

# BRANDON PIETRAS

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## EDUCATION

Parsons The New School for Design New York, NY — M.Arch/MFALD 2017.

Awards & Distinctions: Alpha Rho Chi Medal. School of Constructed Environments Honors Award. Scholarship recipient. Founding Editor of **container** Design Journal. Teaching: Representation & Spatial Analysis, Daylighting Studio II, Po[e][l]itics of Space (Peter Wheelwright), Arch. & the Written Word (Paul Goldberger).

Fordham College at Lincoln Center New York, NY — B.A. in Visual Arts, 2012

Awards & Distinctions: Loyola Scholarship Recipient, Susan Lipani Award for Excellence in Visual Arts, Published: Fordham Undergraduate Research Journal, Senior Leadership Award.

American University of Sharjah Sharjah, U.A.E. — Study Abroad 2011

## EXPERIENCE

Junior Lighting Designer, Flux Studio

New York, NY 2016

Operated multiple projects specializing in conceptual design and strategic planning. Utilized daylighting and modeling specialties to tackle difficult spatial problems. Provided specifications and layouts.

Junior Lighting Designer, Tillotson Design Associates

New York, NY 2015

Valued team member contributing expertise in rendering/visualization, thought leadership and design.

Expected to demonstrate initiative and to take leadership positions within several projects simultaneously.

Designer, Abruzzo+Bodziak Architects

New York, NY 2014

Led advanced research efforts in tensegrity construction and hydroponic farming. Designed and performed manufacturing processes for proprietary hydroponic systems.

Designer, Aurelie Paradiso Design

New York, NY 2014

Spearheaded the student team responsible for designing and constructing a scale model of the Jewish Museum, the culmination of their exhibit Other Primary Structures in March, 2014.

Designer, Young Projects

New York, NY 2013-2014

Assist in the design of the Match Maker sculpture at Times Square Alliance's Valentines Day in Times Square.

Designer, Colin Cathcart for The Design Trust for Public Space

New York, NY 2011-2012

Conducted independent research spearheading Making Midtown's initiatives to reform the Garment District.

## PUBLICATIONS & ENGAGEMENTS

2016 30 Years of Emerging Voices

Parsons The New School for Design, Panelist

2015 LightYears

Parsons The New School for Design, Panelist

2015 **container** Design Journal

Parsons School of Constructed Environments, Founding Editor

## SKILLS

Revit, Rhino3D+Grasshopper, DIVA for Rhino3D, Autocad, Vectorworks, Sketchup, AGI32, Adobe CS, drawing/illustration, writing/editing, photography.

## REFERENCES

Paul Goldberger 917 602 1777 [pjg@newschool.edu](mailto:pjg@newschool.edu)

Peter Wheelwright 917 523 0803 [pwheel@newschool.edu](mailto:pwheel@newschool.edu)

Derek Porter 816 668 8060 [porter@newschool.edu](mailto:porter@newschool.edu)

**brandon pietras**

at the school of constructed environments

work sample

2013-2017

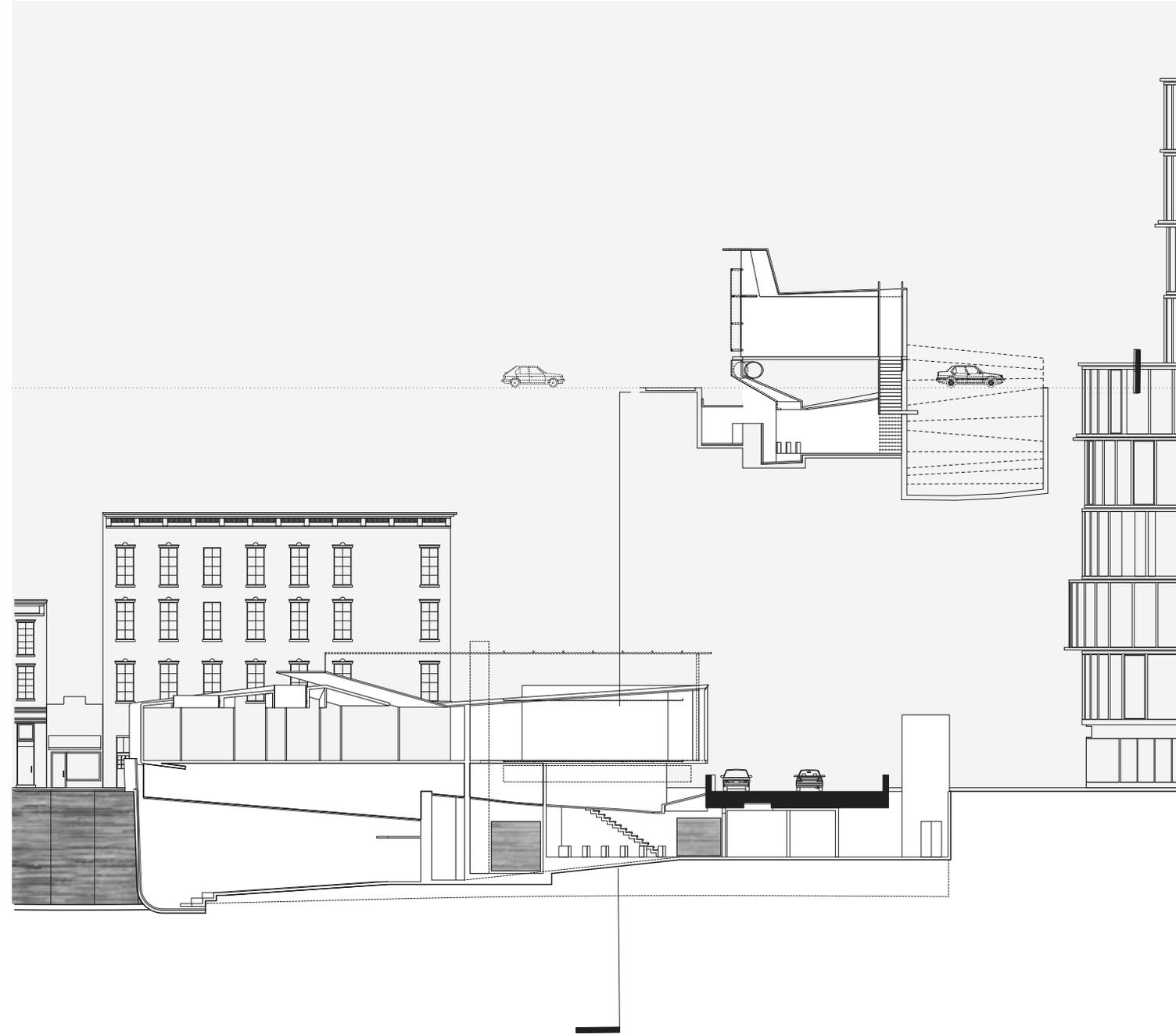


**thesis: frontierscape**

**concept development** publication

the introduction of the *common lands* grid established by the 1811 *commissioner's plan for the city* abstracted a three-dimensional landscape into a two-dimensional territory, disassociating the development of manhattan from its ecological contexts. As a result, the "manifest destiny" of the city, northwards, since 1811 produced the image of an invariant, concrete public realm at the expense of the potentially rich phenomenological ecology engendered by the interaction of urban form and temporal light. today, west 13th street stands as the "frontier" border between two opposing organizational schemes: the topographically sensitive farms to the south and the orthographic "wilderness" to the north. mining the historical and geographical past of manhattan at this frontier reveals an alternative methodology for future urban development that utilizes diurnal light to impart meaning into new york city's public realm.

2017+



thesis

concept development publication

frontierscape was published as part of a collective volume by the School of Constructed Environments. following are analogs of those spreads, including a sample of the written documentation.

2017

research sample

The foundational research for this thesis studio project began as a search for the presence of environmental light within urban form, necessitating analysis of both “natural” and “constructed” contexts. The term landscape was thus split into two borrowing from the earth:world dichotomy established by Martin Heidegger to become earthscape and worldscape, describing the palimpsest of the naturally-occurring the earth and the anthropologically generated world.

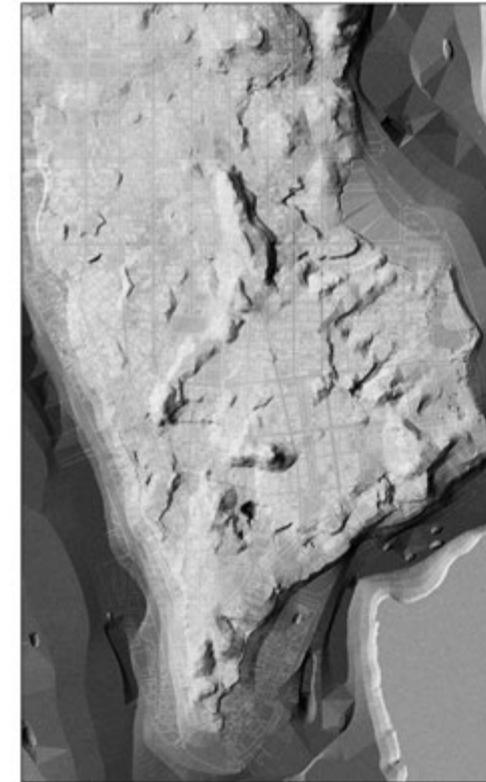
Earthscapes’ dynamic qualities are often overlooked as critical in our experience of the built environment.

“[E]arly cities shared a dependence on a clear interaction between human activity and nature,”<sup>[1]</sup> a quality lacking in a vast majority of contemporary cities. Many historic cities were constructed with an intimate cultural understanding of density, orientation, and scale in response to climactic conditions, resulting in cities and a culture irrevocably tied to the light of their environment. This worldlight has been undermined by an incessant desire for economy and capital production realized by the worldscape of the nineteenth-century grid city. As a result, the once nuanced and personable urban vernacular is being replaced by a decontextualized built environment.

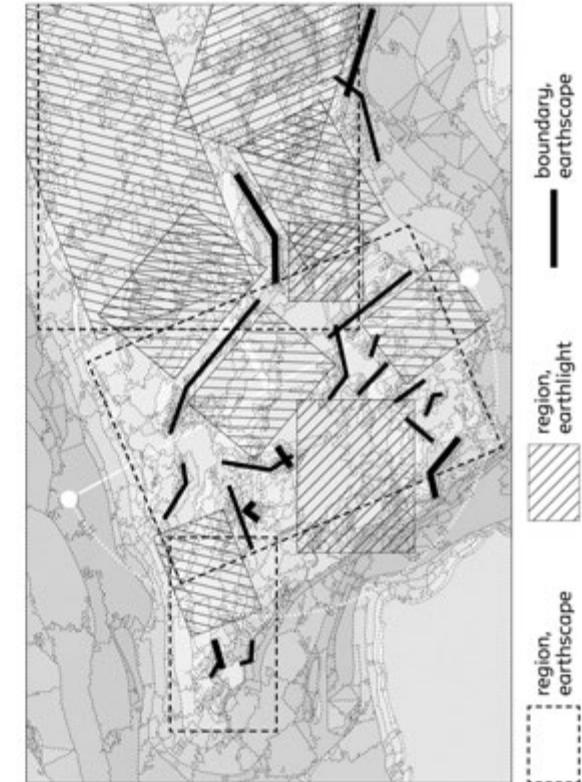
New York City’s urban development is trapped within a cage of its own construction. The intersection of an economic city grid, rampant speculation, and complex, restrictive zoning codes have resulted in a built environment that, for all of its vertical ambitions, remains entirely flat. Our streetscape, dullard and flat, thinly blankets the natural topography of the Island. What is lost is light as a material component implicit within our culture’s use of space. Granting the streetscape the opportunity to use this light to a greater extent could only lead to a marked improvement of daylighting in these spaces. It is precisely this sensitivity to diurnal lighting that drove the form, orientation, and positioning of vernacular structure in rural settlements and pre-grid urban centers.

As magnificently detailed in Pierre Bourdieu’s *The Berber house or the world reversed*,<sup>[2]</sup> the Kabyle Berber house can be considered in components associated with light, darkness, or periods of social or environmental time. The intersection of these components results in a complex tableau of environmental adaptations marked by a specific location (spatial) or surface (formal/material). The psychological associations attributed to shadow, glare, warmth and cold, penumbra, etc., are architecturally realized. The entire way of life of the Kabyle Berber is, according to Bourdieu, one of negotiating between light and shadow. Every object, space, surface, and occupant are intertwined within “a symbolic system.”<sup>[3]</sup>

Amos Rapoport’s research covers similar ground — albeit at a larger scale — in *House Form and Culture*. It is his assessment of the vernacular’s value as the essential component to (although he doesn’t state it quite so directly) urban form that expands Bourdieu’s specialized assessment into a systemic foundation for urban development as “the world view writ small, the ‘ideal’ environment of a people expressed in buildings and settlements.”<sup>[4]</sup> . . .



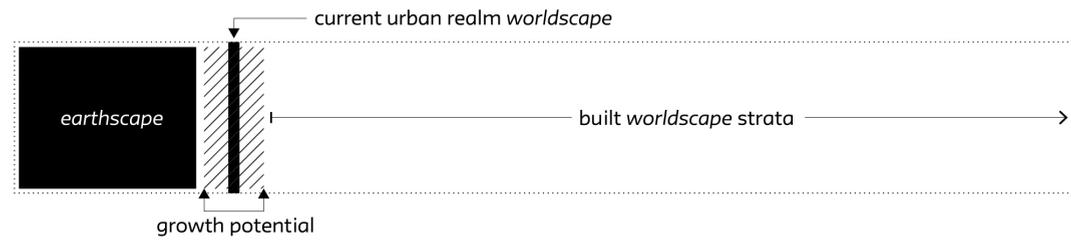
[Fig. 1] The Mannahatta hillshade map overlaid with the 2016 lot map, displaying the city’s entrapped earthscapes.



[Fig. 2] Preliminary analysis of Manhattan’s lost geographic variegation from the perspective of earthlight and earthscape relationships.

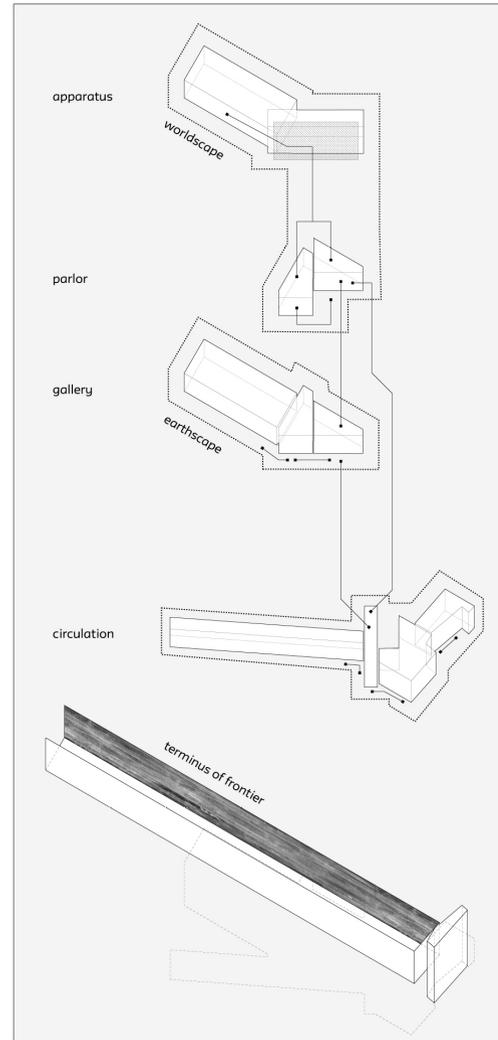


[Fig. 3] Conceptual analysis of Marrakech, Morocco’s urbanism from the same perspective, 2016.

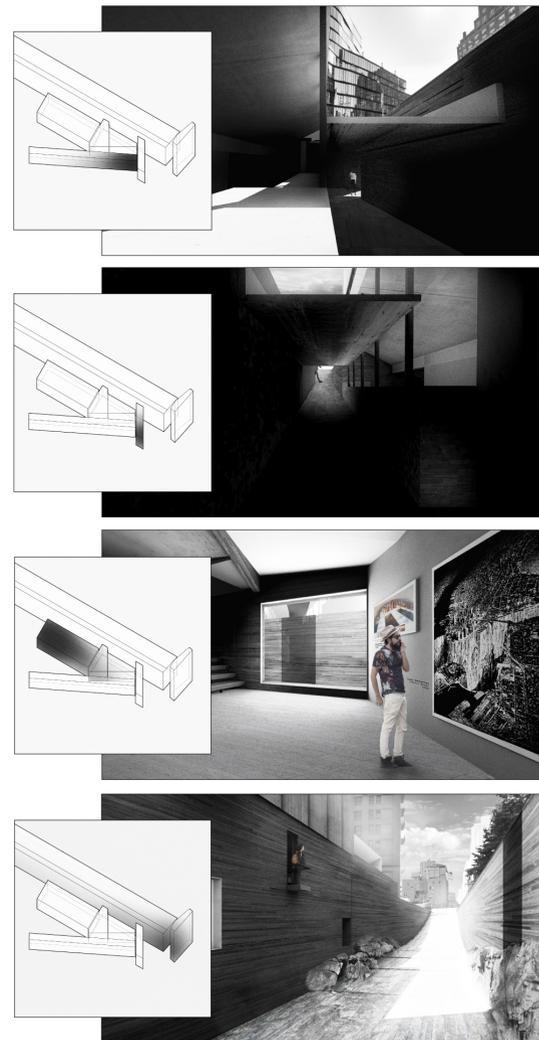


[Fig. 5]

[Fig. 6]



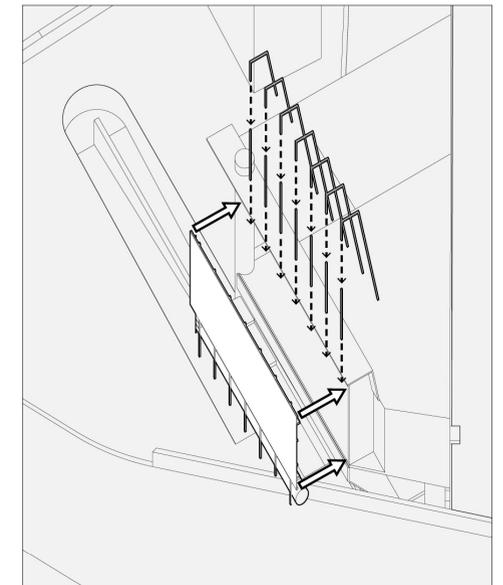
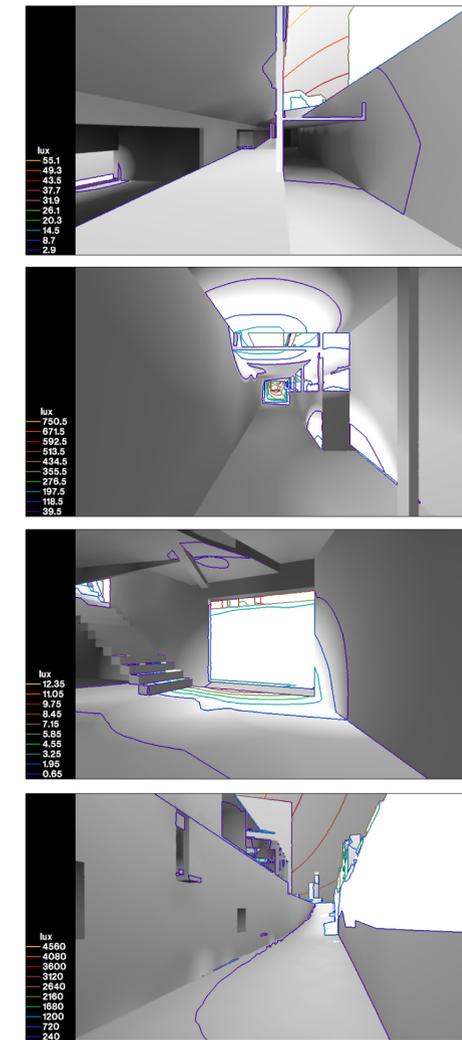
[Fig. 7]



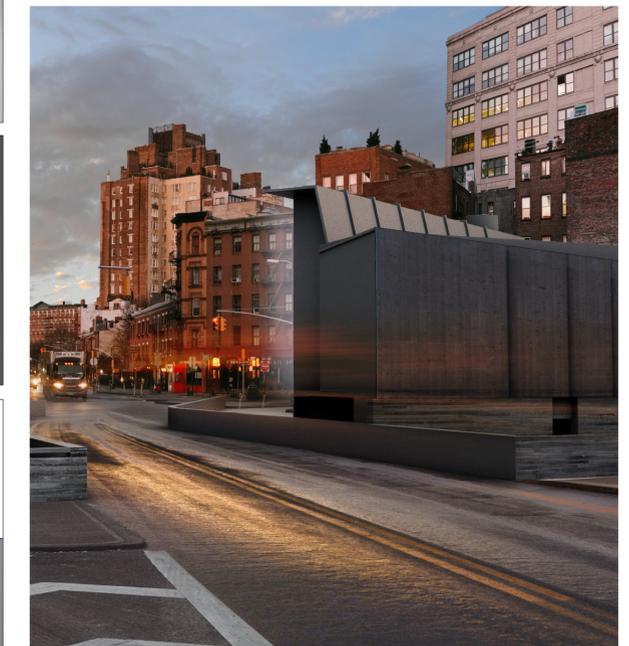
[Fig. 5] For all its vertical ambitions, Manhattan's urban realm is almost entirely flat.

[Fig. 6] The architecture attempts to capture the experiential variety engendered by a phenomenologically rich urban realm.

[Fig. 7] The architecture was designed through the arrangement of specific "densities" of light to correspond experiential intentions with the programming's functional needs. These were then validated through analysis with DIVA for Rhino3D.



[Fig. 8, 9] The billboard at the Gansevoort Hotel is transformed from contentious eyesore to a productive component of the architecture's intent to "deprogram" our vision of the city, projecting unique visions to the public.



**light of place & the library**

**concept development cd**

daylighting studio (glenn schrumm/derek porter)  
with lindsey dieter (mfald/mfald 16) and jimmie drummond (m.arch/mfald 17).

an intensive study of the cooperative possibilities of daylight and technical lighting was drawn and diagrammed with phenomenal/experiential goals, then tested through digital analysis and the construction of a large-scale physical model used for subsequent renderings and documentation.

2015



**NYCHA+farm**

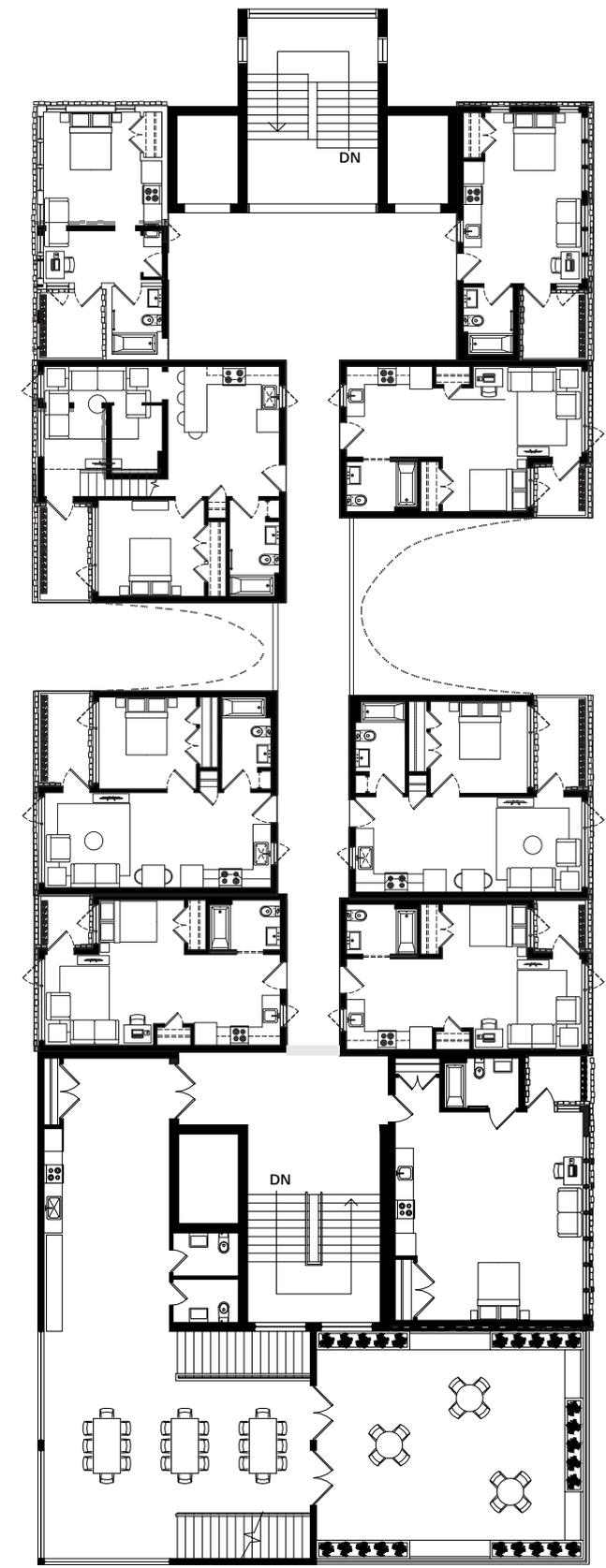
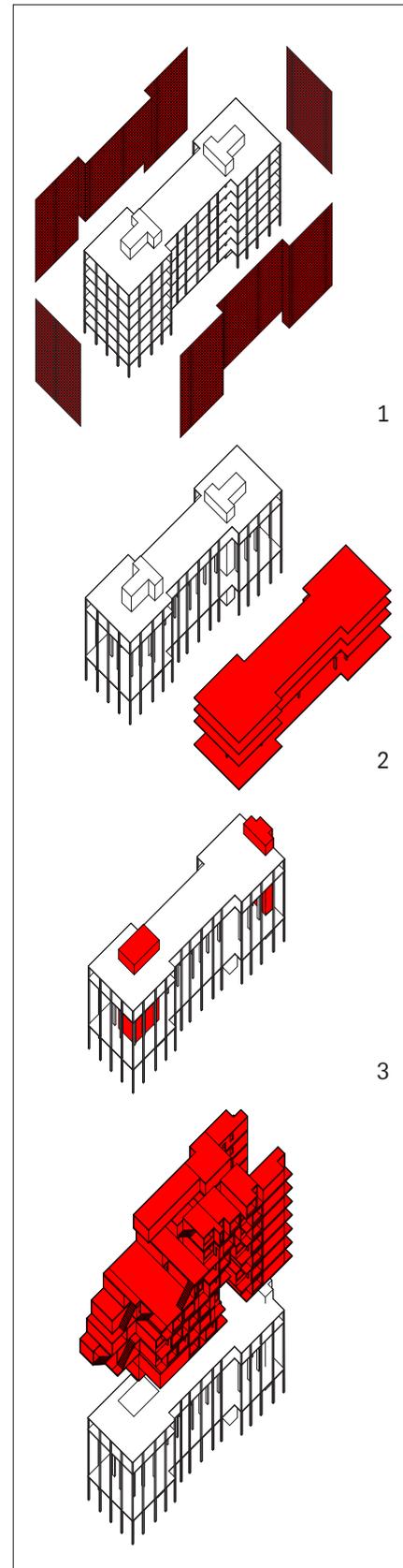
**concept development cd**

design studio ii (andrew bernheimer/david leven)  
with jack dinning (m.arch '16)

the housing studio at the SCE challenges students to develop a comprehensive housing protocol for an existing NYCHA complex with a focus on adaptive reuse - of both material and cultural capital.

this proposal reimagines urban living as an interiorized street, where housing units face inward to form courtyards and neighborhoods supported by a vertical farming complex in the shell of the former housing tower.

2014



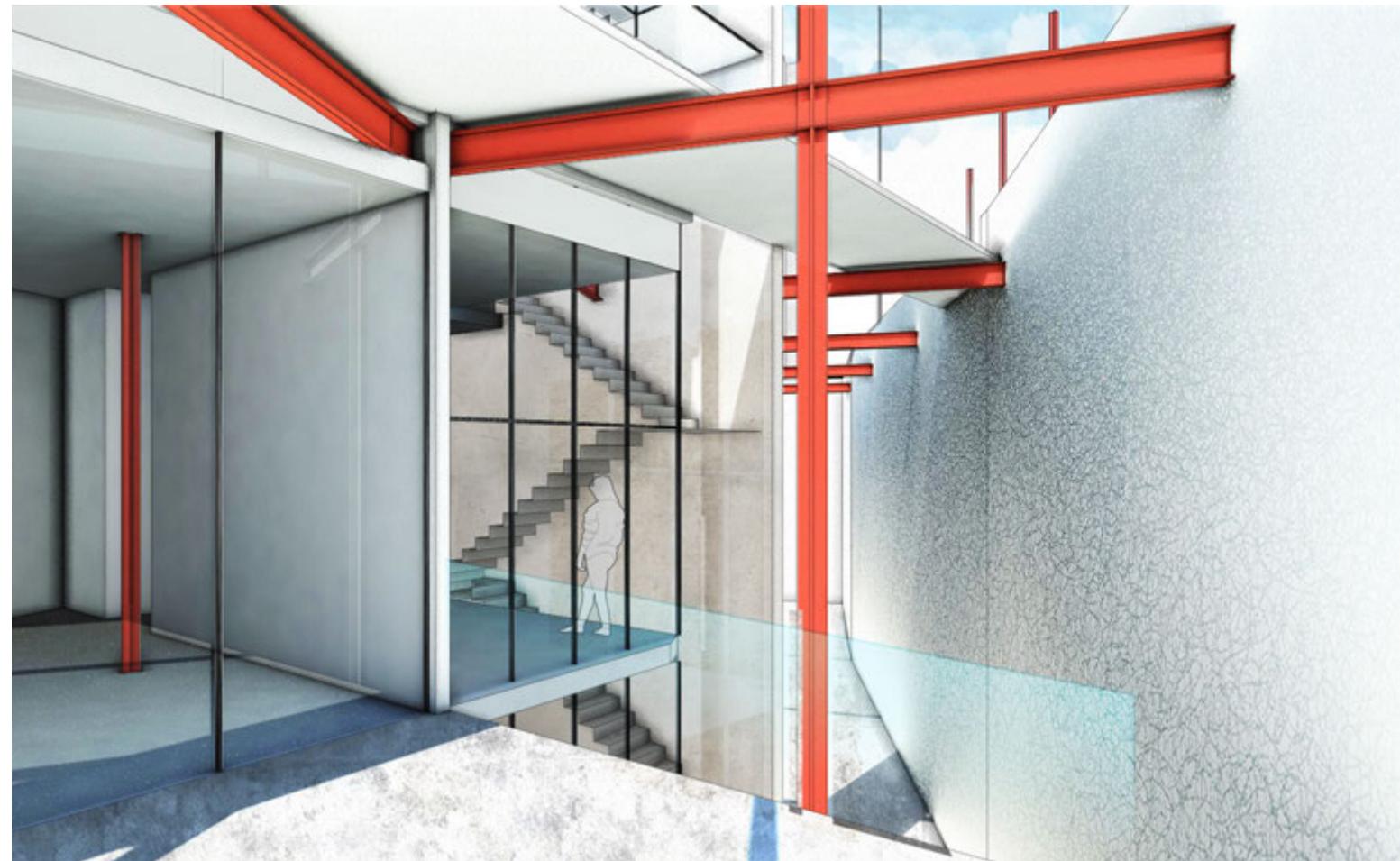
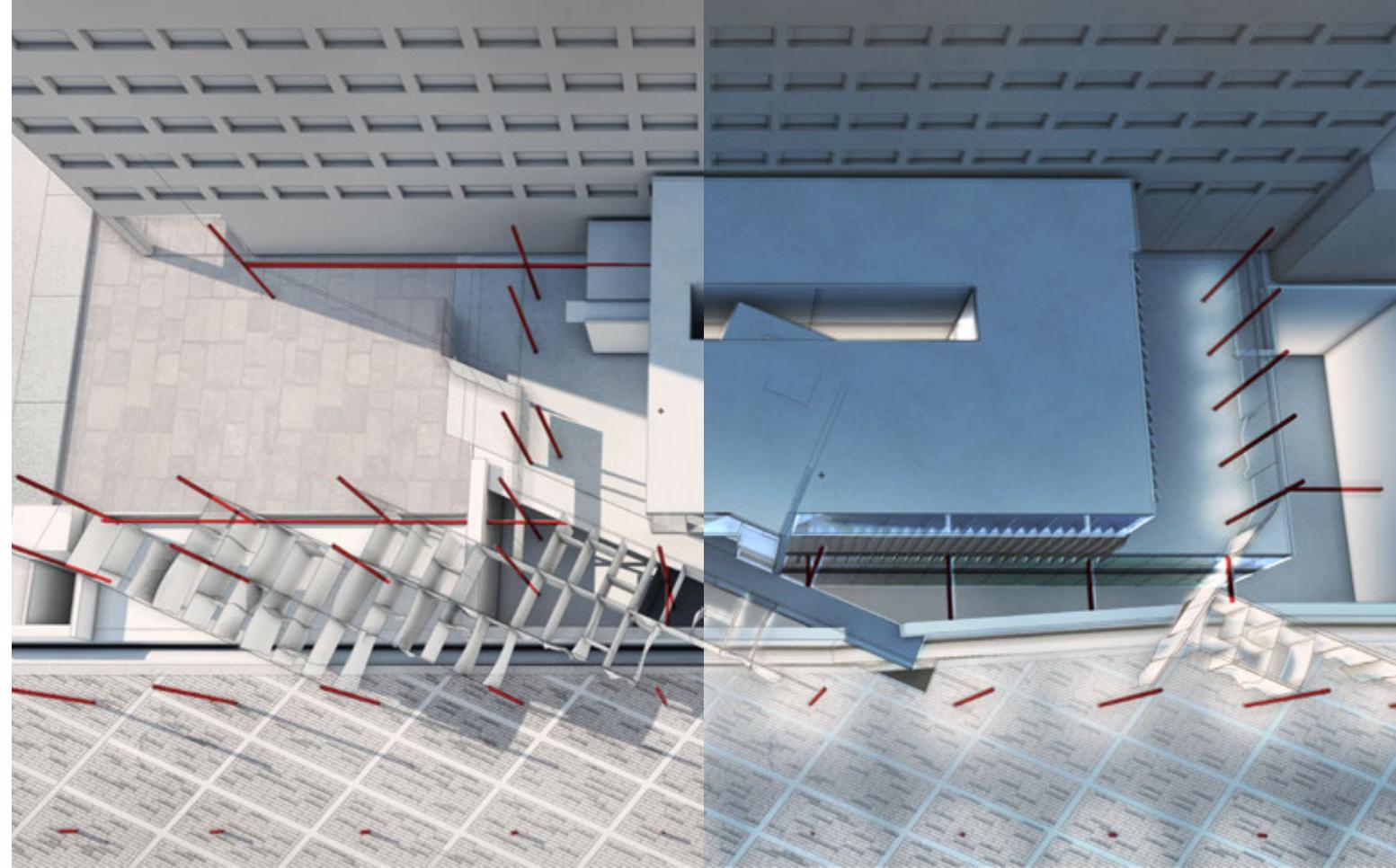
**b.o.d.e.g.a. nutrition and wellness center**

**concept development cd**

integrated studio (derek porter/david leven) with mingyu dong (m.arch/mfald '17)

a narrow, limited-height lot positioned on the northern edge of a tall mid-manhattan building challenged my partner and i to push the boundaries of architectural propriety in search of daylighting opportunities. our solution, to dig deeper into the earth, revealed additional constraints that led to a unique and idiosyncratic project successfully combining culinary facilities, mixed-use community spaces, and temporal programming.

2015



**container design journal**

**concept development publication**

the first student-led design publication at the school of constructed environments.

excerpts from the editor's note to the 1st edition:

"container is the first of its kind at the School of Constructed Environments, unique in both material and methodology from any other publication prior: a journal that is not only edited entirely by SCE students, but one whose pages are dedicated exclusively to the theory and praxis of students and alumni of the SCE. ...

While wildly different in approach, each piece has in common the constant presence of the human body and a close consideration of its relationship to the form of space. ...

container eschews the use of theme as an organizational device. It intentionally defers to its featured content to guide its course. ...

No grandiose statement regarding the ambitions of container can fully depict the extent to which this journal can impact the course of scholasticism at the SCE. container will be the central repository of shared knowledge at the School and an invaluable representation of our ideas to the world at large. ..."

founding editor.

2014+



Photo courtesy of Kristin Eugenio

thesis preparatory "casework"

concept development publication

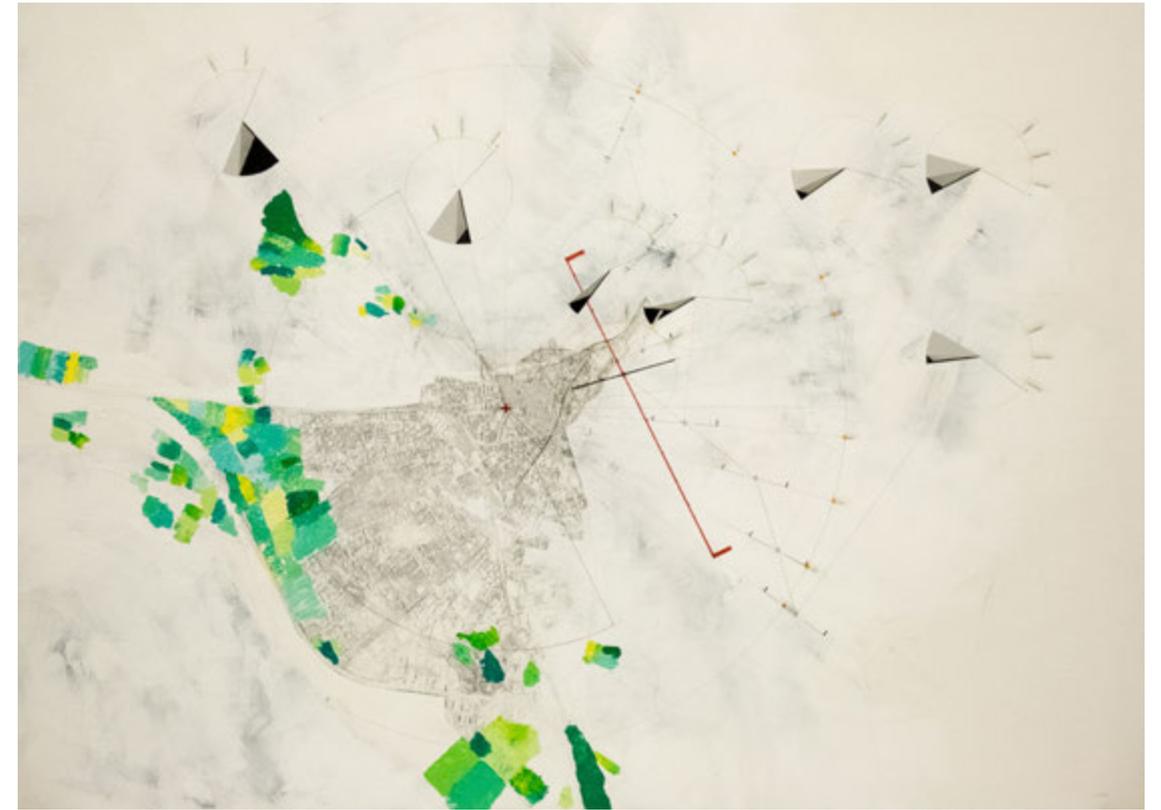
acrylic, collage, pencil, and ink on canvas. 30x40".

the culmination of a semester's research on daylighting and urban form, these paintings re-present the town of chur, switzerland, as an integral component of its geographic contexts. embedded within these works is a complex reconsideration of "site study" from the perspective of the sun.

the result is a new understanding of chur's urbanism at regional and neighborhood scales, revealing the intimate arrangement of individual homes and the city at large within light-space events in the alpine basin.

this project became the research foundation for my thesis studio.

2016



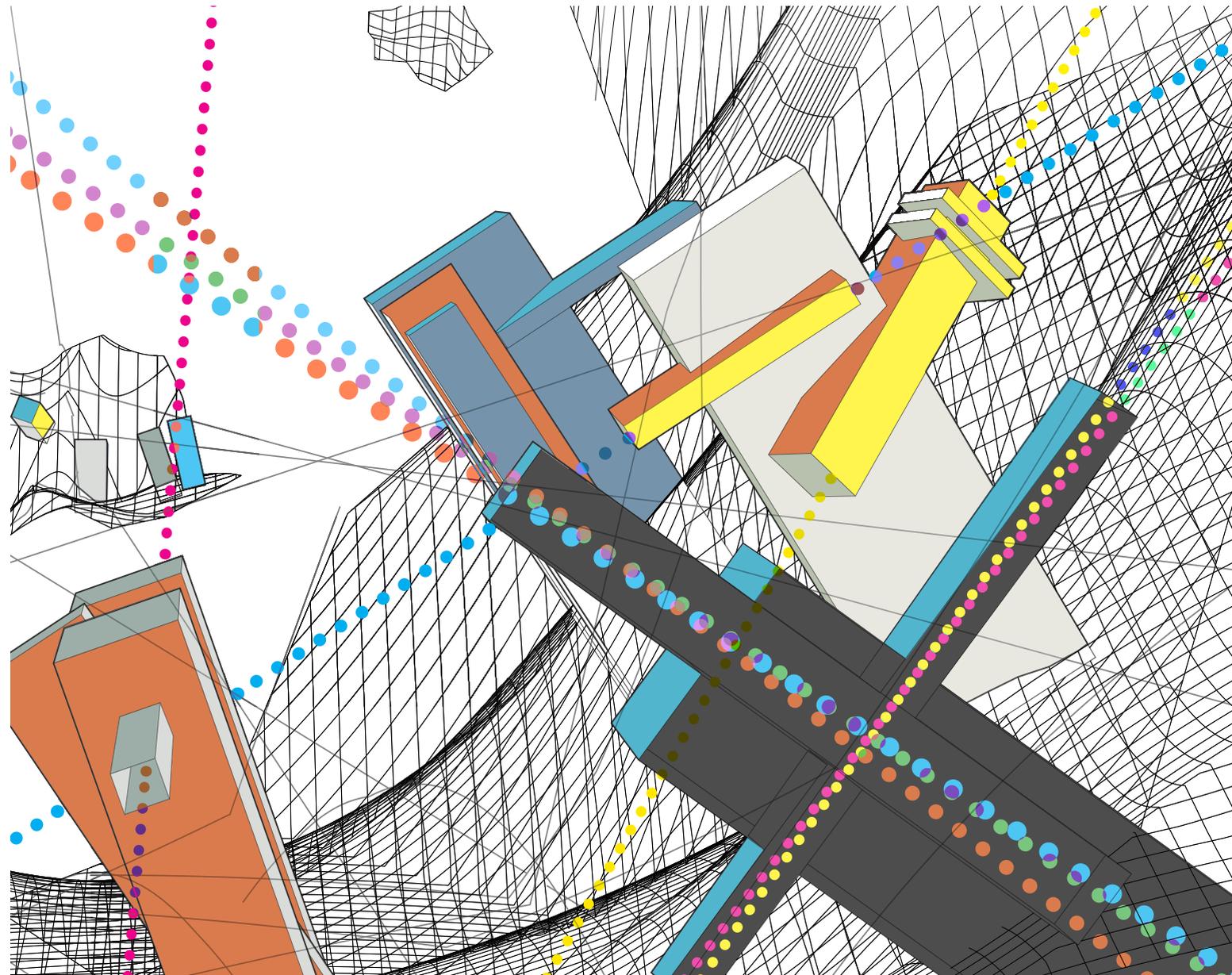
**from infrastructure to architectural act**

**concept** development cd

shelter international architectural design competition for students  
with mingyu dong (m.arch/mfald '17)

this competition entry theorizes all built work as opportunistic happenings in a continuum of intertwined infrastructures. these *architectural acts* spatialize relationships that were previously only conceptual; each thus represents not only the specific combination of resources needed for its creation, but the diversity of the community it spatializes. truly diverse architecture is both intimately tied to social and temporal contexts.

2016



**greenpoint environmental educatin center**

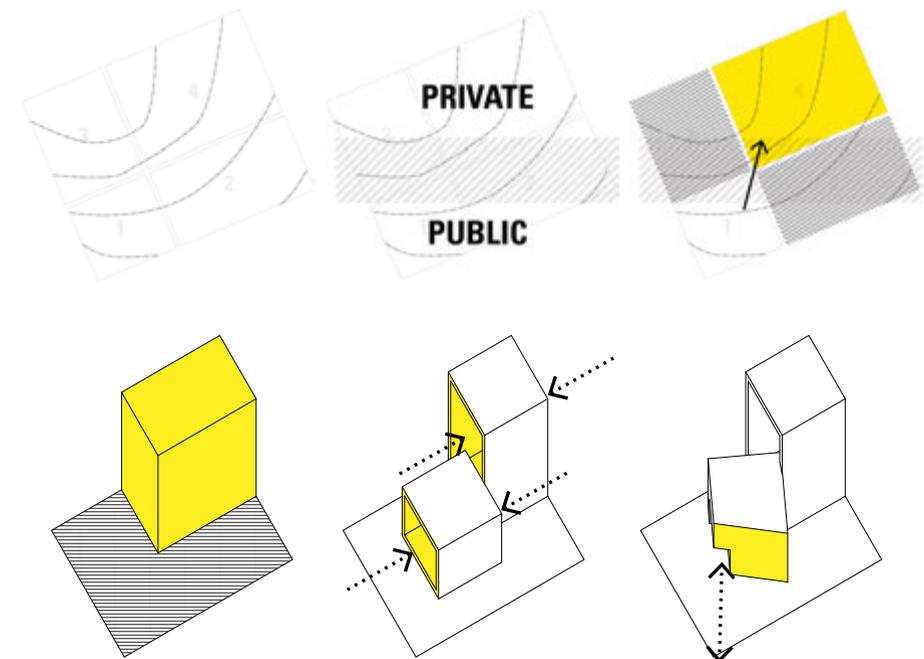
**concept development cd**

design studio iv (astrid lipka)

in the wake of nearly \$20 million in funding from the greenpoint community environmental fund, greenpoint public library is slated to become the greenpoint environmental education center. in this studio, i proposed an alternative design for the project that is both contextually sensitive and forward looking in its construction and programming.

the entire building is designed with a clt/timber structural system. Before the final design and cd set completed as part of the course, I took great pains to test and experiment with new, efficient alternatives for the building's structure.

2016



**life after floodtime**

**concept development cd**

design studio v (walter meyer/jennifer bolstad)

turning environmental pessimism into optimism for the future habitation of nyc - particularly jamaica jay and the rockaways - this project imagines how the city can adapt to the ocean's reclamation of its littoral zones.

2016



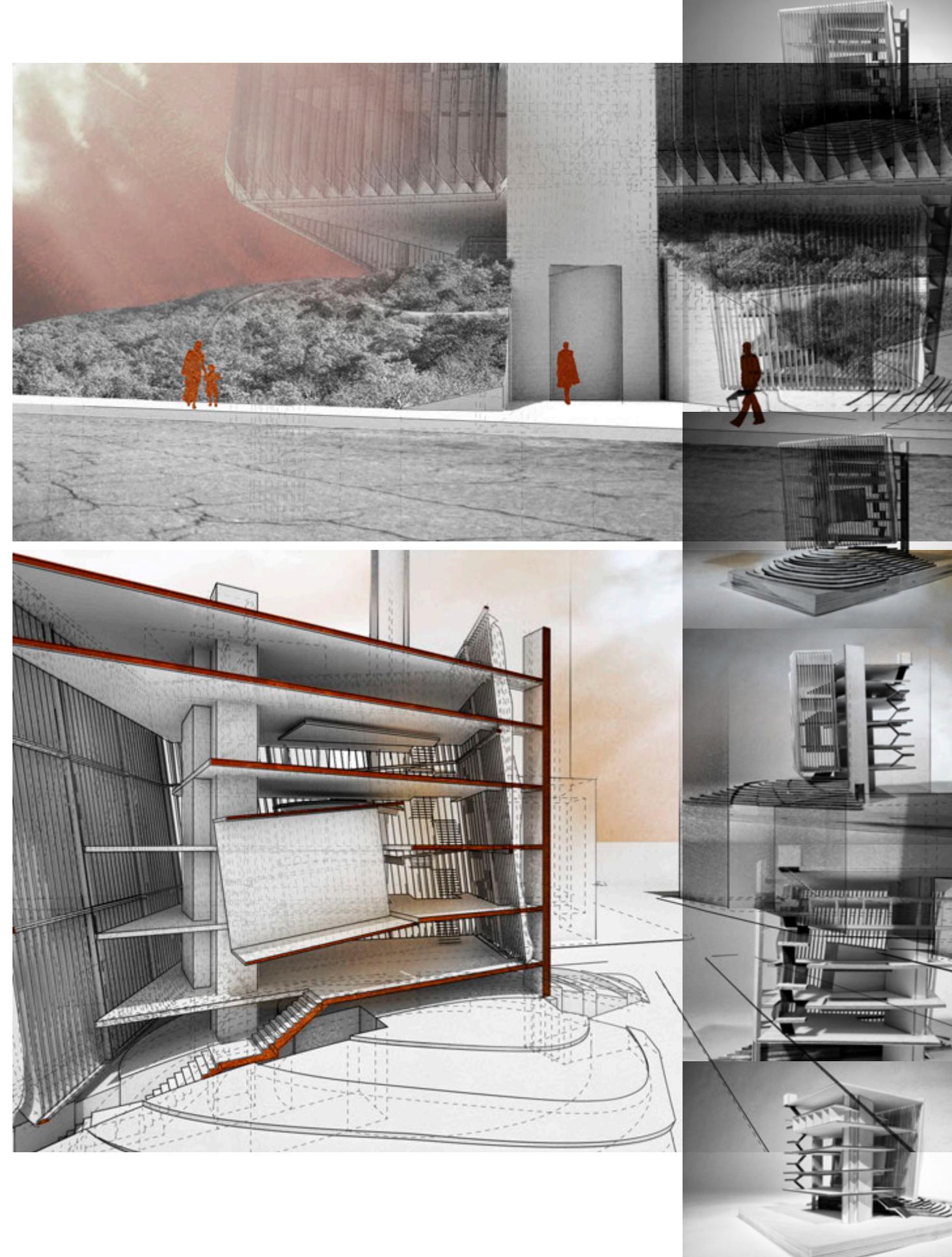
**city to table**

**concept development cd**

design studio i (emily abruzzo)

a complex formal exercise in an underutilized lot on canal street, *city to table* combined teaching kitchen, restaurant, and food production facilities within a reductive architectural mass. emerging from a landscape built for foraging, the facade of the structure subtly reflects the tufts of vegetation beneath, softening the edges of a rigidly geometric frame.

2013



**resonance**

**concept development cd**

light, space, art (derek porter)  
collaborative installation

developing a strong, open, and collaborative design process was vital to the success of resonance.

the inspirations for resonance were numerous, but common to all is an awareness of the body's impact upon its own conception of space and time as expressed through movement. The phenomenon of the reflected body spreading infinitely in two directions forces one to confront their body from the outside, from both the past and future, in a mechanized out-of-body experience. That one must choose to enter and exit the "machine" "brackets" the experience, allowing us to, as Husserl states so succinctly, "suspend our preconceptions and consider experience as it occurs..."

2016

