Hybrid Retail:
Rethinking the Urban Public by Embracing the Digital Experience

by

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

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Abstract

Commerce has been regarded as the engine of urbanity, and shopping is said to be arguably the last remaining form of public activity. If this is so, the added phenomenon of increased traction of retail in the digital space can allude that truly public areas, especially in the urban context, face endangerment. This translation towards eCommerce would undeniably impact the urban landscape, as the behaviour of human exchange, and therefore retail consumption, has shifted to be less physical, or requiring less physical space. However, a public space for all is not exclusively confined to the physical.

By studying the relationship between the physical and digital realms of shopping, their spatial impacts, and the trends of and towards consumerism, this thesis attempts to develop a hybrid intervention where inhabitants are connected with their sense of place through heightened experience of the intrinsic activity of consumption in a progressively metropolitan context.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

The activity of shopping is in constant metamorphosis. From ancient markets, to arcades, to big box stores, society is continually reinventing the retail space. What's more, people have based life choices, cities have been reorganized, and the world has been consumed by the changing processes of retail. The extent at which shopping has infiltrated people's daily lives is extraordinary, and yet utterly customary. Just as how technology has penetrated society to be indispensable in basically all aspects of urban life, thus retail was affected. Now, online shopping is as common as watching television, and the rate at which people want the next new thing calls for a consideration of this increased dependency on electronics.
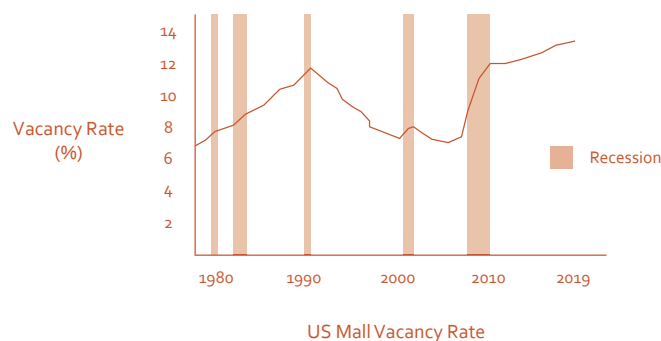
US mall vacancy rate from 1980–2019. (data from Lipsman 2019)

Trends show a steady rise in global retail sales, with the rate at which eCommerce is increasing being consistently nearly four times that of traditional shopping sales over the last decade (Lipsman 2019). As a result of this, many malls have suffered. Retail outlets have been changing to respond to the growing preference of digital mediums by offering more experiential services, augmenting an aspect of shopping that the customer cannot have through their

digital devices. While all retail experts say this is the right move, it can potentially be more effective if combined with the cybernated shift, rather than be fighting it.
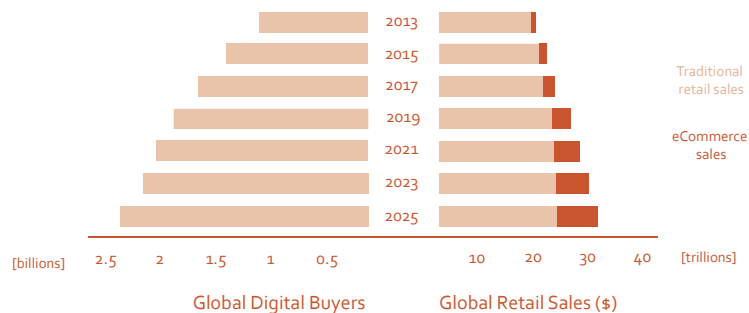
Rate of growth of global digital buyers and retail sales. (data from Lipsman 2019)

Commerce has been regarded as the engine of urbanity (Wall 2005, 18) and shopping is said to be arguably the last remaining form of public activity (Chung et al. 2001). If this is so, the added phenomenon of increased traction of retail in the digital space can allude that truly public areas in the urban context face endangerment. This translation towards eCommerce would undeniably impact the urban landscape, as the behaviour of human exchange, and therefore retail consumption, is becoming less physical. As the post-war period ushered the expansion of suburbia, due to rapid population growth, and ultimately becoming the reason for the creation of suburban malls as we know them today (Chung et al. 2001), the current rise of people living in cities might alter current urban processes.
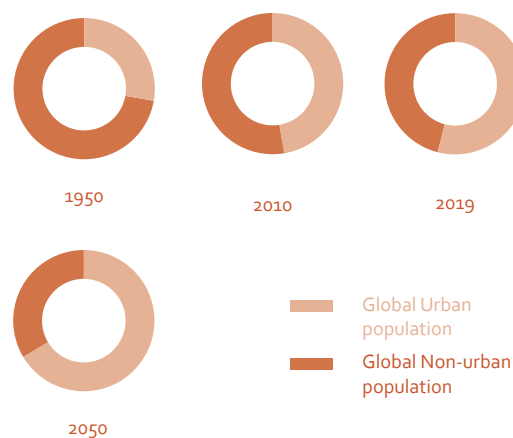
Global Population Distribution

Global rise in Urban population from 1950 projected to 2050.
(data from UN 2018)

By studying the relationship between the physical and digital realms of shopping, their spatial impacts, and the trends of consumerism, this thesis explores how architecture – conventionally, a practice of the physical – can amplify the growing domain of the digital. The mall is not only a place for shopping, but also a place to eat, watch a movie, or spend half the day simply hanging out with friends. As the public market was an indicator of a city's vibrancy, the modern mall is a symbol of a community's identity. In this regard, the public aspect of the space surrounding the activity of shopping is crucial to its purpose for a society.

The mall could then be based on the shopping experience of the individual – the individual that is anybody – and this approach would affect the functioning of a store, which would affect the mall, and ultimately have a large impact on the planning of a city over time. Despite the transition towards digital shopping, most people still choose shopping in person over the convenience of shopping online, if the choice is exclusive. This is largely due to the opportunity to
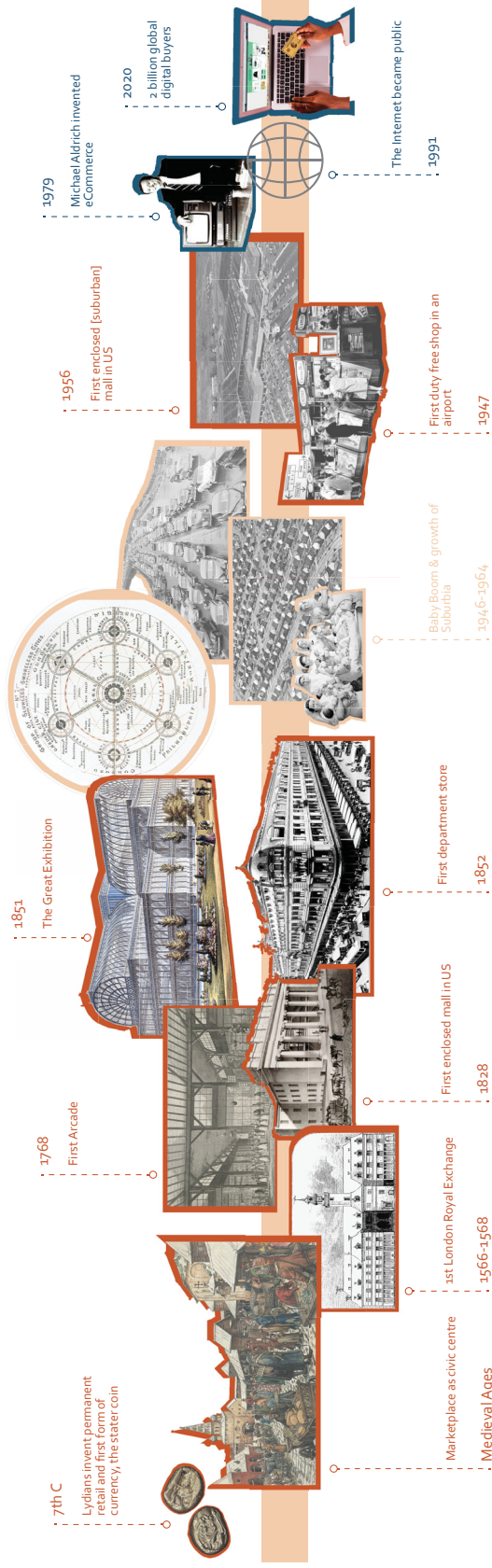
experience the tangibility of a product (Verhagen, Vonkeman, and Van Dolen 2016, 460). And although consumers are more knowledgeable than ever, with the increasing ease to access information through the internet, the experiential and social aspects of shopping remains desirable. And there is no argument that there is much to experience in the digital world. The realm of mixed reality is not new, and when utilized for this real-environment purpose, the results can alter what we associate to be the "mall."

A popular criticism of the technological era is the loss of this social interaction upon which a community is often founded. Despite this, it is widely accepted that technology is a powerful tool for connecting people, as it is through this medium of connection that we now live in such a globalized and therefore interconnected world. The store can then be broken down to its essential elements, and rearranged to build a commercial centre of a different order. With less space required compared to traditional store typologies, the mall may no longer need such vast space for parking. The return to the market typology paves the way for the contemporary agora. This thesis attempts to develop a hybrid architectural intervention where inhabitants are connected with their 'place' through the everchanging yet undeniably intrinsic activity of consumption in a progressively metropolitan context.
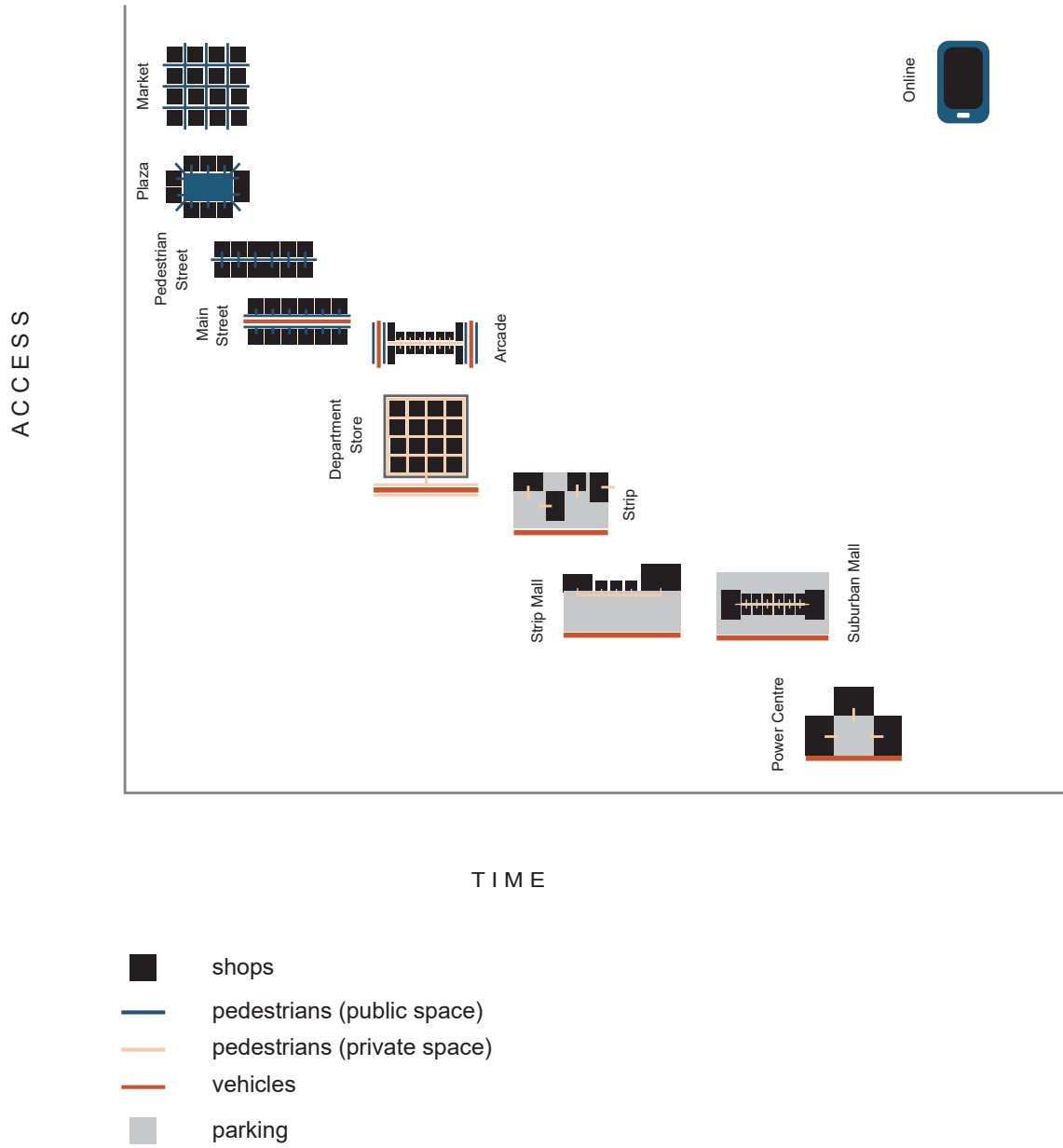
Chapter 2: A Brief History of Retail in Cities

Trade was founded on human connection, and human connection is something generally all people not only want, but innately need, especially in order to progress as and within a society (Heinemann and Gaiser 2015, 12). The inherent significance of trade created what is known as the market system that has become a defining characteristic of a 'city,' amongst other things. The town of Çatalhöyük, Anatolia – modern day Turkey – was built in the 7th century BC for the trade of commodities. It was not for another three millenia until what is considered the world's first 'city' was established, the city of Uruk in Sumer, ancient Mesopotamia (Chung et al. 2001, 29). Hence, the idea of an urban place is marked by the activity of commerce.

In the 7th century, Lydians invented permanent retail, thereby inaugurating the marketplace typology. Marketplaces eventually became the backdrop of how a city was organized, most notably associated as such in the Medieval ages (Chung et al 2001, 29). The next emergent layout was the court or plaza type, with the 1st London Royal Exchange being among the first examples. The introduction of this typology no longer puts the hustle and bustle of shopping in the square, but rather, around it (Rao, Dovey, and Pafka 2018, 547). Indeed, it leaves the plaza free for arbitrary socialization, but it was arguably the first endeavor in segregating the public from shopping. The illustrious department store type, although reminiscent of the marketplace, encloses circulation, which effectively made the store private in nature. The pattern continues, as the mall types that have arose over time became increasingly difficult

Timeline of relevant retail, urban, and historic events. (data from Chung et al. 2001)

7th C
Lydians invent permanent retail and first form of currency, the stater coin

Medieval Ages
Marketplace as civic centre

1566–1568
1st London Royal Exchange

1768
First Arcade

1828
First enclosed mall in US

1851
The Great Exhibition

1852
First department store

1946–1964
Baby Boom & growth of Suburbia

1947
First duty free shop in an airport

1956
First enclosed [suburban] mall in US

1979
Michael Aldrich invented eCommerce

1991
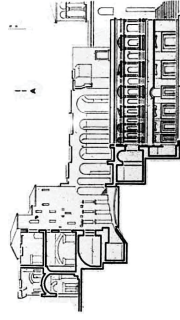The Internet became public

2020
2 billion global digital buyers
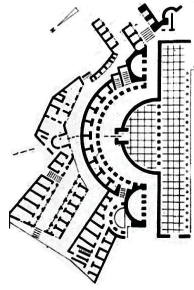
Evolution of retail typologies. (data from Rao, Dovey, and Pafka 2018)
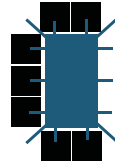
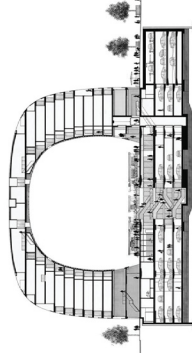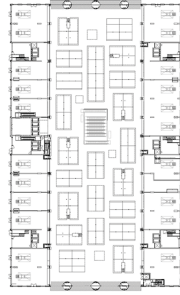Historic: Trajan's Market, Rome

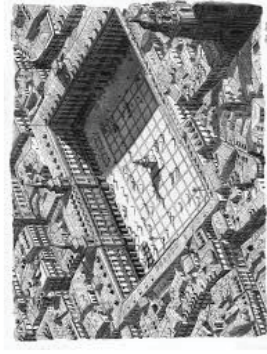New: Markthal Rotterdam

Plaza Mayor, Madrid

Market

Plaza

Examples of mall typologies evolution, part 1.
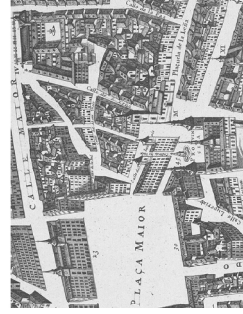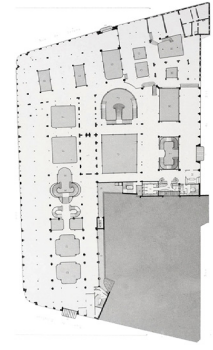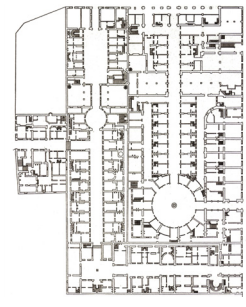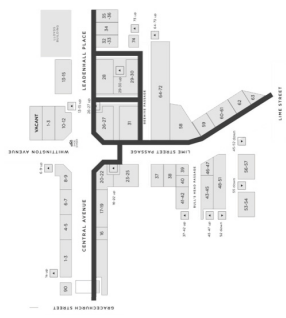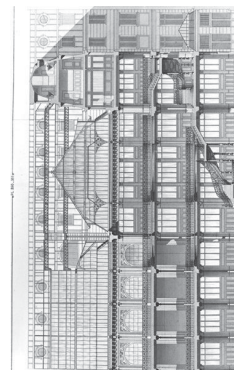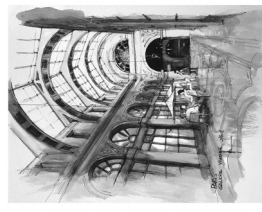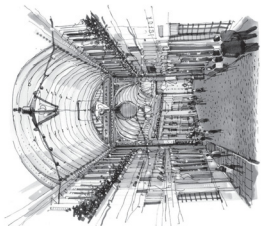
Leadenhall Market, London

Galerie Vivienne, Paris

Bon Marché, Paris

Pedestrian street

Arcade
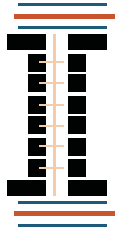
Department Store
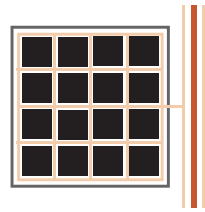
Examples of mall typologies evolution, part 2.

to access for the pedestrian, opting instead to accommodate the automobile. This transition was magnified, especially in North America, in the mid-20th century.

The Growth of Suburbia

For a period of time after World War II, from approximately 1946 to 1964, there was surge in global population growth. This phenomenon is known as the Baby Boom, and it resulted in a high number of people moving away from the city. In the United States, migration was additionally prompted by the high level of affordability to move further from the urban core, to more suitable conditions for raising a family. Thus, suburbia came into existence, with the Levittown in New York being the first (Wall 2005, 60).

Levittown, NY. circa 1950. (*Encyclopedia Britannica*, n.d.)

Levittown, Pennsylvania circa 1959 (Cinema Guild, 1994)

With displaced population comes the necessary means to transport them, as the city remained to be the location of economic life. As Burgess's concentric ring theory exhibits, the Central Business district (CBD) is at the core of the city, with residential zones of increasing cost the further away from the centre. Hoyt's Sector model is still quite simple, with segmented areas that are more spatially diverse and more connected to the CBD, yet the CBD stays at the locational centre. Edward's and Ullman's multiple nuclei theory is perhaps the most realistic, with a CBD that is not literally at the centre of the city, and considers some spatial fragmentation between programmatic activities, such as the existence of industrial suburbs (Burgess 2008, 74).

These urban theory models demonstrate an understanding of cities (and their surroundings) as a relationship of production and consumption, and everything that would be in between. The CBD as historically a place of production – of labour – and once one was able to afford it, one would

Burgess' Urban Model

Hoyt's Urban Model

Edward & Ullman's Urban Model

Central Business District

Transition Zone

Working Class

Middle- Income Residential

Commuter Zone/ Suburbs

Industry

Industrial Suburb

Variations of urban models of the early 20th century.

move to live in the suburbs – a place of consumption or entertainment. In lieu of a mindset focused on efficiency, suburban life offered more space: front and back lawns, green parks, and no party walls. With all this space, how would one get from place to place as quick as it once took in the city?

In the US, car ownership rose by over 200% from the late 1940's to the end of the 1950's. It became increasingly evident that services that once were only available in the

city should be imitated in the suburbs, where people who have money to spend live (Wall 2005, 61). Also, since there was more land in the suburbs, it was logical to expand the typologies to match. The strip mall came about, followed by the suburban mall with scads of stores sandwiched by 'anchor' department stores and a vast area for the newly disseminated car, which was then succeeded by the power centre, popularized in the late 20th century (Rao, Dovey, and Pafka 2018, 549). This development only encouraged the propagation of suburbia.

The suburbs were, and in many ways still are, the image of American utopia. However, the global population is persistently becoming more urban; with 55% of the world living in cities in 2019. By 2050, this number is estimated to reach 68% (UN 2018). Most of that growth is predicted to occur in developing countries, where most of the production of globalized commodities are manufactured. The idea of the mall is undoubtedly different from country to country, but as proven by the reality of suburbia, an architecture of mall typology designed for a specified location, targeting a unique audience, can alter the course of cities at an urban scale.

Chapter 3: Ecology of Shopping

The "Mall": An Etymology

The origin of the term "mall" is two-fold. It originated from a 16th century Italian alley game that resembled croquet, called *pallamagalio*, or 'Pall Mall' in English. The alley on which the game was played came to be known as a 'mall.' The stretch between Buckingham Palace and Trafalgar Square in London was named "The Mall" (formerly and more precisely "The Mall at St. James's") because it was originally one of these alleys. When people lost interest in the game, "The Mall" was renovated to a fashionable promenade lined with trees and beautiful flora (*Merriam-Webster*).

Marco Ricci. *View of the Mall and St. James's Park (*Ricci, 1709-1710)

National Mall, Washington DC. (Washington DC n.d.)

The National Mall in Washington DC is a more recent example of this etymological development. Though the origins are not similar, the resulting 'mall' is. It is certainly not the often enclosed commercial centre that is now associated with the term. This thesis will explore the flexibility of the term.

Publics, Places

> Shopping malls have replaced the parks and squares that were traditionally the home of free speech. (Koolhaas et al. 2000,154)

Jan Gehl believes public space is where social interaction and perception, urban recreation, and the sensory experience of city life take place (Gehl 2010, 32). In "The Public Space of Social Media," Thérèse Tierney describes the public sphere as "a set of physical or mediated spaces where people can gather and share information, debate opinions, and tease out their political interests and social needs with other participants" (Tierney 2013, 22). Among many other definitions of what public space is, the most
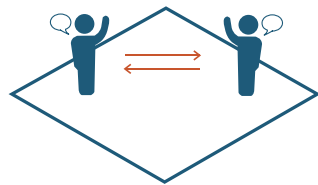
Spatial Public
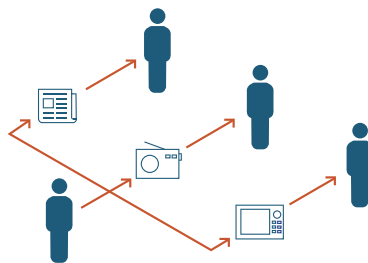
Mediated Public
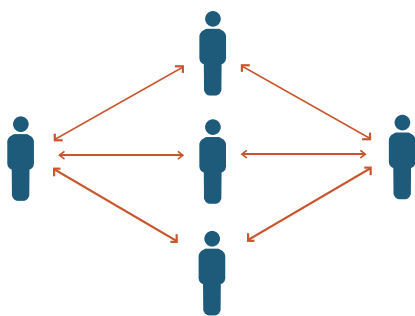
Networked Public
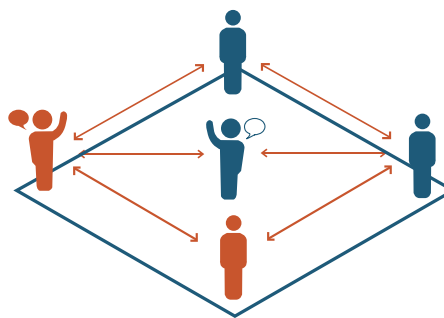
Hybrid Public

Timeline of Tierney's classification of types of public, with a proposed hybrid public. (Fresia 2019, 20)

truth seems to be found with those that expresses how people use the space, rather than describing what a space is intended for (Hemmett and Cooper 2013, 12). Public spaces are not so much designed as they are organically created through the activities that occur and the subsequent attachments developed. They become as people will them to; they are a social construction.

Tierney discusses an expansion of the concept of public space to be perceived beyond its physical dimension. She divides the term into three areas: the spatial public, the media public, and the networked public. The spatial public consists of the vis-à-vis interaction within a natural space – the plaza and agora are among examples. The media public emerged when new technology allowed for communication through other mediums, such as newspapers and the radio; however, in most cases, exchange is limited to two entities. The networked public presented itself when the second wave of technology gave opportunity for communication between many entities, such as the internet (Tierney 2013, 25). This illustration of public realms aides in the exploration of programmatic urban architecture that this thesis undertakes, as malls are treated and used as public spaces.

Agora

The ancient Greek agoras were the very definition of public space as it is known today. Literally meaning, "gathering place," or "assembly," a city's agora was the central location for social and political exchange, and eventually, it would also serve as a marketplace for merchants and artisans to sell their product and services. The agora became the crucible for change and improvement in the arts and in the politics of the city that was the cradle of Western civilization. Indeed,

a plethora of places can be considered a modern agora of sorts nowadays, but the essence of an agora whereby the very space is considered as such for the reason to simply gather, considering the mall itself as an agora will hold much significance in this thesis.

The agora in Coringh, Greece. (*Encyclopedia Britannica* n.d.)

Mall = City

> Found at these malls are most of the uses and activities citizens engage in outside their homes… Within and without the enclosures are not only stores of every kind and size, but large open spaces available to the public and suitable for numerous uses. There is space to roam, to sit down, and to talk. (Koolhaas et al. 2000,154)

Critique of the Heterotopian Mall

Foucault's theory of heterotopia embodies the current role of the mall within a city well. Heterotopias, which means "other places," mirror what is outside, but they also somehow upset it. They describe places functioning in nonhegemonic conditions and that are simultaneously physical and mental. They are disturbing, contradicting, and transforming – an approximation of a utopia, or a parallel space, but by the mere fact that they are not what they are trying to emulate, they are also incompatible (Dehaene and DeCauter 2008, 15).

Matrix of various activities that mall-goers partake in, whereby exemplifying a mall = city.

The first climate-controlled mall was the Southdale Centre in Edina, Minnesota, built in 1956, when only 5% of all US homes have air conditioning systems (Chung et al. 2001, 121). The suburban mall became a prime destination of leisure. Soon, the artificial atmosphere created in these enclosed retail centres granted certain plants to be placed in a geographic location where they would have withered otherwise, mimicking the exterior ambiance, but a version of it closest to perfection. This desire for what was unattainable at home contributed to the proliferation of suburban malls (Chung et al. 2001, 116). Now, cities are realizing that a strong presence of natural environments in urban areas

are not only more widely desired, but also crucial to a city's resilience (Glaeser and Gottlieb 2006, 1276). As it is a concept birthed from the need to describe something that was almost indescribable, quite simply, heterotopias are also not the real thing. However, the mall may no longer be the heterotopia that provides a 'placeless place,' as the concept was perhaps never intended as a tool for the study of real sites, but rather those that pertain to unique representations of semi-mythical places (Knight 2017, 142). A mall that is fully integrated into the city, whilst still maintaining some level of effect to suspend disbelief, could be a more accurate utopia.

Southdale Centre in 1956. (Life Magazine 1956)

The digital sphere can be considered as another layer of heterotopia of a newer type of mall – the online store. Online shopping is largely seen as an individual experience, a time of solo decision making on products that are at that point in time, intangible. There is no sales associate to offer help or answer questions. The convenience of essentially being at a mall anywhere there is internet connection, so long as you have an electronic device to connect (Heinemann and

Gaiser 2015, 87), also diminishes the impact of what malls came to be in the city, which was a public place for communal activities. However, the technology which justifies the digital medium is also precisely how someone in Canada can talk to someone in Switzerland whilst also looking at them. This combination of the spatial and networked publics would not only resist association of malls as being something as "other," deeming them inaccessible and therefore not public, but also produce a new place for shopping that follows the consumption patterns of the world.

The Significance of the "Street"

> Architecture, now transformed into an artificial environment, is no longer defined by its spatial and physical forms, but instead produces environments where colour, light, temperature, acoustics, and ventilation, encourage the immersion of the occupant into a world of sensations. (Wachter 2012)

Rem Koolhaas has said, "the 'hypermodern' metropolis is marked less by a transformation of places than by an escalation in the physical and virtual flows that connect these places." The idea of a digital city – whether it be a city that is entire digital in its existence or one that fully embraces digital elements that make the city as it is – the perception of the architecture by its inhabitants defines the parameters of its very concept. Serge Wachter, professor at the National School of Architecture of Paris- La Villette, states the significance of the permanence of streets within a city. In a public cyberspace, the street represents the flow of information, paralleled by its purpose in physical reality as the transportation line in which people flow, and each person is essentially a portable data bank. For example, "the way in which we experience our environment in the street will perhaps soon be defined by which is invisible to the eye" (Wachter 2012). This would be the extreme

Movie still from *Tron: Legacy*. (Kosinski 2010)

scenario of the current tool of location tagging. The homo digitalis would then fully depend on the sensual [city] and its architecture, making the mixed platform all the more crucial to understanding how people would interact with their surroundings in the future.

The Flâneur: An Observation

> To be away from home and yet to feel oneself everywhere at home; to see the world, to be at the centre of the world, and yet to remain hidden from the world - impartial natures which the tongue can but clumsily define. (Baudelaire 1964, 229)

Baudelaire's flâneur, and Walter Benjamin's study of the figure, has permeated the philosophy of urban life. This thesis has no intention of disputing that outcome, but rather, requests to reimagine the flâneur in 21st century context. The flâneur is an anonymous and aimless stroller who is able to observe his surroundings whilst also being detached from it. When this character adopted the term in the mid 19th century, it was unconditionally a male, and one who possessed a certain level of urban riches that which could afford wandering the city with no economic purpose, neither working or window shopping, an act often said to be typical of a flâneur. This characterization of an aimless wanderer as the prime point of view to experience a city has undoubtedly changed. The flâneur of today could very well have no job or any intention to purchase anything, but the lens of the city is no longer merely through a person's eyes, but the screen of a cellular phone. Afterall, an Instagram post or story is the utmost way to experience the lives of everyday people and culture nowadays.

It is for this precise reason that the flâneur, or perhaps the mere idea of him/her, is the perfect character for which to realize a hybrid mall. This is not to say that a mall designed

Illustration of the concept of the modern flâneur. (base drawing from Gavrani 1842)

without this notion in mind is out of date, or that this notion itself is even contemporary, but the laissez-fair mentality can aide the narrative for retail that truly personifies both its physical context in a city, as well as the digital urbanity that modernity has placed the flâneur in.

Relevant Typology: Arcades

Also known as the Covered Passage of Paris, shopping arcades as a typology originated in Paris but quickly flourished across Europe. Recognized by repetitious arches, arcades became the place to shop, largely for the growing middle class of the 18th and 19th century, as they provided a semi-covered and therefore semi-enclosed space, effectively separating the activity from the noise and bustle of the street while still being connected to it. In time, simply promenading in the arcades became an activity on its own.

Arcade shops along row of high Medieval houses, France.
(wikiwand n.d.)

Relevant Typology: Transit Malls

> A shopping street has a delicate web of intersecting relationships. Sever the web in one or two places, and the whole commercial district may die. This is the reason why suburban shopping centres are always planned with the small stores situated on the routes the link major stores. (Koolhaas et al. 2000, 94)

Transit malls are streets with restricted or prohibited vehicle traffic for the purpose of pedestrian friendly activity. Only pedestrians, cyclists, and limited public transit are permitted. These malls were conceived through the realization and acceptance that malls provide a special place of gathering. They are meant to be such spaces that encourage social engagement in an atmosphere that was not dominated by automobiles. This display of the pedestrian street typology is a return towards a more public shopping experience. Albeit rather literal, as it is an open outdoor space, the almost seamless involvement of the transit mall with their urban context proposes an architecture of a different scale. The street can be seen as an urban room as well as a microcosm of a city, for the everyday person in his or her place (Rubenstein 1978, 3).

Fulton Transit Mall, Fresno, CA. (Rubenstein 1978)

Untitled (I shop therefore I am) - a narrative of shopping as identity. (Kruger 1987)

Movie still from *Her* (Jonze 2013)

Shopping = Urbanity

Shopping has historically developed alongside, sustained, amplified, or aspired to the urban. The Greek agora and the medieval town hall provided a space in which the gravity of civic life and the liveliness of the marketplace could coexist in often indistinguishable ways. The Parisian arcades and the early department stores intensified urban life by creating a previously unknown experience of the city, and the suburban shopping mall was originally conceived to function as a surrogate town centre (Chung et al. 2001, 153)

The Society of the Spectacle, Where the Medium is the Message

> All that once was directly lived has become a mere representation. (Debord 1967, 116)

> ... the decline of 'being' into 'having,' and 'having' into merely 'appearing.' (Debord 1967, 83)

Guy Debord's Marxist philosophy of *The Society of the Spectacle* is a criticism, or rather, a collection of aphorisms about 'authentic' social life and the shifts that result in the degradation of human life/ quality. The spectacle is not a collection of images; rather, it is a social relation among people, mediated by images (Debord 1967). He argues that it proves the conquest that commodity has over social life, and there are arguably no truer words to describe society's current state. As a response, the détournement movement was encouraged, which is defined by the act of "turning expressions of the capitalist system and its media culture against itself" by "using spectacular images and language to disrupt the flow of the spectacle" (Debord 1967).

The mass media is a crucial ingredient of social life in regards to understanding Debord's Spectacle, and this only supplements Marshall McLuhan's theory of media that the

content (message) is not as important as the medium by which it is distributed. Indeed, it used to be that when an important event occurred, the town crier would yell the news to everyone who so happened to be where he was yelling the news. Then news was being spoken in moderate volume into a microphone, being heard on the other end by a radio, and now it can be received through a television and cellular phone, where convenience is not the happenstance of being present when the news was being announced, but getting notifications on content with a hashtag that one subscribes to. It is hard to argue that this evolution says something about humanity as a whole; that there is a message there somewhere, and perhaps Debord heard it and interpreted it.

Movie still from *Blade Runner 2049* (Villeneuve 2017)

In the urban context, where life is more known to be fast-paced and consistently changing, the technologies of people's daily lives are indelible. A city's architecture is imperative to its identity, and therefore the very thing that its inhabitants latch onto, so utilizing it in a communicative function can shape the urban locale. The architecture can be the medium, and the implemented technology is the physical material in which to manifest collective expression – the people's shared message, so to speak.

Cultivated Identity

The theory of place emerged from Roger Barker's research on behaviour settings in the field of ecological psychology. His studies informed Relph exploration into personal experience settings which they refer to as 'identity of place. (Castello and Rands 2001, 62).

> While place meanings are rooted in the physical setting and its activities, they are not a property of them but a property of human interaction and experiences of those places. (Relph 1967, 47)

Ala Moana Mall's daily Hula show. (Ala Monana Center n.d.)

Additionally, and more recently theorized, is a hybrid character of contemporary identities, blending different sources and traditions from different locales. Doreen Massey argues for a 'progressive' of global sense of place. Rather than searching for a lost 'authenticity' based on nostalgia and potentially false memories, places should be "understood as a distinctive articulation of social relations from the global to the local" (Miller, Rowlands, and Jackson 1998, 189).

Although malls are known heterotopias, disengaged from the 'outside,' the activities that occur within its walls are quite indicative of a community's identity. What people buy and do informs much about them as a person, and since the mall is not only an aggregation of stores, but also includes movie theatres and food courts, the mall is vessel for place (Miller, Rowlands, and Jackson 1998, 70). Hawaii's Ala Moana Center has a stage and seating area that holds over 800 performances a year, with a daily Hula show – a regional dance known as the heartbeat of the Hawaiian people. Merely 'hanging out' at malls is a show of social identity, often associated with the teenagers of the 1980's to 90's, during peak infiltration of malls, as popularized by

North American movies. Even the suburban mall emanated from the society's familial identity.

America's "Third Place"

The concept of a "third place" was originated by sociologist Ray Oldenburg in 1989 and describes the third place where people spend most of their time. In this theory, the "first place" would be the home, and the "second place" would be the workplace. Third places can be a multitude of things for each person, such as churches, cafes, and barbershops, essentially any other social space. In his book, *The Great Good Place*, Oldenburg cites these third places as critical for relationships. After World War II and the migration away from the city centre, the suburbs lacked good social places, and eventually the mall became America's "third place" (Oldenburg 1989, 38)

Scholars have summarized Oldenburg's idea of third places to include eight qualities:

1) Neutral ground: people can come and go as they please with no obligation to come or stay

2) Accessibility: must be accommodating

3) Conversation: must be the main activity

4) The regulars: people who help set the mood and characteristics of the area, and help newcomers feel welcome

5) Leveler: an individual's status (economic or social) has no importance

Still from *Stranger Things* season 3. (Duffer Brothers 2019)

Movie still from *Mean Girls*. (Waters 2004)

6)	Playful mood: no tension or hostility in the nature of the place

7)	Home away from home: foster feelings of comfort and familiarity

8)	Low profile: without extravagance, grandiosity, or pretentiousness in order to be more welcoming and approachable

Most places that would be considered as Third Places now offer internet access, such that has become so common, one might be baffled when it is not offered. It can be argued that the digital realm itself is added to the list of third place examples, as it satisfies most, if not all eight qualities listed above.

Relevant Typology: Traditional Marketplaces

From ancient markets, such as Trajan's Market, to modern markets, such as Markthal Rotterdam, markets are an indicator of a city's vibrancy and shows a glimpse of its economy. A study of these markets, raises the question, "what makes a market a market? And why did they become such important parts of the society in which they exist and serve?" The matrix of mall typologies introduced in chapter 2 assumes that the layout, which optimizes maximum access and interaction between people, is key. The floor plans of

Markthall Rotterdam, Netherlands. (Bevan 2015)

both aforementioned examples display a similar set up, with some differences that are due to the available structural methods of the times each market was built.

Digital Placemaking

Placemaking can be traced back to Jane Jacobs and William W. Whyte and their work, which emphasized the "social and cultural importance of lively neighbourhoods and inviting public space" (Project for Public Spaces 2007), Digital placemaking refers to the process of using digital media for shaping urban experiences that are citizen-centric, both in their conception and implementation (Hespanhol et al. 2017, 16). Martin Tomitsch also calls this "spectacle placemaking," in that it is typically created in the context of temporary festivals or exhibitions. In said cases, people experience the altering dynamics of public spaces, as the approach transforms the space into a stage, leading to performative interactions amongst passers-by, who can decide to either enter the stage, thereby becoming a performer, or to step back and participate in the performance as an observer. An elevated approach would integrate responsive digital media

Examples of digital placemaking: Millenium Park, Chicago; and Hand from Above, England; Field of Light, Australia; Waterlicht, Netherlands; Le Circuit de Bachelard, Montreal. (Hespanhol et al, 2017)

into physical architecture, enhancing the interplay between people and place and diluting the role of performer across the whole audience.

An elevated digital implementation would consider improving the services already available in cities, which Martin Tomitsch refers to "infrastructure placemaking," which uses digital media to improve the existing infrastructure in cities, such as the Crown Fountain at Millenium Park in Chicago, Illinois, which activates a park landscape through permanent urban screen installations. It can also enhance critical aspects contributing to the liveability of cities, such as safety in public spaces. For example, Nikolopoulous et al. studied the effect of visual stimuli displayed on screens or placed on the ground on pedestrian movement in sensitive environments. They found that playful interventions, such as the urban screen artwork Hand from Above displayed on the BBC Big Screen in Portsmouth, UK, can disrupt routine use of space and act as a form of deterrence, shaping the flow of pedestrian movement which is an integral aspect of security planning.

Places of Exchange

Simply put, consumerism is always changing, and shopping is continuously expanding its real estate. The department store agglomerated specialty stores, malls provided air-conditioned enclosures, and the introduction of the escalator increased customer flow beyond what was imaginable (Chung et al. 2001, 358). Presently, retail is not restricted to the building typology of the 'mall,' in the same way that malls do not consist exclusively of stores, as previously mentioned. In fact, retail is almost as synonymous to airports

Places of Exchange: first duty free shop in Shannon airport; musuem shop; Gangnam subway station; Montreal's Underground City. (Chung et al. 2001)

and museums as they are to flight and preserved artifacts, respectively.

The first duty-free shop in an airport was placed in Ireland's Shannon airport in 1957. Since then, airports around the globe have expanded in size to include shopping as a part of the 'flight' experience, before one even steps foot on the jet bridge. Heathrow airport is nearly ten times more profitable per square foot than the average shopping mall. Logically, centres of transportation are hubs of movement. Where movement happens, various and abundant forms of exchange are bound to take place (Glaeser, Kolko, and Saiz 2001, 33). Montreal Metro's Underground City was constructed for uninterrupted connection between all transit stations, and it exists in the form of a continuous underground shopping mall. These places of social, ideological, and financial exchange support their public nature, and therefore the magnitude of malls in both the physical and psychological regard (Miller, Rowlands, and Jackson 1998, 196).

Chapter 4: A Psychology of Consumption

Shopping is an imaginative activity; indeed, we go shopping – but shopping is in fact going on almost all the time. In *Captains of Consciousness*, Stuart Ewen explains how advertisers at the hands of a capitalist system know that, while people go to markets and malls to purchase products, real shopping is more about people then merchandise, and it takes place mostly in the mind (Farrell 1998, 155). It is no surprise the word "shop" only became a verb in the late eighteenth century, and then a way of life in the twentieth century.

> Ours is a brand-new word of all-at-onceness. "Time" has ceased, "space" has vanished. We now live in a global village...a simultaneous happening. (McLuhan 1964, 63)

From a quick pop into the corner convenience store to a cross-country trip planned entirely to be spent at a world-famous mall, the various types of shopping experience can dictate its course, and certainly one's perception in its participation, whether immediate or elongated, enjoyable or tedious, or otherwise. Why people continue to shop is that it is wholly necessary, whether they do it solely out of said necessity or as a source of enjoymeny is the distinct reason of its. The behaviour of consumers has changed, thus the medium in which they consume must, has, and shall continue to do the same.
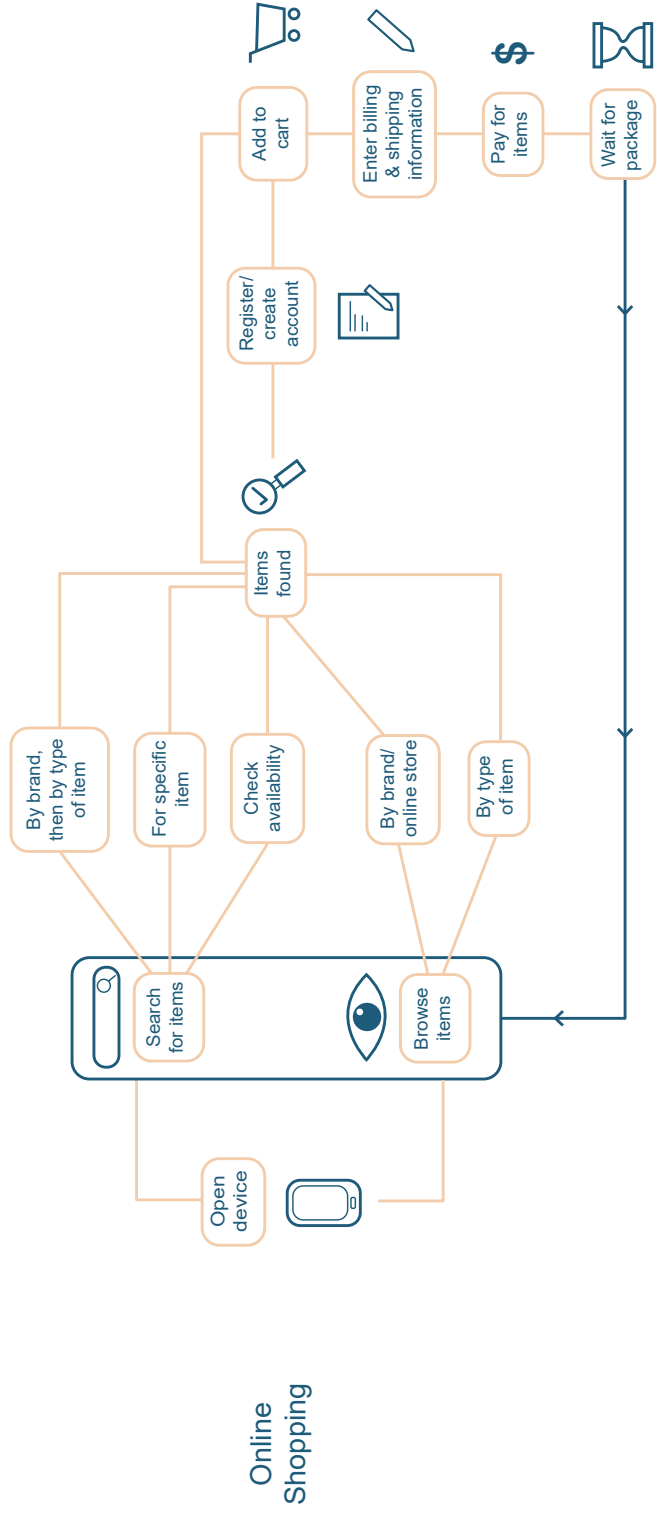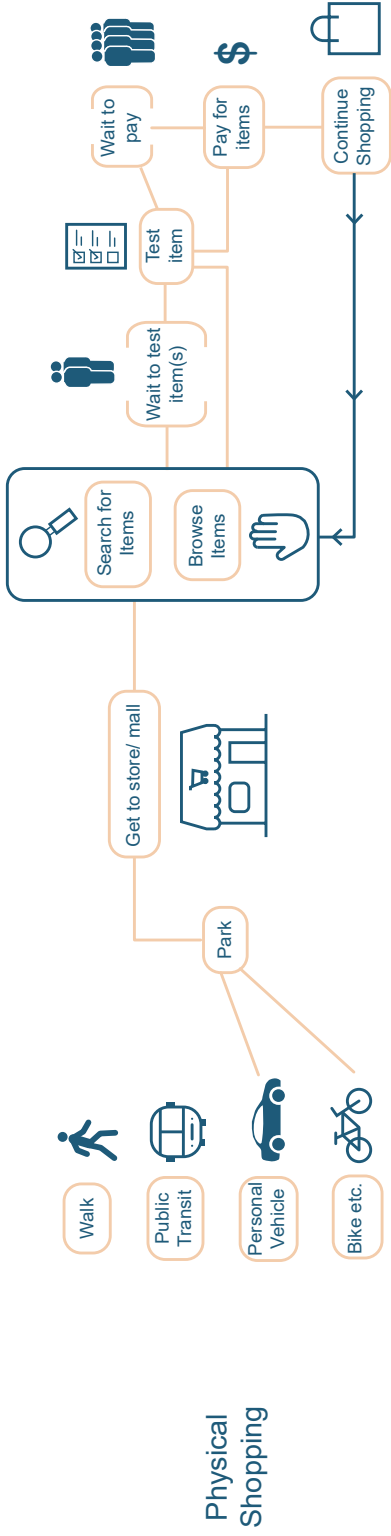
Convenience

One of the main reasons as to why online shopping was invented was the attraction of the convenience it offers. It is no wonder people naturally prefer ease over hardship, and many businesses and technologies were invented
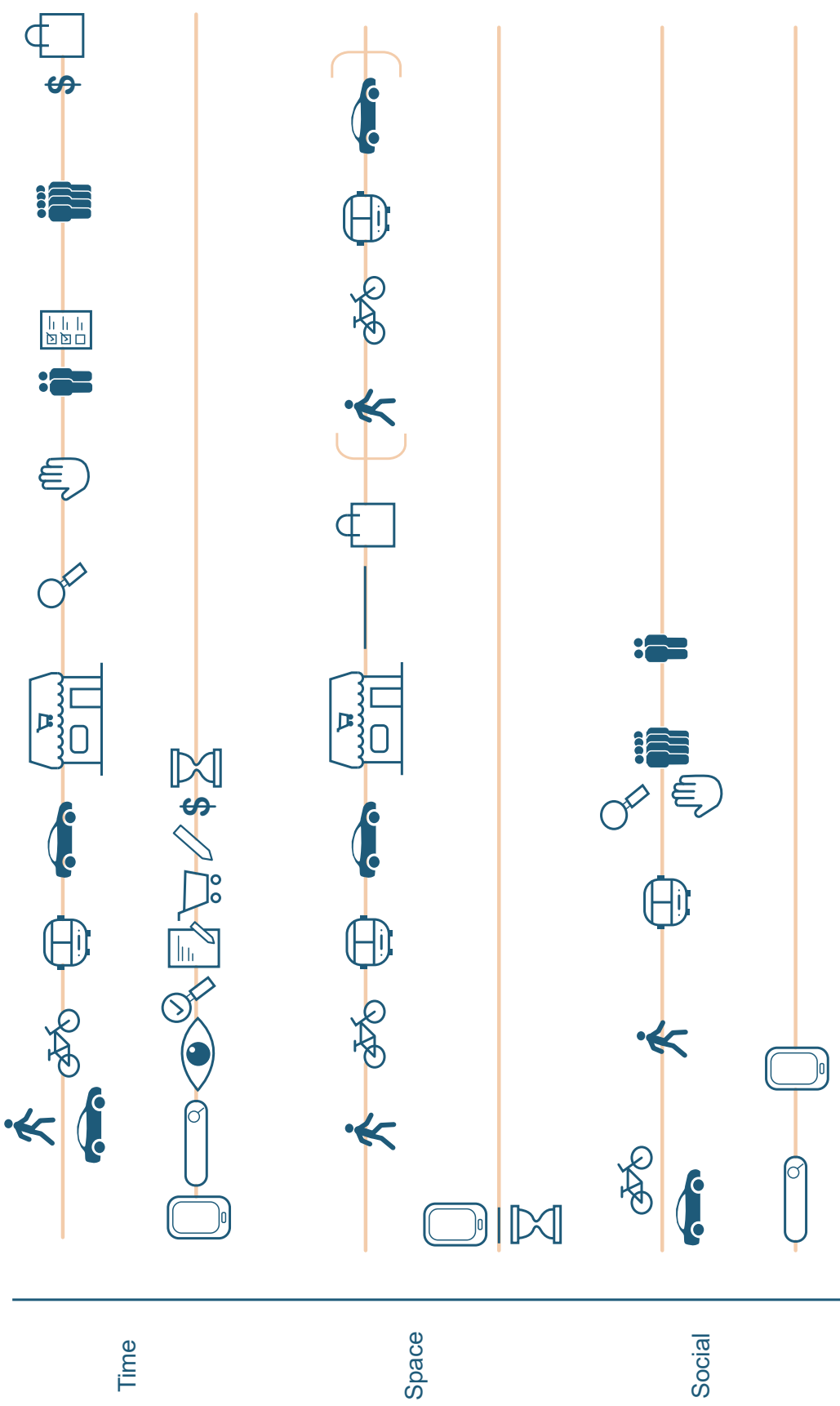
Layered factors; comparisons based on original steps of physical and online shopping experiences.

Time

Space

Social

Comparison of typical steps taken while physical and online shopping.

Physical Shopping

Walk · Public Transit · Personal Vehicle · Bike etc. → Park → Get to store/ mall → Search for Items / Browse Items → Wait to test item(s) → Test item → Wait to pay → Pay for items → Continue Shopping

Online Shopping

Open device → Search for items / Browse items → By brand, then by type of item · For specific item · Check availability · By brand/ online store · By type of item → Items found → Register/ create account → Add to cart → Enter billing & shipping information → Pay for items → Wait for package

to appease this desire for humanity. Again, the escalator made it so that a shopper wouldn't have to walk up and down stairs, so as to achieve an uninterrupted sensation of the mall, and the telephone made it possible to talk with a loved one miles or even hundreds of miles away without physically travelling hours to do so. Similarly, the induction of electronic retail allowed for one to essentially have access to countless malls in the comfort of one's home. Proximity is a bygone restriction, and access is 24/7 (Heinneman and Gaiser 2015, 166). This aspect of human longing serves as a cornerstone of the hybrid mall through experiential means, which will be discussed further in the next couple of sections.

Choice

Another advent of electronic retail service is the expanded options of products available (Jongen 2018, 148). Formerly, one could only buy products that were available in close proximity, but now, quite literally, the world is a mall of innumerable malls, available in the palm of one's hands. Having so much choice can be a paradise, but also a paradox. Relating back to the changes of convenience that digital shopping offers, where one can save time and effort of retrieving an item, depending on the level of certainty one has when starting the shopping activity, having many options can detract from its efficiencies (Jongen 2018, 150). This paradox is a factor in deciding the filtering mechanisms of the digital features that are to be part of hybrid retail.

Experience

> The digital has become indistinguishable from the deeply experiential. (Picon 2010, 157)

Tangibility

In spite of the growing favour of digital retail experiences, various studies show that over 80% of urban residents still prefer to shop at brick and mortar stores over online, if by choosing the other option would cease to exist (Verhagen, Vonkeman, and Van Dolen 2016, 460). Humans crave the certainty that comes with tangibility (Jongen 2018, 152). Often, it is a risk to shop online, as the condition in which the product would be in when it arrives is unknown. There might be assumptions made or descriptive inaccuracies and the purchased product might not be what one wanted at all. Through mixed reality technology, the hybrid mall seeks to bridge this gap between physical and digital shopping, as well as incorporating the benefits that were previously mentioned, to develop new programmatic opportunities through new architectural elements.

The Four Realms of the Experiential Economy

Strategic Horizon's Joseph Pine and James Gilmore developed what they believe is the four realms of the experience economy: entertainment, educational, esthetic, and escapist. These realms are relative to each other by magnitude and type of participation and immersion of the activity, as a means to determine how strongly it would affect the person experiencing it. What can be derived from this study is activities that are immersive and fosters active participation results in the best experiences (Pine and Gilmore 1998, 180). A successful example is mattress company Caspar's The Dreamery store in New York City. Here, people can pay to take a nap on their mattresses in privated sleeping pods to test before purchasing to ensure the product will satisfy all their slumber needs. One is

already set in the mood as the entrance to the store space is through a dark corridor lit by starry lights.
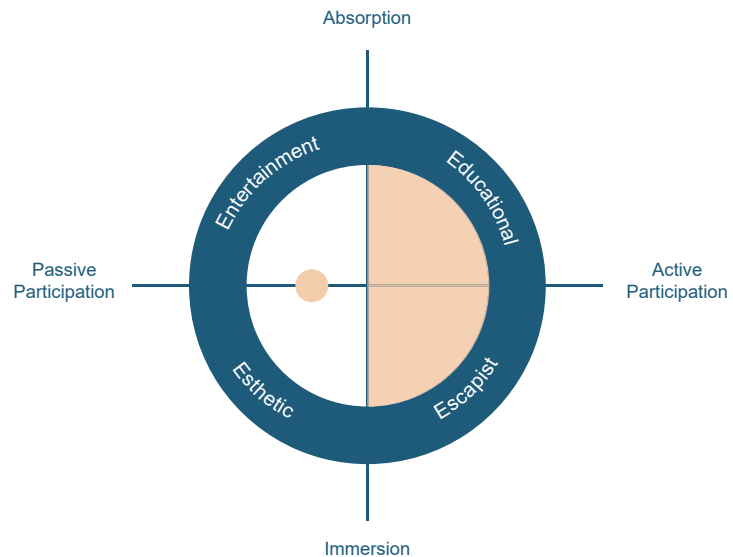

Diagram of the four realms of the experience economy. (Pine and Gilmore, 1998)

The idea of commodities is shifting; it is not so much the products anymore, but the experience, that attracts people, whether it be the marketing vehicle for consumers to buy things or the main commodity itself. This is partially due to the changing priorities of ownership, where the idea of 'the American dream' is no longer what it was when the phrase was coined. A reason why urban populations are increasing is the decreased desire to own as many things – and therefore the property to store said things – as the previous generation. For most people nowadays, experiencing experiences is more coveted, and perhaps having a few pictures of proof that it was experienced.

Examples of experiential retail: The Dreamery by Casper, New York, NY; West49 indoor skate park in Tsawwassen Mills mall, Tsawwassen, BC. (Cogley 2018; West49 n.d.)

Omnichannel

The omnichannel refers to the relationship between channels and forms of shopping, integrating all points of contact to improve the user/customer experience. This strategy marries both online and offline environments by taking the best aspects of both. Despite being able to buy just about anything using a smartphone, roughly 75% of consumers still prefer to finish their purchasing in a brick-and-mortar store (CBinsights2021). The opposite also occurs, where people would enter a store to try test an item's material or try apparel for sizing, then order online, perhaps because the colour they wanted was only available online. The intention of the omnichannel is to eliminate the extra step

and effectively combine the benefits of convenience, choice, and experience and offer it to the shopper. Whereby single channel shopping is largely informational, multi- and cross-channel shopping focus on the various transactional nature, and omnichannel shopping is experiential, by integrating the customer pre - and post-purchase.
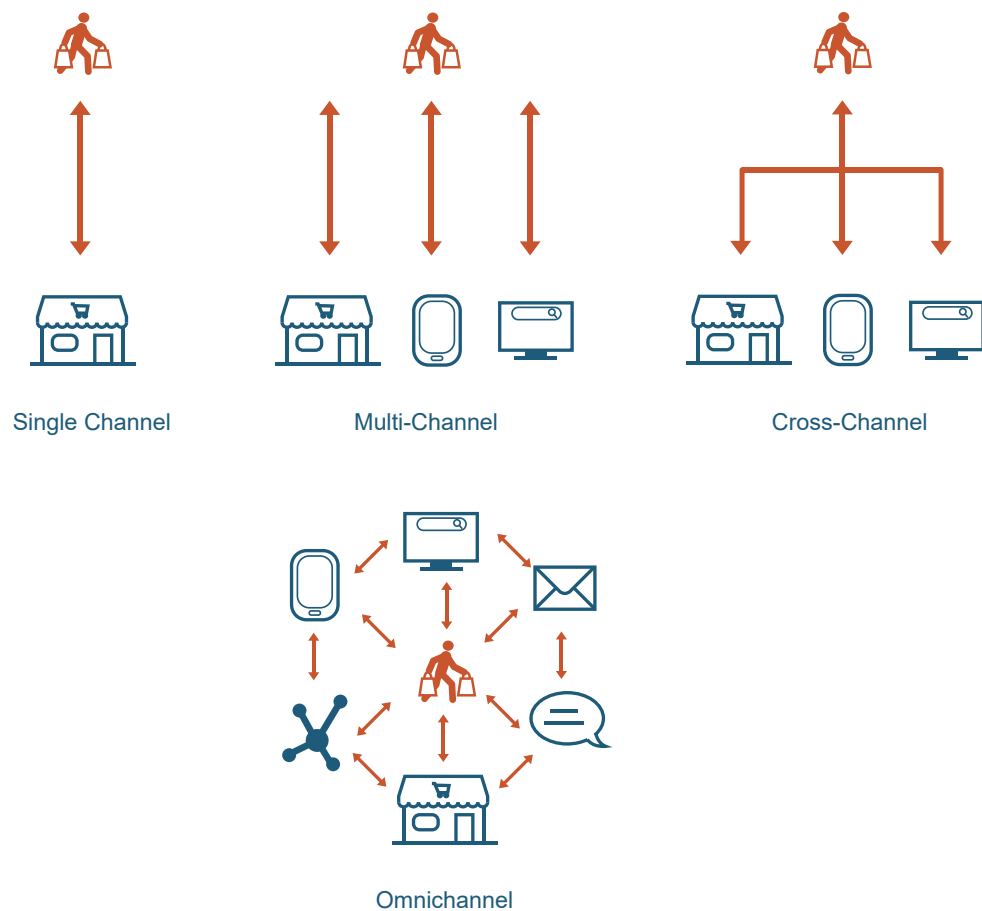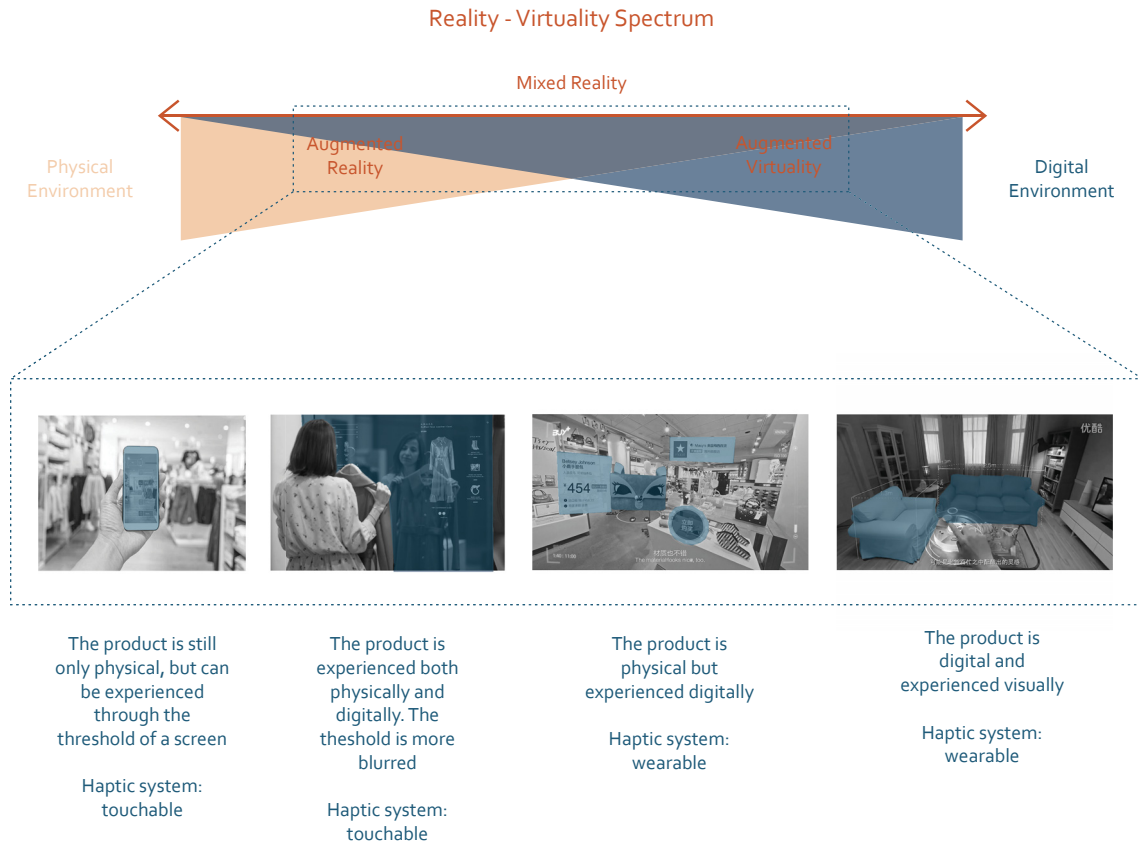

Comparative diagram of benefits of omnichannel shopping. (CBinsights 2021)

Chapter 5: The Mixed Platform

Mixed Reality is an umbrella term for a variety of technologies that allow users to spatially engage with digital content. In 1995, Paul Milgram coined the "Reality – Virtuality Continuum:" a spectrum used for classifying mixed reality technologies spanning between the real environment and the virtual environment (Milgram 1994, 283). While this spectrum was used specifically to classify display technologies, it can be adapted more broadly to cover the interface of any sense with digital content. MR will become part of architectural discussions, because it is inherently spatial. For the purposes of this thesis, the reality-virtuality continuum will be amended for a key distinction. Instead of a spectrum between reality and virtuality, mixed reality will be discussed on a spectrum between the physical and digital.

Early conceptual wish image collage of design intervention.

Reality - Virtuality Spectrum

Mixed Reality

Physical
Environment

Augmented
Reality

Augmented
Virtuality

Digital
Environment

The product is still
only physical, but can
be experienced
through the
threshold of a screen

Haptic system:
touchable

The product is
experienced both
physically and
digitally. The
theshold is more
blurred

Haptic system:
touchable

The product is
physical but
experienced digitally

Haptic system:
wearable

The product is
digital and
experienced visually

Haptic system:
wearable

Reality - Virtuality Continuum diagram with corresponding retail applications.

Augmented Reality
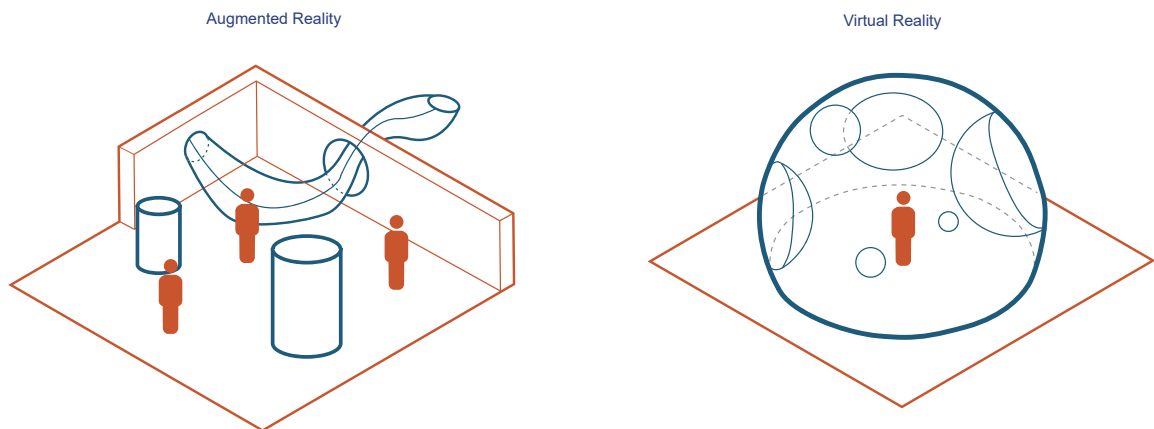
Virtual Reality

Diagram of the reality - virtuality continuum, illustrations of AR and VR. (Fresia 2019)

In *The End of Online Shopping*, Wijnand Jongen coined the term "onlinification," as the process of transferring aspects of life to depend on digital mediums. This is a process that has been taking place for decades, but the going forward, the goal is not to live entirely 'online lives,' but to find a comfortable mixture of the digital and natural. By his claim that "the end of online shopping" is coming, he means that there will soon be no differentiation of shopping online as an alternative to the conventional physical shopping, but rather it will be the norm that all platforms of retail will be considered as simply, "shopping" (Jongen 2018, 11). Marshall McLuhan famously said, "the medium is the message," and he also considered media to be "an extension of ourselves" (McLuhan 1964, 47). If this language of how the digital and physical may be seen as almost interchangeable persists, it may be soon enough that the two worlds will have little differentiation.

Movie still from *Anon* (Niccol 2018)

Movie still from *The Matrix* (Wachowskis 1999)

Mixed Retail

Divisions between digital and nondigital [public] spaces are becoming less distinct, resulting in an entanglement of media platforms and practices, formations and allegiances across space and time. (Tierney 2013, 22)

The merging of the physical and digital realms for the purposes of retail is nothing new. Smart mirrors, virtual headsets, beacon technology, and big data have all made a place for themselves in the world of shopping. However, the distinction between augmented reality and virtual reality is where and how the effect of the applied technology makes a mark on the community, rather than the benefits to a brand's earnings, VR is fully immersive, but not as actively participatory as mixed reality, where products would be integrated into and responsive to the natural world (Flavian, Ibanez-Sanchez, and Orus 2019, 551).
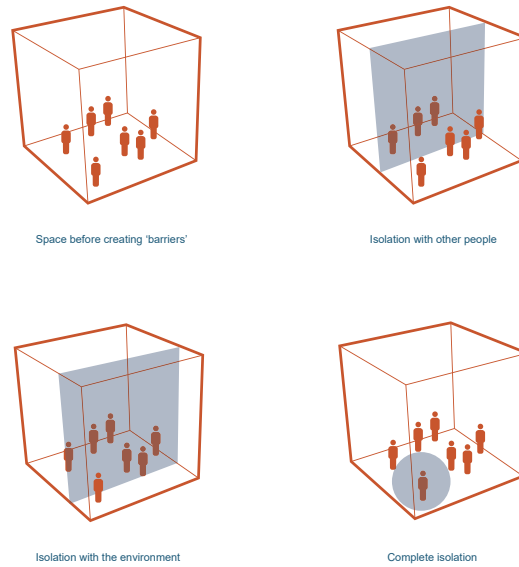
Farfetch, an online luxury store, launched their "store of the future" in April 2020. Using radio-frequency identification on item tags, and ultrasound for movement, smart mirror in fitting rooms, hologram technology, and seamless device transmissions, Farfetch is one of the leading fashion companies to implement the omnichannel to its fullest.
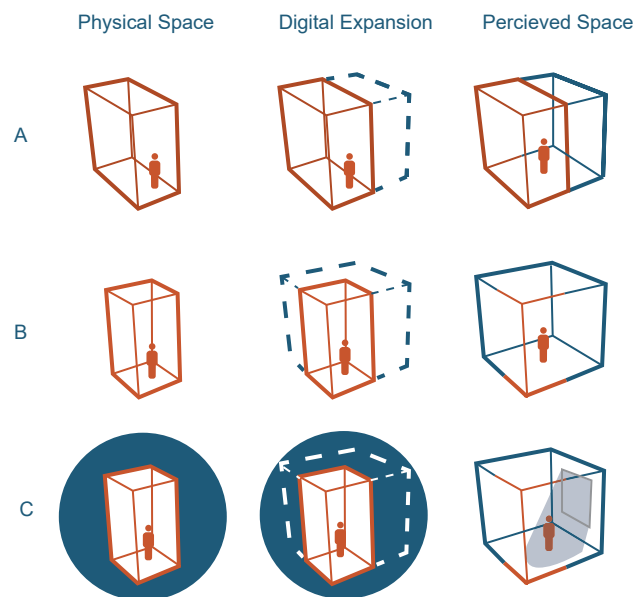
Spatial Manipulations

All involved technologies that would contribute to the nature of the architecture in which it is placed and therefore would augment, have barriers. By the mere notion that there are constraints, the opportunity for some liberation exists, albeit through digital means (Pociute 2017, 55).

a)   Immersiveness: visual barriers create the sense of being in a certain [created] environment, fostering personalized experiences, not unlike in reality, without an added threshold of technology

b)   Illusionary Expansions: small spaces could be visually expanded by digital overlay

c)   Transparency: the difference between illusionary expansion and illusion of transparency is that in case of simulating transparency, a representation of a real physical space instead of an imagined one is projected as an extension of the room

d)   Movement: as a result of illusionary expansions or transparencies, the viewer would want to experience the space (physical or otherwise) through movement

When the virtual and physical blends together, spatial perception are distorted, and the projection of another
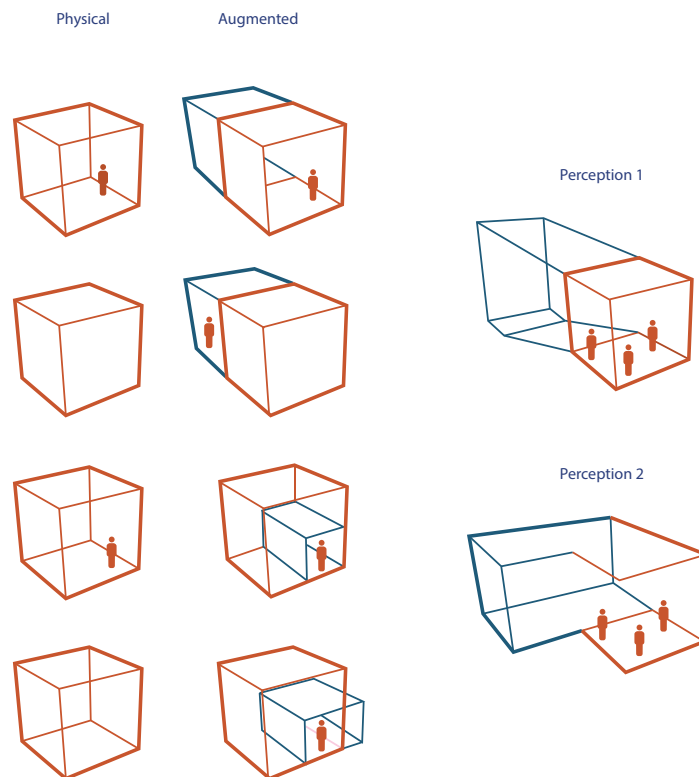
Space before creating 'barriers'

Isolation with other people

Isolation with the environment

Complete isolation

a) Variations of Immersiveness within the mixed platform.

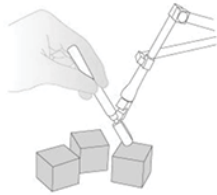Physical Space Digital Expansion Percieved Space

A

B

C

b) Variations of Illusionary Expansions within the mixed platform.
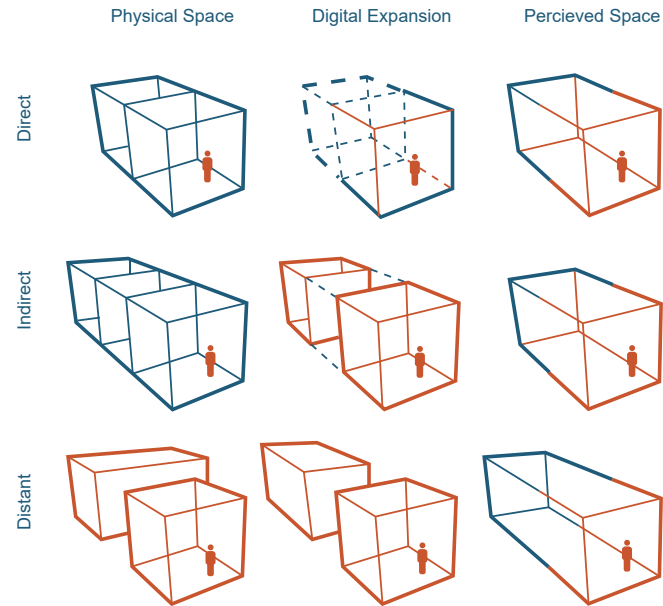
c) Variations of Transparency within the mixed platform.

d) Variations of Movement within the mixed platform, and potential perceived spaces.

Forms of haptic systems: graspable, wearable, touchable. (Culbertson et al 2018)

space, or extended space, has several relationships, as such.

The utilization of haptic technology might also augment MR shopping for the fullest customer experience. Touchable haptics are currently the norm, with the commonality of touch screen phones and tablets that respond with a buzz or sound when something is clicked. Wearable devices usually rely on tactile sensations – pressure, friction, or temperature, mediated by nerves in the skin. Graspable devices trigger kinesthetic sensations: feelings of movement, position, and force mediated by nerves not just in our skin but also in our muscles, tendons, and joints. A graspable device called Grabity provides the illusion of weight and inertia to the handling of virtual objects (Peck and Childers 2003, 37).

Although the idea of augmentation and applying that to the reality of retail architecture seems separate – whether it is a matter of programming technologies for the purposes of retail, or to apply already existing technologies to a building intended for retail – AR does not necessarily have to replace an aspect of the fully physical reality that is seemingly missing, but rather be the only available means for which to have the full physical experience. It might soon, or already be, a very necessity in designing spaces, not an additional element that designates the design as futuristic.

# Chapter 6: Design Intervention

Site

The design proposal aims to provide a backdrop of public space in an area dissociated from a traditional commercial focus in the city. That is to say, unlike many of Canada's major cities, Halifax lacks an urban mall that is even remotely comparative to the calibre of others. However, similar to many cities in Canada, Halifax is growing as an economic, cultural, and social hub.

The proposed site on Gottingen Street, between Prince William Street and Cornwallis Street, is currently home to not one, but two rather underused parking lots. These lots are separated by four buildings between them, and it is proposed that these buildings are to be removed for the design intervention, with the services they provide to be replaced in some form within the new mall. Currently, there resides Dalhousie University's Legal Aid Services, a real estate office, the Bus Stop Theatre, and a café.

Gottingen Street has seen many changes throughout the decades. From being a residential street to, to a commercial corridor, to an area of community services, to a revitalizing 'hip' area, its story reflects the influence the of shifting regulatory regime, transportation modes, commercial practices, and cultural values. (Roth and Jill L. Grant 2015, 38) This history and current state of the street serves as a suitable backdrop to the effect that the proposed mall can have on and for the city of Halifax, and perhaps continue its biography.

The trajectory of the street – from a site of commercial prowess until the 1960's, to a poor and stigmatized

neighbourhood through the 1990's, to a gentrifying district in the 2000's – is hardly unique. Such urban developments have been well documented in larger cities such as Toronto and Vancouver; with much less having been written about smaller Canadian cities. The North End neighbourhood, in which Gottingen Street is a part of, was one of Halifax's first residential extensions of its original seventeen-block settlement grid. By the turn of the 19th century, electric cars replaced horse-drawn carriage lines, and with the Halifax Explosion of 1917 effectively destroying much of the North End, the ease of access to the newer South End area encouraged people – and consequently, services – to move south as well. By the late 1940's, Gottingen Street was outperformed by their South End counterpart and despite various attempts to reinvigorate the once thriving commercial street, it was not for another half century until hope was seen. The accomplishments thus far prove the existence of a community that wants the area to flourish, as it has not yet been overtaken with high rises as a result of the urban core merely requiring more land.
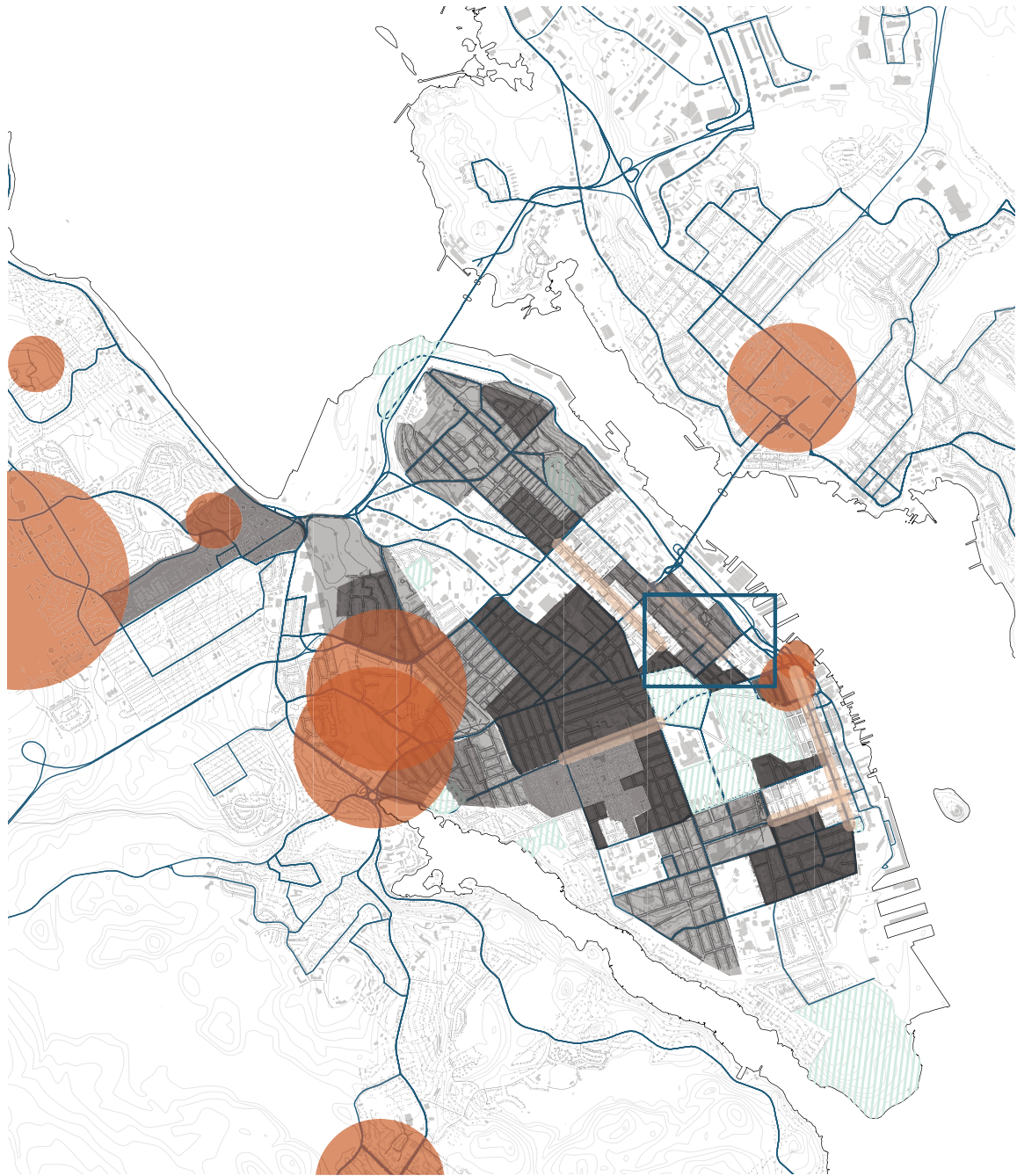
Commercial Street

Bus Routes

Malls

Public Spaces
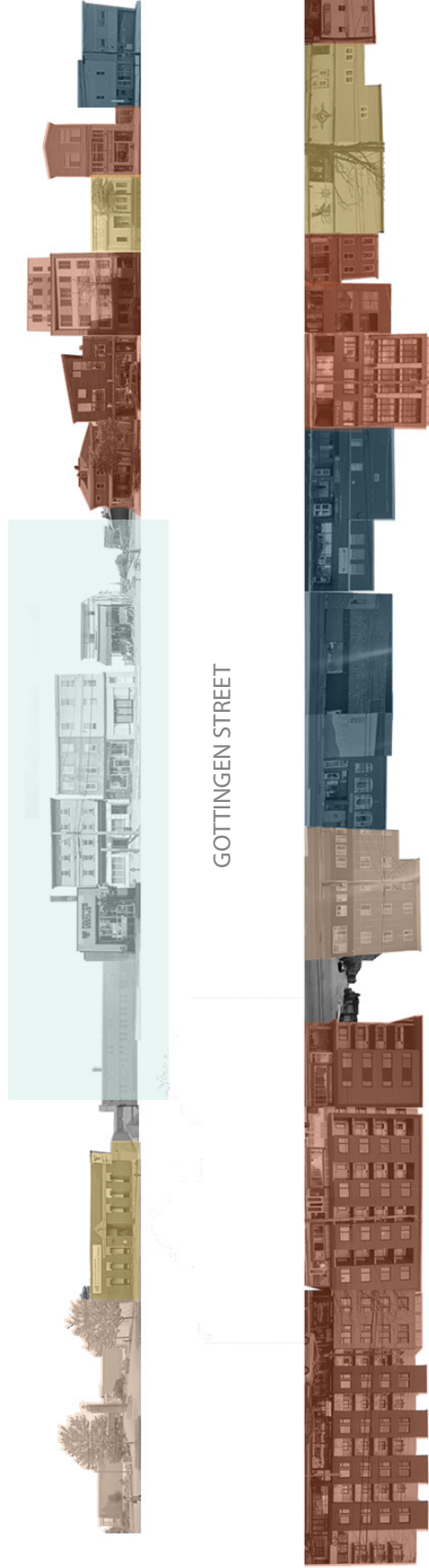
Population Density

Site

500   2000

M   1000

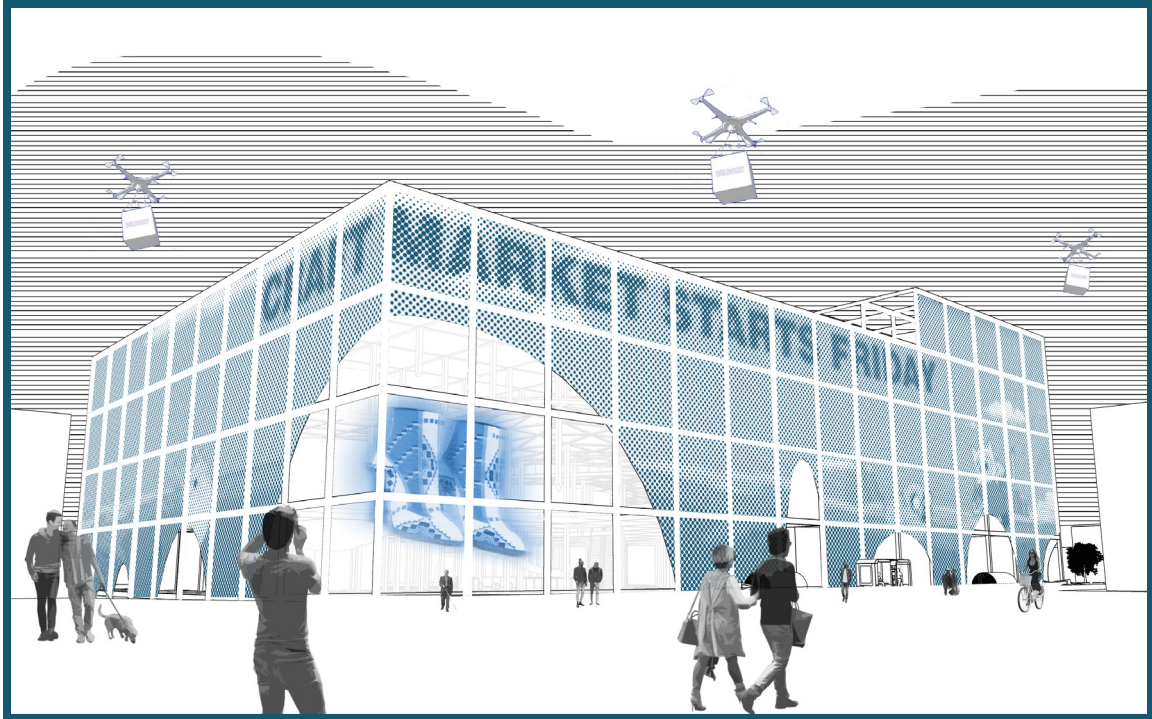Map of Halifax Peninsula with relevant factors for chosing site.

Map of current building types surrounding proposed site.

SITE

Commercial
Mixed Use
Residential
Community

Historic Commercial Street

Cogswell St
Portland St
Falkland St
Cornwallis St
Cunard St
Maynard St
Creighton St
Buddy Daye St
Gottingen St
Uniacke St
Maitland St
Brunswick St

M   50   100   200

SITE

GOTTINGEN STREET
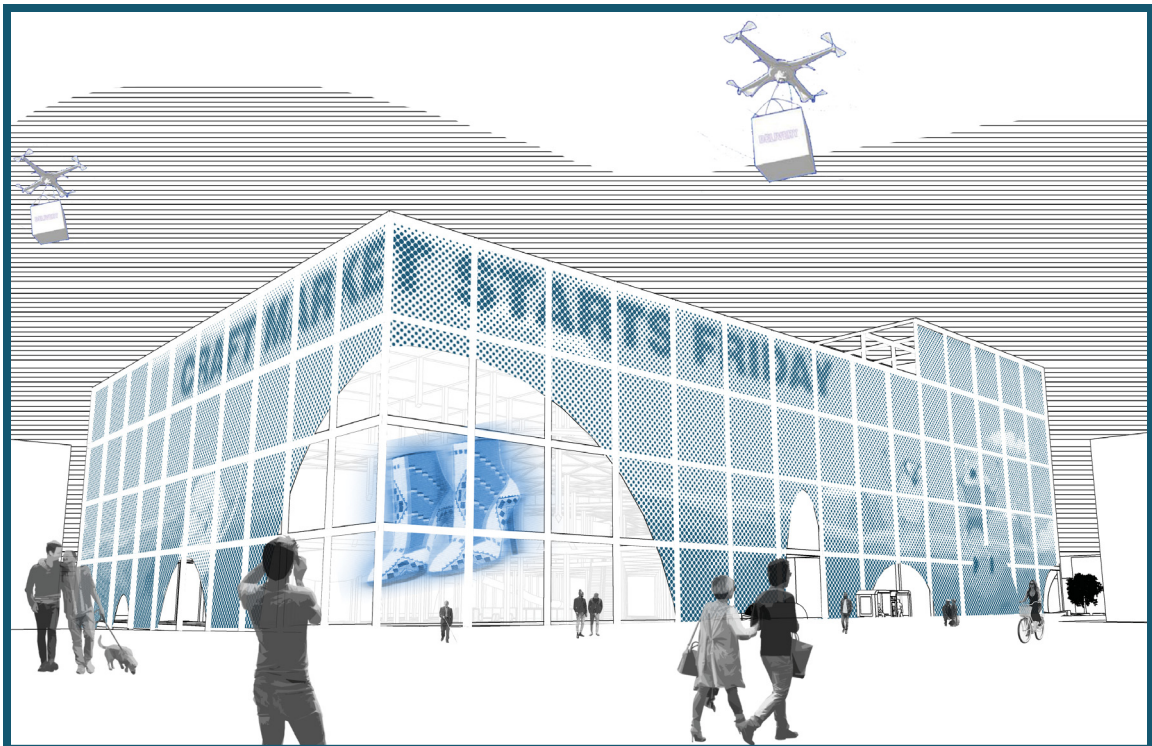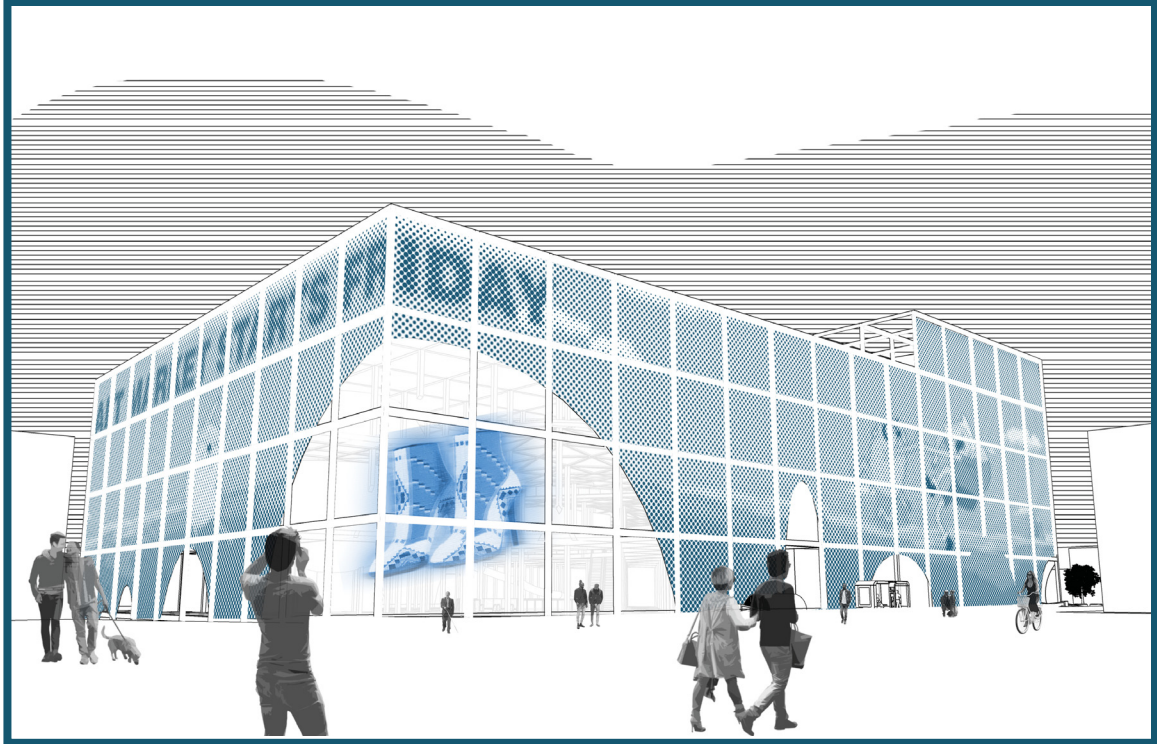
Streetscape of Gottingen Street surrounding proposed site.

Gottingen Street view of proposed mall 1 (moving images on mesh LED facade)

Gottingen Street view of proposed mall 2 (moving images on mesh LED facade)
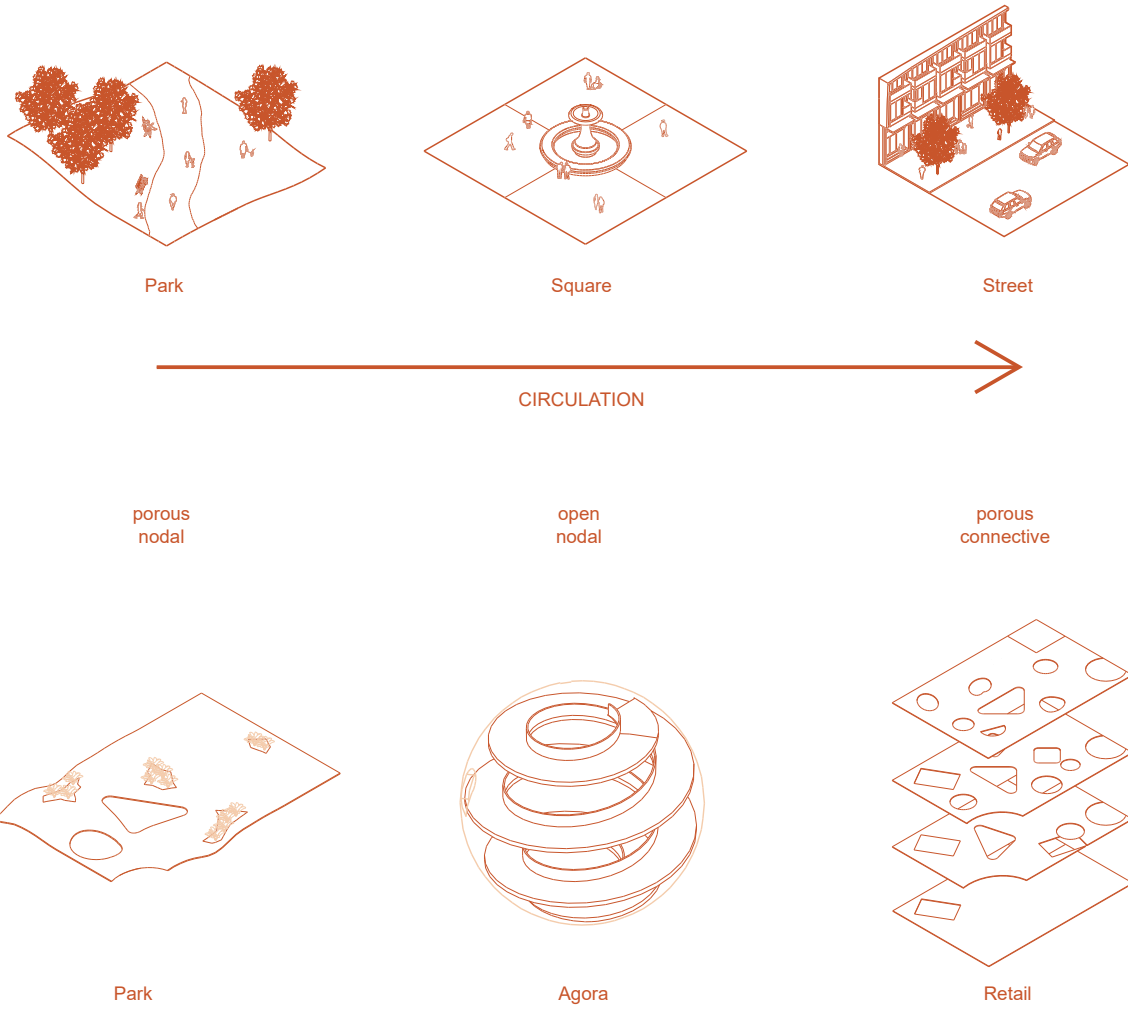
Gottingen Street view of proposed mall 3 (moving images on mesh LED facade)

Publics, Places; Revisited

The connotation of conventional physical public spaces such as parks, squares, and streets, no doubt plays a part to people's perception of certain spaces as public or otherwise. Therefore, the concept of these existing urban areas will be a guide to the creation of pockets of experience and excitement throughout the mall. Such that the street is inevitable for civic interaction, street shopping was historically essential; such that the agora was prime for municipal congregation, a city's central square stimulates communal discussion; and such that a park provides nature and leisure, a larger consideration of recreation apart from shopping has been proven to evoke social synchronicity.

By taking these urban elements, the mall hopes to encourage consolidated public gathering, conversation, and

Park   Square   Street

CIRCULATION

porous
nodal

open
nodal

porous
connective

Park   Agora   Retail

Typical urban elements and their corresponding parrallels emulated within the mall.

intermission. Sprinkled with options of conventional retail, the seemingly secondary relegation of the activity does not diminish the ambiance of what is 'shopping,' rather, it envelopes the ease of everyday activities in the same space to blur the lines of what a mall is to the community.

Wander / Wonder

The mall can be seen as a blank canvas for pockets of excitement to occur. The gridded structure is a two-fold homage: one, it refers to grid technology, the form of distributed computing whereby a "super virtual computer" is composed of many networked computers actuating together to perform a larger task; and two, an organizational principle of space that, again, applies a system of network and theory to architecture. Pillars and [organic] shapes then occupy the grid, carving out chambers of experience and excitement where one can let one's wonder roam. These spaces do not follow the grid, rather interrupting the established flow. There programs of the pillars shapes are as follows: eat, perform, work, socialize (agora), and warehouse. Each floor is also categorized by a priority program, apart from the pillars and chambers. Level 0 (Maitland Street access)
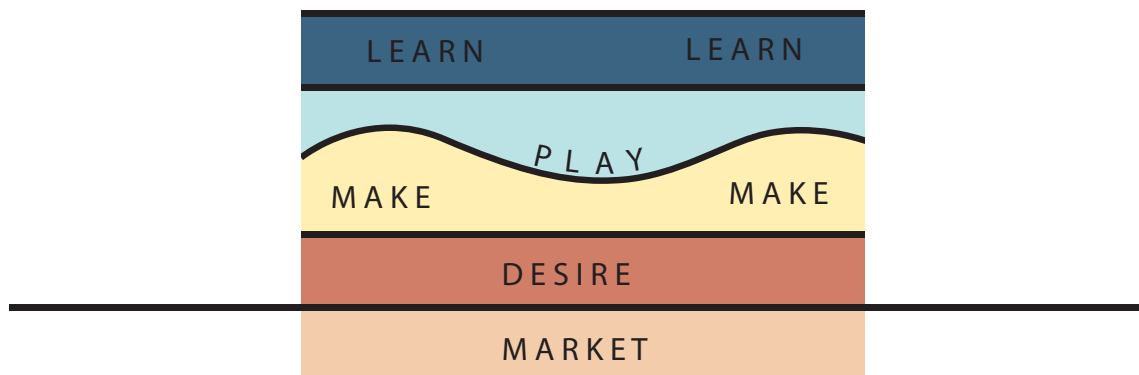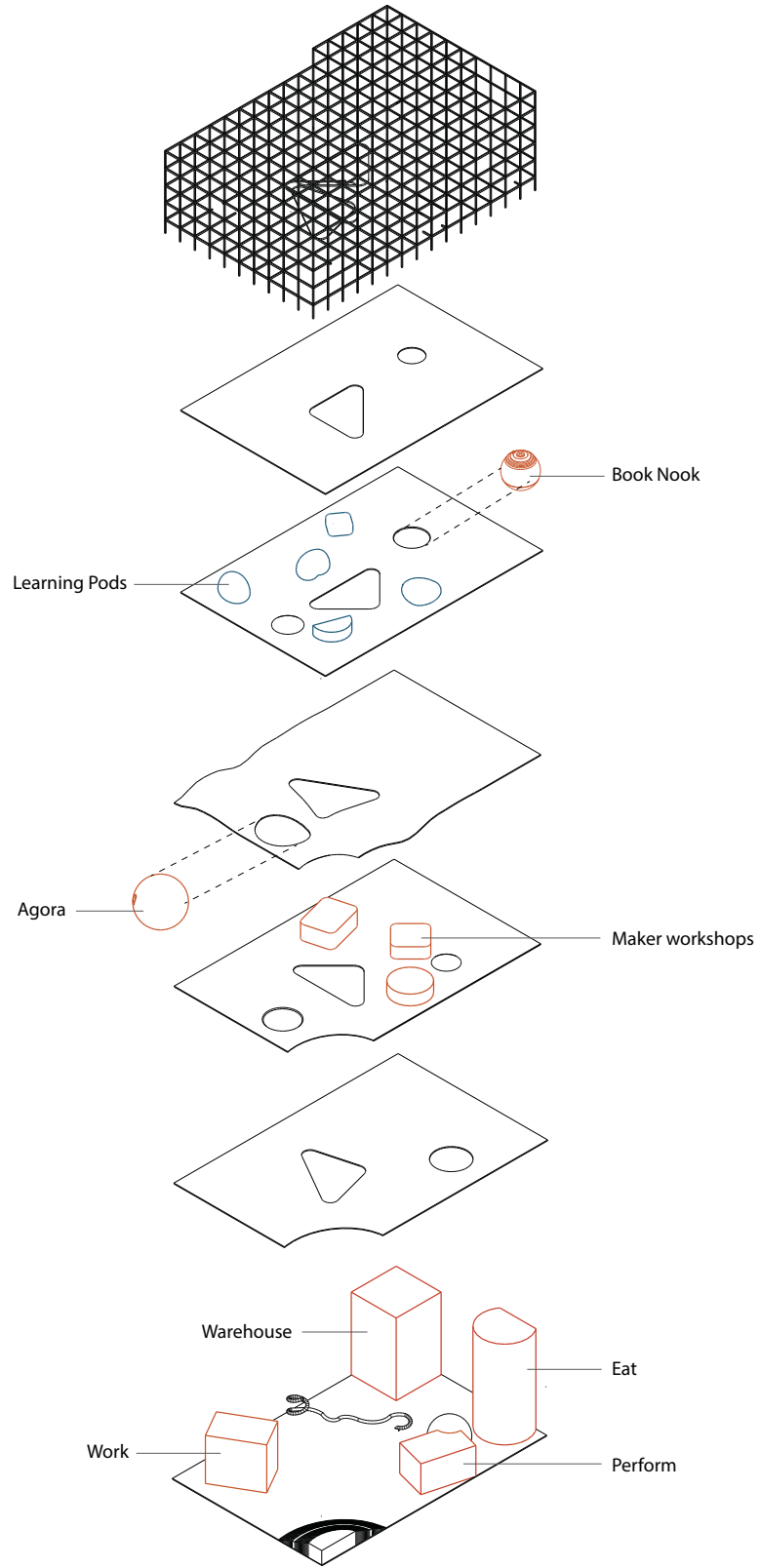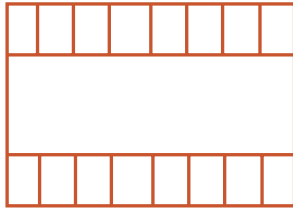
Programs by floor level
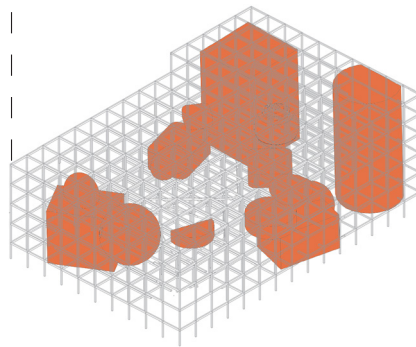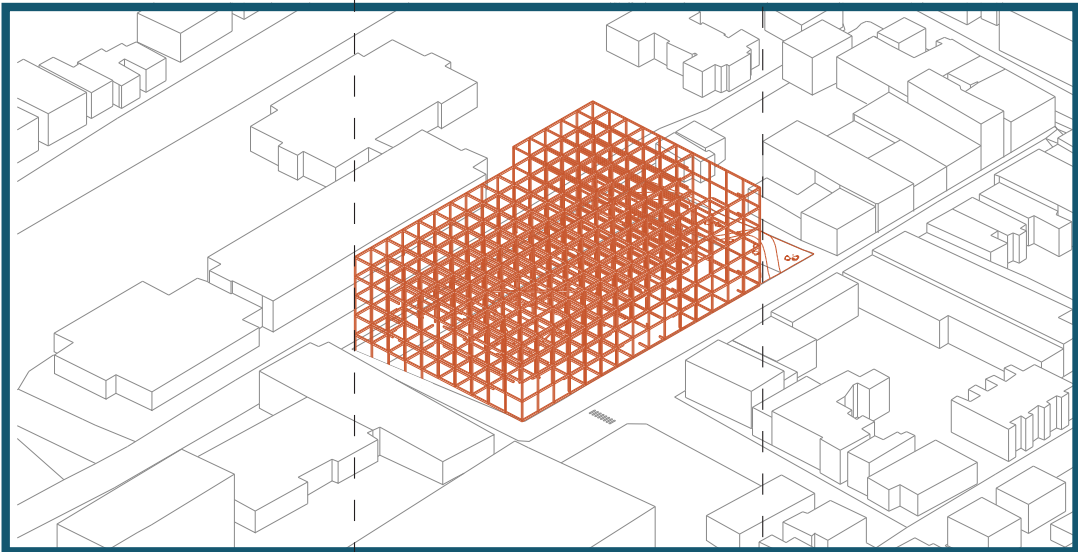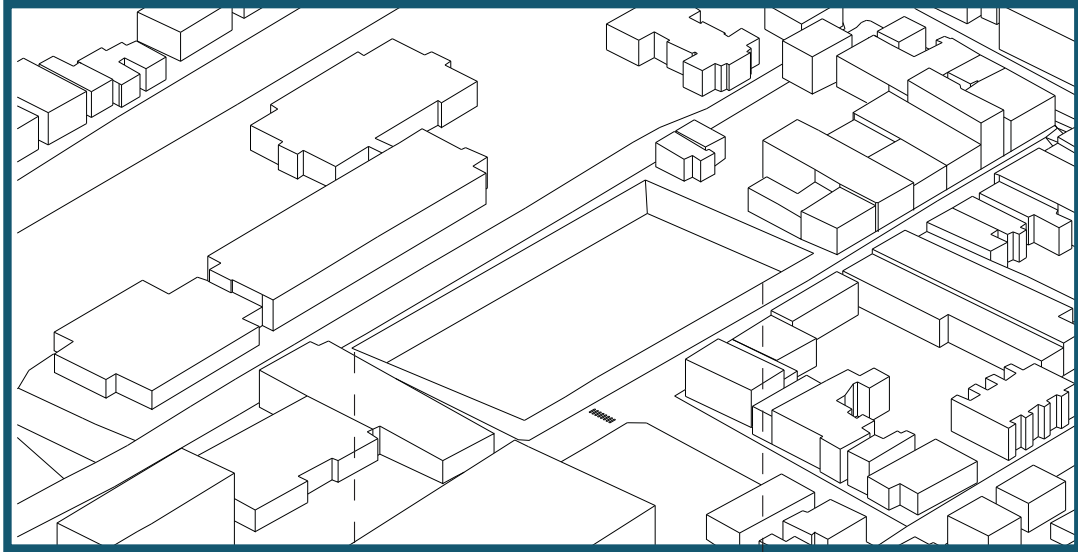
Top: empty site
Middle: grid structure
Bottom: physical rooms
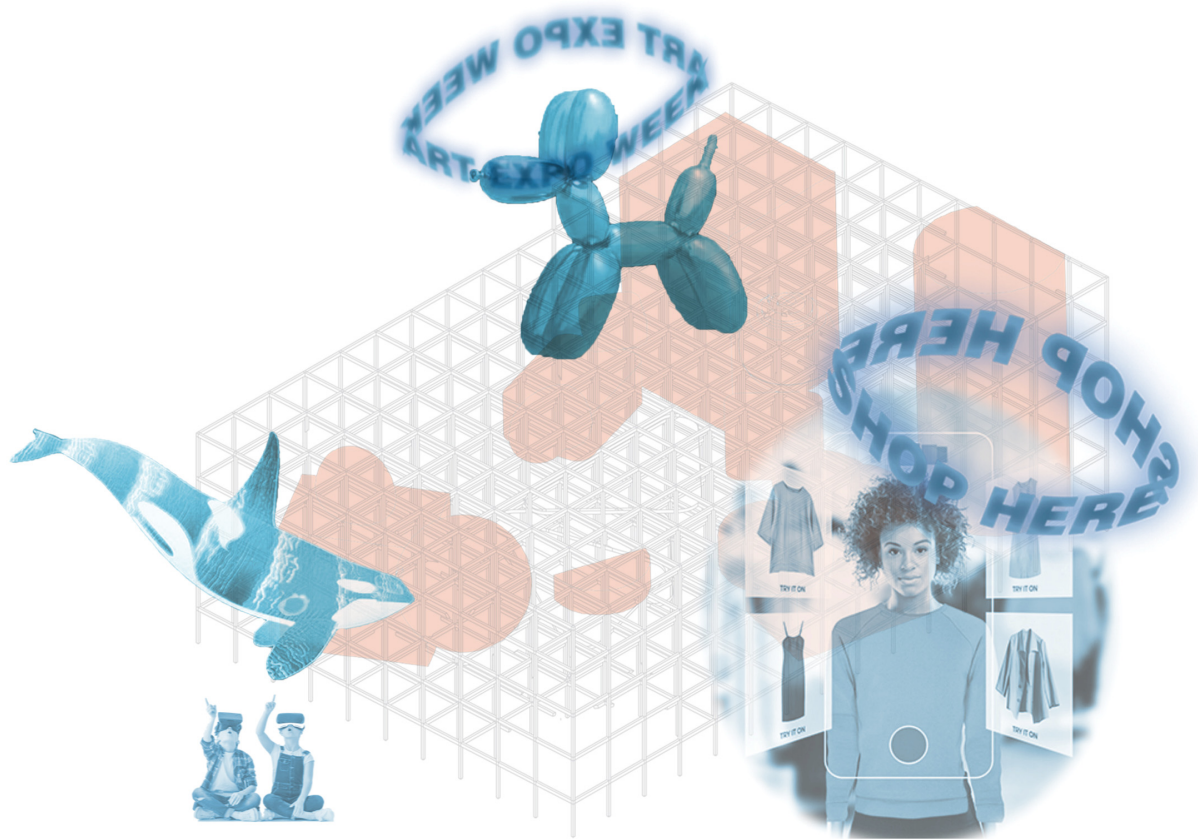
Augmented, virtual, and mixed reality experiences occur throughout the remaining space.

Book Nook

Learning Pods

Agora

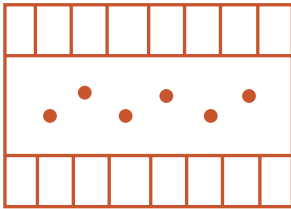Maker workshops

Warehouse

Eat

Work

Perform

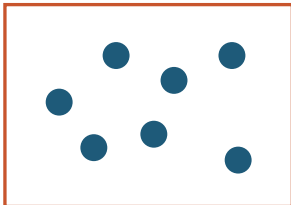Exploded axonometric of programmatic pillars and rooms.

is where the traditional physical community market is held; level 1 is want/desire; level 2 is make, level 3 is play, and level 4 is learn.

Shop

There are no definitive stores in the mall, at least not in the familiar manner. Feeding into the nature of wandering through the space, the mall instead prioritizes the various specific and unspecific activities that embodies public experiences. Various transient kiosks are placed throughout the levels one, two and four, which are the 'stores,' although each having no distinct boundary, location, or product. In more recent history, mall layouts, especially the iconic barbell typology of the rise-of-suburbia fame, largely adhere to the corridor blueprint, with stores fledged on either side. The inclusion of kiosks placed within the corridors allowed tenants with smaller rental budgets or need for smaller spaces for their product to also be a part of the mall and take advantage of the foot traffic. However, these kiosks are generally immobile, representing a sort of 'kiosks in a field' layout. The mall will instead portray a 'field as shopping' plan, where although there are kiosks, they are mobile, minimal, and digital.

The kiosk is designed to provide a better shopping experience by product type, but not by brand. One can access every 'store' from any kiosk, and if inclined to purchase, simply order through the kiosk, select which pickup booth to retrieve it at or have it delivered home by drone if the size and weight permits. All products are stored in the warehouse, and automated systems are programmed to ensure inventory and movement of every product, each with their own product code.

Evolution of retail typology to proposed 'kiosk in a field' scheme.
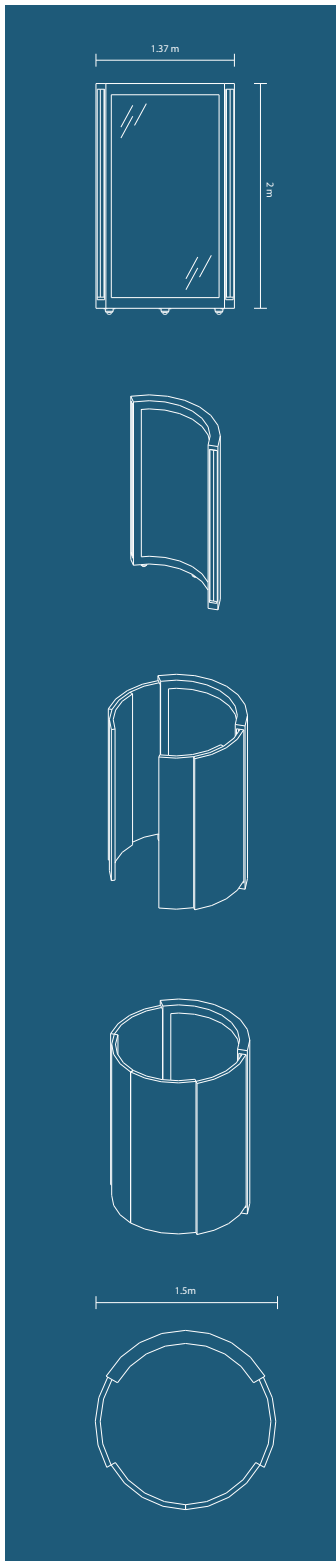
Elevation, axonometic, and plan of kiosks.

It is designed as an exposed curved screen with camera that is essentially a smart mirror, aimed for shoppers who are looking for items that are for the body such as beauty/ health, accessories/ jewellery, and fashion/ shoes. These are adjustable to be fully enclosed for the shopper's comfort.

These kiosks are to be periodically placed throughout the city and beyond, to both advertise attendance and develop a retail network in the city. Inhabitants would need to get out of their homes to shop in these street kiosks, but the difference to shopping online at home would be the certainty that the mall has the items in stock locally and again, they can expect a same day delivery by drone.

Market

The community market is the only area where traditional physical shopping occurs. It is a pop-up sort of retail, with alternating themes. One week, it might hold a farmer's market, another week, it might be a craft market, but as the concept of a community market suggests, the distinct difference to the kiosk shopping is that the market is for local businesses. Occasionally, it is also an exhibition area for shopping that does not suit the kiosks. Here, shoppers can fully use the space to physically and virtually roam to test out products, using MR headsets.

Physical pop up market on level 0.

TEXTILE WORKSHOP IS CLOSED DUE TO ME-CHANICAL MISHAP. YOUR BOOKING WILL BE RESCHEDULED

SHAD VIRTUAL CONCERT

STARTS IN 34 MINUTES

The Balenciaga sweater you favourited last week is on sale!
Follow the yellow line to the nearest available kiosk.
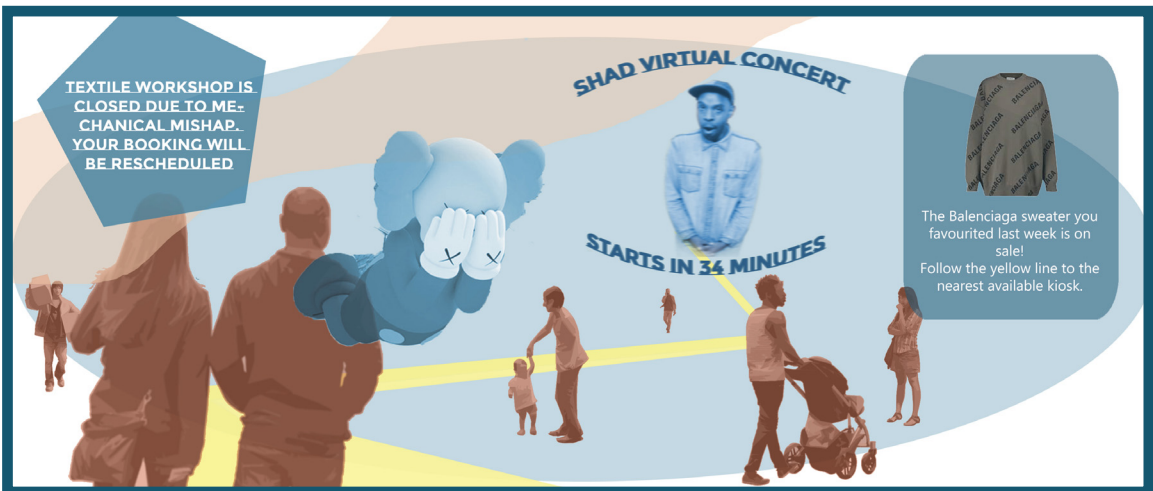
Virtual experience of the same space.

Desire

Innovation in technology has enabled new players in the shopping industry, more specifically the luxury industry. This fairly recent phenomenon of perceived reduced exclusivity of high fashion due to wider availability and access is called the democratization of luxury or, the new luxury (Shah 2020). Although the term is largely specific to the classification of luxury goods, the concept of and accommodation of consumers' wants and needs is significant in terms of technology's role in retail and its future. Allowing for more people to be able to want more things, regardless of price point, and realizing they are able to attain it is a large driver of consumerism. The experiential form of commerce avails on spectacle, and despite critiques of capitalism, humanity desires, and not much can change that.
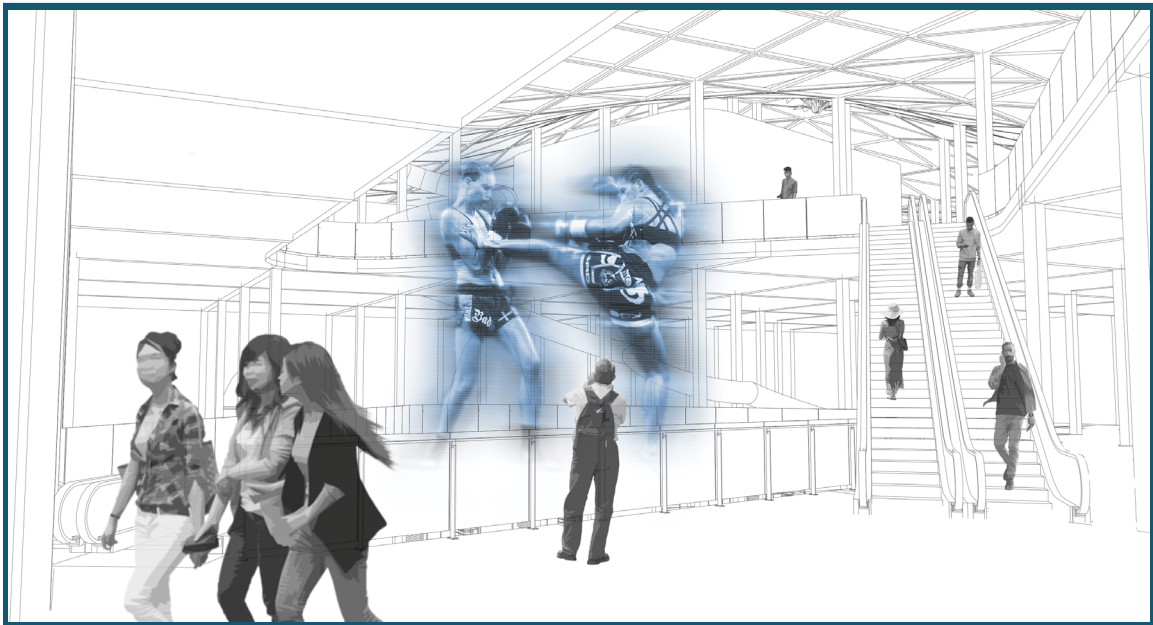
Hologram display: entertainment

Hologram display: billboards
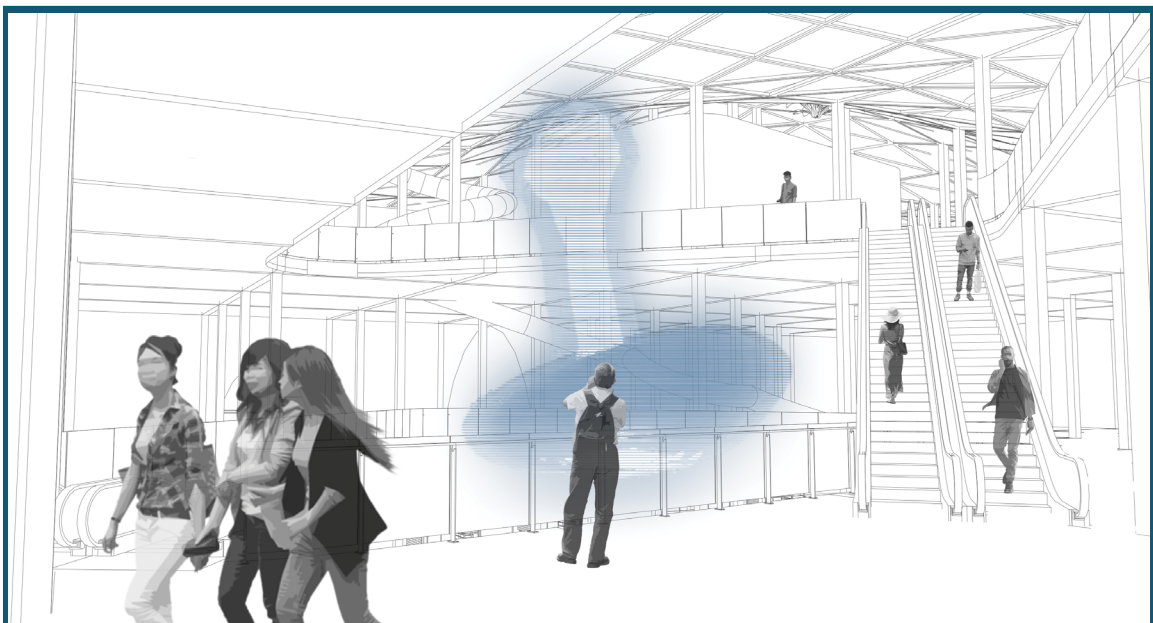
Hologram display: art installations

Make

In the effort of a collaborative consumption, the mall not only facilitates general consumerism, but provides local businesses with some resources understand and participate in the world of product and shopping them. Three compartment makerlabs are directed towards the thematic materials of textile, wood, and 3D printing.

Play

Level three is almost entirely composed of a wavy floor, resembling the natural undulations of an outdoor park, designating it as the play centre. Low maintenance vegetation are planted and hung from the ceiling to create a playful and outdoorsy atmosphere, and by doing so brings a moment of pause in an otherwise technology-driven setting. From here, one can also access the slide that travels across much of the mall. It is not only simple fun, but a way to very quickly get from the level three to level zero as well.
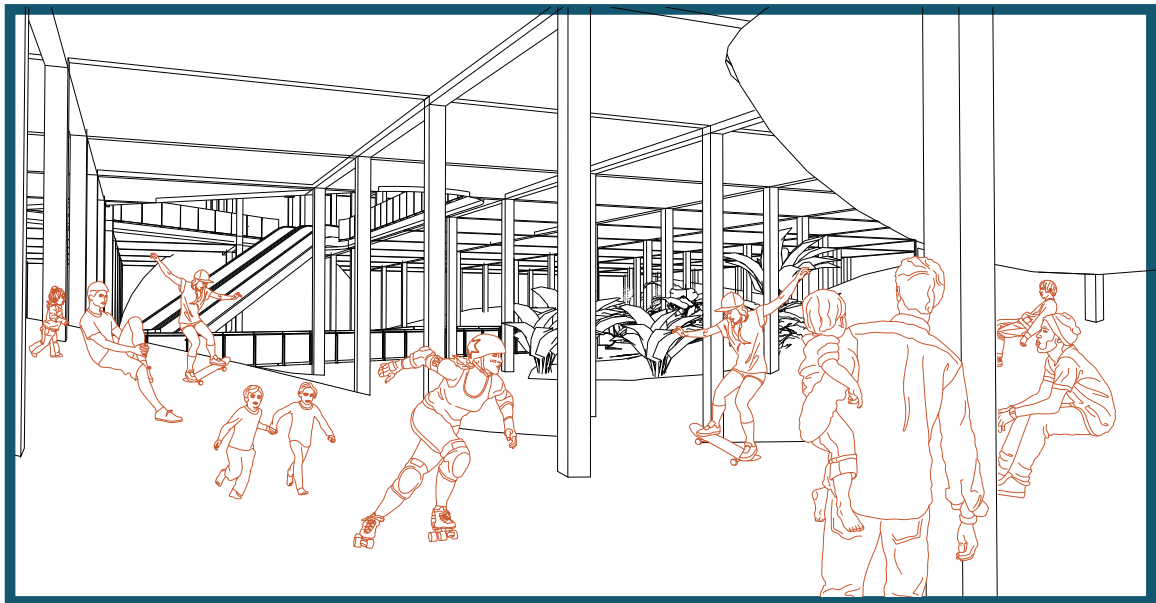
Play level on level 3

Learn

Learning pods that are flexible and therefore suitable for various educative scenarios are located on the top floor. Sessions such as cooking classes, yoga, but also immersive instructive sessions using AR and MR technology.

Socialize (Agora)

Although the entire mall is meant to stimulate community and socialization, this spherical space is meant to intensify the experience. Another holographic rod is located in the centre, displaying visuals such as virtual art installations and current news to encourage conversation while slowing walking in a concentric path.

Eat

The stacked food court is located largely in part to replace Alteregos Café, by being accessible from Gottingen street. It is the source of all things food in the mall. Each floor of the food court partially correlates to the program of the floor it intersects. The lowest floor stores the drones for local delivery; the ground floor has a window booth oriented to the narrow park on the south side; the second the third floor has no seating within the pillar walls, encouraging sitting on the wavy floor as one would at the park; and the fourth floor is where the cooking classes occur.

Perform

The existing Bus Stop Theatre is a black box theatre, which are defined by its simplicity, allowing for vast diversity of productions to be performed. Its purity grants ease of various configurations of stage and audience interaction. Despite the name, it is not mandatory for the space to be

in the shape of a box. The spherical theatre performance space, metaphorically merged with the quadrate lobby, is still indeed a black box theatre. With over 200 square feet of stage area, centred in the space, and seating for over 100 people in radial rows, the space is suitable for traditional shows with an observer-centric audience, or those calling for more immersive audience participation by utilization of mixed reality, where they also occupy the stage.

Work

Being a growing economic boulevard that it is, Gottingen street seems to only be lacking office spaces. Taking note from the emerging trend of shared office spaces such as WeWork and the like, an office pillar is to be part of the mall. Accessible through Maitland Street, it acts as the proposed replacement for the Dalhousie Legal Aid Service (DLAS) office, as well as co-working spaces. The DLAS occupies the ground floor, with the co-working offices inhabiting the two upper floors.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

> Perhaps the beginning of the twenty-first century will be remembered as the point where the urban could no longer be understood without shopping. (Chung et al, 2001, 207)

The difference between shopping and merely purchasing as the implicative means to the end of a shopping experience is vital to the acceptance of how the activity shapes society. As people and the cities they live in change, so do their avenues of consumption. In *Augmented Reality Law, Privacy, and Ethics*, Wassom asserts, "Augmented reality is simply a medium; what society chooses to publish in that medium will be a reflection of the messages that society wishes to convey" (Wassom 2014, 180). However, recalling McLuhan's theory that "the medium is the message," it must be said in response that the form of communication is just as influential to not only how the message is carried, but what message ends up actually being transmitted.

In more definitive terms of shopping, the digital medium has also adapted the range of products that are being searched, advertised, and procured by consumers; people are shopping not only for an experience, but the experience of shopping itself. Theoretically, this in turn defines how urbanity has transformed and progressed. And if shopping is in fact the very driver of the urban, then malls are key players in the architecture. Malls – if thought of as merely a physical fulfilment of the purely public exercise that is shopping – should arguably be, in and of itself, public.

As the future is never attainable, designing for an ever-changing world is interminable. This thesis studied the relationship between the physical and digital realms of shopping and their spatial impacts to further explore the

possibilities of an urban mall where conventional commerce might be challenged. It also sought the potential for embracing the digital in hopes to have opened the horizon for new retail experiences, which will unceasingly emerge, an infinite *terra incognita*.

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