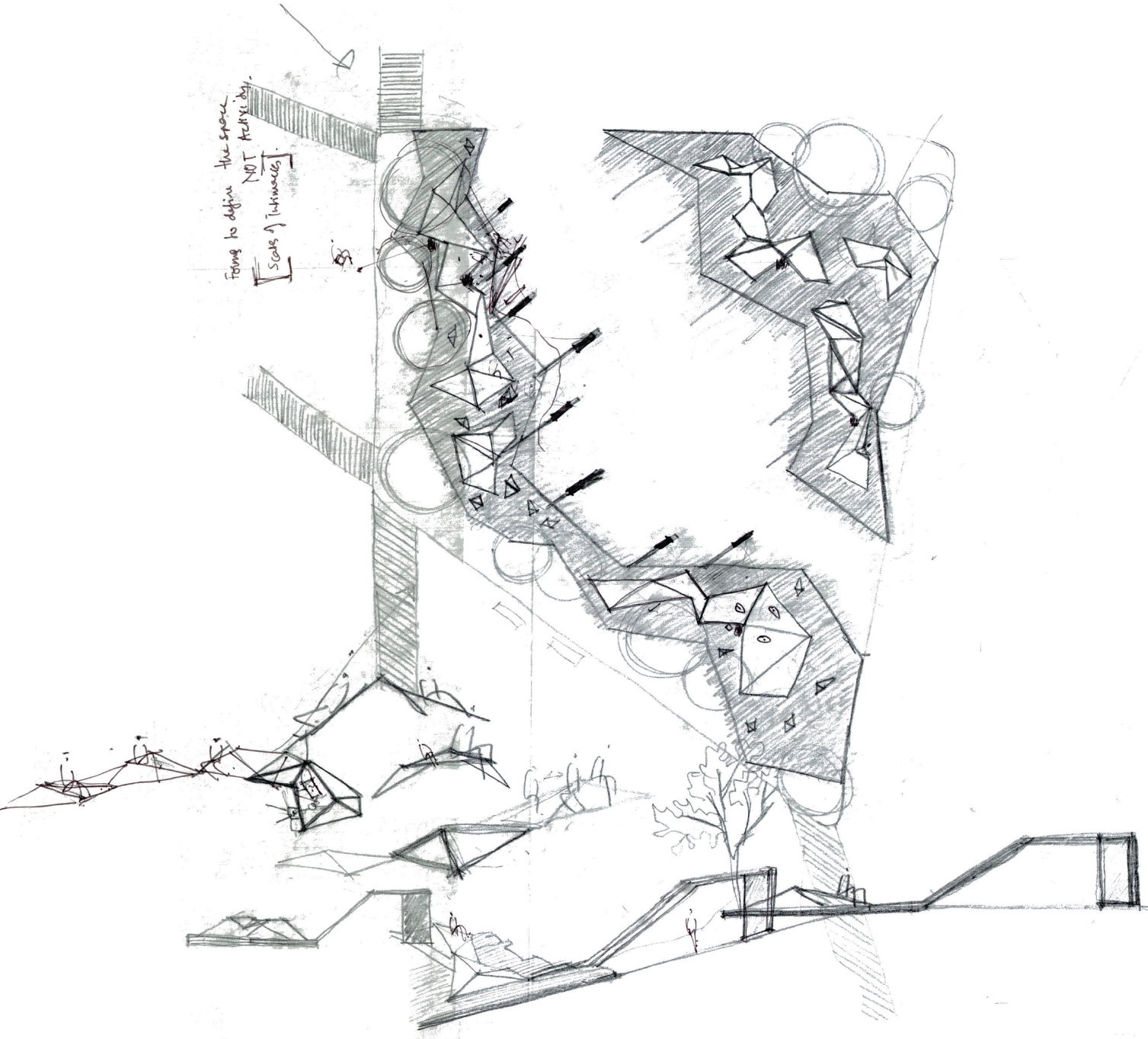




**REIMAGINING INTERACTION**

The year long research has gone through seasons of success, failures, detours and dead ends, but in all cases, they have taught lessons. Research by design was a new method to me and I thank my studio professors Kelly Homan and David Hill, for teaching it the best way, with constant rigor about letting the hands speak. I would like to thank Professor John Pittari for questions that sharpened my thesis. Melanie Duffy's research has been a big contributor to the research. MLA class of 2016, have ridden along with me on this journey, without whose inputs, I could not have made it this far. Thank You.

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



MOM, PAPA, SHIRI AND UDAY

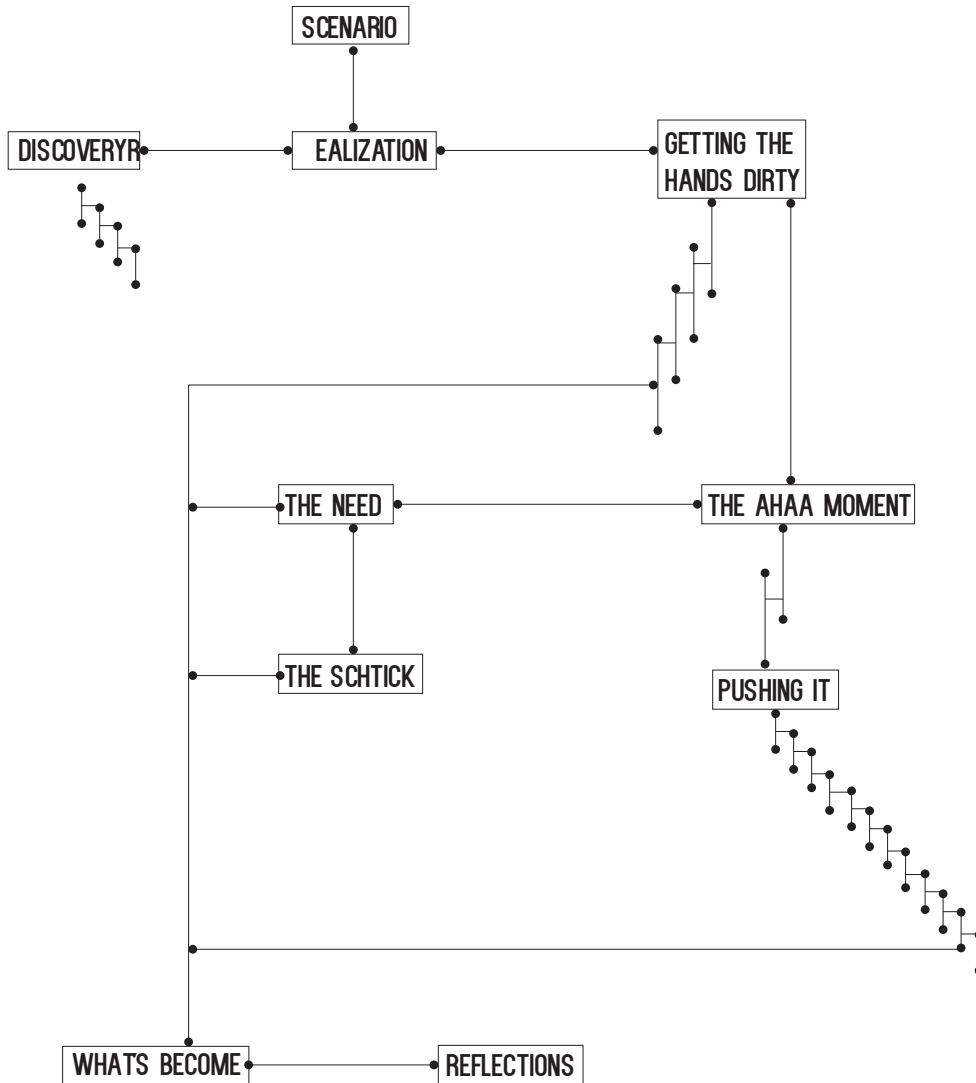
MODERNITY TORE APART THE CONNECTION BETWEEN SOCIAL INTERACTION AND PHYSICAL PROXIMITY. THE APPEARANCE OF THE STRANGER' ON THE MODERN STAGE WAS A DIRECT CONSEQUENCE OF THE DISASSOCIATION OF THE SOCIAL AND PHYSICAL SPACE. THE 'STRANGER' IS AN ALIEN PRESENCE WITHIN THE LIFEWORLD, A FIGURE PROXIMATE IN PHYSICAL SPACE, YET SOCIALLY DISTANT. AS A CONSEQUENCE WE CLING TO OUR MOBILE PHONES TO CONNECT TO OUR LOVED ONES AND FRIENDS AS A SENSE OF SECURITY.

ZYGMUNT BAUMAN.

# RESEARCH BY DESIGN



shows design iterations. The length of the line shows the impact of design on the research process.



The book essentially has two parts. The first part contains the research, its importance, its state of affairs as of today and other details of its situation in the discourse. It opens this up through the chapters, Shtick, Need, Scenario and the Question. The second part of the book opens up about the design explorations.

Starting with how I discovered the project and its need followed by all the design iterations. At each stage, the focus of the research has morphed with the relevance of technology in our social understanding. As the social behavior is understood, technology has befit to use that as an opportunity to enhance interaction.

# CONTENTS

THE SCHTICK	08
THE NEED	10
THE SCENARIO	12
THE QUESTION	14

THE LOW DOWN	16
THE DISCOVERY	18
THE REALIZATION	28
GETTING THE HANDS DIRTY	32
THE 'AHAA' MOMENT	40
PUSHING IT	46
HITTING THE GROUND	58
WHAT'S BECOME	62
REFLECTIONS	72
REFERENCES	75

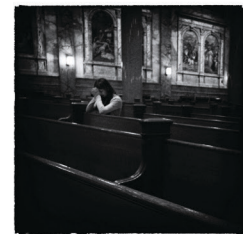
Interaction does not mean just talking anymore. With technology, interaction has brought its presence in many forms. We get the message across without having to use spoken words. Public content when shared on social media and other forums, have commendable response almost immediately. Each of these responses are made, not only in strongly worded comments, but also graphic emotions, i.e. emoticons. The most distinct part of the emoticons is not only streamlining consensus to what someone feels about it, but also the ease with which opinions are laid out for other people to see. The ease of clicking a button to have an opinion heard/ seen, gathers more respondents. The accumulation of all these opinions on a forum so easily accessible, promotes for all voices, big or small to be heard on an open and public platform. These voices have come forth where they would have remained unnoticed if not for web based media.

**THE SHARING OF THOUGHTS, OPINIONS AND JUST COMMON MATTERS ON SOCIAL MEDIA, HAVE GOTTEN THE ATTENTION OF MANY PEOPLE. THEY HAVE THE ABILITY TO REACH DIVERSE PEOPLE FAR AND WIDE AND MAKE UNFATHOMABLE CONNECTIONS AND OUTCOMES. THIS ONLY GOES TO SHOW THAT PEOPLE ARE READY TO BE SPOKEN AND HEARD ON MANY DIFFERENT PLATFORMS, AND SUCH BASIC BUT PRIME PLATFORMS ARE PUBLIC SPACES. THESE OPEN STAGES CAN AFFORD REINVENTION TO ACCOMMODATE NEW DIMENSIONS OF INTERACTION.**

Advancements in tech communications have exceeded what our ancestors would have imagined public spaces would do. As demand for sharing ideas increases, tech companies advance the need for newer forms of interaction and responses. In 2015, facebook added more emoticons to their 'like' response, such as 'dislike' etc. Yet we look to the early set examples of public open spaces for grounds of design. The farthest we have gone to including the internet in public spaces, is access to local Wi-Fi signals, which is made available as a commodity and as a marketing media strategies by the companies that plan them. Once these signals are known, people make use of them in public spaces and thus their behavior is immediately altered, not by the design of the space but by the availability and strength of the signal.

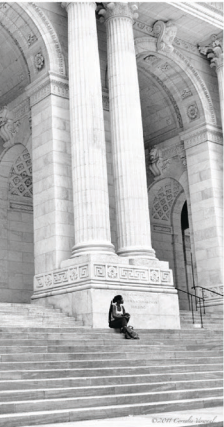
The research focuses on recognizing change in societal behavior and people's understanding of current trends of communications in the unmediated web network. Consequently, these observations should inform the newer designs to make our current scenario legible and adaptive.

As landscape architecture caters to every type of community, there is a certain aspect of public spaces that has still not gained momentum and that is, exploring newer form of interactions that technology affords for us.





# THE SCHTICK



The design of public spaces in cities has evolved and reinvented overtime, with the underlying purpose being community and bringing people together. By doing so, the designs have accomplished gathering diverse people on one platform. Along the lines of successful designs, where may people come together to use it, we have understood that interaction takes place amongst these members of the community, needless to say. The meaning to the notion has morphed many a time with advancement of society and their independence.

Historically, interaction was necessary with the neighbors and people of the community to spread a word of important news. Public spaces were stages for debates and public opinions. Overtime, public space design seem to have assumed the fact that people's presence in one place, when together, brings about interaction.

Community tool box, an online education and health organization, provides information for local communities, on how to involve and promote public engagement.

An article on their blog, described what makes a good place for interaction:

- There has to be a reason for people to go there.
- There has to be a reason for people to want to stay once they've arrived.
- People in the space have to feel safe and comfortable.
- The space has to be welcoming and accessible to everyone.

The above criteria does make a good public space, but interaction among people in today's society works in many dimensions. Over the years, as generations have adapted to many advancements, interaction has come forth in public space designs, as reintroductions. Scenic views to landscapes tend to have greater meaning when the user interacts with his surroundings. For example, Millennium Park, in Chicago, and Schouwburgplein in Rotterdam, push the boundaries with interactive spaces. But as we find meaning to attach more to our spaces, we may be evading an opportunity to go back to the root of interaction in public spaces, which is interaction with the people.

**OUR SENSE OF INTERACTION HAS CHANGED DRASTICALLY FROM WHEN SMARTPHONES HAVE BECOME A PART OF OUR DAILY WARDROBE. OUR COMFORT LEVEL IN INTERACTING, LIES WITH KNOWN FRIENDS, LOVED ONES AND ACQUAINTANCES, THAN TO SURPASS BOUNDARIES OF PERSONAL SPACE IN THE TANGIBLE SOCIETY. AND DUE TO THE EASE OF CONNECTING, WE TEND TO BE SATISFIED WITH THE CONNECTIONS THAT WE FIND ON THE PHONES, THAN SEARCH FOR COMMONALITIES OF A COMMUNITY IN PUBLIC SPACES.**

# THE NEED



ASLA general Awards 2015: three projects exemplify the latest advances in design and their fore front idea is bringing people together. And while they are successful in doing that, two of the projects (The Lawn on D in Boston and Public Media Commons in St. Louis) work on making the public space evenful. The IBM Plaza in Honolulu works with surfacing the history and culture of its place.

Their strategy of community gatherings is making a large open space where events can take place. Like many others' intensions, these designs hope that the open spaces and their events bring people together in one place. But facilitating for interaction (making open spaces) is much different from interaction actually happening. We are more prone to stick to our comfort zones.

The Lawn on D, is a project in Boston that pushes for community gatherings. And while that is the overarching intent, they provide movable furniture by which people can make their own decisions about where they want to sit and with whom. As people are more and more self-defined in their spaces that their devices allow for, people may tend to stick to their comfort zone. An atmosphere of independence, choice and personal space is advocated with movable furniture, and the ability to connect to a different space and time, with the device.

**THERE IS A GAP IN OUR UNDERSTANDING OF WHAT WE MEAN BY BRINGING PEOPLE, AND HOW THAT WOULD INCULCATE INTERACTION. THEREFORE, NEW FORMS OF INTERACTION CAN TAKE PLACE WHEN THE FIELD OF LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE ACKNOWLEDGES THE OPPORTUNITY TO DESIGN WITH GENERATIONAL CHANGE OF TECHNOLOGY AND TRENDS OF SOCIETY.**

The basis for designing urban public spaces even today, is with reference to William Holly Whyte's work on the social life of urban spaces. His research revolutionized public space design by understanding dynamics of people in everyday urban places. A part of his research looks into interaction, specifically by what people did when in groups and when alone. When in groups, people manifested a general understanding of how companions interacted. In this case, he looked into where they situated themselves, for how long and what kind of groups they were, couples, friends, etc. When people were alone, the number one activity was watching and observing other people.

Whyte's research is still a prominent part of our design dictionary, except for one thing that has majorly changed, which is, our interactions, especially when technology such as the portable devices have come into play. Keith Hampton and his team at Rutgers University in 2011, worked on retracing Whyte's research in today's urban spaces. They try to redefine our societal understanding in perspective of recent urban changes. In his comparison, of people in groups and people alone, he observed people in groups hadn't changed too much with respect to technology. When with companions, people would not use their phone. But when people were alone, their priority activity would be to observe other people, but their attention would soon detract and go into a world of distant but instant gratification. He points out that many studies indicate people are more isolated and removed from public spaces than in the past. But there is no research to prove the actual change in interaction.

Melanie Duffy's work on hybrid digital spaces talks about digital interfaces that should be viewed as "systems that enable people to filter, control, and manage their relationships with the spaces and people around them" (de Silva and firth). Therefore, we are not detached from our surrounding like some claims suggest, but more selective and fleeting with our presence. Whilst on our phone, we are still aware of people around us, the wind that brushes against our skin, the sound of traffic and birds. This in fact, enables us to interact differently. We can multitask when on our phones. We do it while driving, eating etc. She goes on to say that "The need for physical public space and social interaction will not diminish, but it will be altered and evolve within a digital framework." Using emoticons is an example of how interaction has altered and evolved. Rather than elaborate on our emotions, by using words. We do it with just a face symbol.

Recently the term "Public Privatism" has been used very often in researches regarding public social behavior. Public privatism is being immersed in a traditionally private activity in a public space. E.g. having a skype chat with your friend in a coffee shop. And as we are more private and comfortable by making a cocoon of connections on a web based network, this same network also orchestrates serendipitous encounters. Phone apps such as Instagram, Pinterest, Spotify and Twitter, and even Tinder let us follow and meet people we do not know personally and also accept people following our content even when unacquainted.

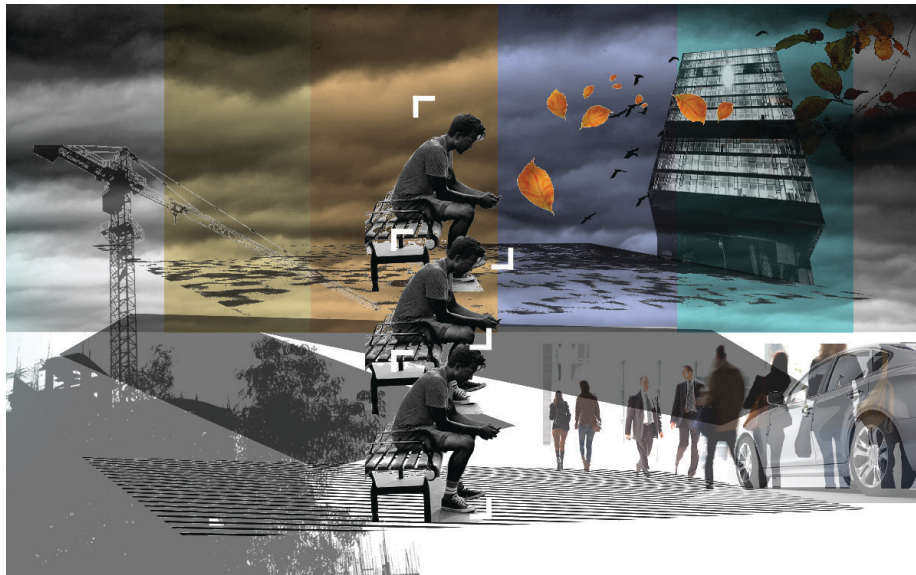
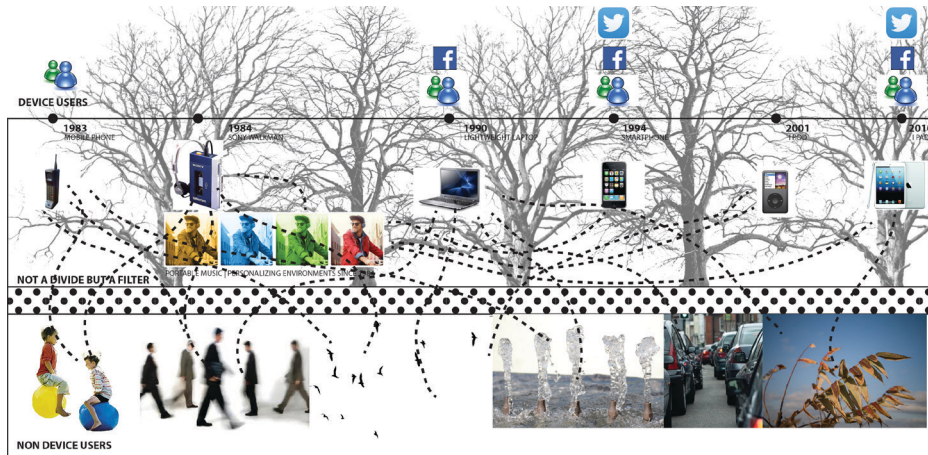
William Whyte in his research found that serendipitous encounters in public spaces were the minority of all interactions. Thirty years later, Keith Hampton seconds the same observation, the difference is that these encounters are happening in unmediated networks. Hence social interaction is altering in a digital framework.

With all the advances and ease of connecting online, many think public spaces would be redundant. But by just making open spaces for people to come together, all public spaces are successful. Townsend says, the distinct human characteristic is that they want to be around other people, it is the timeless beauty of public spaces.

Privatism, serendipitous encounters, unmediated connections, comfort zone, observing other people, are all very distinct characteristics are yet to be brought into the discourse of landscape architecture as an inevitable future of public behavior. It proves that people are ready for new forms of interaction, and the field of public space design could use this by leveraging technology to take public interaction and involvement to the next level.

**PHYSICAL PLACES AND URBAN SPACES WILL RETAIN THEIR RELEVANCE IN THE INTERNET SOCIETY ESPECIALLY BECAUSE PEOPLE STILL CARE ABOUT MEETING FACE-TO-FACE AND GRAVITATE TO PLACES THAT OFFER PARTICULAR CULTURAL, URBAN, SCENIC OR CLIMATIC ATTRACTIONS THAT CANNOT BE EXPERIENCED AT THE END OF A WIRE AND A COMPUTER SCREEN' (MITCHELL 1996.) (DUFFY,**

# THE SCENARIO



**AS TECHNOLOGY MAKES  
WAY FOR NEW FORMS OF  
SOCIAL INTERACTION, HOW  
CAN PUBLIC SPACE DESIGN  
LEVERAGE IT TO CREATE  
NOVEL EXPERIENCES?**

# THE QUESTION

Drawing from the research, it is important to set up the foundation of public space design to comprise of: Shared experience, Diversity and new forms of interaction.

People need shared experiences. They need to be around other people. Which is why, although their basic grounds for comfortable interaction is on their phones, public spaces will continue to be successful as long as it brings meaning for people to come together in one place.

Diversity (People using technology, and people observing other people using technology). As the proliferation of new technology continues, not every moment is happens through the lens of a device. As William Whyte observed, people tend to watch other people in their daily routines. There is a joy to the simple nature of life around us, and that is what people want to be around in public spaces. Therefore the design should accommodate the ones on their phones and the ones without as well.

New forms of interaction. Our advancement in time and space through the internet has introduced us to a different kinds of interaction over social media with friends and acquaintances and even with strangers. Such interactions are an initiative to look at our physical surroundings also in a different form. Modes of interaction are changing so our definition of interaction in different forms need to be explored as well.

The character of interactions is explored through the lens of serendipitous encounters, accommodating for private moments in a public space, designing with the novelty of exposing public data and public opinions, acknowledging the presence of a variety of opinions and using existing technology of screens and data sharing platforms.

This defined lens brings clarity to ways that we can advance design thinking for public spaces. Before which, the process of finding the lens has gone through waves of understanding our behavior. The ebb and flow of research is explored in the following chapters of leveraging technology at its best.

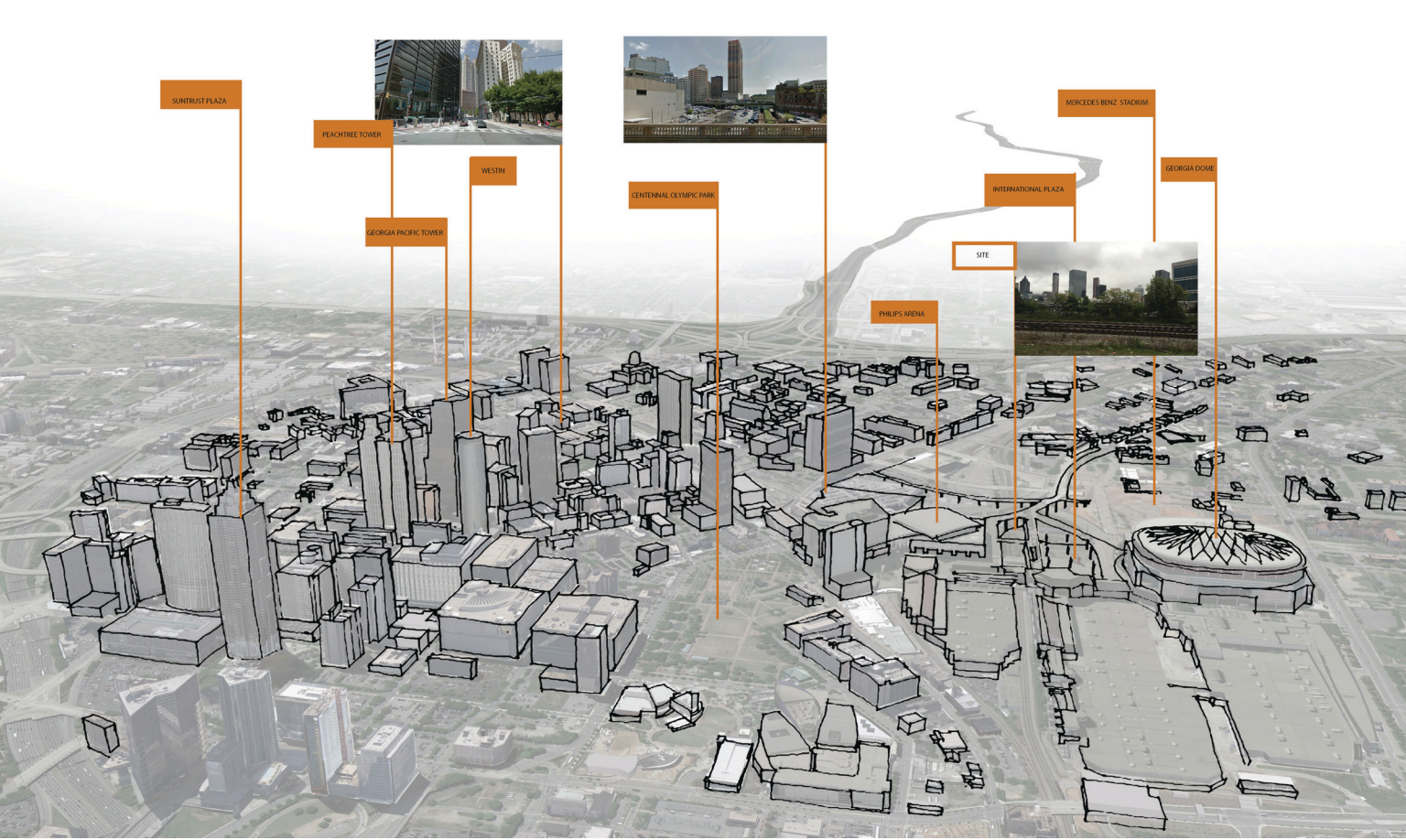


# THE LOW DOWN

”

MUSICIANS AND ENTERTAINERS DRAW PEOPLE TOGETHER (BUT) IT IS NOT THE EXCELLENCE OF THE ACT THAT IS IMPORTANT. IT IS THE FACT THAT IT IS THERE THAT BONDS PEOPLE, AND SOMETIMES A REALLY BAD ACT WILL WORK EVEN BETTER THAN A GOOD ONE.’ ”

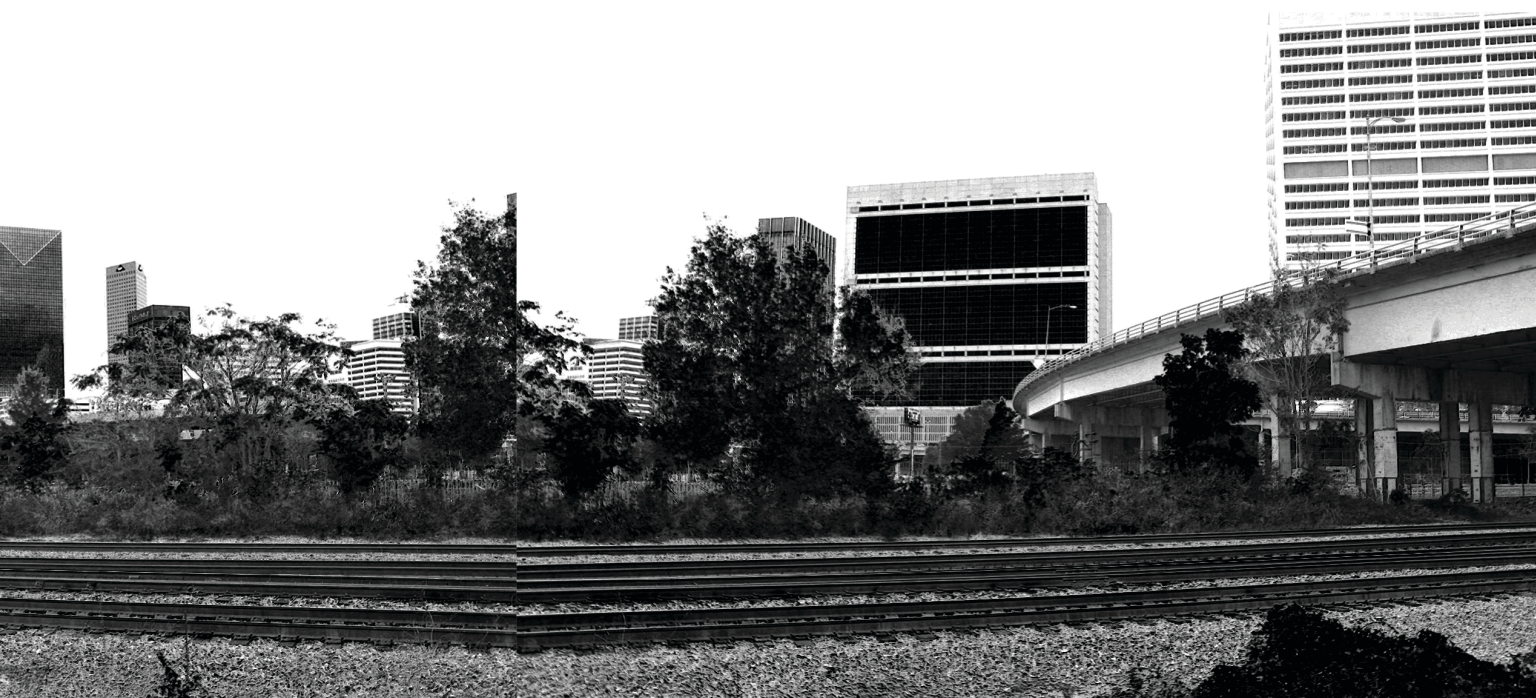
WILLIAM.H.WHYTE

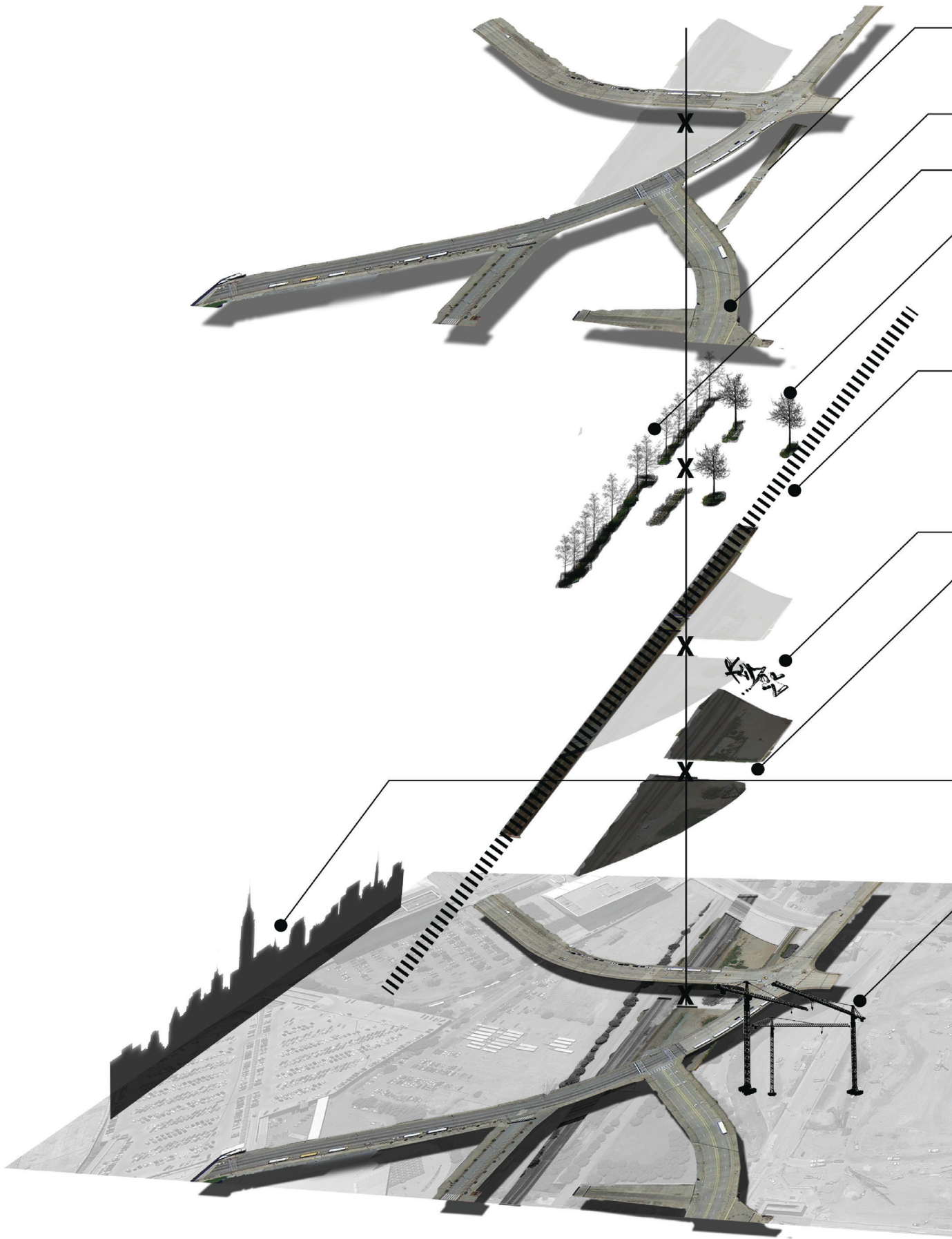


# THE DISCOVERY

While we make public spaces for people to come together as a community and to gather, not many designs look into making places for solitude. Urban cores and city centers make way to accommodate green spaces for the masses but the same people wait to get out of the city scape and away from the routine as and when they strike an opportunity for vacation. The research began in understanding what solitude means in an urban city scape, and one site that beckoned this idea was an old parking lot under a freeway in the middle of Atlanta City Center.

Just a mile from downtown, the site immerses and envelopes the visitor in a cocoon of concrete infrastructure, laying on vacant and cleared land, but looking onto the expansive view of the Atlanta skyline. The site allows one to look at the busy city life in a way that the viewer is outside of it, making him the observer. A sense of solitude overtakes, just to know that there is an escape to routine.





ACCESS TO BASEMENT  
BRINGS SCALE TO SITE

OVERPASS  
SPATIAL SECURITY

1

GROUND SCREENING  
BRINGS THE SKYLINE TO FOCUS

SINGULARLY PLACED TREES  
SUBJECT TO SPATIAL COMFORT

5

RAIL LINES  
UNIQUE VALUE



GRAFFITI | A SITE FOR ANYTHING

3

SITE IN FOCUS  
'X' MARKS YOU



ATLANTA MID TOWN SKYLINE  
OOPORTUNITY TO BE THE OBSERVER

2

CONSTRUCTION ON THE MERCEDES-BENZ STADIUM  
PRESENCE FOR SECURITY AND ALSO NOT BEING  
WATCHED OVER

4

THE SIGN THAT ALLOWS FOR LIBERATION

6

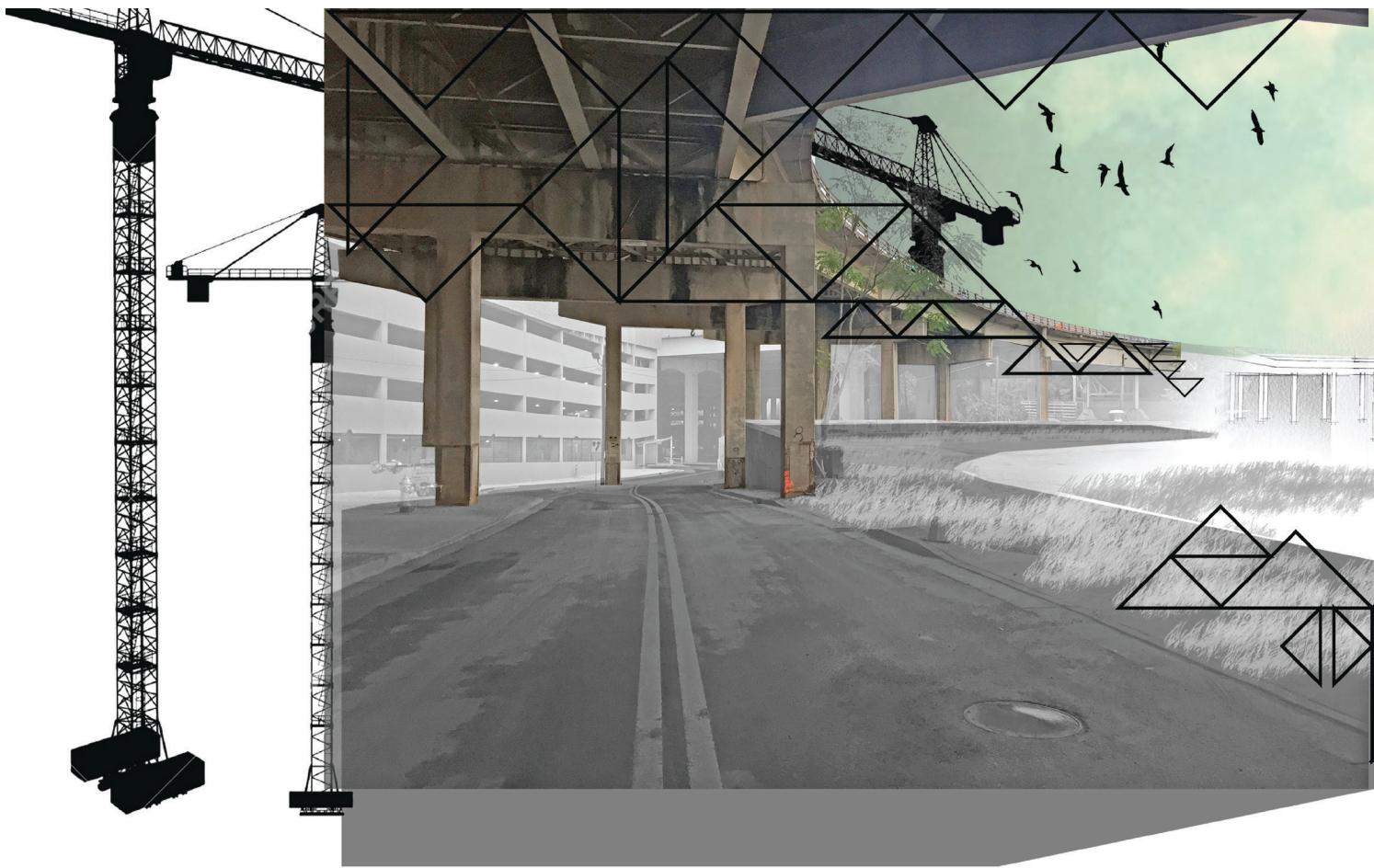


While the sense of escape was the main factor in making a person feel solace, there were many other contributions by the environment. A graphic dissection of these elements that make up the space is shown in order of their prominence.



Exploring atmosphere: a graphical representation of what a person is most drawn to in the site. Solitude is an independent and personalized emotion. Understanding the construct of space in the lens of a evoking a feeling can only be defined by capturing the atmosphere that goes into making it. Each of these graphics opens up a character of space and how that plays a part in evoking emotions. The girl represents the user, suppressed and constricted by the concrete structure and then immediately released to look at the expanse of the skyline, give a sense of relief, escape and being the observer. All that culminate into a feeling of solace.

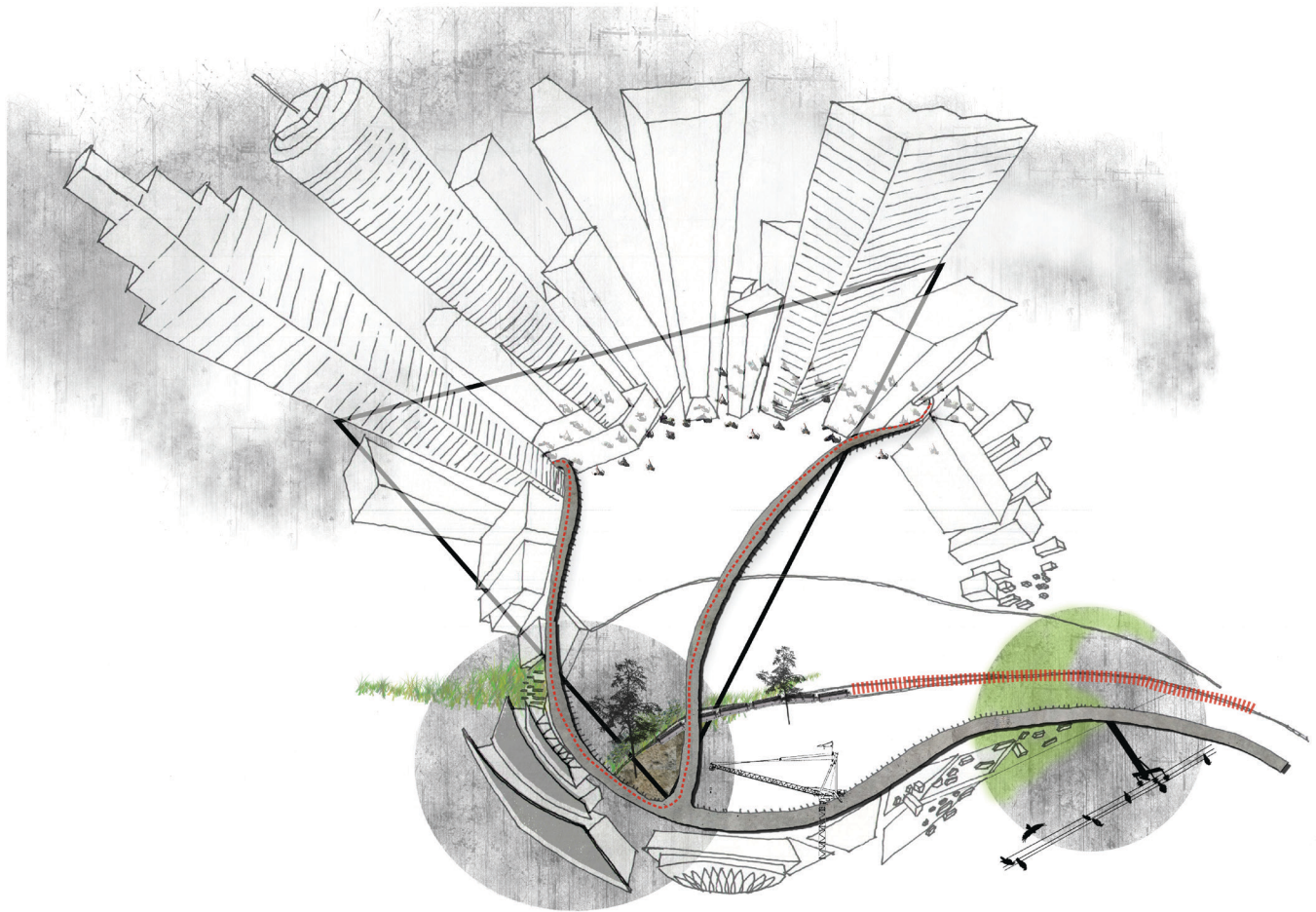
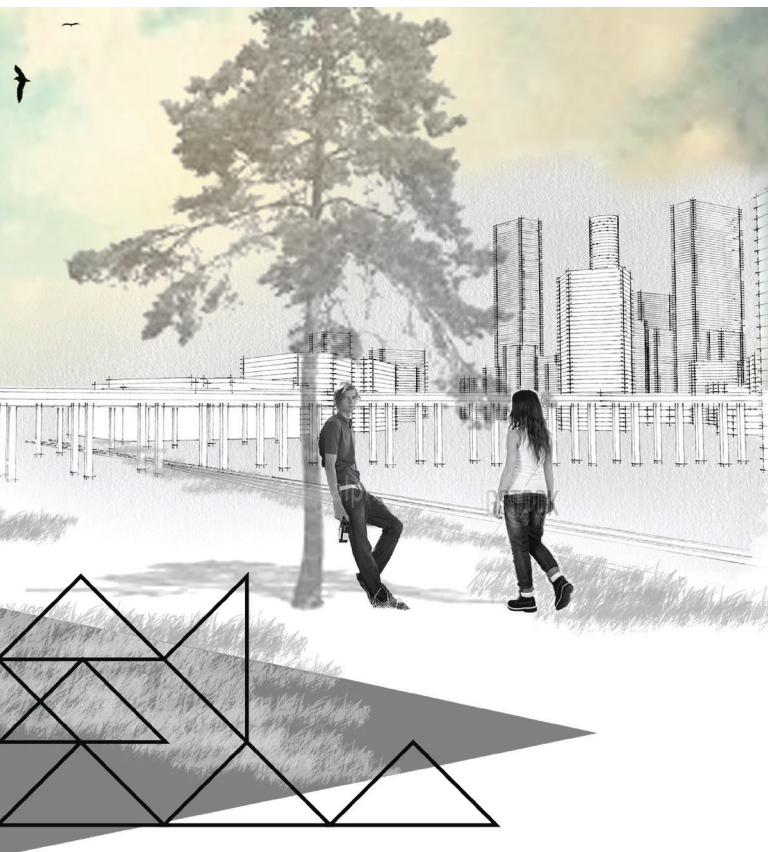




Exploring atmosphere through materials used: The concrete material of each of the structures, gave played with compressing the space and view sheds played with opening up the space. The arrows show places of compression and expansion. The illustration is looking for meaning in the materials evokes a sense of introspection.

Exploring atmosphere through scale: the scale of the structures seem to be built around the person encompassing and overpowering him. Solace could also be achieved by taking a step back to watch the world be built around you. Another perspective of introspection.





In the process of exploring the built space and the making of personal moments in the city, the users that came to the site were primary contributors. A place which was not meant to attract any type of user, in fact became a haven for some. The 'some' were objects of analysis and what they did during such moments molded the reason for research.

An impromptu picture of a murmur at the corner of the site, led to the understanding of private moments. A group of young work professionals, on a ledge by themselves, stealing a moment away from the city life, only to look back on it without a hindered view, was in fact solace. A picturesque photograph of youth, secrets, freedom, and being true to themselves, without a manipulation of the environment. The design of place didn't matter to them. Rather than the place give meaning to their activity, they gave meaning to the place. A seclusion from the busy city life.



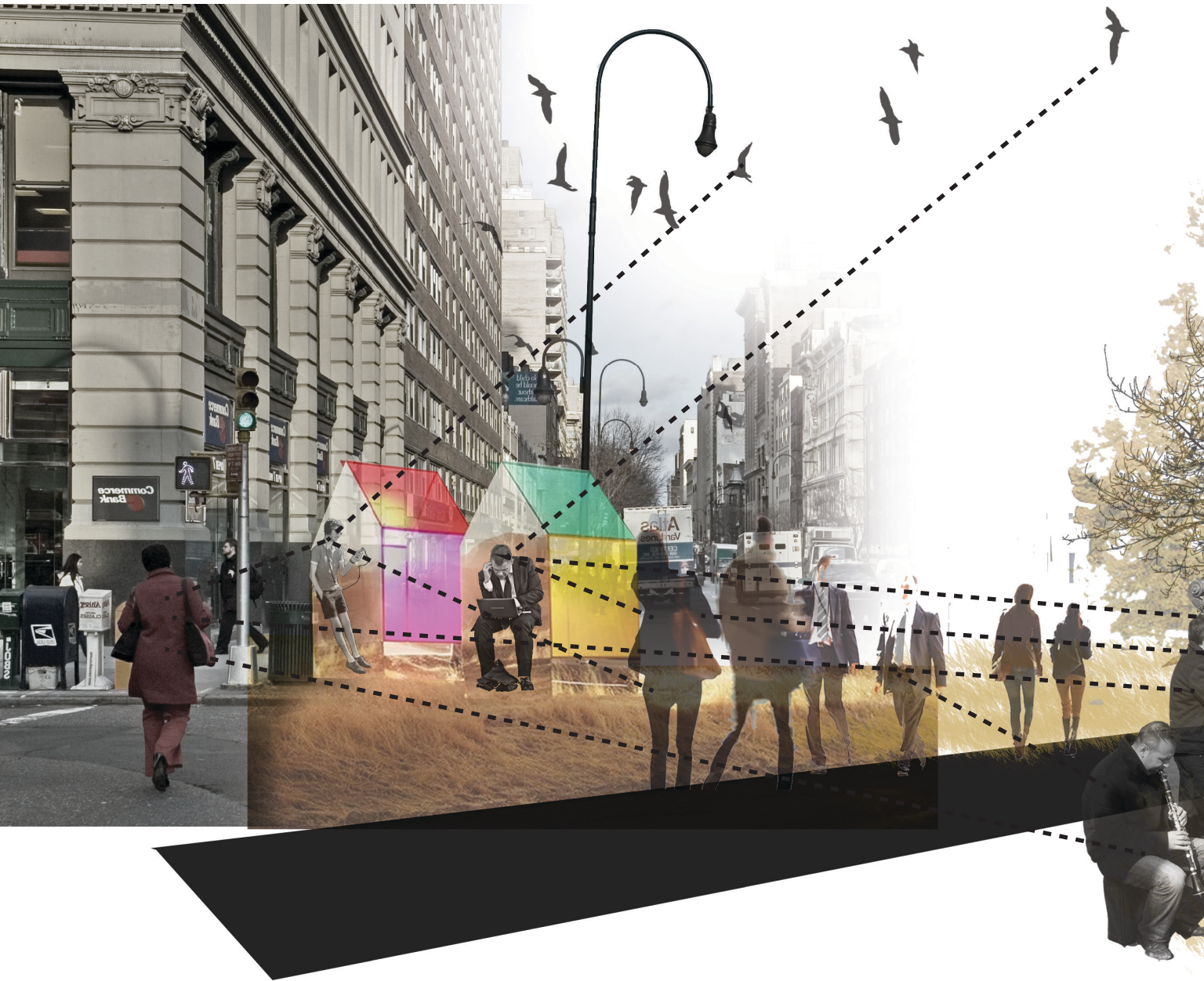




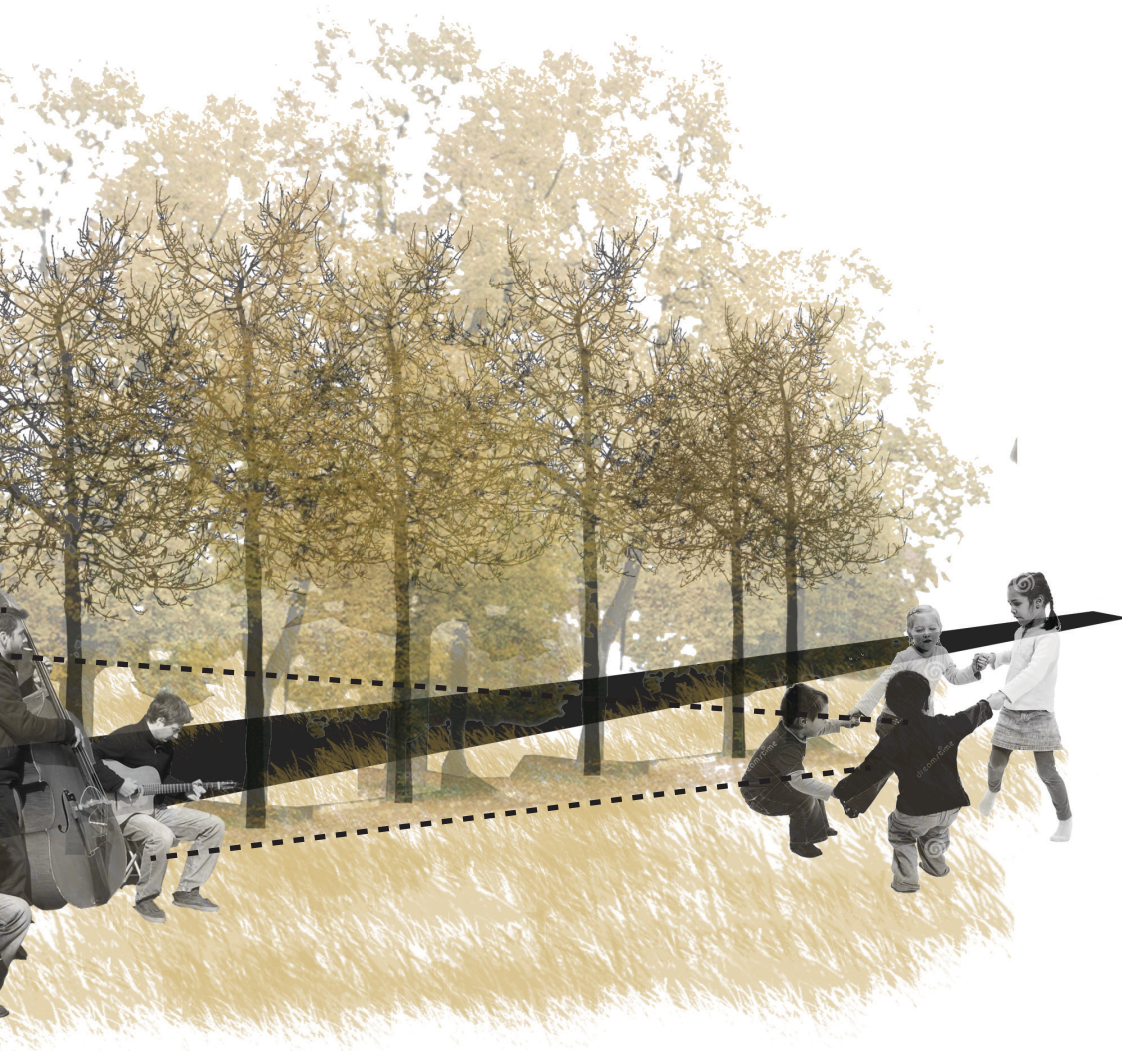
# THE REALIZATION

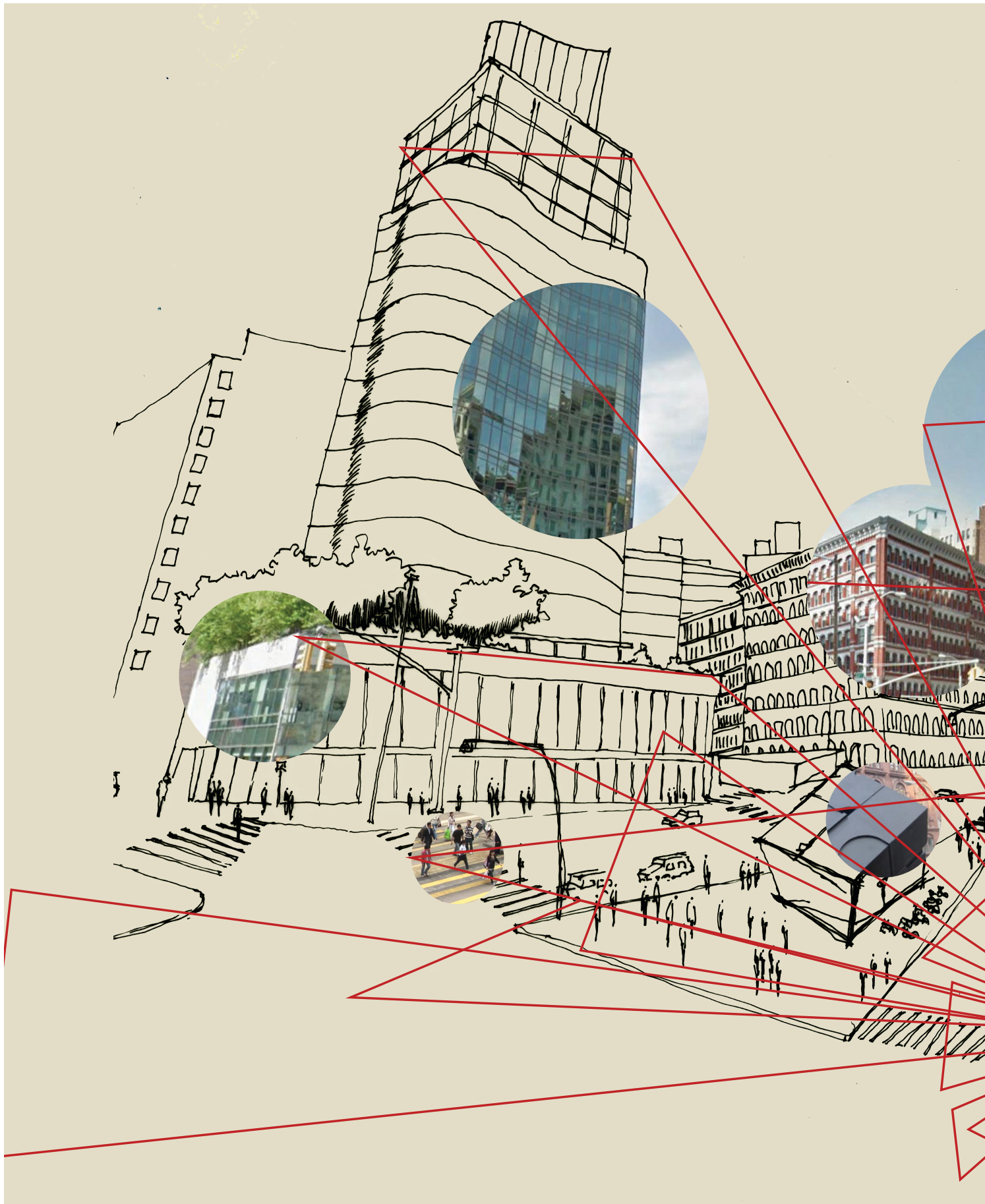
Understanding people when on their own was the focus of research, to understand their environments. To dig deeper, it was necessary to look at people's moments on their own, which then gives meaning to why they choose the space. Cornelis Veriwaal, a photographer from Brooklyn, reveals such moments, in one his series of works called Urban Solace. Some pictures were about a moment carved in a nook of urban structures, some, a moment amongst many people where you are the observer, and the most distinct, a moment where people are in a different place and time, while the world around them passes by, when they used devices. When this was the case, did the design of the atmosphere around them matter at all? An undeniable truth of moments that everyone has, no matter the environment.

A behavior that has grown exponentially, dubbed by some and encouraged by others, the research settled with the fact that is it in fact the state of affairs today, and therefore landscape architecture needs to recognize this change in society, to inform design of spaces, because the user is the driver of designs.



Privately owned public spaces (POPS) are public parks and open spaces owned by private and corporate companies, made to cater to the common public around where it is situated. Sometimes the open spaces are close to the vicinity of the company building and sometimes much further depending on their market strategy. But in either case, they allow for Wi-Fi signals to be established in the open space to attract people so that they can work in outdoor spaces. Watts, Miah and Pheasant in their research look into understanding how this technology manipulated people to use the public spaces. They discovered that their preference would be the following in order: Seating close to the signal, preferred partial sun and shade, preferred quality of green space and the distance from the road depended on the times that they lingered. In all cases it was highly dependent on good weather.



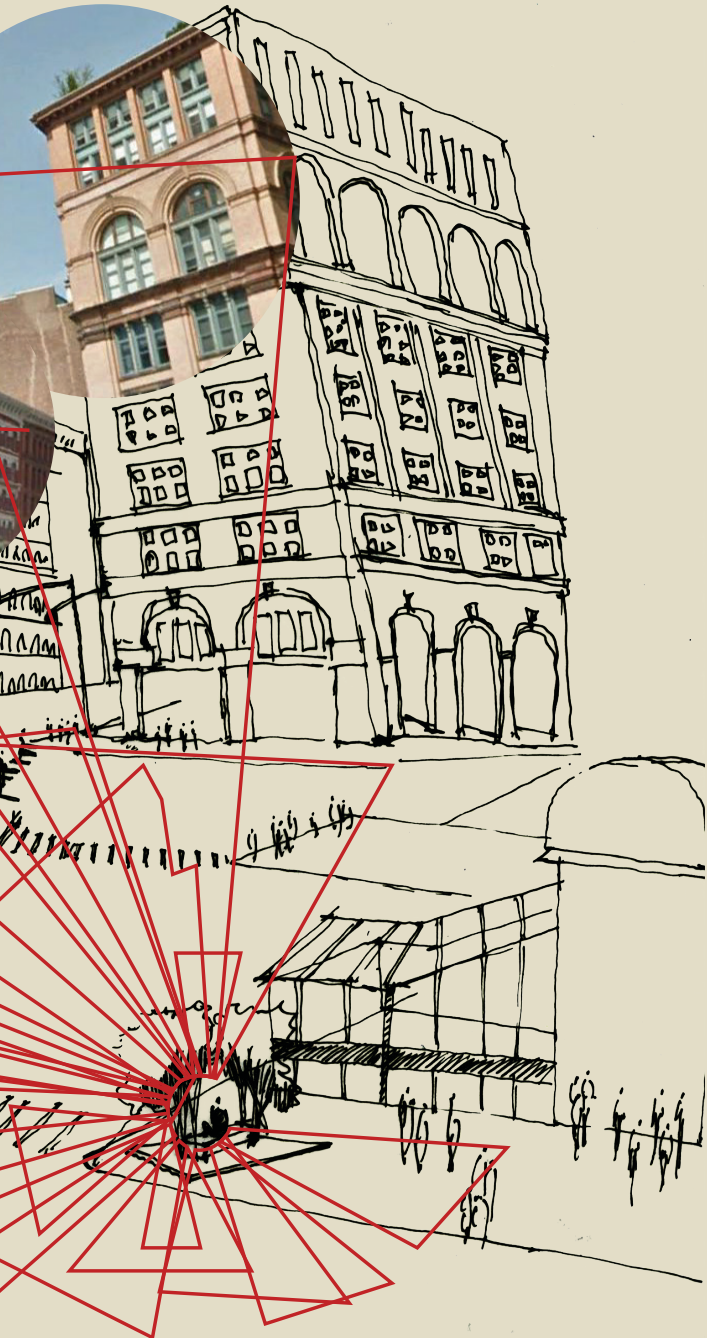


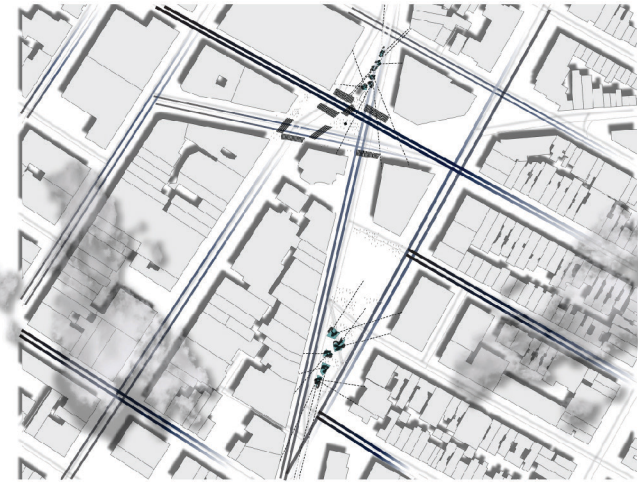


# GETTING THE HANDS DIRTY

There are many researches looking into to the changing societal behavior. But as human understanding of social trends picks up, there was less that seeped into the design of public spaces that acknowledged it. The history of public parks and public spaces has made its impact on public space design quite strong for us to adhere to traditional forms of design and their needs.

Today there are the working men and women who step out of their glass cubed offices for a break, they carry their portable devices to be connected to the market wherever they are. Even when they come to a public park to gain what a public park should do, a sense of relief and escape. There are also, the younger crowd, the older lot, the tourists and the stay at homes who all come to public spaces. But as everyone has accepted to the society of technically advanced, they may not all use it as frequently or in the same way. These spaces should accommodate and reinvent for all the typologies of people. A site that allows such maximum exposure to this diversity was easily found in New York, NY.



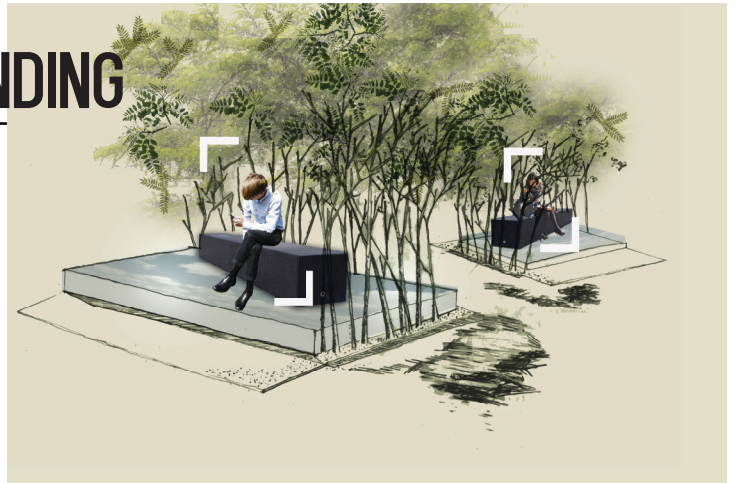


The phones allow us to have a moment to ourselves by being connected to our own space and time. To test the power of finding this moment in the busy life of the urban scape, the site was chosen as a traffic island in the middle of Lower Manhattan. The site was surrounded by corporate building on all four sides, with the addition of a subway station and 5 crosswalks to get around them. This would mean that there is non-stop activity and people walking around the space of the traffic island. Each design is a module that can be further developed but the heart of the design involves accommodating for moments on the phone.

## **HOW CLOSE TO THE CITY CAN ONE BE, TO ESCAPE FROM THE CITY?**

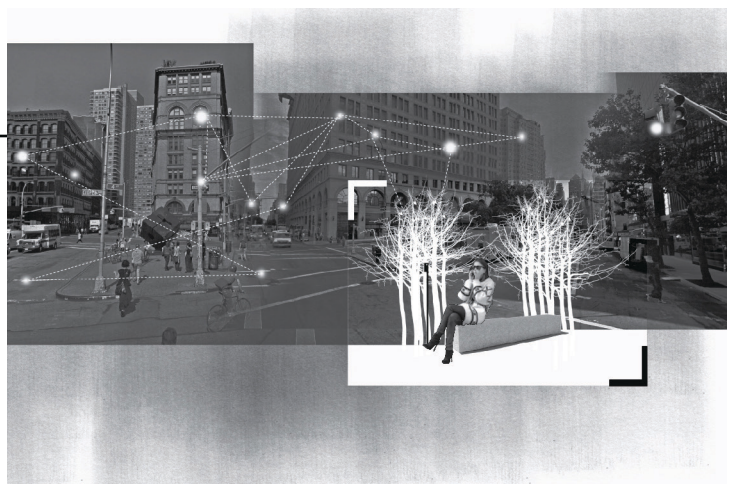
## AWARENESS OF SURROUNDING

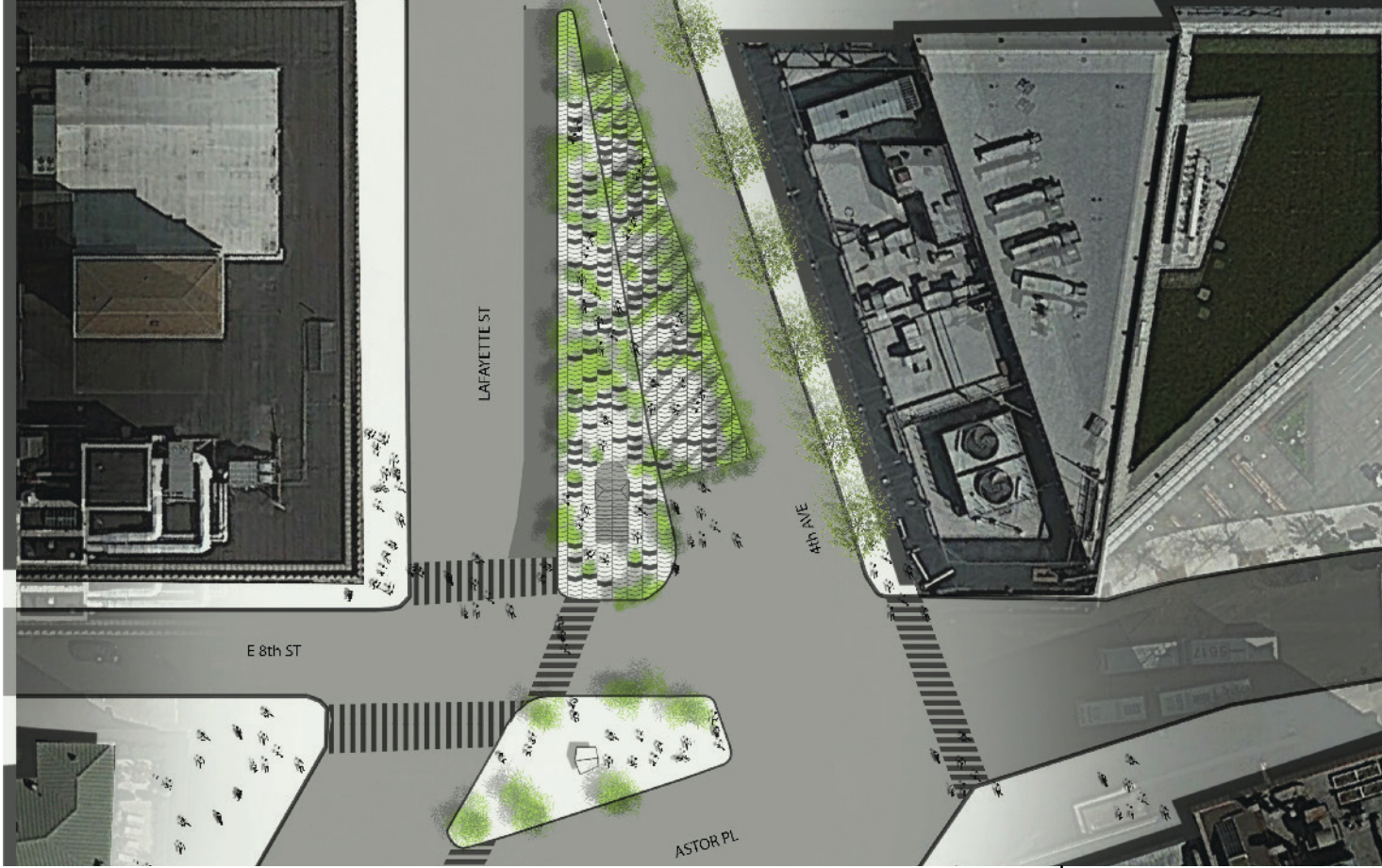
Accommodating people as they wish to be seated, single or with companions, but enough to define it for just their moment. Enclosed in a partial view nook made by honey locust plants, the person also is in partial sun and partial shade. The moment on the phone is one for himself until his view, which is looking down on the phone, shift to the looking down on the ground plane, which is in fact the view of the sky. The ground plane is made of a reflective surface, to bring attention to the phone user of this surroundings. The surroundings that the public space is made to introduce a person to.



## EPHEMERAL MOMENTS

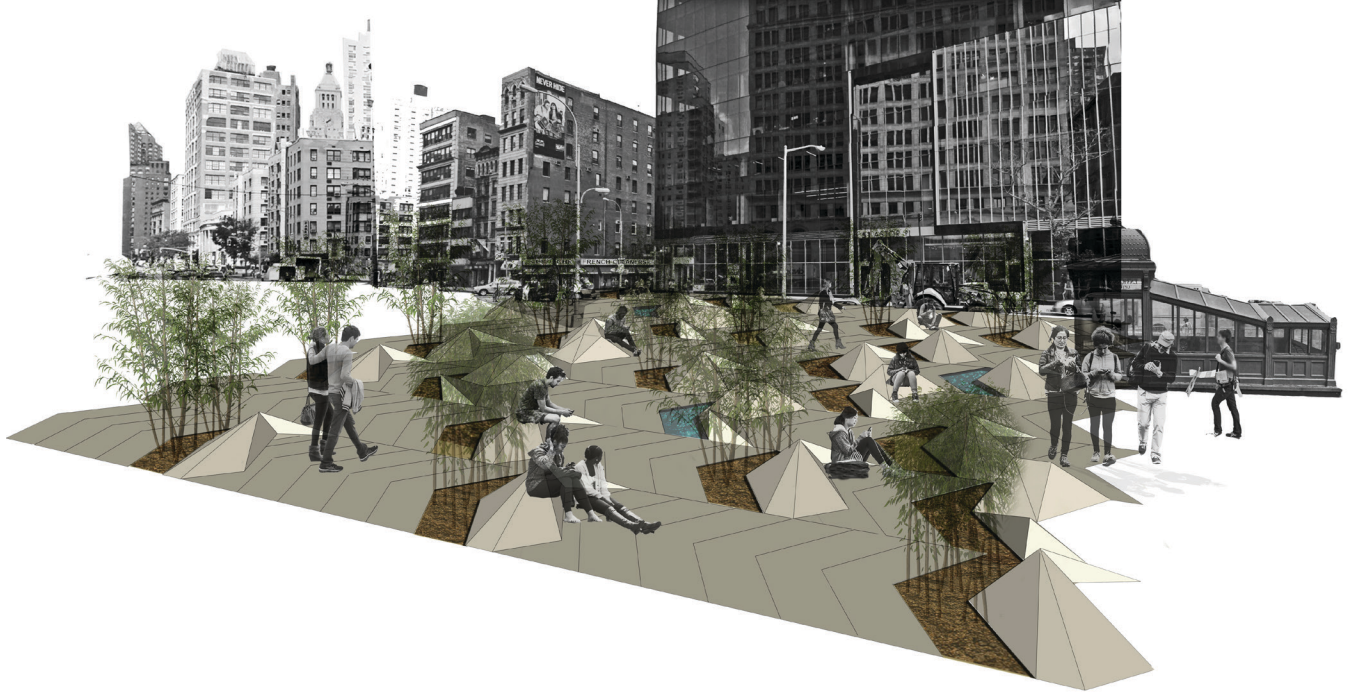
Understanding the power of what is visible to the corner of the eye even when on your phone. As the person begins to use his phones he sees a light go off with the gadget placed next to his seat. As his eye and focus moves to the light, a sequence of similar sparks set off, taking his attention to his complete surrounding, a moment that just last for a minute, and then he can get back to his phone. The design, specifically made for the phone user, goes to show the user that the moment came about because of his phone usage.





The design exploration was more focused on people being aware of their environment rather than just accommodation. The design moves forward with enabling outside reinforcement to technology such as Wi-Fi signals.





## SHOWING PRESENCE

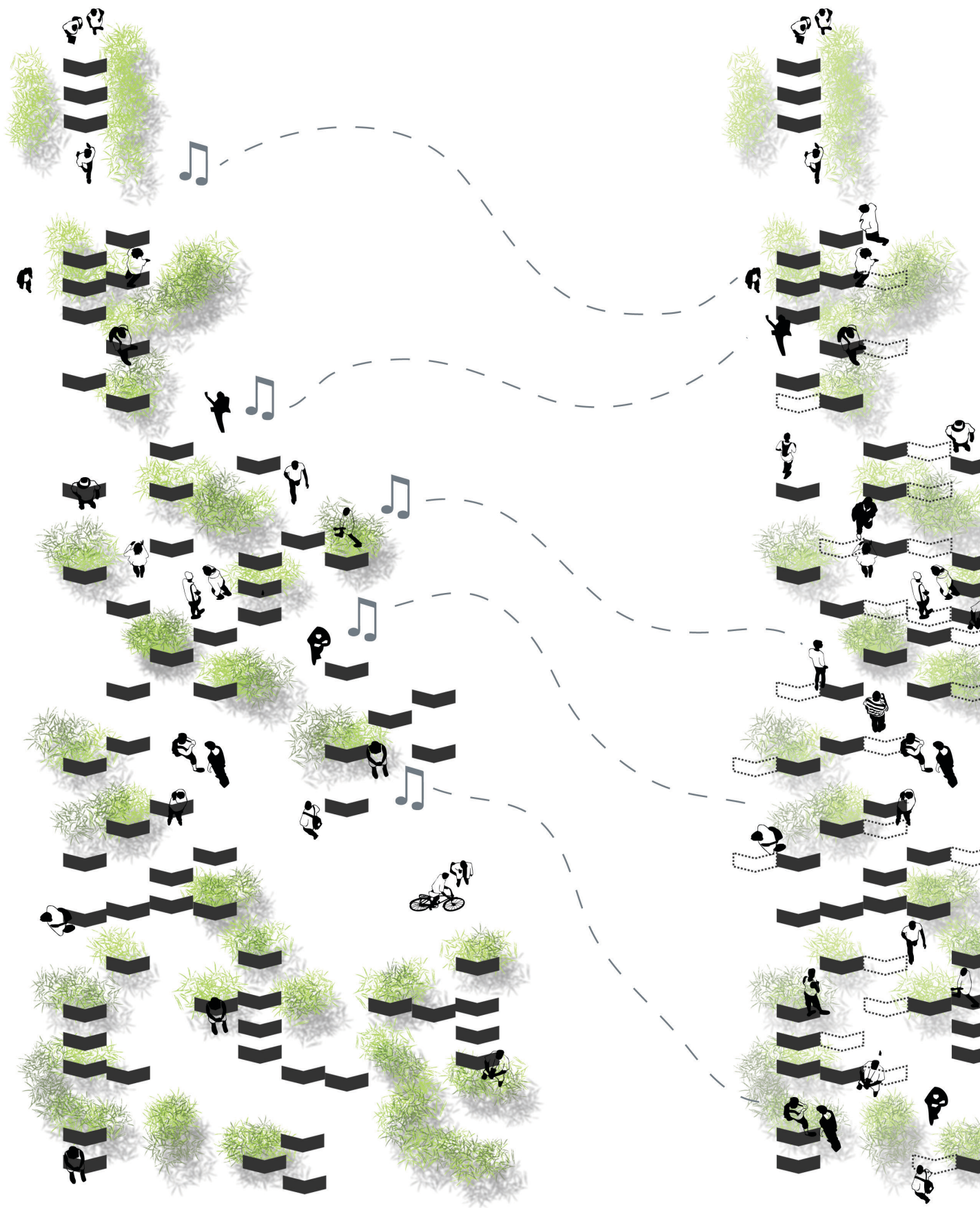
As the person in the seat uses his phone, Wi-Fi signals pick up on the usage and liven the surroundings. The water spout/fountain starts to surface. The design still holds elements of bringing the surrounding to the users notice.

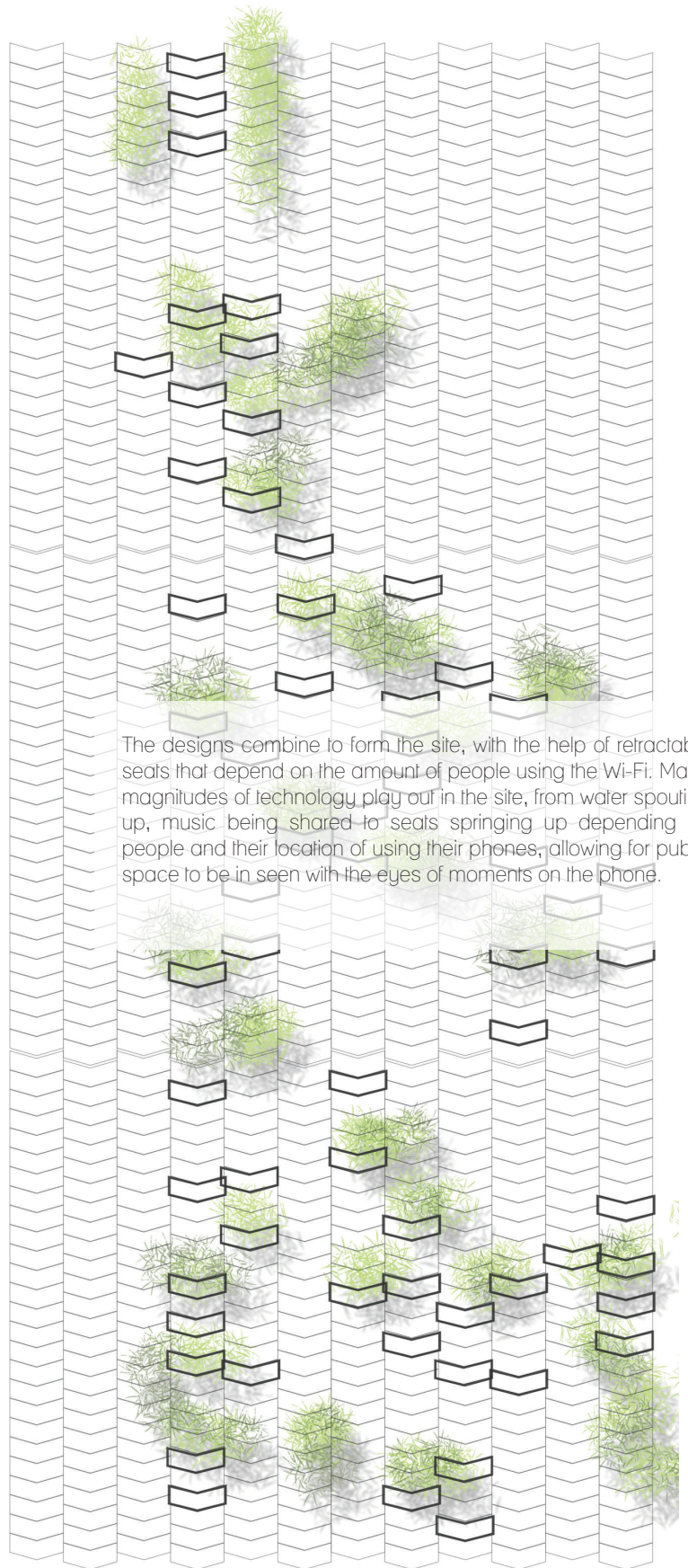
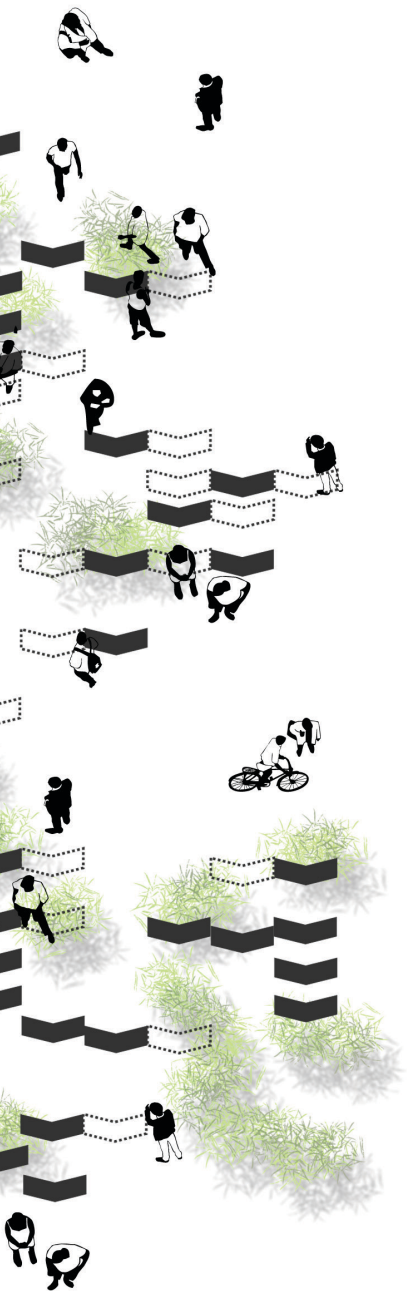


## NEW INTERACTION

In addition to the surrounding livening up, the place creates an opportunity to communicate to other people. A console allows a person sitting in the module to leave a music file behind, that starts to play once the next person occupies the module. Inherently communication without meeting.







The designs combine to form the site, with the help of retractable seats that depend on the amount of people using the Wi-Fi. Many magnitudes of technology play out in the site, from water spouting up, music being shared to seats springing up depending on people and their location of using their phones, allowing for public space to be in seen with the eyes of moments on the phone.





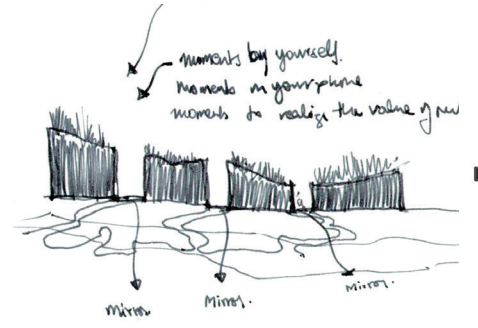
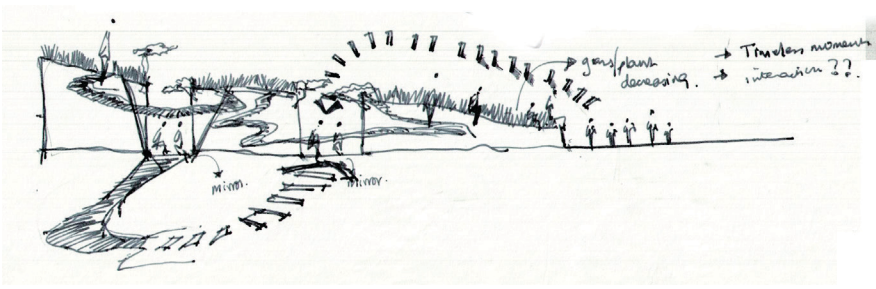
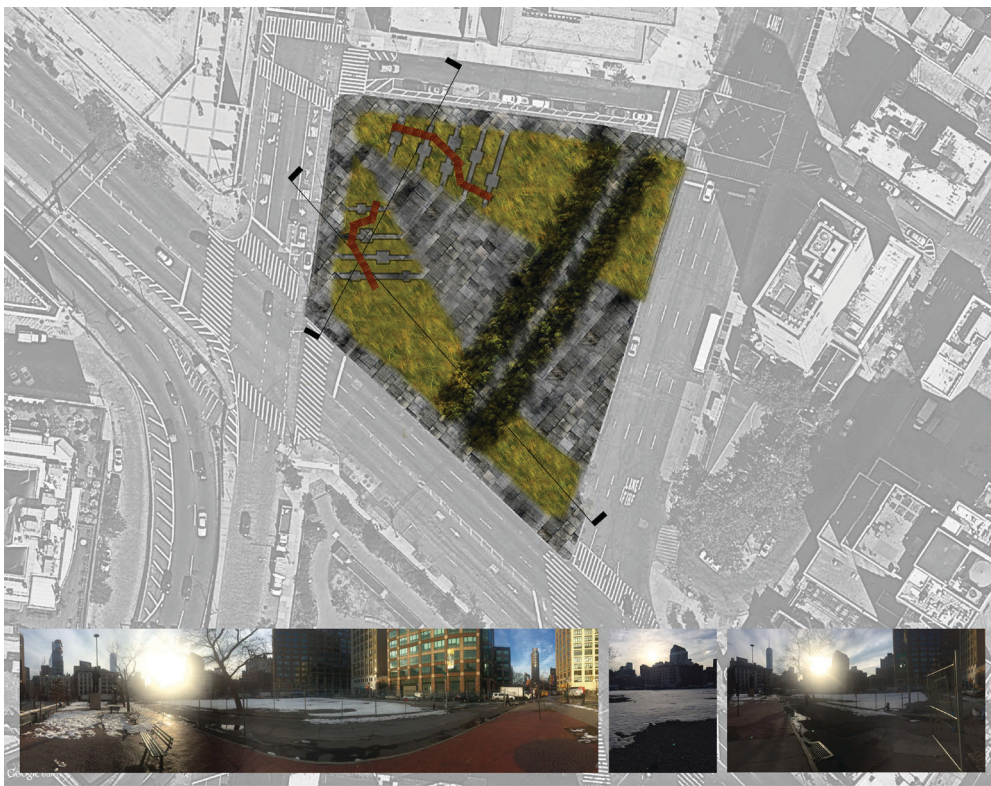
# THE AHA MOMENT

The investigations were led by behavior of people in society. A comparison of ages was necessary to know how the technology has contributed to the behavior. With the help of pictures from the past and present in different public spaces in NY, it was easy to see the difference of social interaction in each case. The pictures are from Paley Park and Washington Square Park in the 1970's and today.

We are more critical of behavior and anticipate conformity in public spaces. This is more common when we are at a place where the context compels you to follow. Paley Park for example, is more conformed than a bigger plaza like Washington Square Park in New York City. People at Paley Park are expected to behave in a more acceptable manner. For example, although they provide movable furniture to re arrange and seat as one pleases, they are not allowed to put their feet on the table, or speak in a manner that will disturb other users. In such a place, although there is an ideal condition of sunlight and shade and architectural features to entice a person's interest, it is not the best case atmosphere for activities that invigorate visitors to participate as a community. It rather works in a manner when the busy city dwellers would need a minute by themselves. Washington Square Park on the other hand is a lot more vibrant and less strict with user rules than Paley. With less conformity, the people have a lot more activities that naturally emerge as a public space should. These activities keep all the people visiting the park immersed on the show and this, is a form of public interaction too. They may not have to keep conversations flowing but they are exchanging glances, bonded by the scene, observing the crowd and in a parallel sharing a moment.

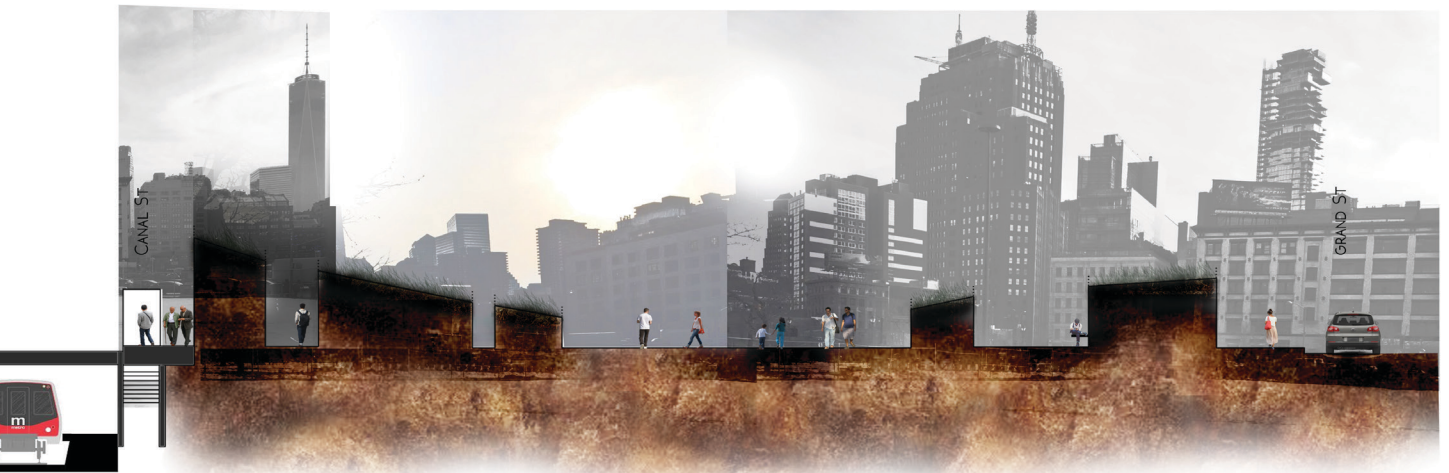


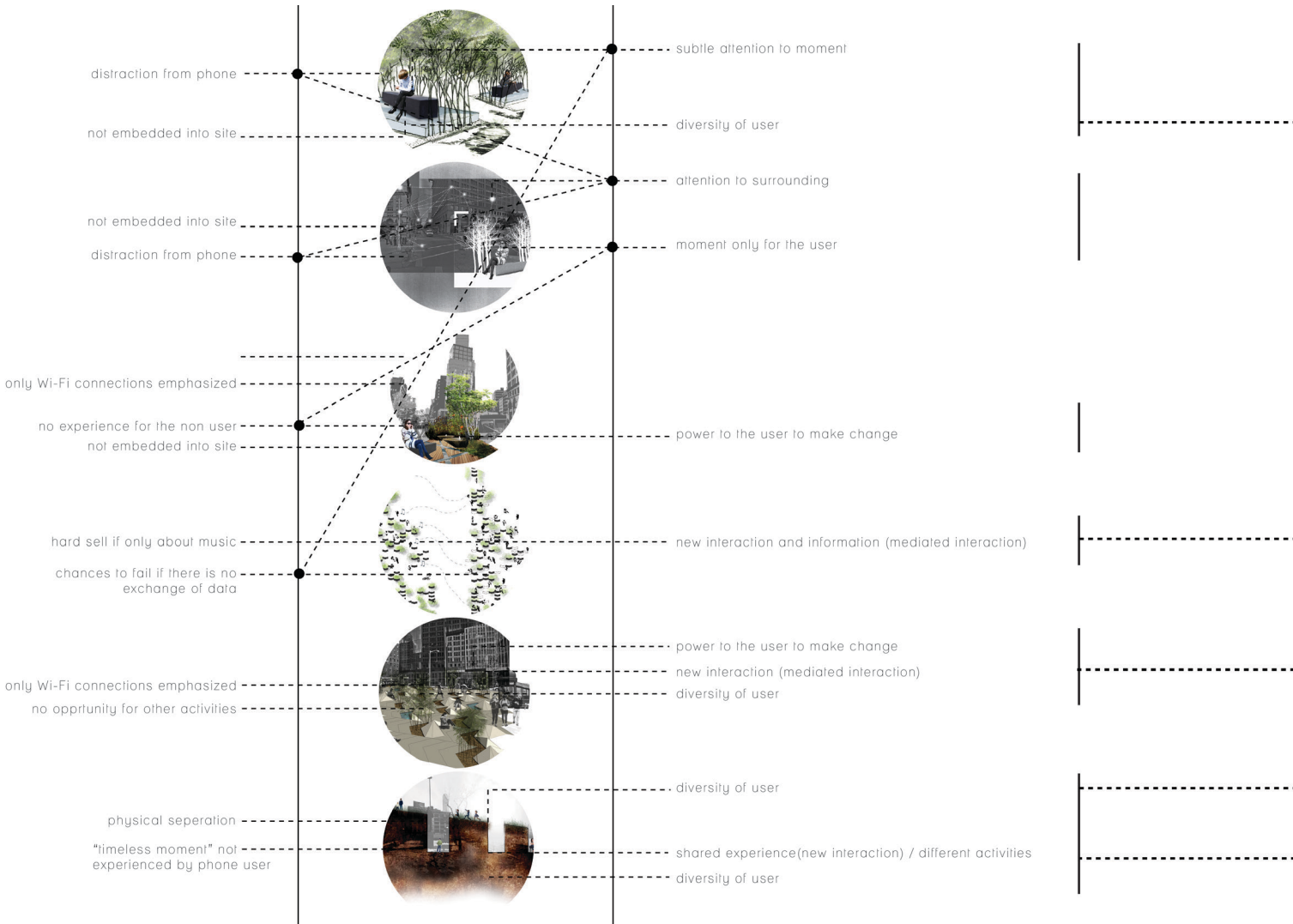
To bring together people for a shared experience by an event, the site dimensions expanded from a traffic island to a plot of 1.7 acres in Lower Manhattan. All other characteristics remain relatively still the same, with the number of crosswalks and a subway station.

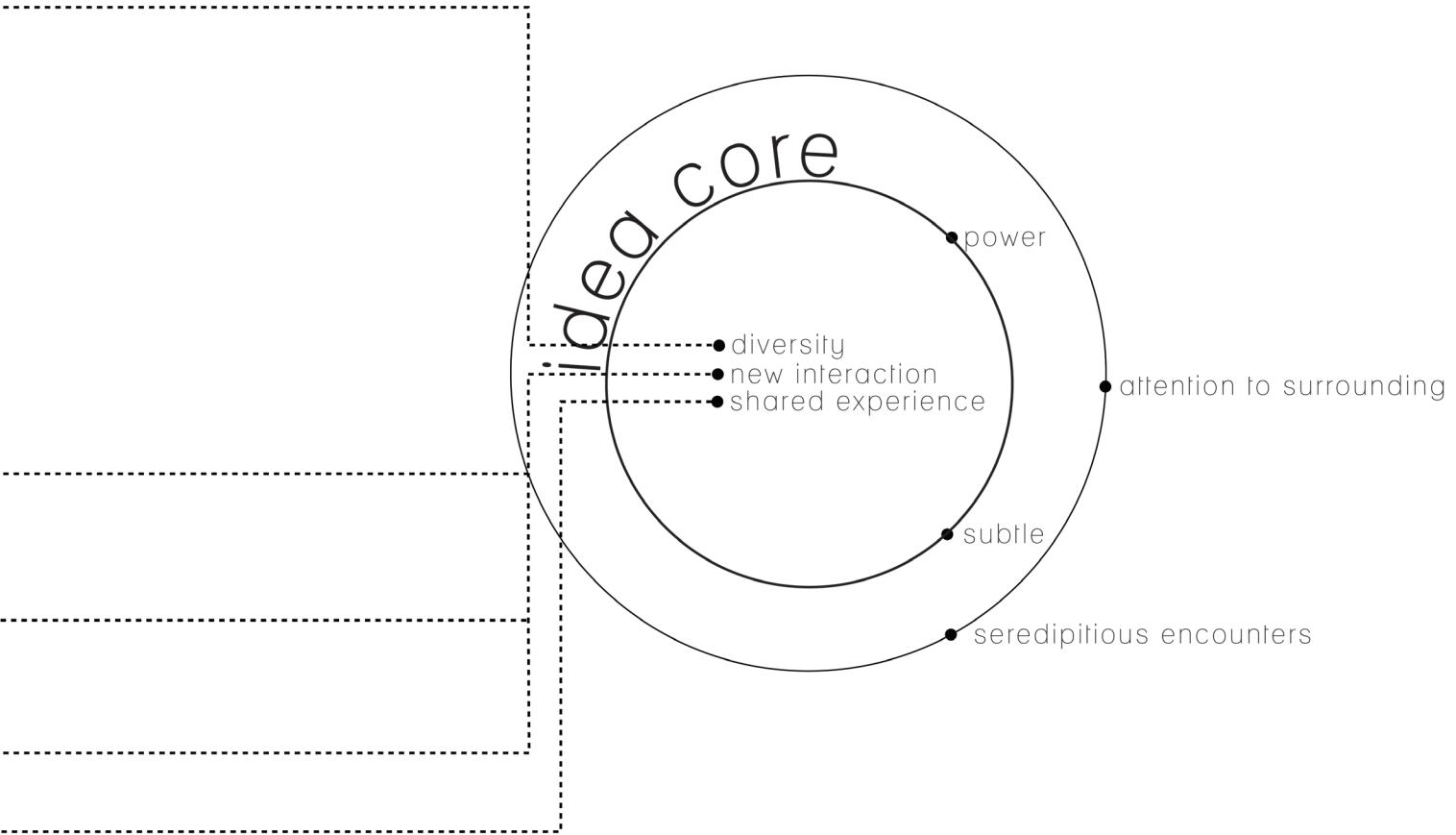


The project worked on the basis of Anthony Townsend's suggestion that the value of public spaces is a timeless beauty that we as humans are still connected to. The aim of the exploration was to create an event space to build value of outdoor spaces and bring attachment to it and yet make place for private moments as well.

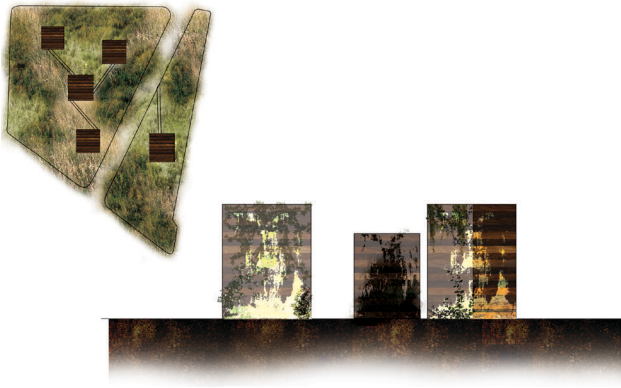
The landform is raised to achieve private niches, intended for people to be by themselves and an event spaces splitting the site in the middle. The people in the private space are connected to the sounds made in the event space. Therefore allowing for a shared experience and people in parallel moments. This is under the assumption that the person in the pod will tend to use their phone when in there for a considerable amount of time. The phone makes the person linger in there and still be connected to the people outside.







Each design so far, demonstrates an aspect of social behavior that can be brought out by public space design leveraging technology. The diagram shows a map of design thinking with all the drawbacks and potential ideas to work with. Of all the information that has been derived from each of the explorations, three stand out as the core ideas that all public spaces need in accordance with the current public trend. Diversity and shared experience that make most public spaces successful, and new interaction that all public spaces can afford to advance with societal trends. Other factors that go into design explorations are serendipitous encounters that people are ready for and giving power to people to manipulate the space.



Technology is a broad term with all the advancements today. A number of explorations are made to show that technology in all its aspects is taken into consideration. The core values of diversity, shared experience and new interaction lead every intervention.

---

---

---

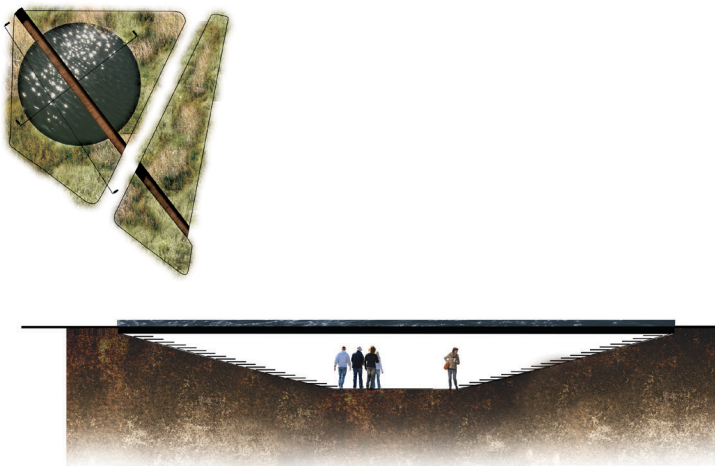
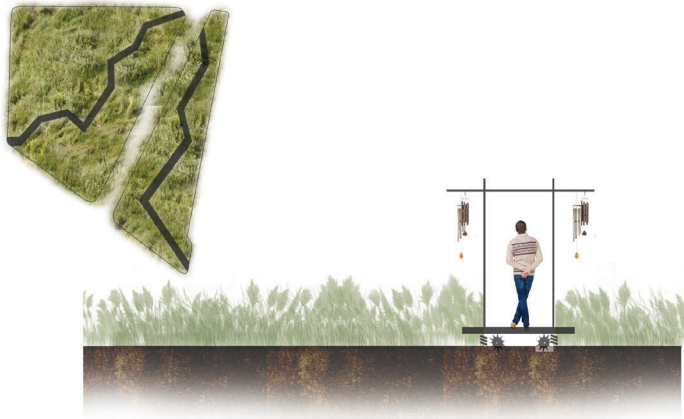
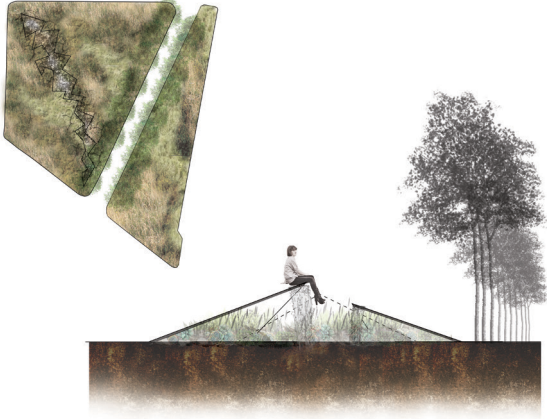
---

---

---

---

---



## ACCUMALATING PEOPLE

---

Rooms in the landscape play the sounds of the jungle, for e.g. the sounds of birds, as people walk into them. As the number of people walking into the rooms increase, the sounds of birds increases. The design proves interactive environments depending on people but not a social outcome.

## FACING PEOPLE

---

A fractured form opens the ground up to a stream like water bed. As water brings people to it, the design focused on brining people to the edge of the land so as to face each other. The raised land allows for a water fall where people sit, enticing more people to sit opposite to each other but none to start interaction.

## IMPACT OF PEOPLE

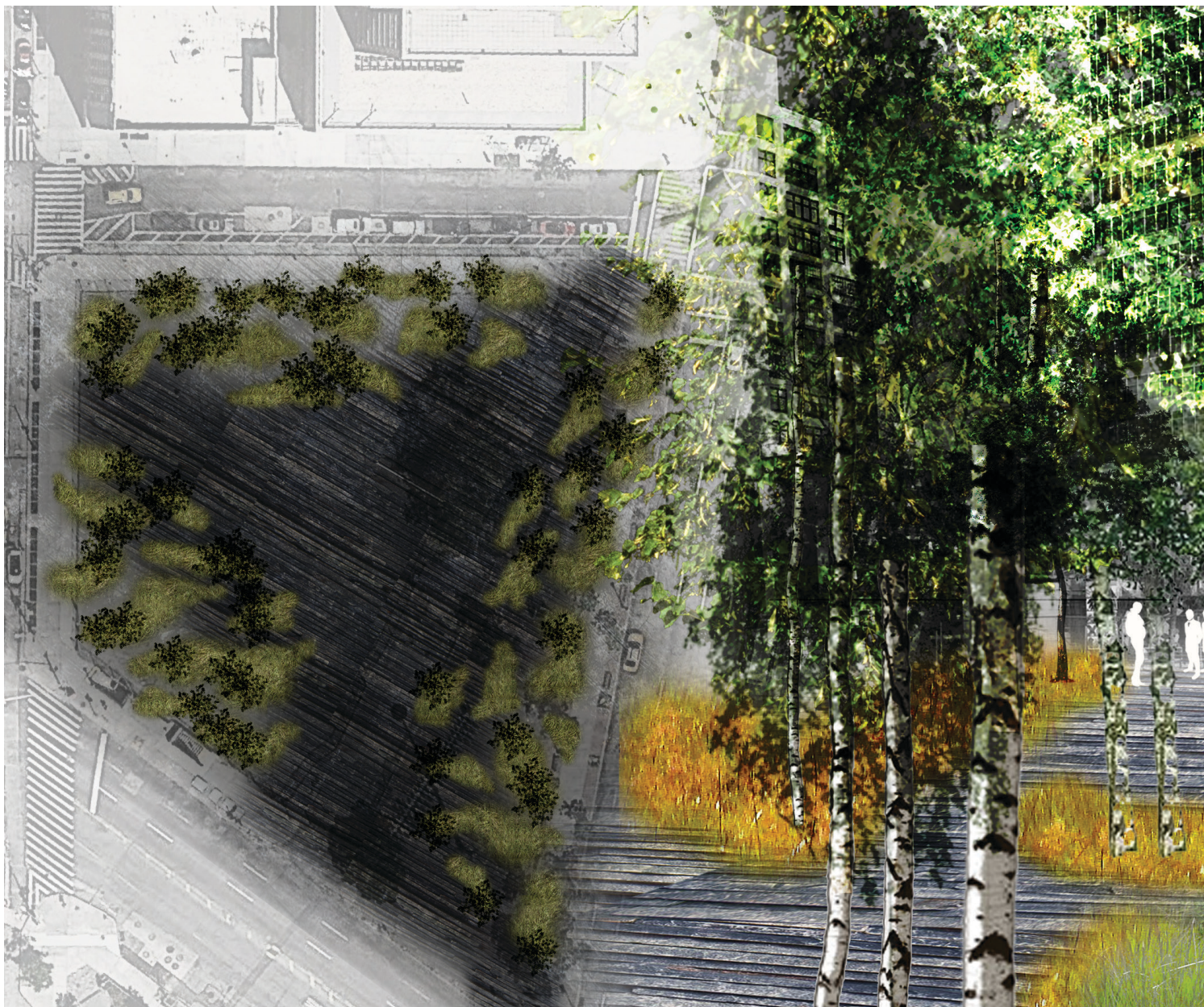
---

Inspired by the meadow and the movement of grass in the wind, a boardwalk runs through the grass. Beneath the boardwalk are fans that respond when people come closer together on the boardwalk, turning to move the grass. Additionally windmills can bring out the presence of the wind. The design limits interaction by only bringing people together.

## IMMERSION AND INTERACTION

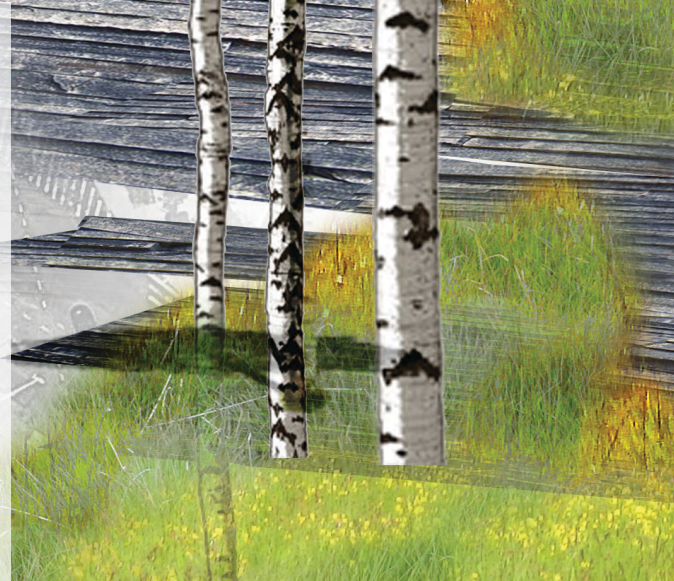
---

With the previous ideas of technology making its presence by following groups of people, water is used again to immerse the user into the site. With all these designs, interactive spaces that bring people together does not actually promote people interacting with each each other.



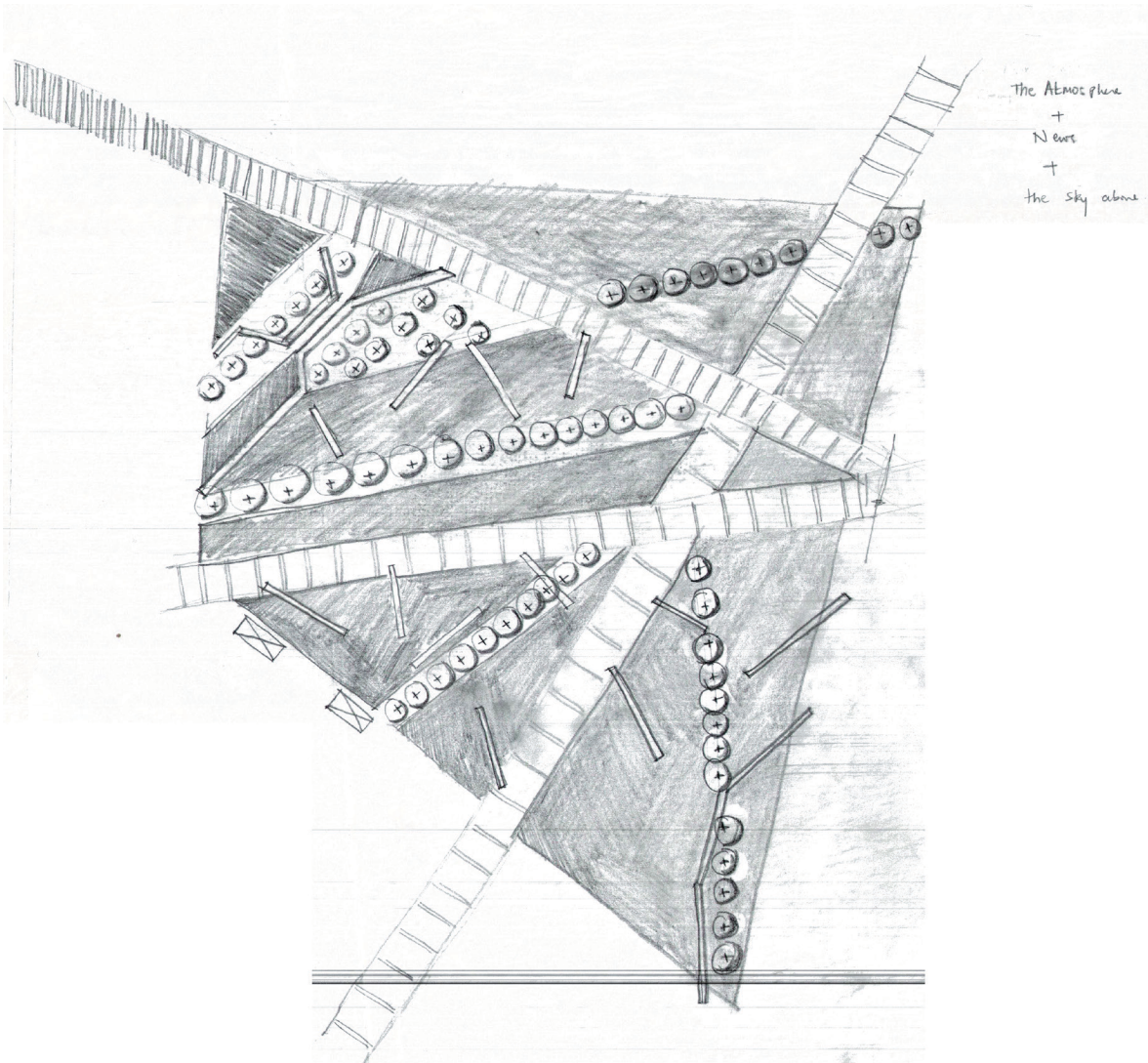
Our portable devices are part of the social structure. When the phone is a part of our daily wardrobe, it is necessary to include the use of that in public space design as well. Moving from the aspect of general technology, the focus is on what the phones are doing for us. The social structure would be impacted by design if we used the working of the phone into a tangible embodiment of public space design.

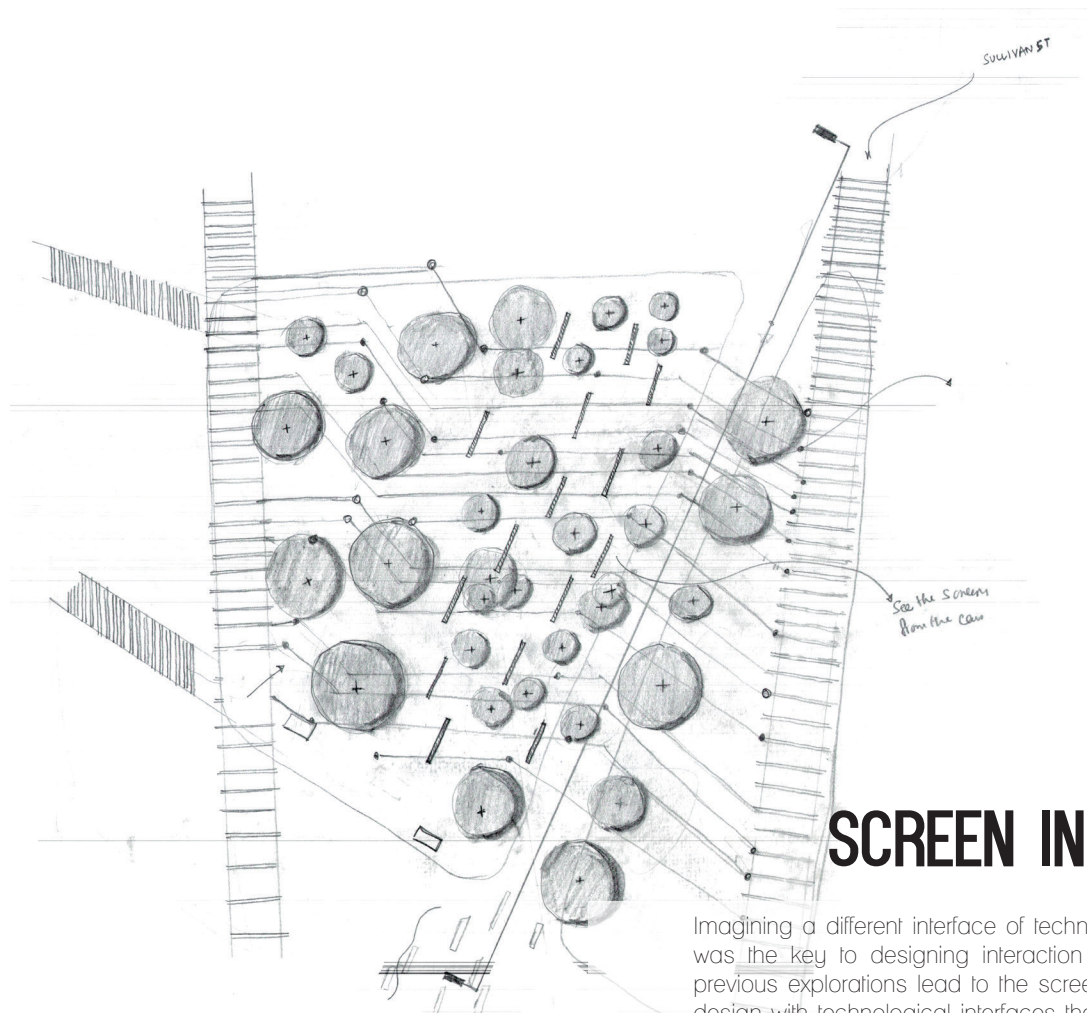
The design follows the working of facebook, twitter and other social media, where people share photos, videos and viral information. To make a shared experience, the site opens up in the middle to make way for street performers. As the performances are encouraged, the people post their videos on the screens are placed in the space. These videos can further be forwarded and watched by people all over the world. The existing technology that social media allows does the same that the screen do in the public space. To advance the design, the embodiment of social media needs to be different from the interface of the portable devices.







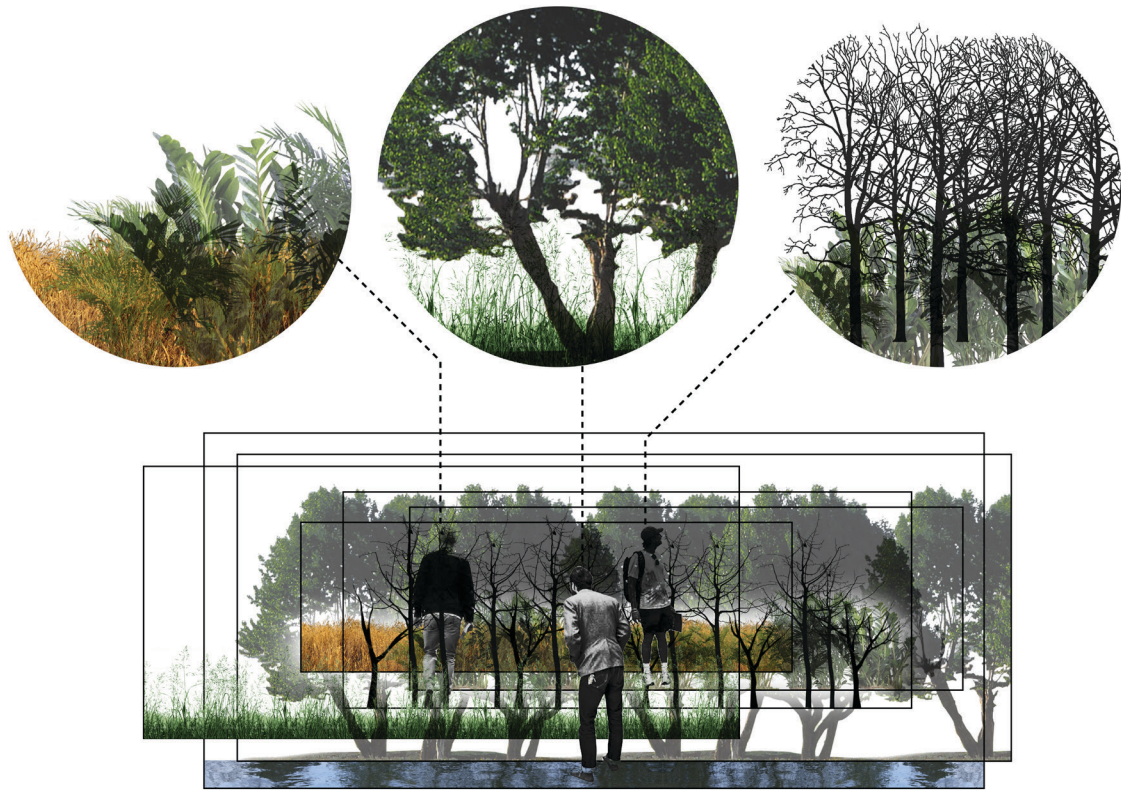




## SCREEN INTERFACE

Imagining a different interface of technology and the media was the key to designing interaction in public space. As previous explorations lead to the screens, it is imperative to design with technological interfaces that add to the portable devices than mimic them. These iterations go through modules of screen placements. The content of each of the designs vary from landscape screen savers to shared content.

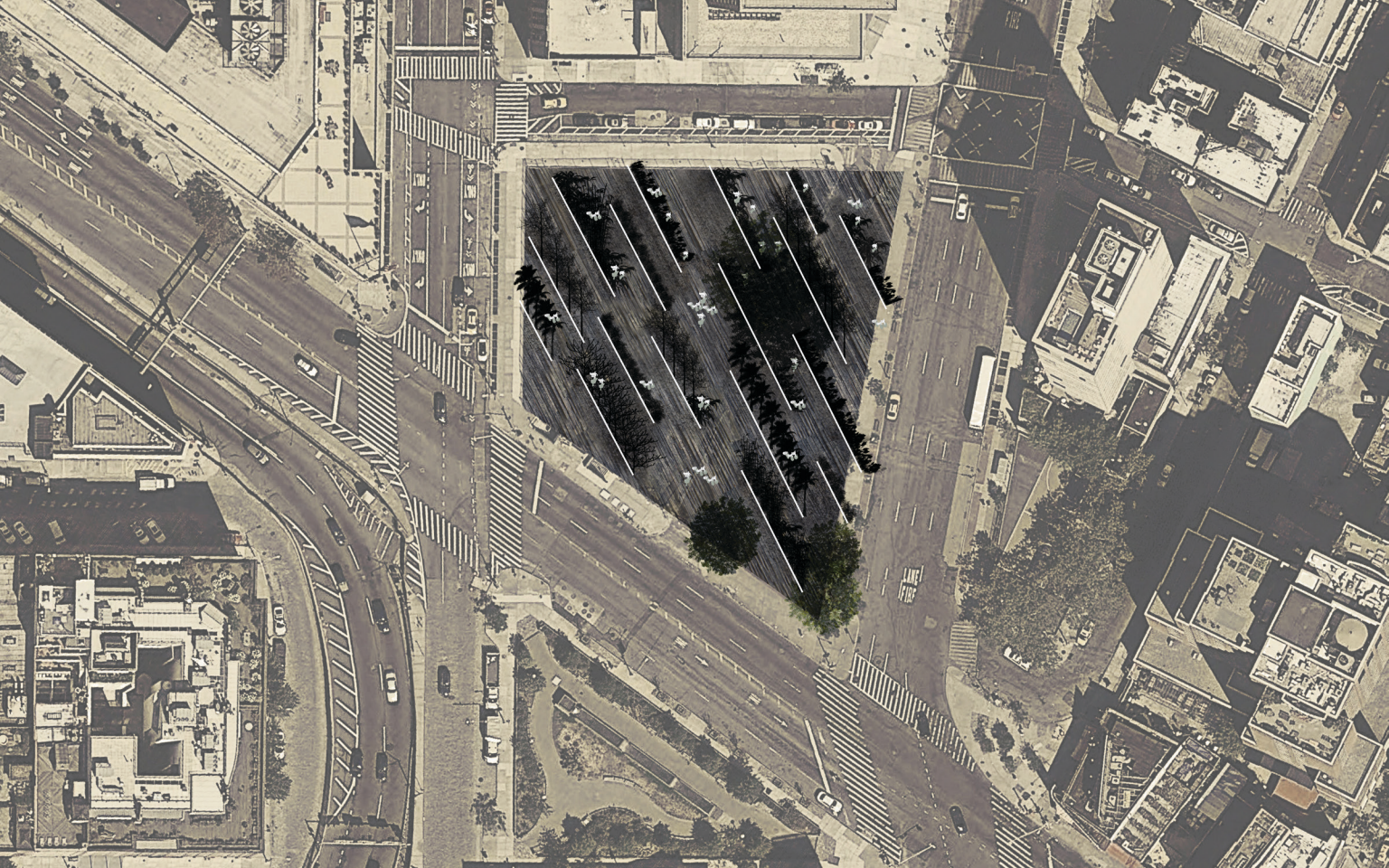




## INTERACTION BY LAYERS

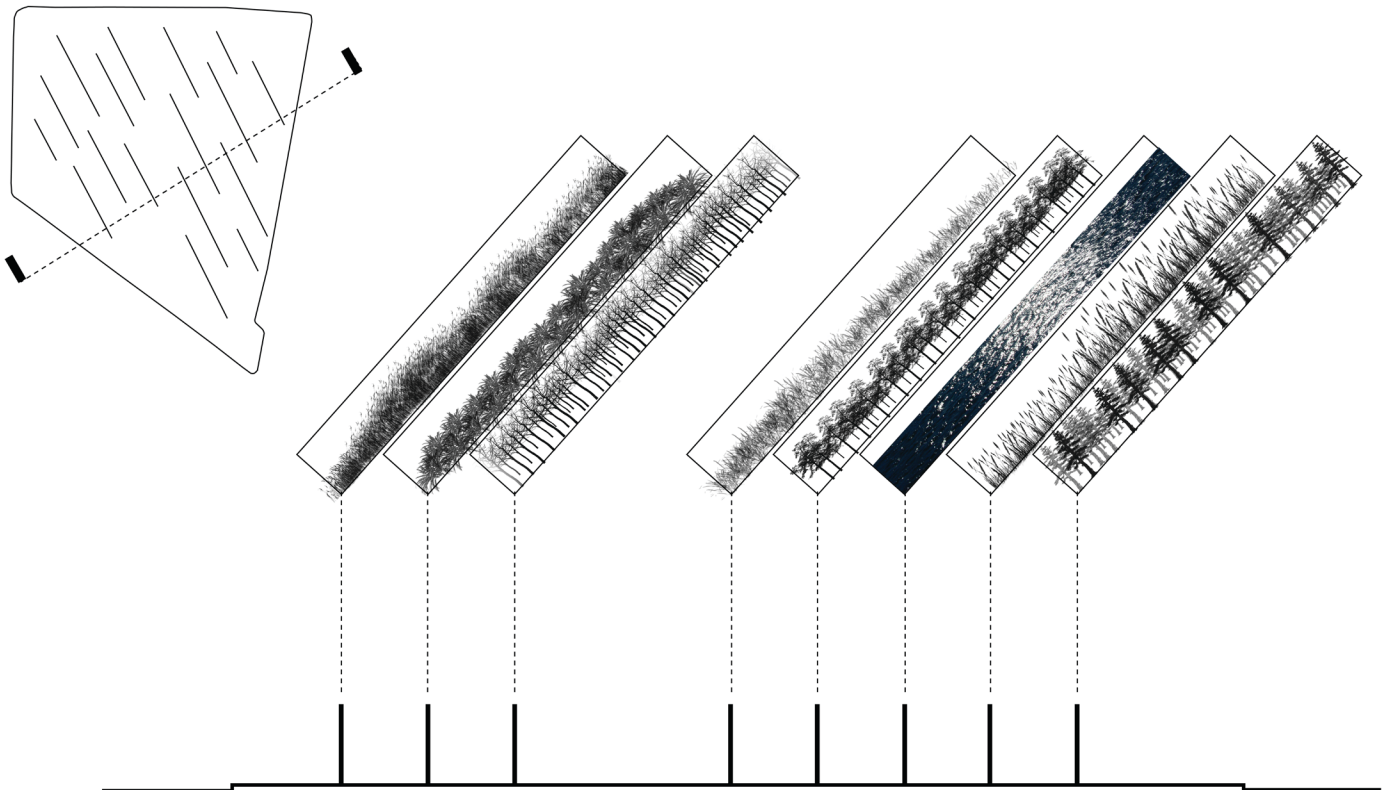
The screens are further developed with content to better the interaction. In this exploration the screens are placed parallel to each other. A user can set the screens with screensavers of landscapes that reflect the person's moods. By using a touch screen, they can change the kind of landscapes that are displayed. The transparent screens overlap with their content to form a series of landscapes that can be seen as an entirety.

By looking at another person's display, you understand what kind of mood he is in, without having to talk to them. Symbolic of many phone apps today, that let us in on what a person is thinking or feeling without an actual conversation.





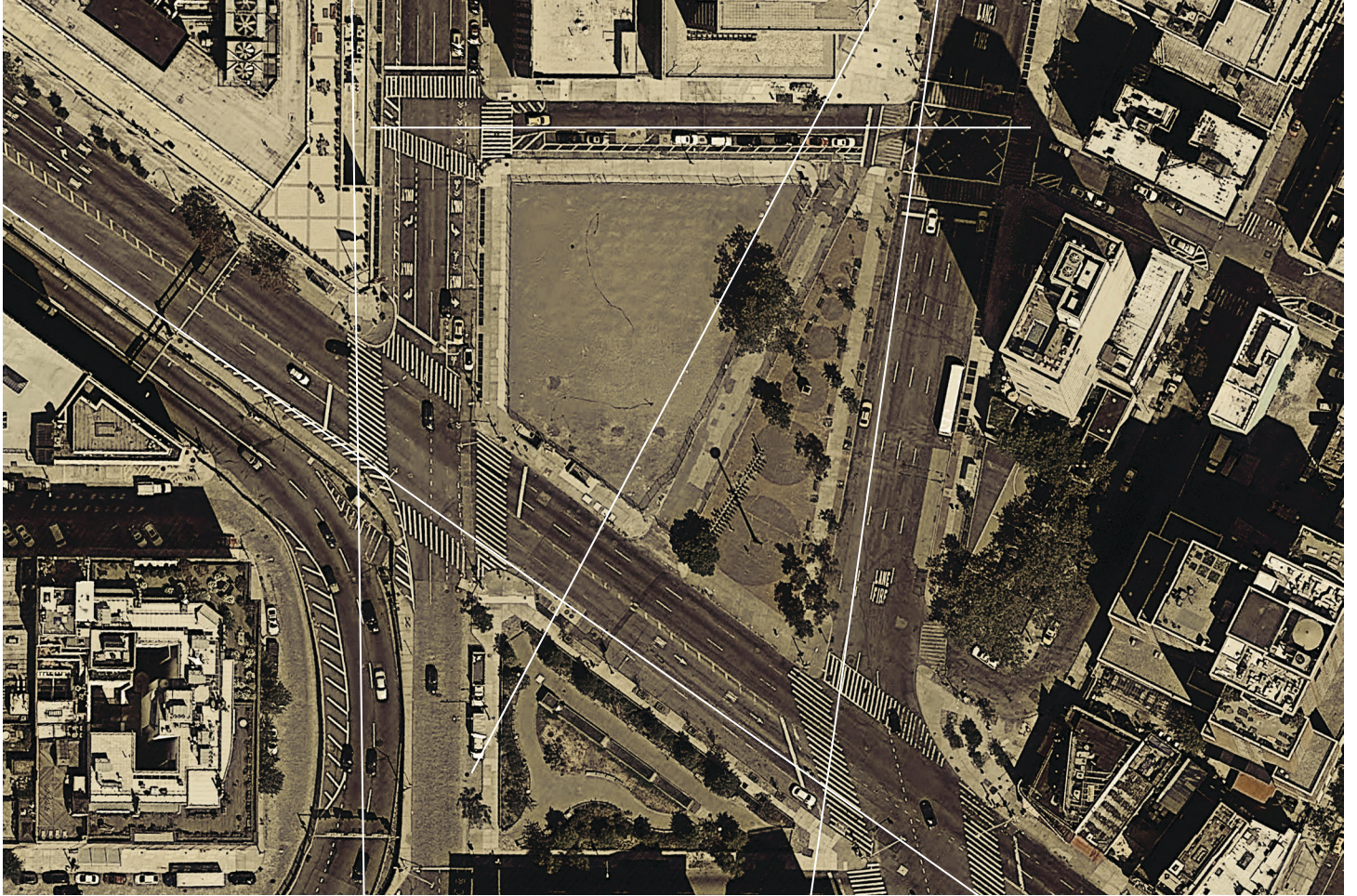
A day and night rendering not only showing the placement of the screens but their content having shadows. The changing landscapes on the screens are viewable from the tall buildings around the site during the day, and the frames are lit at night.







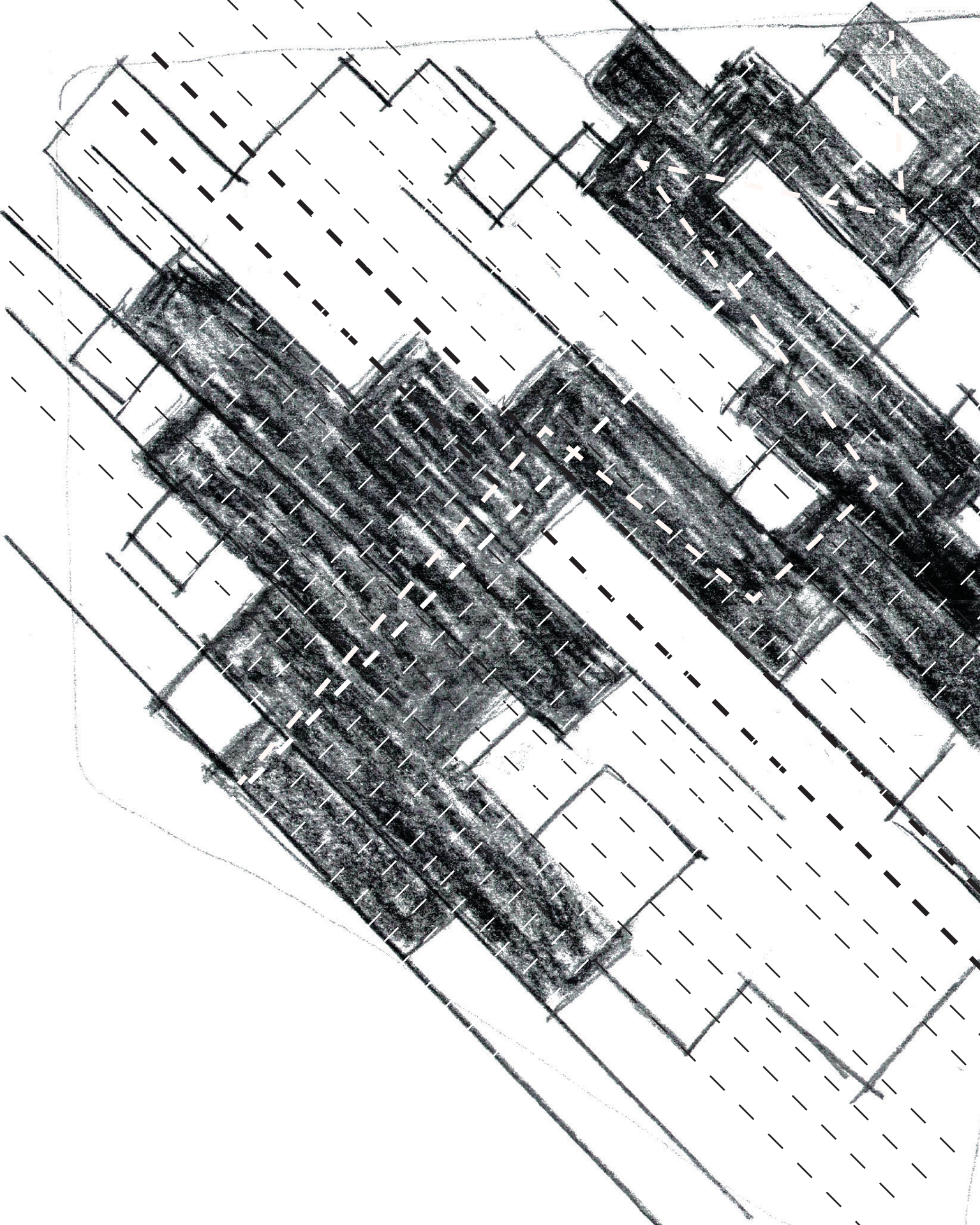




# HITTING THE GROUND

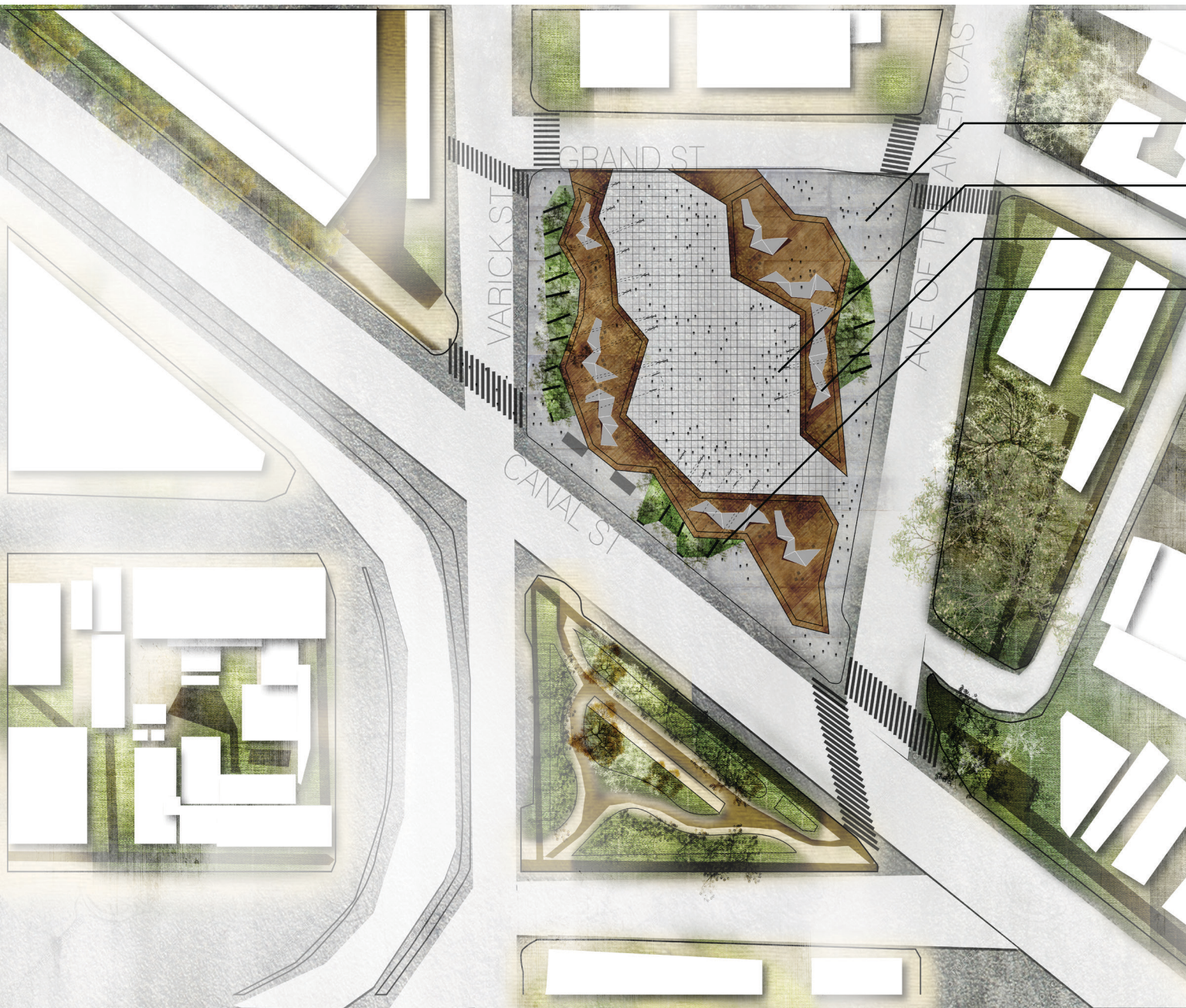


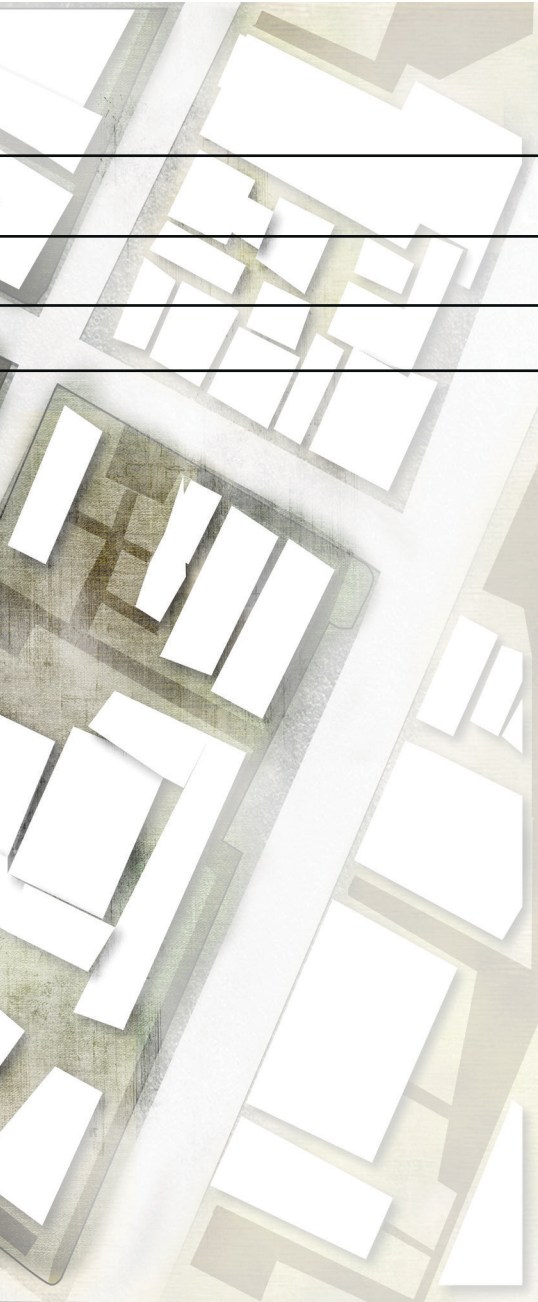
The foremost part of the design process after conceptualizing the working and intent is the site design. For this, the intricacies of how people move and use the site is important. The north east side gave rise to most of the pedestrians walking from the hub of the village to the subway station on the south west side. Currently the site contains a pedestrian route, slicing as a diagonal in that direction. Feeding off from the current usage, the circulation and the basic form of the site is explored.



The primary 'form making' entities of this site design are the circulation and the gathering space (shared experience, which defines how all the people are involved in one moment) and the way the screens are positioned. Each design involved the screens being viewed in layers to make an image or idea spread amongst many people. Rather than limit the data to be of the landscape, the content works better when it has to do with real time sharing of opinions, which is essentially what all the people are interested in, on social media.





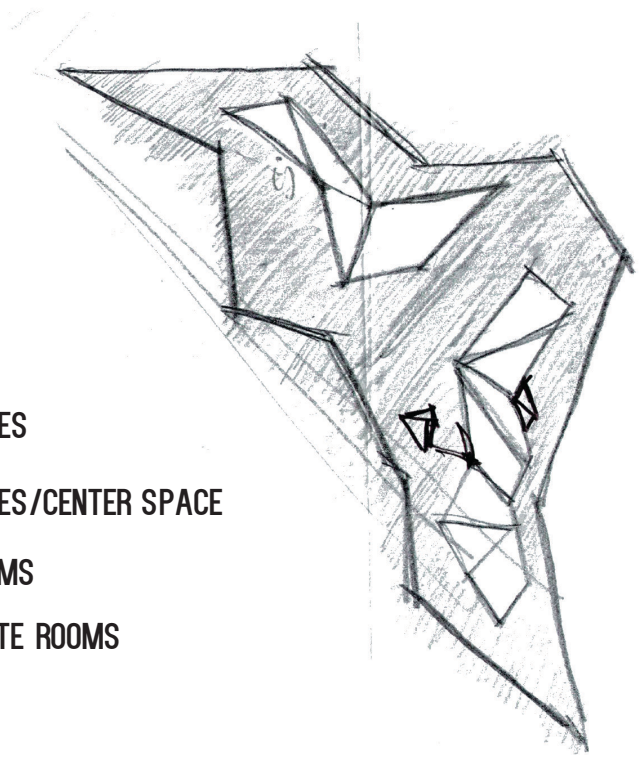


**EVENT SPACES**

**EVENT SPACES/CENTER SPACE**

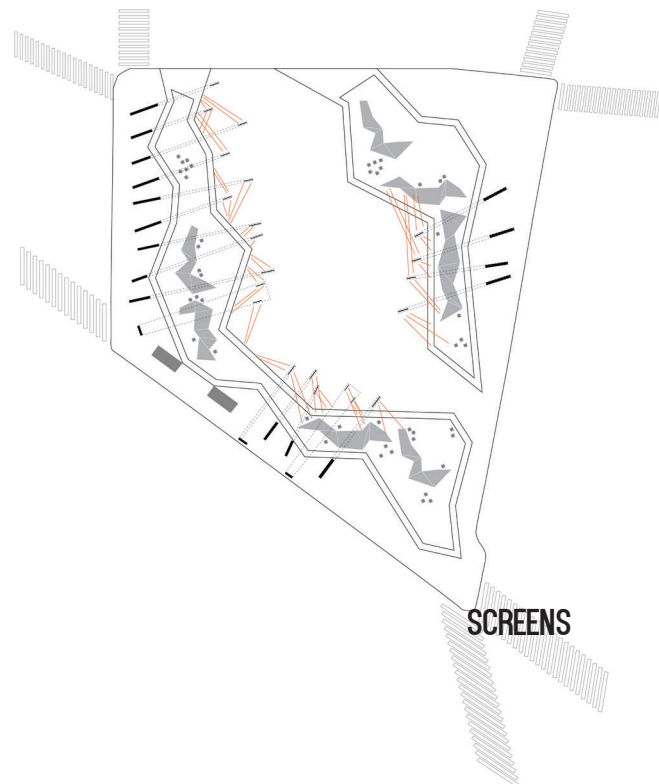
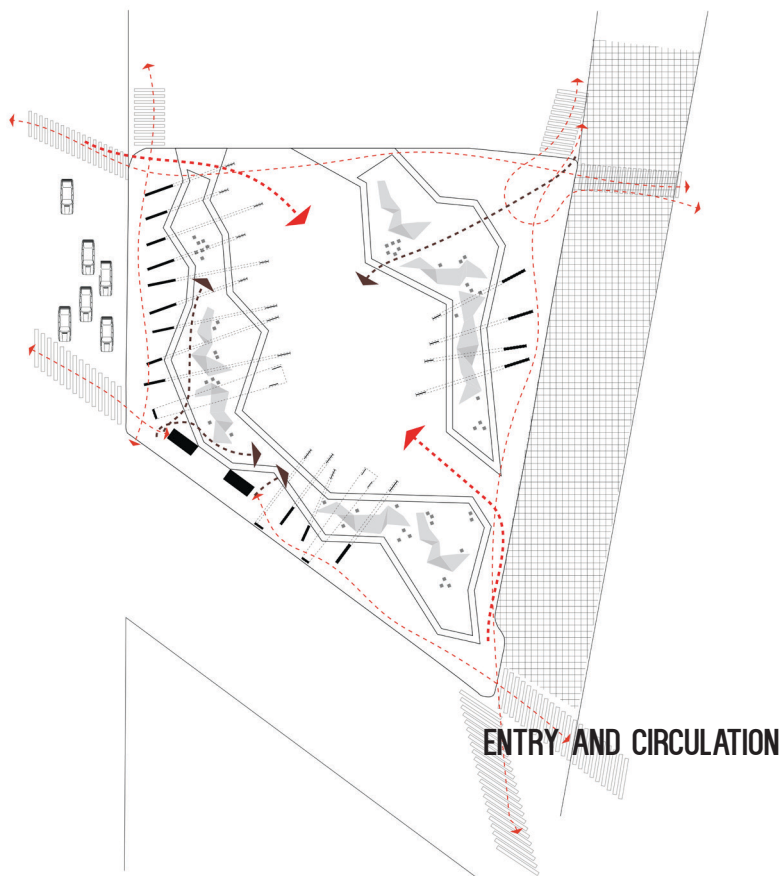
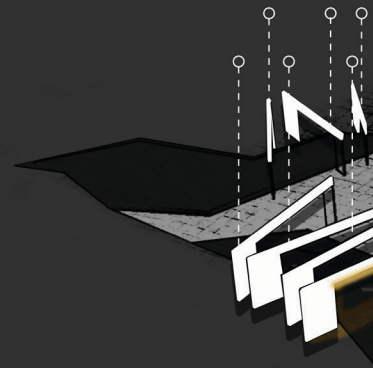
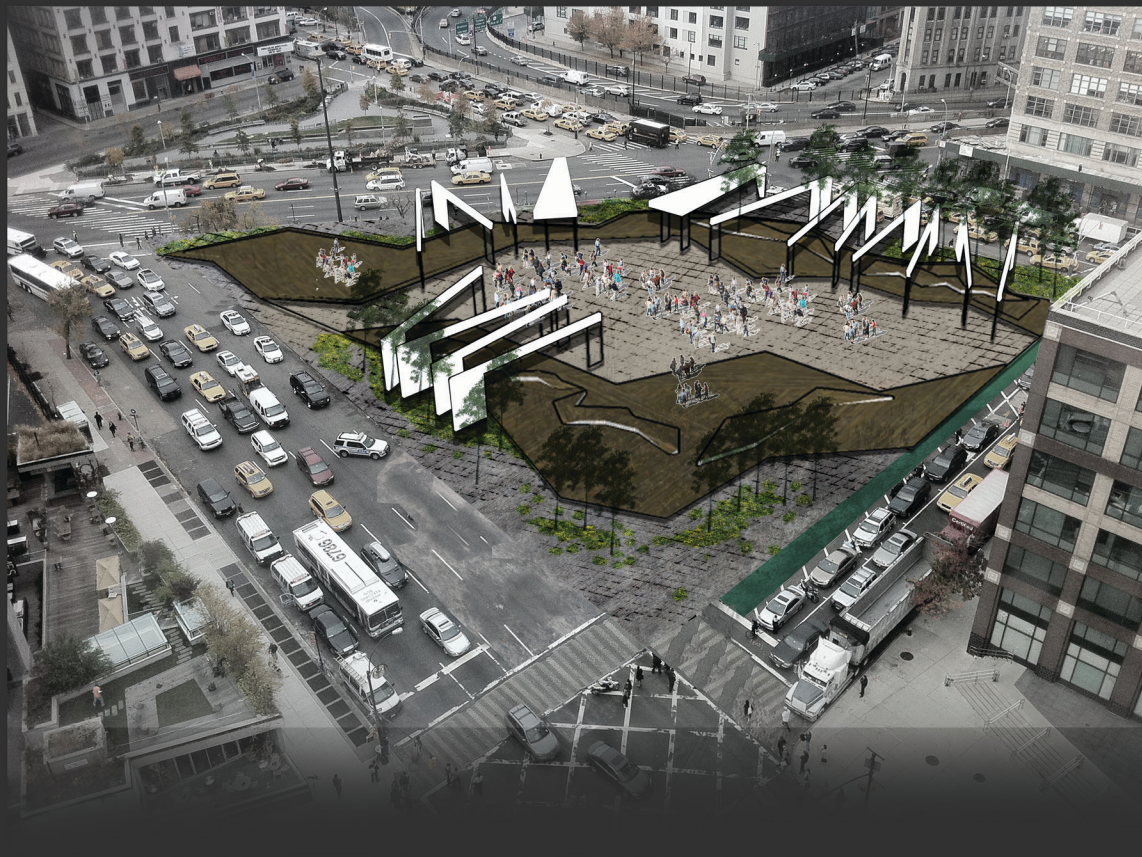
**SEATING FORMS**

**GREEN/PRIVATE ROOMS**

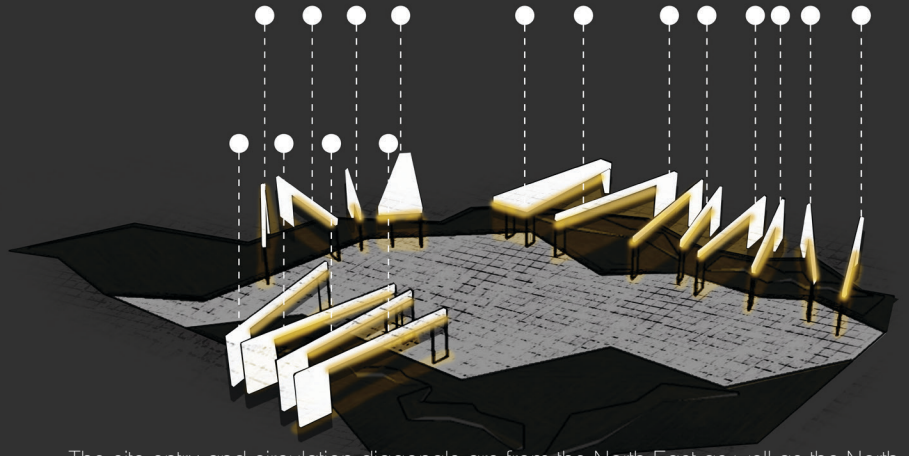
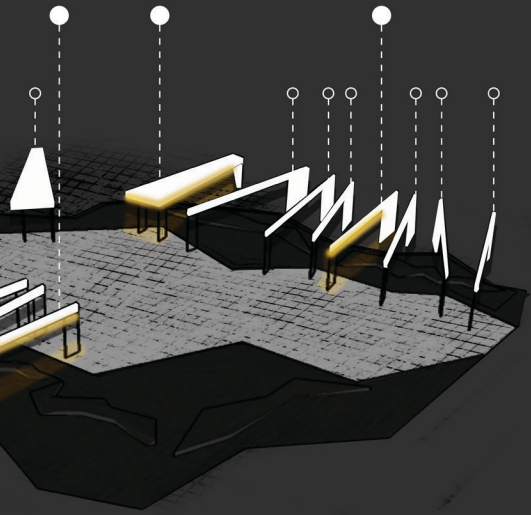


## WHAT'S BECOME

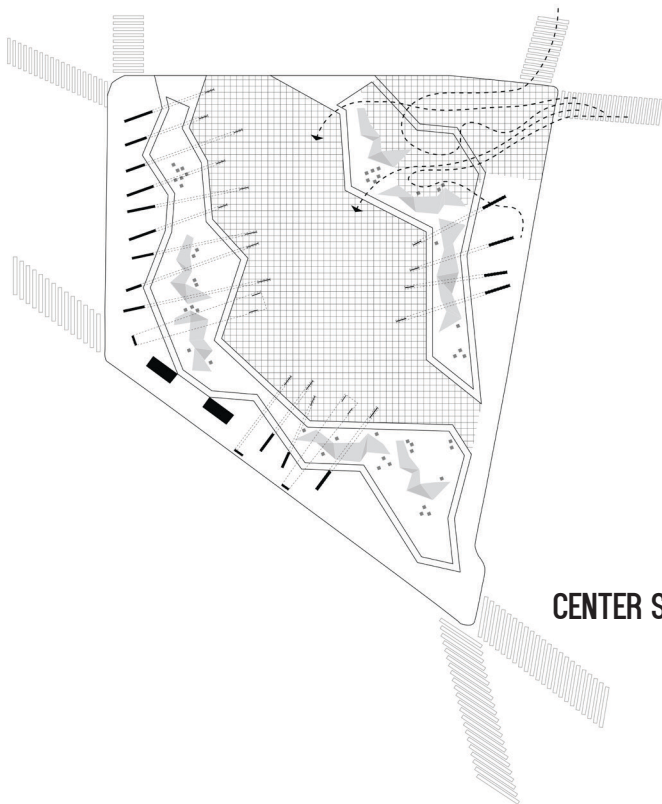
The design that manifests interaction by leveraging technology, works on the basis of the viral content that is popular on the internet. Today, data is made and shared to the world by the common man and reactions to these are received almost immediately. With power of sharing thoughts, events and opinions at the click of a button, there is a lot of impact made, and interaction and ideas that are passed on without ever talking. The focus of the design is to use this as a new form of interaction amongst people in one open public space.



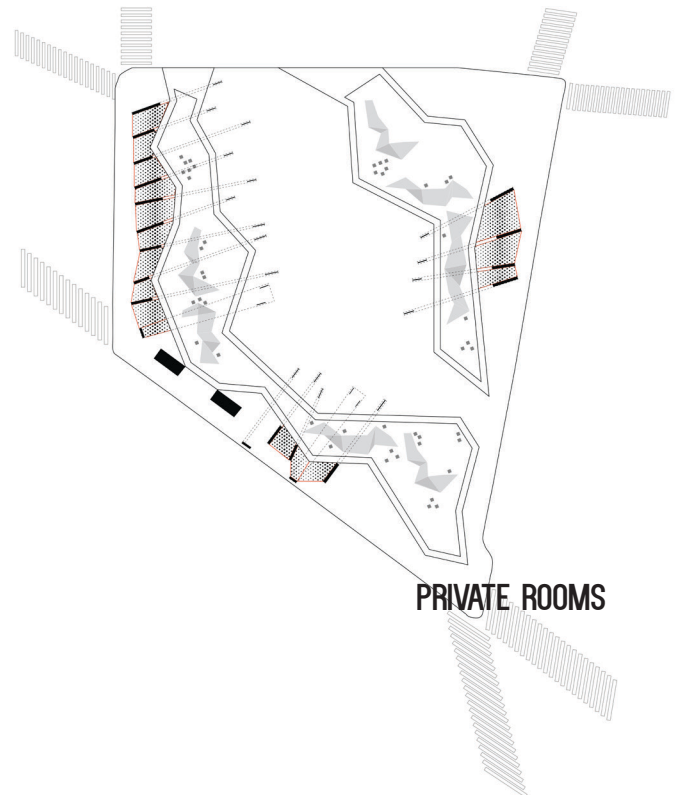




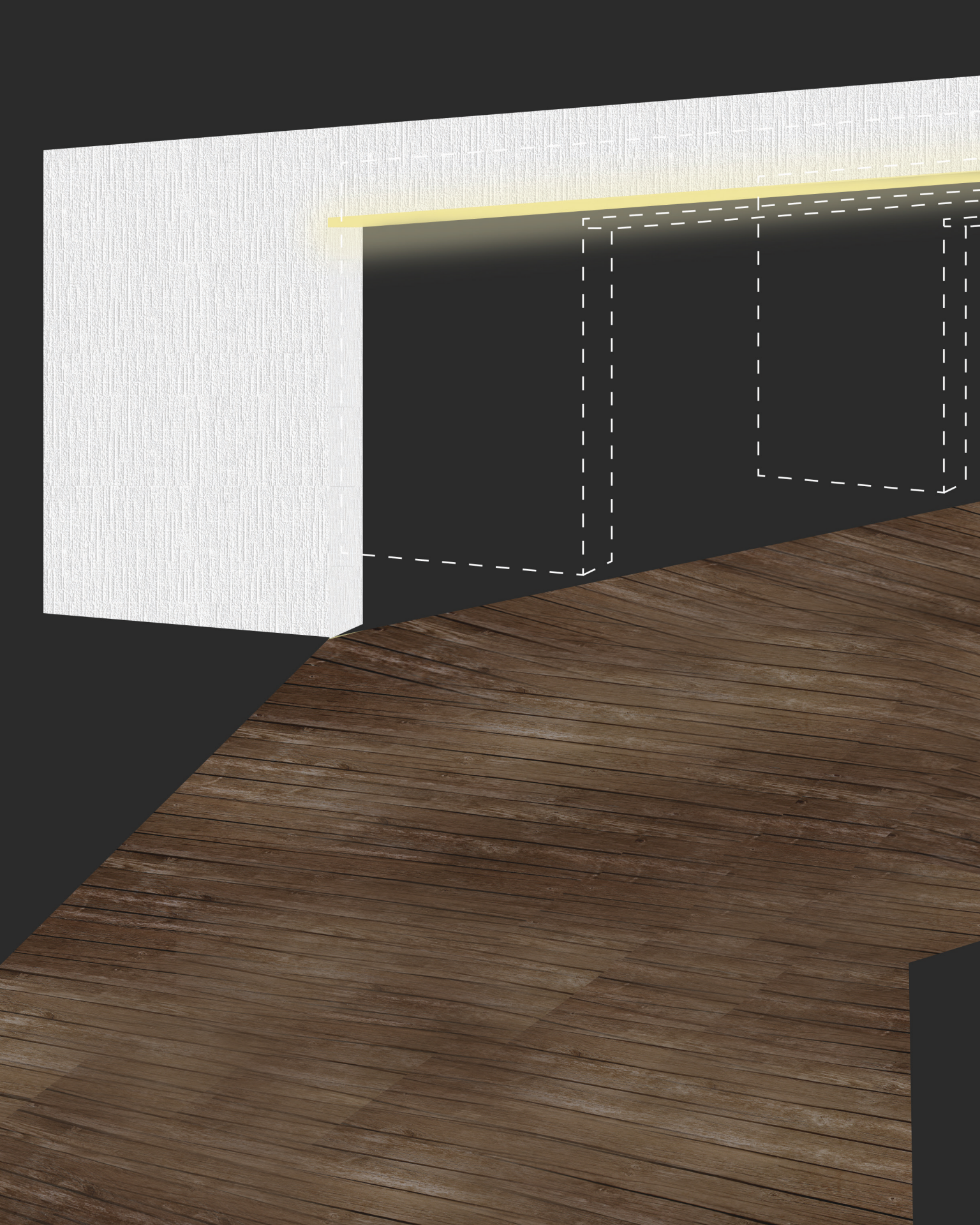
The site entry and circulation diagonals are from the North East as well as the North West, going downwards. All the crosswalks are at the corners of the site, therefore the prominent entries are here as well. On entering the site, the wooden decking provides levels of seating. The edge of seating gives view to vertical screens. On entering the site, the embedded Wi-Fi System, asks for permission to access one's public domain. This public domain contains all the data that a person has shared on the web. The site's embedded system looks for similarity in the person's content, with the content of the crowd that has gathered on the site at that moment. By building consensus, the data is then projected onto the screens. When the two people who have shared the data are by the screens, the corresponding screens light up, to inform the users of a common thinking and opinion, allowing them to acknowledge each other.



**CENTER SPACE**



**PRIVATE ROOMS**





New York  
6:46 PM EDT

Mostly cloudy  
73°

© by Mark Phillips on flickr

www.youtube.com/watch?v=4c142UP1v6

YouTube

Last Week Tonight with John Oliver: Home Depot Commercial (HBO)

120,069

Published on Nov 2, 2014

Recommended videos:

- Last Week Tonight with John Oliver: 1,000,000 YouTube
- Last Week Tonight with John Oliver: State Legislatures and ALEC
- Last Week Tonight with John Oliver: Transducers (BBC)
- Last Week Tonight with John Oliver: Age Rand - How is This Still
- John Oliver - McDonald's Ad Campaign
- Last Week Tonight with John Oliver: Chaf Fertilizer (BBC)
- Big Supreme Court Debates: Human Sacrifice
- Last Week Tonight with John Oliver: Scottish Independence

New York  
6:46 PM EDT

Mostly cloudy  
73°

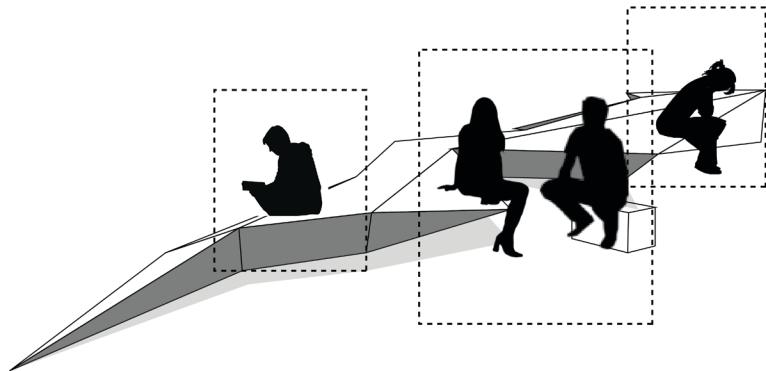
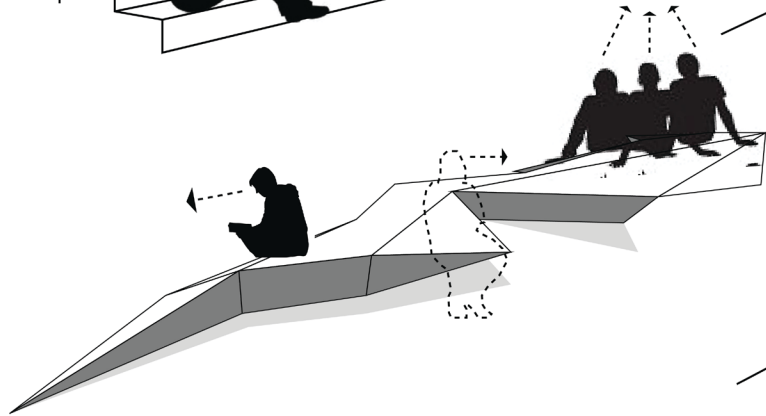
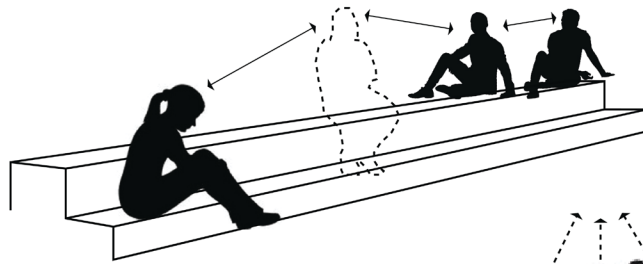
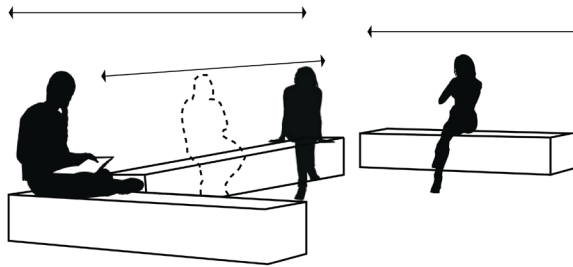
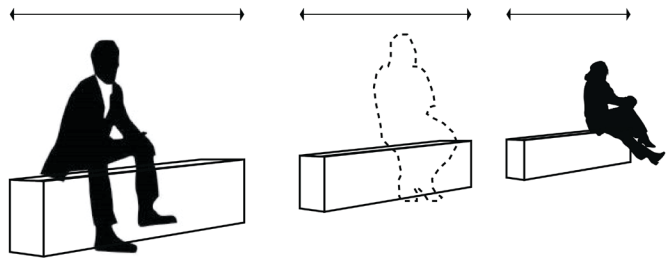
© by Mark Phillips on flickr

Donald Trump

Donald Trump LIVE: DONALD TRUMP HOLDS RALLY IN NASHUA, NH

Pepperbush Middle School

INTERACTION AS CONTENT MATCHES





The forms of the seating are explored with the change in comfort level of people. Rather than the individual seats that lead the definition of space between people, linear lines of undefined seating lets the people choose their place for themselves. To add to that, if the linear seating forms also have distinct faces, that give each face an individualistic feel, opening more options for seating as well as orientation. Additionally, movable seating provide people to come together even in smaller nooks of seating.



The design also houses more private areas, acknowledging and accommodating the use of cell phones distinctively. The rooms allow for charging stations that come with music sharing devices, such that, a shared music content would automatically start to play when the next person occupied the space, allowing a new form of interaction.







# REFLECTIONS

The research in totality gives a deeper understanding of the missed opportunities with our public behavior as generational trends develop. The research and design go as far as the working of current social media networks. The project could gain greater value by looking at it through other lenses such as non-profit organizations, commercial markets and to build awareness.

All in all, the growing trends and developments set a stage for constant reinventions of every aspect of public space design.



# REFERENCES

- Silva, Adriana DeSouza E. "From Cyber To Hybrid." *Mobile Technologies as Interfaces of Hybrid Spaces*. Sage, 2006. 261-272.
- Townsend, Anthony. "Digitally mediated urban space: New lessons for design." *Praxis* (n.d.).
- Ball, Benjamin. "Busking the Silence ." 2012 .
- Ben Gurion, Amelia Rosenberg Weinreb. "Mapping Feeling: An approach to the Study of Emotional Response to Built Environment and Landscape ." *Journal of Architectural and Planning Research*. (July 2013 ).
- Duffey, Melanie. "Hybrid Spaces: Users' Perceptions of Digitally Mediated Public Space." 2014.
- Graves, Steve. "Third Places : Social Innovation ." Unknown .
- Greg Watts, Abdul Mich, Rob Pheasant. *Tranquility and soundscapes in urban green spaces- predicted and actual assessments from a questionnaire survey* . University of Bradford, England : *environment and planning B: Planning and Design* 2013 Vol 40 , November 2011. *Journal* .
- Hanselman, Scott. "The Developer Theory of the Third Place." July 2007 .
- Igwe, Chukwudu Franklin. "Beyond The Digital Divide into Computer- Mediated Communications: A Content Analysis of the Role of Community Webblogs in Building Oldenburg's Third Places in Black America ." May 2008 .
- Keith N. Hampton, Lauren Sessions Goulet, Garrett Albanesius. *Change in the Social Life of Urban Public Spaces: The Rise of Mobile Phones and Women, and the Decline of Aloneness Over Thirty Years*. New Bruswick, NJ : *Project For Public Spaces* , March 2014.
- Peterson, Christopher. "Happy Places: Third Places ." 2009 .
- Trancik, Roger. *Finding Lost Space* . NJ. USA : John Wiley and Sons , 1986.
- Veriwaal, Cornelis. *Urban Solitude - Photographs* . NewYork , unknown .
- www.embracetheplace.com. "Third Places - Abstract ." 2012 .
- Bergmann, Sarah. "Pollinator Pathway ." n.d.
- Bianchetti, Cristina. "Manifesto del Terzo Paesaggio, Gilles Clément Quodlibet." *Domus* (2009 ).
- BryantPark.Org. *Park History* . NewYork , Unknown .
- Davidson, Cynthia C. "Terrain Vague: De Sola Morales ." Web blog: <http://landscapeandurbanism.blogspot.com/2011/07/source-terrain-vague-de-sola-morales.html>. 2011.
- Hickman, Matt. "How would you reclaim the 700 miles of unused 'el-spaces' in NYC?" 2015.
- Huhges, Sarah Anne. "Photos: The NoMa Underpass Finalists." October 2015 .
- KEIM, BRANDON. "The Wild, Secret Life of New York City." *Nautilus* (September 2014 ).
- Keohane, Jessica. "The Hip Hop Culture ." Unknown .
- Lee, Kelly. "Sensorial Ecology: THE HAPTICITY OF SITE." Auburn University Terminating Thesis (2010).
- LOPATE, PHILLIP. "Above Grade: On the High Line." November 2011.
- McPhearson, Timon. "Vacant Land in Cities Could Provide Important Social and Ecological Benefits." August 2012 .



MENDES, RUI. "TERRAIN VAGUE - For a renewed cartography of urban space." <http://www.estudoprevio.net/en/books/3/ruimendes--terrain-vague-de-ignasi-de-sola-morales>. 2011.

Meyer, Elizabeth K. "Sustaining Beauty. The Performance of Appearance: A manifesto in three parts." *Journal of Landscape Architecture* (2008).

Michael A. Pagano, Ann O'M. Bowman. "Vacant Land in Cities: An Urban Resource ." 2000.

Miller, Jeremy. Filling New York's 'Vacancies'. NewYork : Gotham Gazette , January 2008 .

Monchaux, Nicholas De. Local Code: San Francisco Case Study. <http://www.demonchaux.com/Local-Code-San-Francisco>. San Francisco , 2009-2011.

Planning, NYC City. "Parks Planning for greater NewYork ." Unknown .

Pruned. "Pruned — On landscape architecture and related fields." September 2009 .

Regan, Ed. "The Aging Interstate Highway System: Our Biggest Funding Challenge." April 2013 .

Schildt, Riitta. "All Things Finnish." July 2014 .

Steffen Nijhuis, Inge Bobbink, Daniel Jauslin. "Research And Design In Landscape Architecture." IASDR : The 4th world Conference on Design Research. Netherlands: TUDelft, Department of Urbanism, 2011.

