2022

CONDIA + ORNELAS TRAVELING FELLOWSHIP

Haneen Abu-Sherbi

STATEMENT OF **PURPOSE**

"It is perhaps when our lives are at their most problematic that we are likely to be most receptive to beautiful things."
Alain de Botton, The Architecture of Happiness

Architecture consumes a remarkable collection of narratives and differences relating to the physical constructions of our surroundings. When I recall my first awe-aspiring spatial experience, it was not that of great architectural or historic significance. It was in the home of my late grandmother; a concrete house dressed in paint that had washed through the weather, blending within the hills of the desert. The entrance guided you into a courtyard, welcoming you into the multi-generational home where an olive tree proudly announces itself directly center, supplying rays of light and shadows onto the dreary and monotonous texture of the house.

This space, a transaction between nature, material, and order, somehow exuded feelings of unity and togetherness. Overlooking the thick concrete frame around the house was a view of the broken houses below the hill. This is where my family made refuge. This presumably unnoticed and unlikely courtyard offered a sense of place and belonging now lost after three generations. The tree was a little piece of homage, of what now only dwells in memories and stories. If the tree did not exist, would it have held the same spatial impact? Without this meaningful element contradicting the barren surroundings, what else would take on the responsibility of delivering the uniqueness of the light patterns and form the space seeks desperately, to stand happily? I cannot be certain, but it is doubtful the courtyard would remain inviting. I reflect on this experience because this is where, personally, I discovered that architecture holds the most significance through the collaboration and representation of forms, light, and materiality, impacting the agency of a space.

Therefore, the design process is meant to reflect the direct intentions of the designer, whether it is about connectivity, healing, or monotony. If architecture is the construction of structures, through drawing, then it should be assumed that architecture will account for the people that occupy it, no matter how provoking or conventional.

The purpose of architecture is to believe in the idea that form, light, materiality, and space have a direct reflection and influence on our physical and emotional experiences. This is to believe the floors, walls, and roofs that shelter us can alter our current state of mind. These experiences then translate themselves through our senses and live within our memories, giving purpose to buildings and spaces. This happens at multiple levels, from the intimacy of a simple teacup to the vast interiors of the great cathedrals or the major cityscape of Shanghai. When looking at architecture through the lens of our cities, we see our memories colliding, harmonizing, and intersecting within them.

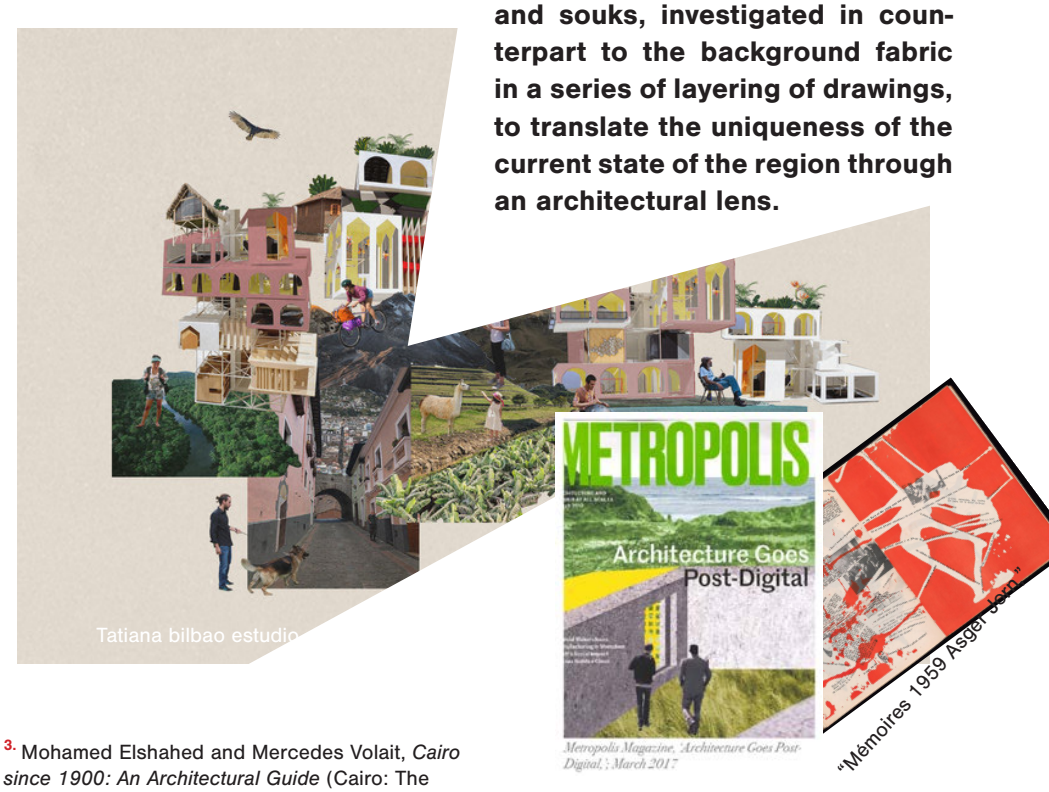
Cities represent the synthesis of differences created between various cultures and people using the medium of architecture and the resulting environments. As humans, we hold the power of determining spaces that are a direct reflection of ourselves, this diversifies the meaning of beauty and values within architecture. So, to believe in architecture is to acknowledge the subjectiveness it projects onto itself. The interior of a Mies van der Rohe house can reflect simplicity, calmness, and light perceptions to one occupant or appear distastefully reductive and bleak to another. Architecture is both personal and possesses the capacity to hold fragments of time or express a longing for a new future.

THE PROPOSAL

By the twentieth century, a phenomenon occurred with the spread and increase of different practices, styles, forms, and imitation, mixing the identity of regions all over the world. **Elements** of the **East and West** are found in areas far from their original uproots. In the perspective of the non-Western city, when elements of the West appear, they collide with the current beliefs and standards evolved within a society. A place I find most intriguing is Egypt because of the curiosity it projects culturally and globally.

Egypt possesses humble roots, traced back to the earliest Pharaohs, and stands as a symbol of the capabilities of ancient and new architecture. Historically, this is a postcolonial region in which, "east and west, traditional and modern, marginal and central intersect and overlap in unprecedented and unexpected ways to produce new modes of spatiality and new architecture expression".[1] The Middle East, a chaotic and beautiful exchange of culture, has developed greatly from the start of civilization, enduring through the challenges of time. These challenges are expressed through the fabric of the evolving cities. This is evidence of evolutionary development as described in ***Collage City*** by Colin Rowe and Fred Koetter, the layering of our cities through multiple materializations and architectural movements, along with the perspective of Aldo Rossi's ***Architecture of the City,*** who argued the importance of a city is evident through its form and time.

Rossi states, "With time, the city grows upon itself. It acquires consciousness and memory."[2] This is the idea of urban artifacts; it is the overall **collective memory** associated with objects and places that structure the city. It is how we experience the city and its **forms over time** that will inevitably create the structure of our cities. So, it is not in the creation of a new world distant from our past that will progress our society, but the understanding of how spaces accrued incrementally that will determine the balance of our human needs within our physical context and experiences. An excellent precedent to an architecture study is exploring the pieces of the traditional/modern city though a specific composition of drawings that seek to analyze and unpack the accrued layers of the city. **This warrants an analysis between the relationship of sacred and important structures and spaces in Egyptian cities, such as mosques and souks, investigated in counterpart to the background fabric in a series of layering of drawings, to translate the uniqueness of the current state of the region through an architectural lens.**



Metropolis Magazine, 'Architecture Goes Post-Digital,' March 2017

[1] Nalbantoglu, Gülsüm Baydar, and Chong Thai Wong. *Postcolonial Space(s)*. 1st edition. New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1997.

[2] Rossi, Aldo. *The Architecture of the City*. MIT Press, 2007.

[3] Mohamed Elshahed and Mercedes Volait, *Cairo since 1900: An Architectural Guide* (Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press, 2020).

a layer of enfilade.
Horn, Kathryn J., "Possibilities in Post-Digital Architecture" (2017).

How does **new** and **old** architecture intermingle in the current dense, **vibrant** streets of Cairo, near vicinity of the **elaborate and sophisticated** ancient pyramids of Giza, within the **secular** and the **sacred** realm in Alexandria, and with the modern and re-defined villas throughout the vast country? Some examples of "traditional" aspects include: the ***keel arch***, a feature of Fatimid architecture like the al-Aqmar Mosque in Cairo built in 1125; ***Kufic***, the oldest Arabic calligraphic form, developed in Kufa, Iraq in the seventh century; ***Zawya***, a "corner" where a saint or holy person lived or was buried; and ***Sahn***, an open or closed courtyard, usually in a mosque but also witnessed in domestic architecture.[3] As argued in, *Preservation is Overtaking Us* by Rem Koolhaas, the historic is "valued more culturally than the new," stating the relevant difference between contextualism and preservation as modes of creating culturally significant architecture.[4]

This generous fellowship would grant the opportunity to observe differences within the remarkable urban structure that hold memories reaching far back in time, ultimately learning about the current Egyptian city through post-digital drawing methods which might characterize the elements of a dense, timeless region. **Post-digital, palimpsest drawing sets**, may uncover the unique aspects of old and new. Post-digital is an emerging contemporary drawing technique that depends on the sourcing of images and textures, composed, layered, and manipulated through digital programs; "The ethos of collage shapes every aspect of contemporary culture, from the glut of signs and images to the many layers of digital information to the art of sampling."[5] Post-digital is very similar to the early-twentieth century collages, such as the abstract geometries and compositional works in ***Mémoires*** by Guy Debord and Asger Jorn, or even the recent post-digital images of Tatiana Bilbao, combining fragments of places to organize abstractions exclusive to the space. Referencing a recent ***Metropolis*** article, "Architecture Enters the Age of Post-Digital Drawing," the article exclaims that "the return of the architectural drawing in the digital age is a reinvigoration of the tradition of drawing, but its techniques, tools, and media make it fundamentally new, too... (like the) collage images of Office KGDVS, whose alternating flatness and depths recall structures of Ruscha and Hockney. Or think of the crisp delineations of Dogma, which resonate with rationalist precision".[6] This lens, and with the ***wonder-filled fabric*** of the traditional and modern cities within Egypt, perhaps provides an alternative perspective about the richness of the cityscape, recognizing various forms of architectural elements in an overlay of multiple compositions.

More specific to Egypt, Mohamed Elshahed recently published *Cairo Since 1900, An Architectural Guide,* also a current exhibit at AIA New York Center for Architecture, which documents the vast history of architecture buildings, which currently stand or was previously demolished, in historic and modern Cairo. He writes the urgency of the book's documentation of buildings is important for understanding modernism, particularly within the Middle East, and states that "hybridity and the ease of moving across artistic lines to produce architectural form define modern Cairo since the nineteenth century".[7] Egypt in particular, is at the juncture of cultural, political, and artistic subtleties, implementing change in a fascinating way.

4. Rem Koolhaas, Jorge Otero-Pailos, and Jordan Carver. *Preservation Is Overtaking US* (New York: ColumbiaBooks on Architecture and the City, 2016).

5. Horn, Kathryn J., *Possibilities in Post-Digital Architecture* (2017). *Architecture Program*. 181.

6. "Architecture Enters the Age of Post-Digital Drawing," *Metropolis*, (August 11, 2021)

7. Mohamed Elshahed and Mercedes Volait, *Cairo since 1900: An Architectural Guide* (Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press, 2020).

TRAVEL **EXPERIENCE**

My studies at APDesign have allowed the opportunity for travel, one being the second-year **Chicago** trip. Unfortunately, other academic trips were altered or paused due to the ongoing pandemic. However, with personal funds I have experience the U.S cities of **Dallas, Houston, Austin, Los Angeles, Chattanooga, New Orleans, Louisiana, Denver, and Miami.** I spent a summer interning in Dallas and have visited family in living in Houston and Los Angeles. Outside the U.S, I have explored parts of Jordan, including **Amman, Petra, the Dead and Red Sea, and sites of Roman antiquity in Jerash.** Petra takes the led on favorite experienced space.

CURRICULUM VITAE

INVOLVMENT

Digital Architecture 1, 2, 3
Teaching Assistant - Current

***Oz* 44**
Co-Editor - Current

Treasurer - Plot Club
Aug. 2019 - Dec. 2020

Peer Educator APD
Aug. 2019 - Dec. 2020

Architecture Representative
Dean's Student Advisory Council
Jan. 2020 - Dec. 2020

Previously, I was a **peer educator** for first-year students for two years. As a peer educator, I helped students through their first-year journey, advising them on the right resources to succeed. As a result, I met exceptional students who I have seen transition and evolve later as their **Digital Architecture Graduate Assistant (1-3)** and other emerging students as an **invited critic** for first and seond year project presentations. In addition, I was the **former architecture representative** in the **Dean's Student Advisory Council.** This position allowed me to engage in a club advocating for open communication between the students and faculty.

Academically, I have previously earned a place on the **Dean's Honor Roll,** and have maintained a 4.0 grade point average throughout my last three semesters.

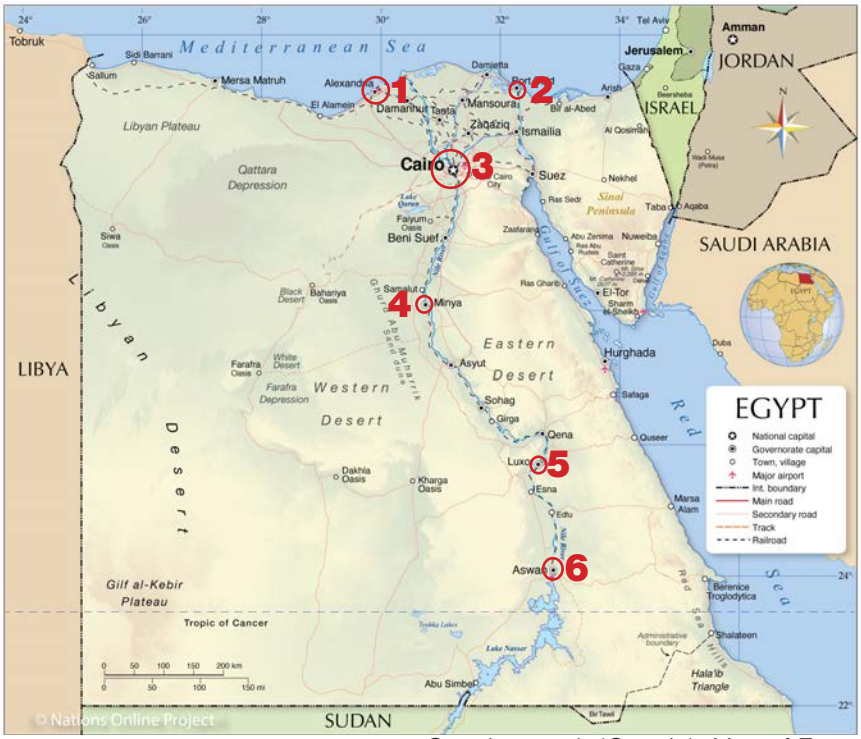
I also facilitated a **workshop** for **Grow** + **Excite**, held by Advancement of Women in Science in Engineering (KWASE), to **inspire** younger generations about the wonders of architecture, and often volunteer for recruitment events. This year, I am a **co-editor for Oz 44**, an ongoing experience fueling and strengthening my passion and knowledge of architecture through **conversations** and interviews with a host of U.S. and international architects, artists, and critics.

BUDGET + ITINERARY

Intent to travel:

Arrive in
1. **Alexandria**
2. Port Said

Down the Nile
3. **Ciaro**
4. Giza
5. Minya
6. Luxor
7. Aswan



Google search (Google), Map of Egypt

Alexandria

Day 1 - 20

400 - 700 *Housing*
100 - 150 *Local Transport*
320 *Food*
150 *Activities/fees*[**]

$840 - 1,200

Port Said

Day 21 - 25

Housing **200 - 250**
Local Transport **30 - 50**
Food **80**
Activities/fees **75**

$385 - $455

**Fees to enter sites / Museums / ect
https://www.budgetyourtrip.com/egypt/alexandria

Total ***Estimate***

Housing **1,580**
Local Transport **300**
Food **1,000**
Other **1,350**
Flight **1,300 - 2,000**

Adobe Digital subcriptions: **189**
Miscellaneous Material **1000**
Accidents/mishaps **150**
Travel Insurance **350**

$8,007

Day 57 - 62

Housing **225**
Local Transport **30**
Food **80**
Activities/fees **75**

$410

Minya

Day 66 - 68

Housing **25**
Local Transport **15**
Food **30**
Activities/fees **50**

$106

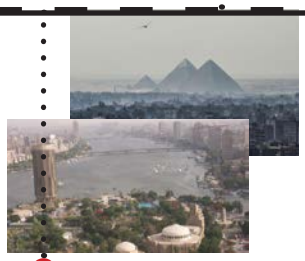
Aswan

Ciaro

Day 26 - 47

Housing **440 - 600**
Local Transport **100 - 150**
Food **320**
Activities/fees **150 - 300**

$840 - $1,000



Giza

Day 48 - 56

Housing **140**
Local Transport **30**
Food **80**
Activities/fees **75**

$325

Luxor

Day 63 - 65

Housing **40**
Local Transport **15**
Food **30**
Activities/fees **50**

$121

ARCHITECTURAL CONTENT

FIFTH YEAR

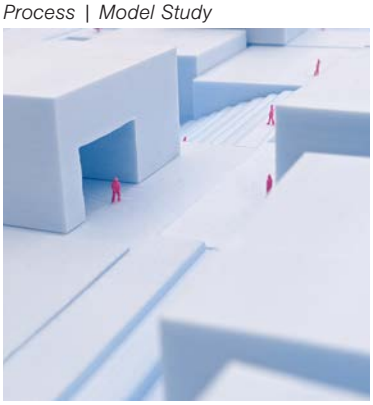
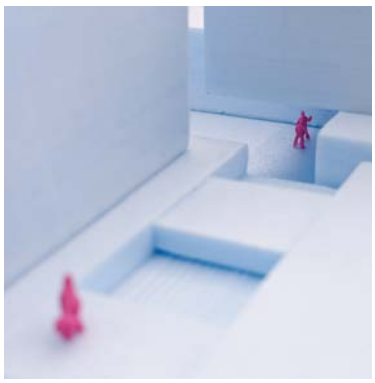
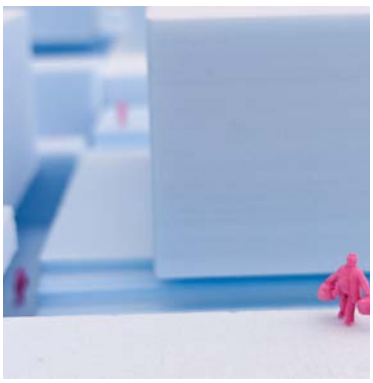
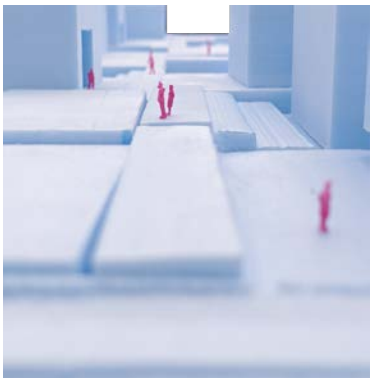
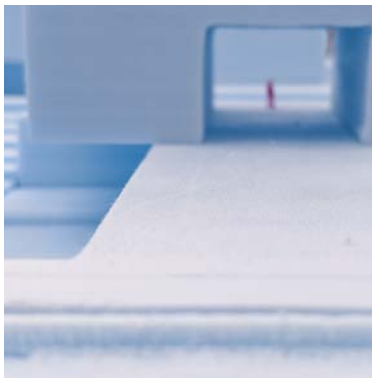
FOURTH YEAR

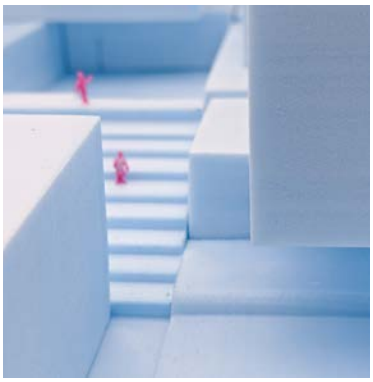
THIRD YEAR

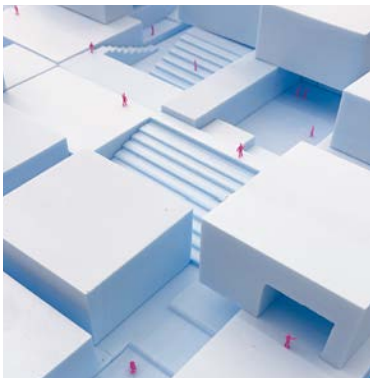
ARTWORK

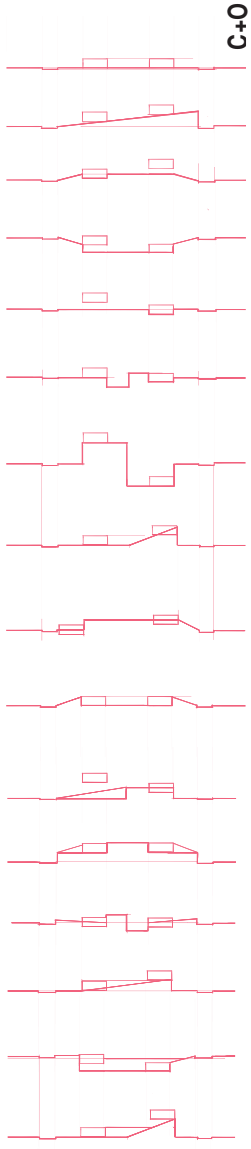
SUBURBIA RE-IMAGINED

Process | Model Study

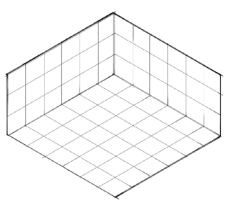




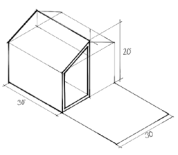


Ground vs. Building Relationships

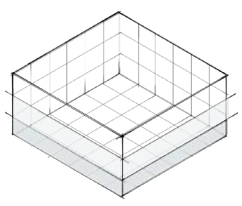
Organization



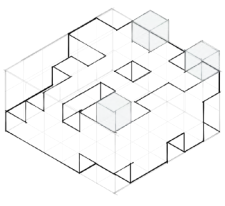
Grid Organization



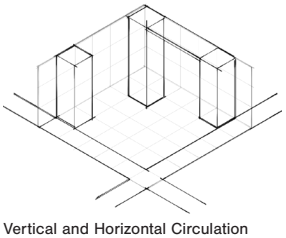
Suburban Attachment



Mixed Use

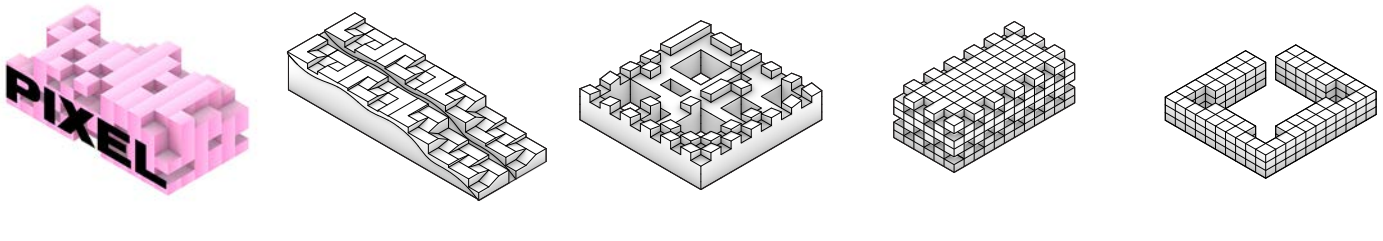


Subtraction and Addition



Vertical and Horizontal Circulation

“Form Giving”



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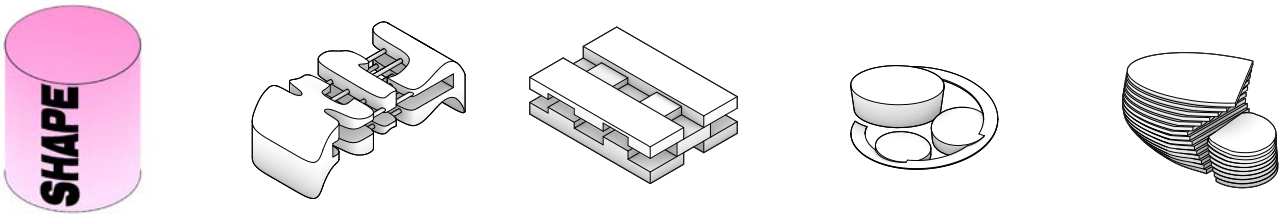

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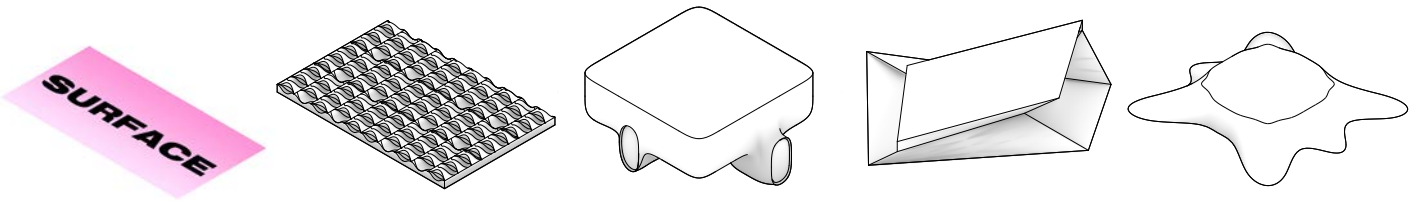


3

Can a reimagined suburbia live within a mixed-use landform building that combines density with detached houses with yards?

Demographic trends that fueled the suburban boom of the early 1900s are entering a period of significant change, referring to the measurable characteristics of a population. By 2050, the US population will double that in 2000, with half living in the suburbs. The architectural form of suburbia must evolve to accommodate new and denser user groups. The driving architectural critique of this thesis on suburbia explores the ground vs building relationships and how it relates to density. Early studies of massing and section diagrams led to the idea of an occupied, artificial ground for suburban houses. These studies made the relationship between suburbia, density, and the ground plane became more apparent, and introduced the concepts of “landform building” and “mat building” to my work. Stan Allen discussed Landform building through four main ideas: form, scale, atmosphere, and process. Landscape Building utilizes the advantages of new technologies in emerging fabrication and materiality to construct new artificial environments. Landscape building seeks to re-think the architecture’s relationship to the ground, no longer occupying a given site but constructing the site itself with new formal strategies and technical problems within architecture itself. I also draw on the historical precedent of the Mat Building, with its emphasis on low-rise, high density, homogeneous layout, and systematic repetition. The next step explored part-to-whole relationships through massing studies of pixelization, shapy, and complex surfaces.

MULTI-GENERATIONAL HOUSING
ISTANBUL, TURKEY

Section Through Middle Residence

DIGITAL + PHYSICAL MODEL

Inter-generational living with community ammenities - health-care, child care, laundry, fitness, religious spaces.

• Turkish culture is family orient-ed, with mutipul generations living near or together.

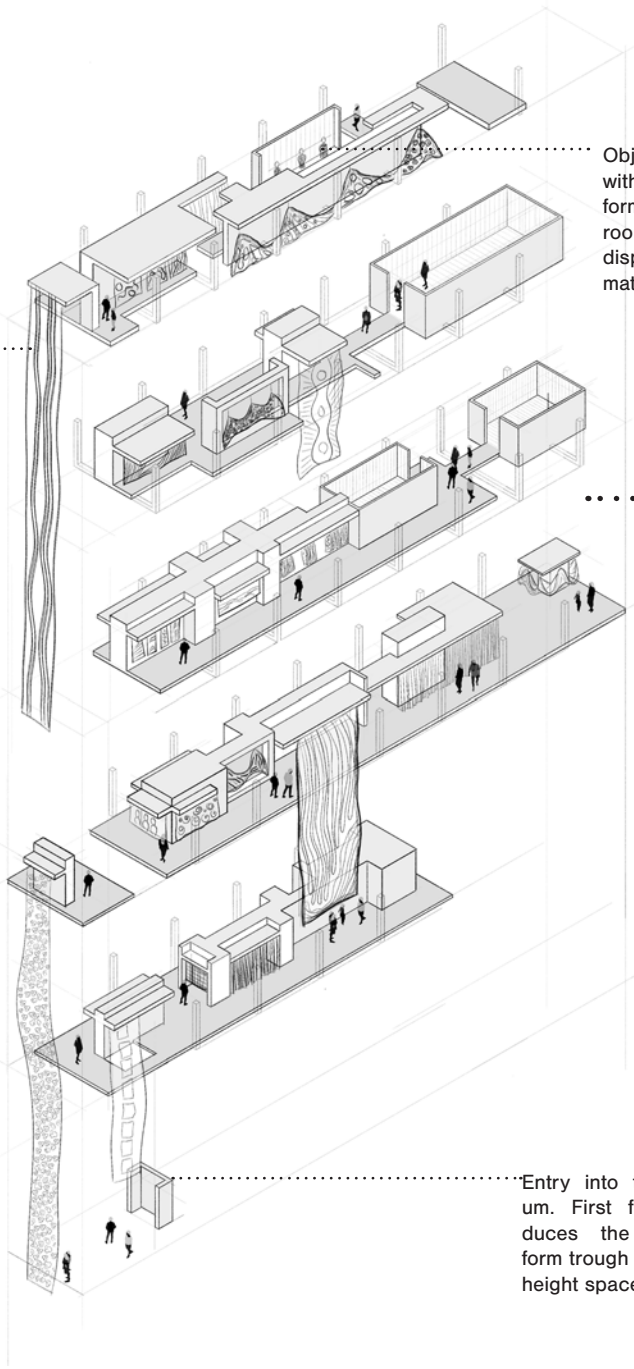
• Those consisting of more than two generations living under the same roof.

• Sharing knowledge and history
Economic or caregiving
Closer family interactions

East Elevation

DIGITAL + PHYSICAL MODEL

MAIJA ISOLA TEXTILE MUSEUM
NEW YORK

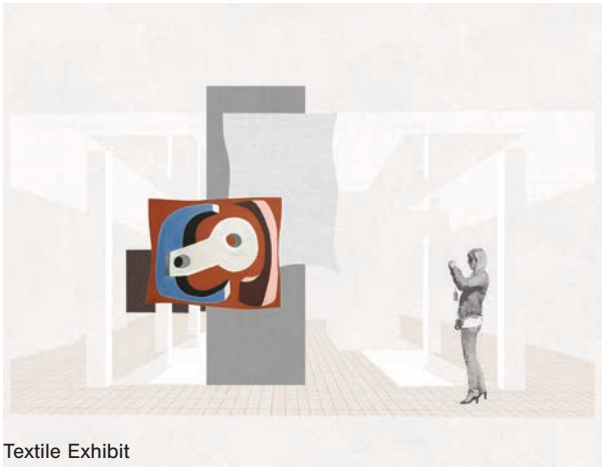


Object Exhibit - Hidden within the concrete form. Wood wraps the room as the “objects” displayed in an intimate, open, room.

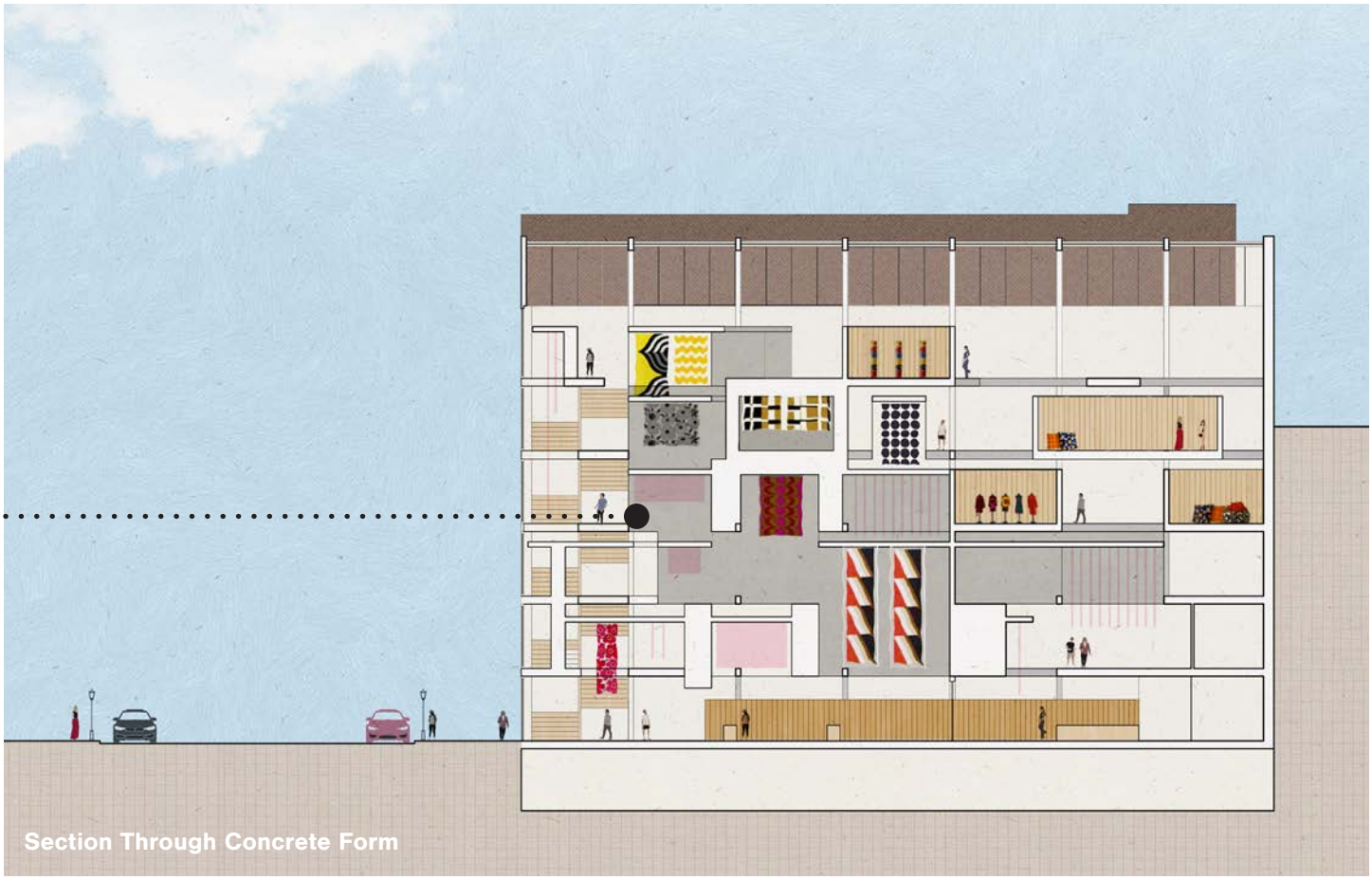
Textile Exhibit - Sculpts the space vertically. “original” prints dispayed in the concrete form to compliment the fabric material. Open through multiple floors.

Entry into the Museum. First floor introduces the concrete form trough the double height space.

Object Exhibit

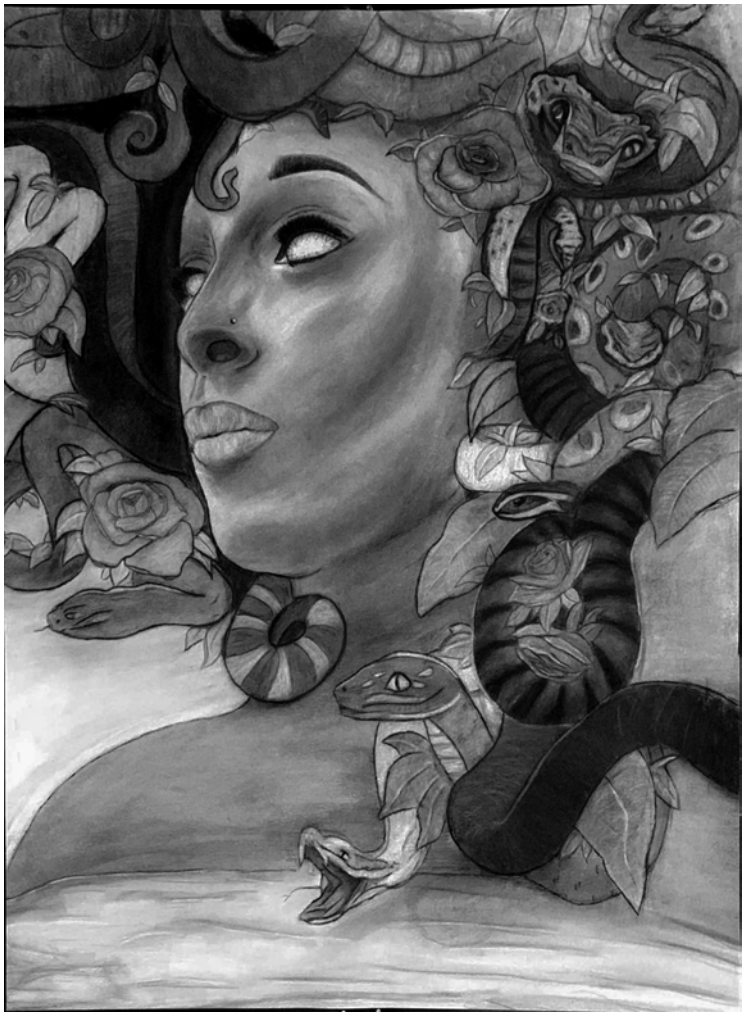


Textile Exhibit



Section Through Concrete Form

Elevation of Wooden “textile” Facade



"Kedusa" *30"x40" Charcoal*

"Dancing Pears" *Digital*

"Mysteries" *Digital*

THANK YOU.