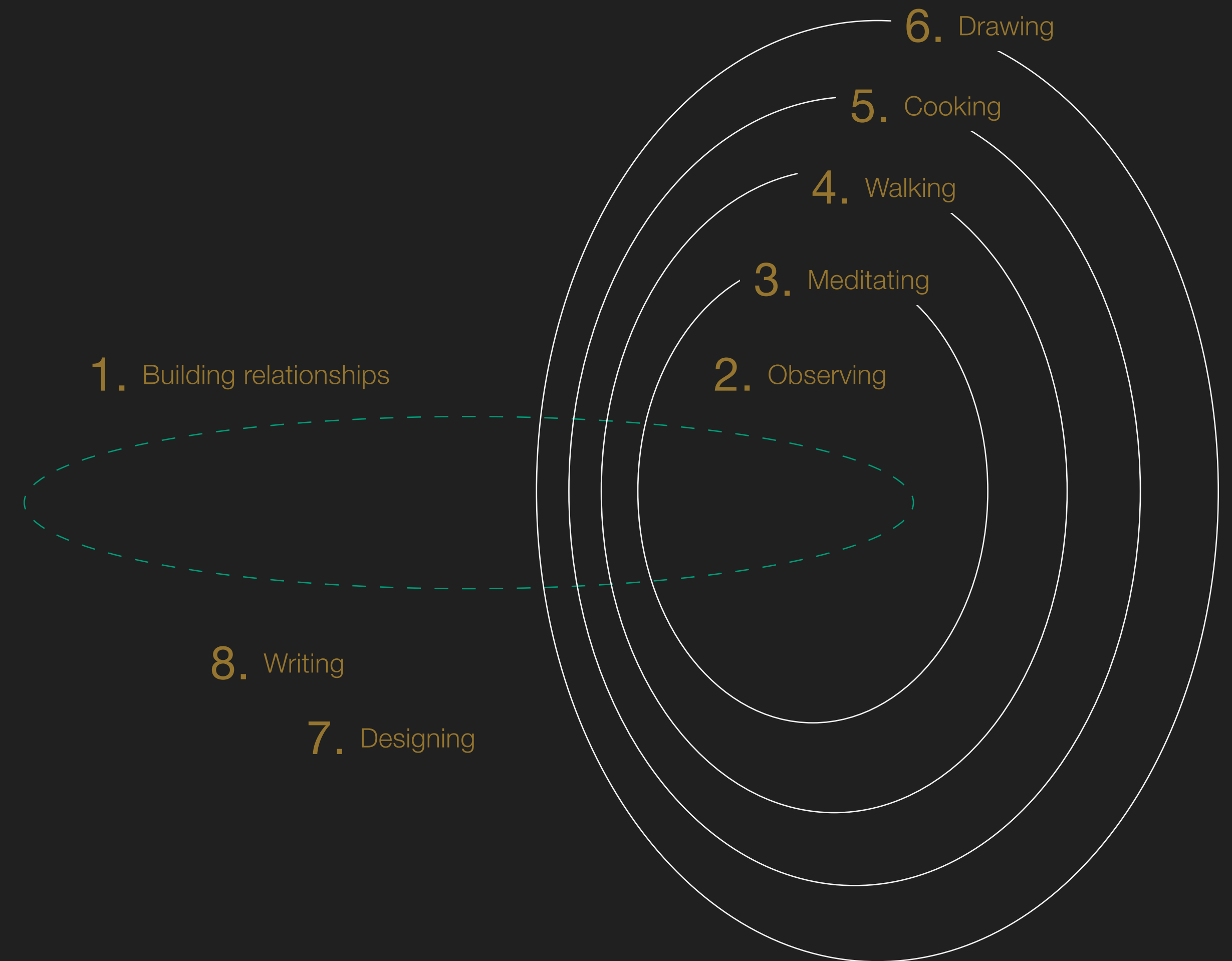


I approach each project through **daily practices** and **rituals**. I aim to offer spaces for unlearning limiting beliefs, reclaiming our wisdom, and strengthening connections with each other, the environment, and the spirit of a place.



Carlos Medellín

I am a spatial designer who incorporates architecture, art, interior design, service design, urban design, and urban planning, among other disciplines, into my practice. My identity as a Colombian gay man and immigrant inspires me to approach each project from a perspective deeply focused on the context: the relationships we have with the built and natural environment and the everyday practices we create to inhabit them.

My practice is an adventure — a journey in which I prioritize the relationships and stories of those who inhabit the spaces. Through an immersive research process, I seek to deeply understand the individual and collective narratives that make up a place, which opens a space for innovative and unexpected visions, solutions, and processes.

Work: Architecture as Rituals

My design process is about **more than just the buildings**—Whether envisioning a dream home, a place for restorative social and environmental justice, or a public space for expression, **working with me is a journey** of self-discovery, collective hands-on experimentation, and unexpected outcomes.

- Projects
- Actions
- * Sharing ideas

- Looking for El Dorado: in this site a sacred Land
- Dialogue: Restorative Justice for youth
- A spiral home in the jungle: a stewardship process
- Recipes for difficult friendships: Salt rituals
- El Rozar: Queer cultural center
- CurtainLandia: a Public Art Company
- Nurturing the Land: attuning as spatial practice
- Reviewing Paramaribo: a loving River
- Summer Sessions: Commonwealth
- * I don't want to talk about the weather: Master of Architecture, Core I design studio

Looking for El Dorado: in this “site,” a sacred Land

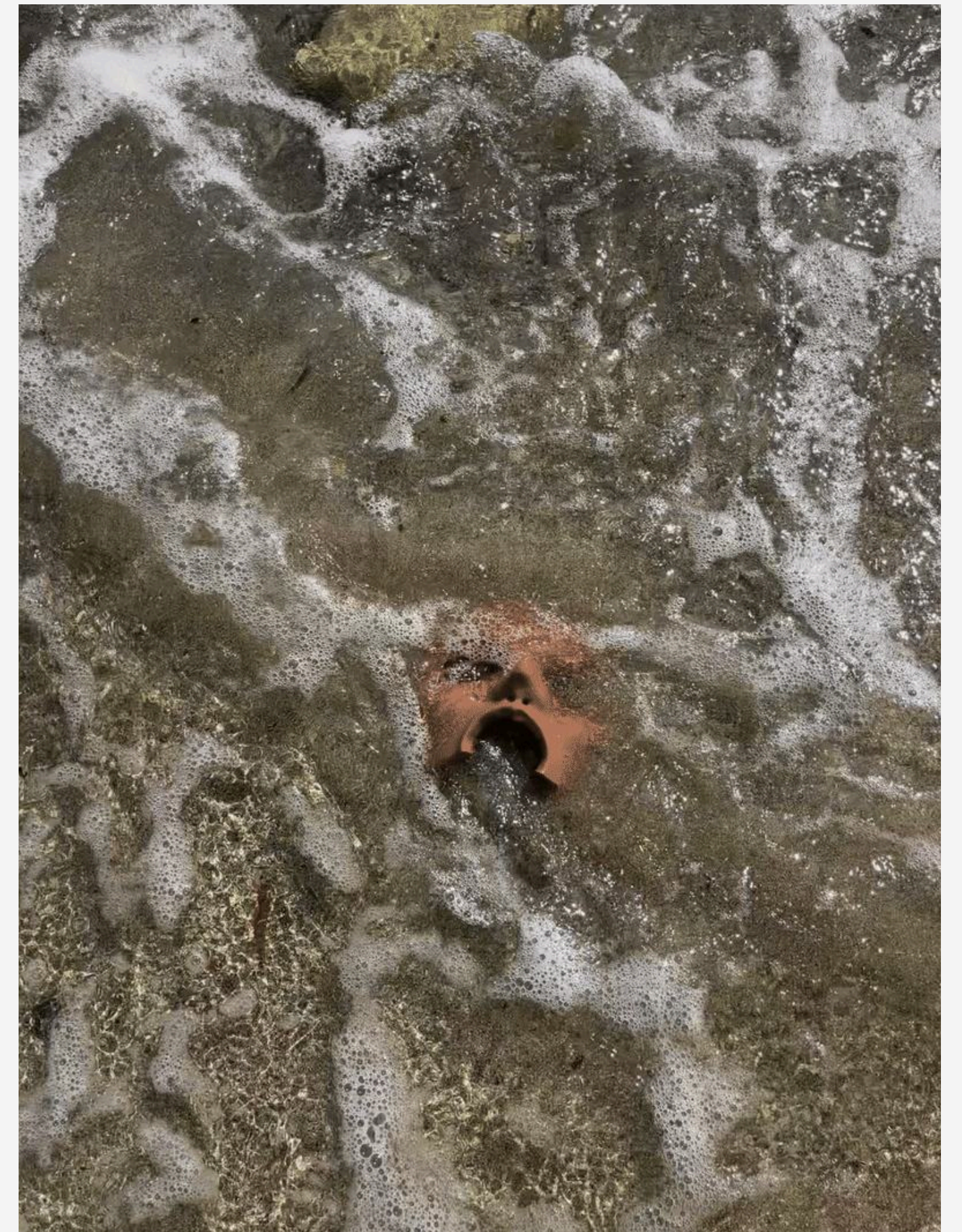
Around the world

2023

Role: Designer

Status: ongoing

Client: Personal Practice



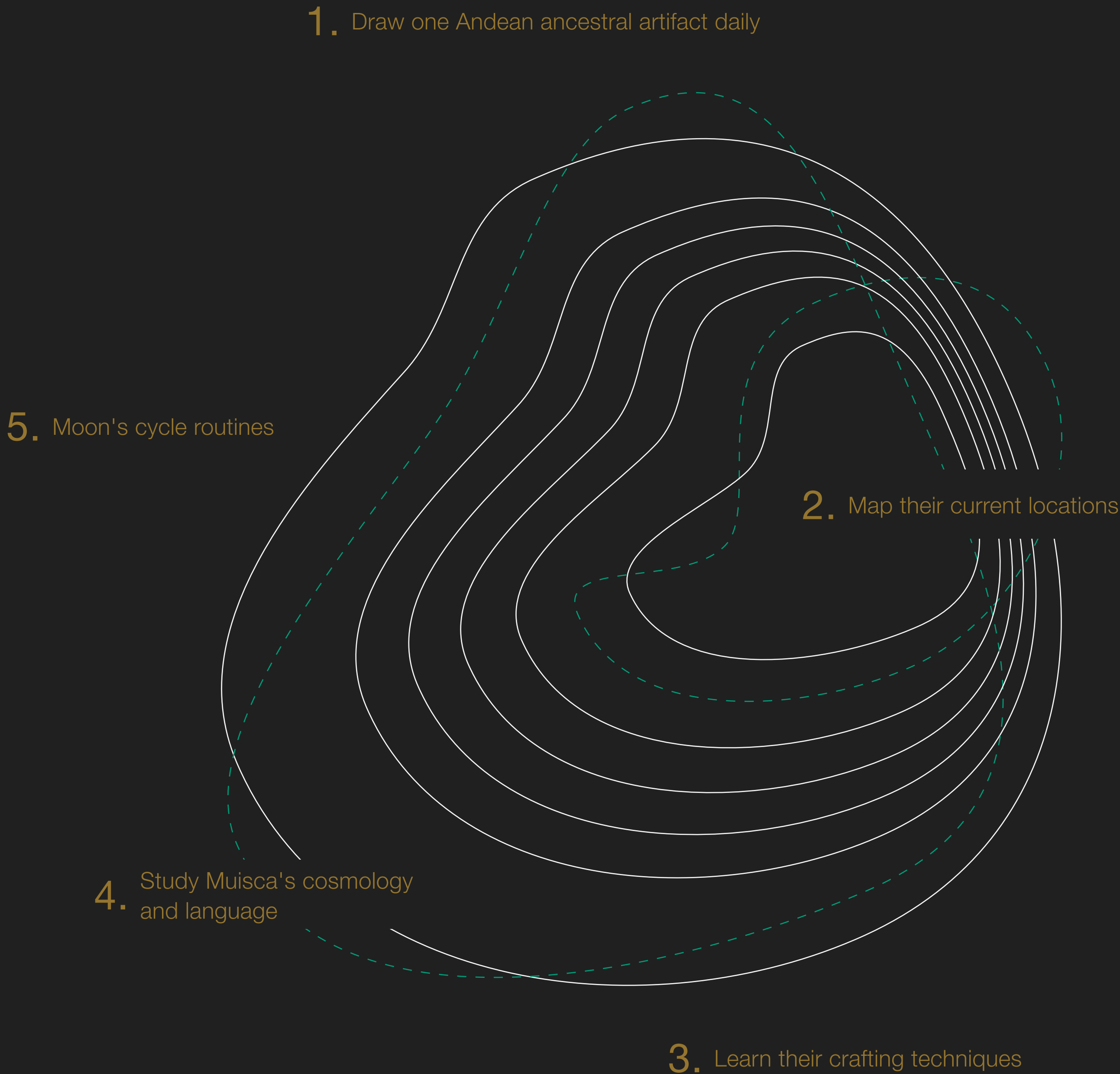
Brief

Spatial practices for facing the climate crisis

Once, I thought "El Dorado" was a myth about a gold city Europeans sought but never found. Now I know it is also about how Indigenous Muisca made gold offerings, the Sun's gift, to place in sacred lagoons to maintain the Land's balance. Colonizers only imagined a site to exploit and dismissed natives' wisdom. For millennia, Andean cultures made clay water-whistling vessels to talk to the stars by mimicking birds' tones, and recently, scientists have caught cosmic waves resembling birds' chirps 100.000km from Earth.

Rituals

Witnessing the Andes mountains burnt in fires made me understand I needed a different way to engage with the earth. So, I committed to seek wisdom in ancestral artifacts.



To embody ancient wisdom,
I have been crafting:

A. Journals with more than 1500 drawings

B. Sound artifacts echoing bird's tones

C. I have crafted masks to explore my shadows and offer that energy to the Land.

Building a cosmology

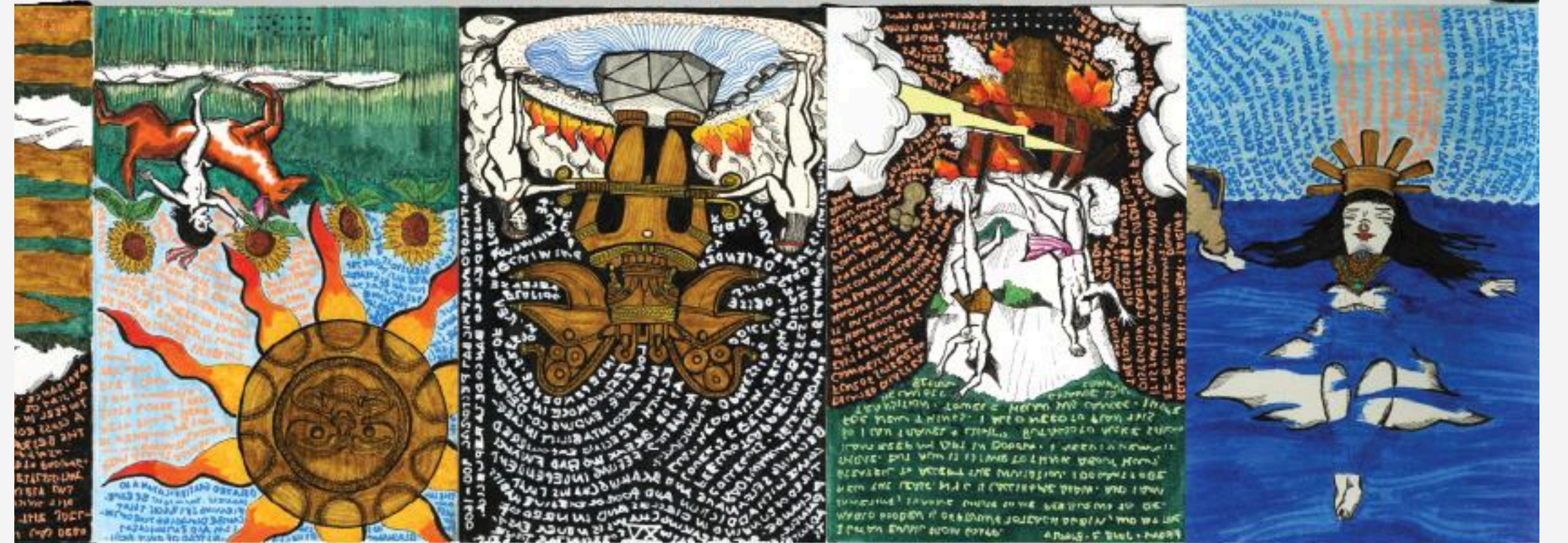
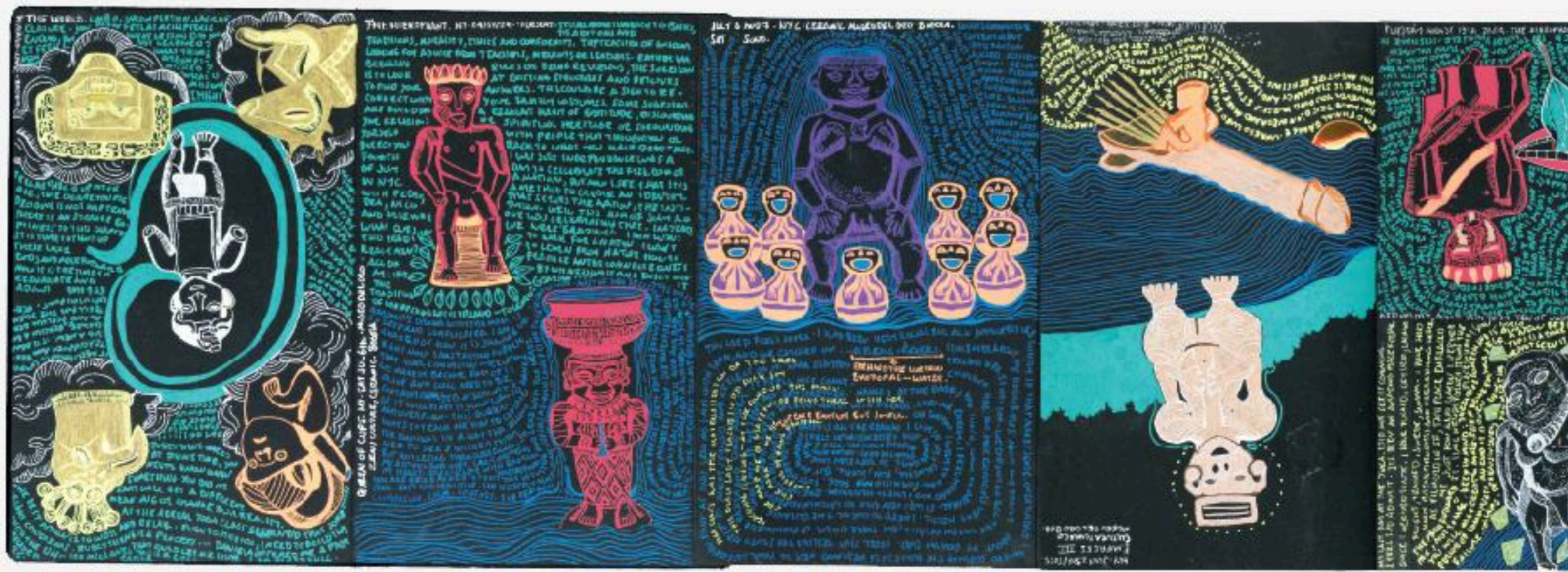
Crafting, writing, and drawing have
become my main tools for
researching and connecting with
the knowledge of a place and
enhancing my own.



B.



C.



A. For years I have visited museums and online collections worldwide, looking to build a closer relationship with Indigenous knowledge residing in ancestral artifacts of the Americas.

Journaling and drawing them have become essential part of my daily practices.



B. Many Andean indigenous cultures believe pottery means immortalizing ancestors and their wisdom, which has become one with the dirt and the clay.



This ocarina is a kind of alchemy: I made it with Bogota's clay to connect myself with ancestors and sounds they played for centuries.



Bogotá, Colombia.



B. While designing a house, I became obsessed with a bird singing. Following it, I understood the place differently.



This water-whistling vessel resembles the sound of that bird when you move the water from one chamber to the other.



La Mesa, Cundinamarca, Colombia.



C. The ancient Greeks had a deep and complex relationship with masks, especially in the context of theatre, ritual, and identity.



C. As a queer man, I learned sex as a tabu. I designed this mask to explore gender-bending roles and erotic elements I am interested in.



Syros. Greece. I placed the mask in the sea, letting the waves carry it away—along with my old understanding of my sexuality—making space for a new kind of creativity to emerge.



C. Masks were seen as channeling divine energy, allowing people to step outside themselves and become vessels for myth, truth, or emotion.



C. I designed this mask to wear at the Dionysian festival, honoring Dionysus—the god of wine, ecstasy, and transformation



Syros. Greece. I left this mask at a sacred cave as an offer to the mountain for holding me.

Dialogue: Restorative Justice for youth

Bogotá, Colombia

2019

Role: Developed as executive and design director at Horizontal Foundation

Status: Built

Client: United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) & Bogotá's District Secretariat of Security, Coexistence and Justice (SDSCJ)

Collaborators: Developed by Horizontal Foundation in partnership with Nicolas Paris. Woodwork by Laboratorio de Expresion. Curtains by Cristian Fajardo. Electronic consultant Julian Bejarano. Restorative Justice advisor Daniela Escallon. Political science and cultural advisors Dana Montenegro and Maria Victoria Londono. Design team: Carlos Medellin, Pablo Londono, Sebastian Rivera, Ruben Gomez, Sara Vera, Steffany Cañon and Pierre Puentes. Management by Alba Lucia Quiceno and Luz Dary Hincapie.



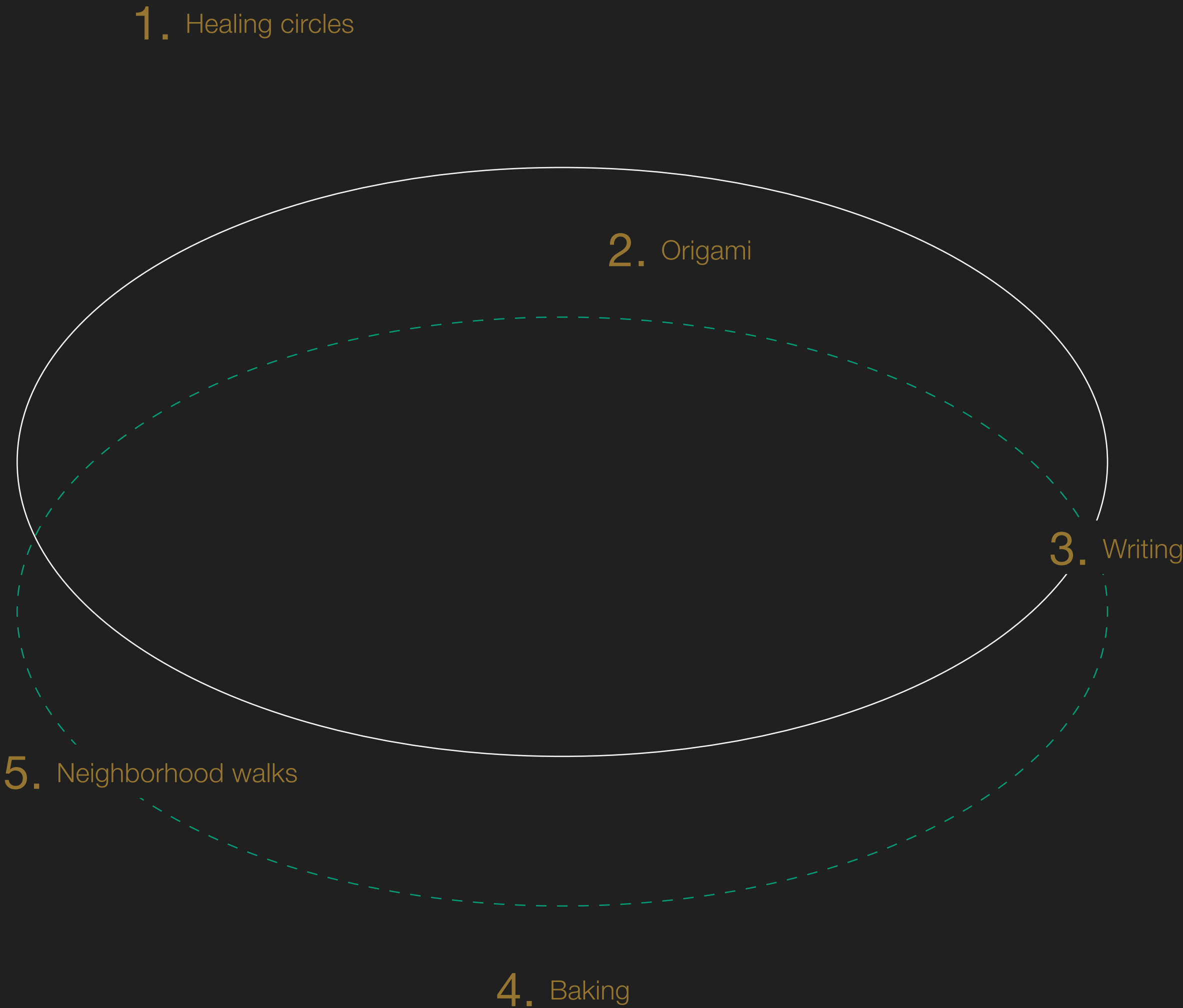
Brief

Redesigning the interiors of "La Casita," a 1940s house in the city's center, to host Colombia's first Restorative Justice (RJ) program.

Until then, I had seen justice only from a punitive perspective and, as an architect, learned to approach space as a product. However, the concept of RJ challenged me when I realized it originates in ancestral rituals. "Healing Circles" are collective spaces where everyone involved in a conflict can tell their story, which many Indigenous cultures in the Americas use to repair broken bonds.

Rituals

So, it was evident that the team and I had to join victims, offenders, and psychosocial workers in their daily rituals:



We designed tools and protocols to facilitate environments that enhance diverse storytelling rituals

A. Tools for tracing, speaking, and projecting testimonies

B. Curtains to stage stories in different ways

C. A mobile artifact for public space Restorative Justice practices

La Casita: space as rituals

Architecture is not synonym of tabula rasa. In this project space is defined and redefined through the disposition of elements that support everyday practices.

A.



B.

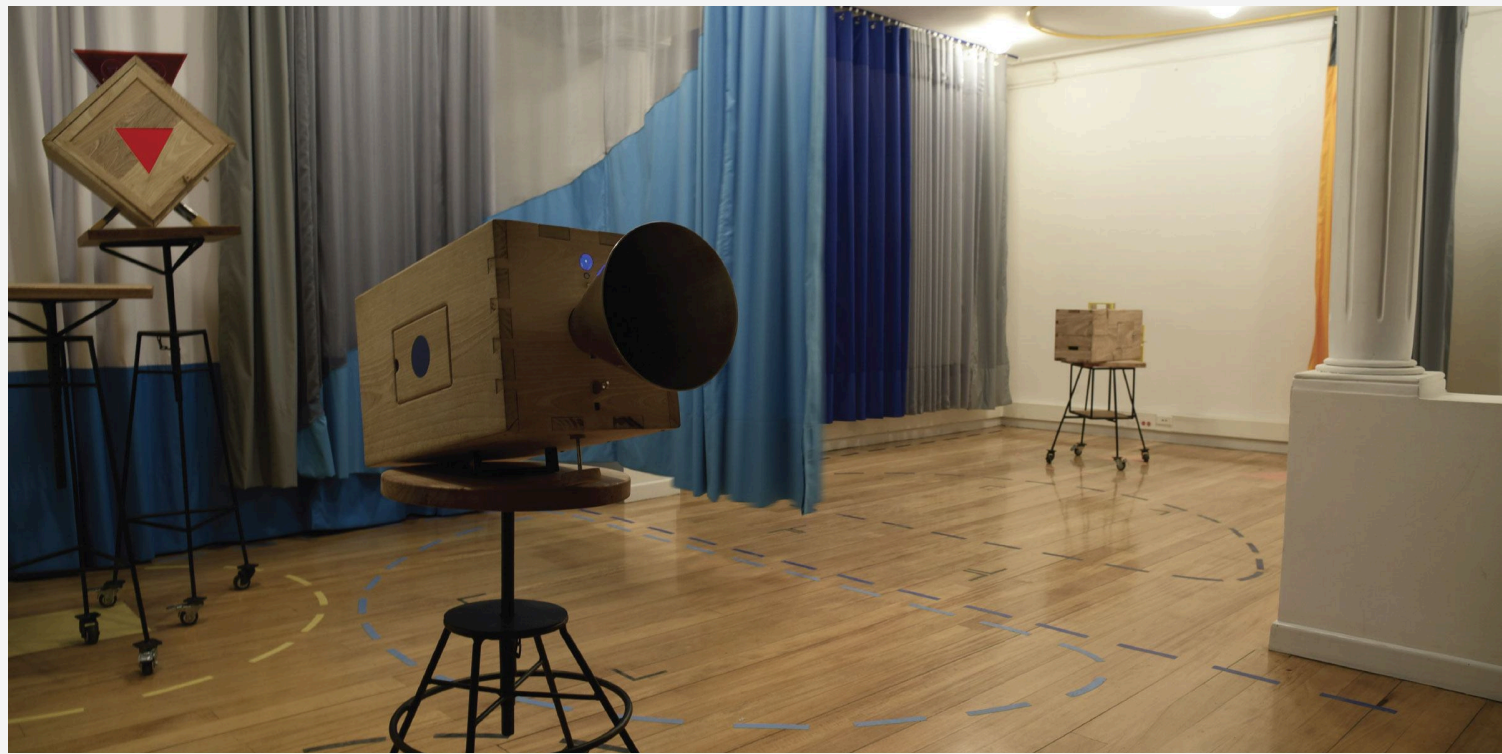


C.

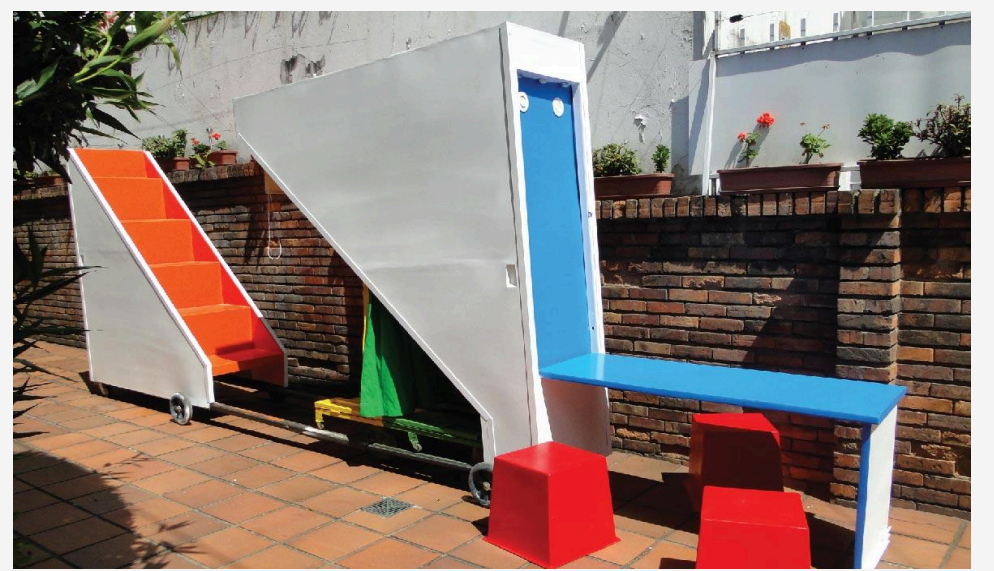




A. This analog light projector is part of a set of 3 tools for showcasing and collecting testimonies in Restorative Justice sessions.



B. These curtains allow people to set up different environments to provide individual and collective emotional comfort and support diverse storytelling practices.



C. This mobile space deploys different tools for activating the public space with Restorative Justice and pedagogic practices.

A spiral home in the jungle: a stewardship process

La Mesa Cundinamarca, Colombia.		2025
Role: Lead designer and construction manager		Status: Under Construction
Client: Leonardo Santa Maria and Lukas Friedemann		

Collaborators: Design by Carlos Medellin, Maria Alejandra Casas, Juan David Gomez, Leonardo Santa Maria and Lukas Friedmann. Construction management and technical development by Carlos Medellin and Juan David Gomez. Curtains by Cristian Fajardo. Structural Engineering by MPA Ingenieria y construccion S.A.S. Electric Engineering by Andres Sanchez from IIE INGENIERÍA S.A.S. Hydraulic and sanitary engineering by Oscar Ramirez.



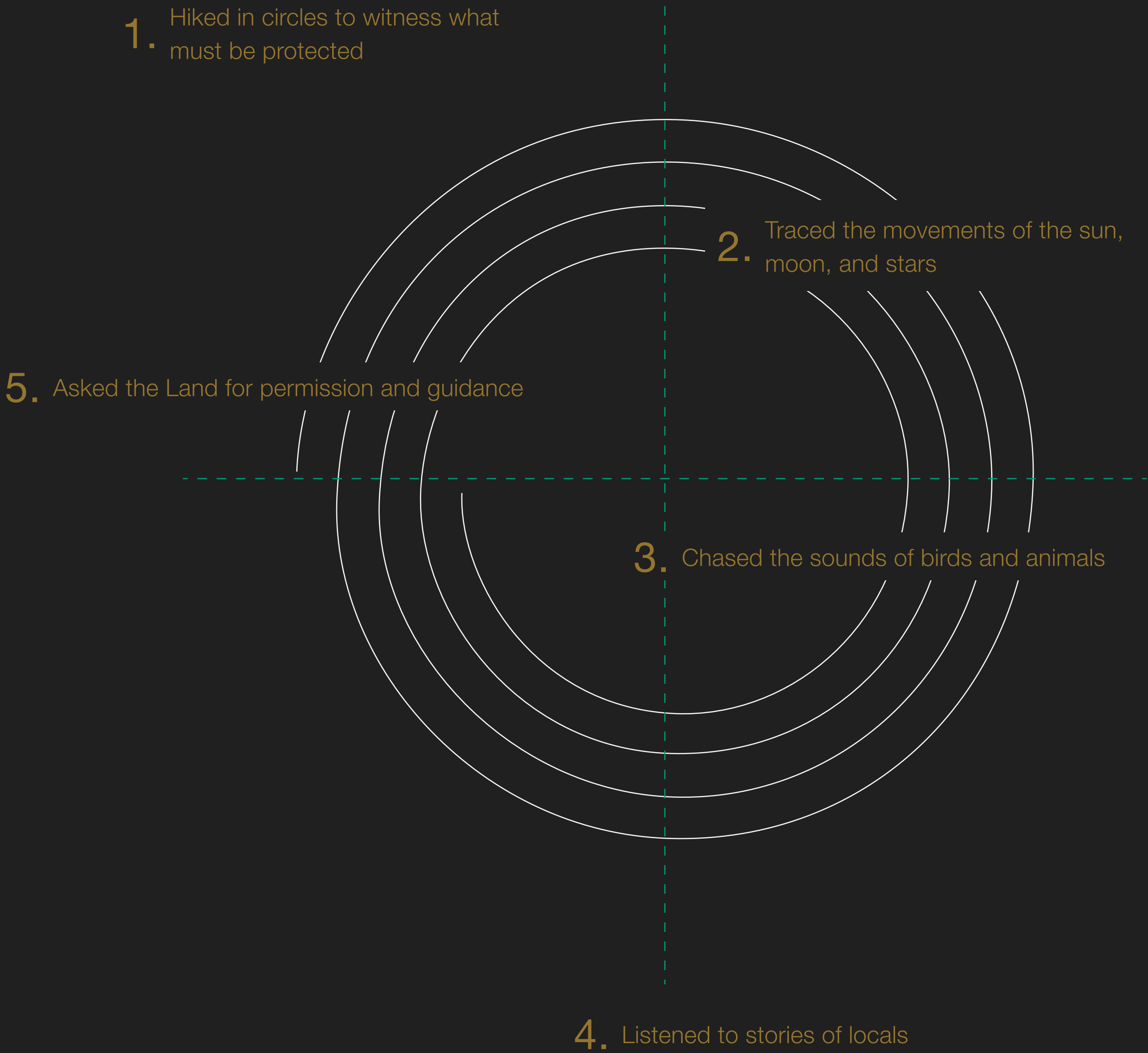
Brief

A house for two friends and a studio for artists in residency.

The Indigenous Panche have long stewarded this Land, making rituals and artifacts to relate to it as living beings. However, its biodiversity and temperate climate made it the origin of the 1783 Botanical Expedition, which aimed to create taxonomies and catalog it as a resource owned by the colonizers, with architects helping its commodification.

Rituals

To learn from the Land's intrinsic knowledge, I lived there for 90 days:



We designed key elements to ensure our collective wellness:

A. An "honor agreement" stating values for respecting the Land in our process

B. A playlist to explore spatial moods

C. 360° spiral shape to honor views

D. Rain harvest, energy efficiency, and dry building systems

The house is a process

While living on the Land, I designed the concept for this house through daily practices like cooking, drawing, and stargazing. It grew from care and respect for the place —aiming to minimize impact, opening to 360° views through ramps and balconies, and creating a central gathering space around the fire for looking at the moon.

A.



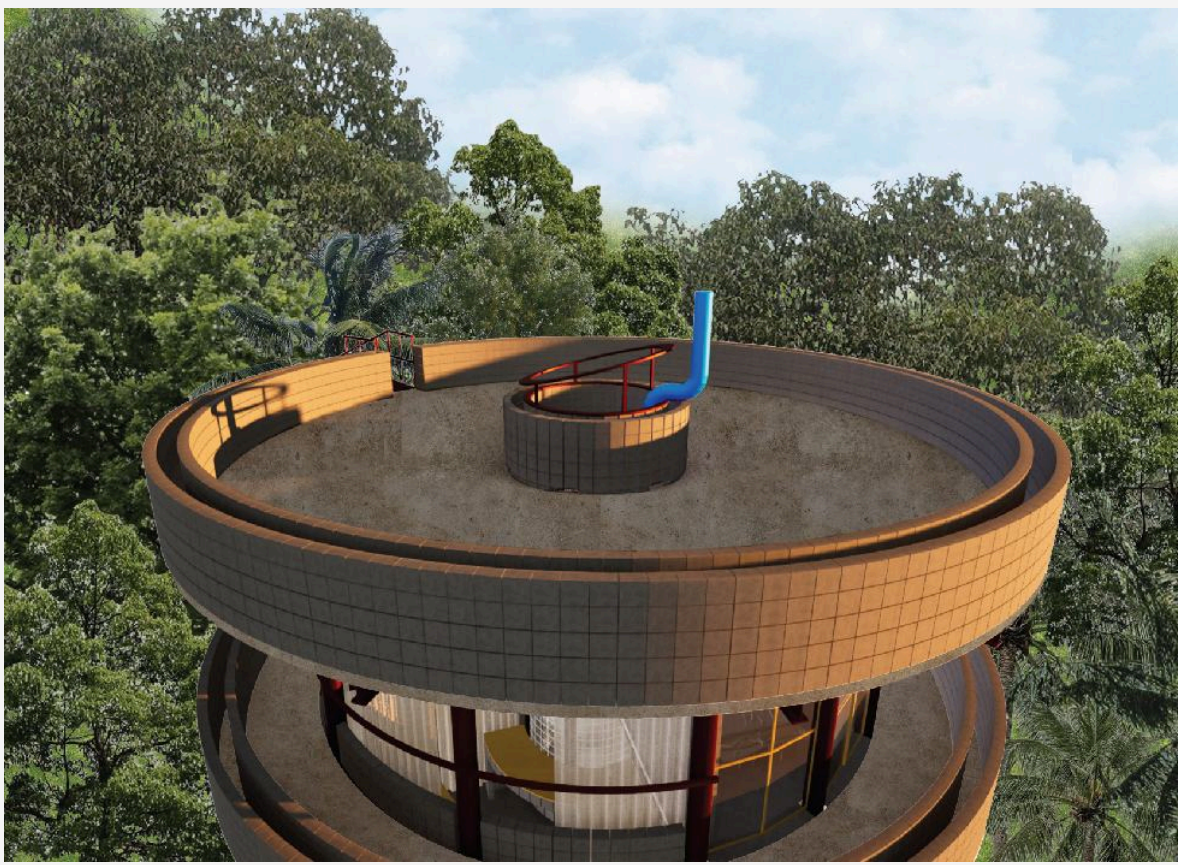
[Go to honor agreement](#)

B.

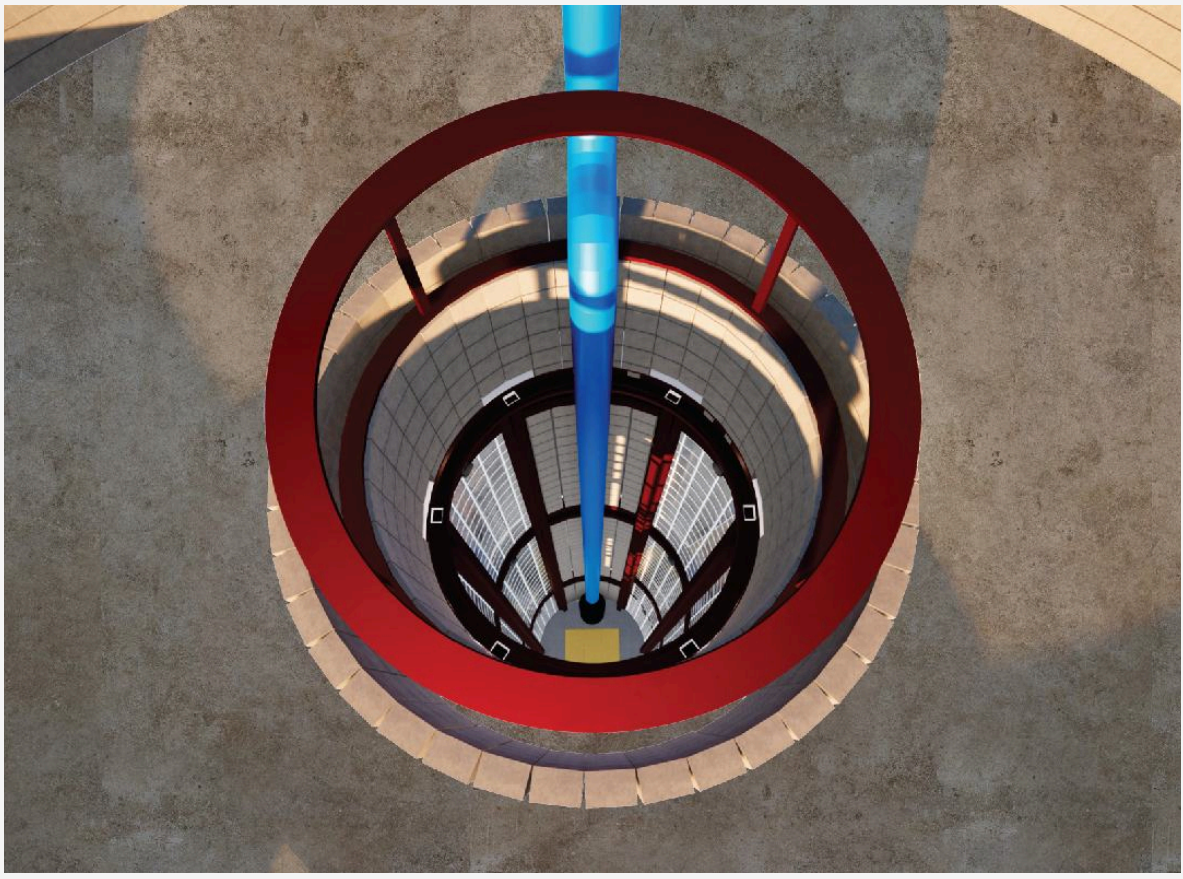


[Go to playlist](#)

C.



D.





C. TThis house features a circular layout centered around a fireplace. A ramp serves as the main vertical circulation, spiraling through the levels and guiding visitors to take in the surrounding views.



C. This is the third's floor flexible studio space



C. This is the second level's- open kitchen



C. This is the first lever- entrance to the ramp



D. This section shows the central space that works as a natural and artificial lamp for the house. It is where the rainwater is collected, stored, and cleaned. It is also a space for contemplating the stars and the moon.moon.

Recipes for difficult friendships: Salt rituals

The Andes Mountains (Bogotá,
Nemocón and La Mesa, Cundinamarca),
Colombia.

2020, 2024

Role: Designer and community
engagement leader

Status: On going

Client: California College of the Arts

Collaborators: Salty Bread with my Grandma (Lola), mom
(Myriam Sanchez), sister (Catherine Medellin), niece (Sara
Medellin) and my ex-boyfriend (Javier Durango). Salty cheese
bread with La red comunitaria trans (Alexa TuFantasia).



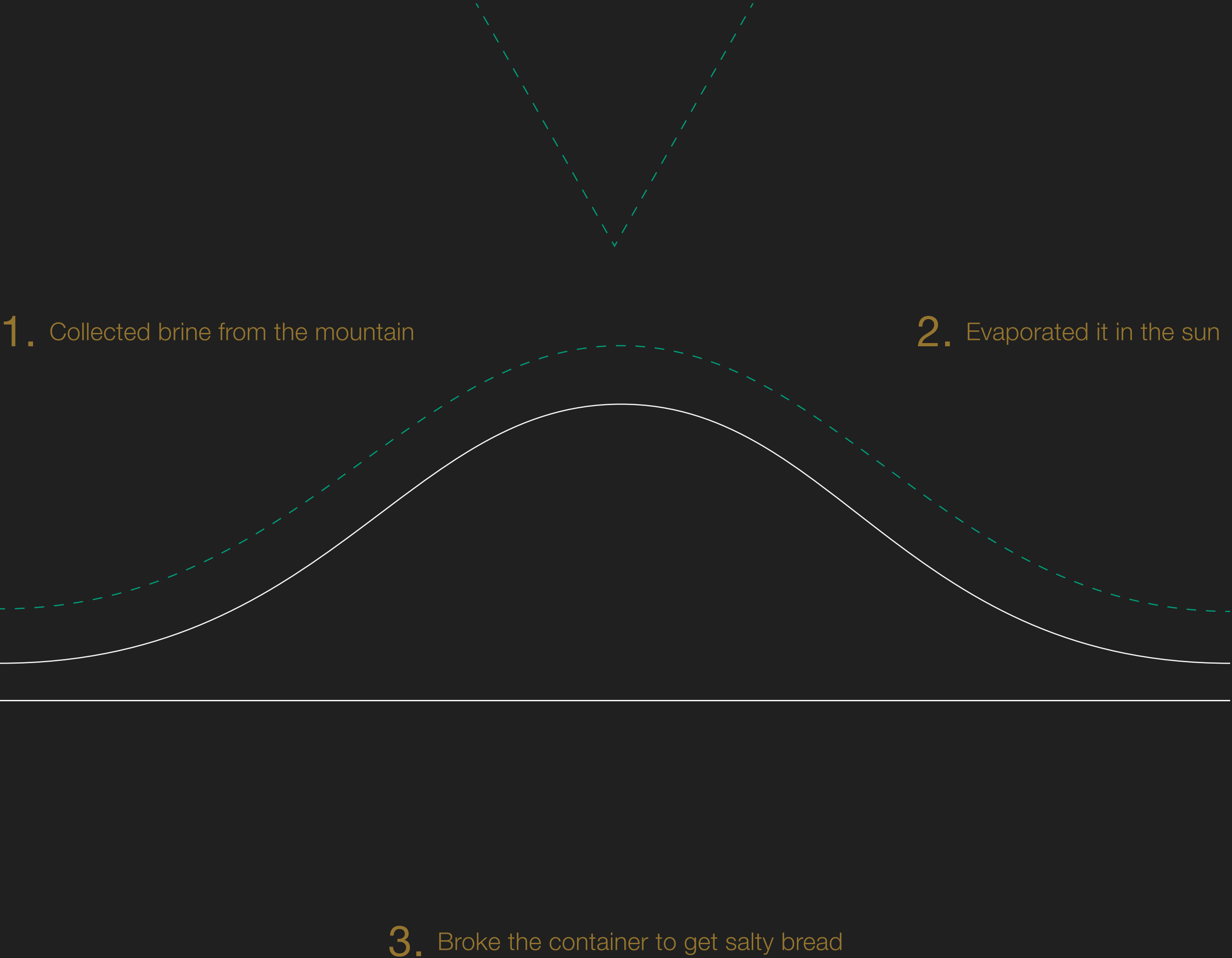
Brief

Design an action with a more-than-human-ally for Indigenous People's Day

Colonizers found a trade network in the Andes where salt was as valuable as gold. The "salt people," Indigenous Muisca, ritually evaporated brine to obtain "salty bread," a paste they exchanged for gold to craft offerings for the Land. Their relationship with salt, gold, and the mountain was sacred, but the Spanish devalued them, making it difficult to relate in solidarity and bridging differences.

Rituals

I worked with salty bread as my ally:



To explore my roots and connect with others, I decided to learn my grandma's bread recipe and:

A. Baked with my mom and sister to heal homophobia in our relationship

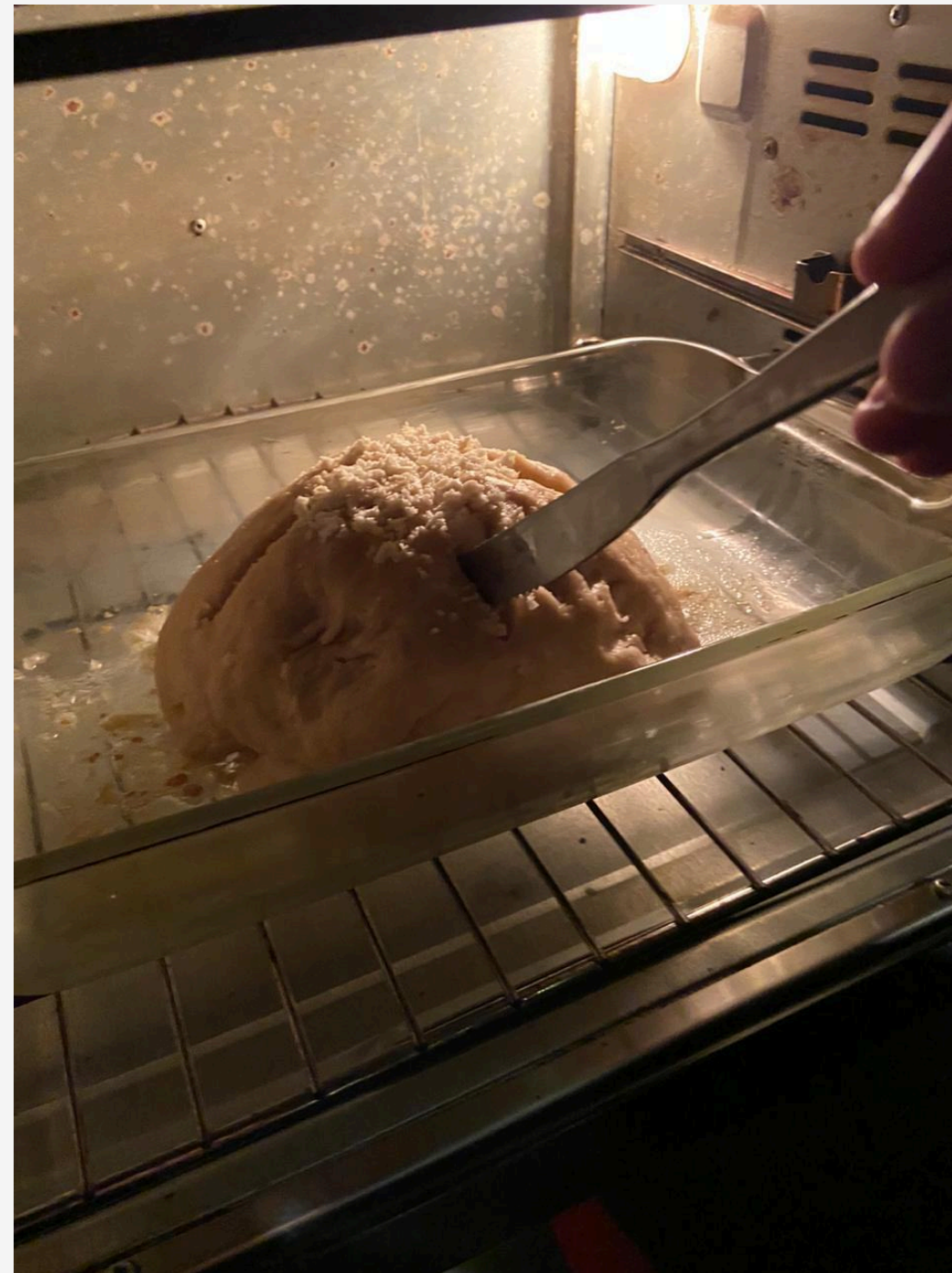
B. Transformed the recipe into fried cheese balls to cross Bogotá's transphobic-spatial segregation with the ladies of La Red Comunitaria Trans

C. Crafted and buried a salt dough figure to honor the Land

Recipe as ritual

I created 'recipes for difficult friendships,' meaning unlikely bonds where sharing space - eating salt together- was hard. Inspired by salt's ancestral ties to preservation, purification, and protection, these recipes aid me navigating relationships across differing realities.

A.



B.



C.





A. Brine from the Andes mountains in Colombia.



My mom teaching me, my sister, my niece and my boyfriend my grandmother's salty bread recipe



Baking this bread was the start of a series of actions that took me to explore my roots



Preservation: My relationship with my family has been difficult, full of misunderstandings and homophobia. Doing this together brought us closer.



B. Brine boiling to get the main ingredient, "salty bread."



This recipe became a space to build relationships with the ladies of "La Red Comunitaria Trans."



However, since their place did not have an oven, we changed the recipe and fried salty bread balls.



Purification: I was able to cross Bogota's physical and social divisions and started a collaboration between me and the trans sex workers from "La Red."



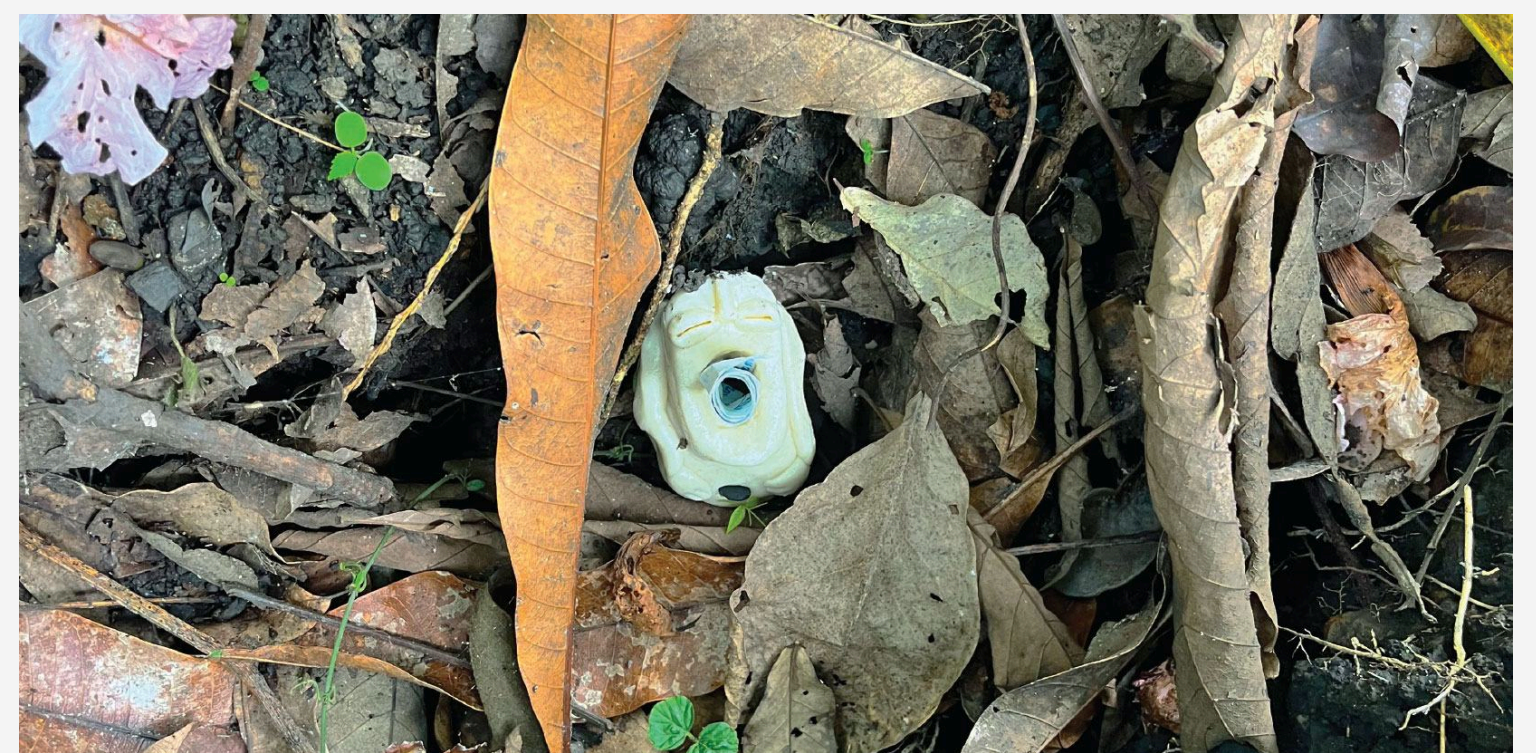
C. While boiling the brine, a dense mass of crystals is formed.



I changed the recipe again and mixed the crystals with flour to make salt dough figure.



While designing a house at La Mesa, Cundinamarca, I offered the figure to the Land.



Protection: I buried the figure, asking the Land to embrace the salt again, guide us toward a respectful connection, and welcome this new home.

El Rozar: Queer cultural center

Bogota, Colombia	2020
Role: Lead designer and construction manager	Status: Built
Client: Fundación El Rozar	
Collaborators: Design by Carlos Medellin, Ruben Gomez. Creative direction by Carlos Medellin. Management and community engagement by Maritza Tamayo, Cristina Rodriguez and Carlos Medellin. Communication design by Nicolas Quevedo. Logo by Federico Castrilón. and Woodwork by Juan David Gómez. Curtains by Cristian Fajardo. Business plan by Michelle Morales and Enrico Lorenzine. Cocktails by Nicolás Reines. Cultural Program with: Epigrama Studios, Tupamaras, Red Comunitaria Trans, and Mis Amigas Drag, Juan Betancurth, Alejandro Diaz, Bastardo, Randy Armas and Javier Durango.	



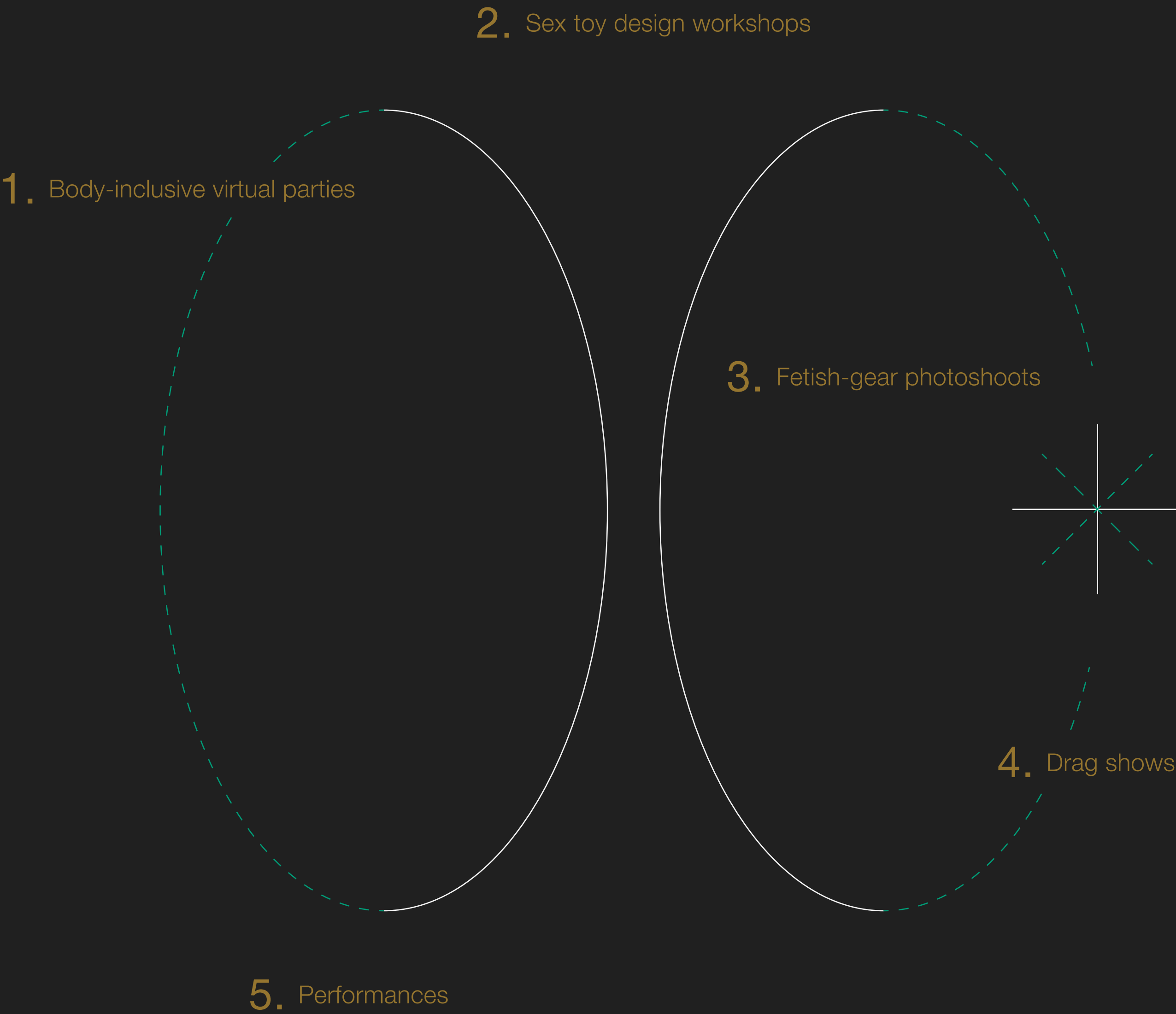
Brief

Designing a sex shop in the city's gay district, Chapinero Alto

Inspired by “Circus of Books,” a documentary about a couple who ran a porn shop and gay epicenter in 70s Los Angeles, Maritza and Cristina sought to profit from COVID-19's confinement using their 200m² commercial space to sell sex toys to the area's gay men. I reframed their vision to reclaim nightlife's importance for queer people and foster restorative economic channels.

Rituals

While restrictions eased, we rehearsed the space by inviting creative activists for:



Looking to strengthen social and support networks and facilitate our bodies to rub and feel together again, we designed:

A. A business plan to warranty queer people in need to attend

B. Flexible interiors and furniture for hosting a bar and performance space

C. A community-based cultural program

D. Communication design

Rozar means rubbing against each other

This was a chance to "rehearse the space." By that, I mean that by collaborating with queer creatives and activists, I designed through use, letting experimentation lead to unexpected outcomes.

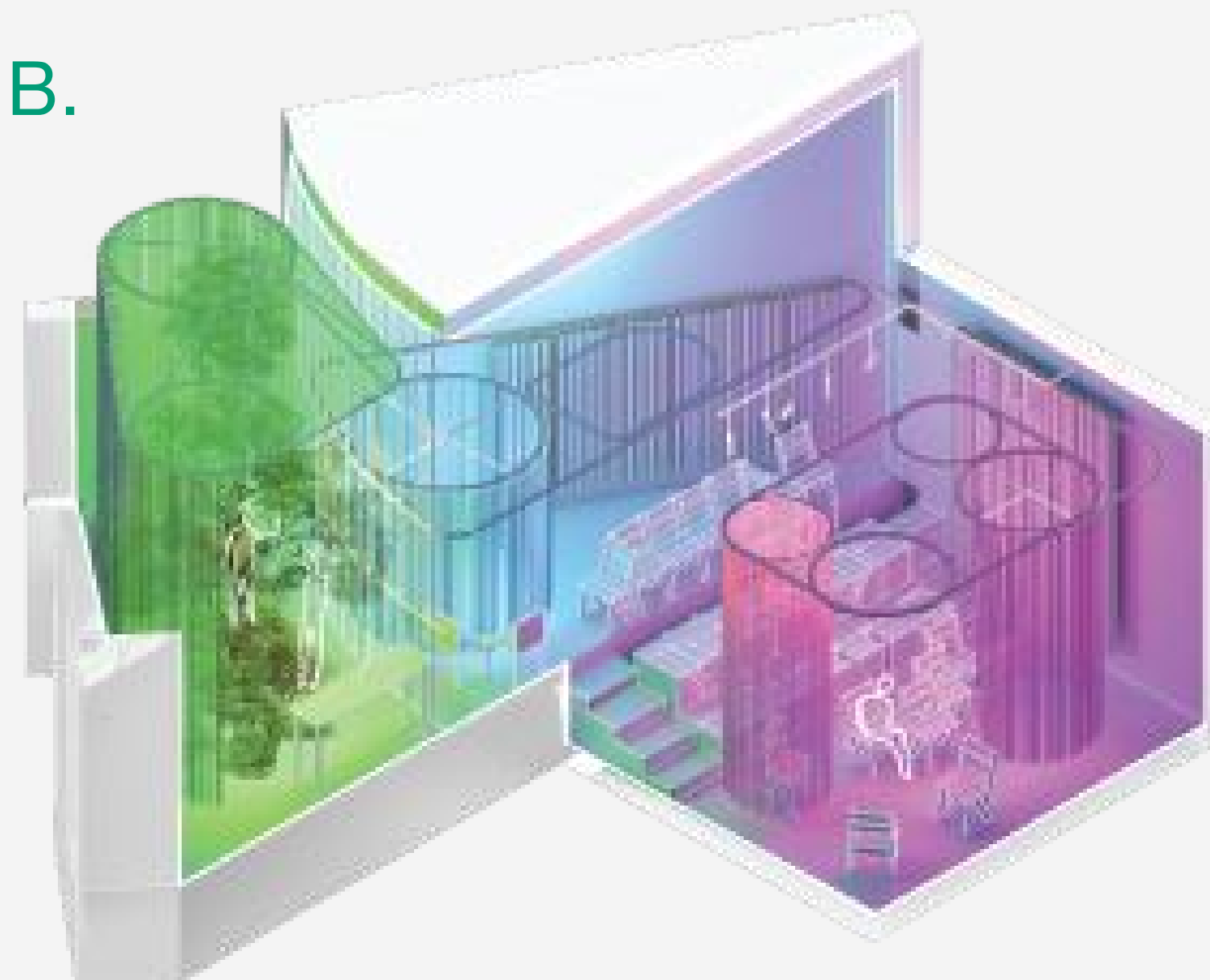


A.



D.

B.



C.





A. The storefront is for selling products and support the space and queer design



B. The top and main level is designed to integrate with the garden - outer space



C. Curtains and movable furniture allow the space to host a range of public and cultural activities—from a bar to performances and backstage areas.



Collab: Body positive fetish wear by Bastardo



Collab: Techno-Guarahca Party by La Putivuelta



Collab: Drag Show by Mis Amigas Drag



Collab: Pride Party with La Red Comunitaria Trans, Las Tupamaras and Mis Amigas Drag. Produced by Epigrama Studios.

CurtainLandia: a Public Art Company

Los Angeles, CA.	2024
Role: Designer	Status: Built
Client: Public Art Company	

Collaborators: Design by Carlos Medellin, Rubelcy Herrera and Raffi Lehrer. Curtains by Cristian Fajardo. Installed by Jason R Stone and Michael Muhlbach.



Brief

Redesigning the interiors of an office/gallery space in Los Angeles.

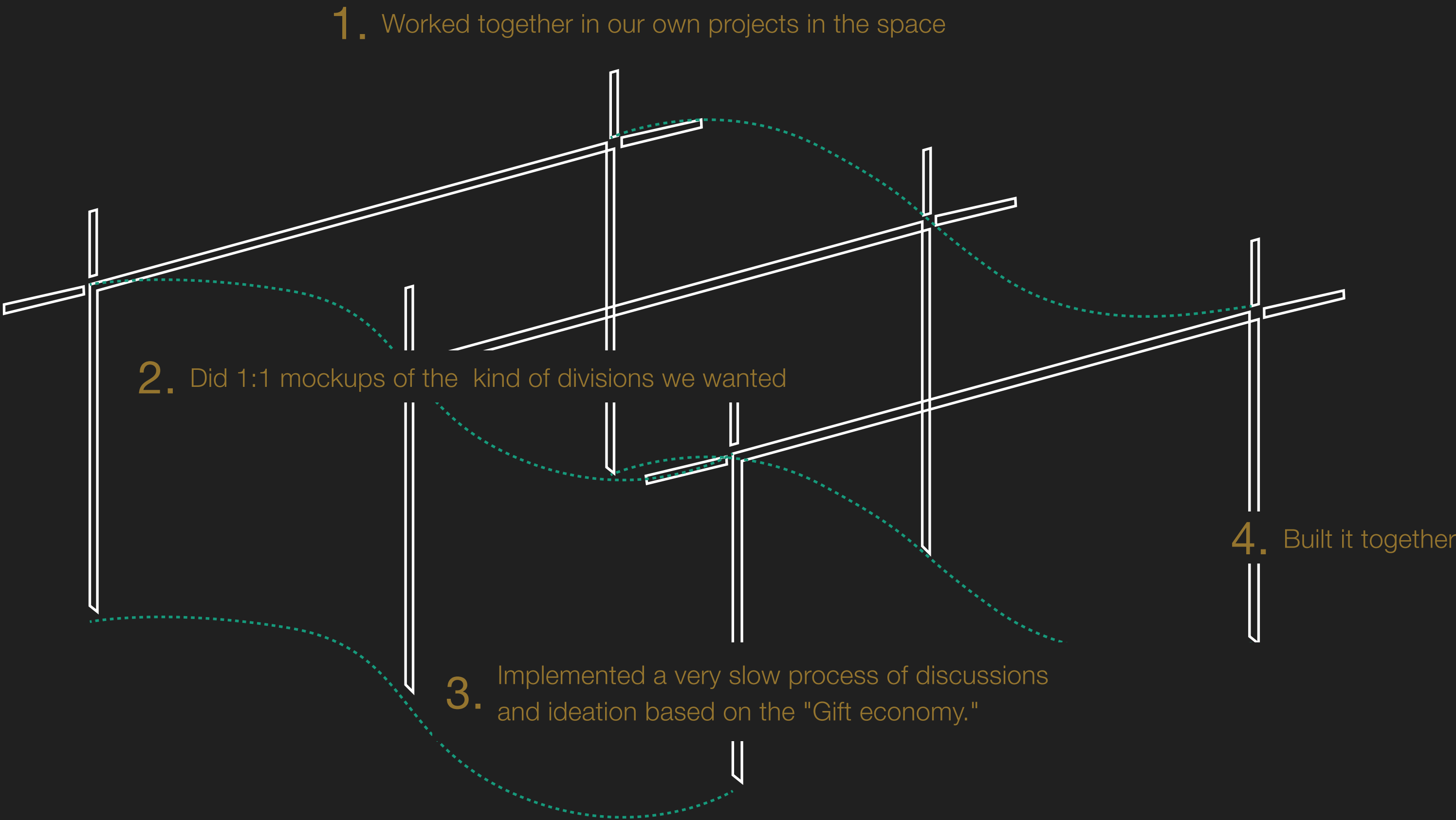
"Curtainlandia" is not a standard word, but it's a creative, imaginative term likely formed by combining:

- "Curtain:" can suggest softness, separation, theatricality, or transformation.
- "Landia:" a playful or poetic suffix often used to name fictional or symbolic places (like Wonderland or Foodlandia), evoking a world or realm centered around a theme

CurtainLandia is then our invention. It suggests an imagined or conceptual space shaped by curtains—a realm of transformation, softness, and shifting boundaries. It could be artistic, architectural, symbolic, or all of the above.

Rituals

For giving shape to Curtainlandia we:



For this space to become a creative environment to work with art and to embrace a meaningful public program for the art industry in Los Angeles, we designed:

A. Make a color palette inspired by Los Angeles' singular sunsets and sunrise colors.

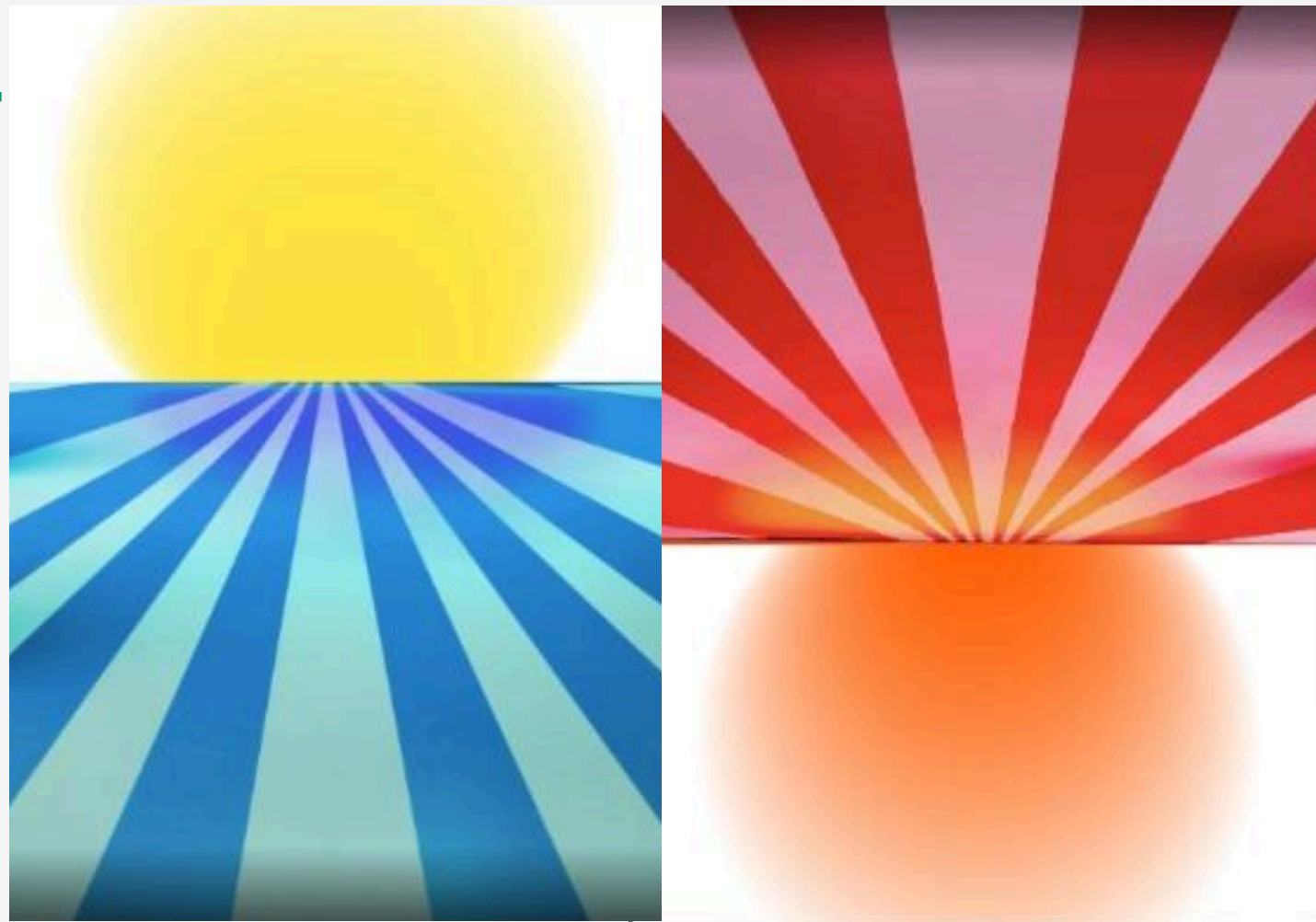
B. Install a system of curtains and rails to make the space reconfigurable.

C. Curated a series of art pieces to have a home in the gallery.

CurtainLandia is a gift for a friend

One of the most important facts of this project is that there was no monetary transaction. We did it as an experiment to strengthen our friendship, support our work, and let our creativity flow.

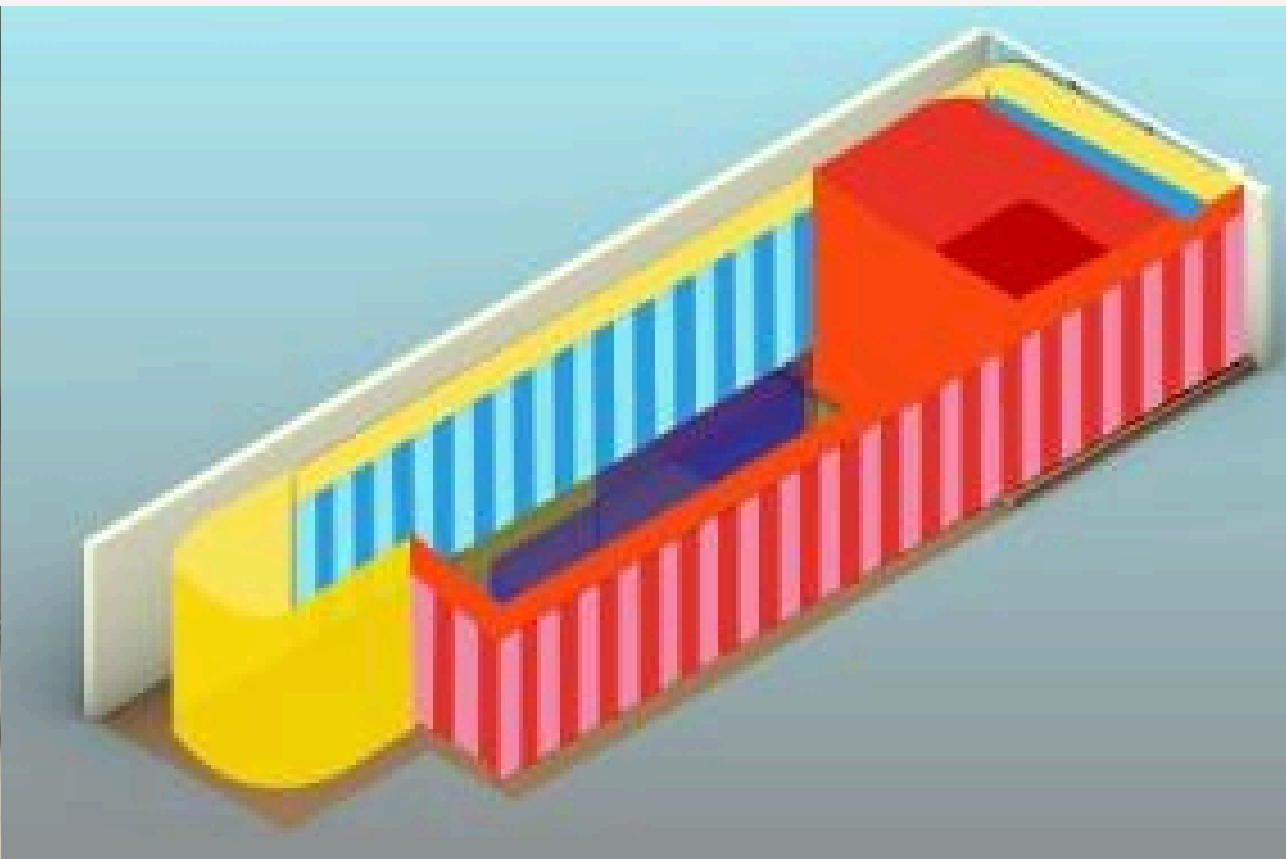
A.



C.



B.





A. This is the most private and softer and colorful part of the space. It houses Raffis' office and lounge.

B. This is the central part of the space, which is thought to host people, meetings, gatherings, and dinners.

C. This is the entrance area—a calm space, ideal for displaying curated art without distraction or competition.

Nurturing the Land: attuning as spatial practice

Brooklyn	2023
Role: Designer	Status: Complete
Client: Personal Practice	
Collaborators: In oartnership with John Bruce.	



Brief

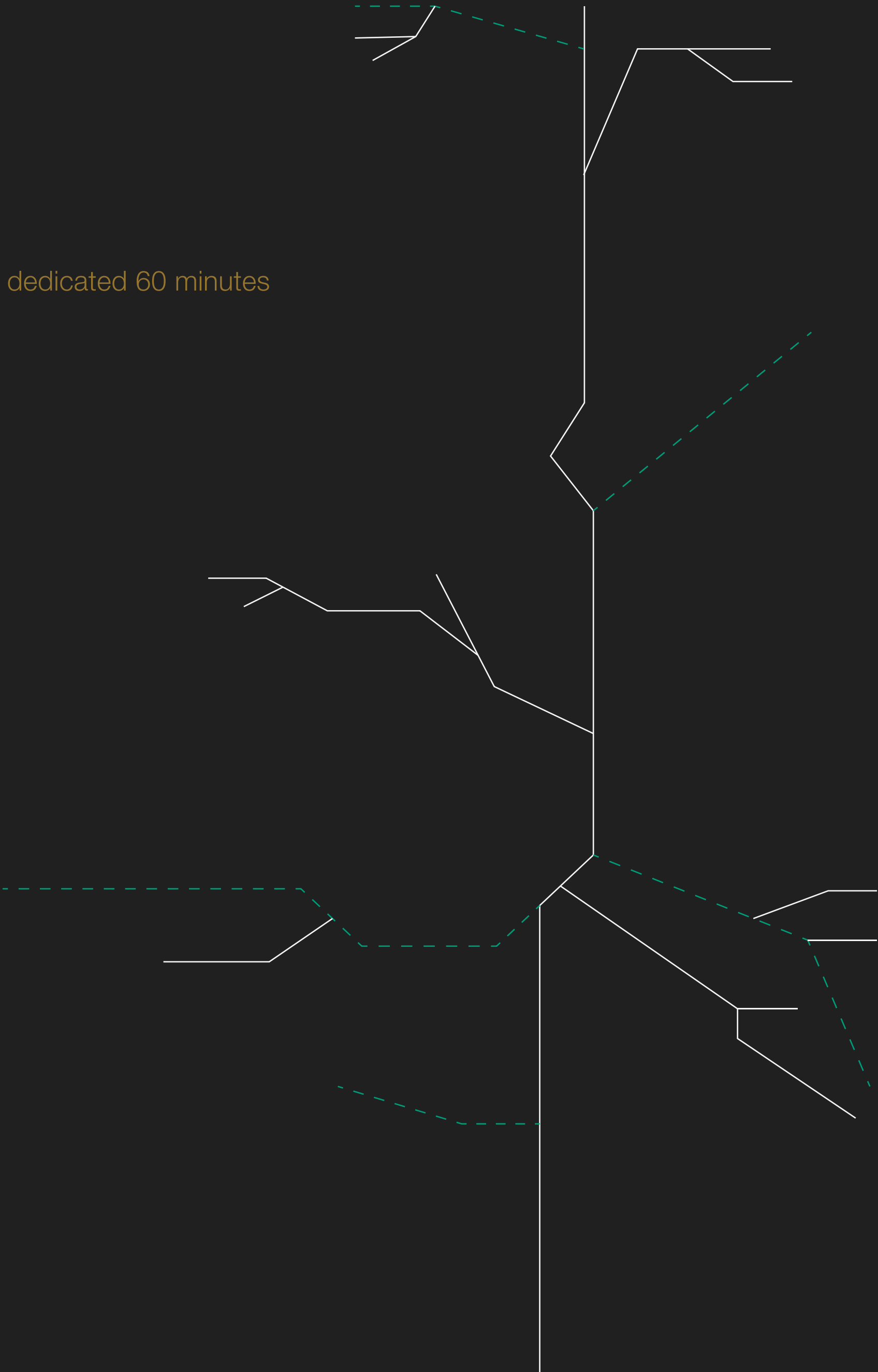
Design an action with a more-than-human-ally for Indigenous People's Day

The Spanish Botanical Expeditions, or "plant hunting," from the post-contact expansionist period were instrumental in helping scientists and artists classify American flora. The hunters' diaries describe the botanists renaming plants based on European taxonomies and dictating what illustrators, never in contact with the plants in their natural environment, should draw. A form of colonization that excluded natives' wisdom.

Rituals

For Indigenous Muisca, trees' consciousness embodies ancestors' wisdom on life and death cycles in the human journey. Inspired by this, I worked with a tree in my Brooklyn backyard:

1. Over 60 days, I dedicated 60 minutes to relating to it



I attuned to the tree and its wisdom by:

A. Burying my feet in the dirt to explore my roots

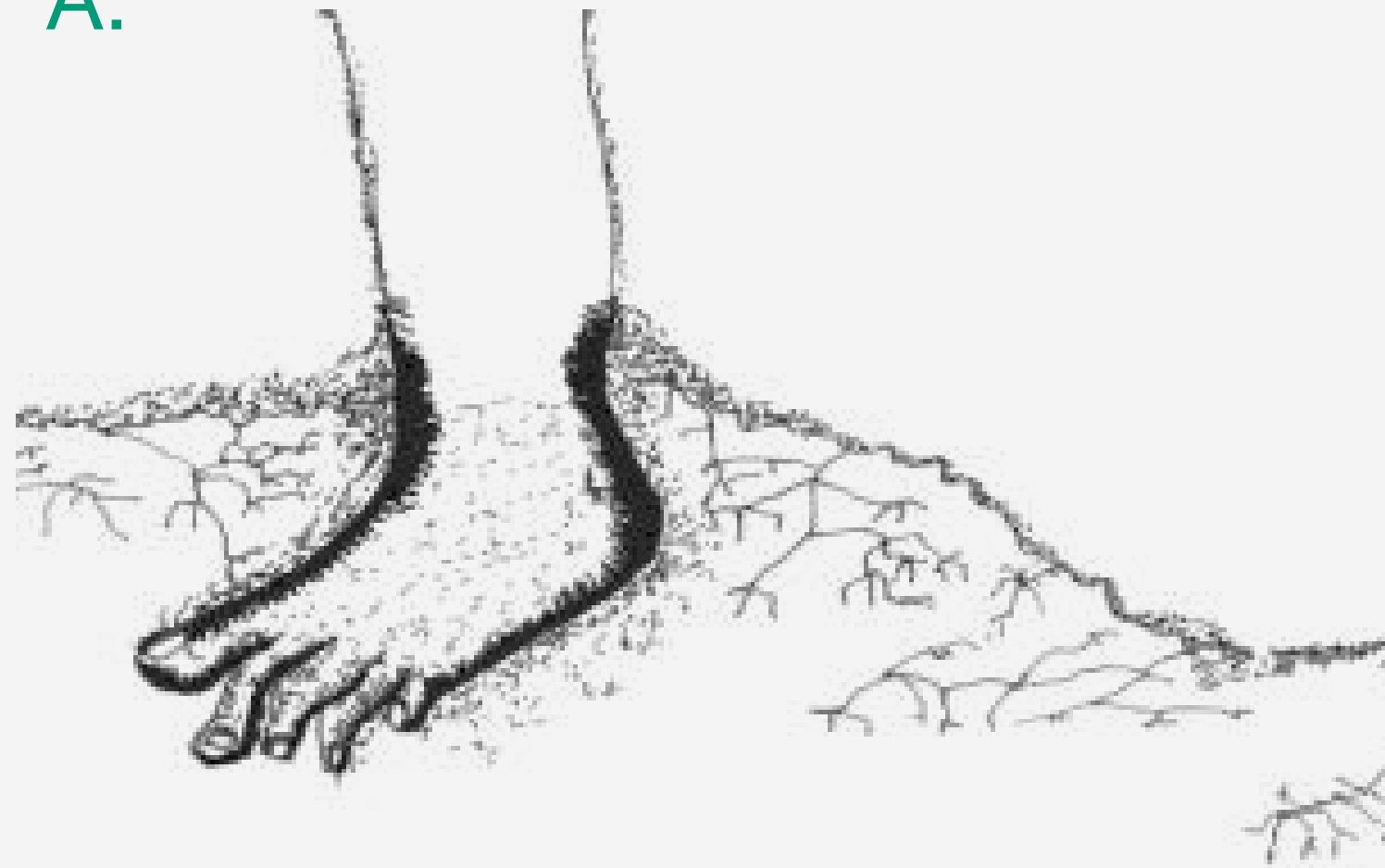
B. Breathing exercises to understand interconnectedness

C. Blindfolded, practiced deep listening to feel movement in environmental reciprocity

Nurturing intimacy

For this practice, I paused my daily work to build a deeper connection with my closest neighbor—the tree in my backyard. With no specific goal but the joy of witnessing and caring, I committed to exploring mutual support and nurturing as an emancipatory action. I practiced this for 60 minutes daily over 60 days, from October 8th to December 6th, 2023.

A.



C.



B.





A. Planting my feet beside the tree helped me sense how it moves in reciprocity with the wind and nearby animals, even while staying rooted in one place. The tree is not a piece of wood, it is not an object.



B. Breathing exercises with the tree helped me focus and visualize the natural exchange that sustains life—the tree absorbs the carbon dioxide I exhale and releases the oxygen I need to breathe.



C. Blindfolded, I meditated beside this tree. After a few sessions, it became a familiar place—an anchor. My body began to associate it with calm, presence, and focused awareness

Reviewing Paramaribo: a loving River

Paramaribo, Suriname

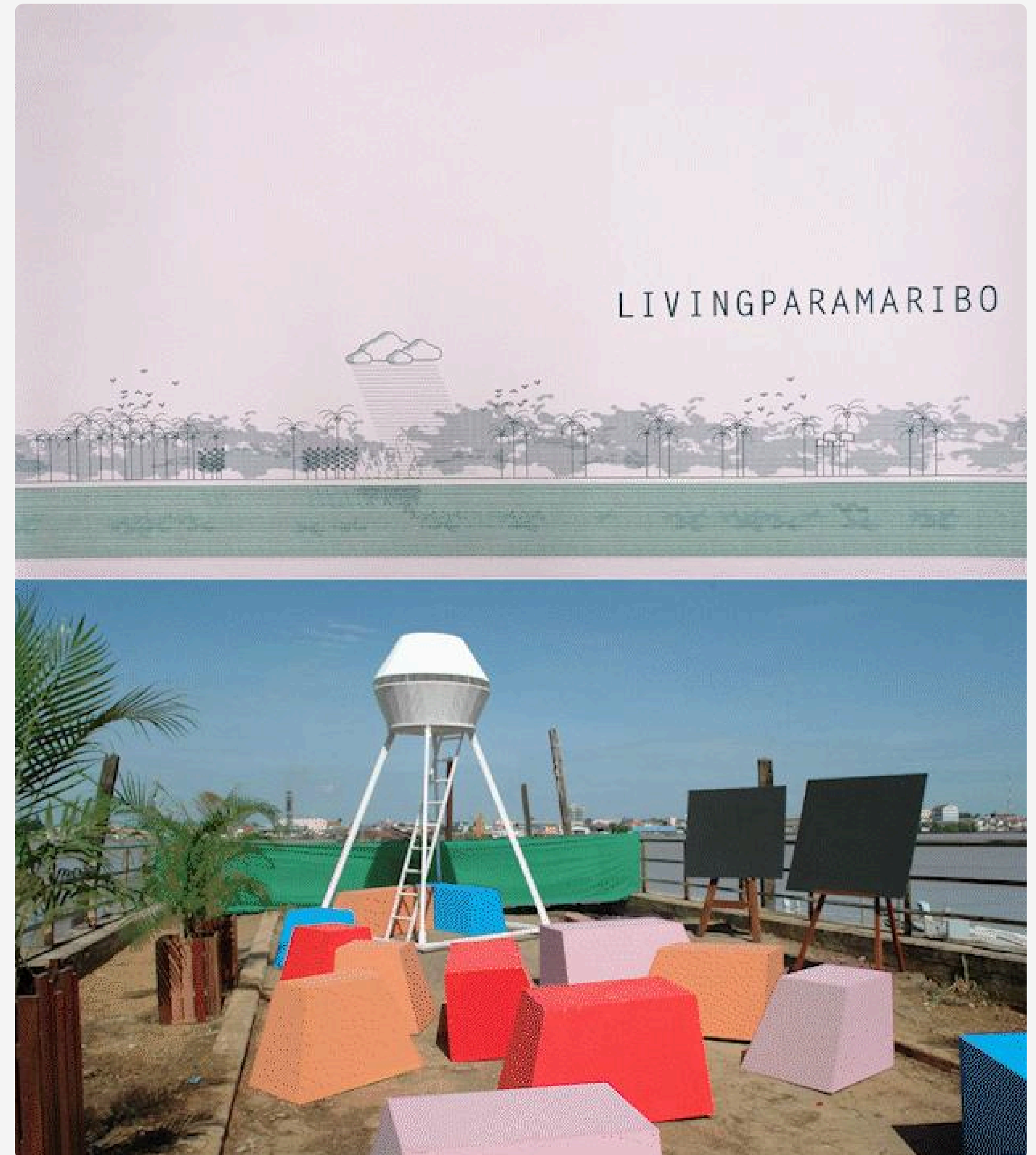
2017

Role: Developed as executive and design director at Horizontal Foundation

Status: Built

Client: The Inter American Development Bank (IDB), and Paramaribo district - UNESCO Program.

Collaborators: Developed by Horizontal Foundation in partnership with Geografia Urbana and Woei A Sioe Architects. Design team: Carlos Medellin, Pablo Londono and Josephine Philipsen. Web Design: Montenegro Studio. Video by Britt van Soloun. Management by Alba Lucia Quiceno and Luz Dary Hincapie.



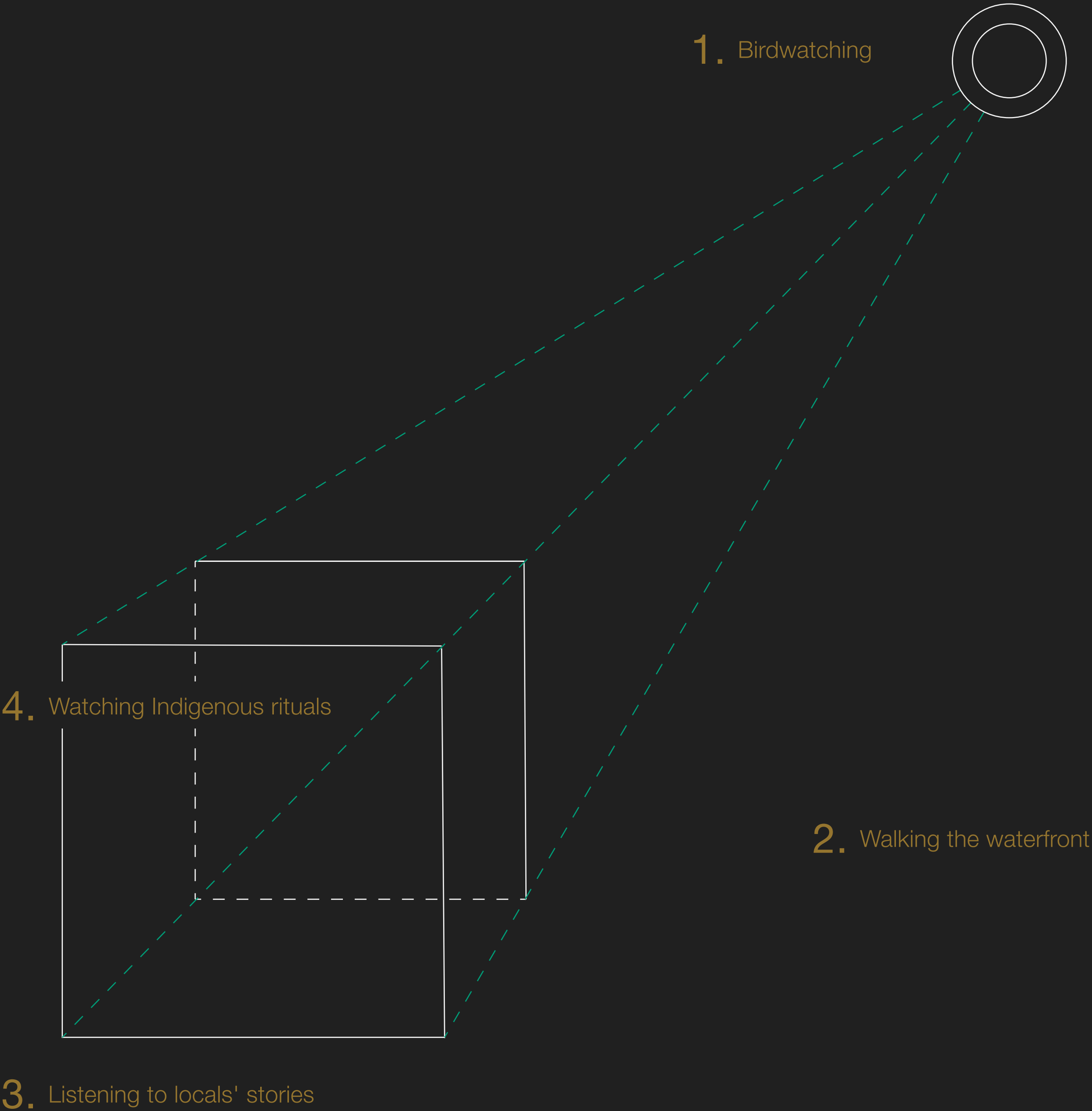
Brief

Design a Master Plan for Paramaribo's Waterkant renovation

Guyana means "Riverland," reflecting the deep relationship its Indigenous people have with the Amazon and Orinoco rivers it lies between. After the Dutch colonized its central region, Suriname, while navigating its namesake river toward Paramaribo, its capital, the first view was a wall built to prevent floods. Then, plantations, a fortress, the governor's palace, and colonial mansions. The river became vital for the slave trade and exporting goods.

Rituals

To reconnect with the native's point of view, the team and I went:



The design aimed to create spatial narratives to reconnect with the river's biodiversity

A. A mobile tower to view the river from different perspectives

B. A story by Cynthia McLeod that identifies the city's heritage and promotes a spatial narrative focused on caring for the river.

C. A roadmap for navigating the river and creating a public space that connects and honors its biodiversity.

A living River

This project transformed the long and often hermetic process of designing a master plan into a space for citizens to share ideas that inform the plan and a public and physical manifestation of its main goal: building a closer and more respectful relationship with the river.

A.



C.



B.





A. This tower was part of an urban action that symbolically marked the start of the building process of a new waterfront. It allowed Surinameses to frame the Paramaribo River differently and give their ideas for their waterfront master plan.



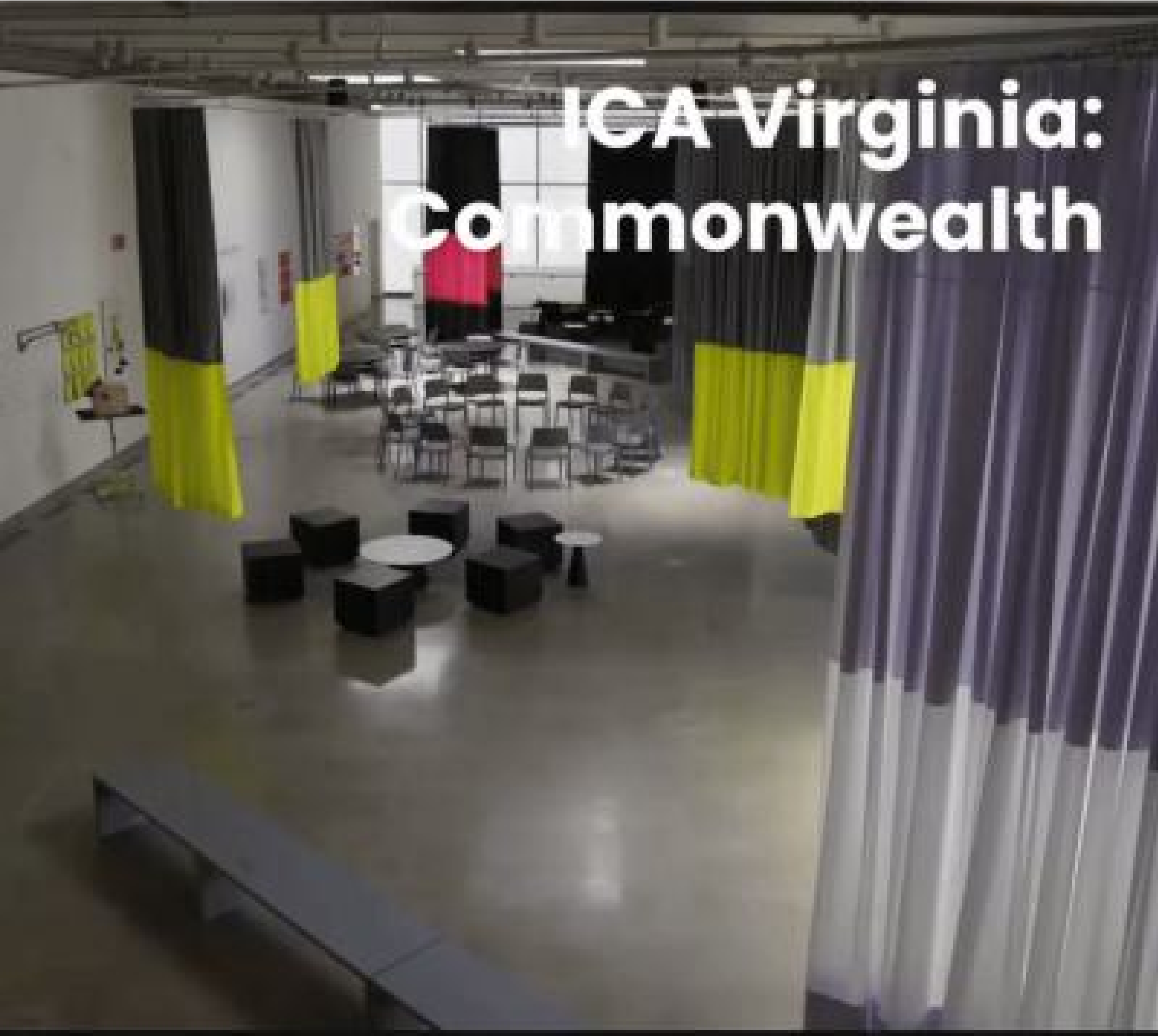
C. This master plan is shaped by three principles: giving space for the river and its biodiversity to expand and contract naturally, connecting the populations from each side with each other and with the dynamics of the water, and blurring the human-made borderline between river and land.



B. Surinamese writer Cynthia Mc Leod created a narrative about the river's indigenous meaning and historical importance. These postcards tell that story by pointing out heritage buildings and framing connection points with the river.

Summer Sessions: Commonwealth

Richmond, Virginia.	2019
Role: Developed as executive and design director at Horizontal Foundation	Status: Built
Client: Institute of Contemporary Art (ICA), at the Commonwealth University (VCU)	
Collaborators: Developed by Horizontal Foundation in partnership with Quilian Riano (DSNG). Woodwork by Laboratorio de Expresion. Curtains by Cristian Fajardo. Electronic consultant Julian Bejarano. Design team: Carlos Medellin, Sebastian Rivera, Ruben Gomez, Sara Vera, Steffany Cañon and Pierre Puentes. Management by Alba Lucia Quiceno and Luz Dary Hincapie.	



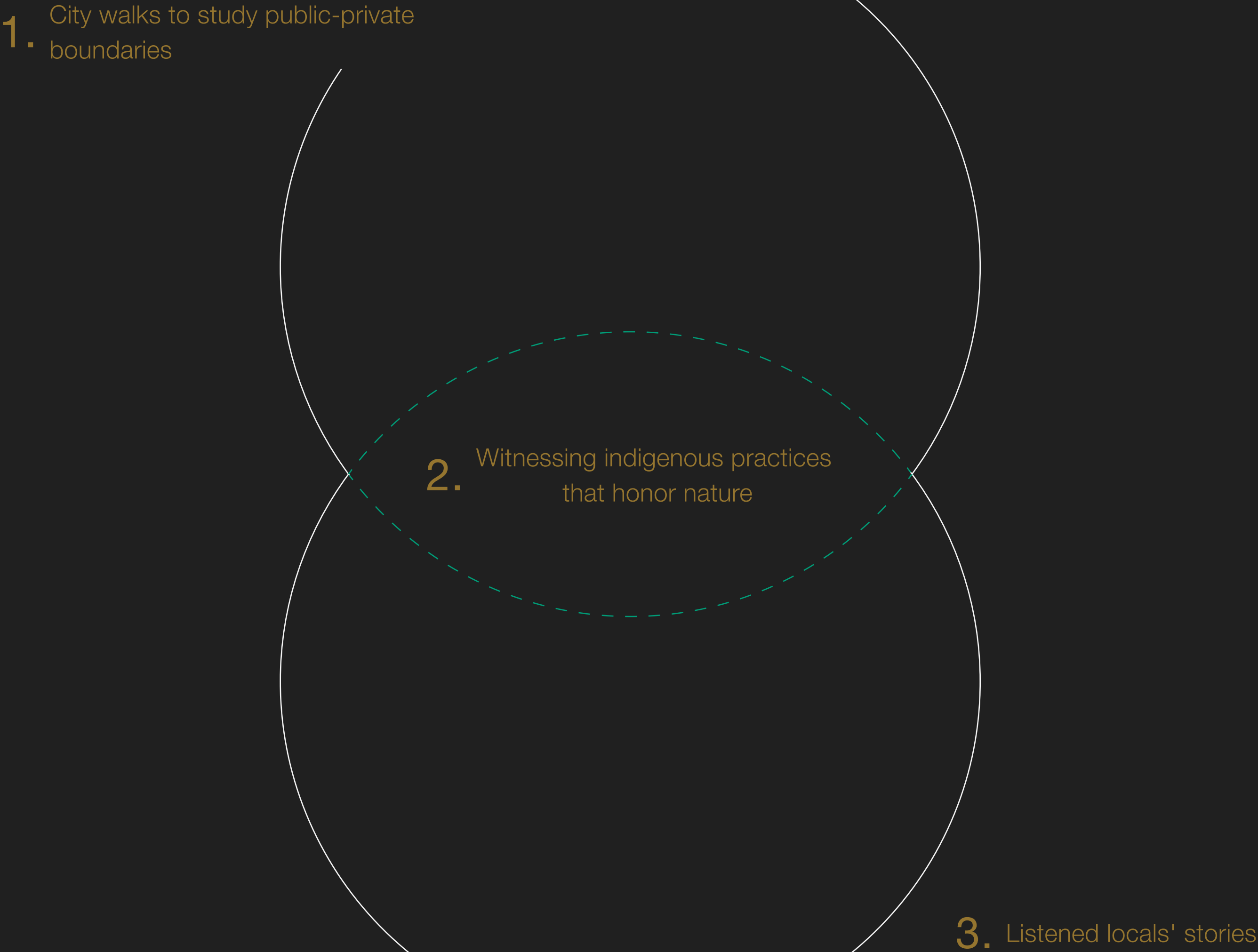
Brief

An exhibition design for the public program "Summer Sessions: Commonwealth."

The British created "The Commonwealth" as a political model based on the medieval concepts of "commons," referring to shared resources, and "wealth," referring to societal well-being. After the fall of the Empire, they used this idea to stay associated with former colonies, now regarded as 'free and equal,' but without holding reparation processes. Only a few states, including Virginia, remain part of it in the USA.

Rituals

To explore how " The Commonwealth" could aid decolonization, we looked at Virginia's everyday life through:



To hold the program's lectures, debates, workshops, screenings, and performances, we designed:

A. A cohesive aesthetic to engage the public

B. A curtain system for adaptable atmospheres

C. Galleries and tools for archiving the public's ideation process

Commonwealth is co-created

Through a series of guidelines and color-coded clues, this project suggests that people take control of the space, shape it however they need, and leave their collective or individual traces in it.

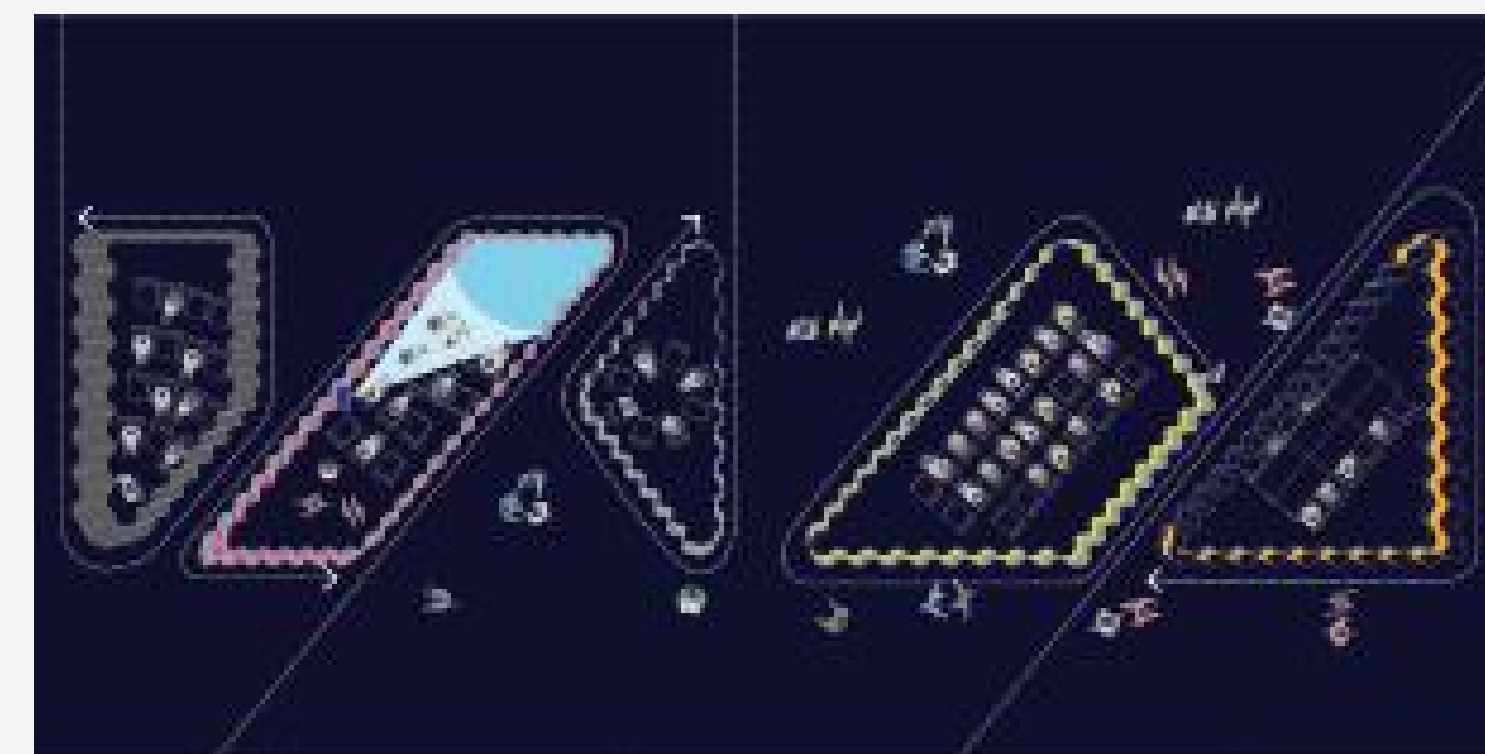
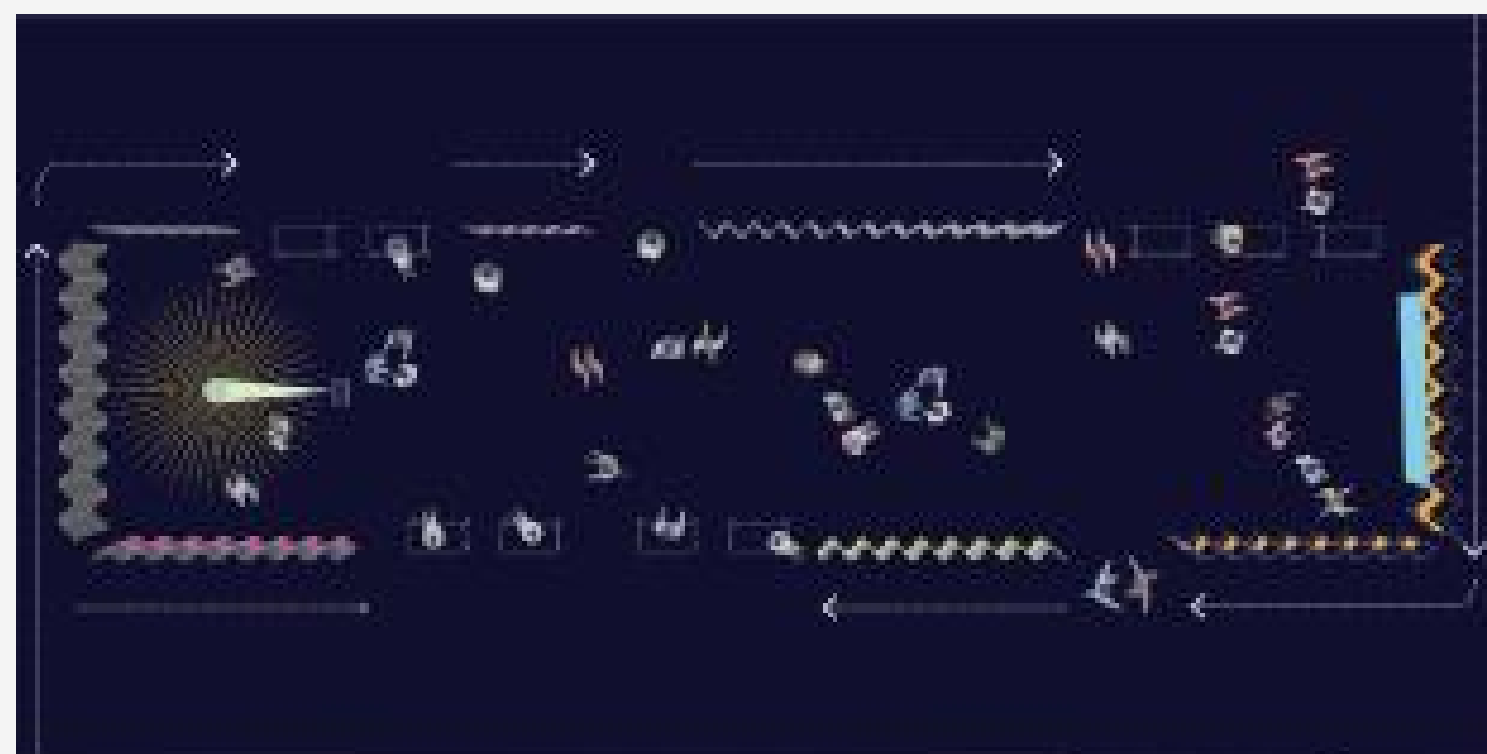
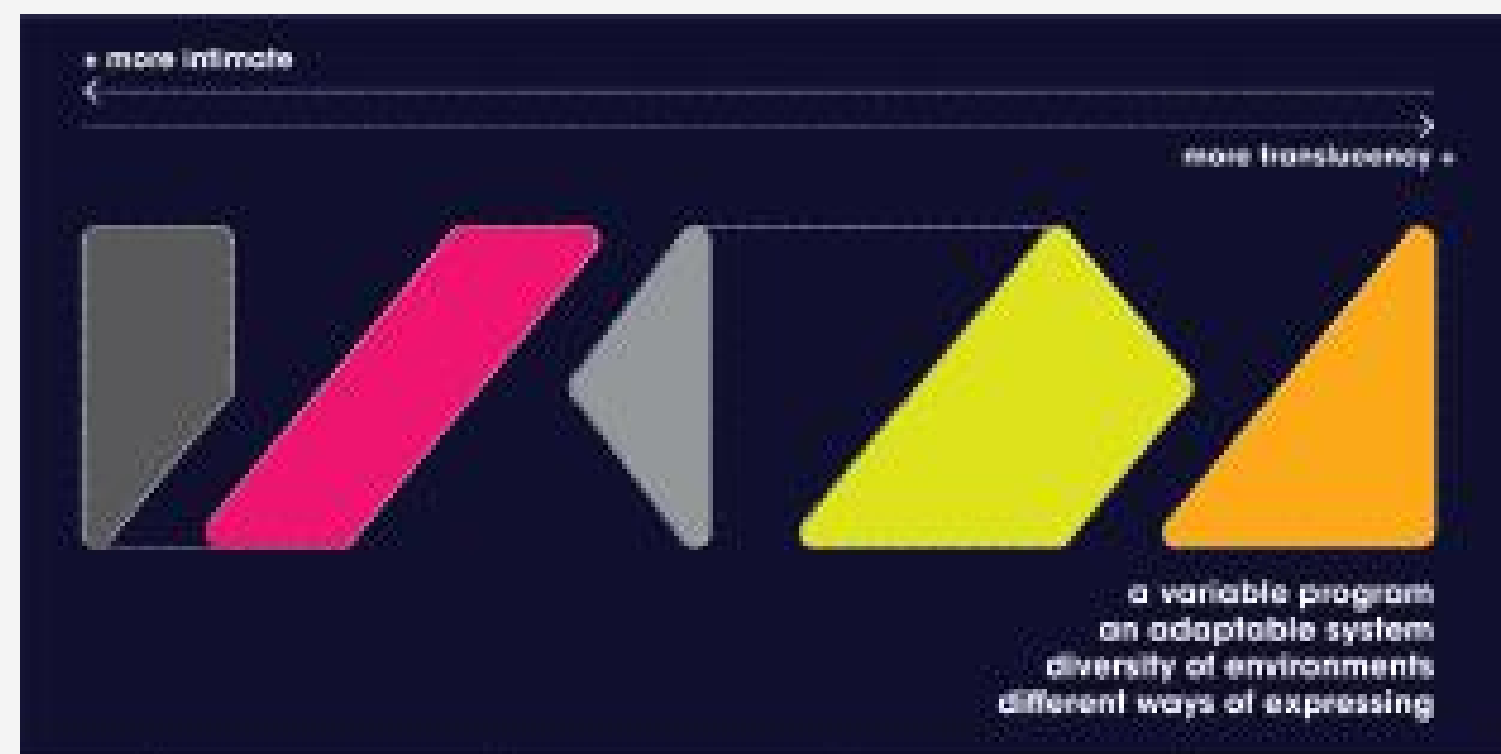
A.



B.



C.



A. The curtain system starts at the entrance with lighter, more translucent fabrics, gradually transitioning to darker, more opaque ones toward the back of the gallery to provide different environments and levels of privacy.

B. This gallery intervention setup uses rails, curtains, and modular furniture, allowing the space to adapt—opening up for group activities or dividing for smaller and more intimate gatherings.

C. The gallery walls serve as an archive of discussions and brainstorming sessions with artists, designers, scholars, activists, and others—documented through social hours, lectures, small group talks, workshops, performances, and screenings.

I don't want to talk about the weather: Master of Architecture, Core I design studio

New York, USA.

2024

Role: Adjunct Assistant Professor

Status: Complete

Client: Graduate School of Architecture, Planning and
Preservation (GSAPP)

Work by Students: Karim Baba, Simon Brock, Harrison Davies,
Sean Eren, Yu-Hsuan Hsieh, Zhaosen Luo, Magness Meredith,
Yan Qian, Pinutcha Wiriyanlert and Mengxi Xin. Teacher
Assistant, Esther Su.



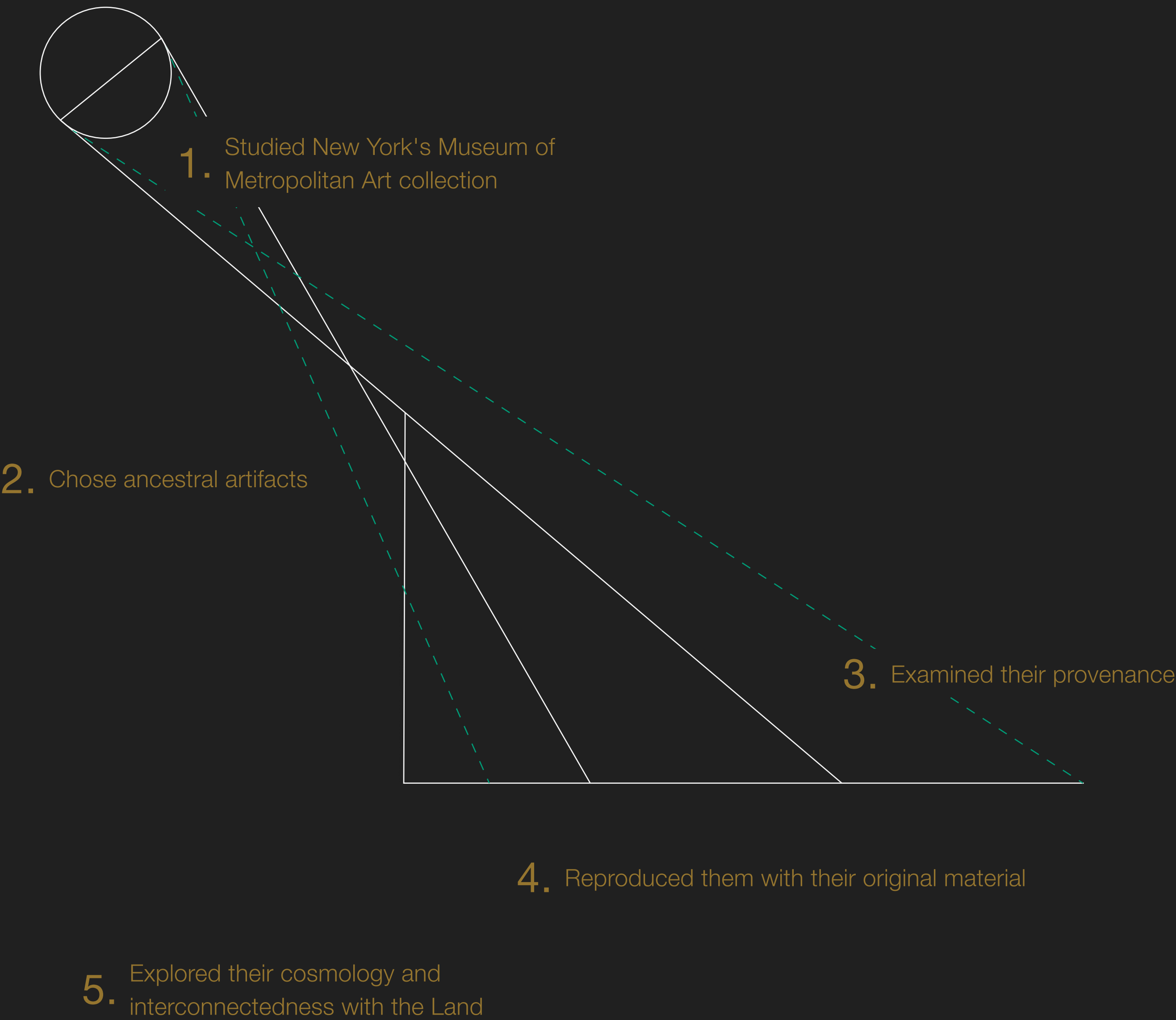
Brief

Design and instruct a first-year M.Arch studio.

Talking about the weather as "small talk" reflects a perspective that considers the environment a commodity, limiting reciprocity. The students explored architecture's principles and tools (representation, measure, proportion, scale, constructive systems) while questioning its colonial, patriarchal, and speciesist origins to uncover its role in commodifying bodies and ecologies.

Rituals

To reconnect with ancient practices of "talking to the environment," we:



The designs engage with climate change's socio-environmental consequences in New York by proposing:

A. Archives of socio-environmental resistance practices

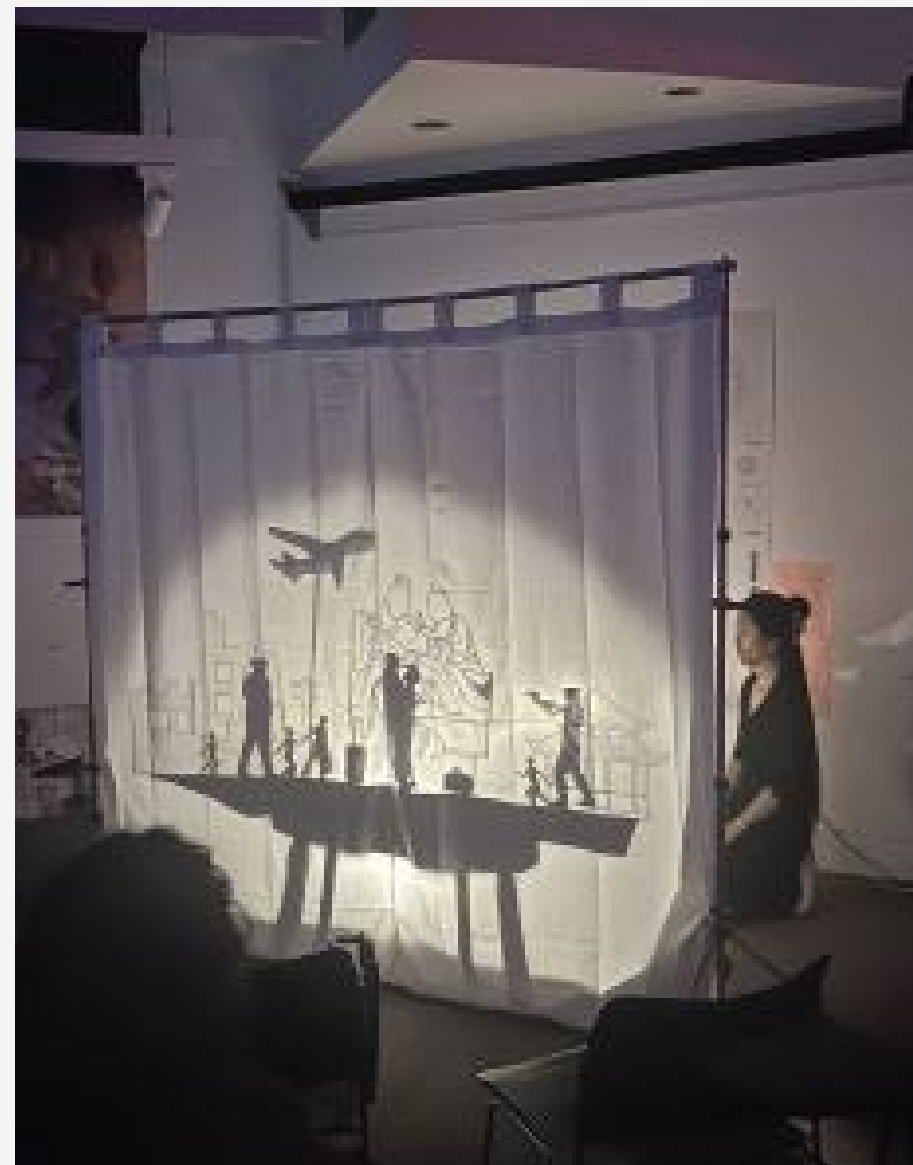
B. Rituals to activate cultural and public spaces

C. Building systems to reduce impact on the Land

Acknowledging the Land

This is the work of the students from the design studio I teach at the March program from Columbia GSAPP. Although it is their work, it exemplifies how I guide my students using commitments and rituals to bring them closer to ancestral knowledge and build more respectful relationships with the Land.

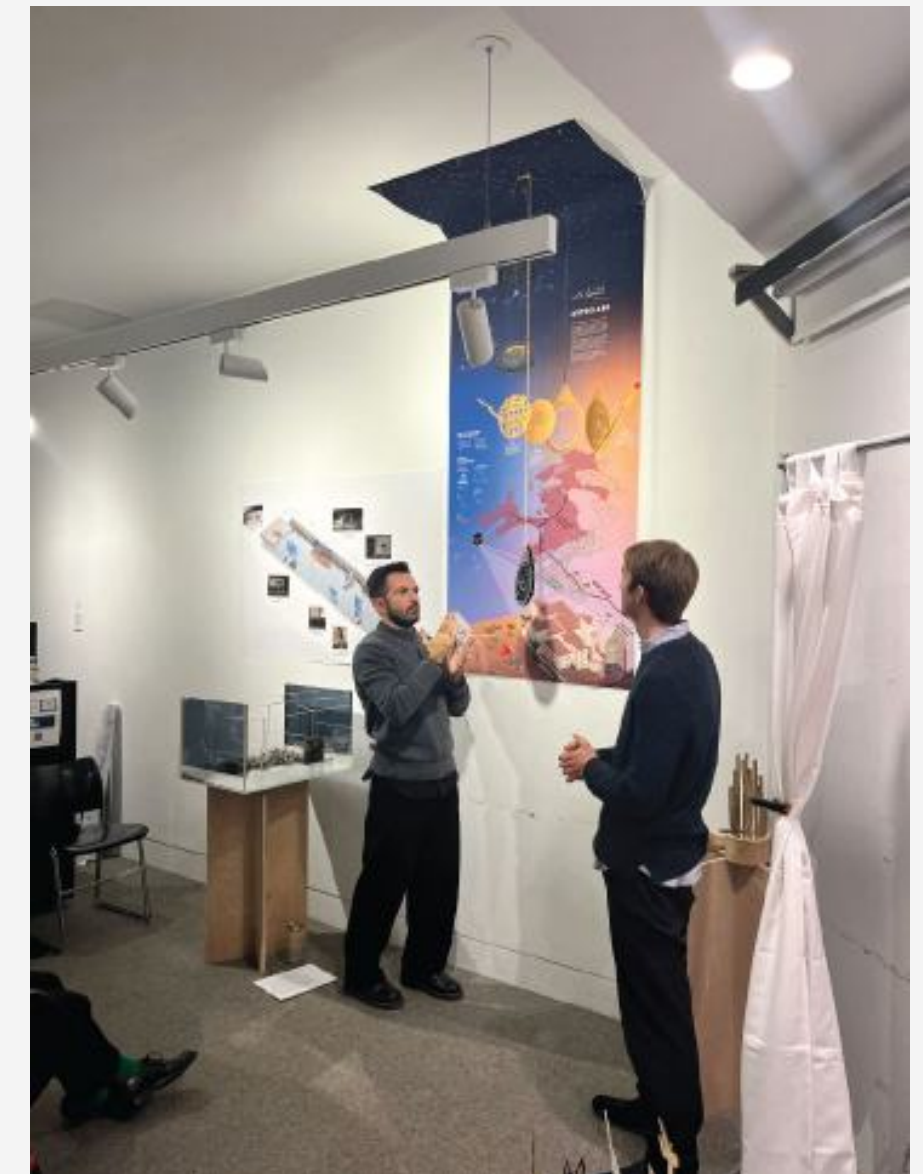
A.

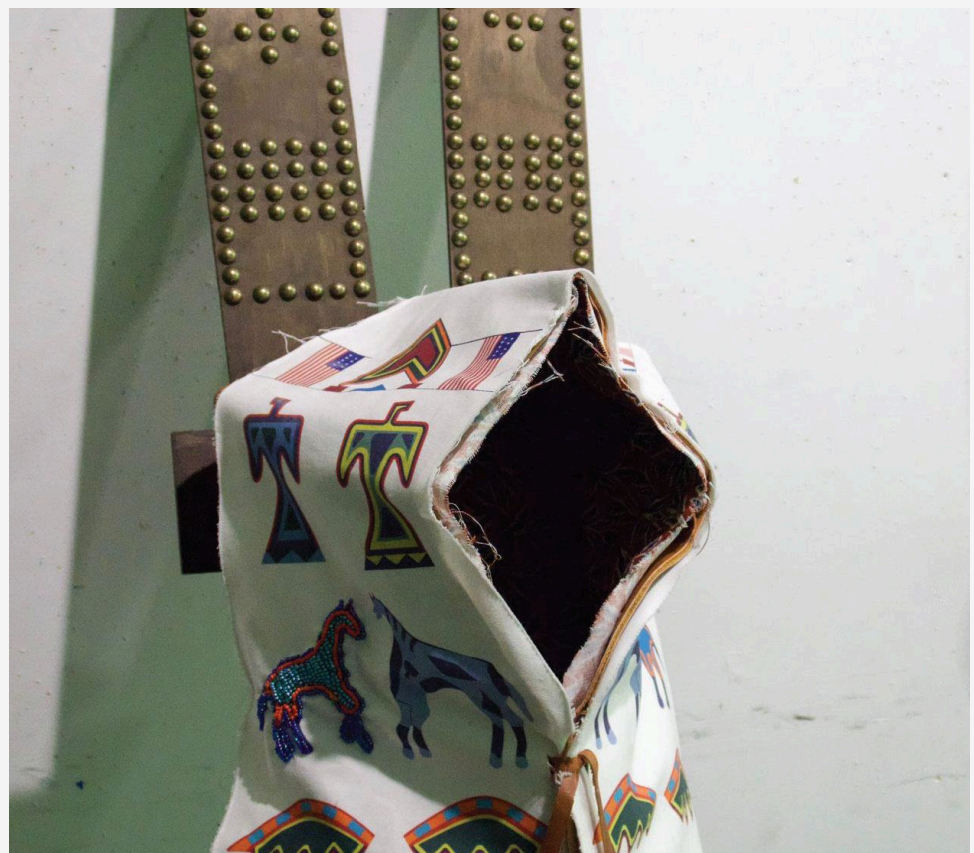


B.



C.





Sumi & Harrison reproduced a Cradleboard Lakota (Teton Sioux) and engage with the spatial narrative of the genocide of Buffalos and Native Americans in Colorado.



Bubble & Aaron recreated the twelve Chinese zodiac animals and explored their connections to astrology, astronomy, agriculture, and the movement of the moon and its influence on rivers.



Julia, Mengxi, and Serena recreated the Sheng, a Chinese wind instrument inspired in a phoenix, and designed a stage to bring Chinese culture into New York's public space.



Meredith and Sean recreated Syrian Eye Idols as amulets to explore New York's West Village. They uncovered hidden spatial narratives and designed hardware to share these stories through the neighborhood's buildings.