

the Individuality of the Commonality

A journey of the definitions of individuality

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Abstract

In a globalized world, we gained many benefits and diversified our lives through commerce and information exchange. Yet, many cities in East Asia such as Shenzhen and Tokyo or West Asia such as Doha are facing challenges. Living habits and construction methods are threatened by standardized ways of building. The skyscraper replaced the houses in traditional neighborhoods. Homogenization and annihilation of the conventional is paramount. This problem guided me to the question that drove my research during my three semesters at Cornell : **What is the individuality of the commonality?** During the coursework, I gained a deeper understanding of the problem of globalization and broadened my definition of individuality. I explored the meaning of individuality as a shared value in a place or for a group of people. How is one place distinguished from others? This thesis exemplifies three different forms of individuality, as they manifested in an art scape studio, a class about timber tectonic class, and a seminar about building agency

Acknowledgements

I want to thank my parents, who support me in my education, classmates, and teammates who provide valuable discussions and suggestions, and professors whose works and words grant me endless inspiration.

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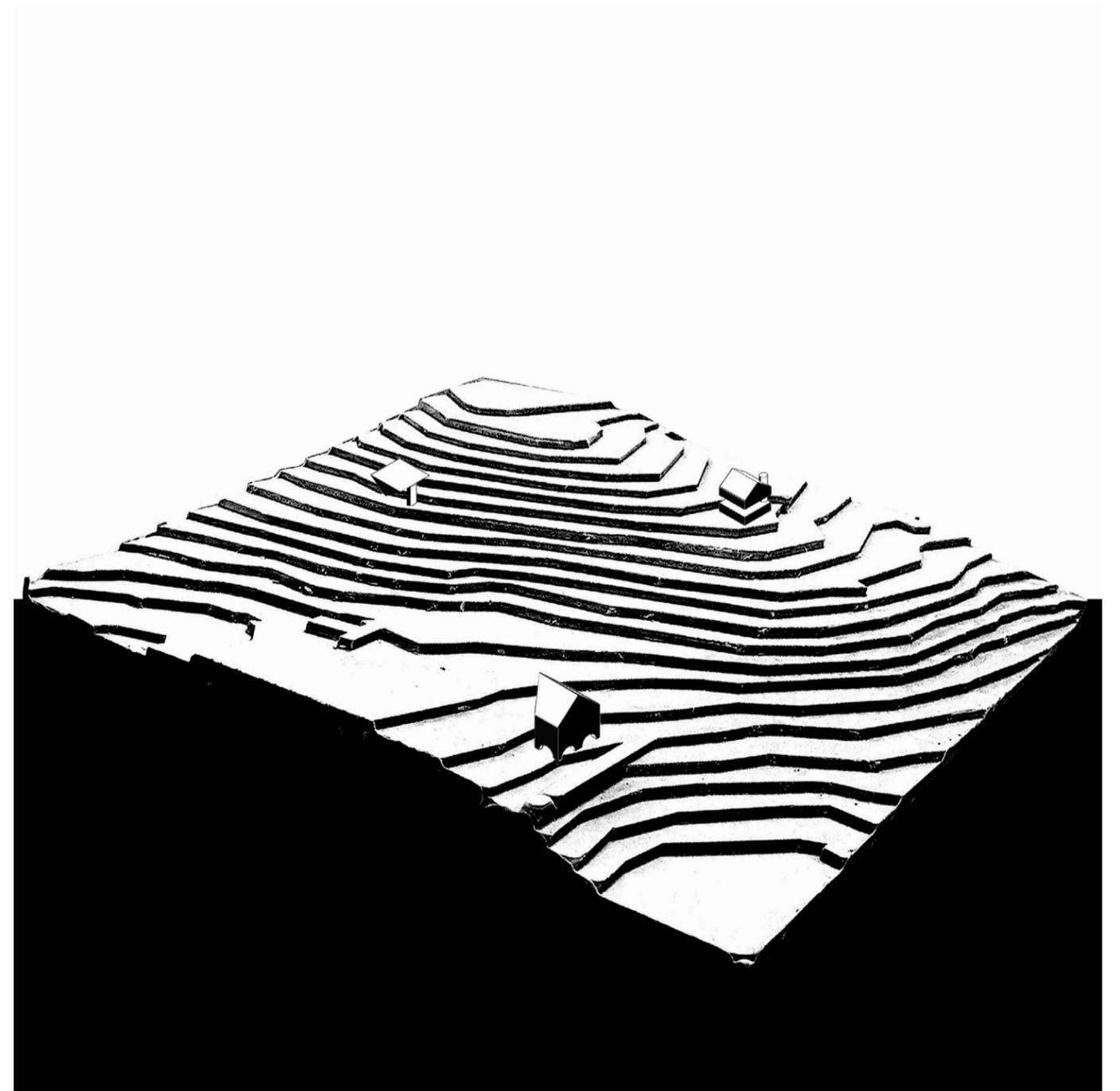
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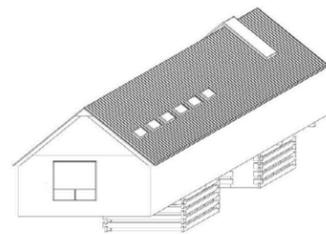
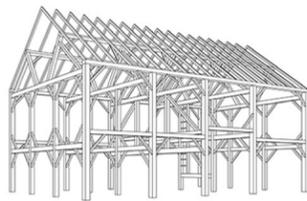
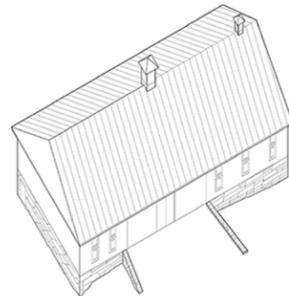
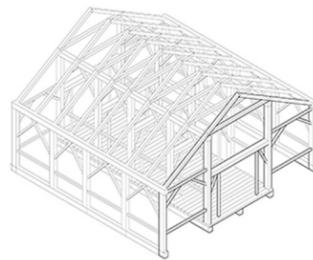
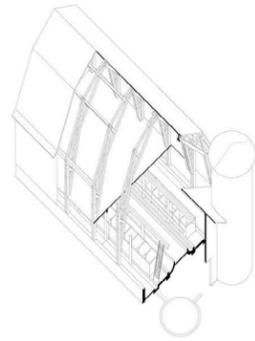
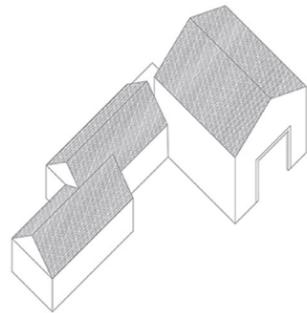
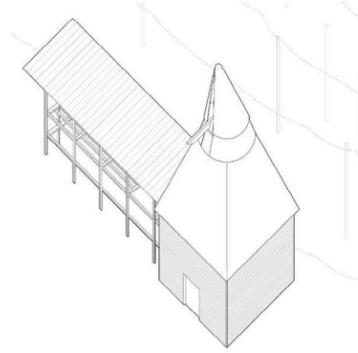
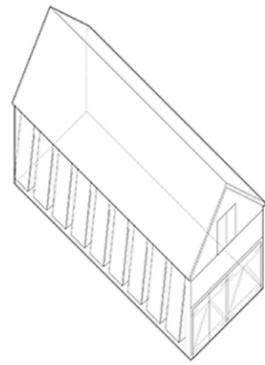
This is not Vernacular

when objects are formed through understanding

Spring 2021
Independent work
Instructor: Alessandra Cianchetta

The individuality of one place is a projection of many people's understanding. It lives in one's imagination or interpretation, and in this project, architecture is the fragments of indefinite puzzles. It is the words waiting to become sentences, and people who experience them become the only writer. In the precedent of Parc de la Villette by Bernard Tschumi, the whole site is divided into 40 grids. At the nodes of the grids, there is folly combined by six types of elements and their variations. Follies relate to each other through ramps, stairs, straight or meander trails. Landscape views of different kinds have cooperated with the path people choose and the folly they get. Visitors can choose which direction they want to take and what folly they wish to get. People choose the destination with a reason and take the hint by preference. While they were making their decisions and getting to follies by sequence, they wrote their sentences. The idea of leaving space for people themselves to generate their choices and answers is a method in my project for visitors to think about their versions of "vernacular" as time pass by. Through destroying, disassembling, and reassembling the familiar elements of the vernacular, this project also proposes rethinking and challenging. In all the words these elements wrote, to what extent do they lose their meaning, to what extent do they inspire? Is vernacular represented in the symmetrical and slanted roof that drains raindrops in summer? Is it the chimney that breaks such symmetry, or is it not about the configuration but the warmth generated in the chimney space? There are different answers and different grasp. Hopefully, when the tide of this era falls, we have something to grasp at the end of the day.

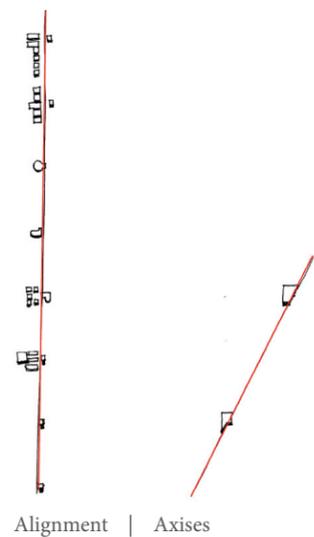
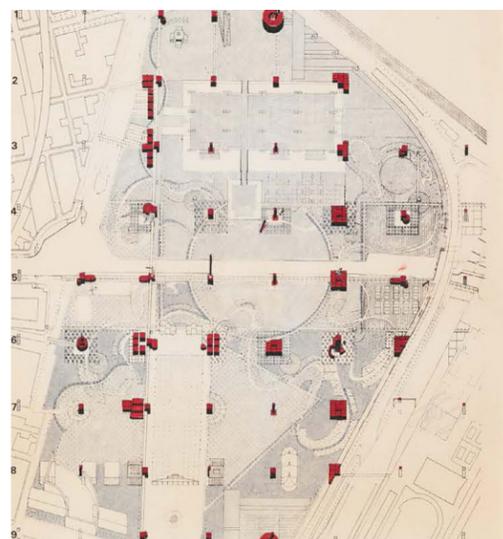




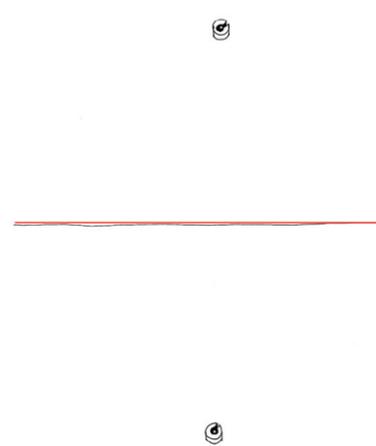
This is not a Pipe

The concept of this painting referenced the painting “This is not a pipe” from René Magritte. Even though this painting depicts the shape of the pipe, the paradox between the word and the shape guides people to think about the undepictable features of the pipe.

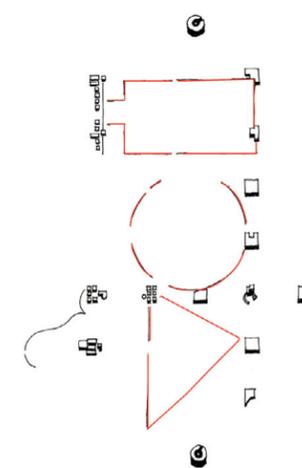
ANALYSIS of
SITE RELATIONSHIP



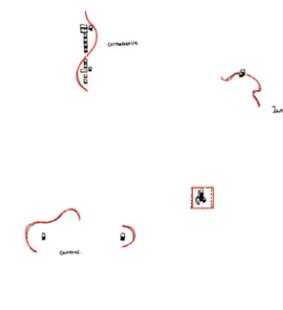
Alignment | Axes



Symmetry | Axes

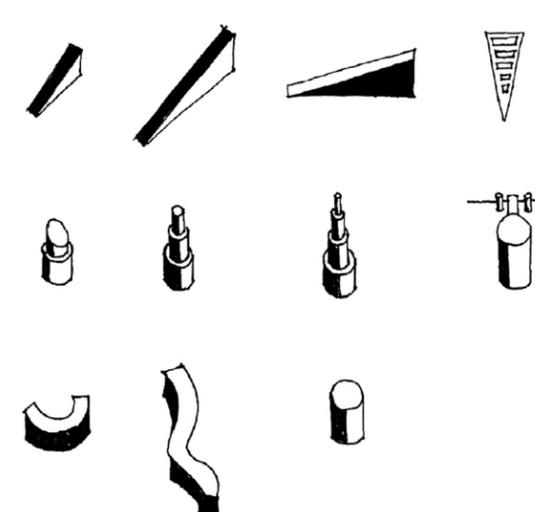
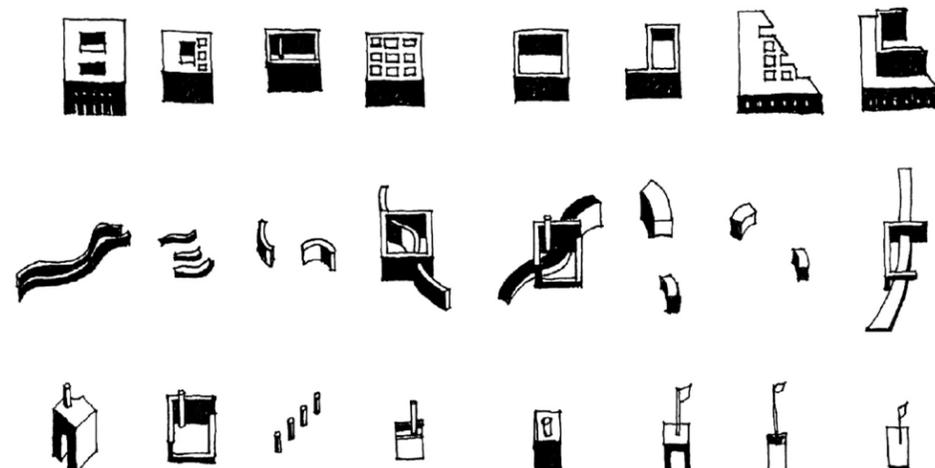
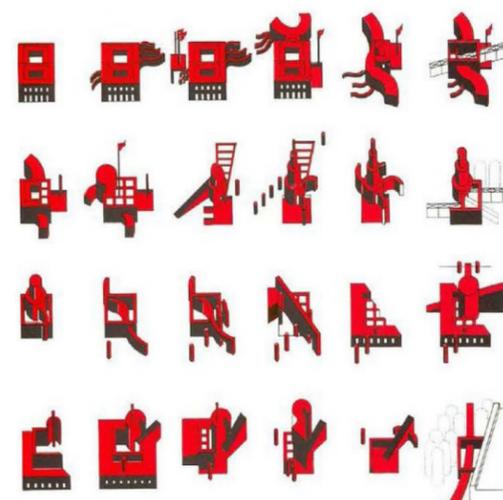


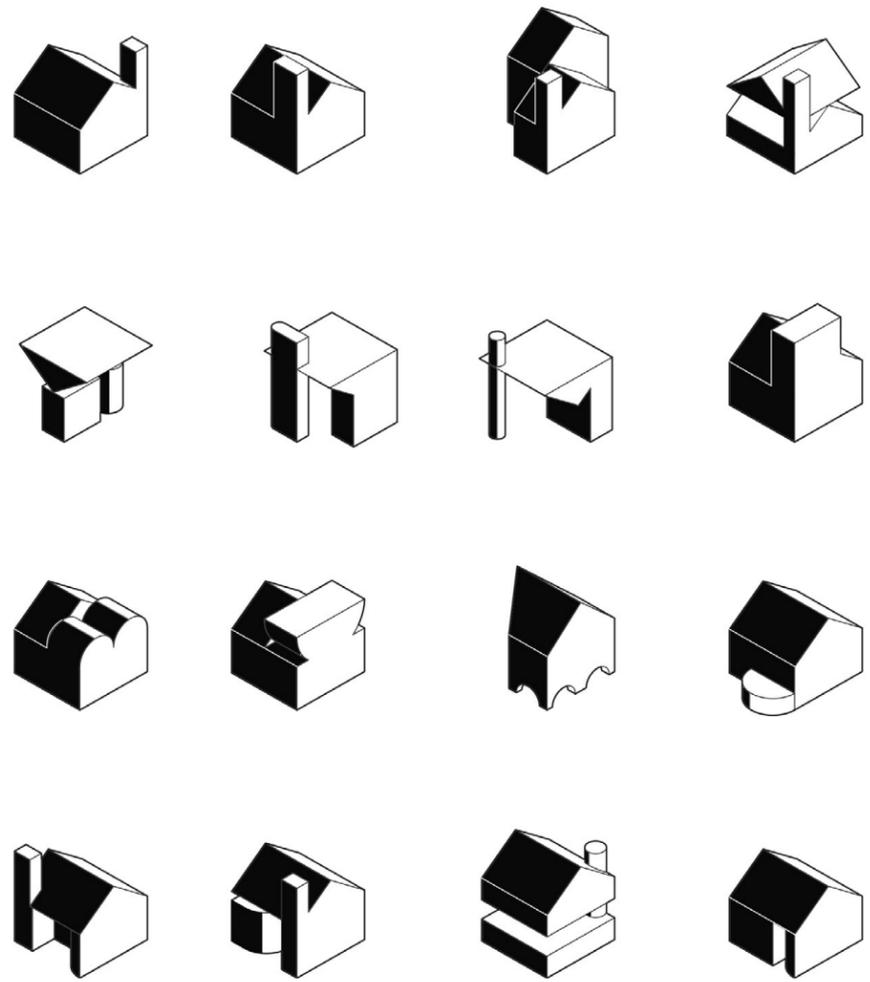
Folly | Periphery



Folly | Landscape

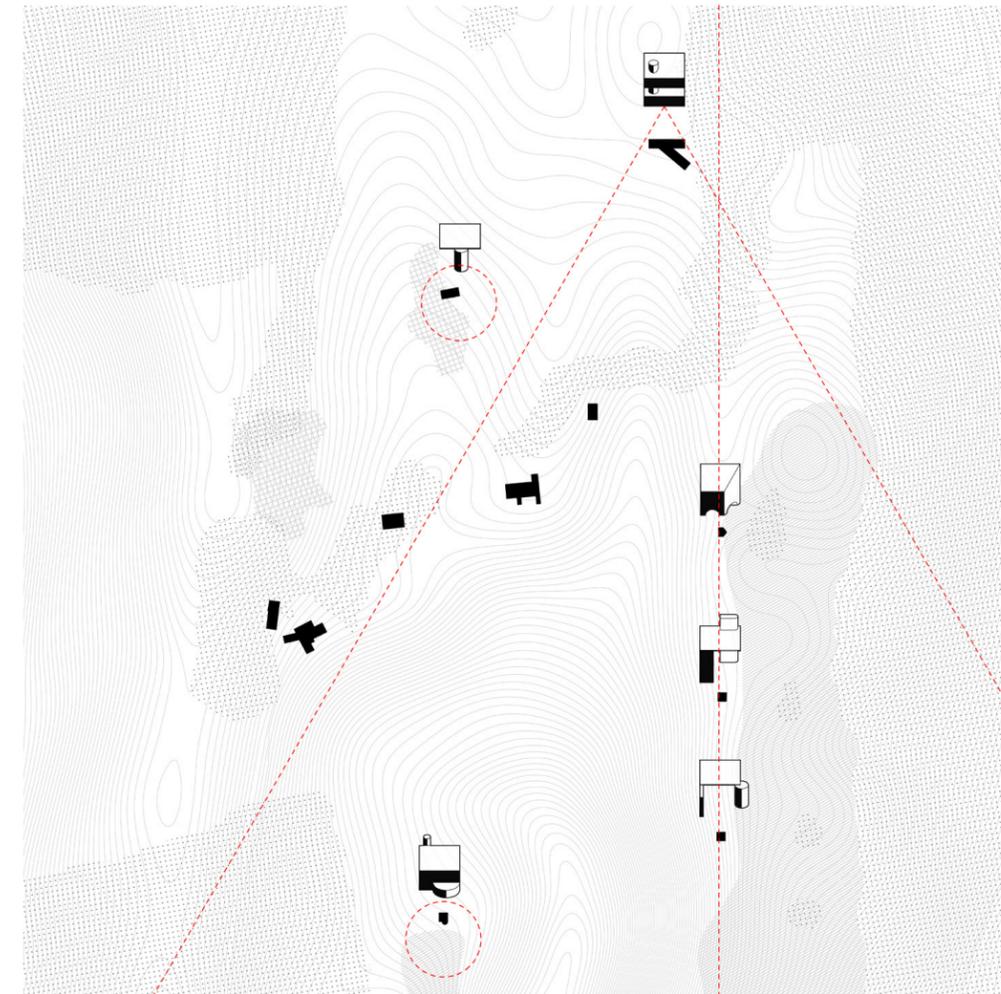
ANALYSIS of
FORMAL COMPOSITION





Formal Composition Study

Through scaling, disassembling, and reassembling the vernacular elements, we experimented to what extent do they lost the idea of vernacular



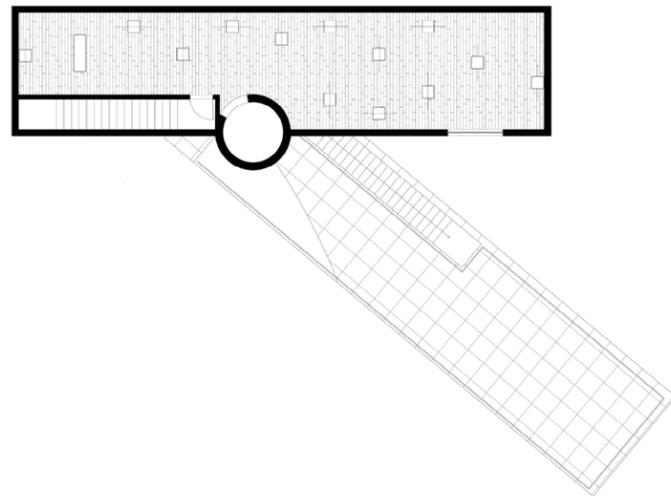
Integrated relationship with site

Similar to the site analysis above. We can establish three kinds of relationships with the site here: Framing effect for the project sitting at the high landscape area, gating effect for the projects that are axial and surrounding effect with the object that has one corresponded attraction.



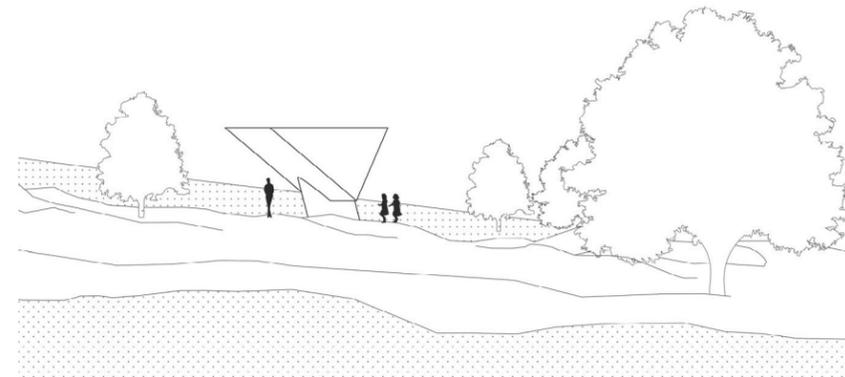
Gallery and Archive Space

The gestures of gallery space and archive space pointed toward different directions of the landscape. The “chimney” becomes the elevator connects these two programs.



Folly

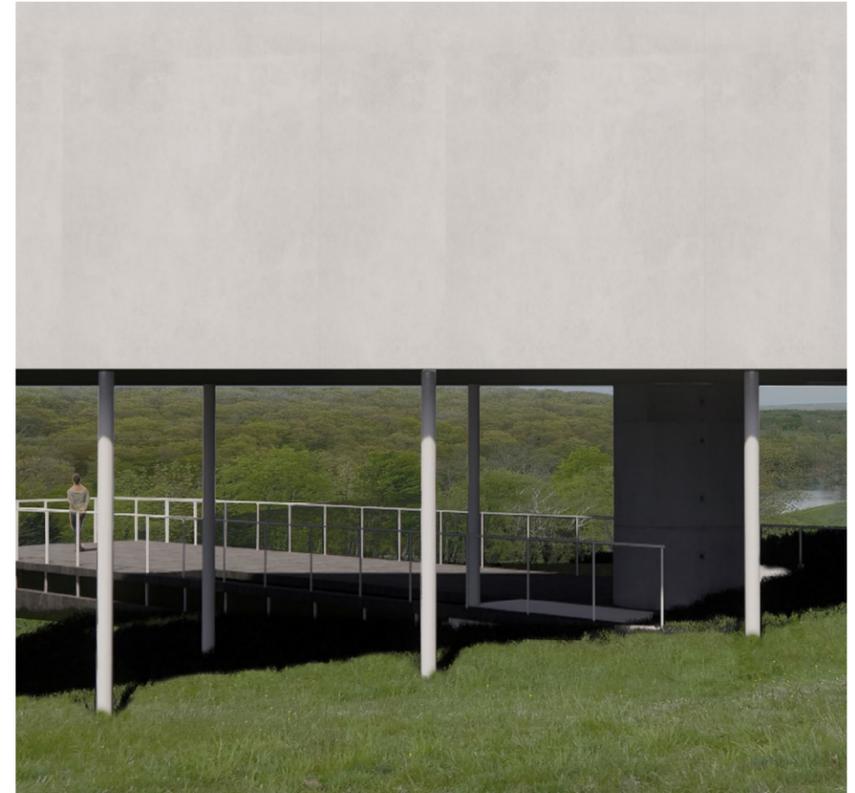
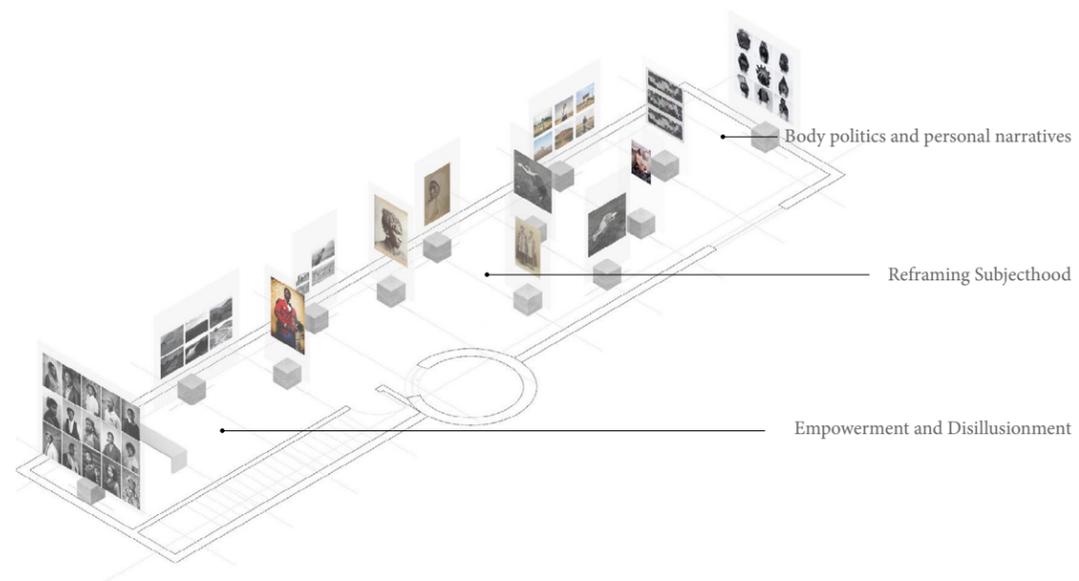
The design of the folly echoes with the rock landscape nearby. While the rough landscape provides space for sitting, climbing, the folly provides shadow for visitors to enjoy the space underneath. From a tectonic aspect, the texture of the limestone plate contrasts to that from the landscape.





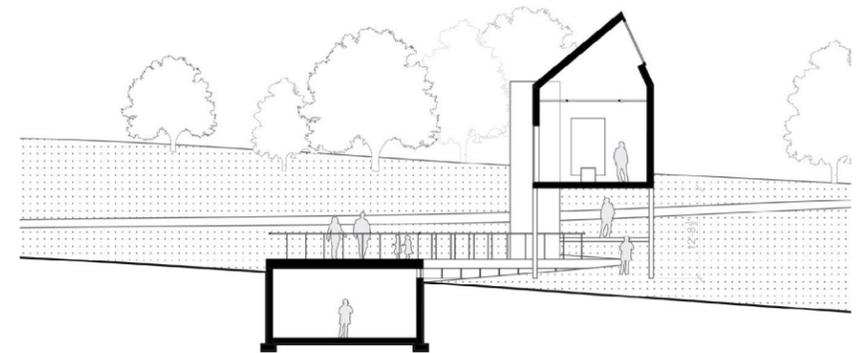
Interwoven Exhibited photographs

While from outside, the gallery seems to be a house. The “pitched roof” becomes a light apparatus for the gallery space. The exhibition design follows the logic of arranging the “objects” in the landscape; Each painting is in its presence. The experience of watching the exhibition is curated by the positions of the visitors.



Framing the Downhill Landscape

The space inbetween the the archive space and the gallery space frames the downhill scene of the river and the forest. The rooftop of the archive space extends into the field.

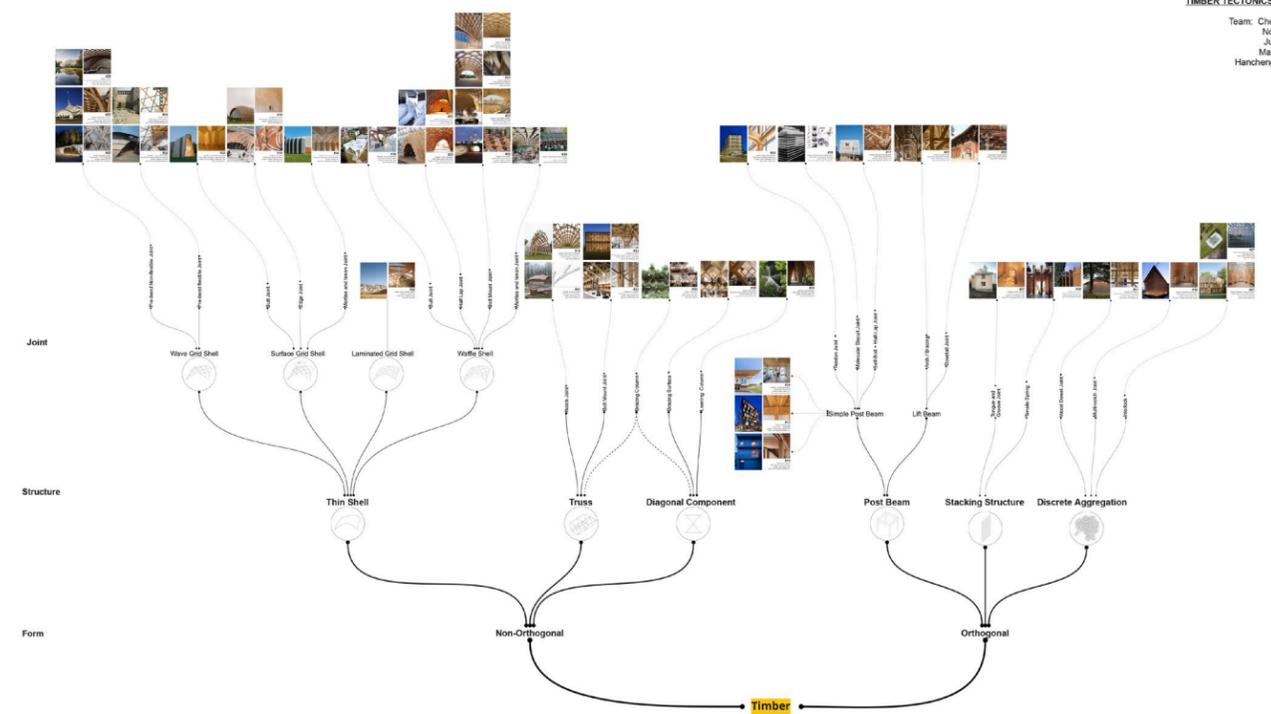


Timber Tectonic

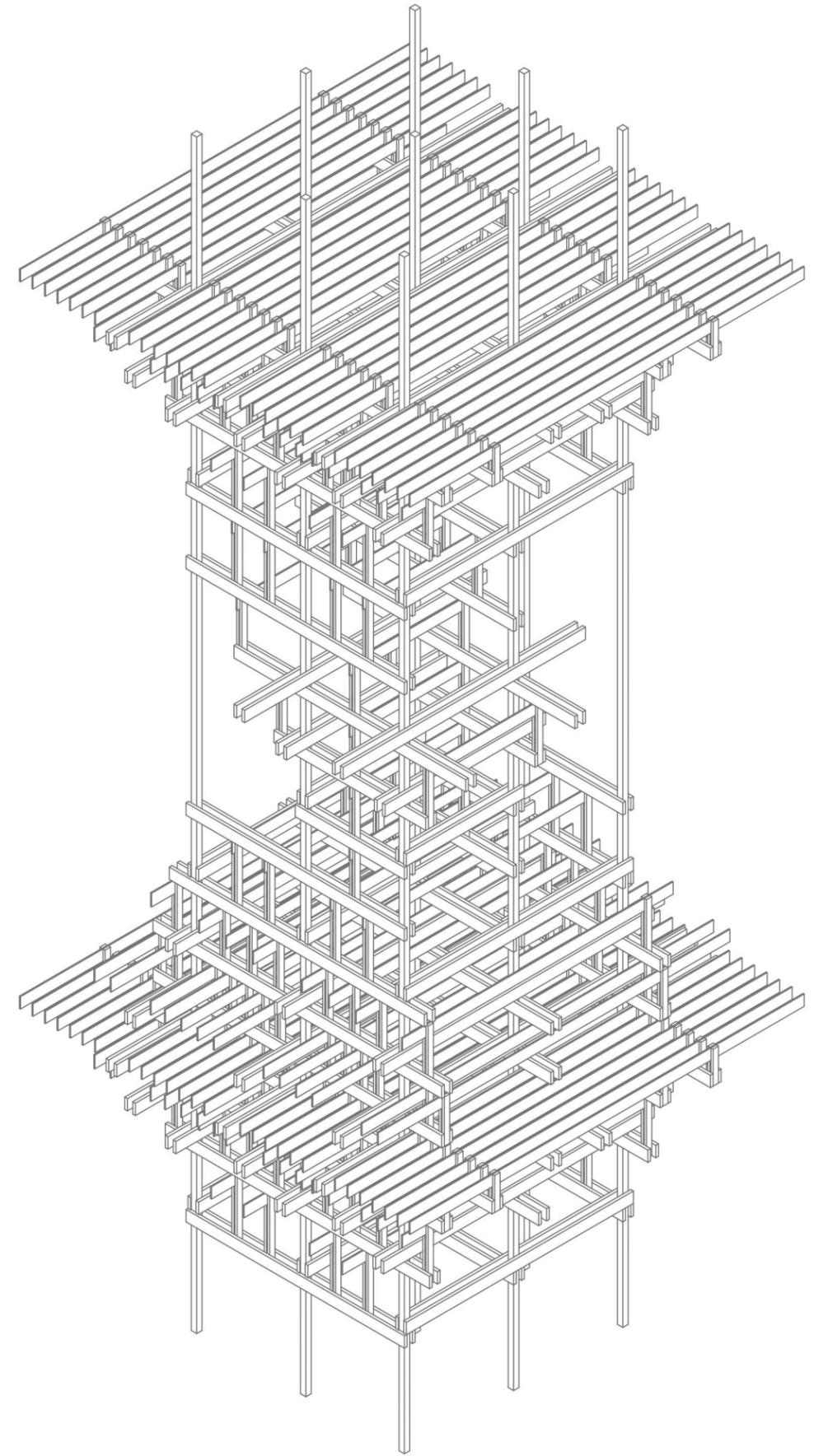
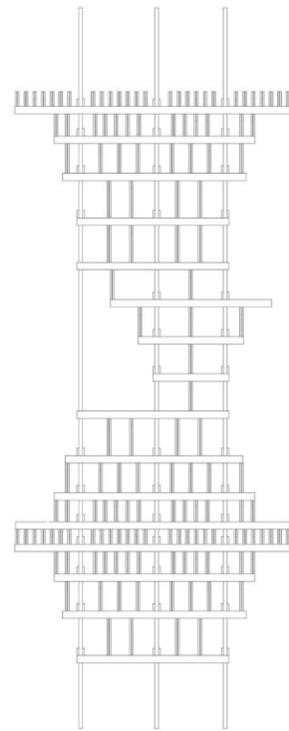
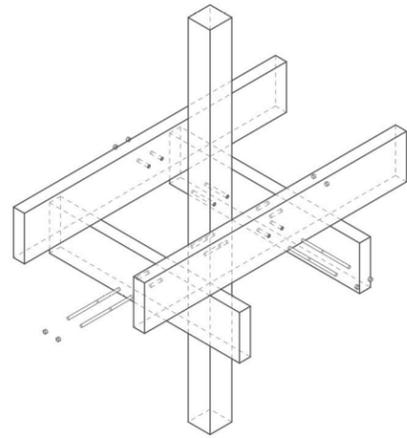
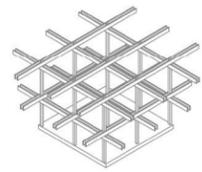
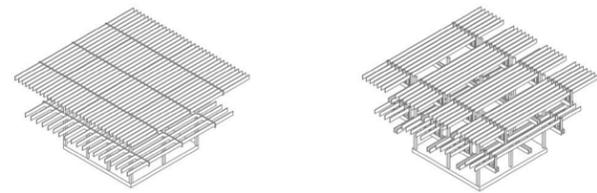
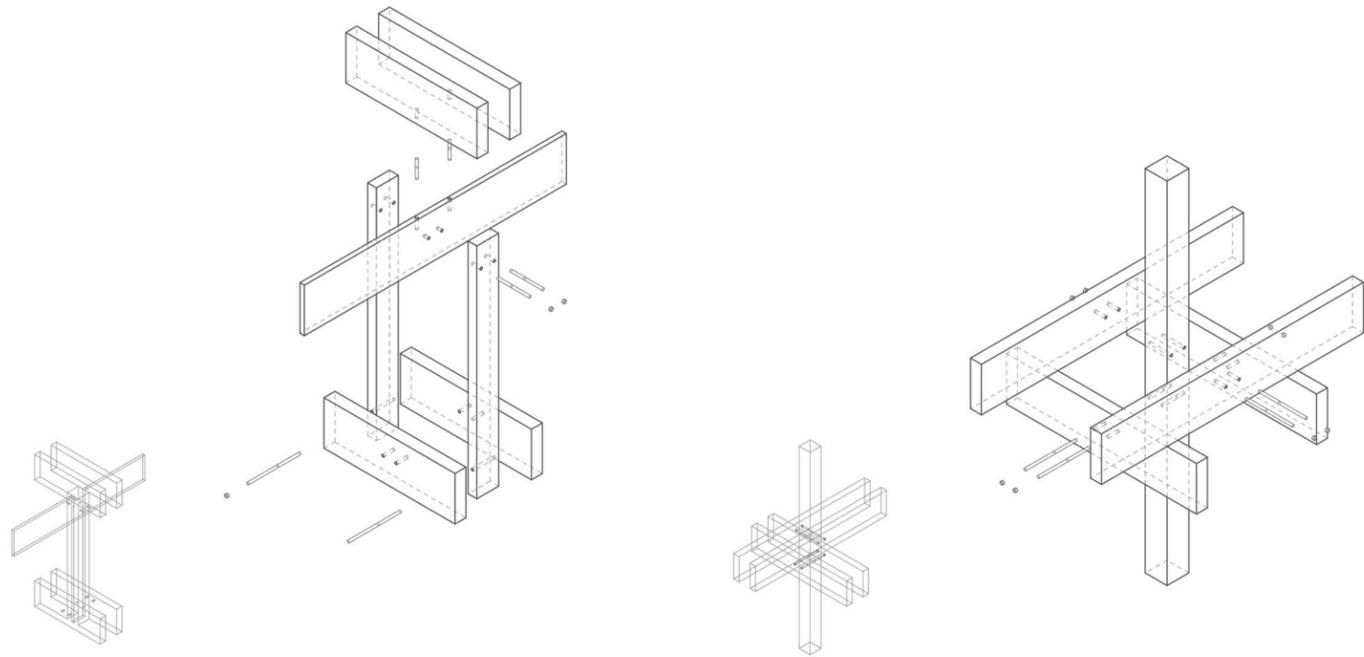
Analysis of timber precedent and design based on structural principles

Spring 2021
 Independent work + Group Work
 Instructor: Katharina Maria Kral

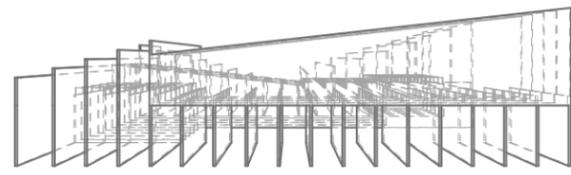
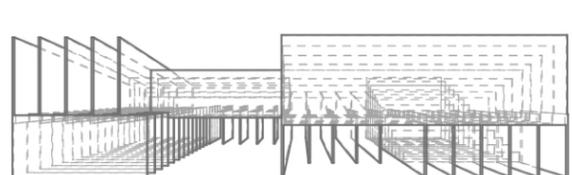
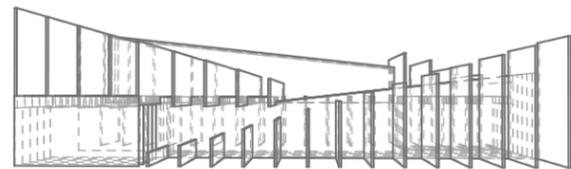
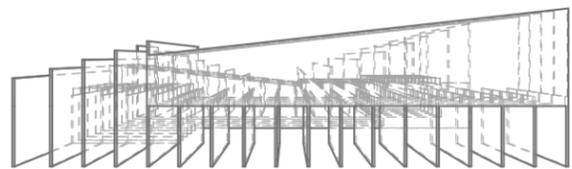
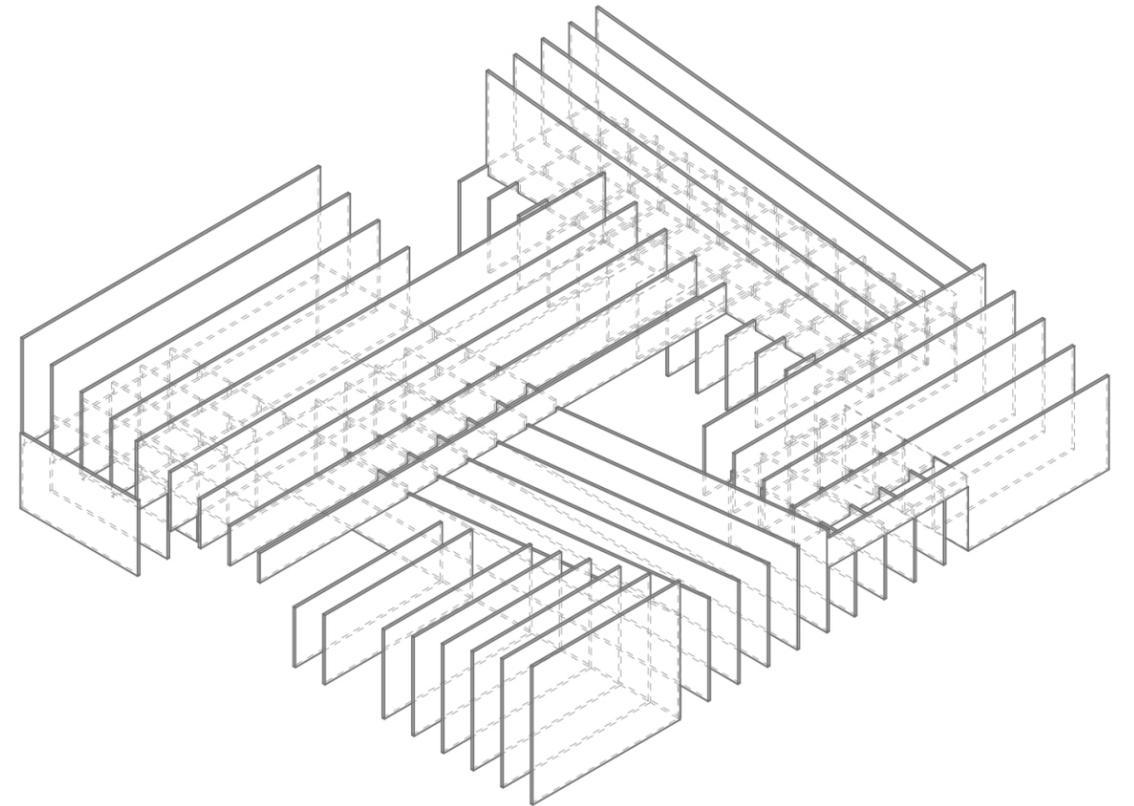
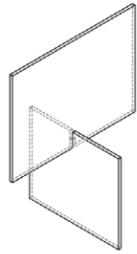
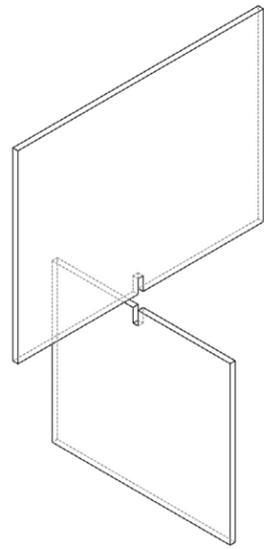
Through analysis of the timber tectonic class, I see individuality lies in the tectonic story. The tectonic of wood tells a story of a time, a location, and a method from different cultures of putting materials together. From the Harmondsworth Barn from London built-in 1426, you can see the traces of using the tool of chisel and axes to shape the elements from a wood chunk into columns and beams. While today, you can see very clean wood elements shaped by CNC machines from the example of Swatch Headquarters built by Shigeru Ban in 2019. There was an eastern way of duplicating the joints to support the roof in many temple examples. Today temple built-in 1191 is one of them. There's also a traditional Western way of building wooden frames with in-filled walls for the houses. While wooden buildings in the same technical ages have commonalities, they also have their wisdom of addressing structural, spatial, and religious needs. Through studying the precedents, we can also experiment with the possibilities for their future development.



Proposal One of Precedent Development



Proposal Two of Precedent Development



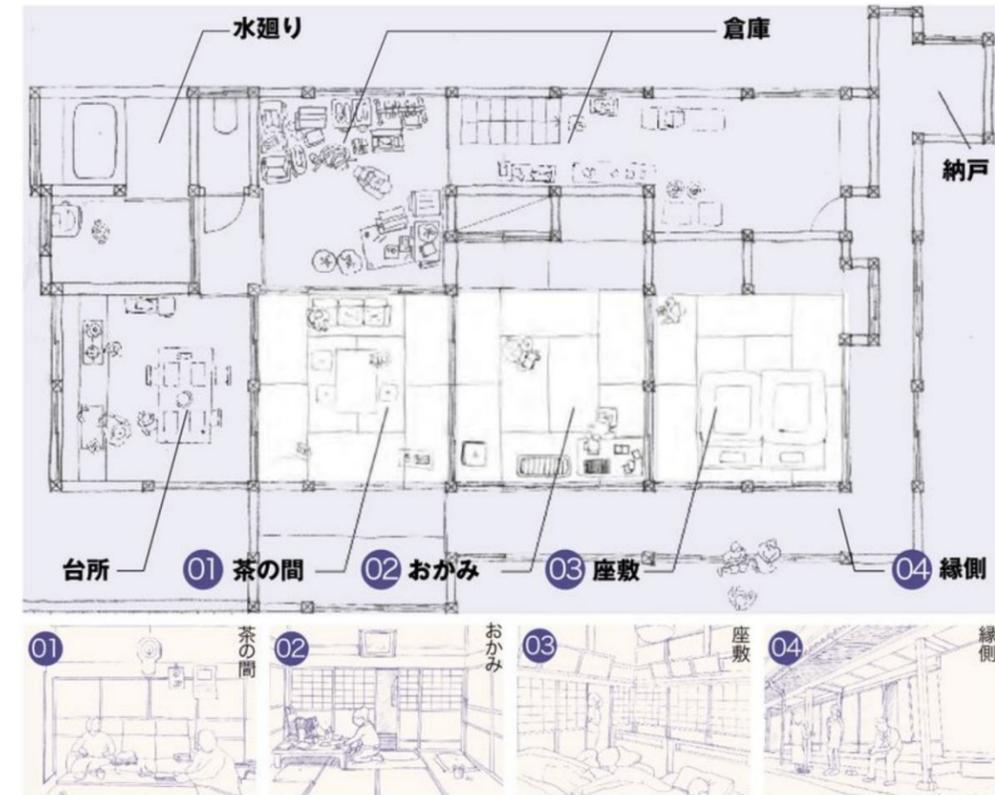
03

Fisherman's House

The way of living

Spring 2021
Seminar | Building Agency
Independent Work
Instructor: Lily Chi

In the building agency seminar, I learned that people's ways of living can also preserve individuality. Atelier Bow-wow designed for the village in Oshika after the tsunami disaster. The design of the house for fisherman is only part of the larger plan to help the village recover the economic growth and attract population growth. The housing project proposed a core house that consists of the necessary programs such as a kitchen and the restroom. It offers fishermen to add on more sections later after their economy recovered from the disaster. The core refers to as much to the basis of the house as to the basis of the fishermen's life. For example, one entry of the house leads directly to the bathroom because fishermen spend a lot of time on their ships, taking showers and changing their soiled clothes are the essential part of their life and routine. In this design, fisherman's traditional way of living is preserved, and it's innovated through having the flexibility to add on rooms based on the core.



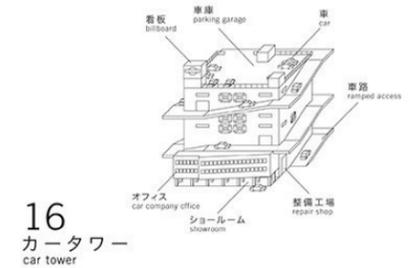
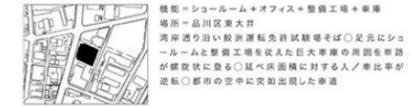
1アハウスの基本プラン



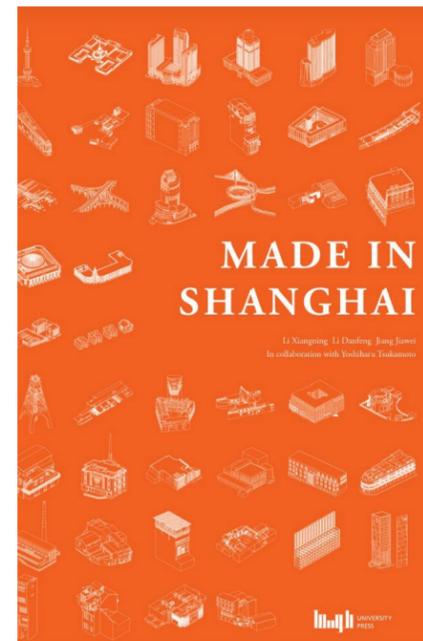
Observation and Representation
Media and Multi-Intervention

Spring 2021
Seminar | Building Agency
Independent Work
Instructor: Lily Chi

While architectural materials can empower individuality, individuality can also be empowered by architectural representations. In the case of Made in Tokyo by atelier bow-wow, each “environmental unit” included by atelier bow-wow is numbered and arranged in the same format that includes program information, location, and use. While the fixed format embeds this collection with growing potential, the isometric drawing made easy access to people who are not from the architectural profession. Even though they rendered this book as a traveler’s guidebook for Tokyo, it never lost its critical condemn for the domination of neoliberalism.



function: car showroom + office + repair shop + parking garage
site: Higashi-oi, Shinagawa-ku
- along Wangan street and near the Samezu car licencing board
- single package-building for all aspects of car service
- an external car access road spirals around the tower made up of showroom, offices and carpark
- a proportional flip between a building's usual numbers of people compared to numbers of cars
- suddenly, a road flies through the middle of the city's air space

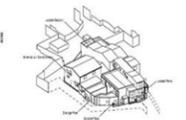


The book cover of 'Curved Alley' by Li Xiangang, Li Daxing, and Jiang Jiewei.



44 CURVED ALLEY

"Curved Alley" is the nickname for a high-density street structure of about 100-year-old houses in Shanghai. It is a narrow alleyway that has been transformed into a modern residential building. The building is a curved structure that follows the curve of the alleyway. It is a unique architectural form that has been created through a process of urban regeneration. The building is a mix of old and new, with traditional Chinese architectural elements and modern residential amenities. It is a prime example of how urban regeneration can be done in a way that respects the existing urban fabric while providing modern living conditions for its residents.

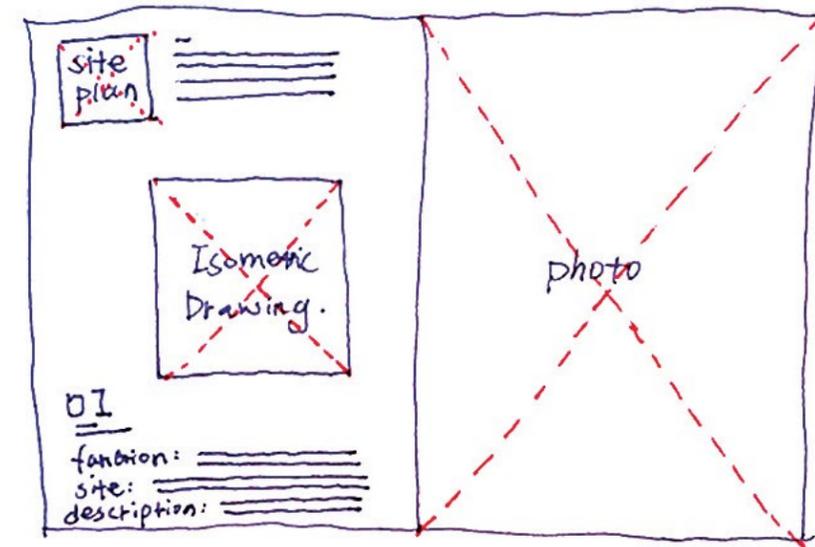
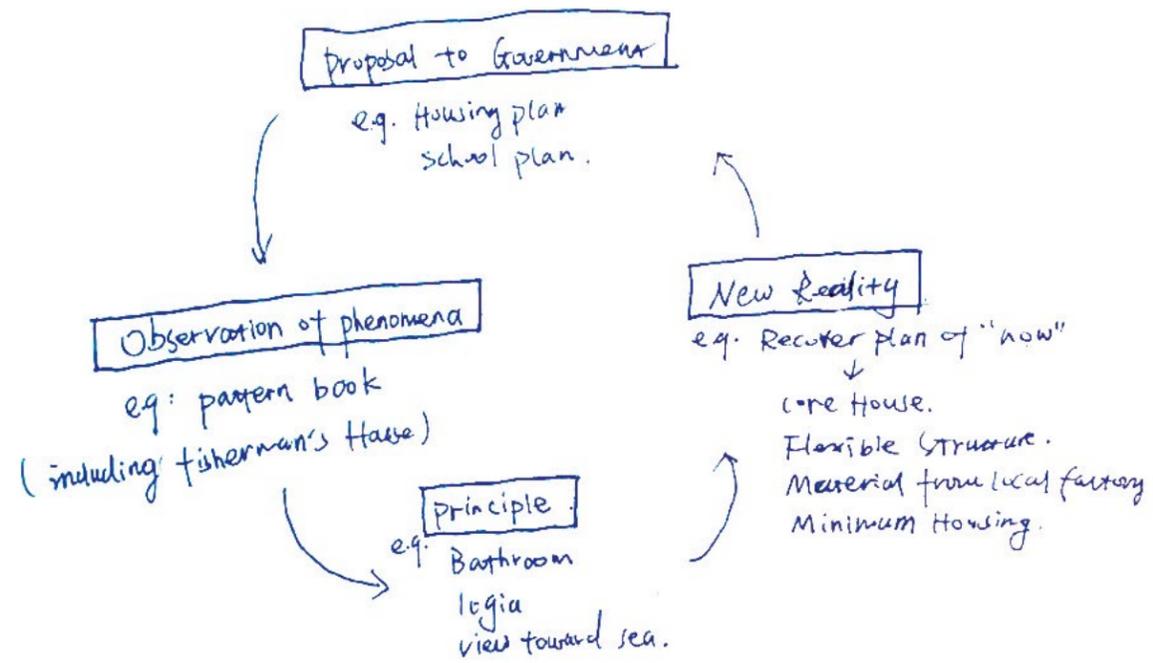


As an architect & planner to help an old city handle its old planning context, the 'Curved Alley' is a prime example of how urban regeneration can be done in a way that respects the existing urban fabric while providing modern living conditions for its residents. The building is a mix of old and new, with traditional Chinese architectural elements and modern residential amenities. It is a prime example of how urban regeneration can be done in a way that respects the existing urban fabric while providing modern living conditions for its residents.



Another example of how different media could represent one concept is Atelier Bow-wow's other strategies in the Oshika rebuilding process. Besides the fisherman's house proposal, they made a pattern book that describes Oshika's landscape patterns and the relationship with the water. It analyzed and explained to fisherman how they could recover their home and relation to the water. They also collaborated with the government to build a fishing school. To do it, they made a textbook together with the local fishermen that teach the villagers the fishing techniques and methods of making the nets.





Moment of Your City. insert

Conclusion

Facing the challenge of homogeneity brought by globalization, I realized that discovering the individuality of places or people would be meaningful. In the project “This is Not Vernacular” I created a feeling of unfamiliarity from the familiar elements in order to foster individuality. In the project “Timber Tectonic” I explored the individuality of the timber embedded in different types of joints and structural prototypes. In the research carried about “Fisherman’s House”, a project by Atelier Bow-Wow, I discovered that the individuality of the fishermen’s group in the Oshika island lies in the habits of living. In the project “Made in Tokyo” by the same office, I saw the individuality of a place defined through observation and representation. Recognizing individuality in common places is not meant to segregate individuals, but to create a platform for a more diverse and respectful merging.

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