



Benjamin Smithers

Architecture work sample

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| Introduction

I graduated my M.Arch with Distinction at the Pratt Institute GAUD after a successful earlier career in consulting.

This work sample represents my skills and interests in architecture and my developing architectural inquiry. My ambition is to explore the capacity of architecture to make us notice and be affected by the physical world around us, and to investigate the discipline as a constantly-evolving dialogue between people, ideas and the spaces we occupy.

| Curriculum Vitae

| Experience

- Architecture Intern | **Young & Ayata**, *New York*
(June-August 2020)
- Architecture Intern | **Studio Libeskind**, *New York*
(June-August 2019)
- Editor and writer | **Tarp, Pratt GAUD magazine**
(September 2018 - May 2020))

| Teaching

- Teaching Fellow | **Thom Mayne Young Architects**
(February 2021 onwards)
- Teaching Assistant, Architecture | **Pratt Institute Young Scholars Program** (September 2020 onwards)
- Teaching Assistant, Architecture | **Pratt Institute Design Initiative for Community Empowerment**, Architecture
(September 2019 - May 2020)

| Education, Honors, Awards

- M.Arch Distinction | *The Pratt Institute*, Brooklyn (GPA 3.95)
(2018-2021)
- Awarded the American Institute of Architects Henry Adams Medal 2021
- Awarded the Pratt GAUD Climate Crises Prize for *We are Nature* | *Flying Meadow for an Apiary* (May 2021)
- Awarded the Pratt GAUD Architecture of the Post Anthropocene Prize for *Awaiting the Next Violent Refuse* (May 2021)
- Shortlisted, *BeeBreeders* ‘Iceland Cave Tower’ international design competition (March 2021)
- Finalist, *NonArchitecture* ‘Reviving Mines’ international design competition (November 2020)
- Nominated by The Pratt Institute GAUD Dean David Erdman for the Center for Architecture Design Scholarship (March 2020)

Semester 3 studio project selected by GAUD Dean David Erdman for the Pratt Center for Sustainable Design Strategies’ Green Week 2020

Selected in every semester by faculty and fellow students to represent the studio in Pratt GAUD ‘critic-at-large’ events, including for Thom Mayne, Mack Scogin and Merrill Elam, and Neil Denari | *The Pratt Institute GAUD*

First prize for best first semester M.Arch portfolio
| *The Pratt Institute GAUD* (December 2018)

| Other Professional Experience

- Founder and Director** | *RDF Economic Consulting*
Geneva, Switzerland (2016-2018)
- Senior Managing Consultant** | *ICF International*,
London, UK 2015-2016
- Senior Economist** | *UK Government Economic Service*,
London, UK 2010-2013
- Assistant Manager** | *Deloitte Economic Consulting*,
London, UK 2008-2010
- Economist** | *UK Government Economic Service*,
London, UK 2006-2008

| Software

Rhino, Grasshopper, Keyshot, Vray, RhinoCam2018, Adobe Photoshop, Illustrator, InDesign, Lightroom, AutoCAD, Autodesk Revit, Maya, Recap Substance Painter, ZBrush, Slicerforfusion360
All MS Office applications, advanced Excel modelling

| Other Education

M.A. (Hons) Economics, 2002-2006,
The University of Edinburgh, UK

| Languages

English - native
French - DELF B2 (*professional working proficiency*)

| References

- Neil Denari**
Principle, Neil M Denairi Architects, Inc.
Professor, UCLA Architecture and Urban Design
- Kutan Ayata**
Partner, Young & Ayata
Associate Professor, Vice Chair, UCLA Architecture and Urban Design
- Ferda Kolatan**
Partner, SU11 Architecture
Associate Professor of Practice at the University of Pennsylvania

Contact on request

| cave. light. house

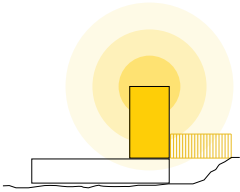
Shortlisted | BeeBreeders Iceland Cave Tower competition

With KoFong Hsia



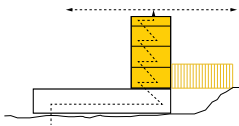
A beacon

In response to the competition brief asking for designs visible from afar, Cave. light. house. acts as a beacon and a landmark, unmistakably denoting the location of the Grjótagjá caves. Its orange color references Icelandic lighthouses, ensuring its visibility in both summer and winter.



Far sighted

The tower acts as a viewing platform, allowing visitors to climb up to a height from which they can survey the crevasses and its surroundings. This affords a view of the Grjótagjá caves area and of Mývatn beyond.

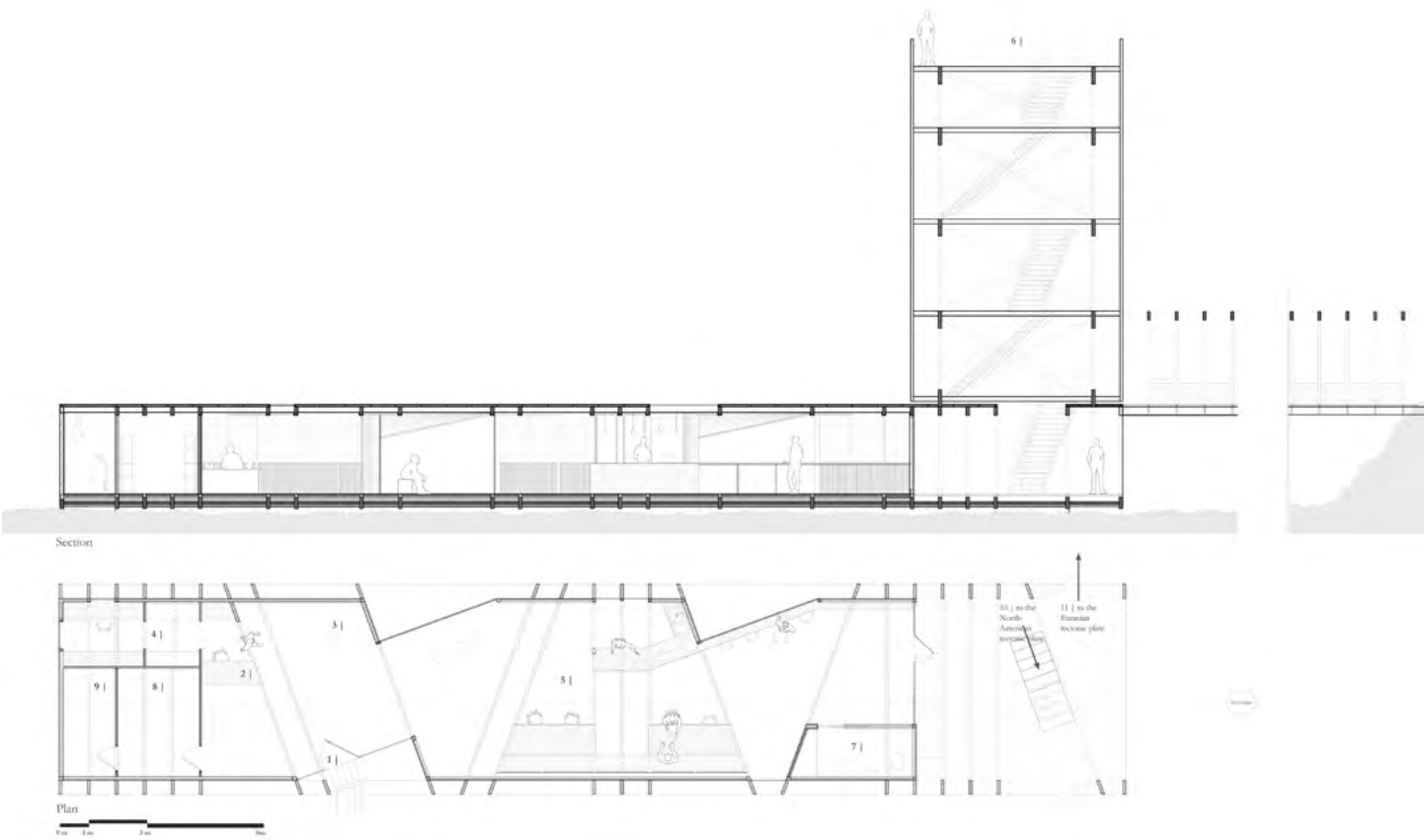


Two continents

Here the Eurasian and North American tectonic plates pull apart. Cave. light. house. comprises two overlapping parts, evoking the tectonic flux enduring beneath the surface. The tower leads to a bridge over the divide, taking visitors from one continent to another.



- cave.light.house
- 1 | Entrance
 - 2 | Kiosk
 - 3 | Information
 - 4 | Office
 - 5 | Cafe / waiting area
 - 6 | Viewing platform
 - 7 | WC
 - 8 | Storage
 - 9 | Mechanical (heat pump, hot water)
 - 10 | to the North American tectonic plate
 - 11 | to the Eurasian tectonic plate



| Fortnight
Institute
Contemporary Art
Gallery

21 East Third Street, New York,
NY

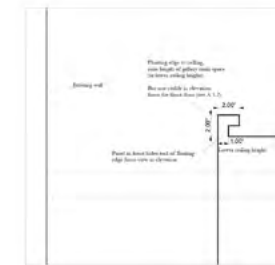
Renovation | Completed April '21

Fortnight Institute commissioned me to design the gallery space for at its new site in the East Village location on Manhattan. They requested gallery space to expand and enhance their viewing opportunities.

In close consultation with partners Jane and Fabiola, I discerned the appetite for an additional intermediate space, which could be used in various ways according to the occasion. It can operate as a separate gallery for private viewing, while dividing the office space from the main gallery, but still at the same time offering a connected feeling those within, and allowing some natural light to reach the office space behind.

Photographs by Jason Mandella





A1.5 detail section of gallery corner at change of ceiling height

| **We are Nature**

| Flying Meadow for an Apiary

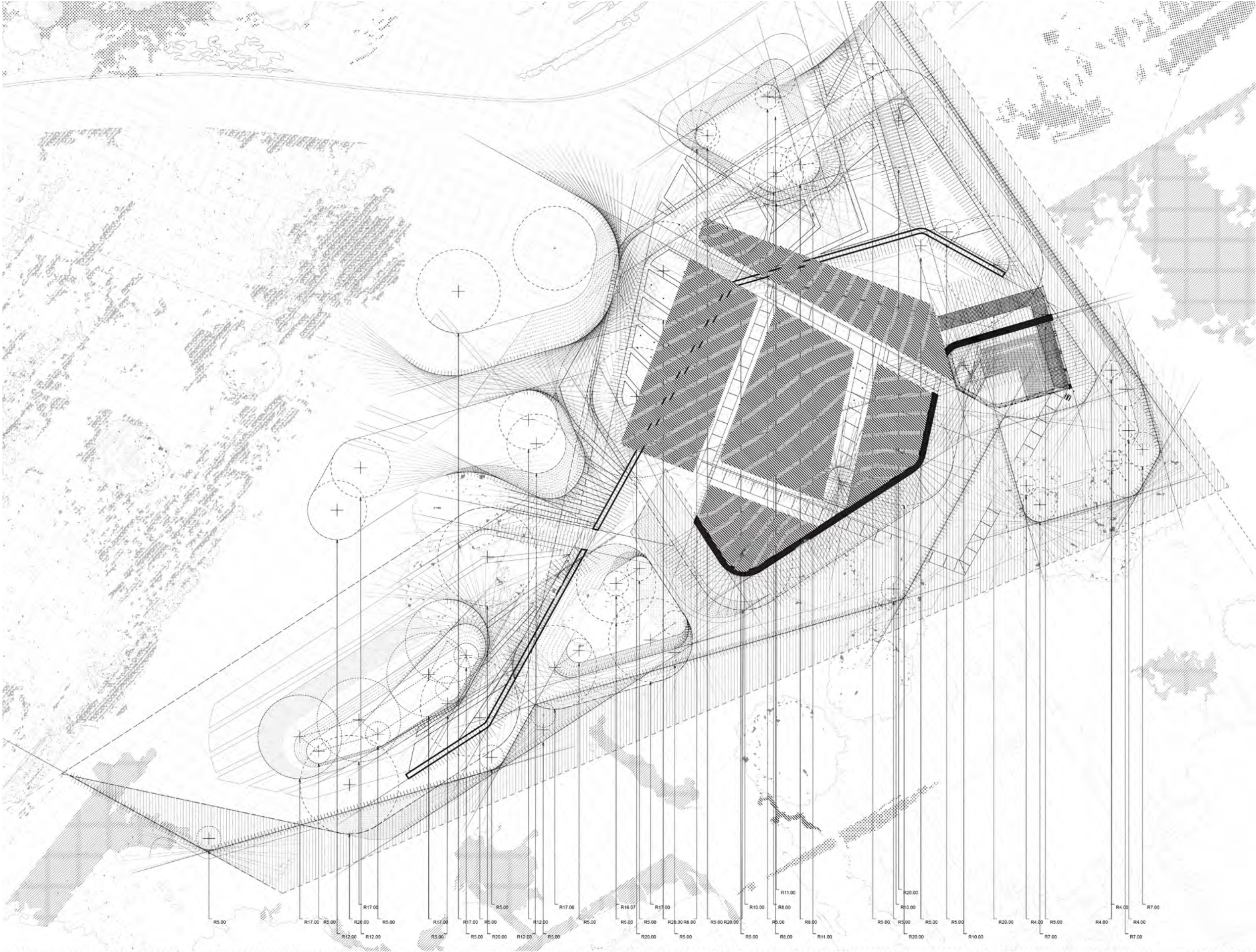
M.Arch studio 06 | Studio of
Experiments with professors Neil
Denari and Graysen Maxwell
Babbitt

Today, no part of the earth is remains untouched by the activities of human kind. We can no longer maintain the notion that we are separate from nature, neither as enchanted onlookers absent from participation, nor see nature as a resource that we can exploit without consequence to our separate human world.



The plan is organized around the concept of oscillating alignments. Three grids layer onto the site; a digging layer aligning to the Brooklyn Street grid and the Atlantic towards which it evacuates floodwaters; a flying layer aligned with the Manhattan street grid, towards which its confrontation with the city is oriented; and a mediating layer in between, which aligns to Liberty Island and the parkland which the project engages as its interface with the public.

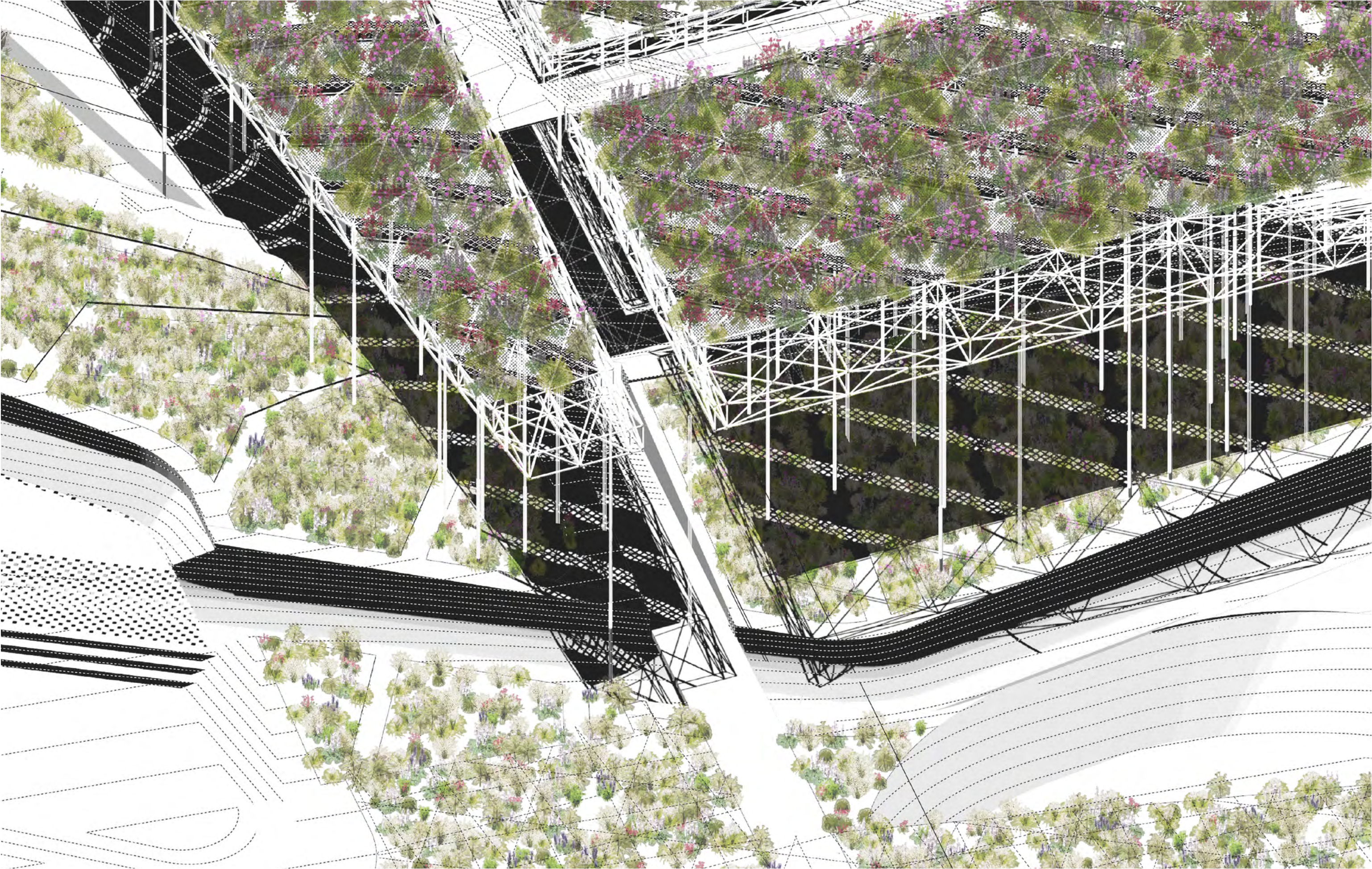
This drawing explores the geometric transformations which define the interaction of the digging layer with the landscape; an intensity mapping of circulatory implications of the landscape; and the addition of the flying layer and its structure as it conforms with and breaks its own geometric alignment.



In its place, we are seeking a new conception of nature, one which confronts the consequences of human activity on the planet and addresses them, not as outside events to be managed and mitigated, but as the fundamental realities that this new conception must incorporate.

This projects confronts the interdependence of infrastructure and a built nature in today's urban environment





The architecture acts as a mediator between the meadow above and the infrastructure below. Layers of structure operate as line, surface and mass, mass and void. Wooden interior details evoke the simple aesthetics of the beekeeping typology and act to activate all three layers by creating occupiable space in all three layers and facilitating vertical circulation between them.



| Covid Memorial Bridge

M.Arch Glass in Structures
elective | Professor Radhi
Majmadur

This bridge spans The Lake in Central Park, Manhattan.
Glass columns, which surround and penetrate through the
walkway, represent the memories of those lost during the
covid-19 pandemic. Their triangular shape disperses and
refract sunlight all around..



| Awaiting the next
violent refuse

Finalist | Non Architecture
‘Reviving Mines’ competition

M.Arch studio 05 | professor
Ferda Kolatan | Co-teacher
Angela Huang

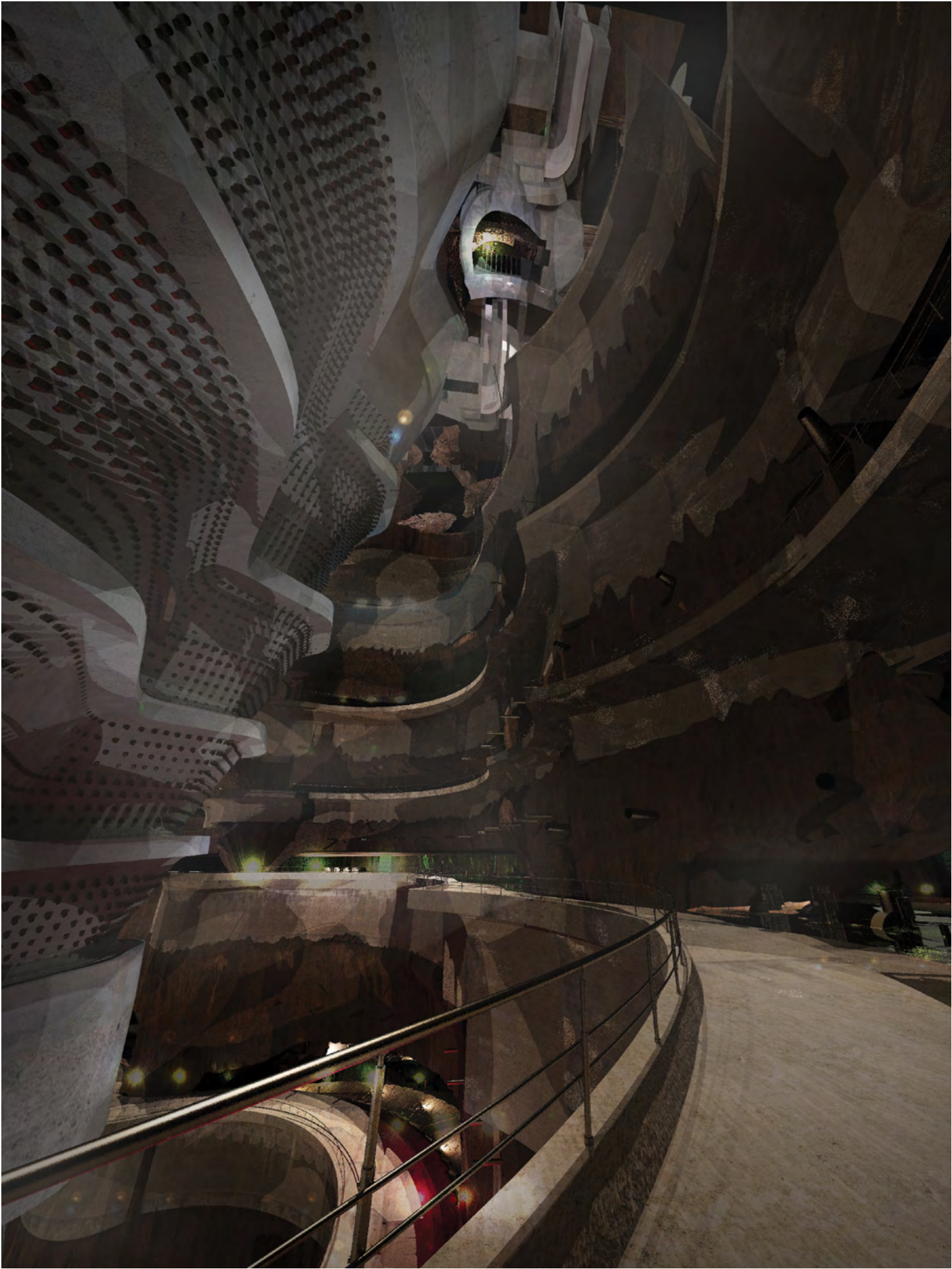
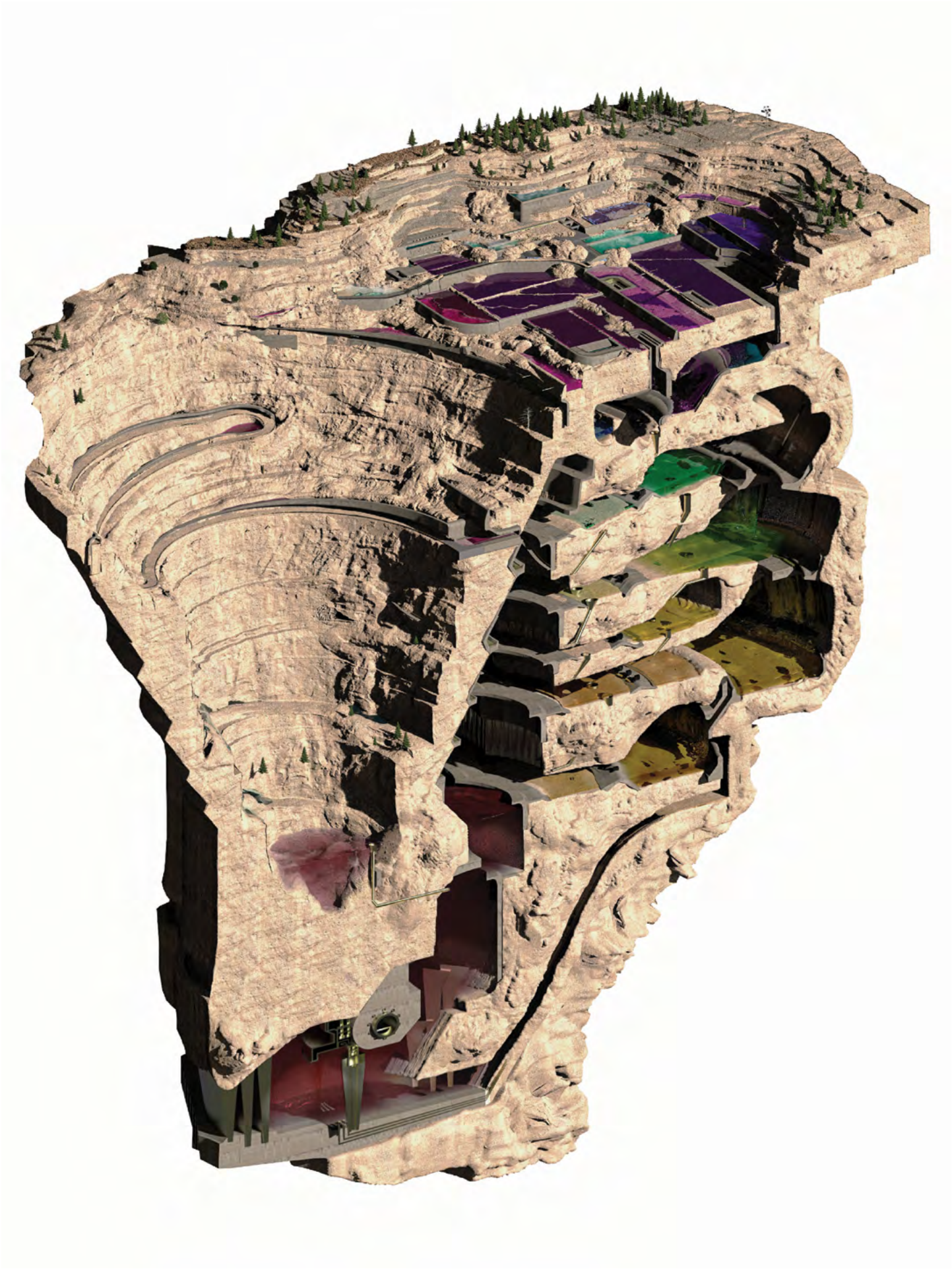
*A short film with Lux Wallace (Film
at QR code opposite)*

To me, the mountain masses are noby alive,
I ask why they are and from where they writhe.
When Nature in herself was upended,
the muddle of Earth she left untended,
baffled by the mountains and the deep,
finding rock inside rock, and cave on peak.
Prising the hills, strangely unfounded,
Roughening them to edges, distantly unbounded.
They rest in flux and she bridles confused.
Awaiting the next violent refuse.

*Goethe, Faust Part II
Amended by Benjamin Smithers*



Screenshot from ‘Awaiting the next violent refuse’

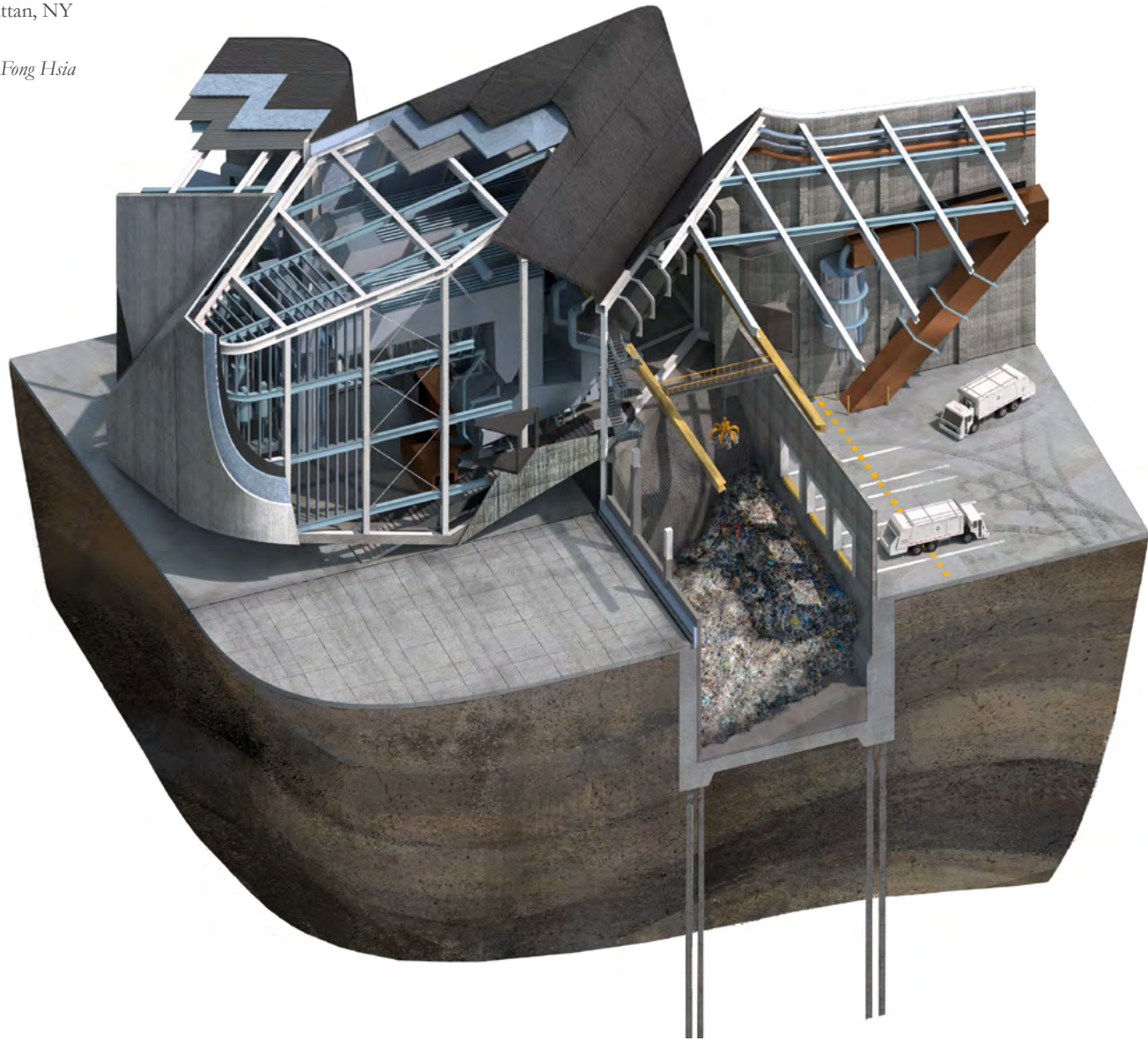


| Symbiosis in the city

M.Arch studio 04 | professor
Kutan Ayata | Co-teacher Alex
Tahinos

Energy-from waste plant and
free-diving training facility |
Manhattan, NY

with KoFong Hsia



The energy-from-waste plant develops a symbiotic relationship with the city, feeding off the waste of its people and in return, producing energy on which city life thrives.

This concept founded our intention to evoke a presence alongside the water, a building with its own agency that will become a creative catalyst for new relationships between consumption and waste, urban and rural, housing and public land, the city and the water.

Programmatically, the brief mixed a waste-to-energy plant with a free-diving training facility, requiring three deep diving pools. This mixed program, and its urban location immediately adjacent to the East River, called for a project which formed a coherent

whole but without dominating its surroundings.

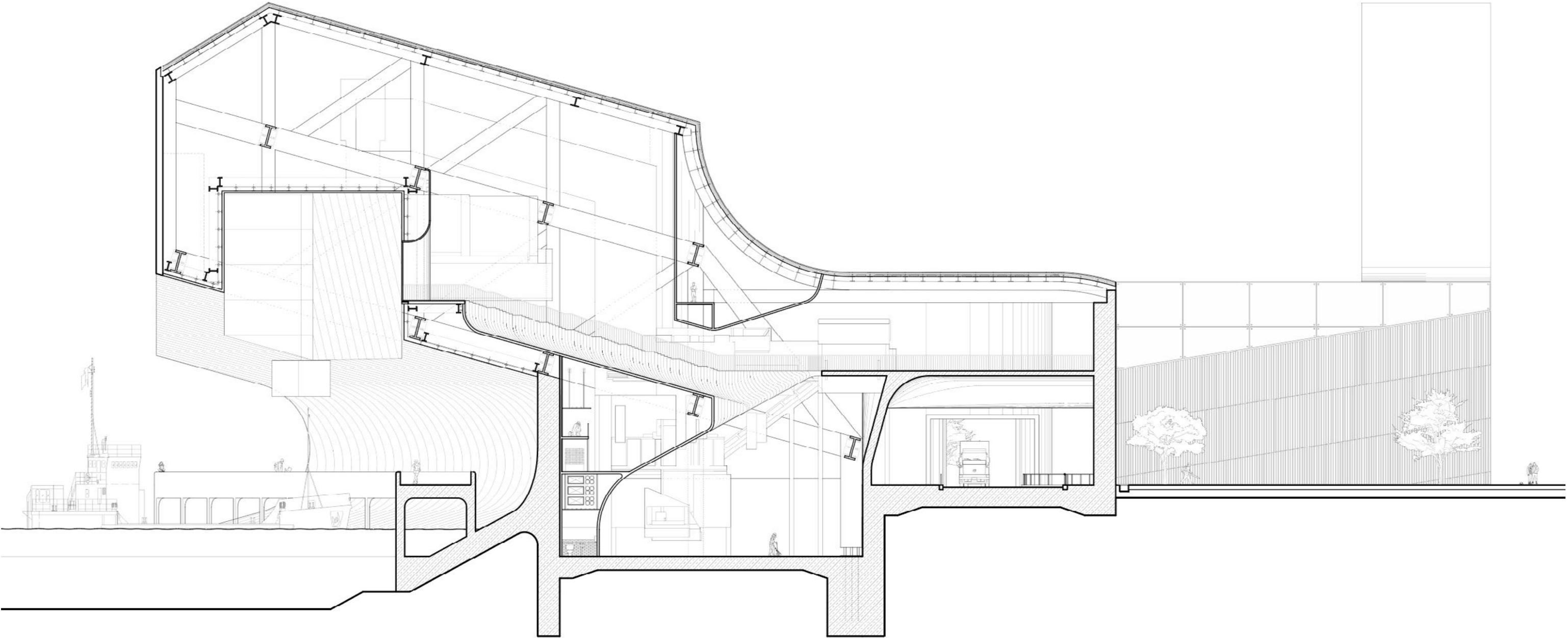
In response, our design destabilizes the part-to-whole relationship in its form, material treatments and its interior.



*A calm, benign presence, guarding the water's edge but inviting its exploration,
alive, warm, heavy and slow, evoking symbiosis with the city*

Interior

Section drawings explored the relationship between formal and programmatic parts of the project on its interior, in particular seeking to destabilize that relationships, sometimes distinct part, sometimes whole, sometimes ambiguous. Interior connections were made using the same strategy as the exterior; selectively extending lines and surfaces between parts.



Section | recycling center

| **Dissolving density**

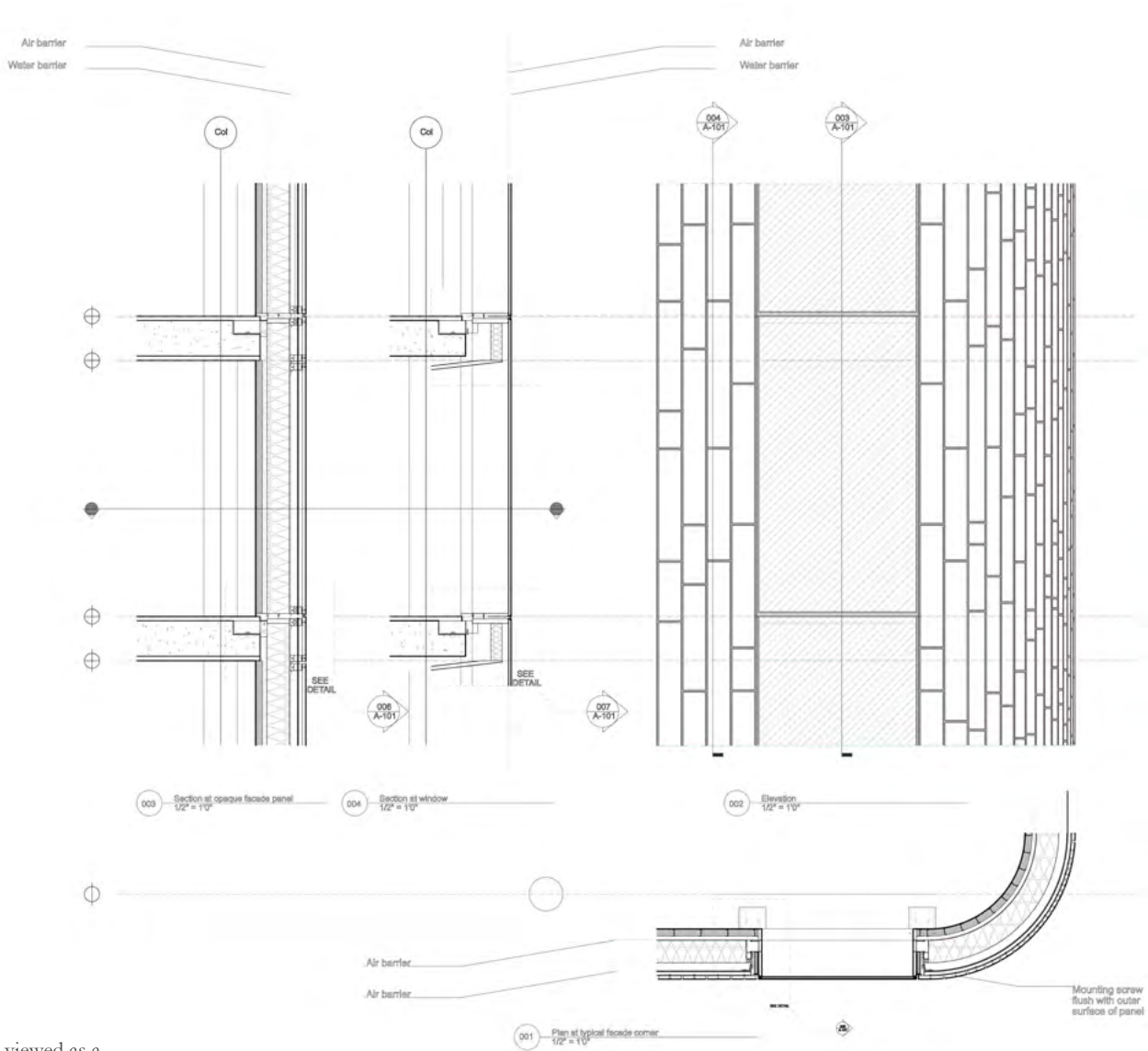
M.Arch studio 03 | professor
Kutan Ayata | co-teacher Alex
Tahinos

Residential high-rise, Brooklyn,
NY



Dissolving density

Appearing on the horizon as typical of its downtown location, this high-rise dissolves those expectations on closer proximity and within. Its concept is inspired by Rosalind Kraus’ writings on the experience of minimalist painting transforming with proximity.



At first, it is viewed as a monolith, the archetypal residential high-rise. From street level, an observer glimpses the dissolving top-edge of the building, which moves in and out of the constrained downtown site. On closer approach, it becomes clear that the bottom of the building peels away into separated pillars.

In-situ rendering

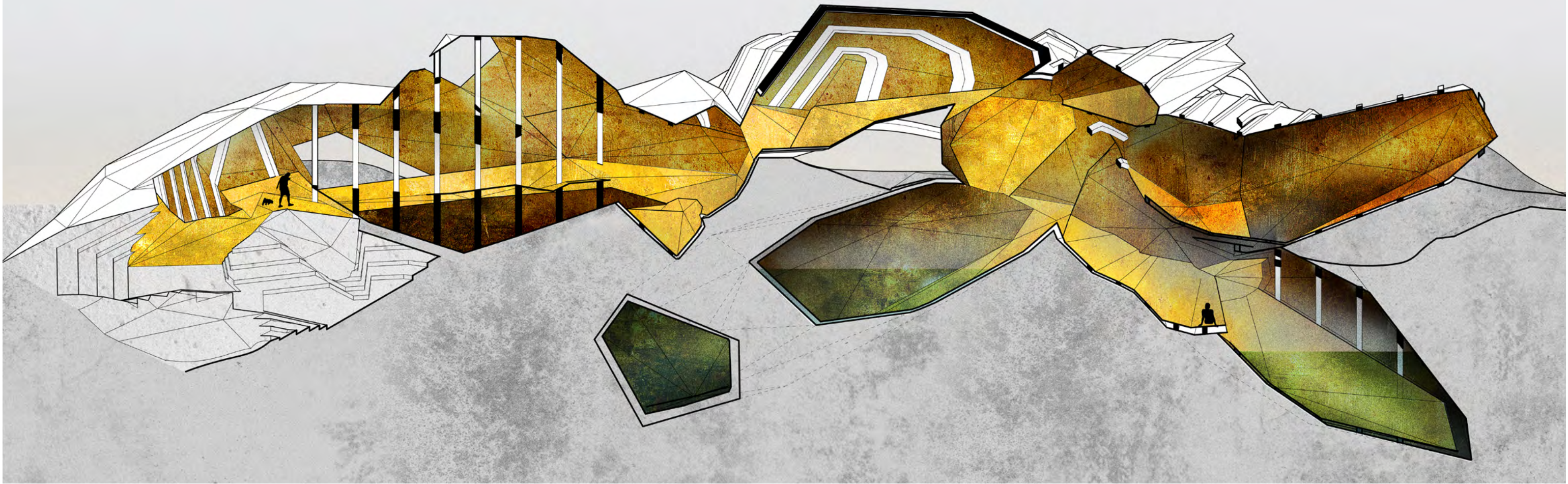


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| Cenote seculsion

M.Arch Studio 01 | professor
Ryan Brooke Thomas

An urban recreation space |
Manhattan NY



This first project of my architectural career evokes a cenote – a natural sinkhole exposing bathing water below - offering escape from its Manhattan surroundings by

elongating a journey into its depths below the park above. Its circulatory space becomes progressively darker, punctuated by a succession of increasingly closed spaces, with apertures

between emphasizing this progression and shafts of light penetrating the furthest spaces from above. Outdoors, a gathering area is characterized by its connection to the tree-lined site

perimeter and park, while lifted masses invite exploration around the full extent of the site.