

Delta Strikes Back:
Nine Projects for
El Haraneyah

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DELTA STRIKES BACK

Andrej Badin, Justyna Chmielewska,
Jana Crepon, Ruben Dahmen, Lada Hršak,
Tobias Kumkar, Billy Nolan, Quita Schabracq,
Sharon Sportel, Wouter van der Velpen,
Silko van der Vliet, Robert Younger

Delta Strikes Back: Nine projects for El Haraneya

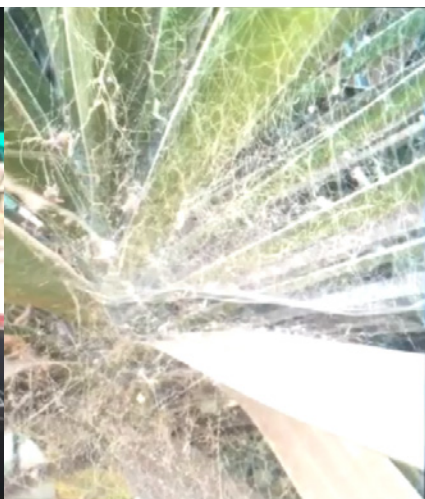
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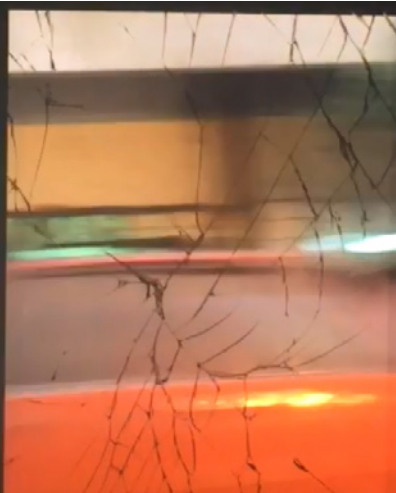
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Ruben Dahmen, first page;
"Dust moves, Dust settles"
Andrej Badin, p. 4-5;
"Wind" Quita Schabracq, p. 6-7;
"P5" Sharon Sportel, previous page

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Book I

Nine Projects

The Cairo Delta Metropolis:

Between the No Longer and the Not Yet

Lada Hršak, Jana Crepon, Billy Nolan, Holger Gladys

Cairo. Home to twenty million people, bursting at the seams. An archipelago of planned and unplanned districts. How should this metropolis prepare for future growth? 'Delta Strikes Back' focuses on the rapidly urbanising agricultural landscape within the Nile Delta. Environmental pressure, 'water wars' and climate change make redefining the relationship between Cairo and the Delta a matter of urgency. 'Delta Strikes Back' gives voice to forces of nature as agents of the Delta in co-creating the new megalopolis.

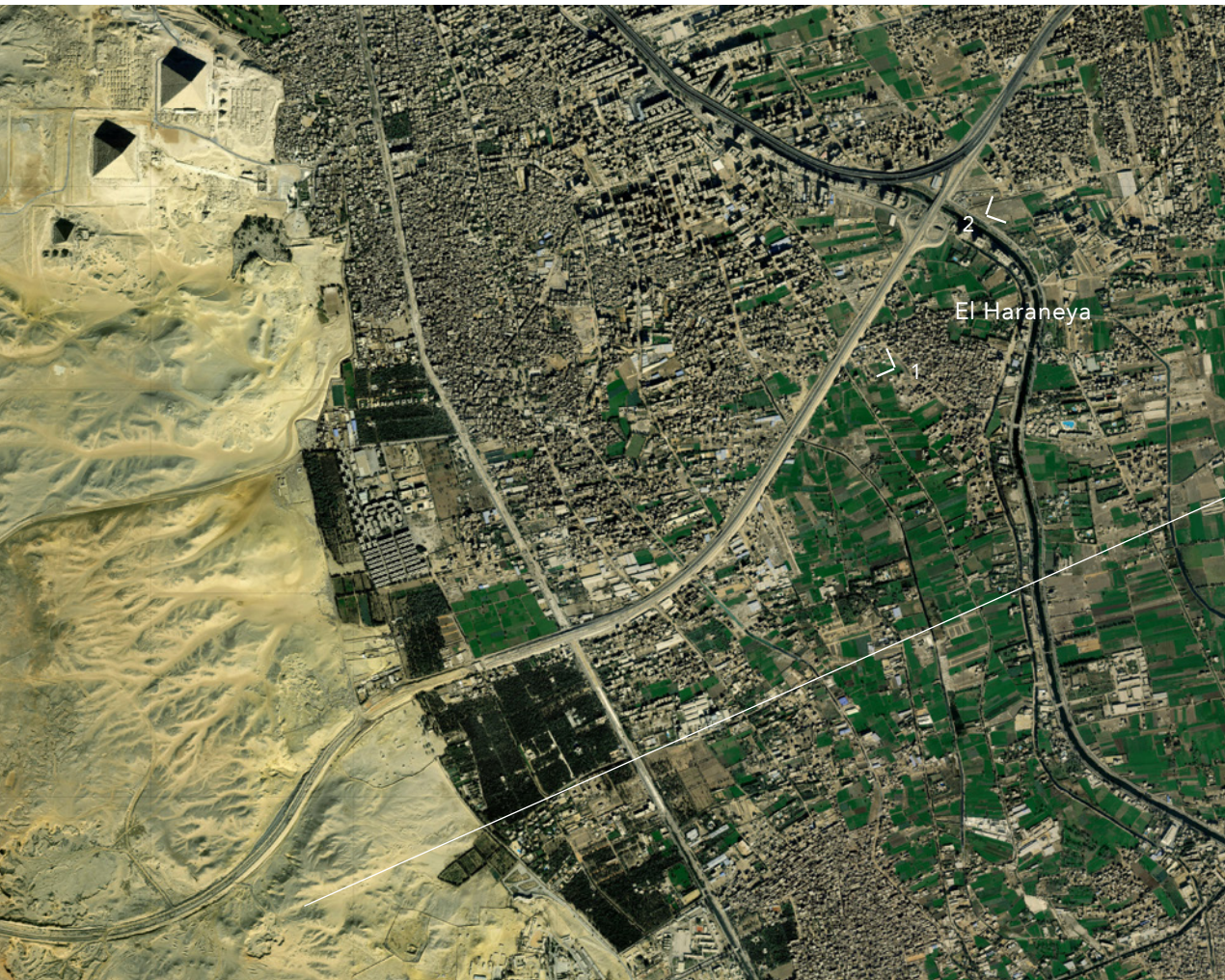
The case study centres on the peri-urban landscape of Al Haraneya at the southern edge of Giza, an area that rapid urbanisation could turn into just another massive housing district. Peri-urban areas appear unplanned, yet follow a strict logic of utilising the landscape layout for urban development, resulting in constellations with little or no infrastructure, and growing environmental and social problems. The studio views the rural-urban fringe as a landscape in its own right, a place to forge new coalitions between 'nature and culture'.

Run in parallel between the Amsterdam Academy of Architecture and the German University in Cairo, the studio started with a week-long workshop and study trip in Cairo in September 2017. Dutch and Egyptian students start with the following questions:

As the studio looked at a broad range of scales, what are the specific conditions at the scale of the delta, the green corridor and the neighbourhood? Can we establish ecological connections across the valley? How can nature and culture reconnect to add new layers of practice to the contemporary megalopolis? How can architecture and landscape act together to generate new settlement patterns? Which traces, elements, layers and traditions of ancient and current agriculture can inspire, influence and alter the strict logic of so-called informal urban transformation?

How can the Delta strike back at urban developments - with one big blow or subtle interventions?

The project area spans from the Sahara desert to the Nile river, crossing the urban-rural binary of El Haraneya, map, 2017 DigitalGlobe satellite imagery, EPSG 6312, orig. scale 1:10 000



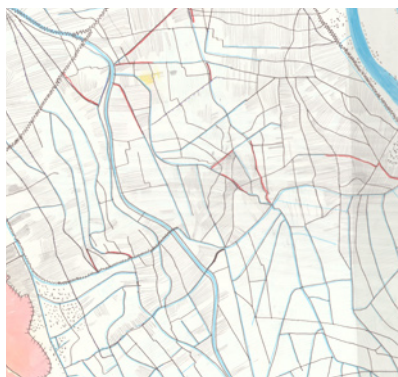
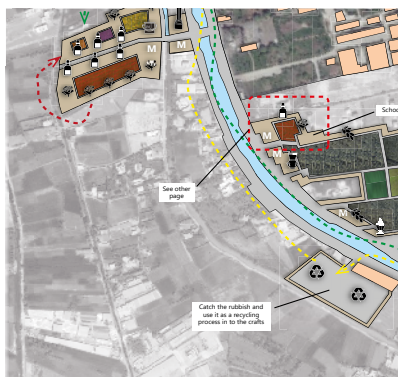
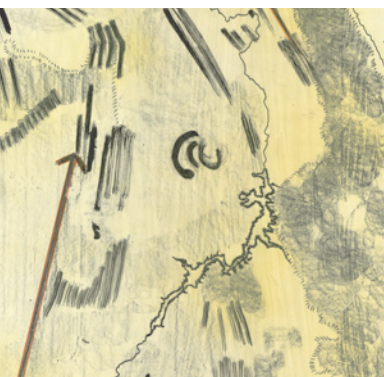
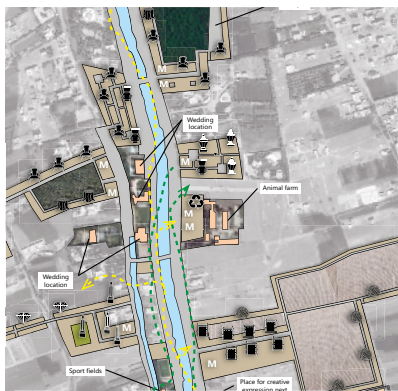
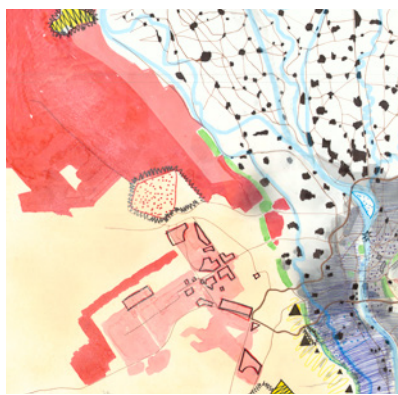
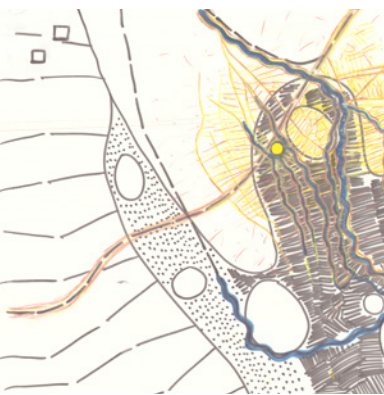
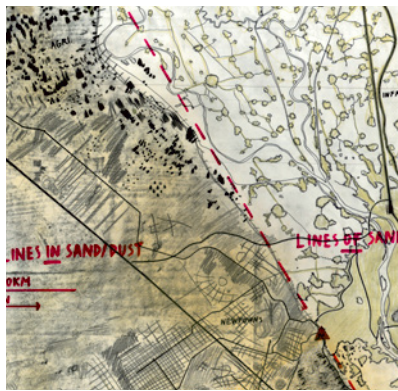
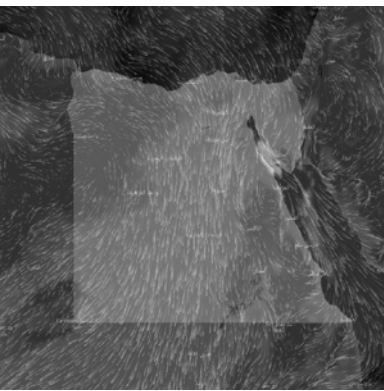


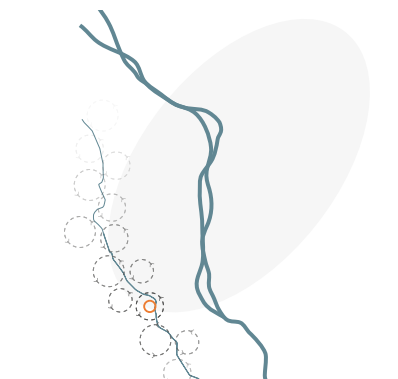
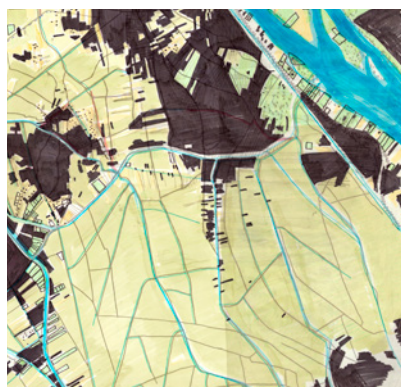
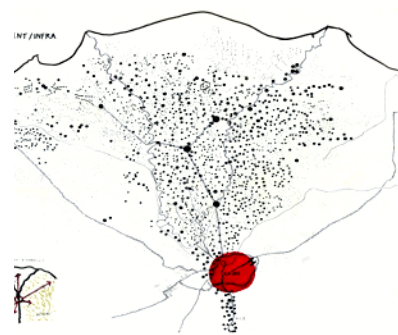
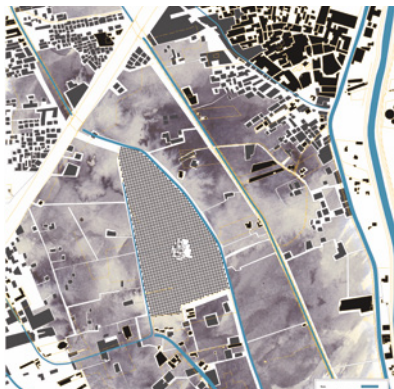
El Haraneya project site, left-1, right-2,
for location see previous page, pho-
tohraphs, Lada Hršak, 2017





Excerpts from analyses on multiple scales made through visits to El Haraneya, Sahara, Cairo and Giza, mult. authors





Proposed landfill, view from the recycling ring, render collage, AB



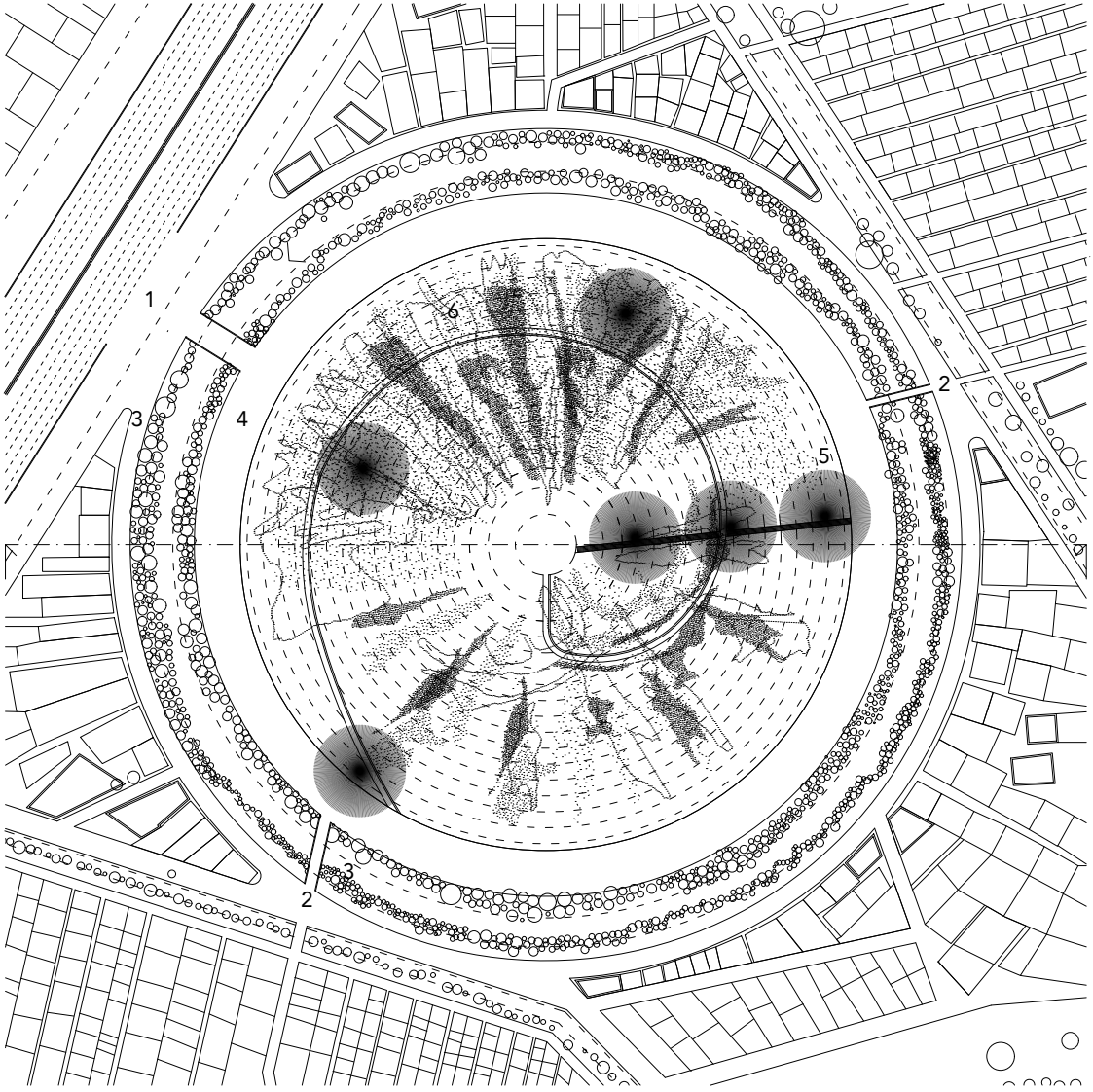
Landscape of Dust

Andrej Badin

Old landscape is lost. Landscape of Dust is my personal search through mineral dust and its properties, ranging from global to microscopic, resulting in an architecture of a hill with mushrooms, slowly encircled by the city. Dust is used to experiment with a new natural succession on a landfill.

The all-embracing yellowness of Cairo led me to the seasonal Khamaseen windstorms and the traces they leave around the Nile. Soil turns into dust thanks to them and economy, housing and free waste disposal. Dust Topography mediates between these dynamics and turns people's waste into money by skipping a middleman - people bring garbage to the proposed site themselves - resulting in a primitive conical landfill 200m wide and 52m tall, with an aspect of 30 degrees. Textiles lay under it and papyrus filters its pollution in a 272m-wide water basin frame. Remaining space is used for recycling and infrastructure. Topographical exactness is ensured by gas exhaust pipes that are raised with every new level of waste, burning with thorium lanterns. Wildfires occur when the landfill is young, speeding natural succession that on a sandy clay cover develops into a dry and hostile landscape hardened by dust. On a path to the top supported by a perforated double textile, people pick fungi that the Khamaseen has sown and encounter both emptiness and life forms. Insects. Fungus. Succulents. Tumbleweed. Ghaf.

- Dust topography, AB, plan:
- 1 motorway entrance
 - 2 neighbourhood entrance, continuous urban fabric behind
 - 3 recycling ring road
 - 4 dumping ring road
 - 5 lighting
 - 6 fungi



Dust topography, AB, section and detail:

- 1 leachate protection, clay below
- 2 drainage, water collection and filtering
- 3 sand/clay stretch protection
- 4 gas recovery (thorium burning lantern)
- 5 wet woven textile for mushroom roots
- 6 clay+sand/dust+tomatoes mix 50/50, experiment in natural dust succession

terrain modelling

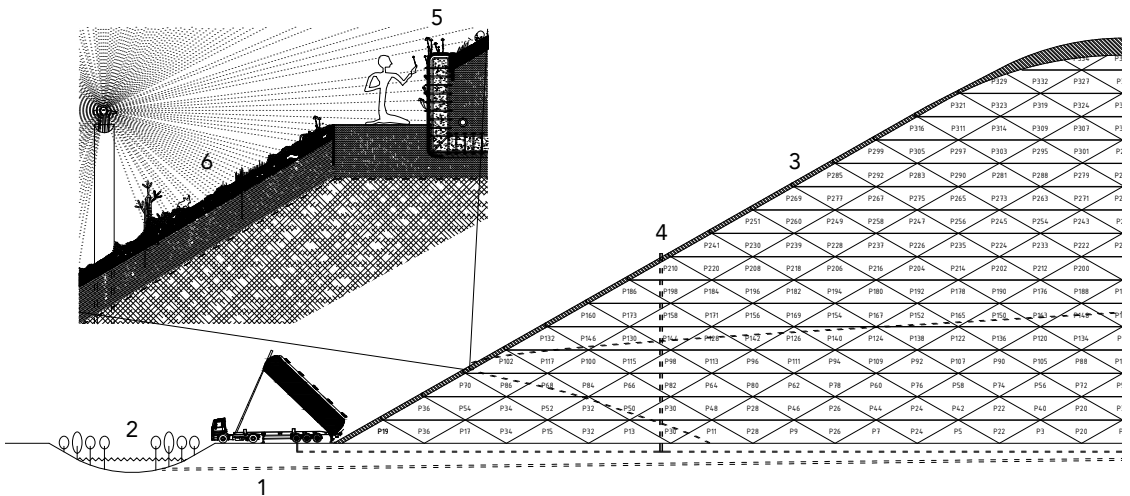
drainage and gas

pile circle 1-19

pile circle 19-71

pile circle 71-186

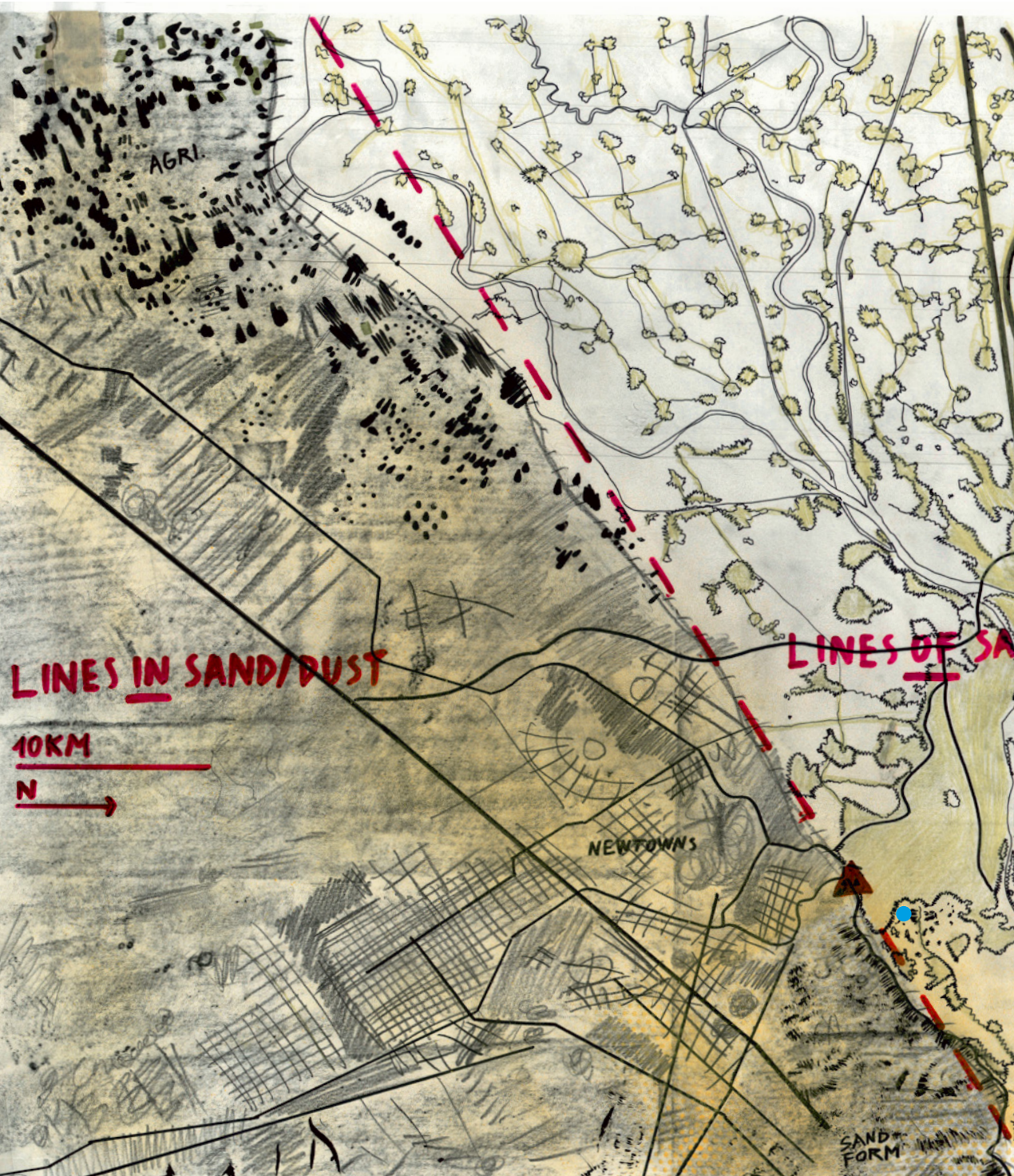
pile 336 and cover



Project site ●

Bottom - traces of the Khamaseen sand-storm mapped on top of 2017 DigitalGlobe satellite imagery, EPSG 6312, orig. scale 1:100 000, hand drawing, 0.75x2m, AB

Top - *Aspergillus sydowii* fungus (part of the dusty particles blown by Khamaseen) growing on a tomato, scale 5:1





Women's Date Garden, view towards the entrance for women, render collage, SS



Women's Date Garden

Sharon Sportel

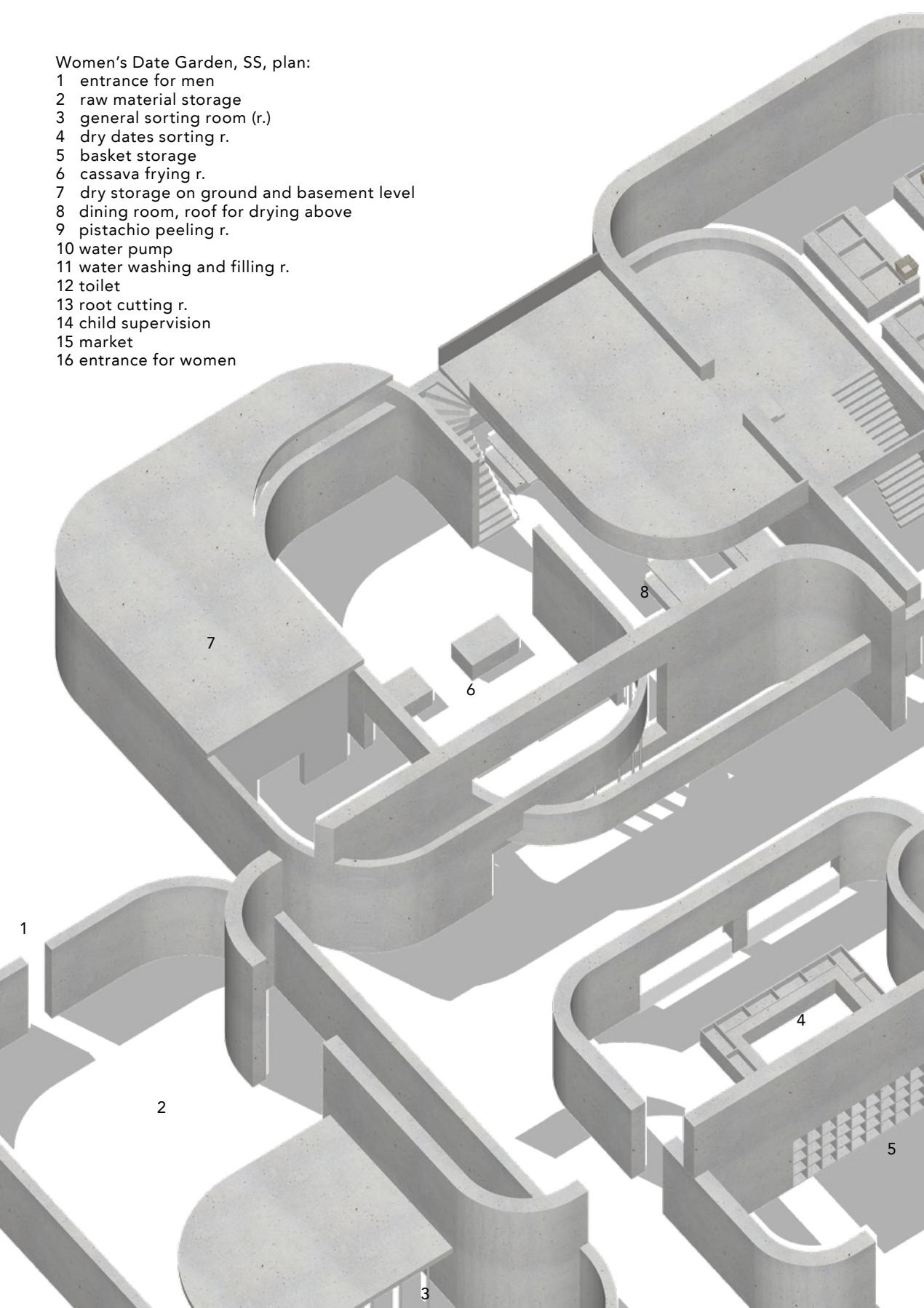
The life of women in Al Haraneya is lived with a great respect for Sharia law. With great devotion to their community and families, the space is limited to the street they live in, which is becoming denser and denser. During conversations with them in the village, they mentioned that boredom increased when the village became more and more enclosed as a result of the extreme increase in new buildings. Some of the women started their own chicken or vegetable shop to be able to speak to other people than their relatives living in the same street. This way the women of Al Haraneya sought as much freedom as they could get.

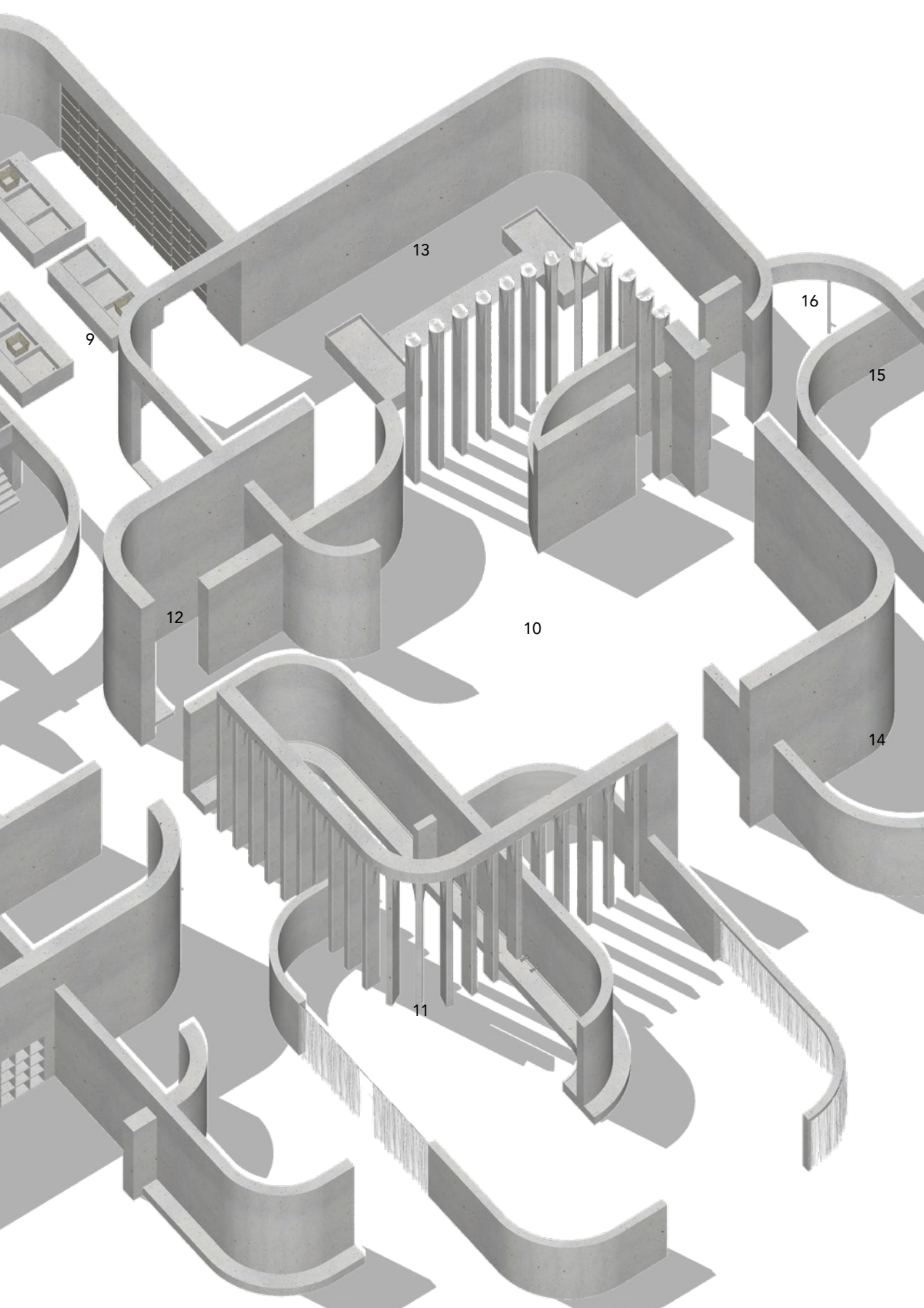
The date garden for women, placed in the middle of a date palm plantation.

Women can fulfil their ambition to provide for their families, broaden their action radius and also have a relaxed time in nature. The garden is a place where they cook, peel and sell the dates. In the future, the plantation will still be in agricultural use in the midst of the urban settlements.

Women's Date Garden, SS, plan:

- 1 entrance for men
- 2 raw material storage
- 3 general sorting room (r.)
- 4 dry dates sorting r.
- 5 basket storage
- 6 cassava frying r.
- 7 dry storage on ground and basement level
- 8 dining room, roof for drying above
- 9 pistachio peeling r.
- 10 water pump
- 11 water washing and filling r.
- 12 toilet
- 13 root cutting r.
- 14 child supervision
- 15 market
- 16 entrance for women





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View from the center of pistachio peeling room, ltr - central corridors of Women's Date Garden, entrance to roof for drying, dining room, render collage, SS





A collection of various small, colorful geometric shapes and structures, including wooden blocks, plastic pieces, and metal fasteners, arranged on a dark surface. The items are organized into several groups: a top row with two long wooden strips; a middle section with a grid of small wooden squares and a vertical strip of blue and yellow blocks; a bottom section with a grid of small wooden squares and a vertical strip of blue and yellow blocks; and a right side with a grid of small green squares and a vertical strip of blue and yellow blocks. The items are arranged in a way that suggests they are components of a larger assembly or a study of geometric forms.

Sawiaan

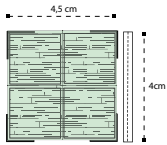
Robert Younger

Egypt is in a phase of change. With a dysfunctional government, this change is being carried out by the people. There is no trust in the nation, therefore changes have to be made in the democratic entity of neighbourhoods. A big part of the housing in Cairo is created without any governmental supervision. If this is possible for housing, then the next logical step is informal city planning. Can we scale up the development and make public space, infrastructure or even produce our own energy? This project is to enable neighbourhoods to make their own urban fabric. Everybody becomes an urban designer, everybody has a voice.

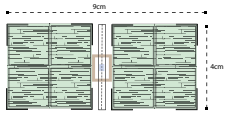
A major inspiration for this project was a motorway exit constructed by the adjoining neighbourhood. It shows that infrastructure and public amenities, usually implemented by the government, can be done by the people themselves.

This game is a platform to discuss, to test and to dream up your neighbourhood. It becomes part of the culture and educates people on the basic tools and questions of urbanism. The set of rules is adaptable to any scenario. Playing pieces can be invented and different grids can be applied.

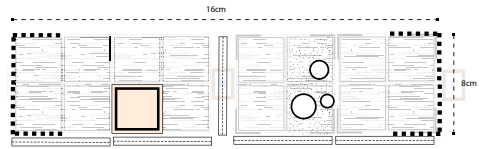
Rules of the game, schemes, RY.
 The rules apply to different grid types.
 The grid is scaled up from a building plot
 to a 4 ha sample of urban fabric



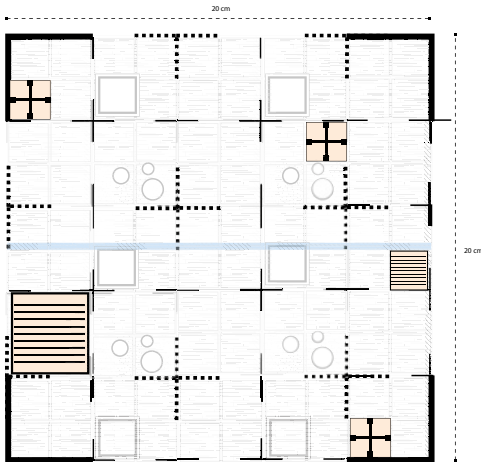
A plot has to contain 4*4 housing. 4*4 agriculture and has to be connected to a street on one side.



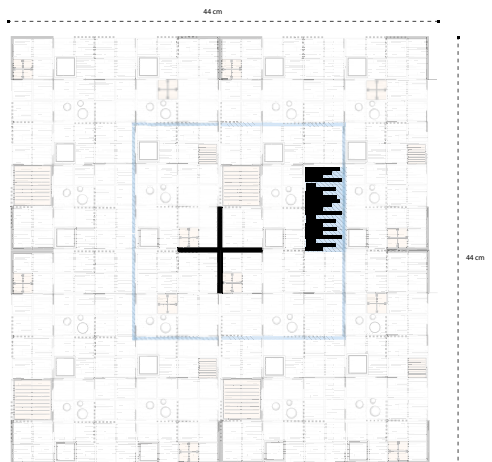
A block has to have a collective vertical routing (Quita's project).



A feddan/block has to contain a waste disposal facility & has to connect to a pocket park.

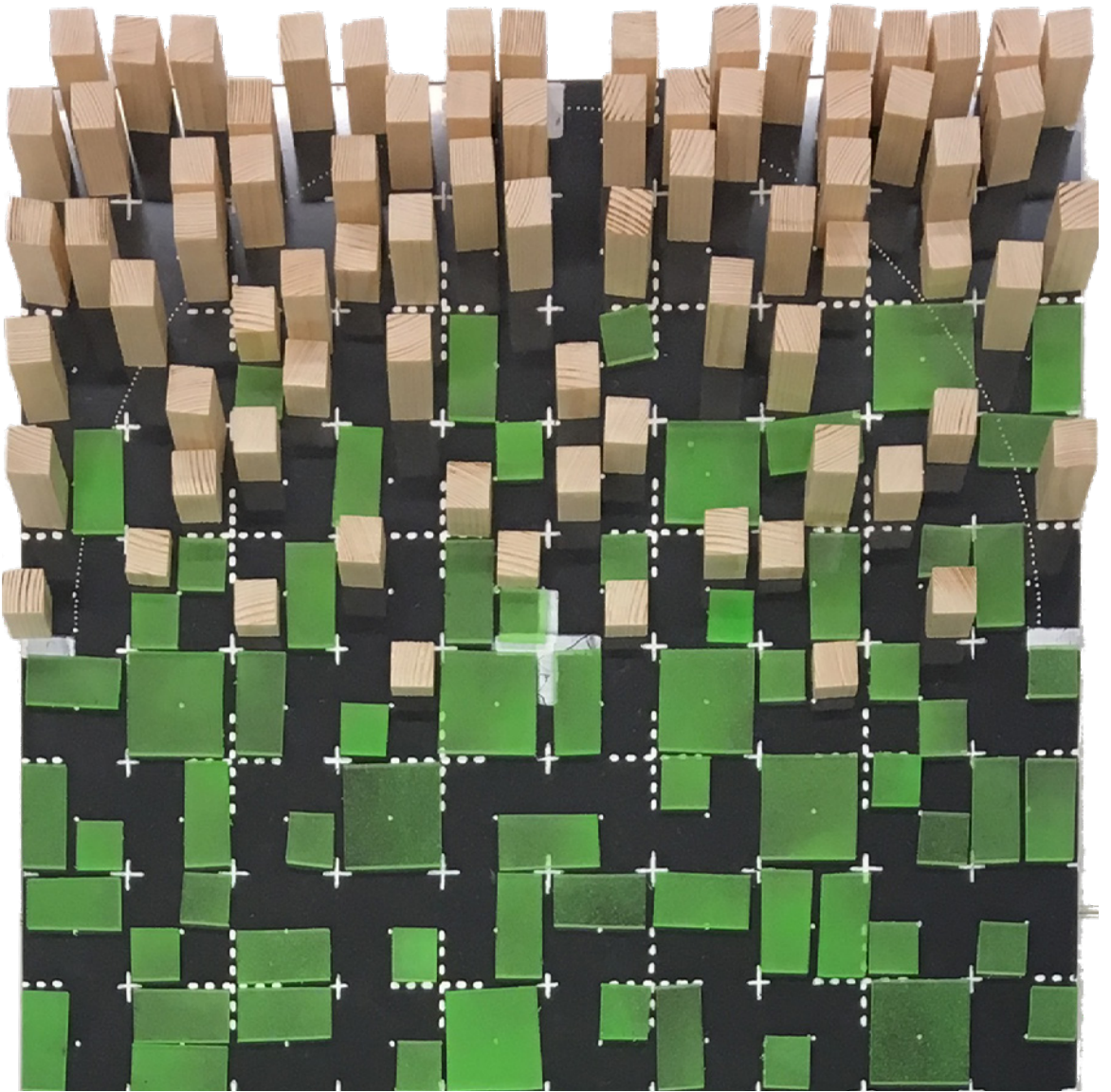


The Quadrant needs to contain 8 fields of energy-producing devices. The quadrant needs to be crossed by a canal. The street network has to connect to the exit road.

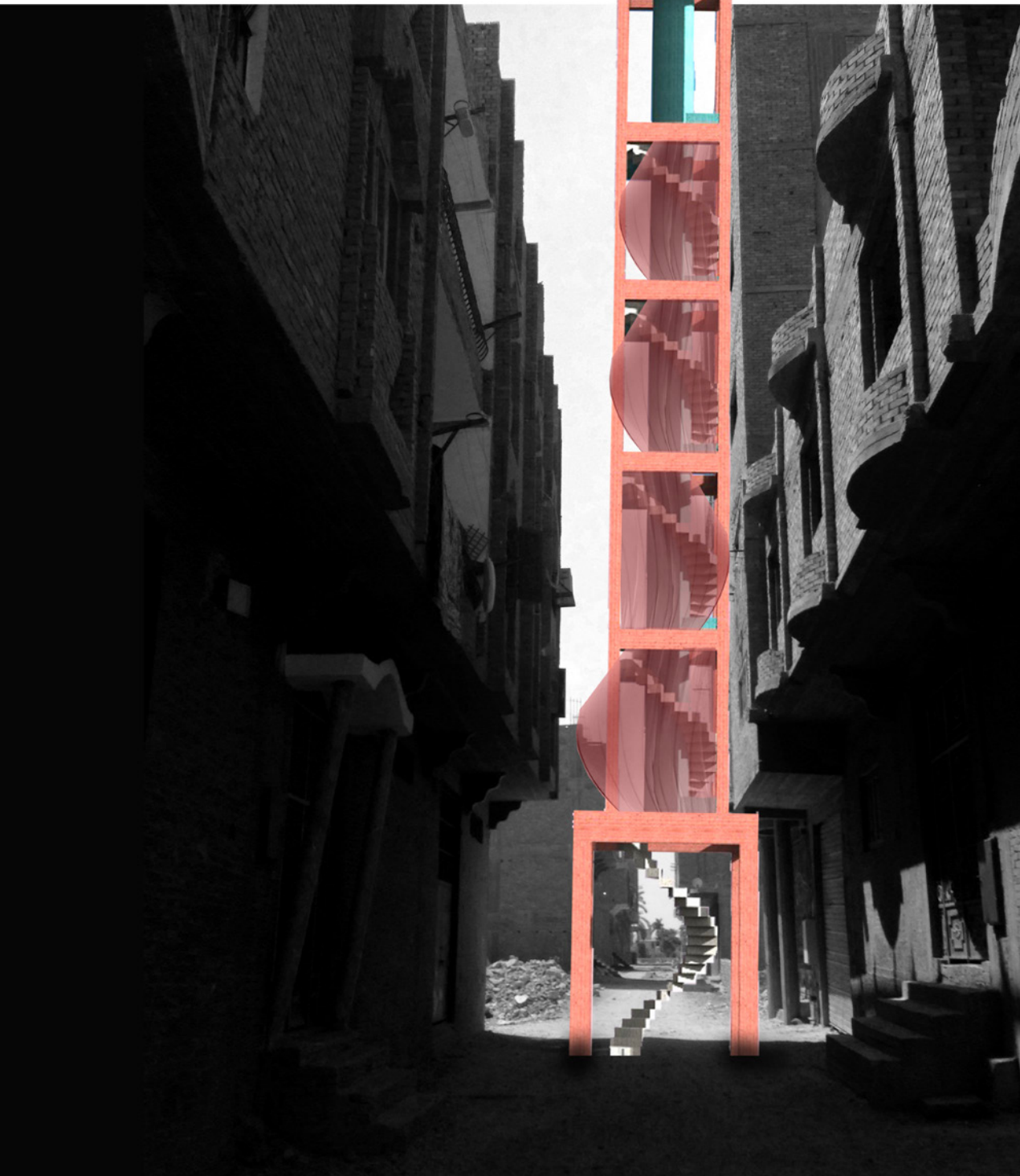


The neighbourhood has to facilitate a connected watersystem. The Van der Vliet filtering system has to be integrated into it.

Cut-out of the project: a board game to be played by the current dwellers teaching rules and questions of urbanism, RY



View towards the proposed Windcatcher,
render collage, QS



Freedom of Air
Quita Schabracq

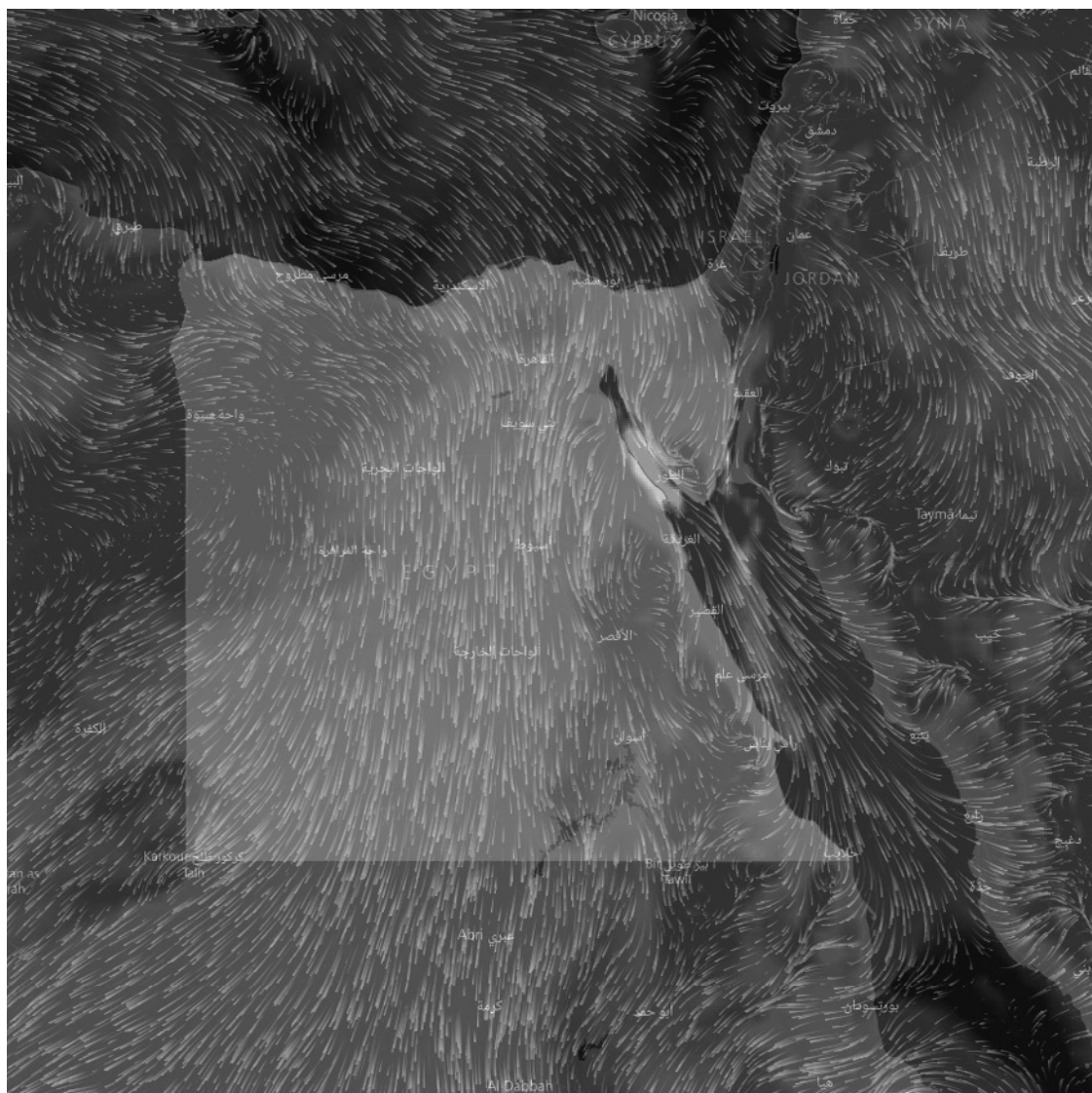
Once you get out of the city, you notice how oppressive the smog was. A thick blanket prevents any air from escaping the streets. As if they never knew healthy air, people intoxicate themselves with shisha and cigarettes, smoking together or alone.

In the desert, the air is fresh. The vast planes of land allow wind to blow all day through, bringing sounds, music and stories. Only at night, when air temperature drops to the land temperature, the wind settles down and silence remains.

In the area of Haraneya, we still experience the freedom of the air. Children flying their kites in the open fields, a breeze slowly moves the crops. What is to become of this soon-to-be city? Will the air be captured within the stone environment? Is it possible to keep it moving? To blow the streets clean and tell the stories of the agricultural past?

This proposal aims to integrate the natural quality of the wind for cooling, air circulation and social activity into the emerging urban fabric and thus improve the quality of life.

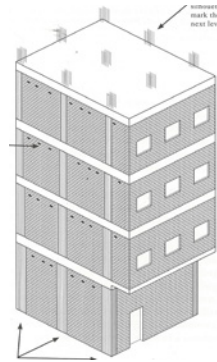
Windflow of Egypt, map



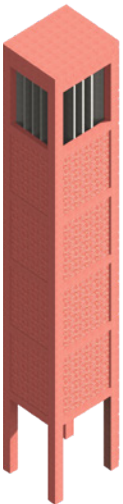
Old techniques for air ventilation combined with the new typology. The concrete web encroaches on the urban fabric. Water is given a new function for the cooling of air, drawings, QS



The old vernacular: malkaf (windcatcher) on ancient Egyptian house



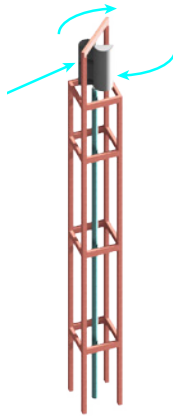
The new vernacular: self-built concrete structure with brick infill; Source: 'Housing Cairo - The Informal Response'



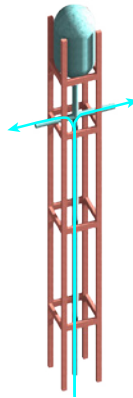
Windcatcher/
Chimney



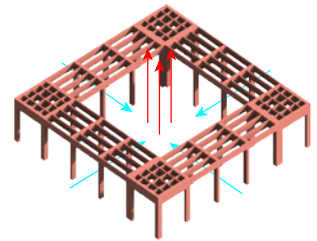
Windcatcher/
Public Staircase



Windmill/Water
Pump

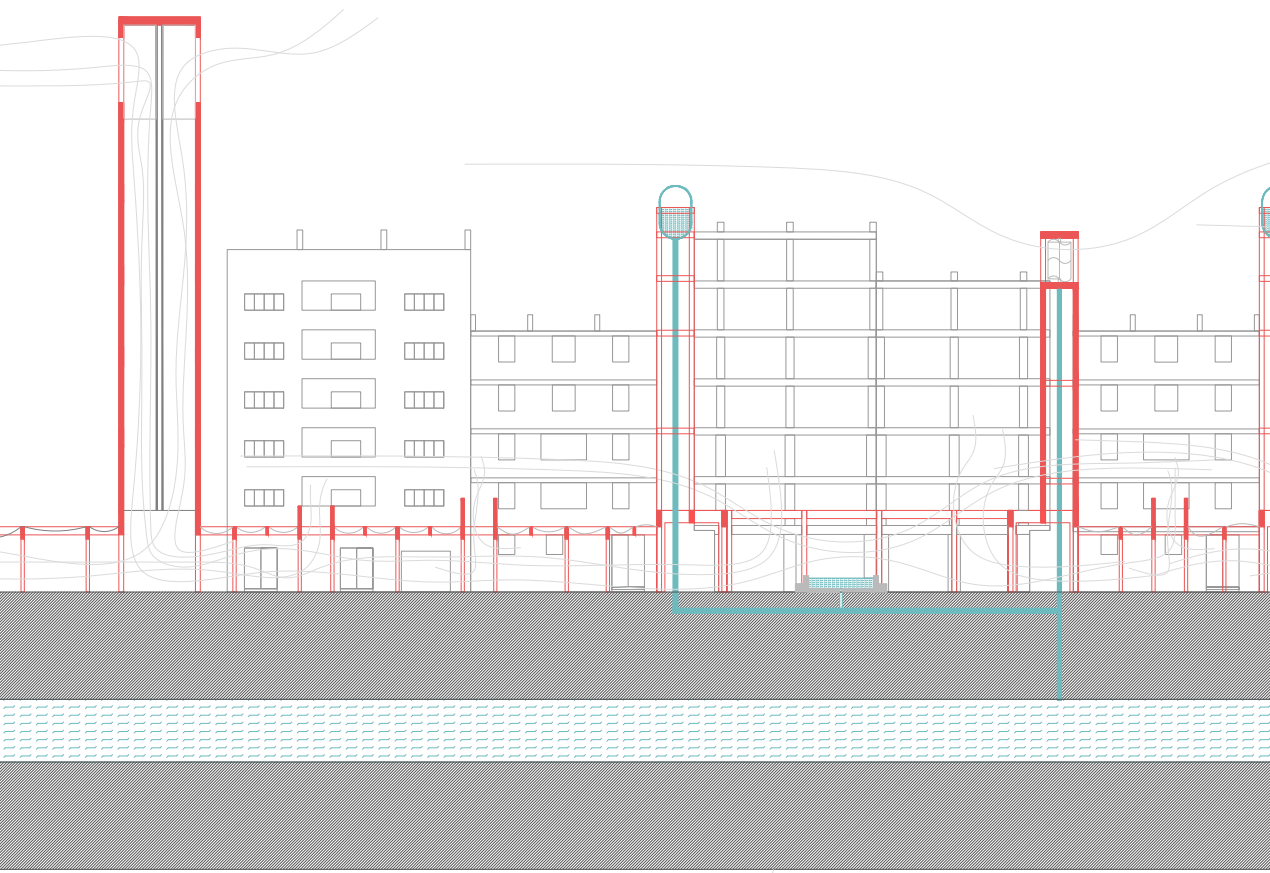
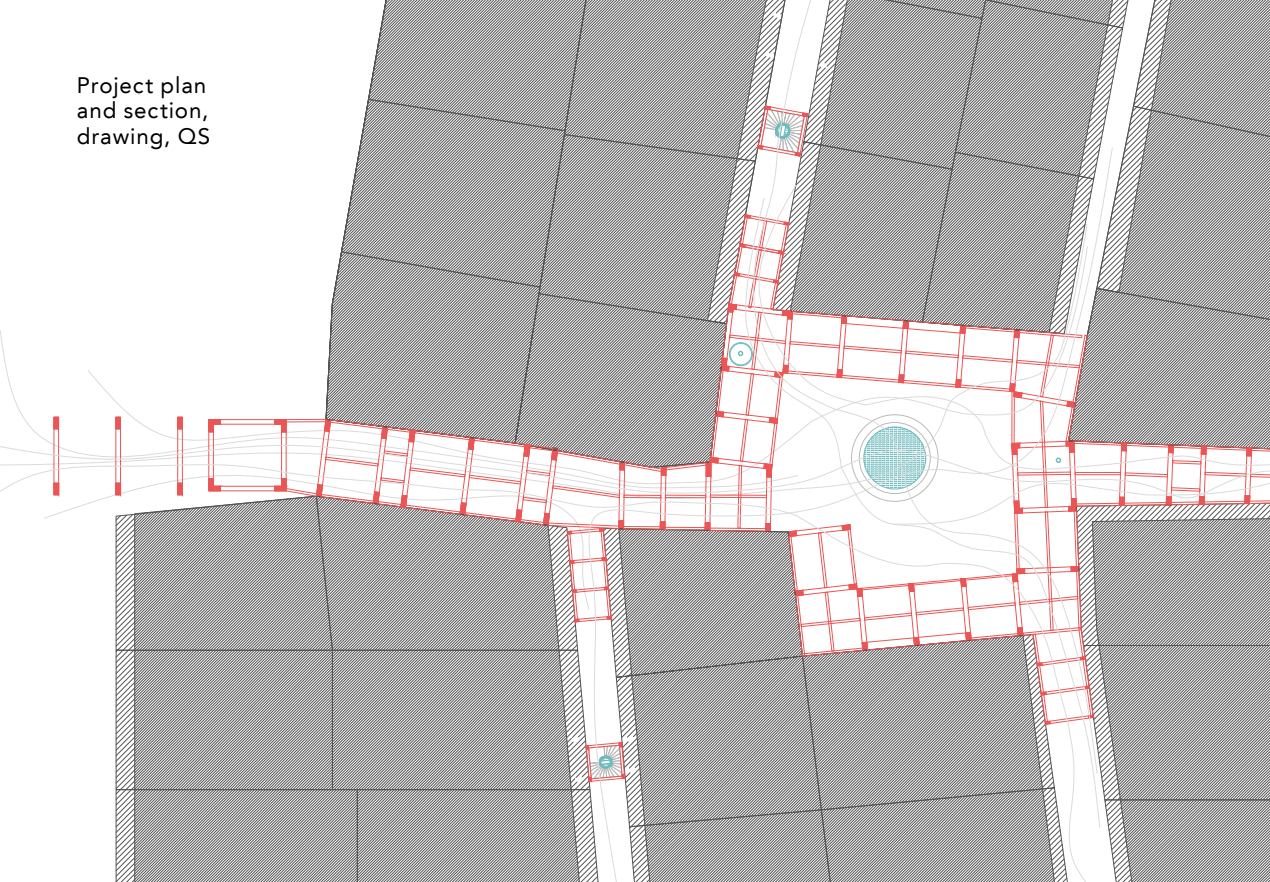


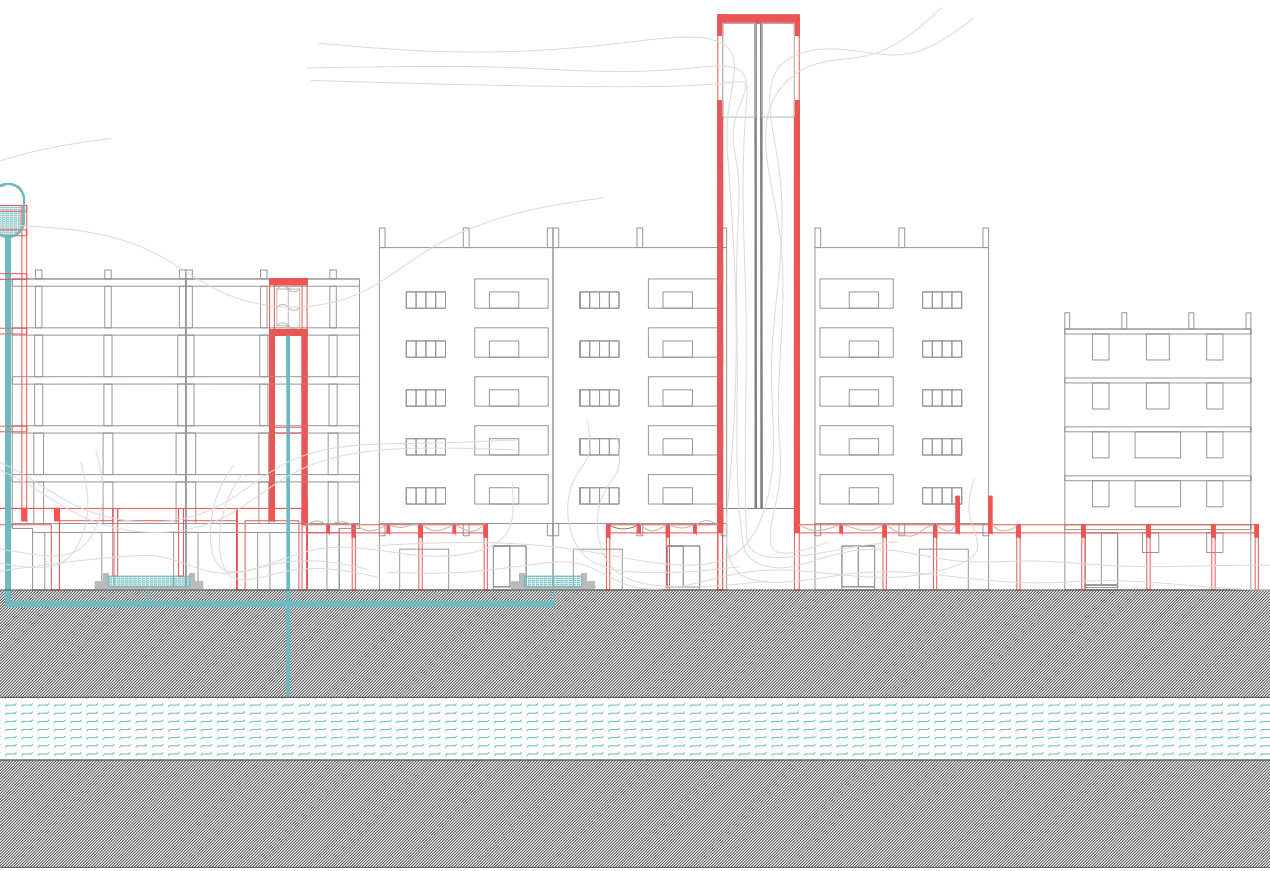
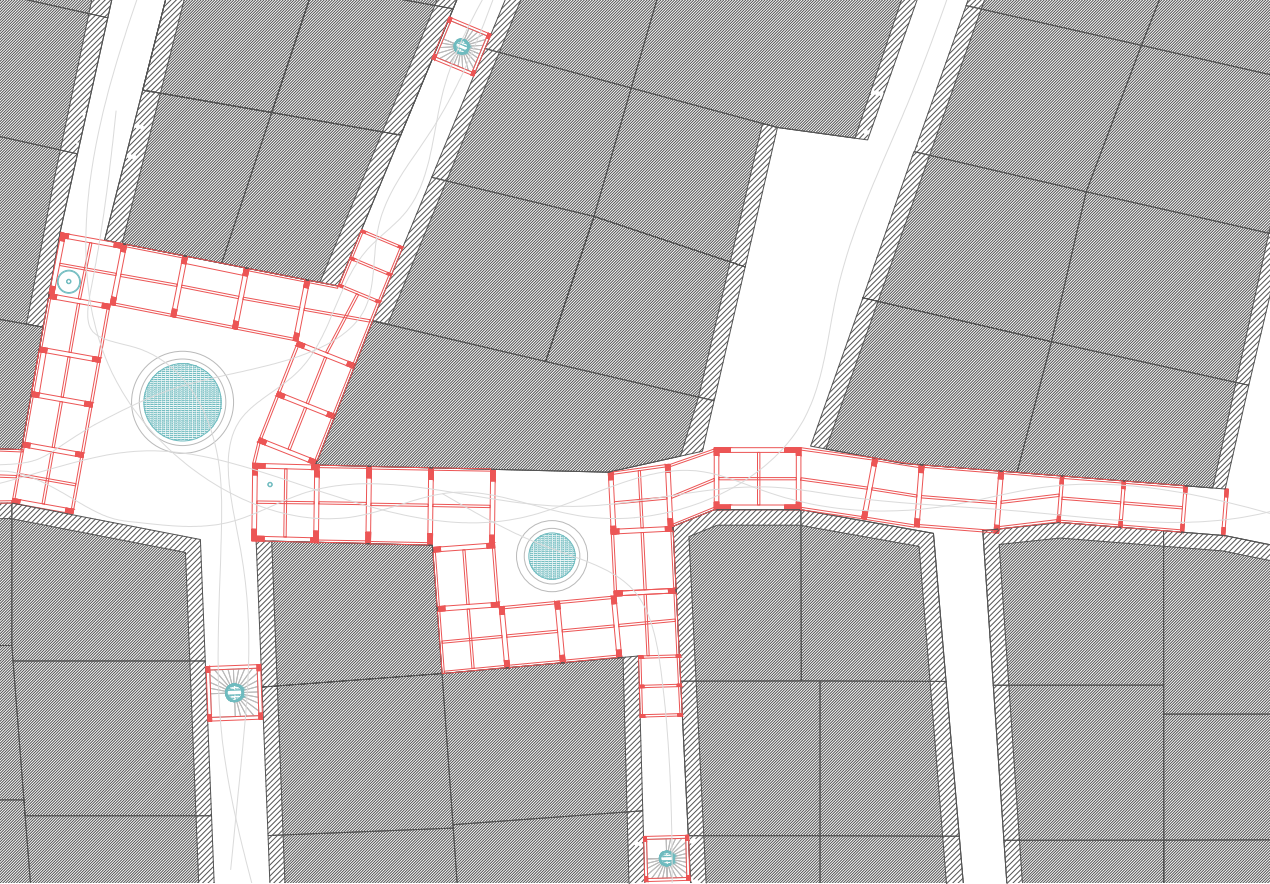
Water Tower



Courtyard/Covered
streets

Project plan
and section,
drawing, QS





Entrance to the strip of workshops, drawing, WV



Expression and Preservation through Craftsmanship

Wouter van der Velpen

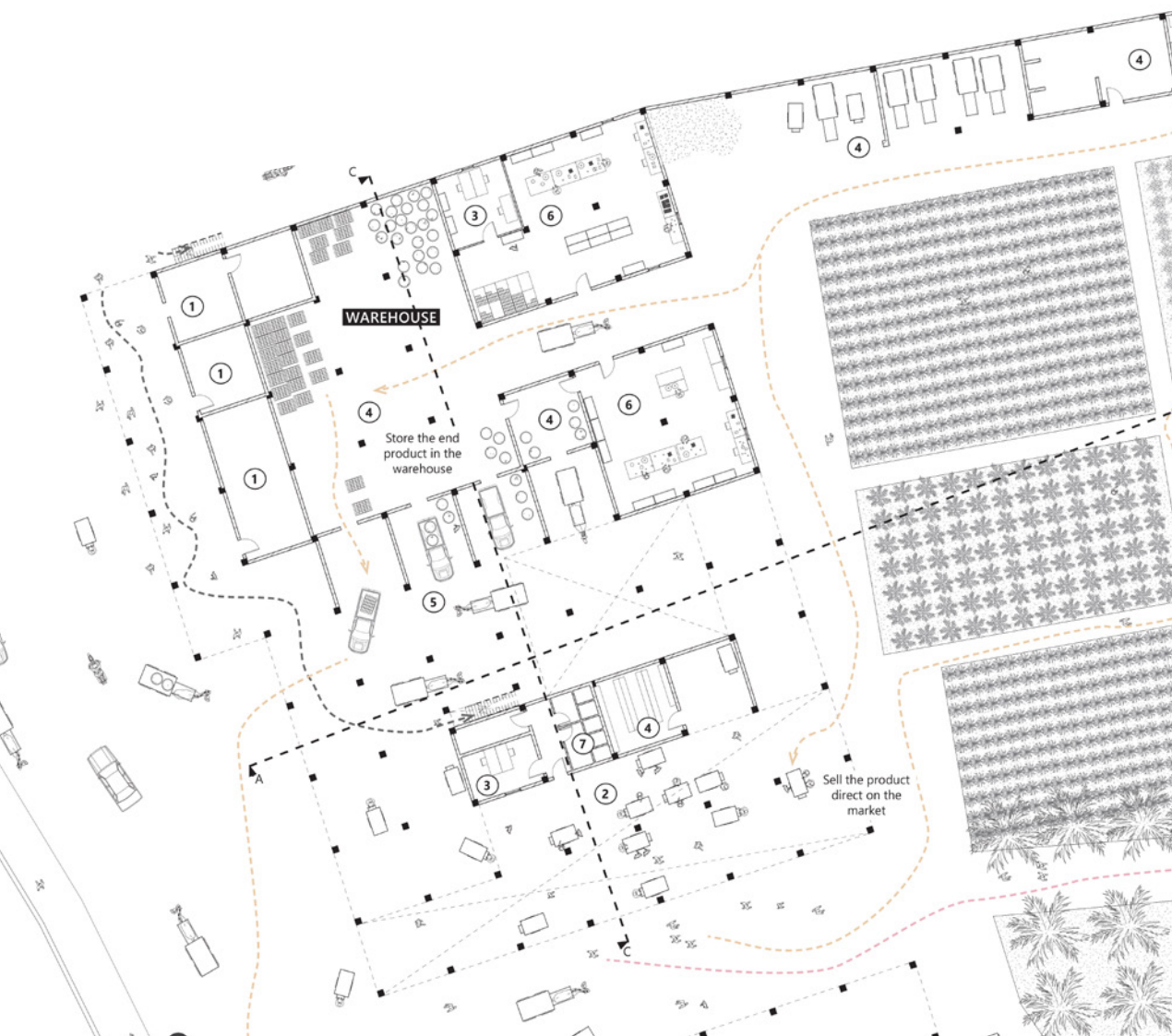
Craftsmanship has always been important to Egyptians. Craftsmen were highly respected professionals in ancient times and helped civilisation to flourish. We still benefit from their work to this day. Walking through old and informal neighbourhoods, I witnessed men practicing their traditional crafts. The carpenter, the perfume maker and the weaver are all still active. As the area develops, their workshops will probably be forced to relocate to larger factories outside the city. I want to keep workshops in the area because of their important role in the community. They give expression and meaning to life.

To do this, I have created a strip of workshops alongside the river, whose banks become a public zone. The strip connects the river to the surrounding informal neighbourhoods. By integrating agricultural land with the workshop strip, I ensure a compact production line and enhance the value of land. The workshops form a barrier that protects the open landscape from further urbanisation. The workshops and landscape are preserved as the city grows around them.

This new development creates a socially cohesive area where residents can express their creativity through a variety of crafts. Moreover, it gives structure to the rapidly growing area and activates the river again. Crafts survive and thrive, and so does agricultural land, lending the district a distinctive character.

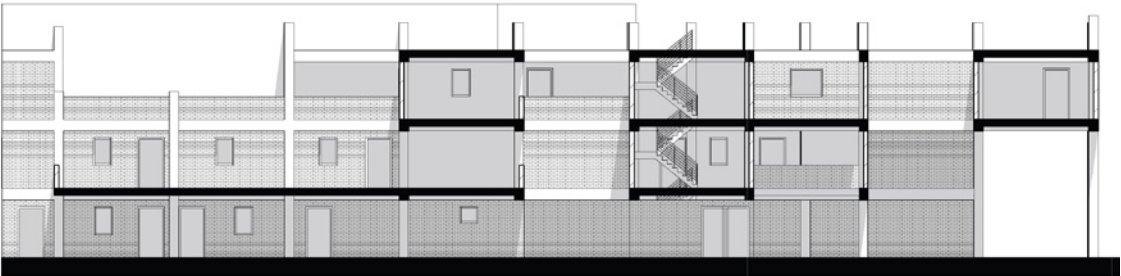
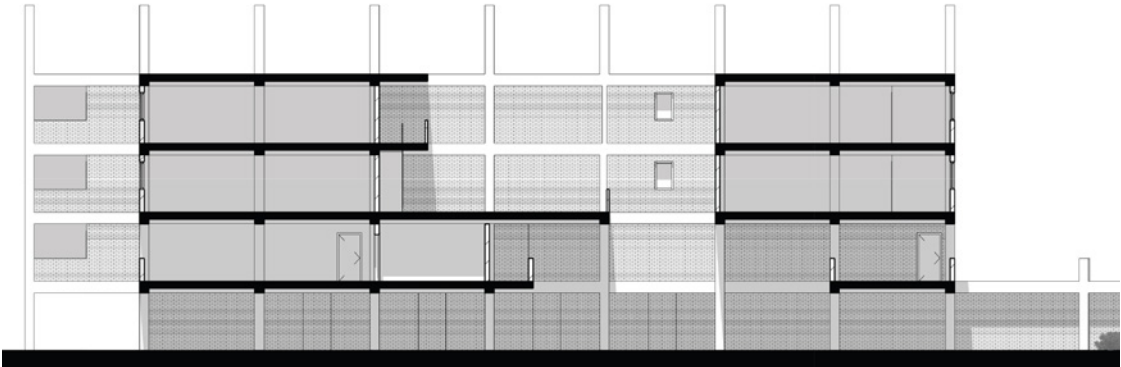
Proposed Workshops plan, WV, drawing:

- 1 shops
- 2 market
- 3 office
- 4 storage
- 5 pick-up area
- 6 workshop
- 7 toilet
- 8 theory classroom
- 9 practice classroom
- 10 project room
- 11 courtyard
- 12 kitchen
- 13 canteen
- 14 house
- 15 café

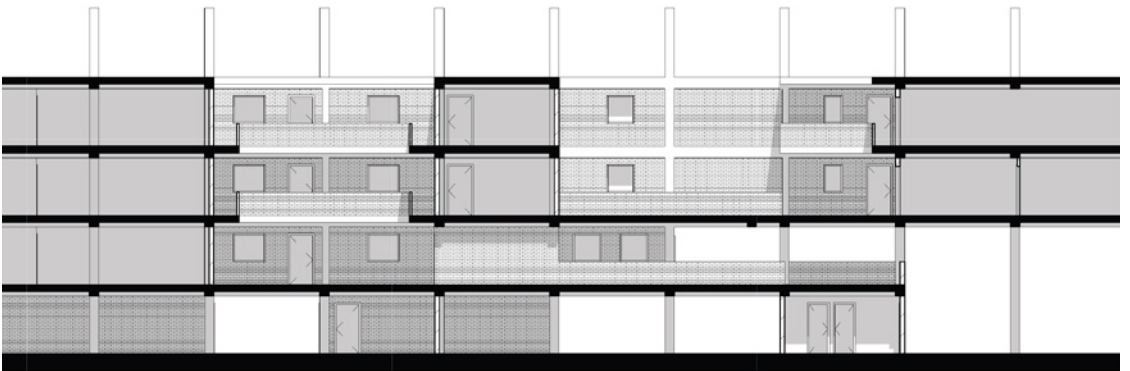
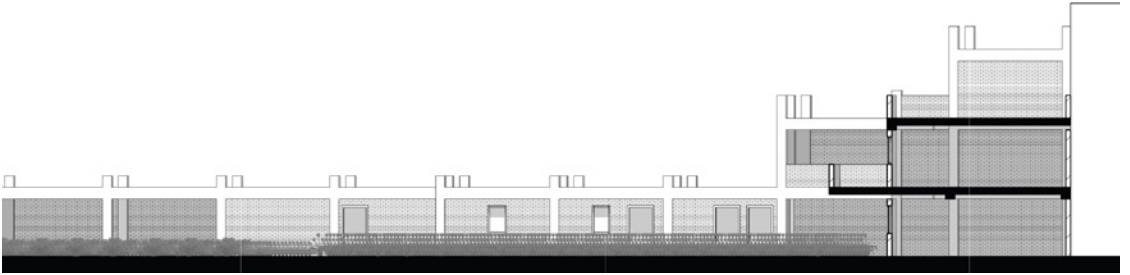




Top: section A-A', bottom B-B'



Top section A-A', bottom C-C'



View from the proposed temporal skeleton, rendering, TK



Temporality - An Informal Approach

Tobias Kumkar

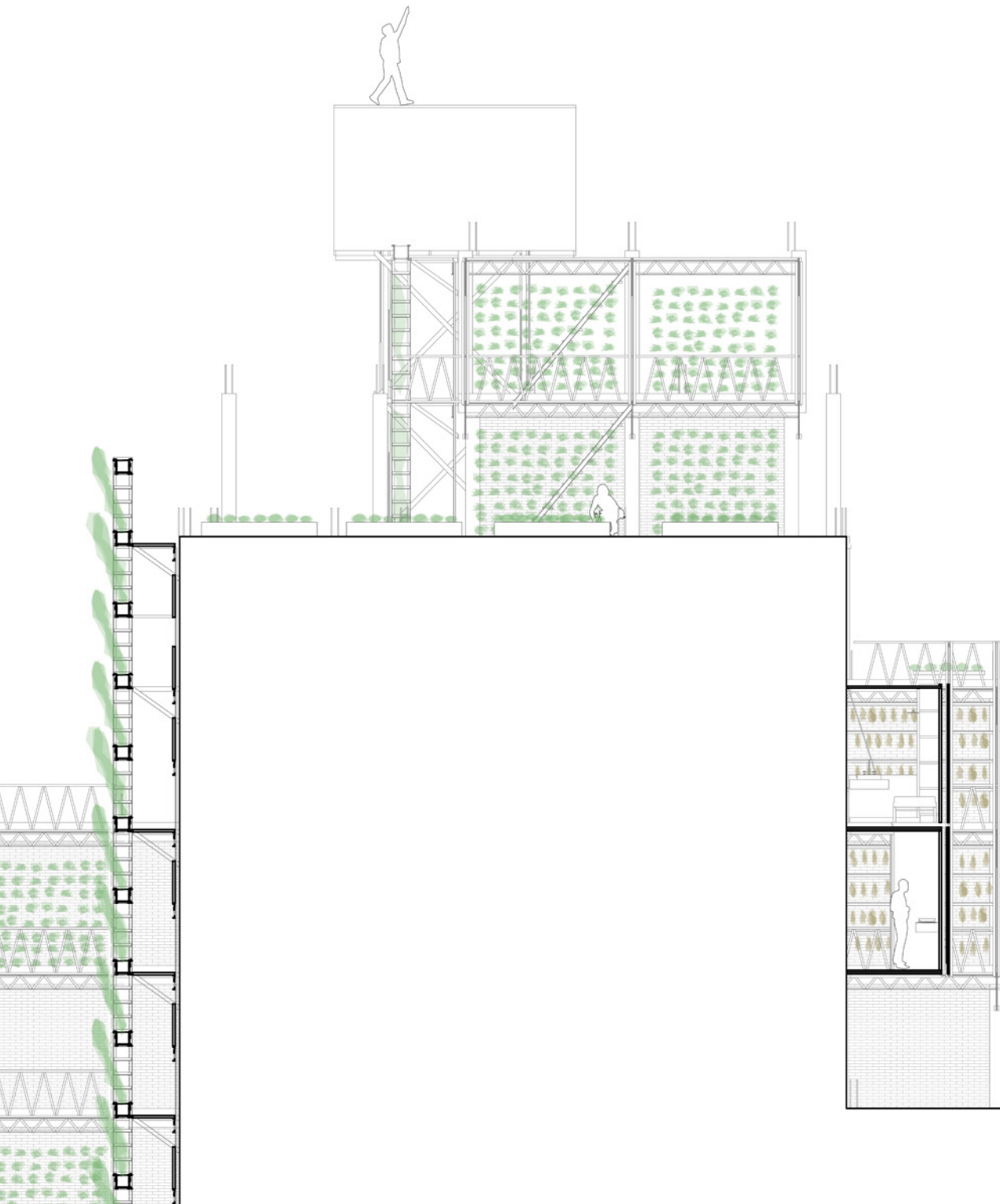
The constant urbanisation of fertile land around all major cities in Egypt leads to a drift in cultural and individual identity. The new neighbourhoods are characterised by extreme density, almost no open spaces on street level and an endlessly repeating pattern of concrete skeletons with red brick infills. Here an urban niche appears in empty plots, leftover roofs, empty apartments and blank facades.

A flexible system enables the temporary adaptation of these urban niches. Inhabitants of the neighbourhood can access and use the empty spots of the city without limiting the opportunity for their neighbourhood to expand and adapt.

The spacial connection between the projects and the property of the people, as well as their direct involvement, leads to a growing connection between the individuals and their urban environment. People start to identify with their neighbourhood; a neighbourhood that starts to flourish.

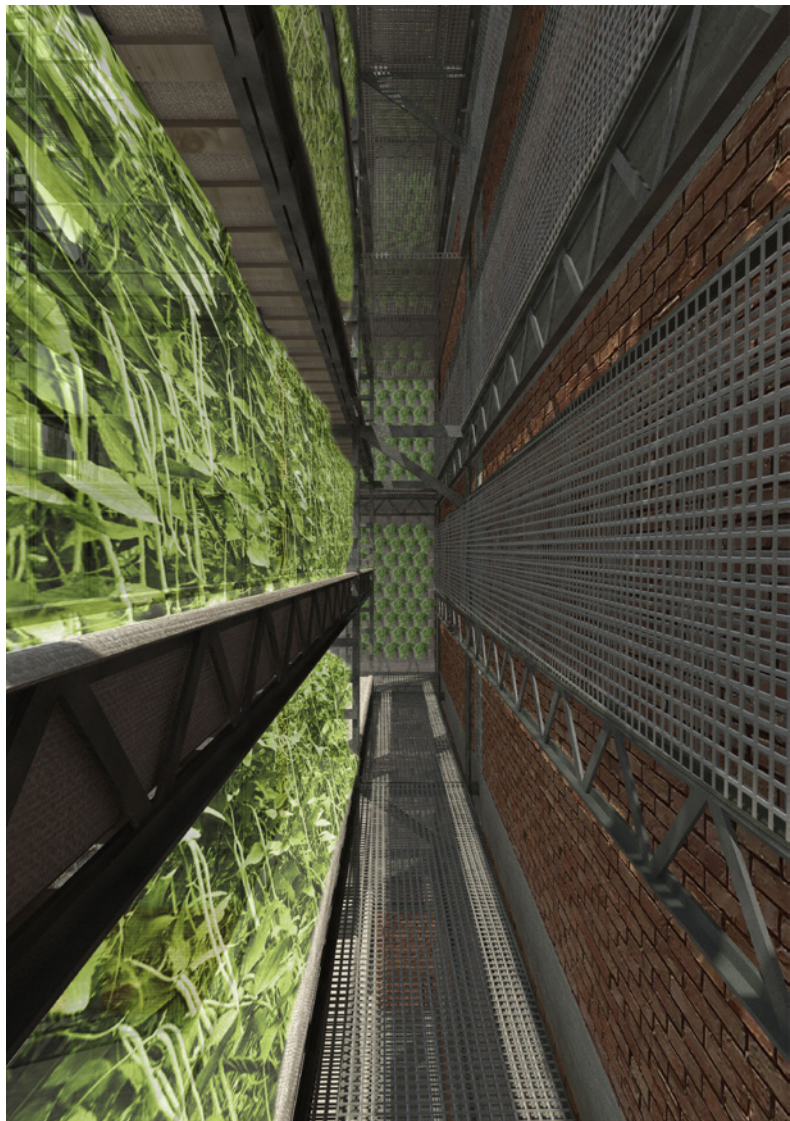
Flexible and temporary system attached to the concrete skeleton of existing buildings invites people to access and inhabit unused spots in their neighborhood, cad drawing, TK

cad
drawing
TK



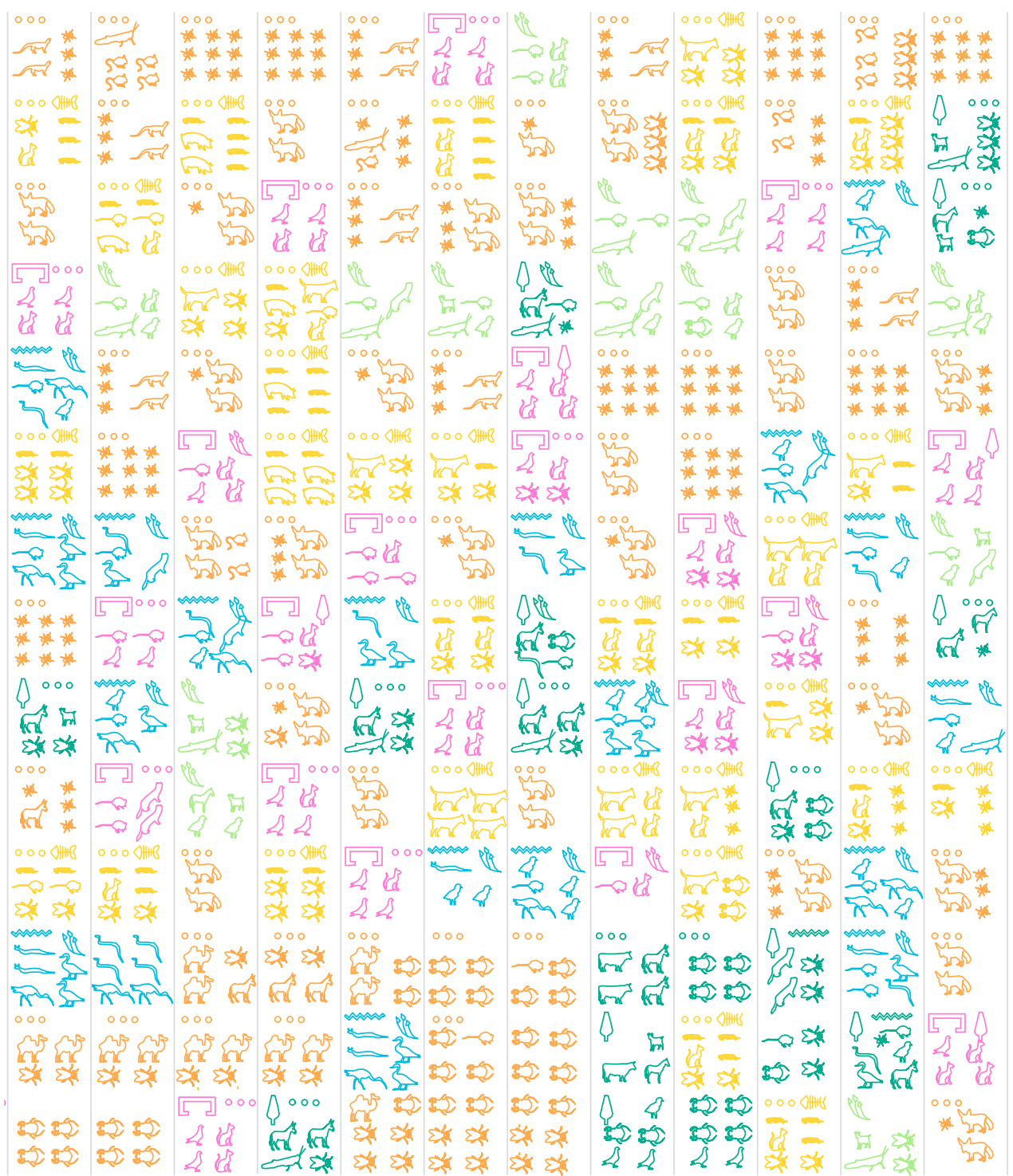


Residents occupying their new facade
and growing fava beans, ingredients in
many local dishes, rendering, TK



Temporary housing units in the structure
serving as first shelter for urban mi-
grants, rendering, TK





Release the Beast

Justyna Chmielewska

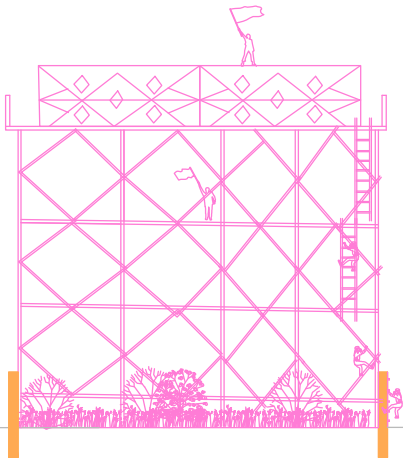
"I am suggesting that we (...) reduce ourselves, our own vision, to that of the animal - a reduction that may be an extension, an amplification, of our vision so as to see the animal with an animal eye" (Rosi Braidotti)

I want to take us on a journey that begins in the city where cows live inside the houses. We will go through six gardens that will transform us into animals, reminding us of the ancient past when the animals were mysterious gods: therianthropes with human bodies connected to the animal's head.

The process of becoming an animal will be influenced by changing our body position to the one of an animal in each of the gardens:

- 1: Lay down and chill out with livestock animals. You are still a regular human;
- 2: Climb up to the pigeon shed reaching the sky;
- 3: Get dirty, lay down on the ground to see the animals transforming our garbage into something useful;
- 4: Fear the stray dogs, run away.
- 5: Swim like a fish, prepare for the transformation;
- 6: Crawl to the underground together with the animals to become one of them.

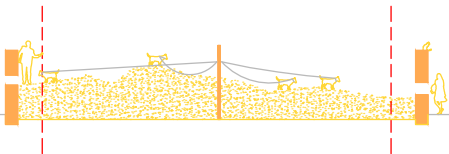
Release the beast, proposed gardens, sections, JC. Evolution process of becoming an animal forced by the body movement in the proposed gadens: 1 walking, 2. climbing, 3. pushing, 4. laying, 5. swimming, 6. crawling



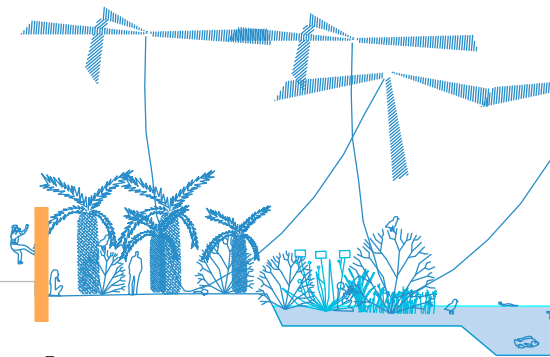
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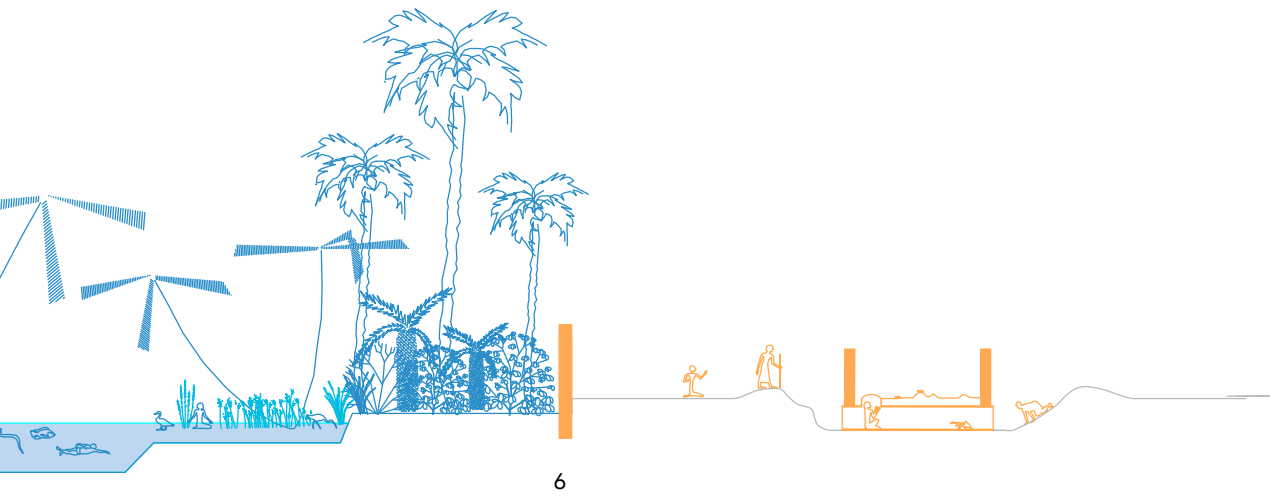
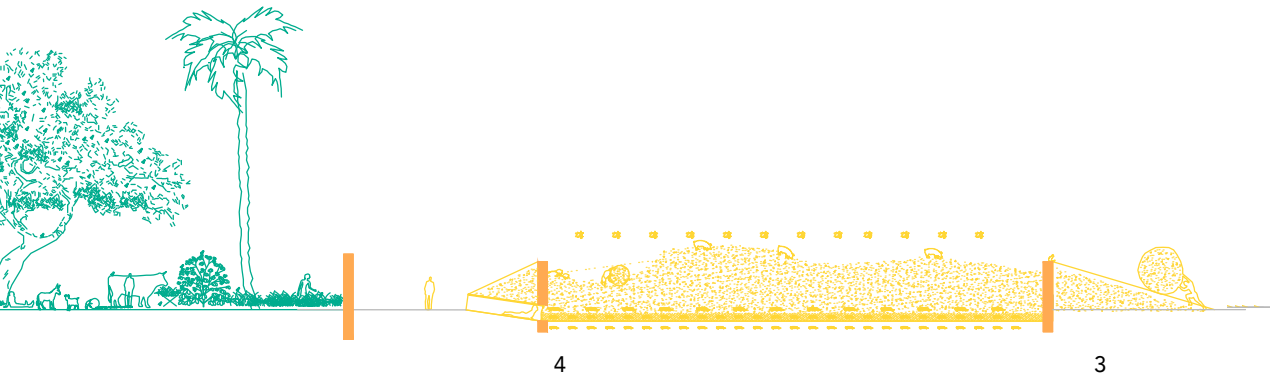
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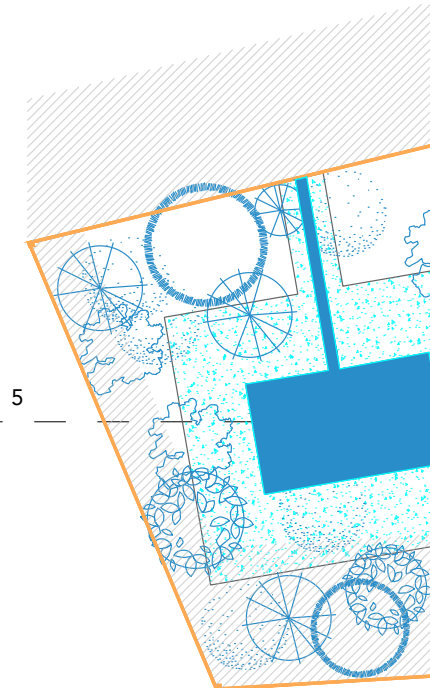
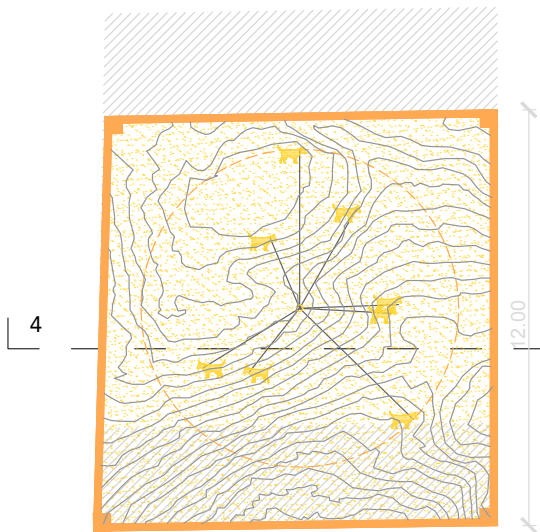
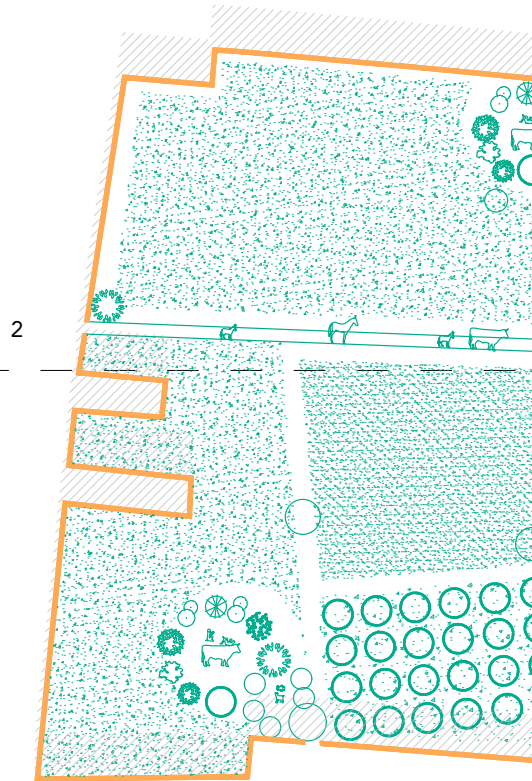
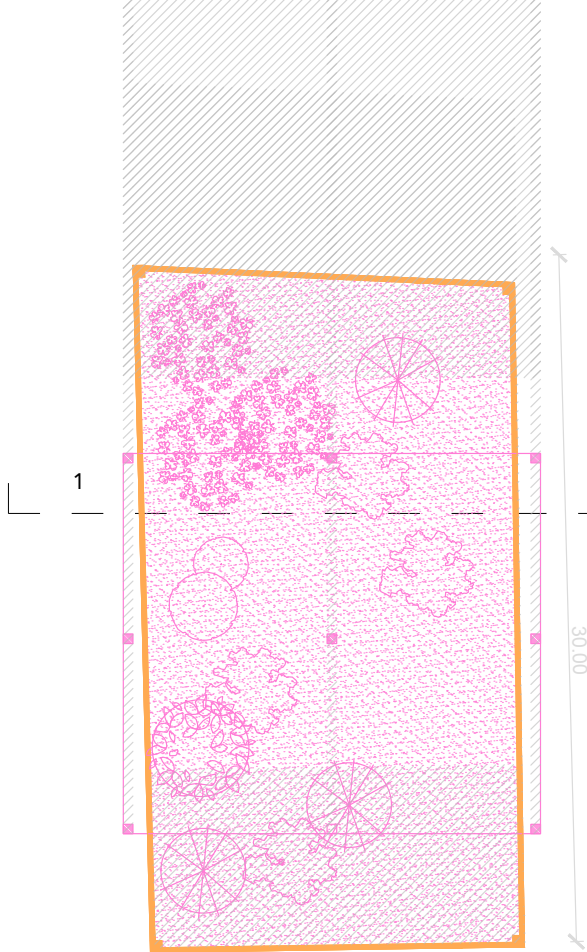
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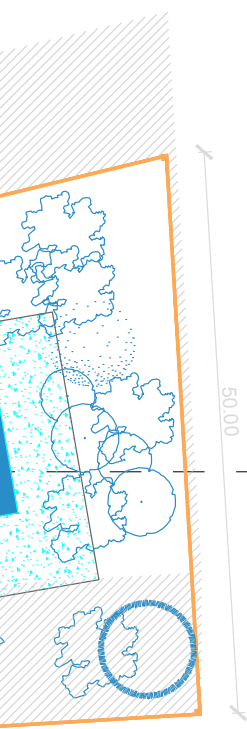
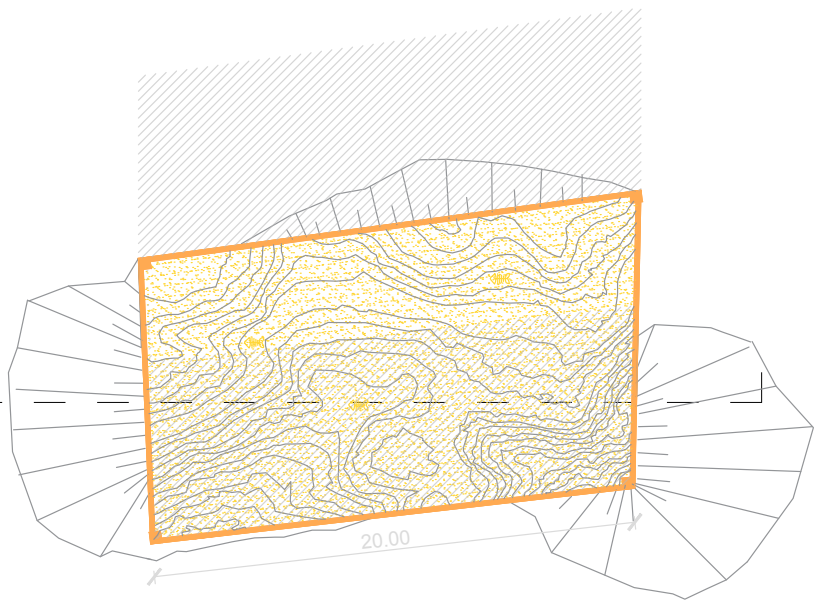
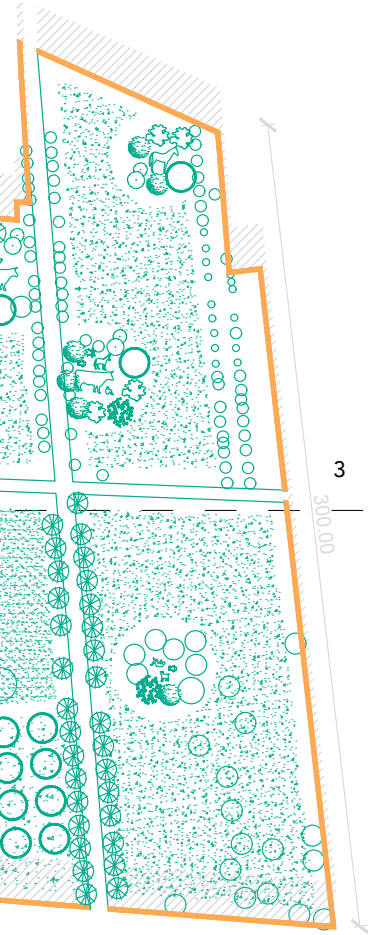


5



Ibid.,
plans





View from the centre of the proposed
productive landscape, collage, SV



Haraneyya Water Harvest Collective

Silko van der Vliet

Egypt is a gift of the Nile, as an old saying goes. Seasonal flooding created an environment where civilisation, flora and fauna could live in harmony. However, since the construction of the Aswan Dam, the dynamics of the Nile have been in decline. People depend on the Nile, but the flow of water is strictly regulated by the government. Yet, water seems to be neglected too. The system can't handle the amount of waste fed into it. Egypt needs to think about ways to safeguard its future water supply.

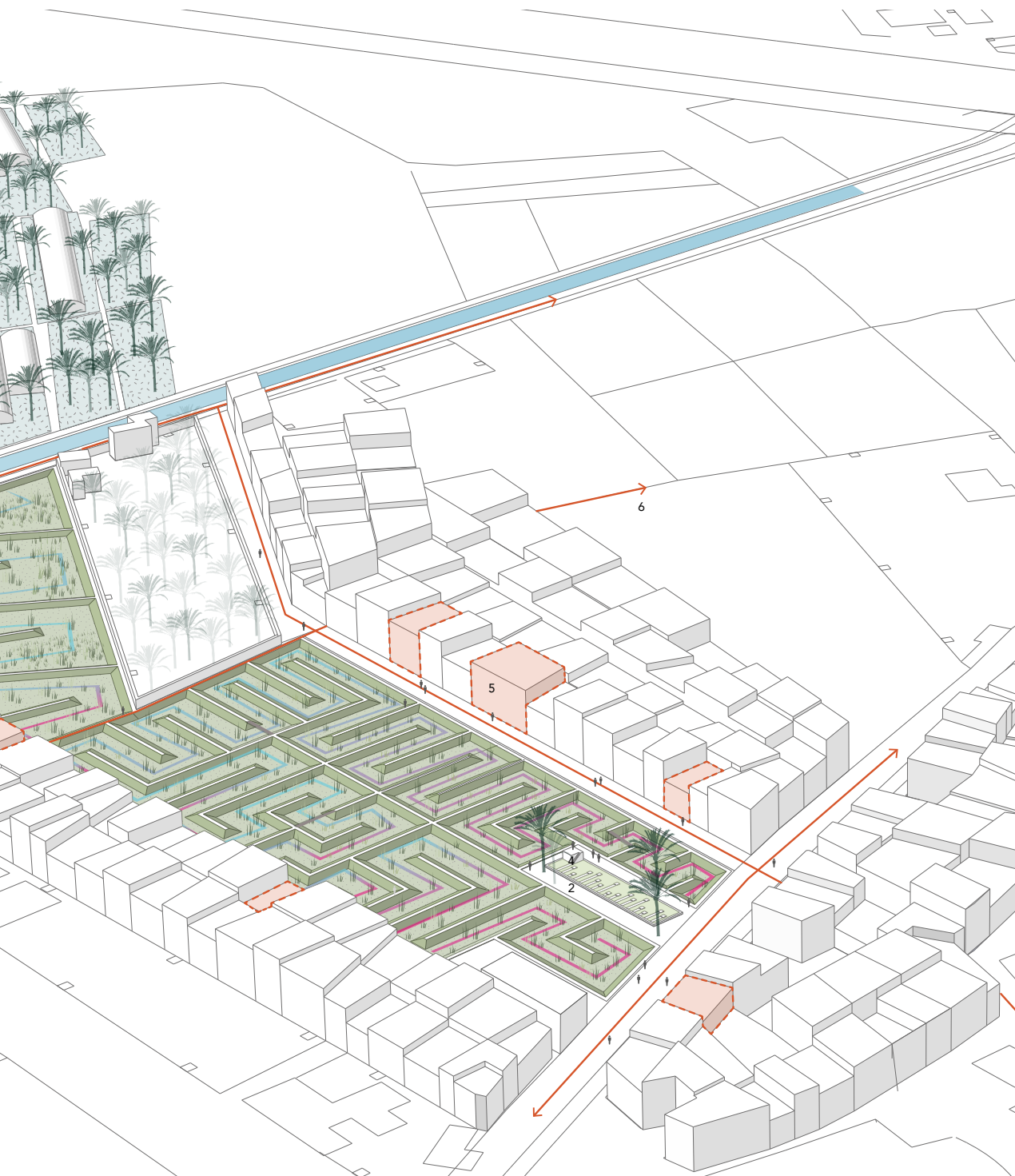
In a new water harvest collective, waste water is collected, filtered by wetlands and channelled to a landscape for new forms of agriculture and local fresh water supply. Two types of farmer work in the water harvest collective. One cultivates the filtering wetlands, selling the reeds to local craftsmen. The other uses fresh water to cultivate crops, fruit and date trees. The farmers organise the collection of local waste water. They also share the profit generated by the fresh water supplied to the community. In this way, the system can become independent and circular, and can link to other similar systems in the future. Moreover, the water harvest collective raises awareness of the need to use this scarce resource in a careful and rewarding manner.

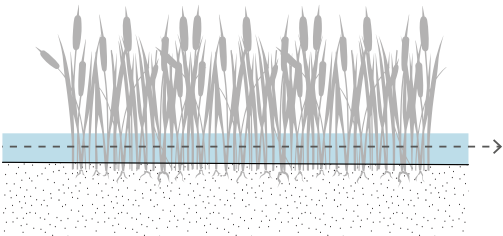
New constructed wetland within
existing city fabric working as an

independent circular water system, SV

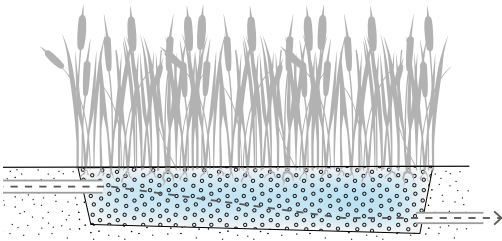
- 1 oasis farmland (utlising freshwater)
- 2 reed farmland (utilising waste water)
- 3 filtering wetland (water for oasis)
- 4 septic tank
- 5 craftsmen workshops (crop processing)
- 6 flows of local routes (crop export)



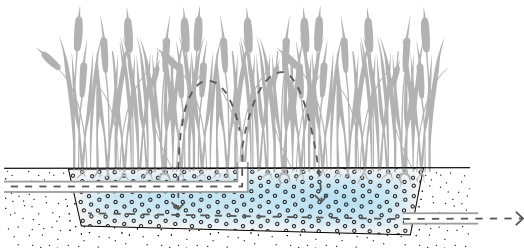




Constructed wetland with a surface flow
implemented in a low-key way by locals
to filter waste water, generate freshwater
and reed materials



Money made by the above system is
invested in wetlands with horizontal
sub-surface flow which cleans waste water
more efficiently



Same as above, utilizing vertical
sub-surface flow



Waste water is collected in a septic tank for filtering and after that will flow into basins of the first constructed wetland



Waste water is further cleaned by flowing through the basins to the canal, workshops in the plinth use materials out of the wetland



Next to the canal a productive landscape will store, grow and process agricultural produce by utilising the filtered freshwater from the previous landscapes as well as provide wastewater back into the system

Alone in the proposed chamber, render,
RD



Encounter the Silence

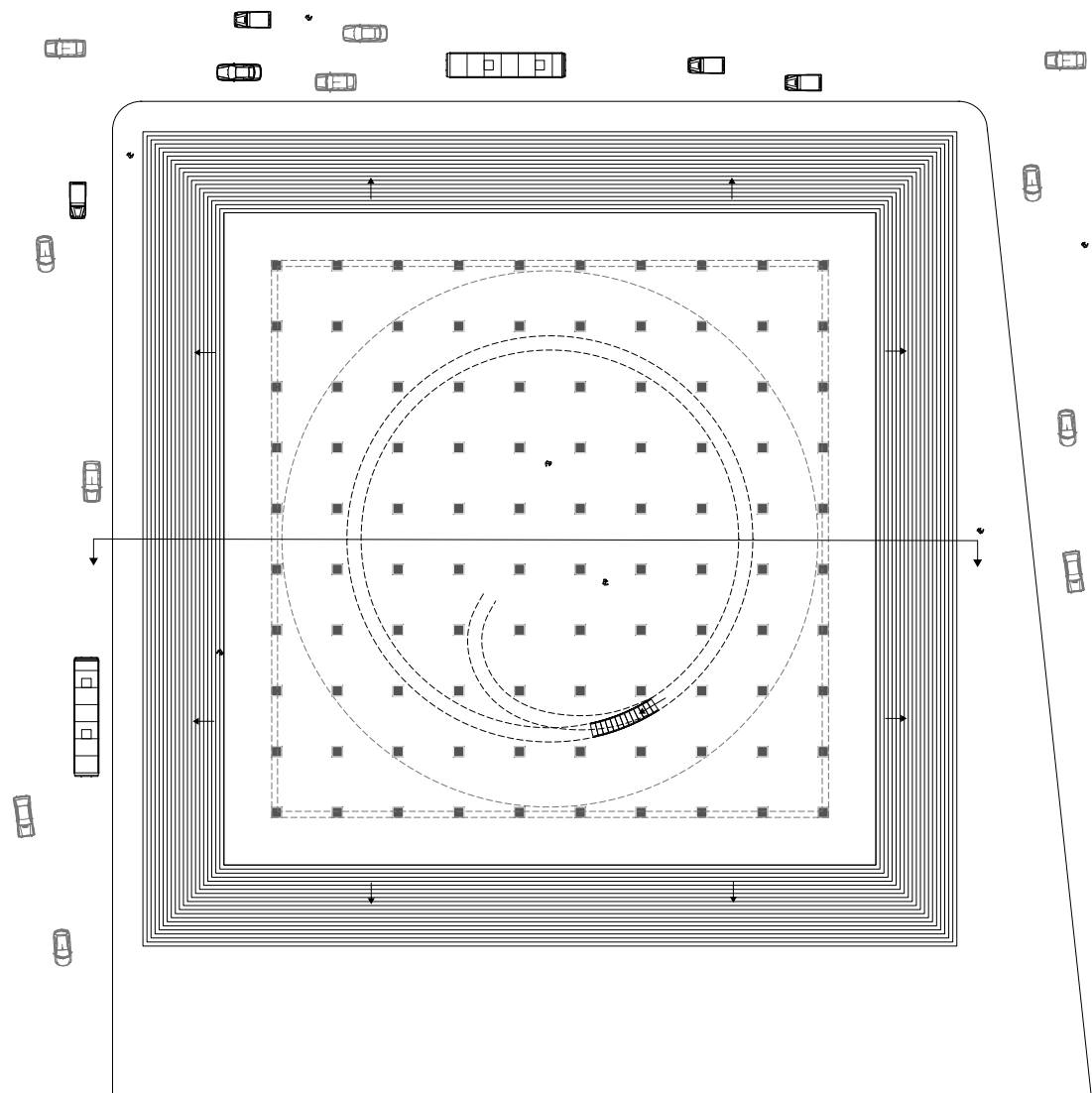
Ruben Dahmen

Cairo is dense, jammed and crowded. Traffic roars along the streets. The market vendors shout out their products to the public and advertisements scream for our attention everywhere. This city stimulates the senses to the extreme.

This building encounters the silence on the peaceful farmland. Land that will soon be flooded by inferior apartment buildings, roaring traffic and ear-piercing markets stalls. In the middle of this, the silence is heard.

When I enter the building I hear a high contrast in sounds. The walls reflect the street noise creating a crescendo on the point I enter and descend. Down into the forest of columns where the buzz of the city echoes in extreme reverberation. The circular stairway leads me up in a long walk, slowly getting nearer to the hanging spherical structure above me. Once I enter the bowl, the only thing that's left is my own sound reflecting off the rugged concrete shell. The opening above me cuts a clear round circle out of the sky. Due to the absence of intense stimulations, I can focus on my very existence.

Alone in this chamber, I am overwhelmed by this precious moment of silence.





Encounter the Silence, section, render
collage, RD





Book II

Nine Essays

Reading and Writing Cairo

Billy Nolan

Few of the texts on the following pages deal directly with Cairo. Yet all of them find their source in the multitude of experiences gained over the course of one week, in late 2017, spent exploring that vast city with its endless expanse of half-finished structures carved by motorways, its pockets of farmland, its monuments and museums, its mosques and marketplaces, its squares and sebils, its frayed edges where the city steadily advances at the expense of the delta.

Cairo proved to be a wellspring of inspiration on everything from the pleasures of smoking to the marvels of madness and the landscapes of dust, and from anechoic chambers to sewage surfers and phosphate fertilisers carried all the way to the Amazon.

In some cases, though not all, these writings can be read as a complement to the projects presented in part one, offering as they do some insight into the underlying design motives. What they illustrate is that the discipline of architecture is as much about generating ideas and texts as it is about designing and constructing buildings.

Reading Dust

Short stories on landscapes hidden in dust

by Andrej Badin

Children

Traffic flows, the sand moves. Roads of Cairo shine in gold, reflecting the high sun. Children fill moulds with concrete and before a block is finished, the grey form is covered by a new layer of yellowish sand. Sand turns into dust of the same colour and - with the exception of anything that moves - colors the megalopolis of 20 million people in yellow and gray. Locals call it 'Khamaseen', the winds of the East. That is the force bringing tons of sand, dust and particulates into the capital every year with deafening strength. To people, yellow dust equals suffering. For a keen eye, it equals delicate visual paint. It steals the landscape from farmers, turning crops into nothingness, wealth into hunger, the delta of Nile into desert. Then it flies away.

The garden

Egyptians would carry gardens with them into the tomb, literally. They'd make a scale model, approximately 1:20. The enjoyment of cultural nature was there to be continued into the afterlife. The inscription of one tomb said: 'You promenade at your ease by the lovely bank of your pond; your heart rejoices from your trees and is refreshed under your sycamores; your heart is satisfied by the water from your wells that you made so that they would last forever.'

The micro-global particle

Tons of dust fly over the Atlantic ocean, blown by atmospheric winds, sometimes swiftly, sometimes gently. They come from the Sahara, where stellar quantities of minerals, formed on the bottom of the great sea, reside. These minerals, together with several types of sand form the so-called Saharan or Mineral dust. The dust has seen some history in this regard. Corals drying up. White-bellied fish leaving their bones bare and the composting of their fins. Sands turning into rocks turning into sands again. Long reptile-whale-like animals hunting and being hunted. Mostly black and white grains, the dust is both fertile and radioactive, as it contains phosphate and thorium. Irons, calcium, aluminium: I will attempt to describe at least partially how rich this poorly looking grainy thing is.

In March, cyclones move over the Mediterranean sea - flying east towards Africa. Coming to the Sahara, propelled under an atmospheric depression,

storms of biblical scales origin, leaving circular scars on the surface of the desert. Khamaseen. The warmth of the desert is pushed up, the dust with it, and so the transatlantic journey begins.

The flying landscapes of dust

They glow in white, sparkle in black and deep blue and leave gray traces on everything and anything they touch. As they fly through different climatic zones, their composition changes. Rains reign above the Amazon and phosphate from the dust is liquefied and soaked into foliage and roots of millions of plants and creatures of gazing greens, glosses, hairs and shapes. Without it, the soil in the Amazon would lack natural fertilisers as waters and arms of rivers wash them away quicker than the plants absorb it. In the end, it was people who made this micro-global journey visible using satellite imagery. The observers.

NASA, 2016. This research does not merely show the beauty of interconnectedness of every landscape - the microscopic being vital for the global and vice versa. It shows how people understand systems of lands by shooting and scanning their functioning from space. As strange as it sounds, it means seeing with one eye enhanced with a microscope, the other with a telescope. Invisible information from both of these scales couldn't be more spatially disconnected yet bound together.

How come a forest revives after a wildfire or a plague if we don't take away what has fallen on the ground? Some landscapes still hold onto millions of years of knowledge in their own functioning. Dust is what they turn into. Mineral dust is what helps to resurrect them. Species of tiny fungi reside in it. The mould.

Mould grows on bread, tomatoes, or anything we don't feel like using anymore. After fires, it is the first emergency unit to arrive on the burned battlefield, healing the cracking wounds of fallen or missing branches. Humidity, rains and other factors unknown to me may influence the mould to be sexual rather than typically asexual, thus growing into something bigger. Rotting away starts the preparations for a new and better soil from which the forest will be born one day, as long as we are patient enough. Yet, patience is fleeting. While landscapes are driven by the accumulation of time, humans are driven by the passing of it.

Crimescape

Landscape systems depend on the free movement of pieces of dust from one place to another. Human body has natural defense mechanisms against mould spores - the same spores that revive a burned forest in its early phases of natural succession - contained in the dust. This fungus is tiny enough to enter the lungs. Farmers and miners in particular know the lengthy list of diseases contracted by inhaling dust. Coughing, wheezing, bluish skin at ears and lips, fever, chest pain, silicosis and black lung. The killing landscapes of dust. To cherish dust is to cherish natural systems and their optimal functioning, yet at the same time it is also to cherish human death. Landscape architecture will become a crime scene in the 21st century, technical drawings silently loaded with the ammunition of dust, serving landscapes with life and humans with antidotes.

Lonesome traveller

The sky yellowed. Shivering cold encroached upon everyone in the town. Rim, local scientist demystifying the paradoxical movement of sand dunes across the desert looked at his thermometer that suddenly rocketed 20 degrees Celsius and was showing a merciless 41 - all but good news for a March day in Cairo. He opened the wood barricaded windows, quickly but carefully, to feel the unbearable warmth outside. Shutting the windows again, not leaving a single beam of light through, he whistled to his wife to wake up. A persistent cacophony broke out under his apartment in the Haraneya neighborhood. Impossible forms, trimmed cylinders and neverending rays of black matter appeared on the horizon. C-shaped beams glittered in the distant darkness. Clouds heavy as radioactive smoke raised, the desert mirrored horizontally and started restlessly pouring tons of dust anywhere his eyes could see. Khamaseen had just arrived. Rim put on a scarf and ran out, his body saturated with adrenaline. Outside of his house the winds would unroot old acacias. Anything lacking support flew around. He ran along lingering back alleys with blind walls whose tops he couldn't see, for they had been swallowed by the granular sky. Running through the deafening winds, he almost choked as the worn white scarf covering his face tilted slightly. Blinded, he carried on.

The road was overly familiar to him. Shapeless mould started to appear close behind the sprawling blocks of simple freemasonry this outskirts consisted of. Twice as wide as the pyramids he knew, yet with a low, slightly slanted top and approximately circular in plan, this monumental mountain stank so heavily his clothes shrunk and became sticky. Finding a spot to hide behind a thick carpet

stuck in between two massive trucks loaded with garbage, he finally caught his breath. What no one could see, yet precisely what Rim came for, was a meeting long arranged between him and myself - the dust on a hill.

Groups of locals including Rim were my elders, my creators. They worked restlessly, with help from a dozen or so bulldozers, gathering debris from around the El Haraneya neighborhood. In the last days, Rim took upon himself a task that wouldn't give him sleep. Employing some 30 experts on sewing, they started dressing me in a 2km long, 5 ton heavy silk curtain that was the only cloth covering my skeleton of rusted rebar, leftover brick and badly decked concrete columns topped with household garbage, clay and sand. This cloth was to mark the route atop myself and has just been finished. Exactly on the second day of March, the silk got soaked in water after being carefully laid on me and anchored to the dry soil beneath. Everything was ready.

Rim came to see what evades the eye - a microscopic beauty happening under the silk and my rotting body. In the Saharan dust storm that was as deadly as to almost rip apart this cloth, *Aspergillus Sydowii* - the magic fungi - travelled. Furthermore, it was joined by particulates of bourgeois origins, an apatite fertiliser family long ingrained in the memory of local dry farmers and nomadic tribes. Together, this loose compound started soaking through the textile into me. There, phosphorus liquefied, and all of a sudden a small mushroom would appear, protected by the double silk cloth from the winds. Life appeared on my rotting carcass, rooting into tomatoes and other organic matter.

The storm came upon the city and its citizen twice every week. Feast followed. Mushrooms grew on the silk sawn route and dust compacted the sandy soils covering me, held by car tyres cut in half. A natural garbage isolation was under way, so that my carcass remains a carcass forever. Moulds would slowly develop into a deadly landscape of thorny tumbleweed on the uneven surfaces of my slopes. Later, after years of waiting a tree would appear, a crooked and bent Ghaf with leaves all covered by the ponderous dust. The lonesome traveller would stop by. Storms raised again but I'd continue standing, mute yet warm, frozen in the yellowish dirt. A hill with mushrooms, slowly encircled by the ever-growing city.

Landscape is the artificial insemination of the natural world or listen to the dust

Architecture for architecture; landscape for landscape – follow me on a journey into the latter, reader! Think of a landscape – one so vast its borders disappear and everything is lost.

Look at the increasing scale of natural disasters recently. Hurricane Katrina – 2017 – the most horrifying ever to happen. Sandstorms occurring as frequently as never before. Landscape crises all over the world. Sand wars. Soil erosions. Floods. Acid rains. Melting ice. Extinction of species. The bee armageddon. We drank the sea and now it will slowly devour us from within. Then it will throw away the dead human skin, just as a snake leaves its crust on the desert – resilient as never before.

Landscape is merciless. People fall from its peaks and drown in its swamps. The more we manifest order and artificial systems, the stronger it strikes back. We control, but chaos succeeds. Hunting, scorching rituals, everburning fires. Gardening. Water structures. Killing, fencing, laughing at, decomposing, dumping animals into their own intestines – the mythically beautiful legacy of sausage making. Foraging for berries is over.

Read the dust, it gives life to itself, but brings death to us.
Let's embrace the culture of death and listen to the dust.

And forge steel bees with numerous indestructible needles. On their backs, collections of safran will be carried. Spices for people, life for the flora.

And cherish the dead end, the pathless valley, the deadly landscape of dust. Landscape value will be assessed by an index of deadlines. The more kills, the higher level of protection in policy.

And free the asylums and feed the oppressed with proteins and sugar, pay them to wander around medieval gardens as the self-whipping monks used to, back in the 18th century. Polish the stones of grottos with rivers of cry and blood.

And waterproof weld thick steel coffins, fill them up with carcasses and wait for the explosions in the open air.

Touch of Herning

HEART Museum of Contemporary Art in Herning, Denmark
by Sharon Sportel

Have you ever felt the urge to touch something because you don't know how it will feel? Because you want to make sure this communicates with the idea about it given by your other senses? To surprise your senses and therefore address the rational part of the brain, the connection with the surroundings is different than usual: you start to think about what you see.

This is the main case in the Herning Museum of Contemporary Art in Herning, Denmark, designed by Steven Holl. Built for the textile industry the area is known for since 1600, this museum captures the qualities of the works and the surrounding area. The question is: how was the design process initiated and what ingredients were used to capture all the aspects the museum and the contexts are about?

Introduction

The HEART museum was designed by Steven Holl Architects and built in 2009 in Herning, Denmark. This 5,600 square metre building houses the works of conceptual artists with a permanent collection of Piero Manzoni. The design was made for the textile industry in Herning and is therefore shaped as overlapping sleeves of white shirts. Other than the exhibition spaces with the collection, the museum also houses a restaurant, an auditorium, music rehearsal spaces and offices. The museum is entirely made of off-white concrete with curved ceilings and outer walls, with rectangular walls and straight lines in the exhibition spaces. In 2005, the heads of the Herning Center of the Arts Project Foundation launched a competition for the new textile museum. Steven Holl entered with a finely honed concept, which was all about the exhibited art, the landscape and the context of Herning itself. With seven black and white panels, he won the competition.

As Steven Holl states in an introduction of the work of Rick Joy, architecture often starts with an idea which is executed by technical drawings, sections, regulations and budget. For a museum, the original idea of the concept can be worked out in detail which does not have to be as pragmatic as an apartment building. The HEART Museum in Herning is an example where the original idea has been worked out through arguing details for the concept. Practical, straight, white walls are implemented to exhibit the collections. Although

the core of the exhibition sounds like a rectangular box, the building is an exploration of the site and the landscape in relation to the collection.

Routing

When the visitor stands in front of the building, the entrance is clearly present. The curved roofs seem to announce the place to enter and this is emphasised by the open glass facade. The path towards the main opening in the facade is a large amorphous shape of fine sand-coloured gravel with paths continuing around the building. When looking up to the building, which is located a bit higher than street level, you already feel the volume and the heaviness of the construction.

The entrance space has the most square metres of the entire building and the ceiling is as high as five people standing on top of each other. The entrance hall gives the opportunity to choose a direction with the option of four great openings in different walls, seen through the layered design of the walls for the art spaces. The ceilings seem to float above the exhibition spaces by the diffuse light coming through. They do not give a glimpse of the hierarchy of each space and seem to connect them all through the curved shapes. Every space is equal when seen from the entrance hall.

The second element which makes the route equal are the openings in the walls which also have equal dimensions. Sometimes the routing takes you to a darker space where a video is shown, sometimes it takes you to a bright serene space, without any view and sunlight coming through the covering sleeves of the roof a few meters above you. It does not feel like a boxed shape at all by the diversity of the routing and by the curved roofs.

Once an exhibition ends in one of the rectangular spaces, the route guides you towards all the other spaces and hallways which lead to the back of the building. In a fraction of a moment, the diffuse atmosphere changes to an overwhelming view of the broad Danish landscape. The view through the high glass window next to the restaurants and the auditorium shows a great lawn with oval shapes in them, curved in the opposite direction of the roof sleeves of the building. The roof pushes you gently around the building into the landscape and the landscape reacts to this. In this way, the human scale is made visible, even through the great volumes of the site.

One of the details of the building are the soft-looking walls; concrete poured into textile filled moulds. The concrete is not grey, but refined off-white to offer a clear contrast to the shade of the textile surface and the sun shining on the white walls. The museum was made for this broad landscape and the briefing of the competition required a great capacity in square metres to show the works. However, it sometimes feels like an enormous space with an even greater soul. The visitor feels small and encroached upon as a person by the design. The art is emphasised by the explorable routing with straight walls and a ceiling which gently guides without giving a sense of hierarchy to the spaces.

In the landscape, the building might seem very impersonal on the human scale because of the white colour and the great walls which force you to have a certain view of the landscape through their curves. When you come closer, it even becomes delicate: the concrete castings were drenched in thick textile sheets and therefore appeared soft and subtle when a person is guided to one of the back entrances at the massive site. This gesture to the concrete was not randomly chosen, but has a significance for the building. In the early 1960s, the Herning textile museum was built and decorated by textile designer Paul Gadegaard. He was also the man who owned a profitable t-shirt factory in Herning, which Holl hints at with the sleeve-shaped roof. In addition to his work as an entrepreneur, he made different pieces of art for the area. This old textile museum contained works of textile designers and diverse works of pottery since this was a big part of Herning.

Herning and History

Herning is located in central Denmark in the Jutland region and is mostly known for its textile trade. It already started around 1600 with the street traders of self-made textiles and is now still known for the global fashion companies located here.

Because Herning was a poor area in 1600 and had very cold winters with cold winds in the flat landscape, men started knitting their own socks and started a business with it. Soon, the socks were also traded throughout Europe and Jutland became famous for it. Later on around 1800, when railways came and transport was made easier for exporting their products, the knitters purchased machines to produce fabrics and the entrepreneurs could import cotton from Egypt. These were one of the first industries in Denmark, also supplied with machines from England and Germany.

The textile industry in Herning was at its highest point from 1950 to 1980,

when young people started to move from the countryside to the city of Herning to work in the textile industry. These young people had children and they needed to go to school. The schools were also involved in the textile industry and therefore a school was built for textile design; the so-called 'Danish School for Ready-made Clothes and Hosiery'. This school still exists and is now called the Teko Center.

When the wall came down in Berlin in 1989, this had a great impact on the textile industry as it was at the time. Manufacturers had more freedom to import and export and moved their manufacturing to other countries like China, because this was cheaper. This led to closure of the smaller companies, because they could not compete with the mass production of the other textile companies.

Art

Amongst the permanent collection are the works of the Italian conceptual artist Piero Manzoni (1933-1963) who rebelled against the traditional art. The 'Artists Shit' was one of his works and he worked with different textures in linen fabrics. The art had to speak for itself and right before his death he did not even work out his ideas anymore. His last work was a book of 100 blank pages.

The reason why Piero Manzoni is exhibited is because of his relationship with Herning itself. Most of his textile works from 1961 were made in the textile ateliers in Herning. Steven Holl intensively studied the conceptual works of Manzoni to form a concept for the competition. The work 'Socle du Monde' from 1961 struck him and became a source of inspiration: an empty pedestal which gives a sense of absence. This three-dimensional element is meant to provide space for a piece of art and is used to focus attention on the art. This pedestal directs one's attention to the space 'on top', therefore Piero Manzoni already intended at the time to focus attention on the space where it is located. Holl therefore intended to create the design in line with where it would be placed, serene and spacious, to draw attention back to Manzoni as a gesture of deference.

Conclusion

At first sight, the concept of draped t-shirt sleeves as a roof with straight walls underneath can be interpreted as a banal way of executing a design for a museum in an area which has a large history of textile industry. However, Steven Holl was given the theme of textile and he chose a way

to cope with the given briefing by creating extra layers for different approaches to come to one design. The layer of programme and purpose was the most important as Holl states in the description of the competition time. The purpose was the museum and the given permanent collection of Piero Manzoni. The studies of his work gave a concept of making screen space with a filter towards the outside world. The glass is covered by a screen and consists of different layers to filter the light as well. The curved roof in combination with the filtered daylight emphasise the amorphous atmosphere. It is the visitors choice how to interpret, feel and move amongst the art and in this building.

Secondly the context was one of the given themes which cannot be denied for a design for this particular building. The site of Herning has a history of textile design and manufacturing and the HEART museum would be a place to gather this information about the village and its landscape. The t-shirt-sleeved roof is used to make the curved spaces inside as well as give the reference to textile sleeves. The ends of the curved roof continue in the landscape in the shape of inflated lines of grass. By this intervention the museum reaches over the Danish landscape in a comprehensible way.

Added design restrictions by the heads of the foundation of the museum were the size, the budget of course and the functions like an auditorium and the rehearsal spaces for musicians. What Steven Holl added in approach to those regulations and given context, were the delicate sun studies he made for the building to give a different interpretation of the space in every hour of the day. With his Norwegian blood and different projects in the upper north of Scandinavia, Holl was comfortable with bright summers and dark winters and used these extremes to emphasise these phenomena in his buildings. The strips of glass between the curved roof and the walls catch the low angle of the sun and allow it to slightly run across the downward curved ceiling.

This project is a good example of the philosophical approach of Holl to a building. Like the philosophy of Heidegger with the existential ideas about place and making, he interpretes this into his concepts which are carefully constructed and argued through programme and context. Although the spatial explanation seems solid, it could also be designed in another way. The given theme 'textile' could have been executed in many different ways. Therefore, Holl is a master in communicating his design to

the public, very commercial in a way. The design theme is the human scale and the contextual approach to the programme, also in this museum. This gives an explorable yet comfortable experience, even if the visitor is not familiar with the area and its history. The phenomena of the art, the area, the country and the culture are captured in an overall experience in the HEART Museum of Contemporary Art.

Place for Smoking: from Consolidating Pipe Circle to Glass Box Condemnation

An investigation on the social value of smoking, based on the physical spaces where the act of smoking takes place
by Quita Schabracq

'Smoking was so commonplace as to appear a natural act, not a habit.'
Gately I. (2007)

Introduction

As a recent quitter, I just started to appreciate my liberation from the cigarette, when a visit to Cairo made my life very difficult. I encountered a world where unhealthy air completely smothers the city. The intense fumes of the cars and industry lays thick blankets over the city, mixing with bad smells of garbage lit on fire. On top of that, as if they never experienced healthy air, everybody smokes. Often the cigarette, but even more often the hookah. Every little cafe, restaurant or place to take a moment of rest, offers a variety of fruit tobaccos, to be enjoyed by yourself, or as means of social interaction. I found myself craving to smoke more than ever. Not so much because I was confronted with it very often, but more because I could not be part of this amazing culture of smoking. Smoking in Cairo would temporarily allow me to be part of Cairo, doing things the way they do it. Smoking shisha on a street corner, or cigarettes in El Horreya until the walls are yellow.

In conversation with a local friend, I understood that smoking tobacco in Cairo has the same reputation as alcohol in Amsterdam. It is available everywhere and very integrated into daily social life. It does not seem an often recurring thought that smoking is as damaging as drinking alcohol, or possibly worse.

These experiences led to my interest in the the origin and social meaning of smoking. How come it overcomes languages, cultures and classes? How did the habit go from a ritual, to an addiction? Is there a way to replace the immense social power of smoking? In order to investigate this I look at different images that portray a place for smoking throughout history. The physical space that is given or created for the act of smoking explains the meaning of smoking in that specific time, place and society.

To be concise, only images of spaces where more than one person is smoking

are analysed. This because an individual smoker could possibly smoke anywhere, whereas smoking together automatically creates social meaning for a space.

The text explains in four chapters moments in time wherein the behaviour or the social meaning of smoking significantly changed. In chapter two and four, two images are compared in order to show a big contrast or a subtle change within that specific time.

Circular consolidation

The smoking of tobacco has been used for medicinal, spiritual and social reasons by the Native Americans for centuries. With the arrival of the European settlers, smoking tobacco became a social tool for trade. Since both parties

*Harry Behn in a peace
pipe ceremony with
Black Foot Indians*



had incongruent ways of trading and valued goods for trade differently, it was hard to establish a system which both parties trusted. Comer explains how rituals for trade were executed in order to overcome the cultural differences: ‘disparate groups came together at Bent’s Old Fort and employed rituals to form a common world for a time.’ In this view, the trading post was much more than just an economic institution; it was a ‘social space where relationships and identities were forged.’ This was accomplished ‘through rituals associated with trade’ (Comer 1996:23).

In the image we can see two white men sitting within a circle of Native Americans men, while the act of shared smoking is taking place. The group is sitting down in a field, in front of a little tent. Considering they are dressed without shirts and covering themselves with blankets, it is most likely the white men’s tent where they have their temporary sleeping place. Even though the group of men smoking is sitting within the open field, the scene feels pleasantly shielded by surrounding layers of trees, vegetation and mountains.

The group forms a circle, with seemingly no hierarchy. The pipe is going around and smoked by each individual sitting in the circle. Concentration yet relaxation can be sensed from the scene. 'The ritual practice of smoking replicated the "primordial state" and created, if only temporarily, a fictive kinship between smokers that was based on a 'common mythical ancestry' (Comer 1996:129).

It is evident that even though these two white men might have different habits and cultures than the native American men, they have for this moment overcome their differences. Comer states that 'it was the performance of ritual that created and sustained social relationships and identities'.

Cultural Tobacco Club



Fig 2. The Tobacco Club of Frederick I of Prussia (Leygebe, 1710)

'While smoking dissolved cultural and social barriers, it also enforced them. As smoking became more and more part of the life of ordinary people, a problem arose, which had to do with pleasure. Smoking gives pleasure, but this was to be enjoyed by royalty, by the privileged and by the elites, not by the self-respecting working masses, whose preoccupations were supposed to be work, productivity and discipline.' (Gilman and Zhou 2004:15).

In the scene of the 'Tobacco Club' we see a gathering of an elite group of people. They are seated on chairs forming a circle in a flamboyantly decorated room. The walls have gold patterns on top of scarlet red velvet, and silver framed mirrors reflect the light of candles. A chandelier is suspended from the high ceiling.

In the middle of the scene, the royal pair is seated. The queen is lighting her husband's pipe. The rest of the circle consists of men, all smoking their private

pipe. Drinks and lighters for the pipes are being served by footmen. There is a hierarchy in the way the people are organised within the space: the royal pair in the middle, the visitors seated in a circle, and lastly the footmen walking around the circle to serve the guests.

Altogether the space seems like a space for high culture. Intelligent conversation is held under strict etiquettes, one man holding his pinky finger up, and shows this 'tobacco club' as a self-possessed form of entertainment.

The act of smoking is transformed here into a different cultural social activity. Like the Native Americans, these men form a seated circle. What's different is

Smokers in an interior
(*Teniers de Jonge*,
1637)



the hierarchal organisation, and they are seated on chairs instead of the ground. In addition, every man smokes his own pipe. Therefore, the habit of smoking has become one of cultural identity. You are part of the 'tobacco club' and you own your own pipe. It defines that you are part of a certain social class, shown by the way you smoke.

The room displayed by David Teniers, shows a different kind of 'Tobacco Club.' The painting portrays a local bar or pub where the ordinary people come together to drink and smoke. In front, we see three men loosely surrounding an old barrel serving as a simple table. The chairs are low and one man is sitting with one foot up trying to light his pipe with a match.

The other man is leaning back whilst exhaling smoke. A third man in the back is just taking a drag. A ceramic jar in the corner and glass on the table

show that alcohol is being consumed. Everything in the image suggests this is a place of loose morals. Shirts are halfway unbuttoned and in the back two men are in the midst of a card game. A possibly broken pipe is carelessly lying on the ground. The colors of the floor blend into the colors of walls and furniture, expressing that no finery was brought into this interior. Perhaps the only decoration is a little portrait on paper hanging above the fireplace. Furthermore, a shelf is holding the necessary ashtrays and jars.

The facial expressions of the smoking men in front all communicate a certain obsessiveness and therefore suggests addiction. They do not seem to really connect within the act of smoking, facing different directions. Another sinister



*Fig 4. An American, a British and a Russian soldier smoke Camel cigarettes, at Torgau an der Elbe, April 1945
69th Infantry Division*

man is peaking through the only small window, maybe catching the others in this immoral act. Coming back to the statement of Gilman, the habit of smoking was also adopted by 'ordinary' people as a form of pleasure, yet with different customs. Whereas the Tobacco Club of Prussia is full of etiquette and restriction, the smokers that have come together in the interior in Teniers painting, seem to have done that just so they can share their addiction and let go of any moral behaviour. In doing so, they do not seem to connect with each other.

Cigarette, crossing continents

With the invention of the machine rolled cigarette, the shape of the cigarette and behaviour of smoking became uniform. In the photograph we see three men leaning towards each other, each of them holding a cigarette in their mouth, waiting to be lighted. One man holds the lighter underneath the cigarette of the other, while he is inhaling in order to stimulate ignition. The second men patiently waits his turn, and the man with the lighter will probably serve himself last.

The three men stand in front of a commercial stating 'East meets West' portraying an American and Russian soldier greeting each other happily. In the background, we see a man yawning, a cart, some other people and a frame of the River Elbe. The scene shows a temporary meeting point of the alliances at the time of WWII.

All three men wear an army uniform, yet with recognisable differences. The man on the left wears a firm helmet, seemingly reinforced with a solid material, whereas the other two have a hat made of textile in different shapes. They all have specific gear in their outfits like aviator glasses, a torch or shoulder bag suggesting they all come from a different division of the army.

So here are three soldiers, all from different continents, maybe not even speaking each others languages, sharing a moment of smoking. They all

*Fig 5. Atlanta airport
smoking lounge*



know what to do in order to participate in this act of smoking. One lights the cigarette, the other leans forward showing participation. He inhales so that the ignition will happen quickly, making the act easy and simple. All of these behaviours and customs contribute to the fact that these men can bond quickly in this lost moment. During war there is limited time to get to know each other, so they come together through the act of smoking.

In addition, soldiers move fast, going wherever the superiors want them to be. That dictates that the space given for smoking should be flexible. Smoking should be able to happen anywhere. Whether it is inside, outside, for relaxation or social bonding.

Glass box condemnation

A modern day place for smoking is the smoking lounge on airports. The smoking lounge portrayed in the image beside, shows the current attitude towards smoking from governmental institutions. The space for smoking is separated by a glass wall, making it look like an aquarium. An aquarium where

‘the smoker’ is portrayed as a rare species to be mocked and looked at. The bright strip lights leave no space to hide. Within the space, all the chairs are placed in such a way that they prevent social interaction. The middle row of chairs are placed with backs against each other, and the opposing rows of chairs are at such distance that it would be hard to start a conversation. Furthermore the space is filled with bins, and public phones on the back wall. The bins suggest that with the habit of smoking a lot of trash is involved, and the phones provide an escape to a conversation with someone else then someone in the room.

Altogether the space given for smoking shows a condemnation of the habit. It is reluctantly created in order to serve the last few smokers, but more to prevent any behavior that is even less tolerable. Thus the space is made as uncomfortable as possible. The people within the smokers lounge do not seem to bond or connect in this space for smoking, making smoking an individual



Fig 6. Smoking area in Japan

experience. The image of ‘smoking pods’ in a restaurant in Japan show what space for smoking might be in the near future. In this diner or restaurant, ventilation pods hang from the ceiling. Smokers can smoke as individuals. A man and a woman are both seated underneath their own pod, while smoking a cigarette.

They have taken place on a comfortable chair or couch and a waiter is helping the lady to place the ventilation system down over her head. They are almost completely covered by the pod. The material of the pods seem so thick, that no conversation could be held while inside. This space appears to be a service of the restaurant for the last individual smokers. The ventilation machine dictates a purely individual experience.

The man under the pod in the foreground is tensely lighting his cigarette suggesting a certain obsessiveness and addiction. The smokers within their pods are a big contrast with the rest of the interior of the restaurant, a cosy decorated room with warm light and red furniture. The smokers are completely alienated from normality.

Conclusion

From the spaces for smoking portrayed in the images, different social values of smoking can be understood. In the first image, we see how the ritual of smoking serves to connect people from different worlds. The Native Americans and the white men take place in a non-hierarchical circle and smoke together a pipe. This creates a connection, if only temporary.

The circle of men seated in the painting of the Tobacco Club in the castle of the Berlin shows hierarchy and therefore a different social meaning. Being seated with the Tobacco Club defines that you are part of the cultural elite. This is in contrast with the group of men smoking in the interior portrayed by Teniers de Jonge. These men smoke in a dark, trashy and disorganised room, with little connection to each other. This portrays that they have loose morals and no manners. The contrast of the spaces portrayed in these two paintings show that smoking was used to identify yourself with a certain social class.

With the invention of the cigarette, the shape and behaviour of smoking became uniform again. This made it understandable for everyone and therefore a way to easily connect. This can be seen in the photograph of three soldiers from England, Russia and America that smoke together in a lost moment in a coincidental space during war times.

The smoking aquarium on the airport and smoking pod show disconnection. The two spaces define a separation between the smoker and the non-smoker, and even between the smokers there seems to be little to no connection.

Smoking in a pod becomes a purely individual experience.

These four chapters show a certain wave pattern over time. Smoking first served to connect, then to separate, again to connect and again to separate. Would that mean that the next chapter of smoking will serve to connect again? Or is the last chapter told, and will the habit of smoking die along with the last individual smoker?

We cannot undo our knowledge on the health risks of smoking, yet I want to acknowledge the social value it still has in worlds like Cairo. There the connection of people through the space made for smoking is strong and powerful. For a moment of time, I can belong with the people from Cairo. Alright then, I'll have one, just to connect.

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Temporality - an informal approach

Imagining the influence of temporality on informal urban settlements

by Tobias Kumkar

Cairo, September 2017

Today Mohamed woke up early. The sun just rose and the heat is slowly rising in the streets of El Haraneya, a small neighborhood at the eastern edge of Cairo.

It seems as it will be again one of those summer days with empty streets in which the heat is trapped during the day with only a few people rushing back and forth to the kiosk at the corner. Only at dawn people will start taking over the streets, filling up the rare cafés.

Today is Friday and Mohamed doesn't have to go to school. Instead, he is going to help his friend Omar. Omar lives only a few streets away but every time he goes to visit him he feels as if he is in a totally different world.

Already during the day the cafés are full of people; people that are buying groceries at the neighboring market. Sometimes, Mohamed has to pick up some groceries at the market as well and every time his mom gets angry with him. It is only a few streets away but it always takes him ages, but what can he do, there are just so many things happening on the street that he could stay there the whole day.

Omar has been living in this area all his life. His father, a former farmer, moved to the city when his first son started going to school. He owned a small piece of land just outside the city, but back then he needed the money to pay his son's tuition fees. Ever since, he has missed the fresh air of the countryside and the fresh food he could find wherever two streets met.

It was only a matter of time before he decided to transform the dusty roof of his building into a small urban garden. Since he had all the knowledge about cultivating plants, what soil to use, how much water to give and what plants to plant, the crops he grew were much better than anything he could buy in the local supermarket. And every time his roof gave more than his family could eat he gave it away to his neighbours. Soon, everybody in the neighbourhood was secretly hoping for some of his delicious leftovers.

One day his neighbour was standing on the scaffolding of his construction site for an extension to his building, a process that in the good old Cairo manner can take a lot of time. Looking down over the little farm he got the idea to lend some of its space to his neighbour. Omar's father got very excited about it. He always loved a warm Taameyya in the morning, but without fresh Fava beans they just weren't the same. Fava beans, the typical bean in Egypt, would grow very high, taking all the sun from the other plants on his roof. But on the scaffolding they could grow as high as they want. When Omar's father planted his first row of beans he wouldn't have imagined that this simple idea would change his life and the whole neighbourhood at the same time.

A lot of time has passed since then and soon his first son is going to be married. Last week, he harvested some beans again, but instead of planting new ones this time he left the buckets empty.

That is also why Mohamed woke up so early today. Every Friday, he would play with his friend Omar but today Omar's father needs all his family to help him take down the lowest of the planting rows and clean the roof for a new apartment on top of it. After eating his breakfast Mohamed is already on his way to help them. He never misses an opportunity to spend a day in their neighbourhood.

Understanding Cairo

The neighbourhoods Mohamed and Omar live in are two of many similar neighbourhoods that are spreading around the edges of Cairo. A city that has been under enormous pressure in the housing sector for many years. With an enormous growth in population, and more and more people trying to find their luck in the city, the existing housing market of Cairo is not able to meet the demand. Many people take their faith into their own hands, buy a piece of land at the edge of the city and build their house on it. For farmers like Omar's father this situation makes it much more lucrative to sell their land than cultivating crops for the local market. The once so green fields along the Nile are slowly transforming into a grey and red cityscape.

Officially labeled as informal these neighbourhoods spread all around the city. They are characterised by extreme density, almost no open spaces on street level and an endlessly repeating pattern of concrete skeletons with red brick infills. Without any individual characteristics it is almost impossible to distinguish the differences between them.

Everybody in those neighborhoods tries to survive on their own. After buying a small plot of land the self-built home is everything people identify with. Using it in the most efficient way and keeping it adaptable to the ever expanding family is one of the crucial elements in order to survive in those neighbourhood.

This is also why El Haraneya is a neighbourhood that is in constant flux. As most of the buildings are privately owned, they are constructed fully on the demand of the family. If a son is born, the family starts preparing for a new layer on top of their house so in time the son marries the new family has a place to live.

Apartment and commercial buildings follow a similar approach, only that they are built according to the financial situation of the owner instead of the demand of the tenants. If new money is made available it is invested in new apartments. This steady process of extension leads to a constantly changing urban pattern that is always awaiting a next level on top of the existing one.

El Haraneya is only a small neighbourhood in Cairo, but its typology is typical of almost every informal neighbourhood appearing at the fringes of cities in rapidly developing regions all around the world. High density, private ownerships in between formality and informality and the lack of public spaces, identity and a representation of the human scale in the cityscape are common characteristics for these areas.

But why did the project of Omar's father have such an influence on a neighbourhood that is lacking so many social qualities? Why did the whole neighbourhood flourish after he started occupying his empty roof and his neighbour's facade?

By adapting his neighbour's scaffolding to his needs he achieved a way to access and use the empty spots of the city without limiting the possibilities of his neighbour to extend and adapt his house. The temporary nature of his venture persuaded his neighbour to take a chance in investing in it. His neighbour didn't have to fear losing the adaptability of his house and even saw a chance for personally profiting from it. Without this temporality, the little farm would've never been bigger than the little rooftop.

Taking a look at temporary projects around the world, one notices that temporality can achieve much more than just fulfilling its direct needs. In cities like Amsterdam, but also in other cities around the world, the temporary use of abandoned and leftover spaces is implemented into almost every process of city planning in order to enhance social interaction and trigger development in the area. In Amsterdam for example projects like the NDSM Werf close the gap between two differing functions of a whole neighbourhood and projects like de Ceuvvel take advantage of temporary restrictions to execute permanent developments. In general, these projects can range from small interventions existing for a day to year long occupations of whole neighbourhoods.

On the whole, temporary projects share that quality. Because of their temporary character people are more willing to engage with them. Since the time period of the projects is limited, people's engagement is as well.

The same goes for another approach towards the project: failing. In the city of Mons in Belgium for example an extravagant structure was built in the streets of the old town. Completely constructed out of reused wooden sticks, its construction was daring, but because of its temporality it was realised anyway. In the end it collapsed. This illustrates that knowing that a project exists only for a certain amount of time people are more adventurous and daring to fail. In the way that the projects are temporary, the impact of failing is as well.

Another characteristic of projects like this is the limited or non-existing budget for their implementation. Depending of course on the reason and the people involved most of the projects are built with a design approach that takes advantage of all available resources before taking into account resources and processes available for permanent projects.

In the little town Weimar in Germany, for example, a restaurant occupied a little gap between two buildings. Since its existence was limited to only one summer it was completely built out of waste materials. Old roof beams became tables, while used truck covers became water.

This also shows that with the limited palette of available resources basic elements are solved in a simple and direct manner. That doesn't mean a completely technical and toneless approach in the design process. On the contrary, since the tools and techniques are limited the design becomes a representation of the qualities and characteristics of the material or object

being used. The most common example for that would be the use of the EUR pallet. A simple search online presents countless examples of possible transformations into new objects. Sometimes as a whole, sometimes completely reassembled or only used in fragments. In the already mentioned restaurant 'Lücke' (literally 'gap' in German) for example, these EUR pallets are transformed into raised beds in order to grow fresh herbs for the restaurant.

Since the designer, constructor and user is mostly one and the same person, the direct involvement in the process of creation is much higher than in professionally executed projects, making it a representation of its creators individuality. One side-effect of this stronger personal connection is that the willingness to let go of a successful project decreases as soon as it nears its end. People tend to put an effort into the extension of its timespan or even transform it into a permanent project.

All these characteristics can also be found in the project in El Haraneyya but an important difference lies within its location. The majority of the projects mentioned earlier are located in empty office spaces, empty houses and building plots or abandoned industrial zones and infrastructure areas. What all of these areas have in common is that they are dots in the landscape of the city.

In El Haraneyya, on the other hand, the project started on the farmers' own rooftop and the neighbouring walls. Slowly extending onto neighbouring buildings, it became an inspiration for other inhabitants of the area. With every plot or house in the neighbourhood having at least the same type of empty roof and surrounding walls, people that got inspired could project the success of Omar's father on their own property. With his initiative as a direct example, a tested prototype so to speak, security and confidence was created in order to take the first step towards the adaptation of their own space. After a while the projects were not bound to a specific location anymore but spread equally over the whole neighbourhood of El Haraneyya.

This spatial connection between the projects and the property of the people as well as their direct involvement led to a growing connection between the individuals and their urban environment. Triggered by the exchange of food and experience or by the negotiation of the usage of available spaces, affiliations with the neighbourhood were created, a neighbourhood people started to identify with. With people identifying themselves with the projects and their neighbourhood, the typical side-effect of personal commitment that leads to

the attempt to transform a temporary project into a permanent one is even more distinct than in the ones mentioned earlier. But since with the underlying principle of spatial flexibility, its actual shape and location always remains temporary, only its implementation as such becomes permanent, allowing the acceptance of it to survive along the process.

One could even say that the transition to a more permanent nature of the project was actually one of the reasons for its success on the level of the neighbourhood. With the appearance of a regular market, currently located on one of the empty plots in the area and the agriculture improving the microclimate in the streets people from inside and outside the neighbourhood started occupying the streets. The neighbourhood flourished and an identity was created, an identity that fascinates Mohamed every time he passes by.

Today, the project in El Haraneya is only a dream. Inspired by the constant flux of the informal areas in Cairo and the potential of temporality itself. It is a dream about a new connection to our built environment. As architects, but also as inhabitants, we have been used to a rather permanent image of it for a long time. Buildings were constructed to outlive ourselves. This approach is changing, in part because of our awareness of environmental issues and the connected approach of circularity, but also because of changing values in our society.

In times where more and more activities are transferred into a digital space, we are getting used to spaces that are adaptable to the personal needs of their users. In a neighbourhood that is, due to its economic factors, already one of the fastest changing ones we know, maybe we can take this approach to the next level. Maybe temporality can not only enhance the efficiency of the space itself but can also be an opportunity for a neighbourhood to create identity, public spaces that people feel connected to and a cityscape that reflects its inhabitants.

Big Toe Under a Microscope

The beast trapped inside each of us

by Justyna Chmielewska

Foreword

We share the world with animals. We need them, we use them, we trade them, we feed on them, we praise them, we love them, we kill them, we fear them, we treat them, we live side by side with them.

Egypt is where pigeons were first domesticated and bred. You can see them depicted on the walls in pharaonic tombs. In Cairo, you see young men with white flags on flat roofs trying to attract flocks of birds. Colourful wooden sheds (with pigeons inside them) densely cover the city's rooftops.

In the evening the Egyptians climb onto the roofs to their pigeons and observe the city from a different perspective. Here a person and an animal meet. They share the privacy of the home.

People love them, take care of them, hold them, sell them, eat them and let them out of the sheds to fly in flocks around the city. After the evening ritual, they go back downstairs, into their kitchens, and eat pigeon stuffed with rice, an Egyptian delicacy. A favorite dish is hamam mahshi - pigeon stuffed with young wheat, rice or bulgur. You serve stuffed pigeon if you really want to show somebody love.

El Haraneya

During my visit to El Haraneya, a district in Cairo, I entered a house. A young boy led me upstairs, through the kitchen and living room, to the top floor, which was home to four cows, hundreds of chickens and a bunch of pigeons. The owner put one of his favourite pigeons in my hands. I was holding the pigeon in my hands! Looking at these animals in the cities, I was scared and disgusted by them, for they are our city's flying rats. One can see them everywhere.

Egypt is full of domesticated animals. Besides pigeons, I saw cows chilling out in the shade of palm trees, goats stuck on the rooftops, people riding donkeys, camels eating thorny grasses, cats begging for food, horses pulling broken cars, mice being chased by a weasel and packs of dogs wandering around the streets.

For the inhabitants of El Haraneya, it is common to keep livestock in the home. Around 60% of inhabitants do it, mainly for economic reasons. They eat these animals. After all, most of them used to be farmers, who moved to the growing city and its apartment blocks in search of a better life, job opportunities and money from selling their land to developers.

In this rapidly growing city where every centimetre counts, farmers are losing contact with the soil and moving into buildings with their families and animals. The transformation from farmland to city is proceeding fast.

A young woman from El Haraneya objected to my taking photographs of the animals seen inside the houses. She asked if the photos would be published abroad and said: These photos are an embarrassment to us and damage the image of Cairo as a civilised city. "Activities like poultry raising should be kept in the villages. Poultry in the city are a source of dirt and disease."

(Jorg Gertel, Said Samir)

Our attitudes towards animals have always been difficult. In them we can see our monstrous and alien mirror images, our negative counterparts. We used to fear them, but now we just use them because we can control them.

Otherness

In our modern era, animals are the 'others', there to be used and abused. In her book *Animals, Anomalies and Inorganic Others*, contemporary philosopher and feminist Rosi Braidotti tries to find the reason for appreciating and changing the value of 'the other'.

The animal is the term that describes one's relation to otherness. All the non-white, non-masculine, non-normal, non-young, non-healthy, zoomorphic or disabled were put to the other side of normality and seen as deviant or anomalous. However, the normal, the dominant subject, needs the 'other'. He is haunted by them, because through negation they are necessary to his self-representation:

"The metamorphic power of monstrous others serves the function of illuminating the thresholds of 'otherness' while displacing their boundaries. Their effect is cathartic, as if the monster was within our embodied self, ready to unfold."

Rosi Braidotti

But the point is to break the old metaphorical habits and to develop dialects and modes of interrelation and representation of the others in an affirmative and empowering manner.

However, an interspecies communication is complicated. Isn't it anthropomorphic? (antropomorphism is the attribution of human characteristics or behaviour to a god, animal, or object.)

“Modern man no longer communicates with the madman... There is no common language: or rather, it no longer exists.”

Michel Foucault

Does my cat understand me when I talk to him? The house in which I grew up was a zoo. Ninety square metres and one dog, two cats, two hamsters, one chinchilla, one turtle, two parrots, one chameleon, a snake and his food - white mice. I was an observer of and participant in the animals' behaviour. The dog chased the cats, the cats ate the turtle and scared the parrots, who stressed out the chameleon and hamsters. Between us and the dangerous snake, an almost invisible border of glass. Interaction between us (humans) and them (animals) wasn't always positive. There was lots of anger provoked by their animal behaviour. Each time they lost control, a human tried to temper them, raise them, make them behave.

Every month the cat went through the feline heat cycle and exposing her genitals to everybody from the house, which was always unwelcome. My grandma would try to humanise the cat by beating it and tempering its animal behaviour. I have learned that we all try to escape our animality. Animalisation is an act that makes people cruel or lacking normal human qualities. It's fascinating how we humans live with animals and try to communicate with them.

Ancient Egypt

Interspecies communication was especially present in ancient Egypt, where people used animal figures as letters to communicate (hieroglyphs). Animals spoke to the gods in a language humans could not understand. Animals were therefore special beings. While other religions consider animals as less than humans, in Ancient Egypt animals took important decisions. By reading their movements and interpreting their sounds, priests took decisions for believers asking for advice. To ancient people, the world was unknown, frightening and

filled with mystery. The tension resulted in a God-like adoration. Egyptian gods represented aspects of the natural surroundings and helped them understand its many aspects.

The physical form taken by the various Egyptian gods was usually a therianthrope - a hybrid between an animal and human. They had an animal head attached to an anthropomorphic, human body. This refers to the fantastical or mythological, ability of some humans to change into animals. In the hybrid form of therianthrope, civilization and wilderness met.

Once praised wild animals, now kept in the zoos, extinct or moved south further into Africa mainly because of the development of agriculture and cities around the fertile lands of the Nile.

The lush forests and grasslands around the river used to be corridors for many wild animals that travelled north to the Mediterranean Sea. The animals which used to be gods - leopards, lions, hippopotamuses - were driven from the precious areas around the Nile. The remaining populations of wild animals are often geographically isolated from one another, which leads to inbreeding and consequently to reduced genetic diversity.

Lions became extinct in the north of Africa before the end of the twentieth century. Most lions now live in eastern and southern Africa, and their numbers are rapidly decreasing, with an estimated 30-50% decline per 20 years in the second half of the 20th century. Domesticated animals took the place of wild animals.

“Since the domestication of animals in the Neolithic Period, the ancient Egyptians’ relationship to animals has taken several forms. The most significant domesticates were cattle. Their energy was harnessed, they were used to work the land, as food, and a source of raw materials.”

Salima Ikram, Mamdouh Eldamaty

The Marvels of Madness

Domestication, from the Latin word domesticus, means ‘belonging to the house’. Domestication started with putting the fence around animals.

It is a relationship between the organisms, in which one cares for the other in order to secure a predictable supply of resources. Domestication has led to an explosion in the human population. Accordingly, the world began to spin

around the needs of people.

Humans concentrated the planet's biomass in human-favoured plants and animals. Domesticated ecosystems that provide food and promote commerce also resulted in habitat loss and the extinction of predators and dangers.

All that we inflicted on the earth has made us rethink our god-like attitude. Ecological disasters spell the end of our drive towards mastering nature. We have to negotiate with the forces of the earth in relation to climate change and environmental disasters.

Our attempt to control and domesticate nature's madness was studied by the French historian and philosopher Michel Foucault in his book 'Madness and Civilization'. We have disassembled our own madness leaving behind its marvels and fears.

'The world is sliding into universal Fury, and the victor will be neither God nor the Devil, but Madness itself. The fantastic images that madness inspired were no fugitive appearance that quickly vanished from the surface of things: man was fascinated by madness on all sides. The vain images of blind foolishness turned out to be the truth of the world, and in this grand disorder, this mad universe, the cruelty that lay in the day of judgement began to appear. (...)

But the key point is that these fits of madness are seen as a kind of animal freedom. The negative fact that 'the mad were not treated as human beings' was the result of a very real thought process, in that this apparently inhuman indifference betrayed a deep-seated worry which since antiquity, and above all since the Middle Ages, had given the animal world its familiar strangeness, its menacing marvels, and the weight of all the fears it inspires.

Yet this animal fear that accompanied the perception of madness with all its imaginary landscapes no longer had the meaning that it had had for previous centuries. Metamorphosis into an animal was no longer an indication of the power of the devil, nor a result of the diabolical alchemy of unreason. The animal in man was no longer the indicator of a beyond, but had become in itself his madness, with no reference to anything other than itself, his madness in a natural state.

The animality that raged in madness dispossessed man of his humanity, not so that he might fall prey to other powers, but rather to fix him at the degree zero of his own nature. Madness, in these later forms, was for the classical age a direct relation between man and his animality, without reference to a beyond and without appeal.' Michel Foucault, *Madness and Civilization*

Cairo is a showcase for the contact with the 'other' - the animals who live with us. The pressure of space in the megalopolis has led to an intensification of contact between species. The thin strip of the river cutting the desert has become a cramped meeting point. Here the wilderness and civilisation met, resulting in the praise of the wild. The Nile is a living organism on the vast and dead plateau of the Sahara - a slice of life in a mad, cosmic landscape of sand. To me, the desert is a place of fears, dreams and madness.

Conclusion

Instead of making a change in ourselves, we would rather imagine the end of the world. Controversy and criticism of Slovenian philosopher Slavoj Žižek make me think about the ugliest and the worst vision of the world. However, we are just another killing force on the Earth and when facing the nature we often lose. Gladly.

"Nature, in itself, is a series of unimaginable catastrophes. It is crazy. Things go wrong all the time."

Slavoj Žižek., YouTube video

"The world of animals used to be mysterious for us, saturated with fantasies, emotions and desires."

Rosi Braidotti

In the past the mad represented mysterious forces and portrayed as having wisdom, revealing the distinction between what men are and what they pretend to be.

We used to observe the animal and the madman like unknown phenomena. We tried to explain their behaviours and existence with fairytales. The tales were arousing around them in order to explain the irrational world, to tame the wild. What can surprise us now?

We are getting to the point that we think we know almost everything, so we are also in control of everything. We have become our own gods. Therefore, how can we become curious about the animal part of us and make ourselves more humble? How to see the unseen animal part of each of us that is pushed aside?

My whole life I have been running away from the animal part of myself. I try to be perfect. I control, because I fear, I worry. I want to be like a machine,

perfectly oiled. I have to be useful.

No. I want to become an animal and start speaking like one. Let's fear the catastrophes, let's dance like animals, let's allow ourselves to be sick, let's be a human beast, let's observe and fantasize, let's be weak and weird, let's fall in love with a mobile phone, let's make no sense at all!

Let's let out the beast trapped inside each of us.

"The big toe is the most human part of the human body, in the sense that no other element of this body is as differentiated from the corresponding element of the anthropoid ape. [...] The function of the human foot consists in giving a firm foundation to the erection of which man is so proud. [...] Man willingly imagines himself to be like the god Neptune, stilling his own waves, with majesty."

Georges Bataille

In the space age, while we are faced with the task of thinking of the non-human scale of the universe, zoom in on your big toe and look at the substance you consist of.

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Water World

An inspirational exploration in design with water
by Silko van der Vliet

The paradoxal relation of Egypt and water

An old saying states that Egypt is a gift of the Nile. The river created due to the seasonal flooding, an environment where civilisation, flora and fauna could live in harmony. The levees of the Nile river are dynamic places and a phenomenon to be celebrated because of the fertile soil where food can be grown, products sold and fresh water used. However, in the last century the great Aswan Dam was build and the dynamics of the Nile are fading. Also, the population was growing and still continues to grow rapidly. The population is highly dependent on the water from the Nile, but the flow of the river is strictly regulated by the governments of Egypt. Only paradoxically the water seems to be neglected nowadays. The natural resilience of the water system can't handle processing the amount of waste anymore, what seems the only use in the urban fabric when the agricultural functions dissolves. Egypt should start thinking about how it wants to maintain its water supply in the future, otherwise there will be uncertainty of which nobody knows the consequences. It concerns the entire population because water has always been an essential part of daily life. Whether the people remains conscious of that or not.

Designing with water

Sometimes designers help to show people how our lives are connected to water. They usually give us insights through a visual expression. It does not really matter whether it is more of a practical or poetic nature, a specific object or an experience. In order to further assist Egypt with its foreseeable water problems, it would be wise to look at the different ways a designer can approach the theme of water.

The selection of projects discussed in this paper aims to be as diverse as possible, to show a wide variety of possible consequences. It is an opportunity for me as a landscape designer to look beyond my own horizon as well, so the focus will not be on landscape architectural projects. After discussing the projects it will have to show whether there are recurring principles. If so, what are these principles or can the lack of it be explained? Which possible acquired knowledge can also be applied when creating spatial designs? Is it applicable on every scale and are dynamics or adjustments still possible after application.

Sewage Surfer

Nature photographer Justin Hofman went on a diving expedition on the Indonesian island of Sumbawa when he spotted the little seahorse. Riding the currents by holding on to seaweeds or other floating objects. As the tidal water flows became more intense, incoming solid ocean waste took over the scene. In need of a more stable raft, the seahorse switched to a cotton swab passing by. Aghast of what he saw at that moment, Justin took his 'Sewage Surfer' photo. It had such an impact on him as an individual that the focus of his photographs changed towards showing this state of pollution in our oceans. Feeling this responsibility the photo was submitted to the Wildlife Photographer of the Year competition in 2017, held by the Natural History Museum in London. As one of the finalists, he made sure that the troubling image reached as many people as possible. It is a great example of how a small thing as photo can set so much things in motion to make actual water quality better. According to the United Nations, Indonesia pledged to reduce its amount of waste being discharged into the water by seventy percent in 2025. In addition to that, specific plans are being implemented to clean coastal areas, for instance, and make it part of the school curriculum, to work on a trash-free Indonesia.

Water<Less™

In their Water<Less™ collection fashion label Levi Strauss & Co is working on ways to use fewer water resources to manufacture clothing items. The production of a pair of jeans requires a lot of water, from getting raw materials out of cotton fields to the manufacturing facilities. Realising that, in a time of water scarcity, a business so dependent on fresh water supply should evolve to secure a future, action was taken. Because Levi's is a big brand with a specific image and feel to its products it is a tricky thing to make big changes in the methodology to achieve this. In rethinking the traditional production process and making adjustments in specific parts, the overall design becomes more sustainable.

By combining multiple wash cycles into a single wet cycle process, using the same materials and techniques, the unique appearance and feel are preserved. Since the launch in 2011, the savings of water have been brought down to an average of 28 percent up to 96 percent for certain products. In addition to the continuous savings in the production process, an interactive Go Water>Less campaign was also initiated in collaboration with Water.org. People were encouraged to adopt a lifestyle that is conscious of fresh water as a precious resource and even literally provide water to those who are without by expanding the Water.org's Watercredit initiative.

Popsicles of Pollution

Not only companies can try to make a difference when it comes to growing awareness in water as a precious resource. Hung Yi-Chen, Guo Yi-hui and Cheng Yu-Ti, three graduate students of visual communication studies at the National Taiwan University of Arts, gained international attention with their project Polluted Water Popsicles. Inspiration for their project was found in seeing near-black water in the canal right behind the school. Noteworthy is that the university is located in one of the most dense urban areas of Taiwan, the Banqiao district in New Taipei City. To illustrate the state of pollution, samples from hundred lakes, rivers, beaches and ports were taken from all over the country. The samples were first frozen into popsicles and then preserved in polyester resin for display. Each of them reveals different flavours of pollution with plastics, metals and other detrimental materials. With each popsicle comes a casing including a label with the sources of the sample used. So exhibited, people could identify the popsicle with a specific place, which was also ranked from cleanest to most dirty. The project's strength lies in pointing out the paradox of the damage pollution does, even though it can be aesthetically beautiful and at the same time probably has a terrible taste.

Sink-Urinal

As a designer there is also the opportunity to put water into use when designing aesthetically appealing objects. With the STAND urinal sink design, the traditionally separate elements of the urinal to pee and the sink to wash your hands afterwards are merged into one sanitary element. The idea of combining both could come to life since water saving is a core value of the design. Because the water used to clean the hands is re-used to flush the urinal, a water saving of 50 percent can be achieved, which adds a sustainable aspect to it. Latvian designer Kaspars Jursons created the design for the urinal sink at his own product design and development company SIA Jursons in 2011. From that time on, the product has already been sold to buyers worldwide. The design is also intelligent in saving space combining two elements into one. Which makes it interesting to apply in crowded public spaces to make people flow more efficient and increase comfort, but as well for restrooms with limited space in general. One could argue that next to previous it could change the culture of men not washing hands due to a lack of time. In this combined setting, they'll be reminded to integrate it into their routine, so hygiene will increase.

Warka Tower

The name of this project is directly linked to the name of giant wild fig tree, native to Ethiopia. Just like the tree, this designed tower becomes part of the local culture, giving its fruit fresh water, shade and serving as a gathering place for the community. It is an alternative source of clean water for isolated populations without any infrastructure to otherwise obtain it. Usually the water is contaminated by animal and human waste, causing major health problems and high infant mortality. In order to collect fresh water in a low-tech manner, water collecting and storing techniques were drawn from insects and plants that manage to survive in harsh environments. Key principle is that air always contains a certain amount of water vapour, which can be extracted almost anywhere on the planet. This in combination with making use of craftsmanship, materials and construction techniques rooted in local tradition, allowing for realisation by the community. Local meteorological conditions dictate the amount of fresh water that can be harvested from the tower, whereby shape and size may be different from place to place.

Hippo Water Roller

Almost three decades ago also in Africa, two engineers from South Africa developed a water carrying device in response to the water crisis in rural areas. In order to have water, people used to walk for hours with buckets on their heads on a daily basis, causing long-term head and spine damage. The design by Peter Petzer and Johan Jonker consists of a polyethylene 90 litre barrel and a steel handle. Water can be transported inside the barrel which serves as a robust wheel for multiple terrains. Because the actual weight is at floor surface, the effective weight becomes low enough to be user friendly for children, women and the physically less strong. Since bigger amounts of water can be transported at once, more time comes available to get education or economic activities. By optimising an existing phenomenon, the designers manage to create a broad social impact and improve moral dignity within a culture with smart simple tools. Over time, it also inspired other designers to improve or make additions to the design. Such as utility caps for irrigating farmland, water filtering products like Sawyer and the multifunctional steel frame of the Spaza Shop. Recently, students were also motivated to design a filtering system within the barrel that filters as it rolls, so there is already clean water arriving back home.

Querini Stampalia

The Museum of Fondazione Querini Stampalia is one of the best kept examples of a house-museum, within the Querini Stampalia family palace in the heart of Venice. Carlo Scarpa, a Venetian born architect, was asked to improve his earlier design for renovation work by the director at that time in 1959. The main character of the design is water. It enters the building from the Rio Santa Maria Canal, which you also have to cross by bridge to access the palace. Initially Scarpa was asked to protect the building against the 'acqua alta', the exceptional tide peaks that occur periodically in the northern Adriatic Sea and keep the water out. He felt that the water should be inside, just like in the rest of the city and shows in his design the beautiful effect on light in the spaces, due to the bright and reflective properties of water. The project is full of refined detailing and great workmanship of materials, creating a well-balanced combination of new and old elements to showcase the water in many different ways. In the garden, small channels are linked, sculptural objects are placed along the flow and suggest a guidance through Scarpa's story of his Venetian water.

Lessons learned

Start to look at several design projects related to the theme of water, some categories start to occur. They are listed with the symbols at the top of the page. The first thing you will notice is that in order to put something on the agenda with regard to water, it is not necessary to make direct use of physical water. It can also be a narrative or simulation that achieves the desired effect. In common cases it is to create an awareness for the subject of fresh water, the pollution of it or a product dealing with water issues. It often leads to a widely supported process of cultural change. In other words, renewal and new opportunities within existing communities or evolution of tradition. Next to practical or functional meaning where design and craftsmanship are involved, a certain art form can also be pursued and evoke poetic or symbolic meaning. People are encouraged to experience something strong so it might well induce them to launch new initiatives. The sustainability aspect of projects is something more recent. Not only in Egypt, but all over the world, we should reconsider what we know, improve methods to sustain our way of living, in order to save the planet and not deplete her. If we do it really smartly, we can focus on markets which generate new revenues to reward ourselves with a profit, but also to make the product expandable. It also enables others or new generations to build on acquired knowledge and let design play an active role in approaching water-related issues and turn these into inspiring projects.

Projects

Sewage Surfer: Justin Hofman, USA

WaterLess™: Levi's fashion collection, USA

Polluted Water Popsicles: Hung Yi-Chen, Guo Yi-hui, Cheng Yu-Ti, Taiwan

STAND, urinal sink: Kaspars Jursons, Latvia

Warka Tower: Arturo Vittori, Italy

Hippo Water Roller: Peter Petzer, Johan Jonker, South Africa

Querini Stampalia: Carlo Scarpa, Italy

Listening to Buildings

Searching for the sonic spirit of place

Ruben Dahmen

As a music-playing architect, I'm obsessed by sound in buildings. Suddenly I get hit by a sound that feels like a great discovery. When I want to share my findings I feel misunderstood, as if sound is of no importance. When I was a little boy my mother took me to church. Not the reformed church, but the



Remonstrant church in Alkmaar, built in 1659

Remonstrant church in Alkmaar¹. This used to be a clandestine church from the 17th century. This church was not allowed to be noticeable. So for that reason, the church is situated in the middle of a housing block, invisible from the street. The importance of this church is that it is designed to be hidden. This also means that all the religious songs are kept inside. A remarkable feature for a large building. The wooden floors are totally covered with a thick layer of sand. The sand works as a heavy porous cover so that the sound waves are silenced. This results in a striking experience; a large space with soft acoustics.

In this article, I will share my thoughts about how sounds in buildings are conceived and why it is so important for our well-being to design with sounds.

It will consist of my search for silence and the human reaction to silence according to scientists. I will also explain how architects could use sounds in their plans and how it works on the basis of some projects where something remarkable happens with sound. I will go from the source of the sound to the acoustics of spaces. I will start with the reason why I think sound is an important part of our surroundings. Sound is the only input we can't ignore. Our ears don't have lids that shut them off from our surroundings. Everyone has an acoustic subconsciousness that plays a role in our well-being. We constantly have an idea of space and position due to the input through our ears. It is the sound coming from the walls and objects that makes our mind understand the dimension of space.

In my normal daily life, I have sounds around me 24/7. I live in Amsterdam in a street parallel to the Albert Cuyp market. When there is no market there are pubs that produce a lively noise. When the pubs close the market starts to build up again. I can probably count the experiences where there is no background noise from engines on one hand. These sounds influence our behaviour. For example, a sound coming from above will make you take action directly. Your heartbeat will rise, your muscle tension increases and a shot of adrenaline will rush through your body. You are ready to look where your ears are telling to.

Sounds or absence of sounds can make us crazy. Literature describes multiple examples of how sounds of the city can make your stress level higher with a number possible resulting illnesses as: ischemic heart disease and hypertension. By contrast, total silence can result in paranoia and schizophrenia (Fowler, M). In my noisy neighbourhood, silence sounds like a holiday. A reason to test what happens to my body in silence.

Finding silence is a hard sport. It takes real engineering to build a truly silent place, although for science this doesn't exist in practise. This journey brought me to two inventions: the anechoic chamber and the sensory deprivation tank. The sensory deprivation tank is an invention by John C. Lilly known for his unusual experiments with dolphins and LSD. I took this experience for practise and went to one of the deprivation tanks in Amsterdam. There I found myself accompanied with fit female fighters in the waiting room. The tank consists of warm water with loads of dissolved salt. This makes it possible to float on the water. The tank is totally closed and the only thing there is a big door to get you in and out. In this tank, it is silent for all your senses. I could only feel

warm water that had the same temperature as my body. I was not able to see because of the darkness, and all sounds were blocked because of the three doors that I had to pass through. The only thing that was left was myself. The sound of my breathing felt heavy, I could hear my heartbeat through the water and I could even hear my eyelids close and open. The time is there to forget. The only thing that kept my real attention were my thoughts. That is actually a lot to handle. My mind went from boredom to dreaming to silent. When I came out of the tank, it felt uncomfortable to talk. It was as if I saw the world as an alien that lands for the first time on the planet. You could say that I was detached from the city and felt like a misfit walking there after this silence experiment. I definitely felt distant from the world around me.

My second experience with silence brought me to the TU Delft, where they have an anechoic chamber. Scientifically speaking, the most silent place on earth. The only existing sound is the sound directly from the source, and the only source is you. They created this chamber completely separate from the structure of the building. The inside of the room is covered in baffles out of glass wool with a depth of 80cm. The floor is a grid of metal cables holding you like a trampoline. When you enter it feel like you enter a room with overpressure. Like you need to pop your ears because you can't hear. I immediately heard a noise similar to white noise, the snow on a television. White noise is all the audible soundwaves together at the same decibel. It was my own head making up something for what wasn't there. After a while I could hear my heartbeat, as in blood running through my veins making a rhythmic sound that reminded me of hearing the flow of water through copper pipes. At some point, I felt like the walls were moving. I would say that this extreme silence I have experienced is uncomfortable. Distracting and imparting a sense of being out of place. In the literature about silence, it has been shown that people start hallucinating and become mentally unstable.

The things you hear are important for the connection you have with the surrounding world. Background sounds make you function in the world instead of being solely in your own mind.

In what way should architects work with sound? Now that we know that sound does matter in architecture, architects should play with it more. Just like we do with colours and forms, we can play with the sounds in buildings. I like architecture that surprises me. When something remarkable happens in the acoustics of a building, I become enthusiastic. It provides another layer of

feeling to a building.

In my experience in architecture, office sounds in buildings are mostly seen as a problem to solve. There is definitely more discussion about the colour of a façade than the sound of it. I would say this is a missed opportunity for the experience we have with buildings. We architects should follow the example of the product designers where sounds are seriously designed.

Take Mercedes, for example. The sound of slamming the door of their cars is precisely designed. Mercedes even says that the sound of the car is the most important for letting your subconscious decide whether you like the car or not (Mercedes YouTube channel).

In architecture we could say that humans produce most of the sound. They touch buildings in different ways, they open doors, they walk, they talk. These are all situations where the architect has influence on the outcome of how a building sounds. In the process of designing, we can play with these active sound sources. We can compose with them by adding active sounds such as water fountains, birds or pianos. We too could see our design as a soundscape. What will you hear on what point? And does this follow-up of sounds compose the right experience?

An amazing example of playing with active sound sources is the sea organ by architect Nikola Bašić located in Zadar, Croatia. This sea bank has stairs where the waves move under the stairs, pressing air through tubes making a harmonic sound. It makes people aware of the current situation of the weather and the tides. It gives a positive identity to the place and has drawn many visitors to the bank. After the sounds come from the source the acoustics are important for how we receive the sound. This has to do with the form and the materials being used. Differences give another atmosphere in sound to the building.

When I walk through the building environment and something striking happens in the acoustics, I become enthusiastic. I will state some examples and architypes that are remarkable in terms of their acoustics.

Whispering domes are small domes situated in the ceiling, they reflect sound downwards under the dome. This creates a situation where your voice seems amplified for the person next to you. So you can easily have a private conversation in a sea of noises. Like the ones in the World Trade Centre in

Rotterdam. Close to the entrance there are little domes with frescos inside. In the terrible spatial acoustics of the big exhibition hall, it is a well-placed acoustic enjoyment. These domes with a focal point were also used in the First World War. Before the radar, there were acoustic mirrors. With these mirrors you could hear an aircraft coming from miles away. The concrete form has a parabolic dish that points towards the presumed spot of the enemy. In the focal point of the dish, you hold your head and by this the sound from a large surface is reflected in to your ears.

To understand how this reflectivity of sounds works in rooms it clarifies to know an artwork of Alvin Lucier. In his work he speaks this text out loud: 'I am sitting in a room different from the one you are in now. I am recording the sound of my speaking voice and I am going to play it back into the



*Sound mirror in Denge
near Dungeness England*

room again and again until the resonant frequencies of the room reinforce themselves so that any semblance of my speech, with perhaps the exception of rhythm, is destroyed. What you will hear, then, are the natural resonant frequencies of the room articulated by speech. I regard this activity not so much as a demonstration of a physical fact, but more as a way to smooth out any irregularities my speech might have.'

When you listen to the art piece you hear a slow transition from clear words towards the frequency of the standing waves that fit inside that room. Every room has its own resonating frequencies that define the acoustic atmosphere. Take, for example, my Dutch social housing bathroom. If I sing here a tune at 400 hertz it feels like a choir is singing with me. If you calculate the wavelength of this frequency it fits perfectly in my bathroom, as it's just 85 centimetres wide. This makes it possible to create rooms that reverberate one tone really well.

This trick had been known for a long time. In 4,000 BC, a temple was made in Malta. It is located under the ground dug out of the limestone. There are multiple rooms here that have the dimension on a wavelength of 110 hertz. These are connected by openings where sound can travel freely. Once you start to sing at a frequency of 110 hertz all the chambers fill themselves with sound, resulting in a long loud reverberation of 110 hertz. If you continue singing at this frequency the reflected soundwave comes back and joins the tone of your singing wave. These two waves interfere and amplify each other in a natural way. A neurological study run by UCLA in 2008 tested the effect on the brain of singing 110 hertz in this temple. It resulted in a high activity of the right side of the brain, comparable to the brain activity of monks in meditation.

Reflecting sound can also be done through an echo. The difference between reverberation and an echo is that with the echo there is a short pause between the source sound and the reflection. This is caused by a distance that the source sound travels before it hits something else. Hearing an echo inside a room makes us understand that it is large. This is not the case with reverberation: then it could be a small room with hard walls. Sound gives us knowledge of our surroundings, so it becomes a powerful tool for architects to influence the experience. With simple knowledge of acoustics architects can design interesting soundscapes. This will all be beneficial for our health and stress levels and wellbeing. Let's design with sound in our buildings.

Afterword

Head of Architecture Department,
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Jan-Richard Kikkert

There are few places in the world where the presence of the past is as overwhelming as it is in Egypt. During Napoleon Bonaparte's famous expedition to Egypt from 1798 to 1801, a team of scientists and artists mapped Egypt, resulting in the massive 23-volume 'Description de l'Égypte'. This awakened an interest that has remained undiminished: from continuous scientific studies and excavations, to Karl Baedeker's famous 1929 edition of the guide to Egypt, to popular culture in Katy Perry's recent music video Dark Horse. To build a future upon this magnificent heritage seems an impossible task.

Nevertheless, students from the Amsterdam University of the Arts and the German University in Cairo have developed strategies to deal with the future of the ever-expanding settlements along the banks of the Nile.

In the third year of our four-year Master's programme, which encompasses architecture, urbanism and landscape architecture, students participate in an interdisciplinary studio where writing is the engine behind the design assignment. It is my intention to send our students out into the wide world to discover, exchange thoughts and be inspired by cultures other than our own, to expand horizons beyond the familiar.

This book documents one of these explorations.

Recited by the Scribe

from the Pyramid Texts of the Old Kingdom
from Philip Glass's 1983 opera Akhnaten

Open are the double doors of the horizon
Unlocked are its bolts

Clouds darken the sky
The stars rain down
The constellations stagger
The bones of the hell hounds tremble
The porters are silent
When they see this king
Dawning as a soul

Open are the double doors of the horizon
Unlocked are its bolts

Men fall
Their name is not
Seize thou this king by his arm
Take this king to the sky
That he not die on earth
Among men

Open are the double doors of the horizon
Unlocked are its bolts

He flies who flies
This king flies away from you
Ye mortals
He is not of the earth
He is of the sky
He flaps his wings like a zeret bird
He goes to the sky
He goes to the sky
On the wind
On the wind





IT IS FORBIDDEN
TO CLIMB THE PYRAMID

منع الصعود والتسلق

Jan-Richard Kikkert; 1991







Credits

Collaborative studio between Amsterdam Academy of Architecture (AHK) and The German University of Cairo (GUC).

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The designers of Delta Strikes Back: Nine projects for El Haraneya have been careful to try to contact all copyright holders of the illustrations that appear in the book, but it was not possible to find all of them. If you claim ownership of any of the illustrations appearing in this book and have not been properly credited, please contact us and we will be happy to print a formal acknowledgement in the next edition.

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Cairo. A wellspring of inspiration on everything from the pleasures of smoking to the marvels of madness and the landscapes of dust, and from anechoic chambers to sewage surfers and phosphate fertilisers carried all the way to the Amazon. *Delta Strikes Back* focuses on the peri-urban landscape of El Haraneyah at the southern edge of Giza by giving voice to forces of nature as agents of the delta in co-creating the new megalopolis in an area where an Arcadian deltascape is transforming into a self-organised city. The studio views the rural-urban fringe as a landscape in its own right, a place to forge new coalitions between nature and culture. How can the delta strike back at urban developments? With one big blow or subtle interventions?

This book brings together a selection of work from a collaborative design studio, held in late 2017, involving the Amsterdam Academy of Architecture and the German University of Cairo.

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