



INVASIVE PUBLICS

**DEGREE PROJECT
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“ Public spaces are- or at least should be- places where individuals and the community can openly, and insecurely, meet. ”
(Muller, Verlag, and Busmann 11).

“ [M]any of the aspects cannot be planned in advance...rather, master plans need to allow for a degree of ambiguity, uncertainty and openness to change, recognising that a new community will develop best if it is allowed to be dynamic and evolve in ways that the planners cannot entirely predict. ”
(“Uncertain Futures: Designing Adaptable Spaces” 3).

Today, public space is becoming an image of the capital, lacking in social, cultural, and spatial dimension. There are different forms of public space such as plazas, natural landscapes, and virtual space, like internet and social media. These types of spaces are homogenized and privatized to reflect desirable conditions that are orderly, predictable, and controlled.

However, we believe that **true public spaces should be active, radical, and overflowing with character.** Today, San Francisco’s urban fabric containing its financial district lacks identity and hinders social interaction. Predominantly gentrified by white and wealthy populations of the Dot Com Boom, mainstream, commercial and technological interests influence the entire city of San Francisco.

Before the virtual wave, SOMA district symbolized middle

class immigrants, who relied on human relations and worked in factories and sweatshops. In the 1960s, hippie and free love movements fostered vibrant new attitudes of communal living, androgynous fashion, gay pride, and activism in the streets. Progressively, in the 80s and 90s, local establishments became hubs for art, music, and performative culture, later subverted into other districts.

From this research, public space is defined by its cultural identity, supported by its local community’s historical background, diverse forms of communication, and livelihoods of its people. Understanding this, **how can a counter fabric invade existing urban spaces to foster new kinds of social relationships, and how can these new social relationships drive people away from spectacle culture** (propaganda & capitalism) ?

In response to these questions, we are basing our degree project in 3 locations, the corporate hub in SOMA’s Transbay Temporary Terminal, and San Francisco’s more recognizable cultural hubs in Garfield Square and Castro. **We seek to connect occupants of different districts within the city through an interactive network of playscapes.** These will extract physical information and actions from one place and translate them into multiple perceptions of the body in another through **material landscape, sensory atmosphere, and virtual technology.**

We aim to stimulate non-hierarchical creative processes and collaboration between players to establish **a new urban consciousness** that allows leeways for interpretation, improvisation, and rebellious behavior.

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PARADOX

UNION SQUARE, MANHATTAN, NY



fig. 1 Monotonized urbanism

Lipsky, Florence. "San Francisco:La grille sur les collines," 1999

"[H]omogeneity of public space can lead to a number of negative and otherwise unwanted impacts on a location. Homogeneity between parks across different contexts creates a culture of disconnected places. These disconnected places can be placed anywhere with no regard to the surrounding community which leads to disassociation and indifference by the residents who are not specifically served by these spaces."

(Luna 19)

Public space is where a person expresses identity, absorbs new knowledge, and encounters unfamiliar perspectives. Diversity glorifies public space, for it generates innovative and creative thoughts and activities. However, the ideal public space, one that embraces the various possibilities for people to express, perceive, and interact, is often compromised.



fig. 3 Commercial Ring

The Union Square Park, submerged in the congested downtown area of Manhattan, is always lively. They sit along the stairs in front of the plaza to enjoy the energy of the city presented by the crowds, cars, and protesters. It acts a paradoxical place for it simultaneously brands itself as a clean and lively commercial space where the activities are restrained, predictable and lucrative, which counter political and social dominance.



fig. 2 Signage & Seating

A signage, a look from a stranger, a police that strolls around, all these are signals and rules in public space, both material and immaterial, shape our values and tune our behavior. Social hierarchy, political regulations, and economic expectations perpetually augment the public space. It is undeniable that some constraints and rules, such as public courtesy, help to construct an engaging environment for people to communicate. However, they also at times restrict the possible ways one can think and express.



fig. 4 Greenmarket

However, as Sharon Zukin pointed out, the paradox of public squares is that they are often controlled by a private group of property owners. (Zukin 127) These owners hire cleaners and guards to keep the public space pleasant and secure. To raise revenue, they organize and rent spaces for commercial activities, such as the greenmarket and photoshoot. Under the control of private associations, Union Square is clean, lively, and attractive.

But on the other hand, the integrity of public space – the freedom to express one’s identity and concern – gives way to these profitable programs that homogenize the possible uses of public space. The greenmarket takes over the entire Union Square four days a week, police forces suppress rebellious confrontations, and homeless people have no place to rest. Thus, the authenticity of public life is diminishing.

Union Square is not an exception. Many public spaces in the U.S. are struggling with the dilemma of inefficient funds from the government to keep public space hygienic and safe, thus inevitably taken over by private organizations for their interest and profit. In a sense, public space is becoming an administrative hub for mass monotony. Run by order and control, dictated by private

management, we are trained to be more civil, adhering to the activities that it chooses and surveils, which can gradually produce a cultural die-off.

Public space is now often treated as a destination spot for visitors, a market space, and an outdoor dining room. The elitism that exists in the U.S. public space today excludes certain social groups, hinders the diversity of the occupants and activities. As a result, public space is losing its capacity to stimulate collective creativity and the exchange between different souls.

Although tethered by its private management, Union Square is still quite lively and seems to have the potential to break free from the confinement. The diversity in its surrounding neighborhood is an undeniably essential contributor, but the design of the square is also powerful, for it encompasses a multiplicity of relationships.



fig. 6 Union Square Middleground

The experience in Union Square Park is different from enjoying peace and nature in Central Park. Here, one’s vision is constantly drawn away from greenery in the foreground, and forced to acknowledge the overwhelming energy of the city that spills out from the middleground and background. Crowds of people squeeze their way into subway stations; neverending streams of cars circulate the park; extravagant storefronts aggressively demand one’s attention.

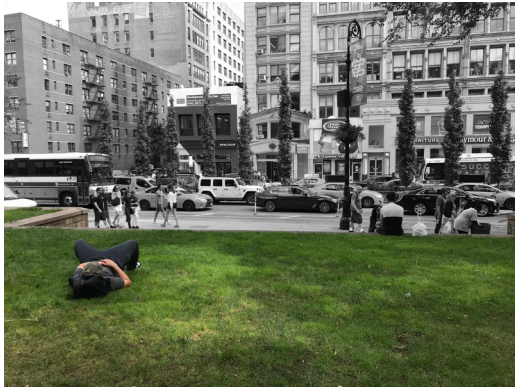
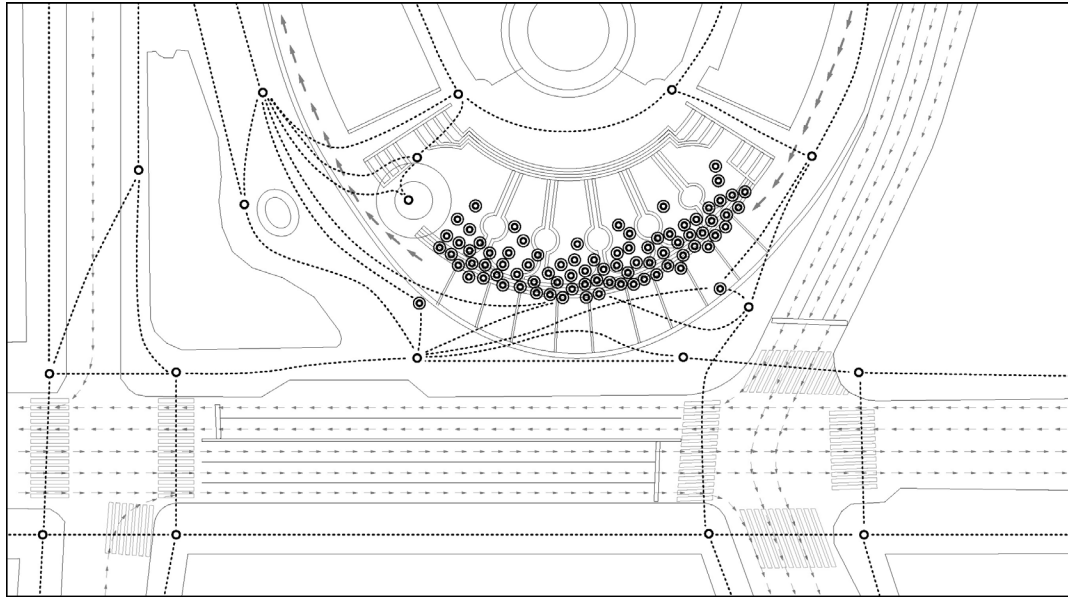


fig. 5 Union Square Foreground

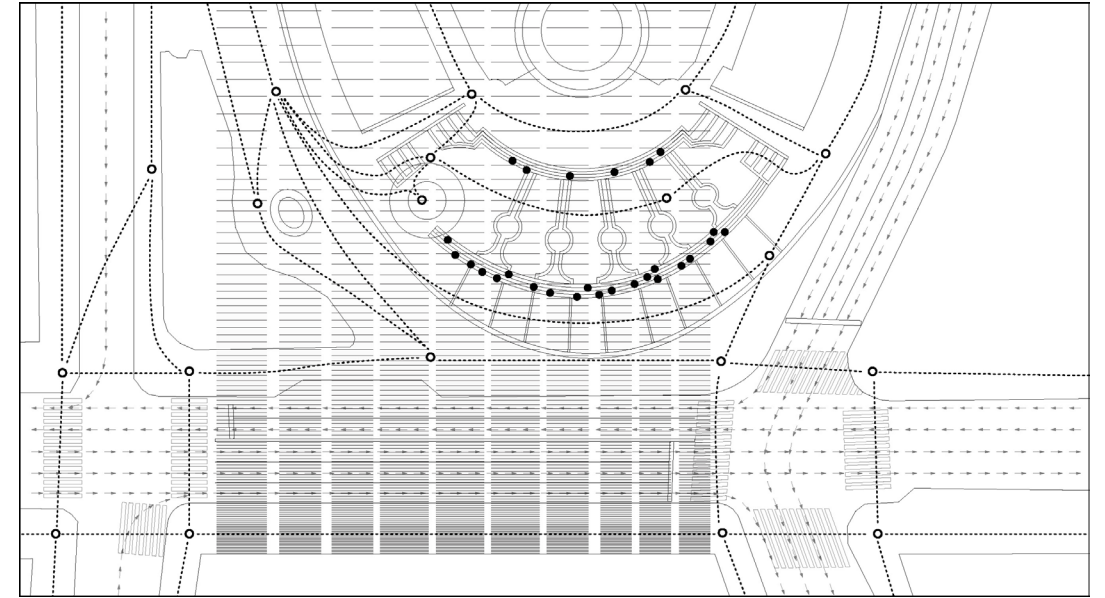
“The vitality of Union Square is really a sign of the city government’s defeat by the public’s expectations. In this defeat the public both gains the use of a clean, safe space and loses control over it.”
(Zukin 128)



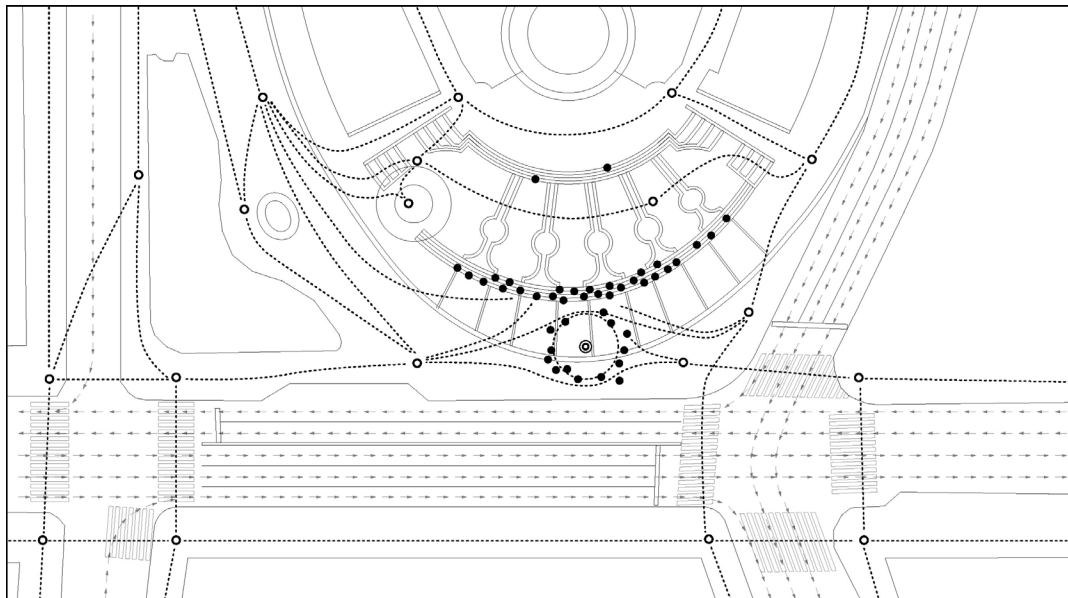
fig. 7 Union Square Background



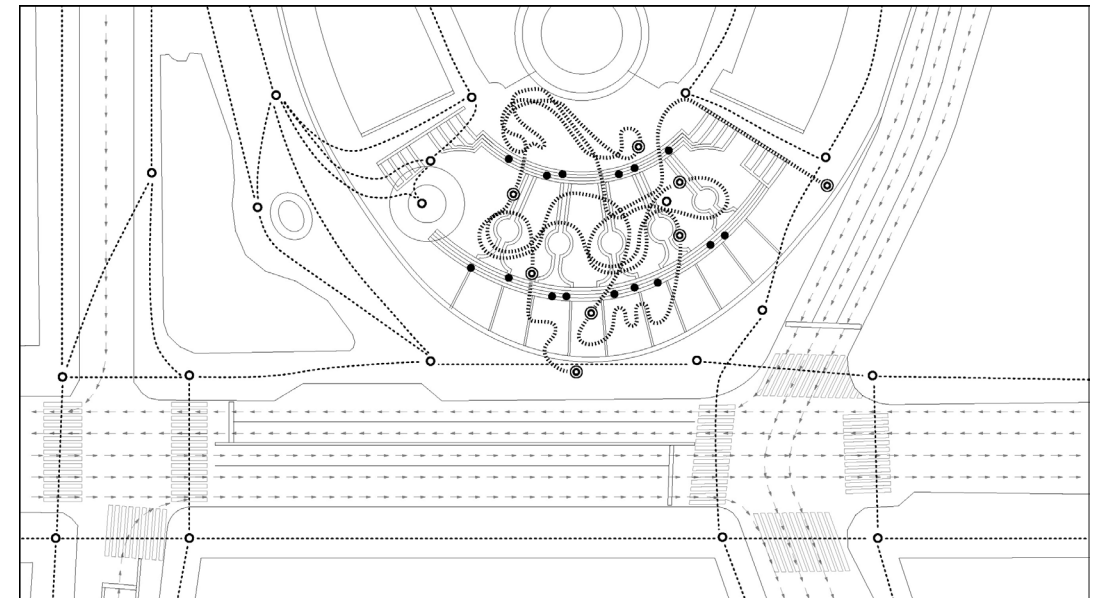
Political Protest - stair as stage



Leisure- storefronts as movie screens



Performance - stair as audience seats



Play- square as skaters' stage

fig. 8 Multiplicity of Action Analysis

The square on the south side has two sets of staircases that ascend to the park. Day and night, people come here and charge this square with various activities. Sometimes the front stair is a stage for protesters, voicing their rights out towards the city; sometimes, it becomes the audience seat for people to watch a performance or to stare at the crowds of the city; sometimes, it becomes a playful boundary for skaters to practice their tricks.

The design of Union Square is successful because it is open to different possibilities of interpretation and inhabitation. The ellipse shape and the steps present a center, a radius, and a gentle elevation change. It is a spontaneous diagram that can sustain many types of relationships, rather than providing designated programs. The activities are triggered by people. The boundaries are redefined, challenged, and inversed.

PARADOX

FORT GREENE PARK, BROOKLYN, NY

As a secondary critique of public space, we look into Fort Green Park. We investigate how public space has the ability to blur existing boundaries within our social environment, linking the ways people interact with each other on the physical ground through modes of circulation and activity. In this sense, the ground acts as a container for our behaviors, in addition to the geologic, organic and inorganic matter both buried and breaking through its surface. It is the combination of exposed and hidden conditions of the ground, such as its materiality, that drives the boundaries we choose to obey and avoid (Sedlock 8).

However, in public space, today, these environmental boundaries that originally constructed our world are being compromised by political ideals linked to maintaining a desirable social order. Yet, this “natural” order we are all exposed to is rather artificial because nature acts as “a space apart from the aesthetically and behaviorally controlled and homogenous ‘theme’ environment of leisure and consumption, where nothing unpredictable must occur” (Hou 6).” Through ownership and built conditions, the ground and its occupants are limited, homogenizing natural environments and human connectivity. These spaces are lacking in the aspects that truly define public, both in landscape

and creative expression, which are driven by disorder, diversity, and dynamic relationships.

In this respect, nature is not only an environmental force but a social condition. It is composed of the undesirable and desirable elements of our surroundings’ materiality and generative processes, engaging its inhabitants through connectivity. Specifically, in public space, undesirable conditions are forces and objects that create disturbances within the organization and layout of a space itself, which impacts the behavioral performances of the occupants that are experiencing it. For example, a real life disturbance can act as an unpredictable boundary that may prevent or enable an activity.

In Fort Greene Park, vegetation versus pavement creates a boundary between natural and man-made materials, which often borders program or derives new paths of circulation. While paved surfaces supply direct routes of circulation for humans, animals, and vehicles, they can be disrupted by cracks in the ground or uneven topography in the bedrock. At the same time, while trees and areas of grass are used for rest and recreation, they can be disrupted by uplifting root action and erosion that make it difficult to maneuver.



Fracture



Overgrowth



Uplift



Overlap

fig. 9-10 Fort Greene
Park Subnatures

This relationship between people and the ground creates a sense of material duality. Material duality refers to the reciprocal functions of matter in public space as a result of their appearance, texture, and impression on the individual. It can either act as a supportive or a disruptive boundary. Within both cases, each express how the material quality of organic and inorganic objects in our surrounding environment are responsible for how individuals interpret their behavior, whether they’re in, on, or around a given space.

Supportive boundaries are more desirable because they create conditions of definition and order that further isolates activities through suggestive placement and creates smooth transitions between space for people to follow. For example, in Fort Greene, one can describe the materiality of the vegetation versus the asphalt, in which each material type is associated with a different action. Asphalt is mainly used for fast traffic and circulation of pedestrians and bikes, offering a direct route of passage, while vegetation of grass and trees allow for slower interactions to take place as one chooses to sit, play, and rest.



fig. 11



fig. 12



fig. 13



fig. 14

Disruptive boundaries are more associated with the subnatural elements in our midst, the forms of nature we treat as secondary because they are often embedded and concealed from view. Subdued by inhabitants who perceive them as a threat, these parts of nature are not given the best reputation. This further links them to be undesirable and subnatural, further explored by David Gissen's "Subnatures," defining these elements by the same standards of appearance and functionalism that runs public spaces today.

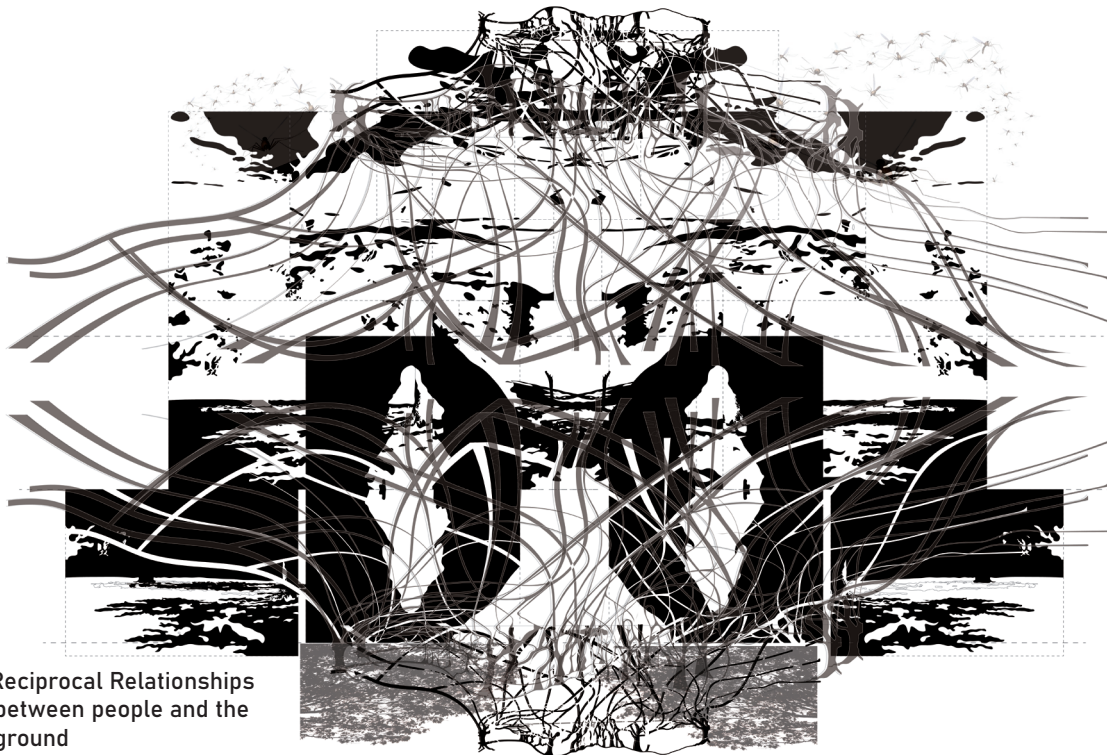


fig. 15 Reciprocal Relationships between people and the ground

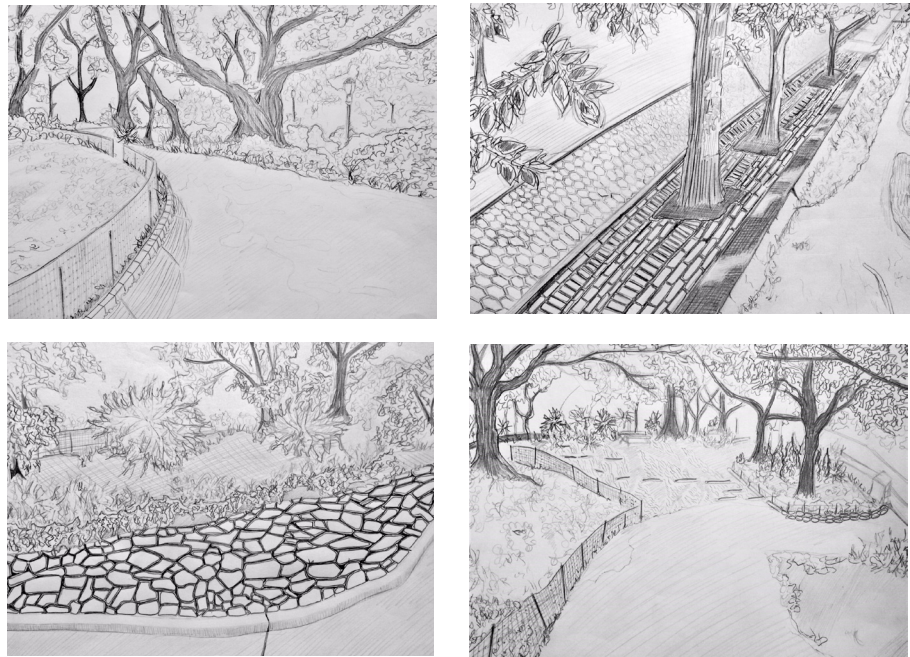


fig. 16 Fort Greene Landscape Sketches

After our visit to Fort Greene Park, we used both sketch and notation to express its scenes of public space, and we found that much of public activity is influenced by features of landscape creating reciprocal relationships between people and the ground.

NATURAL MULTIPLICITY

RHIZOMATIC NETWORKS + REVIVING LOCALITY

As we strive to change this norm, we believe it is important to express that public space is a form of collectivity that should not be wasted or forgotten. There are many instances in today's modern societies, such as urban areas in the U.S., in which the meaning of the term "public" becomes diluted, losing its cultural value to serve other interests than its occupants. For example, the creation of the public square acts as a feedback mechanism for commerce. While economic exchanges take place on its surface, the intention of the space acts as a lure, for people with capital to buy into their markets' services rather than truly experience the environment they enter. In contrast, spaces with more potential for personalized activity, like small, local hotspots and unoccupied crevices of the street grid, find themselves drowned out by adjacent walls of skyscrapers and mass transit. Even people's accessibility to virtual devices, such as cell phones and data apps, are mentally turning themselves off from their surroundings and the potential relationships they could be having with each other face to face. In all these cases, rapid urbanism's atmosphere of industry and technology are dehumanizing the local experience, leaving behind space without identity and people without communication.

To establish more resistance against these norms, our thesis seeks how public space can become a counter fabric to invade these lacking moments in urban areas and stimulate more, active collaboration, cultural integration, and social interaction. We aim to revive a future where human activity can exist away from spectacle culture through our research of undesirable forms in nature, from David Gissen's "Subnatures," rhizomatic networks, from Deleuze and Guittari's "A Thousand Plateaus," and the significance of locality and play, from Appadurai's theories in "The Production of Locality" and Mary Flannagan's views in "Critical Play". We engage these concepts within three sites in urban San Francisco. Each location is based in a different district, each representing a culture reflected by the context of its area and people. Mainly, we will be working within Transbay Temporary Terminal in the SOMA District as a hub, which contains more homogenized, urban conditions than the other two that we wish to counter. However, our intention is to create a public playscape that will rhizomatically connect and grow into these other sites we plant into, such as Garfield Square and Castro. Through an integration of material landscape and virtual technology, we aim to create a sensory and ecological atmosphere for communication to flourish.

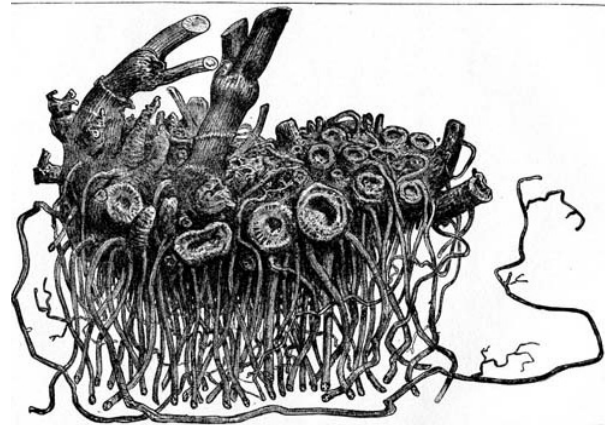


fig. 17 Rhizome

"A Fresh Rhizome of Cimiofuga Racemosa." CCDigitalPress, <https://ccdigitalpress.org/book/techne/rhizome3.html>

In reference to material landscape, we first researched undesirable forms of the ground. This later inspired us to consider how excavating the geologic fabric of San Francisco, now leveled by rapid urbanism, can expose the hidden, experiential qualities of the spaces we ignore. As a result, we establish a truer sense of public as we connect ourselves more with nature. Specifically, in public space, undesirable conditions are forces and objects that create disturbances within the organization and layout of a space itself, which impacts the behavioral performances of the occupants that are experiencing it. For example, a real life disturbance can act as an unpredictable boundary that may prevent or enable an activity. Undesirability can also reflect the perceptions of the occupants, who give the object its negative connotation. This links the undesirable to subnature.

According to David Gissen's "Subnatures," subnature refers to "forms of nature deemed primitive (mud and darkness), filthy (smoke, dust, and exhaust), fearsome (gas or debris), or uncontrollable (weeds, insects, and pigeons)" (Gissen 22). It is defined by the portions of our surrounding environment that are more concealed, threatening, and unpleasant, composed of the undesirable parts of nature we treat as secondary. This is due to their bothersome, uneven, and unpredictable qualities that challenge preset orders of space and life. In public territory, much of subnature is subdued to maintain space for the desirable, appealing to conditions that are orderly and controlled. Oftentimes, it is the combination of these interests in design that can impede public space from reaching its full potential.

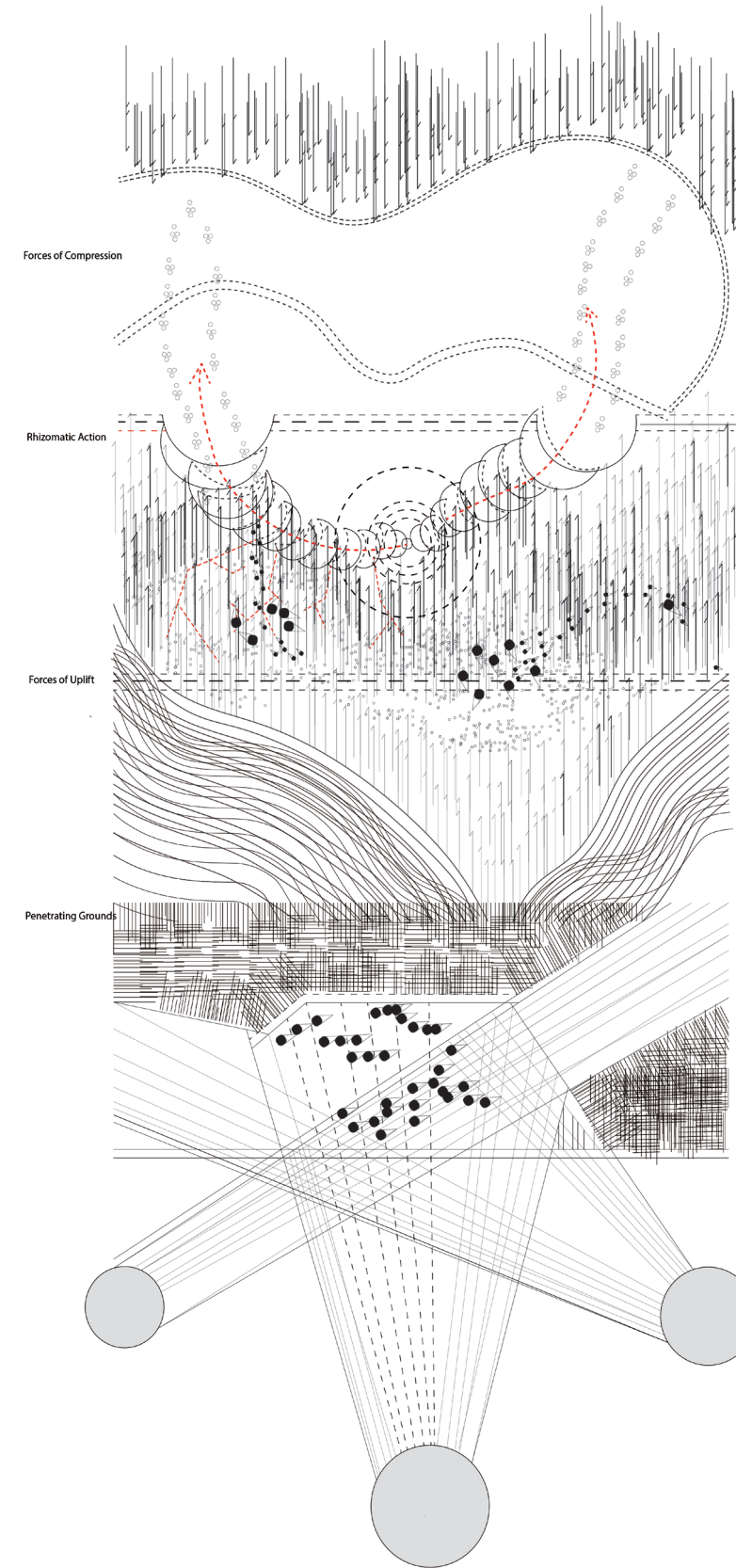
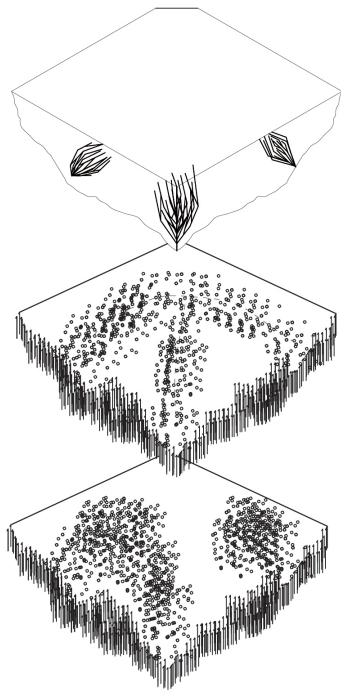


fig. 18 Rhizomatic Network Deep Section

This discursive deep section uses notation to express the inverse relationship between the ground's hidden features and social activity that can occur above. Through uplift, the rhizome pushes for new levels of ground, revealing itself at the surface. At the same time, boundaries compressed downward are being resisted and altered as activity breaks through.

For example, public squares, like Union Square in New York, are owned and funded by the city to be cleaned, grown, surveilled, and calibrated with familiar forms to convey public in a commercialized way. These forms can be represented by marketplaces, arranged seating, organized plantings, and monumental statues that may serve as focal points for collectivity, but still represent ownership. Public in this sense belongs to someone rather than no one. Space is not promoted unpredictably through modes of nature, like weeds, or personal expression, such as radical behaviors by protestors and displaced homeless people shut down by the system. It is subnature that emphasizes the embedded systems and processes outside of the spaces we already define. As many people ignore it, this further imposes boundaries on the way that humans live, perform, and perceive space.

Although we may lack control and not understand its physical properties or purpose, subnature is still a mutual part of the world we live in. This refers back to our investigation of Fort Greene Park, which holds a greater amount of ecological diversity in its landscape than Union Square. The richness of its ground composition and materiality promotes an atmosphere that embraces the subnatural, which gives way to the subcultures that roam upon its surface. Specifically, public activity is influenced by its messy, disruptive features of landscape including moments of overgrowth in its vegetation, fracture in its soil and paved surfaces, and uplift of its root systems and bedrock, which create new boundaries and levels of occupation.



All these features create reciprocal relationships between people and the ground, which we investigate further in the invasive behavior and form of the rhizome. It is the rhizome's ability to spread and create an embedded network within the ground it lives in that allows us to physically bridge our occupants through structure and virtually through technology we invent. This generates more multiplicity in activity. As a spatial multiplicity, the rhizome can act in multiple directions at once, allowing for different outcomes, uneven movements, and new levels of space to be interpreted. Translated into a landscape, public space can be terraced, hollowed out, and distorted in its topography to create different degrees of experience, like moments of public and intimate activity.

Through its connectivity, however, multiplicity turns marginal space into potential areas for growth. To contrast limiting features that exist in fields of space, such as the abstract line fixed by a singular dimension and direction, we find opportunity in forms that act as points, identified by their free range and lack of complete definition. Thus, there is still room for adjustments and change to be considered. In this respect, the multiplicity does not always have to meet or relate, creating conditions of "aparallel evolution" and lines of flight (Deleuze, Gilles, and Guittari 11). Similar to epigenetics in living organisms, the rhizome in space can be treated as a gene, which can be expressed differently without changing the code of DNA. This creates phenotypes that allow forms to have different appearances, structures, and functions, which can be influenced by the rhizome's ability to rupture and regenerate. As a public space, the rhizome constantly regenerates itself, spreading to connect its reach, while expressing resiliency to the force that breaks it off. Although monotony of public space tries to purify the undesirable, the rhizome acts as a force of resistance and flexibility, an untouchable space that can take root anywhere.

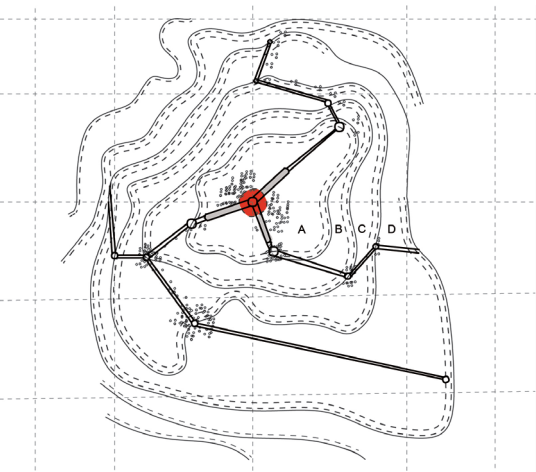


fig. 19 -20
Exposing Embedded Materiality
of Organic Material to Promote
Rhizomatic Activity

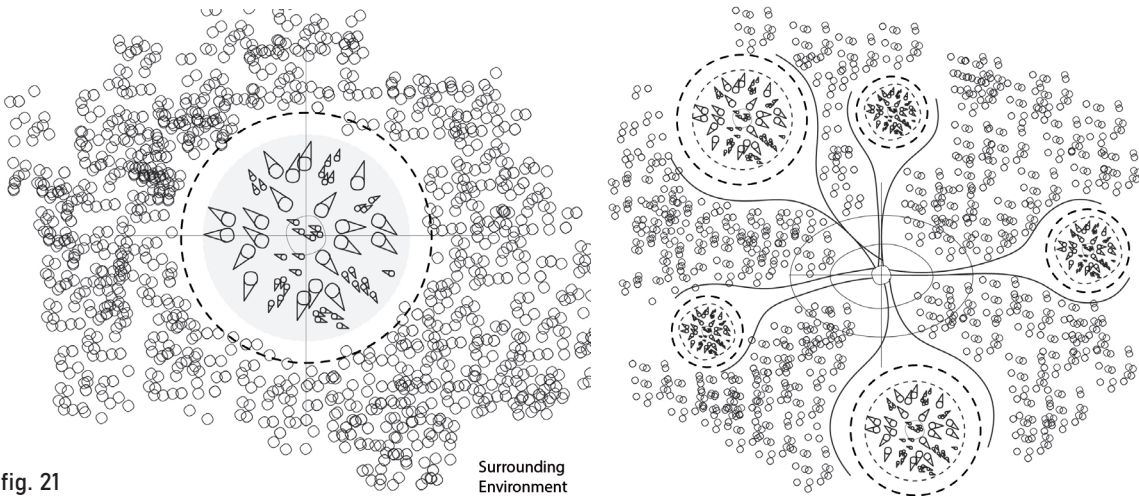


fig. 21
Transforming a Singular and
Rigid Public Space into a
Fluid Multiplicity

As a species, such as roots found in weeds or ginger, it is the rhizome's ability to remain resilient to the external forces that try to eradicate it, like weather and human intervention. Under urban conditions, we translate the rhizome into a public counter-space, that will embed itself into the city at large, and conduct playful and interactive programs resilient to the capitalistic influences that surround it injecting homogenous urban spaces with new meaning. This treats the rhizomatic logic we use to connect programs of our public space as a cartographic map to "form connections with different points of terrain," which are "always detachable, connectable, reversible, and modifiable [with] multiple entryways and exits" (Senagala 4).

Such adaptability can relate to structures and proposals created around the same era as San Francisco's rise to hippie and performative culture in the 60s and 70s. Specifically, in the project "Instant City" by Archigram in 1970, architects employed the idea of a moving metropolis that would temporarily settle in communities using mobile objects like hot air balloons and technology like robots and cranes to generate transport, structure, new information, and temporal programs used for education and leisure. Like an enzyme, the rhizome activates space and produces new social order, one against neutralized environments, like the plaza, and establishes footholds in areas of

excess. For example, areas that can serve as potential corridors are paths, intersections, boundaries, thresholds, and props, which can also be used to promote play between individuals (Stevens 1-3).

However, to further explore these areas to create a counter fabric, one must dissect the composition of the site, or the DNA of its threaded parts. This was significant for us because San Francisco, specifically the SOMA District, is monotonized by its businesses, tech hubs, and vehicular traffic, which diminishes the role of the pedestrian, neighborhood, and locality. According to Arjun Appadurai, he defines "producing locality (as a structure of a feeling, a property of social life, and an ideology of situated community)" that remains in constant struggle as it tries to protect itself from the overshadowing forces placed upon it (Appadurai 189). This matter is especially true within neighborhoods that serve as platforms for social gathering and human action. For example, in our Castro site the area is known for having a high population of LGBTQ members in its community, who congregate in nearby bars, restaurants, and streets like the Rainbow Walk intersection. According to the Castro district's demographic and history in social activism, the neighborhood is a landmark preserved by its culture, which thrives more in comparison to the more urbanized areas along the east coast's financial districts like SOMA.

When threatened by modern society, the construct of the neighborhood is overshadowed and overpowered to submit to more regulated forms of behavioral living. Oftentimes, these forms are restrictive such as hours of operation and rule sets to establish maintenance and exclusivity. Although Appadurai refers to global instances in “The Production of Locality,” the concept stays the same. The nation-state or political pressure of those in power, like corporations and wealthy figures of government, tend to conform people under principles “of allegiance and affiliation” using “set[s] of places and spaces calculated to create internal distinctions and divisions necessary for state ceremony, surveillance, discipline, and mobilization” (Appadurai 189). In the context of San Francisco, many of the city’s public spaces are known as POPOS, privately owned public spaces, which pose certain restrictions on the occupants as they are owned and maintained by the city’s government.

As a result, the shift in power creates boundaries of territory to manipulate the social formations of people who live there, eventually turning the defining characteristics of their culture-rich neighborhoods obsolete. **With this awareness in mind, how can we bring back a sense of locality and neighborhood into our own public space? How can the lacking DNA of the site be used to instill a new attitude for social interaction?** Rather than allowing for the neighborhood to dissolve completely from systems of hierarchy and territory, one can begin to consider the people themselves, who fill space with purpose. It is the human figure that creates flexibility and spirits of individuality in contrast to the formal structures built around them. In order to create place rather than a hollowed out space, it is crucial to consider people’s social relationships, communication styles, and behavioral patterns to drive activity (Appadurai 190-192). This will be able to convert the idea of nonplace, spaces without cultural identity or purpose, and promote more integration of our site’s historical background along with the local context that already exists, tweaking the way the city operates from the inside. From this standpoint, our design can act with more sensitivity and begin to address a new type of public not solely derived by spatial and physical context, but internal qualities and personalities that drive it.

In relation to sensitivity, a counter fabric to San Francisco’s urban landscape can be developed through the use of soft architecture, aimed to convert its capitalist culture of speed and efficiency into one that emphasizes opportunity and expression. Within “Soft Architecture and Slow Cities,” authors, Zhenkun Gan, Lingege Long, and Professor Wen Oyang, suggest

slowing down the pace of public social spaces by adapting them to the occupants and the physical environment that surrounds them (Gans 1-3). This can occur on both a macro and micro scale, as the human body begins to transform the way that architecture can successfully translate presence, movement, behavior, and activity. Aside from this concept, we also found their definition of soft architecture compelling. They do not “refer [soft] to curved, organic, and fluid” forms and materials as in construction, but they use soft as the boundary and strategy behind the space itself, including the patterns, energy flows, traditions, cultures, and associated relationships emanating from the people within (Gans 3). This further supports an idea we wish to bring out through the sensory experiences we create, in which we measure architecture through experience at various levels that explore the physiological, psychological, and physical aspects of the body’s impact on space.

When the body uses its senses to pick up stimuli from its environment, it triggers the mind to react, causing a person to perceive space differently with every action they perform, which brings us into a new realm of play used to power collectivity within our program. Through our public playscape, we create more social connections between people as they actively engage with each other to stimulate moments of communication through discovery, spontaneity, and improvisation. As a result, we create counter by embracing the individuality of our occupants and the roles that each of them play within the situations we create for them. According to Mary Flanagan in “Critical Play” and inspired by the Dada and Situationist Movements of the twentieth century, play possesses a historic value and can be used as a social tool to drive relationships between people, place, emotion, and physical movement. As an intervention between players, communication becomes a common theme, as play sparks cultural exchanges. It promotes collectivity in spaces while also creating a resistant force against restrictions placed upon society like capitalism and social norms of behavior. Acknowledging the philosophy of Michel de Certeau, he considered “everyday practices [like] (talking, reading, moving about, shopping, cooking, etc.) [as] tactical in character [especially when] they become independent from the rhetoric of power” to create new modes of operation (Flanagan 190-191). In other words, design does not have to be rigid in its form or the way it interprets the logic of the activities that happen inside of it. Inspiration can be found from familiar values and roles in our lives, in which we have the power to change their effect and purpose.

This begins to answer another critical question in our thesis, as to **how we can create situations that don’t just target the ground as a way to drive communication, but focus more on how they can activate the figure within its grounds.** To welcome a fresher perspective at a local level, we envision play as a way to free program from its original setup, another counterpoint in our public space’s development. In this way, experience does not have to become a system of commodity, the ordinary, or the prescribed. Instead, it can begin to focus on the situational aspects that people explore, allowing space to act as a “playable map,” to create an intentional interface between individuals and their environment to instigate social change (Flanagan 200). This idea of public space as a map supports the network behind the rhizome that governs our project. As a map versus a trace, the rhizome can diversify its activity as it spreads, without repetition. Pathways can be created and experienced differently by its inhabitants, allowing for interweaving of activity, and a clashing of narratives.

As a sequence of games, our rhizome becomes more dependent on the figure as they follow different rules of engagement for each program we sequence. Their reaction and awareness of the space around them determines its “identity, language, and social” impact (Flanagan 199). This awareness can also be determined from how the players embody the space through the external use of objects, technology, landscape, and perception. As these elements combine, the physical and mental factors of each space can mingle to create an overall journey for people to collect their own data from, through sensation and motion. These new zones created can then “provide [alternate] avenues for movement, a place for communication, and [multiple areas of] common ground [existing on, above, and below]” (Mamoud 25). At the same time, we begin to think about how the rhizome of our public space, using this form of locality, can serve as a more inclusive realm, creating ways for interaction between players as they take on the role of the local and the stranger.

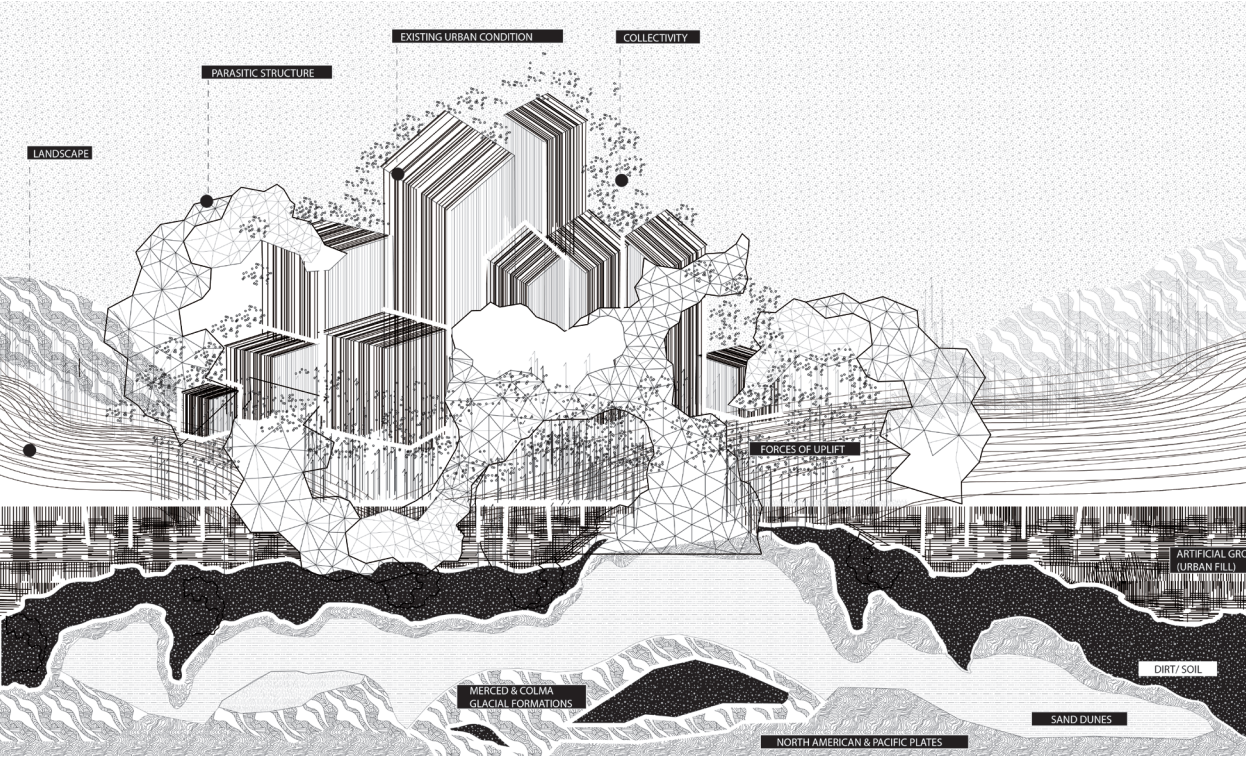


fig. 22 Notational Playscape Deep Section/ Embedded Geology Resurfaced

VIRTUAL MULTIPLICITY

VIRTUAL PUBLICS + COMPONENTS OF INCLUSIVITY

Public space is not limited to the streets and plazas. In the 21st century, another form of public space sways and dominates people even more aggressively, that being the virtual public space.

Internet is a powerful tool that extends our corporeality to understand, connect, and enjoy the world, without the limitation to time, distance, and gravity. Public space suddenly exists everywhere as long as one has access to an electronic device and internet, but it also exists nowhere for it does not have a material form.

In dialogue with the physical space, Beatriz Colomina points out that virtual public space, in fact, makes people less public in the physical realm. (Colomina 261) As we transition

from making a public speech out in the street, to laying on the bed and sending a post to an immaterial space, the action of publicizing is privatized.

"The biggest invasion of privacy in the history of the planet is revealed from bed and dominates all media. The most public figure in the world at that moment is a recluse. Architecture has been inverted."
(Colomina 261)

What we understand as the primary function of social media is that it connects people and enables us to see the experience or thoughts shared by others from digital screens, but what we often ignore is the twist and turns information travel through before it reaches us, and how it gets further distorted when we pass on the information. When people post their stories on social media, it is a representational snippet of their life. There is a flattening in dimension, a lack of context. After we receive that information, we reconstruct it with our understanding and experience, resulting in a secondary transformation of the actual story. Social media stands as a mirage of the actual

space, containing an explosion of disconnection and distortion, which multiplies the way that one is able to create and perceive information. Our interest in virtual public space thus sprouts from an investigation on how to employ its capacity of enabling and transforming possibilities and potentialities to make physical public space more diversified and inclusive.

Elizabeth Grosz proposes to think about architecture differently and philosophically, questioning if architecture can set free from its habitual functions and systems and embrace transformation. (Grosz 90) Architecture hence shares some characteristics with James Corner's argument about mapping, "a process of exploration, discovery, and enablement." (Corner 225)

This understanding of architecture precipitates a new construction for future public space that embraces various sets of relationships and promotes the process of learning. As mentioned before, the physical public space is facing the predicament of losing its diversity and publicity, mainly because elite groups try to civilize and coordinate others with criteria and activities that gear towards their benefits. Public space is becoming a commodity, required to be clean, safe, and presentable.

In order to subvert the social dynamics and bring more creativity and interactions to energize the public space, it is intriguing to think about public space, not as a static place,

but as a process of transformation that will perpetually diffuse, distort and deflect itself — a place for random encounters and new perspectives.

"...the alignments between the actual and the virtual, the ways in which the actual feeds off and grows in distinction from the virtual and, conversely, the ways in which the virtual continually enriches and diminishes the actual by forcing it to diverge from itself, to always tend towards and to be absorbed by virtuality."
(Grosz 113)

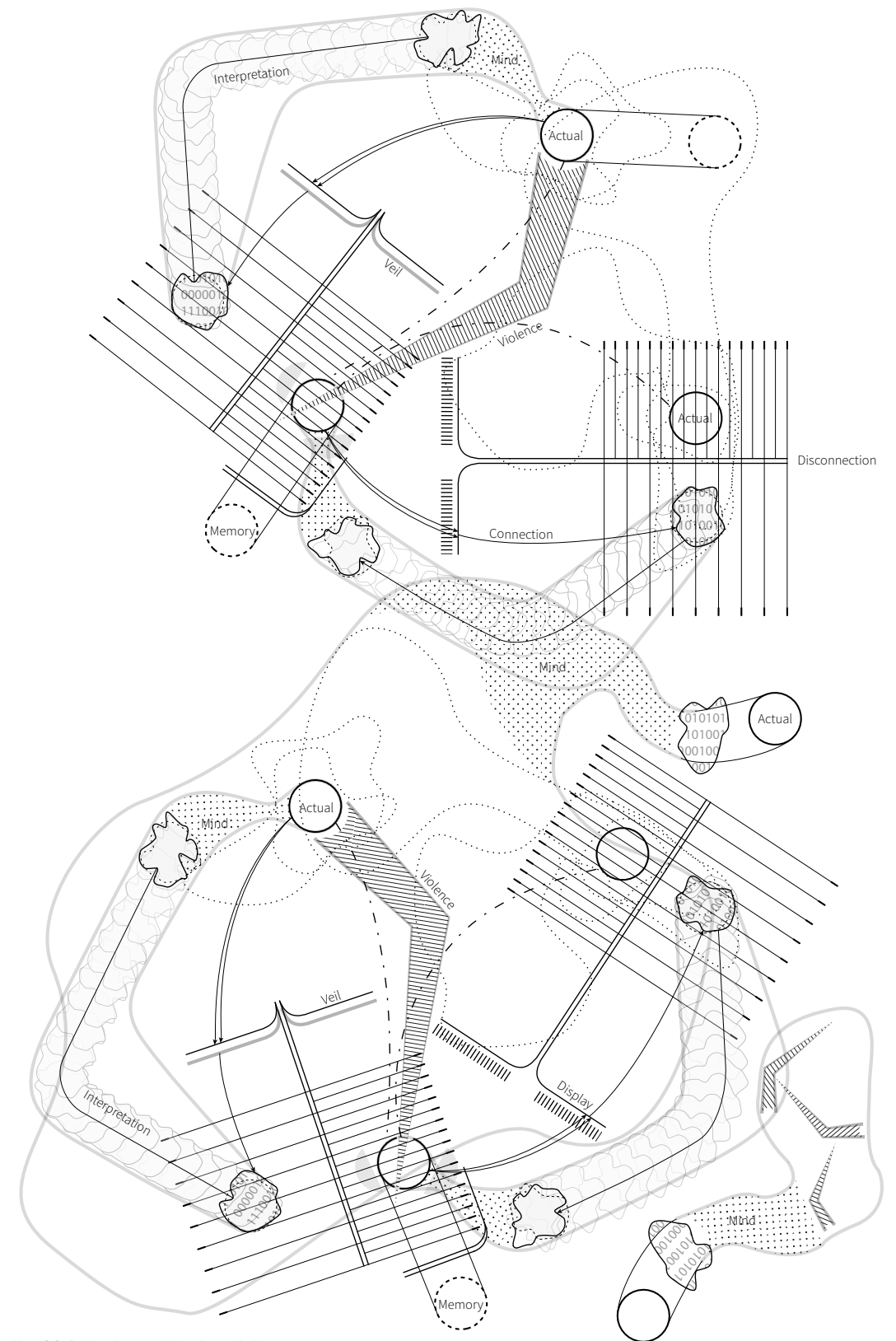


fig. 23 Dillution of Authenticity

In the book *The Arsenal of Exclusion & Inclusion*, Armbrorst and others measure the exclusiveness and inclusiveness of urban spaces from a multi-disciplinary perspective, ranging from zoning policies to the design of the transportation system, urban furniture, and sound. It lists designs and regulations (sometimes combined) that serve to restrict or liberate certain social groups, such as the homeless and young people. Referencing the various cases covered in this book, we became more aware of the social outcomes for different design strategies. We learned that it is possible for the same design move to be both inclusionary and exclusionary when the targeted communities are different. For example, in the chapter *Clear Zones*, the authors indicate that the removal of urban furniture, although it provides an aesthetic and pedestrian-friendly urban space, “obstructs the possibilities for the circulation of alternative content in public space – not to mention the local newspaper.” (Armbrorst et al. 95) These clear zones favor the homogenized middle-class taste but prevent the potential exchange of different values. This chapter reveals to us the importance of certain urban furniture, such as newspaper vending boxes, which support the circulation of the local community’s stories and ideas that are many times unheard or ignored. Combining this idea of urban furniture with the earlier research on how virtual technology can create multiplicity in one’s perception, we imagine that implementing the infrastructures in public space with virtual technology can enhance the inclusivity in public space. First of all, different public spaces in a city can be virtually connected to encourage cultural transmission between different communities. People can expound their visions and express their artistic vitality not only towards the audience that exists in the same physical space but also towards a group of people that exist in other public spaces. For example, a public stage in one neighborhood can be live-streamed

in the public space of another demographically and culturally distinct neighborhood. Second, as we create a virtual projection of a body, this virtual figure can be manipulated in different ways, resulting in unconventional perceptions of the human body in space. If we are allowed to communicate with a virtual figure that displays one’s gestural motion and erases one’s facial identity, will people be more excited to engage in a random conversation this way? Will public space, then, become an inclusive engine that connects people of different colors, cultures, and social statuses.

To confront the paradox of public space with the concept of virtuality, of becoming, means that the design will take the initiative to stimulate dynamic activities and various perceptions. Therefore, a question emerges. How to design and control the public space while maintaining its spontaneity and publicness?

The difference between a constructive and a dictating control is that of the signifier and signified. A signifier is revealing and concealing at the same time, allowing one to comprehend the potentials of space; the signified, on the other hand, presents a definitive answer so one would conform to that singular modality. We can draw an analogy to the difference between LEGO and a puzzle. LEGO provides elemental units and simple joints to connect, so one can use the tool to imagine and create a variety of outcomes, while the puzzle pieces only connect in a predetermined way, resulting in an anticipated outcome. LEGO presents no default output and stimulates the process of learning and creating in an affective way instead of an informative one. Therefore, a public space that inspires creativity should not provide or anticipate a certain outcome. Instead, it will provide all the tools for people to distort and shape the space.

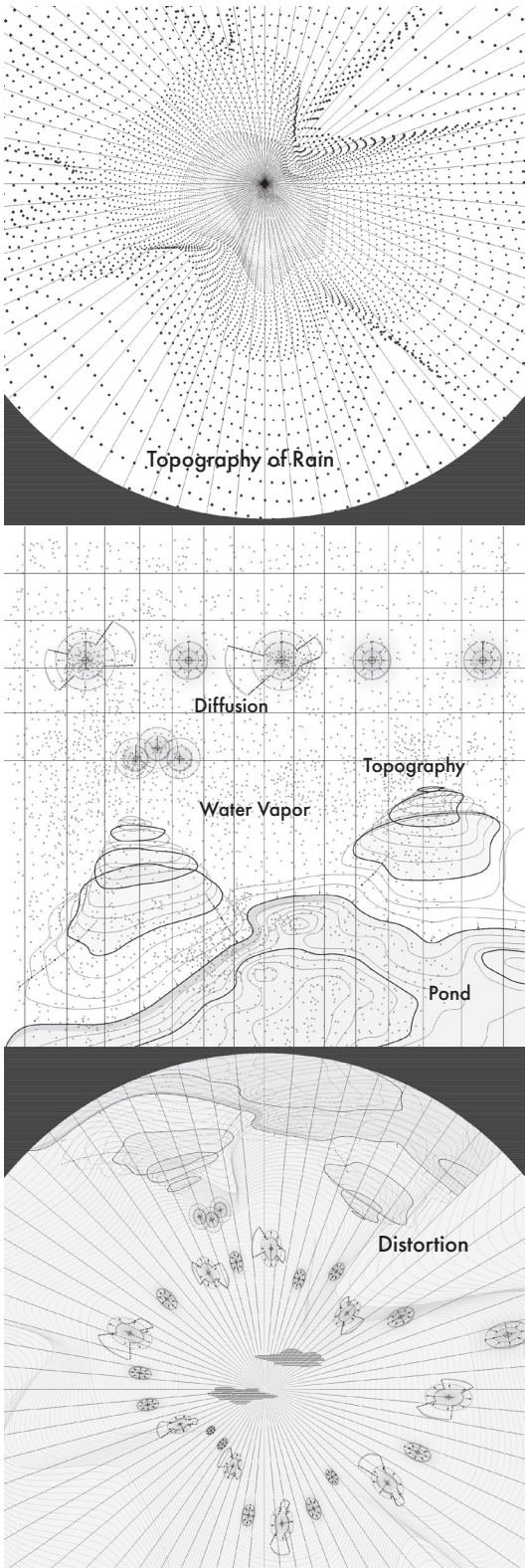


fig. 24 Tryptic Section

A drizzling night in Union Square, water vapor diffused the dazzling lights of the stroefronts and cars, all of which swirled into the water ponds formed on the ground.

This drawing depicts that natural elements like water vapor are charged with the potential to distort and transform our perception of reality.

In order to find a methodological base to design the public space as a signifier, we delved into The RSVP Cycles written by Lawrence Halprin. The scoring method proposed by Halprin provides us a guideline to create an interactive space that celebrates communication, collaboration, improvisation, and play. The RSVP Cycle introduces a planning process that weighs heavily on community involvement. Instead of producing a permanent design result, he offers scores as the design proposal that encourages and absorbs the artistic and creative imaginations of the community. The scores serve as a starting point for occupants to react, but also allow people to insert their own interpretation of how the spaces can be occupied.

“We need to establish a scoring method which allows for lines-of-action which score in the implementation at each level, and allow for feedback and multivariable inputs, but not rigidity.”
(Halprin, pp.174)

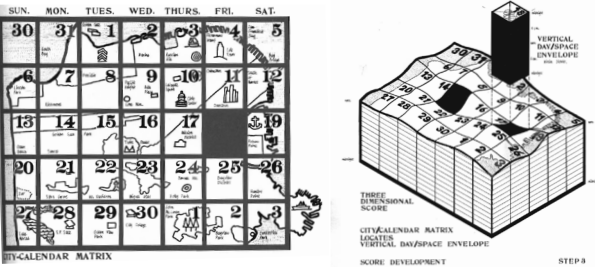
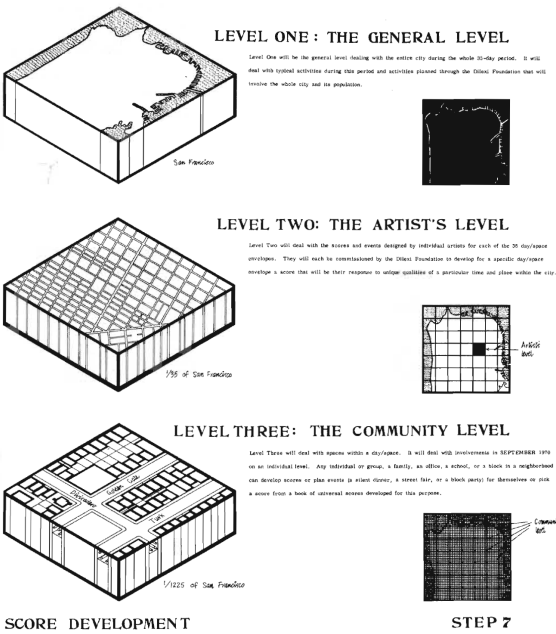


fig. 25 Score Development in The RSVP Cycle

His claim sheds light on a design process that emphasizes the possible events and programs that can be stimulated. Adopting his methodology, we devised scores and invented new programs that will each have different ways and degrees of engagement. Some programs provide novel platforms for people across the city to share thoughts, artworks, and acknowledge each other's presence. Some programs, such as the public kitchen, celebrate a communal life. The ultimate goal is that, with all the programs, users have multiple ways to input their own interpretation and improvise.



Our position on site selection was largely influenced by the book Non-Places, written by the French philosopher Marc Augé. His insight helps us to horn our argument when defining our targeted site: what are the DNAs of a public space that we are critical about, and what are the counter DNAs that our design project should provide? According to Augé, one strong character of non-places, such as space for transport, transit, commerce, and leisure (Augé 76), is that “they are defined partly by the words & texts they offer us: their ‘instructions for use’, which may be prescriptive, prohibitive, or informative.” (Augé 77) Texts certainly serve practical functions, such as the need for efficiency and regulation. They ensure that space can convey itself clearly to its occupants so that everybody can get what they want in the least amount of time. But texts also eliminates communication and interaction. Space predominantly controlled by texts doesn't require the exchange of knowledge and ideas for it to function properly. The non-place thus performs as a one-way instruction where everyone would merely follow instead of engaging and contributing. “The space of non-places creates neither singular identity nor relations; only solitude and similitude.” (Augé 83) In light of his argument, we decided to anchor one of our major sites in a non-place where minimum communication is needed, and people act with universal sameness. Our new design will then infuse the non-place with communal activities and grow out of the mothership to invade more streets and homogenized public spaces. According to the above-mentioned characteristics of

a non-place, we chose Transbay Temporary Terminal in San Francisco as our anchor point. Transbay is a transit center that programmatically relies heavily on text-instructions and requires very little communication between people. On top of that, it is located within the financial district of San Francisco and is surrounded by high-rise corporate buildings, which defines this place with a high level of cultural homogeneity. This particular site will then be virtually linked to the secondary sites that are programmatically rich and have culturally diverse neighborhoods. We aim to allow the creative communities that were evicted out of the gentrified financial district to enrich the social life in the non-place like Transbay.

In terms of the materiality of the design, we are intrigued by the story about the Ghost Ship written by Gregory Sholette. The Ghost Ship used to be a warehouse space in Oakland but was burned down in 2016. It was a sanctuary for a creative, but marginalized group of people who co-lived to “support each other, gain momentum, hash out projects, and just be joyous.” It was a space that is constructed by plywood, shipping pallets, and fabric pieces of materials and furniture that the people bring together. Inspired by this collaborative space, we consider fabric and wood as our material palette to create the inclusive environment that we are trying to advocate.

“Collectively, they created a virtual micro-city composed of makeshift living spaces built from repurposed plywood, shipping pallets, and fabric scraps linked together by a labyrinth of twisting pathways...”
(Sholette)

CULTURAL EVOLUTION

SITE HISTORY OF SAN FRANCISCO

Between the years 1848 and 1859, San Francisco made a rapid transition from an isolated village to a bustling city (Miller 9-15). Once the Treaty of Hidalgo ended the war with Mexico in 1848, California became part of the U.S. The gold rush of 1849, one year later, drew in a massive migration, in which people all over the world, especially entrepreneurs and business people came to establish themselves into the wealth (Miller 9-15). This brought on the birth of San Francisco's Financial District, home to corporate headquarters, law firms, banks, hotels, and restaurants. These were the start of a long line of programmed spaces that "represented order, homogeneity and a consolidated future" turning San Francisco into a blue collar town (Solnit 364).

Another factor that contributed to San Francisco's monotonized culture, was the ideal to maintain

elitist virtues in public space. Specifically, there were four, public health, prosperity, democratic equality, and social coherence (Young 9). During the San Francisco Park Movement between 1865 and 1880, it was out of the fear "that vice would result from heterogeneity" that led park advocates to only support social progress (Young 10-11). According to them, limiting undesirable conditions for the means of safety and maintenance was the key to a good society.

However, good society lies within the people that supply its diversity. During the 1960s, San Francisco's Recreation and Parks Commission was controlled by the City's financial elite (Lozano 39). During the age of expression, culture still persisted such as the hippies and creative people who rebelled against orders defined against them.



fig. 26
"San Francisco Financial District." BackingWinds, May 2010, backingwinds.blogspot.com/2010/05/san-francisco-financial-district.html



fig. 27
"San Francisco Mime Troupe." UC Davis Library, <https://www.library.ucdavis.edu/news/50-features-of-special-collections-san-francisco-mim-troupe-records/>

One group, known as the San Francisco Mime Troupe believed that art and performance was a tool in opening space. They sought artistic forms of expression as new ways to reeducate public so that the everyday citizen could reclaim control through their temporary atmosphere (Lozano 39). They, intentionally performed in closed venues to transform public space into their own stage. They became the undesirable, breaking the city's abstract space through their "guerilla" theater, disturbing local authorities with their political backlash in mainstream society (Lozano 39). Similar to a rhizome, the counterculture emerges where there is rupture in the existing system, and takes over a public space where there is excess from local production and value, transforming it to serve the community in a new way.

As of now, San Francisco is a high technology incubator. The numerous business opportunities boosted economic prosperity and diminished culture. Rebecca Solnit wrote about the story of the I-Hotel, which used to be a hotel for the homeless elders from China and the Philippines.

Located near the financial district that is overpacked by the technology companies, I-Hotel became a lucrative spot if turned into parking lots. Despite the resistance force among people, I-Hotel was eventually demolished for parking space, and the elders were forced out of that area. (Solnit 54)

This story is heartbreaking, but it is only the tip of an iceberg. Inflated housing prices, polluted air quality, displaced local business and residents, gentrified demographics, homogenized culture, and inhuman work hours. All these are consequences of the city's sole belief in economic progress.

Many public spaces, especially around the financial districts, became lunch space and parking spaces to "welcome" the new white-collar workers. Restaurants and businesses around these public spaces are substituted by chain-stores that you can find all over the world. Public space is now a gaping hole through which the city's identity and energy are lost.

URBAN ANALYSIS

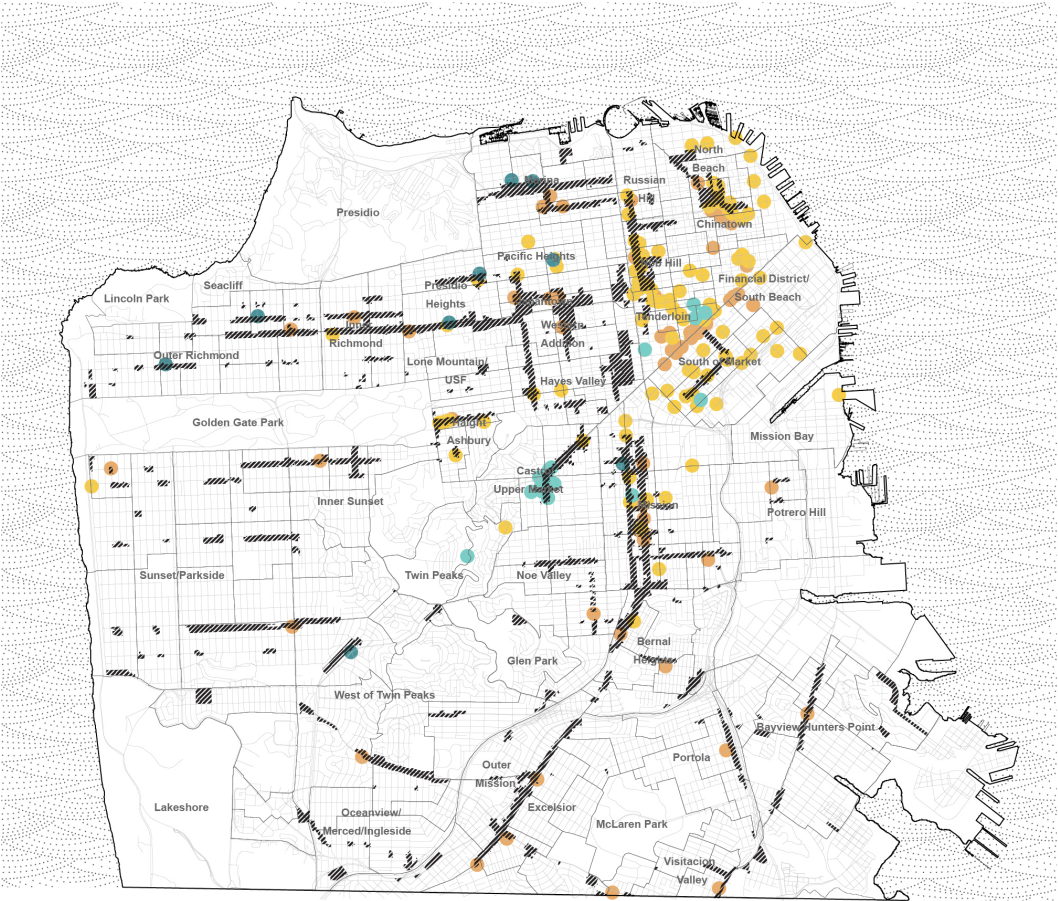


fig. 28

We studied the historical theater and lgbtq hubs from 1960s, which respectively represented the artistic vitality and cultural diversity of that era. Many of these cultural spots disappeared under the wave of gentrification, only a few remained. By studying the current city fabric, we figured that most of these historical cultural spots are adjacent to the neighborhood corridors that support small scale local businesses.



fig. 29

Therefore, we chose two sites adjacent to these neighborhood commercial streets. One is the Castro Theater, which is located next to most of the LGBTQ centers and the Garfield square which is famous for its graffiti alley.

SITE FABRICS

And we also chose a counter site, the Transbay Terminal, located in the highly gentrified financial district. These three diagrams indicate that the cultural hubs have a small scale, low-rise, and dense fabric consisting of mainly housings and few streets of local restaurants, businesses, and mixed-use buildings. On the other hand, the corporate hub has a large scale, highrise, and dense fabric that consists of mainly corporate buildings and transit centers.

How can a counter fabric invade existing urban spaces to foster new kinds of relationships and how can these new social relationships drive people away from spectacle culture?

CORPORATE HUB

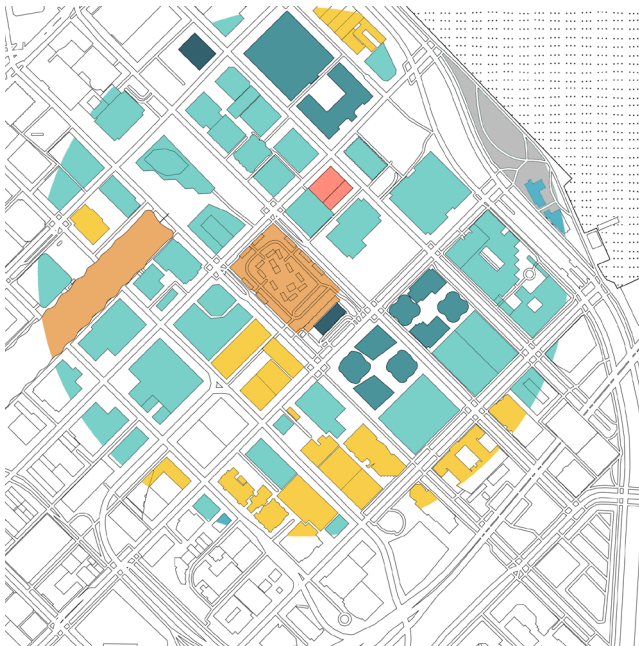


fig. 30 **SITE 1: Transbay Temporary Terminal**

CULTURAL HUBS



fig. 31 **SITE 2: Garfield Square**

- School/ Church
Community Center
- Transit
- Housing
- Park
- Office/ Factory
- Restaurant
- Mixed Use
- Commercial



fig. 32 **SITE 3: Castro Theater**

GEOLOGY & INFRASTRUCTURE

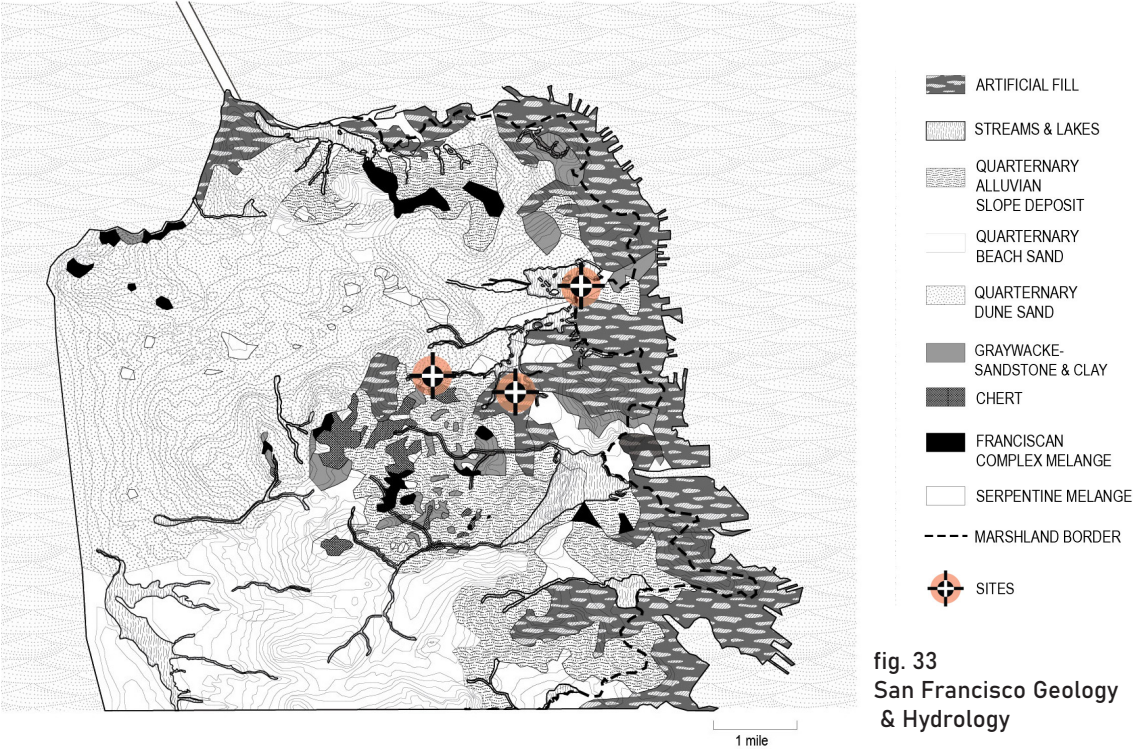


fig. 33
San Francisco Geology & Hydrology

Exploring the embedded geologic fabric of San Francisco, we learned that its land was characterized by its modes of change , which influenced its form. For example, the land was carved by erosion, deposited by landslides, and brought to the surface by glacial movements 300 million years ago. Its top layer was covered by mostly dunescapes in the west, and artificial fill along its coasts in east. After 1850, as urbanism expanded westward, most of the old networks of streams were covered up, while cisterns underground were created to supply the city's water. As for San Francisco's other forms of infrastructure, its transportation systems like

the trolley on Market St. begin to power the city's circulation more than the pedestrian. From this, we wish to change these current systems as potential areas of intervention for our project.

"To make this city, much of a windswept, fog-shrouded expanse of sand dunes and chaparral-covered hillsides was smoothed over, dunes removed, hilltops flattened, bays and marshes filled in, streams forced underground , endemic species driven into extinction" (Solnit 352).

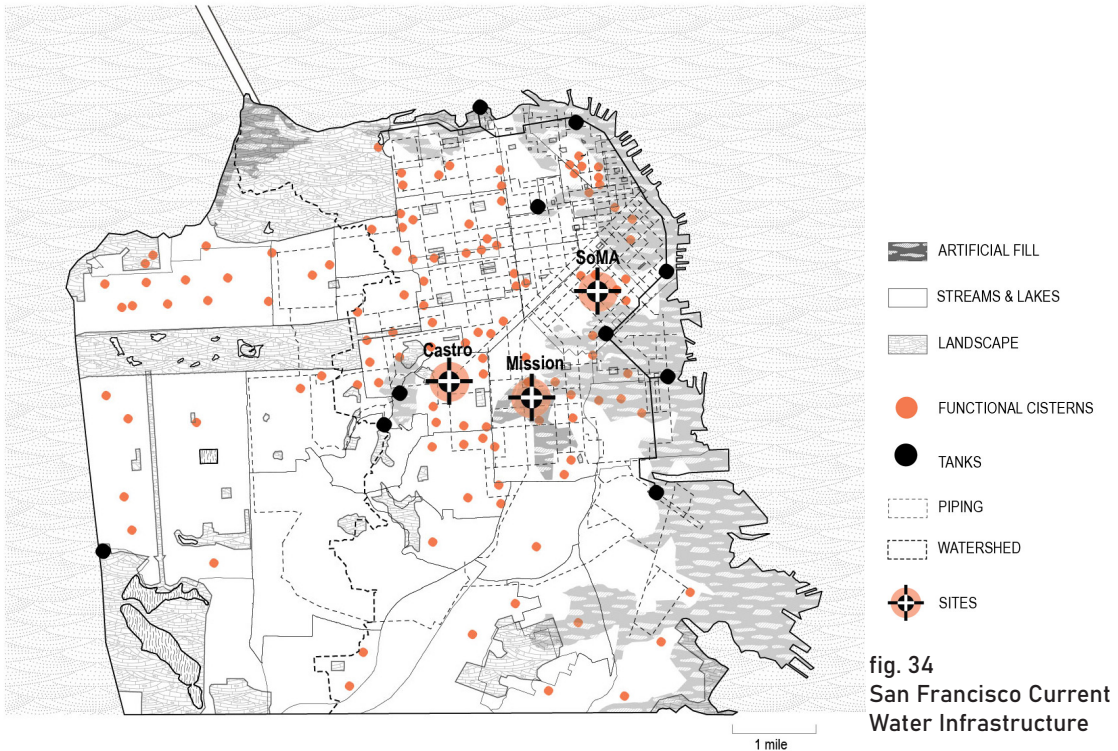


fig. 34
San Francisco Current Water Infrastructure

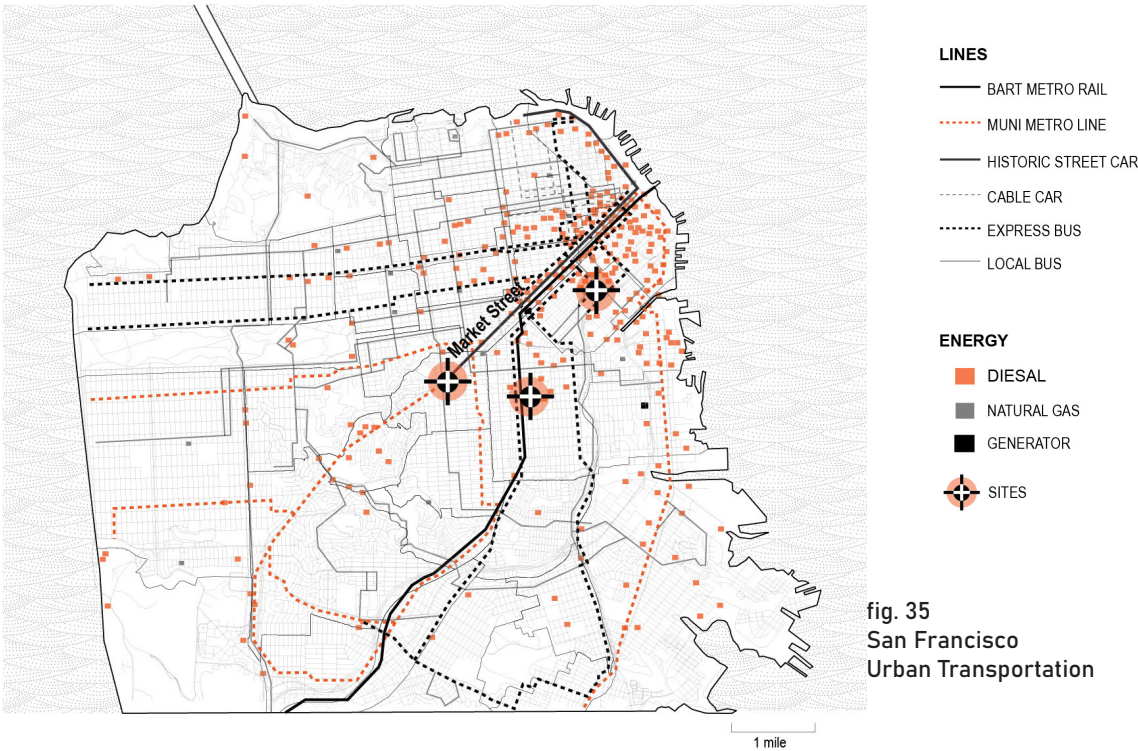


fig. 35
San Francisco Urban Transportation

CULTURAL EVOLUTION

PROGRAM PRECEDENT STUDIES



fig. 36-37 Projects by Sean Lally
Images from Metropolis
Top: EOS
Bottom: Proof 001



"Behaviors associated with an activity are tied directly to the physical properties (transparency, opacity, openings for movement) of the boundary that either links it to or separates it from other activities or contexts. The introduction of material energies into architecture not only opens up opportunities in terms of what materials we build with, but also allows reinterpretations of the activities and events we design for (Lally 97).

Buildings today are intricate conditioning machines that take care of basic requirements for human comfort. For example, HVAC systems provide the desired temperature through heating and cooling. Sean Lally, unsatisfied with using the conditioning systems for basic human needs, brought this idea a step further and suggests that energy control is a key that opens up new design territories such as innovative materiality, and the sensational aura generated from it. In the project EOS, the floating "suns" adjust the atmosphere with heat, sound, and light. The project **Proof 001** alters the temperature and velocity of air to "build" walls. These new architectural elements are smart, dynamic, and immersive. People perceive space with all sensations, instead of pure visual examination on physical geometry. Human behaviors and activity, as Lally claims, are inseparable from their atmospheric context. Our surroundings give us discrete clues on what to do and how to behave. Reconceptualizing the materials that construct a space, from solid and physical objects to subtle and sensational energy, will thus change the way we act and interact with others.



"Eco Boulevard." EcosistemaUrbano, <https://ecosistemaurbano.com/eco-boulevard/>

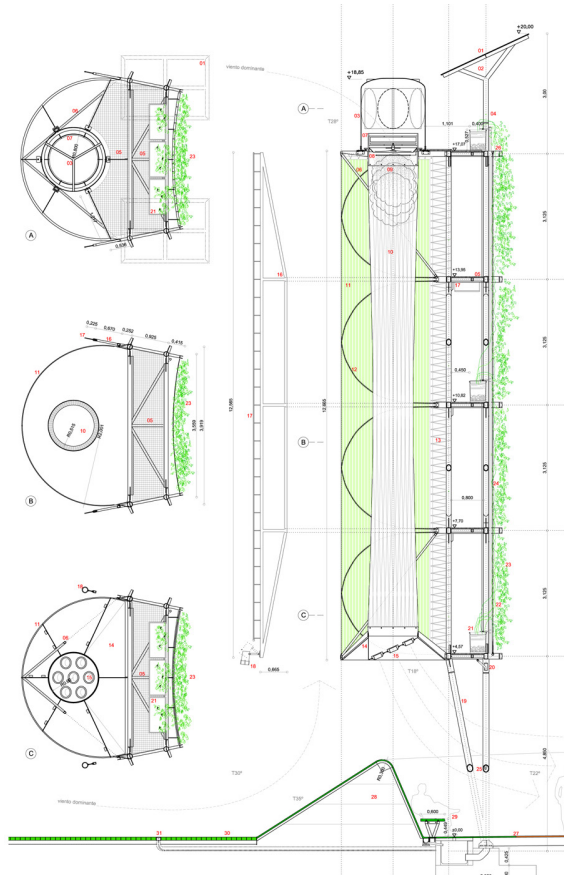


fig. 38 Eco Boulevard Skin Detail
Image from Archdaily

Public space in Spain is unfriendly in summer due to the high temperature. Inspired by the tendency of people gathering under the shades of trees, the architects for **Eco Boulevard** simulated the evapotranspiration process of trees with intricate mechanisms that wraps around this elevated cylindrical structure. As Aurora Per describes: "A crown of photovoltaic panels, wind sensors and atomizers make it possible to regulate the temperature and humidity conditions of the place. The result is a sustainable stimulator of public life." (Per 94) The air tree structure changes the thermodynamics of the space, creating a micro-climate that cools down the air around for people to gather. This structure does not have any predetermined program, thus can accommodate a variety of events, acknowledging the spontaneity of public life.



Step to the River is a one day project in Belgrade where public arts were temporarily installed in various corners of the city. There were different types of artwork, such as graffiti, music, and performances. They formed an exploratory trail leading to the Sava River, along which the long-forgotten Sava Port awaits. “After decades of living in oblivion, the old Sava Port belonged to the people again, at least for a day. By increasing density of events, the intensity of urban experience and recognition of the place increased as well.” (Dukanovic 55) Public space becomes a journey of detour and pause, slowing down experience to be more appreciated versus rushed. It acts as a transformative being that injects itself into an existing context and expands through crevices of unoccupied, abandoned, and recognizable gaps in space. The public art strategy is to intensify, densify, and diversify the space.

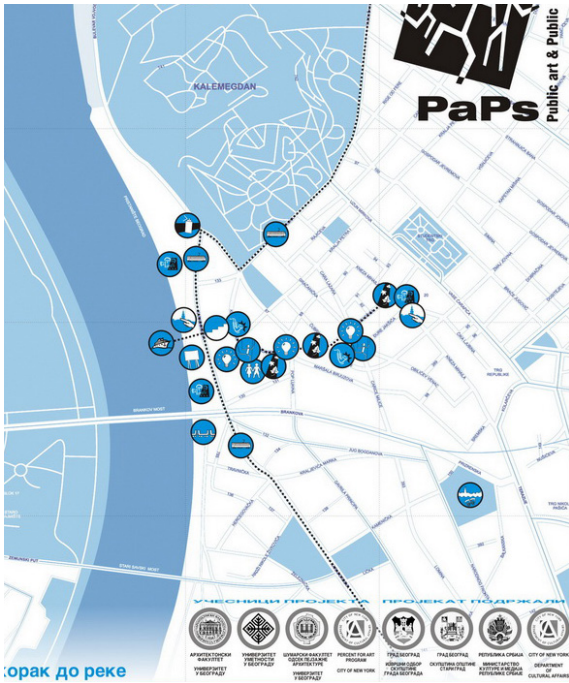


fig. 39 Plan and Photo of *Step to the River*
Images from University of Belgrade

“ Art teaches us how to disrupt, in order to create a new public space. ”

(Dizikes 3).

“ The point of art is not scaling up answers, but to tackle powerful questions, to provide and mobilize humanity to find the answers themselves, or to create a space of possibility.”

(Dizikes 7).



fig. 40
“The Blur Building at Night.” AtlasObscura, <https://www.atlasobscura.com/places/blur-building-architecture>

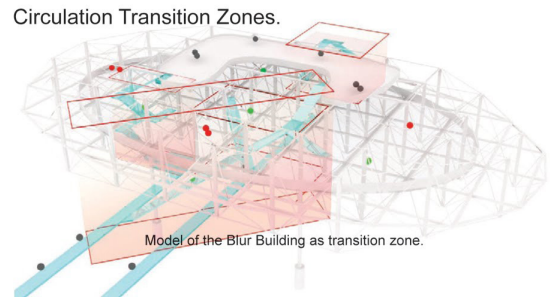
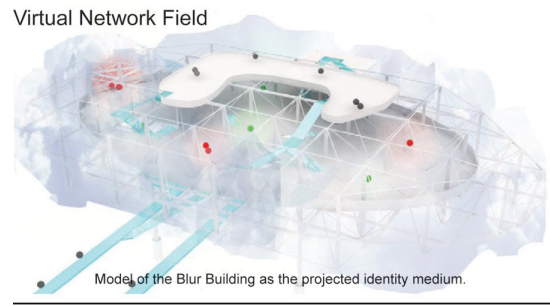
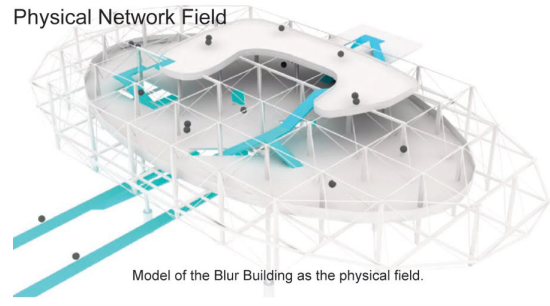


fig. 41 Network Analysis
Image from GSAPP Studio Blog

The **Blur Building** creates a microclimate of fog mass with “water pumped from Lake Neuchâtel, filtered, and shot as a fine mist through 35,000 high-pressure nozzles. A smart weather system reads the shifting climatic conditions of temperature, humidity, wind speed and direction and regulates water pressure at a variety of zones.” (Diller Scofidio + Renfro) Water vapor is used as an ephemeral material that veils the structure of the building. As wind breezes by, the vapor will scatter and expose the architecture inside. It conveys a poetic idea of everchanging visibility. It also challenges how people perceive and interact with one another. Visitors will take a character quiz and wear a smart raincoat before entering to track and protect them through the mist. It also glows in different colors according to one’s personality in relation to the people around them. By blurring one’s vision, the building suspends oneself in a world of mystery and offers a new way to feel and recognize reality.

INTERVENTION

PROJECT STATEMENT

As a result of the gentrification in San Francisco today, the urban fabric of the city containing its public spaces are becoming more homogenized for commercial and spectacle culture, such as its plazas and confined parks. In response to this phenomenon, we intend to create a true public space that excavates the radical culture and nature of the city's embedded history to allow free expression, interpretation, and multiple ways of communication. We argue that public space should be invasive as it spreads its program and structure to fracture the monotonous layout of the street grid.

We propose a synergistic master plan anchored in three key locations and leaking into multiple blocks, alleys, corridors, and lots to create a network of playscapes that supports cultural exchange across different districts. As a network,

we facilitate the rhizomatic urban spread of our playscape through different spatial, material, and programmatic interventions on the ground to excessively fill public space for maximum pedestrian activity.

We chose the Transbay Temporary Terminal as our main site, which is located in the highly gentrified financial district. We also chose Garfield Square in Mission District and Castro Street Public Parking Lot due to the cultural diversity in those two neighborhoods and their adjacency to local arts and businesses. Working across these sites, our plan grafts and augments the conditions for new social relationships and activities inspired by San Francisco's cultural hubs and inject into Transbay Temporary Terminal. And, to halt corporate interference.

Our playscape, features fun and messy atmosphere with light structures and heavy programming. We articulate the architecture with fabric and scaffold to achieve the provisional and informal quality of our playscape. At the same time, we create five new programs for rebellious behavior and inclusive activities to be experienced at different times of the day. The Public Kitchen emphasizes communal living through its extensive gardens, preparation zones, food truck stops and a revolving dining track. The Manhunt

Pool encourages translocational communication and urban consciousness with new technologies that connect its occupants through physical and virtual experiences. The Sandbox creates spaces for performative improvisation with interactive landscapes and the Starting Bubble meditative zones for hibernation. Rather than acting alone, these programs intermingle to create multiplicity through new combinations of activities and events.

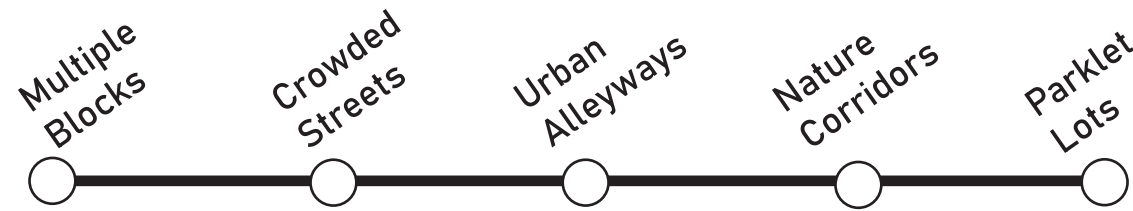


fig. 42 Invasive Urban Land Strategies

DISCURSIVE PLAYSCAPE

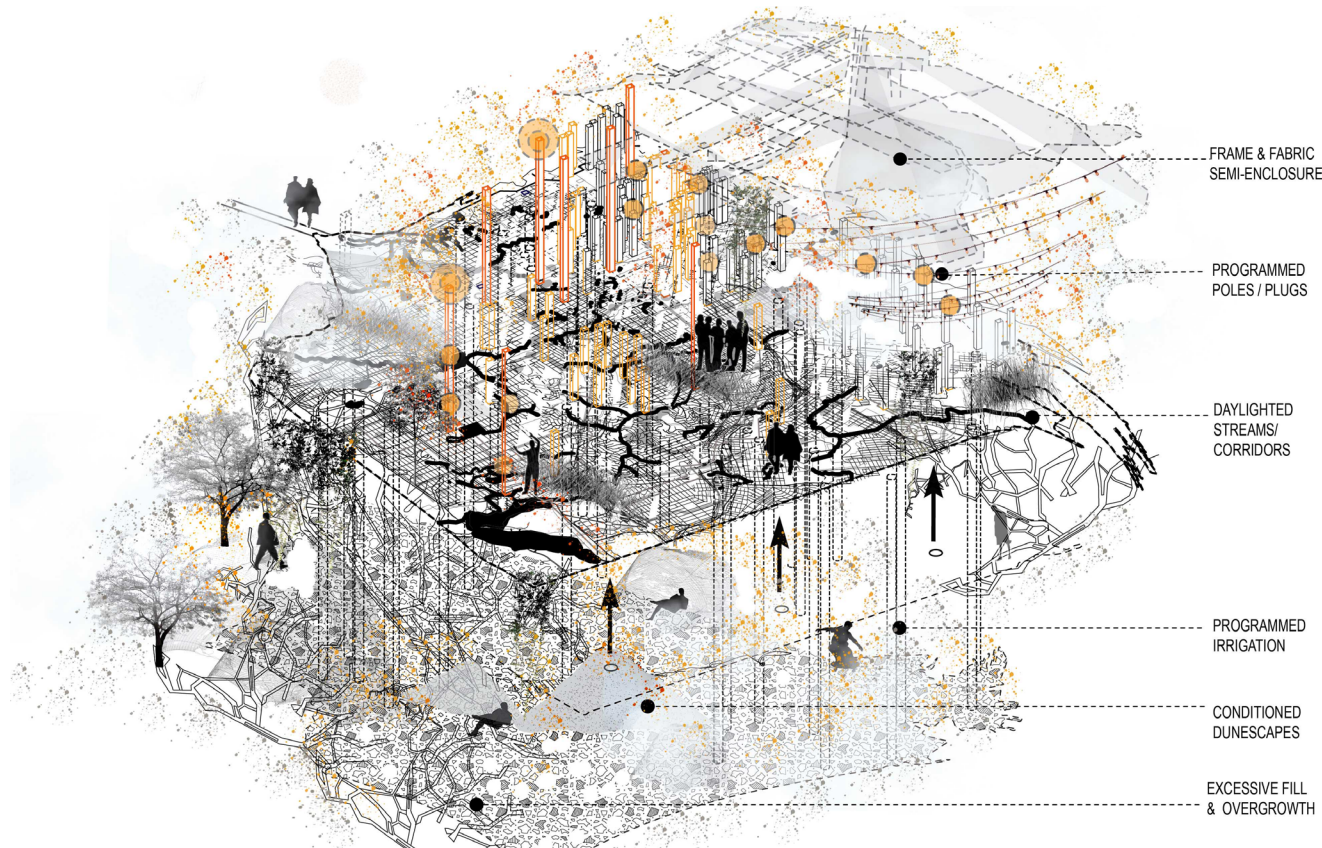


fig. 43 Discursive Playscape Collage

Our new urban master plan should become a hybridized and connected domain for virtual technology and natural landscape to interact.

Typologies of landscape include terraforming, overgrown vegetation, reconstructed sand dunes, and daylighted streams. Typologies of virtual technology include microclimates, interactive landscapes, live streaming stages and plugs that are implanted and programmed into the elements of landscape and infrastructure we create and

expose. Combining these two typologies provide new opportunities for mutual communication between different urban sites and active participation between local groups of people.

With our network of playscapes, we intend to free public space so that individuals can express themselves, allowing their identities to clash and influence each other, so that public space embraces the diverse subcultures and geological conditions that historically exist there.

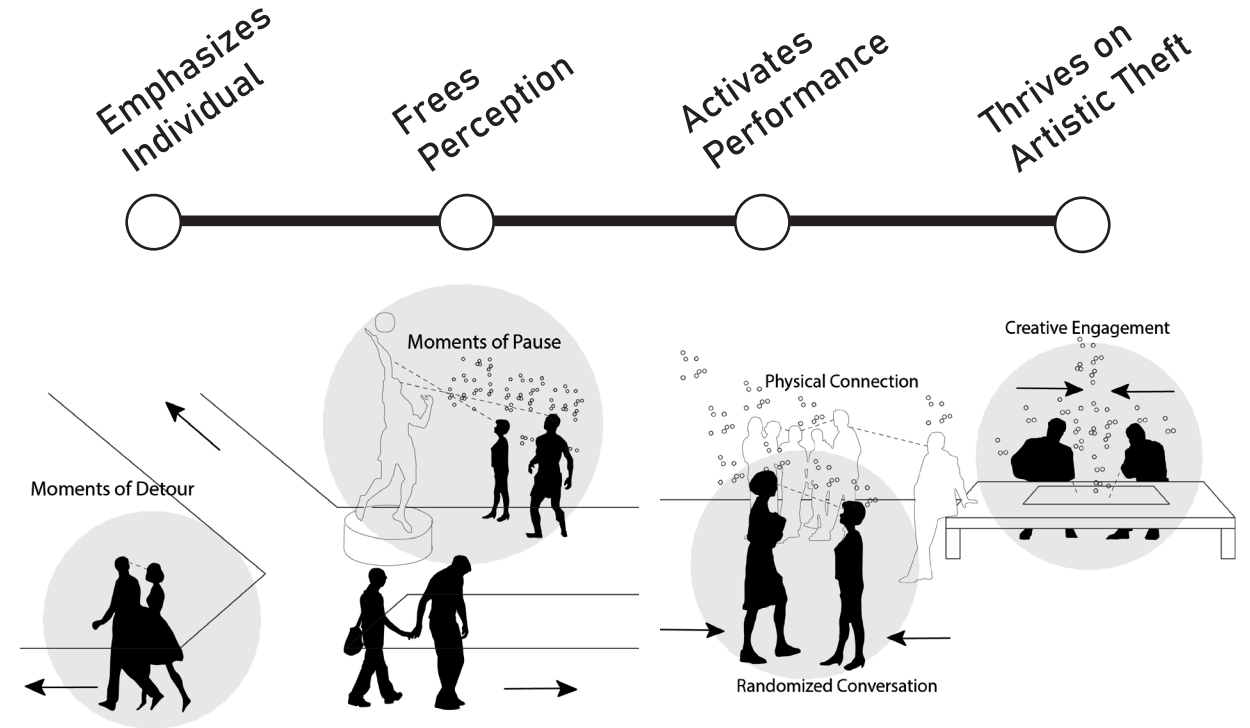
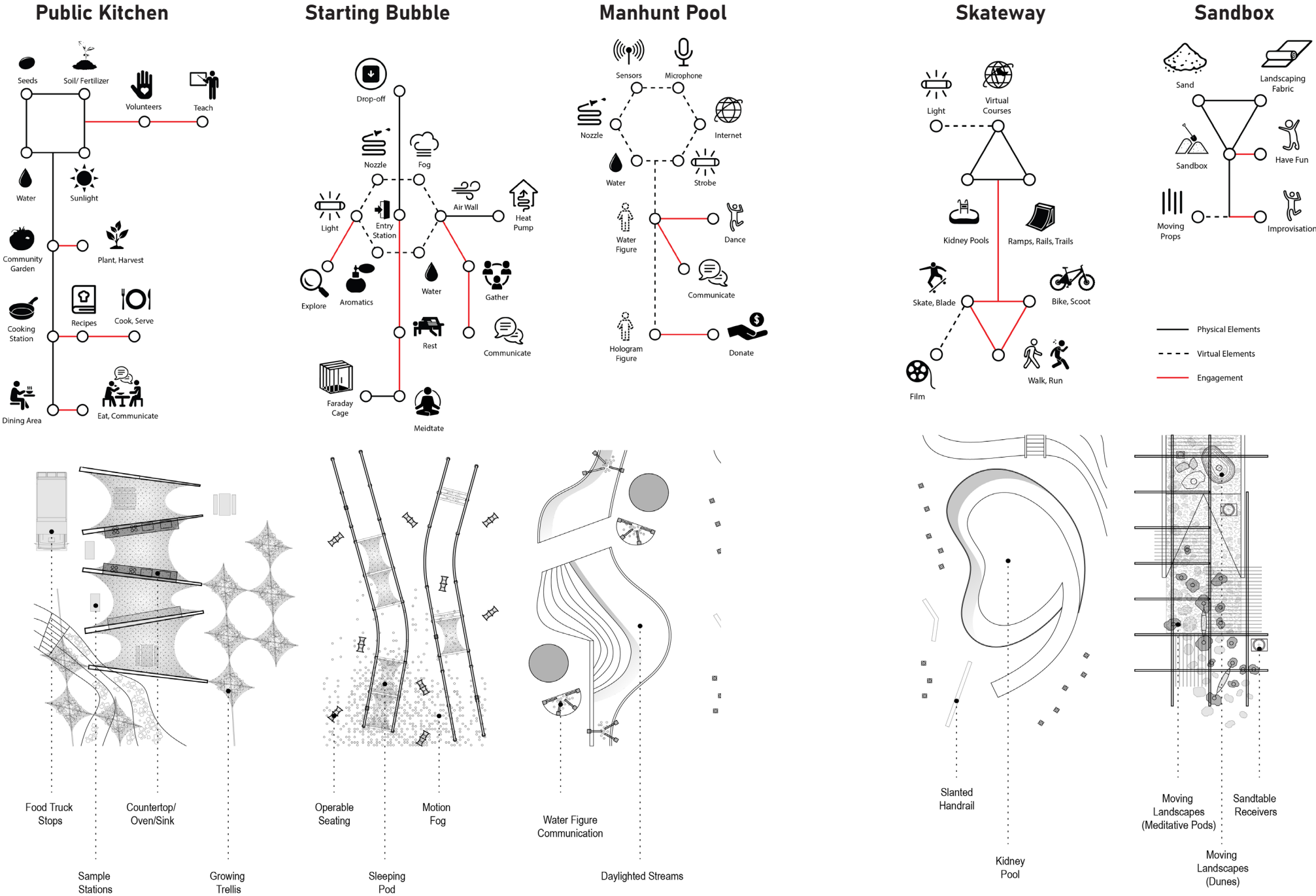


fig. 44 Playscape Intentions

Referring back to Critical Play: Radical Game Design by Mary Flannagan, we recognize how forms of play, games, and situated experiences can be integrated with our architecture to activate people in different environments. So as a playscape, our project creates these interactive

experiences through features of landscape, informal structure, and adaptable props to **emphasize the individual, free perception, and activate performance through artistic theft and communication.**

RULES OF ENGAGEMENT



INTERVENTION

METHODOLOGY

The methodology of our project evolves around heavy programming and urban planning in order to fill out and connect public space for maximum activity. We were inspired by the work of American landscape architect and designer, Lawrence Halprin, who began his career in San Francisco Bay. He too was interested in the creation of a playful modernist design that highlighted user experience and careful calibration of human scale into forms. From our research on his work in "The RSVP Cycle," we devised a planning project that acts as a scoring system, allowing the local communities to implement the design on multiple scales: city, neighborhood, and street furniture. Using these scales, we are consciously considering the remote and local relationships between people and our network of playscapes.

We do this through conventional drawings that explore the atmosphere of spaces in plan, section, perspectives, and diagram, which translate into three-dimensional studies that allow us to test forms in their various contexts.

From the fall semester, we used notation to diagram the abstract and intangible elements in public space such as the underground networks created by rhizomatic root systems and virtual connections. Progressing into the spring, we maintained this notational system in our city scale intervention to show the translocational connectivity, while we modified it at a neighborhood scale to indicate how the occupancy changes over time in this new architectural playscape.

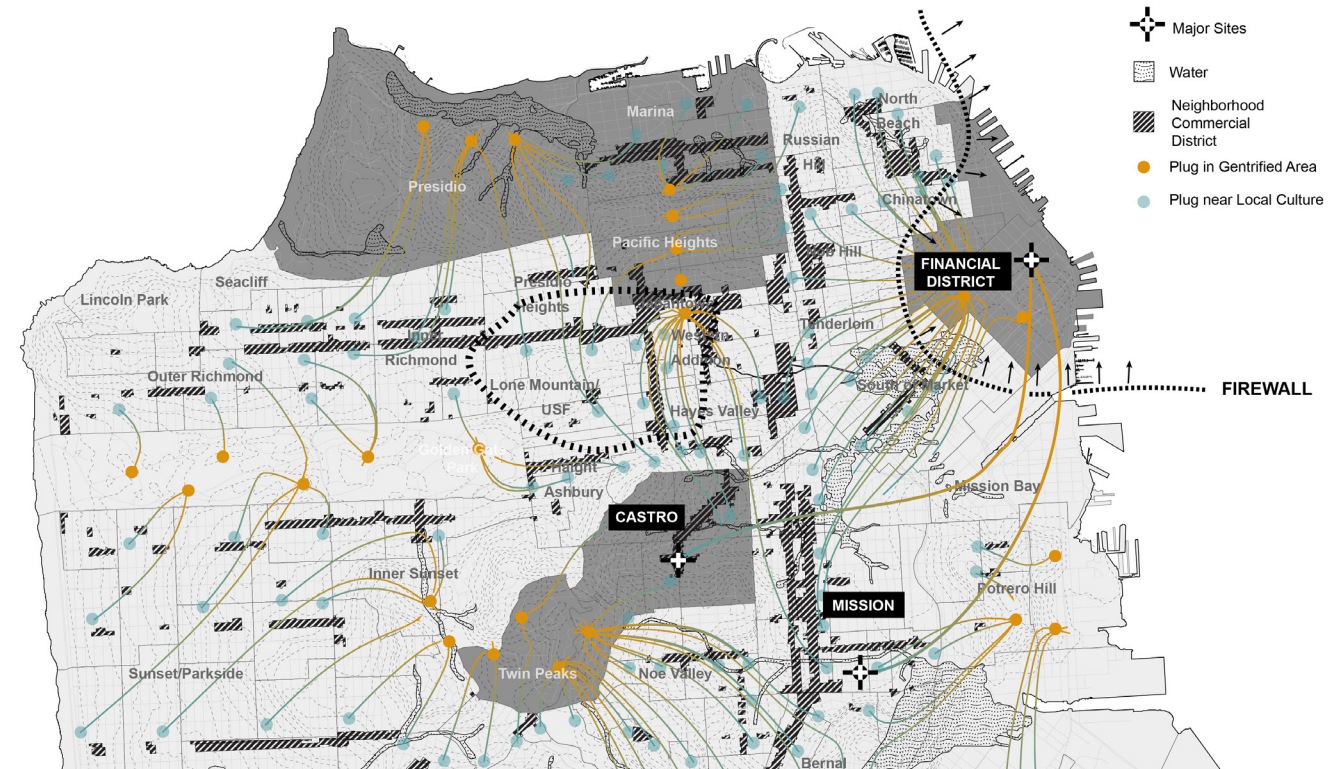


fig. 46 Virtual Connection Urban Map

In this urban map, we are installing plugs in pairs, so as we see, each blue plug that is adjacent to the neighborhood corridor is connected virtually with the orange plug that locates in a relatively gentrified area, aiming to encourage the virtual transmission of culture life. The firewall that surrounds the financial district creates a barrier to prevent the tech companies from intervening the local network systems.

PLUGS & FORMS

We first researched San Francisco's historical and contemporary cultures and geology and defined major spots we wanted to intervene in. From learning about these cultures, we developed programs to provide new opportunities for local communities to collaborate and express themselves freely. These opportunities include new modes of communication and perception, invented by combining technology and landscape in different ways. Testing these forms, we then physically modeled the structures in a series to explore how they change their programmatic purposes. Specifically, we invent plugs to blend various ground moves and virtual technologies. Their purpose is to alter and multiply the way

that one is able to perceive the ground and another body, thus generating new modes of communication and interaction, create reciprocal relationships between sites. Implanted as smaller units of space and extensions of the infrastructure we expose, the plugs of activity are connected to a larger system similar to those used in horticulture to catalyze large-scale growth. The weight, occupancy and activity happening on one site will result in changes of the physical space, temperature, or creating a virtual projection in the corresponding site. For example, we are creating an irrigation system from the daylighted streams to create a water figure of a person from another site.

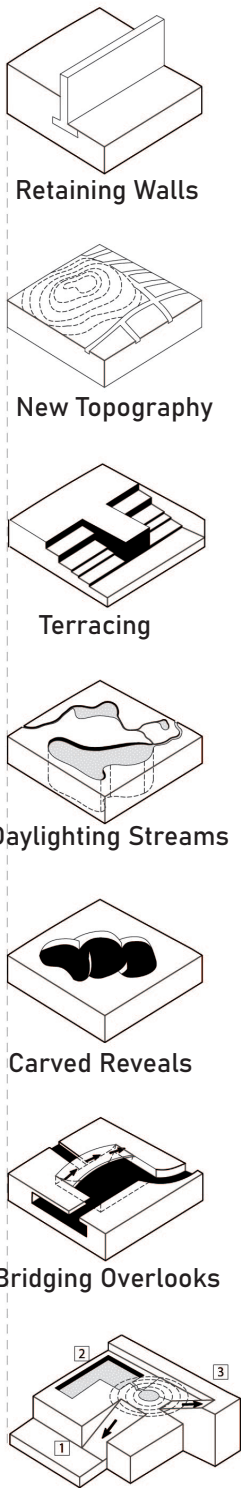


fig. 47
Ground Moves

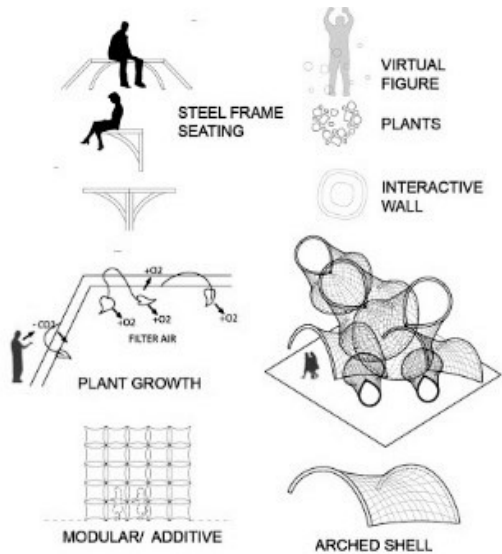


fig. 48
Flexible Forms translated into large and small scale structures, allowing for the construction process to adapt, creating areas of growth and change.

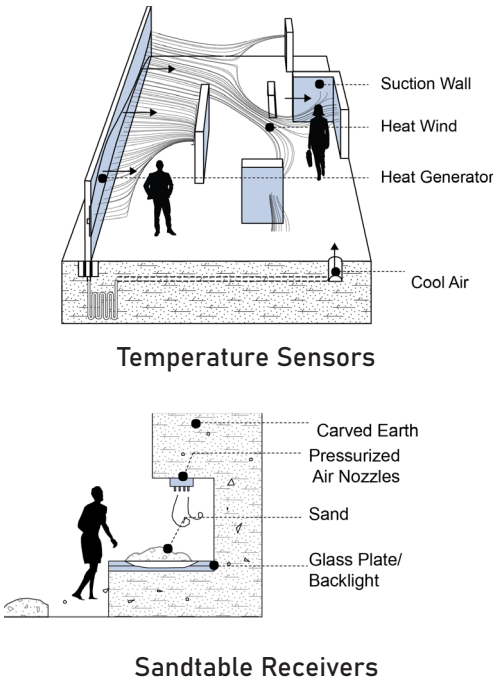
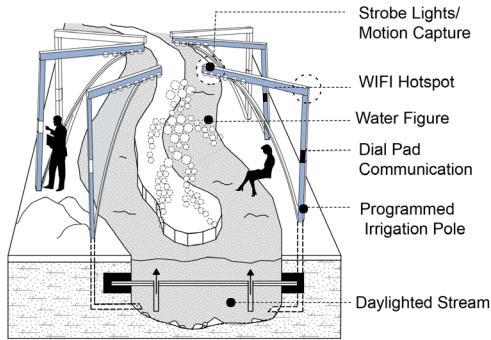
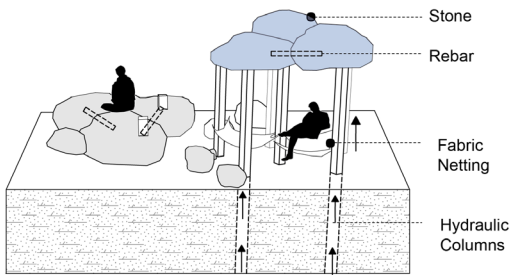


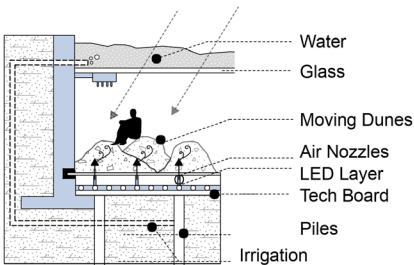
fig. 49 Plugs/ Artificial Landscapes



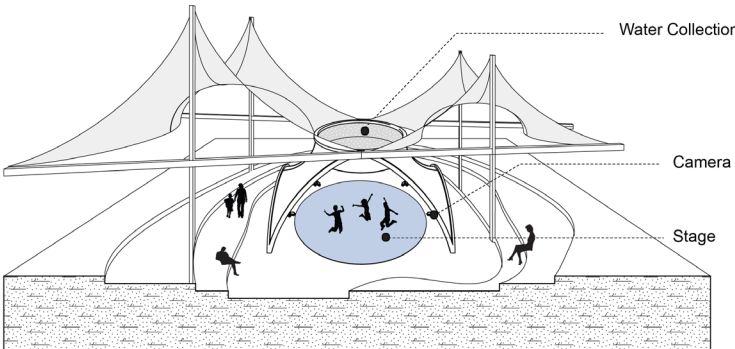
Digital Figure- Water & Light



Moving Landscapes- Meditation Pods



Moving Landscapes- Dunes



Sunken Stage

TECTONICS OF PLAY

As a modeling medium, we used fabric, wood sticks, and steel wire to create light tensile structures that are flexible and adaptable. This creates an informal, stage-like atmosphere to accommodate different radical performances during the days and seasons. The structures can be easily installed, aggregated, and rearranged by the local people, supporting a participatory democracy where people are able to engage in the construction of the public space according to their collective needs.

In addition, the fabric is able to stretch its span to hold more activity, while the wood sticks help to create an extensive framework. By using these two mediums, we emphasize how our public space is rhizomatic in its form to leak into different spaces of the city such as lots and alleys.

From these study models, we learned that there are tectonic moments that need to be set up to support the other flexible and expansive parts.

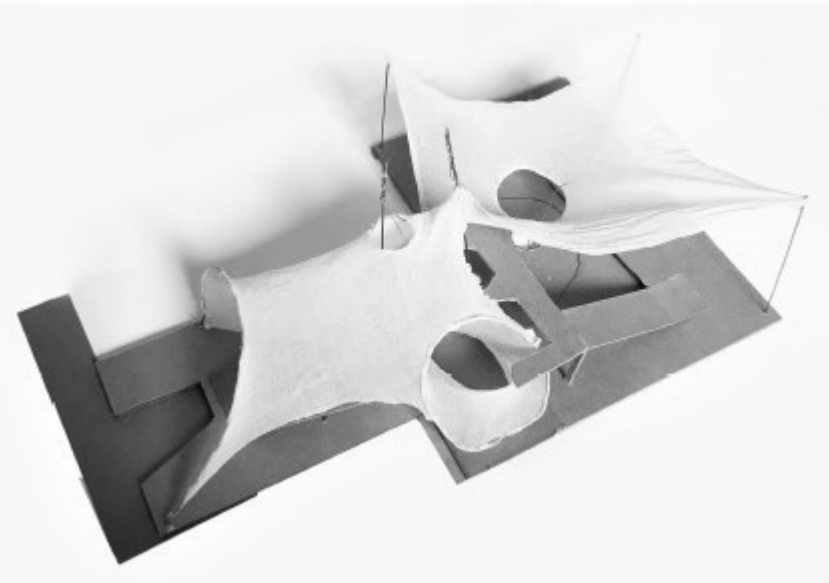


fig. 50-52 Flexible Structure Studies

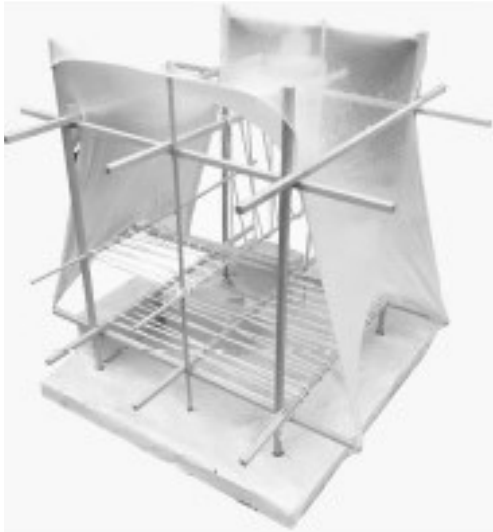
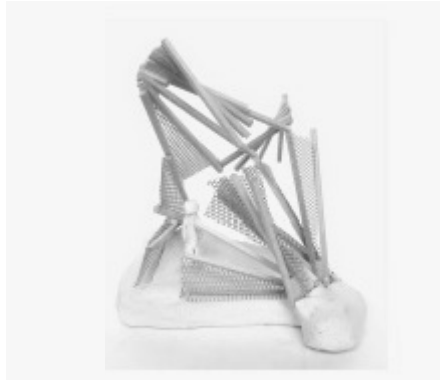
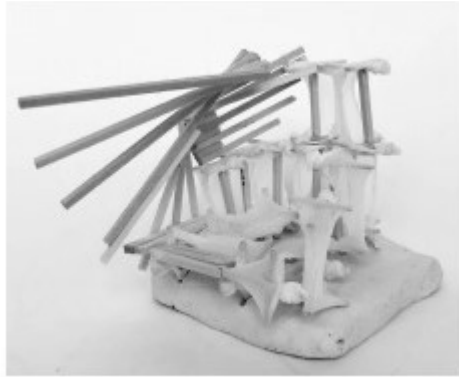
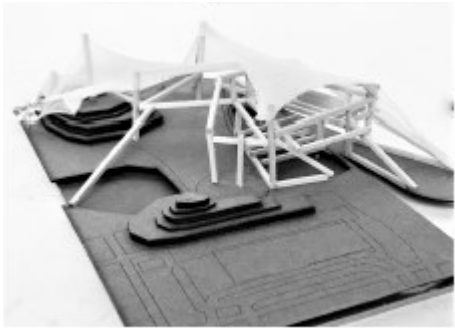
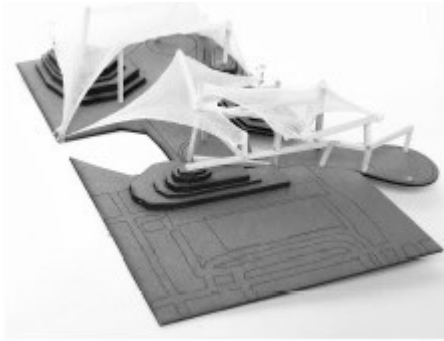
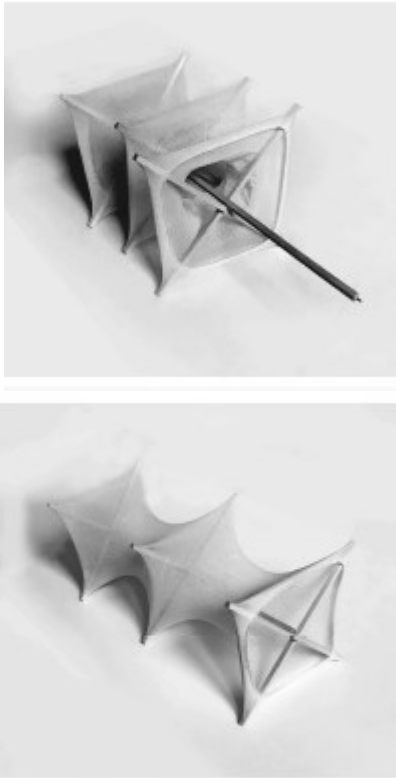


fig. 53-58 Flexible Structure Studies

TRANSBAY

From modeling, we translated these 3d structures into hand-sketched plans, sections, and diagrams to figure out how the programs throughout different sites can be situated. In the neighborhood plan, we originally adopted the

traditional figure-ground aesthetic. However, since we are representing an open street and plaza condition, we left the buildings in white to draw more attention to our public space than its context.

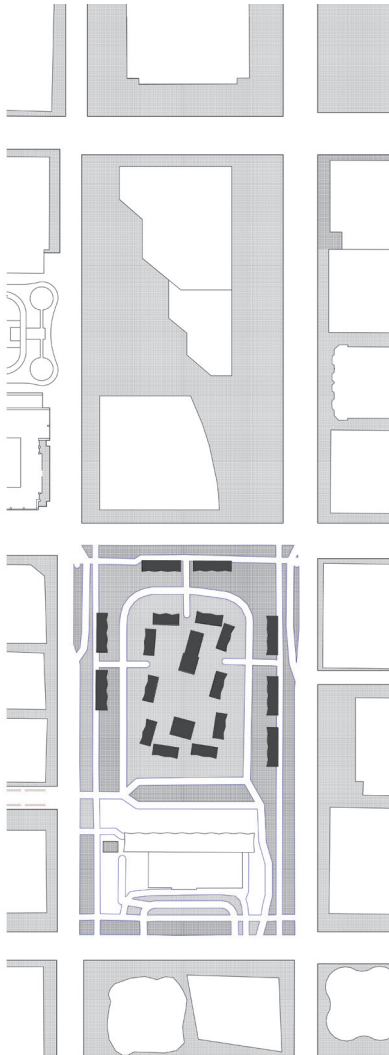
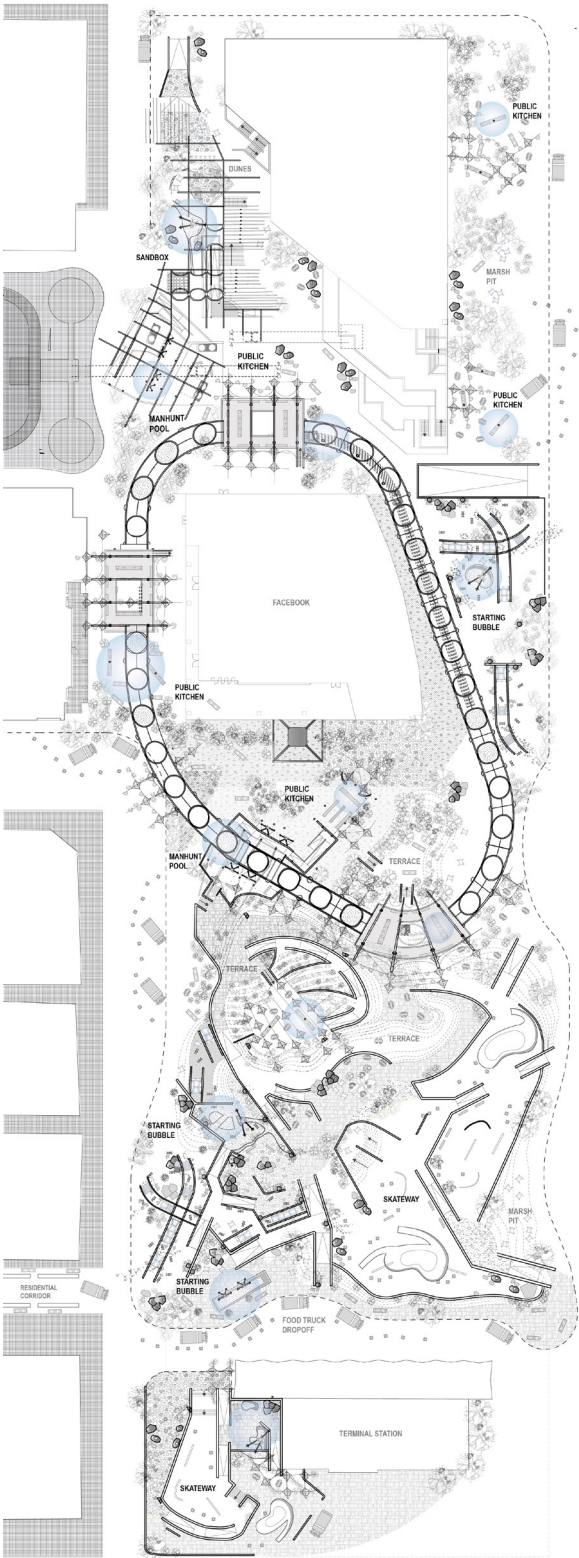
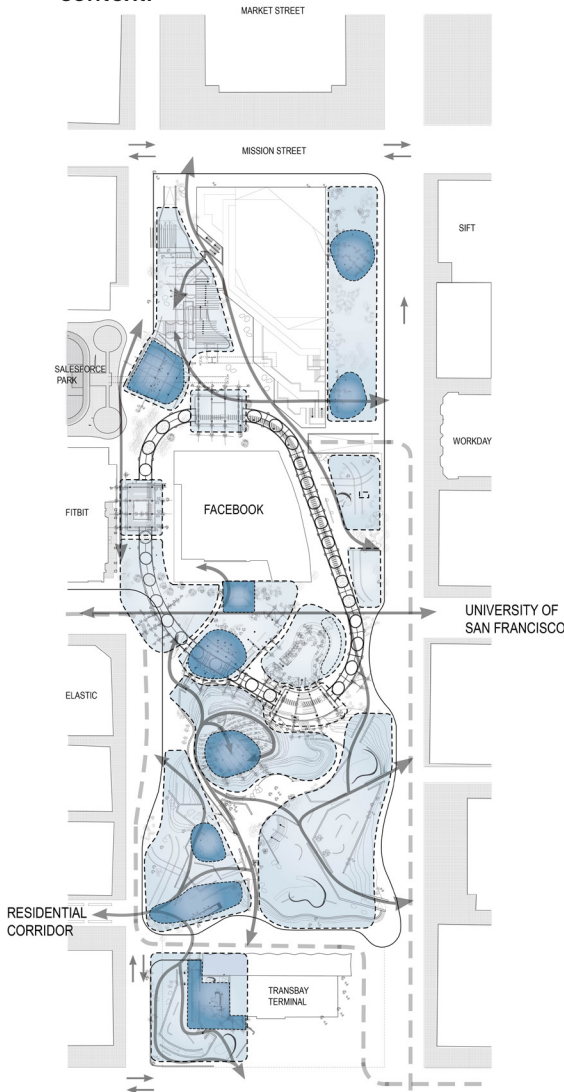


fig. 49 Transbay Before and After Intervention

In this plan series, you can see how Transbay has expanded from a single block and uses the public kitchens' revolving dining track as a **rhizomatic logic** to connect other programs that contain each other, in addition to new pedestrian paths that surround Facebook and other tech buildings, linking access to various moments on the street with our playscape.



Through conventional drawings, we also use gradients to represent the performance of materials in our structure. Specifically, the surface gradient visually bends the fabric that we use for semi-enclosed spaces while gradients in linework express a hierarchy from permanently installed to temporarily arranged structures. For example, the ground moves and technological elements are shown in a darker tone, versus the props which have a lighter hue.

fig. 50 Transbay Structural Plan



fig. 51- 52 Transbay Sections

These sections show the atmosphere of spaces activated over time as people use the Manhunt Pool connected to the dining track and terrace above, while below people occupy areas of the Public Kitchen and performance stages of the Sandbox located in the track's undercarriage.

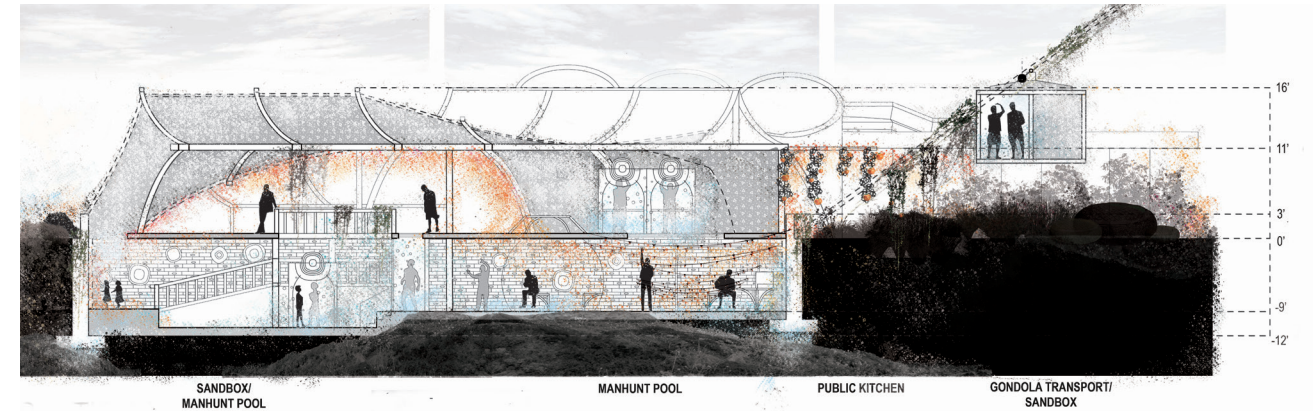
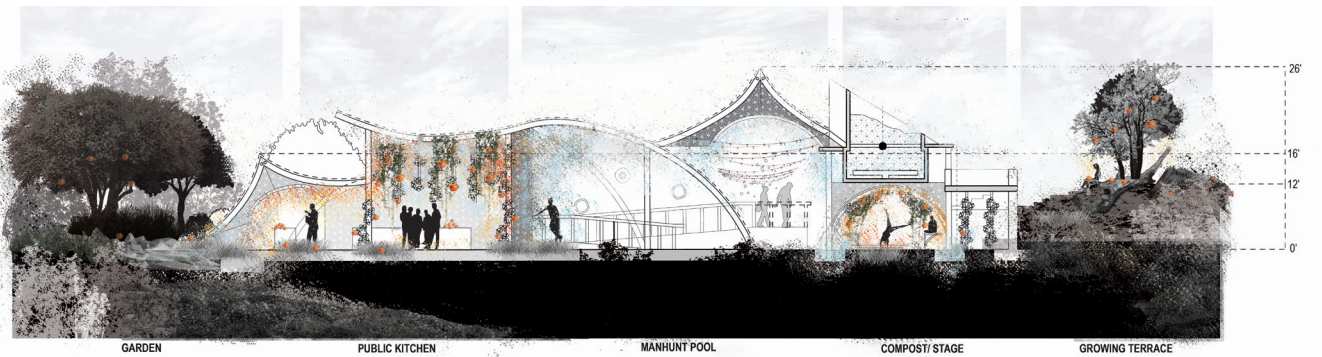


fig. 53 Transbay Section

Meanwhile joint spaces of the Manhunt Pool and Sandbox are combined along with the Public Kitchen's hanging gardens that expand from the framework of the dining track with attachable trellises used for growing food. Ramped circulation between different levels of ground allows for exploration the reveals we excavate and artificial topography we build upon the existing surface.

Like the collectivity created by a campfire, "social ordering is based on habitat rather than territory, one that is performative and must be represented through the ritual, rites, and ceremonies" as set out by the tribe (Lally 17). This emphasizes the importance of the relationship between humans and their environment.. It does not always have to be defined by a formal structure. It can blend interior and exterior, releasing the energy rather that storing it to become dynamic.

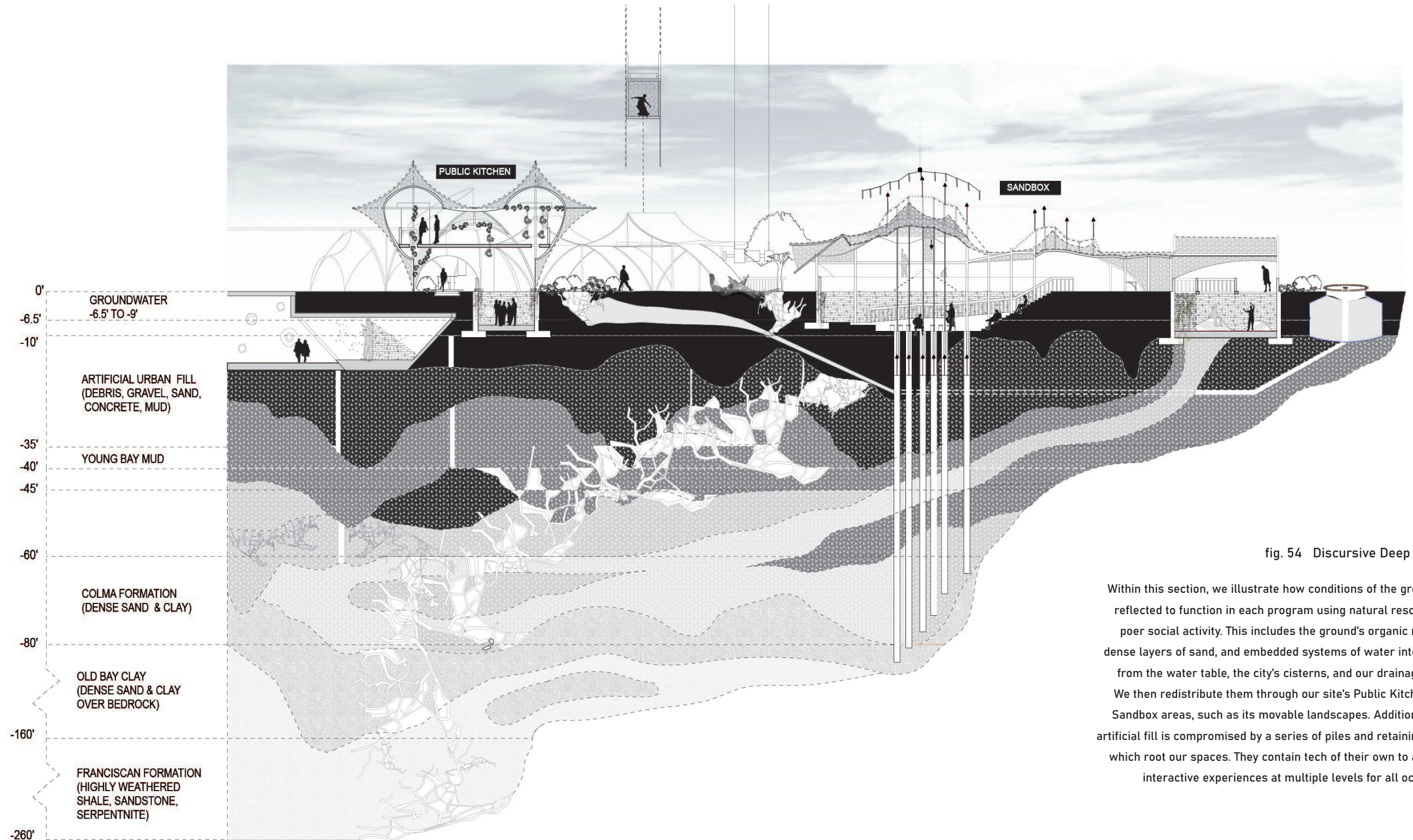


fig. 54 Discursive Deep Section

Within this section, we illustrate how conditions of the ground are reflected to function in each program using natural resources to poer social activity. This includes the ground's organic material, dense layers of sand, and embedded systems of water intercepted from the water table, the city's cisterns, and our drainage pools. We then redistribute them through our site's Public Kitchens and Sandbox areas, such as its movable landscapes. Additionally, the artificial fill is compromised by a series of piles and retaining walls, which root our spaces. They contain tech of their own to allow for interactive experiences at multiple levels for all occupants.

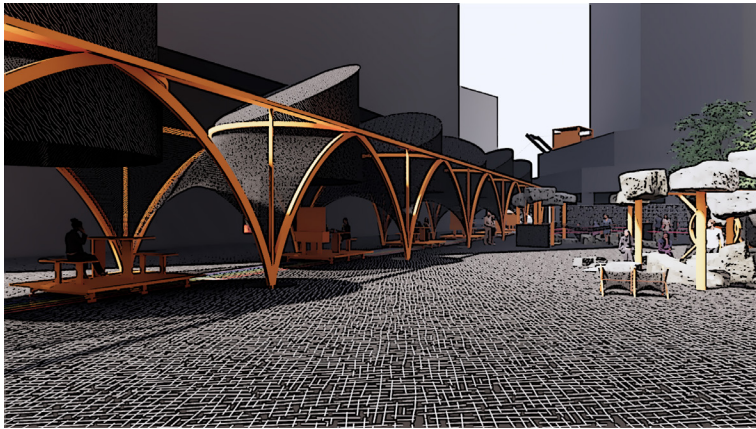


fig. 55
This is the dining track of the Public Kitchens that revolves around the Facebook building to connect people to other programs on the site as they dine. Basins above serve as water collection systems and compost areas for leftover food to supply for the future growth of produce. The structure also creates areas for performative stages of the Sandbox and areas of shade between garden spaces.



fig. 56
Moving landscapes connected to our structure's exposed framework are programmed to rise and fall for people to experience as meditative spaces, in which they can occupy through attachable hammocks and active seating to watch performances live.



fig. 57
In this area, we show a series of temperature walls, inspired to create microclimates indicated by the colored lines, which show air flow as it's generated to create invisible divisions in space.

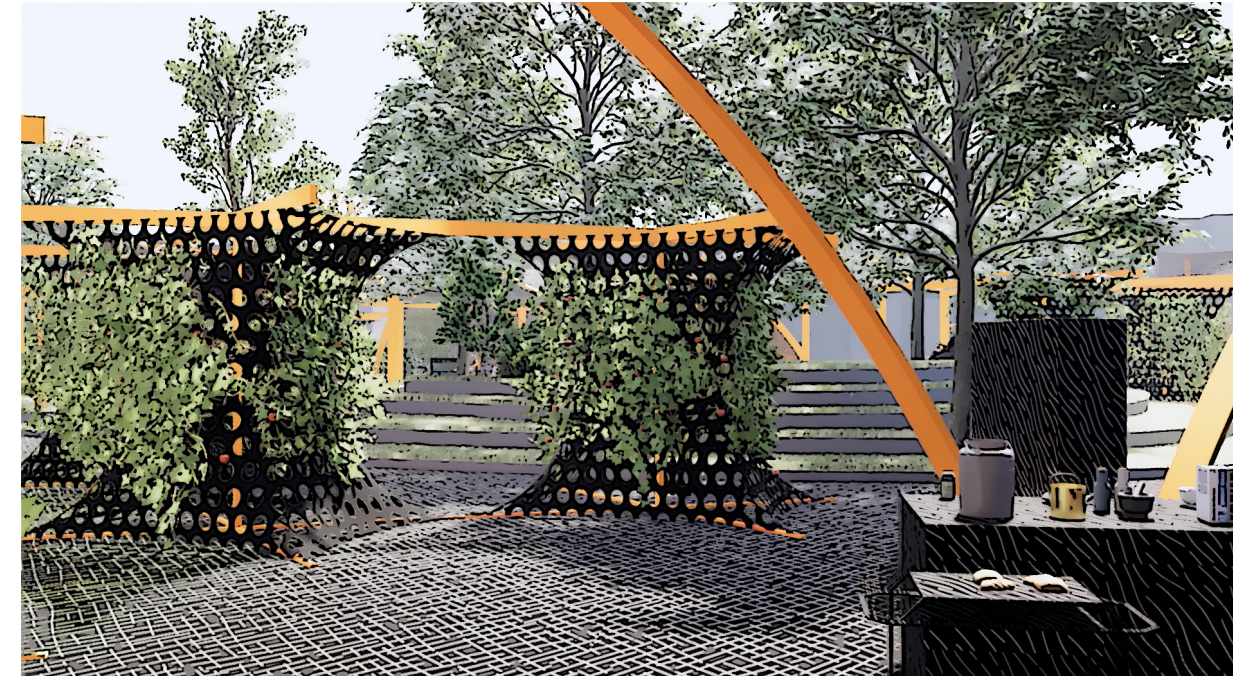


fig. 58
Along the Public Kitchen, we can see these DIY structures with wood and fabric where people can grow their food products.

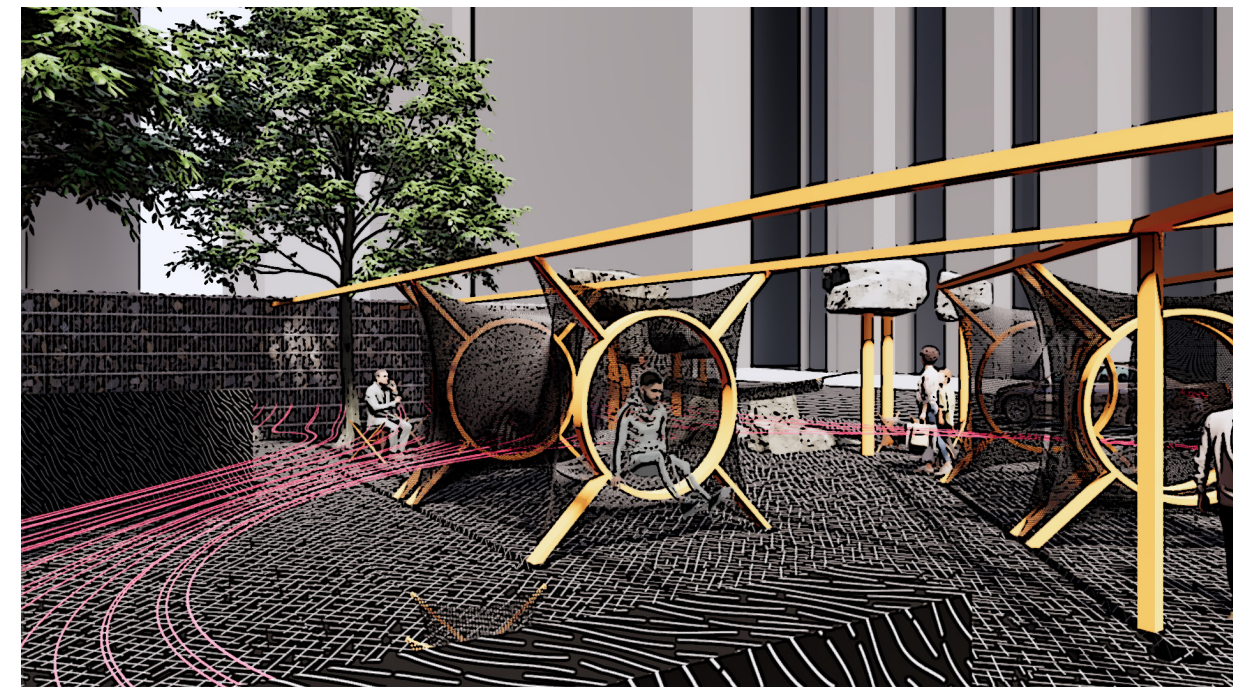


fig. 59
In this area, located in programs like the Starting Bubble and Sandbox, we provide permanent track system above, and grooves in the ground, so people can build their DIY sleeping pods as they desire, expanding contracting, rearranging forms to create areas of privacy.

GARFIELD SQUARE

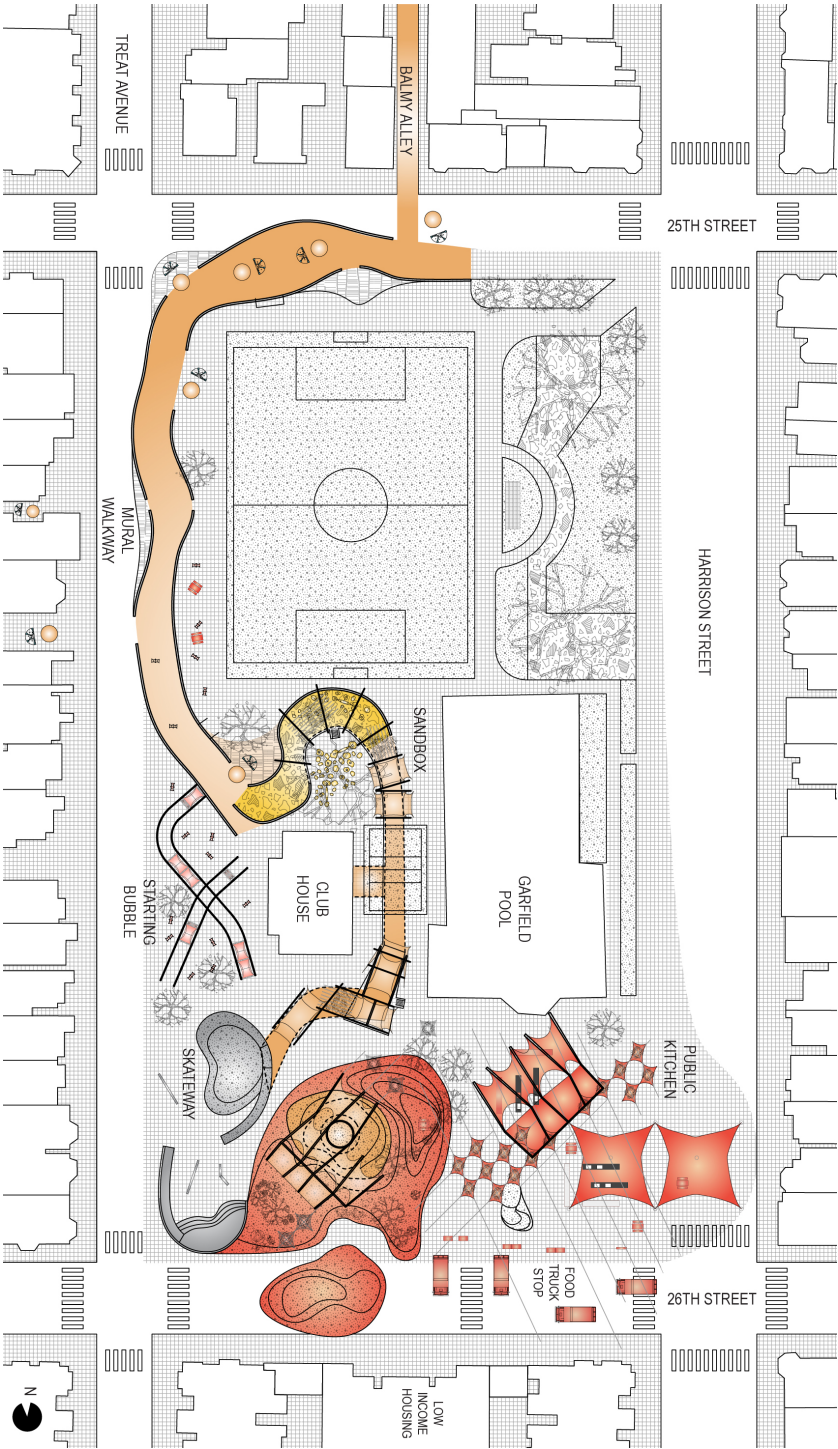


fig. 60

In Garfield Square, the new **graffiti alleyway** that we designed, as the extension of this existing balmy alley, wraps around one side of the football court. As it extends towards the south, it slowly ramps underground and connects to the basement of the clubhouse and eventually tunnels out from the skateway. Similar to Transbay's dining track to connect programs, the new alley becomes the physical rhizomatic logic to connect different spaces dispersed throughout the site. However, a virtual logic is also established to allow for communication between other playscapes in Transbay and Castro.

Physical Rhizome = Urban Alleyway

- PUBLIC KITCHEN
- MANHUNT POOL
- SANDBOX
- STARTING BUBBLE
- SKATEWAY

CASTRO

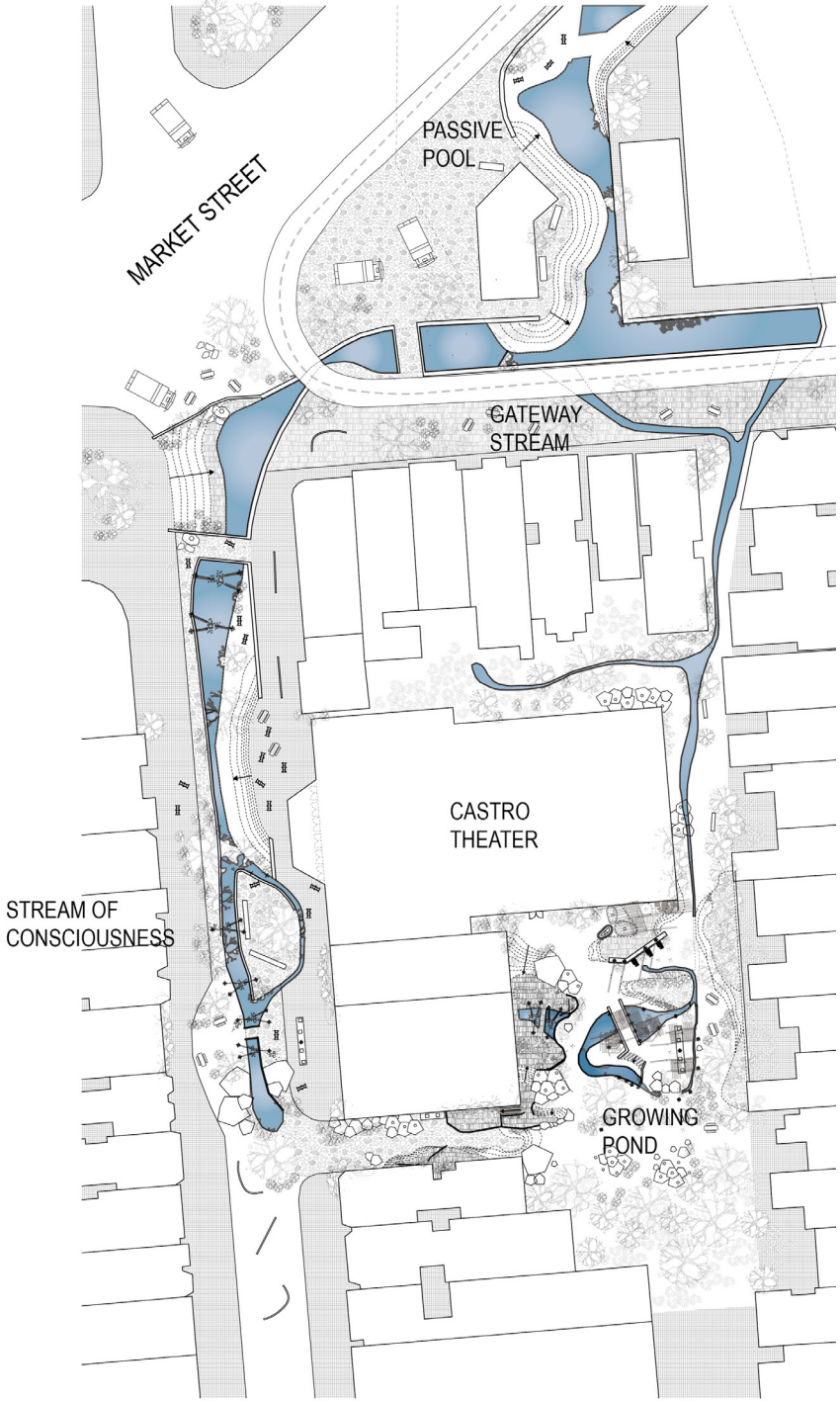


fig. 61

As for Castro, we daylight the hidden **stream**, Arroyo Dolores, as another logic to link spaces from Market Street and its trolley system into corridors such as Castro Street and interstitial yards to open access to Castro Theater's Parking Lot.

Physical Rhizome = Stream/Corridor

GARFIELD SQUARE

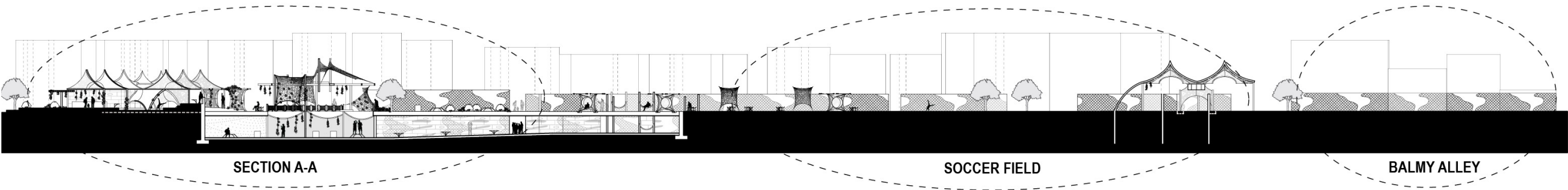


fig. 62

As we create connections between Balmy Alley in Garfield Square, the graffiti wall is carried over into our playscape to create a new public underground for artists and performers to interact.

Moments of activity also expose themselves as reveals within the ground while meeting areas of the Public Kitchen that look down into them, trailing off to the other side near the ManHunt Pool and Sunken Stage.

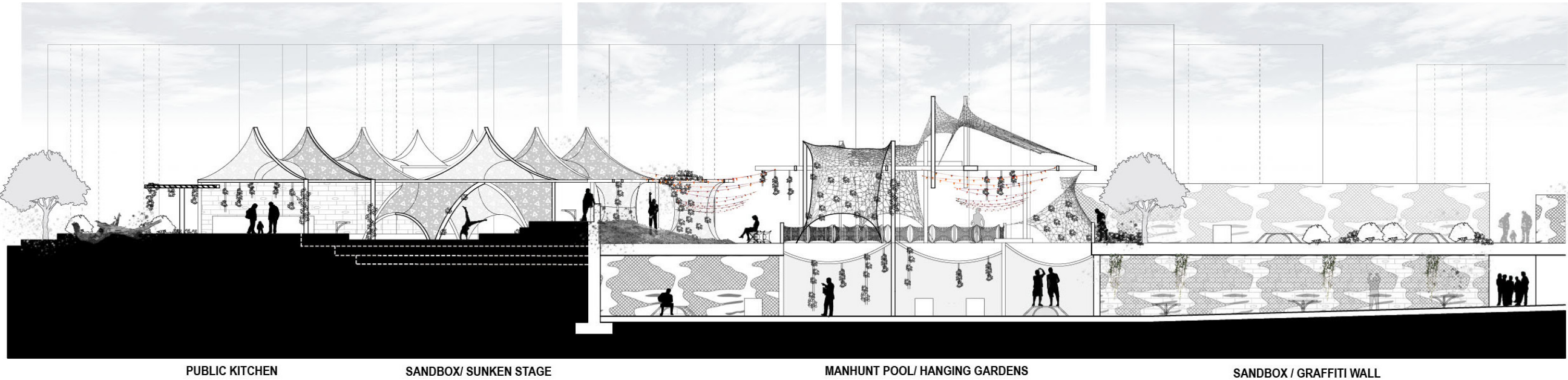


fig. 63

CASTRO



fig. 64

MORNING

In this map series, we show how our third playscape based in Castro changes its form and purpose over time, which is also applied to our other sites to express how people activate areas at different times of day, rearranging props and parts of permanently installed structures to supply their own stage. In this respect, the semi-enclosed spaces we create along the daylighted streams to shelter our programs can be allowed to expand with activity beyond their implanted locations, in case of future events between newcomers and people of the neighborhood near the Castro Theater.

- PUBLIC KITCHEN
- MANHUNT POOL
- SANDBOX
- STARTING BUBBLE
- SKATEWAY



fig. 65

NOON

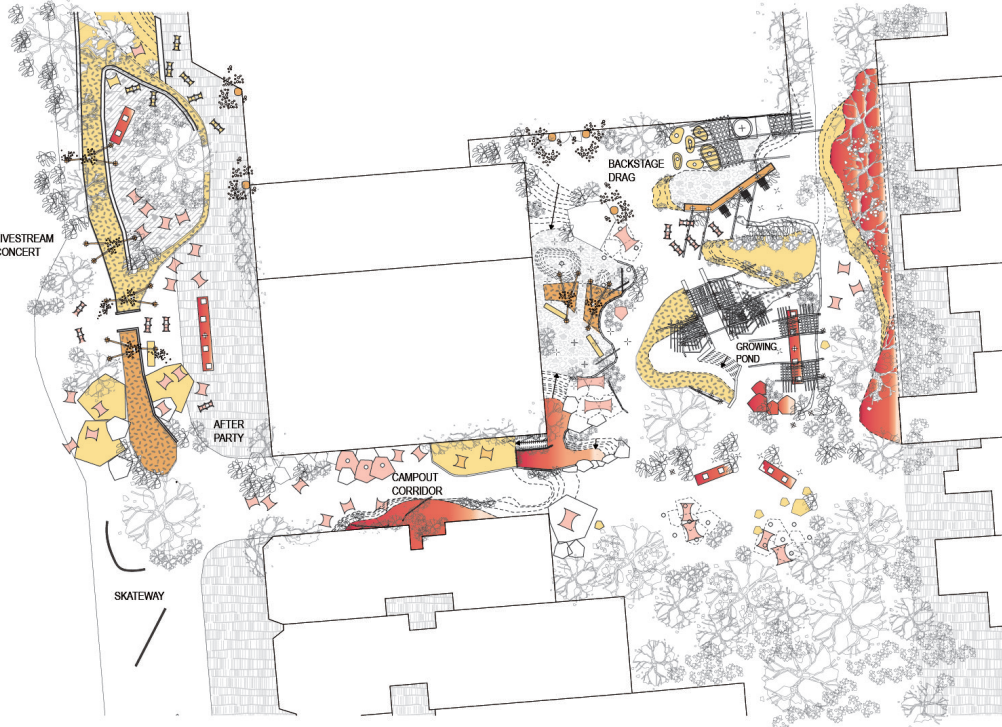


fig. 66

NIGHT

"Play is meant to embrace a wide variety of activities which are spontaneous, irrational or risky, and which are often unanticipated by designers, managers, and other users"

(Stevens 1-3).

- PUBLIC KITCHEN
- MANHUNT POOL
- SANDBOX
- STARTING BUBBLE
- SKATEWAY

GARFIELD SQUARE

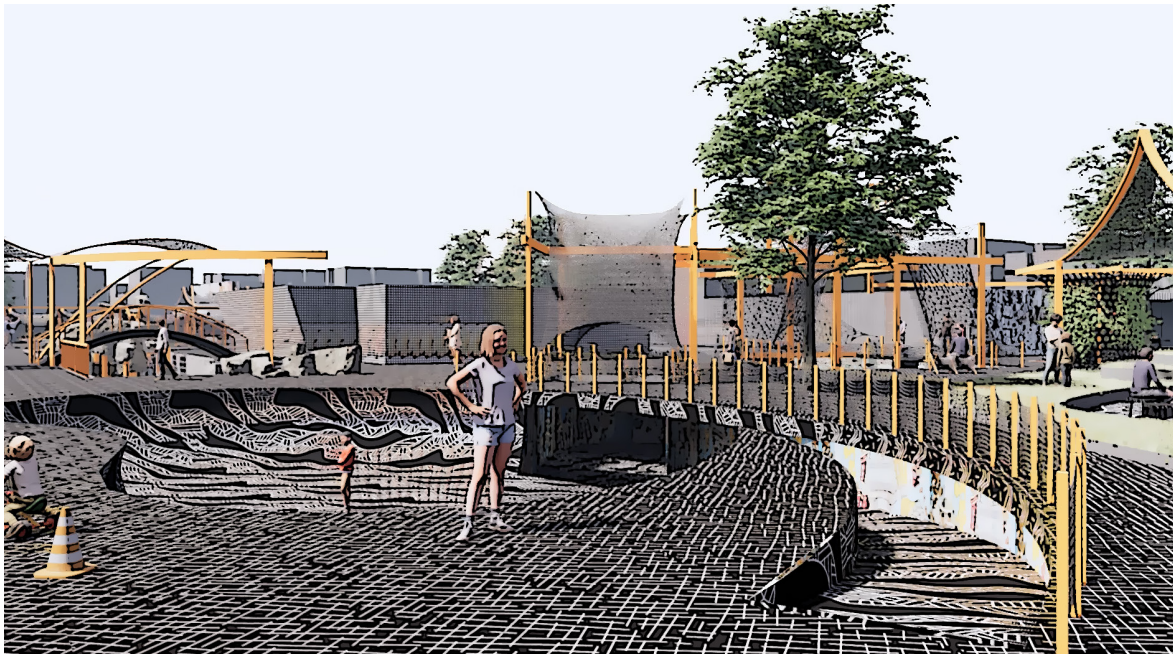


fig. 67
This is the kidney pool for skaters, which has a path that directly link to the graffiti alley underground. And these are the carved out moments where people can look down into the Graffiti Alley.

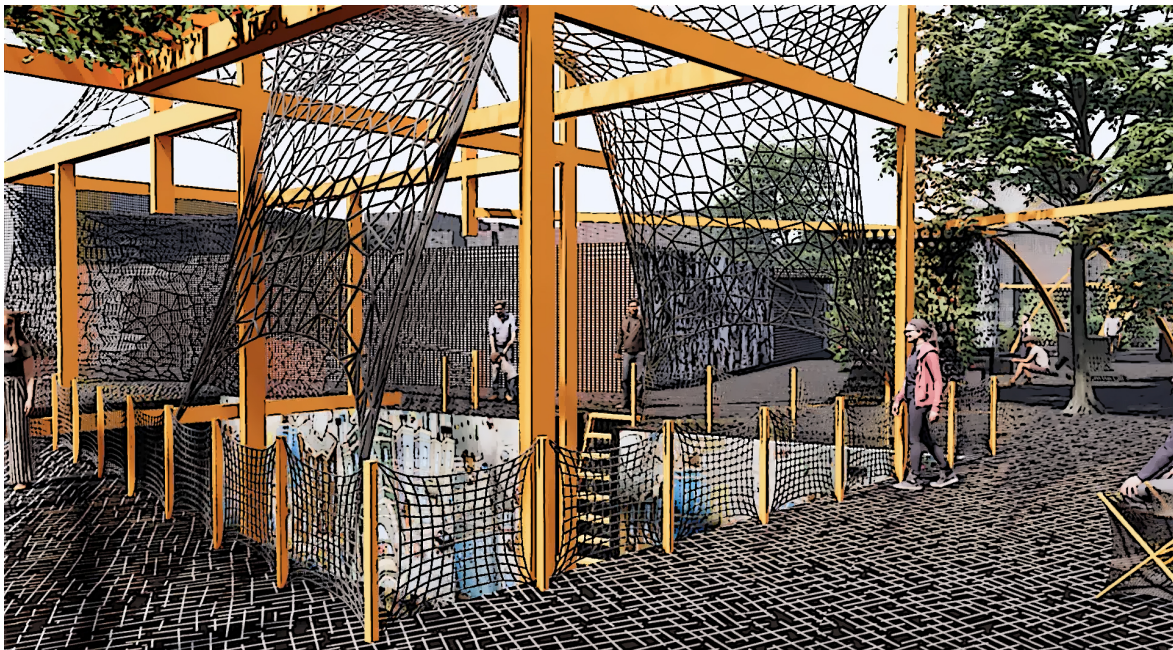


fig. 68 Momentary Reveals of Graffiti Alley from areas of the Public Kitchen's Gardens

CASTRO



fig. 69
there are multiple programs, such as the sandbox and the public kitchen alongside the stream. From the street level, People can go down the terrace and interact with the water, they can also



fig. 70
Exposed frameworks connected to the city's infrastructure systems of water, programmed by local WIFI to generate water figures of the Manhunt Pool

GARFIELD SQUARE

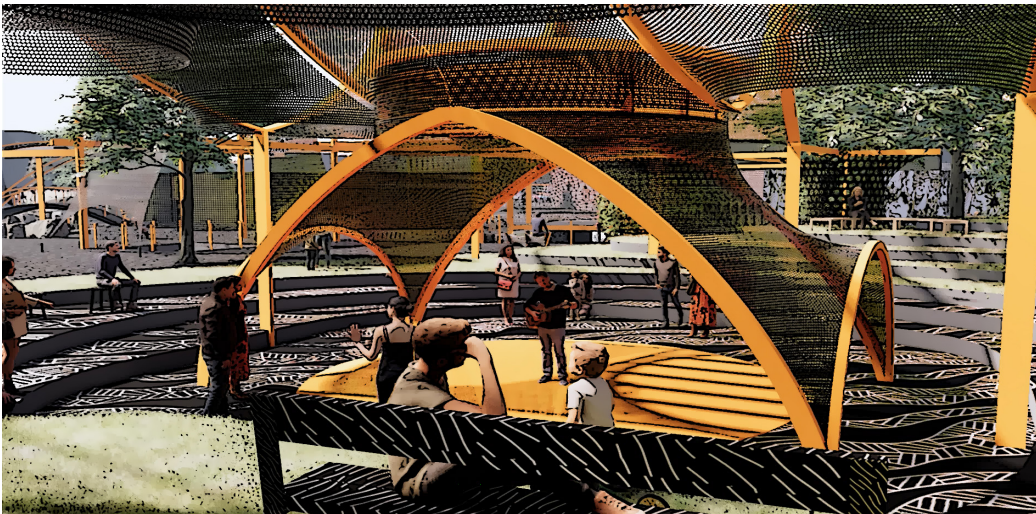


fig. 71

This is the staging area which is embedded within the terraforming garden, the performance of the artists will be recorded and live-streamed in another site.

Then we input the sketches in the computer and digitally overlaid them with linework to refine and augment different portions of our playscape simultaneously. This constant editing process between mediums of representation helped us as we adapted our final program, circulation, and form, which required us to jump between scales.

Towards the final phase of our project, we concentrated on how to represent our space's experiential and atmospheric qualities. Through

Photoshop, we envision how our spaces interact with additional context including vegetation and existing elements of the site. We also use video animation to test out interactive structures in more depth, exploring how time affects the way spaces are used and change. Using gradients of color to express the architectural form, we establish permanent installation in bright orange, and temporal structures in a lighter saturation, which are calibrated and constructed by the occupants themselves.

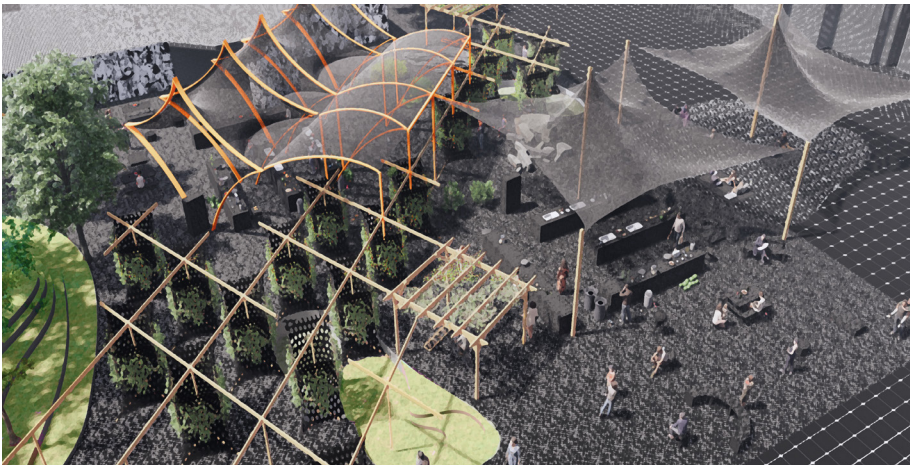


fig. 72
Permanent and temporal semi-enclosed structures

CASTRO



fig. 73

Castro Theater instantly becomes the backstage for drag scene performers and artists as they can be watched from the Public Kitchen's Growing Pond and surrounding programs, which can be further accessed from both west and north nature corridors.

We then layer on cartoon effects and hatchwork to activate the fun and lively nature of our project, which we present in different scenes of our artificial landscapes. Overall, we use the role of perspective to capture the playscape in action as activities unfold around it, allowing for inclusive and participatory democracy to exist and drive the space's functions. As a future public space, we provide permanently installed, modular frameworks to base our major programs. However,

the flexibility of our exposed structures' materiality and attachable joints in its form catalyze new activity to occur, allowing for public space to spread beyond the boundary. Similar to Halprin, we believe that it is important for the human scale to be recognized, performing in tandem with the spaces they occupy. Thus, the result of the design and architecture is meant to instill a spirit of ongoing provisionality and creativity, redefining public space as the embodiment of the



fig. 74

Audiences can then begin to intermingle as they are guided out corridors we create as the networked stream takes on different forms for pedestrian activity at the street level near Market Street's trolley line in the foreground, and back into Castro Street's neighborhood of night clubs and restaurants in the background.

B I B L I O G R A P H Y

G L O S S A R Y

Affective Learning

An experimental process during which one plays with different methods of making, then evaluates the outcomes by how one perceives them.

Boundary

Boundaries are redefined areas of space used to confine or dictate where activities occur. Rigid boundaries are more restrictive and definite than flexible boundaries which allow for leakages and diffusion of fields in space such as program, circulation, and occupancy. They can also be suggested by materiality and interpreted by the individual conducting his/her own movement and experience through a space.

Collectivity

Gathering of people, or communities to participate in social activity

Communal/Communication

Communal life is when people share their local environments with others and communicate through collaborative activities. Communication in our spaces are mainly driven by influences of material, sensory, and virtual forms.

Desirable

The desirable is used to associate with attitudes and perceptions (human, animal, and vegetal) that consider conditions as attractive, advantageous, and efficient to the user. It counters the undesirable in favor of moments and spaces that are often defined, controlled, comfortable, and traditional, which can produce monotony, or moments of limitation in a city's urban fabric.

Ground

The ground is recognized as territories of space in which activities and processes can take place. It does not always refer to spaces we find tangible, visible, or definite. For example, it does not always refer to spaces at grade. It acts as a container of history, geology, habitat, and organic/inorganic processes, generating relationships between the biotic and abiotic world subnatural, the invasive, and the unpredictable.

Homogeneity

Lacks of diversity in culture and social status so that everyone behaves in a similar manner

Informative Learning

An intake process during which one is taught what to do and how to do

Invasive

Invasiveness is associated with behaviors or beings that are foreign and newly introduced, which are responsible for disrupting original orders of space and life. It is characterized by its resiliency and ability to penetrate space and spread its bounds quickly such as rhizomatic species. In an urban context, the invasive form is our public space, which acts as a counter fabric to the grid, and spaces homogenized by a capitalistic system.

Materiality

Materiality can suggest areas of boundary, which may be used to dictate occupant behavior and performance. For example, in public space, it is used to express ideals of predictability as a means of control, tangibility as a means of visual and physical accessibility, and comfort for moments of safety. Together these create conditions that are more desirable to the individual. Undesirable materialities within our environment are often ignored and subdued due to their characteristics that are uncontrollable, invasive, unpleasant and embedded.

Microclimate

A microclimate consists of a local set of atmospheric conditions that can change from one area to the next and expresses differences from the surrounding area it's in. It is associated with topographical change and manipulation of the environment through technology to heighten effects of moisture, wind, air pressure, and other weather to be experienced by the individual.

Monotony

Within this thesis, monotony is used to describe public spaces that embrace desirable conditions to convey a more predictable public appearance, which can result in consolidated, clumped and linear spaces. It is associated with spaces that are repititious, regular, and lacking in variety.

Multiplicity

Multiplicity maintains individuality while it encourages disparate identities to together drive the collectivity. Virtual technology can instill multiplicity into a physical space by creating conceptual relationships with other sites and providing various perceptions of a body. One physical space will send its data such as occupants' motions and voices to another site, presenting itself as a virtual figure or resulting in temperature or spatial changes. The public space is thus not singular. It engages with the cultures outside the site's original space both virtually and physically.

Playscape

A playscape is an environment invented to encourage interaction and enjoyment for those who enter it, usually through features of landscape, props, and situated experiences. It is meant to emphasize the individual as people react and engage with each space differently. Perceptions of the space itself are driven by active performance, not external influences of power.

Privatization

For physical public space, I use the term privatizatiob to address the ownership issue. Many public spaces in the U.S. are owned by private organizations, controlling the activity of public space. For virtual public space, the term privatization implies the tendency for people to stay within their surroundings and same goes fot the accessibility to information, in which personalized search engines gear one's scope of knowledge towards personal interests.

Rhizome

A rhizome is a portion of a plant root that continuously grows itself horizontally underground. Architecturally, it creates an underground network that links spaces within different districts of the city through a series of plugs that evolves its forms and purposes along with the overall structure of the playscape. Like an element of landscape, a plug is implanted as a smaller unit of space that eventually becomes part of a larger system as activities provided to occupants on the street can be brought inside our new space through direct projections on site.

Situate

When situating public space, it is important to create activities that aim to humanize experience through localized relationships rather than converting people into commodities of spectacle culture. Within these spaces, situations don't just target the physical context of the site, but they focus more on how to activate the figure within it, allowing for identities and cultures to clash. This occurs through modes of play within our playscape.

Subnatural

Subnatural refers to “forms of nature deemed primitive (mud and darkness), filthy (smoke, dust, and exhaust), fearsome (gas or debris), or uncontrollable (weeds, insects, and pigeons)” (Gissen 22). They are treated as secondary forms of nature that are often embedded, concealed, ignored, threatening, and subdued by inhabitants who perceive them as undesirable. As coexisting elements within nature, these forms are represented by both organic and inorganic features, materialities, and processes. Examples that express these conditions can be found in decomposed matter (plants, animals, humans), buried layers of geologic history, topography, and areas of vegetation.

Undesirable

Undesirable is used to associate with objects, concepts, and conditions that are unwanted because they are unpleasant and non-traditional. They are linked with attitudes against moments that are undefined, uneven, and uncontrollable. Within this thesis, the undesirable is further investigated with studies on the subnatural, the invasive, and the unpredictable.

Virtuality

The possibilities to transform the reality, “The flux of real duration, vibration, contractions, and dilations, the multiplicity of the real,” as put by Elizabeth Grosz.

Virtual Public Space

Internet and social media are virtual public spaces that exist only in one's mental space, detached from physical costs and consequences. These immaterial space, similar to physical public spaces, has their own rules that tune people's behavior.

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