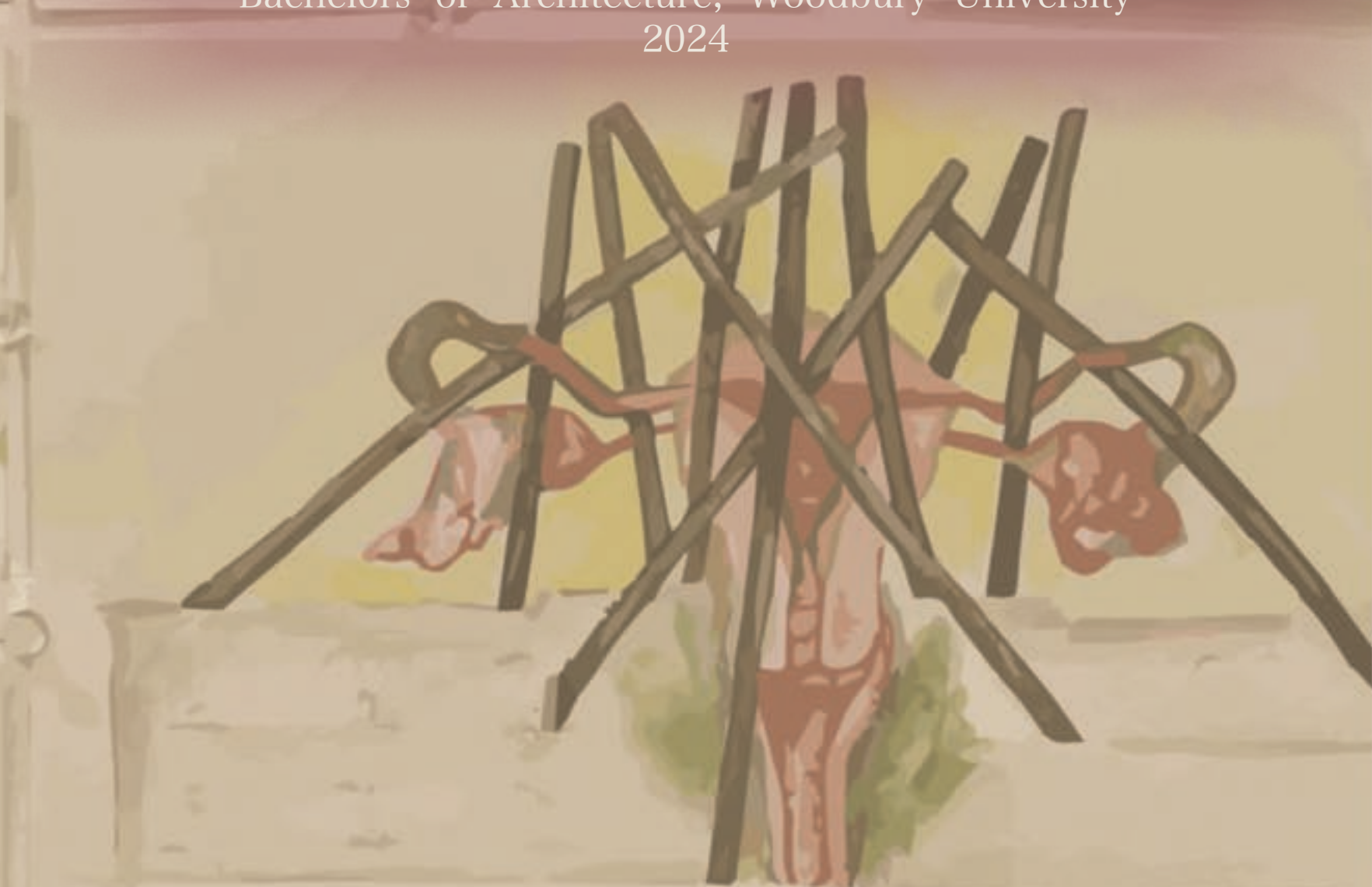




PORTFOLIO

DARA ELISE LEVARDO

Bachelors of Architecture, Woodbury University
2024



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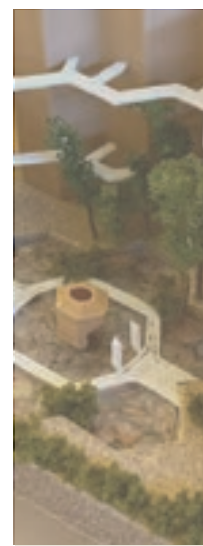
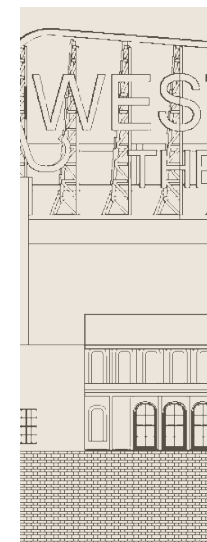
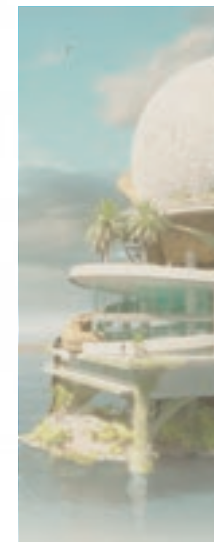
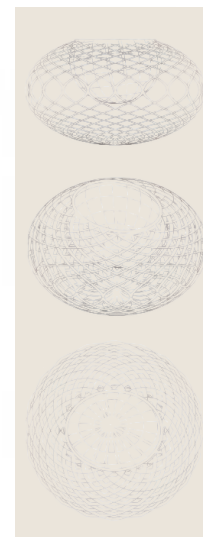
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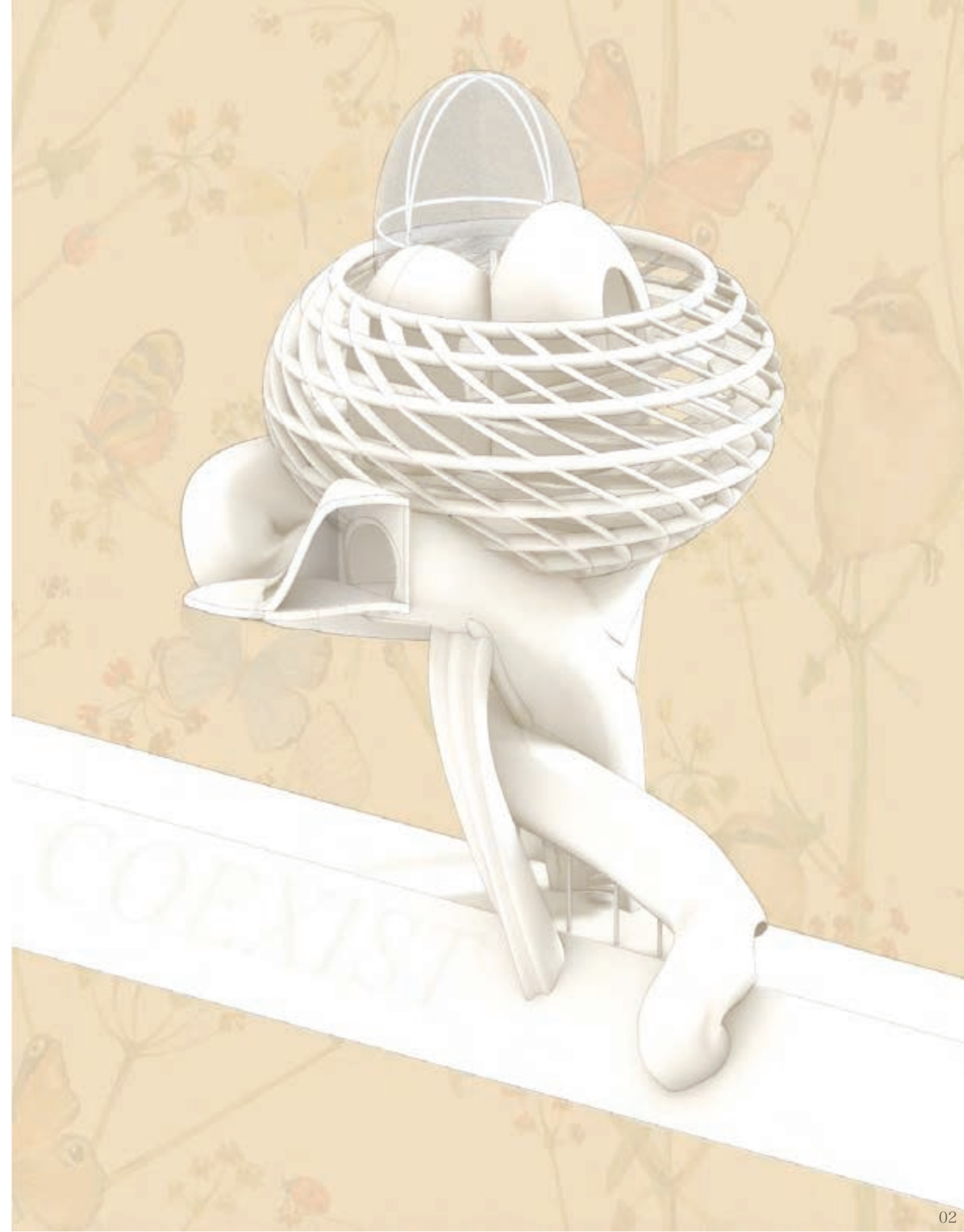


COEXIST

STUDIO 06- Water Sampling & Isolation
Point
Professor Benjamin Jones
2022

LOCATION
Marina Del Rey

The goal for this project was to design a structure supporting a multi-use access platform for water-quality sampling for the purpose of monitoring the levels of bacterial and chemical contamination of Ballona Creek. The design proposal seeks to foster a dynamic relationship between Land and Water, as well as the Urban and the Natural.



THE LEAF

This space hovers over the water to allow direct access for water testing and bird watching. Here, the relationship to nature is informed and nurtured.

THE BRANCHES

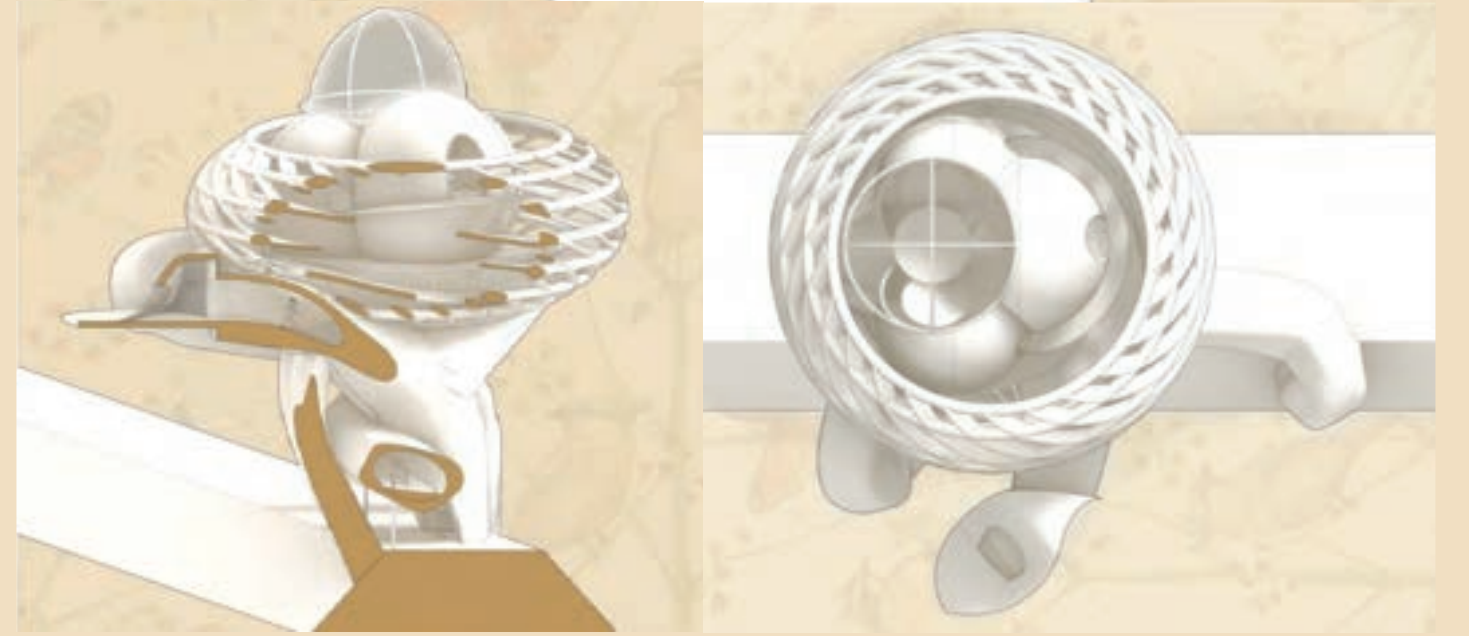
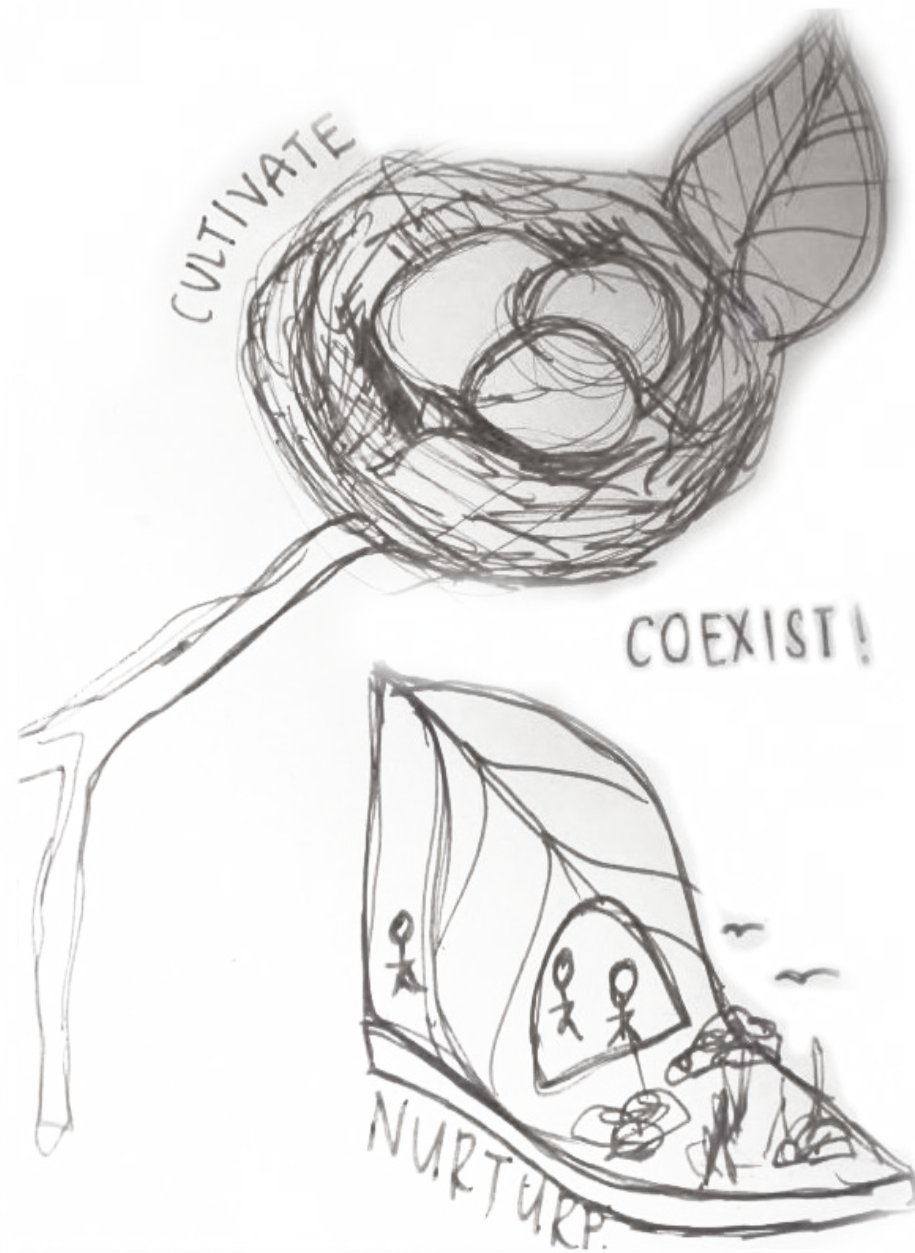
Going throughout the root with ramps and staircases, the user is able to access the nest. If we go back to our roots as being human and a part of nature, we are reminded that we are a part of a natural balance and can coexist.

THE NEST

Puts us in the perspective of another species. Here the user is urged to walk, look out and reflect on the surrounding environment.

THE EGGS

This space includes program shaped around the endangered native species. The two "eggs" are informational rooms and cultivation spaces to raise them.



SYMBIOSIS

STUDIO 06 Climate Organic Research & Educational Lab

Professor Benjamin Jones
2022

LOCATION

Marina Del Rey

Expanding the ideas of the last project, this project proposes a public & private science lab and education center (CORE LAB) dedicated to the investigation, study, education, and dissemination of research on atmospheric and climate change.

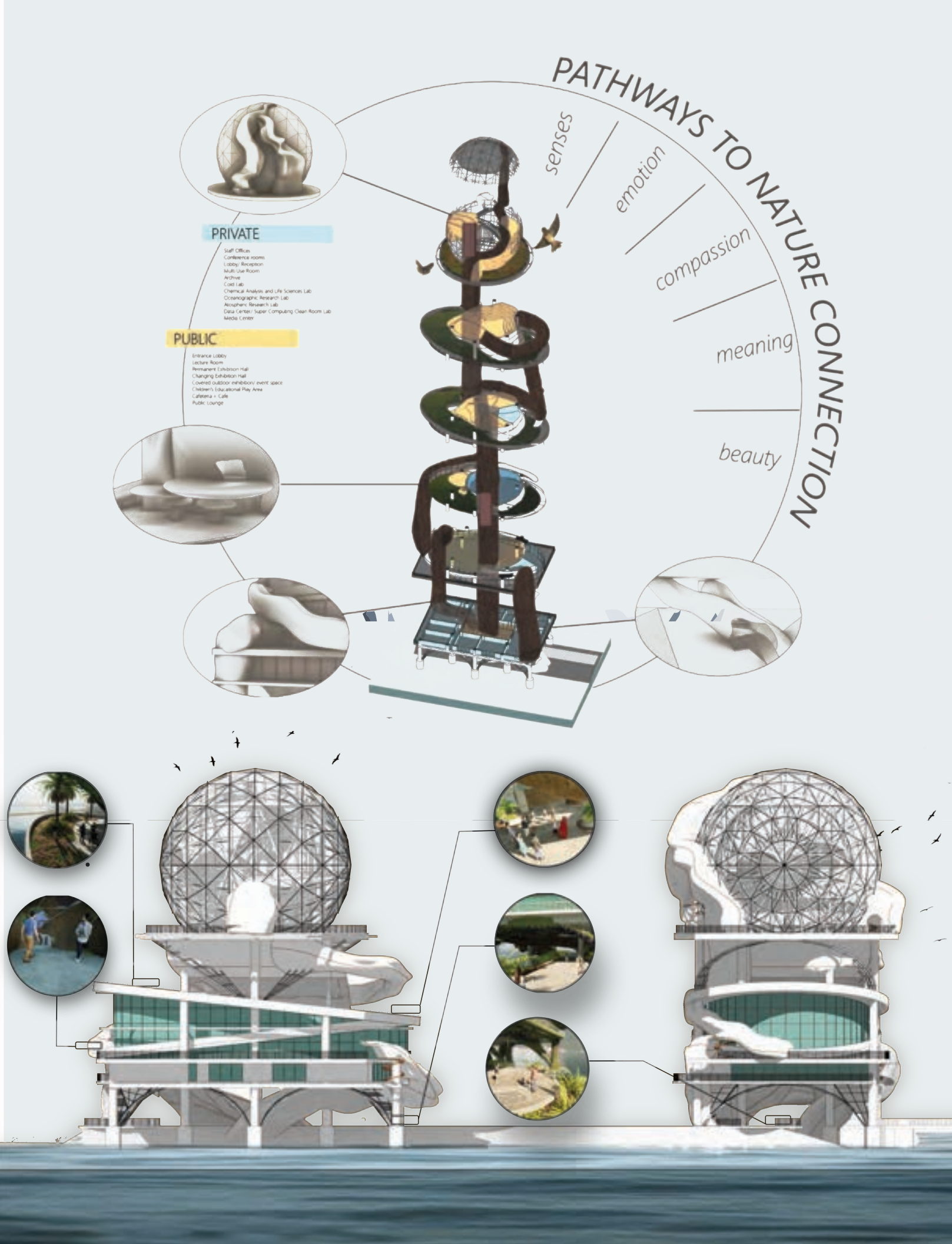
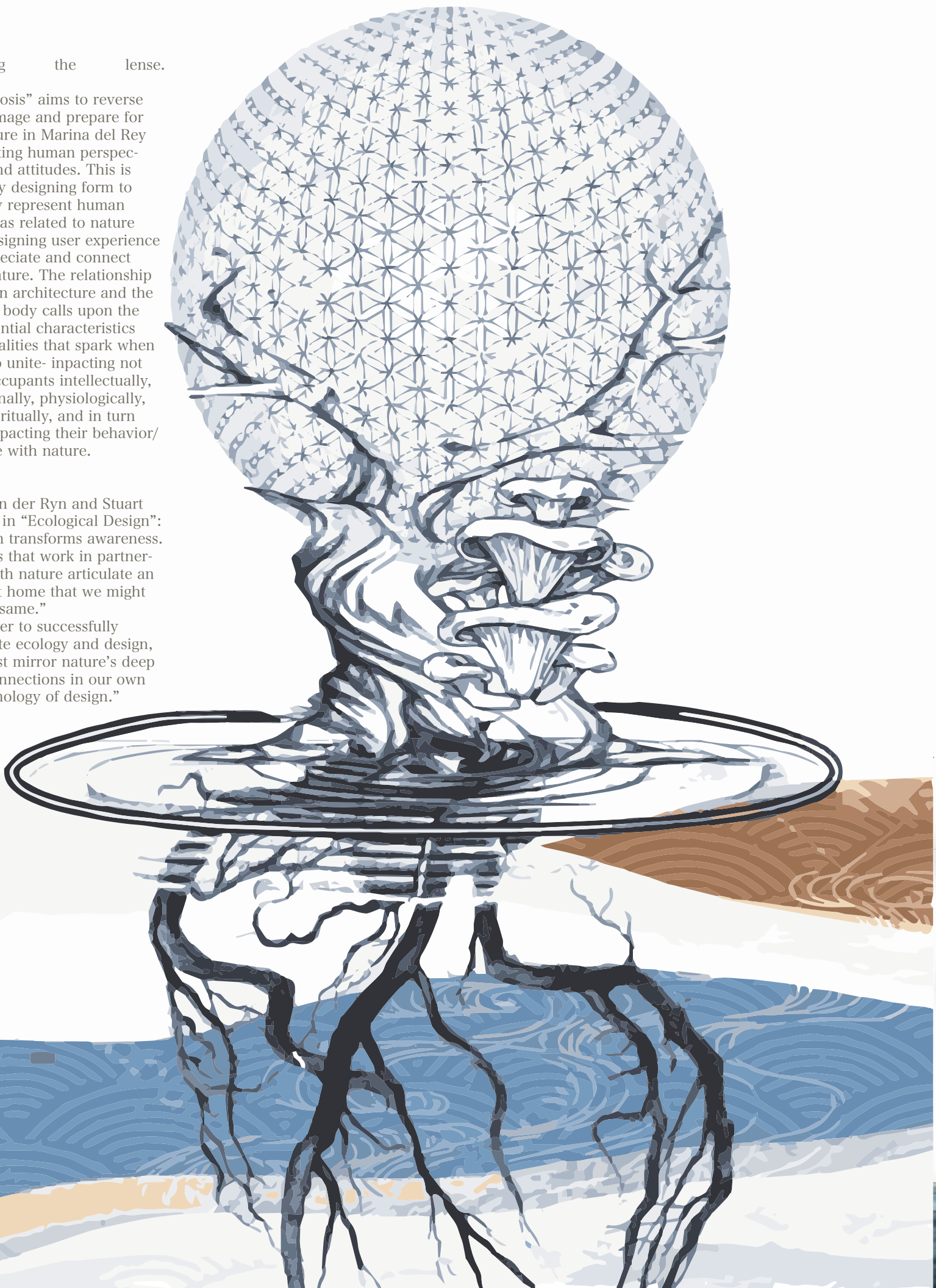
The project approaches an ethic of universal accessibility and access to natural air circulation and ventilation.



Shaping the lense.

“Symbiosis” aims to reverse the damage and prepare for the future in Marina del Rey by shifting human perspectives and attitudes. This is done by designing form to visually represent human bodies as related to nature and designing user experience to appreciate and connect with nature. The relationship between architecture and the human body calls upon the experiential characteristics and qualities that spark when the two unite- impacting not only occupants intellectually, emotionally, physiologically, and spiritually, and in turn also impacting their behavior/ attitude with nature.

Sim Van der Ryn and Stuart Cowen in “Ecological Design”: “Design transforms awareness. Designs that work in partnership with nature articulate an implicit home that we might do the same.” “In order to successfully integrate ecology and design, we must mirror nature’s deep interconnections in our own epistemology of design.”

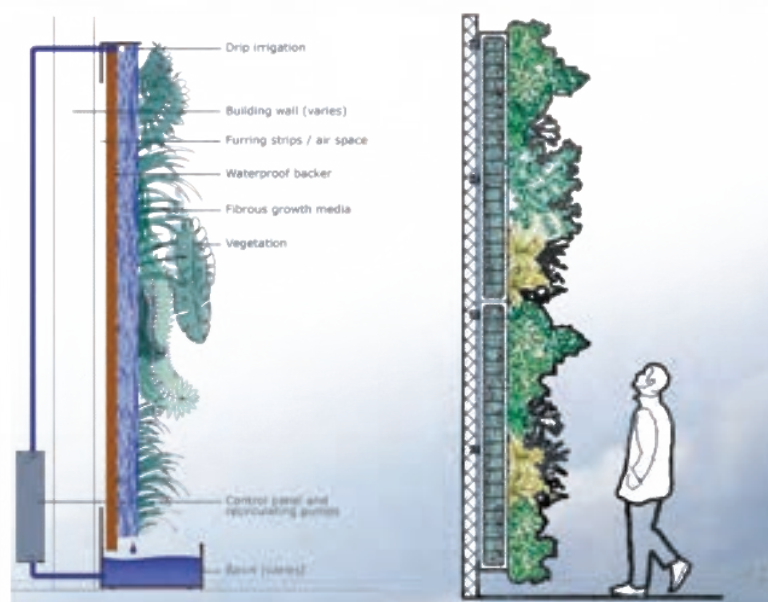
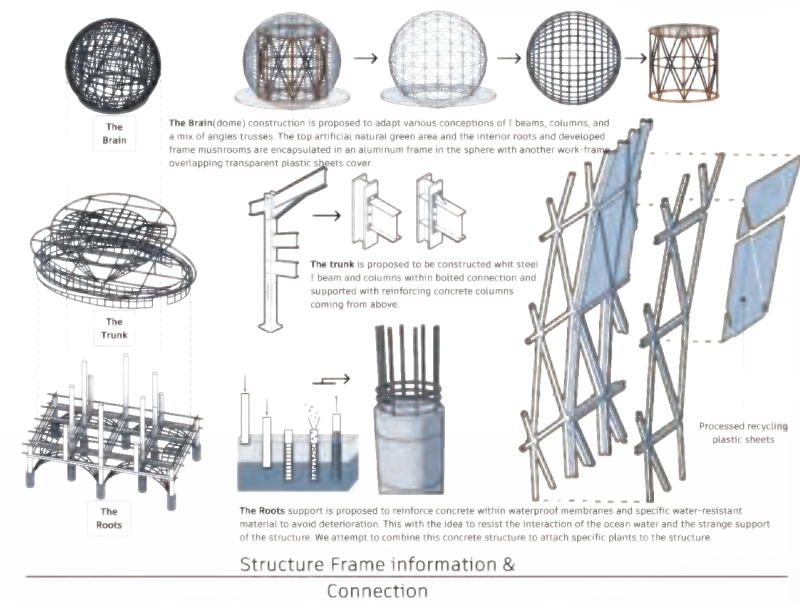
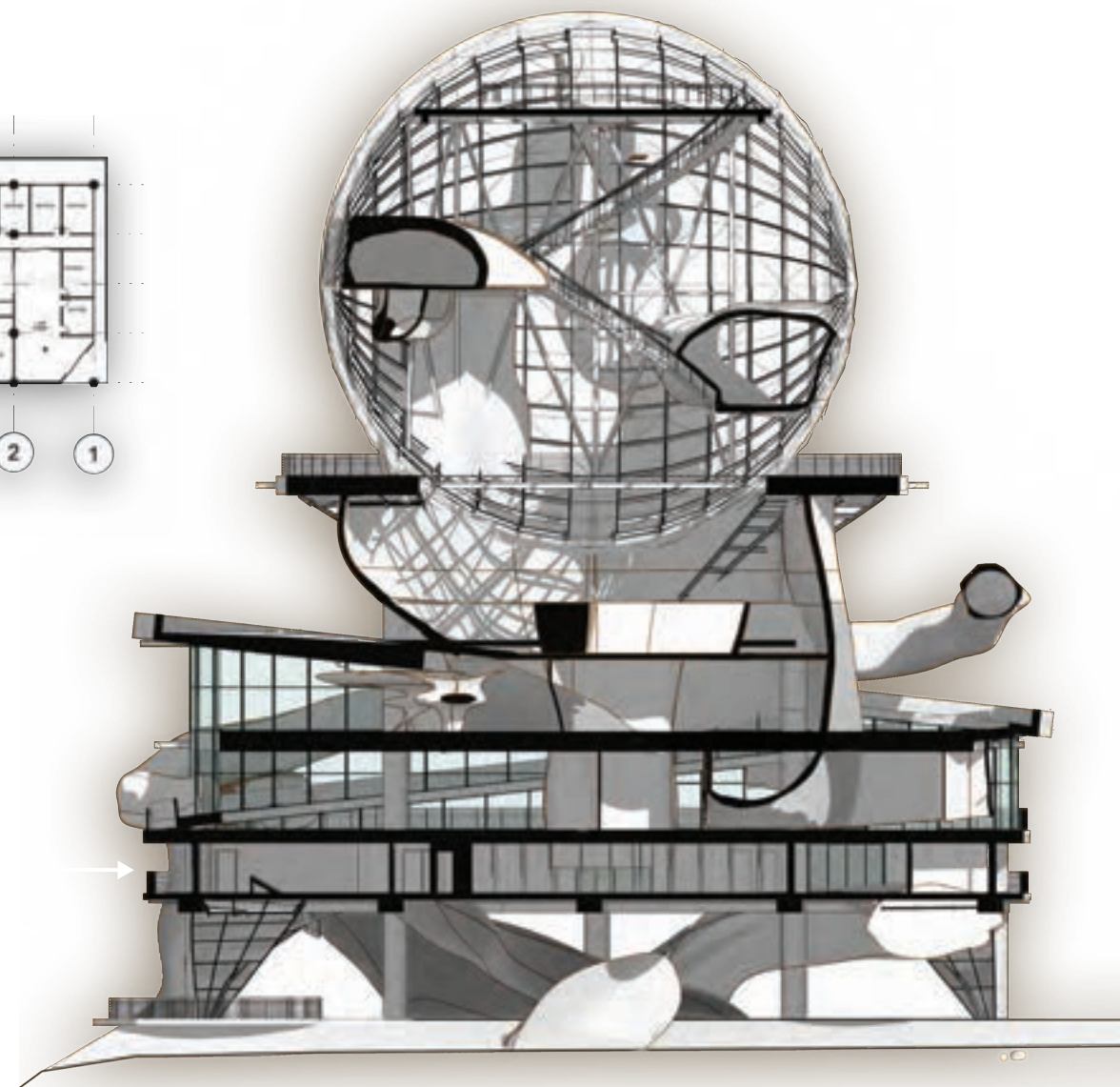
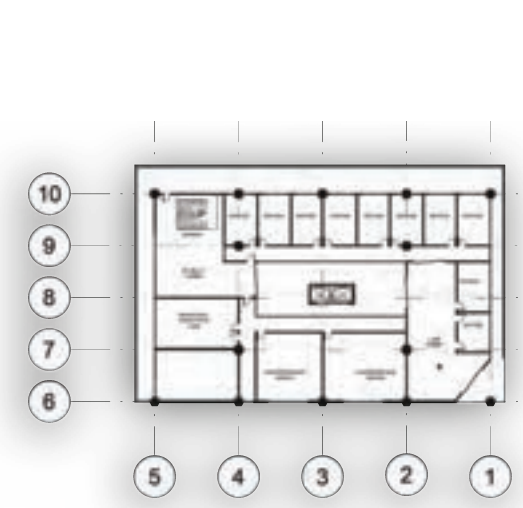




The “roots” or “legs” and first level research labs support the structure physically as well as advise the rest of the experience throughout it. This is where research testing labs are that allow direct access to the water.

The “trunk” or the “body” of the structure contains the space where the users circulate, mingle, learn and eat. Here there are outdoor spaces to breathe, learn about the environment, and eat by the cafeteria.

The “dome” or the brain includes mediation and yoga spaces to be present and clear your mind. There are cultivation spaces for native species here.



ETERNAL HUMAN EMOTION

STUDIO 09- Thesis Preparation
Professor Anali Gharakhani
2023- in progress

Exploring Femininity, Humanness, and Emotion with Ornament in Bathroom Spaces

The project "Eternal Human Emotion: Exploring Femininity, Humanness, and Emotion with Ornament in Bathroom Spaces" endeavors to challenge societal perceptions and embrace the intrinsic relationship between emotions, femininity, and architecture. Rooted in the understanding that ornamentation in architecture serves as a conduit for expressing and evoking human emotions, this project specifically explores the neglected space of bathrooms as a canvas for emotional expression and connection.

The central premise revolves around acknowledging and amplifying the role of emotions, particularly feminine experiences, within architectural spaces. It confronts historical biases that marginalized emotions, especially those associated with femininity, leading to the desensitization of human experiences in architectural design, notably during the modernist era. By critically analyzing societal constructs and their impact on emotional expression, the project seeks to reintegrate emotions into architectural narratives.

The design intervention focuses on a single shower stall that encapsulates the feminine experience through intentional ornamentation. It challenges the traditional perception of bathrooms as sterile and disconnected spaces by incorporating elements that provoke introspection and emotional contemplation. The use of ornamentation, symbolism, and collaging personal elements challenges societal norms surrounding bodies and emotions, while exercising the evocation and generation of emotion and human experience.





The mosaic collaging of the shower floor and the flesh-themed shower curtain, crafted with tulle fabric, liquid latex, resin, and chalk, symbolize the complexities of navigating femininity, emotional acceptance, and societal norms. Strategically placed mirrors within the space weave a narrative of self-discovery, societal expectations, and the inherent beauty of the human form, encouraging reflection on conformity, sacrifices made for acceptance, and feminine identity. By inviting female peers to contribute their thoughts on the tiled walls, I aimed to delve into the shared emotional experiences ingrained within the female journey, challenging the stigma surrounding vulnerability. This project redefines the traditional bathroom space, fostering a deeper connection with one's humanity and embracing the complexities of the feminine experience.

THE BODY BATHHOUSE

AN EMOTIONAL, RAW REINTERPRETATION OF
THE BATHROOM SPACE FOR WOMEN

Thesis, Professor Anali Gharakhani
2024

LOCATION

San Francisco Sutro Baths

The Feminine Emotional Bathhouse aims to challenge traditional notions of bathrooms and utilizes ornament's power to evoke and express human emotions, and in turn connect with the notion of humanness. The repercussions for the lack of ornamentation caused by modernism, as well as the social constraints throughout history on bathrooms, have historically neglected the emotional and sensory aspects of the human experience. Being that women are societally forbidden from emotional expression, the social fabric that structures bathroom spaces therefore oppresses women's ability to connect with themselves, their bodies, their emotions, and other women. It has taken part in shaping how society views women, and how women view themselves. This bathhouse serves not only to challenge this but as pathway to the reclaiming the relationship with self.



Bathroom spaces serve as more than just utilitarian spaces—they are places for emotional escape, release, and introspection, and social interaction and isolation. Bathrooms even serve as a place for small transgressions, where one can temporarily escape the routines and pressures of life and small individual acts of social and political resistance become productive. Throughout history, bathroom spaces have been sanctuaries where women discuss forbidden topics or taboos.

A public bathing space offers safety, addresses shame, works to neutralize the male gaze, and cultivates human connection. Vanity and gossip, often stigmatized when associated with women, are reinterpreted as productive forms of self-expression and conversation within The Body Bathhouse. Women are also expected to place themselves in devotion to men, conditioning a self view to caters to the male gaze & presence. The open plan created by intersections of the candle wax structure, bathing pools, and vanity spaces create a weaving path that represent and elicit the changing emotions, sensations, contemplations, that ornament can produce. The candle wax structures are open, but the constricting and dilating of the form creates canals and slippages that lead to toilets, some put together, working to eliminate the symbolic burden typical bathrooms have of “purity and pollution” and constructs of shame. Gossip curtains, penetrating the path, consist of curtains that provide layers of transparency and can be added to or collaged with ideas and thoughts, similar to how public restroom stalls are often “vandalized” with emotional or confessional statements. All these aspects are ornamented with symbolism to reflect ideas of humanness, femininity, and connection with the body and work to encourage reflection, presence, challenge societal shame, conversations that are typically silenced.





1/4" = 1'-0"
DEVOTION
VANITY
GOSSIP



SPIRIT
BODY
SOUL



Altar space



PAST, PRESENT, FUTURE

STUDIO 07- Adaptive Reuse
Professor Aviva Rubin
2022

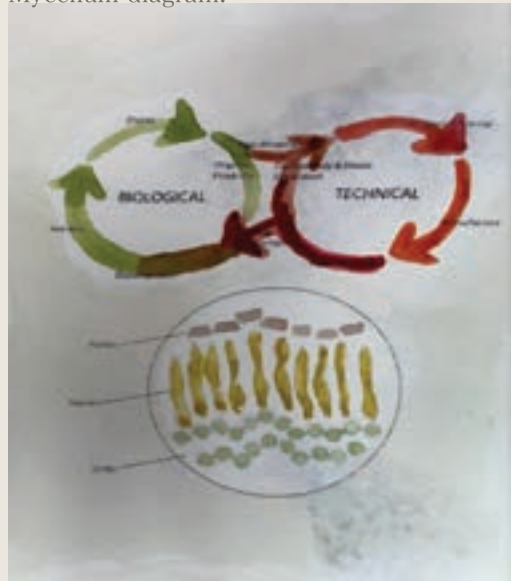
LOCATION

Historic Westlake Theater, Los Angeles

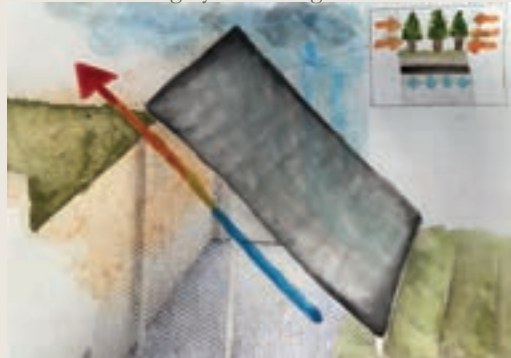
With adaptive reuse, designers are given the ability to innovate architecture in the present with consideration to the past and the future. It especially emphasizes the responsibility of making positive change and doing better than the past in regard to environmental health. This project, being a film archive further allowed me to explore this idea of time, history, and change. “Past, Present, Future” honors the past and is conscious of the future in the present by its symbolic use of design and integrates passive building technology and climate control.



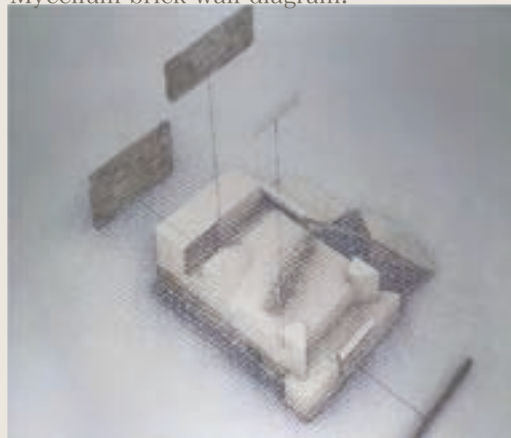
Mycelium diagram:



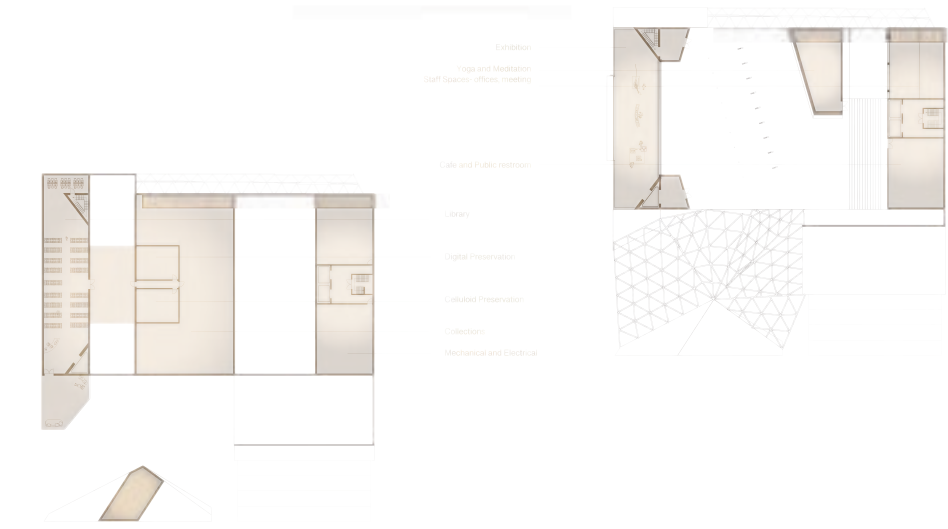
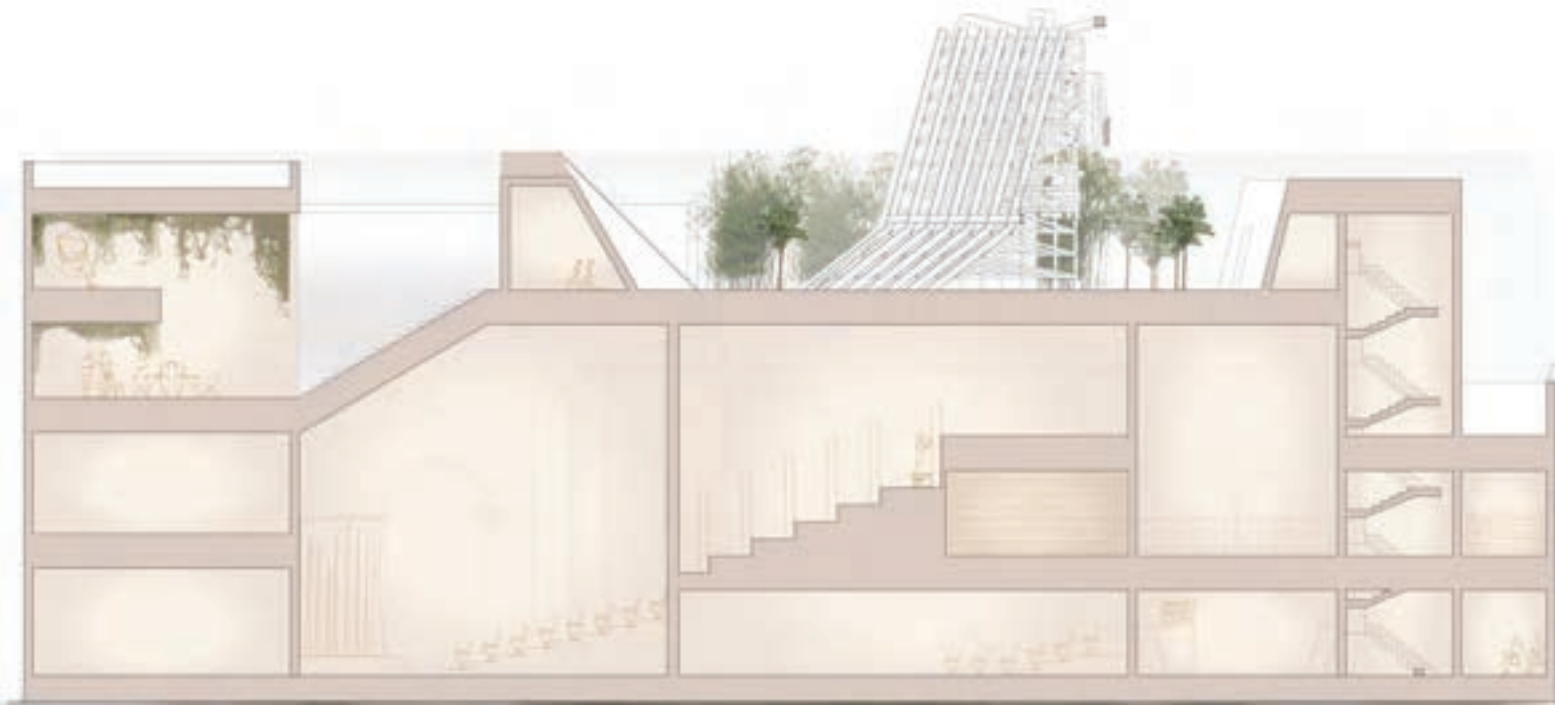
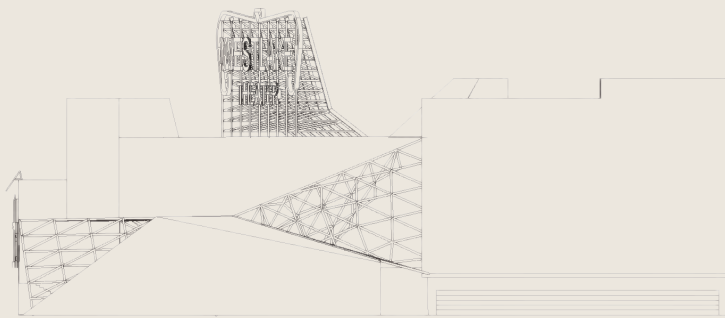
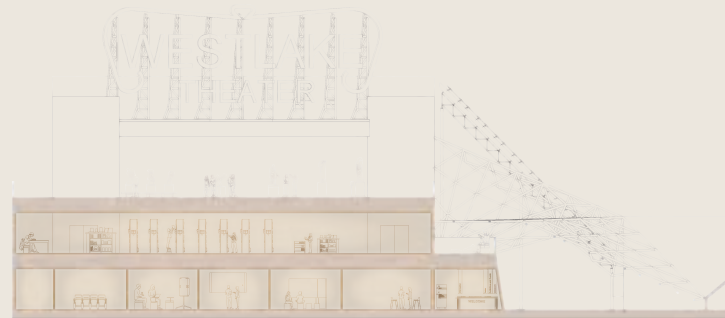
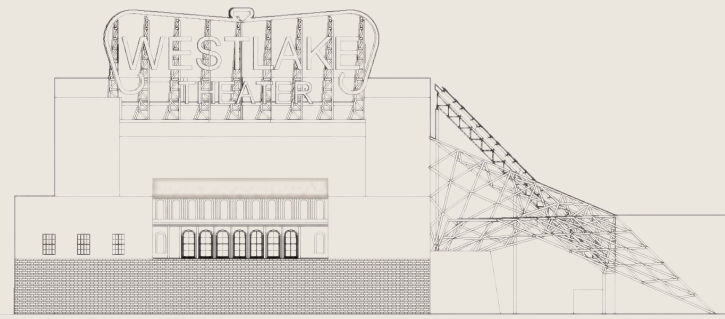
Passive cooling system diagram:



Mycelium brick wall diagram:



Mirror diagram:

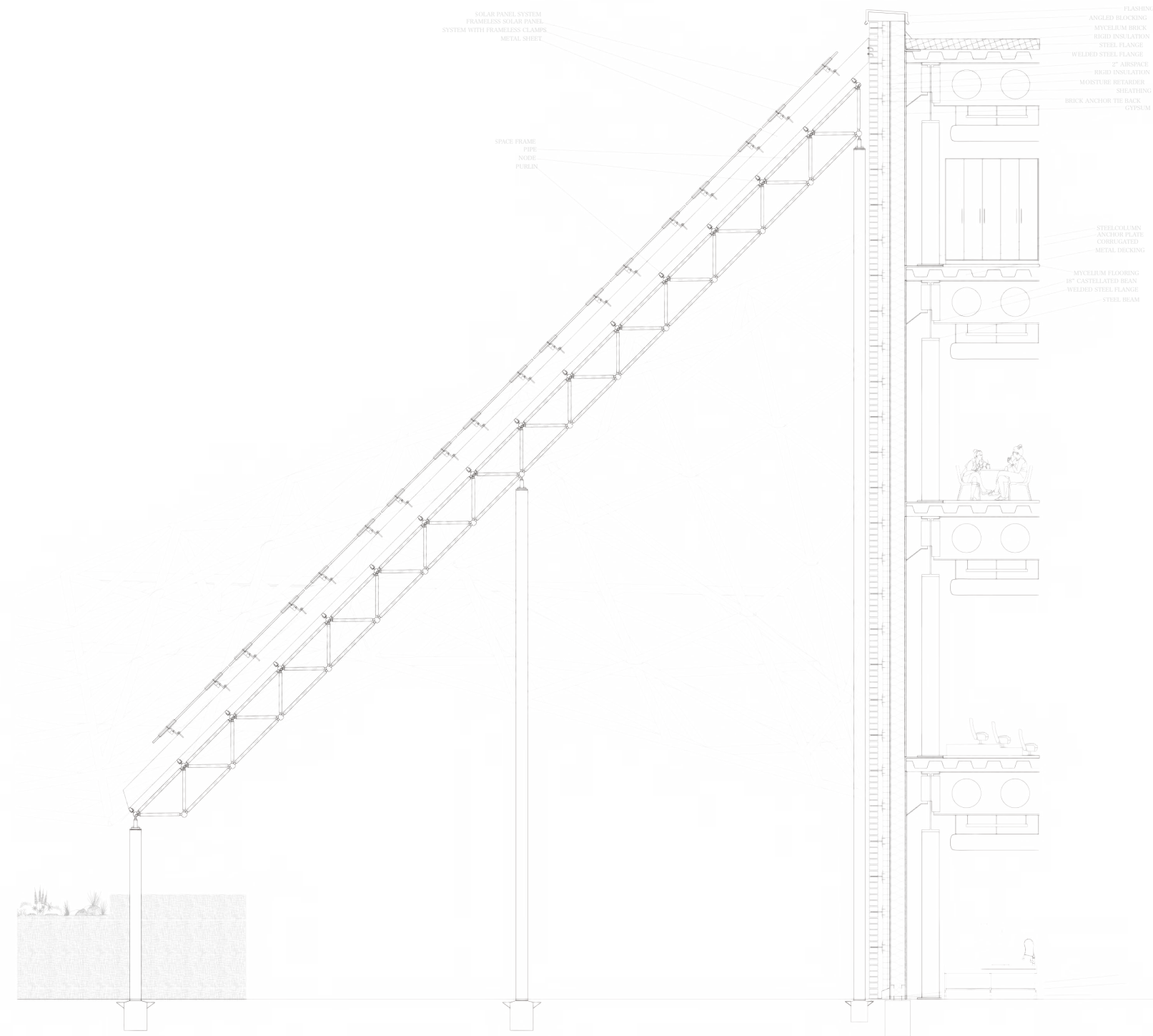




The majority of the Westlake Theater is left untouched, however the new structure is strategically positioned and angled to blend the present moment and history using mirrors that reflect the original building and key historical memorials. As you circulate through the building, you not only catch yourself between mirrors reflecting one another creating a never ending illusion, but you find yourself in an atmosphere that incorporates both the past and the present.

Adaptive reuse is also conscious of the future. This is also considered with the construction material and relationship to the site. Mycelium not only reminds us of our timeless connection to one another and the Earth, but can also be used as a natural and renewable material. The addition of mycelium brick and living walls remind us that we too are a part of infinite natural cycles that occur regardless of time.

In addition, its acoustically absorbing and cooling qualities allow the screening spaces to be sound insulated and be properly heat regulated to preserve the archive. In order to understand mycelium and the building's purpose to connect and blend time into one, mycelium education and cultivation spaces are also integrated into the program with classrooms and gardening spaces. Green spaces exist throughout the building to provide more natural cooling and encourage visitors and staff to engage in connection by circulating private and public spaces to one another, joined by yoga, event, cafeteria, and leisure spaces.



STUDIO ABROAD

Fortification & Facade

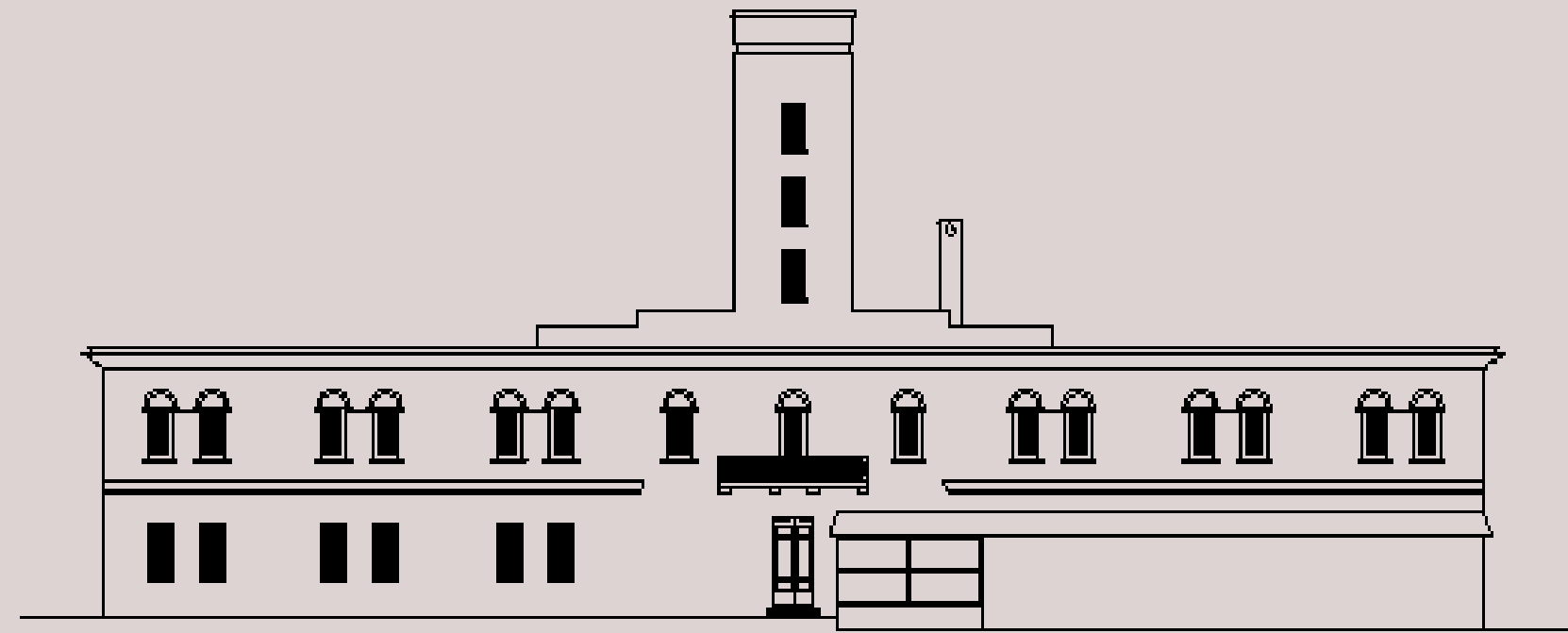
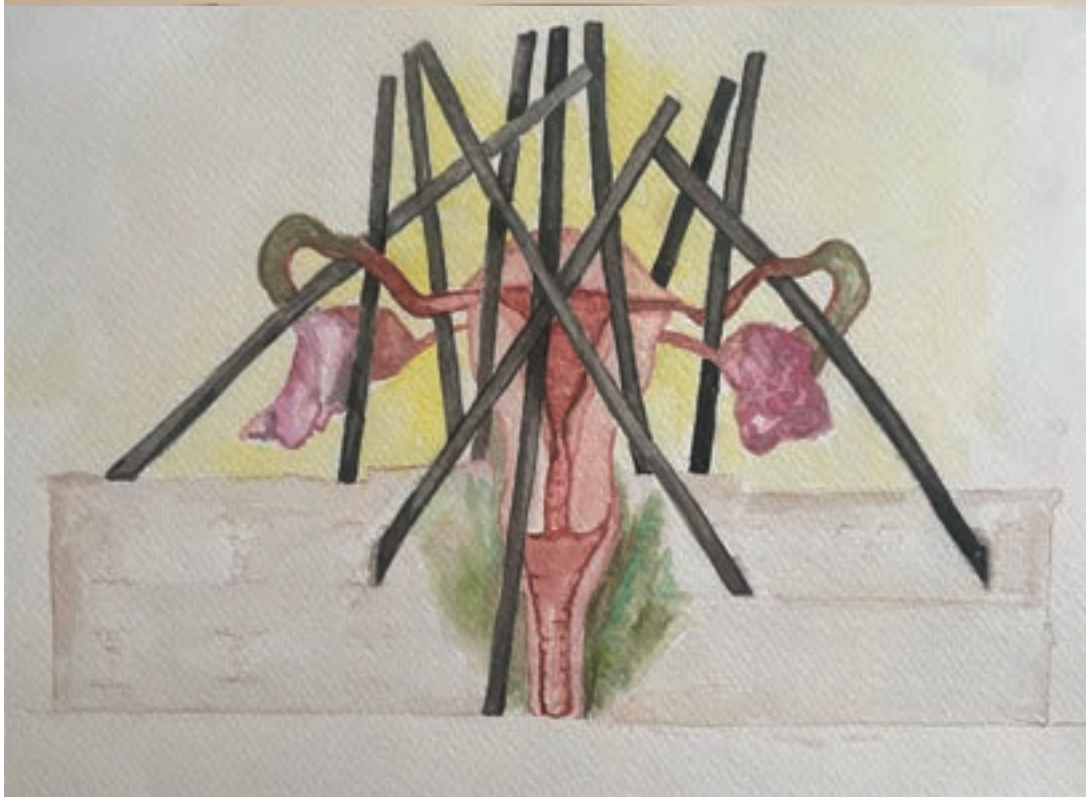
Professor Paulette Singley, Gerard Smulevich, & Eric Olsen
2022

LOCATION

Venice, Italy

Informed by precedent research, historical site analysis, and field trips to Venetian architecture sites and museums, a new life for disused and ruined fortification sites on the Venetian lagoon was designed. Conceptual development and architectural visualization was developed using watercolor as a medium.





Through this studio, I sought to understand the different ways other cultures are shape and are shaped by architecture and design. The first and most prominent thing that I noticed was the value Venice put on love and femininity, with the Virgin Mary being the most prominent religious figure, feminine symbolism existing throughout their architectural design, and through the exhibits in the museums. I saw the way in which this affected its people, the Venetian people prioritized and embraced love and motherhood as a human instinct and power in a way I have never seen before. Because of this observation, and with the ongoing Roe v. Wade decision going on at the time, I chose to explore femininity and what it means to be feminine in society through architecture as my concept for this studio.

