Drake Flood

Portfolio

Summer 2022

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Spring 2022

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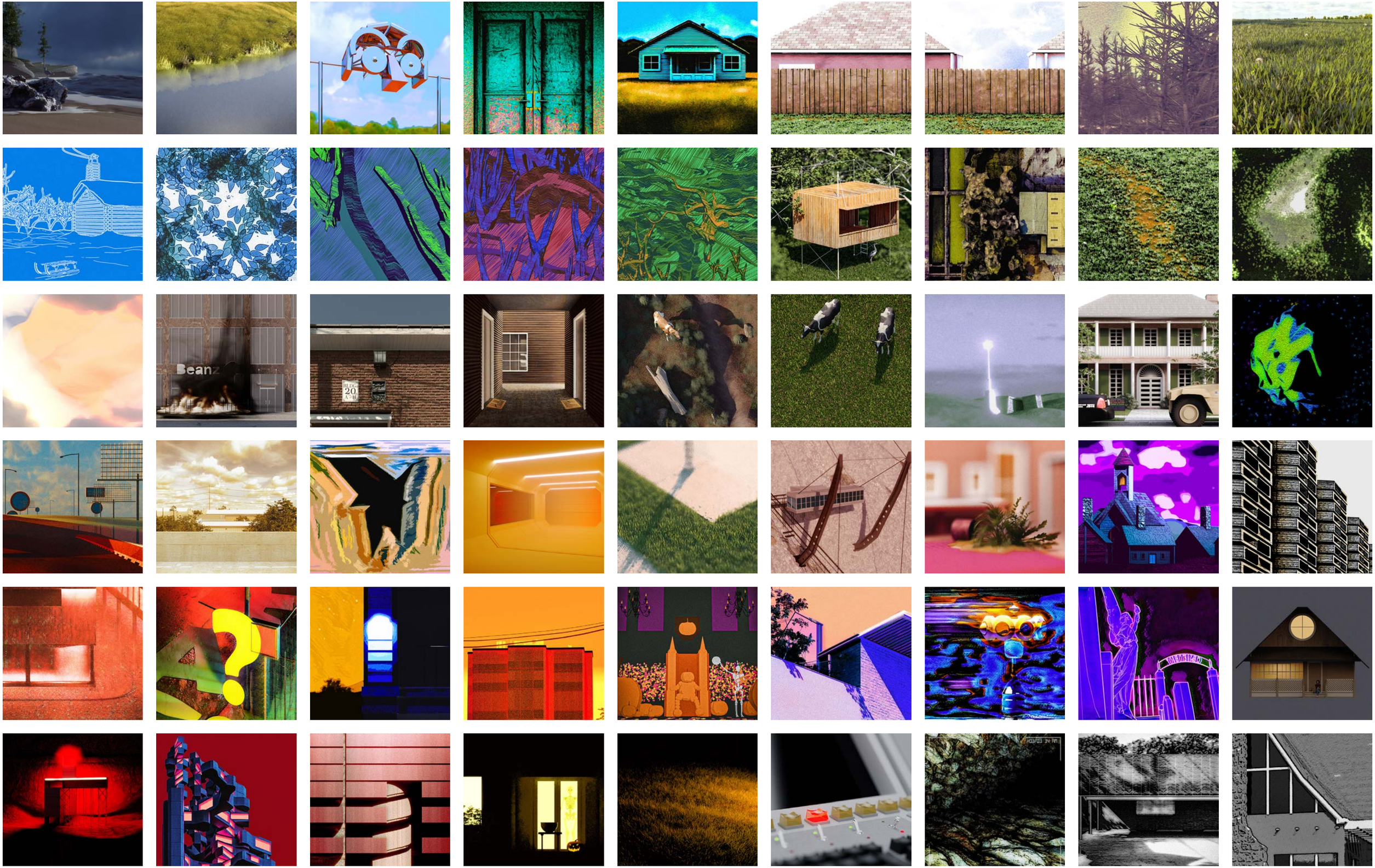
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People Matter More Than Buildings:
An Addition to the Archives of the Gerald D. Hines College of Architecture and Design

Spring 2022
Senior Degree Project

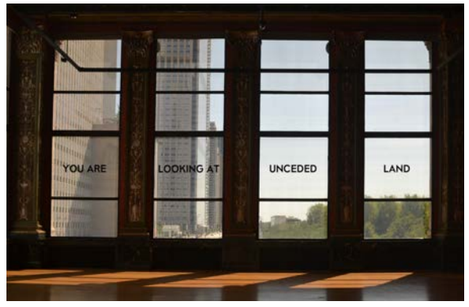
First Reader: Dr. Michael Kubo
Second Reader: Daniel Jacobs
Honors Reader: Dr. Dustin Gish

In my time at the University of Houston Gerald D. Hines College of Architecture and Design, I felt disconnected from the history of students that preceded my attendance. This project was an attempt to answer the lack of detail with the tools that Architecture teaches.

The legitimacy garnered by architectural representation provides the necessary foundation to render scenes found within the history of the school. As such, the images produced exist between the realms of evidence and experience, claiming neither camp while borrowing from both.

At the speed of information today, it is not enough for history to exist solely in text. The final product of this project is a mountain of first hand information presented across timeline, book, and exhibition. Architects have the ability to make the history of a space known and experienced, and, in doing so, can directly challenge ubiquitous power structures that might otherwise go unnoticed.[1]

In its new form, the history of students past can be experienced in direct comparison to the current reality of the school.



1 YOU ARE LOOKING AT UNCEDED LAND,
Settler Colonial City Project,
2019 Chicago Architecture Biennial
Ana María León
Andrew Herscher

▲ Book Cover

People Matter More Than Buildings:
An Addition to the Archives of the Gerald D. Hines College of Architecture and Design

October 4th, 1966

Student Architects Want to See Accreditation Report?

PHOTOS BY TONY TURBEVILLE

Robert MacKill-Arch. junior
"It bothers me, yes, to see the school put in this situation. It won't actually affect me and other upperclassmen since the board will not return for another two years."

Roy Colbert-arch. sophomore
"Yes, for the simple reason that some students were called in to speak to the board. I would like to find out how much of what we said had a bearing on the decision. It was a truthful evaluation, as no faculty members were present during the session."

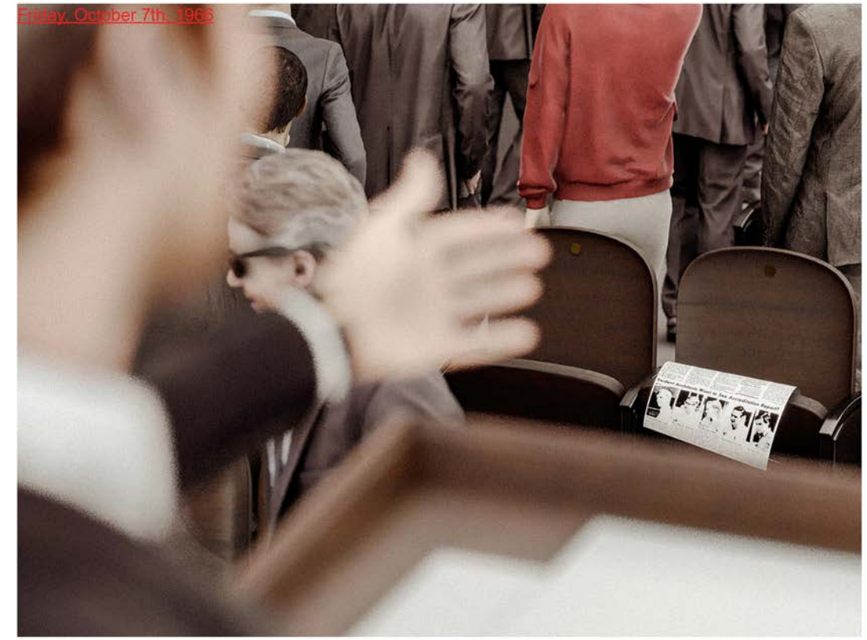
Patt Earl-arch. freshman
"Yes, definitely. Not only should the report be released, but also the plan pinpointing what is going to be done to keep our accreditation. It is not our fault that we haven't enough facilities. Math and English classes now meet in the Architecture building, causing a fifth year course to be held in the lobby."

Dale Kirkpatrick-arch. junior
"Yes, students should have the facts about their college. All we have to go on are the rumors circulating in the building. If there is any basis for the rumors, not only Architecture students should know about it, but all students."

Paul Sparis-arch. senior
"Yes, we need a better picture of the whole situation. I think everyone, students and faculty alike, should work together to try to do something to improve the situation, and this can only be done if we know the facts."

The Daily Cougar, *Student Architects Want to See Accreditation Report?, Page 1*

Friday, October 7th, 1966



The Daily Cougar,
October 11th, 1966
Page 1

THE COUGAR
Money Scarce At Bookstore
Safety & Security Called Service Organization

The Daily Cougar,
October 4th, 1966
Page 1

Monday, October 10th, 1966

The Daily Cougar,
October 11th, 1966
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Photo By TERRY RYAN
THOMAS MOREY, UWAS President

"Student protesters marching down Langdon Street at the University of Wisconsin-Madison during the Vietnam War era."
January 1965
UW Digital Collections

People Matter More Than Buildings:
An Addition to the Archives of the Gerald D. Hines College of Architecture and Design

Flashbacks: Images from the First Fifty Years of The College of Architecture,
Elizabeth A. Floyd, Page 29

"There was a time between colleges. The last drawings had been presented in the old architecture studios, and the new, stately, School of Architecture building was not yet open for classes.

The last survivors of a party one warm Saturday night began to propose activities to revive the waning festivity. Sunset (and probably a few sunrises) over the downtown Houston skyline had already been admired from the new building's roof with construction complete, the cupola permanently inaccessible, and security present, it was, by now, off limits.

Someone mentioned that the old building was almost ready for demolition. The fate of the student-made benches, stepping stones and tombstones situated around the old building was speculated upon: to everyone's knowledge the concrete and wood site furniture were to be abandoned or destroyed.

Anticipation of the transition from the old to new led to discussions about our sense of place, history, culture. Should the past be shed so completely? a consensus of sorts was born; perhaps the new building and its lawn were not so much pristine as they were barren. They had yet to be "dwelled in," and it showed.

An ad hoc "action committee" was formed, though they did not label themselves as such. The committee left the party and convened at the mock graveyard outside the fourth year studios, which were enshrouded for asbestos removal.

Design critiques yielded a long list of favorite 'graves.' There was not enough time to save everything; the list was narrowed to the top ten tombstones. The heavy markers, made so many years earlier by one of Andersen's structures classes, we then lifted into the trunks of three waiting cars. The cars carried the tombstones to the new building's lawn, which appeared flawless, and blue green in the moonless night.

The committee lifted the concrete markers out of the trunks and began to talk about location and spacing. When security arrived, the "action committee" froze, then made eye contact long enough to realize the had a problem. A few of the presumably creative minds went forward to head off the obvious curiosity of the security guard.

"What's going on? the guard demanded, shining his flashlight over the fallen tombstones.

"Wow are we glad to see you." someone sighed. "We've got to get these things, and twenty more just like 'em planted around this building by Monday morning"

"Why are you doing this now? Who authorized..."

"Well sir, we were supposed to do it yesterday, but you know, with the end of the semester, parties and all ... anyway, do you think you guys might give us a hand? Or maybe we could borrow one of those golf cart things ..."

"I'm going to have to speak with my supervisor, I don't think you kids are supposed to do this kind of thing after dark. Wait here and I'll be back in a few minutes," the guard turned his flashlight off, climbed into his cart, and drove away.

There was a collective sigh of relief, and once again, a consensus. Fear of reprisal quickly won out over any notion of making a stand for the furnishings of the past. The committee split up, retreated to their cars, and sped away.

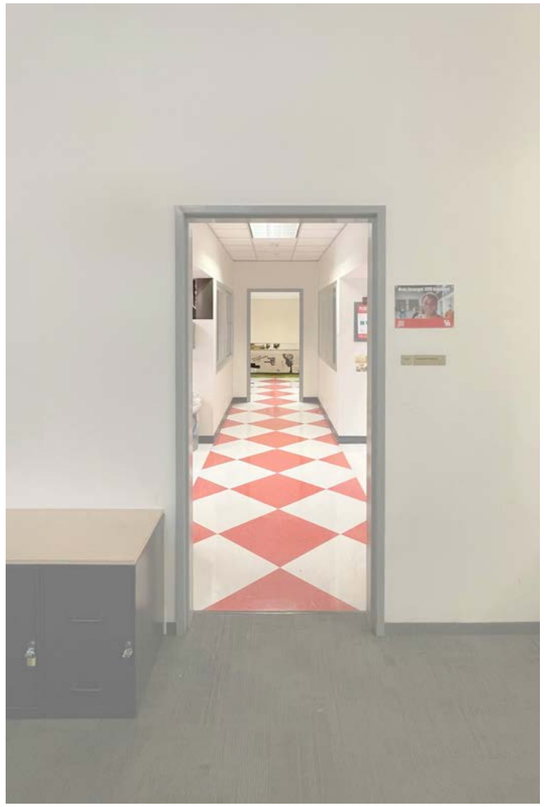
The new architecture building would be confronted on its own terms. The future was part of the present, and as Thomas Wolfe could have told us, we could never go home again.

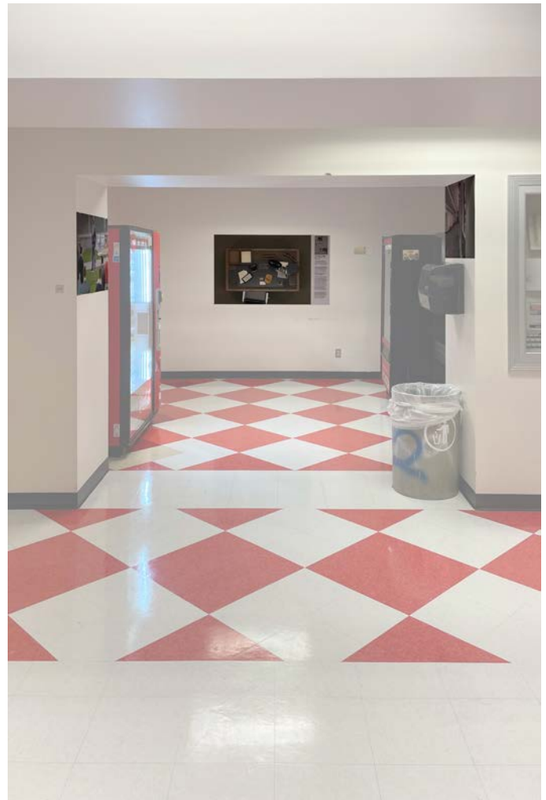
▶ 1984: Students transfer memorabilia to new building; the promise of involvement in the design process never having come to fruition.

People Matter More Than Buildings:
An Addition to the Archives of the Gerald D. Hines College of Architecture and Design

▲ 1968: Fence Graffiti ▼ 1968: Students break into Dean George's office to leave him a bus ticket out of Houston and a lunch for the journey

▲ 2003: Students meet to establish student council governance structure; reviewing documents new and old



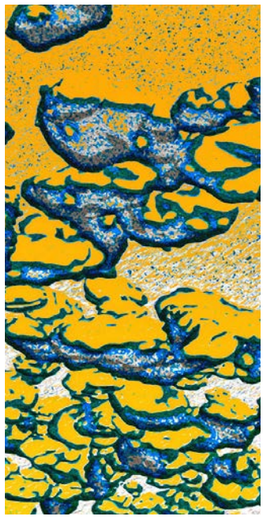
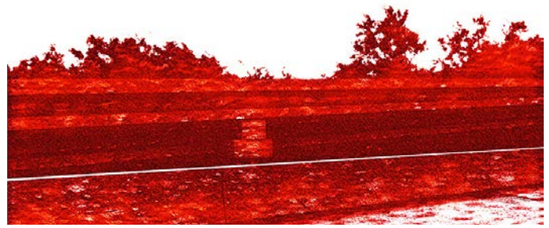
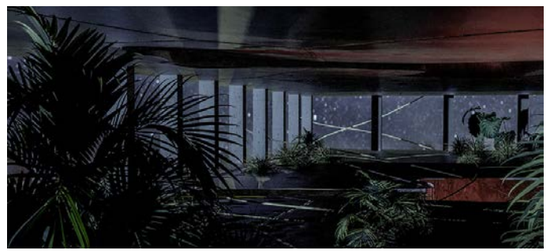
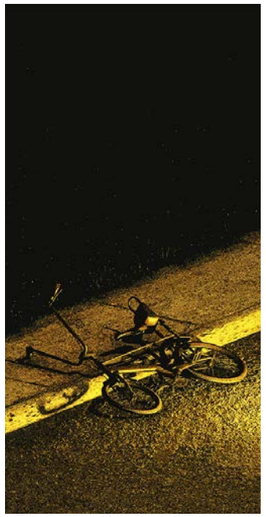
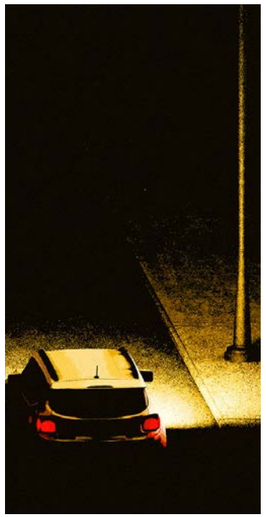


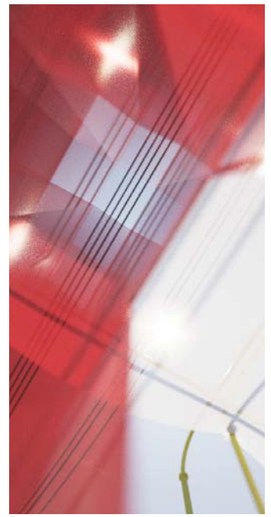
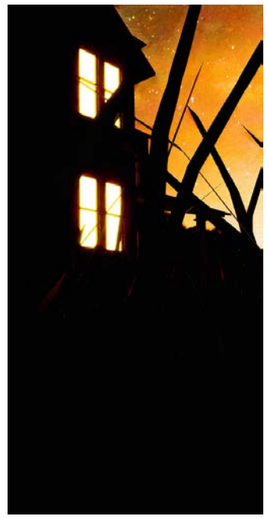
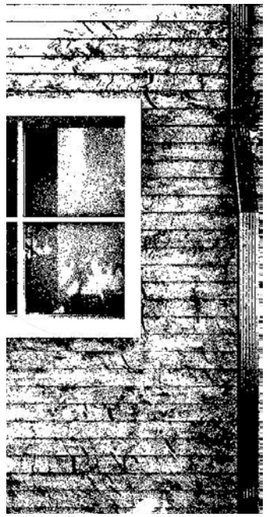
◀ Student lounge exterior

▶ Exhibition installed where students gather

◀ Reclaiming unused space

▶ The Revolution Has Become An Institution

Diffused House: Homemaking
ARCH 5500
MAIO Architects & Daniel Jacobs

Fall 2021
ARCH 5500

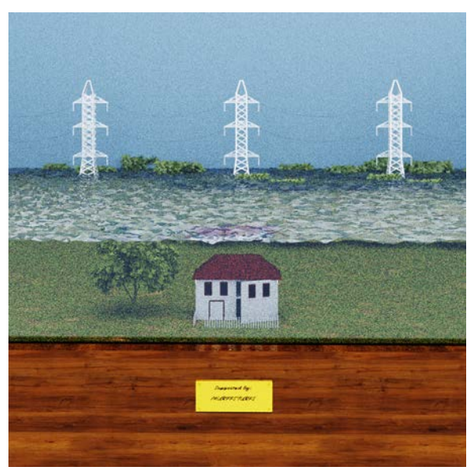
As we imagine the global shift away from the petrochemical industry, designers should should focus attention to the peripheral areas that exist in the dangerous confluence of anthropocentric forces, and Cosby, Texas is undoubtedly one of those places.

Crosby's two main industries, Turf Farming and Natural Gas Refinement produce a terrifying ecological reality on the ground. Turf Farming, as a horribly stripping process, compacts the earth and results in excessive, spontaneous flooding. Natural Gas Refinement is an incredibly delicate process, that doesn't take kindly to natural disasters, which occur frequently do to the acres and acres of turf farming.

To work towards a livable future, however, we can't approach the situation just through ecological terms. As designers we can propose architectural solutions that will simultaneously undo ubiquitous power structures.

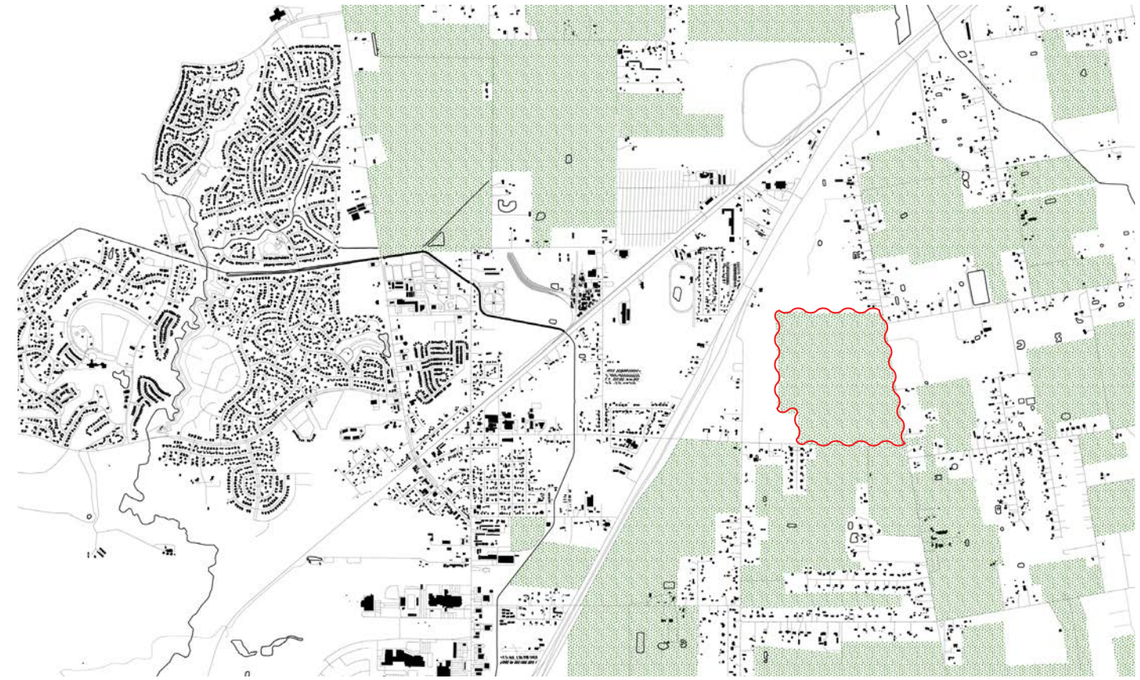
Our project turns away from the suburban model, and instead looks to the rural vernacular of Crosby for both its formal and programmatic basis.

Located on the donated excess land of a turf farm, the site is linearly broken down into three sections, Dance Hall, Agricultural, and Residential. The Dance Hall acts as the public front for the project and extends a hand to the larger Crosby community, the agricultural portion focuses on remediation of the soil and sustenance farming. Meanwhile, the residential portion allows for the seamless communal living of a multitude of families.

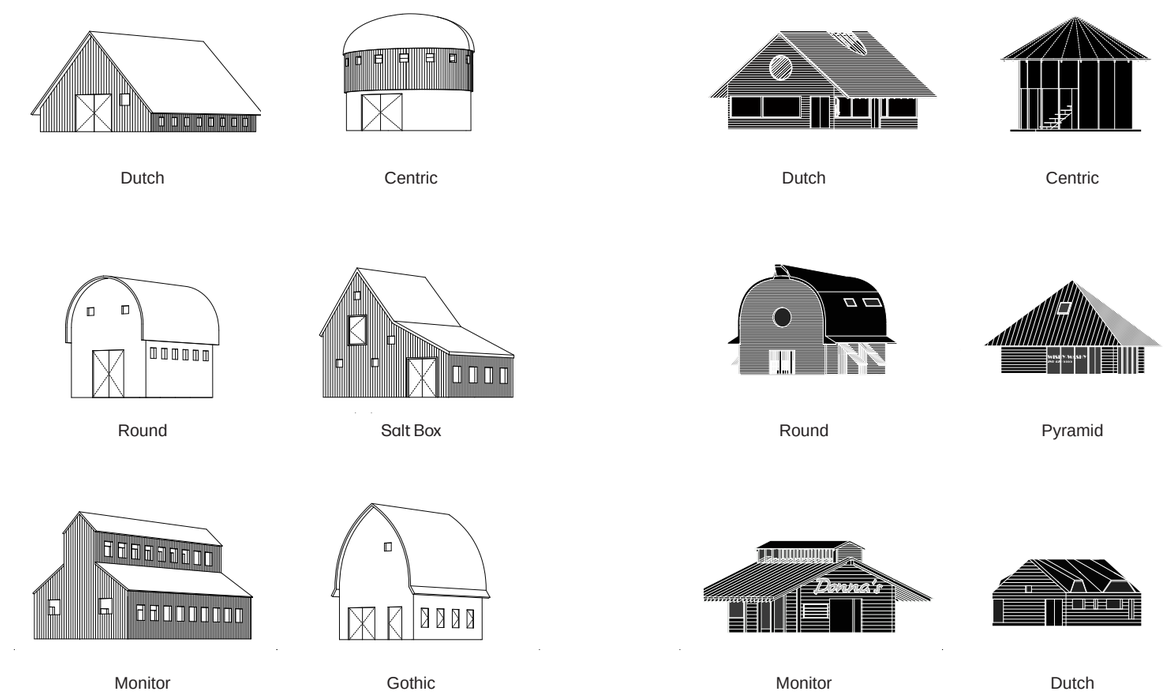


Link to ***Homemaking*** video
Partners: Alejandro Reyes
Nick Jones

▼ Sinking Diorama

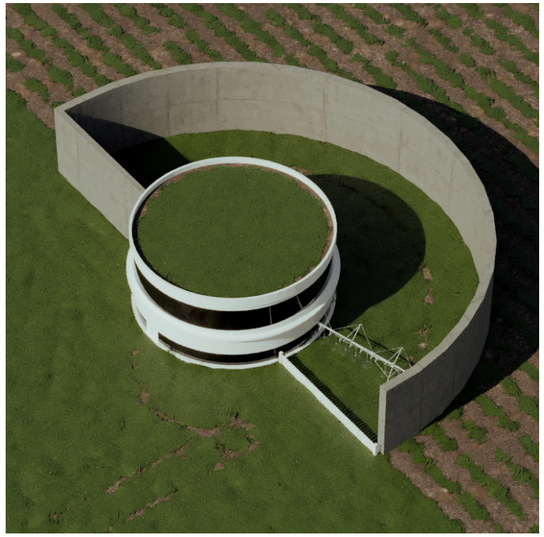


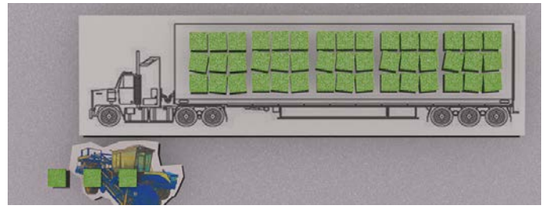
▲ Crosby, Texas — Turf Farms in Green

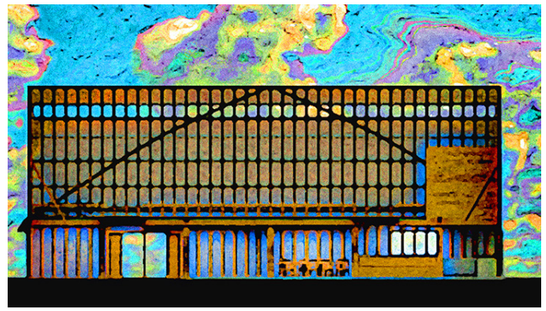


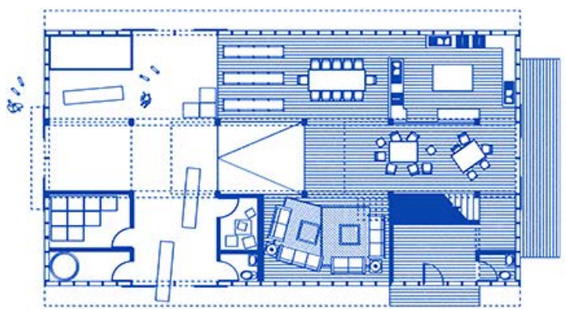
▼ Vernacular Barn Types and Modifications

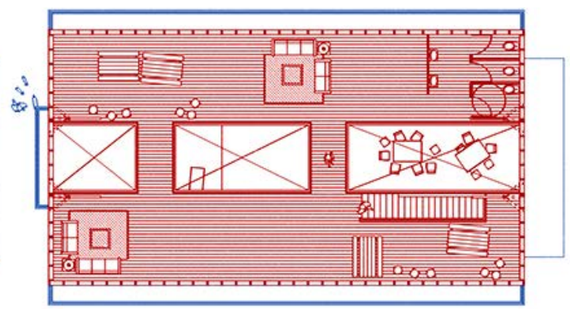
Diffused House: Homemaking





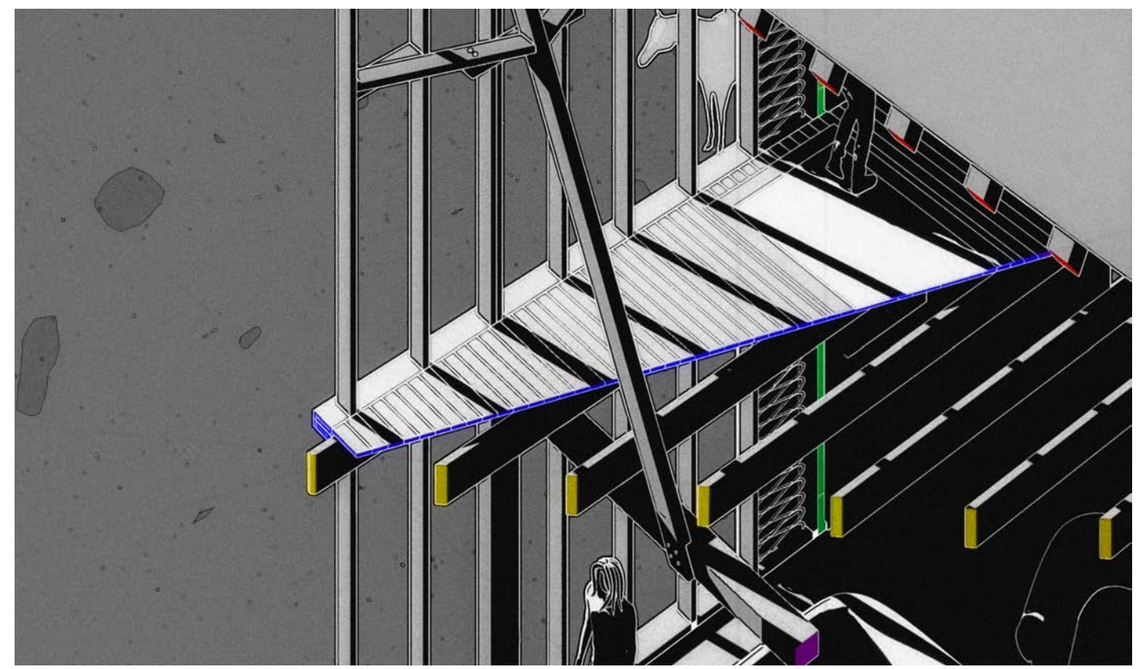


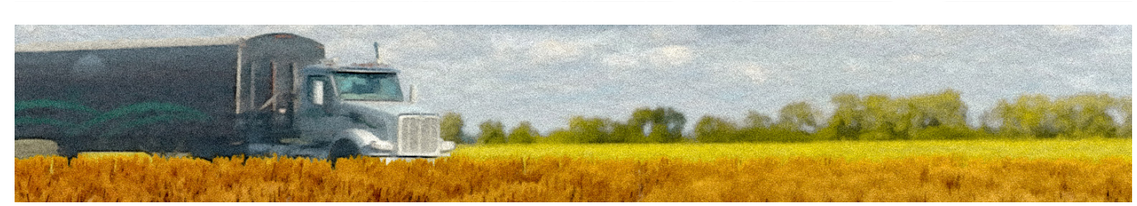




▲ Home for a Turf Farmer

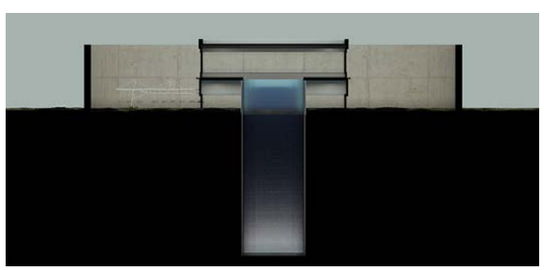
▶ View of Community From Turf Farm

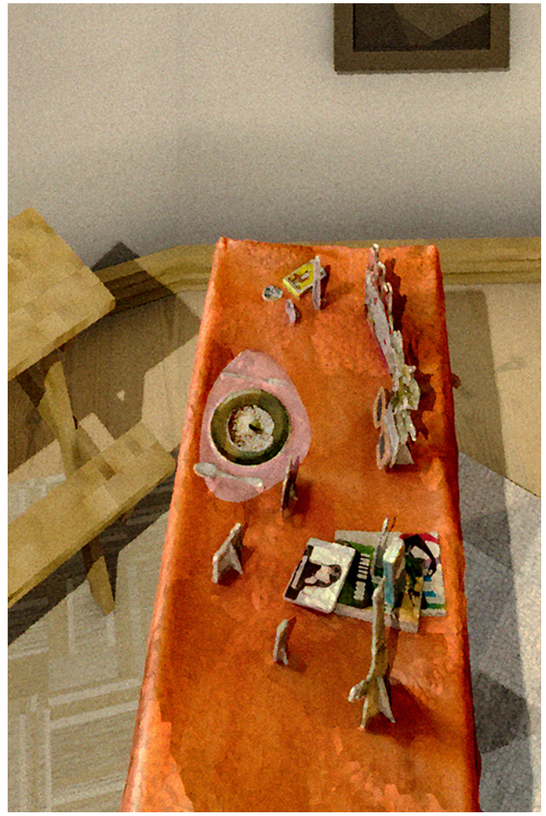




▲ View Into Home

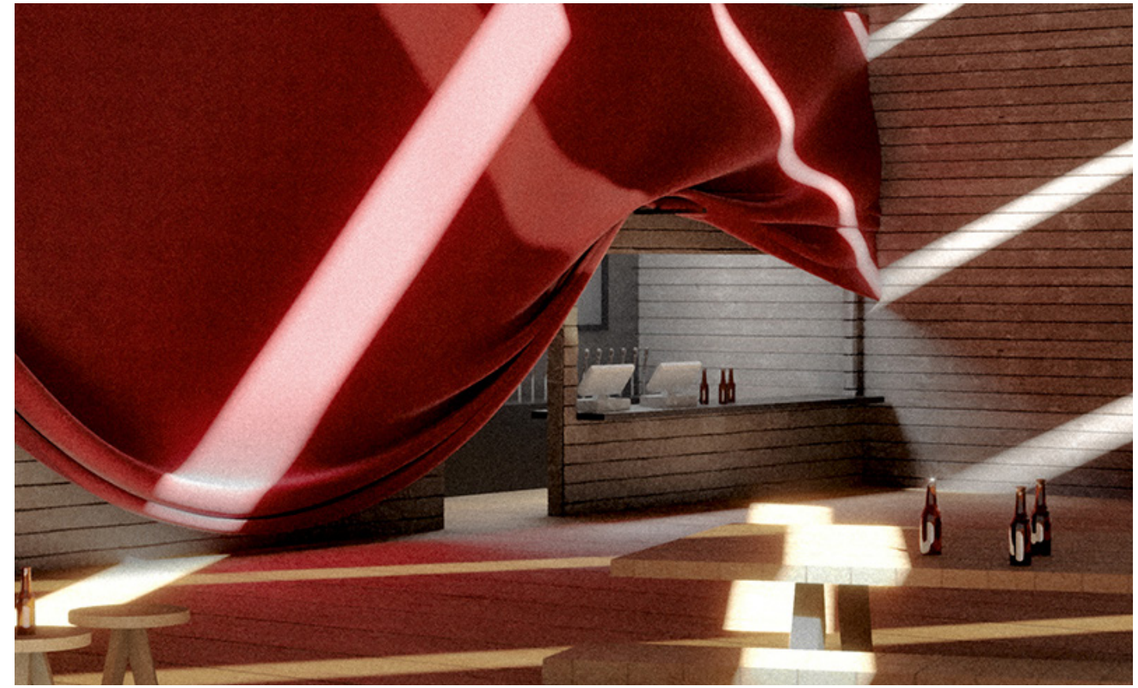
▼ Dissective Section





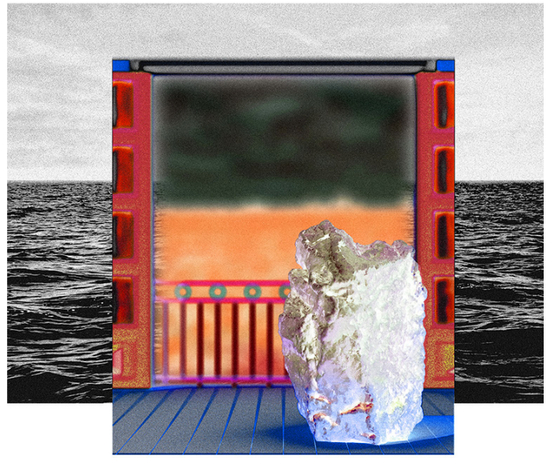
▲ Courtyard View

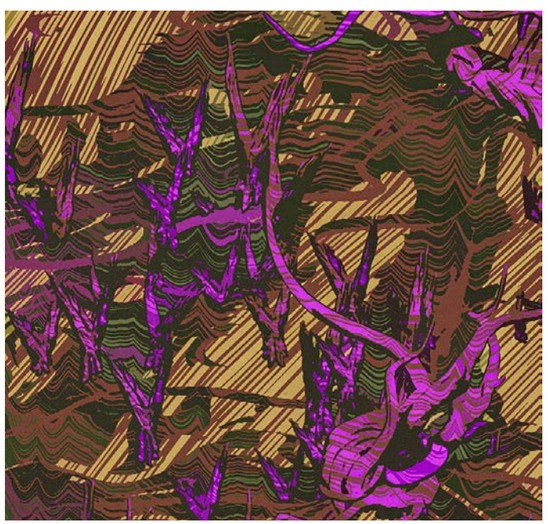
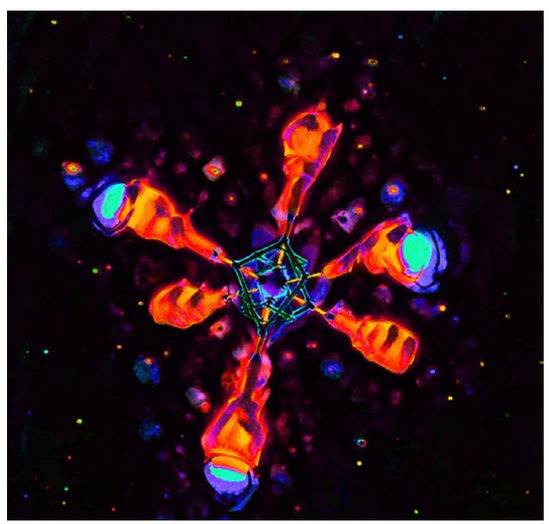
▼ Interior— an Homage to Charles Sheeler

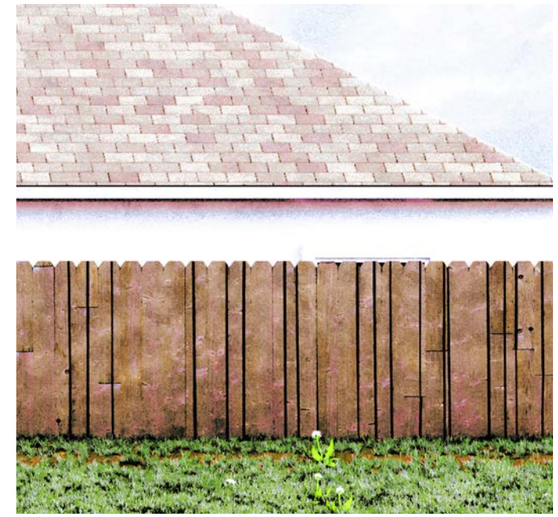


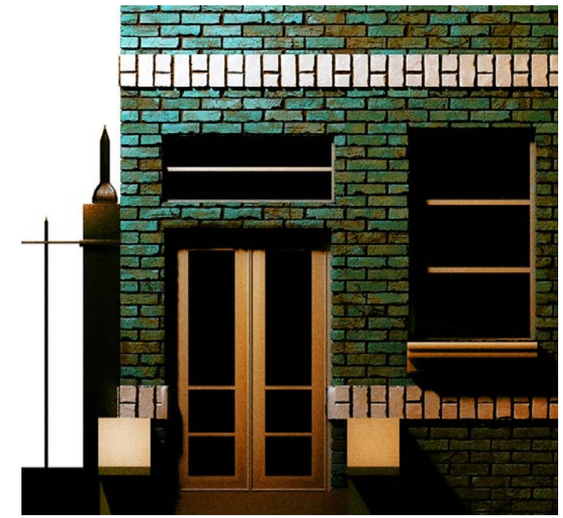
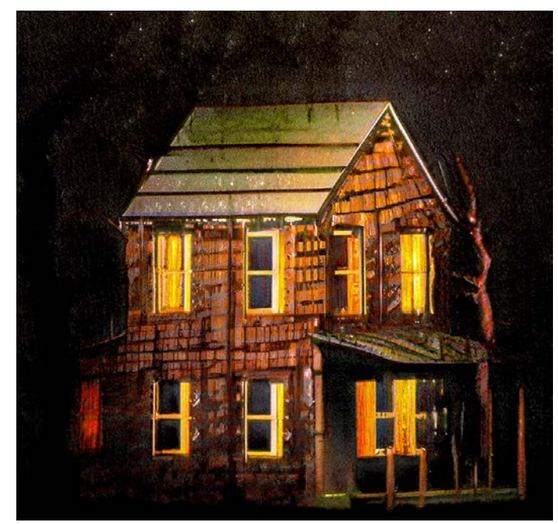
▲ Dance Hall Exterior — Threshold to Interior of Community

▼ Dance Hall Interior





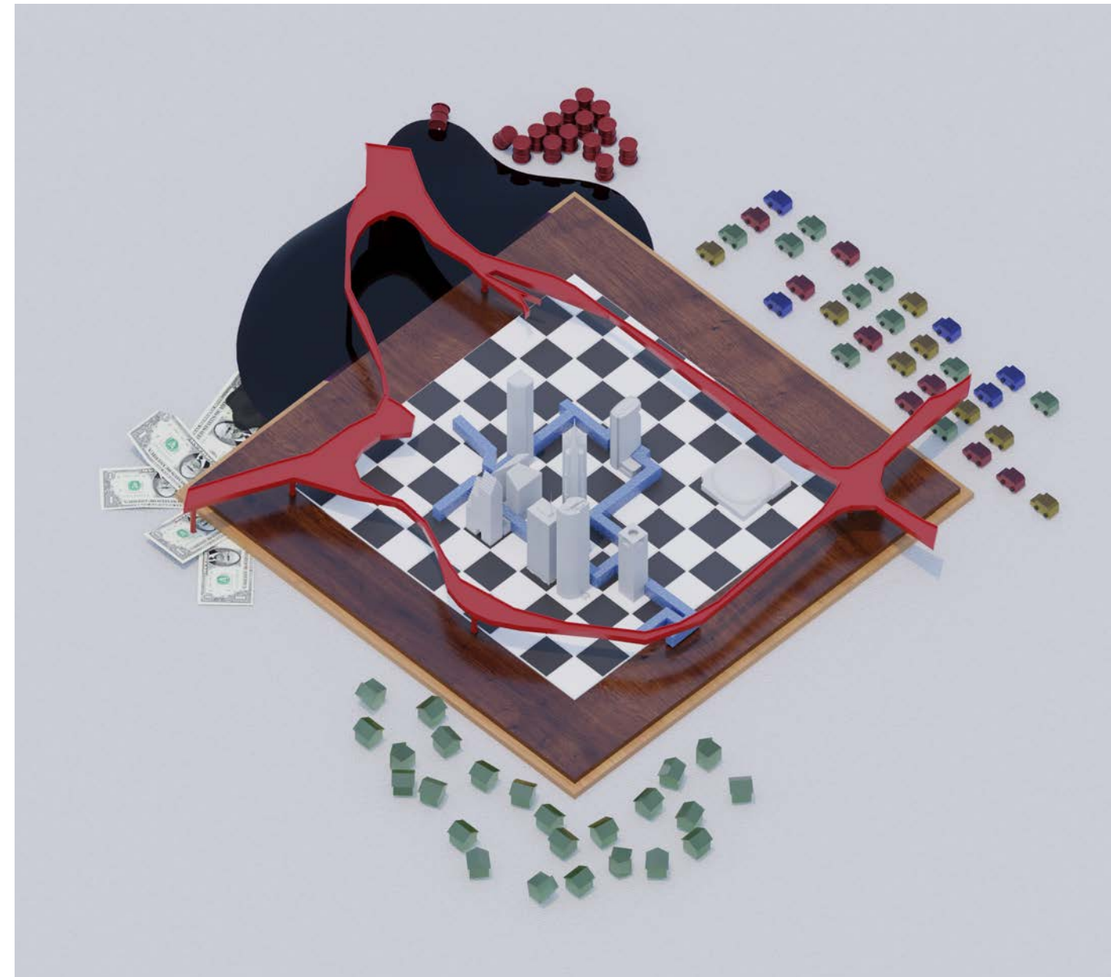



This project uses a mix of disciplinary and non-disciplinary tools to produce a critique of contemporary trends in public space development. By taking current political developments to their logical extremes, the project imagines the reality of a privately-owned public city. Reconciling with a world where working from home collapses the downtown real estate market, this imaginary Houston is left scrambling to maintain the future of the city.

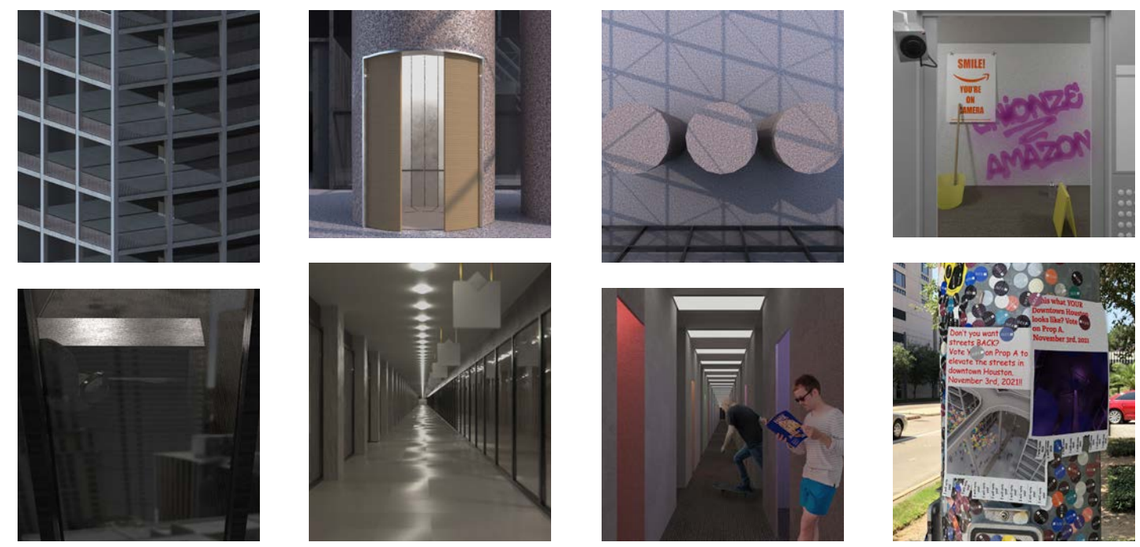
To stay afloat, Houston pitches Amazon on a revolutionary new partnership where Amazon could radically develop the city as they saw fit, in return Houston would remain solvent and receive a huge investment into public infrastructure

This new model is rife with issues to critique. It imagines the reality of a labor workforce suffering under the insane efficiency parameters of a city-wide logistics project. It imagines a world that is totally subdivided between the world of work and play; played out in the relationship between the towers and the tunnels. Similarly, the project imagines the new, profound importance of the lobby as a transitory space. All in the hopes that we may better understand the dangers of private ownership models; particularly as corporations continue to grow in influence.

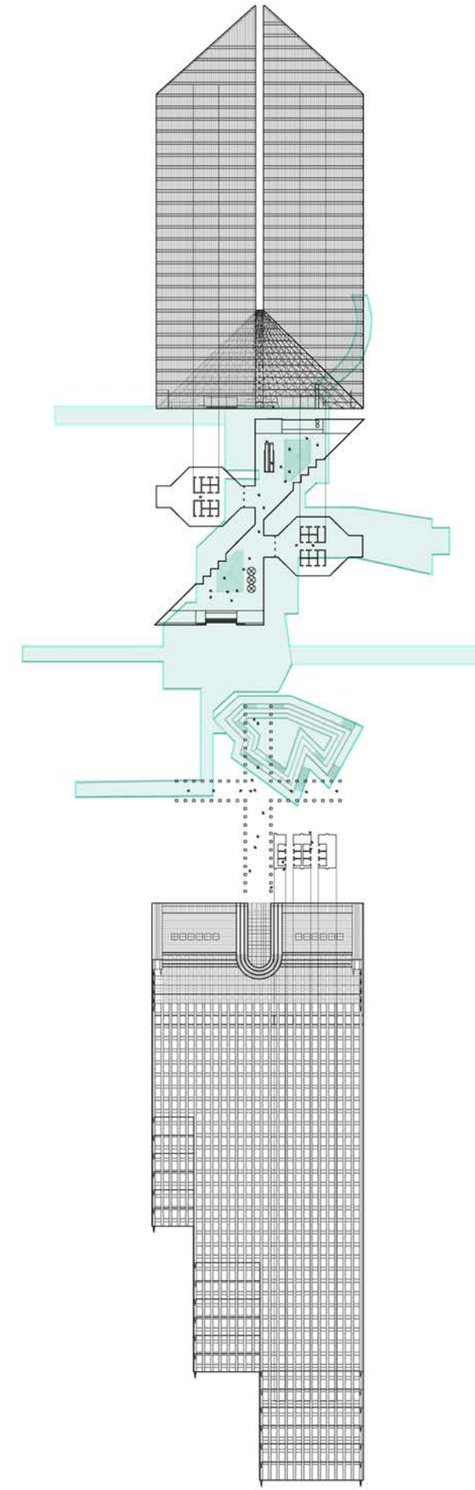
Partners: Faith Charles
Ana Sevilla



▲ Downtown Houston as Board Game



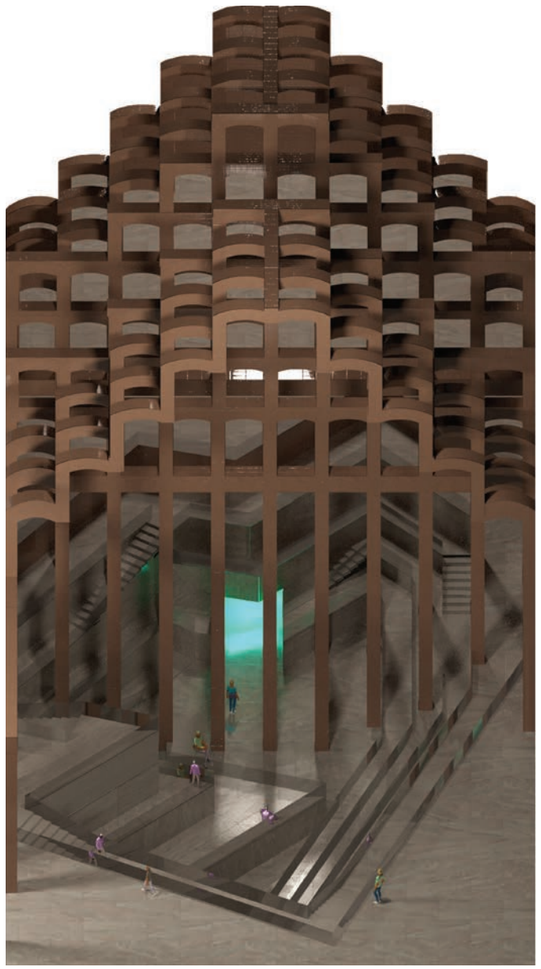
▼ Research Vignettes

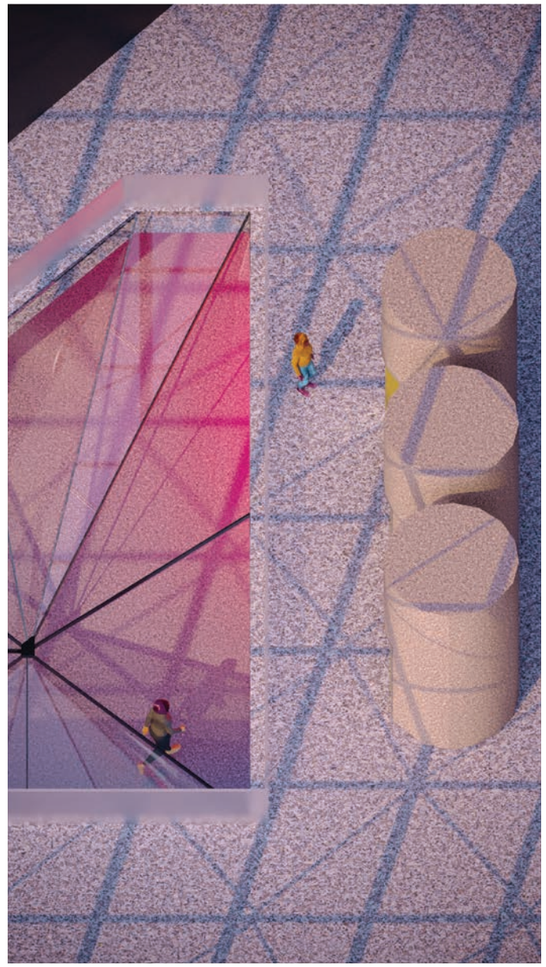


▲ Tower Atriums

▼ Downtown Tunnel Additions — Site Plan

▲ Reflected Elevations with Tunnels in Green





◀ Bank of America Tower Atrium Addition

▶ Pennzoil Place Atrium Addition

▲ Tunnel Foam Party

▼ Tunnel Park

Post-post POST

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For decades, Houston's mayors, developers, and architects have encouraged downtown's role as a cultural hub. After the creation of popular venues in the first decades of the 20th century, the predominant civic strategy post-World War II was the exercise of the modernist tabula rasa philosophy. Eminent domain, slum clearance, and highway expansion was practiced in support of the rapid annexation of suburban communities, fundamentally changing the city. In 1966, the monolithic Jones Hall and Plaza, designed by Caudill Rowlett Scott, imported New York culture four years after Lincoln Center opened; in 1968, Ulrich Franzen's Alley Theatre opened to great acclaim. However, much of the city's energy was distributed elsewhere; downtown became "the hole in the doughnut," as described by Joel Warren Berna in Cite 42 in 1998. Destinations like the George R. Brown Convention Center (1987), Bayou Place (1997), and the renovated Rice Hotel (1998) attempted to shift this balance. In the early 2000s, the Toyota Center and the Aquarium were both marketed as the next exciting answer to downtown's missing public sphere. Discovery Green, completed in 2008, added a much-needed breath of greenery adjacent to the convention center that remains a popular and active destination. Today, downtown is awash in contemporary attempts to make it an attractive public destination, with notable success.

OMA New York, led by Partner Jason Long and Project Architect Salome Nikuradze, and Lovett Commercial, led by Kirby Liu, have realized the next milestone in downtown's history. As an adaptive reuse project, POST Houston responds to the history and culture of the city, resulting in a building that is a welcome addition to the network of private social spaces that host the city's public life.

Pre-POST, the building was the Barbara Jordan Post Office, opened in 1961 and designed by the Houston architecture firm Wilson, Morris, Crain & Anderson. At its height, the building employed over 2,000 workers and supplied the mail processing for the southeast region of Texas. Its architecture was defined by its functionality, as its concrete structure provided a factory-like open space for USPS operations. In 2015, USPS budget cuts enacted by the Obama administration caused this location to close; it was then purchased by Lovett Commercial, led by Frank Liu. Many Houstonians experienced the sublime quality of the unaltered campus at the music and art festival Day for Night, which was hosted here in 2016 and 2017, thanks in part to the efforts of Frank Liu Jr., a musician himself.

For a city like Houston, whose architectural history is littered with unfortunate demolitions, the preservation of a modernist building like the Barbara Jordan Post Office is a victory. With MacRostic Historic Advisors, the project utilized historic tax credits, which meant that its appearance from the street had to be maintained. Windows were cut into the north elevation, but they used the "modularity of the existing grates," according to Long, as to retain the language of the blank facade. Inside, remnants remain: a network of cold-war era surveillance tunnels attached to the first-floor ceiling have been kept. These passages, accessible from the exterior, allowed for the panopticon-like monitoring of the workers below. These

▲ POST, OMA New York, 2021

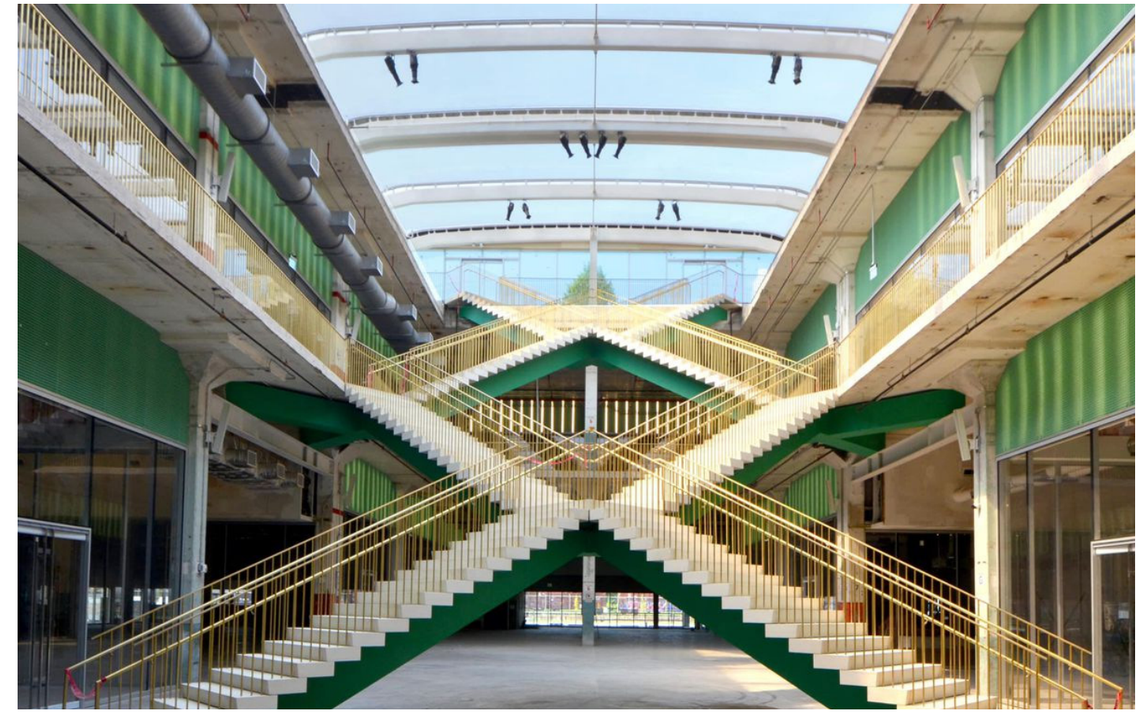
vestiges heighten the impact of OMA New York's improvements. Architects should look to POST as a precedent for future adaptive reuse projects.

OMA New York's primary intervention into the existing structure recalls the work of the artist Gordon Matta-Clark, who transformed buildings through the surgical introduction of voids. POST's voids establish new relationships: between floors, between roof and interior, and in long views through the extensive floorplates. It's a big place: each floor is 250,000 square feet, with a 120,000-square foot skylawn and 50,000-square-foot rooftop farm. These subtractions undermine the previous hierarchy of the column grid. The trimmed concrete floor plates showcase not only the building's structure but also how they were altered; in the final treatment the concrete edges stay as rough cuts, inviting occupants to consider the previous life of the structure rather than hiding the gaps and presenting the project as a new packaged whole. The idea of putting "different programs in every corner," as Long said, isn't that wild, but its aesthetic results are notably austere when compared with the stylings of older models like the interior shopping mall or recent destinations that seek to channel something like Austin's bohemia. It's a testament OMA New York's skill that the intervention in the building is so restrained. On the interior, the team, which included Executive Architect Powers Brown Architecture and Harvey Builders as the general contractor, kept the ad hoc signage and materiality that accumulated over the decades of use as a mail sorting facility. This simple decision is amplified by the use of an opposing material palette for the new additions: aluminum, square grating, neon and fluorescent fixtures.

Day or night, the interior is heightened by the work of lighting consultant Dot Dash, who carefully considered the vantage points of the occupants and created a lighting experience that encourages circulation just as much as the stairs themselves. The bathrooms, similarly, become distinctly memorable through their ethereal lighting and bright colors.

Described by Long as a "an agglomeration of culture, food, and tropical urbanism housed within a solid concrete shell," the massive warehouse was subdivided into four discrete zones, each centrally organized around a large void. To the east is 713 Music Hall, operated by LiveNation. The venue, also designed by OMA New York, holds 5,000 people on two levels. Already local heroes like Tobe Nwigwe have played there.

Each of the other three subtractions are atriums open to daylight above. Each is organized around a large, sculptural staircase that is formally unique and relates to the program of that zone.



▲ "X Staircase", POST, OMA New York

Approaching from the Barbara Jordan Plaza, underneath the low tower, you arrive at the Z atrium. The monumental, social Z stair is pushed to the back of the atrium. It's a switch-backed path clad in stained oak, with flat platforms for coworking or socializing. This geometric form is hung from the roof to allow for the accumulation and circulation of people underneath. This feat of suspension also draws views upward to the ethylene tetrafluoroethylene (ETFE) pillows that enclose each atrium. The air in the ETFE pillows reduces heat gain and has the added benefit of subtly diffusing the light. It's still warm inside at

the top, as the hot air rises and stacks against the ceiling, but the space is filled with daylight. This is the first commercial project in Texas to use ETFE widely.

The O Atrium, the largest of the three voids, houses perhaps the most exciting selling point of the project's cultural offerings: POST Market. Flexing an impressive cast of local, national, and international restaurants, the food hall, using the precedent of a night market, expresses the culinary prowess and diversity that Houston is known for. To fill the space, OMA New York designed a set of food booths in aluminum that accommodate a variety of communal and private eating experiences. The O staircase, which spirals up to the roof, has a totemic presence in the food hall. The double helix staircases—also made of aluminum—are clad in metal fencing and fluorescent tubes whose output bleeds into the neon lights crowning the individual food stalls. POST is given another graphic layer through its signage system by MTWTF with Formation, but hopefully the market will continue to add visual activation, to be seen in the midst of the crowds already dining here. The X atrium is slated for retail when more tenants move in. The crisscrossing X staircase evokes the sentiment of a grand Parisian entry, inviting the onlookers to admire the movement of immaculately dressed influencers. The Escher-like, cascading treads have already been used for a variety of events, including a ballet, fashion show, and an acrobatic performance.

To the OMA team this building is as much a destination, as it "is a link to a new public space within the city and [a] dramatic view out over its juxtapositions." said Long. Ascending any of the three central staircases will bring you up to the five-acre skylawn. Designed by Chicago-based landscape architects Hoerr Schaudt, the rolling landscaping and meandering path stages clear moments for snapping pictures with the city. The height of the warehouse puts the visitors neatly level with the highways that ring downtown. Even the skylights, whose circular panes of frosted glass direct light into the tenant spaces below, are a welcome element of strangeness.

There is one point of conflict. The staircases, while exciting, center experiences that aren't accessible for all occupants. Elevators are pushed to the edge of the floorplates, and, while the stairs received boutique treatment, the elevators are relatively standard. From the perspective of universal design, it's a shortcoming that so much focus is placed on these three monumental staircases. While POST's new ideas about adaptive reuse are exciting, the consideration of access for differently abled bodies could have been better addressed.

While presenting the project during an RDA lecture last year, Long said that "there's a real capacity in Houston to make something really positive out of public/private moments." In that same lecture, Long detailed OMA New York's overall approach of "radical juxtapositions" and the ambition to create a microcosm of the city itself, which is similar to the concept of Dirty Realism. As explored by scholar Frederic Jameson decades ago, the term signals a mode of producing privately-owned space that allows for the sporadic nature of true public life. It was a key concept for OMA's work in the early 1990s. (Rem Koolhaas wrote an essay on the subject for 1994's S,M,L,XL.) Jameson argued that the danger of privatized public spaces is that they don't allow for "one's private life nor the monumentalization of collective powers." But today, POST Houston, carved from a former piece of civic infrastructure, stands capable of offering these experiences to visitors.

POST's energy is also the result of a dynamic architect/developer relationship spearheaded by Kirby Liu. Liu is cited by many within the project as one of the key voices who defined what exactly it means to create an intensely social civic space, but the vision for the destination—and its 713 Music Hall, in particular—was also shaped by Liu's brother Frank Jr., who died this year. A memorial service and celebration of his life was held in January on the skylawn.

Years in the making and now open, POST is a testament to the potential of creative adaptive reuse. Its spaces will only get better as Houstonians claim them as their own.