

A LINE GONE AWRY:

Elongating Funeral Drive-thru
for a Slower Goodbye

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THESIS STATEMENT

Working at the crossroad between the prosaic (the car) and the sacred (funeral rituals), this thesis proposes to meaningfully elongate the funeral Drive-Thru at Paradise Funeral Chapel in Saginaw, Michigan.

Through introducing a series of sensorial disruptions to an otherwise indifferent path of travel that wraps around the existing funeral home, the thesis explores the possibility of the automobile sublime in the hope of holding better space for a slower goodbye.

FAST CULTURE

_Fast food and Drive-thru

_Speed Yoga

_Drive-thru funeral

the ride

why, where

a timeline comparison

Our culture is a very much accelerated one. Be it eat faster, work faster, communicate faster, date faster, mate faster ... Life seems to always revolve around the mentality that the faster, the better, for many.

We can see this obsession with speed permeate into our culture in many ways.

Fast food and Drive-thru



fig. 1_Red's Giant Hamburg first opened in Missouri,1947.

fig. 2_In-and-Out's innovative two-way speaker box.

fig. 3_In-and-Out sign changed for faster reading.

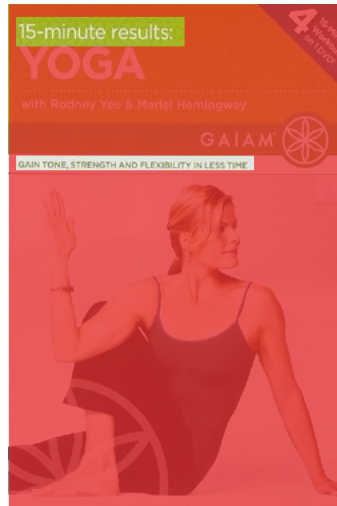
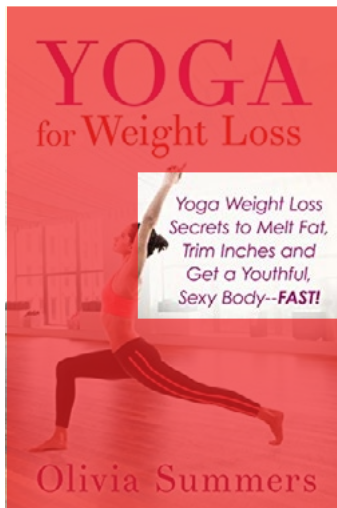
fig. 4_Cars started to have cup holders.

For example, when the age of the automobile rolled around, it started to reshape our experience around dining. Food can now be consumed passively behind the wheel to maximize speed and efficiency. With it we also begin to see larger signs on the streets, electronic communication between people, the emergence of cup holders in the car, which did not exist before.

Beyond dining, we also see Drive-thru banking, Drive-thru pharmacy, Drive-thru car wash and so on.

Speed Yoga

"Burn up to two more calories per minute than slow flows!"
"Increase muscle activation significantly, get stronger faster!"
"15 minute results, gain tone, strength and flexibility in less time"
"Get a youthful, sexy body -- FAST!"



While those adaptations seem innocuous and make life more convenient for us, other things are being sped up rather a little unnaturally. For example, the invention of speed yoga, almost sounds like an oxymoron. Something that is all about slowness and stillness by nature is now converted into something fast-paced and dynamic.

fig. 5_Advertisement in various forms for Speed Yoga

Speed Yoga



fig. 6_Mandala of Amoghapasha, Northern Nepal or Tsang Province, Central Tibet, 15th Century, pigments on cloth.

fig. 7_ Speed yoga class in Cape Town.

The spiritual dimension is also diminished, as the practice is reduced to an aerobic exercise in a box-like space.

Drive-thru Funeral

The Ride



And what happens when the same pattern with the car is superimposed onto something as ritualistic or even sacred like funerals? Since this idea first started in Atlanta, Georgia in the 60s, an increasing number of funeral homes in the U.S have begun to provide drive-thru services, where the attendees can drive by a window with the open casket displayed behind to pay their last respects on the go.

fig. 8_Screenshots from a video on YouTube showcasing the Drive-through funeral parlour at the Robert L. Adams drive-through funeral parlor in Compton, CA.

Drive-thru Funeral

Why, Where

What's the Reason for Drive-Thru Funerals?

A quick Google search of drive-thru funerals gives you lots of media accounts that report about this "breakthrough" in the funeral industry.

Some feel that funeral home directors used the [funeral alternative](#) to get attention and increase sales, but this is their prerogative — they're in the business to make money and serve the public.

Some of these directors are quick to point out that there are several benefits to mourners:

- Elderly or disabled mourners do not have to exit the car to see the body of their loved ones. They can offer support to the family by signing the guest book and leaving a condolence card.
- Those who are sick can "attend" the funeral without infecting others.
- Mourners can avoid getting out in unpleasant weather by staying in their climate-controlled vehicles while viewing the body.
- People can view the body of the deceased even if they are estranged from the rest of the mourners.
- Some people are afraid of going to funerals. They may feel more comfortable when viewing a dead body through two panes of glass.
- Perhaps some mourners want to avoid the religious aspects of a funeral wake or viewing. They want to see the body for the last time, but they don't want to feel forced to participate in religious rituals while doing so.
- Attending a drive-up visitation or viewing saves time.

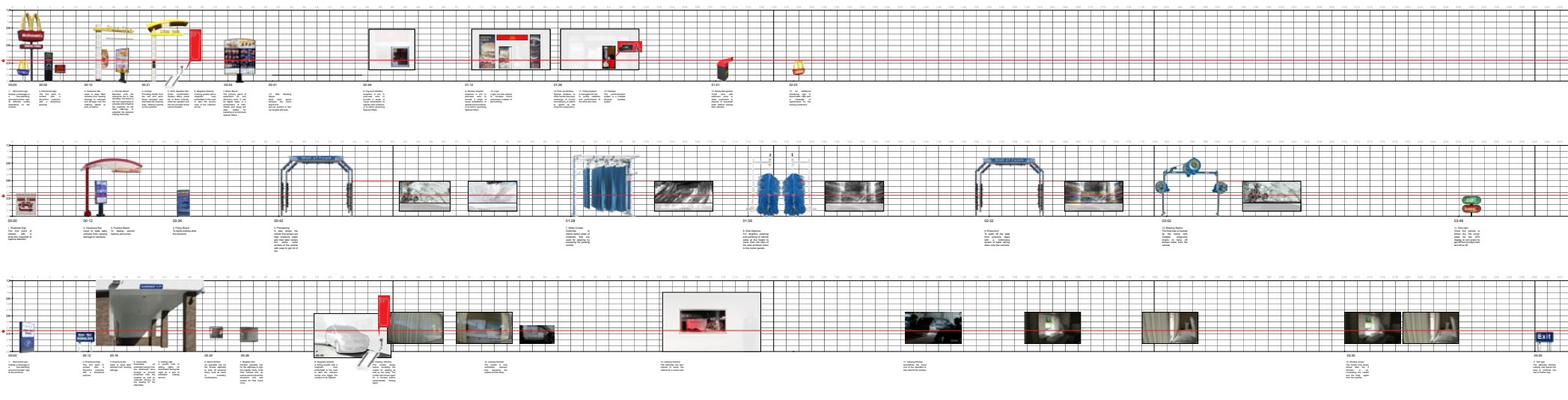
fig. 9 Reasons listed for Drive-thru funeral, all of which land somewhere around either comfort or convenience.



fig. 10 Some Drive-thru funeral locations, located mostly in the U.S, with one in Ontario, Canada, and one in Nagano, Japan.

Drive-thru Funeral

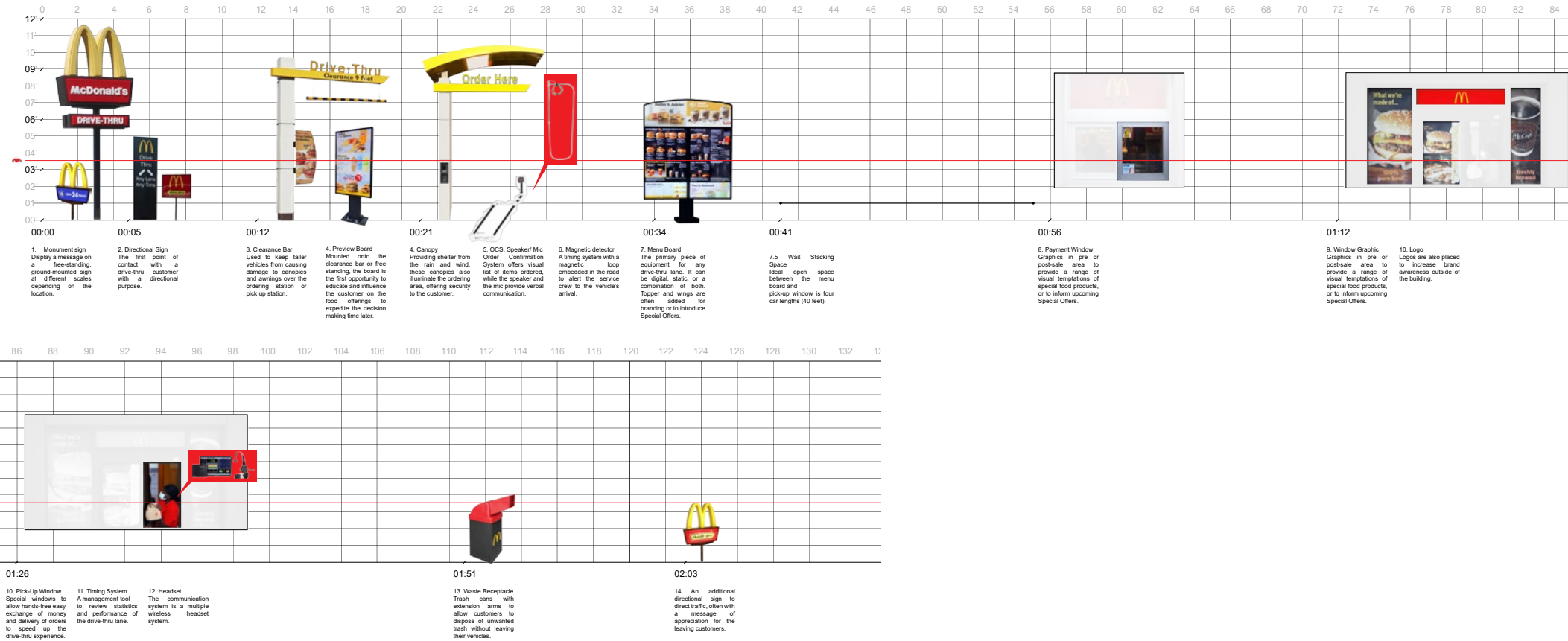
Timeline comparison



Whether it's ordering a cheeseburger, going through a car wash service, or attempting to package grief into a car ride, they now all seem to have similar durations.

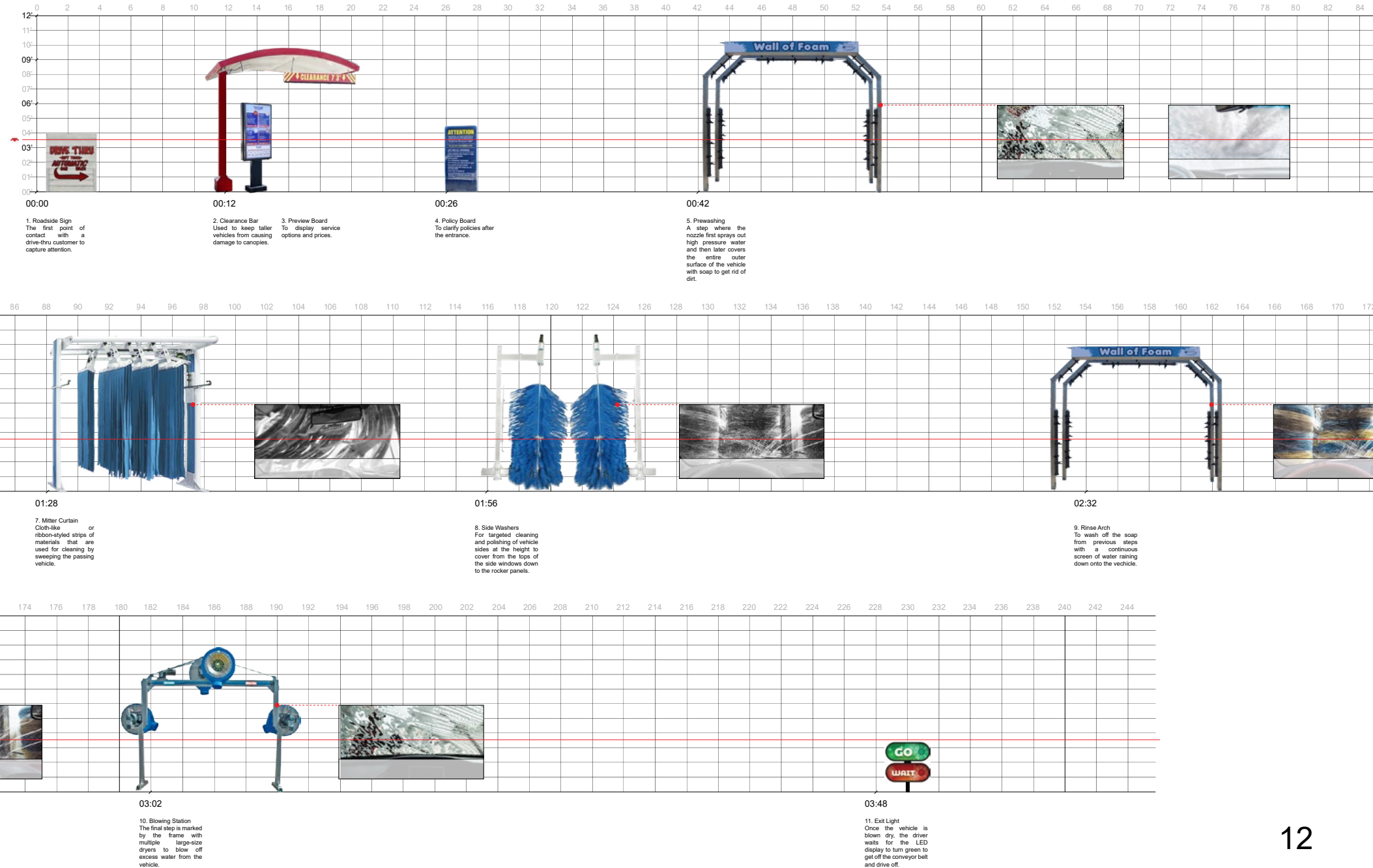
Drive-thru Funeral

Timeline comparison



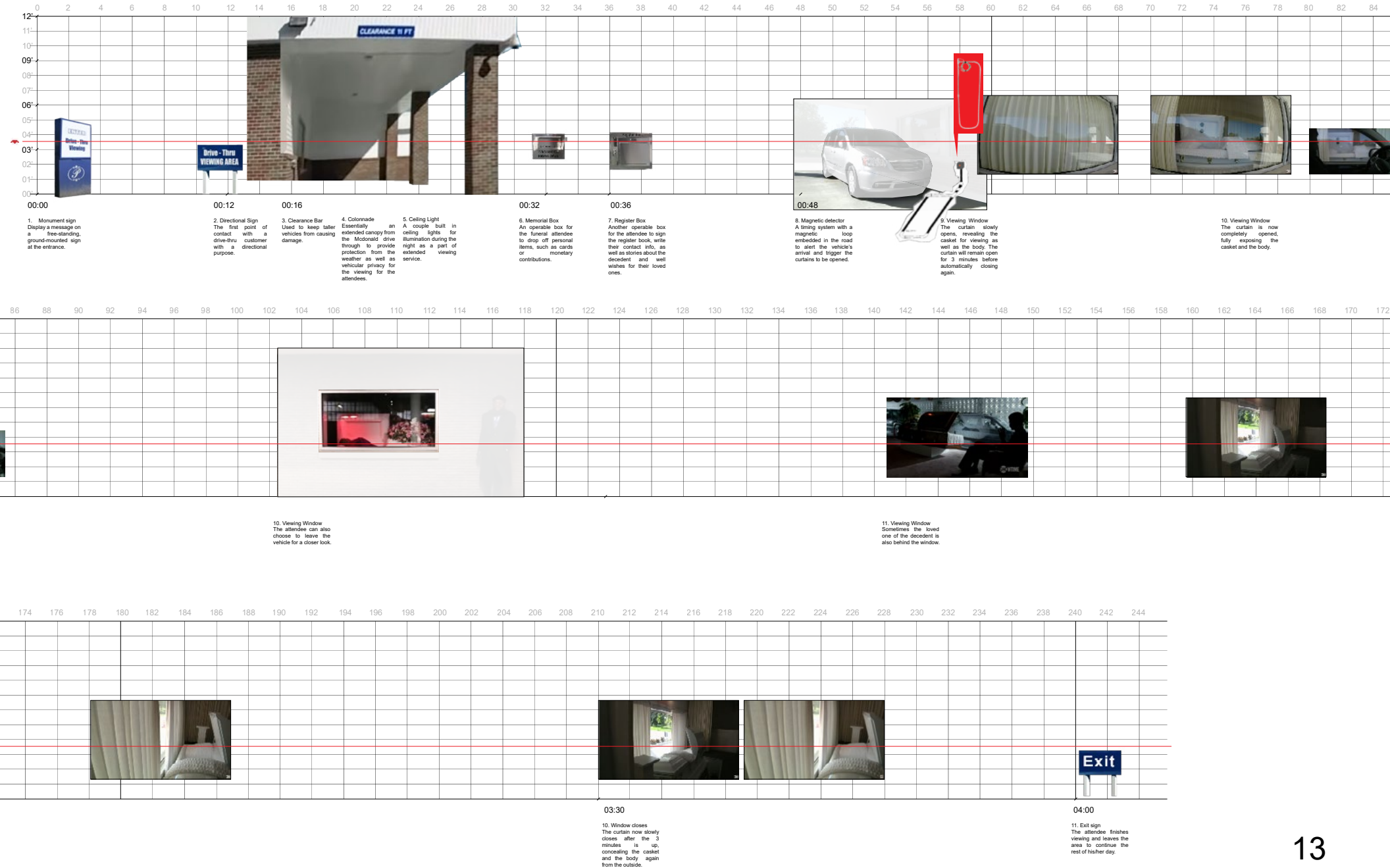
Drive-thru Funeral

Timeline comparison



Drive-thru Funeral

Timeline comparison



AUTOMOBILE STUDY

_The Visual

size and viewing angles
turning radius and speed

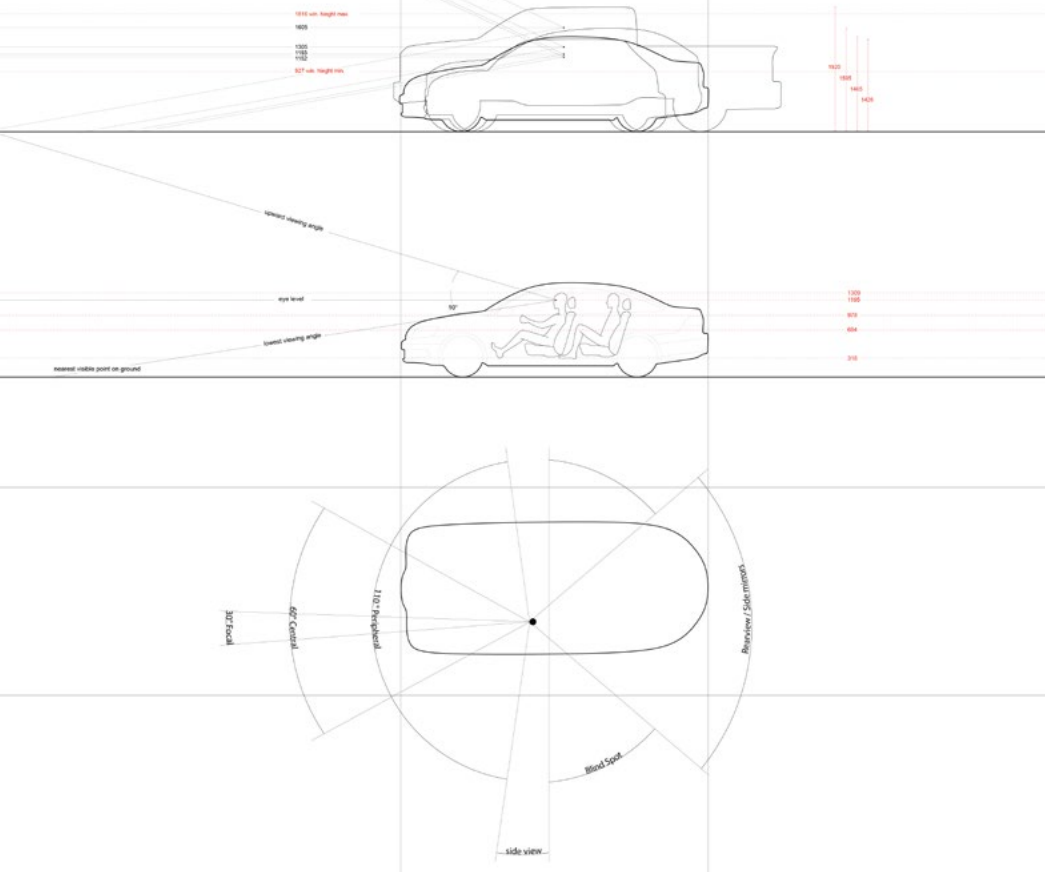
_The Experiential

drive-thru car wash
verkehrsberuhigung

Driving in the car, our experience is always mediated. in two ways,
visual and experiential.

The Visual

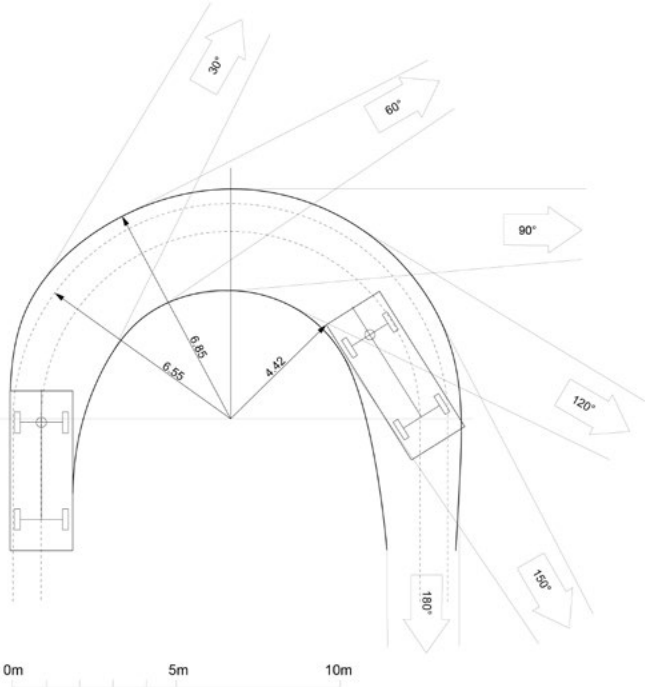
Size and viewing angle



Visually, the size of the vehicle, for example, a mini cooper vs a ford 150, changes our eye level. Taking the average passenger car, like a Toyota Camry, the most popular sedan in the US, these diagram map out the visibility of the driver, sectionally and horizontally, including some critical heights of head, eyes, shoulders, knees, feet to help inform the design decisions later.

The Visual

Turning radius and speed



Similarly, turning radius and speed of the car also have an impact on the vision of the driver.

The Experiential

Drive-thru car wash



fig. 10_The car driving through a car wash service including the Mitter curtains and side brushes.

There can also be an experiential aspect in driving. Car wash is one example. Driving through the screen of water, the Mitter curtains, the side brushes, and the dryers, all create an immersive experience for riders.

The Experiential

“Vekehrsberuhigung”



Diagonal parking



Roundabouts



Diverters



Chicane

fig. 11_Using traffic calming strategies to slow down vehicles and balance the street with other uses.

Traffic calming strategies listed on the left can be utilized to manipulate the driving speed to introduce the aspect of slowness and elongation.

FUNERAL STUDY

_Space

Layout of funeral homes

_Service

Photos

Typical funeral program

_Precedent


Space

Layout of funeral homes



Service Photos

Home Going Service
In Loving Memory
of
Barbara Welch



Reside: January 23, 1933 Sunset: September 24, 2023

Service: Sunday, October 1st 2023 - 2pm
PERKINS FUNERAL HOME
11 West Main St
Dayton, NY

Funeral Director: Officiating

Order of Service



Choral Introit "Offering" _____ *Chy Back, Joy (Musik 6:4)*

Opening Words: _____

Hymn "Ode Rugged Cross" _____

Family Reflections: _____ Beverly Shepard, Roch Witek, Mark Williams

Choral Anthem: How Deep is the Father's Love for Us - Swainland _____

Scripture Reading: _____ *"All Things New" 2 Cor 5:17, Mark 6:1-13*

Hymn "I Stand Amazed" _____

Words of Benediction and Dismissal: _____

I'm Free

*Don't grieve for me, for now I'm free,
I'm following the path God laid for me,
I found the road when I found Him and
I turned my back and left it all.*

*I could not stay another day,
he taught me how to walk on water,
Healy left another road that way,
I found that place at the close of day.*

*Oh my darling, don't grieve,
I'm not here but I'm still with you,
I'm following the path God laid for me,
I found that place at the close of day.*

*Do not fretted with tears of sorrow,
I will give the measure of tomorrow,
My life's been laid, I've covered much,
God's hand, good times.*

*Perhaps my time arrived all too long,
God's Kingdom it now will crown your life,
I'll go your hand and follow with you,
God wanted me here, he set me free.*

Acknowledgment
The family wishes to express their sincere appreciation to all who attended and assisted with this service. My love lives on in the hearts of those who loved me.

Funeral Home:
Perkins Funeral Home
11 West Main St
Dayton, NY
(518) 564-8311

Obituary

In the early evening of Sunday, September 24, 2023 Barbara Welch (Vickerman) Welch passed away peacefully at Cayuga Medical Center. She was born in Seneca NY January 23, 1933. She was raised in Seneca NY and lived there for 60 years before the Welch's moved from Seneca to Cayuga. She was a member of the Seneca Baptist Church in Seneca and then moved from Seneca to Cayuga. She was a member of the Seneca Baptist Church in Seneca and then moved from Seneca to Cayuga. She was a member of the Seneca Baptist Church in Seneca and then moved from Seneca to Cayuga.

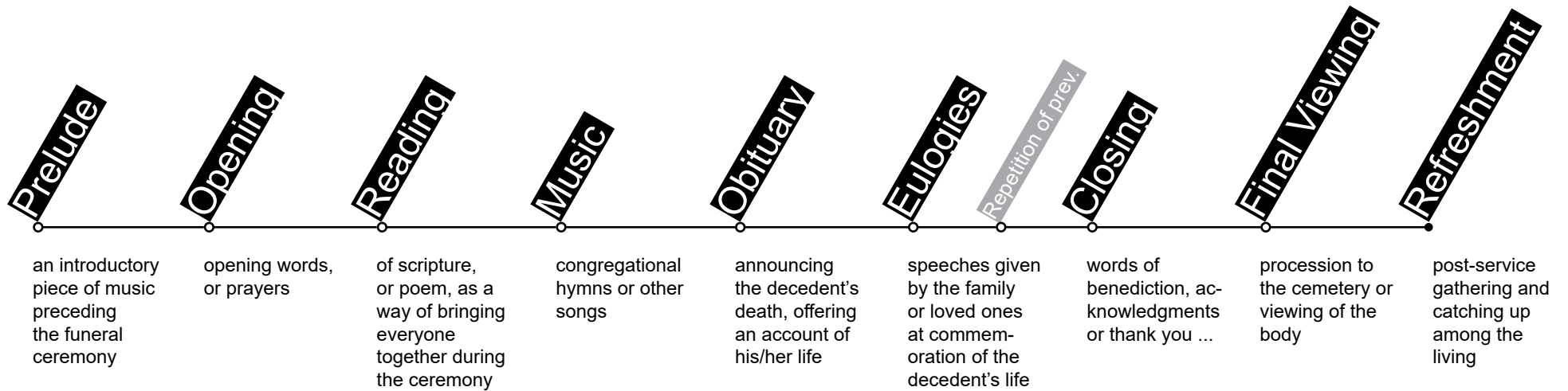


fig. 12_Program booklet from Barbara Welch's funeral service on Oct 1st, 2023 at Perkins Funeral Home, Ithaca.

fig. 13_Photos of the gathering.

Service

Typical funeral program



Precedent

#01 Adams Funeral Home, Crompton, CA

#02 Bernard Funeral Services, Memphis, TN



In a residential block next to a parking lot and a church, the first Drive-thru path lays on the east exterior of the building.

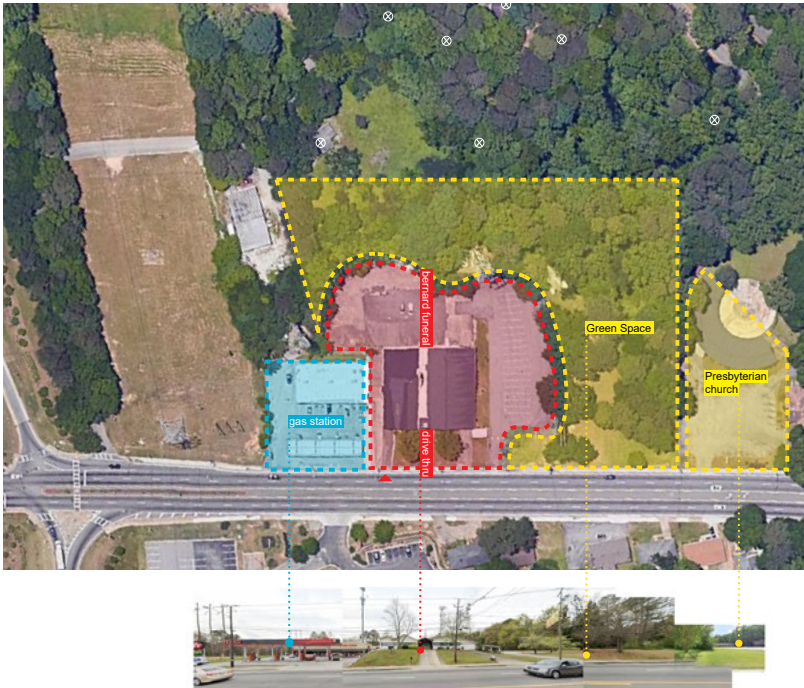


The second one is also situated in a residential area, but here sandwiched between a parking lot and a gas station, with path going under the roof of the west side of the building.

Precedent

#03 Thornton Mortuary, Atlanta, GA

#04 Paradise Funeral Chapel, Saginaw, MI



The third Drive-thru sits between another gas station and a church with a large amount of green space behind. The path here splits through the center of the building.



The last one is at the edge of a large cemetery, with the path wraps around the building. This is the site that I eventually chose to create interventions on.

DESIGN

_Current Drive-thru

_Alternative Drive-thru

_6 Interventions

pool of still water

chapel of light

pavilion of sounds

bridge of grief

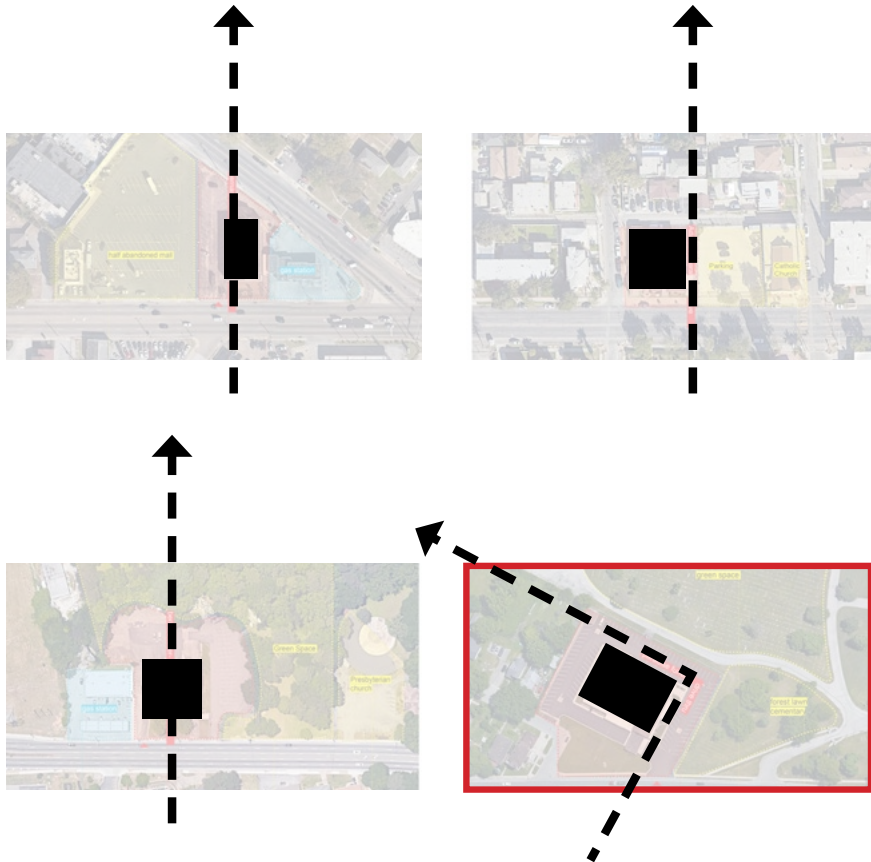
maze of the mind

altar of wine

So now that we have identified the prosaic, car, and the sacred, funeral rituals, how do we better reconcile the two?

Current Drive-thru

Path of travel



Currently, they are all one indifferent path of travel, that either smears on, splits through, or wraps around the building, which simulates something similar to ordering a burger at McDonald's, or going to a Drive-thru car wash. But when faced with, for instance, emotions as heavy and crushing and complex as grief, can there not be better space for a slower goodbye?

Alternative Drive-thru

Path of travel



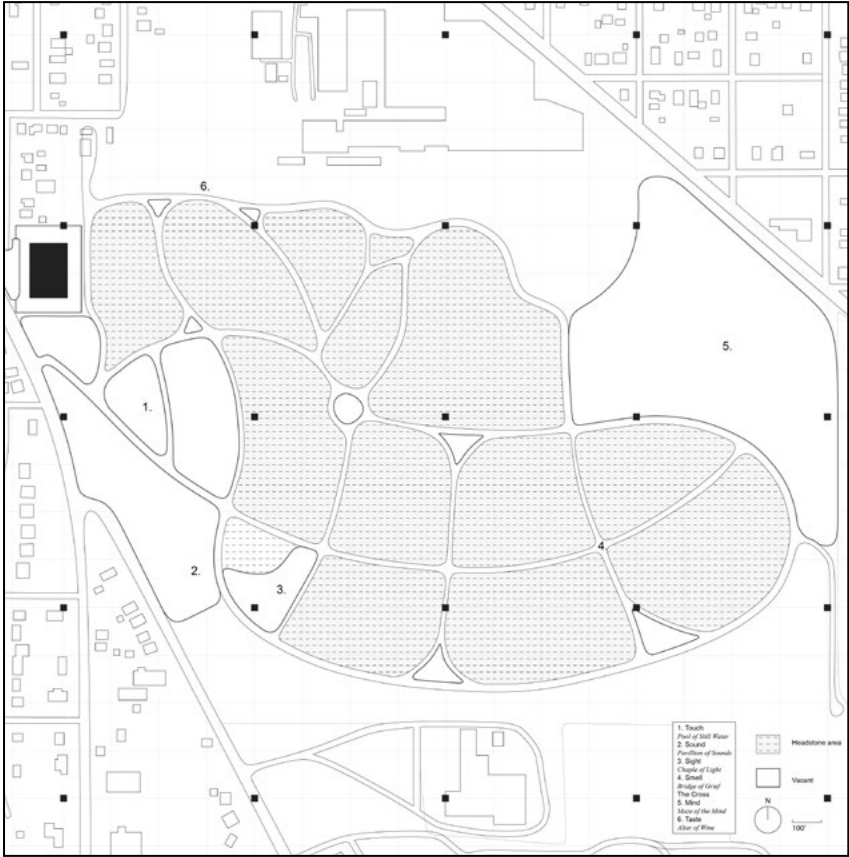
The opportunity



Alternative Drive-thru

Occupied vs vacant

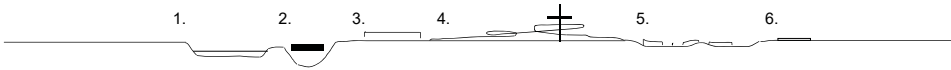
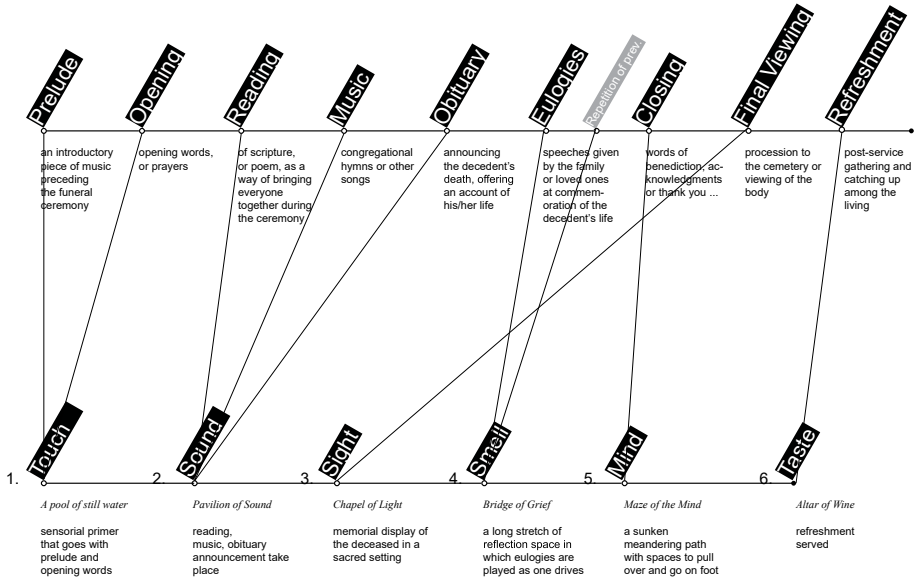
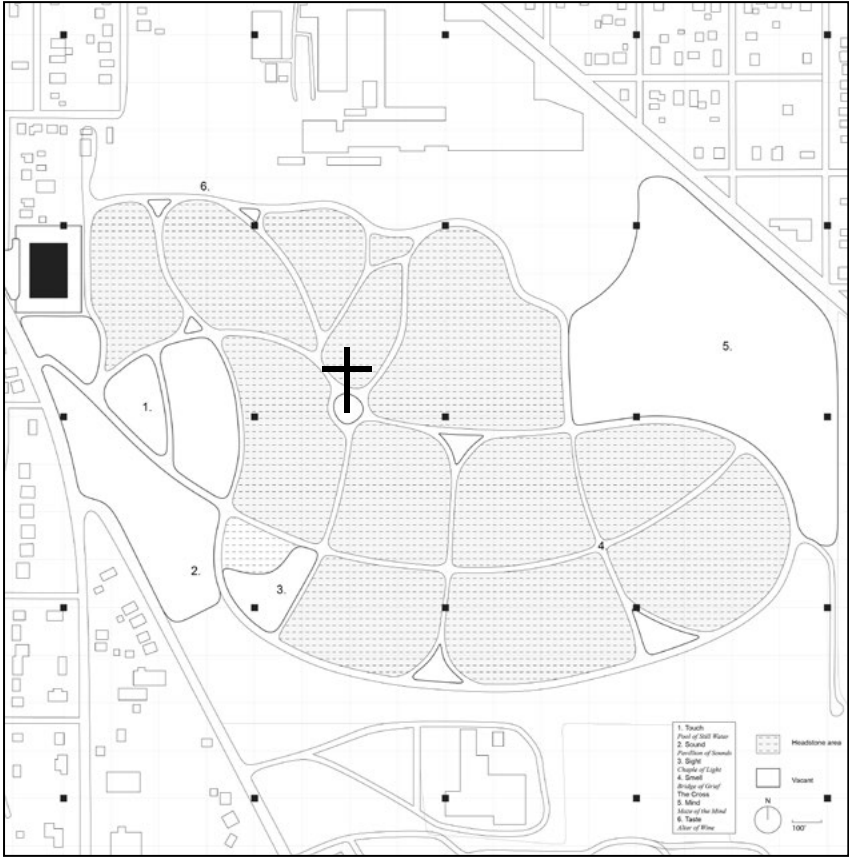
The elongated path



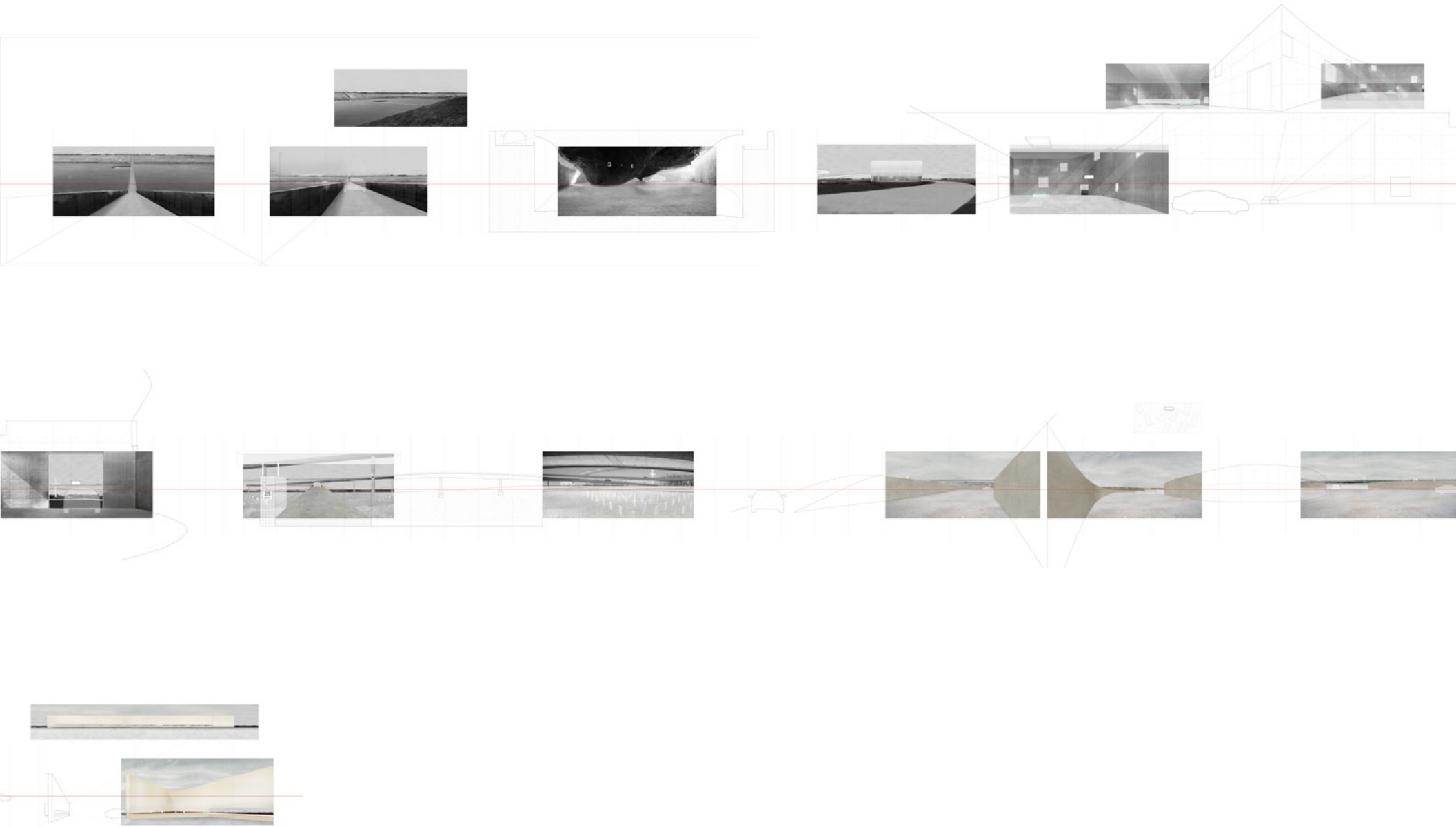
Alternative Drive-thru

Engaging with the topography

The spatial translation

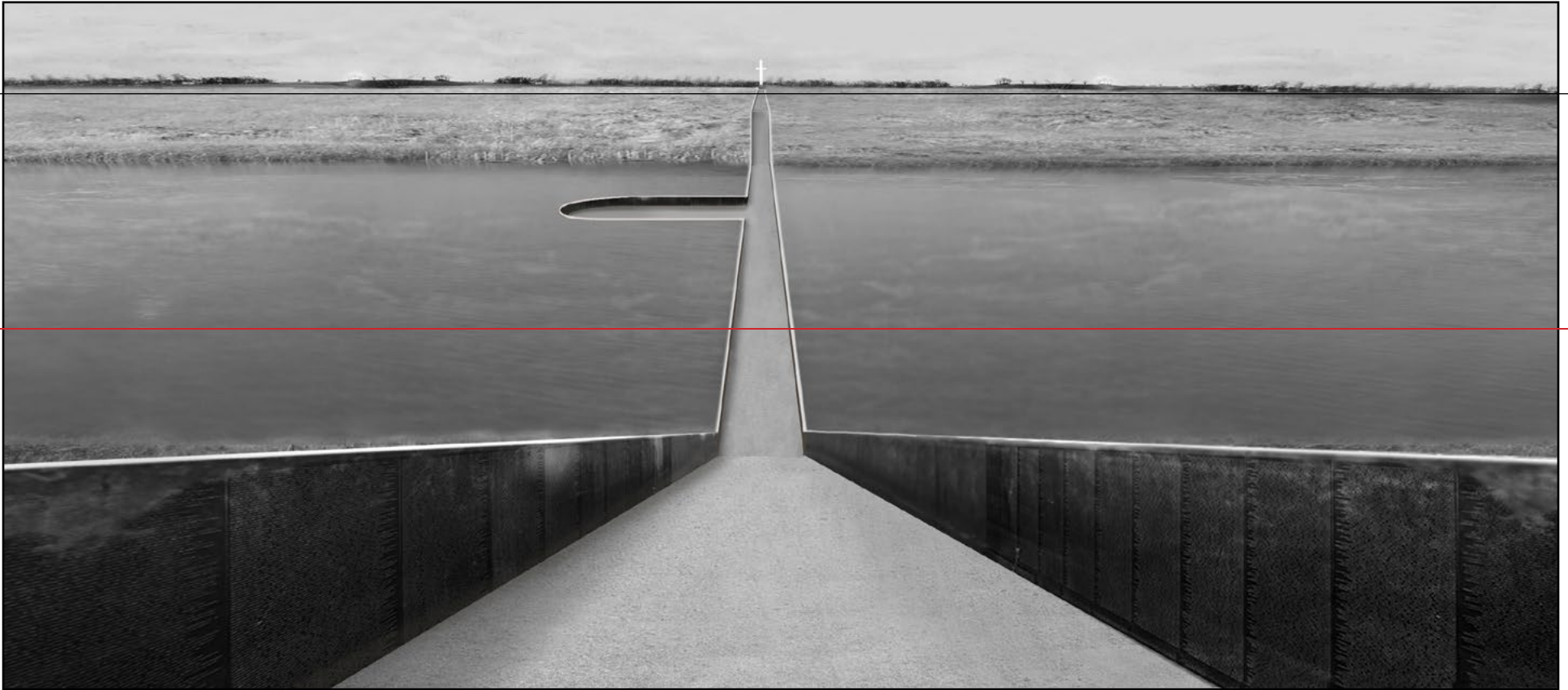


6 Interventions



6 Interventions

#01 *Pool of Still Water*



6 Interventions

#01 Pool of Still Water



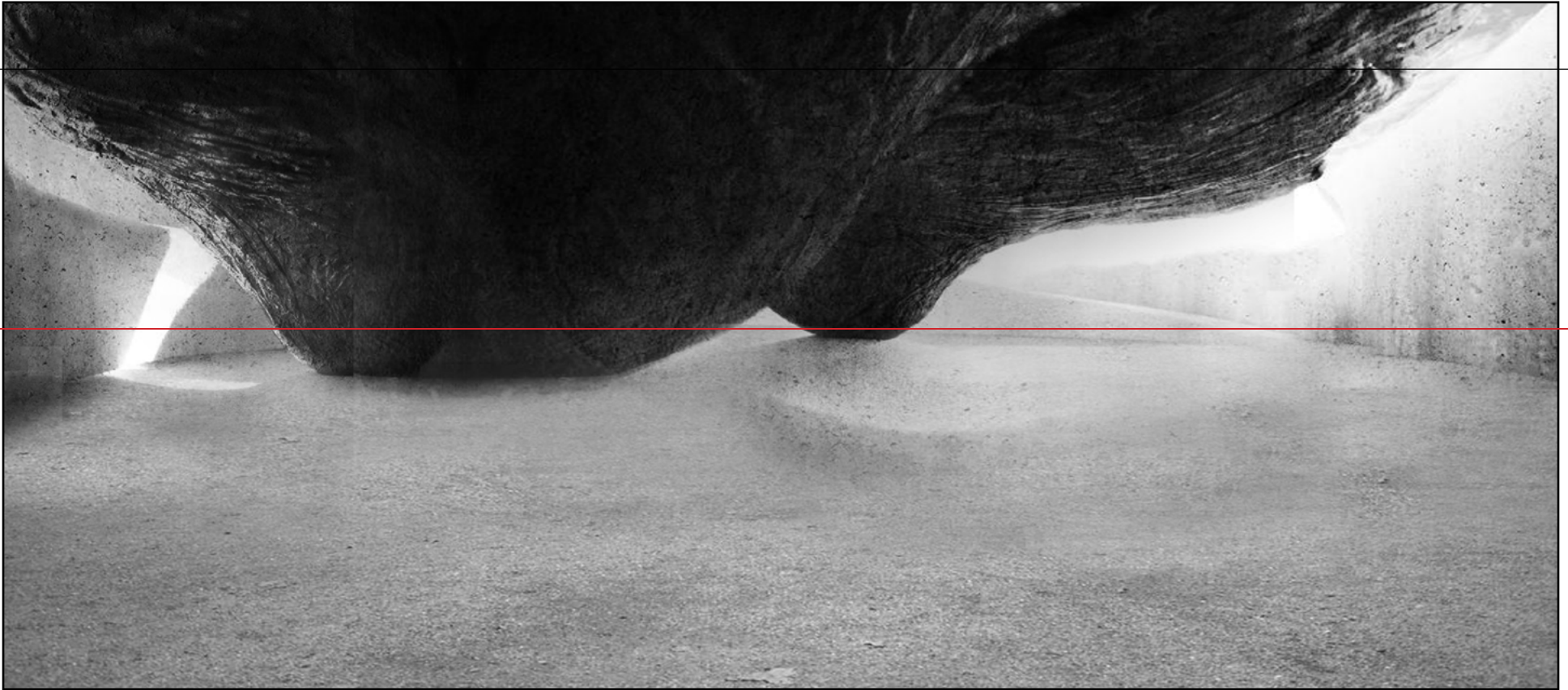
6 Interventions

#01 *Pool of Still Water*



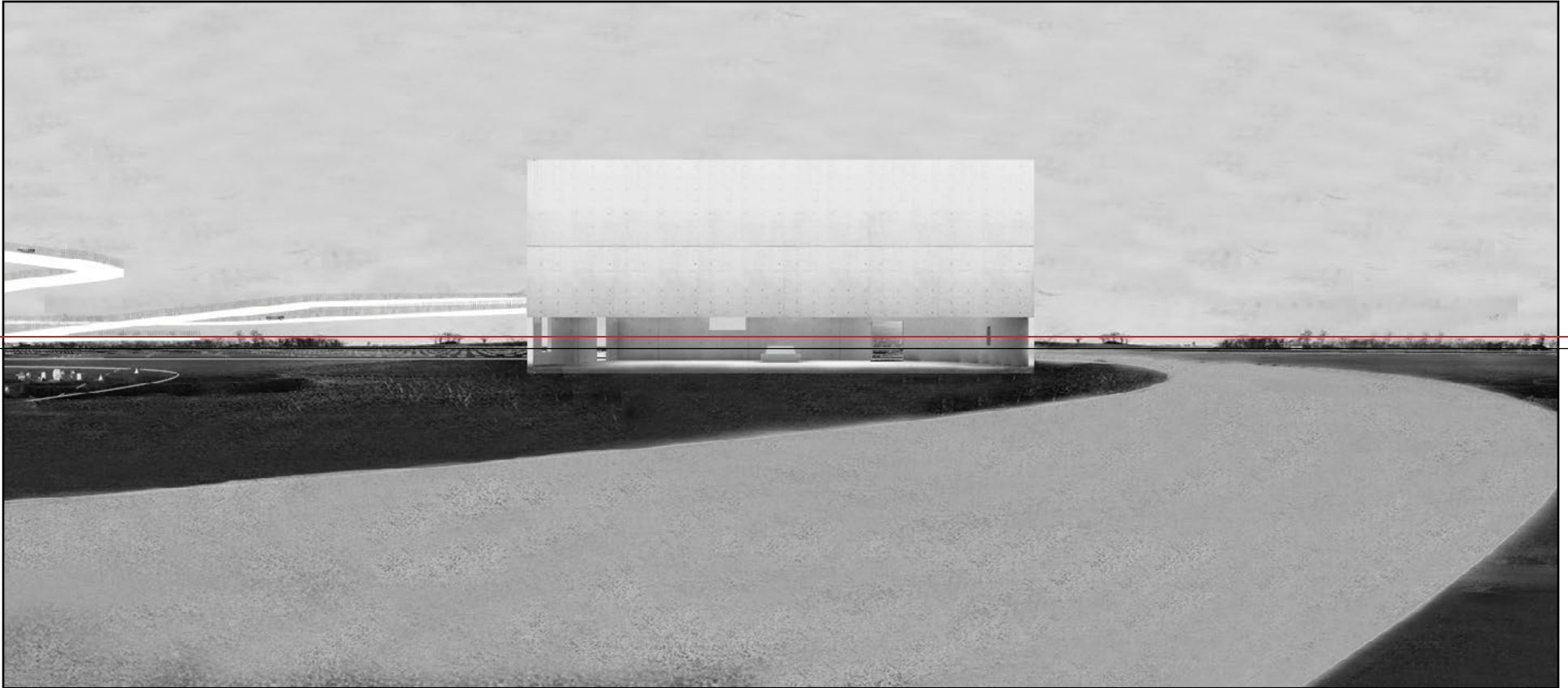
6 Interventions

#02 Pavilion of Sounds



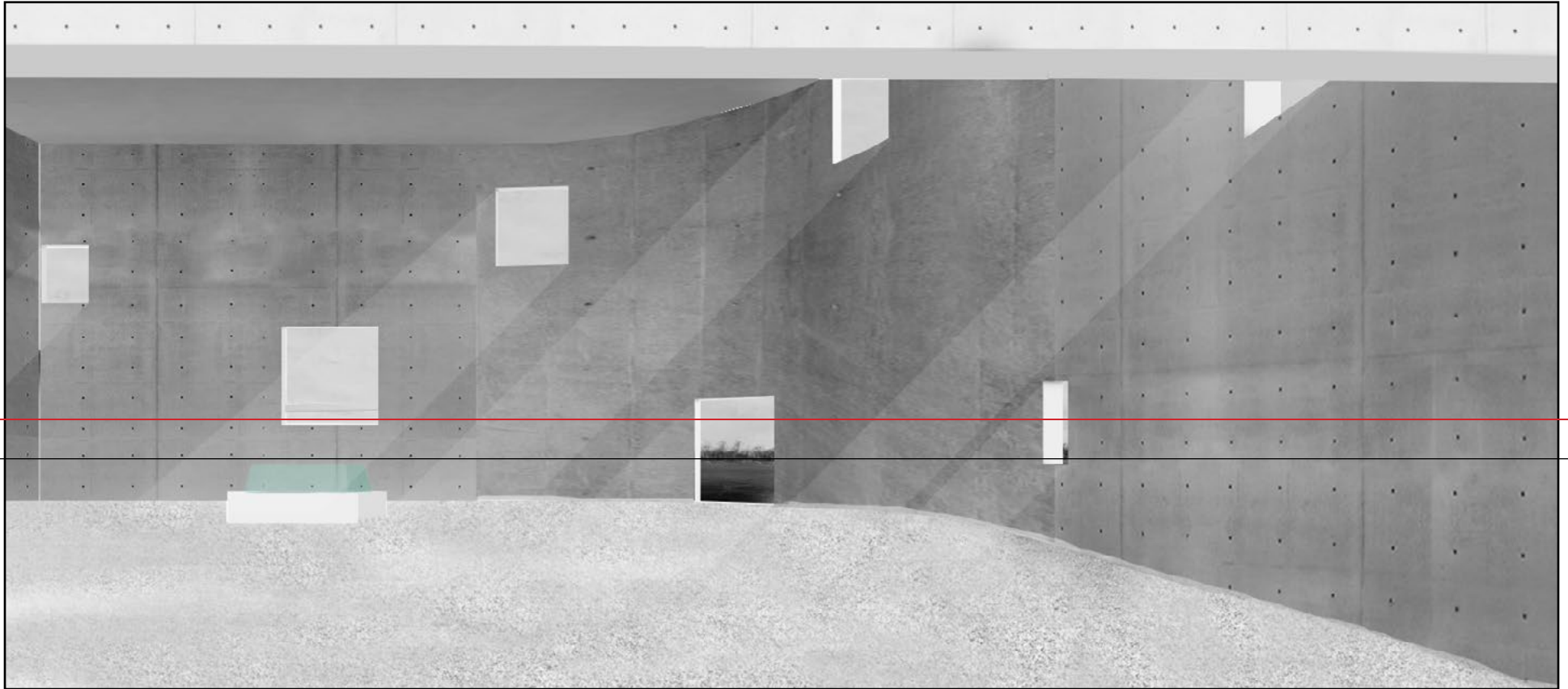
6 Interventions

#03 Chapel of Light



6 Interventions

#03 Chapel of Light



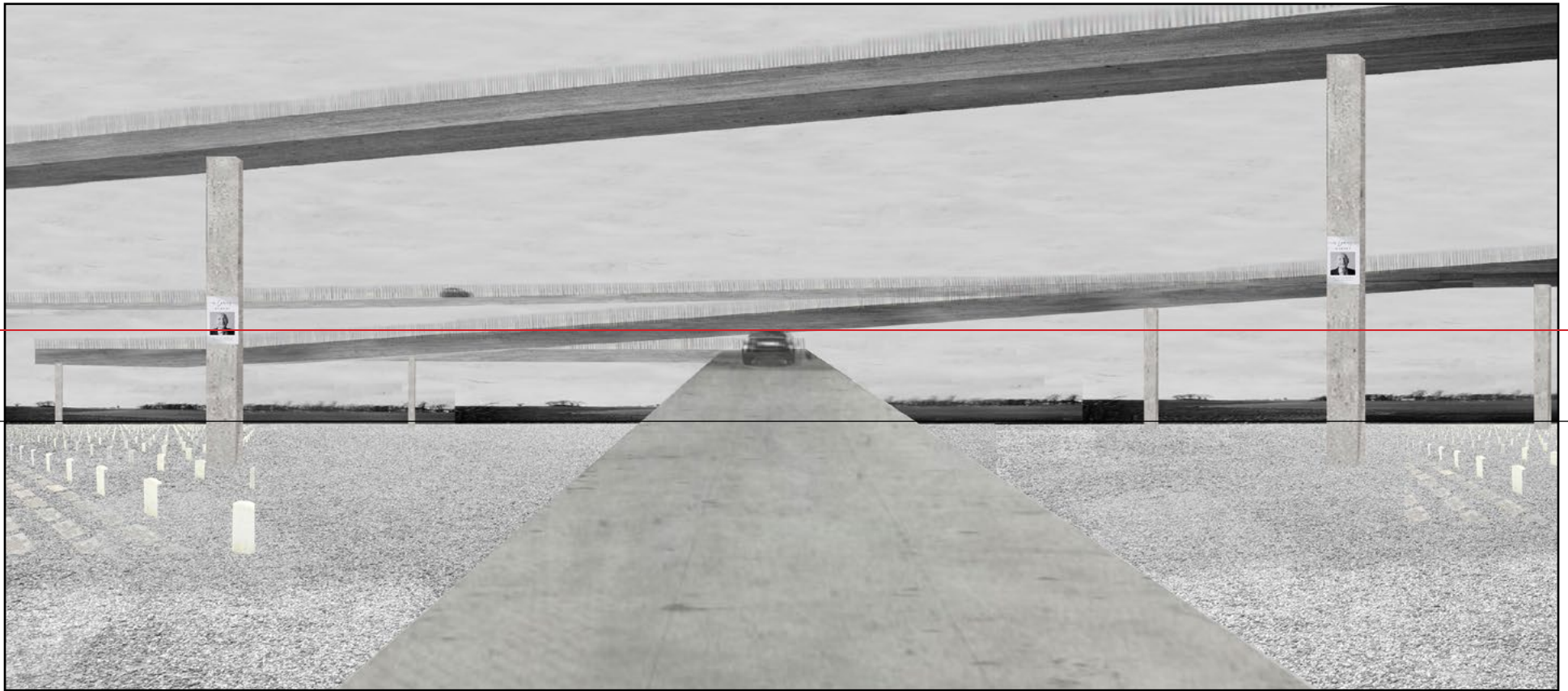
6 Interventions

#03 Chapel of Light



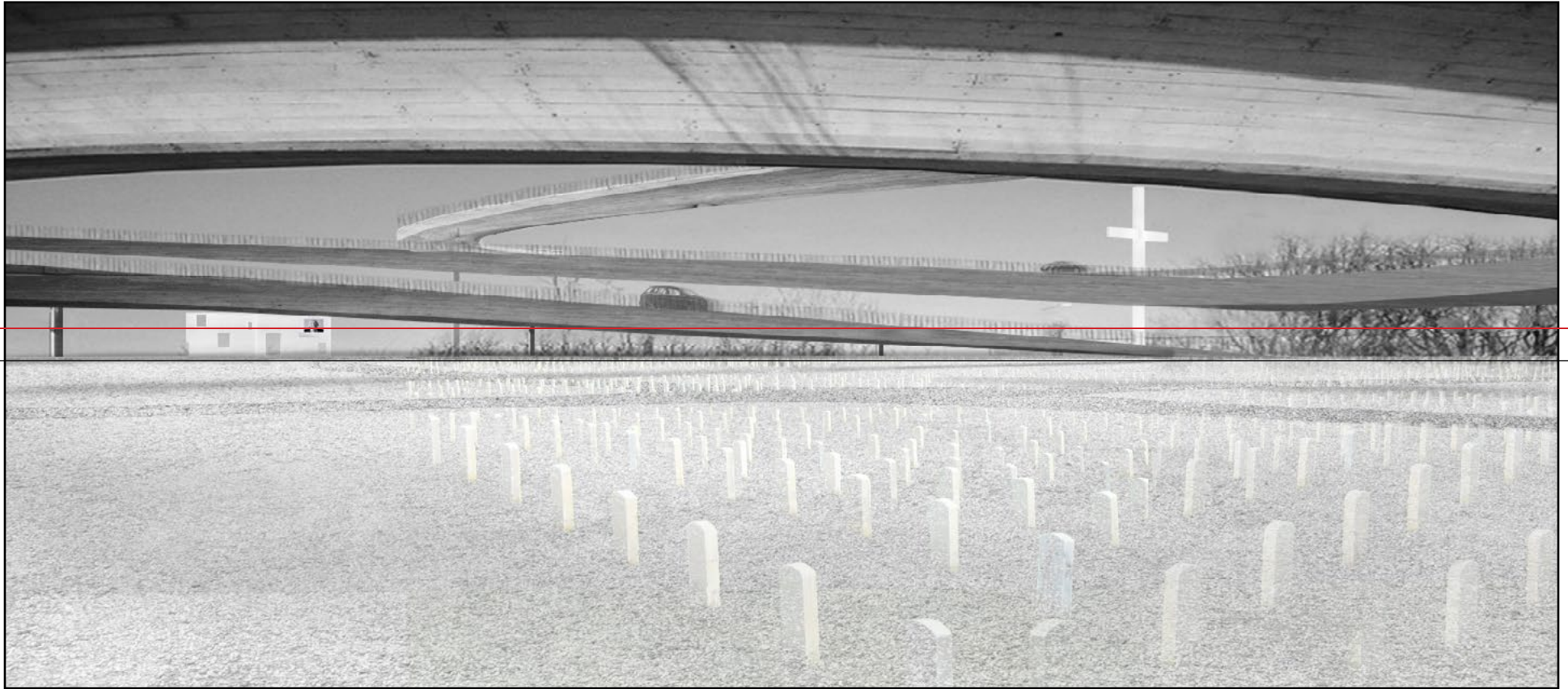
6 Interventions

#04 *Bridge of Grief*



6 Interventions

#04 *Bridge of Grief*



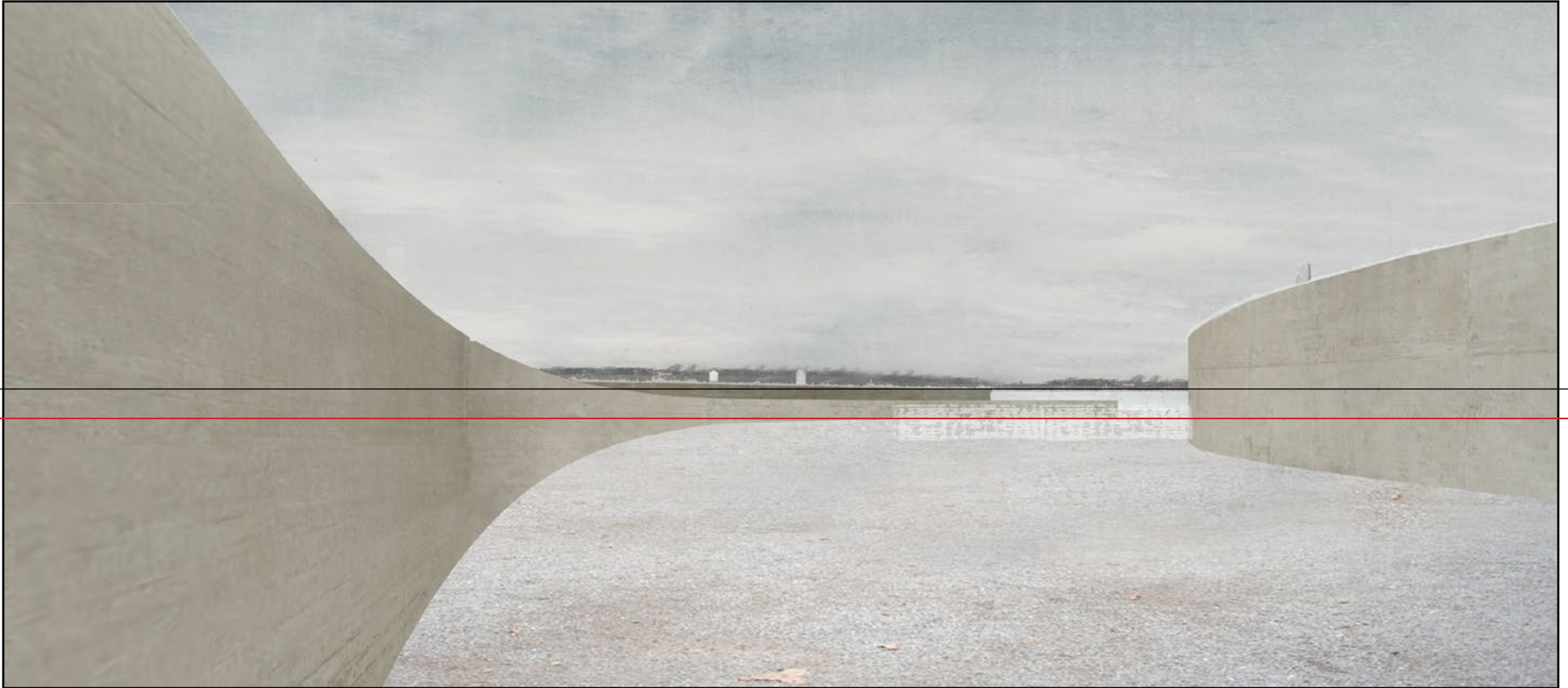
6 Interventions

#05 Maze of the Mind



6 Interventions

#05 Maze of the Mind



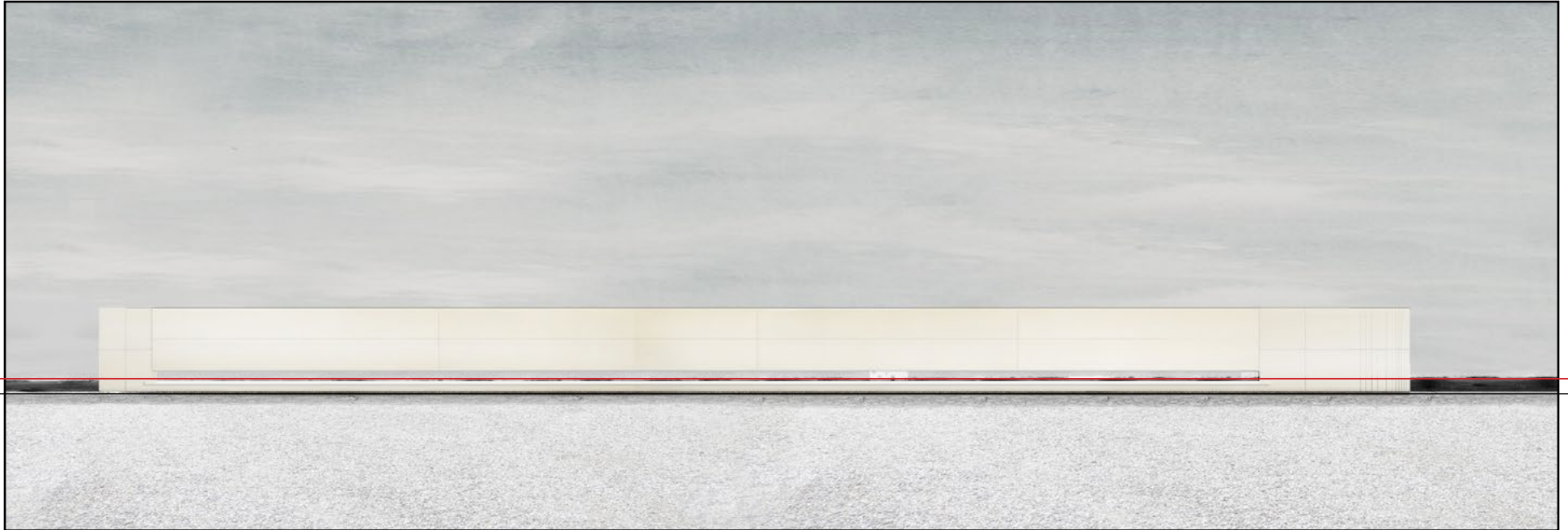
6 Interventions

#05 Maze of the Mind



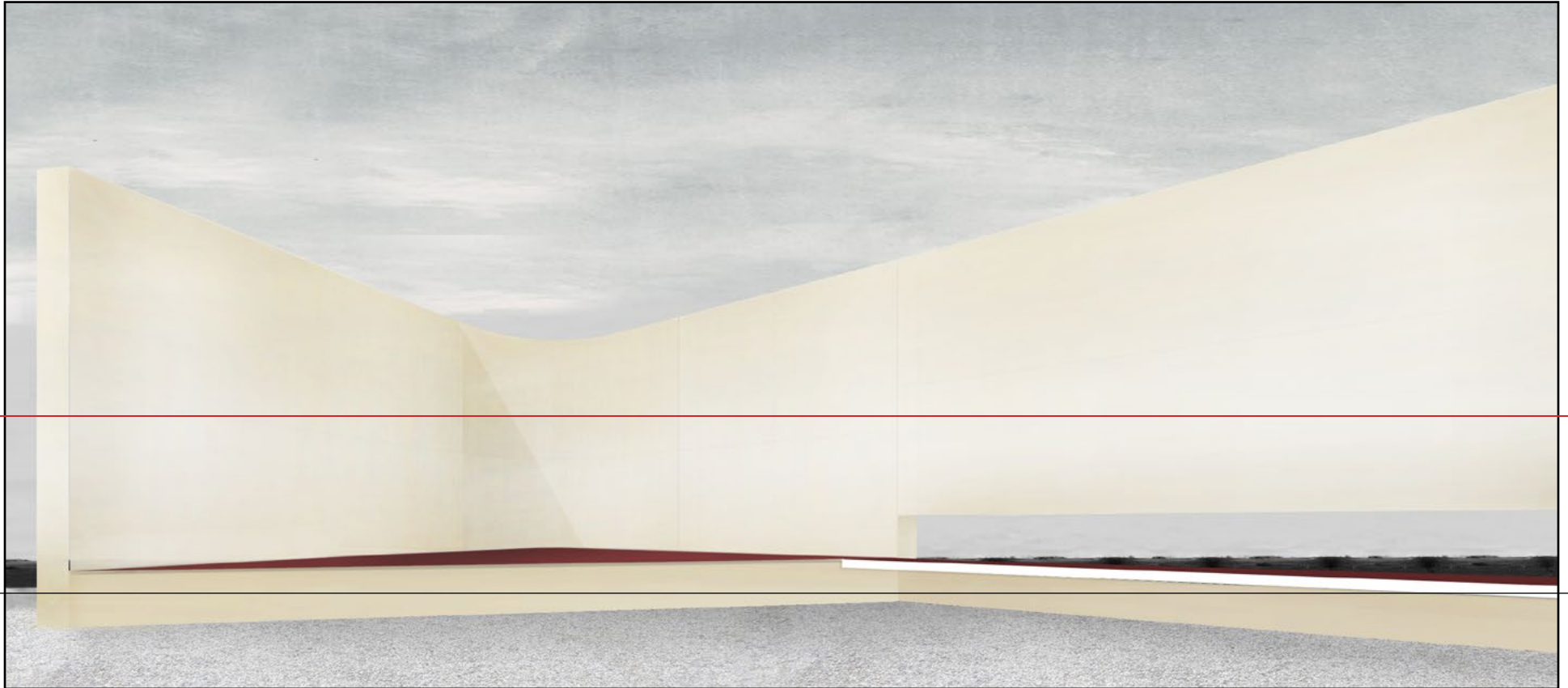
6 Interventions

#06 Altar of Wine



6 Interventions

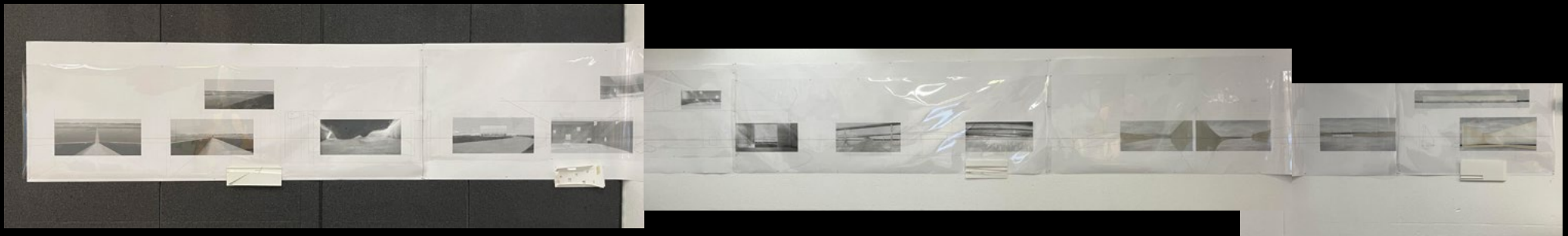
#06 Altar of Wine



6 Interventions



THE REVIEW



ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Thank you,

Leslie and Andrea, for your commitment, guidance and patience throughout the semester, from helping me hone down to a specific direction, to pieces of beautiful advice on representation, to the warmth in some of your most tiny gestures in times of stress that reminded me of my mother...

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My dear dear friends inside and outside of Milstein, for our time together that I would not trade anything for, and for your love and support in various shapes or forms...

My favorite practice room dedicated to Karel Husa in Lincoln basement, the bouldering wall at Lindseth, and countless London Fogs with oat milk and only one pump of vanilla from Olin...

I would not be able to go through this semester without all of you.

A Line Gone Awry:

Elongating Funeral
Drive-thru for a
Slower Goodbye



01_TOUCH, Pool of Still Water



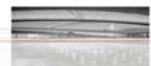
02_SOUND, Pursuer of Sounds



03_SIGHT, Chapel of Light



04_SMELL, Bridge of Grief



Working at the crossroad between the prosaic (the car) and the sacred (funeral rituals), this thesis proposes to meaningfully elongate the funeral Drive-Thru at Paradise Funeral Chapel in Saginaw, Michigan.

Through introducing a series of sensorial disruptions to an otherwise indifferent path of travel that wraps around the existing funeral home, the thesis explores the possibility of the automobile sublime in the hope of holding better space for a slower goodbye.



05_MIND, Maze of the Mind



06_TASTE, Altar of Wine