

Reimagining Retail Space
Consumption as a Catalyst for Urban Intensity

by

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ABSTRACT

Traditional brick-and-mortar stores are struggling to compete with this generation's consumer culture. E-commerce is pushing retailers to rethink their consumer tactics and explore new strategies to engage the consumer. Centered primarily on convenience, the new market is now online and available from anywhere at any time – accessed via mobile devices, computers, and digital screens.

The current shopping model is fading and will soon be irrelevant in consumer society. In today's western culture, shopping spaces are structured around a redundant model dedicated to the pursuit of corporate profit. To break the cycle, individuals are now investing their time into carefully curated events that emphasize on consumer experience rather than the tangible product. With careful planning and implementation of online and offline retailers into the public environment, consumption can act as a catalyst in creating urban intensity at vast scales.

This thesis will critically analyze the decline of traditional brick-and-mortar stores to propose a more synergetic approach of integrating consumption spaces into the social environment. In combining key experiential features of physical and online retailers, this project will utilize a flexible framework that adapts to consumer trends to create public intensity and enhance social experiences in the urban landscape.

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INTRODUCTION

“Shopping is arguably the last remaining form of public activity.”

– Rem Koolhaas et al.¹

Over the centuries, civilization has experienced, and will continue to experience, a multitude of shopping spaces. While some of these places have decayed, others have evolved and transformed into new typologies for consumption. Regardless of their physical composition, the very concept of shopping spaces remain the same. Before we dive into the topics of the project, let me clarify key reoccurring concepts that will be addressed moving forward. Understanding these terminologies will aid in the explanation of core ideas and subjects outlined throughout this thesis.

Consumerism, in its broader definition, refers to the act of acquiring products within a place of exchange. More specifically, I refer to products not only as tangible objects, but also imply goods, services, experience, and information. The exchange-value method can be utilized to better comprehend the notion of consumerism – as long as there is an item or entity that is exchanged or processed from one individual to the other, it can be regarded as consumption. If we consider the socio-political context at which consumerism operates, the act of consumption permits individuals to participate in the growing capitalist economy.

Shopping spaces are not bound by, or limited to, brick-and-mortar stores, but rather extend onto public streets, homes, computers, and so forth.² In the past, shopping spaces were contained within solid boundaries via built structures or town squares. However, in contemporary society individuals have the luxury to shop from any place at any given time. E-commerce (also known as online shopping) is the primary reason why shopping is no longer confined by physical space. The digital market has now expanded the shopping boundaries to infinite capabilities. This thesis will not focus heavily on the implications of online spaces, instead e-commerce will be used to explore further themes in the project.

When describing the social status of the public in relation to consumerism, we must assess consumer culture into the equation. Consumer culture focuses on how people consume the latest brands to associate with current society and use shopping as a means of social belonging.³ Following social trends is directly linked to everyday life in consumer culture. Trends influence consumers so adapt to the ever-changing culture in order to feel associated with the larger crowd. Consequently, trends must constantly redefine itself to match the demands and needs of consumer society. Thus it befalls on architecture to be the mediator in communicating social culture to the individual, and vice versa. Architecture can establish the framework in which retailers operate to create local intensity in the social environment.

Notes

1. Chuihua Judy Chung et al., *Project on the City 2: Harvard Design School Guide to Shopping* (Köln: Taschen, 2001), 125-27.
2. Mattias Kärrholm, *Retailising Space: Architecture, Retail and the Territorialisation of Public Space* (Burlington: Ashgate Pub. Co, 2012), 4.
3. Sharon Zukin, *Point of Purchase: How Shopping Changed American Culture* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 31.

THE EVOLUTION OF CONSUMERISM

What Came Before

Since the beginning of civilization, there was always shopping. Consumerism has shaped our civilization, social and political environments, and ultimately defined our public life.¹ Consumerism has also become an active agent in society. From purchasing goods to selling merchandise, people consume in search of new items and experiences – all in the everlasting pursuit of personal satisfaction and happiness.² Concurrently, shopping spaces have also undergone radical transformations to reflect social conditions and respond to political agendas according to its surrounding context. Neighborhoods, cities, and nations experiment with an amalgamation of built forms of shopping to find adequate designs that is suitable to the landscape around it and the individuals living in them.

The marketplace marks a significant point in consumer culture. Functioning as one of the early forms of shopping in human civilization, the marketplace acts as a civic space where people gather to socialize and engage in consumer activities. In 600 B.C., the Agora of Athens Marketplace in Greece exemplified the vibrant life of the city. The marketplace mirrored the social environment in Athens and operated as the main commercial hub for local inhabitants and visitors.³ This open-air shopping district also served as a place of political discussions and enlightenment – the public was able to exchange ideas and knowledge inasmuch as purchase fresh produce (Figure 1). For a huge percentage of local residents however, the marketplace aimed to serve a higher purpose in everyday life. Lower-class residents often sold their merchandise in public markets to survive. Due to the economic segregation between upper, middle and lower-classes, only the wealthy had the luxury to purchase items without the worry of starvation. Trajan's Market in Rome around 110 A.D. demonstrates this economic milieu. The marketplace presented a means of survival while also acting as a leisure activity for higher classes. Needless to say, the mixing of people's economic status express progression in the early stages of consumption in civilization.⁴



Figure 1 Imaginary depiction of the Agora Marketplace in Athens.

Centuries later, marketplaces continue to endure spatial modifications that have followed the development of human civilization. Depending on their regional context, market spaces have been called Bazaars in Persia, Souq in Arabia, or Mercado in Mexico, to name a few. Indonesia and Thailand have floating markets in which shopping for goods is carried out in boats. Due to water transportation being a common part of mobility in Southeast Asia, the floating marketplace takes advantage of this common activity and implements shopping into the everyday life of the inhabitants (Figure 2). Thus, shopping spaces respond to their surrounding context by blending with their cultural setting and adapting to each particular consumer society.⁵



Figure 2 Damnoen Saduak Floating Market, Thailand.



Figure 3 Passage Choiseul in Paris, France, 1910.

Pedestrianization in Europe

Densification and the rise of mobility in urban centers required new street systems for the pedestrian realm. Nineteenth century European cities commenced the rebuilding of urban sidewalks to accommodate the growing population. This redevelopment was fully realized with the invention of a new space of commerce: the arcade. As summarized in an essay by Sze Tsung Leong, he argues that arcades echoed the life of the modern consumer, and provided a safe passage from the busy roads and vehicular traffic. He also denotes that arcades were “separated from the contamination and distractions of the city, [and] offer an undiverted focus on goods and consumption and provide a steady stream of customers by encouraging movement within an urban network that allows pedestrians, for the first time, to traverse the city with minimal contact with other forms of traffic.”⁶ Indeed, new forms of urbanization construct innovative methods of consumption and consumer spaces. For instance, Passage Choiseul built in 1825 combined mass-consumer culture with the ambitions of Paris’ walkways. Various arcades like Passage Choiseul were fabricated to provide a similar pleasant and safe environment for the working-class residents (Figure 3). The effort in the construction of these consumption spaces epitomised yet another evolution of consumerism in our public sphere. Arcades resemble a strong sense of place born out of the context of the community’s needs in the social environment.

Figure 4 (Next Page) The Evolution of Consumerism Timeline

Notes

1. Sze Tsung Leong, “...And Then There Was Shopping,” in *Project on the City 2*, 129.
2. Jean Baudrillard, *The Consumer Society: Myths and Structures* (London: Sage, 1998), 49.
3. Victor Gruen and Larry Smith, *Shopping Towns USA: The Planning of Shopping Centers* (New York: Reinhold Pub. Corp, 1960), 18.
4. Baudrillard, *The Consumer Society*, 49.
5. Kärholm, *Retailing Space*, 115.
6. Sze Tsung Leong, “Mobility,” in *Project on the City 2*, 478-9.

THE EVOLUTION OF CONSUMERISM

Early civilizations created spaces for individuals to provide, buy, and sell goods and services called a **Marketplace**. These locations were also treated as **Exchange Centers** or **Trading Centers** where ideas, thoughts, and opinions are shared from person to person. Around the world they are described as **Mercado** (in Mexico), **Bazaar** (in Persia), **Souq** (in Arabia), and so forth. On a larger scale, **Market Squares** and **City Squares** are town plazas where merchants build stalls to exchange products and other fresh goods. Other iterations of the market emerged in the eighteenth century with the rise of individual **Shops** and **Stores**. In Europe, the rise of **Arcades** and **Gallerias** offered a space to group shops and merchants together under a covered roof. In southeast Asia where water transportation is common in everyday life, vendors sold their goods in **Floating Markets** using boat as a space for trade and interaction. Soon after, urban cities began to flourish and treated their main street as **High Streets** or **Shopping Streets**. These business-oriented streets allow commercial activities, **Boutique Stores** (small shops occupying a small spaces), **Mom-and-Pop Shops** (small shops own by an independent business or family), and **Convenience Stores** (small shops carrying everyday items) to boost the city's economy. The rapid investment in shops and small businesses in the mid-twentieth century called for a new socio-economic model that unites them together within a single structure. Thus, the birth of the **Shopping Mall** marked a significant shift in modernity. The mall model adopted the idea that **Anchor Stores** would serve as the largest tenants in the shopping mall by attracting the public into the building. The center of the building would comprise of smaller **Department Stores** and **Retailers** that present consumers a wide range of products than traditional shops and stores. Other variations of the shopping center include **Factory Outlets** that allow companies to sell their merchandize directly to the customer at a reduced price, and **Strip Malls** which are outdoor retailers and shops organized in a single row. Shops that specialize in selling foods and household items larger than the ordinary grocery store are known as a **Supermarket**. However, their selection of products and floor space size can be limited to that of a **Hypermarket** or **Big-Box Store** that can exist as a stand-alone structure. When stocked items are particular products for a specific purpose or space, the store is often associated as a **Category Killer**. Retailers can store their product inventory in **Warehouse Stores** that operate in selling groceries and other goods at lower costs than typical supermarkets. When travelling became more accessible to middle- and lower-classes globally, **Duty-Free Shops** began to pose as stores that are exempt from paying national taxes. They would normally appear at international airports, train stations, border checkpoints, etc. The era of the internet in the late twentieth century allowed individuals to buy and sell products via **Online Shopping** or **e-Shopping**. This digital platform allows consumers to access online stores and retailers (**e-Tailers**) at anytime from anywhere. The competition between online stores and traditional brick-and-mortar methods of shopping is giving rise to new spatial explorations such as **Retailtainment**, which merges retail and entertainment and serves as a physical space for stores to experiment with different consumer experiences. Over time, malls, supermarkets, and previous forms of consumer spaces will synthesize to create **Micro-Cities** aimed to integrate consumer culture into the natural urban fabric.

- 1500 B.C. Thebes Market, Greece ■
- 1000s B.C. The Nile Trade, Egypt ■
- 600 B.C. The Agora of Athens, Greece ■
- 600 B.C. Lydian Shops, Western Asia ■
- 25 B.C. Porticus Atrianarum, Rome ■

- 110 A.D. Trajan's Market, Rome ■

- 300 A.D. Bazaar of Isfahan, Persia ■

- 500 A.D. Mayan Market, Yucatán ■

- 707 A.D. The Ancient Market, Changan ■

- 970 A.D. Khan el-Khalili, Egypt ■

- 1014 Borough Market, London ■
- 1097 Mercati di Rialto, Venice ■

- 1214 Wrocław Market Square, Poland ■
- 1217 La Boqueria, Barcelona ■
- 1270 Doritmund Market Square, Germany ■
- 1282 Stocks Market, London ■
- 1337 Tlatelolco Market ■

- 1400s Mercado Central, Valencia ■
- 1455 Grand Bazaar, Istanbul ■

- 1500s Krakow Main Square, Poland ■
- 1514 House of Rahael, Rome ■
- 1547 Loggia de Mercato Nuovo, Florence ■
- 1566 The Royal Exchange, London ■

- 1600s Ver-o-Peso, Brazil ■
- 1606 New Exchange, London ■
- 1608 Amsterdam Exchange, Netherlands ■
- 1650s Chandni Chowk, Old Delhi ■
- 1657 Boston Town Hall Marketplace ■
- 1667 Second Royal Exchange, London ■

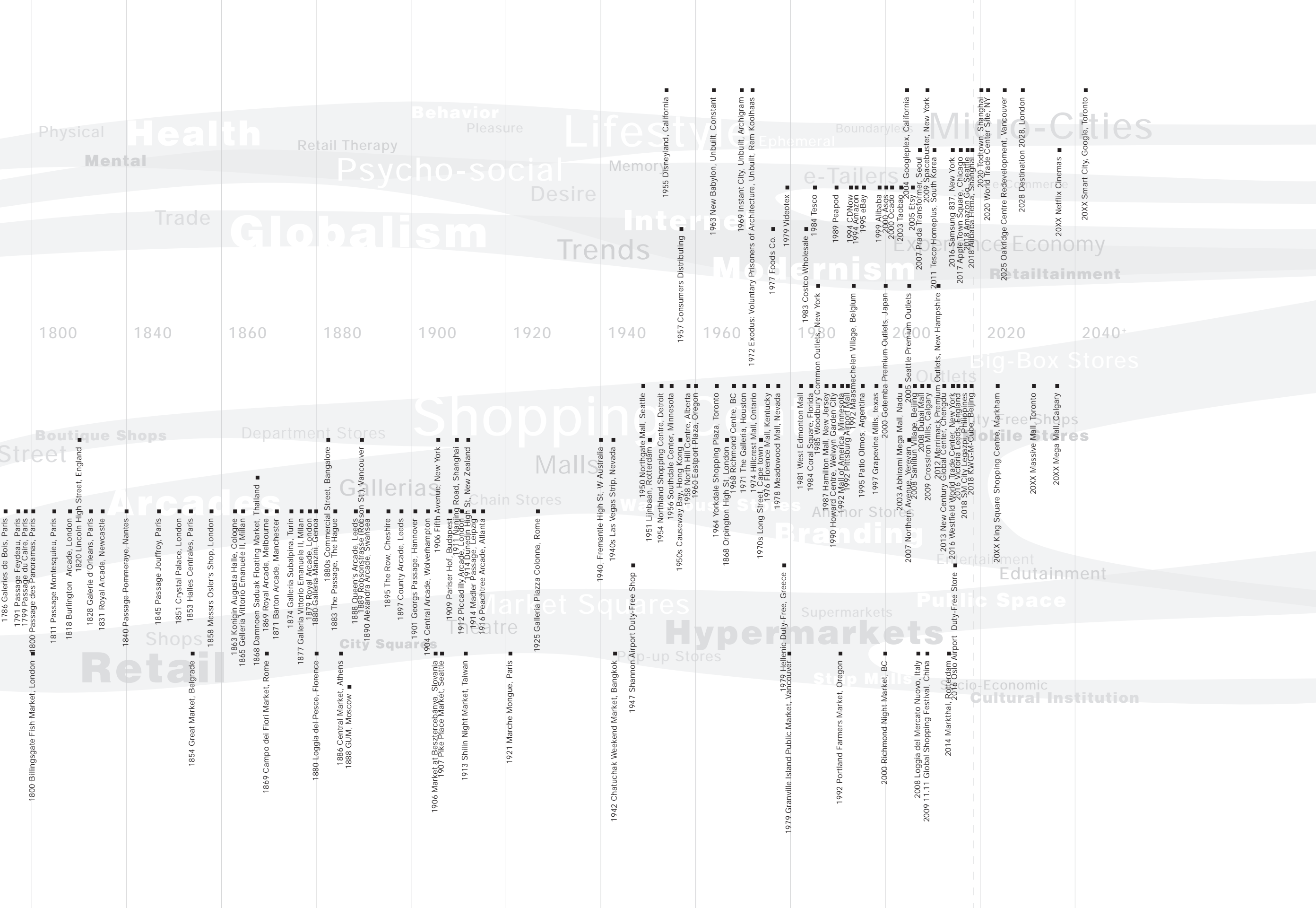
- 1610s Khlong Lat Mayom, Bangkok ■
- 1660s Kalverstraat, Amsterdam ■

- 1700s Champs Elysees, Paris ■
- 1710 Amphawa Floating Market, Thailand ■

- 1730s Silk Street, Beijing ■

- 1740s Bang Nam Phueng, Bangkok ■

- 1762 Foire Saint Germain, Paris ■



1786 Galeries de Bois, Paris ■
1791 Passage Feydeau, Paris ■
1799 Passage du Caire, Paris ■
1800 Billingsgate Fish Market, London ■ 1800 Passage des Panoramas, Paris ■

1811 Passage Montesquieu, Paris ■
1818 Burlington Arcade, London ■
1820 Lincoln High Street, England ■
1828 Galerie d'Orleans, Paris ■
1831 Royal Arcade, Newcastle ■

1840 Passage Pommeraye, Nantes ■

1845 Passage Jouffroy, Paris ■
1851 Crystal Palace, London ■
1853 Halles Centrales, Paris ■
1854 Great Market, Belgrade ■
1858 Messrs Osler's Shop, London ■

1863 Konigin Augusta Halle, Cologne ■
1865 Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II, Milan ■
1868 Damnoen Saduak Floating Market, Thailand ■
1869 Royal Arcade, Melbourne ■
1871 Barton Arcade, Manchester ■

1874 Galleria Subalpina, Turin ■
1877 Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II, Milan ■
1879 Royal Arcade, London ■
1880 Galleria Manzini, Genoa ■
1880 Loggia del Pesce, Florence ■

1883 The Passage, The Hague ■
1886 Central Market, Athens ■
1888 GUM, Moscow ■
1889 Robson's Arcade (Robson St.), Vancouver ■
1890 Alexandra Arcade, Swansea ■

1895 The Row, Cheshire ■
1897 County Arcade, Leeds ■
1901 Georgs Passage, Hannover ■

1904 Central Arcade, Wolverhampton ■
1906 Fifth Avenue, New York ■
1909 Pariser Hof, Budapest ■
1912 Piccadilly Arcade, London ■
1914 Duncannon Road, Shanghai ■
1914 Madler Passage, Leipzig ■
1916 Peachtree Arcade, Atlanta ■

1921 Marche Mongue, Paris ■

1925 Galleria Piazza Colonna, Rome ■

1940, Fremantle High St, W Australia ■
1940s Las Vegas Strip, Nevada ■
1942 Chatuchak Weekend Market, Bangkok ■
1947 Shannon Airport Duty-Free Shop ■

1950 Northgate Mall, Seattle ■
1951 Lijnbaan, Rotterdam ■
1954 Northland Shopping Centre, Detroit ■
1956 Southdale Center, Minnesota ■
1950s Causeway Bay, Hong Kong ■
1958 North Hill Centre, Alberta ■
1960 Eastport Plaza, Oregon ■

1964 Yorkdale Shopping Plaza, Toronto ■
1868 Orpington High St, London ■
1968 Richmond Centre, BC ■
1971 The Galleria, Houston ■
1974 Hillcrest Mall, Ontario ■
1970s Long Street, Cape town ■
1976 Florence Mall, Kentucky ■
1978 Meadowood Mall, Nevada ■

1979 Hellenic Duty-Free, Greece ■
1979 Granville Island Public Market, Vancouver ■
1979 Videotex ■

1981 West Edmonton Mall ■
1984 Coral Square, Florida ■
1985 Woodbury Common Outlets, New York ■
1987 Hamilton Mall, New Jersey ■
1990 Howard Centre, Welwyn Garden City ■
1992 Mall of America, Minnesota ■
1992 Philipsburg Mall, Pennsylvania ■
1992 Maasmechelen Village, Belgium ■
1995 Patio Olmos, Argentina ■
1997 Grapevine Mills, Texas ■
2000 Golembo Premium Outlets, Japan ■

2000 Richmond Night Market, BC ■
2008 Loggia del Mercato Nuovo, Italy ■
2009 11.11 Global Shopping Festival, China ■

2003 Abhirami Mega Mall, Nadi ■
2007 Northern Avenue, Yerevan ■
2008 Sahlul Mall, Beijing ■
2008 Dubai Mall ■
2009 Crossiron Mills, Calgary ■
2012 Merrimack Premium Outlets, New Hampshire ■
2013 New Century Global Center, Chengdu ■

2014 Markthal, Rotterdam ■
2016 Oslo Airport Duty-Free Store ■
2016 Westfield World Trade Center, New York ■
2016 Victoria Leeds, England ■
2018 SM City Legazpi, Philippines ■
2018 KWG-M-Cube, Beijing ■

20XX King Square Shopping Centre, Markham ■

20XX Massive Mall, Toronto ■

20XX Mega Mall, Calgary ■

2020 Todtown, Shanghai ■

2020 World Trade Center Site, NY ■

2025 Oakridge Centre Redevelopment, Vancouver ■

2028 Destination 2028, London ■

20XX Netflix Cinemas ■

20XX Smart City Google, Toronto ■

THE SHOPPING CENTRE

Gruen's Social Experiment

In the 1950s, consumerism reached a pivotal point in consumer culture. The birth of the shopping center in America posed unprecedented opportunities for organizing retail space and created a solution to suburban sprawl. The invention of the shopping mall was designed by Victor Gruen, an architect from Vienna with a vision to revitalize American land by borrowing from the vibrant spaces of the European city.¹ Prior to planning the shopping center, Gruen's experience as an architect in Vienna allowed him to experiment with a handful of commercial spaces. Some of his initial projects in Vienna dealt with store facades and their relationship with the public street. Thinking deeply about the convergence of both spaces, Gruen intended to modify the already successful arcade typology to improve outdoor pedestrian traffic. As a result, he proposed a recessed store entrance to establish an intermediate threshold between the street and the retailer.² The Singer Fabric Store in Rotenturmstrasse, Vienna, illustrates his early work in the commercial sector. Gruen's repeated success in the retail field soon led him to challenge the unruly conditions of American cities (Figure 5).

The brawl between the city and suburb has convinced Victor Gruen to put the heated debate to rest. The dense urban regions of American cities were increasing in size and numbers at an alarming rate. The working class was fleeing the urban metropolis – one that has been congested with pedestrian and vehicular traffic – and settled in neighborhoods outside of the city center. From the sprawl, suburbia was born directly out of the need to escape city life.³ Soon, mass housing began production miles away from the urban core and into the empty landscapes. Communities began to form in suburbs, but there were few proper places designed for public gatherings. Gruen was a witness to the rising circumstances and saw an opportunity to produce a new public hub for the rural region. His new project would be accessible by car but was utilized for the pedestrian – in other words, it a 'city' for the 'non-city'. Thus, the creation of the shopping center revolutionized the modern suburb by introducing people to a new archetype for shopping



Figure 5 The recessed entrance of the Singer Store extends the pedestrian street circulation.

and public life.

In 1956, Victor Gruen designed the Southdale Center in Edina, Minnesota for a department store investor. Being the first of its kind, the shopping center attempted to capture the intrinsic qualities of the urban downtown inside the walls the mall. In *Architectural Forum's* "A Breakthrough for Two-Level Shopping Centers," the article highlights Southdale's urbanistic features:

*Here we see architecture fulfilling one of its most creative roles: building a new kind of environment...There is nothing suburban about it except its location. For Southdale uncannily conveys the feeling of metropolitan downtown; ...Southdale (is not) a copy of downtown. Rather, it is an imaginative distillation of what makes downtown magnetic: the variety, the individuality, the lights, the color, even the crowds...*¹⁴

Southdale's spatial characteristics undoubtedly captures the image of the downtown city, yet it tries to differentiate itself from the physical downtown. Gruen crafts an illusion inside the shopping mall by juxtaposing the environment outside the architecture (Figure 6). Gruen would often



Figure 6 Southdale Center in Edina, Minnesota, 1956.

describe this quality as 'introverted architecture,' for which individuals would get wonderstruck and forget about the congested highways beyond the mall's exterior.⁵ The spatial layout of the shopping center was structured around two department anchor stores on either end of the mall in a diagonal placement. The significance of the anchor stores would operate as the largest tenants in the mall with smaller tenant-store blocks occupying the spaces in between.

The main atrium would not only serve as a public space, but also a stage for special events and public activities (Figure 7). Gruen believed the mall's festivities would attract people to visit the shopping center. He aimed to emphasize the importance of public culture by uniting people together and improving social connections through frequent attractions and entertainment.⁶ Southdale's strategic lighting contributes to the shopping aesthetic as well. The lighting would be tuned to reflect the time and day of the seasons and create a pleasant shopping environment. Gruen advocated for proper lighting as he believed it demonstrated a psychological imperative and provoked an emotional response on consumers, which in turn influenced individuals to purchase more items.⁷ Furthermore, the incorporation of air conditioning enhanced the qualities

of the mall. This technological advancement was highly favored by people in the shopping center, as it allowed shoppers to spend more time inside the mall. This feature was also true for the Southdale's interior landscape. To improve the 'natural' qualities of the mall, Gruen introduced green space into the central court (Figure 8). The main intent of was to offer people a place to sit and relax, and provide a break before resuming consumption.⁸ By synthesizing multiple of tactics and concepts into the shopping center, Gruen had successfully immersed suburban inhabitants into a surreal socio-commercial environment.

However, Gruen did not stop here. He would continue to advocate for new urban centers in other American suburbs. In a way, Gruen conveyed his array of shopping centers as experiments in city planning.⁹ He would further romanticize the European aesthetic and implement their ideologies into his mall designs. Although the form and context of his shopping centers would vary, his fundamental ideas of the American suburb kept challenging the modern metropolis and its disorderly social counterpart.



Figure 7 20,000 guests appear at Bob Barker's *Truth or Consequences* show at Southdale in 1957.



Figure 8 Southdale's Garden Court features a pond feature, bird cage structure, and vegetation along resting areas.

The Mall, the Town, and the Metropolis

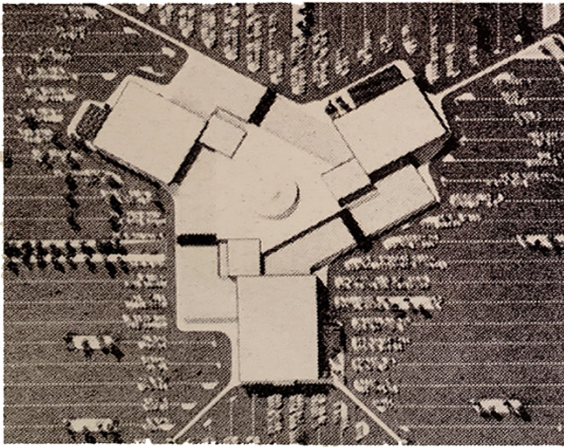
“The shopping mall wants to become a city, the city wants to become a shopping mall.”

– Mattias Kärholm¹⁰

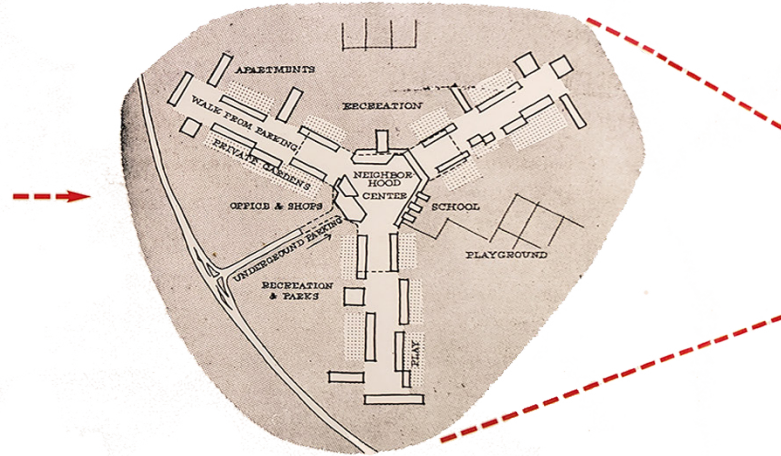
Planning the shopping center encouraged more private investors and designers to partake in developing the city at large. The mall’s architecture was never introverted; in fact, the building looked outwards into the surrounding context and brought prosperity to its local neighborhoods.¹¹ Having planned the mall himself, Gruen always saw the *master* plan – he focused on controlling the entire context of his projects, not simply the building. Although his shopping centers do situate well into their community, the grand architectural design expands beyond the mall’s boundaries. His ambitions led others to trust that shopping could indeed improve the American city and its adjacent towns.¹²

Gruen intended to upscale the shopping center model and incorporate civic programs and facilities into the mix to create his shopping town. The floor plan of the traditional mall would become a template for community life – the city mall would no longer be the ‘mall’, but rather the new urban center.¹³ We can draw from Gruen’s spatial layout of Randhurst Center in Illinois to test this idea. The triangular pattern of the mall’s structural organization has flexibility to extend indefinitely. Adding public functions around the urban center morphs the mall into a community neighborhood. Replicating the process again at an increasing scale formulates an urban town, which would eventually become a city, and later grow into a full metropolis (Figure 9). The resilient nature of the Randhurst Center begins as a place for consumption and leisure, but with closer analysis, we can see the structural arrangement of the mall become the backbone of urban life and space.

The notion that shopping centers are becoming indistinguishable from urban cities is no surprise. Rather, urban planners and architects are well aware of the complexity of designing a mall and designing a city.¹⁴ One has to plan a mall with the intention of future urban expansion. Likewise, the city has to compensate for the success or loss of its constituent parts. Although shopping centers can be regarded famous for their monumentality and presence in the community, the real significance lies in the architectural planning and theory behind their motifs.¹⁵

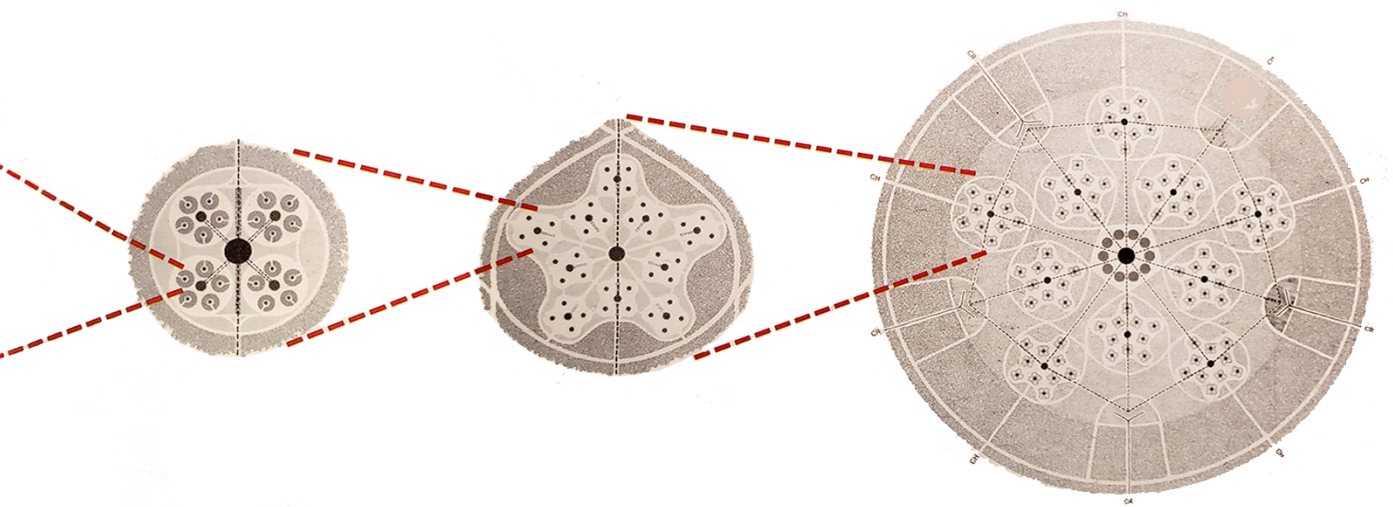


mall . . .



= neighborhood . . .

Figure 9 The mall as the basic unit of urban planning.



... x 20 = town ...

... x 10 = city ...

... x 10 = metropolis

Consumer Psychology and Architecture

Throughout Gruen's many projects on the commercial environment, his consumer spaces embody another kind of psychological phenomenon. The Gruen Effect, also termed the Gruen Transfer, is a major retail theory that has led to the success of American shopping centers in the past and contemporary society. This mental imperative functions as an invisible design strategy aimed to manipulate the public into consuming more.¹⁶ The Gruen Effect helps explain the obsession with shopping in modern society (Figure 10). More specifically, retail spaces rely on architecture to manipulate the public's desires and emotions to invoke a more passive shopping environment. Architects would modify the shopping space to appeal to consumer impulses, thus swaying shoppers to spend more time inside the place and ultimately spend more money. This is achieved via strategic lighting, careful floor planning, magnificent displays, and so forth. For instance, the persuasive power of the storefront window can easily guide the attention of any consumer.¹⁷ The glazing would operate as an open theatre that draws people into the store effortlessly and naturally.

The Swedish department store, IKEA, is a clear contender of the Gruen Effect. IKEA's internal arrangement of products tricks people into travelling through a labyrinth of merchandise, only to find what they are looking for at the end of the maze. However, by the time of their checkout the consumers' shopping carts would be filled with other household items collected throughout the journey. The thoughtful planning of IKEA's spatial layout evidently employs the Gruen Effect to embark shoppers into shopping utopia – all with the intention of boosting in-store sales (Figure 11). As malls and other shopping typologies learn to master the Gruen Effect in their designs, commercial environments begin to steer into the economics of the space – one that is driven for the sole purpose of selling. Alternatively, if used correctly, this ideology has the capability to transform any space into realms of wonder.¹⁸ The strategies of the Gruen Effect can operate as a tool for urban intensity and could become an agent of community-building.

Figure 10 (Right) The Gruen Effect.





Figure 11 IKEA's maze layout emphasizes the Gruen Effect.

Decline of the Mall

After being accustomed to the invention of the shopping center and its immeasurable contribution to the economic landscape, private land investors took advantage of Gruen's retail typology to erect more productive shopping machines. The urban mall soon lost their iconic identities in communities and focused strictly on promoting retail and generating profit.¹⁹ At this stage, Gruen admitted defeat. His humane ideas of highlighting urban space and improving environmental conditions were overshadowed by the ambitions of real estate investors. The mall now represented a secure, long-term investment where wealth and profit were guaranteed. In the article "Magic of the Mall", Jon Goss states that the mall "pretend[s] to be a space imaginatively created by its inhabitants". He further claims "the shopping center is conceived by the elitist science of planning, which operates under the calculus of retail profit and applies behavioral theories of human action for purposes of social control, and yet part of that conception is its disguise as a popular space which has been created by the spontaneous, individual tactics of everyday life."²⁰ Goss describes the shifting reality of the American mall as that of a money-generating scheme.

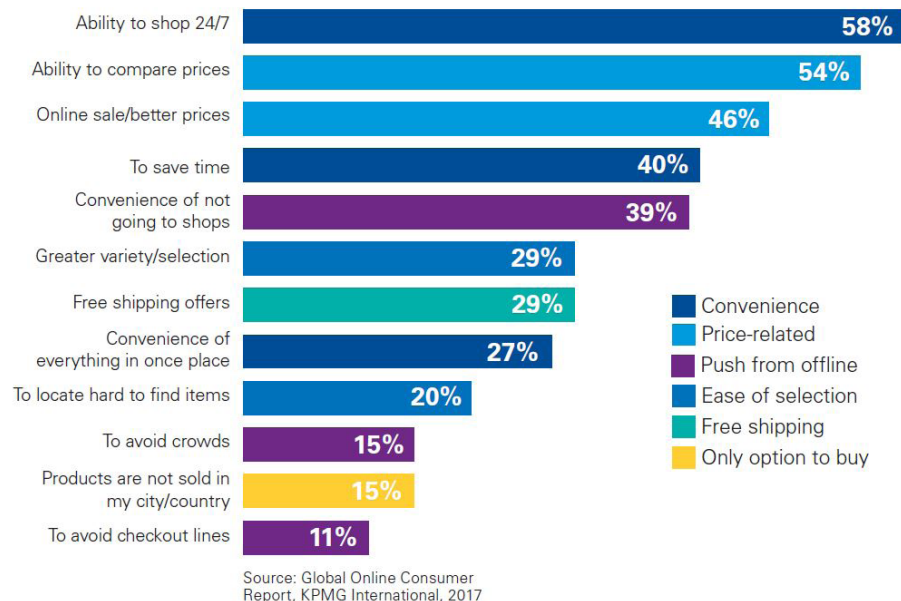


Figure 12 Graph indicating the reasons consumers shop online instead of in stores.

Shopping centers now followed a specific format and redundant organizational structure. This led to a standardization of monoculture – a typical boring and lifeless retail space with no distinctive properties.²¹ More than ever, the shopping center has truly abandoned its role of creating communities.

Additional factors also contribute to the downfall of the American mall. The rapid advancement in digital technology is launching online markets across a global scale. Consumers do not have to drive to the shopping center to acquire goods, instead they can shop at the comfort of their homes. E-commerce completely modernised traditional shopping. Its greatest advantage over standard retailers is its convenience – consumers would purchase products from anywhere in the world and have them delivered to their doorstep (Figure 12). Electronic retailers, or e-tailers, have triumphed over independent small shops forcing them out of business. Today, main anchor tenants are facing the eminent dangers of e-commerce. According to commercial real estate firm CoStar, they predict approximately one quarter of US shopping centers (nearly 310 out of 1,300 malls) are at risk of losing an anchor store.²² Consequently, the disappearance of conventional anchor stores results in the collapse of the shopping center (Figure 13). Without its main anchor tenants to support the financial state of the mall, the urban center's traditional structural system disintegrates and smaller tenants are forced to close down or relocate.²³

The traditional shopping mall has outlived its targeted lifespan. "Shopping," Leong writes, "rather than being a stable urban building block, is best described in terms of cycles, births, declines, and measured in terms of lifespans."²⁴ If we reflect on Leong's statement, then certainly the conventional shopping center is at the end of its life cycle. However, the death of the mall is merely a phase within the larger scope of consumerism. Shopping will always be under threat and will constantly have to adapt to its social, political, and economic context to match the needs of consumer society.²⁵ The chapter of Gruen's traditional shopping center typology is finished. The new shopping typology will have to learn from the mall's success to offer more creative opportunities and experiences to the urban population.



Figure 13 Major Chair Store Closure Chart from 2007 - 2019.

Case Study: Pacific Center

Location: Vancouver, British Columbia

Owner: Cadillac Fairview

Opened: 1971

Total Floor Area: 66,000 m²

Context

Pacific Center (PC) is well incorporated into the urban infrastructure (Figure 14). Above ground, the mall acknowledges surrounding spaces and creates new places to gather, shop, and rest. The facade of the mall blends with the surround neighborhood using familiar materiality.

'Interaction' Zones

Majority of the seating spaces are designed similarly: seats facing one another and are soft and comfortable, and have small tables to place belongings. However, people choose to go on their mobile devices rather than socialize (Figure 15). Is the lack of interactivity a fault within the mall's design? How can designers change this zone for increased interaction? What would happen if these areas would be mixed with adjacent retailers?

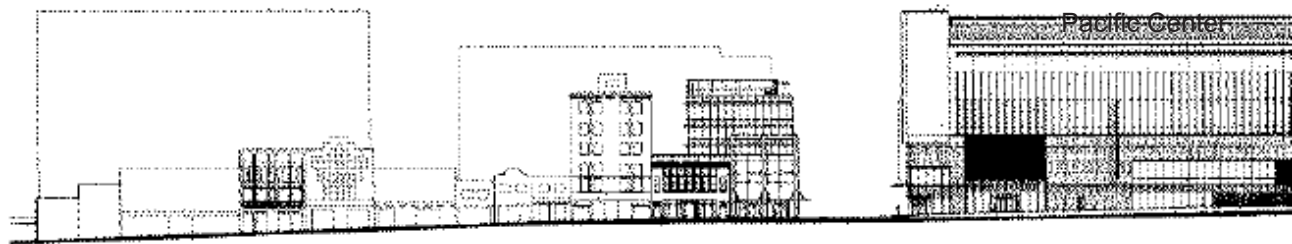


Figure 14 Granville Streetscape Elevation.

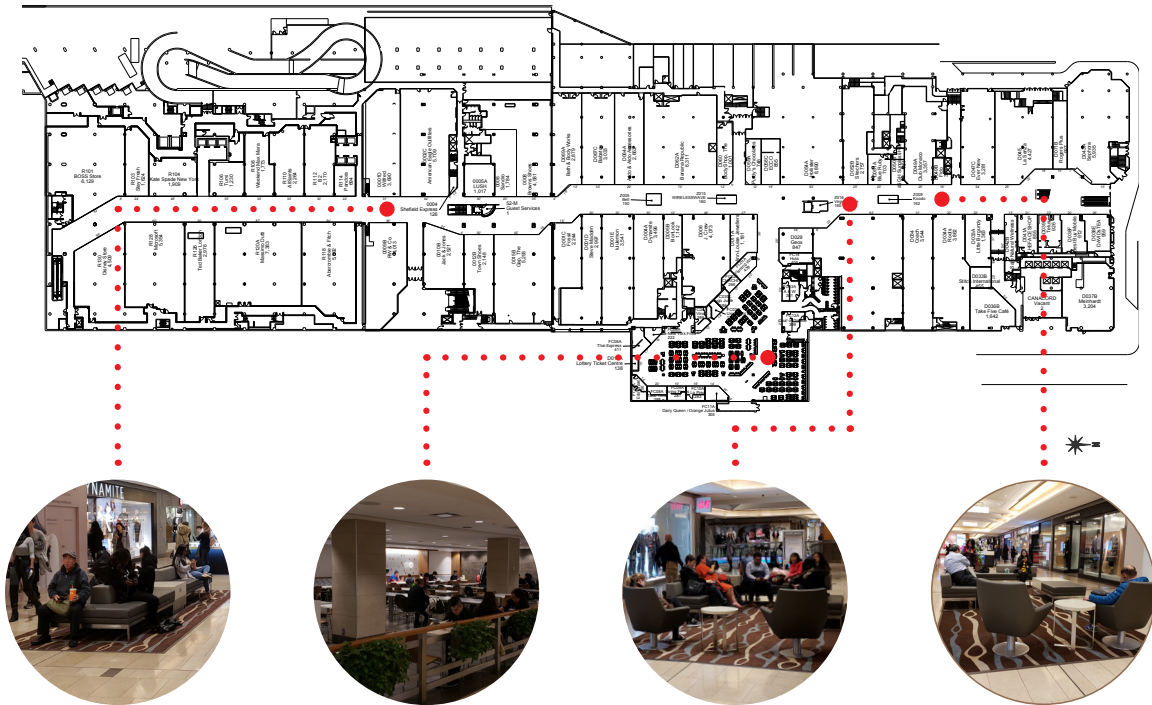
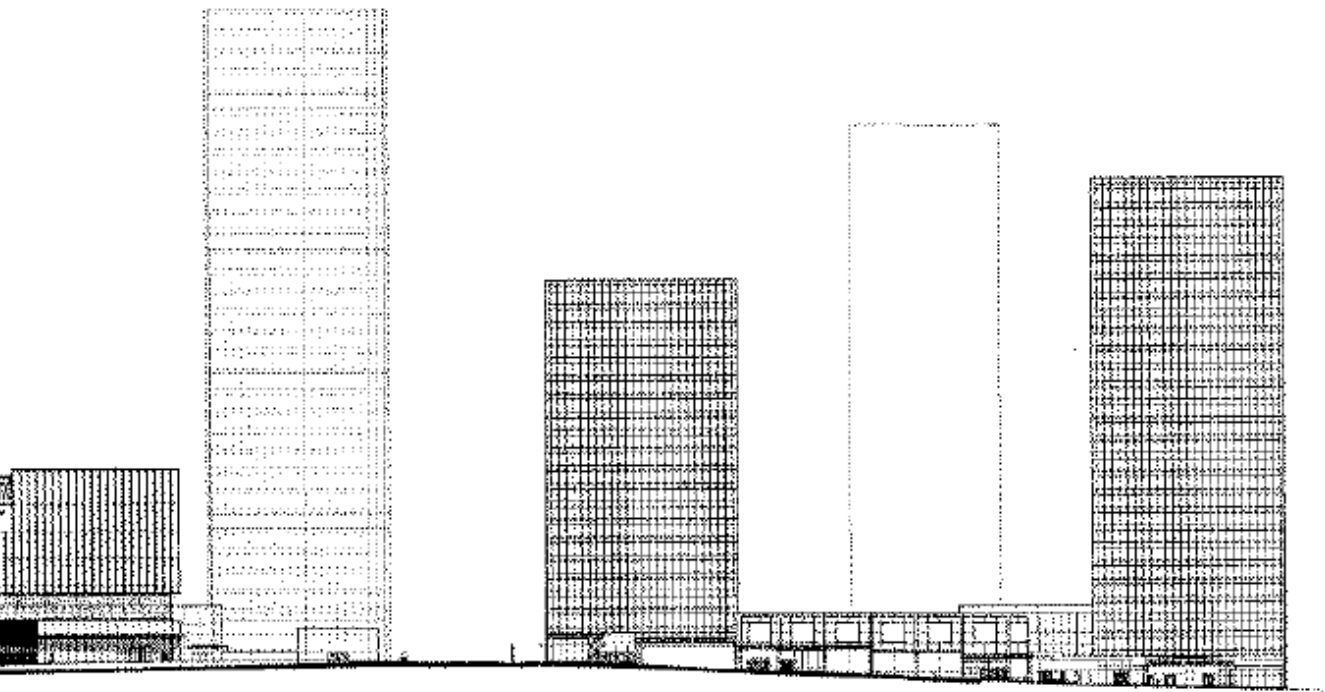


Figure 15 Resting zones in the lower level of Pacific Center.



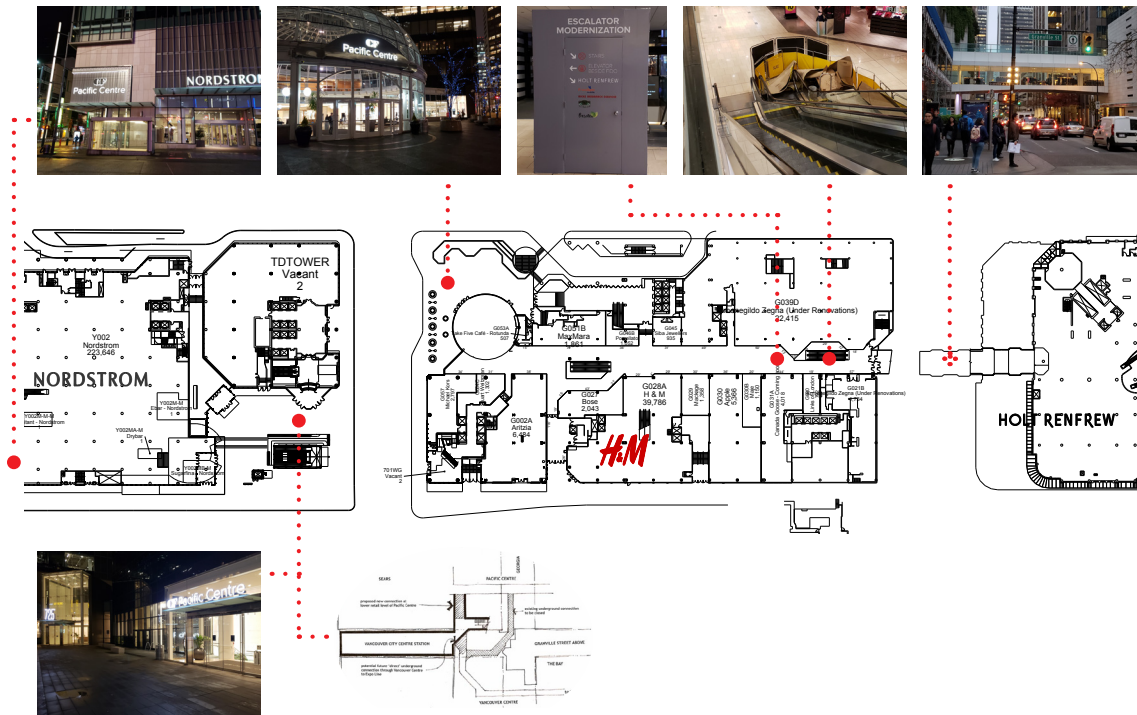


Figure 16 Major circulation points in the upper level of Pacific Center.

Circulation, Mobility, and Points of Entry

PC has multiple points of entry into the building. All main entrances take the visitor through anchor stores – a strategic mall organization that influences consumers to purchase more (Figure 16). Anchor tenants are located at every corner of the mall with smaller retailers in the middle, similar to the traditional Gruen mall model.

Corridors connect stores that are spread out across Granville street. Majority of the mall's connections occur underground as the ground level is used for vehicle and pedestrian traffic.

Circulation is key within the mall; however, due to the tight narrow configuration of the shopping space, travelling between levels becomes an issue. The escalators and stairs are crucial to the vertical circulation inside PC. Out-of-service escalators complicates the mobility within the mall and creates inconvenience for customers.

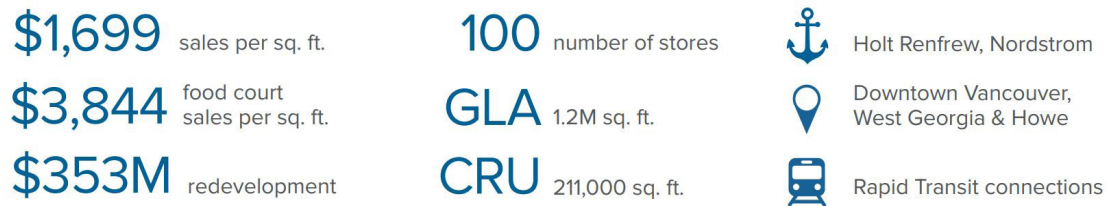


Figure 17 Key facts from Pacific Center.

Interpreting the Facts

PC attempts to present itself as a vibrant hub for the urban metropolis of Vancouver. Yes, the mall is well integrated into the urban fabric partly because it is built underground and interwoven into adjacent city spaces. Visitors can navigate through the mall instead of taking Granville Street. Location is key to PC's economic and public success.

Facts illustrated in PC's property report do not consider customer satisfaction of the mall's overall experience and its contribution to city life (Figure 17). A couple of questions to consider – what does Cadillac Fairview (property owner of PC) do with the income generated from its tenants? Does the shopping center schedule city events or offer unique cultural experiences?

PC is a privately owned space with the appearance of a public space. Security guards inside the mall are a clear reminder of this.

Digital Tools

Malls today incorporate more digital media to enhance consumer experience. Digital screens tend to attract the new generation of consumers and allows PC to associate itself with modern consumer culture. Consumers can also text PC's mobile assistant to find retailer locations inside the mall – this method would remove the traditional 2D directory (Figure 18).

Sky Bridge

The sky bridge is used as corridor and connector between the mall and Holt Renfrew. The space can be used to extend Renfrew's product collection and also showcase public art or host other events. The space is entire visible from Granville Street.

Layout Efficiency

Based on the Canadian Shopping Centre Study 2017, Pacific Center ranks third for the highest sales per square foot in Canada (Figure 20). This study demonstrates the efficiency of the mall's spatial organization and how it maximizes its floor space. Popular retailers in the mall also contribute to the success of the overall revenue.

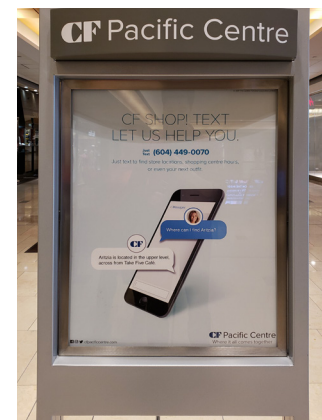


Figure 18 (Left & Above) Digital tools to enhance the retail space.



Figure 19 Sky bridge displaying Holt Renfrew's collection.

Rank	Mall Name	City	Province	Sales Per Sq Ft
1	Yorkdale Shopping Centre	Toronto	Ontario	\$1,653
2	Oakridge Shopping Centre	Vancouver	British Columbia	\$1,579
3	CF Pacific Centre	Vancouver	British Columbia	\$1,531
4	CF Toronto Eaton Centre	Toronto	Ontario	\$1,528
5	Southgate Centre	Edmonton	Alberta	\$1,147
6	CF Chinook Centre	Calgary	Alberta	\$1,075
7	Square One Shopping Centre	Mississauga	Ontario	\$1,064
8	Metropolis at Metrotown	Burnaby	British Columbia	\$1,031
9	CF Rideau Centre	Ottawa	Ontario	\$987
10	CF Sherway Gardens	Toronto	Ontario	\$979

Figure 20 Top 10 Malls in Canada by Sales per Square Foot.

Case Study: Metropolis at Metrotown Mall

Location: Burnaby, British Columbia

Owner: Ivanhoe Cambridge

Opened: 1986

Total Floor Area: 165,000 m²

Location, Location, Location

Metrotown mall is adjacent to Metrotown skytrain station. Metrotown station has a bus loop with buses driving to UBC, downtown Vancouver, and other destinations in the lower mainland. Public amenities such as hotels, dining restaurants, and other retailers surround Metrotown mall within a five-minute walking radius.

Metrotown mall is pedestrian and transit oriented. It acts as a public hub for both residents and visitors of the neighborhood. The walkable nature of the shopping center makes it highly approachable from anywhere either by car or public transit. Underground parking is available as well as street parking and parkades set up around main entrances of the mall.

The Grand (Empty) Court

The Grand Court serves a flex space where activities and events can take the stage. The panda exhibition was popular amongst the crowd during summer 2018. The event filled the entire court with stuffed pandas (Figure 22). Although it was a temporary exhibit, the installation brought joy and a sense of awe to the public. Other events in the Grand Court include a winter-themed installation during the holiday season. Small boutique shops occasionally fill up the space as well throughout the year.

However, as spacious as it appears, the Grand Court always feels empty. It lacks a sense of identity compared to other malls around the world. There is not much activity throughout the seasons to engage visitors in the space (Figure 21). Retailers on the lower floor are also not big-box stores, but rather temporary small tenants. Therefore it does not provide an incentive for consumers to traverse through the central space.



Figure 21 (Above) The Grand Court during low times of the season.



Figure 22 (Left) Stuffed panda exhibition occupies the entire Grand Court.



Figure 23 (Above & Left) Circulation in the mall on a Thursday evening.

Consumers on the Move

Circulation is crucial in shopping centers and Metrotown is no exception. All walking corridors are greater than 10 meters wide (Figure 23). During low times of the season, the spaces might often seem dead and unutilized. However, during special retail events and holiday sales, large crowds take up the entire corridor.

Mobility inside the mall is fast-paced. Consumers will go from store to store non-stop and only those who get tired will find themselves waiting at sitting areas. Needless to say, Metrotown is a pedestrian-friendly shopping center. Travelling from one corner of the mall to the other extreme end would take approximately thirteen minutes without including any shopping time.

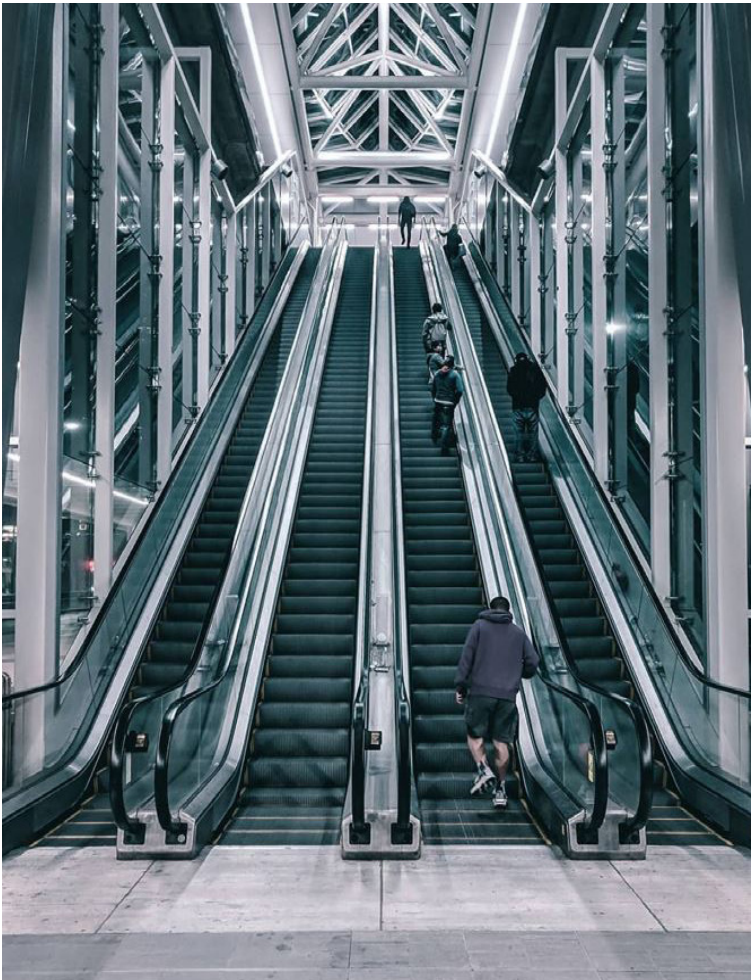


Figure 24 Escalator redevelopment at Metrotown Station.

Urban Redevelopment

Metrotown Skytrain Station is one of the many redevelopments occurring at the Metrotown neighborhood. The skytrain station redesign was completed in early 2018 with a \$37-million budget. The skytrain services 50,000 trips per day and is meant to accommodate a bigger flow of traffic coming to the station (Figure 24). Future development includes the addition of a new bus loop around the station.

While Metrotown mall does benefit from the added redevelopment of the station, the urban infrastructure around the mall is benefitting as well. New condo towers are set to finish construction within the next decade. Soon live-work-shop might be the next lifestyle of the future. The City of Burnaby is also investing on a green network around the station. This includes new cycling lanes and wider pedestrian sidewalks.

Break Time

Metrotown mall is definately a destination rather than a place for casual strolling. Consumers arrive here with a main goal in mind: to shop. While the mall does have public spaces to sit and rest, these 'public' spaces do not encourage social interaction (Figure 25). Elders and individuals who are normally be too tired to walk will find a comfortable spot to wait while the rest of their party consumes.

Seating is typically arranged around green spaces or aesthetic features such as water fountains. While resting spaces serve their purpose, no one is seen interacting with each other. Instead, everyone is on their mobile devices either shopping online or on social media.



Figure 25 Seating arrangement around a central green space.

Notes

1. Daniel Herman, "Mall," in *Project on the City 2*, 468.
2. Alex Wall, *Victor Gruen: From Urban Shop to New City* (Barcelona: Actar, 2005), 27.
3. Victor Gruen and Larry Smith, *Shopping Towns USA*, 20.
4. "A Breakthrough for Two-Level Shopping Centers," *Architectural Forum* 105 (1956): 82.
5. M. Jeffrey Hardwick, *Mall Maker: Victor Gruen, Architect of an American Dream* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), 104.
6. *Ibid.*, 134.
7. *Ibid.*, 65.
8. *Ibid.*, 85-6.
9. *Ibid.*, 140.
10. Kärholm, *Retailising Space*, 7.
11. Hardwick, *Mall Maker*, 74.
12. *Ibid.*, 93.
13. Sze Tsung Leong, "Gruen Urbanism," in *Project on the City 2*, 385.
14. Stefan Al, "All Under One Roof: How Malls and Cities are Becoming Indistinguishable," last modified March 16, 2017, <https://www.theguardian.com/cities/2017/mar/16/malls-cities-become-one-and-same>.
15. Leslie Sklair, "Iconic Architecture and the Culture-Ideology of Consumerism," *Theory, Culture & Society* 27, no. 5 (2010): 142.
16. Hardwick, *Mall Maker*, 2.
17. *Ibid.*, 41.
18. *Ibid.*, 2-3.
19. *Ibid.*, 217.
20. Jon Goss, "The 'Magic of the Mall': An Analysis of Form, Function, and Meaning in the Contemporary Retail Built Environment," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 83, no. 1 (1993): 40.
21. Anna Klingmann, *Brandscapes: Architecture in the Experience Economy* (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 2007), 282.
22. Hayley Peterson, "Dying Shopping Malls are Wreaking Havoc on Suburban America," last modified March 5, 2017, <https://www.businessinsider.com/dying-shopping-malls-are-wreaking-havoc-on-suburban-america-2017-2>.
23. "Erasing the Lines: PoroCity Blurs Artificial Boundaries to Foster Community Productivity," *B+H Architects*, last modified October 25, 2017, <https://bharchitects.com/en/2017/10/25/erasing-the-lines/>.
24. Leong, "...And Then There Was Shopping," in *Project on the City 2*, 131.
25. Herman, "Mall," in *Project on the City 2*, 470-1.

THE EXPERIENCE ECONOMY

The Progression of Economic Value

Consumer culture today craves memorable experiences. While all tangible products have a temporary lifespan, experiences create a new value – one that is long-lasting and memorable. Retailers and other shopping archetypes have always followed the traditional consumer concept used since the beginning of history: to buy and sell. However, current commercial spaces are diverting from the traditional model to focus on delivering consumer experiences. Joseph Pine II and James Gilmore designed a methodology that encapsulates the several stages of consumerism in consumer culture, they call this theory the *Progression of Economic Value* (Figure 26). The fundamental idea behind the framework describes how retail businesses are progressing beyond commodities and products to focus on consumer experiences where memory itself becomes the product.¹ In Pine's and Gilmore's *Progression of Economic Value*, commodities is placed as the first phase of the economic offering. *Commodities* represent the raw substance extracted from the earth, either through farming or harvesting methods. *Goods* involve products manufactured from commodities. *Services* refer to the activity of delivering the goods to the consumer. Finally, *experiences* result in creating memorable events catered to each individual consumer. For example, applying the *Progression of Economic Value* to the process of coffee making, the commodity is the coffee bean extracted from the earth; the good is the packaged brand bought at the store; the service is having someone deliver the freshly-brewed coffee; and the experience is similar to that of a Starbucks store.

Individuals do not simply want to acquire their products – they want to be dazzled and moved by the brands that deliver them. This is not say that convenience stores will cease to exist; in fact, people who prefer to shop conveniently can still attend these stores. However retail corporations that invest in delivering consumer experiences appeal to greater consumer masses. As mentioned in Bernd Schmitt's article on "Experiential Marketing", consumers want "products, communications, and marketing campaigns that dazzle their senses, touch their hearts,...

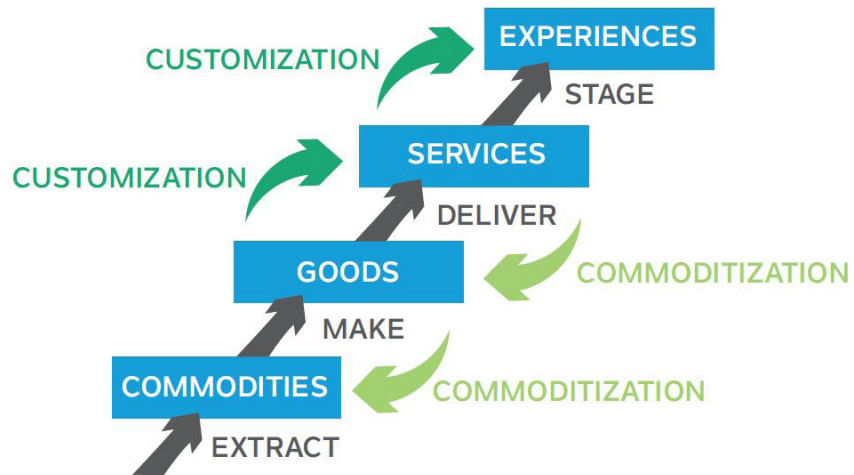


Figure 26 The Progression of Economic Value.

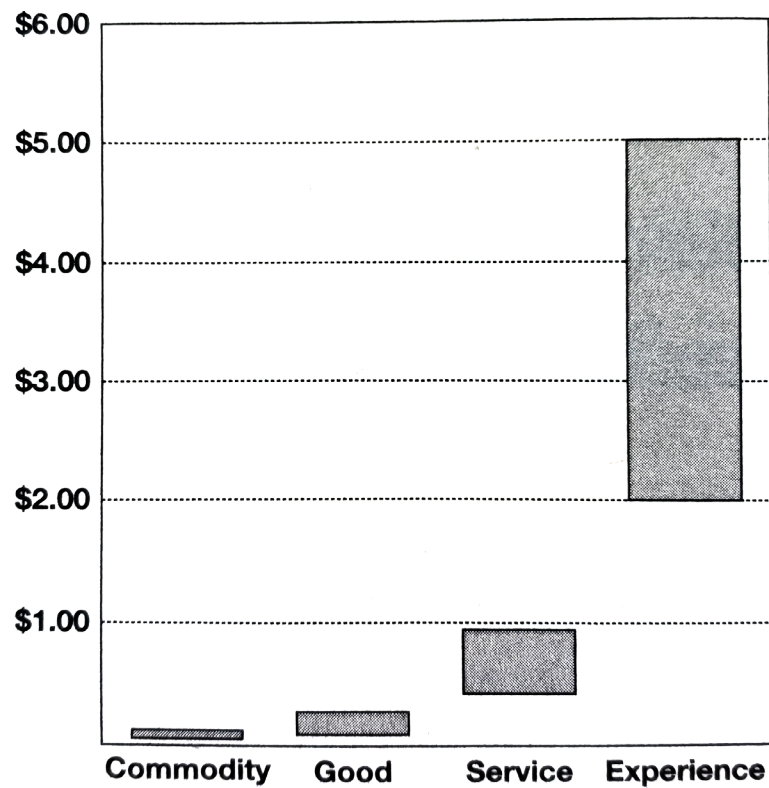


Figure 27 Price of coffee offerings chart.

stimulate their minds [and] deliver an experience. The degree to which a company is able to deliver a desirable customer experience... will largely determine its success in the global marketplace of the new millennium.”² Indeed, current retailers are exercising consumer experience above all other economic offerings. Commercial businesses are also aware that customers would pay a higher price for the added experience. By revisiting the coffee example from earlier, individuals would gladly pay an extra \$2 or \$3 if the brand or supplier constructs a unique experience along with the served coffee (Figure 27). When retail companies often reach plateau in financial profits, they steer towards the experience framework to reach higher profits. At this stage, retail corporations place a greater emphasis providing memorable events over standard product marketing.³

Retailers rely on architecture to assist in delivering experiences to individuals. Architecture can be utilized to augment the customers’ senses and enrich their relationship with the brand. Whereas brands orchestrate the product or message they intend to portray, architects and designers craft the image of the brand and conveys their intent through design.⁴ Here, architecture plays as the mediator between brand and consumer. Architecture must develop a strategy that epitomises the brand in order to place itself within the socio-economic setting. “It is precisely at this point,” claims Anna Klingmann, “that architecture exceeds its use value and becomes a catalyst for perceptual values and transformative experiences.”⁵ If we hold true to Klingmann’s statement, then architecture gains a higher status in enhancing commercial experiences as well as effectively integrating social and economic agendas into the public environment.

The Starbucks Roastery in Seattle is a prime example at the highest stage in the experience economy. Starbucks opened an innovative coffee experience that immerses the public to learn about the history of coffee brewing by cultivating public engagement at the core of their design (Figure 28). While at the roastery, visitors can sit at the Experience Bar to try exotic coffee flavors from around the world or can even rent a portion of the building to host other events. The fact that Starbucks expanded their brand to deliver more than the usual coffee store experience shows their effort in establishing a deeper connection with customers. More importantly, the rationale behind the Seattle Roastery building indicates how commercial architecture contributes to the production of social environments, all while providing surreal experiences in the urban city.



Figure 28 Starbucks Roastery in Seattle, Washington.

Lessons from Theater

Bright lights! Amazing performances! Fantastic stages! Consumer experiences are closely associated with the art of theater. “The architect as the choreographer,” Klingmann explains, “sets the stage (architecture), determines the plot (activities), and guides the actors (users) through a dramatic sequencing of situations and events.”⁶ From the architecture, to the service provided, to the participation of the public, we can derive at the idea that staging an economic experience *is* theatre. If the performance delivered to the public is memorable and unique, then the stage, plot, and actors (equivalent to the architecture, activities, and users) can produce a wholesome experience. The goods being sold, or showcased, to the public become props in the stage of design.⁷ The focus is diverted from the fetishization of the product to its contribution to the overall experience.



Figure 29 Cirque du Soleil performing in “Varekai”.

Furthermore, modern brick-and-mortar stores are implementing theatre into their retail designs. Traditionally, the product was constantly the center of the stage; however, now consumer spaces are flipping the script to make the consumer the main star of the show.⁸ Not every retailer; however, can convey original experiences to the public. The quest of authenticity thus becomes a common goal to all retailers – authenticity is what constitutes a brand and their experiences *unique*. Drawing from literal examples of theater, Cirque du Soleil appeals as a form of authentic performance. Their shows present an unforgettable experience to the viewers through dramatic lighting, the transformative stage, the elegant execution and movement of the performers, and so on (Figure 29).⁹ These different elements of Cirque du Soleil capture the viewers' attention and pulls them into the illusion of narrative. The retail landscape is gradually advancing into the new ideology of consumer experiences by learning from theatre. If used appropriately, retailers have the power to transform public environments and engage multiple communities groups.

The Next New *Thing*

As mentioned in the previous chapter, shopping centers and big-box stores are failing to meet the standards of contemporary consumer culture. To revisit Gruen's initial idea, shopping spaces must be planned to respond to the needs of the community and create a social place for its inhabitants in order to achieve longevity.¹⁰ Now that the mall typology is becoming outdated, what will be the next new type of shopping space? There is always hope that the right architecture will employ new performances and positive change in the retail environment. While profits are presumed to escalate, customers will also benefit from the public interaction and experiences of the next new *thing*.¹¹

In our current milieu, the digital ecosystem is merging with traditional brick-and-mortar stores to produce an amalgamation of consumer experiences. More than ever, consumers desire convenience when shopping. Consumers also want retailers to speak to their lifestyle and offer personalized experiences and services.¹² Above all, consumer society wants technology to amplify human experience in the retail landscape. The mixing of these two spaces gives rise to new forms of spatial exploration, one of them being *retailtainment*. Retailtainment acts as a combination of retail and entertainment, aiming to synthesize traditional brick-and-mortar stores with a multitude of engaging activities. The remaining malls will eventually tear down their exterior walls and spill into the surrounding communities. The new retail experience will transform through the seasons and continue to spark interest in consumers. Current and future retailtainment is constantly morphing and adapting to the new market, community, and consumer culture.¹³

For instance, the Hema Alibaba store in Shanghai functions as *new retail*, or *brick-and-data* – terms that stem from the concept of retailtainment. The store is open as a traditional grocery market for individuals who seek to buy goods on the go, but they are also employing mobile assistance and convenience into the market. Shoppers can now interact with the products by scanning the bar code of the items to acquire further information such as listing all the ingredients, where the product is imported from, or even illustrate the item's government document of approval. Individuals can also go online and purchase groceries from Alibaba's mobile app from anywhere. Hema employees would then receive the order at the physical store, gather the items in the person's order, have them delivered to their specified location within a matter of minutes (Figure 30). Hema's restaurant at the corner of their store require individuals to sign-in through their



Figure 30 Online and offline shopping alternatives at Hema Alibiba.



Figure 31 Hema's digital restaurant blends online and offline services.

mobile devices and order their meal from the Alibaba app menu. Small self-driven robots later deliver their meal to their table (Figure 31). The Hema Alibaba store is a reminder that brick-and-data is a feasible possibility in the urban environment. According the Canadian Shopping Center Study of 2017, local trends, such as the Hema store, are revolutionizing public spaces at a global scale. The traditional mode of shopping is being dissected and explored to provide new social experiences. The study predicts that soon Canada will welcome these innovative forms of retailtainment into the public environment.¹⁴

Moby Mart is another example that exhibits the characteristics of retailtainment. Developed by the young entrepreneurs, Moby Mart is a robo-grocery store that operates day-long and travels on autonomously across the streets of Shanghai (Figure 32). Although the project is in its beta stage, the concept of the mobile supermarket has opposite functions to that of a traditional shop – it will drive itself to specified locations when the store is ‘ordered’ via mobile app. To enter the store and make purchases, individuals must open the door and scan the items with their phone. The project marks a momentous step in the evolution of consumerism by having the store be mobile instead of the consumer.



Figure 32 Concept for Moby Mart in Shanghai.

Enlarging the scale of retailtainment to accommodate the size of the city invites new methods of investigation in the socio-commercial landscape. The future of commercial space is expanding and merging with transit, offices, homes, schools, and civic spaces. Consumerism is not just a single building or collection of stacked shops, but a *micro-city*, or 'city within a city' that incorporates the entire local neighborhood.¹⁵ Micro-cities are born out of the exploration of retail space at a city-scale. The objective of the micro-city is not to invade institutions, homes, or private and public places with commercialization; instead, it attempts to enrich the existing conditions of the city through vast collaborations between people, place, and community. B+H Architects held a charrette on micro-cities in which they commented the following: "When public spaces are no longer defined by marked zones where specific activities take place, rigid boundaries and fixed edges around spaces begin to blur – offering opportunities for new interactions and experiences."¹⁶ The experimentation of micro-cities promises countless possibilities – each with unique spaces to discover and new forms to design.

In the year 2028, the commercial real estate company Westfield has declared a new vision for the city of London. Titled 'Destination 2028', the developer group proposes a micro-city with hyper-connected activities surrounding the field of retail. The project has ambitions to expand consumer experience to integrate health, community, and retailtainment into the city center.¹⁷ Destination 2028 will also utilize advanced technologies to unite the both brick-and-mortar spaces and online shopping, creating a seamless environment in both private and public areas (Figure 33). Retail stores are no longer confined by physical boundaries and are integrated into the urban infrastructure as well.

Westbank Corporation is also planning to build a micro-city in Vancouver's Oakridge district. The Oakridge Center Redevelopment is scheduled to be complete in 2025. Similar to Destination 2028's goals, Westbank's redevelopment project targets the civic environment and embeds portions of retail space into the public environment. As mentioned in the text "Oakridge: The Living City Manifesto", the designers of the project labeled this mix of retail and public space as 'the living room mixing chamber' – it is within this space that online technology and shopping clashes with the sensations of home, nature, and wellness (Figure 34).¹⁸



Figure 33 Westfield's vision for 'Destination 2028' project in London.



Figure 34 Oakridge Center's concept for 'The Living Room Mixing Chamber'.

Notes

1. James H. Gilmore, and B. Joseph Pine II, *Authenticity: What Consumers Really Want* (Boston, Mass: Harvard Business School Press, 2007), 46-7.
2. Bernd Schmitt, "Experiential Marketing," *Journal of Marketing Management* 15, no. 1-3 (1999): 57.
3. B. Joseph Pine II, and James H. Gilmore, *The Experience Economy* (Boston, Mass: Harvard Business Review Press, 2011), 152.
4. Klingmann, *Brandscapes*, 65.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid., 314.
7. Pine II and Gilmore, *The Experience Economy*, 17.
8. Ignaz Gorischek and Kyle Jeffery, "Masterpiece Theatre – Retail Edition" last modified September 28, 2017, <https://www.callisonrtkl.com/you-are-here/masterpiece-theatre-retail-edition/>.
9. Gilmore and Pine II, *Authenticity*, 73.
10. Ian Woodward, "The Shopping Mall, Postmodern Space and Architectural Practice: Theorising the Postmodern Spatial Turn through the Planning Discourse of Mall Architects," *Architectural Theory Review* 3, no. 2 (1998): 52.
11. Daniel Herman, "The Next Big Thing," in *Project on the City* 2, 527.
12. Piers Fawkes, *AI Retail Playbook: Transformation Strategies for Intelligent Retail* (self-pub., January 2018).
13. "Retail of the Future," *CallisonRTKL*, accessed December 2, 2018, <https://www.callisonrtkl.com/mall-of-the-future/#home>.
14. Craig Patterson, "Canadian Shopping Center Study 2017: Executive Research Report," last modified December 2017, <https://www.retailcouncil.org/research/2017-canadian-shopping-centre-study/>.
15. "Retail of the Future."
16. "Erasing the Lines: PoroCity Blurs Artificial Boundaries to Foster Community Productivity."
17. Vivian Hendriksz, "Westfield Unveils the Future of Retail: 'Destination 2028,'" last modified June 4, 2018, <https://fashionunited.uk/news/retail/westfield-unveils-the-future-of-retail-destination-2028/2018060430007>.
18. Ian Gallespie et al., *Oakridge: The Living City Manifesto* (self-published, 2018), 328-9.

THE RETAIL ENTERPRISE

Retail Corporations

The retail environment is growing by the second. By this I am not referring to the physical lots in which they operate in the shopping domain; but rather, I refer to the individual retail companies that are thriving in the commercial market. From the moment institutional investors apprehended Gruen's mall formula to replicate the shopping center for profit, the economic market has strategized a rewarding business model that benefits investors and brands alike, but fails to recognize the cultural and social importance of the shopping space.¹ However, the real tactic here stems from the fact that they operate within a boundaryless setting. Similar to private real estate developers, retail corporations are locationless, they can exist in stores, malls, high streets, marketplaces, and online all at once. Retail corporations do not rely on brick-and-mortar spaces to be flourish economically, they can opt in and out of its physical representations (the architecture) and move to other cityscapes to remain on top of consumer society. Like the mall typology before, the architecture can become outdated but the essence and identity of these corporations outlive that of the commercial space. Additionally, the public is consciously aware of this paradox. Over the years individuals witness the damage dealt on the landscape and community from the masses of consumerism and realize that retail corporations will continue to thrive economically nonetheless. The public perceives commercial places as strictly commercial and nothing more, and feel indifferent towards the vicious cycle of consumerism and its corporate equals.² So now the role of architecture is challenged to serve a superior purpose in the fragile commercial landscape. The intent is not to devalue the existing, past, and future, framework of the urban setting or its communities, but have corporate architecture work with the general public to encourage social interaction and create a common ground for inhabitants and multinational corporations to work collaboratively.³

Corporate Philanthropy

Conventionally, the idea of corporate philanthropy involves a corporation to donate profits or resources to non-profitable organization(s) as an act of charity. In doing so, corporations are eligible to claim a charitable tax deduction to file against their income tax. In today's philanthropic landscape; however, donors are valued for their contribution to establish positive change in the urban environment.⁴ Relating back to consumer culture, corporate philanthropy breaks the private-sector of the corporate industry business model and transforms it into cooperation between the consumer and the retail company. The radical shift from the traditional model of corporate philanthropy to a more sustainable agenda will bring prosperity not only to other non-profit associations, but also provoke change for the greater urban environment.

The ideology behind the modern notion of corporate philanthropy can be used to transmute the image of big retail companies in current consumer society. For instance, the public often deems retail marketing approaches as “phoniness-generating machine[s]”⁵ primarily due to the fact we, as consumers, are not convinced of the retailer's true intentions in provoking positive contribution to the greater social and cultural masses. Now, consider the reverse scenario: a retail company that utilizes its private resources to promote social welfare and implement greater public experiences. The new sustainable method of corporate philanthropy poses a chance to blend the realms of private corporatization with urban engagement. Attaining this outcome thus leads to rebranding the corporation's image for the better. To accomplish this goal, architects should advise private investors and retail corporations to engage and enhance the public environment with memorable experiences and carefully crafted spaces. By influencing the minds of powerful corporations, architects can redirect their economic resources toward increasing both business and social dogmas of city life.⁶

The role of the architect is detrimental in conveying the values of commercial corporations with those of the urban city. This objective is best summarized in Klingmann's work, *Brandscapes*: “The solution lies in architecture's ability to become a building block for a corporate identity as well as place identity by combining aesthetic and experiential values that meet both corporate and civic needs.”⁷ Again, we place architecture as the middle ground, and mediator, between corporate and community ambitions. Corporations in the commercial landscape are willing to invest in an architecture or platform that reinforce the firm's philosophies. As proven by past commercial

typologies, corporate capital is an active agent in the renewal of urban neighborhoods, and it is the responsibility of the architect to foresee the development of such spaces to be used to enrich the public environment, not simply for corporate profit. Only when both corporate and civic parties benefit from the proposed design, can architecture truly produce meaningful moments in the city.⁸

Notes

1. Wall, *Victor Gruen*, 110.
2. Sklair, "Iconic Architecture," 141.
3. Klingmann, *Brandscapes*, 269.
4. Badr Jafar, *Future of Philanthropy: Insights from Multiple Expert Discussions Around the World* (London: Future Agenda Limited, 2018), 48.
5. Gilmore and Pine II, *Authenticity*, 148.
6. Gruen and Smith, *Shopping Towns USA*, 153.
7. Klingmann, *Brandscapes*, 259.
8. Ibid., 186.

RETAILISING CIVIC SPACE

Expansion into Human Activity

Consumerism continues to evolve and express the social attitudes of consumer society. Previously, this thesis established that “millions of consumers no longer ‘go’ shopping, but literally ‘are’ shopping – at every moment and everywhere.”¹ It is difficult to imagine a culture that does not engage in commercial activity. In western culture, urban society advocates for holidays and festivities to celebrate the commercial market. Boxing Day and Black Friday are some of the many occasions where consumers are encouraged to embrace their shopping culture, and allows them to shop out of pure leisure and pleasure. In other countries, these celebrations are extensively broadened to accommodate an array of commercial businesses. On November 11 of every year, China celebrates the Global Shopping Festival which has become the biggest global shopping event in recent decades. This cultural event invites China’s entire population to participate at a national scale, using consumerism’s popularity to progress public and cultural agendas.² The festival joins online shopping with brick-and-mortar stores to appeal to every type of consumer. By implementing the festival’s augmented reality and games on all mobile devices, people are encouraged to move around the city, earn ‘points’, and collect discounts by enrolling in the national event (Figure 35). This multi-network strategy unites the public to experience a 24-hour shopping extravaganza that celebrates consumer culture – it emphasizes human connection as much as highlights the experience of consumer spaces.³

Celebrating consumerism is part of a larger philosophical ideology regarding the patterns and rhythms of urbanity. Theoretician and advocator of social space Henri Lefebvre introduces the idea of ‘rhythmanalysis’ as a way of understanding rhythms in the city by analyzing temporal activities and communal patterns.⁴ Rhythmanalysis helps comprehend the urban qualities of a given public environment and attempts to preserve the natural qualities of the civic space. The method investigates everyday life and intervenes only to enhance public complexities of a given place.⁵ The Samsung pop-up store in downtown Vancouver exemplifies the concept of

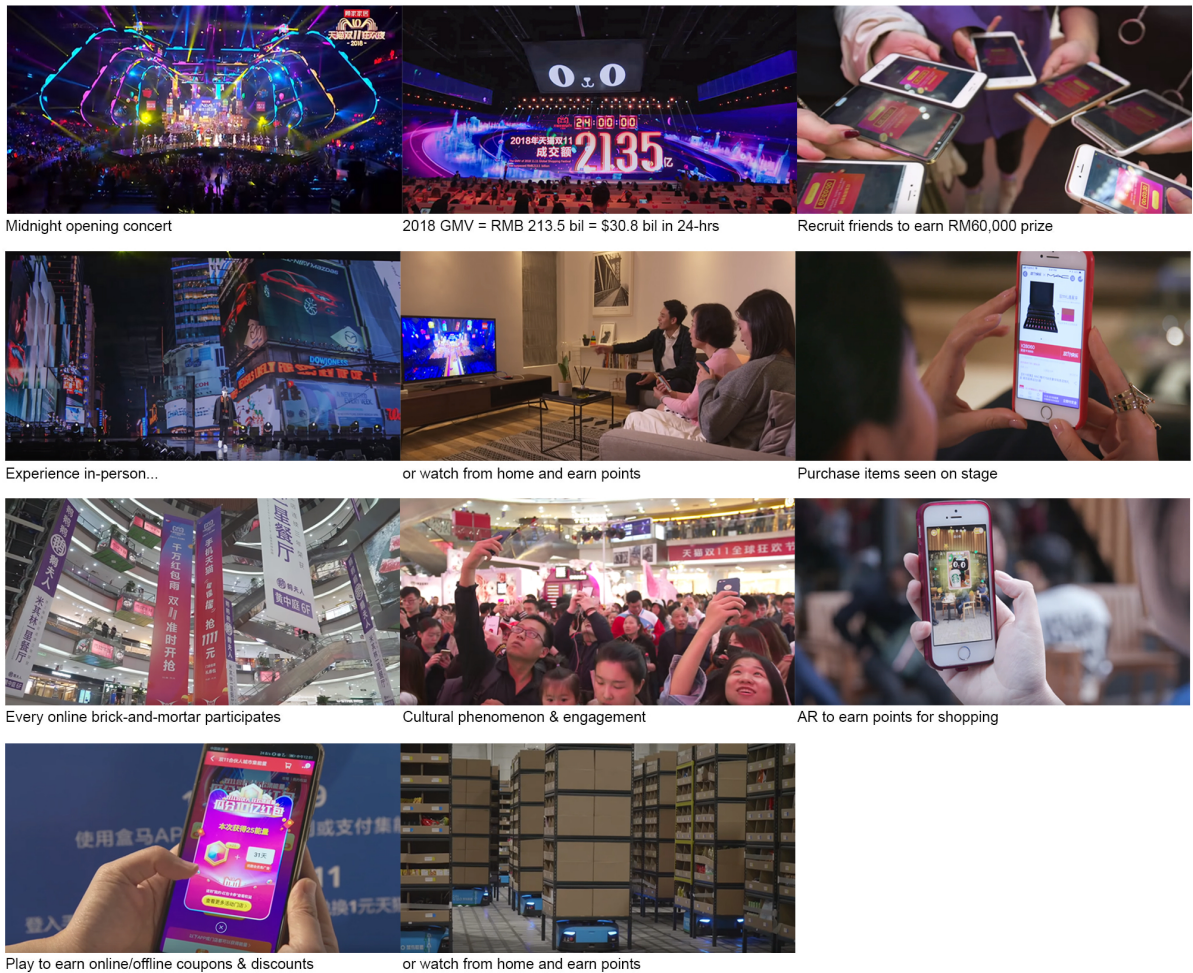


Figure 35 11.11 Global Shopping Festival 2018.

rhythmanalysis. Occupying the, somewhat, unutilized Waterfront parking lot, the pop-up store is built and operates during the summer season only. The temporary installation moves away from the traditional method of exhibiting products and instead utilizes them to deliver a variety of creative public experiences (Figure 36). Here, the experiences of the pavilion generate a temporal venue that places value on the underutilized parkade. The very nature of pop-up stores not only function as a marketing strategy, but also exist to bring ephemeral experiences to unutilized urban locations.

On a more theoretical approach, Archigram's 'Instant City' project exemplifies Lefebvre's rhythmanalysis concept to respond to the flow of people and activities throughout the temporal advancements of the urban metropolis. Emerging as a radical solution to transform suburban towns into active destinations, Instant City uses blimps and hot air balloons to deliver cultural, educational, and entertainment facilities and resources to 'sleeping towns' (towns that lack the liveliness and interactivity of urban cities) to give inhabitants a glimpse of urban life (Figure 37). The project establishes an architectural framework that promotes the lifestyle of urban communities in rural neighborhoods. However, the underlying concept speaks to architecture's ability to behave as a catalyst for advancing socio-political agendas of civic spaces.⁶



Figure 36 (Left & Right) Samsung pop-up store delivering social experiences in Vancouver.

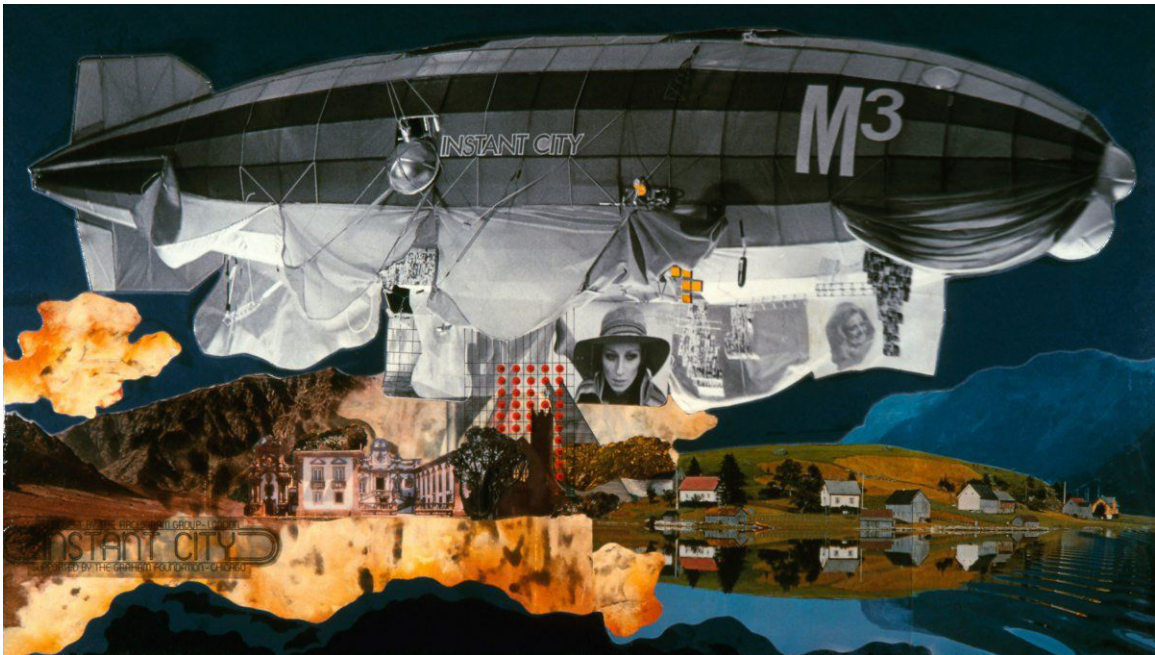


Figure 37 Archigram's 'Instant City' transports resources to rural neighborhoods.

Shopping = Organism

“Not only is shopping melting into everything, but everything is melting into shopping.”

– Sze Tsung Leong⁷

Urban environments employ shopping as means of social, cultural, and political regeneration by treating commercial activity as a living organism within the city infrastructure. In Leong’s essay, “...And then there was Shopping”, he portrays shopping as a parasite that leeches onto cultural institutions and expands into all kinds of programming spaces to appeal to consumer culture.⁸ Operating within physical boundaries, shopping has squeezed its way into educational facilities as bookstores, airports as souvenir stores, museums as gift stores – the list continues – and like every institution before, shopping is “continually being reinvented, reformulated, and reshaped to keep up with the most subtle changes in society.”⁹ Retail is truly deterritorializing conventional modes of urban space and is spreading into the roots of the public infrastructure. The retail landscape is becoming increasingly homogenized as it carves out spaces and defines



Figure 38 Mixed-use buildings in Fifth Avenue, New York.

them with new programs that defy existing practices.¹⁰ However, if used correctly consumerism can function as a remedy to revitalize city neighborhoods through commercial influence. The development of Fifth Street in New York operates as a vibrant mixed-use space with shopping at the center of public life (Figure 38). The logic behind its deserved success lies in implementing commercial space as a connective tissue to synthesize office space, residential, and public activity into its animated corridor. With today's hyper-realization that commercial activity can consume entire cities, Fifth Street stands as a reminder that shopping can mend community programming in dense urban districts with careful planning and consideration.

There is no denying that everyday life consists of consumption and vice versa. In order to abolish the pitfalls of commercialization, by this I refer to devaluing public spaces, designers should use manipulate notions of consumption to endorse urban renewal and placemaking.¹¹ In current consumer society, individuals view shopping as two sides of the same coin: on one end, retail space is unpredictable and can degrade the very fabric of public life. On the opposite end, shopping augment experiences in the city and provide spaces for human interaction and belonging.¹² Steven Miles depicts this duality as 'the consuming paradox' – an endless flux that



Figure 39 Tesco's digital supermarket in South Korea's transit station.

could potentially threaten city life, yet can also enrich public environments and improve livability of inhabitants within them.¹³ Certainly, the very nature of consumerism is a gamble on the urban fabric, but past examples have revealed improvements to the public realm outweigh those that deteriorate them.

In South Korea where majority of the population is too busy to shop for groceries, Tesco Homeplus supermarket launched a virtual store in 2012 to make shopping more convenient. The virtual store is installed in subway stations and displays their products via digital screens. People scan the product code with their phone and is later delivered to their door (Figure 39). The whole process transforms waiting time into shopping time, and demonstrates Tesco's ability to adapt to the social conditions and context of the general public. The fusion of online shopping with minimalistic use of space removes the need to open a brick-and-mortar shop. Tesco serves as an exploration of commercial space born out the necessity to improve urban conditions in South Korea. "The commercialisation of public space," Mattias Kärrholm explains, "is not just about spatial control, it is also about temporal control, and while the retailisation of public space might imply the addition of new uses, it can also come with a more general tendency of synchronisation."¹⁴ Kärrholm's understanding of 'synchronization' is key to homogenizing commercial intentions with urban space. Tesco's experimentation with transit as a platform for shopping has increased corporate sales and made it convenient for busy travelers to purchase groceries on the go. The virtual market synchronizes the needs of the public with an efficient system of consumption.

Commercialization as Urban Revitalization

The retail landscape should experiment with commercializing of space to unravel new ways to experience the city. Architects, designers, and planners need to work closely with brands and retail corporations to better serve public space. The designed outcome should tell a narrative of the retail company and pose to create a playground of unique experiences for all.¹⁵ To do so, designers must be aware of the resilient nature of the urban context, considering all social, political, cultural, and sustainable aspects of the place. In Alex Wall's text, *Victor Gruen: From Urban Shop to New City*, he believes in empowering urban retail projects to promote new social connections in the city: "these experiments in citymaking give a new quality to the life of the metropolis and confirm the central place that commerce, the marketplace, and public space play in the cultural and communal life of the city."¹⁶ The Spacebuster in New York shows exactly how subtle projects can form new possibilities of public space in the urban fabric. Developed by Raumlaborberlin, the Spacebuster is a temporary bubble installation that moves from place to place to open up social space in uncommon city locations (Figure 40). The project blurs the boundaries of private and public space by inflating the bubble, allowing pedestrians to enter the structure and occupy it. Public programs are held inside the space for watching movies or creating a shared work space. Spacebuster's experimentation with 'occupiable' spaces challenge the limitations of private and public realms and reimagines unordinary locations to develop meaningful community experiences in New York.



Figure 40 Spacebuster 'inflates' public space in a New York parkade.

Case Study: Prada Transformer

Location: South Korea

Architect: Rem Koolhaas, Ellen van Loon

Opened: 2007 - 2009

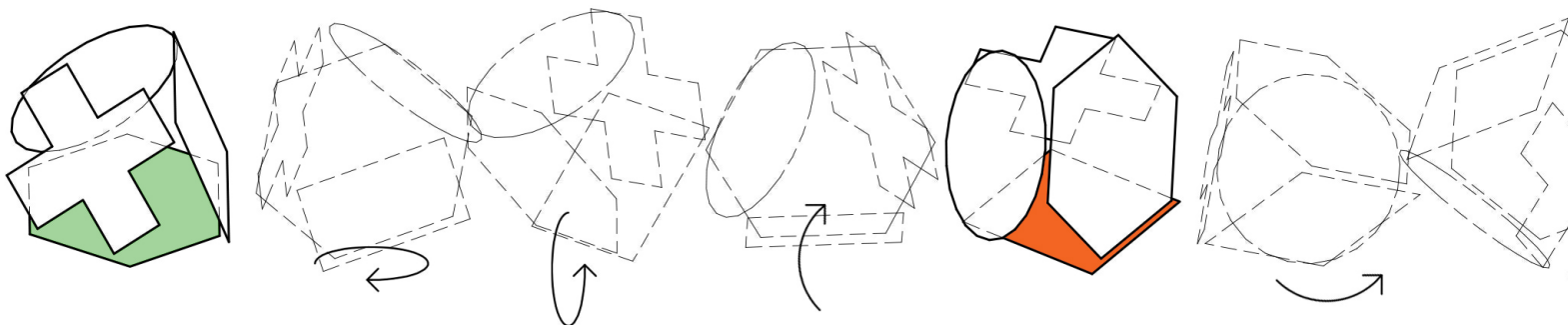
Unfolded Plan

The transformative features of the Prada Transformer allow the walls to become the next stage. The pavilion hosts four primary programs tied to each shape – the hexagon platform is used for fashion exhibitions, the rectangle functions as a cinema, the cross serves as art exhibitions, and the circle hosts special events (Figure 41).

This spatial organization of the pavilion can also accommodate new programs for the different stages. The geometric shapes are merely representational – the intended programs of the various shapes are not fixed onto the architecture. The ingenuity of the design is the ability to modify its spatial layout while being flexible of the activities and events within the space.

Transformation

Flips and turns are crucial to the dynamic properties of the Transformer. The transformation of the pavilion becomes a spectacle in of itself (Figure 42). Every three months the pavilion alters its layout to promote a new program. The very act of modifying the interior, and exterior, qualities of the space gives visitors purpose to re-explore the pavilion. The change in orientation of the facade signifies new activity inside the space.



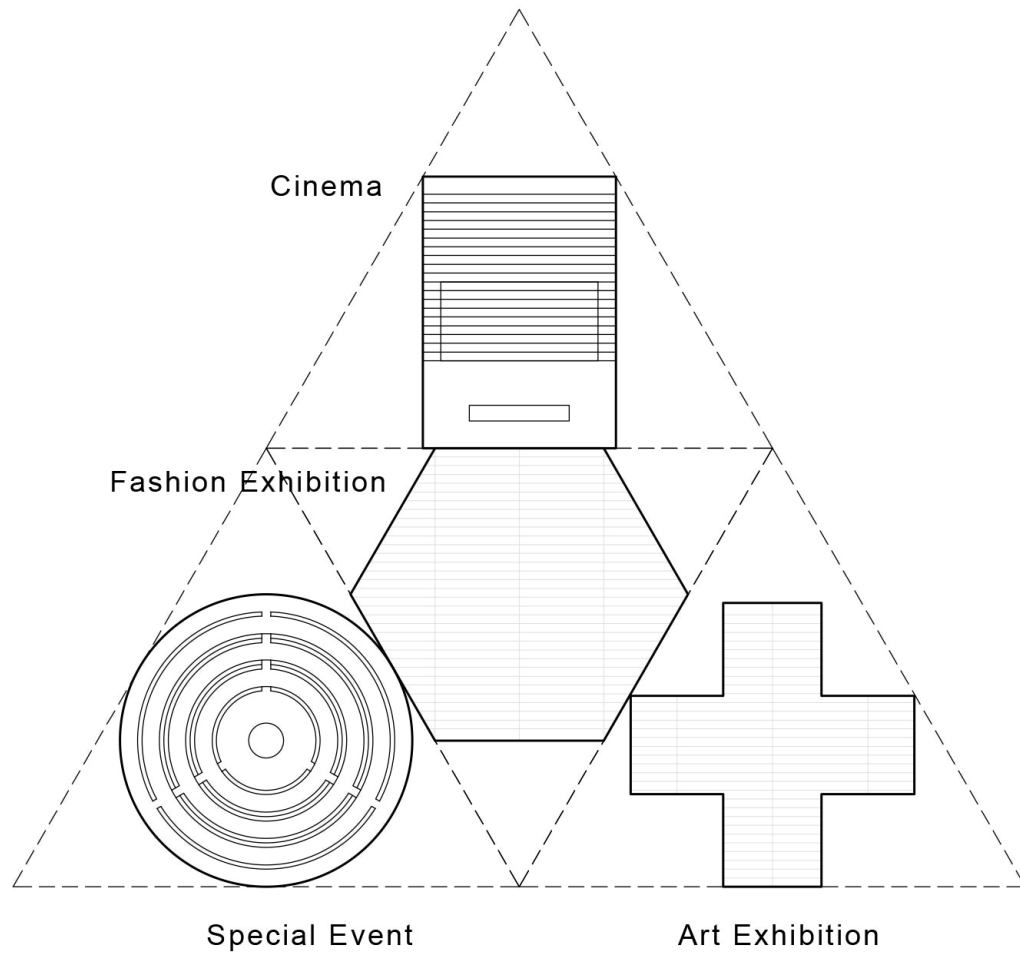


Figure 41 (Above) Prada Transformer, Unfolded Plan.

Figure 42 (Below) Transformations of the Prada Transformer.

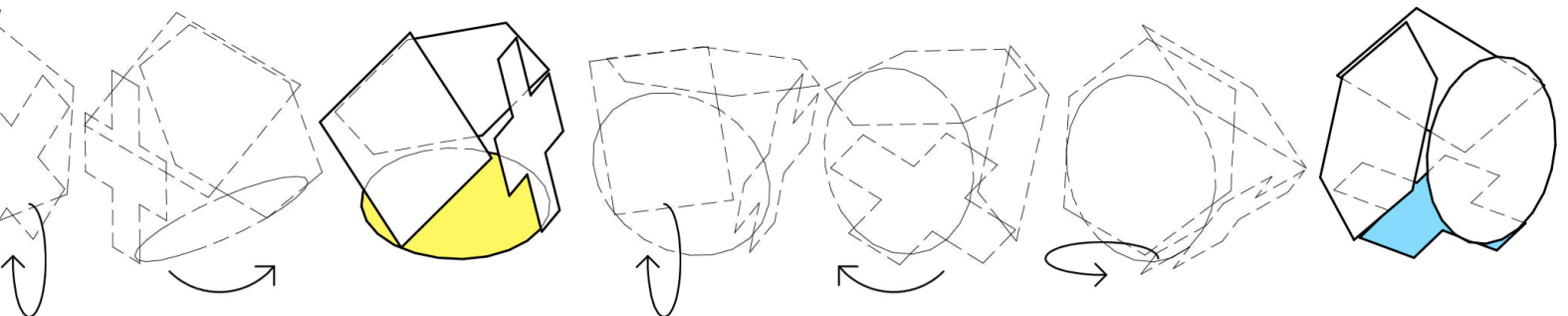




Figure 43 Prada Transformer comes to Vancouver Art Gallery.



Figure 44 Prada Transformer comes to Staley Park's Sea Wall.

Prada Transformer Comes to Vancouver

Relocating the pavilion from its intended site in Seoul and situating it in two well-known areas in Vancouver allows for a more local social experiment. Placing the Prada Transformer at the Vancouver Art Gallery plaza (Figure 43) offers a complimentary experience for both the urban site and pavilion. The Art Gallery is known for lending its plaza to ample public events and installations, and the Transformer is no exception. The site would welcome the pavilion through its various transformations. The size of the plaza also makes it ideal location to host the massive project in Vancouver.

Placing the pavilion as an extension to Stanley Park can further enrich the Sea Wall experience (Figure 44). The installation can offer an unexpected surprise to common visitors by adding performative programs to Stanley Park. Situating the pavilion far into the Sea Wall walkway can also entice residents to mount a bike or walk along the path to reach the installation.

Existence on Site

Inserting the Transformer in multiple cities can demonstrate the project's relationship to its surrounding context (Figure 45). The pavilion only requires an open site to operate regardless of its location. The Transformer's programs function independent of the site's civic features. The project does not engage with the site or the public; but rather, is introverted and oblivious from the context around it.



Figure 45 Prada Transformer at various contexts.



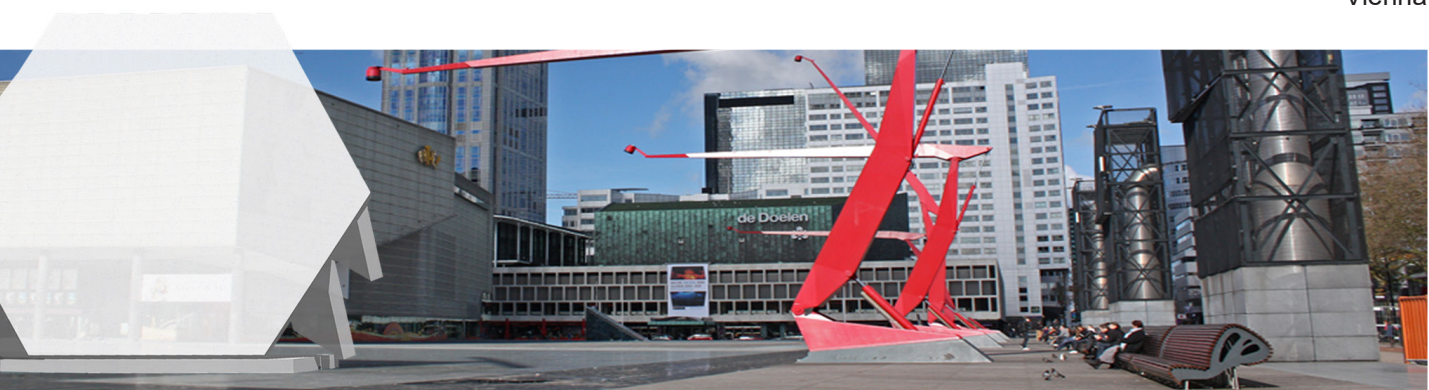
Kyoto



Vancouver



Vienna



Rotterdam

The Prada Transformer uses architecture as a tool for experiential exploration and marketing. Rem Koolhaas reverses traditional methods of consumption by transforming the installation into a catalyst for social space.¹⁷ Although the Transformer essentially represents the Prada brand, the project is reimagined as a communal hub where the individuals can gather and socialize. The ephemerality of the Prada pavilion elevates its significance in the landscape as well. Its temporal quality entices people to visit the pavilion before it disappears, this ensures the Transformer is always utilized by people longing to experience the space prior to disassembly.¹⁸ Experimental projects like the Prada Transformer offers further potential to collaborate with other artists and designers, thus creating new ways to experience social space.¹⁹ The flexible nature of these interventions opens the door to a vast variety of experimentation in the city.

To encourage intensity in underutilized city neighborhoods, we must turn to the curative effects of commercial architecture to restore these spaces. “Both architecture and urban planning,” Klingmann argues, “constitute essential ingredients of city branding to achieve a lasting positive impression... they are also a critical means to create a meaningful and sustainable identity for residents.”²⁰ Architecture must use its authority to convince powerful businesses to reinstate the prosperity and identity of fractured civic spaces. Conversely, architecture should attempt to instil communal characteristics of commercial activity to restore the value of public and social environments. Borrowing from past civic notion of retail landscapes, architecture can express these concepts to establish cultural identity back to the urban setting.²¹

Herzog & de Meuron’s project at 1111 Lincoln Road in Miami utilizes architecture as an agent for reinstituting urban identity. The client’s original intent was to create a multi-storey parkade for the SunTrust Bank office next to it. Instead, Herzog & de Meuron proposed a mixed use structure that hosts not only parking, but also retail, restaurants, and flexible space in attempts to revitalize the western end of Lincoln Road Mall (Figure 46). The final design is appropriate for pedestrian traffic and accommodates additional programs that invokes public interaction and community engagement. Charging the particular space with commercial features amplifies the territorial complexity of the site while preserving the cultural identity of the local environment.²²



Figure 46 1111 Lincoln Rd. by Herzog & de Meuron.

Notes

1. Willy Kruh, *The Truth about Online Consumers: 2017 Global Online Consumer Report* (self-pub., January 2017).
2. Hardwick, *Mall Maker*, 139.
3. Gilmore and Pine II, *Authenticity*, 144.
4. Henri Lefebvre, *Rhythmanalysis: Space, Time, and Everyday Life*, translated by Stuart Elden, and Gerald Moore (New York: Continuum, 2004), 78-9.
5. Kärrholm, *Retailising Space*, 69.
6. Klingmann, *Brandscapes*, 253.
7. Leong, "...And Then There Was Shopping," in *Project on the City 2*, 129.
8. *Ibid.*, 134.
9. *Ibid.*, 131.
10. Kärrholm, *Retailising Space*, 123.
11. Mark Jayne, *Cities and Consumption* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 162.
12. Kärrholm, *Retailising Space*, 7.
13. Steven Miles, "The Consuming Paradox: A New Research Agenda for Urban Consumption," *Urban Studies* 35, no. 5/6 (1998): 1006-7.
14. Kärrholm, *Retailising Space*, 69.
15. Wall, *Victor Gruen*, 238.
16. *Ibid.*
17. Klingmann, *Brandscapes*, 117.
18. Pine II and Gilmore, *The Experience Economy*, 99.
19. Sterling Plenert, "From Trend to Mainstay: The State of Pop-Up Retail" last modified April 17, 2018, <https://www.callisonrtkl.com/you-are-here/from-trend-to-mainstay-the-state-of-pop-up-retail/>.
20. Klingmann, *Brandscapes*, 274.
21. John McMorrough, "Legislative Transactions," in *Project on the City 2*, 430.
22. Kärrholm, *Retailising Space*, 122.

DESIGN PROPOSAL

Concept

Fundamentally, the final design attempts to return to the core idea of a “shopping space” which is to create a place for people to gather within the city. This is accomplished through retail by merging the experiential aspects of brick-and-mortar and implementing the convenience and technology of online retailers into a built structure. The design is a flexible platform that multiple retailers can occupy to engage the public around it. The platform utilizes retail as an urban event generator for locals in the community to gather and experience the space (Figure 47). The emphasis of the platform is not about purchases, but rather to create unique social experiences because retail, by nature, strives to be experiential and adapt to cultural trends. Thus this design simply provides a space for them to experiment with their brand.

Unlike the shopping center typology that operates its programs on a daily basis, this design platform is a flexible machine that is constantly changing and always in construction (Figure 48). The platform creates a public zone that is always unique and refreshing to the general public. Similar to the Prada Transformer precedent, the proposed design can alter its programs both inside and outside its structure depending on the brand and the space it aims to create. The installation is elevated to clear the ground plane below and incorporates elements of traditional theatre where ‘items’ are distributed from its ceiling such as the cable lift that drops down and takes people inside the structure. The platform provides a mutual benefit to both the featured brand and the surrounding streetscape: the retailer inside the platform receives marketing and exposure while it also promotes local activities in the neighborhood by engaging individuals around it.

The Old & New Model

The future retail model is a multichannel event that combines public activities and programs into its approach (Figure 49). It borrows from traditional brick-and-mortar and e-commerce typologies to produce a seamless immersive experience for all visitors. Needless to say, existing offline and online retailer typologies can continue to operate in our current environment (Figures 50-51).

Site Analysis & Events Mapping

Although the final design is siteless, mapping out Vancouver's commercial districts allow us to examine patterns in leasing costs from a regional perspective (Figure 52). By analyzing each business improvement district (BID) in the Lower Mainland, we can understand which zones are more active than others.

I have also mapped a calendar of events and festivals in the Lower Mainland (Figure 53). The diagram is categorized by month and depicts which season contains the most or least amount of community events throughout the year. The platform has the potential to cooperate with existing festivals to further enhance the social environment.

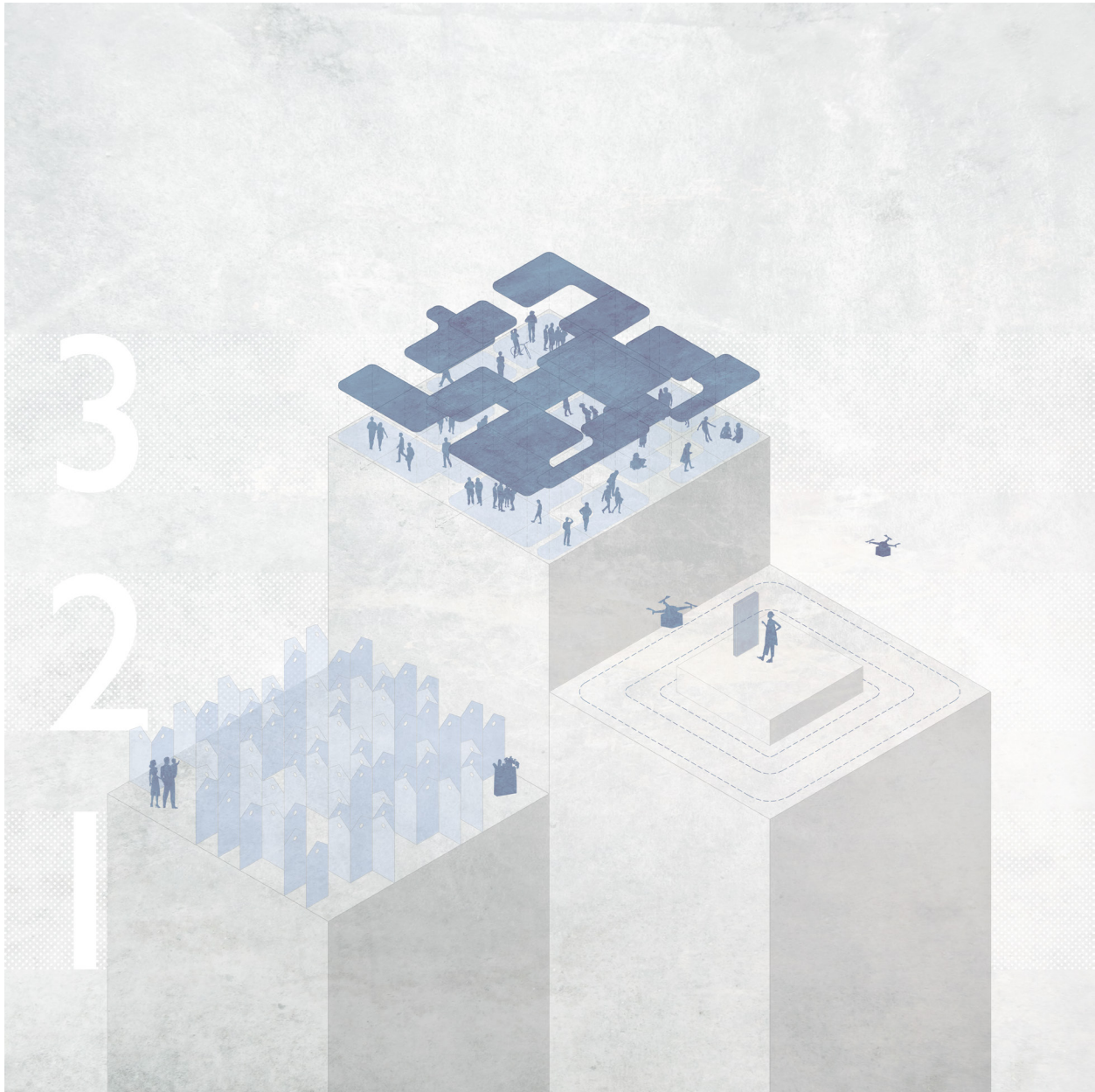


Figure 47 Progression of Retailers

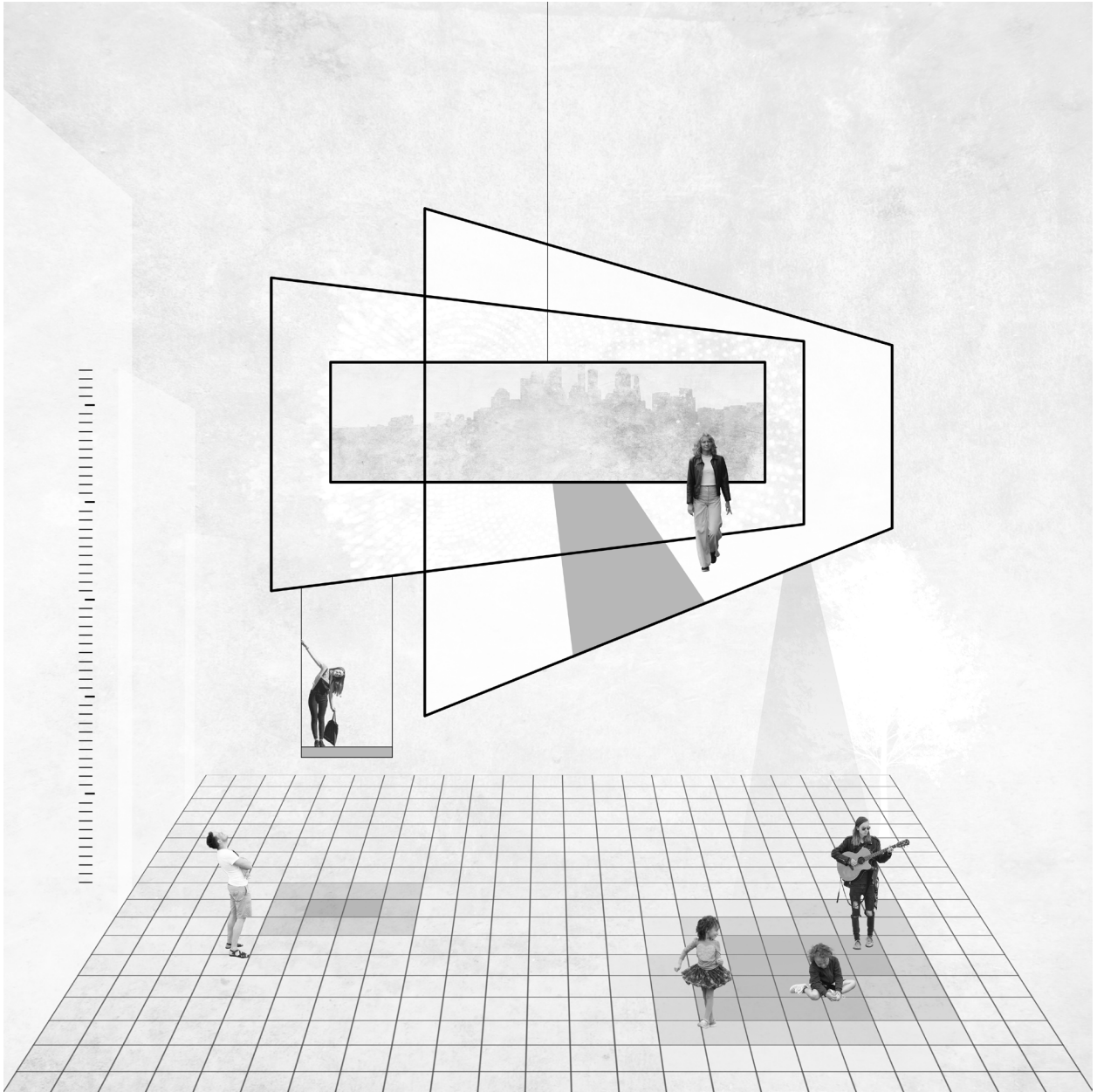


Figure 48 The Platform

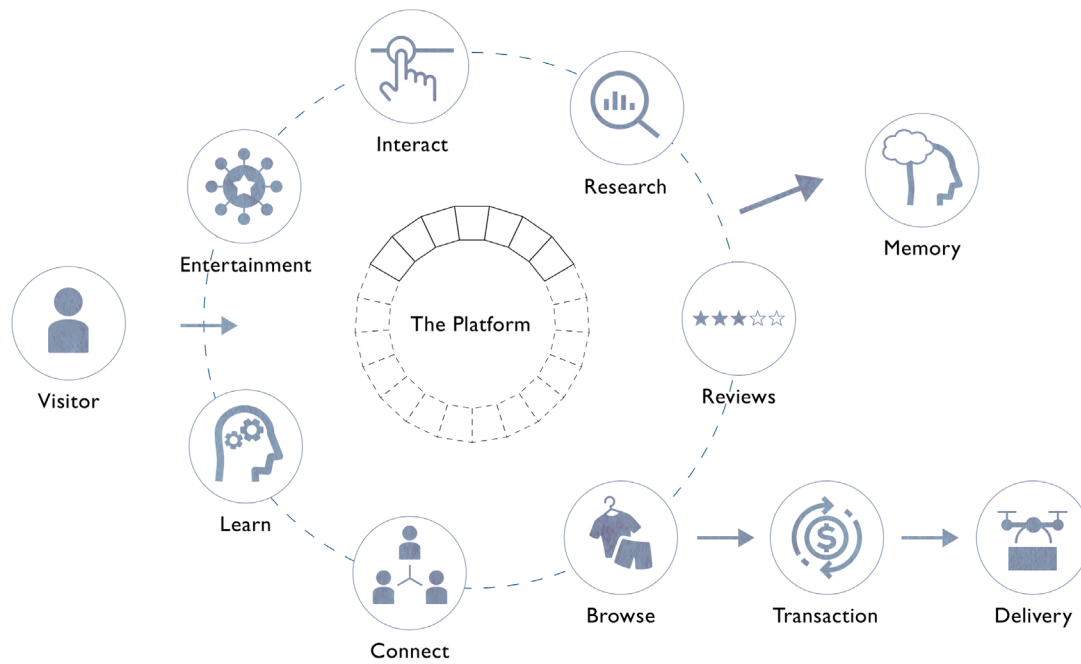
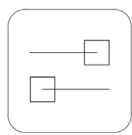
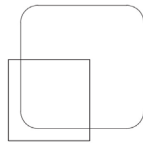


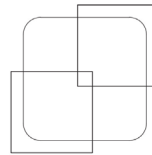
Figure 49 Future Retail Model & Process



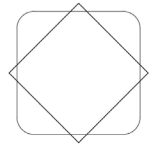
Auctions



Small Online



Brick & Click



Wholesalers



Figure 50 Online Retail Types & Shopping Process

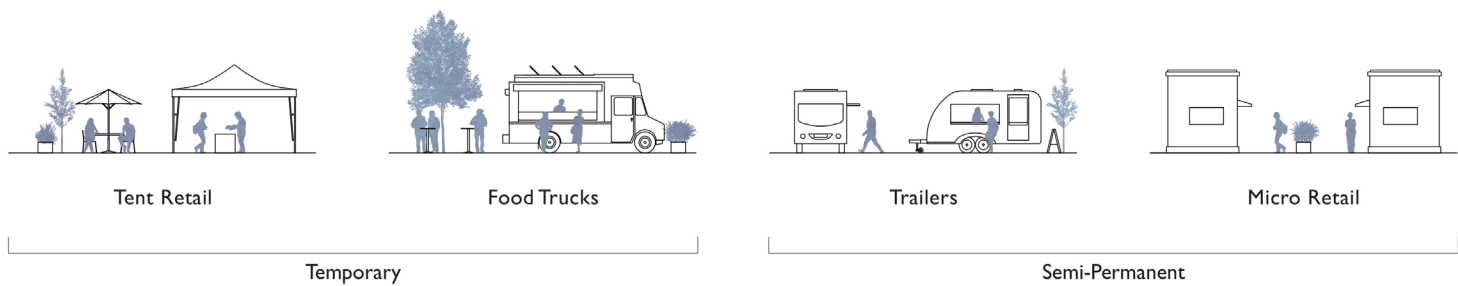


Figure 51 Incremental Retail Types & Tradition Shopping Process

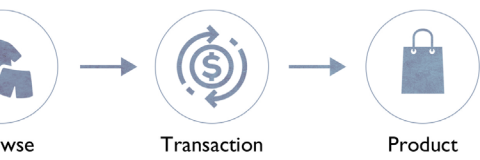
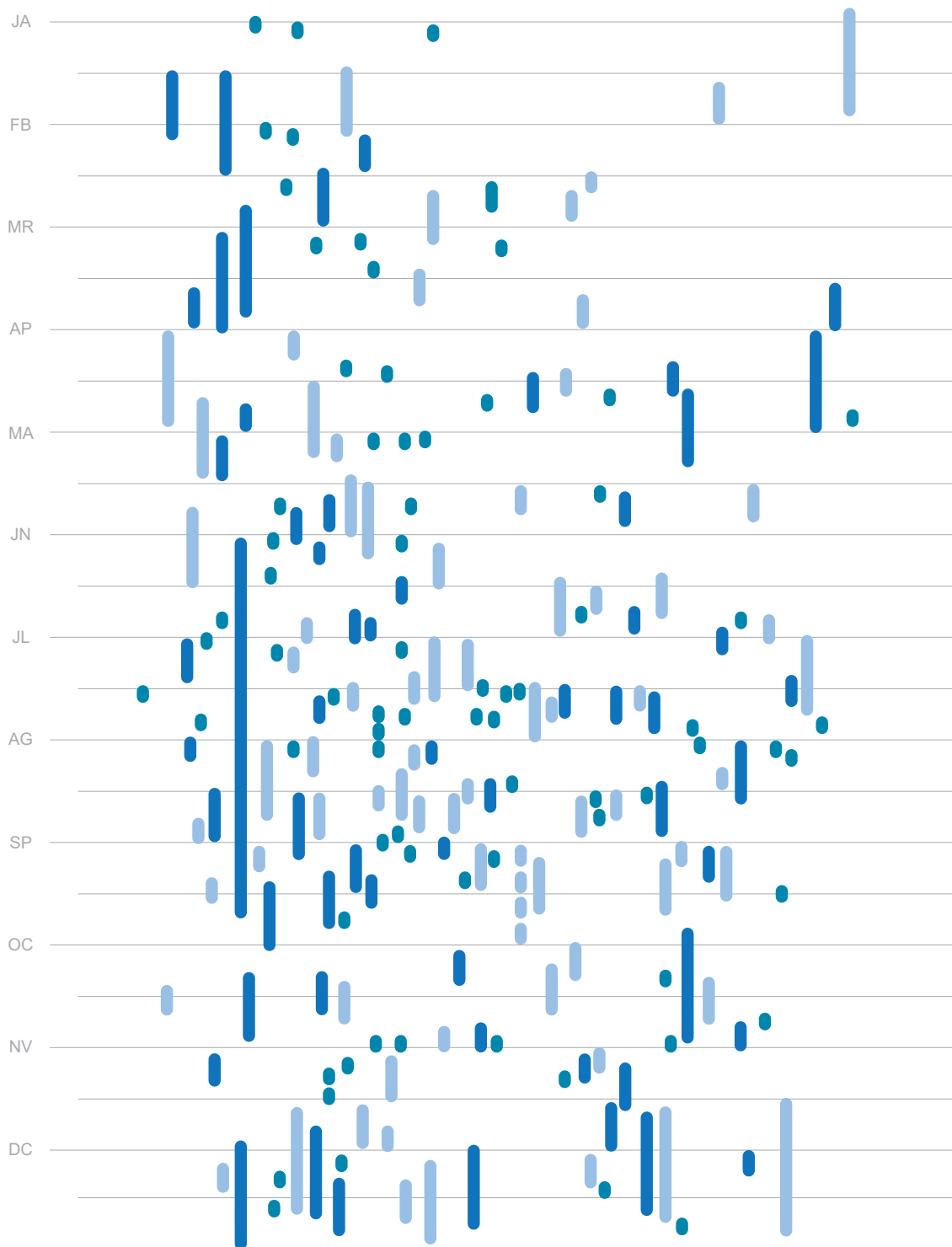




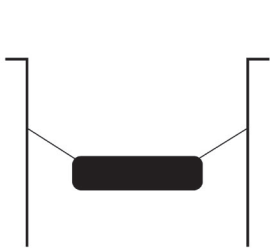
Figure 52 (Above) Vancouver BID Map

Figure 53 (Right) Festivals & Events in the Lower Mainland

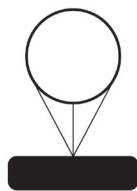


FESTIVALS AND EVENTS IN THE LOWER MAINLAND

Canyon Lights • Dine Out Van • Polar Bear Swim • PuSh Fest • Hot Chocolate Festival • Whistler Pride & Ski Fest • BC Home & Garden Show • Chinese New Year Parade • Coastal First Nations Parade • Northwest Comedy Fest • PuSh Fest • Van International Boat Show • Van International Wine Fest • Lunarfest • Talking Stick Fest • Brewski Fest • CelticFest Van • Coquillam Craft Beer Fest • Fest du Bois • Persian New Year Fire Fest • PlayDome • Tip a Wee Dram • Van International Auto Show • Van International Dance Fest • Abbotsford Tulip Fest • Earth Day • Harrison Uncorked • International Pillow Fight Day • Party for the Planet • TED2019 • Tulips of the Valley • Van Cherry Blossom Fest • Van Opera Fest • Van Sun Run • Vaisakhi Parade • Whistler World Ski & Snowboard Fest • World Music Fest • BMO Van International Marathon • Cinco de Mayo • CityFest • Cloverdale Rodeo Fair • DOXA Film Fest • European Fest • Fort Langley May Day Fair & Parade • Hyack Fest • Public Logo Exhibition • Surrey Children's Fest • Van Comic Arts Fest • Craft Beer Week • Van Children's Fest • Turkic Fest • Whistler Go Fest • 5k Foam Fest • Bard on the Beach • BC Highland Games • Car Free Days • 5X Fest • Golden Spike Days • Greed Day on Broadway • Hats off Day • Philippine Day • Point Grey Fiesta • Scandinavian Midsummer Fest • Scotia bank Half Marathon • Seek the Peak • TD Jazz Fest • Van Craft Beer week • Van Dragon Boat Fest • Canada Day Fest • Caribbean Days Fest • Carnaval del Sol • Columbia St Food Truck Fest • For Langley Jazz & Arts Fest • Fun City Fest • PVIDED in the Park • Gastown Grand Prix • Giro di Burnaby • Greek Summerfest • Harrison Fest of Arts • Honda Celebration of Light • Indian Summer Fest • Maple Ridge Country Fest • Mission Fold Music Fest • New West Grand Prix • Pakistan Fest • PoCo Grand Prix • Port Moody Ribfest • Red Truck Concert Series • Richmond Maritime Fest • Savour Summer Fest • Squamish Beer Fest • Surrey Fusion Fest • Symphony in the Park • Tour de Delta • Uptown Live St Party • Van Symphony Orchestra Whistler • Van Thai Fest • Abbotsford Agrifair • Abbotsford Airshow • Brigade Days at For Langley • Burnaby Blues Fest • Chilliwack Fair • Clover Valley Beer Fest • Deep Cove Daze • Harmony Arts Fest • KitsFest • Korean Cultural Heritage Fest • PNE • Pet-a-Palooza • Powell St Fest • Ribfest Langley • Richmond World Fest • Safe & Sound Music Fest • Shipped Waterfront Fest • Stevenson Dragon Boat Fest • Tsawwassen Sun Fest • Van Chinatown Fest • Van Mural Fest • Van Pride Parade • Van Zombie Walk • White Rock Sea Fest • Agassiz Corn Fest • Bike the Night • Coto Fest • Fort Langley Food Truck Fest • Harvest Grow • Market Mexico • Nikkei Matsuri • Polish Fest • Port Moody Oktoberfest • River District Movie Nights • Riverfest • Taiwanese Cultural Fest • Van International Film Fest • Victory Square Block Party • Whistler Village Beer Fest • Apple Fest • Celebrate the Night • Cloverfest • Diwali Fest • Fort Langley Cranberry Fest • PNE Fight Night • Harrison Beer Fest • Oktoberfest • Richmond Halloween Fireworks • Van Fall Home Show • Van Fan Expo • Van Halloween Parade • North Van Shore Craft Beer Week • Aurora Winter Fest • Bright Nights • Canyon Lights • Candytown • Circle Craft Market • Christmas Glow • Garden Light Festival • Eastside Culture Crawl • Heritage Christmas • Hopscotch Fest • Lights of Hope Celebration • Lumiere Van • RMHBC Boundary Bay Marathon • Surrey Tree Lighting Fest • Tri-City Wine Fest • Van Christmas Market • Carol Ships Shoreline Celebration • Maple Ridge Christmas Fest • Shipyards Christmas Fest • Van Santa Claus Parade • Yale Duel • VanDusen Garden Lights • New Years Eve Celebration • Winter Solstice Lantern Fest • Contact Music Winter Fest



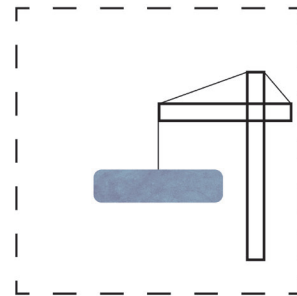
CABLE



BALLOON



POST



CRANE



MOBILE

Figure 54 Infrastructure Types



FLOAT



VEHICLE



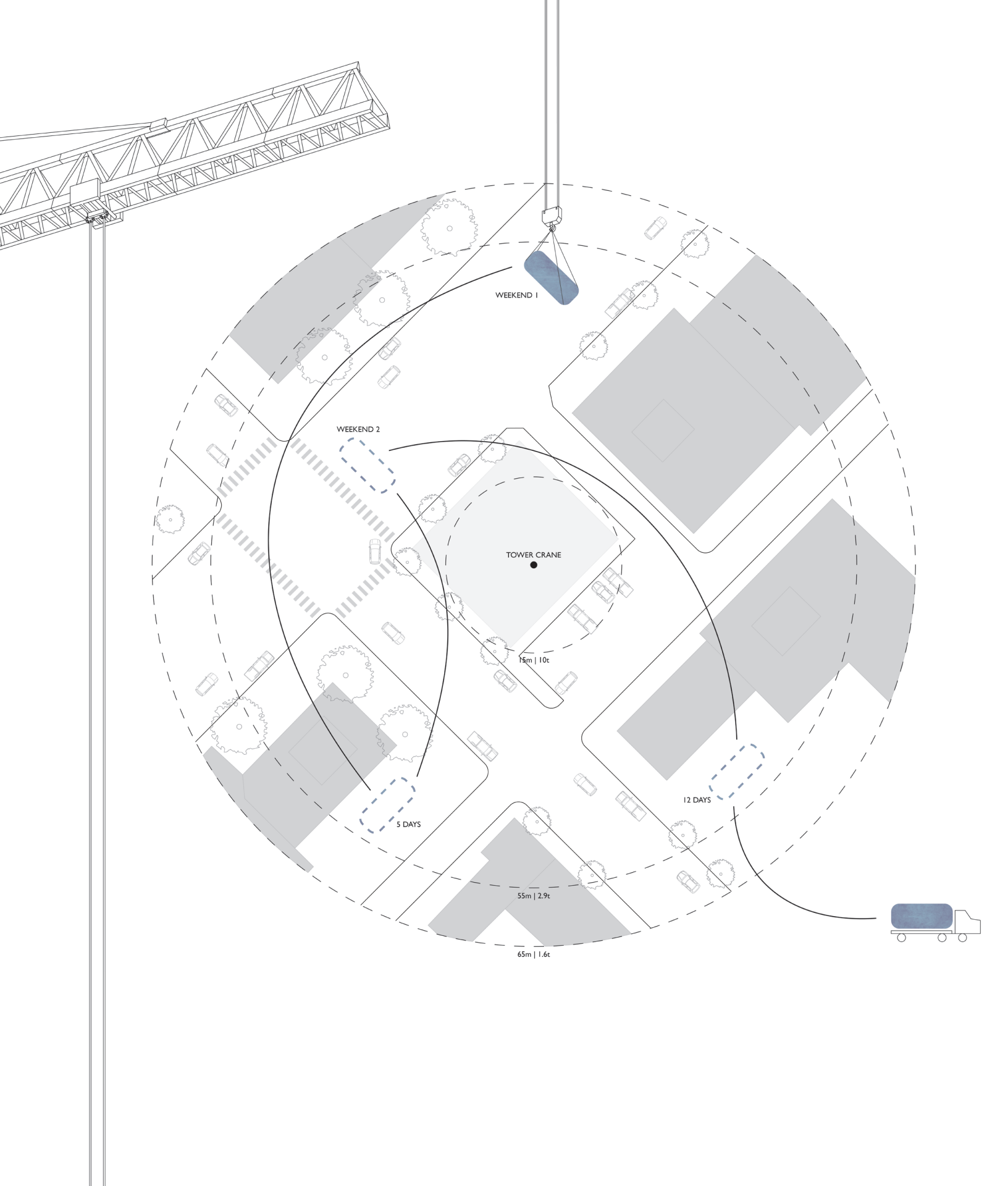
PARKING LOT



TRACKS



OPEN AREA



Tower Cranes

The design platform is temporary and ephemeral. Similar to a concert, the fact that it lasts a few days and changes location allows the project to have a bigger presence on the landscape. This would encourage people to visit the installation before it relocates or transforms itself entirely. Whichever location it travels to, the platform has the ability to create unique moments within different areas of the city.

Out of ten existing infrastructure possibilities that this platform could occupy in the urban city there is one type which has the most potential: using tower cranes (Figure 54). Tower cranes are a giant beacon of economic development in the city. They mark a moment in time of transition that attracts businesses and creates greater density in the neighborhood. In addition, from a local perspective there is opportunity to create events and celebrate these point of economic growth. To operate in conjunction with tower cranes, the platform is suspended to define the ground space below with various community activities. By rotating the tower crane, the platform can be relocated to other nearby uncommon or underutilized areas and intensify them (Figure 55). Since there is plenty of developments and construction happening in the urban city, there are also plenty of cranes for the platform to attach to. This will allow more than one platform to activate various zones at the same time (Figure 56).

Figure 55 (Left) Tower Crane Radius

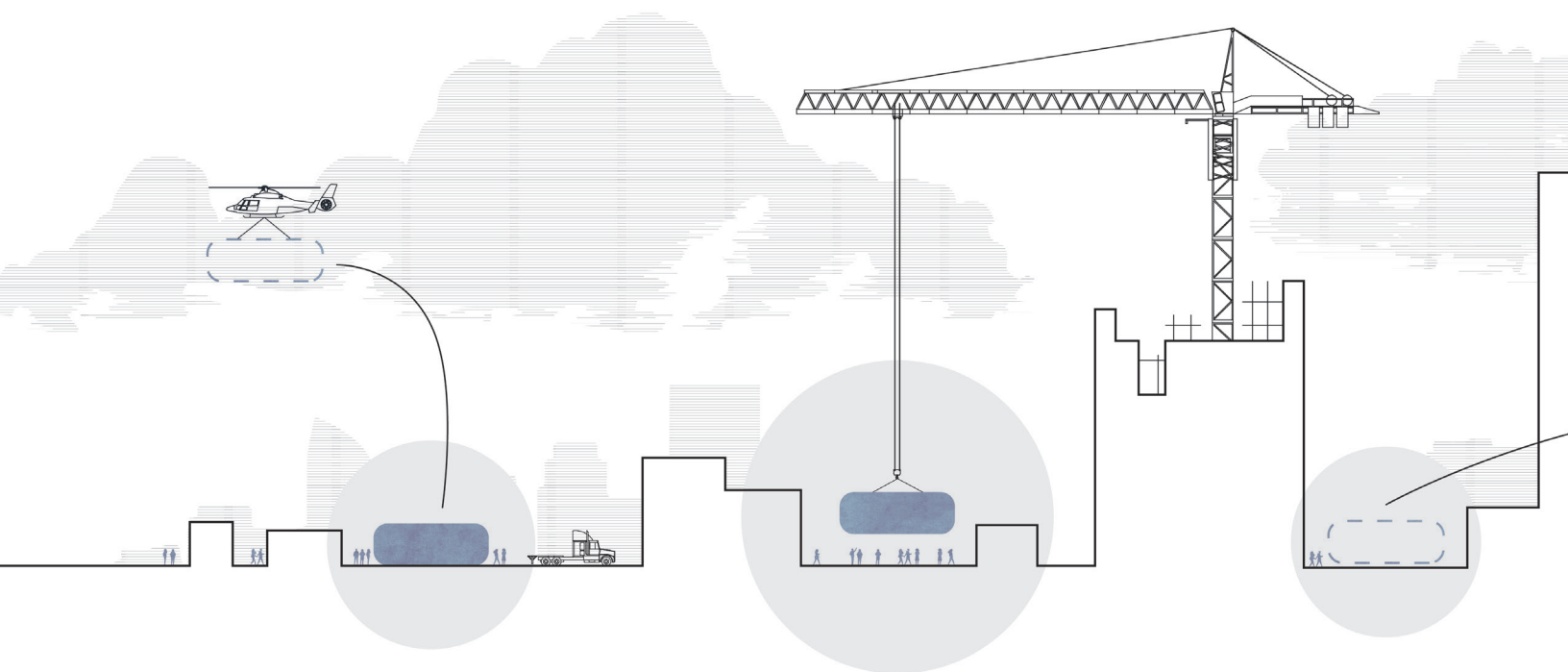
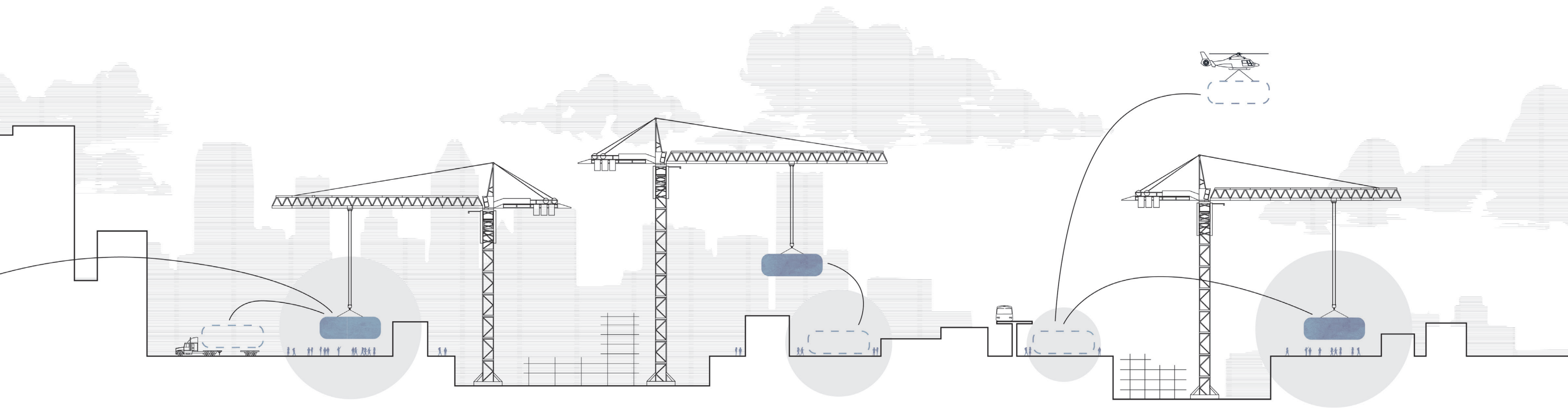


Figure 56 City Section

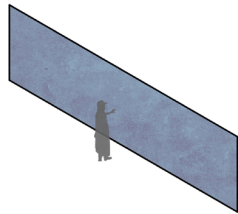


The Platform

The design platform is a lightweight modular structure that can shrink and expand indefinitely according to the retailer occupying it. The platform can also alter the programs happening inside and outside the structure. Its form developed from the idea of merging brick-and-mortar and e-commerce into a single physical structure (Figure 57). Now that plenty of consumers shop online there is potential in exploring the notion of interacting with a giant physical screen. The screen is then given dimensionality and space. Then by curving the overall structure it allows people to gather on one side and disperse a crowd on the other – similar to a panorama screen. Once the platform is lifted by the tower crane it defines the space below and clears the ground for local businesses to expand and occupy. This invites the opportunity for local food vendors to intensify the area with community programs. The platform can also enhance local space by occupying underutilized areas when it is not suspended. More information and details about the platform can be found in Figures 58-60.

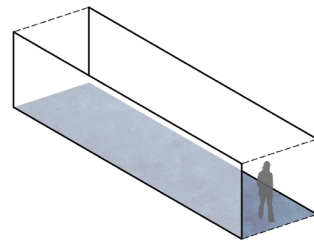
The platform modules can be modified, reconfigured, added and divided depending on the intent of the brand occupying it (Figure 61). There are numerous arrangements in which the platform can be suspended from a crane as well as placed on the ground. There is also an abundance of possibilities that retailers can do reconfigure the interior of the structure (Figure 62).

Figure 57 (Right) Concept Diagram



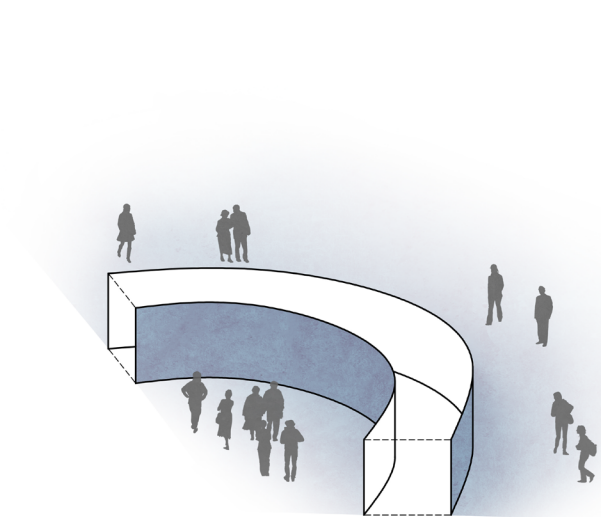
SCREEN

Consumers prefer to shop via digital screens.



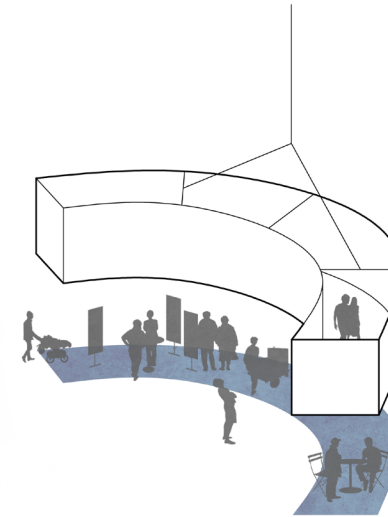
OCCUPY

The screen is given dimensionality and becomes a physical space.



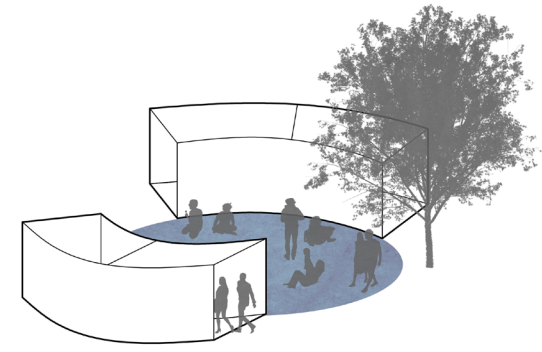
GATHER / DISPERSE

Curving the structure gathers or spreads individuals on either end.



INTENSIFY

Lifting the structure defines the ground space below and creates social programs.



ENHANCE

Underutilized areas are intensified with activity.

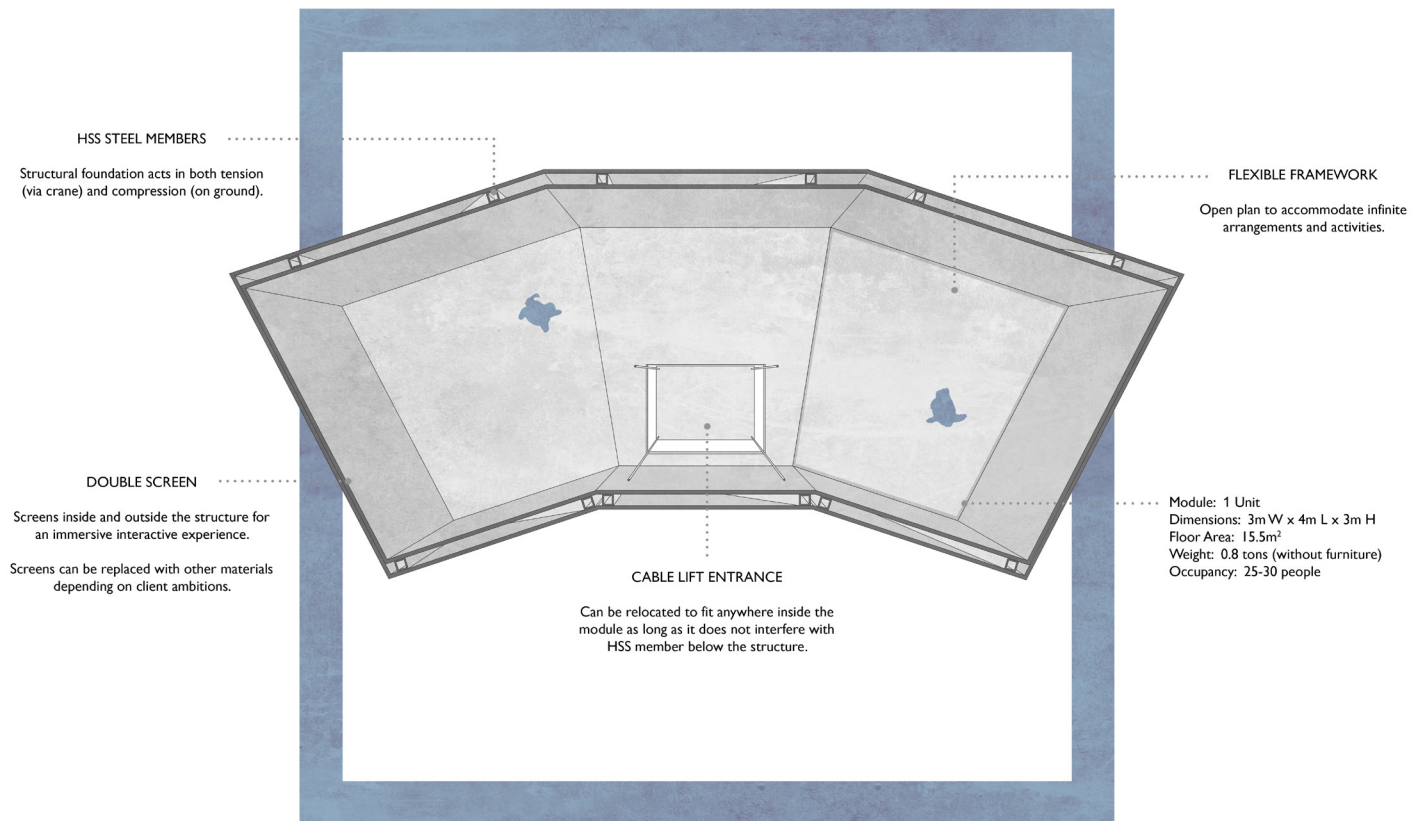


Figure 58 Plan (TYP.)

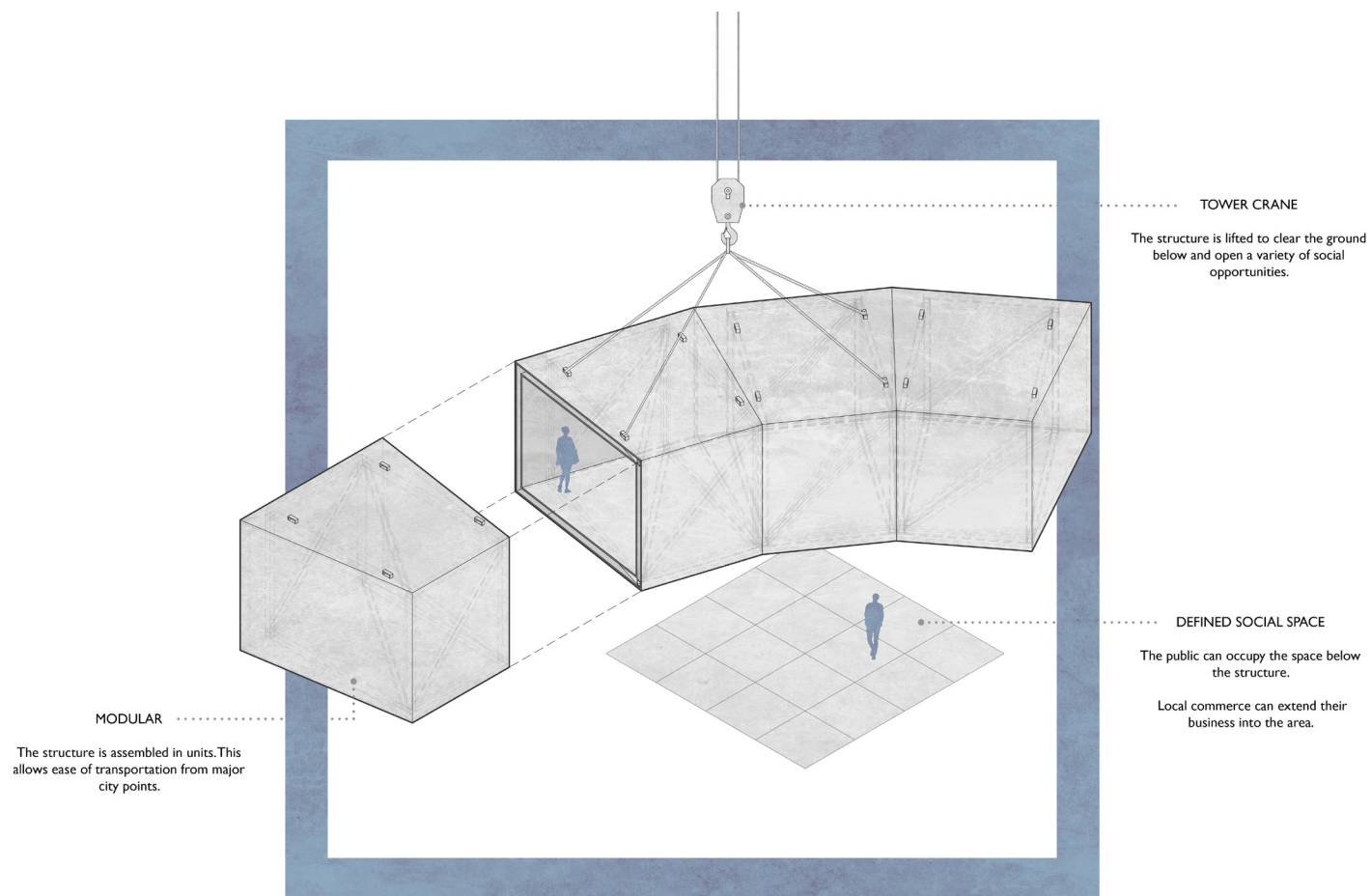


Figure 59 Module Assembly

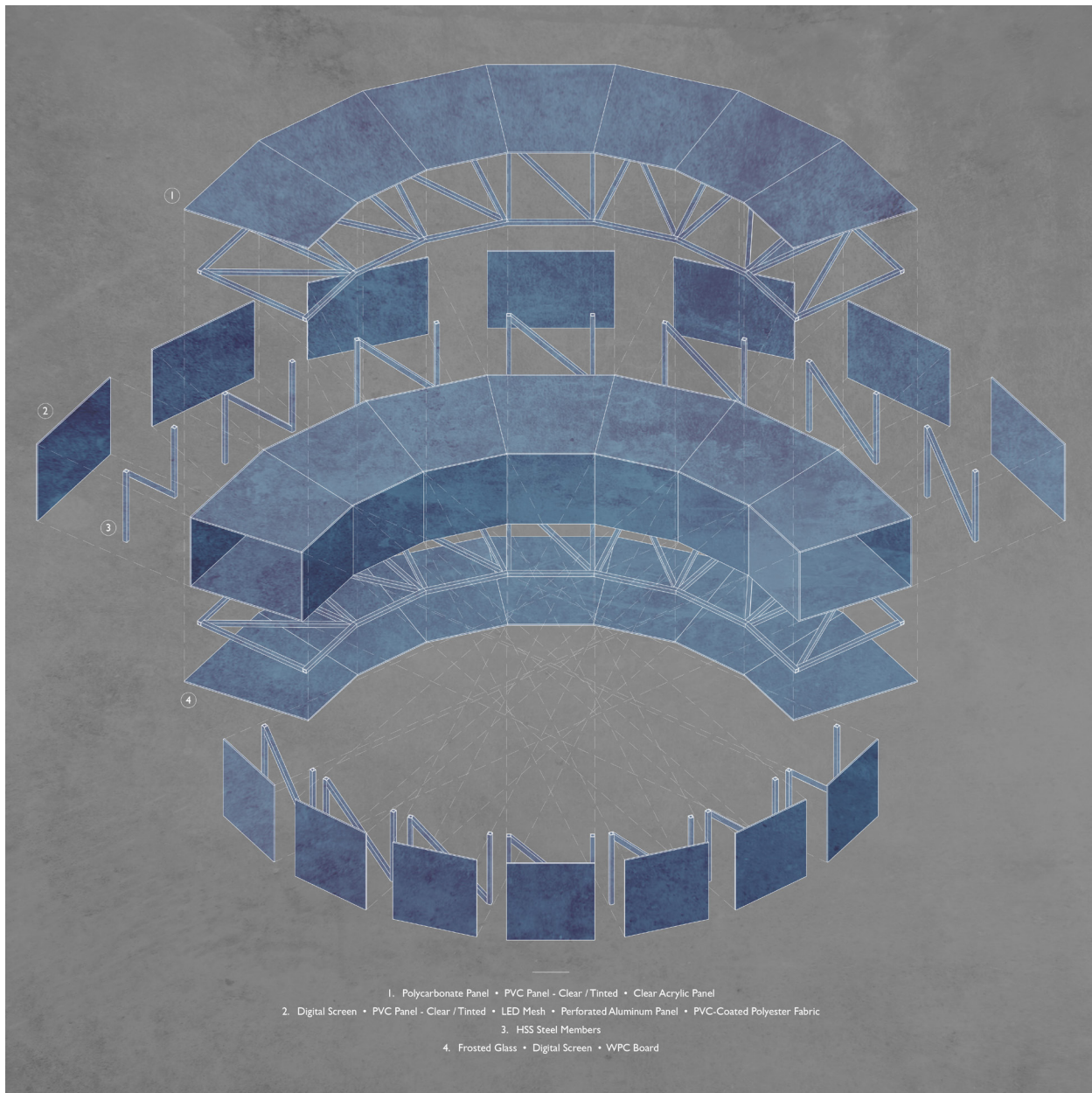


Figure 60 Axonometric

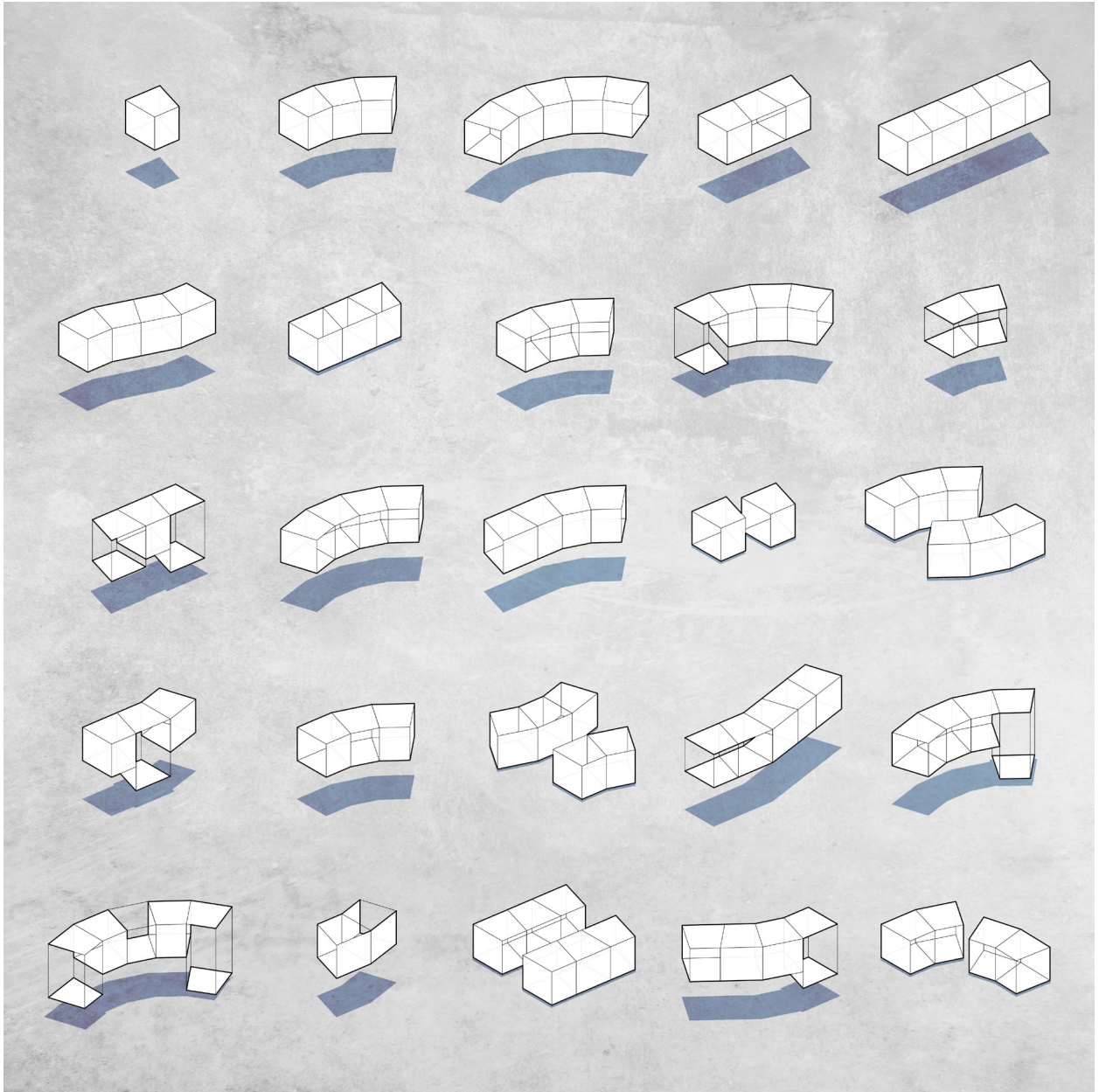


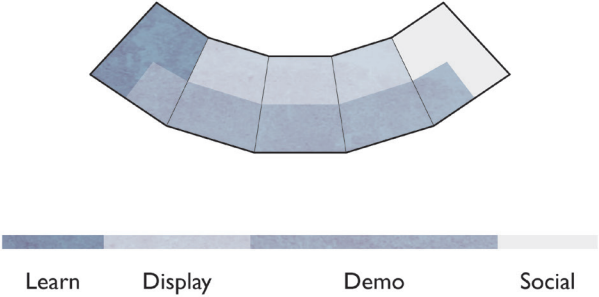
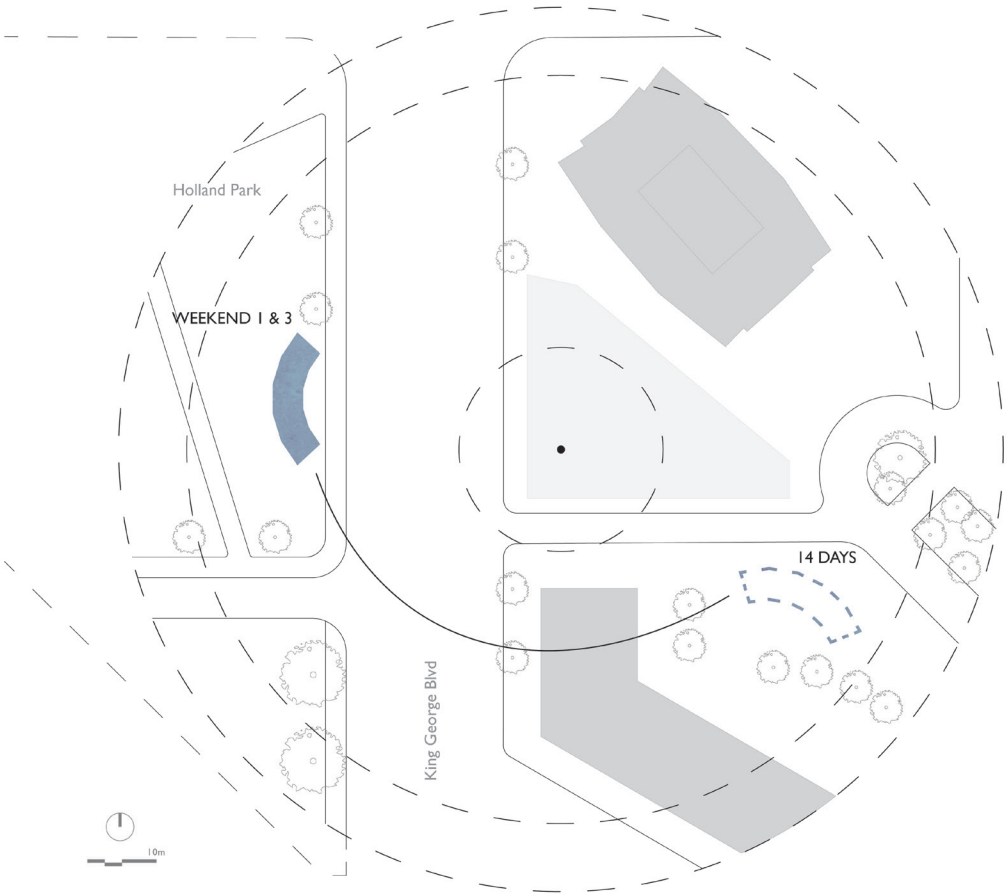
Figure 61 Massing



Figure 62 Section Collage



CLIENT 1: *allbirds*



Client 1: Allbirds

This project demonstrates three possible scenarios featuring three key components: site, retailer and local event. The brands chosen for this project are not high-end corporations like Apple or Microsoft because they are already independent retailers that tackle much bigger projects. Instead, this project targets more small/medium size retailers. The platform offers a more cost efficient space with short term opportunity for kickstarter brands to operate and experiment with local urban space.

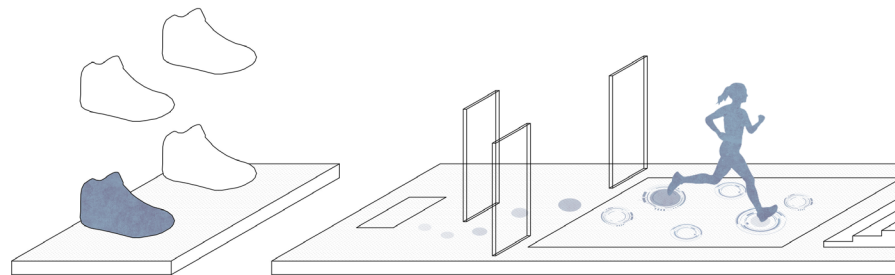
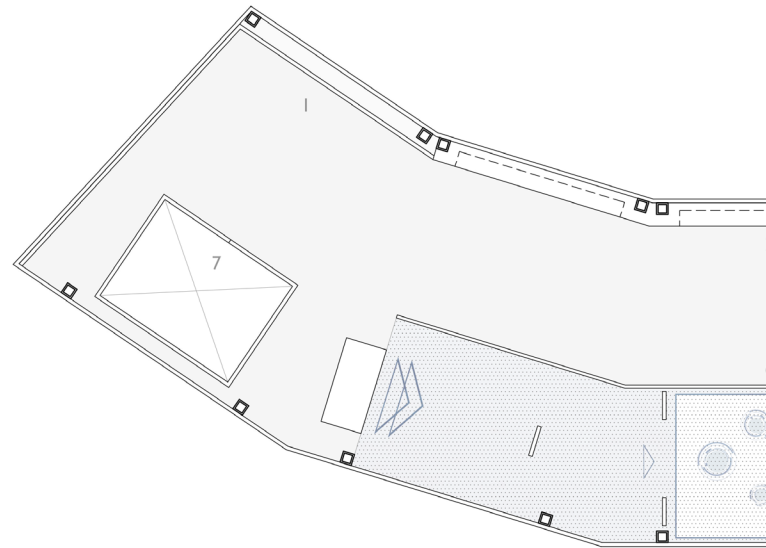
The first client is Allbirds. Allbirds is a new shoe brand with only four store locations in USA. They are trying to open a shop in the Lower Mainland but would like to research and understand the locals first before opening a store. The Whalley District offers the perfect location to experiment with their brand since Surrey is slowly becoming a walkable city. By borrowing the existing tower crane from the new condo development, “Park Boulevard”, the platform can host Allbirds as it intensifies Holland Park across the street. The installation will be suspended over the park in time for the Surrey Fusion Festival happening on the weekend of mid-July (Figures 63-67).

Figure 63 (Left) Surrey Site Plan & Program Diagram

Figure 64 (Next Page, Above) Plan: Allbirds

Figure 65 (Next Page, Below) Sequence Diagram

1. Brand History Screen
2. Product Display
3. Seating
4. Product Screen
5. Data Screen
6. Obstacle Course
7. Cable Lift

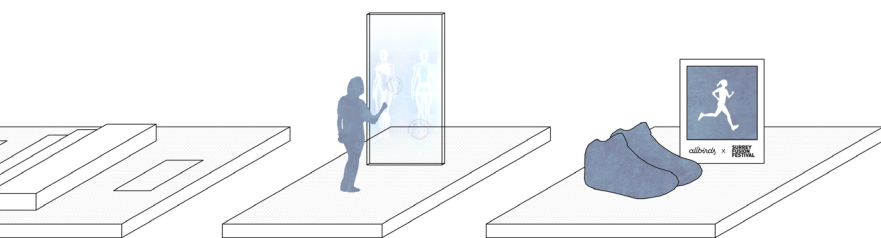
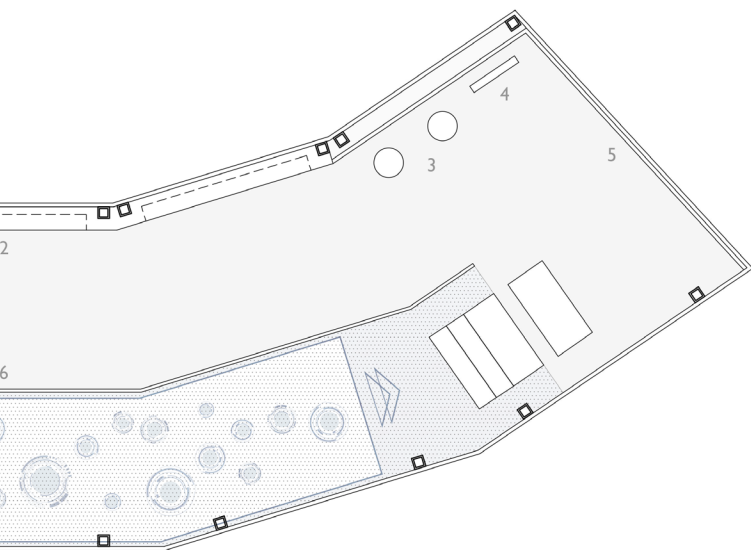


Choose

Discover and learn about Allbirds sneakers.
Choose one that fits your lifestyle.

Test

Traverse through the obstacle course to
gather personal data based on your
selected sneaker.



Feedback

Obtain your results and download your personal data.

Memory

Personalized experience becomes a long-lasting memory.

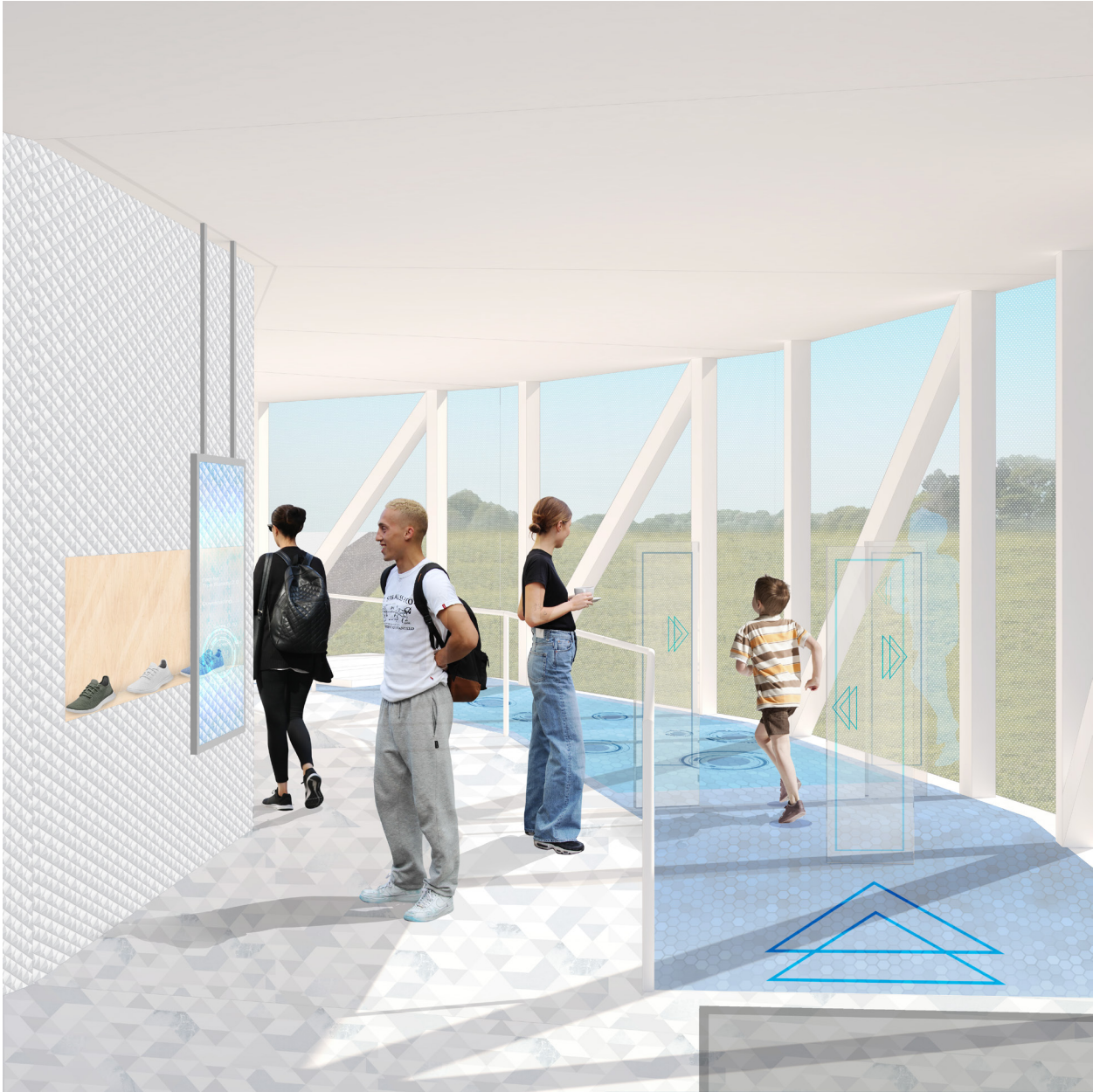
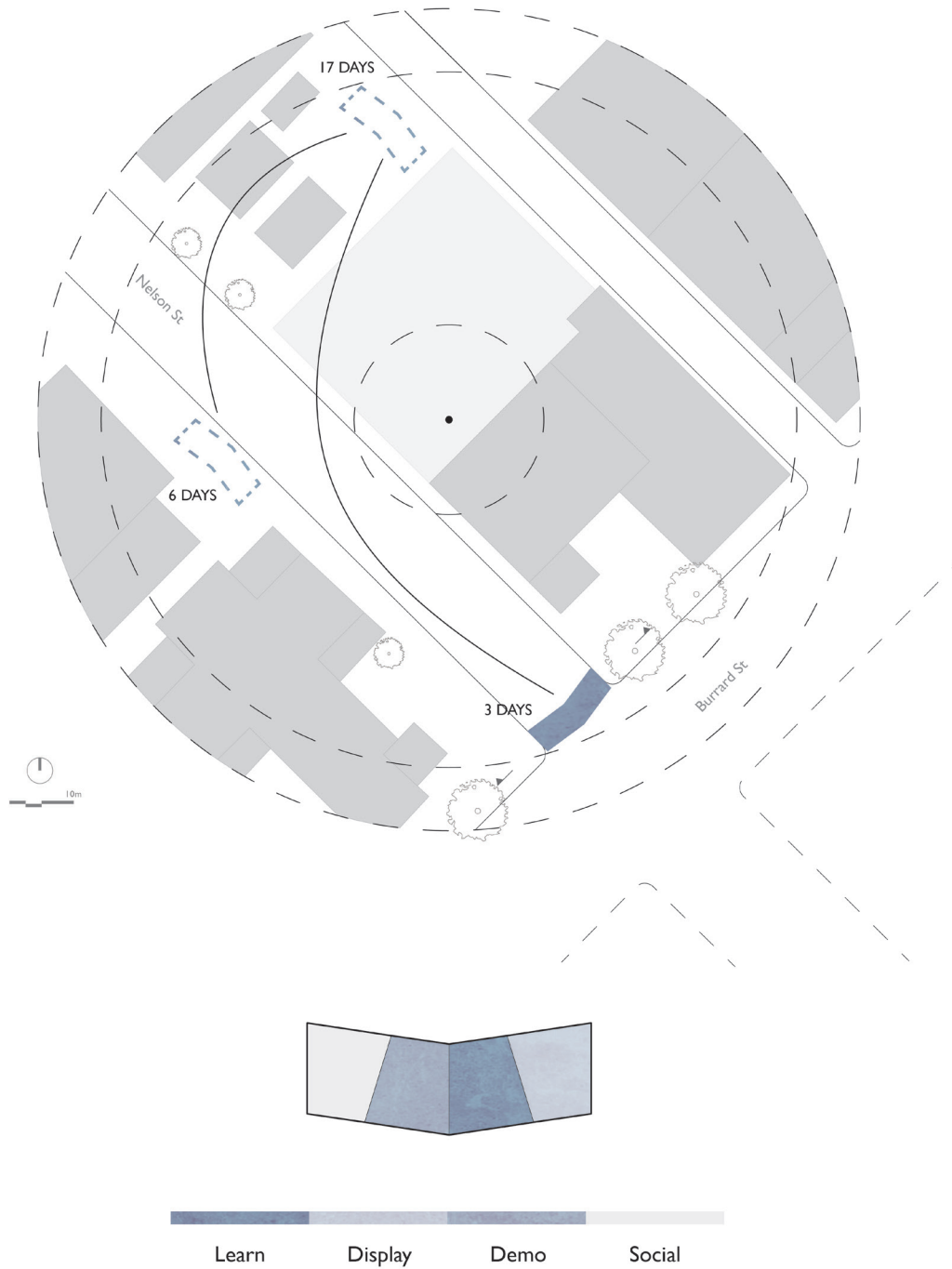


Figure 66 Render: Inside Allbirds



Figure 67 Render: Front View of Allbirds Platform

CLIENT 2: DIRTY LEMON



Client 2: Dirty Lemon

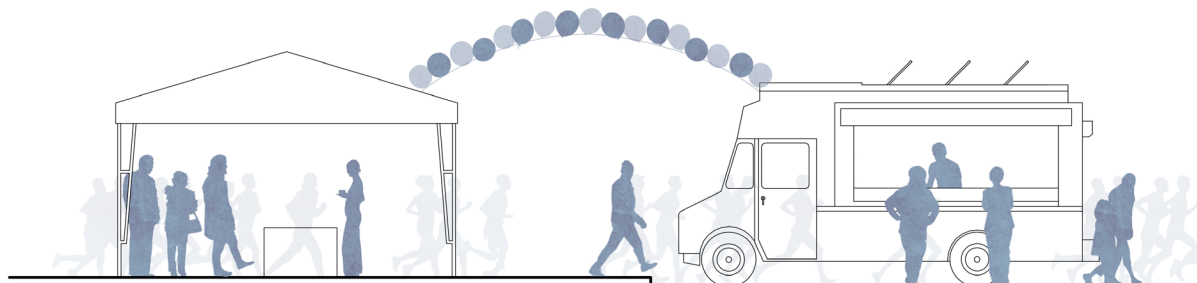
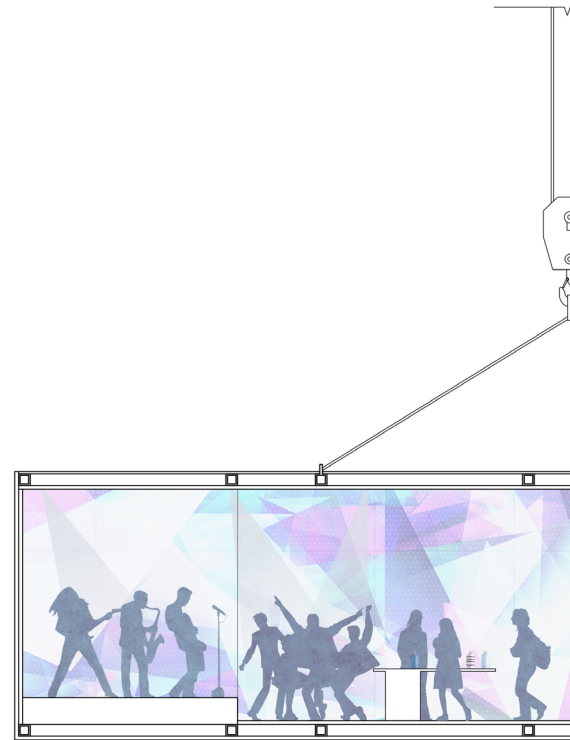
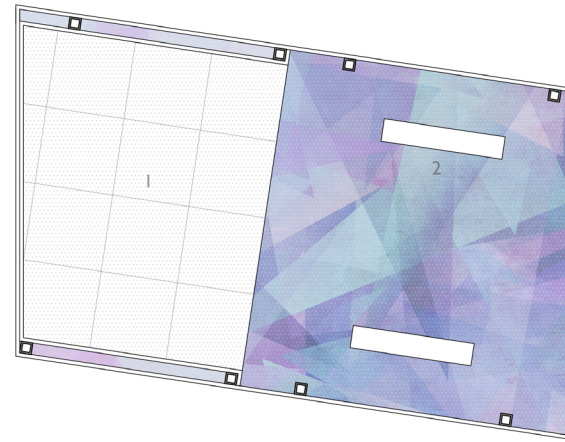
The second client is Dirty Lemon. Dirty Lemon is a purely online retailer that sells purified drinks with distinct flavors like matcha, rose, turmeric and others. Since they do not have a physical store, Dirty Lemon is getting creative with activating the platform for the upcoming Vancouver Sun Run happening in Downtown Vancouver. The platform is suspended by the tower crane operating for the Butterfly Tower development in Burrard Street. To celebrate the marathon Dirty Lemon is pairing up with a local band. The band will perform inside the platform and the exterior screens will play the performance for the crowd outside (Figures 68-72).

Figure 68 (Left) Vancouver Site Plan & Program Diagram

Figure 69 (Next Page, Above) Plan: Dirty Lemon

Figure 70 (Next Page, Below) Section: Dirty Lemon

1. Performace Stage
2. Tasting Table
3. Brand History
4. Product Display Area
5. Cable Lift



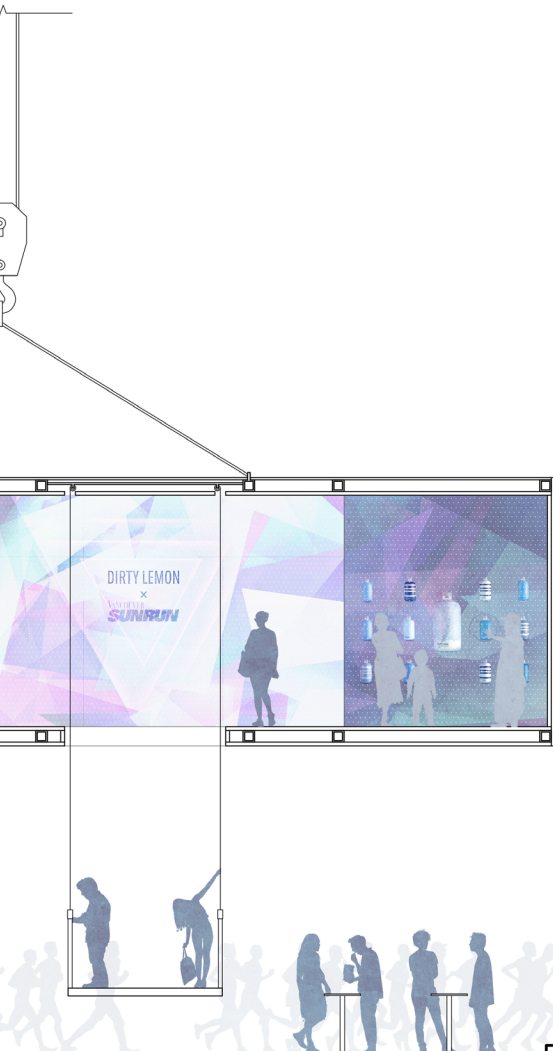
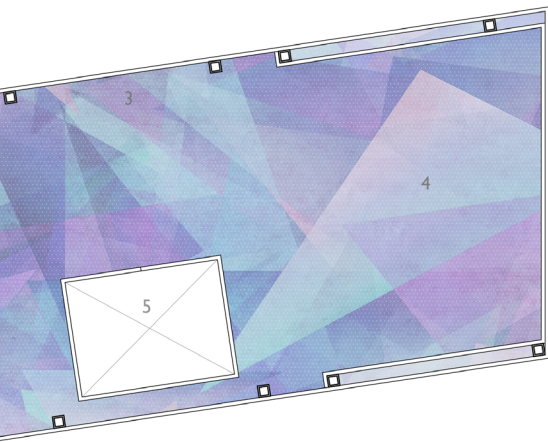


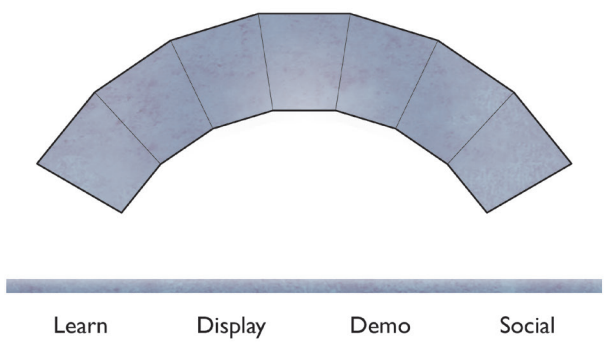
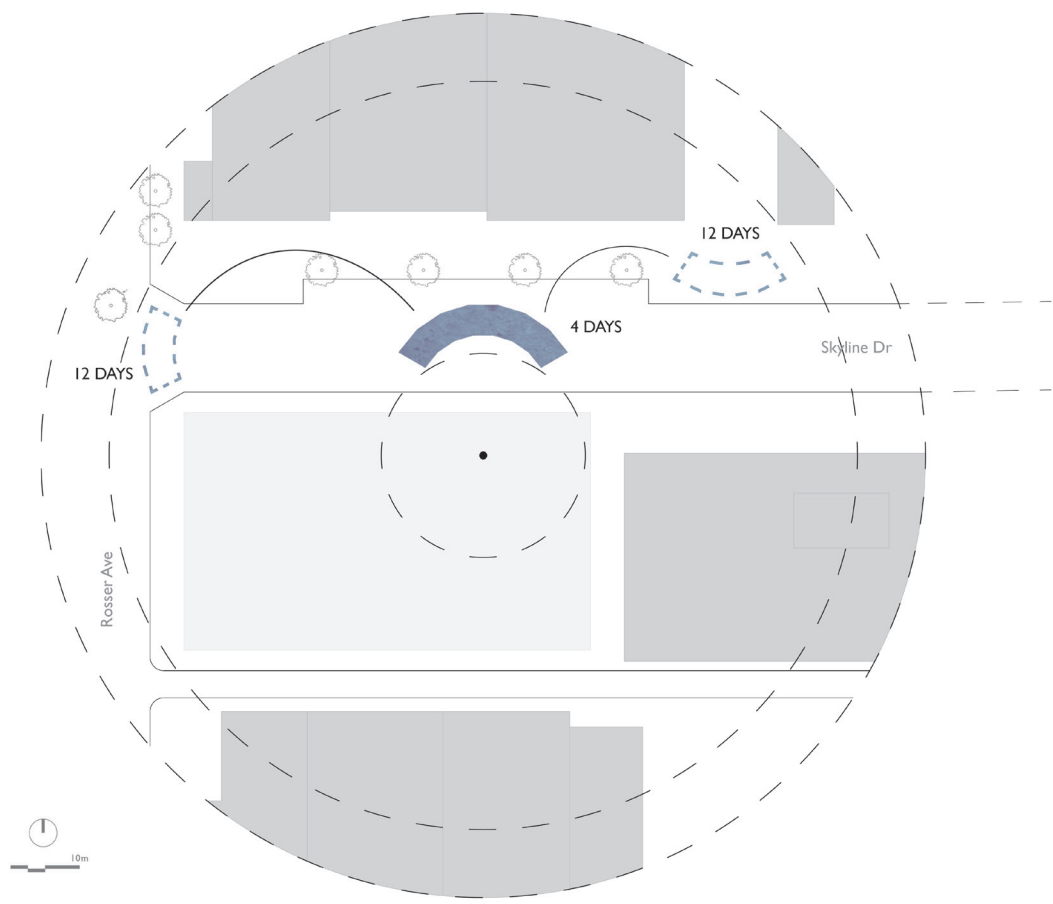


Figure 71 Render: Perspective of Vancouver Sun Run



Figure 72 Render: Inside Dirty Lemon

CLIENT 3: FANTASY 6 SPORTS



Client 3: Fantasy 6 Sports

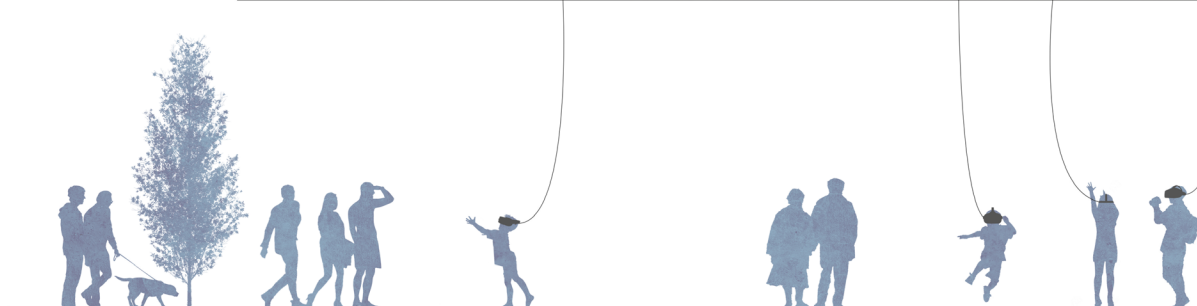
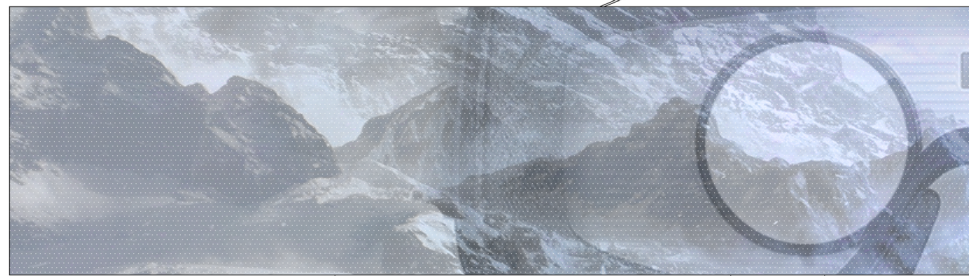
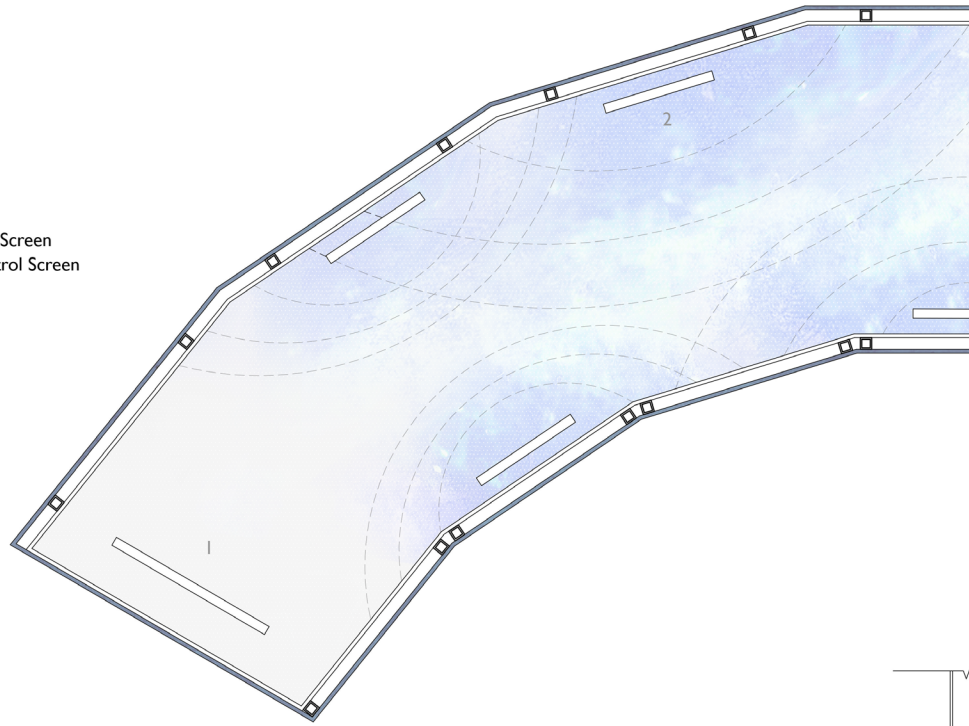
The third client is Fantasy 6 Sports. Fantasy 6 Sports is a retail business that creates virtual and augmented reality visualizations. With an office in West Hastings, Vancouver, the company sees potential in moving their office to Brentwood in Burnaby to attract more clients. Due to the “SOLO District” development happening at Brentwood, Fantasy 6 can use the existing crane to lift the platform above an empty parking lot and showcase their new VR and AR technologies. Using the platform’s interior and exterior digital screens, Fantasy 6 is able to transform the entire structure into virtual getaway by projecting visuals that offer an out-of-city experience from within the city. The ground space below is used to suspend VR headsets for the public to wear and experience the simulations created by the brand (Figures 73-77).

Figure 73 (Left) Burnaby Site Plan & Program Diagram

Figure 74 (Next Page, Above) Plan: Fantasy 6 Sports

Figure 75 (Next Page, Below) North Elevation: Fantasy 6 Sports

- 1. Master Control Screen
- 2. Interactive Control Screen
- 3. Cable Lift
- 4. Storage



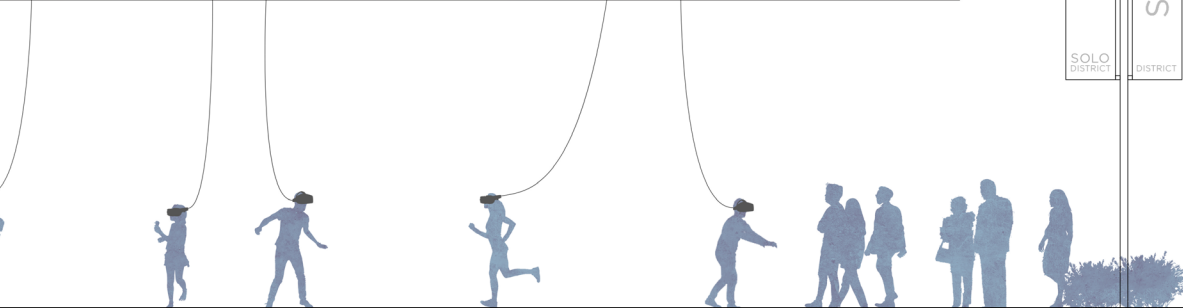
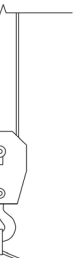
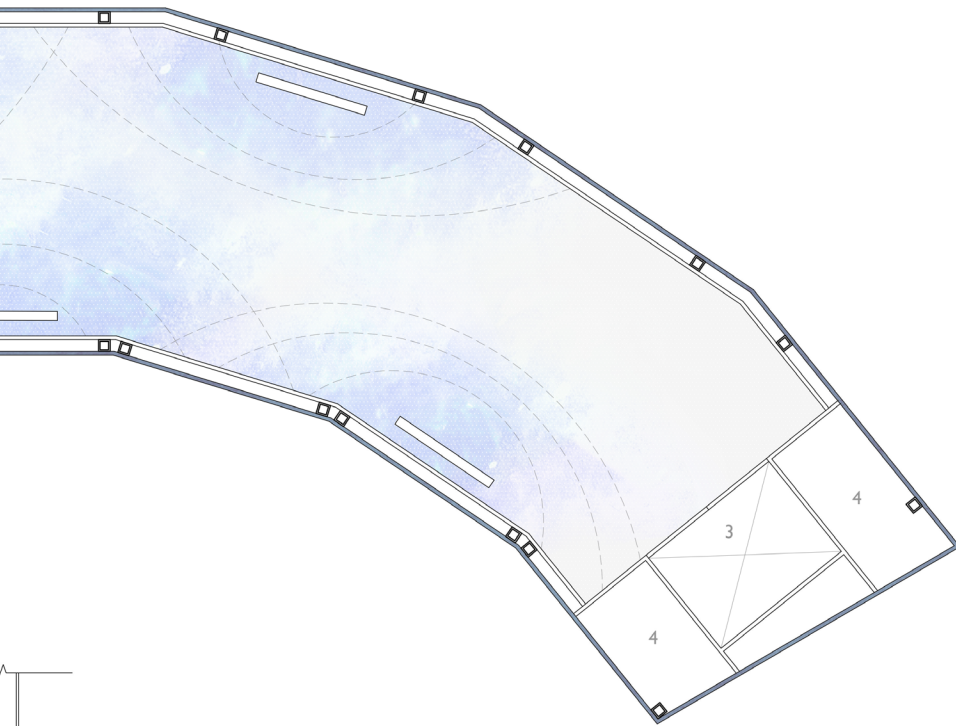




Figure 76 Render: Ground Perspective of Fantasy 6 Sports



Figure 77 Render: Inside Fantasy 6 Sports

Abstract Model

The model is an abstract representation of the suspended platform. The clear films show progression of space with various programs inside the structure. Its curved form emphasizes sequence and creates the illusion of an endless floating walkway (Figures 78-81).



Figure 78 Model Photo 1

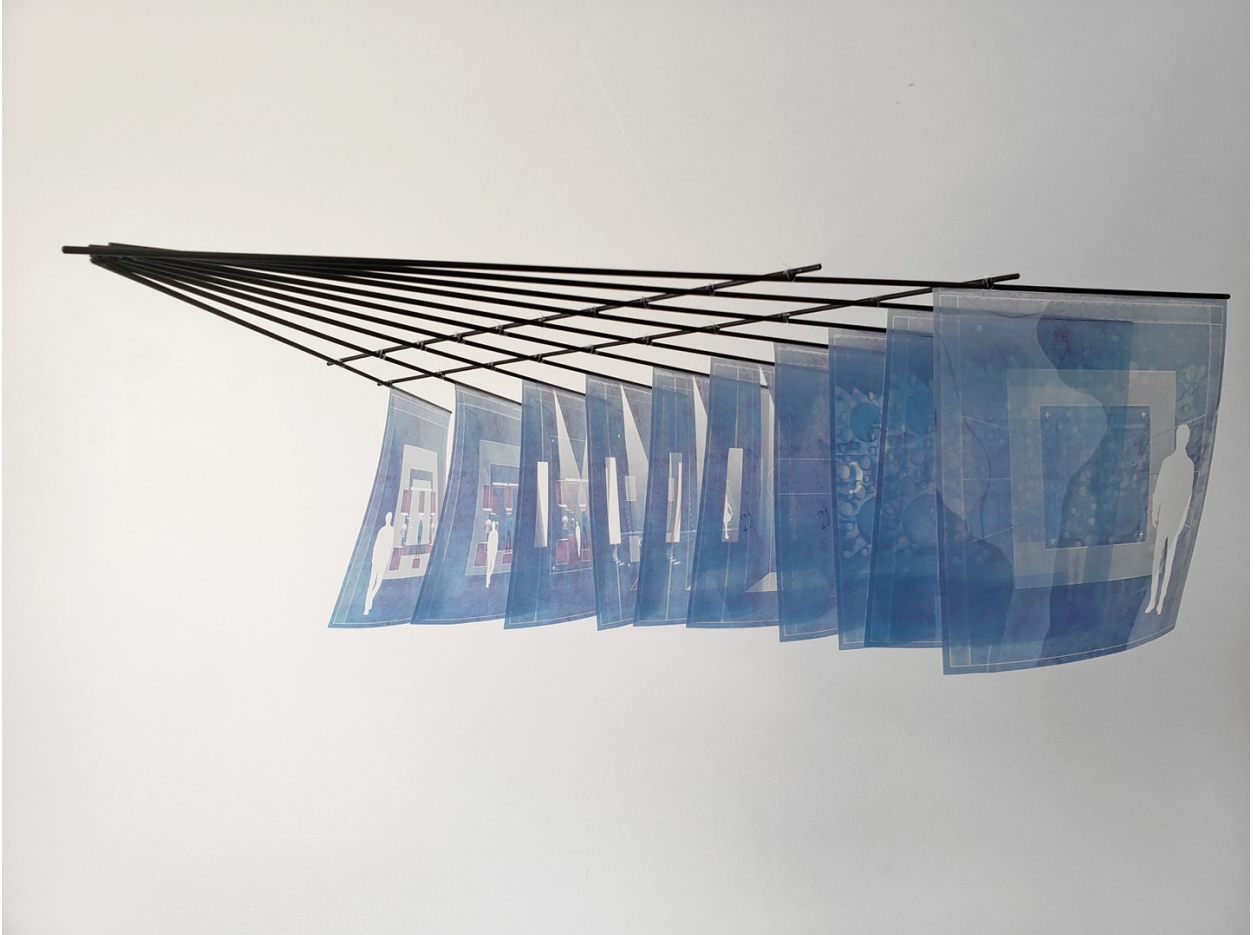


Figure 79 Model Photo 2



Figure 80 Model Photo 3

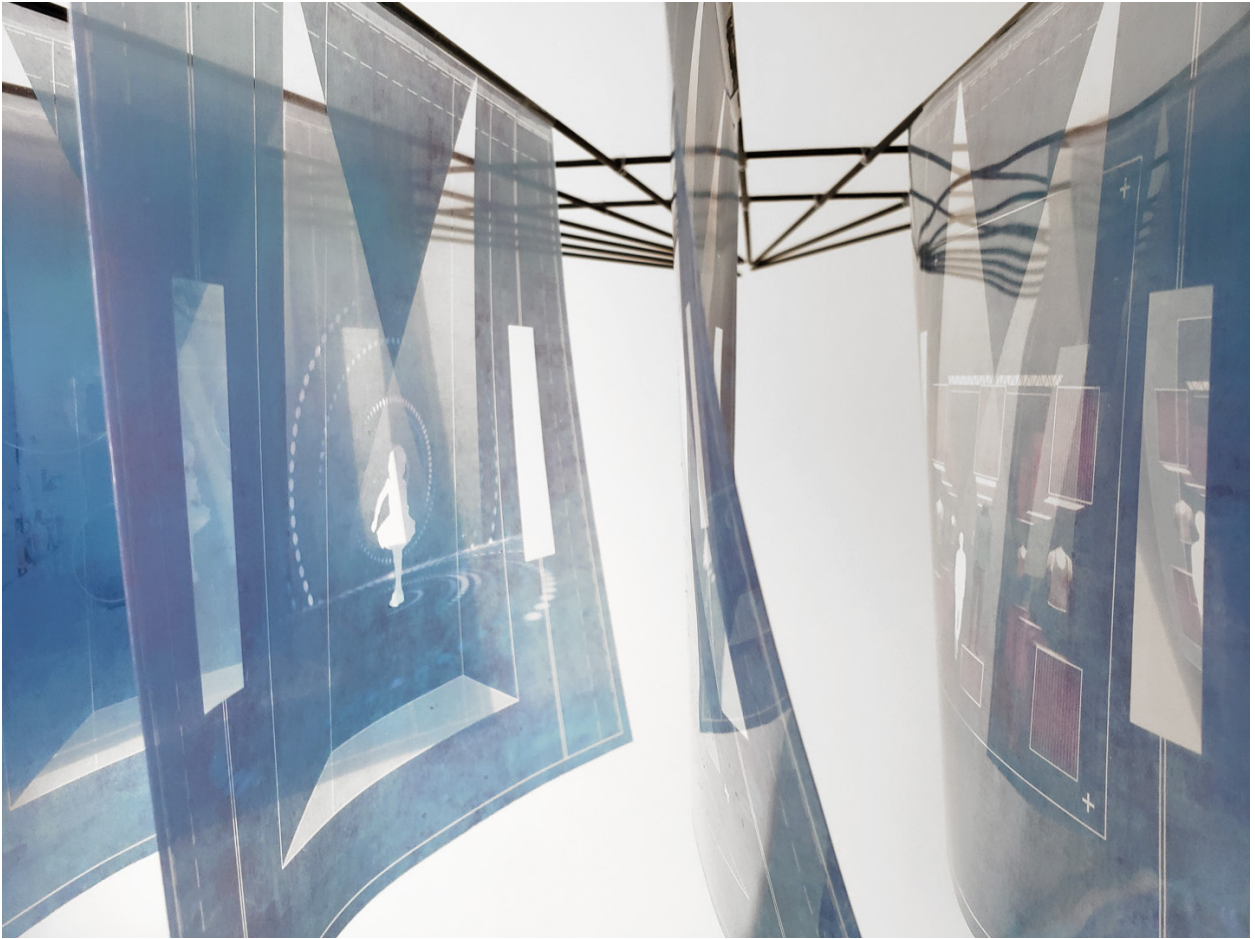


Figure 81 Model Photo 4

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