

**Narrative City:
Latin American Home-City Landscapes in Halifax, Nova Scotia**

by

Manuel Cyrus Moncayo-Adams

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Architecture

at

Dalhousie University
Halifax, Nova Scotia
June 2023

Dalhousie University is located in Mi'kmaq'i,
the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq.
We are all Treaty people.

© Copyright by Manuel Cyrus Moncayo-Adams, 2023

To the three Latine Community
Members that donated their time
and shared their stories with me.

Together, you guide my life as a
Latin American in Halifax.

Seeing you live keeps me going.

Contents

Abstract	v
Glossary	vi
Acknowledgements	vii
Chapter 1: Introduction	1
Stories in Space: A Narrative Triptych	1
A Definition of the Diaspora	3
The Story as a Research Site.....	6
Narrative Design: An Architectural Triptych	7
Thesis Question.....	8
Chapter 2: The Domestic: A Colombian Farmer's Urban Garden	9
Chapter 3: Public Living: Seeing the Square Everywhere.....	20
Chapter 4: A Commercial Home? Sharing and Augmenting Private Space	32
Chapter 5: The Diasporic Home	43
On 'Latin America.'.....	43
Narrative Space.....	46
Diaspora as Methodological Framework	48
Diasporic Networks of Home	50
Chapter 6: Narrative Method	52
Situating Home	52
Visualizing Home	54
Spatializing Home.....	56
Home-City Landscapes	57
Chapter 7: Mapping Home Infrastructures	58
The Oral Narrative	58
Mapping Autobiographical Time	62
The Built Environment	64
Layering Space	68
Digital Media.....	70
Augmenting Landscape	72
Chapter 8: Narrative Design	73

Home Narrative 1: The City Garden	73
Under the Microscope.....	73
The Garden Bridge	77
Home Narrative 2: Looking Straight Through	82
Parallel Spaces.....	82
City-Piercer	86
Home Narrative 3: The Anti-Intersection	91
Around the Tower.....	91
Relational Carousel	95
Chapter 9: Conclusion	100
The Diasporic Home-City Landscape	100
The Diasporic Narrative Landscape	103
Appendix A: Research Ethics Board Application: Interview Guide	105
Appendix B: Nocturne: Art at Night 2022- Narrative City	106
Appendix C: Presentation Gallery: Narrative City Thesis Defence.....	107
References	109

Abstract

Storytelling lies at the center of cultural production and exchange. In smaller immigrant communities without dedicated cultural infrastructure and established networks of gathering spaces, oral storytelling functions as the dominant medium for the formation of 'home-spaces' in the city. Three conversations with established Latin American immigrants in Halifax, Nova Scotia explore 'home' across domestic, public, and commercial space. Using the oral chronotype, mapping, collage and spatialization translate time and space across digital infrastructures, the built environment, and oral narratives into speculative design proposals grounded in the storied and subtle imaginary. Storytelling is imagined as a subversive design practice, bringing forth liminal histories of the city to provide alternative contextual readings of place, materiality, and human behaviour.

Glossary

I grew up to a Colombian father and Canadian mother: First in the Annapolis Valley, and then in Dartmouth, Nova Scotia. They would occasionally speak to me in Spanish, trying to instill the language within me. I still have a memory of my father asking me if I'd like some breakfast.

“Hijo, quieres desayuno?”

I am somewhere near the kitchen, and he is making oats. The memory is both here with me and in multiple places. A moment occurring in the English structure of my brain, a reconstruction of a Spanish upbringing. These are the activities of the diaspora. They are not an objective retelling of events but moving and shifting stories we act out and share. Moving forward to define these multi-situated transnational moments in the city is the central goal of this thesis.

Several Spanish words and phrases are used in this document. They are both established parts of the language and colloquial phrases of the diaspora. Often, their use occurs within English. They are searching for a memory, meaning, or idea that doesn't exist in each of the languages alone. Unique to context, place, or condition, they are hyper-specific markers to help move us from memory to speech, action, and design.

Spanish Glossary

Caminos: Paths. Comes from 'Caminar: To walk.'

Campesino: A farmer.

Fachada: Façade: In reference to a building façade or the illusion of a real thing.

Hijo: My boy, son, young boy (affectionate).

La Piesa de la Madera: The place for wood. A place of wood. The wood's place.

Latin(e): Alternative to Latino, Latina, or Latinx. A combination of the masculine el and the feminine Ella. Gender non-conforming Latin American Spanish speakers may refer to themselves as Latine and use the gender-neutral pronoun elle, which replaces the a of the feminine ella with an e.

Acknowledgements

The difficulty of this thesis owes itself to circumstance. Its penchant for inquiring deep within my intellectual and creative capacities initially lied at odds with a time of my life I've currently dedicated to expansion. It has taught me to slow down, appreciate redirection, and value the people in my life that 'do it for the plot.'

With pain, discomfort, love, and care, I am growing into the lives I admire.

To my father, Fernando Moncayo, for demonstrating the joy of living passionately, everyday. Your stories cut through the mental imprecision that subsumes us far too often. You are the inspiration for this thesis.

To my mother, Rose Adams, for raising me to be kind, loving, and unconventional. Your creative practice guides my own. I love you more than all the _____ in the world.

To Angelica Silva. Your warmth and discipline is shaping me more than I can acknowledge.

And Eileen Bernasconi: A distant loving anchor. I owe and love you more than the sum of our moments together.

At the School of Architecture: I owe the entire student community. You make saying hello everyday a delight. To Torie Payne, the DASA good cop to my bad cop.

To Jared Weiss: You are a light. To Erin Haliburton, for coming to the rescue when my model-making skills languished. To Matt Sealy, for being just as lost and inspired through this process as I am. To Adria Maynard, for your friendship and leadership through example.

To Catherine Venart for daring me to think in poetics. And to James Forren, for showing me new models of research and practice.

I owe every one of you so much. Do me a favour and never read this thesis :)

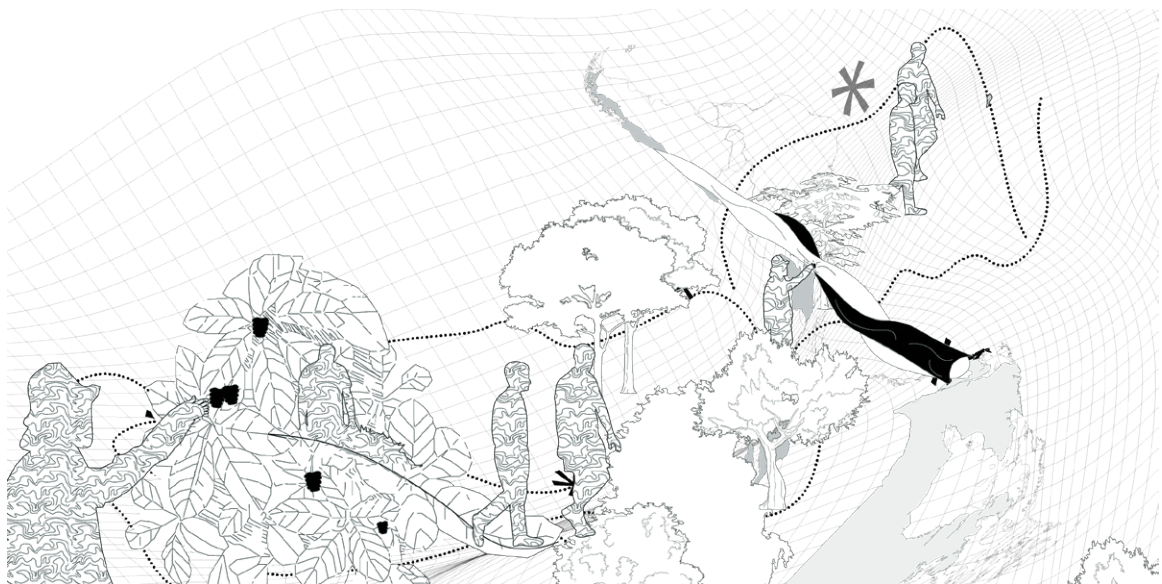
Chapter 1: Introduction

Stories in Space: A Narrative Triptych

Garden

We speak of the garden as a reflection of his childhood. Beds of fruit, vegetables, and shrubs sit on terraces dug into the small hill of his backyard. He is fond of the mess; its logic derivative of the patterns his father planted fruit trees in throughout the forest in Colombia they cultivated. We take a pilgrimage through it every Sunday: “Hijo, come look at the raspberries.”

The Garden serves as the physical interface for cultural exchange: A site for us to practice cultural memory and a place where memory shifts in dialog with the present. It is a cultural nest for us and the neighbourhood. One by one, the neighbours gradually let their grasses go. Next door, a row of sunflowers crops up over a tulip bed: Mimicked garden symbiosis. To their caretaker, they are Colombia here. To the neighbours, they are just his garden next door.



An illustration of the web of space of the garden.

Square

Across the harbour a Colombian woman, also an immigrant services worker, sits comfortably in her living room. From her chair she weaves together a surrealist map of public moments. As she speaks, her hands illustrate sites of joy and tension that stretch across expectations of what a public space *should* be. She tells me it makes her so proud to see other immigrants in public spaces here: Spaces she says which are fundamentally made for people.

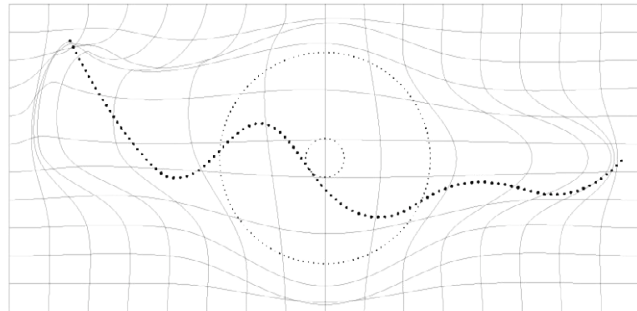
Cafe

Just as I arrive, someone waves to me through the far window. I had assumed I'd enter the café through the front entrance, a bright red door set symmetrically on the street corner. Instead, the side door opens, and I see the setup. Two glasses of water sit on a small table in the middle of the dining room. A file folder is open on one side, and I take a seat on its opposite. Before our interview officially starts, the owner of the Café tells me how important she finds doing this kind of work. She's the only full-time employee here: Sometimes her niece does shifts on the weekends. She almost never declines interviews, because there are so few Latin Americans here who can share what they have. Sharing her culture is her life's work and the mission of her café.

Diasporic Narrative-Landscape

The three interviews were initially structured along a series of questions beginning with the premise of a home-space. Quickly they morphed beyond that static framework to conceptualize the metamorphosis of home through three distinct methods of cultural practice: Creating, contesting,

and consuming space. Each narrative is a collage of moments, individual spaces, and layered time. Through their translation into space, these narratives form the landscape of the diaspora. The logic of these stories are our streets, their moments our buildings, and their syntax our addresses. Together they form an idea of the diaspora tied to human narratives: Stories in space.



Stories in space parti.

A Definition of the Diaspora

The topological view of the diaspora taken here stresses narrative geographies created by human relationships and their associated activities over their grounded physical coordinates. Nishat Awan writes that the importance and efficacy of the term 'diaspora' lies in its inclusivity. This position takes a critical stance on our tendency towards categorization within the diasporic umbrella. Terms like 'victim diasporas,' 'trade diasporas,' and 'cultural diasporas' apply external distinctions to a human condition that thrives on relations. Awan argues that increasingly complicated migratory patterns challenge the existence of a home within the diaspora. To Awan, the radicalization of the term away from the concept of the home becomes necessary in a world where communities are frequently fragmented, where we all trend towards the diasporic condition of 'without home' (Awan 2016, 4).

Cultural theorist Stuart Hall approaches a similar notion, emphasizing subjectivities in the becomings of diasporic subjects over the use of fixed identities. However, Hall is criticized for failing to include the economic, political, social, religious, or gendered contexts of the diasporic lives which colour many of his ethnographies. Awan differs from Hall's views in that she finds the positioning of diasporic theory within everyday lived experiences more useful to define their alternative geographies and the agency they embody (Awan 2016, 5). Both Hall and Awan focus on what Hall calls the 'production of subjectivities' in diasporic identity, but neither move forward to identify narrative as the medium of cultural production in the diaspora. Similarly, Awan does not clarify if the absence of 'home' in diasporic identity is more an absence of the physical 'place of home' than an absence of the functions and feelings home provides.

In describing his layered understanding of culture, Clifford Geertz wrote "Believing... that man is an animal suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun, I take culture to be those webs..." (Geertz 1973, 311). If Geertz sees culture in the webs, I view narrative as the spinning. On 'spinning', French philosopher Michel de Certeau sees narrative stories as spatial practice: Narrative devices in stories and communication function as ways of orienting oneself around others, objects, and across spaces (Certeau 2011, 115). All this to say that there is little evidence within the world-view of relational space that space exists outside the production of culture. And so, amid the transnational practice of the domestic within the diaspora, why could there not be a 'home'?

Narrative Home

Building on contemporary transnational notions of the 'diaspora,' I theorize that 'home' lies in multiple forms of diasporic narrative practice. The absence of the 'place of home' in the diaspora as articulated by Awan allows us to imagine home as a 'space' in multiple sites throughout



An image showing the diversity of activities included under the umbrella of 'home.' The language of collage allows the transposition of home wherever the designer is able to imagine. "Any inhabited space bears the notion of home." (Bachelard 1956, 5).

the city, wherever its narratives exist. We can understand through active patterns how diasporas create spaces of home and belonging in the landscapes they inhabit, the place of home serving as a physical reference for diasporic memory in narrative practice. These narrative spaces are the diaspora.

The Story as Research Site

Recent architectural research has focussed on storytelling more directly as a research method. Master's thesis research in architecture has used storytelling either as a design driver (Cameron 2022) or as a site of study (Kopp 2021). In studying oral home-city landscapes of the Latin American diaspora, this thesis looks to storytelling both as a site of study and a design driver.

Latin American oral culture is composed of the oral narrative, the built environment, and digital infrastructure. The oral chronotype is the conceptualization of time and space in oral culture. The oral narrative guides models of time, where built environment organizes narrative spaces. Digital infrastructures augment both in the story of the diaspora. In this thesis, the three oral narratives help to identify home-spaces through oral culture among the Latin American diaspora here.

Situating Narrative

Landscape architect and academic James Corner conceptualizes mapping as an emancipatory act. His four operations, drift, layering, game-board, and rhizome (Corner 2011) guide an iterative mapping, collaging, and assembly process. This process identifies and then combines the narrative, digital, and physical components

of the Latin American diasporic landscape in Halifax, Nova Scotia for design. The first of his four operations, drift is an ephemeral mapping practice. Practiced here as a hybrid cognitive-urban map, drift mapping follows the oral, digital, and physical components of the three stories that support this thesis and form the diasporic landscape being studied.

Ventures into physical infrastructure play upon analogy to introduce the architectural elements of story. And connections, detours, or gaps left by the inclusion or absence of digital media inform rhizome-like digital diagrams describing the augmentation of time and space at the hands of digital media.

Spatializing Narrative

Collages exploring oral narratives across time and space spatialize the visual composition of layered narrative elements. As an iterative representational style grounded in spatial configuration, collage facilitates the use of analogy to functionally translate graphic compositions and narrative characters into three-dimensional spatial environments. The relationships between the various human and non-human characters of these environments help to illustrate three architectural operations: Mechanisms of the microscope, piercing, and encircling.

Narrative Design: An Architectural Triptych

As this thesis begins with a narrative triptych, it ends with an architectural one. Lighting the microscope's stage from underneath, the Shubenacadie Canal snakes below a pedestrian bridge, connecting two separate residential neighbourhoods to form a layered garden that exists across the public and domestic. Following a narrative path,

interventions in the earth, the built environment, and the senses connect disparate public spaces to prioritize human experience downtown. Goods, letters, gifts, and tools populate a rotating mirrored carousel, positioned such that you never exit its enclosure where you entered. To engage in the process of exchange, you must share a possession of your own and remove yourself from your physical context.

These prototypes talk together, placed in relation to one another in a network of interventions, augmented infrastructure, and collective ruins from narrative practice function as architectural drivers to connect distant geographies and temporalities, situating each interaction as a scene in a storied landscape of the diaspora.

Thesis Question

As our cities become more diverse and immigration to Nova Scotia accelerates, can the graphic study of spatial narratives from the Latin American Diaspora expand beyond the diaspora into the public realm to help us imagine, connect, and embody alternative models of living within architecture?

Chapter 2: On the Domestic: A Colombian Farmer's Home Garden

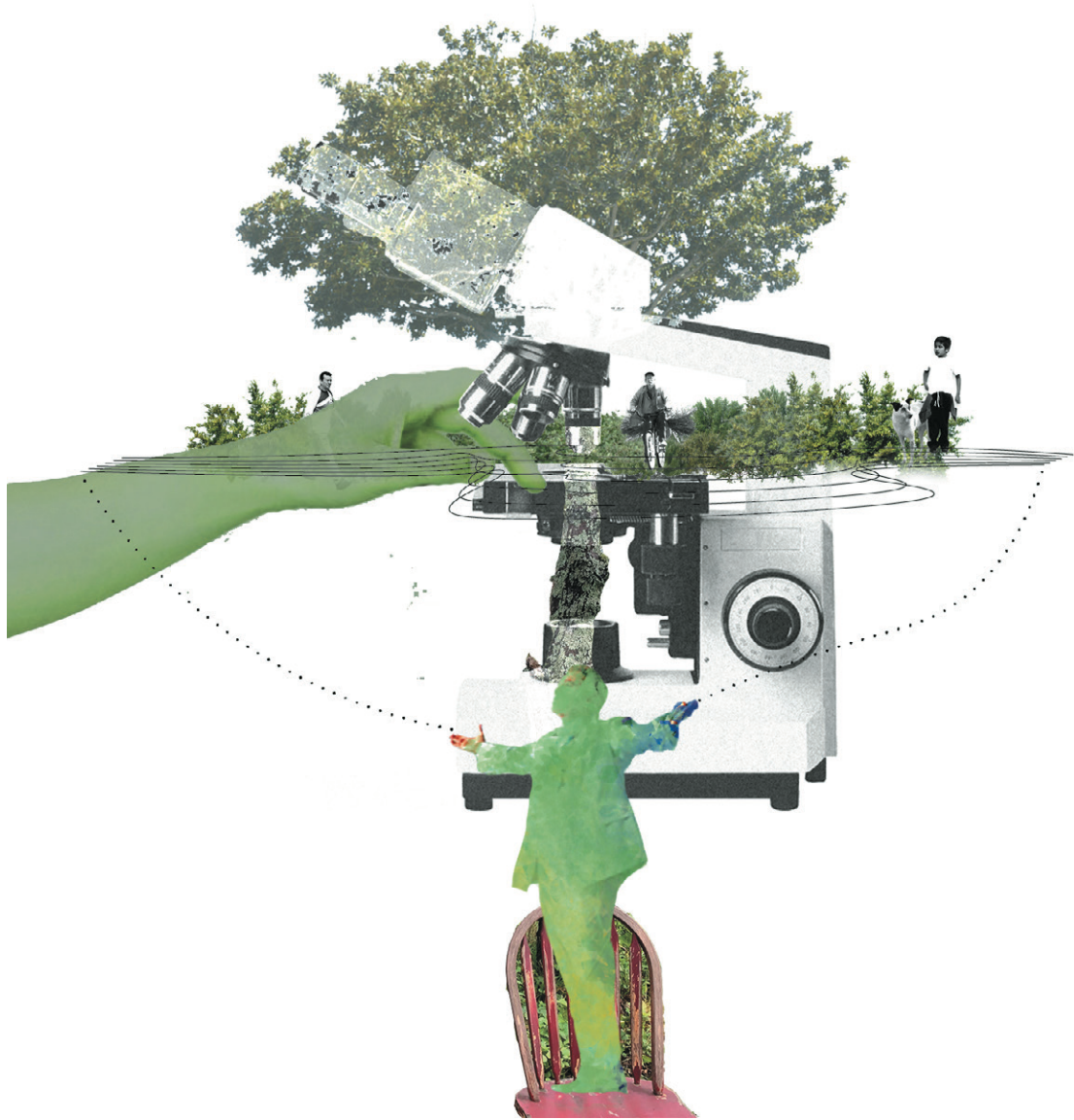
Wind breaks through the humidity on my bike ride across the harbour into Dartmouth in late September. A rock cuts into my back tire, slowing down my journey and giving me time to look around as I walk up the last couple hills. Every front lawn is a bright green grass carpet, flanked by lonely bushes whose structures lay exposed on bare patches of dirt: Their accidental austerity makes my destination hard to miss. The yellow house in a sea of vegetation sits in the middle of the hill. No longer an island of colour, the vegetated chaos previously contained within the property lines seems to be finding new welcome homes in the lawns of its neighbours. I walk my bike through the layers of sunflowers, bushes, wildflowers vegetables, and grape vines before setting it gently by the front door, not locked but sheltered and out of sight.

“Hola Hijo! Venga venga, tienes hambre?”

It takes ten minutes to go over the structure of the interview and fuel up on snacks before we head back out the front door. The audio recording app on my phone stares up at me, lithe black and white. It doesn't seem like my phone can really capture everything I'm seeing, or even hearing. Still, we begin.

“Do you think that because you're aware that we're doing this interview, that you'd behave differently?”

The second I ask that question I know the oral pandora box has been opened and the interview becomes officially out of my control.



A garden sits in the world of a microscope, imagined by a ghostly figure just out of present-view

“Well no, not necessarily, because I’m a scientist. The way I approach this is exactly the way I’d do it and exactly the way my father would do it. I take all this, and I’m looking at the experiments in almost a scientific way. I’m not doing replications and things like that, but I’m looking into how you can transform a place to your liking, to what you want.”

The two of us stand on the front path of the garden, which connects the door to the street. I look back to the door and my bike pokes out from behind the bush. The other way, the neighbours have organized to park their cars on the street as far away from the curb as they can to narrow the road, a kind of ironic traffic calming. You take one step off the only pre-existing path and you enter a world of true architectural organicism. Game trails guide you through overgrown grass and ever-diversifying species of wildflowers. The space is much bigger than the place it occupies. I could walk across the neighbouring lawn in 5 steps but here I'm invited across 30 feet, 4 microclimates, and 2 continents. The journey takes a while. My tour guide describes this lawn's conversion:

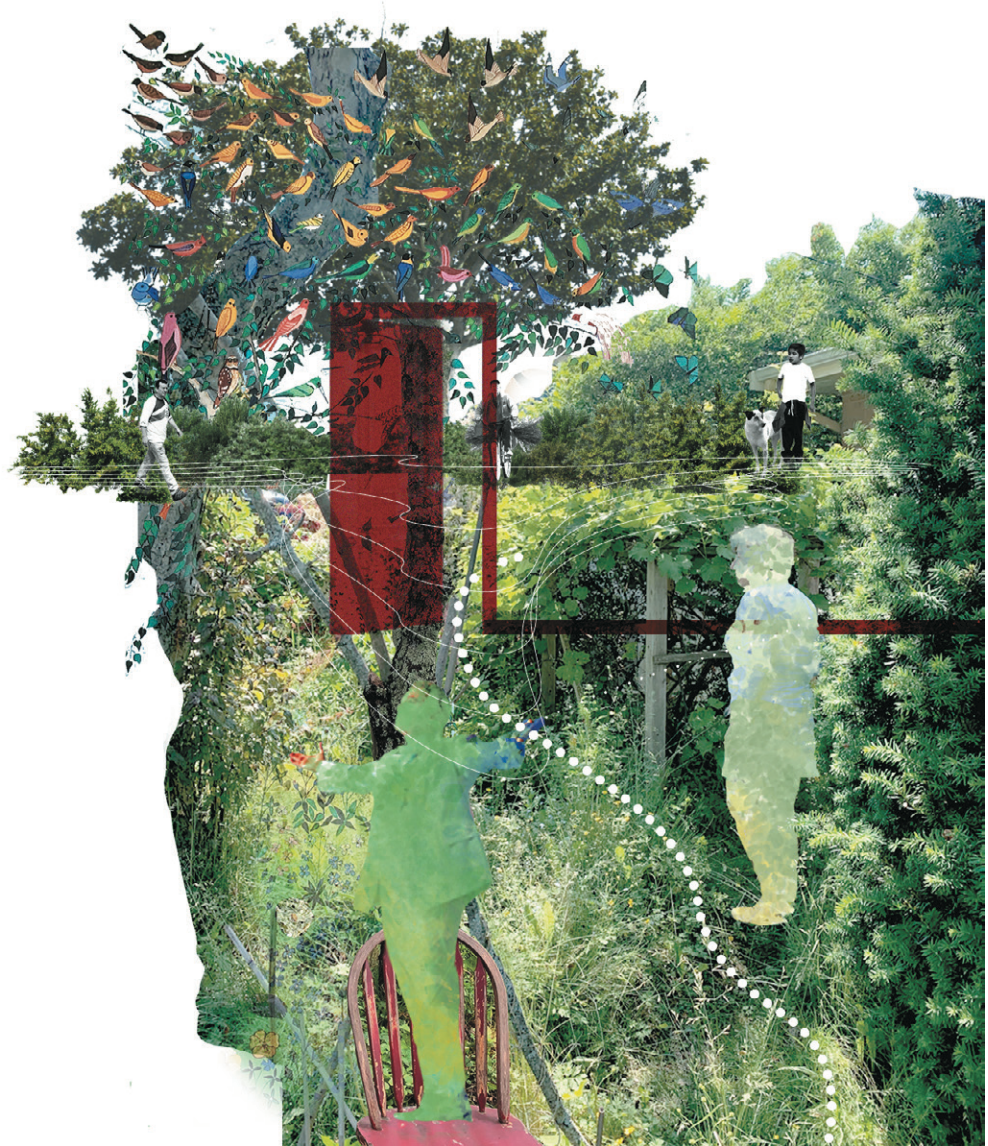
"When we came here, it was all open grass. That bothered me a lot." He pauses to let out a deep breath. "For one thing, it scared me that you opened the door and immediately you're on the street. When you're downtown no one is driving fast, but here, they just fly down the hill. And it's feng shui! You've got to put the stuff so all the shui doesn't go out of the house. My wife grew up too in a similar way."

We make our way out to the curb. His hands gesture wildly, and wind blows through the bushes in response. "First it was the bushes, and the bushes would grow to make this space kind of contained. Then, where you live, it's not exposed to the wind, the sun. There's some kind of protection physically. It works in terms of how cool the house is, the difference could be several degrees."

The sunny curb quickly gives way to a shaded maze. We pass by fruit trees, patches of wildflowers, and an older birds' nest. We accelerate with each step around the side of the house to the backyard: When you're showing someone

around the garden there's no time to waste. "You're really getting into this aren't you."

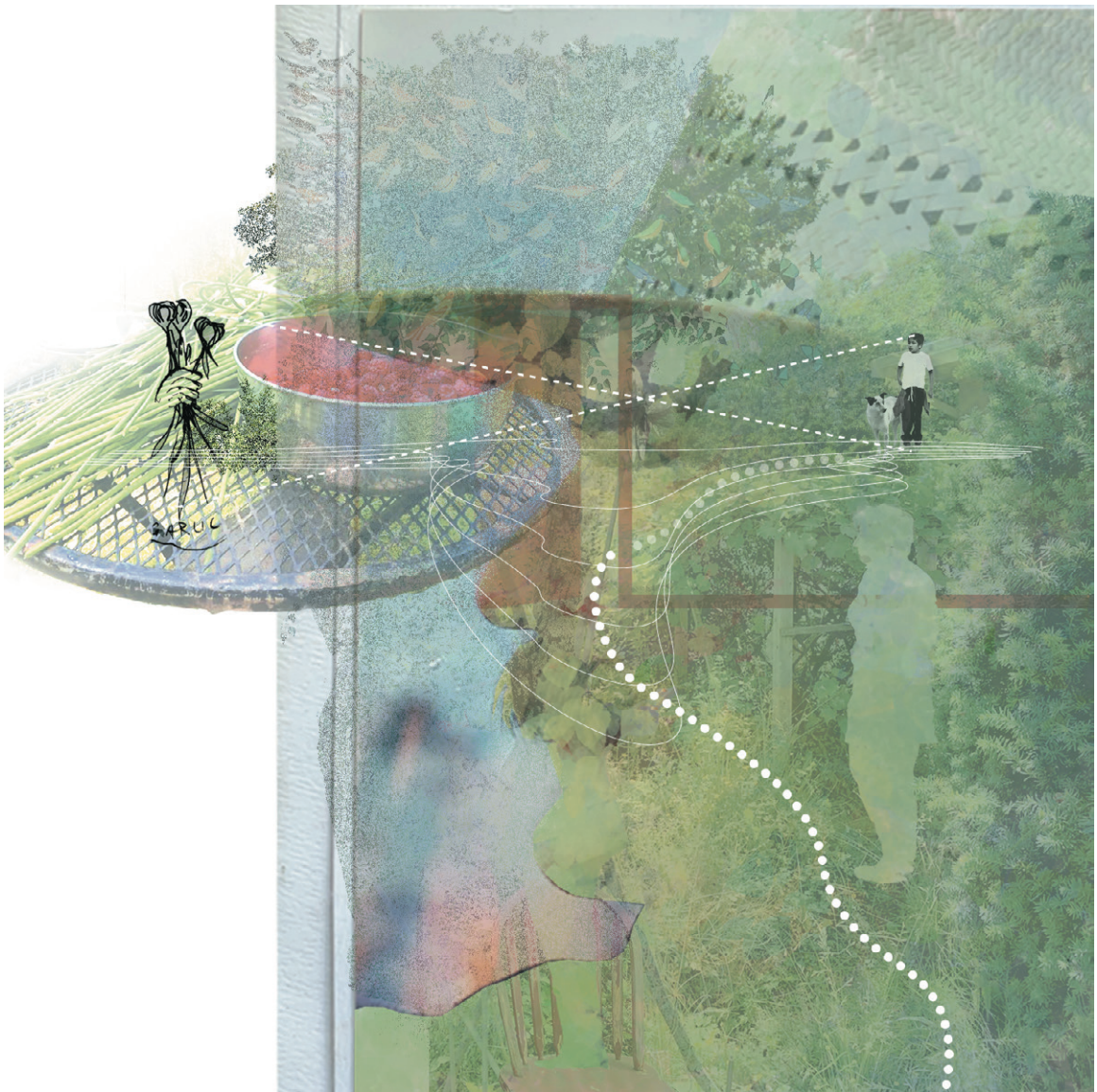
"Totally. Because I think about this stuff. And I don't talk about it a lot. See, these are all weeds, and you pull them. Just like that. But then they produce this little flower! I'm talking about my identity as a farmer, as a campesino. That you grow up as a campesino, so where you go, you transform your space



Wildflowers form the floor of the garden. Birds dress its canopy and bushes form its walls.
Includes San Francisco, *Sofia Urrutia*, 1969 (Veléz and Véllegas 2001, 306).

to what you know. And so, I couldn't just think of having flowers. I had to have something to grow."

This story isn't unique. What about the thousands of Canadian farmers whose children moved into cities, whose farms consolidated and industrialized? They may not physically replicate their memories in their front or back lawns, but they bring a rural mythology into suburbia not



A figure overshadows the garden. A sketch of a garlic plant reflects through his retina before appearing as a child, nestled just behind his eye, deep in the garden. Includes San Francisco, *Sofia Urrutia*, 1969 (Veléz and Véllegas 2001, 306).

unlike the story of this Colombian garden. But then why is the mythology of this garden so pronounced? I take a minute to walk around the garden mid-interview and think about the mountainous forested farmland that sits within this. Its climate, geography, and human culture were so fundamentally different to the neighbourhood I stand in.

Maybe that is the key. When you grow up represented in your culture, you see yourself everywhere. It's hard not to. Everyday reflections of your identity can make its expression habitual, natural, and subconscious. But what do you do when you don't see yourself in the environment you're in? My internal monologue gets cut off by a partial answer to the question:

"One of the things about this is that this is an imaginary farm, I live in a fantasy. It's a farm of fantasy. See that's what the Colombian professional does. They retire and they go to their farm. So, I'm doing that."

Cultural geographers Sheringham & Brightwell argue that Latin American diasporic cultural production in Canada occurs through the contestation, consumption, and creation of space, in space (Sheringham and Brightwell 2012). The lack of cultural spaces here in Halifax makes the creation of the garden and the ways it stretches the fabric of Canadian suburbia critically important for its caretaker's identity. Its layers run perpendicular to the pastoral field-logic of its manicured neighbours, distinguished through paths, steps carved in the earth, and glorified game trails. I finish my thought as we enter the back yard and are presented with a fork in the road. I'm told to 'pick one.'

"Tell me about Los Caminos"

“Los Caminos! Every farm has caminos. My dad’s farm, si? All full of caminos. You have to have a path to get places. I grew up walking through caminos and so I like making caminos. And you need it! When we thought we wanted to make this a whole flat thing, we talked to a contractor who said a retaining wall would be over here, and gravel over there, and stuff of that sort.”



Working the earth. The garden transforms in the immediate and in memory.
Includes Ana Maria Rueda, *Fuego*, 1996 (Veléz and Villegas 2001, 372), and Gonzalo Ariza, *Cafetal*, 1956 (Veléz and Villegas 2001, 253).

The hands get going again. They make airborne cartographies describing the proposed walls. “And I thought, all that stuff that’s awful. Even if you had the money that intervention is way too much into the earth. I didn’t want to do it. So I took the pick axe, and first I made that path there with just the pick axe, and then I started making terraces.”

We walk down a few dirt steps to prove the point: “I love this stuff. It comes down this path, and it goes the other one, and the other ones, it’s just magical. When I look at this stuff and I just feel like, oh, my. It’s nice. Where would that path go? You feel like a kid! When I showed it to the neighbour’s kid, she went around and around. The next week we went to dinner at their place, and she showed me her path she made around the back.”

By this point we’ve made our way down the hill to the lowest point of the lot. They’ve placed a bench at the very corner, underneath an elm tree which marks the common corner of 4 neighbouring properties. My view is framed by the terraced hill upwards from where I’m sitting and the droopy elm branches swaying overhead. On one layer, a large patch of raspberry bushes explodes from their makeshift wooden barriers.

They make a 6-foot-high wall above the path on the terrace below, which snakes its way from a trellis of grapes to the base of the little shed & sauna built the previous winter. The pleasant view of the sauna and the garden walls obscures a nest of wood hidden under the decking by its footings: Scraps from previous projects, grape trellises, or useful wood found lying around. We hop over a bit of mud and make our way up the hill.



The garden shifts and patterns spread. Includes Ana Maria Rueda, *Fuego*, 1996 (Veléz and Villegas 2001, 372), and Gonzalo Ariza, *Cafetal*, 1956 (Veléz and Villegas 2001, 306).

“You see, that’s how the campesino goes. Here I show you where we keep the wood. In my dad’s farm, we had la piesa de la madera. A room that was full of lumber, where you went to look for anything.”

He gestures to the backyard structures behind us. “With that, the design of the thing is very much part of the whole story. You can imagine that this is in so many places that we

know. And we feel like that. This could be a house in Chile, or a house high up in the Colombian mountains. I always liked those areas in the mountains. So when I'm an old man you're just going to find me walking through the paths, and you don't know where I'm going to be."

Standing together back on the one short patch of grass near the back door, the formal part of the interview comes to a close. We're at the summit of the backyard: It's all a downhill palace from here.

"There you go, that's the garden."



The final Garden collage. The story comes full circle.
Includes Gonzalo Ariza, *Cafetal*, 1956 (Veléz and Víllegas 2001, 306).

Chapter 3: Public Living: Seeing the Square Everywhere

It was just past Christmas, and I wanted to interview her on making tamales. But while the food is important, the role she plays in Halifax is the collaborator. Knowing everyone, thriving in public. So when I asked her, what spaces do you really feel at home here? She didn't talk about food. She didn't talk about tamales either (that became another interview). She talked about people.

"Well, it depends on your definition of home. What it means for you."

She's sitting across from me in a recliner: We're in the living room. I'm uncomfortably perched on the corner of her couch. My notebook sits on my lap and my phone rests, recording, on the coffee table. Her granddaughter is observing from her portable car seat on the living room floor next to the recliner, eyes wide shifting side to side. She's supposed to be picked up soon but until then will be our personal audience.

"There's a song that is just about cars. The singer's local. In any case, what she tells is the story of going from one place to another place. When she gets to this other place and hears the cars going by, they're just cars going by. They aren't Jimmy going to piano lessons, Alicia going to gym practice... She feels disconnected."

There's a little pause. I'm meant to be taking all this in, and I am.

"To me, that is when you make a place home. When you have your own narrative of home."



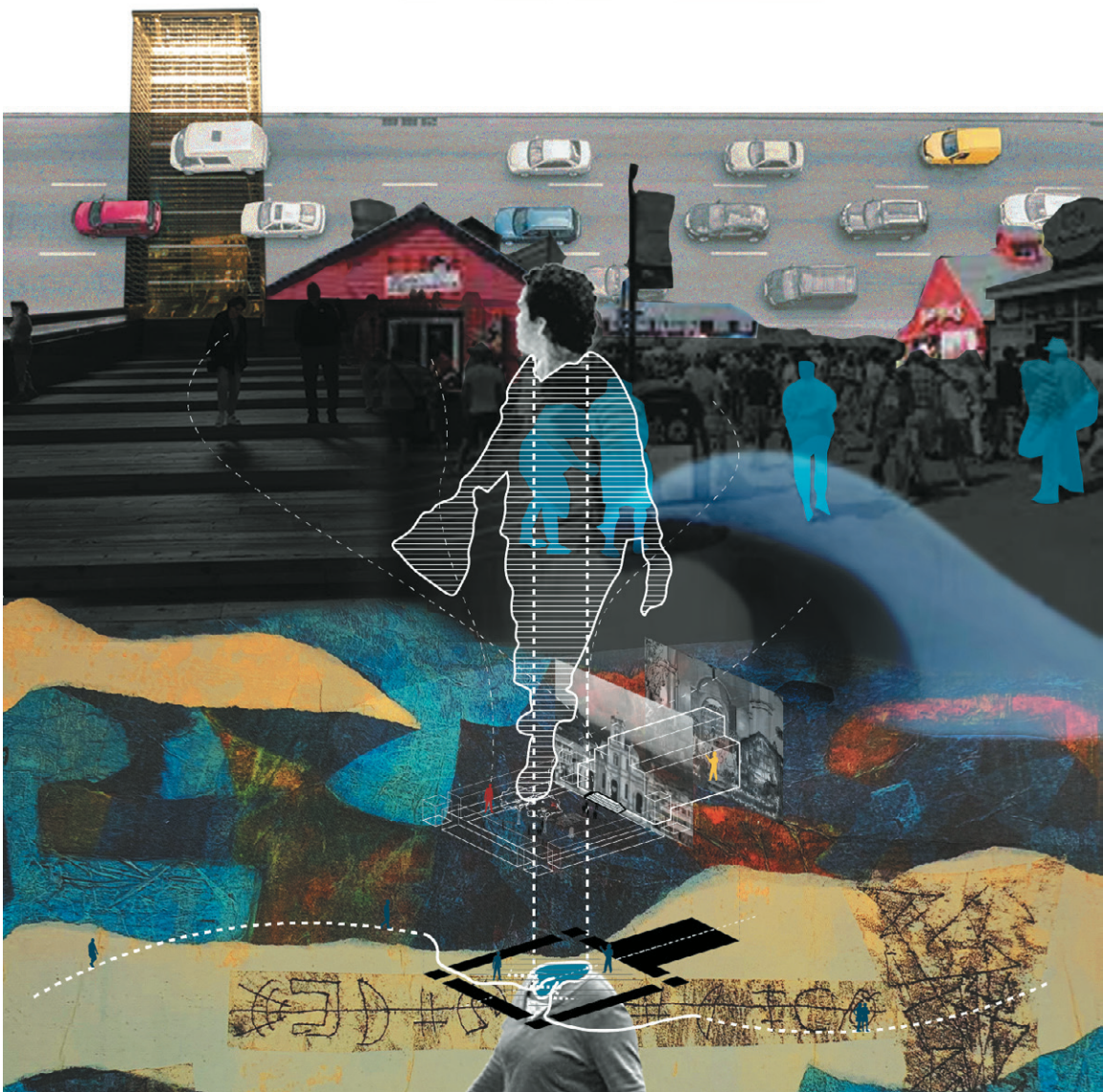
A woman walks alone. She looks back: Nothing there means anything to her, yet.

I was slightly nervous that the setting of the living room would limit our imaginations. That we'd stay talking about flat picturesque scenes of knitting by the window, archetypical Canadian images of home. That was short lived.

"There are two places. One place is the waterfront, in summer. When I walk there, I meet a lot of friends, there is music, it becomes more and more home. It's maybe the first

place I went when I came that I enjoyed. Then, there was nothing. It was just the wave.”

I'm trying to remember the waterfront before people found out they could make money off it. Lots of parking lots. The new buildings have given it a bit of enclosure. It feels like less of an indiscriminately open place and now a series of launchpads, public corridors from city to sea. She continues.



The woman's head stays where she is, but her body is somewhere else. It controls her movements, helps her understand what she's seeing.
Includes Jan Bartelsman, *Satori*, 1965 (Velez and Villegas 2001, 291).

“Now there are all the little shops, and it resembles a town square in Colombia. I really love those stairs and going up to the lights. It’s a meeting place, and I love all the art. If there’s something I miss from the Colombian town, it is the town square. That is a place that makes me feel at home.”

Being confined to the living room might have given us more narrative flexibility. Talking freely between places, unencumbered by actually being there. It was the opposite condition of the garden. A lateral expansion of a concept in the present opposed to a vertical farm stretching from father to son.

“And I feel so proud. It’s the same thing from when they built the library, I felt so proud that we built the library. Probably, because those spaces like the library, the waterfront, those are places that are made for people.”

The strength of this interview comes from an alternative contextual reading of place. Instead of aesthetic markers, connections are drawn through the inhabitation of a space. How do the people here remind her of the people anywhere else? These public associations are the driving force of spatial connection and carry us between the urban scales she introduces to me here.

“One thing that is distinctive for us, is that we are coming from places that are crowded. So, when you are walking in Colombia, when you are walking in San Vicente, when you are walking in Bogotá, there is always people in the street. Here there are times where I walk to work, and I don’t meet anybody. We [my husband and I] go for walks mid-morning, and we don’t meet people!”

She shifts her focus downward to the baby and her voice jumps two octaves. “Ya, no! Nada persona!” Suddenly her voice projects back up, and vocally down, to me:

“It’s very sad. But on the waterfront, you meet people. And most times of the year the people are locals. I see many people who are clearly immigrants, and I like it because you see all ages! You can see a bunch of teenagers all walking together.”



People arrive around her. Is her body in Colombia? She decides yes, it is. The people here are comforting, the crowding familiar.

Includes Jan Bartelsman, *Satori*, 1965 (Velez and Villegas 2001, 291).

I'm getting to the point in this interview where internally I've become impatient. I'm thinking "I want something architectural!" And I've yet to master the art of the interview. But all is architectural in the land of imagination: And the collages that accompany these stories are not only illustrations but flattened worlds ripe for translation into physical space. I haven't realized that yet, and I'm sitting in this living room trying to provoke a detour into some process.

"What kind of stuff do you do when you're there [the waterfront]?"

"Just sitting."

Okay...

"But you know, when I used to be in Sambanova [a Latin American drumming group], we would practice down there a couple times. But the wealthy people who moved into Bishops landing they called the police. It's ridiculous, you want to live in a quiet place don't live in the waterfront! The waterfront is a loud busy place!"

There it is. The public square is the social and economic center of the Latin American city. The public square, while a colonial relic, has been given its own distinct character. Where the European city has been shifted according to the demands of global capital (Pop 2021), the contemporary development of Latin American cities has further entrenched the power of the square. The square remains a site of protest, tension, celebration, and social mixing (Medina Gavilanes and Cano-Ciborro 2022).

The square of the town mentioned in this interview, San Vicente, cascades slowly down a hill. On the top side, the church sits decked in bright lights and textured stone

ornament. In the dry season, the square explodes with light at night. Bars open up their garage-door style entrances, and street vendors populate the pavement. Kids play football together on the corner near the church. The square gets louder, maybe a bit rowdier, but always more welcoming. It's not a space reserved for adults, like the nightlife district in a Canadian city. Every night the town displays its unique social contract: It says, 'we're all here, be as loud as you want and relax.' None of the tensions and extreme issues that grip the town are solved by the strength of its public life, but it continues anyway.

For the woman sitting across from me in her recliner, the square is no longer a physical entity. It's a mental structure, a habitual set of rules and expectations that govern her experiences here. She's animated as she talks about the waterfront. She tells me it should be a place of celebration!



Photo overlooking the San Vicente Town Square (Left). Photo showing the back of the Church, rising above the square (Right).



Photograph of *Accion de Duelo*, Doris Salcedo, by Sergio Clavijo, 2022 (Carrasquilla-Vallejo 2015).

And In that moment of course I believe her. Why in the center of the city should we not be loud, joyous, and unreserved? Her actions in the city shape it concretely. Through her, the square shapes us every day.

It's been about 20 minutes on her couch now, and the square in her mind takes us from the waterfront back to us, in her neighbourhood.

"Another place that makes me feel at home is my neighbourhood. I have been in this place for 18 years. This is the place I have been most for my entire life. And my neighbours are the same since I came."

Her neighbourhood includes her family, accessible through video chat on the phone. Her sister calls us mid-interview. I've interrupted their nightly chat.

"Alo? Hola Mija, quio.... Estoy aqui con Manuel hacienda una entrivista. Entonses, qual allla alhuego? Mañana estoy aca. Beuno, okay, chao."

And to me; "She says hello."

I'm quickly realizing that to her, home is where she can interact, and engage: "For example, my neighbour is a historian. He is the curation of the immigration museum, and he loves flags. He has a collection of flags and he puts up the Colombian flag because it's Shakira's birthday! Or it was the date when Gabriel Garcia Marquez launched 100 years of solitude, or it was the day that our beloved neighbour moved to Halifax!!!"

That day, he had a Greek flag up over his front porch. Later, when I'm walking back home, I wonder what wonderful Greek woman who arrived on Halifax on this day he's blessed to

know. But the neighbourhood is not always positive. Often, diasporic cultural expression is inherently radical. Within the framework of Sheringham and Brightwell, cultural practice that asserts a behavior, pattern or logic through contestation into its environment is fundamental in the creation of diasporic space (Sheringham and Brightwell 2012). In many cases, a contest requires competition or conflict. Akin to



Her phantom body arrives in the neighbourhood and settles into the iconography given to her by her neighbour. But her body is still somewhere else. Colombia? Maybe. Includes Jan Bartelsman, *Satori*, 1965 (Velez and Villegas 2001, 291).

the reaction of residents in Bishops Landing, unashamed cultural expression will run into tension.

“There was a guy who lived here. And he walked up to me one day, very upset. Because when we moved here, my daughter and my neighbours’ daughter, who had just come back from Ecuador, they decided to paint the porch! And it was like a baby’s birthday cake! It was orange, bright



The iconography slowly fades beyond the colours of cultural practice. They shape her neighbourhood, from inside her home to the minds of others.
Includes Jan Bartelsman, *Satori*, 1965 (Velez and Villegas 2001, 291).

pink, bright purple. That guy was really upset because the neighbourhood was 'losing its character.'"

She lets out a bit of a sigh. "And I even thought it was a bit much at first. But I grew to love it. And probably that is why I love my kitchen: The kitchen is full of colours, plants, and full of things from Mexico, Cuba, Colombia."

It's getting late now, and I sense she's gearing up for a bit of a final act. "All these people are characters, and so now I know all the cars. That Jimmy goes to piano lessons. The whole place has a meaning and makes me feel that I belong. And there was a lot of solidarity. And when we initiated it, people responded. One day during covid we made a lot of flyers and we invited people to get out Sunday at 5pm to say hello to neighbours, from the porch. And everybody did it!"

The square reemerges. In the forum of the street, the houses and their inhabitants make a public square where there wasn't one, at a moment in time where we all wondered if the public realm would disappear. The tension between diverse expectations for contact and isolation gives the moment its power. Sensing she might have mischaracterized the story, my narrator clarifies:

"Not everybody, but all the people I mentioned to you came out. That's what makes me feel at home."



A public space exists inside her kitchen. It is the memory of the square. A public space exists inside of her street: It is the kitchen which is the memory of the square. She takes part in the ever expanding metamorphosis of her community's public life, taking the square along with her.
Includes Jan Bartelsman, *Satori*, 1965 (Velez and Villegas 2001, 291).

Chapter 4: A Commercial Home? Sharing Private Space

Two months before this interview in late January, I walked over to the only Latin American grocer in Nova Scotia. Malty and golden yellow, the Colombian sodas I picked up were a gift for a weekend visit. Left out overnight on the trip, they froze and shattered on the floor of my car. I neglected to properly deal with the patterned glass for over a month. It was a reminder of that warm feeling, when you decide to share something new with someone else.

“I believe in sharing the culture for local people.”

Satisfied with her opening statement, the owner sits tall across from me on a small table in the empty dining room. Her café hasn't opened yet but she's here, looking over what looks like a file folder of spreadsheets. Her posture is straight, and mine is bent and tired. This is the most intimidating of the interviews for me. Her black collar is ironed and pressed, requiring a certain decorum: Relaxed, but disciplined. Like a politician outlining grave news by press conference, she clasps her hands and delivers us our prognosis:

“Right now, they are no Latin American spaces downtown. In this city there is no essence. There's the façade, the fachada, but the authenticity isn't there.”

And as only the best politicians can truly execute, she launches right into her solution. “That's the reason here in the café, I wanted it to be so authentic. From the food, into the decoration, and all that. Because I wanted to share the culture for local people. One day a couple came in: It was a sad day and they said, oh it feels like Latin America.”



The facade of the cafe obscures what's underneath. Activity illuminates the space in-between.

I shift in my seat and bring us both into the meat of the interview: “So, when someone comes into the café, how do you share your culture with them?”

“I share through the different types of food I make. And the people that immigrated here, they come to the café to ask me questions. To suggest, to consult with me. This business becomes kind of the center of everything.”

I'm reminded of my visit two months prior. If I wanted to share 'the' Colombian soft drink with someone, would I choose Colombiana or Pony Malta? Colombiana of course, what was I thinking. When I come in for ingredients for Tamales, I make a B-line for the bottom right shelf. However, the choice of soda requires expert consultation. Center of everything indeed.



A column connecting memory, present, and potential is unlocked through touch.

“Do you live near the shop?”

“Yeah, I live upstairs. Sometimes I think to move, but then I think it’s so handy. I spend 75% of my time here. You see all these colours? I can’t paint my apartment these colours, but I like to feel vivid, the colours give you happiness. My first home is the café, and my second is the apartment.”

I keep looking to my right. A row of windows lets light in from the street. They puncture the rich red wall, adorned with plants and photos of the menu items. “What makes this [the café] home to you?” I shift in my seat, again. The wooden chairs are sturdy and upright.

“The food, the cooking, the touching of the products. When I make the tortillas, I touch the flour and that transports me home. To be home, is to cook for myself. The opportunity to cook every day the dishes I had before or that I invented, that’s home.”

Design researcher Nishat Awan centralizes the discussion of agency when mapping and drawing diasporic space in London, U.K. By centralizing agency around the human body before working outward, human dialogue with appropriated spaces is meticulously logged. Rings on a plastic tablecloth where one too many hot cups of tea sat unattended, and a glowing sign at the door of the Khave (café), named after the owner’s favourite Turkish football team (Awan 2016). Makeshift construction & feverous adaptation. The ability to move and inhabit at a small scale is emphasized for the purposes of design research: We as designers have the ability to translate small physical moments into spaces that effect the landscape of diasporic agency at larger scales. One process in one space can spark a journey through many.

“I’ve been to every country except for Chile, Venezuela, and Paraguay. Each time I go, I go to the local markets and see what’s going on and all that. I pick certain things, and when I come back I create new dishes.”

“So, how do you invent a dish?”

“I was frying plantains for the breakfast. I used to have leftover plantain so I was like, what can I do? And that’s how I invented the maderito breakfast.”

She gestures loosely to the kitchen on my right. “There I made a mash from the plantain. I incorporated everything in it, then I made this rectangular patty and deep fried it. And I put black beans, chorizo, and melted cheese with fried eggs on top of salsa. It was about wasting less food, and about the combination of different countries. Mexico, Colombia, Argentina, plus my own.”

Café Aroma Latino is just that: Latino. I’m told that the café wouldn’t survive if she made it just focused on one country, her own. She wanted it to be representative of a small niche of every country she’s lived, visited, and has roots. In the back of my mind, I wonder who this café is for. The owner, Latin Americans, or anglophone locals?

“About 90% of my customers are Canadians. The other 10% are Latin Americans, and they come for the grocery part.”

I am once again reminded of my own habits, picking up ingredients I miss from childhood every couple months.

“Most are Canadians who traveled and miss the food. It’s quite interesting! Even Canadian people they come with the list, and they say we want to do tamales this winter!” She widens her eyes and leans in: “And I say, really?”

We both laugh. There are a lot of moments from this interview that are fuzzier memories, but this exchange remains crystal clear in my mind.

“They say yeah, we want to switch to tamales instead of turkey, but we want to do it as a family. Once again it’s about introducing the culture, that kind of mix.”



The process of making a menu item. The food provides a direct link to other spaces.

Sheringham and Brightwell highlight a third category of cultural practice instrumental in the formation of diasporic space: Consumption (Sheringham and Brightwell 2012). Café Aroma Latino becomes a true diasporic space. Not only dependent on the agency and hard work of its owner (and only full-time staff member), the café relies on all of us to come inside, buy its products, and eat its food. How we eat, where we eat, and how we talk about our experience



Planes establish memory, present, and potential within the column. Spaces, as the owner envisions them, arrive in people's homes through food.

are all components of the 'activity-space' that is the café. We don't all come from Latin American backgrounds, and our experiences in the shop shape its future, and make it distinctly transnational. The owner is still chuckling about the tamales. People don't realize how hard they are to make. She launches into the process:

"So first, we cut up the chicken and put it on the side. The second day, I do the recado, the sauce. After that, you cut and roast the peppers, then almost the day before you have to cook, cut and clean the banana leaves. The day you put everything together we cook the masa in lard."

These are very classic Guatemalan tamales. Personally, I prefer the Colombian ones.

"When covid hit, I put on Instagram that I would make tamales. My two sisters, my niece and myself made 300 tamales! One was putting the masa, and the other one was putting the chicken and vegetables, and the other was putting the sauce and I was folding them. It was a factory."

Her dining room transforms into 300 mini dinner tables in my mind. Some of these tables sit in small apartments, others in large, bright, family homes. 300 or so Haligonians experiencing what it's like to eat your culture's food physically alone but digitally connected. This thought takes a bit after the interview to really materialize for me. So in that moment I try to bring it back to 'space,' but she stays firm.

"Are there places in Guatemala this space reminds you of?"

"No, not really. I don't have the imagination for decoration and other things, but I have imagination for doing, for cooking. When people ask me 'What is your vision?' I have no clue."

I'm sitting across from her, puzzled. My mind works through images. To me, this café is hundreds of my own memories, and I'm just looking at it. Unfazed, she describes putting it all together.

"I went down to talk to a carpenter in Guatemala. I took the idea from Colombia for the tables, and then the furniture it was made form Guatemala. The same with the ceramic, I



The tamale-making process. The column receives a boundary: How does one cross it?

designed the ceramic, so I went to a potter, and he says yeah, we can do that. The process was the vision.”

Her laser-focus drifts from me, finally, and lands on the floor.

“You know the floors, it was during the pandemic, and I painted the floors by myself for two weeks. I had a stencil, but I did it free-eye, no measuring.”



The boundary becomes porous once more. Making the food creates the space, and sharing the food allows it to be accessed.

The black decorative pattern curves slightly, following the slight widening of the corridor from the front door to where we sit. It doesn't look particularly deliberate, but it flows with the space. Not perfectly aligned but not abruptly disjointed, it's a visual effect that could only be produced by doing first and visualizing later. We take a bit of a pause before I ask her, what does she really want out of this café?

"When we landed here, it was 1987. People were asking me, 'Do you wear shoes?' 'Do you have TVs?'"

We're sitting here 36 years later. While the circumstances may have changed, those experiences still remain fresh in her mind.

"I do this to cook, but mainly to share. To teach the culture."

Chapter 5: The Diasporic Home

On 'Latin America'

The community I grew up in was transnational. Guatemalan aunties scoff at the Colombian tamales served over Christmas, and the Colombian men who malign Central American boleros danced to Cuban music every January at the Olympic Center. If not overtly recognized in the plates of empanadas & tamales next to the Christmas turkey, the Canadian context facilitated the foreign conditions where diverse nationalities that compose Latin America must intermingle.

'Latin American' is a broad distinction. Covering broadly predominantly Hispanic nation-states in the Americas, use of the term in Canada & the United States alongside Hispanic, 'Latino' & 'Spanish' is sometimes associated with cultural homogenization, flattening the geopolitical region and its inhabitants into a cultural stereotype (Khattar, Vela, and Roque 2022) (Etzioni 2002) (Oboler 1995). Within immigrant communities, nationalities may intermingle out of necessity or proximity, creating transnationalities that define the community outside of the 'neither here nor there' cultural binary. In regions with categorically small immigrant populations, these transnationalities are a defining feature of immigrant culture (Lima 2010). The term 'Latin American' may prescribe a homogeneity in immigrant communities, but it may also function as the analytical scope for the many interlocking transnationalities made out of necessity in smaller Latin immigrant populations in Canada.

The Latin American community in Halifax is one of those small but growing immigrant communities in Canada. Just

Mexico
90,585

Colombia
80,570

El Salvador
49,445

Chile
27,755

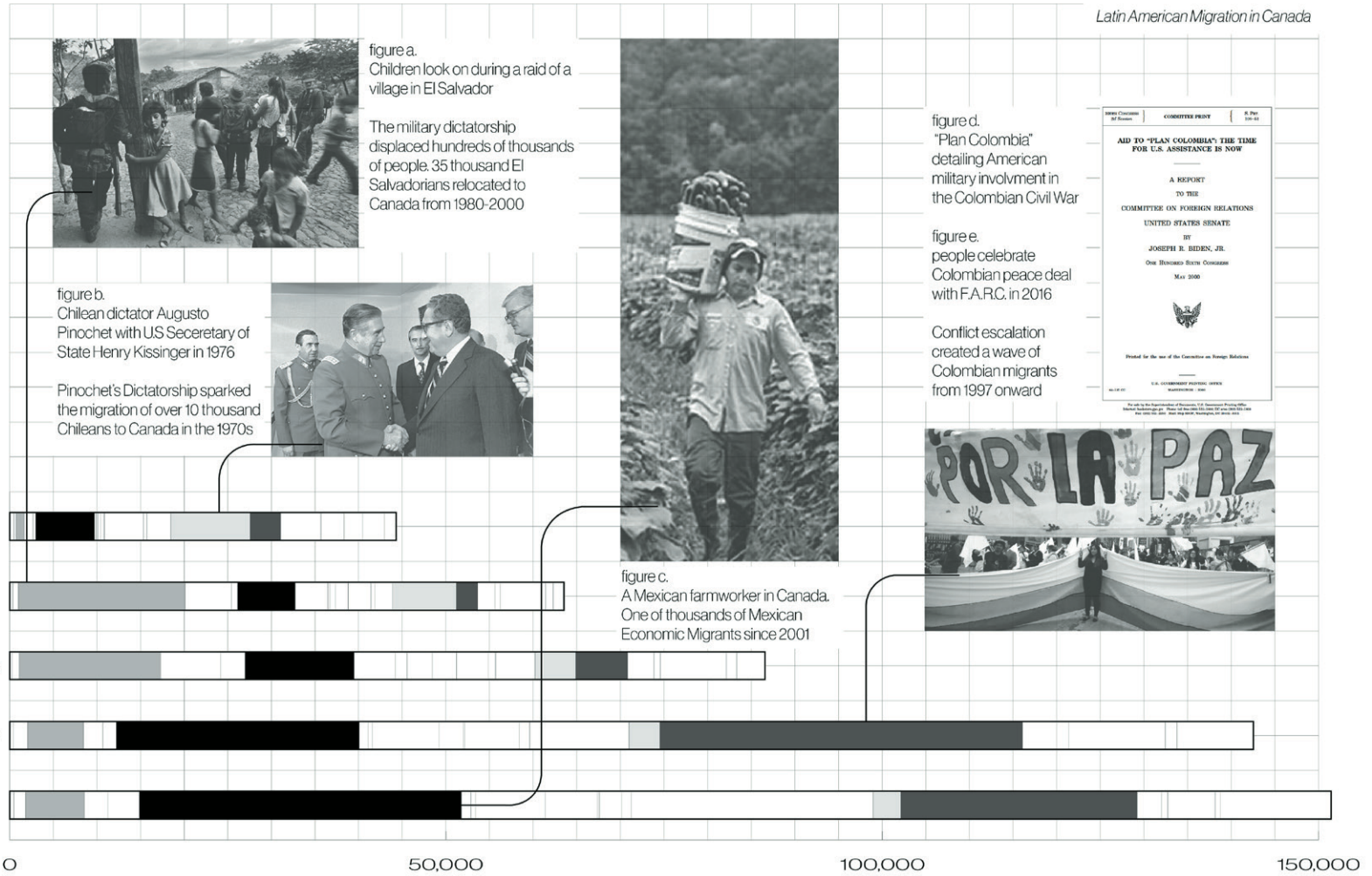
< 1980

1980-1990

1991-2000

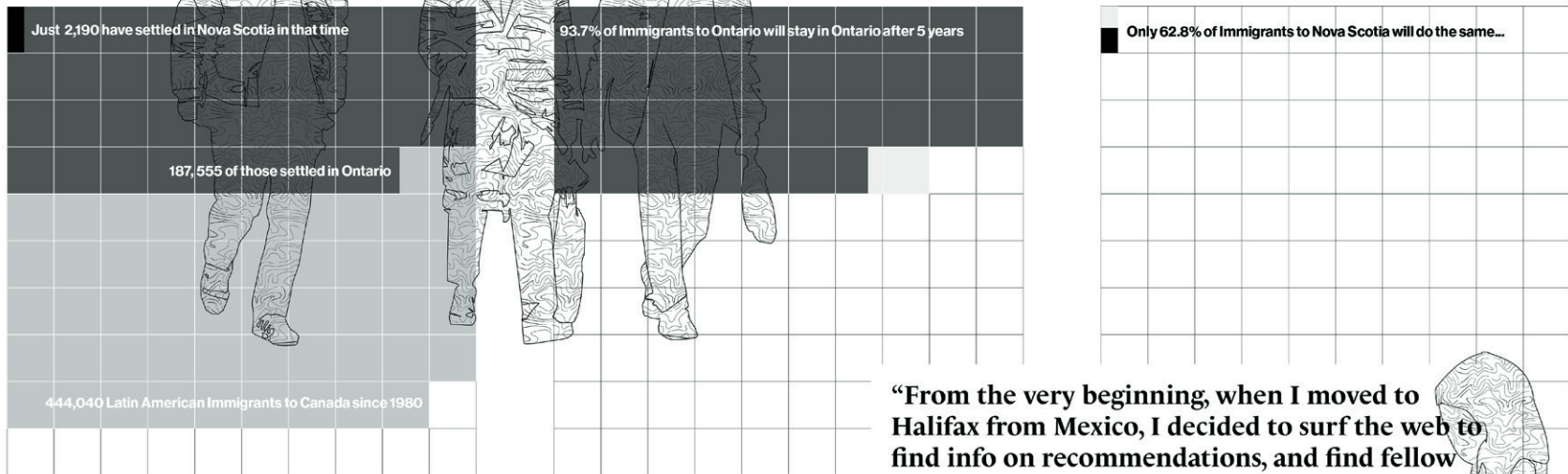
2001-2010

2011-2021



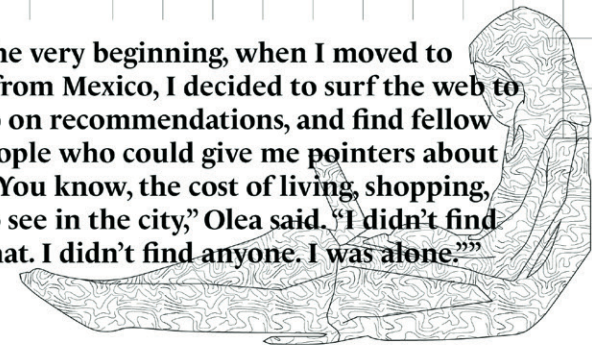
Latin American immigration to Canada by decade and citizenship 1940 to 2021 (Statistics Canada 2022). Figure a. Photograph by Donna De Cesare 1987 (Lybarger 2013). Figure b. Photograph by Otto Betman 1976 (Laborde 2023). Figure c. Photograph by Laura Elizabeth Pohl 2011 (RIGHTS 2018). Figure d. Joseph R. Biden Jr. 2000 "Aid to 'Plan Colombia:..." (US. Government Publishing Office 2000). Figure e. Photograph by John Vizcaino n.d. (Klobucista and Renwick 2017).

“In Toronto, we had an entire neighbourhood for Latin people,” Gomez said. “In Toronto, I could see it. I mean, it’s a huge place, and of course there’s lots of events, Latin events you could join and meet Latin people. I’ve not seen anything like that here.”



Latin American Immigration to Canada and Retention of Canadian Immigrants

“From the very beginning, when I moved to Halifax from Mexico, I decided to surf the web to find info on recommendations, and find fellow Latin people who could give me pointers about Halifax. You know, the cost of living, shopping, places to see in the city,” Olea said. “I didn’t find any of that. I didn’t find anyone. I was alone.””



Latin American Immigrants to Nova Scotia, Ontario, and Canada (total) from 1940 to 2021 (Statistics Canada 2022) and immigrant retention rates from 2014 to present for Ontario, and Nova Scotia (Statistics Canada 2022). Includes quotations from “Halifax’s Spanish speakers try to build a Community” published in *The Signal* (Rangel and Stewart 2021).

over 2000 Latin American immigrants have settled in Nova Scotia since 1980 and only 62.8% of total immigrants to Nova Scotia in 2014 were still living in the province five years later (Statistics Canada 2022). Common shared languages are more important than national identity. Programs, initiatives, and news coverage of the community focus on Spanish speakers as a whole (Rangel, Abel and Stewart, Avery 2021), searching for a community visible enough that it's 'worth' covering. Community initiatives and businesses such as 'Los Primos' and 'Café Aroma Latino' reflect many different nationalities in the cultural content they create and the demographics they serve.

In this context, treating Latin American immigrants as a recognizable immigrant community in Halifax provides necessary emphasis on the transnationalities that uniquely position immigrant communities not 'here nor there,' but as diasporas.

Narrative-Space

The topological conception of the diaspora used here relies on viewing space as 'relational' instead of fixed. In an interpretation of Leibniz's summarization of the Baroque, Deleuze writes on how the convergence of physical and allegorical actors around an object redefine it as an 'event' unique to its socio-spatial context (Deleuze 1993, 19). In a study of diasporic agency in the global city, Design researcher Nishat Awan argues for a topological conception of space, privileging human relational exchange over fixed spatial geometries. Awan writes on 'body localities,' fluid geographies fine-tuned to specific human spaces and temporalities (Awan 2016, 20). Implicitly addressing the dissonance between analyses on human and object-

based spatial production, Actor Network Theory (ANT) conceptualizes human and non-human actors within a non-hierarchical web of relations, where network intersections along lines of interests (read: motivations) constitute the event (Latour 1996).

If we accept human reality as an indeterminable web of motivations, relations, and events, how do we make sense of it? Sociological applications of ANT often criticize the lack of an inherent organizational strategy to analyze notions of agency, marginalization, trust, or conflict between human actors (Sismondo 2010, 87–92). More conventional methods of analysis such as modified coding or social taxonomy may pull out specific types of actors or multiple sets of actors from specific distant relations. But those events, however categorized, remain relatively disconnected.

In *Narrative Architecture*, architect Nigel Coates describes narrative as the central organizational vehicle for all actors around real and imagined events. It is a device that shapes and simplifies events into an order that provokes the imagination (Coates 2012, 15). In the kitchen of culture narrative is the recipe. A recipe constructed, augmented, and made significant by one or many narrator cooks. Flat networks of events and exchanges become selectively illuminated along the path of human experience. Narrative helps tell us what interactions are important ‘now,’ and how they are important ‘to each other,’ rather than telling us what interactions are objectively ‘important.’ Anthropologist Clifford Geertz once quipped “culture is the stories we tell ourselves about ourselves” (Price 2010, 203). As three cultural generators in Latin-American immigrant communities, the consumption, creation, and contestation

of space as characterized by Sheringham & Brightwell (2012) have found homes in the three stories of this thesis.

Storytelling is equally as important for the longevity of architectural design. In *Confabulations, Storytelling in Architecture*, Paul Emmonds and Luc Phinney note that stories gain importance and weight with repetition, unlike information whose value evaporates when it is no longer new (Emmonds and Phinney 2017, 2). As with the practice of memory, the repetition of stories across written and oral media produces ever-evolving narratives able to hold conflicting values to adapt across shifting topological notions of space.

Griffiths argues that so long as the city can be read as a text, the text can likewise be read as a city using a literary chronotype. Characterizing the portrayal and role of time and space in literature, the literary chronotype allows the written narrative to become spatially legible and transposable on a social urban environment (Griffiths 2015). The three stories of this thesis form a topological landscape: A landscape that creates active networks between many parallel homes and distant temporalities (Awan 2016). Explored as an analytical device in oral narrative, the chronotype becomes the vehicle from which narrative-based design-research can comprehend the axes of time and space.

Diaspora as Methodological Framework

Defined simply as the dispersal of a people from their original homeland (Oxford Dictionary 2023) use of the term 'diaspora' is often so broad as to require categorization, limitation, and context outside the field of diaspora studies. Initially referring to the dispersal of Jewish, Greek and Armenian communities from B.C.E onward, 'diaspora'

expanded in use in the 20th century to refer to formerly enslaved West-African communities in North-America and modern African migration into Europe. The modernization of the term's use to accommodate both hyper-specific migratory communities and broad historical categories of displacement may weaken its use as a word but increase its potential as a methodological framework.

As the numbers of migratory communities that adopt the term 'diaspora' expand, communities that were previously identified as 'nomadic' or 'immigrant' may also be referred to as diasporas (Butler 2021). Diasporic identification has long been predicated on a migratory communities' relationship to their homeland(s). As scholarship includes more people within the diasporic umbrella and more communities assume the term, our understanding of the word has shifted alongside our understanding of home.

Design-researcher Nishat Awan confronts this relationship to home by deviating from it completely: Awan theorizes that as human migration accelerates, and more communities identify as diasporic, we all trend to the diasporic condition of 'without home' (Awan 2016, 10). Awan conceptualizes the diaspora as a topology: a relational landscape composed of movement, action, memory, and communication among its members and through the environments they inhabit (Awan 2016, 11). To Awan, diasporas create their own unique space-time. If we take the diaspora as a human topology of relations rather than a physical geography, why couldn't the diasporic 'home' be wherever its practices occur, and its narratives evolve?

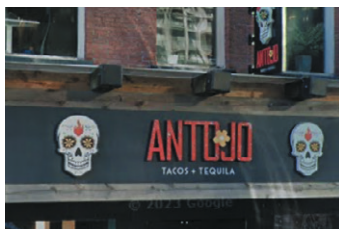
Cultural geographers Alison Blunt & Olivia Sheringham refer to these relations as 'home-city geographies.' Most

explorations of urban domesticity privilege domestic interactions within traditional public spaces. While this scholarship recognizes the complicated geographies of domesticity in the diaspora, their focus reflects the binary distinction between 'public' and 'private' as it reflects the assumption of the home as a private and exclusively domestic space (Blunt and Sheringham 2019). It becomes important to then view home as a typological space of meaning, filled with narratives that run across traditional concepts of domesticity to occur in multiple urban spatial typologies.

In the absence of an identifiable 'centre' of the Latin American diaspora in Halifax, 'home' is a comprehensive point of reference from which to understand and identify meaningful diasporic spaces. In the poetics of space, Gaston Bachelard writes "all really inhabited space bears the essence of the notion of home" (Bachelard 1958, 5). Human imagination within the home establishes an interplay between written, spoken, or visual narratives and their physical surroundings (Bachelard 1958, 7-17).

The narrative aspect of 'home' functions along the medium of time, and the home's physical dimension exists in the world of space. Where there are multiple sites of 'home' digital communication functions as a compressor of time and space: A compression instrumental in forming transnationalities that Awan cites as inherent to the contemporary diaspora (Awan 2016, 61). Not 'without home,' the diaspora is instead the topological network of narratives, built infrastructure, & online interactions that immigrant communities weave together to habitually 'create home.'

Diasporic Networks of Home



Bar signs borrowing Day of the Dead imagery adorn a corporate-owned bar on the Argyle Street entertainment strip, Halifax, NS. Screenshot taken July 3, 2023 (Google StreetView 2022).



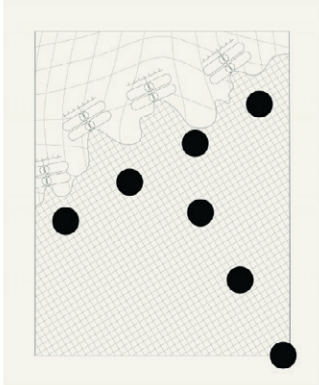
A screenshot of the 'Colombianos que viven en Nova Scotia' Facebook group. Screenshot taken July 3, 2023 (Facebook 2023).

Narrative, infrastructural, and online networks involved in the production of 'home' within the diaspora do so due to their ubiquity in the cultural production of the city. Memories of urban squares in Latin America invite comparisons to the waterfront & the public gardens. Faux nods to Latin American aesthetics adorn downtown businesses. A Facebook group for Colombians in Halifax started in 2017 sits mostly populated by advertisements for a local Colombian import company. They aren't written well and get 1 'like.' The three networks of the Latin American diaspora are individually weak and two-dimensional. Digital efforts of connection within the community often go unrealized. Lessons from the similarities in the joy of inhabited public space across continents remain confined to the realm of imagination, and ethnic 'mood-boards' break out like acne on building facades.

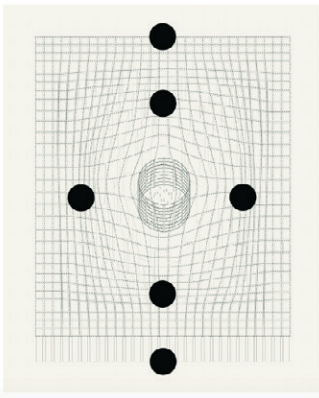
Individually, these networks provide a diagnosis on the state of the culture. When woven together, they successfully characterize growing diasporic home-spaces. The oral narrative is the vehicle, organizing physical spaces through the chronotype of the story. Digital networks augment both time and space of diasporic narratives. And in this thesis, the three oral narratives help to identify home-spaces through oral culture among the Latin American diaspora here.

Chapter 6: Narrative Method

Situating Home



This thesis takes the view of mapping as a potentially emancipatory act. By the process of selecting and synthesizing information, mapping can illuminate and erase prominent histories of a place. I place an emphasis on mapping the liminal ways oral narratives of the diaspora weave through the digital landscapes that connect them, the physical infrastructures they inhabit, and themselves. The products of these images are iterations of a kind of ‘thick description’ of culture, borrowing ideas from the work of anthropologist Clifford Geertz (Geertz 1973) who conceptualized of the ‘thick description’ as a way to illuminate and analyze the liminal.



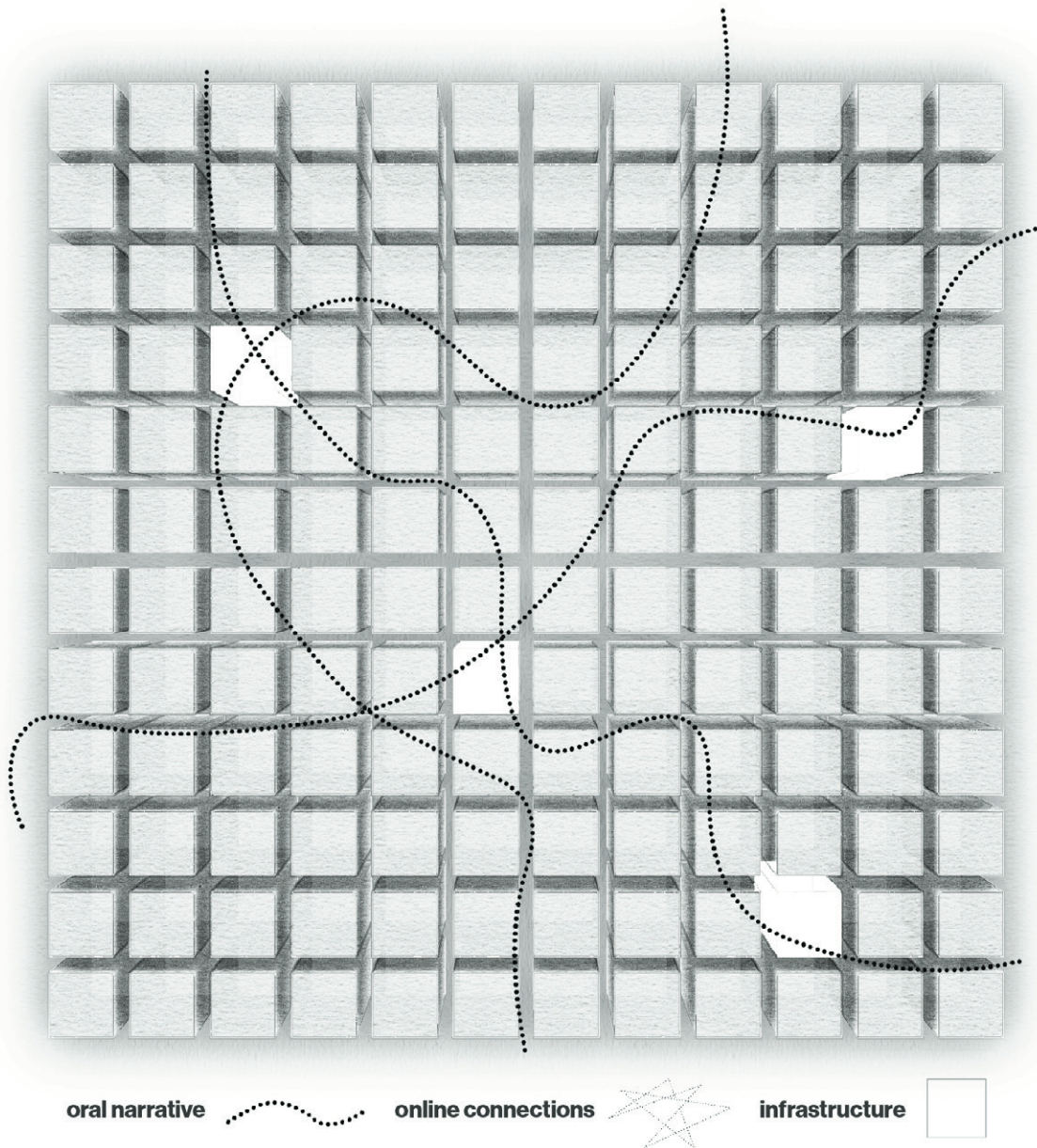
Believing in the imaginative design-potential of mapping, landscape architect and academic James Corner identified four mapping ‘operations,’ used to both describe and speculate on landscape: Drift, layering, game-board, and rhizome. A concept with roots in the French scholarship of relational space, to drift is to muddy the distinctions between cognitive and conventional mapping (Corner 2011, 95). It is in search of the ephemeral qualities that connect through a city’s geographic coordinates. By applying the principles of cognitive mapping onto research methods grounded in the body, we begin to understand the city and its physical and ephemeral forces through the oral narrative.

Diagrams of urban erasure
and other ephemerality.
(Pop 2021).

The cognitive mapping of this thesis loosely applies the principles of drift, sifting through the three components of diasporic oral culture, the oral narrative, digital landscapes, and physical infrastructures, to generate typological

representations of the home-spaces as described in the stories of the Garden, the Square, and the Café.

Through the typological analysis of the three narratives through the three components of diasporic oral culture, we can situate found and augmented typologies within the city for use in design.



Components of diasporic oral culture: The Oral Narrative, Digital Infrastructures and The Built Environment. The oral narrative weaves through digital and infrastructural landscapes.

Visualizing Home

Conceived as an alternative to increasingly realistic representations of designed architectural work, the process of collaging creates its own pictorial reality through methodical decontextualization (Wehmeyer 2021, 28). Collage allows design-researchers to decontextualize multiple disparate references, graphics, and practices. Recently, collage has been explored as both a design practice and an architecture-adjacent representational strategy (Wehmeyer 2021, 25).

This thesis uses collage as both an illustrative strategy to communicate the intimate nature of the three narratives and as a literal architectural framework from which spaces can be extrapolated and analyzed. Similar to the role of sketching in architecture as a way to slow down the design process explored by Goldschmidt (1991), the methodical process of collage becomes both a reflective and generative tool for architects (Wehmeyer 2021, 32).

The ability to create imagined realities with real components offers potential for the production of alternative geographies within the city. Awan describes the production of body locality among diasporic subjects as the fundamental mechanism from which diasporas transcend linear time and geographic space (Awan 2016, 57). By embarking on the collage process, there is an understanding that the inhabitation of the diasporic landscapes within this thesis will be defined by the pre-selected parts of the collage and their relationships to one-another.

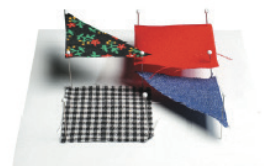
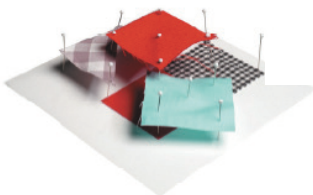
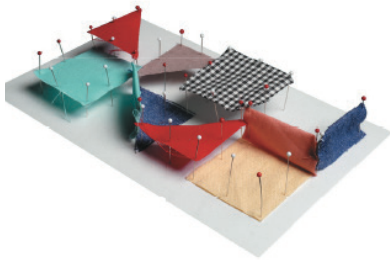
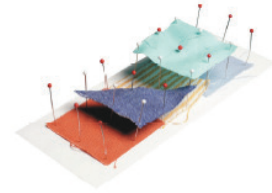
The collage process gives us characters who become actors in the images we produce. Our characters may be ephemeral, non-animate, or human actors. Their graphic positioning in relation to one-another during the collaging

process creates literal relationships, ripe for translation into space. Through spatial translation of collaged images, we can identify architectural operations to move us further through design. The reliance on collage in this thesis not only presents it as a valuable representable tool but reaffirms collage as an activity native to the design process.



An image showing the diversity of activities included under the umbrella of 'home.' A hand is engaged in some sort of narrative renovation. The collage not only illustrates the diversity of home, it introduces a depth onto and behind an otherwise flat building facade.

Spatializing Home



Imagining the quilt as an inhabitable space
(Frail 2022).

Alongside collage, pattern recognition is becoming a key part of contemporary architectural practice. An analytical approach rooted in pattern recognition requires a larger scope of focus and a de-centering of any one specific event. In their book *Tooling*, Aranda and Lasch identify seven patterns found in our material environment. Identified patterns are interpreted according to function through analogy in order to identify their inherent qualities and produce seven 'recipes' for design (Aranda and Lasch 2006).

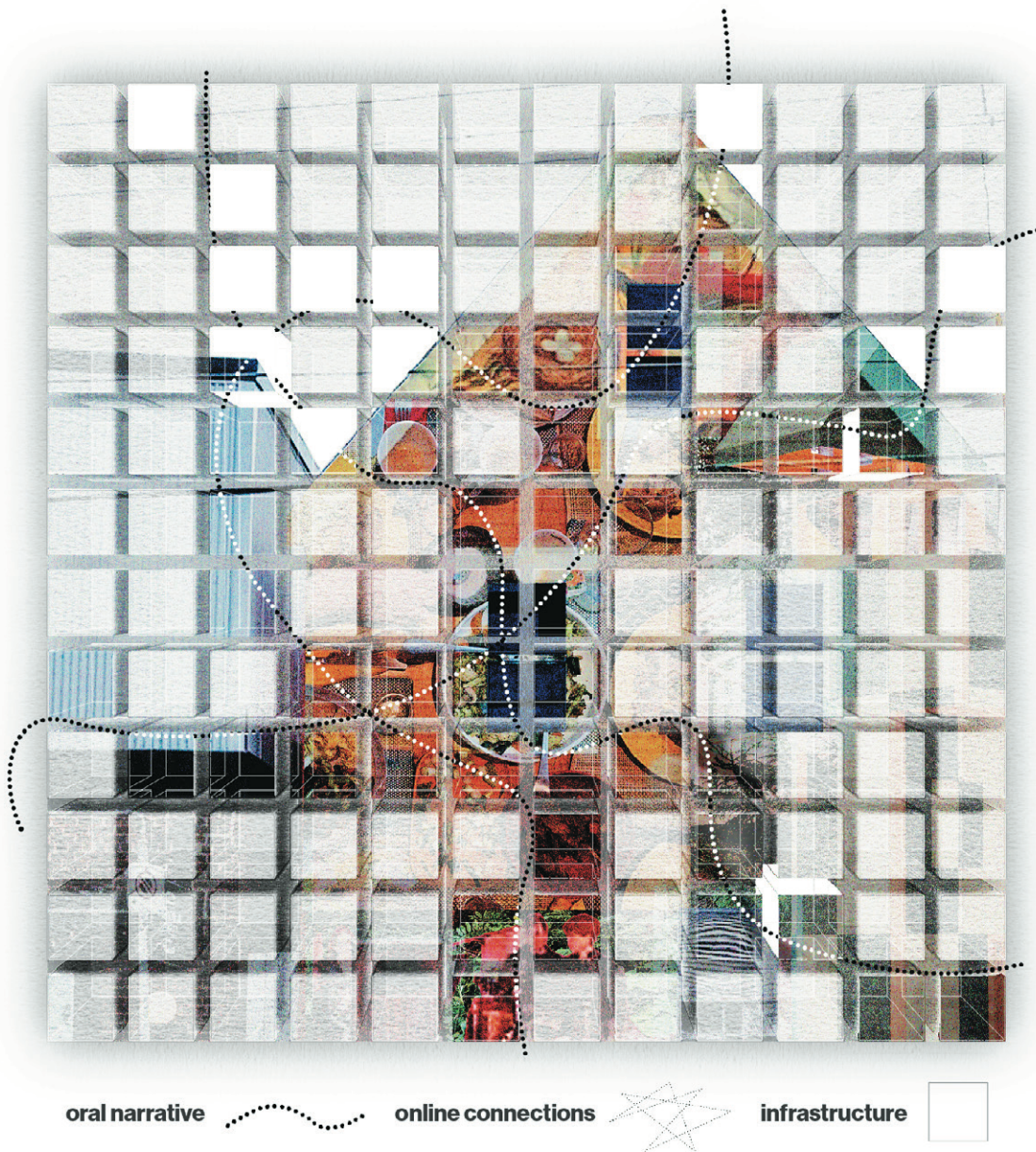
The use of analogy in architectural design may coincide with both the return to collage and growth of literal interpretations of urban patterns over metaphorical readings. Where translation through analogy has a more functional direct relationship, metaphor relies on similarities for the translation of ideas from one thing to another.

In a comparison of metaphor and analogy as teaching tools in post-secondary design education, those who viewed design as a process of exploration preferred analogy, and were more likely to generate and test a suite of options in order to iterate towards a solution. Those who viewed design as a process of selection preferred metaphor, and were more likely to identify a list of options and choose one (Hey et al. 2008, 286).

- ◀ Collage is a layered, slow, and rewarding process. Designers are required to make many iterative decisions through finding, preparing, modifying, and assembling material. The fragmentary and unpredictable nature of oral narrative necessitates an adaptable process with many decision points like collage to functionally translate narrative patterns from graphic compositions into three-dimensional relationships.

Home-City Landscapes

Architectural operations and spatial configurations from collage are considered within the conclusions generated from cognitive mapping. Diasporic oral cultural networks identify opportunities for integration of a diasporic architectural language into the city. Together, they form a topological home-city landscape of the diaspora.



The Final Wish Image: Components of diasporic oral culture are shown. The oral narrative weaves through digital and infrastructural landscapes

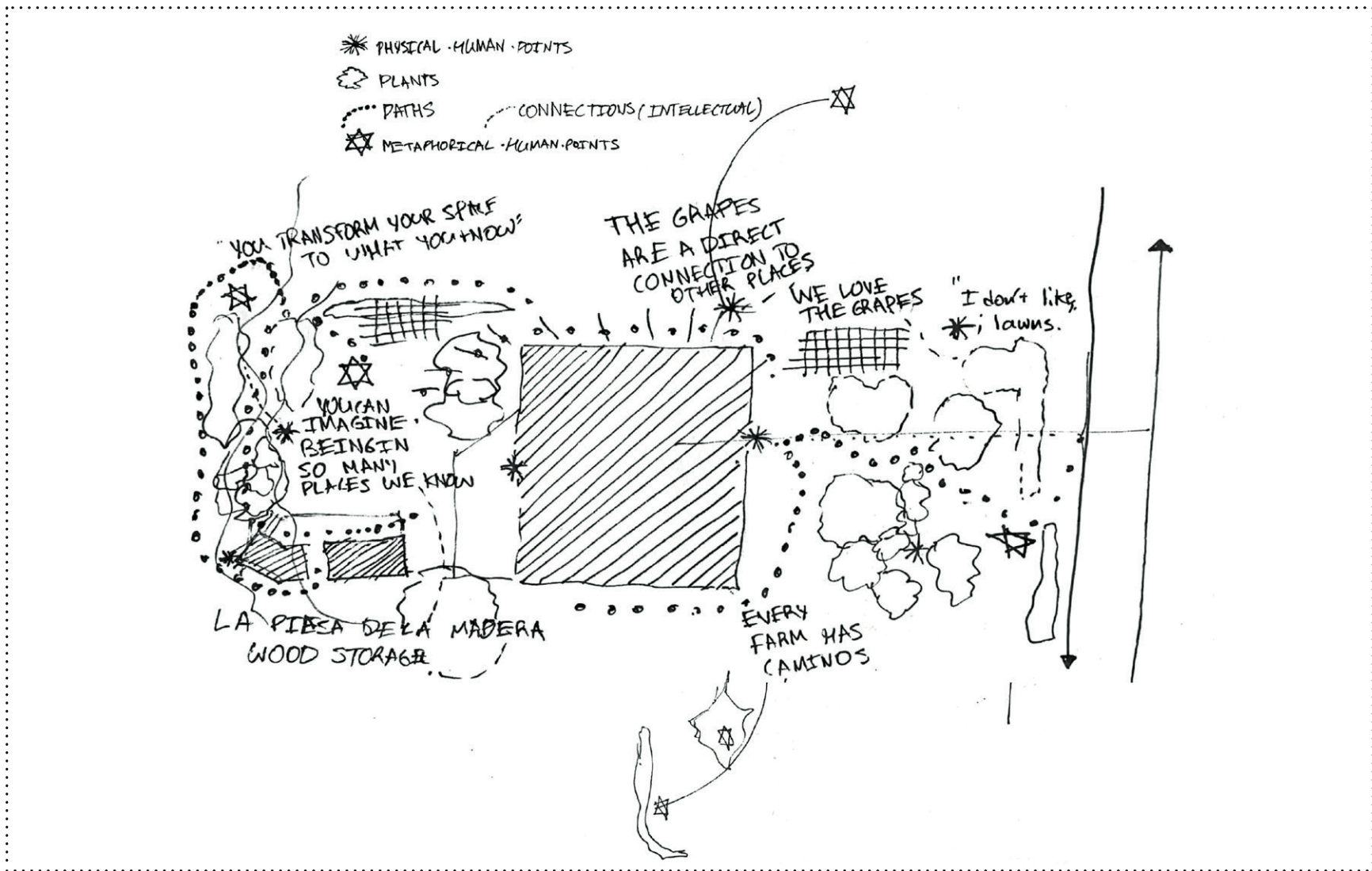
Chapter 7: Mapping Home Infrastructures

The Oral Narrative

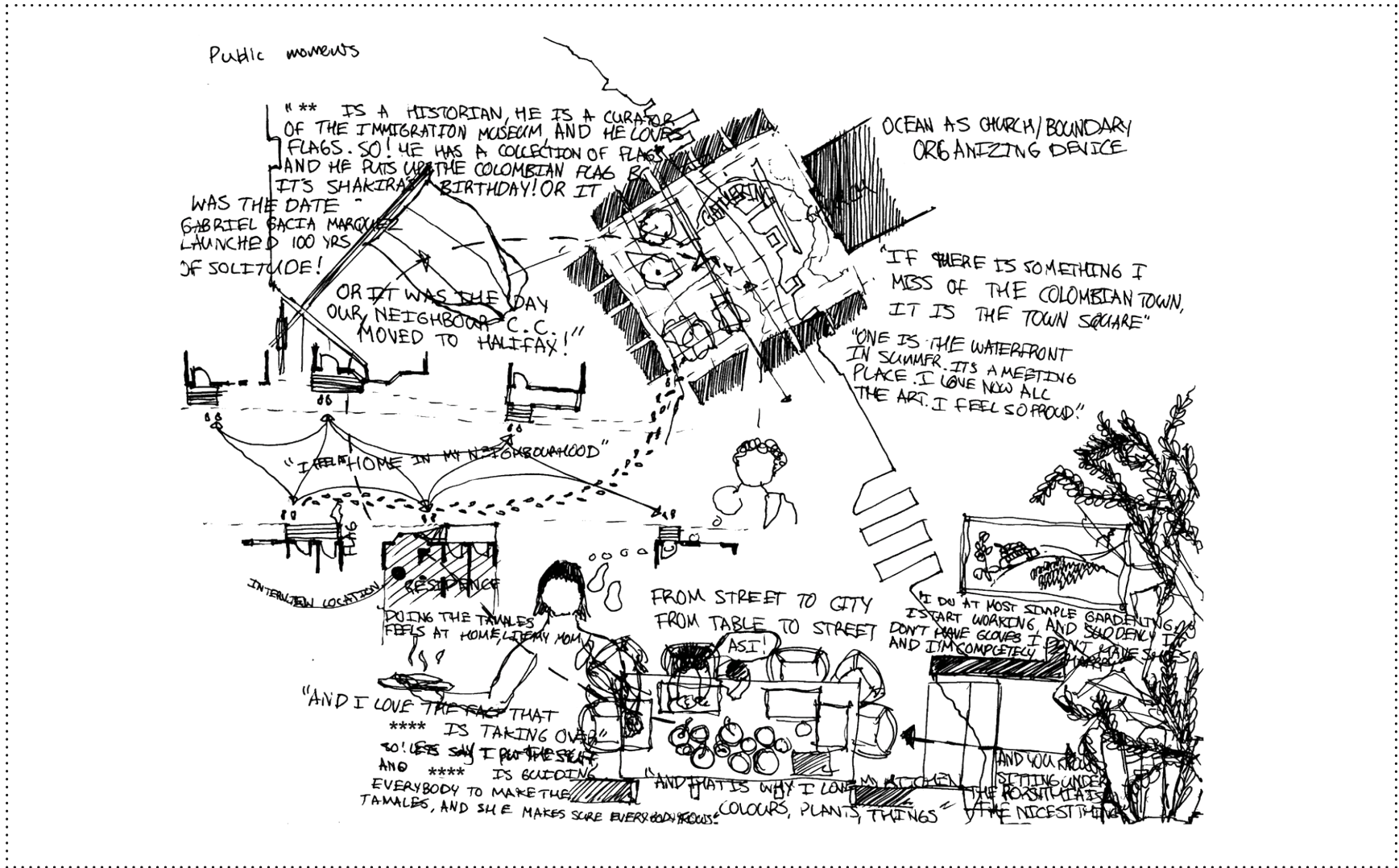
In a study of Turkish diasporic spaces in London, Awan uses the social space of the Khave to identify moments of human agency in the city (Awan 2016, 55). Awan constructs diasporic narrative from first-person observation and cognitive mapping of the spaces that she studies. However, in communities that lack identifiable diasporic cultural spaces, design-researchers must continue to identify ways to understand the built environment, directly or indirectly.

Oral communication is grounded in human action, and may be the primary method of cultural production in emergent immigrant communities. Awan uses body locality to generate a topological landscape from physical space grounded in human agency (Awan 2016, 57). Can we expand the application of body locality as a concept to create topological landscape from oral narrative?

In the *Dialectics of sketching*, Gabriella Goldschmidt posits sketching in architectural design as a generative process of not only selecting information but transforming our environmental perception (Goldschmidt 1991, 140). The human mechanism of sketching lies in dialogue with the content that is being analyzed and translated. As such, upon completion of the interview, I sketched out a 'map.' For each interview I identified moments of connection across space, references to materiality, and objects that develop a sense of place. Together, these develop the graphic spine of the oral narrative, providing conceptual and literal graphic linkages to be explored in further mapping and design.

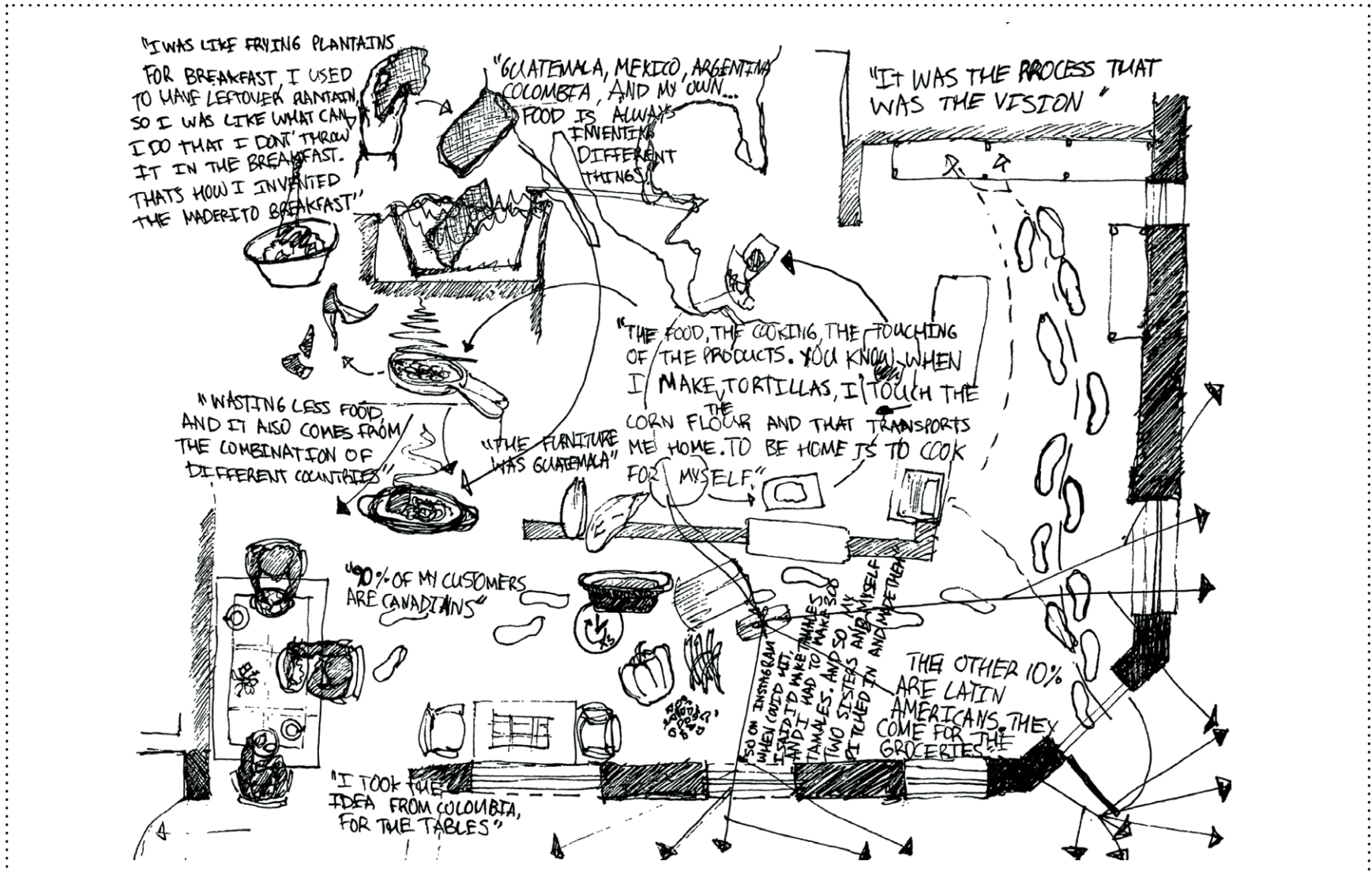


Oral map of the Garden interview. This plan depicts a fragmented conception of time and space, made cyclical through the paths (caminos) of the Garden.



Oral map of the square. The experience of public space transcends purpose built spaces and creates analogical links across time and space.

****: The Interviewee's Daughter. **: A Neighbour



Oral map of the Cafe. The Cafe is a space created by process and augmented by digital and oral connection.

Mapping Autobiographical Time

The Garden

The garden interview was the first interview held for this thesis. Unlike the other interviews, it was deliberately rooted in a specific place, a single family home property in a suburban Dartmouth neighbourhood. The garden snakes around the property, anchored by caminos. The caminos run in circles around the lot. They connect the caretaker to other places, and they provide opportunities for him to share his culture. In a study of autobiographical narratives, Jens Brockmeier identifies several models of narrative time: Linear, circular, cyclical, & fragmented (Brockmeier 2000, 61). The resulting map was very heavily based in the plan to reflect the importance of the caminos in this story.

At a certain point, their forks and diverging directions recombine parts of the garden and create opportunities for evolution. The little girl runs down a camino to the path by her house, making her own camino next-door. Often-times during the interview, we would jump decades, talking about whatever came to our minds as we walked. While this would follow a fragmentary temporal model, as we walked in circles our repetition created a unique chronological order. The sequence of memories provoked by the routes through the garden created their own narrative time, more akin to a cyclical model. Around and around. Similar, but never the same.

The Square

The three interviews occurred over several months between September 2022 and March 2023. As a result, representational methods evolve alongside the research

process. My focus on an individual place become a focus on the connections between types of spaces in the city. This shift occurred alongside the conceptualization of home as an ephemeral typology. The oral map of the square relies less on the plan, and reads more as a storyboard from a graphic novel. Similarly, the actual interview connected multiple spaces. Plan, section, and perspective exist in a cyclical organization on the page. However, the model of autobiographical time that is represented here is more fragmentary. The graphic organization of the piece follows a walking route from the interviewees home through various public spaces of the city to the waterfront, the central space of the story.

The Cafe

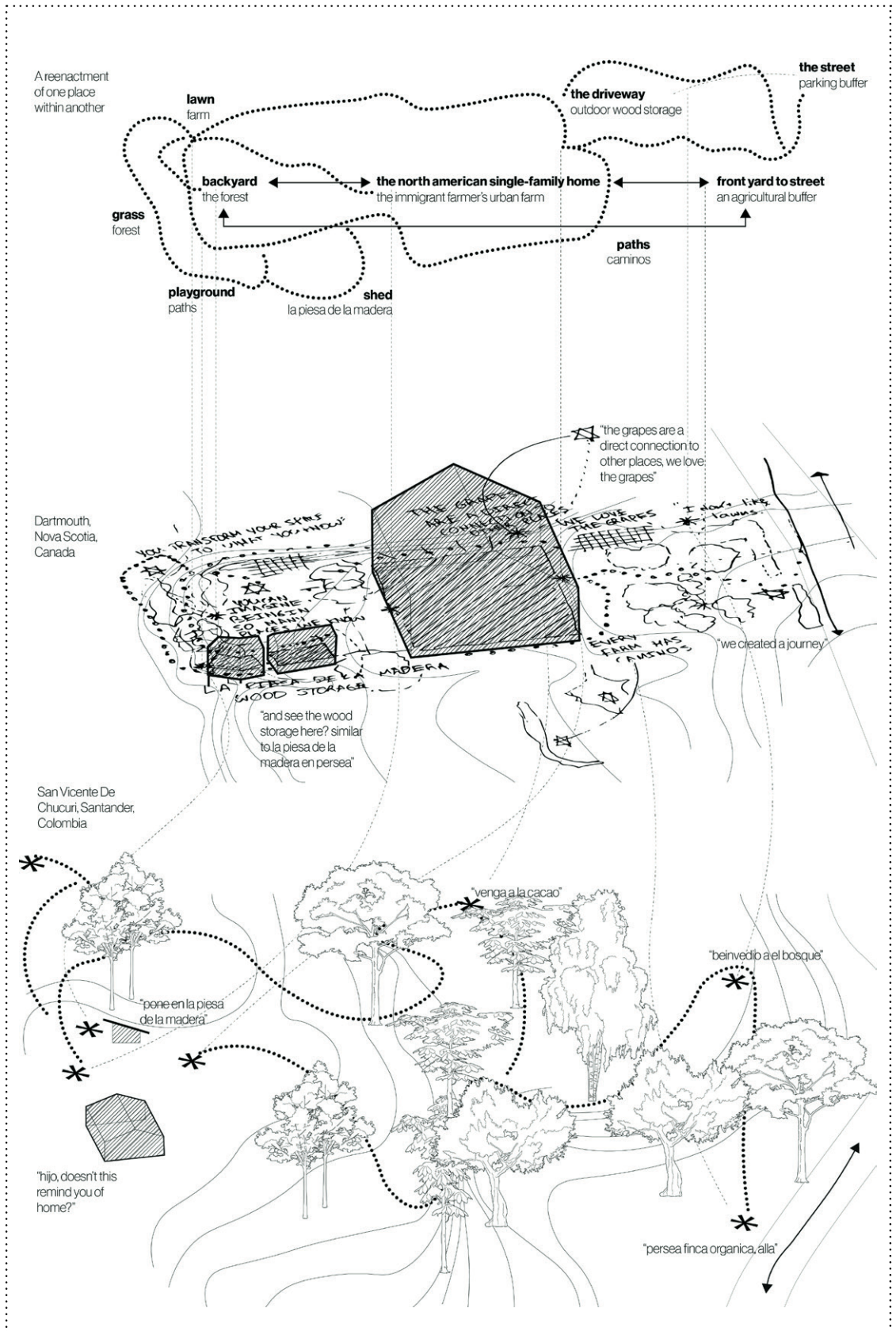
The fragmentary model is described as a “timeless” form of autobiographical time (Brockmeier 2000, 69). Brockmeier dips into the postmodern, writing that autobiographical accounts from the modern era are increasingly de-centering time and privileging human experience (Brockmeier 2000, 70). It is in this respect that these three interviews are at their heart fragmentary modes of time. Where the garden was made cyclical by its organization in space, the cafe remains fragmented and energetic within the space that it occupies. It is human movement and the process of cooking that augments the fragmentary mode of time, giving it a linear aspect. However, this is not explored until later chapters. What this oral map gives us is an inhabitation of the space. It shows us how it becomes permeable and augmented by and the physical and digital aspects of the business.

The Built Environment

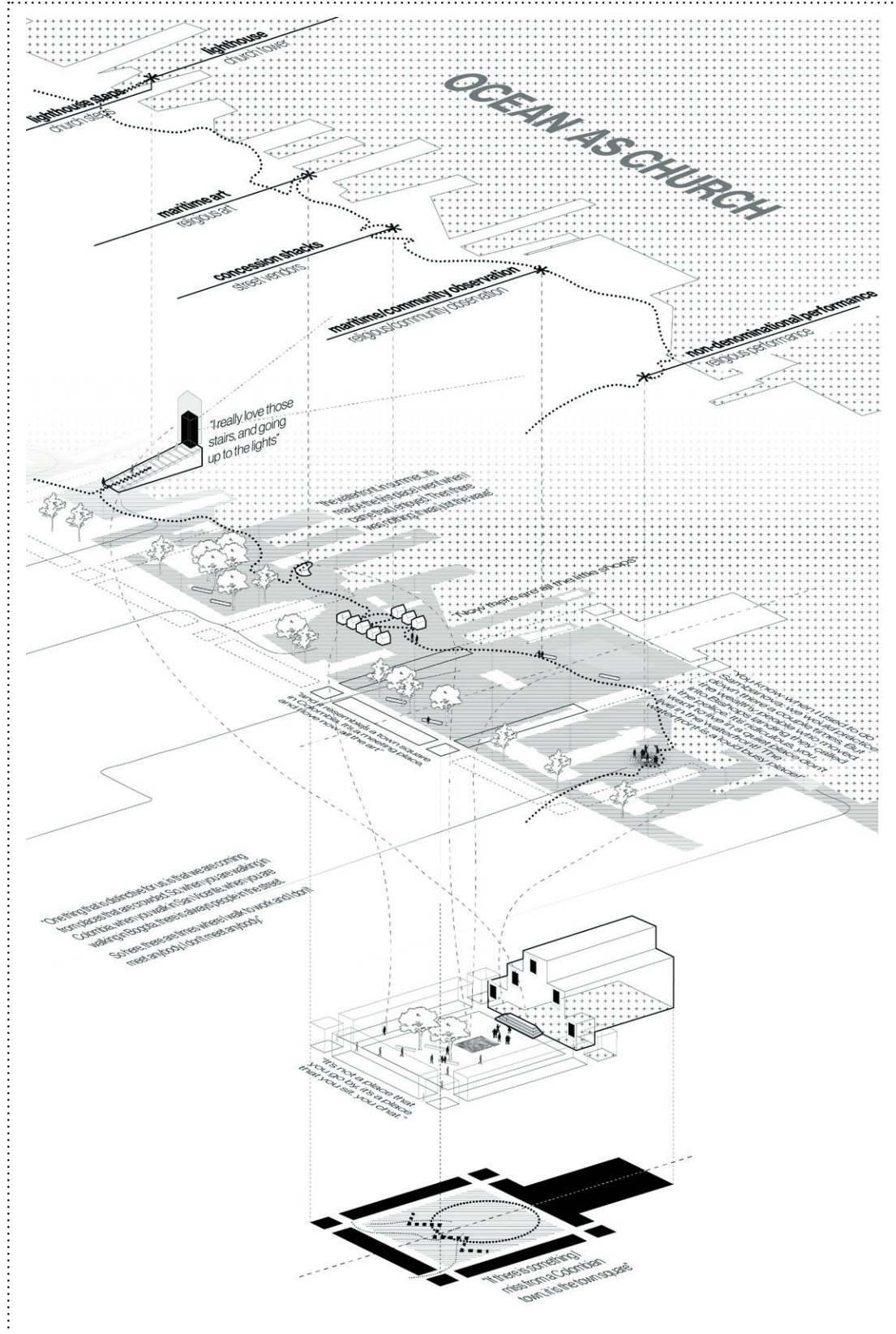
Oral cultures in the contemporary era do not exist in isolation. Tangentially related to the deep body of literary research, the word orality is used to describe oral cultures. Linguistics researchers distinguish between primary and secondary oralities: Primary oralities being oral cultures in isolation and secondary oralities being mediated by some form of environmental media (Yeganeh 2021, 565). However, this research does not consider the impact of spatial typology and configuration on oral communication, limiting its analysis of mediatory media to digital forms of communication: TV, internet, phones. Design-research necessitates the inclusion of space to identify sites within the city where narrative moments gathered from the interviews can be contextualized.

Awan's study of the Turkish Khave allowed her to create alternative urban geographies from existing networks of domestic spaces (Awan 2016, 50-74). The emphasis on home-spaces in this thesis not only helped structure the oral interviews but helps develop a point of analysis for understanding diasporic geographies of the city. The following maps construct layered guides of prominent home-spaces from each interview. They view each home-space as a typology, identifying specific moments of materiality, place, and human behaviour that augment their respective domestic, public, and commercial spaces.

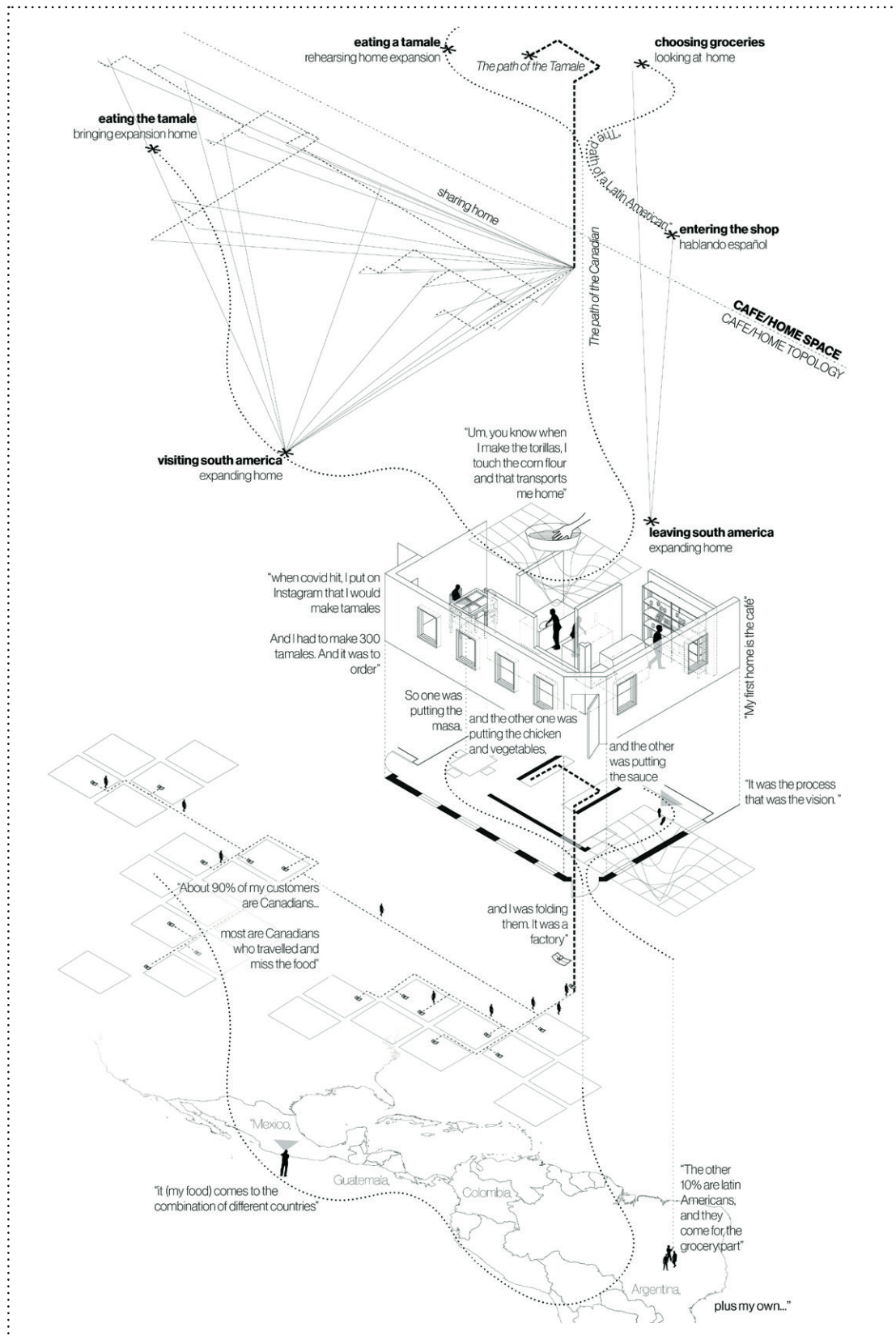
The cognitive mapping here does not seek to project our narrative world onto a flat geographic one. Instead, this work seeks to identify alternative geographies of the city and organize them into what Awan describes in topological terms (2016, 19-21): Relational landscapes of the diaspora.



An infrastructural map of the garden: Exploring home augmentation through typology in isolation.



An Infrastructural map of the central analogy of the square exploring the 'pressure points' of tension and connection across geographies and memory.



An infrastructural map of the cafe showing cooking processes, their augmentation through digital means, and a schism of use between Canadian and Latin American customers.

Layering Spaces

The Garden

Two gardens exist in the space of one. Together they form this space of home. What was made clear from this drawing was the importance of the direct connections to the farm of my interviewee's childhood. Tied together by the caminos, the mountainous setting of memory guided the way the garden has been built up, enclosed, and navigated. Having been a visitor in both spaces, they are mapped according to the familiar areas of my memory. Cognitive mapping in design-research gives the designer the same power of interpretation and landscape formation that diasporic communities exercise through bodily agency in daily life throughout the city (Awan 2016, 118).

What is important about both gardens in the infrastructural map is that the home is placed within the farm, which is itself a mix of productive and recreational spaces. The act of walking down the hill from the road in Colombia to the farmhouse informs the significance of the front yard in the current garden. Where intimate domestic practices may often be hidden from public view, my tour guide started our interview in the front yard, and emphasized what an important role it played in the augmentation of the very typical space he inherited when he arrived. The garden makes the first step into the public realm, and is only now beginning to rub off on the neighbours, making the public street a more diverse and layered space.

The Square

The square is not named for its home-space in Halifax but for the mental geography that governs the habitual practices of

the second interviewee. The main moment explored in this drawing is the sense of home she feels on the Halifax waterfront. Speaking candidly during the interview, she quipped “It was one of the first places when I came that I enjoyed.” For her, the colourful inhabitation of the Colombian town square is what makes the Halifax waterfront home.

The square is not just felt in its inhabitation. The built logic surrounding it can help us identify corresponding catalysts in the waterfront. Where the Catholic church is often the main built barrier of the square, the ocean is the organizing device of the waterfront, and waterfronts similar to it around the world. When the interviewee describes moments of tension and celebration, the connection between ocean and church helps us orient our thinking in design.

The Cafe

Similar to the garden interview, the cafe exists in one primary space. Where it diverges is that the functions inherent to the cafe regularly puncture its walls. While the cooking process is important to the story of the cafe, human movement from South America through the cafe into a diverse network of homes in Halifax helps us identify the close but distinct use patterns between Latin American and Canadian customers. The social relationships between the owner and her communities are rich, but perhaps a bit separate. In her own words, the cafe is “the center of everything.”

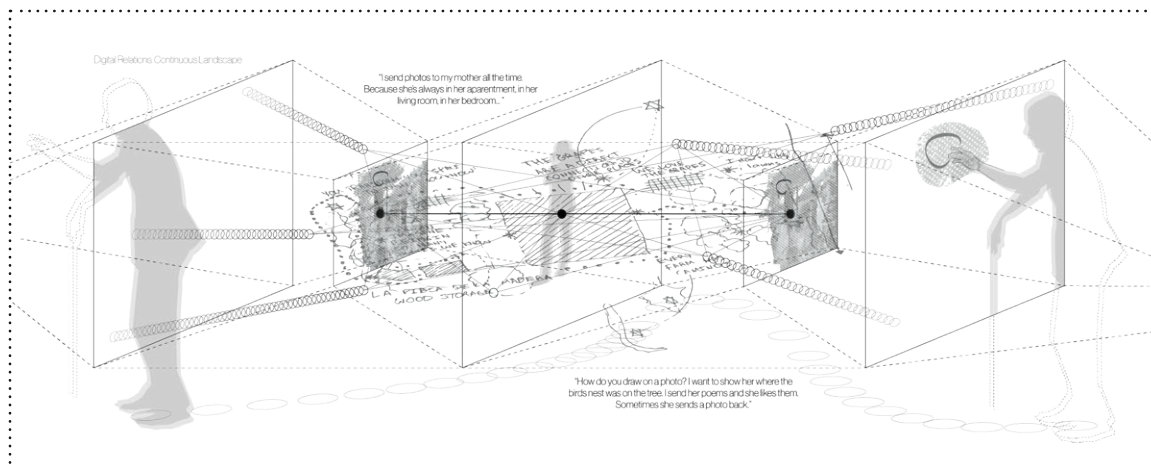
Her cooking allows her to share Latin American culture with the Canadians in her community, and all other visitors. It also makes her a respected source of advice for Latin Americans who visit her shop. This drawing questions the disparities in urban movement between the two groups just as it highlights their interaction.

Digital Media

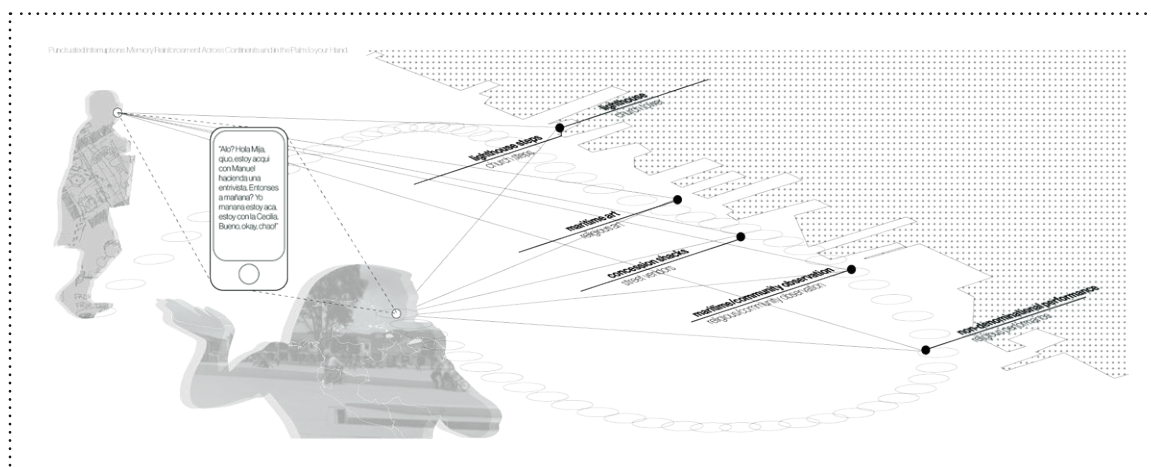
Instrumental in connecting with participants for this research, digital media is a fundamental part of diasporic cultural creation. Yeganeh (2021, 572) writes on how oral communication brings the audience closer to the orator. In literature, a separation exists through the documentation and dissemination of language. While this separation is not inherently negative, the immediacy of oral communication allows for translation and interpretation to occur in synchrony with its dissemination. Together, these processes layer and complicate the 'event' of oration.

Borrowing language from Deleuze (1993, 19), the 'event' includes the act of oration, the responses of interpretation and translation, and all supportive infrastructures. Using Latour's work (1996) on clarifying the presence of non-human actors in non-hierarchical networks I argue for the inclusion of digital media as a component of the 'event,' not an addition. Within the event, we can extend the qualities of immediacy and communion observed in oral communication to supportive digital media. Written intermediaries such as text-messages or photo captions are becoming fragmentary and decentralized (Hurlburt and Voas 2011, 5) qualities found in contemporary autobiographical narrative (Brockmeier 2000, 68-70) and oral communication (Yeganeh 2021, 573).

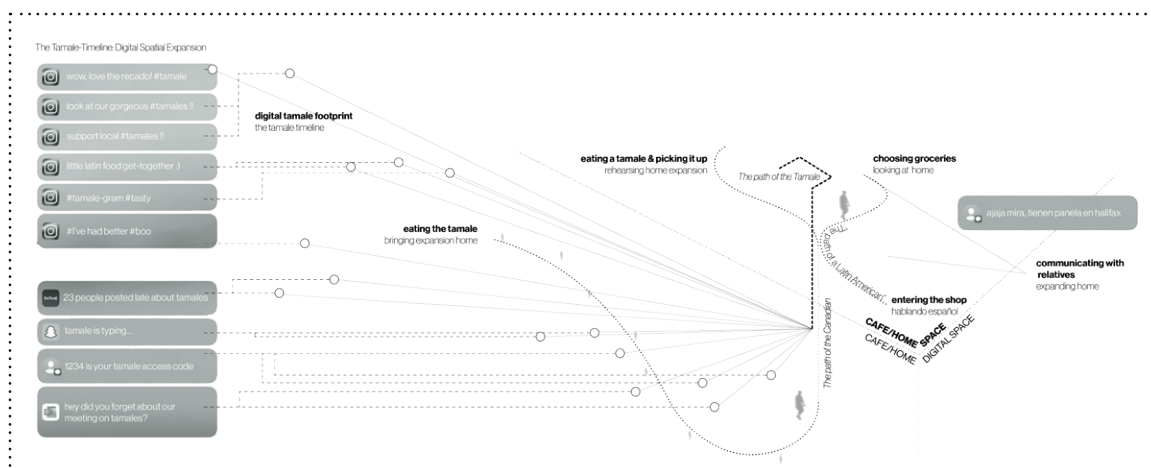
The following drawings characterize the 'event' as a narrative moment that compresses the layered spaces explored through the infrastructural maps earlier in this chapter. These diagrams characterize the ability of digital media to create cyclical mirrored time, pierce through space and facilitate the creation of regional landscapes through the dissemination of food and cultural products.



Digital map of the Garden: The interviewee shares his space with his mother, alone in her apartment in Northern Colombia. This digital exchange brings the garden out of isolation.



Digital map of the Square: The interviewee is interrupted by a phone call from her sister. She later confides in me that her home here relies on communication with family from South America.



Digital map of the Cafe: The reflectivity of digital space created by the pandemic offers some potential for mixing the two distinct user groups of the cafe.

Augmenting Landscape

The Garden

Part of the garden's story is about communication with the interviewee's mother. He will often send her photographs of developments on his property. Sometimes they are accompanied with poetry, other times a description and a loving greeting. Recalling the *The Poetics of Space* where Bachelard stresses the importance of the poetic image, I come back to his quote "all inhabited space bears the notion of home" (Bachelard 1958, 5). Here, the interviewee's mother joins the garden inhabitation through the immediacy of digital connection. They exchange poetry and photographs, reliving the past garden as they generate the new one.

The Square

Midway through our interview, the phone rings. The interviewee's sister calls. Communicating with other immigrants is important in connecting her to the Colombian spaces that guide her. After she hangs up, she's rejuvenated. The phone call offsets the loneliness of her experience some days in Halifax, where she "can walk to work and not meet anybody." It helps her make her mark on the public spaces where she feels at home here, continuing integration.

The Cafe

During the pandemic, the Cafe's owner decided to advertise tamales online. Quickly, she received orders for over 300 tamales. She enlisted her family to help make tamales for others. Together, hundreds of families, connected by digital space, joined the 'event.' The hash-tag for the store is still populated by pictures of food taken at people's homes. The Latin Americans still buy products, just at a distance...

Chapter 8: Narrative Design

Home Narrative 1: The City Garden

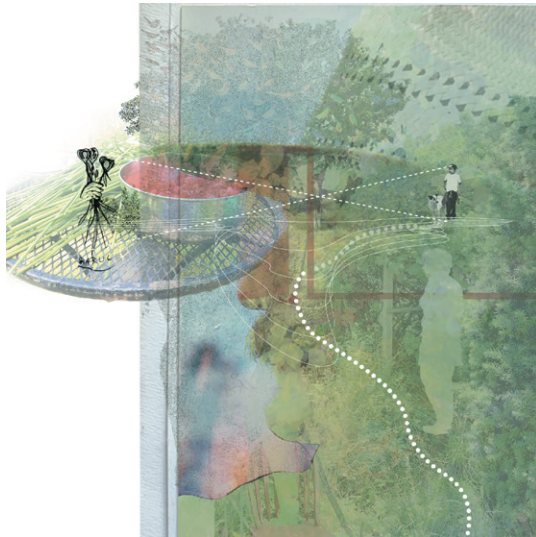
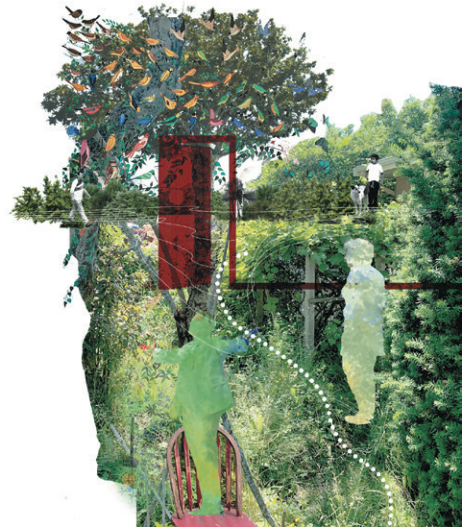
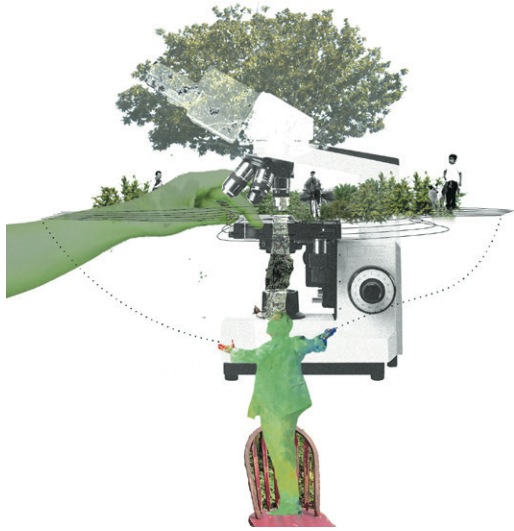
Under the Microscope

Just as the Spanish musician Juan Manuel Serrat might have stepped out into the concert hall, the man of the garden raises his arms. He stands on a little red chair, as if his stature alone isn't enough. If he wanted, he could walk up the little wood steps to his right and emerge from the earth. Still, he's content to just sing. The birds in the trees up above hear him singing and they sing right back.

The top of a door frame rests just above his head, a hand reaching just inside. This is where the living tend to their garden. A big bush rises up on one side, protecting the farm. Silhouettes get buried in the vegetation. Farm or garden?



Collage Model: Exploring the mental and present levels of the garden, with the earth as connector. Paper on Plexiglass.



Garden Collages: Showing the story progression from setting, to carving, and sharing.

Working Under the Microscope



The analogy of the microscope informs the spatial configuration of the garden on both vertical and horizontal axes. The microscope as an instrument has several levels: An illuminator rests upon its base. Light from the illuminator shines through the diaphragm to illuminate the stage. Above the stage, the arm holds up the eyepiece. A scientist could look through the eyepiece, have their view reflected by the mirror in the nose-piece and look through the objective lenses to reach the stage. The domestic garden is the stage.

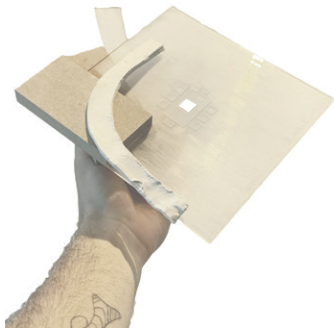
The Base and the Illuminator



The illuminator provides light to the stage. It lets the scientist see. The singing man on the chair is our illuminator, his chair our base. He sings and the light shines.

The Diaphragm and the Stage

The diaphragm filters light onto the stage. Little clips hold the samples down, in the perfect position for the light to percolate through. The property anchors the garden, its clips tightly holding the edge of a bush. The doors of the house open and light rushes in and out.



The Eye Piece, The Nose Piece, and The Objective Lens

The little girl looks down across the street and through the eye piece. In the nose piece a mirror reflects her desires as she runs around the paths of the garden. The objective lens translates that to something real, and she goes home, forges her own path.

The Eye Piece, The Nose Piece, and The Objective Lens

The arm holds everything up. The terraces connect the lowest point of the property to the highest. Little mountains.

Terraces support a plane pierced by a keyhole. Paths provide ways of movement below and above the plane.



The Garden Microscope: The Garden story is set within two planes, visible from each end.

The Garden Bridge

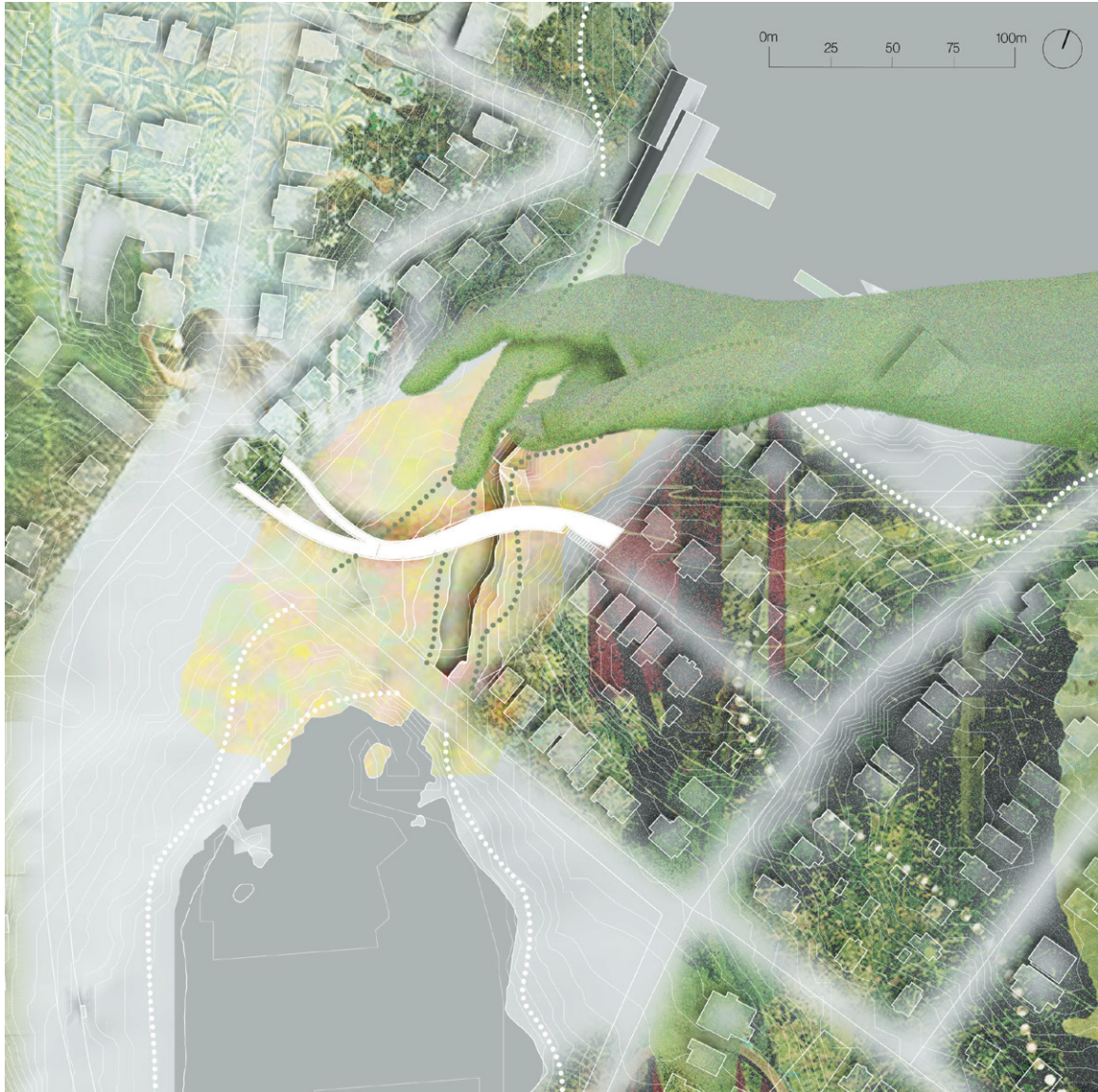
There's a part of the Shubenacadie Canal that gets very narrow. Two residential neighbourhoods flank each side of Banook Lake. At the lake's base, they converge on each hillside. The canal carves between each hill, creating a miniature valley of deciduous trees, paths, and parkland. The trees are beautiful but slightly neglected. Some of the residents wish they could take care of them.

Walking Underneath

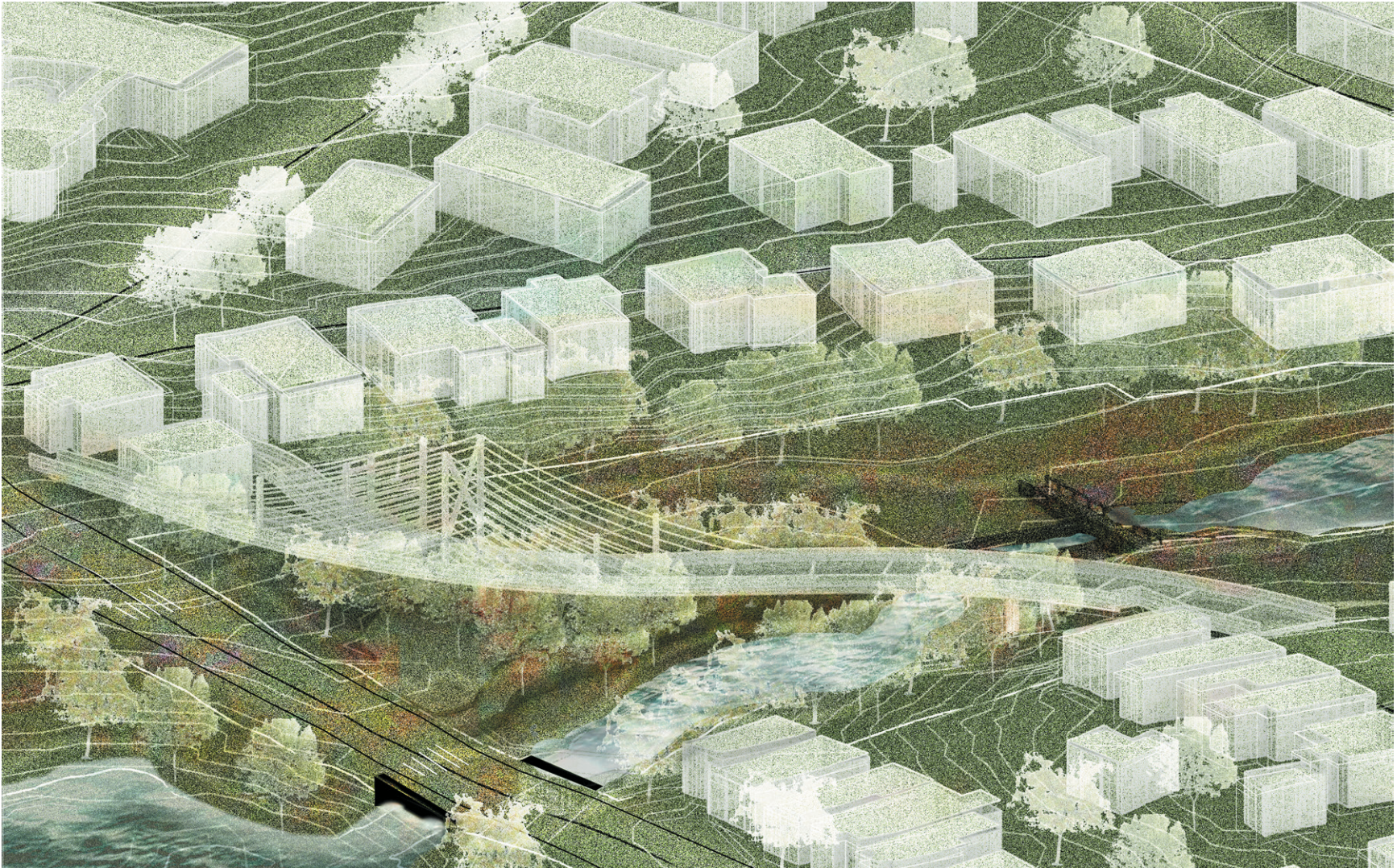
After quite a bit of construction, the park opens again. You come from one side of the lake and meet up with a friend as the paths converge, pinched by the hillsides. There's a new pedestrian bridge just up ahead. It weaves through the trees. Some of the trees are a bit different. There are little signs now at their base. Cherry trees, some apple trees, and a couple pears mixed in with the maple and poplar that you're used to. Given a few years they will stretch up above the bridge, ready to be harvested. In the meantime, you watch the city take care of the new garden.

Walking Above

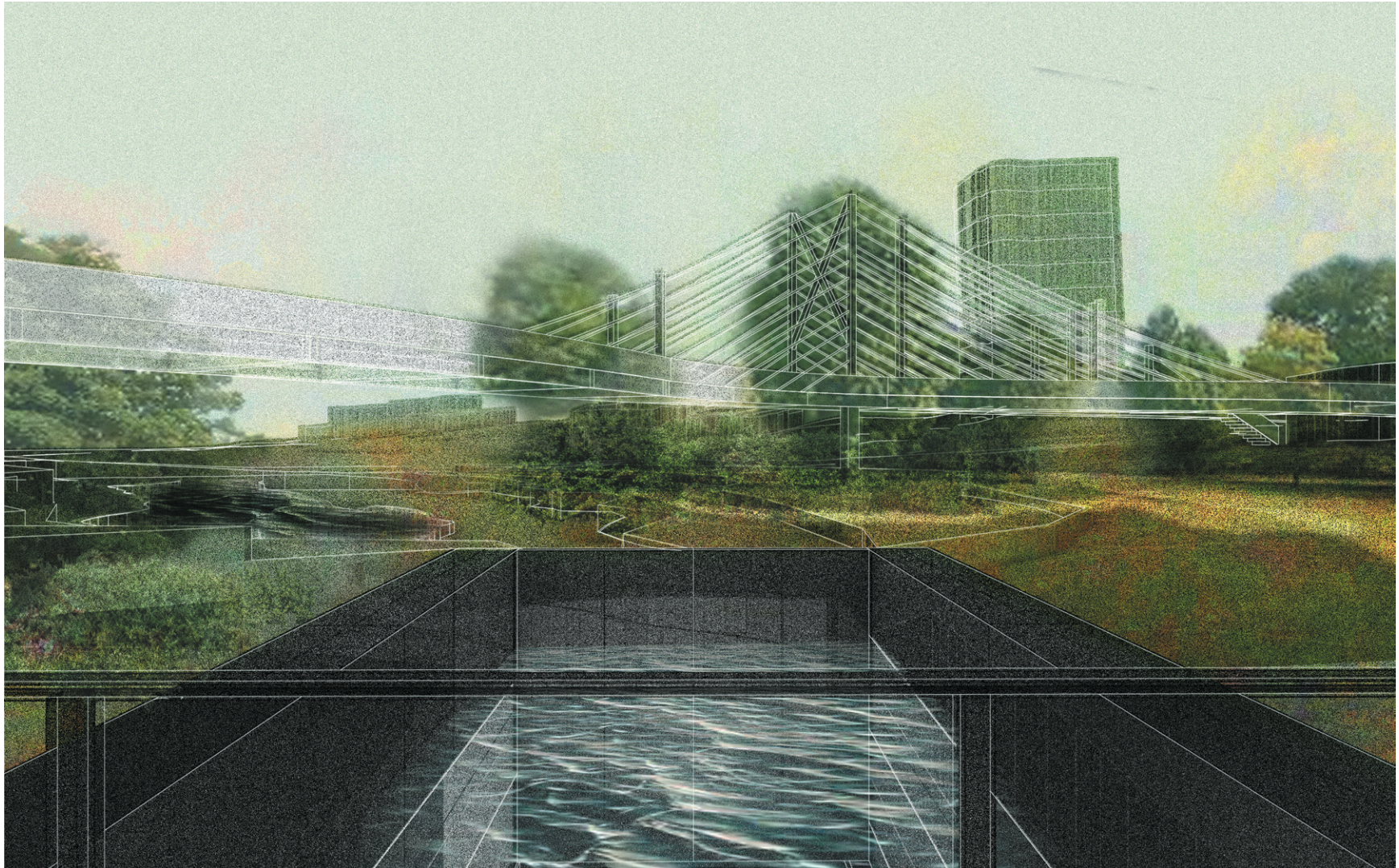
A few years later, the trees grow tall and are mature enough to harvest. People use the bridge everyday now. All you need to do is walk up into one of the residential neighbourhoods and a little sign beckons you in-between two houses. Walking up on to the bridge, you enter a thick canopy. Cherries beckon you over on one side. Reaching between the cables of the suspension holding you up, you put a couple in your hand. That this garden bridges public and domestic space does a lot to bring the public who use the park and the residents around it together. If you work together, maybe everyone can have some cherries.



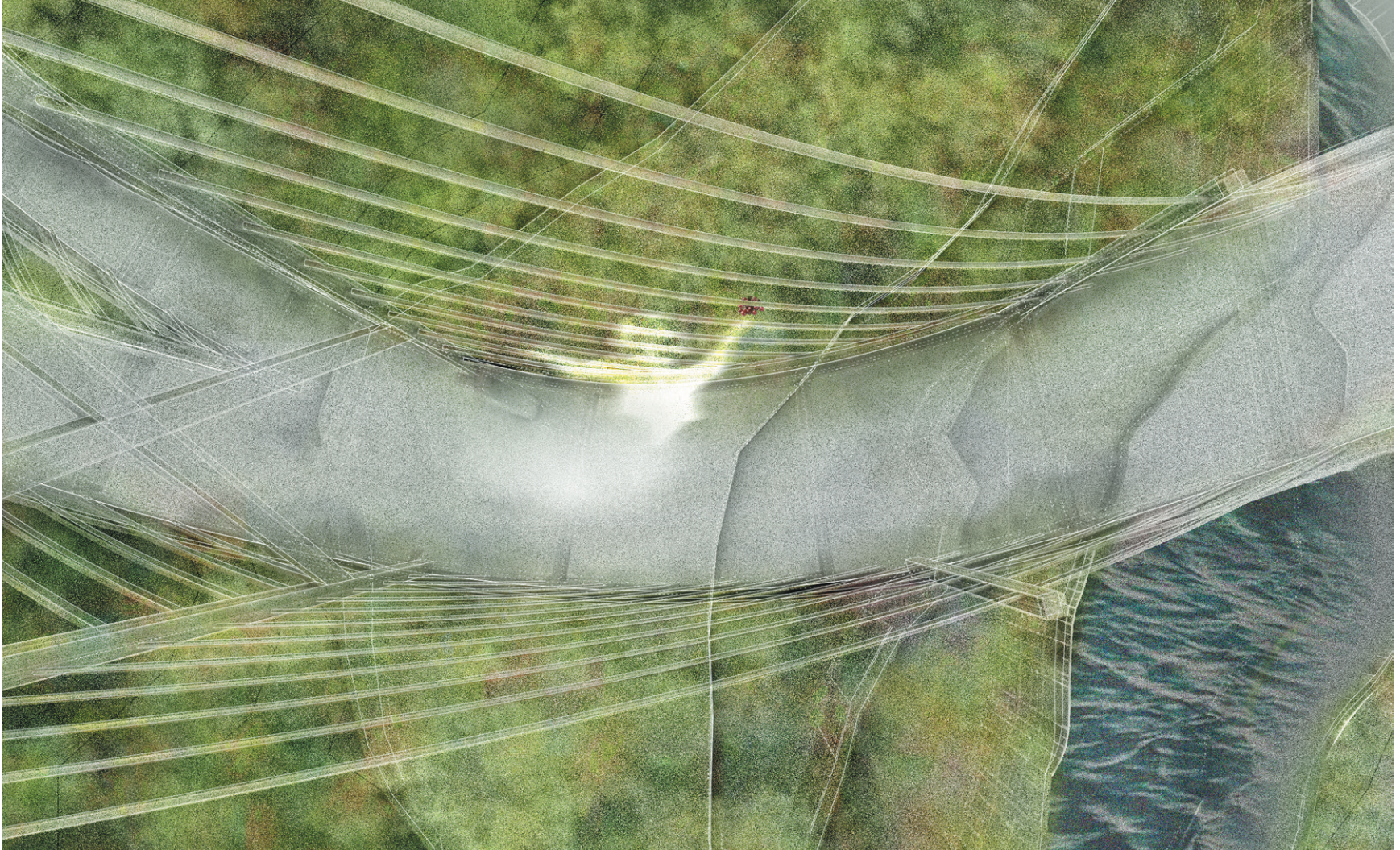
The Garden Bridge: Site Plan. The bridge is a device that connects opposing residential neighbourhoods over a public park bisected by the Shubenacadie Canal. Snaking through backyards, it pierces domestic space and introduces it into the public garden from above.



The Garden Bridge: Isometric drawing showing a pedestrian bridge weaving through the trees of the Shubenacadie Canal below. The bridge separates the functions of the public garden. Cherry trees planted by the city are harvested by the neighbours above.



The Garden Bridge: Perspective from an existing pedestrian bridge just north of the proposed garden. Fruit trees intermingle with existing vegetation. Paths snake through terraces underneath the bridge and along the Shubenacadie Canal.



The Garden Bridge: Perspective from above. When walking along, will you be lucky enough to grab a cherry? Who's to say.

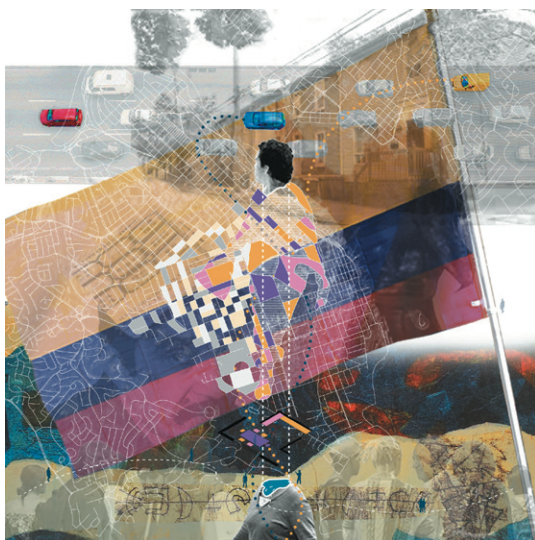
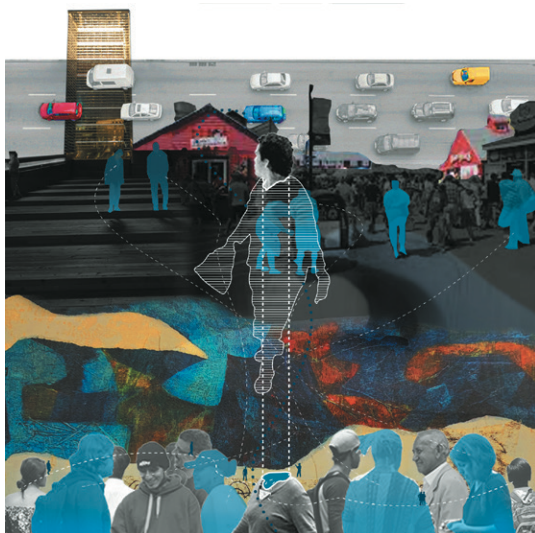
Home Narrative 2: Looking Straight Through

Parallel Spaces

The woman stands before a cacophony of noise. She is bright, multi-coloured. Blue figures reside just to the right of her view. She sees a brightly lit tower, rising up from a mountainous boardwalk. She sees the steps, and the procession. Slowly, she sees her cars. They fly across the horizon like shooting stars, but they aren't nearly as romantic. They are her neighbours. They pierce holes in the tower, and it becomes more present less iconographic. Her body is split by the ground she walks on. Her legs are dangling, just over a second body, pulling on their strings like a marionette. If she sees anyone in blue, her body underneath relays instruction. She keeps moving.



Collage Model: Exploring two social elevations separated by the present geographic context. Paper on plexiglass.

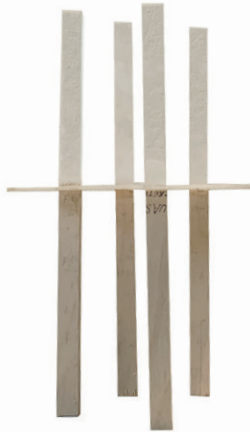


Square Collages: The creation of home from the square, to waterfront to the neighbourhood.



Piercing through the Parallel

The parallel spaces of the square narrative are only together in the mind and body of someone who remembers both. There are several elements of the story that form the narrative space of the present. The earth of the peninsula, the ground that we walk on. The noise of the waterfront, and the familiarity of chaos. And there is the ocean; A church needing no creation, and the catalyst for the spaces discussed through this narrative. To the woman in the middle of it all, the people she sees bridge her between both worlds: The square she grew up in through the land she currently sees.

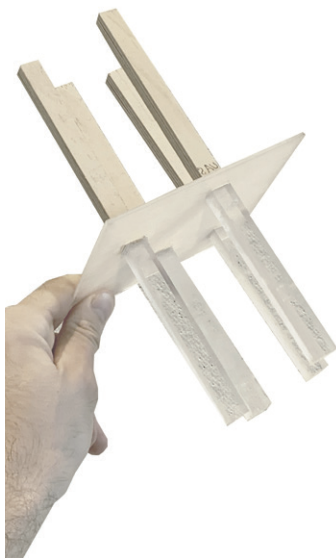


Piercing Through the Earth

The woman is in the middle of multiple spaces. To her, they are similar, but not the same. That she knows so many spaces for people in this city makes her proud. She sees immigrants there more than anywhere. They are a trigger, keeping the body below happily moving.

Piercing Through the Chaos

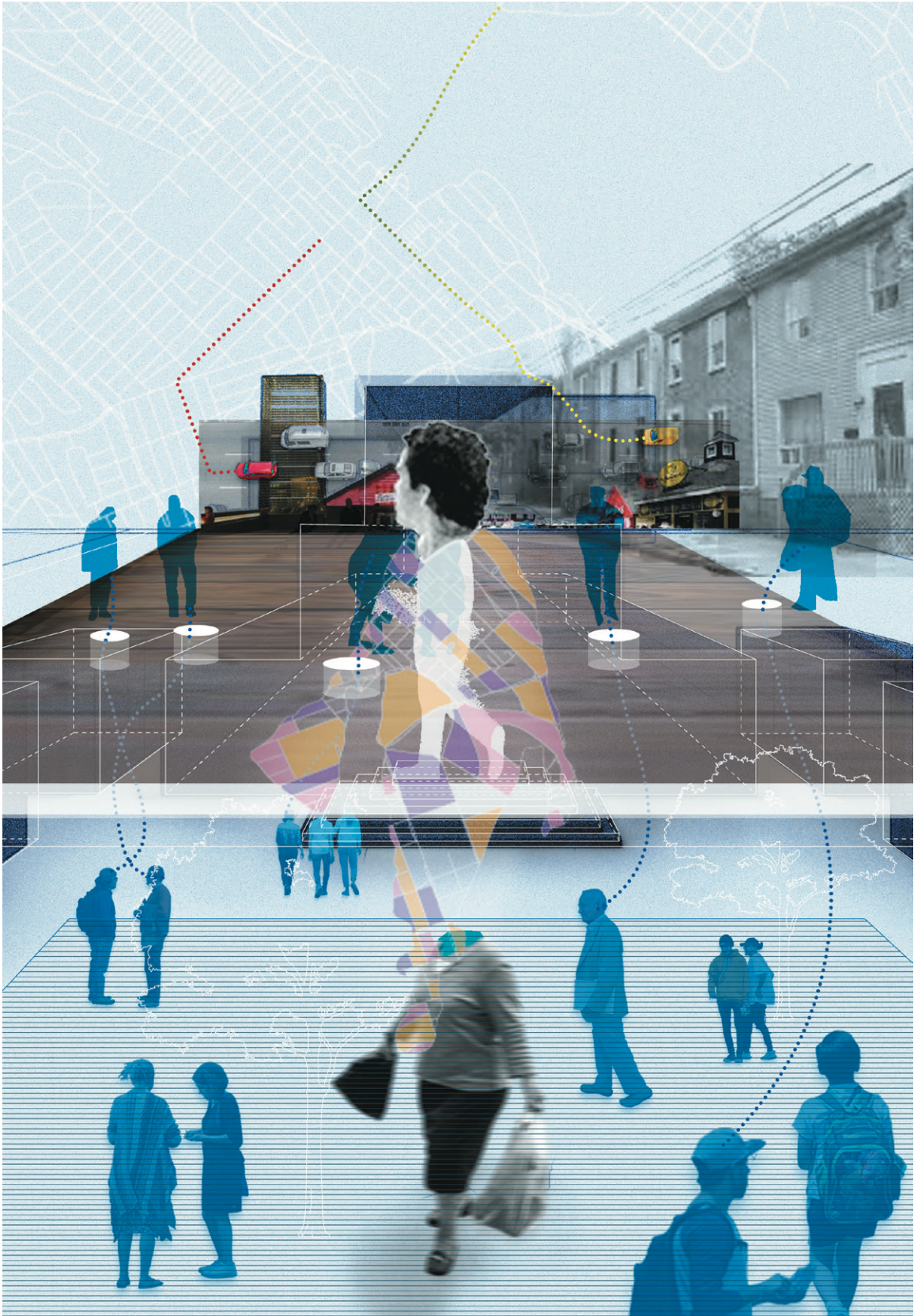
Where there are people, there is noise. But not all noise is the same. There is disorienting noise, and clarifying sound. Again people are the trigger. But these triggers are positive. They allow the subject to make noise herself. That this creates tension is secondary to the point. The body below moves, and bangs the drums. The waterfront becomes more like a square.



Solid columns pass through a plane, becoming light. Body memory governs the form of the present.

Piercing Toward the Water

Leaving the waterfront, slivers of the harbour flash between the tectonics of the stone buildings downtown. She looks and she can't quite see. What if she could?



Piercing the Parallel: Triggering of habitual memory and practices in a new place.

City-Piercer

Everywhere you go in the city someone's already been. They leave little traces: A cigarette butt stomped on the ground, or a sticky stain from fallen ice cream. There was a Colombian woman who lived in Halifax a while-back. She used to walk on the waterfront, up through Bishop's Landing, past the public library, and to the Halifax Common before going home near the west end. People say that she left her mark. Once you take that walk, you understand.

Carving the Earth

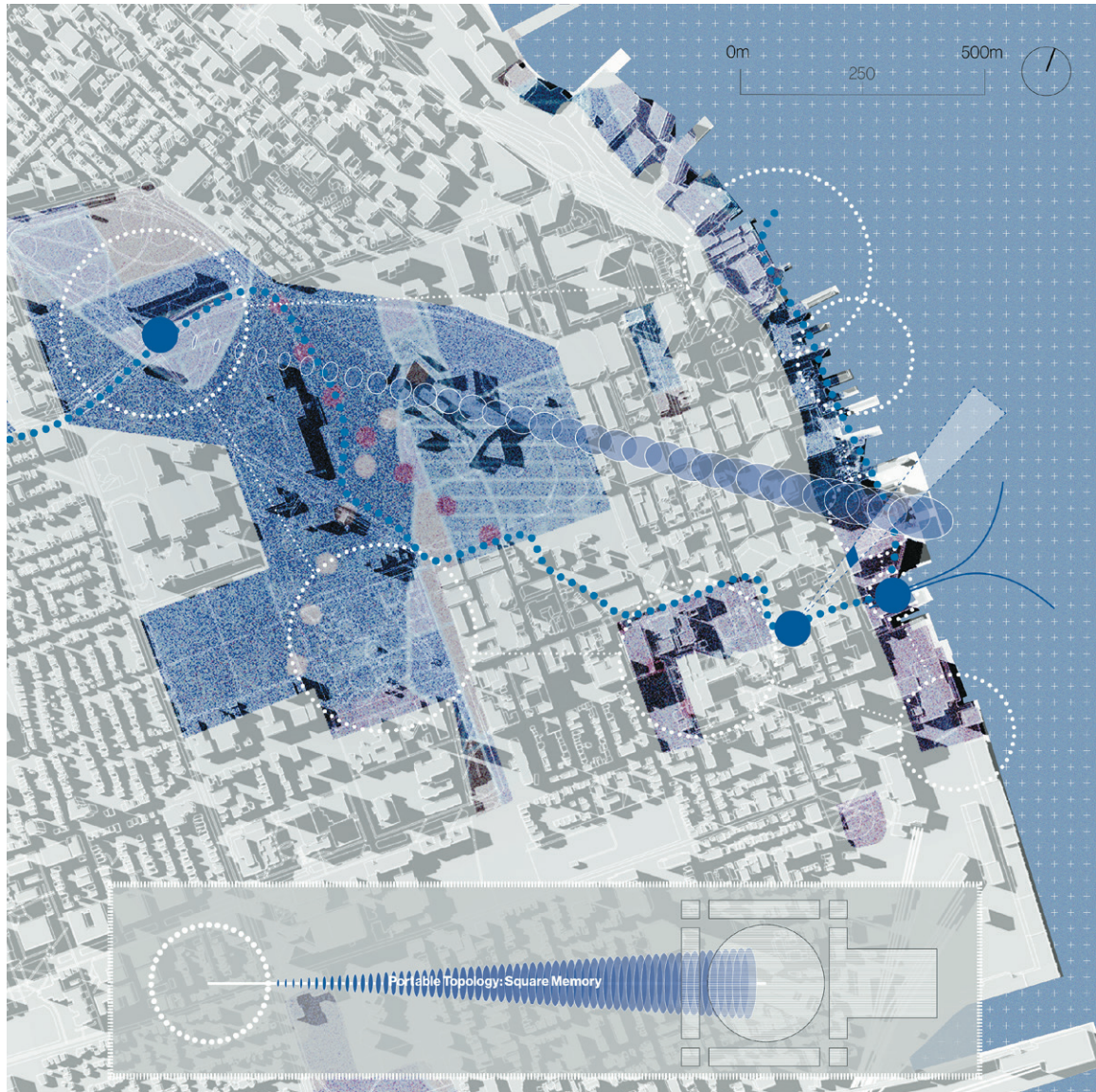
It takes you a few minutes of walking from the ferry until you see it. Where there used to be a parking lot, what looks like a crater creates a ragged beach that stretches almost into Lower Water street. You don't quite get what she had to do with this, but it's nice.

Carving Sound

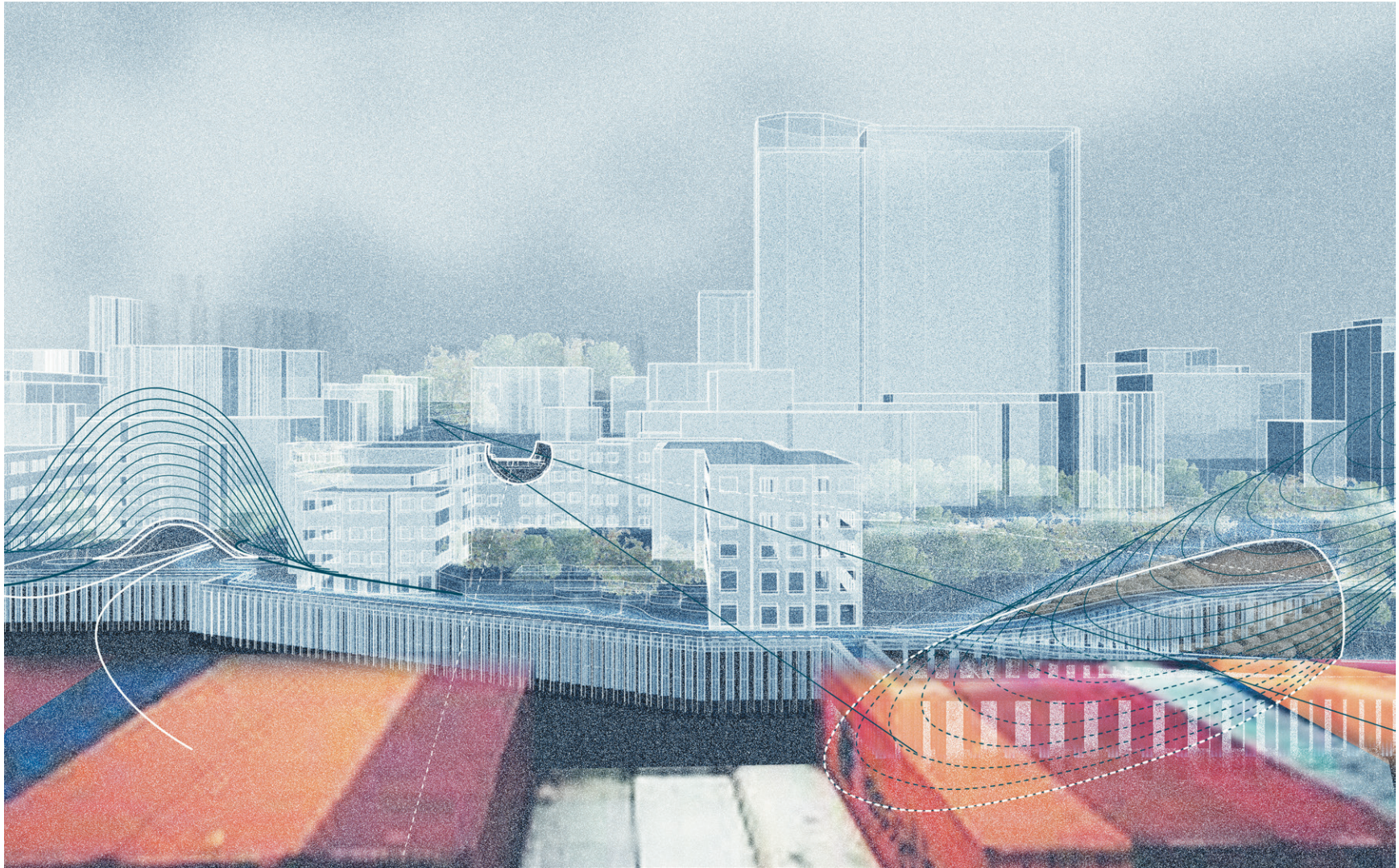
There's a party happening at Bishop's Landing. Some cultural association with drums. Behind them, what looks like a trumpet provides a dramatic backdrop. The drums reverberate from the amphitheatre. A crowd sits in front, directly in the path of the sound as it project onto the water. None of the residents seem upset. When you walk behind the trumpet it is noticeably quieter. Huh.

City-Carver

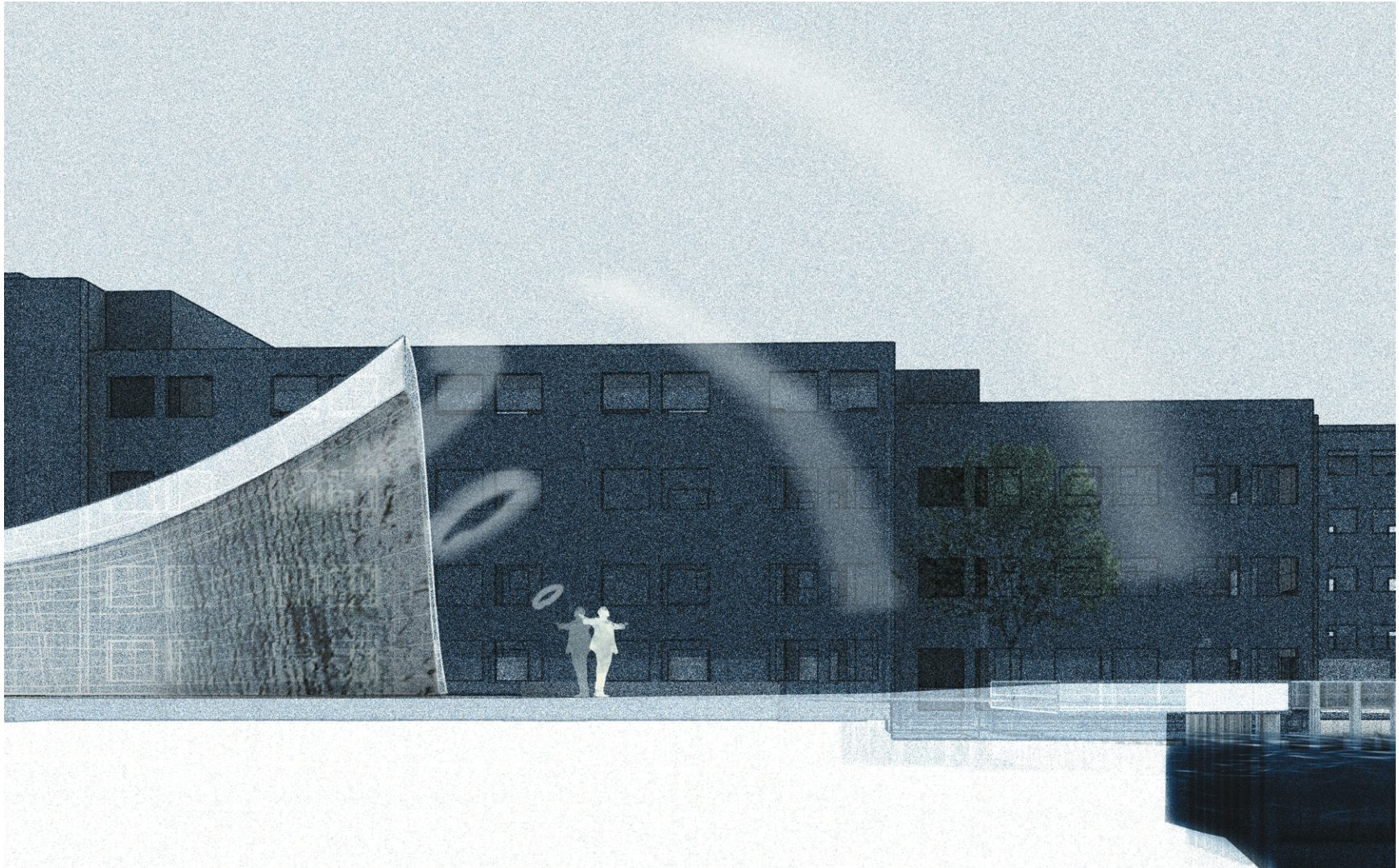
You never used to be able to see the water from a bit up the hill. There's an opening in the building that allows you to see right from where you are. It's magical. The indent in the earth makes sense now when you remember the common. You can imagine her dreaming that up as she tries to look down from the Citadel. One woman's dreams manifested.



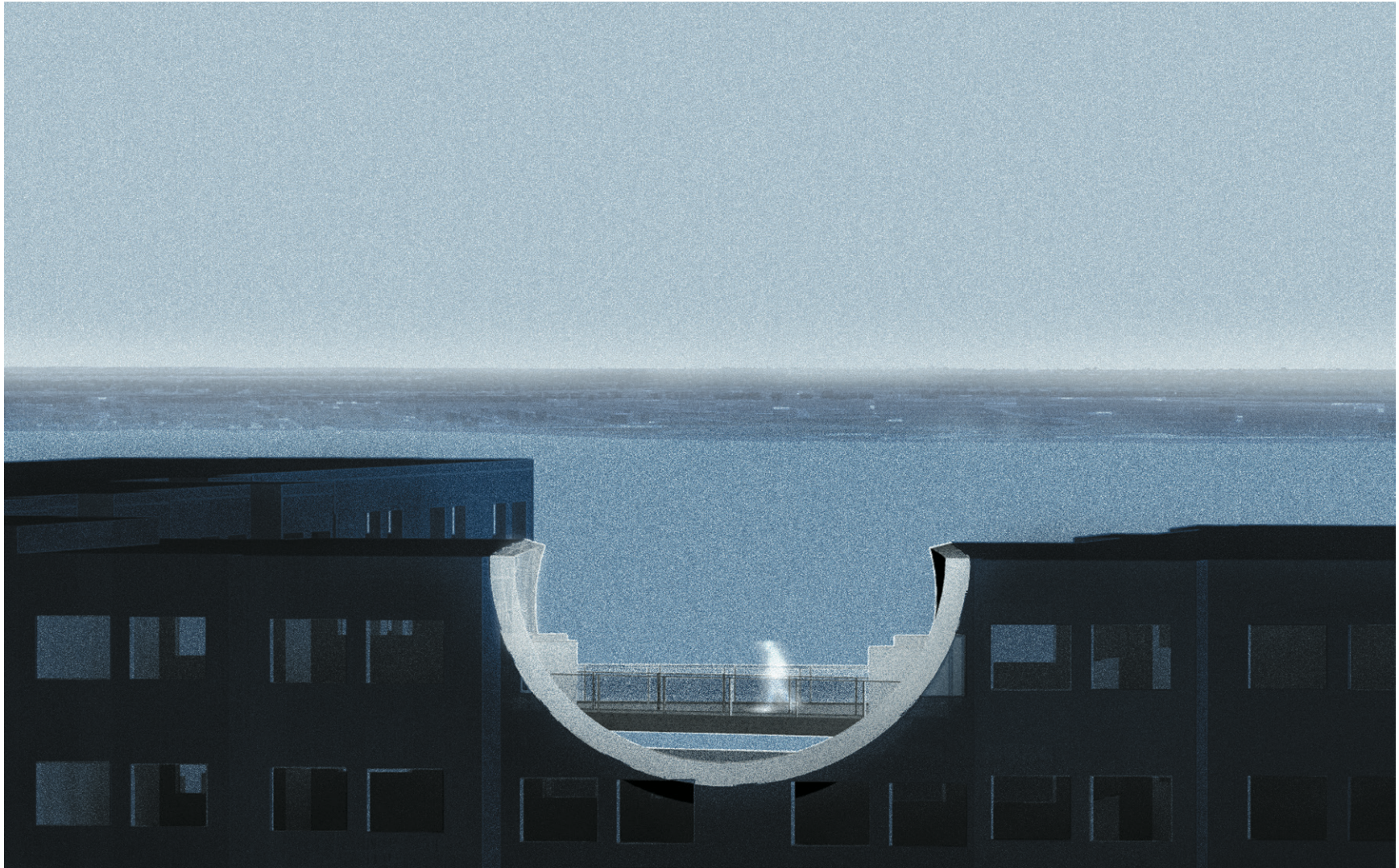
City-Piercer: Site Plan. Three interventions are organized along the narrative path snaking from the western half of the peninsula through the Halifax Common, past the Public Library, and down to Bishops' Landing to access the Halifax waterfront.



City-Piercer: Perspective from a container ship. An echo from the commons carves out the earth towards the water. A view-plane creates a crater in an apartment building, and a 'trumpet' shapes sounds of celebration away from residences towards the ocean.



City-Piercer: Section perspective of the trumpet. Visitors enter from its narrow end. When in the smooth narrow beginning, human sounds are amplified outwards. Grooves in the formwork absorb sound from the other end, shaping it away from residences and towards the public.



City-Piercer: A viewplane carved through the built environment. A narrative moment expressed concretely, experience made whole, integrated culture. A tube carved through Bishop's Landing gives way to a waterfront view from the street, until now closed off from the ocean.

Home Narrative 3: The Anti-Intersection

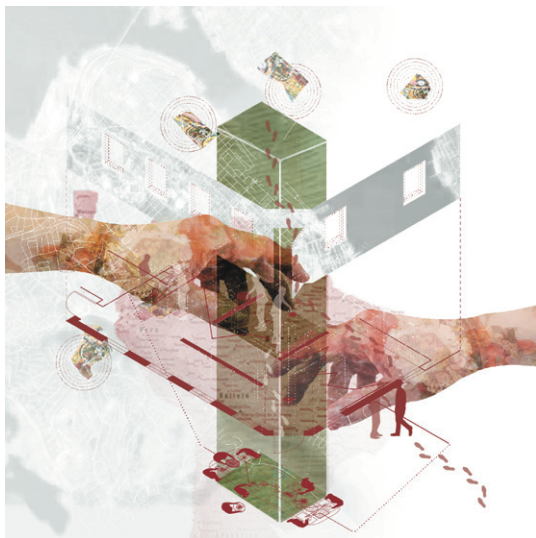
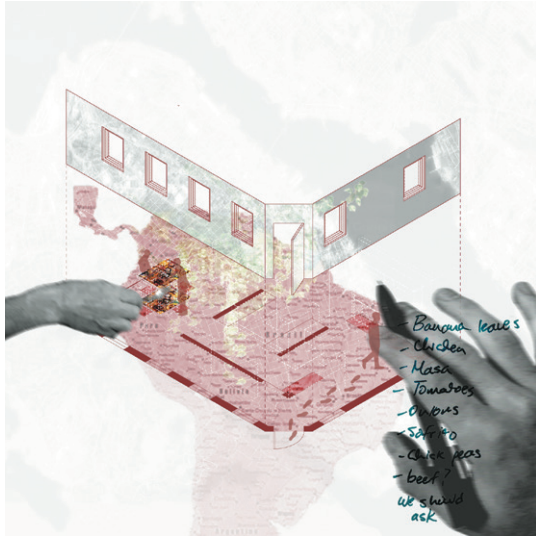
Around the Tower

Towers are peculiar objects. If a column grew ten times in size, stretched up to the sky just to hollow itself out and welcome us in, we would call it a folly. But it is a tower, and it has a calling; To connect the sky and the ground.

This tower is a tower for sharing. It has big holes where hands covered in food reach through, touch each other, and raid its contents. Sometimes they touch the ground, and other times they reach the sky once they've made something new. There's part of a building around this tower, but no one who makes anything pays it any mind. Families around tables far away look up to the tower every once and awhile. They're relieved to find that it's still there.



Collage Model: Paper cutouts explore various intrusions into the tower. Paper on plexiglass.



The Cafe Collages. Exploring sharing through a vertical element accessed midway through touch.

Around the Tower

Latin Americans and Canadians alike circle around the tower. Their patterns are similar, yet do not touch. Inside the tower, food is made. Focussed steady hands of the cafe owner penetrate the tower as if it was mist. They touch the source of the food, and bring its ingredients up to the present. In the present, the food is recombined and played with. The new inventions are placed at the top of the tower, above the facade, ready to eat. The cafe owner does this to share her culture. She shares it with other Latin Americans through the products she sources and the advice she gives. And she shares it with Canadians every time they eat her food. Together, the Canadians and Latin Americans revolve around a tower of her own design.

The Owner

The owner travels routinely to South America. She travels to markets, and buys products for her cafe. After her journeys down to the bottom of the tower, she rises as the menu takes shape. She lifts herself to the top of the tower and serves the city her food.

The Latin American

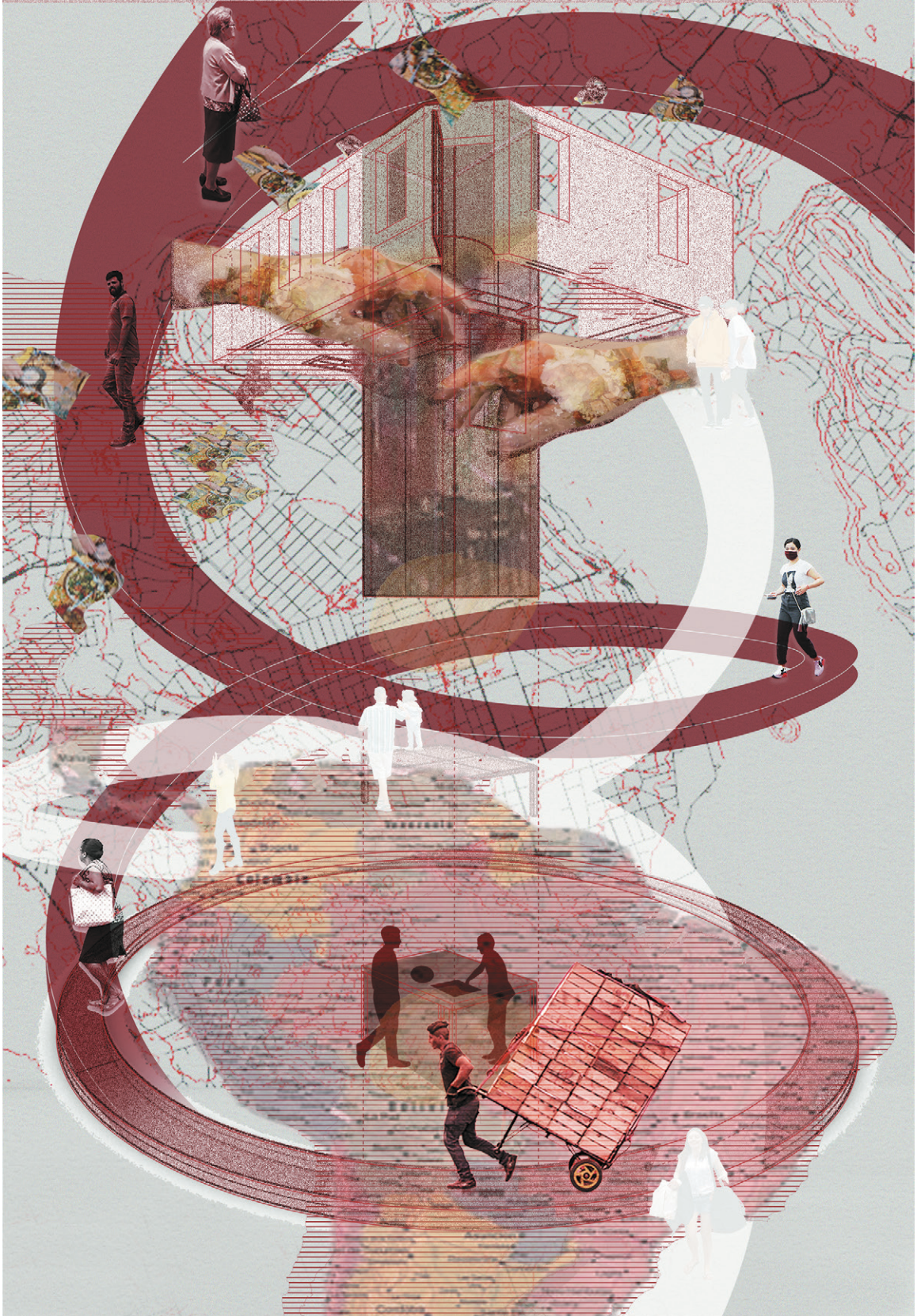
The Latin American walks into the store. They enter through the front door square in the middle of the corner of the intersection. Turning to the right, they make a bee-line for the groceries. There's no time to eat today. "Which one is better" they ask. The owner replies, and the day continues.

The Canadian

Canadians enter through the same door. However, they turn left. Rich colours and lush plants greet them before they sit down at a Colombian table, reminding them of their trip.



A metal sheet spirals around a tower. Translucent acrylic supports two wooden sides.



Encircling Home: Visualizing the paths of Canadians and Latin Americans in the cafe.

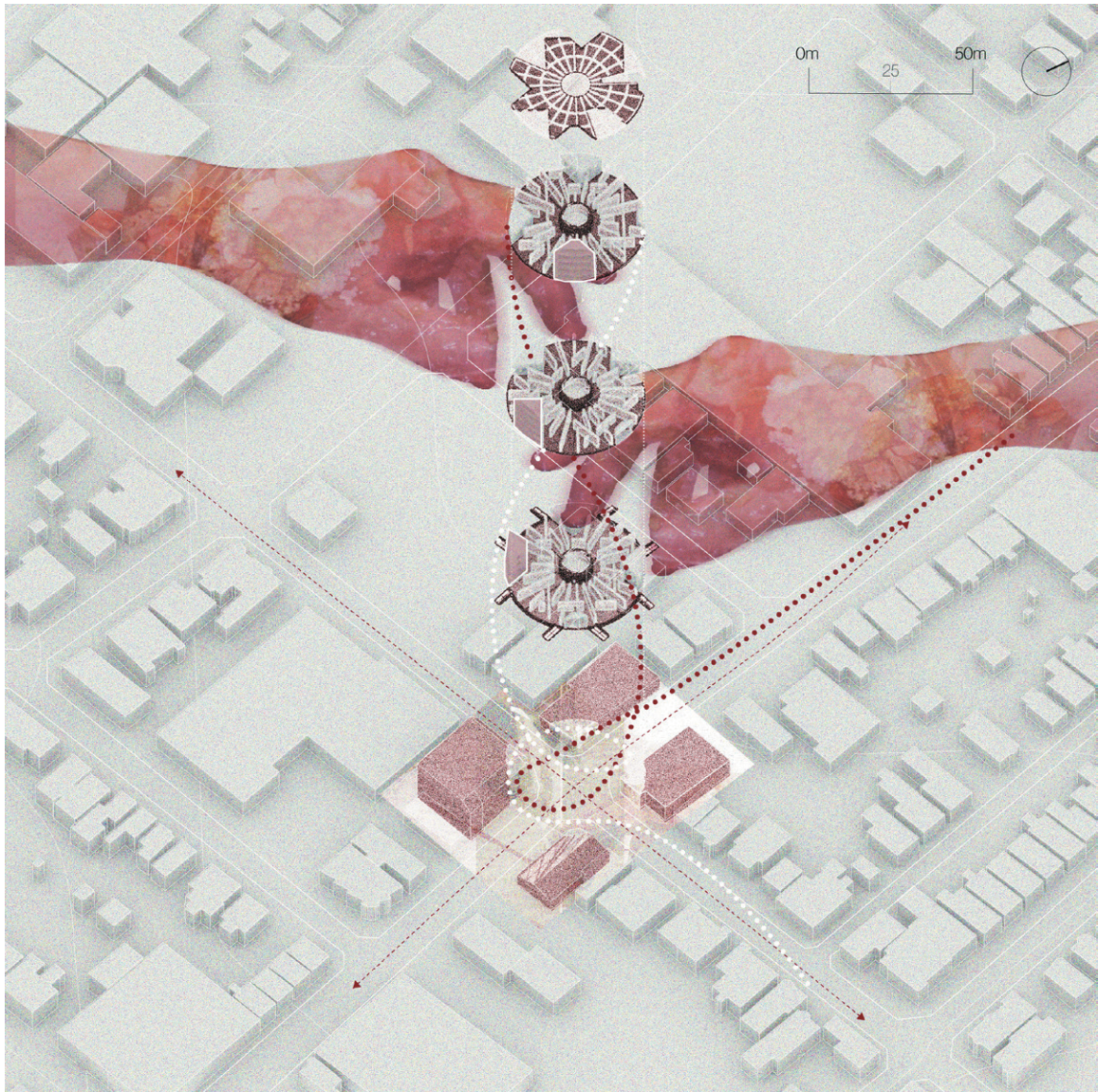
Relational Carousel

This is a very special intersection, for Halifax at least. Two cultural food stores? Unheard of, at least until recently. The other two corners of the intersection are a couple of local bars, one for those that moved to Halifax, and one for those that have always been here. Many groups of people cross this intersection, pass it by, or enter one of its many offerings. But rarely do they ever mix. The young people at the bars never talk to the regulars at the slot machines. The Latin Americans go in and out as the Canadians eat in the other room. These are not hard and fast rules. But it could be proposed; What if these people talked to each other?

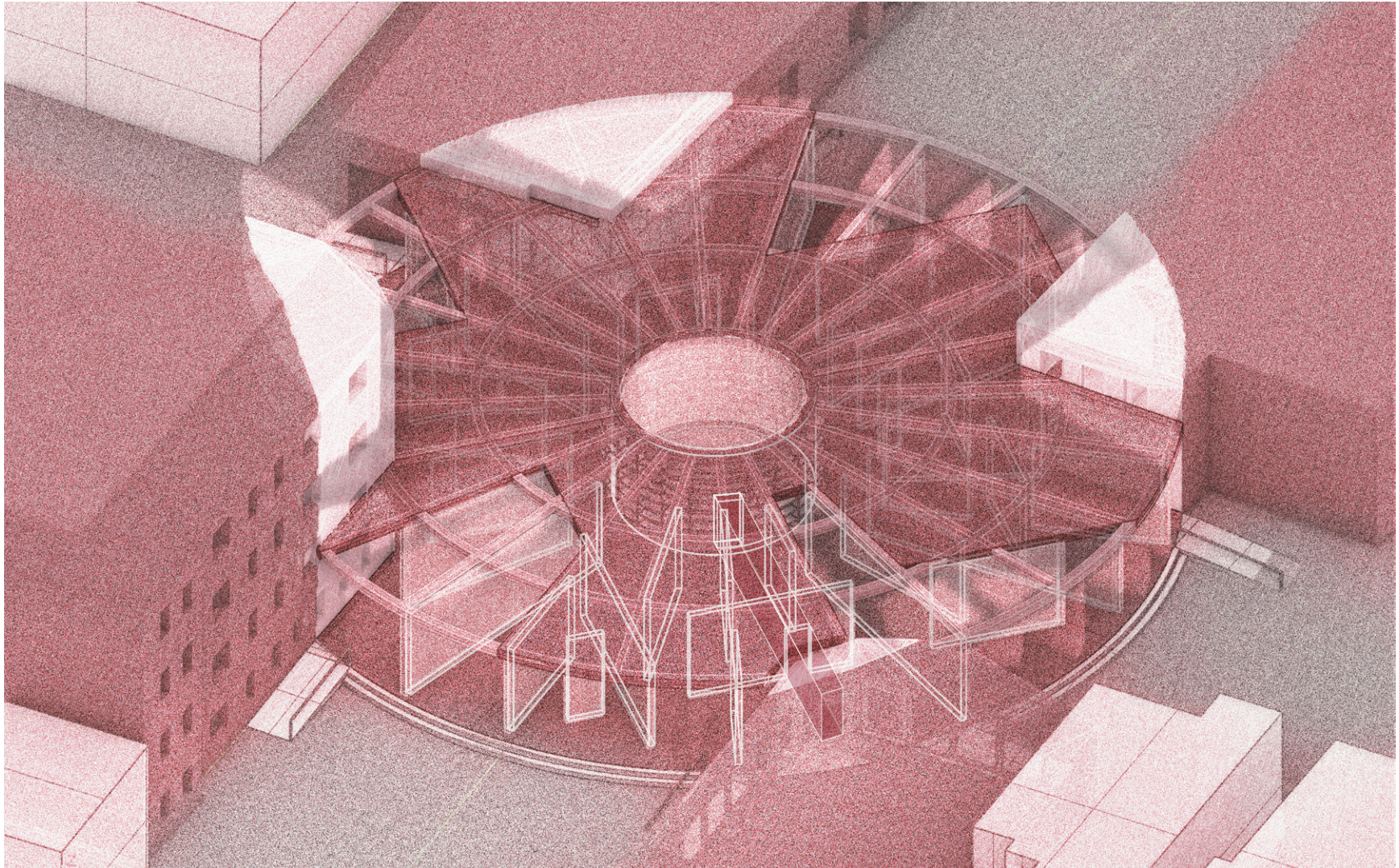
The Carousel

A large carousel covers the intersection and consumes the corners of the four buildings. It's impossible to walk through the intersection anymore. If you wish to pass, you walk up the two steps or journey up the ramps into a radial web of mirrors. Sometimes, the walls intersect, lines extended from the former streets. You didn't realize that the whole thing was rotating until you walk straight into the interior of the cafe. That's convenient. You grab a drink, head out of the corner door and into the carousel.

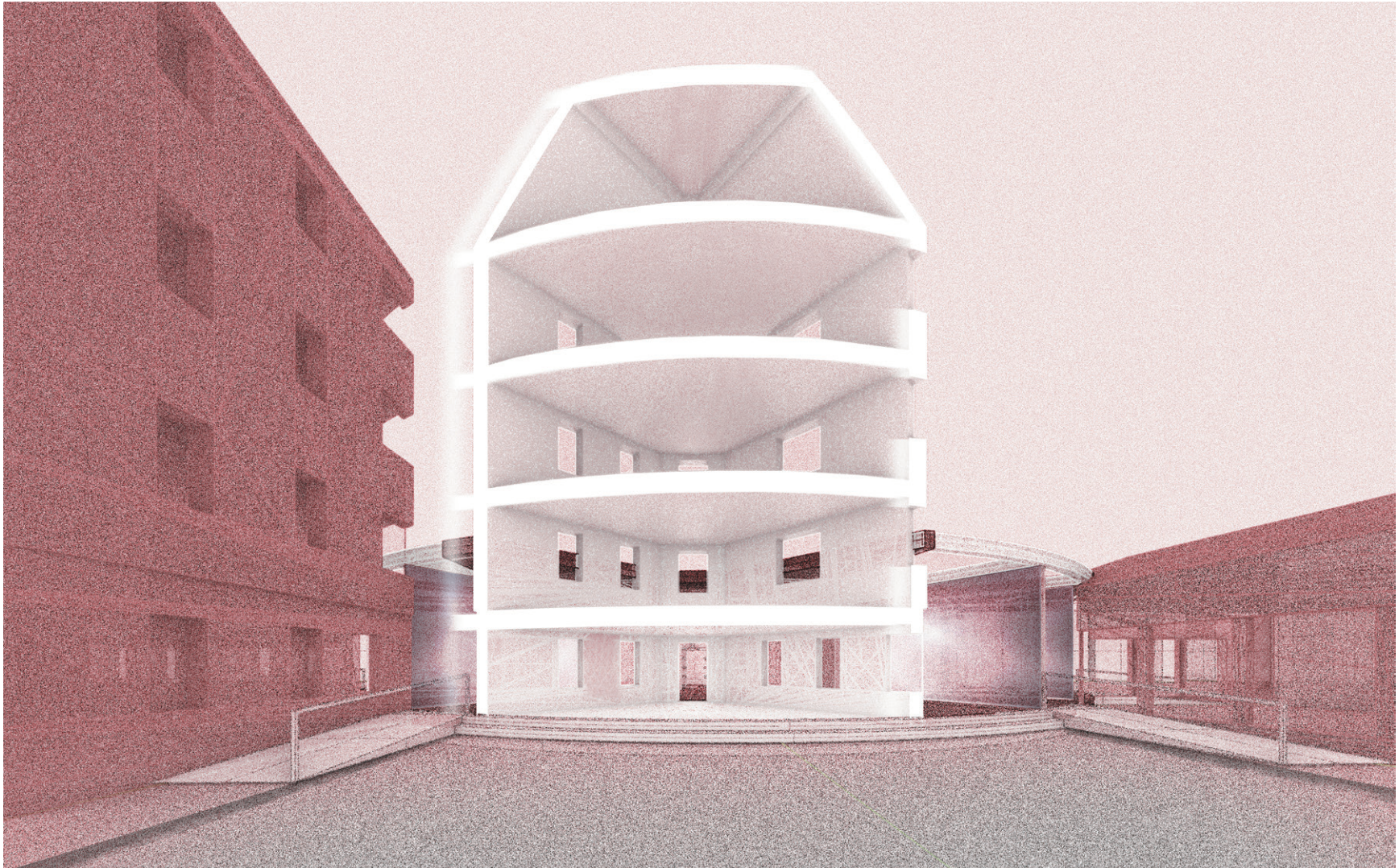
There's a few people at the center of the carousel. Shelves line the circular core. Someone's dropped off a book. You take the book and drop off the can of pop you got from the store. A hole in the core invites you in. Together, you all stand around and see everyone's reflection in the circular mirror. Once you exit, you didn't realize you'd be rotated around almost 180 degrees. That's fine though: You talked to someone new.



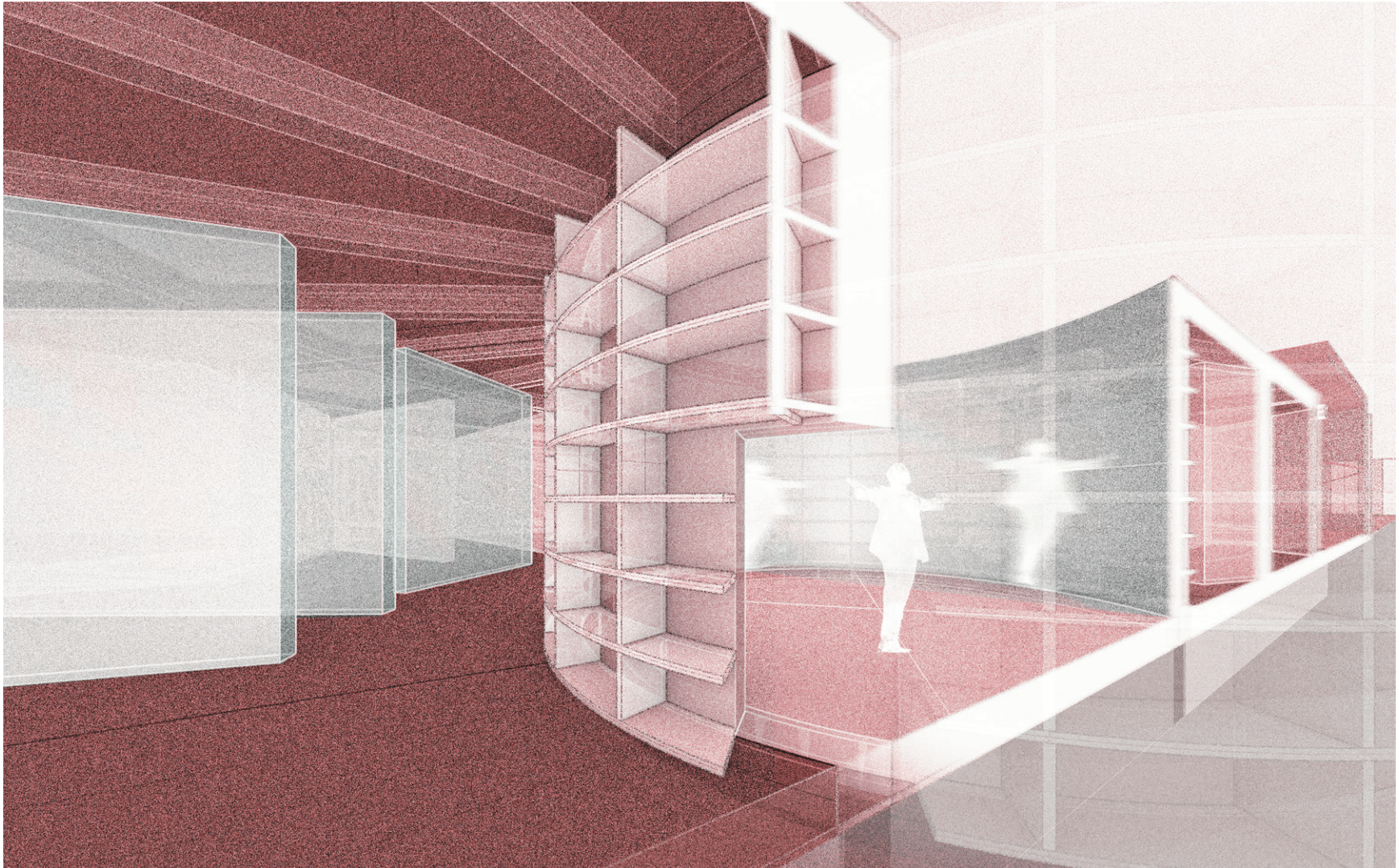
Relational Carousel: Site Plan. A carousel inserted into a street intersection, carves out the corners of the buildings caught within its plan. They rotate and recombine, creating new architectural opportunities and opportunities for social integration.



Relational Carousel: Isometric. The walls of the carousel are mostly radial. Specific incisions reflect the offset-nature of the street grid and increase the sense of disassociation necessary for the recombination of social pathways.



Relational Carousel: Exterior Perspective: Rotated almost 45 degrees from its original position, the corner of the cafe on the ground floor lies open to the street. Buildings and social patterns are re-contextualized upon entrance to the carousel.



Relational Carousel: Interior Perspective: The center of the carousel is an open cylinder surrounded by a structural core, with specific cuts. One must give an object and take another, acting in the process of exchange to enter.

Chapter 9: Conclusion

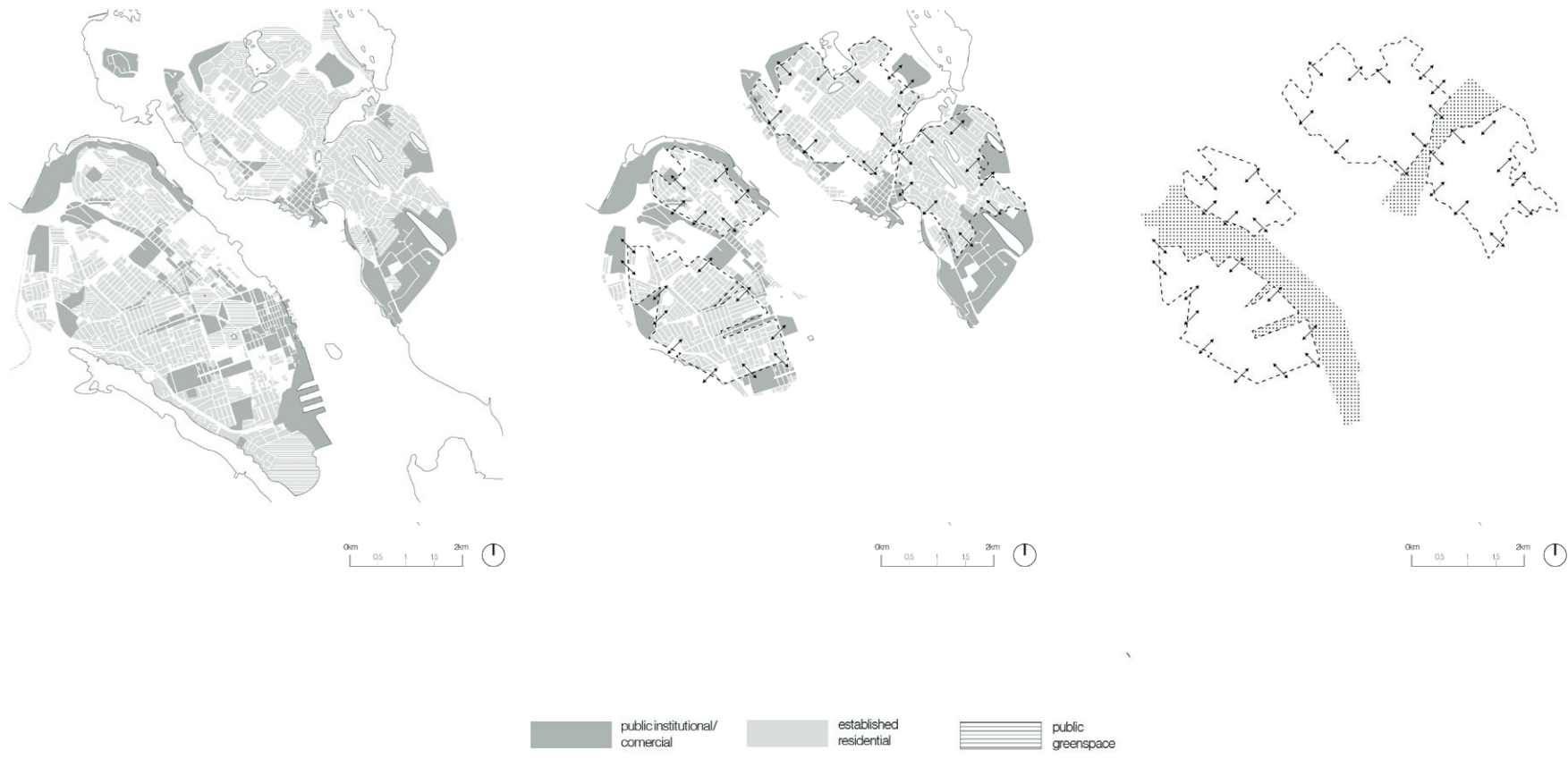
The Latin-American Home-City Landscape

The architecture of the diasporic home-city landscape is a simple one. Each intervention relies on a functional operation that transposes habitual cultural patterns onto the urban fabric. I hope that this thesis contributes both to a contemporary understanding of integration, and wholesale adoption of literal storytelling in design. By focussing on the joys of home among the generous community members that participated in this research, I was able to imagine a future where Latin Americans in Halifax were able to have their culture reflected in the city that they live.

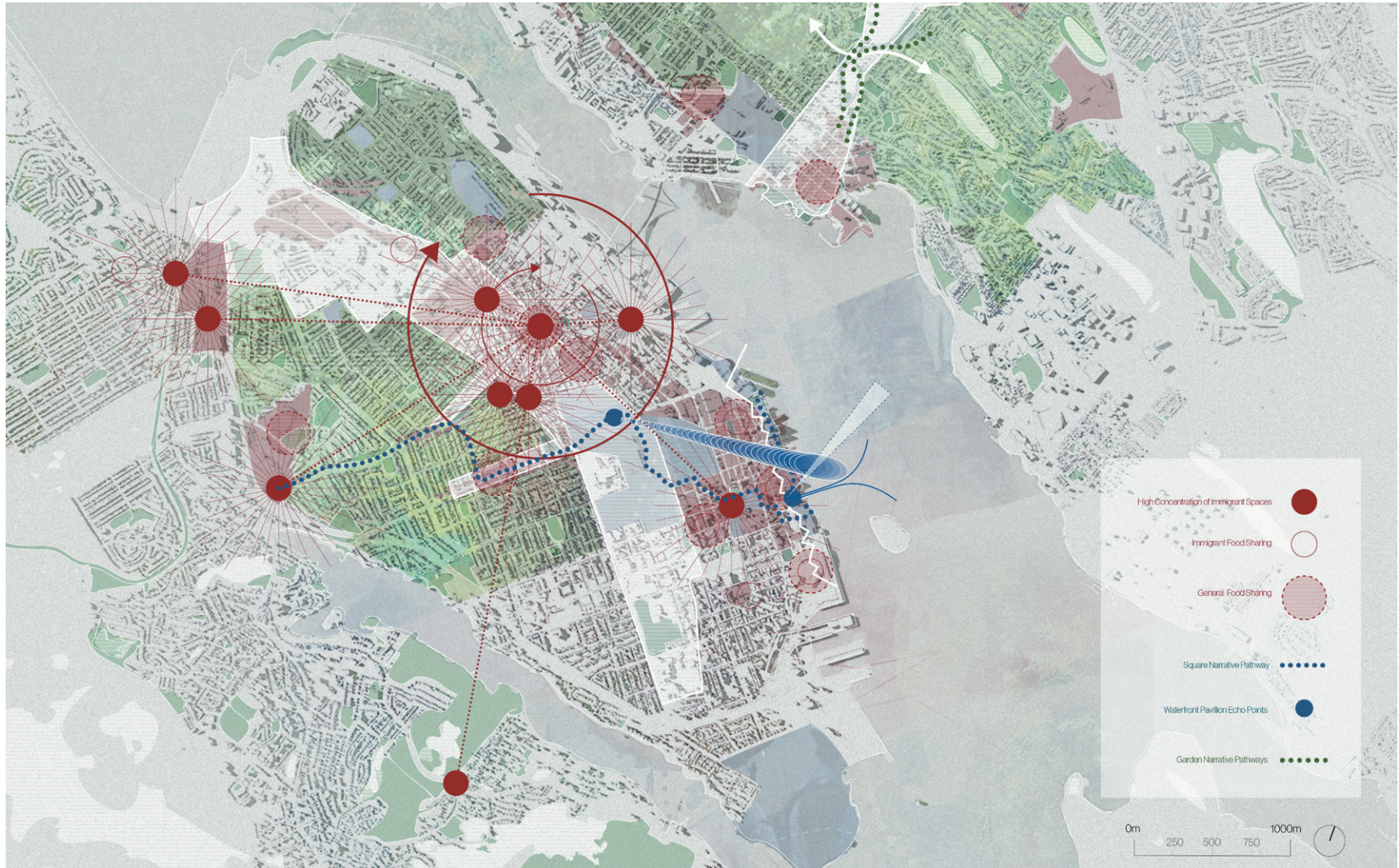
The tensions of immigration, acculturation and integration so often dominate academic research in architecture and other academic disciplines. I deliberately chose to not contribute directly to the overwhelming body of trauma porn on marginalized communities that Canadian universities love to traffic in. To understand how a community behaves through violence, hardship, and displacement, you have to also understand how they behave at their most loving and their most comfortable.

The concluding drawings explore the following in sequence:

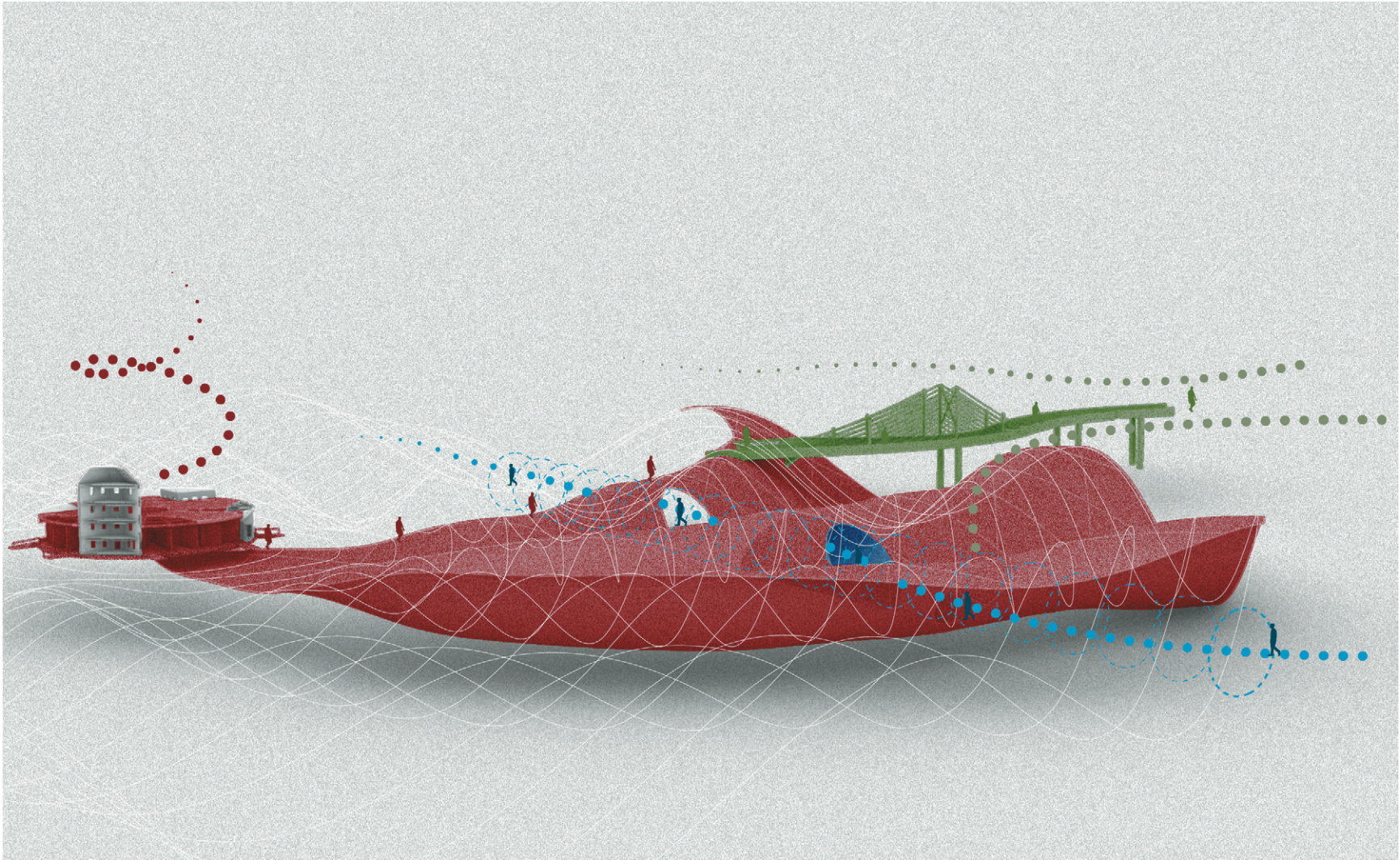
1. The relative separation of residential and commercial spaces in Halifax's regional center. Two corridors exist that connect distinct residential blocks on either side of the harbour.
2. This urban pattern is taken advantage by the three narrative-architectural interventions of this thesis.
- 3-4. The transformative potential of this methodology to augment traditional geographies. This last drawing captures the spirit of my conclusion. With love- Manuel.



Iterative pattern maps: Residential and commercial spaces in Halifax are highly separated. Two main corridors of interaction, with residential, commercial, and public functions separate each pair of urban residential spaces. Zoning information for Halifax (Data from Halifax Regional Municipality 2022).



Narrative Patterns on the City: Includes geographic rationale for site strategies and interventions. How do the narratives respond back to the urban fabric?



Narrative Patterns in Space: The carousel, while the most explicitly architectural, has the greatest effect upon the social landscape. The other two functions of piercing and bridging rely on the functions of the carousel to transport and imbue the carousel's cultural impact. The last drawing done post-defence.



The City as its Narratives: The carousel spins the city around it. City-Piercer becomes inhabitable, and the Garden Bridge pinches socio-geographies together. The first drawing done post-defence. A chaotic drawing and a work in progress. Clarity comes with time.

Appendix A: Interview Guide

From Research Ethics Board Application # 2023-6554

Narrative City: Designing with the Diaspora

C

INTERVIEW GUIDE:

Upon introduction and review of the study description and consent forms, the interview will begin. Participants will be asked to respond to the following questions:

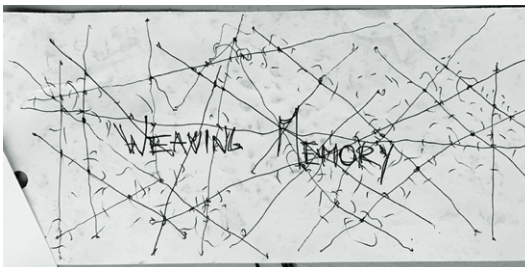
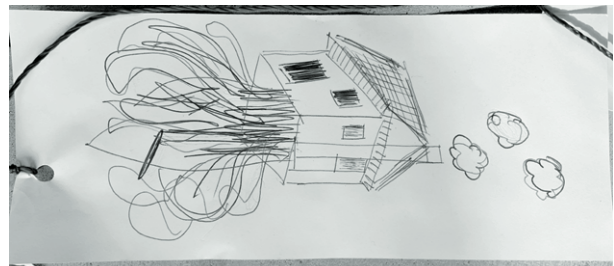
- As a Latin American Immigrant in Canada, *where now do you feel most at home? *ALT: Why does this place make you feel at home?
- Describe this space for me. How big is it, is it yours? What comforts you about this space?
- What kind of activities make you feel most at home in your space?
- Tell me about that activity? What does it entail?
- Are there other people involved in your creative process? What are their relations to you?
Ex: Employee, Friend, family member, colleague...
- Does doing this activity Ex: Cooking, gardening, or music..., evoke any memories in you from Latin America? If so, can you describe them for me?
- Is it different doing this activity here than it was in Latin America. Can you elaborate?
- Do you think your experience as an immigrant to Halifax is different to other Latin Americans that moved here? If so, can you describe how?"
- How does sharing this information with me make you feel?

*These are conversation starters and stories may evolve beyond the questions of this list.

Appendix B: Narrative-City: Nocturne, Art at Night 2022



Narrative City: An interactive installation involving audio, drawing, and the public. The garden interview is broadcast through the journey. The installation asked members of the public to draw what they were hearing, feeling, and seeing.



Sample photos of the cards drawn by members of the public

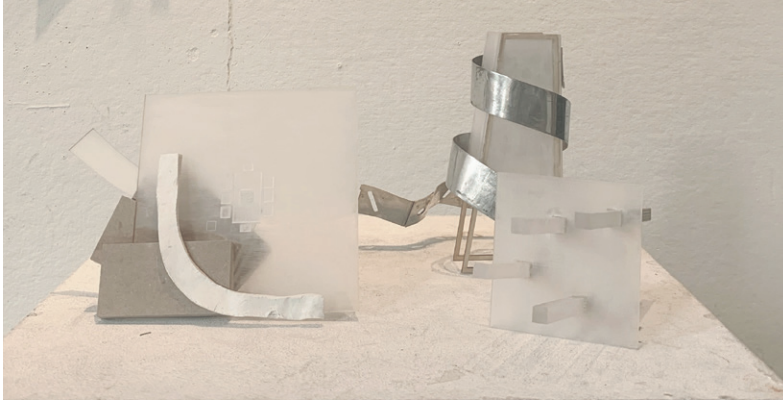
Appendix C: Narrative-City: Thesis Defence Gallery



Narrative City: The full presentation board at the Dalhousie University School of Architecture on June 20, 2023. Work is shown on the main wall, the two adjacent side-walls including 3 wall-mounted models and 3 models on a white plinth on the right edge of the main wall.



The Three Narratives: The Garden, The Square, and the Cafe (Left to Right).



The right edge of the main wall. Three models show the architectonic operations: The Microscope (left), piercing (right), and circling (back). The Site map sits above 3 collage models: The Garden, the Square, and the Cafe (left to right).



The Two Side Walls: On the left side wall, the three stories are explored through mapping exercises that explore the oral, physical, and digital components of the woven narratives. They are placed above graphic data exploring Latin American immigration and local urban conditions.

The small side wall includes the Three Wish Images: Diasporic Oral Culture, The Diasporic Home, and the Diasporic Home-City Landscape (Top to Bottom).

References

- Aranda, Benjamin, and Chris Lasch. 2006. *Tooling*. New York, NY: Princeton Architectural Press.
- Awan, Nishat. 2016. *Diasporic Agencies: Mapping the City Otherwise*. Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Company.
- Biden Jr., Joseph R. 2000. "Aid to 'Plan Colombia:' *The Time for U.S. Assistance is Now.*" Washington DC: U.S. Government Publishing Office. <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/CPRT-106SPRT64135/html/CPRT-106SPRT64135.htm>.
- Blunt, Alison, and Olivia Sheringham. 2019. "Home-City Geographies: Urban Dwelling and Mobility." *Progress in Human Geography* 43, no. 5: 815–34. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0309132518786590>.
- Brockmeier, Jens. 2000. "Autobiographical Time." *Narrative Inquiry* 10, no. 1: 51–73. <https://doi.org/10.1075/ni.10.1.03bro>.
- Butler, Kim D. 2021. "Defining Diaspora, Refining a Discourse." *Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies* 10, no. 2: 189-219. <https://doi.org/10.3138/diaspora.10.2.189>.
- Cameron, Paulette. 2021. "Invoking Memory: Traced Narratives of Mabou, Cape Breton," Master of Architecture Thesis, Dalhousie University. <https://DalSpace.library.dal.ca/handle/10222/80774>.
- Carrasquilla-Vallejo, Maria. 2015. "A Silence so Loud: Doris Salcedo's Accion de Duelo (blog)." *Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago*. <https://mcachicago.org/publications/blog/2015/02/a-silence-so-loud-doris-salcedos-accion-de-duelo>.
- Coates, Nigel. 2012. *Narrative Architecture*. West Sussex UK: John Wiley & Sons.
- "Colombianos Que Viven en Nova Scotia." 2023. *Facebook*. <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1249721761713715/>.
- Corner, James. 2011. "The Agency of Mapping: Speculation, Critique and Invention." In *The Map Reader*, edited by Martin Dodge, Rob Kitchin, and Chris Perkins, 89–101. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9780470979587.ch12>.
- de Certeau, Michel. 2011. *The Practice of Everyday Life*. Oakland, CA: University of California Press. Translated by Steven Rendall.
- Deleuze, Gilles. 1993. *The Fold: Leibniz and the Baroque*. London: The Athlone Press.
- "Diaspora- Noun." n.d. *Oxford Learner's Dictionaries*. Accessed February 17, 2023. <https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/diaspora>.

- Emmons, Paul, Marcia F. Feuerstein, and Carolina Dayer, ed. 2016. *Confabulations: Storytelling in Architecture*. 1st ed. Oxford, UK: Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315573359>.
- Etzioni, Amitai. 2002. "Inventing Hispanics: A Diverse Minority Resists Being Labeled." Brookings. Blog. <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/inventing-hispanics-a-diverse-minority-resists-being-labeled/>.
- Frail, Jennifer. 2022. "Quilting Urban Fabric: Imagining Patchwork Quilting as an Architectural Methodology for Sustainability and Collective Care." Master of Architecture Thesis, Dalhousie University. <https://dalspace.library.dal.ca/xmlui/handle/10222/81762>.
- Geertz, Clifford. 1973. *The Interpretation of Cultures*. New York, NY: Basic Books.
- Goldschmidt, Gabriela. 1991. "The Dialectics of Sketching." *Creativity Research Journal* 4, no. 2: 123-143. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10400419109534381>.
- Griffiths, Sam. 2015. "Reading the Text as a City:" In *Proceedings of the 10th International Space Syntax Symposium*, edited by Kayvan Karimi, 105: 1-10. London, UK: International Space Syntax Symposium. https://discovery.ucl.ac.uk/id/eprint/1501439/1/Griffiths_SSS10_Proceedings_105.pdf.
- Halifax Regional Municipality. *Zoning Boundaries*. <https://catalogue-hrm.opendata.arcgis.com/search?q=zoning>.
- Hey, J., J. Linsey, A. M. Agogino, and K. L. Wood. 2008. "Analogies and Metaphors in Creative Design." *International Journal of Engineering Education* 24, no. 2: 283-294. https://www.sutd.edu.sg/cmsresource/idc/papers/2008-_analogy_and_metaphor_in_creative_design_-_hey_and_linsey_et_al_ijee_2008.pdf.
- Khattar, Rose, Jessica Vela, and Lorena Roque. 2022. "Latino Workers Continue To Experience a Shortage of Good Jobs." Center for American Progress (blog). <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/latino-workers-continue-to-experience-a-shortage-of-good-jobs/>.
- Klobucista, Claire, and Danielle Renwick. n.d. "Colombia's Civil Conflict." *Council on Foreign Relations*. Last Modified January 11, 2017. <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/colombias-civil-conflict>.
- Kopp, Natalie Jianyi. 2022. "A Home Then, A Home Now." Master of Architecture Thesis, University of Waterloo. <https://uwspace.uwaterloo.ca/handle/10012/18206>.
- Laborde, Antonia. 2023. "The Private Meeting between Kissinger and Pinochet in Chile: 'We Want to Help.'" *El Pais*. May 26, 2023. <https://english.elpais.com/international/2023-05-26/the-private-meeting-between-kissinger-and-pinochet-in-chile-we-want-to-help.html>.

- Latour, Bruno. 1996. "On Actor-Network Theory: A Few Clarifications." *Soziale Welt* 47, no. 4: 369–381.
- Lima, Alvaro. 2010. *Transnationalism: A New Mode of Immigrant Integration*. The Mauricio Gastón Institute for Latino Community Development and Public Policy. <http://www.bostonplans.org/getattachment/b5ea6e3a-e94e-451b-af08-ca9fcc3a1b5b/>.
- Lybarger, Jeremy. 2013. "El Salvador's Children of War." *Mother Jones*. April 30, 2013. <https://www.motherjones.com/media/2013/04/el-salvadors-children-war-de-cesare/>
- Medina Gavilanes, Ana, and Víctor Cano-Ciborro. 2022. "Cartographies of Everyday Conflicts in Public Spaces. Informal Micro-Activities on Formal Infrastructure. Carapungo Entry Park, Quito." *Revista INVI* 37, no. 106. <https://doi.org/10.5354/0718-8358.2022.67122>.
- Nora, Pierre. 1989. "Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire." *Representations* 1 no. 26: 7-24.
- Oboler, Suzanne. 1995. *Ethnic Labels, Latino Lives; Identity and the Politics of (Re)Presentation in the United States*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.
- Pop, Anita. 2021. "Imprints of the Everyday: Architecture for Incremental Interventions." Master of Architecture Thesis, Dalhousie University. <https://dalspace.library.dal.ca/xmlui/handle/10222/80697>.
- RIGHTS. 2018. The Project. <https://projectmigrantrights.org/project/>.
- Price, Patricia L. 2010. "Cultural Geography and the Stories We Tell Ourselves." *Cultural Geographies* 17, no. 2: 203–10. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1474474010363851>.
- Rangel, Abel, and Avery Stewart. 2021. "Halifax's Spanish Speakers Try to Build Community." The Signal. Blog. <https://signalhfx.ca/halifaxs-spanish-speakers-try-to-build-a-community/>.
- Sheringham, Olivia, and Maria Das Graças Brightwell. 2012. "Consuming, Creating, Contesting: Latin American Diasporic Practices." *Canadian Journal of Latin American and Caribbean Studies* 37, no. 74: 11–16. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08263663.2012.11006001>.
- Sismondo, Sergio. 2010. *An Introduction to Science and Technology Studies*. West Sussex: John Wiley & Sons.
- Statistics Canada. 2022. *Mobility of Immigrant Taxfilers by Census Metropolitan Areas and Tax Year*. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/cv.action?pid=4310002201>.
- Statistics Canada. 2022. *Period of Immigration by Admission Category and Place of Birth: Canada, Provinces and Territories, Census Metropolitan Areas and Census Agglomerations with Parts*. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/cv.action?pid=9810031701>.

- Wehmeyer, Sarah. 2021. "Collage-Based Research and Design." *Dimensions of Architectural Knowledge* 1, no. 1: 25-36. <https://doi.org/10.14361/dak-2021-0104>.
- Vélez, Satiago Londoño, and Benjamín Villegas. 2001. *Colombian Art: 3,500 Years of History*. Bogotá, D.C., Colombia: Benjamín Villegas & Asociados.
- Yeganeh, Hamid. 2021. "Orality, Literacy, and the "Great Divide" in Cultural Values." *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy* 42, no. 5/6. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJSSP-04-2021-0088>.
- "1669 Argyle St. Halifax, Nova Scotia." 2022. *Google Street View*. https://www.google.com/maps/@44.6466578,-63.5745914,3a,75y,91.06h,92.66t/data=!3m6!1e1!3m4!1sV8n0Cfl1z8DwkkXcn_iH6w!2e0!7i16384!8i8192?entry=ttu.