

Donovan Cole



There is no isolated issue in our world, nor does this body of work attempt to produce definitive solutions or self-contained answers.

Bio:

I (donovan) am a mixed media spacial practitioner operating out of the midwest.

My work is not restrained to a single material or representational practice. Conventional architecture drawings, video, photography and new methods of drawing exist alongside sculpture and architectural material research to produce speculations. Media that doesn't fit in the realm of this portfolio can be viewed at donovancole.com

Currently I am is working on a debut novel and a series of sculpture as I wrap up my bachelor's of architecture. I can be found on instagram (@repoetics), or emailed at donovan.cole@me.com.

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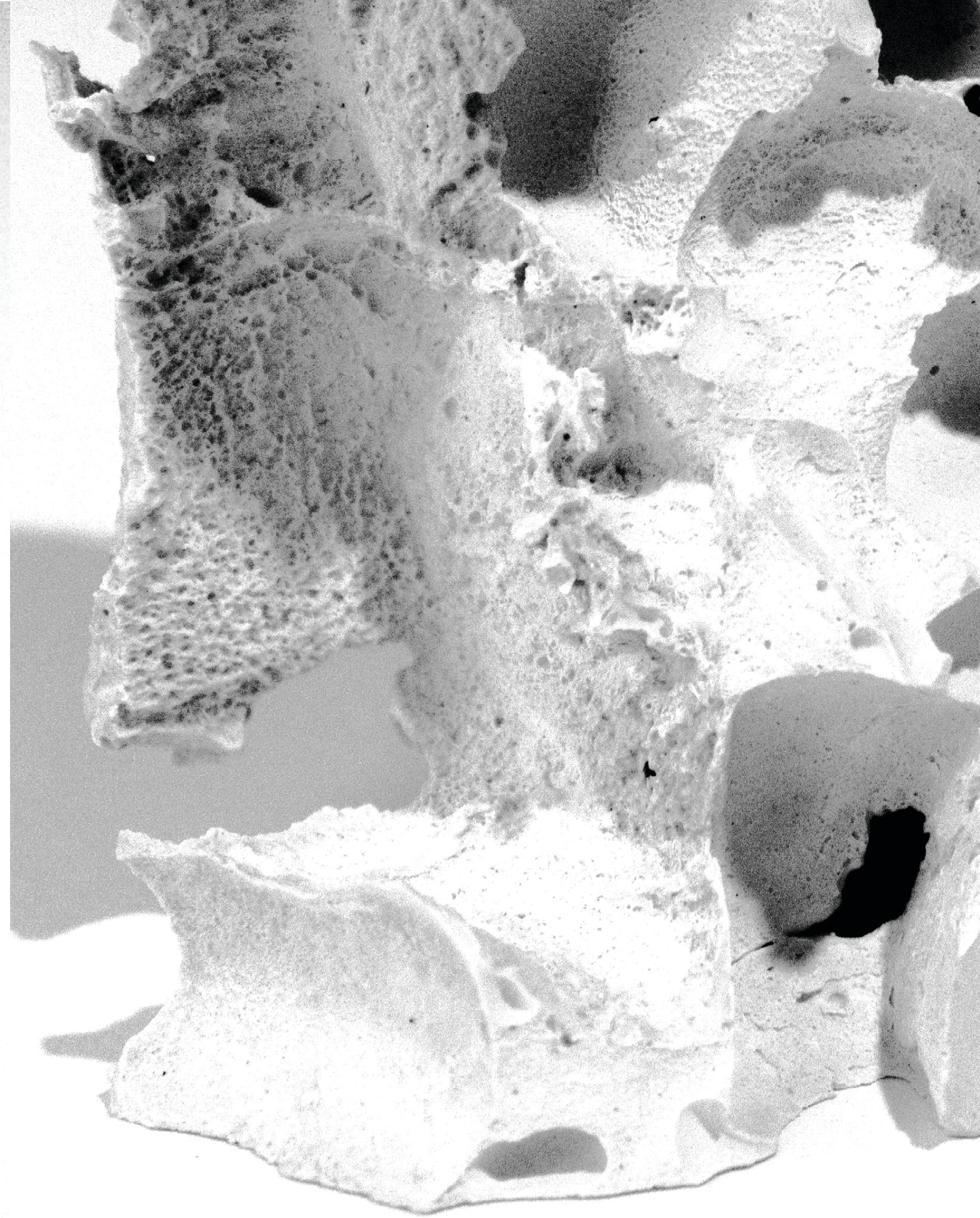
Pleasant Decay

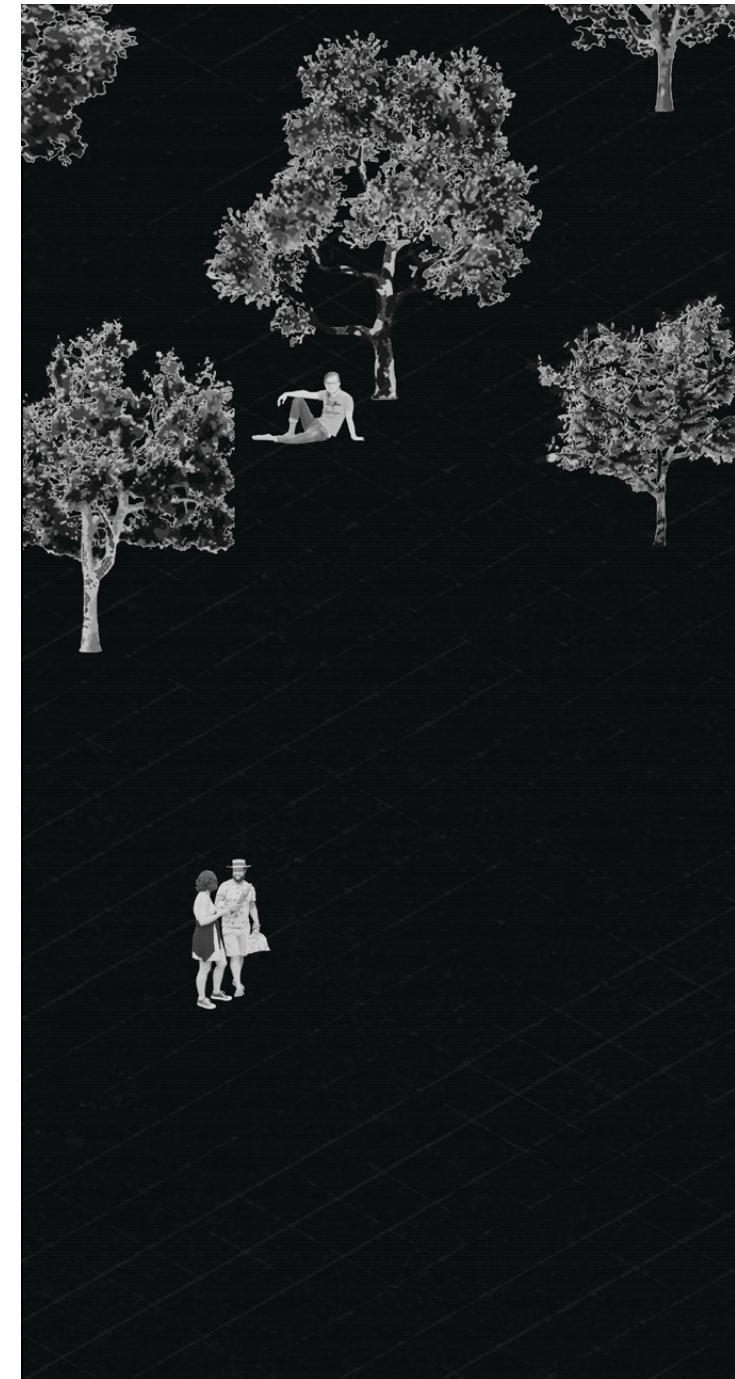
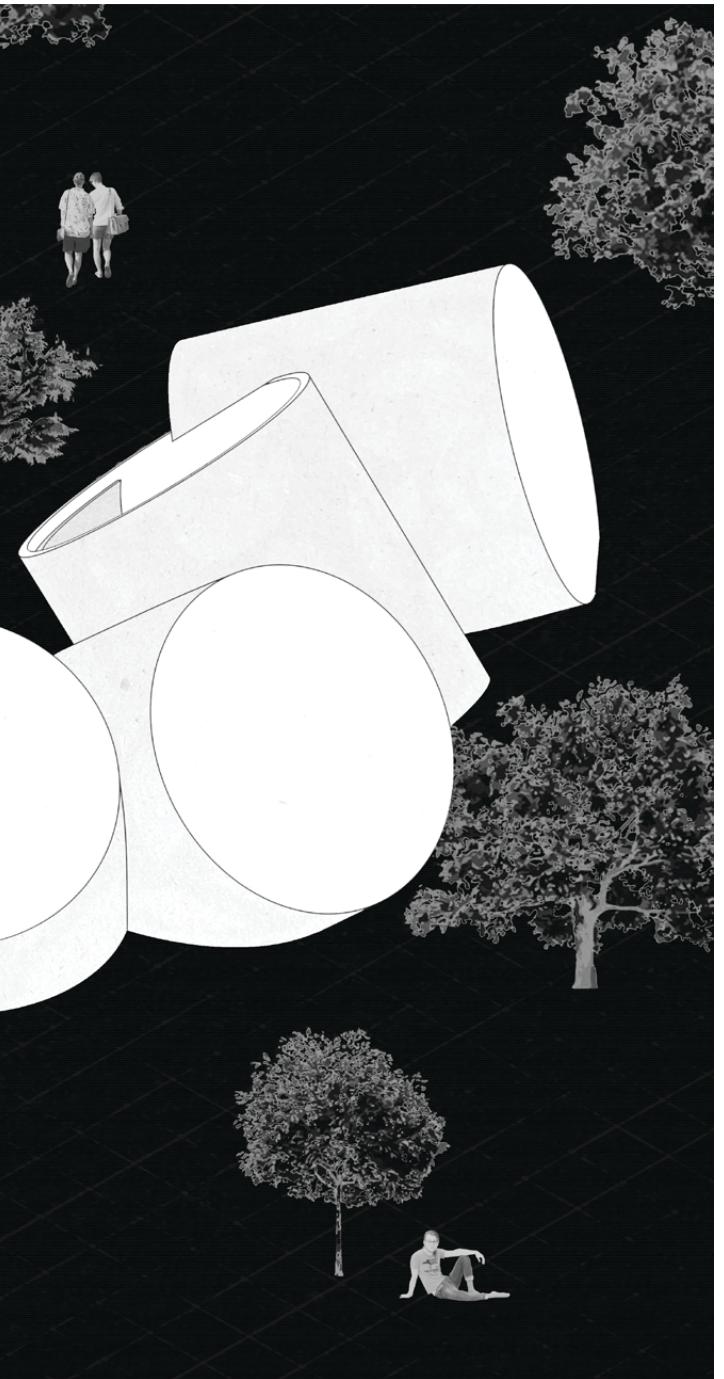
2019

East Village, Des Moines, IA

In the first phase of this project, concrete forms were cast with intentional but unpredictable imperfections within them. Marshmallows were placed in the liquid concrete, moving about unpredictably as it was poured and set. After setting, the marshmallows were then washed out with water, revealing unpredictable voids within the casting.

These castings were then used as the basis for the form of a new pavilion. Further leaning into the relationship between material unpredictability and form, this pavilion was designed with materials that would biodegrade unpredictably. It was intended to be a constantly changing work with new forms emerging as the mushroom panel and wood lattice biodegrade. A performance emerges from the materials - the pavilion's unpredictable form is an installation across both space and time.





past

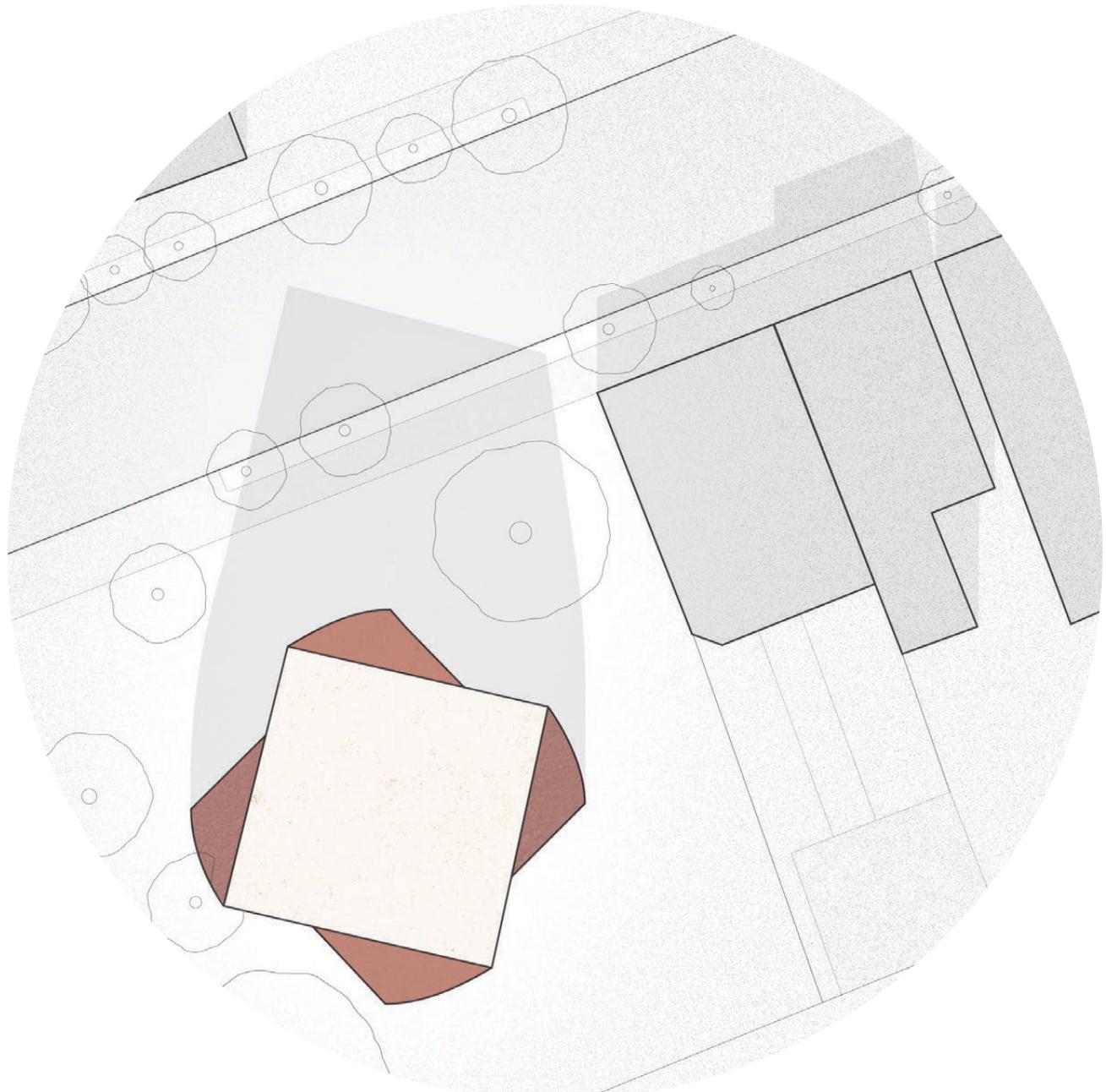
present

future

Community Center

2020

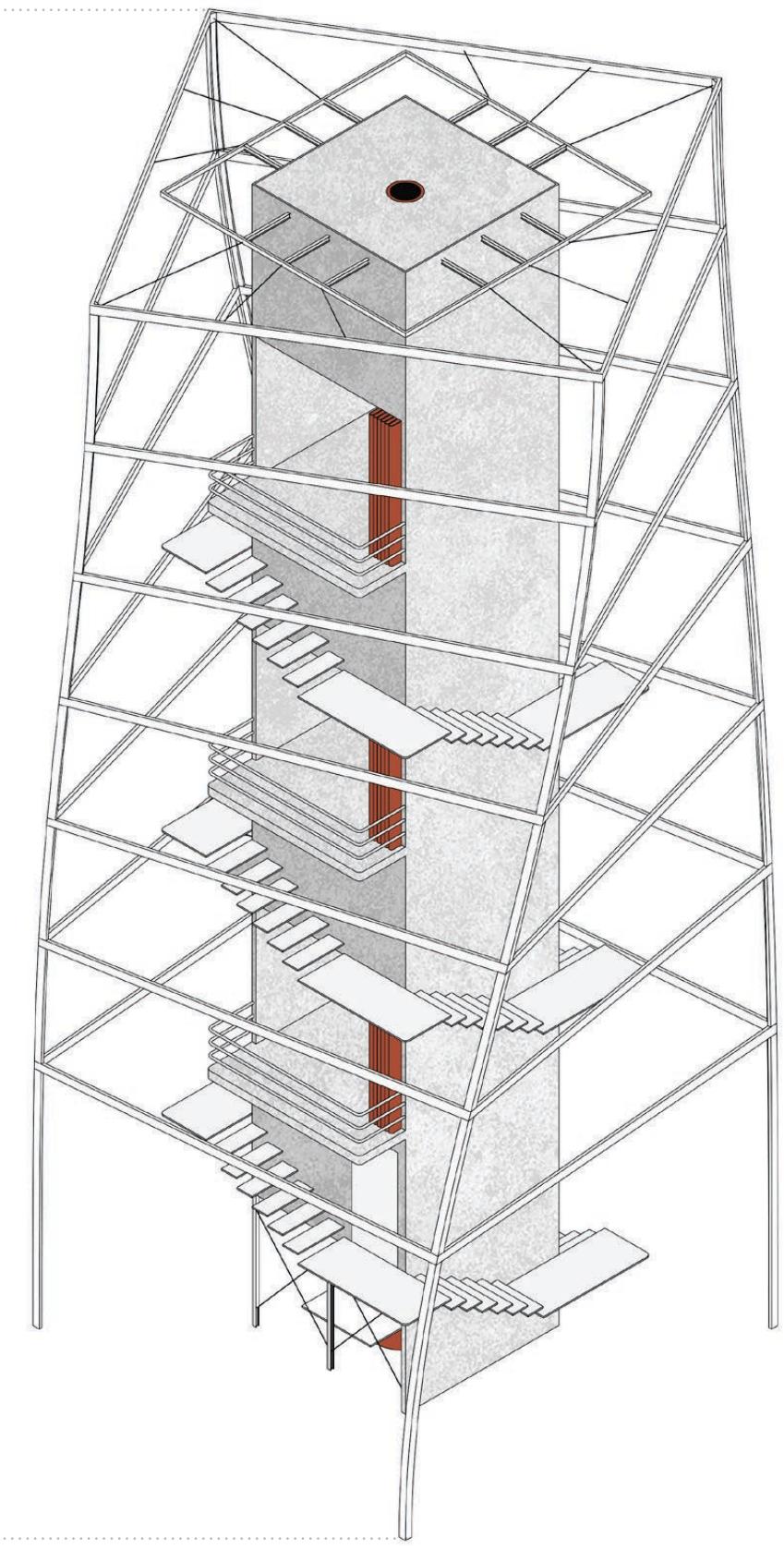
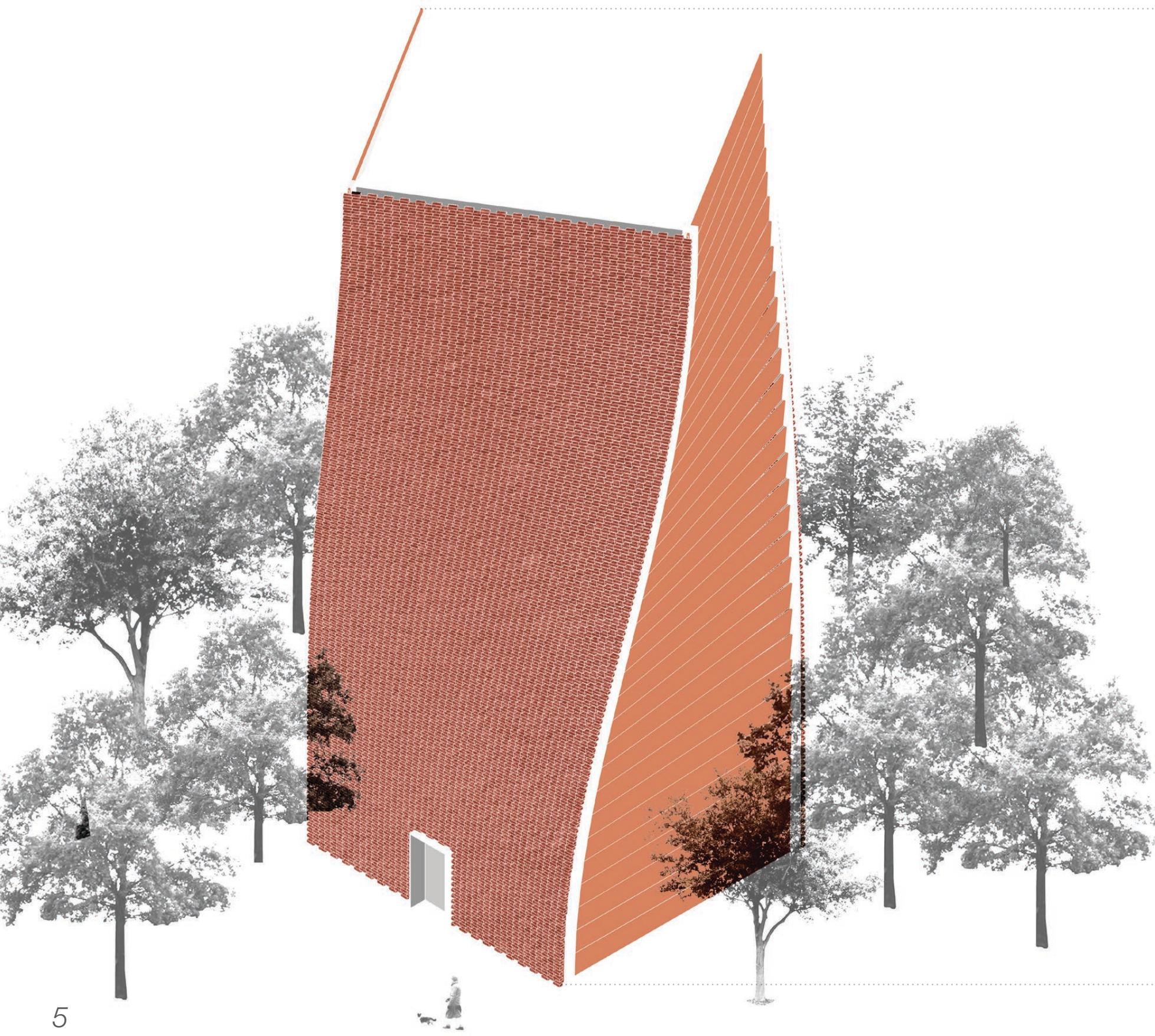
Old North, St. Louis, MO



Old North neighborhood is caught between past, present and future. Past holds a thriving neighborhood with beautiful brick houses full of the black residents of St. Louis. The past also holds redlining and intentional efforts by the city government to make Old North financially impossible to those residents. The present reflects this past injustice, with large swaths of the neighborhood full of derelict, crumbling houses and empty lots. The future of Old North is either one of decay or gentrification: two options that displace and erase the current residents.

This project is a community center designed to both create new housing and community space. The units above house displaced members of the community and on the ground floor there is a community kitchen intended as a gathering space for members of the community.

Formally, this work aspires to signal both a new opportunity for community enrichment as well as a respect for the past of Old North - bricks reclaimed from nearby derelict homes are turned from a sign of decay into a form symbolizing new growth in the neighborhood. Furthermore the form reinforces that “newness” as it turns subtly, eschewing mortar and instead using cables to keep its form.



Reconnective Infrastructure

2020

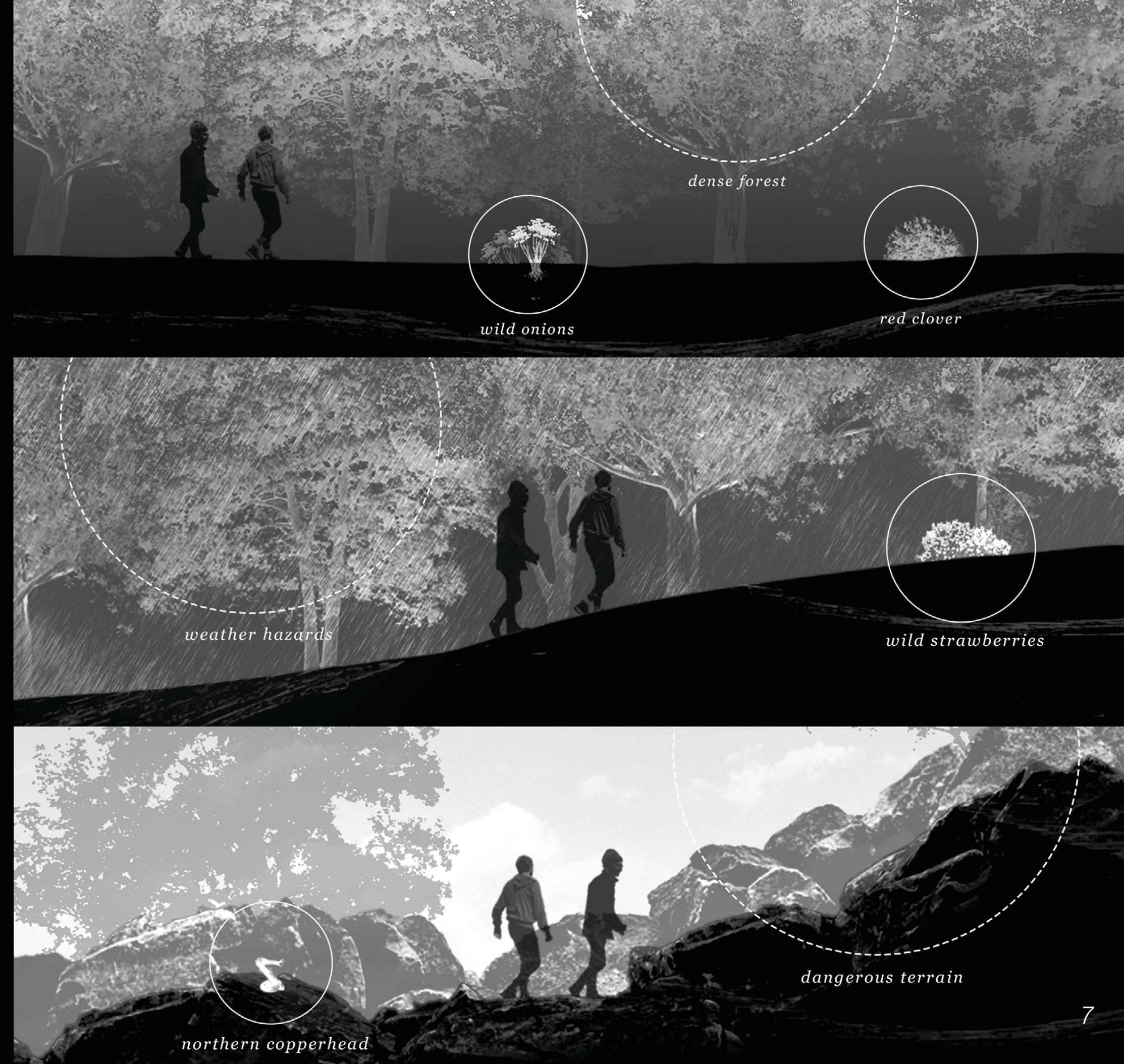
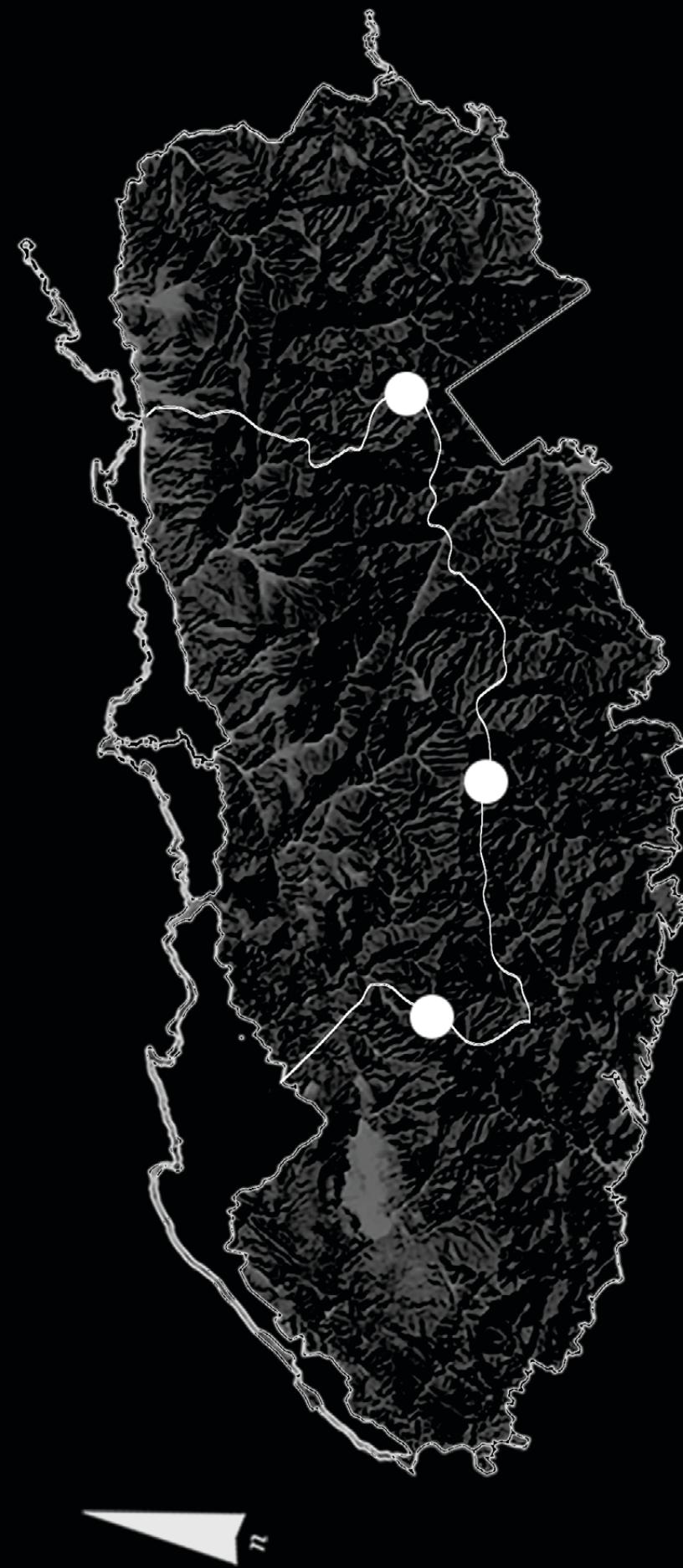
Great Smoky Mountain National Park

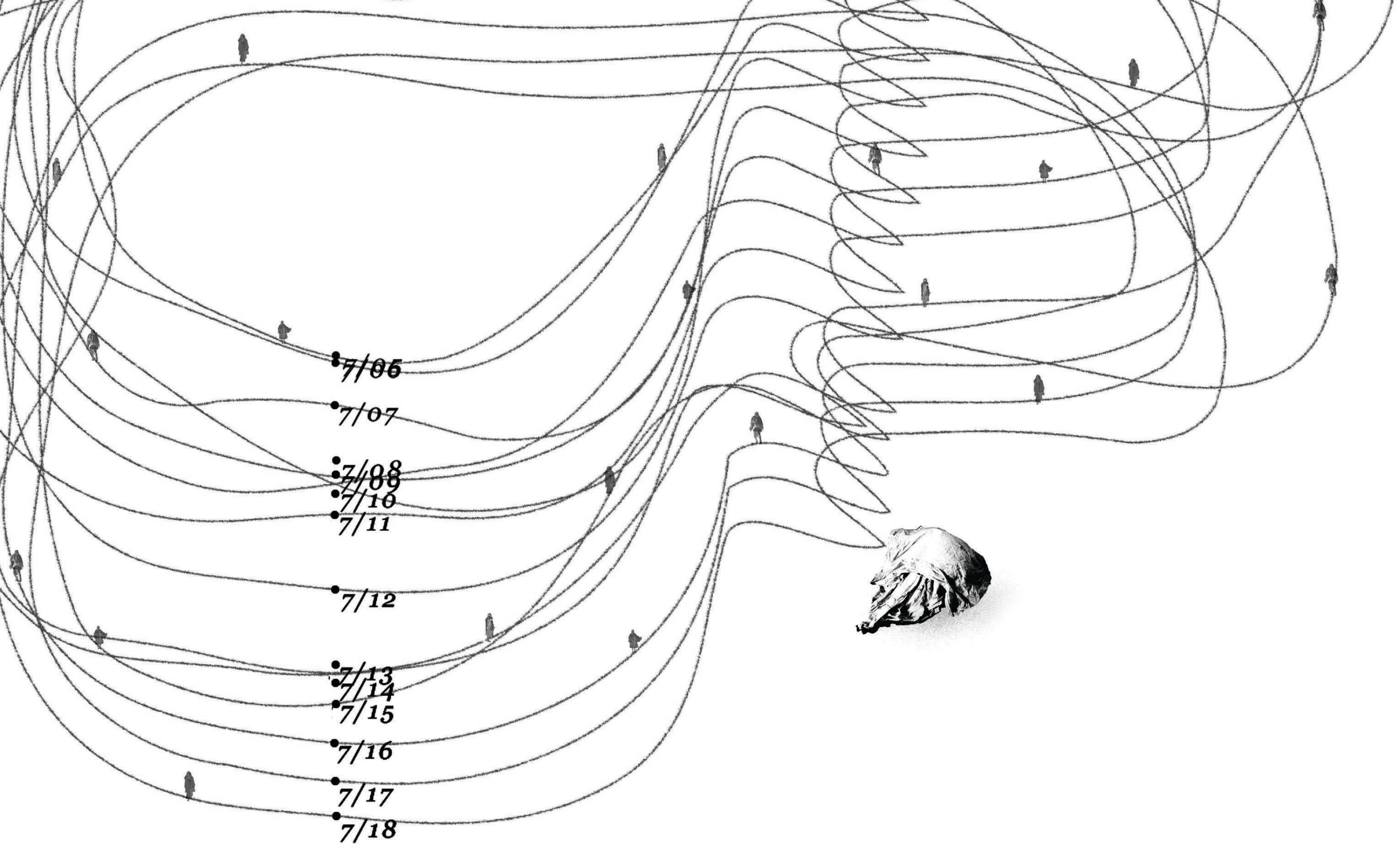


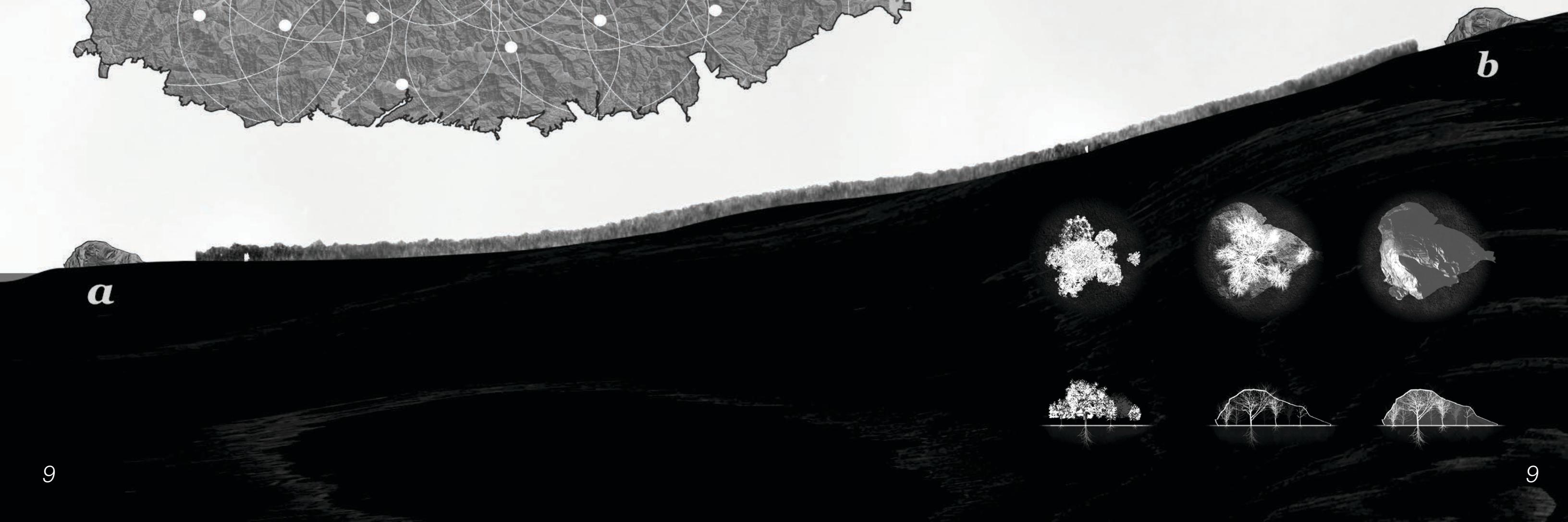
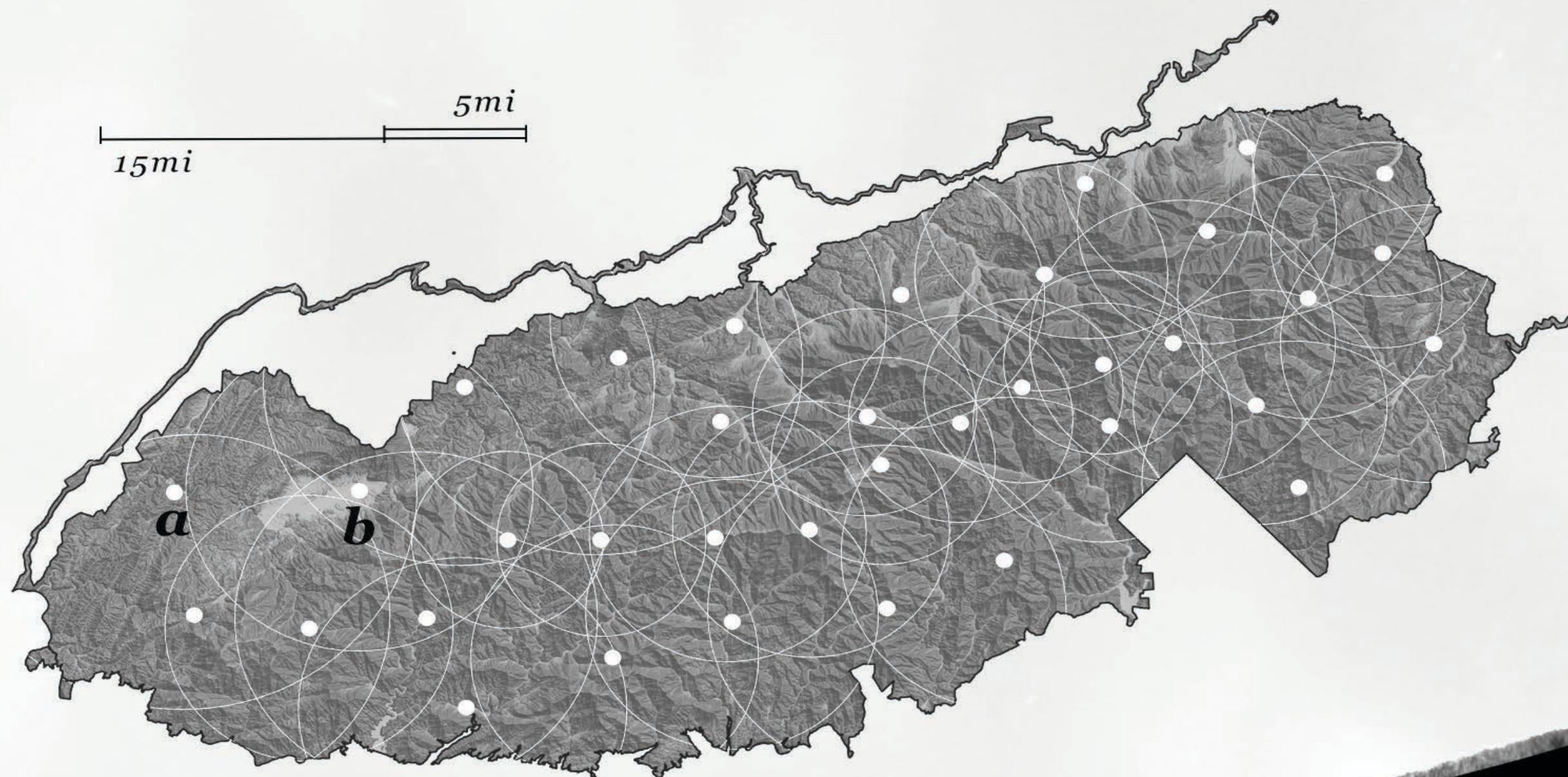
Historically, the United States Park System has seen nature and human as separate entities. The goal of protecting nature from humanity has separated the two and implies that we don't live in a constant relationship with nature. This view manifests in the park system in how the infrastructure of traveling through each park guides you on specific, car-centric routes. This separates the park-goers from the landscape and still treats the two as separate entities.

Reparative Infrastructure: Reconnecting the GSMNP envisions a speculative GSMNP where infrastructure isn't a tool for separation but rather a means of connection to the landscape. Visitors now walk over the landscape, aided by experiential cartographers. Connection requires relationship, and oral cartographers act as proxies from visitor to landscape. Each experiential cartographer lives in a post located in the park and traverses the landscape daily to form a relationship with the landscape. Posts are located approximately five miles apart, a distance that allows visitors to safely traverse the landscape in between them.

To further cement the connection between built and nature, each post is constructed with methods that embrace the connection. Each post begins as trees - planted intentionally for this purpose. The trees are then covered in canvas and earth, creating a void.







Election Center

2021

Court Ave., Des Moines, IA



Conceptualized as a new typology of building, the Des Moines Election center is designed for residents to politically organize, caucus and learn about democracy. As our democracy undergoes foundational challenges, conceptualizing the future of spatializing democracy becomes more important.

This center was designed with both practicing democracy and learning about it in mind. The large convention center allows for election-related activities and the large public space above ground enables public conversation and demonstration. Furthermore meeting rooms enable smaller political groups to organize. An auditorium, museum and library allow for education to occur.

Ultimately this was designed with the implication that democracy is difficult - the more difficult the method of education, the higher up it is. Democracy is complicated and ultimately prescriptive learning is the surest way to see it fail. The library occupies the highest space in the building - a statement that once you begin learning how to navigate democracy it is a never ending process.

