

Volatile Domesticity

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Abstract

Architecture exists within a Myth of Permanence. I am seeking to destabilize this myth with the addition of a Volatile Domesticity; a system of living that is unstable in nature and through its instability, seeks to break apart the illusion of permanence of the built environment and our relationship to it. Volatile Domesticity can be achieved by implementing tactics of Active Temporarily and Siting.

The Myth of Permanence is the pervading myth that what we build, who we are, and where we stand are permanent, unchanging facts. The Myth can be exemplified in monuments we never imagined could crumble, thirty year mortgages, divorce rates, and the demolition of buildings with tons of materials sent to landfills.

The Myth of Permanence has started to be broken down in other fields but architecture clings to this Myth as a life preserver. In some ways architecture may fear its own obsolescence if it were to embrace impermanence. But I do not believe this to be the case; architects have the power to break free of this Myth and position themselves prominently in the design of the future. I am attempting to provide a counter to the notion that architecture has to be heavy, expensive, static, and permanent.

Volatile Domesticity is a system that seeks to overthrow illusions of stability and permanence in the built environment. It is a building archetype and a lifestyle that engages site actively and temporally.

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Firewood becomes ash, and it does not become firewood again. Yet, do not suppose that the ash is future and the firewood past. You should understand that firewood abides in the phenomenal expression of firewood which fully includes past and future, and is independent of past and future. Ash abides in the phenomenal expression of ash which fully includes future and past.

—Dōgen Zenji, 1233

Chapter 1: The Circumstances of Temporality

The nature of the home is not defined by any one state. The home is in constant flux, moving from one incarnation to another, but architecture as a whole resides in the Myth of Permanence. This Myth pervades within the practice despite evidence to the contrary. This project seeks to examine new possibilities that can enliven the debate for a domestic architecture that understands the inherent impermanence of our place and the structures that we place upon it.

The single family home is an icon of the “American Dream.” It was the promise of this dream that led to the construction of suburbia, in built form and in the American consciousness, after World War II. The story being that we wanted to give the veterans returning from war the homes they dreamed about and fought for. This “house with a white picket fence” became an ideal in the American consciousness of the 20th century. This ideal (along with segregation and other social issues) drove the exodus from cities and the explosion of suburban sprawl. This was the white, hetero, middle class story of America.

This story is starting to shift in the 21st century. Cities are re-densifying and young people are more mobile than ever. Home ownership is at 48 year low and the suburban dream is fading. Our work and social lives are becoming increasingly more digitalized. Our home is no longer a “forever

home,” but rather a “home for right now.” People are staying single for longer and partnered people are often delaying marriage. The working man married to the housewife with 2.5 kids and a dog does not exist as the paradigm of the American dream anymore. So, why are the types of houses we are building the same as they were sixty years ago? There is the potential to shift the entire system towards a typology that is more egalitarian and in reach of a wider cross section of the American people.

The American home needs to be approached through the concept of impermanence; the realm in which it resides. Impermanence and instability need to be integrated into the siting of the home and its programmatic uses.

We will work with the active siting of a home instead of the passive site on which we normally build. We will explore how time can replace space. An architecture based in siting is always in the process of making. There is no fixed state that continues indefinitely. We are also looking at the body as the site for architecture. When a fixed site for a home becomes less important, the body steps up to play the role for more site-specific design.

The domestic program of the home is an essential element in all of our lives and the elements that come together to create this space are facets that must be closely examined. Machines and

mechanical systems have become such an integral part of the home, it is hard to tell where one begins and the other ends.

The design of new possibilities for a domestic architecture are explored through a range of representations that encourage strange-making and lateral thinking. A wide range of techniques and scales allows us to make the fantastic appear possible. We will examine the working methods of other artists and designers that use a variety of mediums and methods to test ideas and conceptions of reality.

My goal is to break the conception of the home as a stable, permanent archetype and develop new approaches to domesticity that are based in the natural law of impermanence and is reflective of the diversity of the American public.

The Myth of Permanence

The Myth of Permanence is the pervading myth that what we build, who we are, and where we stand are permanent, unchanging facts. The Myth can be exemplified in monuments we never imagined could crumble, thirty year mortgages, divorce rates, and the demolition of buildings with tons of materials sent to landfills.

The Myth of Permanence has started to be broken down in other fields but architecture clings to this Myth as a life preserver. In some ways architecture fears its own obsolescence if it were to embrace the impermanence. But I do not believe this to be the case; architects have the power to break free of this Myth and position themselves prominently in the design of the future. I am attempting to provide a counter to the notion that architecture has to be heavy, expensive, static, and permanent.



Figure 1: A House After Hurricane Sandy

A Volatile Domesticity

Volatile Domesticity is a Late-Postmodern phenomena of domestic life. It is a system that embraces instability and seeks to overthrow illusions of stability and permanence beginning in the domestic sphere. It is a building archetype and a lifestyle.

Volatile Domesticity is inherently difficult to pin down, it is constantly shifting and changing form. It allows people to liberated from conventional practices of domestic life and to live how they chose. Domesticity has always had a somewhat tenuous relationship to architecture, so it is ripe for challenging of the Myth of Permanence in the built world. Domestic architecture has the power to cultivate awareness with the impermanent and the unstable because of our intimate connection with our homes.

No person is static and neither is what we call a home. What we consider the program of home changes as well. A home could be a working farmstead, an RV, a castle, a tent, a suburban tract house, a studio with a bed, or a storefront with an apartment. We work out of our home, drive our homes, or rent them out to strangers.

We must make a close study of the constitute parts of a home. What are the differences between a shelter and a home? There is a key cultural component to what we call a home.



Figure 2: A Volatile Domesticity

In many ways our house becomes a facade of how we want to be viewed by others. Our houses are rarely monumental architecture, but become shells that allow us to be more comfortable but also separate us.

What are the essentials of a home? How do our needs shape the architecture of a home? Is a home more than a shell? What does mobility mean when discussed in conjunction with domestic life?

The home is a complex and long-standing program within the field of architecture. In the past century machines and the mechanical systems of the American home play a more leading role in how we live and relate to the spaces that we live in.

Machines have played a central role in the American home since the 1920's, and more so in the 1950's, when appliances such as refrigerators, washing machines, and air conditioners started to become affordable for middle class consumers. This rise in domestic machines is also linked to women becoming the main targets of advertising for these products.¹ These products were marketed as time-saving, so women could have more free time, but in reality the advertising and design of these products encouraged women to embrace housework as women's "natural" calling.² Women became tied to the very machines that

¹ Ellen Lupton, *Mechanical Brides: Women and Machines from Home to Office* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1993), 7.

² Lupton, *Mechanical Brides*, 7.



Figure 3: Suburban Tract Homes



Figure 4: Farmhouse in the Great Smoky Mountains



Figure 5: Interior of a Nakagin Capsule



Figure 6: Bull Run Castle, Virginia

were promoted to free them from the drudgery of housework. The home became solidified as a place of work for women, while simultaneously being a place of rest for men. And while the world is very different today than the 1950's ideal white middle class household, there are still strong connections between women, domestic machines and housework.

Reyner Banham writes about the home and its mechanics from a completely different perspective. Banham sees Americans as obsessed with cleanliness and climate control and their homes become nothing more than shells for mechanical systems.³ For him Americans do not monumentalize or make architecture, but rather the great outdoors is the American monumental space.⁴ Banham decides to leave the house all together and proposes a clear inflatable bubble with a core of mechanical systems (figure 4). Someone could sit in the middle of the wilderness but still enjoy clean 70 degree air while listening to their favorite album. In many ways Banham is correct his analysis of the American home, the shell of our home or the interior architecture seems to be of little importance to most people and we value our ability to control the climate with mechanical means above most other "architectural" aspects of the home.

3 Reyner Banham, "A Home is Not a House," *Art in America*, vol 2, (1965), 74.

4 Banham, "A Home is Not a House," 74.

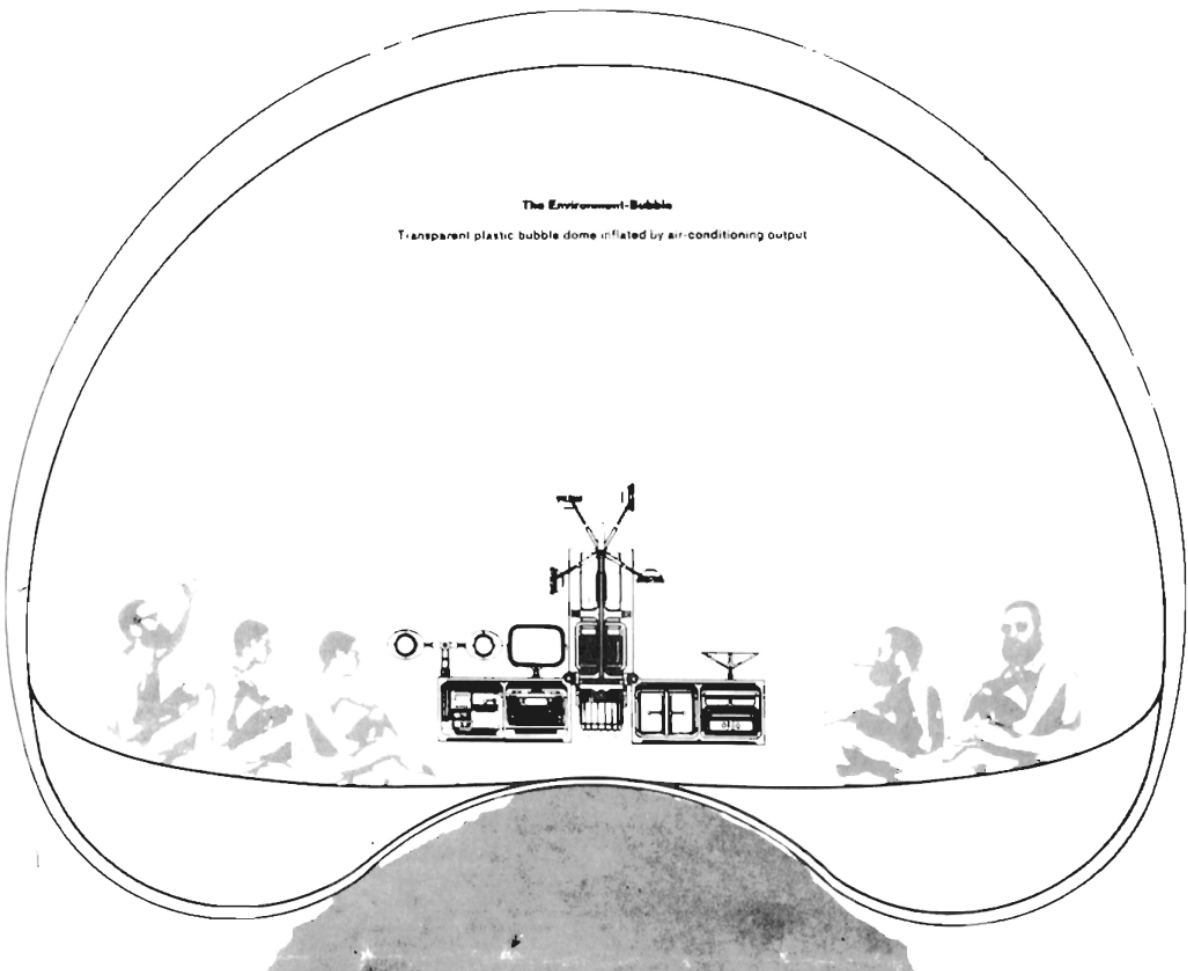


Figure 7: Illustration from "A Home is Not a House"

What Banham misses though, is the importance of the facade of the shell to act as the image of ourselves we project to the street. The house, in many instances, becomes a symbol of wealth and conformity to what is believed to be the American Dream. The home becomes another suit of clothes that we wear to symbolize how we want others to see us. This is the root of the various revival tract home subdivisions, the mega-mansion on the hill, and the inoperable shutters on mobile homes. The appearance of conformity allows people to feel a part of the larger American community.

The architecture of the American home itself is of little consequence, as Banham argues, and I agree. What makes the home is its relationship to the machines that make it a domestic workplace, the machines that keep it clean and comfortable, and the image that is projected by the facade. This sounds like an anti-architectural stance, but there is the possibility to turn these aspects into a positive energy that can drive a new way of designing the home.

Active Temporality

Active Temporality is a tactic that challenges the myth of permanence by highlighting the inherent instability of our life on this planet and embracing it. Active Temporarily presents itself in built form to become integrated into our daily lives. Through this strategy, experiencing instability can become a daily ritual, constantly reminding us of the impermanence of each object and moment.

Active Temporarily can be expressed through materiality, mobility, construction methods, or lifestyles all supported within the system of a Volatile Domesticity.



Figure 8: Splitting Monumentality

The Grammar of Site

The concept of Site being a static and unmoving space is usually accepted in conventional architectural practice. Architects are given a site (or choose one) then a building is designed for that place. A piece of architecture is often judged “good” by how well the site is integrated into the building, how site-specific it is. When we think of site-less architecture, we most often imagine cookie cutter house plopped down in any generic suburb. But what happens when we imagine ourselves as the main site of our home and the ground that we set upon only a temporary situation? Site, the static noun, becomes siting, the active verb. When Site becomes Siting, place becoming a temporal event. When we chose our own site and prepare it, our relationship to the our environment changes. What are the architectural implications of a home based on time and the body?

When site loses its static definition possibilities emerge that radically change how we relate to the ground we stand/sleep on and our conception of the home.

Charlie Hailey, in his book *Campsite: Architecture of Duration and Place*, introduces the dichotomy of the terms camp/camping as both active and passive, moving and fixed, verb and noun.¹ This dichotomy continues for the terms site/siting.

¹ Charlie Hailey, *Campsite: Architecture of Duration and Place*, (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2008), 2.



Figure 9: Siting



Figure 10: Camping in the "Wilderness"



Figure 11: Pier 43, San Francisco



Figure 12: Kenyan Refugee Camp



Figure 13: Suburbia, USA

Hailey uses the term *siting* in his examination the temporal architecture of campsites. *Siting* is a negotiation with the ground, it requires an openness; a campsite cannot be altered in the same manner as typical building projects.² While this project is not specially working with camping, the openness of *siting* is how we want to engage site.

What are the implications of an active *siting* as opposed to the fixed site in which we usually interact with? The first difference is that we see place in direct relation to a duration of time that we reside there. When it is understood that where we are is not permanent, less invasive site clearing and excavation are undertaken. Our marks on the existing landscape become smaller and we, in turn, adapt to the ground more than adapting to ground to us. This is what Hailey calls a "negotiation" with the ground.

The second difference between site and *siting*, is the inherent incompleteness of *siting*; we are never truly finished *siting*. This architecture, "waits to be finished, and its incompleteness implies an abundance of possibility rather than a lack of organization or decisive finitude."³ It is this unfinished possibility that gives temporal architectures the energy and potential to shift our thinking about place and the home.

² Hailey, *Campsite*, 3.

³ Hailey, *Campsite*, 5.

Hailey's discussion of siting is generally in relation to camping, but if we expand the basic conceptions of siting beyond the campsite, we can start to conceive of an approach to site that is grounded in active temporality. We take the "ground" as it is. This approach can be taken in a warehouse, a forest, or an abandoned suburb. All of these have the potential to be the ground, or the place of siting in this project.

When our relationship to the ground becomes more temporary, our bodies start to carry more of the load in regard to site specificity. We build around ourselves, for our own comfort. An extreme example of this is the space suit. The space suit was designed as a completely closed system, protecting the wearer from the vacuum of space. The A7L suit of the Apollo missions was designed around the human body and its needs. The systems engineering that guided the design for the other components of the Apollo missions did not work for the design of the suit; its success came from epidermal logic of the body.⁴ The astronauts were siting themselves within these spacesuits, or rather, the designers of the suits were designing site-specific habitations with the astronauts as the site.

These two examples of siting; camping and the spacesuit, seem contradictory. One is permeable

⁴ Nicholas de Monchaux, *Spacesuit: Fashioning Apollo*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2011), 331.



Figure 14: Buzz Aldrin in the A7L Space Suit

to the environment around it and one is completely sealed off. One is site specific and one is site adaptive. What they share is the conception that the duration of time is a determining factor. We want to be somewhat permeable to the ground we are working on, but we must also need to take into consideration the advantages of closed systems that are linked with the human body.

Chapter 2: Mapping Methodology

This investigation started with a *Taxonomy the Architectures of Impermanence* with particular attention paid to the program of the home. This taxonomy breaks down the fundamental issues of each category. It is a casting of a wide net that then enables one to tease out issues and relationships not normally raised when projects are examined separately.

The examination of the taxonomy allowed for the discovery of various *Scenario Themes*. The themes are studied through possible relationships to site, construction methods, scale, inhabitants/users, representation methods, and instances of appearance.

The *Scenario Themes* explored are; The Subversive Other, House As Instrument, Inhabitable Systems, The Itinerant Unit, The Wearable Enclosure, and Instant Urbanity. Some of the themes are examined more in depth than others and this further highlights the potential for this project to continue indefinitely, to keep siting itself in the world for years to come.

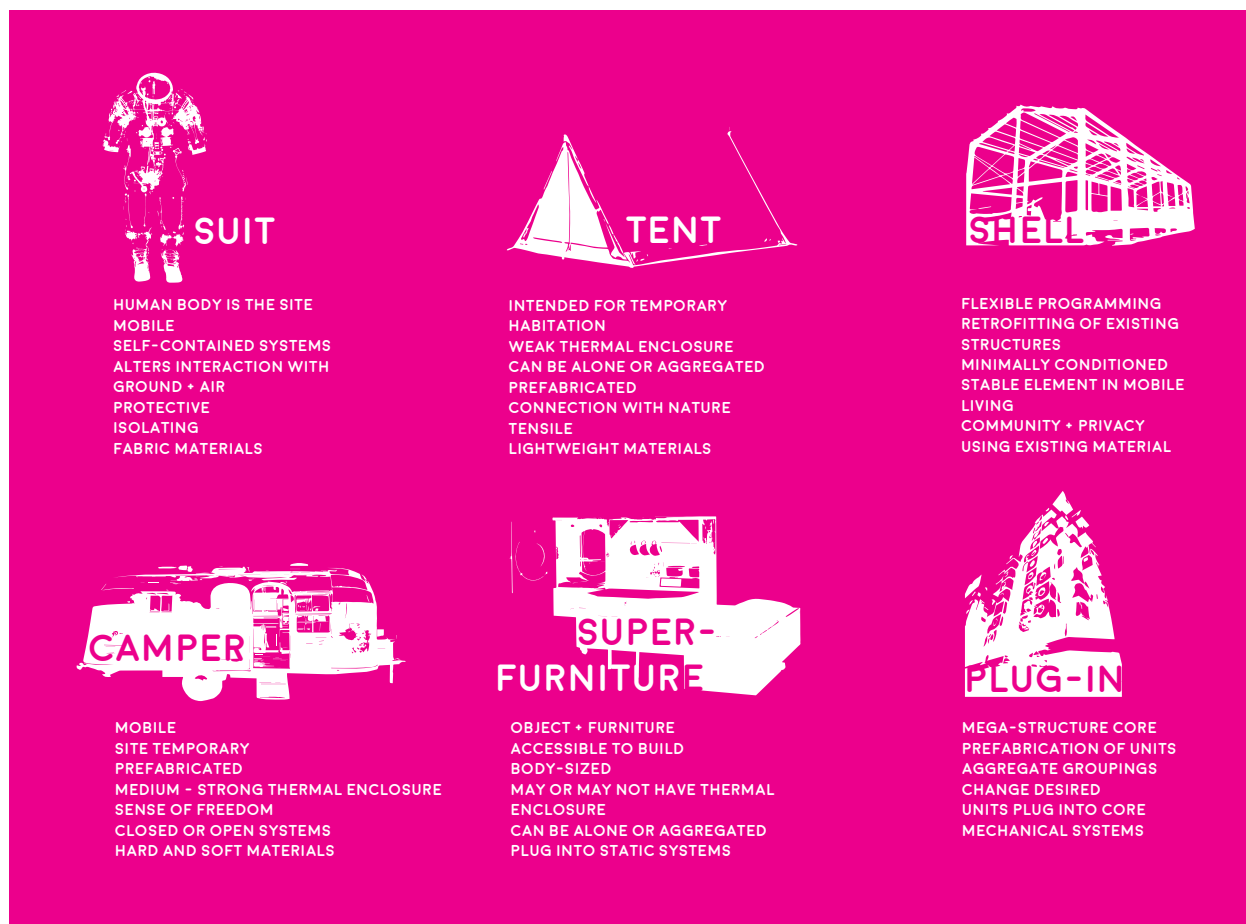


Figure 15: Taxonomy of Architectures of Impermanence

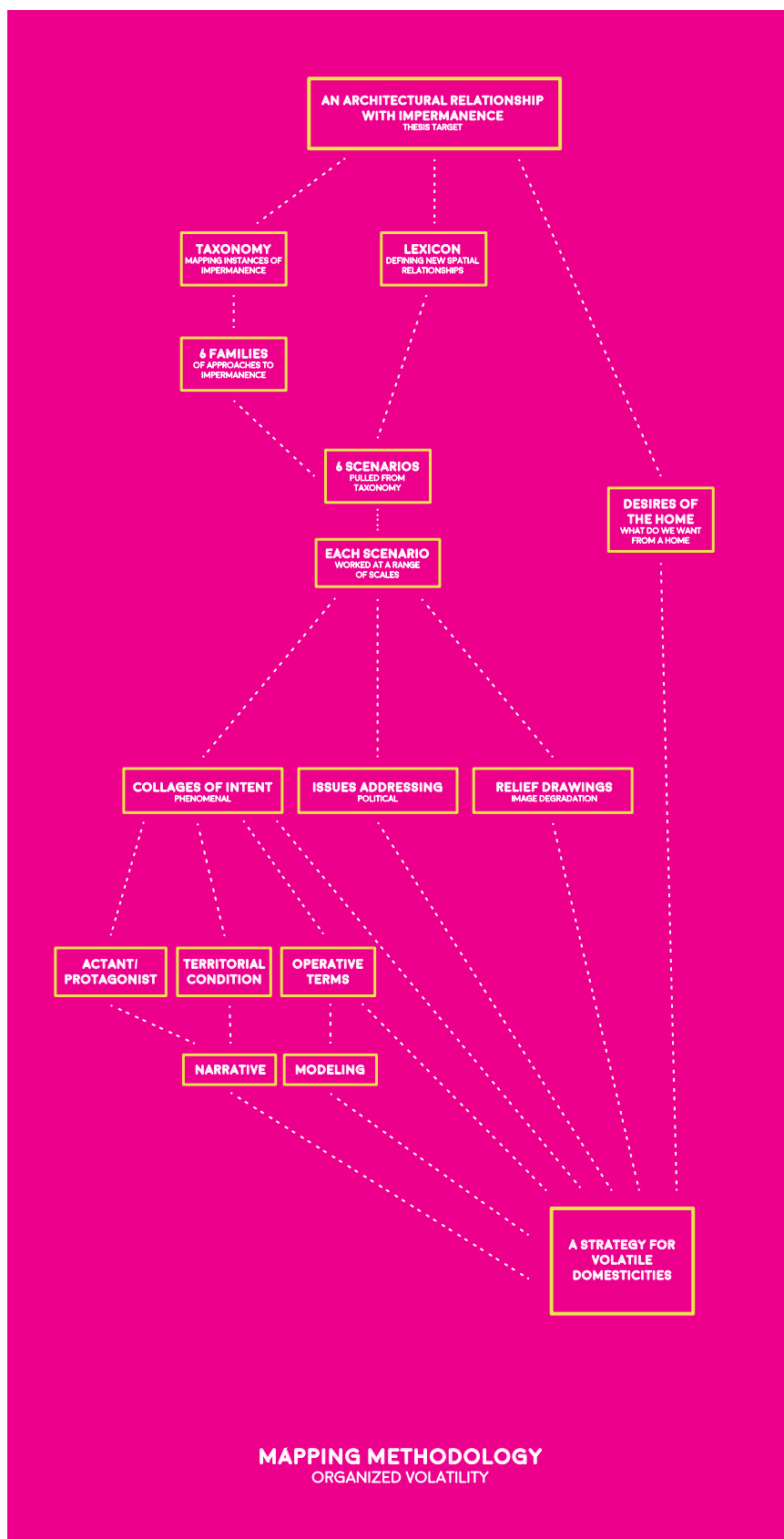


Figure 16: Mapping Methodology

Chapter 3: The Mad Science of the Domestic

The practice of simultaneous thought is very important in this project. This is one reason Volatile Domesticity is explored not with one singular design, but with several, each addressing different issues and lifestyles. This is what I am calling *The Mad Science of the Domestic*. This approach allows for a diversity of solutions for the manifestation of Volatile Domesticity. Mad Science also asserts that there is no singular correct answer to the question of what an architectural relationship to impermanence can look like, but rather the multitude of possibilities point to a new direction of domestic architecture.

Each scenario is presented in context of *Instances of Appearance*; where these ideas have manifested in the past or are occurring today. I am not proposing that these concepts of domesticity are solely of my own devising, but rather fit within already established (yet disparate) strains of thought already existing the world.

Each of the scenarios is also accompanied by a narrative of a protagonist, a territorial condition, and a dichotomy of issues to address. The development of the narratives serve as a tactic to enter into each scenario with a different perspective. They become foils to each other, allowing each scenario to explore different relationships to mobility, family life, materials, systems, and ownership.

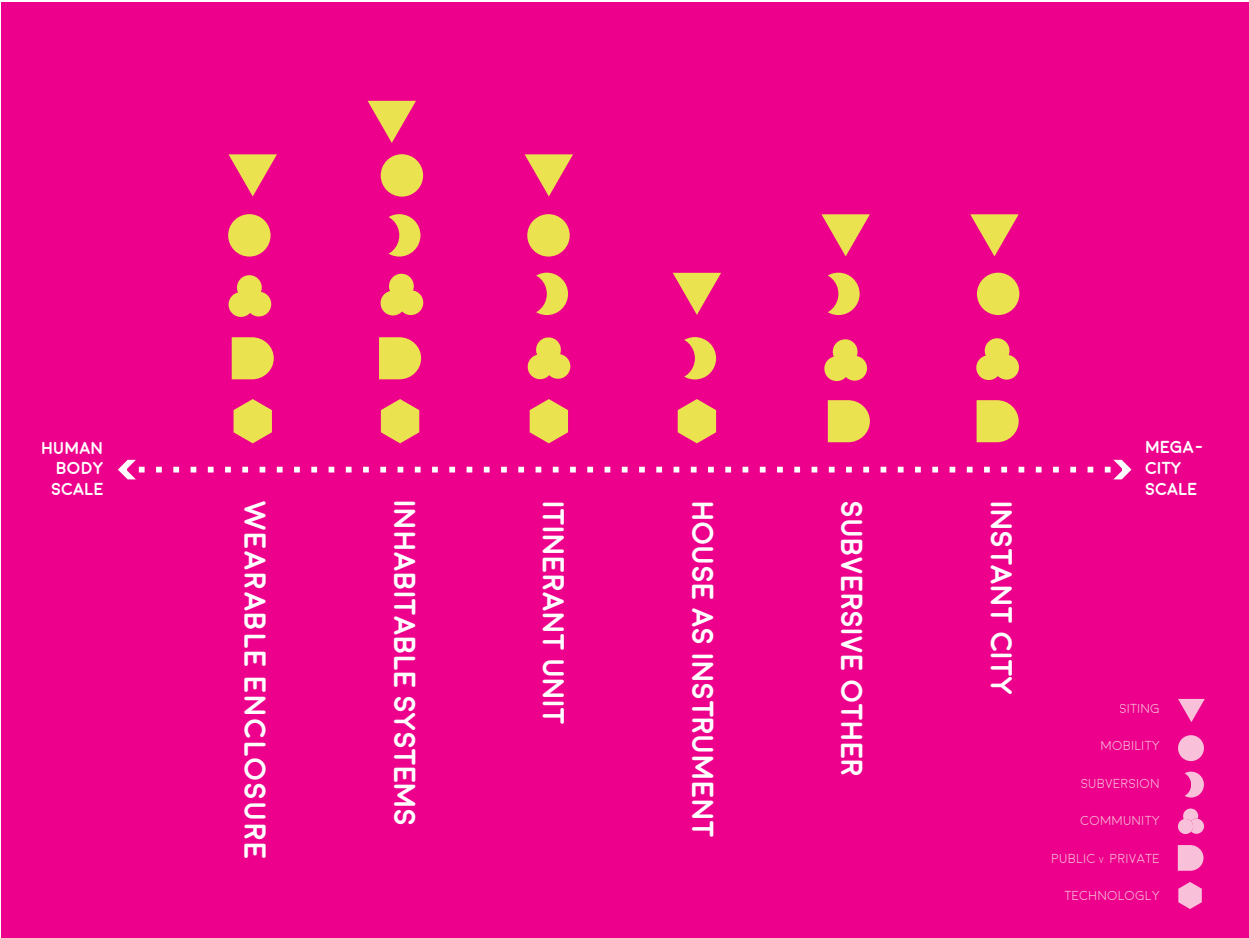


Figure 17: Issues of Each Scenario

Wearable Enclosure

The Wearable Enclosure challenges the of division of *public and private spaces*. The concept that the home is static and private is called into question. The human body is the site of this type of domesticity. It moves from place to place with the user continually siting on the ground it inhabits.

The Wearable Enclosure is inherently mobile, but it alters how we interact with our environment and the ground that we walk on. The enclosure is a self contained system that is built specifically for the needs of the human body. The Wearable Enclosure creates an impermanent separation of the user and the outside environment. This separation is either necessary due to conditions on the ground or is a self-imposed isolation. *Public/private* delineations of space become murky.

The Wearable Enclosure is most often constructed of some type of fabric material. The thinness allows for flexibility, mobility, and comfort. Its design is closely linked to clothing design in how it has to interact with the body.

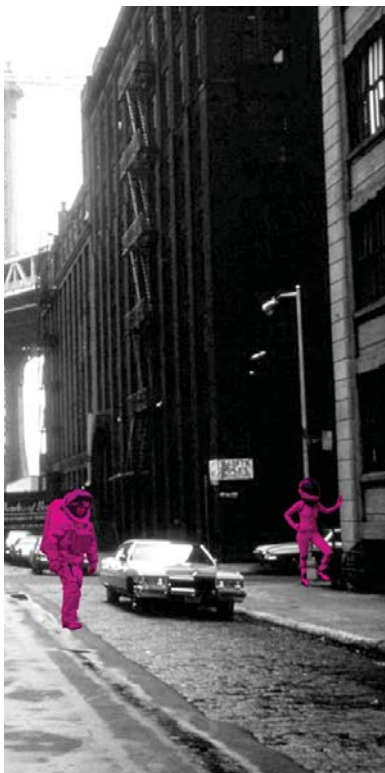


Figure 18: Wearable Enclosure

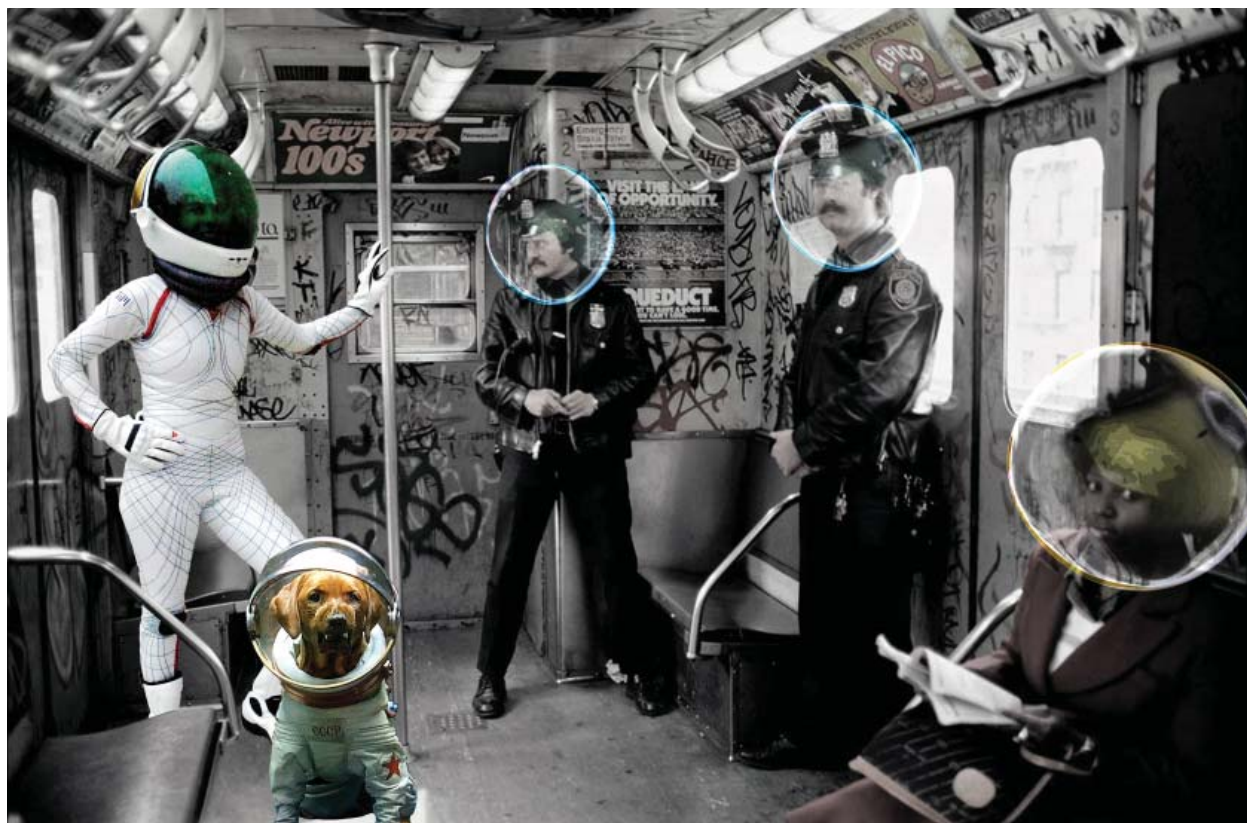


Figure 19: Wearable Enclosure Concept Collage



Figure 20: Dava Newman's BioSuit



Figure 21: Z-2 spacesuit

Instances of Appearance

The spacesuit is the most prolific instance of the Wearable Enclosure. It is an intricate weaving together of the human body and the systems that support it. The A7L Spacesuit (figure 22) was custom fitted to each astronaut and sewn by hand by a team of skilled seamstresses.¹ Alternatives to the A7L would propose “engineering man for space” and again and again the human body would aggressively reject such encroachments, the spacesuit worn to the moon was not developed from military-industrial expertise, but rather from underwear.²

There are several new designs for the next spacesuit, especially directed to visiting Mars. Dava Newman's Biosuit (figure 20) is working towards a tighter fitting and more comfortable suit. The suit uses compression wires in the material to keep the body at a stable pressure. The Z-2 suit (figure 21) includes many innovations such as a rear entry hatch and is being touted by NASA as the suit that astronaut will wear on Mars.

Another manifestation of the Wearable Enclosure is of the wearable tent or bubble. This is an enclosure that expands out to create a space that can be inhabited that is larger than the suit itself.

¹ Nicholas de Monchaux, *Spacesuit: Fashioning Apollo*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2011), 3.

² de Monchaux, *Spacesuit*, 3



Figure 22: Apollo 14 Spacesuit worn by Alan B. Shepard

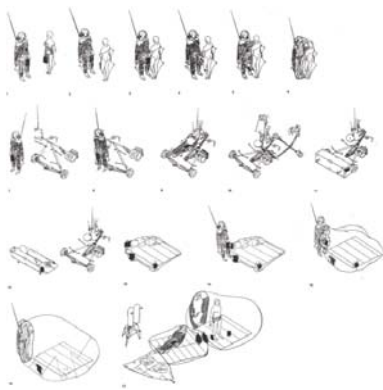


Figure 23: Archigram Suitaloons



Figure 24: Archigram, Suitaloons Prototype



Figure 25: Studio Orta, "Refuge Wear", 1998

Archigram's Cushicle and Suitaloons (figures 23 and 24) are prime examples of this type of enclosure. "The Cushicle carries food, water supply, radio, miniature projection television and heating apparatus."³ The user wears a suit that preforms the systematic functions of a home that then expands to a larger bubble that can be shared with others. Their example of the Wearable Enclosure is important in part for its theory of how two people could join in the enclosure.

Studio Orta is a team of artists that often work with wearable enclosures. Their work is primarily focused on social issues and their potentially inhabitable installations question politics and policies. Their work is usually found at the intersection of art, fashion design, and architecture. Their series *Refuge Wear* (figure 25) "occupies a territory somewhere between portable housing and fashion design, and gestures to issues surrounding homelessness, refugee culture and the, often ambivalent fashion industry."⁴

³ Peter Cook ed. *Archigram*, (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1973), 64.

⁴ Lucy + Jorge Orta, Paula Orrell ed. *Pattern Book: An Introduction to Collaborative Practices*, (London, Black Dog Publishing, 2007), 24.



Figure 26: Wearable Territory:
Disintegrating Urban Center



Figure 27: Wearable Protagonist: Lin,
Social Worker

The Proposal

Lin inhabits the Wearable Enclosure and is a social worker and activist working in a disintegrating city core. The enclosure allows him to visit his clients even on toxic levels days or during acid rain storms. He doesn't have to worry about the extreme temperatures or even waste disposal, the enclosure takes care of it all. The only liability is when he visits his girlfriend it is harder to connect than when he is not wearing the suit. He is hoping to upgrade to another model that allows other to join him inside the enclosure.

There are several models of the Wearable Enclosure. Some models are completely closed systems, while others only mitigate the interactions with exterior systems. This diversity allows for the people using them to pick and choose the system that works best for them and personalize it.



Figure 28: Wearable Enclosure Version 1.2

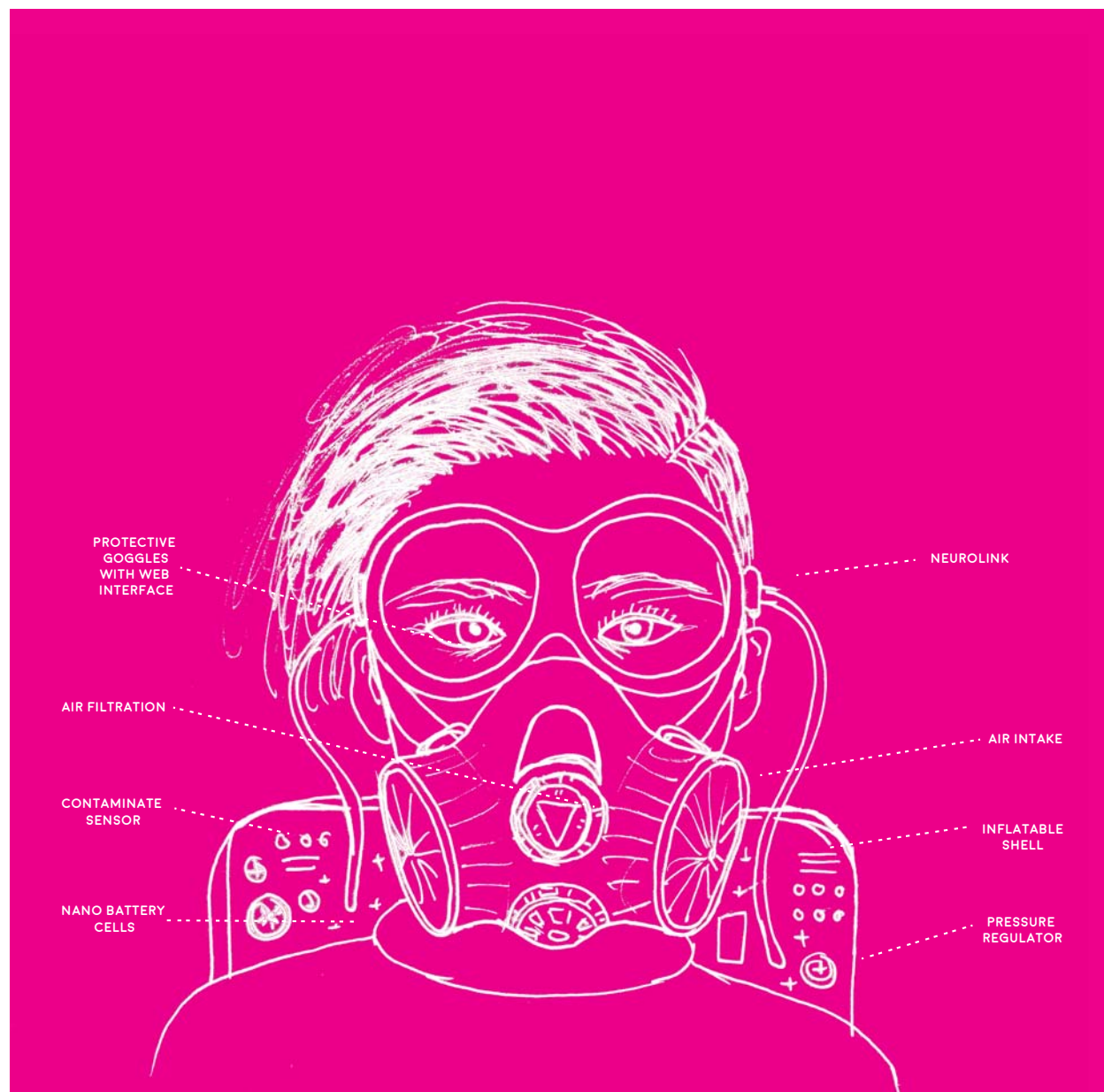


Figure 29: Wearable Mask Version 1.2

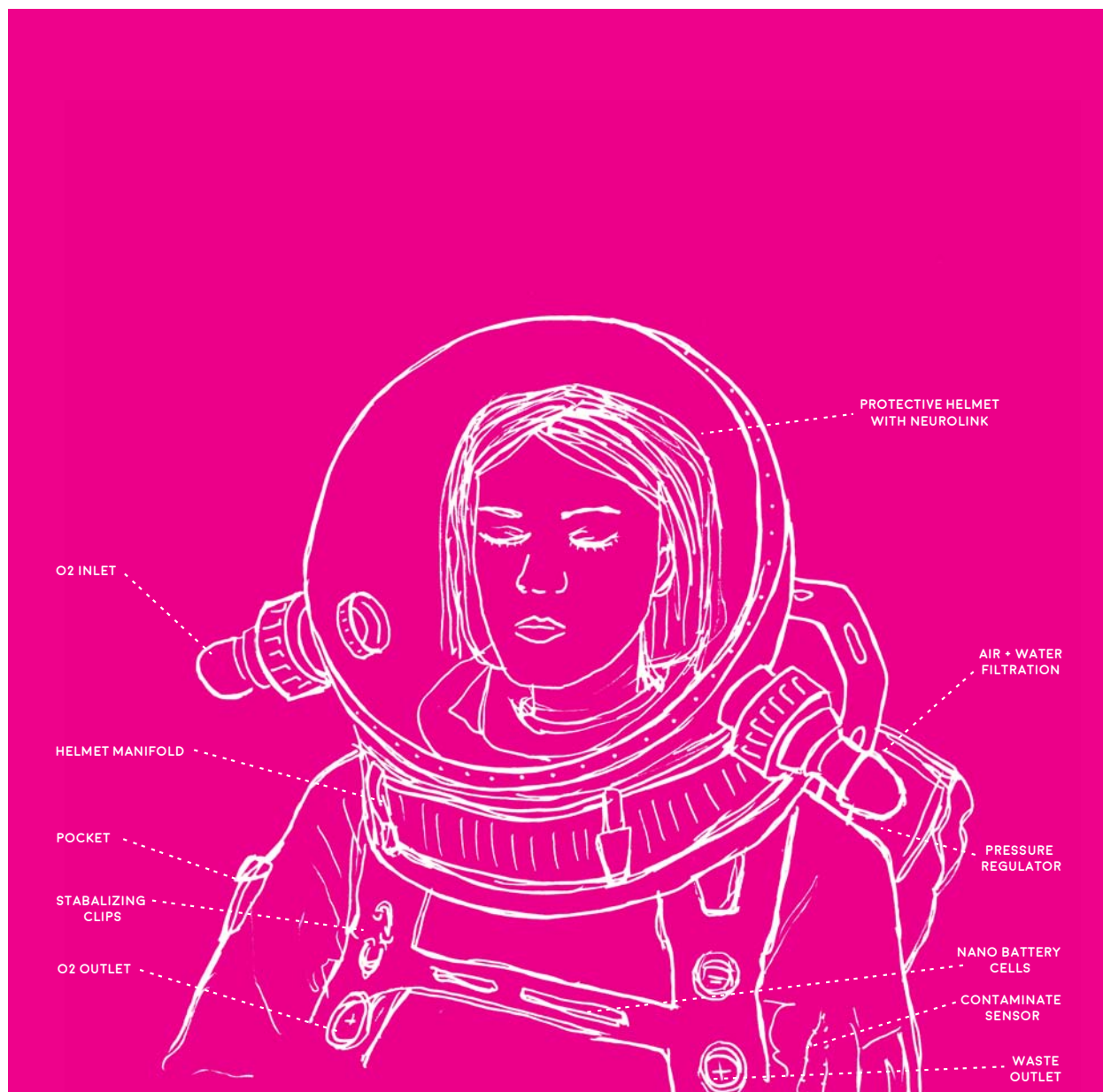


Figure 30: Wearable Helmet Version 2.3

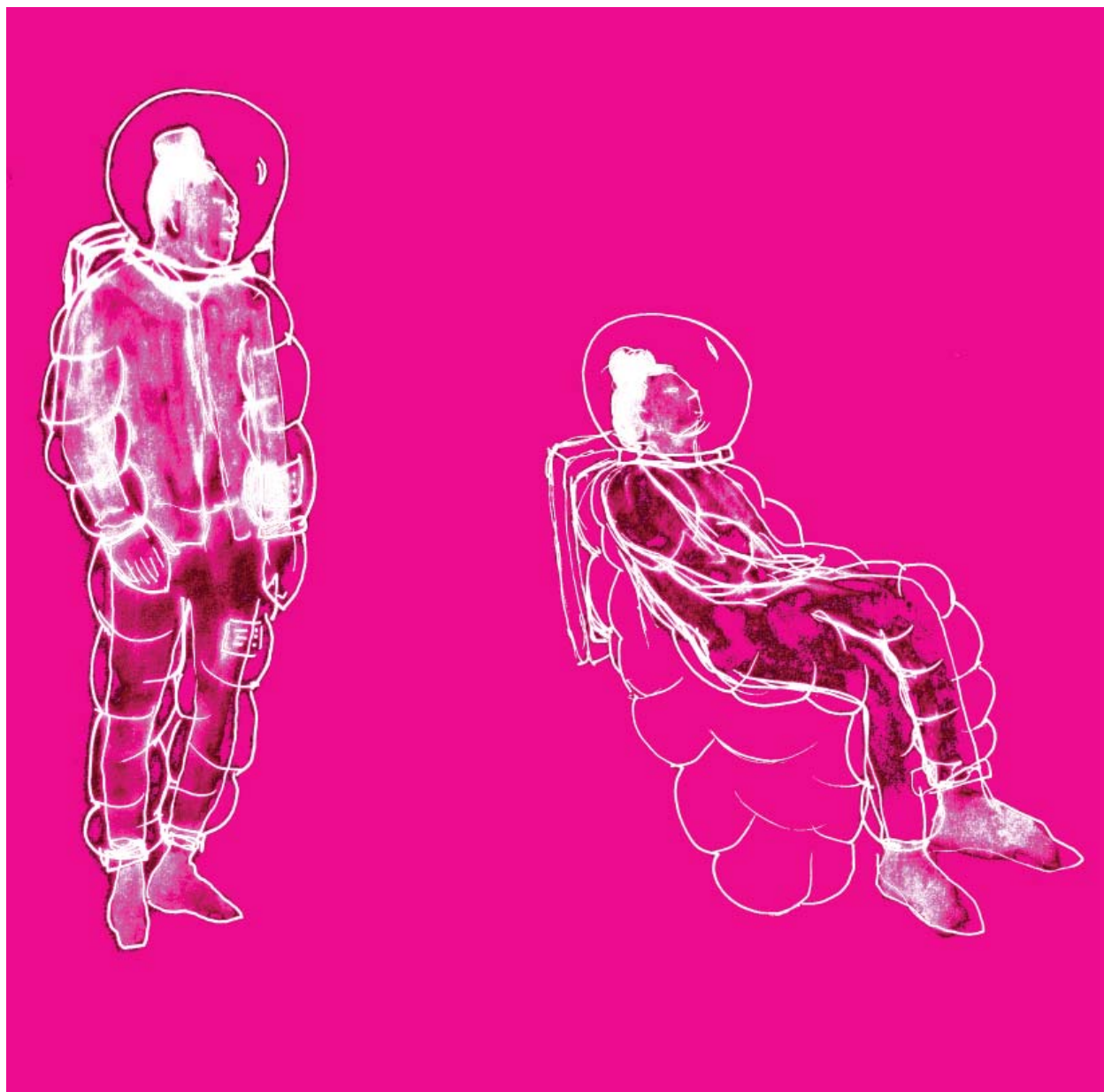


Figure 31: Wearable Enclosure Version 2.3

The Wearable Enclosure is an entirely mobile system of living that allows for a diversity of experiences. The biggest liability of the system is the alteration of how one interacts with the environment around them and the people in their lives. The Wearable Enclosure suggests, or even presupposes, a more solitary lifestyle, but one that is lived in public. Public and private space delineations become less defined, altering how we relate to our surroundings.



Figure 32: Wearable Enclosure In-Situ

Inhabitable Systems

Inhabitable Systems acts as an architectural domestic parasite in an urban condition. It tackles issues of *cybernetics, hacking, and conceptions of ownership*. The Inhabitable System redefines domesticity through its use of technology and machines that preform the jobs needed by the users.

It is a scheme meant to be hacked. Its form is non-determinant, rather is designed as a system to be used and misused at will. Inhabitable Systems is mobile, but less so than the Wearable Enclosure. The siting of this system is a type of deployment that is intended for short bursts of time, then quickly disassembled and deployed at a new location.



Figure 33: Inhabitable Systems

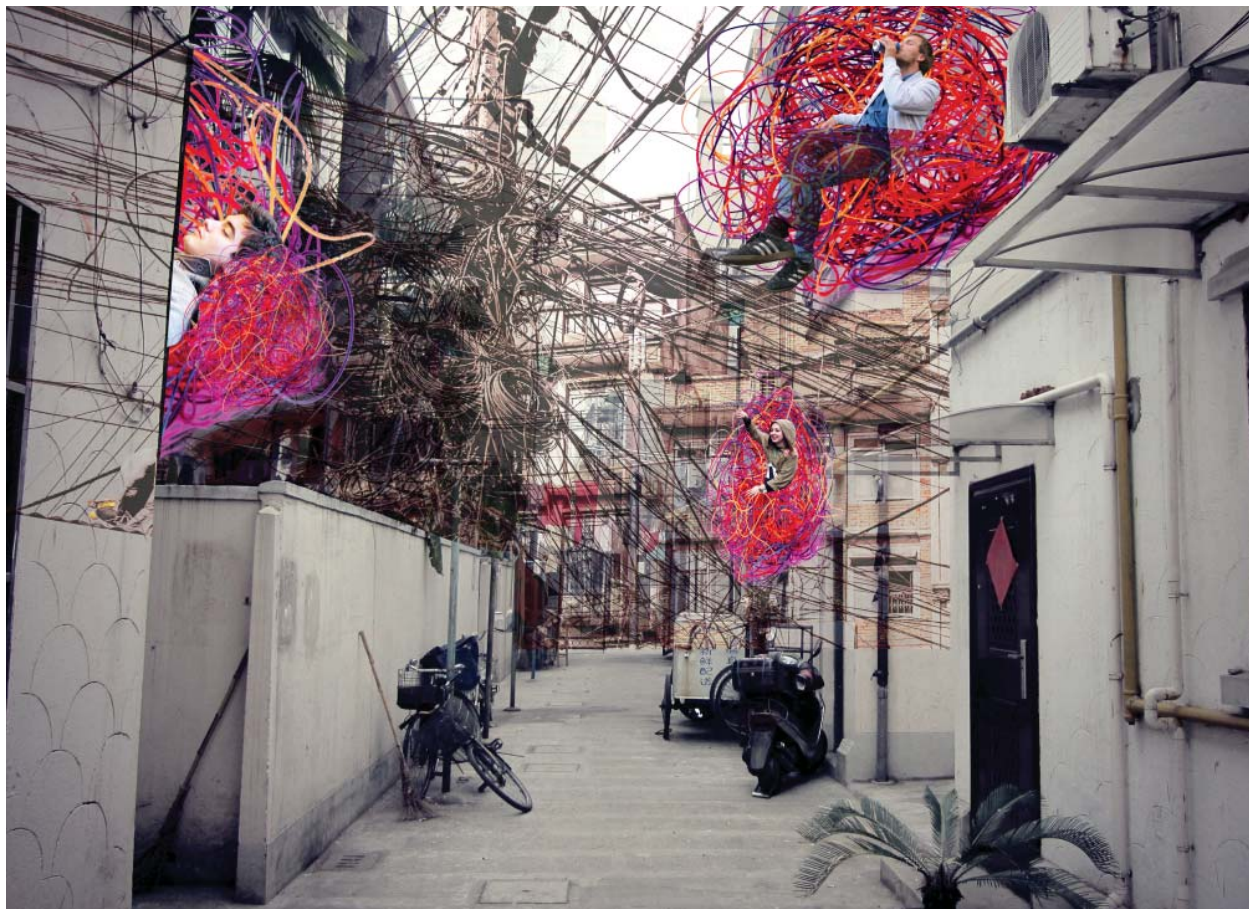


Figure 34: Inhabitable Systems Concept Collage

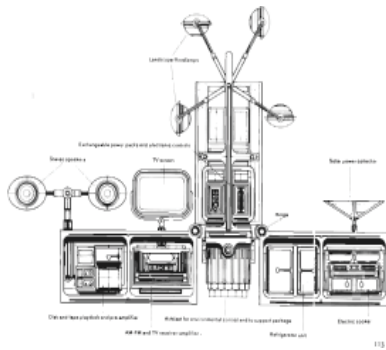


Figure 35: from "A Home is Not a House"

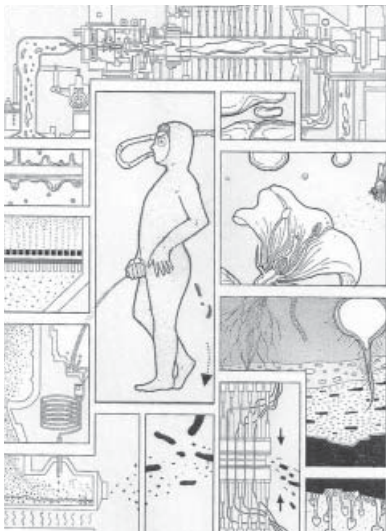


Figure 36: Jimenez Lai, from "Citizens of No Place"

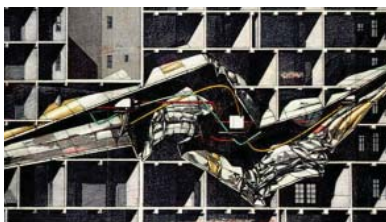


Figure 37: Lebbeus Woods, "Berlin Free-Zone 3-2," 1990

Instances of Appearance

One of the most prolific instances of the Inhabitable System is in Reyner Banham's essay "The Home is not a House" from 1965 (figures 35 + 38). This essay proposes that what American people actually desire from their home are systems and comfort contained in a shell. The bulky architecture of the home is shed and people are able to inhabit the great monumental space of the outdoors with all the comforts they desire.¹

Jimenez Lai, in his architectural graphic novel, *Citizens of No Place*, deals in many issues through representation and storytelling of fake realities. These fake realities come to life through representations that are both architectural and absurd, but brings up issues that are prevalent in architectural discourse today. The figure to the left (figure 36), is one page from the graphic novel representing what I see as an Inhabitable System.

Lebbeus Woods is another that works in the realm of speculative architectural visions. His visions are often influenced by upheaval and act as parasitic actors in relation to their surroundings. His work resides in the inherent instability of modern life.

1

Reyner Banham, "A Home is Not a House," *Art in America*, vol 2, (1965), 73.

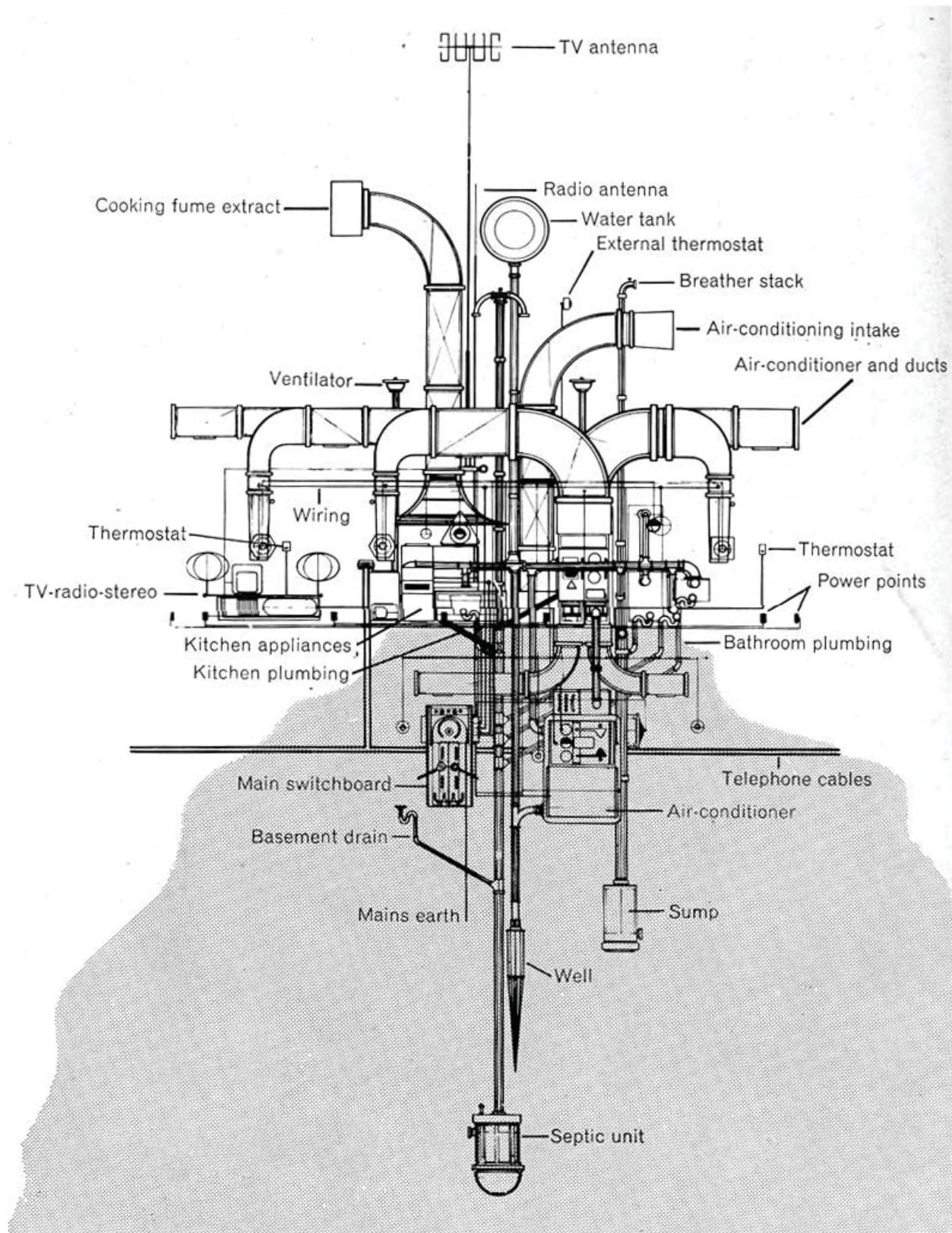


Figure 38: Anatomy of a Dwelling: Reyner Banham and illustrated by Francois Dallegret, from "A Home is Not a House"



Figure 39: Inhabitable Territory: Alley in Dense Urban Fabric



Figure 40: Inhabitable Protagonist: Emm, Freelance Hacker

The Proposal

The Inhabitable System is home to Emm, a freelance hacker. She is able to deploy her pneumatic system on the side of an existing building, hacking into its systems for her own use and using the forced air systems to inflate the living quarters of her home.

Most of the dense structure of the home is made of the tubes and wires needed to purify the air and water. Emm is as paranoid about cleanliness as she is about getting caught by the authorities.

She gives back to the building she feeds off of by way of boosted wireless internet speeds. This action buys her some goodwill from the inhabitants of the host building, but she is ready to move on at a moments notice. The system has a level of camouflage that makes it almost imperceptible during the day, and counts on a level of distraction from those who happen to pass by to not observe the parasite attached to its host building.

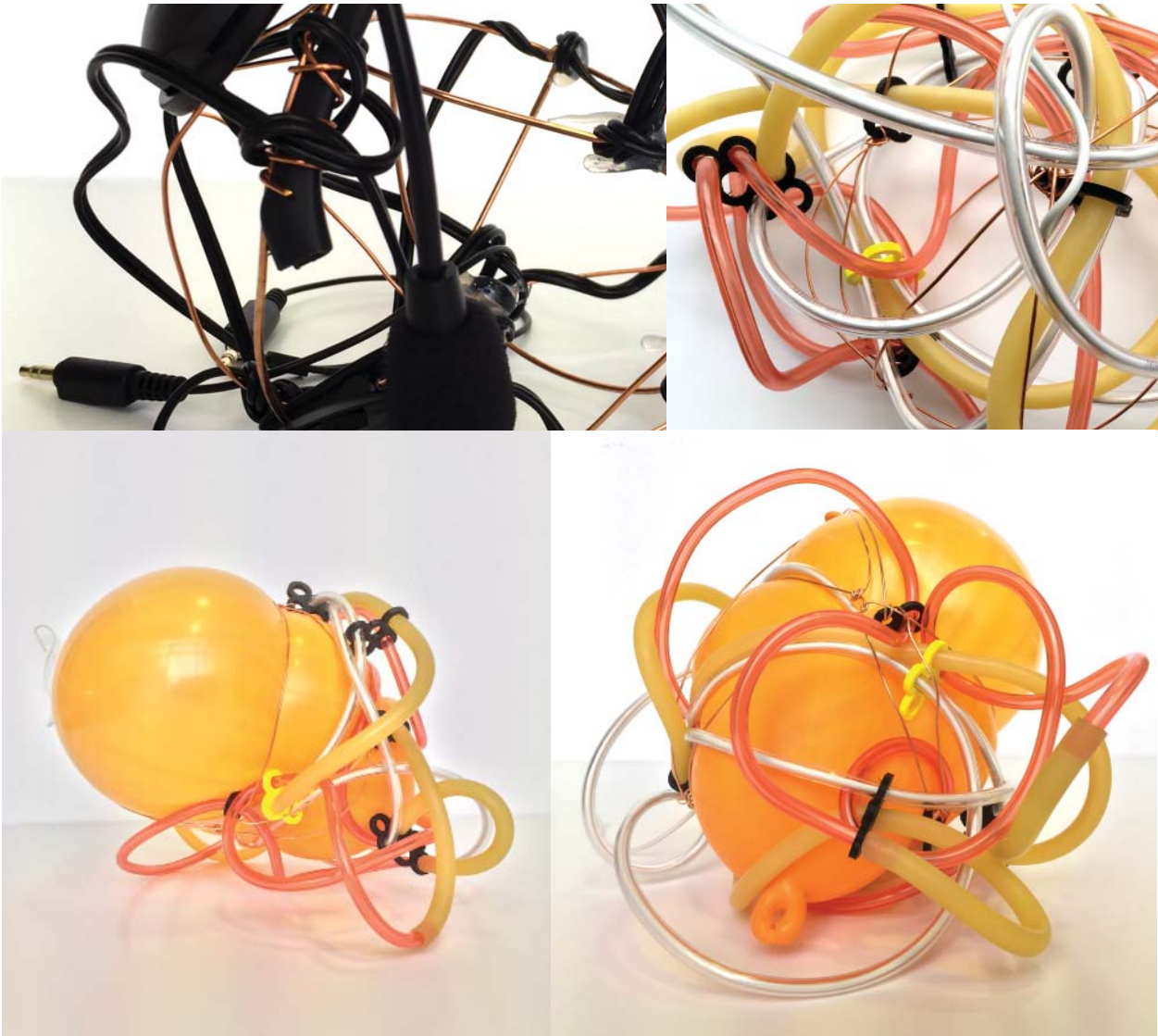


Figure 41: Photographs Documenting Modeling Process

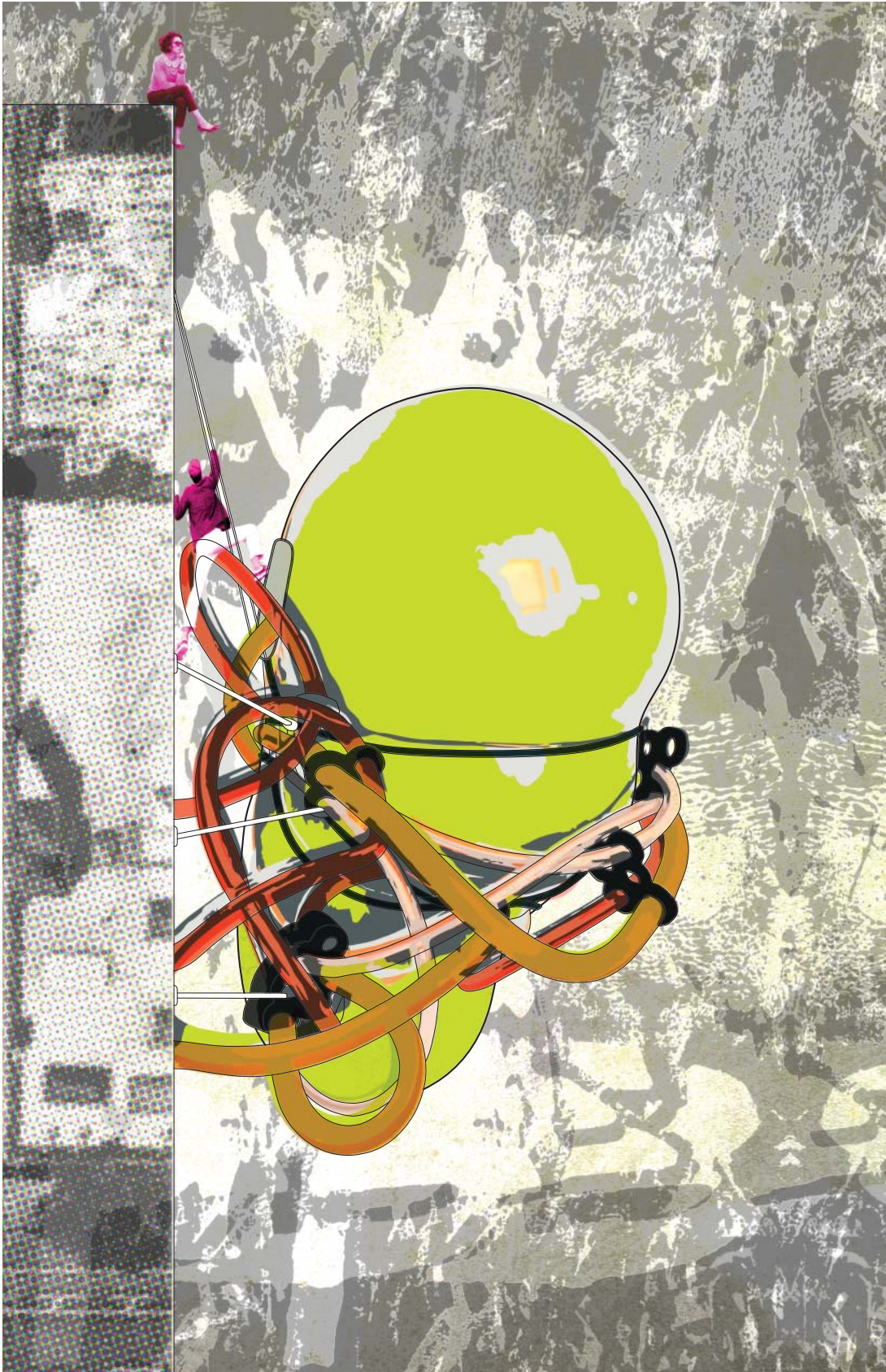


Figure 42: Elevation of Inhabitable Systems

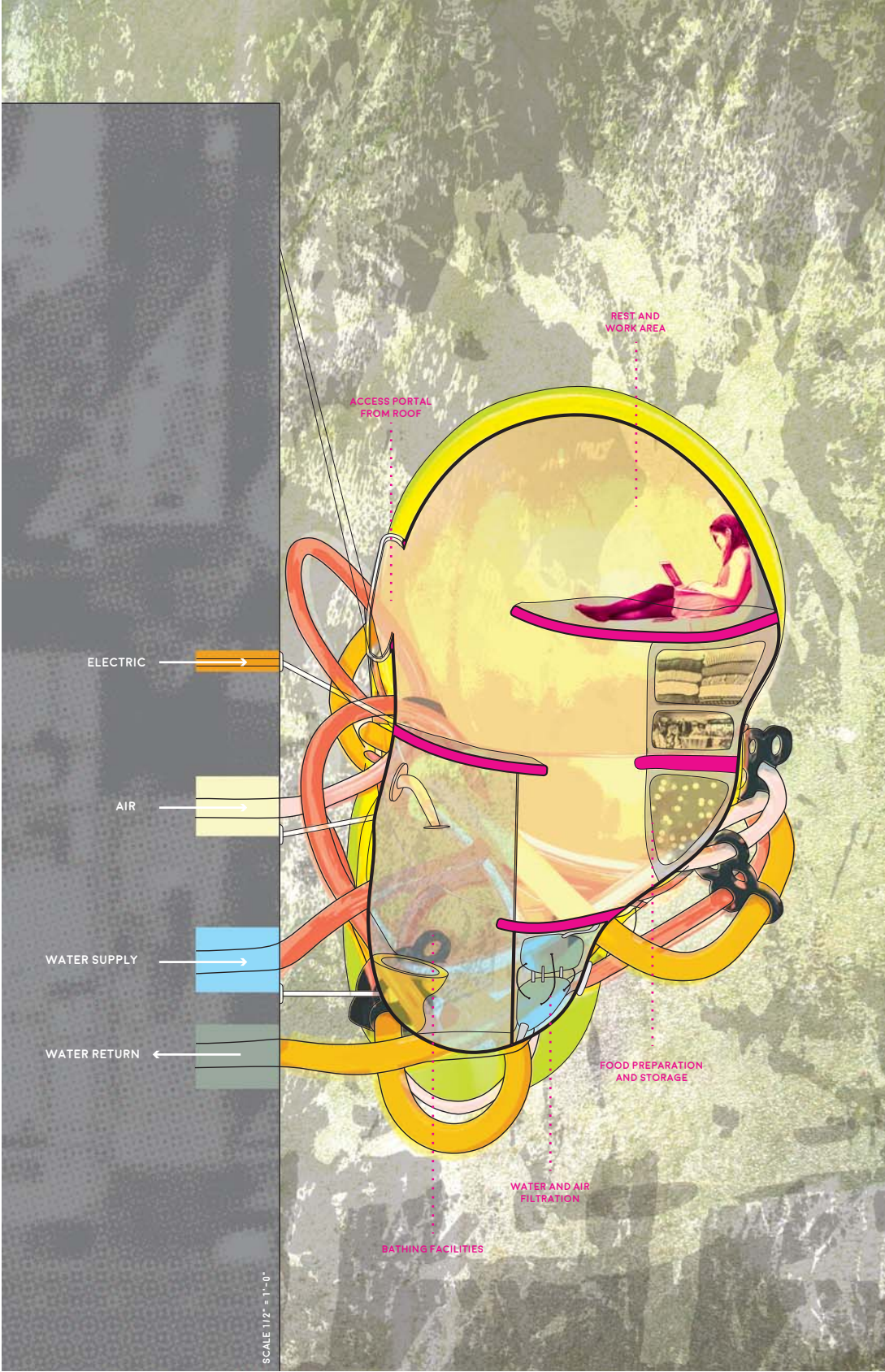


Figure 43: Section of Inhabitable Systems



Figure 44: Daytime Perspective of Inhabitable Systems Showing Camouflage Capabilities

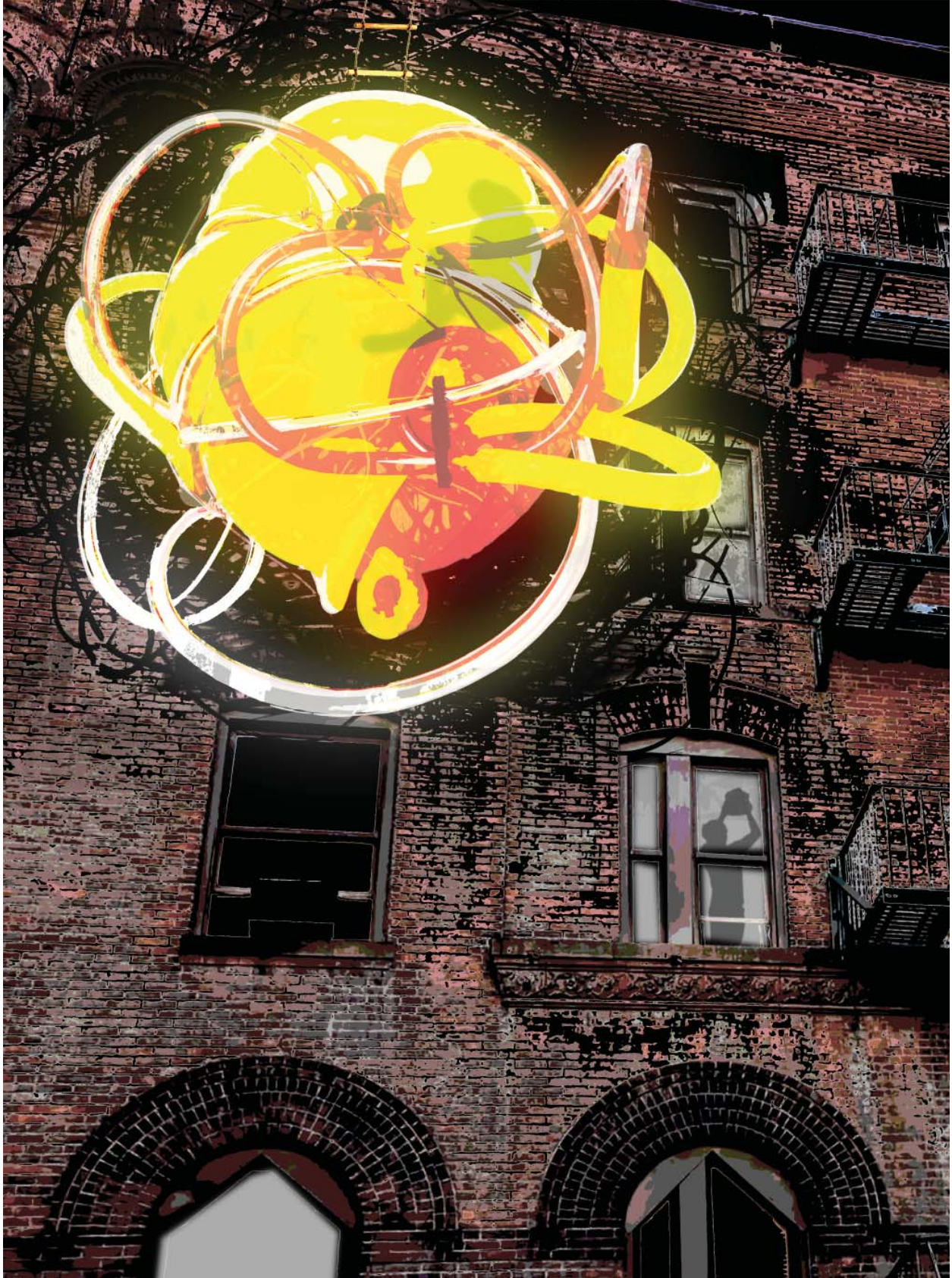


Figure 45: Nighttime Perspective of Inhabitable Systems Showing Luminescent Skin

Inhabitable Systems is a deployable lifestyle that allows for flexibility and subversion of cultural norms. Its parasitic nature can be both a strength and a liability; it allows the inhabitant to be free from having to supply or pay for utility systems, but it also puts them at risk of arrest or not being able to find the hook-ups they need. There is a certain level of complicity that must be cultivated with neighbors; the camouflage nature of the structure only hides what does not want to be seen in the first place.



Figure 46: Deployment Diagram

Itinerant Unit

The Itinerant Unit aims to misbehave, traveling where it pleases and disregarding demands for a stationary existence. The Itinerant Unit deals in issues of *mobility* and *closed-systems*. It is a unit that can *expand and contract* with the needs of the users. The Itinerant Unit plays the role of the visitor and the host simultaneously. It travels to meet with friends and family but also welcomes newcomers with expanding spaces. *Community* becomes an important issue within this scenario. It includes the tight community of a family traveling together but also the extended community engaged through temporary visits and digital connections.

When siting an Itinerant Unit, we must consider how it is transported and what sort of access is needed. They can be closed systems but some need to be plugged into municipal systems to drain waste or access water.

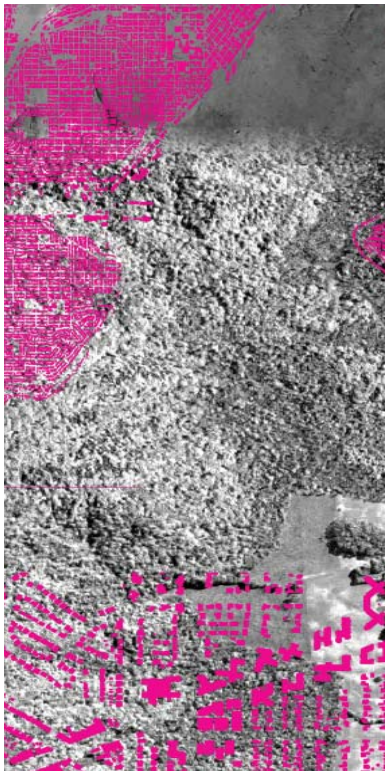


Figure 47: Itinerant Unit

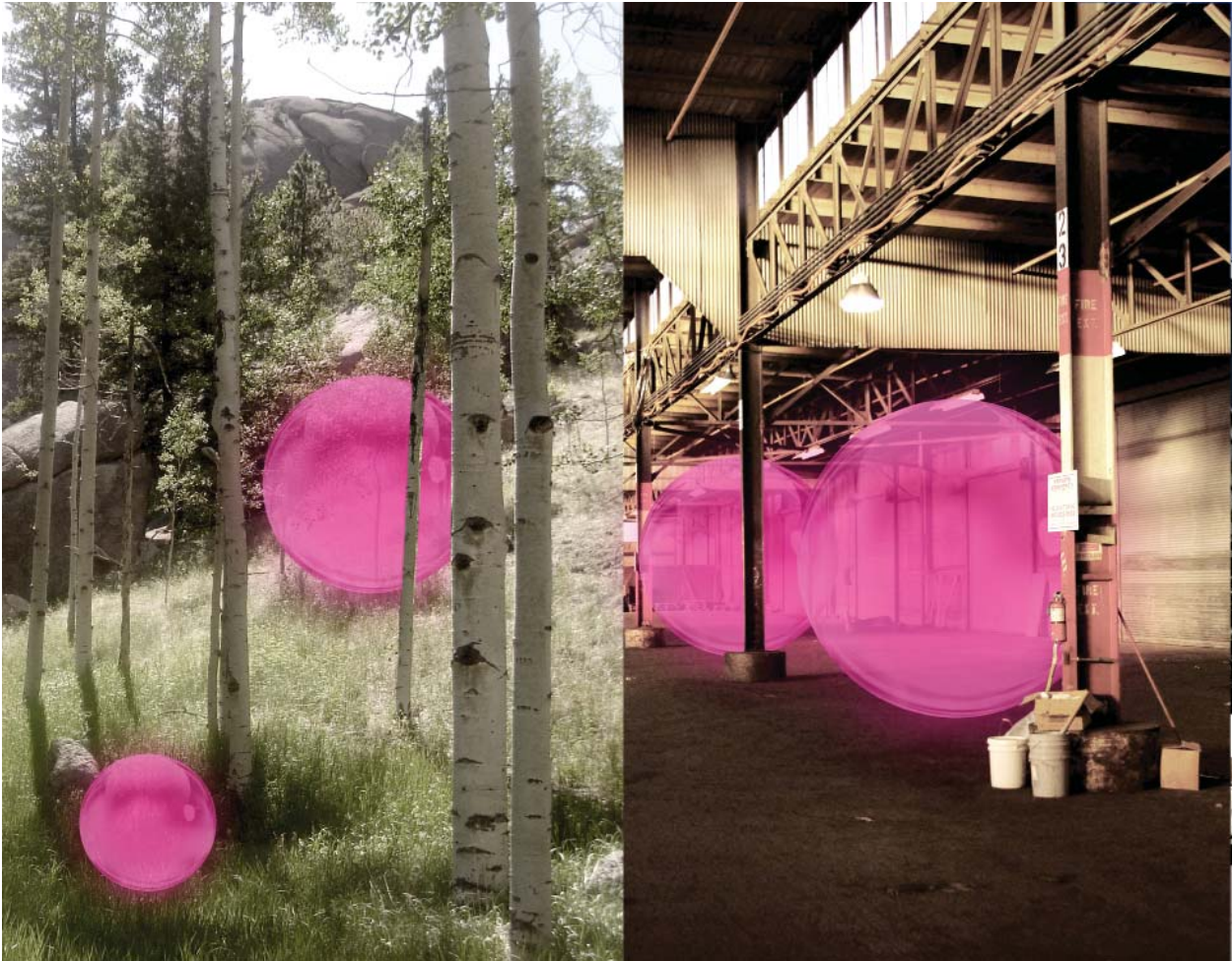


Figure 48: Itinerant Unit Concept Collage



Figure 49: Airstream Trailer



Figure 50: Trailer Park in Coachella Valley, CA



Figure 51: Nomadic Sled Habitats, Rob Sweere



Figure 52: Indy Island, Andrea Zittel

Instances of Appearance

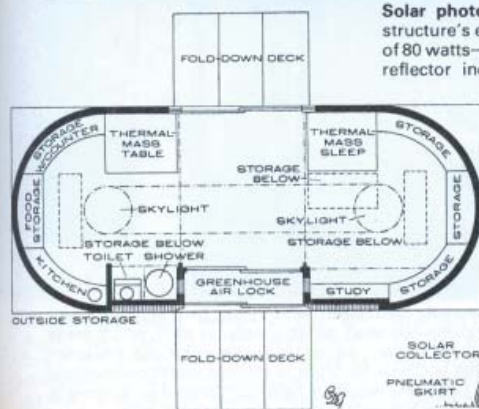
The Itinerant Unit is a well understood concept in American culture, partially because of the popularity of "camper culture." Both the Airstream Trailer and the trailer park (figures 29 + 50) are well known to Americans. The camper is a symbol of freedom and the open road. When the mobile home becomes immobile though, as in the case of a trailer park, they can become a symbol of poverty, or lost potential. Both of these examples are well established as being slightly outside normative ways of living, but still accepted by society.

There are several instances of the Itinerant Unit that are more outside conventional modes of living. The Nordic Sled Habitats by Rob Sweere (figure 51) and Indy Island by Andrea Zittel (figure 52) characterize a different relationship to mobility and the land (or water) on which they reside.

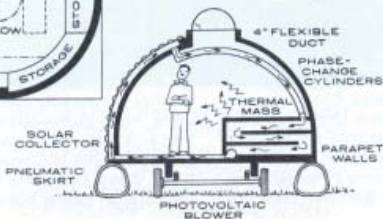
The Autonomous Dwelling Vehicle by Michael Jantzen and Ted Bakewell III from 1979 (figure 53) is an instance of a closed system, mobile house. It utilized top of the line technologies of the time to become "one of the most energy efficient houses in the country."¹ The was intended for mass production, but never moved past the prototype phase.

1

Everett H. Ortner, "The Liberated House," *Popular Science*, (April 1980), 171.



Solar photovoltaic panel (above) supplies structure's electrical needs, with peak output of 80 watts—when the sun is out. At noon, the reflector increases output. Large areas of sides function as solar collectors; they're painted black and covered by translucent fiberglass panels. Diagram below shows flow of heated air.



Designer-builders of Autonomous Dwelling Vehicle—Michael E. Jantzen and Ted Bakewell III—are shown in top photo standing on one of structure's two side decks. For travel, the decks fold up out of the way. Visible behind Jantzen and Bakewell, inside vehicle, is Insulating Shade, rolled down for cold weather. Rooftop view above shows warm-weather look. Stovepipe in top photo has been replaced by turbine ventilator, making three in all for ventilation (there are only two tiny windows). Skylights cover roof openings at each end; these would normally be used for entry to silo. They not only admit light, but are vented to permit hot air to exit in summer. Shelves beneath skylight bubbles are designed to hold trays for food dehydration. In center, corrugated fiberglass covers pipes that carry heat-exchange fluid for water-heating system.

Figure 53: Michael Jantzen + Ted Bakewell III, Autonomous Dwelling Vehicle, 1979



Figure 54: Itinerant Territory: The Western United States



Figure 55: Itinerant Protagonist: Family Band

The Proposal

The Itinerant Unit is home to *The Chemical Brothers and Sisters*, a traveling family band that preforms old-time electronica. The family travels around the country in their closed system unit, playing new venues and visiting extended family and friends. The unit is a closed system and has no need to hook up to exterior utilities. It is able to gather its own power though solar collectors and its own water though rainwater and fog harvesting. The family strongly believes in leaving no trace, both for the environment and whatever authorities might be attempting to follow them.

The unit is able to expand when parked and for unexpected guests. The family are members of an extended community of traveling performers and while they are only able to connect with the rest of their community once a year, they stay connected in digital space continuously.

The structure of the house is reminiscent of tent construction, with long poles fitting into connectors with thermo-conductive fabric suspended within. The kitchen/bath unit is pulled off from the main living/sleeping unit but share water and power. The large poles structuring the unit also provide conduits for water, power, and waste.

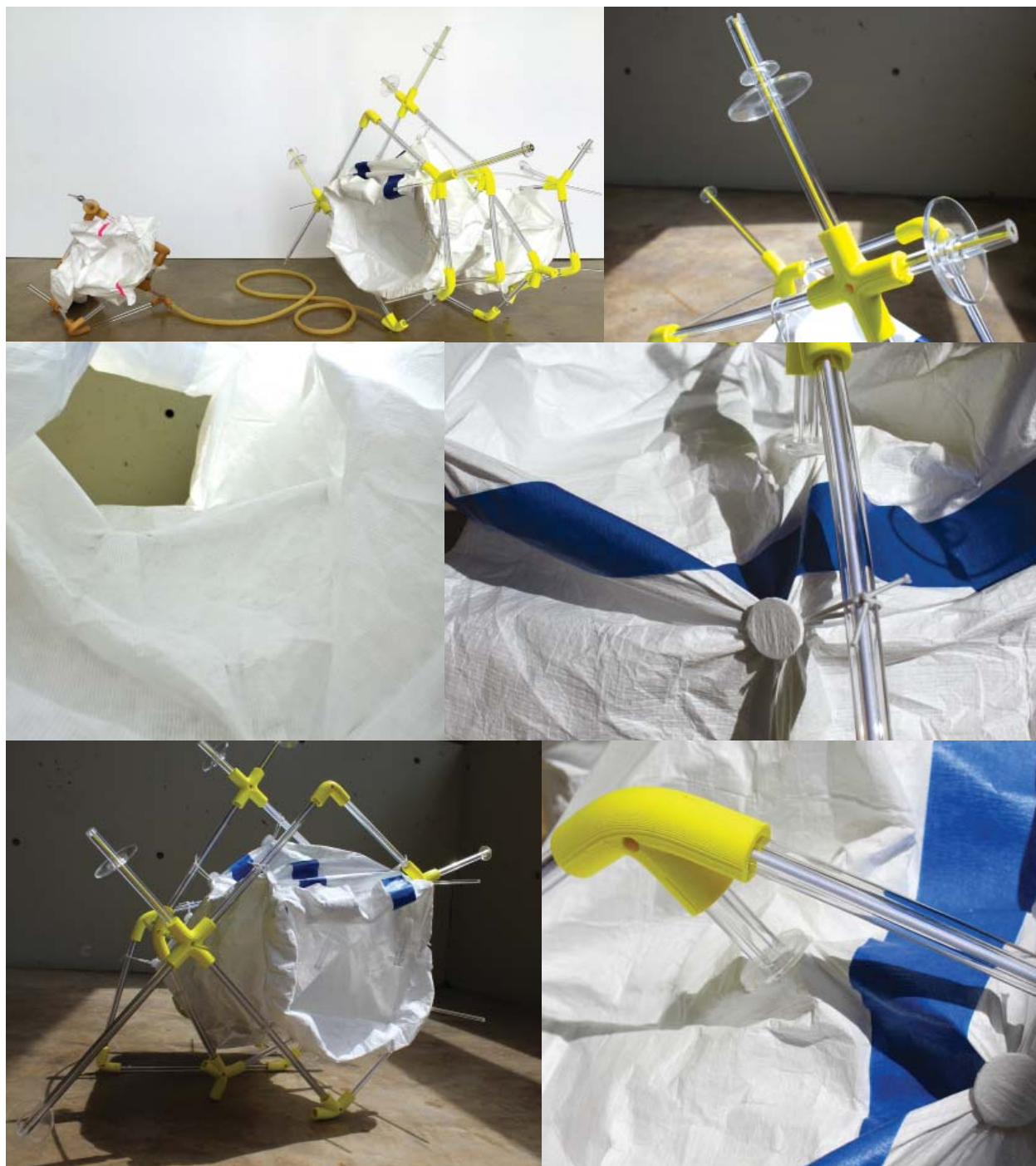


Figure 56: Photographs Documenting Modeling of Itinerant Unit

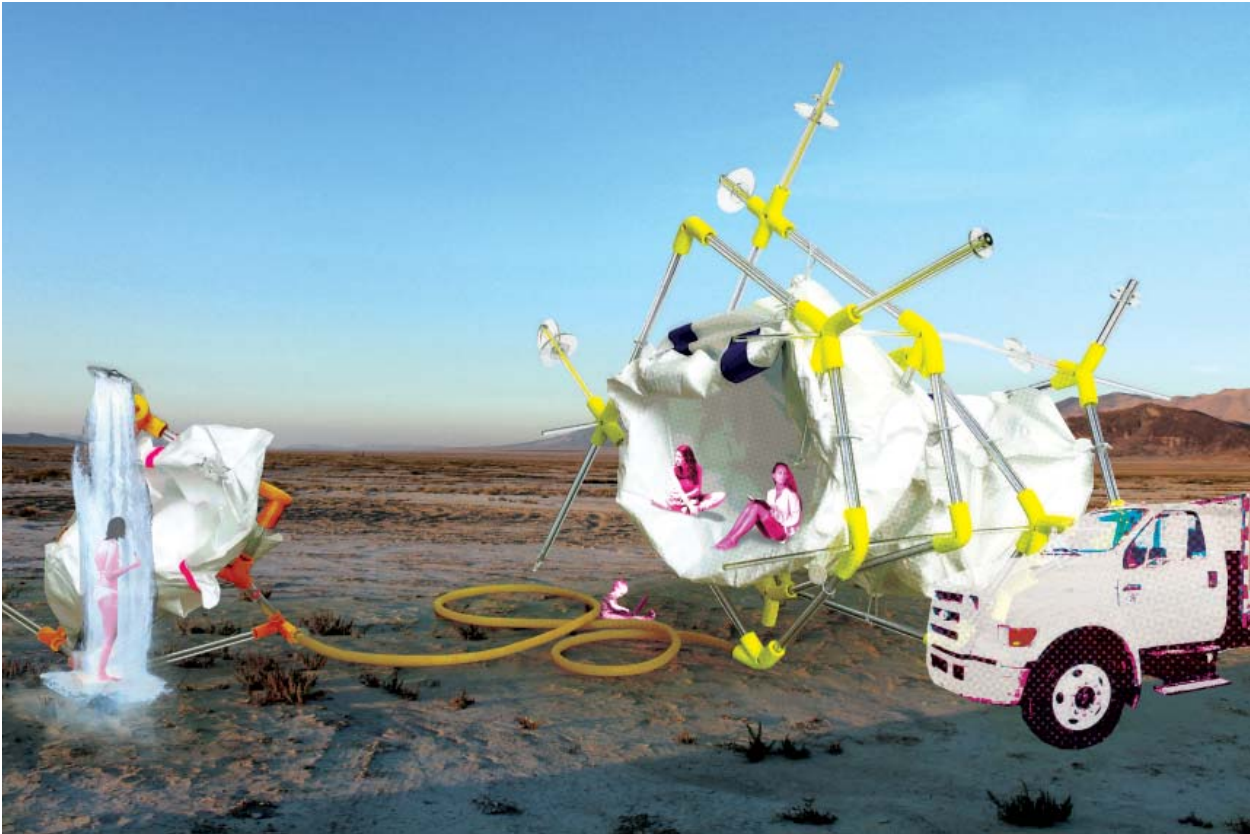


Figure 57: Itinerant Unit Deployed in The Utah High Desert

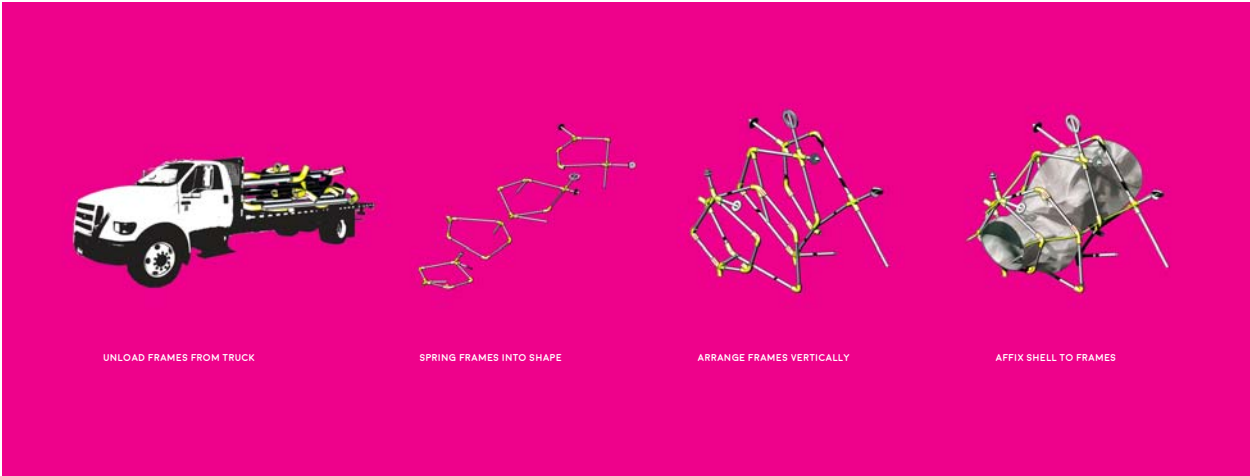


Figure 58: Diagram of Itinerant Unit Deployment



Figure 59: Interior of Itinerant Unit

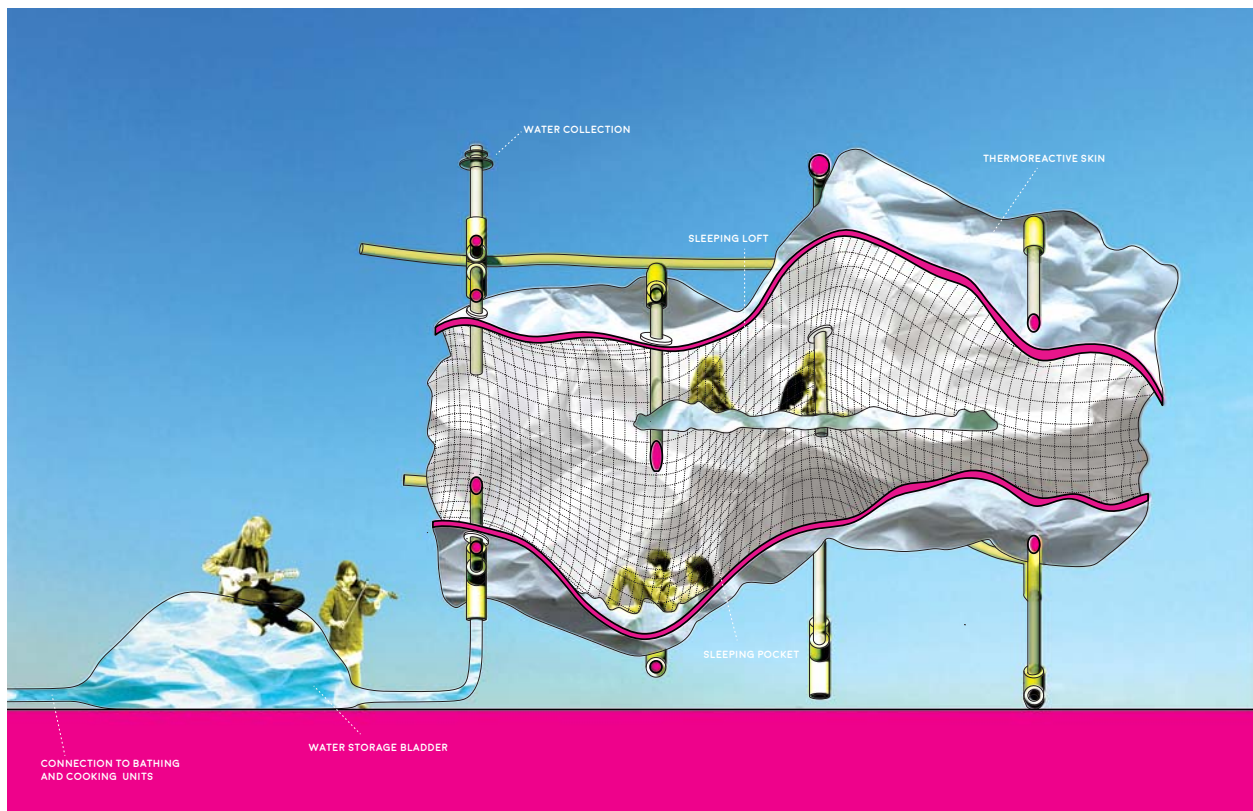


Figure 60: Section of Itinerant Unit

The Itinerant Unit is not a foreign concept to the American consciousness, we all can relate to the pull of the open road, to live off-grid. There has also been extensive projects addressing these issues and investigating new solutions. The Itinerant Unit here fits into this lineage as another instance of this desire for mobility and freedom.

Instrumental Outpost

The Instrumental Outpost deals in issues of *active/passive systems* and *technological interfaces*. The house is both high and low tech simultaneously.

Instrumental Outpost works to heighten an awareness of the inherent instability of the external world while still sheltering its inhabitants from the direct effects. The house rejects the necessity for the appearance of stability in favor of a domestic environment within the instability that surrounds it. The house is connected to changes in nature and the digital world.

Instability can be experienced through material changes and architectural features that bring awareness to the passage of time and shifts in the elements. High and low technology come together to shape the inhabitants experience of impermanence.

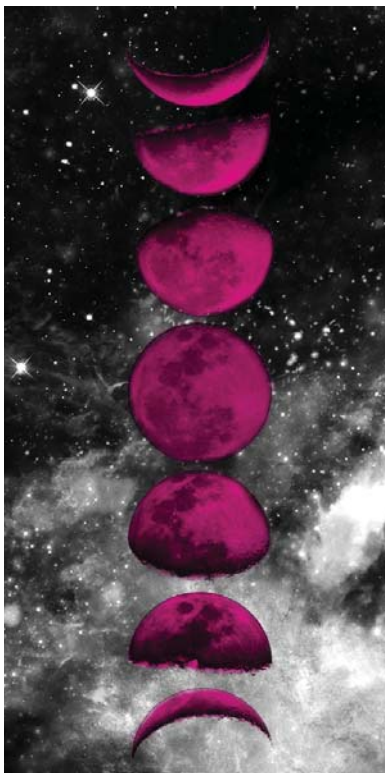


Figure 61: Instrumental Outpost



Figure 62: Instrumental Outpost Concept Collage

Instances of Appearance



Figure 63: Diller Scofidio + Renfro, "Slow House," 1991



Figure 64: Craig Borum, "Storm Glass," 2011



Figure 65: The Living, Living Light, Seoul Korea, 2009

Instances of Instrumental Outpost vary in levels of technological and analog interventions. *The Slow House* by Diller Scofidio + Renfro (figure 63) utilizes live video feeds of the surrounding landscape projected into the house, whose horizon is always out of register with the "real" landscape visible through the window.¹ The camera is able to zoom and scan the landscape, or if preferred can play a prerecorded image. This house brings an awareness of the instability of the exterior landscape into the house to be experienced with comfort.

Craig Borum's *Storm Glass* project (figure 64) is a new use of a historic technology. The instrument is a crystalline barometer that can predict weather based on the shapes and patterns that form in reaction to weather conditions. Borum utilized this material to create a facade for a house that could predict changes in weather, connecting the inhabitants to their surroundings by altering their experience of the their home.

The *Living Light* project by the Living (figure 65) connects people visually to changing air conditions. The lights in the installation blink in accordance to interest and real-time reports of air quality in the city. This project suggests a building technology that can connect with people both in physical and digital space.

¹ Elizabeth Diller + Ricardo Scofidio, *Scanning: The Aberrant Architectures of Diller and Scofidio*, (New York: Whitney Museum of American Art, 2003), 103.



Figure 67: Instrument Territory: The Prairie



Figure 68: Instrument Protagonists: Vera and Luna

The Proposal

Vera and Luna found the perfect piece of land to build their new house and astronomy observation station on the prairie of the United States. The wide open prairie is ideal for observing the stars and the temporal shifts of the environment. Their studies of the cosmos embrace the deep unknown factors of the universe and they wanted their house to be reflective of their research.

The house rises out of the prairie on three delicate legs and utilizes both analog and digital technologies to engage with the instability that surrounds it. The skin of the house has two layers; the first being vertical bands that contract and expand with barometric pressure. This allows Vera and Luna to visually detect potential changes in weather that could effect their work. The second layer of the skin is an operable and flexible transparent polymer that is able to be opened to allow the elements to flow through the house or closed when they need to be kept out. This polymer also has areas of digital interface where Vera and Luna can track real time astronomical data and the twitter feed of their associates for any upcoming celestial events. Their bedroom resides at the top of the house and opens to the sky to allow them to observe the night sky as they fall asleep.



Figure 69: Photographs Documenting Modeling of Instrumental Outpost

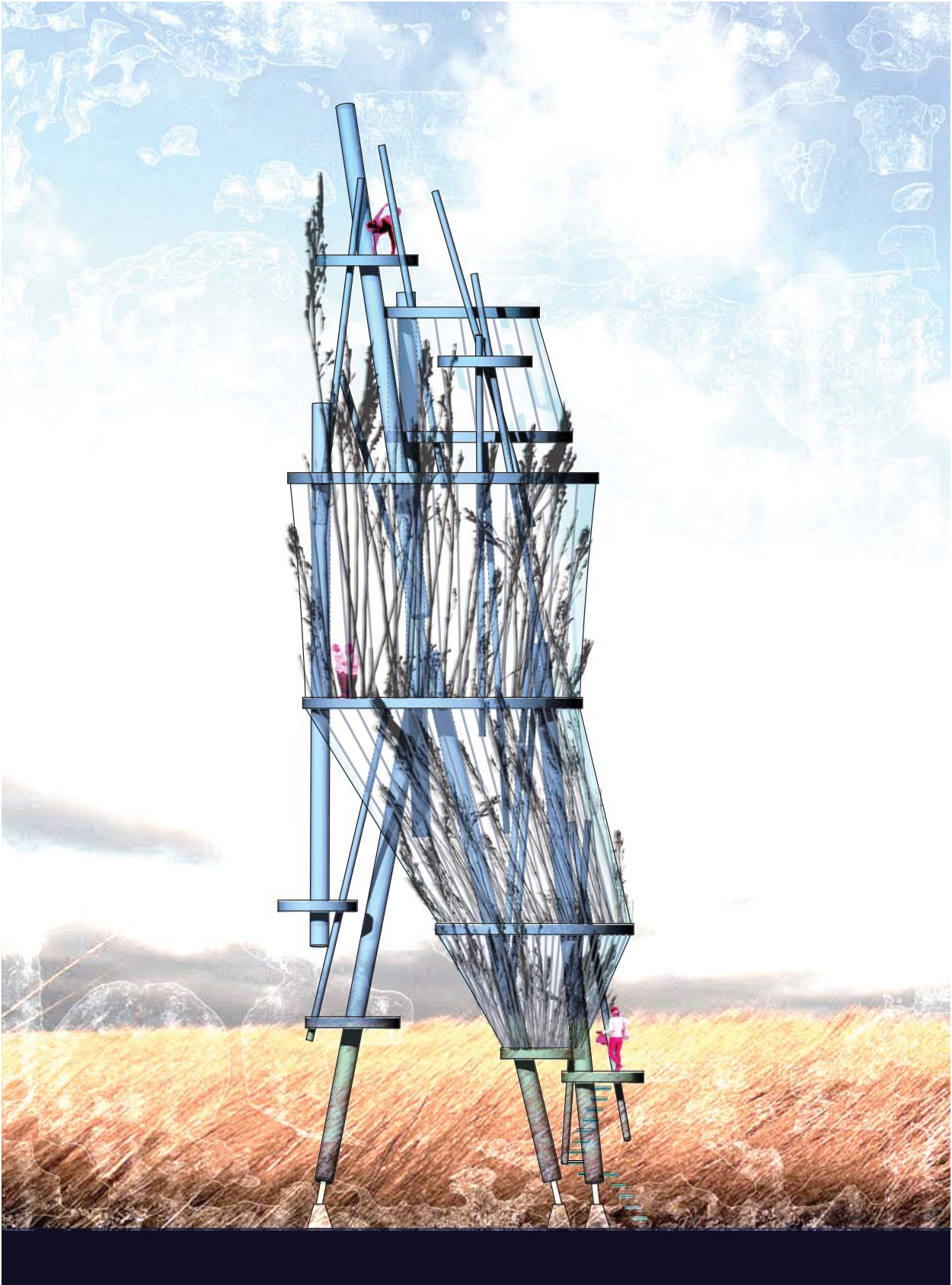


Figure 70: Elevation of Instrumental Outpost

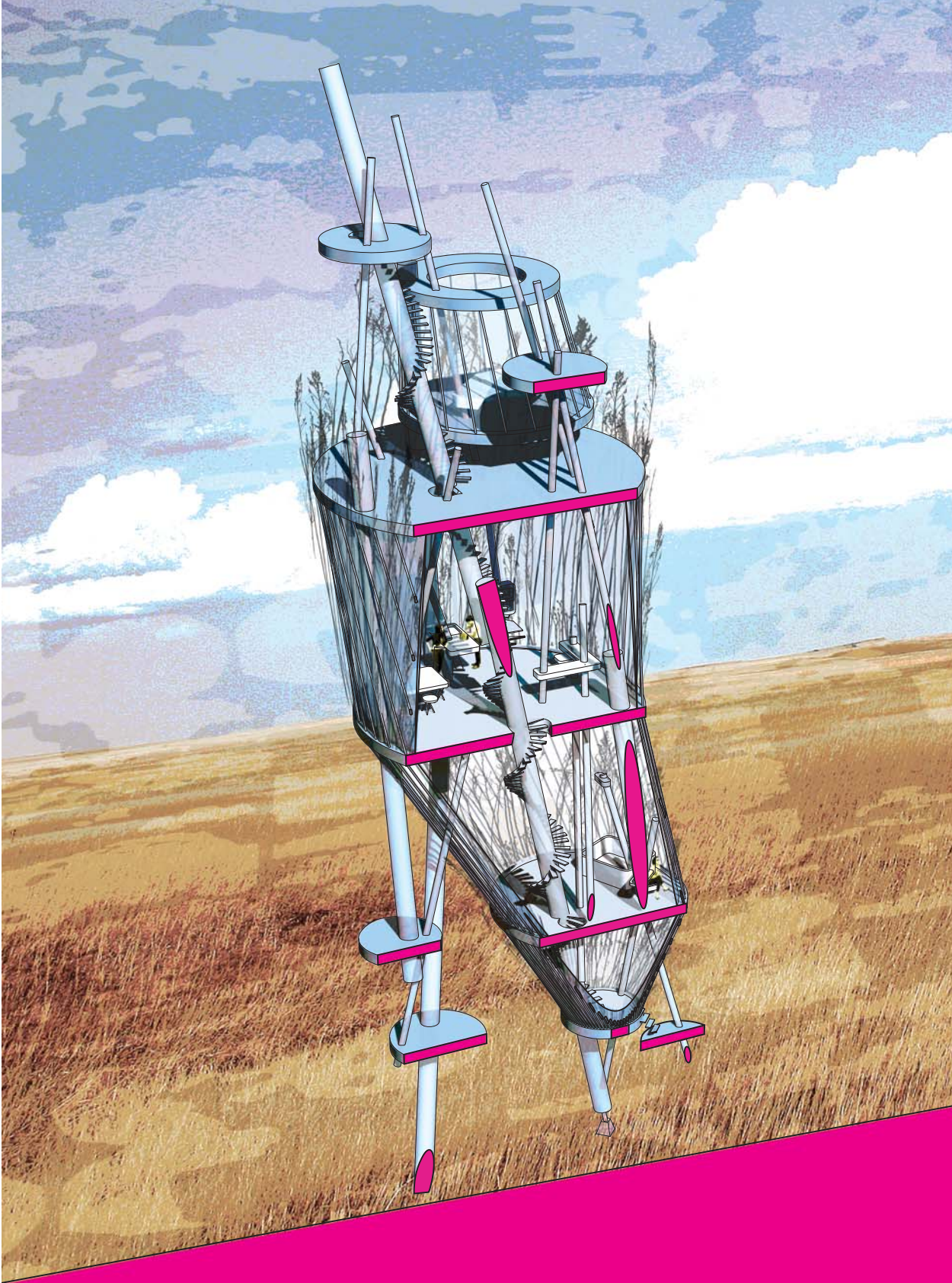


Figure 80: Sectional Perspective of Instrumental Outpost



Figure 81: Roof Plan of Instrumental Outpost



Figure 82: Interior of Instrumental Outpost showing Digitally Interfaced Skin



Figure 83: Exterior of Instrumental Outpost Siting Itself in the Prairie

The Instrumental Outpost is an instance of a more subdued experience of impermanence. This house is also more "permanent" in the sense that it is not mobile and sits on point foundations. The intention being that this house will be here for many years but its interventions with the ground are kept to the minimum, so when the time comes to dismantle the house, it can be done with little waste and disturbance to the ground as possible. This scenario allows for a more rooted lifestyle, but one that embraces the impermanent nature that surrounds us.

Subversive Other

The Subversive Other sites itself in an established domestic environment. It disrupts this seemingly stable environment through covert means. The permanence of the normative house is called into question allowing others to break the illusion of stability in their own lives. The Subversive Other blends with its neighbors in most ways, but at the precise moment it shifts to illuminate its inherent instability.

The Subversive Other has no set form, it can shift as needed for each situation. It subverts our idea of the image of the home to become something unexpected.



Figure 84: Subversive Other



Figure 85: Subversive Other Concept Collage

Instances of Appearance

Instances of the Subversive Other can be difficult to track down given their subversive nature. The *Wolf in Sheep's Clothing* (figure 86) is a cultural instance. The wolf is able to blend in with the native sheep population until it find the perfect moment to strike. R&Sie's *Dusty Relief* in Bangkok, Thailand (figure 87) expresses the dusty grays of the city while highlighting air quality as a dust breeding ground. Lil' Kim's album cover (figure 88) also acts in a subversive manner. The scene is a convention domestic environment with innocuous pink text, but the artist's pose and the word "hardcore" in bold letters suggest an ulterior motive behind the album and the artist herself.

One of the most interesting instances of the Subversive Other lays in the work to the artist Gordan Matta-Clark. The scale of his work is often on an architectural scale and works with issues of the image of the home and the subversion on that image. In one of his more well known pieces, *Splitting* (figure 89), an abandoned single family home is split down the center and the foundation is angled to revel this subtle split though the house. This action engages the viewer to question their ideas of what a house should be.



Figure 86: Wolf in Sheep's Clothing



Figure 87: R&Sie, "Dusty Relief," 2002



Figure 88: Lil' Kim "Hardcore" Album Cover, 1996

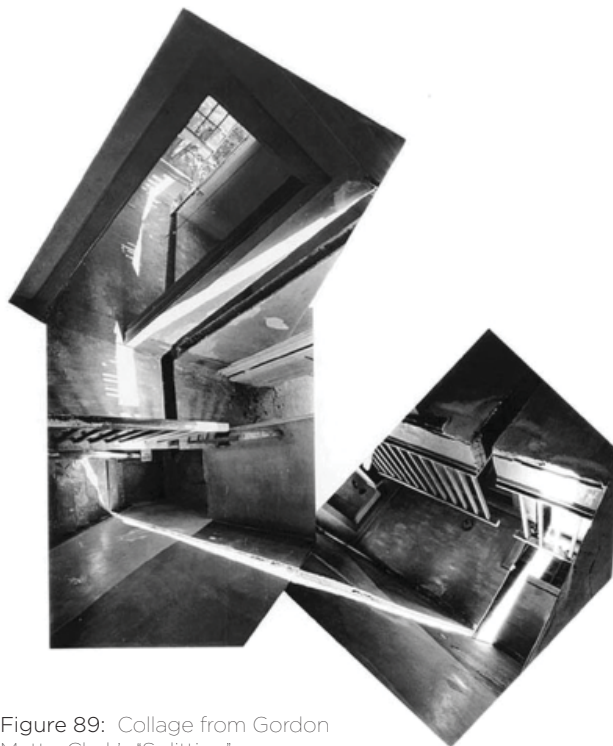


Figure 89: Collage from Gordon Matta-Clark's "Splitting"



Figure 90: Image from Gordon Matta-Clark's "Splitting," 1974



Figure 91: Subversive Territory:
Suburbia, USA



Figure 92: Subversive Protagonists:
Family of Con-artists

The Proposal

The Jackalobe family, con-artists by trade, reside in a house that acts as a Subversive Other. The house blends with its neighbors but also subverts the condition it resides in. The house is duplicitous as the family themselves are. The family sites themselves in the seemingly typical suburban home, knowing that their stay will be temporary. Each of the children find their new room, a room which upholds the appearance of a normal suburban child, while also serving as a base for each of their private jobs. This particular manifestation of the house remains for the stay of the family, ready to shift as needed for its next inhabitants.

Instant City

Instant City highlights the temporality of urban space and urban domesticity. This aggregation of people challenges conceptions of urban systems being stable and permanent. Instant City questions the very nature of what we imagine a city to be.

It must also produce its own framework for occupation and provide for minimal services. The Instant City is a transformative process that can be organized spontaneously or planned beforehand.

The Instant City has the ability to interact with the breadth of different scenarios presented. All of the Volatile Domesticities are able to gather and share their experiences in the Instant City.

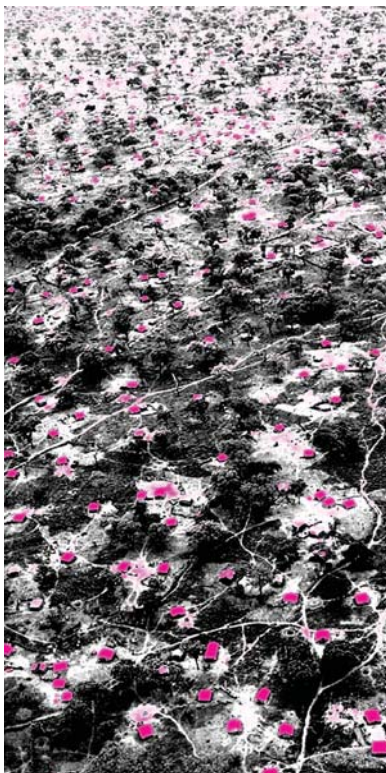


Figure 93: Instant City

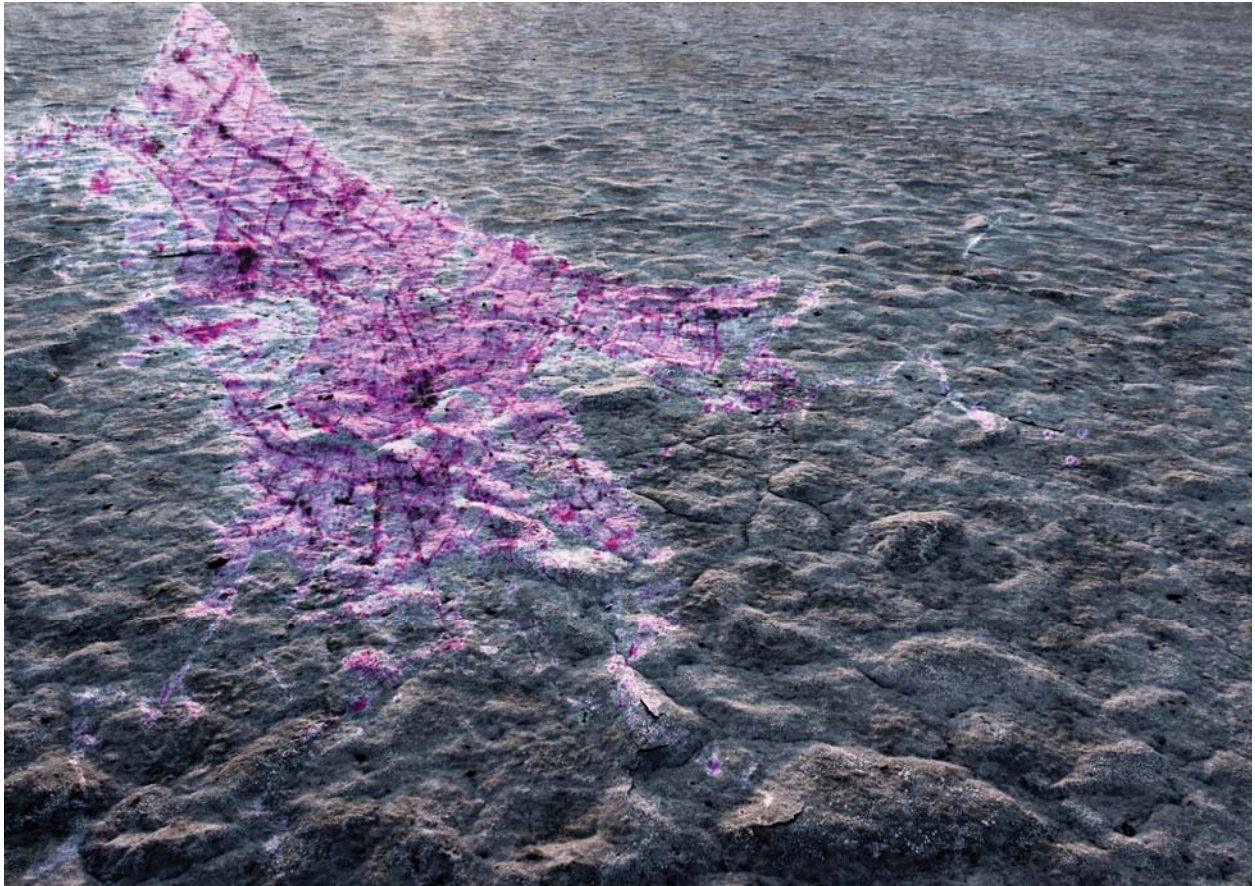


Figure 94: Instant City Concept Collage

Instances of Appearances



Figure 96: Burning Man Festival



Figure 97: Slab City, CA



Figure 98: Archigram, "Instant City"



Figure 99: Kenyan Refugee Camp

There are several instances of the Instant City in play around the world today. These planned and unplanned temporary aggregations of people have their own inherent knowledge and organizational structures.

One contemporary instance of the Instant City is the Burning Man Festival in Black Rock City, Nevada (figure 96). About 70,000 people gather in the desert for week of community and artistic engagement. The festival is known as an experiment in "flash urbanism" that is communal and hedonist simultaneously.¹

Slab City (figure 97) is an abandoned Marine barracks site in the Sonoran Desert with only slabs remaining of the previous structures. It has become a place for a wide range of people, from retirees, to those wishing to unplug from society, to come together and live for free. People live at Slab City for any duration of time, some for the season, some for 20 years.

The Kumbh Mela in Allahabad, India is a month long festival that occurs every twelve years that brings tens of thousands of people together to bathe at the confluence of three sacred rivers. This is the most extreme and well documented Instant City.

¹ Charlie Hailey, *Camps: A Guide to 21st Century Space*, (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2009), 132.



Figure 99: Aerial of the Kumbh Mela

The Kumbh Mela has become the largest public gathering in the world with the "pop-up megacity"² built on the sandy flats left by the receding rivers.² This gathering requires extraordinary planning and corporation by public and private entities to be successful in hosting the tens of millions of pilgrims that pass through this ephemeral megacity.

² Meena Sonea Hewett, introduction to *Kumbh Mela: Mapping the Ephemeral Megacity*, (Germany: Hatje Cantz, 2015), 11.



Figure 101: Tent Complexes at the Kumbh Mela

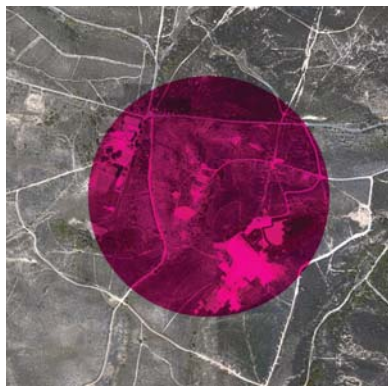


Figure 102: Instant Territory:
Abandoned Military Base



Figure 103: Itinerant Protagonist: The
Electronica Matriarch

The Proposal

The Matriarch chooses a different location each year for “the gathering.” She brings together all those she has mentored in old-time electronica for a festival lasting several weeks. Most of her protégés, travel the country away from their extended community of musicians and this is the one time of year they can reconnect with old friends, extended family, and their mentor.

The gathering is planned for months in advance to set the location of the different camps and access to services. Most of her protégés live off-grid but other guests will need access to clean water, waste removal, electricity, and most importantly, wifi connection. All of these services are taken care of by the Matriarch and her intimate inner circle through trade or donations. She strives to keep the gathering a free experience for all.

Chapter 4: Reflections and Conclusions

Domesticity is an extremely personal endeavor and this system of Volatile Domesticity allows for the flexibility and self-expression that is often suppressed in normative domestic construction. This system challenges the notions that architecture has to be heavy, expensive, permanent, and impersonal.

Volatile Domesticity is a new way of thinking about architecture in an unstable and changing world. Our relationship to our houses are already changing. Our houses may be impermanent but when start to care for them as another member of the family, who is always in flux, the relationship becomes much more than intimate that a simple roof over our heads.

The goal of Volatile Domesticity is not to find a singular answer to these problems, but to raise the questions and start a discussion. There is no one solution, and that is why I have presented six different scenarios, to explore the diversity of issues and experiences of domestic life. The normative house is full of assumptions based on ideals of family, gender norms, economics, transportation and ownership. When we let go of these assumptions, we can come to a new understanding of domestic space, a Volatile Domesticity.

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042	Figure 41: Author
043	Figure 42: Author
044	Figure 43: Author
045	Figure 44: Author
046	Figure 45: Author
047	Figure 46: Author
048	Figure 47: Author
049	Figure 48: Author
050	Figure 49: http://o.homedsgn.com/wp-content/ uploads/2011/12/Airstream-Flying-Cloud-Travel-Trailer-07-2.jpg
050	Figure 50: http://catholicextension.files.wordpress. com/2011/09/thermal-lc-9-11-37.jpg
050	Figure 51: http://www.designboom.com/wp-content/ uploads/2013/11/rob-sweere-moves-sledge-habitats-over-the- arctic-circle-in-greenland-designboom-01.jpg
050	Figure 52: Andrea Zittel
051	Figure 53: Michael Jantzen + Ted Bakewell
052	Figure 54: Author

052	Figure 55: Author
053	Figure 56: Author
054	Figure 57: Author
054	Figure 58: Author
055	Figure 59: Author
055	Figure 60: Author
057	Figure 61: Author
058	Figure 62: Author
059	Figure 63: Diller Scofidio + Renfro
059	Figure 64: Craig Borum
059	Figure 65: The Living
060	Figure 67: Author
060	Figure 68: Author
061	Figure 69: Author
062	Figure 70: Author
063	Figure 80: Author
064	Figure 81: Author
065	Figure 82: Author
065	Figure 83: Author
067	Figure 84: Author
068	Figure 85: Author
069	Figure 86: Author
069	Figure 87: R&Sie
069	Figure 88: Lil' Kim
070	Figure 90: Gordon Matta-Clark
070	Figure 89: Gordon Matta-Clark
071	Figure 91: Author
071	Figure 92: Author
072	Figure 93: Author
073	Figure 94: Author
074	Figure 96: (http://cdn.theatlantic.com/assets/media/img/photo/2013/09/photos-of-burning-man-2013/b02_RTX130JD/main_1200.jpg)
074	Figure 97: (http://img15.hostingpics.net/pics/389828IMG1146.jpg)

074	Figure 98: Archigram
074	Figure 99: (https://wnninterviewsociety.files.wordpress.com/2012/10/040-dadaabrefugeecampimageun.jpg)
075	Figure 99: <i>Kumbh Mela: Mapping the Ephemeral Megacity</i>
075	Figure 101: <i>Kumbh Mela: Mapping the Ephemeral Megacity</i>
076	Figure 102: Author
076	Figure 103: Author

Appendix

Photographs of Installation and Artifacts







Vita

Rebecca Gillogly grew up in rural Virginia and received a Bachelors of Fine Arts from Virginia Commonwealth University. During her undergraduate career she developed an interest in sculptural spatial interventions that transformed into a love of architecture and design. Rebecca took five years off before returning for her Masters of Architecture at the University of Tennessee, during which she worked as a pastry cook, artist, and a gardener among other endeavors, but always staying committed to creativity and critical engagement. She will continue this commitment in the field of architecture, always striving to push the discourse ahead.