Transformational Urbanism: A Revitalized View for the 21st Century City

A Thesis

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Ву

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-
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Dedication:

To Dr. Cornelia Paraskevas for teaching me about her hometown of Athens, Greece and showing me the beauty of a bunch of stacked rocks.

To Gerardo Brown-Manrique, Dr. Sergio Sanabria, J.E. Elliott, and Dick Overton: The thesis committee that let me run wild with this fantasy idea and take the ridiculous to The Ridiculous.

To Architecuture, the beautiful mistress that has and will be my one and only true love.

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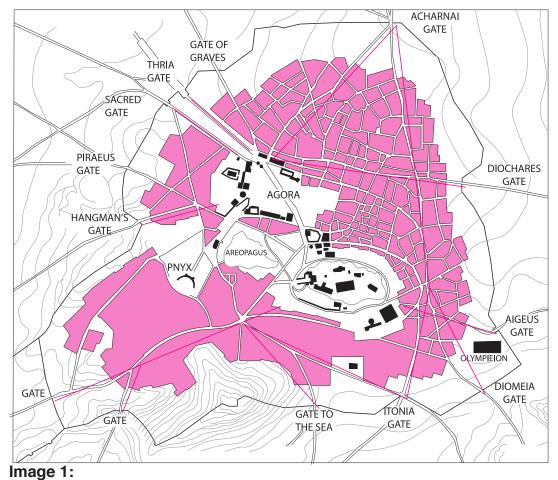
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Abstract:

The city can no longer be seen statically. The world is rapidly changing and solutions to urban sprawl need to be adjusted to the 21st century. Can 21st century cities expand and contract based on political ideals and exonomic thought?

This paper places the city of Athens, Greece under the historical filter of Ildefonso Cerda, Camillo Sitte, and the theories of O.M. Ungers and Rem Koolhaas. Ildefonso Cerda's work reflects the idea of movement through networks with providing functional environments. Camillo Sitte views the city as an aesthetic composition, while O.M. Ungers and Rem Koolhaas take a formalistic approach to the functionality of archipelago cities. The theory of Manuel De Landa's crystalline city as a dynamic organism, with vertical and horizontal expansion through layers of hierarchies and meshwork; becomes a distant relationship of Koolhaas, Ungers, and Citte. While Cerdas theory agrees with the energy flows of cities.

A graphical analysis of historical conditions of Athens, Greece attempts to consider a revitalized viewing of 21st century city as a Transformational Urbanism; energy flows become a political meshwork while hierachical organisms are an economic thought of the 21st century city



Authors redrawn figure ground map done by Travlos in 1960. The diagram shows filled in with pink the organic growth while the pink lines signify major roads leading into the city from the walls

Introduction:

The city has become a complex hub of whatever the mind imagines. If we look back at the way the cities of Greece were formed we find two manners of planning: gridded and organic. While the way we define the city has changed, sprawl instead of organic, the fundamental concepts enlisted by the Greeks have remained influential. While ancient Athens experienced sprawl in the modern sense of the word, if we study a plan of Athens from the fifth century B.C. we find a form of sprawl happening. (Image 1) From this diagram the idea of a "sprawl" or organic planning has been a function of urban design either rationally or irrationally for centuries. Wycherely explains that the Athenians formed their city as a radial organization with the Agora as the central node; the plan was to have direct routes leading out from the Agora to the growing city keeping constant contact between growth and the Agora. The Agora becomes the central node for the city based on it being a shared market and meeting space for the citizens. However, the organic growth the Athenians plan for can be contained because the wall surrounding the city bounds the growth within. Looking at cities today we find a similar concept but instead of main roads we have highways that begin to connect the "sprawl" to the central business district. The question is then can we begin to create stronger boundary conditions for the planning of "urban sprawl"?

There are two strategies that can be implemented to a city, we can either create a boundary for the extents of the "sprawl" or we create a better master plan for the city center to provide organization. For this paper I have decided to study the master planning in the city center. Transformational Urbanism will create an expandable and contractible boundary for a sprawling city. Using political ideals and economic thought Transformational Urbanism can be defined as a transforming plan for the city.

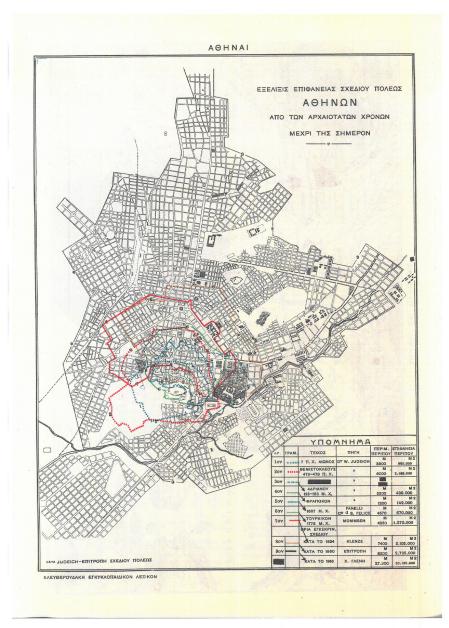


Image 2:

Map showing the growth of Athens Blue dots (7th Century B.C.) Red dots (5th Century B.C.) Red line (1700's) Gold line (1834) Black line (1916)

Transformational Urbanism:

Politics

Politics in the city shall not control the citizens and how they interact but rather become meshworks of conversation and free interaction between individuals. Politics is part of every day life, as citizens we formulate our individual opinions; but how can we begin to define politics both for the political citizen and built environment?

According to Aristotle in "The Politics", the state needs to be divided into two parts, one being communal and the other private. Another way we can start to define politics comes again from Aristotle in "The Nicomachean Ethics", Friendship becomes the bond that holds communities together. A final way to define politics is in Hannah Arendt's "The Promise of Politics", for political freedom to persist Arendt believes there needs to be a space of equality in the state.

In "The Politics" Aristotle finds a necessity in the state being divided into communal space and private space. In the city we have a break down of two spaces, the positive and the negative space; the negative space within the city being the space between buildings and the positive being a built object/building. Architects and designers like Camillo Sitte looked at the plazas associated with buildings, and how they have to fit proportionally to the size of a church. The ideas of plazas for Sitte were a space for citizens to come and view space that is associated with architecture and in a way become as important as the building itself. Extracting concepts from Aristotle's idea of divided space in the state, the communal space inside the city becomes the negative space within the city. In that way the positive space within the city then becomes a proportional geometric space. The relation between these two spaces becomes important in the general development of the plan.

If we then take Aristotle's idea from "The Nicomachean Ethics" about friendship in the state and how it begins to form communities we can see how the negative space inside the city can become effective. We have established that the negative space inside the city plan becomes the communal space, but inside this communal space the interaction of citizens. This interaction begins to form friendship and becomes a space to develop a dialogue where political opinions can be discussed. However, the only way this negative space can stay as a communal political sphere, political bodies must form a friendship with opposing views and in that friendship of opposing views politics happen. In that sense the negative space becomes a communal space of friendship in politics.

Finally, investigating Hanna Arendt's view of equality in space. While this equality of space has broken down with the fall of the Agora, through my personal travel to modern day Greece I have noticed the Agora in the classical sense of being a large concentrated open space for people to gather has become more transformative as just a space to sit, enjoy drink and food, and talk politics. The Agora has fallen from being the open space it once was in classical Greece to rather a series of moments in the city. The equality space again lies within the negative space within the city, with it being communal for friends to talk politics it becomes the space within the city where political bodies are on an equal playing field. One body cannot control the rest in this space but all are equal in their opinions and rights.

The way the positive and negative spaces interact becomes important at this point. According to Arendt, borders and limits become important for politics to flourish. The geometric proportional spaces in the figure ground of the city become the borders of these communal political spaces. The way political bodies move from space to space should be fluid. The political body ultimately should be free. The body will "linger" in a hierarchical space for political bodies to become equal friends in the political of the city.

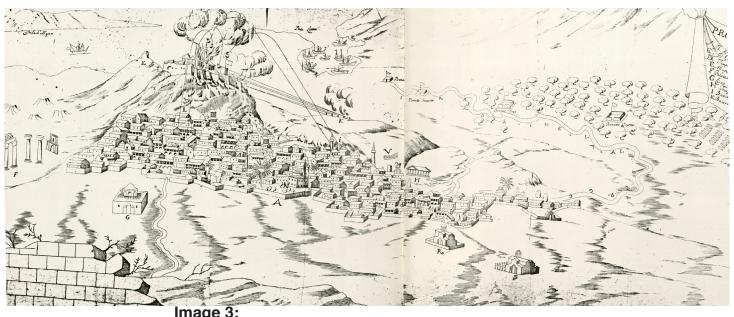


Image 3: Image of Athens from the Morosini attack on Athens

Economics in the city will be looked at as an ideology of economic thought. Today we see economics being a symbol of Capitalism, Socialism, or what ever you want to call it. These ideas of economics are too complex and need to be broken down to a more basic understanding. While I have established that the negative space in a city will be a political realm, forming a communal space within the urban context. The positive space will be formed by concepts of the economics.

Taking the ideas of Aristotle we can understand economics in the most primitive way and how economics can begin to influence our urban environment. In Scott Meikle's work "Aristotle's Economic Thought" he has found Aristotle to break down "economic value" to use value and exchange value.

Inside the Urban context we look at the city as being split into a positive and negative space. In the ideas of this economic value the negative space inside our ideal city is seen as being a "use value". Negative space inside our city has the potential to be a political communal space for political bodies to interact in politics. The interaction of politics comes from citizens of opposing views to have a conversation about their views; ethically both parties in the discussion will understand the others view and not force their own opinion on the other. Interaction of politics is simply a matter of understanding. Positive space then has an "exchange value". Aristotle describes exchange value as being the exchange of objects based on proportion. While I'm not too concerned with the proportional exchange of a shoe and a house, exchanged based on proportion can be see in the city on how proportionate spaces interact. The positive space shall not overpower the political bodies in the political space. The two spaces will then need to be stitched together. Looking at Giuseppe Terragni and his Casa del Fascio, we see that Terragni creating a connection between the built form and the city. A rationalist designed façade that creates transparency for fascist to rush out into the piazza del Popolo and protest their government. Terragni starts to connect the ideas of the people from interior and exterior.

In addition to the proportions of exchange value, Meikle finds in Aristotle's "The Politics", money gives exchange value an independent existence making the exchange value of an object to have expression separate from the physical body. With the idea of money giving the exchange value of an object two independent existences. In a micro/macro viewing of the city built forms take on two different meanings. In the macro viewing of the city, built forms become part of a collage of forms, while in the micro viewing the built form takes on a human quality. When a person inhabits a form they begin to brand that space as their own, they call that space; home, work, or school. That built form has a personal meaning to the user while in the composition of the city; the built form is just another mark.

Finally as we look again at Terragni and the Casa del Fascio, and the architecture he creates to house a political body; a political ideology is a natural concept while the architecture itself is an artificial concept. Meikle discusses Aristotle's view of the city as being a natural object that looks more artificial. Aristotle has split the city into two types in this statement, while I understand he is making a statement about the city being an artificial object, the city can be split into the two forms I have been discussing so far being the positive and negative space, the political and the economic. Instead of seeing the city to be an artificial object when it should be a natural object; the city should begin to stitch the two concepts together bringing the natural in the movement through the city, while the artificial concept becomes the built forms. Interjecting artificial forms on the hierarchical natural negative space.

Economic factors will begin to shape our built environment. Proportions of the built environment will be related to the political space connected to it. People will give the built form two independent meanings. The city will become a blended image of both the political and economic, the positive and negative, interior and exterior.

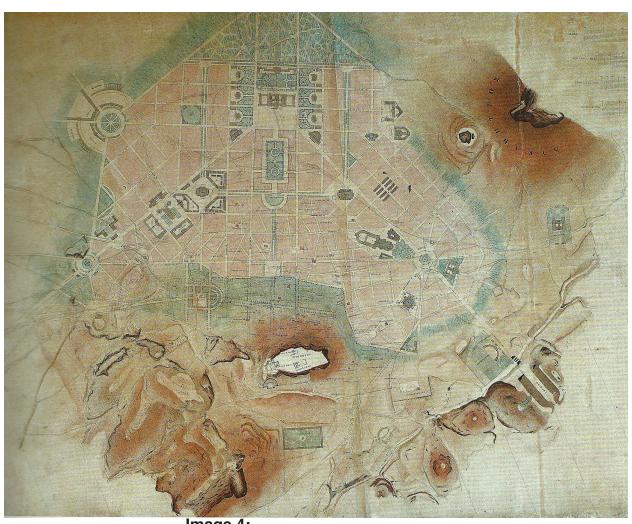


Image 4: Cleanthes and Schaubert 1833 plan

The negative space is political, the positive economic. The relations of political and economic factors become Space/Anti-space. Political realm will become space defined by the geometric proportions of the economic. Anti-Space becomes the connection of the economic and political in the meshwork.

Political thought and movement carve through the city and grow organically out from a datum. Economy grows in the exchange of thoughts at hierarchical moments of lingering.

The influx of citizens will begin to grow the city but once resources have dried up cold dead forms will remain. A more malleable city is in need. The city needs to be organic like a lung, as the city takes on citizens it will expand but will reach a moment of exhaling. Meshworks of political movement will pull back in the economic growth. Politics will create networks of energy flows to move from economic attractor to the next. The attractor points become an explosion of a vertical hierarchical energy forming a connection between political and economic factors.

Energy will retract, collapsing attractors into the parts that make up the whole. Breaking into pixels the economic growth flows back into the major energy flows. Artifacts of the growth remain, waiting to be buried by the masses.

Political interaction is a path of nonlinear movement. We are unethical in our way of thought, constantly changing opinions. Our political minds need contained we need a means to an end. We can preserve our ethical mindset. As an individual political mind we are but lost souls, community can preserve our ethics of politics. Connectivity between the economic attractor and the political needs coexistence. A creation of a Space will be made by the Economic geometries. Economic individuals will rush out into the political field and create an Anti-Space of politics and economics.

Energy then remains; the political and economic minds coincide. Sprawl will come and go, energy rises and fall. Political and economic thought fluctuates on their energy flows.

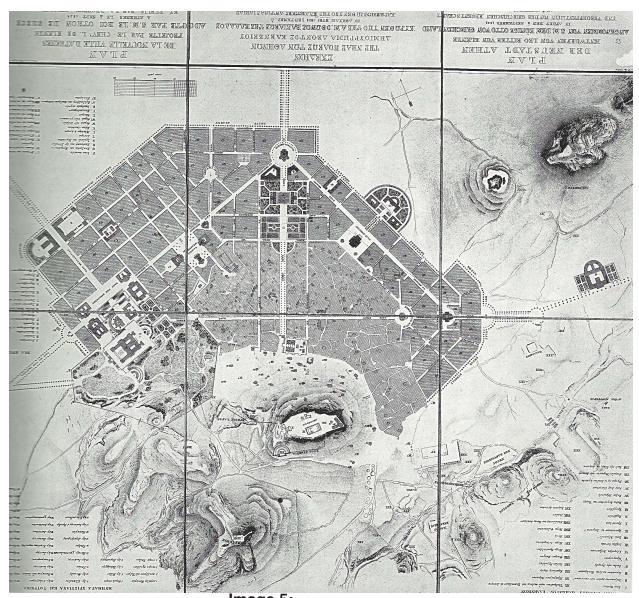


Image 5: Leo von Klenze 1834 plan

Athens, Greece:

The beginning of western civilization, western thought, and foundations for architecture movements all resonate from Athens, Greece. During the 5th century B.C., known as the classical era, Athens saw a major growth in the city and seen as one of the most powerful city states in Greece(image 2). However, the growth of the city would lay stagnant while under Turkish rule. Until the 1830's Athens wouldn't be more than a small Ottoman village (image 3); Greece would be returned to the Greeks after their war for independence.

Upon freedom from the Ottomans the Greeks were stuck with the dilemma of naming a capital of their newly found independence. In 1833, under King Otto, Athens would be named the capital due to cultural sensitivities as well as an obsession with antiquity. However, in 1832 Archeologist Ludwig Ross would write in letters of his disappointment "with Athens: "It's a shapeless grey-brown pile of dust and ruins." The following years followers of Prussian architect Karl Fredrich Schinkel will arrive in Athens to propose major city plans for the new capital of Greece. While many proposals for Athens were made only two plans were executed in Athens master plan.

The First plan to be used was by Greek architect Stamatios Cleanthes and Bavarian architect Eduard Schaubert. The plan Cleanthes and Schaubert propose is focused toward an expansion toward the north of the Acropolis, leaving the area around the acropolis and southern area by the acropolis to be an excavation area. Cleanthes and Schaubert's proposal "is adapted to the Mediterranean climate and attempts to combine central European geometric urban design as well as views towards the monuments with traditional construction and lifestyles of the southern cities". The architects proposal is based around three main roads; the first and main road (Athinas) would create a visual connection between the proposed palace and the Acropolis. The next two main roads (Pireos and Stadiou) would come off at 45-degree angles from the palace, creating what looks like a goosefoot (image 4). While the plan by Cleanthes and Schaubert was used for the planning of the city, the proposed major roads (Athinas, Pireos, Stadiou) were actually built.

In 1834, Leo von Klenze would return to Greece for 3 months to interfere in the political and cultural affairs of the country. In those three months Klenze would devise a compromise to the original Cleanthes and Schaubert plan. Klenze's plan adopts the basic principles of the original plan but changes the density and system of construction. Leo von Klenze's adapted plan doesn't change much from the original but a major design concept proposed by Klenze was for more of an artistic perspective, creating public buildings with direct visual connection with the historic area (Image 5).

Finally, Athens would settle on a plan for the city and neither the Cleanthes and Schaubert nor Klenze plan would be faithfully executed. The only elements of the original plans that remain are the triangular arrangement of the main roads and the juxtaposition of old and new city. However, these architects were able to create a "genus loci" within Athens. In the plan these architects proposed they were not thinking solely of the current condition designing the city for a population of 35,000-40,000 but developed a design that would react for further expansion.

A recent trip to Athens revealed that elements of the plan by these architects are still very noticeable in the city. Athinas street still holds a strong visual connection between Omonia (proposed location of palace by Cleanthes and Schaubert) and the Acropolis; while Pireos and Stadiou are major boulevards around the city. However, the growth of the city to nearly 6 million in population never followed the proposed expansion plans proposed by the architects of the city. Instead Athens has sprawled in all directions destroying the vision of keeping the southern area by the acropolis an excavation site.

With the antiquities being the main concept of all the plans for Athens in 1984, a design around the "genus loci" became the most important aspect to study.

First, studying Athens in the manner of Ildefons Cerdá would be a futile attempt at best, his idea of circulation would be important. In 1991, Athens would attempt to connect its ever-evolving city with a meshwork metro system. The Metro system in place provides Athens opportunity to connect many of the surrounding sprawling neighborhoods, Piraeus, and in 2004 the Olympic village.

Next looking at Athens in the filter of Camillo Sitte. For Athens, to study under the filter of Sitte becomes a study the relationship between buildings and plazas; but to understand the city for Sitte is to go and visit. There are two aspects of the city that are separated by four flights of stairs. While on the street level of Athens, the buildings are tight, the city is dirty, but the city opens up in what Sitte would call where peace prevails. The city took on a new life higher up and became a pixelated image of a city with a crown (the Acropolis) overlooking its city.

Finally, looking at Athens in the filter of O.M. Ungers and Rem Koolhaas as a city in the city. To start Athens would have to weed out the substandard parts. The spaces that would be left in Athens would be all the Antiquity sites: The Acropolis, Karimikos, The Trilogy, and the Stadium. The main pieces of Architecture in these locations will become the social condensers for the respective "cities". Then within each of these "cities" they will need to have a sense of repose and intensity throughout its site. From there the rest of the city will be turned back to nature.

Endnotes:

- Wycherley, R. E. How the Greeks Built Cities. London: Macmillan, 1962. pg 29. Wycherley states: "Careful planning was by the fourth century recognized as a good thing and an asset to a city; the chaotic state of the streets of Athens was condemned by some writers."
- It becomes important to note here that Athens was planned organically based on the topography of site conditions.
- Sinclair, Thomas Alan. Aristotle The Politics. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1962. Pg 420. While at this point Aristotle is discussing the worship of gods for this necessity of division. For the argument being made here, I am taking Aristotle's ideas and making my own modern interpretations.
- ^{IV} Aristotle, J. A. K. Thomson, Hugh Tredennick, Jonathan Barnes, and Aristotle. The Nicomachean Ethics. London: Penguin Books, 2004. Pg 200-201. Aristotle is comparing friendship and Justice and creates an argument that lawmakers search for friendliness because it leads to honesty.
- ^v Arendt, Hannah, and Jerome Kohn. The Promise of Politics. New York: Schocken Books, 2005. Pg 119. Arendt states that political freedom was lost once the Agora was deserted.
- vi Collins, George R., Christiane Crasemann. Collins, and Camillo Sitte. Camillo Sitte: The Birth of Modern City Planning. With a Translation of the 1889 Austrian Ed. of His "City Planning According to Artistic Principles" New York, NY: Rizzoli, 1986. Pg 177-184. In this chapter Sitte discusses the size and shape of plazas and how the positive space must be proportionate to the negative and visa-versa.
- Wycherley, R. E. How the Greeks Built Cities. London: Macmillan, 1962. Pg 50.
- viii Arendt, Hannah, and Jerome Kohn. The Promise of Politics. New York: Schocken Books, 2005. Pg 181.
- Collins, George R., Christiane Crasemann. Collins, and Camillo Sitte. Camillo Sitte: The Birth of Modern City Planning. With a Translation of the 1889 Austrian Ed. of His "City Planning According to Artistic Principles" New York, NY: Rizzoli, 1986. Pg 141. "To linger! If we could but linger again in those places whose beauties never wane; surely we would then be able to endure many difficult hours with a lighter heart, and carry on, thus strengthened, in the eternal struggle of this existence"
- ^x Hierarchical is defined here by size, shape, or placement
- ^{xi} Meikle, Scott. Aristotle's Economic Thought. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995. Pg 8. The idea of use value is an object designed to have a specific use, while exchange value is an object design to be used for exchange.
- Meikle, Scott. Aristotle's Economic Thought. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995. Pg 10. Aristotle uses the example of buying a house with a shoe. "It would not be fair for a builder and a shoemaker to exchange one house for one shoe, because a house is to great or too much to give for a shoe."
- Meikle, Scott. Aristotle's Economic Thought. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995. Pg 54.
- xiv IBID. Pg 61.
- Peterson, Steven Kent. Space and Anti-Space. Vol. 1. The Harvard Architecture Review. Cambridg, MA: MIT Press, 1983. Space is controlled, tamed, and formed; while Anti-Space is continuous, open, formless, or a connection of interior and exterior.

Endnotes:

- ^{xvi} Landa, Manuel De. A Thousand Years of Nonlinear History. New York: Swerve Editions, 2000. Pg 55. De landa finds that nonlinear models without an energy flow of a certain intensity can self organize with attractors and transitions between theses attractors.
- Aristotle, J. A. K. Thomson, Hugh Tredennick, Jonathan Barnes, and Aristotle. The Nicomachean Ethics. London: Penguin Books, 2004. Pg 4-5. "For even if the good of the community coincides with that of the individual, it is clearly a greater and more perfect thing to achieve and preserve that of a community; for while it is desirable to secure what is good in the case of an individual, to do so in the case of a people or a state is something finer and more sublime."
- Paraskevas Cornelia. Summary of Athens-A vision of Classicism. Trans. Sieti Panagiota.2001. Pg 1. Leo von Klenze, consultant to King Ludwig of Bavaria would justify this decision; "Just the name Athens restores the city and offers it its fourth era of glory. Athens would be the capital of Greece regardless whether another city was chosen."
- xix IBID, 2
- xx IBID. 1-2. All proposals for Athens involved an excavation area around the acropolis
- xxi IBID. 2.
- xxii IBID. 2.
- IBID. 4. Instead of a system of free standing houses, Klenze proposes a system of continuous housing that will be more appropriate for a Mediterranean city.
- xxiv IBID. 7.
- Rossi, Aldo. The Architecture of the City. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1982. Rossi describes the genus loci as creating a spirit of place. Cleanthes and Schaubert and Klenze, created this genus loci in Athens by keeping a strong connection between the antiquities of Athens and the modern city plan.
- xxvi Paraskevas Cornelia. Summary of Athens-A vision of Classicism. Trans. Sieti Panagiota. 2001. Pg 9.
- Collins, George R., Christiane Crasemann. Collins, and Camillo Sitte. Camillo Sitte: The Birth of Modern City Planning. With a Translation of the 1889 Austrian Ed. of His "City Planning According to Artistic Principles" New York, NY: Rizzoli, 1986. Pg 153. While Sitte is discussing plazas in relation to Churches, in the city of Athens peace prevails when one can sit and enjoy drinks and food with friends. The plaza is a place where a man can contemplate not just the architecture but also his soul and deal with the existential dilemma.
- ^{xxviii} Ungers, O. M., Rem Koolhaas, Peter Riemann, Hans Kollhoff, Arthur Ovaska, Florian Hertweck, and Sébastien Marot. The City in the City: Berlin: A Green Archipelago. Zürich: Lars Müller Publishers, 2013.

Photo Credits:

- Image 1: Authors Diagram
- Image 2: "The city of Athens from Antiquity until the present day." Encyclopedia Eleftheroudakis. 1927
- Image 3: Athens, 1650-1870. I. Meletopoulos, 1979.
- Image 4: Paraskevas Cornelia. Summary of Athens-A vision of Classicism. Trans. Sieti Panagiota. 2001.
- Image 5: Paraskevas Cornelia. Summary of Athens-A vision of Classicism. Trans. Sieti Panagiota. 2001.

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Thesis Addendum:

Nicholas McCormick Hansford Miami University

From Written Thesis to Design Thesis:

When I set out on this Thesis journey it was my goal to try and redefine the way we study and plan cities. Spending most of my summer planted at a desk in Alumni Hall I attempted to read some 30 books on Urban Design and theory. It wasn't until mid June of 2016 that I finally felt comfortable enough with the information to attempt such an effort no matter how futile it turns out. The written research is based around Manuel De Landa's *Thousand Years of NonLinear History* in a way that we begin to look at the city as a living being that will act like a lung and will expand as people enter and then contract as people leave. The theory is grounded solely on Aristotle's political ideals and economic values. The choosing of Athens, Greece as my site was based on a trip out to Athens to visit my Cousin and Aunt. Where my Aunt would translate books on the history of the city and we would walk all over Athens documenting and studying the sites we were reading about. After looking at what my cousin would call "stacks of rocks" for three days, the specific site location became obvious based around the 1833 plans for Athens and the 5th Century walls. After leaving my Aunt and Cousin I was left with the task of trying to design around a theory that I constructed. For the better part of four months I struggled with the execution of Transformational Urbanism. Upon one seemily poor thesis review in early November I agreed to spend the next two days living in the studio and come up with what would be the parti to final design proposal. At this point I was no longer following my written thesis religiously and was spirally into the ridiculous. At the start of my final semester here I was sent the images to Rem Koolhaas' Thesis and was posed with the task of writting the story that would soon be the essence and rationale behind my project. From then on out I was constructing a fictional story that was filled with just enough reality to not get me thrown out of school.

Thesis Reflections:

While I struggled at the begginning of this project with implementing the design theory I constructed, I think devulging from my theory to create a design that follows more of a fantasy idea was for the best. For the better part of the first semester I was not real happy with the direction my work was going I was fishing without a fishing pole. After the two day sprint to find a Parti I was finally going in a direction I knew was going to be just crazy enough for me. Once I was told to construct the story the Thesis became easy but getting someone to begin to understand the chaos that I was wrestling became a real struggle. Remembering that the first stories I ever read as a kid were The Flash comics from the early 90's, putting my thesis as a comic only felt natural. When the story line was constructed It didn't matter what I did after that as long as it helped strengthen that story. At the end of the day I never forgot what I was told early on at Bowling Green State University by my professor Scot Macpherson that all great architecture is a metaphor or tells a story.

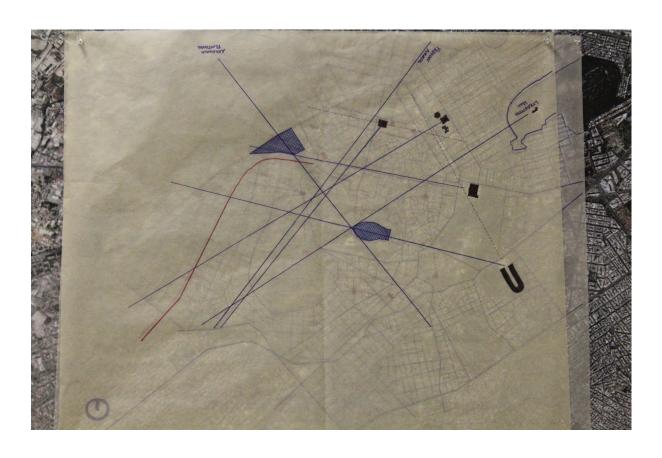
Conclusions:

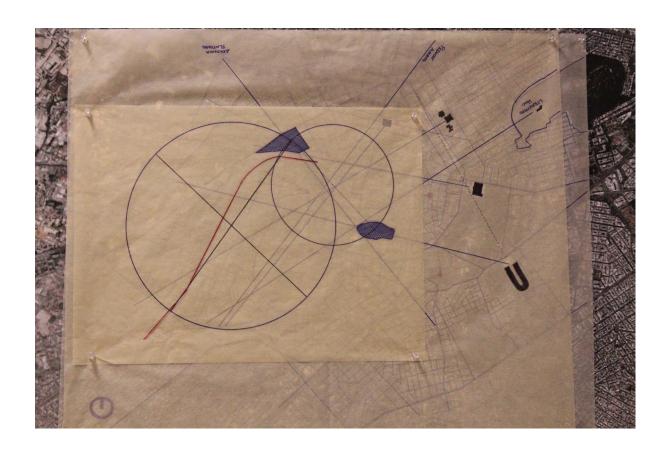
I don't know if it's right to conclude this Thesis in any formal manor, but to say that this thesis is a culmination of my formal education, I threw everything and my purse at it. I have reached the end and I am tired. However, the next chapter in my education begins now.

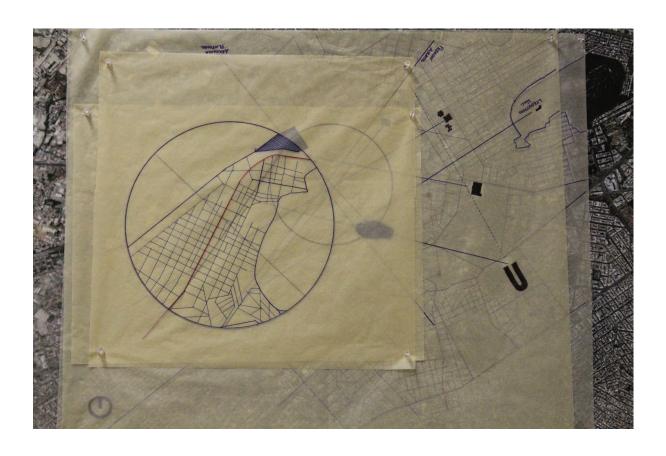
Thesis Appendix:

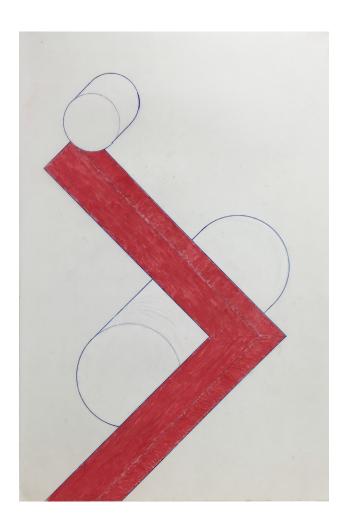
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The Histrionic Man	35

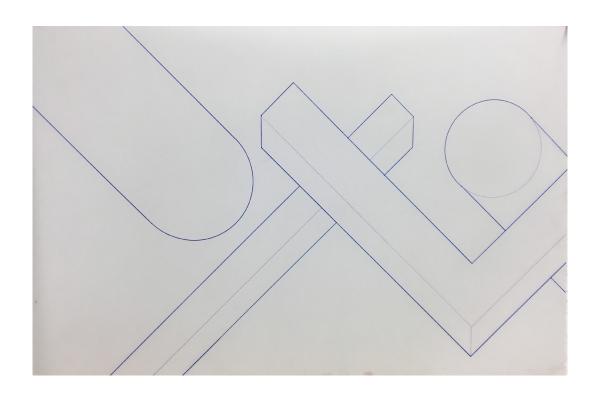


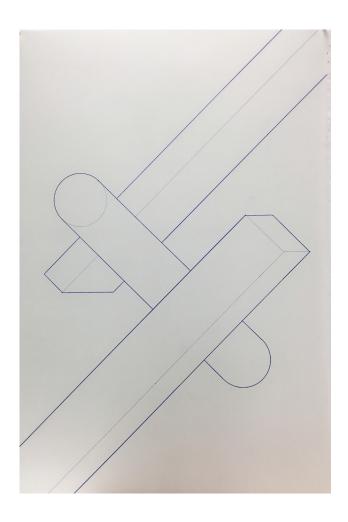


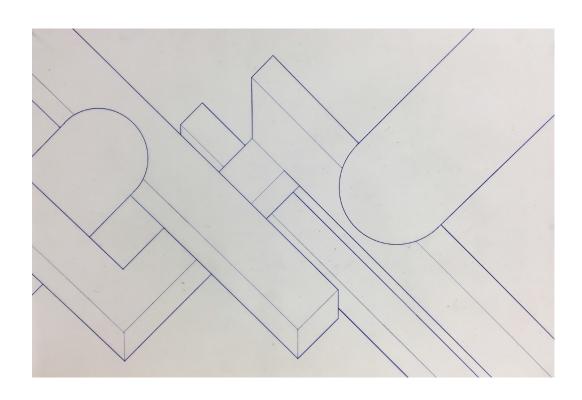


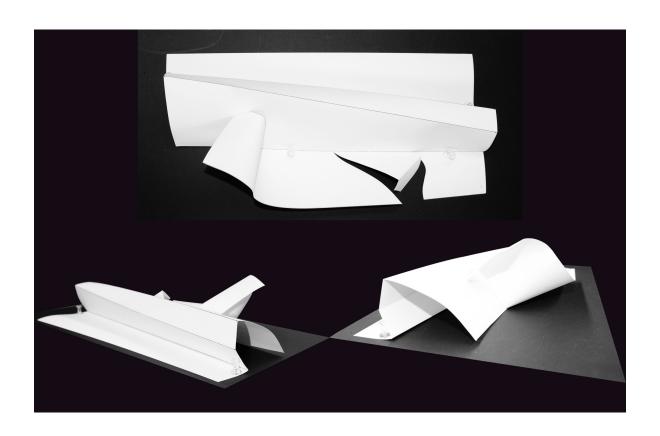


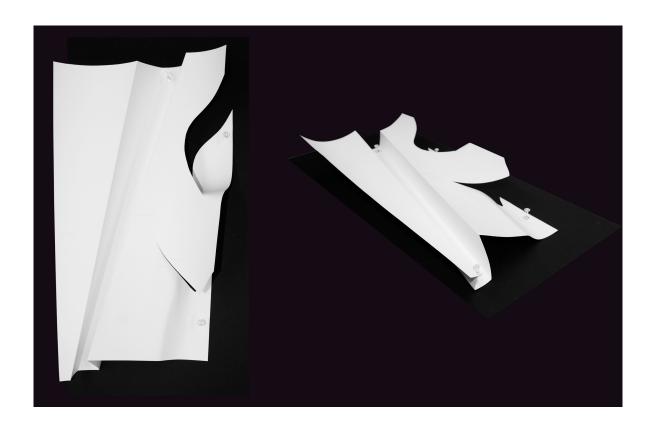


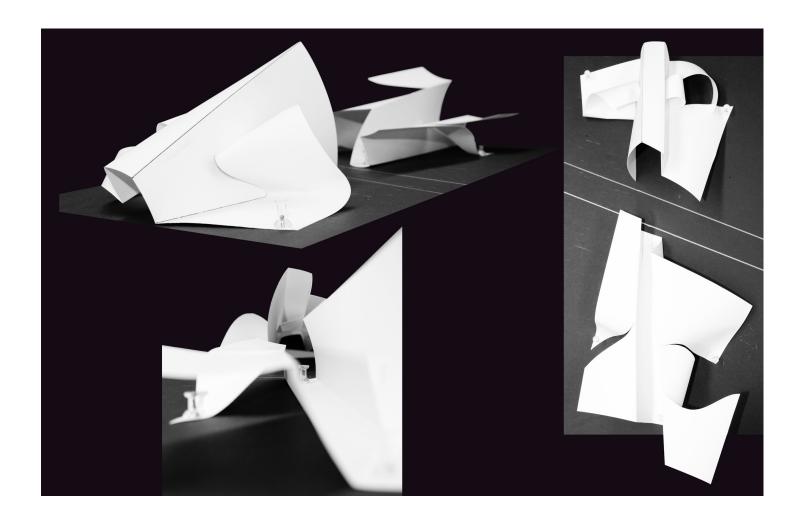


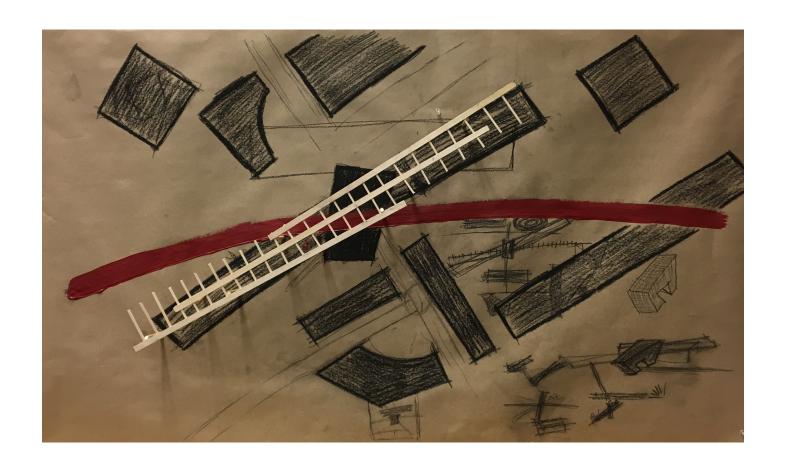


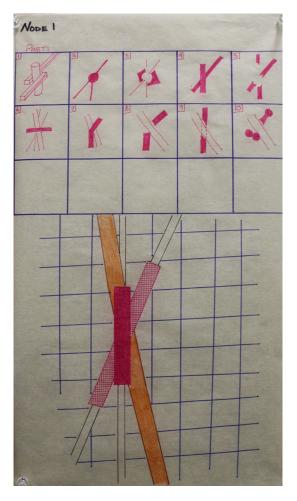


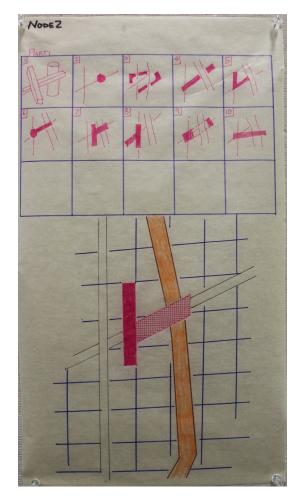


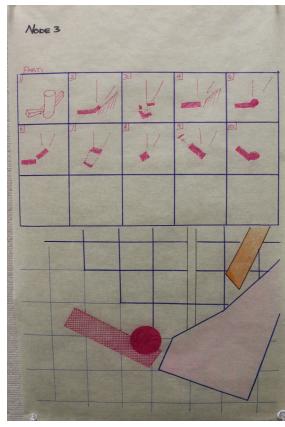




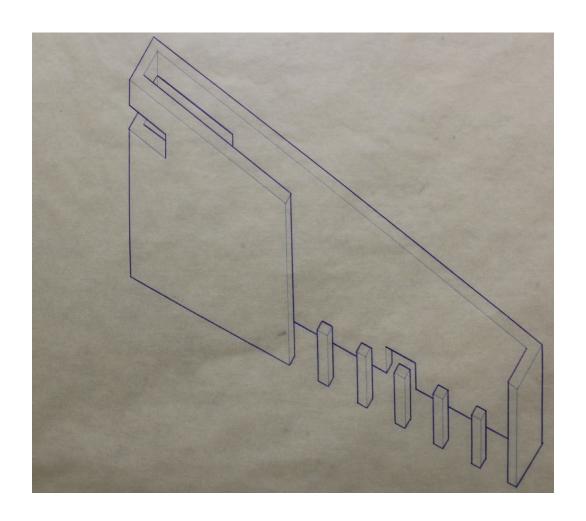


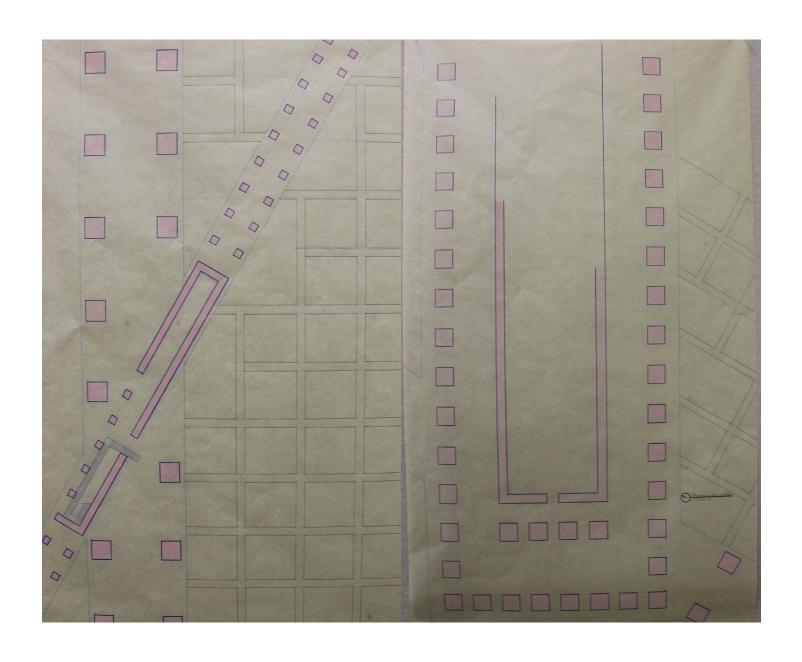


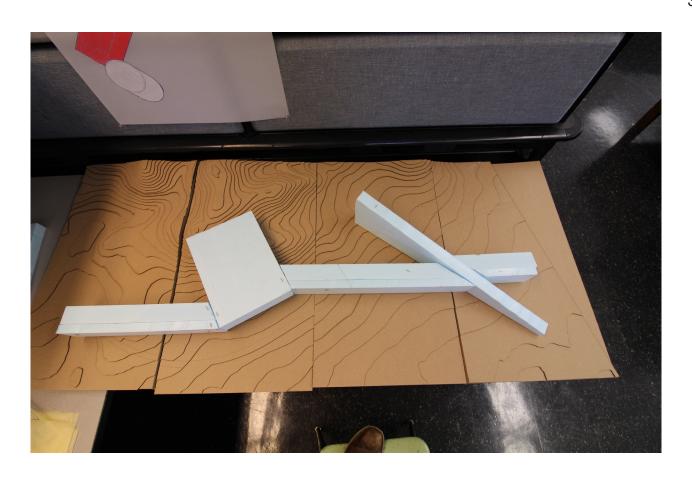






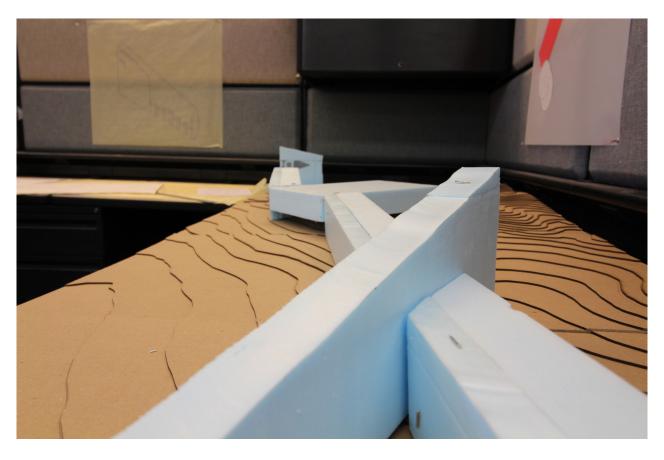


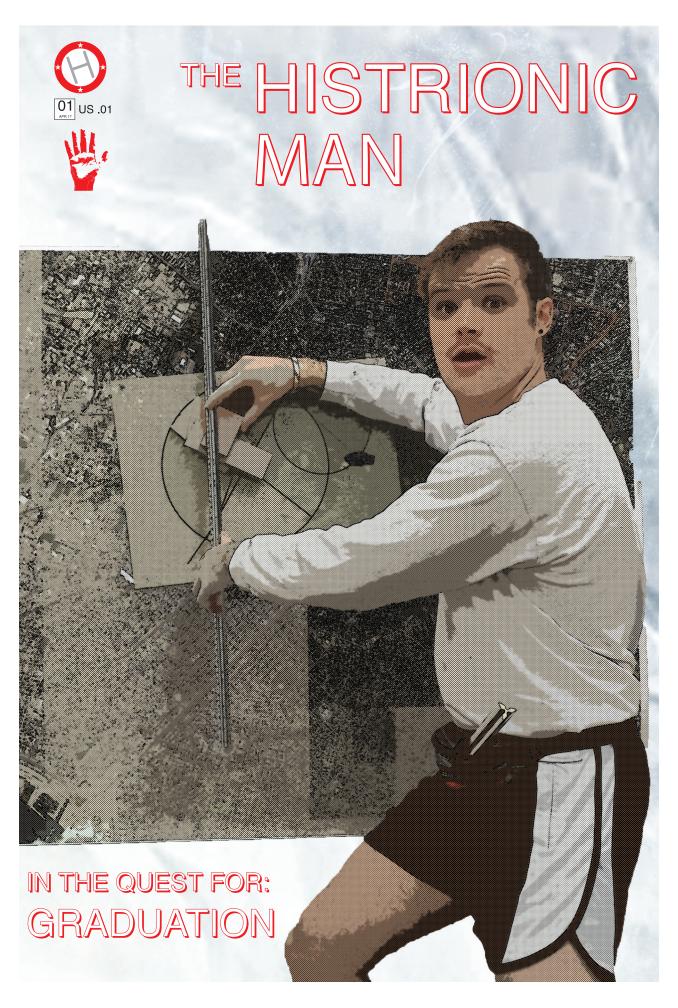




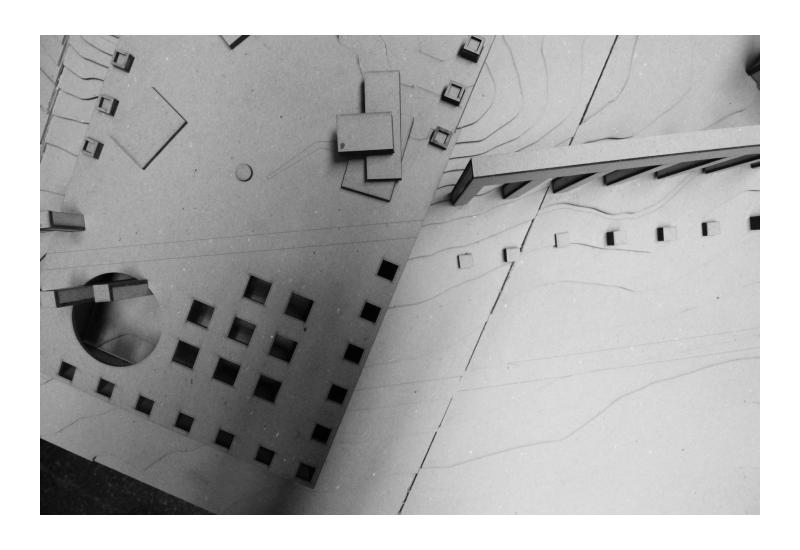


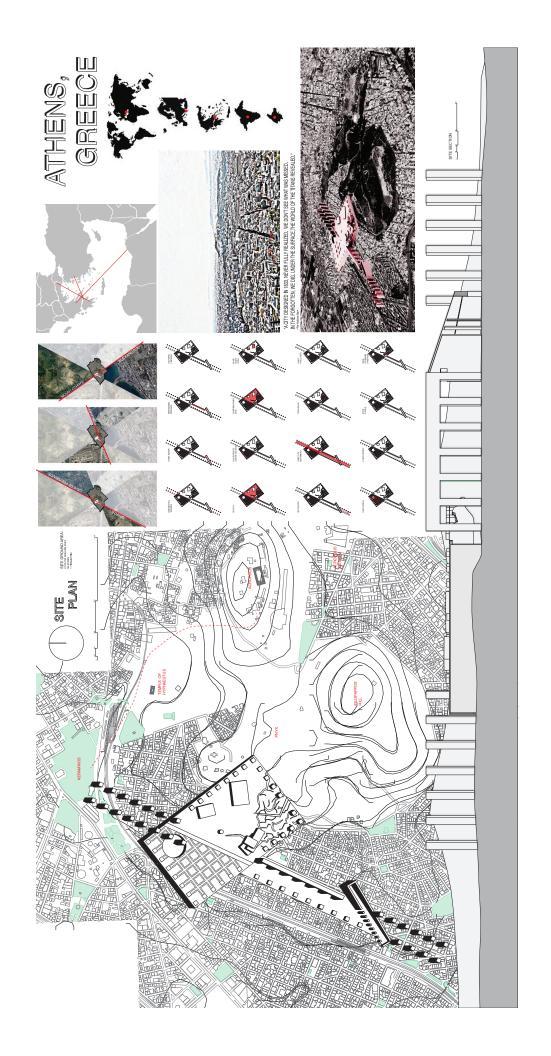


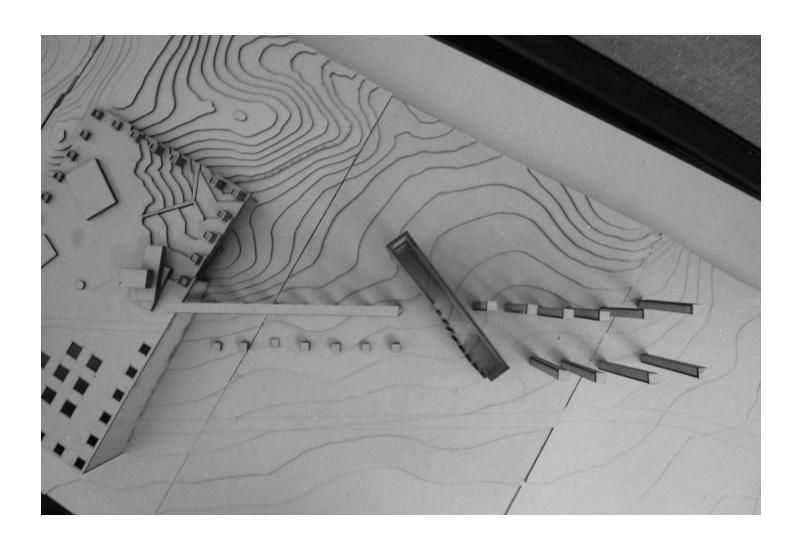




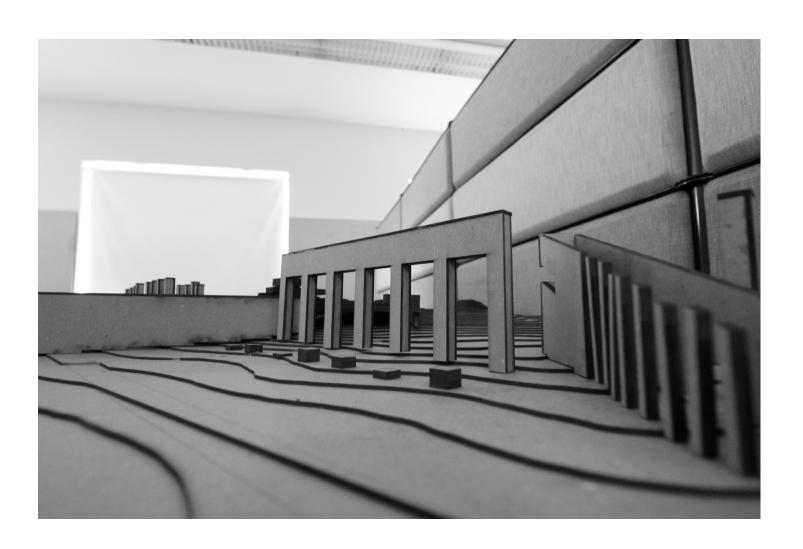


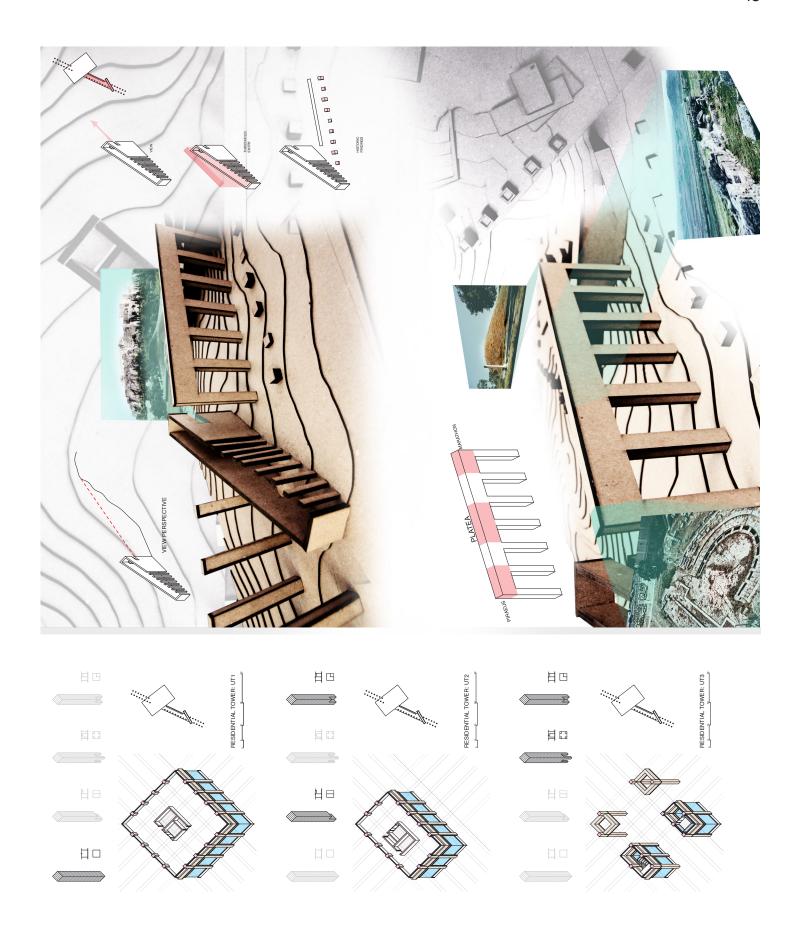


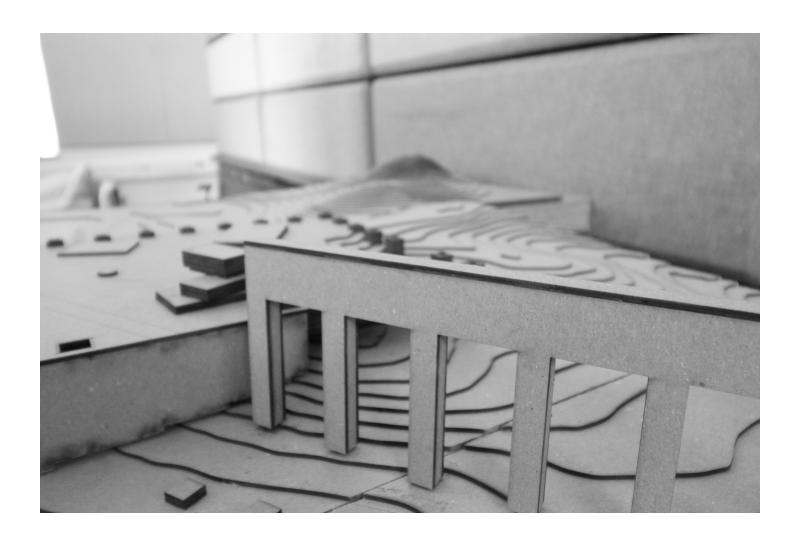


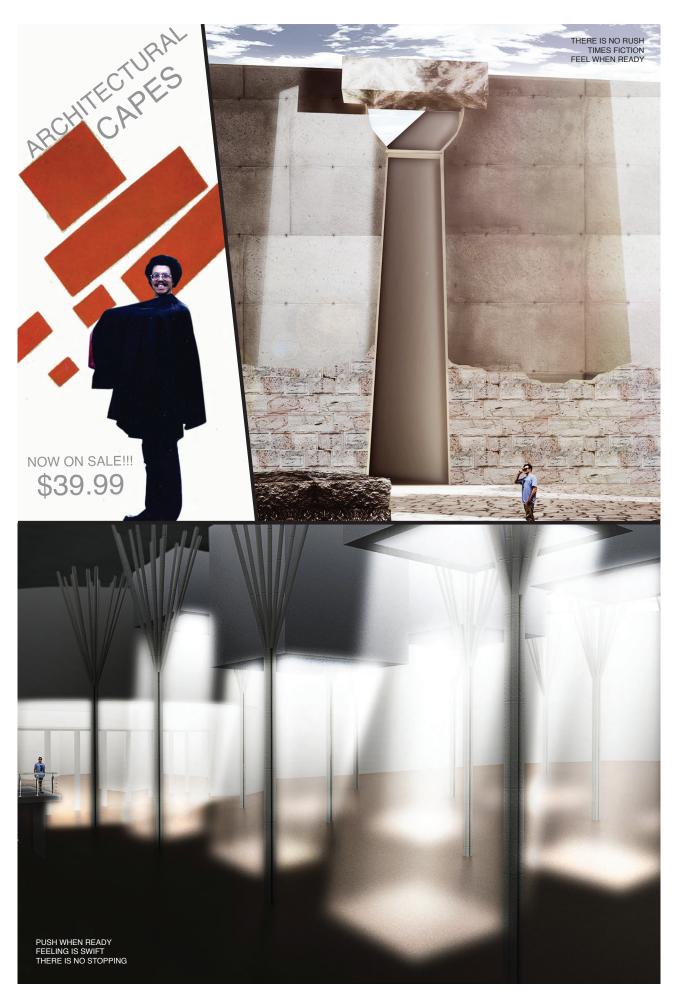


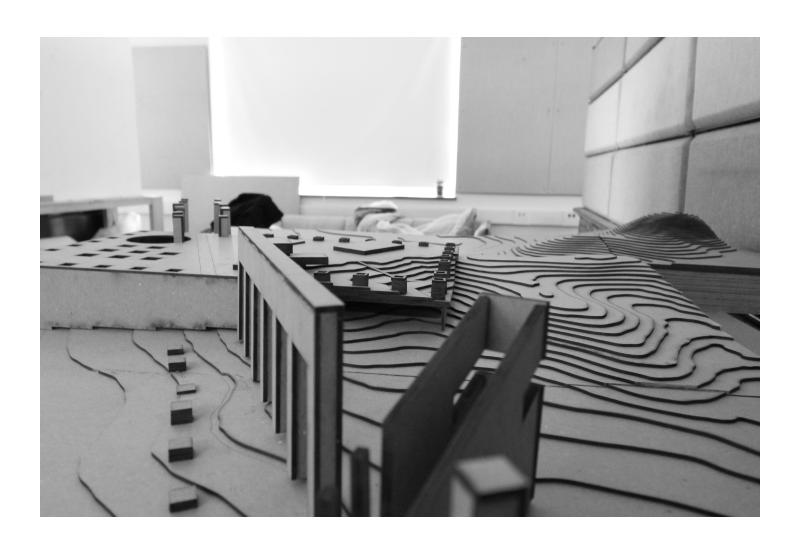


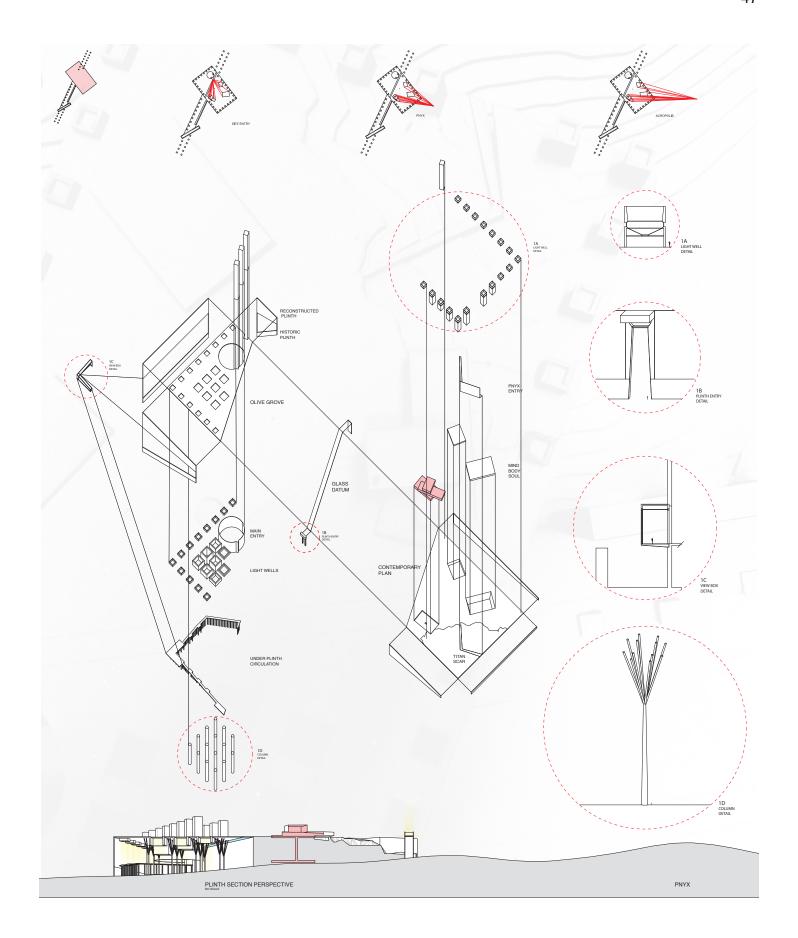






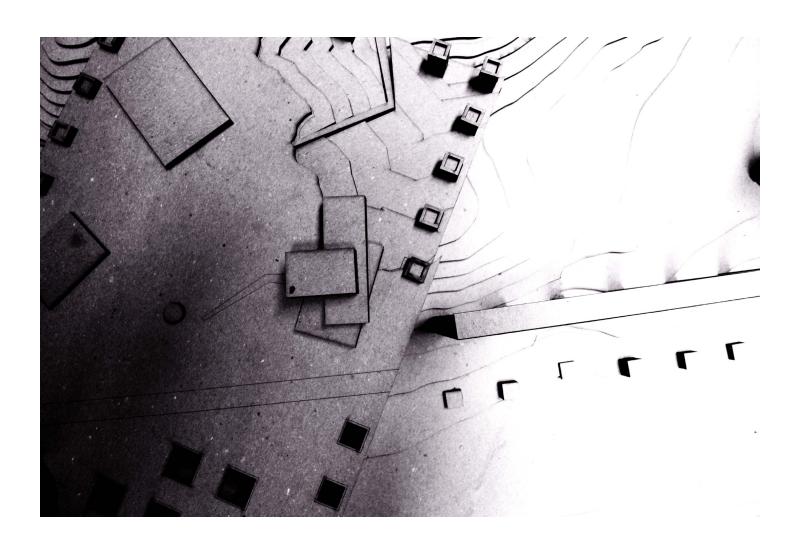


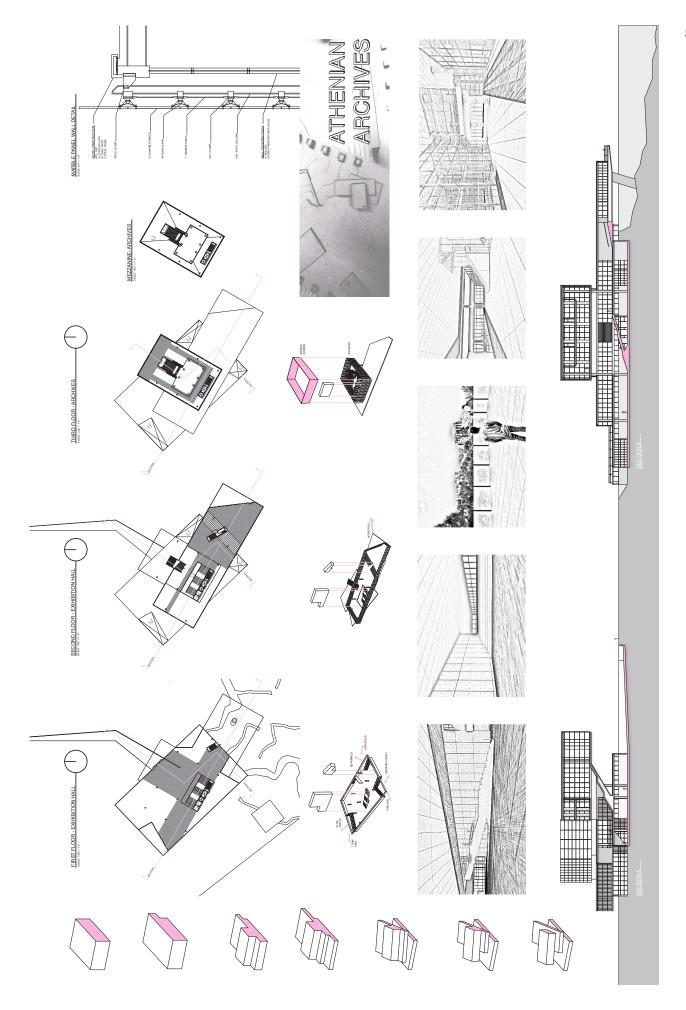












Special Thank You to my father Patrick Hansford without your support and guidance over the past 23 years I wouldn't be where I am today.