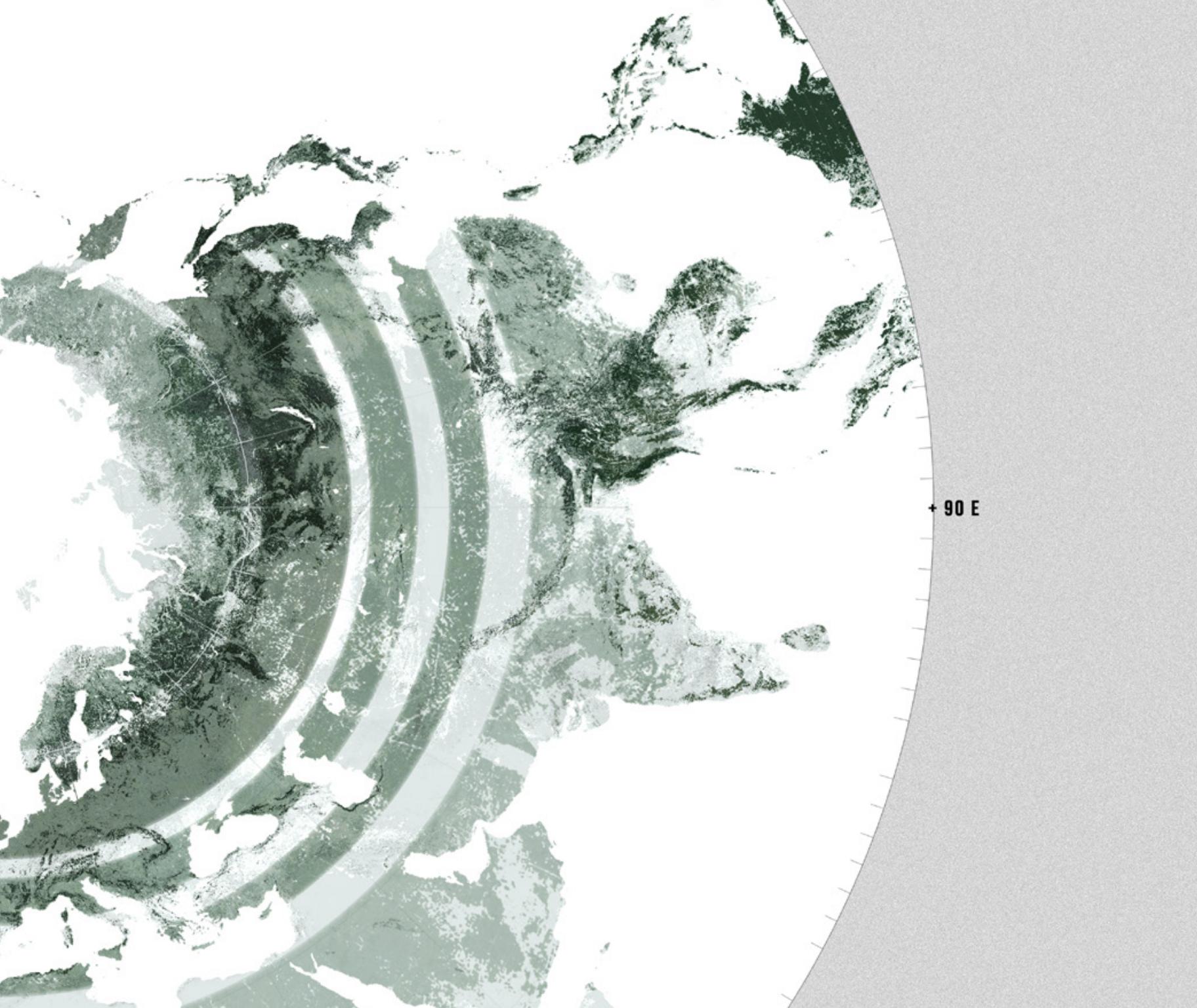


90 W





+ 90 E

Atlas of Epic Proportions

Thomas Provost

This Atlas contains drawings for eight multi-scaled enigmatic traces of humanity created during the Anthropocene era, completed for partial fulfillment of the Master of Architecture degree at the University of Detroit Mercy School of Architecture in 2013.

This thesis was advised by Professor John C. Mueller and defended at 1:30pm on Tuesday, April 16, 2013. The jury was composed of Claudia Bernasconi, Melissa Dittmer, Reed Kroloff, Noah Resnick, Will Wittig, and Stephen Zacks.

To family and friends, thank you for your relentless encouragement. This work is dedicated to all of you. Edgar, Atlas would not exist without your introduction to the Anthropocene in March 2011 AD. Elaine, for the conversations steeped in wonder and speculation. Mary Margaret, for the books that I promise to return. Jon, for productive weekends at the cottage on the lake. Dr. Spagnolo, for the drumlin map. Dr. Lakhan, for the anthropocentric revelations. Danzell, in space someday...

6. Ladies and Gentlemen We Are Floating in Space

8. Antipodes

22. Drumlins

32. Lake

40. Spiral

44. Towards A Northern Hemisphere Republic

48. Arctic Circle

50. Gravitational Construct

52. Lunar Destruct

Atlas of Epic Proportions

Excerpt from a speech given at the School of Architecture, April 16th, 2013.

"Ladies and Gentlemen, we are floating in space.

In both the spatial and temporal sense, humanity will forever be a microcosm within the great macrocosmos. We are floating in a vast, ever expanding universe. Pluto will have only travelled one-third its way around the Sun in our lifetime.¹ In the twentieth century, astronomers believed the universe to be 14 billion light years wide.² In the twenty-first century, that figure grew to 15 billion.³ As an incredible clockwork of forces act upon the entirety of space; as we ponder the minute possibility that we even exist today as a result of the supernatural balancing of matter, energy and time; modern humanity has become the first culture to break with the primordial tradition of celebrating the mysteries of the universe.⁴

First you are, then you are there. Then your place becomes relative to some other place you have been. It is further networked by every place you may have heard of; will one day venture to; or never even know. Our planet moves, its rhythms cycle. We observe things seasonally. These actualities invigorate the cosmic and continue to flow day-in-and-day-out. The minutia of everyday Earth life is complex and imperative, but it does not compare in its totality to the everything!

Complimenting deep space is deep time. A famous phrase concisely puts humanity within the context of geological time: if existence was a 24-hour day, humanity comprises the last stroke before midnight. While we perceive the mountains and stars to be models of majestic stasis, we know that the Earth's crust changes ceaselessly under our feet, while the heavens sweep us along in a cyclone of stars.⁵ The last ice age ceased around 15,000 years ago leaving the Earth in a condition vaguely similar to what we inhabit today. The recession of the last glacier is imperative for relative consideration because of this. Around 17,000 BCE the sea level rose forty feet as the glaciers melted, defining contemporary land borders.⁶ Humanity and all we know thrived as a result of the gradual warming of the planet. The agricultural revolution began some 11,000 years ago due to these atmospheric and climatic changes. In summation, the Earth we inherited and will pass on to foreseeable future generations is in *medias res*.

Enter the Anthropocene: the current geological epoch. The Anthropocene represents a new era demarcated by the rapid changes to the Earth and its atmosphere by human forces. Geologist Paul Crutzen was the first to effectively challenge conventional geological thinking by proposing this human era of geological time.⁷ Given the incomprehensible scale of geological time, the dimension of artificial human alterations over the past 200 years is staggering; preposterous enough to warrant change. For the first time, humanity has now entered the sciences as a collective body informing its ethics. The ramifications are dramatic, and as Jonathan Keats believes, the word puts a golden spike in the language of science.⁸ Architecture, being the artifacts of collective bodies, enters the Anthropocene with a clear motive: to capture the infinite; to put a golden spike on a geological scale; and to challenge the "here and now" quality inherent to modern modes of production. Artifacts of the Anthropocene represent, with all their imperfections, an epic of evolutionary change, the history of life on this planet, grand in its range and diversity, and magnificent in its detail.⁹ They are the record of the historical process that we now lead.

The work that follows is devoted to this radical reversal in perspective.¹⁰ It is a project halfway between a vision and a narrative in which a series of atypical architecture succeed each other in scope and purpose, in and out of sequence, but nevertheless connect deeply to the pull of geological time."

1. Phillip D. Stern, *Our Space Environment* (New York: Holt, 1965), 116.

2. Ibid., 153.

3. Brian Swimme, *The Hidden Heart of the Cosmos* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 2005), 2.

4. Ibid., 9.

5. Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, *The Phenomenon of Man* (New York: Fontana, 1959), 59.

6. Ian Morris, *Why The West Rules-For Now* (New York: Picador, 2010), 81.

7. Jonathon Keats, *Virtual Words* (New York: Oxford, 2011), 19.

8. Ibid., 22.

9. Kenneth R. Miller, *Finding Darwin's God* (New York: Harper, 1999), 128.

10. Paul Virilio, *A Landscape of Events* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2000), xiii.



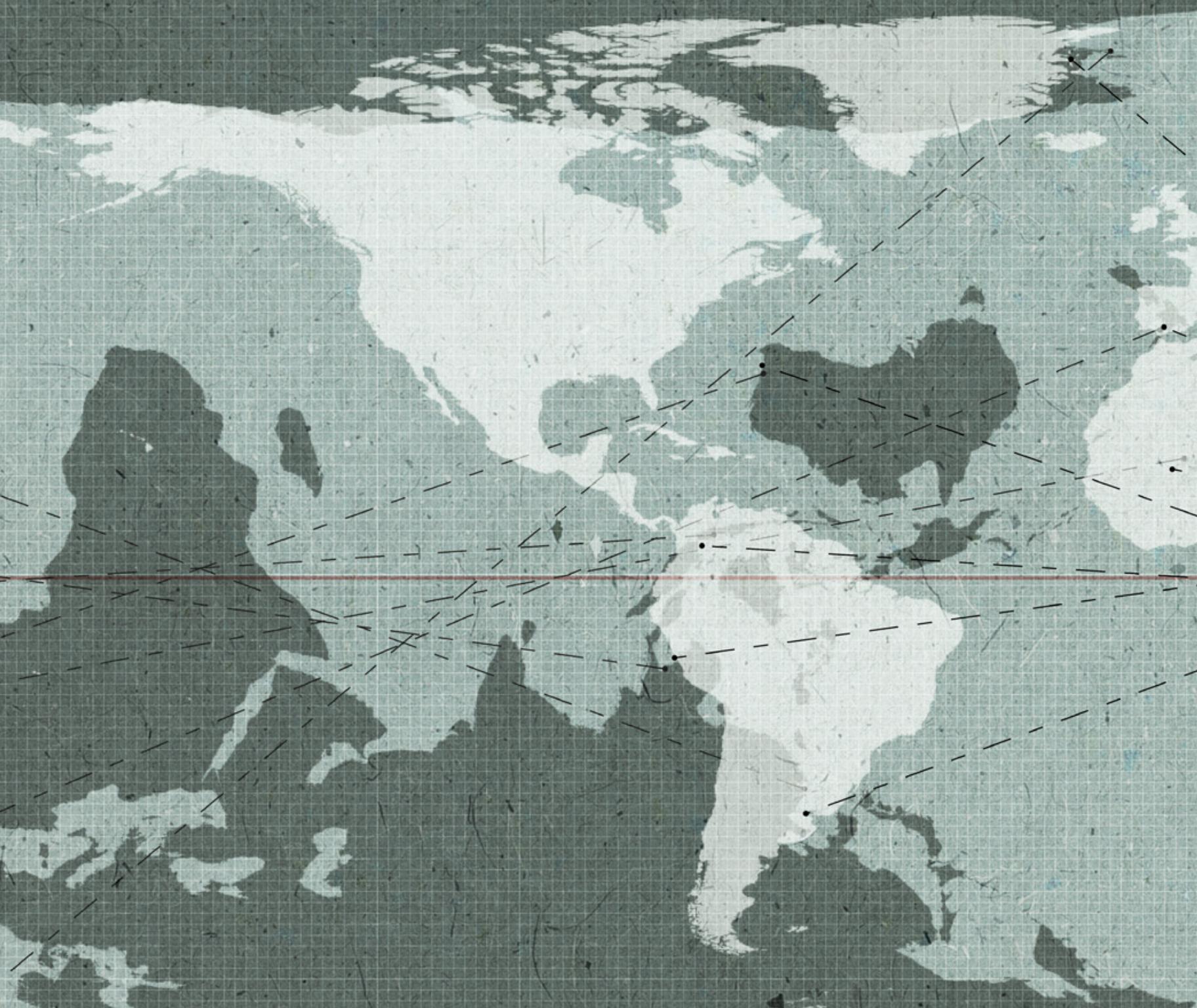
Rudolf Schwarz, Von Der Bebauung Der Erde / Of The Development Of The Earth, 1949.

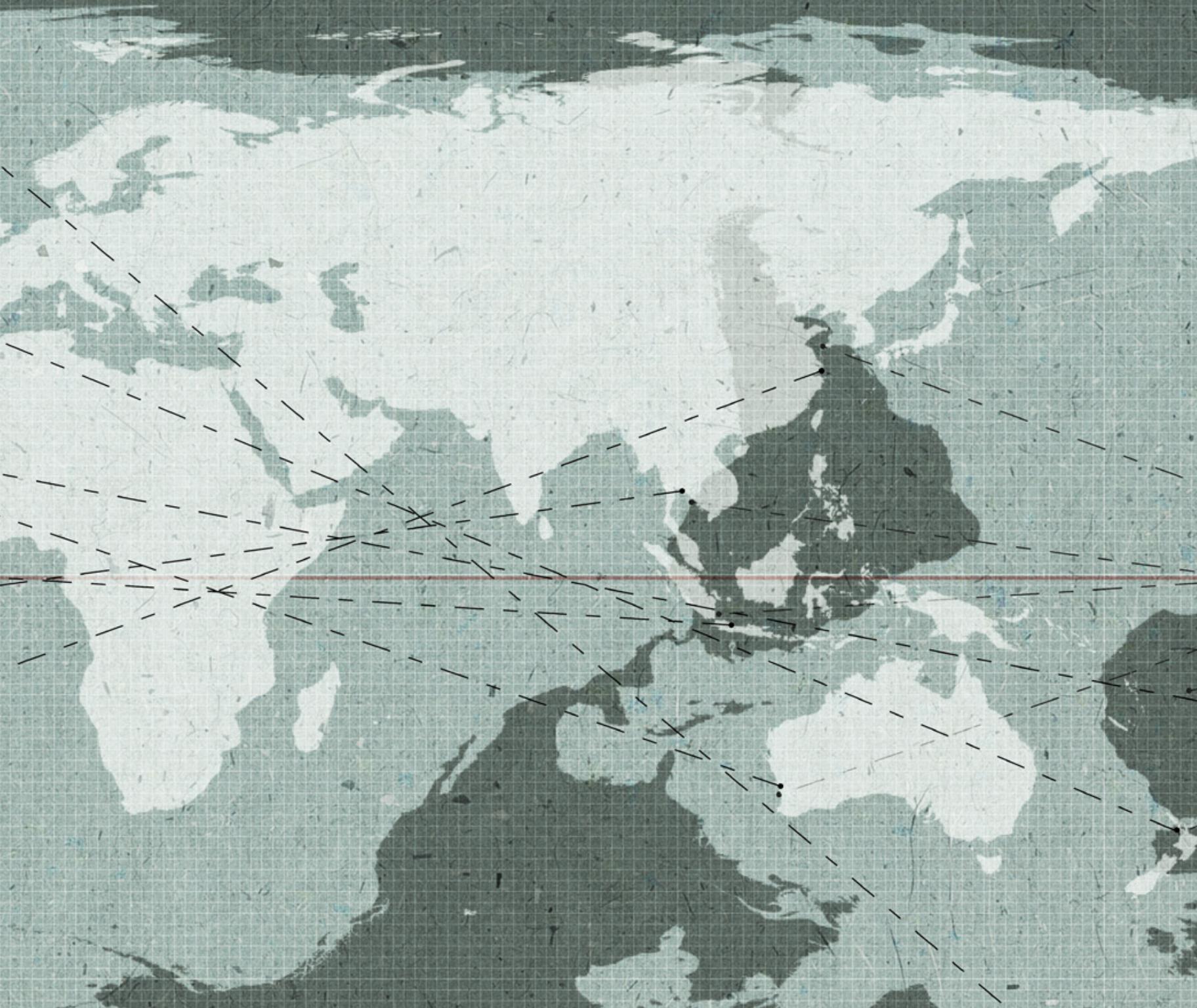


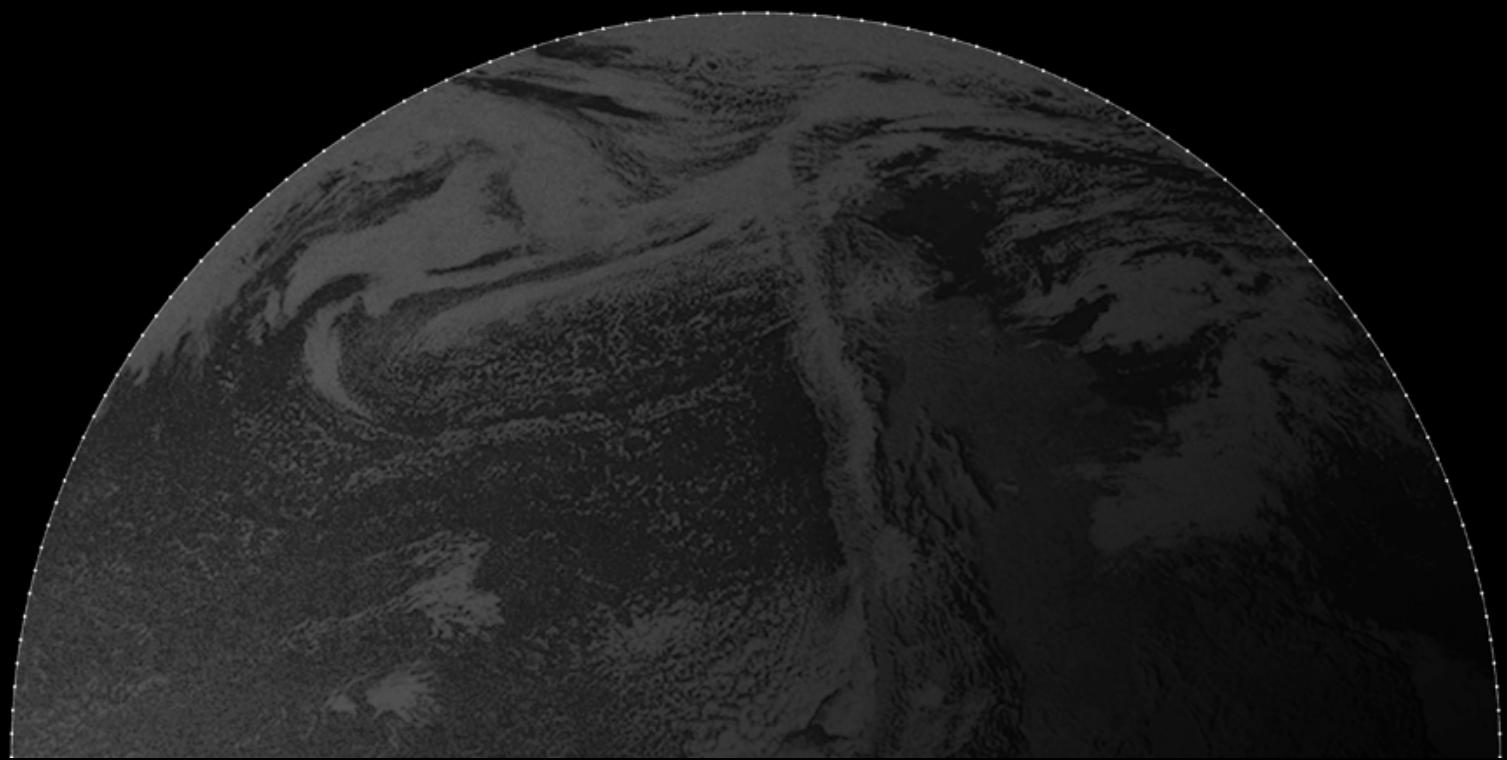
Richard Miller, Areas of the Continental United States crossed by one or more Nuclear cloud from aboveground detonations, 1999.

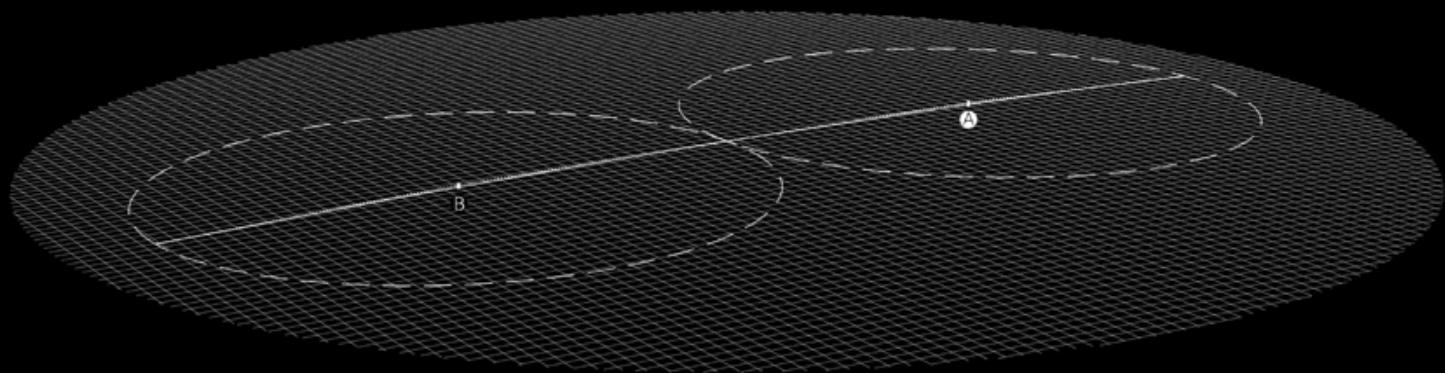












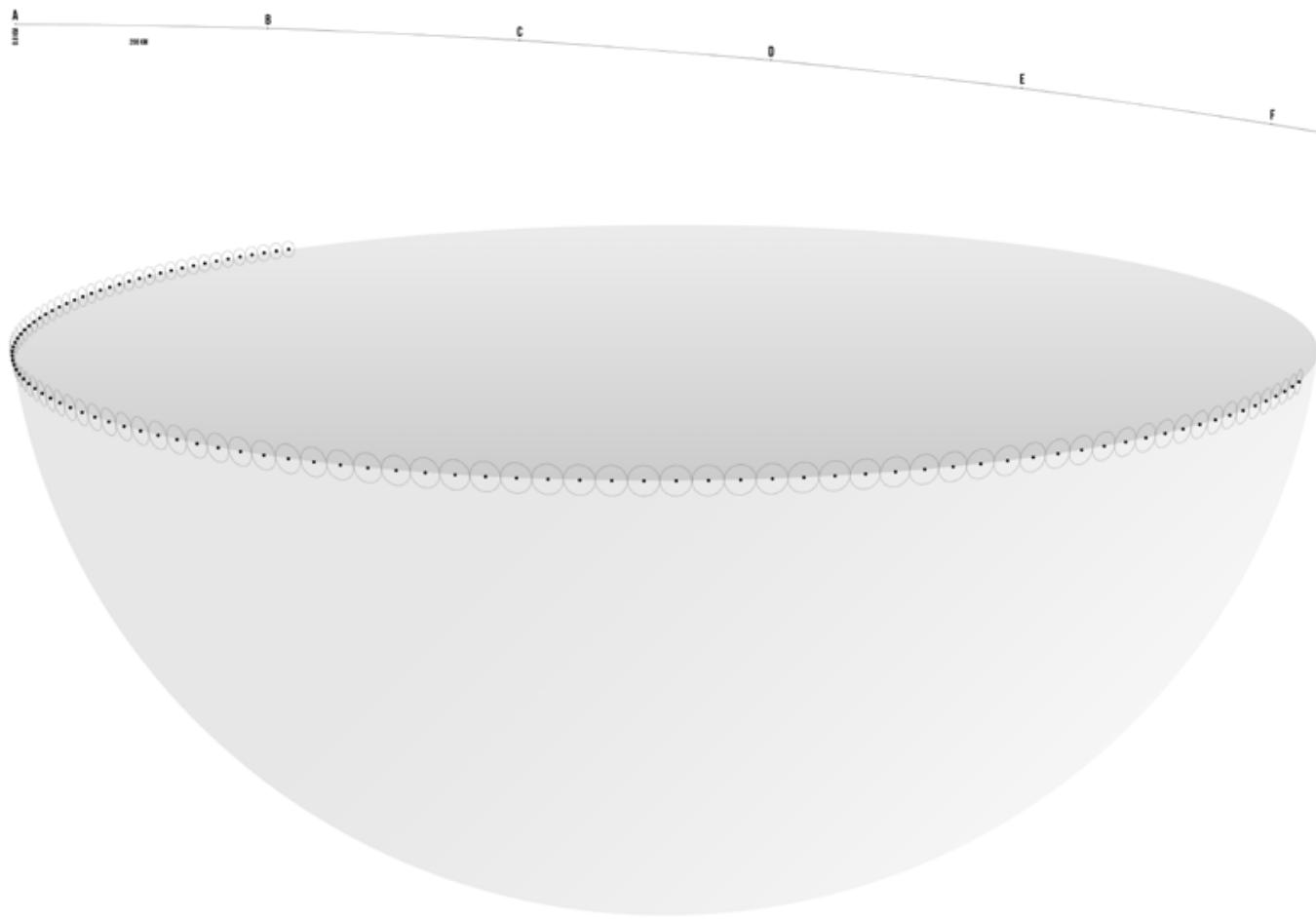
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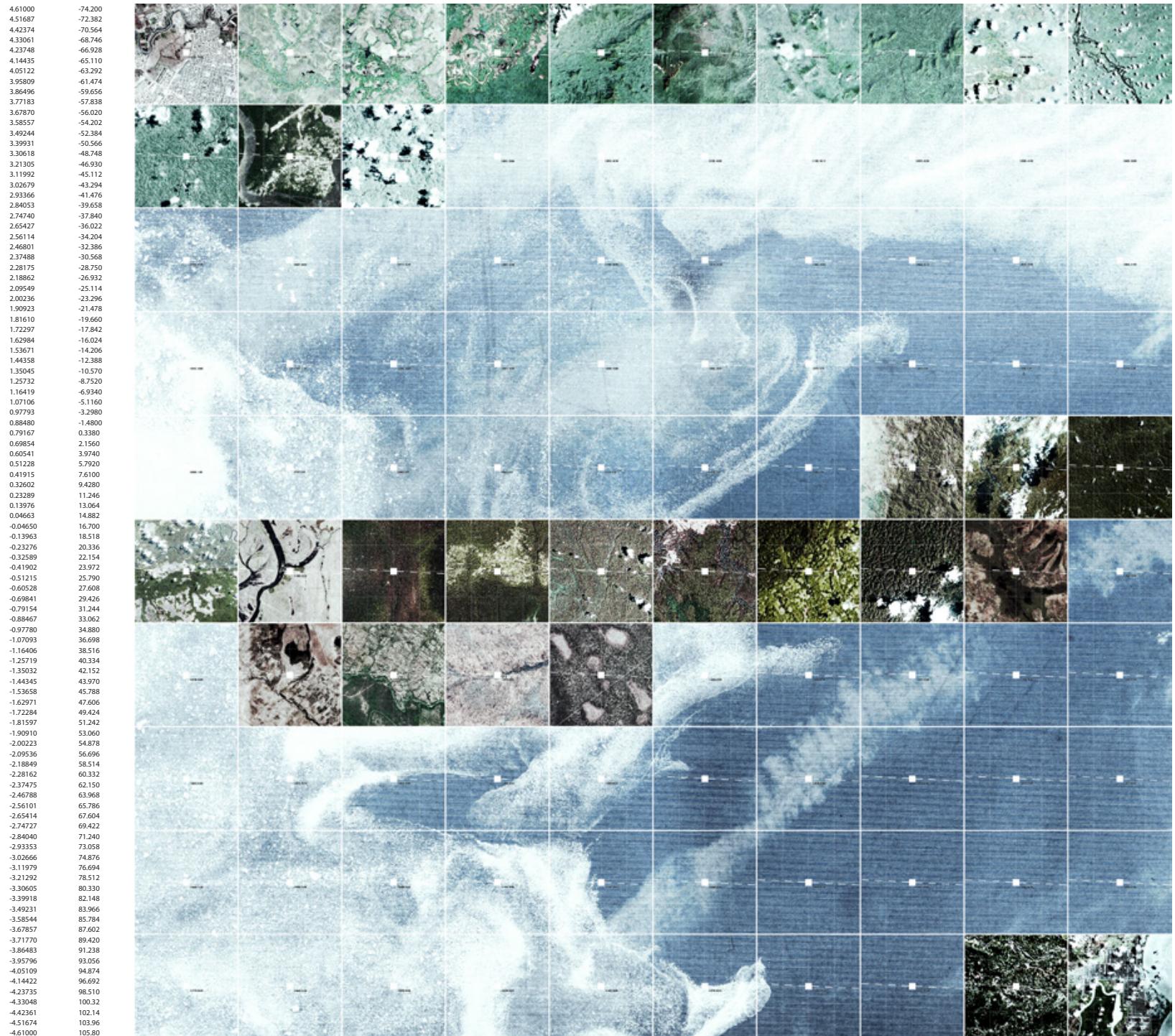
+10km : TROPOSPHERE

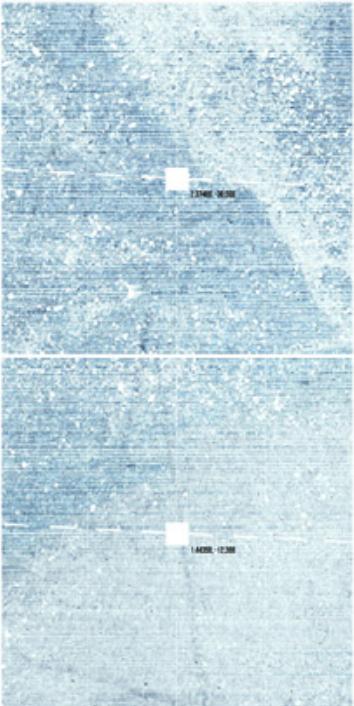
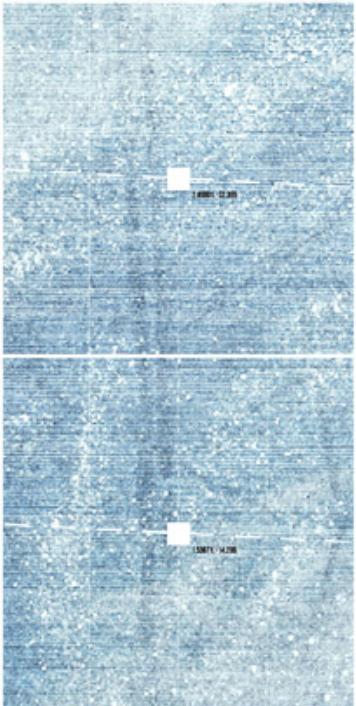
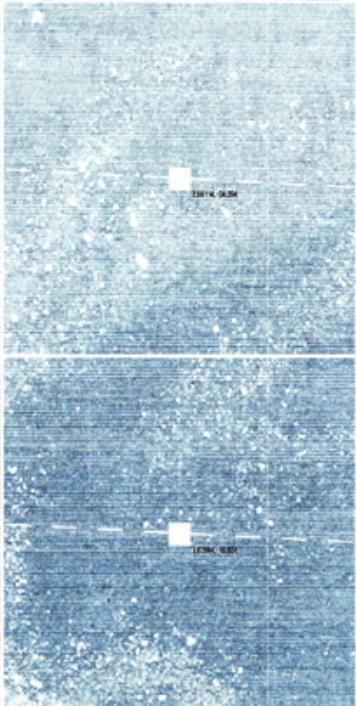
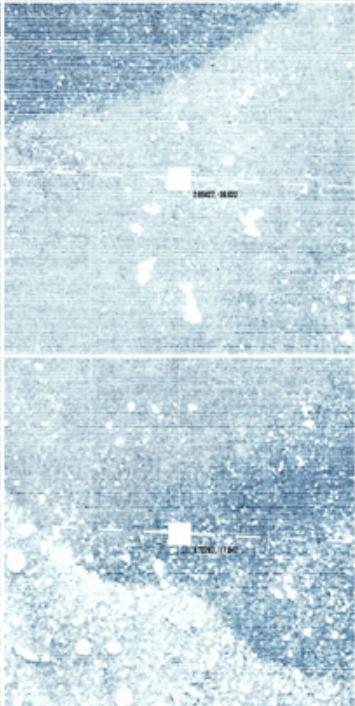
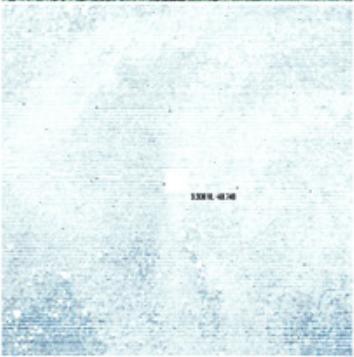
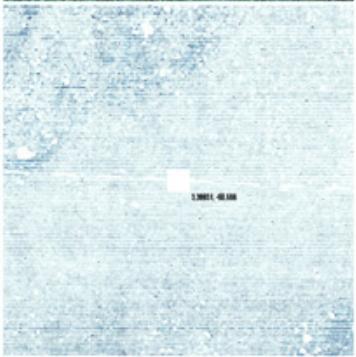
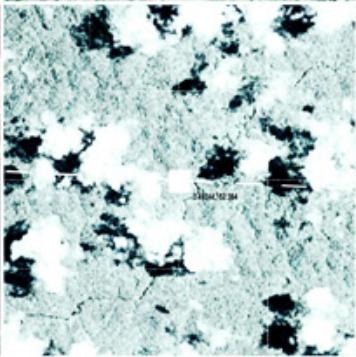
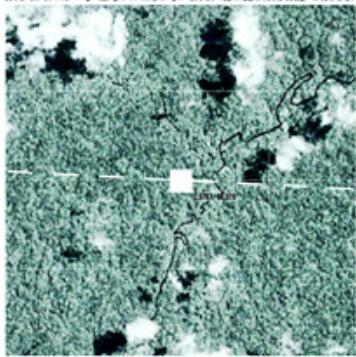
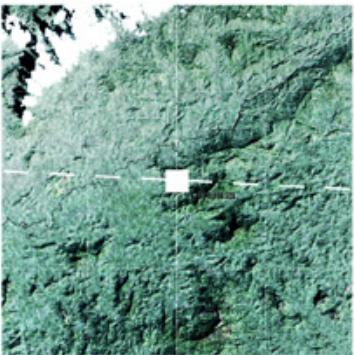
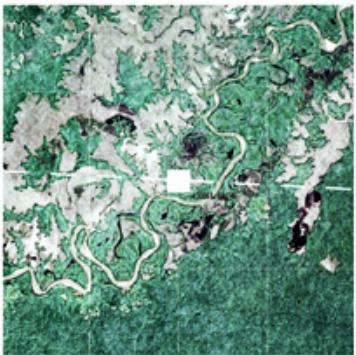
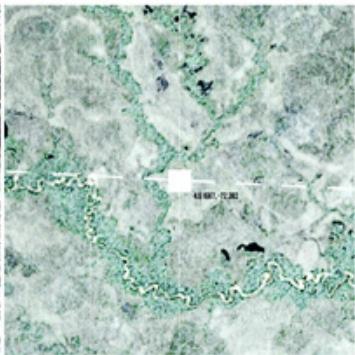
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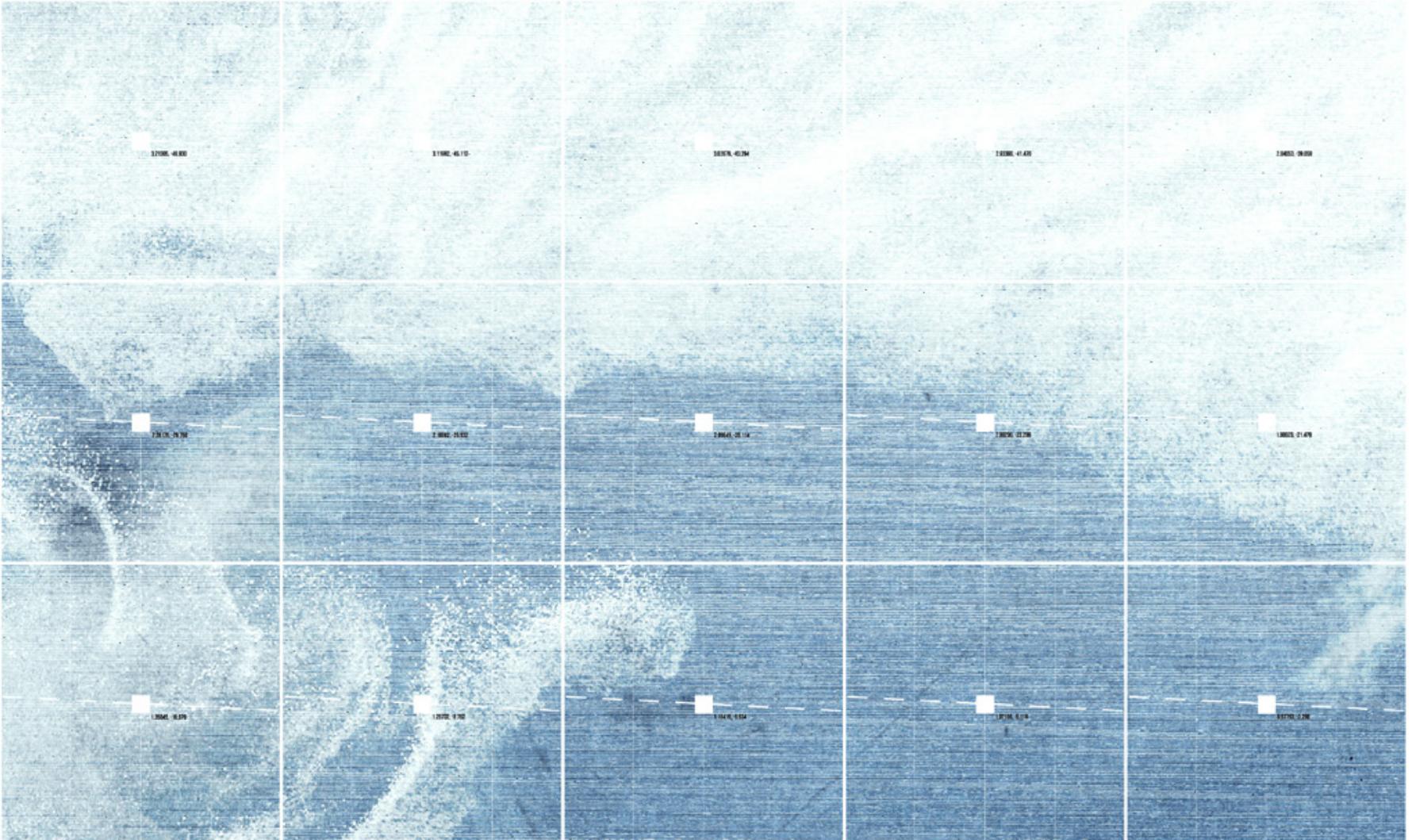
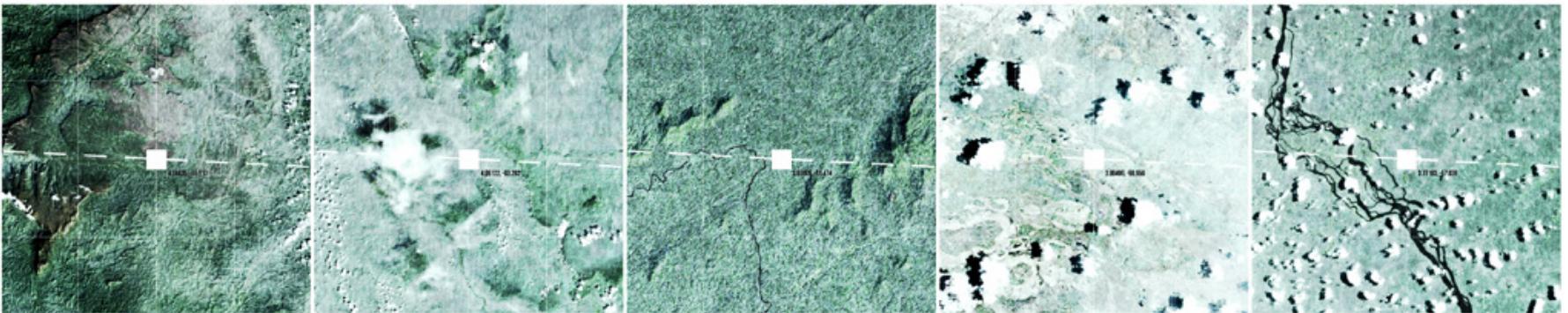
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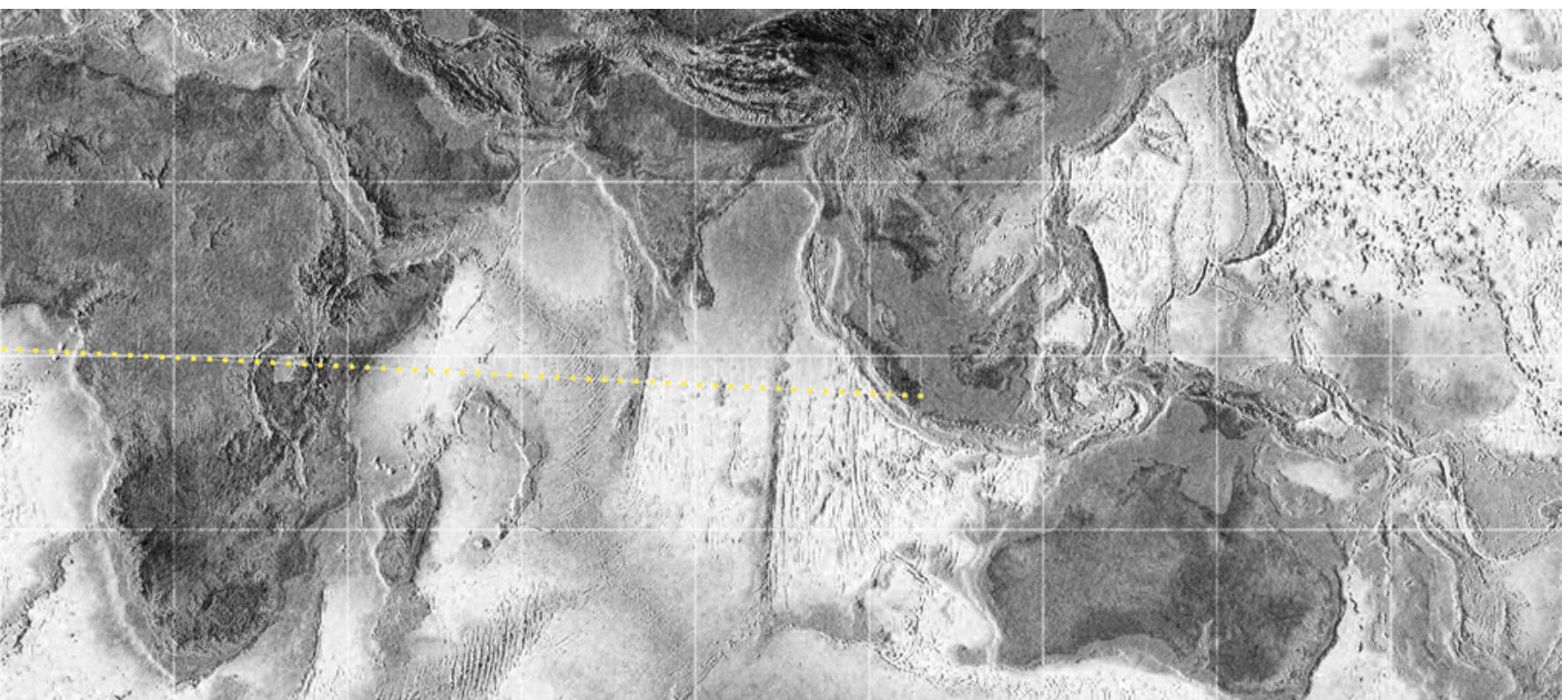














DAVMENDA

Banco de Occidente

Corficolombiana

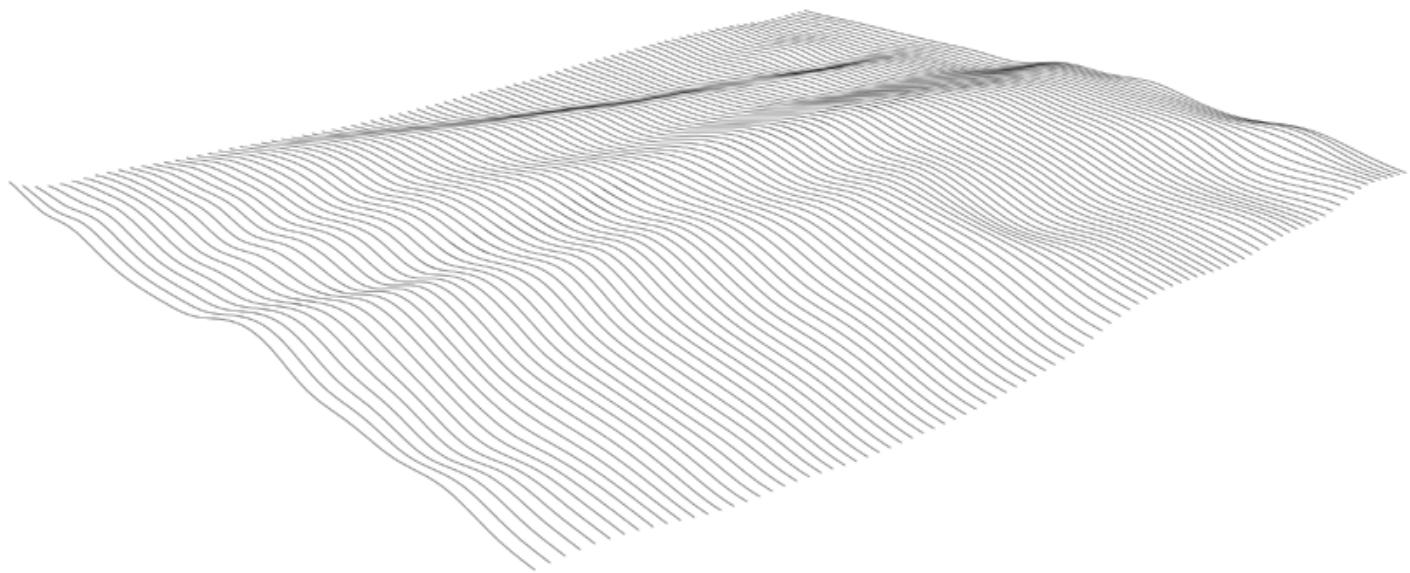
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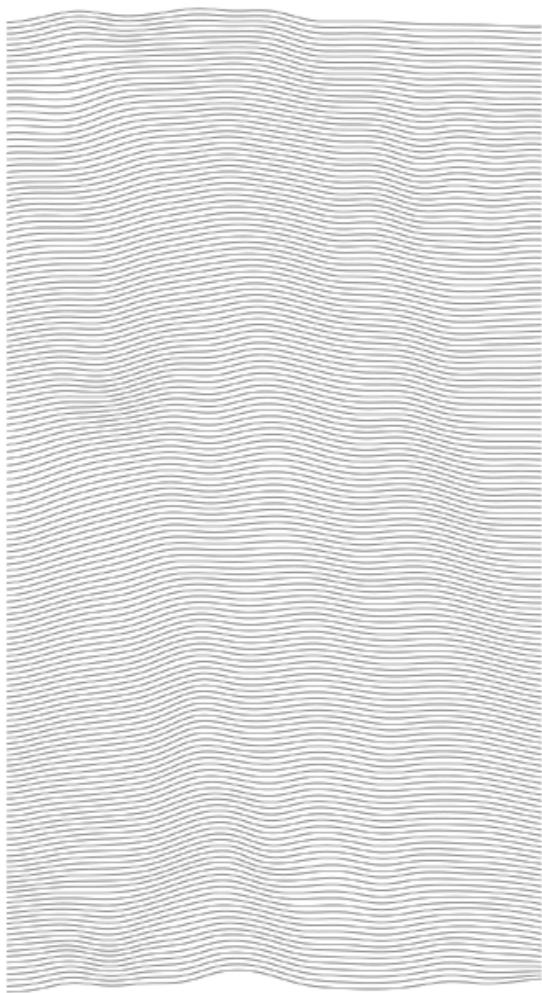


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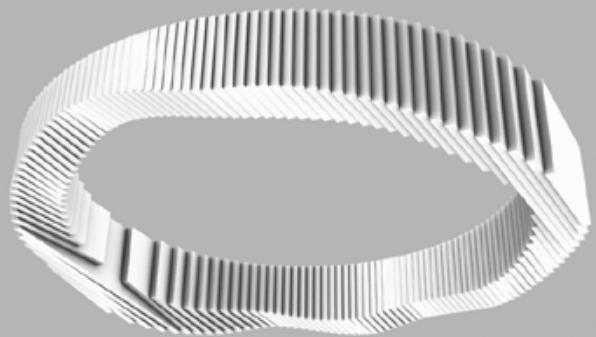


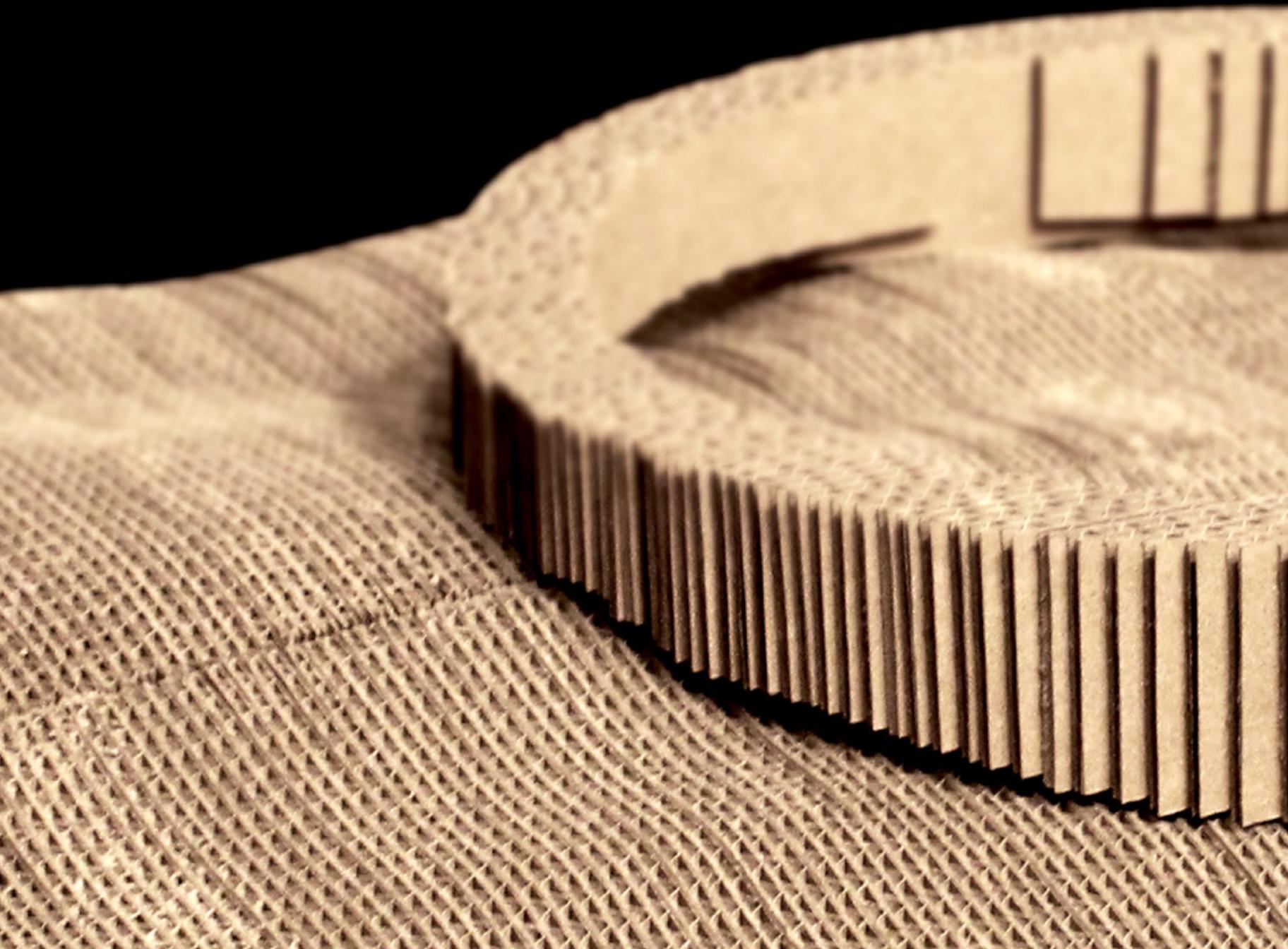








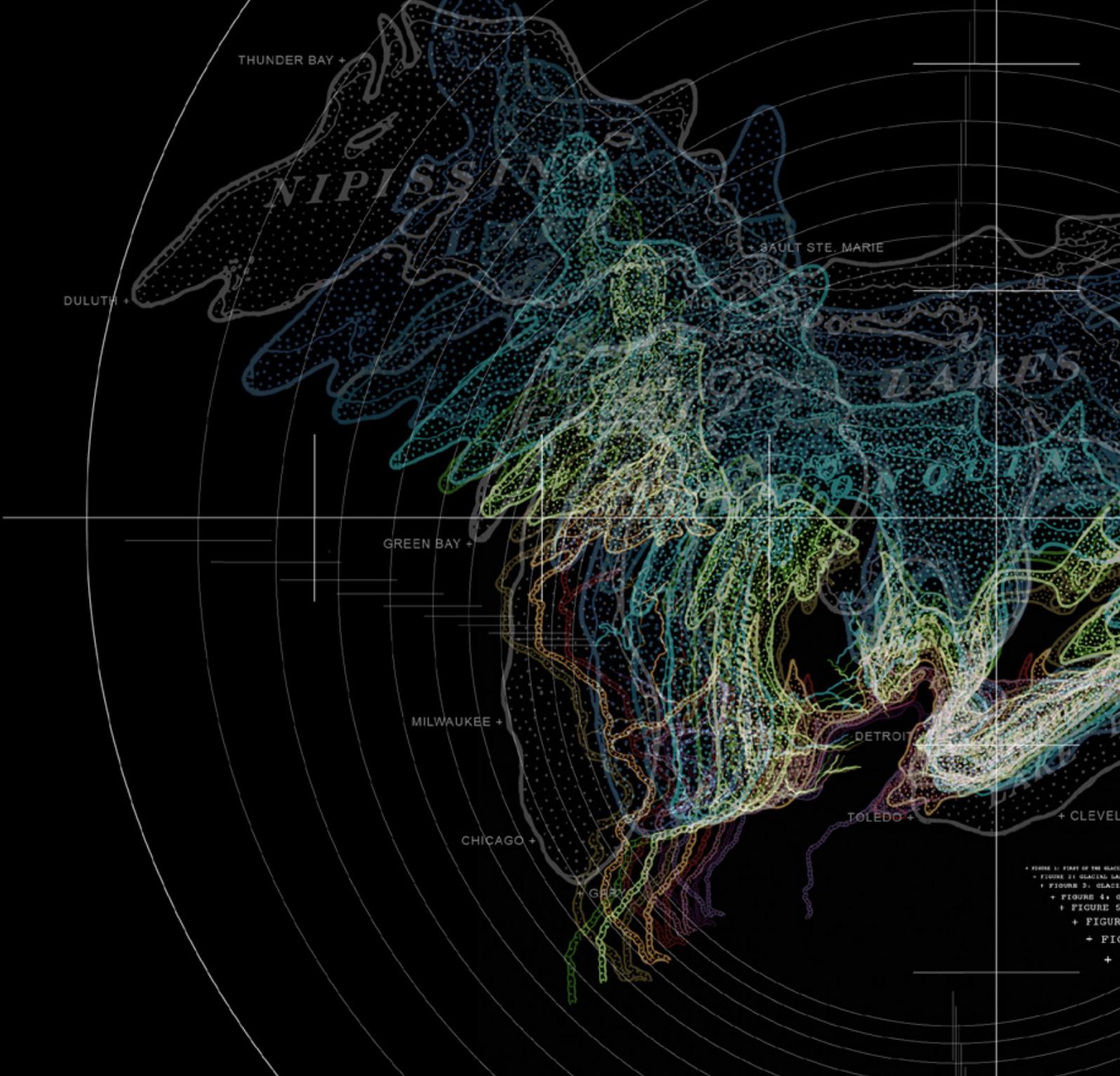


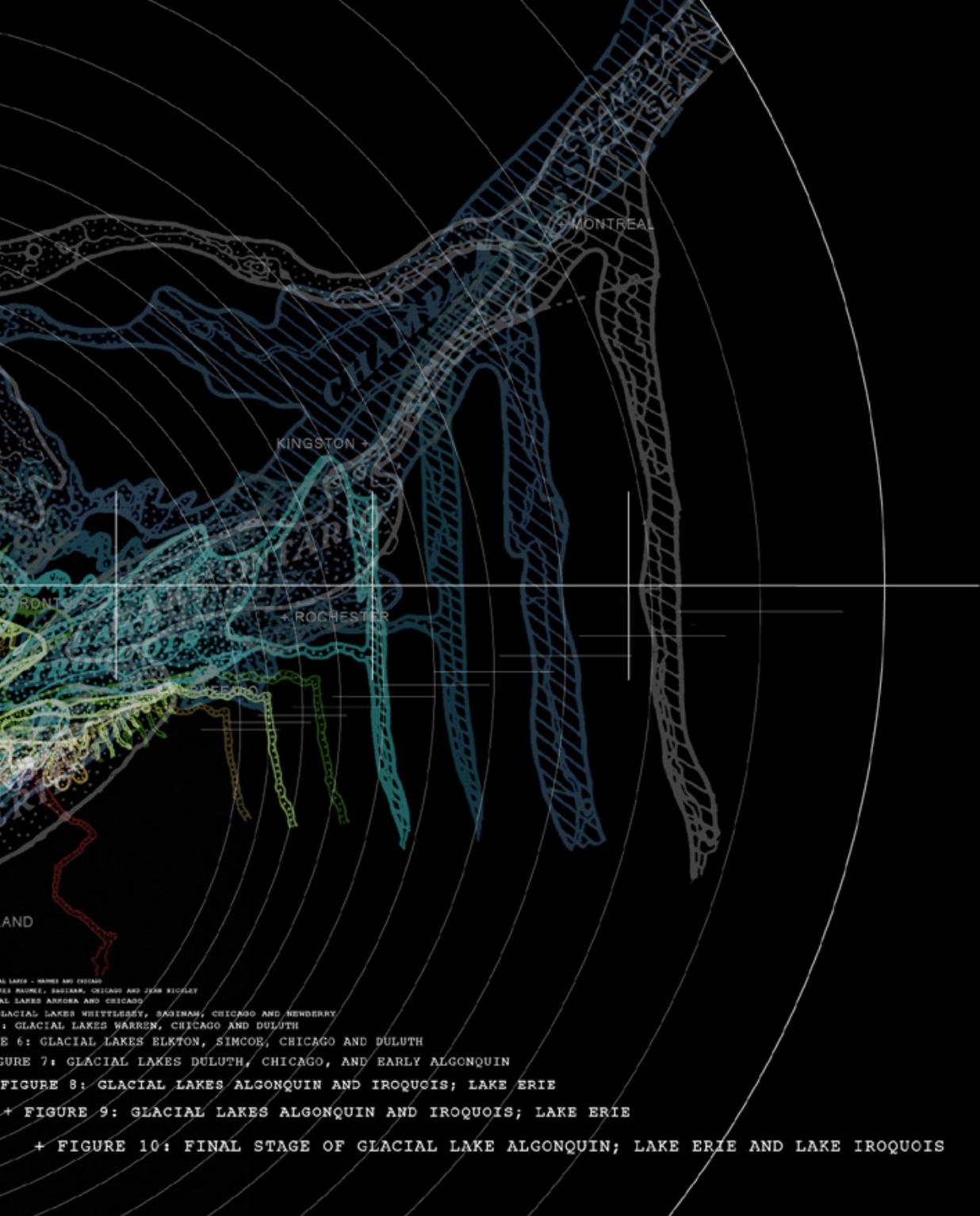


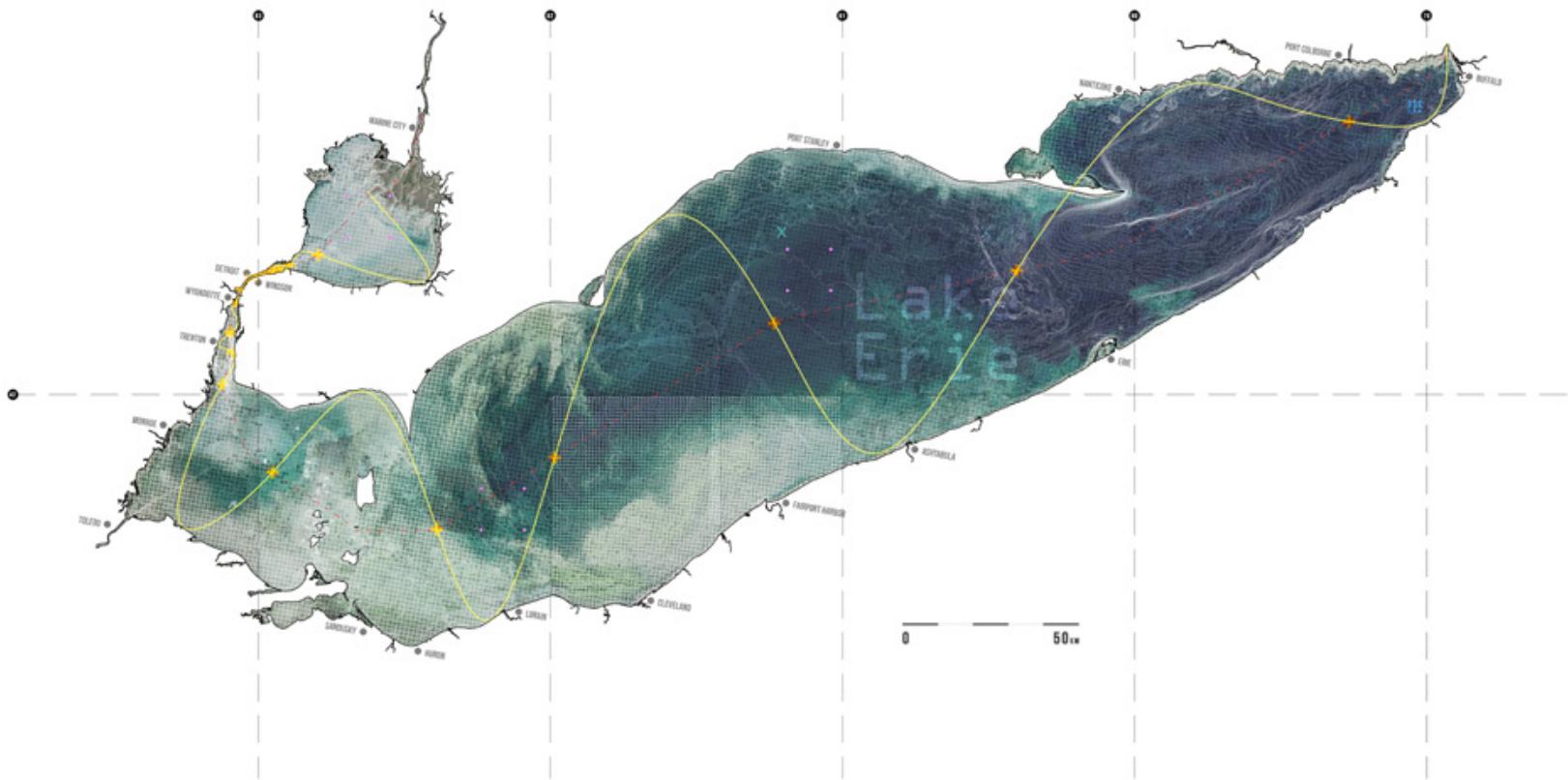


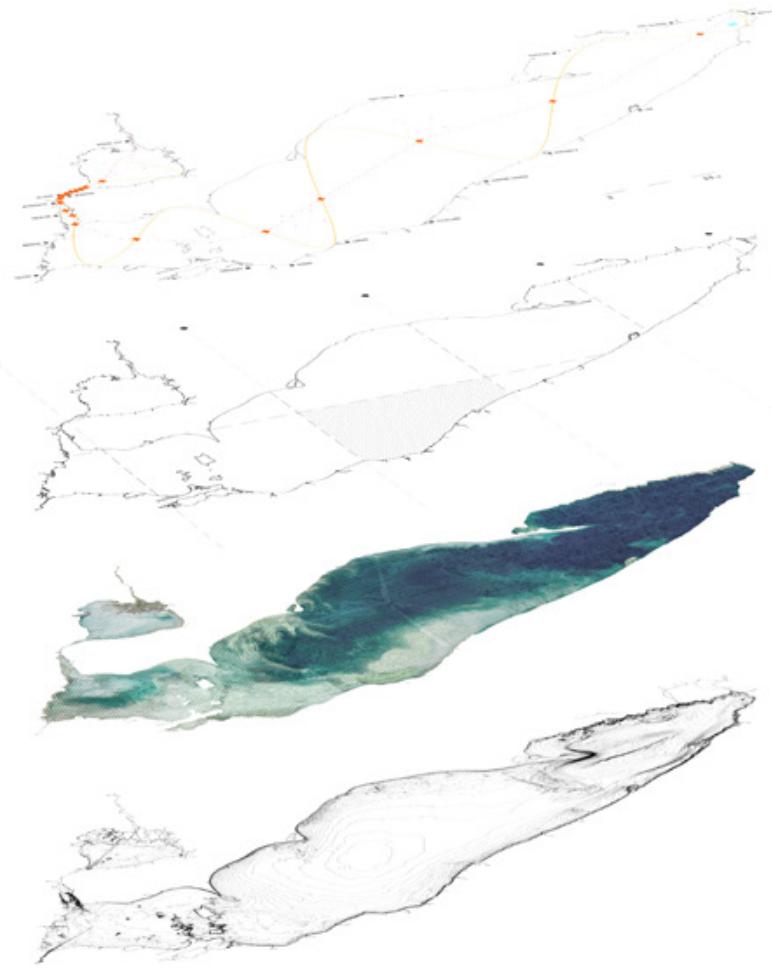










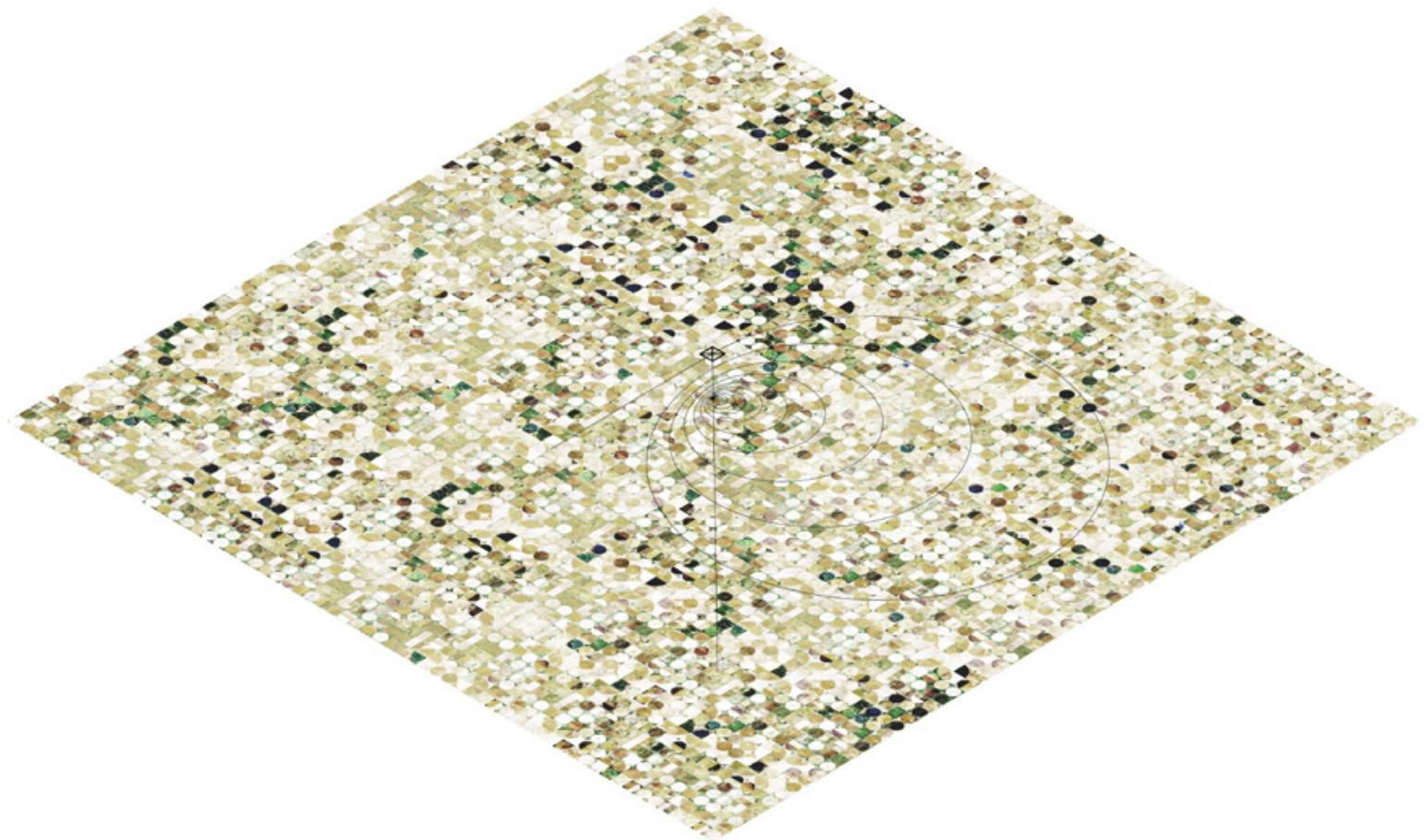


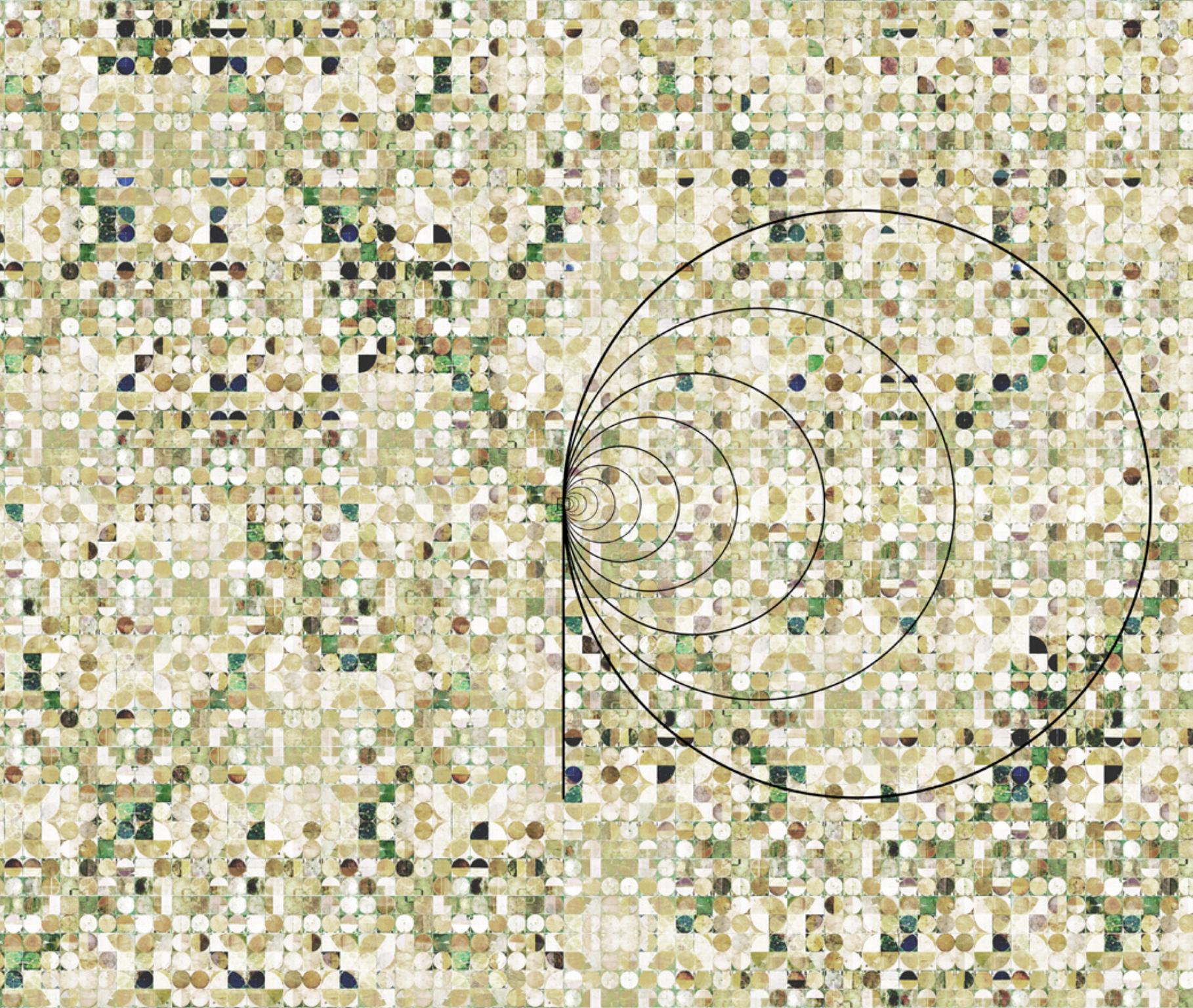


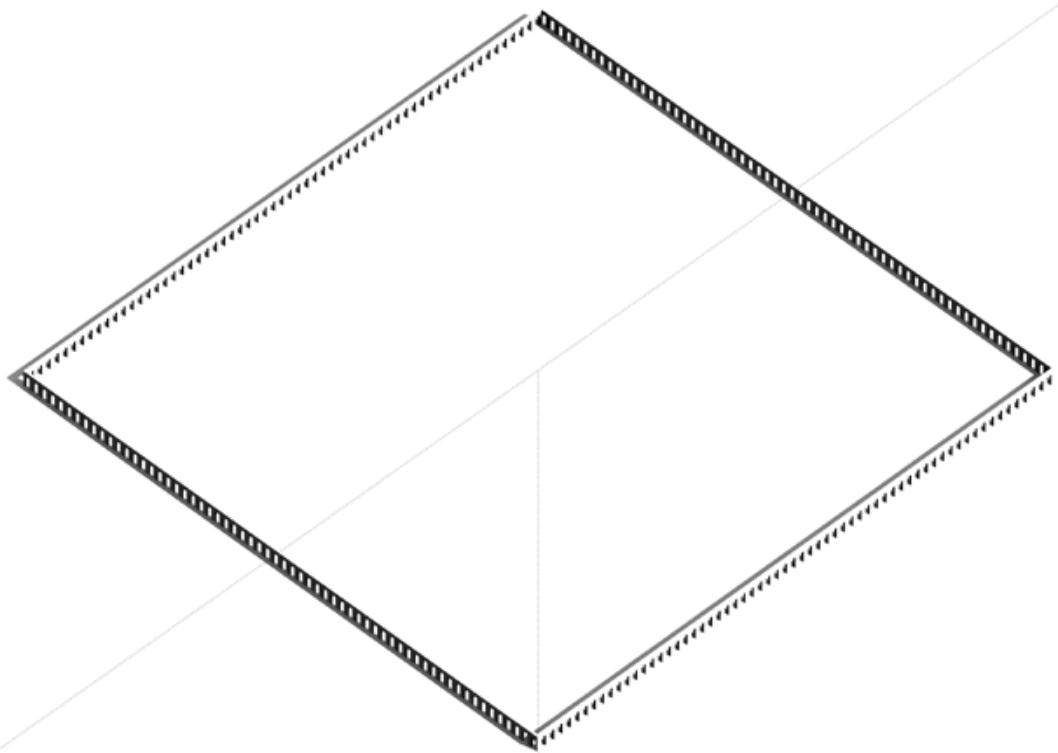




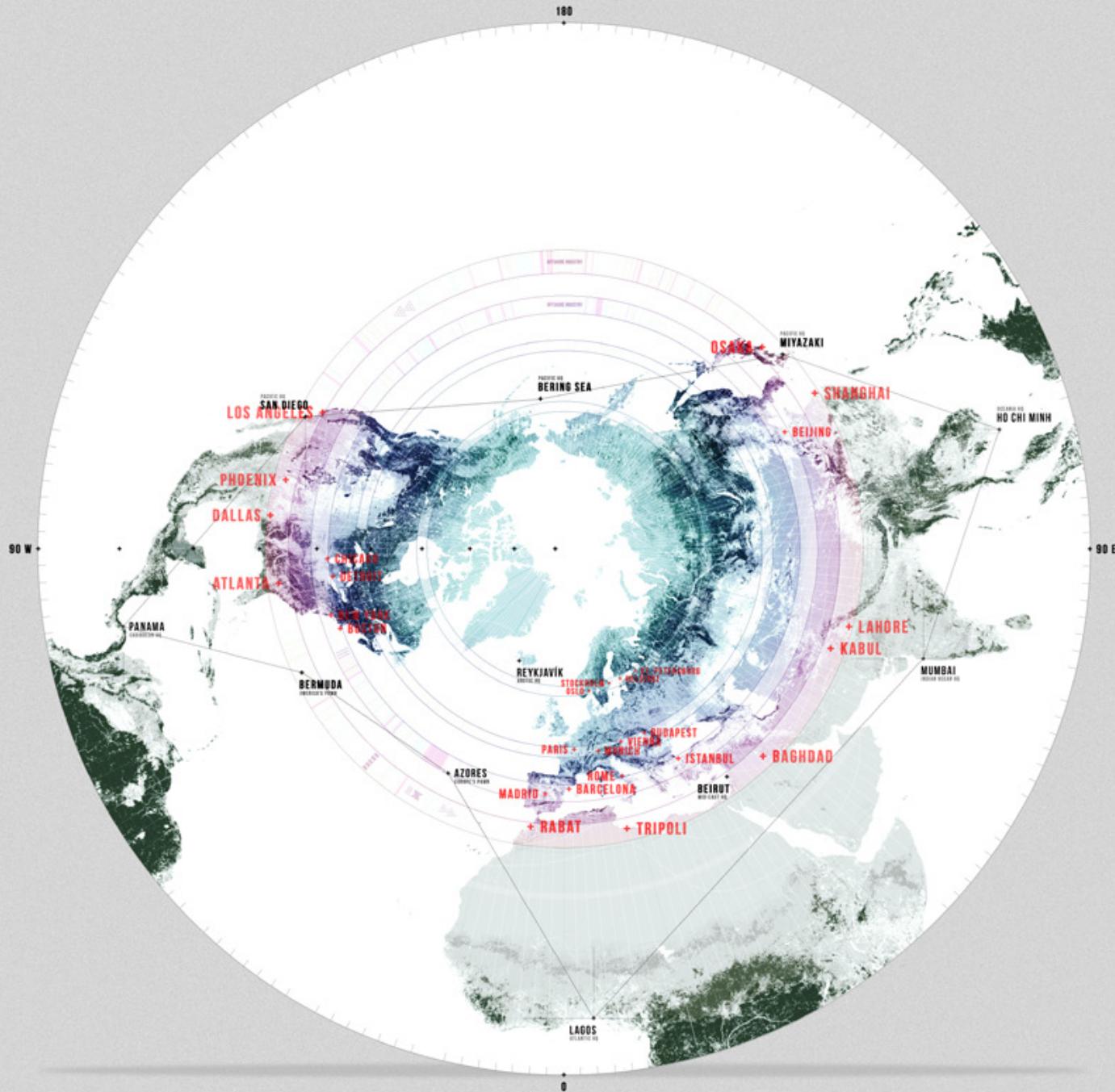


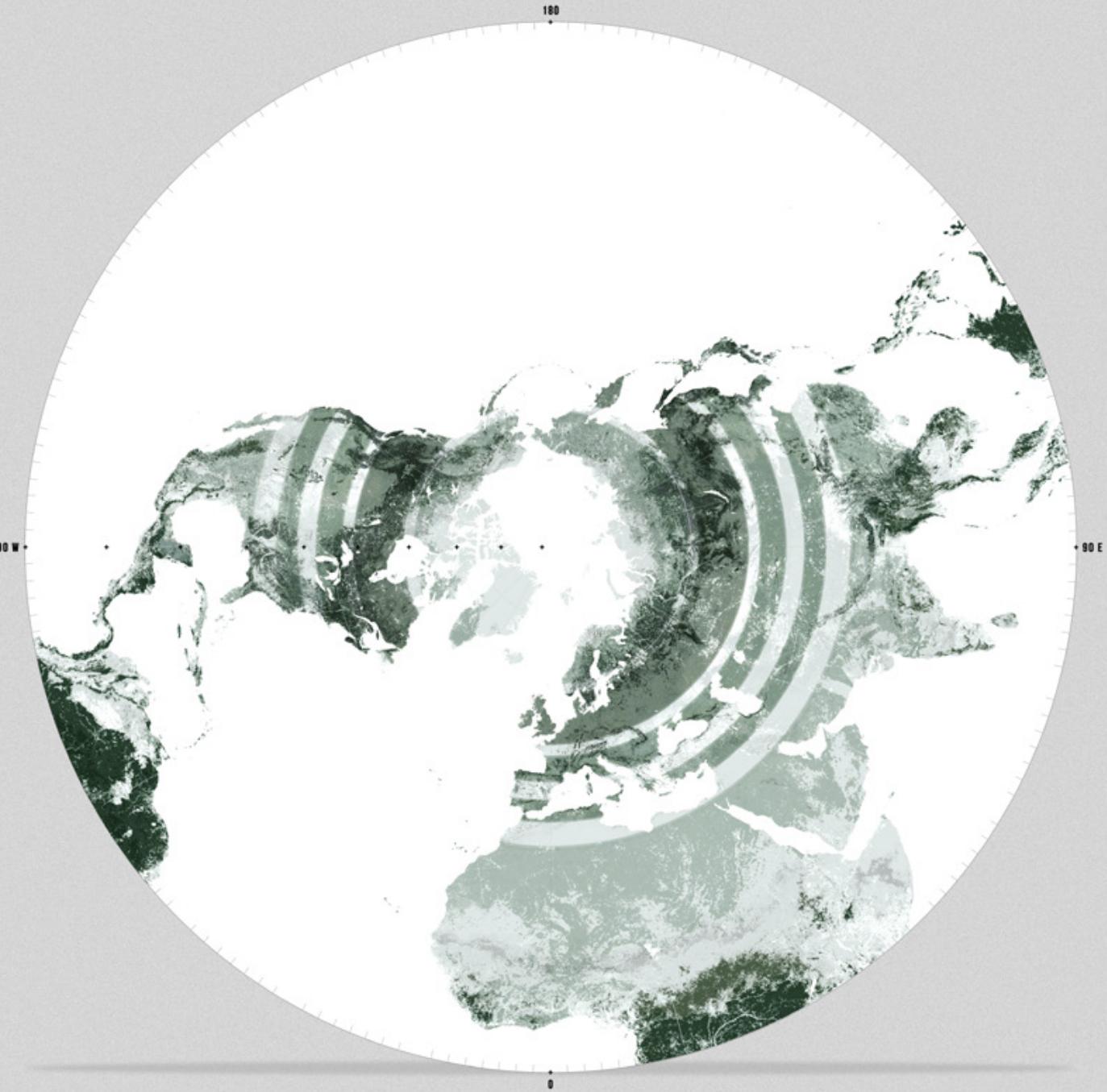




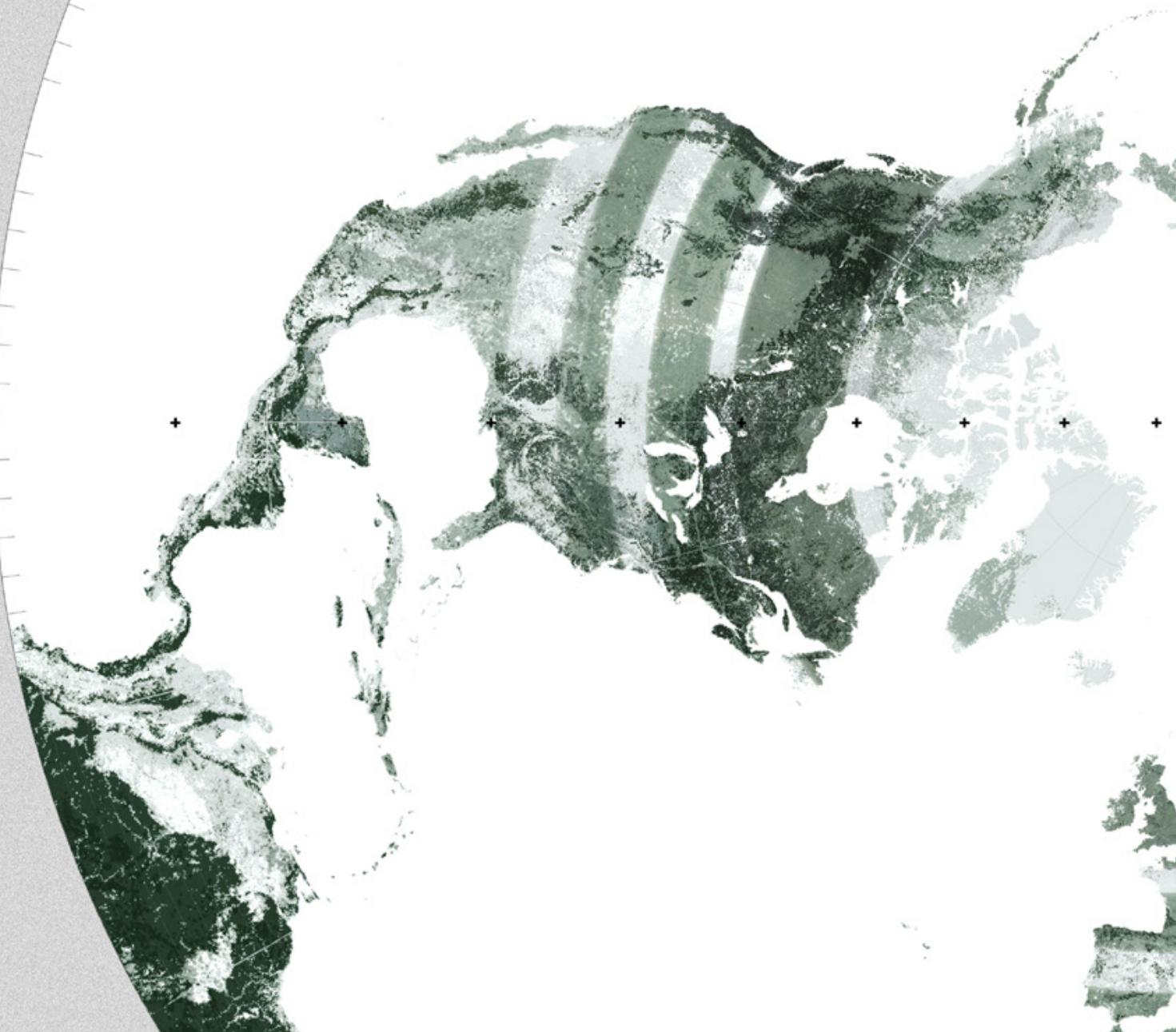


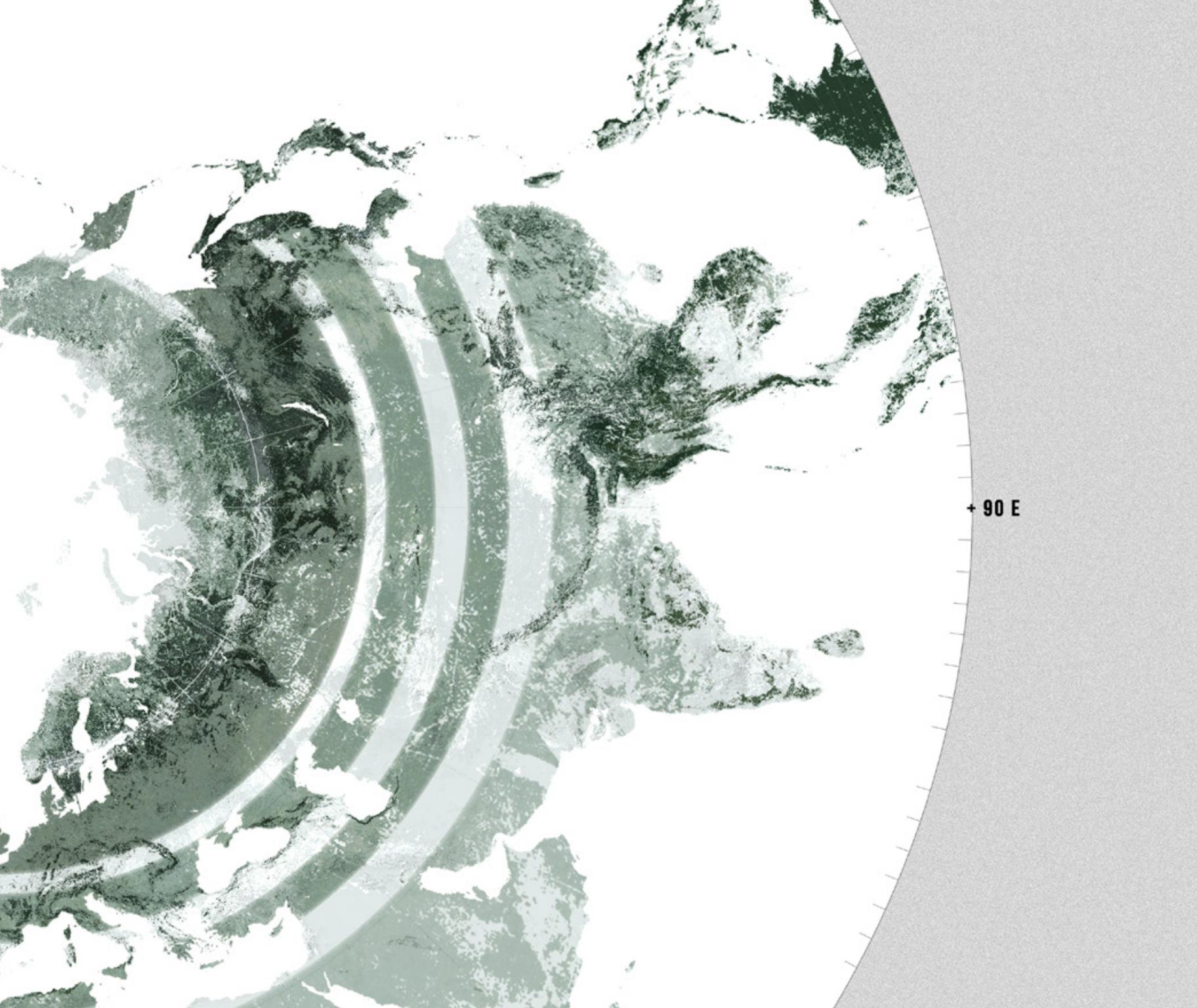






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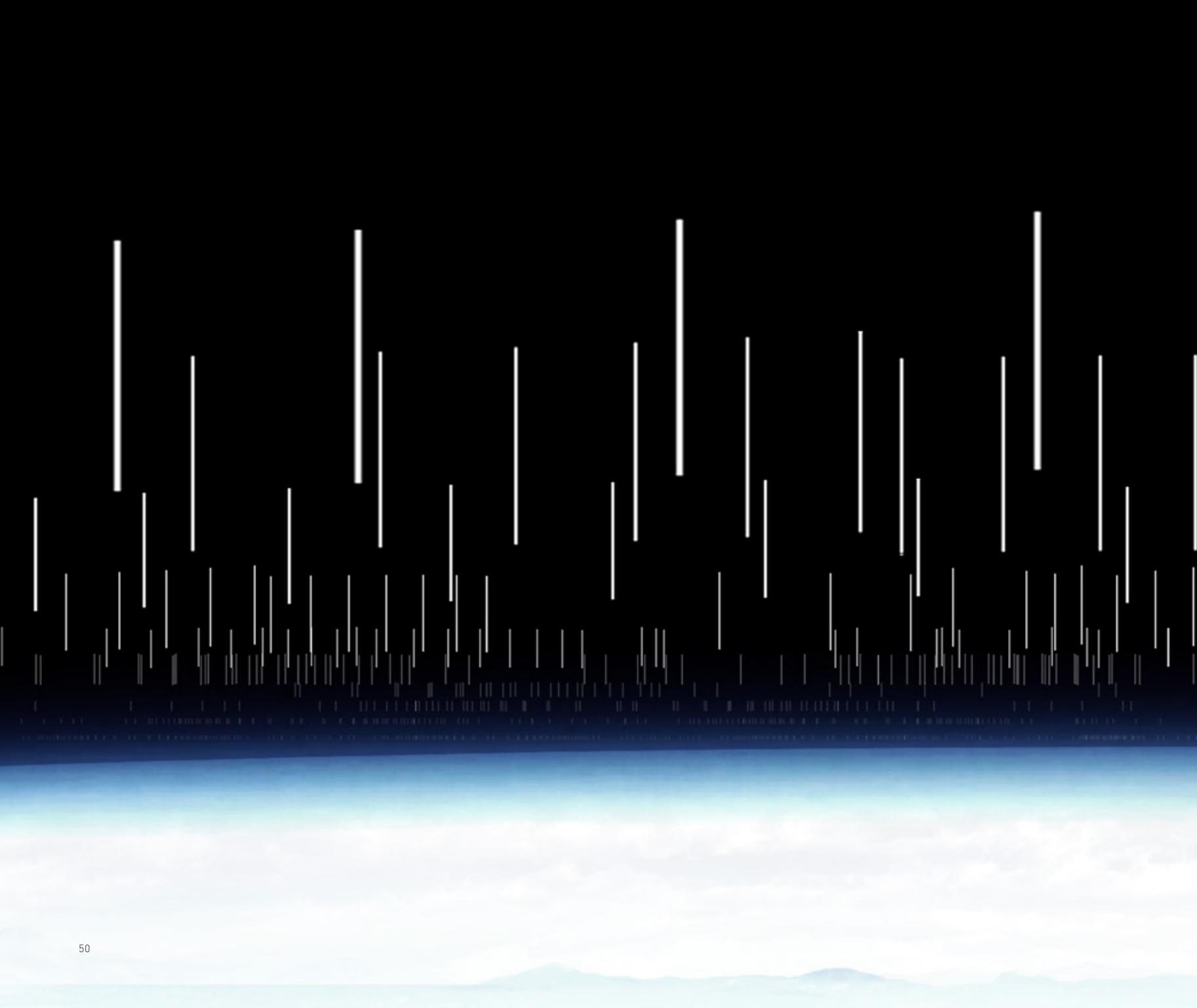


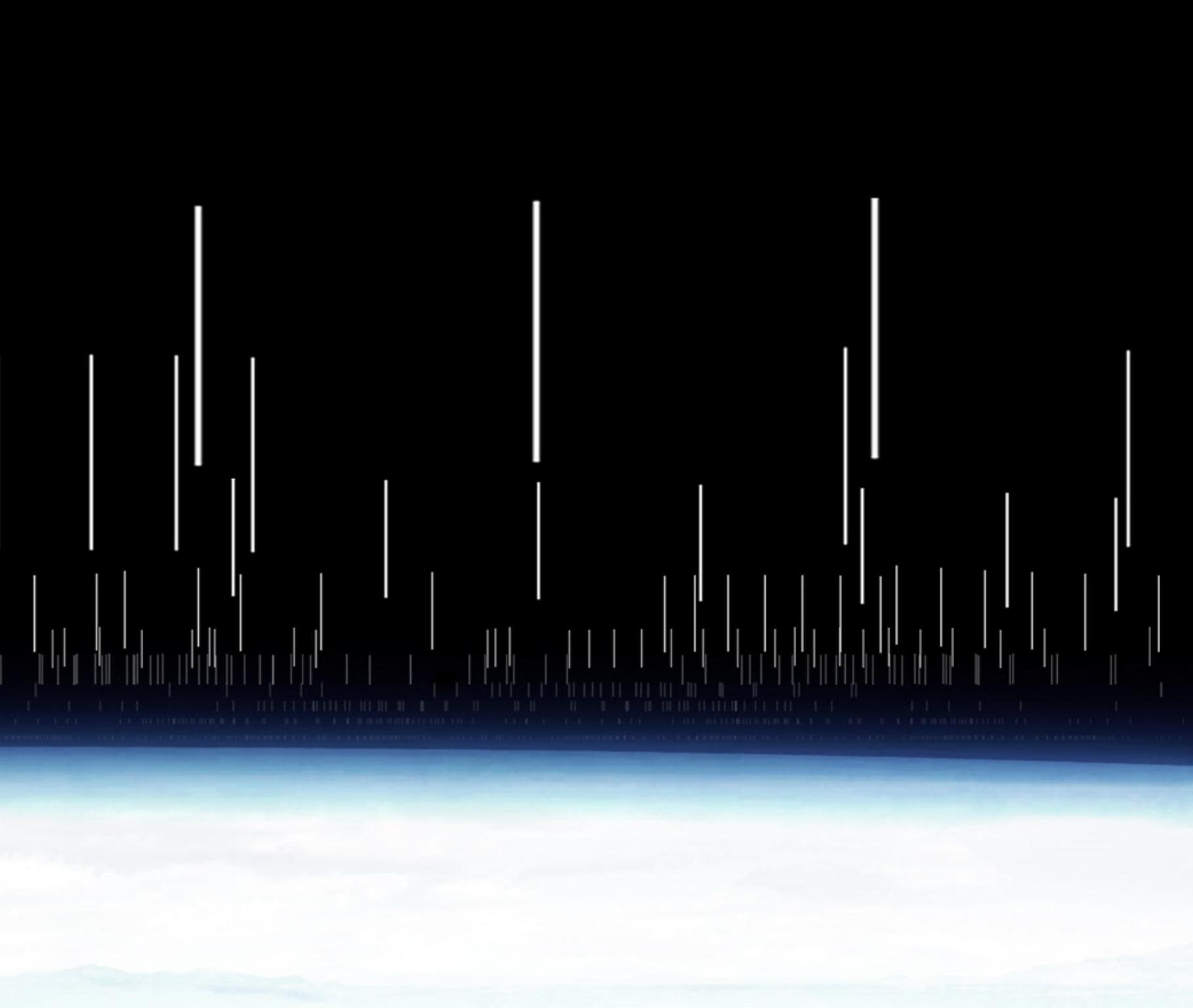


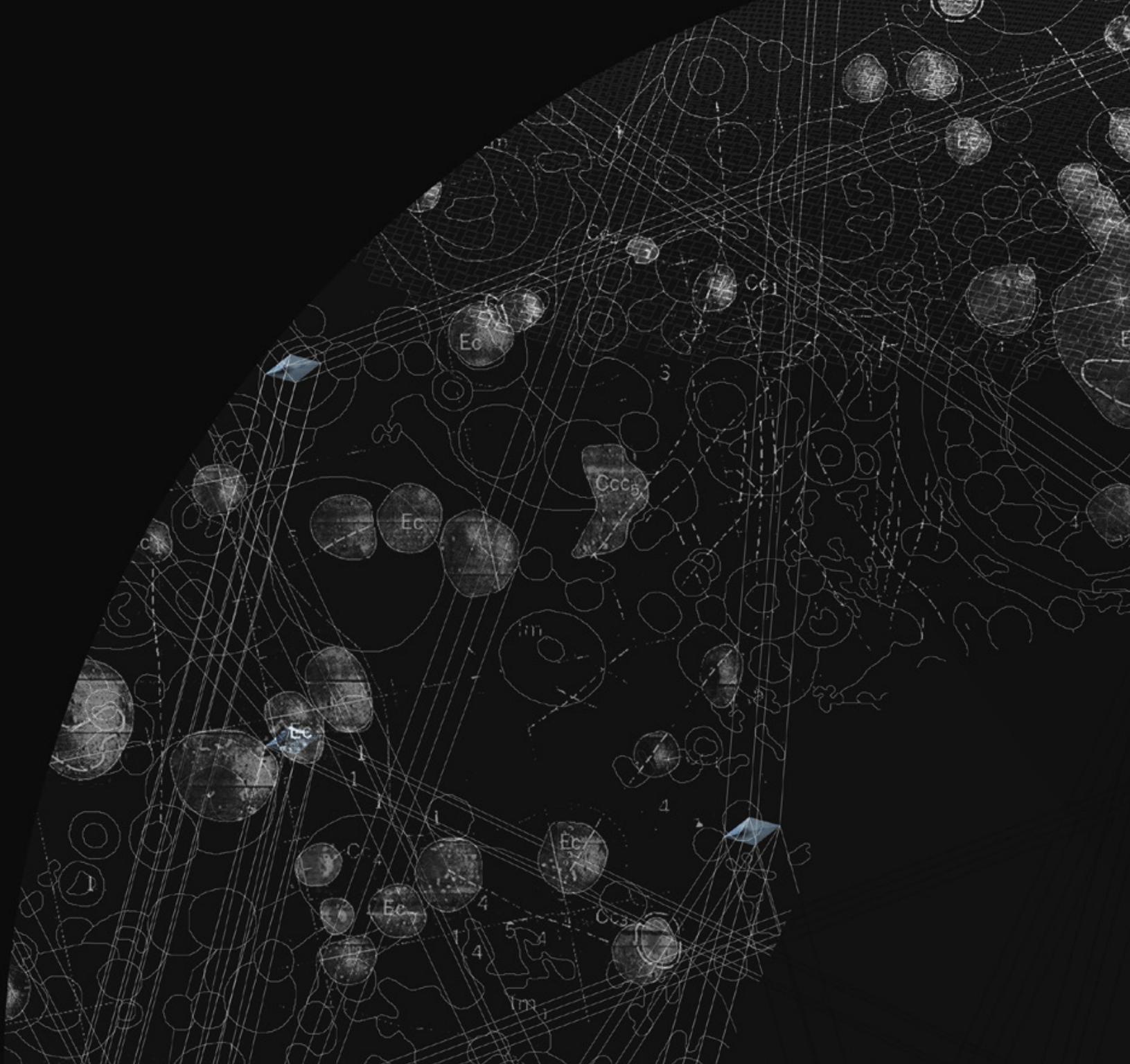
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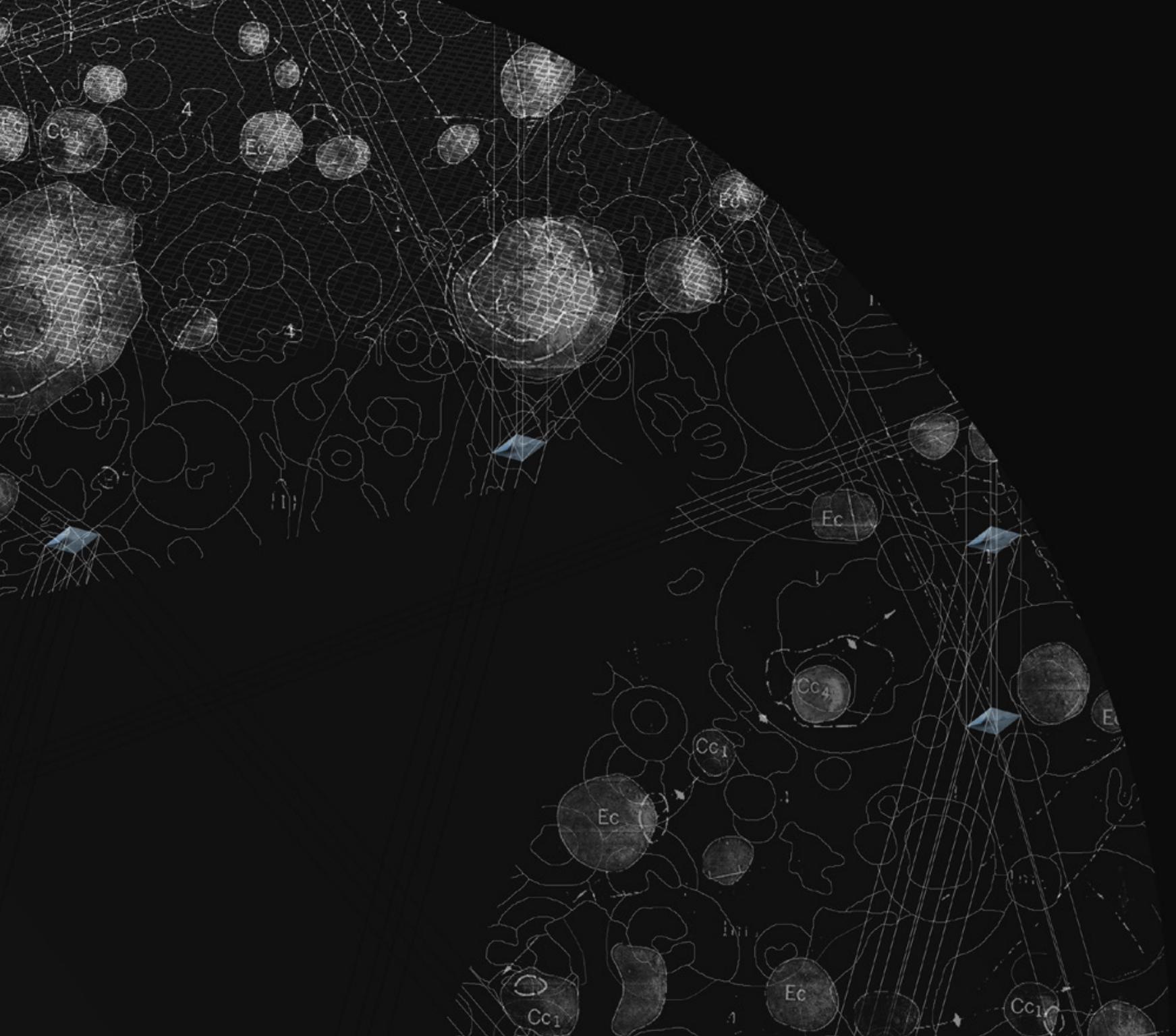


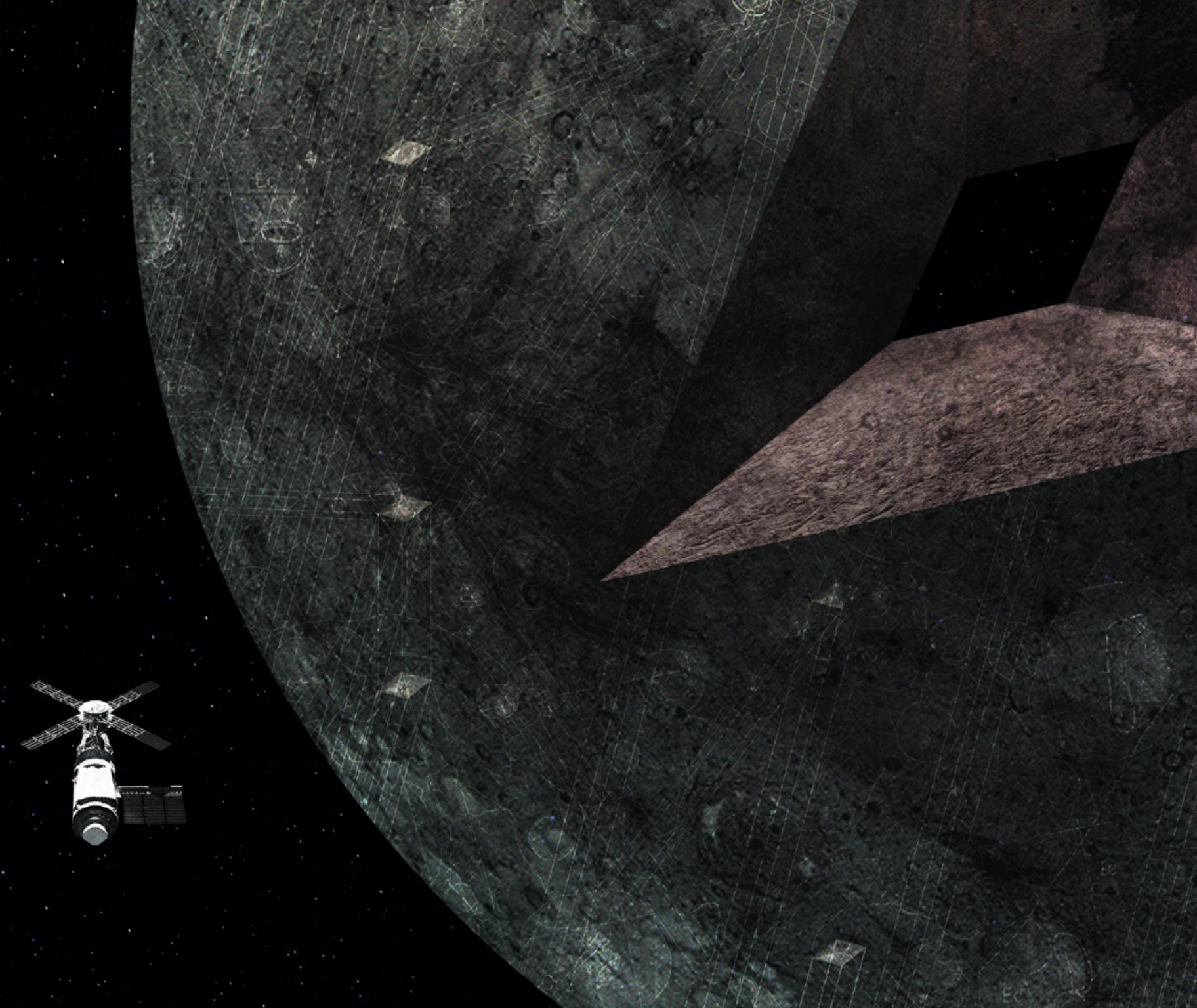


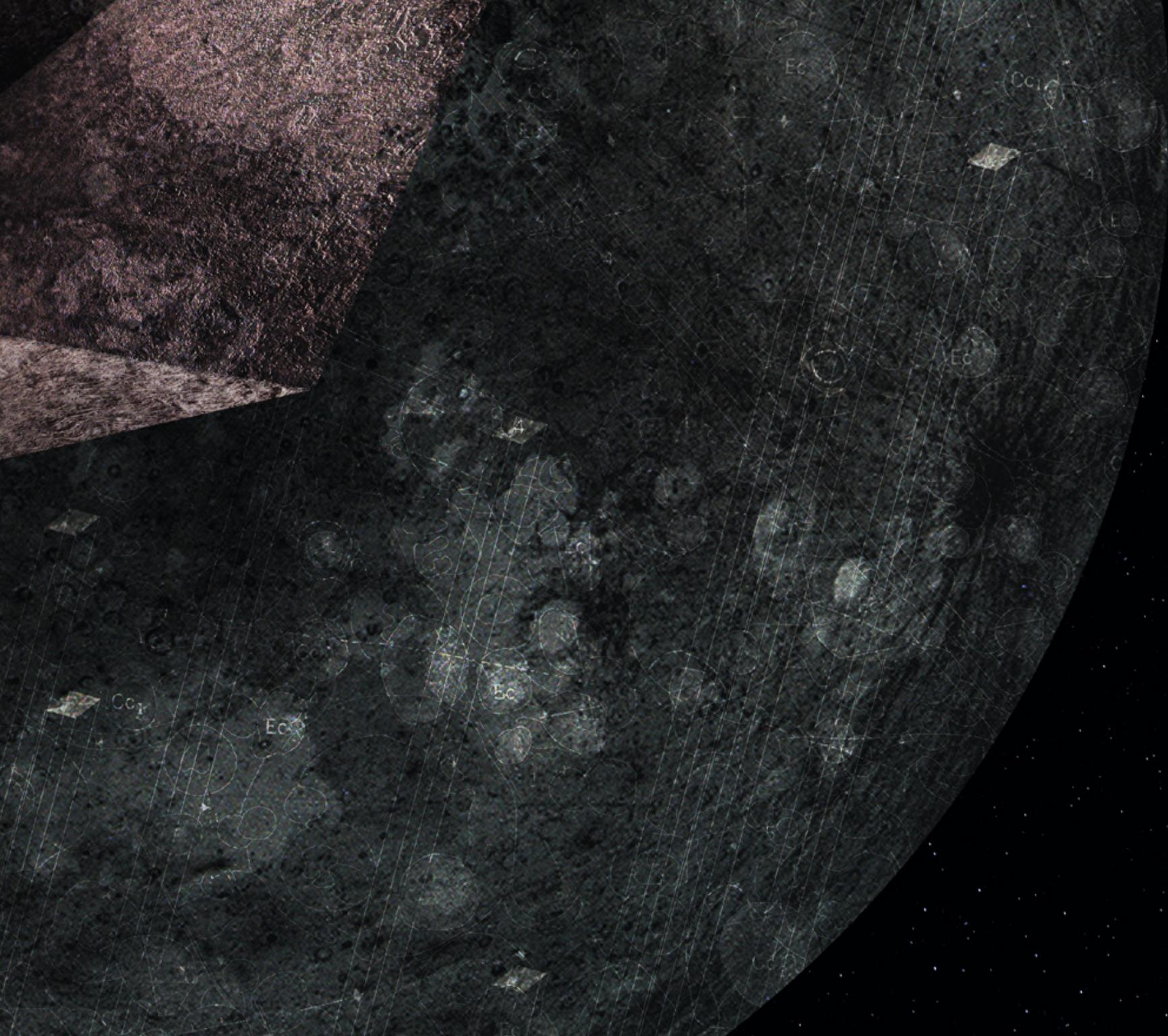












Ec

Cc

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4

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Ec

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Cc

Ec

Should I die before humankind
spins cosmic bodies into
some grand Fibonacci sequence
uplift my corpse from
Earth's soiled ground
and launch normal to surface
and watch from some remote screen
and speak not of energy gone to waste
but of the infinite increments
my body will reach in time.

Thomas Provost, 2012