THE PATH TO RECOVERY: ACCESSING RUINS OF THE GULF WAR TO REVEAL THE LOST NARRATIVES OF FAILAKA ISLAND

by

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Contents

Abstract

The Gulf War is a tragic moment in Kuwait history, which brought about massive physical, cultural and environmental loss. Memorialization facilitates the processing of trauma through storytelling and can assess the values and identity of a collective through commemorative action. However the spaces that attempt to do this in Kuwait are few in number and fail to connect with the public. Immersive and interpretive sites can facilitate visceral commemorative experience that juxtapose the past and present while reimagining the future. Failaka Island is the longest inhabited place in Kuwait until it was abandoned and left damaged by Iraqi troops in 1990-1. By interacting with ruins of war, how can recovery narratives be revealed through be revealed through architecture to aid the memorialization process? The proposal is a network of paths that allow people to navigate the abandoned town, punctuated with points that engage with a different narrative of public life.

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I would like to thank Cristina Verissimo and Roger Mullin for all your guidance, support, patience and creative energy.

To Mum, Rohan and Neal, thank you for always believing in me and always pushing me to be better, even though I keep worrying you.

To my Kuwait family; Liz, Ravi, Patti and Ali for helping me reconnect to Kuwait and for always being so welcoming.

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To all the wonderful people at Dalhousie and in Halifax. I found a new home within the school, I made the best friends and I am always inspired by the environment you all helped create. It's been real.

This thesis is inspired by and dedicated to the memory of my late father.

Chapter 1: Introduction

The Gulf War plays a major role in my family's history; it acts as a marker in time when things changed in our lives and the country we called home. My mother fled with my brothers and I on a convoy arranged by the British government, only to return to continue our lives in Kuwait after the end of the war. My father stayed back for some time, helping some left behind escape, before joining us in the UK. Whilst growing up, I experienced only a few public acknowledgements of what took place that were set with a tone of triumph, which I have personally found slightly alienating to myself and my fellow expatriates. I have found that the story of the invasion has been passed down between generations better through an oral tradition rather than through the architecture of the city, and has given me a piecemeal perception of what life was like during such a crisis.

Upon our return in 1991, my parents picked up what little was left over and rebuilt their life in Kuwait. We moved to Canada 10 years ago, but a few relics remain. One in particular is a tank shell casing that currently sits in my mother's foyer in Mississauga, Ontario as an umbrella stand, seamlessly integrating to its new setting. The implicit power of this object has always intrigued me; its life has changed too since the war. The change in context and tactile experience with it alters its meaning. As an existing part of the past, it provides an opportunity to encounter the event first hand.[1]

I am interested in the conflicting juxtaposition between the past and present and how their layering can provide richer interpretations of the past. This thesis is influenced by my upbringing in Kuwait and through

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1   J.D. Prown, "Mind in Matter: An Introduction to Material Culture Theory and Method," *Winterthur Portfolio*, 17, No. 1, (Spring 1982): 3.

Left: Our apartment in Kuwait after we returned to it in 1991.

Right: Tank shell casing, now umbrella stand.

that, my curiosity for a greater understanding of the loss and its representation within Kuwaiti society.

Chapter 2 is a discussion of memorialization and how public monuments, memorials and memory sites are interlocked. Following in chapter 3, there will a brief explanation of the event of the Gulf War and the impact of quick reconstruction and the current architecture of memory, particularly using the museum typology. The fourth chapter discusses this history of Failaka Island, and indicates sites with historic value and age value due to the destructive force of the Gulf War. Finally, the design chapter will take the ideas of memorialization to produce sites that allow visitors to engage in a parapetic and didactic experience of the effects of war.

Chapter 2: Memorialization

Cultural Trauma

Ron Eyerman defines cultural trauma as a blow to identity and meaning and hurt the social network of a group.[2] Collective identity is manifested from the memory of loss as well as triumph. Public reflection allows for its meaning to be understood though a "meaning struggle" and "trauma process." Social memory, storytelling and narrative is initiated within the urban landscape through "place-memory," realising that the persistence of place as a container of experience that encompasses the built, natural and cultural landscapes.[3] With regards to remnants of war Aldo Rossi states that destruction represents the "interrupted destiny of the individual," and further to that of the collective.[4] The destruction of urban elements is a way in which Iraqi forces attempted to dominate, terrorize, divide and eradicate the Kuwaiti people. However since new construction was favoured over repairs on the mainland of Kuwait, elements of the country's collective memory have been erased.

The Iraqi invasion led to the immediate displacement of many people and their subsequent return. The forces of the totalizing phenomena of the invasion resulted in compounding socio-cultural problems within the reconstruction process.[5] This included the polarization in what people believed were the causes of the war, specifically whether the trauma experienced was due to the illusions of Arabism or due

2   Ron Eyerman, "The Past in the Present: Culture and the Transmission of Memory," in *The Collective Memory Reader* (New York, N.Y.: Oxford University Press, 2011), 304.

3   Dolores Hayden, *The Power of Place : Urban Landscapes as Public History* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1995), 48.

4   Aldo Rossi et al., *The Architecture of the City,* Opposition Books (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1982), 22.

5   Anthony Oliver-Smith, "Communities after Catastrophe: Reconstructing the Material, Reconstituting the Social," in *Community Building in the Twenty-First Century* ed. Stanley E. Hyland, (Santa Fe: School of American Research Press, 2005), 47.

to secular western trends that faulted away from Islamic practices.[6] Relph states that "inauthenticity is expressed especially through the "dictatorship of the they" meaning that there is a top down planning of an experience with little room for the other.[7] In *Radical Reconstruction,* Lebbeus Woods discusses the how the downfall communism in Germany after the fall of the Berlin Wall represented not only the "triumph of the Western powers over the East" but also a "victory of the Western way of life."[8] Similar affects are felt in Kuwait after the Gulf War. In this instance, the need for continuity in Kuwaiti life and identity was recognised but the void was filled by the Western way of life through the proliferation of mass-culture and foreign presence in the country due to government agenda, sacrificing community identity.

The self-awareness and self-concept of the individual requires that ones past, present and future are reconciled into a complete whole.[9] This understanding and projection of self is woven with the social histories of places and spaces, creating a reciprocal relationship with the world.[10] Community thus plays a part in self-definition, self-identity is constantly revised against a social reality. Narratives are "discourses with a clear sequential order that connect events meaningfully for a definite audience and thus offer insights about the world and/or people's experiences of it."[11] By the social, temporal and cultural framework, narrators can speak to a certain continuity of identity within a community. Narrative and stories that compose the cultural identity are products of social encounters, spatially and temporally located.[12] The human interaction that takes place

6   Yasser Mahgoub, "The Impact of War on the Meaning of Architecture in Kuwait," *Archnet-IJAR* 2, no. 1 (2008): 240.

7   Edward Relph, *Place and Placelessness*. Research in Planning and Design; 1 (London: Pion, 1976), 80.

8   Lebbeus Woods, *Radical Reconstruction* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1997), 13.

9   Scherto Gill, "Mapping the field of Critical Narrative" in *Critical narrative as Pedagogy*, (London, UK: Bloomsbury Academic, 2014), 53.

10   Ibid., 64.

11   Ibid., 60.

12   Ibid., 70.

within the web of narratives allows for didactical relationships within a community.

Commemoration according to Edward Casey is meant to encourage participation and connection between commemorators. It is not only an act that pays homage to the past, but contemplative commemoration creates spaces of lasting memory.[13] Oliver-Smith makes the argument that communities that have experienced "psychohistorical dislocation" due to these traumatic phenomena must "engage in a continual process of radical reinvention" for meaningful identity formation. [14] The question is asked: how can there be a memory consensus when dealing with national trauma?

Collective Memory and Monuments

> With time, the city grows upon itself; it acquires a consciousness and a memory. [15]

Understanding the city's collective nature, of its architecture over time and inseparable from its civilized life and society is the underlying premise of Aldo Rossi's *The Architecture of the City*. He also describes the city itself as "the collective memory of its people, and like memory it is associated with objects and places."[16] 'The relationship of the collective and place shapes the idea and image of a city, connecting the city's past and present. It is the past histories, participation of the citizens as well as the urban artefacts that shape the space that influence the individuality of a place.[17] In the physical sense, one can reflect on a city's changing dynamics through its monuments, creating fixed points of reference with their permanence.[18] While each monument maintains its own history, memory and locus, the

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13 Edward Casey, "Remembering: A Phenomenological Study," in *The Collective Memory Reader* (New York, N.Y.: Oxford University Press, 2011), 185.

14 Oliver-Smith, "Communities after Catastrophe," 46.

15 Rossi, *The Architecture of the City*, 21.

16 Ibid., 130.

17 Ibid., 131.

18 Ibid., 22.

collective and various experiences of the monument constitute the city.[19] Within it the city's primary elements, that affect public space more than through its fixed function, act as a catalyst for accelerating urban evolution.[20]

Riegl outlines the different commemorative values as they relate to monuments of the past: historical value (in the form of unintentional monuments, with value placed in the idea of preservation), deliberate commemorative value (in the form of intentional monuments with the value placed in continuous consciousness of a moment) and age value (an idea of decay).[21] Age value is constantly at odds, one's value is within its disintegration through time and the latter bringing the past image into the present day. The underlying difference between intentional and unintentional monuments is that one is created out of a direct significance and those that have meaning thrust upon them - and with the effect of damage, we see society's fragility is reflected in its monuments.[22] For example, this can be illustrated in the difference in the destruction of a statue (intentional) and that of a school (unintentional) - both of which people relate to due to a sense of group identity.[23] In addition, Riegl speaks of monuments as they relate to present day values; their use value (of how a monument can be operable and performative), and its newness value (showing no signs of disintegration).[24] Newness value is the value that can be viewed by all people, educated or otherwise. This stands at opposition to relative art value which requires an educated population's ability to transform the perception of art through time (through the lens of "collective will-to-art", *Kunstwollen*), which needs an underlying basis of

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19   Ibid., 29.

20   Ibid., 87.

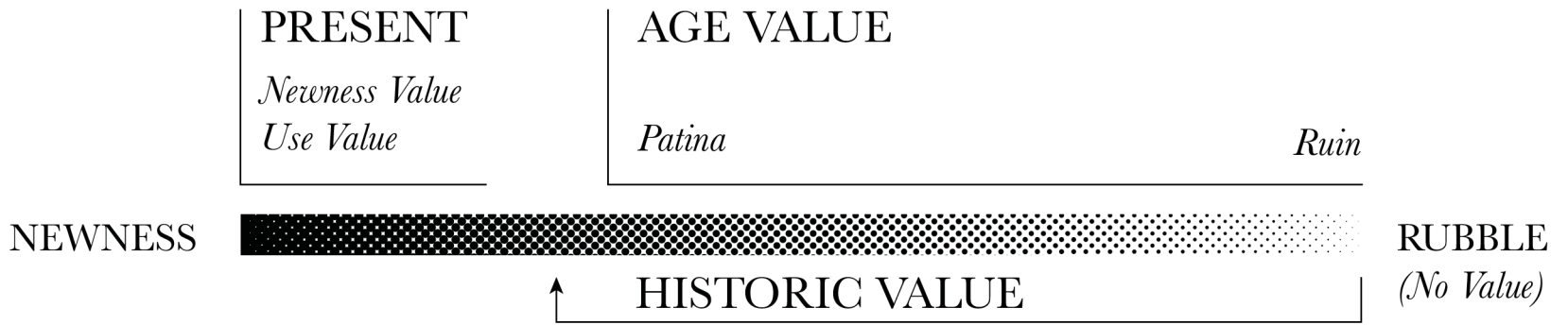21   Alois Riegl, "The Modern Cult of Monuments," in *Historical and Philosophical Issues in the Conservation of Cultural Heritage: Readings in Conservation* ed. Nicholas Stanley Price, et al. (Los Angeles: Getty Conservation Institute, 1996), 72.

22   Robert Bevan, *The Destruction of Memory: Architecture at War* (London: Reaktion, 2006) 8.

23   Ibid., 14.

24   Riegl, "The Modern Cult of Monuments," 78.

KUNSTWOLLE.

Relative Art-Value

PRESENT

Newness Value
Use Value

AGE VALUE

Patina   *Ruin*

NEWNESS   RUBBLE
                                                                      (No Value)

HISTORIC VALUE

Intentional
Commemorative
Value
(Immortal)

Riegl and Commemorative Value.
Diagram: adapted from ERA
Architects Inc. website.

art education.[25]

The 'monumental' and public memory have an interesting relationship. How monumental (or big) does the monument have to be for official public memory to be expressed? How permanent of a monument or how large does a monument have to be to exist within the collective consciousness? Huyssen uses Christo and Jeanne-Claude's wrapping of the Reichstag as an example that challenges the postmodern idea of monuments. The historical value of the Reichstag monument was cut with the questions of memory and forgetting, and becoming a monument to new German democratic culture in all its fragility.[26] And yet, it is within the image of the installation, now decades past, that its monumentalism persists, within the collective.

Christo and Jean-Claude's wrapped Reichstag.
Image: *Wrapped Reichstag, Berlin, 1971-95*, 1995; from Christo and Jean-Claude website.

25 Ibid., 80.

26 Andreas Huyssen, *Present Pasts : Urban Palimpsests and the Politics of Memory. Cultural Memory in the Present* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2003), 36.

Memorialization, Memorials and Memory Sites

Memorialization is the process of honouring those that were lost in conflict while being a means to reflect on the past.[27] This can allow for an interpretation that includes a larger metanarrative, such as consolidating national identity and reconciliation of different populations. Inherently memorialization is a politically charged process that can stir up the emotions of affected populations. The functions of memorialization are as follows:

> Truth telling or documentation of specific human rights violations
>
> Mourning space for families/victims and/or society
>
> Symbolic representation to honour victims and reinstate their reputations
>
> Symbolising a community's or nation's commitment to values such as democracy and human rights
>
> Promoting reconciliation by recasting national identity or repairing damaged relations between groups
>
> Encouraging civic engagement and educate the wider community in a dialogue about the past and promote discussions of a peaceful future based on coexistence
>
> Advancing educational purposes including the retelling of history for future generations
>
> Facilitating historic preservation of a specific era in a country's or community's history.[28]

Memorials keep events of the past present in public memory through the physical representation in public.[29] They are responsible for the transfer of cultural knowledge, allowing for a comparison between past events and present as well as personal reflection. Major initiatives have manifested in the form of constructed sites, found sites and activities.[30]
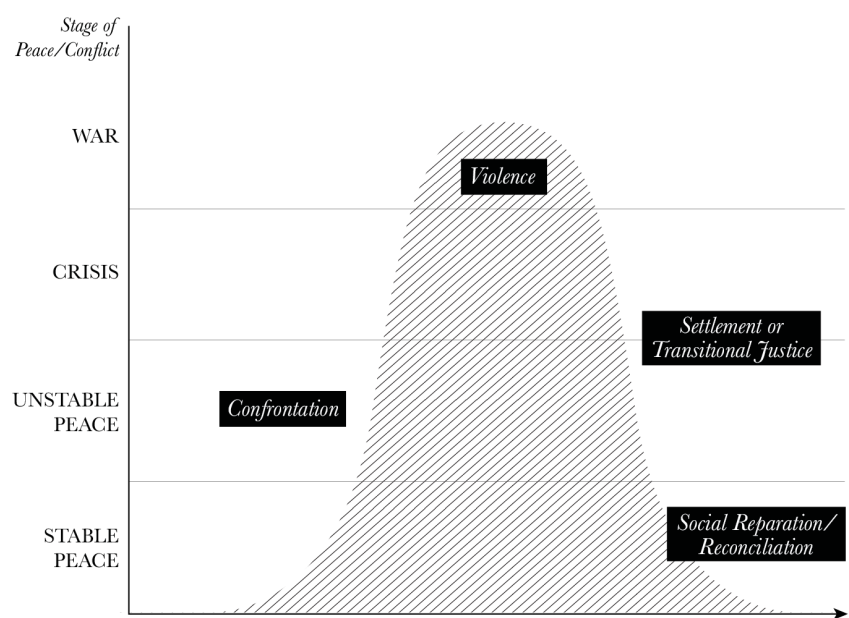
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27 Judith Marie Barsalou, et al., "The urge to remember : the role of memorials in social reconstruction and transnational justice," *United States Institute of Peace, Stabilization and Reconstruction Series* no.5 (2007). http://trove.nla.gov.au/version/9032968, 4.

28 Ibid.

29 Ebru Erbas Gurler and Basak Ozer, "The Effects of Public Memorials on Social Memory and Urban Identity," *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences* 82 (2013): 858.

30 Barsalou, "The urge to remember," 5.

Memorialization takes place throughout the conflict life cycle.[31] At each of these stages (confrontation, violence, settlement/transitional justice and social reparation/reconciliation) memorialization takes on different forms. At each stage, the symbols are sites are contested and new ones are created. Official memorials are designed and built during the social reparation/reconciliation stage, with the potential for long-established memorials take on new meaning for subsequent generations.[32] An issue that arises with this is the fact that one dominant identity is usually represented.[33] Memorialization through the subjective selection of history's highlights can blur the lines between the act of remembering and can push a specific political stance.

Stage of
Peace/Conflict

WAR

Violence

CRISIS

Settlement or
Transitional Justice

UNSTABLE
PEACE

Confrontation

STABLE
PEACE

Social Reparation/
Reconciliation

t

Conflict Life Cycle. Diagram: adapted from *The urge to remember : the role of memorials in social reconstruction and transnational justice*, 2007; from Judith Marie Barsalou, et al.

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31   Ibid., 2.

32   Ibid., 22.

33   Brian Osborne, "Landscapes, Memory, Monuments, and Commemoration: Putting Identity in Its Place," *Canadian Ethnic Studies* 33, no. 3 (2001): 18.

Pierre Nora defines *lieux d'memoire* (sites of memory) as places in which "memory crystallizes and secretes itself" providing a sense of residual continuity to the past.[34] The experience of sites is widely varied as they are not just concerned with their immediate physical reality, but are inherently self-referential, making them open to a full range of opportunities and significations.[35] The *lieux* are an assemblage of the physical and non-physical and is brought to consciousness through the *volante d'memoire*, the secured act of memorialization.

> Monuments articulate official memory, and their fate inevitably is to be toppled or to become invisible. Lived memory, on the other hand, is always located in individual bodies, their experience and their pain, even when it involves collective, political or generational memory.[36]

The case that Huyssen makes is that rather than being a dictated account of history (represented by an official monument), the memory to the past is one of shared responsibility. [37] The space between official memory and lived memory is compelling. Unforgettable landscapes provide the stage for the past to be mapped in our minds. In discussing the commemorative practices of the Inuit people, Bordo states that the site takes part in the act of remembering.[38] These places of memory differ from the institutional and archival depositories of memory such as museums, called "keeping places."[39] If memorials are solely static representations of one memory, such as certain keeping places, they risk losing meaning as opposed to memorials that become performances of democracy.[40] Along with supporting the remembering, memory sites could facilitate other community needs, such as "meeting," combining symbols, memories and utility.[41]

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34   Pierre Nora,"Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Memoire" *Representations*, 26, Special Issue: Memory and Counter-Memory (Spring, 1989): 7.

35   Ibid., 24.

36   Huyssen, *Present Pasts*, 110.

37   Ibid.

38   Jonathan Bordo, "The Keeping Place," in *Monuments and Memory, Made and Unmade*, ed. Magaret Olin and Robert S. Nelson (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2003), 173.

39   Ibid., 174.

40   Barsalou, "The urge to remember," 14.

41   Gurler and Ozer, "The Effects of Public Memorials," 860.

Constructed Sites

MONUMENT

MEMORIAL

RUINS

SITES OF MEMORY

Found Sites
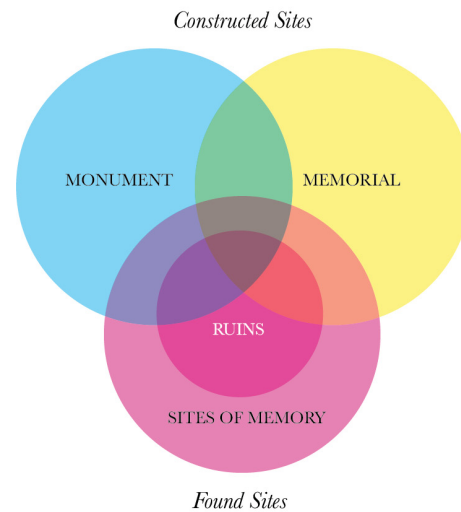
Framework of memorialization and ruins

Within this framework I am interested in exploring the area in which all three intersect. How can a monument provide a memorial experience while not being overbearing? When memorials are superimposed onto sites of memory it calls upon the locale and past of the site in the experience of the memorial.

Ruins

> When we contemplate ruins, we contemplate our future. To the statesmen, ruins predict the fall of Empires, and to philosophers the futility of mortal man's aspirations. To a poet, the decay of a monument represents the dissolution of the individual ego in the flow of Time; to a painter or architect, the fragments of a stupendous antiquity call into question the purpose of their art.[42]

Architecture is the bridge between the past and the present, and the psycho-geography that is generated between the successive layers of the past have an affect on place.[43] In *The Necessity for Ruin*, Jackson goes to say that monuments have a power to recall or remind to recall something specific.[44] This power also has the ability to allegorically guide the future through urban artifacts. An example he gives in the Kaiser Wilhelm church ruins in West

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42   Christopher Woodward, *In Ruins* (London: Chatto & Windus, 2001), 2.

43   Barsalou, "The urge to remember," 16.

44   J.B. Jackson, "The Necessity for Ruin," in *The Necessity for Ruins, and Other Topics* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1980), 91.

Berlin. Although Berlin has transformed into a dynamic and creative city, the ruin acts as a reminder for the negative time in the city and its message is not easy to forget.[45] The quote above by Woodward also speaks to the resilience of cultural values (and cultural contemplation) through the residue of the ruin. Although he alludes to how swift the downfall of man can be, we continuously look to ruins to understand aspects of humanity that are transcendent.

Although much of public culture is derived from what we choose to remember, there is also an equal and opposite reaction to that. Collective amnesia is a phenomena that must be addressed when dealing with traumatic events. Events that cause pain and destruction in urban fabric can create voids that are left largely unaddressed. With the case of 90's Berlin, there was an instant urge to reconstruct in a tabula rasa manner, whether to build the city with the contemporary high tech global architecture or to continue the national concept of "critical reconstruction"[46] The void created could not be immediately replaced by new construction, specifically the no-mans land that lied between Potsdamer Platz and Leipziger Platz.[47] In 1991 an installation of coloured paper was put up on the remnants of the wall that remained after parts of it were deconstructed and sold off, creating an "uncanny feeling: a void saturated with invisible history, with memories of architecture both built and unbuilt."[48] This became representative of mental/cultural voids between the unified East and West Berliners, a problem hard to ignore, and even more difficult to address. Yet, the amount of construction that took place right after the fall of the wall emphasised Berlin as a void rather than a new city, leaving little room for the dynamic energy of the early 20th century.[49]

Woods states that is natural to want to reconstruct what was lost as well as forget what had happened.[50] However, we see from Modernist housing and city

45   Ibid., 91.
46   Huyssen, *Present Pasts*, 60.
47   Ibid., 58.
48   Ibid.
49   Ibid., 54.
50   Woods, *Radical Reconstruction*, 15.

planning with its rejection of the past that it was too rigid and prioritised new building technologies. Woods advocates for buildings that there should be a formal respect for those buildings damaged by war, as their histories must not be denied and allow for new comprehension to emerge through their presence. Each ruin is unique in its form and meaning, yet they all share the suffering from the same forces of war. New spaces of habitation can be injected into those voided by destruction and accept their remnants with a certain distinction. The metaphor of the scab and the scar are used to describe Woods' layers of reconstruction and healing.[51] the Scab is the first, creating the shield for spaces during its transformation from spaces of violence to that of new meaning. The Scar is the way in which the new and the old blend together, how they don't compromise each other, and acts as a marker for what is lost and what is gained, accepting and appreciating its existence in the present.

Narrative and Identity

Identity and narrative are inherently linked. The self-awareness and self-concept of the individual requires that ones past present and future are reconciled into a complete whole.[52] This understanding and projection of self is woven with the social histories of places and spaces, creating a reciprocal relationship with the world.[53] Community thus plays a part in self-definition, self-identity is constantly revised against a social reality. Narratives are "discourses with a clear sequential order that connect events meaningfully for a definite audience and thus offer insights about the world and/or people's experiences of it."[54] By the social, temporal and cultural framework, narrators can speak to a certain continuity of identity within a community. Narrative and stories that compose the cultural iden-

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51   Ibid., 16.

52   Gill, "Mapping the field of Critical Narrative," 53.

53   Ibid., 64.

54   Ibid., 60.

tity are products of social encounters, spatially and temporally located.55 The human interaction that takes place within the web of narratives allows for didactical relationships within a community.

Thesis Question

By interacting with ruins of war, how can recovery narratives be revealed through architecture to aid the memorialization process?

55　Ibid., 170.

Chapter 3: The Gulf War

Pre-Invasion

Prior to the Gulf War, tensions were already high within the Middle East. The Iraq-Iran conflict of the 1980s left Iraq in need of funds for its reconstruction.[56] Iraq did not receive substantial support from other oil-producing Arab states and had to rely primarily on their own oil revenues. However, many of the oil fields were destroyed during the war making it difficult to keep up with other Arab production. Prior to the war, the price of oil was $25 per barrel while after; Kuwait was producing at a rate of $8. Adding to the complexity of the situation, Iraq claimed in a memorandum sent to the Arab League that Kuwait was drilling in an oil field south of the Rumayla oilfield, which they considered to be a territory of Iraq. Iraq accumulated a foreign debt of over $106 billion and appealed to Kuwait to cancel its debt to them.[57] As Kuwait refused to compromise, Iraq - led by Saddam Hussein - chose to invade. The original plan was to occupy only the Northern oil fields but Saddam proposed that the entire country be occupied.[58]

Damage

Human and Physical Cost

Along with the human toll which included over 400 extrajudicial executions and holding military personnel and over 15,000 civilians prisoners and hostages, Iraqi troops incurred major destruction to the physical make up of Kuwait.[59] Forced emigration through the destruction of civilian

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56 Majid Khadduri and Edmund Ghareeb, *War in the Gulf, 1990-91 The Iraq-Kuwait Conflict and Its Implications* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 86.

57   Ibid., 107.

58   Ibid., 171.

59 ʿAbd Allāh Ḥammādī, *Atlas of Iraqi War Crimes in the State of Kuwait* (Kuwait: Al Qabas Commercial Press, 1995), 6.

Oil fires in
the south of
Kuwait.

properties and houses took place, resulting to the largest movement of
people in the shortest amount of time in any modern war at that point.[60]
Over 1800 buildings in Kuwait were destroyed and set on fire, 35.8% of
which were houses.[61] Parts of the capital were bombed, looted and burned
and what wasn't destroyed was stripped of its technology.[62] Who caused
the damage is unclear in some parts – whether it was Iraqi forces, Kuwaiti
resistance or part of the Allied attacks. Much of the ground transportation
infrastructure was damaged, street and town names were changed to Iraqi
names. Universities and schools, sports clubs, police stations, nurseries and
houses were taken over to be used as torture centres set up by the Iraqi
regime.[63]

60   William Arkin et al., "On Impact; Modern warfare and the Environment A Case
      Study of the Gulf War." *Presentation: "Fifth Geneva" Convention on the Protection of the
      Environment in a Time of Armed Conflict*, (Greenpeace International, London, UK, June
      3, 1991), 15.

61   Abd Allāh Ḥammādī, *Atlas of Iraqi War Crimes in the State of Kuwait* (Kuwait: Al
      Qabas Commercial Press, 1995), 26.

62   Arkin "On Impact," 53.

63   Ḥammādī, *Atlas of Iraqi War Crimes,* 39.

50 km

300m Elevation

Minor Major Oil Field

Iraqi Invasion of Kuwait,
August 2nd 1990.
Diagram: adapted from
United States Military Acad-
emy West Point website.

Environmental Cost

Along with the destructions of buildings, and infrastructure, Iraqi forces set fire to 798 oil wells, and its discharge large quantities damaging 114km^2 of the surrounding environment.[64] As it flowed across the surface of the desert, 300 oil lakes formed. Iraqi forces spilled 12 million barrels of oil into the Gulf.[65] Trenches stretching 110km along the Saudi Arabian border were dug and filled with crude to prevent allied troops from advancing contaminated over 136,000 m^3 of soil. Oil mist (tarcrete) covered much of the surface, and released tonnes of toxic chemicals into the air.[66] Contributing to the bad air quality was the black clouds created from the burning oil wells, altering the microclimate. US General Norman Schwarzkopf described his shock of how black the air had gotten as he was flying over Kuwait, and how it was as if he was "flying into hell."[67] The affect on the flora and fauna of the area has been disturbed greatly. Species of plants have become endangered and their growth has been affected by contaminated soils, animals, particularly birds, have been trapped in oil lakes and the toxicity of the environment has killed many through suffocation.[68] Groundwater resources were vulnerable to pollution through the soil, and a rise in the water table due to firefighting exposed them to risk even further. Marine life suffered due to the increase in heavy metals and hazardous war materials in the water but recovered.[69]

With further investigation through satellite imagery, it is estimated that over 64 million m^3 were damaged by oil lakes, trenches and spills.[70] Al-

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64   Samira A. S. Omar et al., "Critical Assessment of the Environmental Consequences of the Invasion of Kuwait, the Gulf War, and the Aftermath," in *Environmental Consequences of War and Aftermath*. ed. Aboul-Kassim, Tarek A. T., and Damià Barceló, (Berlin ; Heidelberg: Springer, 2009): 145.

65   Ibid., 156.

66   Ibid., 147.

67   Michael Ryan, "Here's to the Winners," *Life Weekly* (18 March 1991): 32.

68   Omar, "Critical Assessment of the Environmental Consequences," 151.

69   Ibid., 157.

70   Ibid., 146.

most 1-1.5 billion barrels were lost due to oil fires and flows.[71] The environmental tragedy that resulted from the invasion is known to be one of the greatest in modern warfare.

Recovery

Since the end of the Gulf War, the Kuwaiti government speedily repaired the damage done to its infrastructure to reestablish the oil industry once more.[72] Recovery efforts (estimated at US$25-30 billion) included firefighting, clearance of mines, repairing buildings and public infrastruc-

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71   Ibid., 153.

72   Youssef M. Ibrahim, "After The War; Quick Kuwaiti Recovery Is Seen, With The Cost Less Than Thought," *The New York Times* (March 18, 1991). http://www.nytimes.com/1991/03/18/world/after-the-war-quick-kuwaiti-recovery-is-seen-with-the-cost-less-than-thought.html?pagewanted=all.

ture, pausing development of the architectural design and planning.[73] Although there was a unifying effort the rebuild, the war inherently affected the mindset of Kuwait. The pre-war '*Al-Nadha*' attitude rejecting tradition for modernity was strengthened by the need to rebuild the country and within the emerging ideological context after the invasion.[74] The healthy relationship with Western states that aided Kuwait's liberation made the countrymen more trusting of Western values.
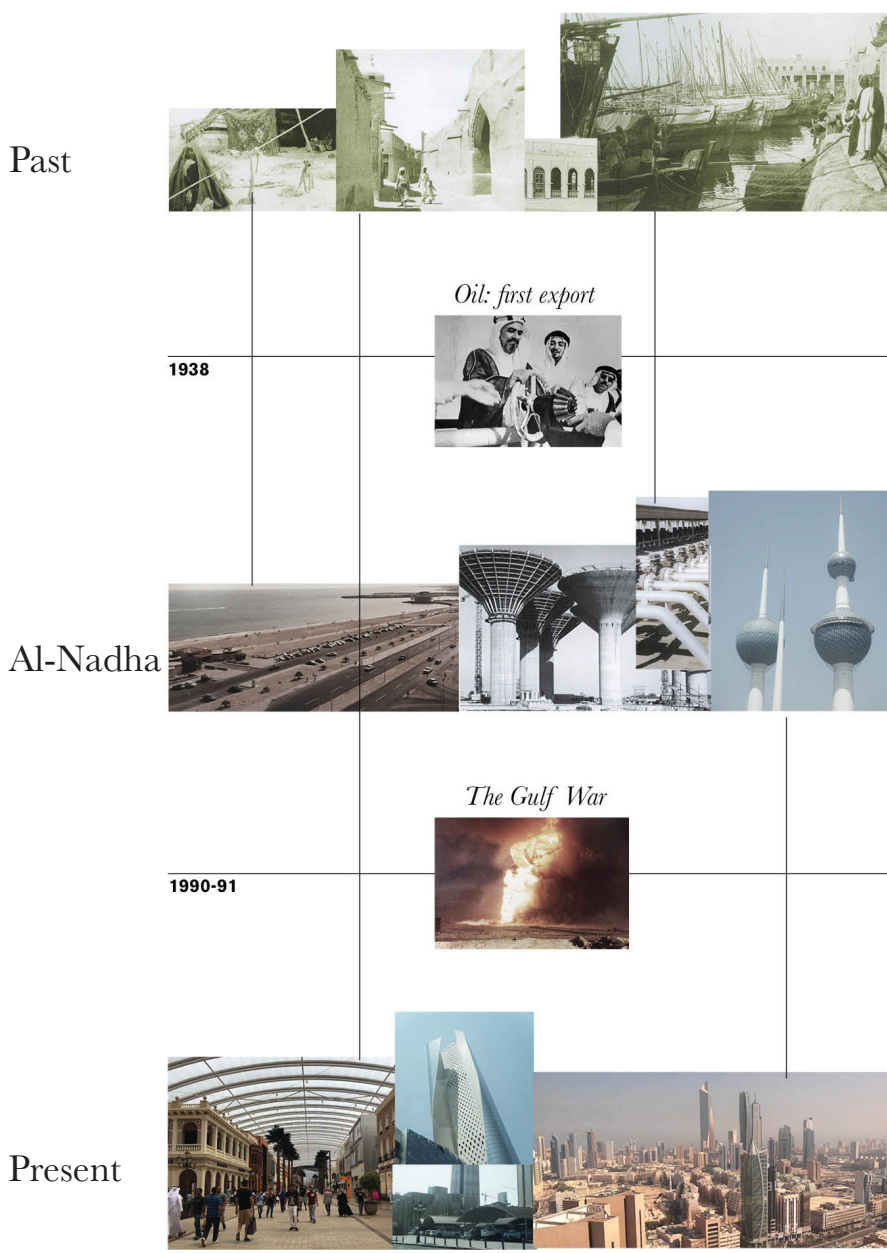
Timeline of Kuwait developement. Images: from *Fuelling Kuwait's Development: The Story of the Kuwait Oil Company,* 2007; from Jonathan Fryer.

Past

Oil: first export

1938

Al-Nadha

The Gulf War

1990-91

Present

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73   Mahgoub, "The Impact of War on the Meaning of Architecture in Kuwait," 240.

74   Ibid., 241.

Remembrance

Remembrance of the war in Kuwait is left to singular events, such as the National and Liberation days, where celebration takes place on the streets on the anniversary of the end of the war offering only one perspective of the war – liberation as an achievement rather than recognition of the pain. However sites that address the collective trauma are few and far between. There are four museums that address the Gulf War: the Kuwait House of National Works, the Kuwait Oil Company Display Centre, the Thekra Museum at Al-Shaheed Park and the Al-Qurain Martyrs Museum.

The Kuwait House of National Works is a converted house, containing documents, photos, models and audio effects showing what happened during the war to recreate at atmosphere. The Kuwait Oil Company Display Centre details the specifics about the affect on the oil industry, within a central space within the company town of Ahmadi. With both of these, the problem arises within the traditional museum exhibit format, with a clear separation between the information (object) and the audience (subject) in the context of knowledge transfer. Dr. James B. Gardner, president of the National Council on Public History in 2004, stated that engaging the public in the complexity of the American experience and contested pasts within the museum setting is a challenge, especially within highly politicized climates.[75] He argues that the perception and trust in the museum to provide an authentic and accurate depiction of the past is problematic. The "trickle-down, all authoritative academic history" still has wide gaps between the understanding of the past as historians and the public's.[76] In an article addressing the role of historical scholarship in public displays and memorials with regards to a canceled exhibit at the Smithsonian, Linenthal states that "without the commemorative voice, history exhibits run the

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75 James B. Gardner, "Contested Terrain: History, Museums, and the Public," *The Public Historian* 26, no. 4 (2004): 11.

76 Ibid., 14.

Al-Qurain Martyr's Museum exterior and interior

risk of being just books on the wall, with little to fire their imaginations."[77]

The Al-Qurain Martyrs Museum is an anomaly amongst the other museums as it is a house that was also the location of a battle between Iraqi troops and the Kuwaiti Al-Massilah resistance. Located within a residential district, the building typology is that of a typical Kuwaiti villa, but has been left in the state since then and remains a significant site within the story of the struggle of Kuwaitis. Walking around the building, the dichotomy of the scars of war with the humble familiarity of the villa typology produce a stark contrast of experiences. On the bottom level is a renovated section to function as a museum, displaying an exhibition about the events surrounding the Gulf War and the battle itself. The layering of the place memory gives a rich description of life around then. As an unintentional monument, it represents the discontinuity in Kuwaiti life but perhaps does not activate people within the public realm to commemorate. It is a self-referential site that tells a story directly through the museum program without the engaging in reinvention of self and integration of ritual surrounding it.

The Evolving Museum

As a memorial, the museum program acts in a way that teaches about a past event, which each of the museums in Kuwait do. Although I am not interested in necessarily proposing a depository of memory, I am interested in the way in which museums are storytelling devices. What lacks in the Kuwaiti context is the component of immersive participation in storytelling in the public realm. In her text *The Museum Effect*, Valerie Casey traces the evolution of the museum, from the traditional legislating museum to interpretive museums the more contemporary performing museum. In

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77   Edward T. Linenthal, "Can museums achieve a balance between memory and history?" *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, 41, No. 22 (1995), 2.

each of these, the relationship between the subject (person experiencing the work) and object (museum content) changes through the method of receiving the information. One way in which the museum typologies have evolved is through the focus of the gaze. The gaze is "the act of involuntary participation in a culturally constructed, visual discourse where there is no unmediated, pure relationship between a Subject and the Object of its view."[78] The idea here is that the object within museums is always filtered through a screen or display device that alters the image of the object that the subject consumes. In addition, a characteristic of the gaze is its reversibility, meaning that the subject is both a watcher and being watched. This can create an alienating effect to the subject when the gaze is reversed on them.

The diagram below describes the changing dynamics of museums. In the legislative museum there is a direct relationship with between subject and object in the context of the museum. This museum type dictates how the subject should interact with the object and behave in the museum setting, expressing authority through the object.[79] The reversible gaze here is created through the museum and other spectators watching. The *interpreting museum* takes into account a viewing device/screen or "interpreter," whose presence manifests by splitting the view of the subject or where the a specific understanding of the object of the interpreter becomes the focus of the subject.[80] In the *performing museum* the interpreter and the object collapse into one entity, and the object is subordinated by the interpretation. Here, ideologies are conveyed more visibly in-situ and provide a clearer reading of the exhibition, becoming a medium for the production of culture as it puts on its display.[81]

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78 Valerie Casey, "The Museum Effect: Gazing from the object to performance in the contemporary cultural-history museum," *Ecole du Louvre ICHIM 03 Archives & Museum Informatics Europe* (Paris, 2003): 5.

79 Ibid., 5.

80 Ibid., 6.

81 Ibid., 11.

Legislating Museum
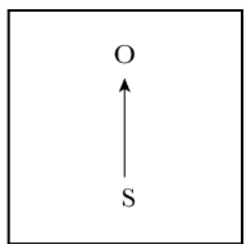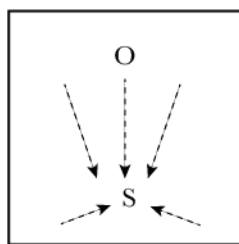
O

↑

S

"Uninterrupted"

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S

Reversibility

Interpreting Museum

O

↑ ┄┄┄ I

S

Ideal Mediation
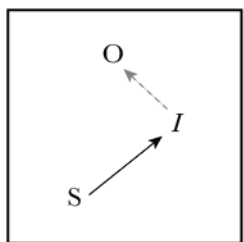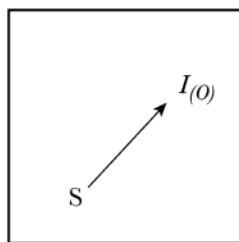
O

I

S

Split View

O

I

S
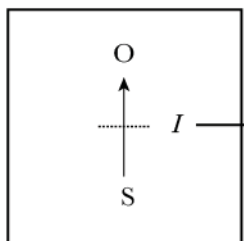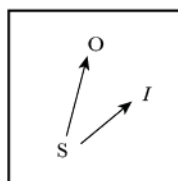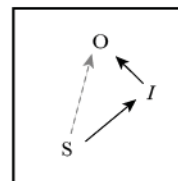
Privileging Interpreter's Object

Performing Museum

O

I

S

Object diminishes in importance

$I_{(O)}$

S

Interpreter becomes the Object

The museum has become more performative as the objects are no longer the main element to convey information. What has changed in particular is the degree in which the subject and the object perform. In the legislative museum, the performing subject - S_P - enters the museum space to perform in a specific restrained way and leaves with a notion of what the object is - $S_{P(O)}$ - and thus changes the viewer.

Shifting Degree of Performance
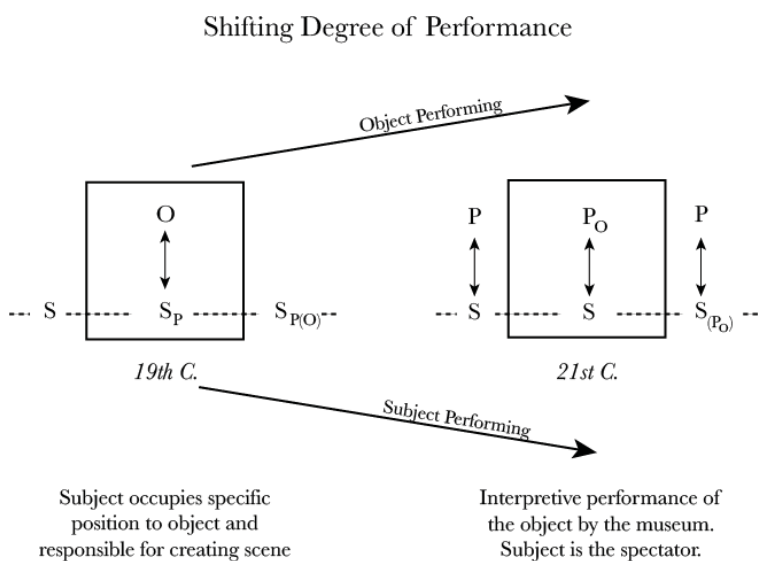
The performative museum relies on the interaction of the subject with the performance rather than just with the objects. Rather than just relying on empirical knowledge, the idea of narrative prevails, promoting a certain cultural identity.[82]

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82   Ibid., 14.

Chapter 4: Situating on Failaka Island

Failaka Island is a 45 minute ferry ride off the coast of Kuwait. The town of Al-Zoor which used to have over 6000 residents and has been abandoned since the Gulf War, creating a stark contrast to the mainland. The ruins of the war are not the only ones that exist on the island. The earliest settlements on the island are said to date back to 2000 BC, by the Dilmun civilization from modern-day Bahrain. This makes it the longest consistently inhabited place in Kuwait. Archaeological studies have been conducted by numerous agencies, attracting international attention. During the invasion, Iraqi's occupied it, using it as a space for training.

Water

The location of Failaka makes it an important point in the context of historical trade routes. The Tigris and Euphrates Rivers merge into the Shatt Al-Arab river before opening up into the Persian Gulf, where the island sits. The Shatt Al-Arab was the primary fresh water source to Kuwait. It started off as a small summer base for the Bani Khaled, a nomadic group that travelled across the Arab world.[83] A small fortress, 'kut', was there and was home to a small fishing community. Maritime trade of food products established a sea system between the Gulf countries.[84] Historically major trade routes went from Mesopotamia into the Gulf through Kuwait in search for other resources and for Kuwait's pearl industry.[85] Numerous civilizations made their way through Kuwait since the 6th century BC including Achaemenides, Dilmun, Romans, Portuguese and eventually the

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83   Jonathan Fryer, *Fuelling Kuwait's Development: The Story of the Kuwait Oil Company*, (London, UK: Stacey Publishing, 2007), 19.

84   Robert Fletcher, "'Between the Devil of the Desert and the Deep Blue Sea': Re-orienting Kuwait, C.1900-1940," *Journal of Historical Geography* 50 (2015): 54.

85   Majed Almutairi, "The Archaeology of Kuwait," PhD diss., Cardiff University, 2012. http://orca.cf.ac.uk/41961/, 26.

Relationship to Water

Historical connections with the Tigris and Euphrates, and contemporary ferry routes
Image: from Google Satellite 2017

Historical

Contemporary

British.[86] Pearldiving and trade with Bombay accounted for a large portion of the country's income.[87] Maintaining the pearl diving industry became a priority in the national politics by the ruling family, working closely with the British and with merchant houses in India. With the development of these trade relations, especially with India, Kuwait earned a reputation for having some of the best shipbuilders in the region.[88] The fabric of the city - its palaces, markets, squares - was oriented towards the sea.

Archaeological Finds

The location of the island made it accessible to different civilizations. What made them stay were the eight fresh wells located around the island, surrounded by salty sea water and allowing ships to stop by and replenish their water reserves.[89] Even into modern times, the islands wells were a source of water for the mainland. Ancient Mesopotamian documents describe the island as a vital link to the Indus Valley and Magan (Oman).[90] A series of archaeological missions conducted by Danish, American, Slovak and French teams have uncovered ruins around the island that date back to the Bronze Age that have peaked the interest within the field.[91]

Destruction of Al-Zoor

Al-Zoor is the town that has been inhabited on the island until 1990. The population of 6284 (2391 Kuwaitis and 3893 non-Kuwaitis) before the invasion dropped down to 79 (74 Kuwaitis and 17 non-Kuwaitis) after liberation, with only one citizen remaining on the island during the entire occupation.[92] All houses, public buildings, beach cabinets, schools and clinics

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86   Ibid., 3.

87   Fletcher, "'Between the Devil of the Desert and the Deep Blue Sea," 55.

88   Ibid., 21.

89   Almutairi, "The Archaeology of Kuwait," 30.

90   Ibid., 45.

91   Ibid., 2.

92   Ḥammādī, *Atlas of Iraqi War Crimes*, 296.

Map of Failaka Island with
topography, archaeological
sites and study area
Image: adapted from *The
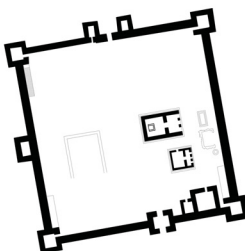Archaeology of Kuwait*, 2012;
from Majed Al-Mutari

Failaka Island

Bronze Age · Hellenistic · Christian/Islamic · Other Sites · Ancient Wells · Tidal Flats
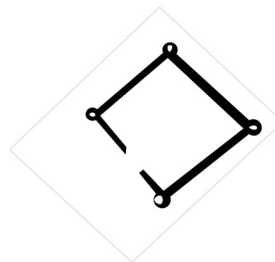
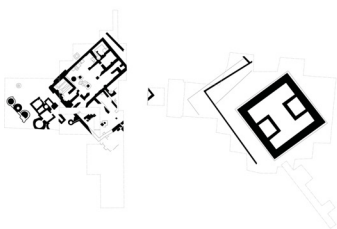**BRONZE AGE**   **HELLENISTIC**   **CHRISTIAN + ISLAMIC**

Tell Said (F3)
2000 BC
Village + Fort
Dilmun civilization

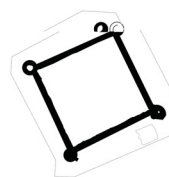Hellenistic Fortress and Temple (F5)
400 BC
Roman Empire

Al-Quraniya Fort
2000 BC
Settlement + Fort

Dilmun Temple and Palace (F6)
2000-1800 BC
Dilmun civilization

Tell Al Khaznah
2000 BC
Village + Fort
Dilmun civilization

Al-Zur
Arab Fortress

Al-Qusur Church
2000 BC
Christian Settlement

Al-Khidr
2000 BC
Dilmun civilization

Sa'dia Mosque
16th century AD
Village + Mosque

Matrix of
archaeological
ruins on Failaka
Island
Image: *The
Archaeology of
Kuwait*, 2012;
from Majed Al-
Mutari

Archaeological Sites

were looted or destroyed as the Iraqi army occupied the entire island. Used as a base, anti-personnel and anti-tank mines were implanted all along the perimeter of the island. Trenches and bunkers were dug and anti-aircraft machine-guns were installed.

As a resident of the mainland, the town appears intact, but the extensive damage on some of the buildings is shocking. It's unlike other ways in which I learned about the Gulf War from material qualities. The island and the mainland stand at complete odds with one another when looking at reconstruction, almost forgotten. The main points of interest today however is not the town, but a hotel that has established itself over the last decade at the old harbour and the tank graveyard further up the island. The majority of the town is overlooked, which I recognize has potential for learning about the impacts of war.

Mixed media collage of site conditions, including major routes and ruins. Original dimensions 8'x3' Images: from Al-Jazeera; Kim Toohey, *Failaka Island*, Feb 2011. Digital Image (flickr); Google Satellite Imagery 2017.

Iraqi Defensive Site

Main Street

Connection to rest of island

Proposed Path
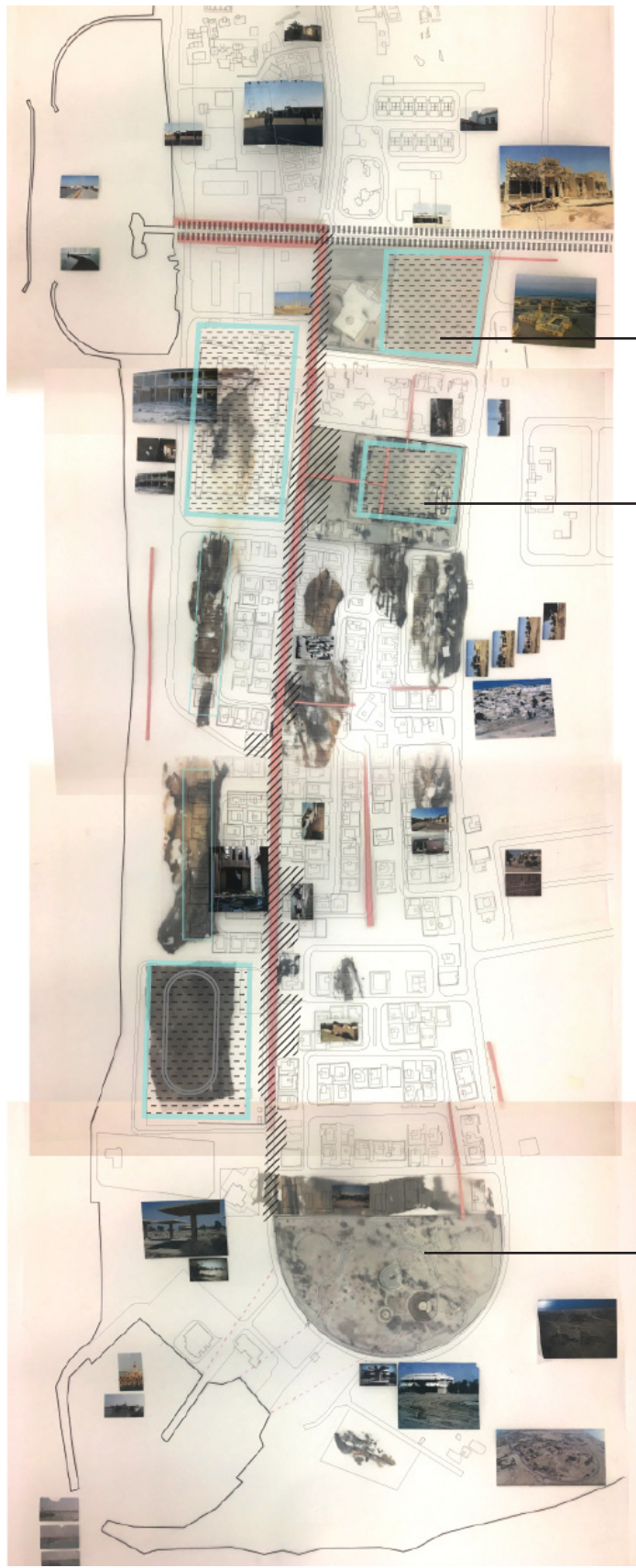
Site 3 Mosque

Site 2 School

Site 1 Park

Urban Artefacts

According to The Atlas of War Crimes Against The State of Kuwait, the Iraqi's occupied Failaka in a couple of major ways; through the destruction of the existing fabric and by adapting spaces for offence and defence. The destroyed housing fabric can be seen throughout the greatest area. Certain urban artefacts and their accompanying grounds were used as spaces for installing defensive artillery or used as bases. After piecing together information about Failaka, I chose four different types urban artefacts as sites of interest: ruined houses, a park, a school and a mosque.

Ruined Houses

Many houses were taken over or destroyed, often used for target practice. Much of the urban fabric is derelict but fairly intact. Since the damage of them is over a larger area, I am looking at them is as a network that maintain the age value of the ruins - and of the island - in contrast to contrast new proposed building.

Plan collage showing the blank site and exploring routes (in pink). Image source: Al-Jazeera; Google Satellite Imagery 2017.

Site 1: Park

The public park near the arrival harbour stands out from the rest of the island due to its irregular geometries. As a welcoming point, it serves a function for the community. Three forms sit close to one another - a fountain, a community building and an amphitheatre. Although they share the same grounds of the park the ability to experience of all three is hindered by the scorching heat in Kuwait.

Above: Image source flickr: Kim Toohey, *Failaka Island*, Feb 2011. Digital Image.

Below: Plan collage showing the blank site and exploring routes (in pink); image source: Al-Jazeera; Kim Toohey, *Failaka Island*, Feb 2011. Digital Image (flickr); Google Satellite Imagery 2017.
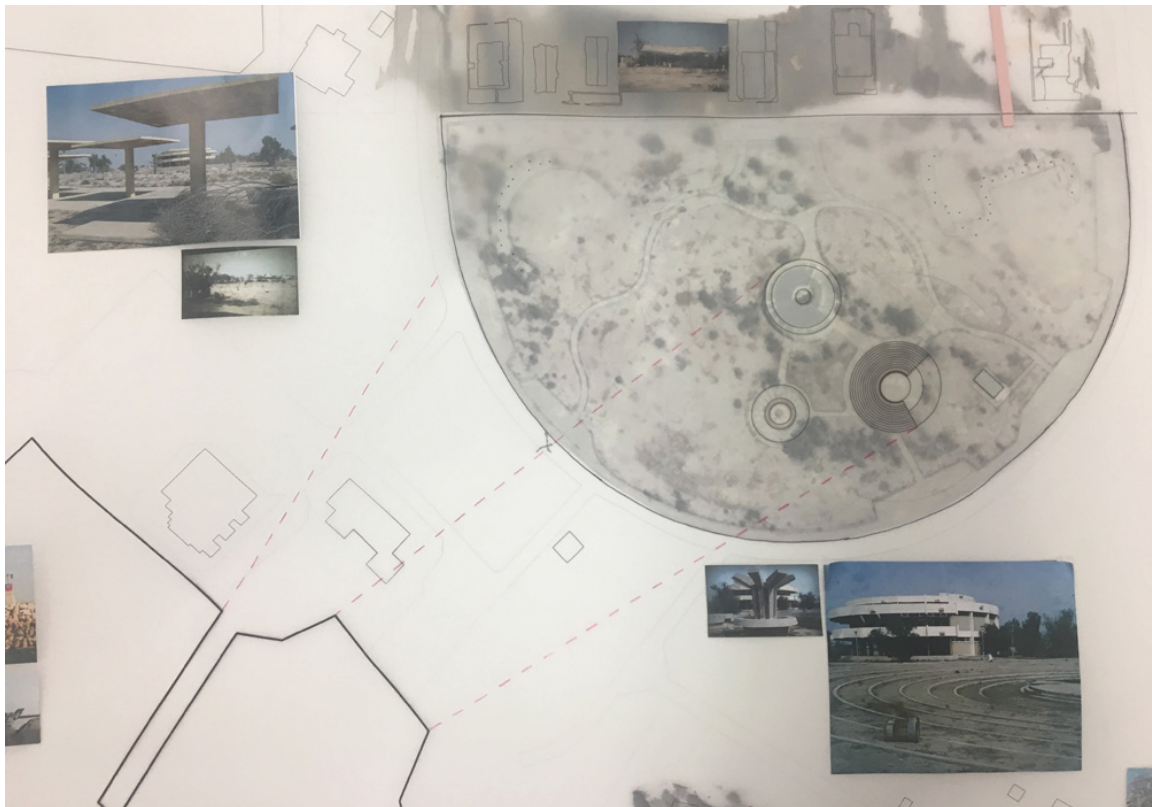
Site 2: School

Several schools operated on the island prior to the invasion. The schools on Failaka have a similar formal approach, with rooms lining the sides to create a communal space in the middle. The centre serves as a public yard for school children to play during recess.

Above: Drone photo. Image from Al-Jazeera

Below: Plan collage showing the blank site and exploring path routes (in pink). Image source: Google Satellite Imagery 2017.

Site 3: Mosque

Mosques provide for the spiritual wellbeing of a community, and becomes a necessary social instrument as people come in for prayer. Failaka holds a long lineage of religions, with temple ruins dating back to the Bronze age Although there are a few mosques on the island, one stands out as the largest standing structure within the town.

Above: Image from Google

Below: Plan collage showing the blank site and exploring path routes (in pink) Image: from Google Satellite 2017.
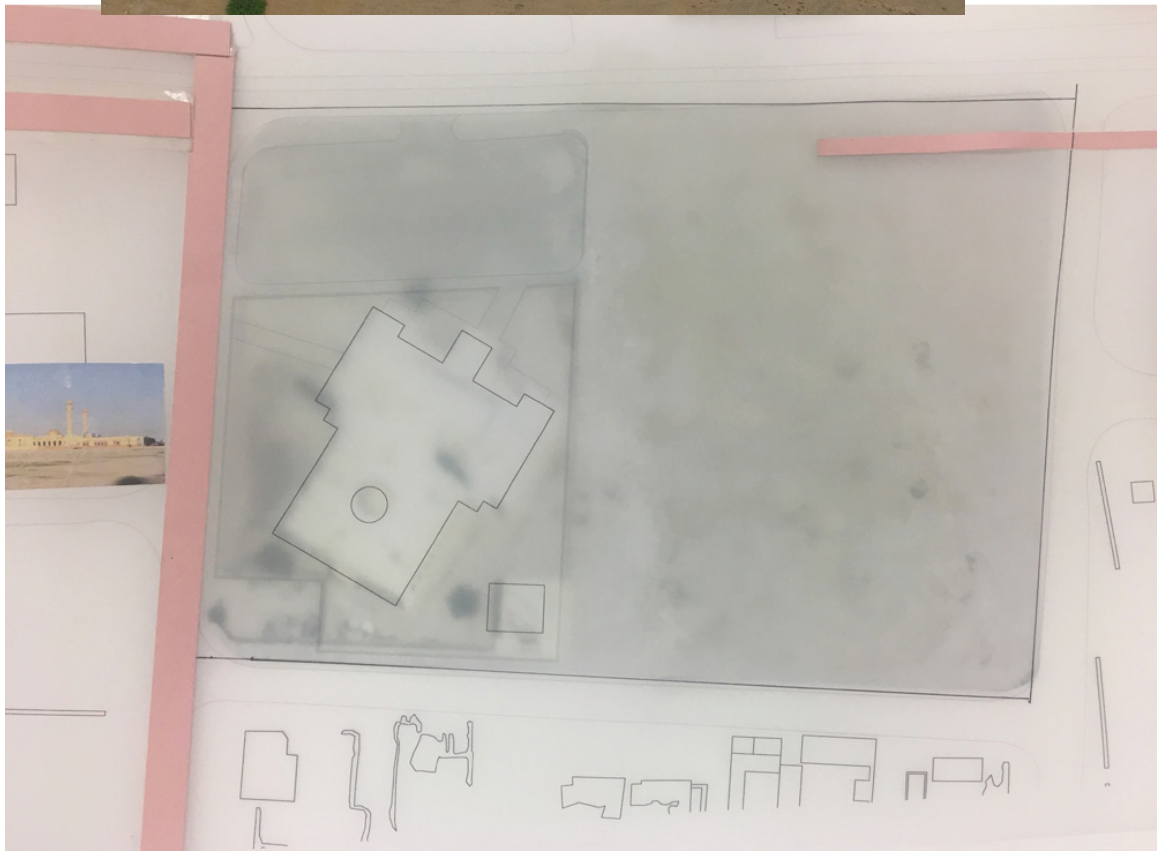
Chapter 5: Design

Intention

The intention of this thesis is to allow people of Kuwait to connect to the remnants of trauma, and facilitate cultural healing, learning and remembering. Reflecting back on Riegl, the project also explores the way in which age value and intentional commemorative value can be superimposed on one another to provide a new holistic understanding of experience over time. The project aims to explore the way in which memorialisation can combine the monumental with visceral experiential means of commemoration.

Program

The discussion of the performative museum as a storytelling device outlined the evolution of museums, from the legislative, to interpretive and finally to performative. Here, the subject performs without prescribed interpretation and the subject interacting with a set of objects outside of the museum framework in-situ. This stresses the importance of the performance of moving through the ruins over the ruins as objects. The proposal involves a network of paths and three public interventions on each of the sites mentioned in the previous chapter. Each corresponds to a specific narrative on the site with a new commemorative narrative. By adding a new active piece of architecture, the original artefacts could be brought back to consciousness. Out of the four interventions, the house and path is different. Rather than conducting architectural surgery within the houses, the experiential path guides the user between them, in order to understand the terror caused to civilians. This path on a larger scale is punctuated by the three other interventions that create focal points along the way.

Urban Artefact	*Proposal*	*Narrative*
Houses	Path	Didactic navigation of ruins of war Understanding the damage to domestic Kuwaiti identity.
Park	Canopy	Moment of arrival and threshold into town. Necessity of shadow in the desert.
School	Bath	Place of nourishment and reflection as well as providing to the common social good.
Mosque	Wudu	Protection and revival of religious and cultural heritage.

Principles

For each of these sections, I will be considering a series of dichotomies that fuel the driving design concerns. Each of them will be negotiated between the sites and the path, providing highly varying experiences throughout the project.

Subject and Object

Immanuel Kant's philosophy distinguished subject and object (consciousness and matter) which are required to be connected through a human knowledge.[93] He argued that single experiences in the material world add up and create an holistic perception in one's mind, as humans have an underlying desire for order.[94] Emerging out of Kantism was phenomenology, the focus on consciousness, and constructivism, the focus on matter. Architecture that concentrates on the phenomenological aspects focus on the integration within its environment. Constructivist architecture tends to stand in isolation, as objects in themselves. This proposal positions itself

93   Kengo Kuma, et al., *Anti-object : The Dissolution and Disintegration of Architecture,* (AA Words ; 2. London: Architectural Association, 2008) 10.

94   Ibid., 14.

in the middle of this conversation, between the focus of the subject and the focus of the object. When this manifests physically, object isolation and spatial abstraction techniques provide completely different experiences.

Matter ⟵——— EXPERIENCE ———⟶ Conciousness

Object
Constructivism
Isolation

Subject
Phenomenology
Integration
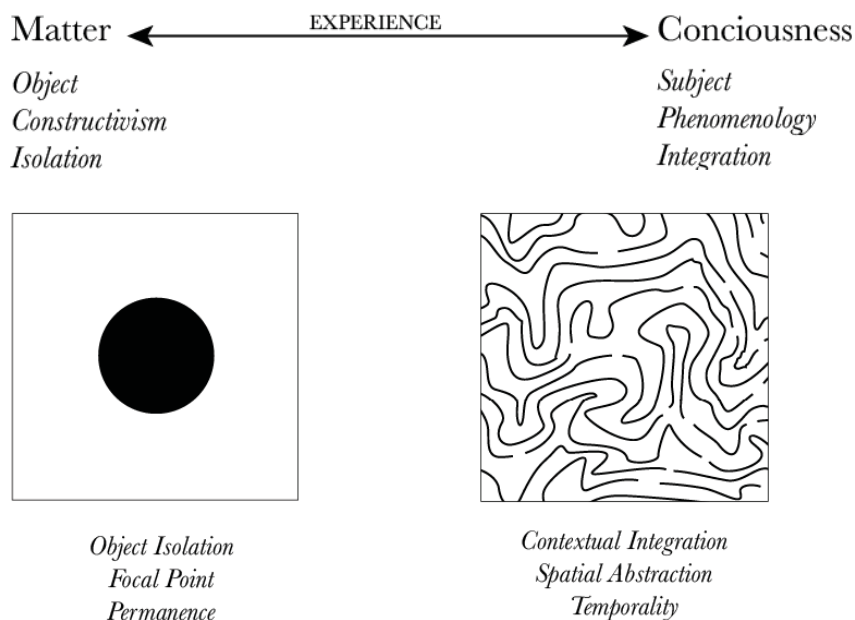
Experiential spectrums deriving from Kantist philosophy.

Object Isolation
Focal Point
Permanence

Contextual Integration
Spatial Abstraction
Temporality

Formal vs Visceral

The way in which the body perceives objects and the spaces they create vary based on the framework above. We can see this when we look at the difference between French and English landscape gardens.[95] The former emphasises man's control over nature through the rational arrangement of anchoring objects within a defined field and continuous, direct routes. The English garden was intended as creative space, inspiring the imagination of the person walking through. This type of garden was produced as a set of qualitatively different experiences rather than a singular piece with a specific geometry. Kant believed that although these different experiences in the English garden varied between subjects, he also argued that the subject would also try to find an underlying order or try to comprehend the perceptual disorder.

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95   Ibid., 9.

Continuity   Discontinuity
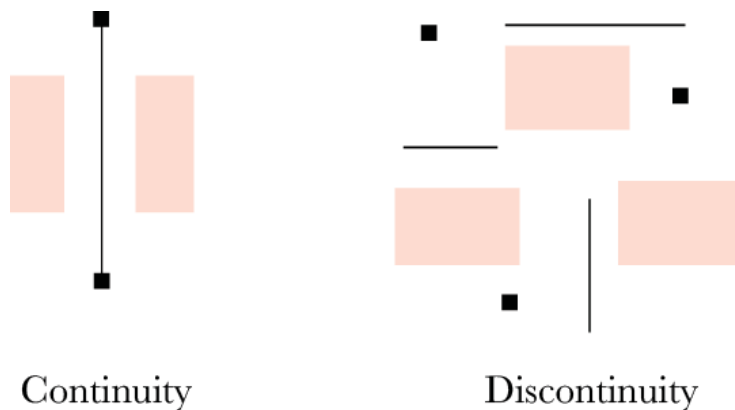
Description of routes being direct versus a route allowing exploration through meandering.

In the diagram above, continuity describes a direct immediate relationship that has a strong relationship between two points of interest, through pathways and sightlines. With discontinuity, the relationship between the entities is fractured, but moving along the points and lines allows multiple experiences of the same place through temporal experience.

Old and New

The main strategy of interaction between the ruins and between the new proposal is through superimposition The idea is that the direct layering on site - of program and through its physicality - creates a new experience that requires the user to reflect on the past though the framing mechanisms of the new. When the two are not layered directly the adjacencies highlight their differences between them whilst continually influencing one another.

Superimposed   Adjacent
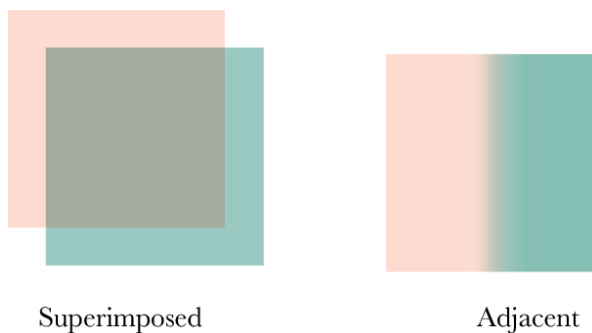
Diagram describing the way in which two parts can interact through layering.

Themes

Movement and Perception

> Within the experiential continuum of enmeshed space, we understand
> distinct objects, distant fields, as "whole." Our experience of a city can
> only be, however, perspectival, fragmented, incomplete. This experience
> - unlike a static image - consists of partial views though urban settings,
> which offer a different kind of involvement or investigation than the
> bird's eye view, which is typically used by architects and planners.[96]

In *Questions of Perception: Phenomenology and Architecture*, Holl, Pallasmaa and

Perez-Gomez discuss 'enmeshed experience' as a phenomenon that has

an intangible quality, as opposed to the physicality of architectural ob-

jects.[97] This derives itself from the continuous unfolding and overlapping

of spaces, materials, views and details. Within the perspectival views that

we navigate the world by, our perception of it develops, unfolding though

angle and speed. In his article Hapticity and Time, Pallasmaa advocates

for an architecture that comes out not from the conventional process of

working from large scale concept to detail (conceptual idealism), but ori-

ginating from experiential situations (sensory realism).[98] This is a call for

architecture that addresses authentic architectural and bodily confronta-

tions. He goes on to say that "perspectival understanding of space gave

rise to an architecture of vision, where the quest to liberate the eye from its

perspectival fixation has enabled the conception of multi-perspectival and

simultaneous space."[99] Simultaneous perspective arose during the Cubist

period, this way of thinking makes room for peripheral and anticipated

vision. Like the paintings of Braque and Picasso, the spatiality is without

focus, allowing for an immersive understanding of bodily movement and

participation, rather than the focused, passive singular images. Multiple

images constructed in a way that shows movement and different perspec-

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96   Steven Holl, Juhani Pallasmaa and Alberto Perez-Gomez, *Questions of Perception :
     Phenomenology of Architecture,* (ed. Tokyo : San Francisco, CA: + U Publishing, William
     Stout, 2006), 48.

97   Ibid., 55.

98   Juhani Pallasmaa, "Hapticity and Time: Notes on Fragile Architecture," *The
     Architectural Review* (May 2000): 82.

99   Ibid.

tives will be a key theme with my explorations.

Collage

> Collage and assemblage are favoured techniques of artistic representation in our time; these media enable an archaeological destiny and a nonlinear narrative through the juxtaposition of fragmented images deriving from irreconcilable origins. Collage invigorates the experience of tactility and time.[100]

Reconciling the past, present and future concerns the layering and passing of time. Temporal experiences that are layered over one another add to the collective consciousness and overarching narrative of place. The synthesis of foreground, middleground and background provide complete perception, and provides a way to construct images through the juxtaposition of its parts.[101] With the juxtaposition, collage and collage-drawing situates the body with respect to space and materiality, with clear references to the haptic realm.[102] Their ability to stimulate our imagination and allow the viewer to project their own references creates specific and unique interpretations for the user.

Relics and Materiality

I explored the above ideas through perspectival experience and the journey through the different stages of the proposal. The materiality of the design is derived from the residues that are currently on the island and optimising their material properties. The driving materials are brass, rubble and ceramic. I have also included shadow as a "material" as dwelling outdoors is determined by how much people are protected from the intense sun.

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100 Ibid., 80.

101 Holl, *Questions of Perception*, 45.

102 Jennifer Shields, *Collage and Architecture*, (New York: Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group, 2014), 11.

Materiality of DESTRUCTION
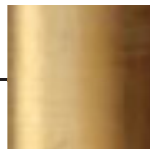
Cause of Destruction.
Durable material for a single use tank shell remains intact. A tank graveyard sits towards the north of the island.

Brass

Shiny

Effect of Destruction.
Buildings that were a part of everyday life in Failaka were severely damaged.
As the buildings continue to crumble, they erode down to rubble.

Rubble

Texture

Materiality of PLACE

Local Histories
Through the archaeological site, many ceramics have been found on Failaka. Tiled walls are also a common feature on the island.

Ceramic

Thermal mass

Seeking Shadow
During the midday intense heat, people seek shelter from the sun. The humidity on Failaka produces a different, yet intense heat than the mainland.

Light + Shadow

Protection

Ceramics

In this material study, The initial idea started with screens, creating a barrier that allowed light in but protected the privacy of those on either side of the screen. I was then interested in the idea of creating a unit that could be used throughout the project, specifically as a wall or a floor material.

Using different coloured glazes, an ambient glow is created to create different atmospheres on either side of the wall.
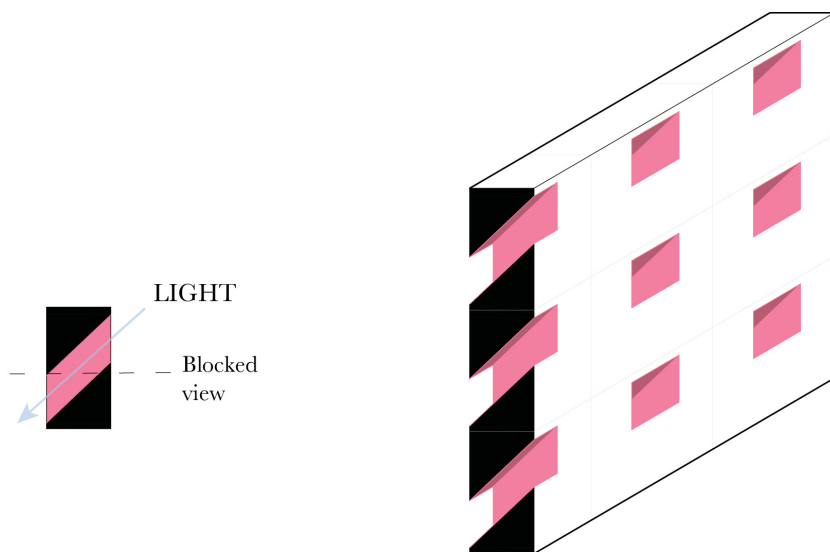
Above: Concept drawing for a ceramic block detail.

LIGHT

Blocked view

Below: Light test with glazed ceramic block

Interior   *Exterior*

Iterative study
on interior and
exterior atmos-
pheres
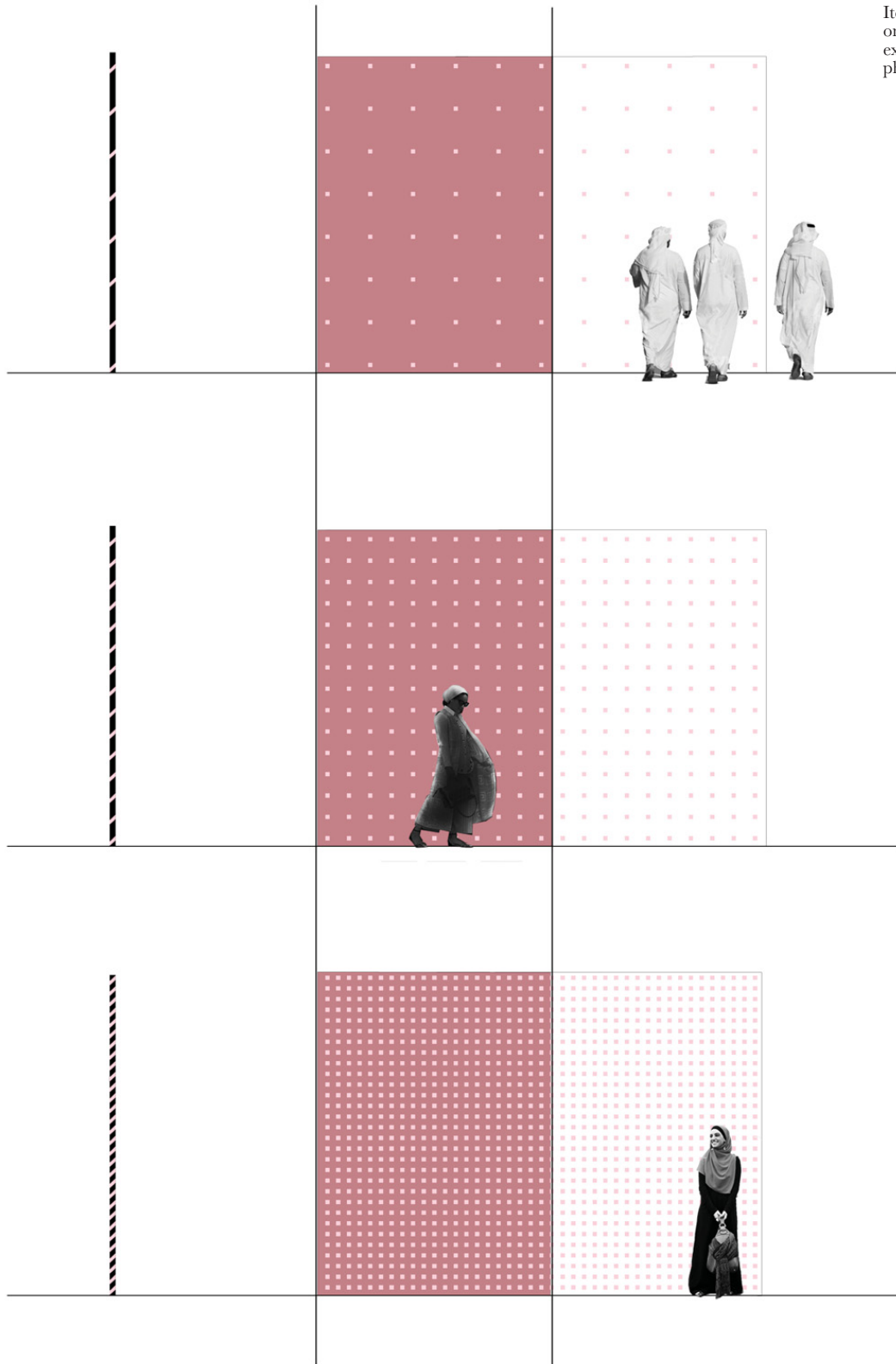
Blocks set on the ground catching the light
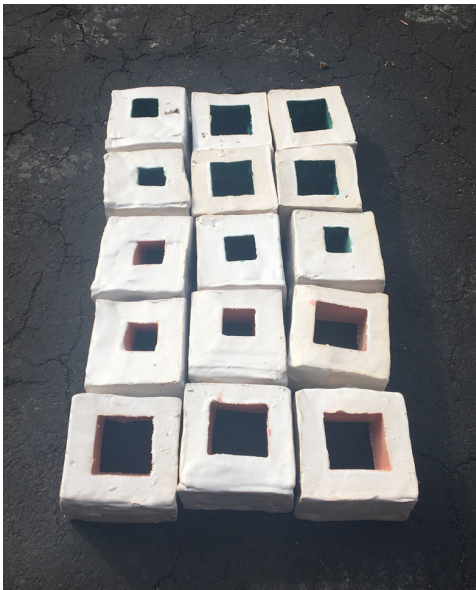
Ground looking in opposite directions and mixing colour
Left: catching the light
Right: Shadow

Paver perspective effect.

Design Interventions

Path

The path is comprised of a major spine and smaller capillaries that allow the user to infiltrate the town and explore as they chose. There is not a specific path to navigate through.

The path is comprised of two elements. One is a horizontal ground plane, made up of ceramic tile and rubble. From the experiments (shown previously), the way in which the light captures stands at complete contrast to the rubble that exists on the site and The second is a vertical pillar, made of concrete and brass. Spatial abstraction techniques placing the elements in the foreground, middleground and background leading the subject through the town.
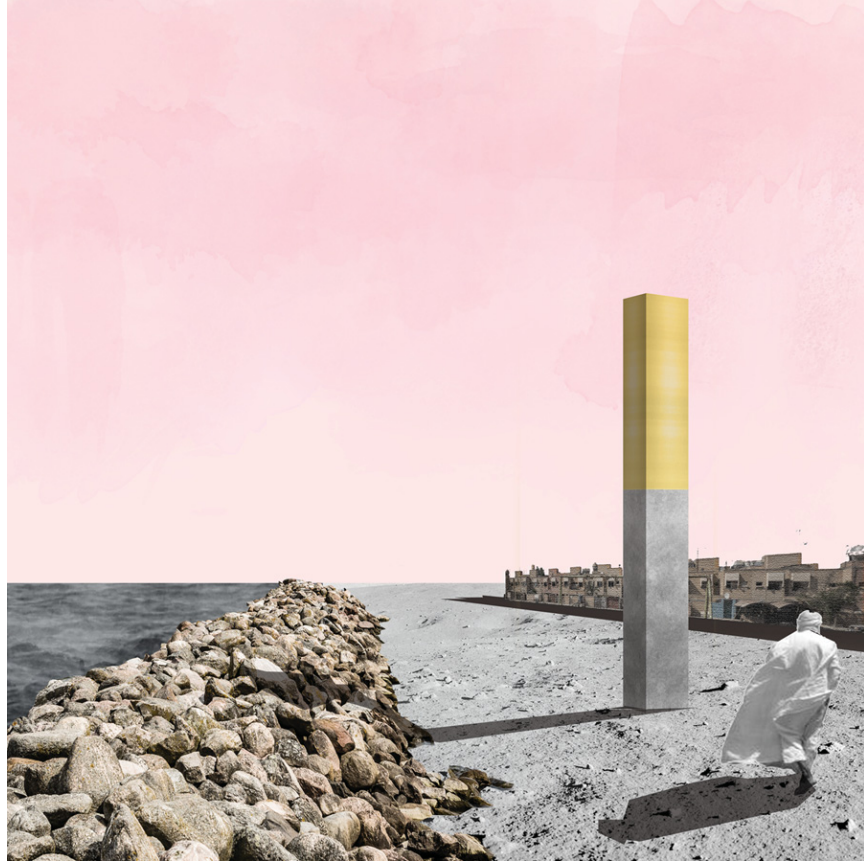
Perspective collage showing vertical brass wayfinding element.
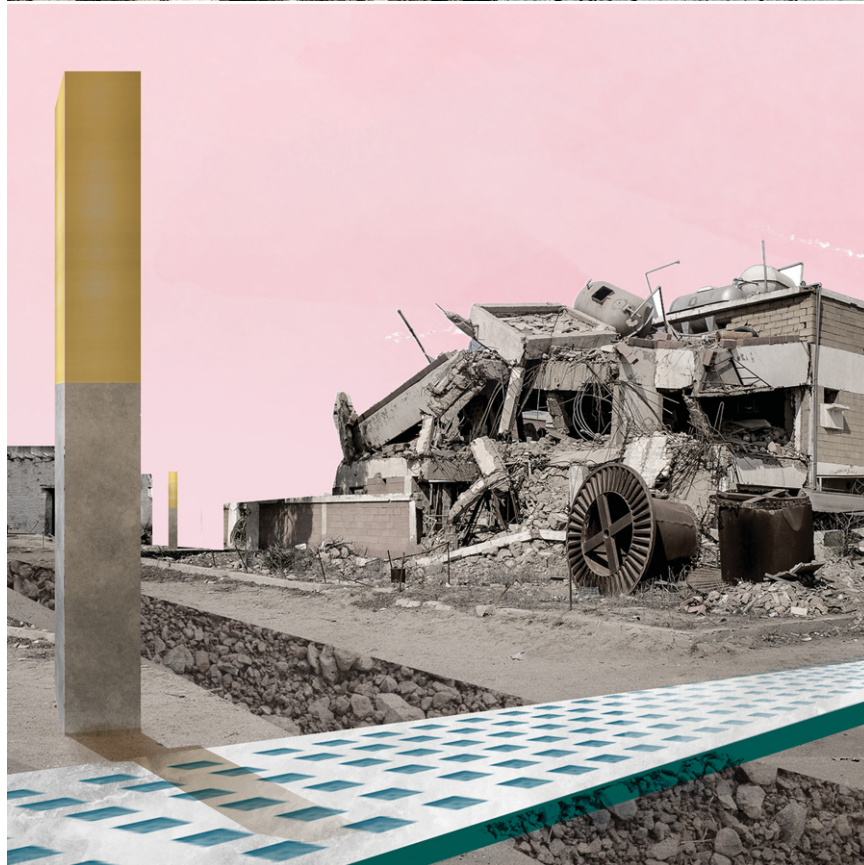
Perspective collage showing vertical and horizontal element. Brass reflection can be used to connect two points in space.
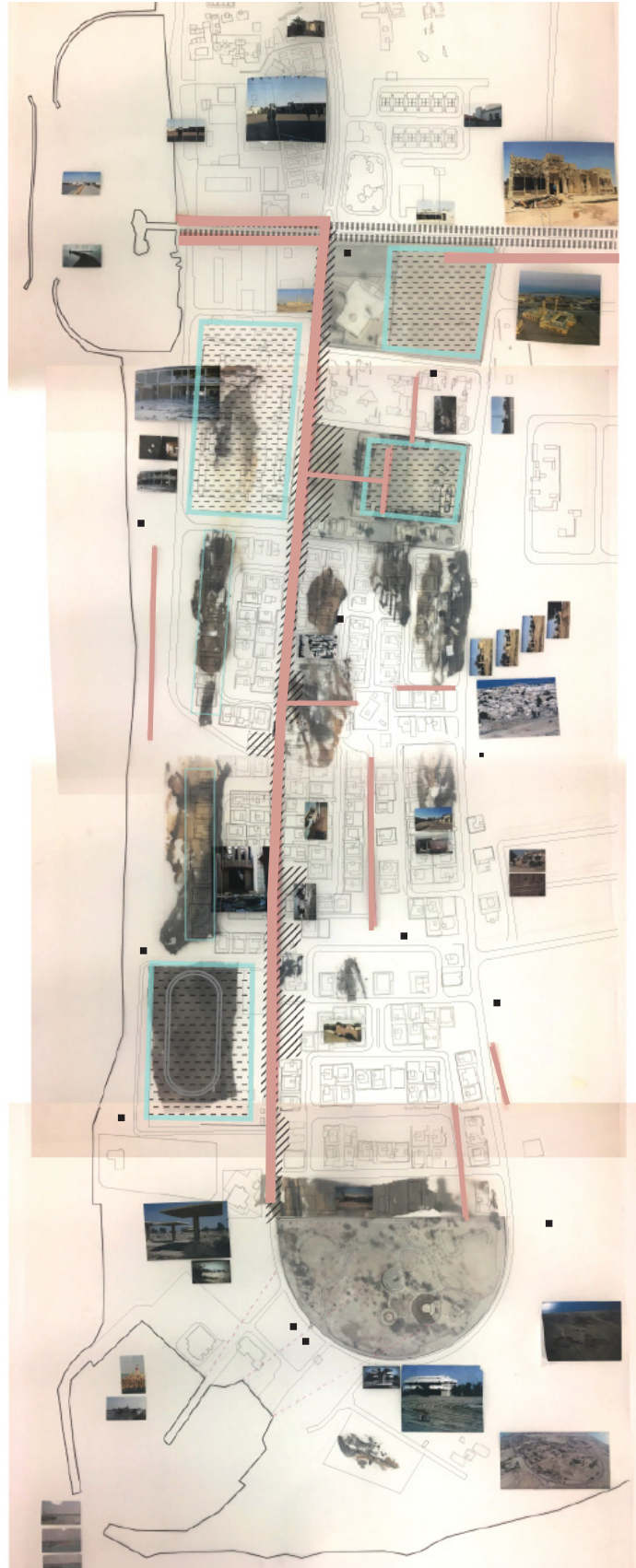
Site map with paths (pink lines) and wayfinders (black dots); images from Al-Jazeera and Kim Toohey, *Failaka Island*, Feb 2011. Digital Images
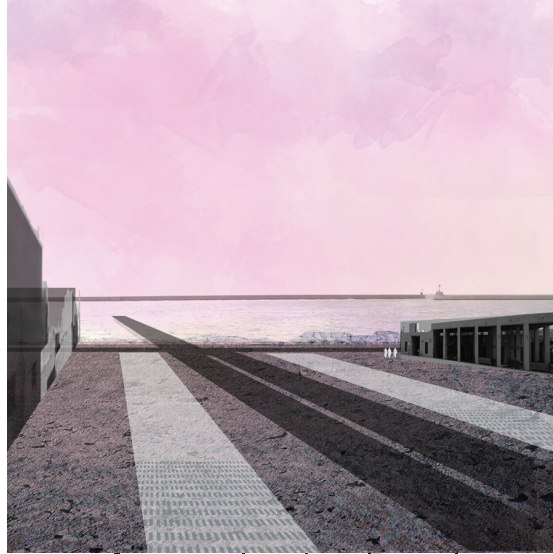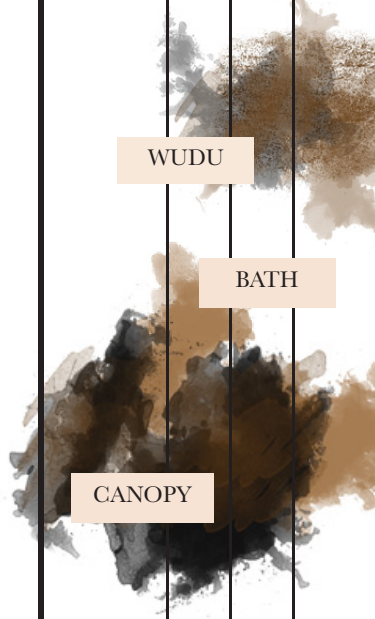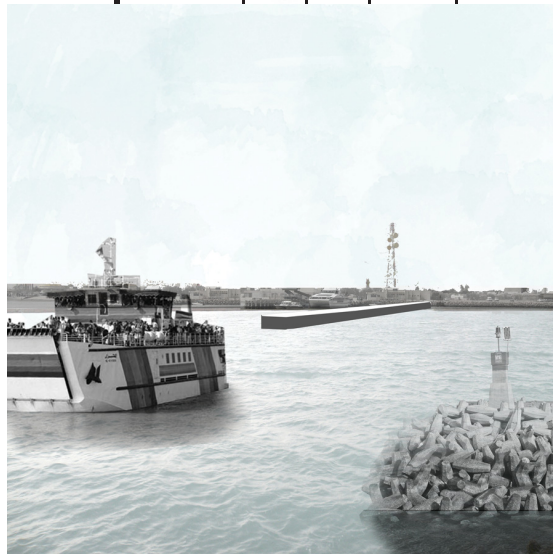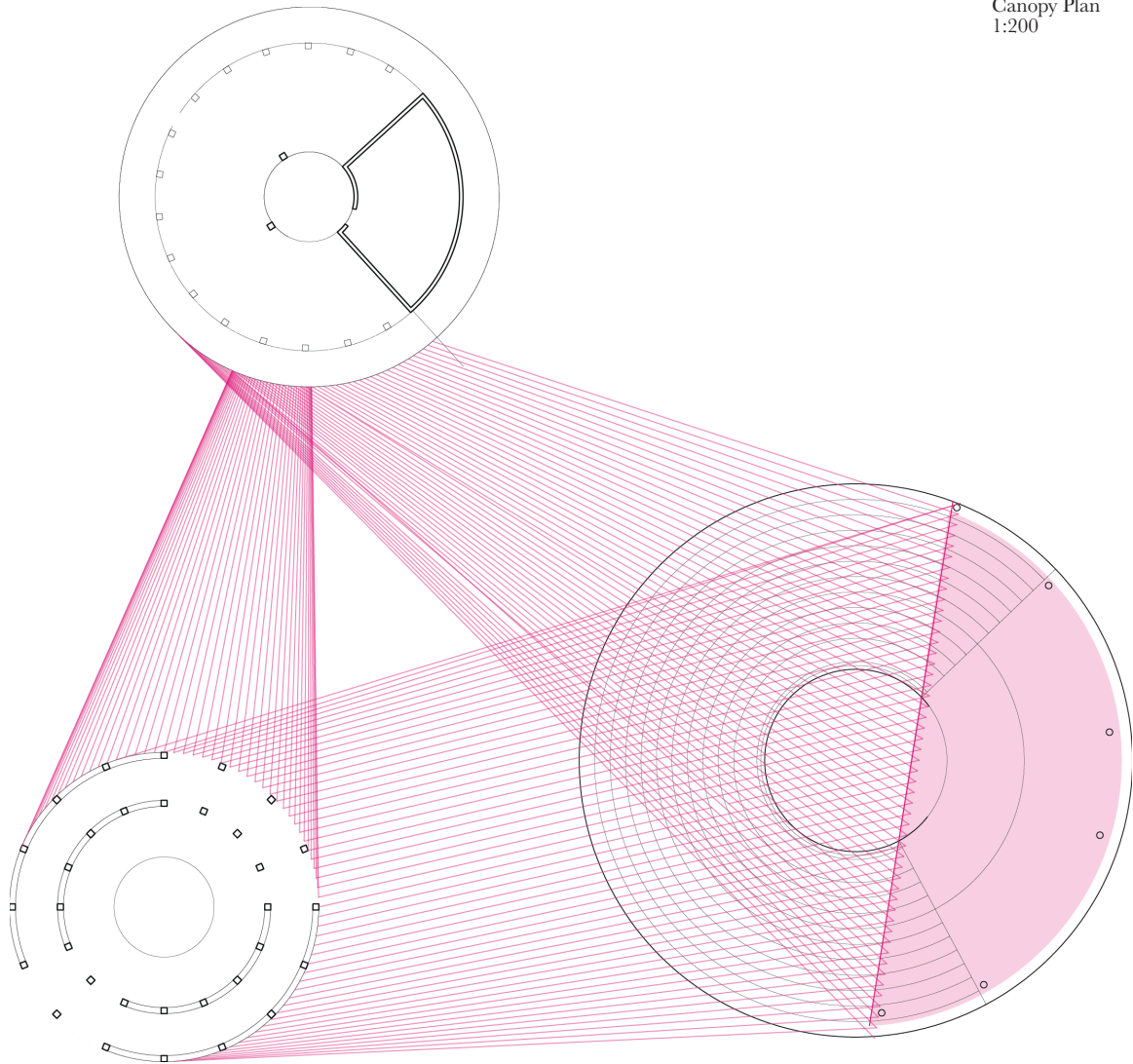
Departure

WUDU

BATH

CANOPY

Arrival

Site 1: Canopy

The canopy acts as a way for people to enjoy the space between the three existing structures and acts as a threshold between the arrival point on the island to the town of Al-Zoor. The bright canopy activates underused space by providing a shadow that is so necessary in the harsh climate. The amphitheater, fountain and public building were all previously there but with subtle changes, such as creating a snall collonade around the fountain and clearing out the ground floor of the main building, it becomes an interstitial and flexible space before entering the ruinious town.
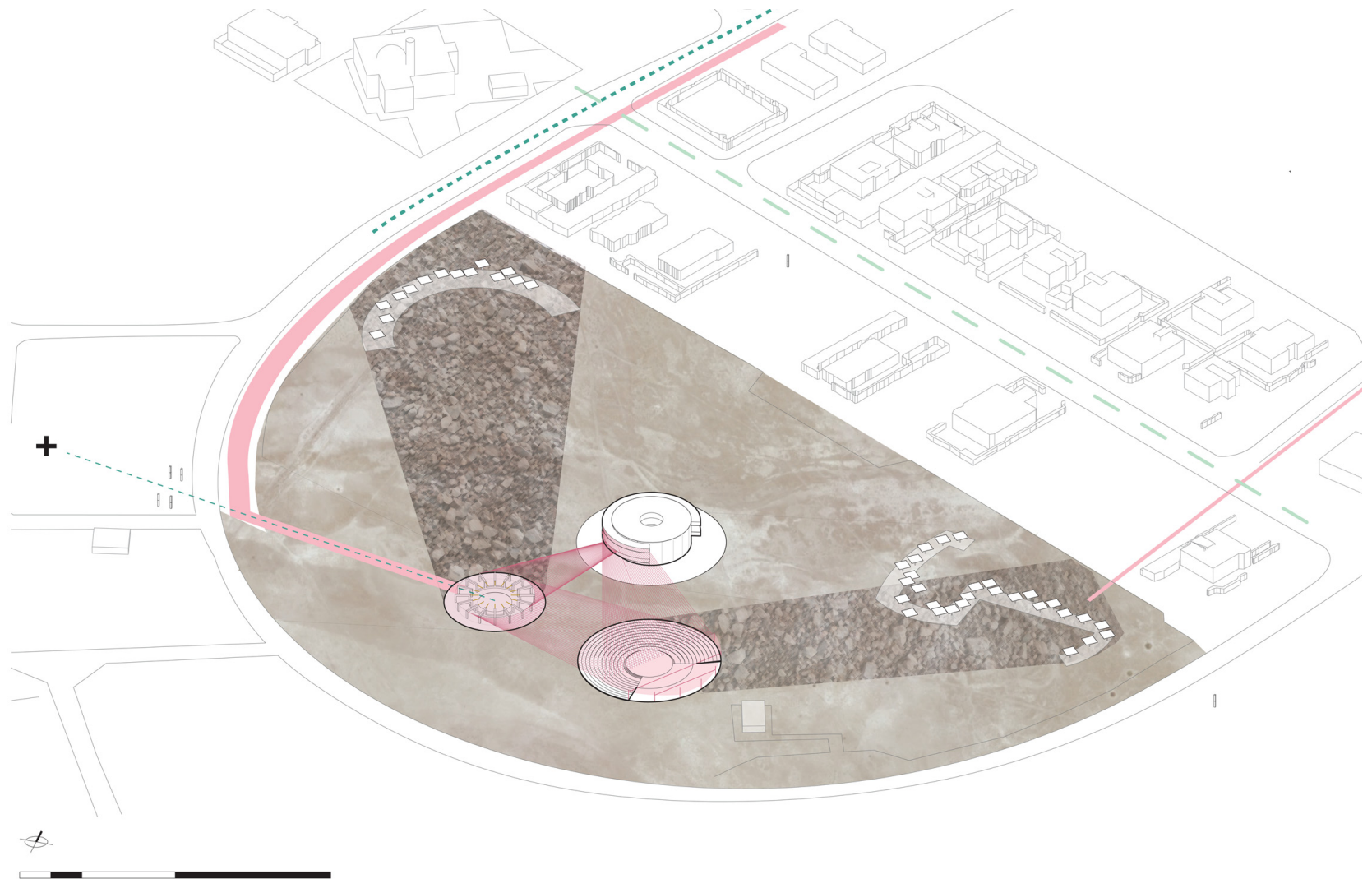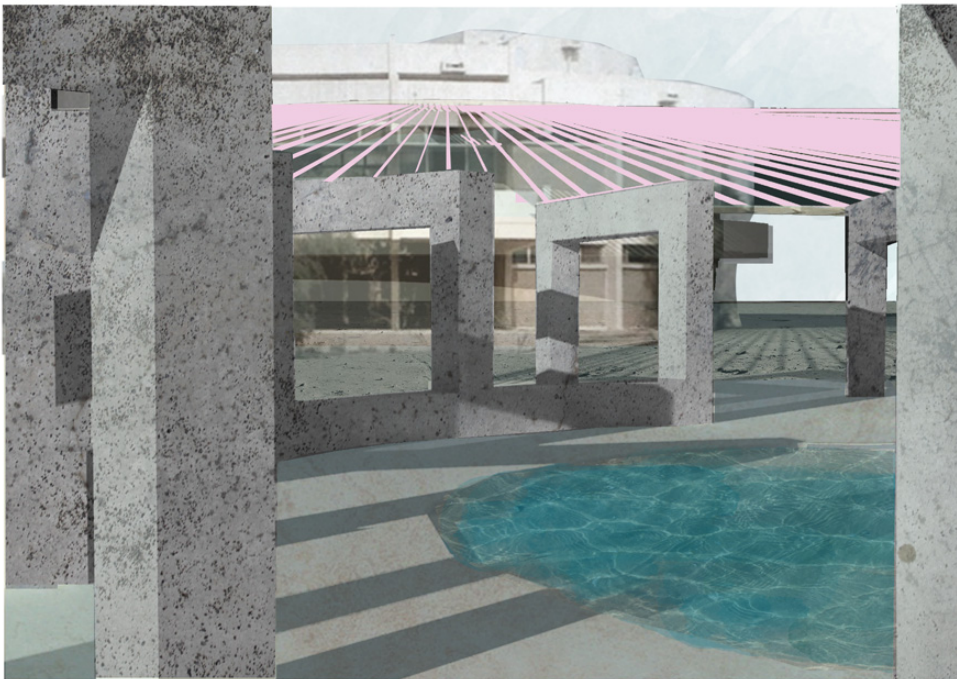
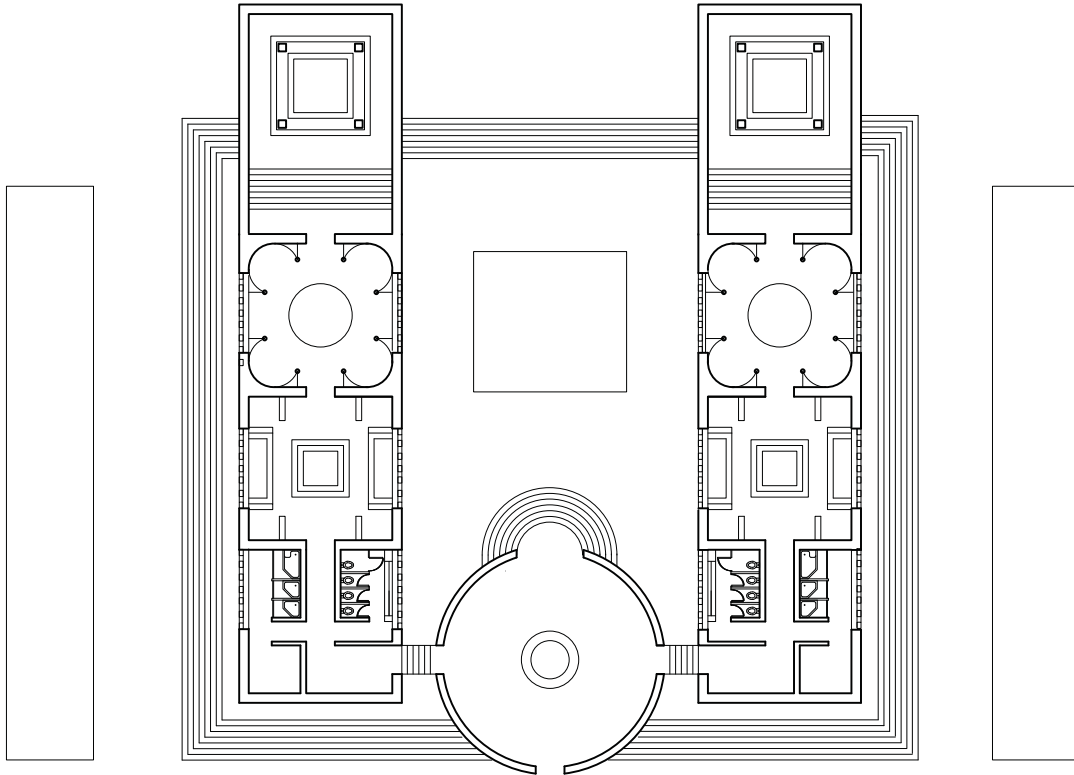Canopy Site Contextual Isometric
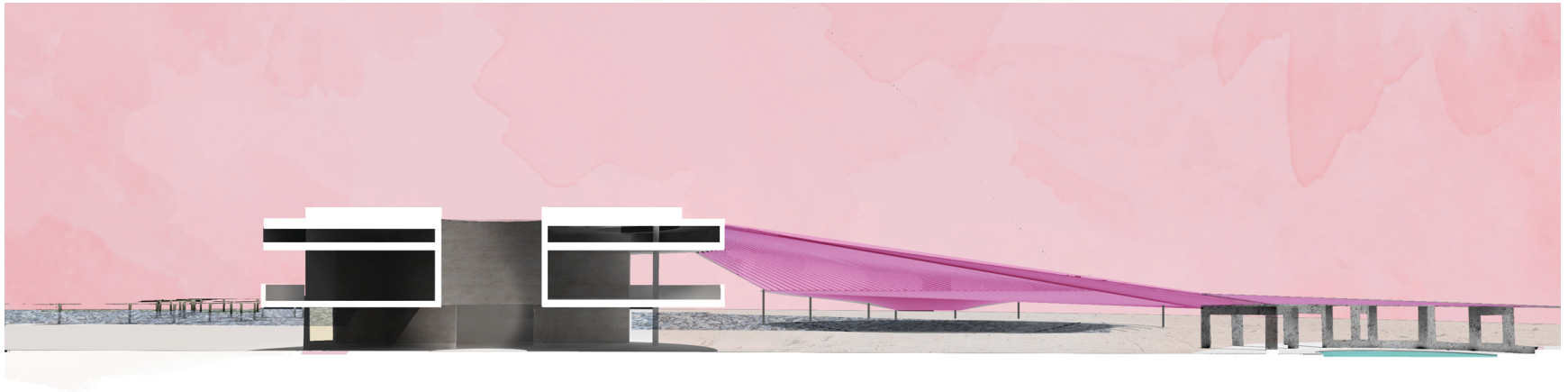
Canopy Site Section
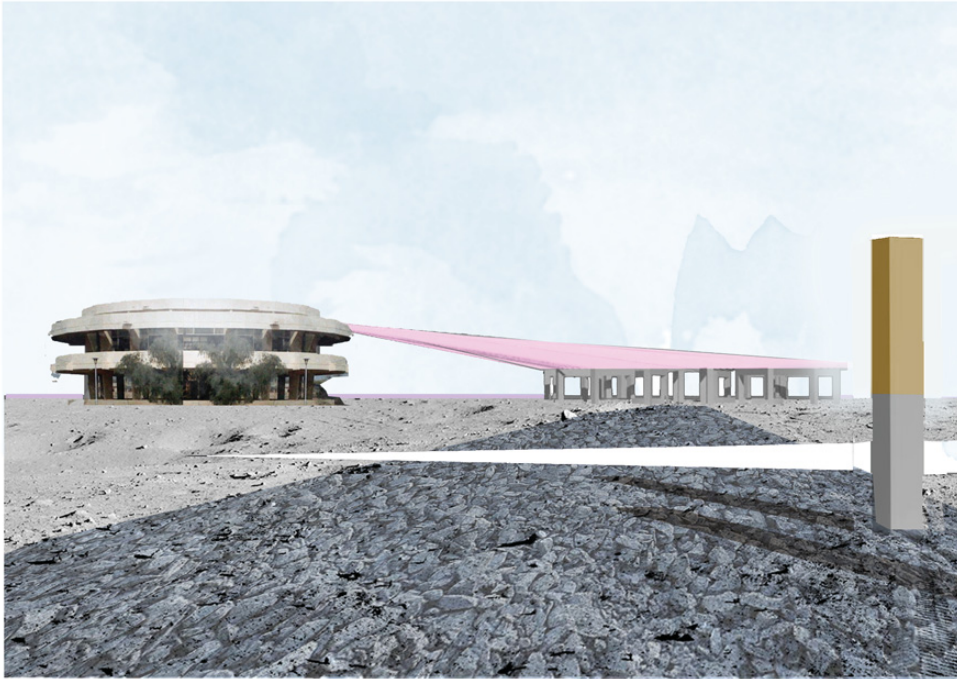
Approach to Canopy Site.

By the fountain

Site 2: Bath

On the grounds of the former school, the bath is a civic building that promotes reflection, nourishment and healing. The main building is slightly sunken, almost skimming in with a plaza underneath. The symmetrical plan gives spaces for both men and women. Privacy is important in the Arab culture and the demure facade expresses that. The pools that flank the main bulding reflect the facade against the sandy ground.
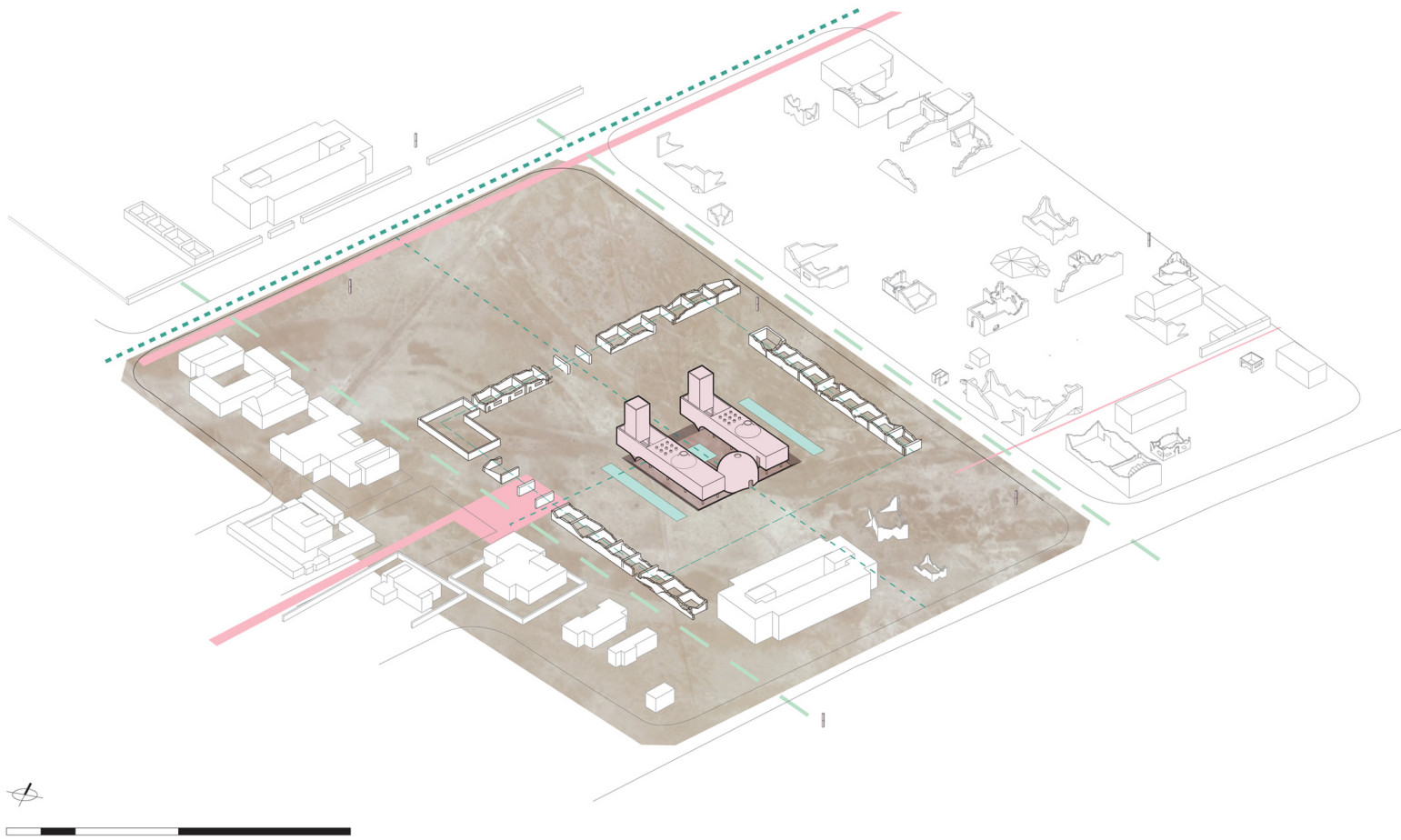
Bath Site Contextual Isometric

Bath Section
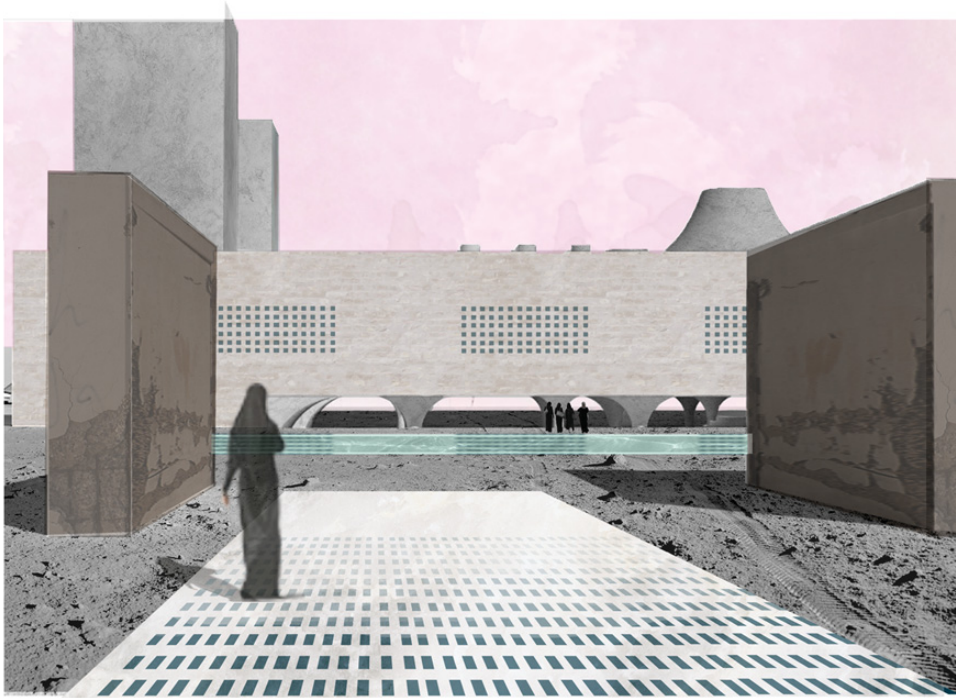
Path, Ruin, Bath
intersection

Inside the dome,
framing the ruin

Site 3: Wudu Pavilion
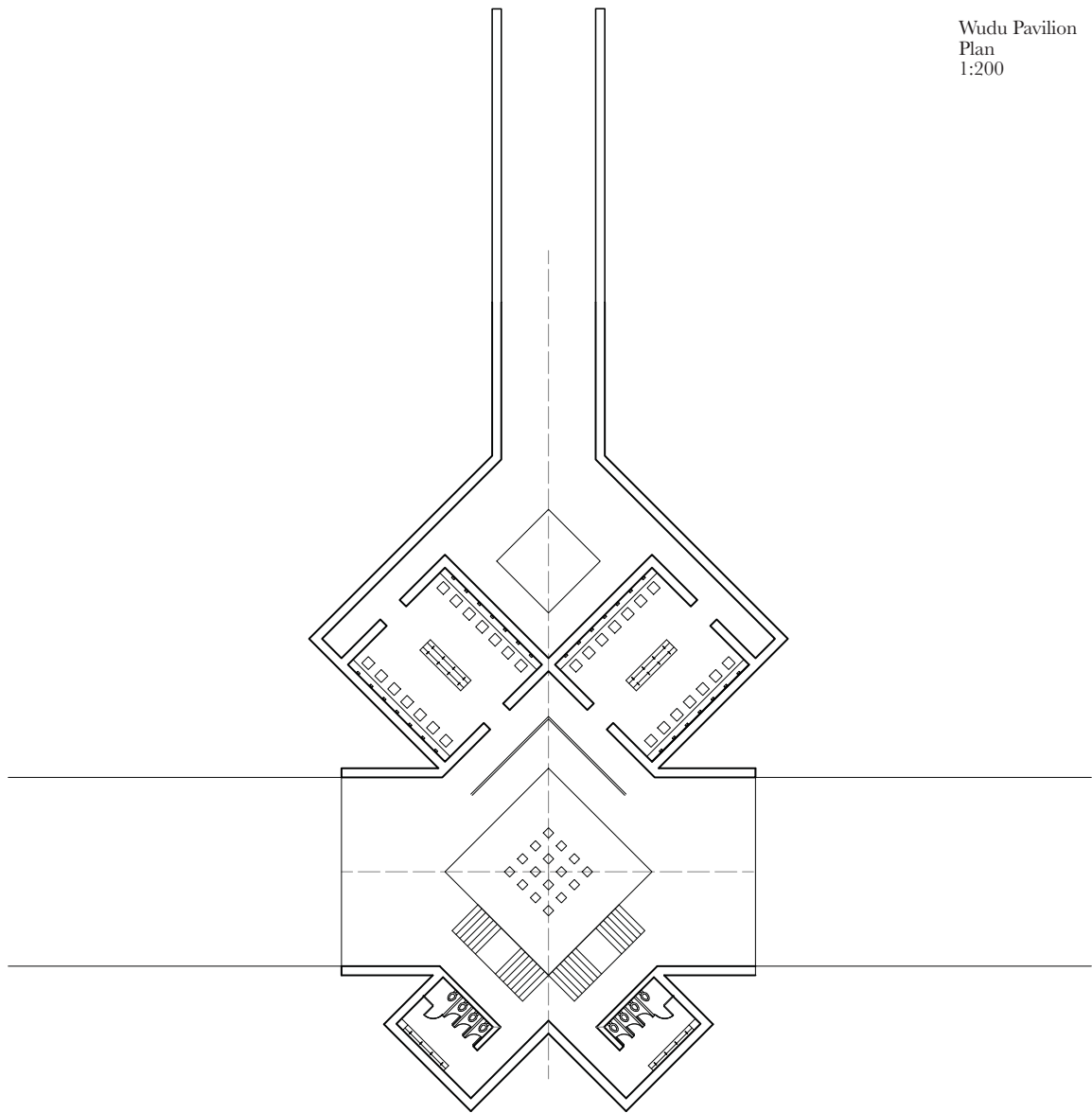
Wudu is a part of the Islamic ritual of prayer that purifies the worshipper before entering into prayer. In this moment, the building is sunken, and is a slow decent into a dark tunnel which eventually opens up above into a sunken courtyard. The visitor is isolated from the rest of the context here, before entering the wudu spaces. In the areas used to sit and wash, light wells shower the worshipper with light, before they continue on into the mosque.
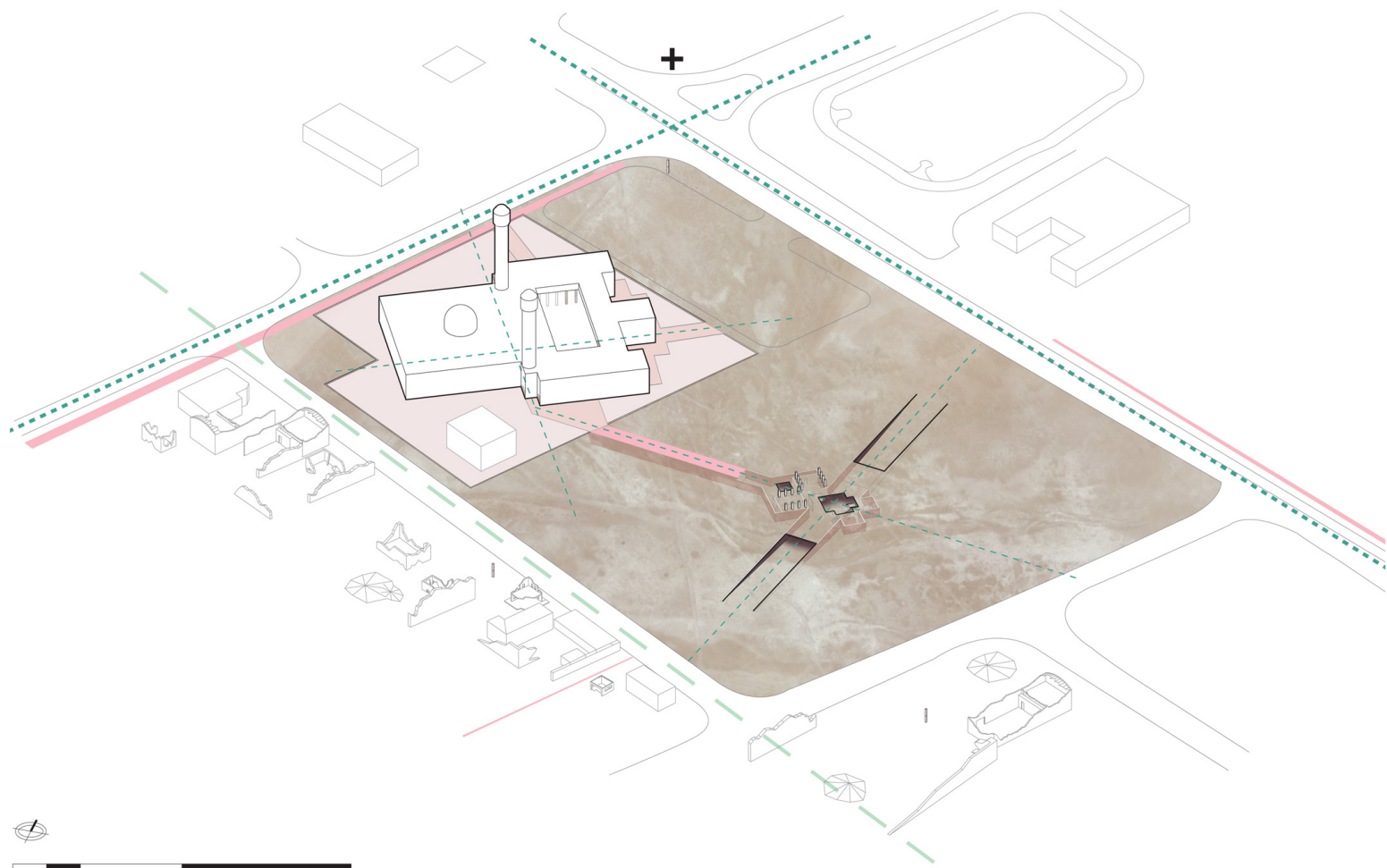
Wudu Pavilion Site Contextual Isometric

Wudu Pavilion Section

Underground
wudu space

Entering the
underground
tunnel

Chapter 6: Conclusion

This thesis looks to civic building as a way for a community to collectively remember. The architecture allows people to frame the past and reflects a contemporary life against it. The memorial itself is not a formal memorial, rather it is a set of civic interventions that frame the ruinous landscape and allows the visitor to interact with both the new and the old. The questions about the past are open ended and the new architecture may not provide all the answers but allows the visitor to seek it for themselves. By using the activity and the building as a means to understand the past adds a new layer of history to the place, and thus adds a new dimension and new narratives.

Each intervention serves different elements of remembering, each dealing with a multitude of physical phenomenon. Creating different atmospheres play a large part of the proposals, and bringing the human experience of it into play touches on an embodied memory of place. The path in particular is a way for the individual to explore as they are invited to get lost navigating the ruins. Immersive experiences reconnect the public to its environmental reality and revive the idea of place.

The spaces to gather in public are important for the development of a community. The shared history makes up a significant part of that but also providing space that allow people to forecast or question the future. Forums that allow people to gather, remember and reflect when it comes to issues of conflict, trauma, the environment and society are becoming increasingly necessary in the region, specifically concerning Kuwait's post-oil future. Perhaps by engaging in a place where the affects of an oil-war can still be seen may be the best way to start that conversation.

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