

DSGN 313

CONSTRUCTIVISM

WITHIN THE

URBAN FABRIC

VERONICA
LEONOVA

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MANIFESTO

My “Cadavre Exquis” is an exploration of Constructivism within the Urban Fabric. Constructivism, a design movement that originated in Russia in the 1920s, is characterized by the combination of mechanical objects into abstract, mobile structural forms. This style prioritizes functionality, rejecting the notion of art as a solitary practice, and instead envisions art as a tool for social change. It is defined by bold colors, geometric shapes, and an emphasis on industrial themes.

The start point for the design process for this collage was a reflection on my geographical identity. Growing up in Calgary, my personal philosophies and values were shaped by the cultural lens of a major metropolitan city in the Global North. However, my identity is also influenced by my Russian heritage, as my family immigrated from Khabarovsk, Russia in 2000. The intersection of Canadian and Russian values has played a significant role in shaping my identity.

Russia has a complex political history and present-day challenges, so it was an interesting discovery that Constructivism, an influential art movement, originated there. Its parallels to the Bauhaus movement, which I also admire, further informed my design process.

Both Constructivism and Bauhaus played a role in shaping my approach to this project. My “Cadavre Exquis” aims to dissect and explore my identity through the lens of urbanization, considering the city-scale perspective. The collage employs foreground, midground, and background elements to represent different layers of my identity, with each contributing to a larger narrative. As an urbanite and student of city design, I recognize that my identity is inseparable from the urban environment, and I believe the urban landscape plays a significant role in shaping who I am.

The design process for this collage involved numerous iterations, experimenting with color, texture, shapes, and how to combine these elements in a visually complex composition. In many ways, the “busyness” of the collage mirrors the complexity of identity itself—an identity that is multifaceted, intricate, and transcendent, existing beyond spatial boundaries.



BACKGROUND

01

This map of New York City sits at the top of my collage, reflecting a city I strongly associate with urbanism and aspire to live and work in. While New York has its challenges, it embodies the vibrancy and humanity that I love about cities.

02

A map of Calgary, placed at the “foundation” of the collage, symbolizes my birthplace and the core of my identity.

01



02

MIDGROUND

03

An array of triangles, a hallmark of Constructivist design, extends beyond the artboard to signify upward and forward movement. This aligns with the New York map in the background, representing my aspirations.

04

A blue overlay atop the Calgary map evokes grounding and tranquility, connecting to my roots in Calgary.

05

A yellow circle resembling a sun symbolizes the urban fabric and aligns with other forward-looking symbols, emphasizing optimism for the future.

06

An image of St. Basil's Cathedral, a Russian landmark, ties the collage to Russian design. Positioned in the background, it underscores my heritage without dominating the urban narrative.

07

A crane near the Bauhaus-inspired building references the industrial and stylistic influences of Constructivism.

08

A central cityscape of New York represents hope and aspiration for a vibrant urban future.

09

An inverted mountain reflects Calgary's iconic geography, symbolizing the deep roots of my identity.

03

05

06

07

08

09

04



FORGROUND

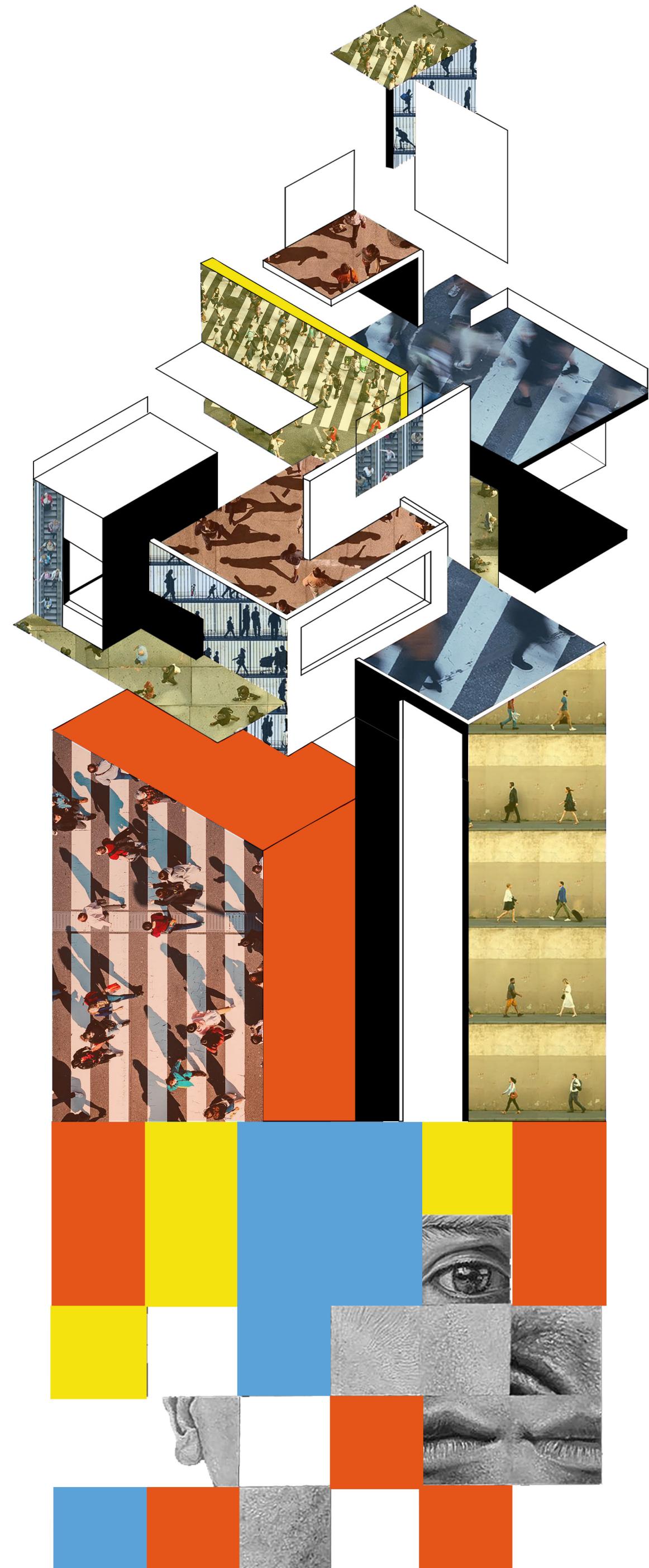
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10

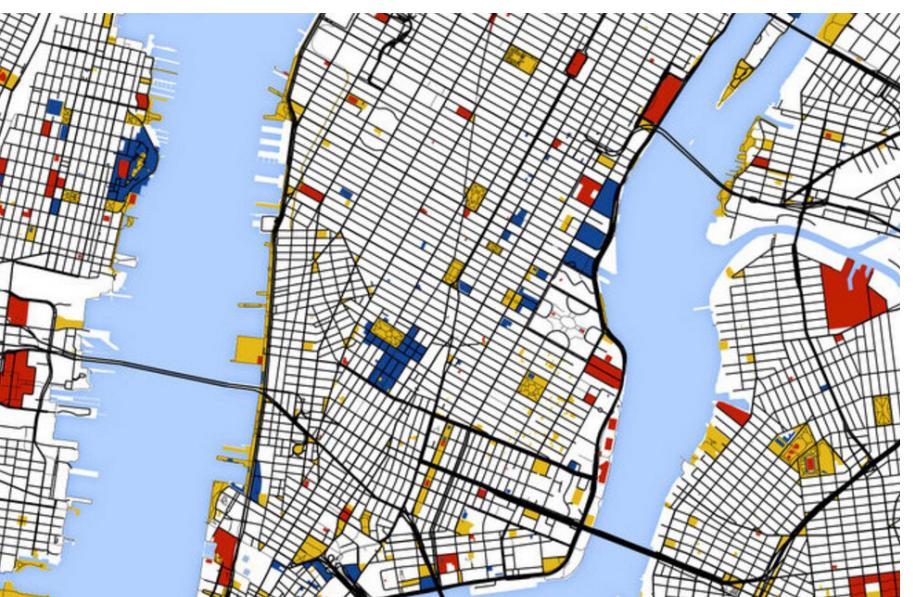
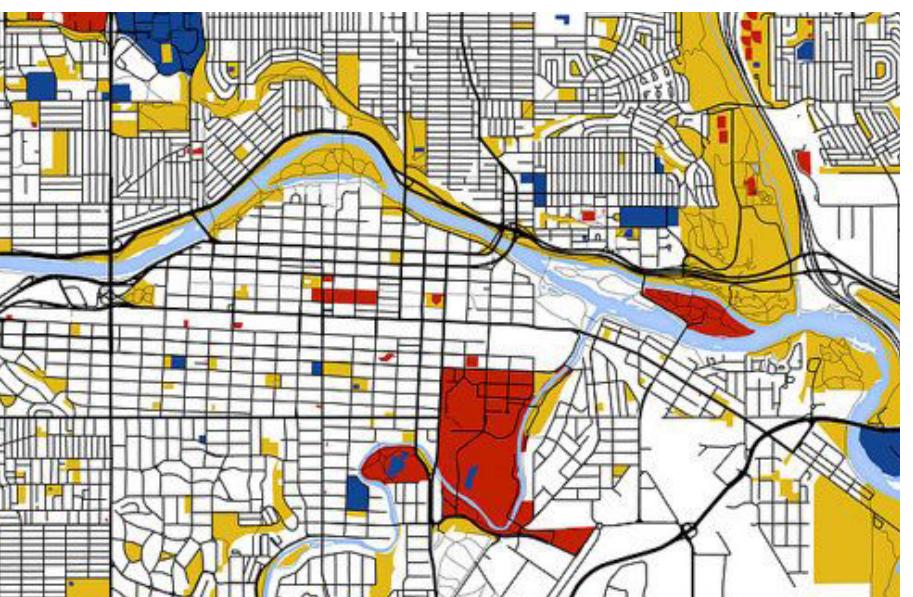
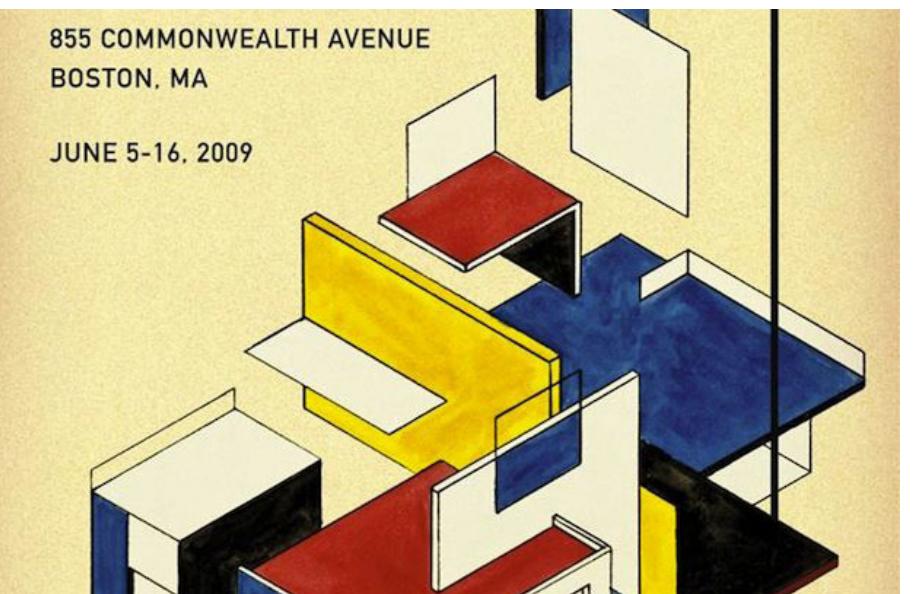
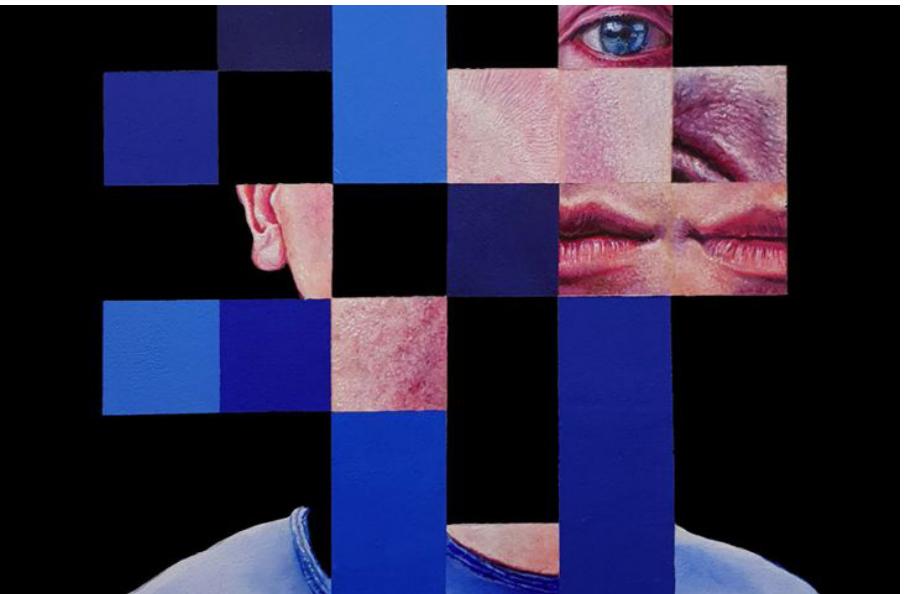
A Bauhaus-inspired structure featuring urban photography overlays highlights the vibrancy of urban community. Its placement in the foreground emphasizes its significance.

11

An abstract, pixelated face merges the concepts of self and urban structure, illustrating how identity and the urban environment are intertwined.



11



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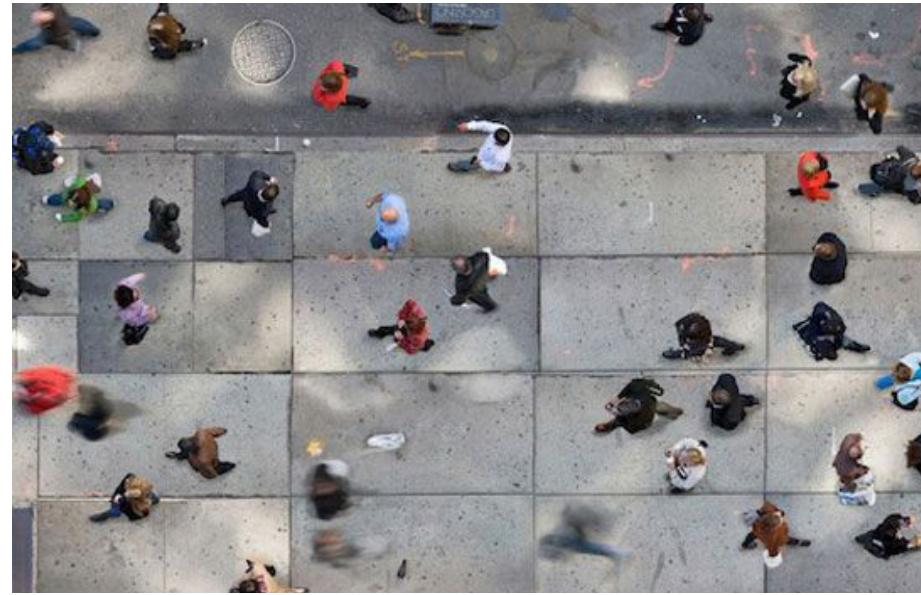
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