Fragments of Home

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Committee:
Brian McLaren
Elizabeth Golden

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Architecture

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Lean Galvez Octavio

University of Washington

Abstract

Fragments of Home

Lean Galvez Octavio

Chair of the Supervisory Committee:
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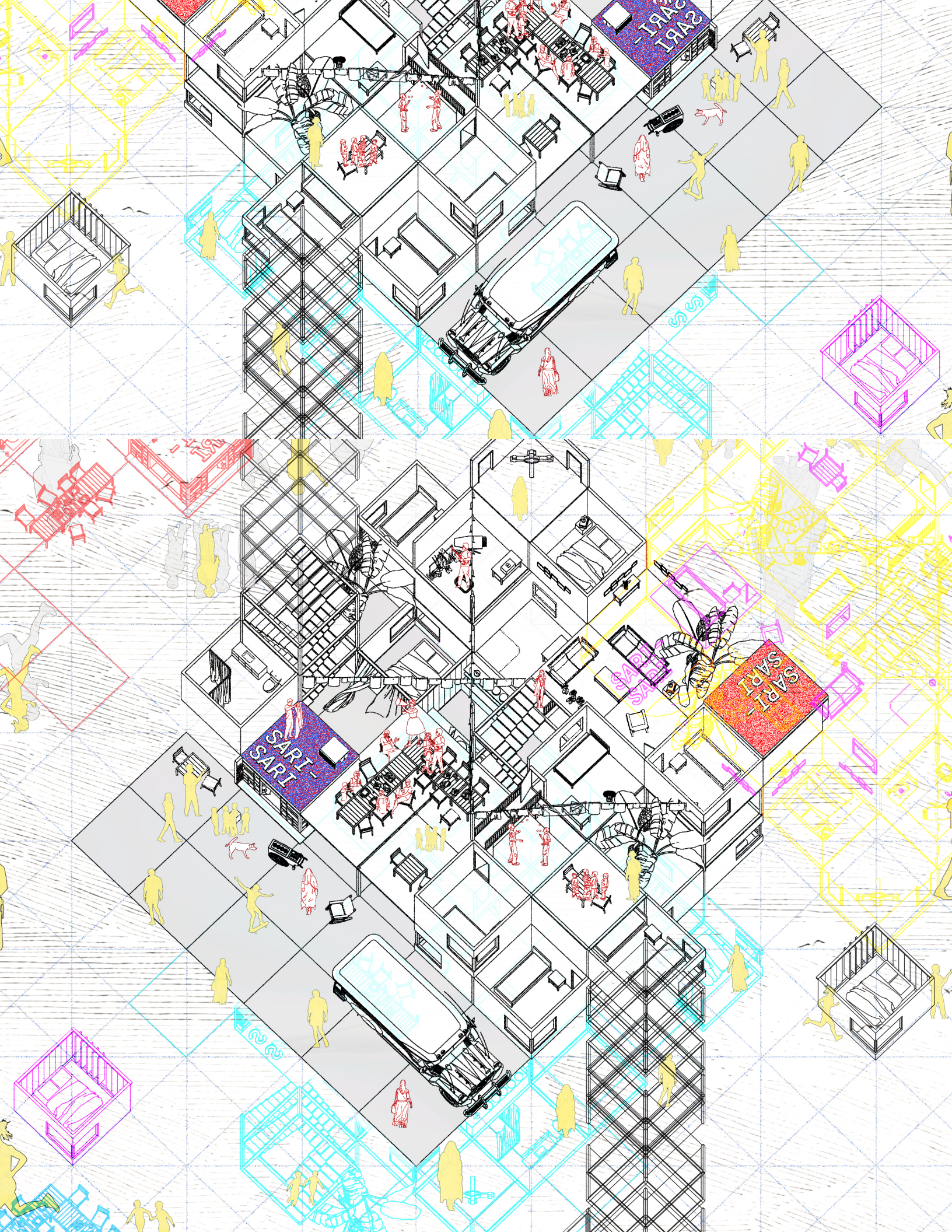
This thesis explores the meaning of Filipino identity through the architecture of the home in its many forms. With emphasis on the culture of the Philippines and its long colonial history, the thesis recognizes the complexity of the house in a cross-cultural context where traces of submission and resistance to colonization are present up to this day. The thesis tells a narrative through architectural allegory to discover and reveal the different fragments of home. Four houses are conceptualized, to represent a story particular to the cultural and physical landscapes of history, identity, memory and becoming.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fragments of home

lean galvez octavio

thank you | *salamat*

brian mclaren & elizabeth golden

my family

maks

motherland

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introduction

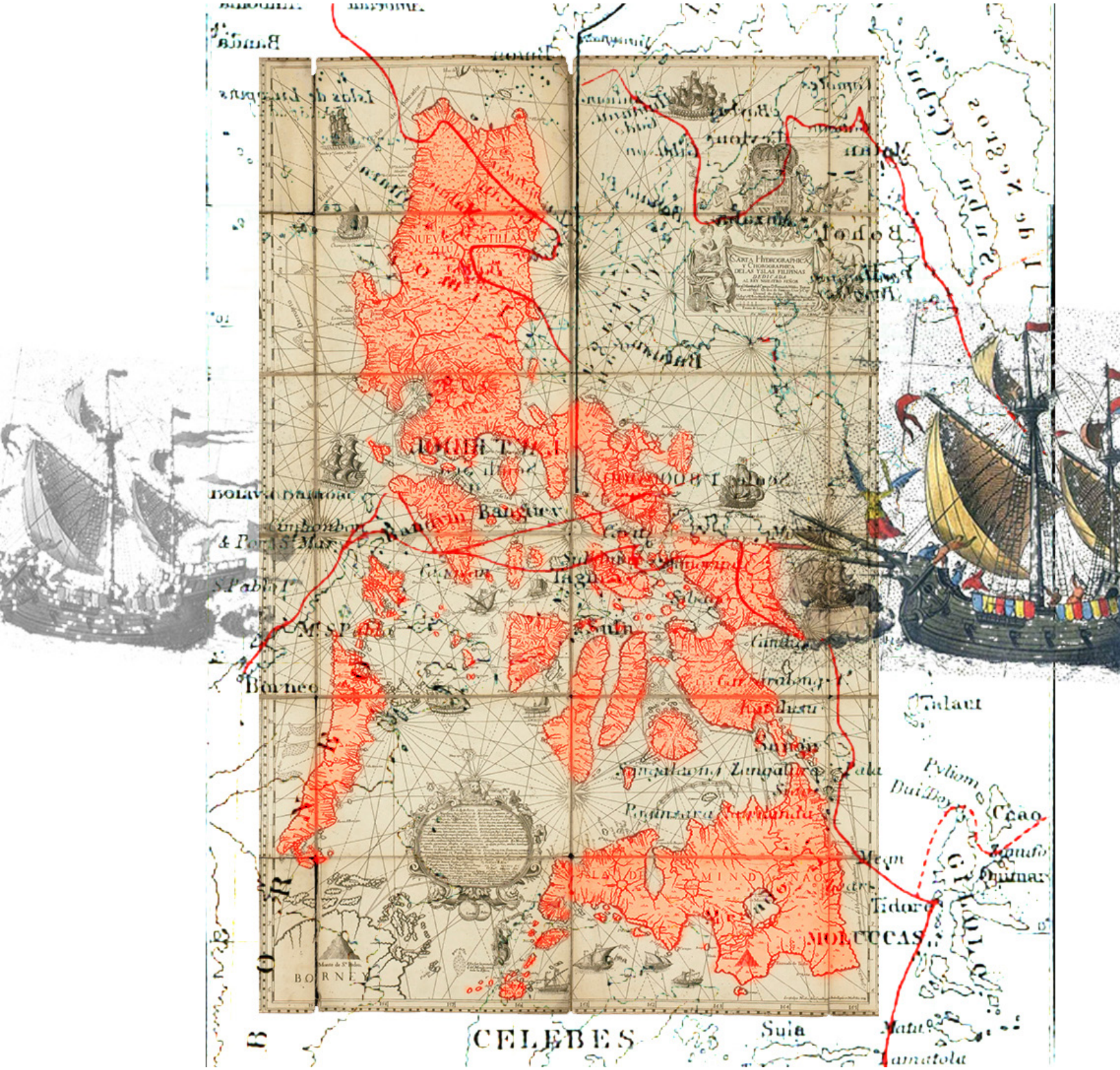

about being together home
never together

introduction

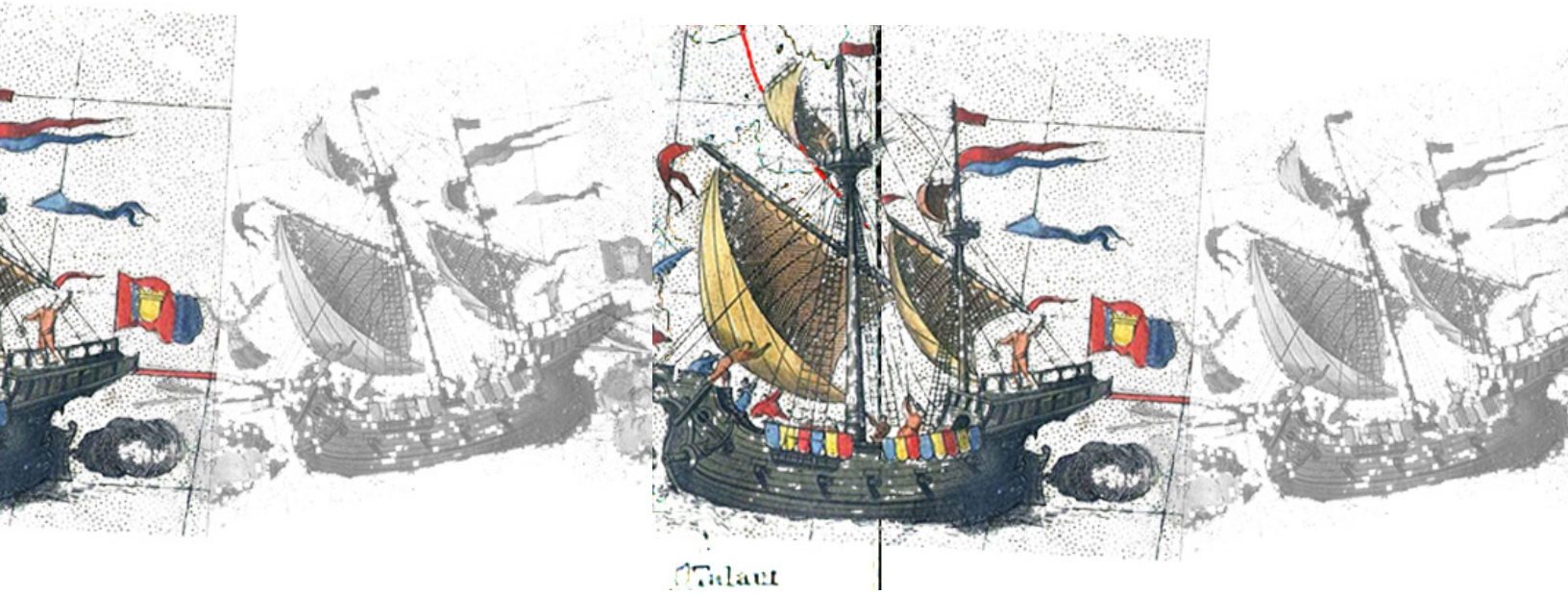
What is the meaning of home? Is it a place of origin? The house of childhood? Is it the architecture that shelters the basic needs in life? Perhaps the space that brings comfort and warmth to the soul? For many, home implies permanence, a symbol of rootedness of being, yet for others home is not tied to a fixed location, rather it is a pursuit for a sense of belonging. Luis Francia's describes his journey upstream to home in his book Eye of the Fish. He writes..

> *I had been coming back to the Philippines regularly over the course of more than two decades, a process that began as something purely instinctual, moved by the same urge that compels salmon to travel up the waters of their genesis, moved by the need to feel familiar ground, to add to the store of memory and association that nourished me in my sojourning. The trips gradually took on a conscious edge. Upstream to home: what did that mean? Where was "I" in all this, where the "we"? Death for the new self, resurrection of the old? But home had changed. And so had I.*

In this passage, the notion of home is described as a continuous journey rather than a final destination - a process linked to the search for identity which sometimes goes against the current of our beings. This thesis explores the meaning of Filipino identity through the architecture of the home in its many forms. With emphasis on the culture of the Philippines and its long colonial history, the thesis recognizes the complexity of the "house" in a cross-cultural context where traces of submission and resistance to colonization are present up to this day. It aims to tell a narrative through architectural allegory to discover and reveal the different fragments of home.



NUEVA CASTILLA
CARTA HIDROGRAPHICA Y CHOROGRAPHICA DE LAS YSLAS FILIPINAS
Bangüey
Tagin
Sulu
Borneo
Talaut
Pyliom
Ceao
Tidore
MOLUCCAS
CELEBES
Sula





THE WHITE MAN'S BURDEN.

BY RUDYARD KIPLING.

Take up the White Man's burden—
Send forth the best ye breed—
Go, bind your sons to exile
To serve your captives' need;
To wait, in heavy harness,
On fluttered folk and wild—
Your new-caught sullen peoples,
Half devil and half child.

Take up the White Man's burden—
In patience to abide,
To veil the threat of terror
And check the show of pride;
By open speech and simple,
An hundred times made plain,
To seek another's profit
And work another's gain.

Take up the White Man's burden—
The savage wars of peace—
Fill full the mouth of Famine,
And bid the sickness cease!

...a short history

This journey started with complicated questions about Filipino identity in relation to the long history of imperialism in the Philippines, thus understanding of historic events is crucial in unfolding the narrative of cultural identity that extends to the home. The origins of the country can be traced back to the continuous process of colonization by the Spanish, Americans and Japanese for more than three centuries. As a result, the nation-state has become an imperial artifact of these different power regimes with manifestation extending to culture, language, cuisine, arts and architecture.

The discovery of the archipelago is closely connected to the Spanish expedition that completed the first circumnavigation of the globe. In hopes to reach the spice-

figure 1. the white man's burden. digital mixed media collage (2020)

filled Mollucas Islands through a westward route, Ferdinand Magellan set sail from Seville, Spain in September 1519, crossed the vastness of the Pacific and reached the Philippine islands in 1521. This marks the Western discovery of the archipelago and the beginning of colonization decades later.

It was in 1565 when the islands were officially conquered by the Spaniards and was named “las islas Filipinas” in honor of Felipe II of Spain. The most visible presence of the colonial rule came in the form of missionary work during the Spanish period. Religion had become an effective agent for colonization, with the promise of salvation ensured to Catholic converts. According to Vicente Rafael, control was made possible through “hearing confessions and dispensing penance” as priests manipulate the thoughts and acts of Filipino people in order to gain redemption from their sins.[1] The imperial rule lasted for 333 years and collapsed in the late 19th century during the Spanish-American War, with the United States allegedly involved as the protector of Filipinos. Interestingly enough, the combat between two forces was secretly planned to stage the victory of the United States partly to suggest that Spain never lost to Filipinos but to American forces. The so-called Mock Battle of Manila marked the beginning of a new era. Upon declaration of independence from Spain, the Philippines became a colony of the United States. The new period of American colonization was declared as a “benevolent assimilation” by President William McKinley, claiming that the occupation is “meant to liberate and not subjugate Filipinos”.[2] As described in

1 Rafael Vicente L. “Colonial Contractions: The Making of the Modern Philippines, 1565-1946,” June 2018. https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190277727.013.268.
2 Ibid.

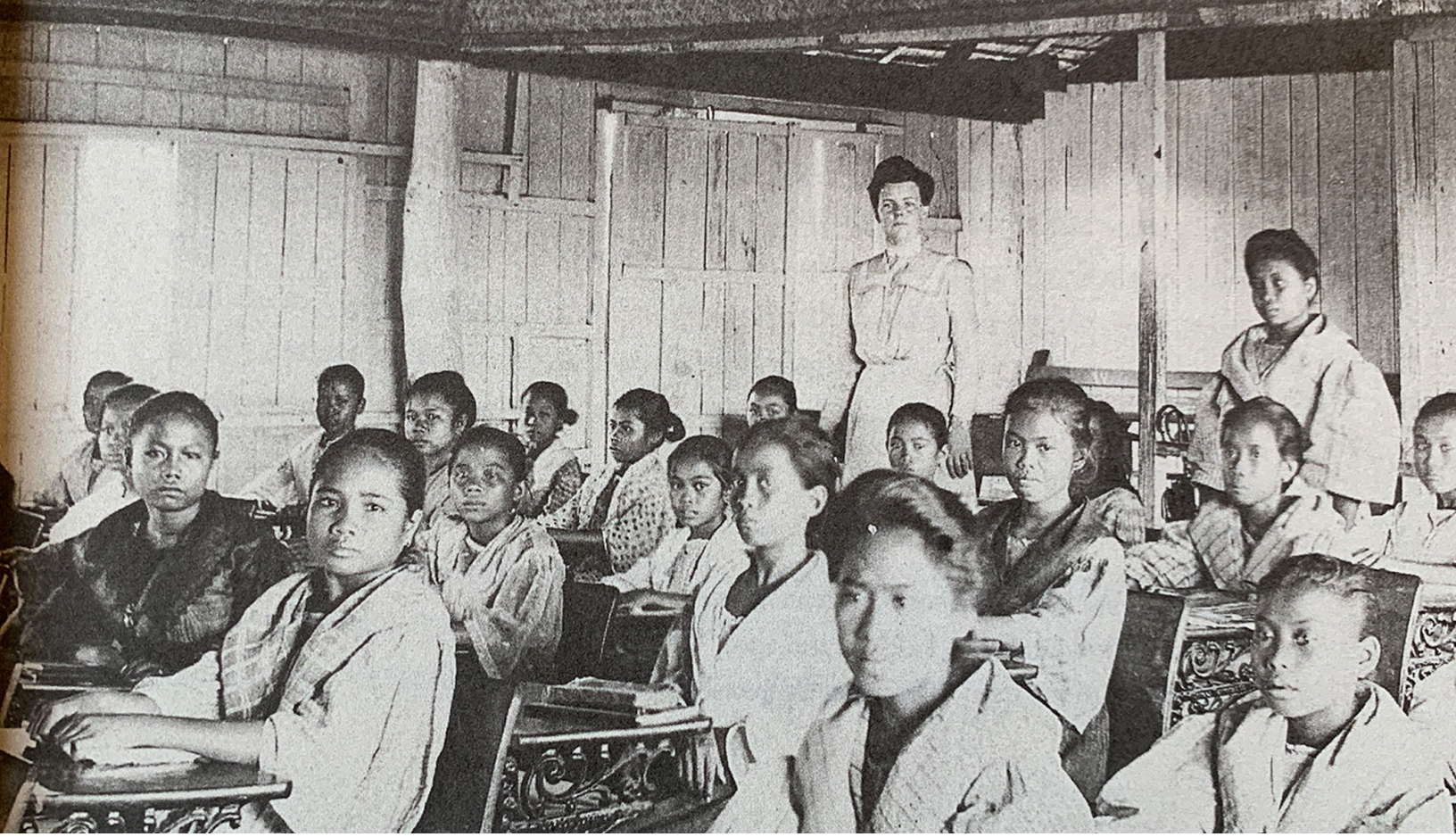


figure 2. Mary Cole and her class in Palo, Leyte Philippines. 1901. Bentley Historical Collection.

the famous poem by Rudyard Kipling, colonization of the Philippine islands is justified as a civilizing mission, an act to take up the white man's burden to educate people of color. Although conceived with friendly intentions, white Americans were considered superior masters among "tribes of dark, brown, and mixed-race people"[3]

The history of imperialism in the country continued until 1946 towards the end of the Second World War but its legacy is very much alive today as struggles with cultural inferiority and experiences of transgenerational trauma were passed on to the children of the nation.

3 Ibid.

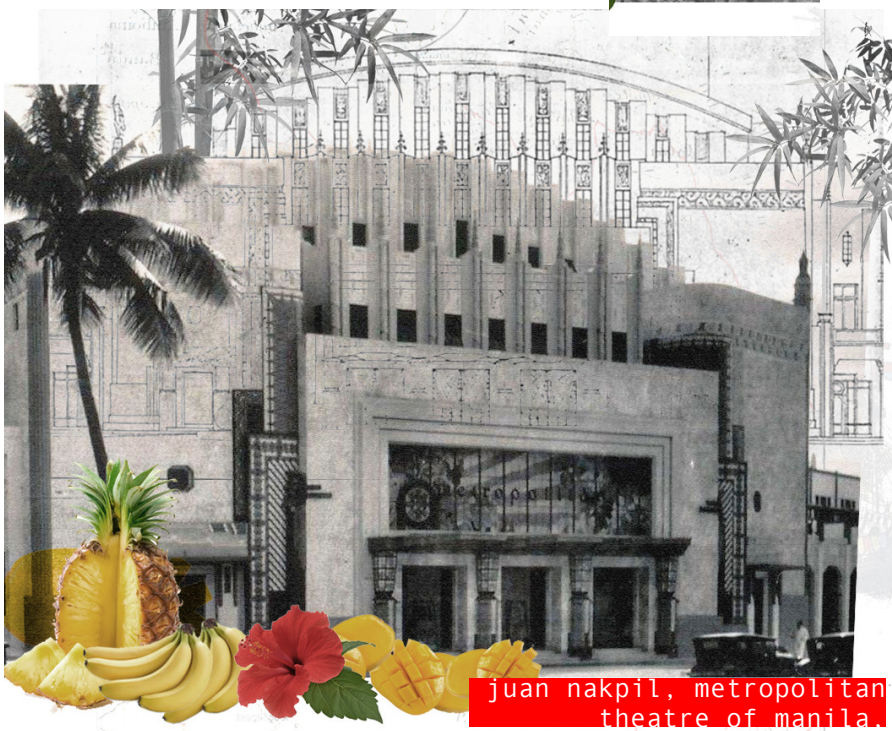

CELEBES
Banguey
Cavit
Mindanao
Tagima
Sibago
Sulu
The Daily Ker
DR. WHITSITT ON THE RACK.
d Hot Fight Precipitated—The First Thing After Organiza-
tion—Dr. Coleman's Salty Resolutions
E A SPECIAL ORDER FOR THE AFTERNOON SESSION NOW IN PROGRESS.
MOLUCCAS


THE WHITE MAN'S BURDEN
BY RUDYARD KIPLING
Take up the White Man's burden—
Send forth the best ye breed—
Go, bind your sons to exile
To serve your captives' need;
To wait, in heavy harness,
On fluttered folk and wild—
Your new-caught sullen peoples,
Half devil and half child.
Take up the White Man's burden—
In patience to abide,
To veil the threat of terror
And check the show of pride;
By open speech and simple,
An hundred times made plain,
To seek another's profit
Take up the White Man's burden—
The savage wars of peace
Fill full the mouth of Famine,
And bid the sickness cease;
Watch sloth and heathen folly
Bring all your hope to naught.
Take up the White Man's burden
No iron rule of kings,
But toil of serf and sweeper—
The tale of common things.
The blame of the
Why brought
Our loved
The judgment of your peers.
[Copyright 1899, by Rudyard Kipling—All Rights Reserved.]
The above poem, which we reproduce by permission of the S. S. McClure Company, is the latest effort of the most distinguished writer of English of the present day, Mr. Rudyard Kipling, who is now staying at the
past week at
RK TIMES, FRIDAY, JULY 5, 1946.
TRUMAN DECLARES PHILIPPINES FREE
Proclamation on Independence Read at Special Observance at Washington Quarters
WASHINGTON, July 4—President Truman formally recognized the independence of the Philippines today through a proclamation.
The official statement was read at ceremonies held some hours after those in Manila, because of the time difference, at the headquarters of the old Commonwealth Government on Massachusetts Avenue.
Frank P. Lockhart, chief of the Philippine Division of the State Deepartment, read the proclamation in the absence of the President. As the United States came down the United States Army Band played "The Star-Spangled Banner," and as the



leandro locsin, CCP

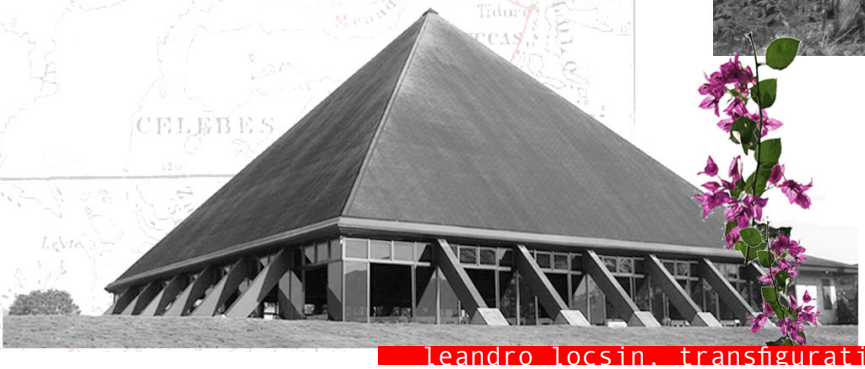




juan nakpil, metropolitan theatre of manila.



ifugao fale house



leandro locsin, transfiguration chapel

“in what style should we build?”

In an attempt to understand ramifications of colonization, the history of the Philippines will be analyzed through the lens of architecture. In this process, questions about cultural representation emerged. What is the identity of the place? Which part of history was considered worthy of celebration? What details have been be omitted and how is this portrayed in the built environment? Does architecture speak about a nation’s identity? Examples were drawn from architecture that employs different styles from neoclassical federal buildings to tropical regionalism. The thesis looks at work of well-respected architects in the country such as Leandro Locsin’s attempts of modernizing the indigenous house *bahay kubo* in designing the Cultural Center of the Philippines by abstraction of form and liberation of local materials to the use of concrete in such a way that it fits within the style of brutalism. As the very first registered architect in the country, Don Tomas

figure 3. architecture in the Philippines. digital mixed media collage (2020)

Mapúa's works seem to agree with Eurocentric ideologies[4] as many of the federal and institutional buildings he designed employ neoclassical forms. Some notable projects include Manila Central Post Office, Philippine General Hospital, and the facade of St. La Salle Hall in De La Salle University. On the other hand, the Metropolitan Theater of Manila by Juan Arellano is culturally celebrated and has often been described as an example of "beaux-arts classicism or tropical art deco". This is considered as hybrid approach as the architect transforms a neoclassical building through ornamentation of tropical motifs such as bananas, mangoes, bamboo as a way to appropriate colonial buildings in the context of the Philippines.[5] Vernacularization as coined by Edson Cabalfin had become a form of expression in the post war era as the Philippines faced a new period of nationalistic movements. This is an approach that looks into the indigenous culture to explore the idea of a genuine cultural identity, perhaps the notion of "untouched" or an idealistic portrayal of a style that has "never been colonized". The approach of literal representations was perceived as "an avenue for the expression of Filipino-ness" as a way to achieve a "genuine Filipino identity."[6]

Along with the historical research is a personal observation from a distance of the development of architecture in the Philippines. I ask myself why things are the way they are today? Or perhaps if the Philippines have

4 This is filtered through my personal understanding of the built environment. The presence of a neoclassical building in the context of the Philippines, especially through institutions, is a physical manifestation of power of those who are in control.
5 Edson Cabalfin. "'Modernizing the Native: The Vernacular and the Nation in Philippine Modern Architectures.'" DOCOMOMO Journal 34 (2006).
6 Ibid.

figure 4. on the streets of Intramuros, Manila retrieved from http://www.canadianinquirer.net/

fully submitted to the ways of the colonizers? The desire to be like the West? What does Filipino identity mean? In hopes to pursue a “holistic definition”, or what many call a “solution to the problem”, I was confronted with the realization that I am looking at things with a biased perception, perhaps a colonized mind. This became the start of a journey of what seems like an impossible pursuit, but I believe that it should remain this way. There is no clear solution. Rather, this thesis is a continuous process of pursuit of cultural and personal identity. It reflects upon the non-tangible elements of architecture that are beyond the meaning of style and aesthetics, but of the human experience in a colonized world.

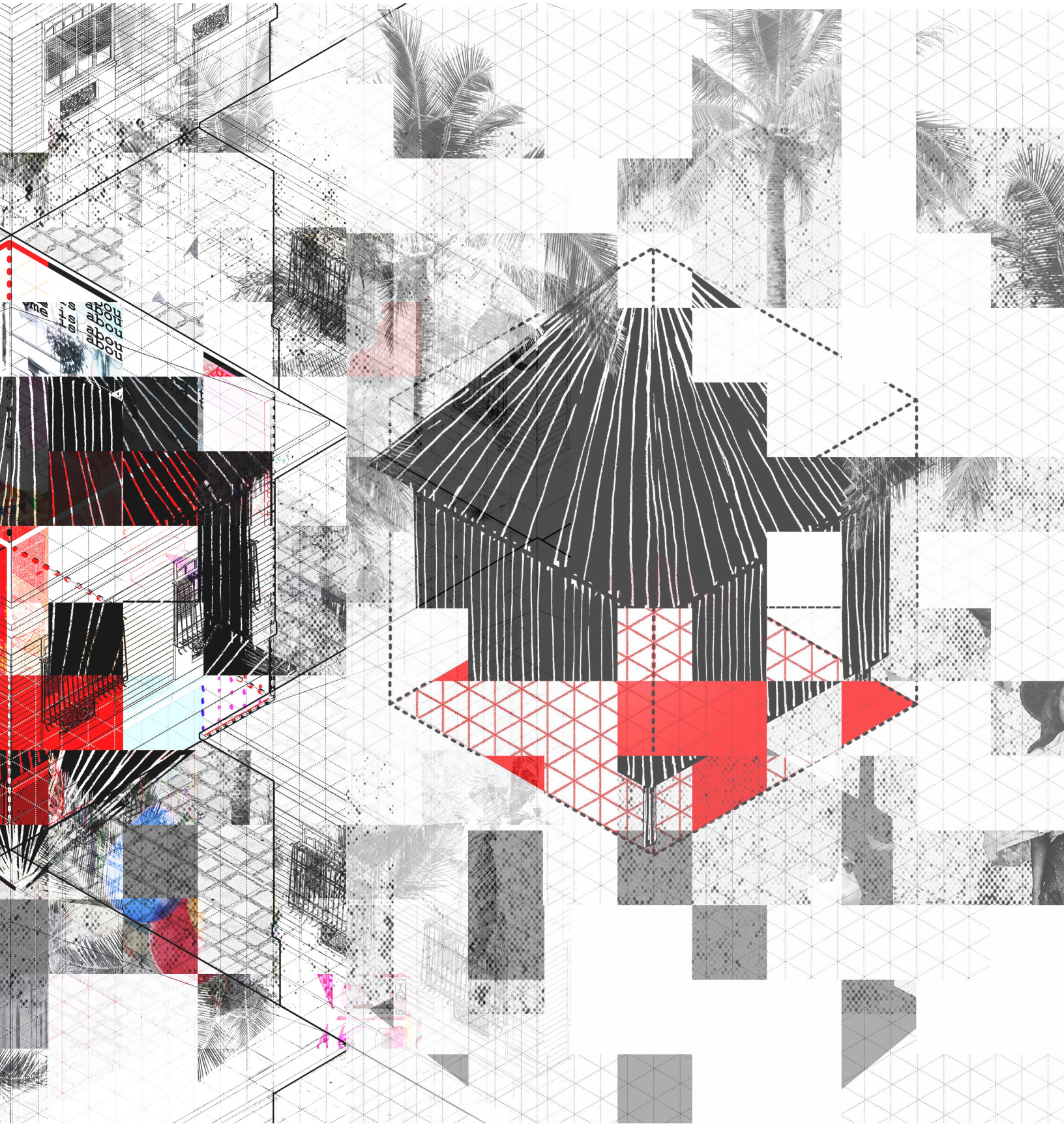


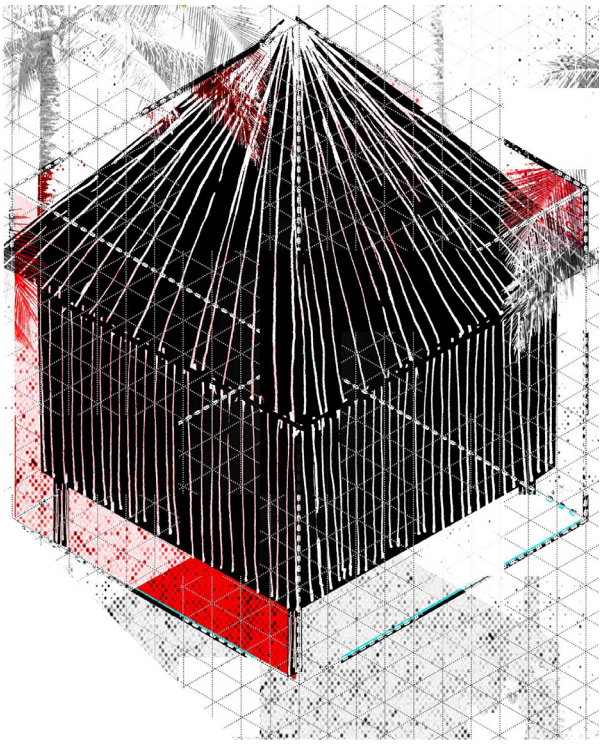
ii

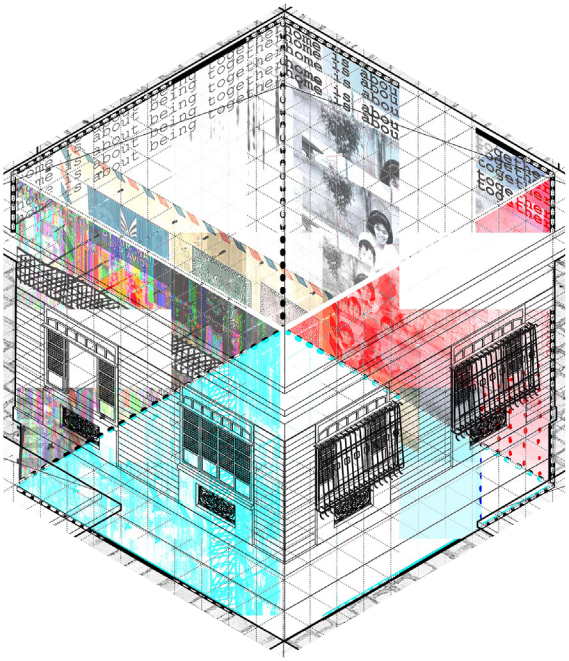
theory

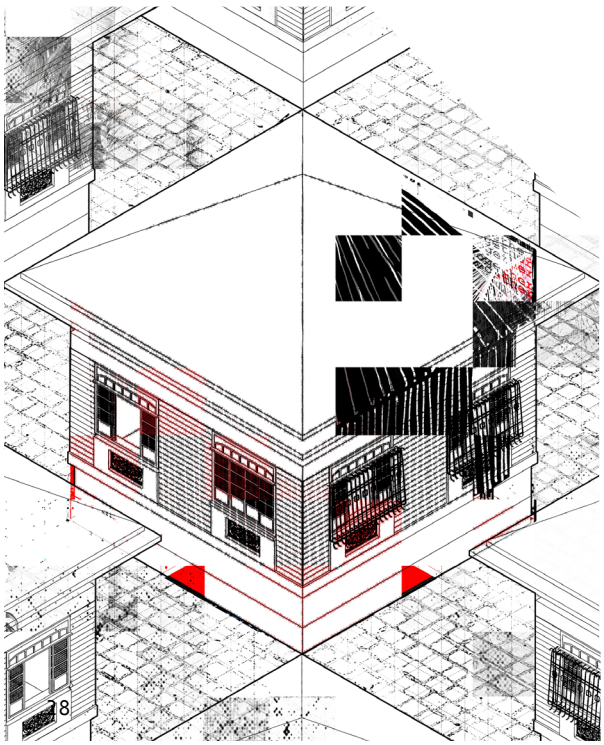
hybrid









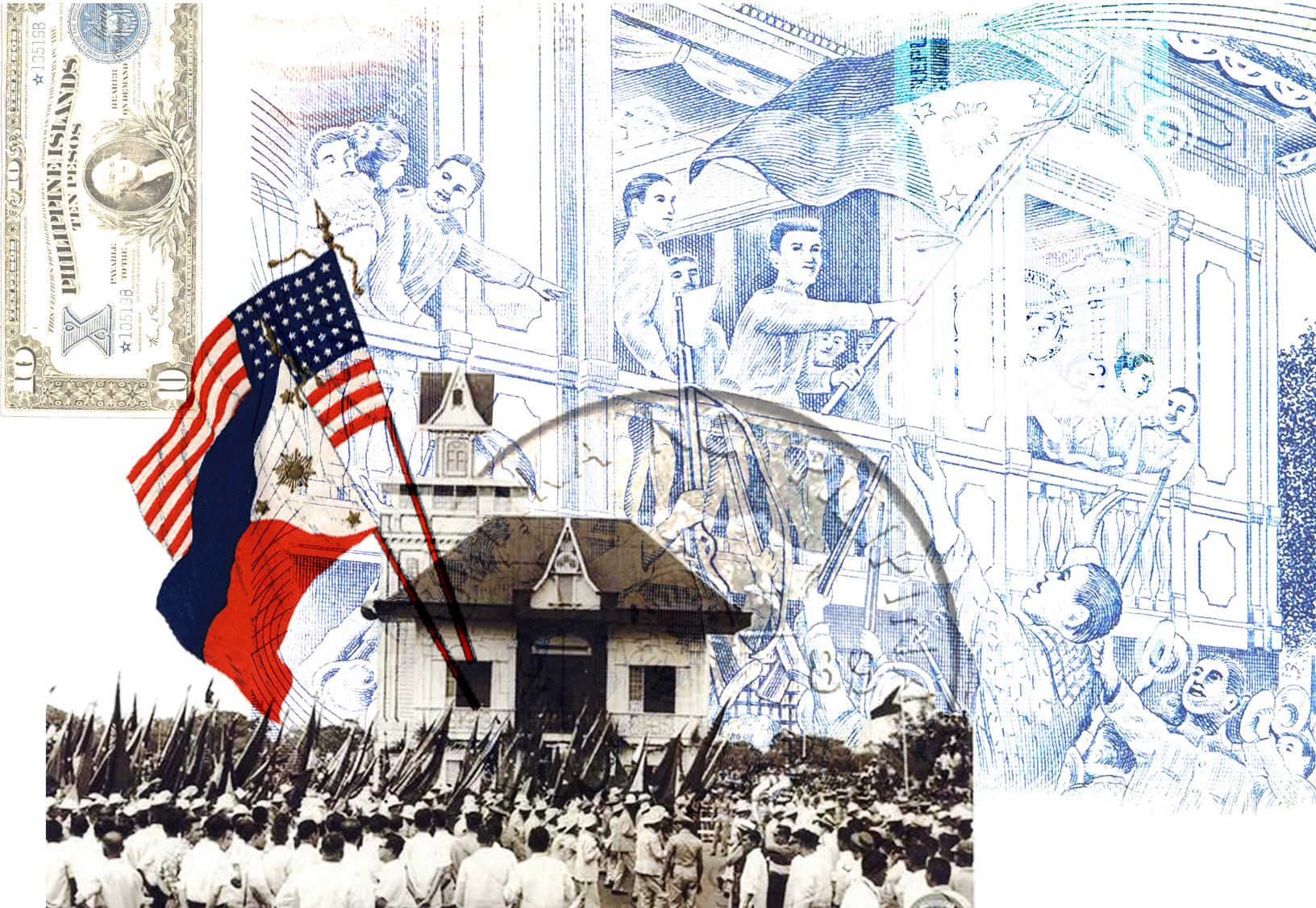


hybrid

A person once asked a dutch anthropologist Niels Mulder, “What is Filipino?”. He responded by characterizing the people of the Philippines as “Roman Catholic, English-speaking Malay with a Spanish last name and a predilection for Chinese food.”[7] In this passage, the question implies that Filipino is meant to be understood as a holistic concept. Nevertheless, cultural artifacts point to multiplicities and the assemblage of contradictory pieces, which according to Deluzian concept are “complex structure(s) that does not reference a prior unity”, some fragmented parts that “cannot be considered manifold expressions of a single concept or transcendent unity.”[8]

7 Niels Mulder. “Filipino Identity: The Haunting Question, in: Journal of Current Southeast Asian Affairs.” GIGA German Institute of Global and Area Studies, Institute of Asian Studies and Hamburg University Press. May 5, 2013.
8 Adrian Parr. The Deleuze Dictionary. New York: Columbia University Press, 2014.

The notion of a singular identity however has its origins. Derived from the Latin word “idem”, the meaning of identity has the connotation of “sameness”, “likeness”, or “oneness”. It suggests that identification is homogenous by nature and civilizational values rooted in uniformity embody the pure and absolute essence of identity. Therefore, when derived from a multiplicity of sources, the meaning could entail a “crisis” of identity. Niels Mulder’s reading of the culture in the Philippines epitomizes an idea of crisis as he suggests that Filipino identity is a “haunting question”. In his essay, he argues that Filipinos have a lack of nationalistic values and the society drowns in repercussions of the American imperialist regime that still exists today. Based on a “nineteenth-century



European phenomenon" he defines nationalism as a "means of building the strength of the state through creating popular identification with its ruling regime."[9] He claims that colonial impact resulted in the miseducation of Filipinos and this situation limits the society's sense of nationalistic spirit to meaningless symbols such as raising of the flag, singing of the national anthem, or false celebration of national holidays like Independence Day or Rizal Day without knowing their significance. Furthermore, he criticizes the use of English language as a means of instruction in most schools and regards it as depriving people of their own history and identification with the collective nation. He illustrates the extreme alienation some children experience as they grow up submitting to the "discipline of English-speaking private schools" and discovering upon entering higher education that they do not live in an English-speaking country.[10] For him, Filipinos have lost their own identities in pursuit of the Western ideals.[11]

> *We take after whatever reaches us from the West, from America. We are imitators who have lost authenticity. How can we ever be ever self-confident Filipinos who stand identifiably on their own? "(Excerpt from a commentator from Mulder's lecture at Enverga University)*[12]

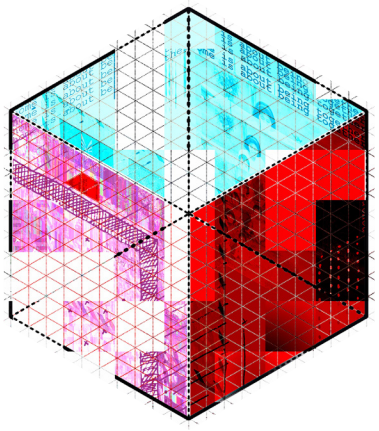
figure 5. resistance from independence. digital mixed media collage (2020)

9 Niels Mulder. "Filipino Identity: The Haunting Question, in: Journal of Current Southeast Asian Affairs." GIGA German Institute of Global and Area Studies, Institute of Asian Studies and Hamburg University Press. May 5, 2013.
10 Ibid.,66.
11 The use of English in the Philippines is very common. In fact, people often converse in what many call "Taglish" language - a mixture of Tagalog and English. In this Youtube video (Asian Boss. Can Filipinos Speak Their Own Language? (Tagalog Challenge) | ASIAN BOSS, 2018.), an interviewer conducts a social experiment asking people to answer a question in pure Tagalog language. The responses illustrate how difficult it is for young folks to engage in a conversation without slipping a few English words in their sentences. For many, this raises a question of appropriation, while other claims that it is a sign of a declining culture.
12 Niels Mulder. "Filipino Identity: The Haunting Question, in: Journal of Current Southeast Asian Affairs." GIGA German Institute of Global and Area Studies, Institute of Asian Studies and Hamburg University Press. May 5, 2013..

To put this into perspective, Mulder's position represents an essentialist understanding of cultural identity, one that is situated in centers of influences such as the school, nation-state and civil society. While reasonable, this view fails to recognize the fluid nature of culture and other aspects that could fall short to identify within the given criteria. According to Nikos Papastergiadis, the notion of multiplicity and its negative implications has historical references as the process of assimilation takes away the purity of a subject. He argues that hybridity "bears the dubious traces of colonial and white supremacist ideologies"[13], stating:

> *[A]s long as the concepts of purity and exclusivity have been central to a racialized theory of identity, hybridity has, in one way or another, served as a threat to the fullness of selfhood. The hybrid has often been positioned within or beside modern theories of human origin and social development, mostly appearing as the moral marker of contamination, failure, or regression.*[14]

The concept of hybrid is problematic from an essentialist perspective, but it gives meaning to the case of the Philippines. Homi Bhabha elaborates on describing the process of hybridization as the emergence of new identities through cross-cultural breeding of different opposing entities. In the book, *Location of Culture*, Bhabha argues that there is no such thing as pure and holistic definition of culture as its essence is fluid, changing and always in the process of redefinition. The significance of post-colonial, post-modern, post-feminism, post-anything discourse do not only rest on the extreme criticisms that references from historical or ethnocentric theories as they are limited to the "grand

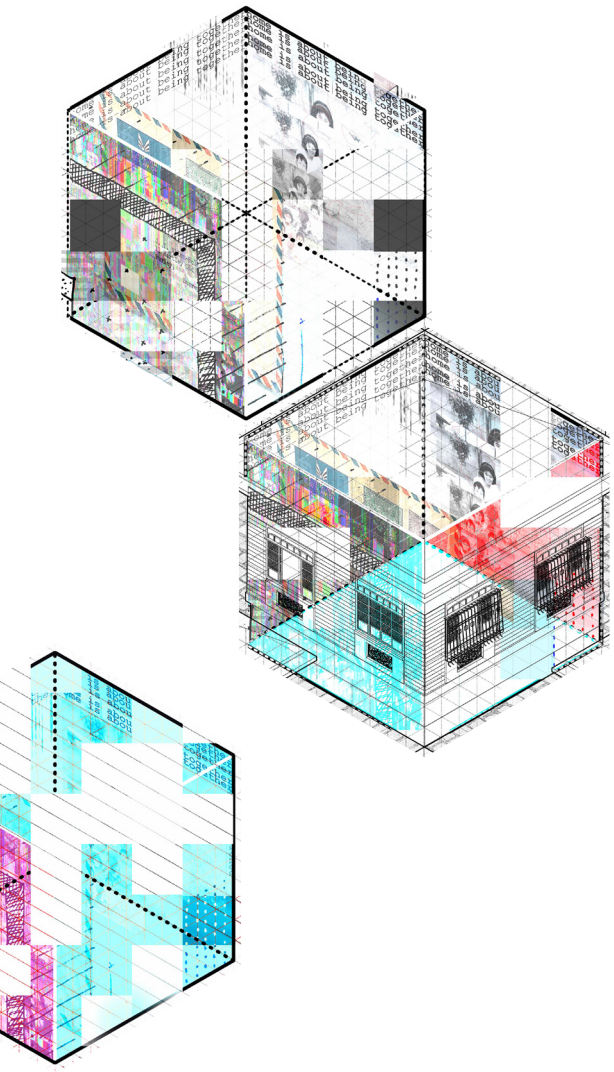


13 Nikos Papastergiadis, "Tracing Hybridity in Theory," Debating Cultural Hybridity: Multi-Cultural Identities and the Politics of Anti-Racism, 1997, pp. 257
14 Ibid.

narratives of postenlightenment rationalism" which in turn appear as biased conceptions.[15] It suggests a problematic notion of understanding matter as purely black and white:

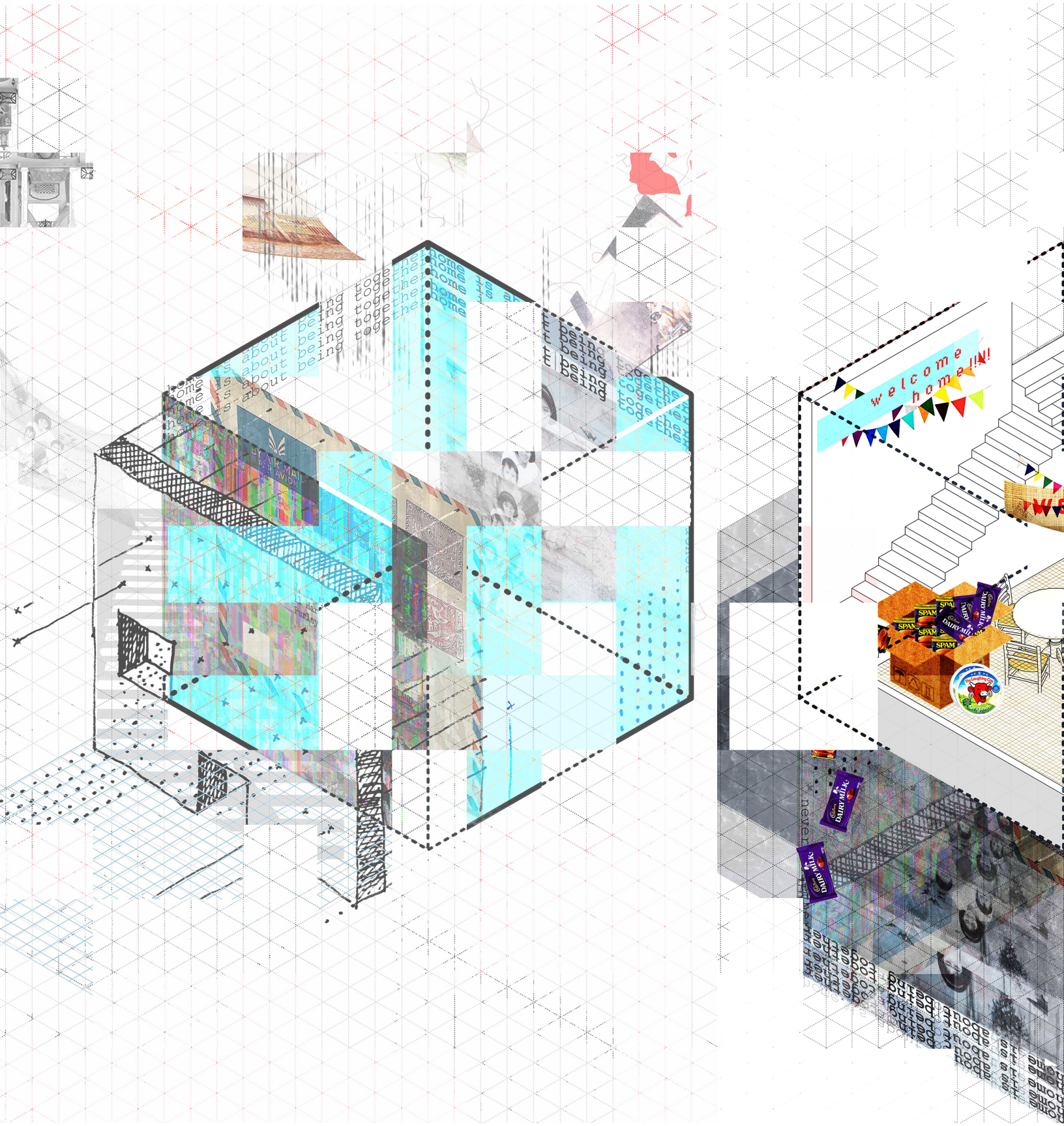
> *The move away from the singularities of "class" or "gender" as primary conceptual and organizational categories, has resulted in an awareness of the subject positions – of race, gender, generation, institutional location, geopolitical locale, sexual orientation – that inhabit any claim to identity in the modern world. What is theoretically innovative, and politically crucial, is the need to think beyond narratives of originary and initial subjectivities and to focus on those moments or processes that are produced in the articulation of cultural differences.*

Hybridity focuses on subjects that are not one or the other, but live within the entanglement of complex layers. However, given that the self "obeys the logic of more-than-one", the concept of identity "does not signal a stable core of self".[16] The search for meaning within this context can be a struggle because of the changing nature of its elements. Cultural identity cannot be bounded in a singular definition. It is composed of an assemblage of parts rather than a holistic definition. It is always under constant development and reconstruction. It is hybrid.



15 Homi K Bhabha. 2012. The Location Of Culture. Brantford, Ont.: W. Ross MacDonald School Resource Services Library.
16 Stuart Hall and Paul Du Gay. 1996. Questions of Cultural Identity. London: SAGE Publications Ltd.

third place




welcome home
welcome home
welcome home


ROXAS
ROBREDO
DAANG MATUWID
OUTERTEXUTERTE

third place

The space in-between is the architecture of the hybrid, a third place that exists amongst different dimensions. It is in this place that the hybrid continues to exist for it challenges an essentialist concept of space and meaning. However, it is also in the third place that complexity is created when a singular body recognizes multiple natures of being. In architectural terms, in-between occurs in the left-over, negative spaces. It is present in places along the periphery and at the borders but seldom at the center. Perhaps, this is one reason why inhabiting this space insinuates struggle because the nature of the place involves displacement of one entity to make way for another. The notion of margin, edge or a border implies difference and a state of transition and not a destination. For something to occur at the margins implies that there is a conflict of difference. It uncovers the entanglement and coming together of different worlds.

figure 6. architecture of-necessity. digital mixed media collage (2020)

To put it simply, the third place can be compared to a threshold, a connection between different entities. It is a space in-between that is neither here nor there. It is the doorstep that suggests entry to a new space and a departure from another sphere. A threshold implies the existence of separation and a subject's desire for movement because one never settles in the in-between. Inhabiting the third space could easily be an unsettling process for one only wishes to arrive at a destination but never does because the place only functions as a space for transition. The complexity lies in the absence of arrival, perhaps in the lack of sense of belonging in the world. Homi Bhabha elaborates on this concept in his essay "*The World and the Home*" while introducing the idea of "unhomeliness". Drawing upon Freud's concept of the uncanny, Bhabha illustrates the home, a place where one must feel a sense of security and belonging, as one that is the opposite of such. He states:

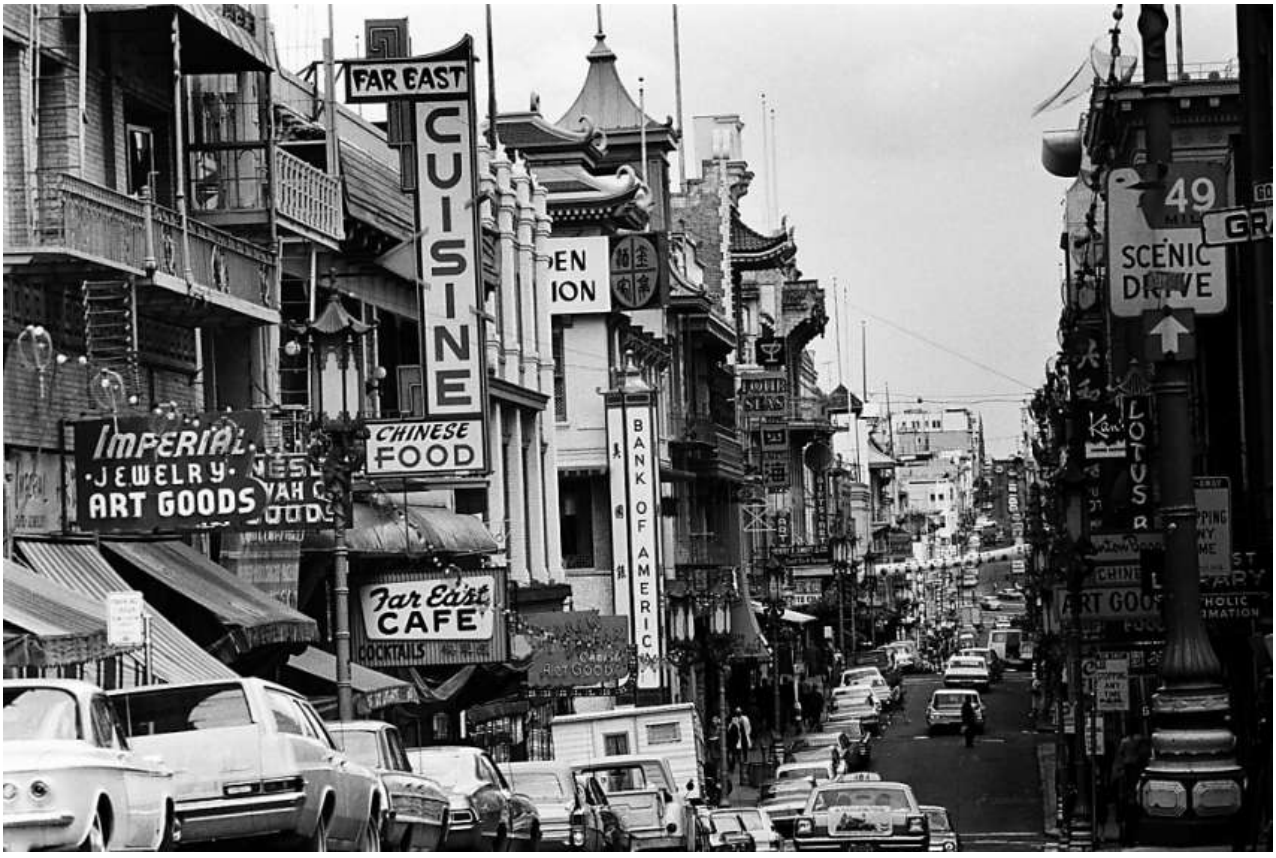
> *In a feverish stillness, the intimate recesses of the domestic space become sites for history's most intricate invasions. In that displacement the border between home and world becomes confused; and, uncannily, the private and the public become part of each other, forcing upon us a vision that is as divided as it is disorienting.*

In the context of this research, the third place manifests both in the physical and physiological realm. The physical world demonstrates this more evidently as illustrated in the examples earlier about hybrid buildings[17] From this example, we discover that the third place emerges in the resolution of two or more conflicting elements that exist in one environment.

figure 7. san francisco chinatown. michael ochs archives / getty images

17 Metropolitan Theatre of Manila, Cultural Center of the Philippines, Transfiguration Chapel of Bukidnon

Chinatowns in the United States are illustrations of two distinct cultures that encounter each other in one place. In the third chapter of *Hybrid Urbanism* entitled “California Chinatowns: Built Environments Expressing the Hybridized Culture of Chinese Americans”, Christopher Yip describes in-between spaces as they materialize in the real world. While raising questions about authenticity and cultural appropriation, the author emphasizes the complexity of Chinatowns as a consequence of cultural assimilation. He claims that the architecture in Chinatowns no longer carry the essence of American buildings, nor are they the epitome of Chinese architecture. Rather, the resilience of users inhabiting a



foreign environment resulted in hybrid architecture, one that reflects the “transformation of U.S. building types to the needs of Chinese-American immigrants”.[18]

Similarly, the notion of third place exists in borderlands, as described by Ronald Rael, “they are a place of contentions, of confluence..a place where identities are both defined and shared across landscapes”[19]. An architect and professor at University of California, Berkeley, Rael’s work has been inspired by his own experience living as a “border citizen”. He illustrates the nature of architecture that develops along borders, specifically between New Mexico and Colorado, the United States and Mexico’s border back in 1898. For example, San Lorenzo church, a Spanish church built on the Native American reservation near the border uses construction techniques from various cultures. The structure evolved through time from its construction in the late 1700s to today. Originally built with mud walls and flat roof made of logs, the church transformed with lime plastered walls, pitch roof with tin metal sheets and cupola upon the arrival of the railroad and lumber mills. Today, the church appears closer to its original form with the pitch roof stripped back and with new materials integrated. Rael describes how the church is “trapped in a liminal condition between all cultures” as it tries to define its actual authentic version.



18 Christopher L. Yip, “California Chinatowns: Built Environments Expressing the Hybridized Culture of Chinese Americans,” in Hybrid Urbanism, ed. Nezar Alsayyad (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2001), 73-74

19 “*GSD Talks: Ronald Rael, “Borderwall as Architecture.*” Lecture presented at the GSD Talks: Ronald Rael, “Borderwall as Architecture,” November 14, 2017.

These examples express the notion of third place in the same manner that the built environment in the Philippines continues to develop. Architectures that characterize hybrid attributes do not portray a lack of unity in its essence, but it is a symbol of resilience and resistance as the nation attempts to reconstruct itself throughout its long colonial history.

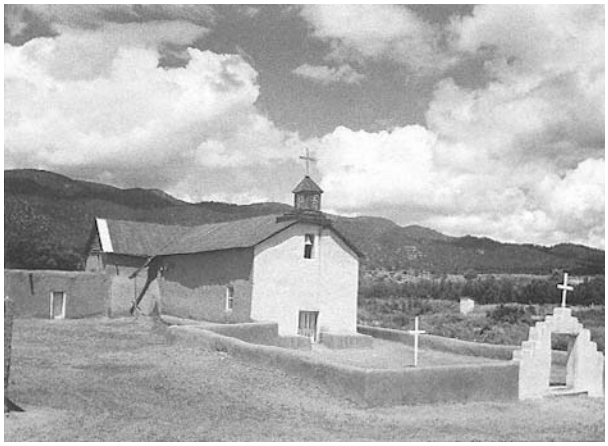






figure 8. development of san lorenzo church at picuris pueblo new mexico from late 1700's to today.

home





home

As humans, we physically inscribe our identity in the spaces we occupy and as a return, these spaces inscribe their presence into us. In the article *The Place of Home*, Janet Donohoe explores the interconnection between body and place, specifically the "normative power of home".[20] She writes that "the body and place are inseparable" and that the body has an intimate relationship with the home as it is the place "where we develop a certain style of acting in the world". As a "point of departure for all experiences", home represents the real engines of our beings.[21] It is the extension of self, the embodiment of ones' lived experiences in the world. Quoting Gaston Bachelard in his book Poetics of Space, he writes:

20 Janet Donohoe. "Place of Home." Environmental Philosophy8, no. 1, 25-40.
21 Ibid.

> *"…the house is one of the greatest integration for the thoughts, memories and dreams of mankind... Without it, man would be a dispersed being. It maintains him through storms of heavens and through those of life. It is body and soul. It is the human being's first world. Before he is cast into the world, man is laid in the cradle of the house. And always, in our daydreams, the house is a large cradle."*[22]

In this passage, the house is described as one of the most intimate spaces that transcends the boundaries of physical geometry and time. It represents a deeply personal encounter with space, the architecture that spatializes the inner landscapes of being. At home, new worlds can be created through the act of dwelling, daydreaming, longing, imagining.

As stated in the theoretical framework, hybrids exist in multiple dimensions and so are the homes they occupy. This concept suggests that home is a fragmented architecture composed of multiple pieces that evolve as inhabitants navigate to exist within differerent realities. In this context, the house becomes the medium that bridges the gap between opposing cultures. The thesis explores the meaning of hybrid identity that dwells in the house as a third place. Recognizing that the homes are grounded on shifting landscapes, the act of dwelling is conceptualized around the following ideas of home:

1 being at home

2 being temporarily at home

3 being away from home

4 community as home

5 place as home

22 Gaston Bachelard. The Poetics of Space. London: Penguin Books, 2014.



characters

bahay kubo:

Bahay kubo is a traditional house in the Philippines typically made of natural materials such as bamboo, *palapa* or thatch roof. Although a simple house, the *bahay kubo* is an illustration of sustainable architecture in the country as it practically functions with no waste and within a closed loop sytem. The traditional house is commonly situated in close proximity to the coast or the forest which enables easy access to material and food resources. The house is raised on stilts, elevated off the ground to allow livestock and other animals to inhabit the space underneath. This configuration also enables natural ventilation, especially with slatted bamboo pieces used for the building envelope. The whole structure is constructed with lightweight materials which performs to endure natural disasters such as earthquakes and typhoons.

In Spanish colonial period, the *bahay kubo* developed into "*bahay na bato*", a house with a similar form as the *kubo* but with the use of stone in order to create a more noble and permanent home. Today, the use of industrial materials has become more prevalent, while natural materials are regarded unreliable for permanence and durability, thus bamboo's reputation as the "poor man's timber" The significance of *bahay kubo*, however, is more than its physical qualities. It represents a cultural heritage that is closely connected to the land, a self-sufficient way of living that unites one with its natural environment.

figure 8. bahay kubo.
mixed media collage (2020)



balikbayan:

"To return home". Yana Galbuena describes how *balikbayan* boxes, (cardboard packages filled with imported goods) are the only tangible connection between an overseas worker and their families in the Philippines. "I wanted to be the first one to tear the brown tape and inhale that American air, because even for a brief moment, I would be sharing the same air with my mother."[23] With about 12 million people residing overseas, Filipino diaspora comprises 10% of the Philippines total population. Given the economic circumstances in the country, many Filipinos take their chances to pursue work opportunity overseas, "to greener pastures", to buy into the American dream, to find a better life. Galbuena describes this as family trading for dollars, an unfortunate circumstance that "became the breeding ground for a colonial mentality"[24] This results in a brain drain as many educated citizens and highly skilled professionals provide their services all around the world, and very seldom in the Philippines. As a product of colonization, this is perhaps an illustration of Filipinos' lack of confidence in their own country's potential to develop and support its own society's needs.

figure 9. balikbayan.
mixed media collage (2020)

23 Yana Gilbuena, "Balikbayan Boxes and the Slow Erosion of the Filipino Family," SFChronicle.com (San Francisco Chronicle, October 31, 2019), https://www.sfchronicle.com/food/article/Balikbayan-boxes-and-the-slow-erosion-of-the-14661247.php.
24 Ibid.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SPAM
DAIRY MILK
The Laughing Cow
Original
welcome home!!!!!

kapitbahay:

Kapitbahay means neighbor in English but its direct translation connotes “to hold a house”, “firm grip to a house”, perhaps in association with the “*kapit-bisig*” or “arm to arm”. This is a reflection of the social structure of Filipino society especially in the barrio where families and neighbors are expected to look out for each other. *Kapitbahays* are considered as extension of the family. Some common practices include households exchanging cooked meals or watching the next-door neighbor’s children if needed. Personal belongings like utilities, cookware and utensils are shared among different households when needed. When there is a big celebration or fiesta, people come together to cook and prepare for the party. This is well illustrated in events like bayanihan, where a society thrives through mutual support and trust with each other.

figure 10. bayanihan.
mixed media collage (2020)



sari-sari:

The word *"sari-sari"* in Tagalog language means "variety", "sundry" or "assortment of different kinds". One of the most common usage for the word is in the "*sari-sari* store", a small family-owned neighborhood store usually situated in front of the house directly connecting a household to the street. Sari-sari stores offer variety of goods in small amounts - mostly common everyday products from snacks, cooking ingredients to cigarettes and laundry detergent. The products are usually displayed as a facade of the store, which creates a rich and colorful vibe to the street frontage.

While small scale, the *sari-sari* store plays a significant economic and social role in the neighborhood. The products are sold in very small amounts which allows people to acquire goods they could only afford with the day's earnings. In a popular variety television show in the Philippines, avid viewers are gifted with *sari-sari* stores or what they call "*Kabuhayan* Packages" (Livelihood Packages). This portrays the small business as an "empowering source of livelihood and upward mobility"[25] for families in need of additional income. As a social hub, *sari-sari* store is a beacon of the neighborhood, a piece of the street where childrens play after school and where locals hang out and catch up with one another.

figure 11. sari-sari.
mixed media collage (2020)

25 Jan Doroteo. "The Little Pinoy Sari-Sari Store: Of Otherness and Belonging in a Global Diaspora." Berkeley Prize 2017. UC Berkeley Department of Architecture, 2017.


HYBRID!
HALO
BOY BAWANG CORNICK
Chippy
BARBECUE
DRINK Coca-Cola
HALO HALO
SARI-SARI STORE
7up
EBRO

fig. 14

iv

fragments of home

allegory

Allegorical design as described by Penelope Haralambidou is “a critical method, which distances the architect from the construction site and redefines her as a commentator of spatial phenomena better grasped and analysed through drawing and text”.[26] She describes the process as figurative, metaphorical and imaginative which often signify “doubleness of intention”.[27] In other words, representation of the work requires interpretation in order to create room for meaning to shift. It invites agency and allows the spectator to engage with the content through a personal filter. This design approach introduces a shift from the often precise and rigid practice of architecture, and allows for a more speculative and intuitive process of drawing and exploration. For architects, this is an alternative way of thinking about space, perhaps one that is “not possible with the static two-dimensional representation of plans and section”.[28] It invites one to encounter chances for discovery.

For this thesis, allegory is used as a medium for storytelling to construct and reconstruct the narrative of identity through the lens of home in Filipino culture. Four homes are conceptualized to represent stories particular to the cultural and physical landscapes of history, identity, memory and becoming.

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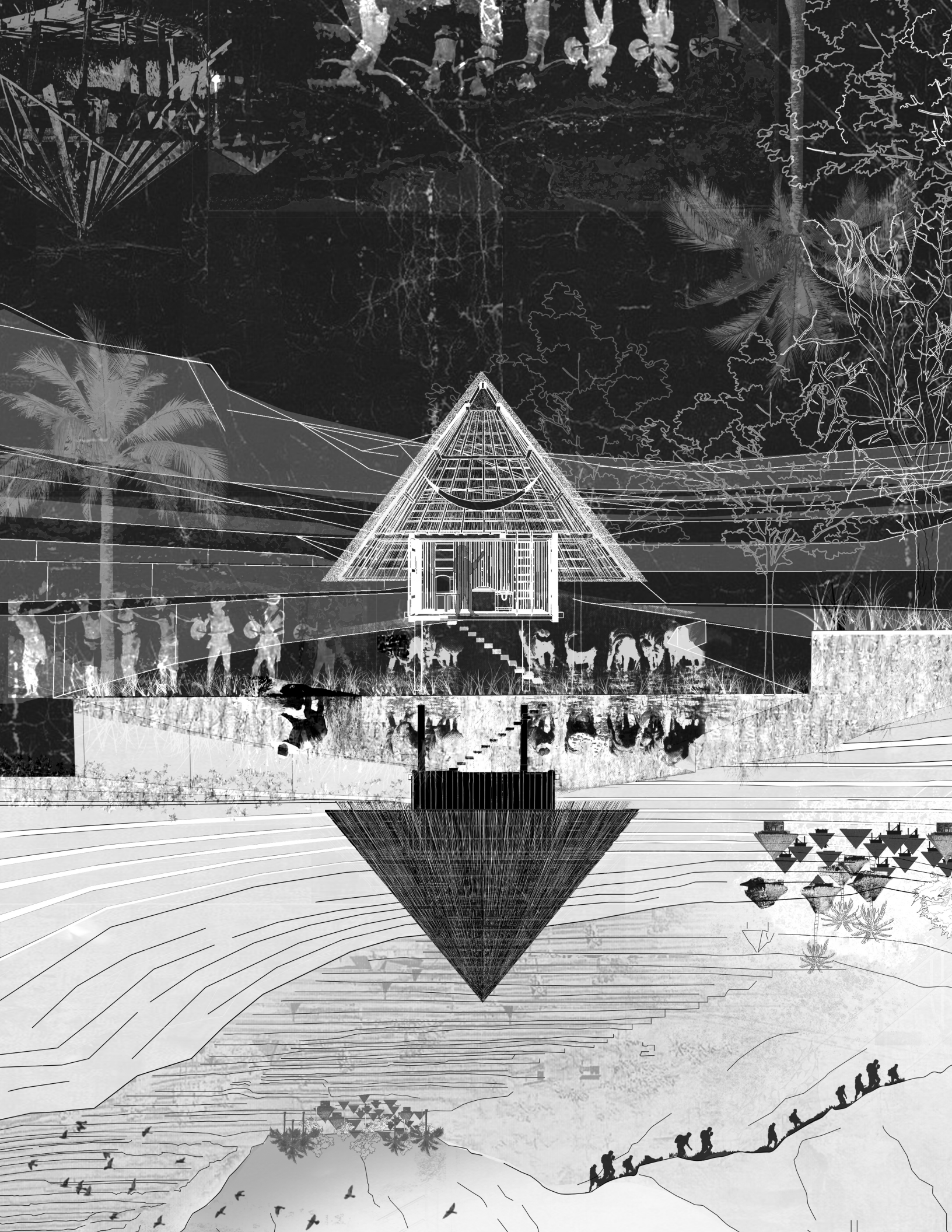
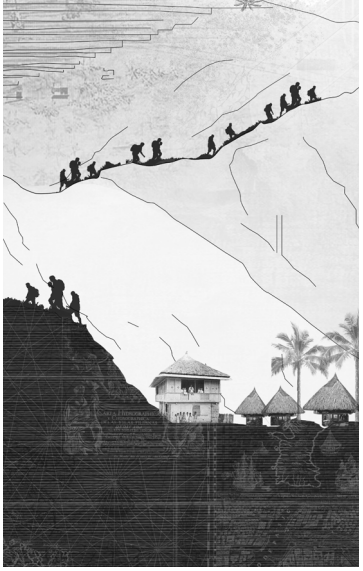
26 Penelope Haralambidou. ‘The Allegorical Project: Architecture as Figurative Theory’, in Tim Anstey, Katja Grillner and Rof Hughes, eds., Architecture and Authorship: Studies in Disciplinary Remediation, London: Black Dog Publishing, 2007, 36-51.
27 Ibid
28 “*Penelope Haralambidou - Jury Interview for ArchFilmFest London*”. Vimeo, 2017. https://vimeo.com/215390777.



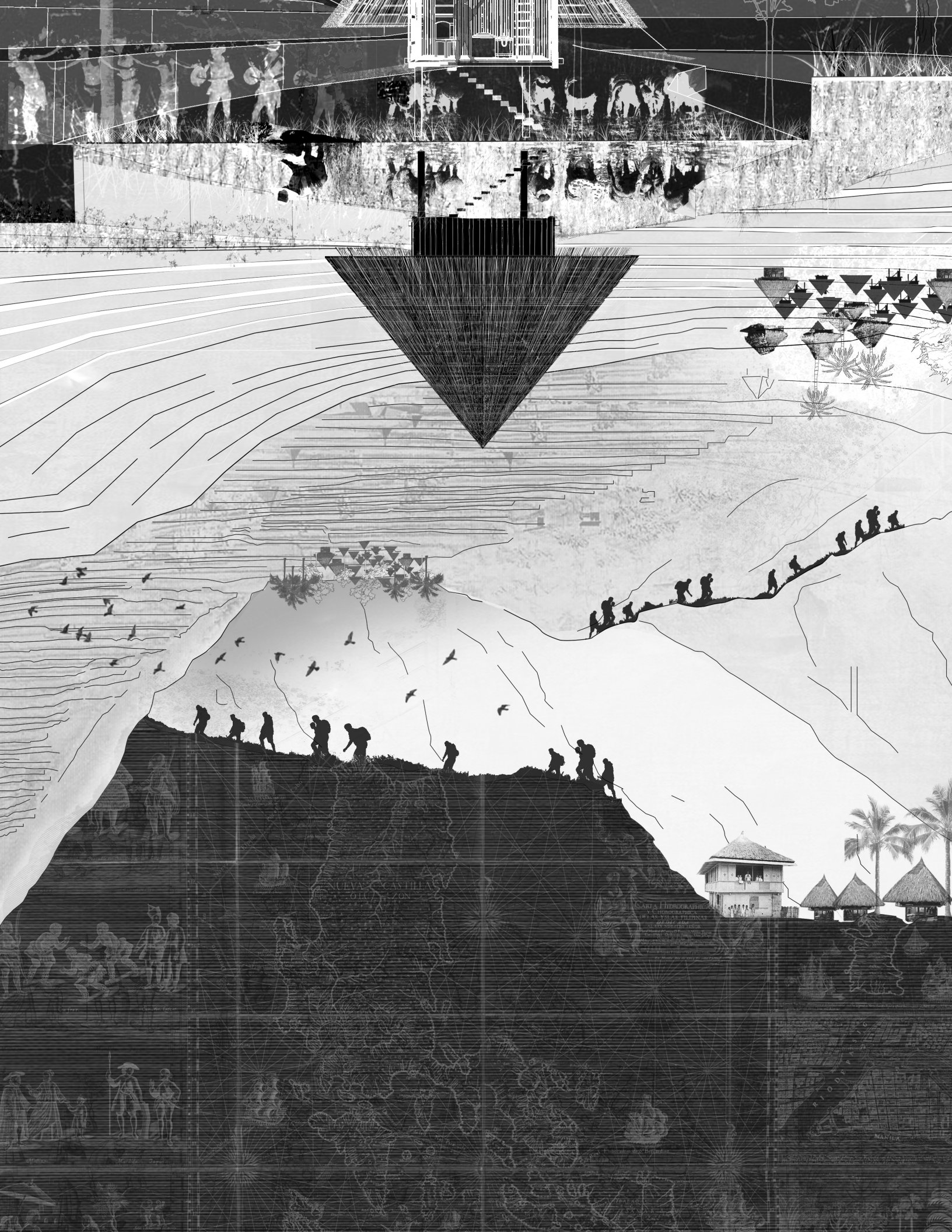
mountain
kabundukan

The first story is about the house on the mountain. In the northern province of Ifugao region, rice terraces majestically ascend thousands of feet following the contours of Cordillera mountains. The landscape steps up towards the sky resembling an amphitheater structure. Constructed with stone and earth, the terraces were designed to hold flooded ponds to support the cultivation of rice. It is believed that the carved mountains have been around for thousands of years. This landscape represents an outstanding work of engineering, but more importantly it is a symbol of rootedness, of humans' deep relationship with nature.



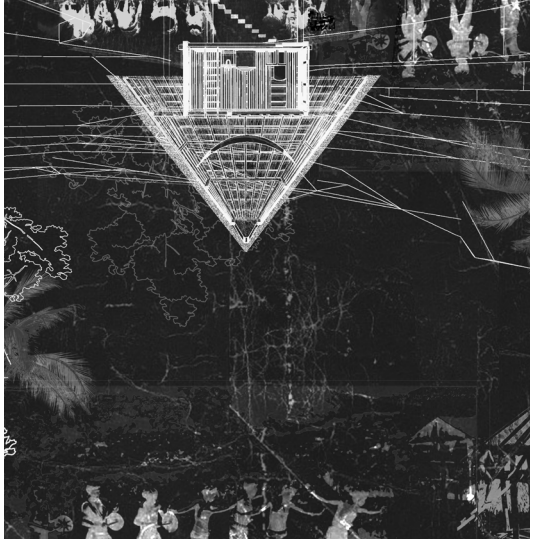


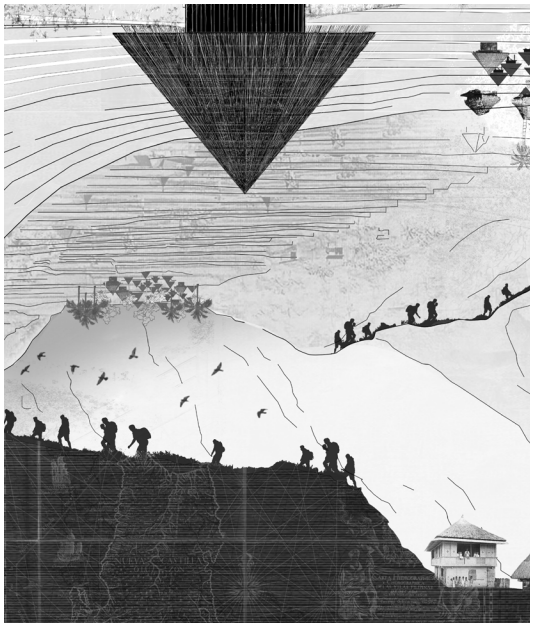
The house on the mountain is a reflection of this culture. It is grounded in place, in spirit and in materiality. It is constructed with natural materials – thick layers of palm leaves for the thatched roof, timber from *amugawan* trees, and a stone foundation to keep it stable. It is a simple house but it functions both as granary and a dwelling place. The pyramidal roof structure encloses its whole form creating a dark and windowless chamber, perhaps almost resembling a mother's womb, the origin of life. In a country where rice plays a central role in survival, this house stands on its feet embedding its rich history in the land.



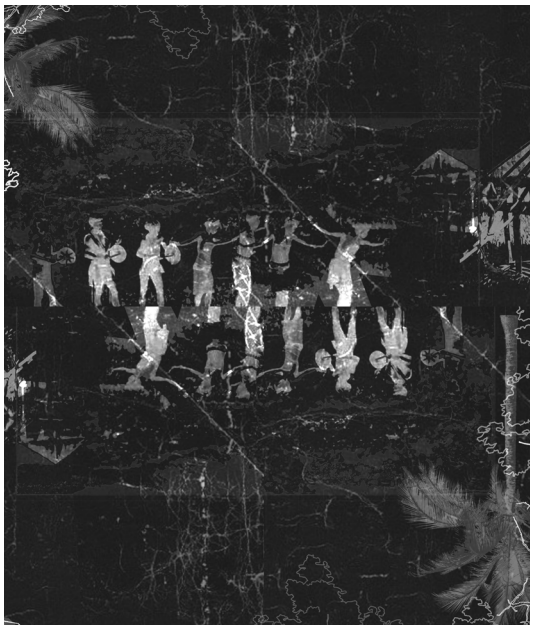
The earth is deemed sacred in the mountains, whereas in the lowlands, erosion of traditional values succeeds. Lowlanders submits to the "dominant feeling that colonial history was all we had."[29] It had made us supremely adaptable to the demands of the imperious West. Luis Francia writes, "Nationality, ethnicity and history hardly mattered to the landscape, yet it had helped shape a culture, the basis of a collective identity, the highlanders' identity that had resisted for centuries the assertions of colonizers."[30] This reminds us "lowlanders and coastal dwellers of how the sense of self often lay inert, inarticulate, and in danger of being forgotten."[31]

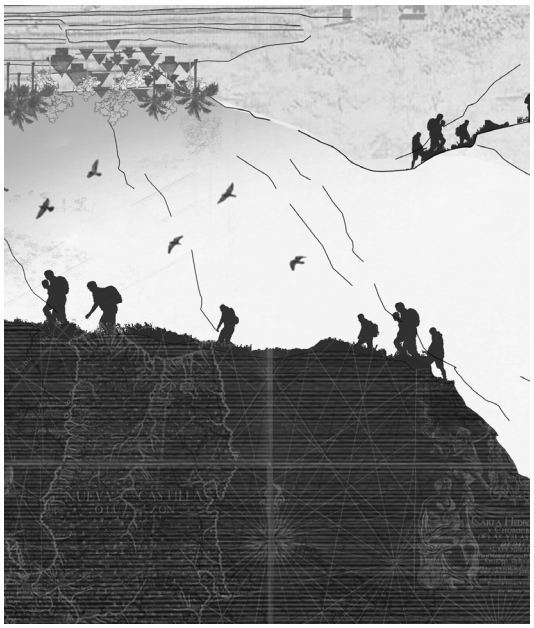
29 Luis Francia. Eye of the Fish: a Personal Archipelago. New York, NY: Kaya Press, 2001.
30 Ibid.
31 Ibid.

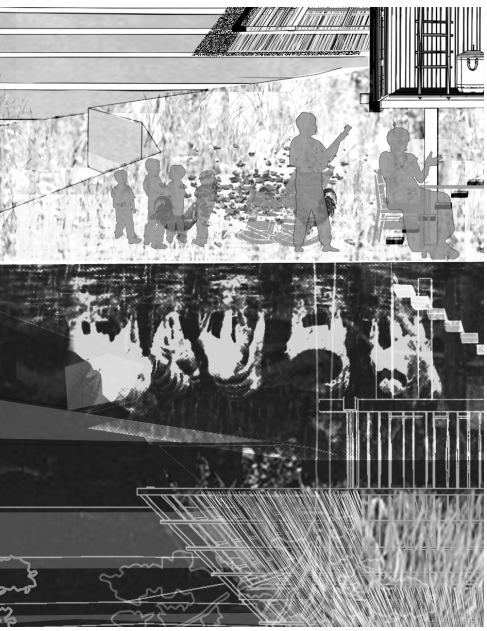


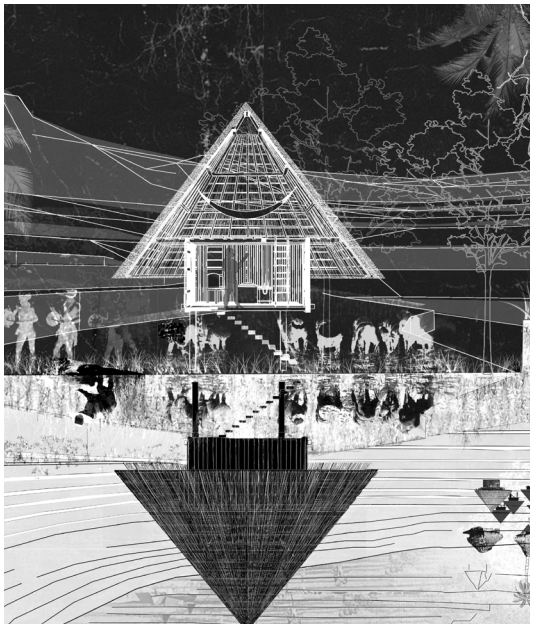


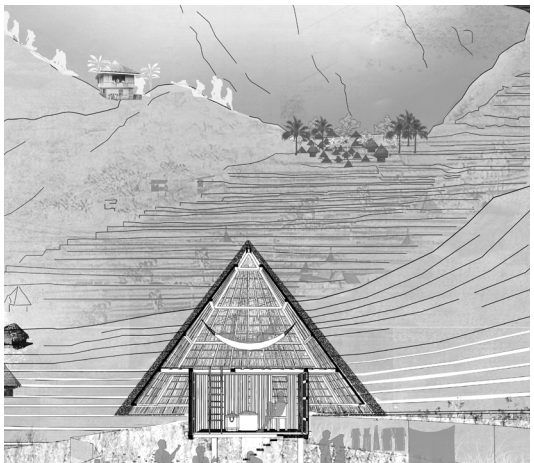


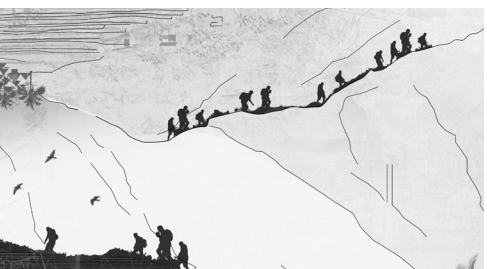


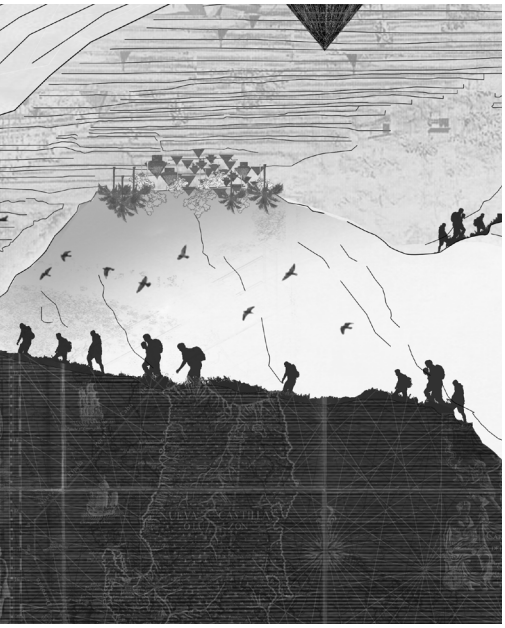


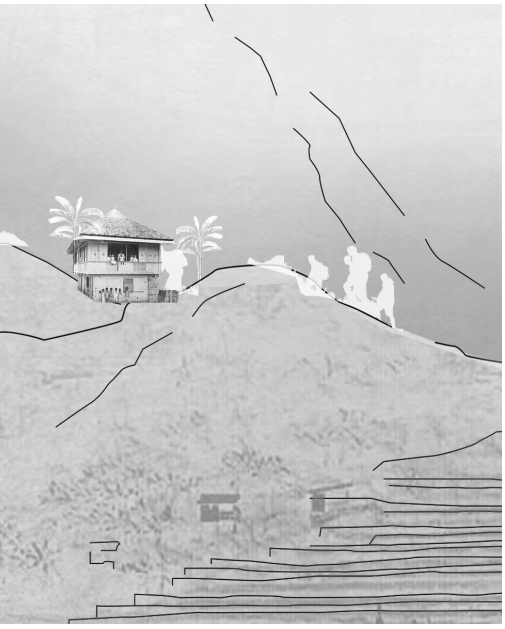






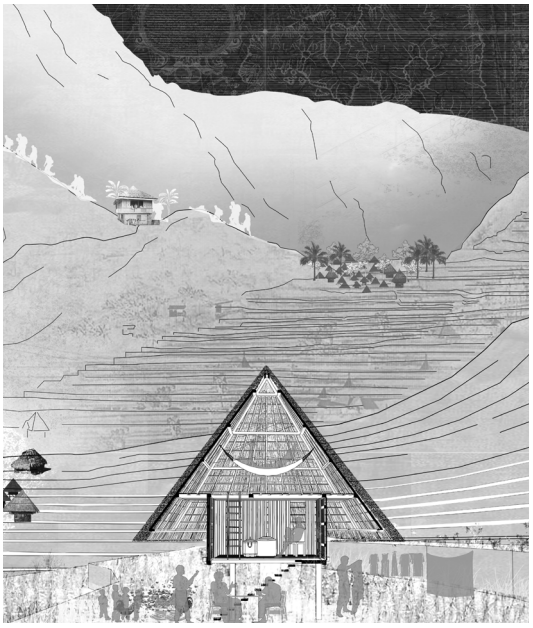


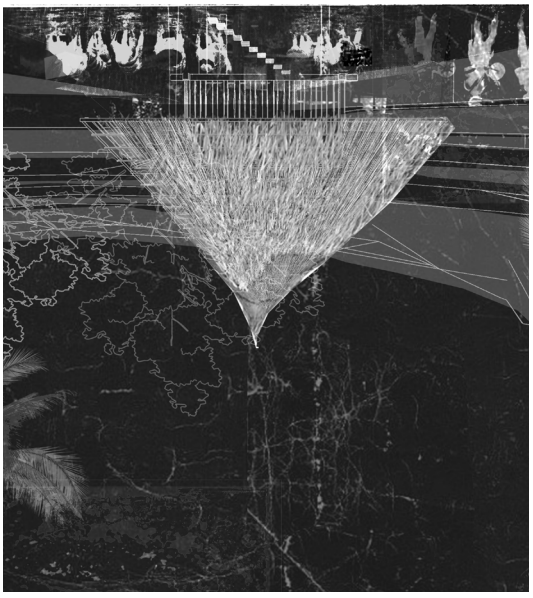


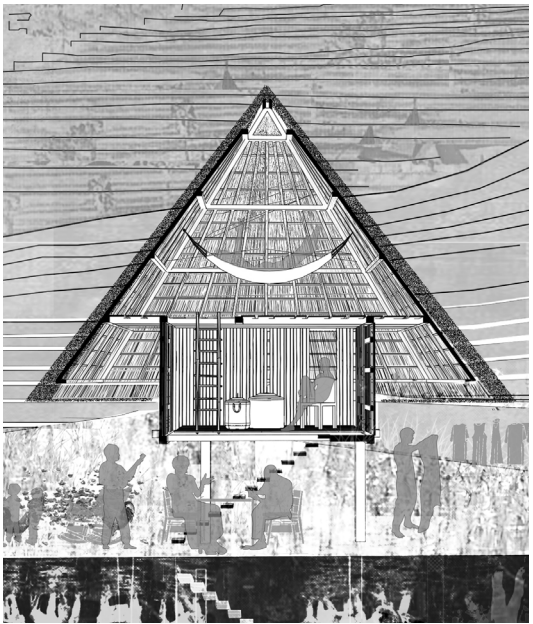




"Nationality, ethnicity and history hardly mattered to the landscape, yet it had helped shape a culture, the basis of a collective identity, the highlanders' identity that had resisted for centuries the assertions of colonizers." *(Luis Francia, Eye of the Fish)*





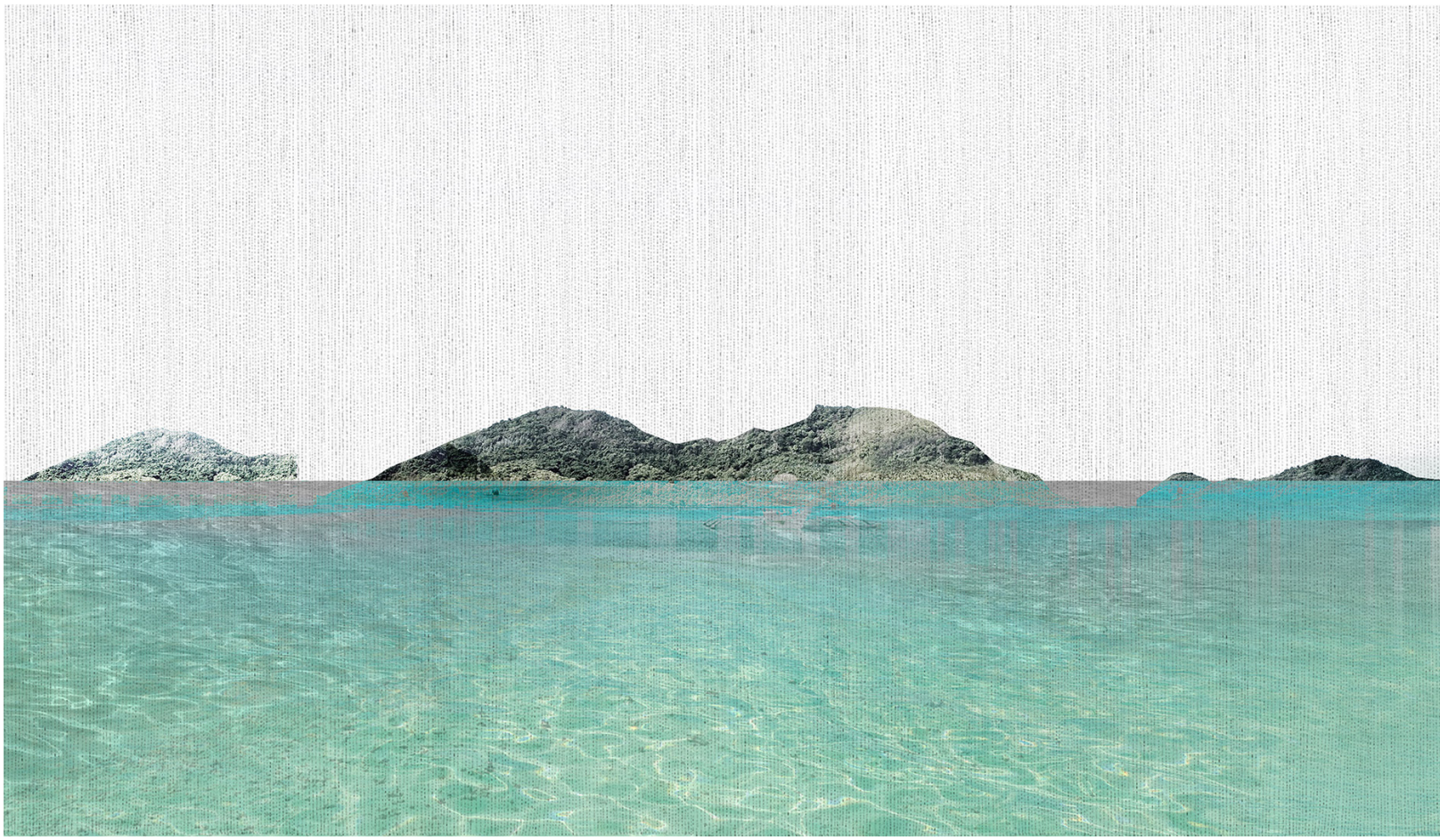




water
karagatan

Water. It is refuge, a source of livelihood and nourishment for survival. It is a force that allows one to progress and resist stagnancy, a fluid body that extends one's universe to a world without limits. However, it is also in the same waters that life is put at risk with its powerful tidal forces and deadly storms. Reflective of life itself, water is a symbol of change and the fluid nature of our identities.

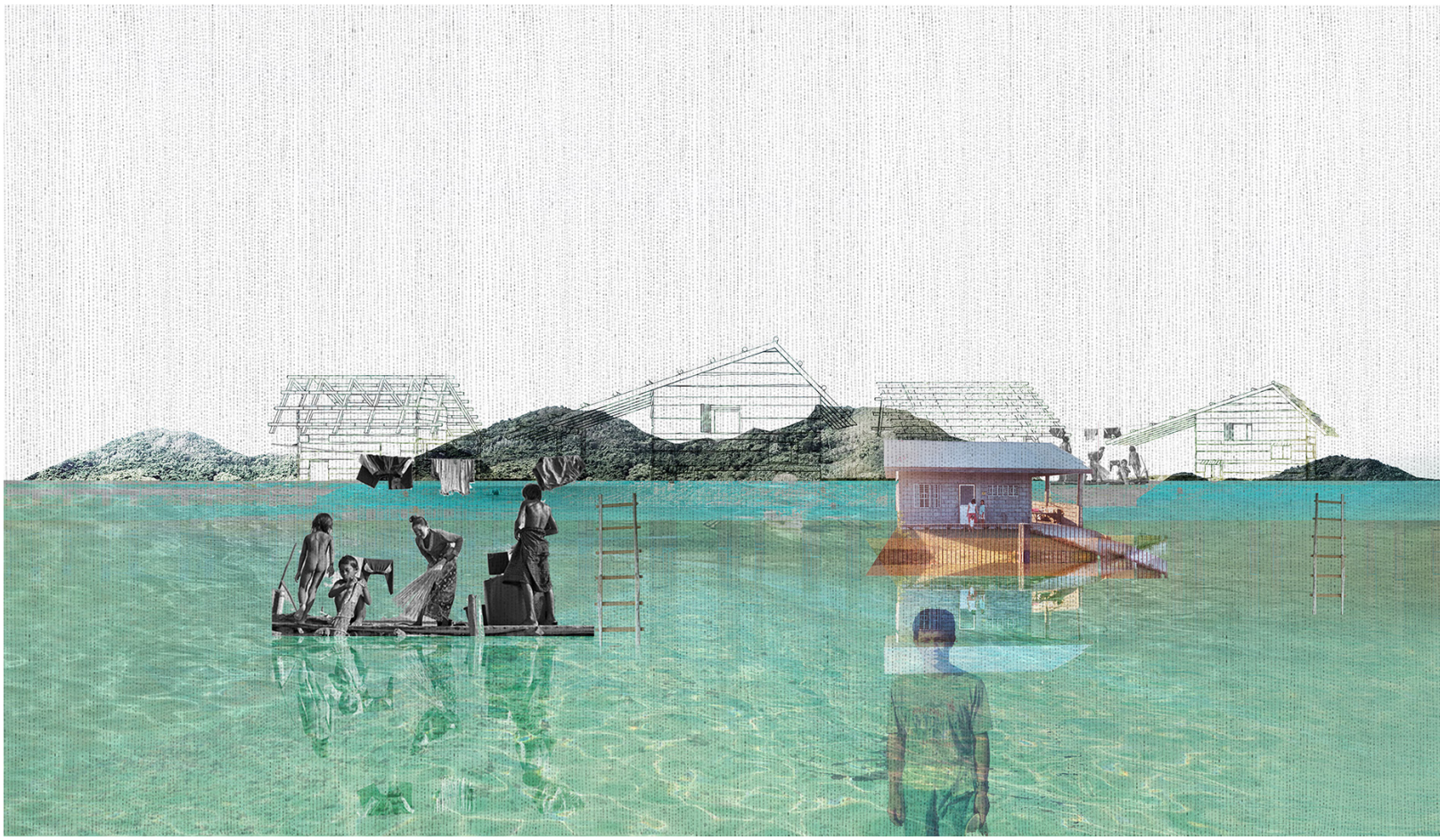






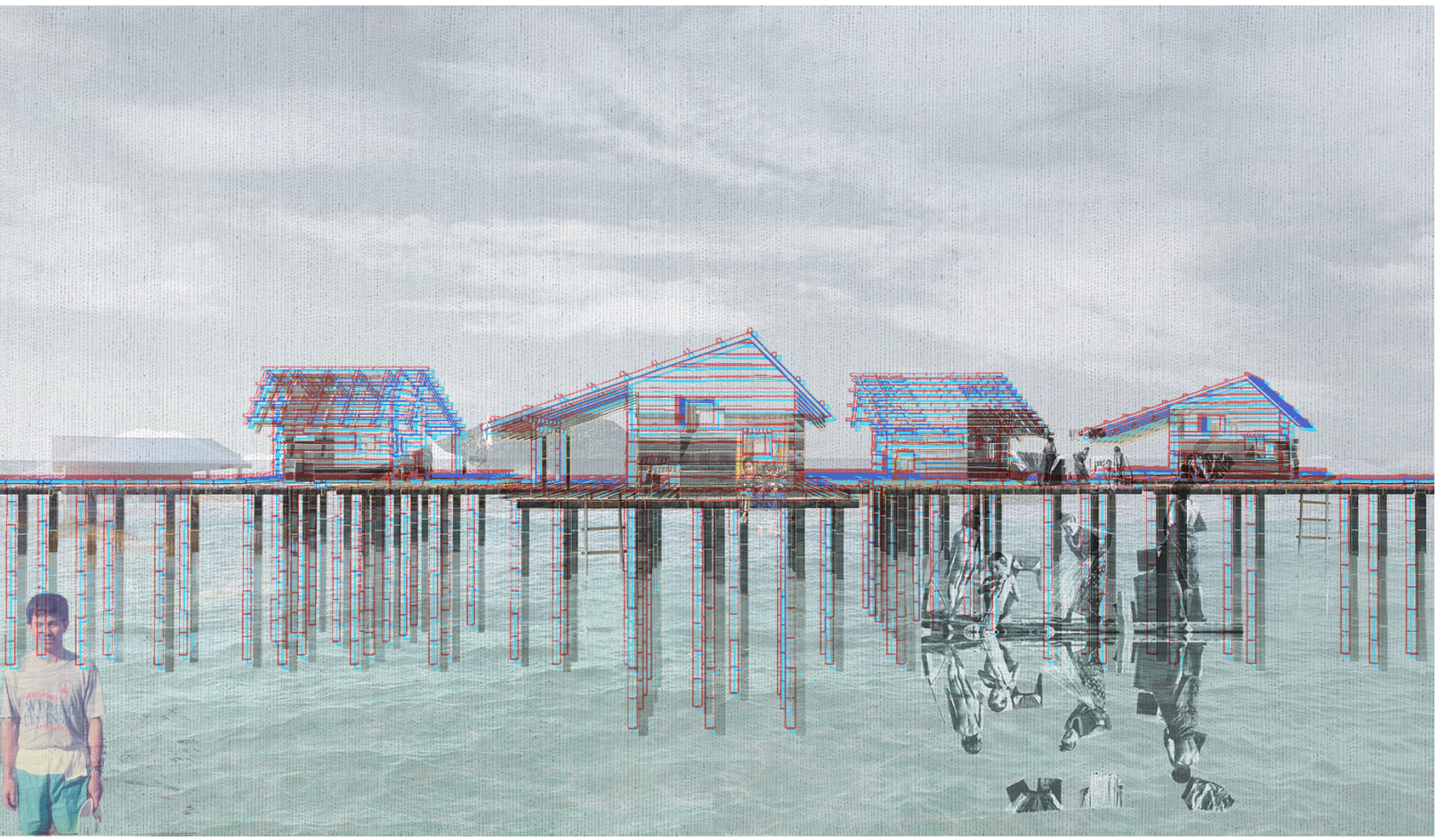


With more than 7000 islands, the Philippines is an archipelagic state, its waters both separating and uniting different dimensions of cultures, landscapes and societies. On the coastal regions of the islands, a house is situated on unstable grounds. It submits to the forces of nature and adapts to the ever-changing environment. The house is made up of fragments and debris of the ocean – some disintegrated pieces that were once a part of something bigger. It is everything but permanent. Here dwells hunter gatherers of the sea, species without fixed residency floating on the margins of the country, some call them *Badjaos* or sea gypsies.

















Perhaps, this lifestyle is parallel to Filipinos working overseas distant from their families, sailing away from home to search for what many call “a better life”. They dwell in a house where children grow without fathers, and where mothers care for other children but their own. It is a house under construction, needing to be completed but constantly in progress.

These inhabitants, should they know better than to construct fragile structures, and worse to live in them? But no, the houses are built for destruction. This architecture allows space for uncertainty, embraces possibilities, and accepts the ephemeral state of life. People inhabit this house without settling. They travel in harmony with the seas and survive through continuous navigation. Nevertheless, the inhabitants still desire to arrive somewhere and to finally settle home, wherever that may be.







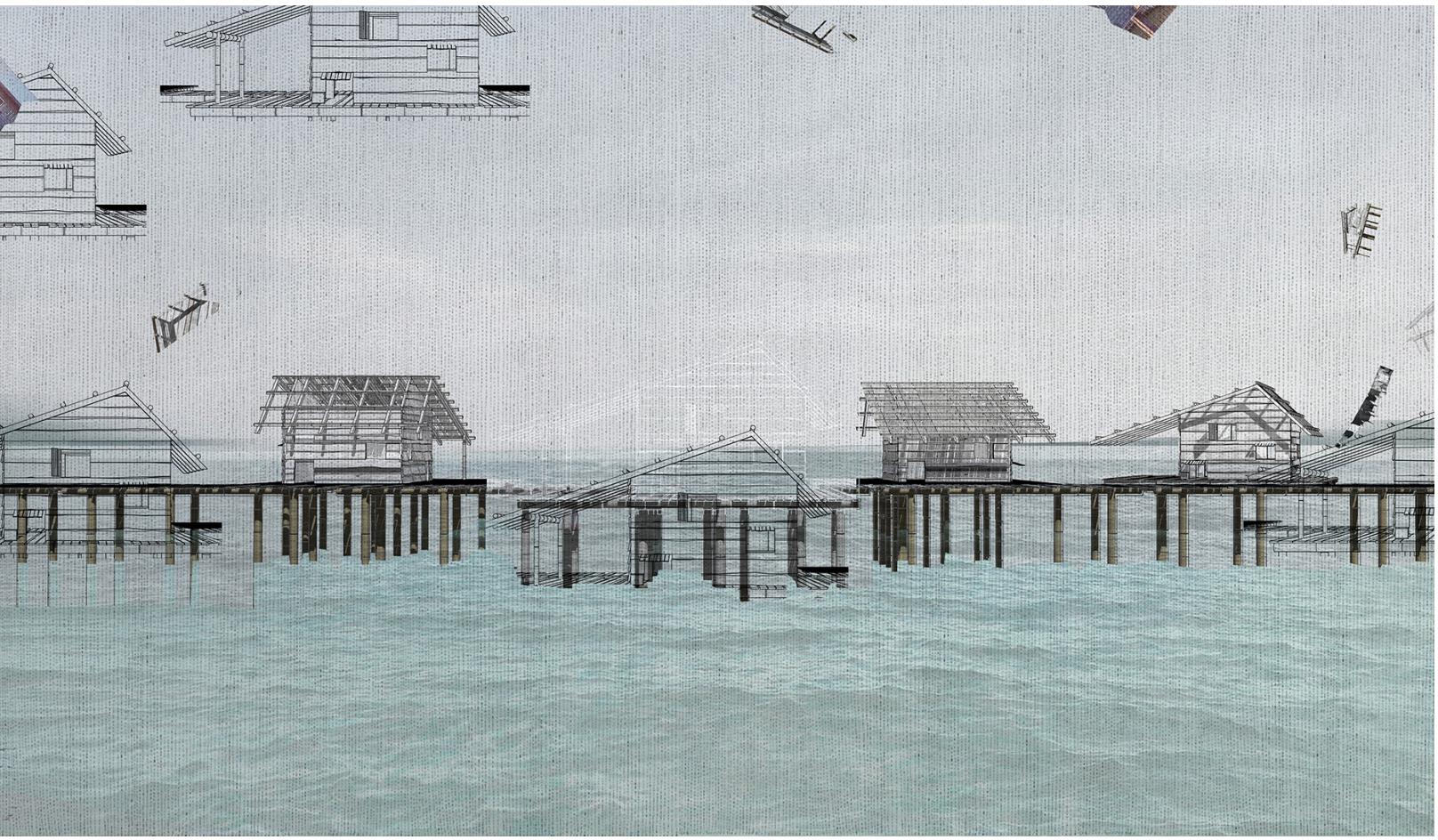


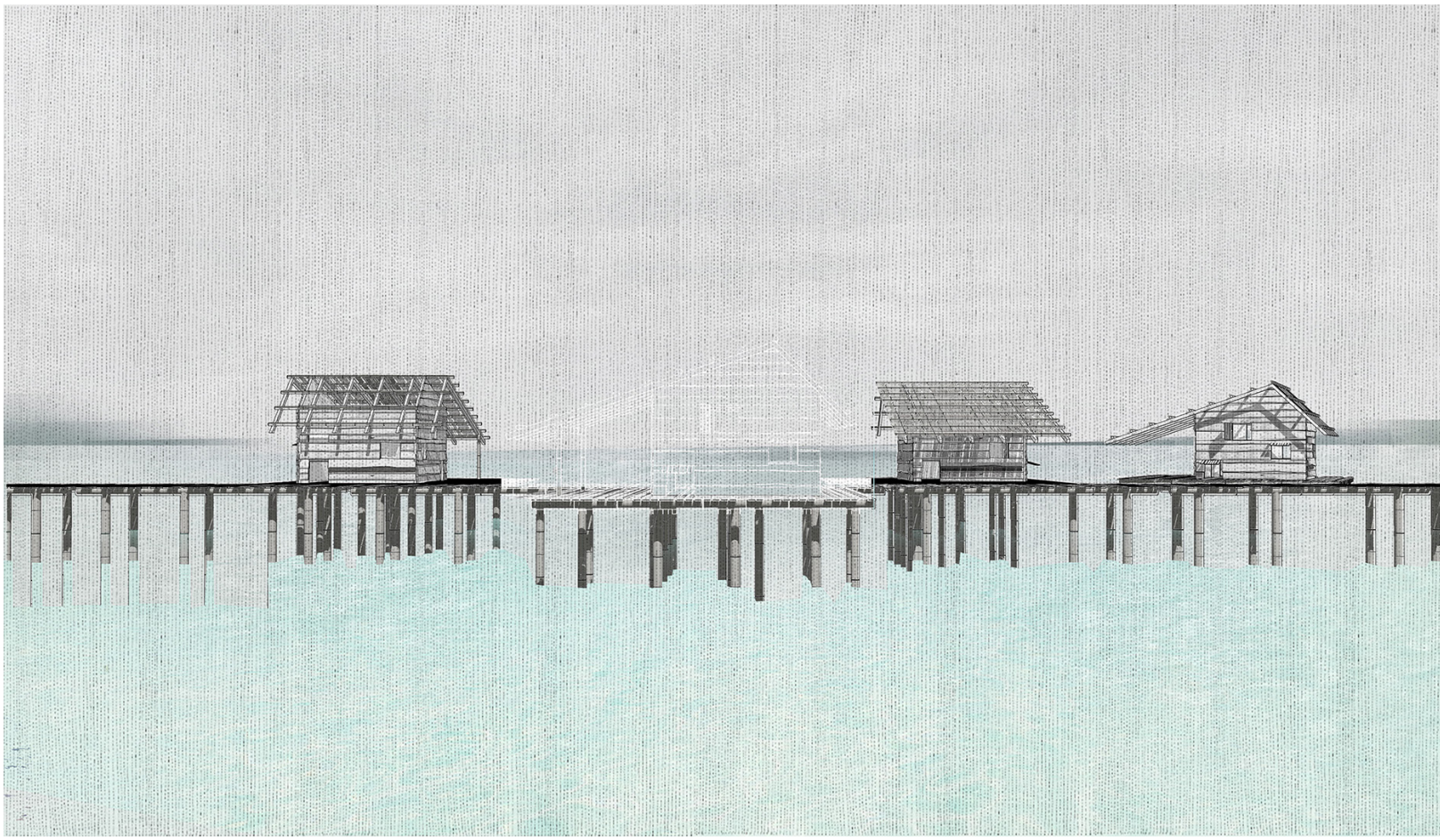




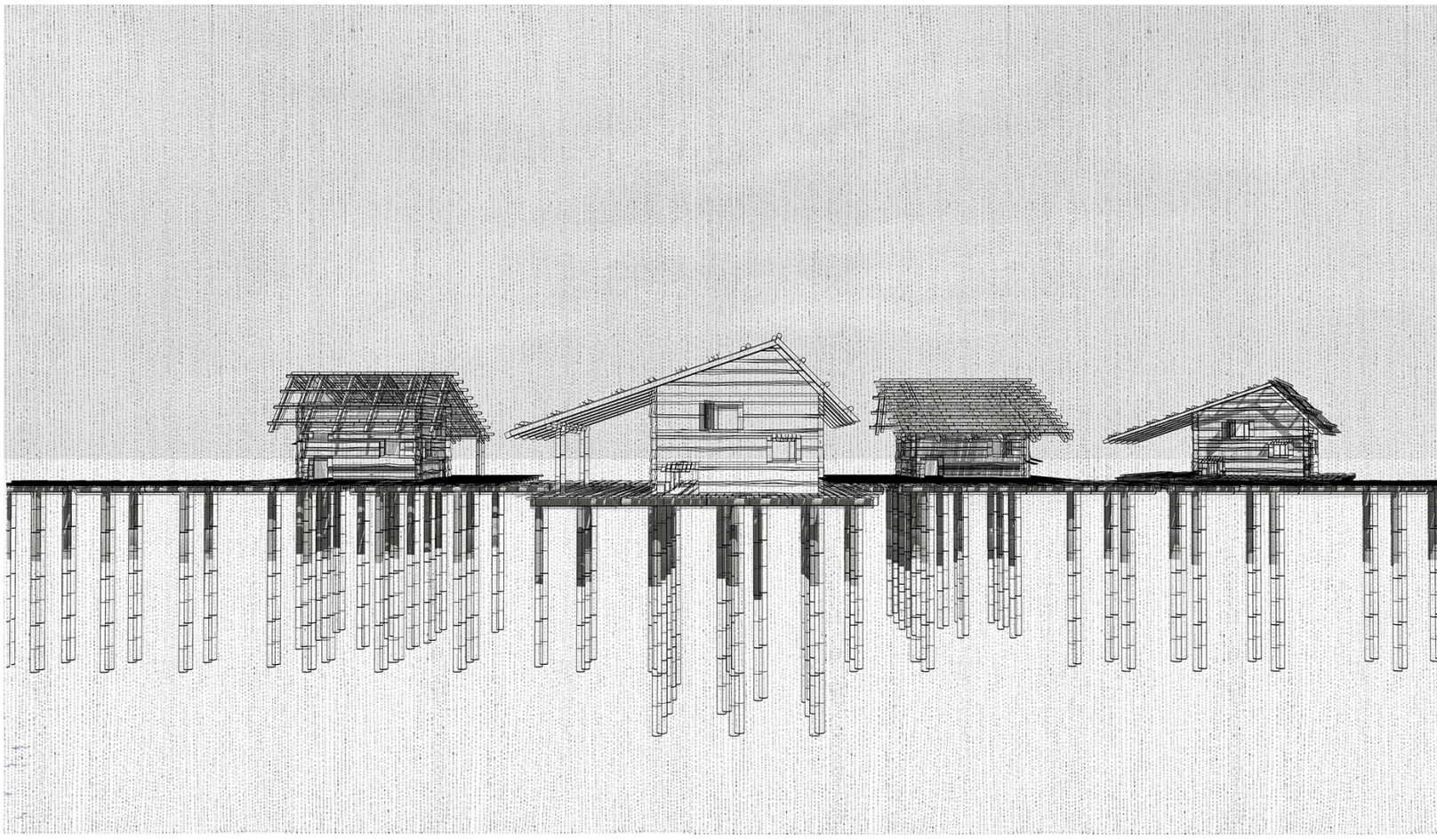






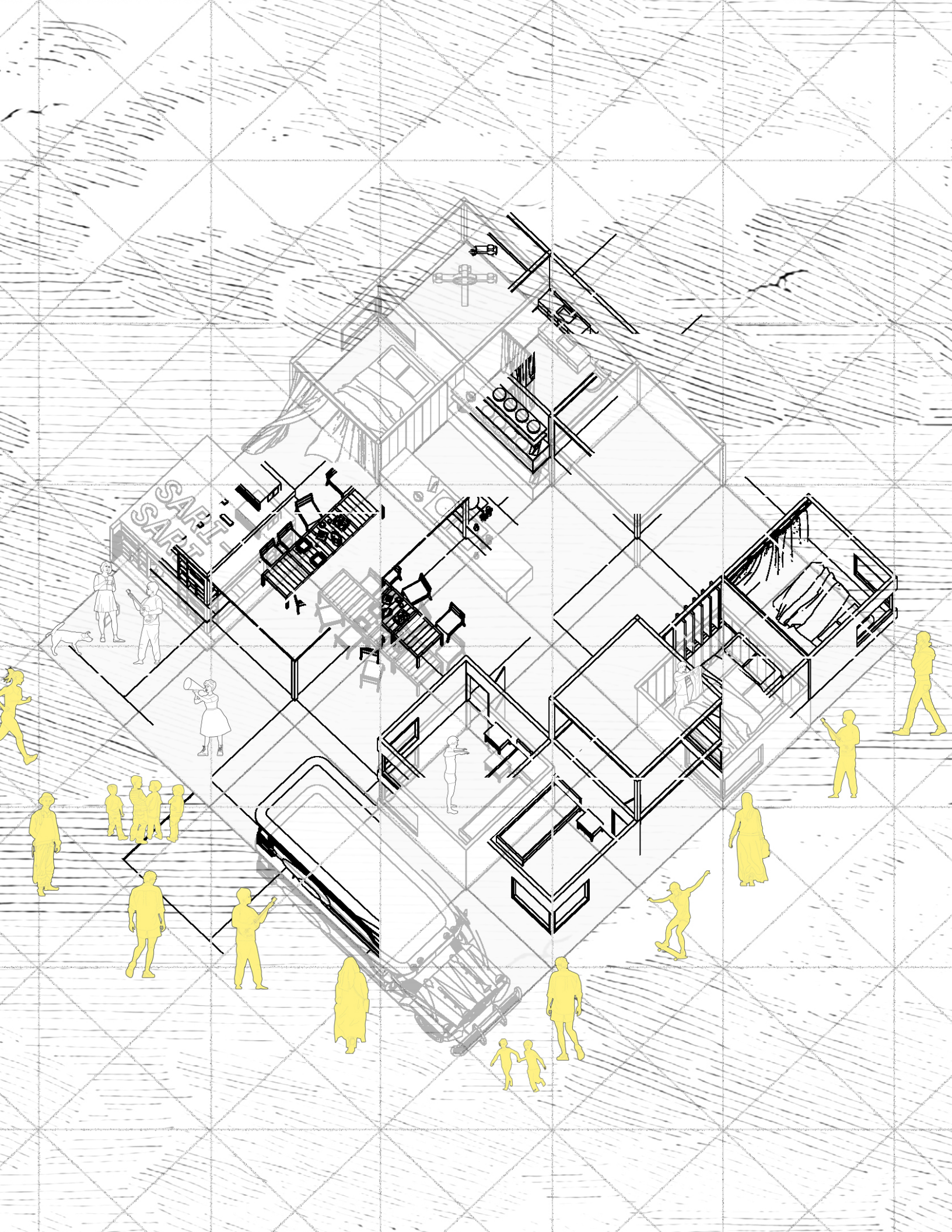


What is with permanence that architecture strives for eternal state when life is the exact opposite of it? Is it the monumental legacy that we want to leave to the generation after us? Or is it just instinctual that humans yearn for a final destination in life? The desire for a sense of belonging exists in the house on water because it delivers one to a space of uncertainty. The sea gives life and takes life apart. It brings one closer to home and away from it.





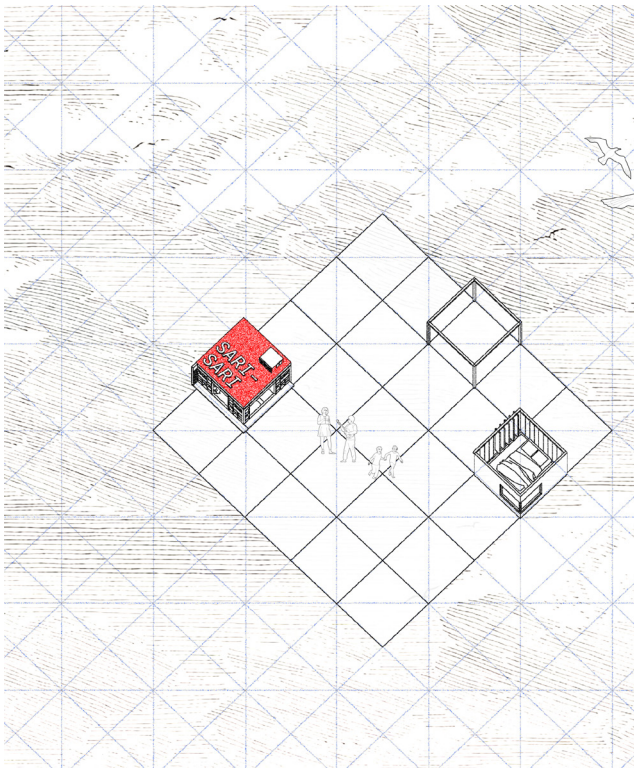




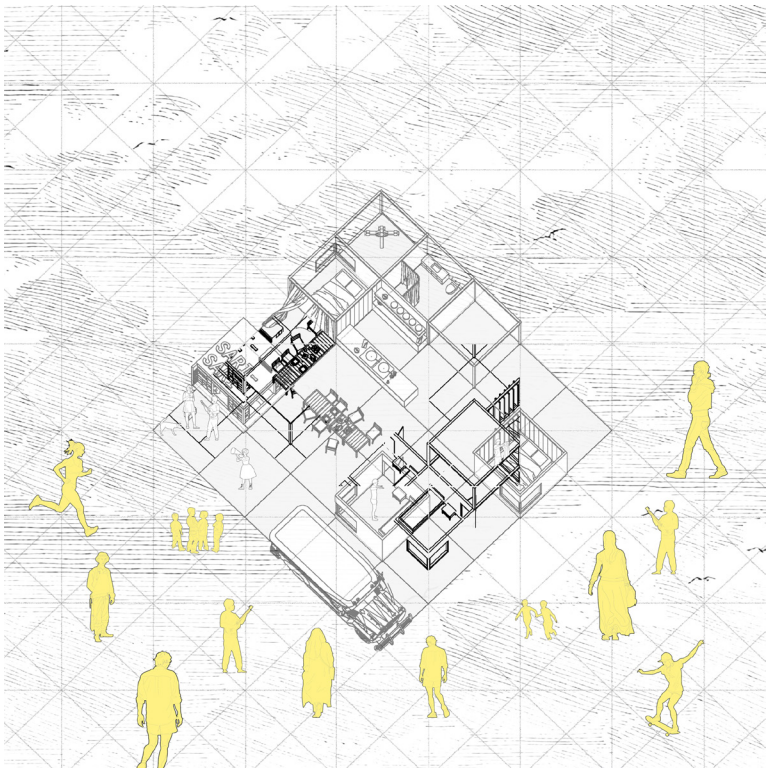
bayanihan
to come together

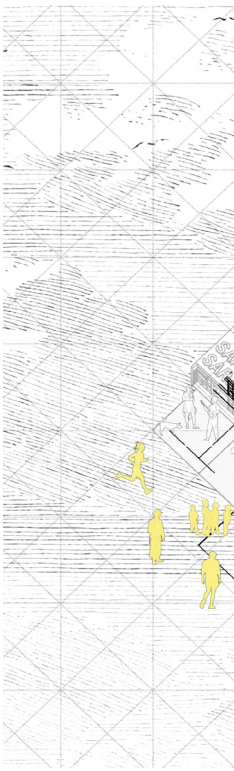
The most recognizable image of the *bayanihan* spirit in Filipino culture is the lifting and moving of an entire house to their new location in rural areas, where a group of people in the community would bear the weight of a house on their shoulders. The laborious task follows with a small fiesta as an act of gratitude and celebration of the day's accomplishment. This narrative conceptualizes a fragment of the Filipino identity in the form of a collective house to express the significance of coming together as a powerful force that shape life in our homes.

BAYAN -IHAN

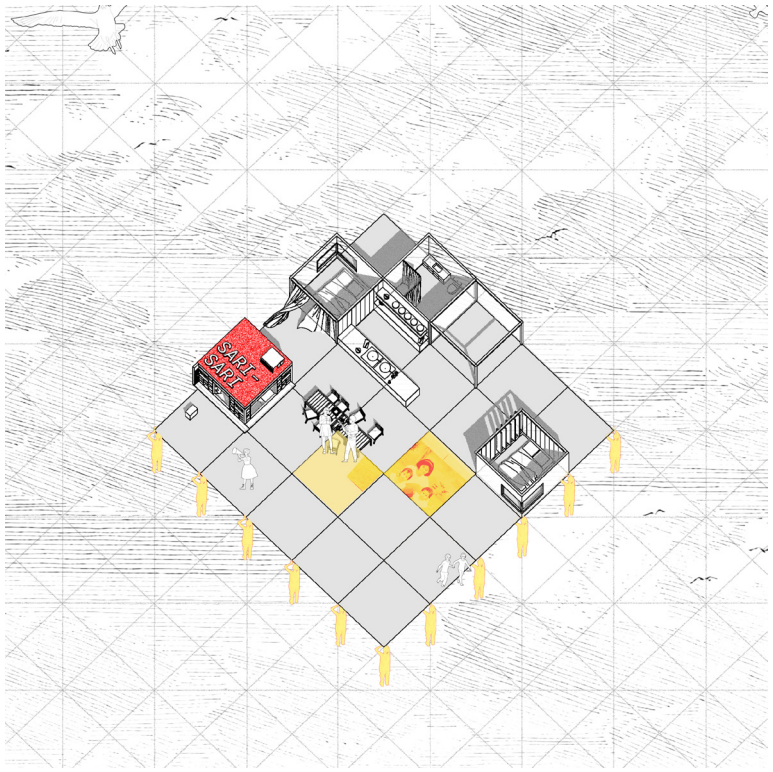








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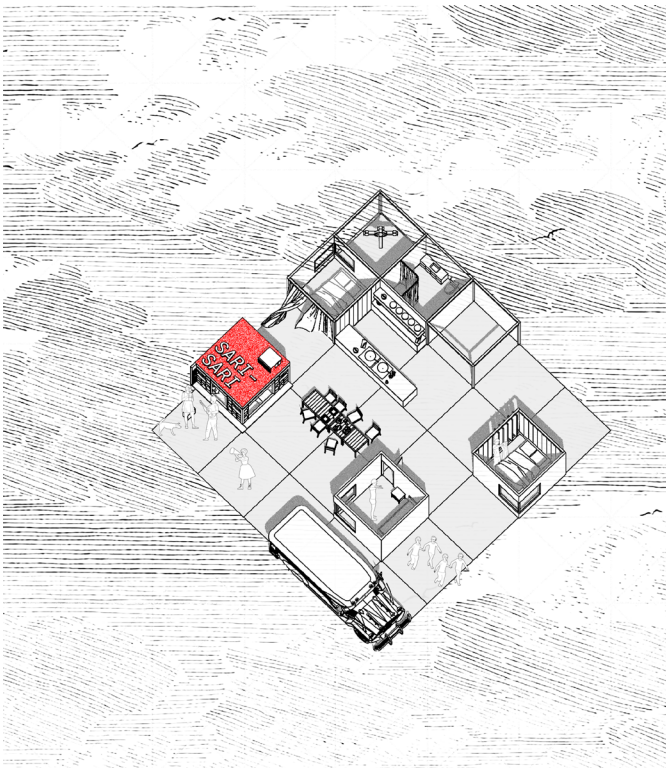
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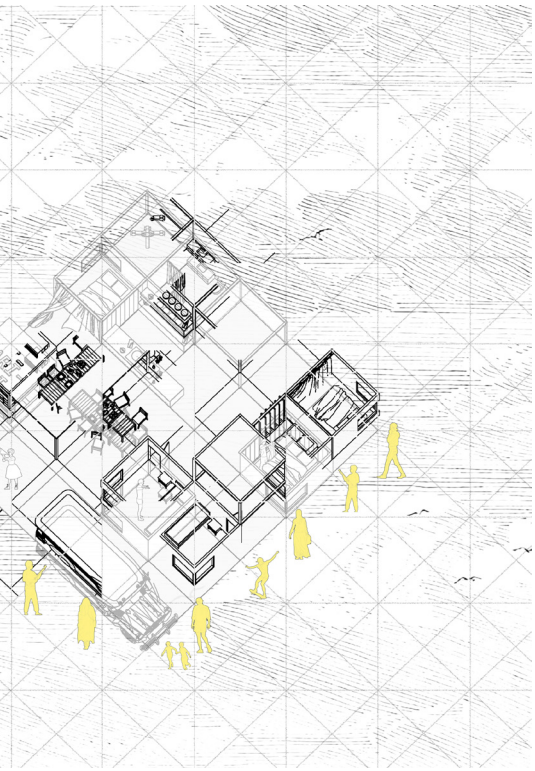

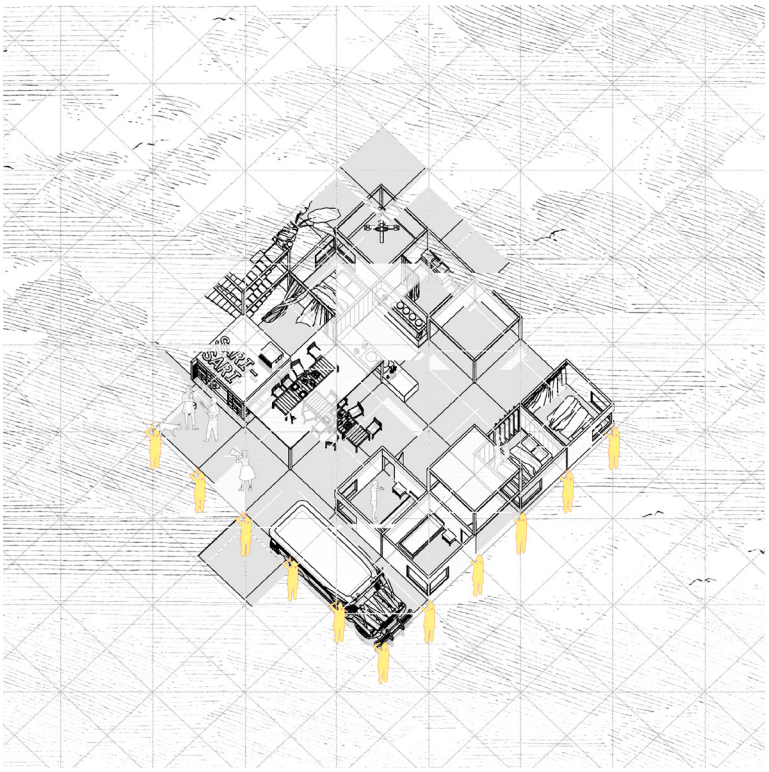
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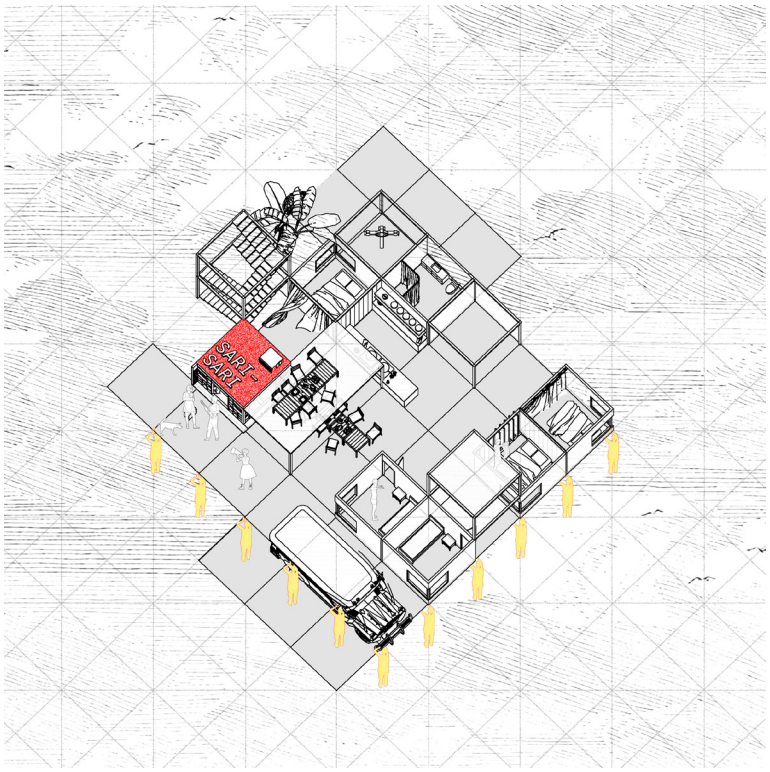
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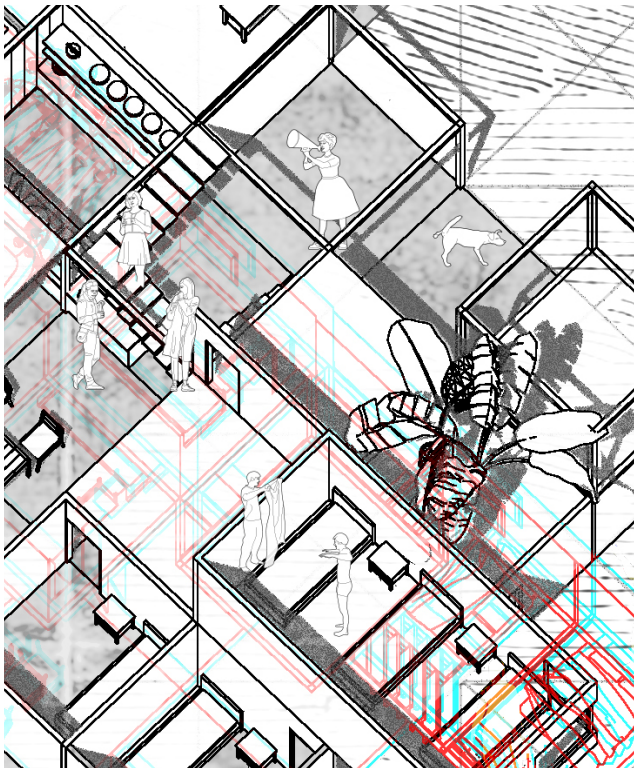

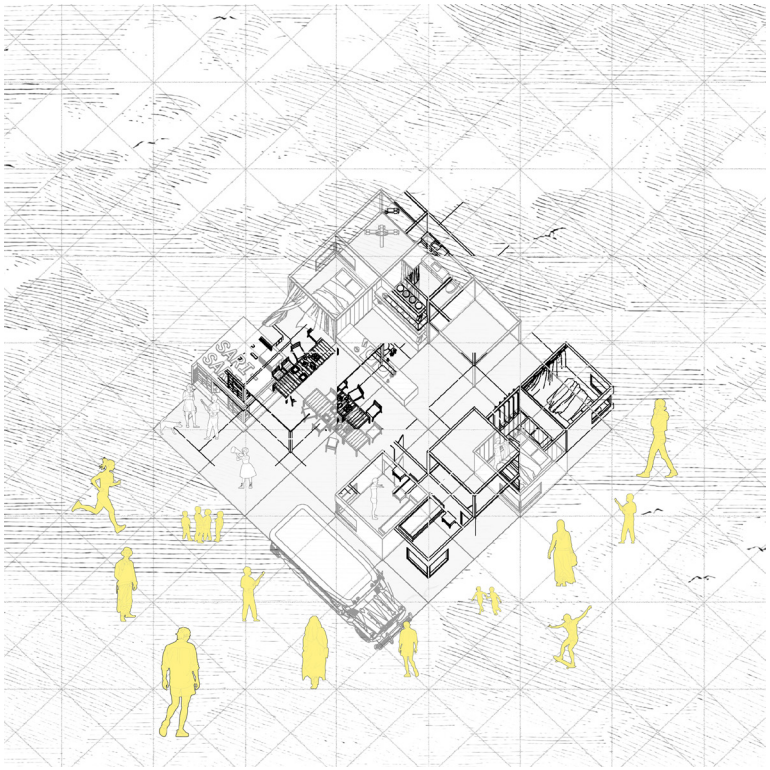





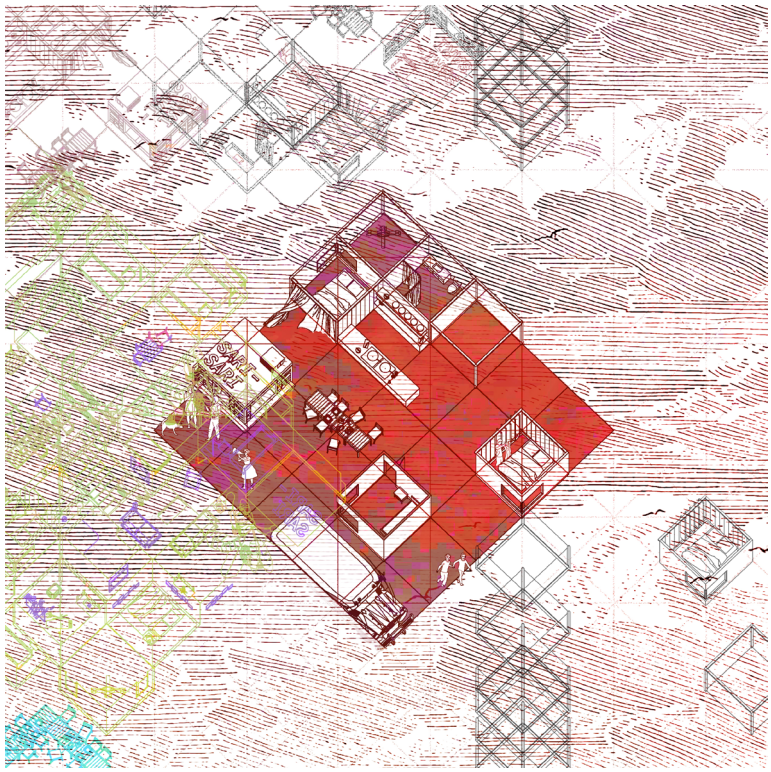
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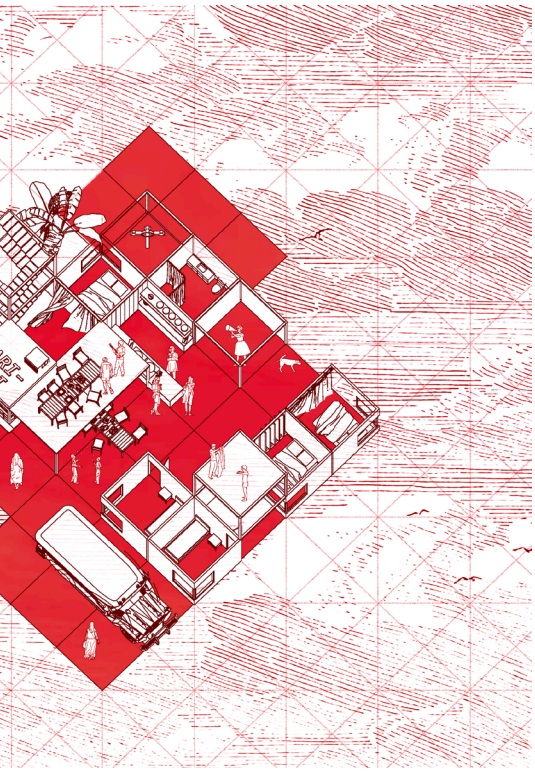

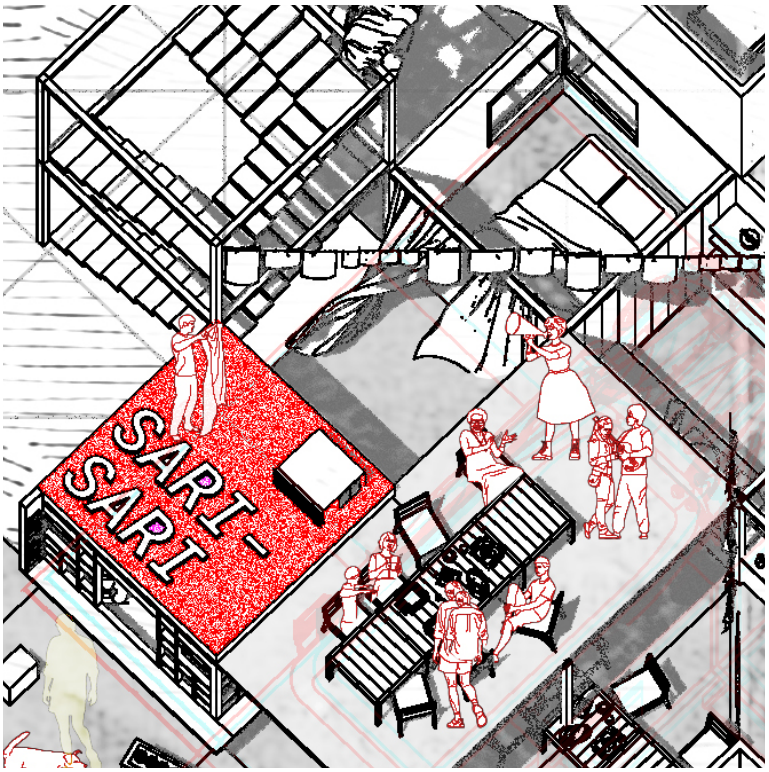
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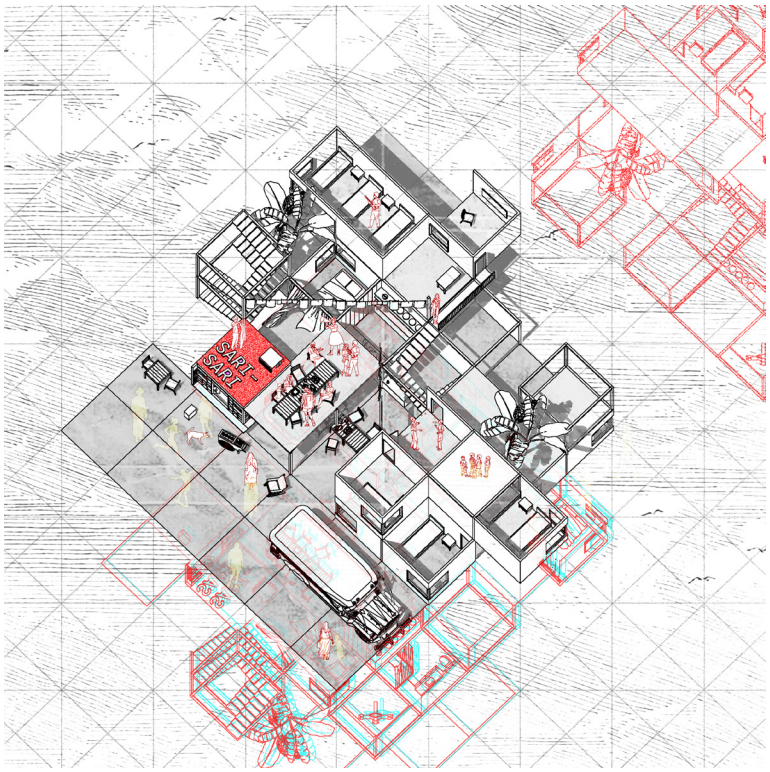
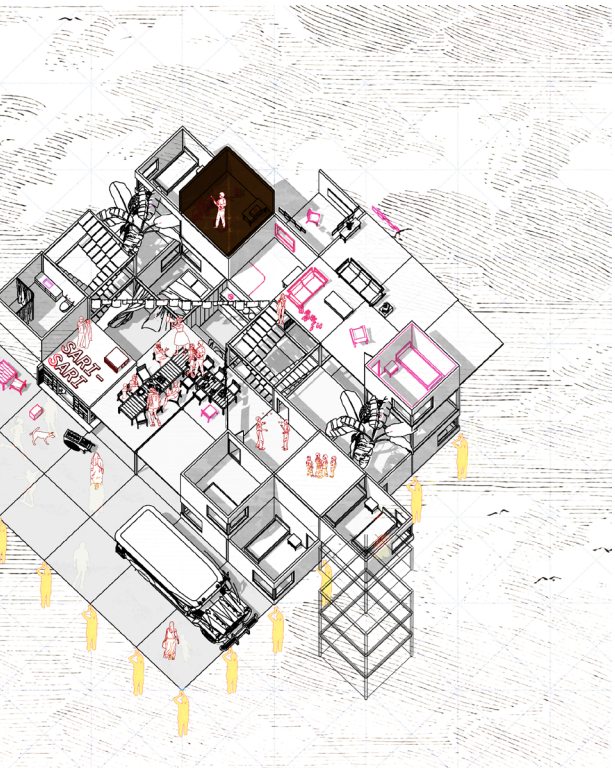




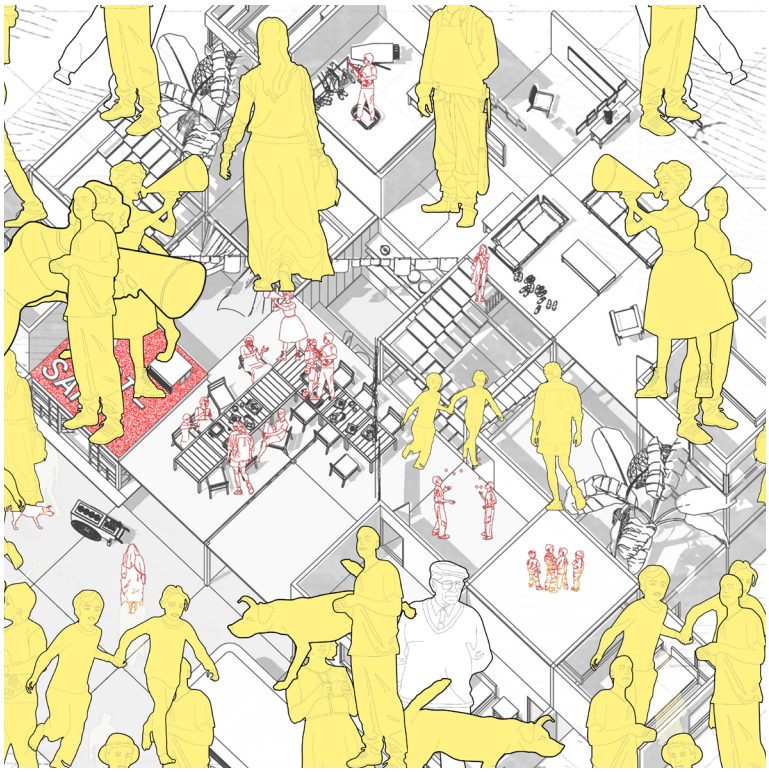


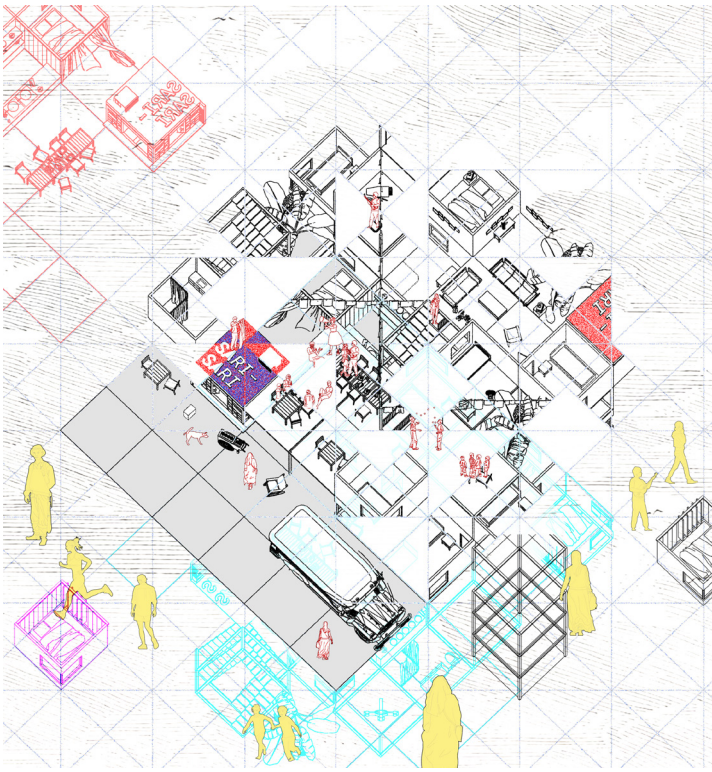
is the backyard. The sari-sari store opens up the home to the outdoors and stretch its boundaries externally. The collective house is chaotic, perhaps uncontrollable but it is alive.



There is no clear distinction between inside and outside. The house is the street. The neighborhood





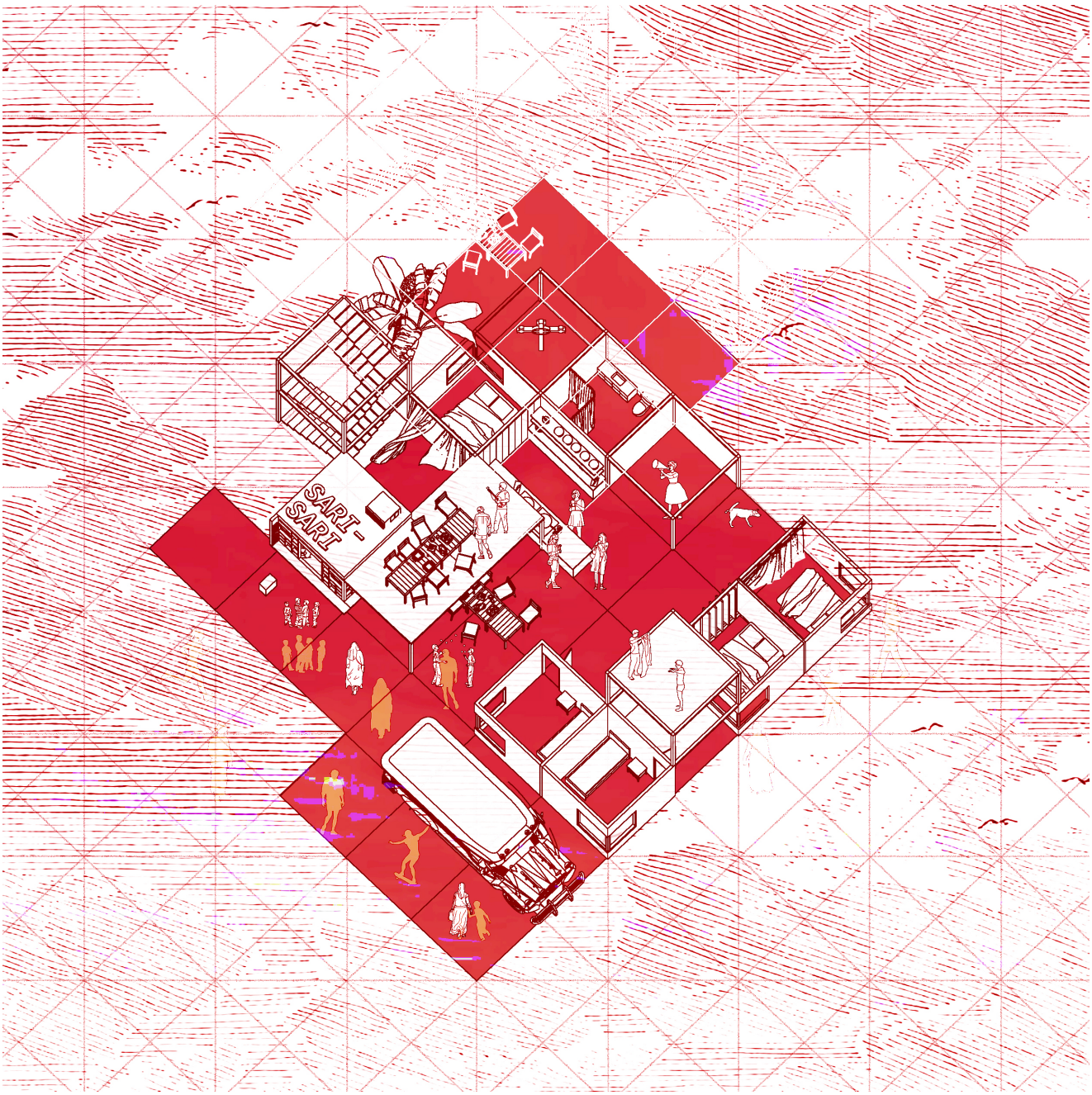


The house is a growing family. It is the mother, father, their offspring, and perhaps everyone else in the barrio. It is the neighbor who trades her cooking in the afternoon and the neighbor's relative who invites himself for dinner to the house. In the course of time, this house renders architecture as a dynamic system that responds to fluidity of life. It is a hybrid structure that embodies the entanglement of circumstances and the complexities of familial and spatial relationships. There is no clear distinction between inside and outside. The house is the street. The neighborhood is the backyard. The *sari-sari* store opens up the home to the outdoors and stretch its boundaries externally. The collective house is chaotic, perhaps uncontrollable but it is alive.

Damon Wood's writing encapsulates the fluid notion of Tagalog language, specifically in relation to the word *bayan* as he unpacks its evolution from connotation of place, community and ultimately to the meaning of a collective nation.[32] The last one remains as an aspiration, but he expands the word even further to defy physical boundaries, location or even citizenship recognizing the Filipino population in the diaspora. In the words of Virgilio Enriquez, *"Pilipino kahit saan, kahit kalian"*[33]. This concept gives meaning to the collective house at it is a structure that stands on its grounds through the strength of its people. Despite differences, it is the *bayan* and the *bayanihan* that gives us a sense of collective identity

.

32 Woods, Damon L. "From Wilderness to Nation: The Evolution of Bayan." eScholarship, University of California. The Regents of the University of California, October 4, 2005.
33 Filipino, no matter where, eternally.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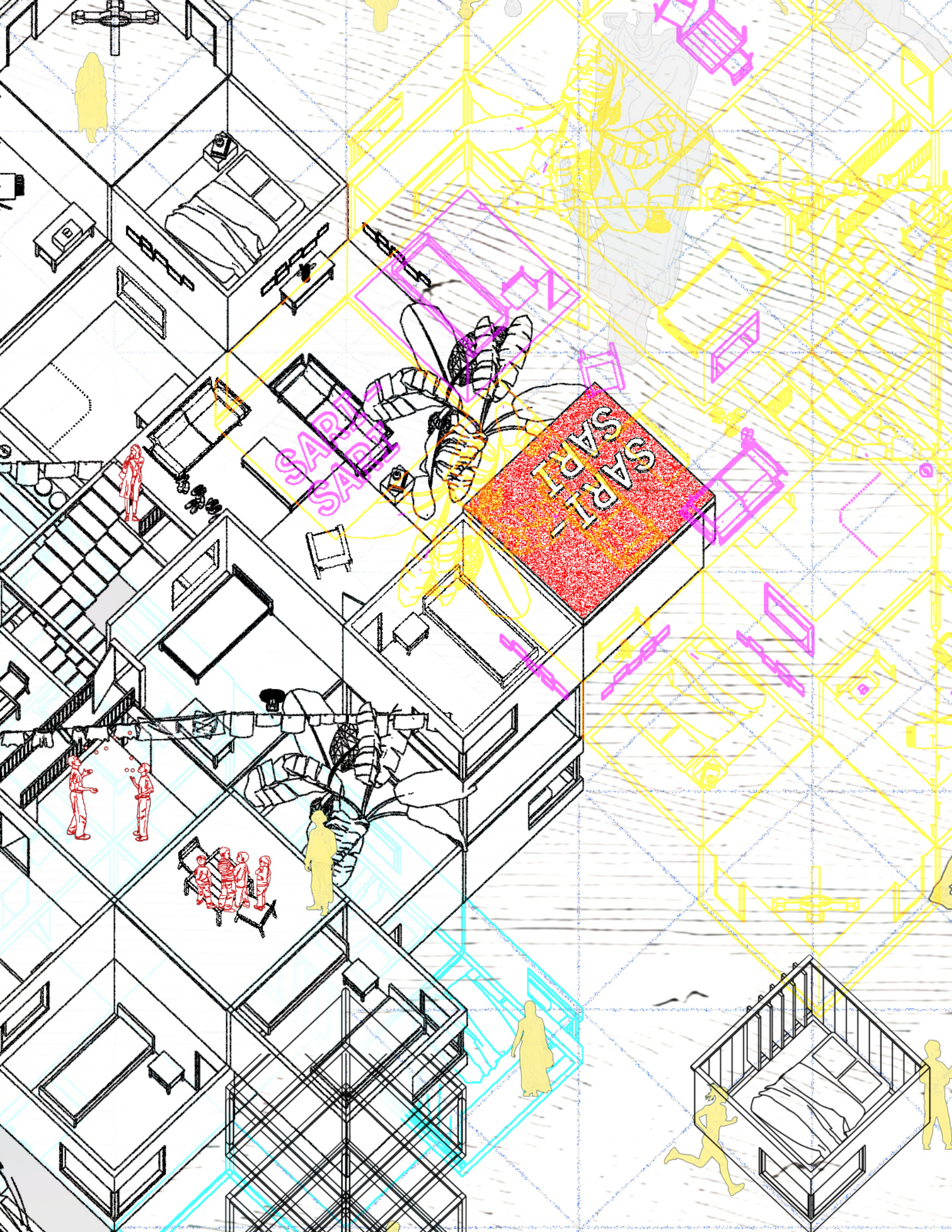
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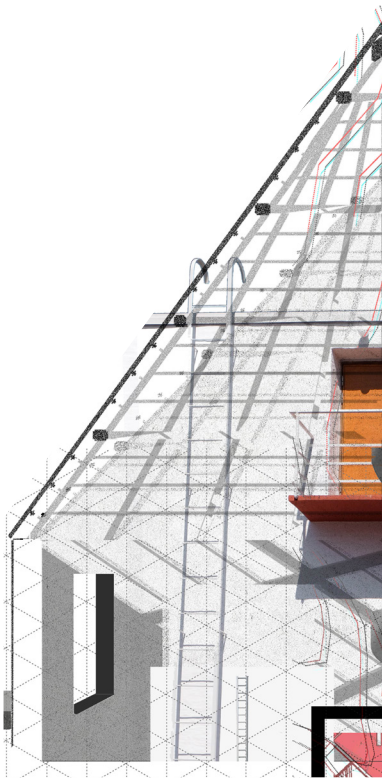
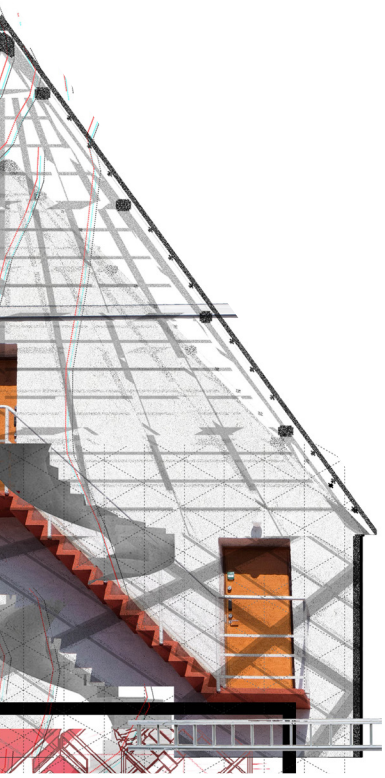
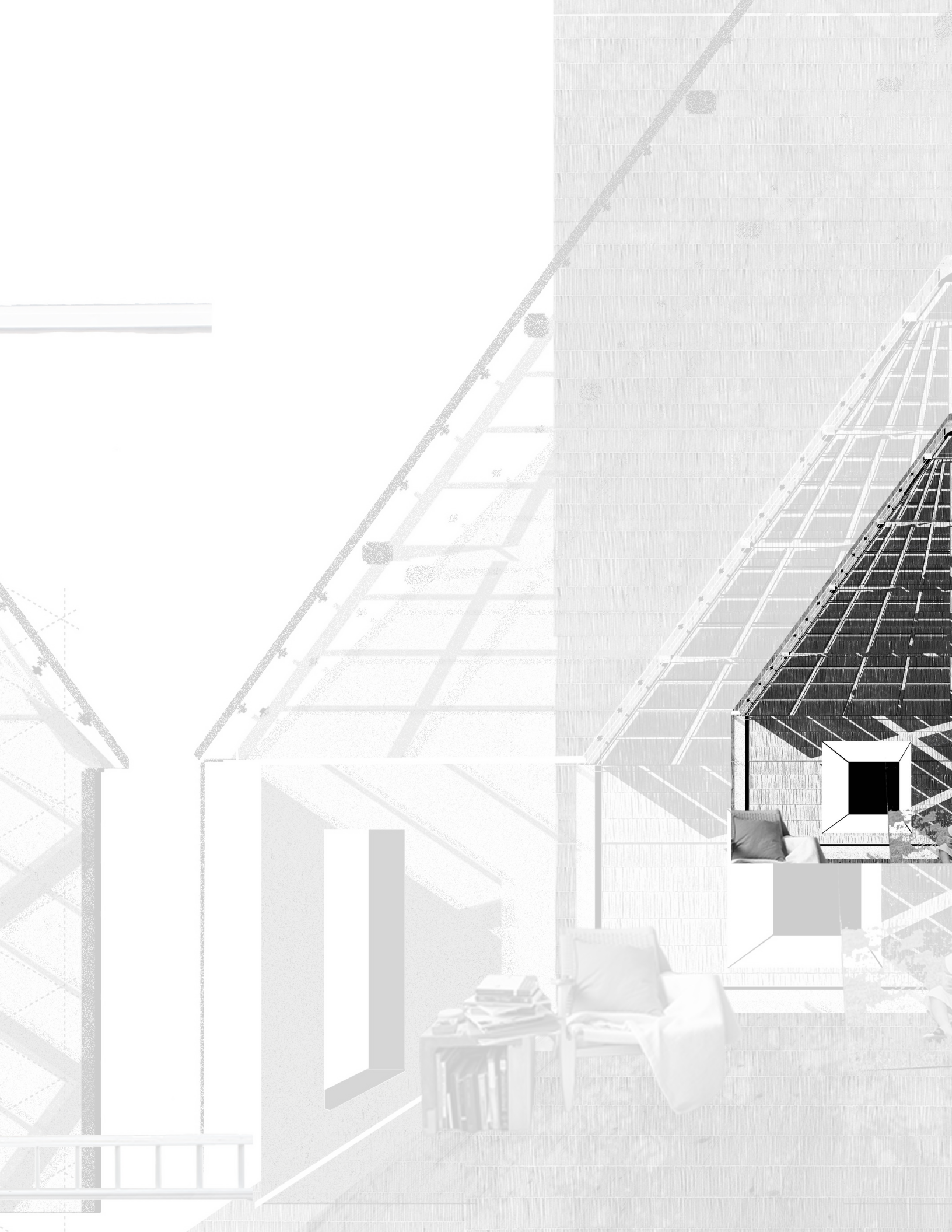
becoming *kamalayan*

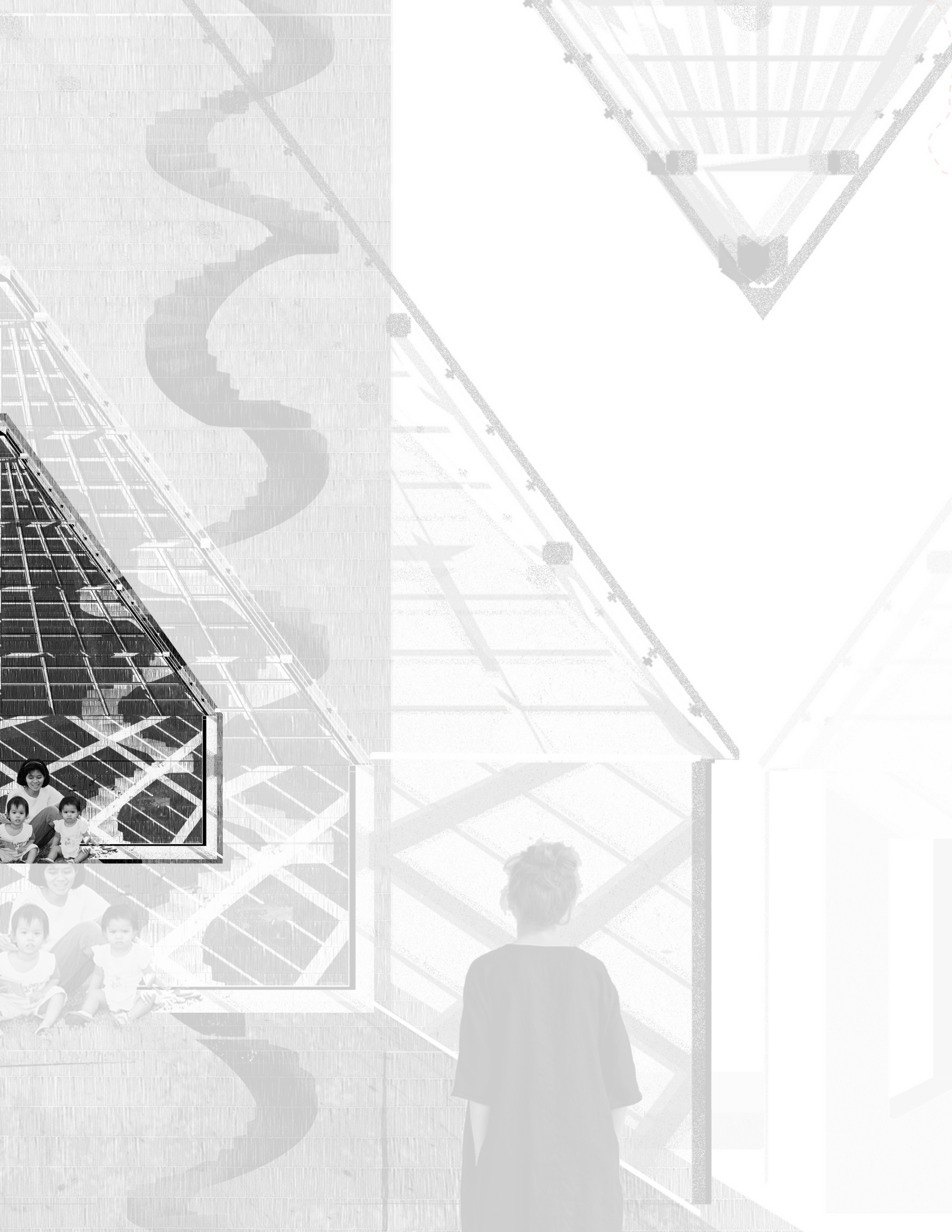
I wish I could tell you everything about the last house but I'm not quite sure either. I could show you the plans and the sections, the drawings of the perfect home that encapsulates my visions and dreams for its future - But the reality is, it is nothing like its blueprint anymore. All I know is that I started building it, certain of what it should be, but it turned out different throughout the process like it has a life on its own. I thought I was the architect, but it seems that I am no longer in control of its development. But this house from what I recognize now, reflects upon the existence of the other houses. It has fragments of the childhood home, reflection of history of the generation before, memories of the family, the smell of the mother's cooking, the father leaving, and coming home. It desires to be grounded in the idea of "Filipino" but finds itself rooted in so many other places, uncertainties, possibilities.

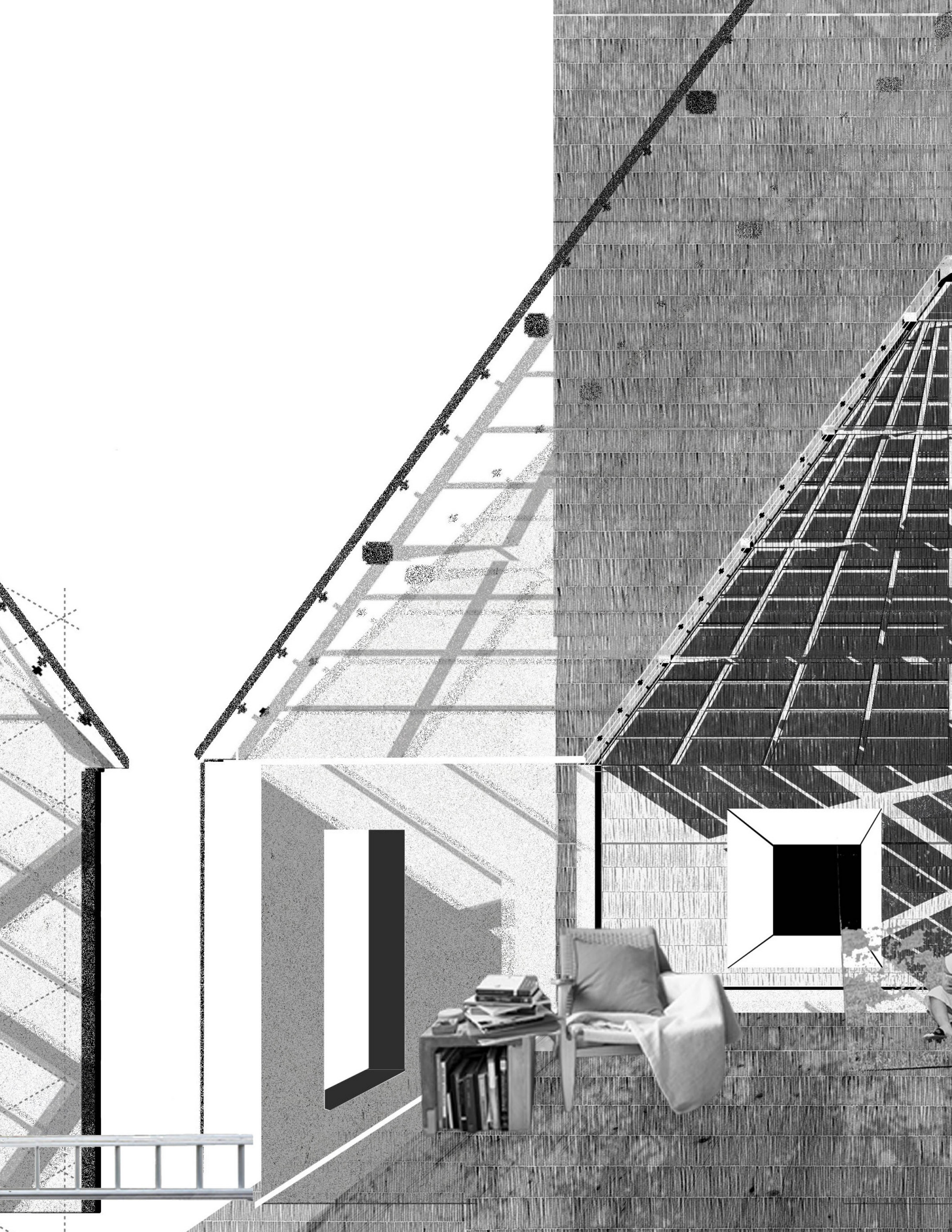
I realize that this home is the embodiment of the fluid identity – it is hybrid, complex and grounded in the third place. It is colonized but the resistance remains not because of the fight with the enemy, but with the love for the self, the awareness of being in the world around it. It does not settle for a final destination but is in the process of becoming. It contains with it layers and layers of history, and memories of people within that journey. I'm not certain about what it will be in the future, but for now, it is where it should be, for this is not the last house. The journey has only started.



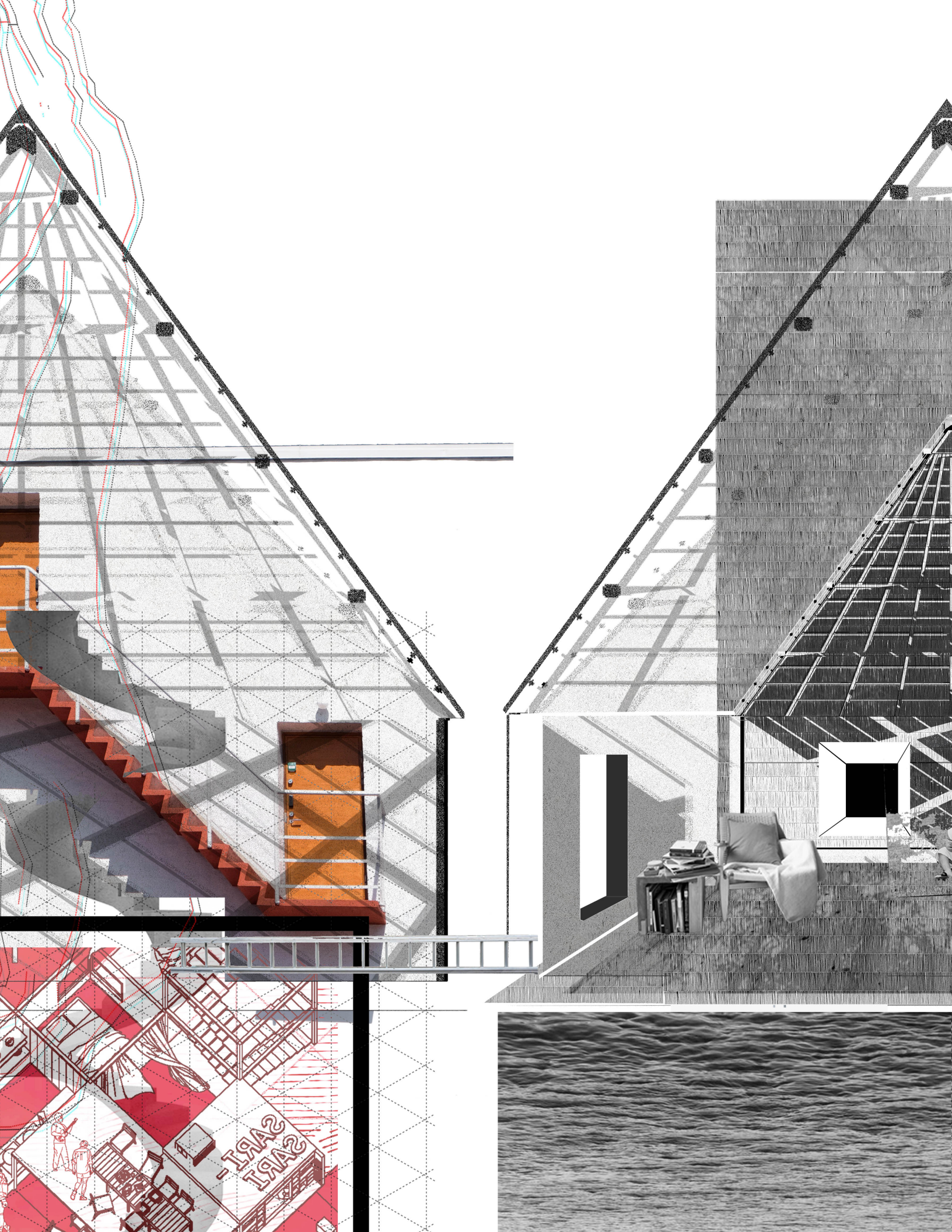








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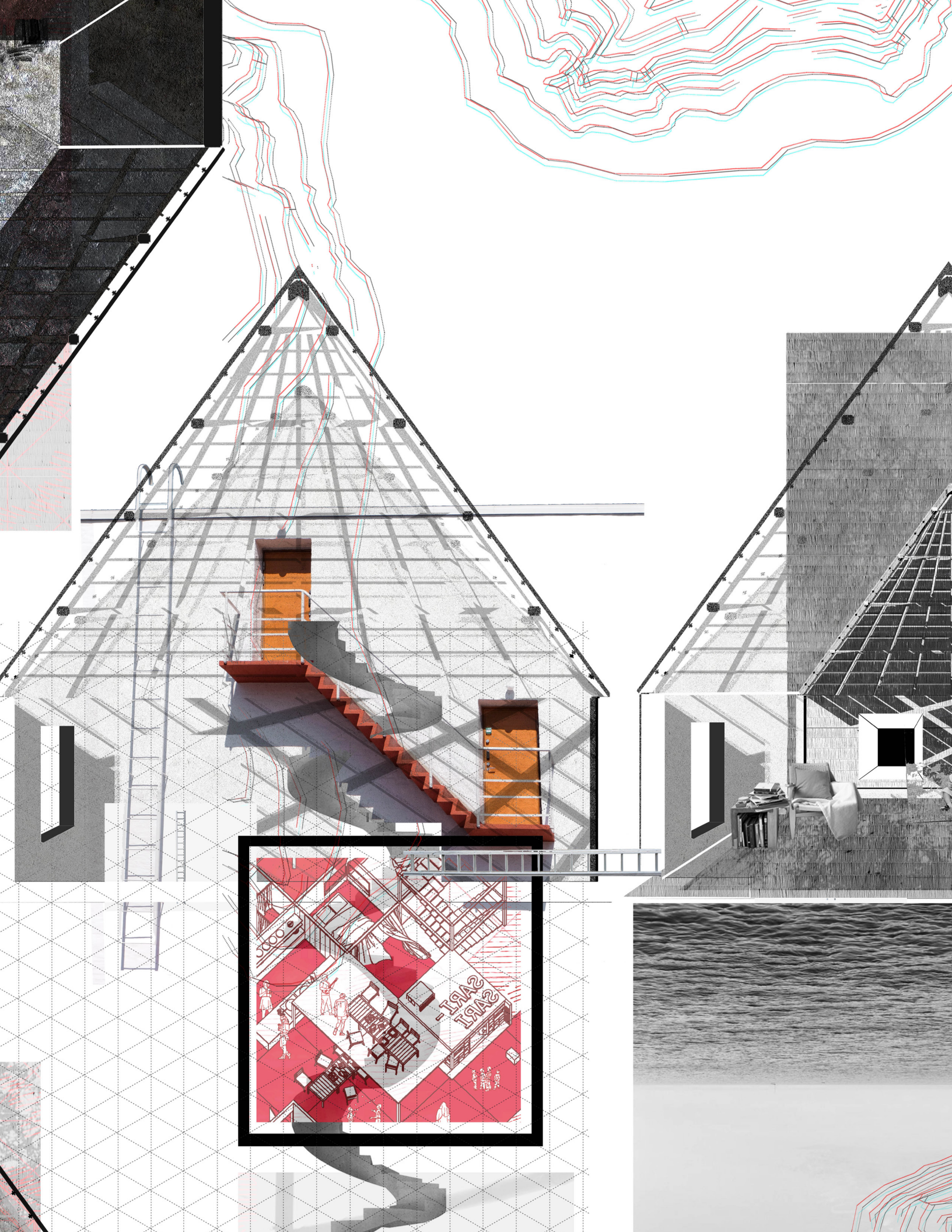







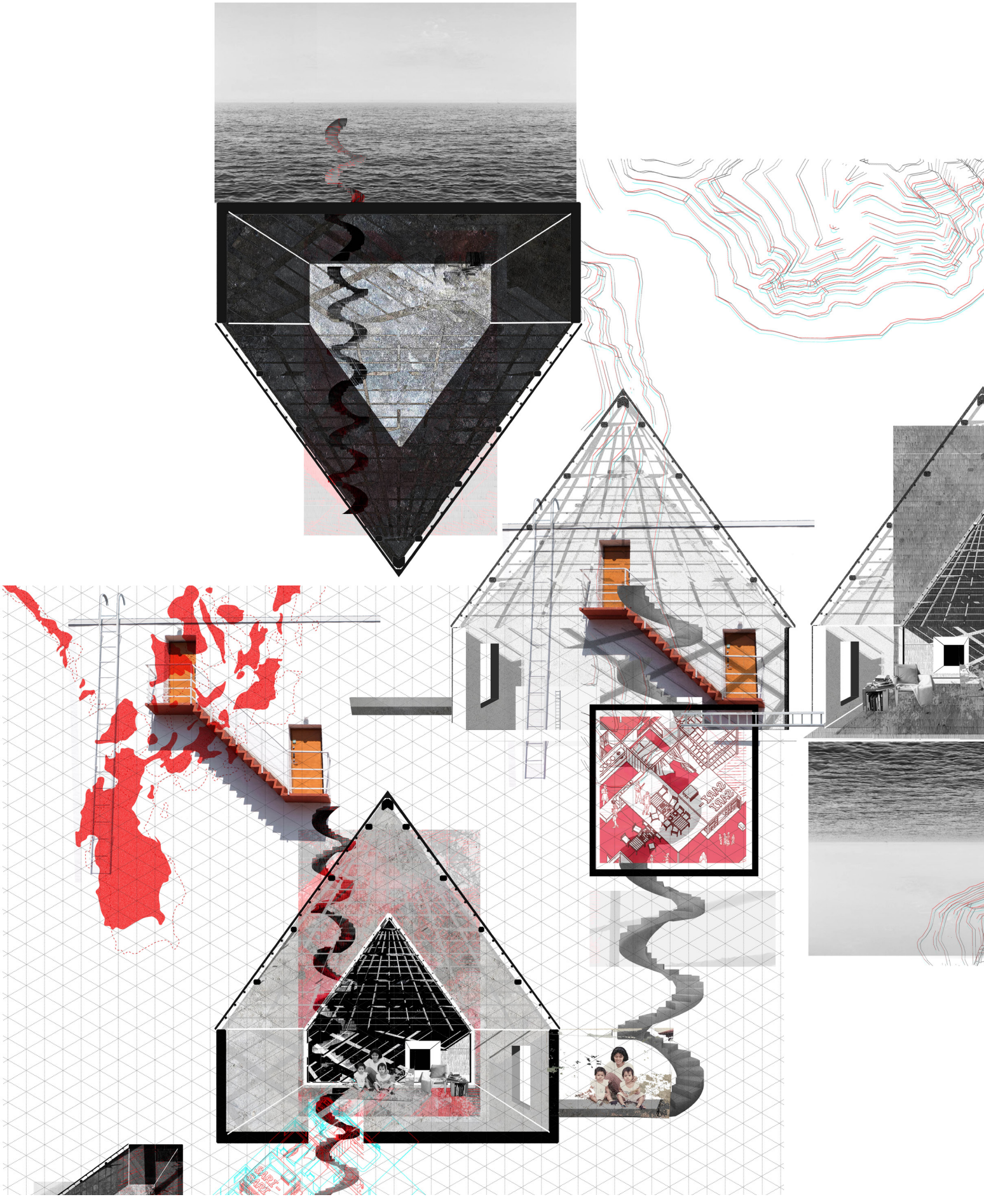

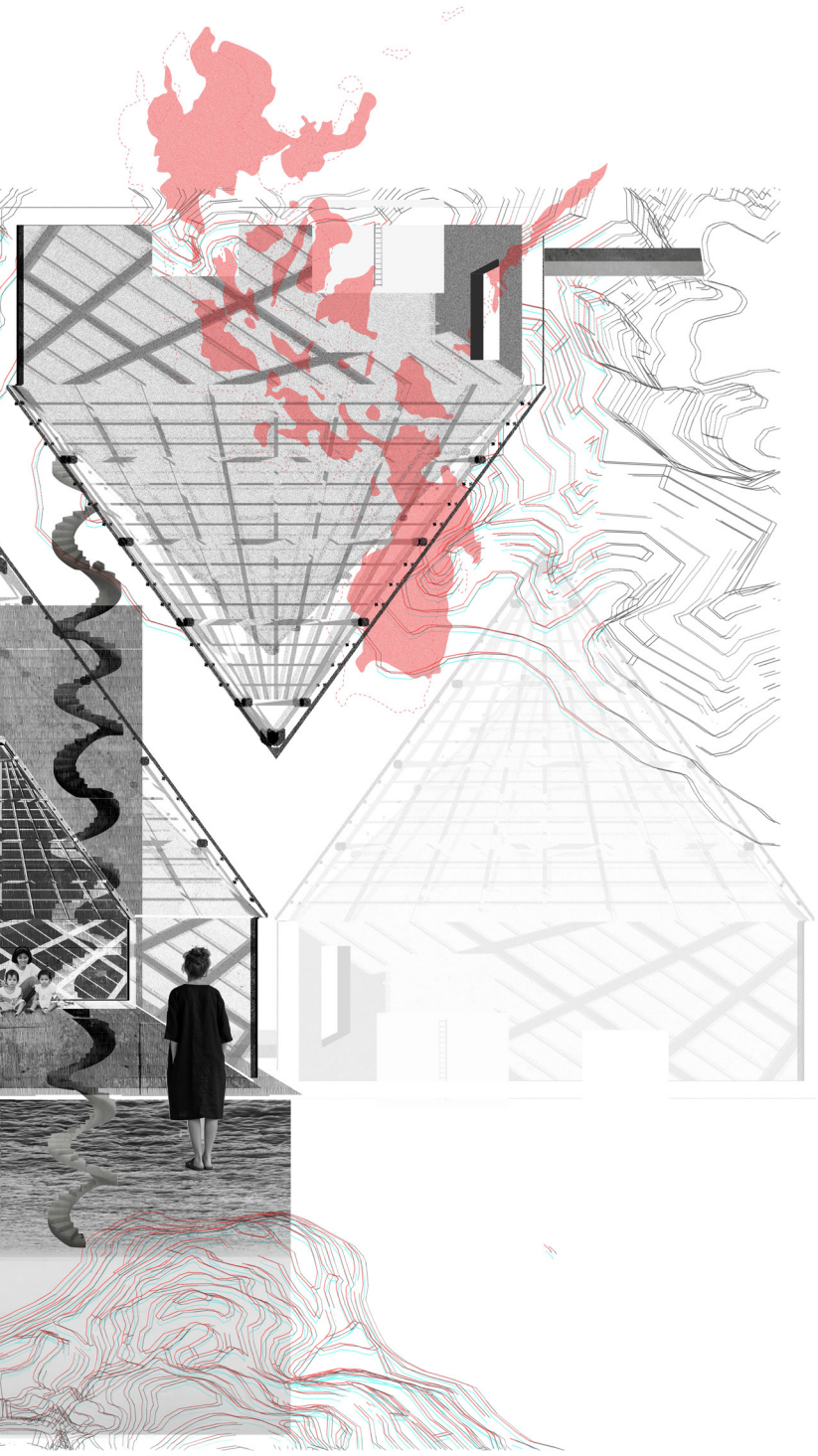

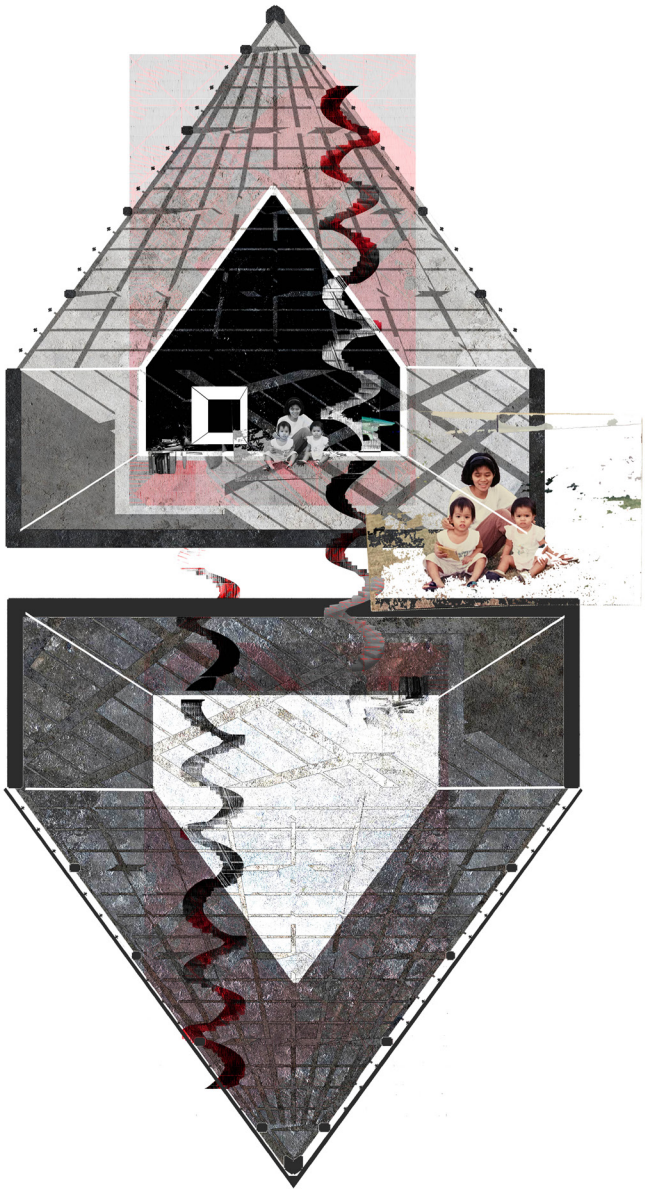









V

reflection

reflection

I cannot count how many times I asked myself during this whole process, “What does this thesis have to do with architecture?” Without the precision of plans and sections, how do we grasp and represent space around us? I wrestle with the idea of literal and metaphorical, constantly seeking justification from both ends at once. There has always been a search for the right and appropriate project and at one point, I was certain about moving forward with a building design. Interestingly, the first question I was asked during the presentation of the thesis is “Are you going to build the house?”. I was startled for a moment thinking that the construction of the house is not at all the purpose of the thesis. Yet, reflecting about it now, I realize that perhaps I have been unconsciously pondering the same question and performing a balancing act of feeding the rational and instinctual self.

In this process, I am reminded of this podcast conversation Architecture as Unfinished Storytelling as Nicole Huber speaks about questioning the expected. She says:

> *The conventions in which we live are so much based on evidence and what is supposed to be the factual. You do analysis of a site, and then a program and you go for it, as if this was given, as if it was evident that this is just the situation...*[34]
>
> *...We have to...not take things as given, but rather to tap into [our] own imaginaries, into [our] own yearnings, and longings, as an alternative world.*[35]

There are two things here that thoroughly frames the exploration of this thesis: First is the process of "tapping into [our] own imaginaries", perhaps through biographic exploration framed within the question of Filipino identity. Second is the understanding of architecture as an "unfinished project" in recognition of the uncertainties and fluid notion of home. This challenges the architect to constantly question, rethink and reimagine other possibilities of the architecture practice. Fragments of Home is the embodiment of these questions through the lens of Filipino culture, through conceptualization of how one might build and dwell their own architectures.

It was not intentional but the concept for each house developed to have a sequential framework as if one narrative is a repercussion of the prior. The first house situated on the mountain embarks a notion of origin, which I came to understand as a process of developing a deep connection with the land. Intuitively, one of the initial steps was to look back in history in an effort to find authenticity within a traditional context. It is as though genuine culture and the notion of rootedness are almost only found in the context of the past. However, the mere idea of "looking back"

34 Vikram Prakash. Architecture Talk (podcast): Episode 36. "Architecture as Unfinished Storytelling with Nicole Huber.", architecturetalk.org. Jan. 30, 2019.
35 Ibid.

reveals the absence of traditional values in the present day. Elizabeth Golden describes the word tradition in her book as a “process of discovery and identification when repeated over successive generations”[36], a heritage that is “passed down through action”, thus when discontinued, there is a possibility of cultural decline. In the realm of architecture, tradition can be cultivated through “the act of building”[37], through engagement with the landscape, and establishment of relationship with natural materials. In a postcolonial context, this can signify the act of decolonization, a symbol of resistance from foreign practices and a process that strengthens one’s culture through architecture. The house on the mountain attempts to raise questions about rootedness as it situates itself within its own history. On the other hand, the house on the water counters the idea of rootedness and questions whether it is possible for one to only be grounded in one dimension, or perhaps not to be grounded at all? Some might understand this as a disruption of traditional values, the acceptance of colonization, or maybe it is a sign of resilience in the face of adversity. The third house situates the question of cultural identity from society to the context of the family and explores the notion of dwelling within this entangled system. Lastly, the *house of becoming* is a self-reflection, a recognition that contradictions come with the the pursuit of meaning in identity. It reveals an ongoing question about Filipino identity as long as the awareness of own history and colonization persist within oneself. How can an individual, the architect, operate in the dimension of the



36 Elizabeth Golden. Building from Tradition. New York, NY: Routledge, 2018.
37 Ibid.

third place? Fragments of Home explores these questions as they translate from a larger context of history, to the society, and to an individual. I do not propose to know the answer to what Filipino identity actually means, but I do hope that the conversation remains as a continuation of this thesis.

Nevertheless, I like the idea of the “unfinished architecture”, because this project is truly an unending process. For one thing, it acted as a trigger for me to understand myself as a designer, to recognize my own process and realize that I perceive the world through a filter of my personal experiences. I would like to think that this is an architectural manifesto, an exploration and pursuit of understanding of the other - one that embraces the uncertainty and process of becoming rather than settling at a final destination.



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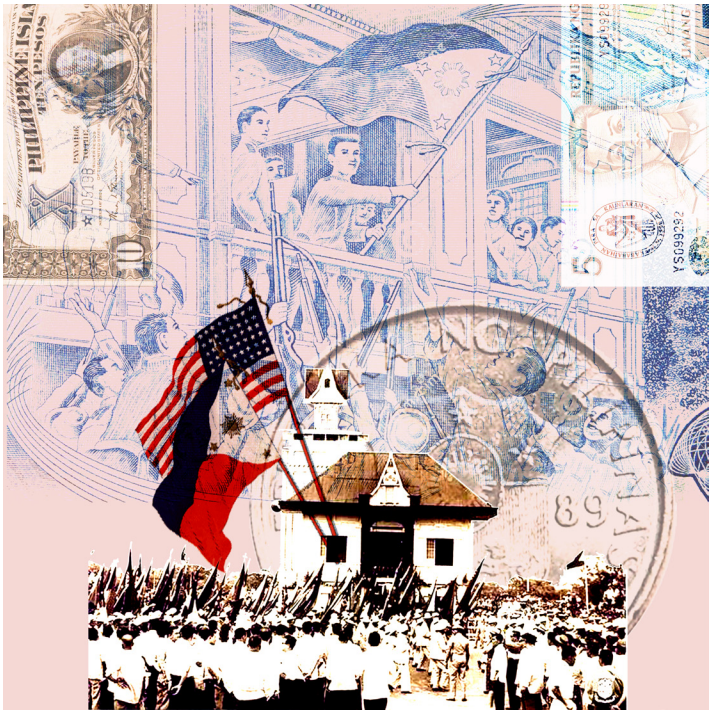
appendix

CULTURE

Initial collages created to represent the culture of the Philippines. Four panels illustrate hybridity, the strong influence of the United States in the country, culture of resilience and the significance of the family.





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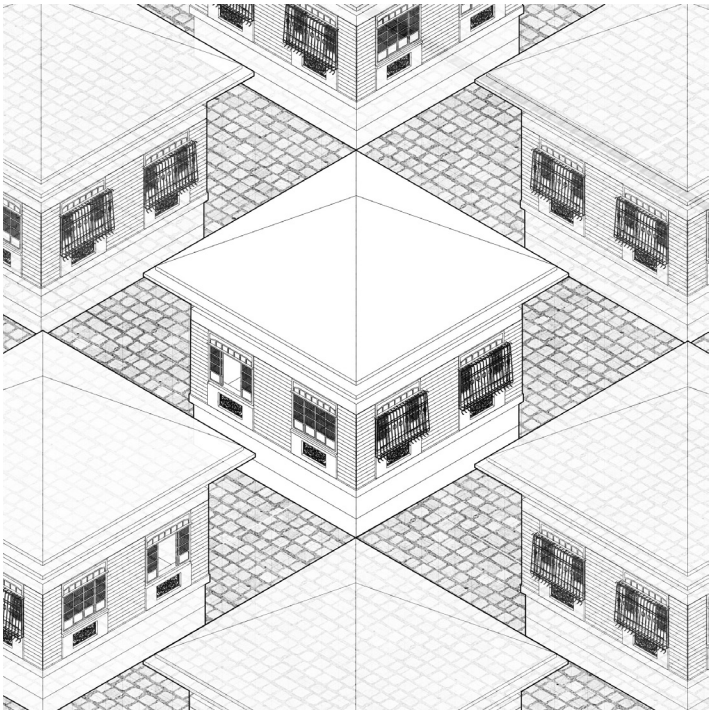
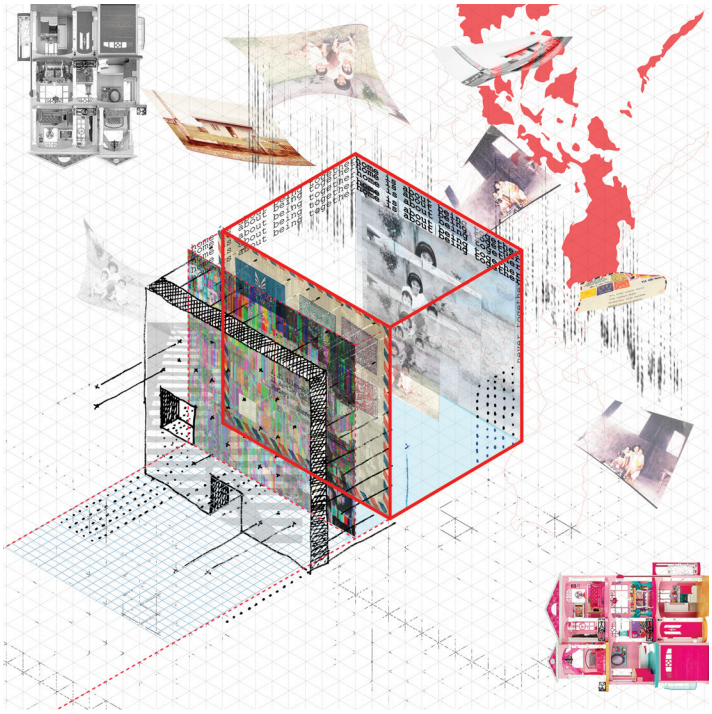
CUBE

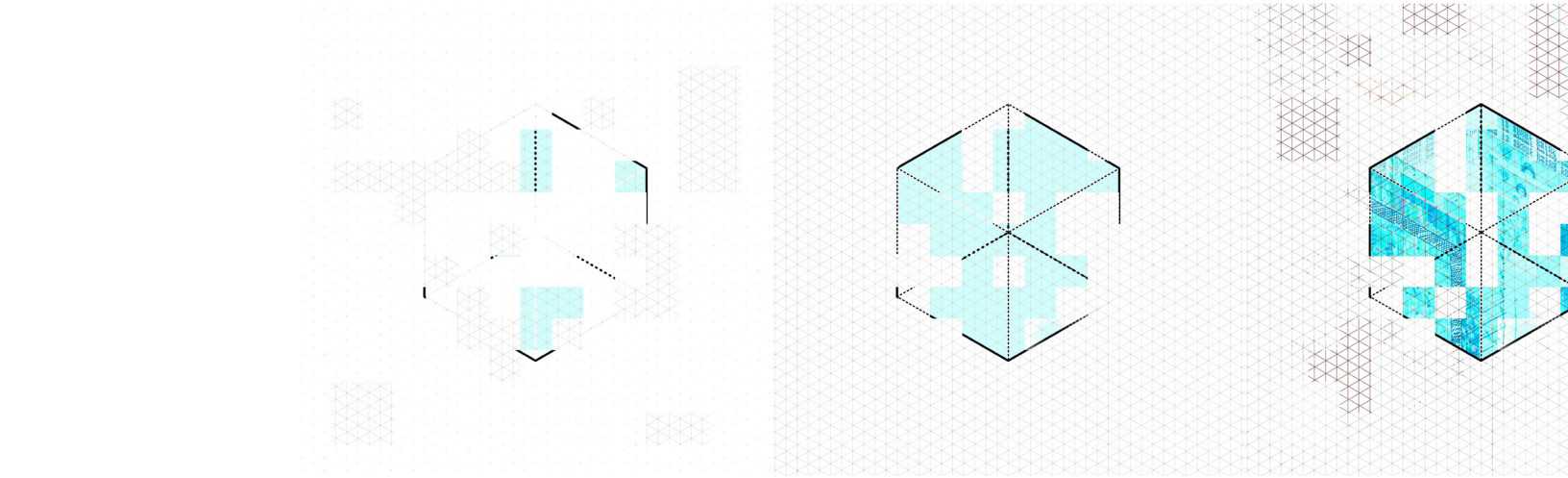
Initial round of storytelling devices uses the cube form repeatedly to illustrate the concept of colonization. With 6 equal sides, the cube is represented as an ideal form. Situating one in a box signifies the imposition of a foreign influence. Illustrations in four panels portray the bahay kubo, bahay na bato, imagined home and homecoming.

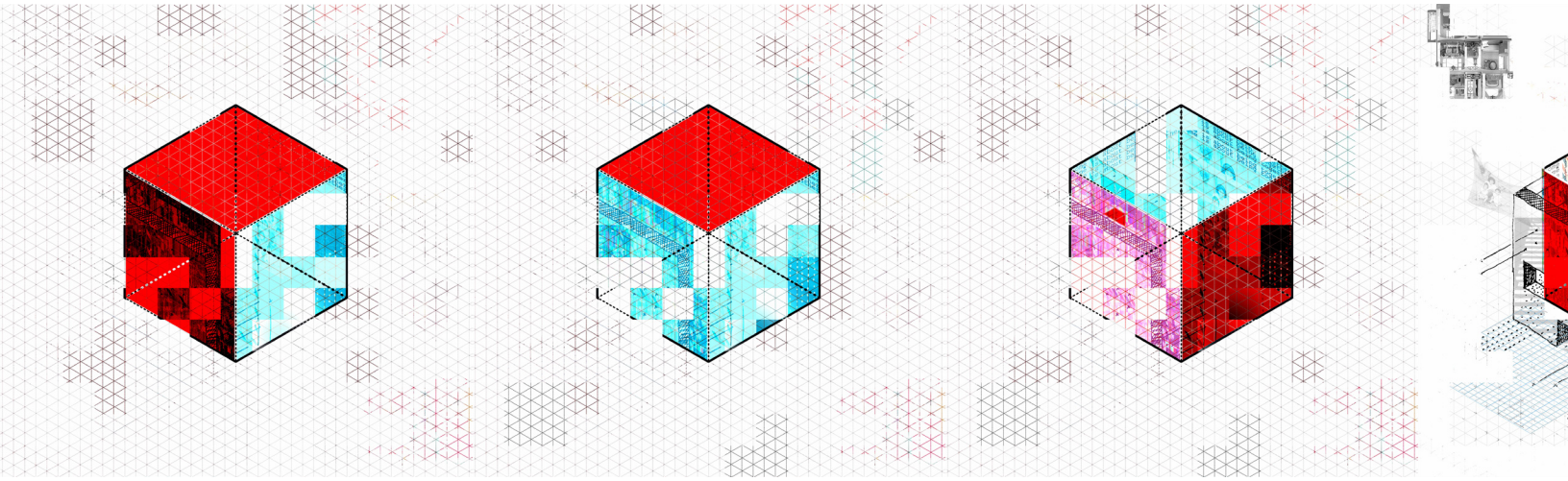







WELCOME
HOME !!!!!

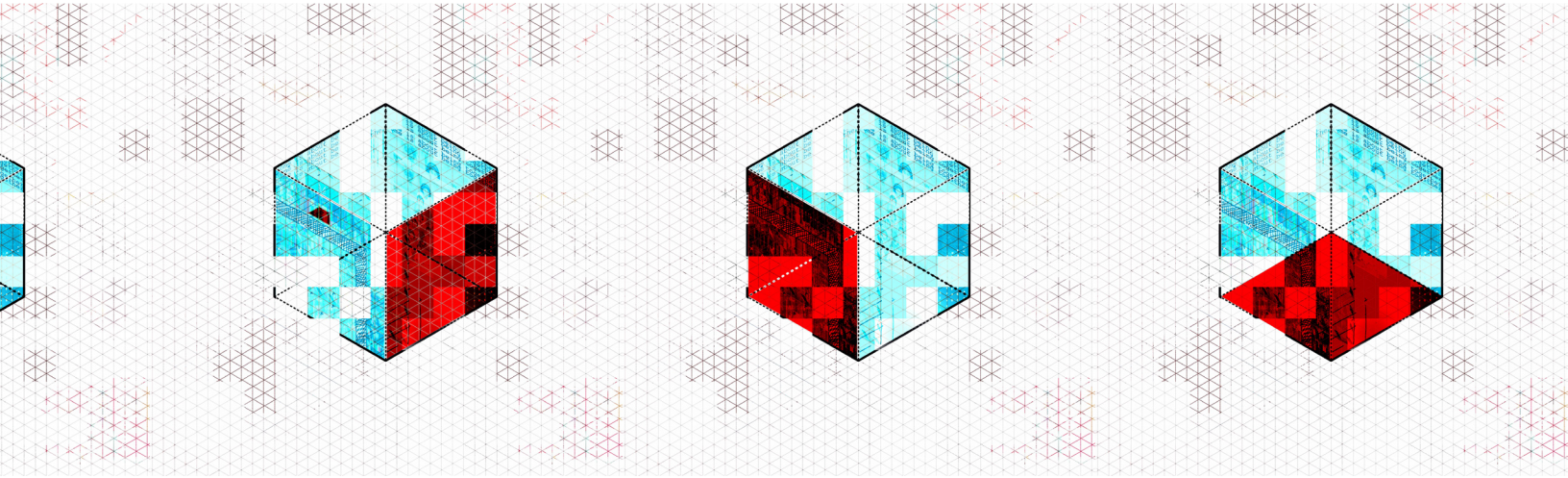


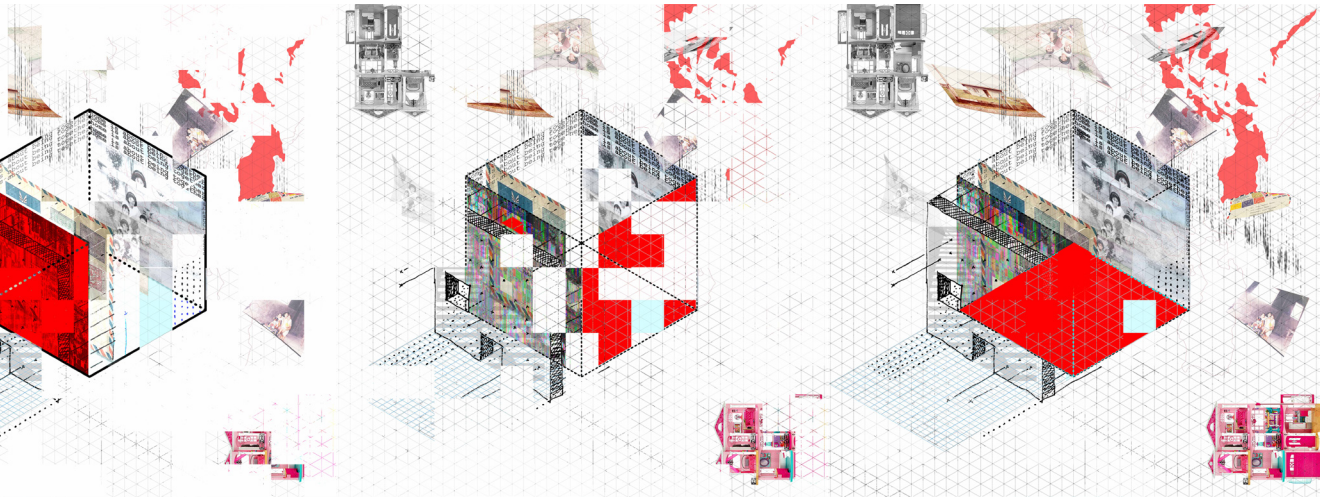


COLLAGE

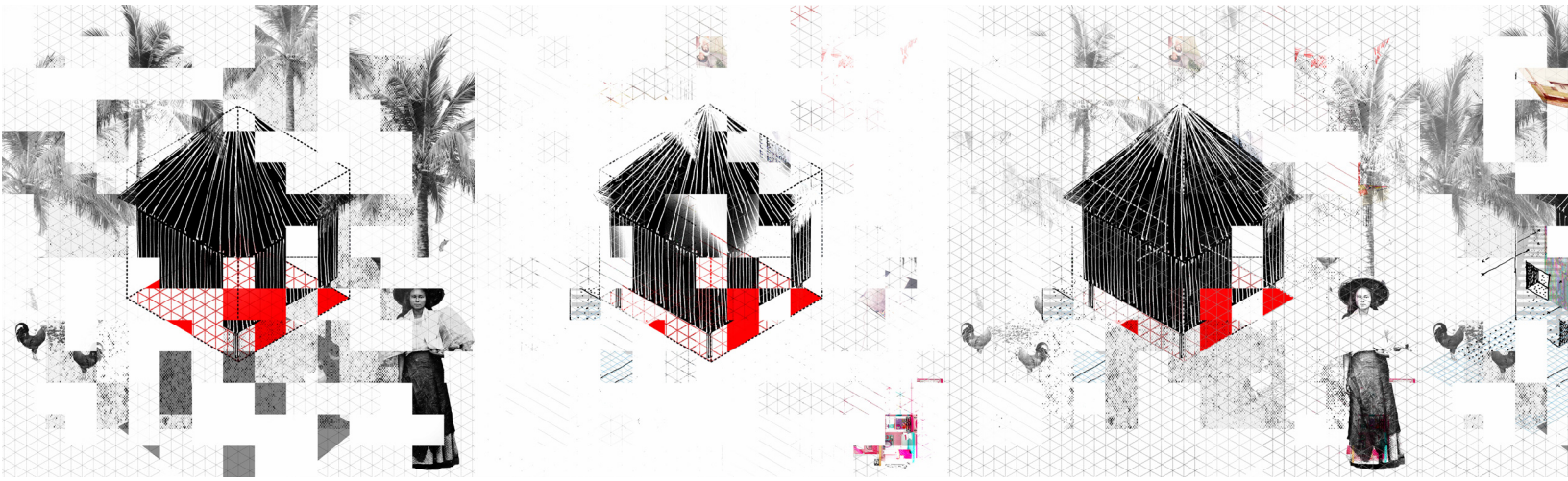
One strategy that developed in the process is the exploration of collage as a form of illustration. The previous images were layered and deconstructed almost in a form of pixelation to extract some parts and reveal the overlay of other images. This graphic exploration attempts to frame multiple images into one composition to create a hybrid subject. The resulting piece transformed into an animation which shows the endless possibilities of this process.

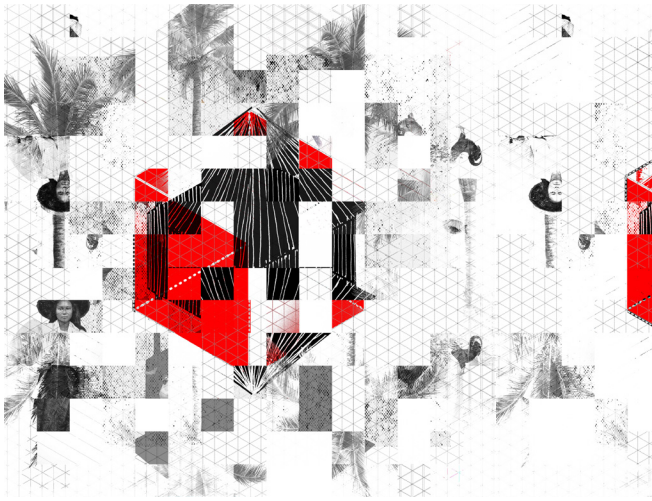






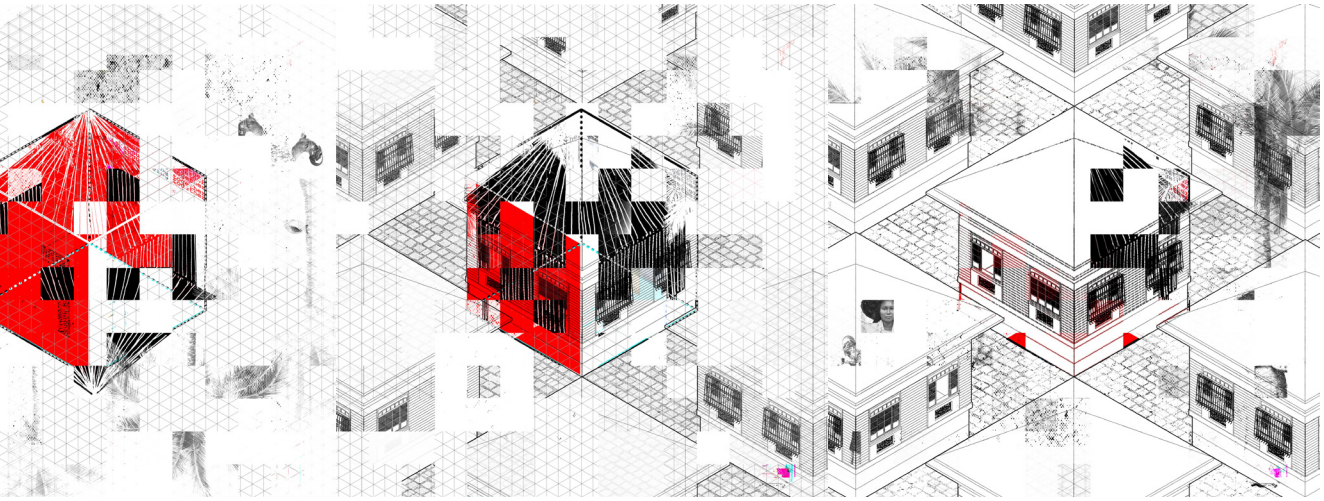


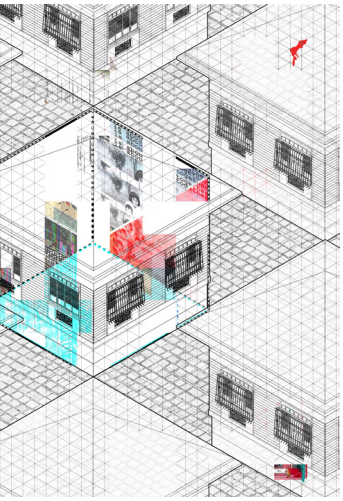


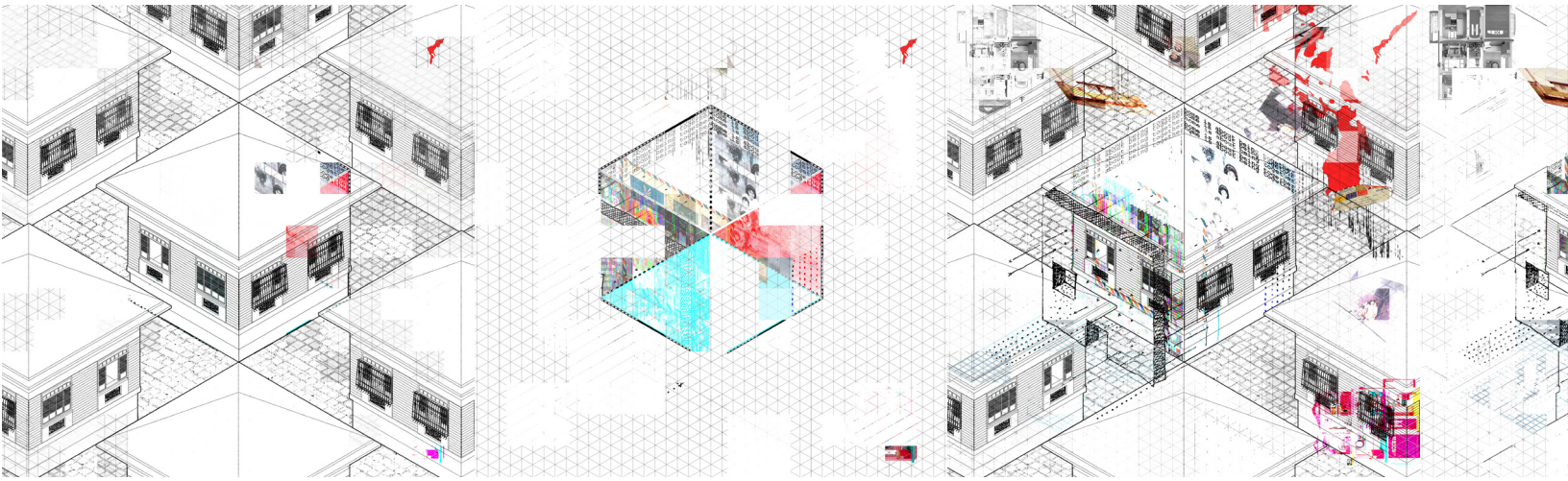


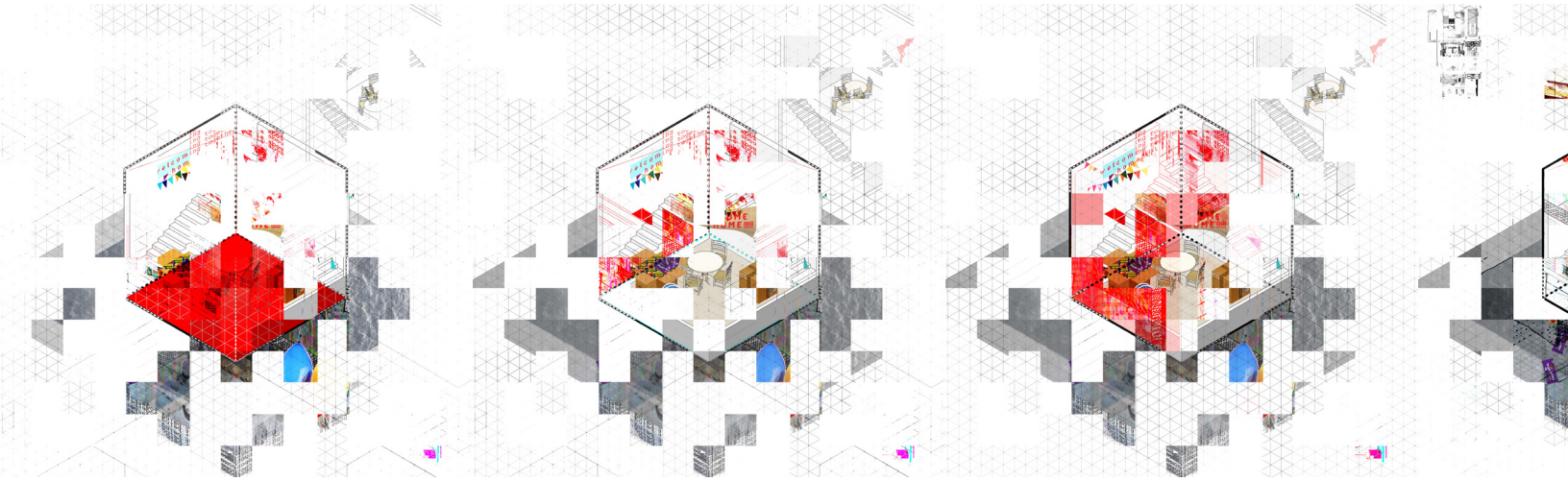


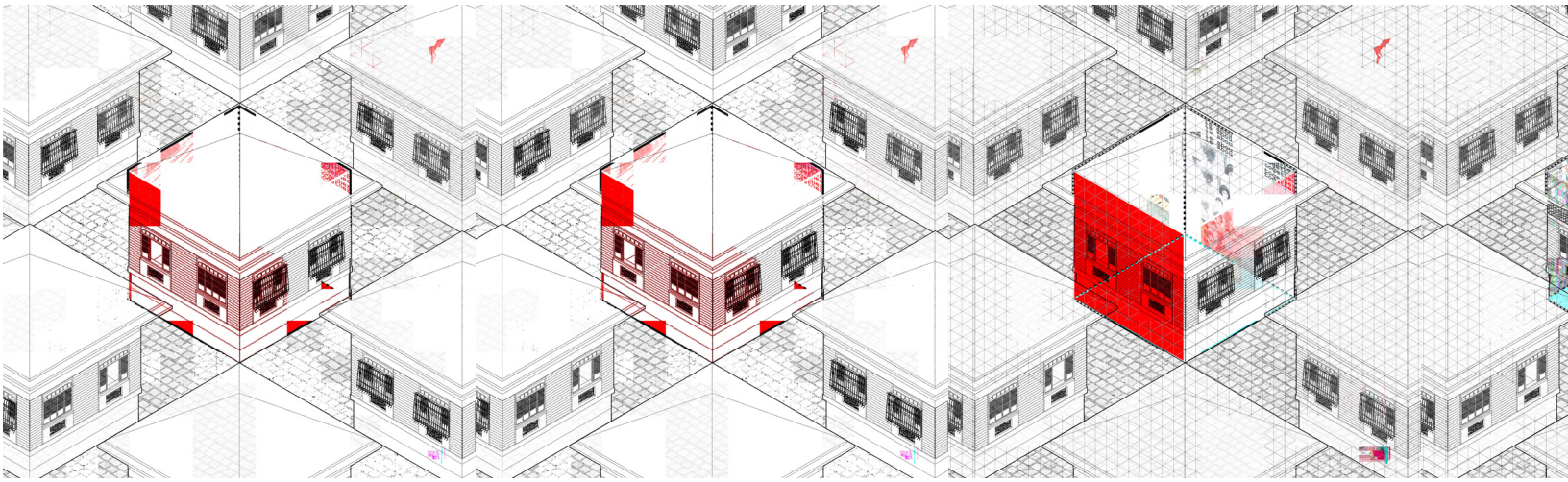


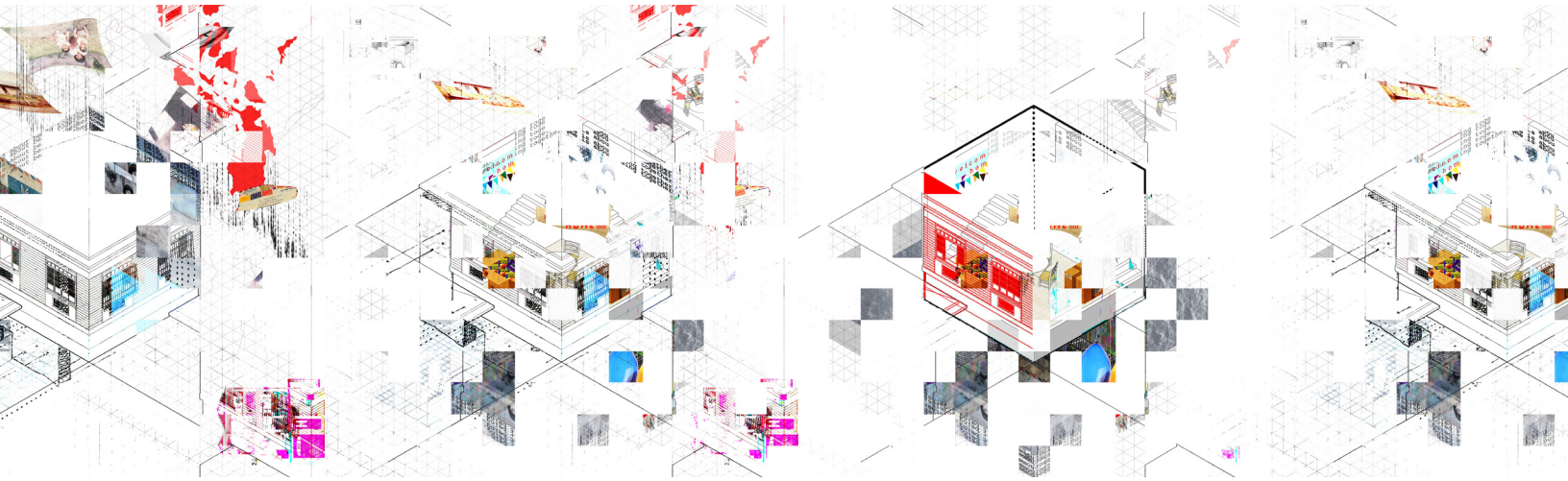


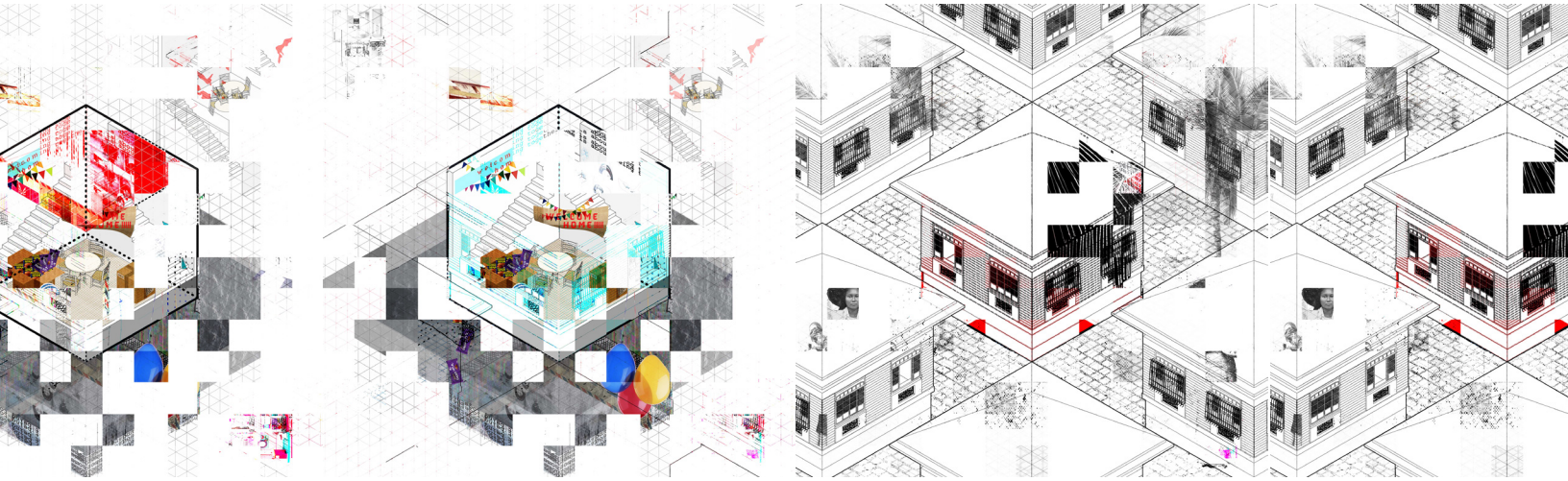


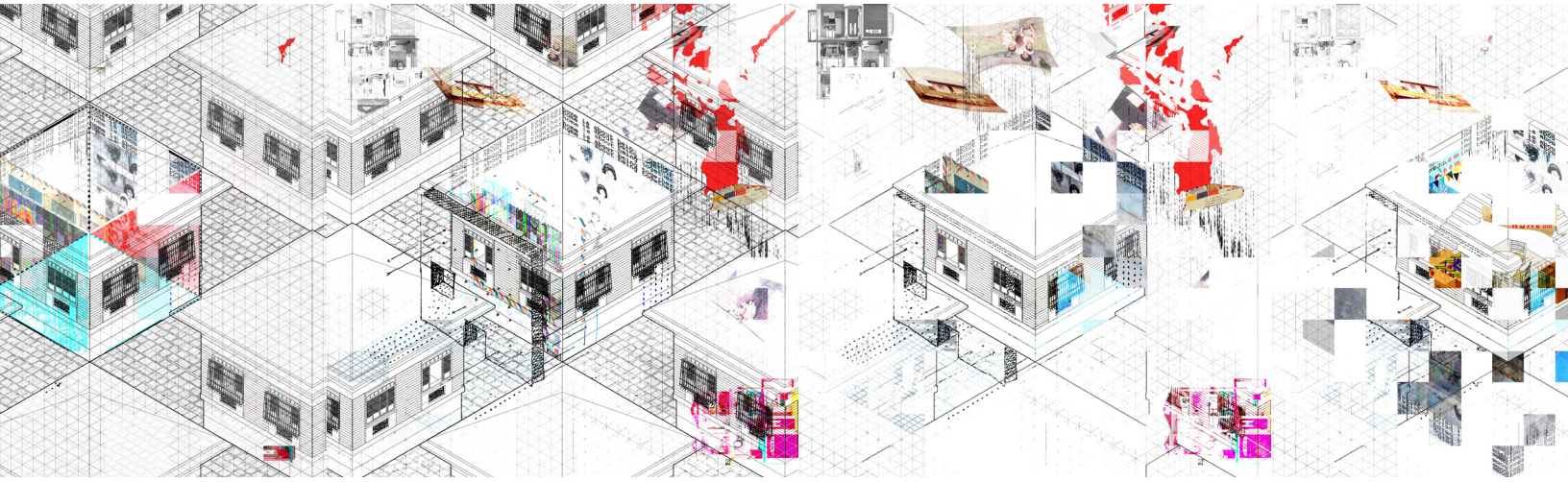


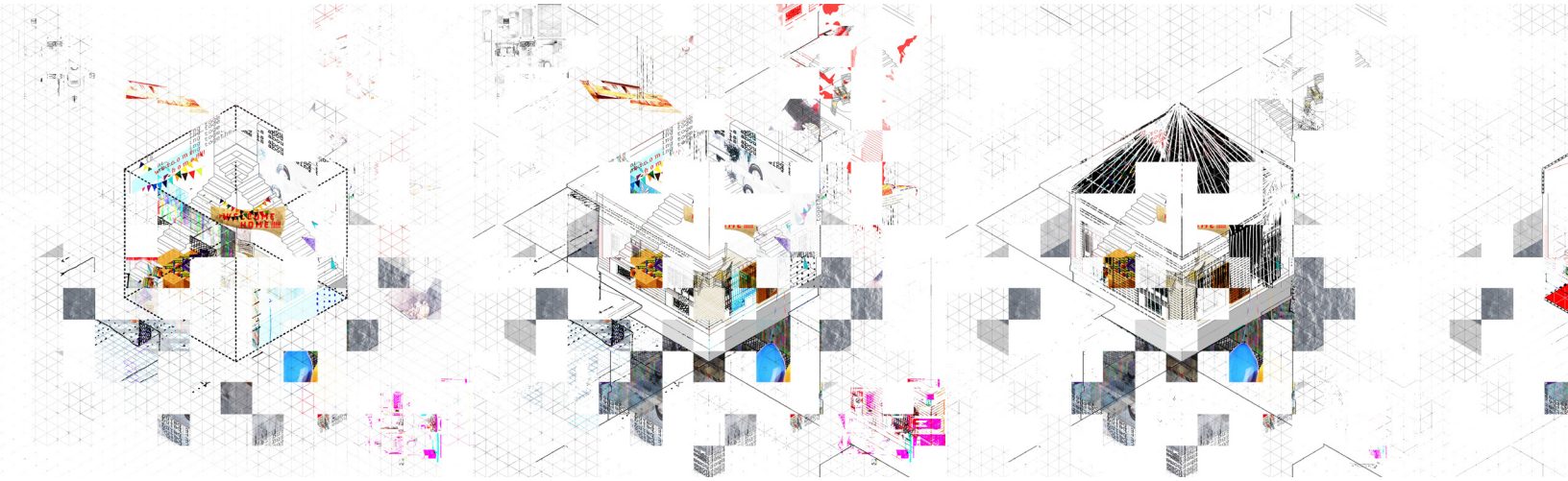


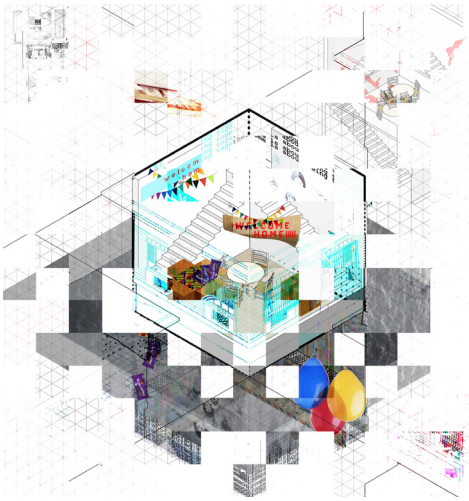









WELCOME HOME!!!


WELCOME HOME!!!

