

Selected Works

JOSEPH PATRICK DONAHER

PROJECT
Capri Villian Masterplan Site Model

MEDIUM
Laser-Cut Plywood, PLA

YEAR
2023

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PROJECT
House ThePeople
TYPE
Academic (Collaborative)
YEAR
Fall 2023

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TYPE
Academic
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Fall 2024

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TYPE
Academic
YEAR
Spring 2024

PROJECT
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TYPE
Academic
YEAR
Spring 2023

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TYPE
Academic
YEAR
2021

PROJECT
Legendary Highway 14 Tower Competition
TYPE
Competition
YEAR
2023

House The People

PROJECT
House The People

LOCATION
Chicago, IL

YEAR
2023



This Housing Project on 2048 N Milwaukee Ave. in Chicago IL, challenges the banalities of conventional housing by reimagining it as monumental architecture, a civic gesture as much as a place to live. At its core lies the proposition of **housing serving not just residents but also contributing profoundly to the identity and fabric of a city**. Here, ornament and typography, elements often dismissed as extraneous, become critical tools for crafting an architecture that is bold and monumental, and serves as a vehicle for a salient social and political statement, boldly proclaiming the project's ethos:

"HOUSE THE PEOPLE"

A CALL TO THE POWERS
THAT BE THAT THERE
OUGHT TO BE A ROOF OVER
EVERYONE'S HEAD



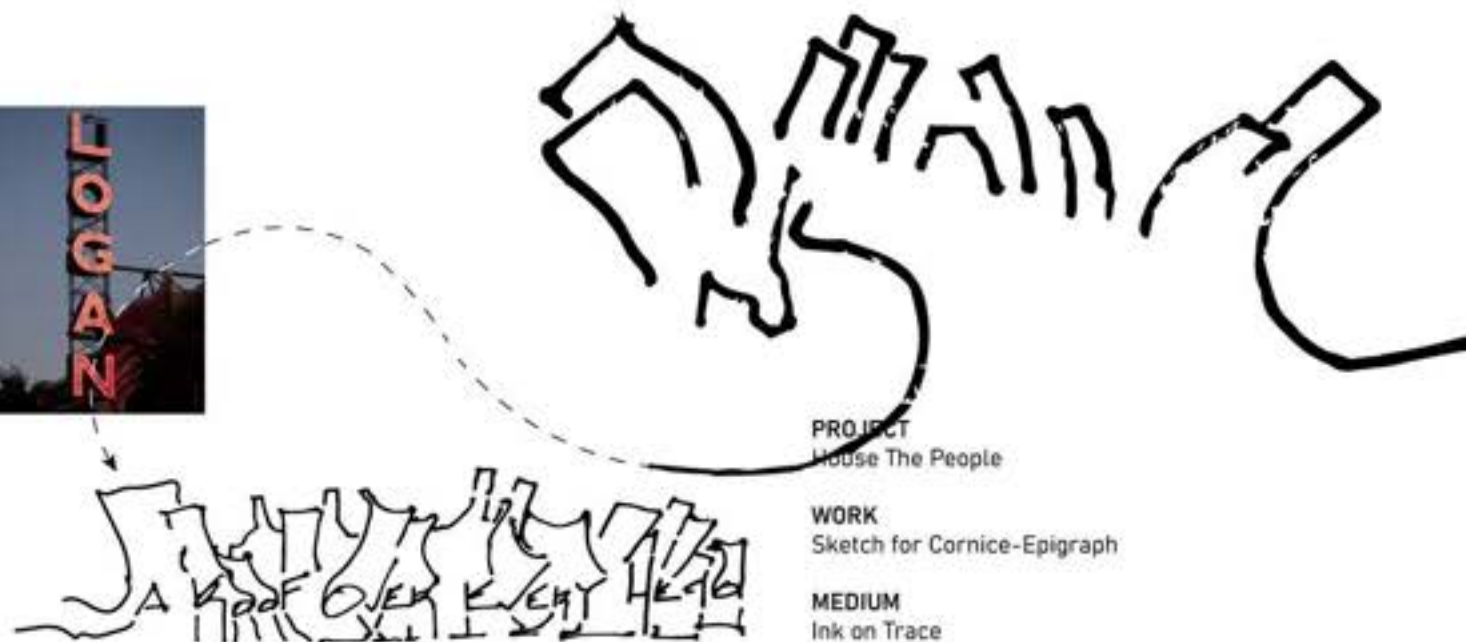
MONUMENT

The project defines a monument as a building distinguished by its symbolic meaning as part of a societal event or social cause. In the case of this project,

SIGNAGE

The uproar over the Logan sign revealed something simple but profound: people care deeply about symbols of their place. This project captures that care in built form.

The potential removal of the "Logan" sign in Logan Square, Chicago, sparked public outcry and inspired this project's use of typography as a vehicle for ornamentation. This approach seeks to recreate the elegant yet often simple beauty of Chicago's historic townhouses, where decoration was both integral and expressive. **Typography and organic form are combined to shape the townhouse facades, transforming them into communicative artifacts that engage residents and the broader city alike**. The project challenges the prevailing trend of housing that, while equipped with modern amenities, contributes little to society or the built environment. Instead, it embraces ornament and narrative, drawing on the spirit of historic Chicago townhomes to root the design in place and meaning. As María Senderos Laka asserts in her essay "Epigraphy, Typography and Architecture: Control Over Graphic Design Beyond Drawing": "Architecture has been historically linked to other types of visual arts, and the kinds of typography included in old buildings, hieroglyphics, the 'archetypal inscriptions of a Roman architrave,' or the 'ubiquitous tattoos over a Giotto chapel' contain **messages that go beyond their 'ornamental contribution to architectural space.'**"



PROJECT
House The People

WORK
Sketch for Cornice-Epigraph

MEDIUM
Ink on Trace

PROJECT
House The People

LOCATION
Chicago, IL

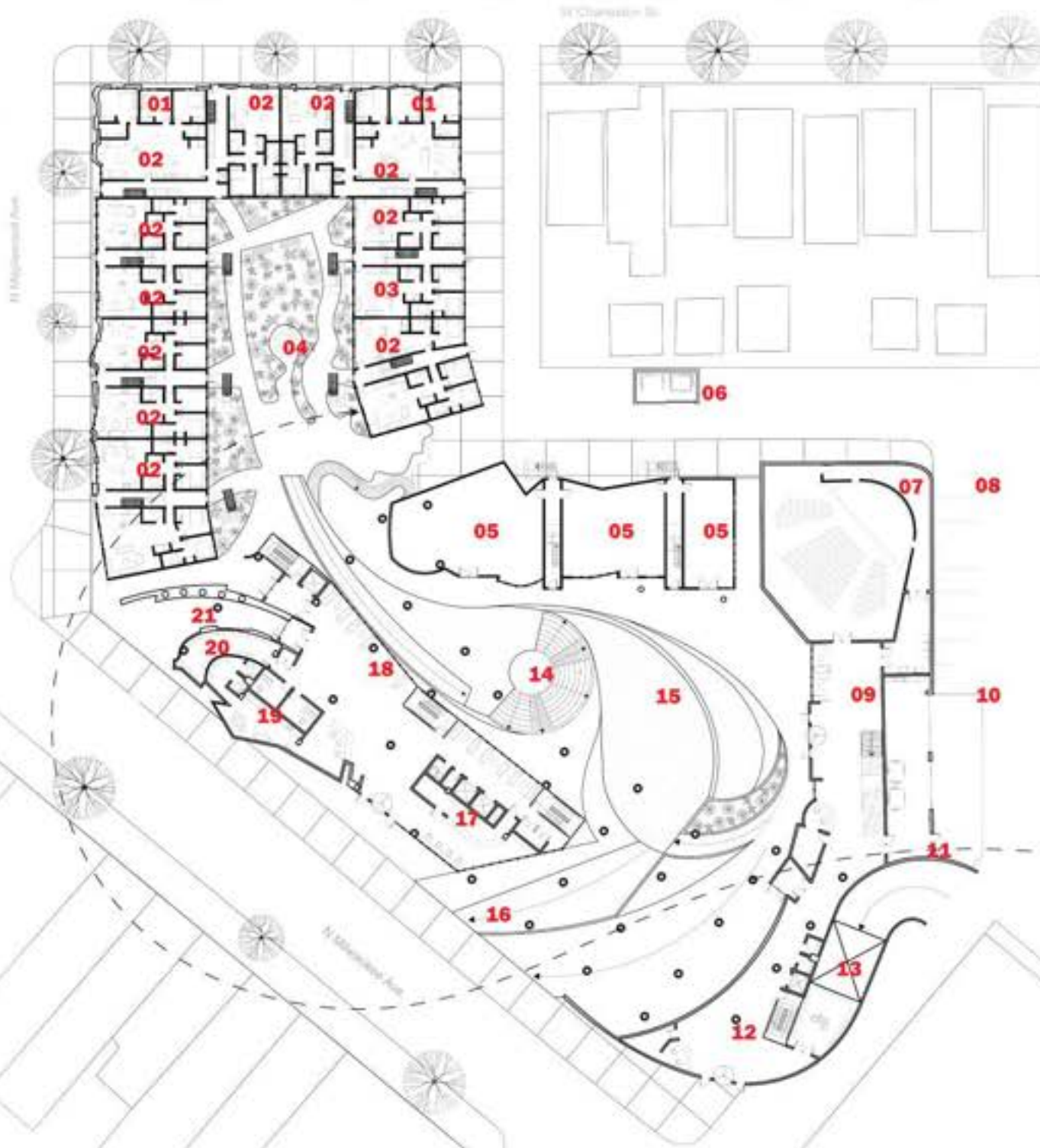
YEAR
2023



00 SITE PLAN

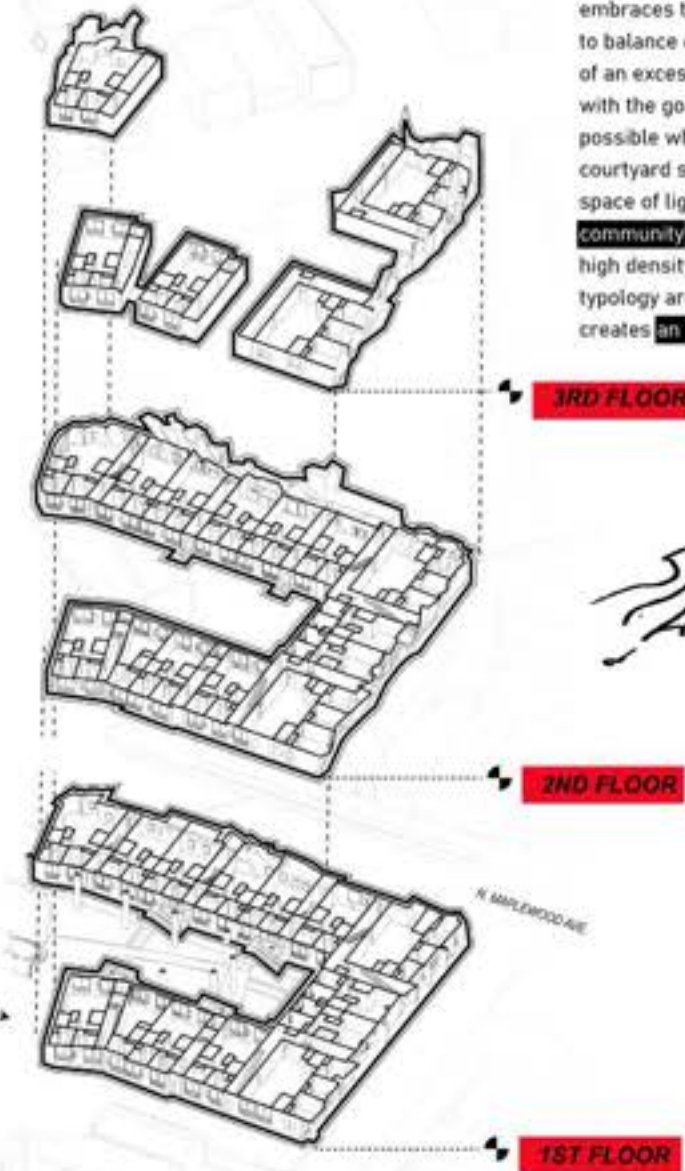
In the layout of 165 residential units, the "Missing Middle" typology seamlessly integrates into the scale of the existing neighborhood, lining the streets and fostering the creation of a private courtyard space for residents. Mixed-use retail and housing, continuing the cohesive architectural language, along with a music school and the main apartment building, frame a central public square. This square serves both residents and the broader community, embodying the concept of housing as an integral part of public life and social connectivity.

- 01 3 BED/2 BATH ACCESSIBLE MISSING MIDDLE
- 02 2 BED/2 BATH MISSING MIDDLE UNITS
- 03 1 BED/1 BATH MISSING MIDDLE UNIT
- 04 PRIVATE COURTYARD FOR THREE FLATS
- 05 RETAIL SPACES
- 06 TRASH PICKUP FOR MISSING MIDDLE/RETAIL
- 07 MUSIC SCHOOL AUDITORIUM
- 08 ON-GRADE PARKING SPACES
- 09 MUSIC SCHOOL LOBBY
- 10 MUSIC SCHOOL/APARTMENT BACK OF HOUSE
- 11 RAMP TO BELOW-GRADE PARKING SPACES
- 12 SECONDARY APARTMENT LOBBY
- 13 BIKE STORAGE
- 14 OUTDOOR PERFORMANCE SPACE
- 15 PUBLIC SQUARE
- 16 ENTRANCE TO PUBLIC SQUARE
- 17 CAFE
- 18 MAIN APARTMENT LOBBY
- 19 LEASING OFFICES/STAFF ROOM
- 20 MAIL ROOM
- 21 MAIN APARTMENT LOBBY ENTRANCE



COURTYARD COMMUNITY

In response to a program demanding an immense number of housing units, the project embraces the courtyard typology as a strategy to balance density, which is here in the form of an excessively large apartment building with the goal of housing as many people as possible while maintaining livability. The courtyard serves as a central green space, a space of light, air, and possibility of community offering spatial relief amidst the high density. By arranging a townhouse typology around this shared space, the design creates an environment that feels generous.



1-0 TOWNHOUSE ISOMETRIC





PROJECT
House The People

LOCATION
Chicago, IL

YEAR
2023



GRAFFITI

Graffiti can serve as a profound form of public ornamentation, imparting local relevancy into the urban fabric. By integrating graffiti into architectural design, we transform static structures into dynamic canvases that reflect the community's voice and identity.

Typography turns the facade into a canvas for storytelling, making the building itself an artifact of meaning and communication, intentionally leaving little room for ambiguity.

P12 & ROOF LEGEND

- 1 Daycare
- 2 Solar Array
- 3 MEP & Elevator
- 4 Cornice Structure

A1 EAST ELEVATION /01

- | | |
|-----------------------------|-----|
| Apartment Bldg. Terraces | A01 |
| Balcony Curtain Wall Facade | A02 |
| Epigraph-Cornice | A03 |
| Dancing Roofline | A04 |

A2 SOUTH ELEVATION /02

- | | |
|----------------------------------|-----|
| Apartment Bldg. Terraces | A01 |
| "A Roof Over Every Head" Cornice | A02 |
| "House" Townhouses | A03 |
| Milwaukee Ave. Corner Turret | A04 |

A3 NORTH ELEVATION /03

- | | |
|------------------------------|-----|
| "People" Townhouses | A01 |
| Grand Entry Colonnade | A02 |
| Milwaukee Ave. Main Turret | A03 |
| Balcony Curtain Wall Facades | A04 |

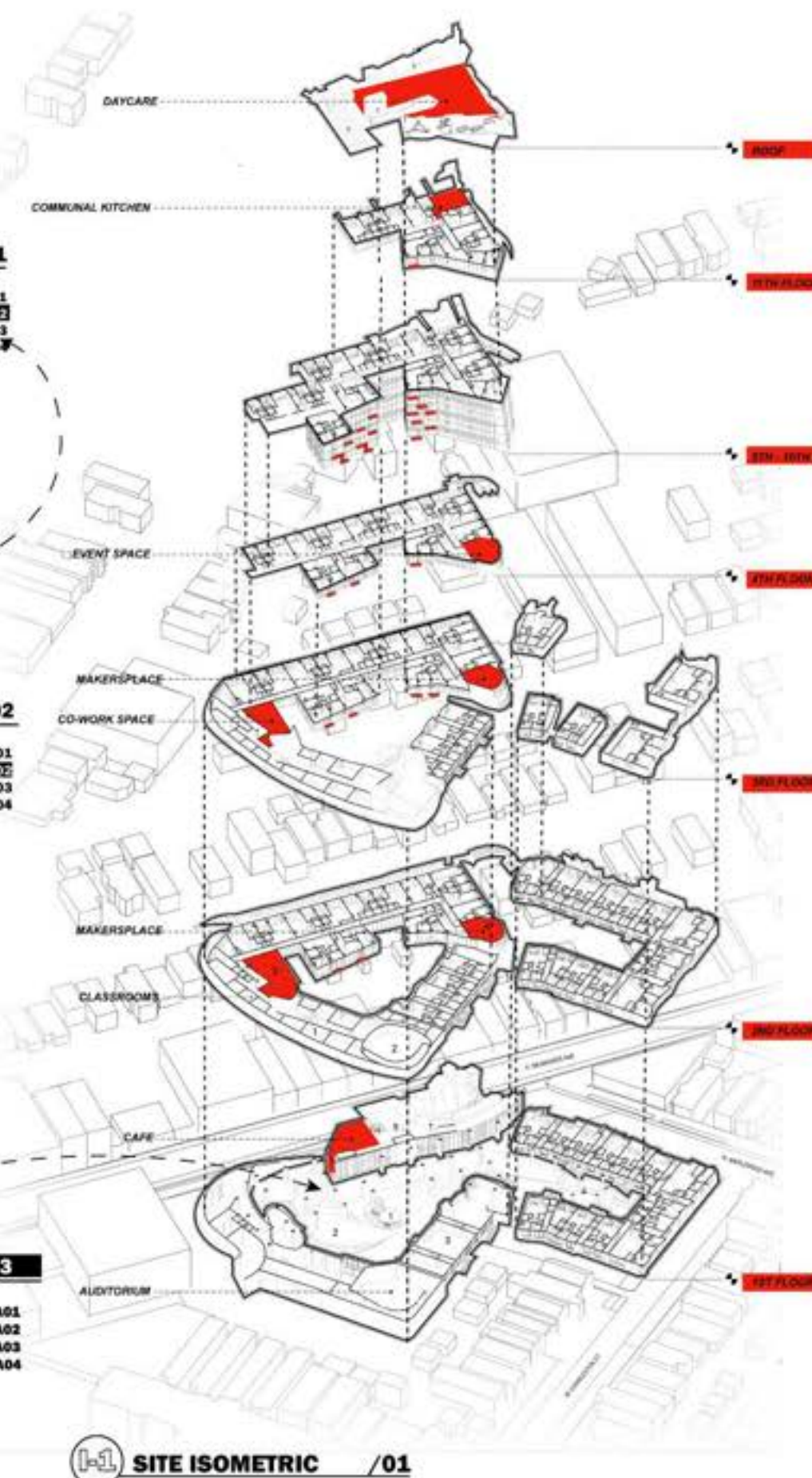
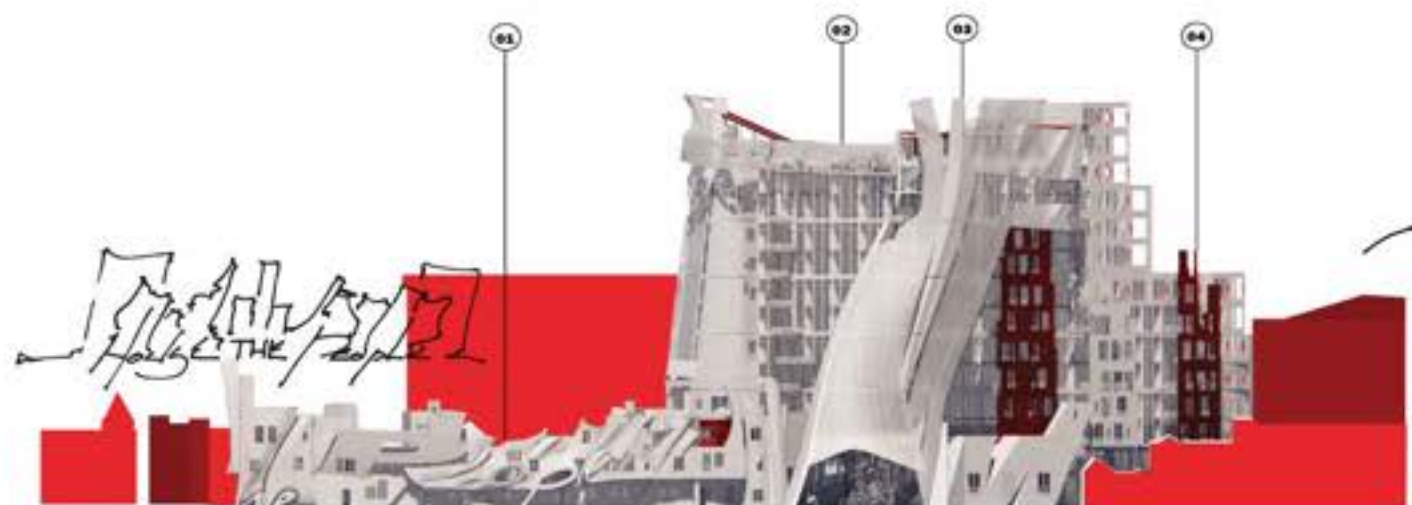
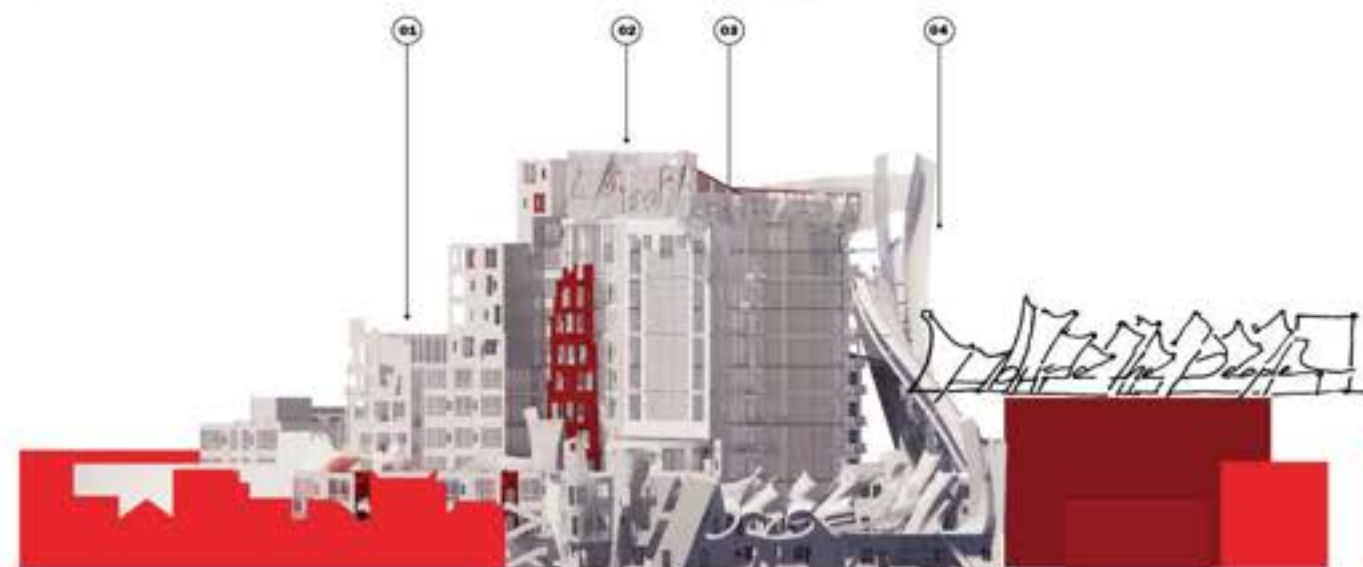
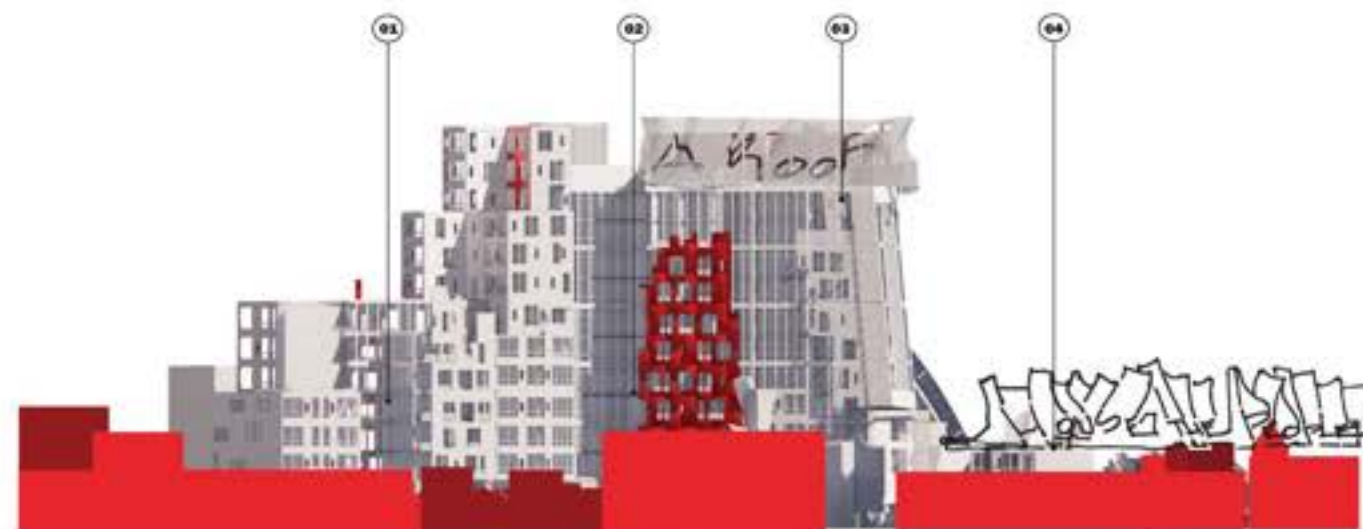
I-1 SITE ISOMETRIC /01

P3 LEGEND

- 1 Music School Classrooms
- 2 Music School Auditorium
- 3 Co-Working Space
- 4 Makerspace / Workshop Studio

P1 & GRND LEGEND

- 1 Public Auditorium
- 2 Green Public Square
- 3 Retail, Restaurants
- 4 Private Townhouse Courtyard
- 5 Apartment Bldg. Lobby





PROJECT
Lafayette Park Townhouses

DESIGNER
Mies van der Rohe

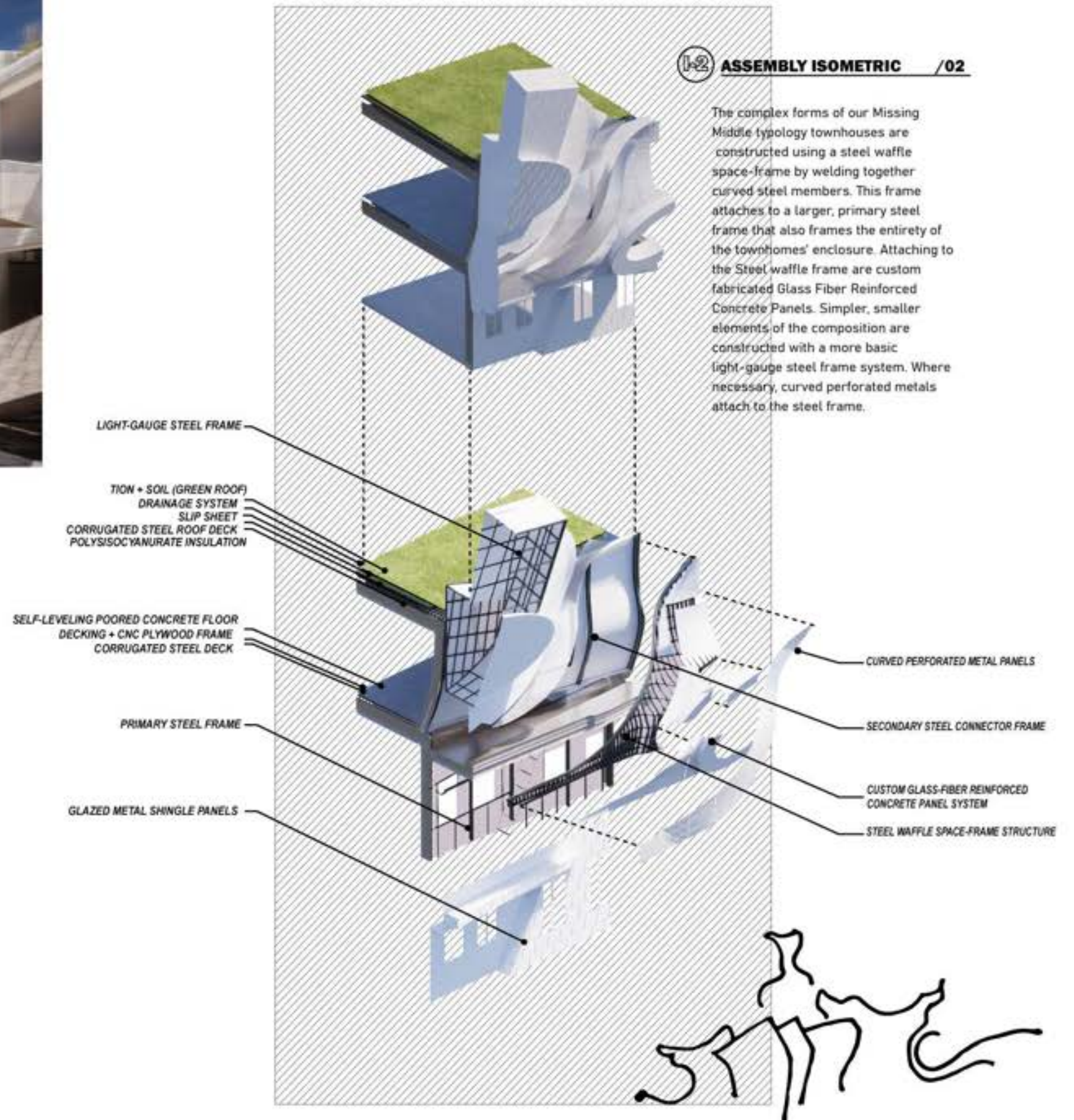
YEAR
1957

PROJECT
Madrid Housing

DESIGNER
Morphosis

YEAR
2006

THE PEOPLE



Architecture has always been humanity's mirror, reflecting its values, aspirations, and identity. Yet, since the rise of modernism, it has abandoned stylistic cohesion and cultural resonance in favor of abstraction, minimalism, and excessive functionality. The result is a built environment that often fails to inspire, connect, or delight. Historically, architecture operated within shared stylistic frameworks, **creating visual languages that transcended class and intellect**. These frameworks ensure that even modest buildings contributed to cohesive and memorable urban identities. Modernism, despite its noble ideals of inclusivity and progress, rejected this tradition, producing cities that are often incoherent, barren, and culturally detached. The absence of stylistic unity **leaves architects to reinvent the wheel with each project, frequently yielding arbitrary results.** To reverse this trajectory, we must reclaim architecture's role as a daily source of pride and joy, integrating "more than necessary" qualities such as ornament and deliberate symbolism that elevate the ordinary, foster community, and inspire lasting affection. This thesis imagines an urban world that rejects the destructive patterns of American urbanism, particularly car dependency, which has tethered society to patterns of unnecessary travel.



The environmental toll, urban ugliness, and existential detachment caused by this paradigm demand immediate change. A future disentangled from the car (amongst other things such as overconsumption) necessitates localized living, where proximity fosters beauty, community, and human connection. Places will reassert their presence as destinations and not mere backdrops for movement, rekindling care, creativity, and pride. The result is an artificial hill town manifesting in a masterplan defined by stylistic unity and an unmistakable identity.

AMERICAN ACROPOLIS

The thesis is a master plan of an artificial hill town in Chicago's South Loop. Drawing on the Platonic ideal of cities, it reinterprets the Acropolis and Agora as symbols of civic life and social exchange. **A grocery store, the American equivalent of the town square, and a Town Hall** crown the Acropolis, serving as monumental anchors and champions of tangible public space. The urban fabric builds up to these landmarks through a maze-like, walkable plan inspired by European city centers.

A NEW STYLE

The project begins to establish a cohesive architectural style through a crafted codex. This style dictates recurring elements across scales: Double Curved surfaces, deep-set windows, ornate gables, cornices, etc. Ornamentation features abstracted historical motifs, of all shapes and sizes... industrial, ecclesiastical... Together, these rules create a recognizable visual language, ensuring harmony while allowing individual creativity of different buildings within the framework.



PROJECT
Thesis WIP

MEDIUM
Site Map Tryptych

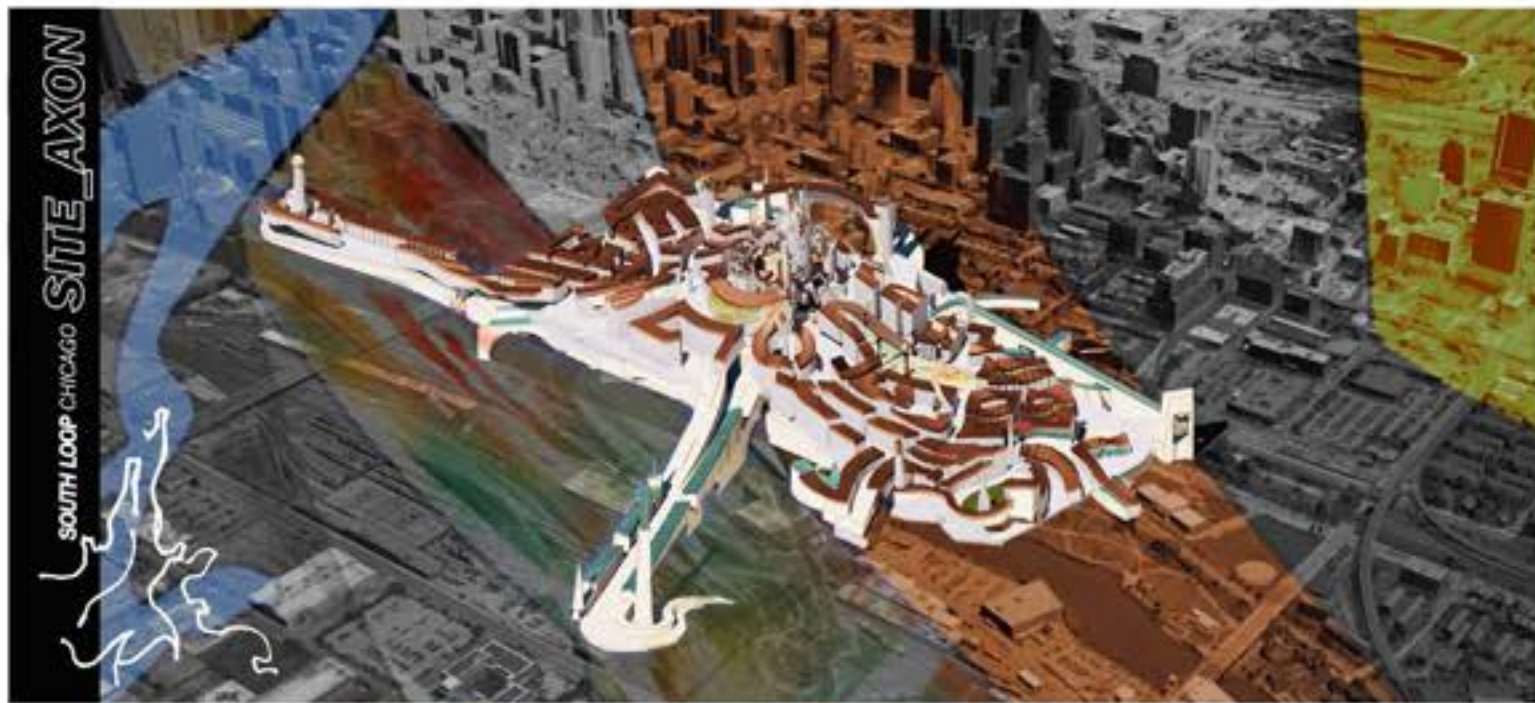
YEAR
2024

PROJECT
Thesis WIP

MEDIUM
Elevational Collage

YEAR
2024





A1 MASTER-PLAN AXONOMETRIC 01

A2 MASTERPLAN SITE-PLAN 02

A01
A02
A03
A04

Urban Fabric
Artificial Hill Agora
Main Market Square
Piazza Città Ventosa



PROJECT
Thesis WIP

MEDIUM
Digital Vignette Render

YEAR
2024



MARKET SQUARE AX_02



PROJECT
Central Acropolis

MEDIUM
3D Render

YEAR
2025





A1 FACADE STUDY AXON 01

A01 Bell Gable
A02 Acroterion
A03 Organic Finials
A04 Big Sister, Little Brother

A2 FACADE STUDY ELE. 02



PROJECT
Thesis WIP Sketches

MEDIUM
Graphite + Ink on Trace

YEAR
2024



Project
Thesis WIP
Medium
Digital Vignette
Year
2024





PROJECT
Thesis Urban Facade Study

MEDIUM
3D Render

YEAR
2025



In Cork, Ireland, the city's 17th and 18th century expansion beyond its medieval walls formed a grid of streets and structures shaping its unique character. Red limestone spires and winding streets spread across the rolling Irish hills, creating a city of unmistakable visual character.

Though as modernity advances, there is a palpable risk of losing entirely the vernacular richness and cohesiveness that once defined Cork's identity. The erosion of local architectural heritage not only diminishes the city's aesthetic appeal but also severs the tangible connections to its storied past.

SUSTAINABLE AESTHETICS

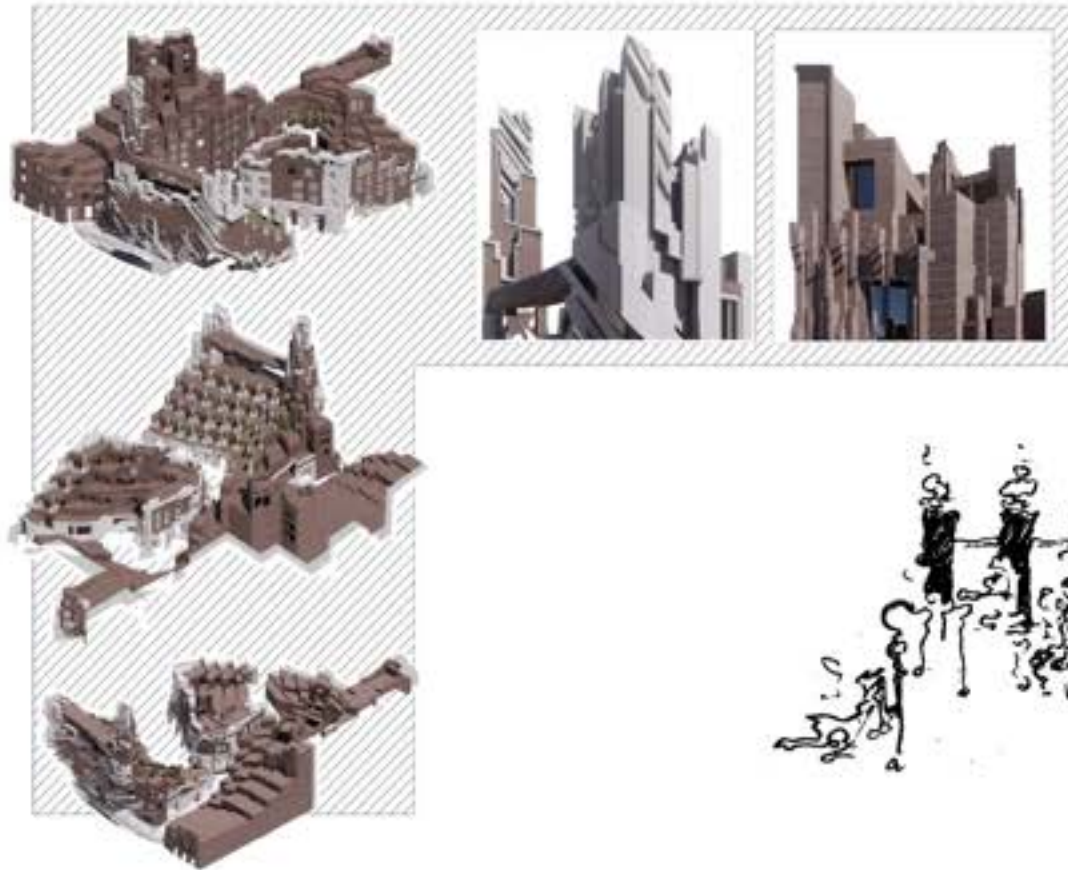
Stone is inherently sustainable due to its longevity, low embodied energy, and natural abundance. Castle Cork uses locally sourced sandstone, showcasing how stone simultaneously **lowers carbon emissions** of buildings and enhances their **local cultural resonance** compared to industrial materials like steel and concrete.

Castle Cork is a counter-narrative to this trend. This low-carbon student housing project is strategically situated in Cork's city center, aiming to rejuvenate a large derelict site and reintegrate it into the urban fabric. By embracing sustainable materials like the indigenous red sandstone and white limestone, Castle Cork pays homage to the city's historical edifices while addressing contemporary environmental imperatives. The design philosophy of Castle Cork challenges the conventional perception of **architectural heritage as a static relic.**

Instead, it advocates for a dynamic interpretation that sees **heritage as an evolving continuum.** This perspective fosters a dialogue between the past and the present, ensuring that the architectural language of Cork remains vibrant and relevant. Castle Cork is a manifesto for cultural preservation through aesthetics. It calls out the importance of integrating a more potent historical consciousness into contemporary architecture, ensuring that the city's legacy is **not only remembered but also continually perpetuated and expanded** for future generations.

TERRACE PINTS

Castle Cork's connected terraces aim to give architecture a tangible role in fostering social interaction in an era marked by isolation. These shared spaces encourage spontaneous encounters and community building, drawing inspiration from Ireland's enduring culture of outdoor gathering.



PROJECT
Shandon Bells

LOCATION
Cork City, Ireland

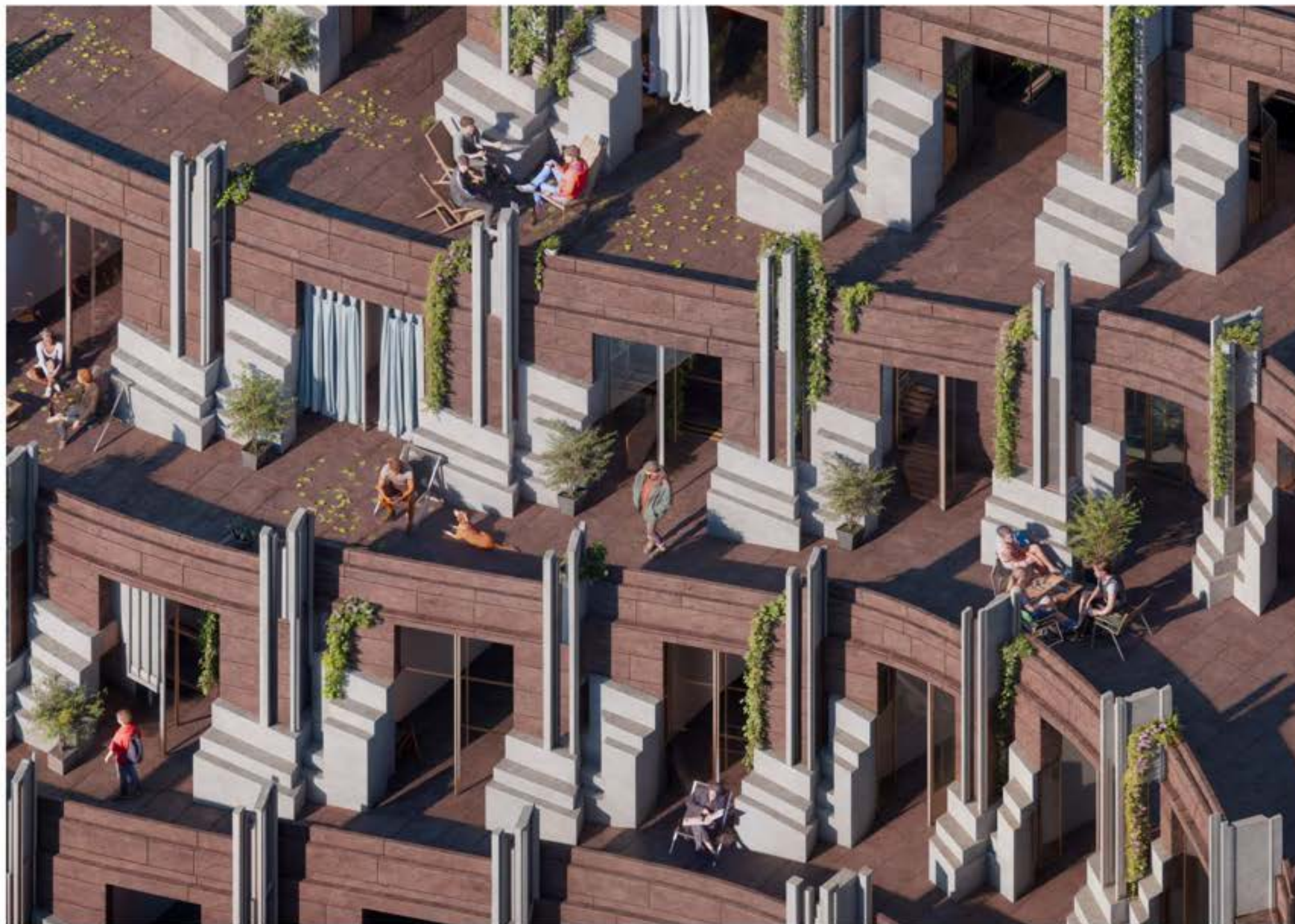
YEAR
1722

PROJECT
Vertical Village

DESIGNER
Sou Fujimoto

YEAR
2020

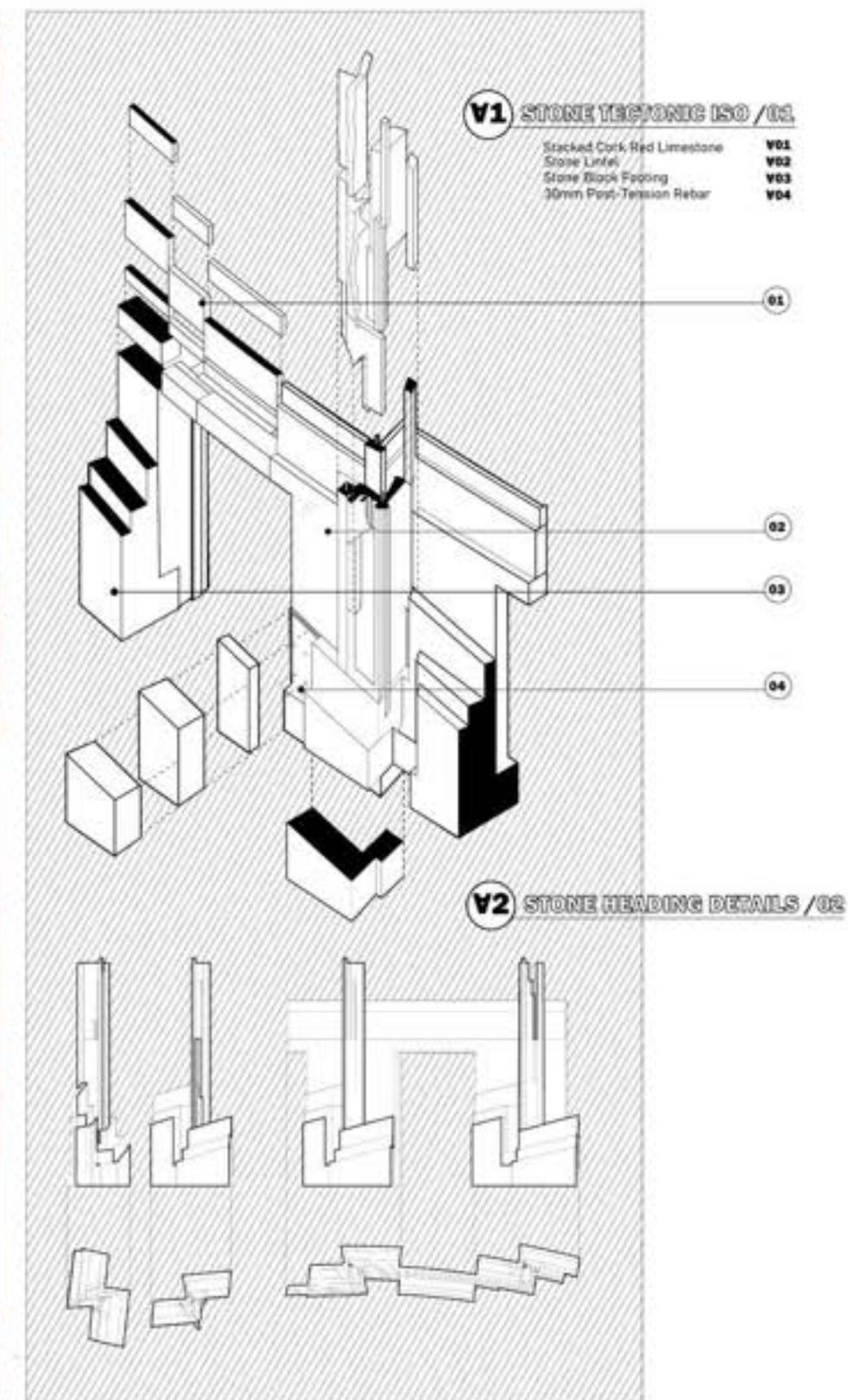




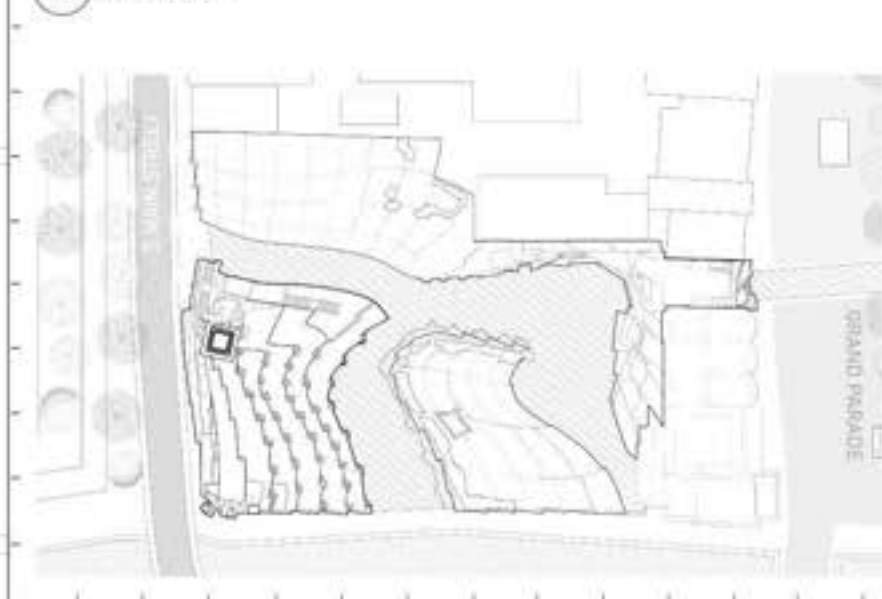
PROJECT
Castle Cork

MEDIUM
Digital Rendering

YEAR
2024



A1 SITE MAP



A2 3RD FLOOR PLAN



A3 4TH FLOOR PLAN



B1 NORTH SECTION 01



LOW-CARBON CHARACTER

Castle Cork takes advantage of terraced housing to maximize sunlight in a climate often characterized by dim light. The organization of the student apartment buildings sculpts a dense urban street, taking its cues from the nearby William Plunkett Street, a dense, mixed-use thoroughfare brimming with intrigue and opportunities for exploration. As a mixed-use development, Castle Cork intends to become an integral part of the city's architectural heritage, which has stagnated; the last buildings of significant value were constructed in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

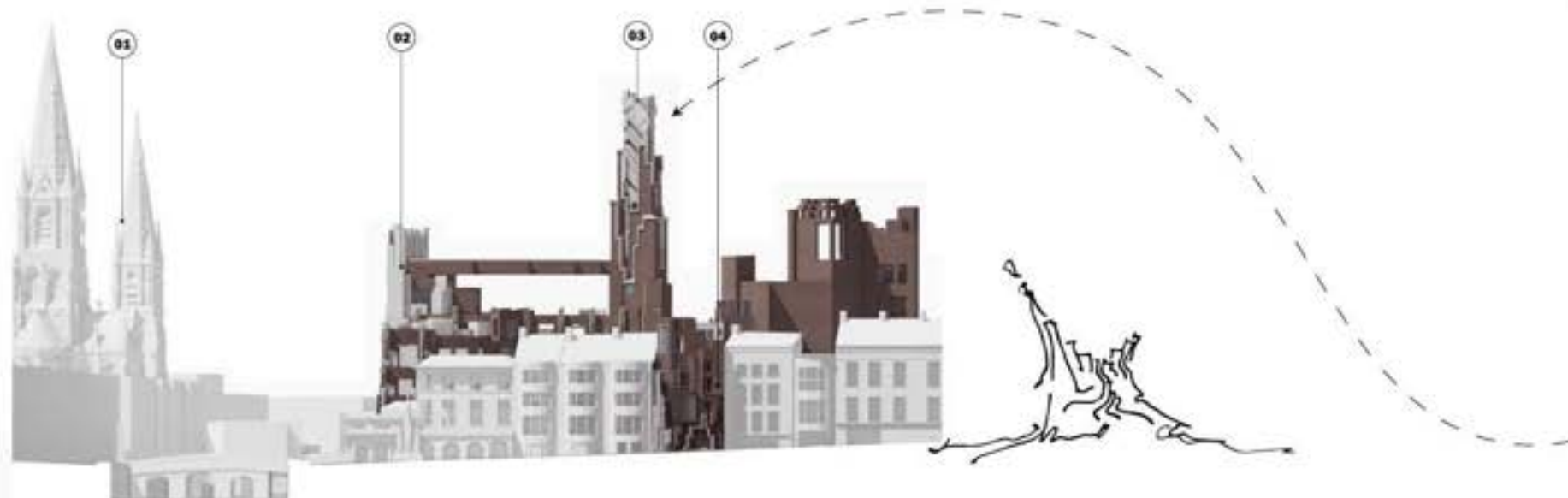


PROJECT
Castle Cork

MEDIUM
Digital Rendering

YEAR
2024





A1 GRAND PARADE ELE. / 01

St. Finbarre's Cathedral
Grand Chimney Stack
Beltry w/ Finial
'Grand Parade' Urban Facade

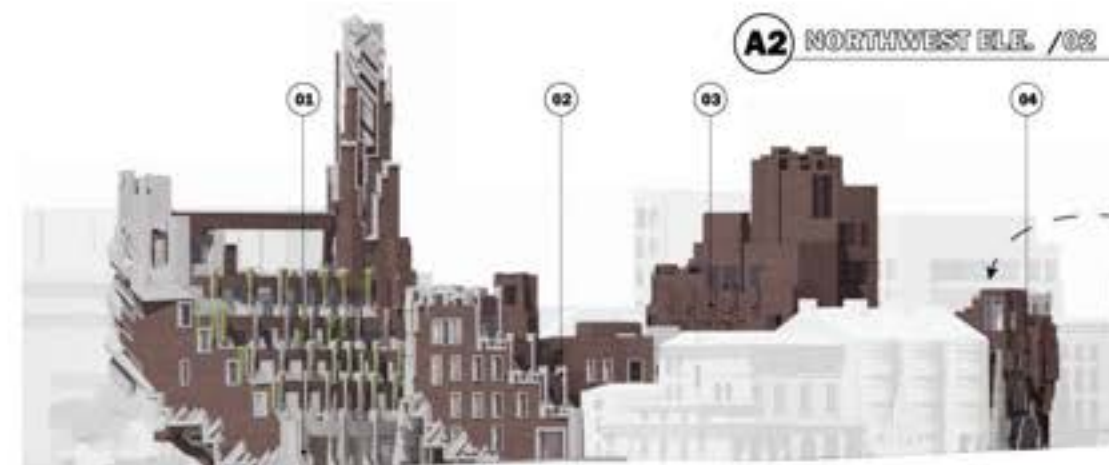
A01
A02
A03
A04



A2 NORTHWEST ELE. / 02

S. Main Facade
Hood Mold
Limestone Quoins
Ground-Level Retail

A01
A02
A03
A04



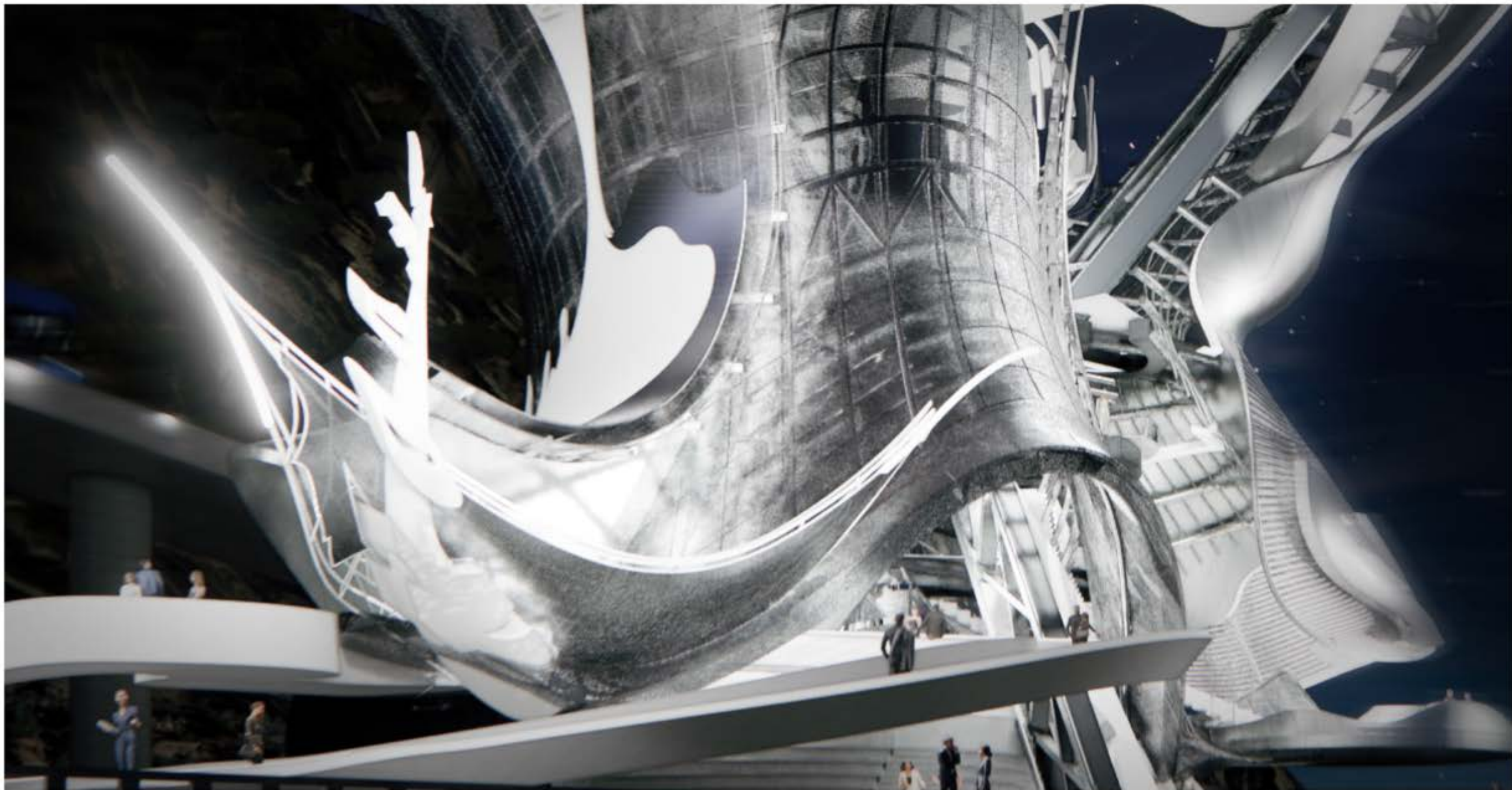
A3 NORTHEAST ELE. / 03

Pedestal Embellishment
Minor Chimney Stacks
Urban Facade w/ Crenellation
'Grand Parade' Urban Facade

A01
A02
A03
A04



THE STREET THE OVER



Exchange is a vessel for human interaction and the exchange of ideas, designed to celebrate the boundless potential of steel. Early 20th-century constructivist architecture embraced steel trusses as both a structural necessity and an aesthetic statement, showcasing an industrial rawness through exposed frameworks and bold geometries. This audacious use of material celebrated the possibilities of modern engineering while visually expressing notions of progress, collectivism, and the machine age, aligning architecture with the political ideals of the Soviet avant-garde. The aesthetic was one of honesty and monumentality, seeking to embody a new social order through an architecture of transparency and power. Exchange reinterprets these principles, with the formal clarity of steel construction translated into a civic gesture that balances functionality with a monumental aesthetic presence.

CRUCIBLE OF..

A farmers market structure exists in the inflection it creates, a physical form that transforms space into place, anchoring a ritual of gathering, exchange, and shared presence. Exchange is similarly not as shelter, but as a spectacle of form and space designed to fracture the mundane. Its structure is less a building than a moment of clarity, an architectural exhale that is meant to create an inflection point in one's state of mind.

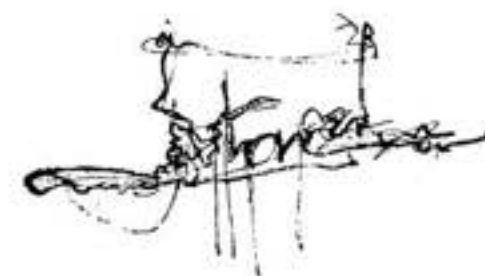
CONVERGENCE

In an altered state of mind, one is inclined to consider the collective, it is here where the project becomes a crucible of convergence. Here, goods, ideas, rituals, skills, traditions, and knowledge flow freely, reshaping the minds of those who gather. The architecture is a catalyst for connection and transformation.

AND EXCHANGE

Drawing on these concepts, Exchange transforms the lofted surface into a dynamic vessel to realize an organic form unique in its deliberate emulation of a historic ideal. This synthesis unites distinct languages of steel construction into a cohesive whole, creating a space where architecture becomes both a stage and a symbol for the exchange of ideas.

Set against the jagged drama of Capri's Faraglioni rocks, the project explores the emotive and structural possibilities of steel through diverse construction techniques. Its roof reinterprets Corbu's work at Notre Dame du Haut, with inspiration from the earliest inclination of a frozen movement formal expression. Meanwhile, the atrium draws inspiration from Firminy, where a square base transitions seamlessly into a rounded peak, embodying a geometric clarity that defined late 20th-century - early 21st century experimentation.



PROJECT
Monument to
the Third
International

DESIGNER
Vladimir Tatlin

YEAR
1920

PROJECT
Notre Dame du Haut

DESIGNER
Le Corbusier

YEAR
1955

PROJECT
Exchange (ACSA Steel Comp.)

MEDIUM
Digital Rendering

YEAR
2023



PROJECT
Exchange Concept Sketch

MEDIUM
Graphite + Ink on Trace

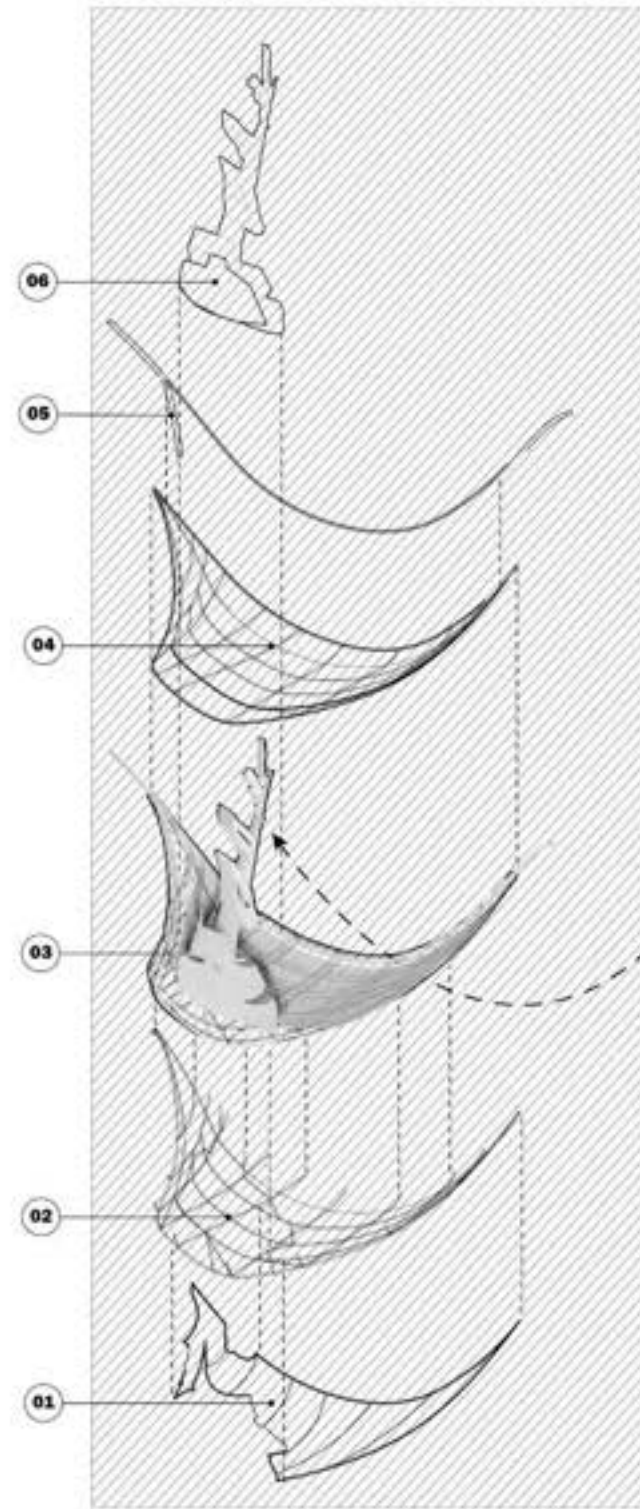
YEAR
2023



01 STRUCTURAL ISO /01

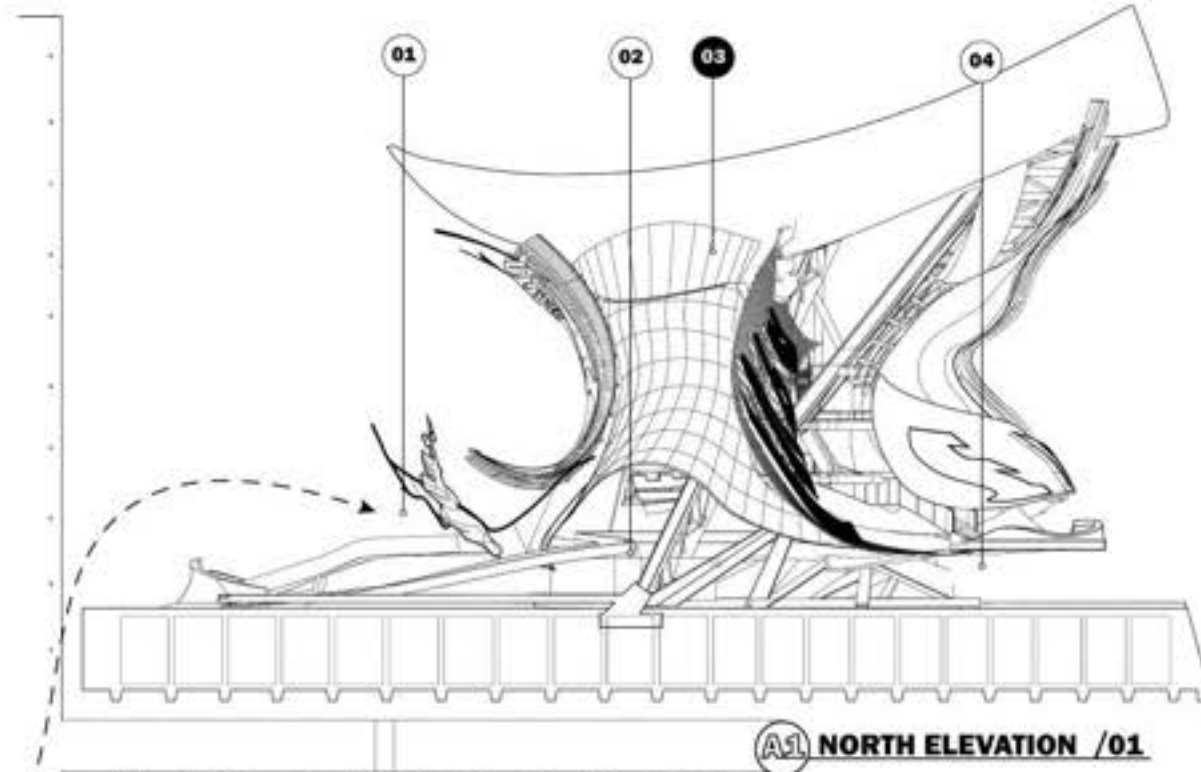
- 001** Main Exterior Epigraph
- 002** Steel Space-Frame
- 003** Structural Steel Trusses
- 004** Lightweight Roof Space-Frame





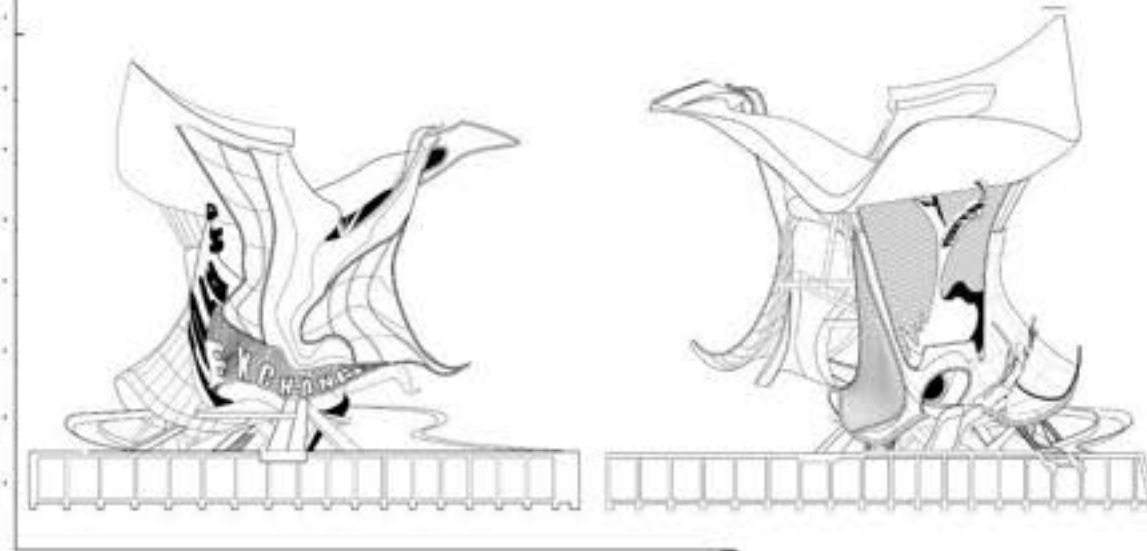
02 STRUCTURAL ISO DETAIL / 02

- 001 ISF Curved Perforated Metal Panels
- 002 Primary Steel Frame
- 003 Epigraph Sculpture
- 004 Secondary Steel Frame
- 005 CNC Milled Sculpture
- 006



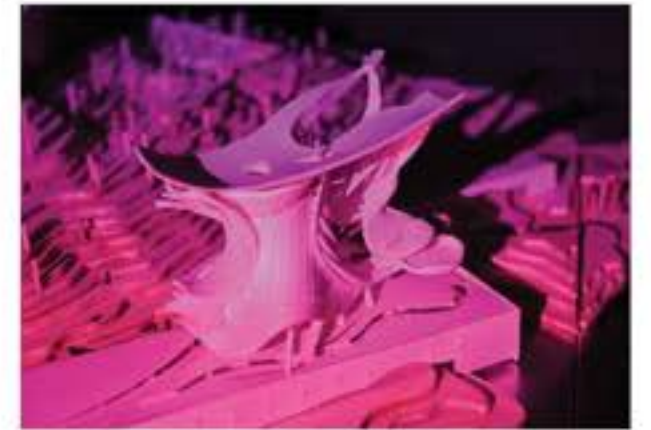
A1 NORTH ELEVATION / 01

- A01 Steel Epigraph Sculpture
- A02 Constructivist Steel Truss
- A03 De Haut Roof
- Exedra Balcony



A2 WEST ELEVATION / 02

A3 EAST ELEVATION / 03



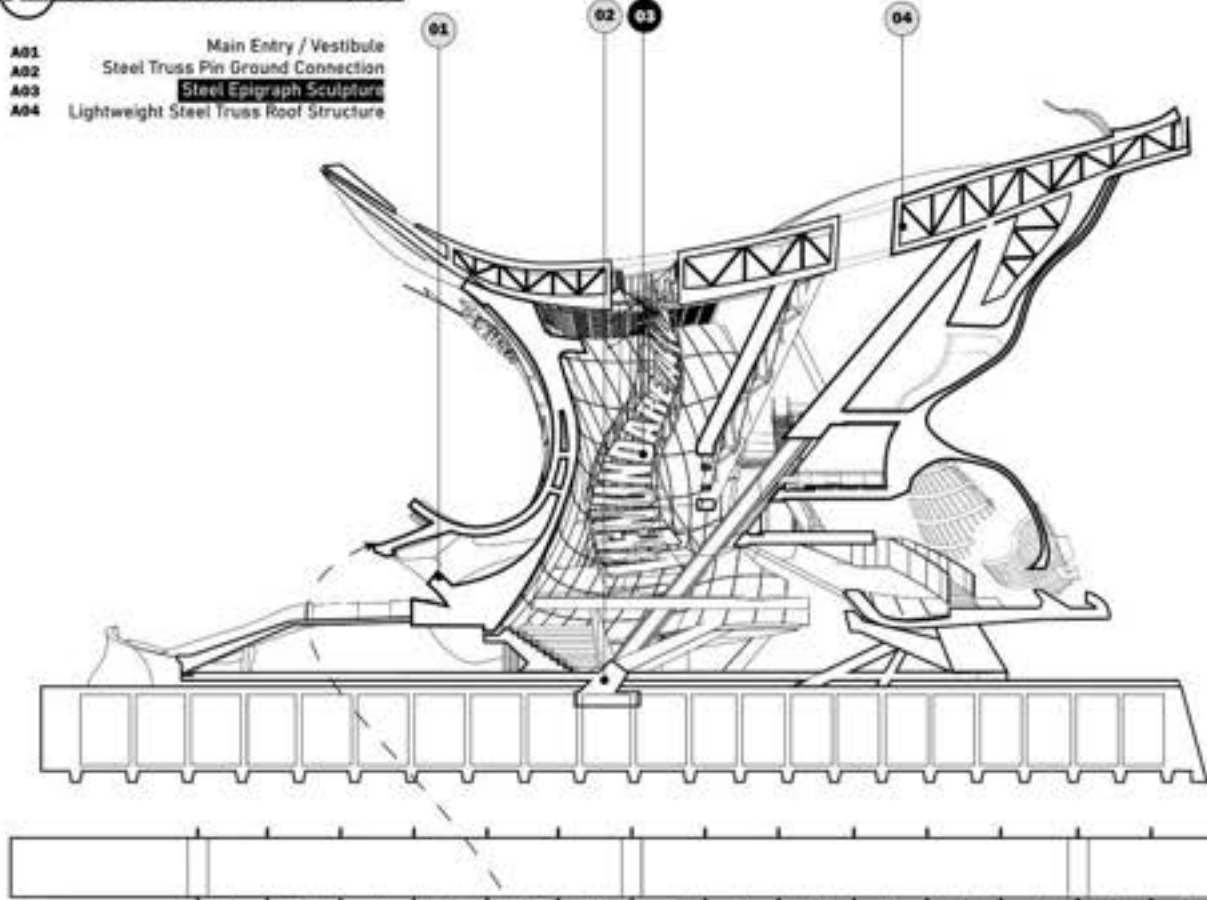
PROJECT
Exchange

MEDIUM
3D PLA Physical Model

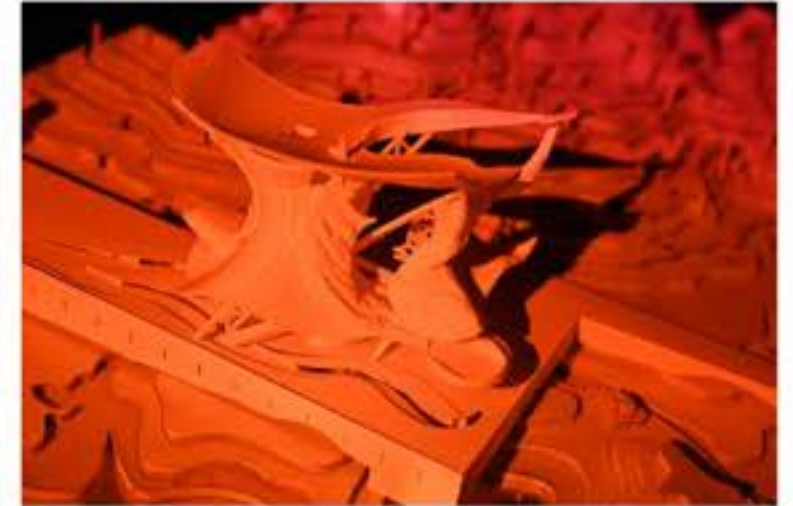
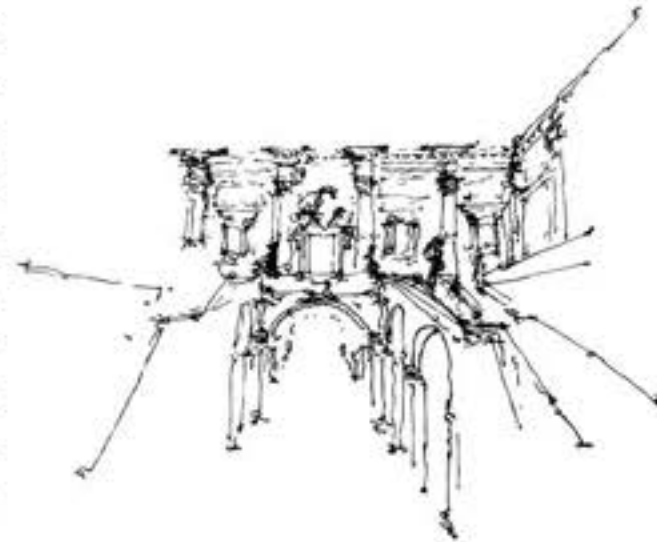
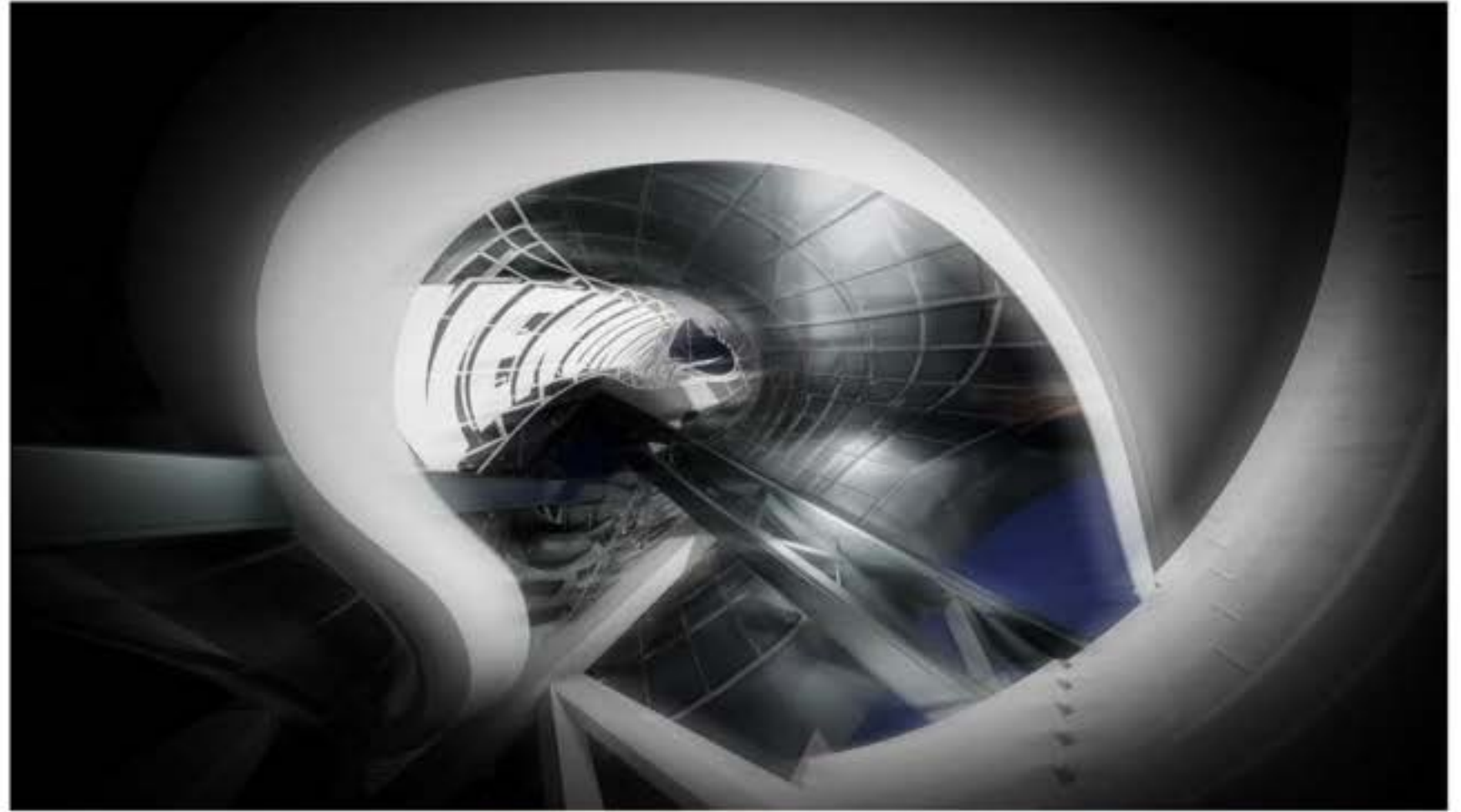
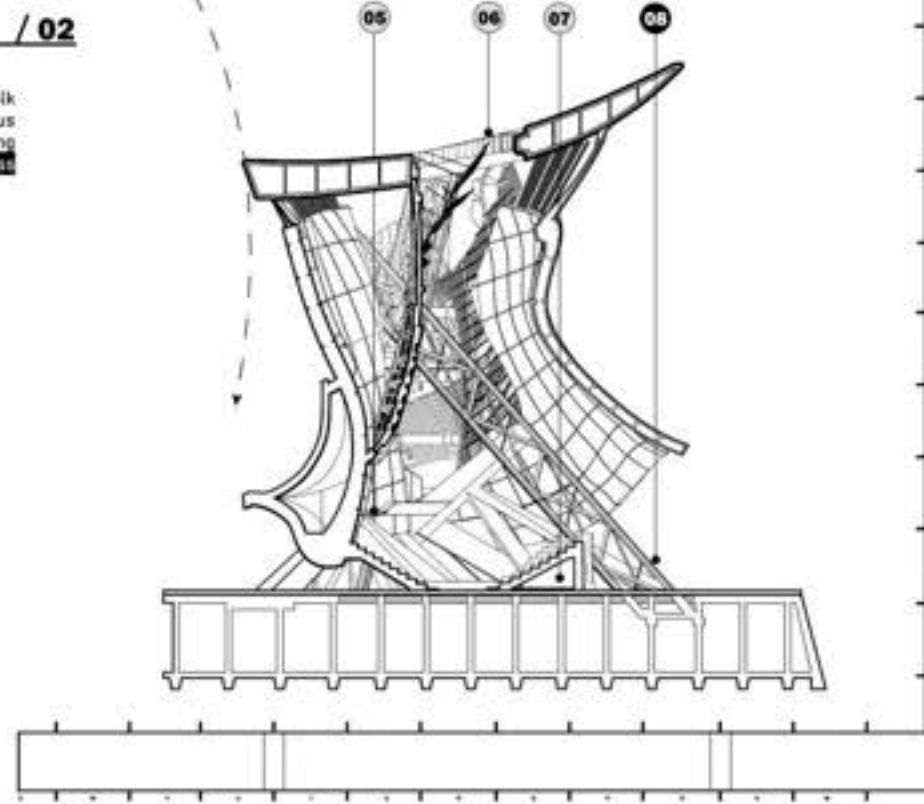
YEAR
2023

A1 NORTH SECTION / 01

- A01 Main Entry / Vestibule
 A02 Steel Truss Pin Ground Connection
 A03 Steel Epigraph Sculpture
 A04 Lightweight Steel Truss Roof Structure

**A2 EAST SECTION / 02**

- A05 Loggia Catwalk
 A06 Sculptural Oculus
 A07 Auditorium Seating
 A08 Steel Truss

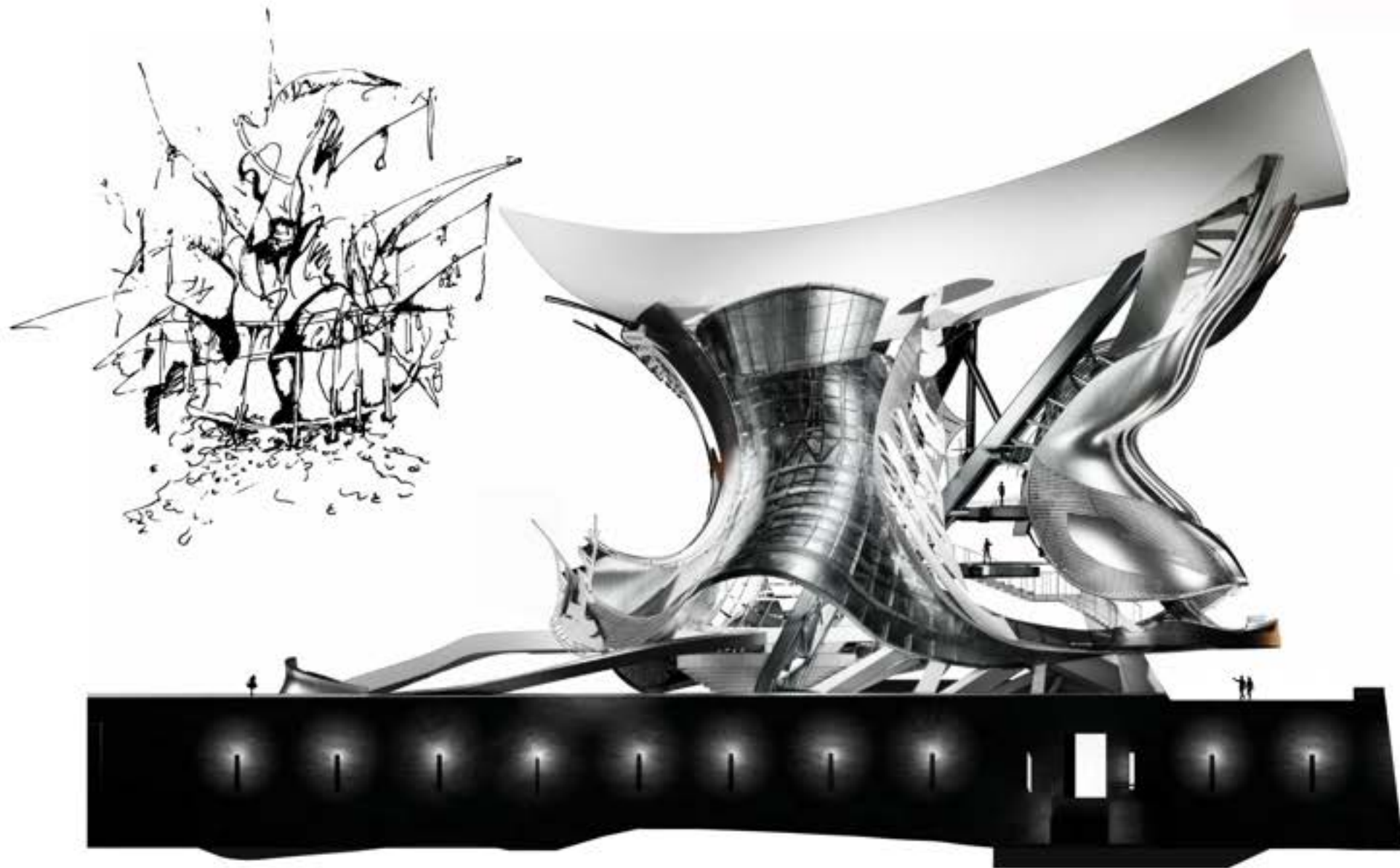


PROJECT
Exchange

MEDIUM
9' x 5' x 3' Plywood
Site Model

YEAR
2023

Exchange



Exchange



PROJECT
Exchange

MEDIUM
Rendered Elevation

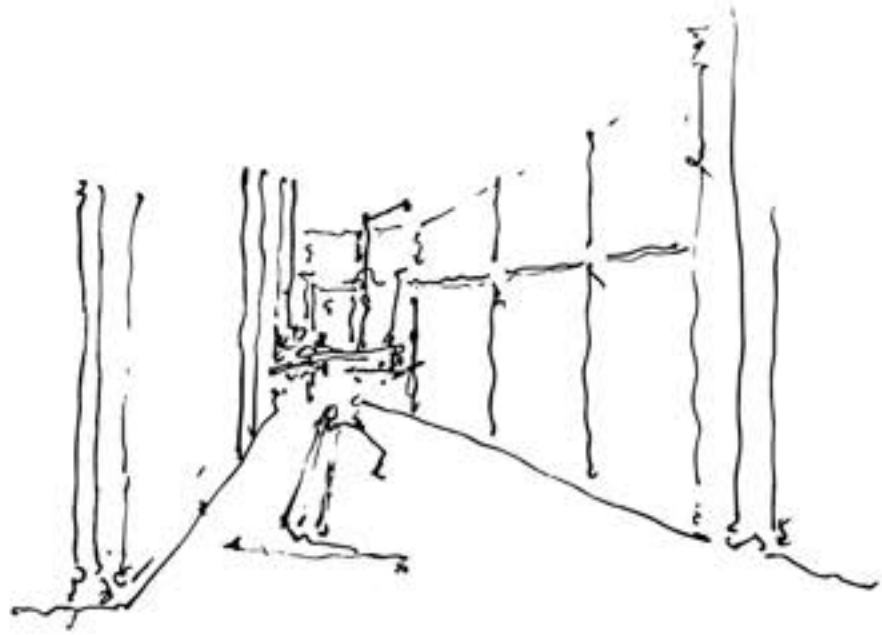
YEAR
2023

2198 Florida Avenue is characterized by a refined economy of means, celebrating the interplay of light, texture, and structure executed to foreground the **aesthetic and sensory qualities of timber**. The clean lines and restrained detailing underscore the inherent warmth and texture of the material, creating an inviting and tactile environment. This intentional clarity of form ensures that the focus remains on the architecture's materiality and light-filled atmosphere, showcasing timber's timeless appeal. The project serves as both an international embassy and a packaging and shipping center. The commercial program and embassy activities are separated by a system of architectural volumes which simultaneously bring natural light into a space flanked on both sides by existing structures

MATERIALITY

Diffused light highlights the material palette, allowing the warmth of cross-laminated timber to shine through without distraction. This combination of timber and **translucency epitomizes contemporary architectural aesthetic practice** where the emphasis on material and specification choices takes precedence in the absence of figural or historical motifs. By creating a space free from ornamental distractions, the project allows the natural beauty of timber to command attention, demonstrating a quintessentially modern aesthetic sensibility.

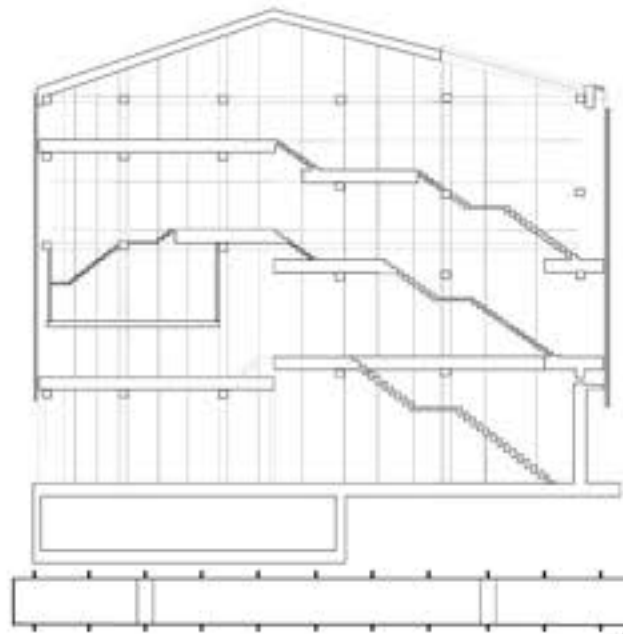
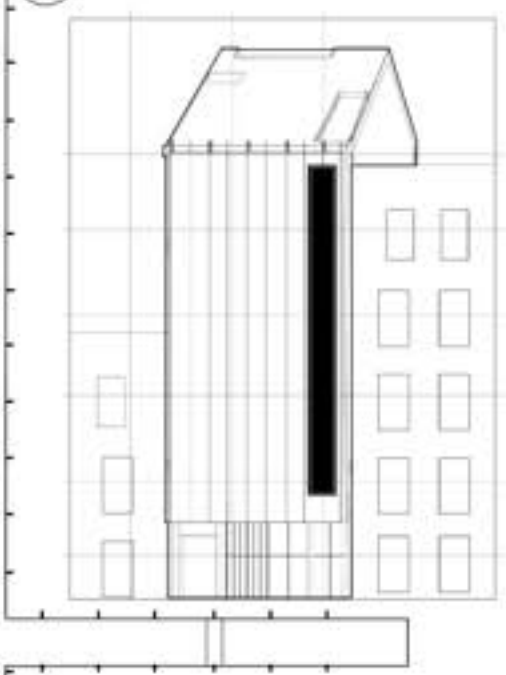
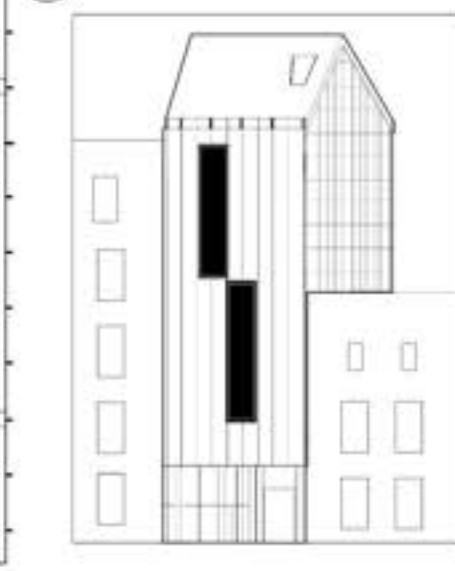
Translucent polycarbonate glass is used on both the front and rear facades, as well as the uppermost two floors to allow a constant flow of diffused sunlight into the cavernous site. The envelope is punctured by tall apertures spanning multiple floors to **create a dialogue between the different programs of each level** and the urban landscape in which the building sits. Interconnectivity between floors was achieved through this system of volumes and promotes a community within the occupiers of this space, while at the same time maintaining its recognition of the varied program

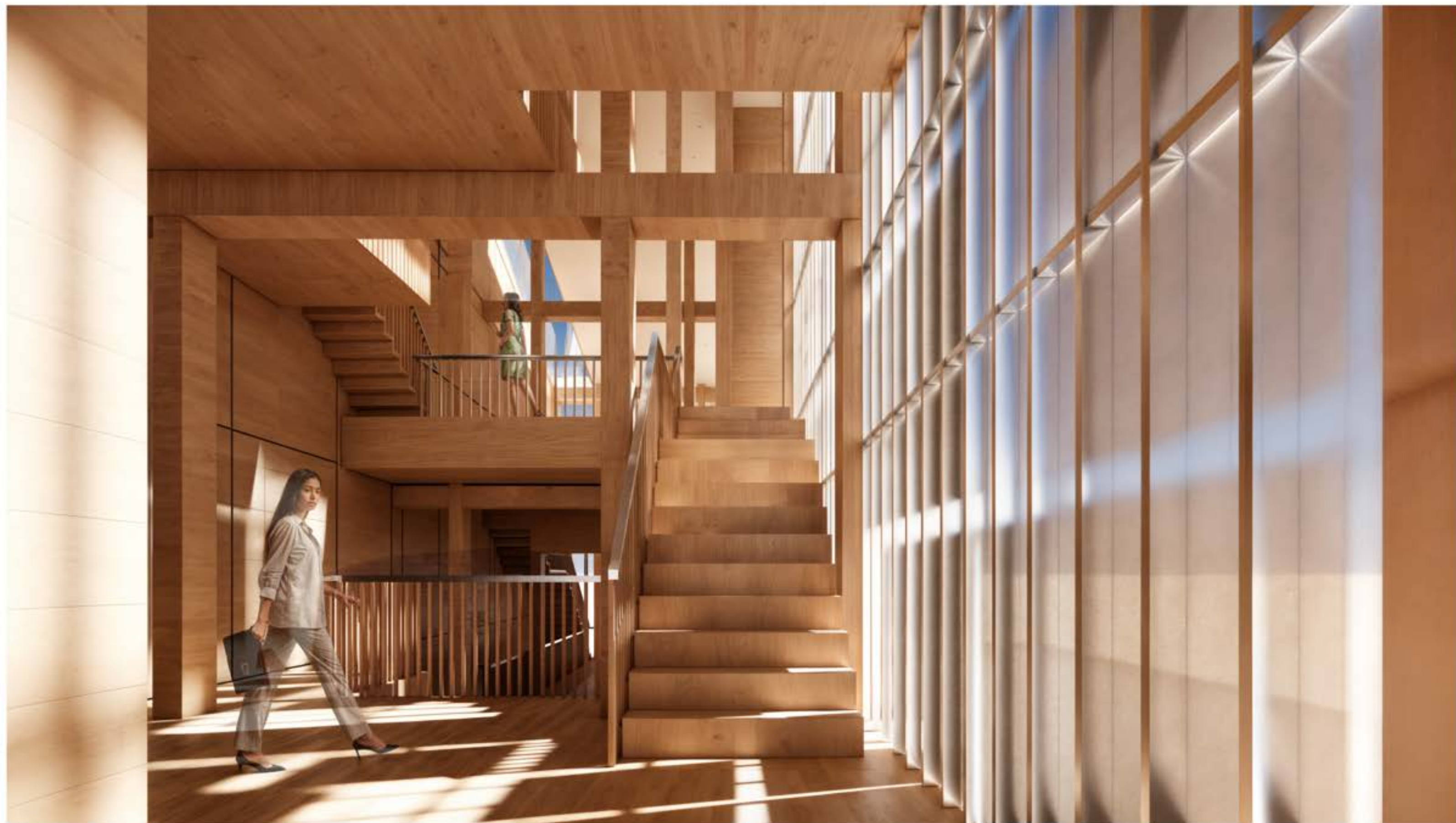


PROJECT Katsura Imperial Villa	PROJECT S-House
LOCATION Kyoto, Japan	DESIGNER Kazuyo Sejima & Ryue Nishizawa
YEAR 1662	YEAR 2023



PROJECT 2198 Florida Ave.
MEDIUM Dig. Rendering, Baswood Section Model
YEAR 2023

B1 EAST SECTION / 01**A1 EAST ELEVATION** / 01**B2 WEST SECTION** / 02**A2 WEST ELEVATION** / 02**PROJECT**
Umbrella House**DESIGNER**
Kazuo Shinohara**YEAR**
1961



The project, a sightseeing tower for De Smet, South Dakota, was conceived as a response to an architectural competition challenging participants to design an "iconic tower" for a modest town. In its realization, the tower seeks to transcend the expectations of mere spectacle, grounding itself in a dialogue between architectural tradition and contemporary expression. At its core lies a classically inspired colonnade on the ground level, where robust structural elements serve as both literal and figurative supports, elevating the lightweight tower above. This juxtaposition of grounded permanence and airy ascent establishes a formal dichotomy, echoing the balance of weight and levity inherent in the town's heritage.

Atop this colonnade rests a mural-like entablature. Boldly unapologetic in its adornment, the entablature asserts itself as more than ornamentation. It recalls the sculptural grandeur of a pediment, serving as a narrative tableau that binds vernacular motifs with universal design language.



The unique plasma-cut steel panels are decorative embellishments and deliberate sculptural acts, evoking a layered interweaving of past and future. Each panel contributes to the creation of a cohesive formal composition. This approach resists the temptation to reduce the past to nostalgic mimicry or superficiality. It instead embraces the past as a rich resource, reinterpreted through the lens of contemporary materiality and craft. The entablature's intricate detailing and narrative complexity ensure that it operates as a culturally resonant artifact, embodying the aspirations of a community that takes pride in its heritage while looking forward to tomorrow.

INDUSTRIAL ORNAMENT

Guimard's Art Nouveau Metro entrances serve as inspiration in their novel originality. With a refreshing exuberance, Guimard's forms reject the cold rationality of industrial mass production that dominated his era. Yet, paradoxically, these entrances were among the first examples of modular architecture, fabricated offsite and assembled with efficiency. This tower's entablature panels could be similarly and easily industrially replicated and fabricated.

DELIGHT

The twining curves and organic motifs of Guimard's entrances declare the act of making something beautiful as an affirmation of humanity's capacity to transcend the ordinary, and declare that corner of the human experience is unworthy of delight.

In these forms there is a care so evident, that they defy cynicism. They are proof that to imbue an object with beauty is to honor the world, to insist that even the most utilitarian spaces deserve to be touched by grace. This tower in the rolling plains of South Dakota hopes to imagine a similar reality.



PROJECT
Blur Building

DESIGNER
DS + R

YEAR
2002

PROJECT
Paris Metro Entrance

DESIGNER
Hector Guimard

YEAR
1900

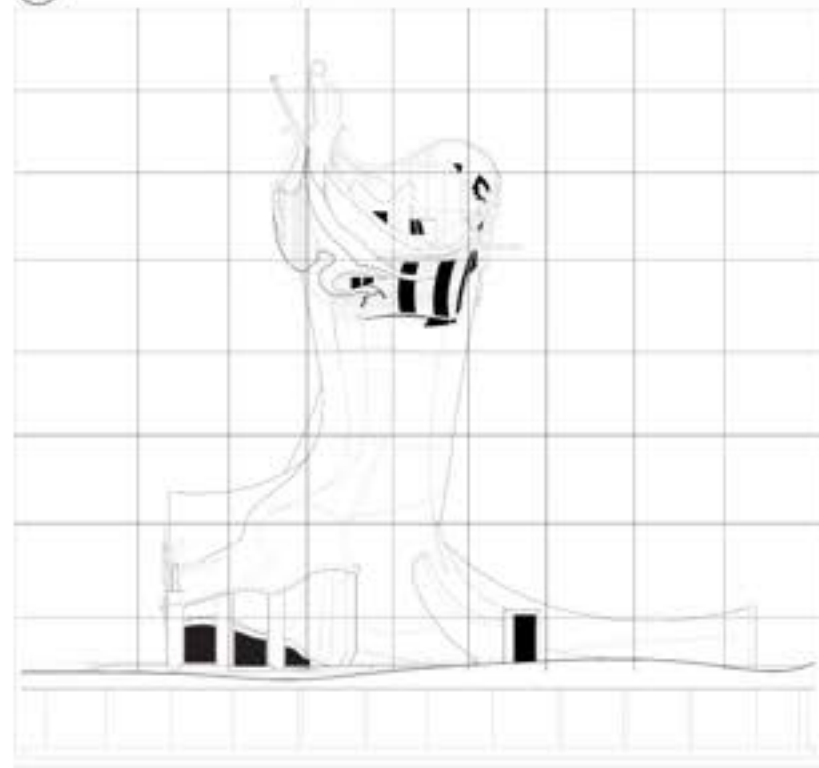


PROJECT
Highway 14 Tower

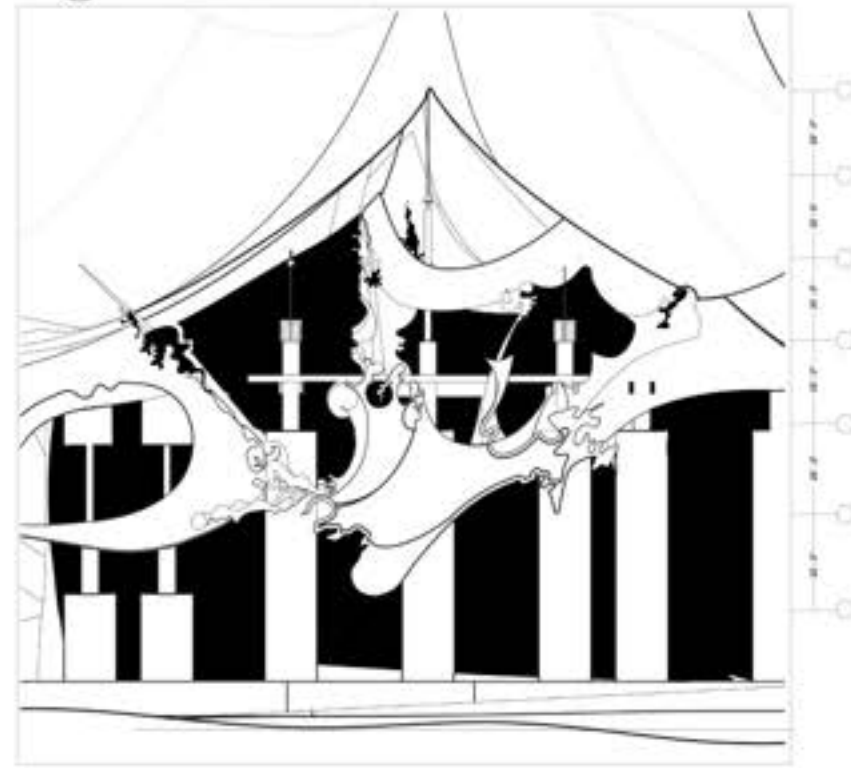
LOCATION
De Smet, South Dakota

YEAR
2023

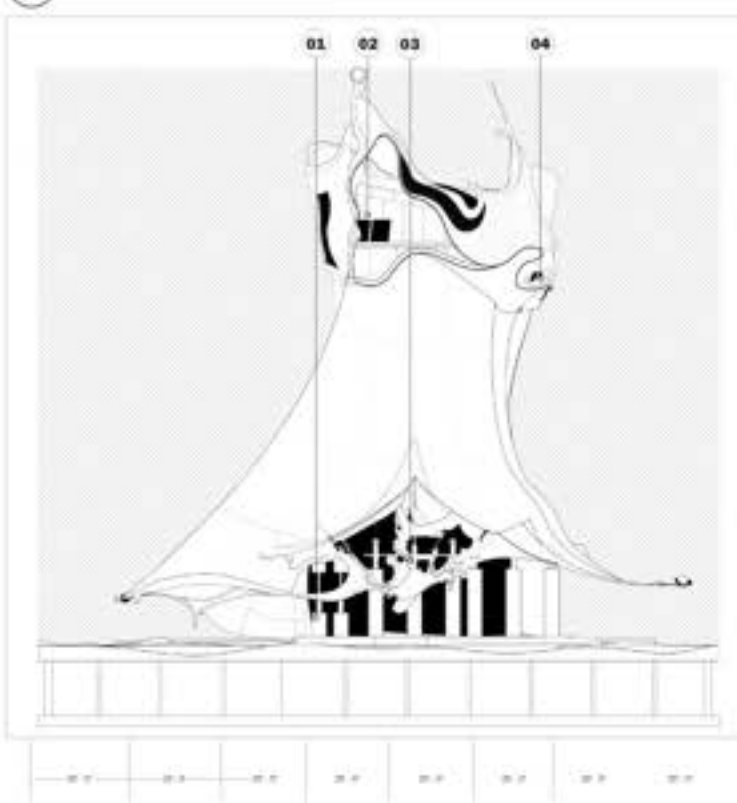
01 EAST ELEVATION / 01



02 NORTH ELEVATION / 02



03 NORTH ELEVATION / 03



De Smetian Column Order
Crown Antechamber
Main Pediment Entablature
Ball Turret Window



A01
A02
A02
A04

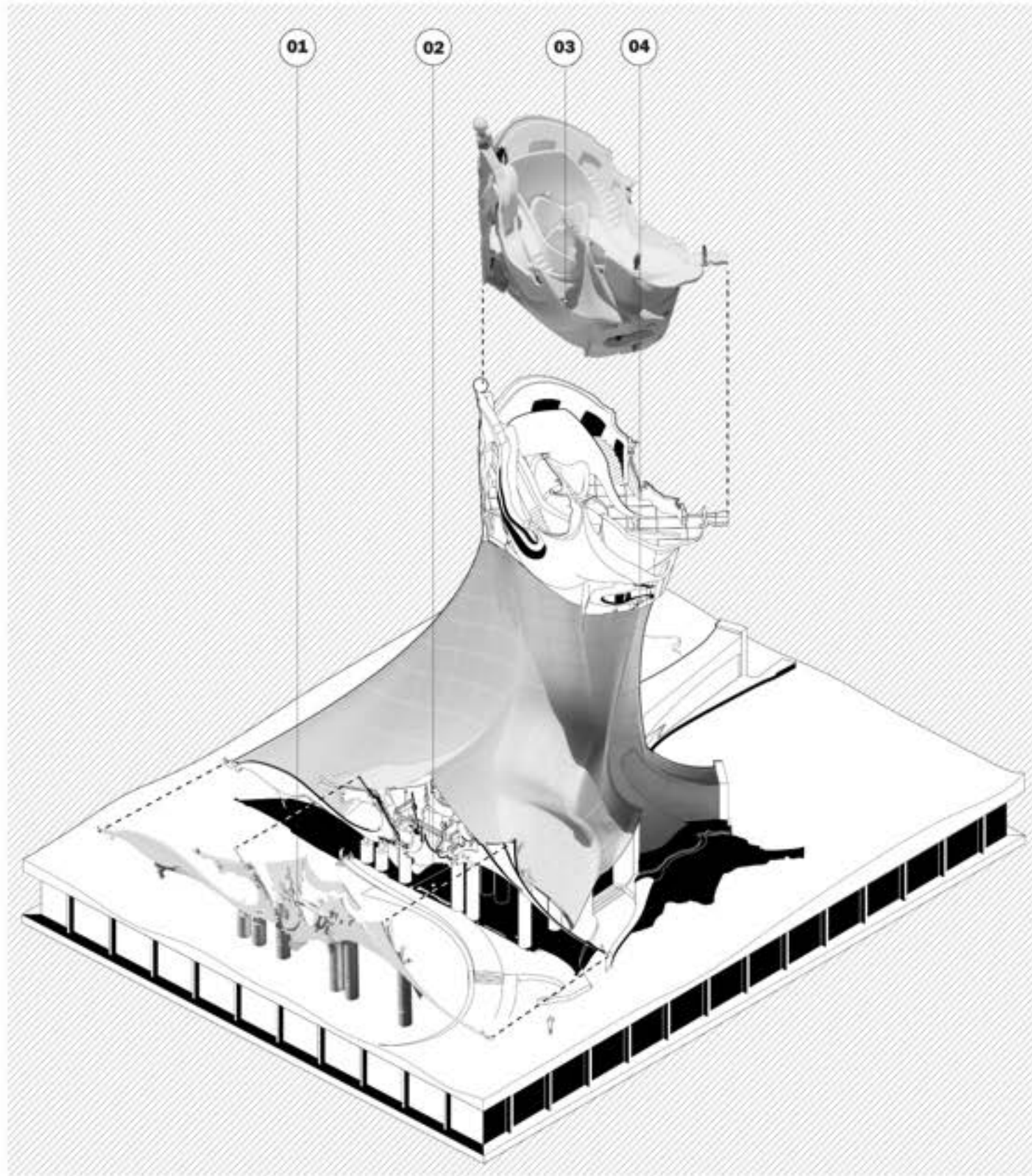


PROJECT
Highway 14 Tower

LOCATION
De Smet, South Dakota

YEAR
2023





C1 CHUNK ISOMETRIC / 01

Metal Panel Entablature **C01**
 Loggia / Collonade **C02**
 Ornamental Attic **C03**
 Secondary Lookout Space **C04**



PROJECT
 Highway 14 Tower

MEDIUM
 Digital Rendering

LOCATION
 De Smet, South Dakota

YEAR
 2023





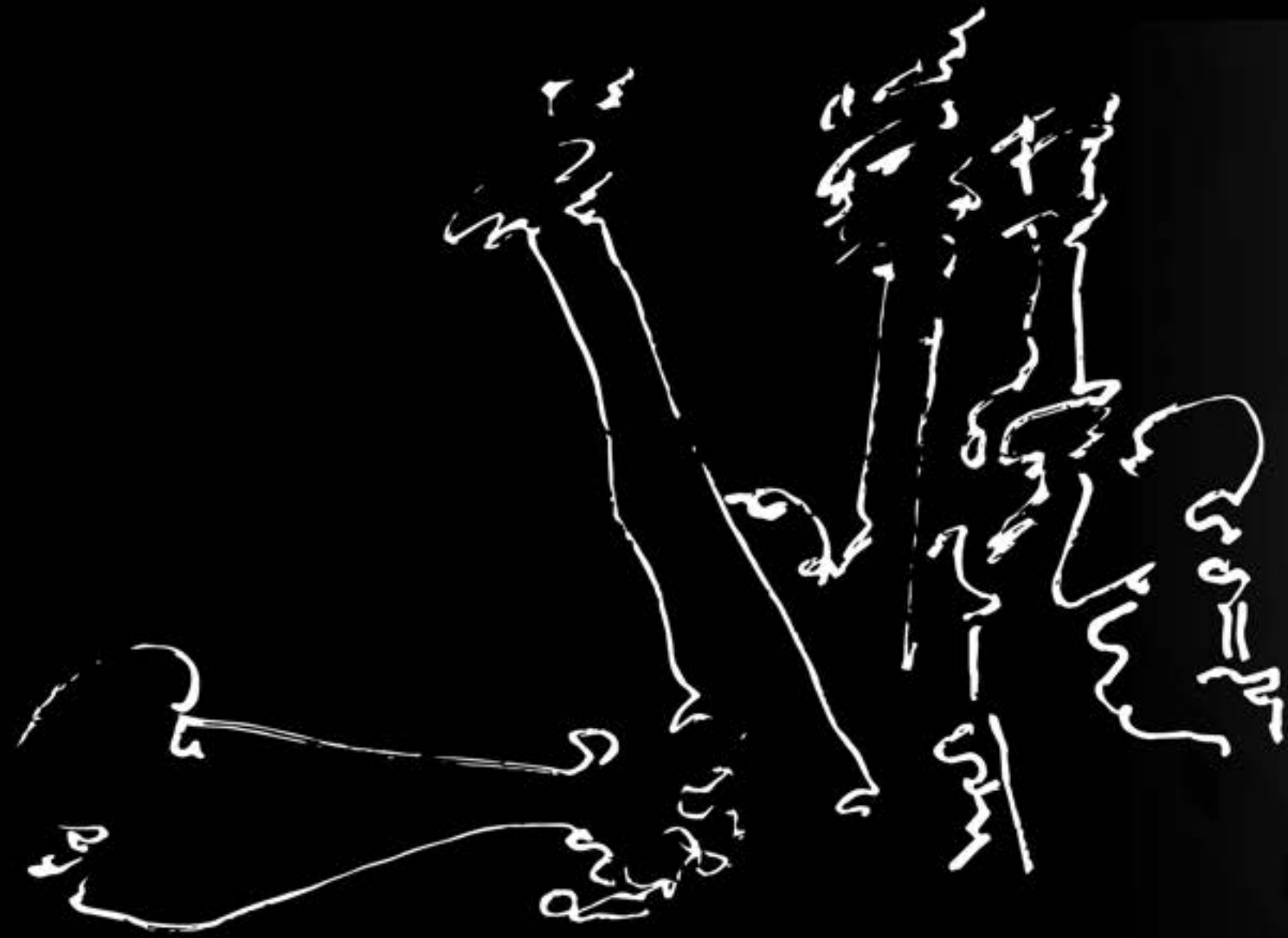
PROJECT
Highway 14 Tower

MEDIUM
3D Model 12" x 7" x 6"

LOCATION
De Smet, South Dakota

YEAR
2023





PROJECT
The Street & The Tower (WIP)

YEAR
2024...

