



## 1. THE CITY IS A FICTION

The urban condition is primarily a surface condition. The facade is the surface of a building, which, juxtaposed with other surfaces, creates the texture of the city. A facade is also a false face, and it is within these faces that the fiction of the city exists. A facade is not required to reveal the program behind it—this leads to the misreading of architecture, and to the misreading of the city. The urban condition becomes an infinite series of misreadings or illusions, caused by the disjunction between the surface of architecture and the program it contains. With each misreading, the city has a new, erroneous meaning.

The architectural project in the modern city can be a site of function and illusion, a distortion of reality and a vehicle for misreading. The architectural project draws reality, or truth, out of fiction: it draws truth out of the fictive city.

## 2. THE TRUTH LIES IN FICTION

In *Ulysses*, the real city of Dublin becomes the site of a constructed narrative. The reality of urban life becomes fictionalized in the text, a theatrical setting where the specific Dedalus/Bloom narrative can unfold. *Ulysses* is a text and it is textual: the text is the primary original source, and textuality is the condition of multiplicity within the text.

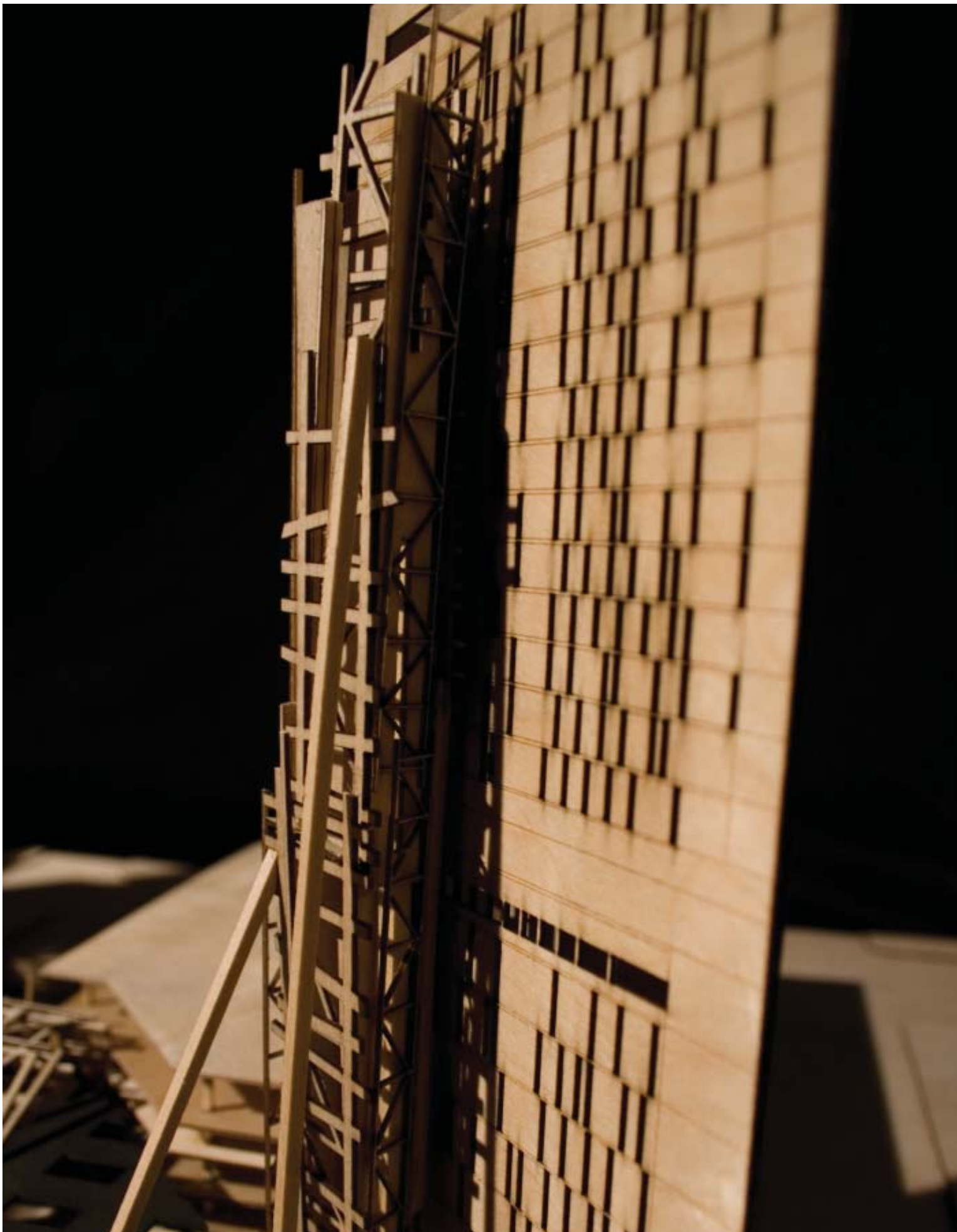
The text is prior to the architectural project: while the text is original, architecture is secondary, absorbing and reconstructing the multiplicities of the text.

The text is prior to the architectural project: while the text is original, architecture is secondary, absorbing and reconstructing the multiplicities of the text. The fiction in the text becomes material reality in architecture, which then becomes part of the fiction of the city.

In the city, as in the text, fiction and reality are in constant dialogue.

*Above:*

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### 3. PROGRAMMING THE URBAN PROJECT

Ulysses offers a programmatic condition based on convergence. Two diametrically opposed characters move through the city, unknowingly in search of one another the intersection of the two characters marks the creation of the complete, universal man. The struggling artist, trapped in a complex intellectual mind, is a prison. His counterpart, the sexually experienced man on a journey of discovery, is a library. The convergence of the characters marks the climax of the narrative, a point of illusions, distortions, and indulgence. Within the fiction, what is real is no longer distinguishable from what is hallucination.

The convergence of a prison and a library within the city is itself a fictional project. It is an experiment in understanding a surface condition such as text, the possibilities of translating that into architecture, and the implications this has for the meaning of 'interdisciplinary'. Furthermore, the merging of two such different programs allows the project to comment on the nature of social interactions in the city.

Bernard Tschumi notes in *The Manhattan Transcripts* that the definition of architecture "may lie at the intersection of logic and pain." The convergence of two programmatic extremes can lead to points of conflict and reciprocity, where balance and synthesis are not necessary. What happens when one confronts the unfamiliar? What happens when extreme modes of existence meet in the same space?

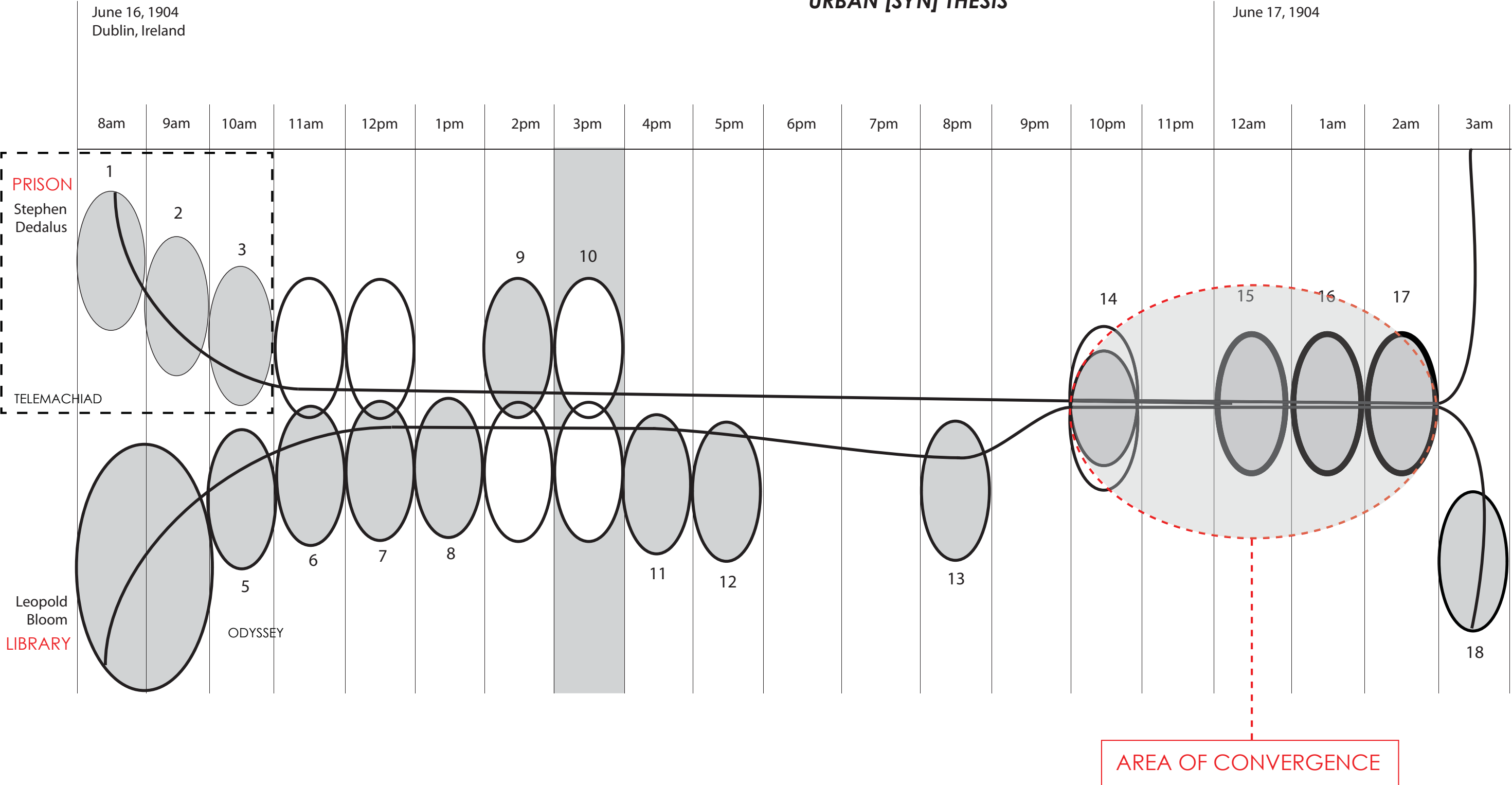
### 4. A QUESTION

Do we escape containment through space or knowledge?

*Opposite:*

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URBAN [SYN] THESIS



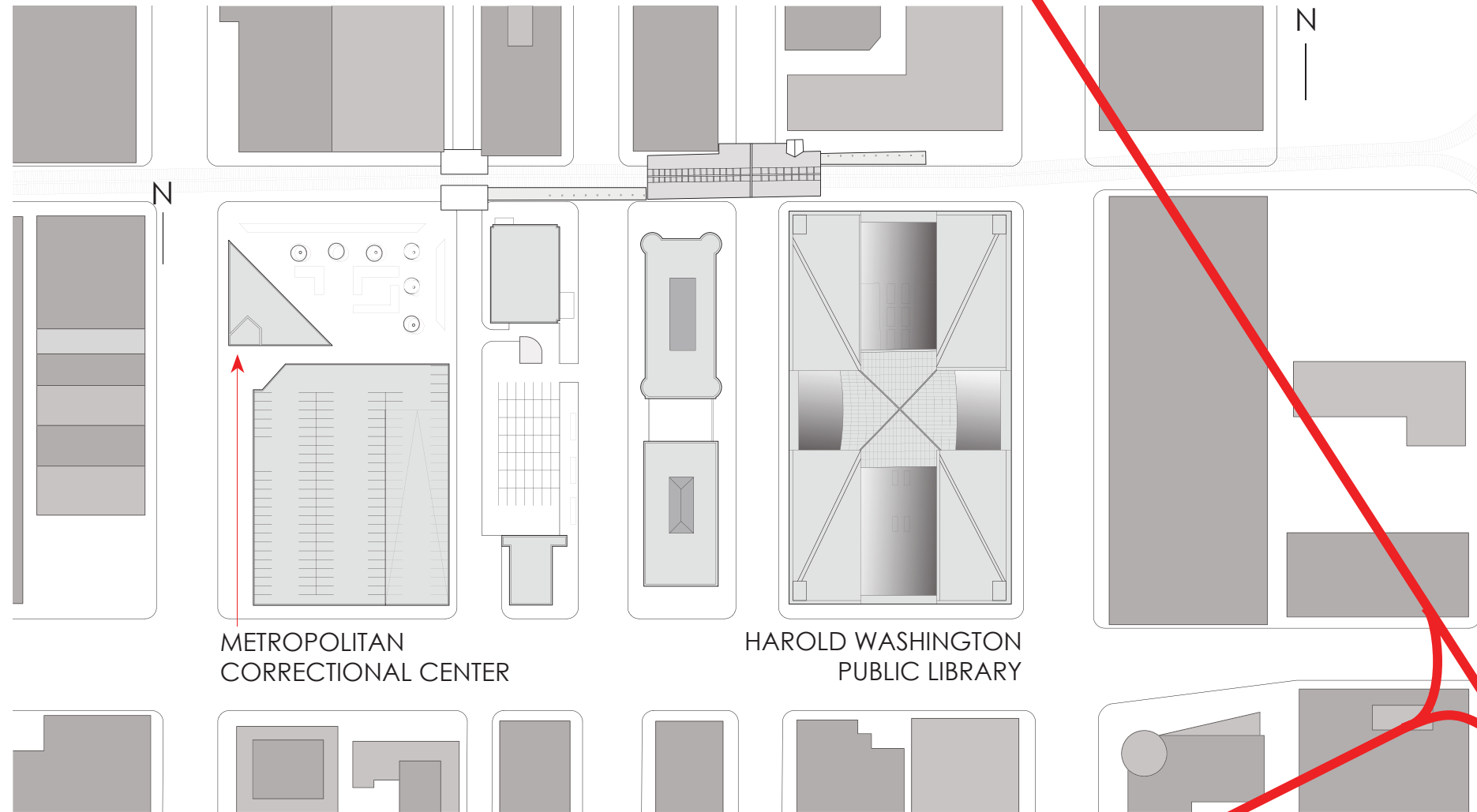
Above:  
Programmatic Intentions

The novel's episodes are placed on a horizontal timeline. The grey infill shows which character is central to the episode. In Episode 10, the city surrounding the two characters becomes the protagonist.

Stephen Dedalus and Leopold Bloom become lines that move through the city in the course of a day. The diagram shows their relative orientation during the day, and the space in which they converge. These lines represent a programmatic relationship between two urban characters, the prison and the library.

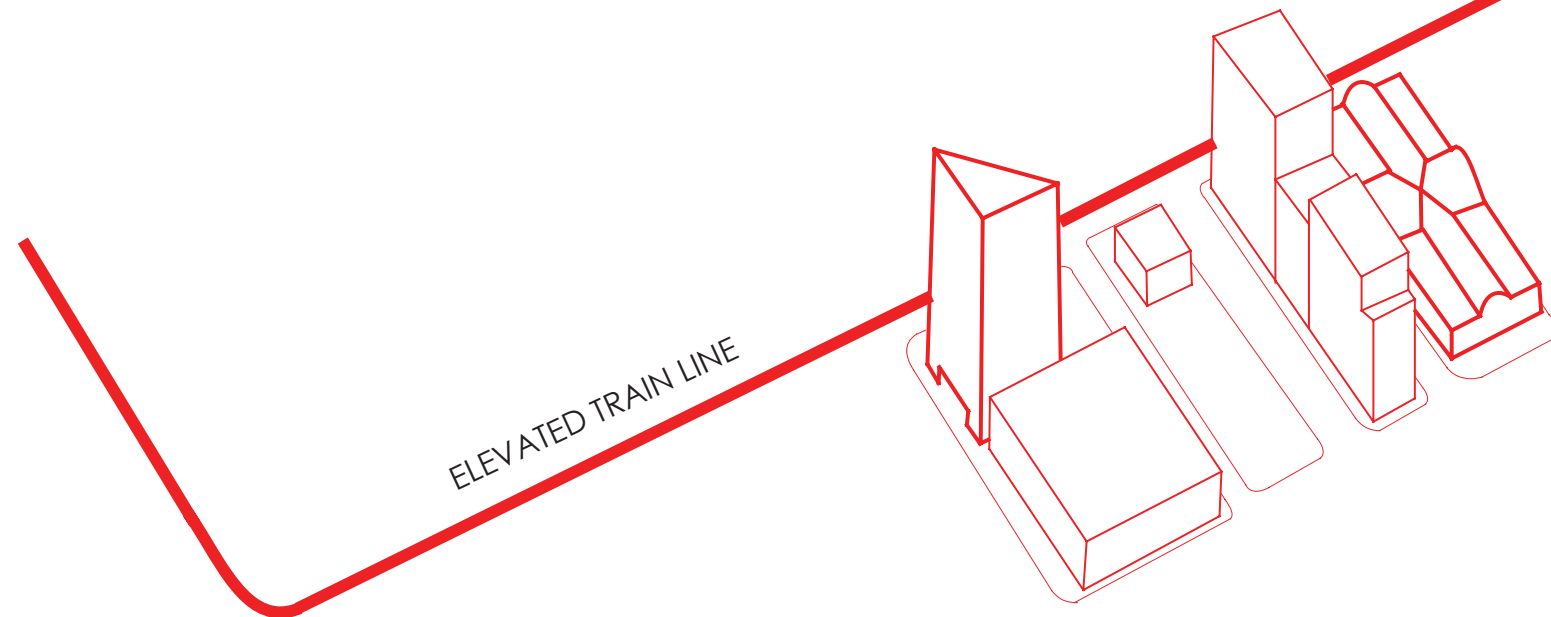


CONDITIONS

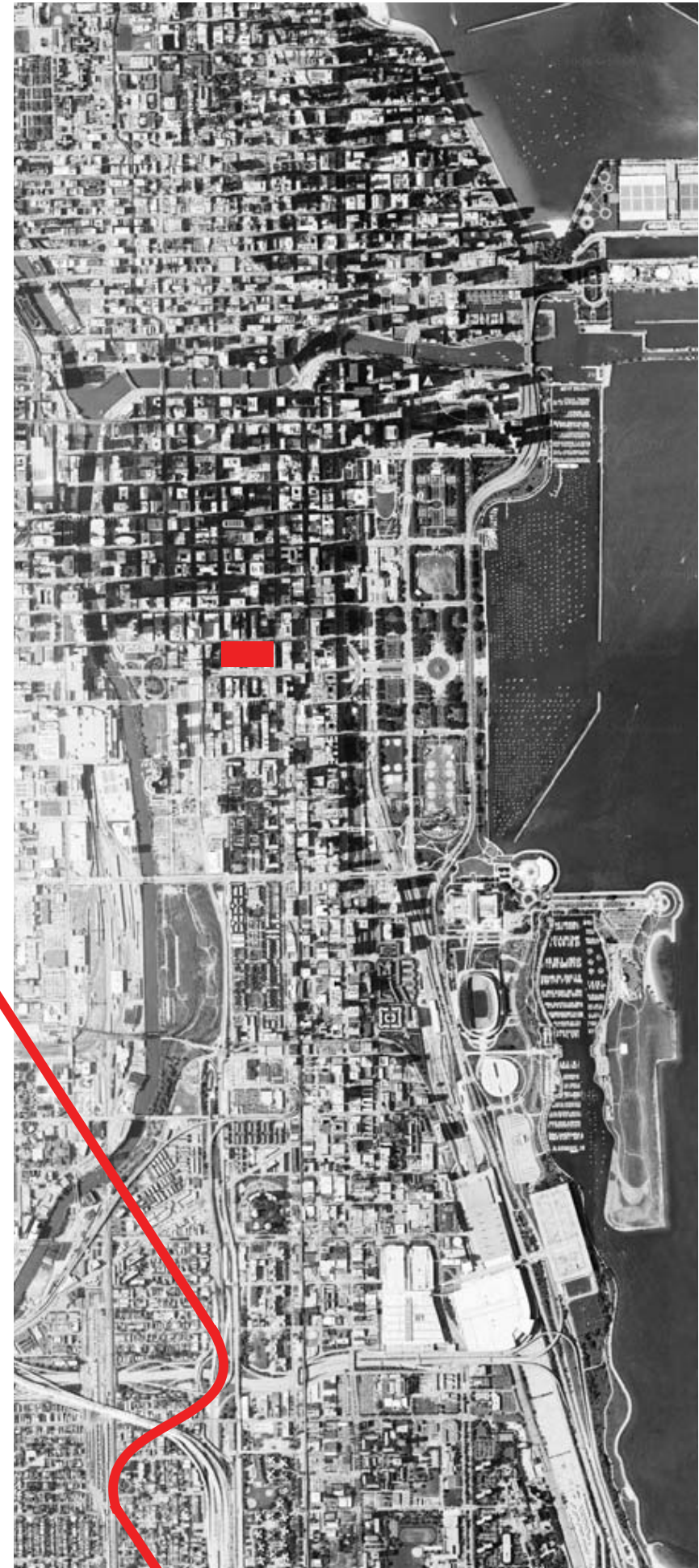


METROPOLITAN  
CORRECTIONAL CENTER

HAROLD WASHINGTON  
PUBLIC LIBRARY



ELEVATED TRAIN LINE



*Right:  
A modern urban site:  
Chicago*

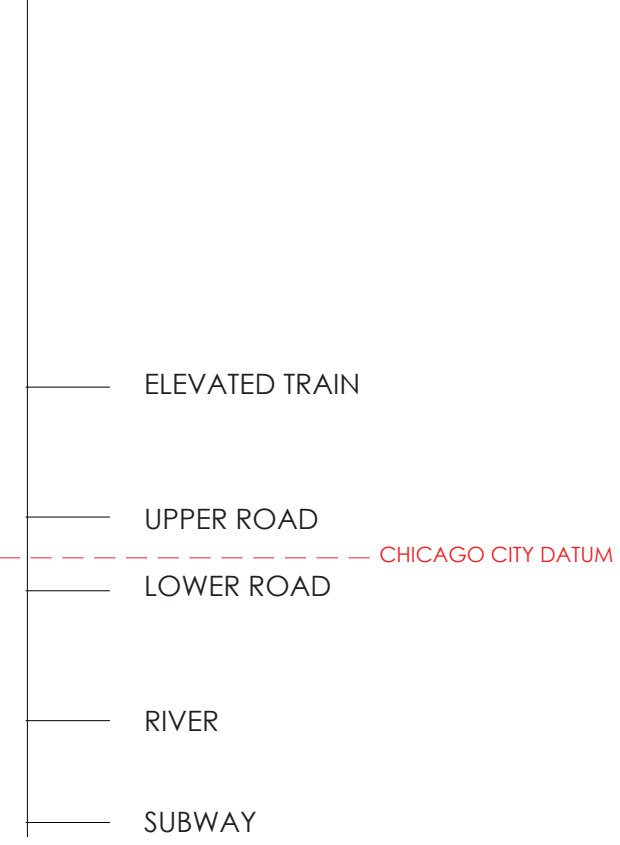
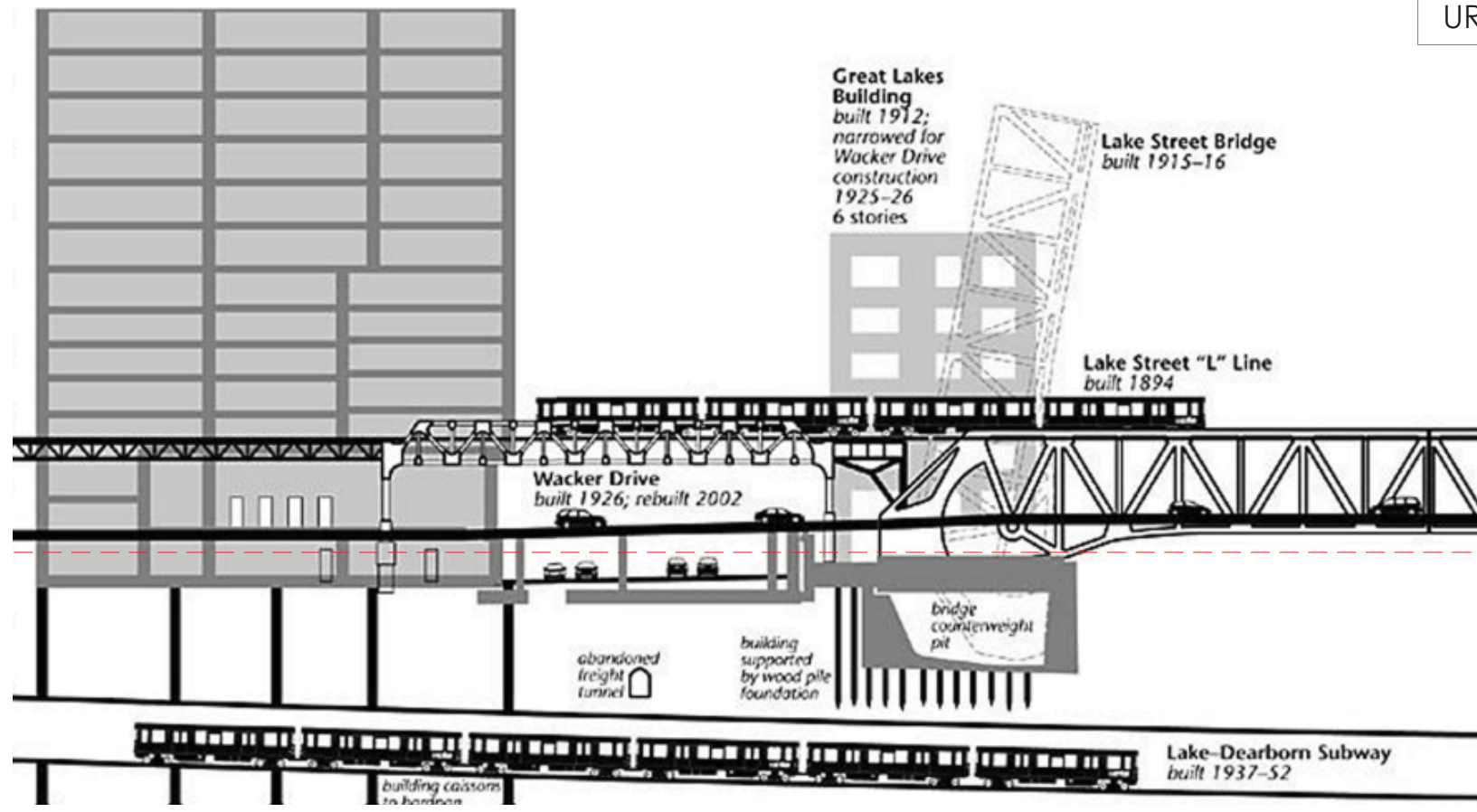




DUALITIES

DEDALUS	-----	BLOOM
CHICAGO	-----	DUBLIN
PRISON	-----	LIBRARY
CITY	-----	TEXT
DRAWING	-----	PERCEPTION

URBAN LAYERS: CHICAGO



DUBLIN

An *Ulysses* is a modern urban text, the project requires a modern urban site. The city is both a settling and a character. For the project, Chicago provides conditions that recall Joyce's Dublin: a city on the water with a gritty, industrial atmosphere, completed by an incessant overhead train. A block in Chicago's South Loop provides two institutions--the public library and high-security prison--between which the thesis sits.

Left:



## DESIGN PROPOSAL

The site offers a peculiar condition: the library, the most public of institutions, has no outdoor public space, while the prison, the most private of institutions, has a public plaza at ground level.

The goal of the proposed project is to create outdoor public space for the library, and provide prison inmates with access to literary texts and space for reading. It physically engages both the library and the prison, while still acknowledging the void between the civilian and the inmate.

The method and presentation of the drawings is as important as the design itself: the drawings become the text by which the project is read.

### PROGRAM:

Public Plaza  
Elevated train station  
Linear Park  
Inmate library

The plaza is located at the level of the elevated train, 28 feet above ground level. Commuters exit the train into the new station, move onto the plaza, along the linear park, and into the library at the fourth floor, where the stacks begin. This creates a purely horizontal transition from train to plaza to library, referencing Chicago's organization as a series of horizontal layers.

While the train station, plaza, and linear park are all horizontal bridges, the inmate library is a vertical one. The new library grafts onto the facade of the prison, climbing to the level of the containment cells and allowing inmates access to texts and knowledge (and, therefore, an illusion of freedom).

The orientation of the plaza creates a void, in plan, between itself and the prison. This void is bridged by the library tower. Thus, the void between the civilian (on the plaza) and the inmate (in the prison) is bridged by the act of reading.

Formally, the plaza is a fragment of an urban facade turned on its side. In this way, users experience the surface of the city by walking across it rather than looking up at it. What would be windows on the facade become openings in the floor of the piazza. At each of these openings is a fire escape stair that provides access from the plaza level to the ground below.

The plaza inverts the relationship between the facade and the fire escape. Rather than existing in the same plane, they are at 90 degrees to one another.

The obsessive repetition of the stairs is a reference to the linguistic excess in the text of Ulysses. Excess becomes access.



*Above:*

There are multiple forms of accessibility in this project:

The rain is a form of public access.

The plaza and linear park provide access to the library stacks directly from the train.

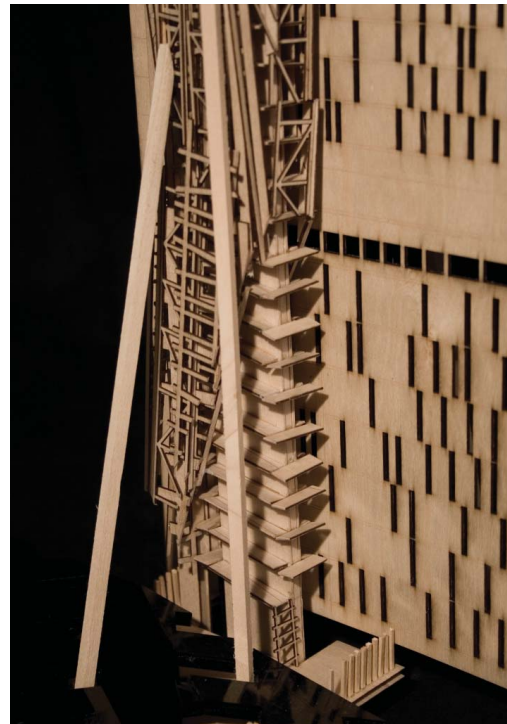
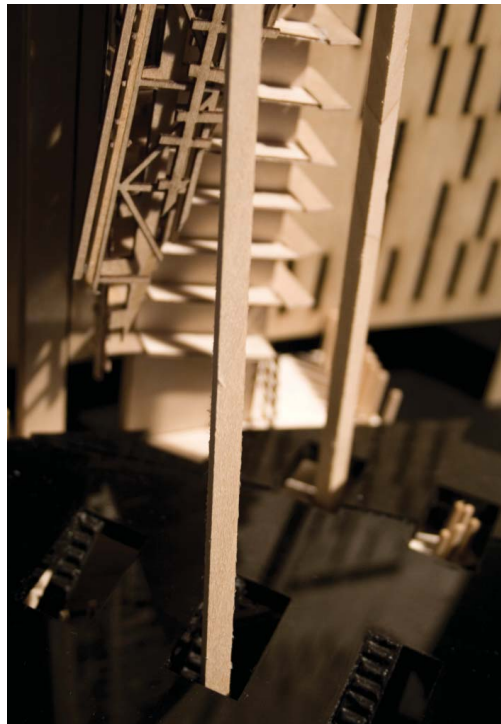
The inmate library provides prisoners access to information and reading space

The project allows civilians and inmates to access one another through sight and spatial intersection.

Accessibility is visible in space and in the mind. By providing many different access points and methods of movement, the project encourages escape.

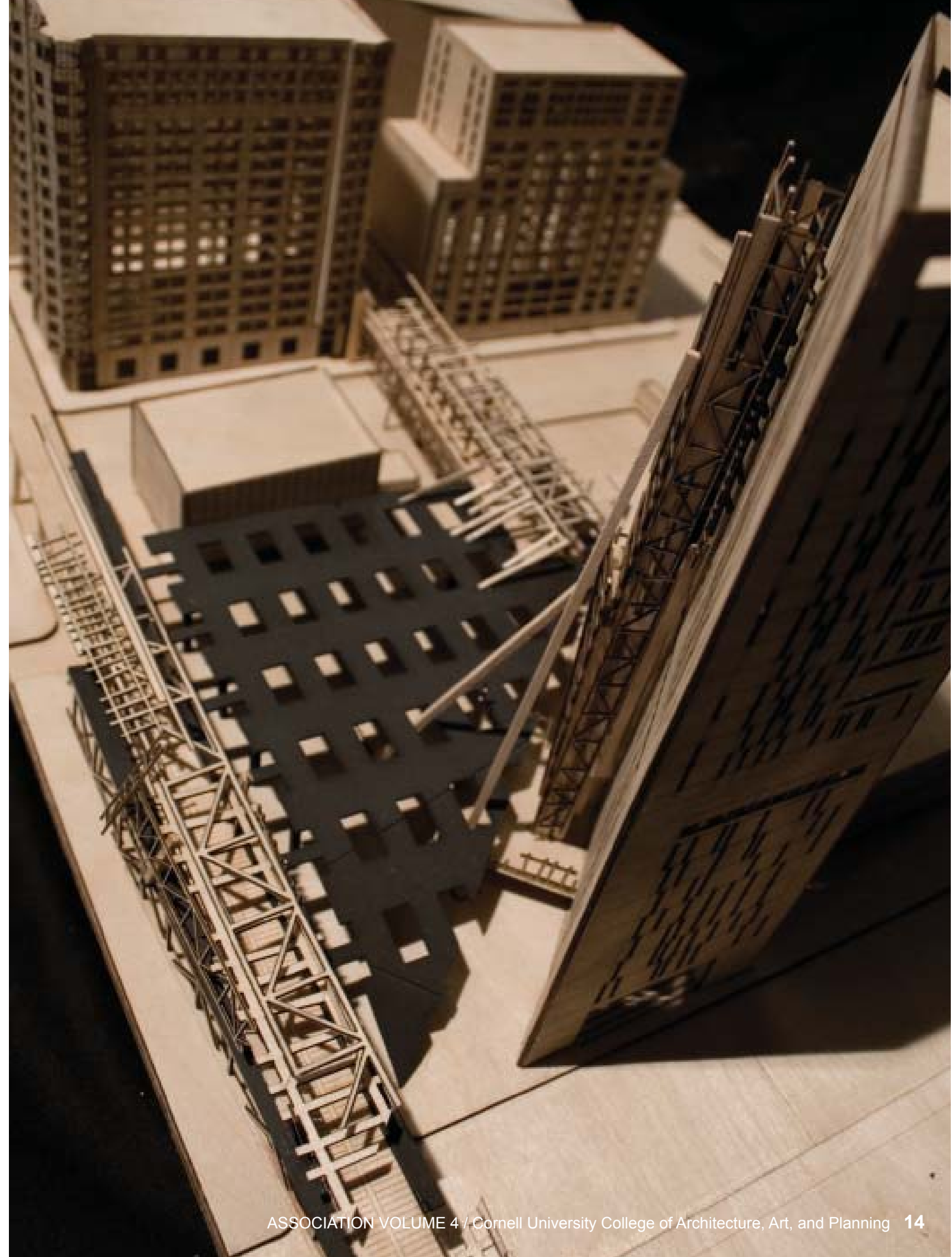
This concept is most potent for the inmates: while the project design might give the prisoners an opportunity to break free of containment, it offers a true escape through the act of reading

It is in the act of reading that the inmate and the civilian truly converge.



*Above:*

*Opposite:*





*Above:  
The surface of the plaza reflects the  
surface of the prison.*





*Above:  
The library tower structure intersects the plaza*

## READING / MISREADING

The architectural drawing is the text that allows us to “read” a project; it is in the spatial perception of the project that the “misreading” occurs.

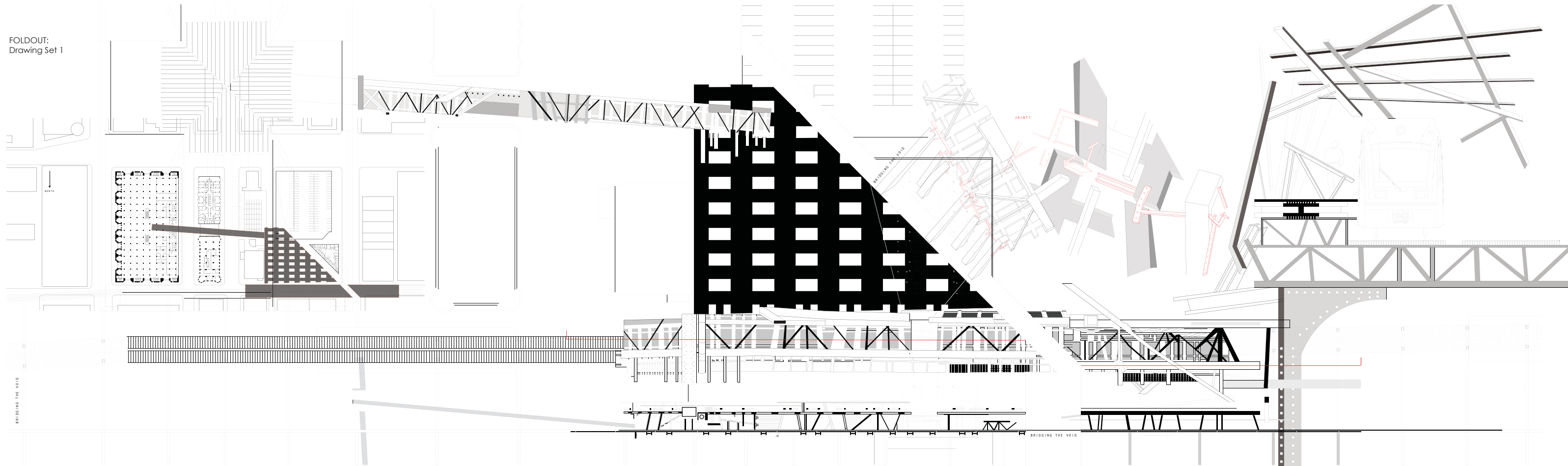
The thesis drawings can be divided into two groups: the Drawing Sets 1-3 are meant for “reading”, and the elevation and perspectives are meant for “misreading.” In the second group, the design project is subjected to the discontinuity found within the images of the site.

The project becomes fictionalized through this fragmentation. But at the same time, the fragmented representation captures the realities of spatial perception.

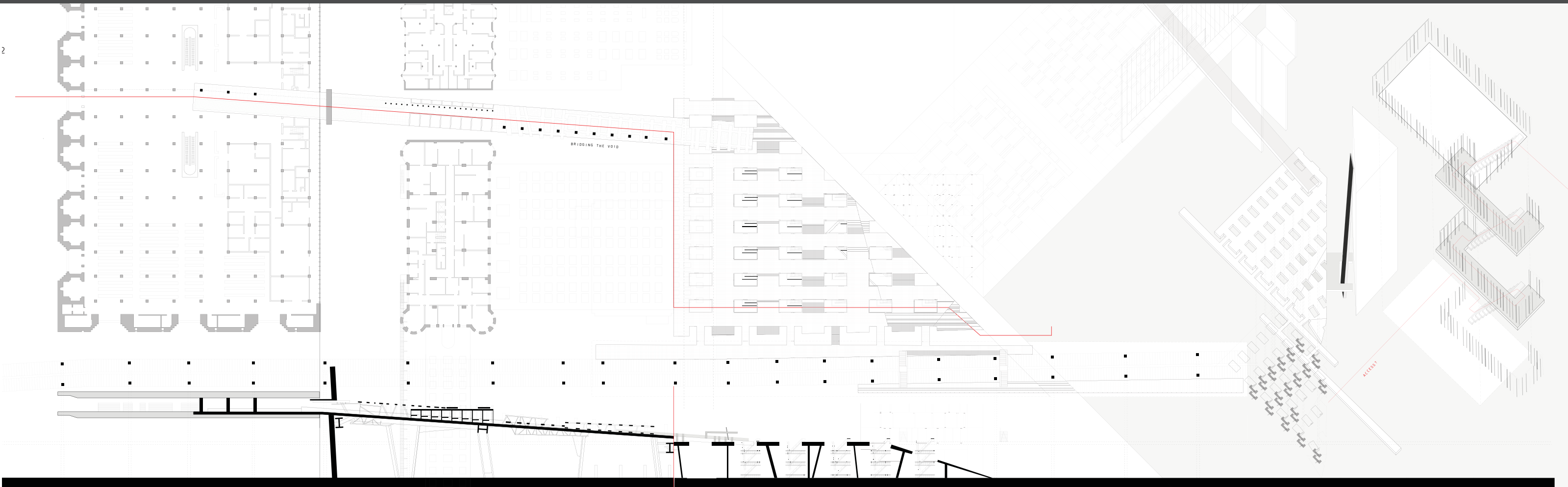
Architectural drawing and spatial perception becomes two opposing, yet complementary, methods of understanding the physical world.



FOLDOUT:  
Drawing Set 1

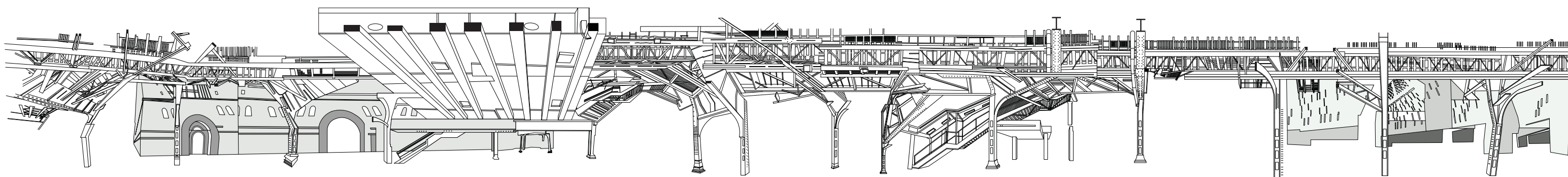


*Above: Drawing Set 1*



*Above: Drawing Set 2*





*Above: Continuing Discontinuities*

**CREDITS AND DATA**

Project Title: Misreading the City: An Urban Proposal

Contributor: Aneesha Dhadwaker (B.Arch '09)

Project Type: B.Arch Thesis 2009

Editor: Justin Hui