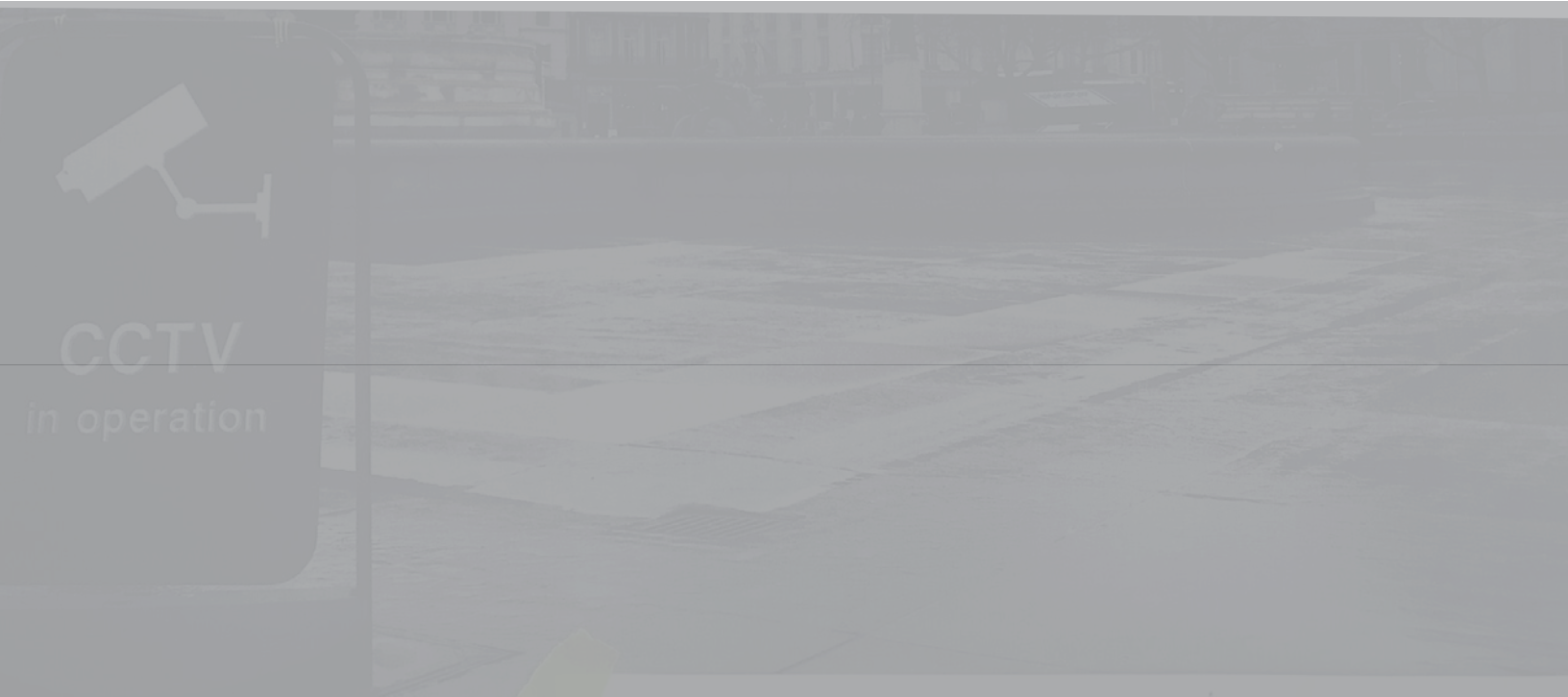# BAD PRACTICES

Politics, Program, and Public Space In a Time of Protest

CHRISTOPHER WALKER

FIG 2. "MAN WITH SIGN"

In what became a popular Intstagram account in 2019, One man stages a series of solitary protests on the street corner, against life's small annoyances, 2019 (Redacted)

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INTRODUCTION

SANTIAGO, BARCELONA, PARIS, HONG KONG, TEHRAN, PORT AU PRINCE, TIRANA, QUITO, CARACAS, ADDIS ABBA, BOGOTA, BEIRUT, SUCRE, KHARTOUM, ALGIERS, TBILISI. (SYDNEY, NEW YORK, MONTREAL, AUCKLAND, MELBOURNE, LONDON, BERLIN, MILAN, ROME, TORONTO, MUNICH...)

In 2019 each of these major urban centres was at the centre of a mass civilian uprising or protest movement, and as the 21st century progresses, global communities are taking to the streets in mass political actions on a scale perhaps greater than any point in history.
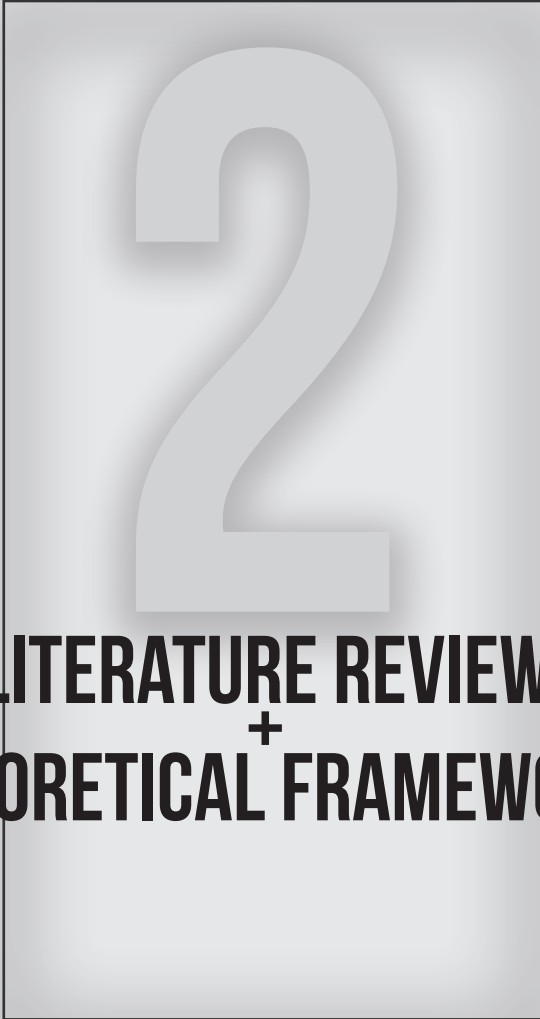
Meanwhile, contemporary urban developments impose ever greater measures of societal control within the public realm - asymmetrically and undemocratically imposing constraints on public behaviour and eroding civic freedoms....

FIG. **3** Protestersgather to form the symbol of Extinction Re-
bellion, a civil-disobience climate movement which began in
2019, (Redacted)

FIG. **4** Violence erupts during economic protest in Tehran,
Iran, 2019 (Redacted)

Through an interrogation of a prominent landscape adjacent to the Norm Foster
designed City Hall in London (UK), this project seeks:

1. To understand the behaviour-limiting impacts on public space, of contemporary trends
in surveillance, securitization, and privatization, as well as their broader political and
philosophical implications.

2. To question whether the professional practice of landscape architecture is complicit
in such developments, or constrained in its ability to deliver on its self-styled role of
"champions" of public space.

3. To imagine an alternative approach to spatial practice; hybridizing the tools of
landscape architecture and activism, leveraging popular participation, and establishing a
new site for political and public expression through radical acts of programming.

2

LITERATURE REVIEW
+
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

As described in the previous section, this design proposal is built upon the convergence of two theoretical frameworks, each of which has a history associated with design and implications for the built environment. The first deals with protest, both as an integral part of human societies and as a practice with longstanding associations to culturally important landscapes. The second deals with an increasingly ubiquitious imposition of technological, legal, and infrastructural controls on the built envionment, which collectively erode civil liberties in the public realm. This section will detail those two threads in order; with 2.1 discussing a brief history of protest as it relates to landscape architecture, and 2.2 outlining the relevant impacts of the identified "Bad Practices", and the conceptual frameworrk within which I propose Landscape Arhitecture should address such impacts.

2.1
LANDSCAPE AND PROTEST

FIG.6 "Secessio Plebis" Engraving by B. Baloccini, 1849 (Redacted)

For at least as long as democracy has existed as a form of societal organization, protest has been a key mechanic of public expression, and agent of both political and physical change in our urban environments.

Without getting into a discussion about the relative democratic-ness of ancient Greece, the significance of the Agora in their society indicate that true and open public space has been fundamental to democracy from its very inception, and the example of "secession Plebis", and ancient roman protest practice in which the commoners would literally vacate the city, demonstrates the subversive and power-inverting capabilities of collective public behavior.

In France, ancient Greece's co-author in the book of modern democracy, protest has quite literally been elevated to an art form. Here we see examples in two slides, of how that country's citizen took direct physical control of their cities during the French Revolution – appropriating environmental materials and reconfiguring entire neighbourhoods – and second of how the students of the Paris '68 revolution leveraged design in order to fundamentally restructure societies concepts of authority. Another key development of 20c protests was the rise of mass marching and occupation – famously visualized through images of epochal protests on America's National Mall.

In the 21st Century, two protest movements occured, which are worthy of describing in more detail here. Both are notable for their innovative engagement with the built environment, and for signalling the impact of technology on future protest movements. They are:

1. Tahrir Square and Egypt's 2011 Revolution

2. Hong Kong's pro-democracy movements of 2014-2019

TAHRIR SQUARE, EGYPT

A longstanding addition to the town-square-as-protest-site canon, Tahrir Square in Cairo is relevant here both because it exemplifies hallmarks of the historic relationship between mass public demonstrations and urban design, as well as for marking the emergence of mass surveillant and communication technologies as determining factors in public protest. The site is noted by architectural historian Nezar Alsayyad as a landscape loaded with cultural and historical significance, who links it with several key moments in the production of the modern Egyptian Nation State. It is also one of the oldest squares in modern Cairo, originally being laid out under the name Ismailia Square in the early stages of the city's Haussmann inspired urban re-development. Following the July 1952 deposition of the country's monarchy and end colonial occupation by the English, the square was officially renamed Tahrir Square, which in English translates as "Liberation". According to Alsayyad, it was not until the events of 2011 that the square would truly "earn its name".

In the spring of 2011 a sit-in protest began in Tahrir Square, which would spark revolution. Originating as a protest against police brutality under long-time Egyptian president Hosni Mubarek, the sit-in soon scaled into a mass demonstration and eventually resulted in the Mubarek's ouster. Although protesters saw early success with this regime change, the subsequent years in Cairo would be marked by turmoil, military governance, violent crackdowns, and yet more revolution. Between 2011 and 2014, each key political moment was accompanied by a return of Egyptian citizens to Tahrir Square; creating a rhythmic spatial and visual narrative surrounding the demonstrations, and underscoring the potential inherent in the relationship between site and protest. This symbolic connection between landscape and ideology was a deliberate tactic employed by demonstrators, who combined an ideally situated site with emergent media platforms to produce imagery with the emotional power to rival the historic civil-rights protests at the Washington Monument. The following section will evaluate two distinct aspects of these events: first, the significance of Tahrir Square itself as the site of protest, and second the influence of these emergent media technologies as they relate to the broader topic of mass protests.

First: site. Situated almost directly adjacent to the Nile river, Tahrir Square's importance seems to stem as much from its site and adjacencies than any of its formal or compositional qualities. While today it is an irregular patchworked of broad, open plazas, covering approximately 20 acres and reaching across a network of roadways to connect various civic buildings and international hotels, Tahrir Square's extents have rarely been fixed over the decades; instead shifting and finding definition through the development of adjacent sites. During the series of mass demonstrations which began in 2011, the largest part of what today would be recognized as the square was in fact a closed construction site. One constant element throughout the decades however, has been a roughly acre-sized patch of formally styled civic space, nested inside a large traffic circle and marking the convergence of broad axial boulevards from each cardinal direction. It was this traffic circle that demonstrators began their sit-in in 2011, and which made Tahrir Square the symbolic heart of a revolution. Although it is not considered best practice in 2019 to hide your civic square behind 5 lanes of traffic, this artifact of city-beautiful planning provided protesters with an opportunity to creatively subvert a landscape of assigned civic significance in support of their cause; an action which carries a lesson for landscape designers regardless of their opinion on the legality or appropriateness of such protests. In a series of images which captured global attention as the protests grew, one can see that as the network of plazas and roadways disappears under the mass of protesters, the traffic circle's formal suggestion becomes the dominant focal point of site; providing both organizational and symbolic qualities.

Further elevating the visibility and significance of this protest site are its architectural and programmatic adjacencies. Directly to Tahrir Square's south sits The Mogamma, Cairo's largest government compound and an ideal backdrop against which to site an anti-government demonstration. It is a grand early modernist government building, its imposing scale and form meant to be enhanced by the open clearing of the landscape leaning to its entrance. As with the traffic circle, the very design of this building and its surrounding landscape produced an ideal site for mass demonstration Bounding the remaining edges of the square are the national Egyptian Museum and a string of international hotels, each of which would play a significant role in the events of 2011. The museum was notably co-opted by the Egyptian military as a detention site, while it was from the roofs and balconies of the surrounding hotels that images and media were uploaded to social media; fostering an instantaneous global response to the events, and a corresponding increase in scale.

NEW SURVEILLANT TECHNOLOGIES AND PUBLIC PROTEST

Although the revolution of 2011 has some features in common with other historic mass protest movements, it gains extra significance for being positioned at the beginning of what might be described as the era of social media (or depending on your perspective, the era of mass participatory surveillance). It is now commonplace to see recently recorded, civilian captured footage from protest all over the globe, however 2011 marked the first time that imagery and information could be captured from the protest and distributed instantaneously, anywhere on earth. This collapse of space and time impacted the protest in several ways. First, constant distribution of imagery of the events had a reinforcing effect on participation, resulting in greater crowds travelling to the site from father away, and encouraging participants to remain on site. Second, the new ability of organizers on the ground to communicate visually in real-time produced a level of responsiveness to that point unassociated with mass public actions. This responsiveness on the part of protesters has increased exponentially in the decade since, as will be shown in the following section on the 2019 civil protests in Hong Kong. Lastly, the advent of social media gave protesters a new power of bottom-up surveillance – wherein any images of violent crackdowns were sure to be seen by observers around the globe. Although this did not prevent such violence from occurring in the case of Egypt, it has reduced the power-asymmetry of such conflicts and thus reduced the likelihood for abuse of power

It much be said here although these technological developments are not inherently spatial, it is in their universal impact that they carry consequence for designers and urban thinkers. The fact is that although public protest movements are still carried out in physical space, they are equally fragmented, distributed, and played out online, and those online fragments can carry real-world consequences. Indeed, the battle for control of online narratives has become an important aspect of public activism, and there have been notable instances of internet services and social media platforms being blocked entirely in countries facing unrest, in an effort to quell civilian action. This blurring of boundaries between digital and physical will only become more prominent as surveillant technology is increasingly deployed in the urban landscape.
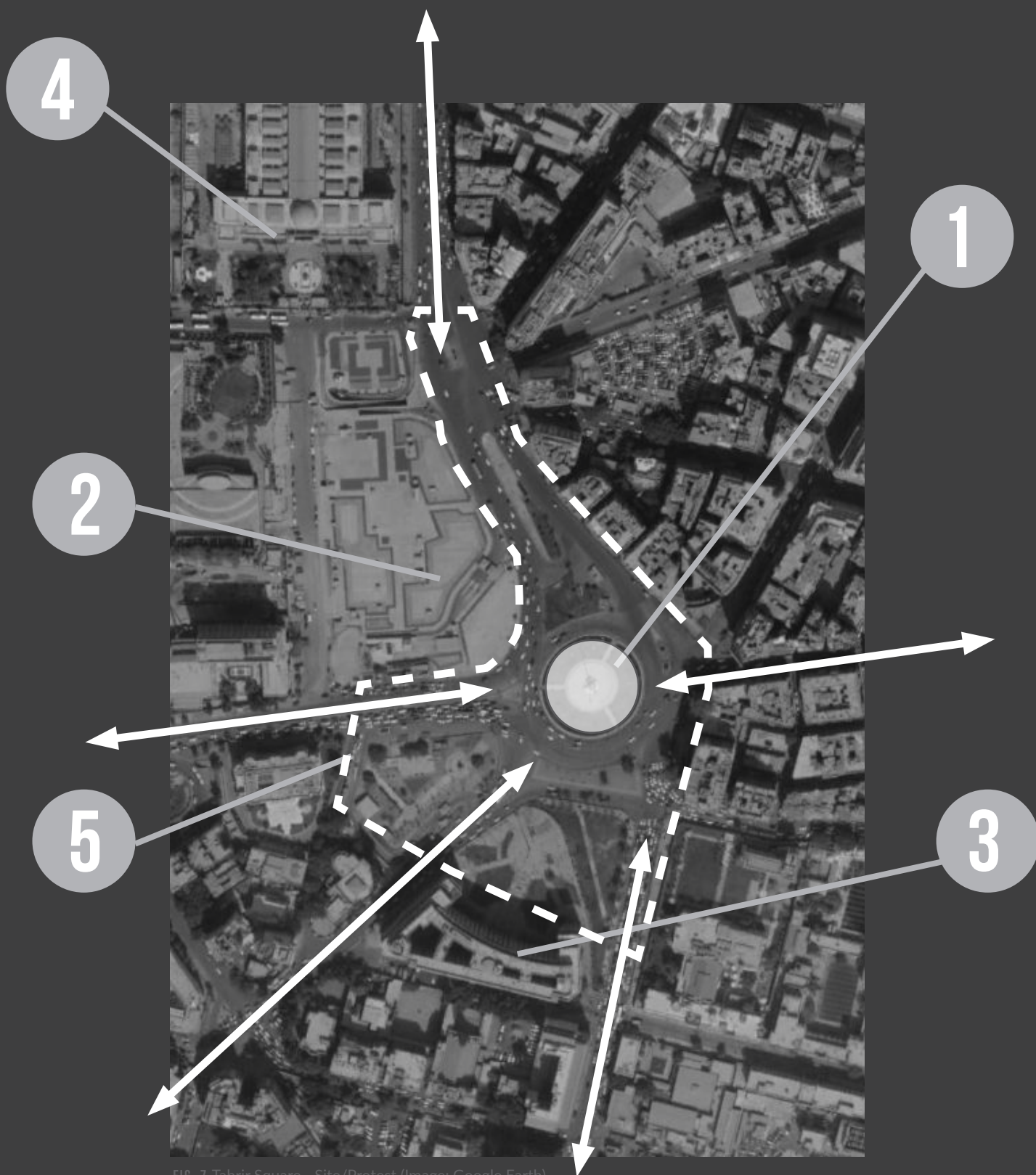
FIG. 7 Tahrir Square - Site/Protest (Image: Google Earth)

1 - TAHRIR SQUARE - CENTRAL LANDSCAPE
2 - NEW PLAZA DEVELOPMENT (CONSTRUCTION SITE DURING 2011)
3 - EL MOGAMMA
4 - NATIONAL MUSEUM OF EGYPT
5 - EXTENT OF 2011 OCCUPATION

HONG KONG

Part precedent, part case study, the ongoing pro-democracy movement in Hong Kong represents the most well documented instance so far of the evolving nature of public protest in the landscape, and an early cue as to how designers might conceive of such actions in the future.

In June 2019, residents of Hong Kong took to the streets in mass numbers, in direct response to a proposed extradition law between Hong Kong and Mainland China. Although first manifest as a popular march against an unpopular law, the protest soon expanded its scope to include calls for deep democratic reforms. At the same time, protesters adopted innovative tactics which signify an evolution in the fundamental conception of the public square as the primary site of protest; an evolution largely driven by an increasing reliance on digital technologies by both citizen and state actors, and in response to the tremendous capabilities of modern AI driven surveillance technologies in law enforcement. As this evolution continues to play out in real time, new and novel forms of mass occupation arise in urban space, with so far under explored implications for the role of designers in public life.

A good starting point from which to analyze the 2019 protests in Hong Kong is by contrasting it with the 2014 Umbrella Movement in that same city. Although ultimately unsuccessful in achieving its demands for reform, the 2014 student and academic led 79 day sit-in captured global attention with its images of hundreds of thousands of Hong Kongers occupying the main roads in the city's Admiralty and Causeway Bay neighbourhoods. Although a captivating story, of particular note here is the contrast between the Umbrella Movement's manifestation as a centralized, highly visible, and permanent occupation of a significant public space, with the more fluid tactics on display in Hong Kong today. If the tactics of the Umbrella movement were reminiscent of famous historic protests such as the previously discussed Tahrir Square revolution of 2011, today's actions in Hong Kong more closely resemble the guerilla tactics made famous by the South American revolutionaries of the 20c. The tactics employed in 2019 have been loosely defined by the Bruce Lee philosophy "be water", and represent a departure from engagement with the urban landscape over the 2014 protests in 4 distinct and interrelated ways: Occupation, Distribution, Mobility, and Appropriation.

OCCUPATION:

The most notable difference between the 2014 and 2019 protests is in their approach to occupying space. Although the relative permanence of the 79 day sit in of the earlier events allowed for a continuous presence and visibility in the landscape, it also notably allowed Chinese state law enforcement and media a wide berth to prepare for and control aspects of the demonstration, including narrative. In 2019 Hong Kong's protestors have forgone the symbolism of a singular long-term demonstration, in favour of temporary "flash mob" style demonstrations. These gatherings are organized "on the fly" using online forums and encrypted digital communications software, and vary significantly in terms of scale and duration. Individual actions can range from fewer than 100 participants to over 1 million, and can last hours or days, making it much more difficult for law enforcement to predict, prepare for, and thus control demonstrators.

DISTRIBUTION:

In conjunction with the new approach to occupation, the 2019 protests represent an evolution regarding the value of a centralized vs. spatially distributed protest movement. In 2014 the mass protests were restricted to 3 locations, with the protesters' primarily occupying the (main road) through Admiralty and Causeway Bay. This emphasis on centrality has been abandoned in 2019, and actions of varying scales and demonstrations are being held in neighbourhoods throughout the city. In addition to creating difficulties for law enforcement in attempting to quell these actions, the protestors see this spatially distributed approach to demonstration as a valuable tool for increasing awareness of state sponsored violence among the non-protesting members of Hong Kong's population.

MOBILITY:

Enabling the unpredictability of both these shifts in occupation and distribution has been a new focus on the city's transit system as both a site of demonstration and a means of rapid egress. Protesters have been noted for their guerrilla-esque preparedness, distributing both train tickets and incognito outfits at "flash mob" style demonstrations, after which the protesters disappear into the crowds of the mass transit system. This use of a key piece of urban infrastructure places the state in a difficult predicament, unable to restrict the free mobility of protesters throughout the city without negatively impacting those who aren't directly involved with the demonstrations, and thus risking increasing public approval of the protests.

APPROPRIATION:

Finally, the 2019 protests in Hong Kong have seen a continuation of the creative, almost architectural approach to demonstrators' acknowledgement and uses of urban infrastructure of 2014. Although not all individually representative of innovations in public protest, this collective repurposing of urban infrastructure speaks to a creative agency and willingness to engage with the landscape with the potential to inspire response from designers. According to this mindset, construction fences are repurposed as barricades, street signs become makeshift shields and body armour, lamp posts serve as armatures for tents and banners, construction scaffolding and buildings become message boards, and more. Lauded as "unique expressions of message in objects and space",these interventions have inspired mapping projects from architects and designers around the globe – both descriptive of the 2014 protests, and generative in their shaping of protesters actions in 2019. One prominent example of this is the mapping and distribution through social media of a CCTV network adjacent to the one of the primary protest by a group of Hong Kong landscape architects known as the At-Grade project.

2014

2019

FIG.11 Spatial Distribution of Hong Kong Protests - 2014 and 2019. (Redacted)

Such efforts compliment more traditional responses to the embedded surveillant technology, which have typically involved wearing facemasks and utilizing groups of umbrellas as "shield walls" (thereby blocking CCTV cameras and spotters from tracking their identities or activities). Interestingly, there have also been instances wherein makeup and clothing designers have developed patterning which disrupts the facial recognition abilities of AI enabled surveillance cameras, with possible implications for anti-surveillance efforts beyond direct civil disobedience scenarios. The most active and "offensive" measure used by HK protesters however, has been their use of high-powered laser pointers to neutralize the CCTV cameras identified through their collective mapping efforts; translating work by activist-designers into direct on-the-ground action.

Conclusion:

Taken collectively these shifting tactics indicate a dramatic reconceptualization of urban civil action, and in their striking contrast to the 2014 protests suggest that these changes are driven by something more than specific cultural context alone (although that certainly has played a part). Instead, it seems that Hong Kong's position as one of a few truly global cities has put it at the forefront of an increased blurring of the lines between technology, civic performance, and landscape, and that the shifting tactics of 2019 signify an ongoing process of adaptation and response – which if it scales globally will certainly have long term implications for designers of urban spaces and systems.

FIG.12 Activist-Designer Mappings of Surveillance Networks at government buildings during Hong Kong Protests, 2019 (Redacted)

2.2

"BAD PRACTICES"
SURVEILLANCE, FORTIFICATION, AND PRIVATIZATION

The next thread in this story are the so-called "bad practices" identified earlier on. Surveillance, Fortification, and Privatization. Again, this treatment will have to brief – as each topic is worth of a GP on its own, and their most important relevance to this project is how they collectively impact the concept decribed in the next section – The Program-matic Milieu

Fortification and Surveillance can be described together here, as both have become ubiquitous elements in urban environments, and are typically implemented under well-intentioned umbrella of "safety".

Safety is great, but both of these practices carry broader damaging implications for democratic societies in their own right. In the case of surveillance, French philosopher michel Foucault outlined its insidious morally compelling and freedom reducing impact – using the architectural metaphor of the panopticon to describe what he saw as a kind of society of control. Similarly, robust and physically dominant fortification elements, which have become a popular environmental response to terrorist attacks, have also been shown by John Coaffee (and others) to be of questionable value in preventing future danger. Such fortifications simply shift attacks from one space to another, and on a societal level can be described as protecting property, rather than people. Thus, in their rashly conceived or poorly designed implementation in public spaces, these safety features risk becoming little more than present reminders of authority and societal control, and undermining the ideals which underpin the very spaces they are thought to protect. In both cases, the societal concerns brought about in the search of safety and security raise real questions of "throwing out the baby with the bath water" as it were.

Privatization is problematic on a different level, and in this context by privatization, I mean the increasing replacement of true public places, with POPS (or privately owned public spaces) – such spaces are even more insidious than surveillance, in that they present themselves as public spaces, but lack any of the democratic openness that underpins the fundamental value of public space to society. Such places operate under opaque and potentially arbitrary constraints on behavior, and at the behest of private interests who's motivations are typically more concerned with reinforcing profit generating behaviour, than with supporting a free and open society.

One way to describe the collective impacts of these "bad practices" is through the conceptual framework outlined in the next slides, which I call the "programmatic Milieu" – and it through operationalizing this framework that the proposal In the second half of the project is conceived.
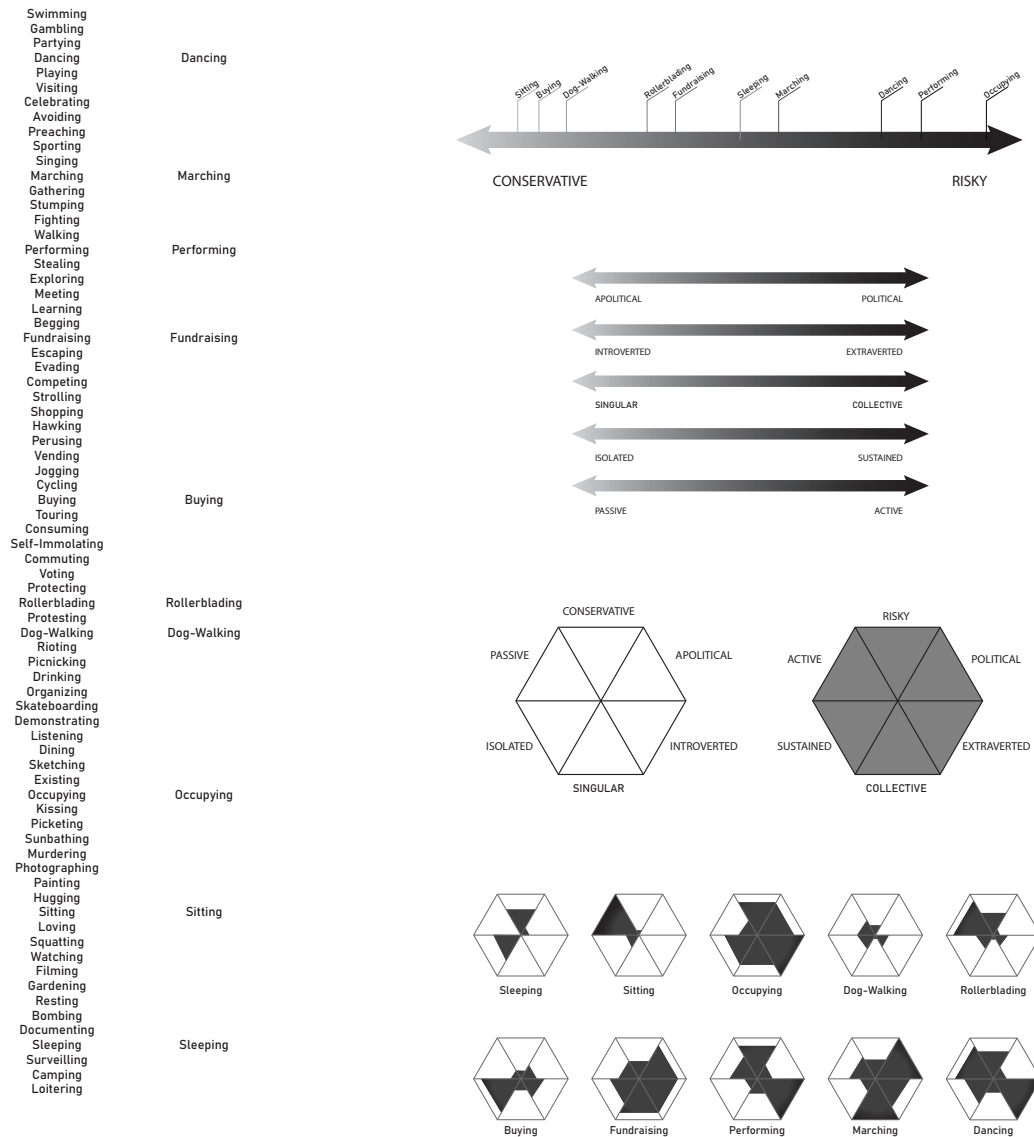
Swimming
Gambling
Partying
Dancing   Dancing
Playing
Visiting
Celebrating
Avoiding
Preaching
Sporting
Singing
Marching   Marching
Gathering
Stumping
Fighting
Walking
Performing   Performing
Stealing
Exploring
Meeting
Learning
Begging
Fundraising   Fundraising
Escaping
Evading
Competing
Strolling
Shopping
Hawking
Perusing
Vending
Jogging
Cycling
Buying   Buying
Touring
Consuming
Self-Immolating
Commuting
Voting
Protecting
Rollerblading   Rollerblading
Protesting
Dog-Walking   Dog-Walking
Rioting
Picnicking
Drinking
Organizing
Skateboarding
Demonstrating
Listening
Dining
Sketching
Existing
Occupying   Occupying
Kissing
Picketing
Sunbathing
Murdering
Photographing
Painting
Hugging
Sitting   Sitting
Loving
Squatting
Watching
Filming
Gardening
Resting
Bombing
Documenting
Sleeping   Sleeping
Surveilling
Camping
Loitering

Spectrum (Sitting, Buying, Dog-Walking, Rollerblading, Fundraising, Sleeping, Marching, Dancing, Performing, Occupying):
CONSERVATIVE — RISKY

APOLITICAL — POLITICAL
INTROVERTED — EXTRAVERTED
SINGULAR — COLLECTIVE
ISOLATED — SUSTAINED
PASSIVE — ACTIVE

Hexagon diagram (left): CONSERVATIVE / APOLITICAL / INTROVERTED / SINGULAR / ISOLATED / PASSIVE
Hexagon diagram (right): RISKY / POLITICAL / EXTRAVERTED / COLLECTIVE / SUSTAINED / ACTIVE

Sleeping, Sitting, Occupying, Dog-Walking, Rollerblading
Buying, Fundraising, Performing, Marching, Dancing

FIG. 15 Descriptive programming Methodologies.

"Creeping Tyrannies" and "The Programmatic Milieu"

As an operative and conceptual framework, this project explores a notion of public program which I've called the "programmatic milieu", which is described here as a contrast to the more conventional and behavior-specific notion of programming.

According to the conventional concept of program, any given behaviour or set of behaviours can be quantified and arranged along any given number of descriptive spectrums. Such spectrums can be very useful in understanding specific behaviours, and in designing spaces for specific purpose – but it is my position that in it's "duty to the public", and in its self-described role as "champions of public space", that Landscape architects need to adopt a more holistic notion of programming public spaces – which is concerned not with the specifics of any given behavior, but instead with the collective range and extents of all possible behaviours, and by extension with those things which impact that range of possibilities.

The extents of this programmatic boundary can be identified somewhere along a descriptive spectrum of Normative – Transgressive, which includes all distinct, physically possible behaviours. Under normal – or ideal – conditions, this "normative boundary" is determined through a kind of dialectic, in which as a given society progresses, certain behaviours are shifted beyond the normative limit, and others are brought "inside the fold"
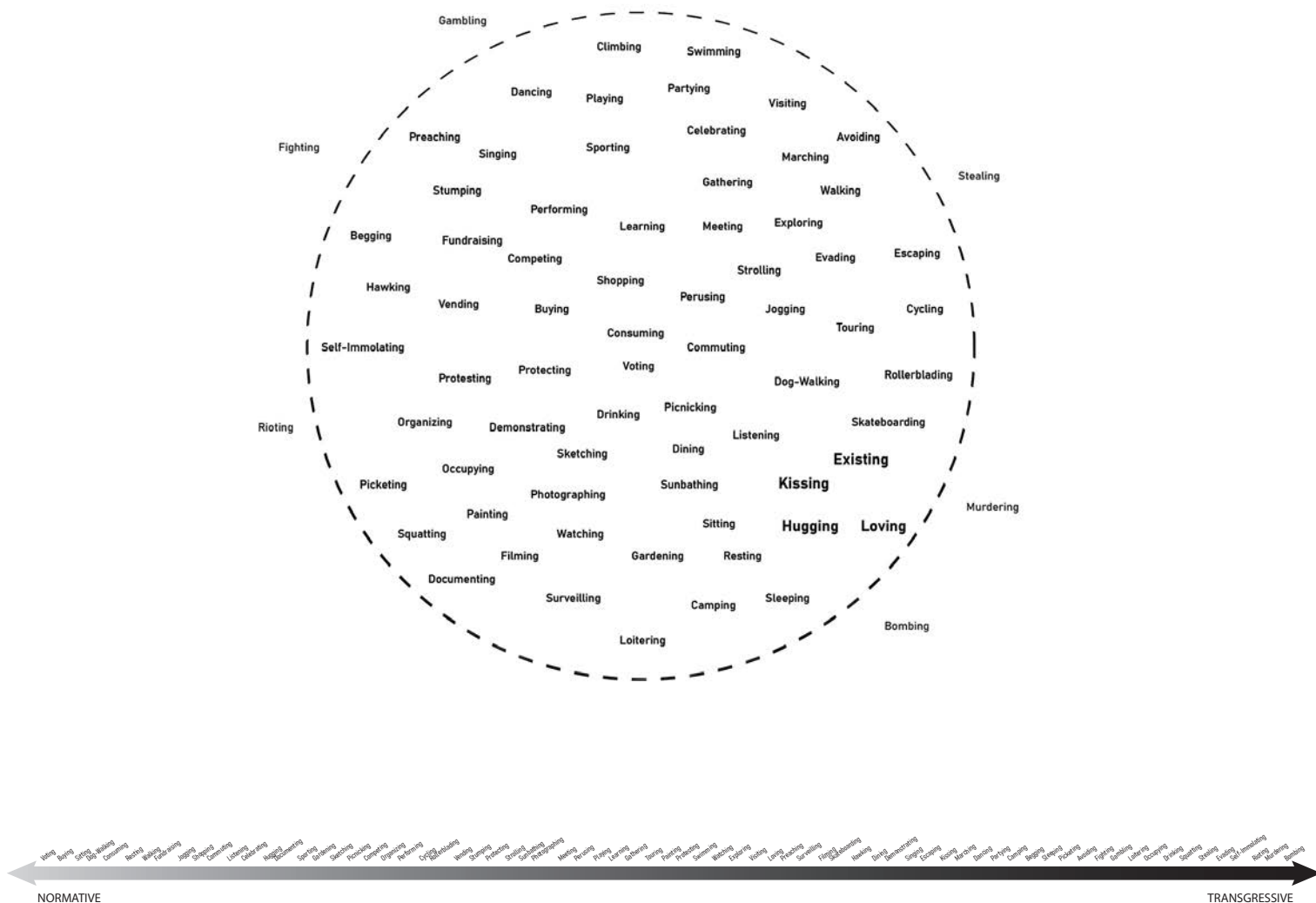
FIG.16 The Behavioural Milieu

Unfortunately, its also upon this edge that the so-called "bad practices" are shown to have their most debilitating effect. Such practices are often imposed unilaterally, and present asymmetric and undemocratically authoritative controls on public behavior. Increasingly, the healthy or "ideal" dialectic process is being replaced with this asymmetrical and opaque process which I've described here as "Creeping tyranny". The result of this substitution is a net reduction in possible behaviours, and thus an anti-democratic shrinking of the programmatic milieu.

It is my contention that in order to be true champions of public space, landscape architects need to not just argue for more square footage – but also to take action in support of the democratic health of this programmatic milieu, and furthermore that an unwillingness or inability to prevent such "bad practices" from being implemented in (at the client's request or otherwise) – suggests a fundamental tension or even complicity within professional practice.

The following site-specific proposal is my attempt to imagine a response to this tension, and to imagine an venue for a landscape architect to use our skillset in earnest pursuit "duty to the public", and in a way that pushes back against the asymmetrical shrinking of the programmatic milieu.

The proposal takes place in a development called More London Estates – directly adjacent to London's City Hall, and is achieved through the imagining of an alternative to professional practice, which for the purposes of this presentation I have titled "Direct-Practice".

SURVEILLANCE

Asymmetrical Inputs
Targeted Behaviours

Celebrating
Dancing
Sporting
Meeting
Preaching   Strolling
Performing
Learning
Competing
Singing   Shopping   Jogging
Buying   Perusing
Consuming   Touring
Fundraising   Commuting
Vending   Voting
Dining   Listening   Marching
Hawking   Sketching
Dog-Walking
Sitting
Painting   Walking
Exploring

SECURITIZATION   PRIVATIZATION

Asymmetrical Inputs
Targeted Behaviours
Shrinking Milieu

Celebrating
Dancing
Sporting
Meeting
Preaching   Strolling
Performing
Learning
Competing
Singing   Shopping   Jogging
Buying   Perusing
Consuming   Touring
Fundraising   Commuting
Vending   Voting
Dining   Listening   Marching
Hawking   Sketching
Dog-Walking
Sitting
Painting   Walking
Exploring

3

SITE ANALYSIS

FIG.18 Norm Foster's City Hall (Author)

3.1

MORE LONDON ESTATES

This proposal for a direct-practice intervention takes place at More London Estates – a landscape which perfectly and unfortunately embodies each of the "bad practices", the impact of "creeping tyranny" on civic spaces + politics, and indeed the complicity of design in the implementation of such practices. It is also, in my subjective opinion, a poorly designed and unpleasant public open space, and is thus an ideal site in which to imagine the kind of intervention proposed by this project.

More London Estates is a major commercial, political, and pseudo-civic development, constructed in the early 2000's, and centered on Norm Foster's City Hall building.

As illustrated in the accompanying photos, from a site visit in early 2020, the design of More London Estates lacks much of what today would be considered essential for a well-designed public space. It's built to the scale of an important civic square, however through unnecessary and jarring grade changes, carefully avoids reinforcing any signals of collective public gathering which might be suggested by the amphitheatre at the project's centre. An amphitheatre which, incidentally, is sunken below grade and turns its back on the river; abandoning expansive views of inner London in favour of a nearly 6 meter concrete and glass wall. Despite being the some of only seating available at the More London Estates(which is major design issue in itself), I observed exactly 0 people in the amphitheater during my visits to the site. Furthermore, the combination of the design's ubiquitous use of grey-toned hardscape materials, and huge architectural retaining elements caused by confounding grading choices, throws into sharp relief the Estate's near total dearth of planting. Aside from a few obligatory oak trees which predate the development, there is only one small area with any notable tree or shrub planting (and it is of course dominated by boxwoods). In this critic's opinion it is a landscape designed to frame Norm Foster's architecture much more than it is for human inhabitation, which would be bad enough, but it gets worse – More London Estates also puts on display each of the 3 bad practices outlined earlier.

FIG. 19 Materiality + Form (Author)

1 – Privatization:

This is a big one. The entirety of More London Estates it a privately owned public space, funded, developed, and operated by St. Martins Property Group – which is in turn owned by the sovereign wealth fund of Kuwait. In plain English, the landscape at the political heart of one of the world's great cities, instead of being a vibrant and robustly political place on par with the agora, is in fact a for-profit venture owned and operated by a foreign national government.

In line with most privately owned public spaces, citizen's behavior here is determined by an opaque and inaccessibile set of rules operating IN ADDITION to the laws of the state. Signage clearly forbids active forms of mobility such as bicycles and rollerblades, as well as specifically directing parents to restrict the behavior of their children. My research also found anecdotal evidence of activities like photography, video filming, and conducting interviews to be deemed unacceptable. This is a very clear instance of an anti-democratically reduced public program.

FIG. 20 Materiality + Form + Surveillance (Author)

2 – Surveillance

Simply put, More London Estates is blanketed with CCTV cameras. Given the private and opaque management of the landscape, visitors must take if on faith that the gaze behind the camera is conducting itself with good intentions...

3 – Fortification

Harbored just beside the development, and permanently fixed in the foreground of its views across the River is the HMS Belfast – a WW2 relic-turned tourist attraction, and a literally massive symbol of the coercive and powerful authority of the state.

It is on this landscape that this project will speculatively implement a vision of Direct Practice

FIG.21 Norm Forster's City Hall (Author)

FIG.22 On-Site Signage(Author)
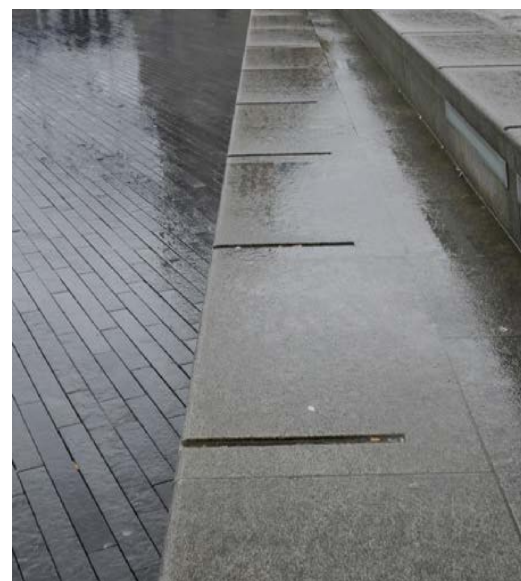
FIG.23 HMS Belfast (Author)

FIG.24 On-Site Fortification (Author)

4

DESIGN METHODOLOGY
+
PROJECT PROPOSAL

FIG. 25 Surveillance in London, England (Redacted)

4.1

DIRECT PRACTICE

If Landscape Architecture is incapable of properly countering the "bad practices" from within the conventions of professional practice, then how might a designer pursue the "public good" outside of those conventions?

For this I propose a kind of hybrid, activist, practice, which assumes, expands, and synthesizes elements of both professional practice and popular protest.

Direct Practice is similar to professional practice, in that it is both sited and "planned". It borrows several methodoligical analogies – such as Site Analysis, Concept generation, Schematic Design, and Detailing, and utilizes many of the same toolsets – Technical Drawing, Mapping, Diagramming etc. It differs in key and meaningful ways, however. For instance, direct practice recognizes that the targets of its media (members of the public) are unlikely to be design or construction professionals themselves – thus the end-state design drawing conventions of architecture are reduced in value relative to more accessible and instructional forms of communication, such as 3d images, animations, and assembly diagrams. This requires in the beginning, a corresponding reduction in the degree of technical ambition or difficulty in schematic design interventions – once again in the name of broader accessibility. Further more,If the scope of a professional project is linear and closed, passing through professional hands from the Commission through Design, Construction, and Handoff, Direct Practice is non- linear, recursive, open sourced, and open ended. It's owners, designers, builders, and users are all the diffuse body known as the public, it begins at the moment of professional project ends, the "Handoff", and continues indefinitely – or as long as there is a societal will to pursue its goals.
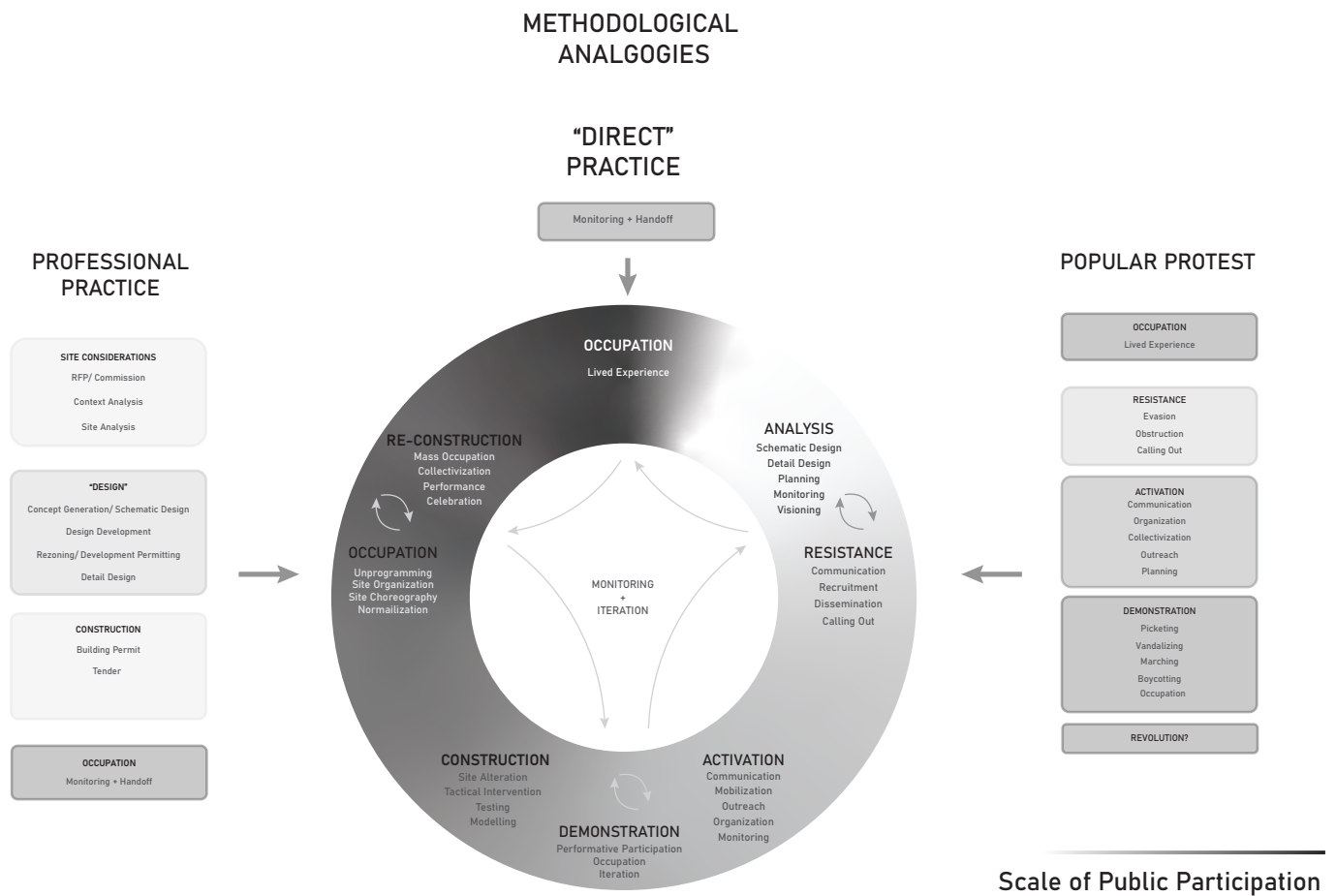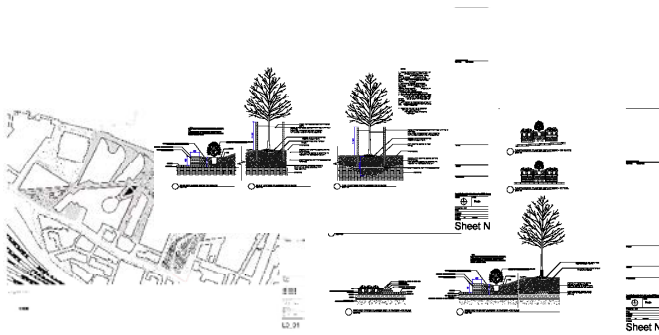
METHODOLOGICAL
ANALGOGIES


FIG.26 Direct Practice Methodological Framewok

Similarly, Direct Practice borrows many methodologies from Protest Movements. It requires antago-nism and resistance, broad organization, and direct, (occasionally illegal) activism. Like protest, it also relies on the kind of logarithmic power multiplication factor that comes with increasing scales of participation. By start-ing small, and through persistence and organization, building a base of citizen support, the practice capitalizes on the cultural phenomenon wherein a society's expectations regarding a type of behavior are recalibrated and normalized, in accordance with the number of people performing that behavior. This "normative shift" is closely related to the kind of healthy or dialectical progress described in the programmatic milieu, and it is through leveraging this phenomenon, that direct practice seeks to create lasting cultural change. In this case the behavior being transitions from transgressive (and illegal) to normalized, is members of public taking direct intervening action in, and a controlling interest in the spatial and programmatic makeup of the public realm.

1. Post-Construction Documentation

3. Process Animations
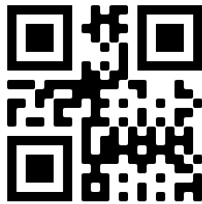
2. Digital Organization Conventions

4. Assembly Diagramming

FIG.27 Direct Practice Graphic Communication Considerations

A direct practice methodology allows the designer to act immediately in pursuit of their goals, and then to dramatically increase the ambition and potential impact of such actions, as organization and participation increase.shift" is closely related to the kind of healthy or dialectical progress described in the programmatic milieu, and it is through leveraging this phenomenon, that direct practice seeks to create lasting cultural change. In this case the behavior being transitions from transgressive (and illegal) to normalized, is members of public taking direct intervening action in, and a controlling interest in the spatial and programmatic makeup of the public realm.

A direct practice methodology allows the designer to act immediately in pursuit of their goals, and then to dramatically increase the ambition and potential impact of such actions, as organization and participation increase.

4.2

ML ESTATES "MASTER PLAN"

This escalating potential for change is illustrated in the 3 "phases" of the following speculative master "plan" which applies a direct practice methodology in order to expand the previously described conceptual boundaries of normative-possibility, elevate the visibility of political discourse in public landscape, and last but not least, inject some life and vibrancy into an otherwise drab and boring site.

It's aim is nothing less than site-wide spatial and programmatic revolution, constructed not with cranes and bobcats, but instead with programming itself. Through People – organizing, imagining, and performing radical acts of program, in a sustained, persistent, and tactical manner.

The Master Plan begins with actions taken at the individual scale, and escalates from there - ending with a vision of More London Estates as a landscape completely transformed by occupation, in which radical expression and the free and open exchange of ideas replace City Hall as the symbolic heart of London's Civic Politics.

Nude Sunbathing

Protesting/ Marching

Protesting/ Occupying

Drinking

Watching
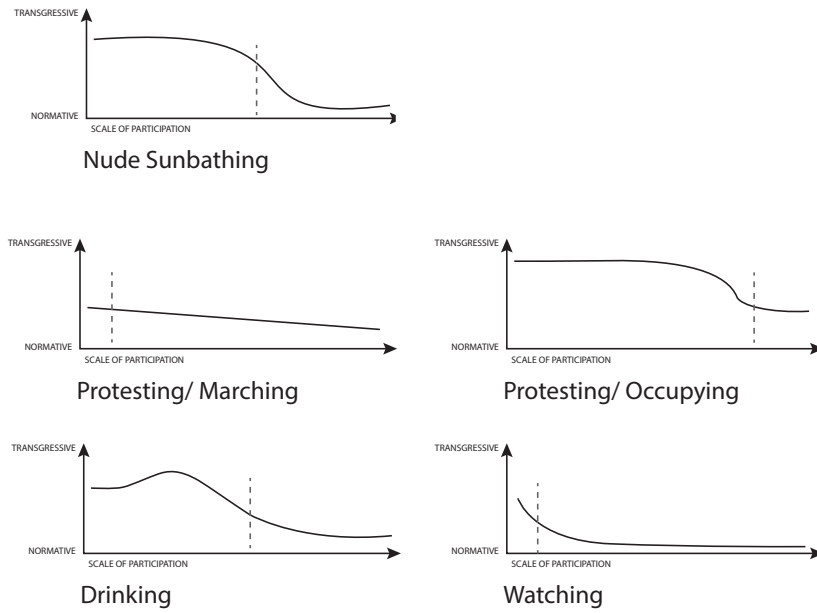
The Normative Shift

For any given non-normative program, a scale of partipation can be achieved at which societal norms shift to accomodate that behaviour.
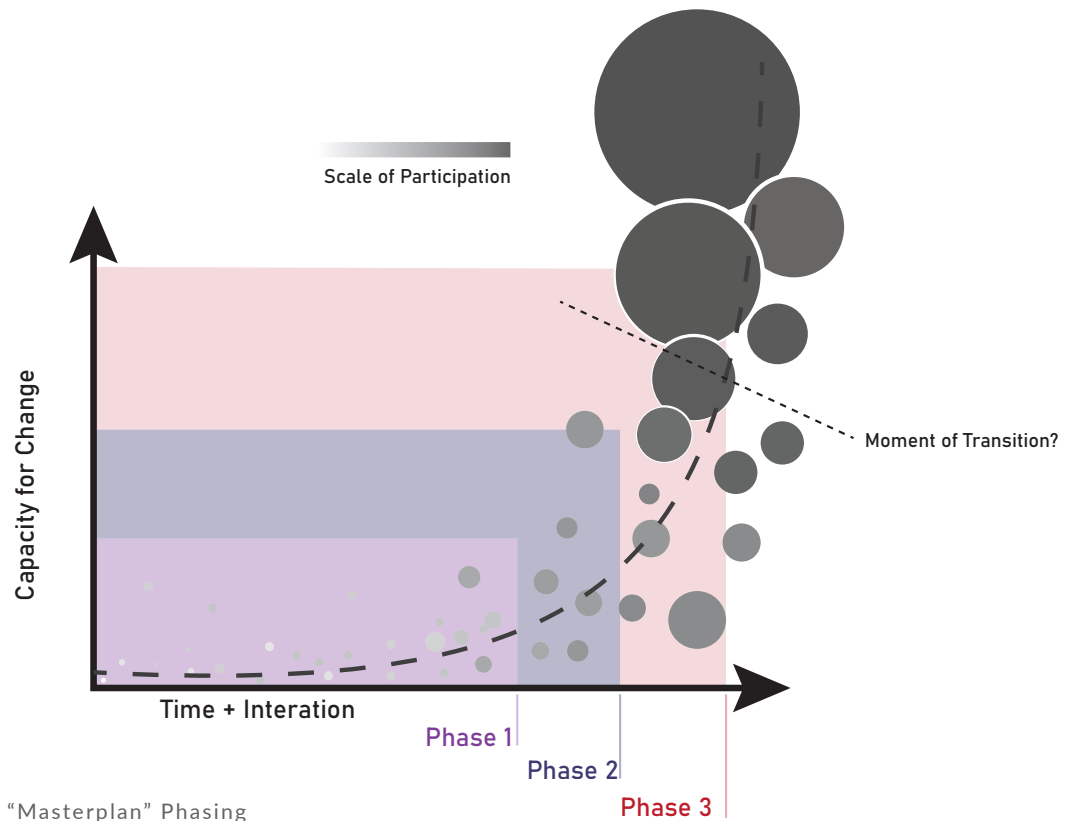
FIG.28 The Normative Shift

FIG.29 "Masterplan" Phasing

PHASE 1

These actions are designed to be carried out by the designer, or an individual with little means of production, and limited or no budget. As such – their ability to enact physical change to the site is of significally less impact than their value in organization and coalition building. Like famous counter-cultural movements of the past, graphic design and communication are the biggest tools here – where I imagine a series of signs deployed on site, which both call out the landscape's deficiencies and serve as a tool of organization. Here – QR codes are proposed as a method by which site visitors can be directed to online forums for communication and coordination, as well as for the provision of materials like site maps, and linking to edifying media.

This use of QR codes is imagined as a no-cost solution for delivering many aspects of the master plan – for instance a site-surveillance map, or the plans and assembly diagrams for a planter bed made from appropriated site materials, which could be accessed on-site, on-demand, by anyone with a smart phone (almost everyone)
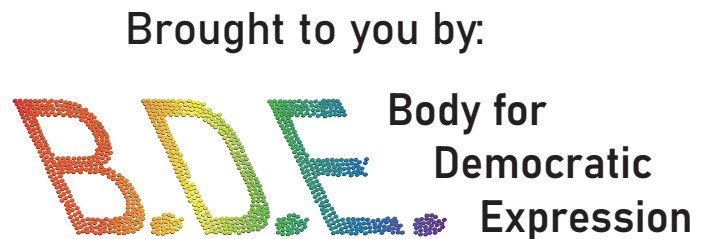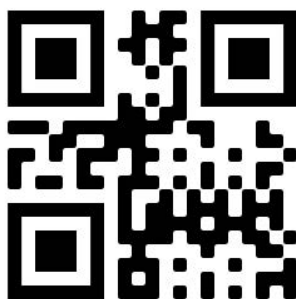

FIG.30 Sample Signage

FIG.31 Sample QR Code + Organizational Logo Design

FIG.32 Tactical Wayfinding (Selected Frames)

Seeds of Change

Following the Lead of Geurilla Gardeners, a well-timed stroll turns into an act of spatial resistance...

SEED + SOIL DISTRIBUTOR

A device to enable even distribution of seed, soil, and earth without attracting undue attention...

Recommended Uses:
- Planting of wildflower or native seed mixes in otherwise underutilized areas
- Choreography of planter zone for future bed contstruction

MATERIALS:
An old Backpack
Heavy Plastic Bag (Garbage bag or similar)
Flexible Tubing (PVC, or Used Garden Hose)
Elastic Bands
Scissors of OLFA Knife
Seed Mix
Kitchen Funnel (Sized to match hosing)
Coconut Mesh Sheashing or Loose Weave Burlap
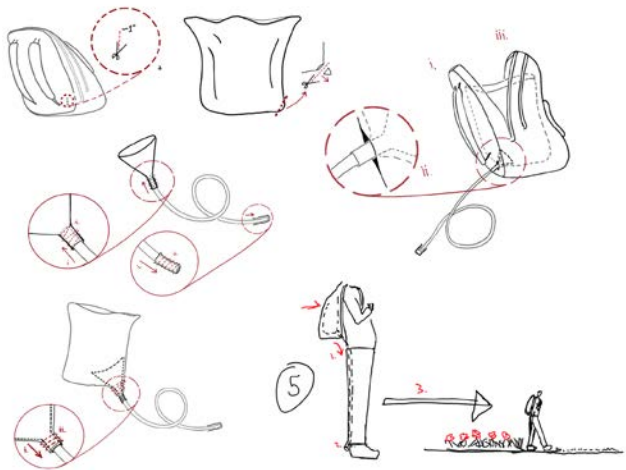
ASSEMBLY AND USE INSTRUCTIONS:

i. Using OLFA Knife, create small incisions at bottom of backpack (near hip height while wearing) and in bottom corner of garbage bag

ii. Using elastic bands, affix kitchen funnel to one end (top) of hosing, and run oppsite end of hosing through incision in garbage bag such that funnel rests within incision. Secure funnel in position using elastic bands on outside of bag.

iii. Insert hose and liner into backpack, running hose bottom through and aligning funnel with incision. Trim bottom of hose to just below ankle length.

iv. At bottom of hose, use elastic bands to affix a cap of loose weave burlap or similar, to act as a regulating cap for seed flow.

v. fill hosing and lined backpack with appropriate seed mix.

TO USE:

Wearing backpack, run hosing through pant leg and walk in area to be seeded. If secrecy is desired, the seeding of greater areas can be achieved through planning and choreography with multiple gardeners. For greatest success, seed in Springtime and just before a rain.

FIG.33 DIY Seed Distributions System - Cut Sheet

Recommended Wildflower Seed Mix:

Aster Nova-angliae

Geranium sanguineum

Veronica bonariensis

Veronica langifolia

Cardamine pretensis

Leucanthemum vulgare

Silene flos-cuculi

Sanguisorba tenufolia

FIG.34 Geurilla Planting (Selected Frames)

MP PHASE 2

Over time, and assuming that the dynamic performance of phase 1 results in a coalition of engaged citizens – site interventions can take on increasingly ambitious goals. Here, the focus shifts from merely calling out the site's inadequacies, to, like the tactical urbanists, "doing something about it".

One Person-One Box

As a functional metaphor for the democratic values of direct practice, the designer publishes plans for the democracy box – a self-supporting 2'x2' box which requires no fasteners, can be constructed with nothing more than a single sheet of plywoodand and a jigsa, and embodies the diffuse, flexible, and scaling potential of direct practice itself. It is a DIY, super-low cost, flatpacked site furnishing solution, which is also multi-functional, modular, and espansive. One Box can be a seat or a planter, 4 boxes a bench, 40 boxes makes a play structure, and by the time you have 4,000 members of the direct-practice movement, the box becomes a module for site wide landforming.i
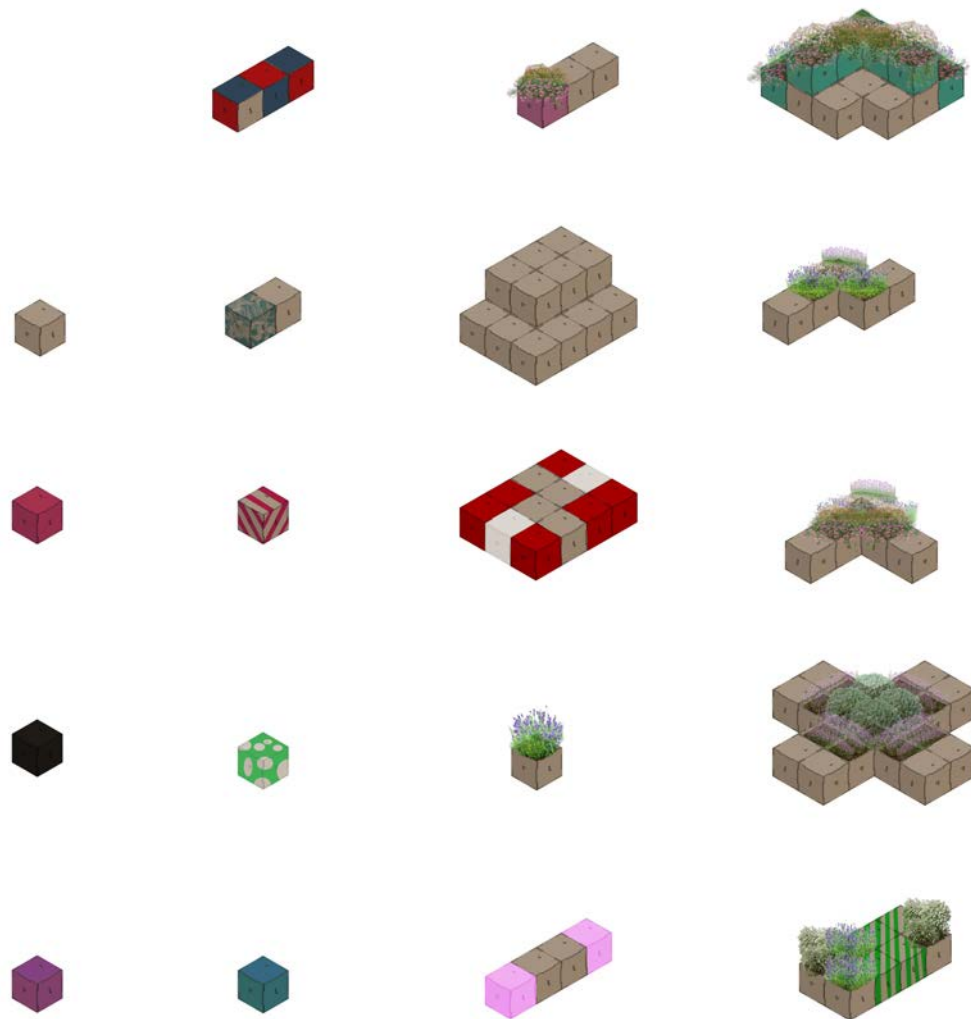
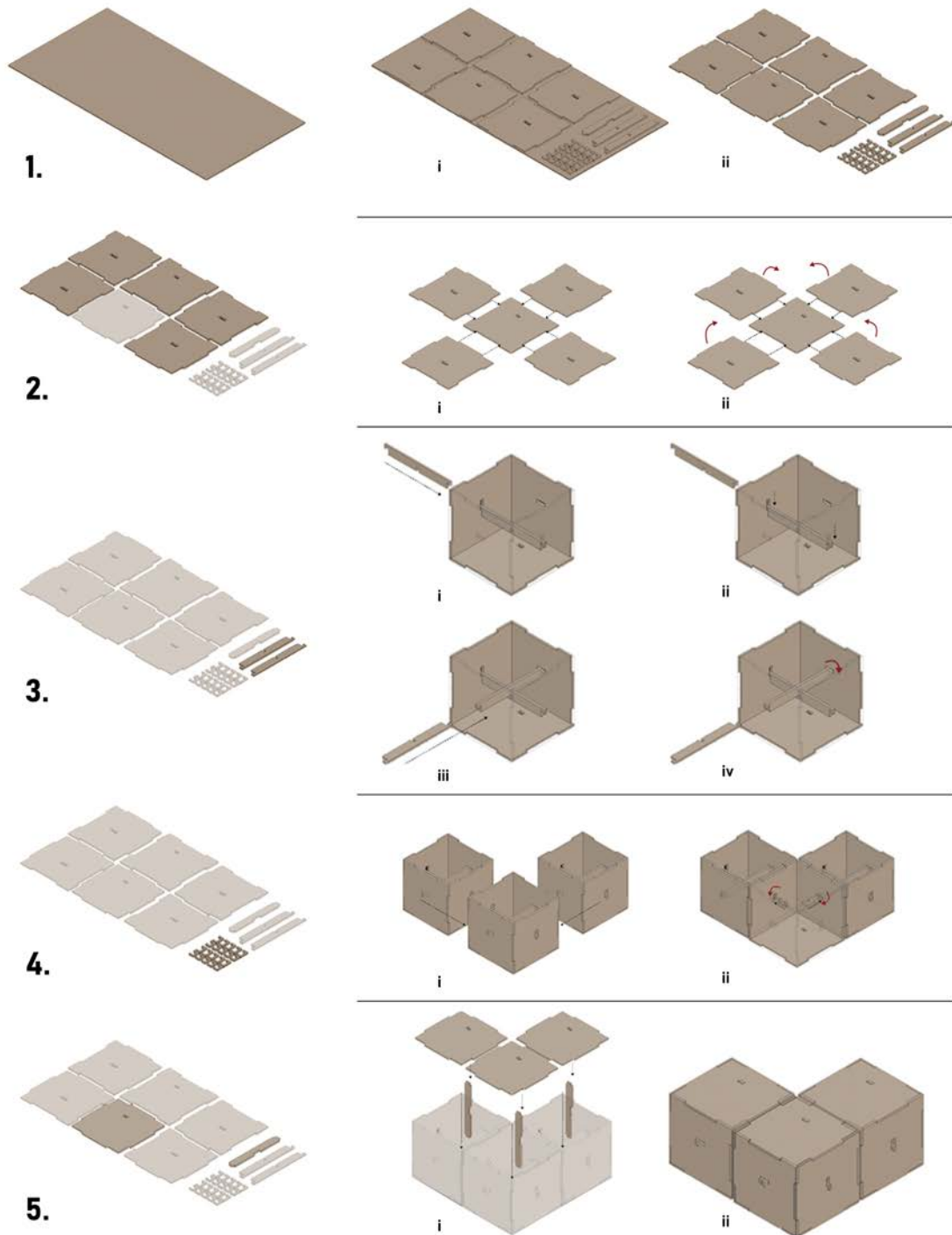FIG.35 Modular Box Permutations

DEMOCRACY BOX ASSEMBLY GUIDE

FIG.36 Modular Box Assembly Instructions

FIG.37 Site Furnishing (Selected Frames)

FIG.38 Expressive Skate Stops

POPULIST ART

Yes, More London Estates technically has public art already – but austere, abstract, and conservative sculptures are not exactly suitable for promoting a lively civic discourse. For this project, direct-practice calls for Graffiti's return to prominence – we don't need Public Art, We Need Populist Art!

London's truest public artists are invited bring their art out of the nearby, undergound, inaccessible, and worst of all politically sanctioned Leake Street Tunnels – and into the public eye once more – and overtime More London's harsh and poorly designed elevations become a canvas for experimental art and communication.
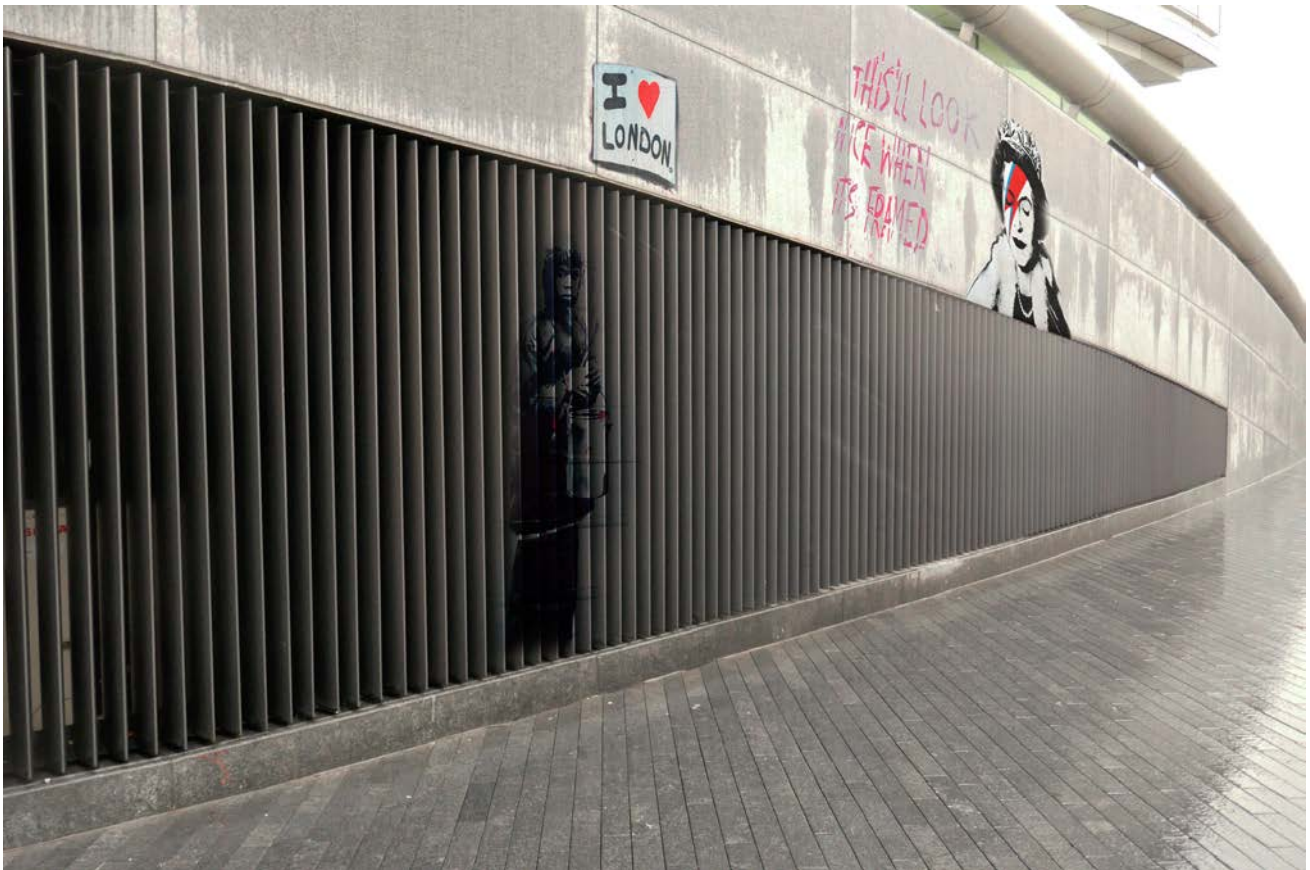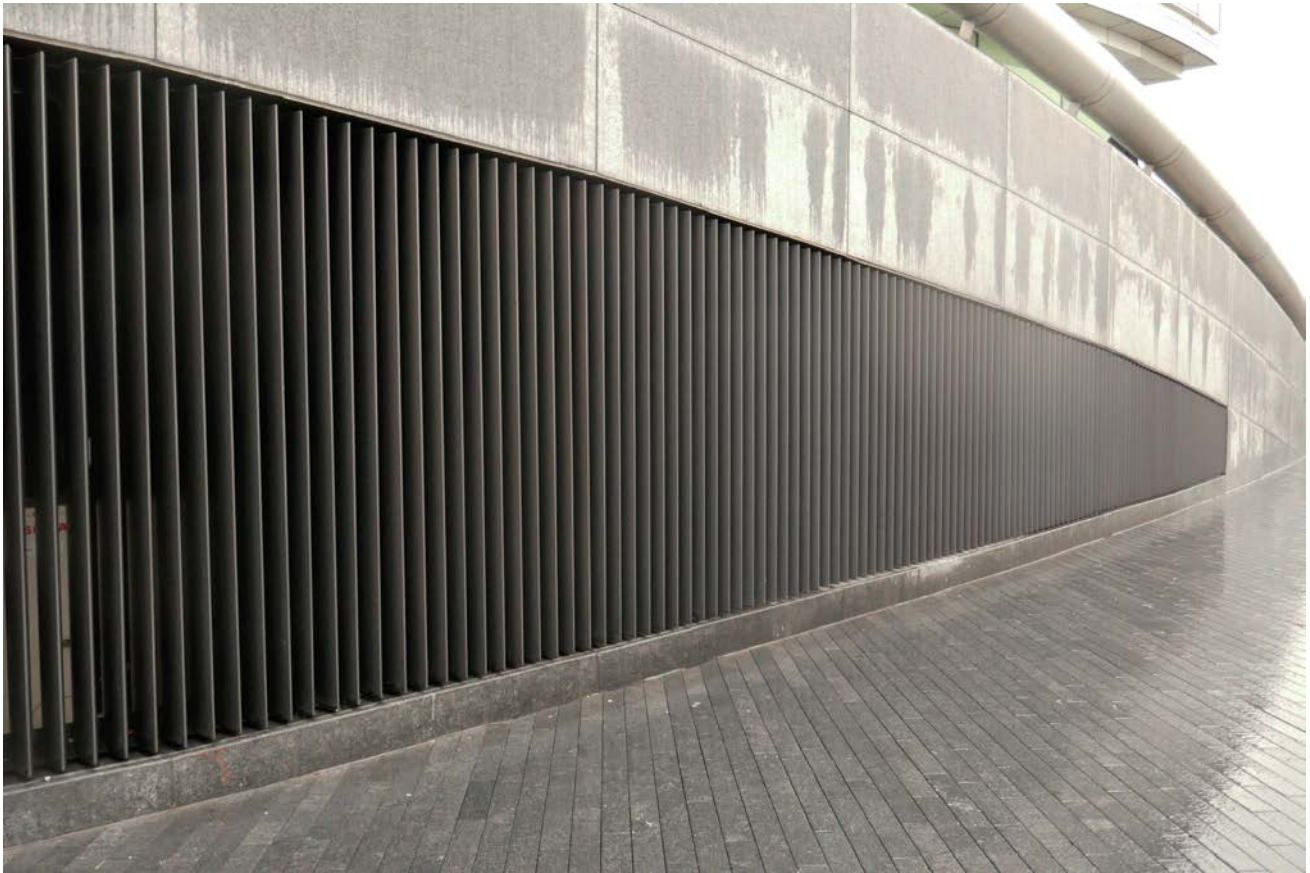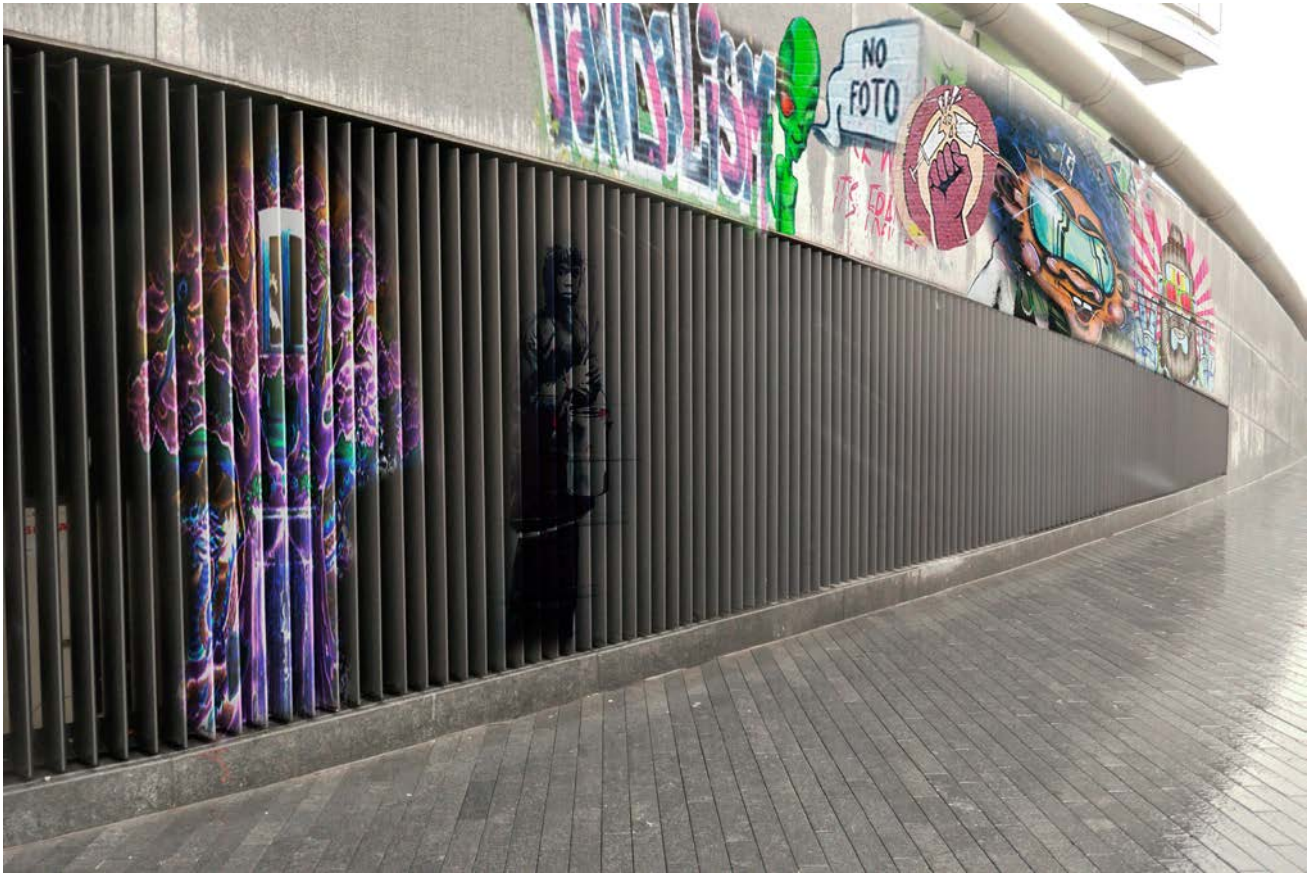
FIG.39 An Easter Egg

FIG.40 Populist Art in Public Space (Selected Frames)

Finally, after much organization and effort on the part of a few, and after breaking a few eggs in the process – the movement ignites. In a sweeping event, citizens occupy and set up camp at More London Estates, and through sheer mass of participation, establish a permanent revolution in public programming, and transformation of site – and as with the earlier phases, the landscape architect's toolbox once again makes valuable contributions to the process.

In this final manifestation of the Master Plan – it is the landscape architect's skill of master planning which comes to the fore, diagramming key guidelines will allow not only for a smoothly operating camp, but also pave the way for it's wider acceptance within the broader public's perception.

FIG.41 Establishing an Occupation
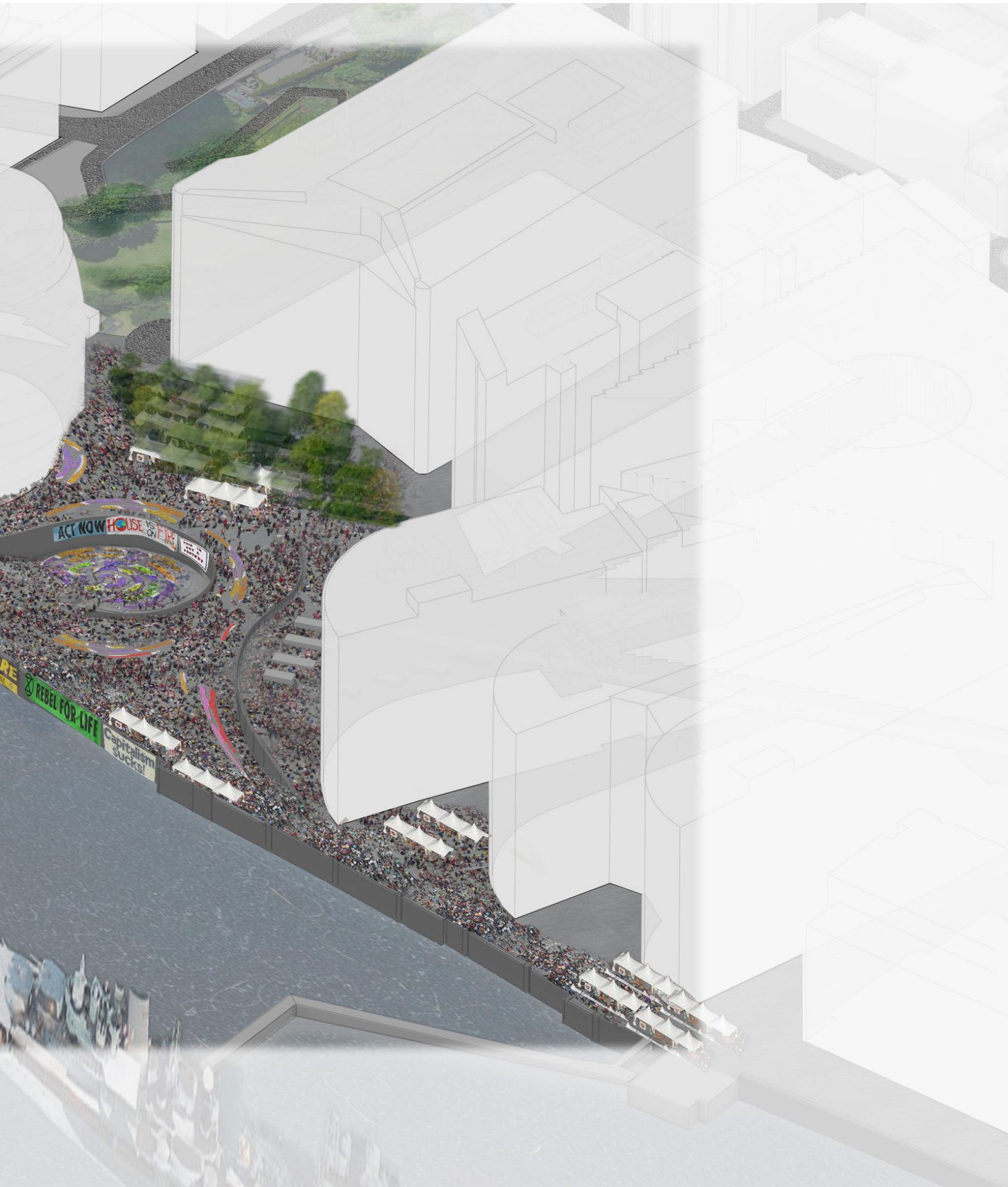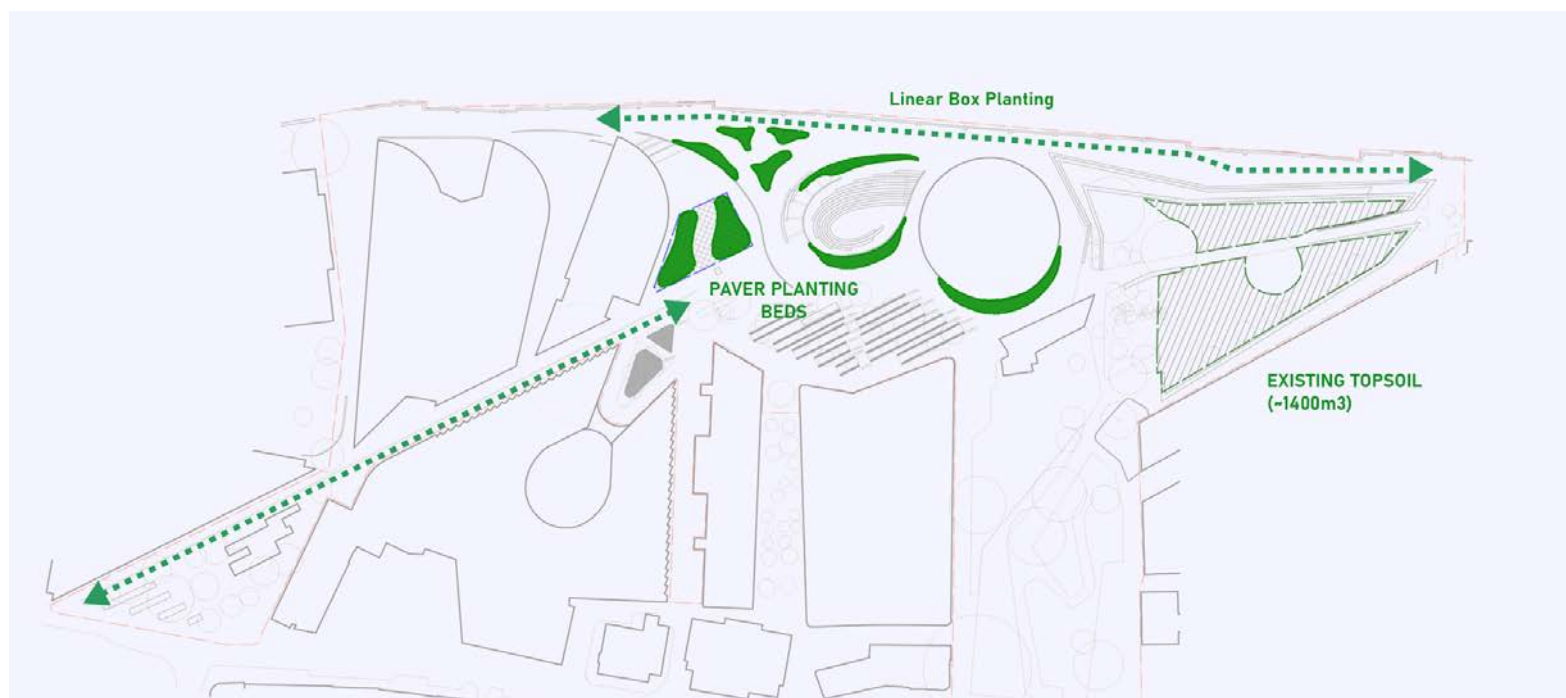
FIG.42 Site-Wide Replanting Schematic (Selected Animation Frame)

SOIL

In identifying the East Lawn as the most ideal location for a tent-city, the master plan suggests emancipating the site's nearly 1500 cubic meters of topsoil from its grassy prison, and using it to redistribute planters throughout the rest of the site. If the occupation achieves nothing else, this move at least should go over well with the neighbours.

It is also at this stage of mass participation that more permanent site changes can take place – such as following the cue of those barricade constructing protesters, and constructing large planter beds out of the site's pavers – creating beauty even as they prevent unwanted vehicle access.
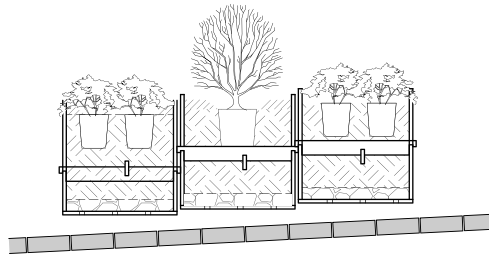
FLATPACK BOX PLANTER DEPLOYMENT - ON SLOPE
Scale: 1:20
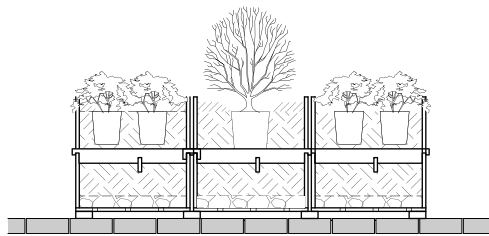
FLATPACK BOX PLANTER DEPLOYMENT - TYPICAL
Scale: 1:20

GROUND COVER PLANTER BED IN PAVERS - ON SLAB
Scale: 1:20

NOTES:
1. DUE TO UNCERTAINTY REGARDING UNDERLYING STRUCTURAL ENGINEERING, TREES AND SHRUBS REQUIRING MORE THAN 450MM SOIL DEPTH ARE NOT RECOMMENDED FOR GEURILLA GARDENING ON SLAB.
2. SHRUB SHOULD BE PLANTED WITH ELEVATION OF TOP OF ROOTBALL OR POT LEVEL WITH FRESH GRADE ELEVATION.
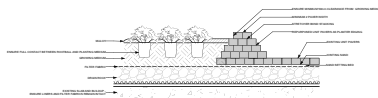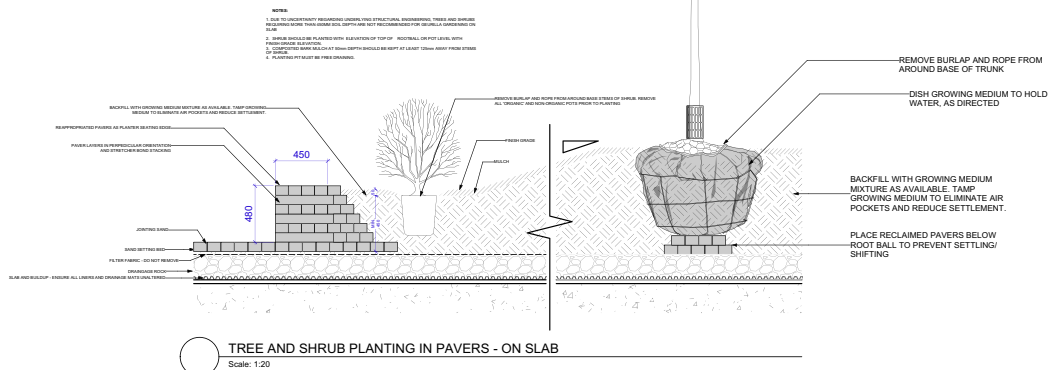3. COMPOSTED BARK MULCH AT 90mm DEPTH SHOULD BE KEPT AT LEAST 120mm AWAY FROM STEMS OF SHRUB.
4. PLANTING PIT MUST BE FREE DRAINING.

REMOVE BURLAP AND ROPE FROM AROUND BASE OF TRUNK

REMOVE BURLAP AND ROPE FROM AROUND BASE STEMS OF SHRUB. REMOVE ALL 'ORGANIC' AND NON-ORGANIC POTS PRIOR TO PLANTING

DISH GROWING MEDIUM TO HOLD WATER, AS DIRECTED

BACKFILL WITH GROWING MEDIUM MIXTURE AS AVAILABLE. TAMP GROWING MEDIUM TO ELIMINATE AIR POCKETS AND REDUCE SETTLEMENT.

REAPPROPRIATED PAVERS AS PLANTER SEATING EDGE

PAVER LAYERS IN PERPENDICULAR ORIENTATION AND STRETCHER BOND STACKING

FRESH GRADE

MULCH

BACKFILL WITH GROWING MEDIUM MIXTURE AS AVAILABLE. TAMP GROWING MEDIUM TO ELIMINATE AIR POCKETS AND REDUCE SETTLEMENT.

PLACE RECLAIMED PAVERS BELOW ROOT BALL TO PREVENT SETTLING/ SHIFTING

450

480

JOINTING SAND

SAND SETTING BED

FILTER FABRIC - DO NOT REMOVE

DRAINAGE ROCK

SLAB AND BUILDUP - ENSURE ALL LINERS AND DRAINAGE MATS UNALTERED

TREE AND SHRUB PLANTING IN PAVERS - ON SLAB
Scale: 1:20
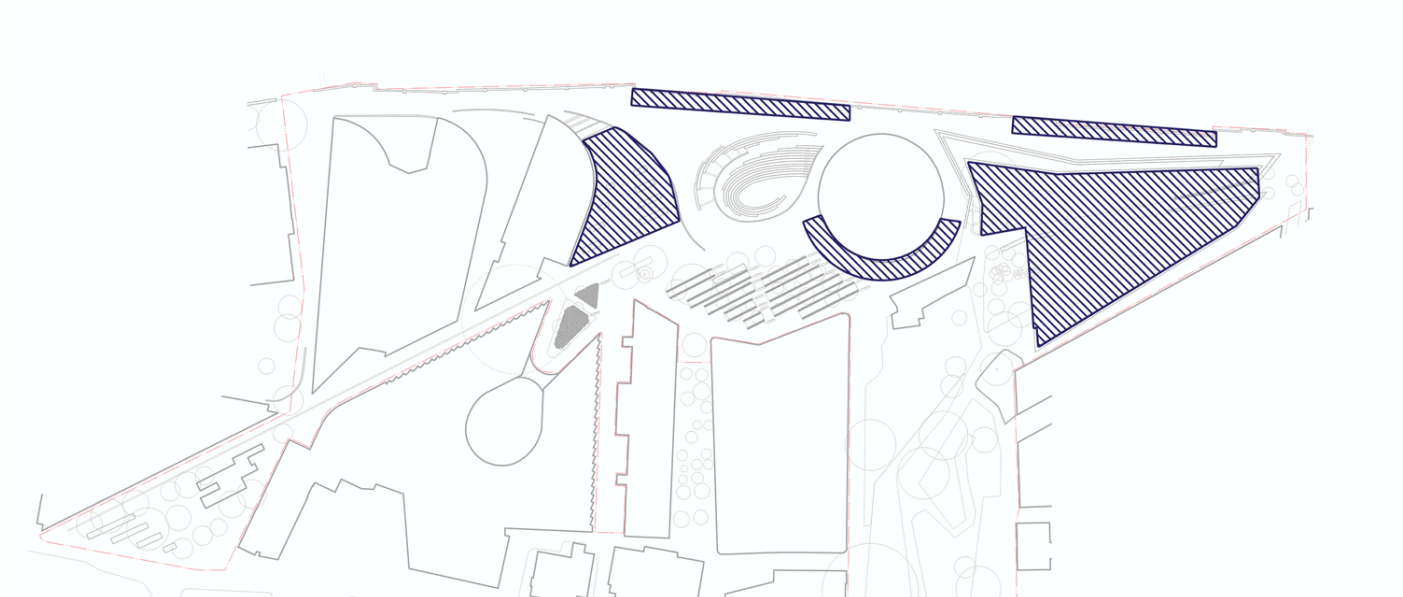
FIG.43 Appropriated Site-Material Planting Details

FIG.44 Suggested Tent-City Zones (Selected Animation Frame)

FIG.45 Diagrammatic Tent Layouts (Selected Animation Frames)
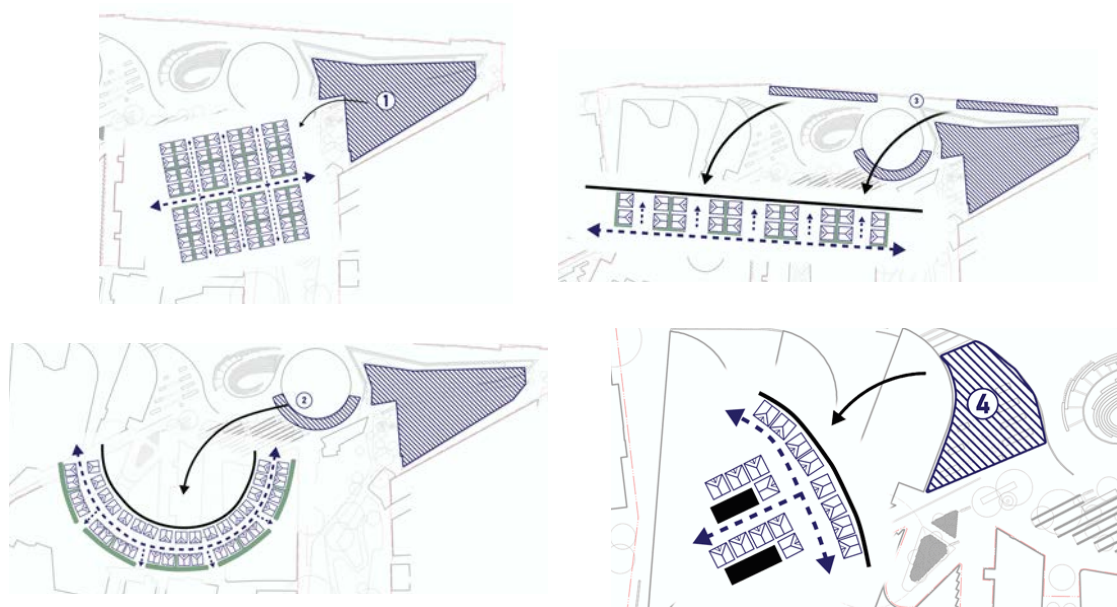
CAMPING

In an occupation such as this, the key to facing unpredictability is to build-in flexibility. Thus, although the main camp is established on the East Lawn, a scheme is suggested in which satellite "neighbour-hoods" can develop according to need. Ideal tent layouts are provided as well, which are deemed most likely to produce a version of domestic bliss.

1. **Entry Nodes + Visitor Information**
2. **Emergency Vehicle + Delivery Access**
3. **3m Primary Circulation Buffer**
4. **Health + Social Services**
5. **3-Step Septic System**
   i. **Facilities**
   ii. **Buried Tanks**
   iii. **Septic Field**

6. **Commisary Services**

FIG.46 Camp Logistical Analysis (Selected Animation Frame)

LOGISTICS

As with all aspects of society – success ultimately hinges on infrastructure and logistics. Here, an analysis of the existing site yields insight into how best to receive deliveries, provide and distribute information, social, health, and commissary services, key site circulation routes, and perhaps most-importantly, schematic plans for a 3 step septic system.
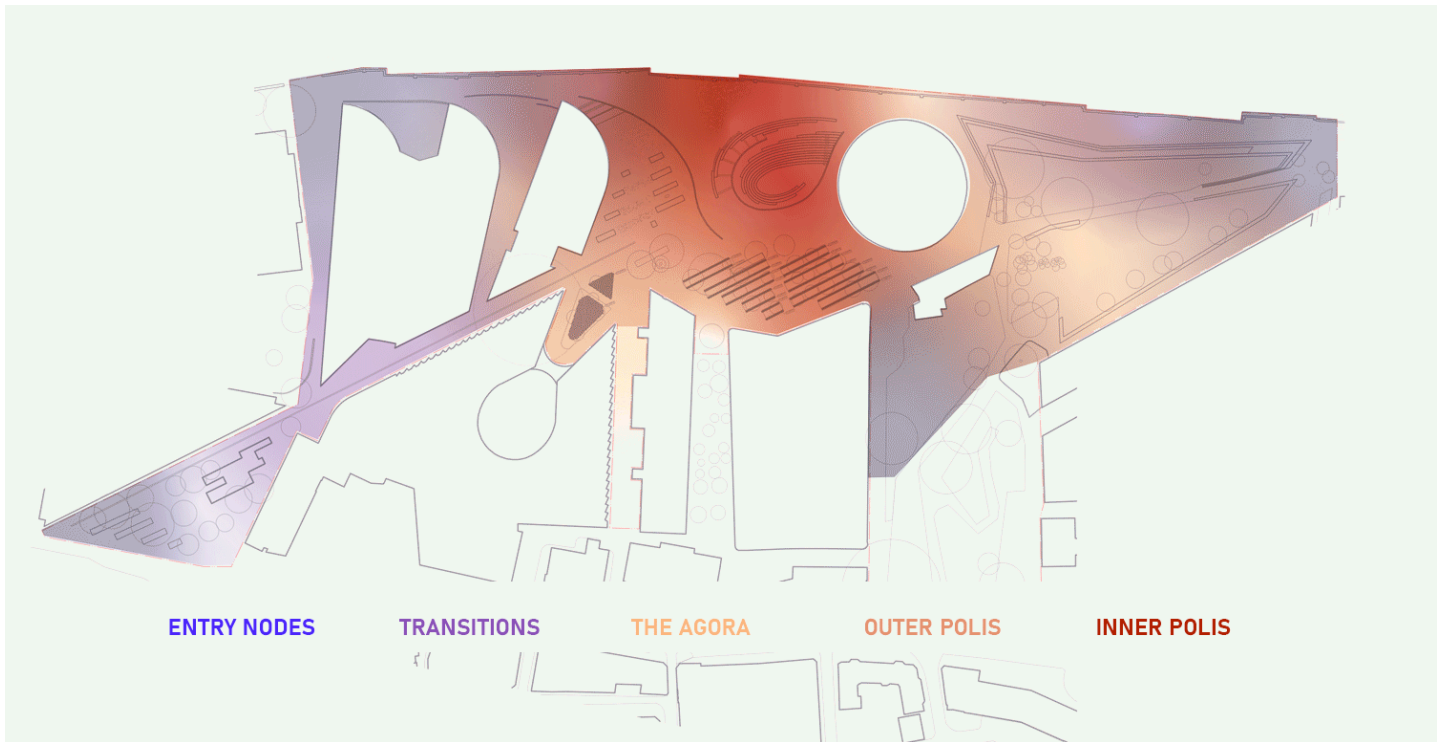
ENTRY NODES   **TRANSITIONS**   **THE AGORA**   **OUTER POLIS**   **INNER POLIS**

FIG.47 Dynamic Site Programming (Selected Animation Frame)

PROGRAM

Finally, we get to the heart of it. The master plan suggests an ideal conceptualization of site programming – which seeks to the goal of creating a sustainable space for open and radical expression of personal and political ideas, with the need to respect urban neighbours and win over public support.

To this end, a concept of concentric, or nested, zones is recommended – with the site's "radically open" core at it's centre, and a gradual transition back towards main-stream culture at it's outer edges. This arrangement has practical and symbolic benefits. On the practical level, this prevents friction along the site's edges, as well as allowing visitors a degree of control over their experience. On a symbolic level, it positions the occupation's programmatic and political heart in the amphitheatre adjacent to city hall – putting the democratic project on full display in a counter-point to the closed architecture of city hall.

In Conclusion – it is not simply the creation of a space "for" civic discourse which is a the ultimate goal of direct-practice, but fostering and participating directly in the discourse itself. In this manner spatially agency is, incrementally at first, and then exponentially, reclaimed as a powerful tool of public political expression.

1. Inner Polis
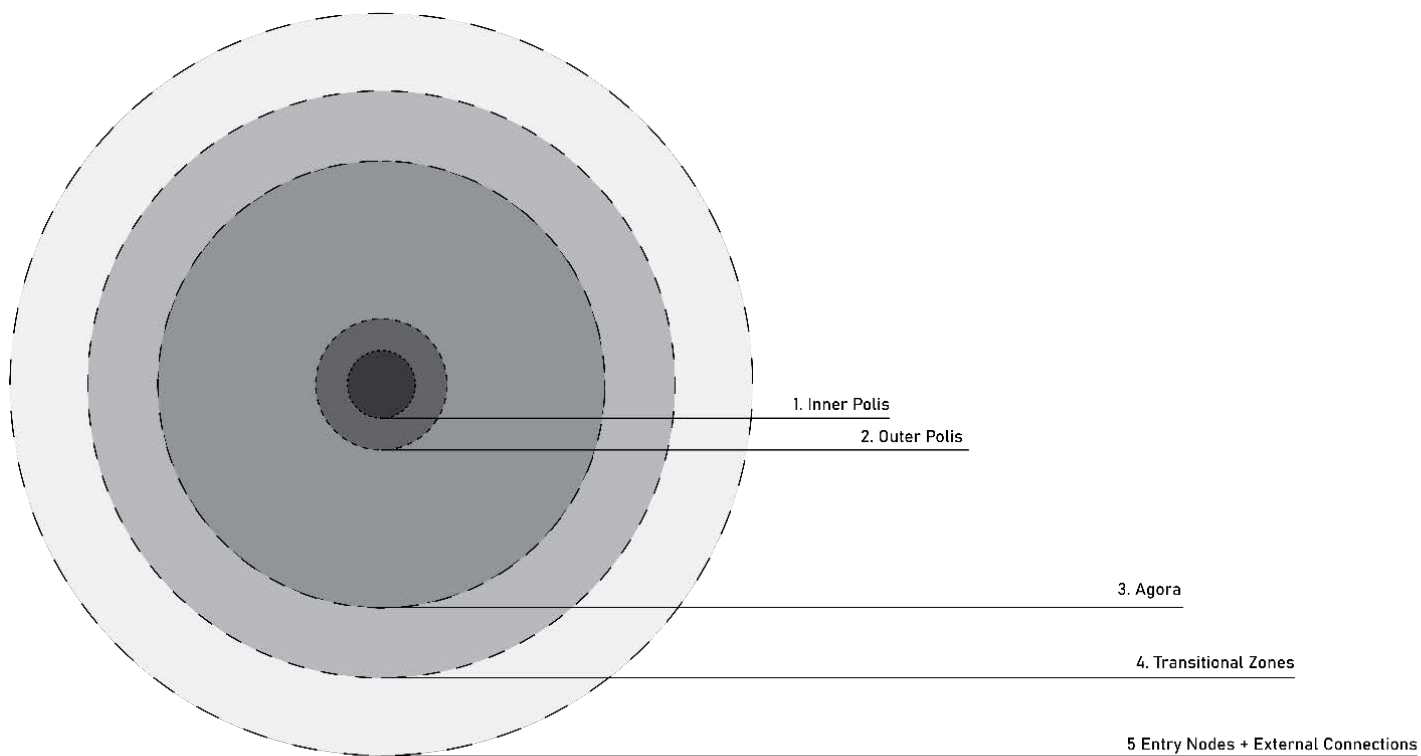2. Outer Polis

3. Agora

4. Transitional Zones

5 Entry Nodes + External Connections

FIG.48 "Nested" Site Programming Diagram

FIG.49 Ongoing Occupation 1

FIG.50 Ongoing Occupation 2

NO FOTO

feed him to the corgis

FREEDOM iS ESSENTIAL

5

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