

ESALA 2025

Master of Architecture

CROSSING TANGIER:

CONTACT ZONES

Ana Bonet Miró
Samer Wanen

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Cap Malabata



This catalogue is part of a collection published by the Edinburgh School of Architecture and Landscape Architecture (ESALA), Edinburgh College of Art, University of Edinburgh. It documents student design work produced in the Master of Architecture (MArch) programme in 2024-25. Each catalogue describes one of the following design studios in the MArch programme. The full collection is available to view online at issuu.com/eca.march.

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Architecture as Support Structure, Vol. 2

Crossing Tangier, Vol. 2

Daire's Airc, Vol. 2

Doing Enough with Less: Leith

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Bonet Miró, Ana, and Samer Wanani. *Crossing Tangier, Vol. 2*.

Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh, 2025.

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Crossing Tangier, Vol. 2

ISBN (paperback): 978-1-83645-107-5

ISBN (eBook): 978-1-83645-108-2

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Samer Wanani

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The City Port

The ability to 'see' time is as important as that of 'bearing' space.

'Cedric Price Talks at the AA', *AA Files*, no. 19 (1990): 33.



TANGIER AS CONTACT ZONE

This catalogue documents the conclusion of a one-year architectural design studio exploring post-colonial Tangier as a complex site of crossing. Situated at the tip of Africa and within sight of Spain, Tangier offers a unique vantage point to examine the global dynamics that define the Strait of Gibraltar as a contact zone, where practices and dreams of crossing converge. These have woven together an intricate colonial history, which has been registered in the cartographies that facilitated European military and economic claims over its geography, in the range of paintings, photographs, and postcards that constructed Tangier's alterity within the European imagination since the mid-1850s, in the literature and films of the International Zone and those produced after the independence of Morocco in 1956. A global gateway for commodities, Tangier is today an infrastructure space serviced by its mega-port and its associated free trade zones. Intense urban development erases the traditional form of the enclave – and the socio-material networks that supported its ways of life – as the city welcomes the tourists and investors, those who dream of Tangier anew. Yet amidst the flow of commodities and tourists, a landscape of micro-practices reveals the inventiveness of Tangier's everyday life – as beautifully captured by the critical artistic practice of Yto Barrada.

Shaped by both its colonial past and infrastructural present, the idea of Tangier as a 'contact zone' draws, on one hand, from cultural theorist and writer Marina Warner's study of *The Arabian Nights*, particularly the cross-fertilisation sparked by the global circulation of this collection of magical tales and the ways in which they influenced the rational drive of modern culture 'at home'. Warner argues that Western artistic appropriations of the stories' wonders—and their elastic handling of time and space—across literature, film, and architecture opened vistas of new freedoms that had tangible effects

TANGER

Lotissement de la ville nouvelle et nouveau port

Projets établis par la Direction Générale des Travaux Publics

Échelle 1:10,000

PROPRIÉTÉS FRANÇAISES . . .

PROPRIÉTÉS MARCANNIÈRES . . .

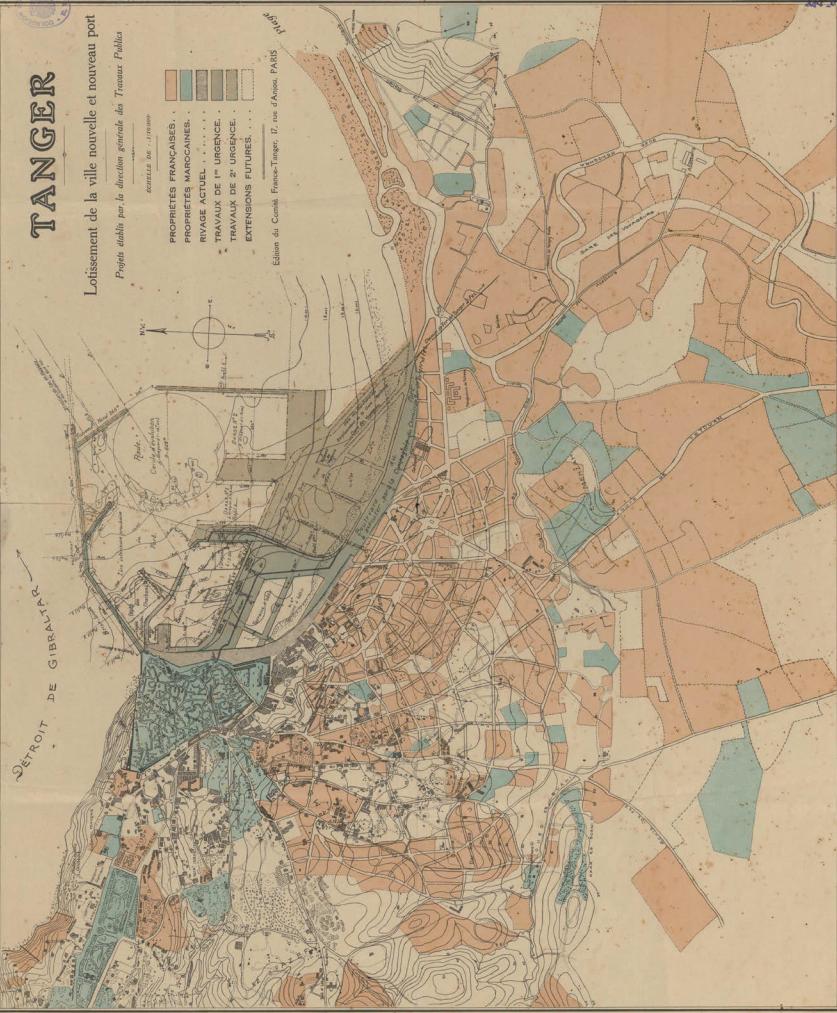
RYAGE ACTUEL

TRAVAUX DE 1^{re} URGENCÉ . . .

TRAVAUX DE 2^{re} URGENCÉ . . .

EXTENSIONS FUTURES . . .

Édition du Comité France-Tanger, 17, rue des Acacias, PARIS



Tanger: Lotissement de la Ville Nouvelle et Nouveau Port

Projets Établis par la Direction Générale des Travaux Publics, 1934?, 1:10,000.

on the political and social imagination of the time. Tangier's colonial imagery appears to bear a similar kind of agency in European cultural production.¹

On the other hand, the vitality that characterises the experience of Tangier seems to derive precisely from its condition as a contact zone. Such zones are inherently sites of contestation, and this lends a degree of ambivalence to their cultural production. For literature scholar Mary Louise Pratt, these are 'social spaces where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power, such as colonialism, slavery, or their aftermaths as they are lived out in many parts of the world today.'² She goes on to define both the arts and perils of writing in the contact zone: the former entails practices such as transculturation, critique, parody, bilingualism, imaginary dialogue, and vernacular expression; the latter involves risks of miscomprehension, radical heterogeneity of meaning, or unread masterpieces.³ By analogy, architectural production in contact zones may be similarly open-ended, ambivalent and complex.

The studio engages with Tangier's cultural history and present reality as a contact zone. It pursues research-led architectures that reimagine the city as a vital site of encounter and exchange. And it does so through the mobilisation of wonder and delight—affects that endow real experience with agency. While vitality refers to the diversity and dynamism that make spaces public, delight emerges from conditions that distort time and space—through unexpected encounters, provisional assemblies, and open-ended outcomes—and imbues experience with a mobility that captures attention and invites participation.

These qualities point towards an understanding of architecture as a dynamic endeavour that resonates with the important legacy of British architect Cedric Price, which we encountered through the UK-wide initiative Thinkbelt. The touring exhibition 'Delightful Fun: A Cedric Price Thinkbelt for Our Times',⁴ brought to the school two original market

1 Marina Warner, *Stranger Magic: Charmed States and the Arabian Nights* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012), 25–6.

2 Mary Louise Pratt, 'Arts of the Contact Zone', *Profession* (1991): 34.

3 *Ibid.*, 37.

4 'Delightful Fun: A Cedric Price Thinkbelt for Our Times', Matthew Gallery, ESALA, UoE, 11–22 November 2024. Curated by Ana Bonet Miró, María Martínez Sánchez, Martin Brown.

stall prototypes by Price, along with a selection of designs for ephemera, reproductions of drawings, and recorded lectures. The direct engagement with these archival materials prompted reflection on how our architectures for Tangier could be designed to be user-centred, timely and delightful, to address current environmental and social challenges.

Learning from Price's work, we began by exploring colonial media as networked practices, viewing architectures as intervals, and designing their representations as chronographies—making space represent time. This approach also led us to spatialise time through design, engaging critically with incrementality, ephemerality, flexibility, adaptive reuse, design for disassembly, and, ultimately, degrowth—all key concerns in Price's practice. We went on to design material assemblies that inventively recontextualised construction systems and technologies within local conditions, while considering the life-cycle performance of their components. These designs aimed to be complex, poetic, economical, and environmentally effective. Ultimately, being in touch with Tangier transformed our own modes of architectural production. To engage with this complex site of crossing is to be affected by its transformative energy.

Excerpts from the Briefs

Chronographies: Making Time Visible

What counts as contact zone in Tangier? We begin by examining the impressions left by the city, its inhabitants, and its practices in colonial media. From the speculative Tangier of the diplomatic period, to the clandestine Interzone, and today's infrastructural landscapes, each period generates distinctive contact zones through cultural production. We focus on sites and practices of encounter—both conflictive and convivial—active across different times. Beyond what is shown or narrated, the artefacts themselves—a map, postcard, photograph, or building—act as contact zones, linking Tangier to wider, often global, networks. These objects speak of resources, labour and situated knowledge, prompting us to trace the actors and timelines involved in their making. Alongside these cultural contact zones, we consider interactions with natural ones—within and beyond Tangier—exploring how they affect local ecosystems and sustained conditions.

We will design chronographies to represent Tangier's contact zones as entangled encounters in time. Both analytical and speculative, research-led and projective, these time-maps will function as design tools in their own right. We are interested not only in the relationships they reveal, but also in their material expression. Think of your chronographies as small paper architectures—capable of generating new space-time relations through their animation: folding, punching, juxtaposing, layering, and more. These constructions will respond, in some way, to Cedric Price's market stalls and the range of movements they enable. During the field trip to Tangier, new chronographies will record events observed and experienced directly, shifting the focus from macro-timelines to micro-dynamics—such as informal occupations of space, recurring daily events, shifting shadows, tidal or wind patterns, local soundscapes, etc. As part of the Thinkbelt exhibition in November, you will also design how this collection of chronographies interacts with or occupies Cedric Price's market stalls.

Hyphen: Design Crossings

An exploratory design project will 'inhabit' some of the contact zones previously researched, testing a site-in-time and anticipating possible directions for the architectural project to be developed next semester. We will refer to this intervention as a 'hyphen': something that comes between, that mediates, and that places things in relation to one another.

Material Crossings

In the final semester, we will engage with the idea of crossing from material, technological, and environmental perspectives. What form might a material contact zone take? How can we imbue vitality, delight, and a time-based approach into the material assemblies we produce? This exploration will involve designing hybrid assemblies that recontextualise local technologies and resources in poetic and environmentally effective ways, while also critically examining resource consumption across the entire life cycle of the project. To this end, we propose introducing a form of undoing within the iterative design process—one that questions prevailing notions of growth and embraces complexity through careful material choices. How can we enrich the architectural project by embracing both complexity and economy?

Ana Bonet Miró and Samer Wan



Temporalities of Water Concertina. Thinkbelt Exhibition in the Matthew Gallery.

Kim Lee, Eilidh McKenna

WATERSCAPE
OF TANGIER





"Hijrah" Boardgame

Yixuan Zhang, Yingwen Zhu, Mingsen Li

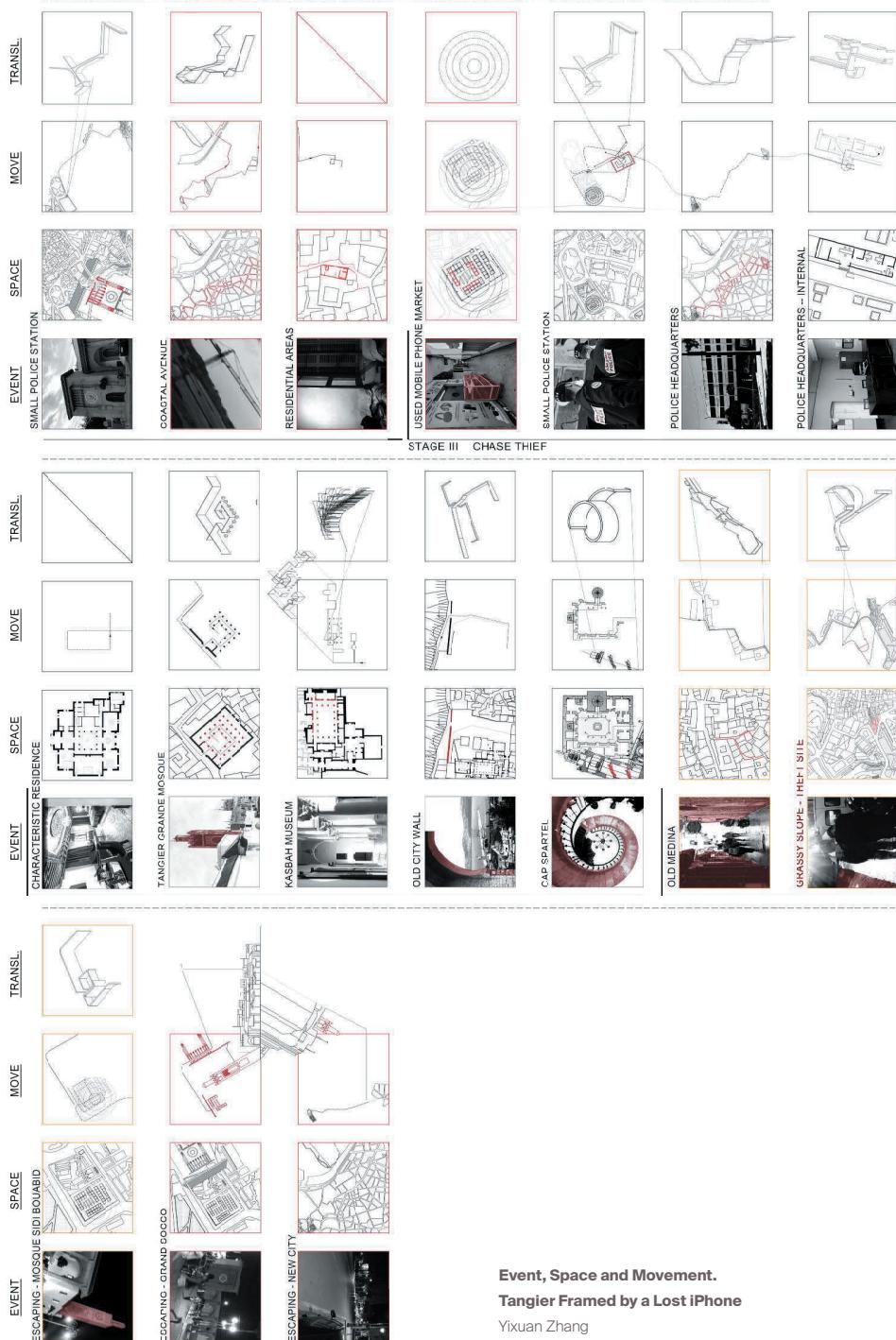


Presenting "Hijrah" Boardgame

Thinkbelt Symposium, Matthew Gallery, 15th November 2024

STAGE I DISCOVER TANGER

STAGE II LOST IPHONE



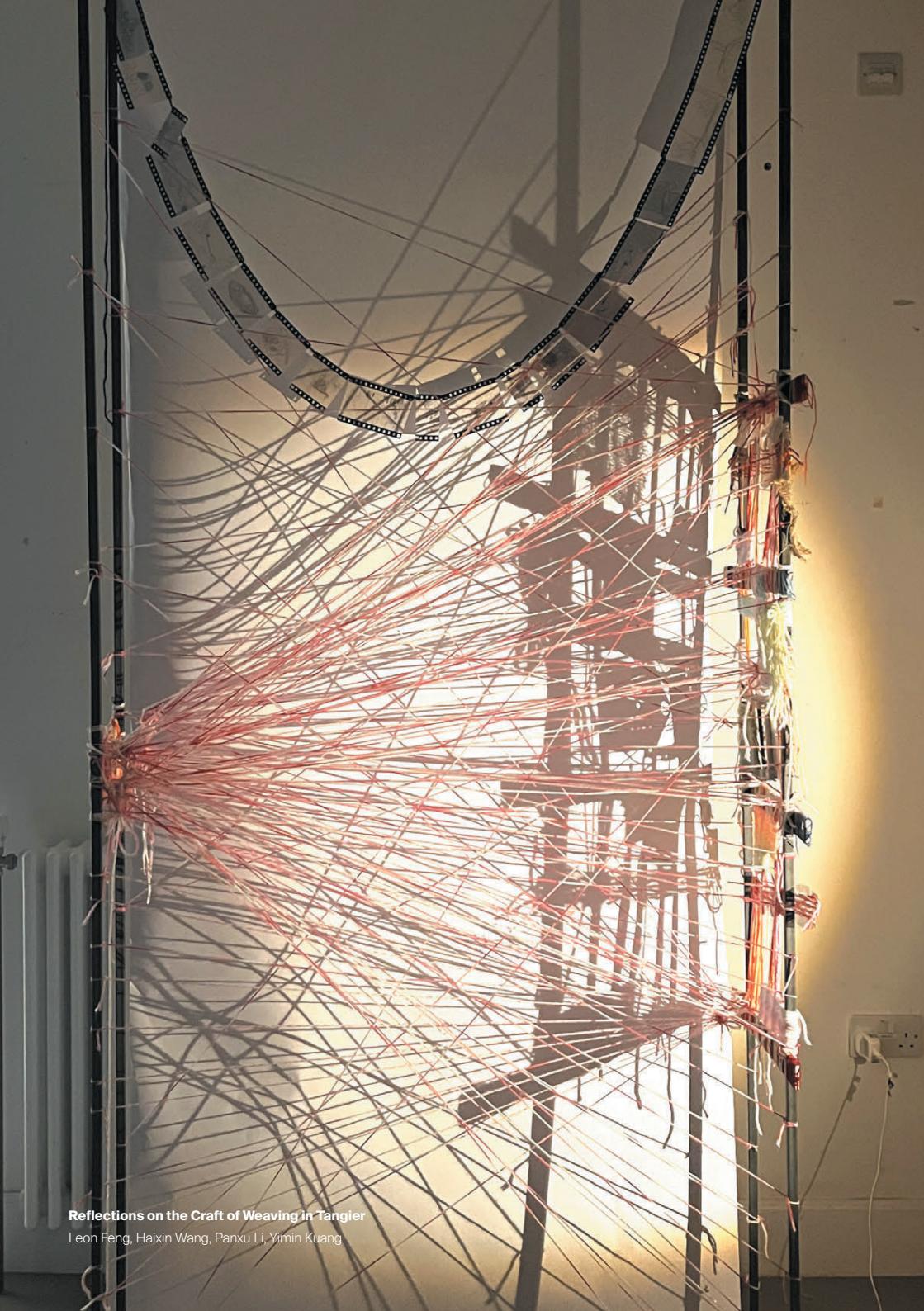
Event, Space and Movement. Tangier Framed by a Lost iPhone

Labour and Leisure, Cinematic Temporalities, Violence and Tranquility of Water

Oliver Maxwell, Folahan Adelakun, Eilidh McKenna, Enrico Luo

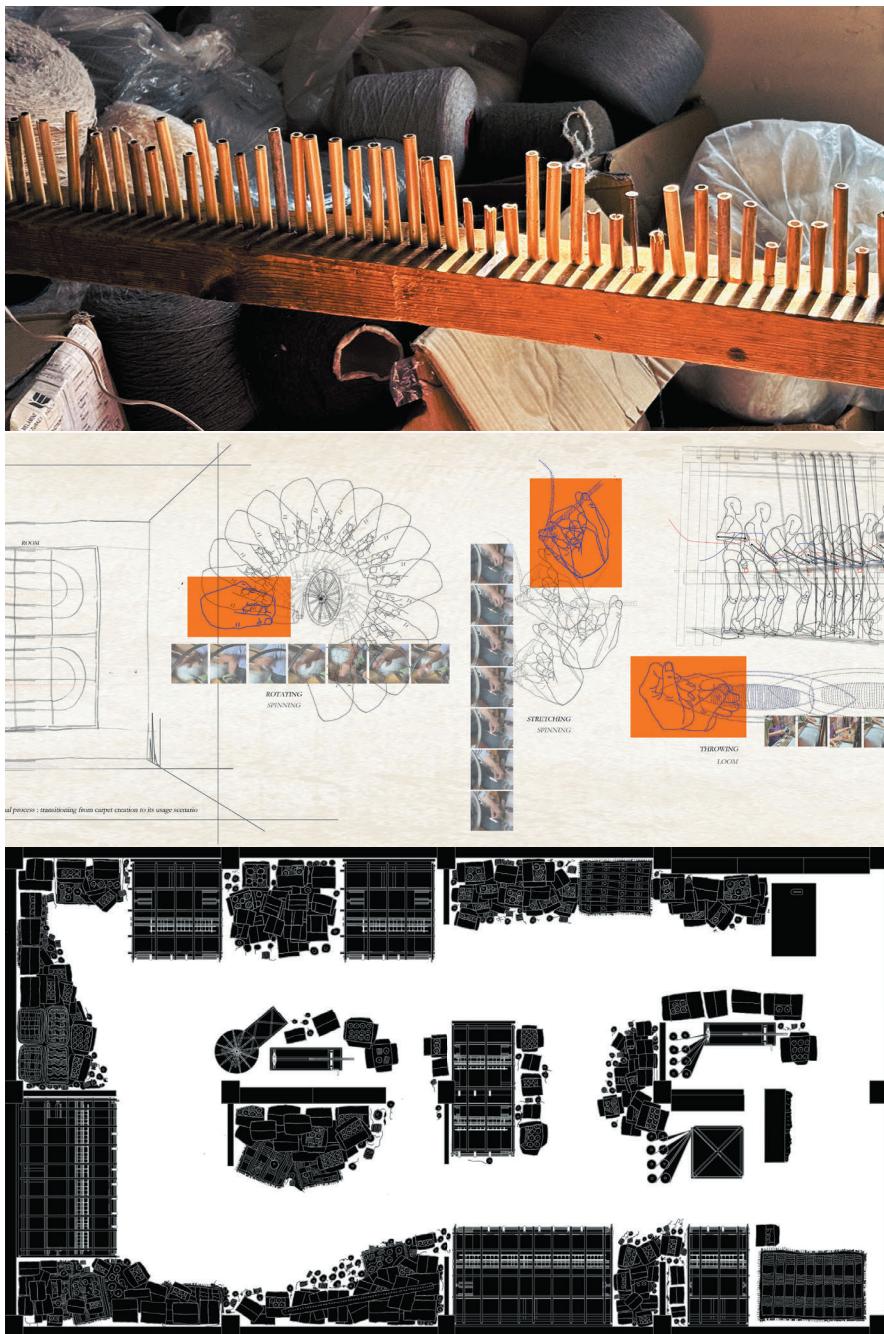






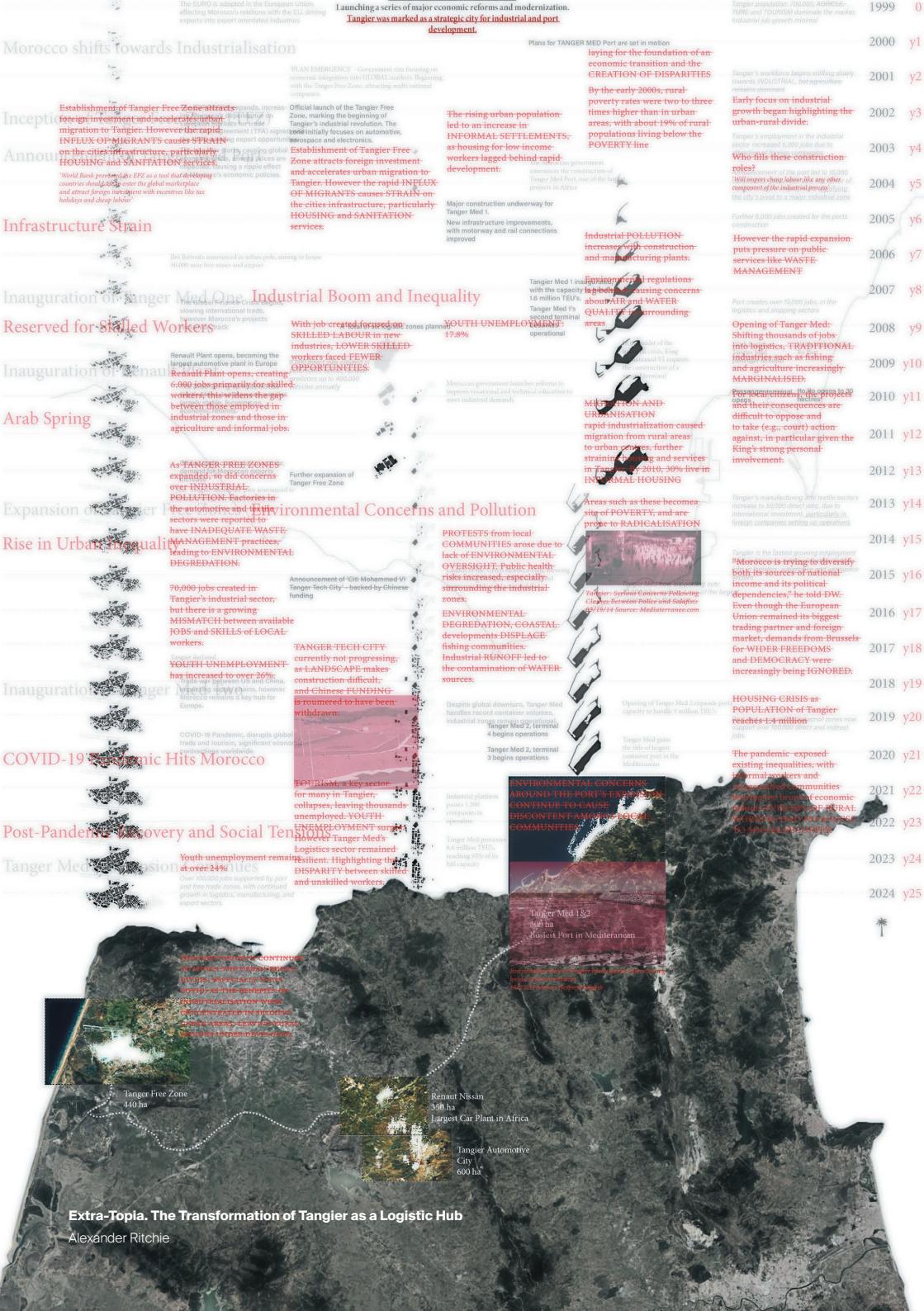
Reflections on the Craft of Weaving in Tangier

Leon Feng, Haixin Wang, Panxu Li, Yimin Kuang



The Weavers' Workshop: Nolli Plan & Gesture Research

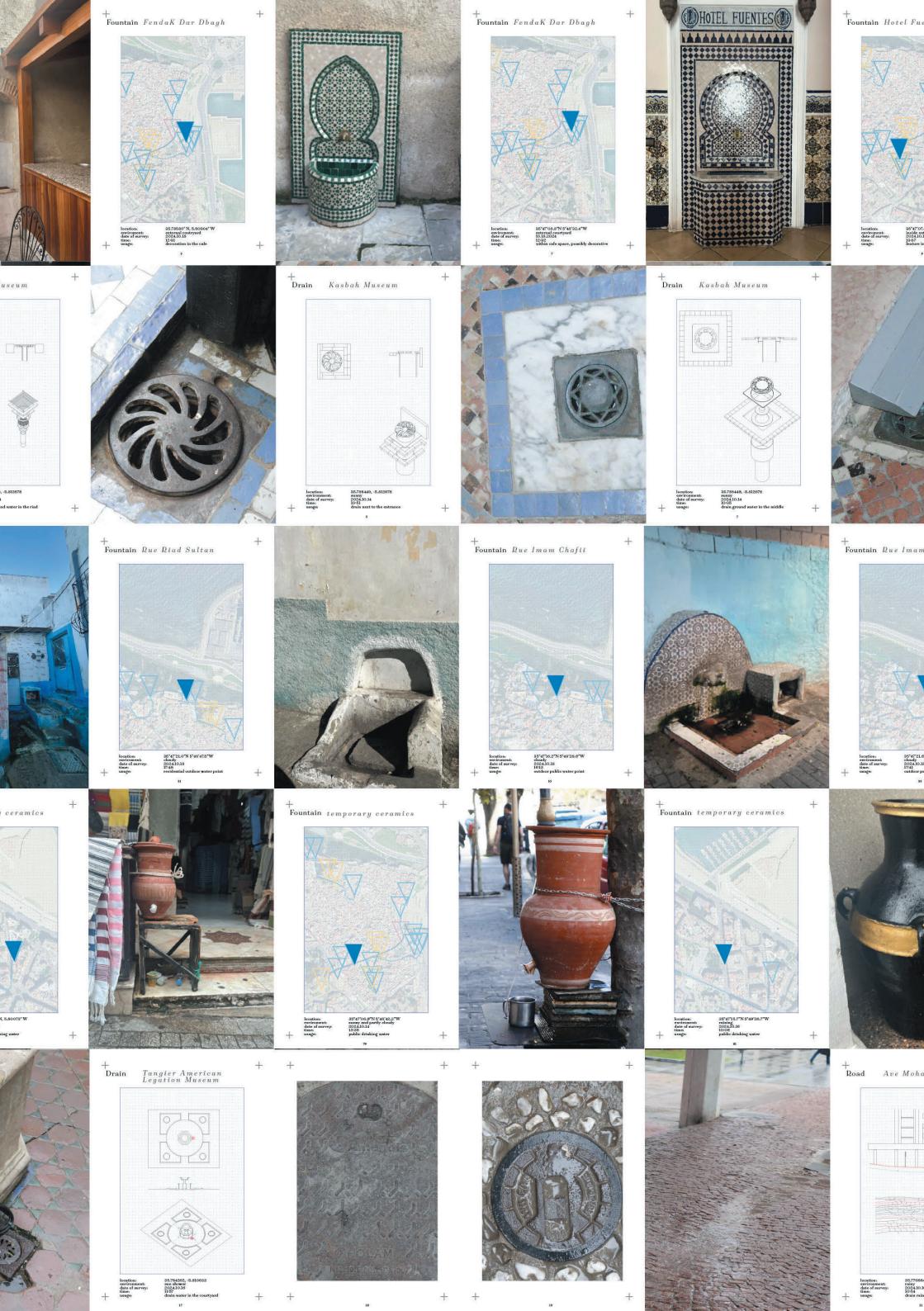
Leon Feng, Haixin Wang





Labour, Leisure and Migration in the Port of Tangier

Oliver Maxwell





Slow Vernacular Commons of Water

Kim Lee, Ellidh McKenna



Exploring Al-Idrisi Map of Europe, Asia and North Africa





Left
Right

**Field Trip. Conversations with Think Tangier
Tangier from Charf Hill**





Framing the New Town of Ibn Battuta



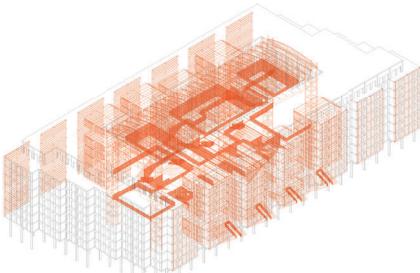
Site: New Town of Ibn Battuta.
Programme: Public Circulation and Community Space, Energy Harvesting Facade, Communal Dining, Kindergarten, Leisure, Workspaces, Living, Winter Garden, Rooftop Cafe.

01

EXTRA-TOPIA

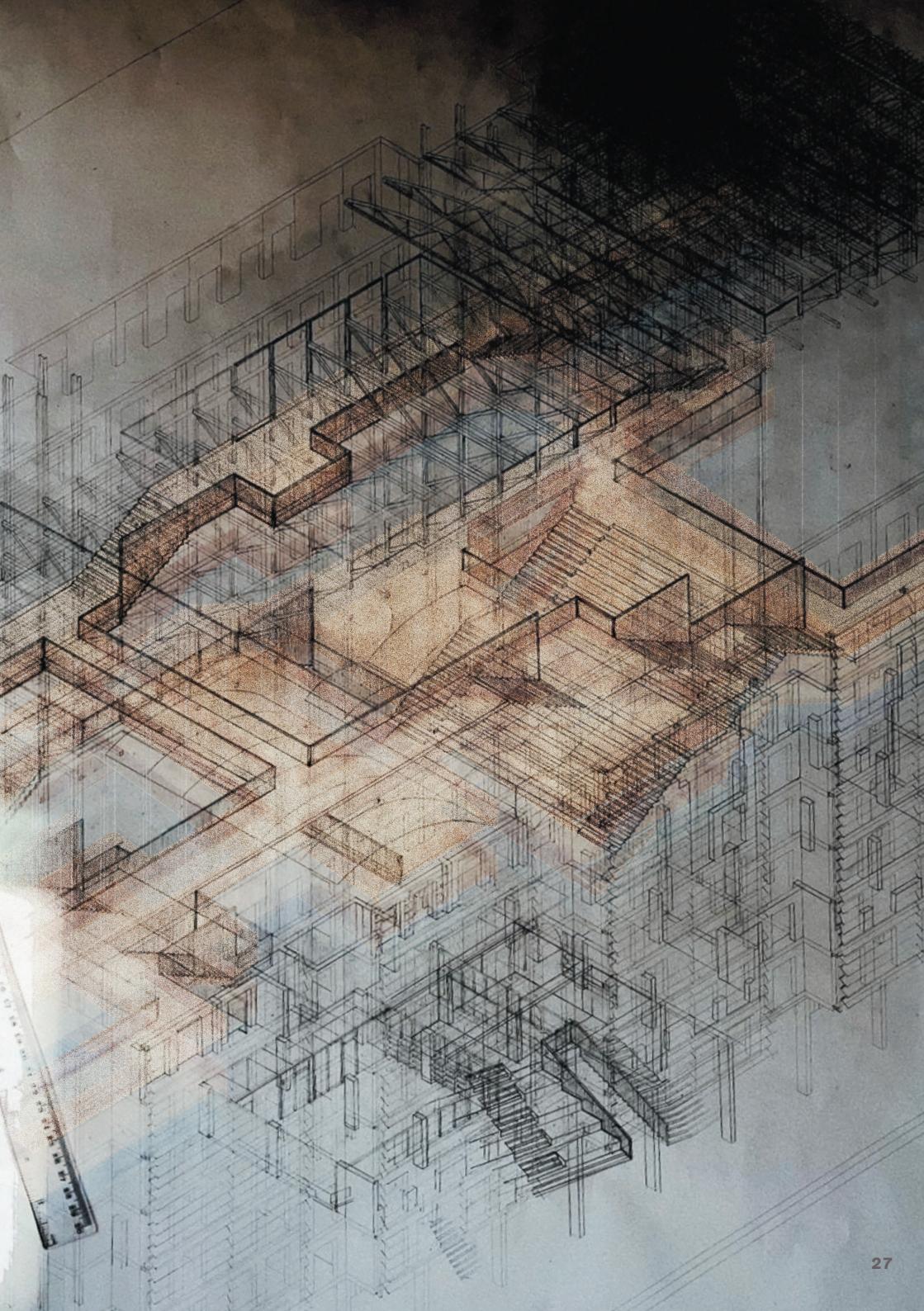
LOCALISING THE REMAINS OF A GLOBAL URBANISM

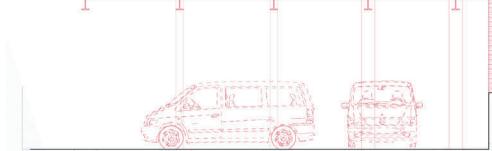
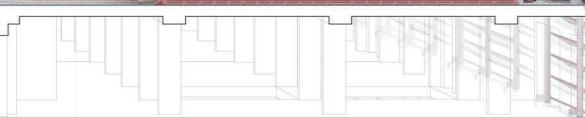
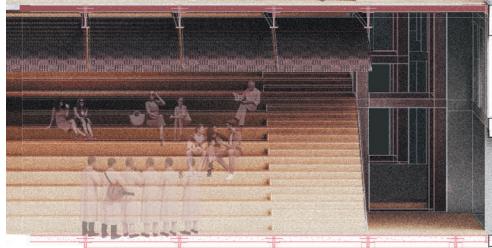
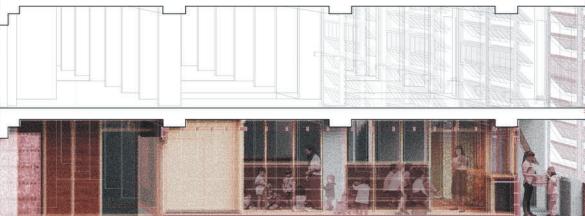
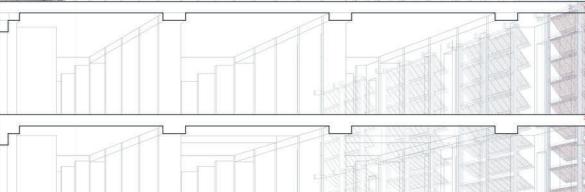
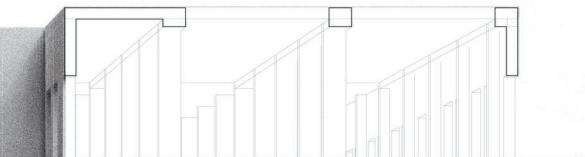
ALEXANDER RITCHIE

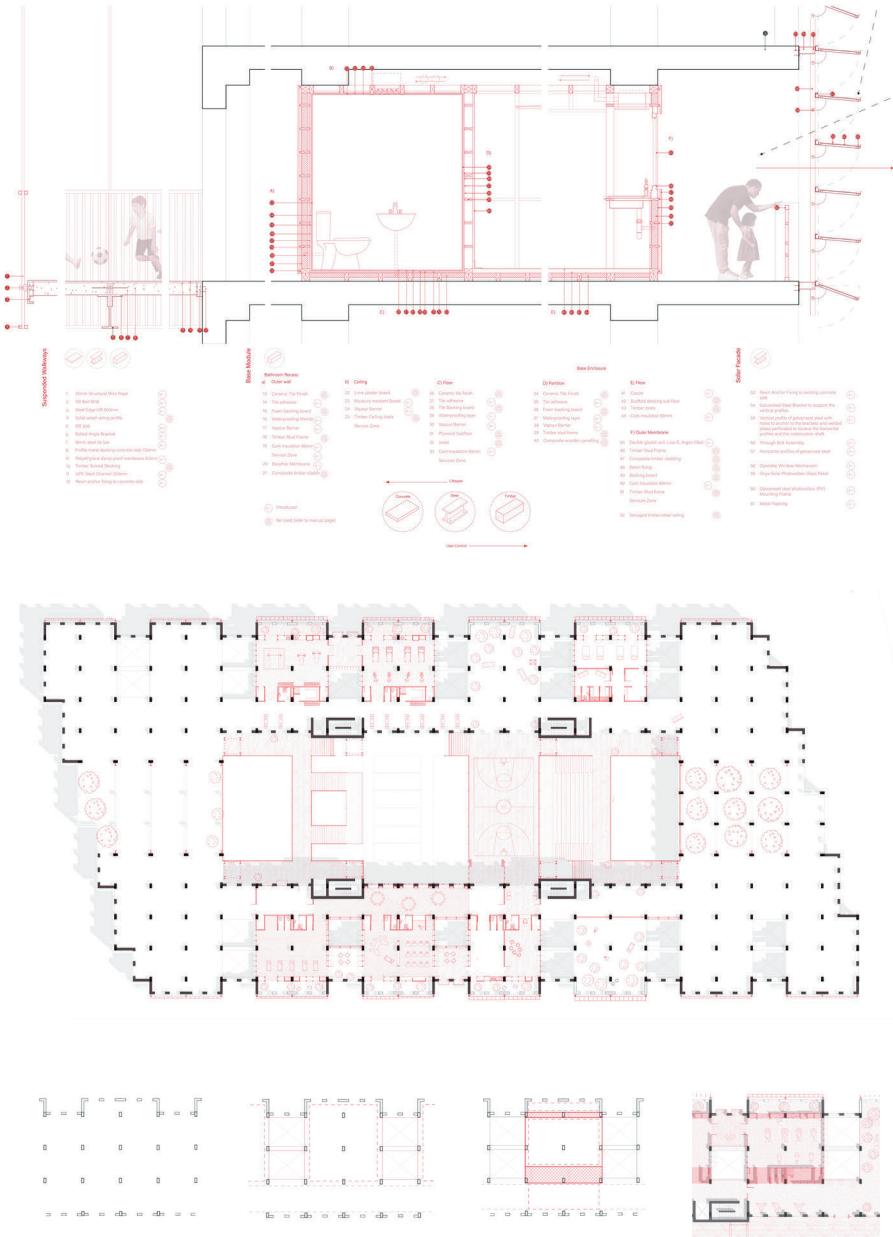


At the fringes of the free trade zone –where 25 years of Tangier’s rapid infrastructural expansion converge with a globalised state of exception – we find ruins. Brought forth by financially incentivized modes of production, and an unprecedented influx of transient workers, a strange urbanism has emerged: ‘new’ cities lining Tangier’s periphery. Like Robert Smithson’s ‘ruins in reverse’, these are monuments to standardised living – developed under obsolete visions of prosperity – only to be abandoned upon ‘completion’. Empty concrete shells, estranged from the communities meant to house, convey a mode of architecture pushed to its own end. This project thus confronts the models for living that these obsolete structures present us with. By accepting them as ‘heterotopias’ within a broader technoscapes, the project reimagines the potential of these concrete shells, exploring their architectural possibilities as frameworks for an evolving, anthropocentric mode of living. The project redevelops an abandoned construction in Ibn Battuta New Town, located near the airport and the adjacent free trade zone. Taking an incremental approach, the design engages the existing structure through a series of typologies that test the spatial framework across various scales. Minor infrastructures – such as façade systems for energy harvesting, roof gardens, a new public circulation and community spaces within the central courtyard, temporary housing and further amenities for free trade workers – serve as catalysts for reprogramming the apathetic shell into a site for social engagement.

The project challenges the global urbanism shaped by capital flows by seeking to root a sense of locality within these extra territorial conditions, transforming space into place and offering a replicable model for similar global conditions.







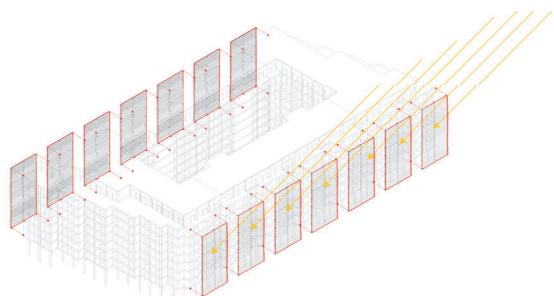
Left
Top
Middle
Bottom

Reversing a Ruin. Key Section

Section Through a Living Manual. Tectonic Section

Grounds for Re-occupation. Ground Plan

Catalysts- Plans

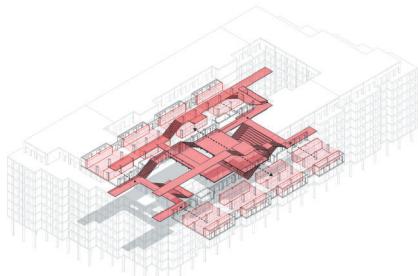
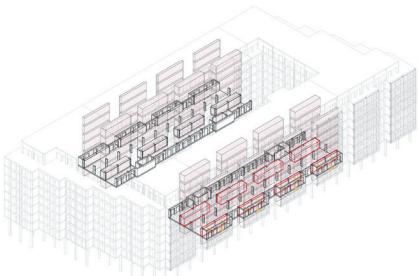


Top
Middle
Bottom

Environments. Interior Renders
Stratigraphy. Elevation/Section
Occupation Strategy. Isometric Diagrams



ALEXANDER RITCHIE | EXTRATOPIA



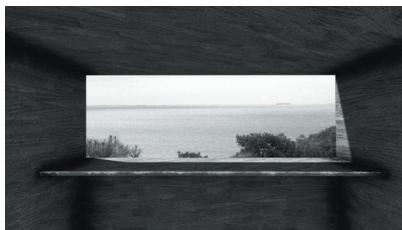
Site: Cap Malabata.
Programme: Discovery and Cinema Pavilion (Observatory 'Nook' Insertions, Vertical Garden, Butterfly Enclosure, Balconies, Stage), Experiential 'Domes', Rooms within the stepped slope (Reception, Cafe, Toilets, Offices, Workshops, Equipment, Classrooms, Terraces)

02

CAP MALABATA PARK

DISCOVER BY DAY, MAGIC UNFOLDS AT TWILIGHT.

ANNA SZCZERBA



Once upon a time in Tangier something delightfully peculiar happened. It was the premiere night of *Une Histoire de Vent* film at the Cinema Riff. The main character, a wise man that devoted his life to capturing the wind, suddenly stepped out of the screen! His eyes sparkled as he addressed the astonished crowd: 'Follow me!'

They all gathered on Grand Socco under the glow of the moon. 'Tonight, magic will awaken. Each of you may make one wish, and it shall come true before the sun graces the sky', he declared. The crowd buzzed with excitement, their imagination ignited. The Cinema Riff spoke first: 'Let's invite the whole world to our film festival!' Yto Barrada added: 'Where can I exhibit my art and spark creativity?'

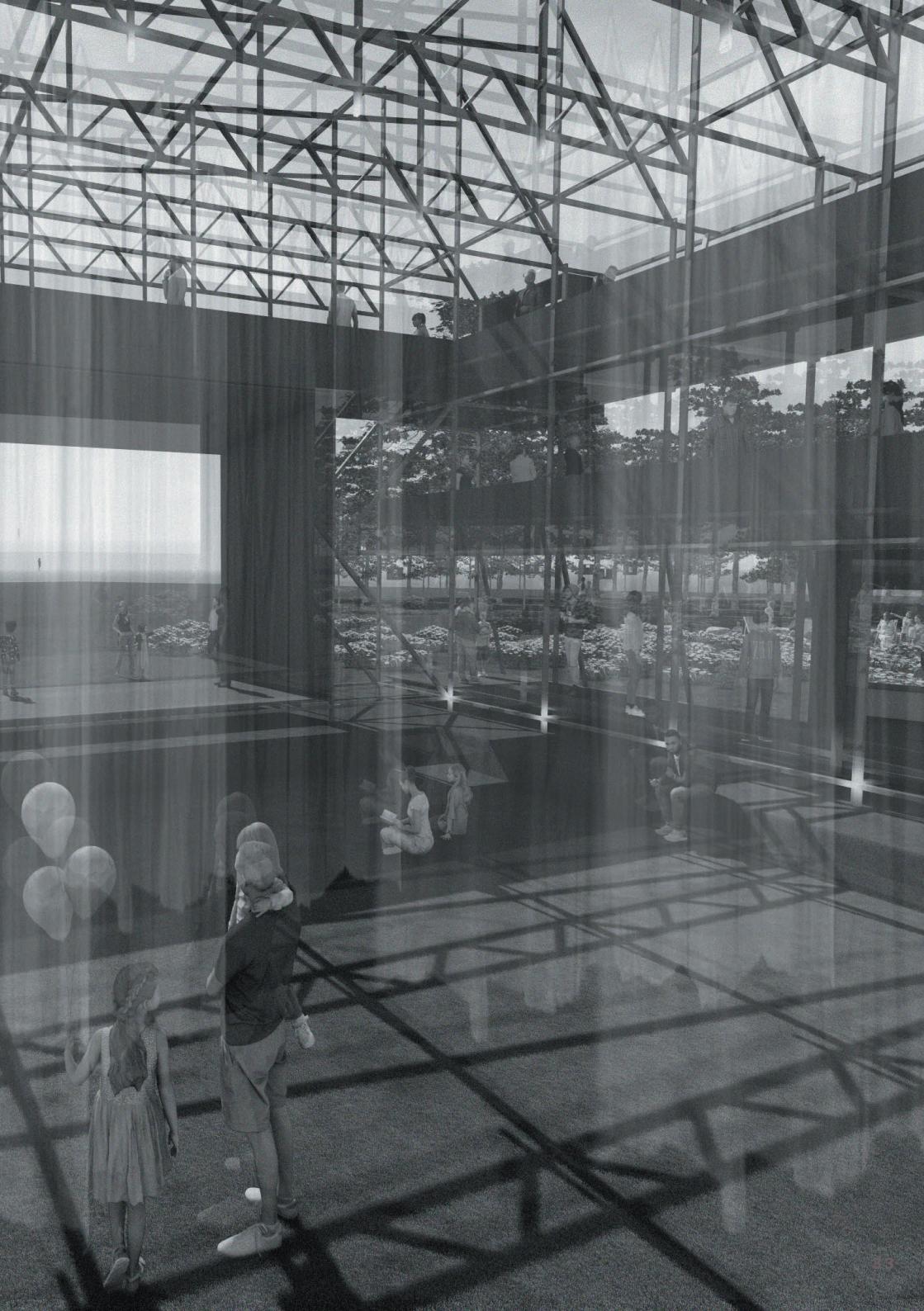
A Construction Worker asked: 'Can we re-use scaffolding for something wonderous?' Children cheered: 'More fun!'

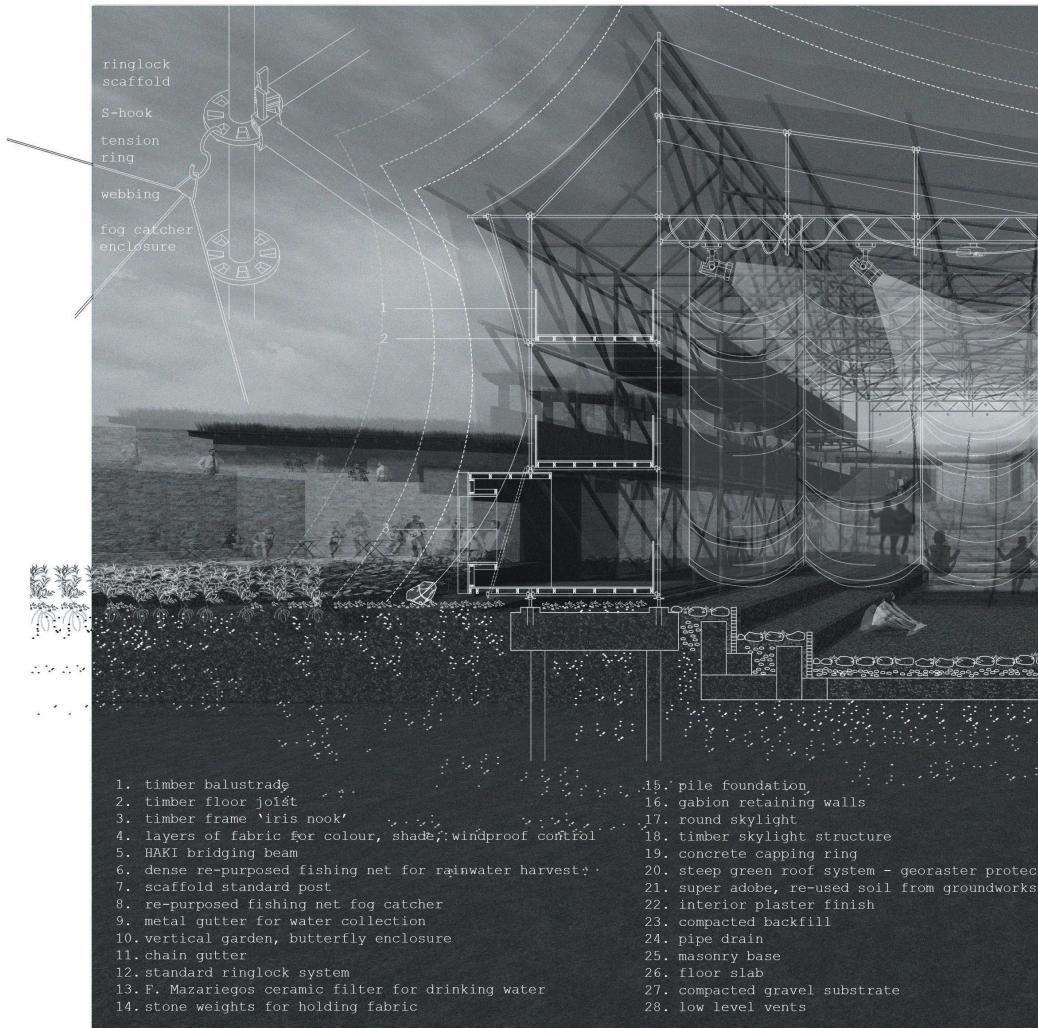
A Researcher wondered: 'Can we have fun and learn simultaneously?'

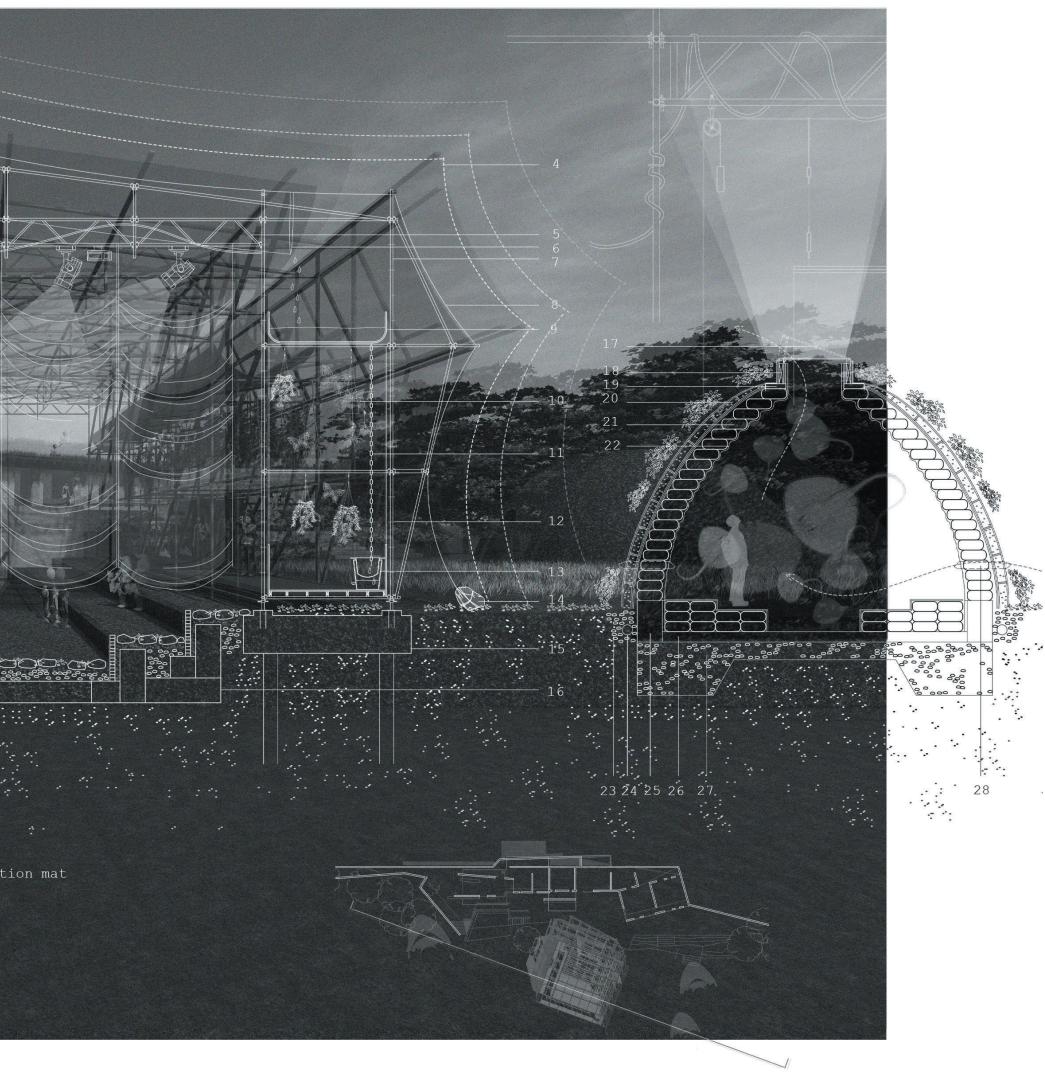
The wise man smiled and revealed his rope with no end. 'I can weave your dreams into reality. Hold on tight.'

As they grasped the rope, it carried them into the night sky, flying over Tangier until they arrived at an empty land beside Cap Malabata lighthouse. The wise man assembled all pipes he found on his way into a playful pavilion. Everyone joined in fastening scaffolds and tying fishing nets, shaping a shared dream: by day discovery blooms, by night magic reigns. The man called the site Cap Malabata Park and vanished as mysteriously as he appeared. The wind passing through the fabrics played a farewell melody for him.

The rest of the story was retold and rewritten over the years blending reality with fiction. Like the tales of 'Arabian Nights' no one really knows what happened and if it happened at all...





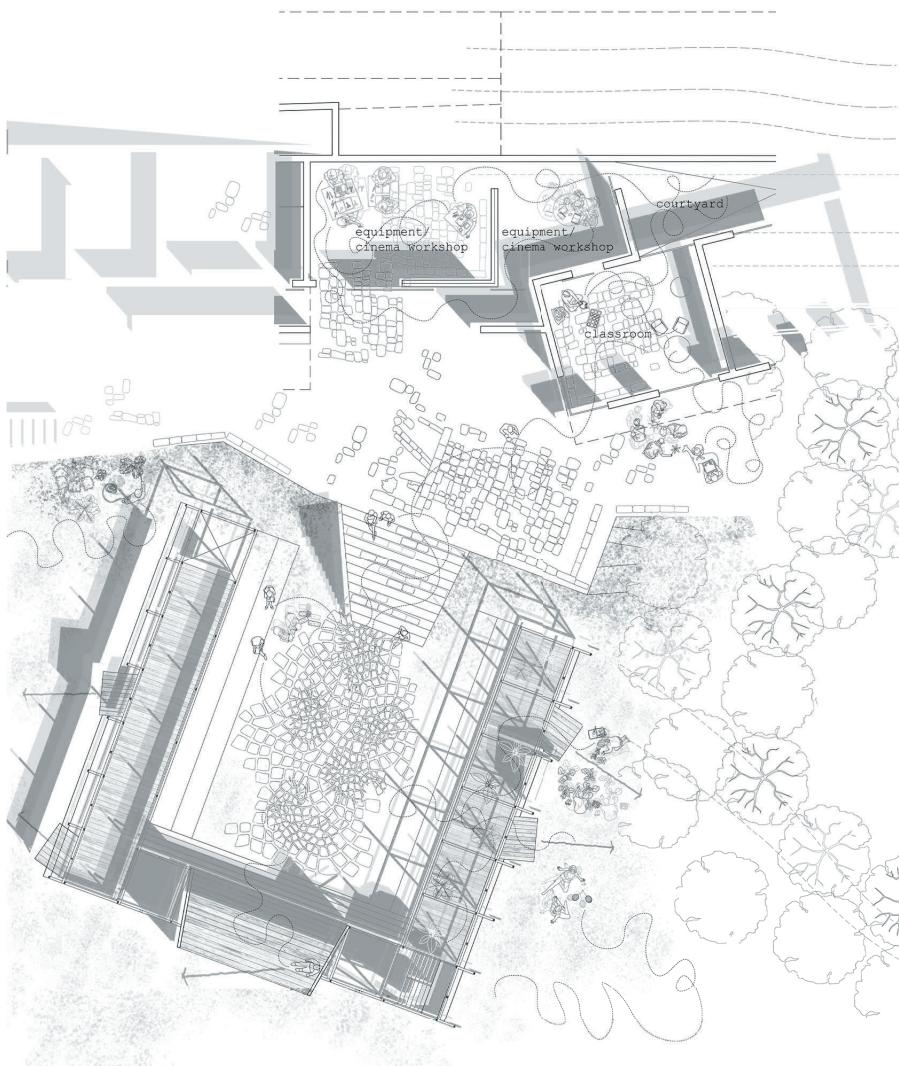


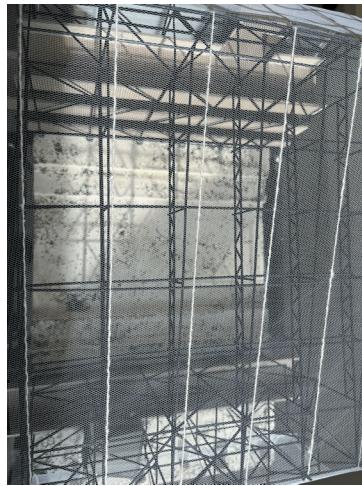
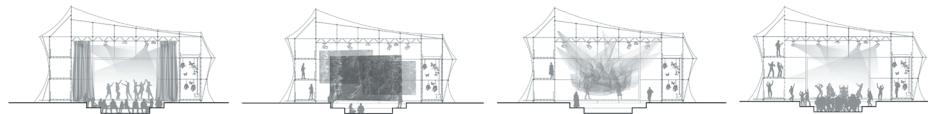
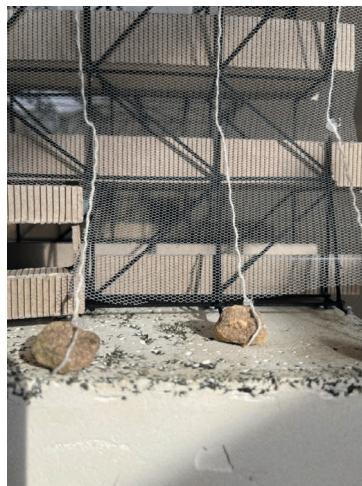
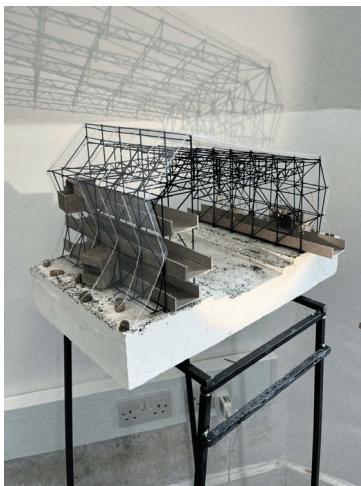
Next Above **Discover.** Close-up Material Plan

Next Bottom **Crossing.** Render of the Building and the Strait Beyond

Next Right **Shadows at Play.** Physical Model Photos

Next Right **Senses in Motion.** Programmatic Diagrams





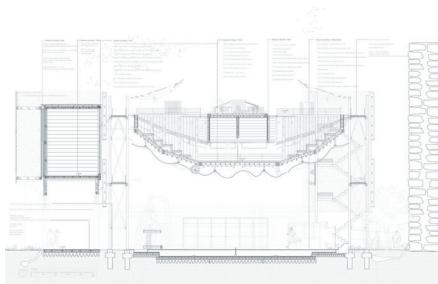
Site: Rue de la Kasbah.
Programme: Multi-functional Communal Sports Centre, Creative Studios, Viewing Platforms and Film Installation Centre.

03

THE EXTENDED PASEO

A WALK WITH NO END

FOLAHAN ADELAKUN



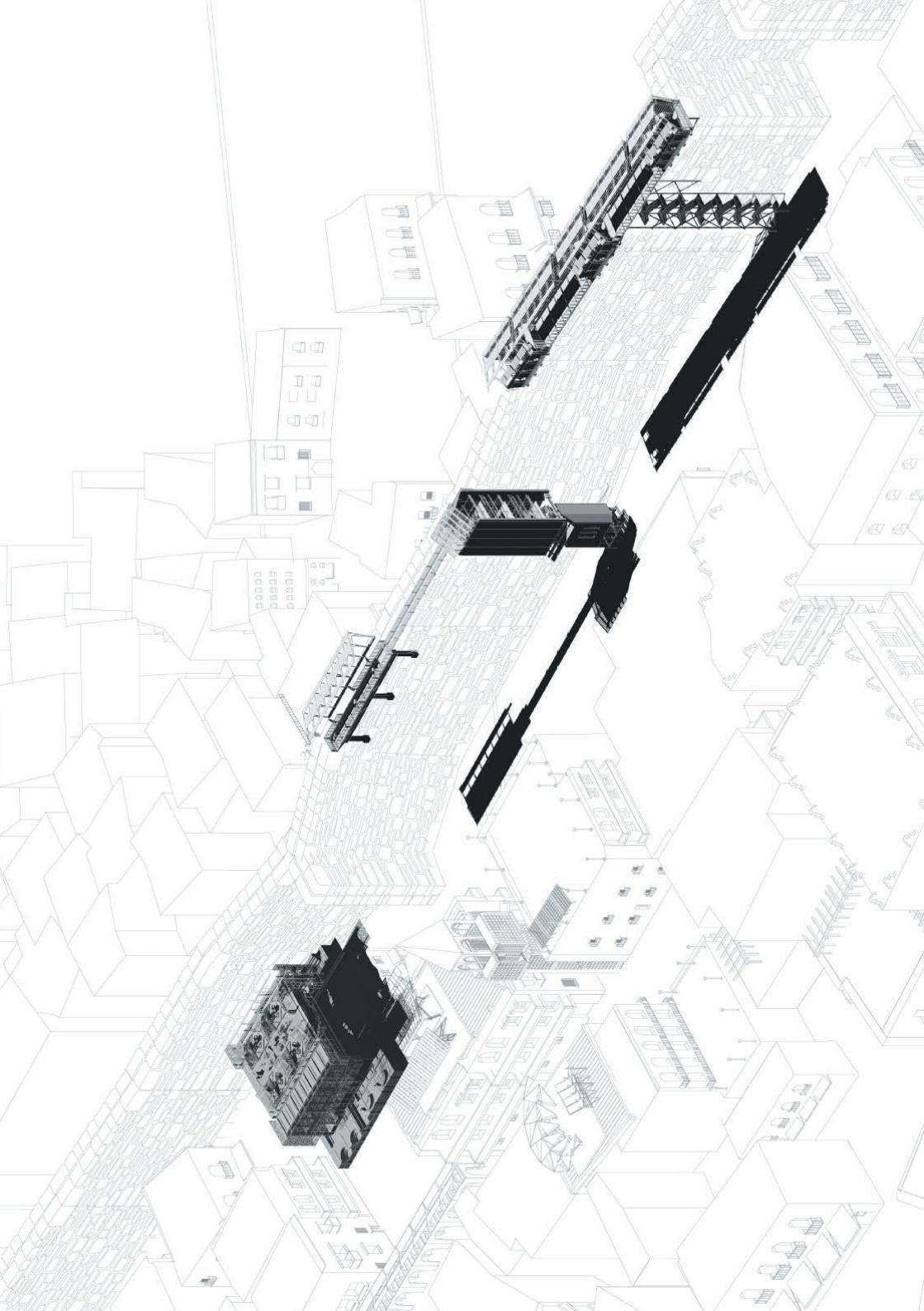
The project aims to decentre Western colonial perspectives on Africa. Immersing ourselves in Tangiers, we pursued this by analysing how key sites operated as social activators in the city, such as the Petite Socco and Tangiers' historical wall. Intimate fieldwork revealed that locals perceive see the city different from outsiders. Their ties to the land are reflected in their culture, needs, and daily movements, all of which evolve continuously. "Who are the natives?" — or "Chokun Howma Tanjawa" in the local dialect, Darija. A walking interview with Malika, a Rabat native studying in Tangiers, challenged me to appreciate architecture as a service to others—hidden in plain sight, yet essential to the city.

The project seeks to centre the local actor as the critical lens through which to experience the city, placing their nuanced and idiosyncratic needs at the forefront of a hotly contested territory within the context of the modern trade zone. The city grows and shrinks like a living organism. The goal is to attune this pulse to the everyday lives of those disaffected by multinational conglomerates in order to effect real change.

This architecture engages with the routines of local actors, facilitates chance encounters between diverse demographics, and fosters co-creative capacity in close proximity to the city's historical landmarks. The project critically reflects upon multiple coexistent realities of Tangiers through opportunistic structural interventions—steeped in its rich historical tapestry, and echoing the diverse movements of the city's inhabitants —culminating in the creation of The Extended Paseo.



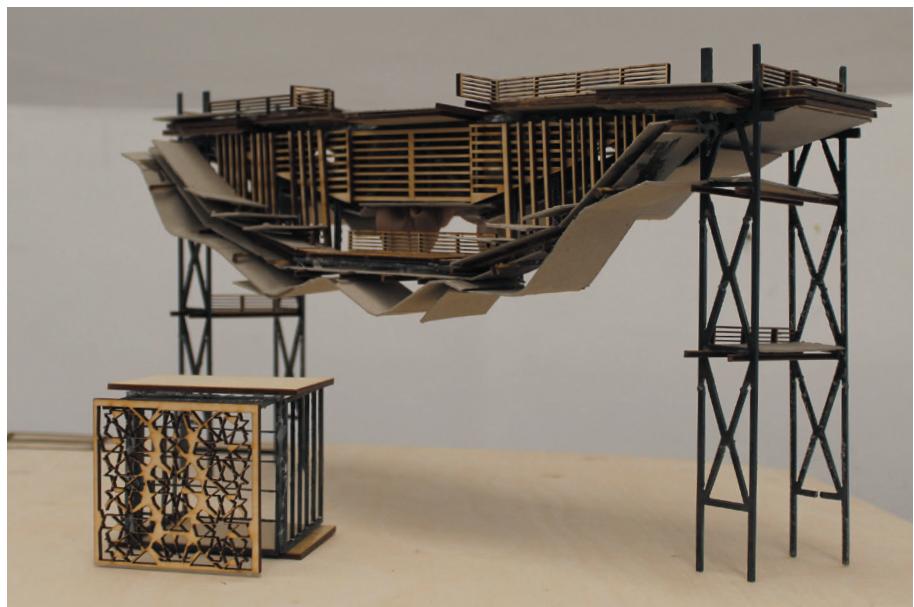
Tangier





Into the Rue d'Italia : the Extended Paseo

Rendered key area section
highlighting the spatial geometry across the structure
(Original provided by J. I. 100)



Pervious

A Historical Spanish Map of Tangiers. Plan Montage

Left

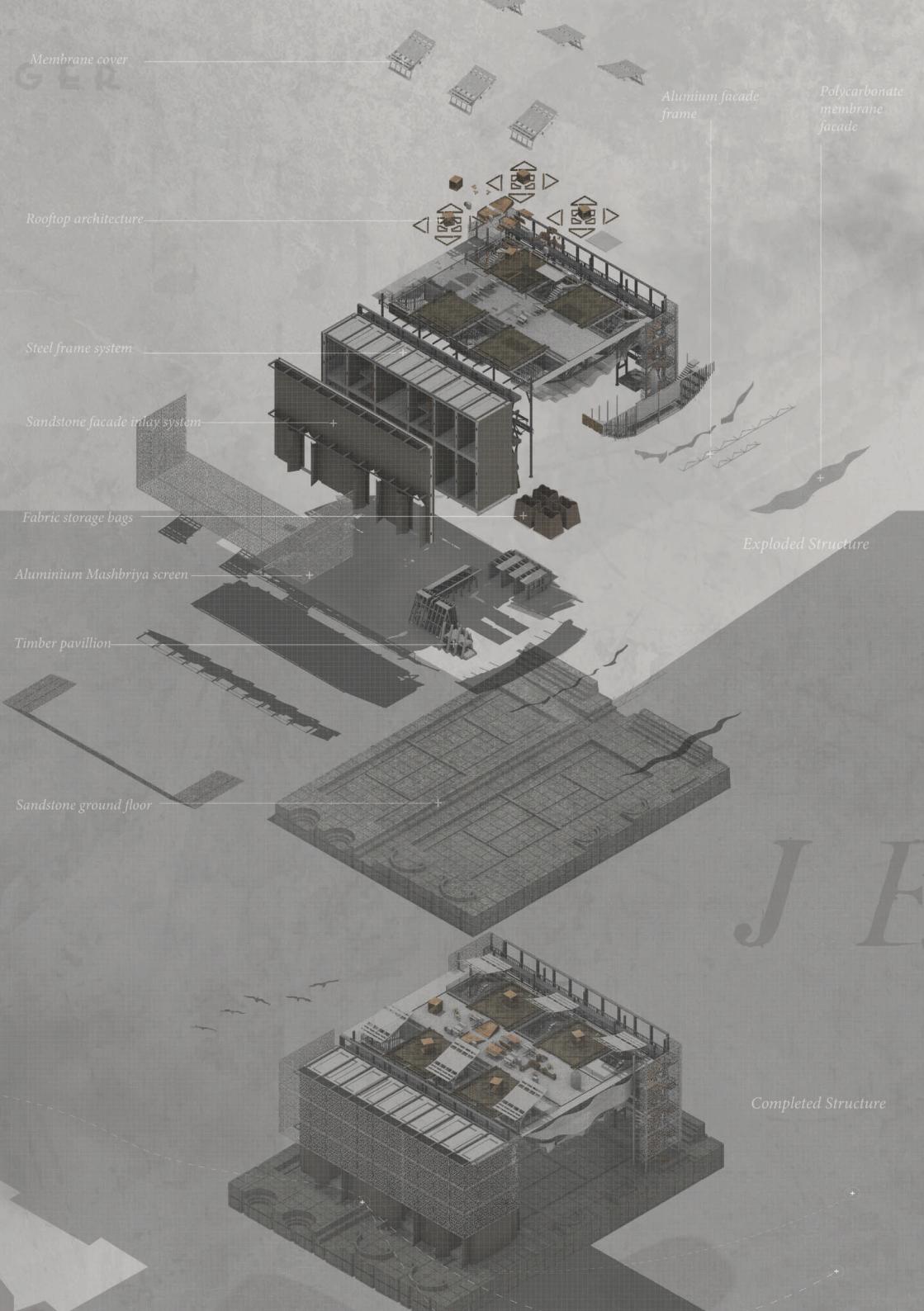
Overall Scheme. Isometric

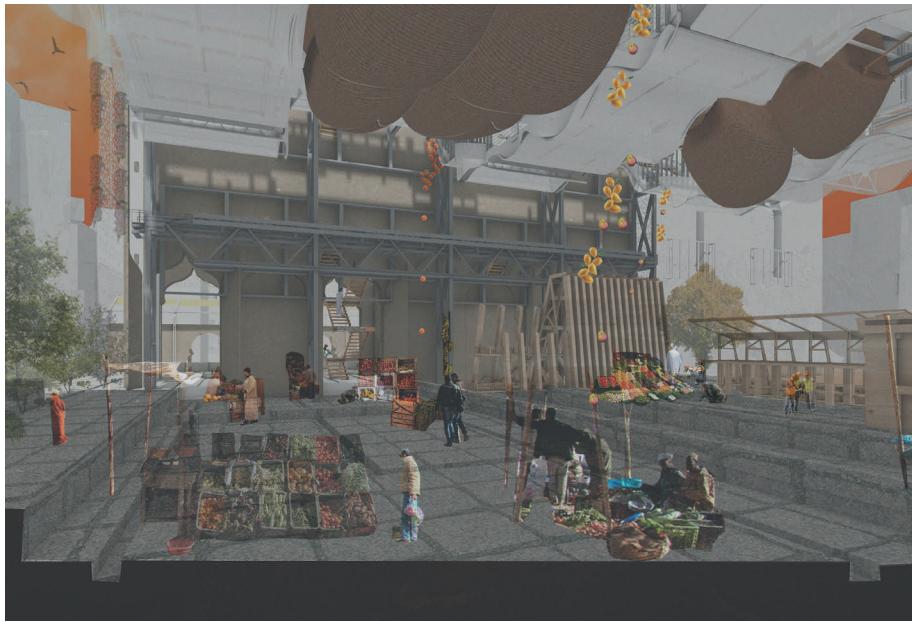
Right Top

The Intervention and the Adjacent Historical Wall. Sectional Isometric

Right Bottom

Communal Sports Centre. Exhibition Model





Left

Material Assembly. Exploded Axonometric

Right Top

Market. Visual Narrative Render

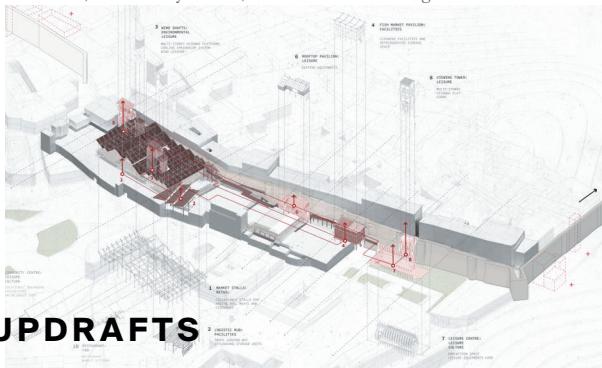
Right Bottom

Sports Competition. Visual Narrative Render

04

INTERSTITIAL UPDRAFTS

Site: Central Market, Grand Socco.
Programme: Market, Community Centre, Restaurant and Viewing Towers.



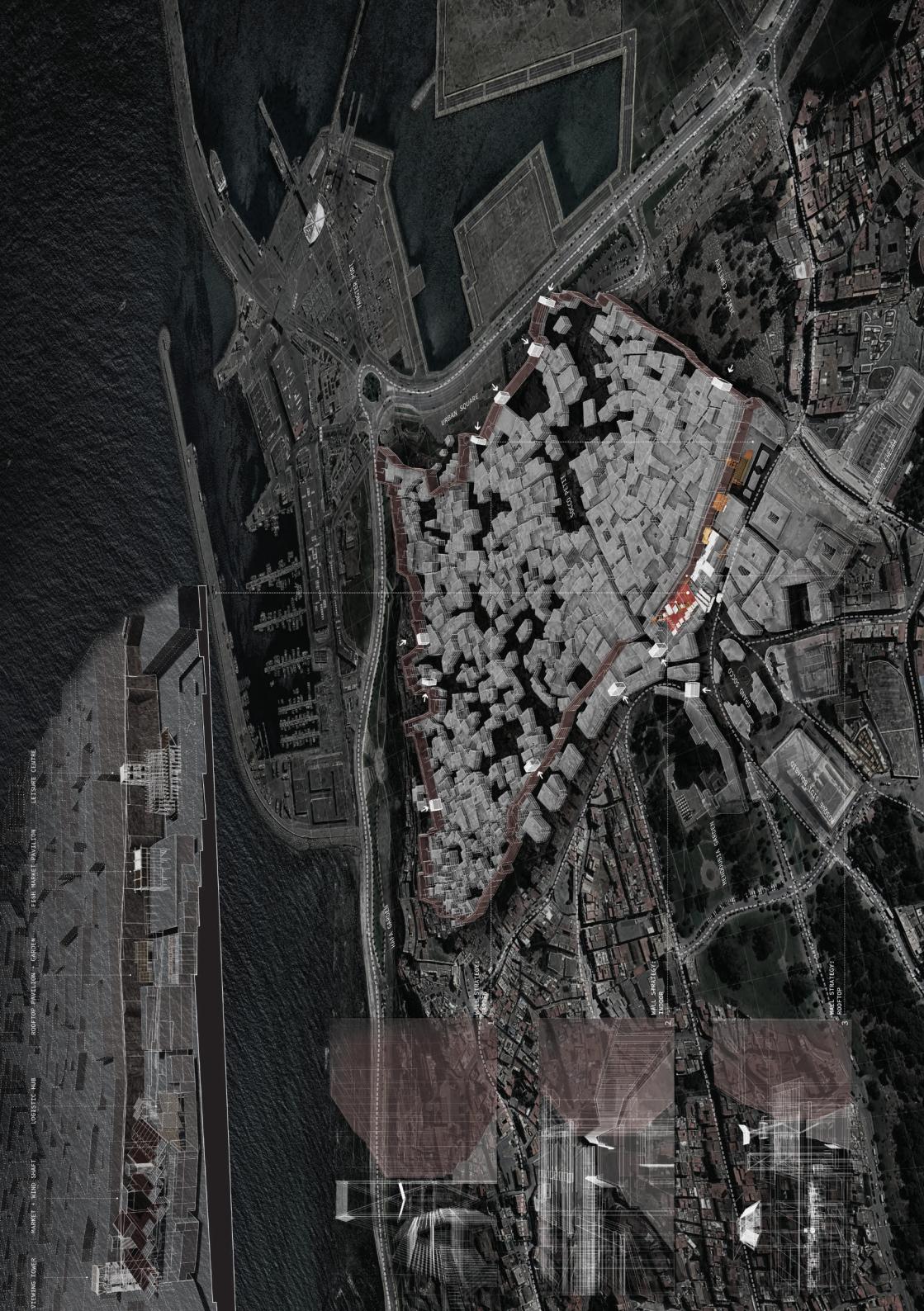
ENRICO LUO

Being both a physical and symbolic remnant of colonial boundary-making, Tangier Medina's historic wall anchors the site in a complex cultural and historical context. The project emerges from the interstitial edge of this wall, a contested yet vibrant zone where the main central market hums with activity.

A range of parasitic architectures embed new public infrastructure within the narrow, historic urban fabric. New cultural, leisure and market facilities engage with both the everyday life and cultural rhythm of the neighbourhood. Hovering over the bustling market, a community centre and a restaurant operate across day and night to provide spaces for gathering and rest. A new pitched roof stretches across the site, with a portal frame system that undulates longitudinally to create diverse spaces underneath and modulate natural light within the new complex. Three wind towers provide natural ventilation to the market, rising through the roof to capture the winds and form a rhythmic vertical configuration in the skyline. A lightweight steel walkway, delicately suspended alongside the wall, engages in a silent dialogue with the site's historic context, weaving together the proposed interventions: the fish market pavilion, roof garden, viewing tower, and leisure centre.

Inspired by Tangier's use of weather-proofing red paints – temporary architectural fixtures anticipating future adjacent extensions, the project operates by addition upon existing built forms, at both the typological and urban level. The proposal offers a replicable, evolving strategy that continuously negotiates with and grows from the historic wall it inhabits.

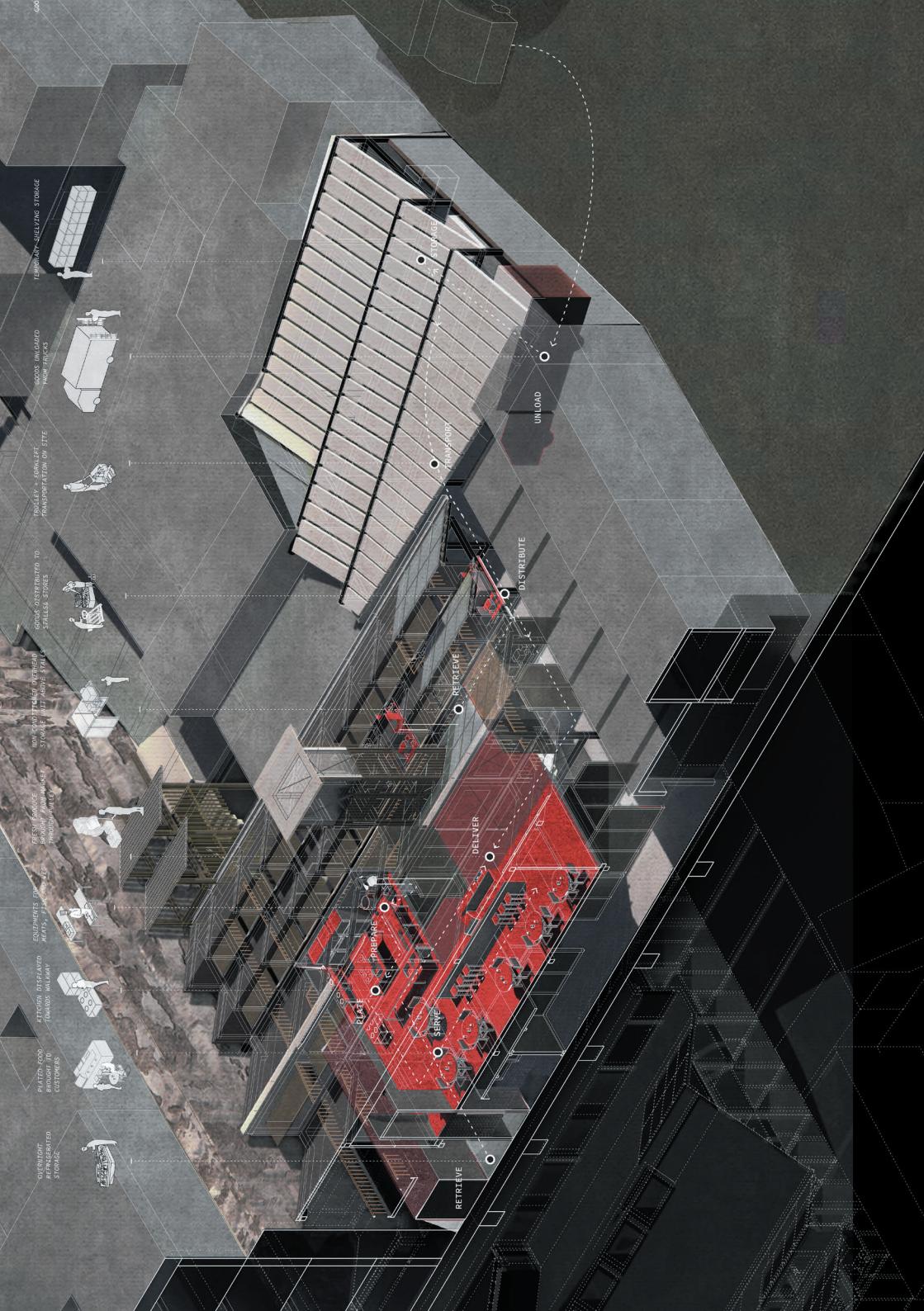


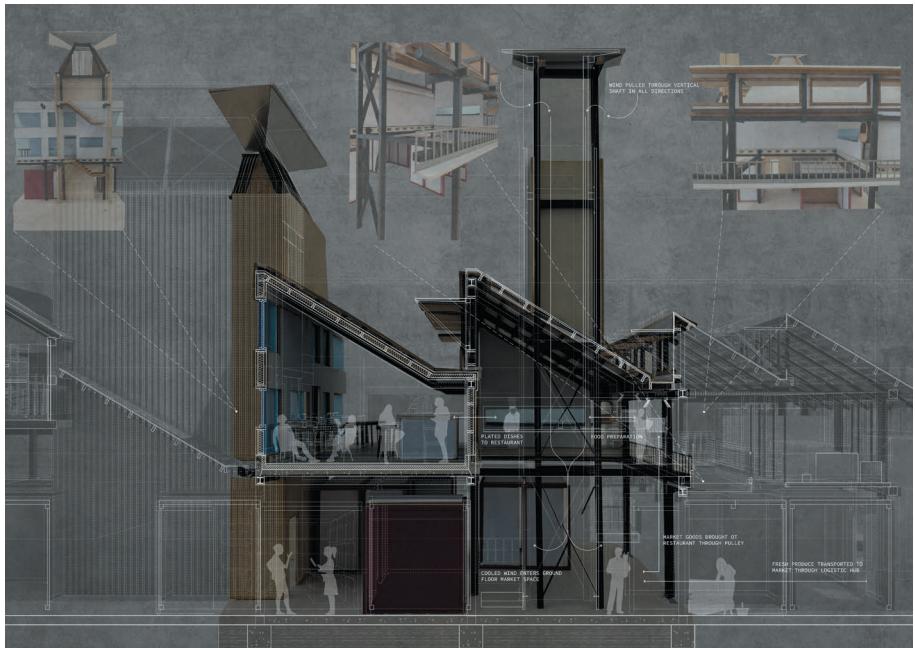




Previous
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Structural Systems. Exploded Isometric of the Market
Urban Strategy. Aerial Perspective of Medina Wall Strategy
Exhibition Model.





Left

Market Flow. Sectional Isometric of Logistical Flow

Above

Vertical Connections. Perspective Detailed Section of Restaurant and Market Interior with Wind Towers

Bottom

Reimagining the Market: Spaces in Transition and Use. Rooftop Render

05

THE EDGE OF THE LOOM

MICRO-INTERVENTIONS, MACRO-CONNECTIONS

HAIXIN WANG
LEON FENG



Tangier is an effervescent city where boundaries between spaces blur — parks fade into alleys, schools meet markets, parking lots spill into homes, and cars and pedestrians share sidewalks. These undefined seams form a loose and fragmented urban fabric. Inspired by looms and spinning, the project weaves a new urban grid through spatial nodes, revealing hidden boundaries and reconnecting disjointed areas. Using a triangulated structural language shaped by twist and tension, it creates a kinetic urban system that balances movement and pause, structure and spontaneity.

Three modes of architectural intervention transform the area surrounding the Fondouk Chejra:

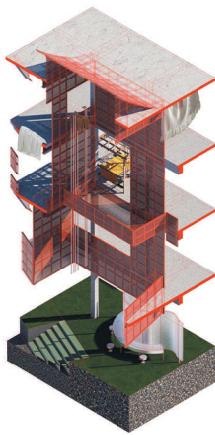
Micro-urban Furniture includes a retractable cinema roof in a parking lot and a foldable stall cart that functions like a revolving loom, anchoring temporary public exchange and trade. *Structural Additions* feature a musical wind tower built from textile machinery to mark the park entrance, alongside new civic rooms bridging the market to extend services and school access. *Architectural Transformation* revives a derelict building near Cervantes Theatre with a split-level steel frame, its perimeter of hanging carpets enclosing a café and community space to weave culture, commerce, and connection into one dynamic structure.





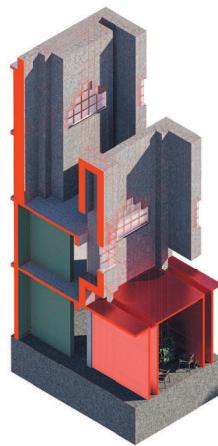
Steel Frame

Vertical landscape wheel



Secondary Struture

Vertical light tube
Perforated Panel



Old-new Contrast

Facade Section



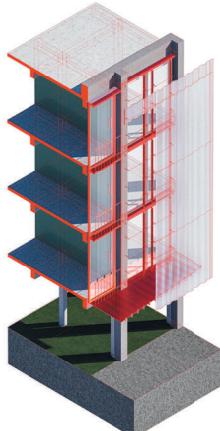
Primary Struture

External Staircase



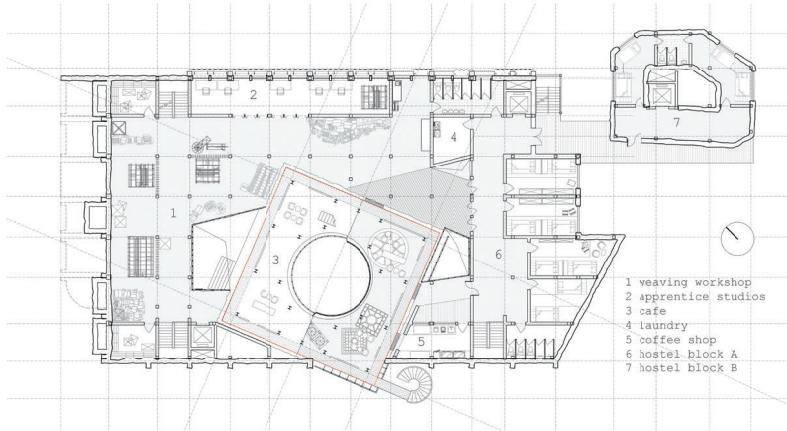
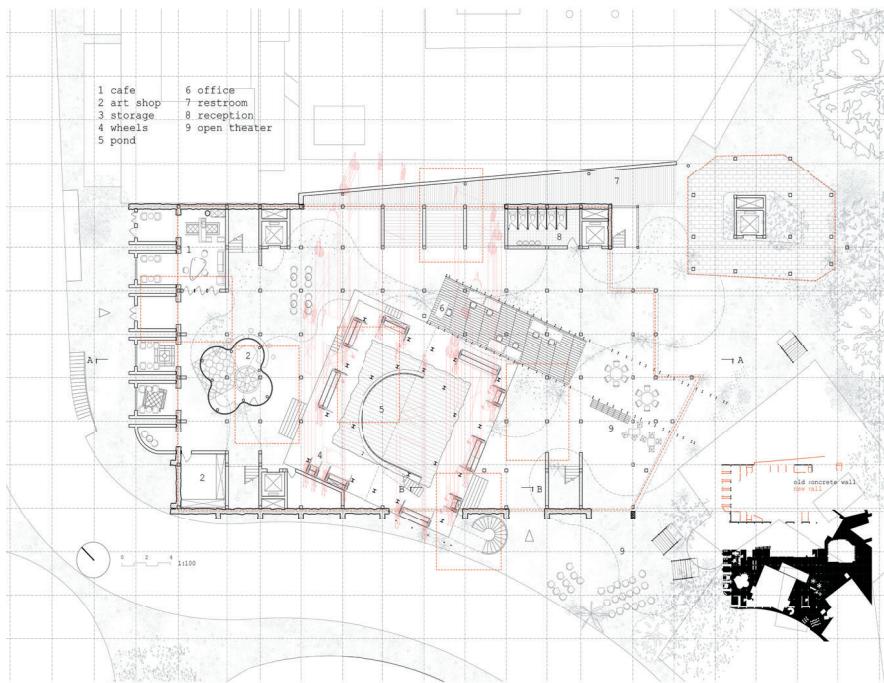
Secondary Struture

Vertical light tube
truss



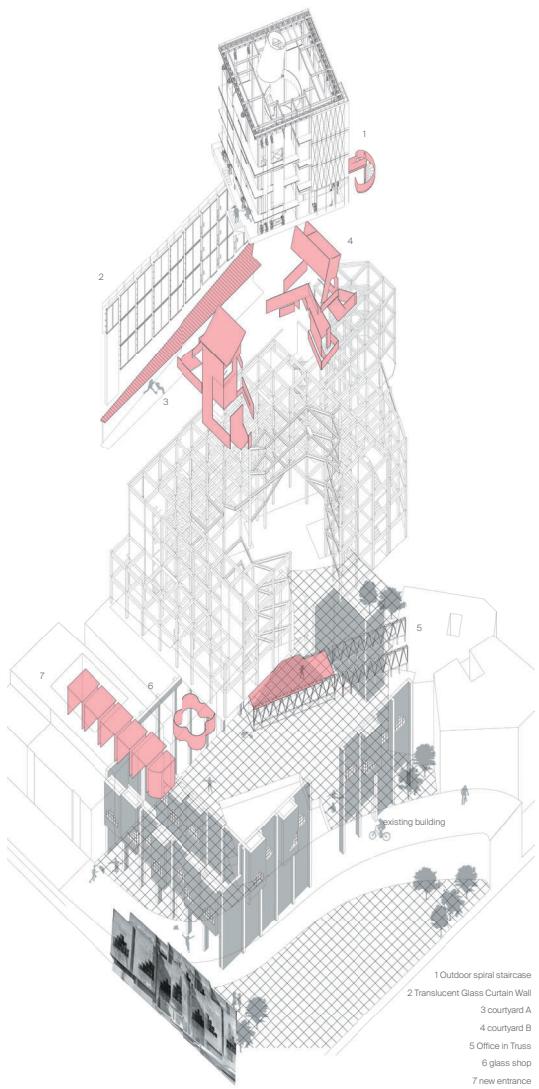
Envelope Component

Curved Glass



Previous
Left
Above
Bottom

Structure Strategy. Building Isometric Render
Re-imagination Fragments. Isometric Structure Detail Drawings
Old-new Contrast. Ground Floor Plan
Reimagining the Workshop: Spaces in Transition and Use. First Floor Plan



Left

Side Atrium & Carpet Workshop. Interior Renders

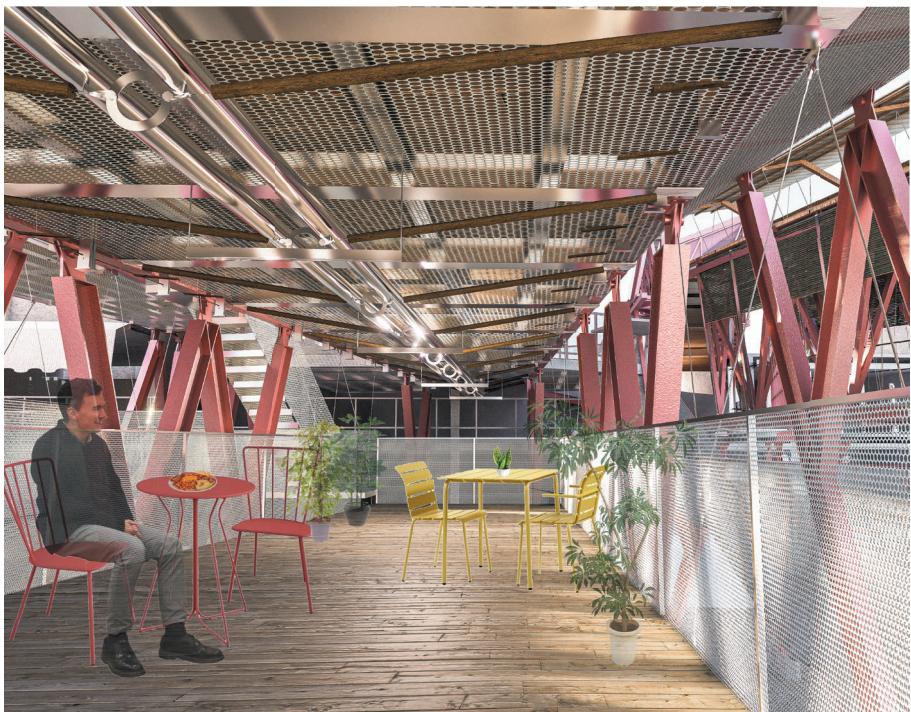
Right

Interventions in Existing Building. Explosion Axonometric Drawing

Adjacent

Fragment of Exterior Wall. Physical Model: Grey Board, Strawberry Spray, Glue, Paper





Left

Additional Market Structure. Exterior Render

Above

Student Center Bridge. Physical Model: Grey Board, Strawberry Spray, Glue, Acrylic

Bottom

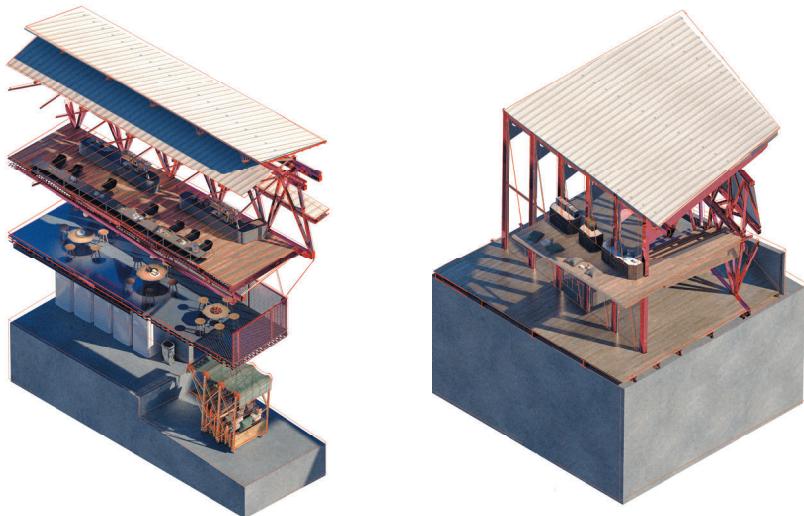
Bridge and Suspension Structures. Physical Model: Grey Board, Strawberry Spray, Glue, Acrylic



Left
Right

Reimagination. Physical Models
Ground Floor and Second Floor. Plans

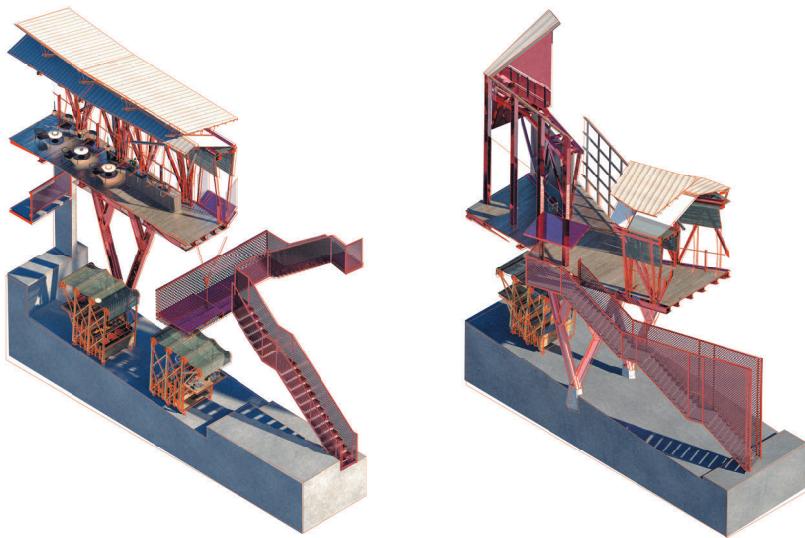




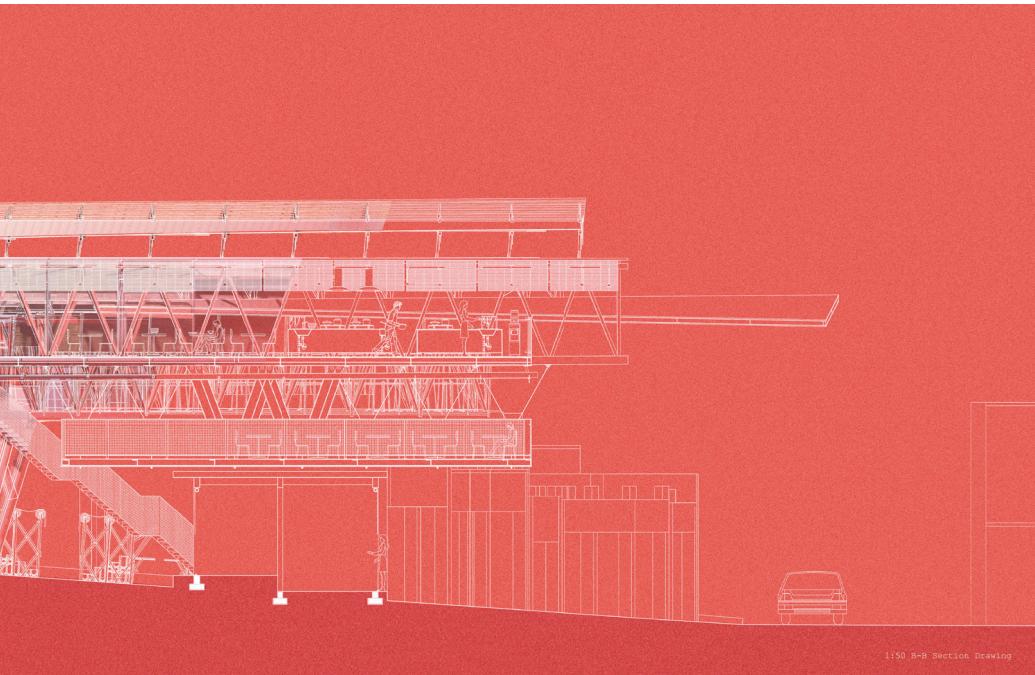
Top
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Activities in Different Places. Functional Spaces Isometric Render
Extended Spaces. Key Section Drawing





HAIXIN WANG & LEON FENG | THE EDGE OF THE LOOM



1150 A-B Section Drawing

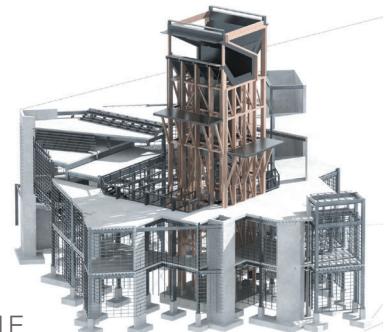
06

A CITY TOLD TWICE

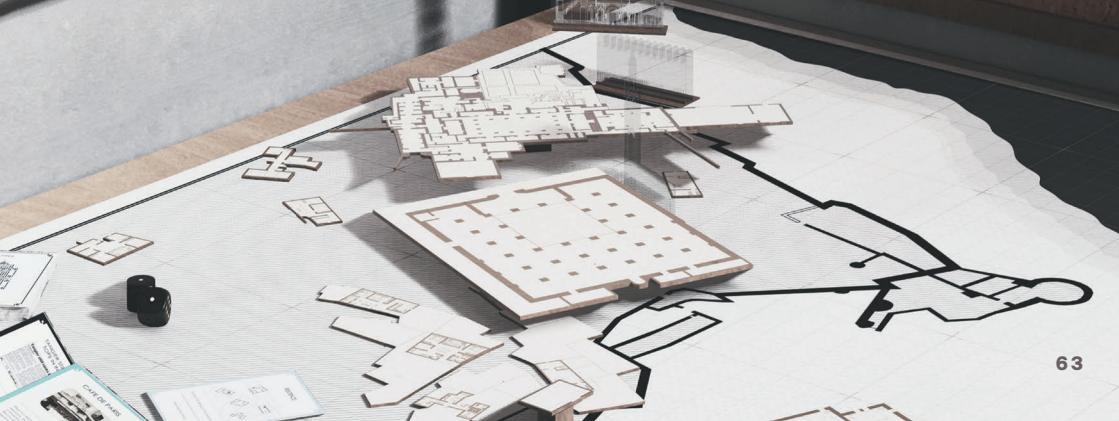
EXPLORING TANGIER THROUGH GAME

YIXUAN ZHANG

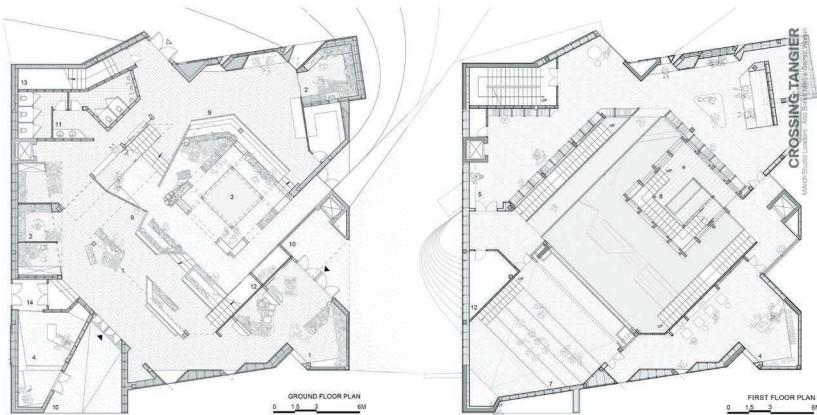
Site: Fish Market, Rue de la Plage.
Programme: A second-hand market rooted in the storytelling tradition, Storytelling Cultural Center, Library, Café, Wind Catcher Tower.



This project originates from the documentary *I See the Stars at Noon*, which follows the failed attempt of a working-class resident in Tangier to flee to Spain. The story reveals Tangier's postcolonial fractures and rising social disparity. The design unfolds through the development of a board game, *Hijrah*, which employs Brion Gysin's "cut-up" technique to construct narrative structures. Players, as fugitives in varied historical contexts, follow prompts to chart their own paths. This fragmented, process-based storytelling reflects how urban life is shaped by movement and memory. During the fieldtrip, a phone was stolen in the Medina—an incident that led to an improvised pursuit across the city. A dynamic city map emerged from the phone's shifting locations. It was recorded drawing on Bernard Tschumi's theories on spatial events and urban narrative. In the midst of anxiety and instability, each object and encounter held narrative potential. Urban fragments were activated, layered with memory and present, and new stories emerged through their interaction. This experience ultimately recontextualized *Hikayat*, Morocco's oral storytelling tradition rooted in marketplaces and public gatherings. The project develops the city's former fish market into a new storytelling centre. It is situated at the edge of the Medina, as part of a broader market network that links the old and new city. The cultural hub is organized around a central tower and provides space for a second-hand goods market, a library, café, workshops, and a projection room. Beneath the tower lies a stage, where the stories passed on the marketplace can be retold. Above, the tower provides a route to catch glimpses of the city's roofscape and its historic wall. The architecture forms a new edge to the existing market and the historic wall, offering both urban continuity and its own evolving narrative.

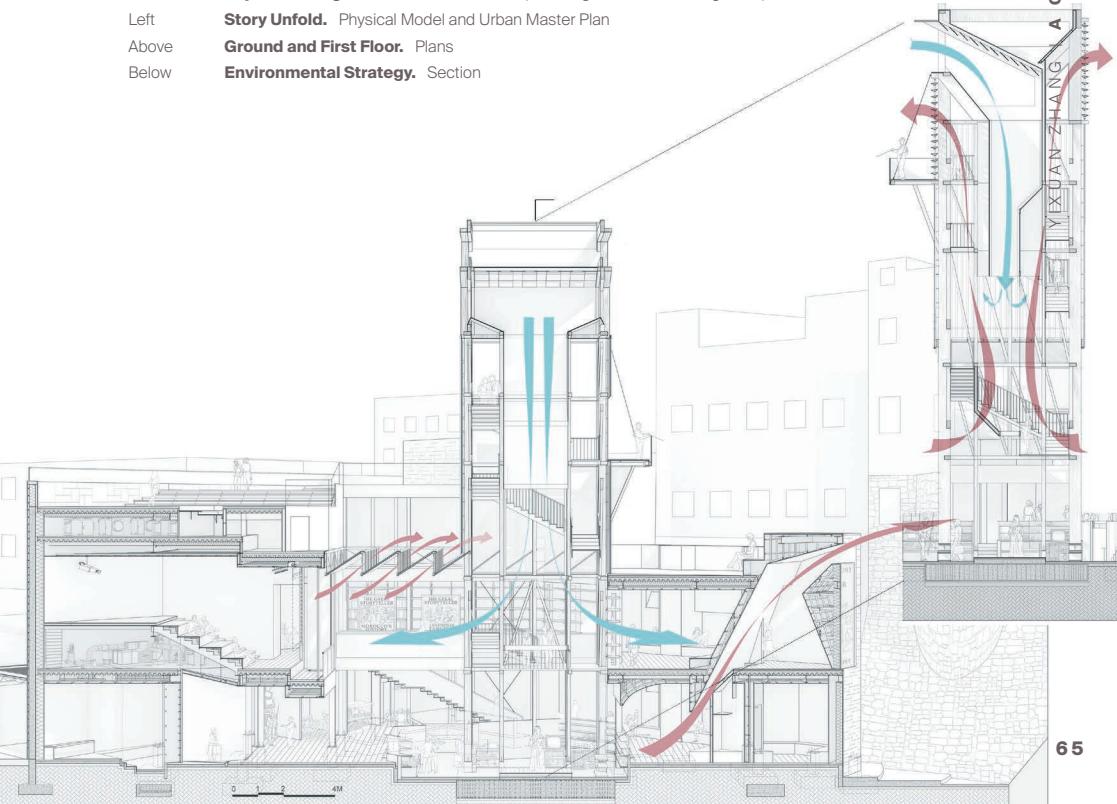


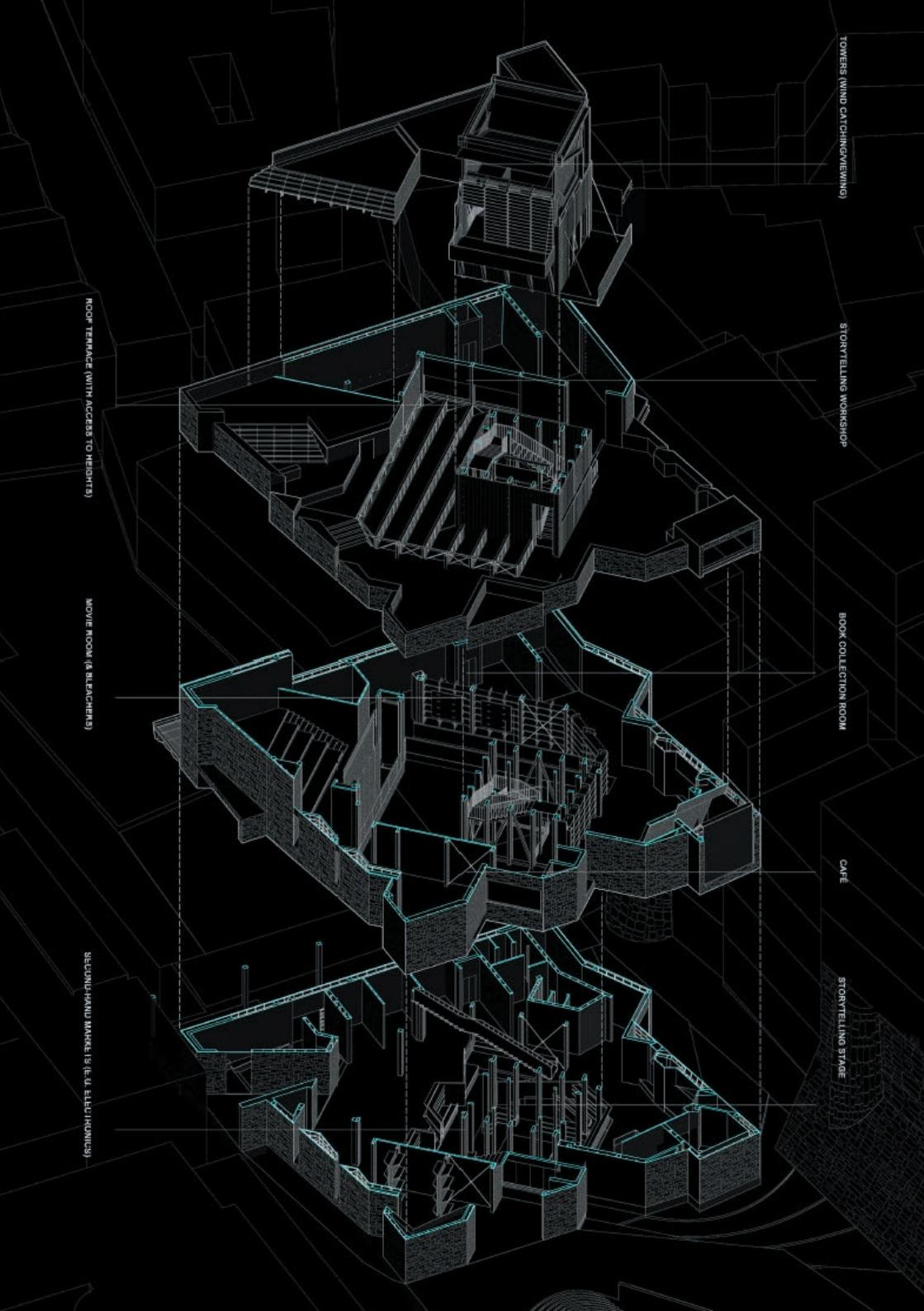


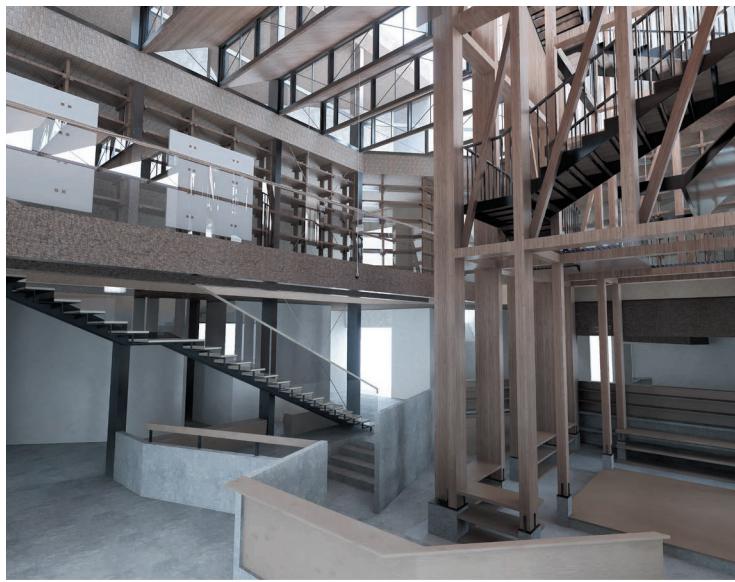


Previous
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Above
Below

'Hijrah' Boardgame. Simulation Render (with Yingwen Zhu and Mingsen Li)
Story Unfold. Physical Model and Urban Master Plan
Ground and First Floor. Plans
Environmental Strategy. Section

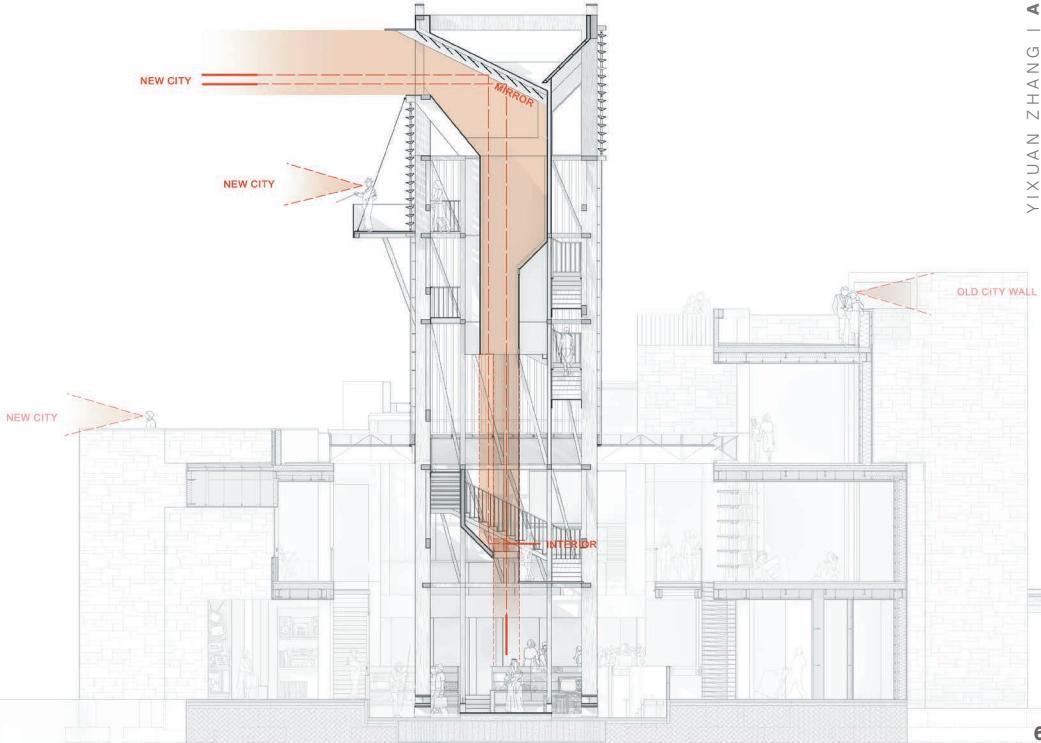






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Story Unfold. Exploded Isometric
Transitional Space. Perspective Render
Urban Observatory. Section



07

Site: Bab Dar Dbagh.
Programme: Weaving Workshops, Dyeing Workshops, Cultural Exchange Center, Temporary Sales, Viewing Platform, Courtyard Ventilation, Water Storage and Solar Roof.



WEAVING MEMORY

A CARPET CRAFT CENTER FOR THE HISTORIC TANNERIES

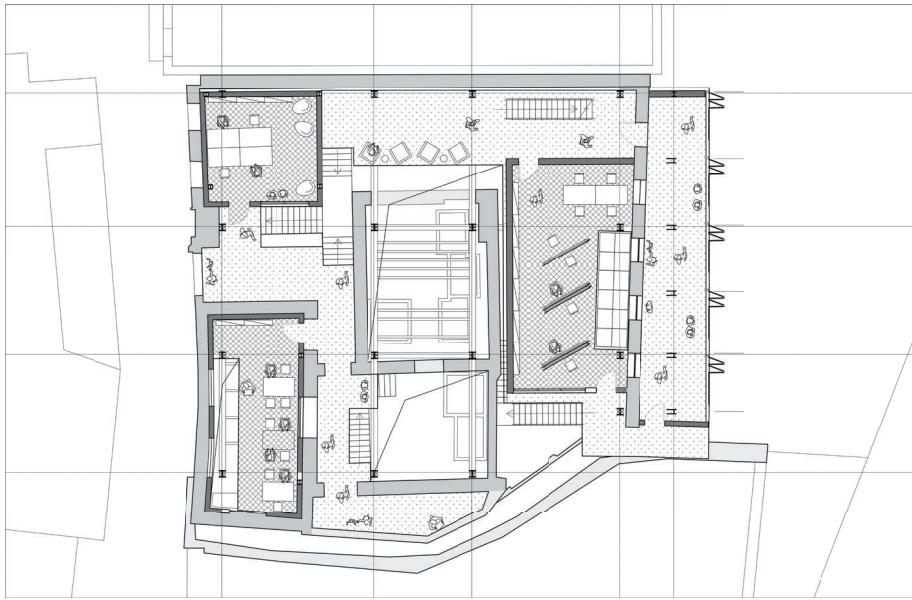
YIMIN KUANG

The project is located at a major entrance to the Medina of Tangier. Adjacent to the ruins of the city's historic tanneries and part of the Medina's waterfront, the site stands as both a sediment of history and a witness to the rapid transformation of Tangier's local culture. As globalization and industrialization advance, traditional crafts have been increasingly marginalized, and their cultural memory has gradually faded from the fabric of the city.

This project aims to revitalise that memory through architecture. Inspired by the practice of weaving, the design provides for a series workshops, exhibition areas, and open platforms within the ruins of the tanneries stonewalls and sheltered under a large modular roof that. Like layers of interwoven fabric, the architecture's permeable spatial transitions and overlaps physically "weaves together" stories, people, and traditions

Transparent courtyards filled with coloured threads encourage flow and interaction, allowing visitors, artisans, and residents to gather, engage, and reimagine traditional crafts. Culture here is not merely displayed—it is continuously enacted, lived, and rewritten. The project does more than reconstruct a forgotten urban site; it becomes a vessel for collective memory and a hub to share local knowledge. On the grounds of the old tanneries, it reestablishes new cultural relationships between people, craft, and place.

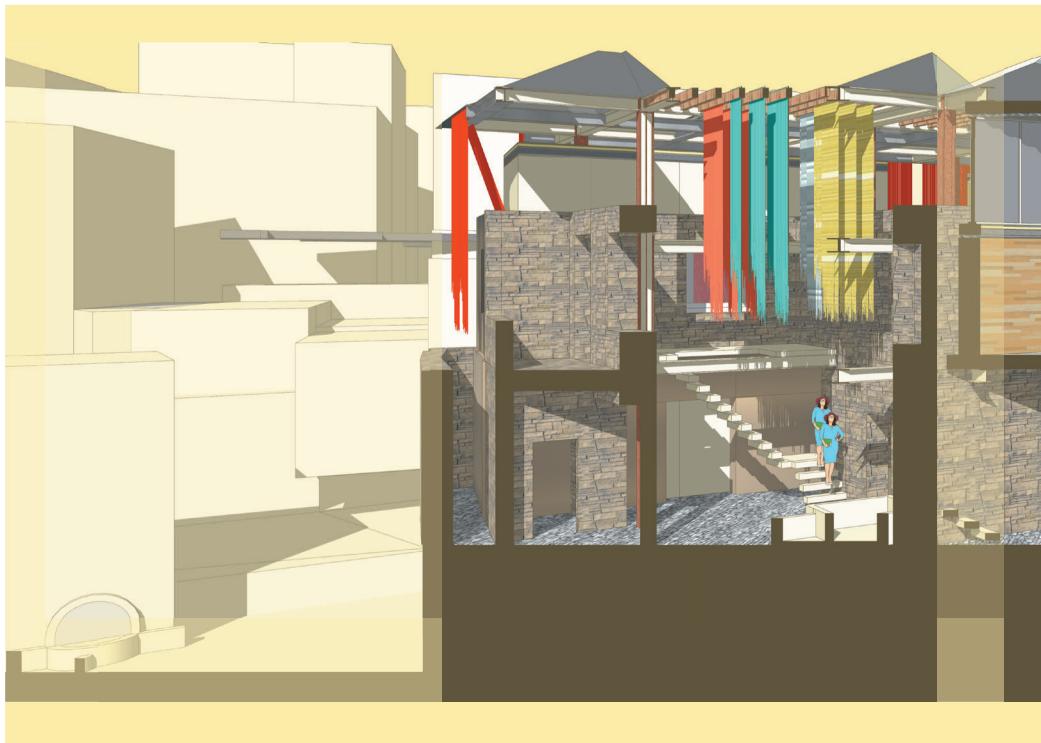


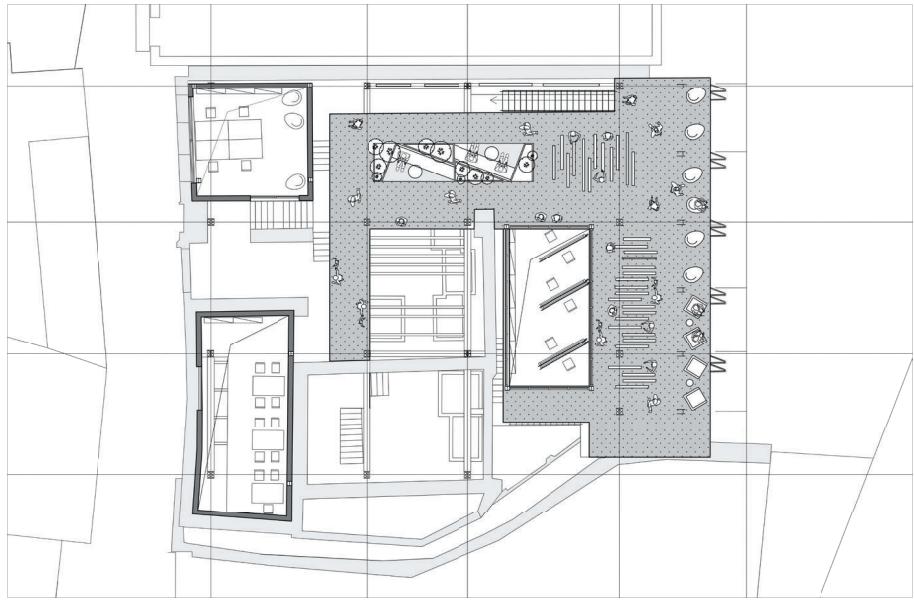


Pervious
Above

Technical Details. Render Series

Activities and Environmental Strategies. Plan





Above
Below

Technical Details. Plan

Main Activities in the Building. Perspective Section



Site: Bab Dar Dbagh.
Programme: Gnawa Culture Center and Music Classroom; Exhibitions and Musical instrument making workshops; Recording studios and Performance stages; Residential and Social spaces.

08



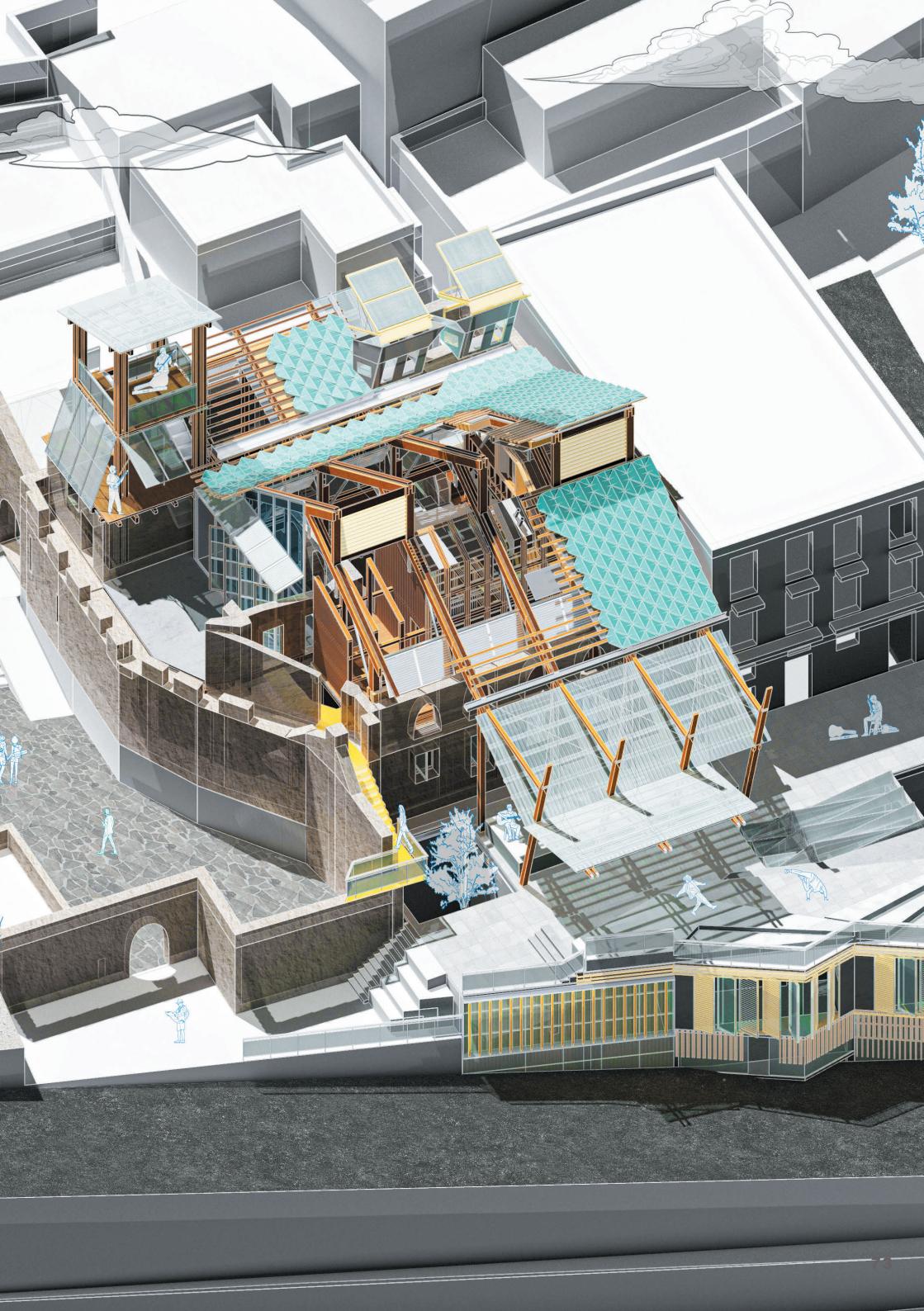
RECONSTRUCTING HIDDEN RESONANCES

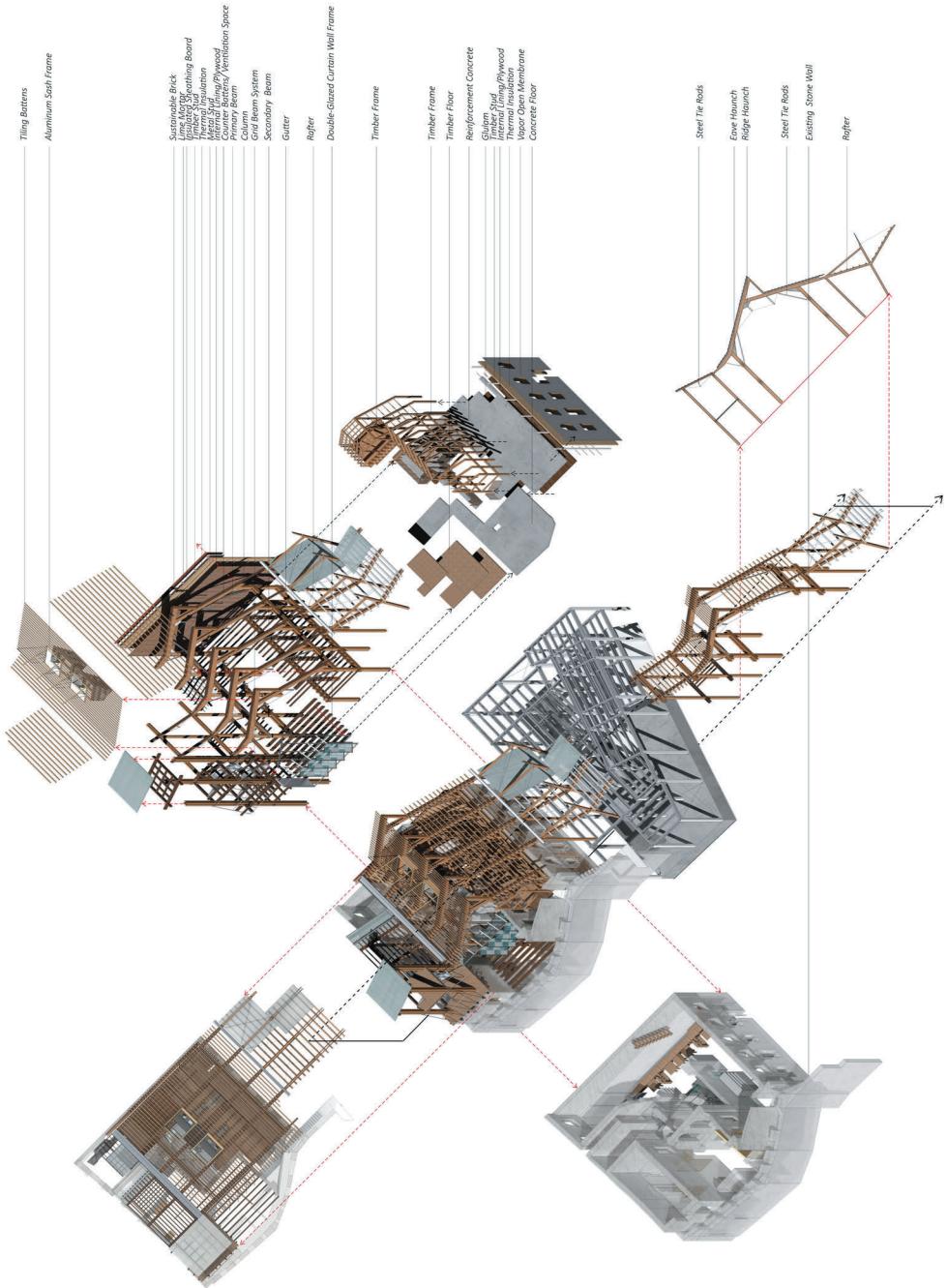
A CENTRE FOR GNAWA CULTURE

PANXU LI

The Gnawa culture originated south of the Sahara, blending rhythm, ritual, and healing through histories of migration and enslavement. In Tangier, this deep-rooted tradition has faded, pushed to the margins amid the city's chaotic intersections and historical breaks, losing its spatial presence and sense of belonging. Today, Tangier—a vital port at Africa's northern edge—faces cultural fragmentation and spatial disconnection. The port area, though open and globally connected, lacks cultural anchors to sustain urban life. Meanwhile, the Medina behind it is dense and aging, its enclosed form contrasting sharply with the waterfront openness. Positioned between these two zones, the project site becomes a critical threshold for urban and cultural renewal. Located at the Medina's edge and facing the port, the project inserts a new structural system into the historic stone wall. It establishes a Gnawa Cultural Center for music production, instrument making, performance, education, and exhibition. As an urban gateway, it reactivates the port's cultural potential while channeling the city's historic energy toward the sea.

The design unfolds as a spatial journey—from openness to enclosure, from urban noise to musical immersion. It carefully considers acoustic needs through material choices, form, and structure, creating distinct soundscapes. The new architecture enters a dialogue with the old, coexisting in tension and harmony, honoring the past while supporting contemporary culture.





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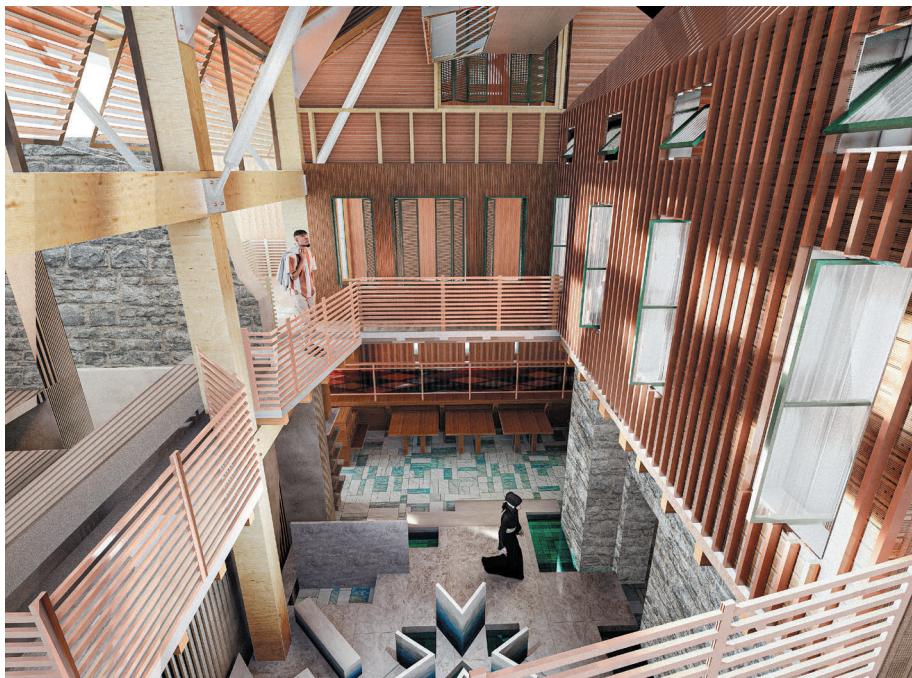
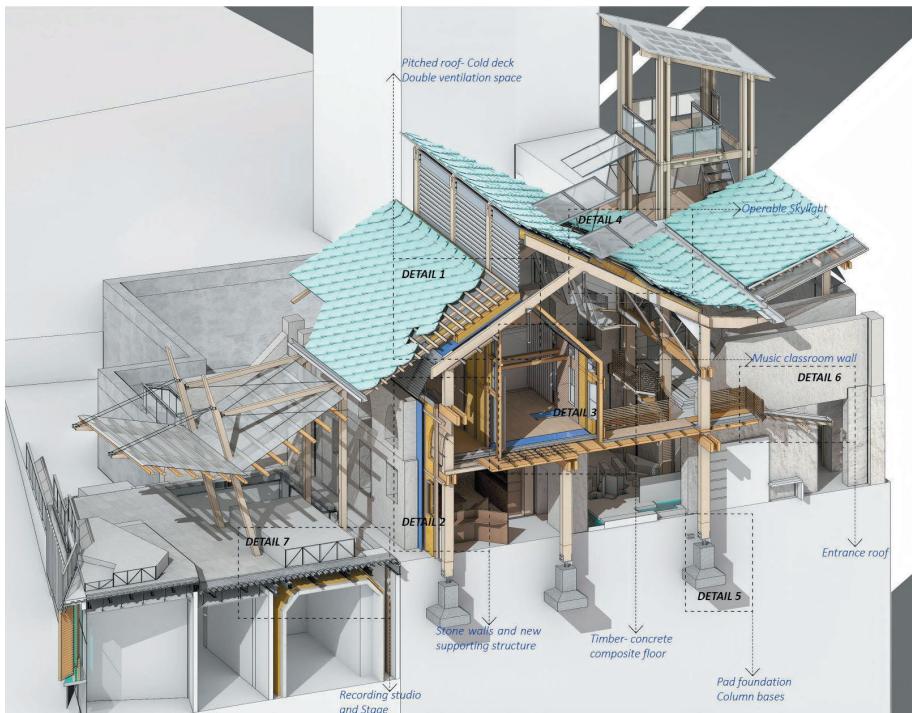
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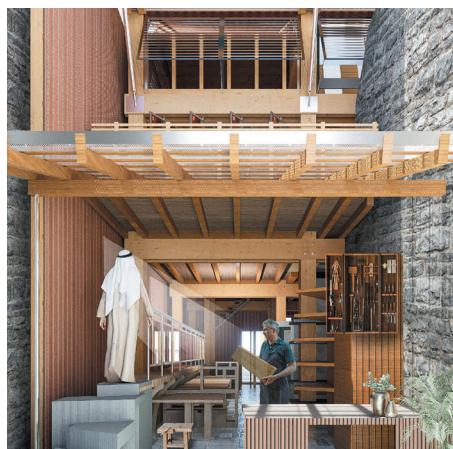
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Structure Performance. Axonometric Detail Section Render

Atrium Overview. Interior Render

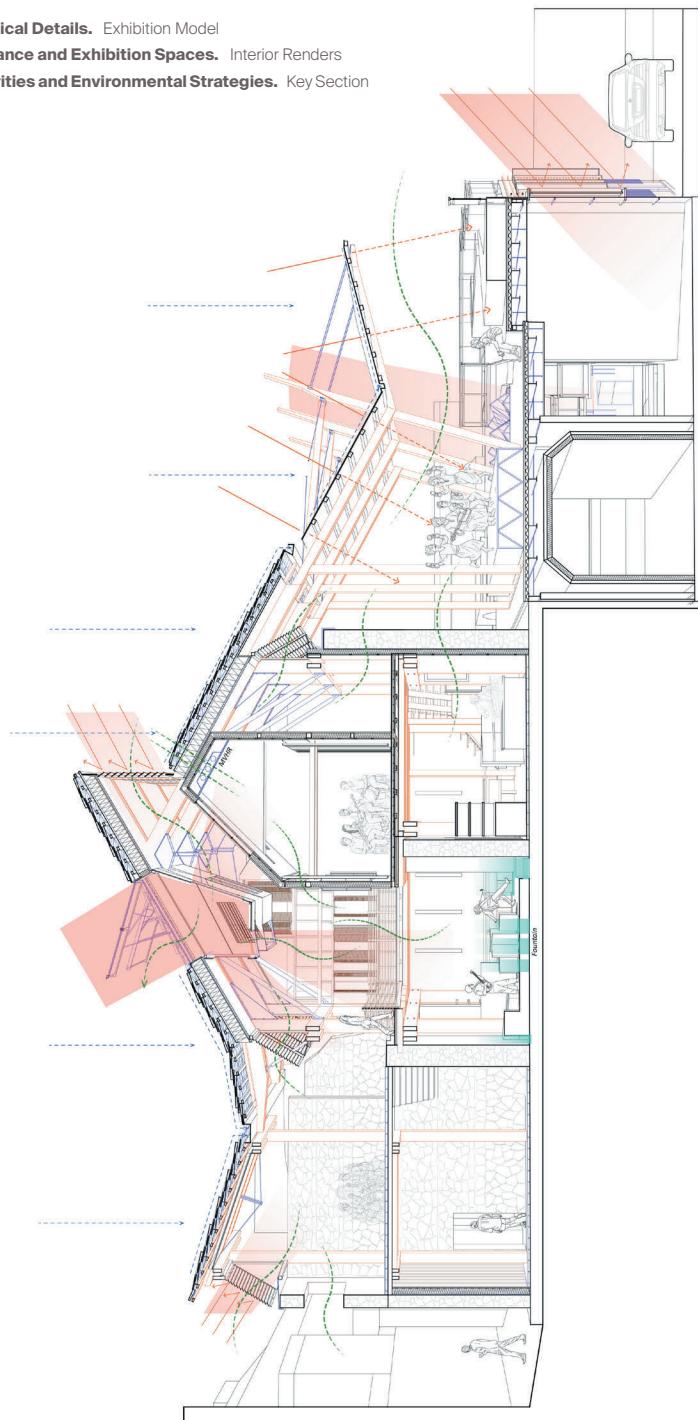
Structure Analysis. Explosion Diagrams





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Technical Details. Exhibition Model
Entrance and Exhibition Spaces. Interior Renders
Activities and Environmental Strategies. Key Section



09

SHARED THRESHOLD

A NARRATIVE OF MIGRATION, FOOD, AND EXCHANGE

YINGWEN ZHU

Situated near Mendoubia Garden, edge of Tangier's historic Medina, the design addresses the experience of migrant communities, providing opportunities for their visibility and active contribution. Explorations into the temporality and informality informed material simplicity, spatial narrative, and its program of collective agency. The project is organized into three interrelated programmes:

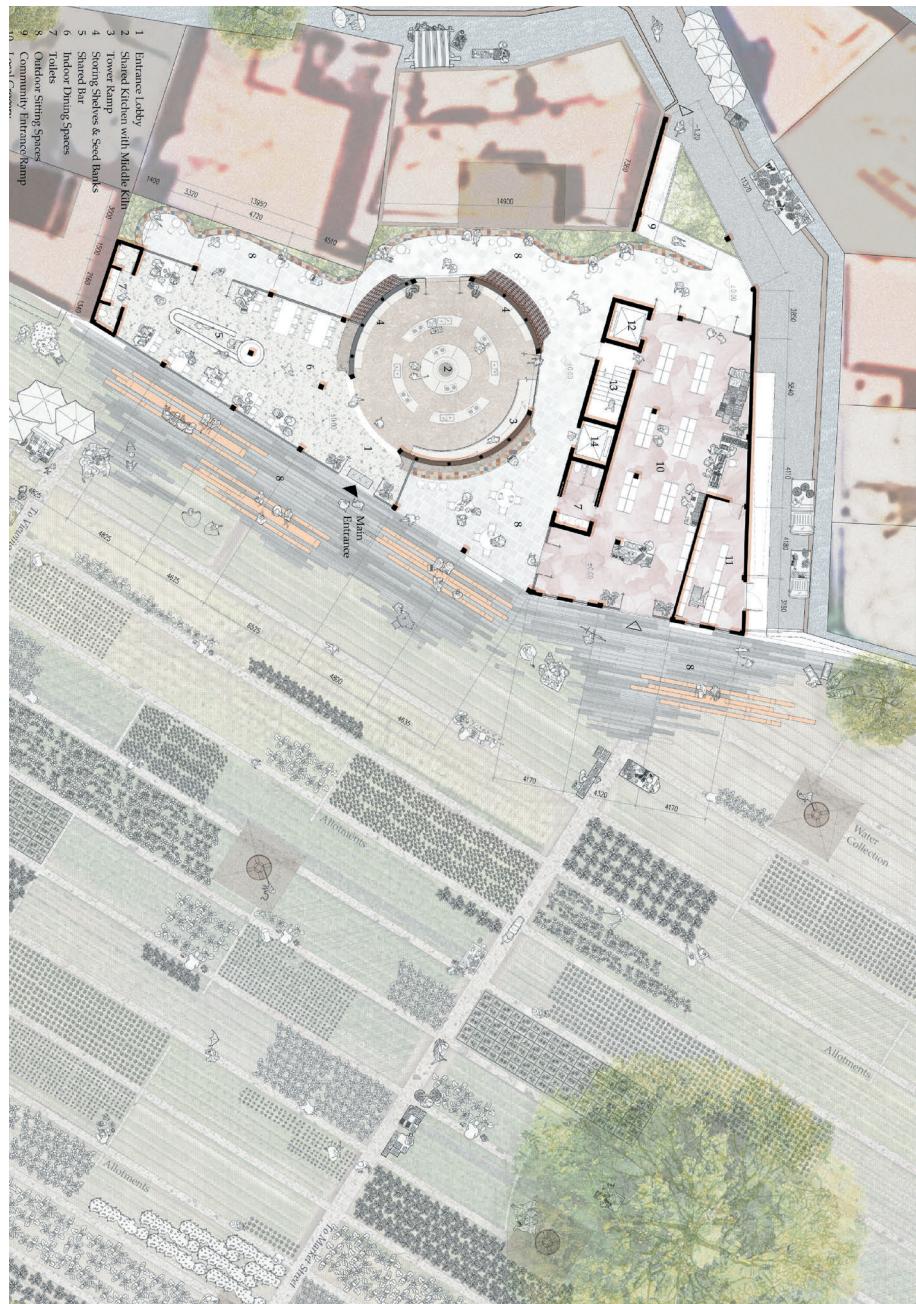
A main building complex embedded in the Medina fabric acts as a central gathering node. A brick cone tower connects three stacked programmes: a ground floor shared kitchen and dining fostering communal life; a mid-level learning zone; and a top floor legal consultation office. Next to this, a residential block offers temporary accommodation to the community. In terms of environmental strategies, the tower operates as a passive design, using the stack effect to ventilate naturally. Meanwhile, recycled bricks facades offer shading to reduce midday heat gain while allowing airflow and joining the local fabric. A formerly underused lawn area, is reimagined as a productive farmscape. Inspired by the informal allotments spontaneously cultivated by residents at the edge, this reworked terrain symbolizes the notion of migrants "taking root"—physically through farming, and symbolically through claiming city spaces. A series of market stalls line up along the main street. These facilitate the interaction between informal traders and migrants, activating public realms by softening spatial and social boundaries. Gathering, cultivating, and trading — form a spatial narrative of presence, resilience, and adaptation. They respond to functional needs and environmental strategies, also to emotional and territorial expressions of a community in movement and encounter.

Site: Mendoubia Garden.
Programme: Community Kitchen and Support Centre, Urban Farming, Market Stalls, Temporary Housing.



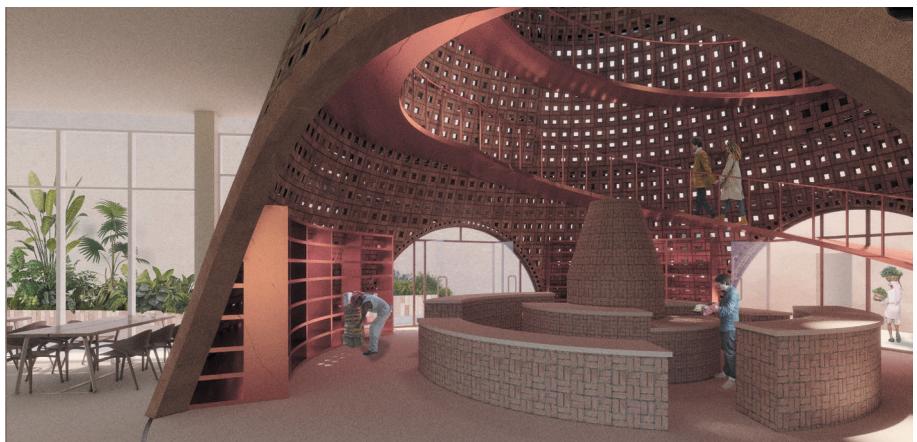
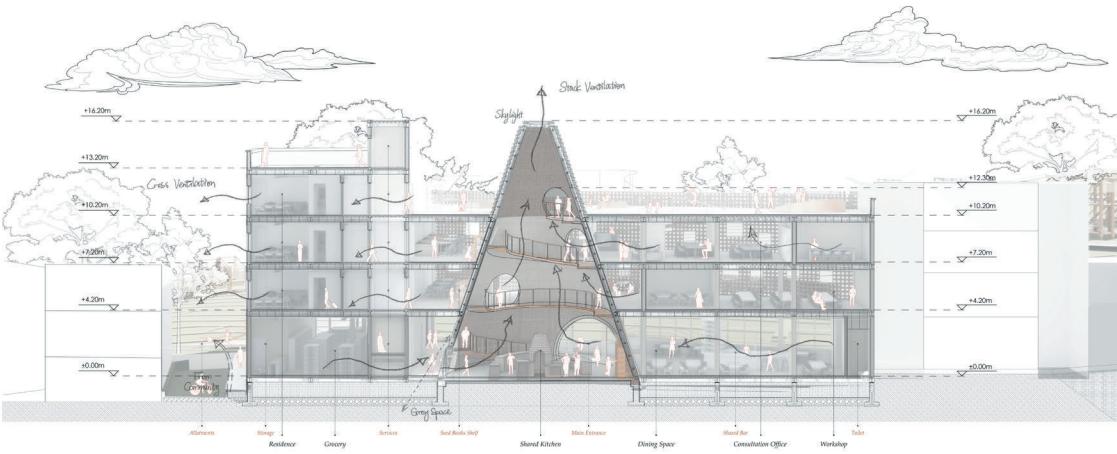


ZHU | SHARED THRESHOLD



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New Urban Surface. Elevation Render
Shared Threshold. Ground Floor Plan
Stories to Be Told... Key Environmental Section
Spiraling Up. Interior Renders

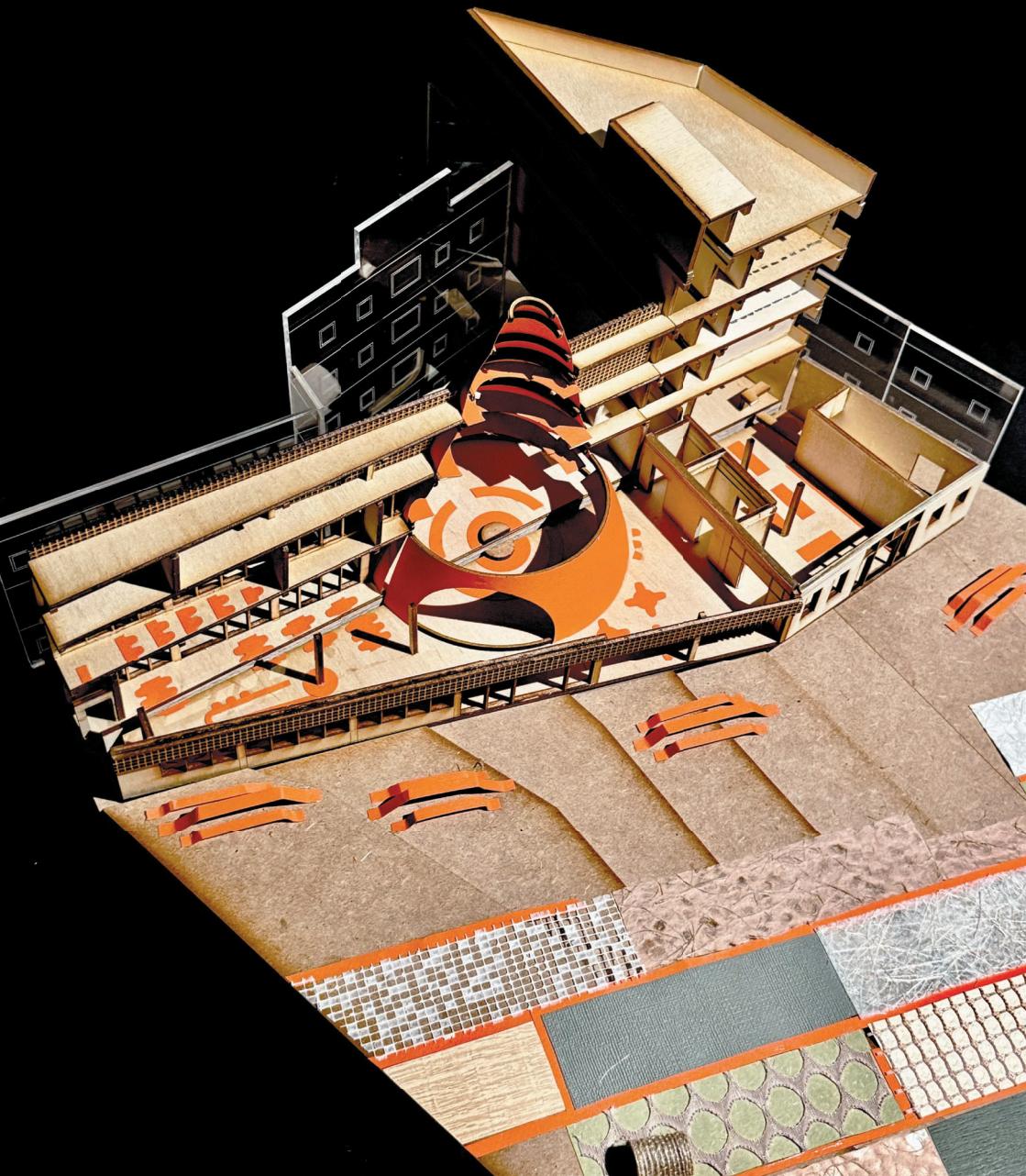


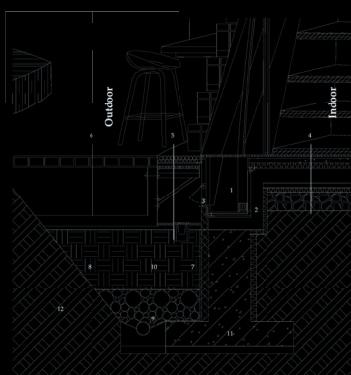
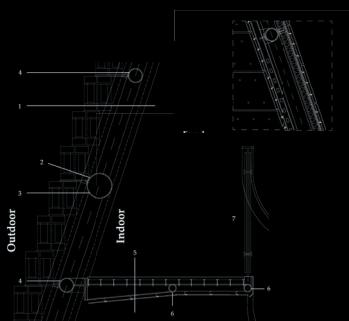
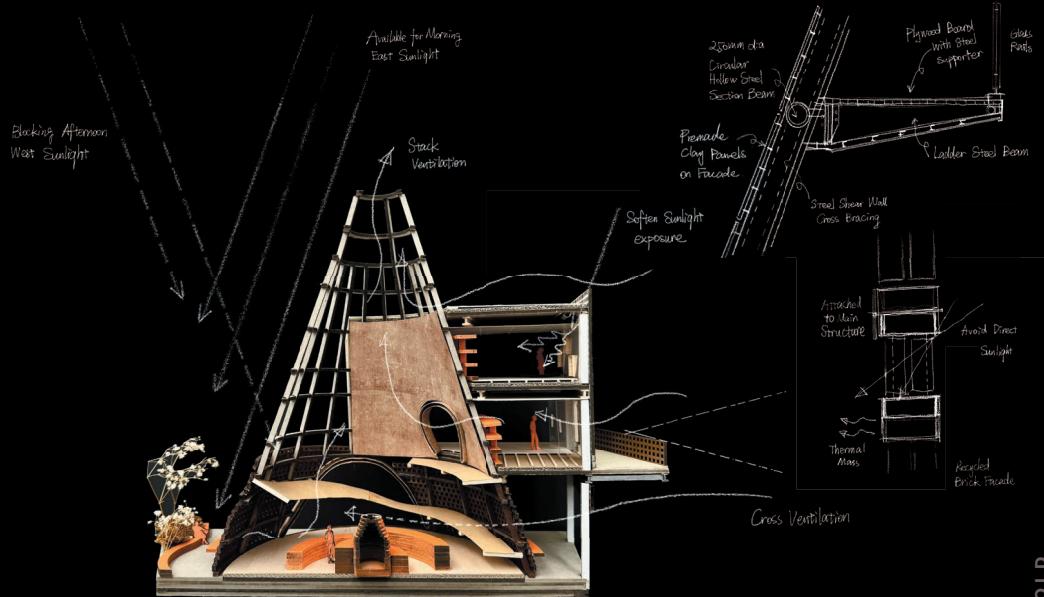
YINGWEN ZHU | SHARED THRESHOLD

Left
Right

Split Performance. 1:100 Model

Build & Construct. 1:50 Key Section Model & Details Tectonics Drawing





10

FRAMING URBAN TALES

A STORYTELLING CENTER IN MENDOUBIA GARDEN

MINGSEN LI

Tangier, the Moroccan city closest to Europe, has long stood at the edge of two worlds. It once symbolized the dream of crossing into the West for many, while also serving as a lens through which Europeans viewed the “exotic” other. Over time, however, the city came to be shaped by invisible walls, created by policy restrictions, cultural divides, and the natural barrier of the Strait of Gibraltar. In 1949, American writer Paul Bowles chose to settle in Tangier. His home soon became a cultural salon, drawing writers, artists, and musicians from around the world, especially key figures of the Beat Generation. Bowles was more than an observer; he listened deeply. He traveled across Morocco to record traditional music, translated local stories into English, and founded the literary magazine *Antaeus*. His work gave voice to those on the margins and built cultural bridges where borders once stood.

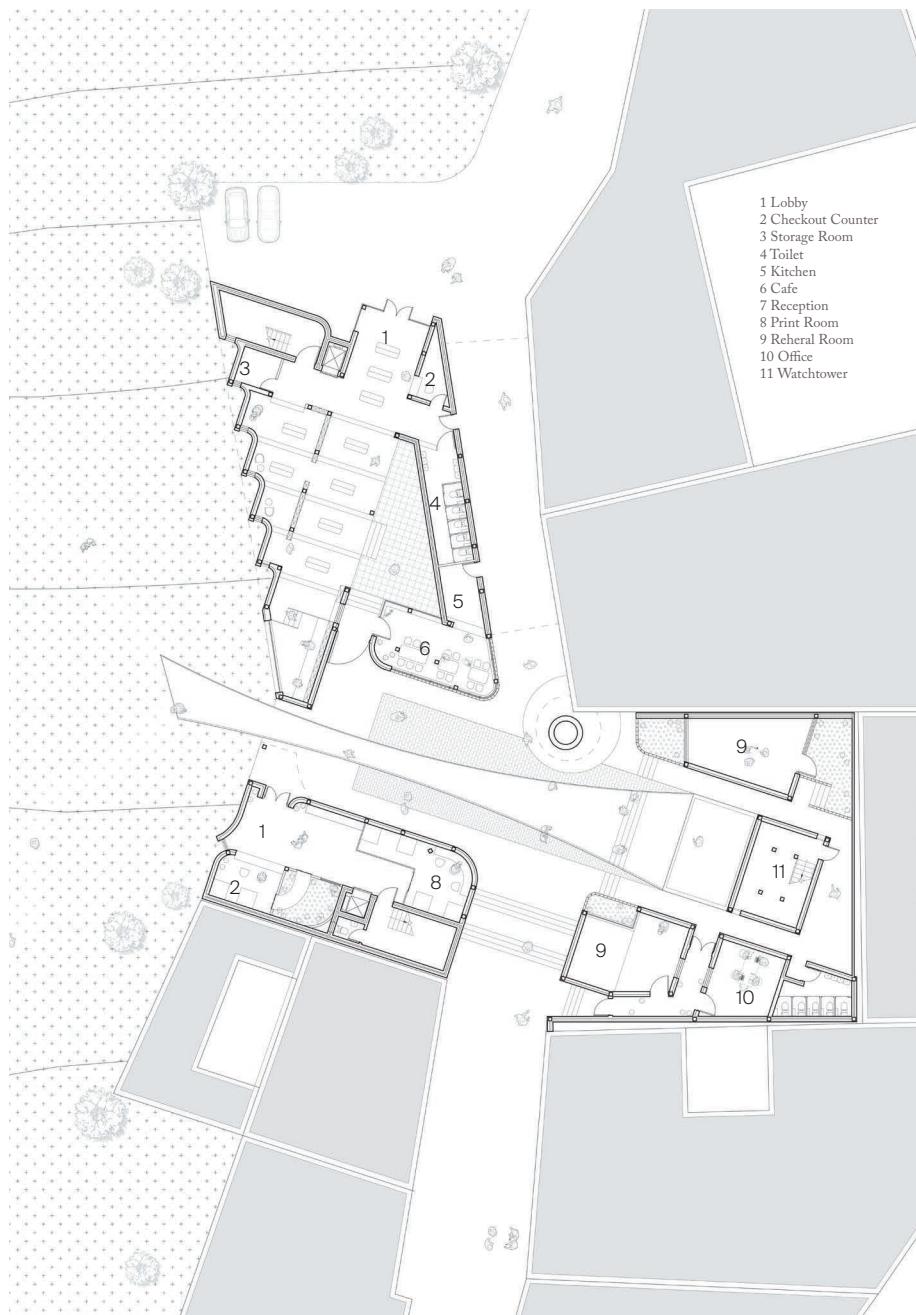
Today, even in an age of global connectivity and mass tourism, the walls remain. They are less visible but no less real. Surface-level contact often replaces true understanding. This project responds to that reality. Continuing Bowles’s cultural practice, the Storytelling Place, creates a space for meaningful exchange and shared narratives. The design seeks to dissolve boundaries, both physical and symbolic by softening the edge between the medina and its surrounding public space. Lookout paths flow naturally into the alleyways that locals use every day. Curved walls and gradual spatial transitions guide the movement between interior and exterior, blurring the traditional divisions between “inside” and “outside”. This is a place to see and be seen, to sit around the table and share one’s own story.

Site: Mendoubia Garden.

Programme: Storytelling Centre with Library, Publishing Hub, Rehearsal Studios, Performance Stage and Watchtower.







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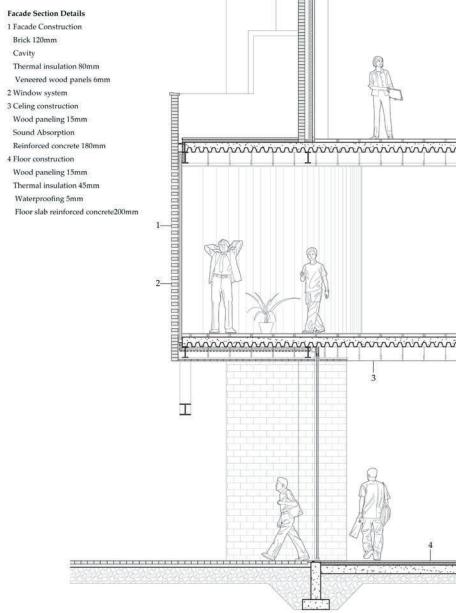
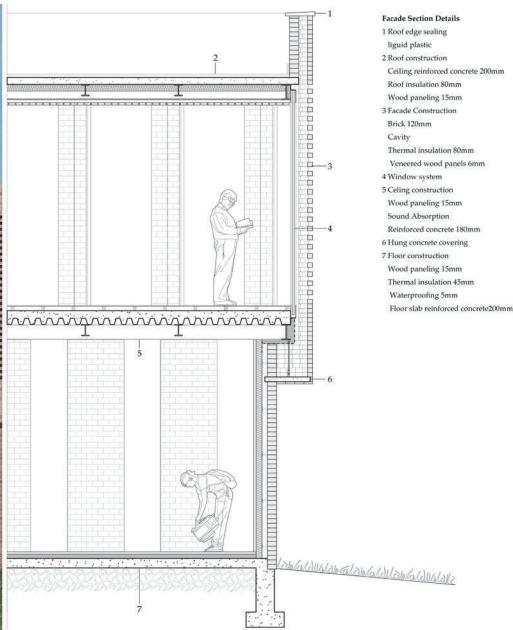
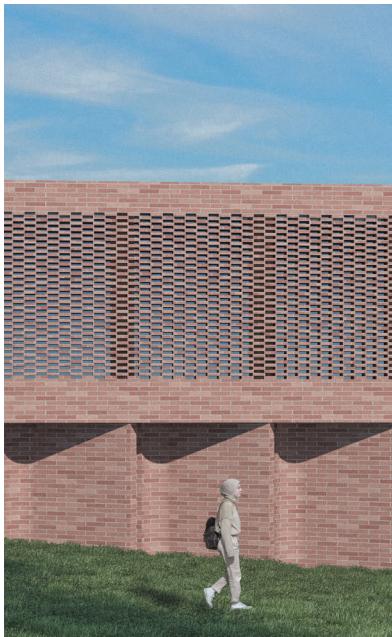
Library. Exterior and Interior Renders

Above

Ground Floor. Plan

Right

Technical Details. Exterior Render and Technical Drawings



Site: Marchan district.
Programme: Hammam, Public Courtyard, Pottery Workshop,
Cafe Terrace.

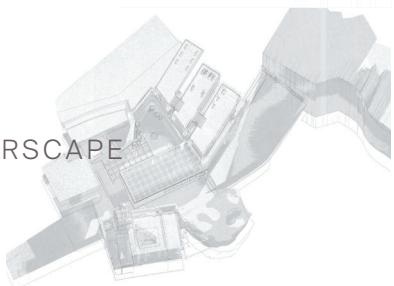


11

AQUA DIALOGUES

[RE]COMMONING TANGIER'S WATERSCAPE

KIM LEE

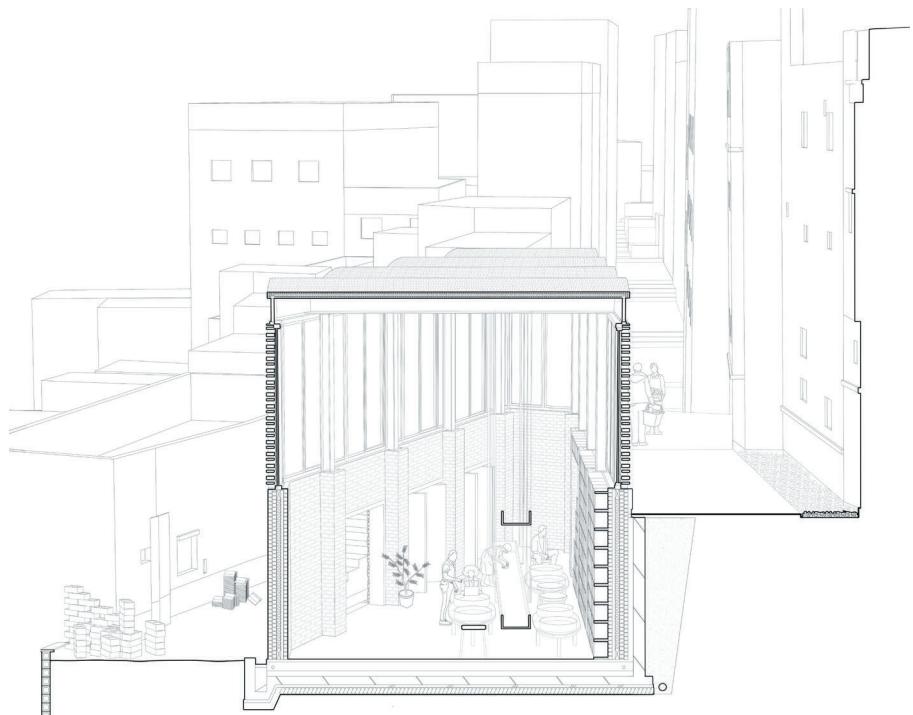
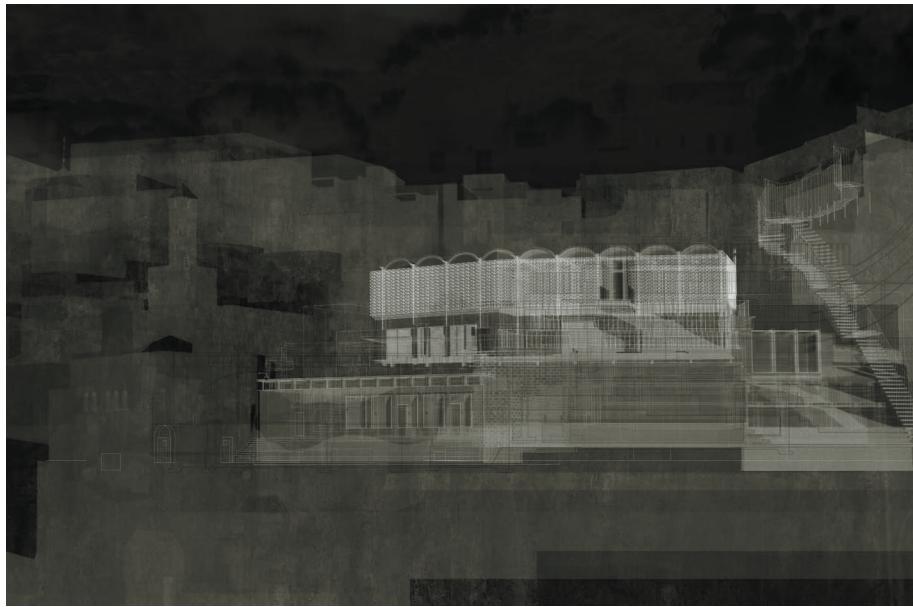


In the vibrant city of Tangier, water is not just a resource; it weaves together the fabric of community, culture, and history. Imagine Tangier as a pivotal gateway between continents, a place where diverse cultures meet and mingle. Here, water not only flows through the landscape but also interweaves itself into the lives of the people, resonating with sacred rituals and daily practices. This narrative carries the complexities of how perceptions and management of water have evolved through Tangier's colonial and post-colonial times.

Situated by the cliffs of the Marchan district, the project engages the multifaceted relationship between water and urban life in Tangier through four design explorations: "Contact Water Zones" uncovers the critical intersections where land and water converge, revealing the dual nature of water as both a source of life and a potential disruptor within the community; "The Slow Vernacular Commons of Water," celebrate the traditions that elevate water as a communal resource, emphasising the importance of cultural heritage through the integration of spaces like hammams, ceramic workshops and mint tea café; "Flow of Water Through Earthen Vessels," explores the interplay of materials and sustainable design, showcasing how local resources and architectural choices intertwine with the cultural significance of water in Tangier; and "Water Path of Nourishment from Soil to Sip." envision an innovative water management system that captures rainwater and promotes communal connections, reinforcing the idea of water as a shared resource vital for the community's resilience.



KIM LEE | AQUA DIALOGUES



Pervious
Top

Material Crossing. Exhibition Models
Carved into the Rock. Perspective Elevation



Hammam garden walkway



allen block retaining wall



Hammam garden walkway



Hammam cold plunge



Pottery workshop and cafe



Hammam reception gathering space



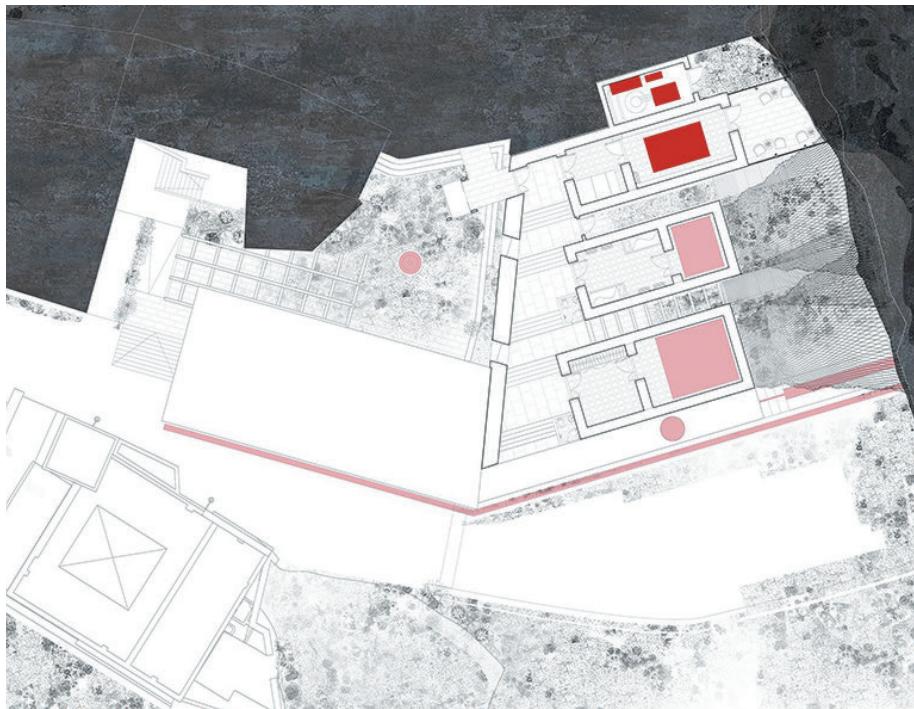
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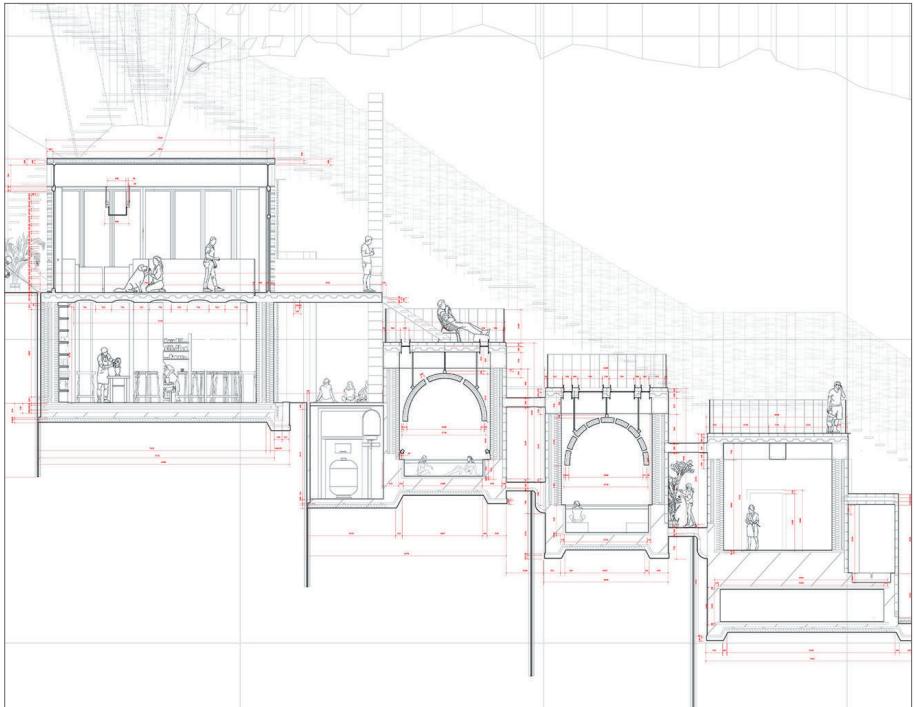
31



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Hamman Entrance. Render

Hamman in Different Levels with Aqua Indications. Plan



Top
Bottom

Pottery Workshop. Interior Render
Materials along the Slope. Technical Long Section

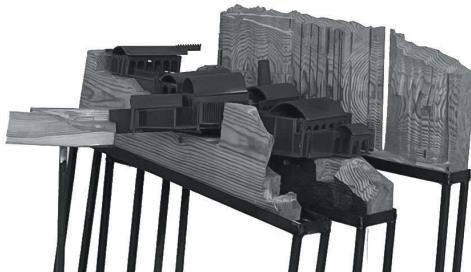
Site: Marchan district.
Programme: Ceramic Workshop, Hammam and Mint Tea Café.

12

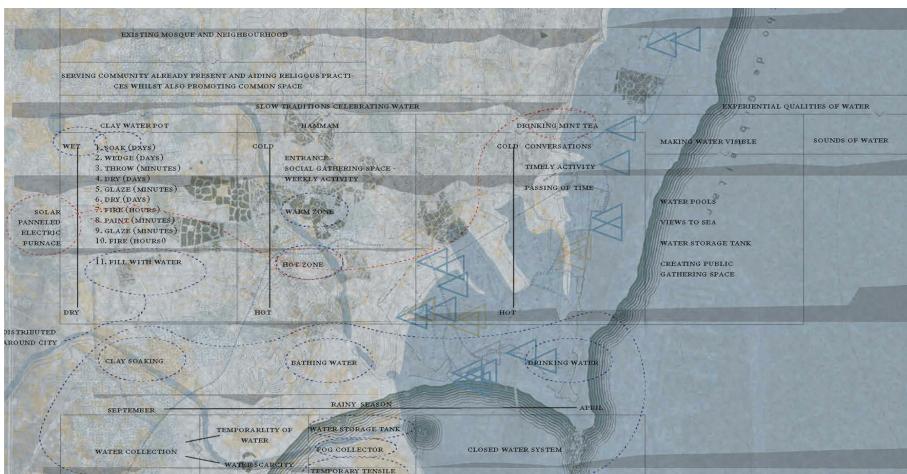
IMAGINARY RIVERS

COMMON GROUNDING THROUGH WATER

EILIDH MCKENNA

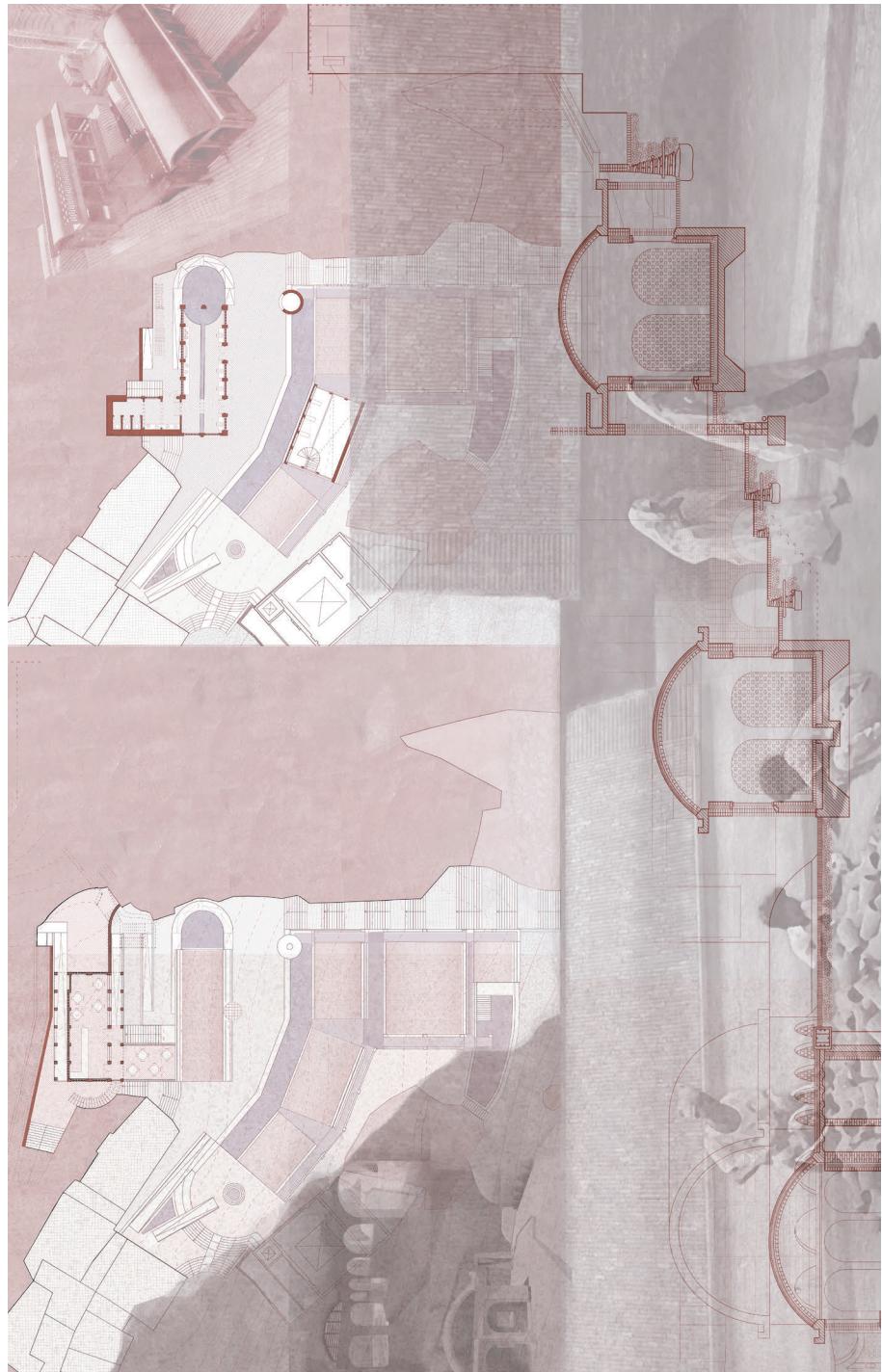


Imaginary Rivers draws on Tangier's interwoven development with water, historically shaped by the interzone's contradictory relationships and treatments of it. Embedded in the northern cliff of the Marshan District, overlooking the Strait of Gibraltar and near the Phoenician tombs, the project re-envisiones water as an "imaginary river" that connects the city's spatial, cultural, and historical narratives. Flowing through four explorations: "Contact Water Zones," "The Slow Vernacular Commons of Water," "Form Flows Through Earthen Vessels," and "Imaginary Rivers," the project frames water as a common, creating community resilience and connection. In Tangier, water serves as both a functional necessity and cultural connector, woven into religious practices, communal rituals, and daily life. Yet, with growing water scarcity and rapid urbanization, these traditional flows are threatened. Imaginary Rivers creates a network of water-centered spaces: a ceramic workshop, a hammam, and a mint tea café, each inspired by traditional practices. Ceramic water pots, reflective pools, and cascading aqueducts invite users to reconnect with ethereal and sensory experiences associated with sacred water rituals. The project's phased development mirrors the cyclical nature of water. The ceramic vessels produced on-site, fired in the shared furnace, serve both as exploratory vessels and architectural components, embedding traditional practices into the site itself. Imaginary Rivers is both critical intervention and poetic reclamation, challenging modern patterns of water overconsumption and privatization. It invites a reconceptualization of water not just as infrastructure but as public memory and cultural artifact. Like the humble street water pot fountain encountered during fieldwork, it stands as a quiet call to reimagine water as a common.

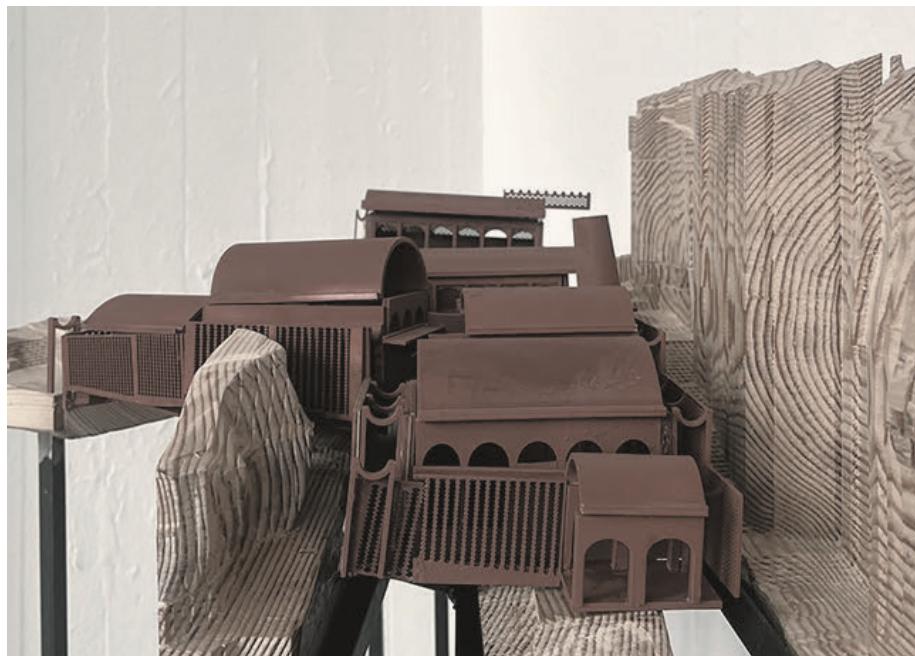
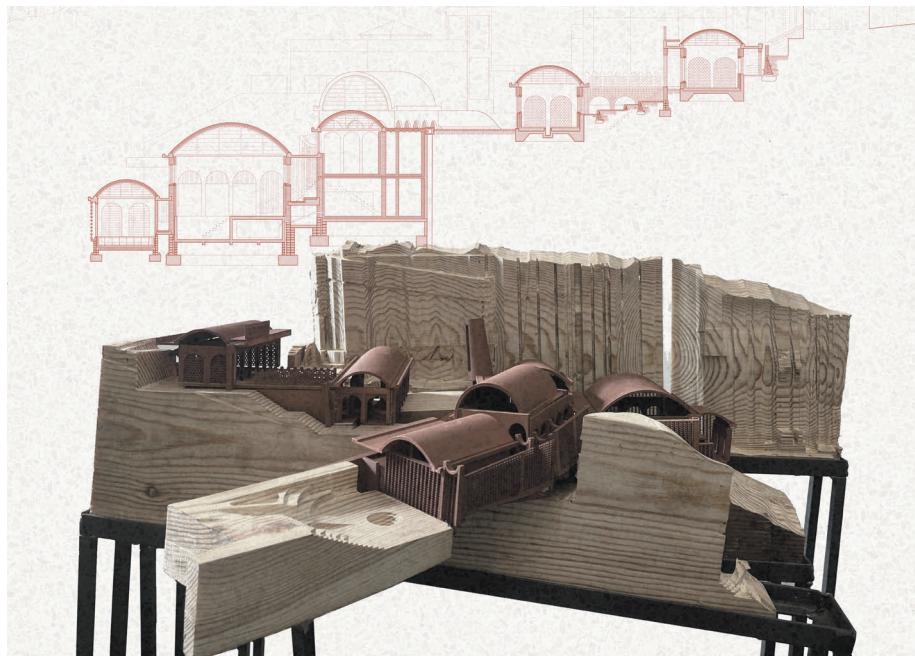


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Accessibility and Neighbourhood Run-off Water Modern Aqueduct Filtration System. Line Drawing
Cascading Arches and Pools Overlooking the Strait. Render
Watering the Programme. Project Brief
Collaging the Ceramic Workshop and Mint Tea Cafe. Plans, Renders and 1:50 Section



EILIDH MCKENNA | IMAGINARY RIVERS



Left
Right

Rising Arches. 1:100 Model and 1:50 Section

Collaging the Hammam. Plans, Renders, 1:2 Ceramic Pot Connection Model and 1:50 Section



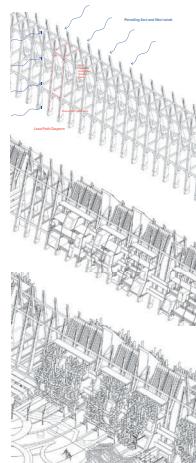
EILIDH MCKENNA | IMAGINARY RIVERS

Site: Marina Bay, City Port.
Programme: Ecological Observation Station, Public Park, Material Craft Studios and Extraction Facilities, Learning Bridge, Public Market.

13

LEARNING GROUNDS

OLIVER MAXWELL

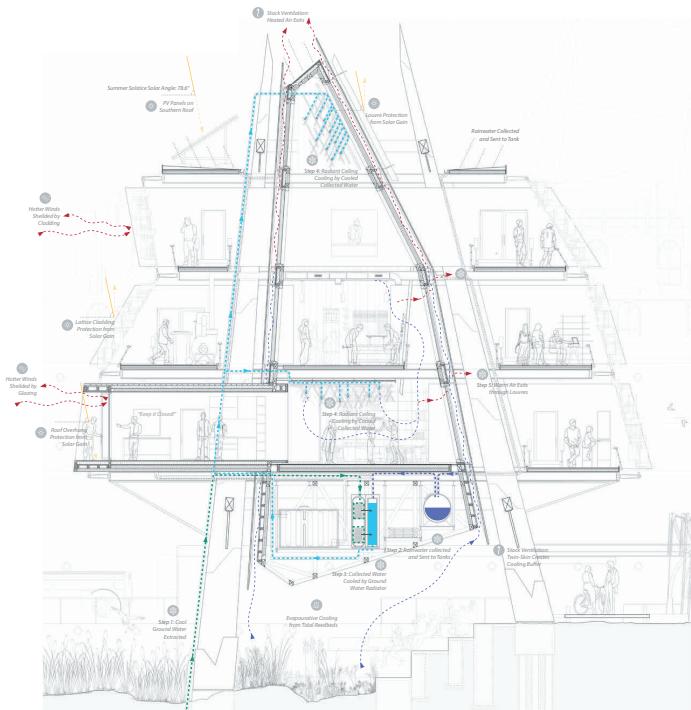


At the edge of Tangier's Medina, the old city port awaits its redevelopment into a new high-end marina. Its artificial land once extended to greet cruise ships and erase labour, the city's waterfront today falters. The promenade gleams, but just beyond it, the ground softens into dust, weeds, and waiting. Between billboards promising affluence, construction fences and scrubland, only wind moves freely here. This main urban space is the residue of a decades-long project to turn an active coastline into a spectacle of leisure. Yet it never fully closed the gap between erasure and return.

The project transforms the marina's artificial lands into a public park, positioned between the polished vision of its planned development and the wild, living landscape that we encounter today. Rather than overwriting the site, the intervention aims to hold the space open. A timber vessel, long and low, anchors itself into the artificial land like a jetty. Part scaffold, part bridge, the infrastructure retains a capacity to allow different uses to unfold as needed. Light pavilions are cradled: places for making, for gathering, for watching. Materials come from the site itself; clay, timber, salt, weeds, drawn not for permanence but for return. Mediations within interventions rise and fall like breath over decades.

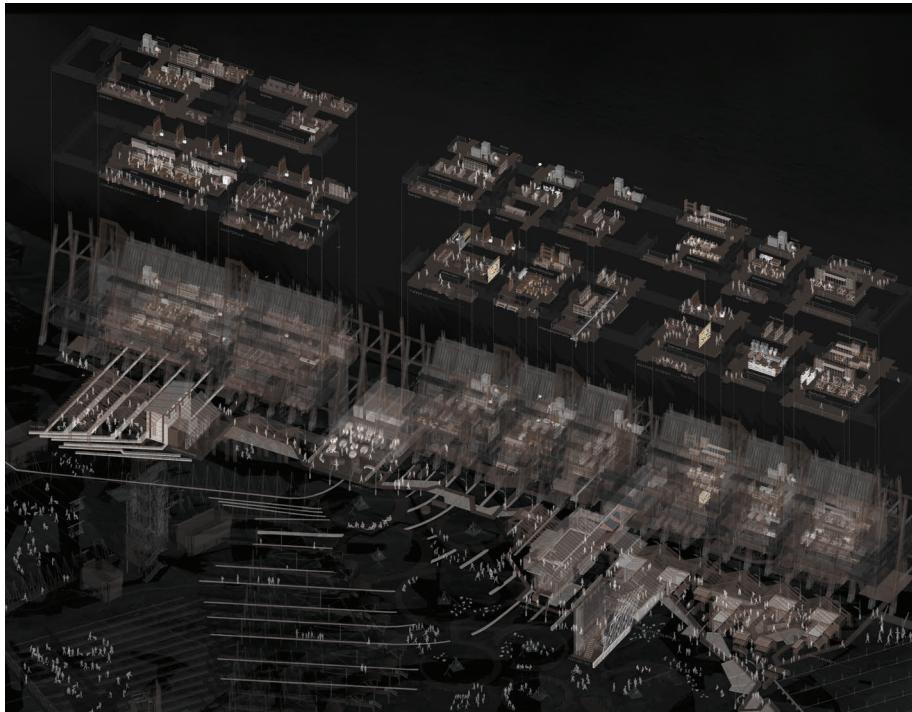
This project inhabits time with care, affording places to stay while leaving is expected. In a city shaped by crossings, indeterminacy makes space for what remains at the great city's edges.





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The Ground Remembers: Chronograph of Port Transformations. Layered Site Plan Mapping
Environmental Strategy. Section
The Learning Spine. Cross-section Render



Above
Bottom
Next

Programmatic Weave. Isometric Render

Field of Wonder and Return. Perspective Render

A Threshold of Time and Territory. Speculative Cross-section





Crafts inside the Weavers' Workshop



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- 9 **Presenting “Hijrah” Boardgame**, Thinkbelt Symposium, Matthew Gallery, 15th November 2024. Ana Bonet Miró.
- 20 **Exploring Al-Idrisi Map of Europe, Asia and North Africa (12th Century)**, Ana Bonet Miró.
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Tutors

Ana Bonet Miró
Samer Wanani

Students

Abdul Hannan Waseem, Folahan Adelakun, Enrico Luo
Eilidh Mckenna, Oliver Maxwell, Anna Szczerba, Alexander Ritchie
Kim Lee, Yingwen Zhu, Yixuan Zhang, Mingsen Li
Ziyang Feng, Panxu Li, Yimin Kuang, Haixin Wang

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Pepe Navarrete
Iain Scott
Alex Blanchard

Consultants

Stuart Fleming, Michael Clutton, Gillian Ogilvie, Will Rudd Engineering
Andrew Leiper, Rhys Houston, Max Fordham

Technicians

Rachel Collie, Dave Taylor, Richard Collins, Malcolm Cruickshank
Paul Charlton, Paul Diamond, Pauline Edie, Catriona Gilbert

Special thanks to:

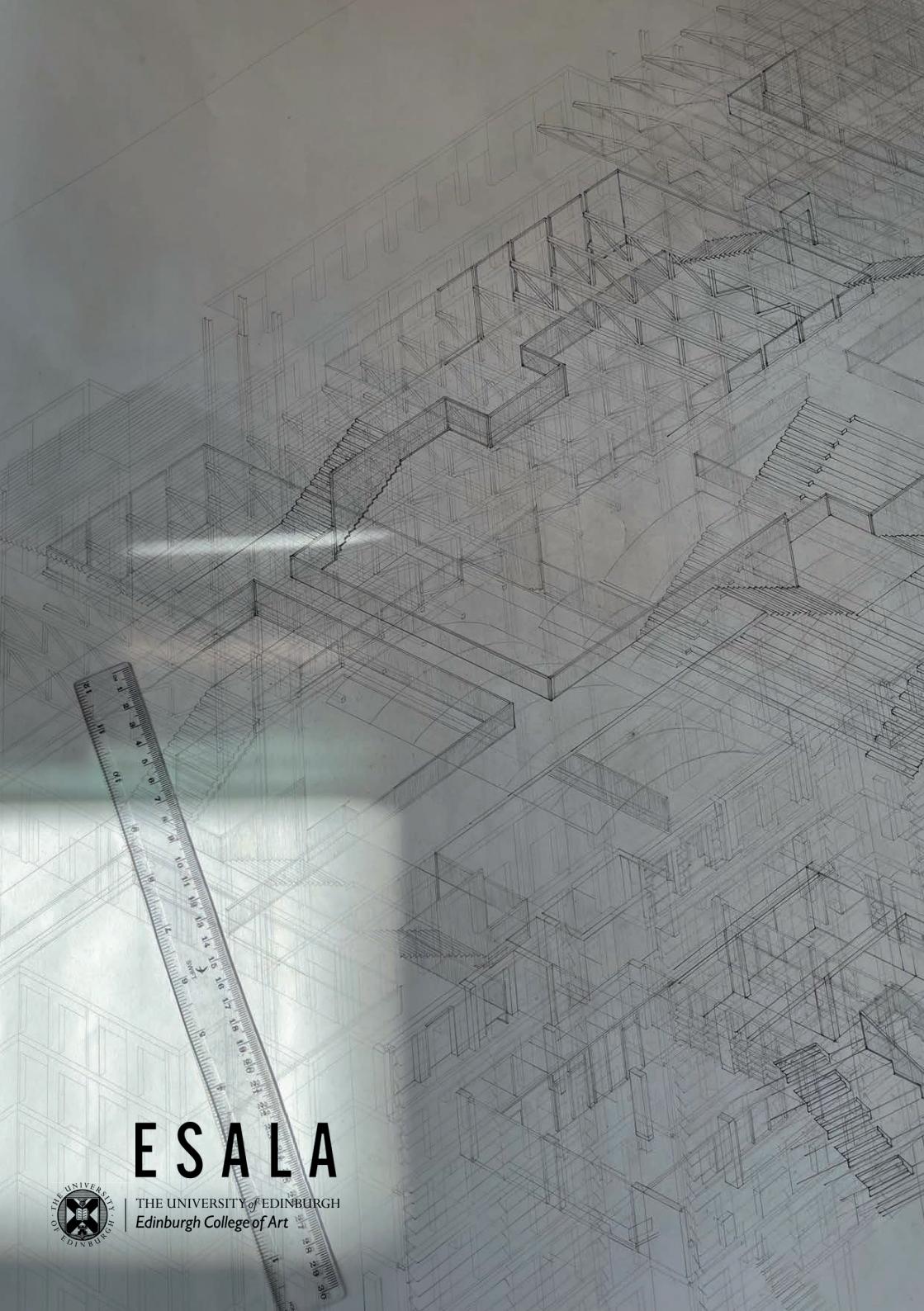
Hamza Nechar, Tangier
Yasmine Taferssiti, Tangier
Kamal Daghmoumi, Amine Houari, Amina Mourid, Association Think Tangier

Crossing Tangier edited by
Kim Lee & Yingwen Zhu



Horizon: Cap Spartel.





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