

DECONSTRUCTING DUTCH



This report was funded by the **Lyceum Fellowship**. 2024

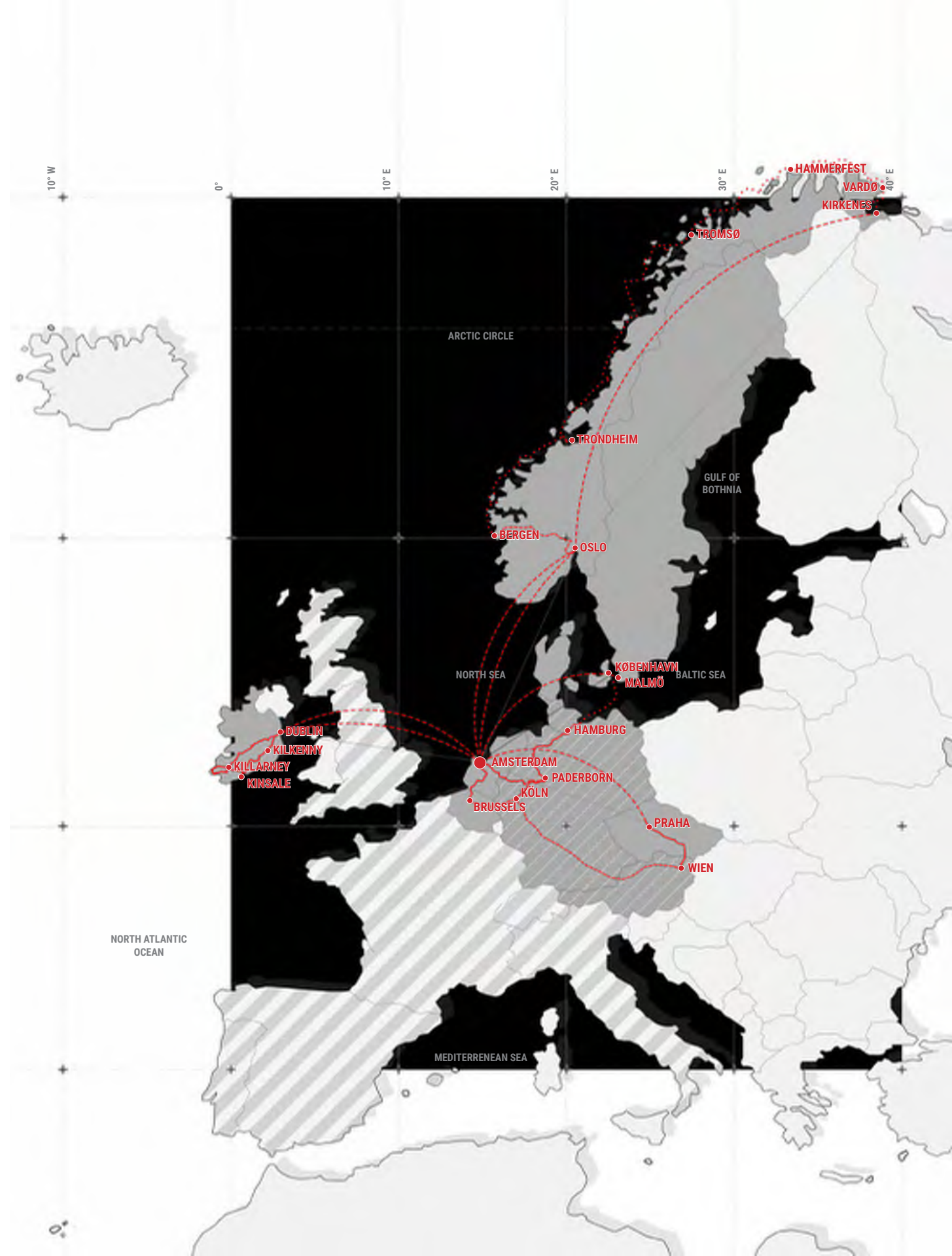
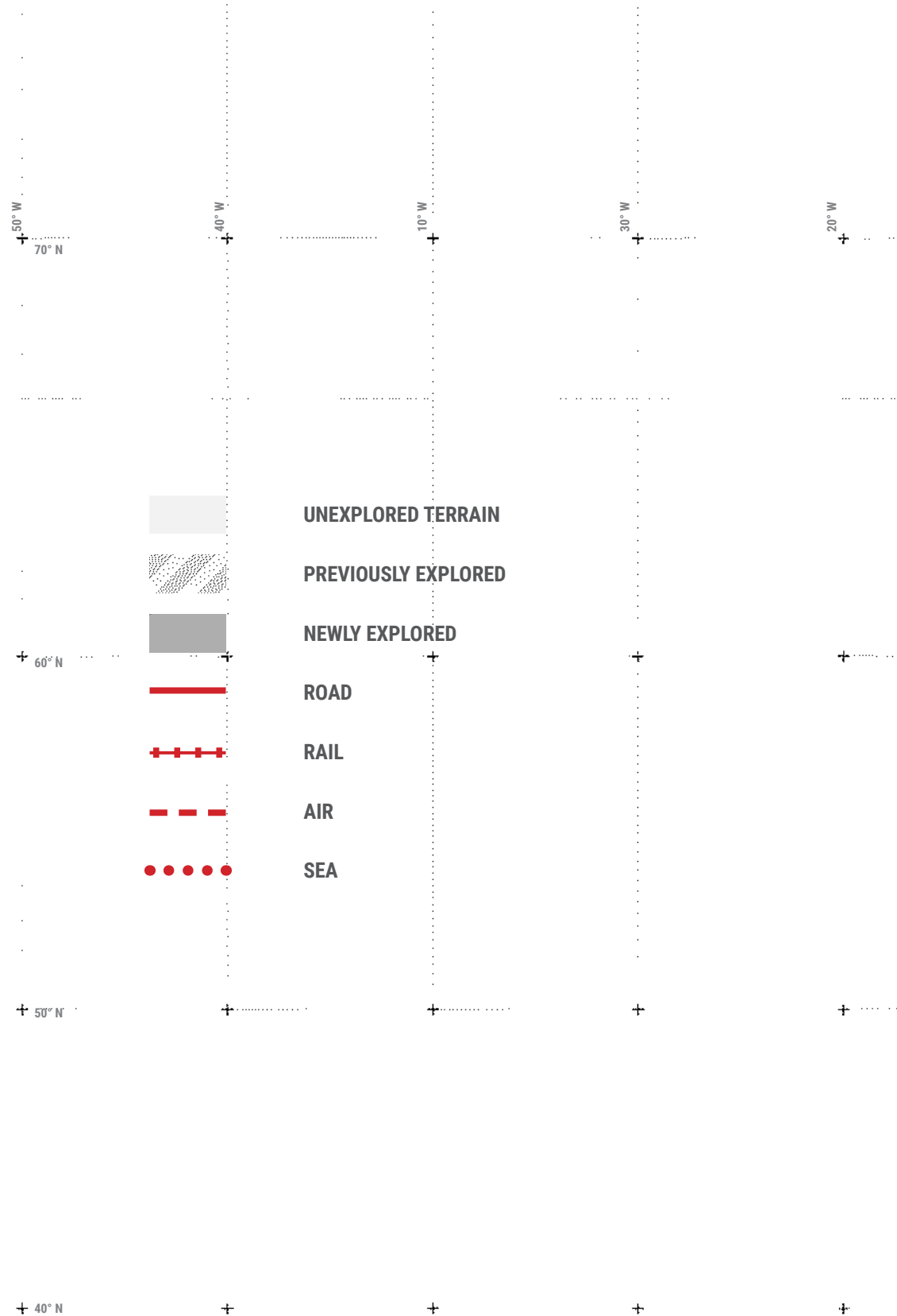
Thank you to my professors and peers at the University of Florida --Bradley Walters, Mark McGlothlin, Jeff Carney, Jason Alread, Charlie Hailey, Marla Stephens, Ray Wincko, and others-- who directly and indirectly contributed to this award, and my growth as a designer and a human...

Thank you to Michael Pardek, SMMA, and all else who've enabled the Lyceum Fellowship to be an impactful vehicle since 1986...

Thank you to Elizabeth Gray, Alan Organschi, Marlon Blackwell, and the rest of the jurors for their contributions to this competition and beyond...

Thank you to those at the Envision Resilience Challenge, who enabled the competition entry to participate in a wider, real-world discourse...

Thank you to Grandma, and the rest of my family and friends, for your unwaning support and encouragement. Words cannot express how fortunate I am to have you...



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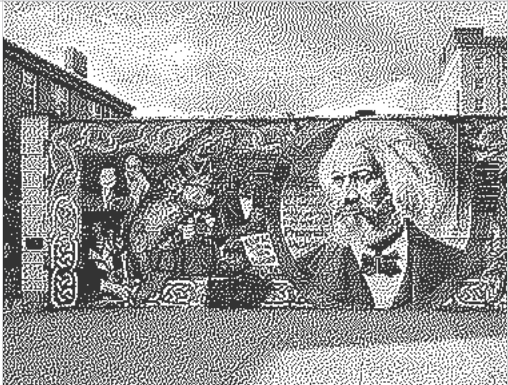


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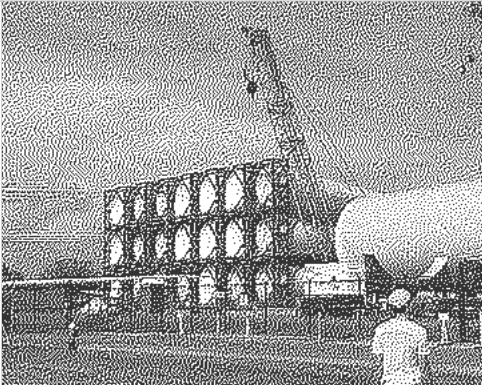
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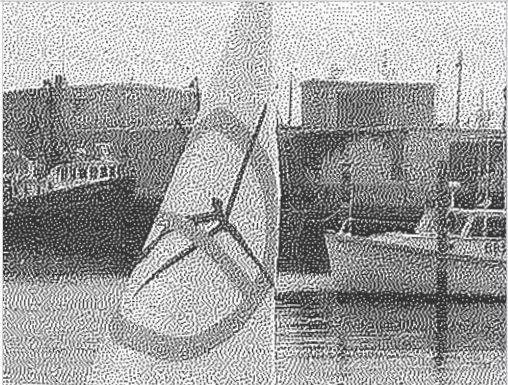
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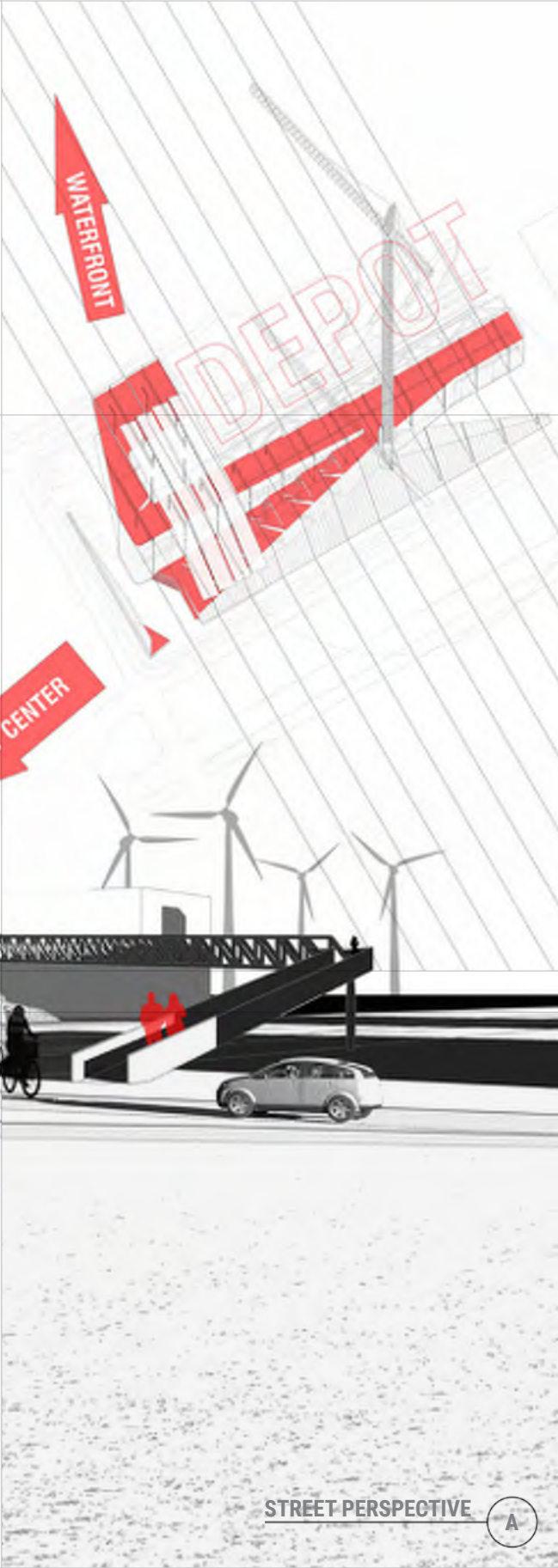
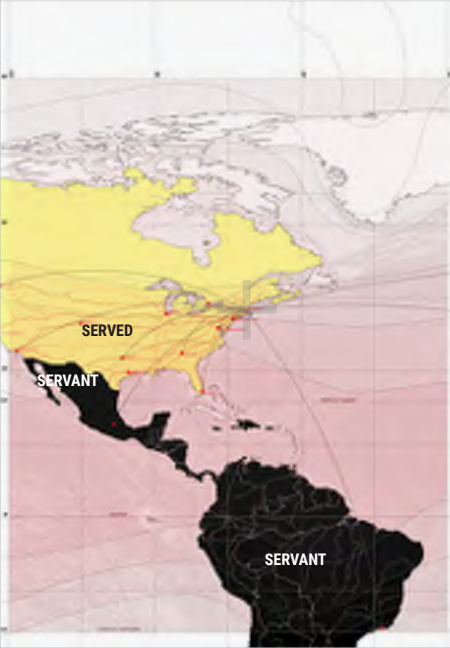
"Keep Jobs in New Bedford"



An Excluded Populace



Ideological Division





EXPERIENTIAL SECTION

B

New Bedford's latest industrial ventures place it at the forefront of the American offshore wind energy enterprise, posing simultaneous threats and opportunities. It will further diversify New Bedford's working community with white-collar workers; but how will this affect the established populace/culture?

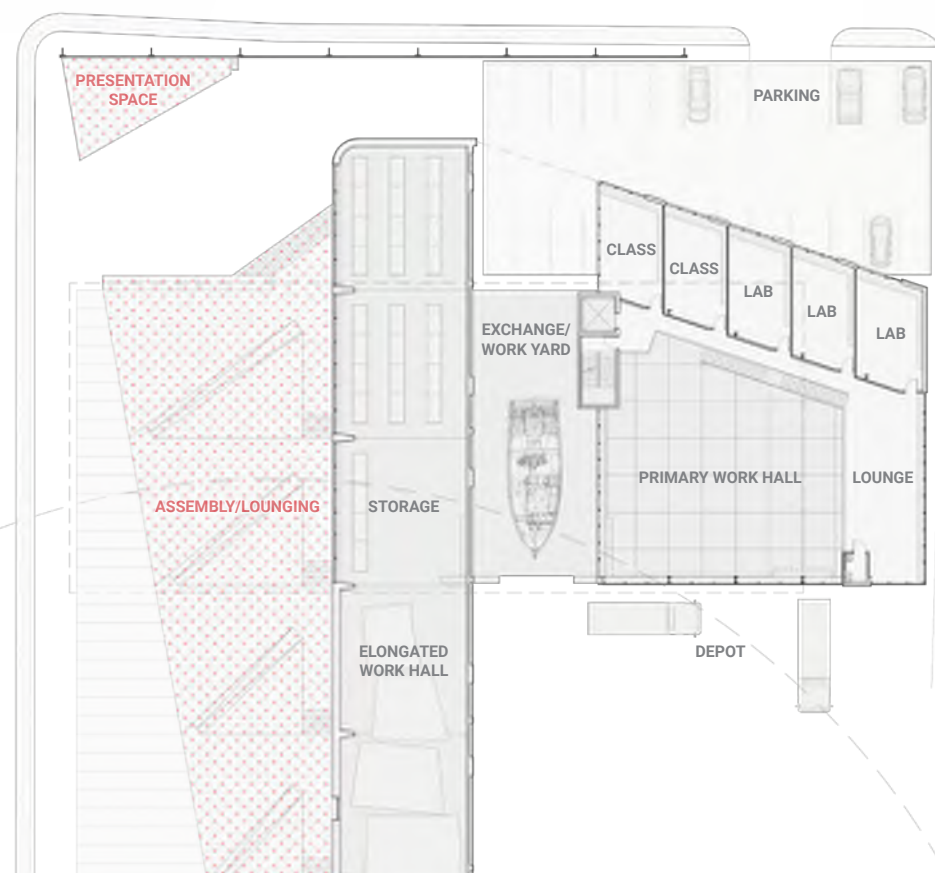
This controversy depicts a recurring dilemma with democratically transitioning toward a more sustainable society —a **majority has not bought in**. While ideas and technologies for sustainable construction practices are plentiful, their implementations are rare and their environmental benefits are negligible at such small scales. We continually choose the damaging but familiar out of an ironic sense of self-preservation; we sacrifice the the long-term, less tangible future to preserve the immediate and more tangible. To develop a regenerative Architecture, one must address this dilemma.

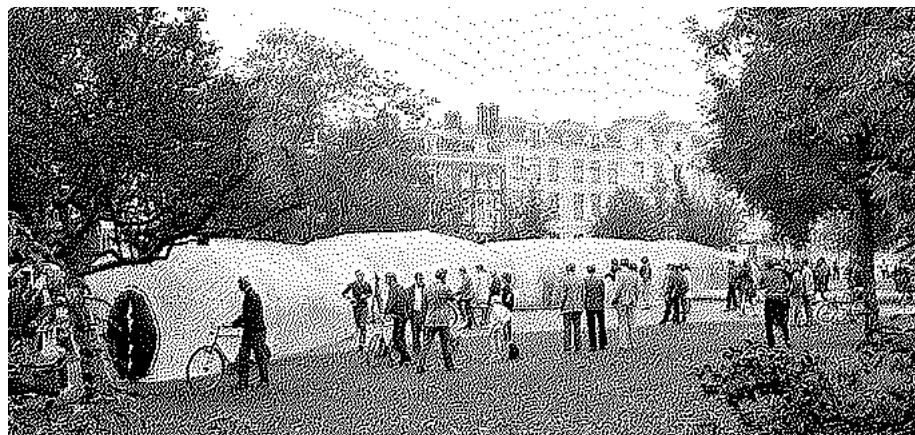
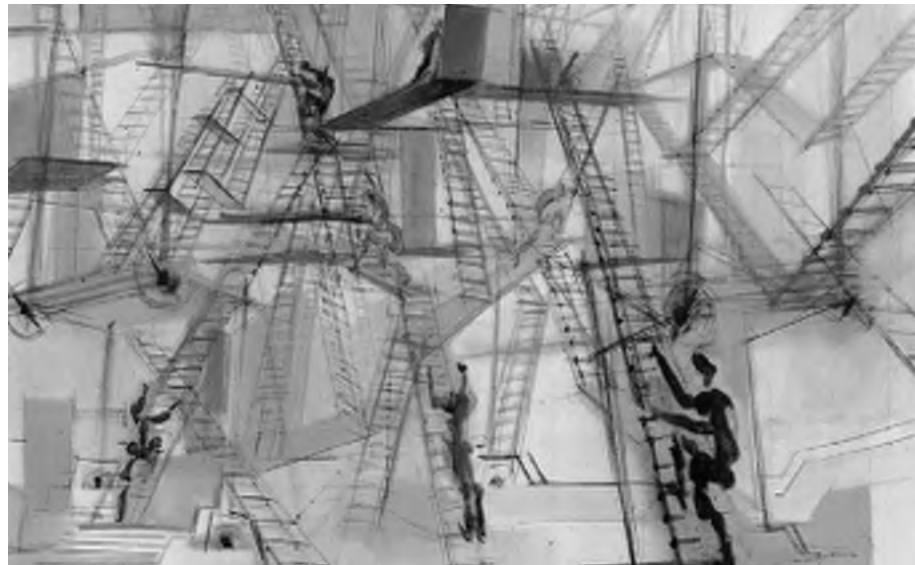
Can an architectural intervention focus New Bedford's dense, mostly unified cultural context into positive change? This project hypothesizes that **colliding New Bedford's now detached public and industrial realms** could encourage buy-in to an ecologically sustainable culture.

The building superimposes industrial and public programs: **a repurposing center** for decommissioned turbine parts, vessels and similar equipment, and **an industrial "park"**, providing flexible exhibition and assembly spaces to the city. This transparent relationship between otherwise juxtaposing programs yields a symbiotic exchange. Nearby workers gain more transparent working conditions to mitigate threats of exploitation, and the city gains a central communal space, reclaiming a piece of the waterfront. From this space, residents can observe the building's activity, the wind turbines' construction, and exchange with neighbors —all first-hand stimuli to **encourage New Bedford to unify around the regenerative activity around it**.

The building communicates, through example, that a regenerative future demands us to accept the necessity of difficult change, think innovatively, and unify. There will be discomfort, there will be sacrifice, there will be difficulty... but maybe New Bedford can guide us.

PLAN (LEVEL 2)





(Top) Constant. *Mobile Ladder Labyrinth*, 1967. (Collection Kunstmuseum Den Haag, NL).

(Bottom) Pieter Boersma. Photograph of "Pneutube", by Eventstructure Research Group. Frederiksplein, Amsterdam (1969)

My graduate thesis project, *Agitating the Residual Collective: the Interchange Hotel*, spawned from a general curiosity for American design conventions and standardizations (how we build), and why we don't seem to question or challenge them very often despite the slew of negatives associated with them that Lewis Tsurumaki and Lewis describe in *Manual of Biogenic House Sections*. The exploration found this observed apathy across scales, from the detail, to the city, to the culture, eventually expanding/shifting in interest to question "what", in addition to "how", we build. The project commanded that I delve into American and urban planning history, revealing some causes and effects of the apathy. Throughout the research process I frequently, surprisingly, encountered the Netherlands –from what I gathered, a literal and figurative battleground for independent and forward-thinking ideas, now many urban planners' Mecca. This ideological non-conformity traces back to at least the Eighty Years' War, in which the Dutch, motivated by political and religious freedom, declared independence from the Spanish. I was particularly struck by Dutch provocateurs and activists between the 1960s and 1980s, when Constant Nieuwenhuys and the Situationists, Rem Koolhaas, Eventstructure Research Group, and others emerged and Amsterdam's people successfully resisted the urban planning trends which plagued most American cities after World War II. Since then, the Dutch have demonstrated solutions to rising sea levels, engineered efficient, historic fabric-preserving transit infrastructure, and consistently ranked as one of the world's

happiest countries. The Dutch example rejects design as a practice of repeated assumptions and conventions; instead, it demonstrates how inquisition, criticism, and experimentation yield value to designers' stakeholders.

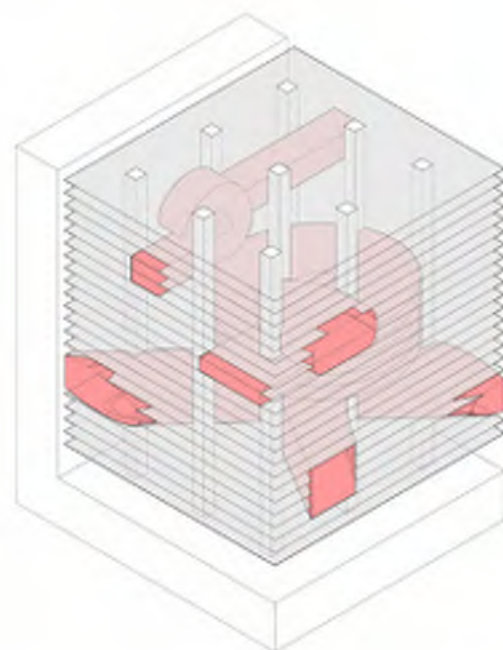
The primary goal of this fellowship is to experience, document, and reflect upon the aspects of Dutch culture I've romanticized. To what extent is my assessment accurate or inaccurate? How does my assessment manifest in cities? In buildings? In materials? In people? How would I compare and contrast the Dutch to similar, proximal cultures through this lens? Additionally, I would like to reflect on my thesis project's conclusions, which (inspired by Constant and the Situationists) problematized the typical American city's diluted public realm/ experience for how it inhibits inhabitants from encountering surprise and spontaneity. How can my itinerary balance the structured/prescribed with the improvised/unknown? How might I document and reflect upon such experiences so that I can compare the prescribed and the improvised?

My cultural fascination and the fellowship's long duration suggest that I should attempt to immerse. I propose renting a long-term accommodation in Utrecht, a medium-sized city, known for its universities and cultural amenities. It seems to host a more permanent populace than Amsterdam, which is losing locals to high housing costs, and seems a more manageable size to plant roots in the community. It is also only about a 25 minute

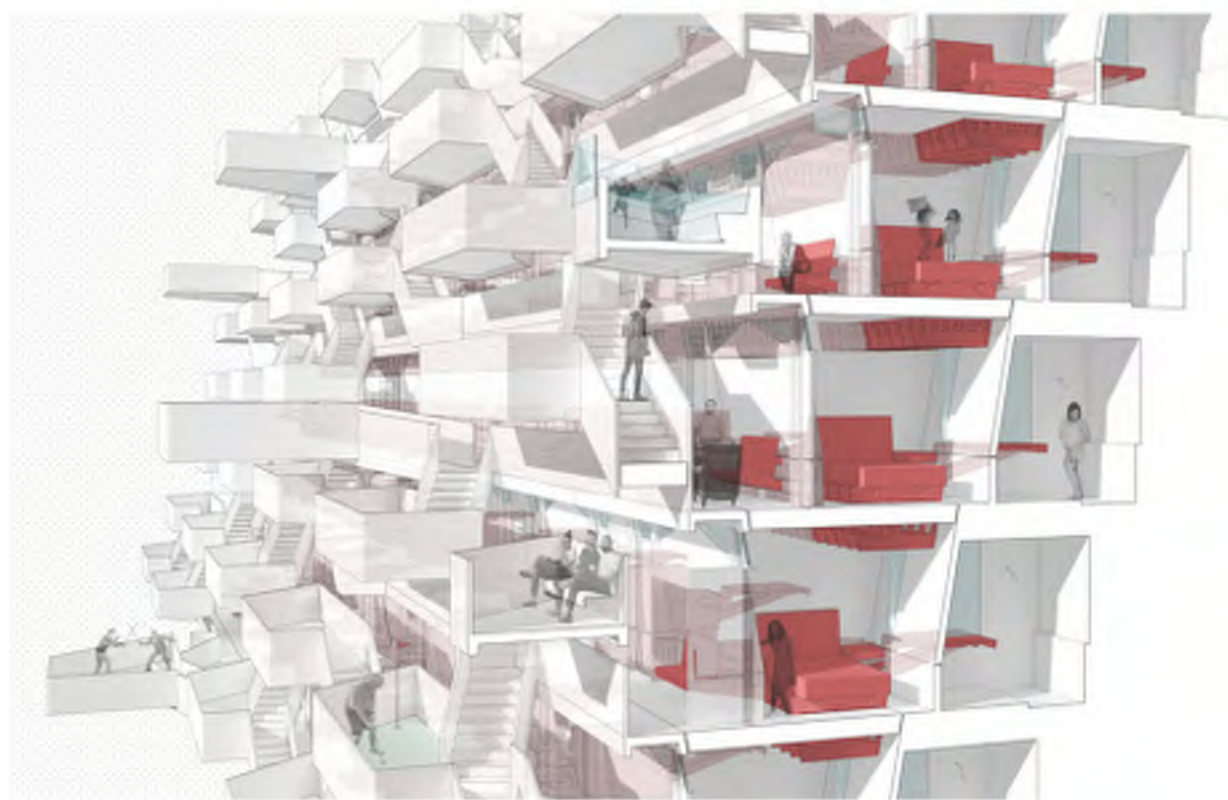
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train ride to Amsterdam, and as the center of the Netherlands' rail network, it's a natural hub to explore the Netherlands and neighboring countries from. I'd like to start participating in Utrecht's community life by taking Dutch classes, frequenting a gym, buying a used bike, perhaps taking a woodworking course, but anticipating more forms of participation to come.

To complement my Dutch adventures I propose venturing out of the Netherlands on five shorter excursions. I'm interested in comparing and contrasting Dutch culture with proximal cultures (Germany, Denmark, Sweden, and Norway). In addition to these, I propose visiting friends a bit further (Dublin and Vienna) to test how locals' knowledge and experience might generate improvisation and spontaneity that a foreigner could never prescribe. I anticipate using photography and sketching as mediums for documentation while formatting and writing could be activated to compare and contrast experiences and to reflect. It could be interesting to complement a regimented (daily or weekly) journal/sketchbook with more spontaneous, spur of the moment series too, as the whole trip is attempting to do.



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(Left) Tres Grande Bibliotheque,
designed by OMA. Isometric by author

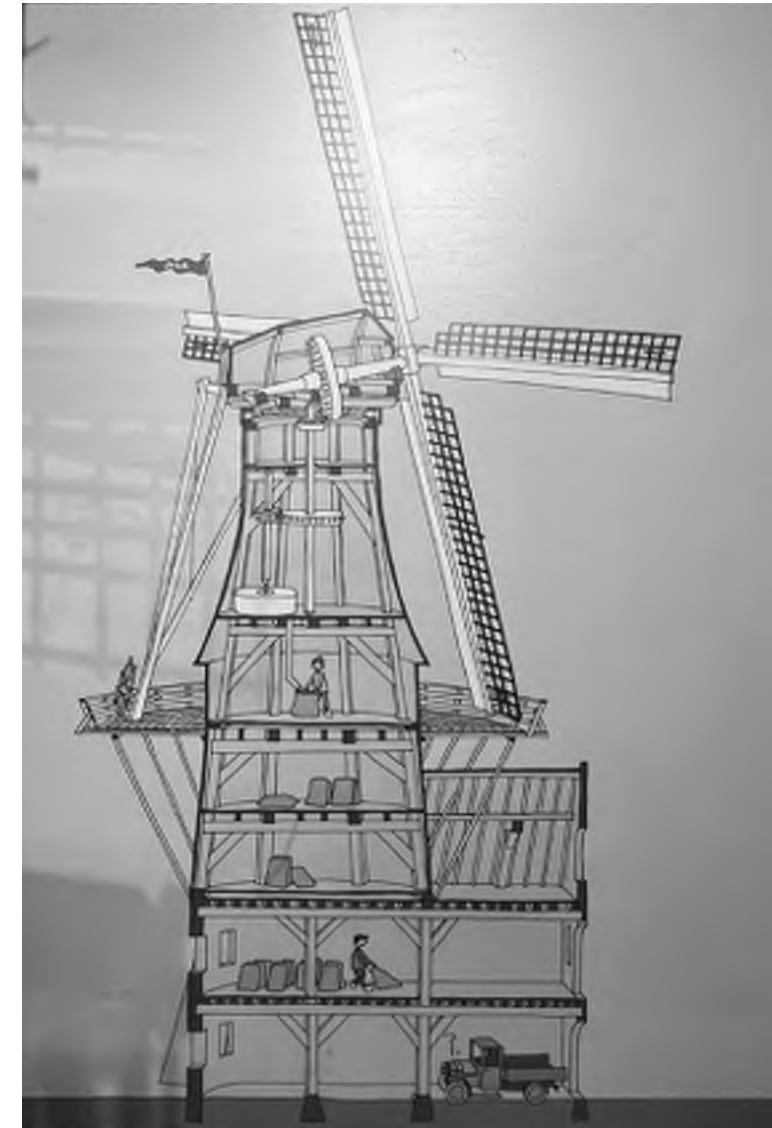
(Right) *Interchange Hotel* (Room Block),
designed by Author. Perspectival Section
Drawing by author

In preparing for this adventure, I've become quite fond of Anthony Bourdain's TV shows. I didn't find any filmed in the Netherlands, but his attitude, his disinterest in the popular and mainstream in favor his eternal search for the true essence of the places he visited, for "authenticity" resonated with me. I developed a similar attitude while working on my graduate thesis. One day, Mark McGlothlin, my thesis chair, questioned why the scabies in my drawing were so young, so beautiful, so perfect... I realized that I had never thought about this before, in fact I usually abstracted my scabies into silhouettes. For whatever reason, I didn't that time, and now I can't unsee it - the idealization and glamorization that we fabricate when we design. In reality, people (and buildings) age, fall out of shape, break; but we ignore the ugliness, maybe clients don't want to think about it. Maybe we don't. Since that conversation I, like Bourdain, have been much more interested in his search for authenticity, whatever that means. I bought his book right before I left. I've been enjoying it even more than his shows so far. Maybe it'll serve as a reminder to think about what Bourdain would do throughout this journey.



The only relevant experience I can compare this to is the semester I spent studying abroad in Vicenza, Italy. While I wasn't actively reflecting on my observations, as I am now, this experience is bringing me back there. For example, our first morning in Haarlem, Marla and I decided to go for a stroll to explore our new home. I guess we unconsciously defaulted to our time in Italy, where the Vicentines (and their dogs) peer pressured us into dressing up for any and all outings. I wore my not-yet-broken-in boots and Marla wore here heel boots, this is how you're supposed to dress in Europe. Fast forward an hour and I'm nursing some fresh blisters on my heels while Marla struggles to stay upright on the cobblestone. I couldn't stop fixating on her heels' clacking, which seemed to echo through the narrow streets and drown out any other sound. We found a cafe where I could give my raw heels a break, just as it started to drizzle on our porous clothes. Sitting at the window, we got to people watch for a little while and conclude that our European fashion sense was maybe more exclusive to Italy. Everyone dressed like they got their whole outfit at REI, like they were on their way to go hiking. Down jackets, rugged pants, and sneakers kept them dry, warm and comfortable. Practical.

Since that walk, I see it everywhere. They've reconsidered things we wouldn't think to question -the umbrella, giving it a more elliptical shape and moving the handle off-center to better cover the holder while staying out of others' ways -the french fry (or friet), freshly extruded, fried, and salted seconds before you hold it, correctly served with mayo (which they've also reimagined) -the edge between land and water... All reminders of why I wanted to come here in the first place, I guess I just didn't think I'd find it outside their buildings and museums.













(Left) *Public Port*. Rotterdam, NL.

(Right) *Public Toilet*. Amsterdam, NL.



(Left) *Intentional Weathering*. De Bijenkorf Mall, Rotterdam, NL. Designed by Marcel Breuer, 1974.



(Right) *Friet Design*. Utrecht, NL.



Before coming here, I encountered stereotypes of the Dutch being "cheap". I can see where it comes from, in the limited encounters I've had with the locals so far (with the man at the Vodafone store and our Dutch teacher), conversations do seem to steer towards money. Walking into this store called "Action", kind of like a dollar store, was a spectacle. They have a weird attitude towards credit cards too; I learned the hard way at the grocery store. But I don't think I agree with the stereotype. Apparently their credit card hesitancy descends from cultural values which dissuade debt. From what I've seen so far, they've faced adversity and constraints for centuries; they've adapted to get the most out of everything and to identify the essential. Coming from the States, I'm accustomed to disposability, highly processed products, and waste. We've lost touch with quality, with reality, with the process, smell, and taste behind a fresh loaf of bread. You can call them cheap, but I think "resourceful" or "sustainable" is more accurate.

EXCURSION 01

- A. 10/17; Brussels, Belgium
- FLIXBUS B810; Amsterdam Sloterdijk to Brussels-North Station
- B. 10/17 - 10/20; Vienna, Austria
- OBB NJ40425; Brussels North Station to Vienna Central Station
- C. 10/20 - 10/23; Prague, Czechia
- FLIXBUS 060; Vienna Erdberg (VIB) to Prague HLN
- D. 10/22; Kutná Hora, Czechia
- ČD; Prague HLN to Kutná Hora HLN to Prague HLN
- E. 10/23; Amsterdam, Netherlands
- EASYJET EJU7928; PRG to AMS





(Left) Grand Place. Brussels, BE.

(Right) *Guten Tag*. OBB Nightjet, outside Salzburg, AU.

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(Left) *Tradition*. Vienna, AU.

(Right) *Secession*. "Secession Building". Vienna, AU. Designed by Joseph Maria Olbrich, 1898.





(Left) *Renegades 1/2*. Rooftop
Remodeling Falkestrasse. Vienna, AU.
Designed by Coop Himmelb(l)au, 1988.

(Right) *Renegades 2/2*. ZWE Jazz Club,
Vienna, AU.



(Left) View from WU Wien's Campus, Vienna, AU.

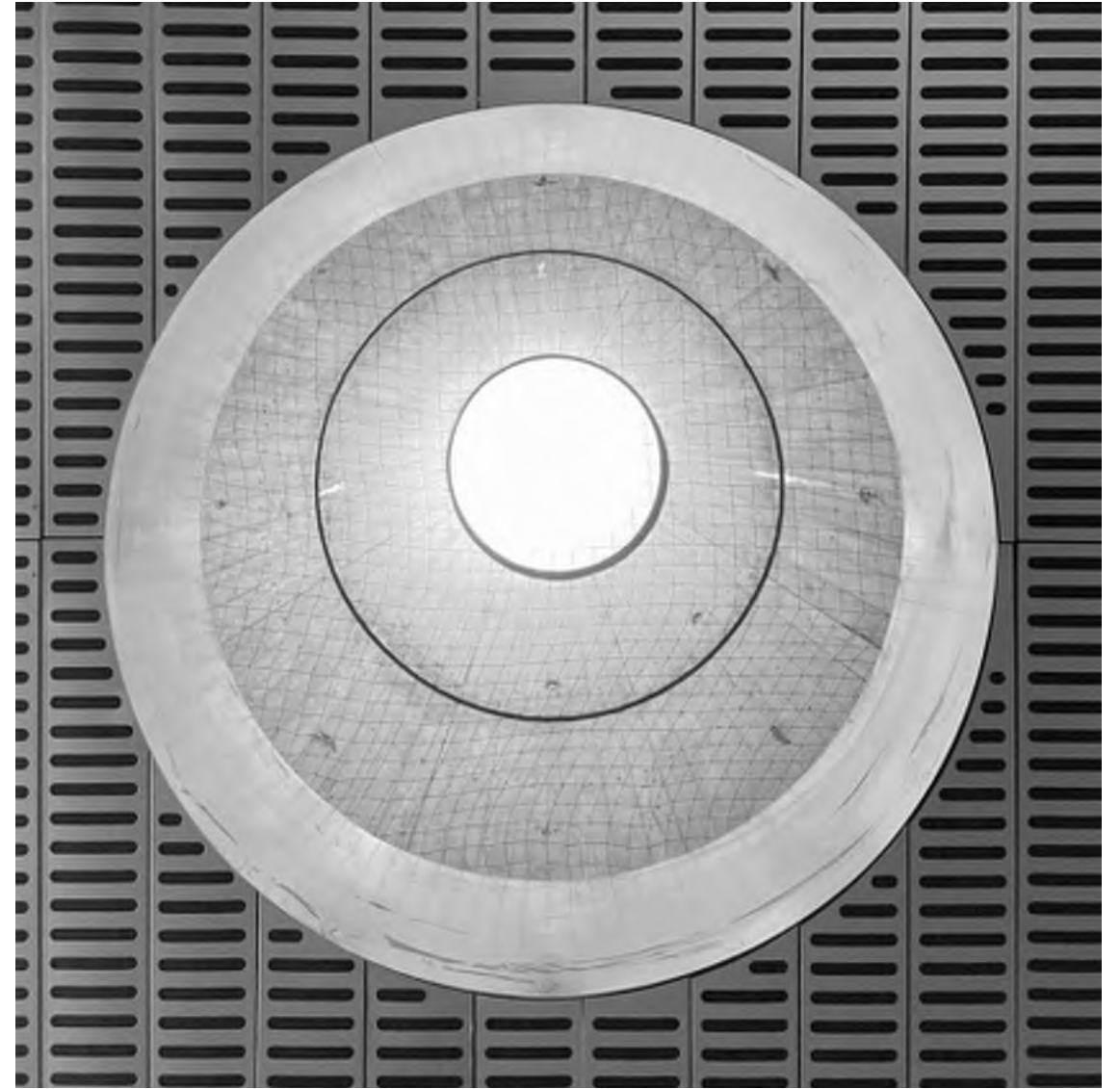
(Right) Library and Learning Centre University of Economics. WU Wien, Vienna, AU. Designed by Zaha Hadid, 2013.





(Left) *Liminal 1/2*. View from WU Wien's Campus, Vienna, AU.

(Right) *Liminal 2/2*. View from Viertel Zwei, Vienna, AU.



(Left) *Sky 1/2*. View from Viertel Zwei, Vienna, AU.

(Right) *Sky 2/2*. View from Metro Station Near Viertel Zwei, Vienna, AU.











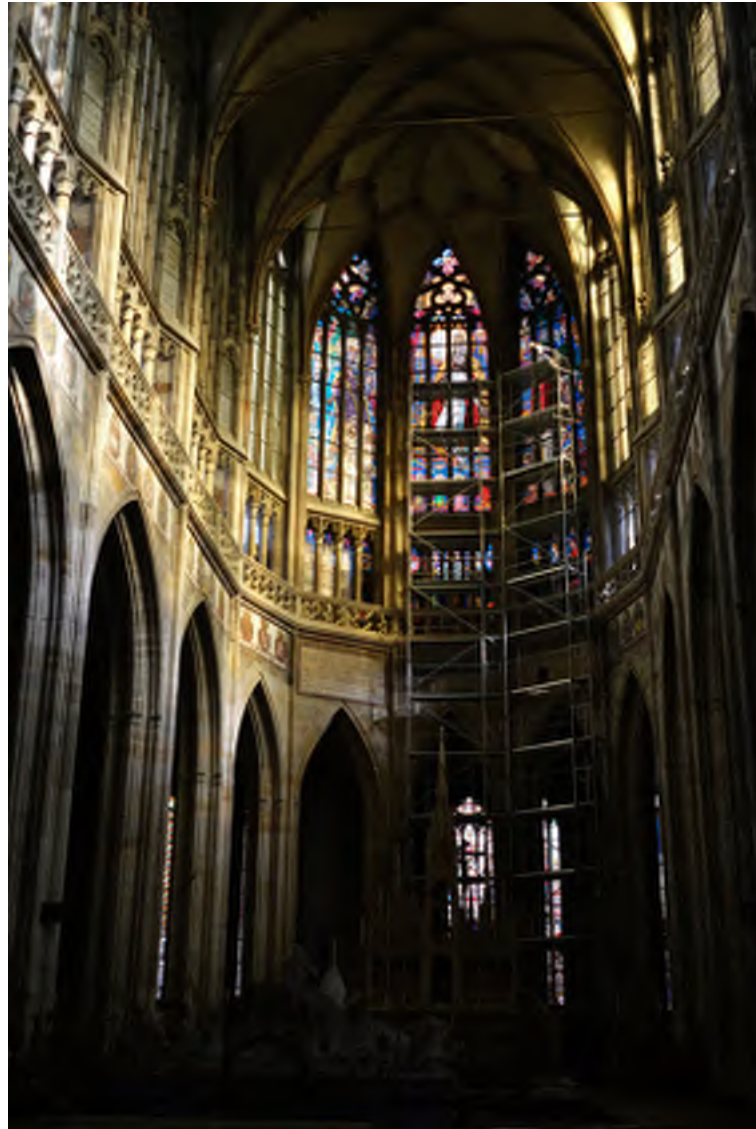


(Left) *Kafkaesque 1/2*. Prague, CZ.

(Right) *Kafkaesque 2/2*. Kutná Hora, CZ.











(Left) *Ground*. Prague, CZ.

(Right) "The Dancing House". Prague, CZ. Designed by Frank Gehry, 1996.









One of America's coolest qualities is its diversity. It's truly a melting pot of people and cultures; I never really noticed before travelling though. But unfortunately, we don't seem to be leveraging our diversity as well as we once did. I unpacked this more in my thesis, but in short, diversity enables us to share wildly different ideas and perspectives. I believe the best ideas are born of this cross-pollination. But we're squandering it, as our built environment grows ever more fragmented. Now it seems more commonplace to fixate on our differences instead of celebrating them.

While the Netherlands lacks the States' diversity numerically, they're doing so much more with what they have. If my Dutch class is any projection, the country is catching up to us numerically too. In our class of fourteen, only two of us share the same nationality - Marla and I. I think we lack the solidarity and community that are not just encouraged, but normalized here. For instance, our Dutch class takes place in this building called the "buurthuis" (neighborhood house). Tomas, our docent (teacher), explained that this building doesn't really have an explicit purpose, it's just there for whoever wants to pop in and talk, play a board game, drink some coffee, take a class, all of those things or none of those things. It consumes quite a bit of frontage in the heart of Amsterdam's Jordaan neighborhood, but people use it! It's a nice place to have. And then there are the markets.





(Left) Markthal. Rotterdam, NL.
Designed by MVRDV, 2014.

(Middle) Haarlem Saturday Market.
Grote Markt, Haarlem, NL.

(Right) IJ-Hallen Flea Market.
Amsterdam, NL.



(Left) Halve Van Haarlem 2024. Grote Markt, Haarlem, NL.

(Right) Haarlem Kerstmarkt 2024. Grote Markt, Haarlem, NL.

They seem to celebrate and invite others' differences. One day our class met at this cafe. We found out that this cafe is entirely staffed by refugees, although they weren't very comfortable with that word, "refugee". Refugee has a temporary connotation, the cafe sees their staff as much more permanent, like a family. We ate very well that afternoon too. This is a very simple but concrete example that corroborates my belief. "A Beautiful Mess" -what a perfect name.

I learned that this openness and curiosity extends far further back than this current refugee diaspora too, to colonial times. While the modern-day Dutch will be quick to express shame in their history as a colonial power, it seems like they were as or more interested in intangible resources -what they could learn from those they encountered. Take the now world-famous Delft blue ceramicware for example, which they learned from East Asian civilizations.









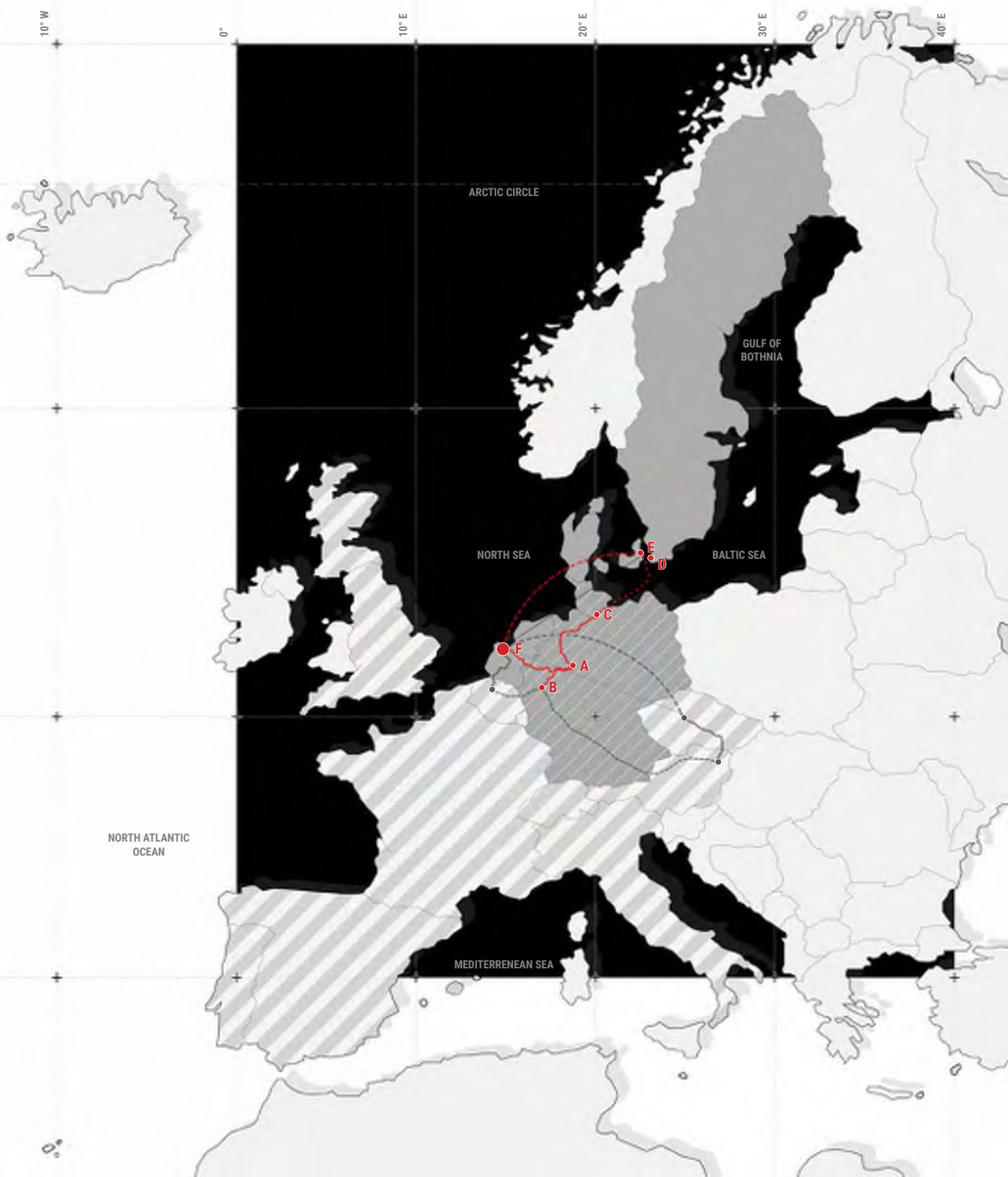
(Left) *Outside Influence* (1/2),
MJ Lenderman at the Bitterzoet,
Amsterdam, NL.



(Right) *Outside Influence* (2/2),
Amsterdam, NL.

EXCURSION 02

- A. 10/31 - 11/04; **Paderborn, Germany**
 - FLIXBUS 068; Amsterdam Sloterdijk to Duisburg HBF
 - ICE 941; to Hamm HBF
 - RB 89; to Paderborn HBF
- B. 11/01; **Cologne, Germany**
 - CAR; Paderborn to Cologne to Paderborn
- C. 11/04 - 11/05; **Hamburg, Germany**
 - FLIXBUS N110; Paderborn Maspernplatz to Hamburg Central Bus Station
- D. 11/05; **Malmö, Sweden**
 - FINNLINES; Travemünde - Malmö
- E. 11/05 - 11/10; **Copenhagen, Denmark**
 - ÖRESUNDSTÅG; Malmö Centralstation to Copenhagen Central Station
- F. 11/10; **Amsterdam, Netherlands**
 - KLM KL1276; CPH to AMS





(Left) *Halloween at the Pub.* Paderborn
DL.



(Right) *Luftmine.* Paderborn, DL.



(Left) *Fachwerk*, Paderborn DL.

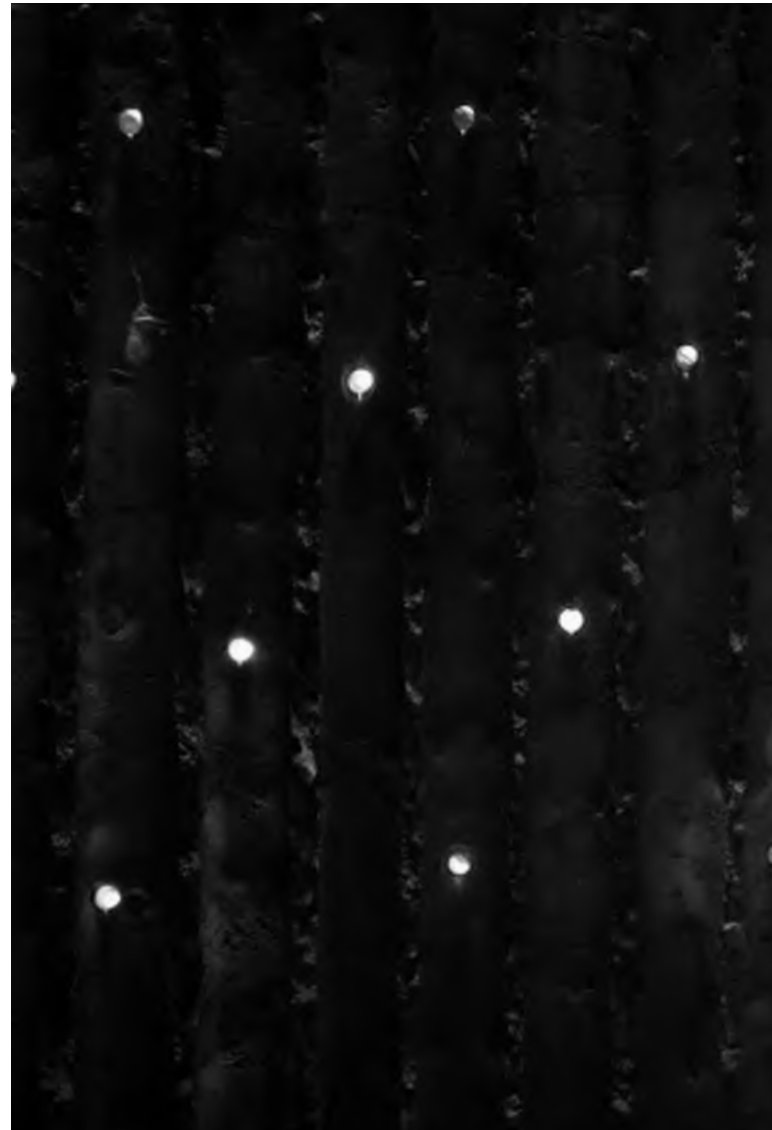
(Right) *Mario Kart*. Paderborn, DL. Photo
by Jenny Saporowski







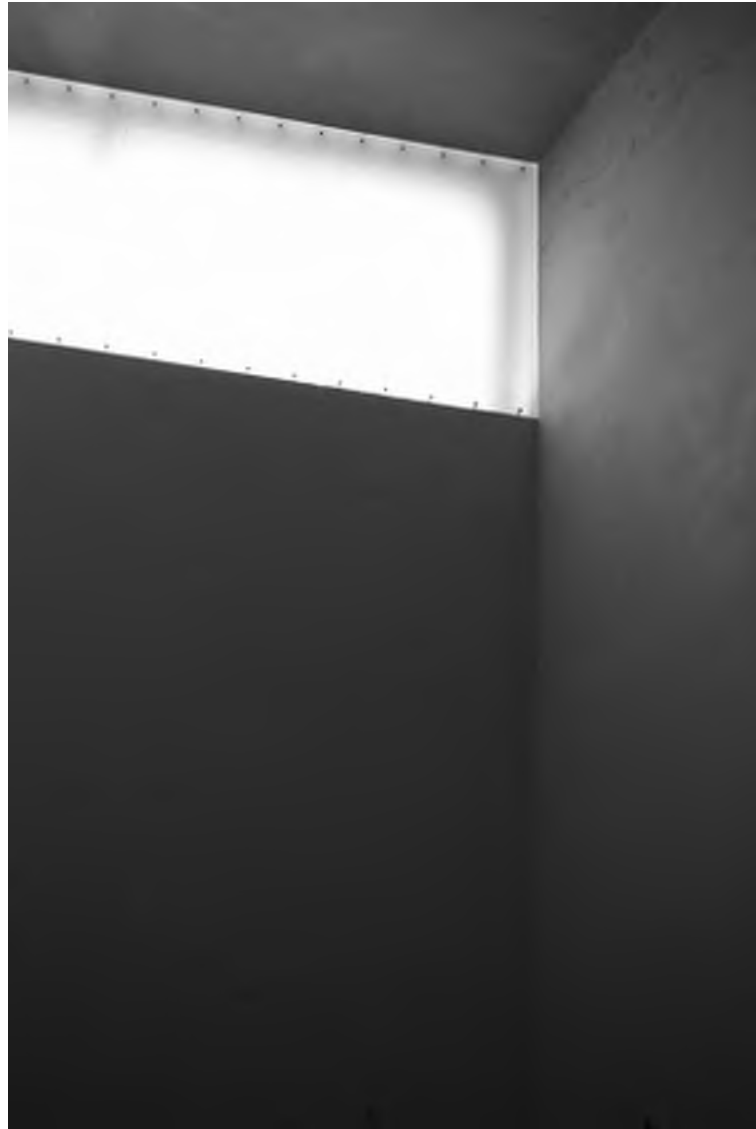
















Schweinshaxe, Cologne, DL.

The Pader, Paderborn, DL. Photo by Nico Bischof



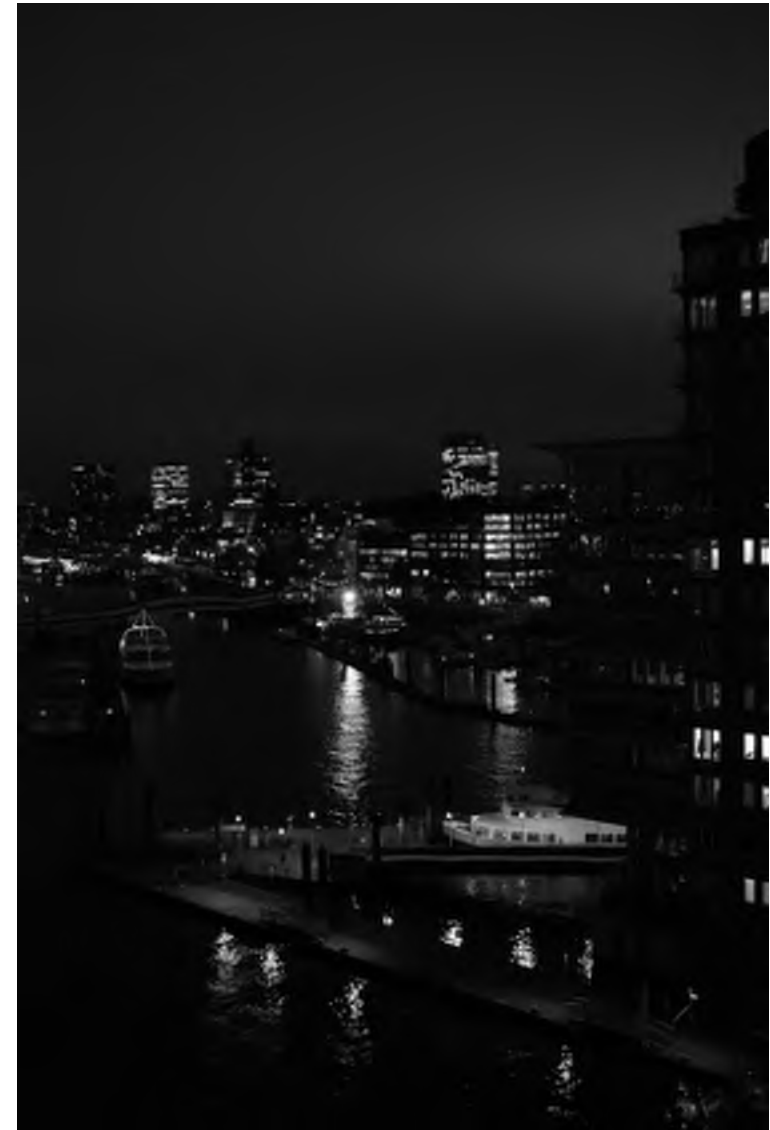
Binnenhafen, Hamburg, DL.

Elbphilharmonie Hamburg, Hamburg, DL.
Designed by Herzog & de Meuron, 2016.







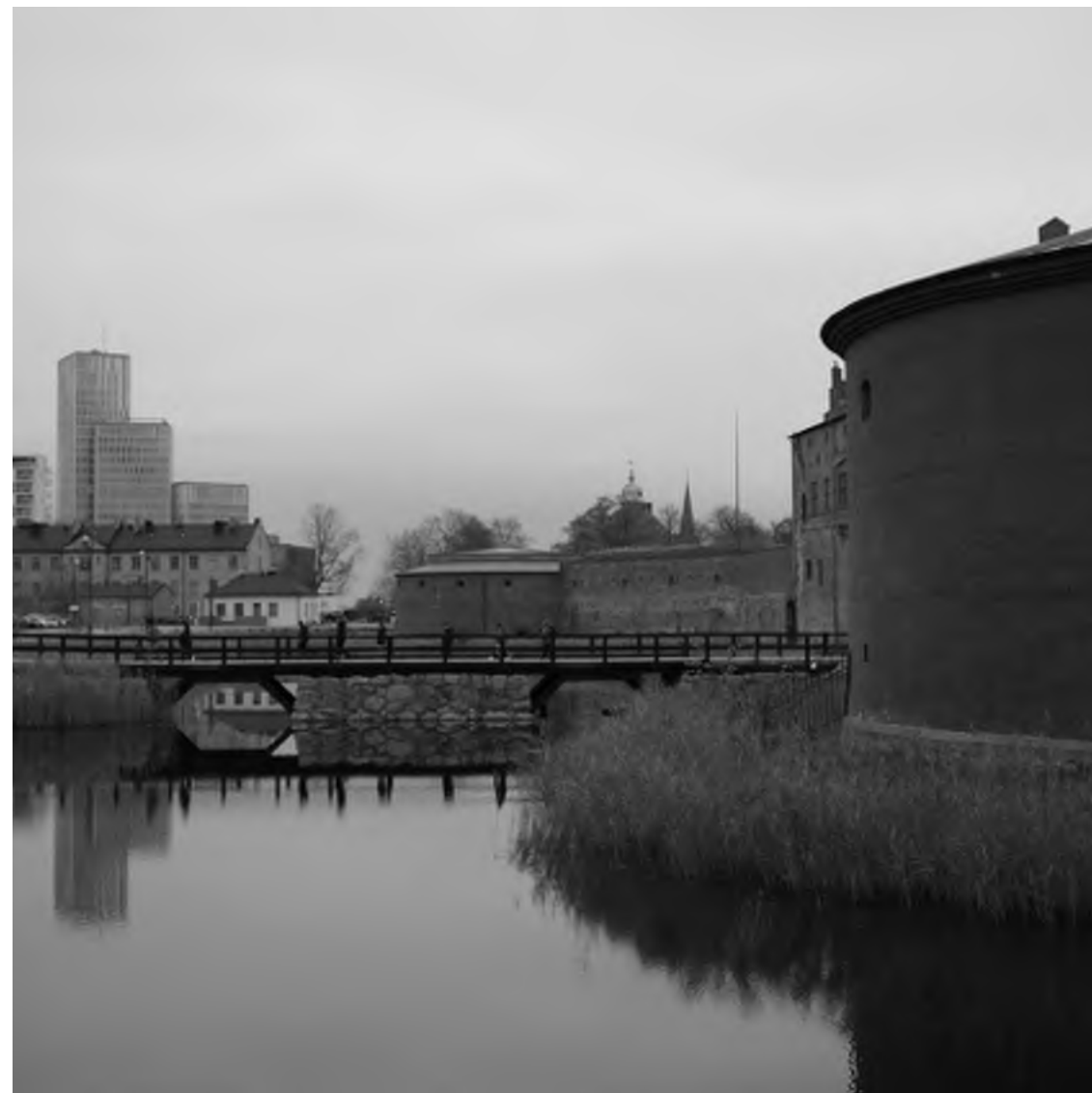






(Left) *War and Waffles*. Feldstraße
Bunker, Hamburg, DL.

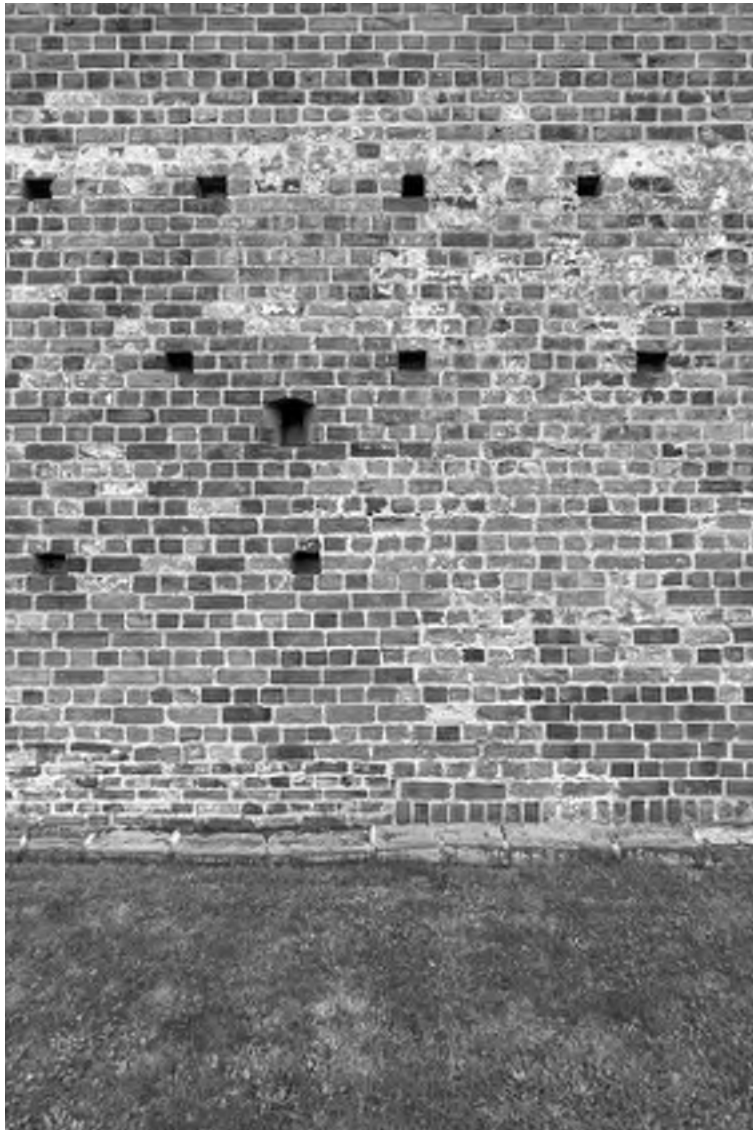
(Right) *Hamburger*, Hamburg, DL.





(Left) Building in Malmö's Lilla Torg, Malmö, SE.

(Right) Malmö Saluhall, Malmö, SE. Designed by Wingårdh Arkitektkontor AB, 2016.





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(Left) Christmas Market. Copenhagen, DK.

(Right) *Nyhavn*, Copenhagen, DK.





(Left) BLOX / DAC, Copenhagen, DK.
Designed by OMA, 2017.

(Right) *Egress*, BLOX / DAC,
Copenhagen, DK. Designed by OMA,
2017.



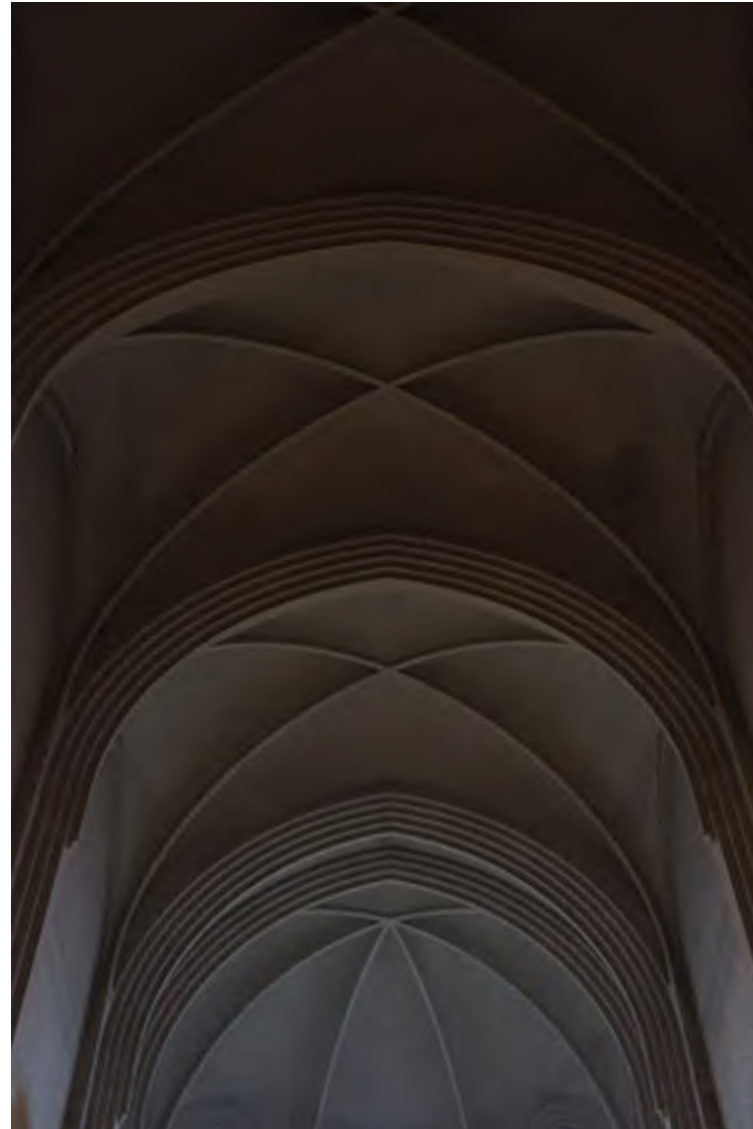
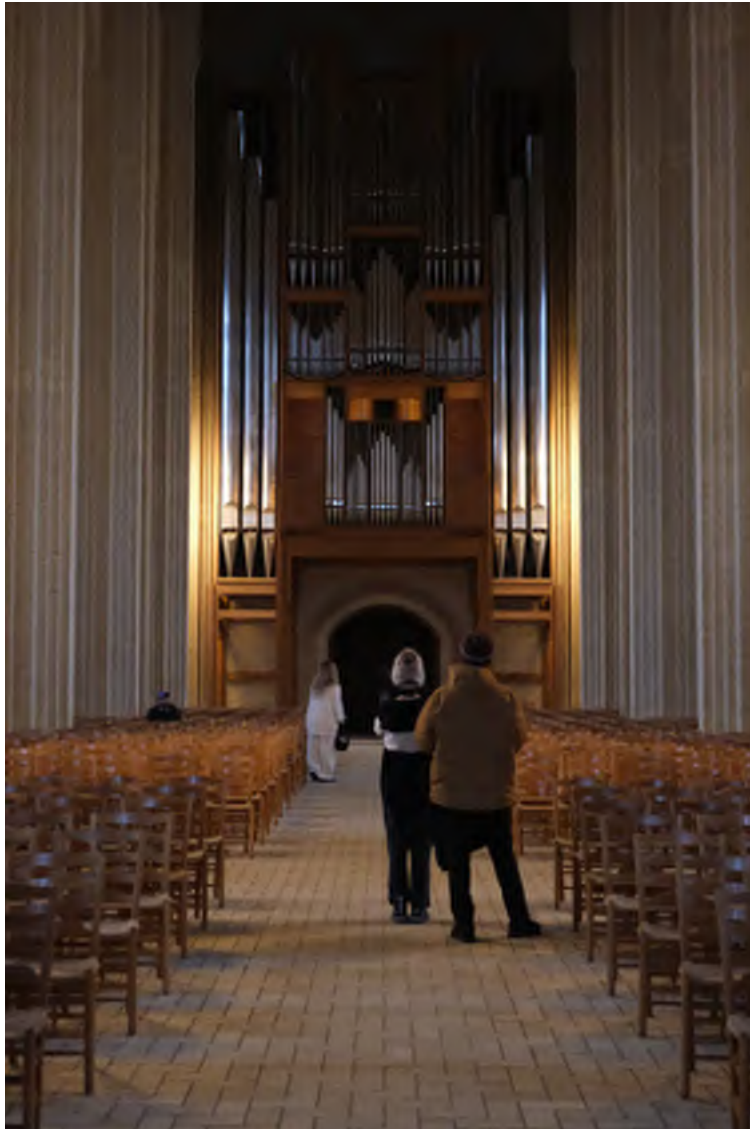
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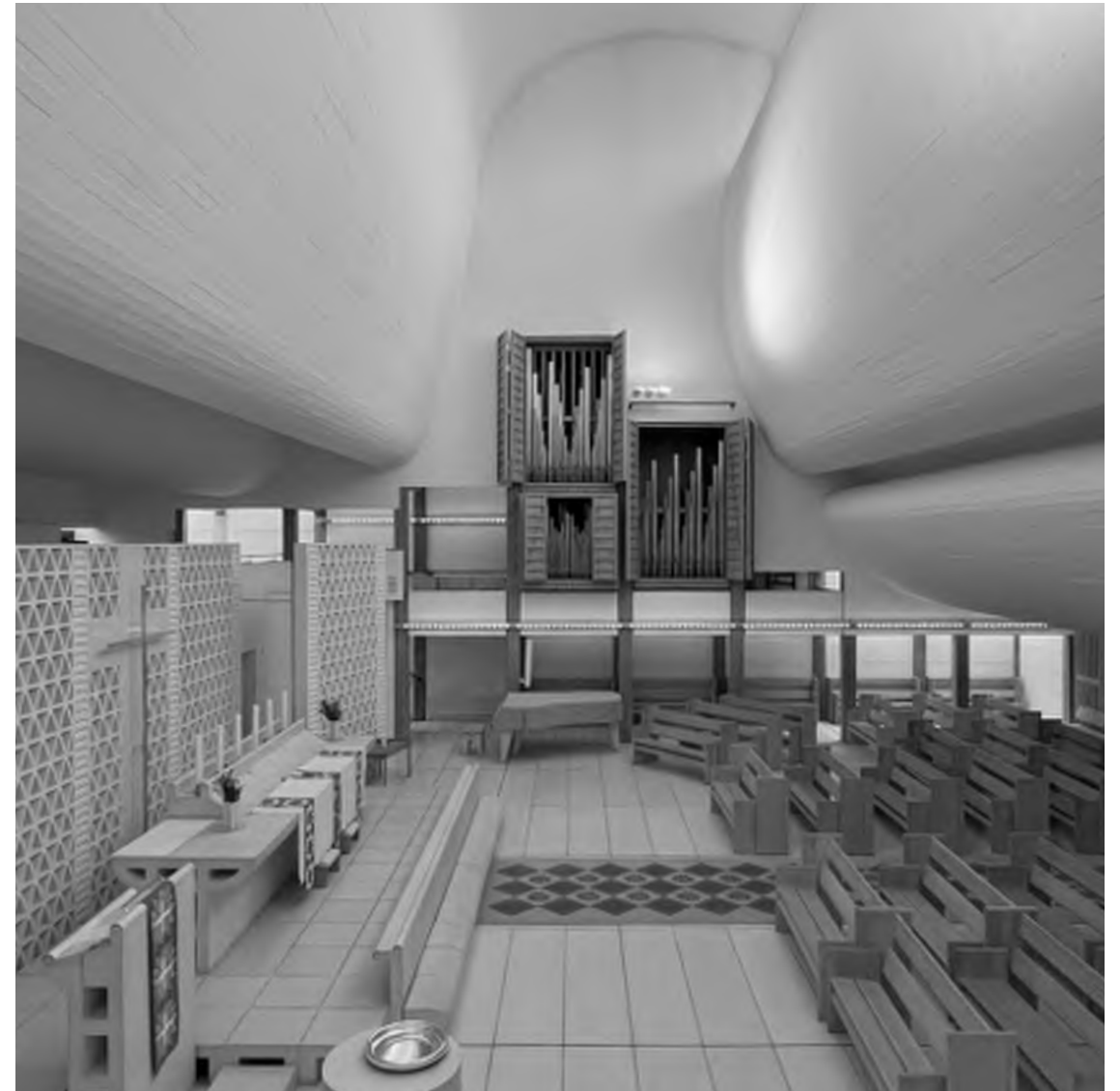


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(Left) *Wood or Stone?* Copenhagen, DK.

(Right) *Noma Projects Pop-Up*,
Copenhagen, DK.















Our apartment overlooks this lovely little courtyard. Recently we discovered that it actually bleeds into an adjacent property, another green space. The cats love it. But displayed there, behind some foliage, is this beautiful old map. At first it's unrecognizable but eventually you see it's the Netherlands, sort of. I don't know when the map was drawn, but when it was, the country was very different. I think most of us associate the Dutch with all this water manipulation and land manipulation shenanigans, but we don't realize the extent of it -how that terraforming process happened slowly, incrementally, over generations. On this map there's a whole body of water between Haarlem and Amsterdam! It's only when looking at a map like this that you realize how far they've come, the power of working incrementally and consistently. This is why I had to come here. The reclamation is amazing, but more so their ability to look beyond the existing, the boundaries, and imagine and realize drastic change. It's uncanny, no one else does this like them. And this attitude, this embrace of the incremental and their insatiable resourcefulness extends way beyond geography.





(Left) *Urinarte*. Amsterdam, NL.



(Right) *Straddle*. Amsterdam, NL.



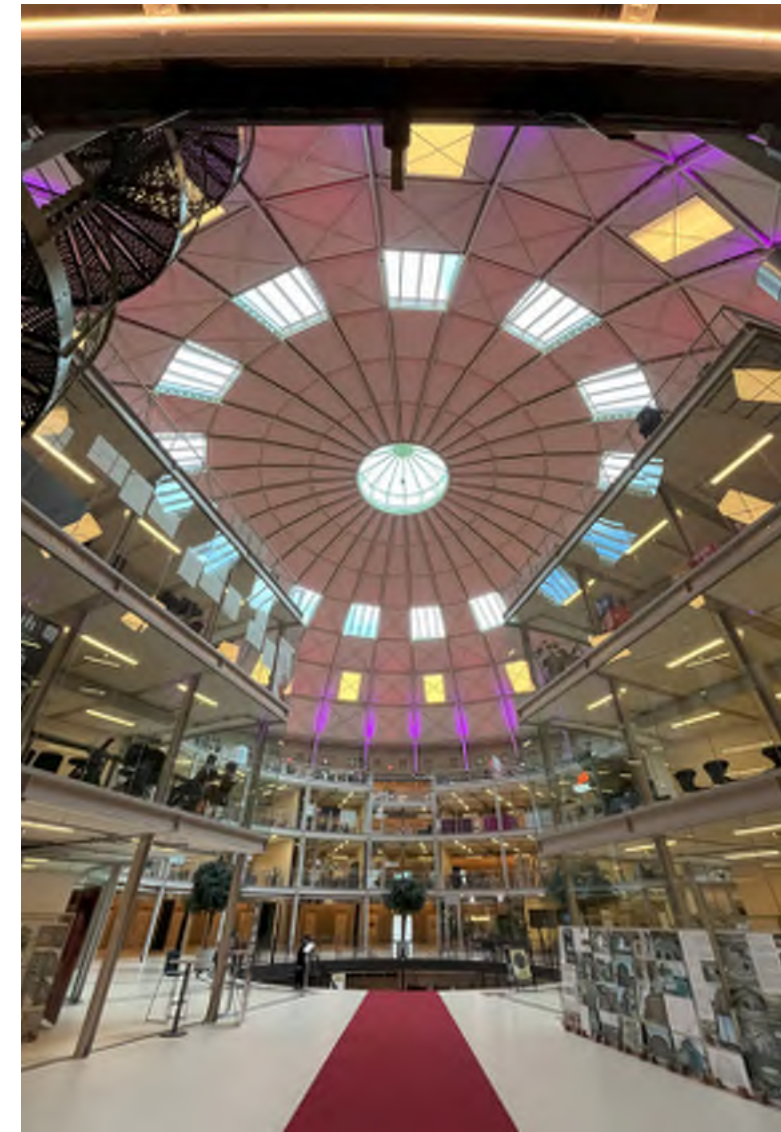
Our apartment building is another lesson. It was recently converted from a University building, in fact it shows up as the University building on Google Maps last I checked. Lewis, Tsurumaki, Lewis and others have illuminated the building industry's tremendous waste and emissions generated. We talk about adaptive reuse as a nebulous idea, a theory. I mean how much sense does it make in the U.S. where we only design new constructions to last about 70 years. Maybe we have to go back to our old, sturdier stock, like the Dutch are doing. It's kind of comical how the more of them that I find, the more juxtaposing the old and new functions become. I haven't found a church-brothel yet (I guess I haven't really been looking) but I've seen a church-hotel, a church-bookstore, and my favorite the Jopen church-brewery in Haarlem. I'm sure a church-brothel isn't far. There's the LocHal library in Tilburg, occupying an old train depot, and the SRH Haarlem University of Applied Sciences' building in Haarlem, occupying an old panopticon prison! And these are only the most memorable ones. I'm sure other designers can relate to the blank page's intimidation. I think a lot of the design process is confronting this, building a momentum of justification against it. But the void still creeps in, it can't be avoided. It seems like the Dutch work around it though on these retrofit projects; the page is never blank this way. While it may give designers less latitude, in my observations these projects demand a finesse and subtlety that, along with the buildings' layers, greatly benefits the space and its experience.





(Left) Market Adapted from Shipyard.
Amsterdam, NL.

(Right) Hotel Adapted from Crane.
Amsterdam, NL.



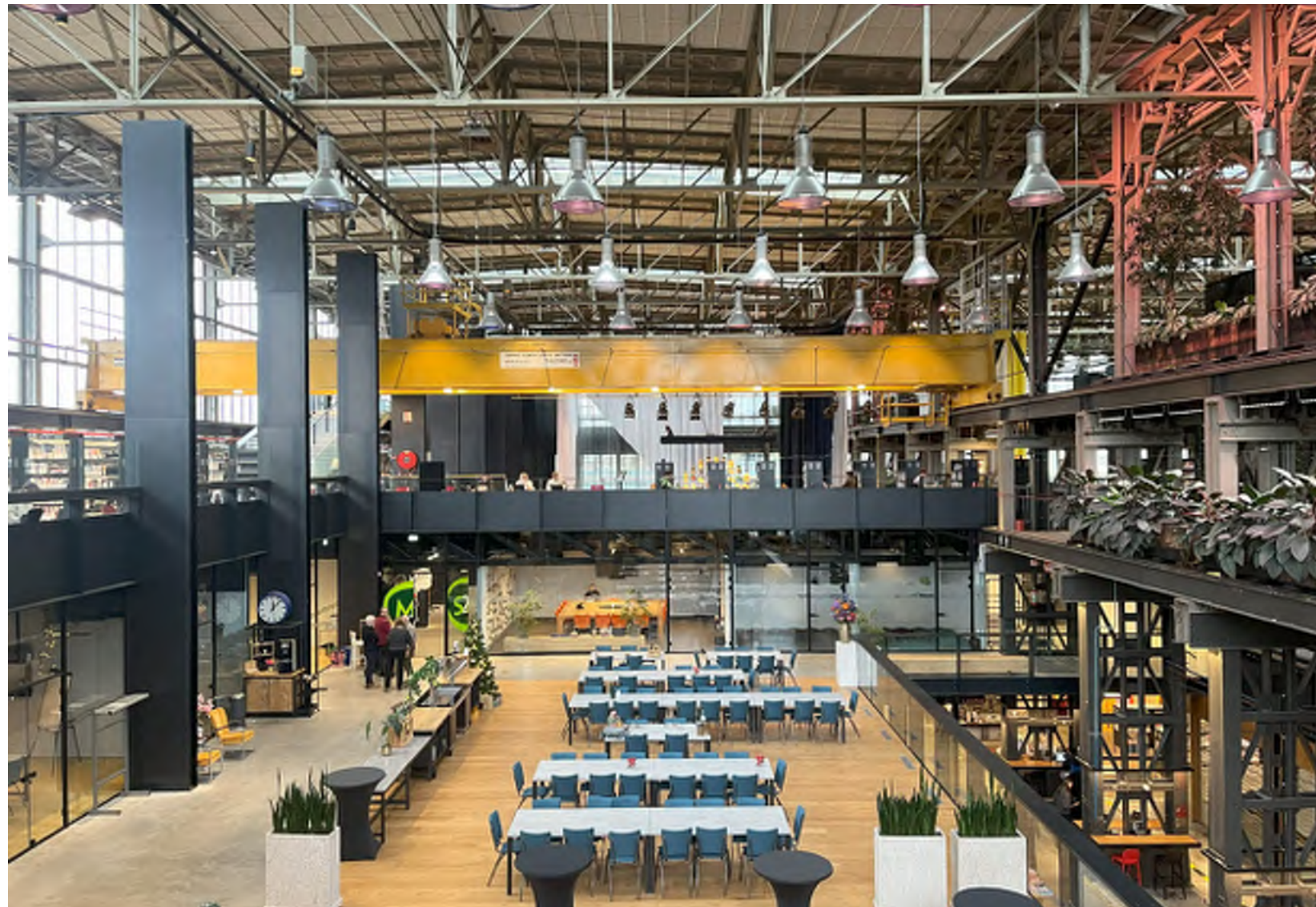
(Left) Bookstore Adapted from Church.
Maastricht, NL.

(Right) University Building Adapted from
Panopticon. Haarlem, NL.



Then there are all these miscellaneous, sometimes subtle examples. I would consider their steep stairs one. They're admittedly a bit more effort for the unconditioned to get up and down, but in dense contexts they opportunize extra, valuable square footage for less transitory uses. The dumpsters are another. To the untrained eye they appear like typical enough street trash cans, only they never seem to get full. They're icebergs, most of their mass is below the street. Garbage trucks slide the whole thing out every so often to empty them -genius. And lastly, kibbeling, their famous fish dish. It comes in lots of small chunks, not fillets, because the meat comes from the cods' cheeks -usually discarded elsewhere. It all tastes the same battered and dipped in tartar sauce. Delicious.





EXCURSION 03

- A. 11/20 - 11/21; **Dublin, Ireland**
- RYANAIR FR421; AMS to DUB
- B. 11/21 - 11/24; **Kilkenny, Ireland**
- RENTAL CAR; Dublin to Kilkenny
- C. 11/24 - 11/26; **Kinsale, Ireland**
- RENTAL CAR; Kilkenny to Kinsale
- D. 11/26; **Cork, Ireland**
- RENTAL CAR; Kinsale to Cork
- E. 11/26 - 11/29; **Killarney, Ireland**
- RENTAL CAR; Cork to Killarney
- F. 11/29 - 11/30; **Dublin, Ireland**
- RENTAL CAR; Killarney to Dublin
- G. 11/30; **Amsterdam, Netherlands**
- RYANAIR FR5102; DUB to AMS





(Left) Berkeley Library. Trinity College, Dublin, IE. Designed by Paul Koralek, 1967.

(Right) Dublin Port. Dublin, IE.









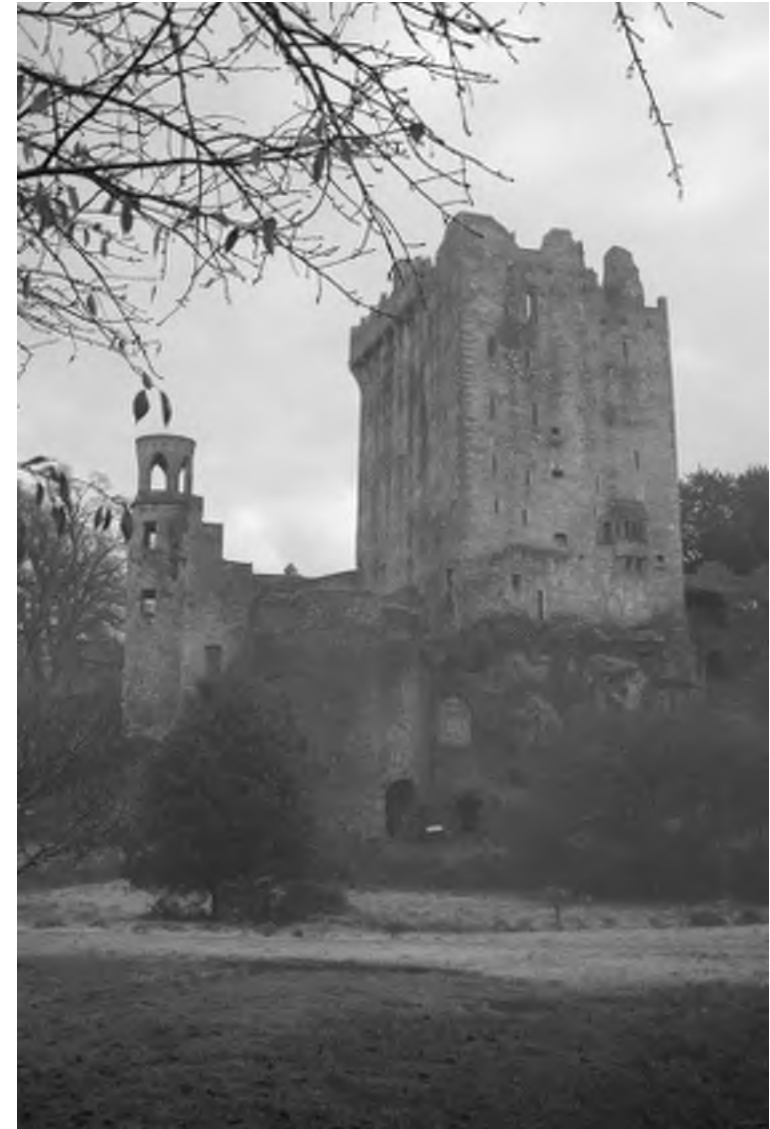




























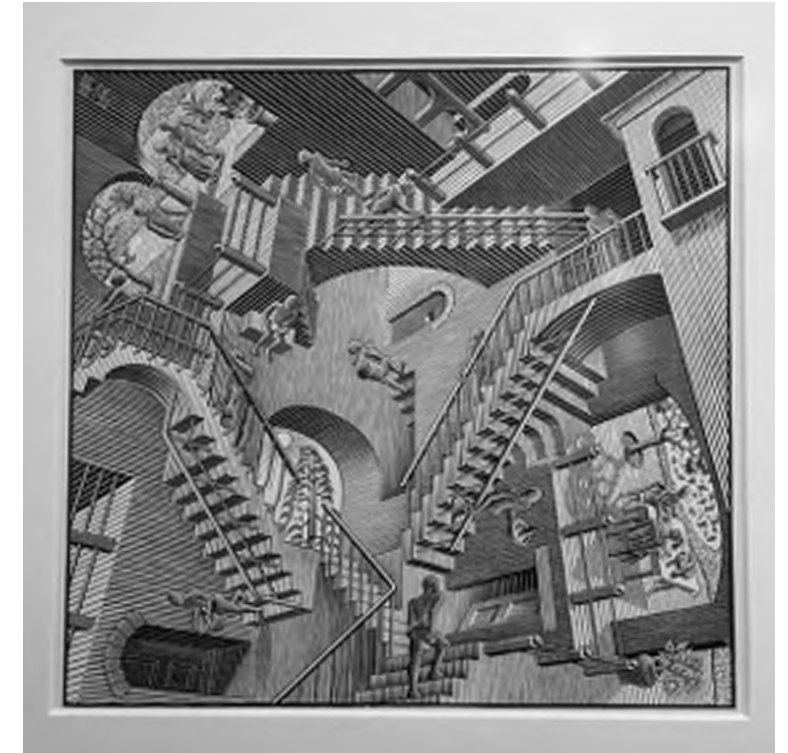


Mark McGlothlin, my thesis chair, introduced me to homo ludens -"man at play". I believe Constant used the term alongside his work, which partly lamented the "monotonous predictability" of the post-war built environment. He pondered how space could incentivize the spontaneity and wonder we lose with adulthood. The Dutch are homo ludens, or as close as it gets.

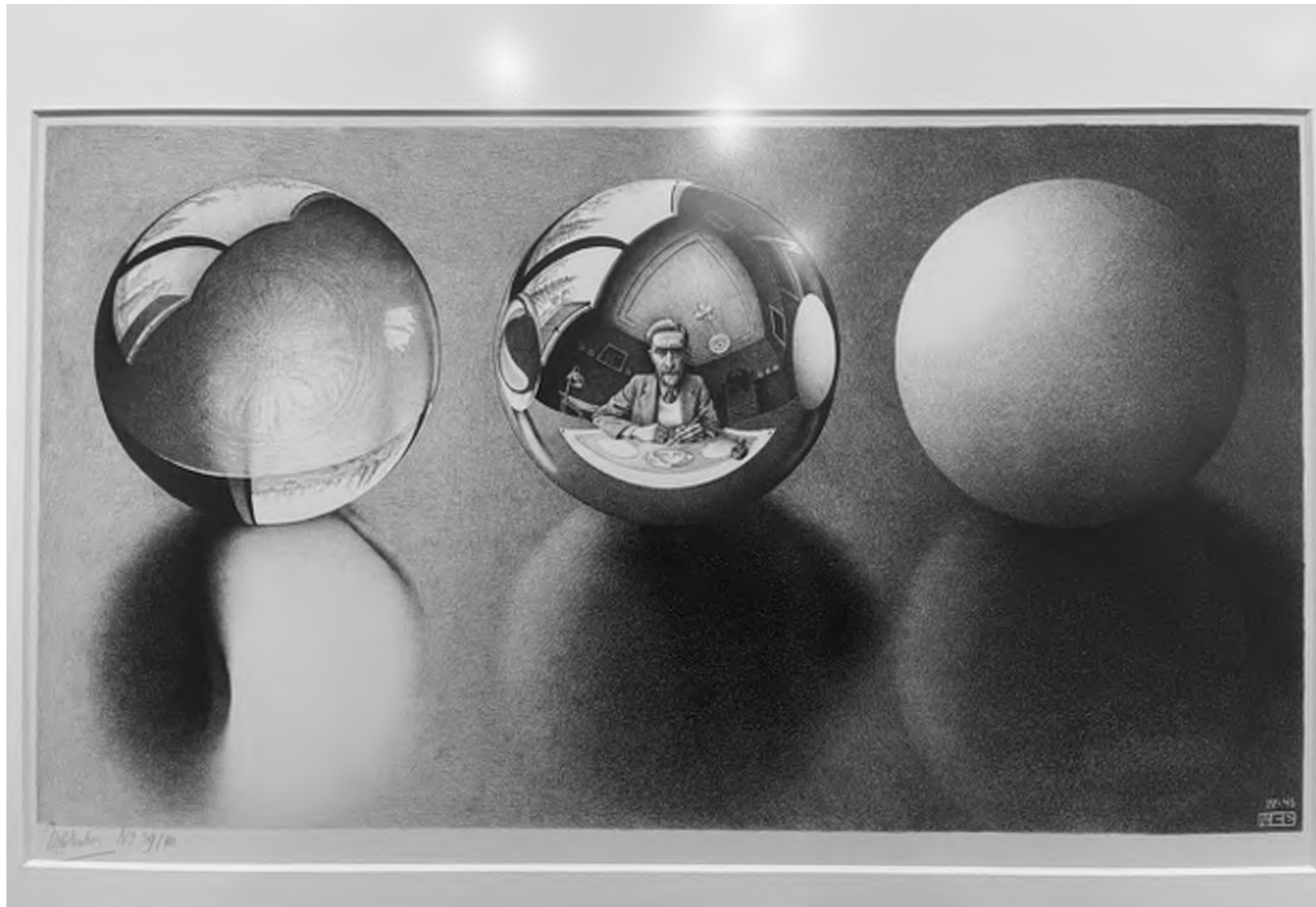
I've discussed Constant and Rem Koolhaas, my favorite provocateurs, in this context before. But MC Escher was a new one. The Escher in het Paleis museum in the Hague was unexpectedly one of the most impactful museum experiences I've encountered. Though I believe he had some training in Architecture, he specialized in printmaking. His early work, mostly representative, focused on portraying the Italian landscapes and cityscapes that he called home. The country's political instability of the early 20th Century forced him back to his Dutch homeland though. Uninspired by this new context, he looked inward. He shifted to the imagined, illusory worlds we associate with him now, pushing the limits of the printmaking medium and of two-dimensional "space".



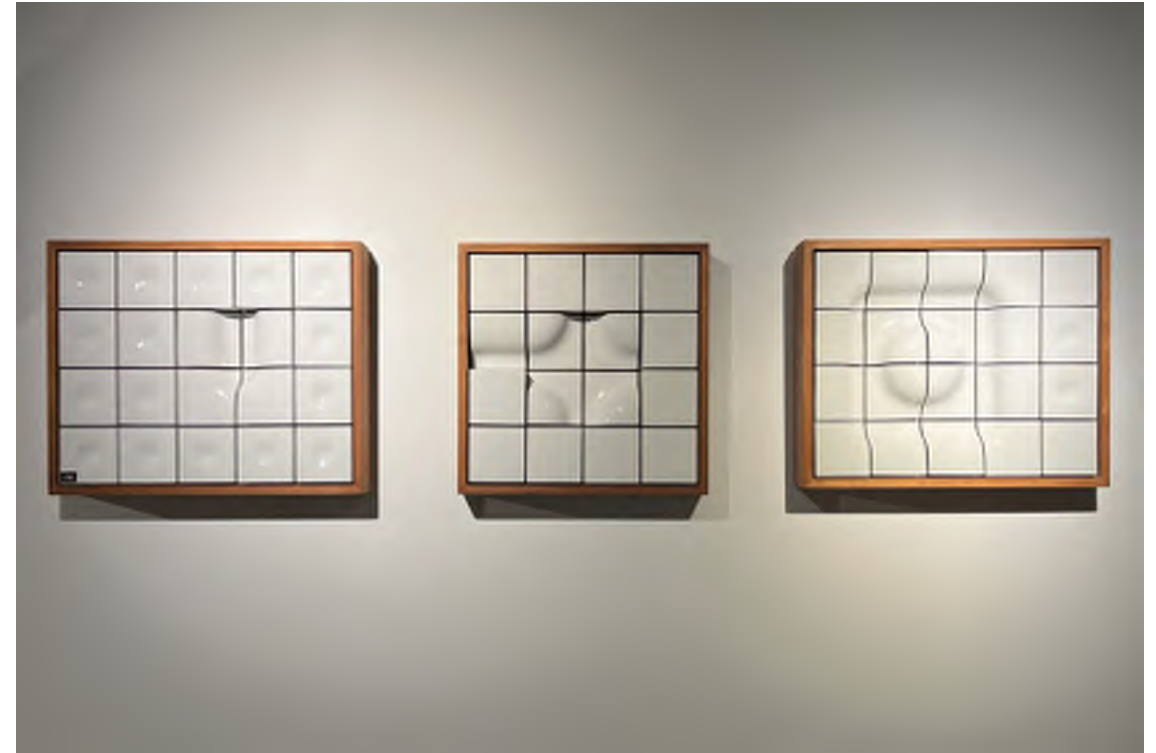
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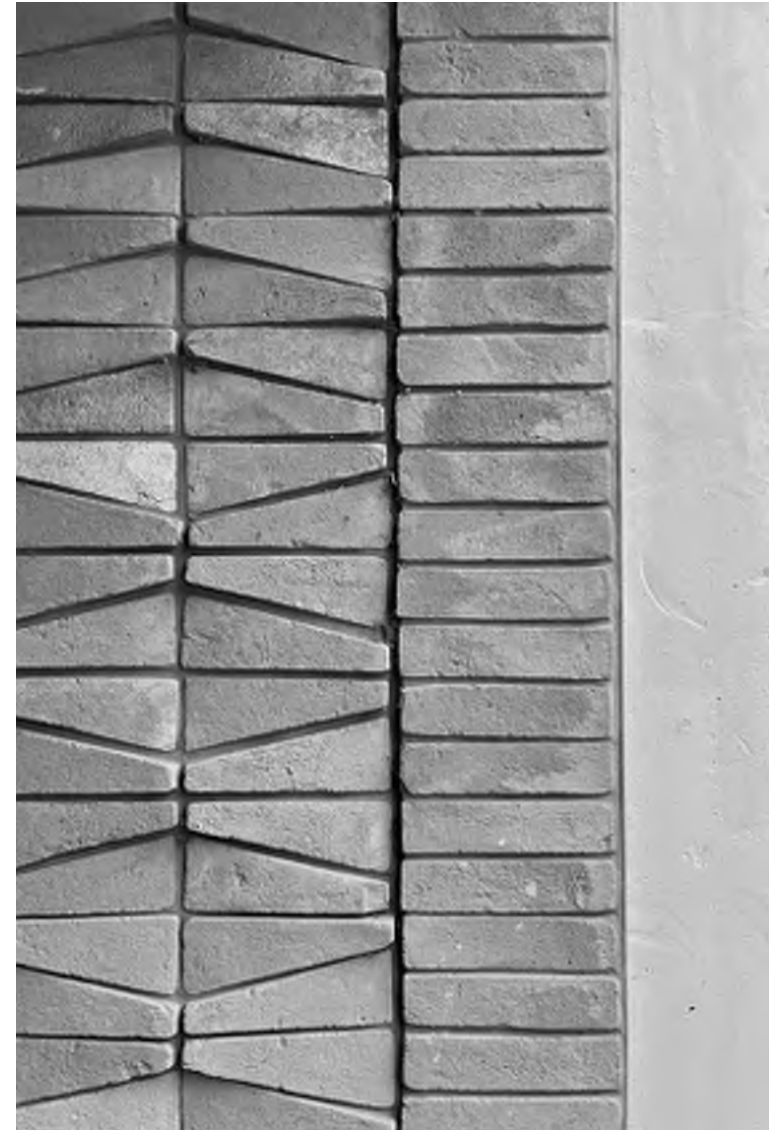
243

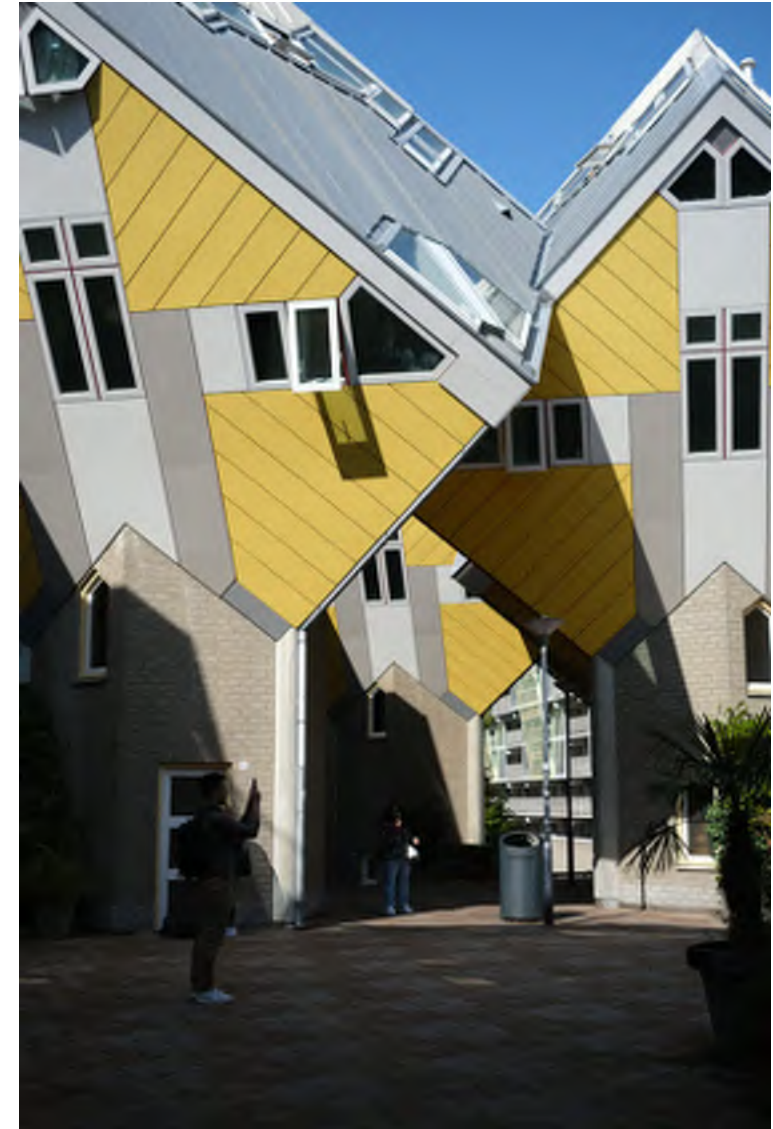


Predating Constant, Koolhaas, and the post-war era, his work isn't as culturally/sociologically charged as theirs. I think Escher explored the limits of his craft simply out of curiosity; for fun. While it's difficult to trace any direct utility from his work, it undoubtedly compounded on Rembrandt's, Van Gogh's, and many other mavericks' work to strengthen the cultural feedback loop that yields the kinds of minds that explore the peripheries, in every discipline. The Dutch. Escher is a great analogy for what I've come to love about the Netherlands. What the country lacks in resources, size, and other strengths, it more than compensates for with its people's insatiable curiosity, fearless creativity, and earth-moving ingenuity. Practicality is a limitation. Maybe this all starts with embracing the homo ludens within us, if they're still there.







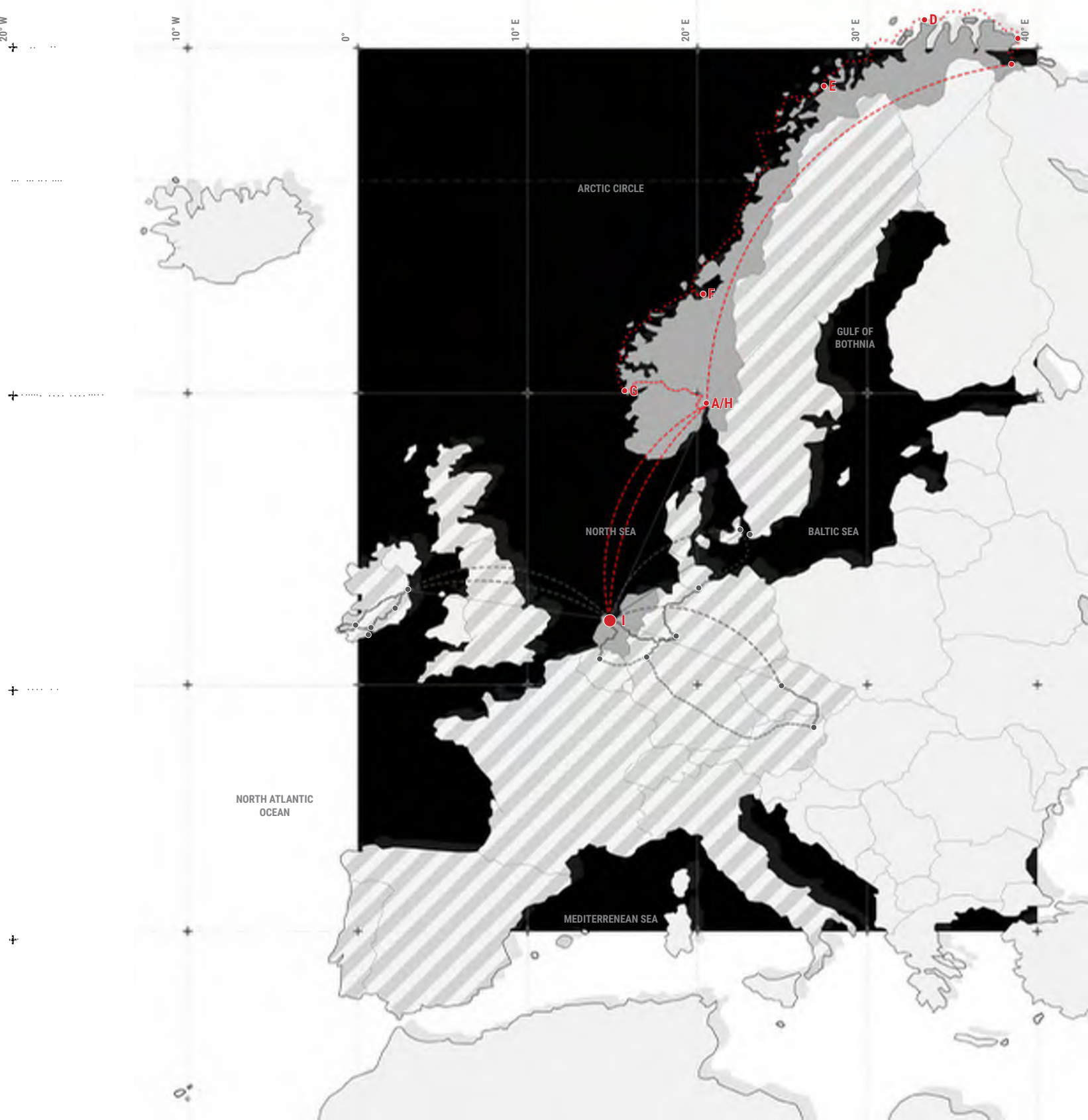






EXCURSION 04

- A. 12/04 - 12/05; **Oslo, Norway**
- NORWEGIAN DY1259; AMS to OSL
- B. 12/05 - 12/06; **Kirkenes, Norway**
- NORWEGIAN DY310; OSL to KKN
- C. 12/06; **Vardø, Norway**
- HAVILA SOUTHBOUND; KKN to VRD
- D. 12/07; **Hammerfest, Norway**
- HAVILA SOUTHBOUND; VRD to HFT
- E. 12/07; **Tromsø, Norway**
- HAVILA SOUTHBOUND; HFT to TOS
- F. 12/10; **Trondheim, Norway**
- HAVILA SOUTHBOUND; TOS to TRD
- G. 12/11; **Bergen, Norway**
- HAVILA SOUTHBOUND; TRD to BGO
- H. 12/11 - 12/13; **Oslo, Norway**
- VY F4; Bergen Stasjon to Oslo S
- I. 12/13; **Amsterdam, Netherlands**
- TRANSAVIA HV5862; OSL to EIN











(Left) *Eternal Flame 1/2*. Steilneset Memorial. Vardø, NO. Designed by Peter Zumthor, 2011.

(Right) *Eternal Flame 2/2*. Melkøya gasskraftverk. Hammerfest, NO.





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EPILOGUE

I write this about a year removed from when I embarked on this amazing journey, now in a completely new home. While the distance between the fellowship and these concluding thoughts was more procrastination than intention, I think it's interesting and notable which memories have stuck the longest –not the buildings or places so much, but the people and shared experiences. The meals we shared with Tim, Lisa, and Becky on our Norwegian voyage, the hospitality Helena, Robert, Gavin, and their dogs showed us in Ireland, the many times we mysteriously encountered Frank and Dani (two ghost hunters from Hamburg) in Malmö, playing “play nine” and singing Karaoke with Jenny, Julia, and their friends and family...

With my thesis project and my initial thoughts for this fellowship, I sought semi-concrete answers on how to engineer interaction and spontaneity within and around buildings. I’m still very interested in this and it’s an important pursuit considering the influences that continue to fragment us. But I guess my biggest takeaway, which unites the whole experience and draws on others, is that while I did observe design as a facilitator in this context, it seems like culture is so much stronger. The best way to describe this is by comparing Amsterdam, with its infinite urban infrastructure and amenities, to any tiny Irish village, where conversation and community just find you. To take it further, what is it about primitive campfires, literally the only constructed things in their contexts, that promote community? How do we modify, strengthen, or activate cultures? Is Architecture even relevant to this conversation? That’s what I hope to explore next.



