



What Makes a City:

Urban Experience
as a Performance

İlayda Keskinaslan
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Oslo National Academy of the Arts

I.

“Architecture is the simplest means
of articulating time and space,
of modulating reality, of engendering
dreams.”

–Ivan Chitchevlov

02

What Makes a City

03

For most of human history, people across the world lived mainly in small communities. Over the past few centuries – and particularly in recent decades – this has shifted dramatically. As of 2007, the amount of people in urban regions overtook the number living in rural settings in the world.¹ So now, for the first time ever, we can say that most of us live in cities. But there are some questions we should ask ourselves to improve our relationship with this complicated structure that is a city. What do we define as a city in the modern world? Is it a place that is constituted by physical elements or is it an idea to which we assign meaning? The answer to these questions will define our position within the vast network of complex systems that we as modern city dwellers find ourselves. Which will also guide our future experiences with built environments, determining the quality of our relationships with urban settings. After all, everyday life is heavily affected by manmade systems all over the world. We as people can increase our productivity and happiness simply by understanding the connection between our inner world and the external world. In doing so, we naturally achieve a higher quality of life, given that our experience of the external world starts from within, bubbling up from our inner-selves as we perceive life around us.

In *Critique of Everyday Life*, Henri Lefebvre mentions how we search for the human in too deep, too far away, whereas it is waiting for us, besieging us on all sides where we already are. All we ought to do is simply open our eyes and leave the false depths of metaphysics and inner lives behind, and instead explore the limitless human wealth that everyday life contains.² Urban dwellings are shared experiences that enhance life and bring the world closer to its full potential.³ Our personal discoveries about our experience in this intertwined system has the capacity to cultivate society. The human mind is exquisitely tailored to make sense of the world.

1. Ritchie 2018.
2. Lefebvre 1977.
3. Chimero 2012.

We ask questions, we analyze and we take an active part in each of our quests to understand our place. Furthermore, the city invites us to enter the scene and explore what is there- to wander, to experience, to move, to touch, and to perform.

Cities are in many ways the greatest ‘invention’ that human beings introduced to the world.⁴ In the present day, humanity identifies many different settlements as ‘cities’. The word ‘city’ is used to describe almost anything. A tiny settlement in Northern Norway that contains a few markets and a school with a cluster of houses accompanying them is called a city. So is Istanbul, with a population approaching 20 million with an urban structure shaping the growth of several neighboring cities, creating a power zone with industry connecting two continents. If anywhere can be defined as a city, then there is a chance that the word starts to lose its meaning. In his book, *The Language of Cities*, Deyan Sudjic points out that in order to make sense of a place, we need to know something about the people who live in a city, and the people who built it. And to ask how they did it, and why.⁵

Looking at this phenomenon from two perspectives, if physical conditions are what makes a city, what are those elements that constitute an urbanized setting? If it is a mental state, what are the underlying forces that shape our experience in built environments? For instance, we can list a number of settlements that have the same physical elements, however, those parts constitute a unique composition. Consider how many European cities are built along a river, yet the Rhein does not produce the same outcome as the Seine. The cities generate unique characteristics and distinctiveness according to how people react to them.

4. Tyrnauer 2016.
5. Sudjic 2017.

Given the previous and current examples of dwellings, in what ways do we attach meaning to space and place? A social scientist would be tempted to rush to culture as an explanatory factor. Culture is uniquely developed in human beings. It greatly influences our behaviors and values.⁶ This approach is highly reasonable, but other than that, there are cultural intersections that reflect the general human condition as well as personal peculiarities that would oppose these. Beyond the design of a city, there is a personal component to the equation, one that no city planner or architect can provide. Compositions of streets, buildings, and parks are more than mere material constructs. We feel connected to some places more than others, not necessarily because of the quality or the status of these environments but because of the meanings they bring to our lives.⁷

To understand the way we attach meaning to the cityscapes, we can set a common terminology first, which could help us systematize these humanistic insights and discuss it under predetermined conceptual frameworks. In daily use, the meaning of 'space' usually merges with 'place'. Technically space is more abstract than place. Space is what we would call a cartesian coordinate system, a mental construct with undifferentiated grounds. As we get to know a space better and enrich it with value, it starts to become a place. Architects usually talk about spatial qualities of place, and they can talk about locational (place) qualities of space. These two concepts of space and place require each other by definition. It is a common misconception to place feeling and thought in opposition to one another. One responsible for subjective states, while the other calculating objective realities. In fact, they reside on the two different ends of the experiential spectrum and both are ways of knowing.⁸

6. Tuan 1979.
7. Norman 2005.
8. Tuan 1979.

According to Donald Norman, there are three different aspects of design and he explains it in a very brief way. Firstly, the visceral design, the one that concerns itself with appearances, simply is the first thing we notice when we look at something. This level of perception works instinctively and it is affected by both our values and our personality. Our reactions to design at the visceral level are immediate and powerful. Secondly, the behavioral design, that has to do with the pleasure and effectiveness of the use. On this level, performance is more important than appearance. And thirdly, the reflective design considers the rationalization and intellectualization of an experience. This is where we reason about the world, how we interpret and understand things, and how we reflect on ourselves.⁹ In an active sense, the process of perception of built environments leads us to understand our worlds in ways where we perceive certain places as meaningful or beautiful. This course of critical thinking lets us unravel the potential of strong emotional connections to the world we live in.

The arguments of the subsequent sections follow an approach that is emotionally descriptive and questioning, rather than reasonably concluding and explaining. The reader is asked to question their own approach to observing and relating to their experiences and conceive of potential new paths to follow. This path can be composed by moving back and forth between the chapters that follow a certain narrative, and the Urban Elements Atlas that takes place at the end as a collection of items that is in progress.

9. Norman 2005.

II.

“The Roman System, or the Generic in
All Times and All Tenses.”

–Jean Attali

08

The Original Recipe

09

To understand the two different sides of this question, we can look at some examples that are relevant through time and different cultures.

Rome was the first city in history to reach a population of 1 million citizens. It took London almost 2000 years to eclipse Rome with reaching 2 million citizens. This is an indication of how revolutionary this situation was at that time. Romans were the first civilization that tried to standardize the concept of a city. Coming up with basic instructions for installing and configuring a city empowered them to establish a strong empire that was recognizable thanks to its iconic elements and the way they structured their establishments in the city. Referring to the views of the Harvard Project on the City, building cities is the most crucial act of production and reproduction within society, and as such is the entity through which Rome most clearly expressed and refined its global aspirations.¹⁰

As a revolutionary act in the history of settlements, Romans assigned a meaning to the imperial city structure, that it should symbolize the power of the empire using it as a spectacle. Every Roman city had to be built following a set of standardized components that asserted and maintained imperial authority. Aside from being functional and sustainable, the elements had to create a unique visual language that determined the form of public architecture, the orientation of them within the city, and the overall composition.

The cities that were built using these principles as a guide established a degree of uniformity and a series of signs. This system could have only been manifested following a method of standardization of certain public buildings, planning strategies that took grids as a logic to build onto, and saw infrastructure as a unifying force that would allow them to reach other parts of the world.

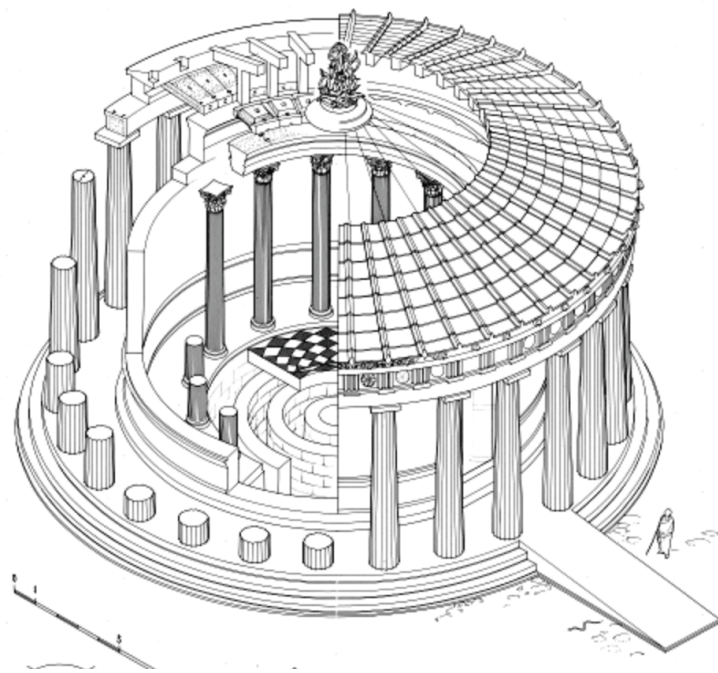
10. Koolhaas 2001.

Jean Attali describes this logic in three very simple commentaries. Firstly, Roman cities were generic cities that reflected the form of no actual city. The settlements were comprised of regulated parts arranged on a grid. He identifies them as standard materials incorporated in the container of each city. Secondly, these manuals took the city as a three-dimensional being, considering the built environment in both a sectional and planimetric way. This way, cities were constructed in a way to let them never rest, moving in both directions at the same time, and favoring movement as a priority. Anyhow, the authorities were aware that the necessary network interface such as the infrastructure of the city, public services, and the things we can call urban armatures, was what enabled the city to thrive while providing efficient communication and exchange with other parts of the Empire. Alternatively, these relations can be seen as the connections of constantly shifting flows superimposed on a universal template. That leads to social, cultural, and political determination when it comes to manifestation through architecture. And thirdly, understanding that this guide assumes the cities to be a container of flows, acting merely as a vessel for movements, rather than an urban artifact.¹¹

However, generic elements do not always generate the same outcomes. This suggests that there might be something more to the equation other than the physical elements we have considered before. To put it another way, we can say that a city is not just a sum of its parts. There are mysterious components that compose the cities, which are man-made mechanisms of almost infinite complexity. Louis Bourgeois explains this phenomenon in a very simple but poetic way: "We bring our lares with us".

11. Attali 2000

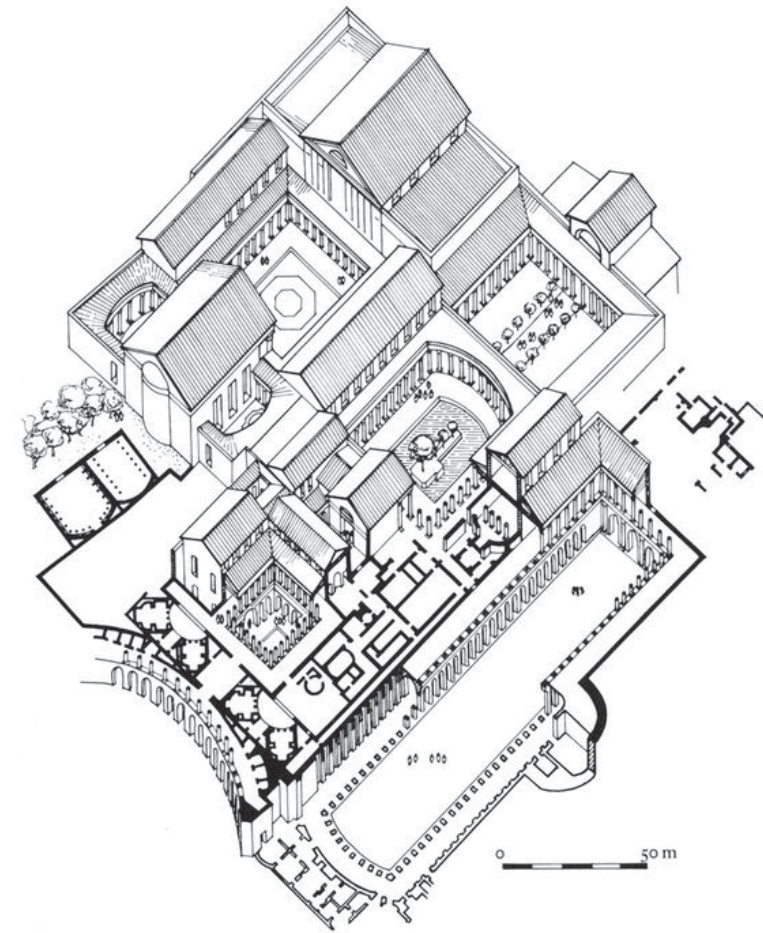
19



Tombs

Tholos of Marmaria,
Anonymous

18



Palaces

Palace of Domustinian,
Anonymous

III.

“Man can see nothing around them that is not their own image, everything speaks to them of themselves. Their very landscape is alive.”

–Karl Marx

Making Sense of Cityscape

In the 19th and early 20th centuries, the Western world went through far-reaching transformations. Following their idealist future projections, modern civilizations started to build their dreams. With the cultural and political changes that came with modernism, western societies went through wide-scale transformations. The development of modern industrial systems and the rapid growth of cities shaped the effects of modernism on western societies. Going through these changes, individuals had to create new ways to understand the physical changes that were happening around them to express their emotional reflections of them. This way, a new era started in visual arts that changed the way that reality was perceived and portrayed.

The modernist portrayal of human nature has been the urban environment in both paintings and literature. Rather than depicting nature as the habitat, modernist productions take place within the context of the city. Although facing very harsh critiques from the conventional art academies as they kept emerging, the city was used as a strong tool to place oneself in the world, and reflect one's own inner perspectives. Artists paid attention to the effects of the passage of time, the depiction of daylight and its changing qualities, and movement as a central element of human perception and the experience of the urban environment. But all were reflected from a personal viewpoint. For all of these creators and thinkers, subjectivity was now the principal focus.

One of the most unique examples of cities with diverse representations of everyday life in the urban setting is Paris. By the middle of the 19th century, Paris went through drastic changes. After a detailed plan was constructed to project authority onto everyone who would experience going into the city, Emperor Napoleon III ordered the rebuilding of Paris, which caused major changes in society.

Walter Benjamin, the great German social critic, refers to this transformation Paris was undergoing as the birth of the modern city. The renovation of the city included the demolition of the medieval settlements that were unsanitary and dangerously overcrowded during those years, and the construction of wide boulevards and avenues, great new squares, lively parks, new sewers, fountains, and aqueducts, as well as a web of commercial arcades. While these new additions were being located in the city center, most of the people had to be relocated outside of it, eventually losing their homes. In this way, a new physical hierarchy was created. The annexation of the suburbs surrounding Paris was a solution to find those people homes, but the central area was gentrified. Just like all radical changes, the process was painful and confusing for most. But it also created the sparks that would turn into the flame of the philosophical idea that moves societies forward.

Witnessing such a harsh change, the arts of the era were highly affected. A new attitude started to flourish that valued the ordinary in life, the unseen. Approaching this subject from the visual arts perspective, radicals of their time, early Impressionist painters, only became themselves by disrupting the rules of highly valued academic painting. Académie des Beaux-Arts, by that time, was the biggest and most respected authority in the city regarding visual arts. They were passionate defenders and preservers of traditional French painting, and they were responsible for all the art shows in Paris, including Salon de Paris. The Salon presented paintings floor-to-ceiling on every empty bit of the room. Some critical reports of the exhibitions were published in the gazettes, which was the beginning of the modern practice of art criticism.

If a painter aimed to be part of an exhibition in Salon de Paris, they had to follow a number of very strict rules and simply be worthy in the eyes of increasingly conservative academic juries who were not receptive to Impressionist painters. Studios were the only places well-established painters would work. Subjects of the paintings should have been biblical stories, mythological characters, or historical events, subjects worth painting. And paintings had to be completely finished before presenting them to an audience. Having a particularly firm position against these rules, Impressionist painters have found their inspirations in the city, where their muses would stroll about in the streets. In Mediated Impressionism, visual reality is conceived, not as a vibrant colored field but as a social world in which the figure and its various 'grounds' must be analyzed to be understood.¹²

Impressionists considered city life as the principal modern subject, which required being outside, examining the flows and movements of the streets, and observing how city dwellers used the space. Given that, the natural habitat for Impressionists was the world outside, their studio. The Artists had to adjust themselves to this fast and changing world to be on the same page with the zeitgeist.

Apart from having the mindset, painting outside was only possible with the right tools. Before the mid-1800s, it was a struggle to keep oil paints from drying out before the painters could use them. People had to store the paints in a pig's bladder sealed with string.¹³

It was already a hard task to complete a painting at a studio in these conditions let alone when painting outside. When it comes to catching the fast pace of everyday life in Paris, the artists had to travel around, find a suitable place in front of a cafe or a train station and work with moving, unaware models and dynamic settings.

12. Saunders 2005.
13. Stowell 2012.

With the invention and mass production of paint tubes, this was possible for the first time in history.

This development was precisely what Impressionists needed to leave behind the restrictions of studio space, to take their inspirations straight from the source: the world around them. Thus they reflected it immediately to their canvas, catching the most important elements such as the effect of natural light and its changes throughout the day.

The well-known aesthetics of the movement derives from a very practical ground, the limitations of time. Visible brush strokes and open composition were both the outcomes of having to work outside and on the move, but also the defining characteristics of creating images of what appear to be impressions of reality. Impressionism acknowledged and, in a way, almost fetishized the subjectivity of the act of representational transcription.¹⁴ They produced works with their awareness of how the modern city transforms the perception of space and time in society and within themselves.

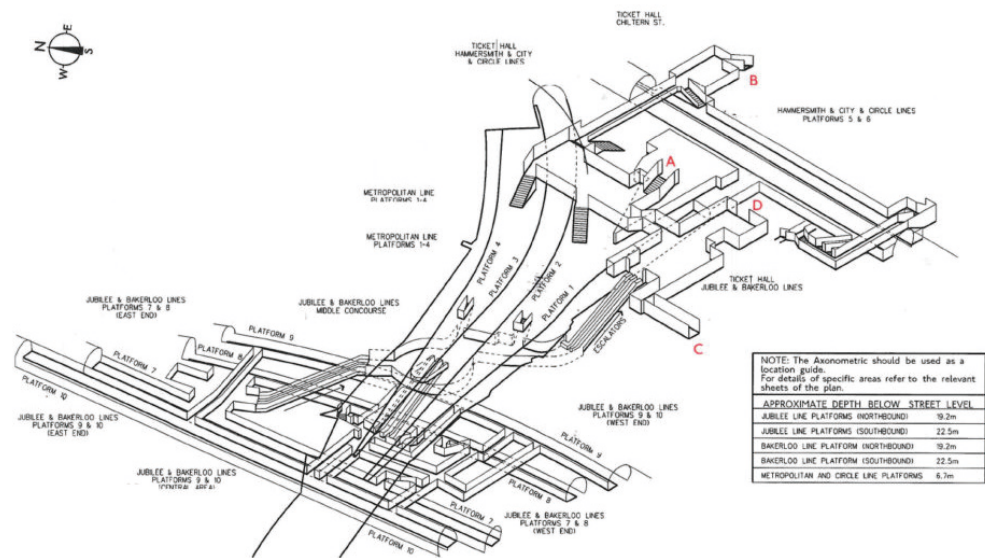
The built environment plays an exceptionally important role in these paintings. It constitutes both the background and the subject of the images. Several locations in the city are used over and over by many artists. Their significance stems from their role in society and the political and social changes people were going through. Places like train stations, bridges, boulevards, and squares were architectural elements that had a substantial meaning for the time. These parts of the city were designed by local authorities to serve their own interests by making it impossible to put up barricades or claim a space, furthering efforts to control the population. But these areas also had a positive side to them, in that they generated new grounds for people to gather, which created one of the most significant characters of the era: the crowd.

14. Brettell 1999.

The urban crowd of the 19th century was a fresh concept for everyone. This phenomenon was a new research topic and a subject for many studies within both art and sociology fields. Rather than being composed of a product of many individuals, the crowd became a separate being with its own characteristics and motivations. In visual arts, this phenomenon was the main star of many representations, both in literature and paintings, representing the unique experience of modernity. It was a tool to revitalize the way modern civilization viewed life, art, politics, and science, composing the self-evident character of this new cityscape.



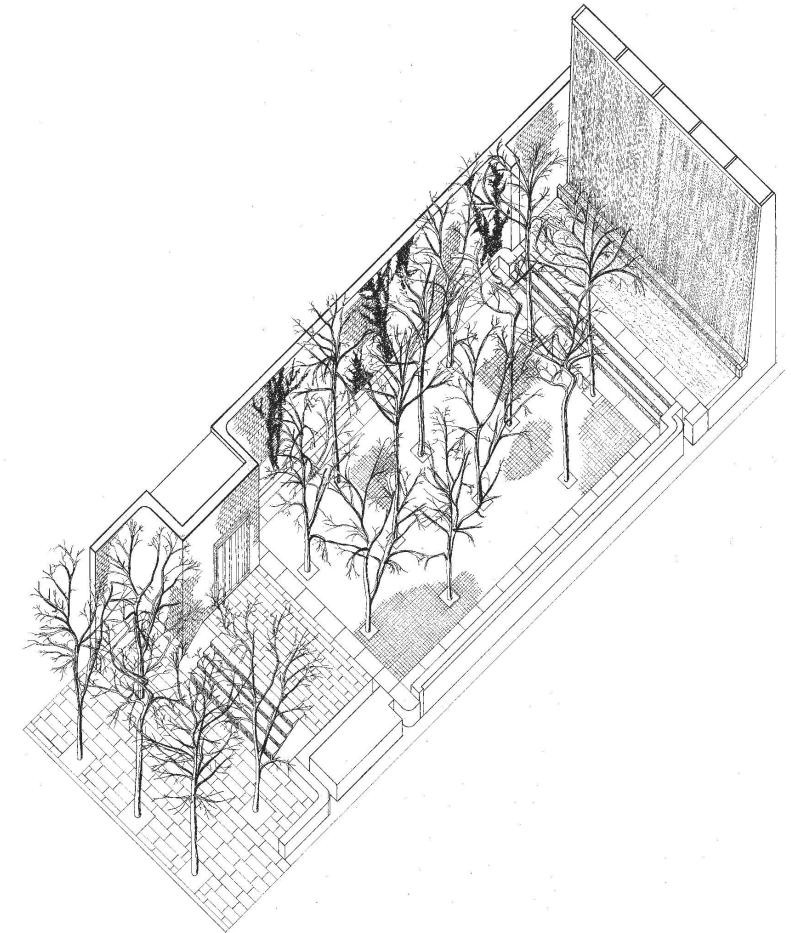
03



Train Stations

Baker Street Train Station,
Anonymous

27



Backyards

Paley Park,
Charlton Jenks

IV.

“Do you remember ... The Man of the Crowd? Sitting in a café, and looking through the shop window, a convalescent is enjoying the sight of the passing crowd and identifying himself in thought with all the thoughts that are moving around him.”

–Charles Baudelaire

How the Modern City Created Its Observers

Along with all the physical changes that were happening all around the physical space, mental changes were happening within individuals. Ideas about the nature of personal perspective and observation were changing radically. The transition from the community to society led people to question their place in these crowds. During medieval times, groups of people who shared a geographical association in a more concrete sense would create a community. But after the first traces of modernity started to appear in cities, a system of social relationships that generally lack geographical limitations started to emerge in the form of societies. Communities could be physically identified depending on where they lived or where they came from, while on the contrary, this new concept of society was a mental construct and abstract by its nature.

City dwellers were adapting to this process as they had to come up with a new identity and a new perspective. The warm and familiar feeling of having a community had disappeared, as these people were a small part of a bigger crowd now. This change came with a realization that people could be individuals within that crowd in a way that was never possible in the smaller communities where everyone knew everything. One could stand in the midst of the crowd and not one person would realize they were there. This freeing sense was so unique that it was the muse for a lot of writers to relocate themselves within the city and create a new role, the observer.¹⁵

The new scientific age and the rapid spread of critical thinking led people to do experiments about the nature of human perception and sensation which unraveled a deeper understanding of the way humans perceive their surroundings. This understanding was not a simple replication of the external world but a very complex psycho-social process that involves both external and internal motives.

15. Baudelaire 1863.

The impact of this new approach grounded the idea of the subjectivity of the observer as the key to becoming their true selves.

The modern city was drawing the attention of many aspiring artists and writers as they wanted to be a part of exploring this unique and dynamic environment. Charles Baudelaire was one of the first ones who expressed his positions in regards to the subjective vision and its effects on the new culture, as well as the experience of the new modern city in his writings. This fresh topic was an unknown area to be experienced and explored, to be documented and speculated. Therefore, Baudelaire called fellow writers to produce works on the subject and establish a theory about the characteristics of this period. Together, they created an understanding of what this new feeling might mean, as well as the motives of a modern city dweller and the fashions, morals, and emotions of the new society.¹⁶

Baudelaire tried to define the key to understanding the new state of the city experience as it was transitory by its nature. He suggested that the way to understand it had to be through observation. While emphasizing the importance of this tool, he pointed out that the manners of this act are as important as the tool itself. He considered himself a *flâneur*, a character of the modern city who is in no particular hurry to get where they are heading, merely taking in the city's sounds and smells and views, experiencing the streets. A distant figure who would simply enjoy being in the moment, observing their surroundings. According to Baudelaire, walking down a crowded city street is one of the most exhilarating adventures a person can experience and definitely way more dramatic than any play, far richer in stories than any book.¹⁷

16. Baudelaire 1863.

17. De Botton 1999.

In this case, just like the way the cityscape constituted both the background of the city and became the subject itself in an Impressionist painting, the crowd both composes the setting of the street and the subject. It becomes a separate being with its own motivation rather than being the sum of many individuals. Bringing large numbers of people together in small spaces while separating them from each other is a modern city's paradox. So, as Baudelaire put it, 'being away from and yet to feel everywhere at home' was the way how flâneurs tried to recover the sense of community within themselves. Walter Benjamin describes this encounter flâneurs go through as a 'shock experience' ¹⁸ And Baudelaire's writing reflects those onrushing impressions and shocks as moving attention from one thing to another with quick glances rather than keeping one object in focus and lingering on it for a while. This way, he shows that he doesn't comprehend the city as individual pieces, but a composition of those elements. The elements of the modern city are fleeting, just the way the city itself is. They come in shocks and waves rather than lasting and fulfilling. That is why flâneurs have to detach themselves from the crowd so that they can quickly move their attention from one thing to another.

In a sense, what flâneurs were doing was to open their eyes and ears to the scene happening around them. They would not treat the street as a spectacle, but instead open themselves to it, letting 'it' happen to them. Observing the crowd, creating stories about their lives, eavesdropping on their conversations, studying their mannerisms, and examining how they dress. Simply enjoying this play and trying to understand the incredible complexity of the scenario. What attracted them to the streets was the value of unexpected simple pleasures they usually bumped into.

18. Benjamin 1939.

Being hit by the welcoming smell of a hidden bakery, seeing young people trying out their first drinks in a dark alley, and the ecstatic feeling someone is left with after seeing the most beautiful lady in the city smile at them. Flâneurs lived for that adventure. And only the cities that were unafraid of allowing for this kind of chaos were capable of presenting such a complex play. Only the cities that knew that a little mess, entanglement, and disorder could provide us the materials to practice our curiosity and humanity.

This fresh sense of speed and explosive energy of the city created a new conception of space. These ideas of sense of place and conception of space are basic components of the way of describing the changes peoples' perceptions were going through. The city became a striking source of energy. Baudelaire tried to express this energy in his writings through descriptions of the ever-changing surface, which could capture the whole visual field instead of focusing on individual points. It was also a technique that overlapped with what Impressionists were doing at the time. Their productions were concerned with the primary facts of sensation. Visual truth was no longer within the rational external world but within the subjectivity of the observer. Just like the use of color and light in Impressionist paintings that blurred the descriptive details in the city, Baudelaire's text would not come from external reality but impressionistic details, which were reflections of the mind.

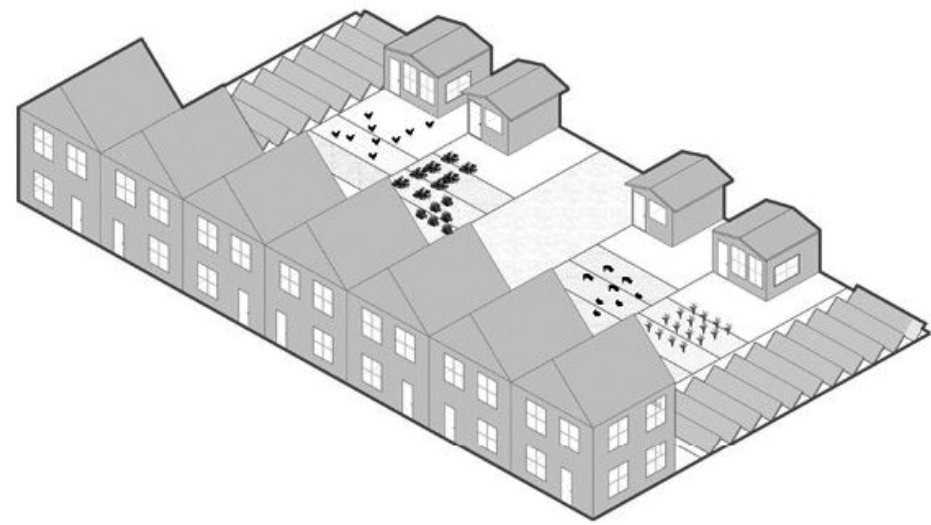
The flâneurs were avid enthusiasts of examples of modernity. Standing in opposition to classical objects of art or views, always following the new and the trendy. This period was rich in possibilities, particularly for the flâneurs, whose goal was to discover the spectacles of the city.

Baudelaire thought the vast majority of his equals were being carried away with subjects such as political heroism and flamboyant stories. Instead, he turned his gaze to the surprisingly fertile area of everyday life. Placing himself in a new position, he started to observe the panorama of daily life that surrounded him. Having a panoramic view in his writing overlapped with the use of panorama as an entertainment method. The observers would stand in the middle of a room and be surrounded by a large round painting. As such, they would have to turn around to see the full picture. This revolutionary technique was one of the first groundbreaking methods to have been explored since the one-point perspective, which also changed the perception of humanity as well as art history.¹⁹ The attraction to this entertainment style was a symptom of the growing sympathy for the representation of everyday life in its totality.²⁰

In this way, he was able to put the detail of the ordinary, the overlooked, into his work by showing the intimate details of everyday life in the modern city. In a way, it was the delicate process of unfolding reality which was buried under the layers of familiar yet overlooked daily life.

19. Staniland 2006.
20. Friesen 1972.

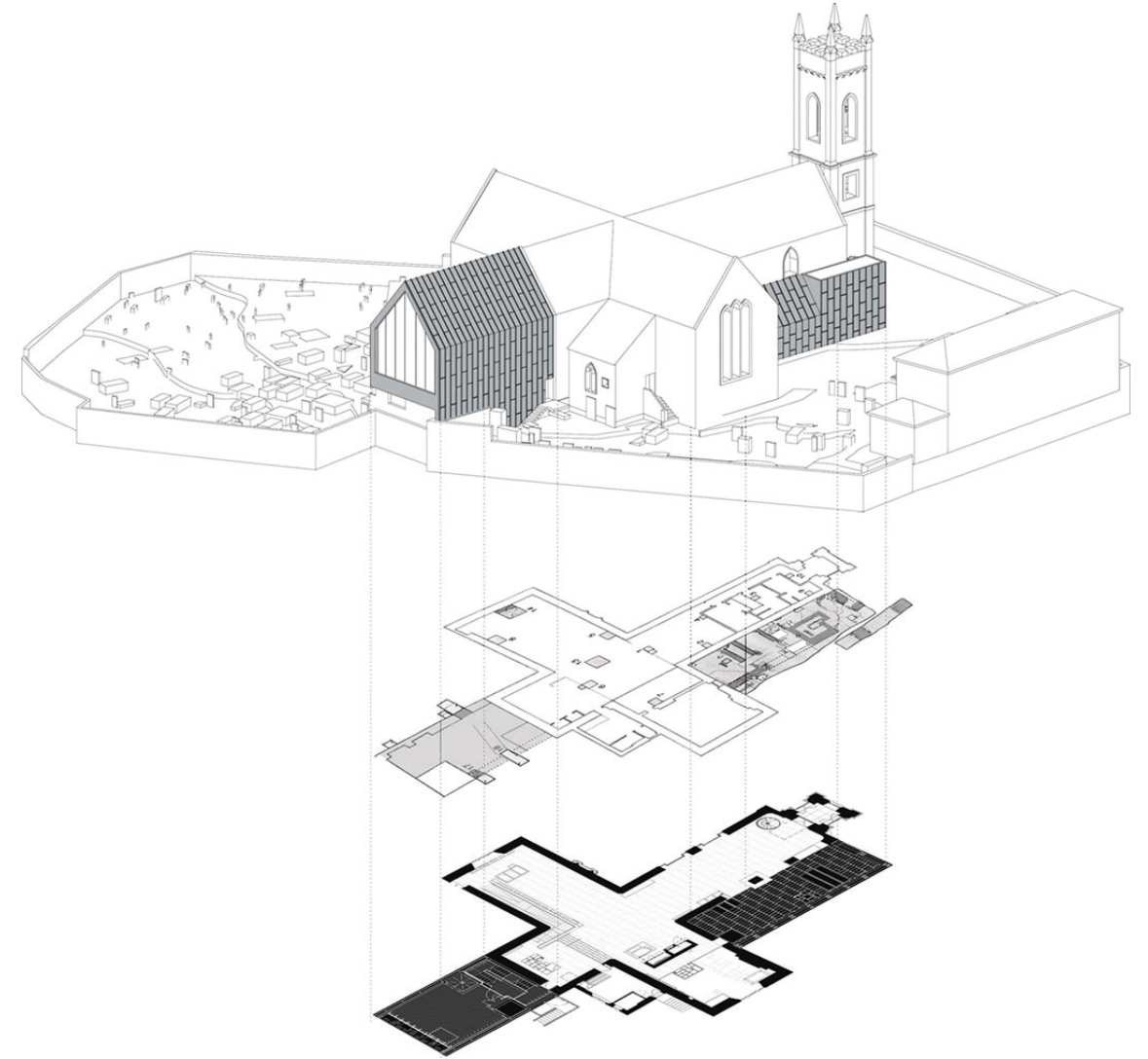
17



Town Houses

Townhouses,
Callum Andrews
& Niek van Laere

15



Churches

St. Mary's Church,
Mccullough Mulvin

V.

"In New Babylon, social space is social spatiality. Space as a psychic dimension (abstract space) cannot be separated from the space of action (concrete space). Their divorce is only justified in a utilitarian society with arrested social relations, where concrete space necessarily has an anti-social character.

-Constant, 1974

34

Mapping the City: Space and Place

35

One of the rational ways to understand a structure or a system is to divide it into smaller pieces that are possible to examine individually. This way one can understand how that piece works on its own and how it changes when it is a part of a bigger picture. The Urban Elements Atlas, that takes place in the concluding section of this narrative, provides a perspective of the diversity and the abundance of the urban environment. There is a cultural element that affects both physical and mental space intensely, as well as personal elements that we all bring with us wherever we go. In this case, our personal perspective towards the built environment is determined by our position. The relation between what we experience and what we know is never settled. The way we experience phenomena is affected by what we know and what we believe. And as we expand our knowledge and experiences in life, the meaning of our encounters change rather significantly. In an urban setting, we encounter numerous elements every day. But when we are in that atmosphere, we never look at one thing, but rather we are always looking at the relation between things and ourselves.²¹

The compositions and unities of ambiance that generate the urban experience are established by many things, but mainly the 'soft' and mutable elements of the urban scene. The human activity, the association of memories, the play of light, the absence of sounds, the subtle effect of temperature... The 'hard' elements are physical and measurable matters such as the shape, the size, the location, and the texture.²²

The physical elements, which we can call 'hard elements' of the urban environment, constitute the materialistic world around us. Whereas, our personal approach, which can be evaluated as 'soft elements' is what binds those hard elements with logical and emotional connections that create a personal atmosphere in any given space.

21. Berger 1972.
22. Sadler 1998.

Most frequently, our interpretation of an urban environment is not sustained. It is rather partial, fragmentary, and intermingled with other topics. Almost every sense takes action in the composition of this image overall.²³ This action generates interminable versions of a place that was constituted by the same combination of elements. The constant play of contrasts that makes a city can only be reproduced in the form of a visual if the creator considers both hard and soft elements of the physical space while mapping it.

First, a definition of the use of 'mapping' in this text must be clearly stated to continue elaborating the act of reproducing the urban experience. Mapping can be defined by the following: any kind of graphical representation of processes, ideas, structures, emotions, or systems that depicts a correlation; a representation showing the relationships among a bigger system's different components; an explanation of the flows of energy, information, materials. Mapping can be considered as a cultural project, as it embodies values and illustrates ideas. It creates and builds the world as much as measures and describes it. In this active sense, the function of mapping is about re-shaping the world we live in and less about mirroring reality. This reveals and realizes the hidden potential we have regarding our personal attachments to a physical environment.²⁴

Developing new methods of representing our experiences have a crucial role in our daily lives. As we get more advanced in expressing our inner worlds to the rest of our community, our way of thinking inevitably changes. With the innovative spirit of the renaissance, exploration of the one-point perspective projection method changed how we perceive the world.

23. Lynch 1960.
24. Corner 1999.

By placing the human as the center of the world, perspective became a catalyst in the process of discovering our place in the universe.

The idea of a human-centric understanding of our surroundings was planted when we started investigating new ways of expressing ourselves, birthing a whole new mindset for humanity. Investigating methods that are different from conventional ways of map-making, such as the one-point perspective, gives people the chance to relocate themselves in their environments or society. Trying to transform the infinite complexity of the city into a line of colors, textures, shapes, and movements frees one from the burden of being objective, and lets them finally be subjective. Trying to describe the 'howness' of things will give us some clues about our ideas and emotions around the cityscape. Instead of flattening the world with the two dimensions of a grid, we can situate ourselves in the map, or make the world our map, and observe what materials give us a home feeling, which streets make us claustrophobic, where we feel completely free, and what makes us feel trapped. The descriptive nature of emotions can be used as a tool to transform the built environment into visuals using the narrative potential they accommodate. The components that communicate with the audience on subjects that are not facts or solid information are the details that capture the actual spirit of the city.



A contemporary mapping practice, Detectives of Daily Life, investigates the details of the built environment that create narrative in stories, in our everyday life. The founder of the practice, Oğul Öztunç, defines this act of reproducing reflections of daily life as a critical urban practice.²⁵ In order to locate their position in multi-layered systems, participants in workshops led by Öztunç have produced a number of works regarding the observation of daily life in their cities. Participants who construct their own reproductions question their place in society and their relationship with the physical environment around them as architects, thinkers, and tenants of the world. However, it is most important for them to observe every detail with a delicate approach, in the role of detectives. As Jane Jacobs argues, cities are a problem of 'organized complexity'. On the surface, city life looks as if it is disordered, but in fact, the underlying structure is visible when approached by careful eyes, as is characteristic of a detective. Participants of these workshops investigated, with a certain level of meticulousness, the balance of this productive mixture of organisms and functions.²⁶

25. Öztunç 2020.

26. Jacobs 1961.

The Detectives of Daily Life practice adapts users to the conditions of the space they are investigating through various mediums, of which several examples have been produced. During the course of the Covid-19 pandemic, participants created a digital detective bureau investigating the physical effects of the lockdown by drawing plans of houses in which they dwell, in order to show how the pandemic changed their physical world along with their rituals in a home setting (2020). In another project, participants devised a gazette that traced mysterious murders from 1900s Istanbul by digging through the archives of the city with the goal of establishing psycho-physical relations of the era by investigating criminal offenses that took place over one hundred years prior (2019). Moreover, they documented stories of a local flea market, examining every single item together with the personas of their sellers from over two hundred individual tables by spending a weekend in one of the liveliest streets in Istanbul (2018). Finally, they drew up a sizable map that illustrates the subtle details that make a neighborhood alive, which was full of unique characters and documented the facades of the buildings as well as human activity throughout the day in order to understand the urban dynamics of their habitat (2017). These attempts were ambitious performances attempting to approach the human condition in the modern world by following in the footsteps of the flaneurs and Situationist Internationale members.



gizem avcısı dedektif
İlayda Keskinaslan



kurnaz dedektif
İLAYDA



Gizem Avcısı Dedektif
İlayda Keskinaslan

image: İlayda Keskinaslan, 2017-2020

A street in the contemporary world consists of hundreds of different components of numerous scales. These elements hold a hidden potential in the way they are composed. The multilayered nature of these parts lets us create new versions of reality using reproduction techniques. These acts result in a visual outcome that reflects the continuous sequence of phases that cities are going through. Using a visual language that is unique to the creator is also what distinguishes the practice of mapping from the mere act of tracing. It doesn't simply reproduce a reflection, it constructs a new version.

Situationist Architecture mainly remained in the realm of the mind, yet situationists drew their inspirations directly from the urban environment, the raw material of the existing city. While altering the perceptions of the situationists regarding the street, this performance contributed to the taxonomy of the modern city.²⁷ Their fundamentally subjective space depictions were documented in a seriousness that could only be seen in scientists and detectives. This documentation method follows the ways of positive sciences which are all about systematization. This dualism where an entirely subjective observation is documented in a systematic way, a parallel reality happens. When the image of the city is reproduced, its meaning changes accordingly. Or more precisely, its meaning multiplies and fragments into many meanings. Consequently, the reproduction of the inspiration that is the real world, becomes a reference itself for future images that are affected by this situation.²⁸ The observer changes the mechanism of the built environment.

27. Sadler 1998.
28. Berger 1972

GÜNLÜK HAYAT DEDEKTİFLERİ

şeyler gördü ve hayatı araştırması

Critical Urban Practice
Analiz no:5



08 / 09
ekim 2016

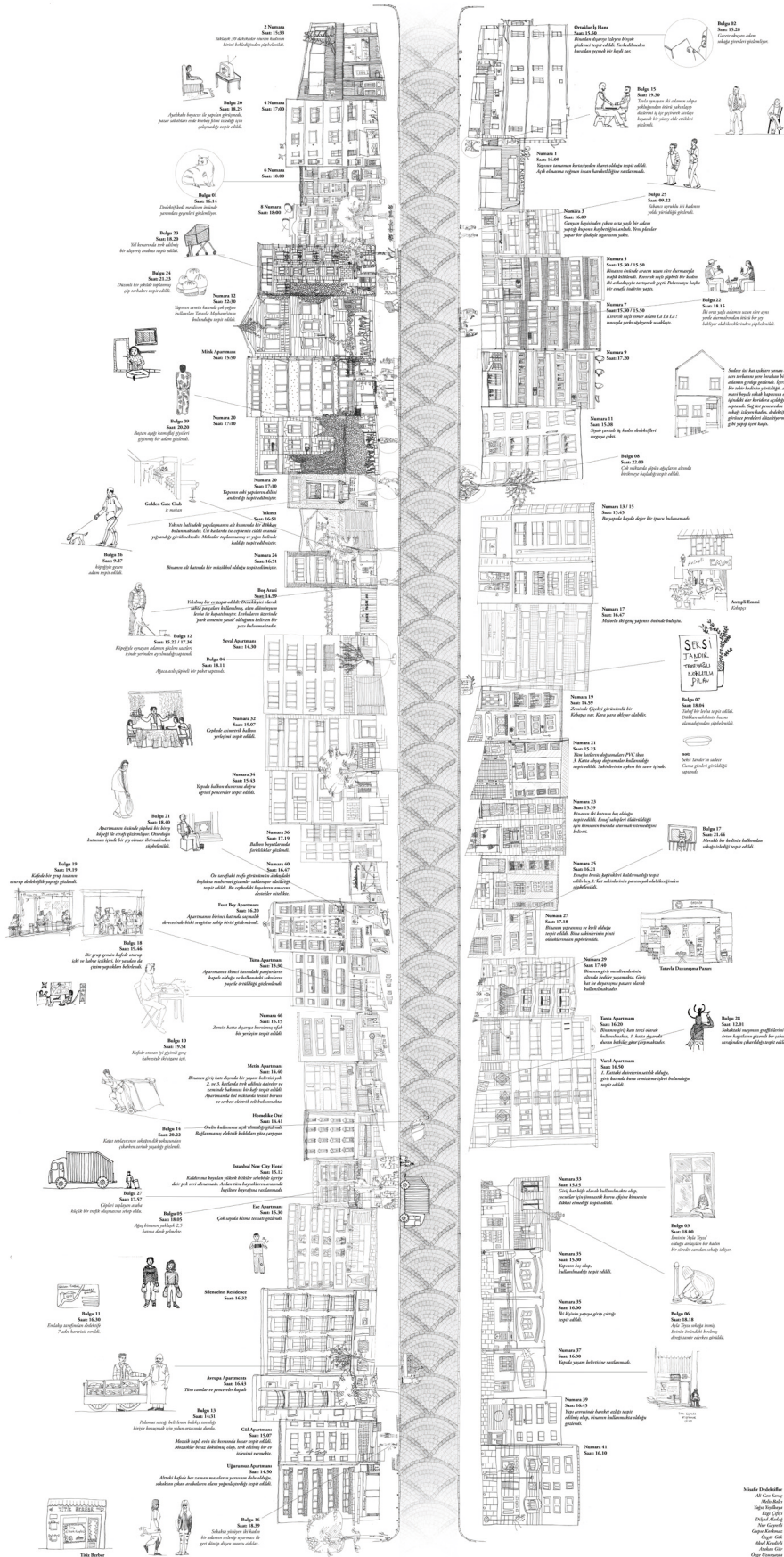


image: Detectives of Daily Life, 2017

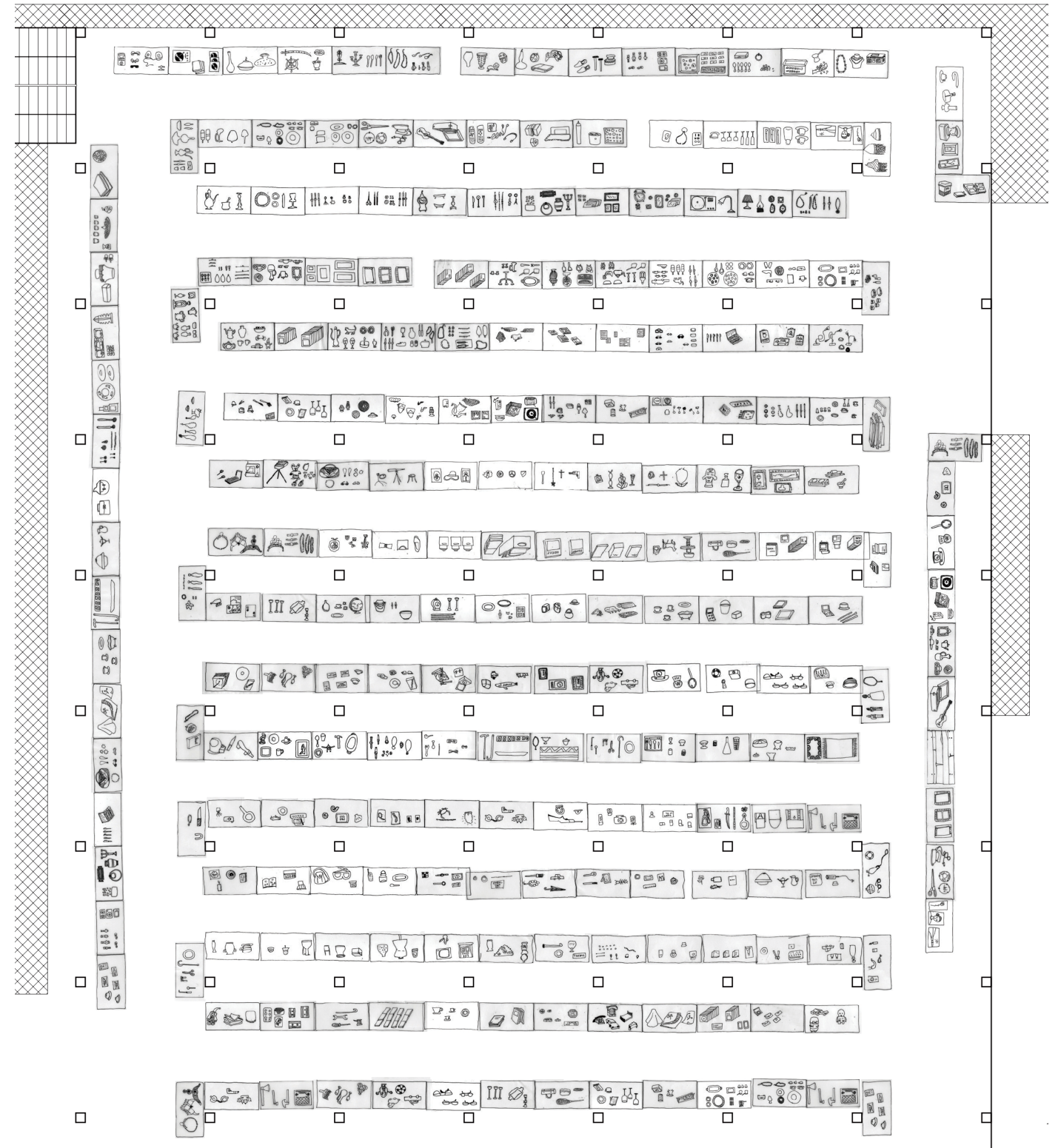


image: Detectives of Daily Life, 2018

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GÜNLÜK HAYAT DEDEKTİFLERİ * ÜÇÜNCÜ SAYFA HİKAYELERİ

CUMARTESİ MECMUASI ÖZEL EKİ

İSTANBUL'DA YAŞANMIŞ CİNAYET VAKALARI

SADECE KUPONA **59**

ÜÇÜNCÜ SAYFA HİKAYELERİ



	DAĞHAMAMI CİNAYETİ	ÜSKÜDAR CANAVARI CİNGENE ARİF	AHMET MUHTAR BEY CİNAYETİ	DESTANCININ AKİBETİ	FERİKÖY CİNAYETİ	CIHANGİR CİNAYETİ	BÖREKÇİ CİNAYETİ	EYYÜB SULTAN CİNAYETİ	DANYAL EFENDİ CİNAYETİ	GALATA CANAVARI BİÇAKÇI PETRİ	BOSTANCI CİNAYETİ
KATİL	HANCI	CİNGENE ARİF	BİLİNİYOR	HARUN	FATMA	NOEL SORIS	BÖREKÇİ AHMET	MEHMET ALİ	LAZ KADEM	PETRİ	SARAFİM ÇETESİ
SUCALETİ	HALAT	TABANCA	HANÇER	BIÇAK	EKMEK BIÇAĞI	BIÇAK	BIÇAK	BALTA	EKMEK BIÇAĞI	BIÇAK	TÜFEK & BALTA
YER	KUYU	ORMAN	BÖREKÇİ BAKKAL MAHALLESİ	UZUNÇARŞI	KÜVET	BİR APARTMAN	ARAPCAMİ	GECEKONDU	FATİH CAMİ SADIIRVANI	AYAMAVRİ	PAŞAKÖY
SEBEP	PARA	PARA	FİKİR	300 ALTIN	ALDATMA	CİNSELLİK	BÖREK	NAMUS	İNTİKAM	DELİLİK	PARA
ÜÇÜNCÜ	DERVİŞ EBE	AGUŞ MUSTAFA	HALİL PAŞA	KIZ VELİ	ÇOCUKLAR	KALOMERRI	BÖREKÇİNİN EŞİ	ERDAL K.	SAİR RAZİ EFENDİ	LAMBO	ERŞED BEY
KURBAN	SAKA MEHMET	ALİ CAVUŞ	KÖR MUHTAR AHMET BEY	MEVLÜD	DURSUN	JOCELYA	MEHMET C.	HATİCE	DANYAL EFENDİ	KAPTAN İSPIRO	ERŞED VE NİDAİ

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2 Feriköy Cinayeti Bayan Kuş Dedektif Elif
3 Evrenosazade Sokakı Cinayeti Son Dakikacı Dedektif Yigit

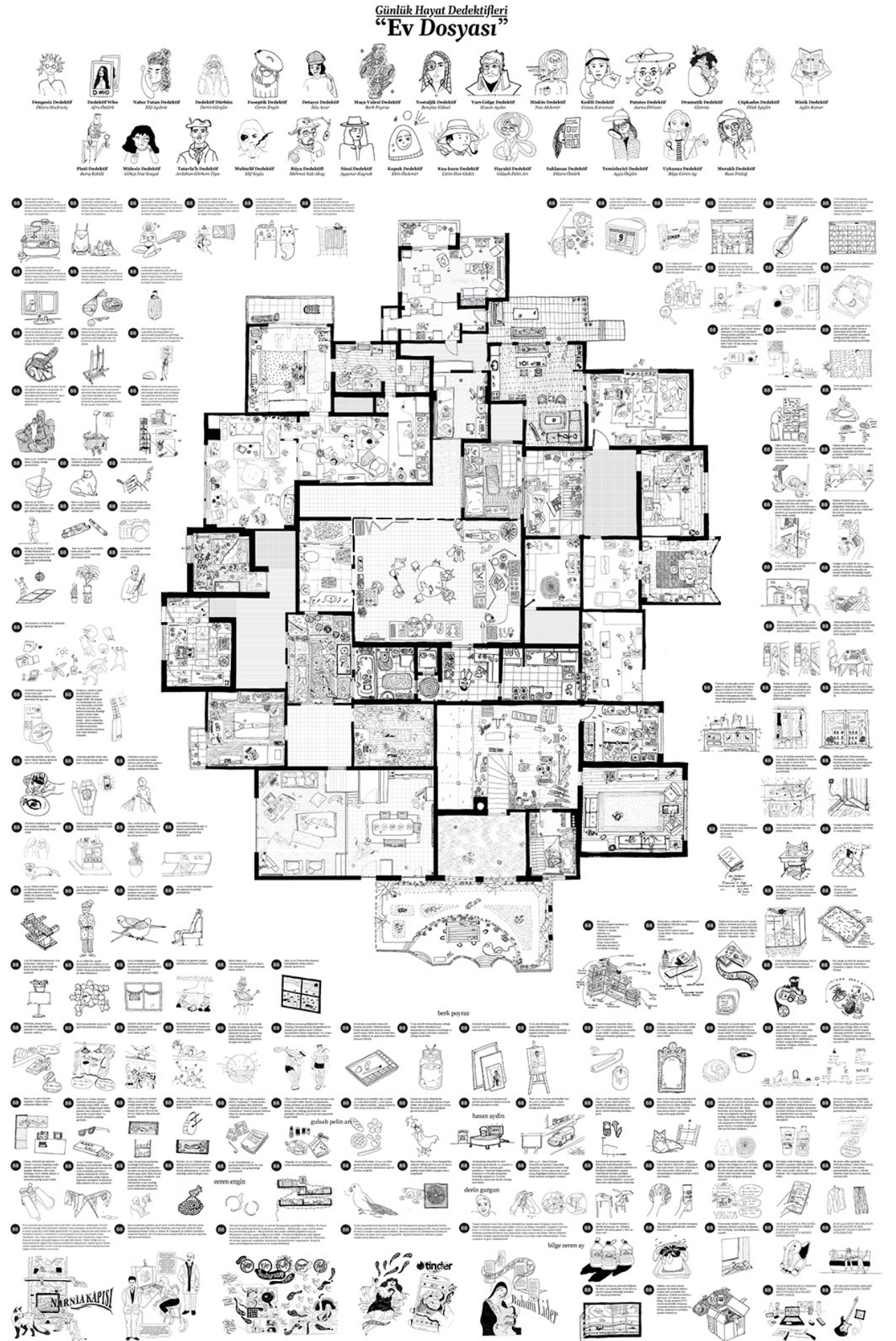
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2 Ünlü Destancının Akıbeti Genel İzleyici Dedektif Şeyma
3 Eyyüb Sultan Cinayeti Lastik Ördük Dedektif Berk

3 Cihangir Cinayeti Nabız Ölçen Dedektif Ayşe
4 Danyal Efendi Cinayeti Çocuk Dedektif Başak
5 Cibali Fırını Cinayeti Dedektif Paloma

5 Ahmet Muhtar Bey Cinayeti Dedektif Betül Von Betül
6 Galata Canavari Biçakçı Petri Derin Dedektif Dilara
6 Bostancı Cinayeti Kararsız Şeyler Dedektif Cemre

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VI.

“Cities are ordinary spaces of activity that many people occupy without thinking much about it.”

–Lauren Berlant

Urban Experience as a Performance

46

47

For many people, their experiences in the urban environment are rather ordinary, lacking astonishing events and curious circumstances. In order to find that spark in the city, a city dweller should adopt a new perspective, and take the position of an observer. Most often, as Baudelaire pointed out, daily life reveals its richest stories and fascinating details when people are among the streets as a character that seeks out, takes action, and becomes a performer. That way, the performer becomes a crucial element of the city, one that is responsible for the production of space. This social construct does not follow consistent rules though. Reason alone can not explain the way people live and love. This is why the observer has to locate themselves right in the middle of the scene, becoming a part of what's happening. Adapting to the almost glacial movement of the natural environment and letting themselves drift and be taken by the constant flow and flux of the city. This endless field of singular moments is held together by the loose threads that are our associations. In this sense, the city is not an object that is perceived by the diverse selection of people who dwell in it, but is the social product of many creators who are constantly modifying the structure as they change as humans. The threads that are connecting all the singular elements are being made, remade and unmade every single day. It may seem like built environments have general outlines that are stable, but are ever-changing through the details of a multitude of personal levels.

One way to create a story is to give parts of the story, the snapshots, to the audience. By dividing the narrative into segments, we highlight some information which later leads to the possibility of different readings. In this way, everyone creates their own unique scenario to fill in the gaps, generating endless possibilities.

The concluding section, Urban Elements Atlas, is a toolset that can be used to make these aforementioned connections. The various pieces represent the elements of the city both in a literal and metaphorical sense. The reader in the narrative and the performer in the city share the same role in these developing narratives with these elements.

To walk without stopping is to lack a place. It requires a moment of thought, a reflection process, in order to achieve experiencing the space through movement. Which then, as a result, generates place by assigning values to its parts. The nature of being in motion comes with the parameters of space and time. Moving elements of the city, which were described as soft elements previously, are as important as the static physical parts when it comes to creating patterns, forms, and structures. As the observer moves in the urban environment, they create a flow that combines with the flux of the existing system. In that moment of ambiguity, everything seems in harmony. This creates what appear to be impressions of reality, streams of memories and emotions, just like what Impressionist painters did with a brushstroke. That is, until the observer is alarmed by something that is worth paying attention to. They stop to investigate the visual qualities of the urban environment by studying the mental image of that city which is held by its citizens. Space achieves a concrete reality when it encounters a reflective mind. In the experience of the urban environment a peculiar exchange happens. We lend our emotions and associations to space, which turns space into place while adding value to its existence, and place lends us its aura which in turn forms our own perception and consciousness.

VII.

Urban
Elements
Atlas

50

51

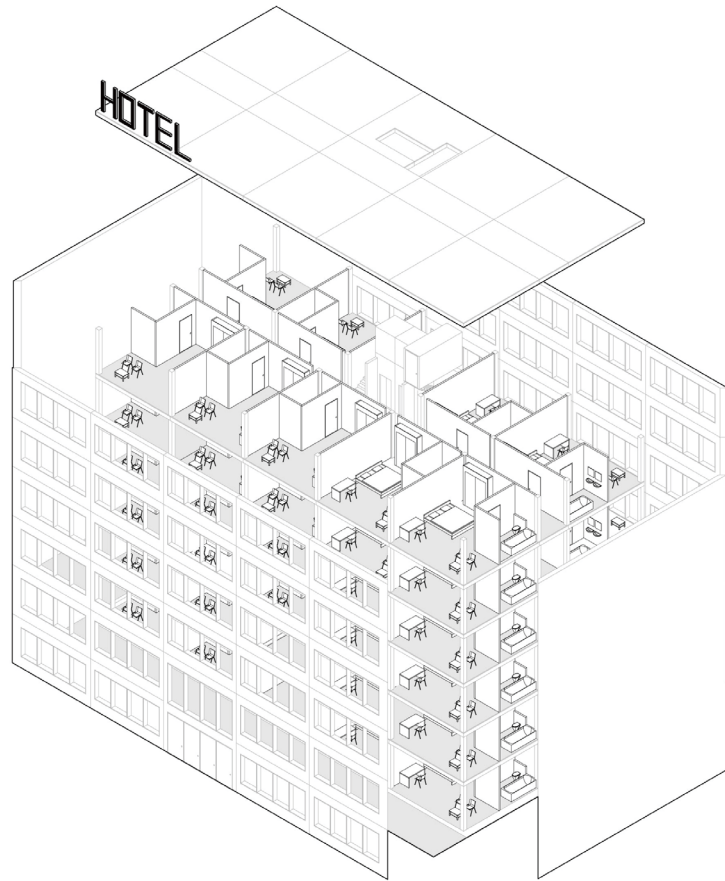
churches
stadiums
town halls
mosques
train stations
ferry ports
bus terminals
metro stops
bazaars
farmer's markets
flea markets
urban gardens
museums
concert halls
sidewalks
bike lanes
roads
traffic lights
car parks
crosswalks
bus stops
graveyards

factories
signs
traffic lights
highways
ports
kiosks
flower stores
street lights
cell towers
palaces
ice rinks
fences
stairs
parks
sewers
trashcans
squares
boulevards
monuments
clocktowers
bridges
electric poles

marinas
funfairs
botanical gardens
zoos
hotels
skyscrapers
shopping malls
libraries
universities
hospitals
airports
public baths
cathedrals
pavilions
scaffolds
skateparks
pop up structures
schools
piazzas
arcades
villas
theatres

embassies
warehouses
bars
stores
brothels
police stations
restaurants
fountains
skateparks
banks
fire departments
jails
bus terminals
monuments
bus lanes
squares
fountains
garages
cisterns
towers
traffic signs
playgrounds

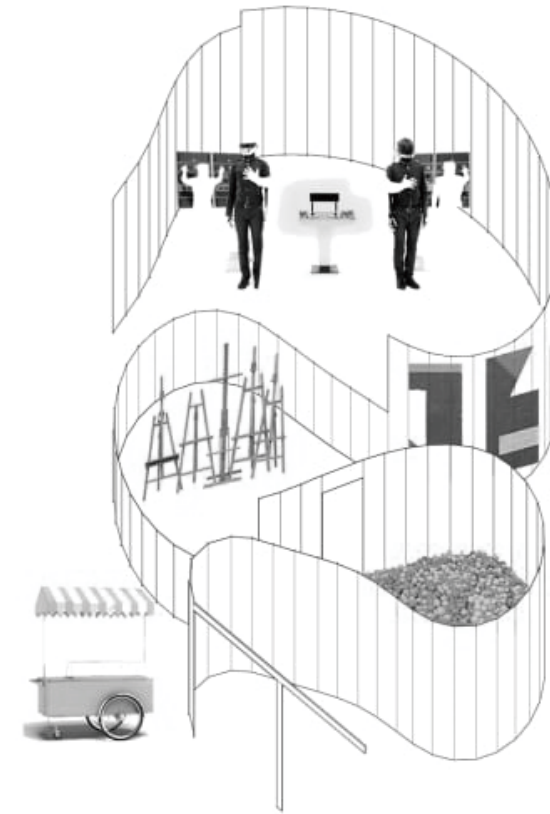
01



Hotels

Hotel,
Callum Andrews
& Niek van Laere,

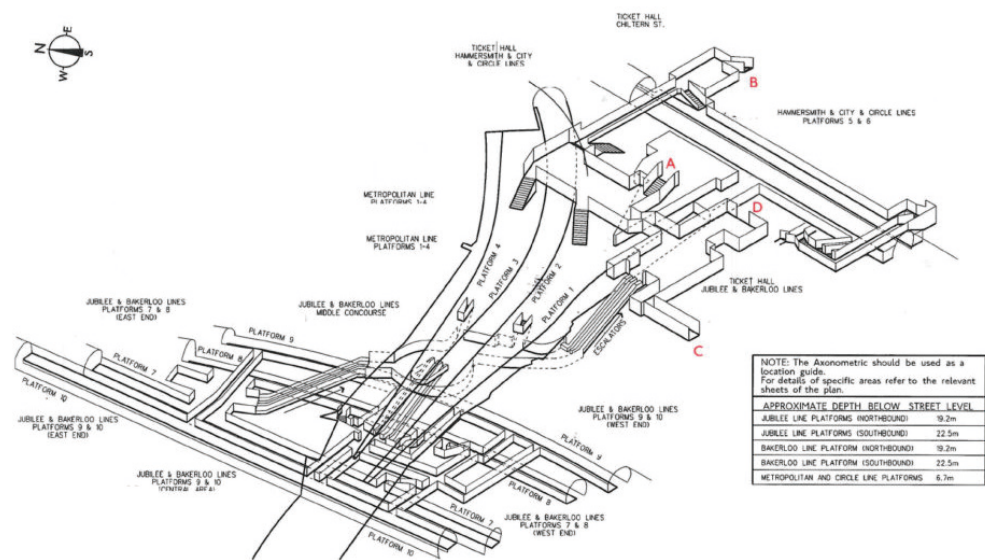
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Temporary Exhibitions

Lanza Atelier,
El Eco Pavilion

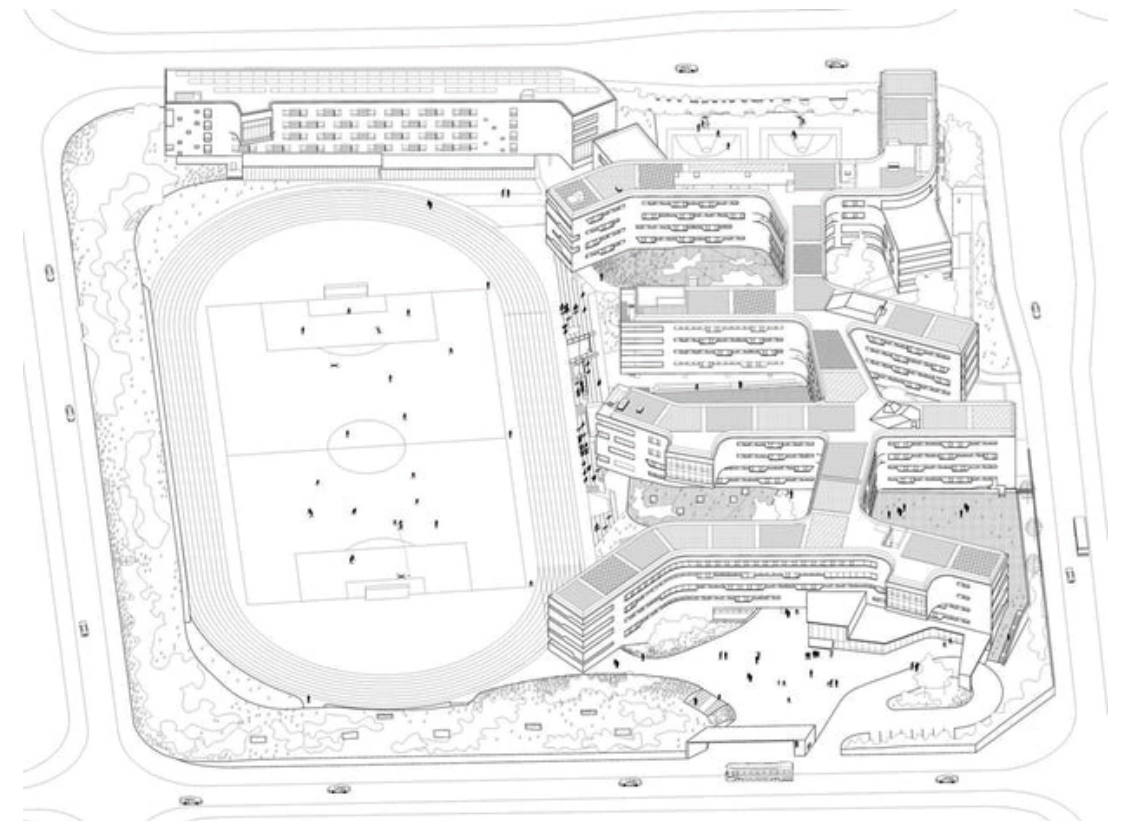
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Train Station

Baker Street Train Station,
Anonymous

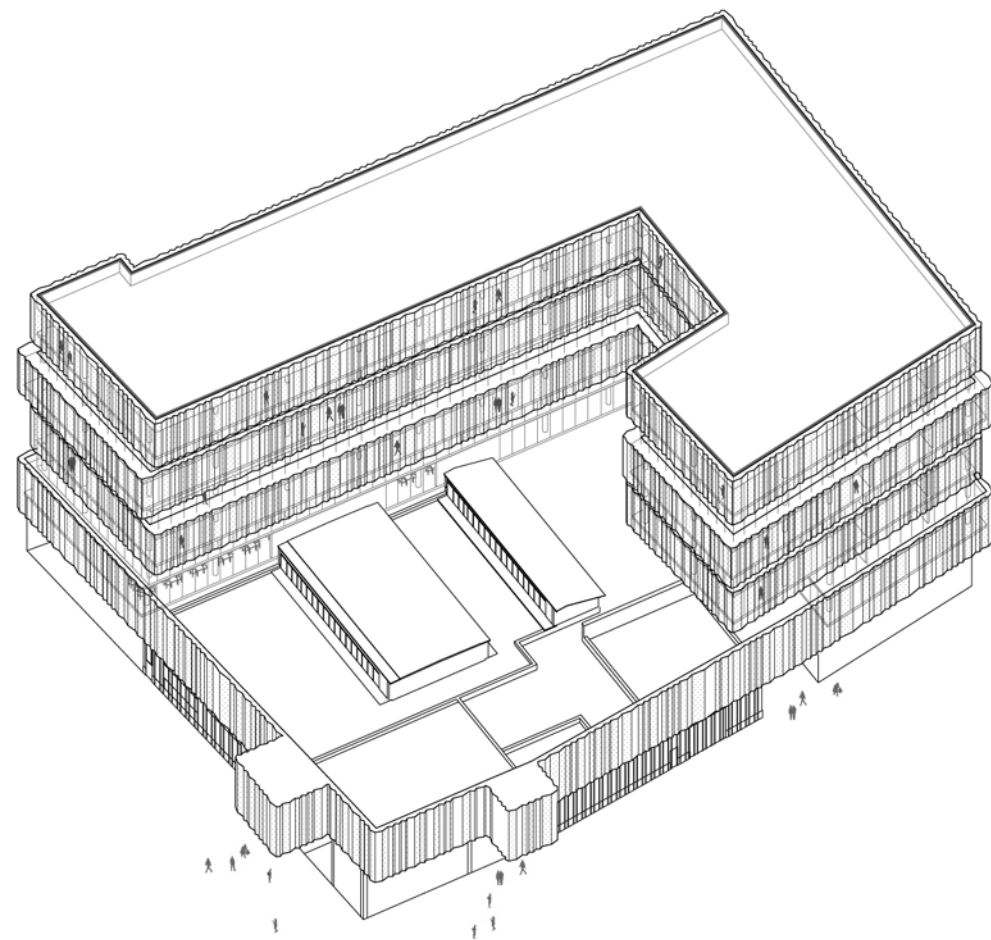
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Schools

Garden School,
Open Architecture

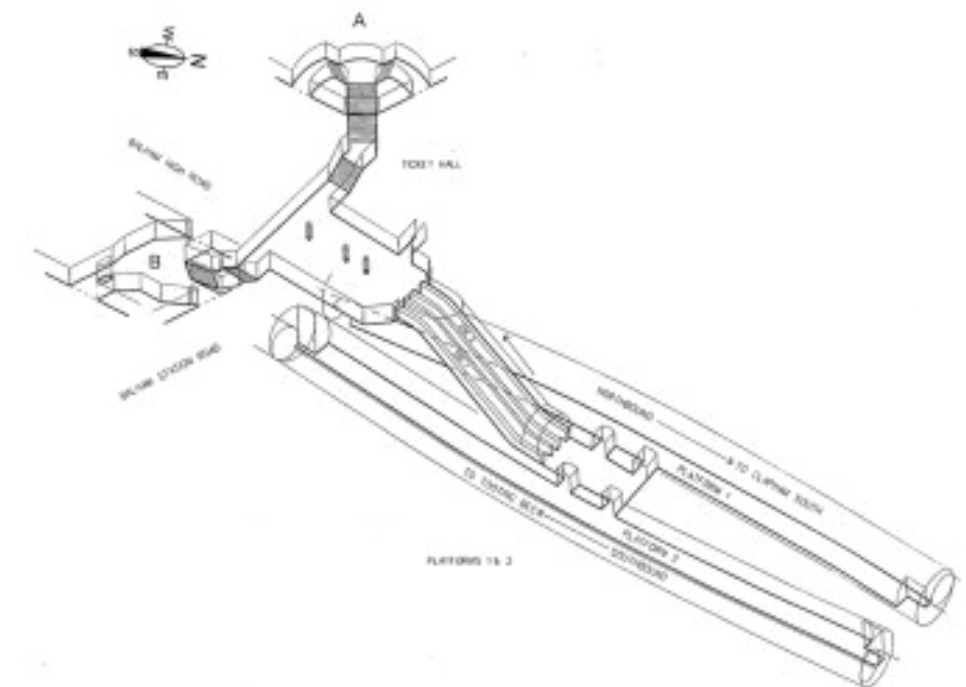
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Shopping Malls

Sur Seine,
Dominique Marrec
Architects

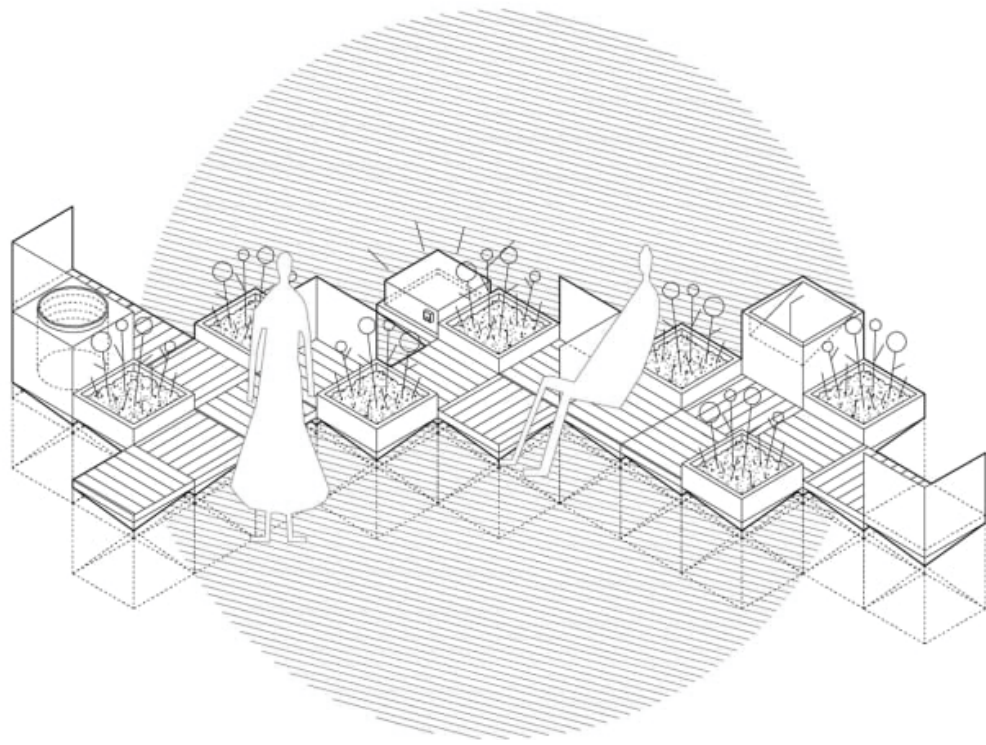
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Metro Station

Balham Metro Station,
Anonymous

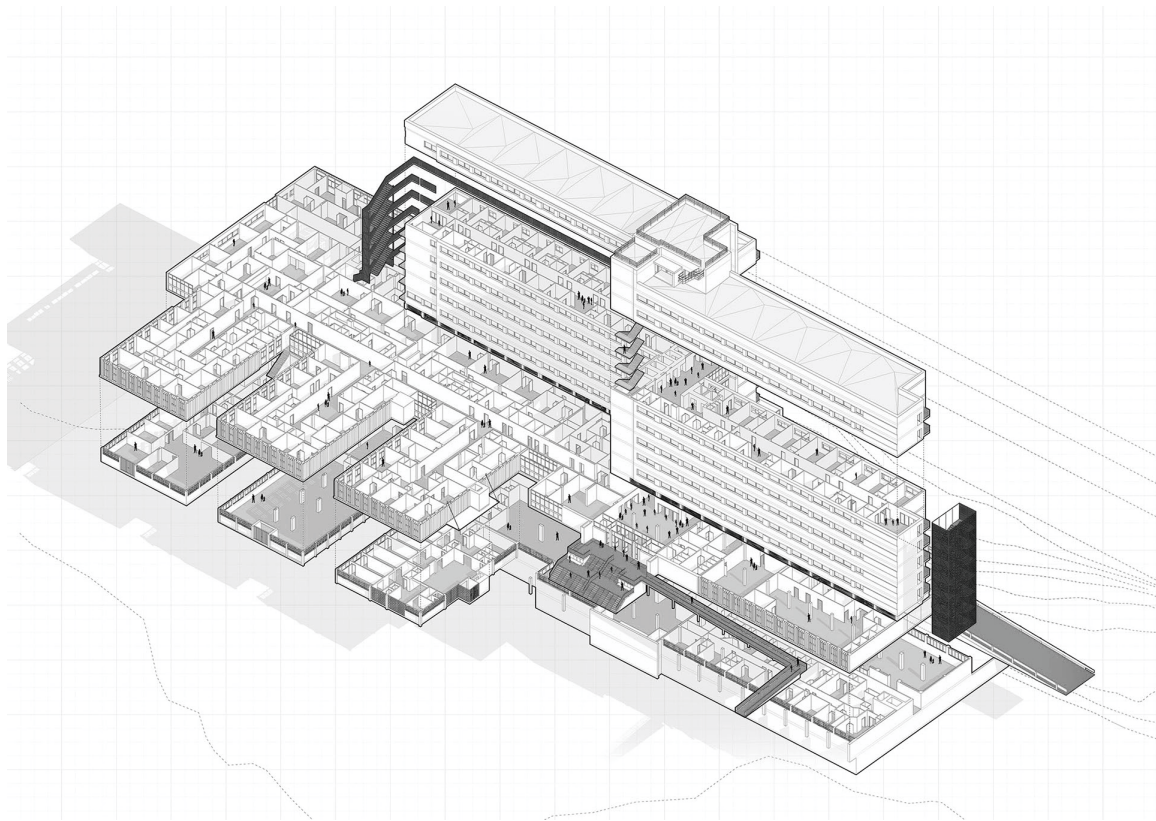
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Urban Gardens

Urban Garden,
Minimo Design

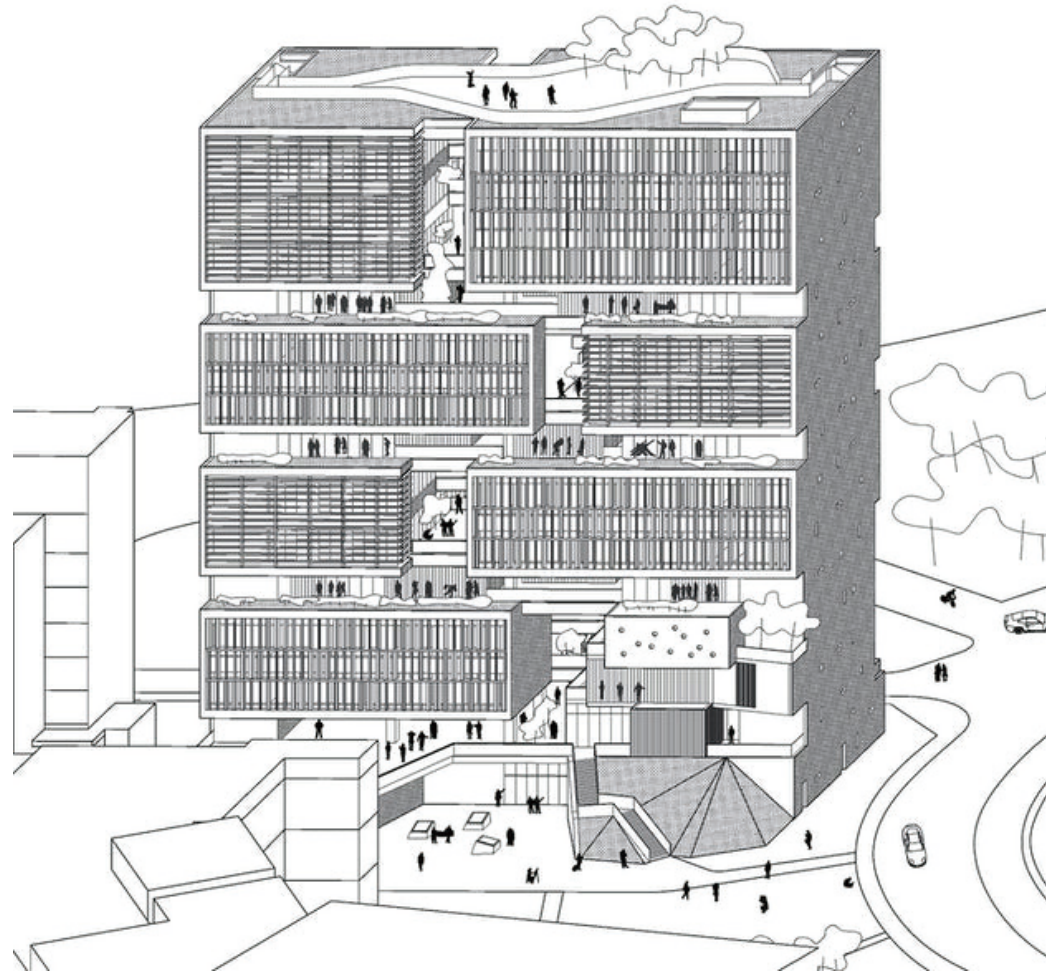
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Hospitals

Infanta Elena Hospital,
Carlos Sanchez

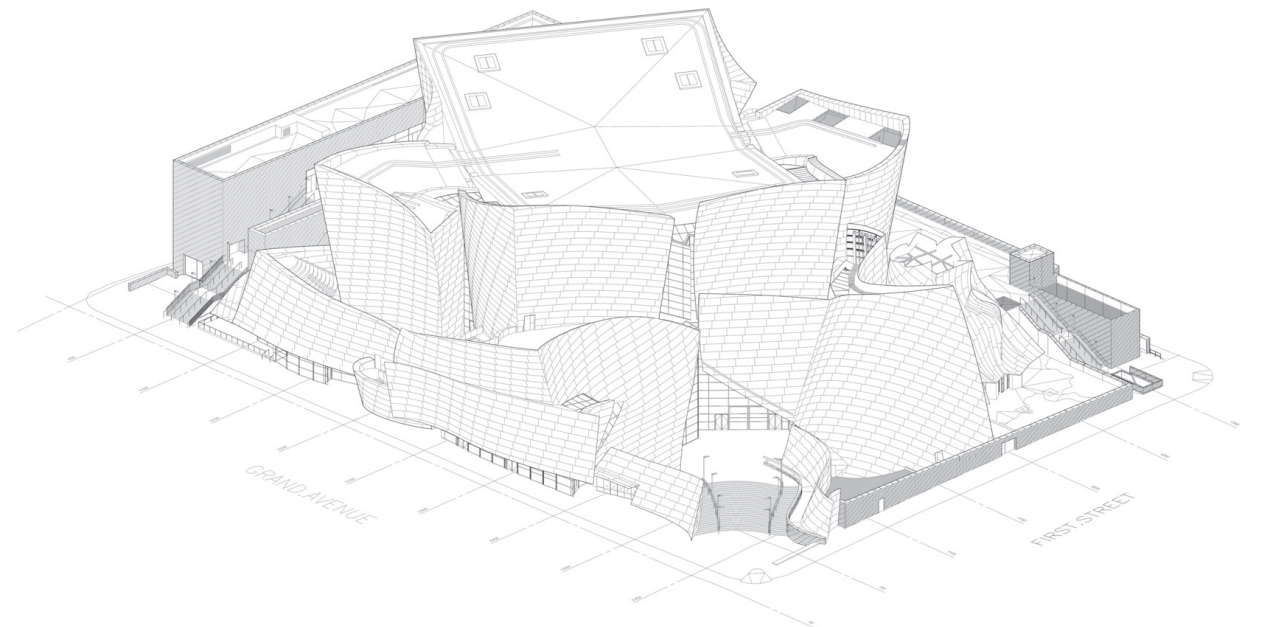
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Offices

Tsinghua Ocean Center,
Open Architecture

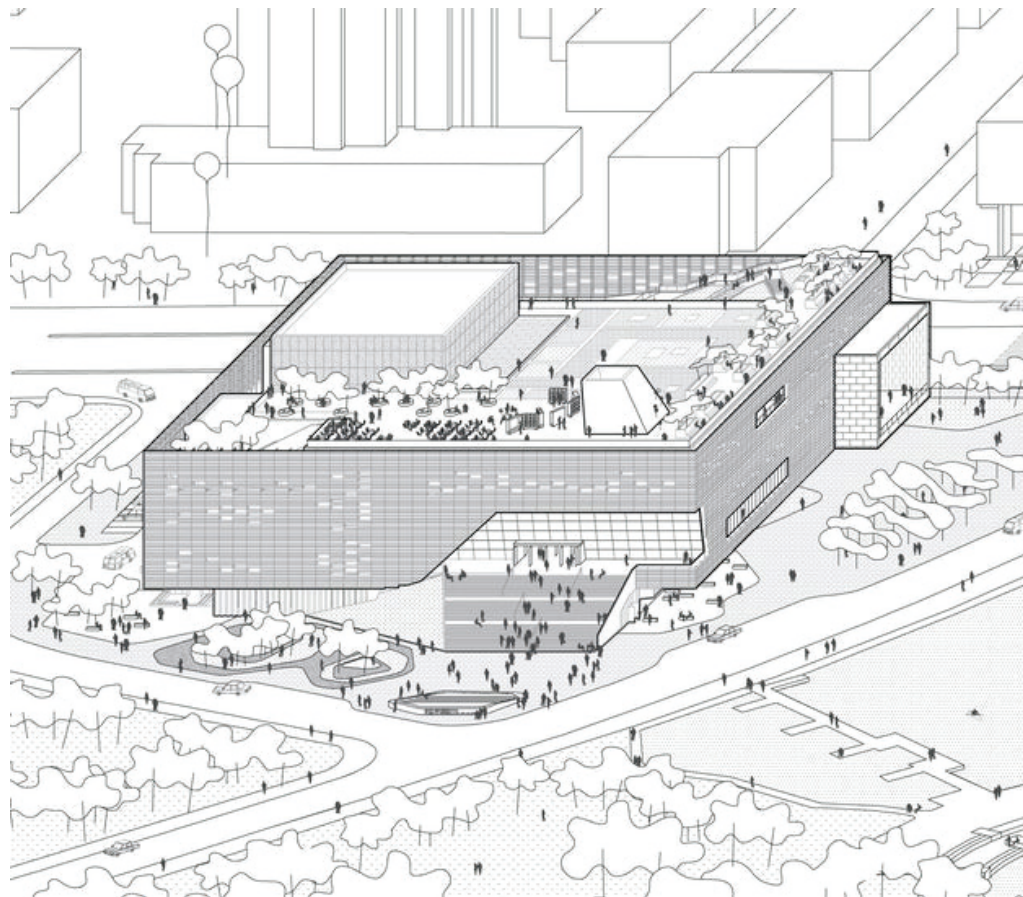
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Concert Halls

Walt Disney Concert Hall,
Frank Gehry Architects

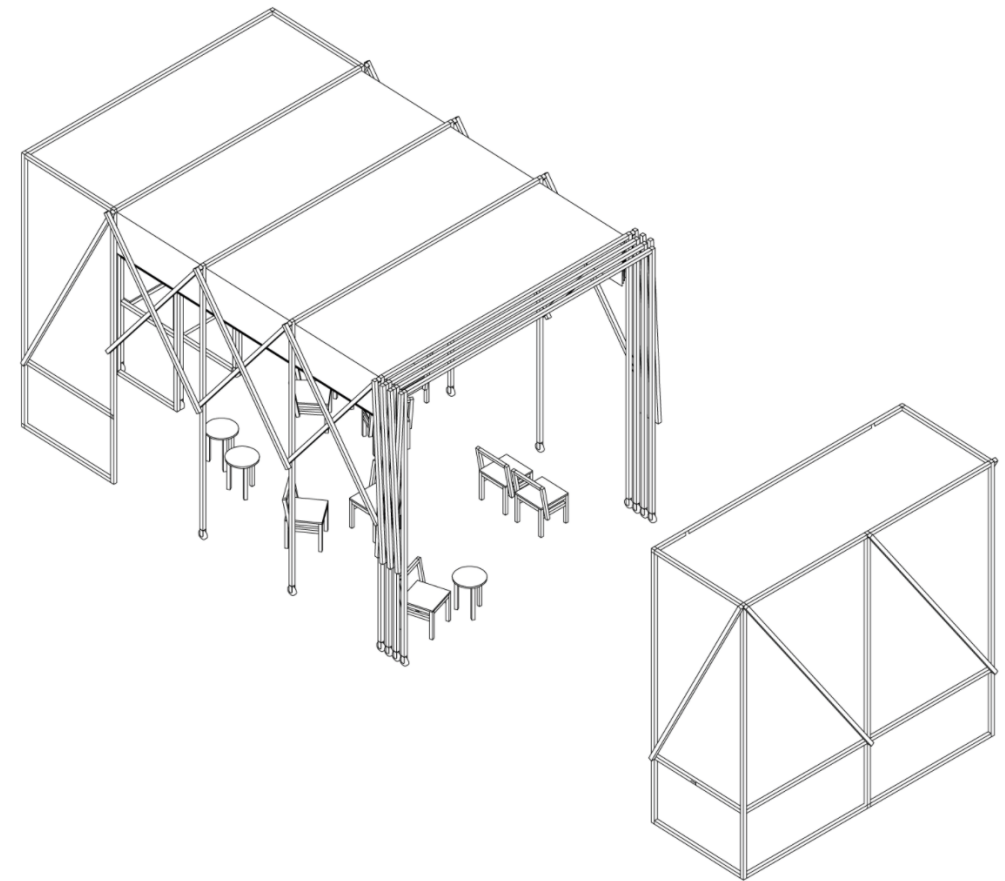
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Arts Center

Pingshan Performing Arts Center,
Open Architecture

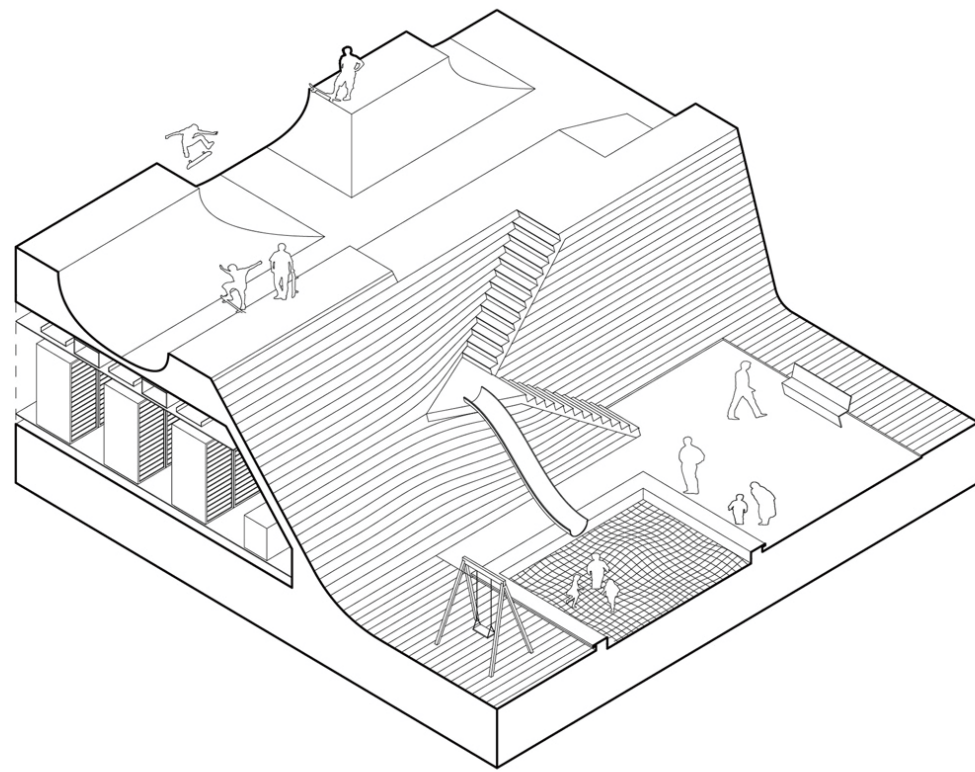
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Pop-up Structures

Pop-In, Pop-Out, Pop-Up,
VAC Foundation

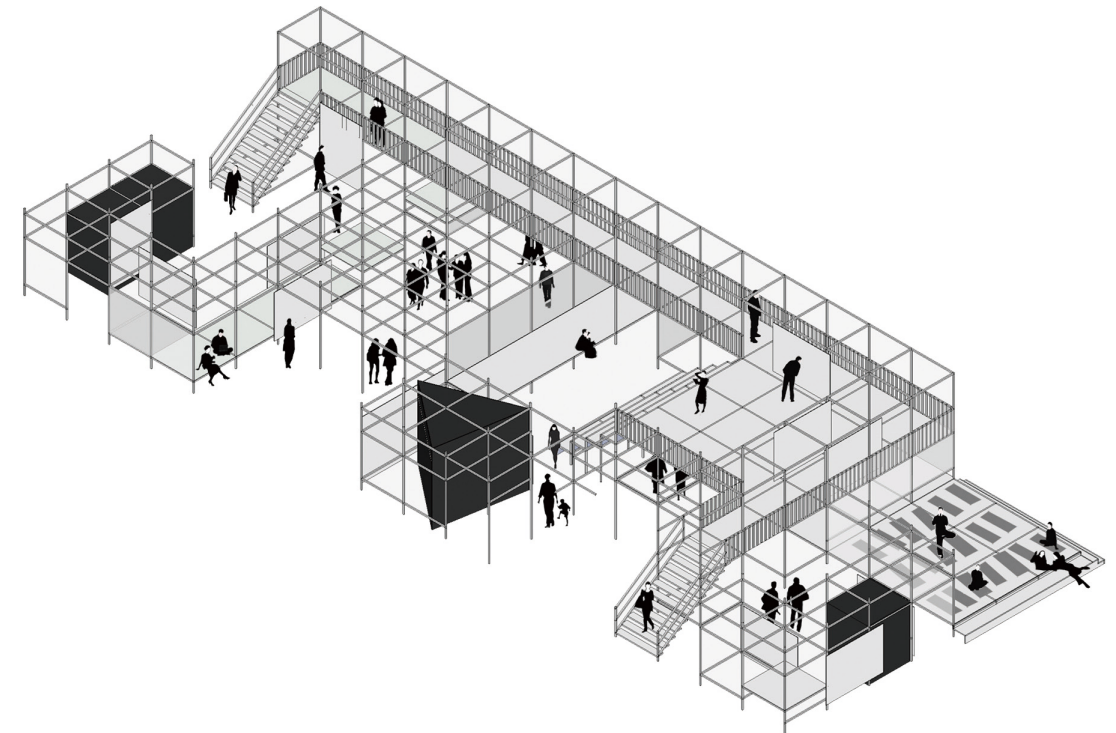
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Skate Parks

Playground,
Project Rhizome

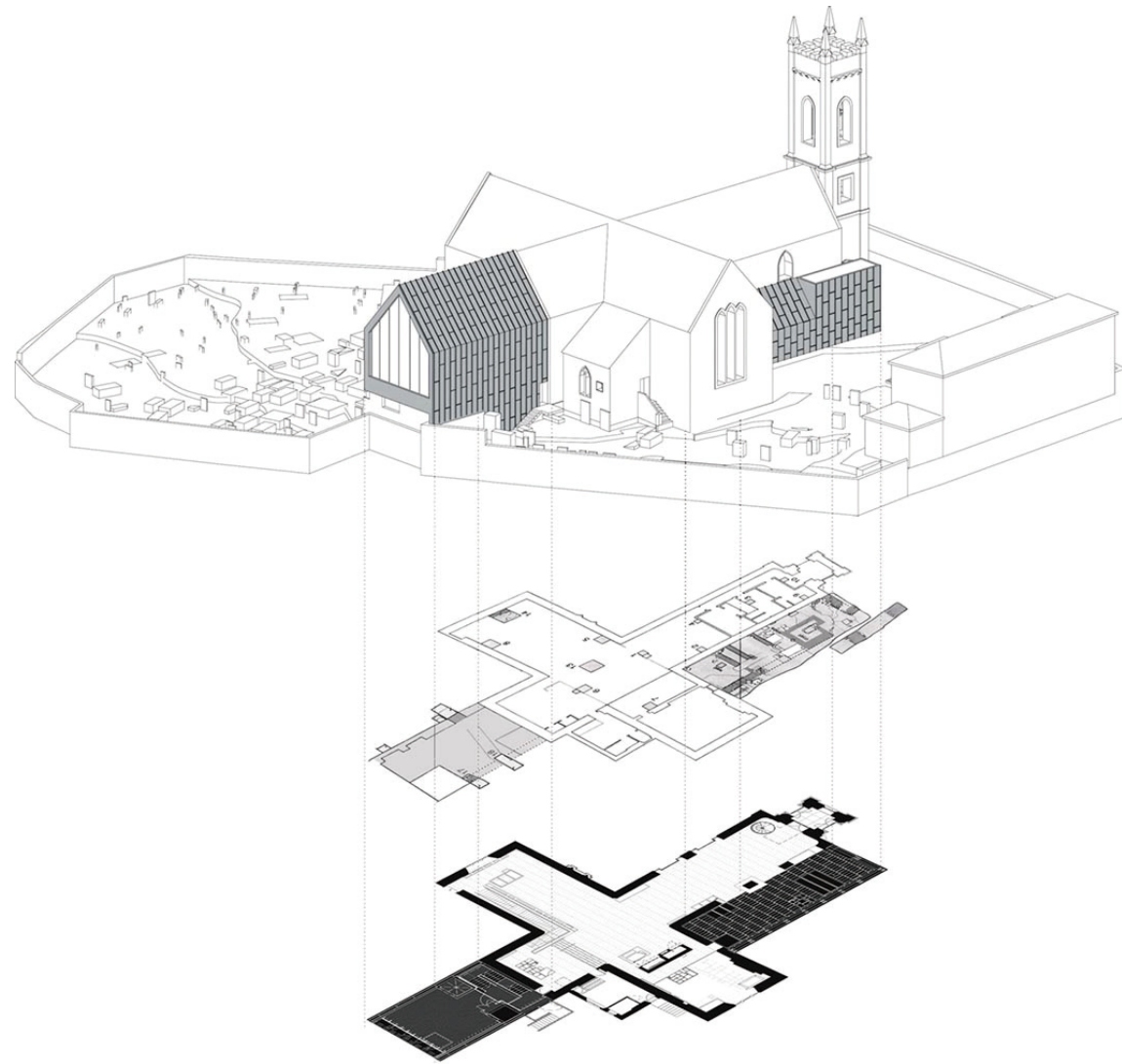
14



Scaffolds

Superstructure,
Raumlabor Berlin

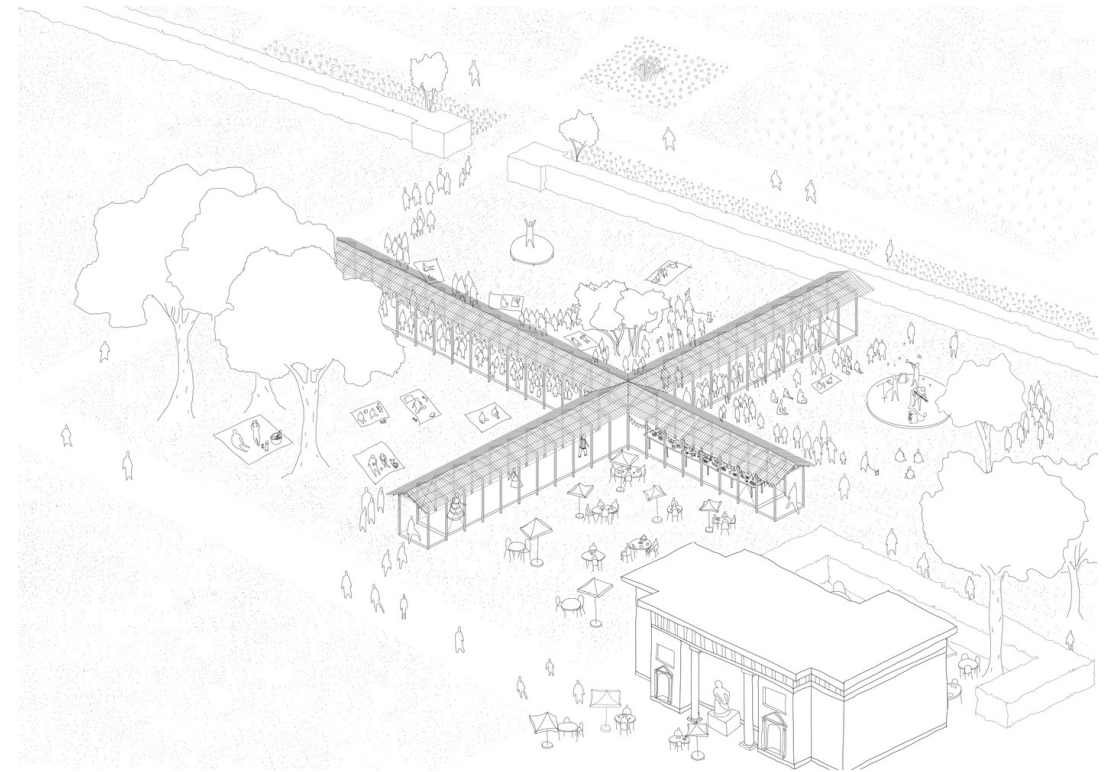
15



Churches

St. Mary's Church,
Mccullough Mulvin

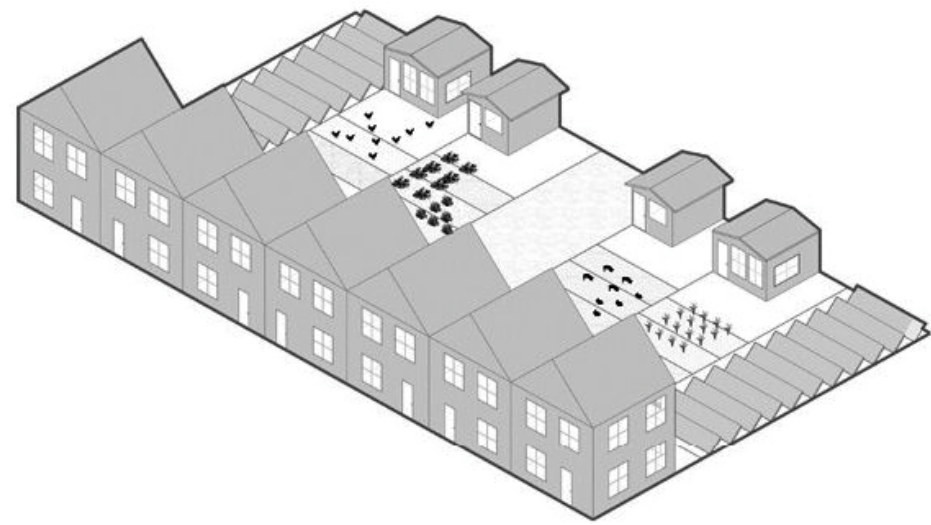
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Pavilions

Kings Garden Pavilion
Krupinska Arkitek

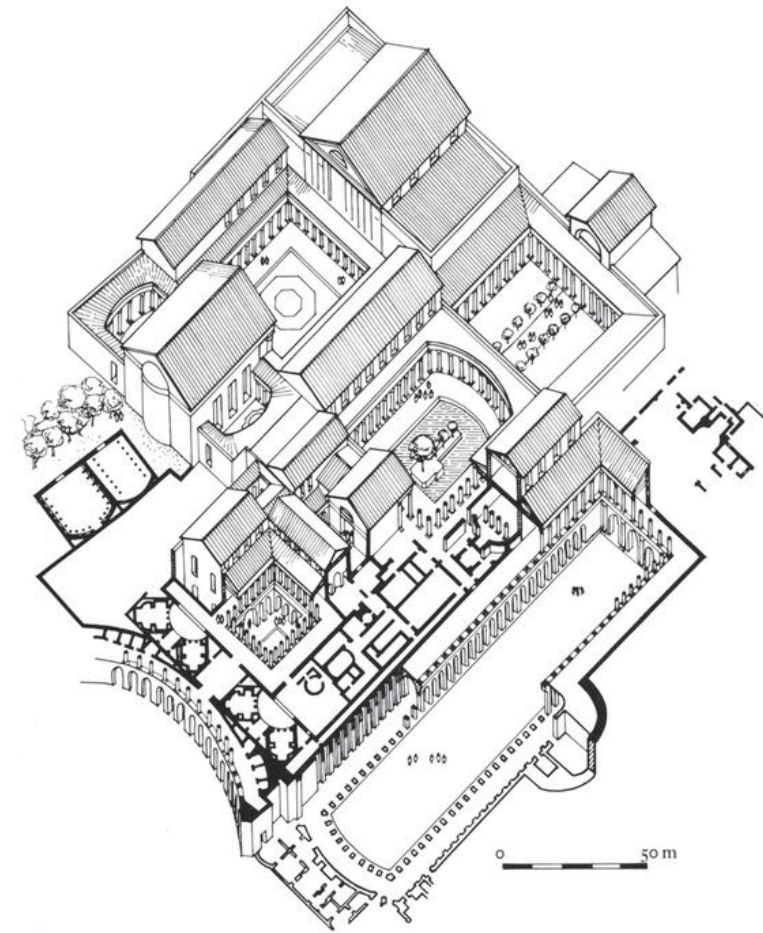
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Town Houses

Townhouses,
Callum Andrews
& Niek van Laere

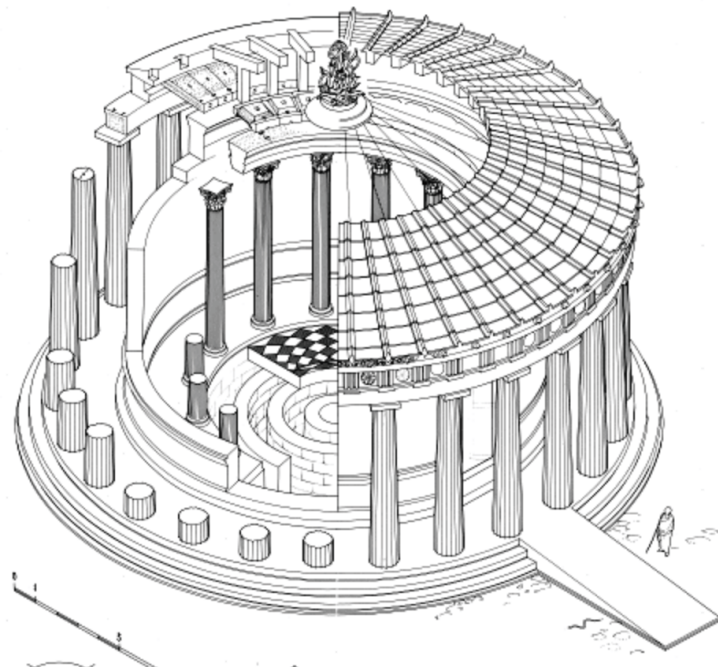
18



Palaces

Palace of Domustinian,
Anonymous

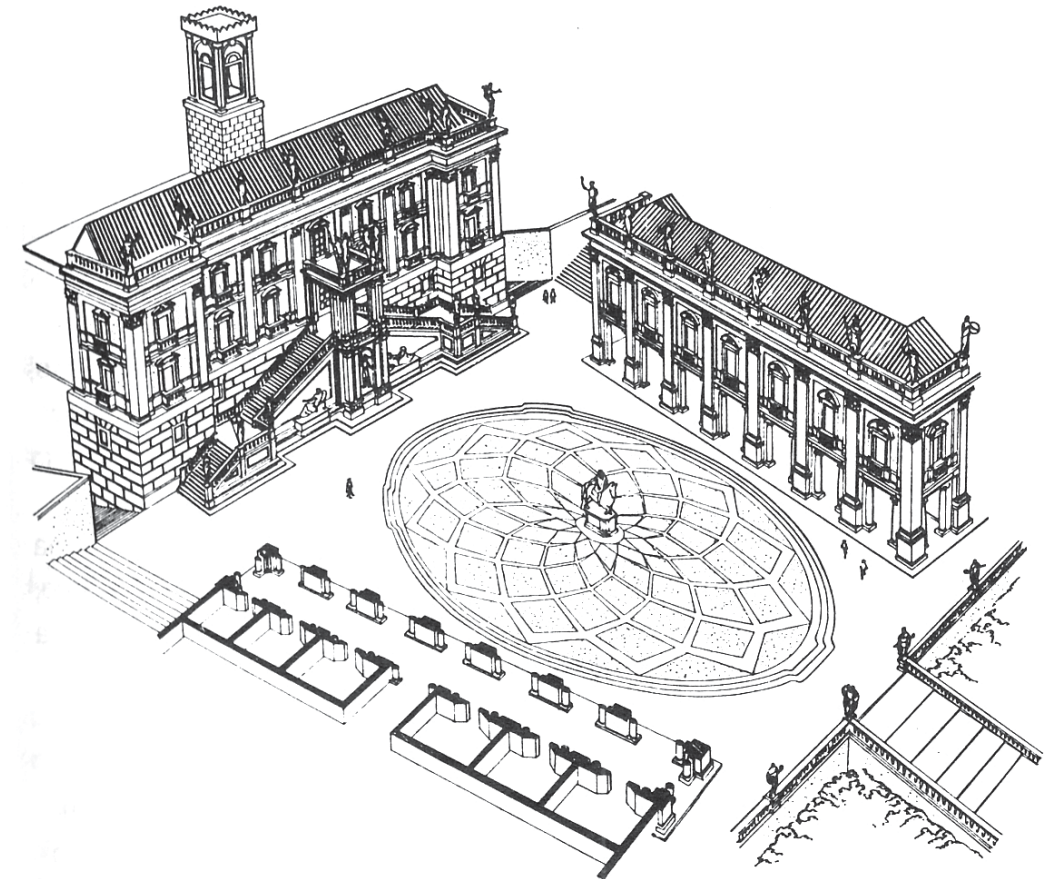
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Tombs

Tholos of Marmaria,
Anonymous

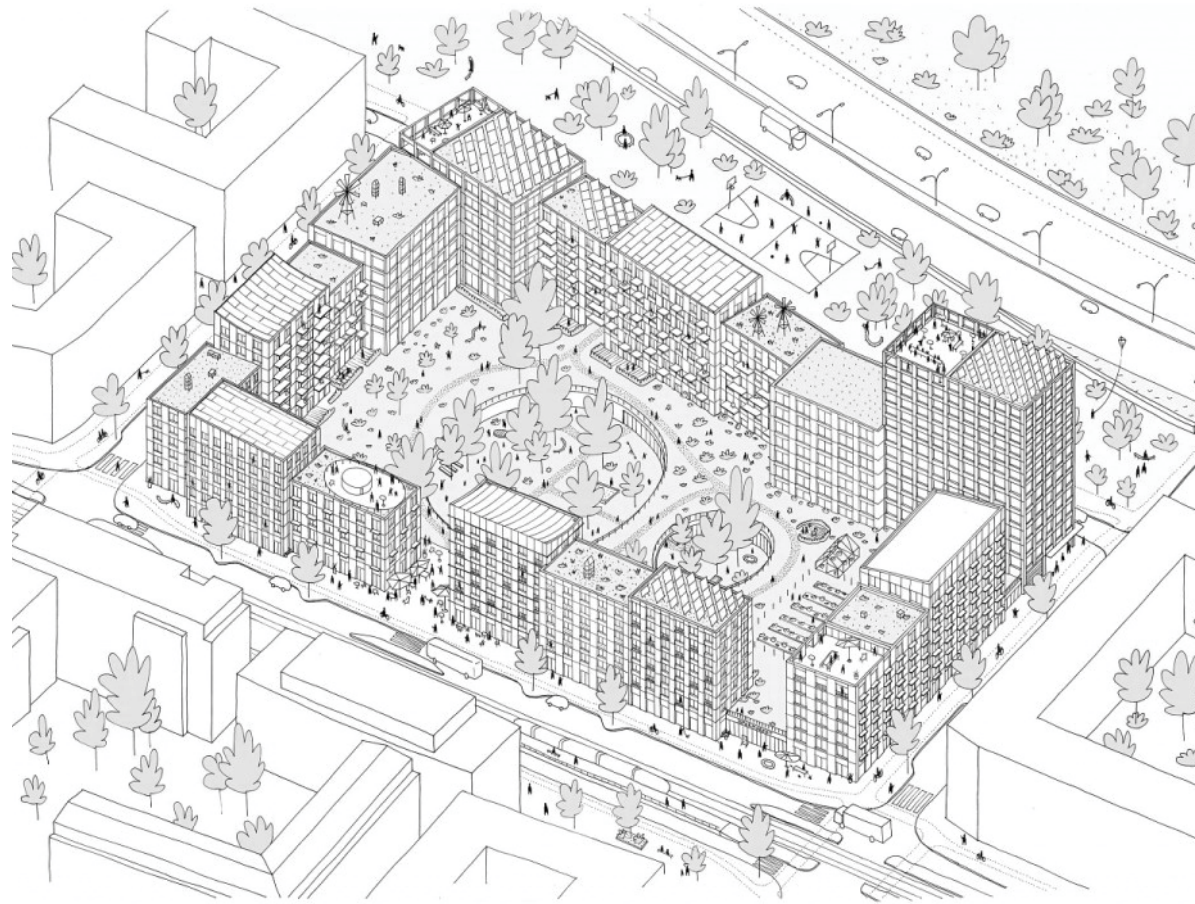
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Piazzas

Piazza Campidoglio,
Michelangelo Buonarroti

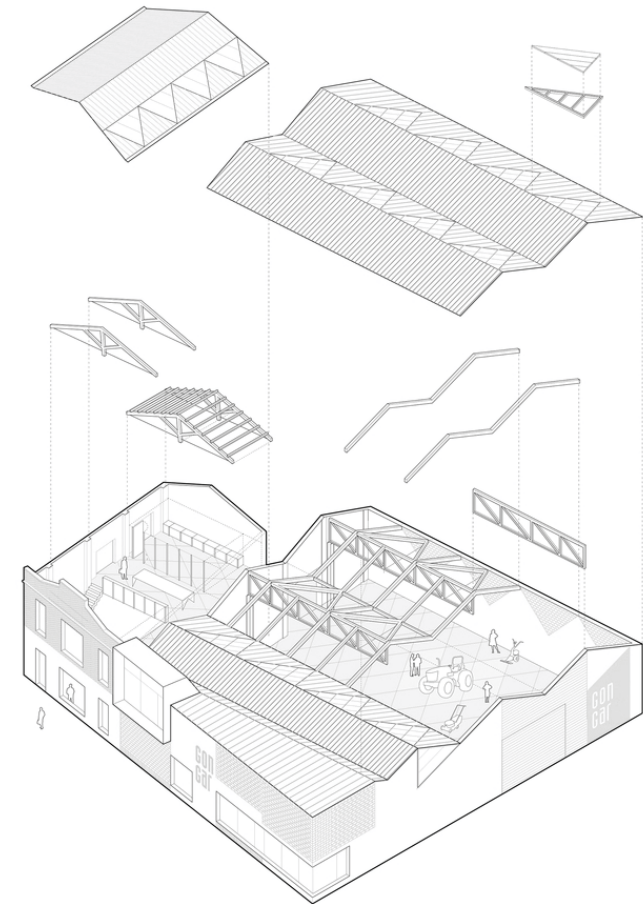
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Blocks

Mixed Use Block,
Elding Oscarson

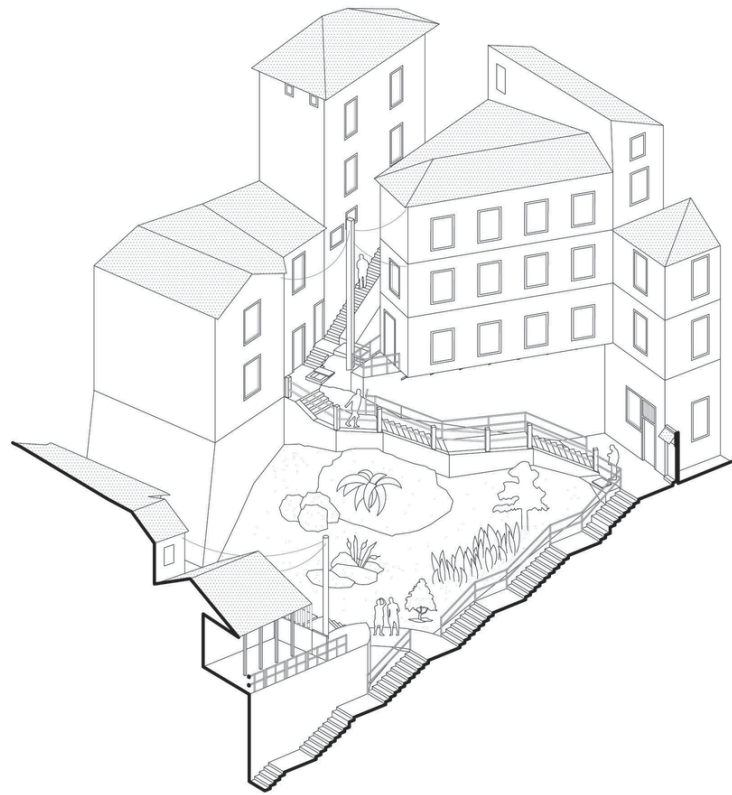
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Warehouses

Gon-Gar Workshops,
NUA architectures

23



Stairs

Stairs,
Valpara Publico

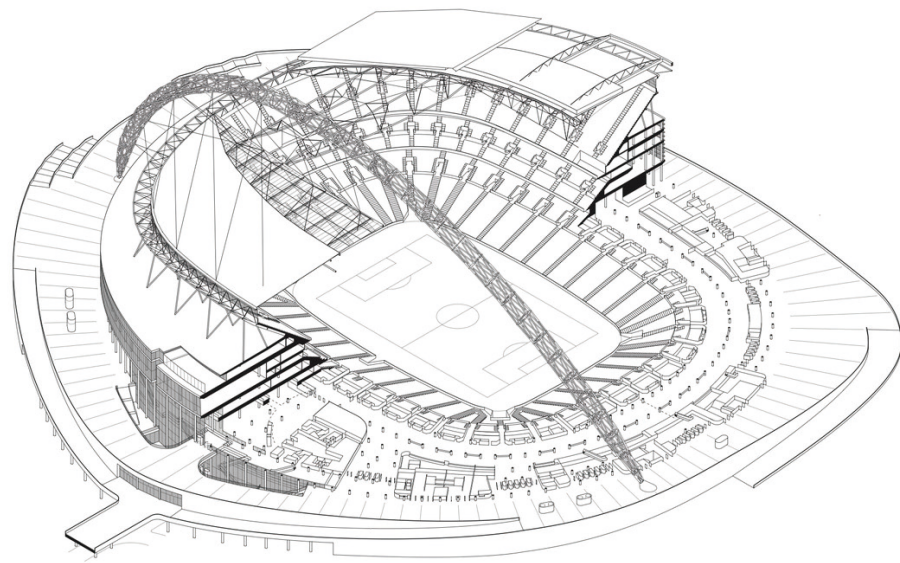
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Skyscrapers

Slenderness,
Zhang Ya Cen + Li Liang

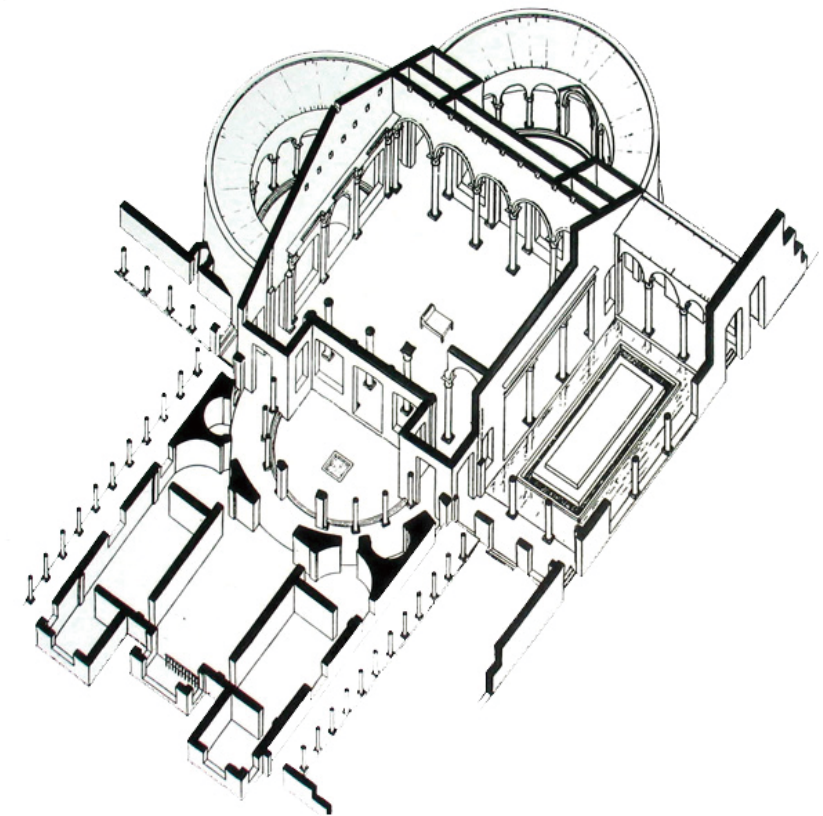
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Stadiums

Wembley National Stadium
Foster + Partners

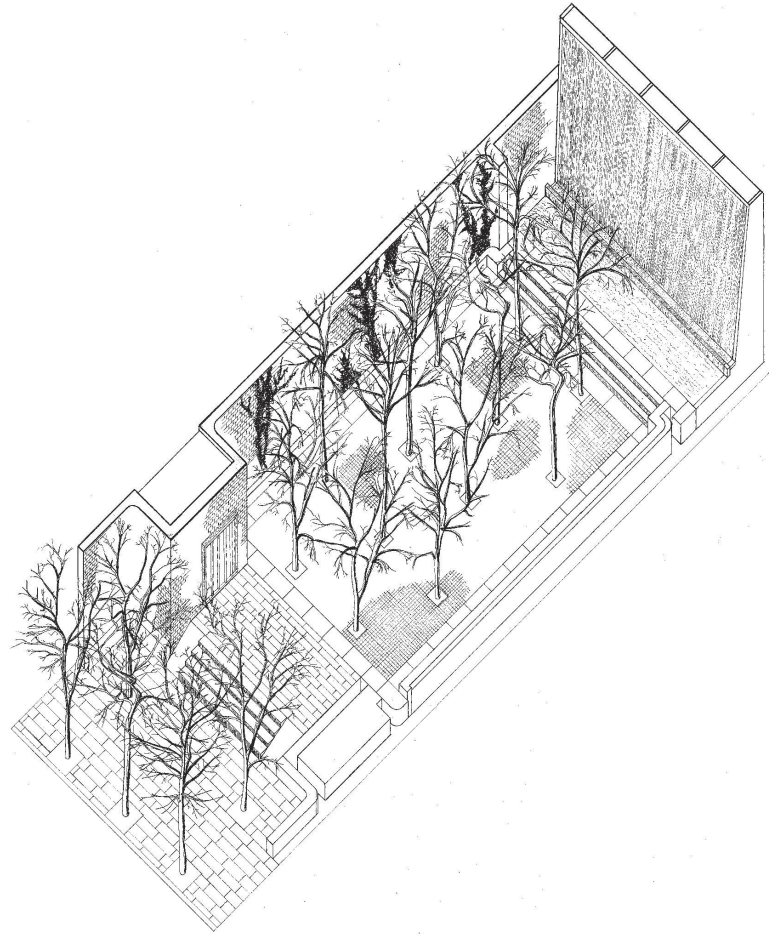
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Villas

Hadrian's Villa,
Kähler

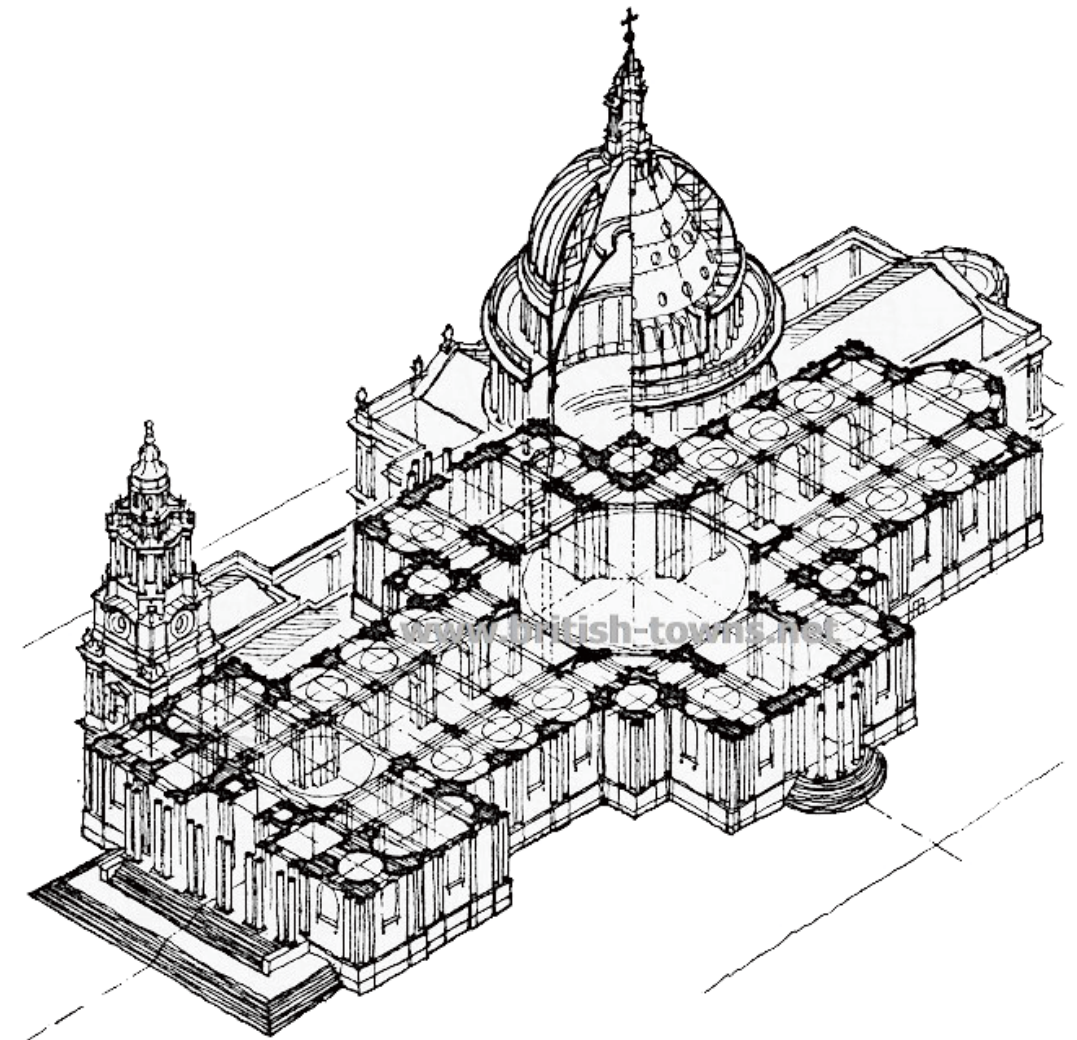
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Backyards

Paley Park,
Charlton Jenks

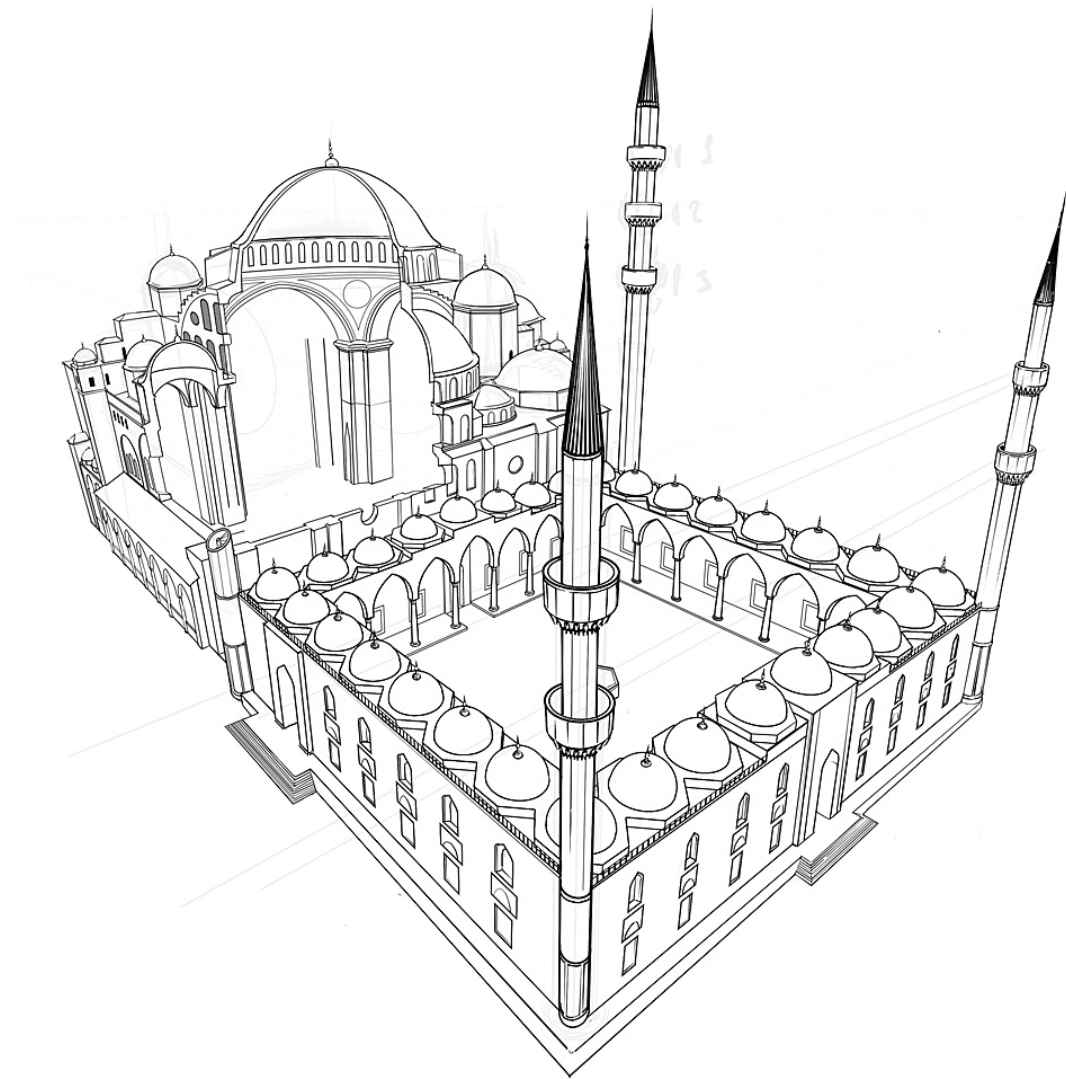
28



Cathedrals

St. Paul's Cathedral,
Anonymous

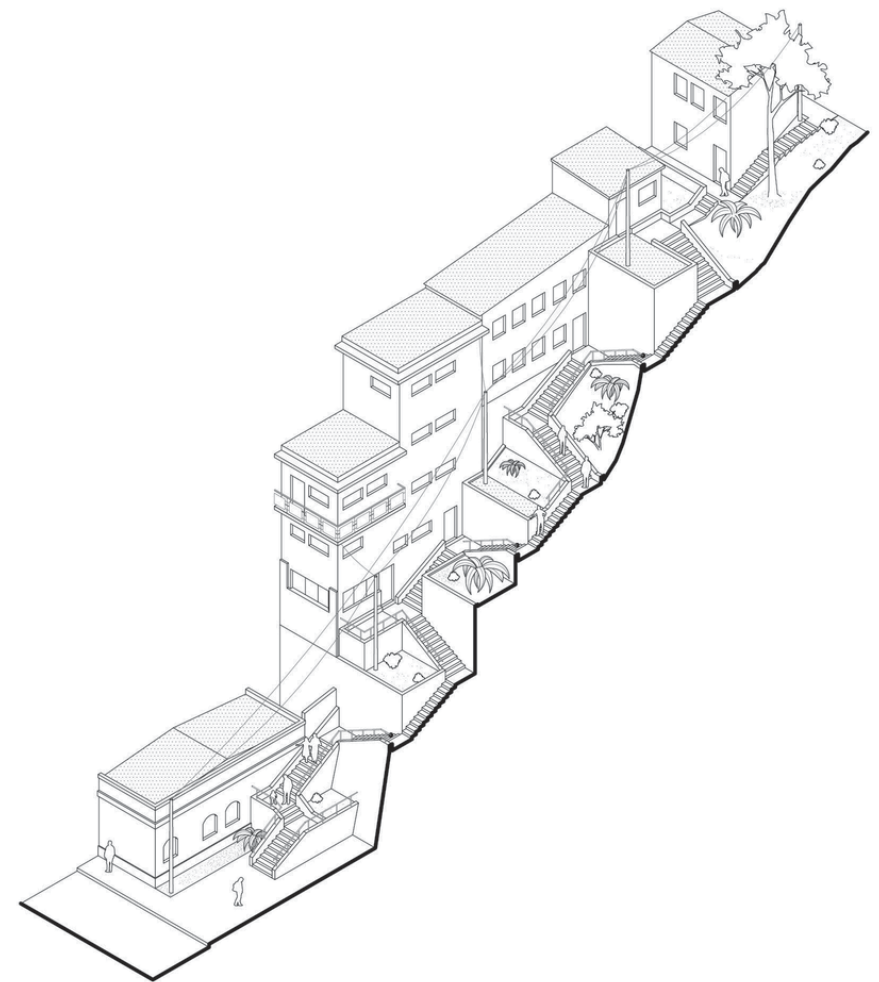
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Mosques

Suleymaniye Mosque,
Eldar Zakirov

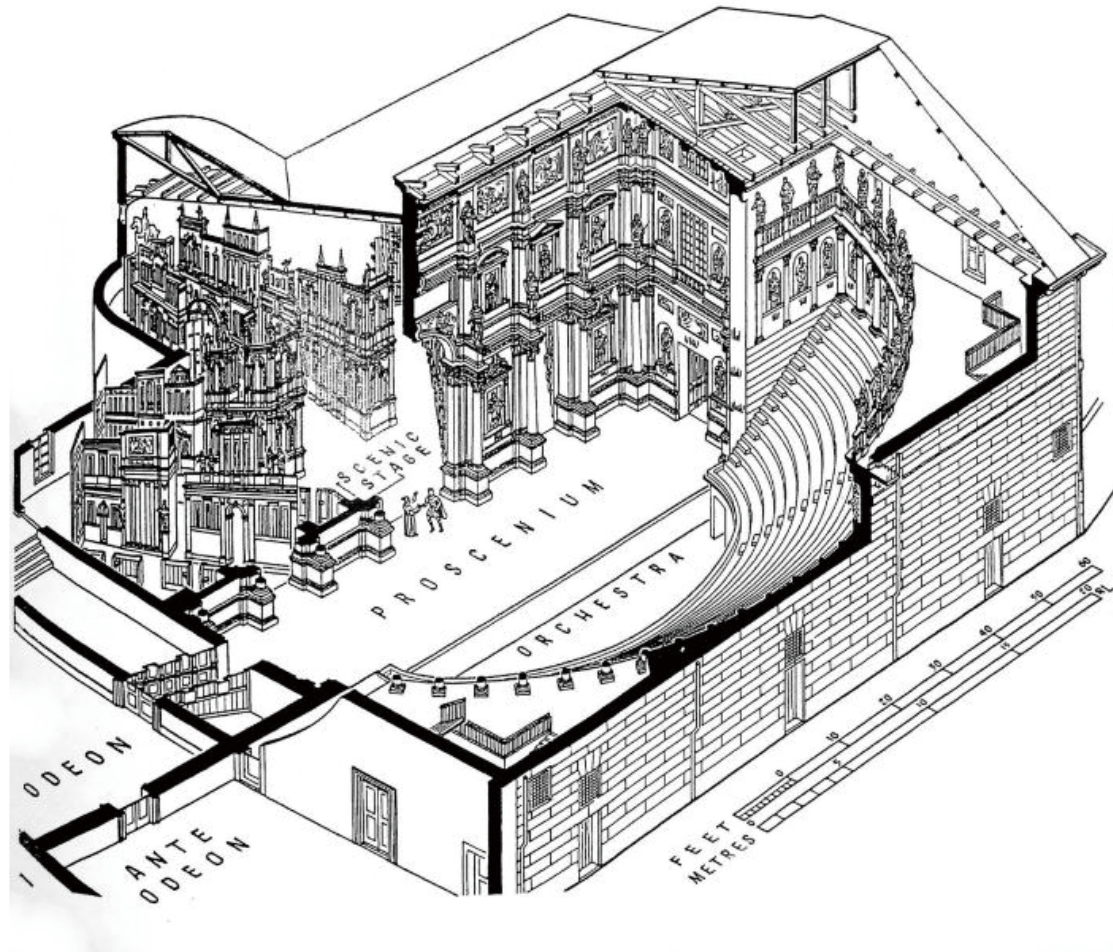
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Electric Poles

Hills,
Valparaiso Publico

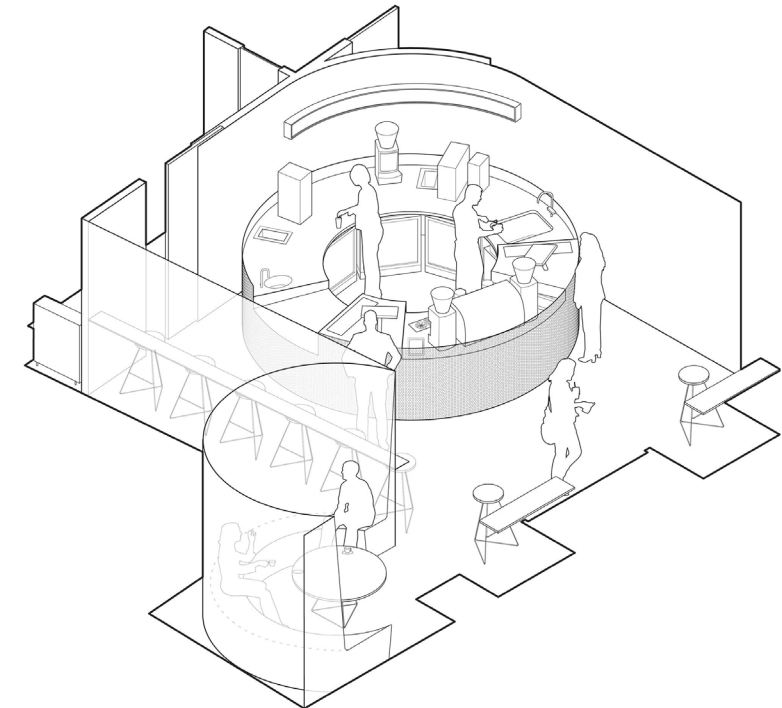
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Theaters

Teatro Olimpico Vicenza,
Andrea Palladio

32



Bars

Voyager Espresso,
Only If

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