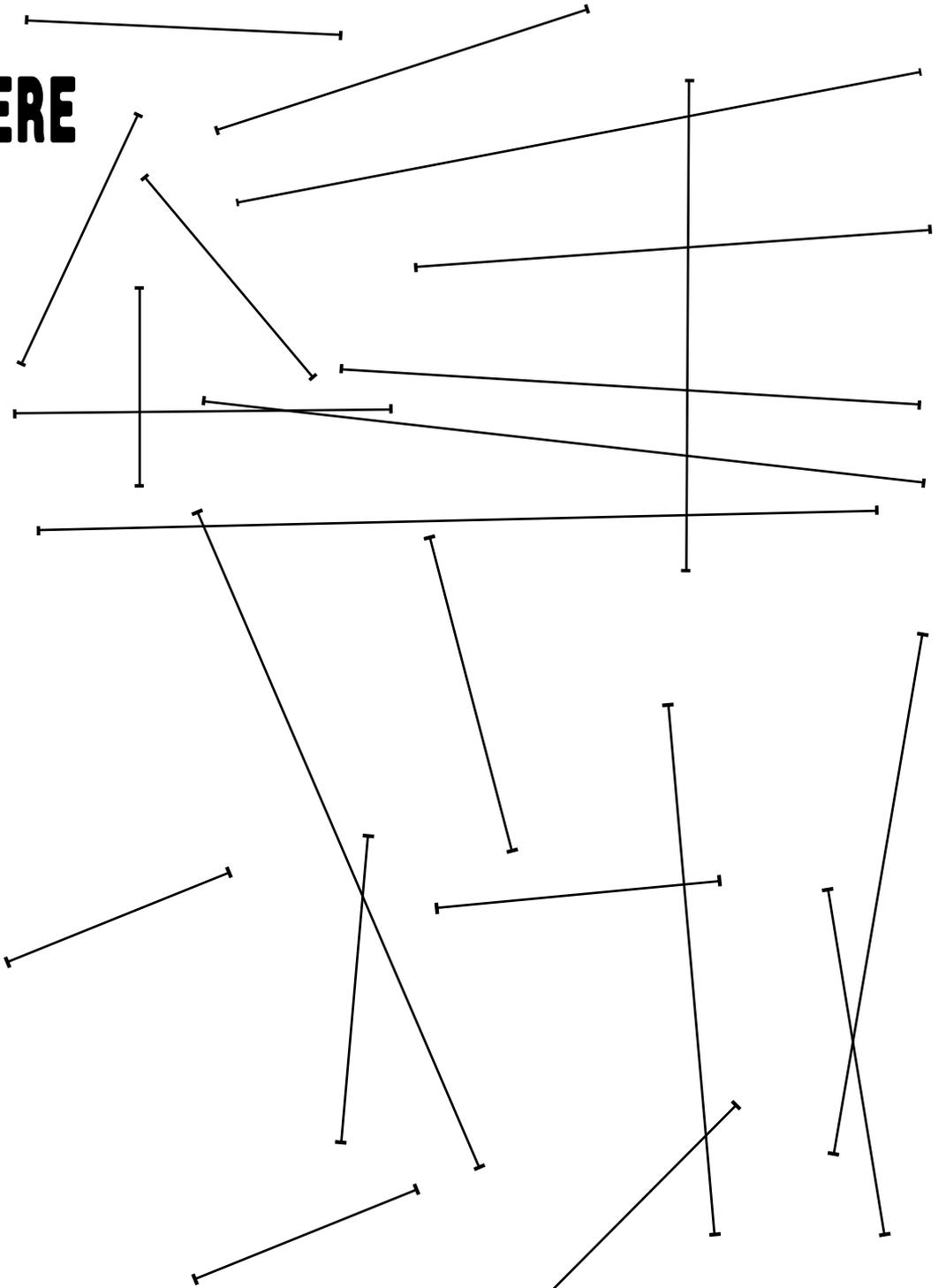


HERE



THERE

HERE — THERE

Glikeriya Shotanova
MFA Graphic Design
RISD 2024

SIGNATURES

A thesis presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Master of Fine Arts in Graphic Design in the Department of Graphic Design of the Rhode Island School of Design, Providence, Rhode Island, 2024.

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(h)

↑ Photo: screenshot from an old video of a family gathering. I remember these events as the happiest moments of my childhood. Summer, my grandmother's house in Almaty, Kazakhstan.



(f)

(a-h): The rooms in my grandmother's house with proportional scaling, the walls between them were removed.

(g)

(e)

HERE—THERE

(b)

(d)

(c)

To my family.

Thank you for all the love and support every step of the way.

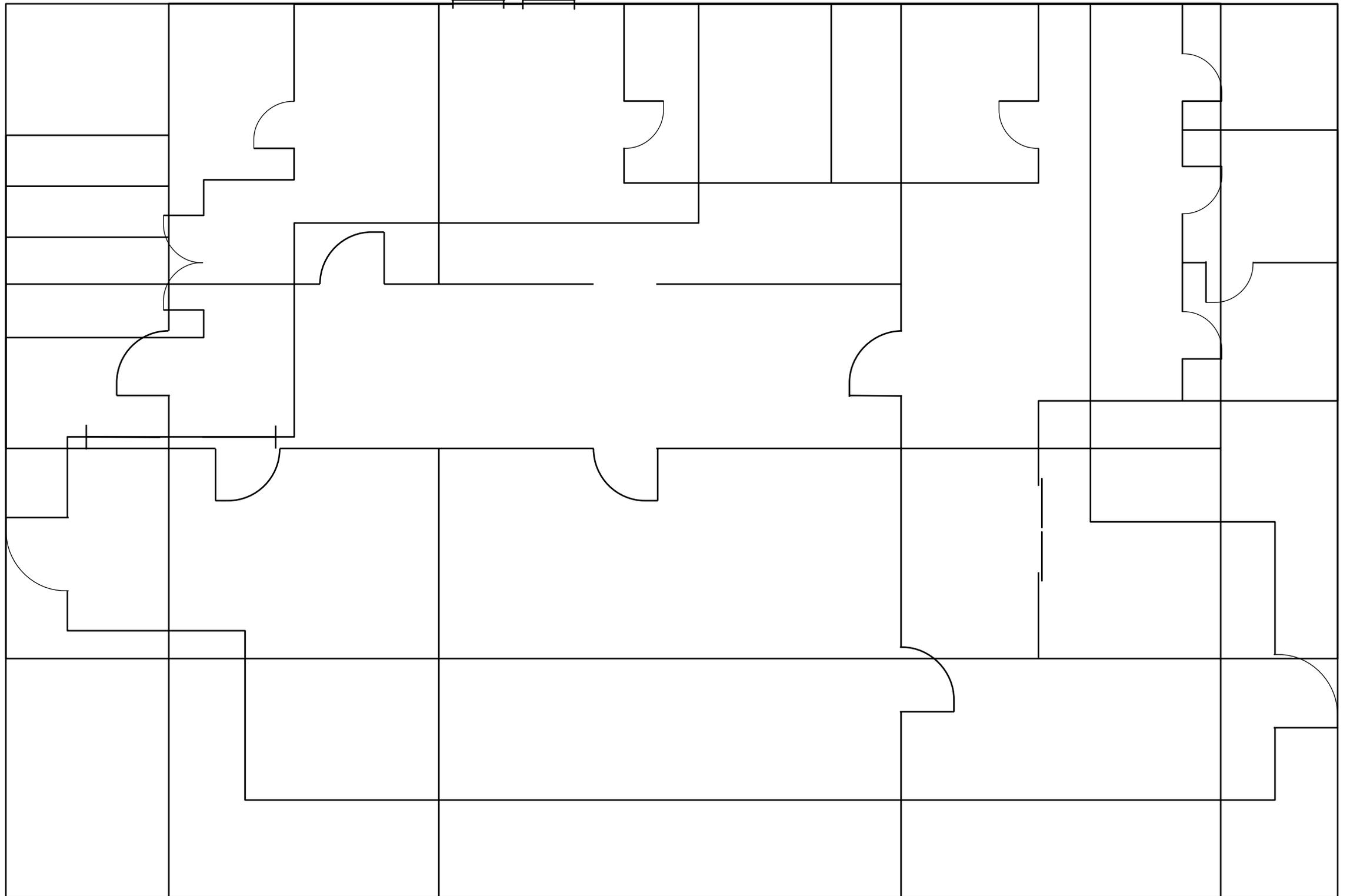
(a)

ABSTRACT

This Thesis explores the nature and ways of gathering, proposing an alternative path to organizing a cultural center. Divided into three acts (Act One: There, Act Two: Here, and Act Three: Together), it touches on the topics of collective knowledge and the importance of its accessibility to the local communities. How do we organize communities in a way that operates as a body, and how do we use industrial spaces as a bridge between knowledge and those who carry the knowledge? Due to alienation in societies, the decentralization of creative communities, and the inaccessibility of real estate to younger generations, there is an urgency in a dialogue between those in power and those in need. In this book, I am attempting to visualize the alternative "Third Places," serving as a middle ground between work and home while building a sense of belonging using Graphic Design as a tool. The body of work builds towards the inception of an event space by experimenting and transforming an industrial warehouse in West Providence, Rhode Island, as an invitation for communities to gather and activate the space. In this work, I will do this by organizing conceptual events and performances and inviting various artists.

What is the affordance of such projects as catalysts for change? This Thesis is a prototype of how societies can organize while occupying space and operating as one organism. I compare a healthy creative community with a physical body that requires all its organs to function correctly, sustain a healthy culture, and examine how various creative fields can work together and serve as a shared knowledge base for current and future generations.





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SIGNS

[a] The floorplans contain numbered rooms, each representing a distinct memory or a specific time period of interaction with the space.

— Journey, interconnectedness, and thought process.

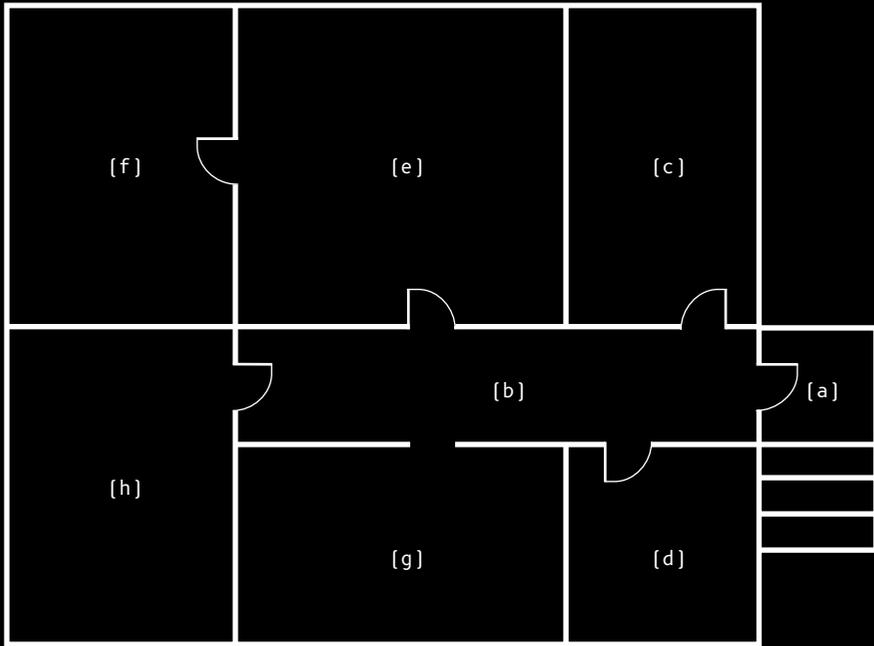
— These architectural lines are for memories and alignment.

Here, Physical.
This figure shows the place and what I am currently listening to.

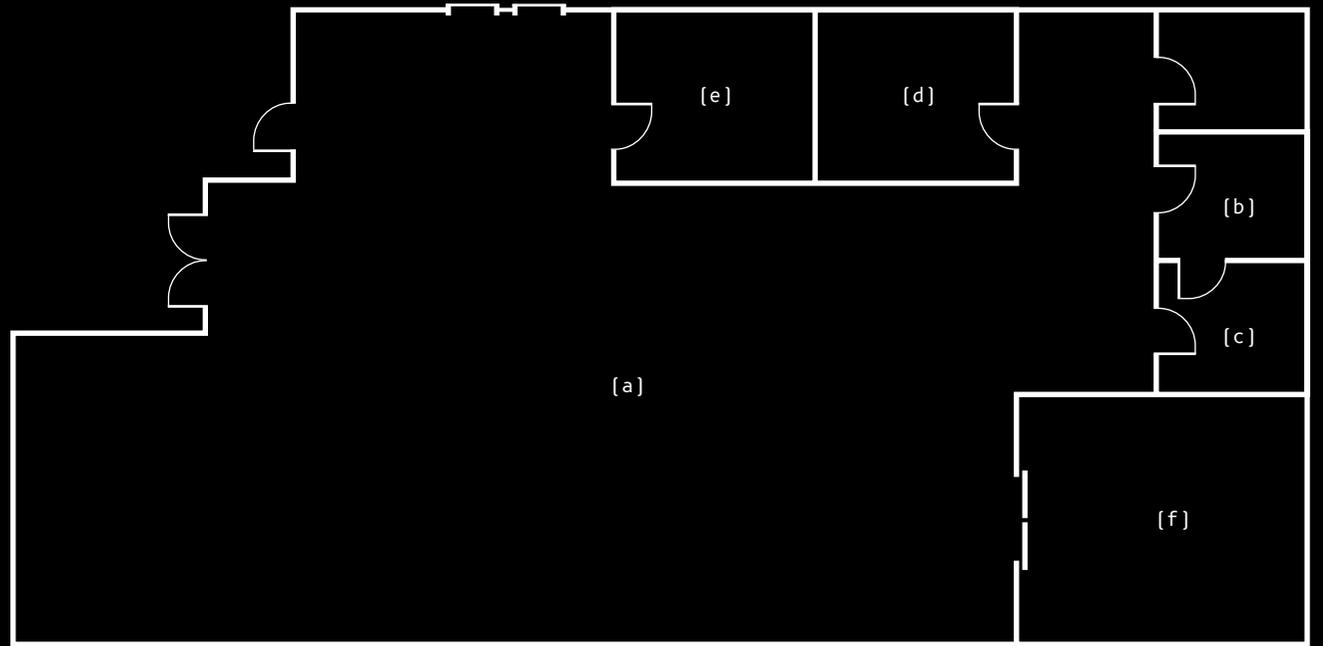


There, Mental.
This figure shows my random thought at the moment.

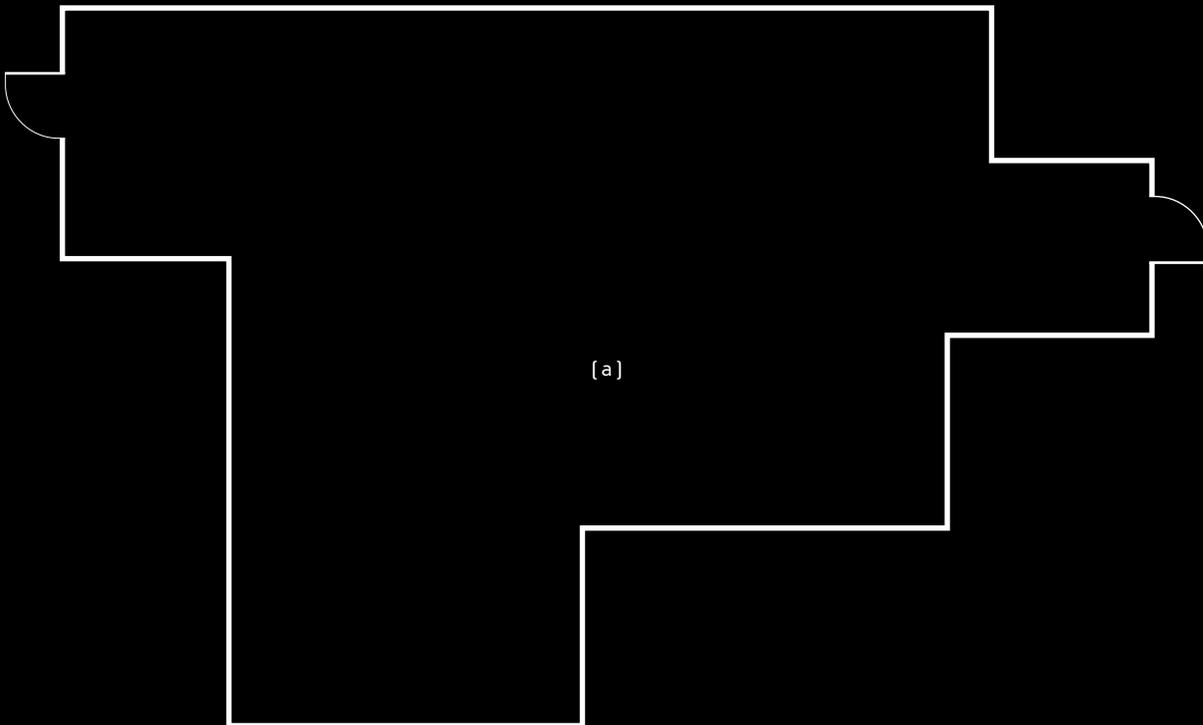




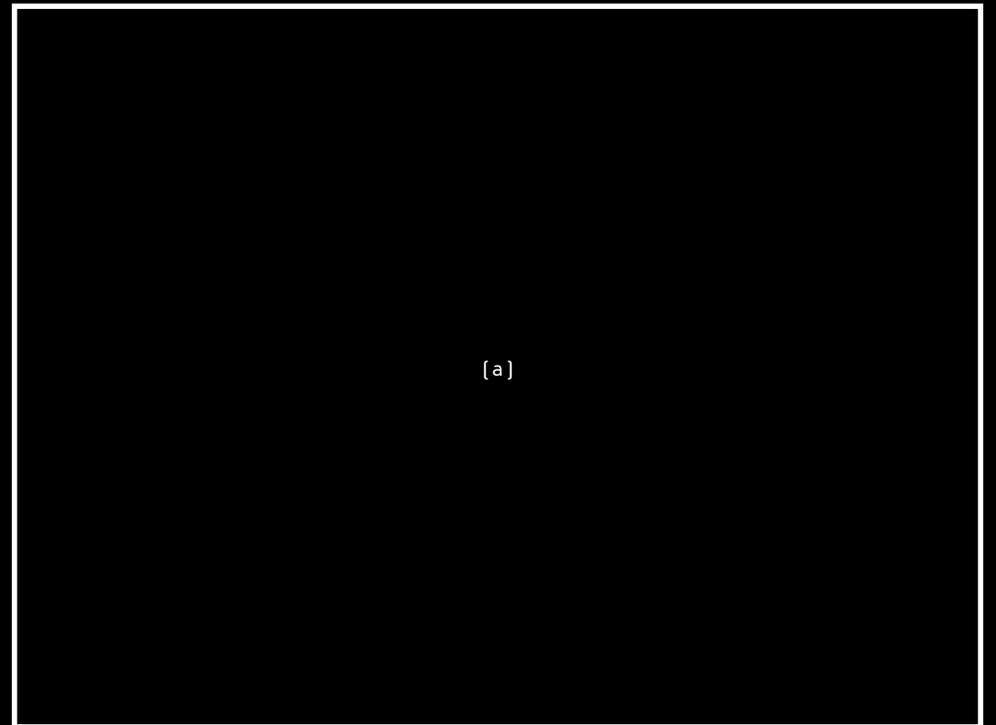
Act One: There. Grandmother's house.



Act Two: Here. Studio in Providence, RISD CIT building.



Act Two: Here. Space in Olneyville, RI.



Act Three: Together. Future cultural center.

HERE—THERE

[e]

[d]

[f]

[e]

[c]

[b]

[c]

[b]

[a]

[a]

[h]

[f]

[g]

[d]

Act One takes place at my Grandmother's house, where I learned to give and receive unconditional love that shaped my personality.

Act Two: Studio in Providence, RISD CIT building. It became a place for self-reflection, overcoming imposter syndrome, adapting to changes, and, finally, finding a sense of belonging.

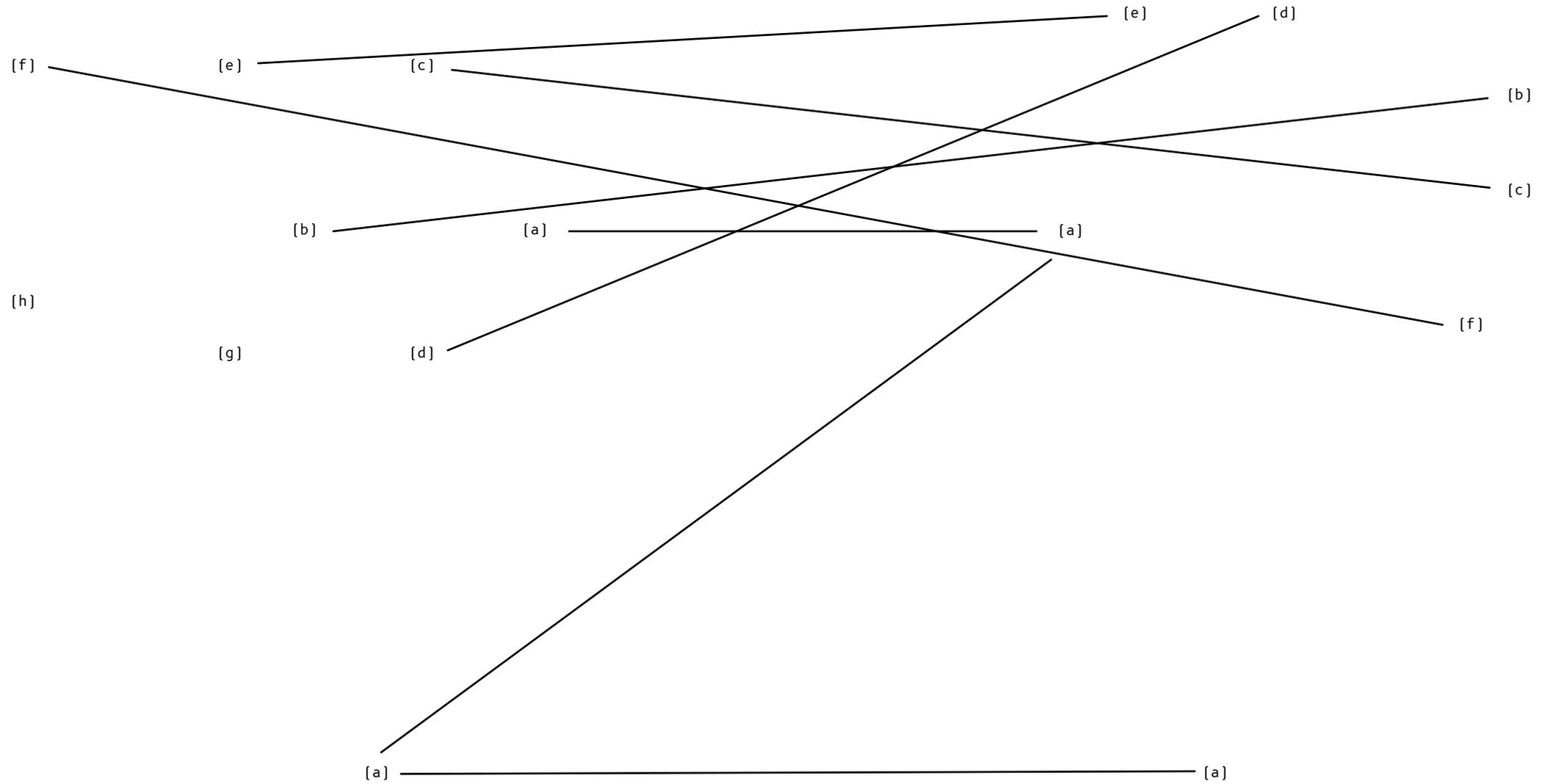
[a]

[a]

Act Two: An empty warehouse in Olneyville, RI. Here, I found friends, like-minded people, and my area of interest, which is organizing public spaces for creatives and building a sense of belonging through Graphic Design.

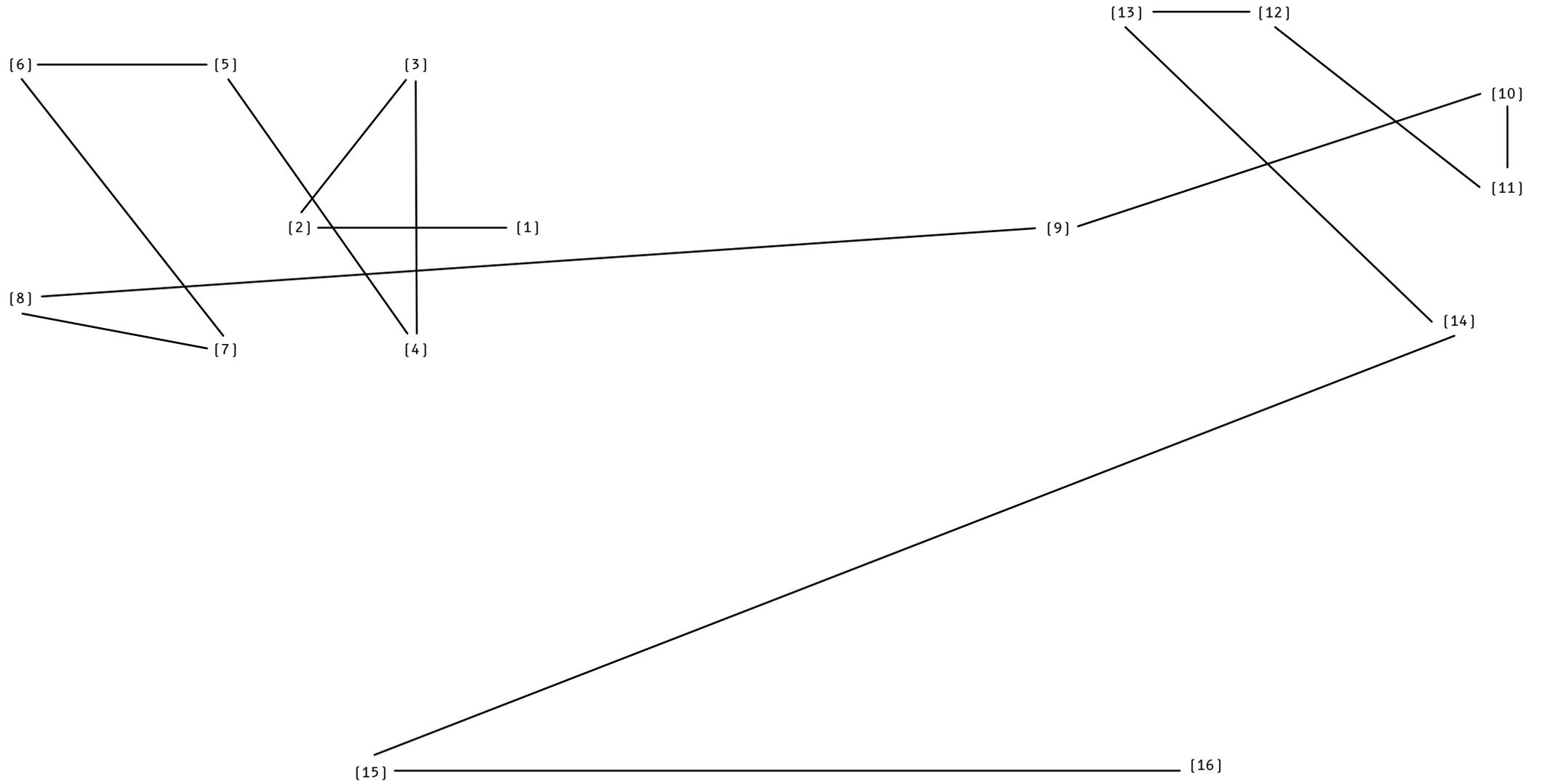
Act Three: Future cultural center. Here, I am exercising my worldbuilding skills, gathering ideas, and exploring ways to organize a cultural center.

HERE—THERE



Rooms are like memory cells; memory is a hierarchy of interactions. One room is connected to a similar room from another period—a cell is a conductor between time and distance.

HERE—THERE



If memory is linear, why are some paths so blurred? If A leads to B, then why are we focused on the path itself? What if we are going in circles? Going in circles until we learn our lesson?



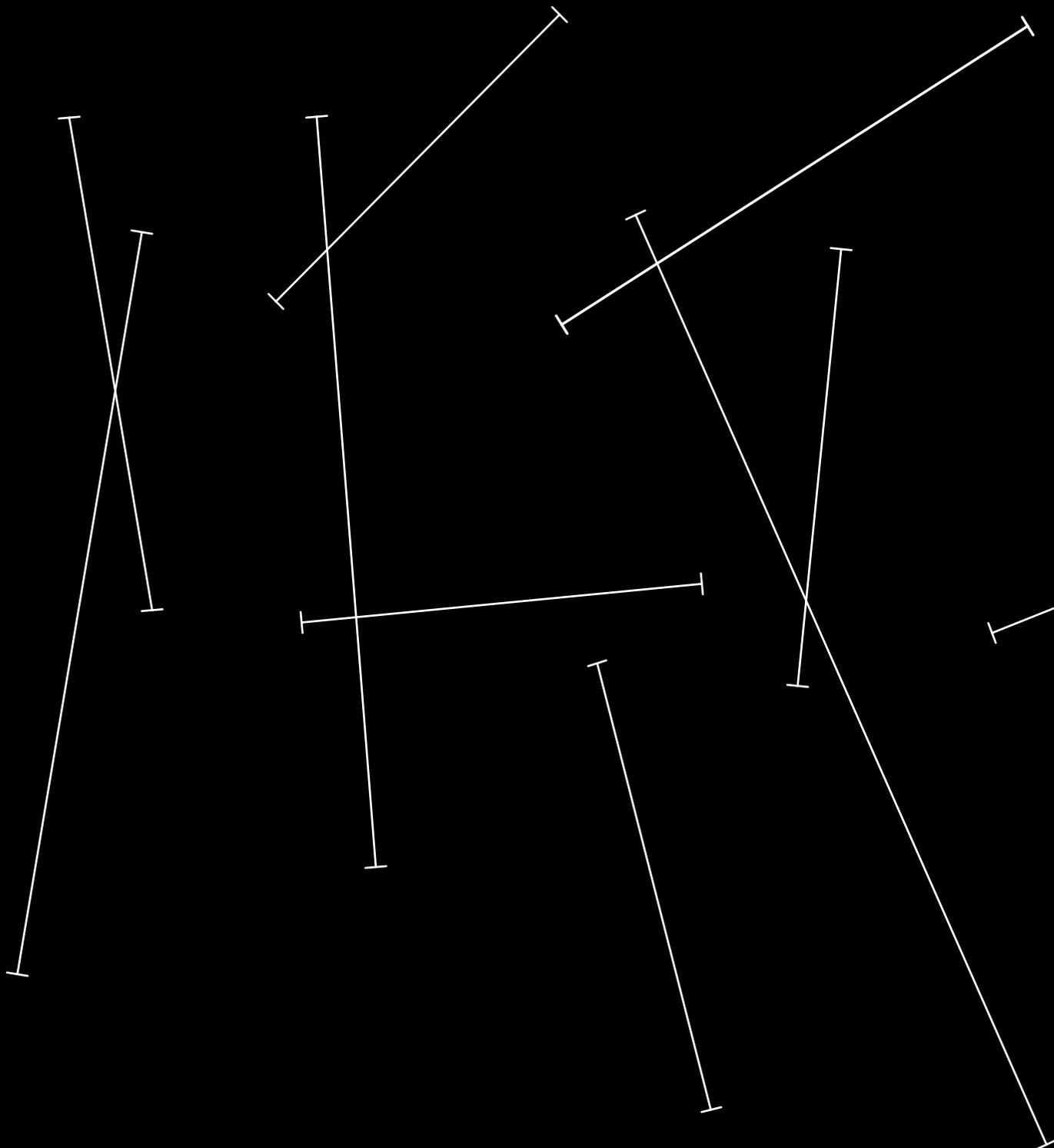
My techno club's first location which was at the Post-Soviet Torpedo factory in Almaty, Kazakhstan. Later, the project was relocated to another factory, where I converted it into a cultural center.

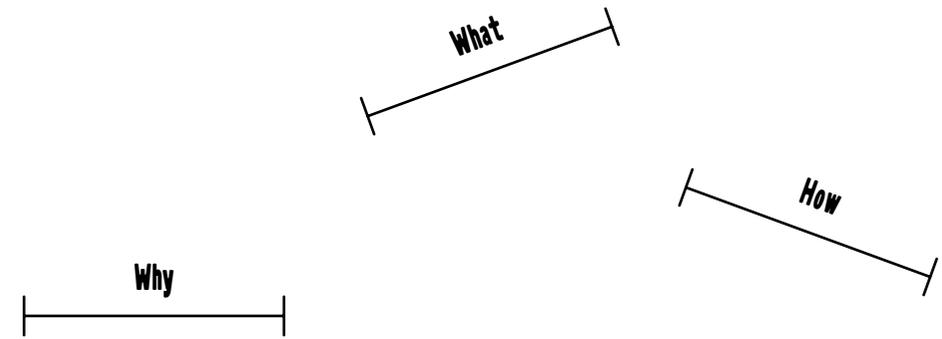


On October 9, 2023, warehouse in Olneyville, Providence. My first visit with permission to use it for my thesis experiments was from my friend Dennis, who manages the space.

ONE PUBLISHES
TO FIND
COMRADES!"

André Breton





The world is like a never-ending nesting doll, each layer containing stories, memories, and experiences. As we navigate life, we instinctively create our own containers spaces to hold our thoughts, emotions, and belongings. These containers come in various forms: tangible, like a toolbox or a vase, or amorphous, like the warmth of a letter from grandma filled with love and care. We inhabit spaces with our presence, shaping them with stories, music, and laughter. Yet, beyond mere containers, this book embarks on a journey. It delves into the intricate formation of communities and examines our perceptions of public space. It seeks to unravel the threads that unite us, exploring the social practices that foster cultural development, ways to gather, exchange of knowledge and build professional connections.

Drawing from personal experience of owning and managing a cultural center in Kazakhstan for seven years. I try to understand the complexities of political, social, and economic landscapes, shedding light on our evolving relationship with space. I gravitate towards the concept of the 'Third Place': an alternative way for various niche communities to gather and operate as a "container" through events, collaborations, and working spaces.

This book contains memories, experiences, and fantasies. Yet, beyond personal narratives, the essence of this book lies in its challenge to connect with like-minded creatives—those who share a passion for gathering, organizing, and collaborating. It is a call to find and nurture a community where ideas are shared, and collective efforts thrive. It draws the great minds willing to go on the edge and push through to the idea, not exactly knowing where they are going. The abrupt change of residence and the unfamiliar environment while studying in the U.S. made me reflect on what "home" really means.

The distance, a different time zone, and sense of detachment from familiar reality are some of the first social challenges any traveler faces. Simultaneously, it's also a very grounding experience. For me, it became an experience of battling isolation. Having the privilege of access to all the conveniences in my country, I had to exert great efforts to achieve the simplest results in America. But that also forced me to grow by leaps and bounds. At one point, I realized I didn't miss home; my new friends and sites compensated for this feeling, and new rituals, like going out for breakfast in new places or exploring local parks and hiking. It's not that I severed all ties, but I understood how important it is to be physically close to loved ones in a new way.

After gaining much experience, I have been reflecting on "the feeling of home," the formation of societies, and the notion of belonging to a community, even if it is temporary. Despite the ease of access to information through the Internet and the flexibility of remote work, urban spaces remain in high demand [1]. Thus, the question arises of what makes these spaces so attractive and how they continue to fulfill the human need for connection through community.

Creators of "Blade Runner," a dystopian movie about the future, show us an alternative planet Earth where machines take over many mundane jobs, automobiles soar through the sky, and people stay isolated from their surroundings. However, in reality, people's need for social interaction and connection persists after Covid, where remote work and social distancing was the norm. Although many individuals may have grown tired of the social interactions and corporate culture that dominated pre-Covid life [2], it is still necessary to find common ground and rebuild relationships with others [3]. Given the current circumstances, it is important to reflect on the nature of society and community and how they can be strengthened. Building a sense of belonging and connectedness can help creatives feel more rooted and secure, even in temporary living situations. The process of constructing and sustaining a

community involves negotiation, compromise, and a willingness to communicate effectively with others. By fostering a sense of community, we can create a more supportive and inclusive environment that benefits everyone involved.

Written in a dynamic encounter with space, I approached writing the thesis as constantly unraveling a series of acts. Being simultaneously a body and a conscious mind, placed in various circumstances, how does this affect one's mind or change their behavior?

The book is divided into three Acts. As in Bertolt Brecht's 'epic theater,' it is important to me that you, my reader, do not feel the 'fourth wall' between us. I want this book to feel like a conversation with a good friend, that one friend who you share an obsession with and all your conversations revolve around that particular subject of interest. The last Act of this book is a prototype of my vision of the creative hubs of the future and how they should operate. The three previous Acts are the motivation, body of work and events that led me to the present thoughts. Each Act is represented by a floorplan of a space that had an impact on my actions. And for the chapters I use rooms of spaces that I am connected with.

I am fascinated by how scientists and engineers use functional and informative visual forms to communicate efficiently, overcoming time stamps and language barriers. Every aspect of it fascinates me, from the architectural floor plans to the various schemes and diagrams used to visualize scientific ideas.

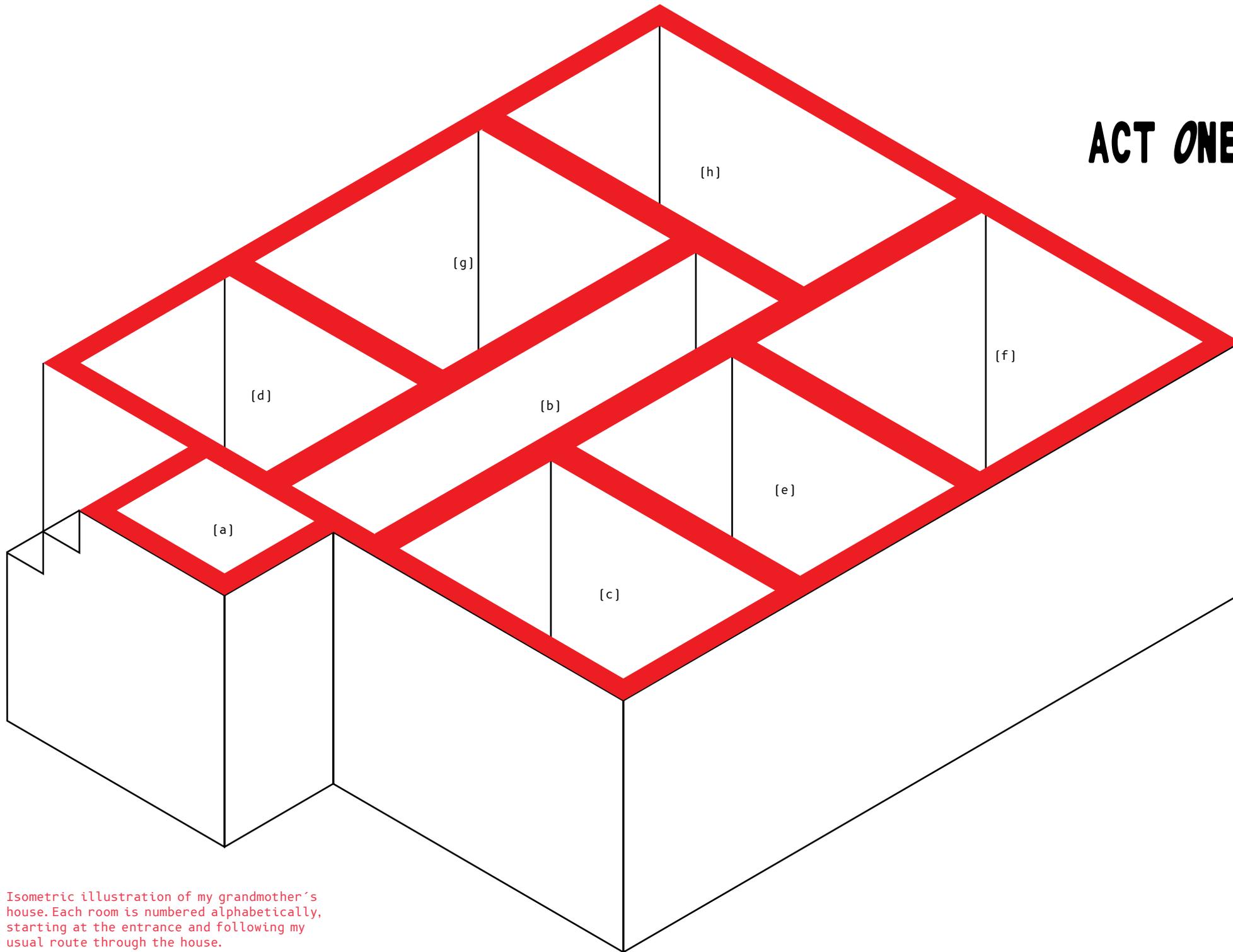
This book was designed using technical language and linear schematic visuals through the lens of a graphic designer. Deconstructed, reimagined schemes serve as additional language throughout pages.

[1] <https://ti-nyurl.com/2hhh2kdp>

[2] <https://ti-nyurl.com/3ekkwjee>

[3] <https://ti-nyurl.com/ybkahcvx>

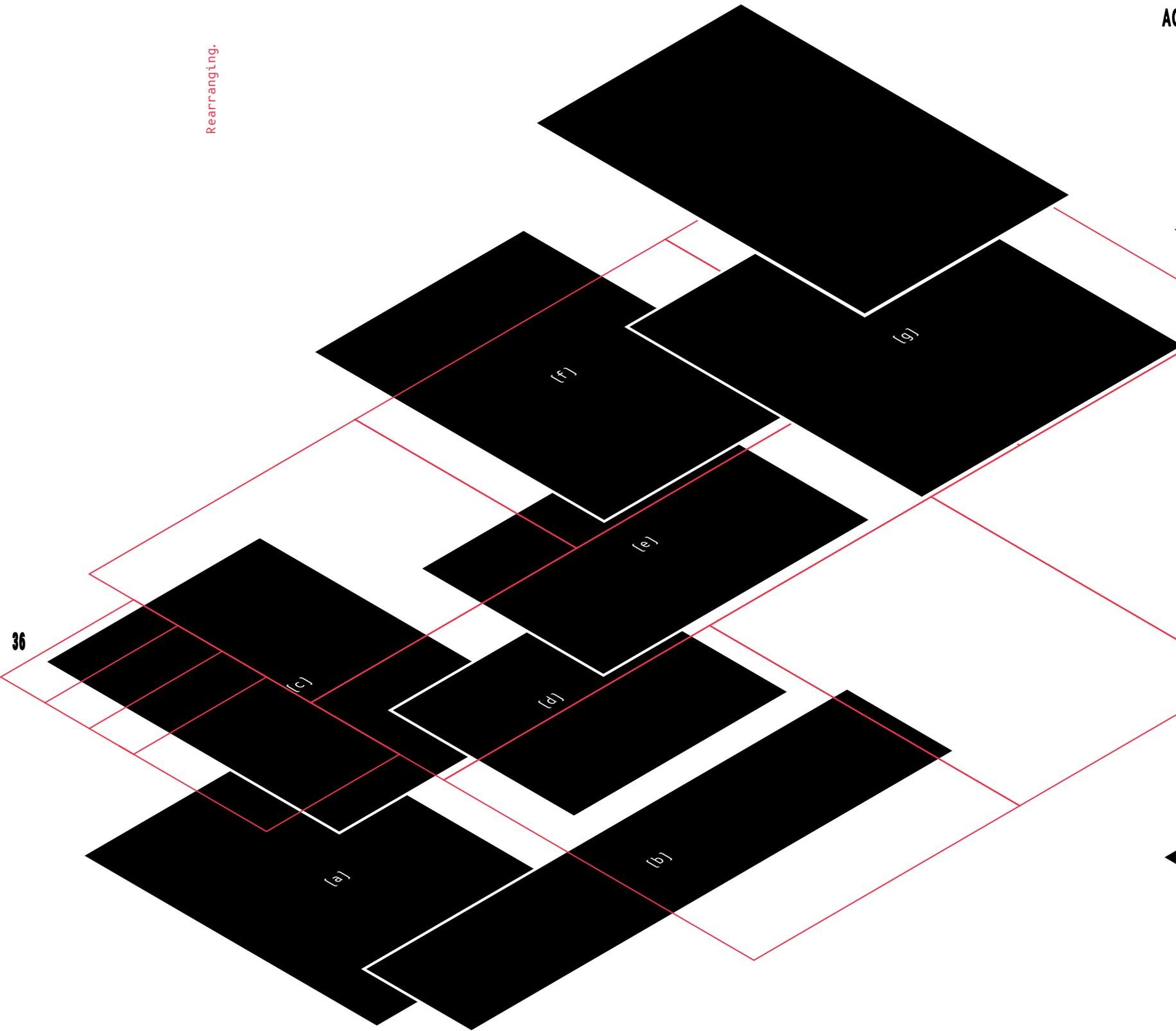
ACT ONE: THERE



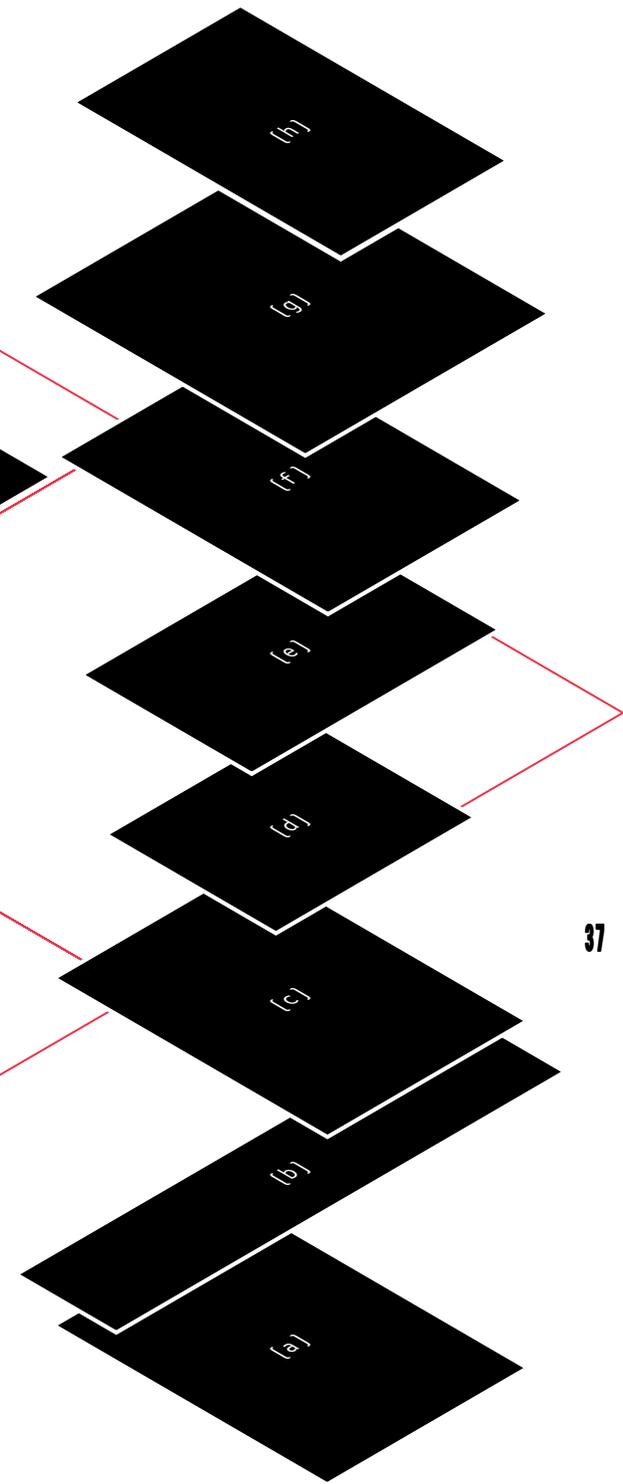
Isometric illustration of my grandmother's house. Each room is numbered alphabetically, starting at the entrance and following my usual route through the house.

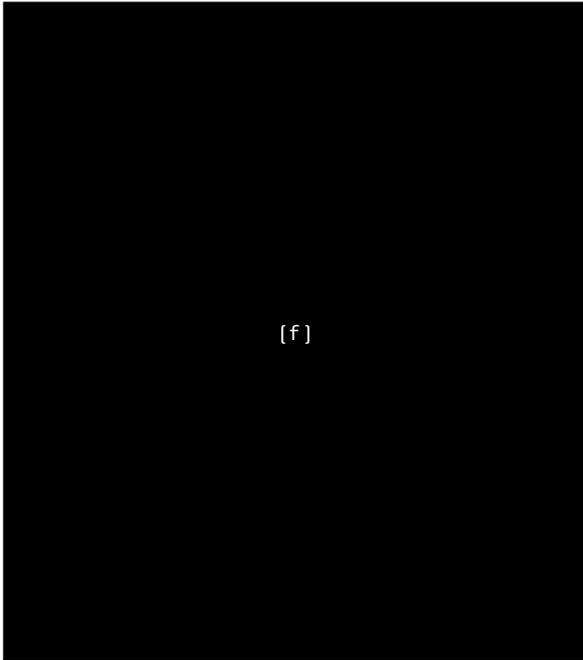
Rearranging.

36

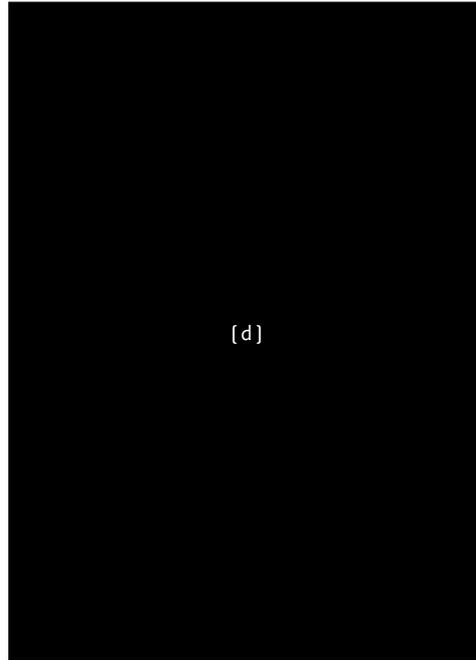


37

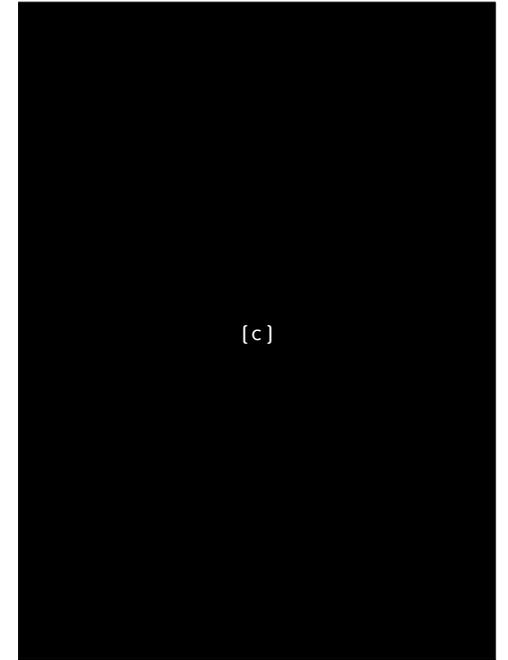




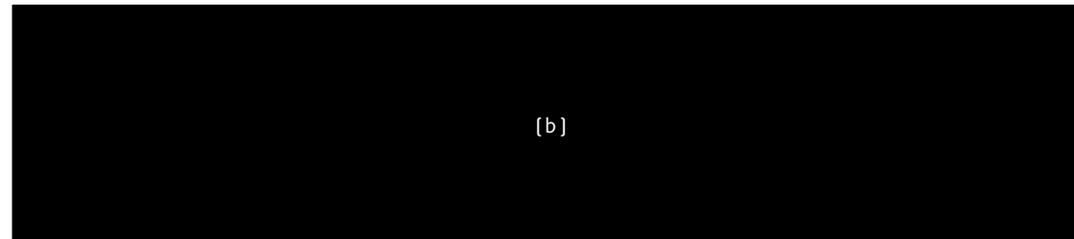
[f]



[d]

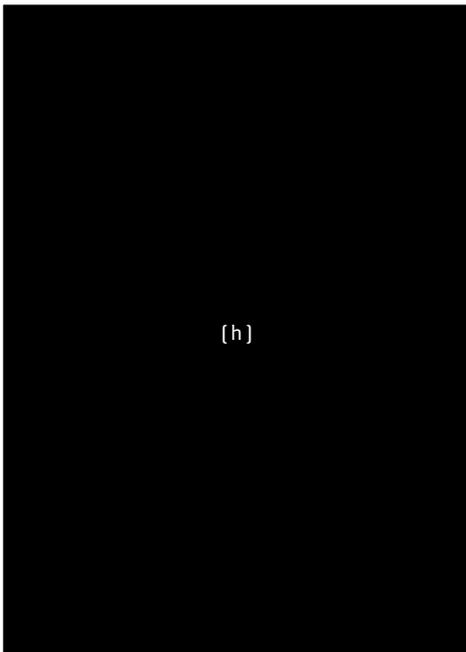


[c]

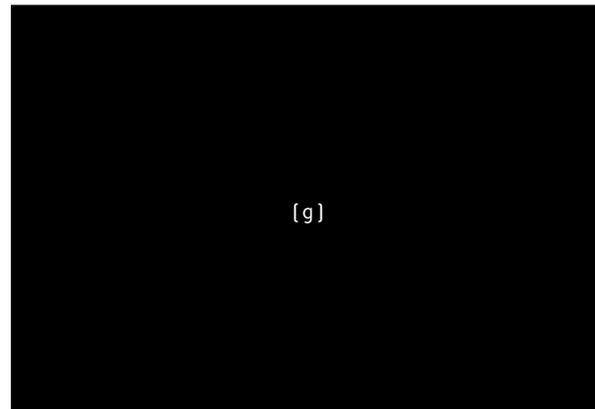


[b]

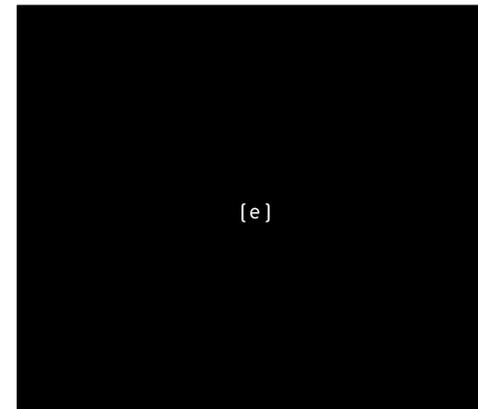
Sorting.



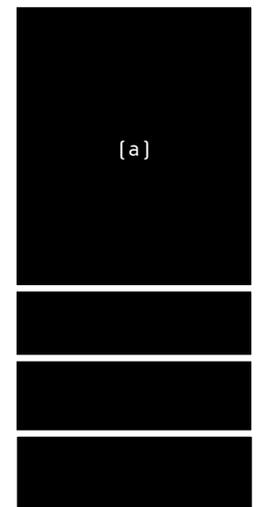
[h]



[g]



[e]



[a]

40

[b]

[c]

[d]

[a]

[f]

[e]

[h]

[g]

41

**(THERE): GRANDMOTHER'S
HOUSE. A PLACE WHERE MY
MOM GREW UP AND WHERE I
SPENT MY CHILDHOOD FROM
THE VERY FIRST DAY OF LIFE.
A PLACE FILLED WITH LOVE
AND TEARS, JOY AND GRIEF.**

[e]

[d]

[b]

[c]

[a]

[f]

[g]

[d]

[a]

[a]

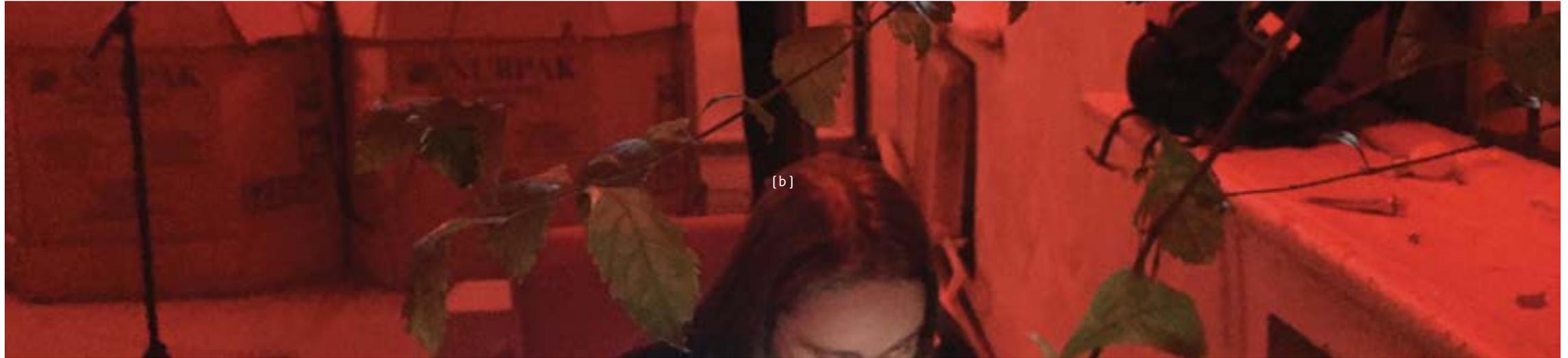


[a]: Porch

↶ [a]: Little me smiling at my dad. Feeling really happy as I am returning home after a family trip to the zoo.

I remember the sweet smell of blackcurrants and how to climb every tree and in my grandmother's garden, where I spent many summers playing and exploring. I vividly recall the first time I ate a beetle by accident along with a handful of raspberries. When I would come back with scraped knees from playing, my grandmother was always there to gently treat them with emerald green, as I was a clumsy child constantly falling.

Baba was a remarkable woman who worked as an engineer in a construction institute her entire life. Her colleagues held her in high esteem, and she continued to work until her hands would no longer allow her to do so. Despite being an engineer, she was also an avid knitter and spent countless hours creating beautiful and intricate patterns on her knitting machine. She taught me everything she knew about handicrafts and gardening, and I spent many pleasant hours with her, looking at drawings, architecture books, and engineers' measuring tools. We would watch TV series together in the evenings, which was a special time for me.



(b)

(b): Hallway

Nadezhda was a constant source of inspiration. She continued to create, even after retiring. She saw knitting as an alternative to construction and gardening as a way to believe in the future. I learned a lot from her about the importance of creativity, perseverance, and hard work.

As I grew older, I developed a fascination with the interaction between people and tools, with attention to how the slightest variation in the use of a tool could bring about unexpected and unique results. I became intrigued by the beauty of the imperfections that arise from moments of malfunction. These “mistakes” carry a wealth of information and reveal complex relationships between an object and its consequences. In the post-Soviet education system, everything was built on a hierarchical system, and I lacked an equal dialogue with my teachers. I found a sense of community and progress in interest clubs and underground communities, where I could explore my interests and collaborate with others to create something new and exciting. A sense of belonging replaced my sense of ambiguity and confusion.

Education was not just a means to gain knowledge but also a tool to decipher systemic flaws and to understand the intricate relationships between cause and effect. I noticed that while the world around me was changing rapidly, the education system seemed lagging. This made me particularly interested in clubs led by young professionals, where I felt progress was being made in all areas, and there was a desire to create. Being a part of collectives such as those of dancers, print enthusiasts, or graffiti artists was

always an exciting experience. I met interesting individuals, learned something new, and felt like I belonged. Often, buildings where creative collectives emerged eventually filled with other like-minded teams, creating an environment of collaboration and innovation. But still, most of the creatives were spread all over the city, which led to a lack of communication.

My daily routine was filled with attending classes, training, and taking different courses during my younger years. The majority of time was spent commuting on public transportation from one location to another, which was always a stressful experience for a young girl growing up in Kazakhstan. Unfortunately, gender-based violence was prevalent in my country due to traditional patriarchal norms and stereotypes, which hindered gender equality.

Throughout my university years, I devoted all my time and energy to studying, leaving no room for courses outside the university. The design school in Kazakhstan is relatively new, and after some time, I noticed a discordant gap fueled by a power dynamic; an outdated model where the teacher has all the knowledge and the student is a receptacle for the knowledge. There is no exchange. In my view, the trust between teachers and students should be built on support and vulnerability rather than relying on authority. Under an authoritarian system of relationships, uncertainty in one’s decisions and the quality of work develops.

(d): The very first room from which the cultural center began. In this room, I started working on organizing one of our earliest musical performances.



[c]

[c] Kitchen



[d]

[d] Living Room



↑ [e] Graphic Design, Exhibiting, Curating. I purchased this book at BABZ art book fair, June 2017, Knockdown Center, NYC.

↑ [c]: Isometric illustration of my grandmother's house. Each room is numbered alphabetically, starting at the entrance and following my usual route through the house.

↑ [d]: Top view on a backyard of the space. Picture taken during the first Spring festival we organized, gathering independent artists, publishers and many others.

After I completed my bachelor's degree, I began working as a junior designer in a post-production studio. Even though I worked in one of the best creative studios with a decent salary and team, I felt unhappy. I was in constant internal conflict and desired to find my place in any sphere of human activity. Finding exciting people was simple for me, but we needed a safe place to meet and socialize. I eventually found friends among musicians and DJs, starting from small home parties with experimental performances, where friends of friends gathered. It grew into something big, requiring a venue more significant than an apartment on the third floor.

Through my travels, I experienced two transformative events: the Outline electronic music festival in Moscow, and the art book fair at Knockdown Center in New York. During my time in Moscow, I witnessed the importance of a safe community that provides a platform for artists, designers, musicians, and other creative people to share their knowledge and talent. Later, at the art book fair in New York, I had the opportunity to meet Christopher and Kathleen Sleboda, and I was impressed by the hundreds of creative minds who attended the event. Christopher introduced me to Risograph, and I purchased my first book from DrawDown. Little did I know that

[e] Living Room

many years later, as their student in the Newly Formed class at RISD, they would once again help me choose the direction of my thesis topic.

After I returned home in 2017, I envisioned a project that would take place solely within the walls of an industrial building. A former factory that had once produced components for torpedoes during Soviet times was a perfect location. I decided to leave my office job and dedicate myself to organizing music events alongside friends who shared my passion. The same year, we successfully organized our first major festival featuring international DJs. We launched the project in the smallest room of the three-story factory and eventually expanded to occupy the entire factory. Over time, many of my former acquaintances from my athletic and artistic pursuits became project residents.

The team consisted of five permanent members. It was vital that all members had complete freedom and were not restricted by corporate culture. The ability to have a sense of freedom while still having control over one's own time is crucial for creative industries. In a project like mine, a horizontal hierarchy allows for innovative development, encourages open dialogue among all participants, and enables rapid resolution of internal issues.



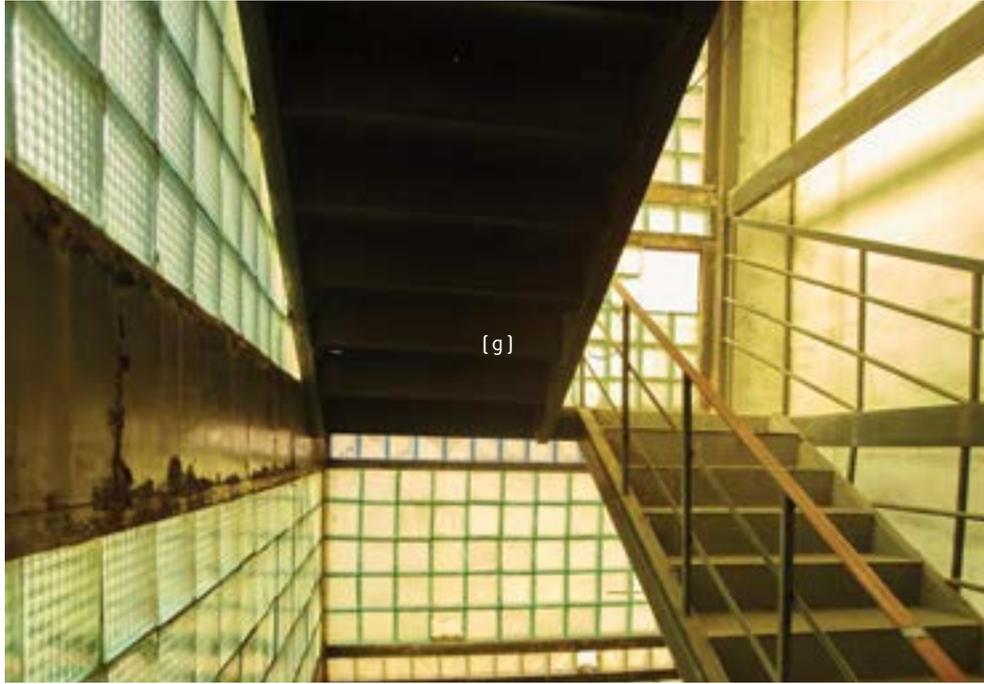
[f]

↶ [f] School of fashion, first day. The first group was only four people, and after some time we expanded to two groups with fifteen students each.

I gained experience in organizing nightlife events, but eventually shifted towards daily events and education. The COVID lockdown was a turning point for me as I noticed people educating themselves and others through online courses and workshops. This shift towards collective support and knowledge-sharing fascinated me, especially in regards to a multidisciplinary approach to curation.

When offered an opportunity to exhibit work, designers tend to shape, tweak, adapt, and take over spaces and resources to create moments of collective learning and production. My project already had a DJ school that taught many music enthusiasts. During the Covid lockdown, my best friend moved in with me after losing her apartment. She is a talented fashion designer, so we started working on the concept of a fashion school to teach young artists technical knowledge and the basic history of fashion without hesitation. We opened it in the factory as soon as it was possible after restrictions.

→ [g] The staircase at the factory is a relic from Soviet times. It was bricked up and non-functional for a long time.



[g]

↵ [h] "Hard work is the guarantee of the people's prosperity!" The preserved inscription on the building's facade has become a distinctive feature of the building.



[h]

[g] Room

[h] Living Room

Fleet Library at RISD, 11:11 am;
Sitting in my favorite spot. A corner of
a second floor where the collection of
thesis books is displayed.



↱ Main dancefloor during one of
the raves, November 2021.

ACT ONE: THERE

Sometimes, things are surprisingly better if I
stop resisting the universe and observe.



CONVERSATION WITH SURAIYA NATHANI HOSSAIN

WHERE

Over Zoom

WHEN

March 21, 2024

WHO

Suraiya Nathani is a design mentor and creative director at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Chicago. She founded a consultancy that provides relationship-driven design services to the Creative Class, which includes students, young professionals, and freelancers. I was interested in learning more about her design practice and experience working in a large non-profit institution. During our conversation, we touched upon several topics such as teamwork, burnout, and support for artists, which are always relevant in the creative industry.



↑ Image sequence of my Zoom conversation with Suraiya.

Glikeriya: It's my first interview for Thesis. I'm nervous.

Suraiya: Don't be nervous!

G: I have a few questions about your practice and work.

S: It sounds great. Please tell me a little bit about the project. Are you doing a thesis?

G: Yes. I'm writing my thesis, and it's my last year at RISD. The thesis is about forming communities, ways to gather, and creating a feeling of belonging through design. I've owned a creative cultural center in Kazakhstan for seven years. It started as a small gathering of classical musicians. Growing up in Kazakhstan, there were few safe places for young people, especially girls, to go out. So it got more popular after some time, and we had to rent a room in an abandoned factory. A couple of years later, we filled the whole building with different self-initiated projects and creatives, from photo studios to a fashion school, and we also had a DJ school. So, it grew and became a must-visit tourist place in Kazakhstan.

S: I'm gonna interrupt you to say that sounds incredible.

G: Thank you.

S: You must be so proud of having done that. It sounds like it really had an impact on so many people.

G: I really hope so, but I never felt like that because I was in the process. Having a background in graphic design, I paid attention to posters, the visual identity of events, and how we communicated with our audience.

It was more experimental because we had no one to ask how to do these things. And it was more of just trial and error. So when I got to RISD, at the same time, I was informed that the factory was going to be demolished. Many other things were happening simultaneously; it was a very hectic and heartbreaking time. But yeah, I moved to Providence. And right now, I'm trying to implement my experience in building communities in my thesis research. I was lucky to get a rent-free space in West Providence for one year. I'm just experimenting with it. I did the identity for it, organized gatherings, and experimented. I'm planning to write the whole thesis inside of it. I'm very interested in talking to you about many things and how big institutions interact with their audience.

When I researched you, the first thing that stood out to me was this phrase: "Suraiya loves her mom." It's such a short but fulfilling sentence. Can you talk about it? I hope it's not too personal. And what does family mean to you?

S: Oh, my goodness, I can't believe you found it. I started that practice [good.v.great] with a friend. She lives in Brooklyn and, during the pandemic, started doing mentorship and portfolio reviews and things like that. So when we were writing in our "about" section, we both were thinking of the smallest thing we could say that would encapsulate who we are. And I felt like that phrase summed it up. It's very open.

Ann loves peanut butter 🥜
 Suraiya loves her mom 👩.
 They both love going to the movies.

← Screenshot from Suraiya's and Ann's [her business partner] website "about" page.

G: I suddenly knew who you are as a person!

S: I never thought anyone would see it; that's so funny!

G: I'd like to know your approach to being a creative director. How does your personal practice inform your professional practice?

S: It definitely does. I feel like it's important to be your whole self as much as you can be. And so I think that relates back to "Suraiya loves her mom." When you're a woman in leadership or a woman in a professional space, it's important to stay distant from being open about who you are, you know. I'm a parent, and I have two kids. And it's important to me that I am able to be my whole self when I'm at work. I do not have to code-switch between all the different versions of myself because it's exhausting. Exhausting to not be able to just be open about who you are. I have a 13-year-old and a 12-year-old. And they're deeply involved in my creative work, and they give me feedback, and they help me, and I help them. And it's really nice because I feel like being a designer, doing the kinds of work that we do takes up so much of your time that either you would be stealing that time from someone else, or you wouldn't be able to be sharing your time in a way that felt meaningful. So, doing something that feels really integrated is essential to me.

G: Your personal practice is also so open. It's about sharing knowledge and developing communities. What did you learn from being a founder of a relationship-driven design consultancy? And how did that experience carry into what you do now?

S: I learned many people feel alone working in this field [design]. You get in your own head sometimes and don't know what the next step should be. I'm fortunate to have people I care about in my life who care about me, and I can take a pressure test and ask them if it's good. And a lot of people don't have that. So what I found particularly over COVID is that people were missing community and just someone they felt safe to say: "Does this work, or should I start over?" Often, with design, there's so much ego involved that it makes you less likely to ask questions or want other people's feedback. But to me, I'm the happiest when people are collaborating and everyone is making each other better. And I've never been a very competitive person. There's room for everyone to win, and there's room for everyone to be successful. So that's really important to me.

G: Do you feel people became more lonely after COVID, or was it always like that?

S: You know, I always was like that, but maybe I noticed it for myself because I was working a little bit more on my own, too. And I missed my camaraderie, which was my former colleagues at the job I had before I went out on my own. And we all really looked out for each other. I met all my dear friends in college, except for my best friend, and we all went through art school together. And so we always had that environment where I trusted people to ask them, or we all helped each other generously, with everyone being generous with their time. We were able to do some stuff that we felt happy to do.

G: I've been thinking about those who contain knowledge and those in the privileged position who have the knowledge. How do they share this knowledge with people who don't have access to knowledge? So I'm thinking about space as a body, a bridge between people with knowledge and local communities. And I wonder if MCA works as a sort of container of knowledge? Or how do you integrate your projects? And how do you communicate with the people that you want to reach?

S: I totally agree. The thing that's changed recently is that people are more open about sharing knowledge. And that's so important to me; I think that if you have the privilege or are lucky enough to have access and skills, then it seems only right that you would share that and be like, "Hey, I figured this out," nobody else wastes their time, "I can just tell you this is if it's six inches, it'll fit," you know, whatever. I love that. And I love people being able to share knowledge and save themselves from everyone doing the same thing over and over again. The more you feel like you can hold the door open for everybody else, the better it'll be. There's no "I want to be alone winning something," I feel so much better if it's shared. There are other people involved who can be part of it. I'm sure you see this a lot, too, where, for some people, deep authorship really matters. And it being like, this is my thing. I did this. And that's super important to a lot of people. It's like if everyone else is enjoying it, then you just feel like it's so much more satisfying.

G: I really appreciate MCA's visual communication, grid-based layout, and clear communication. There's also a lot of content on MCA that spans a wide variety of subject matter. How do you balance decisions about harmonizing all that is often intangible and things that feel right or don't? For some reason, how do you make those decisions?

S: I'm working on a brand refresh right now where I'm adding a little bit more color, and I'm staying with all the grids but adding a little bit more openness and warmth so that this space feels like somewhere that you want to spend time. And we're also redesigning our websites. So that's something that will feel good; it will still hold all the heritage and legacy of what's come before us. And being a little bit more inclusive is something that is on my mind for sure. Each curator will think about their show as it's in its entirety. But my role is to zoom out further from that and ask myself, "How is this show?" Speaking with the show, being right across the hall, you know? Or how are the different spaces activated so that they all feel really special on their own? Sometimes, paintings are coming up soon. We have a situation where there will be a painter, and her paintings are quiet and so beautiful. And then across the hall is going to be a lot of video work, which is going to be great, but it's gonna be really intense. So that's the kind of thing where I spend a lot of time thinking about what we can do to make each one feel equitable against each other, but also feel like that combination is interesting, but also that you feel that you had two really different experiences when you were here. I think about it a lot, but we do it all with our one typeface. So it's very subtle; it's a huge move. And I'll be like, "We kerned it really loose. Everybody, stand back!" Sometimes, it's these really small moves, but when they're done intentionally, you feel like there's something different going on.

G: You have a lot of decisions to make, and as such, you have moved multiple avenues as a creative director. How would you define success? And how would you define failure in the realm of your creative work?

S: I think success is always a few things, right? As a designer and creative director, success sometimes means it was done on time, which can be tough, given how many things and obstacles we usually face. So one metric is always: Did the show open on time, and did everything happen according to the plan? So that is an easy one. But I think the other ones are just, once we have a minute to breathe, that's when I know if it's successful. Usually, the first week or two,

↓ Screenshot from the MCA's main website page.



after the show opens, I can't even look at it because I'm like, "Oh, that was hard." But then, after a couple of weeks, I walk through and see visitors in this space, and I like to hear what they're saying, to see if it was hitting with them. But I don't know; usually, you just feel it. Sometimes, there are ones where you feel like this needs another round. It just didn't feel quite right. But most of the time, when it's done, you just like, "Yeah, okay, this works." But overall, there have been times when things didn't feel successful because they went too many rounds, and people needed other stuff. And it had to change, and it had to make concessions in order to do more for some other stakeholders or something, and then that's when you feel like this got watered down. This really wasn't the plan. And that's okay. I think the main thing to me is not to be so precious with everything you do, and trust yourself and trust that you're gonna make a lot of work. The more you do, the better you get. So then you don't have to fall deeply in love with

each little thing and struggle for it. And maybe this is as far as this one could go. We'll get it on the next one. Giving yourself space to trust and know this isn't your last good idea. You're going to think of someone else tomorrow, and it's going to be fine.

G: What parts of your creative process do you typically do alone or feel like you need to do alone?

S: I definitely like to do a lot of research on my own. I'm a deep researcher, and I will look into everything. And the more I know, the more I can connect with any show. So, all of those are the early stages of conception. I definitely like to do research by myself. And gather, gather, gather, gather, gather, it's actually my favorite part of the process. Learning about whatever exhibition is coming up. And then we go into brainstorming; I have a graphic designer, a production designer, a creative producer, and an intern on my team. And so we all work really closely together. I have a space here with a door, but they're right outside the door. And literally, all day, we're just slacking each other or taping stuff to the glass and looking at it. So we definitely work in a very collaborative way. Honestly, it's the best way to run a team; nobody feels stranded. We always look out for each other, which is really important.

G: Organizing events, making the whole identity, and sensing how it should look, but also there's a part of what will be after the exhibition. I'd like to know about your documentation process and how to give someone who didn't attend the exhibition a glimpse of what was happening?

S: This question is so relevant because we're in the middle of doing it right now. I had to give a talk called the Discovery Forum the other day. It was explaining what the creative studio did. And I took it pretty seriously. Because what it did was it gave me an assignment where I had to reflect back on all the work that we've done since I started here. I've been here just under two years, and we've done tons and tons and tons of work. And when it's similar to what you said about your practice, when you're doing it, you don't realize it, and afterward, you're like, "Wow, that was right." So, we started documenting. Part of our work would eventually be nested somewhere into navigation through a redesigned website. But I started an



↑ Images from MCA Creative Studio Instagram page.

Instagram account for the studio. And it'd be nice if we posted stuff here. It's also for funding and stuff, it's important. I recently thought maybe we should apply for some awards and stuff like that. So we got a few, which I was super excited about; it feels great for the team to feel acknowledged. Part of that is to show up, right, to be part of the creative community, and for people to have visibility into the work that everyone is working so hard to do. Previous to that, that kind of stuff didn't matter to me at all. But now that I'm in a nonprofit space, it adds credibility in a way that I wasn't looking for before. But now it's helpful to have because it's important to me that the in-house creative studio feels on par with all the other studios out there. Brian was a designer on my team. I think his nature is to be documenting. So he takes that on a lot, which is awesome. Katie, the other designer on my team, did the same thing. So that helps me out a ton. We do it organically. But in terms of the space itself, I feel like that's a great question because we haven't been able to really get that feeling across in the way that I want to. Right now, we have a show. Maryam Taghavi, an artist from Chicago, has shown up in our gallery. The space is so beautiful and intimate; the photography doesn't

do it justice, and so many things don't do it justice. That feeling is hard to express in a different medium than just being there. I've been looking at other museums that do Matterport. It's those cameras where they do a zoom-through. You could essentially walk through it on your computer. I never really feel like that hits it. I don't know, it's a great question. It's one that we're still always trying to solve.

G: You don't have monotonous work. It's always project after project after project. Does it feel like a new assignment every time or does it feel like an expanding body of work?

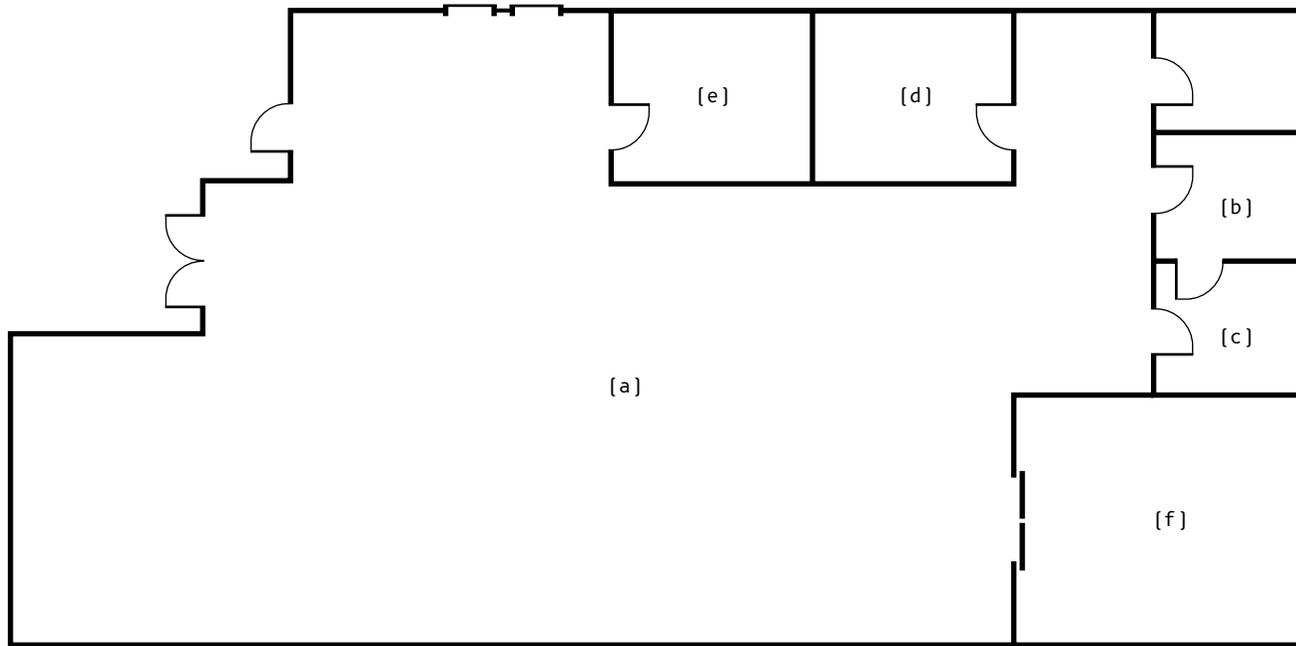
S: My personality is busy. The more you do the better you become. There are important short-term projects, and I always try to have a long-term project going at the same time. It stabilizes and you always have a home base. There's always something that tailors you to something else. I've started working in retail, and the pace there was so fast, and I think it changed me to be more efficient. Being able to do work really fast makes me confident. There are times I wish it could slow down for sure because either can be a lot. It's good for my personality; I've seen people who can be challenged to do work at that pace. But it right sizes how important something is, and while you stay busy, nothing feels like the end of the world. Because you can move on to the next thing.

G: What about the burnout? Is it a thing for you?

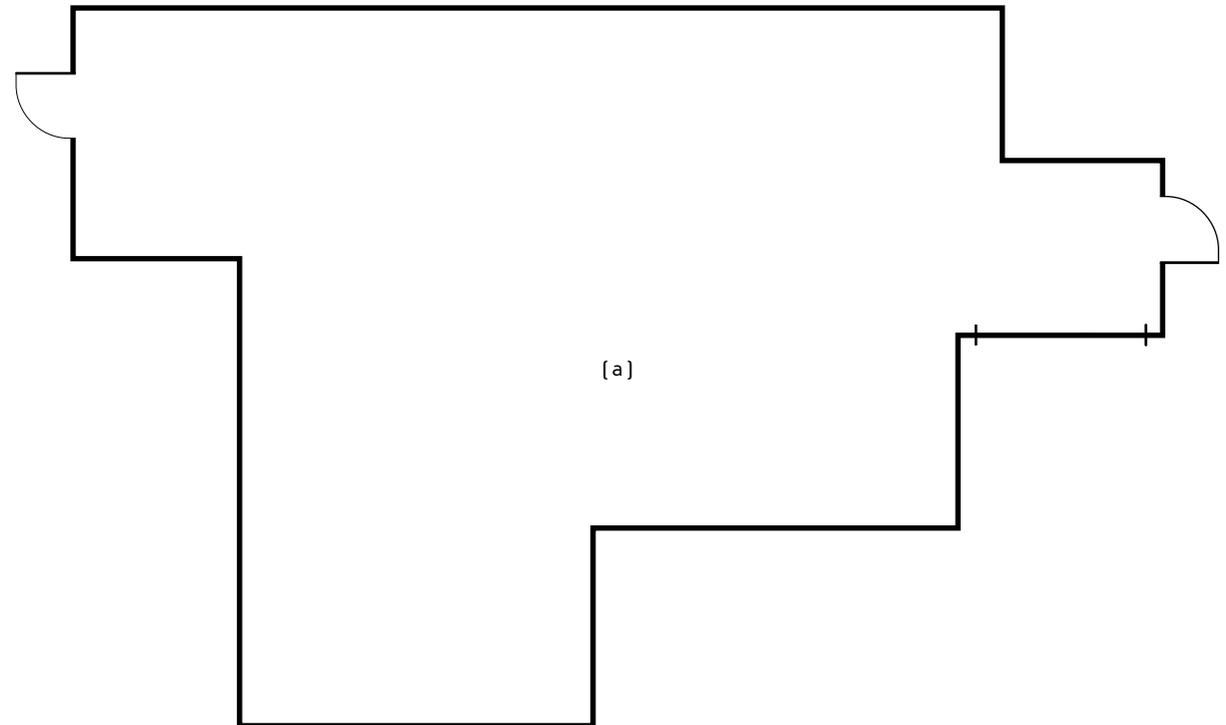
S: Yes. Especially after the Covid, it hit me. That's when I decided to go out on my own, reset, and think about it. Listen to how I was feeling and how I wanted to take my next step intentionally. I wrote a list down. I was doing so many things to be happy: I was in this tough job, volunteering, doing stuff with my family. Doing so many things I was feeling like being pulled in so many different directions. And when the museum opportunity came up, I was talking to my mom and she said: "Does that mean you're not going to do so many different things?" While working at retail I didn't believe in a mission I was doing, so I was filling it with so many other things that I thought were important. But because I believe in the mission of the artists, storytelling, amplifying voices of people of color and women, and all these underheard voices, I focused on work and family.

G: That's so beautiful.

S: I wouldn't have been able to take this opportunity a few years ago, but the burnout taught me a lot about setting boundaries for myself. Learning how to say "no" to things was really tough. And learning not to feel bad after that. When I was hiring my team for this job, I saw so many burned-out graphic designers. So I was very clear that we were going to work really hard, and it's important for me that they take care of themselves. So many people were getting sick from working constantly. You have to do a lot of stuff to be a good designer; it is also important to go out, travel, get some rest, and all of that.



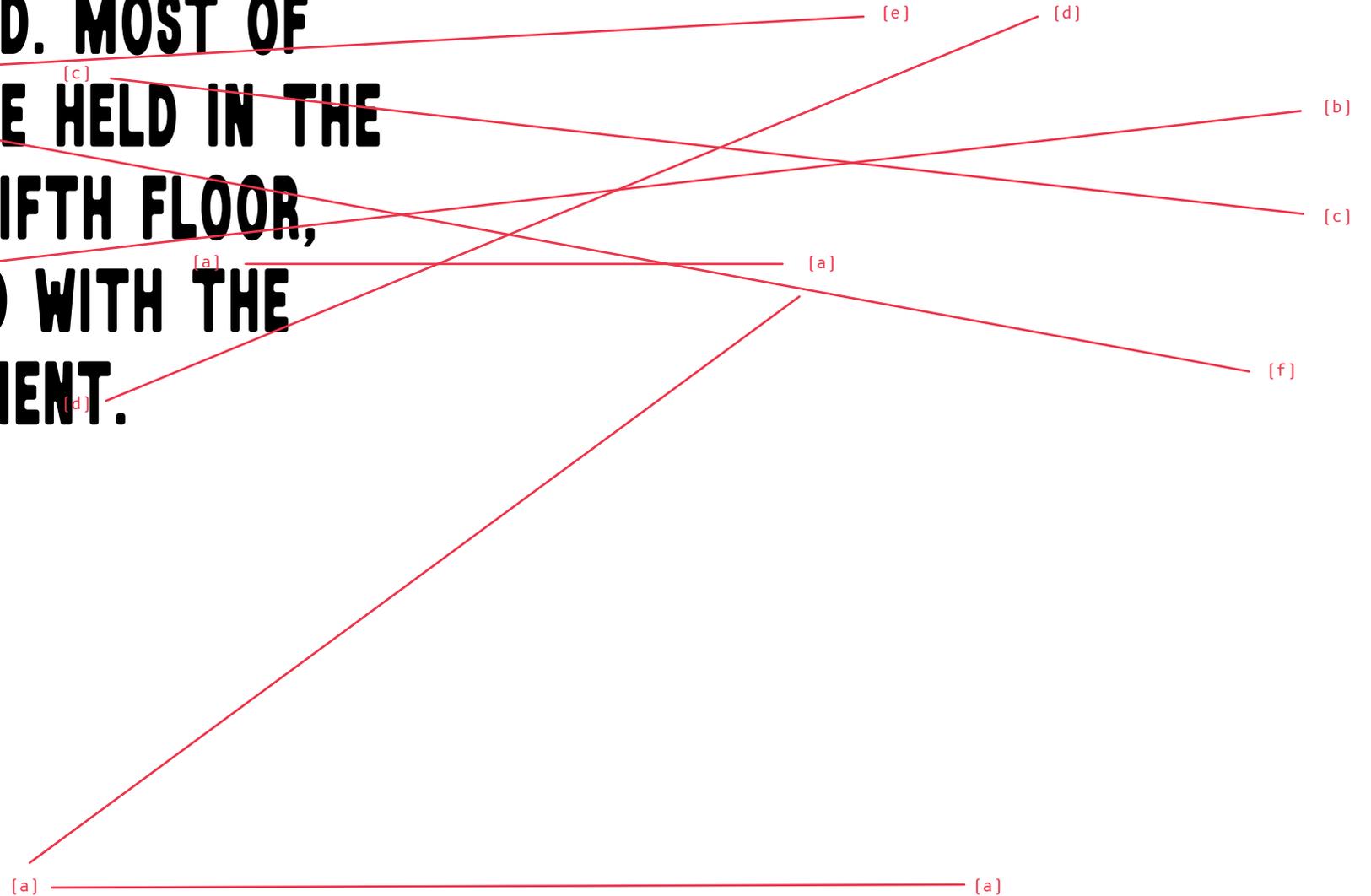
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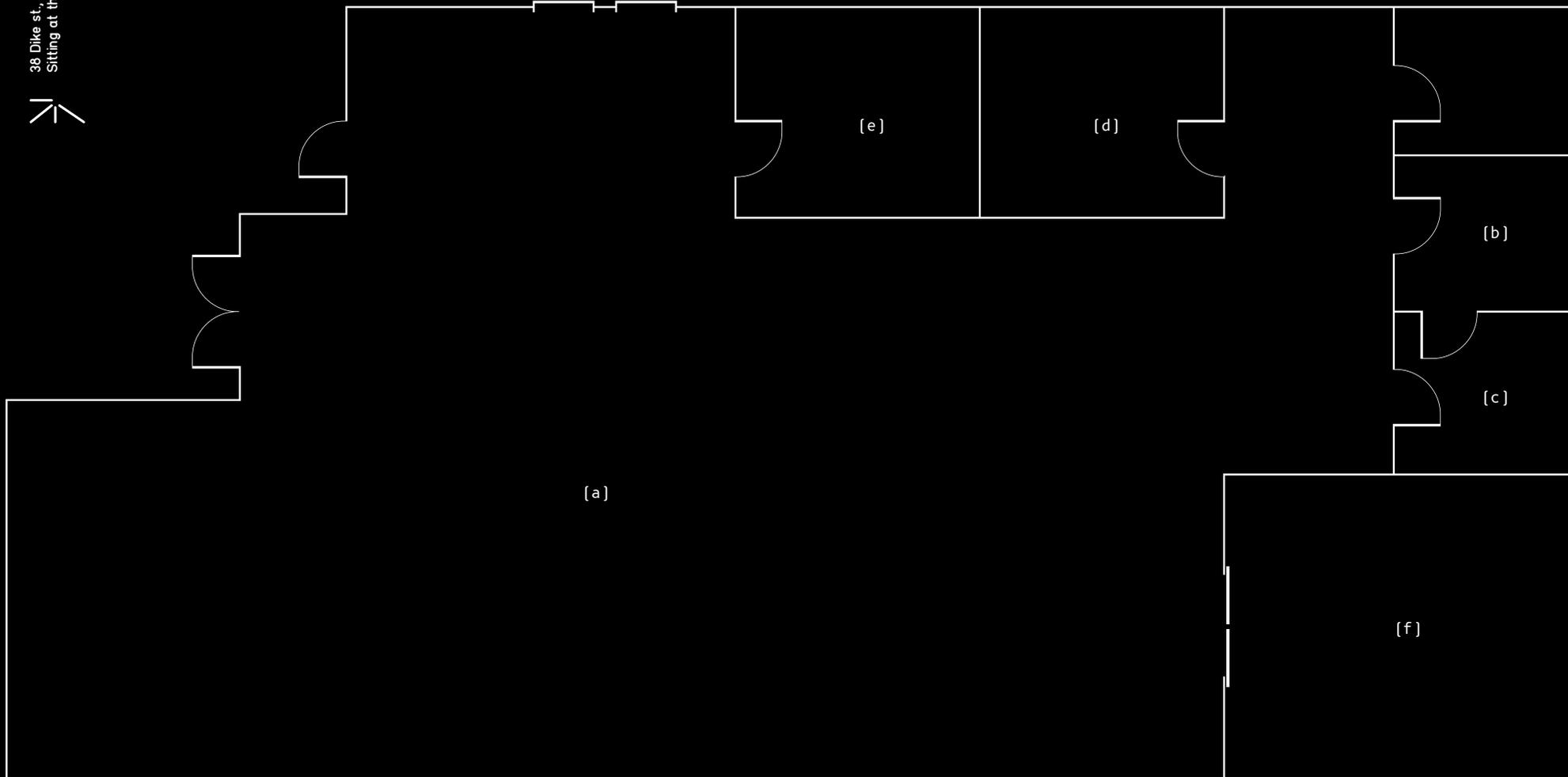
↑ [Top left]: Floorplan of a CIT studio in Providence. The first building I entered after being accepted to RISD. Each room is numbered alphabetically, starting at the entrance and following my usual route through the studio.

→ [Bottom right]: Floorplan of a studio in Olneyville that I was permitted to use as a platform for Thesis experiments.

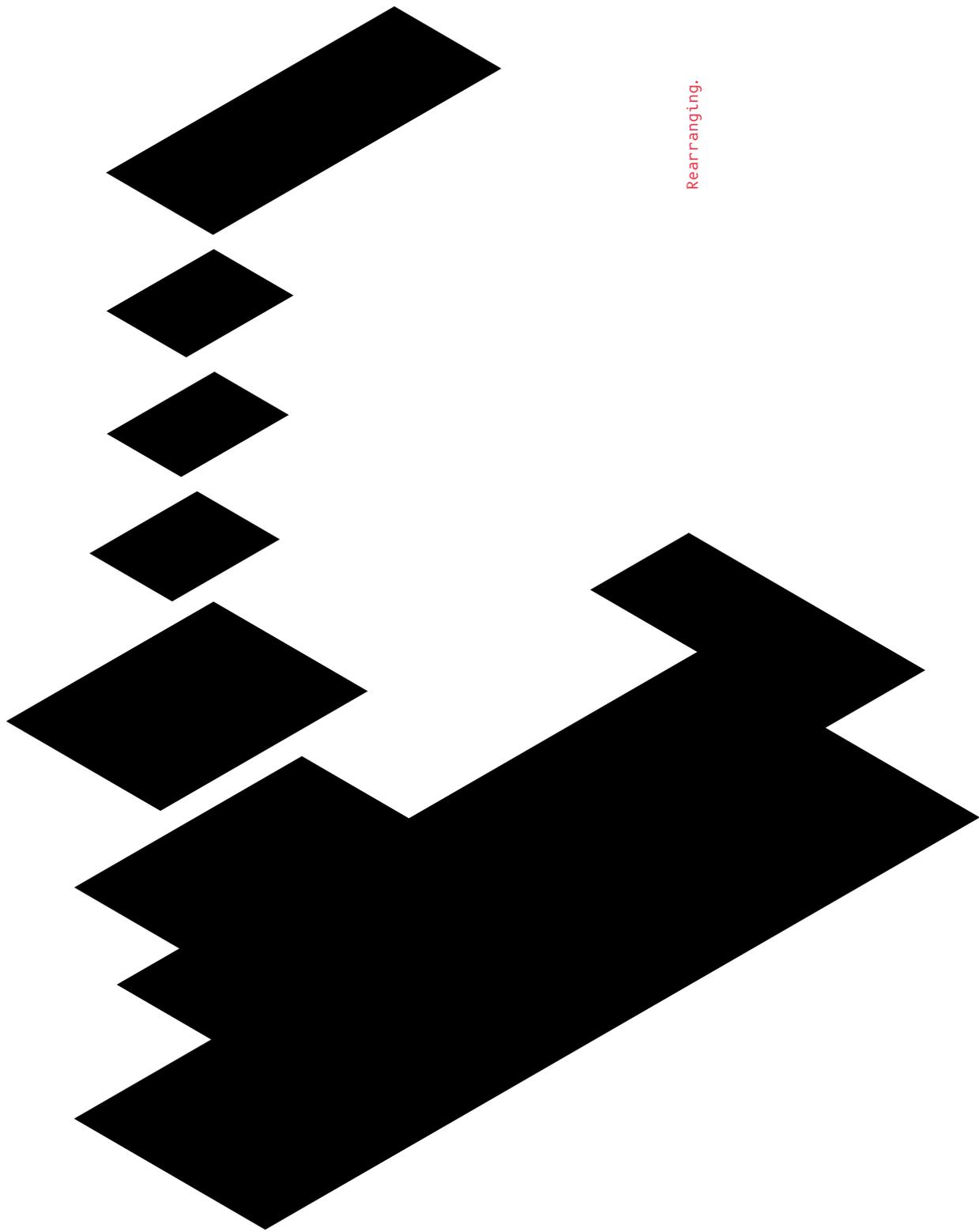
(HERE): CIT BUILDING. THE FIRST BUILDING I ENTERED UPON BEING ACCEPTED TO RISD. MOST OF OUR CLASSES WERE HELD IN THE STUDIO ON THE FIFTH FLOOR, WHICH WE SHARED WITH THE TEXTILE DEPARTMENT.



38 Dike st. 10:30 am.
Sitting at the giant wooden table.



I can do things in advance, but
wait for the very last moment.



Rearranging.

(a)

(b)

(c)

(d)

(e)

(f)

MIGRANTS

↶ Front page



●
MIGRANTS



As soon as I discovered the Nature Lab at RISD, I knew it would become my new home, and I immediately began brainstorming ideas for my first project for Grad Studio I.

For the first assignment, we had to respond to an object of our interest. According to Aristotle's *Organon*, 'every object of human apprehension' can be analyzed within ten categories (substance, quantity, relation, quality, place, time, position, state, action, affection (as in, being affected by)). Using our chosen object as a source, we had to respond visually/formally to each Category using images, text, typography, color, links, etc.

The initial inspiration for the "Migrants" is to destabilize human scales—both spatial and temporal—as the dominant plane of reference and emphasize biological and technological micro-agencies. The project's principles emerge from ideas about simplicity, naturalness, and accepting the realities surrounding us. By "looking closer," we can reveal what's hidden and learn more about the world we live in.

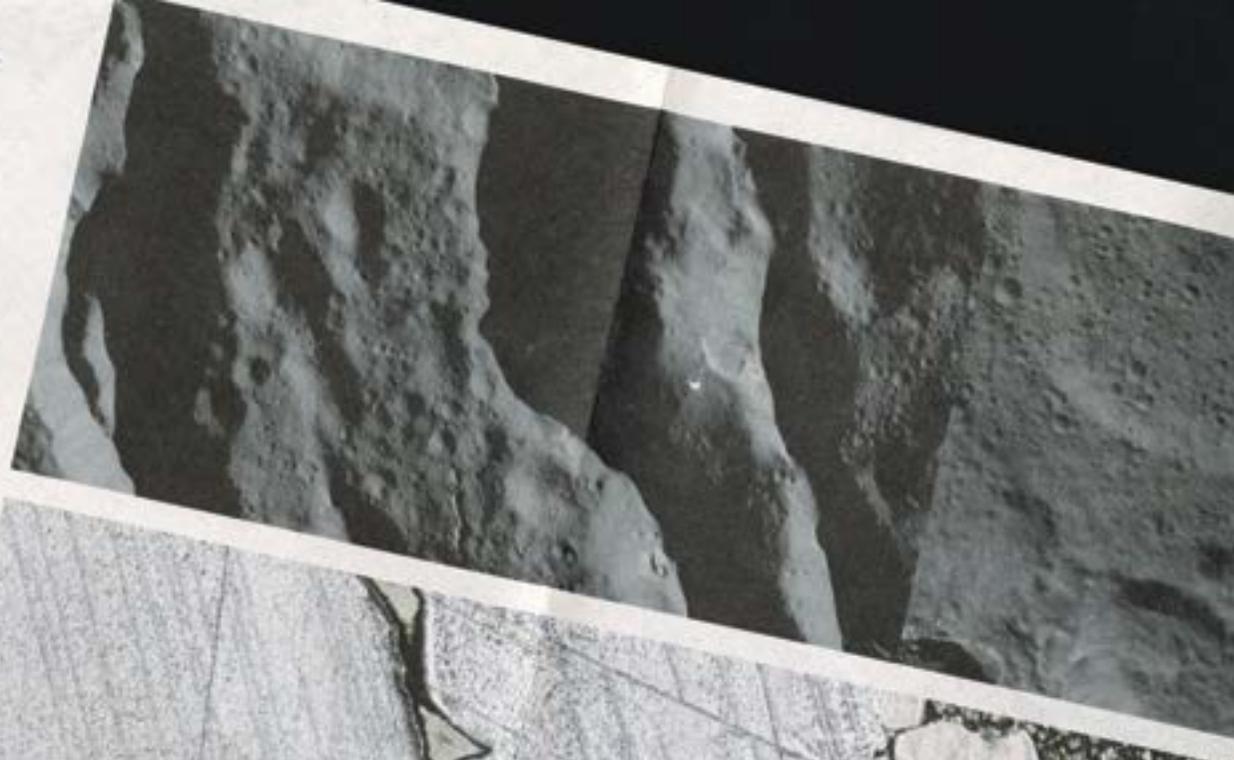
On my visit to Narragansett Beach, I gathered around twelve seashells, some seaweed, and a few other common items found in such places. By collecting such "treasures" from trips, their value is not only in their physical form but also in the emotional connection they hold to the moment, place, or people present at the time of collection.

Object

#1

TILLINGHAST BEACH
A ROCK FOUND
DURING THE TRIP
ON NOV. 1, 2022

20X MAGNIFYING
MICROSCOPE LENS.
RISD NATURE LAB
NOV. 2, 2022
AT 1:17 PM





PORTIONS OF THE SOUTHERN
HEMISPHERE OF DWARF PLANET,
ALTITUDE: 919 MILES.
NASA'S DAWN SPACECRAFT
AUGUST 21, 2015



AN AERIAL VIEW OF THE
ARCTIC SUNRISE IN THE ARCTIC
DANIELLA ZALCMAN -- GREENPEACE,
SEP 15, 2020



VARIOUS MIGRANTS
RISD NATURE LAB
NOV 5, 2022

↑ Poster [1/3] printed on newspaper, 11x17.

Inspired by Charles Eames's "Powers of Ten," I used celestial images from NASA to explore magnification and distance from the human and micro scale. During my study of found objects under the microscope, I made an exciting discovery. I was searching for unusual patterns that I could use for future projects when I noticed a tiny cocoon in the corner of one of the seashell. Upon magnifying the cocoon, I found another tiny organism on top of the previous one. This nesting made me think of migration as an ongoing process of life. As a recent immigrant adapting to a new life in Providence, I dedicated this research to exploring active movements within micro-worlds to celestial-scale bodies.

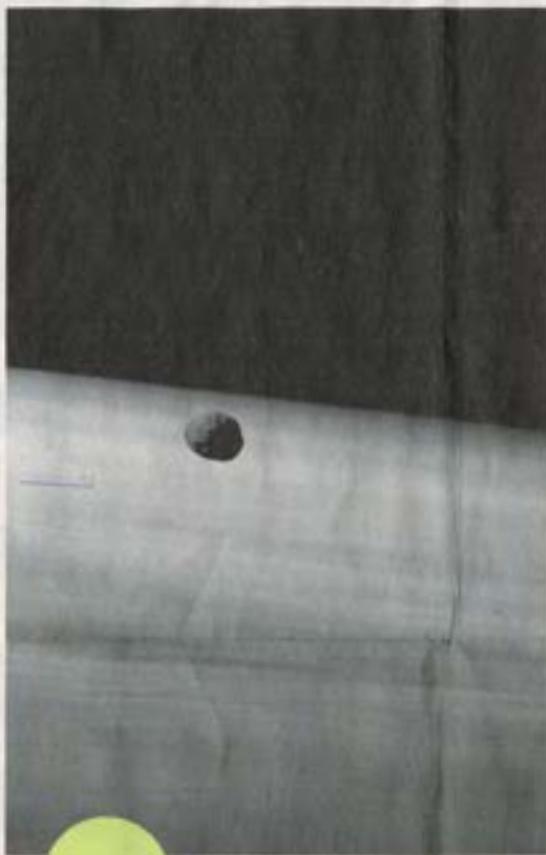
To better understand this concept, I developed a system that juxtaposes different scales: Microworld, Human, Aerial, and Celestial. Through this research, I discovered similarities between various objects, the layering of "migrants," and their history on the surface.

Obj
cct₂



Obj— ect

#2



PHOBOS, THE MOON OF MARS
ESA'S MARS EXPRESS SPACECRAFT
JAN. 22, 2007



NUCLEUS OF COMET WILD 2
DISCOVERED BY PAUL WILD
ON JAN. 6, 1978;
IMAGE: NASA



TILLINGHAST BEACH, RI
A WHELP EGG SHELF CASE
FOUND DURING THE TRIP
ON NOV.1, 2022



ICELAND SOIL
ERROSION
PHOTO: RIKKE LUTHER

2

PHOBOS, THE MOON OF MARS
ESA'S MARS EXPRESS SPACECRAFT
JAN. 22, 2007

NUCLEUS OF CO
DISCOVERED BY P
ON JAN. 6, 1978;
IMAGE: NASA

TILLINGHAST BEACH, RI
A WHELF EGG SHELF CASE
FOUND DURING THE TRIP
ON NOV.1, 2022



ICELAND SOIL
ERROSION
PHOTO: RIKKE LUTHE





Obj- ect

#3



"MARTIAN FLOWER,"
NASA'S CURIOSITY
MARS ROVER,
FEB. 24, 2022



TILLINGHAST BEACH, RI
A SEASHELL FOUND
DURING THE TRIP
ON NOV. 1, 2022



30X MAGNIFYING
MICROSCOPE LENS.
RISD NATURE LAB
NOV. 5, 2022,
AT 4:03PM





"MARTIAN FLOWER,"
NASA'S CURIOSITY
MARS ROVER,
FEB. 24, 2022



"MOTHER OF PEARL"
CLOUDS ON MARS,
NASA'S CURIOSITY
MARS ROVER,
MAR. 5, 2021



30X MAGNIFYING
MICROSCOPE LENS,
RISD NATURE LAB
NOV. 5, 2022,
AT 4:03PM



PATE ISLAND, KENYA.
DESALINATION PLANT;
PHOTO: GEORGE STEINMETZ

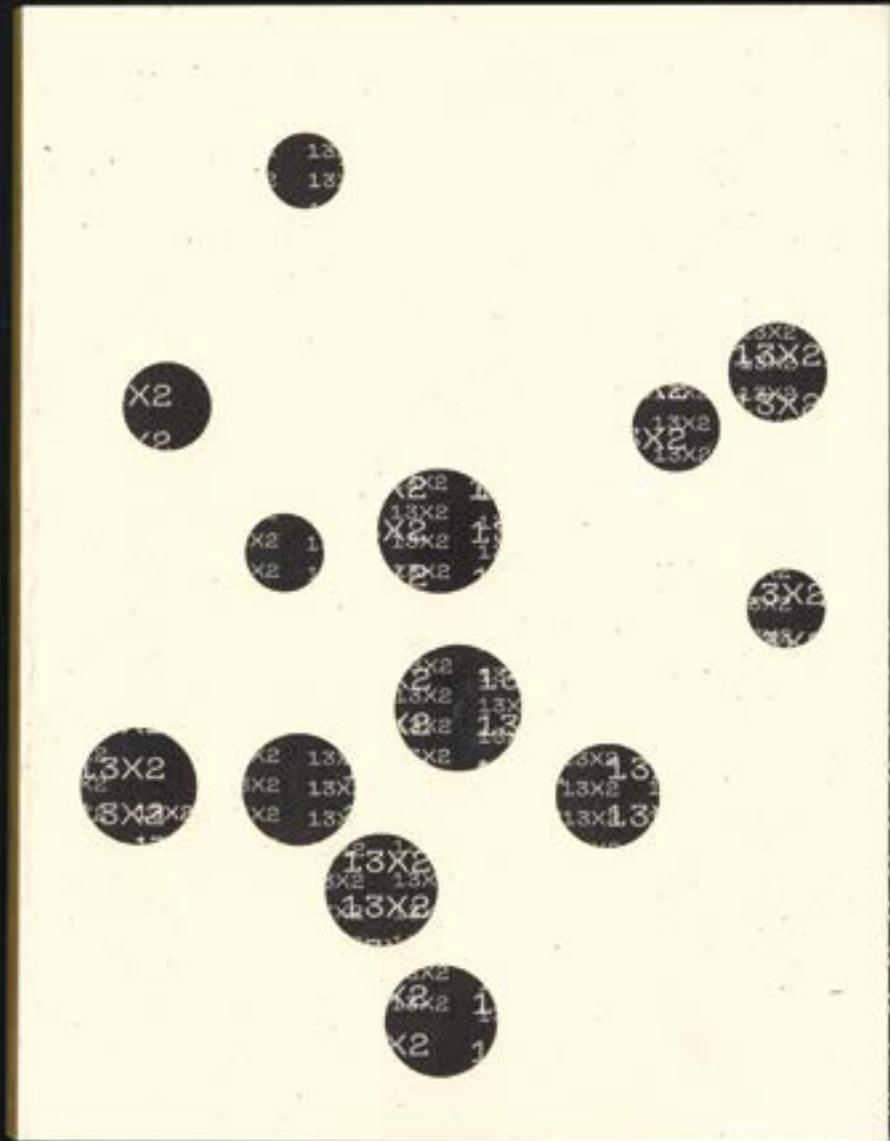




↩ Frames from the final video where I
explore and document the process.

⤴ Pages 88-99: Publication spreads.





“Somewhere, a book once said, all the tales ever told, every song ever sung, still lingers, vibrating through space. If you could travel to far Centauri, you might hear George Washington talking in his sleep or Caesar being surprised by the knife in his back. That’s the power of sound. But what about light? It doesn’t simply die; no, it transcends. All things, once seen, perhaps reside in the dripping, multi-boxed honeycombs where light turns into an amber sap stored by pollen-fired bees. Or in the thirty-thousand lenses of the noon dragonfly’s gem-studded skull, where you might discover all the colors and sights of the world in any given year.

Imagine pouring a single drop of this dandelion wine beneath a microscope; perhaps the entire world of July Fourth would erupt in Vesuvius-like showers of fireworks.”

Ray Bradbury, *Dandelion wine*

The publication and video were created for Grad Studio II, which was taught by Lucy Hitchcock and Paul Soulellis. The first assignment for the class was to bring the items described in the list they gave, and all contributions should have been of interest to us. We collected a variety of items and shared them with the class. Among many interesting objects, what caught my attention was the two opinions shared by each of my classmates. Each opinion should have been of our own.

The assignment took place during the spring season, and it was an excellent opportunity for me to spend time outside and enjoy the beauty of nature. Working in India Point Park, a beautiful green area near the water and conveniently located close to my house, I started noticing the formations of the first dandelion flowers in the field and admired the beautiful constellations they created. However, as I continued with the project, I began to compare tangible and intangible things, thinking about my classmates' opinions and how they were like the metaphysical formation of thoughts. This led me to develop the idea further, and I began collecting the shapes of dandelions and couldn't stop thinking about my classmates' vulnerable thoughts.

Considering dandelion fields as something physical and my classmates' opinions as the intangible formation of thoughts, I constantly compared them to looking up at the sky and down to the ground. It recalled my childhood game: I took my grandmother's round mirror and held it parallel to the ceiling, imagining that I was walking upside down. I could walk upside down for hours.

Mirrors are the closest dividers between worlds, and I used them in the project to create the feeling of duality. This assignment turned out to be a journey of comparison, mixing realities and two vulnerable thoughts that thirteen of my classmates shared. I followed my intuition and paid attention to the surroundings, which turned out to be a publication and a three-minute video.

↓ Pages 106 to 109 depict the first pages of the scanned publication.

↓ My "Downloads" folder after transferring all the footage from my phone.



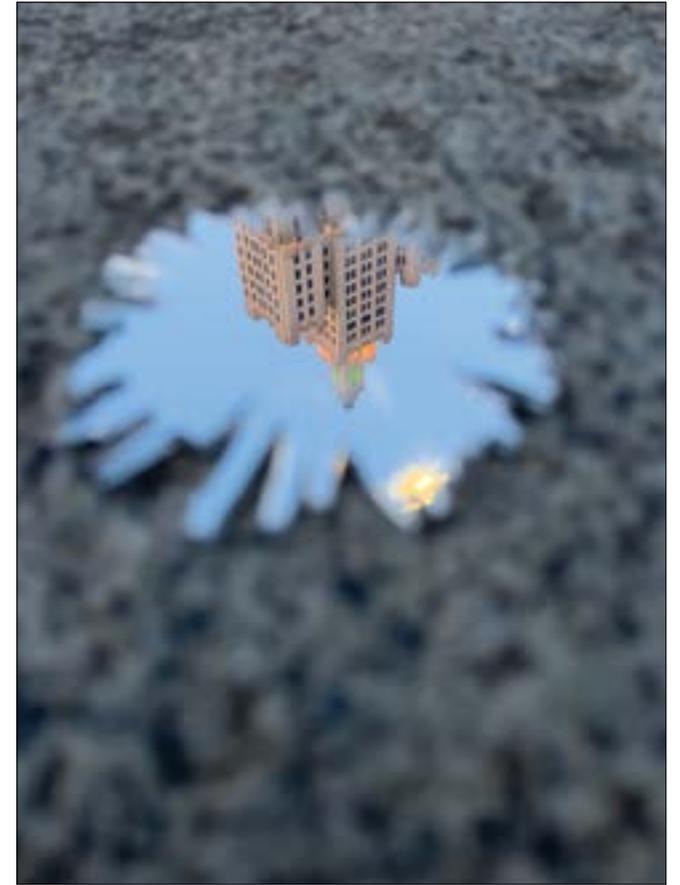






↓ Photos on pages 110 to 115 are my experiments with perspective and reflections.

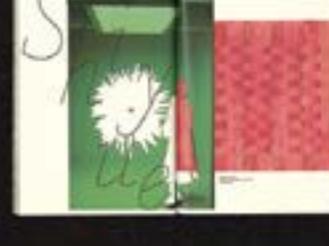
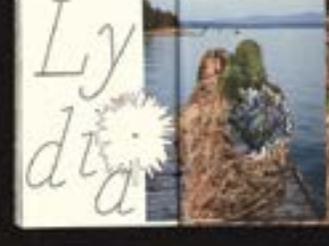
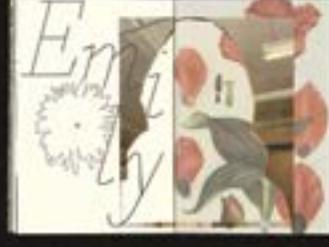
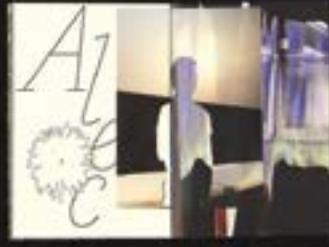
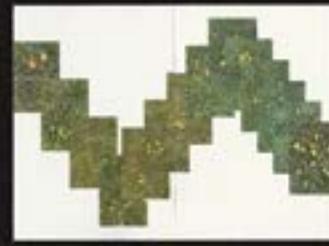
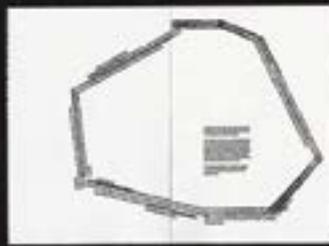
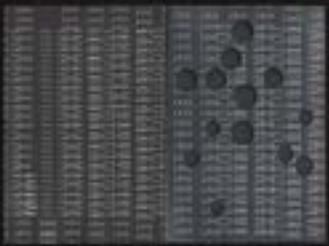


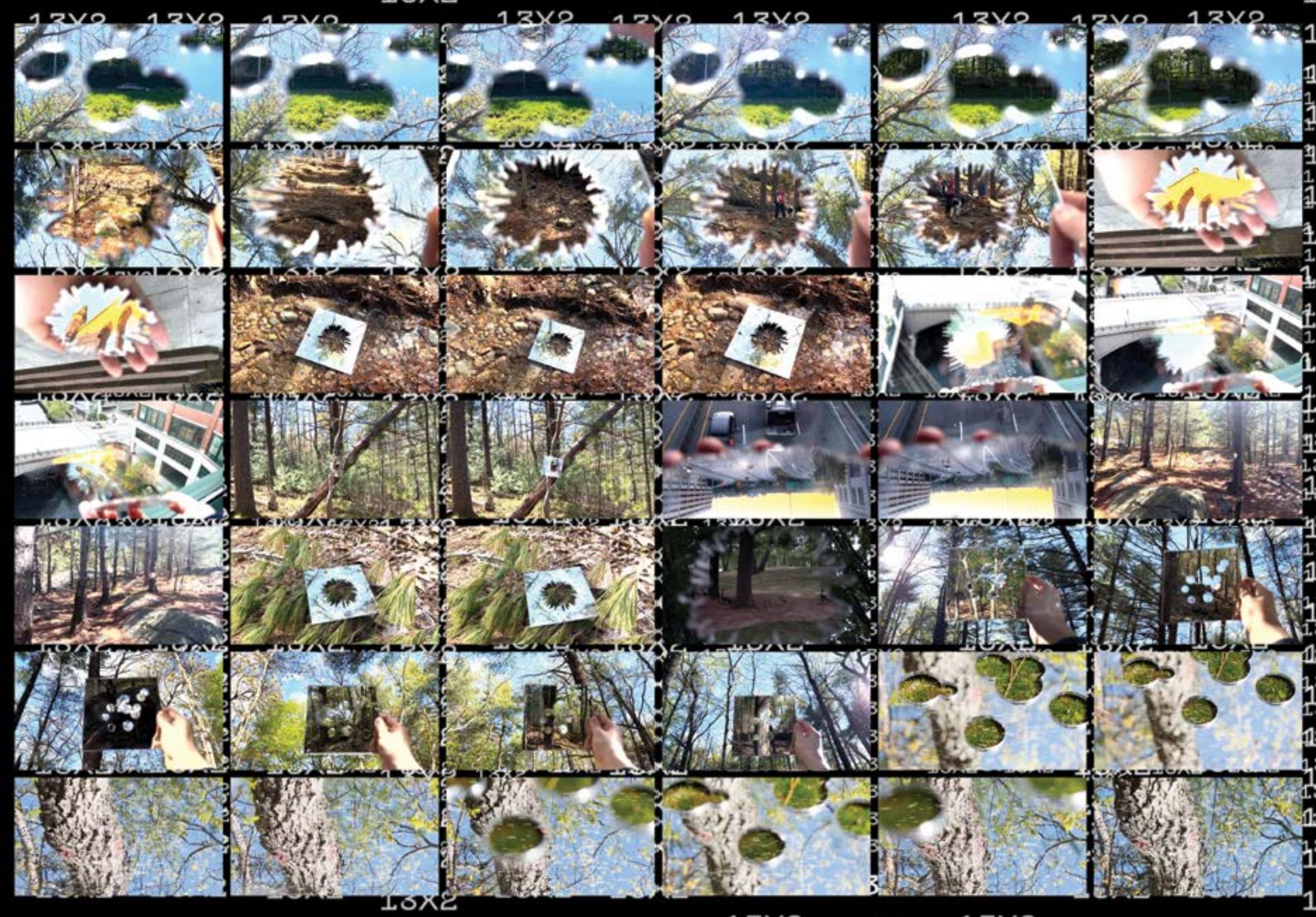




↓ Full publication layout spreads.

↙ Pages 118 to 121: frames from a final video.



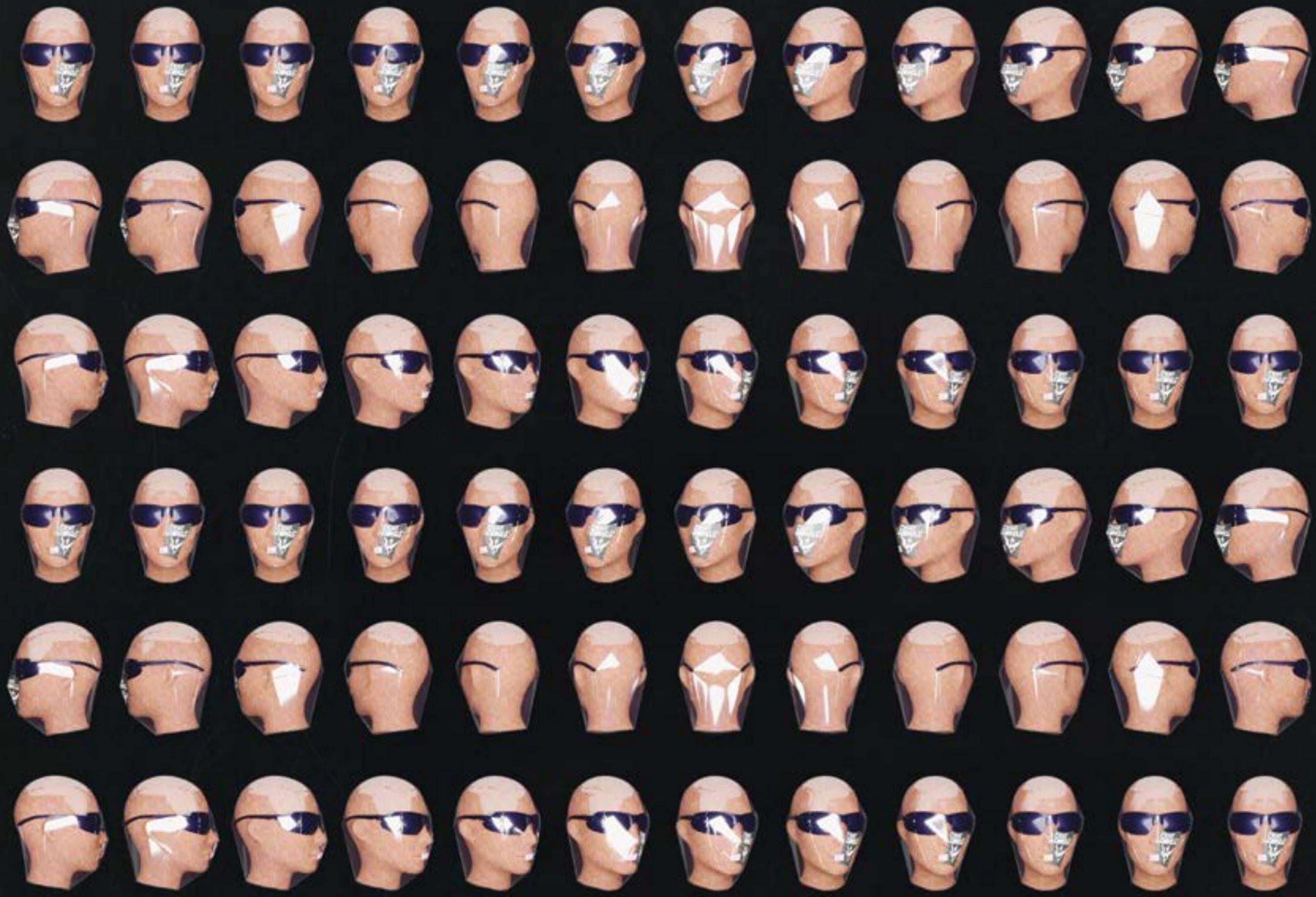


CRISIS SINKHOLE

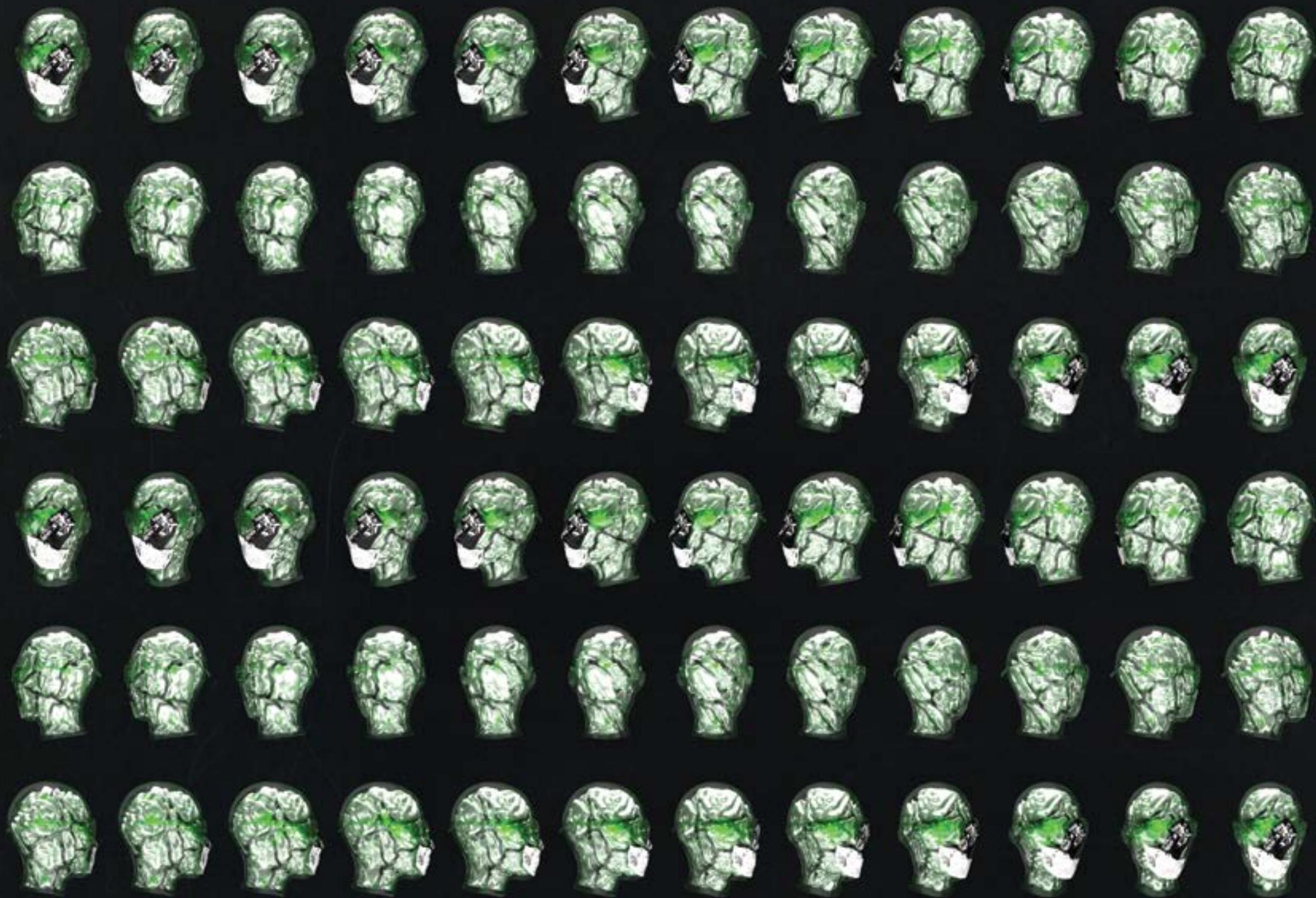


In early September of 2022, my sense of this reality changed profoundly and permanently. I moved to an unfamiliar area with only two suitcases, trying to settle in an empty room, find a local bank that would accept my foreign documents, and adapt to the local food, navigation, prices, and time zone. In most essential public places, sometimes I felt alienated or unwelcome. I was caught in a chaotic situation where physical and digital reality were used to verify me as a human being, living in the war between those who believe in the prerogative of either the digital or the physical as the ultimate source of significance and meaning. With the mental pressure of conflicts simultaneously happening in the world and being constantly bombarded by the feed on my social media, I felt consumed by the digital bureaucracy and entertainment.

Implementing my 3D skills, I created three versions of myself consumed by the Bank of America, Amtrak and Whole foods. These places became the first points of no return from the unknown capitalist train I just boarded. Each animation is an illustrated response to each of three excerpts from the articles by Shumon Basar, where he argues on the topics of "New age of collapsed narratives," our future as a society, and everyone losing the plot.







Every era has its "Magic Individuals." They're endowed with special powers of sight or insight, channeling the culture and often telling the culture truths about itself it doesn't know or is too afraid to ask. In the past, Magic Individuals have arrived as poets, composers, scientists, novelists, or artists.

There was always the next big thing out there waiting to hit us and change the way we understood the world. Magic Individuals pointed them to us. "Look! It's over there!" Lately, it's as if tech is already the next big thing. And then the next big thing. Plus the big thing that comes after. Tech is the ultimate modern magic.



Every crisis is a collapsed narrative: weakened supply chains, irreversible climate change, the return of nuclear war, canceled futures. One of the greatest narratives to have collapsed is the West's immunity from the horrors that have plagued much of the world. Sweltering heat waves, energy shortages, monetary failures. It's what we call "The Third Worlding of the First World." Everyone feels it.



As I scroll through my social media feed, I'm struck by a sense of ambiguity and confusion. It's like sitting in a stationary train and watching the train next to me move, creating a disorienting feeling where I'm unsure whether I'm moving or if the world around me is. This queasy, parallax sensation heightens my awareness that the lines between reality and illusion are blurred.

I can't help but wonder if I'm being influenced by the content I see or if I'm the one influencing it as I try to navigate the ever-changing landscape of our digital world.

ACT TWO: HERE



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wxyz
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Beam Regular

We each designed a serif typeface in Richard Lipton's typography class. Many of his past students were jokingly saying: "If you can create a serif typeface, nothing can scare you anymore." It was one of my favorite classes at RISD because it required a balance of creativity, focus, and strategic thinking. Creating a typeface is a meditative process, and with Richard's guidance, I discovered many unspoken rules and insights that helped me with future projects.

Beam Regular is a serif typeface that combines elements of brutalism with a blend of straight and soft lines. While working on the typeface, I wanted to create a visually memorable yet legible design.

The typeface embodies rawness and geometrically brutal angles while incorporating subtle curves and softened edges to maintain legibility and. Its serifs have a strong and bold presence, contributing to its aesthetic appeal. The balance between the clean, straight lines and the gentle curves adds a sense of harmony and versatility to the typeface, making it suitable for various contexts.

Type Design

Wind Up Bird
Cameron Axtles



Butterfly Serif
Musi Zhong



Phoebe
Olivia Avila



Harold Regular
Christine Wang



Fortis Typeface
Tasha Fling



Solaris
Alina Spatz



Ocean
Kiran Kumar



Beam Regular
Glikeriya Shotanava



Villette Regular
Anne M'Lean



Refuge Regular
Mihailog Gal



with Richard Lipton
Spring 2023

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Beam Regular

"Writing is my refuge.
It helps me think,
it makes me feel safe."
Dr. Asim Rafi Qamar
Bahawalpur, Punjab,
Pakistan.
63350.



Beam Regular

"Writing is my refuge.
It helps me think,
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Dr. Asim Rafi Qamar
Bahawalpur, Punjab.



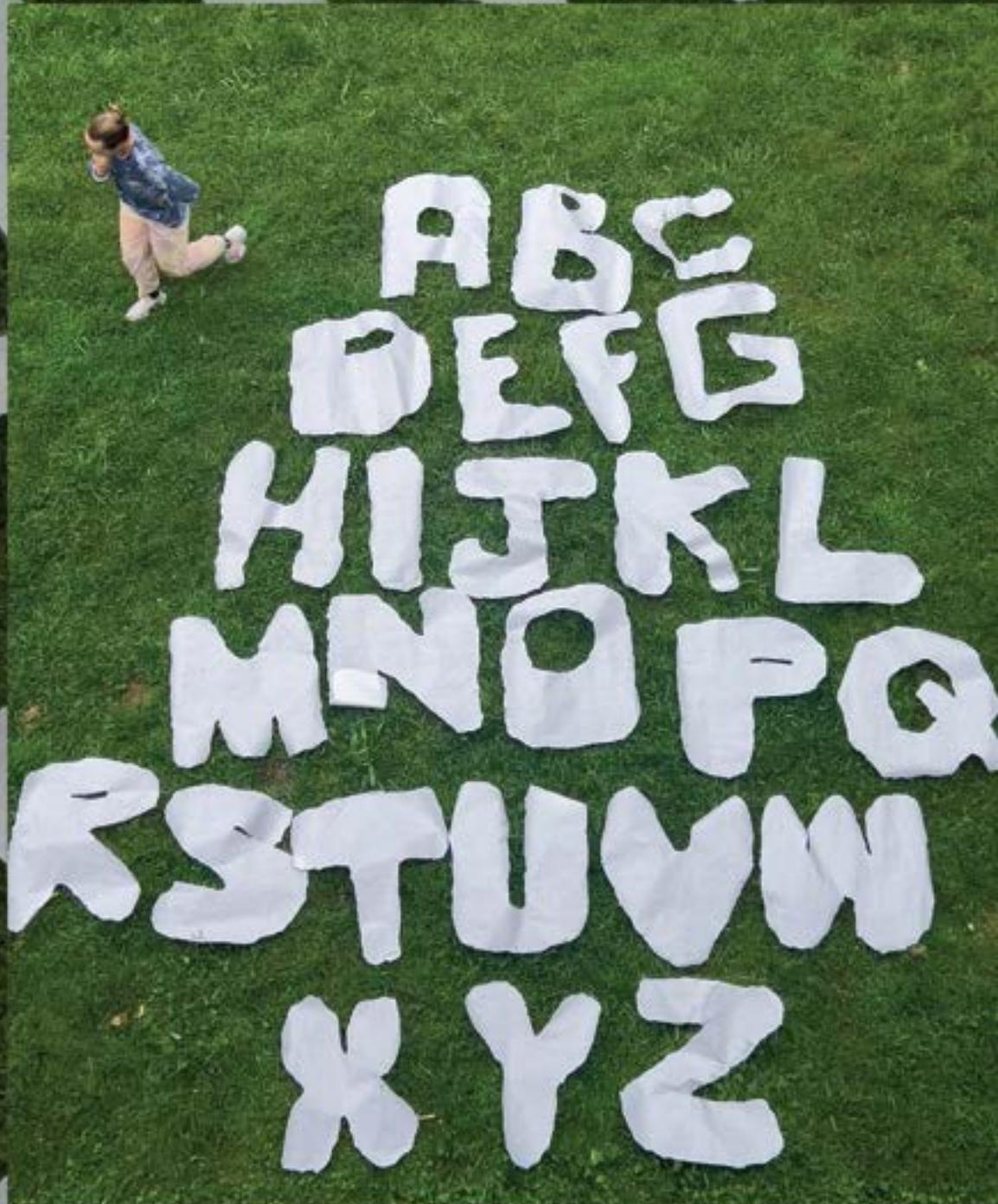
Beam Regular



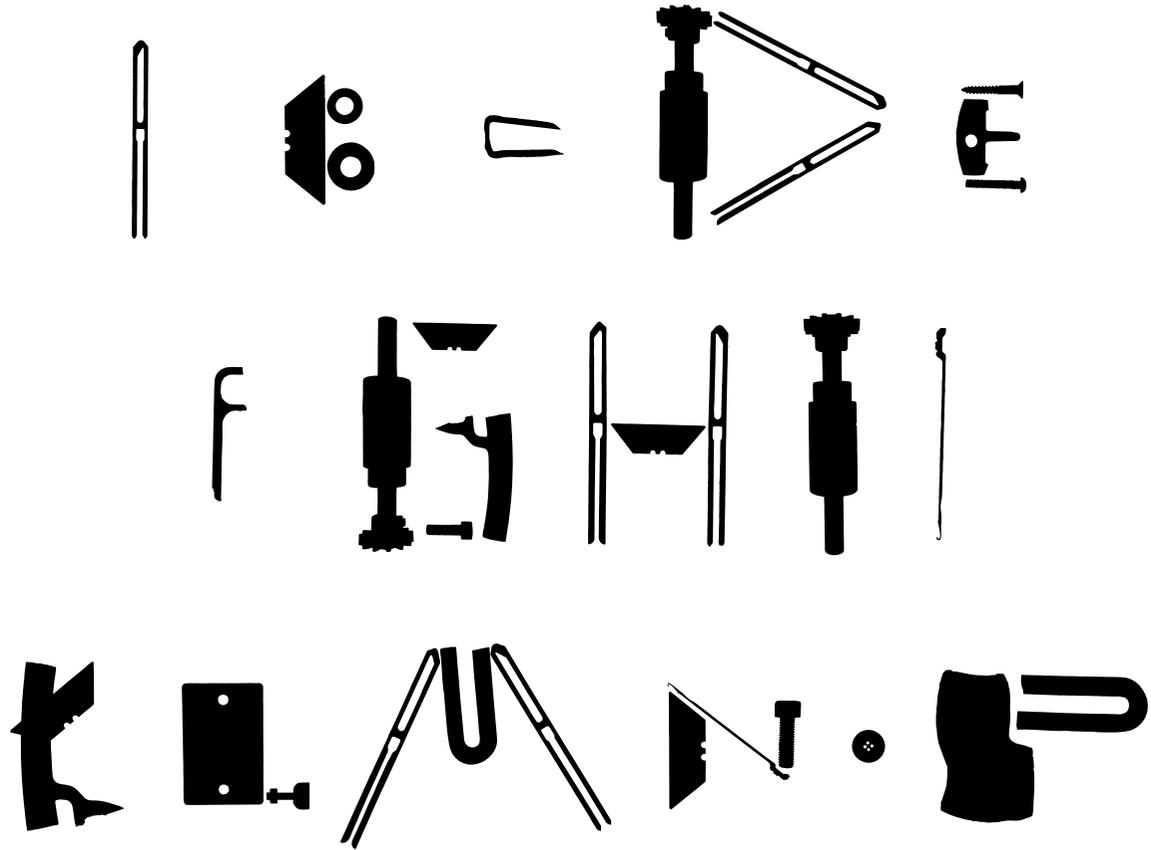
BUTCHER PAPER

The Newly Formed class, taught by Kathleen and Christopher Sleboda, consists of weekly assignments. Throughout the semester, we were in production mode, which helped us build the body of work. The intense program, where we had to respond quickly, helped me make faster decisions, manage the production time, and choose the optimal medium. We also learn to critique the work of others because the whole class is dedicated to reviewing the work of others and providing expanded feedback. Creativity exercises submerged in fast production made me stop overthinking and helped me develop a personal style through the unconscious, meditative practice of making.

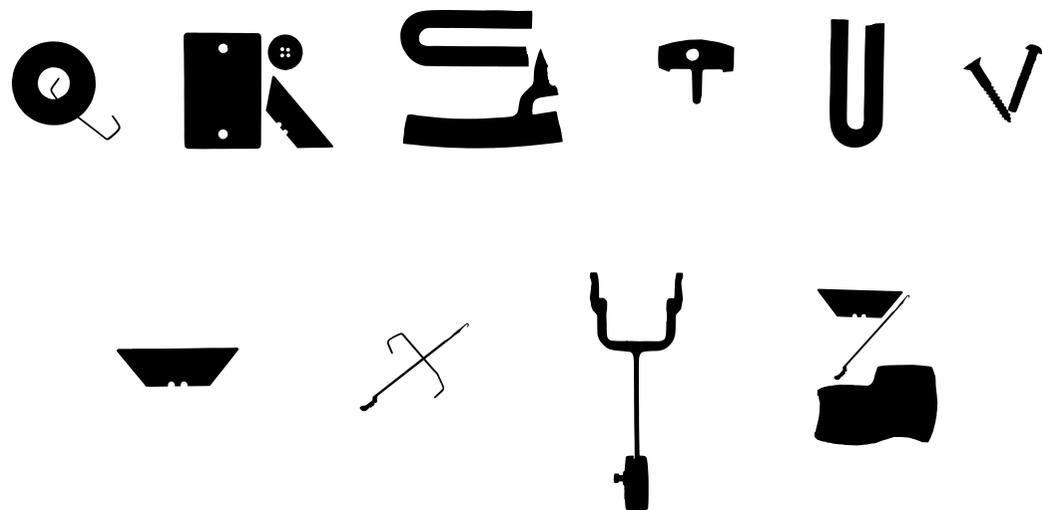
For our first assignment, we were challenged to create an alphabet using three categories: Object, System, and Variable. I chose a butcher paper roll for the Object, cut it into thirty-three squares, and ripped each letter by hand. The letters were big, and I had to find a higher ground to take pictures from the top. The park near my house was a perfect spot. While taking photographs, the light rain and wind suddenly interrupted my process. I realized that this typeface could be a variable, too, because the raindrops left blurred circles on the paper's surface, and the wind was blowing the letters away, distorting and folding them.



WIND
RAIN
CLOUDS
RISD
NEWLY
FORMED!



142



143

For a System category, I explored an empty factory in Pawtucket and collected the artifacts around its perimeter. The factory produced buttons in the past. I collected enough objects and created an alphabet combining different shapes into letters.

A B C D E F
 G H I J K L
 M N O
 P Q R S
 T U V W X Y
 Z
 a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z

W X Y Z
 a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z

Urban Catalyst was created in a short four-week Variable Type workshop by Gabriel Drozdov. We learned how to make master layers for a variable type, technical skills, and other insights into designing typefaces with Glyphs. Using the online software Fontgauntlet, developed by ABC Dinamo, we could instantly animate and see the possible outcome of a design immediately. While working on the design, I was in the process of writing my Thesis Book. Since I used architectural language in the book, I wanted to create a variable typeface that imitates floorplans.

abcdef

abcdef

abcdef

ghijklmn

ghijklmn

ghijklmn

opqrst

opqrst

opqrst

vwxyz

vwxyz

vwxyz

123456

123456

123456

7890

7890

7890

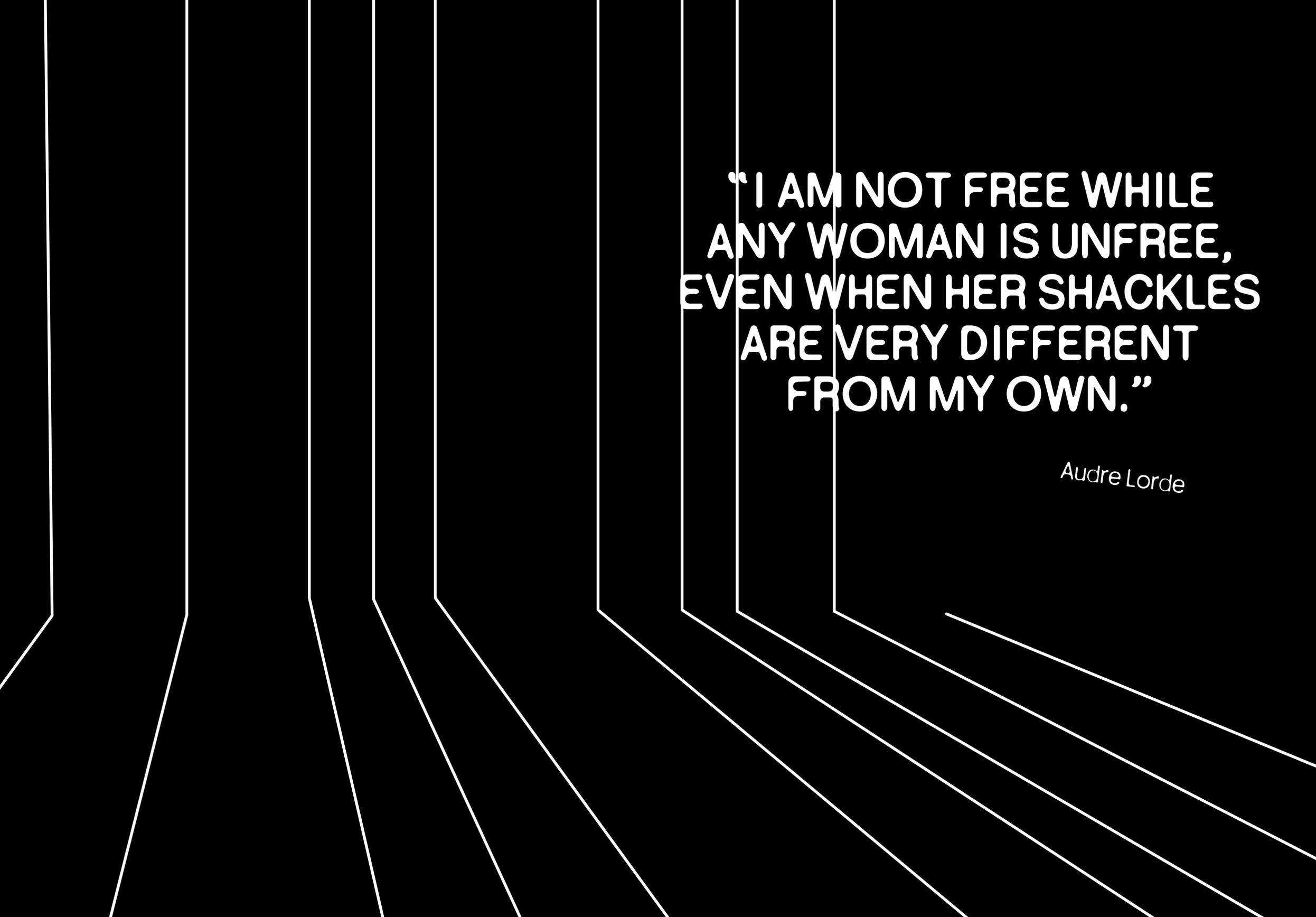
↑ Master A:
Two of my favorite typefaces inspired me: Ball Pill by Benoît Bodhuin and New Edge by Charlotte Rohde.

↑ Master B is an intermediate state between initial and final transformations.

↑ Master C imitates floorplans while simultaneously staying quite legible.

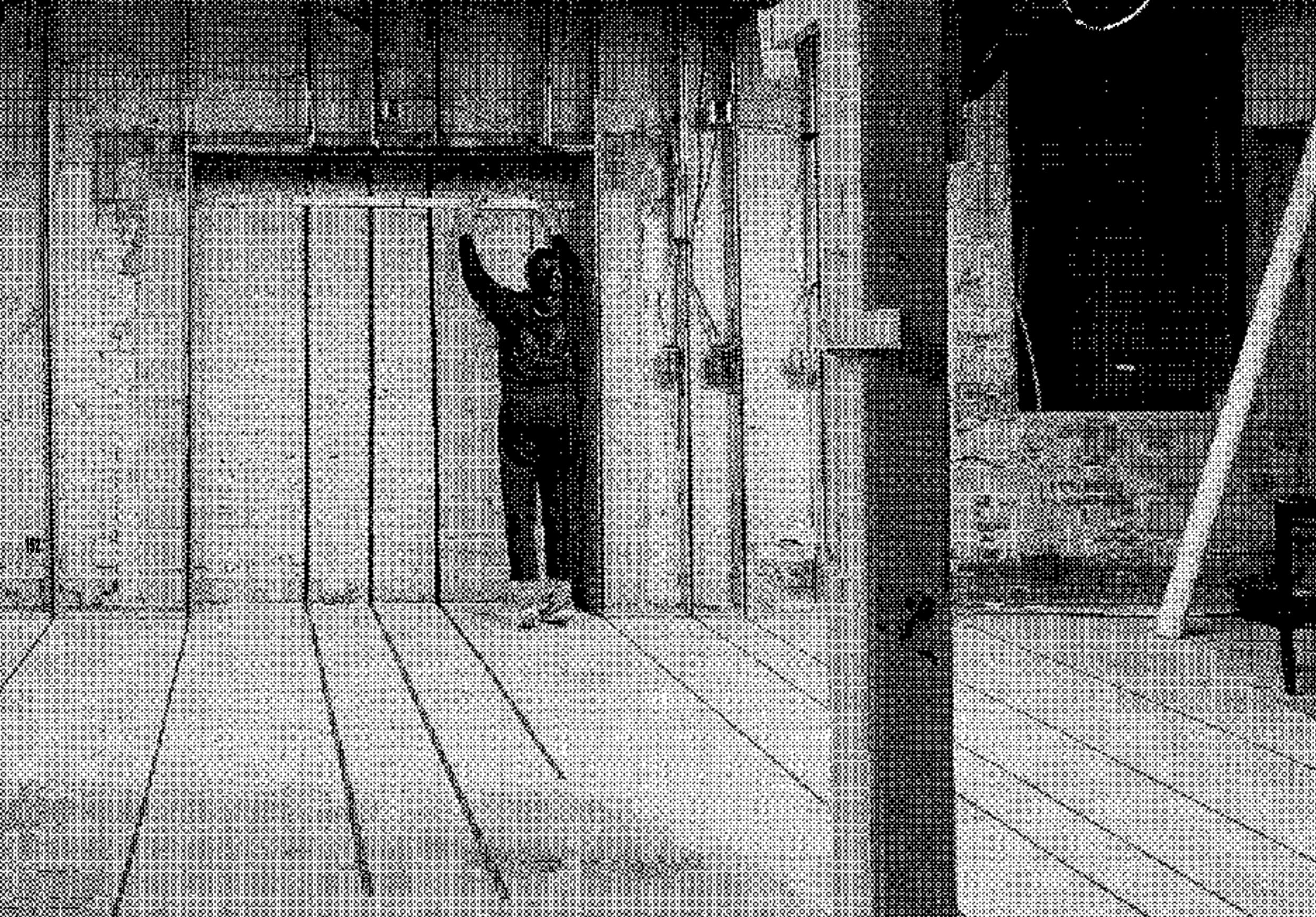
**(HERE): AN EMPTY WAREHOUSE
IN OLNEYVILLE, RI. HERE, I FOUND
FRIENDS AND LIKE-MINDED
PEOPLE, AND MY AREA OF IN-
TEREST IS ORGANIZING PUB-
LIC SPACES FOR CREATIVES AND
BUILDING A SENSE OF BELONGING
THROUGH GRAPHIC DESIGN.**

(a)



**“I AM NOT FREE WHILE
ANY WOMAN IS UNFREE,
EVEN WHEN HER SHACKLES
ARE VERY DIFFERENT
FROM MY OWN.”**

Audre Lorde





↑ Turning space into a grid.
October 2023, Olneyville, RI.

↑ One space I considered researching was the empty Apex building, Pawtucket, RI. Google Maps view from the I-95 highway.

THE SPACE

During the summer of 2023, I had time to step away from the intense program at RISD and reflect on what was happening during the year. I also did an internship at a production company. Being an entrepreneur most of my life and suddenly going back to work for someone and living an office life felt very grounding. I observed the commercial side of creative organizations and corporate life in America. This experience brought back my memories of being in an office forty hours a week, which was something I tried to avoid. I connected the roots of my inner conflict with the current economic system and thought of its inability to adapt to our fast-paced world. It is not the work that I did not like, but the lack of freedom and a feeling of being a replaceable commodity with only one mission: to generate profit for the employer.

In September, when we had to present our ideas for thesis research, I remember entering Bethany Johns's office and optimistically declaring that by the end of the year, I wanted to create a plan for organizing a cultural center and pitch the idea to investors or government. Based on the example of the Apex building, which has been empty for years, I planned to propose reformatting it into an urban Third Place in the Pawtucket area.

Later that month, I met with Paul Soulellis to ask for his opinion about the theme of my thesis, as his expertise in building creative communities was much needed, especially in maintaining a safe environment working with artists. We narrowed the scope of ideas, and I had a plan of action soon after. [Fig. 1]



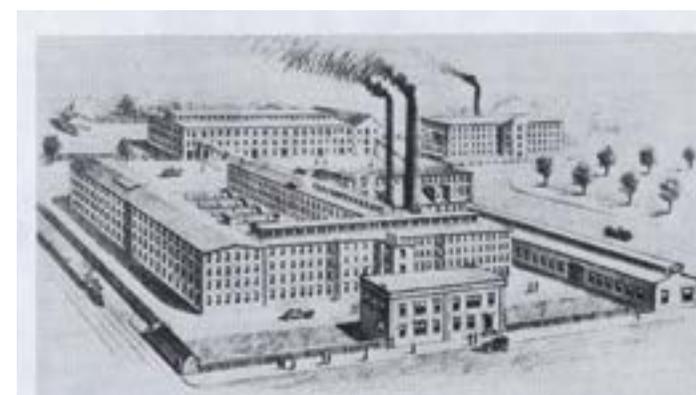
↑ [Fig. 1] The first sketch I made for the structure of my thesis book after meeting with Paul Soulellis.

Sharing ideas and being open with everyone is the best way to achieve results. While some may be cautious about doing that for several reasons, which is understandable, I believe that genuine ideas cannot be fully replicated nor have the same success in conveying the idea as the original concept. By being vocal and open, we attract like-minded people into our lives. One of the positive examples of that was my introduction to Dennis Leggett on October 9, 2023. He manages a few well-known industrial buildings in Olneyville and allowed me to use one of the currently empty spaces for my Thesis experiments. I started engaging with it immediately, and instead of working on the concept for the Apex building, I had a chance to work with an actual physical space.

Providence is a classic example of a post-industrial city. Being a US leader in wool and jewelry production at the end of the nineteenth century, its former glory remained in history as a result of the globalization of production processes in the second half of the twentieth century.

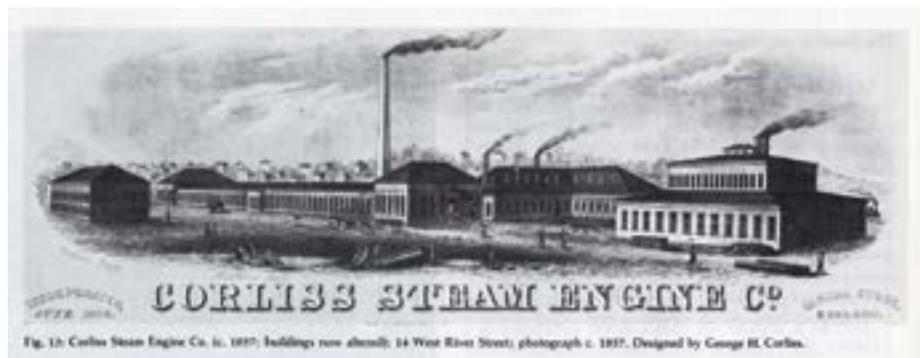
Exploring the urban wastelands of Providence, I compared these areas to the post-Soviet factories that I saw in Kazakhstan and Russia. The structure and architecture of the buildings were similar, but I was surprised by the density and variety of factories spread around Providence's outskirts.

After diving deeper into the history of space in Olneyville, I discovered it was a part of the Weybosset Mills complex, [Fig. 2] one of the largest industrial complexes in Providence, the structures were used for scouring, picking and dyeing wool. The building served as a boiler house with two Corliss Steam Engines inside it. [Fig. 3]



(c) Weybosset Mills, Dike Street.

↑ [Fig. 2] Weybosset Mills. Scanned image from the book: Fink, Lisa C. 1981. Providence Industrial Sites. Rhode Island Historical Preservation.



↑ [Fig. 3]: Steam engine, fitted with rotary valves and with variable valve timing patented in 1849 Invented by and named after the US engineer George Henry Corliss of Providence, RI. Wikipedia. 2024. "Corliss Steam Engine." Wikimedia Foundation. Last modified January 3, 2024. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Corliss_steam_engine.

SPATIAL EXPERIMENTS

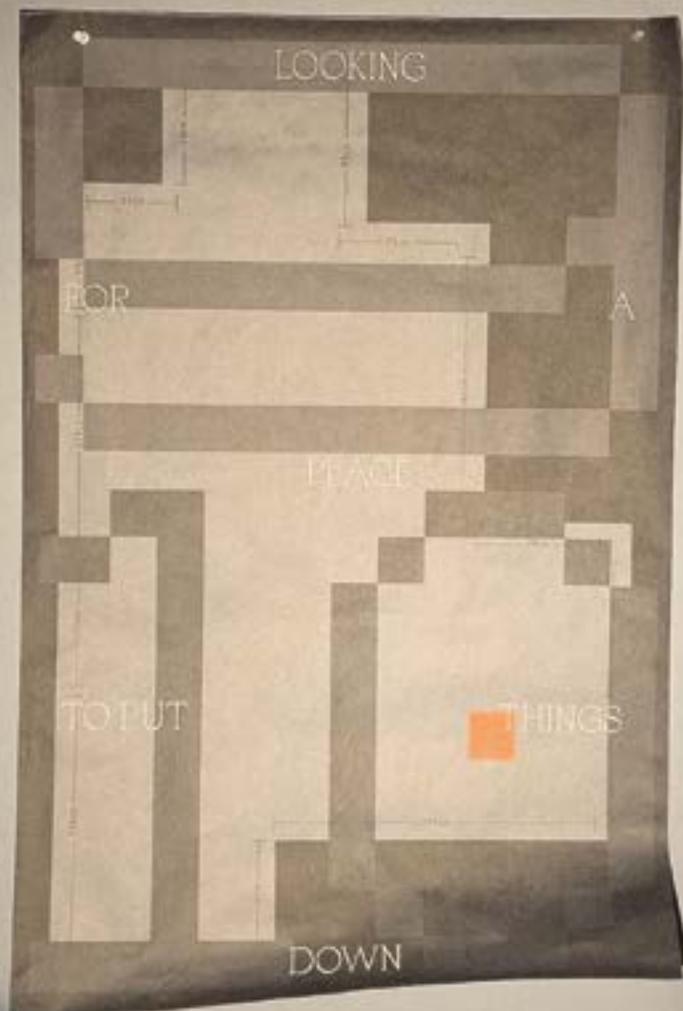
Space is a body that contains memory, history, and ghosts of the past—spatial design is an exercise in building fantasies. The arrangement of objects, interaction with the environment, light configuration, and visual communication should make you feel a certain way. I want to transport you and displace you from normal life.

Form.

Follows.

Fantasy.

I conducted a series of performances in which I clean, arrange, and alter an industrial space in Olneyville. Each performance is a step toward creating a community space open for collaborations, educators, and creative minds. This experience was divided into three acts. It begins with cleaning and turning the space into a grid [Act One], followed by activating the space by organizing a family gathering [Act Two], and then, at the end, filling the space with the audience [Act Three]. At its core, all three acts' methodological approach appropriates the practices of playfulness and the mechanics for spatial design production and research purposes.



[1] Wikipedia. 2024. "Mierle Laderman Ukeles." Wikimedia Foundation. Last modified April 9, 2024. https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Mierle_Laderman_Ukeles&action=history.

LOOKING FOR A PLACE TO PUT THINGS DOWN

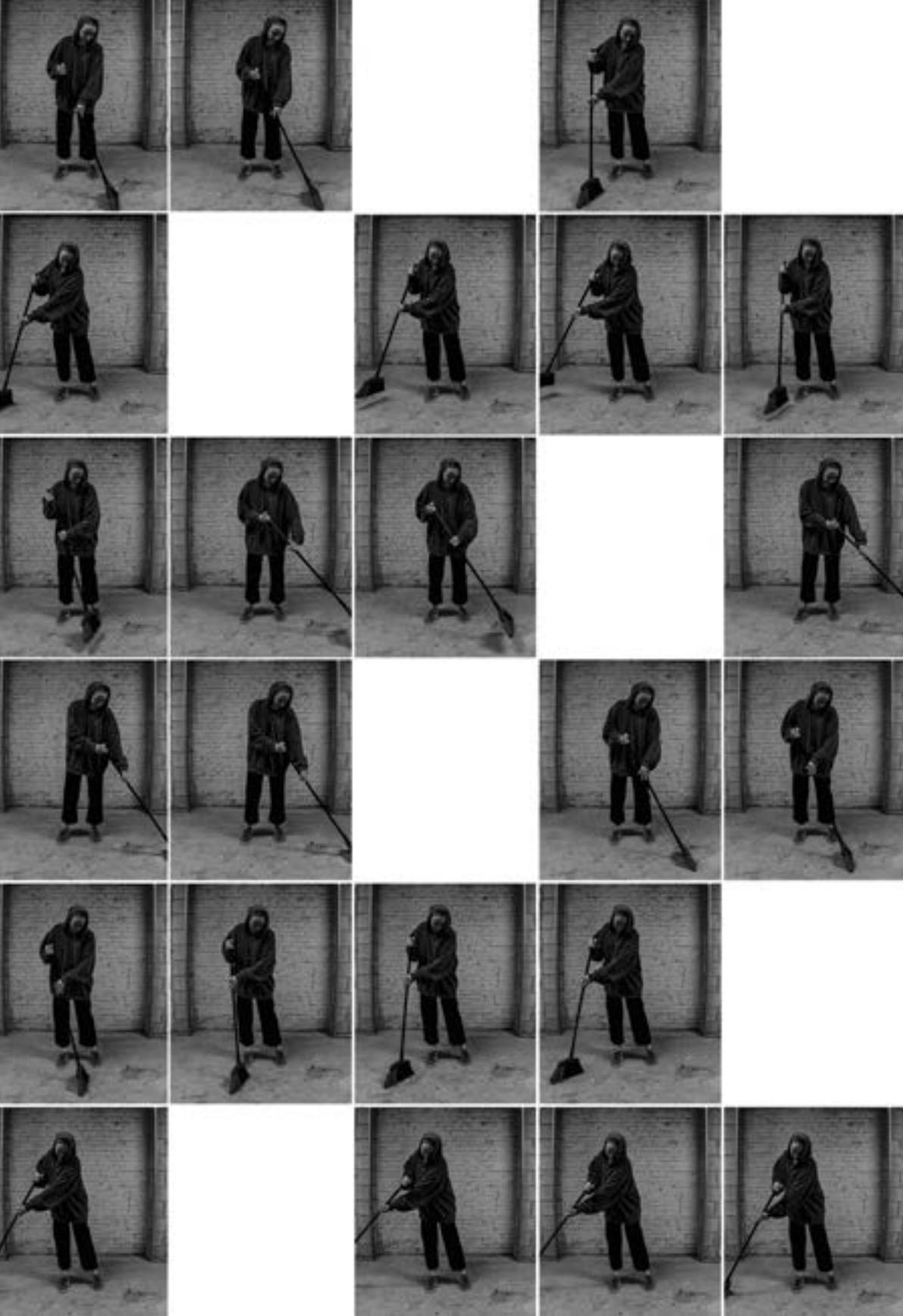
Design is often correlated with problem-solving in practical contexts. Moreover, this conception is mistaken for the definition of design itself, thus excluding activities from a less popular view of design that do not serve a practical purpose. In contrast, my graphic design practice consists primarily of manual labor.

My grandmother often said that when you clean your room, you clean your head.

In the first part of the performance, I clean, sweep, and rearrange the space as a metaphor for "healing." Repetitive and often thankless work is essential for the functioning of domestic and public spaces, challenging the mundane labor of women, which is often seen as monotonous and marginalized. The work of Mierle Laderman Ukeles, An American artist known for her feminist and service-oriented artworks, relates the idea of process in conceptual art to domestic and civic "maintenance." Her art brings to life the very essence of any urban center: waste flows, recycling, sustainability, environment, people, and ecology. [1]

[2] Butler, Cornelia [2007]. *Wack! Art and the Feminist Revolution*. MIT Press. p. 311.

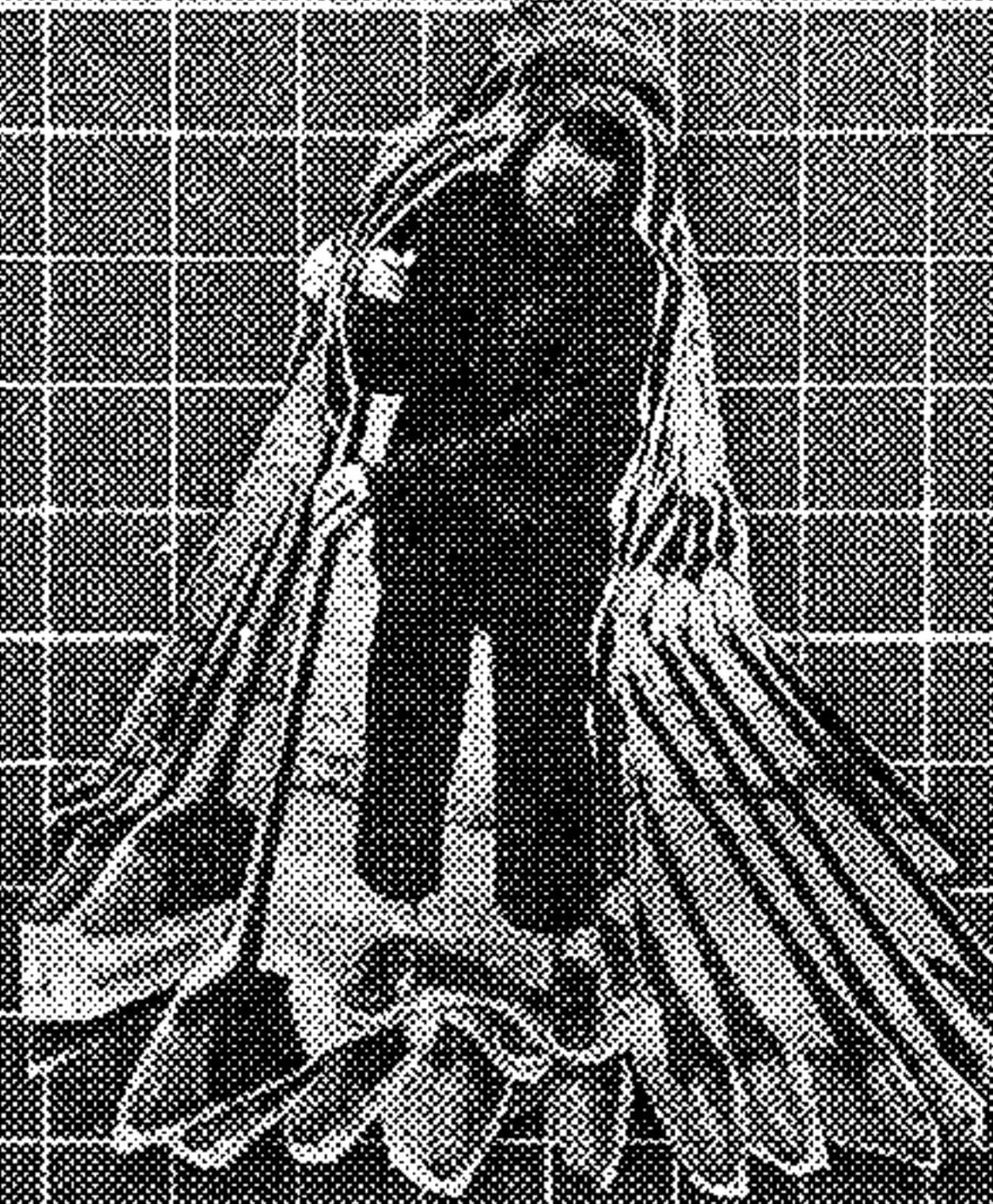
Initially written as a proposal for an exhibition entitled *Care, the Manifesto For Maintenance Art* emphasizes maintenance — keeping things clean, working and cared for — as a creative strategy. The manifesto came about after Ukeles gave birth to her first child. Suddenly she had to balance her time as an artist and mother, and had little time to create art. She noted that the famous male artists that she admired never had to make such sacrifices. [2]

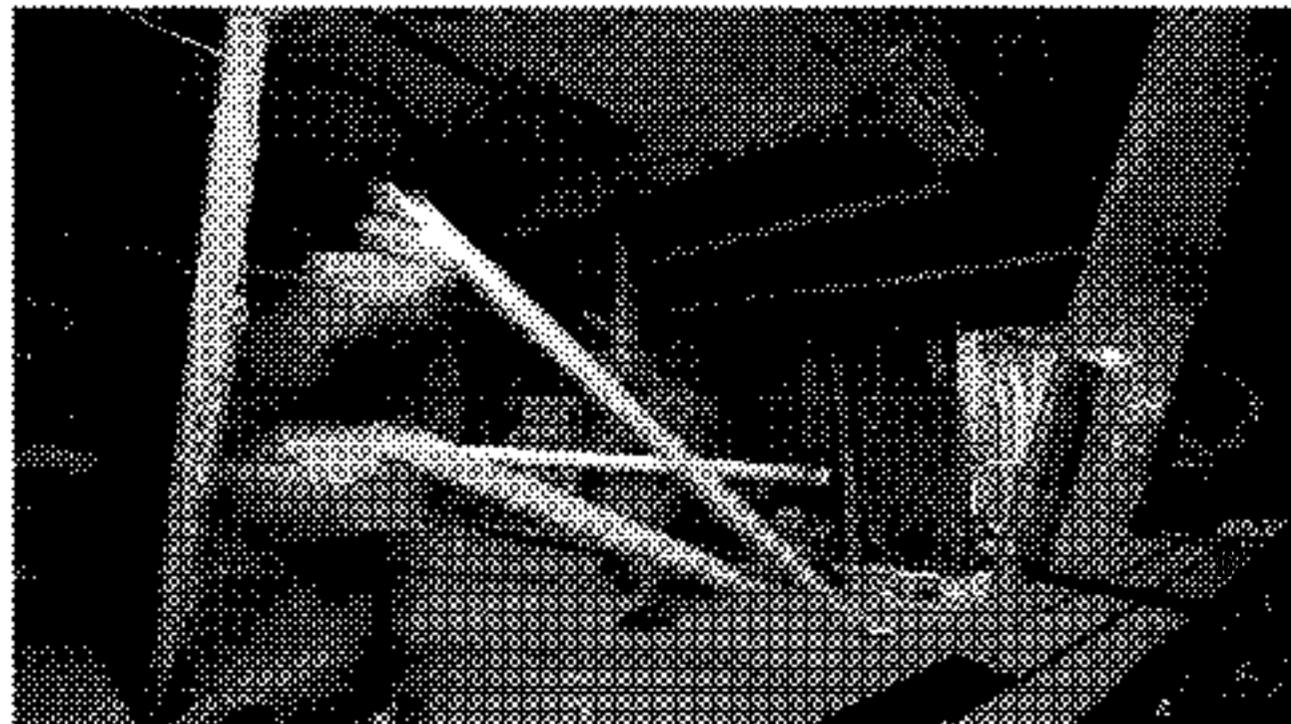
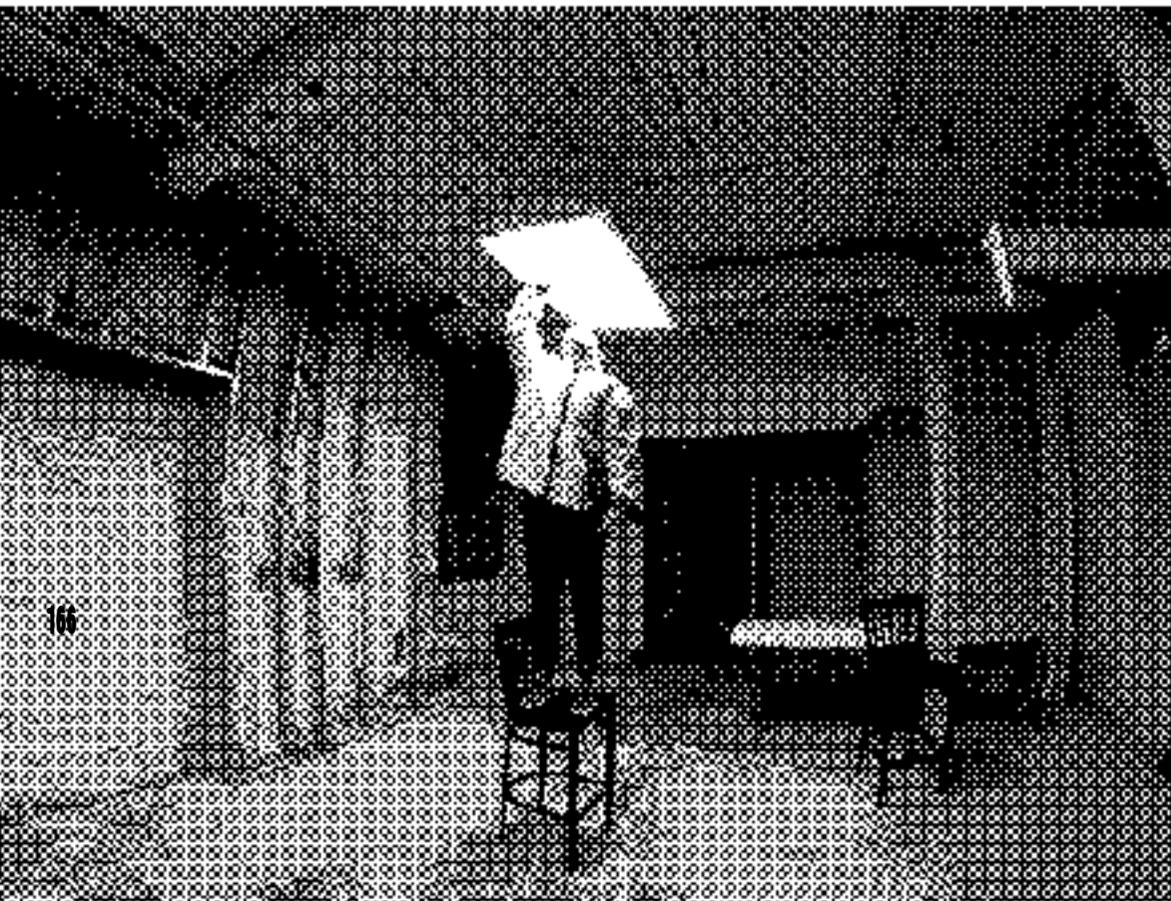


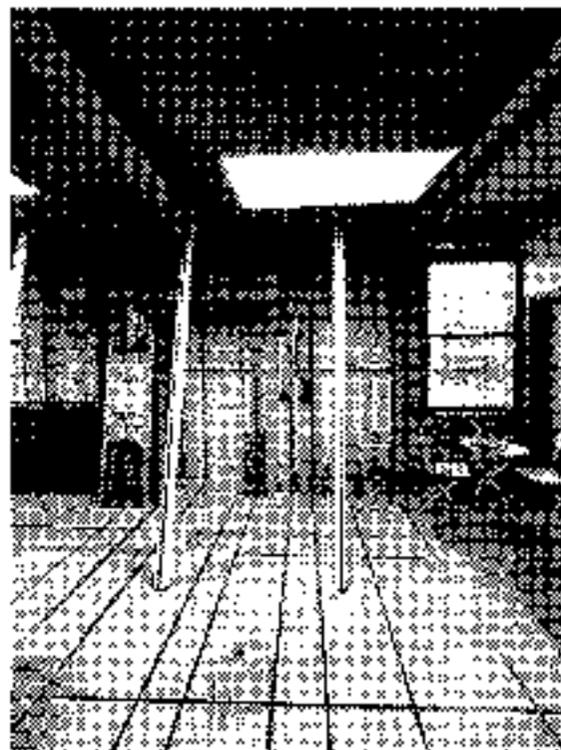
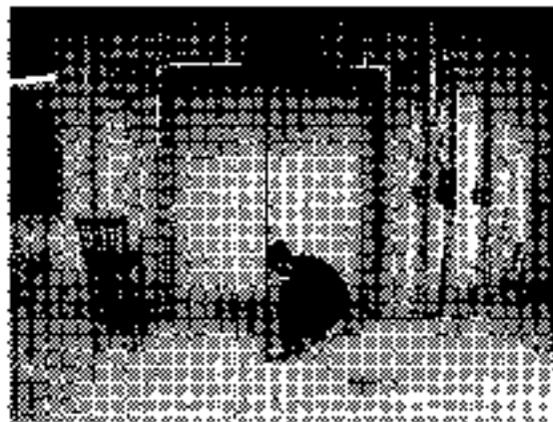
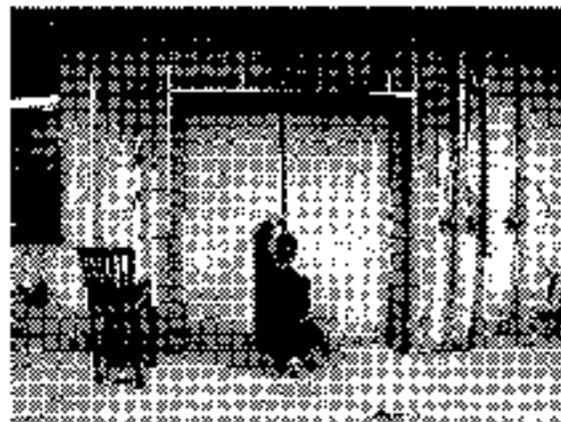
↑ Mierle Laderman Ukeles, *Maintenance Art Tasks* 1973 [detail], album with gelatin silver prints, chain, and rags, 13 × 12 1/2 × 1 3/4". Photographs by Joshua Siderowitz, 1973. Source: <https://tinyurl.com/57mzhpzr>

↑ In the making: I created a stop-motion video by printing and cutting each frame individually.
↓

To clean the space, I used tools that the previous workers abandoned. I intentionally tried to utilize everything left inside the space to continue the work previously done by other people. I was thinking about the meditative process of cleaning the space and the basic essential knowledge women pass down through generations. Repetition is meditative; it helps clean intrusive thoughts, process emotions, and calm the mind. While sweeping the floor, I thought about my rhythm and the broom's sound as it broke through the silence of the space. I create my music with tools that have stayed the same for generations, and I use it with the same care that my mother, grandmother, and all the previous generations of women in my family used. I am taking care of the space where I want to invite my friends and future acquaintances, treating the space as if it were a friend.







GRID

Turning space into a grid is a beginning stage for a graphic designer, using Tape as a symbol of connection. In his book, *The City of Tomorrow*, published in 1924, the architect Le Corbusier wrote, “man walks in a straight line because he has a goal and knows where he is going.’ In a period of post post-modernism we don’t know where we are going, which is perhaps why the grid is simultaneously loved and loathed. It acts as a constant reminder that modernism, which we thought gave permanent answers, was only a temporary solution. In the final section of the book, “*Breaking the Grid*,” the graphic designer/artist Peter Anderson contemplates this shift in approach: the more we build, the more we sprawl all over the world, the more we’ll feel that somehow we want to get nature back.”

The factory’s interior suffered from age and neglect, with its walls crumbling and leaking, and it was threatened with demolition. I feel deeply honored to experiment with this space and understand the responsibility that comes with it.

By repeatedly engaging with the space, I started noticing signs of time: cracks in the walls, layers of paint, and nails that dissolved in wooden pillars. Despite the space being cleaned regularly, these unintentional patterns made me think of the grid that graphic design always strives to reinvent. The grid can be seen both as open and rule-driven and is influenced by the

characteristics of the space it occupies.

The idea to turn the space into a grid came instantly. The grid gives a sense of control and order. As a graphic designer, I start my projects by making a grid. Black tape follows the lines of the space, emphasizing its curves and imperfections.

While documenting the process, I thought the result would only partially convey emotions and atmosphere. If the performance happened once, does that mean that all the pictures we see after are just the vision of the person who documented it? So, when we look at the old photos from decades ago, do we see documentation from a stranger rather than actual

Grid

follows

the form.

work of an artist?

The combined documentation turned out to be different from what I was expecting. Despite the labor, time, and effort I spent cleaning the space, the final video looked light and easy, and I decided to do something to put manual labor into the video as well. I printed each frame from the documentation and cut almost three hundred frames where I swept the floor. For almost a week, I spent hours before bed cutting frame by frame, focusing on one thing and repeating my movements as they were automated.

The looped video sequence consists of two parts. In the first part, I cleaned the space and moved heavy objects, preparing it for future events. In the second part of the video, I carefully engage with the elements of the space by outlining and emphasizing the “grid” with black tape. The video sequence is followed by ambient music in the background.

ACT TWO: HERE





WHAT'S FOR DINNER?

I remember my big family gatherings at my grandmother's garden for every occasion. I remember how we were serving the table, running back and forth with utensils, cups, and plates. I remember when the first guests arrived, and we happily ran to open the gates for them.

As a kid, I learned about community through my family. Later, I created new connections and my new community. When I moved to Providence as an international student, leaving an entire life behind and diving into the unknown was exciting and scary. However, after a year of living abroad, I made new friends and felt a sense of home again. We cooked together, missed our homes together, and shared our cultural differences at small gatherings. We can taste the culture through the food and pass the recipe to future generations after us.

As the next step in activating the space, I inherently invited the closest ones to the site. It was a gathering of eight people that made me feel at home. Giving each friend a prompt — to bring a traditional dish to their family gatherings. Long conversations, feeling safe and open enough to be vulnerable, and sharing a meal are sacred rituals passed down through generations. This evening felt like a piece of puzzle that I needed to honor the space.

Bringing people to the space is something that I enjoy, but it also takes a lot of responsibility and effort to be a host. As a first step, I designed invitations and organized logistics. In her *Theory of a Carrier Bag* by an American writer, Ursula K. Le Guin, wrote: “before the tool that forces energy outward, we made the tool that brings energy home.” Prior to the preem-inence of sticks, swords, and the Hero’s long, hard, killing tools, our ancestors’ greatest invention was the container: the basket of wild oats, the medicine bun-dle, the net made of your own hair, the home, the shrine, the place that contains whatever is sacred.” Keeping in mind that my guests were prompted to bring a dish, I knew I wanted to give them something in return, and a black screen-printed tote bag would be the perfect choice.

I recorded the whole process and later transcribed our conversations. With the help of AI transcribing software, I found out that during our conversations, we used these four words the most: work, culture, community, and food. I considered it a secret message and turned these words into a binary code. For every letter, I created a symbol and created patterns using Processing. As a result, I printed a long pattern with hidden words encrypted inside it.

To continue the idea of connection, continuity, and the sequence of events, I decided to pass the recorded audio of the dinner conversation on to future events. The idea was to upload an MP3 file to a flash card and give it to the musicians performing in the space. I wanted the USB driver to be visually connected to the space, so I 3-D scanned the location and printed it with an outlet for a USB slot.

↓ Invitations. Printed with white ink on black cardstock paper.





Vishakha Rubela

Tina Zhou

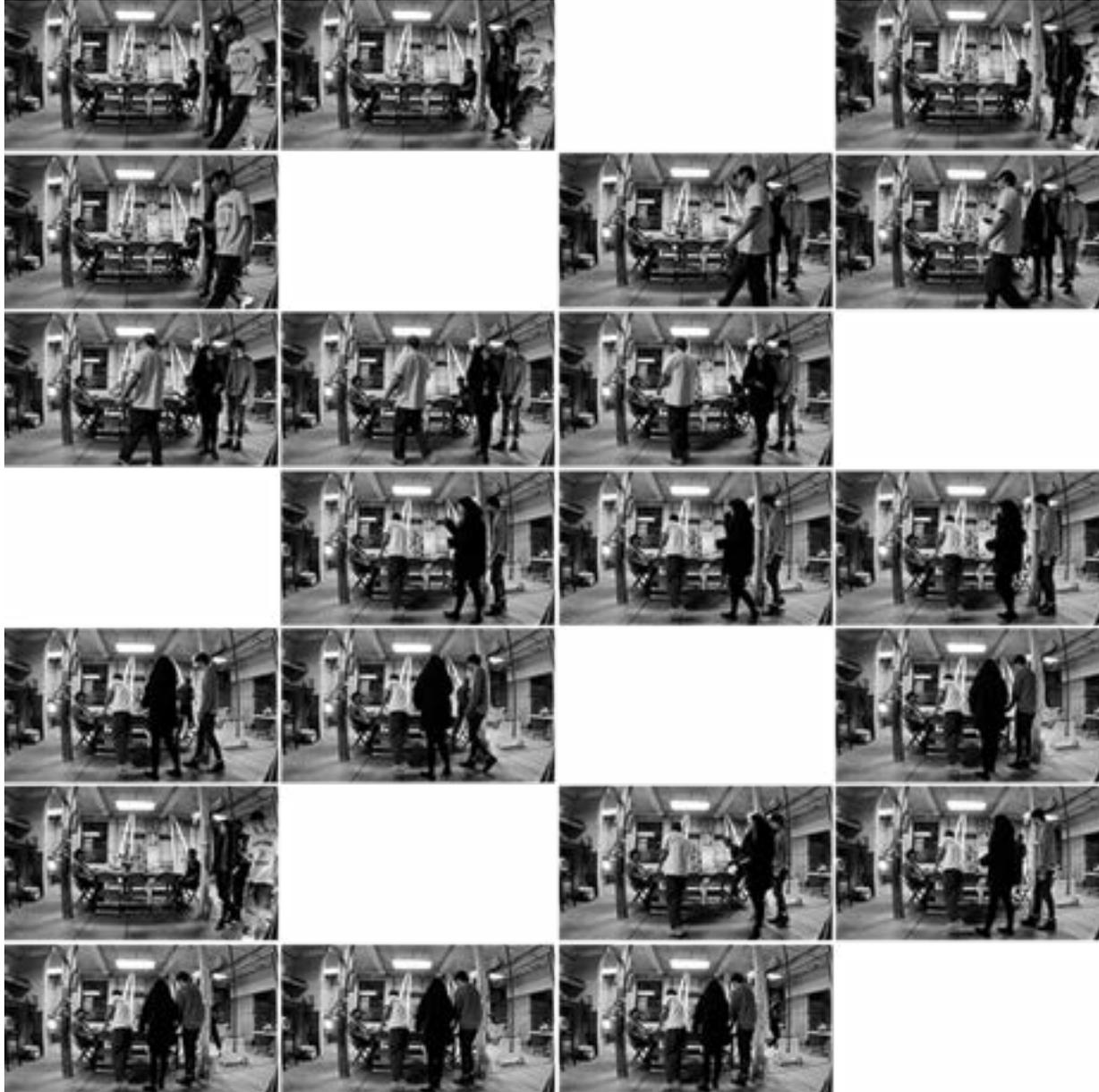
Dennis Leggett

Kayla Leggett

Carlos Mendes

Ian Keliber

↓ Documenting the process.

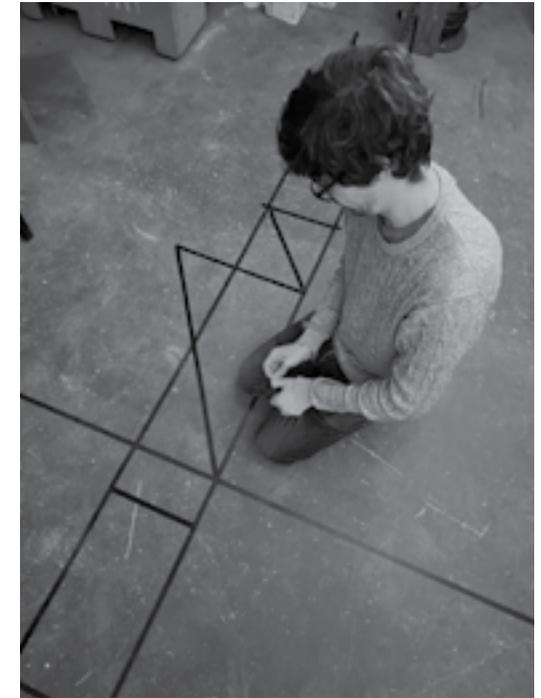


178

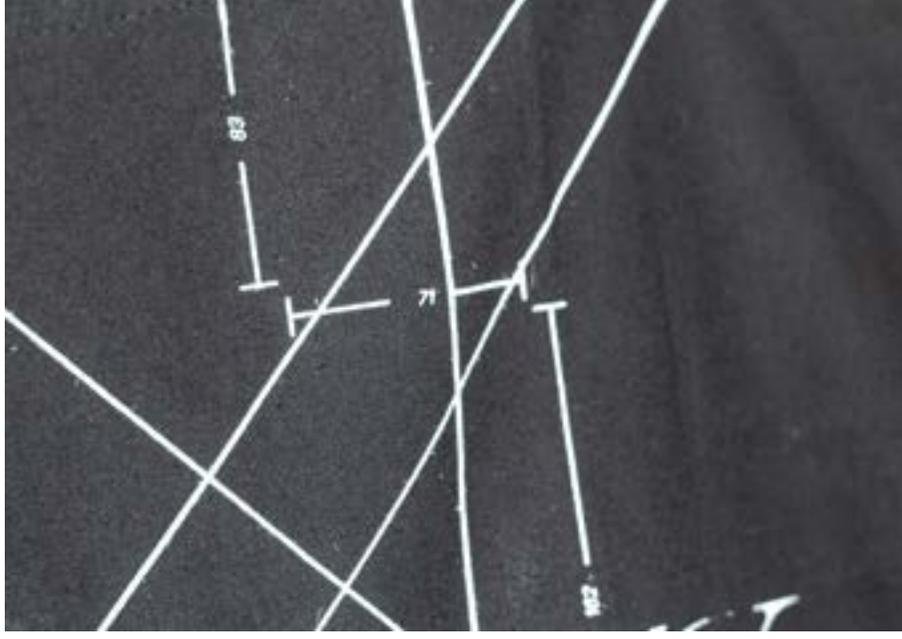
ACT TWO: HERE



→ ↓ Ian is making a grid: after we were done with dinner, everyone suddenly started playing with the tape I left. I like how different everyone's grids turned out.



179



↓ Calu wearing a tote bag.



← I could screen print even the smallest architectural details of the space onto a cotton fabric!

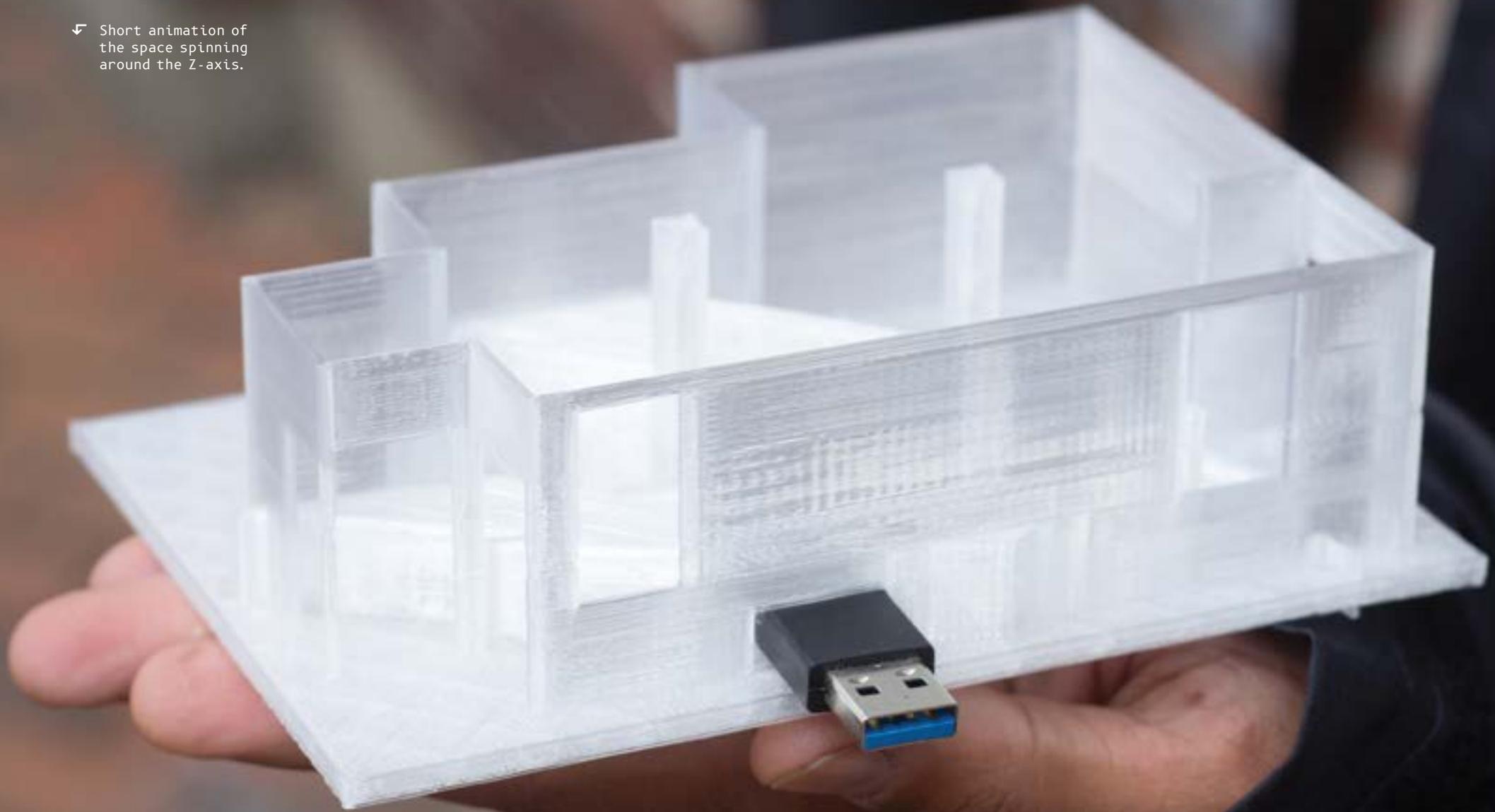


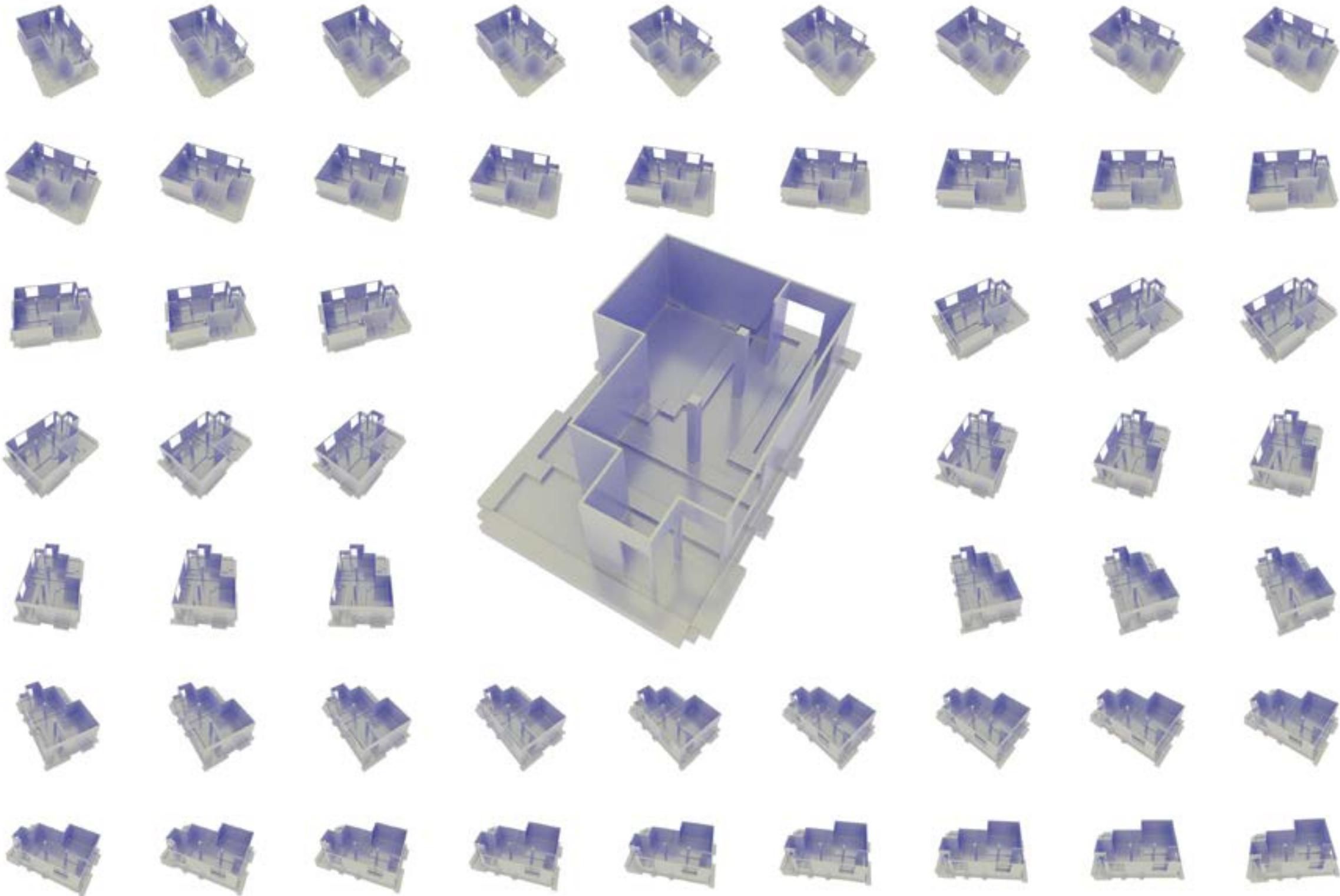
↑ → I encoded into binary code four key words we discussed during dinner: work, food, culture, and community. This resulted in long encrypted sheets of paper, which I printed out and hung in the space.

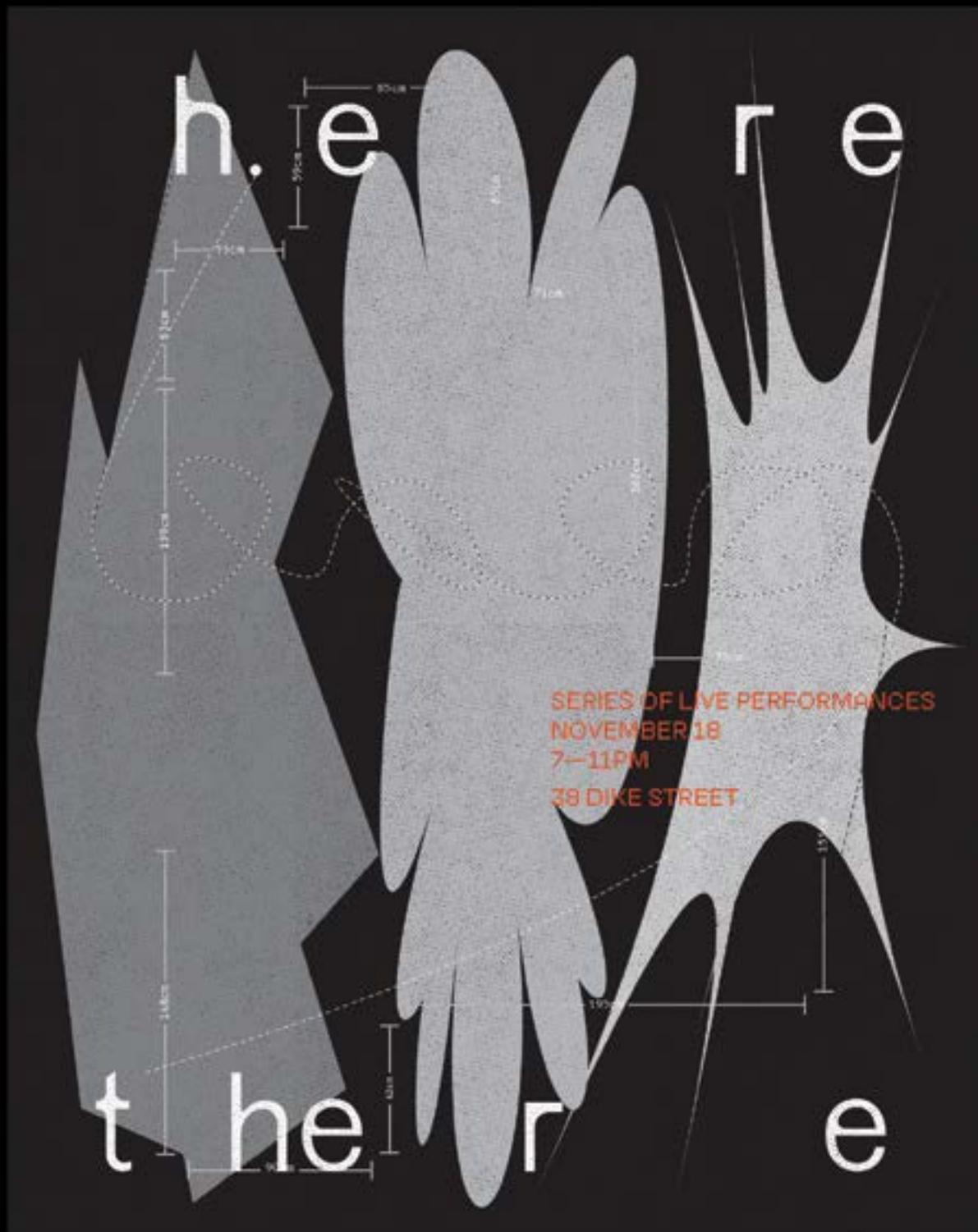


↓ The 3D printed USB contains conversations, posters, and invitations from the previous event.

↙ Short animation of the space spinning around the Z-axis.







HERE—THERE

During winter break, I worked with Ryan Waller on designing a visual identity of the space. My initial idea was to avoid corporate feeling and a “polished look.” I also wanted to avoid naming the space by its address or past historical function, as this commonly happens in similar projects. It felt like a way to claim the space, which was different from my case as it was given to me rent-free for one year. The space was unfinished and raw, and I wanted to create a visual communication reflecting this condition. The concept is meant to be open to change its direction, flexible for any ideas, and formatted completely (or never at all).

While explaining the concept of the space to Ryan, I used “here — there” a lot. It made me think that this combination of words reflects my life’s ever-changing nature, constant movement, and journey from point A to B. So, a name reflects its uncertainty and movement and, ideally, will not necessarily be tied to one specific place. While researching and putting pieces of information together about the history of the building, I found out that this particular building served as a Boiler house. Two giant Corliss Steam Engines were operating in the room, which is no longer here, but they were a part of the most significant industrial complex in Providence — Weybosset Mills.

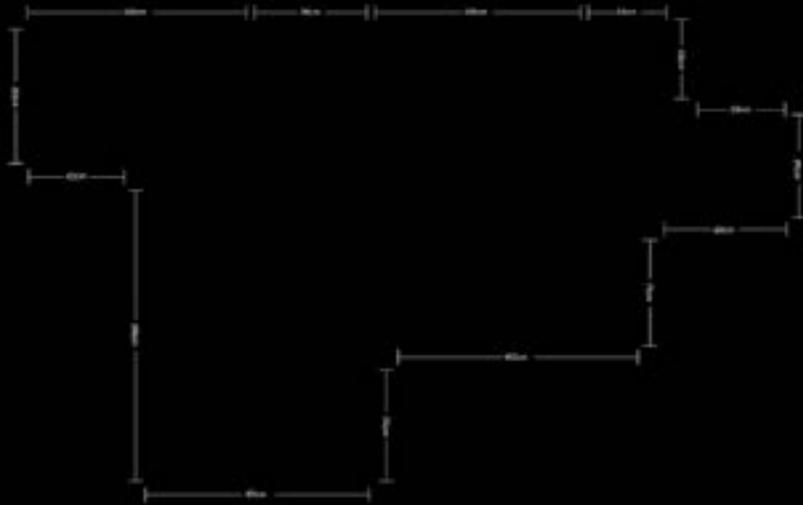
here



↑ First sketches
for the identity
of the space.

here

there

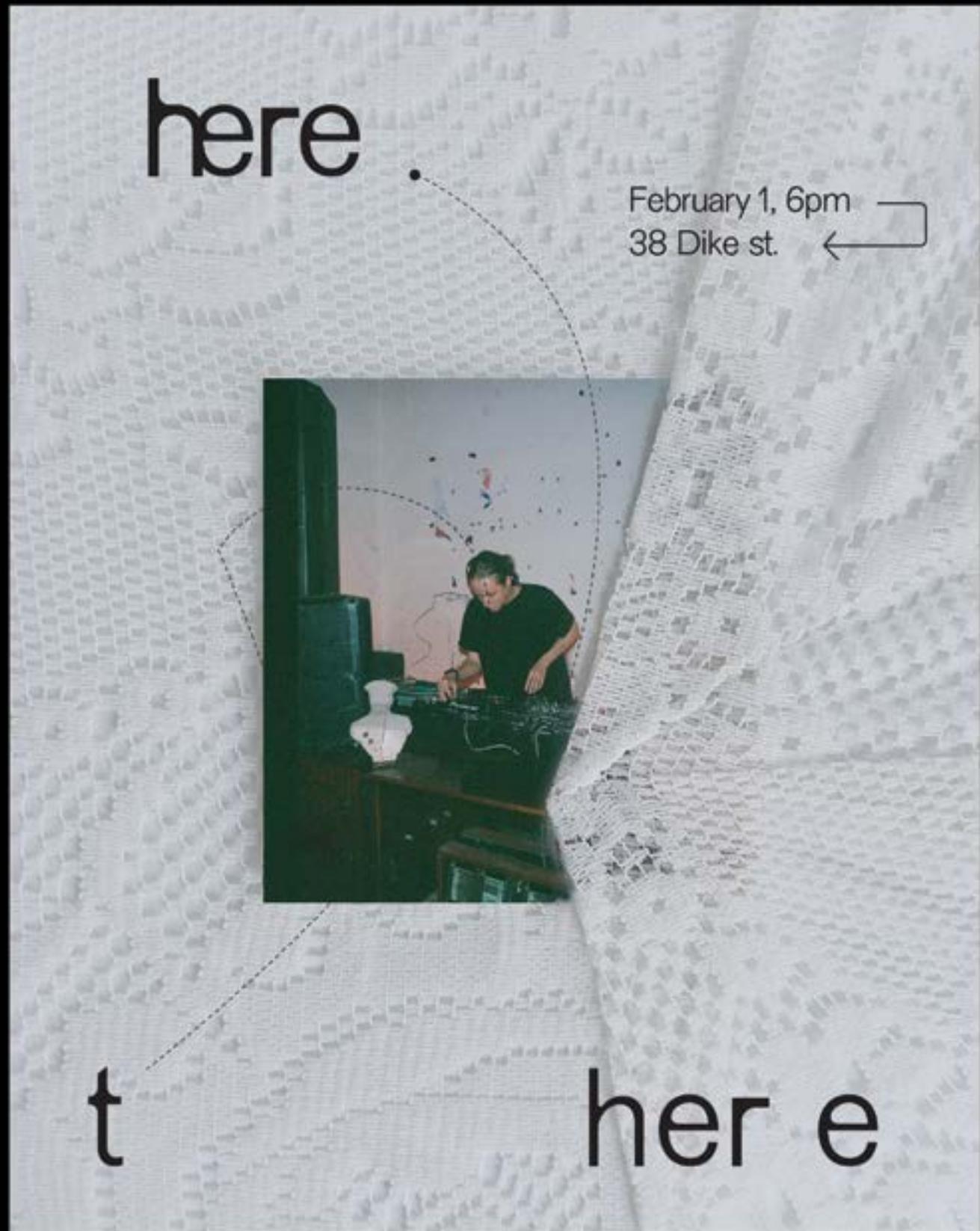
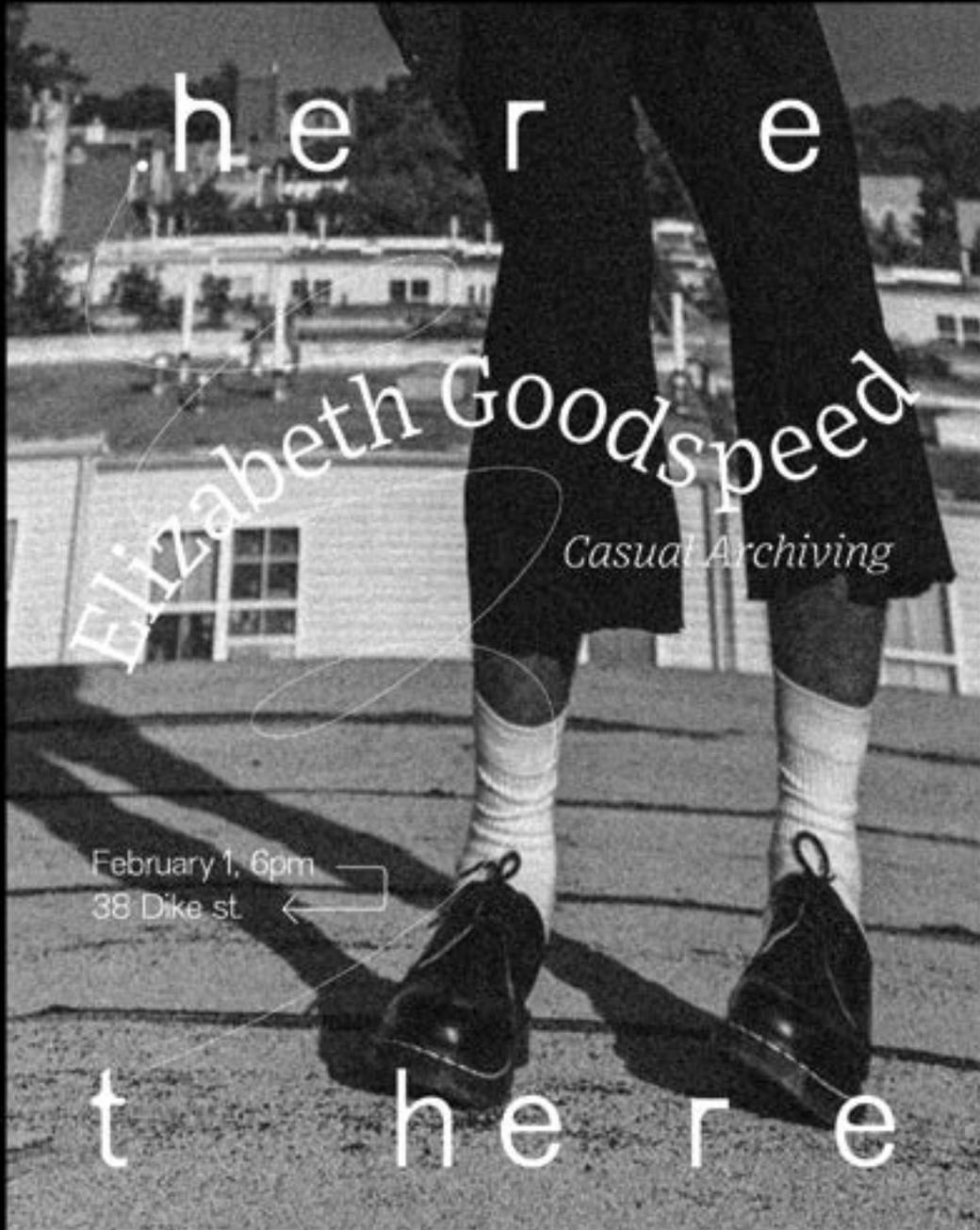


there

“Here — there” is in a state of being active, moving, and constantly changing. I wanted the typeface to feel soft, crafted, and a little childish, with the feeling of a fountain pen bleeding over the edges of letters. I took the best out of my two favorite fonts—Ball Pill and New Edge to achieve the desired effect and turned it into a modified version for my design. By placing the words in two separate corners, I wanted to focus everyone’s attention on what is happening “inside” the poster as a symbol of a journey. “Here” is point A, and “There” is point B. What is in between — is a journey. After establishing the main direction of the project, I started experimenting with mediums and introduced the black tape again as a symbol of connection.

Thinking about the space as an open field for experiments and also as a bridge between local communities, I wanted the project’s identity to speak with the audience through semi-ironic visual language. While being open and accessible, I was comparing it to the corporate culture and Xerox aesthetics. Through this comparison, I started combining “scanned and printed” paper effects, and some of the illustrations reminded me of corporate styles like collars or classic shoes. Here — there identity is an attempt to imagine a moment in the future when the corporate world was left behind, and we only miss some of its aesthetic.

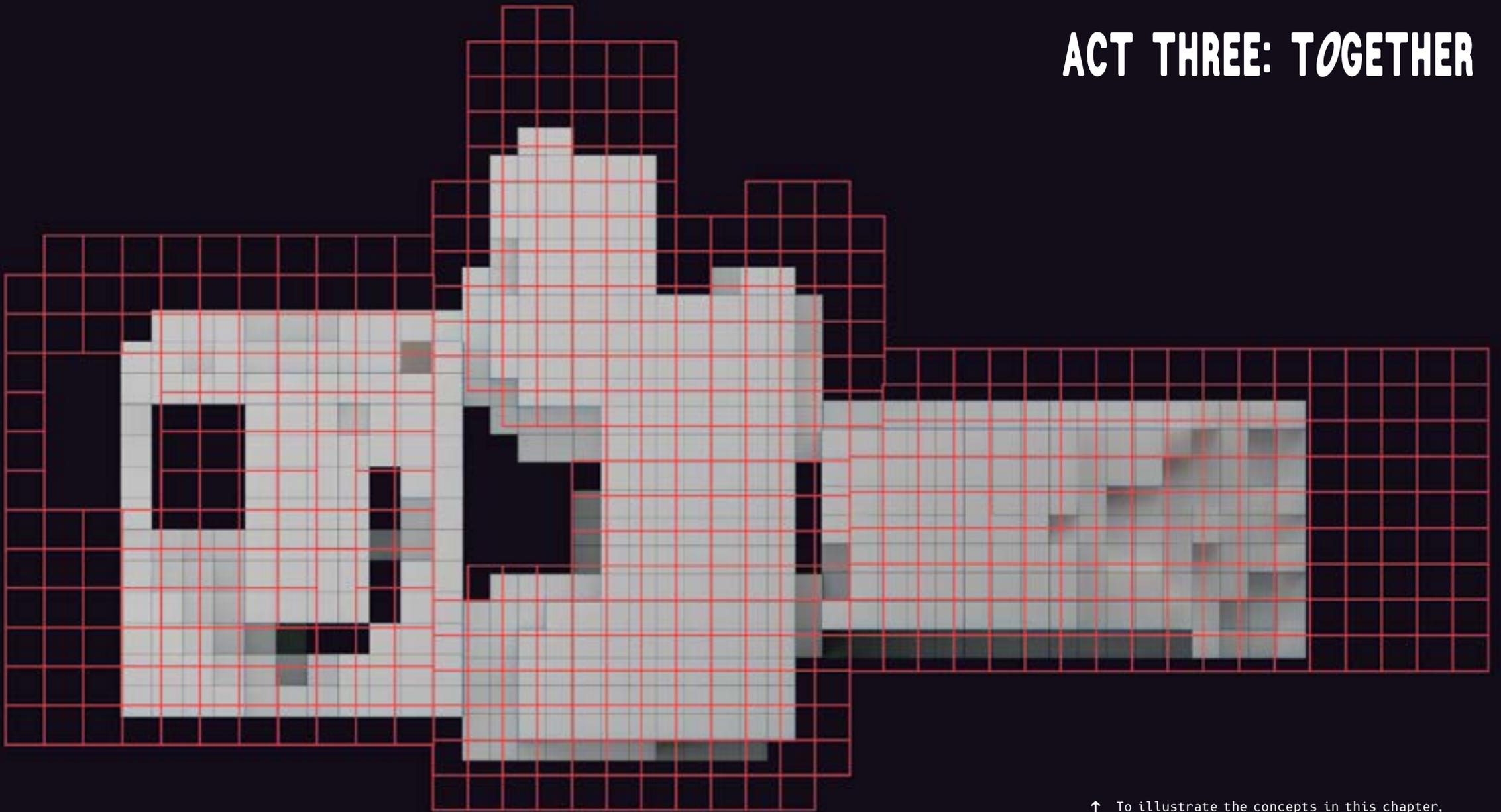
↓ → Poster ideas for fictional events to establish the basic treatment.



↓ More posters! Suddenly all my graphics switched to monochrome and it stuck with me.

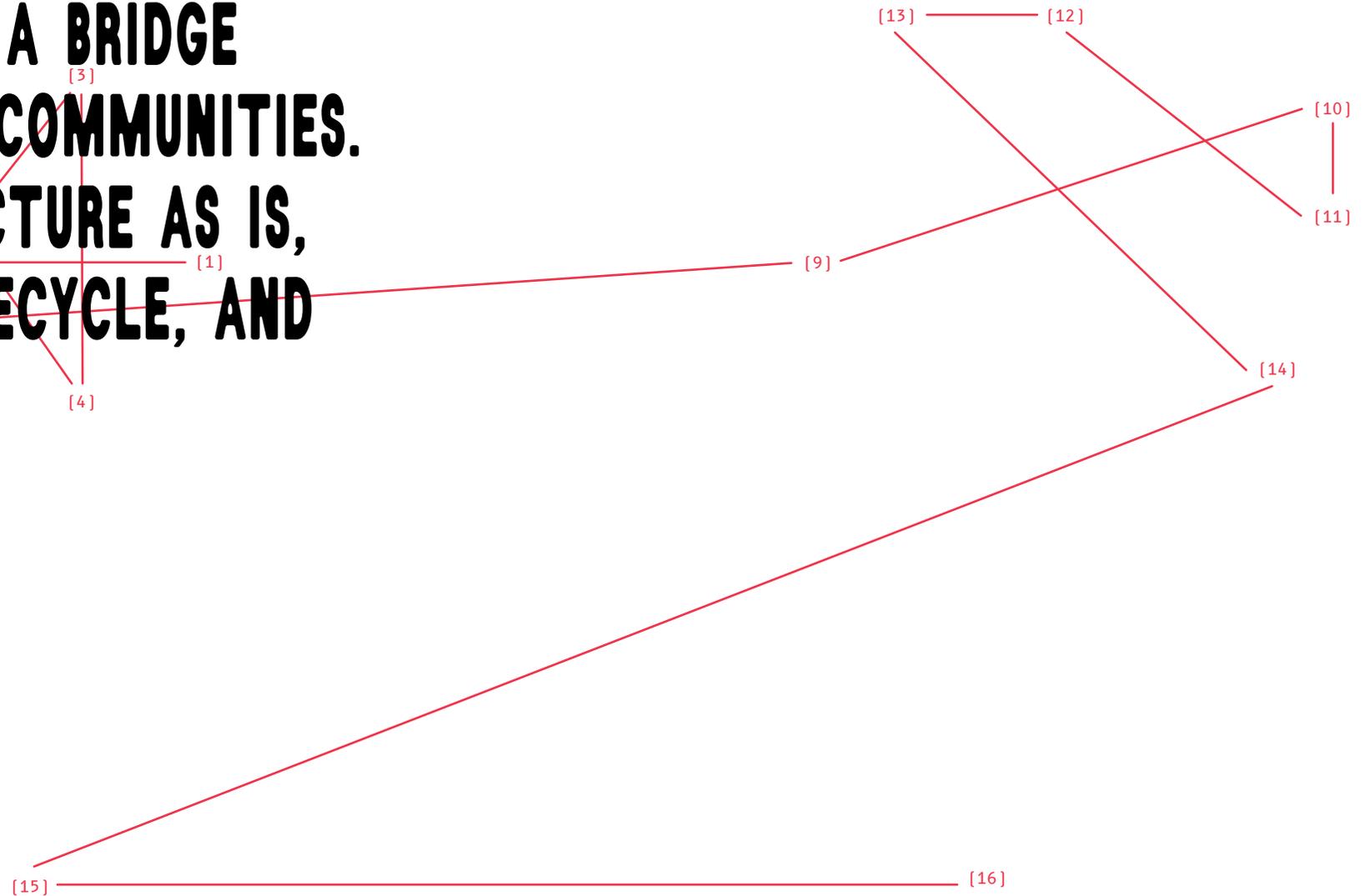


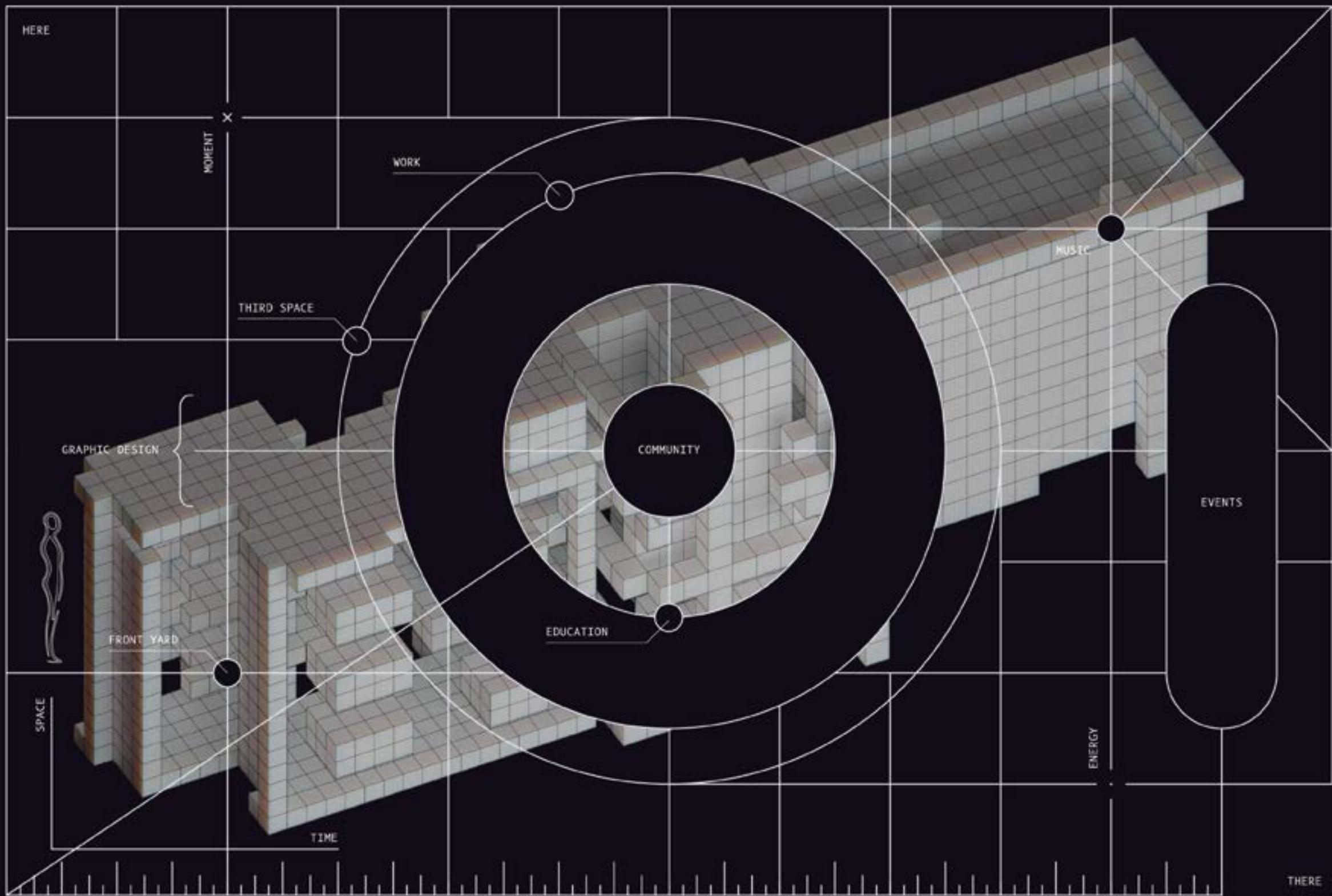
ACT THREE: TOGETHER



↑ To illustrate the concepts in this chapter, I designed a fictional modular building formed of flexible square units that can be rearranged and modified.

**(TOGETHER): A SPACE IN THE
INDUSTRIAL PART OF THE CITY
THAT SERVES AS A BRIDGE
BETWEEN LOCAL COMMUNITIES.
USING THE STRUCTURE AS IS,
WE IMPROVISE, RECYCLE, AND
RESTORE IT.**





WHAT — WHERE

[1] Oldenburg, Ray. 2023. *The Great Good Place: Cafes, Coffee Shops, Bookstores, Bars, Hair Salons, and Other Hangouts at the Heart of a Community: Cafes, Coffee Shops, ... Other Hangouts at the Heart of a Community*. Berkshire Publishing Group LLC.

↑ Schematic representation of the necessary components for the full functioning of a cultural center.

ACT III is a work-in-progress concept, a collection of thoughts, an attempt to create a personal utopia divided into sections and visually illustrated with graphs, creating endless possibilities for the development trajectory for each section. Ideas in this chapter can be implemented in an industrial building of any scale and condition, simultaneously making the future of these ideas universal and non-existent.

A “Third Place” is a separate social environment, different from the two usual social environments of home and workplace. Ray Oldenburg, an American urban sociologist, argues that third places are vital for community engagement, foster creative interaction, and offer psychological support to individuals and communities. In his book *The Great Good Place*, he emphasizes the importance of third spaces, where the conversation takes center stage, and gatherings are unplanned and serve as equalizers, transcending status, class, and race distinctions.[1] Oldenburg argues that the decline of Third Places has contributed to the erosion of community and civility and increased isolation and division within American society. [2]

[2] Wikipedia. 2024. “Third Place.” Wikimedia Foundation. Last modified April 29, 2024. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Third_place.

[3] Fang, Li, and Timothy Slaper. 2022. “Nowcasting Entrepreneurship: Urban Third Place versus the Creative Class” *Sustainability* 14, no. 2: 763. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su14020763>

Table 3. Creative class categories revealed by web browsers' interests that are most associated with entrepreneurship.

| Creative Class Category | Number of Blogs Entered with a Positive Coefficient | Average Coefficient | Standard Deviation of Coefficient |
|-------------------------------------|---|---------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Oil Engineers | 54 | 2.891 | 0.980 |
| Cybersecurity Researchers | 58 | 1.691 | 0.912 |
| Conservative Think Tank Researchers | 56 | 1.892 | 0.455 |
| Design Software | 50 | 0.868 | 0.327 |
| Writing & Publishing | 57 | 0.479 | 0.245 |
| Graphic Design | 57 | 0.474 | 0.243 |
| Public Policy Media | 54 | 0.392 | 0.248 |
| Photography Interest | 21 | 0.209 | 0.500 |
| Data Analysis and Scripting | 41 | 0.172 | 0.212 |
| Science & Technology | 20 | 0.149 | 0.429 |
| Film Production | 40 | 0.133 | 0.171 |
| Memes & Comedy | 43 | 0.087 | 0.122 |
| Science Education & Academic | 10 | 0.017 | 0.063 |
| Painting Techniques | 14 | 0.016 | 0.111 |

[Fig. 1] Table: Creative class categories most associated with entrepreneurship. Authors: Li Fang and Timothy Slaper.

“Our results consistently show that while both the third place and the creative class are associated with entrepreneurship, the creative class exhibits a small advantage. This indicates that encouraging entrepreneurship and attracting and cultivating human capital is slightly more important than the “quality of place”. That said, both people-based and place-based approaches are justifiable. Great spaces are important in sustaining social interaction, but they are better filled with creative people. Not all social interactions lead to innovation and entrepreneurship, but with the creative class gathering in well-designed places, fresh ideas, and startup businesses are more likely to be born. As a result, urban planners who adopt both approaches and prioritize human capital may be more successful in encouraging an entrepreneurial business environment in their jurisdictions.” [3]

[Fig. 2] Fabrika Tbilisi. Image Source: Official Website. <https://fabrikatbilisi.com/about-us/>

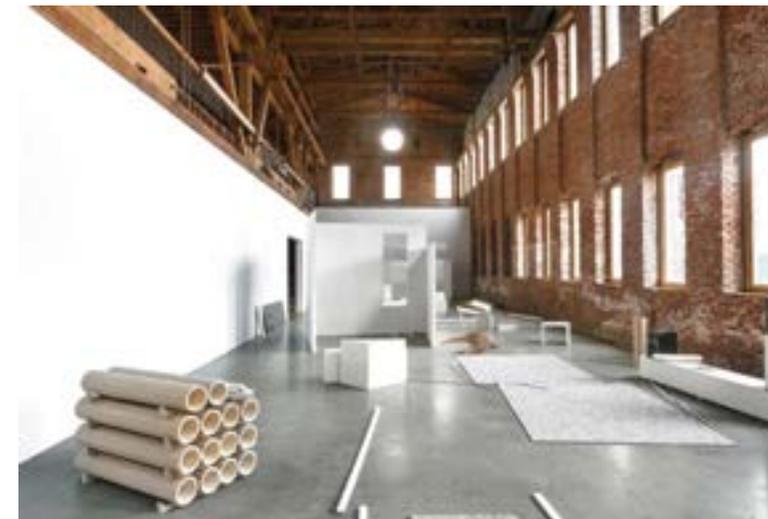


This research shows that people-based initiatives that cultivate creative class should be prioritized. Therefore, it is crucial for young entrepreneurs and individuals to have a platform to generate ideas and socialize. Events like art book fairs, lectures, and music gatherings serve as a social glue for diverse groups of people. They spark new connections and impact creativity, becoming an essential aspect of an individual's social life. However, organizers often face financial, political, and other challenges when choosing a venue for public events.

One of the examples of successful urban third places is Fabrika in Tbilisi, Georgia: once a Soviet sewing factory, it became a multifunctional cultural center with bars, artists, studios and shops, educational institutions, working spaces, a hostel, etc. Their big courtyard also serves as an event space. [Fig. 2] Such places are suitable for people with different social activities: those who need large companies, or vice versa, those who are comfortable alone while not at home. Other examples worldwide include New York's Pioneer Works [Fig. 3] and Knockdown Center [Fig. 4], V-A-C House of Culture in Russia [Fig. 5], and Cable Factory in Finland. [Fig. 6]

Besides having different concepts, financial investments, and scale, they all serve as urban third places and cultural catalysts. They positively impact social, cultural, and economic development. The problem with projects like this is that they need to be more significant in quantity and diversity. Increasing in number will help avoid high and competitive entry points

[Fig. 3] Pioneer Works. Image Source: Official Website. <https://pioneerworks.org/about>



[Fig. 4] Knockdown Center. Image Source: Official Website. <https://knockdown.center/spaces/>





[Fig. 5]. V-A-C. Image Source: Official Website. <https://v-a-c.org/en/about>



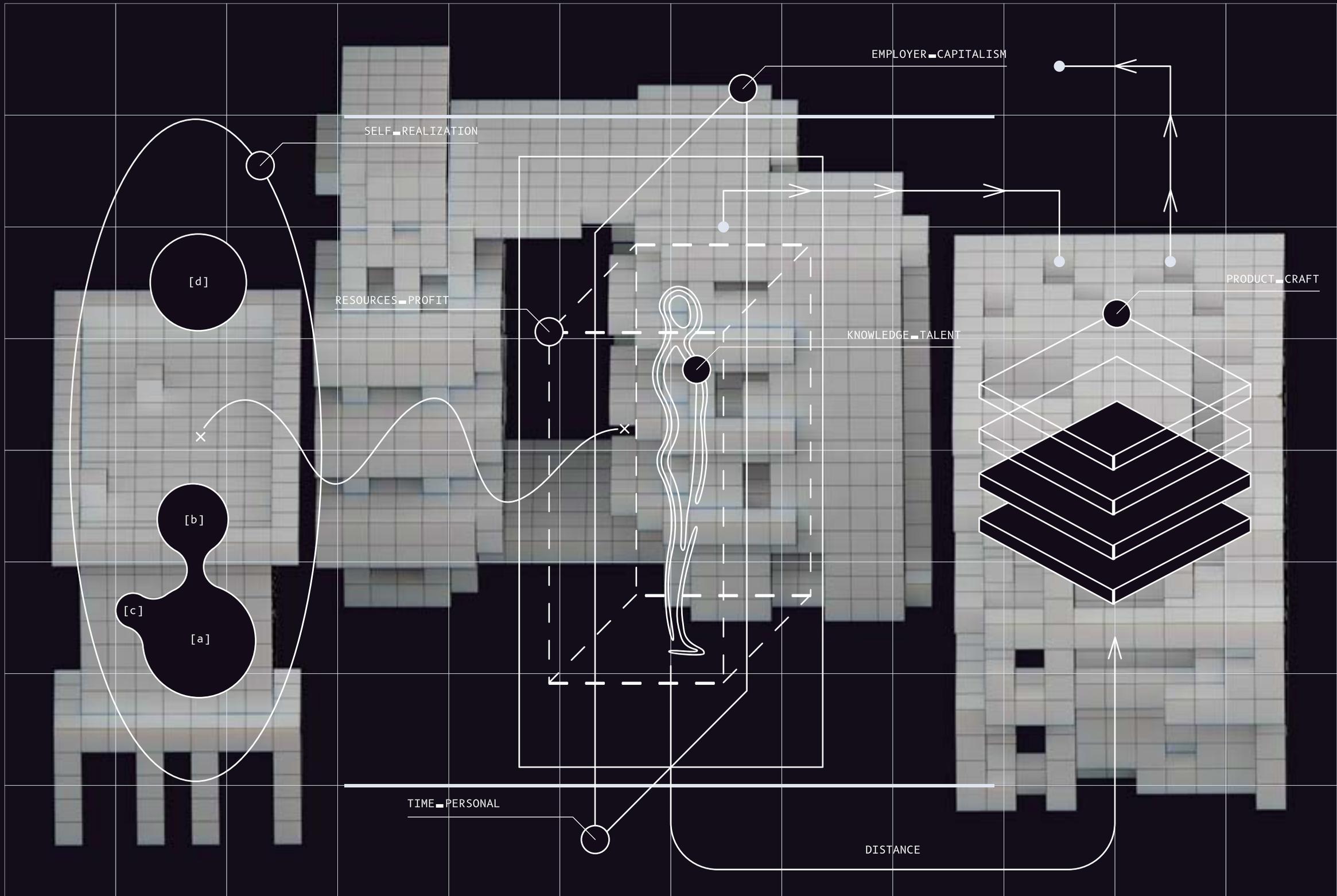
[Fig. 6]. Cable Factory. Image Source: Official Website. <https://www.kaapelitehdas.fi/en/glass-courtyard-and-info-point>

for different groups of individuals or projects and encourage the creative economy to grow. A bright example of a well-functioning communal life is the city planning of Barcelona: its short blocks and orthogonal streets encourage walking, mixing, and vibrant street life. [Fig. 7] These blocks serve as nominal “neighborhoods” where all the essential services are provided within walking distance, and everyone can be engaged in various social activities.

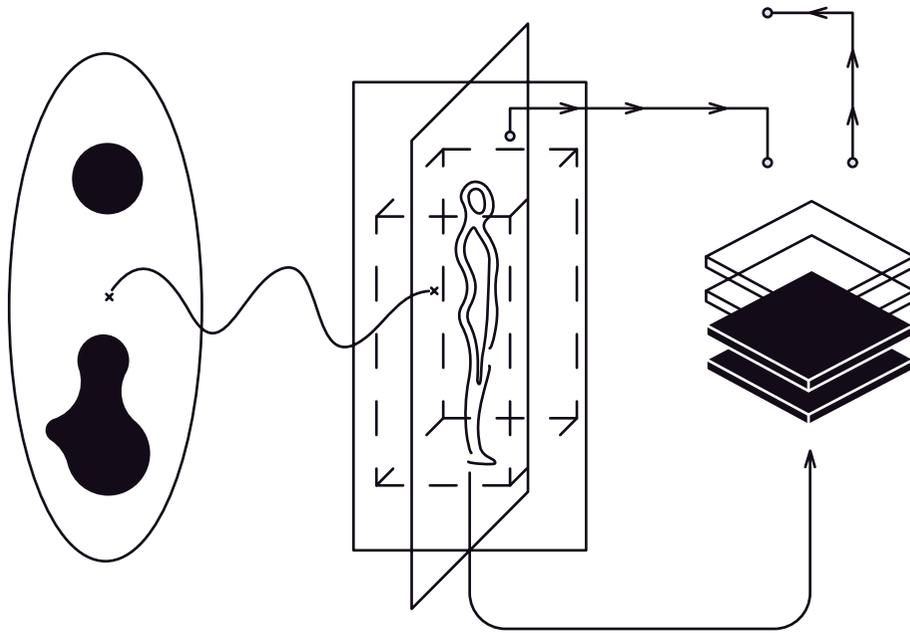


[Fig. 7] Eixample District-Barcelona. Overview. Retrieved March 22, 2024, from <https://www.overview.com/digital-index?query=barcelona&page=1&configure%5BhitsPerPage%5D=30>

The project encourages a shift from cultural consumption to cultural production by providing free and public educational programs and supporting creative businesses in the early stages of their urban formation.



ALIENATION



I want to begin this chapter with an excerpt from Afonso De Matos's Thesis book *"Who Can Afford to be Critical"*: "...[Thesis Book] serves as a container for all those approaches that – following Kuijpers' and Mazé's definitions – aim to use design as a vector for social critique and social change, and see the designer as a political actor." [4] [Fig. 8]

By acknowledging and emphasizing the system's flaws, we can gradually move toward a better future as a community. An economic system that puts a small group of people at the top with all the economic power and wealth they can accumulate makes the rest of the society bitter, angry, denied, and frustrated. And this is the recipe, sooner or later, for the accumulation of too many contradictions for the system to manage. Therefore, the answer is clear: we need an economic system that doesn't produce two groups of people. And this is not for the government to do something; we must change our thinking. Of course, politics and economics are far from my field of knowledge. Still, I dedicated the most significant part of my life to encouraging people from various fields of creativity to start their own

[4] Matos, Afonso. 2023. *Who Can Afford to Be Critical?: An Inquiry into What We Can't Do Alone, as Designers, and into What We Might Be Able to Do Together, as People. Set Margins' Publications.* <https://afonso-dematos.com/Who-Can-Afford-to-be-Critical>.

→ Process of alienation of a worker

[5] Marx, Karl [1992] [1844]. "Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts". *Early Writings*. London: Penguin Classics. pp. 279–400. ISBN 0-14-044574-9.

businesses, fostering a sense of community, support, and belonging through graphic design. Here, I want to implement my experience and think about how things can improve regarding the creative industry's mental and financial state. The worker becomes poor the more wealth he produces. In our own times, even though the productivity of the working class has risen dramatically over the last forty years, real wages have stagnated. In effect, we are producing more than ever but are poorer than we were before. As Karl Marx articulates his famous theory of Alienation: "The worker sinks to the level of a commodity and becomes indeed the most wretched of commodities, that the wretchedness of the worker is an inverse proportion to the power and magnitude of his production, that the necessary result of competition is the accumulation of capital in a few hands and thus the restoration of monopoly in a most terrible form, and that finally the distinction between capitalist and landlord, like that between the tiller of the soil and the factory worker, disappears and that the whole of society must fall apart into the two classes, property owners and propertyless workers." [5]

Nothing can be created without nature; it provides the raw material for physical sustenance. Labor requires objects to operate on and sustenance from the natural world in the form of food and water. However, under capitalism, the worker is separated from direct access to nature and his own life force. Instead, the capitalist provides the worker with an object of labor—a job and sustenance—a wage. This alienates the worker from nature, the product of his labor and himself. By relying on selling his labor to a capitalist for survival, the worker is reduced to a mere physical being and becomes alienated from himself, which is, in my opinion, directly related to burnout and mental and financial instability. [6]

Besides other main principles of economics, I want to emphasize three basic ones: the organization of production, distribution, and consumption. [7] If the working class becomes poorer, there will be no consumption, and capitalism will become a snake eating its own tail. The product of labor is labor itself, which has been embodied in an object that serves as its ultimate realization. However, it is the transformation of labor into a commodity that labor itself cannot

WHERE? LOCATION, SCALE, STRUCTURE.

We can think about the perfect location since we got out of the way the question “what?” and the logic behind stepping away from the capitalist system.

“Since the Great Recession, the “good” jobs—secure, non-temp, decent salary—have concentrated in cities like never before. America’s 100 largest metros have added 6 million jobs since the downturn. Rural areas, meanwhile, still have fewer jobs than they did in 2007. For young people trying to find work, moving to a major city is not an indulgence. It is a virtual necessity.”

In any city, while scouting the location, one must take into consideration its accessibility, the significance of the area, and the city plan for development. Choosing a temporary or permanent location is the most important and strategically crucial moment in establishing a cultural center—something

not far away from the city but not in the residential area. In residential areas, it is unacceptable to collaborate with projects that function during the night time and have loud crowds. The music and event industry is an essential part of a multifunctional cultural center, but in this case, the project’s location will dictate its concept. Sometimes, it is hard to say which came first, the idea or the site. In this case, I describe the project with a specific concept but will adapt to the venue’s scale, location, and condition. If the project is successful, it can scale, unfold, and develop in other locations.

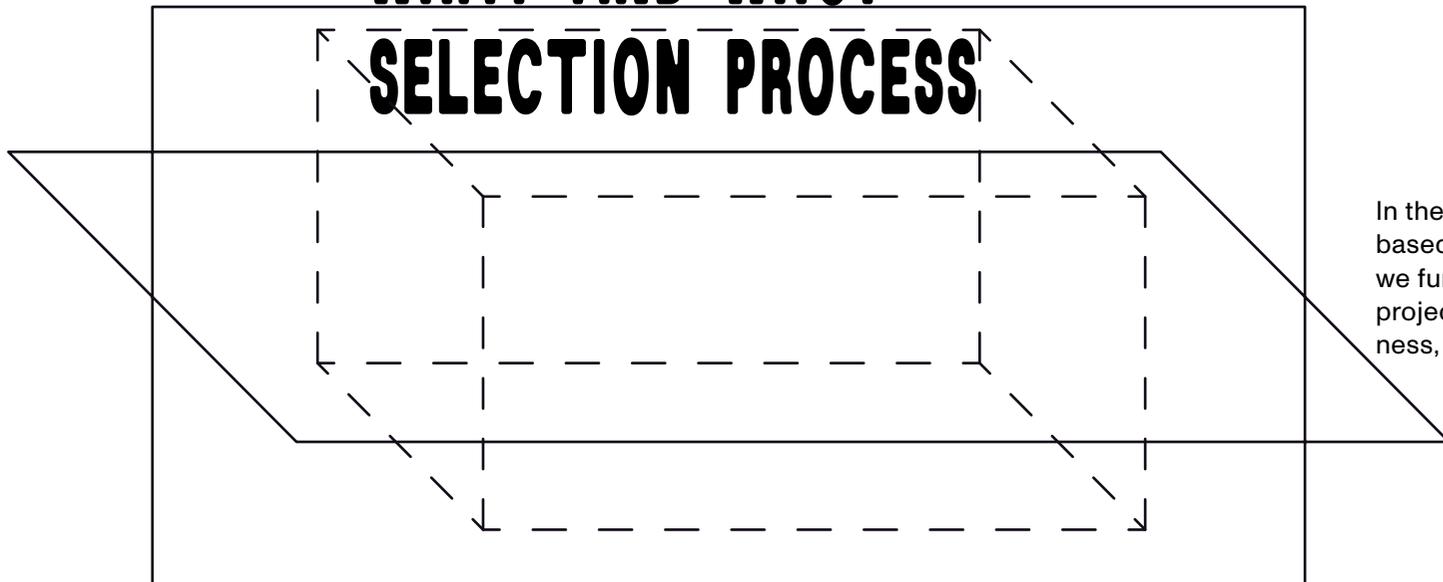
Those who rent are always dependent on others (owners of the building, government, neighbors, etc.), but they are not at their mercy. The condition of the building must be adequately inspected and safe for everyone inside. This is something essential, and nothing like a low price or any other benefits worth the health and safety of people until the problem is eliminated or there is an agreement with the owner to address the problem. For example, an independent publishing organization recently purchased a factory next to the space in Olneyville with donations and help from the government. They had to stop operating and move out due to rat infestation and poor structural conditions of the building. It is unknown how much investment and time it will take until they are allowed to be back.

The ideal building would be three levels (or higher) with a courtyard for summer activities. It has many rooms of various sizes inside to match the different requirements of future residents. The building has been well-preserved throughout the years, and one of the primary missions of the project is to keep its aura and historical character, emphasizing artifacts from industrial culture and postwar modernism. The site presents multi-layeredness that is visible to the visitors and is overlaid with a series of interventions that aesthetically and culturally belong to different contexts. These interventions serve as a background or stimuli to the fields related to design, specifically the visual arts, graphic design, and architecture, which extend beyond the site’s actual use.

Urban projects can offer property owners several benefits that go beyond monetary advantages. These benefits may include creating a more positive image of the location, raising public awareness of the site, and preventing squatting and vandalism.

WHAT AND WHO?

SELECTION PROCESS



Establishing a selection process and criteria for determining the most suitable creative collectives and projects to use the community spaces should be given priority. The attraction of new talent should not depend on workspace availability but rather be the catalyst for creating more workspaces by expanding the project to other areas.

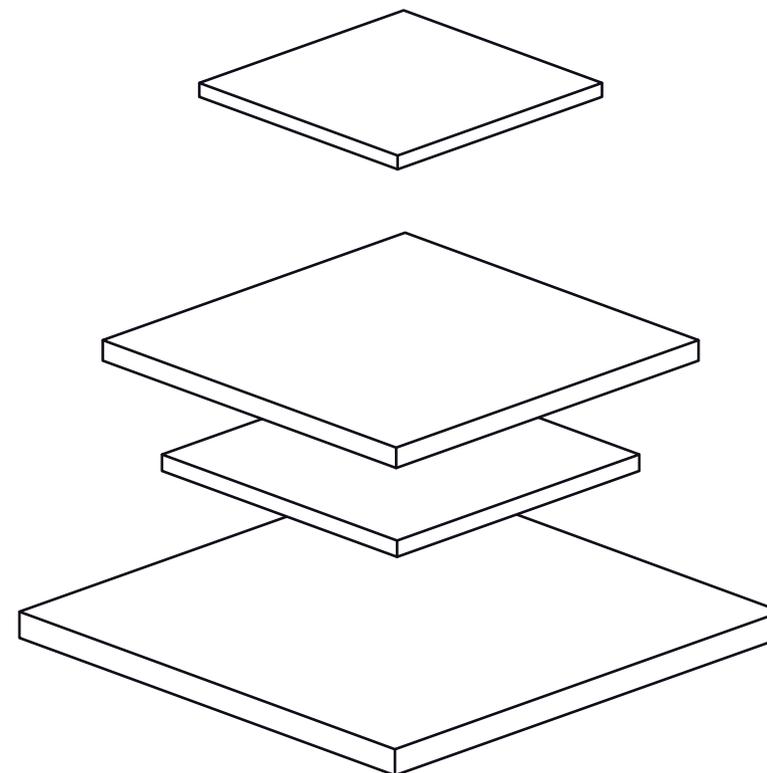
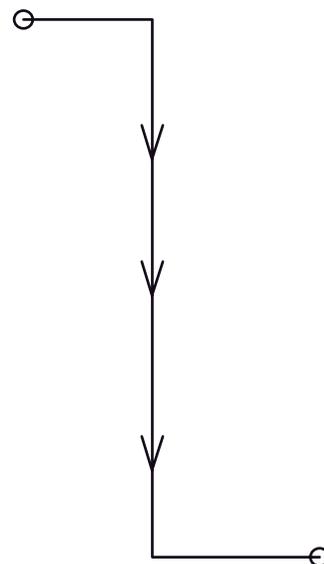
In the first stages of the project, the selection of residents will primarily be based on submitted portfolios, personal outreach, and word of mouth. As we further solidify the concept, we will continue to seek a diverse group of projects with divergent backgrounds and experiences, a sense of openness, and curiosity.

This way, the building becomes a point of intersection, a platform for the culture, design, and architecture scene, making the project more than just an office space, attracting various audiences and encouraging new cultural production.

Who gets the chance to be in the space? What are the criteria for selection? Who is responsible for making these decisions? These questions are the most difficult for me, and I am still considering an answer.

While describing my Thesis to different people, I noticed the excitement for community-based projects. I think the root of this excitement is not only about working in a “cool factory” but also about the sense of belonging and the project’s mission, which can be a measure of success. The factory is just a container, but the benefits of being inside it and the cultural values it represents are the most vital aspects.

Building a creative community requires a shift in the discussion of city economics towards the true kind of capital, which is social and cultural. Comparing a building to a human body, we can think of it as a synergy of all organs working in unison. The primary role of the Curator (Brain) is to stimulate the overlapping of different groups and initiate regular gatherings and events. Therefore, it creates a healthy culture of professional networking and knowledge exchange. When breaking down a project, I have identified four crucial areas to address simultaneously. These areas are essential to the project’s success and require equal attention: education, work, common areas, and leisure. Detailed dissection will be discussed in the following chapters of this chapter.

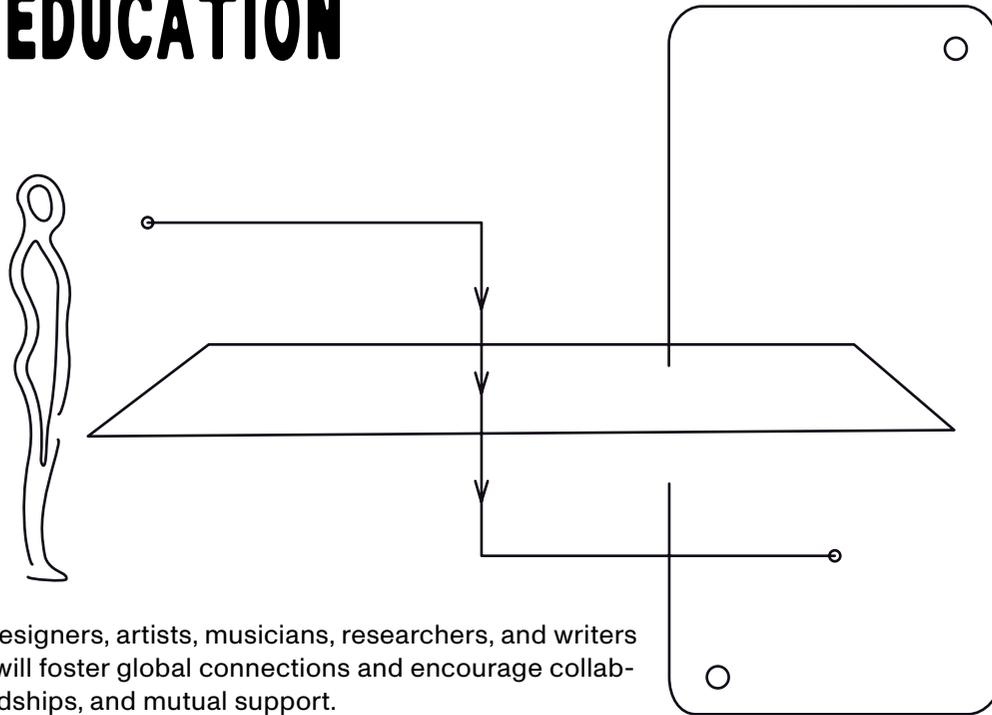


EDUCATION

→ Scheme of an educational process.

[9] Jahoda, Susan, and Caroline Woolard. 2019. *Making & Being*. Pioneer Works. <https://makingandbeing.com>.

[10] <https://www.itsnicethat.com>.



Connecting studios, designers, artists, musicians, researchers, and writers from different places will foster global connections and encourage collaborations, lifelong friendships, and mutual support.

Educational events, such as summer schools, conferences, or workshops, often give many insights into the profession. Only a few talented artists are interested in becoming teachers, but most would gladly give a lecture or a workshop. We see the rise of self-taught artists, graphic designers, and musicians, proving that access to the internet and open-source archives made education in creative fields less relevant. Therefore, sharing knowledge, personal discoveries, or experiences becomes a valuable source of information.

All lectures are free and open to the public regardless of financial status. The selection process will be application-based for educational programs that are limited in the number of attendees or made for a specific level of professional experience.

One of the main trajectories for the educational part would be the larger discussion about alternative ways for knowledge exchange beyond learning models and schools that rely on tuition fees. While doing the graduate degree, I considered taking the conversations and lectures I enjoyed beyond the walls of a private school. Acknowledging that teaching and

learning cannot be separated from the places and the people that we each learn in a relationship with, the project will serve as a bridge between local communities and those who want to share knowledge. [9]

An educational model built on openness encourages all participants to be vulnerable and learn through working and making together. Inviting already established professionals is as important as giving the platform to the rising talents. “Nicer Tuesdays” is a monthly event that “It’s Nice That,” [10] an online media for the creative community, curates. It offers an alternative way of sharing knowledge and building a community. They invite exciting creatives to share short, sharp insights into recent projects each month. They encourage dialogue within the industry and break the hierarchical way of thinking by bringing various creative groups together. [Fig. 9]



[Fig. 9] Nicer Tuesdays. Image. <https://www.itsnicethat.com/nicer-tuesdays>.

By dedicating a space for open discussion, we generate critical thinking, question and reinvent ways to engage as a community, form fundamental opinions, and position ourselves politically in our daily lives.

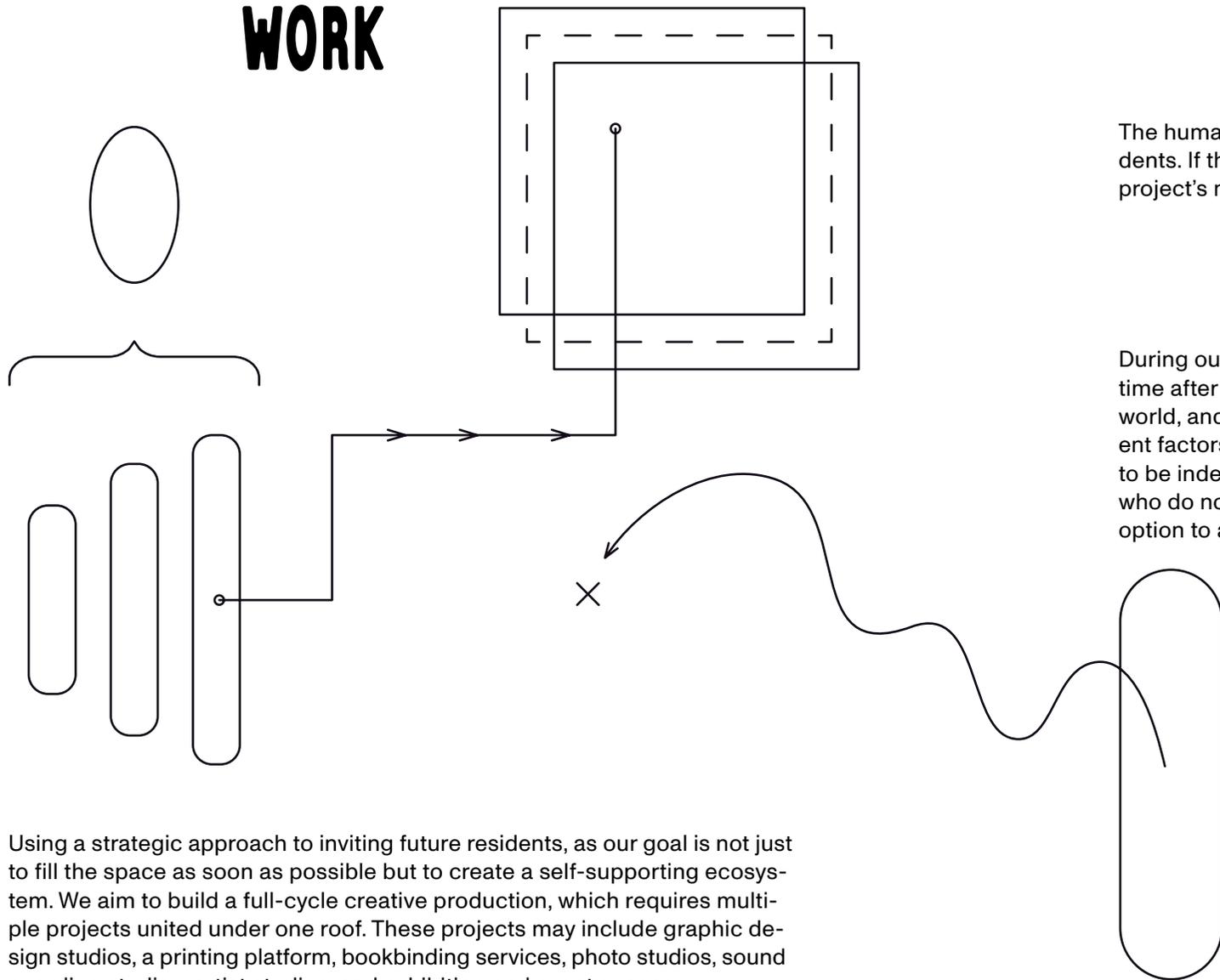
Annual programs of lectures, workshops, and monthly events should constantly expand and aim to reach beyond the Graphic Design community. The program will intentionally expand its language and concept with the purpose of attracting applicants who may not be graphic designers or have different backgrounds but express interest in critical perspectives about it.

All lectures are free and open to the public regardless of financial status. The selection process will be application-based for educational programs that are limited in the number of attendees or made for a specific level of experience.

Invoking graphic design as a mediation between diverse fields of knowledge, such as visual arts, architecture, writing, music, and coding, would be the first step to building relationships between various groups of people.



WORK



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Using a strategic approach to inviting future residents, as our goal is not just to fill the space as soon as possible but to create a self-supporting ecosystem. We aim to build a full-cycle creative production, which requires multiple projects united under one roof. These projects may include graphic design studios, a printing platform, bookbinding services, photo studios, sound recording studios, artist studios, and exhibition and event spaces.

If we divide the entire building into parts and distribute the types of business activities we need, we can know exactly what companies we need. This information allows us to search for teams that suit our concept. Thus, we take the initiative to search for potential residents independently without waiting for the “ideal” resident to find and contact us. Even if the business we are interested in is already renting elsewhere, our task is to convince them to move to

us. In this way, we reduce the decentralization of the creative class and create a community and a place of strength.

The human factor is always emphasized when choosing long-term residents. If the moral and ethical views of candidates do not align with the project’s mission, it is better to avoid collaboration.

Another main contribution to the local community would be the program for temporary residencies. Created for those at the initial stage of building their business and needing support. Why is supporting startups, entrepreneurs, and small studios important?

During our grad seminar class with Anther Kiley, we talked a lot about the time after graduation, when most of us will have to go back to the corporate world, and how graphic designers tend to sacrifice their practice to different factors. Only the strongest ones have the ability and enough enthusiasm to be independent or start their design studios. In this context, I mean those who do not see corporate life as a long-term career choice but see no other option to avoid it yet.

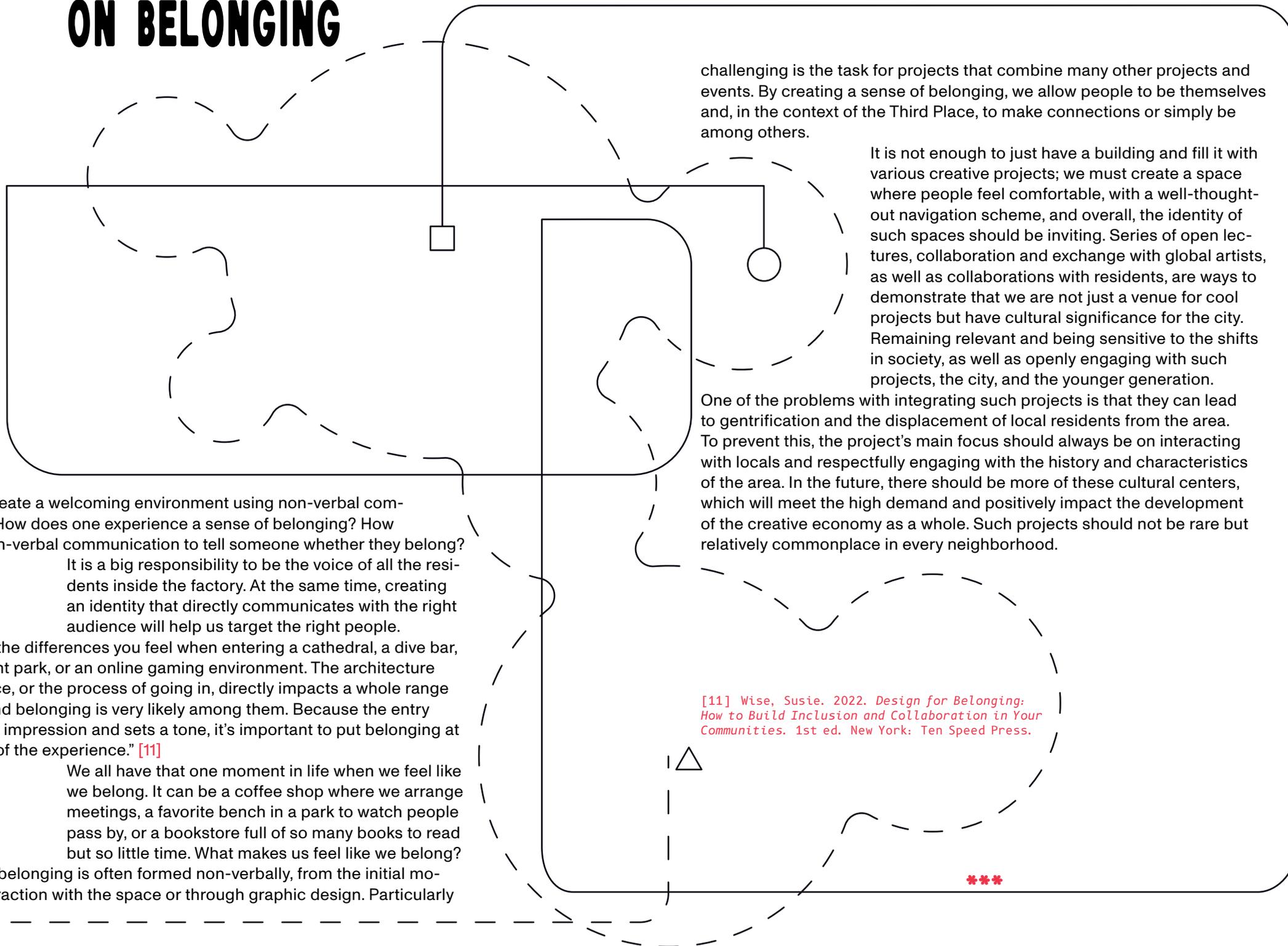
It is not enough to provide space to newly formed businesses. We have to be the ones who encourage talented individuals to start their own practice and provide support and business education. This can be achieved by having local team members who deeply care about the community and history and constantly engage with it. We will establish programs that provide free space for new businesses to encourage growth in the creative economy sector. Depending on the provided service, we will support the business with media coverage and public events and expose directly to the target audience. It is yet to be defined, but the goal of these programs will have its limits, such as given time, achieved goals, or financial stability that participating individuals will set for themselves.

Each candidate is selected according to the development plan and willingness to contribute to the factory’s free educational programs or social life.

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ON BELONGING



challenging is the task for projects that combine many other projects and events. By creating a sense of belonging, we allow people to be themselves and, in the context of the Third Place, to make connections or simply be among others.

It is not enough to just have a building and fill it with various creative projects; we must create a space where people feel comfortable, with a well-thought-out navigation scheme, and overall, the identity of such spaces should be inviting. Series of open lectures, collaboration and exchange with global artists, as well as collaborations with residents, are ways to demonstrate that we are not just a venue for cool projects but have cultural significance for the city. Remaining relevant and being sensitive to the shifts in society, as well as openly engaging with such projects, the city, and the younger generation.

One of the problems with integrating such projects is that they can lead to gentrification and the displacement of local residents from the area. To prevent this, the project's main focus should always be on interacting with locals and respectfully engaging with the history and characteristics of the area. In the future, there should be more of these cultural centers, which will meet the high demand and positively impact the development of the creative economy as a whole. Such projects should not be rare but relatively commonplace in every neighborhood.

How do we create a welcoming environment using non-verbal communication? How does one experience a sense of belonging? How do we use non-verbal communication to tell someone whether they belong?

It is a big responsibility to be the voice of all the residents inside the factory. At the same time, creating an identity that directly communicates with the right audience will help us target the right people.

“Think about the differences you feel when entering a cathedral, a dive bar, an amusement park, or an online gaming environment. The architecture of the entrance, or the process of going in, directly impacts a whole range of feelings, and belonging is very likely among them. Because the entry creates a first impression and sets a tone, it's important to put belonging at the forefront of the experience.” [11]

We all have that one moment in life when we feel like we belong. It can be a coffee shop where we arrange meetings, a favorite bench in a park to watch people pass by, or a bookstore full of so many books to read but so little time. What makes us feel like we belong?

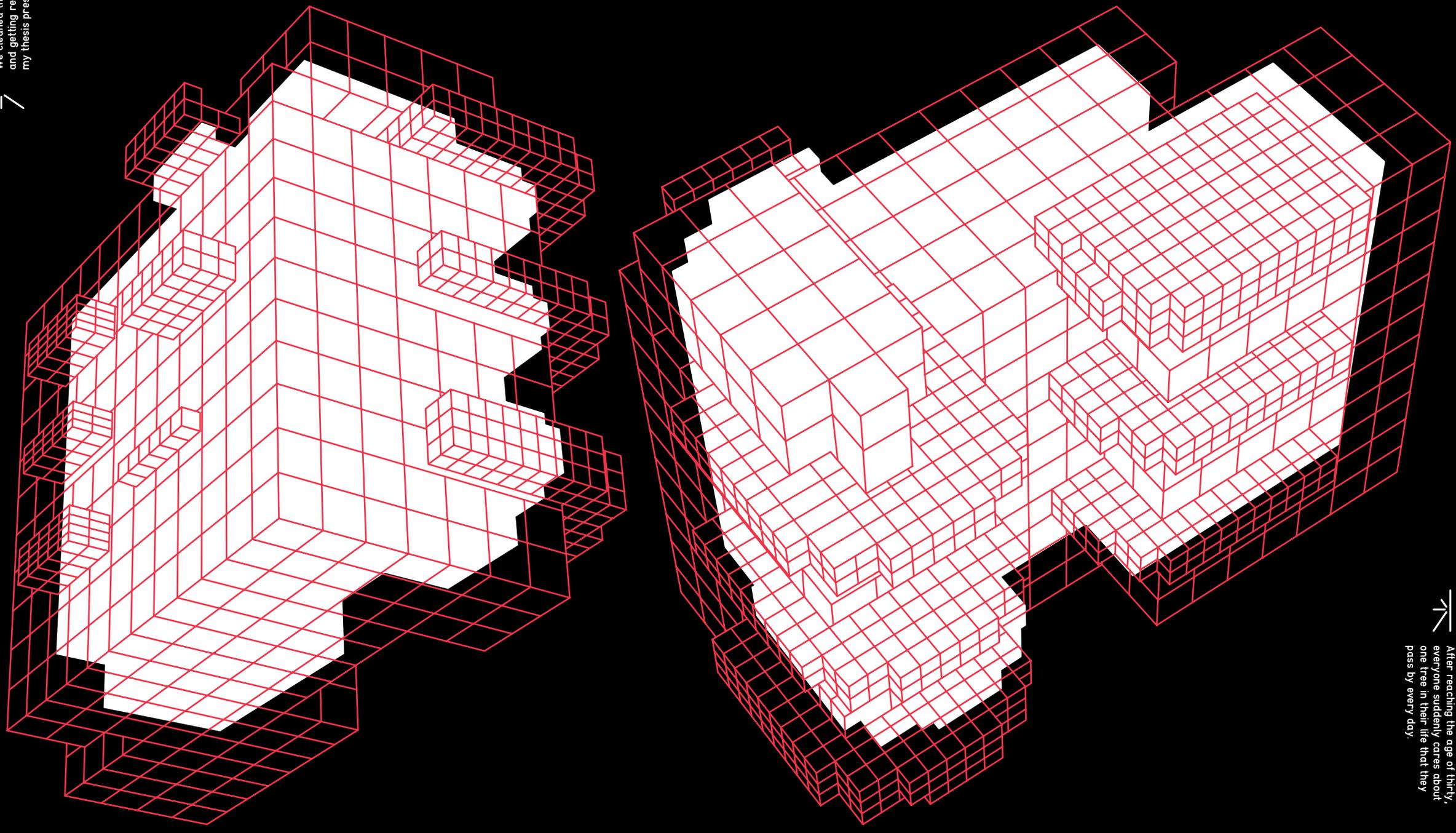
The sense of belonging is often formed non-verbally, from the initial moments of interaction with the space or through graphic design. Particularly

[11] Wise, Susie. 2022. *Design for Belonging: How to Build Inclusion and Collaboration in Your Communities*. 1st ed. New York: Ten Speed Press.

38 Dike st., 12:00 pm,
We cleaned the space
and getting ready for
my thesis presentation.

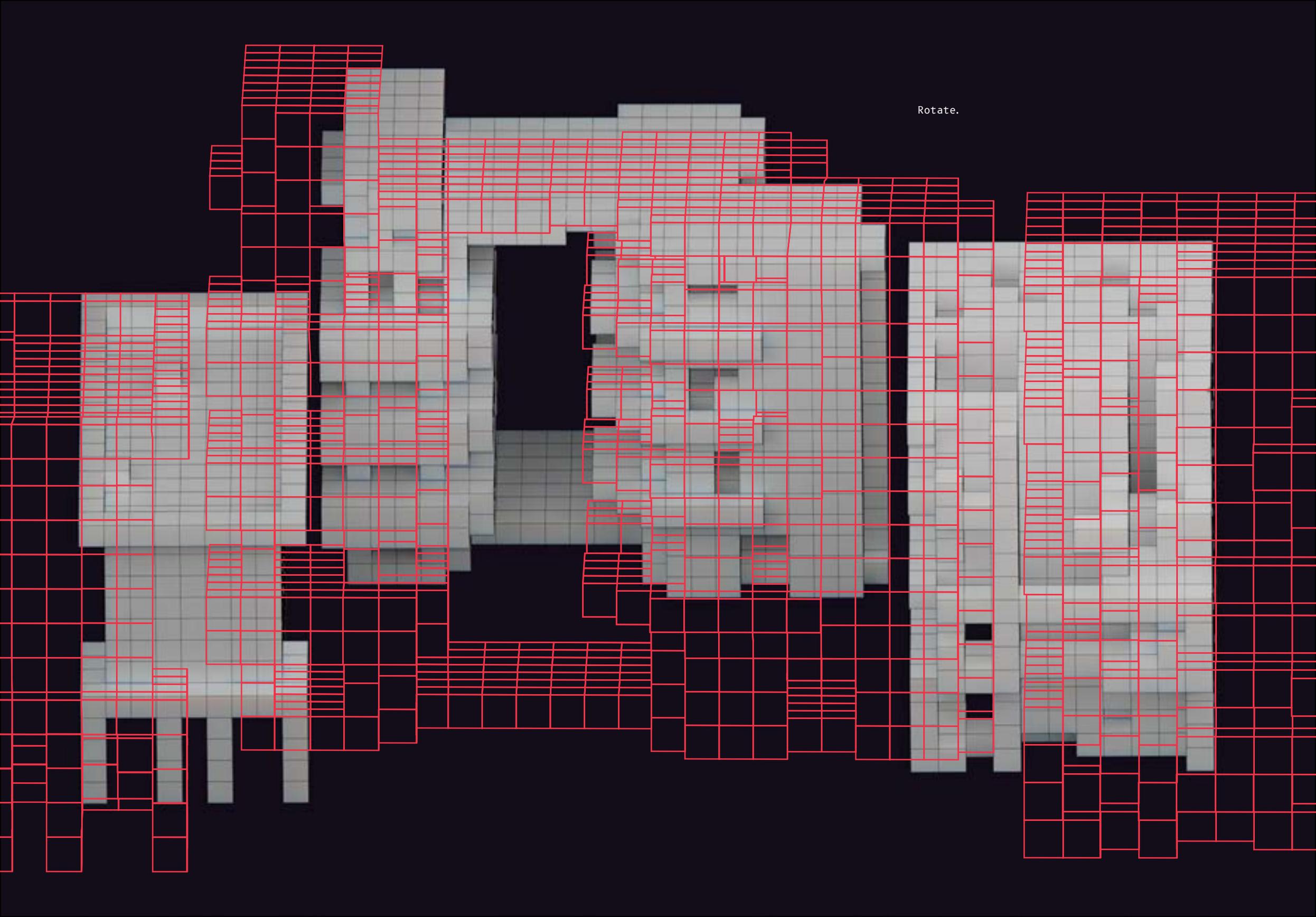


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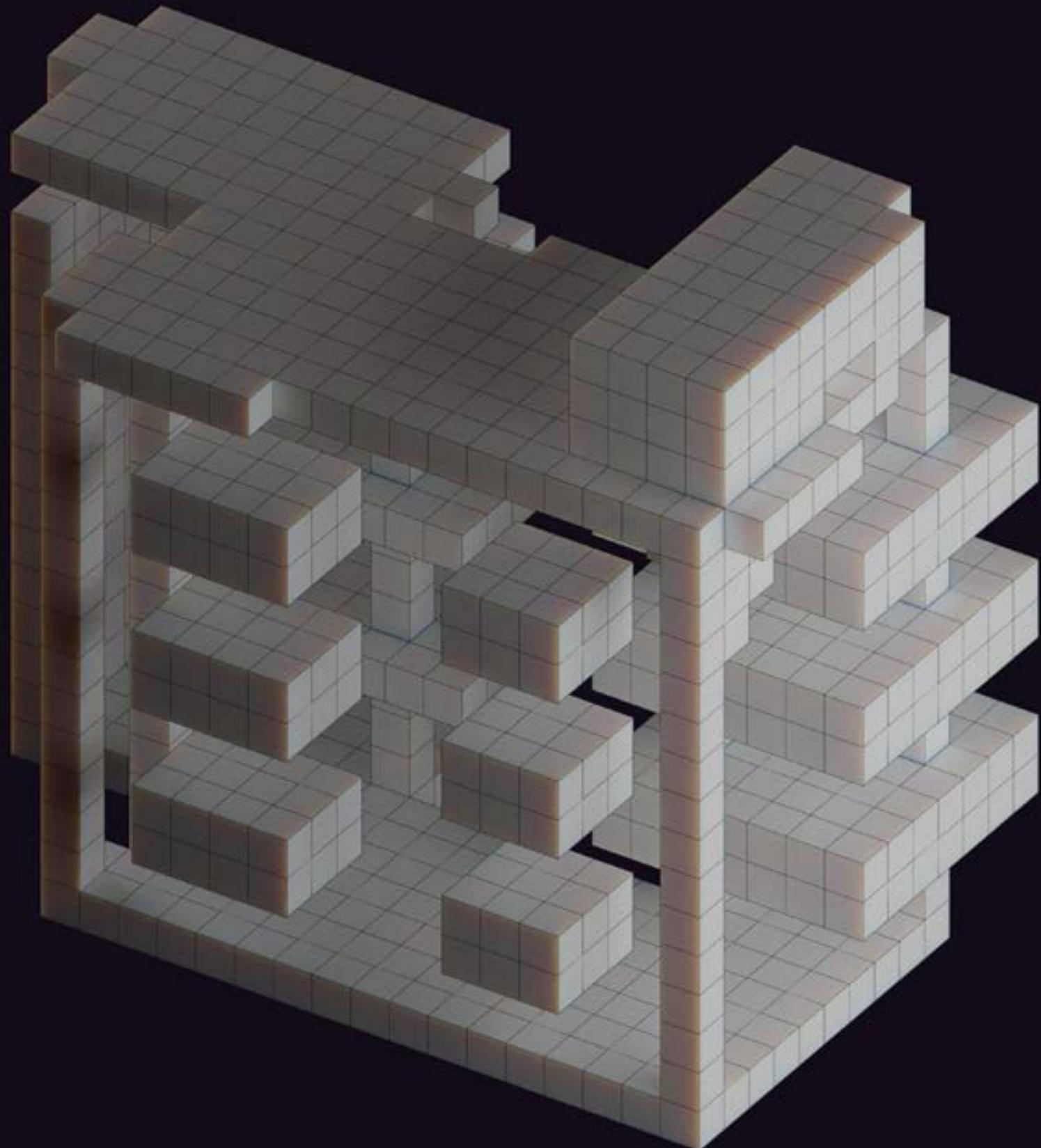


After reaching the age of thirty,
every one suddenly cares about
one tree in their life that they
pass by every day.





Rotate.



Adjust.

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When applying to grad school, one of the things that I hoped for was to find my community and to find myself. I received more than I imagined during the two years that flew by like lightning. It is a great honor and privilege to be surrounded by such talented and kind people who care deeply about their community and making the world a better place.

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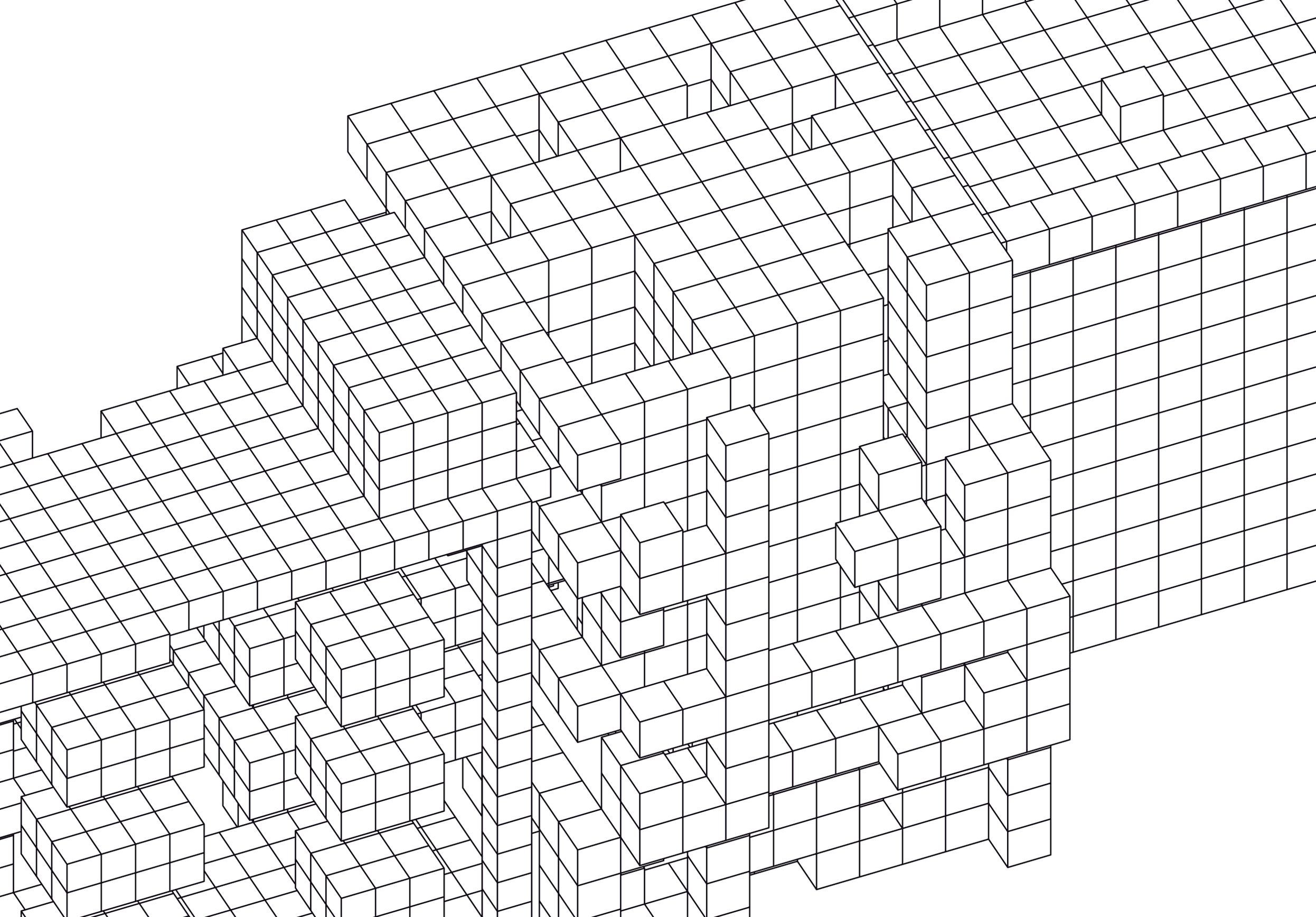
Interviewees:
Suraiya Nathani Hossain

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HERE — THERE

