

**Preserving Place: Presenting Heritage with a New Sense of
Youth**

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

The convergence of social media, the COVID-19 pandemic, and the nature of urban environments has led to a widespread sense of placelessness and isolation among individuals, both physically and emotionally. This predicament has effects at all levels, from the individual to the city as a whole. This thesis explores design of urban environments through the lens of a skateboarder by using the ability skateboarding has to create public space enriched with culture and community to address placelessness and isolation felt in urban communities brought on by generic design. Situating my project in St. John's Newfoundland presents a challenge of finding avenues to seamlessly implement skateboarding to exist with a strong preestablished culture of heritage and tradition. This thesis proposes an architectural response that imbues heritage and culture with fresh perspective which encourages the gathering of people across all generations and fosters a renewed sense of community.

Acknowledgements

From one Newfoundlander to another, I'd like to thank Talbot Sweetapple and Matthew A.J. Brown for sharing their appreciation and passions for Newfoundland and Labrador as a place and a culture. Without their collective support and individual passions regarding heritage life of Newfoundland and Labrador, this thesis would not have been possible.

Chapter 1: Introduction

The landscapes and places we inhabit hold profound significance. Whether we actively shape them or passively allow them to shape us, they serve as reflections of our collective identity. By disregarding these surroundings, we inadvertently limit the spontaneity and richness of our lives.

Like the clothes we wear, landscapes not only hide but also reveal a great deal about what lies beneath and within. In smaller cities and towns what is new is usually appended to the edges or interspersed with the old, and therefore less overwhelming, though it is still significant as the distinctive contribution of the twentieth century to urban landscapes (Relph 2016).

Nevertheless, even in these contexts, the contributions of the twentieth century have left a distinctive mark on urban landscapes, which is noteworthy and consequential.

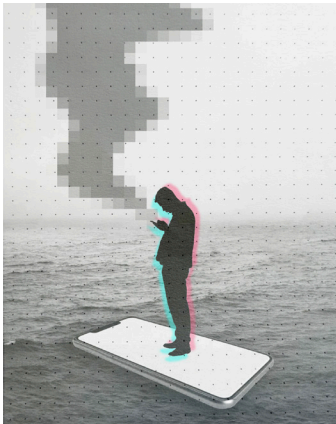
Placelessness / Generic Design

In the latter half of the twentieth century, there was a gradual but increasingly rapid transformation of our urban environments. This change was driven by the advent of the internet, which led to a homogenization of cities, eroding their individual identities (Relph 2016). The easy access to information accelerated the replication of identical buildings across the globe. Consequently, our urban landscapes became dominated by towering office buildings, expansive highways, commercial centers, large concrete convention venues, multi-level parking structures, and ubiquitous international fast-food chains. With each city looking indistinguishable from the next some populations have

been unable to discern distinctiveness and left with an omnipresent landscape (Relph 2016).

Major urban hubs often serve as experimental arenas for pushing the boundaries of architectural technologies. However, in locations with a well-established and distinct topography, greater consideration must be given to the impact that architecture can have on the identity of the place and its inhabitants. A prime example of this is observed in St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador, where recent efforts to modernize the downtown area have resulted in a landscape that bears little to no resemblance to the region's rich heritage and culture. The construction of nondescript elements and infrastructure that lacks meaningful connections to the local heritage and culture has given rise to a pervasive and increasingly noticeable landscape that fails to celebrate the unique character of the place.

Social Media and Covid – 19



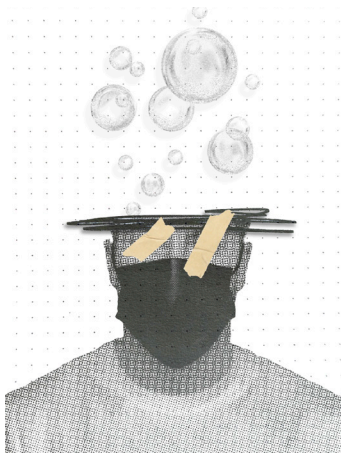
Isolation in Social Media
(S.H.)

It would be a mistake to mention the advent of the internet without mentioning the emergence of social media culture. The impact of the internet extends beyond just our cities; its effects can be seen and felt through all scales. The impacts are strongest at the scale of the individual. While many physical changes in our buildings often reflect the influence of the internet, the effects on individuals may not be as readily observable or tangible, yet they undeniably exist.

The presence of social media, a platform designed to bring us together has ultimately brought us further apart. Social media culture has had a significant impact on social connection and contributed to a large disconnect between people all over the globe. Social media platforms have made it easier to connect with others remotely, but this

has come at the cost of in-person communication. Online interactions can be more superficial and lack the depth and nuance of face-to-face conversations, which has led to a widespread experience of disconnection, especially among young people.

Social media algorithms tend to show users content that aligns with their existing beliefs and interests. While this can create a personalized and engaging experience, it can also lead to an echo chamber effect, where users are only exposed to viewpoints that reinforce their existing beliefs. This can make it difficult to understand and connect with people who hold different perspectives creating further isolation among users.



Negative Effects of
Covid-19 Collage (S.H.)

In 2020, Emerald Publishing (a research based company), conducted a study on the psychological effects of social media. The concluding findings of the study showed negative effects including anxiety, depression, loneliness, poor sleep quality, poor mental health indicators, thoughts of self-harm and suicide, increased levels of psychological distress, cyber bullying, body image dissatisfaction, fear of missing out and decreased life satisfaction (Sadagheyani and Tatari 2020).

To exacerbate the situation, a global pandemic has forced people to physically distance themselves from one another, which has led to a significant reduction in social interaction. The lack of physical contact and in-person communication has contributed to feelings of loneliness and isolation, especially for those who are already vulnerable to social disconnection.

Crisis hotlines and mental health helplines around the world experienced a significant increase in calls during the

pandemic. For example, the U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) reported a 1,000% increase in calls to its Disaster Distress Helpline in March 2020 compared to the previous year. Now, more than ever, we are recognizing the importance of offline social interaction.

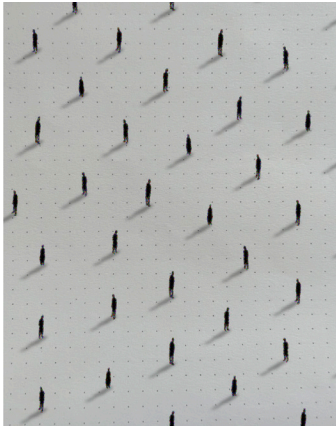
Certain populations have been particularly vulnerable to mental health issues during the pandemic. For instance, healthcare workers faced increased stress, burnout, and psychological distress due to their frontline roles. Studies have shown elevated rates of anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress symptoms among healthcare workers during the pandemic.

The pandemic has had a substantial impact on the mental health of children and adolescents. According to a survey conducted by the Mental Health Foundation in the UK in 2020, one in six children and young people reported experiencing a probable mental health disorder, an increase from one in nine in 2017.

It should be recognized that, even in the normal course of events, people with established mental illness have a lower life expectancy and poorer physical health outcomes than the general population.

Overall, the combination of an excessive use of social media, the effects of Covid-19 and the evolution of our urban spaces create the perfect recipe for isolation and disconnection. The absence of communal spaces contributes to a monotonous and sterile urban lifestyle. Cultural development thrives through collective interactions, and the absence of spaces that foster such interactions leads to a lack of cultural

identity. Without a distinct culture, a place and the people within it, lose their identity.



Collage depicting
widespread lose of Identity
(S.H.)

Addressing these challenges will require a concerted effort to foster deeper, more meaningful connections between people. As an architecture thesis, I am concerned only with the tangible. This thesis will explore how architecture, rooted in place and rich in heritage, can re-connect our urban communities while finding new ways to support local industries. I will present a solution through the process of placemaking with a concentration on local typologies and industries. This acknowledges that while architects can provide a location with structure and accessibility, a place's heart and vibrancy stem from its inhabitants. Placemaking ultimately results in the creation of public spaces for the community by the community. Placemaking has the power to revitalize local communities, foster a sense of pride and belonging, and lead to sustainability, economic growth, and an improvement in quality of life.



Concept render depicting the emotion of isolation and placelessness brought on by generic design

Chapter 2: Through the Lens of Skateboarding

How Skateboarding Contributes to the Making of Place

Skateboarding possesses a remarkable ability to infuse culture and foster a sense of community in otherwise lackluster urban spaces. As an action sport that originated in the streets, skateboarding has evolved into a vibrant subculture that transforms mundane and underutilized urban environments into dynamic and engaging spaces of creativity, self-expression, and social interaction.

Skateboarding thrives in urban landscapes, where skaters repurpose and reimagine the built environment to suit their needs. Abandoned lots, concrete plazas, empty pools, and neglected urban structures become the canvas upon which skaters perform their artistry. The act of skateboarding itself is a form of creative expression, as skaters navigate these spaces, interpreting their surroundings, and reinterpreting the traditional use of public areas.

Through skateboarding, urban spaces are enlivened and transformed into thriving cultural hubs. Skaters bring their unique style, energy, and innovative approaches to urban design, reshaping the way these spaces are perceived and utilized. The streets become a stage for skaters to showcase their skills, pushing the boundaries of what is possible in these often overlooked areas.

Moreover, skateboarding culture fosters a strong sense of community. Skate parks, DIY (Do-It-Yourself) spots, and public plazas where skaters congregate serve as gathering places where individuals from diverse backgrounds come



This collage stands as an abstraction of the ability skateboarding has to bring life to the urban realm. (S.H.)

together around a shared passion. The skateboarding community transcends age, race, and socioeconomic barriers, creating a space of inclusivity and camaraderie. Skaters support and encourage one another, sharing knowledge, tips, and tricks, and celebrating each other's achievements. This sense of community strengthens social bonds and instills a sense of belonging and identity

for individuals who might otherwise feel disconnected in bustling urban environments.

Skateboarding also brings cultural elements to these urban spaces. Skateboarding is not only about the physical act but also encompasses art, fashion, music, and a unique aesthetic. Graffiti, street art, and murals often adorn the skateboarding spots, reflecting the artistic expression that emerges from the skateboarding culture. Skaters develop their own style and subcultural references, influencing fashion trends and contributing to the broader urban culture.

In addition to its cultural and community-building aspects, skateboarding has the potential to positively impact urban spaces in practical ways. Although skateboarding may be stigmatized with rebellion and troublemaking, by activating underutilized areas, skateboarding helps deter crime and antisocial behavior, creating a safer and more vibrant atmosphere. It encourages physical activity and outdoor recreation, promoting health and well-being within urban populations. Furthermore, skateboarding events and competitions draw attention to these spaces, attracting visitors and boosting local economies.

In conclusion, skateboarding possesses a unique ability to inject culture and foster a sense of community in urban spaces that may otherwise be considered dull or neglected. Through its creative expression, inclusive community, and transformation of urban environments, skateboarding breathes new life into these areas, turning them into vibrant and engaging places for individuals to connect, express themselves, and find a sense of belonging. The skateboarding subculture contributes to the broader urban

culture, positively impacting the physical, social, and cultural landscapes of our cities.

Skateboarding as a Critique on Architecture

The average ambler engages architecture and urban space at only one level, while skateboarders engage in multiple functional levels. An ambler sees a bench and sits on it? Exactly what the architect and designer intended. A skateboarder sees a bench and contemplates.

There is a prejudice around skateboarding and our cities reflect that. Architects have been complicit with city officials in discouraging skateboarding, from placing uprights on benches or “skate stoppers” on level surfaces, and demanding their work be experienced as it was intended, enforcing certain behaviour onto its users. However, Defensive Architecture is not strictly used to deflect skateboarders but it also encourages little to no community engagement.

Defence in the Generic

Generic architectural design can be seen as an example of Defensive Architecture due to its focus on creating standardized, impersonal spaces that prioritize functionality and efficiency over human interaction and engagement. In the pursuit of universality and cost-effectiveness, generic architectural design often employs repetitive and predictable elements, such as standardized floor plans, façades, and interior layouts. This approach aims to minimize potential risks and reduce maintenance costs by adopting a one-size-fits-all approach.

While generic architectural design and Defensive Architecture share some similarities, they also differ in important aspects. Generic architectural design primarily focuses on achieving functional efficiency and cost-effectiveness, whereas Defensive Architecture is specifically concerned with deterring or controlling human behavior. While generic design may unintentionally incorporate some defensive elements, such as seating arrangements discouraging loitering, its primary goal is not to actively exclude or push away individuals.

However, one drawback of Defensive Architecture, including generic design, is its limited consideration for human-scale interaction and the creation of inclusive, inviting spaces. These designs often prioritize functionality and economy, resulting in sterile and impersonal environments that lack warmth, character, and human connection. The standardized nature of generic architecture can make spaces feel repetitive, uninviting, and devoid of identity. This impersonal approach fails to consider the diverse needs and desires of individuals, limiting opportunities for social interaction and community engagement.

By neglecting the human scale and failing to create spaces that foster meaningful interactions, Defensive Architecture can inadvertently push people away. The lack of inviting features, such as comfortable seating areas, green spaces, or engaging architectural elements, discourages people from spending time in these environments. The absence of social gathering spaces and the focus on efficiency can lead to a sense of isolation, detachment, and disconnection from the built environment.

In contrast, architecture that embraces human-scale design principles seeks to create spaces that are responsive to people's needs, promote social interaction, and cultivate a sense of belonging. These designs prioritize aesthetics, comfort, and community engagement, providing opportunities for individuals to connect, collaborate, and engage with their surroundings.

In summary, while generic architectural design may unintentionally incorporate some elements of Defensive Architecture, its primary focus is on functional efficiency rather than actively excluding or pushing away individuals. However, the lack of consideration for the human scale and limited emphasis on creating inclusive and inviting spaces can result in a sense of detachment and isolation, ultimately pushing people away. To address this, architects should prioritize human-centered design principles that foster interaction and create environments that promote a sense of community and belonging.

Chapter 2: Establishing Place

Placemaking

A sense of place and community is becoming increasingly absent in our urban environment. While there might not be an immediate solution to address the intricate social, economic, and environmental problems facing our communities, architecture has the ability to facilitate such processes that may provide solutions. (Lynch 1995)

Sense of place is an important aspect in integrating user and place. It contributes to better use, satisfaction, and attachment to places. In parallel, Lynch suggested that a sense of place provides for a good relationship between humans and place. He reasoned that a place must be recognized and should have an identity to create a sense of place that could lead to place attachment (Lynch 1995).

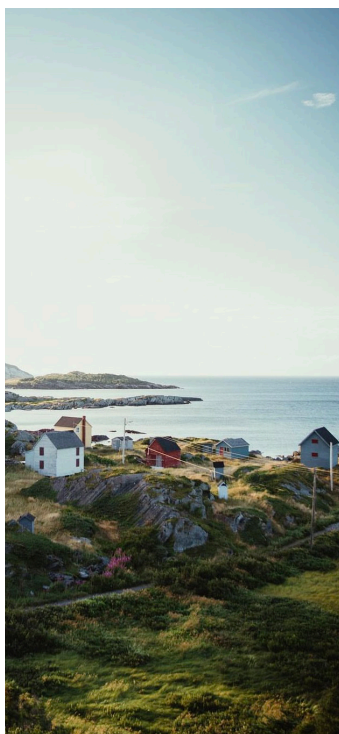
A place can embody a clear identity by encompassing a set of features that guarantee the place's distinctiveness and continuity in time. The concept of 'genius loci', used to describe the impalpable but generally agreed upon unique character of a place, reflects this meaning of 'place identity'. Place exerts its influence through "physical features and symbolic meaning, with the former often being a cue to the latter" (Ferreira 1986).

It defines place-based meanings as 'the non-material properties of the physical milieu – the sociological 'residue' (or residual meaning) that becomes attached to places as a result of their continuous association with group activities" (Ferreira 1986).

“Place is space endowed with meaning”, while identity involves two things: sameness, or continuity; and distinctiveness (Lynch, 1995). Place identity in the built environment arises from both continuity and “distinctive characteristics” and concerns the meaning and significance of places for their inhabitants and users. The process of how a place has achieved and retains its sameness and unity and how a place’s distinctiveness is perceived and interpreted by its habitants and users is multi-layered and evolving (Lynch 1995). The process of identity formation is argued, “can never start from scratch; it always builds upon a pre-existing set of symbolic materials which form the bedrock of identity” (Ferreira 1986).

In an architectural sense, it is possible to define the fundamental, material components of place identity, which all observers of place can recognize: shape or form; texture; material; and colour. Each of these elements is resolved and manifested in architectural details. Place identity is the sum of specific material components and features, which provoke non-material symbolic meanings for collective groups of inhabitants and users.

Placemaking can be a transformative means of fostering a sense of community while sparking social, economic, environmental and cultural benefits. (“Why Public Places Are the Key to Transforming Our Communities” n.d.)



(O'keefe 2021)

Finding place

To focus the discussion, before embarking on the placemaking process, it is essential to establish a “place”. Building upon the previous discourse, let us consider a scenario where a place already possesses a well-defined identity. In this situation, we approach placemaking with the

perspective of preservation, however, I aim to go beyond that. While heritage preservation plays a role in upholding the identity of a place, through the lens of a skateboarder, this thesis explores how innovation and modernization can further contribute to and enrich the character of a place with a strong sense of identity.

The Outport

When one mentions Atlantic Canada, it is not the large cities that immediately come to mind. Instead, the region's identity is deeply rooted in the outport communities and towns scattered along the coastlines, essentially shaping each of the Atlantic provinces. It is these outports that truly embody the essence of Atlantic living. However, in recent years, there has been a notable shift. The predominant focus on



Location of Outport Communities in Newfoundland

the development and growth of major metropolitan centers has left the outports to fend for themselves.

St. John's, one of the oldest cities in North America, was part of the English colony; its streets and vernacular architecture may be the best representation of the inventiveness that gave rise to the province that bears its name. ("History & Heritage - Newfoundland and Labrador, Canada", n.d.)

Due to its position at Canada's easternmost point and its rich blend of cultures and architectural heritage, St. John's possesses a captivating and distinct sense of identity. Many tourists have been attracted to Newfoundland because of its distinctive and unique architecture. The Heritage Foundation of Newfoundland and Labrador has long supported the preservation of architectural history as a crucial component of the cultural character of Newfoundland and Labrador. Architectural legacy is important for social survival in addition to economic progress. Newfoundland and Labrador's legacy in our Canadian culture will be further strengthened if the worth of the things that our predecessors constructed and the record of the talents utilized in producing these buildings are recognized.

Vernacular Architecture

Newfoundland and Labrador vernacular was founded on simplicity, necessity, and survival. Generally, the term vernacular refers to building methods that are particular or indigenous to a time or place, using localized styles and materials. Influences but not defined by a particular style, vernacular buildings are made from easily available materials and exhibit local design characteristics. The harsh environment and landscape prompted many challenges Newfoundlanders had to adapt to.

As a result, traditional Newfoundland architecture prioritized durability and weather resistance. Buildings were constructed



Concept visual showing the outport condition of rural Newfoundland. (S.H.)

with sturdy materials, such as locally sourced timber, to withstand the elements. Sloping roofs with steep pitches helped shed snow and prevent accumulation. Additionally, homes were often situated in sheltered locations, taking advantage of natural land formations or proximity to hills to provide some protection from the wind.

Newfoundland architecture typically prioritized functionality and practicality. Overall, Newfoundland architecture exemplifies an approach that harmonizes with the local climate, landscape, and cultural context. It embraces the challenges and opportunities presented by the environment, resulting in structures that are resilient, functional, and deeply connected to the unique conditions of Newfoundland and Labrador.

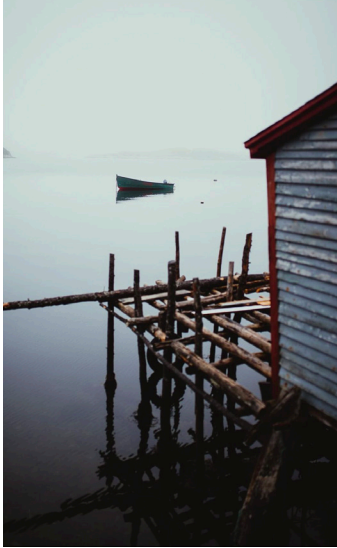


(O'keefe 2021)

The Outport Typology

Jagged rock formations comprise the majority of Newfoundland shorelines where first settlers had to reside, as fishing played a huge part in their survival. Unlike other parts of North America, Newfoundland outport communities did not rely on specialized craftspeople to create forms of vernacular arts and Folk Architecture; rather, the architects of Newfoundland were the carpenters accompanied by ordinary fishermen. Folk architecture is usually employed to describe practices or structures which are the products of persons not professionally trained in building arts, but who produce structures or follow techniques which have been accepted by society as the correct or best way to build (Woodland 1998).

Some examples of typologies that are local to Newfoundland and Labrador are:



(Kara O'keefe 2021)

The Stage

A traditional Newfoundland fishing stage is a structure commonly found in coastal communities of Newfoundland, Canada. It is a platform or elevated structure built along the shoreline, typically made of wood or a combination of wood and other materials. The purpose of a fishing stage is to facilitate various activities related to the fishing industry, such as processing, drying, and storing fish.

The design of a fishing stage may vary, but it generally consists of a raised platform with a sloped surface for easy access to the water. The platform is often supported by stilts or posts to elevate it above the high-tide line and provide stability. Some stages have additional structures attached, including sheds or storage areas for fishing equipment and supplies. Interestingly, gaps were left intentionally in the floor planks to allow for the unwanted fish remains to fall through and into the water during the gutting process.



The Stage typology in context with Parti diagram (S.H.)



The Flake (S.H.)

Fishing stages are used for several important functions in the traditional fishing process. After catching fish, they are brought to the stage to be cleaned, gutted, and prepared for preservation.

Stages also serve as gathering places for fishermen and the community. They are often the focal point of social interaction and cooperation, where fishermen share knowledge, resources, and labor during fishing seasons. Stages are where stories are told, skills are passed down through generations, and a sense of community is fostered.

At its foundation the stage architecturally serves as a device to mitigate the condition between land and sea.

The Flake

A traditional Newfoundland flake, also known as a fish flake or drying flake, is a structure used for drying and preserving fish in coastal communities of Newfoundland, Canada. It is an essential component of the traditional fishing industry and plays a significant role in the processing of salted fish.

A flake typically consists of a raised platform constructed from wooden poles, beams, and crosspieces. The platform is elevated off the ground to allow air circulation and exposure to sunlight, which aids in the drying process. The size and design of a flake can vary, ranging from small individual flakes to larger communal flakes shared by multiple fishermen.

The process of using a flake begins with splitting and cleaning the fish which traditionally happened on the stage. The split fish are then moved to the stage where they spread out in a single layer on the flake's surface, usually in a specific pattern. The fish are arranged with their skin-side down to maximize exposure to sunlight and facilitate efficient drying.

Drying the fish on a flake involves a combination of sun and wind. The sun's heat and the coastal breeze help remove moisture from the fish, gradually transforming it into a dry and salted product. The drying process typically takes several weeks, during which the fish may need to be turned or rearranged to ensure even drying.

Once the fish are sufficiently dried, they are carefully removed from the flake and often stacked in wooden boxes or barrels for storage and transport. The salted and dried fish, commonly known as saltfish or salt cod, has a long shelf life and can be stored for extended periods without spoiling. It was a valuable commodity in the past and played a crucial role in Newfoundland's economy and trade.

Root Cellar

A traditional Newfoundland root cellar is a structure designed for the storage of root vegetables, preserves, and other perishable food items. It is an important part of Newfoundland's cultural heritage and has been used for centuries to ensure a year-round food supply in the province's rural communities.

A root cellar is typically built partially or fully underground, taking advantage of the cool and stable temperatures found below the frost line. The construction of a root cellar involves excavating a space in the ground and lining it with materials such as stone, wood, or concrete to provide insulation and maintain a consistent environment. Additionally, it was not uncommon for decommissioned fishing boats to be overturned and used as the ceiling structure of the cellar.

The design of a root cellar often includes features that help regulate temperature and humidity. It may have thick



The Root Cellar (S.H.)

walls and a heavy door to provide insulation and prevent heat exchange with the external environment. Ventilation is essential to control humidity levels and promote air circulation. Some root cellars have small windows or vents that can be opened or closed to regulate airflow.

Inside the root cellar, shelves, racks, or bins are arranged to store the food items. Root vegetables like potatoes, carrots, turnips, and beets are typically stored in layers of moist sand or soil to keep them fresh and prevent them from drying out. Canned goods, preserves, pickles, and other non-perishable items may also be stored in the root cellar.

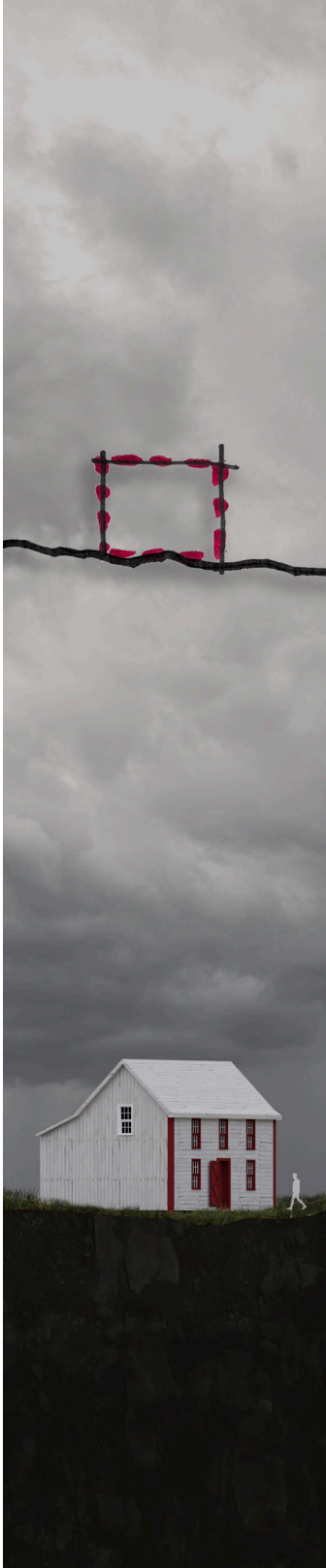
The cool and consistent temperatures of the root cellar help extend the shelf life of stored produce, often allowing it to be preserved throughout the winter months when fresh supplies were scarce. The root cellar's environment creates an ideal storage condition that slows down the natural process of decay and helps maintain the quality and nutritional value of the food.

In its Architectural essence the root cellar acts as a device employed to endure harsh weather conditions. A space for control and preservation.

Salt Box

A traditional salt box house is a distinctive style of architecture local to Newfoundland and Labrador. It is named after its resemblance to a wooden box used for storing salt, with a sloping roof that extends down to the first floor at the back of the house.

The Salt Box house typically has a simple rectangular shape, with two stories at the front and one story at the back. The front facade is usually symmetrical, with a central entrance



The Salt Box (S.H.)

flanked by evenly spaced windows on either side. The roof is long and sloping, extending from the front of the house to the back in a single continuous line, resembling the shape of a salt box container.

The construction of a Salt Box house traditionally involves using wooden materials, such as rough-hewn logs or planks, with a focus on practicality and functionality rather than elaborate ornamentation. The houses were often painted in vibrant colors, adding a touch of visual appeal to the otherwise utilitarian design.

Inside the Salt Box house, the layout typically features a central hallway or “ramp,” with rooms on either side. The front rooms are usually larger and used for everyday living, while the back of the house, with its lower ceiling, was often utilized as storage space or for housing livestock in earlier times.

The Salt Box house design is rooted in the practical needs of Newfoundland’s early settlers, who needed a cost-effective and efficient housing solution to withstand the harsh weather conditions prevalent in the region. The sloping roof of the house provided added strength against heavy snowfall and helped facilitate its removal.

The traditional Newfoundland and Labrador fishing stage, flake, root cellar and the salt box house, all hold historical and cultural significance, representing the connection between the local communities and the sea. Each Structure stands as a testament to the province’s history, reflecting the resourcefulness and resilience of its early inhabitants.

While modernization and changes in the fishing industry have led to the decline of traditional fishing practices, and

the vernacular associated with it, traditional structures such as these, still exist today, serving as reminders of the rich fishing heritage of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Vernacular Arts

Within the rich cultural tapestry of Newfoundland, the significance of vernacular art in the everyday lives of its inhabitants cannot be overstated. While art encompasses a vast array of expressive forms, Newfoundlanders have consistently crafted a diverse range of objects that fall under this expansive umbrella. While conventional discourse may draw a distinction between “art and craft,” thereby segregating objects into functional and decorative categories. However, In Newfoundland and Labrador, all vernacular works possess dual dimensions—they are not only utilitarian but also visually captivating, seamlessly merging functionality with aesthetic allure (“Vernacular Arts” 1999)

Art + Craft in Newfoundland

In Newfoundland culture, art and craft have a strong presence and hold significant importance in the overall heritage and tradition of the region. Newfoundland, an island located on the eastern coast of Canada, has a rich cultural history shaped by its unique geography, indigenous heritage, and influences from European settlers.

Art in Newfoundland encompasses various forms, including visual arts, performing arts, literature, and music. Visual arts in the province showcase a diverse range of styles and mediums, with artists drawing inspiration from the natural beauty of the landscape, seascapes, and the everyday lives of Newfoundlanders.

Craft, on the other hand, refers to the creation of handmade objects using traditional techniques and materials. Newfoundland crafts are deeply rooted in the region's history, reflecting the resourcefulness and resilience of its people. Craftsmen and women utilize materials such as wood, textiles, and traditional boat-building techniques to create intricate and functional objects.

The importance of art and craft in Newfoundland's heritage lies in their ability to preserve and transmit cultural knowledge and traditions from one generation to the next. These creative expressions serve as a means of connecting with the past, celebrating community identity, and maintaining a sense of place in a rapidly changing world. Through art and craft, Newfoundlanders express their love for their land and sea, their resilience in the face of adversity, and their connection to their cultural roots.

Furthermore, art and craft contribute to the economic and cultural development of the province. Many artists and craftspeople in Newfoundland derive their livelihoods from their creative pursuits, showcasing their work in galleries, museums, and cultural events. The unique and authentic nature of Newfoundland's art and craft also attracts tourists, who seek to experience and appreciate the distinct cultural heritage of the region.

Art

Painting

Through the use of color, Newfoundland and Labrador art often reflects the region's unique cultural heritage, natural landscapes, maritime traditions, and the people who call it home.



Placentia Beach (Newhook 2020)

The stunning natural beauty of Newfoundland, with its rugged coastlines, vast wilderness, and picturesque villages, serves as a prominent theme in many artworks. Artists capture the dramatic seascapes, rolling hills, colorful fishing stages, and iconic landmarks, showcasing the province's diverse geography and its deep connection with the surrounding environment.

Newfoundland's rich maritime history and fishing traditions often inspire artistic creations. Paintings and sculptures depict fishing boats, lighthouses, fishing villages, and the hardworking individuals who make a living from the sea. These artworks celebrate the resilience, resourcefulness, and strong sense of community that are integral to Newfoundland's coastal heritage.

This can be found in works done by Artists like Christopher Newhook that depict Newfoundland's rugged scenery and distinct way of life.

Newfoundland art frequently explores the cultural identity and folklore of the province. Artists delve into the stories, legends, and traditions passed down through generations, capturing the essence of local characters, music, dance, and cultural celebrations like the Mummers Festival and traditional kitchen parties.

Overall, Newfoundland art encompasses a diverse range of themes, styles, and mediums, reflecting the province's natural beauty, cultural heritage, and the creativity of its artists. It captures the essence of the region and offers a unique perspective on its landscapes, people, and traditions.

Craft

Quilting



Red Island, Newfoundland and Labrador (Newhook 2009)

One notable craft form in Newfoundland is quilting. This traditional craft has deep roots in the region's history and has played a vital role in preserving and expressing the heritage and traditions of Newfoundlanders.



Hand-made quilt block.
(S.H.)

Quilting in Newfoundland is a time-honored practice that has been passed down through generations, creating a strong sense of continuity and connection to the past. The craft involves the meticulous stitching together of layers of fabric to create a quilt, a textile piece typically used for warmth, decoration, and storytelling. Newfoundland quilts are known for their intricate designs, exquisite craftsmanship, and rich symbolism. Quilting was often done out of necessity to provide warm bedding for families during the cold winters. However, the craft also served as a form of artistic expression and creativity.

Beyond their functional purpose, Newfoundland quilts carry a profound cultural significance. Each quilt is a visual narrative, conveying stories, traditions, and community history. Through carefully chosen colors, patterns, and motifs, quilters express their connection to the land, the sea, and the daily lives of Newfoundlanders. Quilts often feature imagery related to fishing, hunting, coastal scenes, and local flora and fauna, capturing the essence of Newfoundland's unique environment and way of life.

The art of quilting in Newfoundland reflects the resourcefulness and creativity of its people. In a land characterized by rugged landscapes and harsh weather conditions, quilts served as practical items that provided



Quilts on clothes line ("Cabots Quilter Guide" 2022)

warmth and comfort during long, cold winters. Quilters in Newfoundland often repurposed and recycled materials, making use of worn-out clothing or scraps of fabric to create their quilts, a testament to their ingenuity and thriftiness.

Quilting in Newfoundland is not merely a solitary pursuit; it is a communal activity that fosters social bonds and a sense of belonging. Quilting bees, gatherings where quilters come together to work on quilts, have been a cherished

tradition in Newfoundland communities for generations. These gatherings provide an opportunity for sharing skills, stories, and laughter, creating a space where knowledge and cultural heritage are transmitted between generations.

The significance of quilting in Newfoundland extends beyond its cultural and social aspects. It has become a recognized art form, with Newfoundland quilts exhibited in galleries and museums both within the province and beyond. The intricate stitching, vibrant colors, and unique designs of Newfoundland quilts have captured the attention of collectors and enthusiasts worldwide, further cementing their importance in the wider artistic landscape.

In conclusion, quilting occupies a revered place in Newfoundland's cultural heritage. This traditional craft represents the resilience, resourcefulness, and creativity of Newfoundlanders while preserving and expressing their history, traditions, and sense of identity. Newfoundland quilts serve as both practical objects and works of art, weaving together stories of the land and its people. Through quilting, Newfoundlanders have forged a connection to their past and created a lasting legacy that continues to be cherished and celebrated.

In conclusion, art and craft occupy a prominent place in Newfoundland culture. They serve as powerful vehicles for preserving and celebrating the region's heritage and traditions, reflecting the unique identity and resilience of Newfoundlanders. The creative expressions of art and craft not only contribute to the cultural fabric of the province but also play a significant role in its economic development and tourism industry.

Tourism

Tourism Newfoundland and Labrador have promoted the idea of an authentic “living heritage” experience as their main selling point (“History & Heritage”, 2023). While some outport communities still embody this experience, it is becoming increasingly challenging to find, especially in St. John’s. The lack of recognition for the strengths of the local economy and the construction of generic developments have created a growing disparity between the expected “living heritage” experience and reality. The vast discrepancy between the local typology and recent developments of the downtown core has threatened the fundamental aspect that sets St. John’s apart from the others: its character. A Charming character, filled with colourful culture, portrayed in an architecture that reflects its people.

Out-of-scale office buildings placed only for temporary convenience have permanently reshaped the character of St. John’s. As each new high-rise structure breaks the skyline, the distinctive small-scale identity is overshadowed.



The Experience of “Living Heirtage” (“Hospitality Newfoundland and Labrador” n.d.)

The city's character is presently encountering significant challenges posed by urbanization. The absence of thoughtful design that acknowledges the city's history and addresses the requirements of its residents threatens to diminish its unique essence (Brown 2021).

So what happened? What created such a significant shift?

Shift in Traditional Fishing Industry

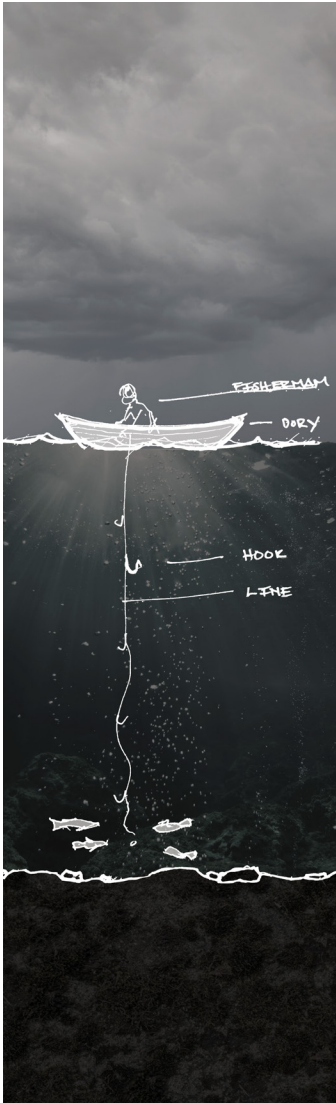
The traditional fishing industry in outport communities of Newfoundland played a crucial role in both the local economy and cultural fabric. Before the modernization of fishing practices in the mid-20th century, these communities heavily relied on small-scale fishing methods carried out by families. Fishing in these communities was typically a seasonal pursuit, spanning from spring to fall. During this period, fishermen embarked on fishing expeditions to the nearby fishing grounds to capture fish, primarily cod, which were abundant in the waters surrounding Newfoundland.



Petty Harbour,
Newfoundland and
Labrador(O'keefe 2021)

Catching

The fishing operations primarily took place close to the shoreline, known as inshore fishing, utilizing small boats like dory's or skiffs. This approach enabled fishermen to navigate the challenging coastal waters and access the plentiful fishing areas. The traditional fishing techniques involved the use of handlines, which were lengthy lines with baited hooks attached. Fishermen would manually lower the lines into the water and patiently await the fish to bite. Once a fish was caught, it would be manually reeled in by hand. This particular method of fishing is commonly known as jigging.



Jigging collage (S.H.)

Other methods include cod trapping. The Newfoundland cod trap is a traditional fishing technique that has been used in the province for centuries. This specialized fishing apparatus is designed to efficiently catch cod fish in coastal waters, particularly during the spawning season. The cod trap consists of a series of interconnected components that work in harmony to entice, capture, and retain fish.

The success of the Newfoundland cod trap relies on various factors, including the strategic positioning of the trap, the use of appropriate materials and construction techniques, and the understanding of the behavior and migration patterns of the targeted fish species. This traditional fishing method has been honed over generations, with local fishermen possessing extensive knowledge and expertise in deploying and maintaining the cod traps.

The Newfoundland cod trap exemplifies the sustainable fishing practices of the region, as it enables selective fishing, allowing for the release of non-targeted species and undersized fish. Furthermore, the use of traditional techniques like the cod trap contributes to the preservation of cultural heritage and the maintenance of a balanced ecosystem.

Salting

After capturing the fish, the fishermen would return to their communities and begin preparing the catch for preservation. The fish would typically be opened, cleaned, and treated with salt. Salting involved layering the fish with salt to remove moisture and prevent spoilage. This preservation method allowed the fish to be stored and traded over an extended period. To dry and cure the fish, it would be placed on wooden platforms called “flakes”. The split fish would be



Salted Cod ("Canadian Saltfish" 2022)

spread out on the stages or flakes, exposing them to the sun and wind for the process known as "drying" or "curing." This step further enhanced the preservation of the fish and prepared it for long-distance transportation.

Once the fish had dried and cured, local merchants or fish merchants from larger centers would collect it. These merchants would then transport the dried fish to larger markets, such as St. John's, where it would undergo further processing, packaging, and shipping for export.

The dried cod from Newfoundland was highly valued, particularly in Europe and the Caribbean, where it served as a staple food. Fishing was a collaborative effort within the community, and cooperation was essential. During fishing seasons, communities would often come together, forming crews to share labor, knowledge, and resources. Cooperation was also vital in the construction and maintenance of communal fishing infrastructure, including stages and flakes.

The traditional fishing industry in outport communities of Newfoundland operated as a labor-intensive and tightly-knit system, sustaining the livelihoods of the people and playing a significant role in the cultural heritage of these communities. However, due to the decline in cod stocks and changes in the fishing industry, traditional practices have experienced significant transformations in recent decades.

Like most industries, over time innovation and modernization has resulted in unprecedented levels of extraction of natural resources.



Dory in Petty Harbour (O'keefe 2021)

Cod Moratorium

A prime example of this is in the fishing of Atlantic Cod. A once sustainable industry fishing industry adopted unsustainable practices to meet global demands. Technological advancements in fish harvesting and processing led to record high catch rates for inshore and offshore groundfish from the late 20th century onward. However, government regulations aimed at protecting cod stocks did not affect the industrial capacity to gather cod. As catch rates increased, fish stocks started to decline and eventually collapsed in the 1990s. The federal government placed a moratorium on commercial Northern cod fishing in 1992, effectively ending a 500-year-old industry (Higgins 2009).

The Impact on rural Newfoundland and Labrador was devastating. Fishing boats remained idle, fish processing businesses closed down, and overnight, 30,000 people lost their jobs. Since there were limited alternative industries or employment opportunities in rural areas, thousands of individuals migrated elsewhere in search of work. Between 1991 and 2001, the population of rural Newfoundland and Labrador decreased by nearly 18%, from 264,023 to 216,734. In contrast, Canada's overall rural population decreased by around 0.5% during the same period, while the province's metropolitan areas experienced a net loss of approximately 9,000 people (Higgins 2009).

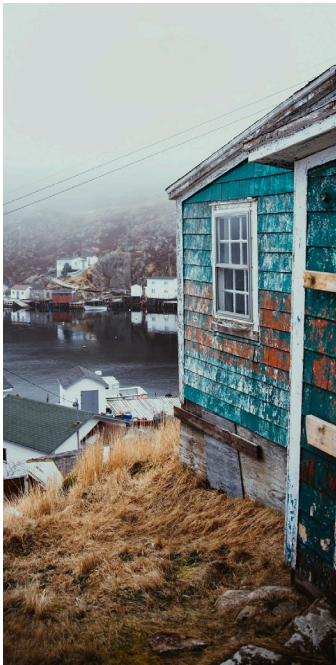
Several factors contributed to the decline in rural population besides high unemployment rates. After Confederation, increased availability of North American entertainment and consumer goods contributed to a shift in rural values and attitudes. Young people began comparing their living situations to those portrayed in American television

programs, magazines, and newspapers. Some individuals chose to leave their towns due to a perception that rural areas lacked the wide range of services and opportunities found in urban centers. Families with young children also relocated to larger cities for better access to educational, medical, and other services (Higgins 2009).

The declining birthrate, prevalent in many Canadian communities, worsens the issue of outmigration, especially for young individuals and families with children. Previously, natural population growth through births offset outmigration, but this is no longer the case as parents are opting to have fewer children. While some people do move into rural areas each year, their numbers are much smaller than those leaving. As a result of lower birth rates, reduced immigration, and the general inclination of young people to leave, several rural areas in the province now face aging and declining populations (Higgins 2009).

Outmigration

In rural areas of Newfoundland and Labrador, the phenomenon of outmigration has become deeply ingrained. Ever since the time of Confederation, the number of individuals leaving rural regions has consistently exceeded those moving in, almost on an annual basis. The majority of those who choose to migrate are young individuals and families with young children, seeking better employment prospects or improved access to essential services like education and healthcare in larger urban centers. As a result, the rural population is aging, and sustaining year-round residents becomes challenging, particularly in terms of funding the maintenance of vital community infrastructure



Newfoundland and Labrador
(O'keefe 2021)

such as schools, churches, clinics, and commercial establishments (Higgins 2008).

While outmigration has been a historical trend in rural Newfoundland and Labrador, it escalated significantly in the 1990s following the devastating collapse of the cod fishery, which served as the primary source of income for numerous small settlements. Between 1991 and 2001, the province experienced a population decline of 10%, largely driven by the emigration of outport residents to other provinces and even other countries. The future prospects of rural communities remain uncertain, with some managing to persevere and flourish through tourism initiatives and the growth of small-scale businesses. However, it is likely that other communities may struggle to sustain themselves in the long term (Higgins 2008)

When Newfoundland and Labrador became part of Canada in 1949, the province had a population that was largely dispersed across numerous small settlements along the vast stretches of coastline. More than half of the residents resided in these scattered communities. The primary livelihood for most households was fishing, supplemented by income from farming, animal herding, berry picking, and logging. However, communities heavily reliant on the fishing industry faced significant risks, as a poor fishing season or a decline in global demand for salted fish could result in widespread poverty. Consequently, outport villages encountered severe economic hardships, which often led to a substantial outflow of residents seeking employment opportunities in larger cities (Higgins, 2008).

Enticing young people to stay in the community and creating attractive employment opportunities are perhaps the most critical long-term issues that must be addressed in Tilting's heritage-conservation and development plan. (Mellin 2006,

20)

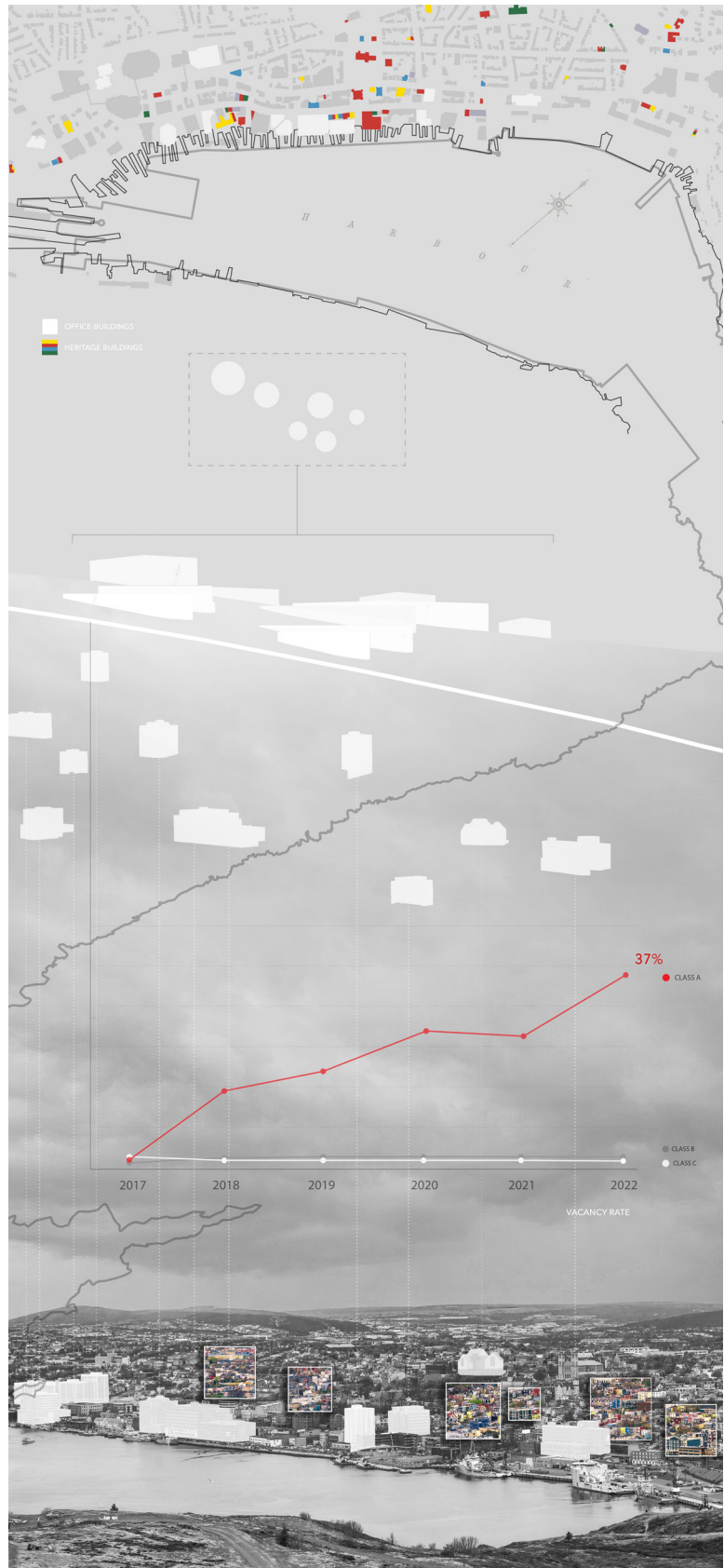
The future of rural Newfoundland and Labrador remains uncertain. The recovery of cod populations, even with the moratorium still in place, is unclear. Some displaced workers have found employment in the shellfish industry, and other sectors have seen job growth through tourism and small businesses. However, these efforts have not been able to fully counter the outmigration of residents from small towns to places like St. John's, Alberta, and other locations or provide a sustainable livelihood for as many rural residents as the centuries-old cod fishery once did.

Vacancy Following Supply and Demand Trends

With the cod moratorium being put in place and a boom in oil prices, a major economic shift occurred and our urban environments adapted to fit the needs of a new industry. However, an outward focus on an unsustainable industry has left its generic mark on a vibrant city.

An outward focus on international industries has resulted in outmigration and lack of investment in local communities. Investments in global trends leave our Atlantic cities dependent on factors out of their control. In recent years, this has proven to be unsustainable. A once booming oil industry has left its mark on the city of St. John's, a rather large one at that.

A rise in oil prices sparked large-scale construction in the downtown area in order to deal with a demand for office space. During a period of economic prosperity fueled by high oil prices exceeding \$100 per barrel, nearly all the prime office (Class A) space along Water and Duckworth streets was occupied by oil and other professional companies willing to



Office building vacancy illustration

pay high leasing fees. However, a subsequent economic downturn, coupled with the construction of new office buildings in downtown and other areas, has dramatically changed the situation. A downtown core offering a large supply coupled with little to no demand has led to empty office fortresses. Fortresses on constant guard offering no interaction with pedestrians at the street level. The largest building in the downtown area offer as prime example of this predicament.

The building previously known as the Scotia Centre in downtown St. John's has been rebranded as 235 Water Street. In 2016, the building underwent a significant renovation and expansion. However, as of December, it had a high vacancy rate of 65 percent, which translates to over 140,000 square feet of unoccupied space.

A construction of a brand new Fortis building, located at the west end of water street has left the original Fortis building, located on the eastern side of water street, with a vacancy of 50 percent.

Cabot Place, the second tallest building in the downtown area, as of 2020, is 70 percent vacant. Exxonmobile and Hibernia Management and Development Company, comprising of 400 employees, has vacated the building leaving approximately 95,000 square feet of office space empty.

In conclusion, a city that succumbed to supply and demand trends is now left with vacant high-rises that redefine the city's skyline and threaten a charming character.

The above discourse is asking for a Multi-layered response to address the outmigration of younger generations and

help maintain a culture that is being threatened by generic architecture.

While the revival of a once-thriving fishing industry may be out of the question, there are opportunities to be found in the local craft surrounding Newfoundland and Labrador culture that can be adapted in new ways that present the value in traditional heritage in a way that appeals to younger generations.

Through the lens of skateboarding, we are able to view vacant urban spaces as an opportunity. The sub-cultures surrounding Skateboarding offer avenues for Newfoundland and Labrador culture to quilt its way back into the urban realm.

Chapter 3: Adaptation

Parallels

Skateboarding, an activity that may initially appear peculiar and disconnected, is inextricably intertwined with the culture of Newfoundland and Labrador. Upon closer examination, the profound similarities between these seemingly divergent realms become strikingly apparent.

In this section I will illustrate how sub-programs associated with skateboarding allow for an opportunity to infuse Newfoundland and Labrador traditions such as, quilt making, boat building, music, art and performance. Adaptation may be needed for Newfoundland and Labrador heritage to find its place in the world of skateboarding; however, Newfoundland and Labrador culture is not unfamiliar with the idea of adaptation, rather that is the fundamental reason why the culture has survived to this day. I am not looking to redefine tradition and heritage, Skateboarding simply offers a fresh avenue through which traditions and heritage can endure and thrive.

Counter-Culture

Both skateboarding and Newfoundland culture share a common characteristic of being somewhat counter-cultural. Skateboarding has long been linked to a spirit of rebellion and non-conformity, as skateboarders often challenge societal norms and express their individuality through their style and actions. Similarly, Newfoundland has a distinct cultural identity that sets it apart from the rest of Canada. The province boasts its own unique dialects, music genres like traditional Newfoundland folk music, and rich traditions deeply rooted in its history. This sense of distinctiveness



Wish Image on deck (S.H.)



The Counter Culture Quilt. This illustration aims to visualize the intent of stitching of Newfoundland Culture and Skateboarding.

and divergence from mainstream norms can be observed in both skateboarding and Newfoundland culture, making them parallel in their inclination to stand apart and defy conventional expectations.

However, standing apart was not necessarily the motivating factor for establishing distinct culture in both cases. Rather it is the other way around. In isolation, whether that be experiences through societal pressures or in a more literal sense, isolated from other civilization, the process of establishing a unique culture was the result of being isolated.

Residents of outport communities in rural Newfoundland may experience a sense of isolation due to their geographical location and the unique challenges of rural living. Outport communities are often located in remote, coastal areas with limited access to services and amenities, which can lead to feelings of isolation or disconnection from urban centers.

While Skateboarders often face a sense of isolation from urban spaces because of the way in which these spaces are designed and used. Urban areas can be densely populated and fast-paced, with little space or time for creative self-expression. Skateboarders often use skateboarding as a means of navigating these urban spaces in a way that is different from how they were intended to be used, but this can also lead to a sense of exclusion or isolation from mainstream culture.

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Skate park location in St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador

designed and used. Urban areas can be densely populated and fast-paced, with little space or time for creative self-expression. Skateboarders often use skateboarding as a means of navigating these urban spaces in a way that is different from how they were intended to be used, but this can also lead to a sense of exclusion or isolation from mainstream culture.

In earlier sections, I explored the elements that have contributed to a sense of isolation, encompassing both the vastness of urban settings and the individual experience. However, within the realms of Newfoundland and Labrador culture and skateboarding, an interesting phenomenon occurs where isolation fosters a strong sense of identity and community. Therefore, it is worth considering how we can draw lessons from these experiences and apply them to our own situation.

Mentality

We might ask, what was the mentality of both Newfoundland and Labrador and Skateboarding that allowed for finding success in terms of community and identity in times of hardships and isolation. Where do we start?

DIY

In the beginning, there was no such thing as “skateparks”. The city was the playground for the skateboarder with the possibilities only limited by their own creativity, therefore a DIY mentality was manifested throughout the Skateboard culture. The DIY (Do-It-Yourself) mentality in skateboard culture evolved as a natural response to the unique needs and circumstances of skateboarders.



This Collage depicts how the DIY nature of skateboarding can bring life to under used urban spaces.

Skateboarding originated as an activity that primarily took place on the streets, utilizing the urban landscape and public spaces as the designated skate spots. However, in many areas, the absence of dedicated skateparks or suitable facilities posed a challenge for skateboarders. Consequently, they took matters into their own hands and assumed the role of creators, crafting their own skateboarding environments.

Skateboarders, driven by their passion for the sport, displayed remarkable creativity and resourcefulness. They started transforming abandoned or underutilized spaces, such as empty pools, drainage ditches, parking lots, and vacant buildings, into skateable terrain. This DIY approach allowed skateboarders to adapt and use their surroundings to fulfill their desire to skate.

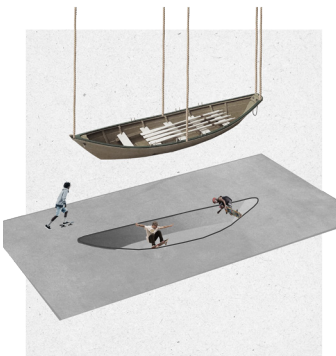
The DIY mentality in skateboarding fostered a sense of community and collaboration, much like it did in Newfoundland and Labrador culture. Skaters often joined forces, pooling their skills, time, and resources to construct homemade ramps, obstacles, and skate spots. They shared knowledge, exchanged ideas, and worked together to build and maintain these makeshift skateboarding areas.

Along with this, the DIY mentality provided skateboarders with an opportunity for individual expression. Building their own ramps or modifying existing structures allowed them to tailor the terrain to suit their unique riding styles and preferences. This sense of ownership and personalization contributed to the growth of skateboarding as a creative outlet. I see this as being no different than homeowners choosing bright, vibrant, sometimes absurd colors for their homes. This simple choice presents a sense of unique ownership and pride in one's creation.

Skateboarders faced various challenges, such as legal restrictions, lack of financial resources, and limited access to official skate facilities. The DIY approach empowered skateboarders to overcome these obstacles by taking matters into their own hands. By building their own skate spots, they could continue pursuing their passion and pushing the boundaries of what was possible.

The DIY mentality became intertwined with the cultural identity of skateboarding. It symbolized the independent and non-conformist nature of skateboarders, who were willing to create their own opportunities and shape their skateboarding experiences rather than relying solely on established infrastructure. Overall, the DIY mentality in skateboard culture emerged as a response to the need for skateable spaces and the desire for individual expression. It represents the resourcefulness, creativity, and community spirit that define skateboarding as more than just a sport, but also as a culture and lifestyle.

This parallels the experience of rural outport living, as discussed in earlier sections. In Newfoundland and Labrador, outport communities did not rely on specialized artisans to create vernacular arts and Folk Architecture. Instead, it was the carpenters, often ordinary fishermen, who became the architects of St. John's and other areas, utilizing their skills to shape the built environment.



Collage exploring forms associated with DIY Mentality

Newfoundland and Labrador vernacular, particularly in the outport communities, was often designed with a strong emphasis on adaptability to the harsh conditions and the rugged landscape.

The DIY Mentality, while it does imply you do it YOURSELF, in the case of Newfoundland and Labrador vernacular and

Skateboarding infrastructure, the mentality was very much community driven. In both cases, it can be seen the DIY mentality was adopted as a survival method.

Sacred Spaces

The Skatepark

As skateboarding became more widely accepted, more and more skateparks were being built. Although there were, and still are, certain reservations among the Skateboarding community about using Skateparks.

The design and location of skateparks can often be seen as an attempt to contain skateboarders to a specific location. Skateparks are typically designed with features that cater to skateboarding, such as ramps, bowls, and rails, and are often located in less desirable areas of a city, such as industrial or underutilized spaces. This design and location can be seen as a way to restrict skateboarders to specific areas and keep them out of other public spaces, such as sidewalks and plazas, where their presence may be seen as a nuisance or even a danger to pedestrians.

This design and location strategy can also be seen as an indication that the city is not an accepting place for skateboarders. By relegating skateboarding to designated areas and limiting their access to other public spaces, the city is effectively marginalizing skateboarders and denying them the same level of access and freedom that other users of public space enjoy. This can be seen as a form of discrimination against skateboarders and can contribute to negative attitudes towards skateboarding and skateboarders.

In order to pinpoint what makes a good skateboard space. What is learned is that a good community space is intern a good space for skateboarding. Skateboard parks are great, however narrow-minded in their design. Urban Street skating allows skateboarders to be creative while being a part of the city not secluded and separated.

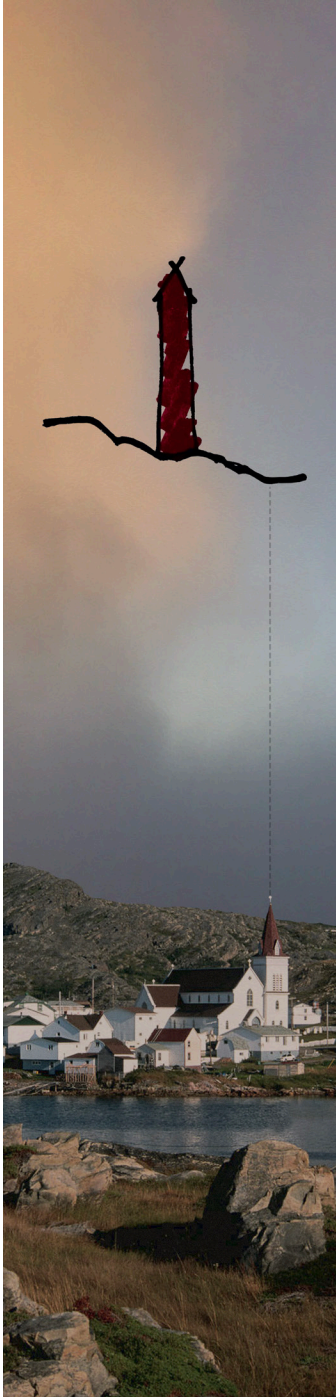
However, it is worth noting that the design and location of skate parks can also have positive benefits for skateboarders and the broader community. Skate parks provide a safe and controlled environment for skateboarders to practice their sport, and can help to reduce conflicts with other users of public space. Skate parks can also be a focal point for community activity and can contribute to the revitalization of underutilized urban spaces.

At its core, when we strip away its primary purpose and look at its fundamental essence, the skate park serves as a communal space where individuals can come together to pursue a shared passion and belief system. What does this sound like to you?

The Church

As an anchor to each outport community, the church was the place for the community to gather, to pray, to celebrate, and to mourn. If we strip away the religious attachment with the church what we are left with is the same essence of the skate park.

The traditional Newfoundland and Labrador Church and a Skate park serve as community hubs in different ways, catering to diverse groups of people and providing unique opportunities for community engagement. They often represent the heart of a community, serving as places of



The Church. Base image adapted from Photograph by Ron Watts (Watts 2012)

worship, social gatherings, and cultural events. They hold strong connections to local traditions, customs, and values.

Traditional Newfoundland Churches in Newfoundland have deep historical and cultural significance and traditionally provide a central space for community members to gather, celebrate religious ceremonies, and engage in fellowship. They offer opportunities for socializing, forming connections, and participating in communal activities such as potluck dinners, community festivals, and fundraisers.

Churches are grounded in religious and spiritual beliefs, serving as places for worship and reflection. They often promote values such as compassion, community service, and moral guidance. Skateparks do not have a specific religious or moral focus. Instead, they promote values such as perseverance, creativity, and sportsmanship within the skateboarding community.

Skateparks, on the other hand, are relatively modern community spaces, primarily focused on recreational activities. While they may not possess the same historical significance as churches, they reflect the evolving interests and lifestyles of younger generations. They foster a sense of community among like-minded individuals who share a passion for these activities. Skaters often socialize, exchange tips, and support each other's progress.

In conclusion, both the traditional Newfoundland Church and a Skate park serve as community hubs, but they differ in terms of historical significance, focus, and the demographics they attract. The church is deeply rooted in tradition, spirituality, and community involvement, while the skate park provides a modern recreational space that fosters a sense of community among skateboarding enthusiasts.

Chapter 4: Avenues for Hybridity

By Design

Whether it be Societal pressures or harsh weather conditions and, in order for the culture to persevere the people of Newfoundland and Skateboarding had to adapt to endure the cruel conditions. Both skateboarding and Newfoundland culture could be seen as embodying a spirit of persistence and perseverance in the face of adversity. The collective experience of hardships of these communities has fostered a strong sense of character only furthering strengthening the sense of community.

The ambitions of this project is to simply provides space for the collaboration of these two worlds to happen. By design, the project stands as a hybrid between the traditional Newfoundland and Labrador Heritage and Skateboarding.



Concept render depicting a space where skateboarding and Newfoundland Culture can simultaneously exist



Newfoundland Skateboarder, “An Alternative Culture” (Perez 2020).

Pushing for modernization and innovation while employing Newfoundland and Labrador Vernacular, the project aims to pay homage to traditional ways of life ultimately further strengthening the identity of St. Johns. Through Architecture, the project facilitates the collaboration of these two worlds collectively establishing community gathering and enhancing sense of place.

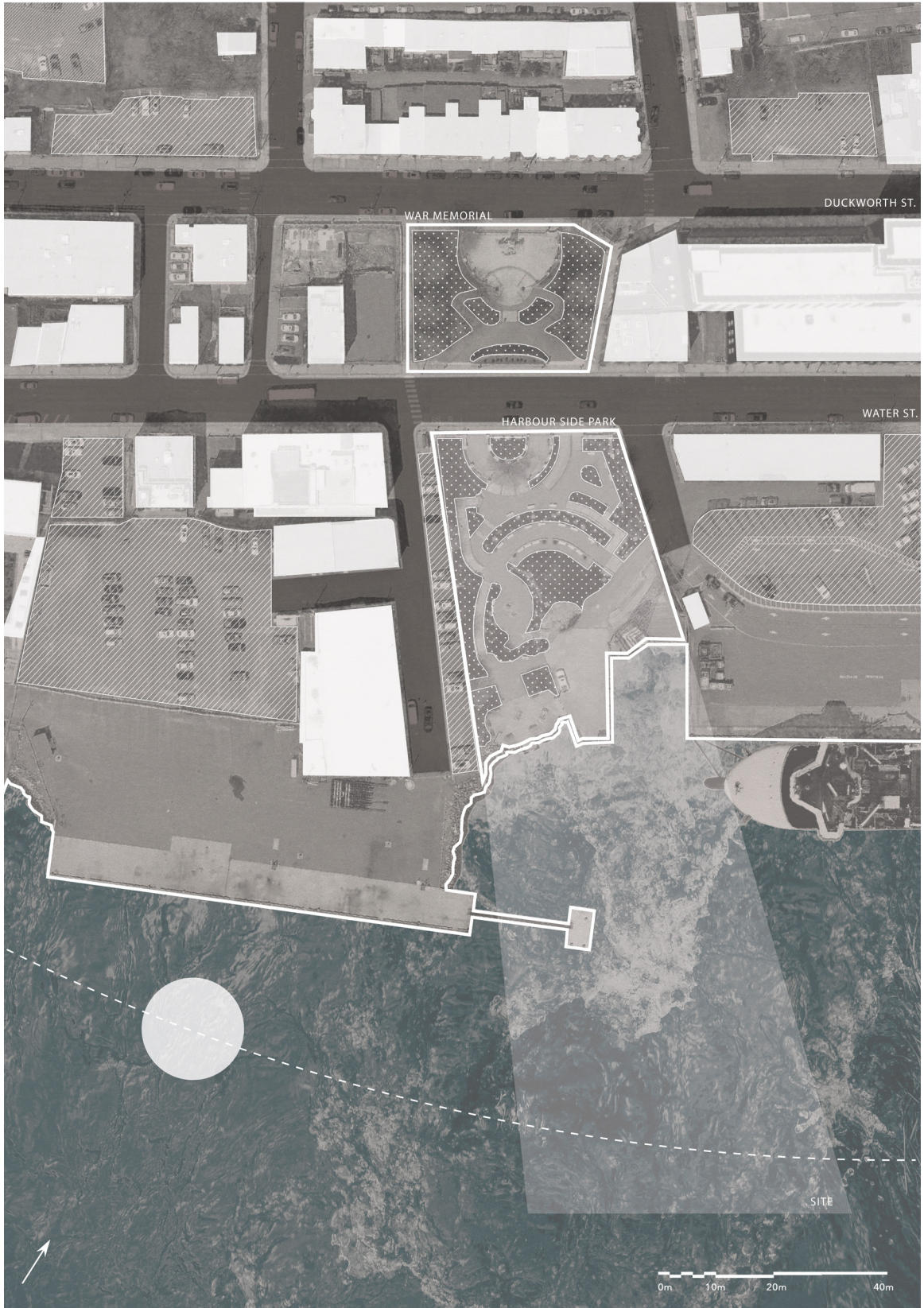
Site

In situating the project, During the initial phase of the project, a thorough examination was undertaken to identify a suitable location within the downtown district of St. John’s. This search encompassed vacant lots, parking lots, open green spaces, and major pedestrian routes. Among these areas, Water Street emerged as the primary street experiencing the highest foot traffic, thereby narrowing the search to potential sites along this thoroughfare.

To ensure a contextual connection with the vernacular architecture and cultural heritage of Newfoundland, it became imperative to identify a site that maintains a link with the water. Considering the industrialization of the waterfront, there remains only one accessible space for pedestrians to approach the water, known as Harbour Side Park. This particular location holds significant symbolic importance to many Newfoundlanders, as it was on this site that Sir Humphrey Gilbert claimed Newfoundland for England in 1583. Furthermore, the memorial now situated on this site stands as a reminder of the customs office that existed there prior to the destructive fire of 1892, which ravaged a considerable portion of downtown St. John’s. The site’s symbolic value is further amplified by its association with King’s Beach, the embarkation point for Newfoundland



The Search for Site



Site Arrival - The Harbour Side Park, St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador

soldiers departing for the First World War and the place of return for survivors after the war's conclusion.

By situating the project in the Harbour Side Park, it allows for a deliberate engagement with Newfoundland's architectural and historical legacy while establishing a profound connection to the island's relationship with the sea.

As a consequence of waterfront industrialization, pedestrian access to the waterfront has been entirely severed, with the exception of the area designated as Harbour Side Park.



Site analysis collage. This collage shows the architectural intent behind the choosing of site. An intent to reconnect the heritage fabric of the city with the sea.

Currently, the utilization of Harbour Side Park remains relatively low throughout the year, as it offers limited amenities for community gatherings beyond a few benches and small areas of grass. While Harbour Side Park holds heritage significance, its representation of this heritage is static, evident solely through modest plaques and statues that commemorate significant historical events tied to the St. Johns harbour's past. The integration of the "Skateport"

brings a new a depth of heritage observation through a living commemoration.

The Skateport

When one designs for Skateboarding, one designs for all.

In the preceding chapters, the research has established that well-designed public spaces often lend themselves to becoming excellent skateboarding areas. Consequently, it is worth exploring whether the converse is true: does

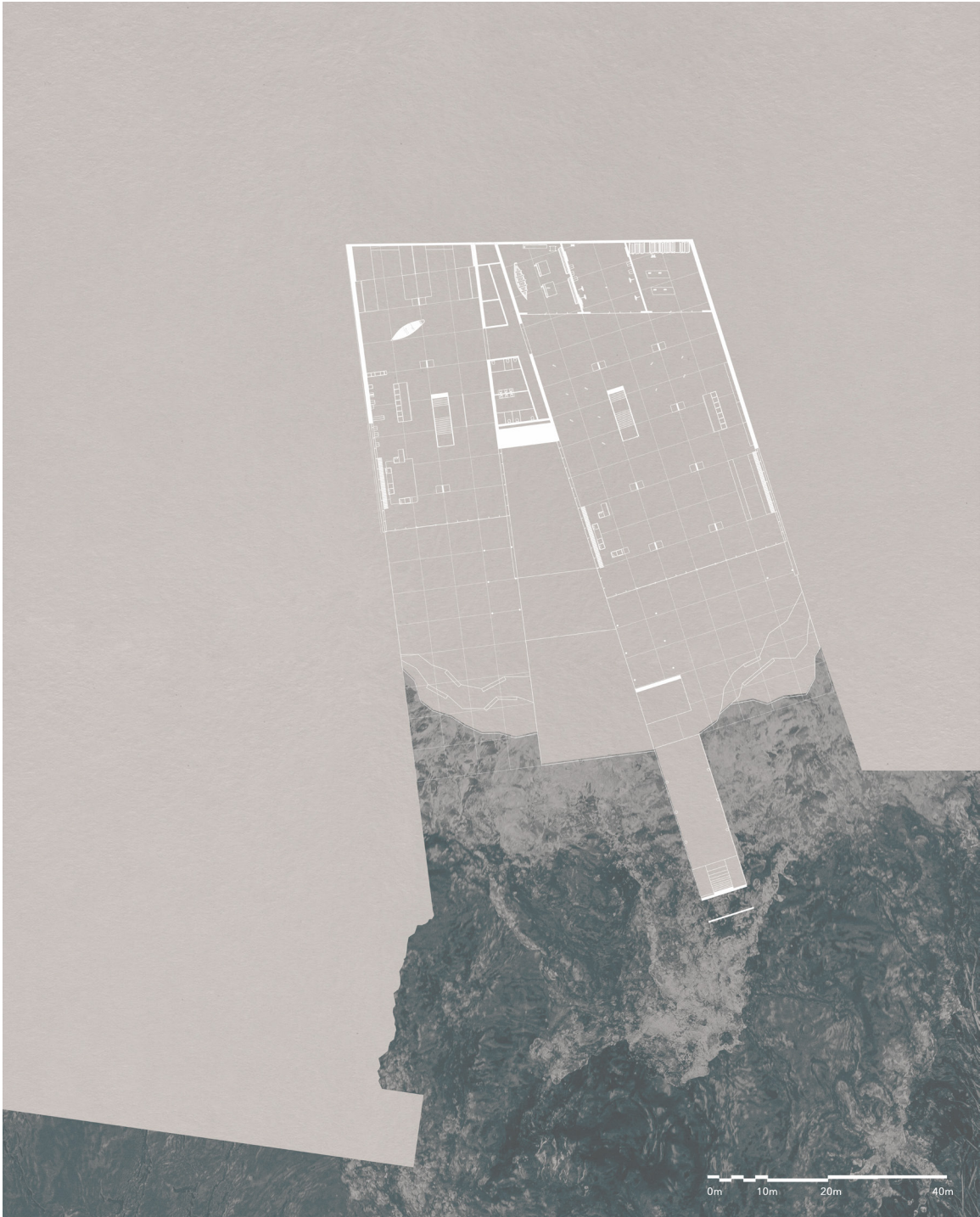


View of the Skateport from the harbour illustrating the reconnection of the public to the water



Water Street level

designing spaces specifically for skateboarding inherently lead to the creation of good public spaces? This holds true provided that the design process does not solely focus on



Ground Level

catering to skateboarding activities. By taking into account the diverse needs and interests of all individuals, spaces designed to accommodate skateboarding also have the



View of the Skateport from War Memorial: Here we see how the Skateport addresses Water Street and invites pedestrians in, around, and through the site.

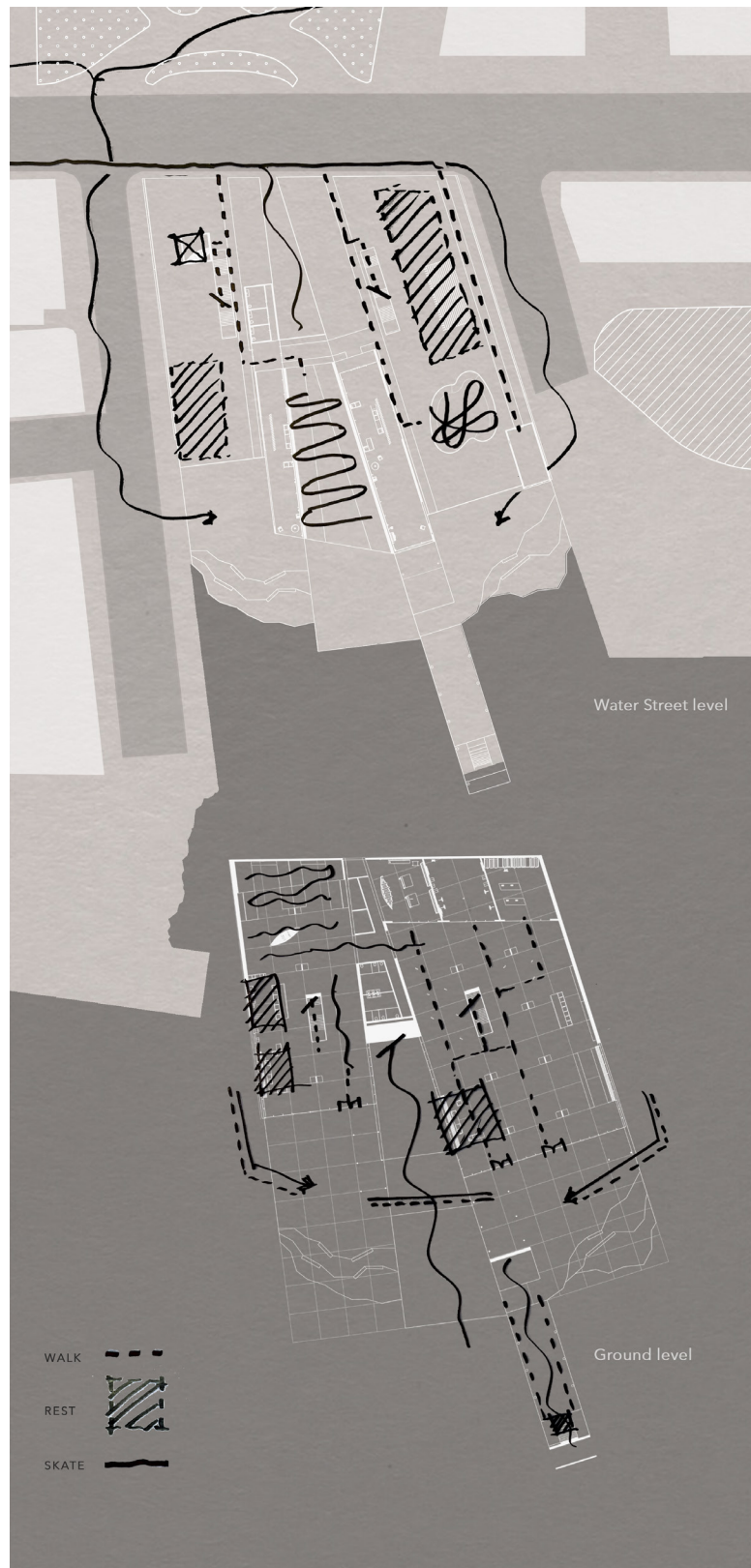
potential to foster inclusive and vibrant public gathering places. Architecturally, the Skateport aims to do just that.

Vernacular Translation

By Design, the Skateport has learned from the identity of Newfoundland created through its vernacular works and applies a skateboarders perspective.

Inherently, by doing so, the design provides inclusive spaces for everyone. From a 7 year old beginner skateboarder to a seasoned Quilting veteran, they can both exist in the same space.

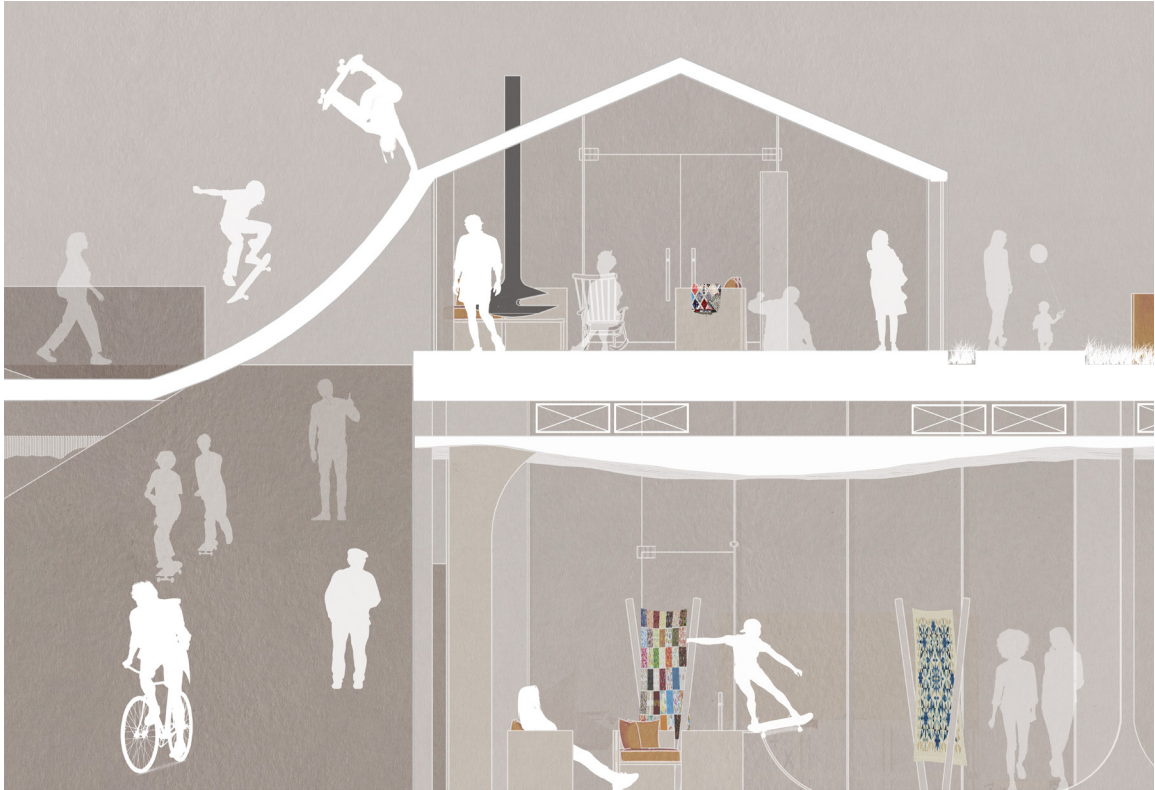
The architectural design of the Skateport project effectively merges the characteristic typologies of Newfoundland's vernacular architecture with the distinct forms and features found in skateboarding culture. The primary objective is to create a design that blurs the boundaries between elements inspired by Newfoundland's vernacular heritage and those



While the intent of the design is to not enforce a “right” circulation path, here is shows an example how different demographics may circulate throughout the building.



This cross sections illustrates the relationship of interior spaces showing the proximity of heritage activities to skateboarding.



At the human scale, the interwoven programs brings a lively space full of youth and play.

derived from skateboarding. This intentional blending results in innovative design interventions where traditional gable structures seamlessly transform into functional halfpipes, and rugged landscapes are creatively repurposed into skate features.

In the analysis of Newfoundland Vernacular and Folk Architecture in the previous chapters, the Stage, the Root Cellar, the Salt Box and the Church, were deduced to reveal their purpose as an architectural device. By doing so, a definition of each element can be translated into a new context beyond the mimicking of form.

For instance, the root cellar in previous chapters was illustrated as an architectural device that provides space for control and preservation within the landscape. As a space

for preservation, a modern translation of the root cellar can be found in the main interior space of the Skateport. Not in the sense of preserving sustenance but preserving heritage but to provide a space within the landscape the offers a controlled environment year-round where culture and tradition can flourish.

Furthermore, the Skateport employs the definition of the church as a way finding device for community. And the Stage as a device that mitigates the relationship between land and sea.



Interior "Sacred Space". At the human scale, the intimate relationship of users partaking in diverse activities is apparent.

The overall aim is to create a harmonious synthesis that simultaneously pays homage to Newfoundland's architectural heritage and caters to the unique needs and experiences of skateboarders.



Water street level showing the largest of the three gable spaces looking toward the opposite side of the St. John's harbour

In Program

As seen in the design, the world of Skateboarding culture and Newfoundland Vernacular collide to create a space of hybridity where both entities can come together. This



One of three Gable spaces on Water Street level. Overlooking “The Narrows”, a human-scale gable space presents opportunity for refuge. Presenting a chance to escape from busy urban living or engage in an intimate conversation.

translates directly to the program of the spaces designed. Spaces where traditional Newfoundland and Labrador crafting techniques can be used in the production of modern streetwear for skateboarding. Places for informal gatherings where stories of old fishing days can be shared or where latest and greatest tricks can be re-enacted.

In program, activities surrounding skateboarding allow opportunities to blend these two worlds with the common goal of supporting local businesses and creating community engagement. By leveraging the creativity, resourcefulness, and community spirit of skateboarding Newfoundland culture can find its way back into the urban realm. A prime example lies in the realm of fashion. Fashion has always played a significant role in expressing one’s individuality within skateboarding culture, and self-expression through fashion aligns seamlessly with the values ingrained in Newfoundland and Labrador’s cultural identity. Perhaps,



Roof top bowl located between two gable structures overlooking the St. John's Harbour.



Architectural intent of “Quilting” programs

this presents an opportunity for a collaborative venture. Perhaps, this presents an opportunity for a collaborative venture.

Fashion

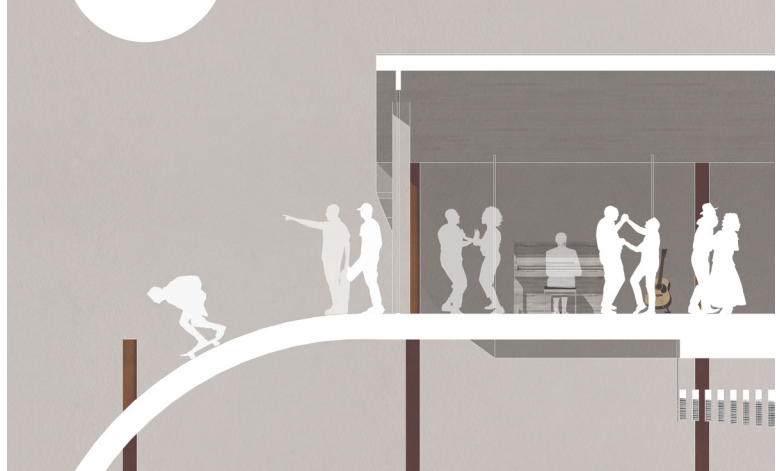
Skateboarders often use clothing and accessories to showcase their individuality and unique style. Skateboarding is not only a sport but also a form of art, and skateboarders



Frame 1 of Master Section: The employment of Folk Architecture elements such as the Stage and the Root Cellar are shown in their urban interpretation.



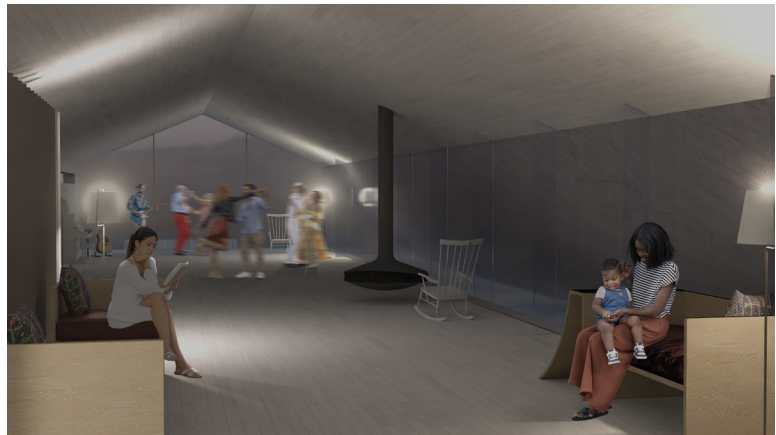
Frame 2 of Master Section. The Skateport is designed as an extension of the street. The Large concrete tower structure aims to mimic the church as a way finding device for community in addition to being a sky light for the interior space below.



Section Callout (Gable): A skateboarders take on the traditional fishing stage.

use their fashion choices to express their creativity and personality.

Skateboarding emerged in the 1970s as a counterculture movement, and the fashion associated with it was often rebellious and anti-establishment. Skateboarders wore ripped jeans, Vans shoes, and graphic t-shirts with bold



All roof level gable spaces do not have a specified program. The intent is to promote informal gathering of all generations through song and dance or Storytelling.

designs. As the sport has evolved, so has the fashion associated with it. Since the turn of the decade, skating and fashion have become intertwined. Today, skateboarders



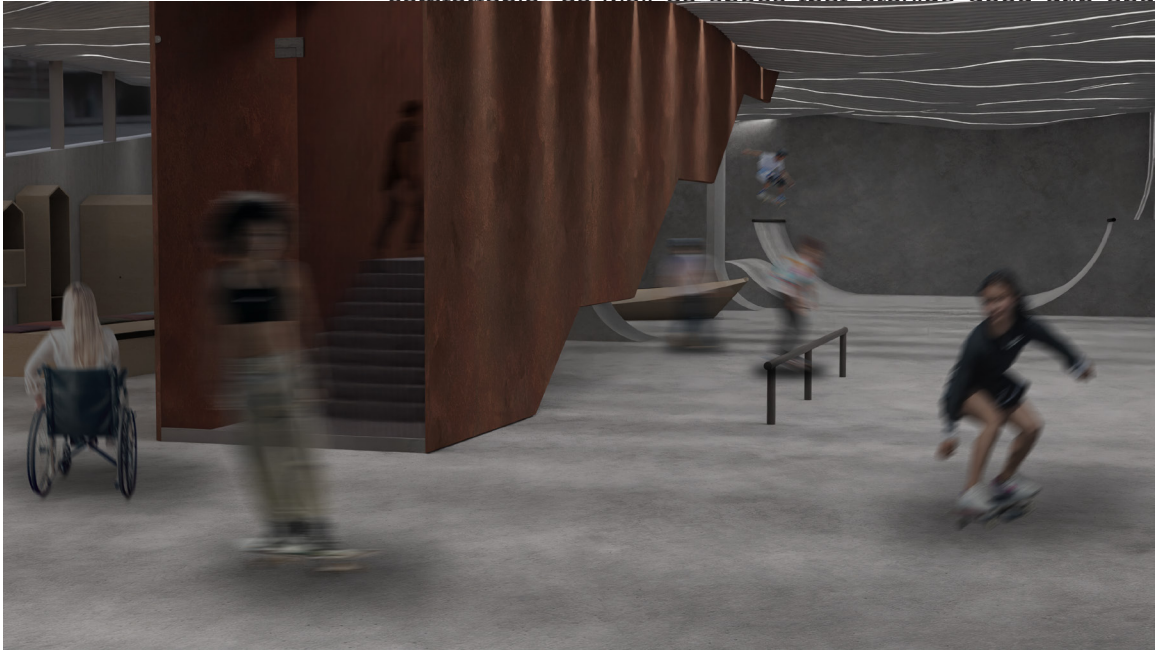
Section Callout (Wharf) illustrating a skateboarders unique take on a typical fishing wharf.

often mix and match different styles and eras to create their own unique look.

With the ascent of streetwear from its underground origins to a prominent influence in contemporary fashion, skateboarding has also emerged and found acceptance within the realm of high fashion. What initially began as a pastime cherished by surfers in California during the 1950s has evolved into a subculture that is intricately interwoven with modern style. This integration has reached such a level that even luxury brand Louis Vuitton has introduced its own distinctive skate shoe. Resembling the bulky DC sneakers popular in the 1990s, this signature shoe not only exudes a similar aesthetic but also offers exceptional skate performance, surpassing, if not surpassing, its predecessors (Baker 2022).

All that being said, functionality trumps all. If a garment restricts movement or prohibits the skater to perform to

the best of their ability, it is useless. Hence the presence of baggy fitting clothing is the staple of skateboarding fashion. Skateboarders need clothing that is durable and comfortable, as well as shoes that provide good grip and



Interior Skateboarding space with access from above level

clothing and shoes carefully to ensure they can perform to the best of their abilities.

Overall, self-expression through fashion has become such a big factor in skateboarding because it is a natural extension of the sport's rebellious and creative culture. While maintaining functionality, Skateboarders use their clothing and accessories to showcase their unique style and personality. Essentially, expression in functionality is the essence of skateboarding fashion. In Newfoundland and Labrador, this concept can be found in traditional quilting. While functionality comes first as Quilting techniques were mostly used in the production of blankets, the quilts served as a canvas for expression for Newfoundland and Labrador Artisans.



Main interior space showing the “quilting” of Newfoundland Culture and Skateboarding

Clothing Line

My vision is to combine the realms of Traditional Newfoundland and Labrador quilting, as well as other handmade garment techniques, such as knitting, rug-hooking, and embroidery, with the production of modern streetwear. This unique collaboration brings traditional crafts into the spotlight, in a way that appeals to the younger generation. While this adaptation may be innovative, it ensures the preservation and continuation of cherished traditions.

Art

Street Art

Skateboarding and street art, particularly graffiti, share a strong correlation and often coexist within urban environments. Both forms of expression have a rebellious and creative spirit, pushing boundaries and challenging societal norms. Here are some key points to address their correlation:

Skateboarding and graffiti are closely associated with urban culture, flourishing in city landscapes where concrete architecture and public spaces provide a canvas for artistic expression. Skaters and graffiti artists often navigate and



Interior space where quilts are put on display with wood shop space in the background

interact with the same urban environments, creating a symbiotic relationship.

Skateboarding and Street Art go hand-in-hand. Both skateboarding and Street Art such as graffiti have emerged from subcultures associated with alternative lifestyles and countercultural movements. They often challenge conventional norms and represent a form of resistance or rebellion against mainstream society. This shared countercultural spirit contributes to their association and the overlap between the skateboarding and graffiti communities.

Skateparks and skateboarding spots often become gathering places for individuals interested in street art and graffiti. Artists may be inspired by the energy and creativity of skaters, leading to collaborations where skatepark features



Clothing Line concept: The hoodie is made using traditional quilting techniques. The pants are made using traditional knitting techniques and the shoes are meant to mimic rubber boots traditionally used in fishing.

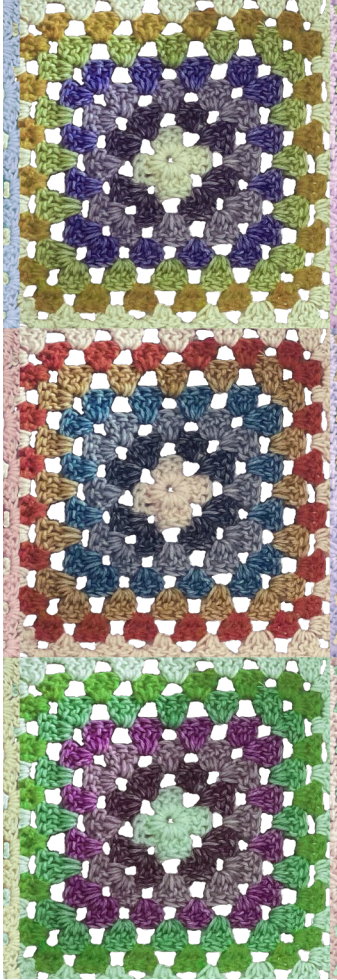


Deck graphics based on paintings done by Christopher Newhook (Newhook 2023)

or ramps become artistic canvases. This convergence of skateboarding and graffiti further strengthens their correlation and fosters a sense of community and shared creativity.

Skateboarding and graffiti are forms of self-expression that allow individuals to showcase their creativity and unique perspectives. Skateboarding is an art form in itself, with skaters using their bodies and boards to perform tricks and create fluid movements. Graffiti artists use spray paint, stencils, and other techniques to create visually striking murals, tags, or pieces that convey personal messages or reflect the social and cultural environment.

It is important to note that graffiti legality varies by location. While some forms of graffiti may be considered illegal, there is also a recognized form of street art that is permitted and celebrated in many cities around the world. Skateboarders and graffiti artists both utilize public spaces to express themselves. Skateboarders use urban landscapes, such as skateparks, plazas, and streets, as their playgrounds, performing tricks and showcasing their skills. Similarly, graffiti artists use walls, buildings, and other structures as



Knitting texture used in the making of pants.

their artistic platforms, using vibrant colors and intricate designs to leave their mark.

Newfoundland and Labrador art also embraces contemporary themes and styles, showcasing the evolving perspectives and creative expressions of artists in the region. Many artists explore abstract, modern, and experimental approaches, reflecting their individual visions and pushing the boundaries of traditional artistic practices. Perhaps, the collaboration between Street art and Traditional Newfoundland and Labrador themes is next. Through the common use of vibrant colors, the street can become a new canvas for traditional Newfoundland paintings.

In addition, paintings of local artists such as Christopher Newhook can be employed as deck graphics. A further example of translating heritage traditions into a medium more closely related to younger generations.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

The primary objective of this thesis did not entail presenting a limited illustration of how skateboarding may rejuvenate underutilized urban environments; rather, its purpose was to demonstrate an approach to placemaking design.

Within this thesis, I propose a methodology that holds the potential for universal application. While the focus remains on the perspective afforded by skateboarding, the specific subjects within the framework can vary. By harnessing the inherent adaptability of skateboarding culture, diverse settings can successfully integrate the same methodology.

A comprehensive exploration into the foundational aspects of place unveils opportunities to revitalize the urban domain in an engaging manner. As the youth represents our future, it is imperative that we design with their needs in mind, encompassing the interests of all individuals.



The approach from Water Street. The scale of the Skateport presents a juxtaposition to the larger scale urban environment enforcing a sense of place.

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