CUTTING OUT

QUEER ASSEMBLAGES FOR ALTERNATIVE DESIGN FUTURES

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Abstract

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In this thesis, I argue that queerness is a practice of generative dismantling, which offers a framework for critically transforming conventional design methodologies. By designing queerly rather than designing queer things, generative dismantling emphasizes process and performativity to engender alternative design futures which adhere to a queer ethic of increasing sociopolitical awareness for more just built environments. The queerly infused collage methodologies that form the basis of my explorations enable a deeper understanding of queerness in relation to design and reveal spatial implications of a queered design practice. Selfie collages produce a queerer version of a queer body. Layered, hybrid site readings re-see alleys with a queer lens and project their intrinsic value outwardly and into the future. Deconstructions of alleys as three-dimensional spaces using two-dimensional collage operations embrace a queer practice of transformation and unlock potentialities unknown to uncritical designers. And finally, horizons are transformed from singular, linear, and horizontal representations of space to plural, broken, multi-directional intersections of time and space. Grounded in an entangled collage of queer spatial theories, queer design practices are positioned as potential and a queer future as a utopian endeavor.
Like queerness, design operates in the realm of potential. This similarity figures both queerness and design as operative agents that when layered and reconfigured, result in an epistemological assemblage greater than the sum of its parts. This assemblage encourages us to leave behind the here and now, and lean into there and then, pushing queerness and design to the forefront of a future marked by transformational justice and wholeness.


CUTTING OUT
queer assemblages
for alternative design futures
A TIME FOR GREATNESS
GIMPY
FOR
PRESIDENT
FOOD & YARD
CEDAR GROVE

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This thesis was conceived of, researched, and performed on the traditional and present land that touches the shared waters of the Duwamish, Puyallup, Suquamish, Tulalip, and Muckleshoot Nations, who have stewarded the land and waters since time immemorial. I gratefully honor the Indigenous communities of this land, which was never ceded, rather stolen through colonial violence. I recognize the queer, Trans, and Two-Spirit Indigenous people who continue to resist the violent heteronormativity that is central to settler-colonialism.

Many thanks to my thesis committee, Catherine de Almeida and Julie Parrett. Your incredible effort and support reminded me of the value of this work and your rigorous critique inspired the advancement of my ideas and explorations. Thank you to my friend and mentor, Rich Freitas, for sharing your invaluable insights into queerness and how it meaningfully relates to our discipline.

To my peers, your dedication to the betterment of our profession and world is energizing. Your love and encouragement over the past three years has made this process possible. Alicia, thank you for the constant emotional buttressing, I literally owe you. Ry, I would not have chosen to share these challenging experiences with anyone else. The wild tenacity and thoughtful purpose with which you work is highly motivating, and a little intimidating.

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Thank you to my friends and family, especially my parents. Your love shaped who I am, which significantly informs this thesis.

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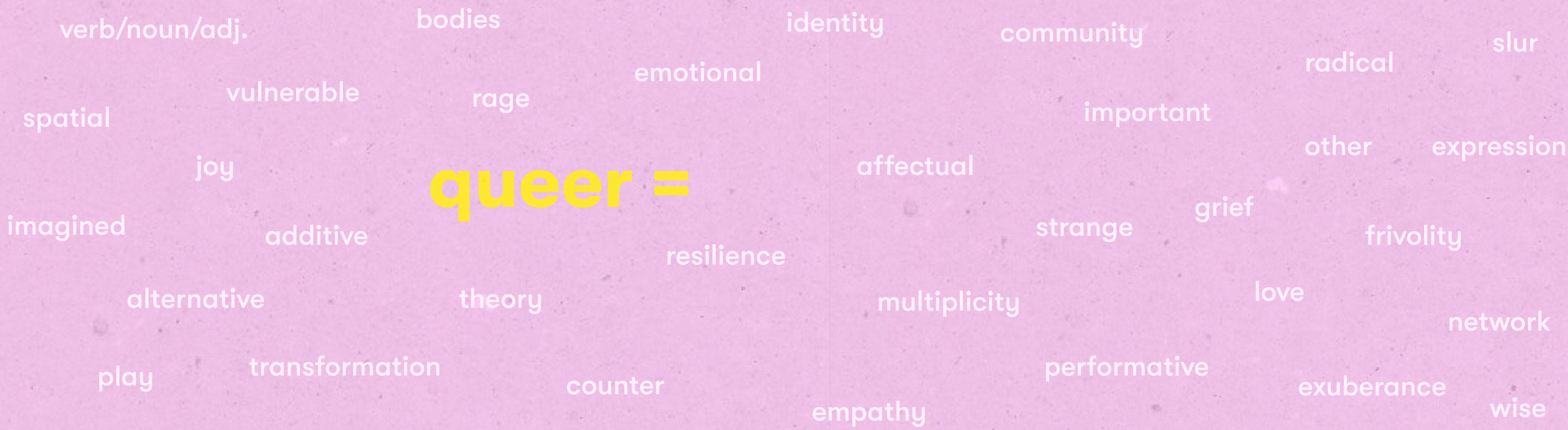
INTRODUCTION



In this thesis, I present generative dismantling as a queer method to critique design processes within landscape architecture. It feels as though this thesis has been in development for the last three years of my design education as I have explored integrating queerness into my work. I suppose it's been forming in some way or another over the course of my lifetime. This thesis is deeply entangled with my lived experiences as a queer person and all of the pain, intrigue, and pleasure associated with that aspect of my identity.

Entanglement is an apt metaphor for queer lived experiences. Queerness represents messy contradictions. Even the act of defining the term 'queer' seems impossible and imprudent, due to its inherent boundlessness and oppositionality. However, I define 'queer' in order to situate my contributions in queer spatial theory.

Queer is many. In fact, queerness is a manifestation of multiplicity. You will read many times throughout this thesis that *queerness is*...one thing or another. The many definitions and valuations of queerness, or queer, are not in conflict. Rather, they are in harmony, each one simultaneously informing, contextualizing, and expanding the other.

The term queer was reclaimed in two different discursive spaces at once. Culturally, the term queer has been used as a slur against people who identify outside of heteronormative sexual orientations (lesbian, gay, bisexual, asexual, pansexual, etc.) and gender identities (transgender, gender non-conforming, non-binary, agender, two spirit, etc.) since the 1890s.[1] Activists in the AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power (ACT UP) and the group, Queer Nation, began to reclaim the term in the early 1990's as they protested the federal government's inaction in face of the AIDS crisis of the 1980's and 1990's. "Queer" caught on as an umbrella term for those with 'deviant' identities and was widely embraced by the queer community by the 2000's.

In an academic sense, queer theory is a relatively new field of study that began to emerge in the early 1990's out of gay and lesbian studies, which evolved from feminist studies and the early study of gender and sexuality. "Queer" was first used as an academic term by Teresa de Lauretis in her 1991 article "Queer Theory: Lesbian and Gay Sexualities".[2] In this seminal text, the author centers her thinking around the refusal of heteronormative worldviews. Ironically, Teresa de Lauretis stated later in life that she never intended her work to spiral into its own entangled discourse. She, along with many critical queer theorists, think the existence of queer theory is counterproductive, as the more queerness becomes defined and discrete, the more it loses its very essence.[3]

Laura Sjoberg considers queerness as "something that is unsettleable, uncaging, and engaging in projects of destruction."[4] Though this definition frames queerness as an unending process of negation and disassembling, it is possible to reinterpret it as a *generative dismantling*. Generative dismantling is an active and productive undoing that is simultaneously nostalgic, forward thinking, and essentially queer. *Dismantling* is a verb that centers process and describes the critical act of breaking down, tearing apart, or disassembling. *Generative* qualifies the action and positions *dismantling* as a worthy endeavor, capable of creative force and enabling future thought. My reinterpretation of Sjoberg's definition of queer as generative dismantling is influenced by one of many definitions of queerness posited by José Esteban Muñoz. Muñoz describes queerness as "an insistence on potentiality or concrete possibility for another world."[5] This utopian conceptualization may refer to a

violent or destructive process, but one that is necessary and yields 'another world'. These two definitions seem at odds with one another. One frames queerness as a breaking down of existing paradigms; the other suggests a queer potential for world-making. Although contradictory, the definitions share a process of becoming, and the suggestion of an alternate future. Generative dismantling is a queer process that connects both Sjoberg's and Muñoz's definitions of queer and conceptually situates this thesis.

Queer author Lee Edelman broadens queer definitions in his book, *No Future.*[6] Edelman defines queerness as the effort required to arrive in a 'place', which in this instance refers to the death of social order.[7] Edelman intentionally obfuscates time, represented by the eventual death of social order, and space, represented by an aspirational and unknown place, to comment on queerness' capacity for subversion. For Edelman, queerness begins to be spatialized and situated into a future place. This future place of queerness can be conceived of as a horizon, as it is distant, yet visible. The horizon metaphor is used by Muñoz to situate queerness as something that is not-yet-here, but impending and promising.[8] Edelman similarly positions queerness as a process of world-making, or rather world-unmaking. Unmaking strongly resists a positive affect associated with the often-hopeful act of world-making by connecting this 'place' to an anti-future and ultimately the death of dominant social order. The death of social order is the dismantling in this case and is framed as a necessary aspect of queer world-making, or generation by queer design.

Navigating the contradictory entanglement embedded within queer theory requires a firm grounding of my own conceptions of queerness. The non-exhaustive list to the right highlights the many expressions of what queerness means for the purposes of this thesis.

It is equally important to define what queer is not. For the purposes of this thesis, queer is not limited to a reference to *queer people.* Queer people, bodies, and identities constitute aspects and affects of queerness. Yet, queerness as a phenomenon is too vast to be contained or defined by one person, body, or idea. Queerness is inclusive of experiences and knowledges that exist beyond accepted understandings of an individual's sexuality and gender.[9] Queerness is *not* sameness, homogeneity, or normalcy. It is an ineffable and direct opposition to singular, hegemonic culture.[10] The essence of queerness is non-normative and an authentic embrace of difference.

To embrace difference is to celebrate otherness. Queer is other, and queerness is the power derived from otherness. The power of the other, and therefore the power of queer, figures relationality as potential.[11] In other words, the act of (be)coming together, is the ultimate transformative practice. A queer togetherness is an expression of solidarity that rejects the singularity of hegemonic power. Furthermore, the oppression of queerness and otherness, used to reinforce hegemonic power, is the impetus for a queer togetherness. This illustrates a queer causality dilemma. What came first? A queer togetherness that threatens hegemony? Or the oppression of queerness by hegemony?

Independent of causality, queerness is uniquely situated to resist and rebuild, or dismantle and regenerate. What follows is a process of generative dismantling to investigate the potential of queerness in design processes. By critically deconstructing design processes and sowing queer seeds in the cracks, my aim is to infuse spatial design explorations with a queer ethic. This process offers a better understanding of queerness as a means of bringing an increased sociopolitical awareness to design. The ideas within this thesis offer a small step towards a queer future on the horizon. And like the horizon, queerness offers us a direction and an unending potential.

Queerness is ...

personal, private, shared, and public.

experienced, embodied, and perceived.

beyond binaries.

often associated with sexuality, gender, and identity.

behavior, expression, and performance.

agentic and generative.

destructive and critical.

dismantling.

spatial, temporal, existential, ontological, and epistemological.

other.

political.

counter.

positive, negative, or neutral. (Realistically, it is all three at once)

embodied prose.

the assignment of meaning and value to the mundane and valueless.

joyful, resourceful, and communal.

vulnerable.

camp, exuberance, over-the-top, outrageous, and too much.

vengeful, angry, tired, and fed-up.

adaptable, resilient, and evolving.

radical transformation.

empathy, acceptance, and love.

Endnotes

1. Jagose, Queer Theory: An Introduction.

2. "Queer Theory - Origins of Queer Theory."

3. Barker and Scheele, Queer: A Graphic History.

4. Sjoberg, "Queering the 'Territorial Peace'?"

5. Muñoz, Cruising Utopia: The Then and There of Queer Futurity.

6. Edelman, "No Future."

7. Ibid.

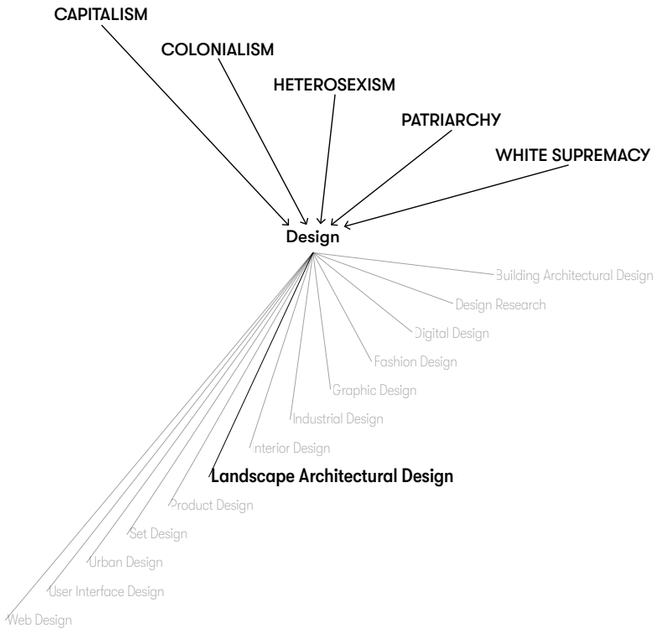
8. Muñoz, Cruising Utopia: The Then and There of Queer Futurity.

9. Miller, "A Queer Literacy Framework Promoting (A)Gender and (A)Sexuality Self-Determination and Justice."

10. Reed, "Imminent Domain: Queer Space in the Built Environment."

11. Gorny and van den Heuvel, "New Figurations in Architecture Theory: From Queer Performance to Becoming Trans."

CRITICAL STANCE



Queerness is a process and practice of radical transformation and world-making that parallels design. Design, as a process and methodology, enables designers to reimagine the world creatively and iteratively, a central aspect of design thinking. The parallel relationship between design processes and queerness allows them to be in dialogue and inform one another.

In this thesis, I argue that queerness is a practice of generative dismantling, which offers a framework for critically transforming conventional design methodologies. By designing queerly rather than designing queer things, generative dismantling emphasizes process and performativity to propose alternative design futures which adhere to a queer ethic of increasing sociopolitical awareness for more just built environments.

To be clear, alternative does not imply betterment. Often in conventional design, 'new' is positioned as 'better', but newness only benefits some and regards past iterations and past, or othered, users as unworthy. Sara Ahmed, in *The Affect Theory Reader*, suggests that betterment implies happiness, which is an affective experience designated for those with goodness or positive morality.[1] Positive morality in this case is associated with families and those who reproduce, not queerness. Everything that is queer exists outside of traditional, family-oriented, reproductive values and is read as unhappy and undeserving of value.[2] This illustrates the idea that design, and its orientation towards betterment, is exclusive of other narratives outside of dominant heterosexism. Sara Ahmed famously refers to those existing beyond positive reproductive morality as "affect aliens: feminist kill joys, unhappy queers, and melancholic migrants."[3] The positioning of new as better in conventional design processes denies the unevenness of the human experience, and wrongly assumes the morality of proposed design solutions. Here, alternative implies potentiality, possibility, and multiplicity.

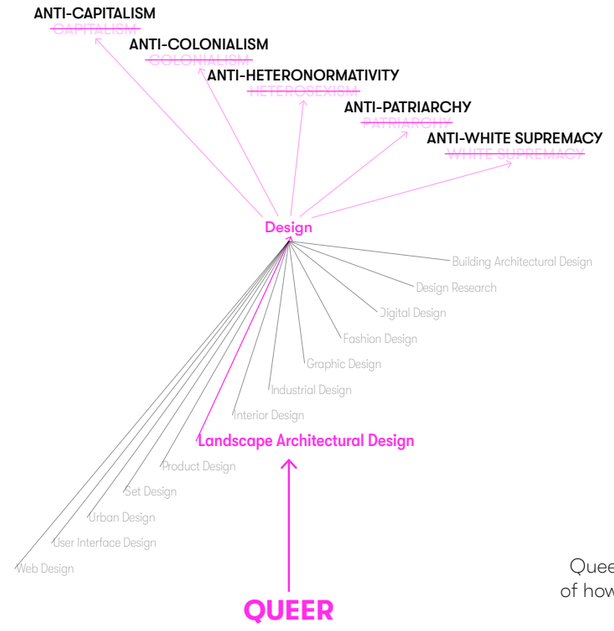


Figure 1: The Opposition of Queerness Diagrams. Illustrative of how queerness, through design can affect change.

To understand why queerness is desired or needed, the practice and ethos of design must be situated in its current cultural context. In 21st century Western culture and politics, design as a tool is often co-opted by hegemonic systems and structures.[4] Specifically, design as a generative instrument of material reconfiguration can be used to advance the aligned agendas of white supremacy, patriarchy, paternalism, heteronormativity, and capitalism. These hegemonic systems work tirelessly to reinforce their power by oppressing the bodies, communities, and knowledges of those on the margins or outside of dominant systems.

Queerness presents a staunch opposition to dominance through its relationality to those systems (fig. 1). The term queer originally refers to strangeness, or oddness.[5] This can also be read as 'outside of' or marginal, on the edge. The positioning of queer and queerness in adjacent relations to hegemony at once removes it from and enables the critique of rigid power dynamics. Queerness benefits from existing beyond the bounds of normativity and looking in, as standing on the edge creates a viewpoint to gain critical perspective. With this shifted awareness, queerness provides an alluring alternative for the other, an alternative that extends power towards the margins, effectively challenging singular hegemonic power and centering the experience of the other.

An example of resistance to hegemony is the notion of queer time offered by queer theorist Judith Halberstam.[6] Queer time refers to the presence of alternative timelines that determine queer life-cycle events and resist the normative timelines of heterosexism. Halberstam defines queer time as "strange temporalities, imaginative life schedules, and eccentric economic practices" that constitute queer ways of life, rather than relational identities tied to sex.[7] Queer time and the subcultural practices associated with it resist prescribed timing of traditional western hetero-patriarchal events like marriage, reproduction, and temporal events tied to

~~what is queer space?~~

what *makes* queer space?

work and production. Simultaneously, the rejection of normative hetero-time results in the grounding of queer life-cycles by interrupting the common association of queerness with sexuality. As queerness is freed from constrictive perceptions of sex and sexual deviancy, it achieves a fullness previously reserved for heterosexual life and timing.

If design is appropriated by oppressive hegemonic structures, and queerness inherently resists hegemonic power, then the oppositional nature of queer practice can provide an antidote for dangerously co-opted design processes. This is evidenced by the alternative paradigm presented by queer time. What, then, can queerness offer spatial understandings as it relates to landscape architecture?

The enticing and elusive idea of queer space has occupied the minds of thinkers, academics, and artists across many disciplines including cultural studies, geography, feminist and queer theory, architecture, landscape architecture, and urban design. Despite this, queer space remains an understudied aspect of both architectural and urban design critical theory, and spatial implications are often unexamined elements in queer theory.[8]

Aaron Betsky and Joel Sanders, two gay male architects and writers, provided early ideations of queer space. In Aaron Betsky's book, *Queer Space*, he outlines three stereotypically queer spaces: the closet, the interior, and the bathhouse.[9] Betsky centers the white gay male experience of queer space and plays off of familiar and legible queer tropes. The closet represents a primary queer space that holds dueling emotional qualities of comfort and fear.

The interior is then explored as an early expression of queer spatial preferences. Safe from the voyeuristic gaze of heterosexual neighbors, queer homes allowed for new kinds of architectural and spatial expressions. Following the queer liberation movements of the 1960's and 1970's, the queering of the interior space was an important leap for the development of queer interior typologies. Queer interior designers explored the "deformation of form" instead of emphasizing structure or discrete elements, and would combine elements using "overlapping curves" and flows of fabric.[10] The influence of queer style on interior design eventually translated to a national scale through film and television. Though specific to a period in time and to the point of view of select queer designers, interior space had been imprinted by a queer aesthetic and practice.

According to Betsky, the bathhouse serves as a historic example of the ultimate queer space. Bathhouses are places of corporeal exhibition and expression. In gender specific bathhouses frequented by gay men, the male form is displayed and consumed. The physical space of a bathhouse is coded by sexualized behavior and a commodified embodied experience. Many feminist scholar contemporaries of Betsky critique his conceptions of queer space as limited in their scope in terms of a privileged, gendered experience.[11] They assert that the connection made between queer space and bathhouses is reductive in the same way that queerness is often entangled in negative ideas of sexuality and lust. Betsky's queer spaces are also limited in their rigid definitions. Claiming some spaces as queer requires other spaces to not be queer. His labeling of queer space creates restrictive binaries that ignore the nuanced act of becoming that define queer spatial processes.

Joel Sanders, in his 1996 book, *Stud*, frames queer space more abstractly. He says, there is "no queer space," only space "put to queer use."[12] Similar to Betsky, Sanders is critiqued for centering and essentializing the embodied experience of the white gay male. But unlike Betsky, Sanders' thinking about queer space

~~design queer things~~

design things *queerly*

begins to deemphasize the space itself and focus on processes of spatial production. This is a point of departure in queer spatial theory. Reorienting the study of queer space to the study of queer spatial processes lends an increased agency to bodies and identities that are crucial in producing and evolving queer space. We see an important paradigmatic shift from queer space defined as fixed spaces frequented by white gay males, to queer space as processes enacted by many different kinds of queer actors.

Queer space as a product of social affect is reinforced around the same time by Christopher Reed in his article, *Imminent Domain: Queer Space in the Built Environment*.[13] Reed posits that all spaces can be thought of along a spectrum from totally queer, space put to exceptionally queer use, to unqueerable, space that is entrenched in heterosexism and its practices. The author further claims that queer space is always a dynamic condition, as queer space can be claimed through coding by queer bodies and uses. Coding space refers to the ways in which queerness leaves behind mostly invisible traces of cultural production.[14] Reed points to the "queer habit" of detecting well camouflaged traces and recognizing invisible markers as a kind of way-finding and place keeping for urban queers.[15] Examples of queer spatial coding include the presence of visual symbols like a pride flag or trans flag, queer gestures like a glance or a look-back, or more nuanced invisible traces like a fleeting feeling or memory. Reed emphasizes the untraceable and ephemeral nature of queer spatial coding, and frames queer spatial users as almost supernatural urban observers capable of influencing spatial processes.

This idea of queer space being imminent, coded, socially and temporally produced, and triggered by the coming and going of queer people, speaks to a common idea in landscape architecture rhetoric - activation. In a recent publication, Jen Jack Gieseking chronicles decades of qualitative research on queer femme and trans spatial production in New York City.[16] Gieseking describes these spatial patterns as constellations. Queer spatial constellations refer to the way in which queer spaces come and go, are connected through their relationality and user patterns, and serve a larger spatial function beyond one specific site. Gieseking's analysis of queerly activated urban spaces in New York is also closely tied to the political and economic power of those responsible for producing queer space.[17] Patterns are identified signaling the often-short lifespans of lesbian queer spaces in comparison to gay male spaces that enjoy greater longevity and establishment. This is also in part due to the gendered nature of queer spaces, where gay males historically congregated in bars, and queer women more commonly used private spaces.[18] Framing queer spaces as spaces of queer activation aligns with Sanders' statement "put to queer use", and firmly plants queer identities and bodies at the root of queer spatial processes.

Tracing the evolution of queer spatial theory illustrates an etymological shift in the use of the word queer from a noun to a verb. Queering, used as a verb, and queerly, used as an adverb, both emphasize process, whereas queer, when used as a noun, emphasizes a fixed singular thing. Fixed and singular are in direct opposition to the nature of queerness. This etymological shift influences the way we currently conceive of queer space and has important implications for design. Designer and lecturer Jaffer Kolb writes about queerness in architecture and highlights this etymological shift; "The effort here is to shift the application of queerness in architecture away from a drive to make queer things and instead to making things queerly."[19] Kolb's statement about *making things queerly*, is the guiding methodological light for later design explorations in this thesis. *Making things queerly* captures the essence of queerness and frames generative dismantling as an active, agentic process capable of powerful change.

Endnotes

1. Ahmed, "Happy Objects."

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

4. Canli, "Queerying Design: Material Re-Configurations of Body Politics."

5. Jagose, Queer Theory: An Introduction.

6. Halberstam, In A Queer Time and Place.

7. Ibid.

8. Gorny and van den Heuvel, "New Figurations in Architecture Theory: From Queer Performance to Becoming Trans."

9. Betsky, Queer Space: Architecture and Same Sex Desire.

10. Ibid.

11. Gorny and van den Heuvel, "New Figurations in Architecture Theory: From Queer Performance to Becoming Trans."

12. Sanders, "From Stud to Stalled! Architecture In Transition."

13. Reed, "Imminent Domain: Queer Space in the Built Environment."

14. Ibid.

15. Ibid.

16. Gieseking, "Mapping Lesbian and Queer Lines of Desire."

17. Ibid.

18. Ferentinos, "Beyond the Bar."

19. Kolb, "Working Queer."

COLLAGE AS METHOD

Figure 2: Queer Exquisite Corpse. This collage shows the dynamic, transformational, and playful qualities of queerness.

In considering Kolb's suggestion to *make things queerly*, the question quickly becomes, how? How does one infuse complicated and tender queer politics and practices into a formal landscape design process? To answer this question, I reflected on initial experimental forms of representation from my own design processes within this thesis. My early explorations were consistently characterized by a familiar medium, collage. I found myself returning again and again to Photoshop and other editing programs to cut-out and reassemble images of queer subjects.

The initial collages featured dramatic juxtaposition in order to create or reveal what was unexpected. This was a *slightly* generative act of dismantling preconceived notions and expectations. It was slightly generative because while splicing the head of a drag queen onto the body of a rat did not answer my deepest questions about the spatial implications of queerness, it allowed the process to begin through levity and curiosity (fig. 2). The act of breaking the rules also felt queer. For example, I knew two things did not *belong* together, but was compelled to express their relationship, regardless of visual or logical norms.

The excitement brought on by early explorations led to collage as the core methodology for this thesis. Initial research into collage methods revealed a long history of queer collage art, rigorous academic collage inquiry, and interesting connections between collage, queerness, space, and design.

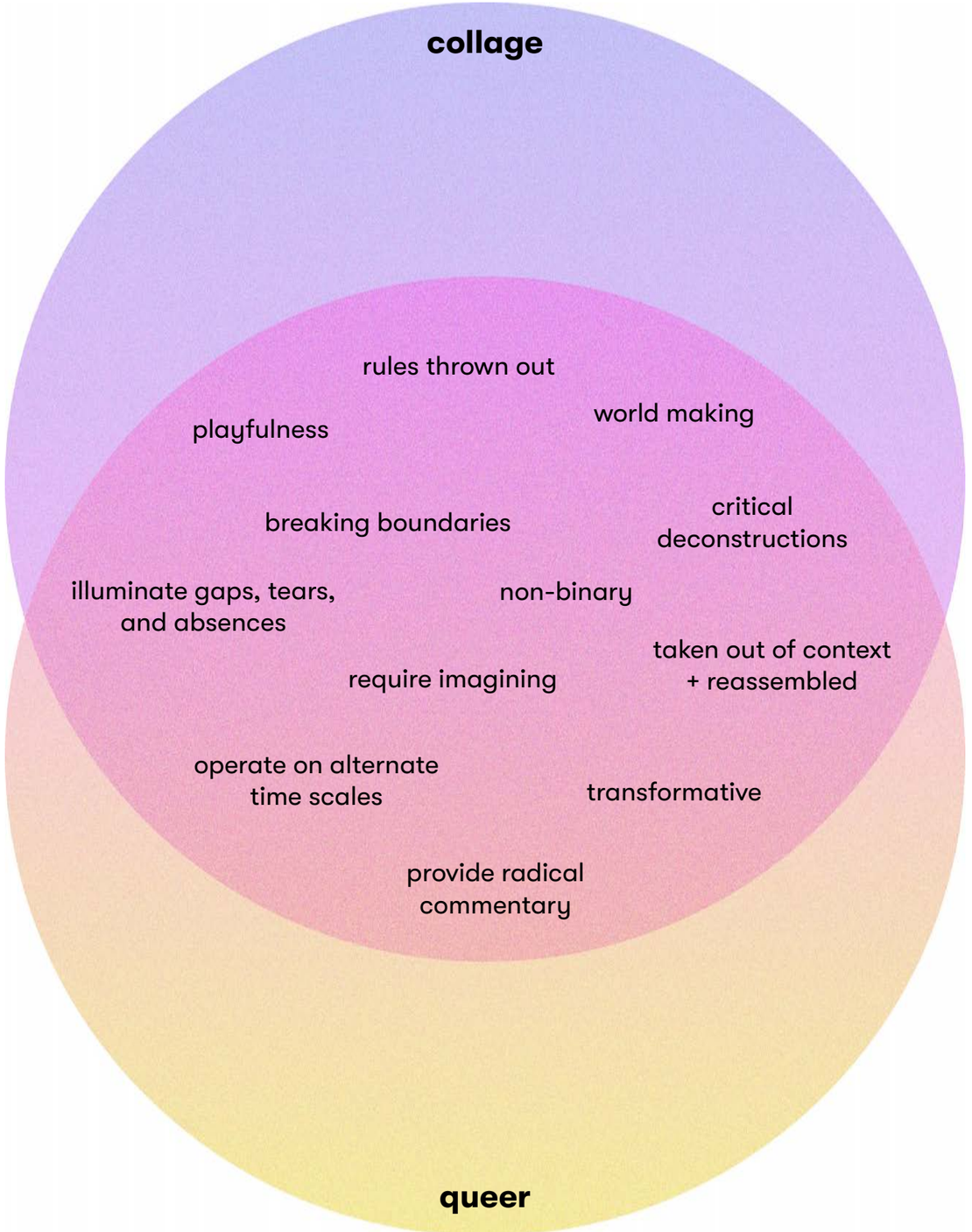
The term collage comes from the French word, *coller*, meaning sticking or gluing together.[1] Early collage artists referred to the practice as photo-montage, and used materials such as paper, photographs, stamps, plants, and even bones.[2] In the art world, "founders" of collage or photo-montage were members of the cubist and Dadaist movements. This included artists like Hannah Höch, Pablo Picasso, and Juan Gris.[3] Early collage artists found utility in the technique as it was a useful way to juxtapose, critique, overlay, combine, and remove different images to reconfigure a fresh point of view.

Collage is a common form of representation that has a low entry barrier, requiring only common art supplies and basic skills of cutting and pasting. Digital collage techniques are among the first skills taught to design students due to the critical and accessible nature of the medium. Collage is frequently produced with found materials already in existence, making it an inherently transformative medium.[4] As a process, collage allows the artist to reconsider and reposition a work that was once considered whole and complete, subverting the original intention of a piece of work. This is reflected in collage methods through rigorous reconfiguration and iteration.

Collage is regularly used in architecture, landscape architecture, and urban design as a tool to communicate design intention and envisioned outcomes. The field of urban design uses collage as a "phenomenological and qualitative research technique" for its additive and collaborative nature, according to designer Fabiano Micocci.[5] It is possible to regard the city as a collaged assemblage of urban spaces. The city setting displays a surficial layering and material togetherness that comprises an urban fabric which is constantly in flux. In cities, as well as in collages, there is abundant space for infinite hypotheses and potentials.[6]

In contemporary design work, collage is often used uncritically and in ways that do not harness its full potential. When designers use collage to create "ultra-realistic renderings," collage is used without critical thought and can result in "kitsch", or art in poor taste.[7] Representing landscapes in an unthinking manner denies any ethical responsibility on the part of designer, to a place or the people of a place. Uncritical collage practices position collage as a noun, or a static thing. In this way, collage can be a tool of normalcy and unimaginative design practice. Representing a designed landscape photo-realistically to the extent that viewers cannot differentiate between what's real and what's proposed does not simulate a future, rather it places viewers into a simulation, devoid of authenticity. This demonstrates

Figure 3: Queer Collage Venn Diagram.



the importance of queering collage methods and using collage as a verb, an active tool to problematize and deconstruct, rather than reinforce unreal and hegemonic narratives. The active reconstruction that takes place when collage is conceived of as a verb uplifts the generative and queer spirit of collage practice.

The emphasis on *how* collage is used as a tool to explore agency and meaning through its creation further positions collage as a verb and points towards a queer, process-oriented methodology over a conventional, product-oriented one. James Corner, in an essay from *Landscape Imagination*, considers collage, or "composite diagram techniques" as inclusive and affiliative, and as advancing emancipation, heterogeneity, and open-endedness.[8] These descriptions of collage media are essentially queer, and the outcomes are aligned with the liberatory and multiple goals of queerness. Corner then positions elements within a collage as agents of transformation, rather than disparate parts of a visual composition.[9] Collages are therefore greater than the sum of their parts, or the finished artifact. Collage is aligned with queerness in this way because the process of composing, or generative unmaking, is where the meaning resides.

Queer Collage

The transformative and subversive nature of collage makes it a well-suited methodology for exploring queer content. There are many ways in which collage can be conceived of as a queer art form (fig. 3). Like queerness, collage is inherently resistant as it involves a performative and generative act of unmaking or remaking that reconfigures previous work. Authentic collage inquiry requires a critical lens to envision multiple alternatives rather than the single original creation. The constant leaping from one potential to another is queer in its rejection of singularity and embrace of the other, or alternative. Collage is similarly adept at collapsing time and space. A collage artist is able to combine things that wouldn't have existed at the same time and play with perspective and spatial logic. Scale is also a frequently manipulated aspect in collage

Figure 4: Hannah Höch Collage. German Dadaist artist in early 20th century who began working with photo montage as a subversive medium. Her work doesn't always feature 'queer' subjects, but is queer in its method, involving humor, camp, inversion, excess, and extremes. Source: Daniel Fountain, Collage Research Network.

Figure 5: "*Title Unknown (White Restroom)*". Olaf Odegaard. His work plays with erotic and fetishized materials as well as with sexuality, performance, and place. This piece locates two men in 'loaded setting' of a restroom. The scene recall's 'sinister tryst of Daphne and Apollo.' Source: Zachary Small, The Quintessentially Queer Art of Collage

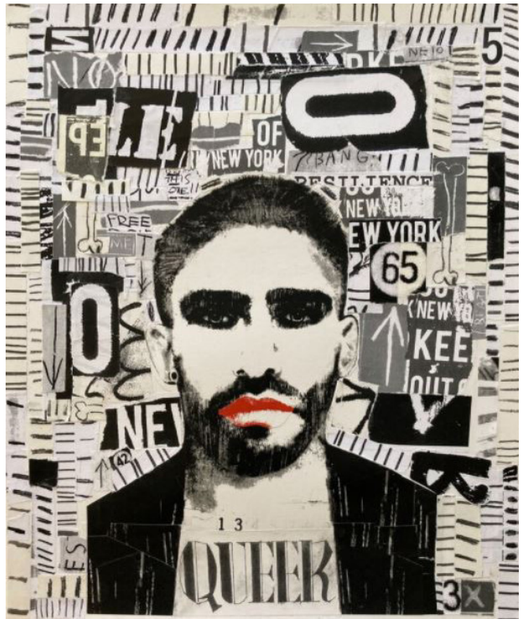
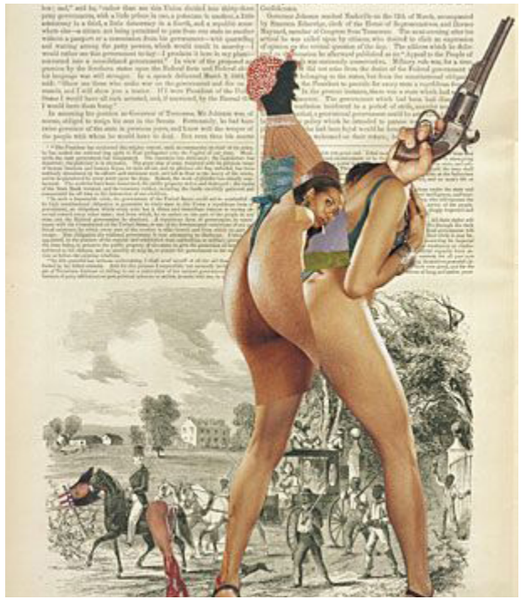


Figure 6: *Le Queer*. Carmine Santaniello. The artist contrasts the "beautiful male form in a somewhat marred, abstract urban setting." Collage is an integral part of his art and is the starting point for most work. He incorporates traditional cut and paste techniques while incorporating elements of photography and street art. Source: https://www.carminesantaniello.com/queercollage

Figure 7: *Mount Wilson Observatory*. Suzanne Wright. Wright's work places queer and femme bodies/identities in fururisitic and architectural settings that speak to performativity and queer utopic futures. Source: http://www.suzannewrightstudio.com/collage



Left: **Figure 8:** *Untitled*. Kara Walker. Source: https://www.maxhetzler.com/exhibitions/leonardo-drew-kara-walker-2005/works/

Right: **Figure 9:** *Untitled*. Kara Walker. Source: https://www.maxhetzler.com/exhibitions/leonardo-drew-kara-walker-2005/works/

by foregrounding various subjects and exaggerating different points of view. In this way, collage can emphasize non-dominant narratives and privilege otherness in its representational choices, similar to queerness.

Halberstam makes a case for the connection between collage and queerness in their book, *The Queer Art of Failure*.

> *"Collage precisely references the spaces in between and refuses to respect the boundaries that usually delineate self from other, art object from museum, and the copy from the original. In this respect, as well as in many others, collage [...] seems feminist and queer. Collage has been used by many female artists, from Hannah Höch to Kara Walker [fig. 8-9], to bind the threat of castration to the menace of feminist violence and both to the promise of transformation, not through a positive production of the image but through a negative destruction of it that nonetheless refuses to relinquish pleasure."*[10]

This quote is significant in its reference to in-betweenness. In-betweenness, again, suggests queerness' adjacency to the mainstream. However, in this case, rather than marginal, in-betweenness suggests a shared edge and a familiarity. This familiarity lends queer perspectives and queer collage inquiry an authority to re-see or reimagine. This is not dissimilar to aforementioned benefits resulting from queerness' relationality to normativity. In betweenness also begins to spatialize the queer art of collage. By considering what is in between, or held in relation to an edge, clues emerge into how queer space can be conceptualized as a liminal space.

In Ali Smith's novel, *Autumn*, the author describes collage as,

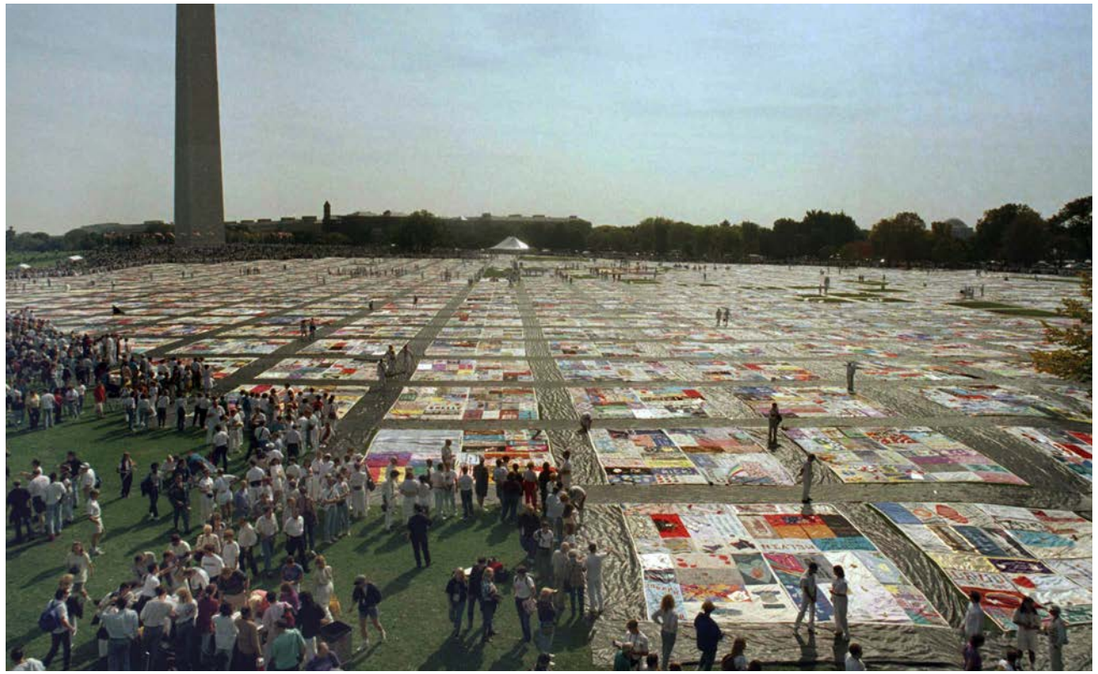
> *"An institute of education where the rules can be thrown into the air, and size and space and time and foreground and background all become relative, and because of these skills everything you think you knew gets made into something new and strange."*[11]

Throwing out the rules is quintessentially queer. The wide range of potentials and nuanced relational qualities further renders collage a queer act. Everything is in play, whether it is upside down, reoriented, omitted, layered, split, bent, or obscured. The purposeful reconfiguration of image and material is a strongly oppositional practice. In this practical opposition and material reconfiguration is an element of making which connects collage to the queer process of generative dismantling.

Many queer artists and designers employ collage to comment on normative or oppressive paradigms. In queer collage, bodies are often disassembled and reconfigured with distorted proportions or among atypical settings, such as the work of artists Hannah Höch, Olaf Odegaard, Carmine Santaniello, and Suzanne Wright (fig. 4-7). These artists feature queer bodies as subjects that are then dismembered, reconfigured, and relocated among abstracted settings. The use of queer bodies in collage honors a sexualized and relational cultural history and confronts notions of desire, voyeurism, and potentiality.

Within these embodied snapshots, time and space are compressed, and we see glimpses of queer or alternative futures, rife with conflict and subversion. While these works begin to illustrate spatial relationships, their content does not explicitly foreground spatial transformation, rather it explores the spatial relationships between queer subjects. Collaged explorations of queer subjects in a-temporal and a-spatial backgrounds are expressions of queer futurism and can be conceptualized as non-linear, non-horizontal horizons. They remain horizons and not realized futures because they only vaguely locate a queer futurity in an unknown time and place. Horizonal collage methods envision a queer future, nonetheless.

The NAMES Project AIDS Memorial Quilt, or AIDS Quilt, is a prime example of the intersection of queerness, collage, and spatial transformation. The AIDS Quilt represents a deeply emotional and tactile assemblage of community, art, grief, queer life and death,



Left: **Figure 10:** The Names Project AIDS Memorial Quilt, Washington D.C. 1992. Viewers are gathered at the edge of the Quilt, in a loving act of embrace for loved ones lost. Source: https://www.npr.org/2019/11/20/781430503/aids-memorial-quilt-is-returning-home-to-san-francisco.

Right: **Figure 11:** The Names Project AIDS Memorial Quilt, Washington D.C. 1987. Viewers shift the way theu move throug space accourding to the Quilt's new spatial patterns. Source: https://interactive.wttw.com/ten/monuments/aids-memorial-quilt.

and political occupation of space.[12] The AIDS Quilt is an expansive series of quilted blocks, each representing a victim of the AIDS epidemic. Blocks are designed and crafted by loved ones of a person who died of AIDS, and sometimes by the person themselves. The AIDS Quilt simultaneously honors individual victims, creates a sense of community, and functions as a political commentary.[13] Blocks of equal size are each collaged with different pieces of fabric that range in color, texture, and orientation to create an equally wide range of messages and emotional content. The blocks are then assembled into a giant quilt that features over 48,000 panels (as of 2019), and measures over 864,000 square feet of fabric. The assemblage of blocks is not static. Adjacent blocks are frequently separated and reconfigured for different occasions and installments of the Quilt, which has been displayed in significant national public spaces such as the National Mall in Washington D.C. The Quilt places the memorials of those lost, and their loved ones, in dynamic relationships with other victims and their loved ones, further transforming the mourning processes through spatial rearrangement.

The AIDS Quilt is a massively transformative and poignant spatial art exhibit. Its deployment alters the physical quality of the space it occupies by changing how people engage with, navigate, and remember the space. The AIDS Quilt performatively affects space similar to collage operations: dividing, layering, transforming, and generating meaning through destructuring and recomposition. Observers maneuver through the public space along new paths embedded in a coding system established by the presence of the Quilt (fig. 11). The Quilt's structure subdivides and reconfigures the continuous, uninterrupted ground plane which the Quilt now occupies. Each quilted block infinitely extends into the atmosphere creating a multi-dimensional maze of grief that viewers navigate spatially, while their gaze is cast downward onto names and memories.

Viewers often gather on the edge of the AIDS Quilt, overlooking the expanse of colorful blocks. The physical presence of the Quilt places those who are alive to view it, along the margins. The dramatic relegation of the viewer to the edge creates parallels to the lives lost as they too were marginalized (fig. 10). In this way, victims and survivors are spatially exchanged, where the deceased are finally placed lovingly in the center.

The AIDS Quilt also signals bold political implications in its spatial transformations. The Quilt represents deeply mournful experiences of queer people and their families. The display of the Quilt in national public spaces is a strategy to harness the power of queer grief to affect political change and to draw focus to the devastating scale of the AIDS epidemic. Its existence is a commentary on the failure of mainstream political structures that refused to provide healthcare for a quickly dying queer community. The Quilt and its purposeful placement in public spaces is a direct opposition to that erasure, as it is highly visible to visitors and media.[14] The AIDS Quilt is a dynamic national memorial that exemplifies the power of queer collage, whether that power is used to express grief, community, resilience, loss, love, or more likely, a complex mixture of many emotions.

Dismantling through Collage

In the following chapters I explore collage methodologies inspired by the aforementioned examples that relate queerness to representation (fig. 12-13). The parallels between queerness and design processes begin to show how collage, seen as a process of generative dismantling grounded in queer spatial theory, can disrupt conventional landscape architecture design processes. First, I examine queer grief to highlight the self in the design process and use collage processes to dismantle and reassemble the self/myself as a process of *queering the designer*. Then I use collage to perform a queered site analysis process to reveal the layered nature of Seattle's alleys. I continue to explore queer collage by translating two-dimensional collage operations into three-dimensional spatial transformations. These explorations are united as processes of generative dismantling and by their attempt to uncover the rich connections between queer processes and landscape design. Together, the queer collage methods illustrate the power of collage as a representational medium when it is laden with queer ethics, practice, and potential.

Left: **Figure 12:** Two-Dimensional Collage Processes 1. Initial collage processes using cut out material from landscape architecture magazines.

Right: **Figure 13:** Two-Dimensional Collage Processes 2. First reconfiguration using 2D collage techniques.

Endnotes

1. Butler-Kisber, "Lynn Butler-Kisber Defines Collage Inquiry."

2. Kangas et al., "Smashing Containers, Queering the International through Collaging."

3. Ibid.

4. Butler-Kisber, "Lynn Butler-Kisber Defines Collage Inquiry."

5. Micocci, "The City as a Collective Collage."

6. Ibid.

7. Kingery-Page and Hahn, "The Aesthetics of Digital Representation."

8. Corner and Hirsch, The Landscape Imagination.

9. Ibid.

10. Halberstam, The Queer Art of Failure.

11. Kangas et al., "Smashing Containers, Queering the International through Collaging."

12. Plett, "TB Then, AIDS Now; A Tale Told Through Art."

13. Ott, Aoki, and Dickinson, "Collage/Montage as Critical Practice, or How to 'Quilt'/Read Postmodern Text(lle)s."

14. Ibid.

QUEER GRIEF & THE CLOSET

Figure 14: Wormhole Selfie. This is a visual representation of what it feels like to use every ounce of yourself to produce a design thesis!

To design queerly, it is important to look reflexively at the designer as a crucial and critically under examined agent within design processes. Designers bring their whole selves to the creative process of design (fig. 14). With that wholeness comes backgrounds, histories, experiences, beliefs, preferences, and personal creative processes. In order to design things queerly, a closer examination of the designer's purportedly objective position is required to address their complicity in the appropriation of design as a tool for normativity.

Examining and queering the role of the designer pushes against unchecked implicit biases to disrupt conventional design processes. A designer's implicit or unconscious biases limit their effectiveness to design for a wider range of design goals as these biases affect much of their thinking in creative processes.[1] Furthermore, unexamined implicit biases can lead to design outcomes that advance the experience of some rather than others. I argue that a generative dismantling of the designer's unconscious biases through a lens of queer grief can begin to liberate designers (and therefore design processes) from implicit bias and enable more inclusive and just design practice.

Of course, not all designers must become queer and not all design should be conducted exclusively by queer people, nor are queer people free of implicit bias. Non-queer identifying designers should also not appropriate queer narratives to inform their design process. However, certain aspects of queer personhood can inform non-queer design processes, and by example, lead designers through vulnerability and introspection. Queer grief as an inherent element of queerness is examined here for its many productive and profound benefits. I employ these reflexive strategies through digital collage investigations that begin to untangle my own biases, limitations, and vulnerabilities as a designer.

The Closet

“Coming out of the closet” is a foundational concept in contemporary queer culture. “Coming out of the closet” refers to the act of disclosing a queer identity. The significance of coming out has changed over time as queerness has become more widely accepted by mainstream culture, but the reception of the coming out process remains uneven and dependent on an individual’s relational circumstance. While the spatial metaphor of “coming out of the closet” is well known, it provides a strong connection between an individualistic experience of queer grief and the process of transformation.

The transitional disclosure of queerness encompassed within the closet metaphor has strong visual and spatial implications. “Coming out of the closet” conjures the image of a body moving across a threshold, emerging from darkness to be finally bathed in light. This body is now unrestricted by the tight confines of a closet and is free to stretch out and take up space. There are further implications in how this imaginary space is allocated for people based on their disclosure status. Those who are unwilling or unable to disclose queerness are equated with the claustrophobic closet space. Whereas those who share their queerness are rewarded with emancipatory spatial freedom.

The closet provides a spatial understanding for experiencing an aspect of queer grief. It is a visceral and accessible image that is useful in provoking empathy from non-queer people. The closet also represents an important launching point for queer life, and I personally view it as a crucial step in developing a critical self-awareness that often accompanies queerness (fig. 15).

Figure 15: Collaging the Closet Selfie. This drawing in inspired by the cover work of Eve Sedgwick’s seminal text, Epistemology of the Closet.

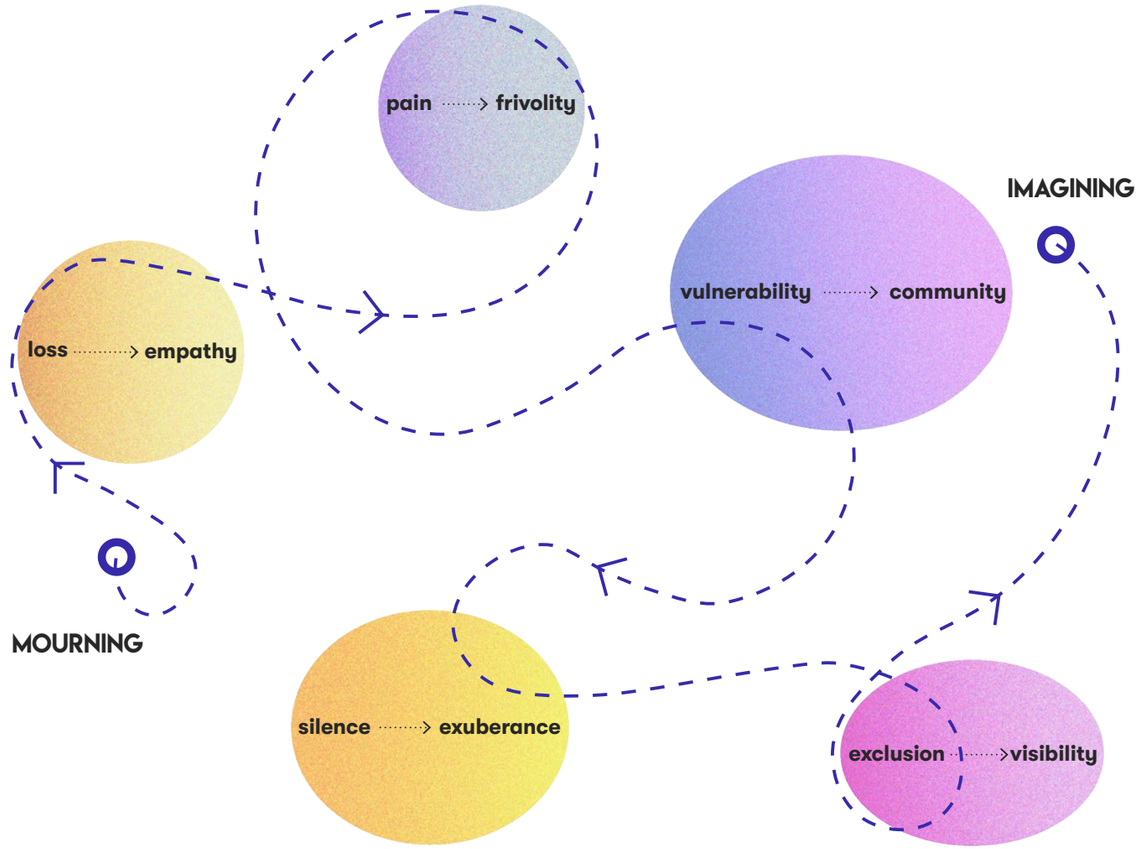
Queer Grief Origins

Grief is an aspect of queerness that is a commonly shared experience among queer people, is deeply transformative, and relates to the self. Grief is a central part of the queer experience. To use a plant-based metaphor, grief is the substrate in which queerness is rooted. It is the soil, the foundation, and the nutrition. Further bearing likeness to plants, queer grief exhibits a generative cycle. I will show that as grief breaks down, it decomposes, eventually nourishing productive aspects of queerness.

Queerness originates in grief. The recognition of queerness in oneself is often painful and unwelcome as a result of violent heteronormative cultural paradigms. When queerness is noticed within oneself, a person is then forced to begin a reconciliation. They must contend with the loss of their imagined normative future. This experience of loss is a form of queer grief, and it triggers a process of mourning.

Judith Butler talks about the mourning process as “submitting to transformation.”[2] When queer people begin to identify what separates them from a normative ontological existence, they slowly submit to a transformative process of becoming. This process is long, arduous, and mournful. They mourn the normalcy of heterosexual relationships, the prospect of parenthood, and having a family. Rationally it is well-known that queer people have relationships, families, and love, but during the turbid process of self-acceptance, that rational thinking is obscured by fear and projected unhappiness.[3] Queer people mourn the love and acceptance of families, friends, and support networks. The process of reconciling with a pathologized and allegedly deviant identity is infamously painful and scary. This is a queer person’s first experience with queer grief.

Figure 16: Generative Queer Grief Diagram. Queer grief is a process that requires a forced imagining to place ourselves in a unknown future. Though difficult, there ere are many benefits of that process.



Returning to Queer Grief

Like the plant's relationship to soil, queerness continuously exists in relation to grief. Once rooted, queerness cannot detach itself from its relationship to grief and mourning, just as a plant cannot uproot itself for a preferable spot. The presence of grief in the life of a queer individual and in the arc of queer history is repetitious. An example of this can be found again in the coming out process. Though coming out is often thought of as a singular event, in reality, queer people are frequently tasked with re-disclosing their queerness.[4] There is a regular return to a fear-filled experience with every new encounter and act of disclosure.

This is also true of how grief revisits the queer community on a larger scale. The frequent return of grief in queer communities is quickly traced through events of several decades. Starting with the violently muted existence of queer people in the first half of the 20th century, targeted police raids of underground queer spaces the 1960's that led to the Stonewall Riots in 1969, Harvey Milk's Assassination in 1978, the AIDS epidemic of the 1980's and 1990's, Matthew Shephard's murder in 1998 Laramie, Wyoming, and most recently with the 2017 Pulse Nightclub Shooting in Orlando, FL. Grief returns to the queer community with frightening consistency.

Generative Queer Grief

However, like soil, queer grief is fertile. It enables queerness to grow, produce, and transform. The fertility of queer grief relates to generative dismantling because it is inextricably linked to the necessary death of an imagined non-queer life and the replacement of normativity by alternative, multiple narratives. The other narratives that emerge from queer grief and queer mourning processes, connectivity, exuberance, and action, present valuable opportunities for designers and design processes to expand creatively and critically (fig. 16). The queer creative force is ironically derived from queer pain and is aligned with the uniquely paradoxical nature of queerness.[5] Through grief and mourning, queerness is an agent of powerful and productive transformation.

Grief is the conduit of queer connectivity and the anchor of queer community. Judith Butler attributes this deep sense of community to vulnerability, which is a function of grief.[6] The mournful origins of queer life are a common backdrop for many individuals. This commonality is an important aspect of the queer community because it unites individuals participating in community and expressing solidarity in the face of marginalization. A strong sense of community allows queerness to widen and include others in the envisioning of alternative futures.

Mechanisms of queer grief, community and connectivity, enable design processes to be more inclusive as well. In its empathic nature, queerness can engender a stronger sense of community. A stronger and more nuanced conceptualization of community allows designers to consider all human, non-human, and even non-living things more thoughtfully.[7] When all life is considered mournable and grievable, including queer life, then all life is valued and can be included in designed futures.

Exuberance and expression are other by-products of queer grief. Rigid order upheld by hegemonic power demands a muted affectual state of individuals. The display of emotion and vulnerability is a "mode of dissent," and therefore, the expression of queer emotionality can be read as an act of resistance.[8] The resilient aspect of queerness that can be seen "parading through tragedy" is seemingly inexplicable.[9] This parading and electing to forgo solemnity in exchange for playfulness and humor are part of the magic of queerness. This is evident throughout history. Following instances of violence and homophobia, queer people repeatedly choose to don wigs and colorful adornment, and dance through their tears. This concept of resilience is succinctly summarized by queer comedian Guy Branum, "when society has denied you dignity, honesty, and safety, frivolity is all you've got."[10]

In terms of design processes, exuberance is critical in integrating play into creativity. Design without playfulness loses a spark of engagement necessary for iteration and creativity. Design processes are often personal, and incorporating emotional thinking on behalf of the designer, though taboo, can benefit the outcomes to have greater affectual and spatial significance.[11] Expression and exuberance can influence design processes through the infusion of play, humor, and a rejection of seriousness and formality that define rigid power structures. Rejecting formality interrupts and dismantles normative design attitudes and the queer infusion of emotional expression is generative in formality's wake.

Another important result of queer grief is the desire for and manifestation of visibility and action. Political action as a direct result of queer grief can be charted through the events of the Stonewall riots in 1969, the ACT UP organization in the 1990's, and the modern movement for Transgender rights. Political action and increased queer visibility are central to a queer ethic of advancing justice through increased sociopolitical consciousness.

The Stonewall riots began in late June 1969, during a police raid of the Stonewall Inn, an institutional queer bar in New York City. Police raids of informal queer spaces were not an uncommon phenomenon at the time. Yet, something about the circumstances elicited trans activists Sylvia Rivera and Marsha P. Johnson to fight back and trigger a major riot that lasted for days and featured a rebellion of hundreds of queer activists and allies.[12] Sources have made connections between the death of then queer icon Judy Garland, further elucidating a relational position between queer grief and action. The riots signaled a renewed energy for political resistance and action in the queer community. The Stonewall riots are memorialized in annual pride celebrations around the world, where queer people quite literally parade through tragedy.

The queer resistance movement brought on by the AIDS epidemic and the lack of meaningful governmental response, was organized by the activist group ACT UP. ACT UP activists were known for their creative and "righteously excessive" strategies that effectively drew attention to the AIDS crisis.[13] ACT UP demonstrations were highly disruptive to normative structures and used strong visual and political cues to convey their desperate messages. They performed dramatic actions such as engulfing a Senator's house with a giant condom-shaped cloth and bringing ashes of deceased loved ones to the White House and spreading them on the lawn.[14] The powerful imagery and actions used by ACT UP activists eventually forced the government to address the crisis and the medical and pharmaceutical industries to begin rigorous AIDS research. Their actions directly resulted in the development of protease inhibitors in 1996, which allowed HIV positive people to live long lives.[15]

Political action performed by or in defense of trans people and activists represents a contemporary example of queer grief as a form of resistance. A 2016 study revealed that trans women of color were more likely than any other demographic group to be murdered.[16] Another report indicated that over 40% of trans or gender non-conforming people surveyed have attempted suicide.[17] These statistics illustrate the dire need for public education, policy reform, and protection of trans individuals, especially trans women of color. The action in this case comes directly from those trans individuals in the development of educational material, public safety campaigns, grassroots organizing, and the expanding of trans theory in academia.

Trans theory builds on queer theory by expanding conceptions of sex *and* gender to further bend boundaries and binaries.[18] The *transing* of architecture has important spatial implications as trans theory embodies the constant transformation of materials, architectural technologies, and place-based identities.[19] In the project *Stalled!*, trans scholar Susan Stryker and queer architect

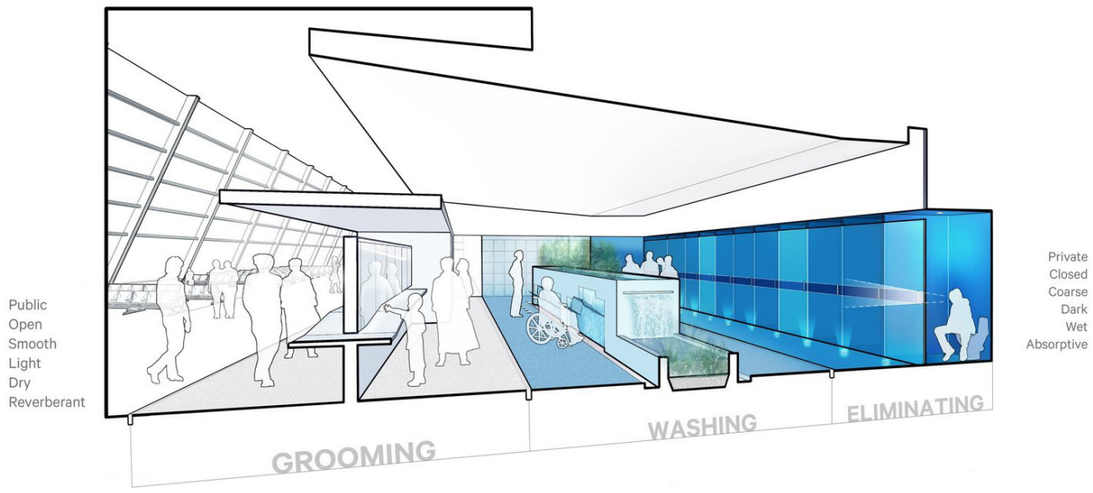


Figure 17: Stalled! Rendering. This image provides an example of transing space by breaking down conventional design dictated by binary identities and instead designing for functionality of multiple narratives. Source: https://www.stalled.online/

Joel Sanders, problematize and redesign the politically contentious site of the public bathroom. The public bathroom has been at the center of contemporary trans rights issues. Bathrooms have been the site of harassment for many trans people and the subject of discriminatory policies from various levels of government. Their redesigned bathroom intentionally moves away from cis-gendered design and focuses on function rather than identity and socialized behavior. This is an example of design employing a queer process of generative dismantling because the designers critically examine the function of the bathroom and generate more inclusive design strategies through that process. Stryker and Sanders urge designers to consider how gender and sexuality "dictate configurations of everyday space" and to "assume responsibility for addressing the spatial consequences of urgent social justice issues at a time when the civil liberties of people in America and around the world are in peril."[20] This example of active resistance having nationally relevant political implications illustrates the fervent potential of queer grief.

Designers and design processes must follow the transformative examples of queer grief, connectedness, exuberance, and political activeness, to become radical advocates for the people and places they are designing with. There are many hats that a designer must wear to be successful in their work, and I argue that *ally* should be one of those hats. Understanding and learning from queer grief as a process of generative dismantling can help designers grasp the nuanced, transformational qualities of queerness. Connectedness, exuberance, and action are just a few of the characteristics that inform processes of generative dismantling. Also born out of queer grief is vulnerability, empathy, visibility, frivolity, courage, dissent, and joy.

Designers have the opportunity to incorporate lessons of queer grief into design processes to make designed futures more inclusive, intersectional, and resilient. Queerness can transform negative circumstances into assets. The same can be true of our designed spaces. The value in transformational queer grief is seeing potential. It is important for designers to be able to envision alternate outcomes that do not match the original circumstance. The first step to intrinsically understanding queer grief's transformational potential is to examine our own positions, values, and processes.

Collaging Myself

To explore my positionality as a designer, I use my identities as a subject for interrogating my values and beliefs over the duration of the thesis process. This approach enabled me to begin a process of disentangling my own notions of creative work, queer intersections, and design perspectives. Using digital collage techniques, I reconfigured discrete parts of my face from different points in time in an effort to collapse spatiotemporal planes and generate alternative positionalities from a set of parts. This process disrupted my personal assumptions of self by disentangling self-doubt from my self-awareness.

To create dismantled selfies, I used photographs of myself that I had taken using my smartphone while I was earning my landscape architecture degree. Viewing them retrospectively, I chose the photographs based on if they expressed my personality, exhibited a skill or ability, or illustrated vulnerability. None of the photographs were taken explicitly for use in this thesis or collage. This ensured that the collages began with "found" objects to maintain authentic processes. While separating my

Figure 18: Selfies Series 1.

eyes from my nose and my beard from the rest of my face, I quickly learned that cutting and reassembling, or applying a process of generative dismantling, to one's own face is a personal and emotional exercise. Through this process I began to reconcile various motivations and limitations in my work and examine my own processes of design (fig. 21). I was able to examine the external and internal pressures on my time, address the high expectations of myself, and clearly envision the goal of graduation that motivated me. This was helpful in putting this thesis into a larger perspective and disentangling the thesis from my self-worth in order to remove stress and approach again with creativity and curiosity.

Throughout the design process, landscape architects simultaneously embody historians, critical thinkers, good listeners, researchers, graphic designers, writers, communicators, and artists (fig. 19). After analyzing my skills and aspects of my identity required in creating a design thesis, I created a set of collaged selfies (fig. 18). In each iteration of the selfie, I considered different and nuanced aspects of my identity, such as the designer, the academic, the jester, the therapist, and others, to create new compositions. The range of skills and aspects of identity these reassembled selfies illustrate were drawn from my personal experiences.

The collage processes I used to make the selfies allowed me to explore generative aspects of queer grief, like connectivity, emotional expression, and political action. I felt particularly well connected to my own design sensibilities and knew my strengths. This allowed me to focus on how I could best achieve the end goal of finishing the thesis and feeling proud. I also felt that the different skills required to complete a design thesis were more integrated after having intentionally disaggregated them previously. The selfies were also a strong emotional expression that revealed both positive and negative affects within my design process. While the selfies did not raise money for donations or cause me to attend a rally, I learned more about infusing the design process with politics and my own personal ethics. The selfie explorations proved to be a valuable method of assessing the powerful elements of queer grief as they relate to design. Exploring (my)self through selfie collages signaled the power of queer grief to transform my positionality as a designer in relation to design processes.

The display of emotion and vulnerability as a beneficial outcome of queer grief disrupts the muted affectual state that is favored by hegemonic power. This can therefore be read as a "mode of dissent" and a queer act of resistance.[21] The collaged selfie exercises demonstrated the important role vulnerability can play in generative dismantling, which requires a breaking down before rebuilding. Vulnerability is an important and queer tool for breaking down superiority complexes and also self-doubt. Vulnerability builds emotional intelligence for increased empathy and offers opportunities to strengthen design work by foregrounding emotionally enriched processes over an unemotional product.

Another lesson I learned from using collage processes for self-examination involved confronting my ego. The egoist architect is a familiar trope in design culture. Falling victim to one's ego can limit the capacity for a design to be authentically inclusive to queer people and other marginalized peoples. Multiple configurations of my face are exhibited by the collaged selfies. Through the processes of dissecting, distorting, reconfiguring, obscuring, and layering facial features, I explored the performative nature of identity,

and strategic portrayal of self. These exercises clarified that my creative design processes are entangled with ideas of self-worth and value.

Cutting and displaying reassembled versions of my face is a method of disentangling oneself from design methodologies, rewriting the narrative of the designer through a queer lens. The practice of collaging self is a form of generative dismantling because it enables personal growth through critical self-awareness. My identity as a person and my identity as a designer do not necessarily have to intersect. However, my identity as a person is important because it can humanize my identity as a designer and enables greater empathy and inclusion in design. Infusing emotionality and vulnerability into design work is a queer approach to resisting dominant power structures like heterosexism, hyper-masculinity, colonialism, and cis patriarchy. Design work is and should be personal. There are important power dynamics and political motivations that infuse design through the minds and hands of a designer, and an exploration of a designer's bias is crucial in balancing those power dynamics. There is also a tendency in design to deny responsibility for the ways in which bias enters our work, whether the bias is related to gender, sexuality, race, class, ability, or any other axis of identity.[22] Through a critical queering of the designer's position and relation to the design process, we can shift the paradigm from which we operate and intentionally dismantle the status-quo, including how designers approach and engage with site.

Figure 19: Jake of All Trades, Master of None.

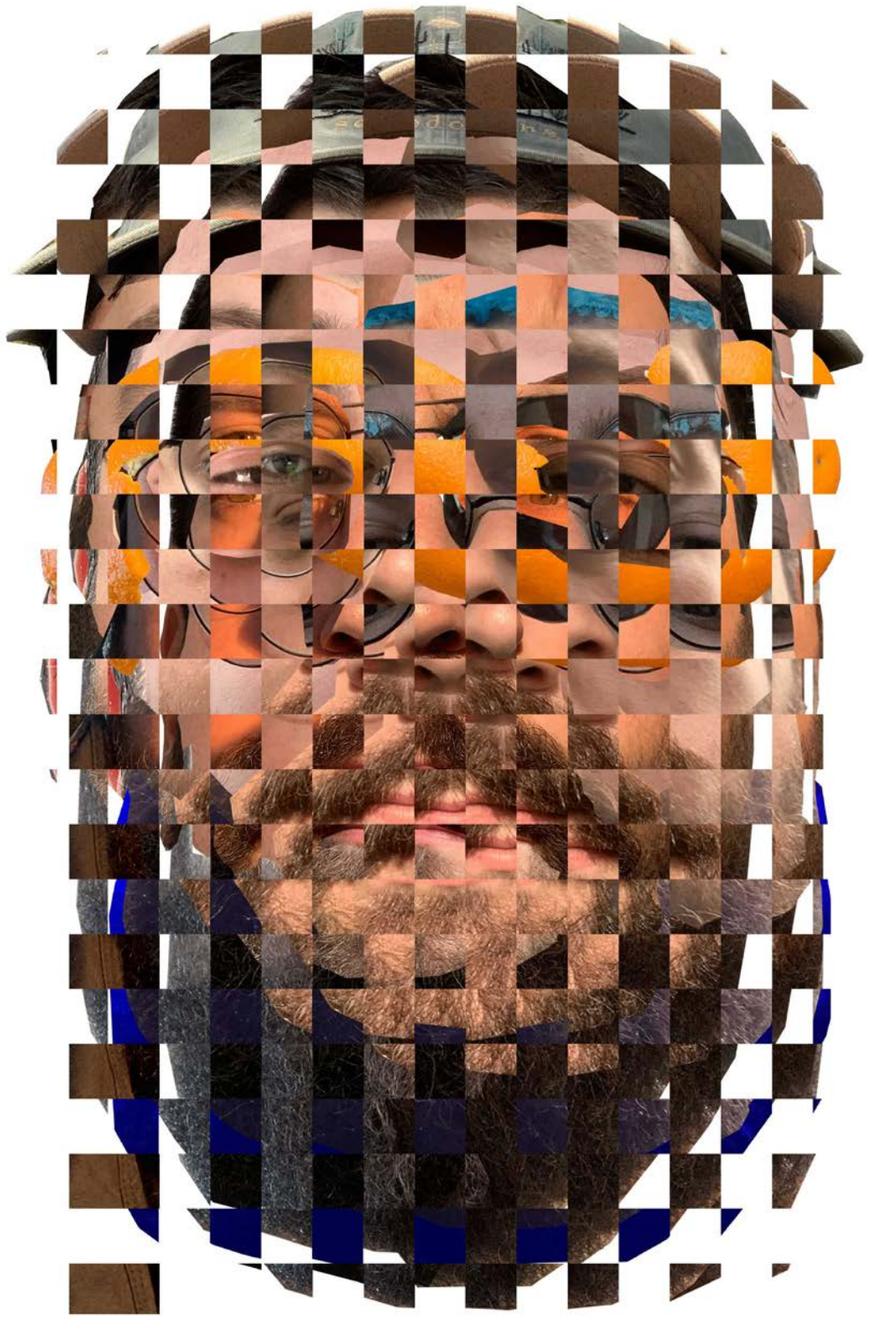


Figure 20: Sliced Selfie. A collage of several collages that frame the layered and cycling process of becoming.

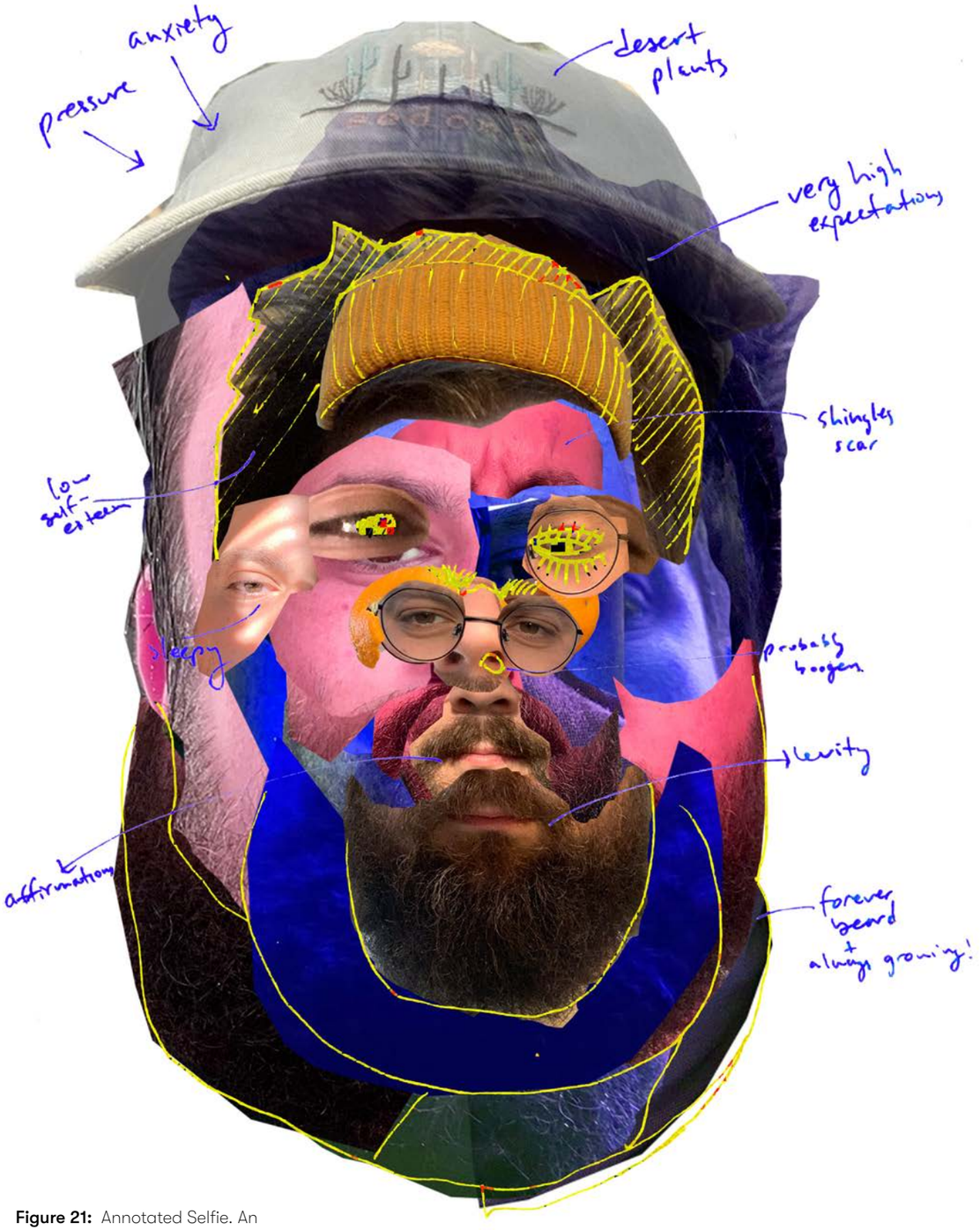


Figure 21: Annotated Selfie. An exploration of my motivations, fears, expectations, and limitations through collage processes.

Figure 22: Selfie (De)Construction Collage.

Endnotes

1. Heazlewood, "Combating Unconscious Bias in Design."

2. Butler, Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Justice.

3. Ahmed, "Happy Objects."

4. Sedgwick, Epistemology of the Closet.

5. St. John, "Physicality of Queer Grief: On Grief and Growth in the LGBTQ+ Community."

6. Butler, Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Justice.

7. Cunsolo, "Climate Change as the Work of Mourning."

8. Mason, "Good Mourning: Structured Feelings and Queering the Affective Potential of Grief."

9. Lowder, "Pulse and the Power of Queer Tears."

10. Ibid.

11. Holder, "Five Points Toward a Queer Architecture; Or Notes on 'Mario Banana No. 1.'"

12. Waxman, "Some People Think Stonewall Was Triggered by Judy Garland's Funeral. Here's Why Many Experts Disagree."

13. Lowder, "Pulse and the Power of Queer Tears."

14. Ibid.

15. Ibid.

16. Park and Mykhyalyshyn, "L.G.B.T. People Are More Likely to Be Targets of Hate Crimes Than Any Other Minority Group."

17. Lowder, "Pulse and the Power of Queer Tears."

18. Gorny and van den Heuvel, "New Figurations in Architecture Theory: From Queer Performance to Becoming Trans."

19. Sanders, "From Stud to Stalled! Architecture In Transition."

20. Ibid.

21. Mason, "Good Mourning: Structured Feelings and Queering the Affective Potential of Grief."

22. Canli, "Queerying Design: Material Re-Configurations of Body Politics."

SPATIAL PERFORMATIVITY & THE ALLEY

In the following section I explore site design and landscape design processes through a queer collage methodology. Landscape architecture is the conceptual and physical transformation of a site to meet the specified goals of a client, and human and non-human users of the project. The site, literally and figuratively, is the foundation, base, and grounding of landscape architectural design processes. According to Carol Burns and Andrea Kahn in *Site Matters*, landscape design practice and pedagogy both typically begin with a site, or "delimited given entity," controlled by a client or outlined in a hypothetical prompt.[1] Though sites are a circumscribed physical area, within landscape architecture sites are defined as far more than the bounded edges on the ground plane. Sites are a layered amalgamation of complex histories and cultural meanings, material qualities of grade, aspect, and soil types, spatial context, and limitless potential.

Following the critical turn in queer spatial theory, which reorients the study of space to the study of spatial processes, the site can be conceived as an assemblage of concurrent processes that are mutually affective and unending. These processes range in temporal and spatial scales, such as glacial patterns that affect soil composition and sociopolitical histories that affect demographics, resulting in discrete pieces of information that inform conventional site analyses. Queering the idea of site allows for a greater temporal and process-oriented understanding, and a more nuanced approach to site design. According to Reed, a space can always be imminently *queered*, implying a constant potential for spatial transformation by queerness.[2] And according to Sanders, a space is only queer if "*put to queer use*."[3] Both conceptions of space can be applied to site, and place site in dynamic relationship with queerness by using queer as a verb. Site, and all of the entangled processes meted out on (in, around, beneath) site, are then seen as spaces of transformation that are inclusive of past processes, current conditions, and future potential.

To see the potential of a site, a designer must first recognize its value beyond conventional appreciations and definitions of space. Broadening the understanding of who produces, edits, and reproduces space, deepens the designer's reading and definition of a site and its users. Queering site design expands the ways designers conceive of a site's potential.

Judith Butler's theory of performativity helps to explore an expanded network of spatial producers and reassess how to bestow value on and within a site. Acknowledging the additive effects of performativity reveals how bodies, identities, and spaces are mutually productive of one another. People, identities, and bodies shape and are shaped by space. This dynamic relationship, full of potential, dictates value assigned to different sites.[4] Depending on a site's socio-cultural relationships, and how those relationships are viewed by dominant socio-political structures, it may or may not be deemed worthy of investing time and resources. The alley is both a ubiquitous urban element and a prime example of a site undervalued by societal norms. For these reasons, the alley was selected as the site typology for this thesis. Using queer collage methodologies, perceptions and realities of the alley are dismantled and reframed by considering the queer and performative nature of its users. This process enables the designer to envision radically alternative site-based futures.

Spatial Performativity

Judith Butler's 1989 theory of performativity describes how genders and sexual identities are continuously and subconsciously enacted rather than stable and natural.[5] Genders and sexualities are imitative expressions and behaviors that change over short and long periods of time. Even over the course of a day, one's identities must shift to accommodate different contexts and relations. The active performance of changing expressions of identity is a learned characteristic and a necessary part of our social existence.[6] The discursive reconciliation of identity as a performance implies a connection between queerness and its environment, or in this case, a site.

Performativity gives agency to people, bodies, and movement, and has important spatial implications, such as the (re)production of space. The influence of bodies, and their movement, gesture, articulation, and position in space has been a topic of study in cultural geography discourse since the mid 1980's.[7] As the concepts of gender and sexuality are destabilized, so too are the spaces dictated by formerly rigid conceptions of identity. All aspects of built environments are influenced by gender and sexuality, and their performance. Some clear examples of that influence include the gendered bathroom, spaces of the home versus spaces of work, and spaces of leisure, like the gay bar or public park. The performativity of gender and sexuality affects how these spaces are coded, managed, legislated, and designed.

In landscape architectural practice, the site is inherently influenced by notions of identity as well. Public spaces such as sidewalks, parks, and plazas are navigated by people with highly varying gender and sexuality expressions. The various users and actors experience and affect sites unevenly. For example, as defined by Christopher Reed, queer people can read invisible traces of queerness within a site. This implies a subtle imprint of identity on places.[8] Furthermore, the act of cruising, seeking informal or anonymous sexual encounters in public, reframes the intended use of a street or park for queer use that is outside of normative

Figure 23: Queer/Spatial Performativity Collage 1. These collages illustrate the agency of bodies and identity as forces of spatial change, using landscapes designed by Lawrence Halprin.

spatial patterns.[9] In this way, queerness and queer social practice, or queer performativity, are agents of spatial (re)creation that influence a site's reputation, and potential.

Throughout their intertwined lives and careers, landscape architect Lawrence Halprin and choreographer Anna Halprin explored the deeply entangled realms of performativity, bodies, and designed space. Using dance choreography, or the designed movement of bodies, the normative and predictable flow of bodies through space is subverted.[10] In this way, designed movement can be read as spatial resistance in opposition to normative performative affects (fig. 23-24). This intentional subversion is a queer dismantling of predictability and understanding of behavior in space.

In connection to site design and landscape architecture, Lawrence Halprin indexed Anna's choreographed experiments through movement notations, or "motation."[11] Motation was a set of descriptive symbols created in order to record movement through space and to help architects and designers consider the nuanced effects of design on someone's physical interaction with space. The Halprins' long-term study of the affective dimensions of space emphasizes the high capacity of bodies to influence site and site design.[12] Bodies and spaces are mutually affective and agentic, but the Halprins reveal a relationality that subverts traditional conceptions and privileges bodies over space in their affective potential. The disruption of the hierarchical influence of site over body is an inherently queer process that changes how to approach site.

Figure 24: Queer/Spatial Performativity Collage 2.

Aaron Betsky in *Queer Space* unpacks the gesture as another type of bodily performance that codes space and forms networks of queer relationality. Gesture refers to the choreographed bodily movements that help navigate between embodied experiences and built environments.[13] Betsky suggests that queer people are masters of hidden gesture and their facility with unspoken and coded language effects space.[14] Gestural forms signal abstracted expressions within a design, and they are used for form and function.[15] A strong use of gesture in design practice can be found in the work of design firm Gustafson, Guthrie, and Nichol (GGN). GGN's gestural designs employ simple, bold moves that capture the essence of a site while realizing functional design goals. Betsky connects the seductive use of gestural design elements with queer seduction and sexual desire.[16] Imbuing spaces with gestural cues is a trick of the designer and of queerness. Exaggerating the power of gesture in site design processes acknowledges performativity and codes spaces with meaning only perceptible to those that are paying attention to various cues. The later use of gestural collage operations as surficial transformations positions gesture as a queer process of performativity because value is transferred from the transformed product to the gestural act of making.

Queerness and the performativity of gender, sexuality, and identity, reshape our conceptions of spatial production and free the site and site design from inflexible and outdated normative spatial constraints of gender and sexuality. It allows for more

alley is to city *as*

queer is to culture

nuanced and fluid understandings of spatial production by designing for unplanned uses and a wider range of users and actors. Incorporating the concept of performativity in the design process is a way to design queerly. Acknowledging the embeddedness of performativity and queerness in a site shifts the design process to be more collaborative and responsive to a plurality of co-creators. Breaking apart constraints of identity in relation to space allows multiple narratives to influence site design. In this case, generative dismantling broadens design potentials and their influence on site.

Framing Alleys

In this thesis, I use the urban alley as a site typology to explore queer design thinking through collage operations. As defined earlier, I chose the alley for its conceptual similarities to queerness. The alley is to the city as queer is to culture. Alleys experience otherness the same way queerness does. This otherness is due in part to the threat they pose as a result of their difference. Alleys possess a spatial xenophobia. They can instill a deep sense of fear in the general public but are critically misunderstood.[17]

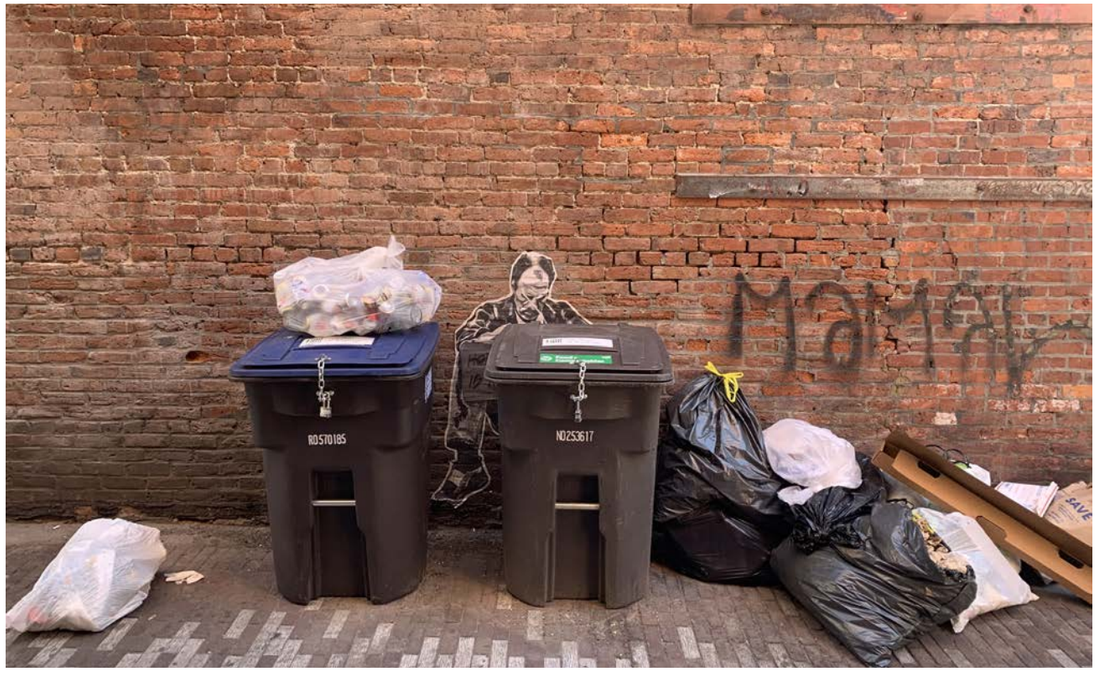
Located along the backside of buildings, alleys are devoid of the aesthetic prestige of the building façade and are seen as secondary to streets. Like queerness, the alley embodies mystery and an unknowability that is threatening to normative perspectives. Queerness and alleys also share an unwarranted negative judgment based on sexual deviance and amorality. As hidden or less visible spaces, alleys can be claimed as sites for public sex and other private bodily functions, though the assignment of moralistic judgment upon sexual or bodily uses is entangled in oppressive dominant cultural norms.

Alleys also experience a large discrepancy between perceived and actual function. The urban alley is perceived as dangerous, dark, unclean, smelly, and to be avoided. They are viewed as places for waste, undesirable and illicit activities, and leftover space. Alleys are seen as mundane, deviant, and undesired. The negative associations of alleys are apparent in language and expressions. A 'back-alley abortion' describes an unsafe and unsanitary medical procedure and an 'alley cat', originally used to describe sex workers, now describes anyone who is destitute.[18] Etymological expressions of alleys illustrate their position in mainstream culture, which is one of fear, misunderstanding, and neglect.

Of course, not all criticisms of alleys are unfounded. The architecture and placement of an alley allows for high levels of concealment for potentially dangerous encounters. Alleys have high walls with few windows and exits, which creates a sense of inescapability. They can feel enclosed and threatening, especially for those who feel vulnerable.

On the other hand, alleys are rich expressions of urban life and provide vital connective tissue within a dense urban fabric. Alleys are queerly assembled in their ownership and maintenance. There is a complex co-mingling of actors and stakeholders with claims to the management of alleys. They are highly functional and contain important infrastructural needs of urban places. In many cities, alleys contain utility infrastructure, access to drainage and sewage networks, and resident or building management facilities like water meters or electric utility boxes.[19] They facilitate easy access for maintenance and support services for bordering buildings. Alleys allow air flow and natural light into buildings in dense urban cores. They often have more permeable surfaces than streets for excess stormwater infiltration, and in some cases reduce urban flooding during major rain events.[20] The density of utilities is magnified by other urban users and uses. Tenants and landlords have certain claims to alleys for parking or building service entrances. Alleys that are defined by the border of businesses may have specific needs like access for deliveries and more frequent waste disposal due to higher volumes.

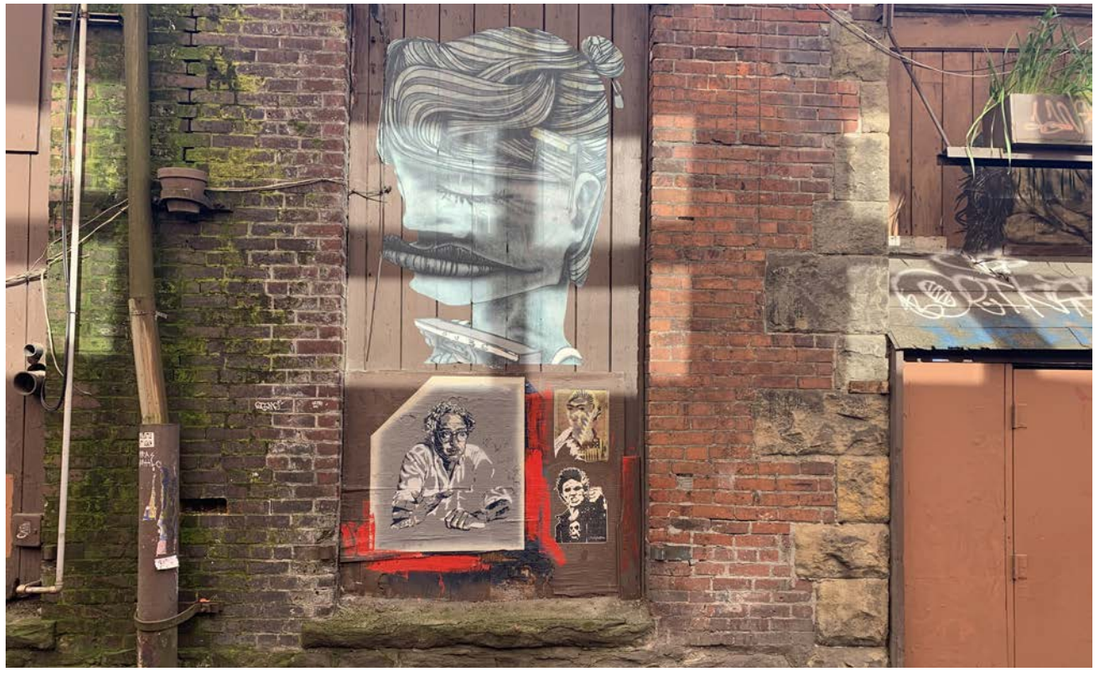
Alleys are filled with life. Many people use alleys and co-create spatial qualities through an unpredictable performance of identities. The often-marginalized unhoused community uses alleys as spaces of rest and privacy. This includes using the alley as a place to sleep, socialize, urinate, defecate, make art, perform, and simply exist. Alleys are often feared because of their use by the unhoused



community. This fear is an example of the power of performativity and performative perceptions as they impact space. It is possible however, to reframe this use that is commonly portrayed negatively in alley imagery and allegory. If we can see alleys as valid (or worthy) spaces to be, it can begin to humanize those who use alleys with regularity.

Non-human lives flourish in alleys as well. The nooks and crannies of the alley are filled with plant life, mosses, and lichens. Small holes provide habitat for squirrels, rats, birds, bats, mice, and other creatures that share our urban spaces. Weeds and other 'invasive' plant species find undisturbed shelter away from weed-whacking street maintenance. Larger mammals and birds like cats, raccoons, hawks, crows, and falcons hunt in alleys and scan alley surfaces for scraps to build nests. These non-human life forms have agency in the process of spatial (re)creation and arguably exhibit queerness in the processes by which they produce and reproduce space for non-normative agendas. This non-human performativity adds a layer of complexity to the alley, conceived of here as an urban, interspecies collage.

Alleys are life-size collages. Buildings come and go, leaving behind remnant materials and traces of former occupancy. Not considered worthy of maintenance and repair, alley surfaces deteriorate, exposing previous layers and an accumulation of histories. Alley walls are a patchwork composition of former and present and are often layered with colorful graffiti and overlaid scraps of posters. Alleys are a dynamic composition of urban processes. Their original composite forms are deconstructed and dismantled, only to be replaced, redone, and reimagined. This continual and performative remaking of alleys is another example of generative dismantling that uses collage as a registration of urban processes.



If the alley is read as a collage, then the gaps and fissures produced by relational, unpredictable layering reveal the processes of ephemeral urban operations. Spatial actors are seen as performative collaborators with creative liberty. The graffiti artist, urban developer, landlord, unhoused person, stray dog, moss patch, sparrow, and weather all contribute to the alley's collaborative design. Cultural meaning can be read in the deep layering of alley surfaces and performative rituals.

There is much beauty to be discovered in alleys. The alley wall is a canvas for formal and informal art projects. Aforementioned graffiti, posters, murals, and urban debris cover surfaces and create an intricate tapestry of color, texture, and material deposition - a hidden code book of performative urban life. Light entering narrow alleys casts long, dramatic shadows that accentuate points of interest at different times of day. Uneven footing in older alleys requires a heightened state of attention and senses are enlivened by irregular shapes and perspectives. Remnant trash and materials pile at your feet or fly overhead, raising questions about what led to these material traces. Who has used what? How did this get here?

Alleys are sites of great revelation, where the pluralistic inner workings of a city are uncovered and placed in stunning exhibitions, an all-access masterpiece or peep show for the viewer. The alley is constantly transforming and accommodating various users through its own performative shifting. The inherent plurality rather than singularity of uses that define an alley further renders it a space in process that queerly and mutually affects its users. Alleys are always in transition, and much can be learned from watching that process unfold over time.

Pioneer Square Alleys

I selected alleys in the Pioneer Square (PSQ) neighborhood of downtown Seattle for design explorations in this thesis. PSQ is Seattle's oldest neighborhood and has been a hub for 'unfavorable' activities almost since the founding of the city.[21] The formal and material aspects of the neighborhood have experienced several iterations of transformation. Through fire, abandonment, economic booms, and regrowth, there is a rich history of architecture and urban design which contributes to the dense layering of materiality, meaning, and histories.

PSQ was home to the city's earliest queer cultural institutions, such as the Double Header and The Casino, two bars that were both established in the early 1930's.[22] The existence of queer spaces defines PSQ as Seattle's first queer cultural hub, before the eventual relocation of queer spaces to Capitol Hill in the 1970's. This unique queer history lends a relevance to the exploration of PSQ alleys and contributes to the metaphor of the neighborhood as a socio-cultural collage.

When placed into Halberstam's notion of queer time, PSQ displays a resistance to normative cycles of hetero-time in its pathologized stagnation.[23] The neighborhood has maintained its reputation as a 'seedy' place in need of cleansing and has narrowly avoided being gentrified out of existence despite multiple attempts by city officials, planners, and community groups. The perception of seediness has endured into the present day. Contemporary PSQ is the site of many social tensions. It holds a dramatic concentration of the city's unhoused population, in part due to the high density of services that cater to unhoused populations like food banks, shelters, and healthcare, and to its cultural legacy.

Several of the alleys in the neighborhood have been renovated and “cleaned-up” - perhaps to reclaim the neighborhood from its persistent identity as a space of marginalized communities. Seattle’s Clean Alleys Program, or CAP, was a resident-led initiative to empty PSQ alleys of dumpsters to enhance safety and reduce illicit activities by improving sightlines and visibility.[24] The renovation of alleys for purposes of safety and leisure activities is an example of designing for some by intentionally displacing others. These alleys are in constant use by marginalized communities such as PSQ’s unhoused population. Renovating alleys by improving pavement, lighting, and accessibility for businesses and capitalist interests actively gentrifies neighborhoods and reduces the usability of alley spaces for other users and uses. Through a queer reading of PSQ alleys, it is possible to reframe alley perceptions and highlight their value for more equitable and inclusive design processes.

Endnotes

1. Burns and Kahn, Site Matters: Design Concepts, Histories and Strategies.

2. Reed, "Imminent Domain: Queer Space in the Built Environment."

3. Sanders, "From Stud to Stalled! Architecture In Transition."

4. Meeks, "Geography and Choreography: How Place Influences Dance Making - ProQuest."

5. Gieseking, "A Queer Geographer's Life as an Introduction to Queer Theory, Space, and Time."

6. Nash, "Performativity in Practice."

7. McCormack, "Geographies for Moving Bodies."

8. Reed, "Imminent Domain: Queer Space in the Built Environment."

9. Bell and Binnie, The Sexual Citizen: Queer Politics and Beyond.

10. Merriman, "Architecture/Dance."

11. Ibid.

12. Ibid.

13. Betsky, Queer Space: Architecture and Same Sex Desire.

14. Ibid.

15. Andrews, "The Architectural Gesture."

16. Betsky, Queer Space: Architecture and Same Sex Desire.

17. Hage, "Alleys: Negotiating Identity in Traditional, Urban, And New Urban Communities."

18. Pickford, "The Process of Seattle's Clear Alleys Program."

19. Ibid.

20. Cassidy, Newell, and Wolch, "Transforming Alleys into Green Infrastructure for Los Angeles."

21. Freitas, "'The Land at Our Feet': Preserving Pioneer Square's Queer Landscape."

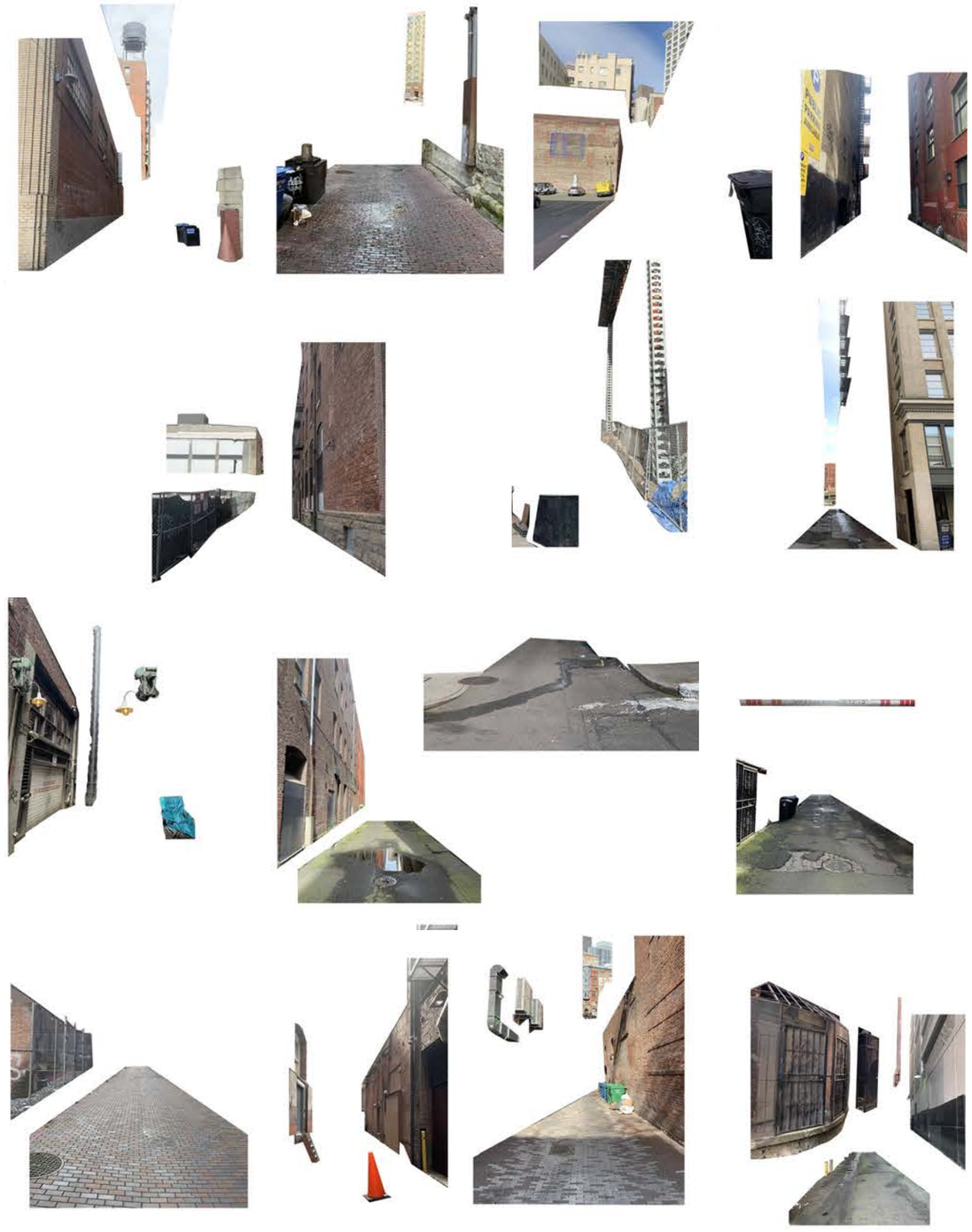
22. Ibid.

23. Halberstam, In A Queer Time and Place.

24. Pickford, "The Process of Seattle's Clear Alleys Program."

QUEERING THE SITE

Figure 25: Dismantled Alley Elements. Alleys were dismantled along their edges and by specific, unique elements.



The following design experiments consider the topics of site and space and how they are transformed through performativity and queer collage. Considering the theory of performativity emphasizes process over product by lending increased agency to the maker or designer and deemphasizing the design outcome.

Documenting the process of these experiments was important in illustrating the performative nature of design work. Collage operations, such as separating, layering, and reconfiguring, shift two-dimensional surfaces to three-dimensional space. Adding multidimensionality is a queer method that alters both site and site design processes through the material expression of alternatives. The subsequent design experiments, site reading, surficial transformations, and a do-it-yourself alley model, employ collage techniques that begin to break down and disentangle the power of queer design practices and are therefore methods of generative dismantling.

Site Reading

Rather than begin with conventional site analysis, I shifted the first step of the design process to begin with a site reading. A site reading is a queer assessment of site, which takes a more in depth, and personal approach to understanding a site and the processes that create and recreate it. Reading a site requires a general dismantling of conventional site analysis through queer critique. Conventional site analysis techniques are critiqued by James Corner. He suggests that the regularity with which certain spatial analytic methods are used, in academia and practice, ignores the nuance of place.[1] The use of formulaic, generic, and oppressively normative site analysis tools reduces the character, value, and agency of place and renders its users useless as well.

A shifted approach infuses queer methods into site analysis in order to consider multiple user narratives, personal place-based observations, and a documentation

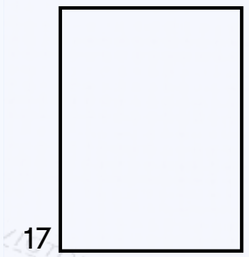
Figure 26: Composite Alley. A representation of the amalgamated PSQ alleys.

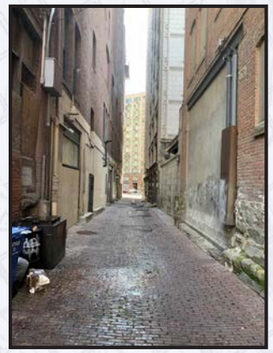
of embodied site experiences. Site reading, versus site analysis, is a process that allows the designer to deeply see a site, not only for its circulation patterns and urban context, but also its inherent value and unique character.

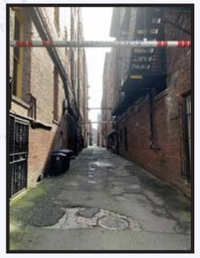
I first performed a site reading to capture the essence of PSQ alleys and draw attention to the embodied experience of being in an alley using collage methodologies. Reading a site through collage effectively conveys the layered and interpretive nature of alleys. Rather than choosing one alley to study through collage, several alleys were read to infuse multiple natures of queerness.

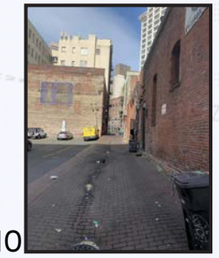
I began the site reading process with an attempt to better understand the nature of spatial performativity and the feeling of PSQ alleys. I traveled to the site three times to walk through the network of alleys in the neighborhood, and document both the visual experience and the associated emotional experience of being in place. I took photographs of nearly all 18 alleys in the area and located each alley on a map with an identifying photograph (fig. 27).

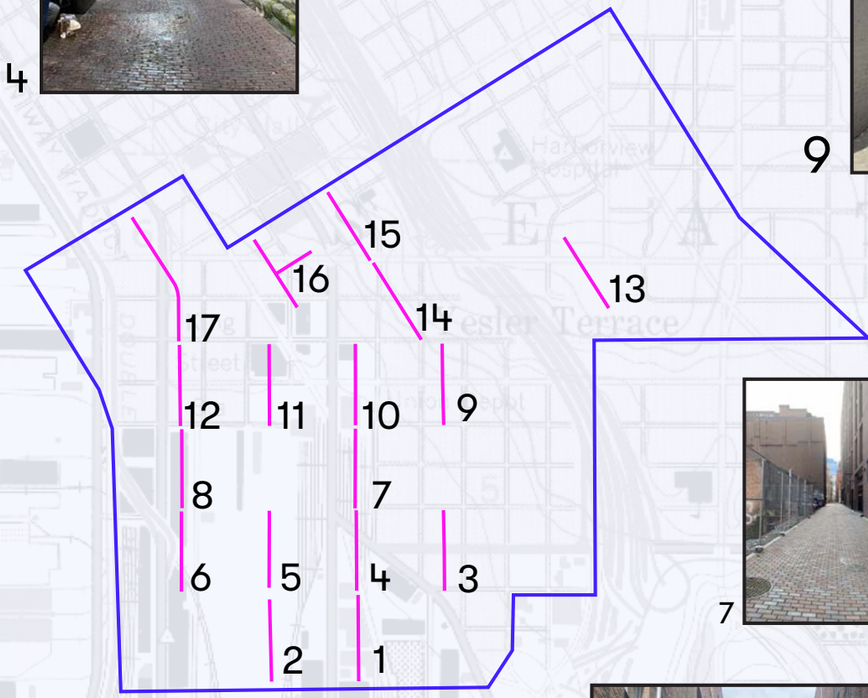
Additional maps of the neighborhood's alleys were created to place the alleys in a greater context and to show their relational geographies (fig. 28-29). The alleys are mostly lined up, one after the other, separated by cross streets. The form of the alley network follows shifts in the urban grid as downtown Seattle is oriented on a roughly 45-degree angle relative to the North and South orientation of PSQ. The two distinct maps show different alley connotations and are inspired by Nolli's figure-ground map, which expresses a subverted representation of space and emphasizes public space as figure and built space, or buildings, as void.[2] The first map depicts alleys as black voids in an otherwise colorful and hybrid urban context. Alternatively, the second map identifies the alleys as sources of rich, colorful public space, while the rest of the neighborhood fades into darkness, further highlighting the alley network. The two maps present dual alley

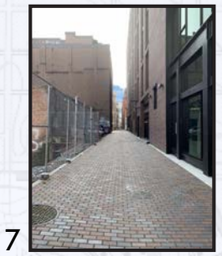


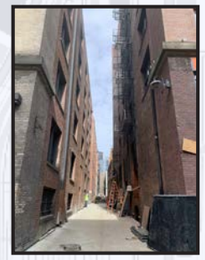












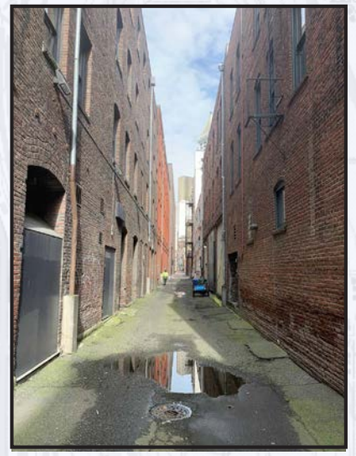


Figure 27: Pioneer Square Alleys Photograph Map.

Figure 28: Pioneer Square Alleys 1. Alleys here are the subject of the map; the presence of life in a black and white grid.

narratives and challenge preconceived notions of the alley. This approach subverts dominant perspectives of site, queerly transforming site analysis into site reading.

The alleys were related in their similarities yet discrete in their identities. The alleys shared a likeness in their materiality, North-South orientation, and affective qualities. Some alleys were so similar that it became confusing to navigate and remember my relative location, as they are often unmarked. Though visually and geographically related, the alleys' distinct characters made each one a surprising revelation of urban form. In various alleys one can find unique art, a mélange of smells and sounds, and clues into varied uses and occupation patterns, all of which indicate the performativity of alley users and the subsequent effect of those performances on future experiences. In reflection, certain alleys are memorable for their specific qualities, engendered by performance, and can be differentiated based on experiential memory.

Walking within the alleys elicited a similarly varied experience. At times I felt calm and wandered unconsciously, immersed in the details of the alley, and lost in ephemeral moments. At other times I was on high alert and aware of my surroundings, focused on my position and safety. This heightened awareness was a result of adjacent alley activities that felt unpredictable and made me nervous. There were other moments where I did not enter an alley at all to avoid being intrusive, invasive of someone's privacy, or to maintain a feeling of safety. The difference in

Figure 29: Pioneer Square Alleys 2. Alleys as space and figure punctuate the urban landscape and are highlighted.

the emotional experiences of the alleys was also a result of time of day. In the morning and evening, I experienced more instances of hesitation and caution compared to a midday visit, which provided the security of other people's presence.

Through these visits I was an observer and participant. In the alley, I was an agent of spatial change in the traces left behind by my movements, gazes, gestures, and performances. I was also affected by the alley, which in turn, dictated my movements, gazes, gestures, and performances. The mutually affective performance between myself and the alley highlights our similarities and engenders a stronger sense of empathy and care for the marginalized space.

I documented the alleys by taking photographs of the alleys' lengths and widths using my smartphone. Out of respect for users of the spaces, I avoided capturing people, and instead focused my camera on the traces of use left in their wake. Photographs of the alleys' lengths illustrate their dramatic architecture and long and narrow form (fig. 30-35). To accentuate the form and make the alleys feel endless, I exaggerated the perspective by splicing and layering the images - a collage technique. The collaged images collapse space and time, simultaneously placing the viewer at the beginning and end of the alley. Similarly, they capture and superimpose multiple ephemeral moments by stacking them one upon another. The images also record the similarities and differences between alleys. Similarities are

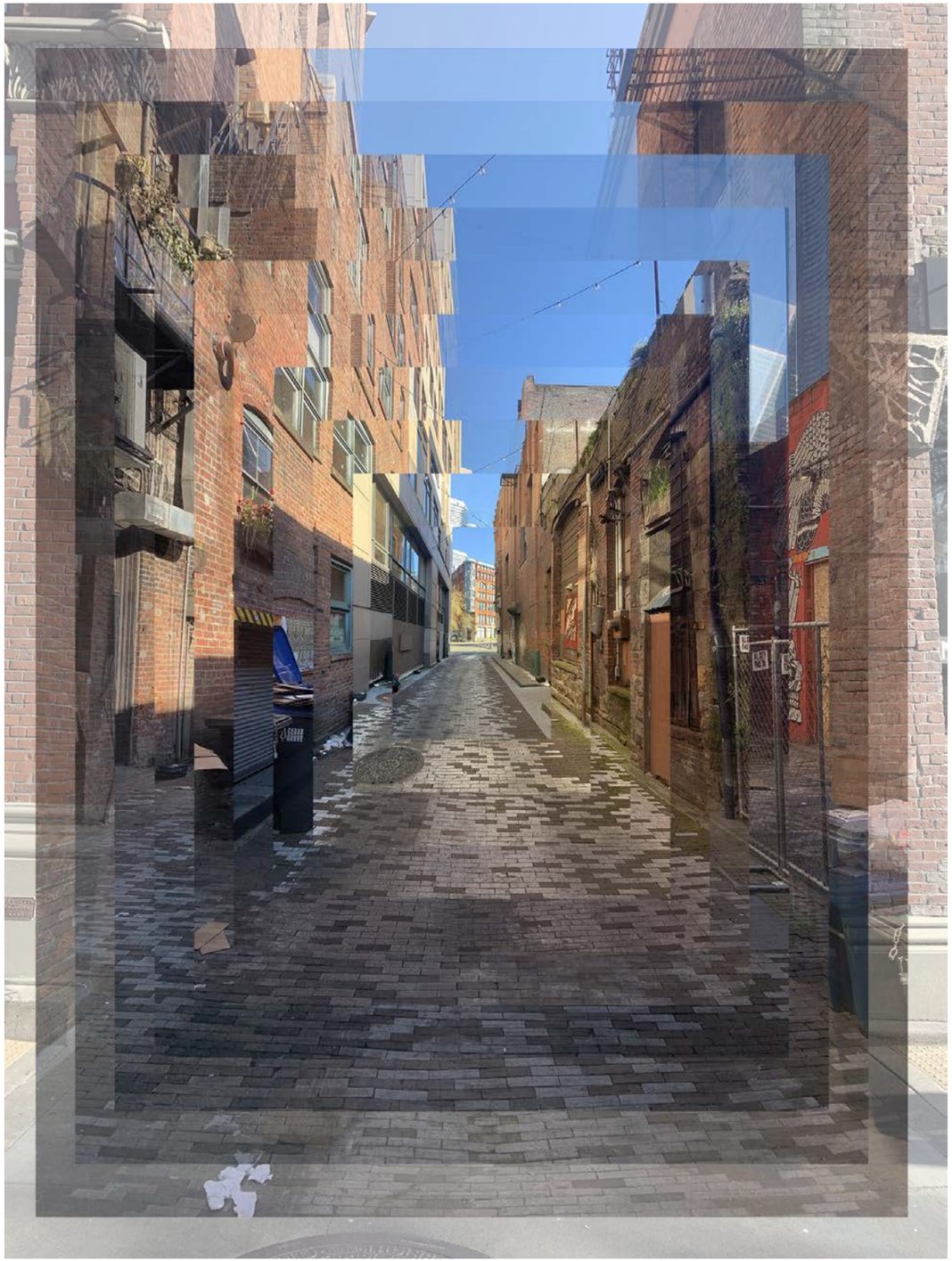


Figure 30: Alley 11 North Perspective.

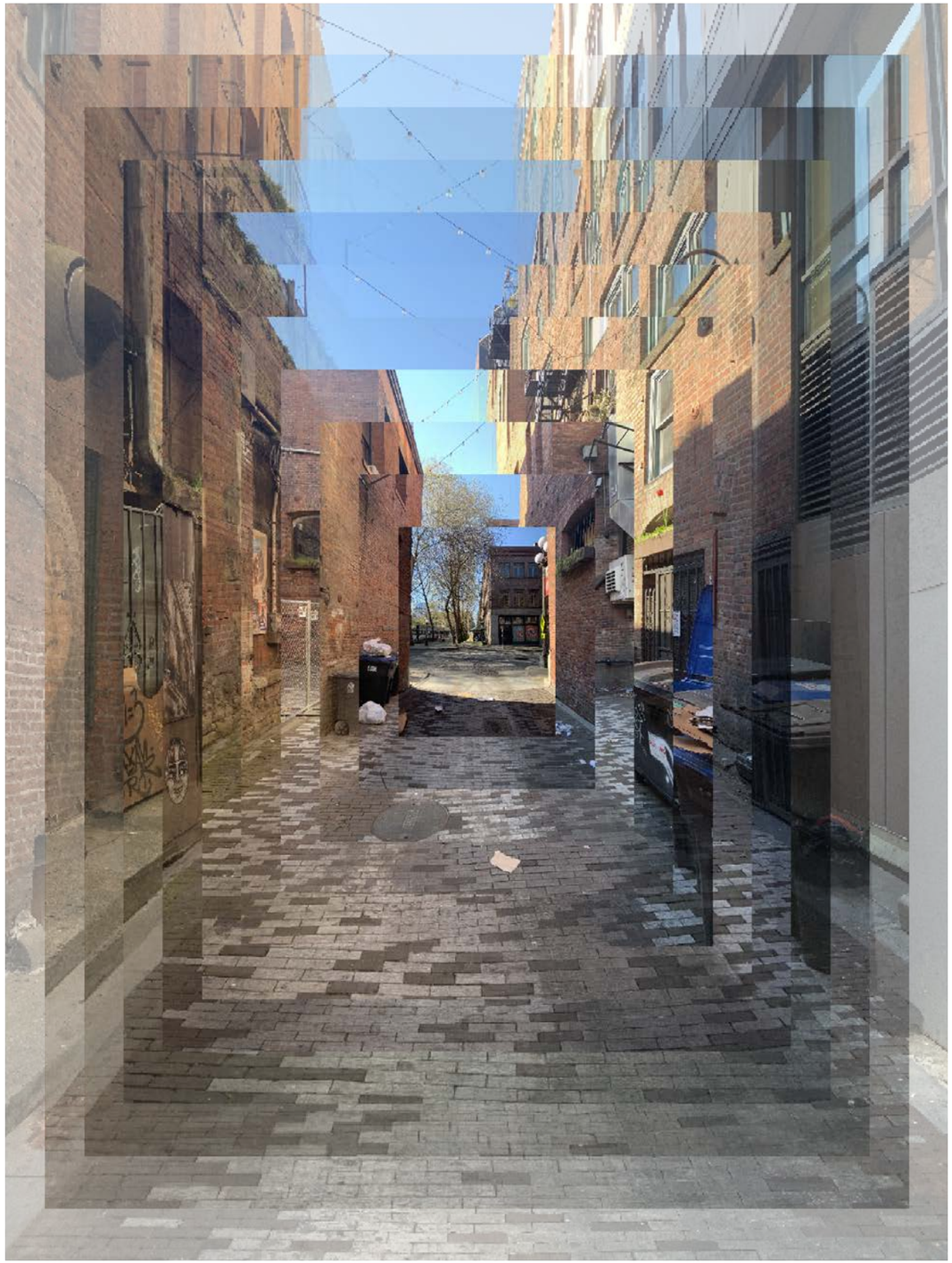


Figure 31: Alley 11 South Perspective.

Figure 32: Alley 12 North Perspective.

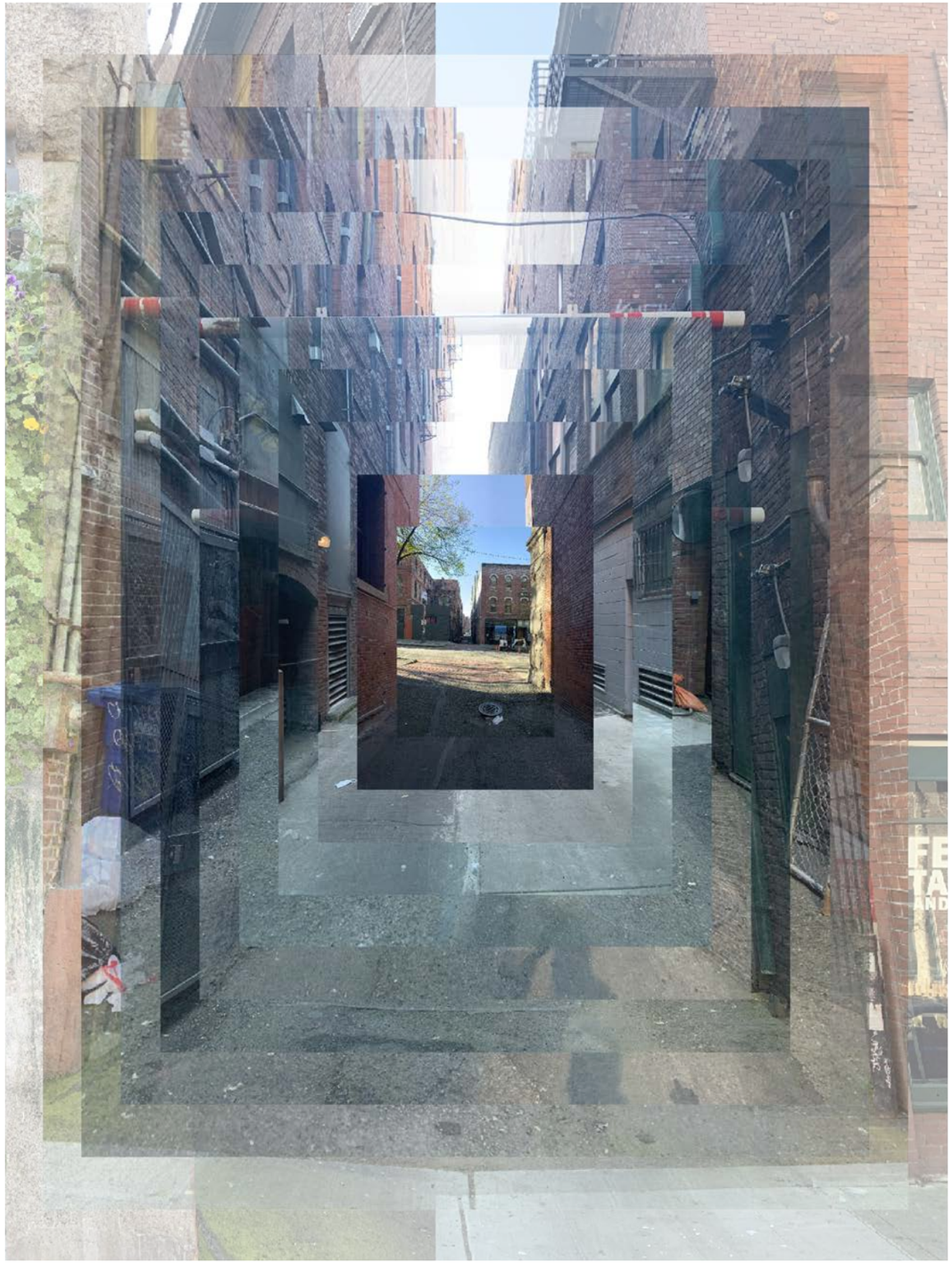


Figure 33: Alley 12 South Perspective.

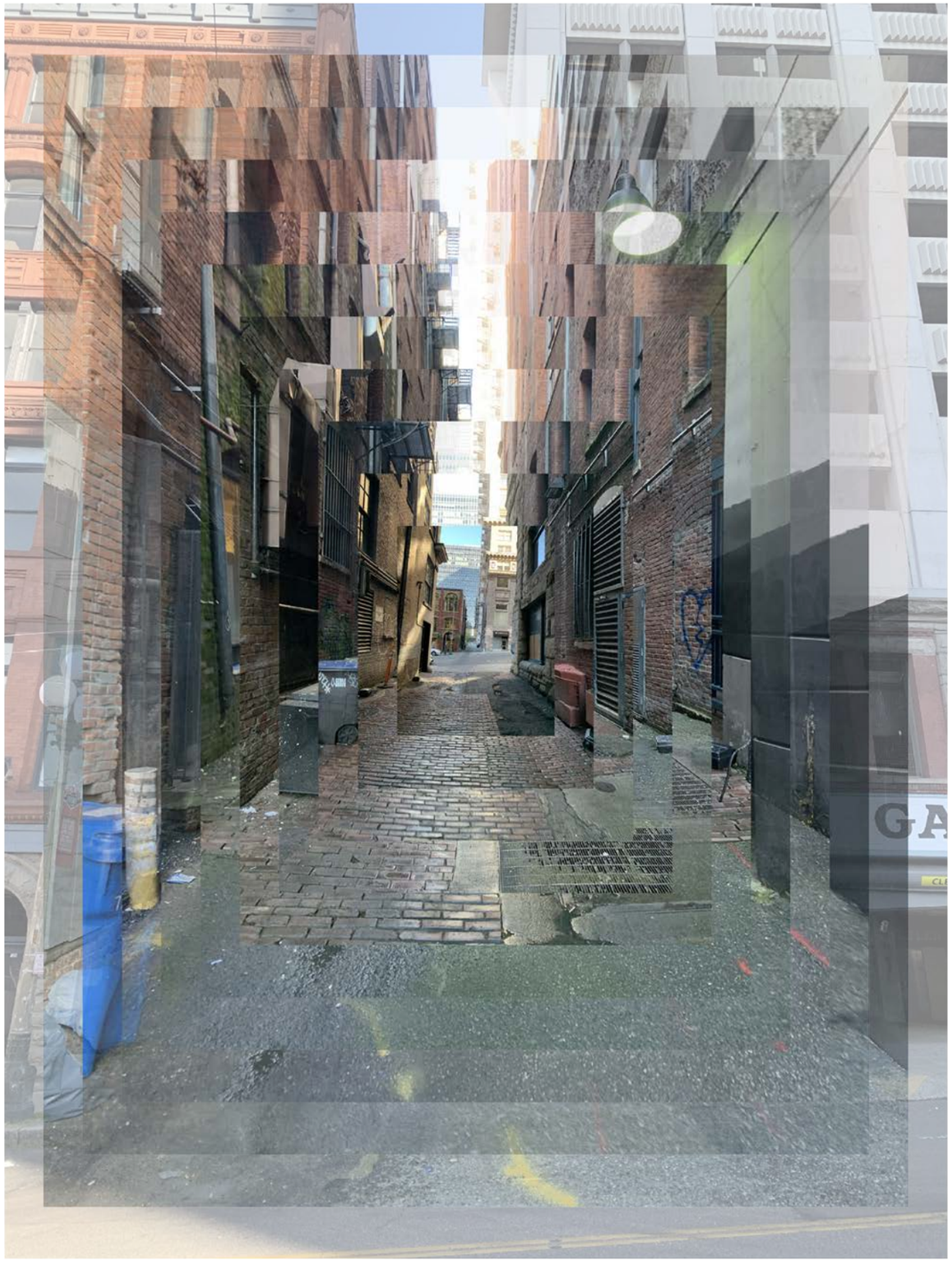


Figure 34: Alley 16 Northwest Perspective.

Figure 35: Alley 16 Southeast Perspective.

expressed as the shared material likeness and orientation in these layered images. Differences are shown through misaligned forms and lines, and through progressively contrasting opacities.

The alley length collages also reveal an aspirational quality of alleys - horizons. At the end of each narrow alley, visual cues signal a spatial transition. A small sliver of light-bathed city emerges as the darkened walls of the alley abruptly end. Cars and pedestrians dart across this opening, emerging, and retreating in seconds, giving clues about what lies beyond the alley's end. Buildings in the distance appear small but effectively provide a scaled contrast to the narrow 15-feet alley width. Although vertical rather than horizontal in form and character, the gap is reminiscent of horizons; the urban spaces beyond the alley are visible, but out of reach. The alley's end beckons with promise of more city, of more life. This little sliver of potential at the alley's end is enough to draw one in, and nurture one's imagination of what lies beyond. Even when the end is near, a new alley just across the street extends that visual experience, and the vertical urban horizon is repeated. Collaged alley images document and reveal this repeating phenomenon. This visual and horizonal alley experience is queer in its repetition as it centers the process of getting there, rather than the arrival.

Alternatively, photographs of the alleys' longitudinal walls are collaged to document the experience of moving through the alley. The cracks and surfaces of the alley's edges are filled with fascinating details. The alley wall photographs capture the disorienting experience of 'getting lost in observation' similar to moving through an art gallery. In the collages, the photographs are layered and adjoined to express a protracted gallery walk featuring opportunistic moss and plant life, expansive brick canvases for graffiti and printed art, and intricate material transitions (fig. 36-41). Annotations are used to highlight special moments including hard to see details, contrasting textures, remnants of past layers, sensory experiences like smells, interesting art, and traces of use. Building off of Halprin's motation, the annotations reflect my positionality within the alleys and how alleys and their users are mutually performative. The annotated details also convey the personal experience of the alley and show my particular point of view as a way to share an embodied and queer view of reading alleys. In the separation of alley details through annotation, discrete alley elements are broken down to reveal a finer-grain picture of the alley, an act that is generative in its disaggregation.

After reading and documenting several alleys and their spatial and contextual qualities, the alleys were further deconstructed by extracting discrete elements and features (fig. 25). The photographs of alley lengths were cut at thresholds between spatial planes. Ground planes, alley walls, and skies were separated, as well as certain details and pieces of infrastructure, to begin to deconstruct the alley at its corners to dissect what constitutes the alley form. Learning through the process off dissection and separation is an example of generative dismantling.

Once extracted, elements from multiple alleys were recombined and collaged to create a composite alley (fig. 26). The composite alley is composed of pieces that are varied in form and stand out as uniquely characteristic of the area. Generating a composite alley frames the explorations in place while not restricting site reading to one location and centers the performative nature of the designer in the process of reading a site. The composite alley is unbeholden to a single place. Together, the documentation of individual alleys and the composite alley embed the fluidity of queer methods in the design process. To design for and generate alternative futures, the site reading process must encompass both breadth in spatial context and specificity of site details.

Aspects of conventional site analysis provide an important grounding for understanding the physical context of a site during design processes. I used an aerial image to map the locations of the three alleys that were used to create the composite, which are highlighted in figure 42, the Conventional Analysis Matrix. Similar to the earlier study, the space of each alley was represented as figure to emphasize their value as complete spaces, rather than only as liminal, in-between thresholds. Recreations of adjacent building facades show some of the details that adorn alley entrances and convey the architectural charm that frames alleys. Applying conventional analysis approaches in this context provides a legibility to alley assessment and, despite its conventionality, adds layers of information to generate a more comprehensive reading of site.

Reading the alleys through careful observation, documentation, and collage enabled an up-close-and-personal relationship to begin to form with the alleys and their spatial identities. Critically breaking down traditional site analysis and performing a queered reading of the site revealed the beautiful and dynamic natures of these marginalized spaces. Reading spaces through multiple narratives and perspectives allows more instances of beauty to be seen and value to be recognized. Breaking down the singular, pejorative view of the alley is a necessary step in designing a future of multiplicity and generating the alley's potential. Through a queer reading of site, and its associated performances that are mutually constitutive of the alley, my own fear and mistrust of alley spaces dissolved into a respect and gratitude for the uses, users, and potential of alleys.

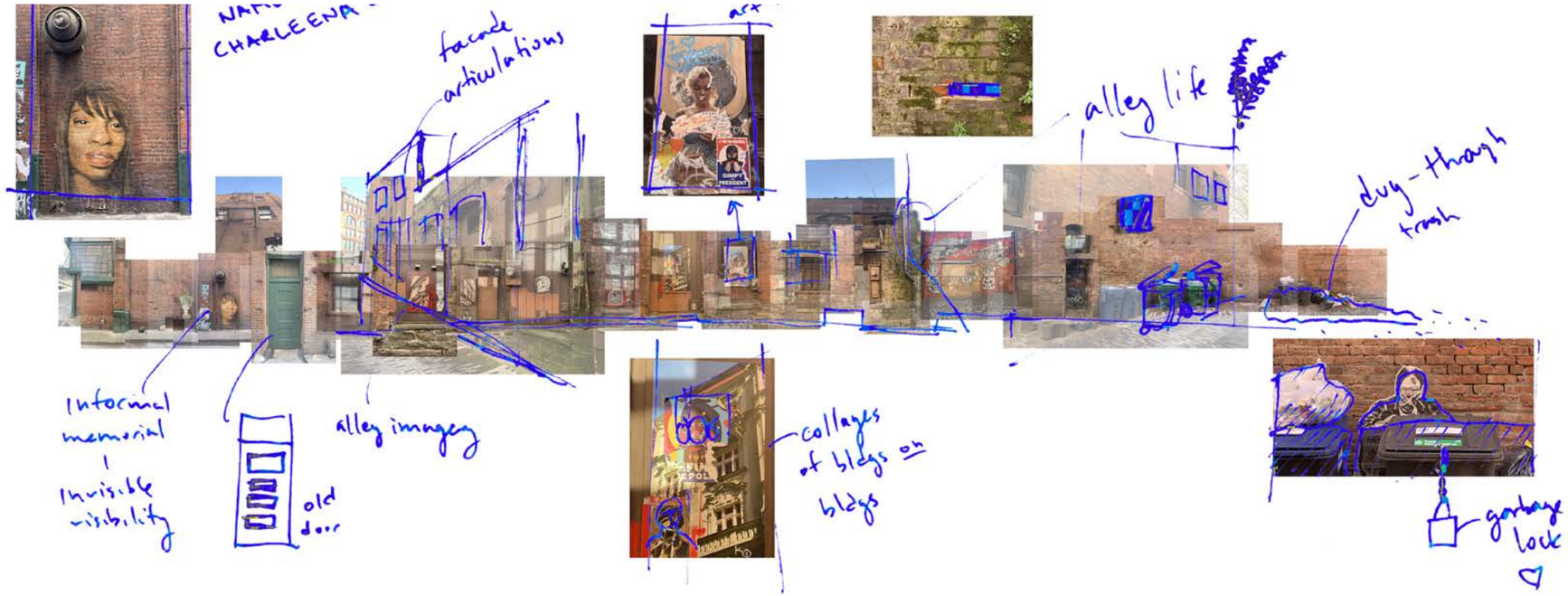


Figure 36: Alley 11 Annotated East Facade. Plant life added character and intrigue to this alley. Low building walls added ample light for increased growth and accumulation.

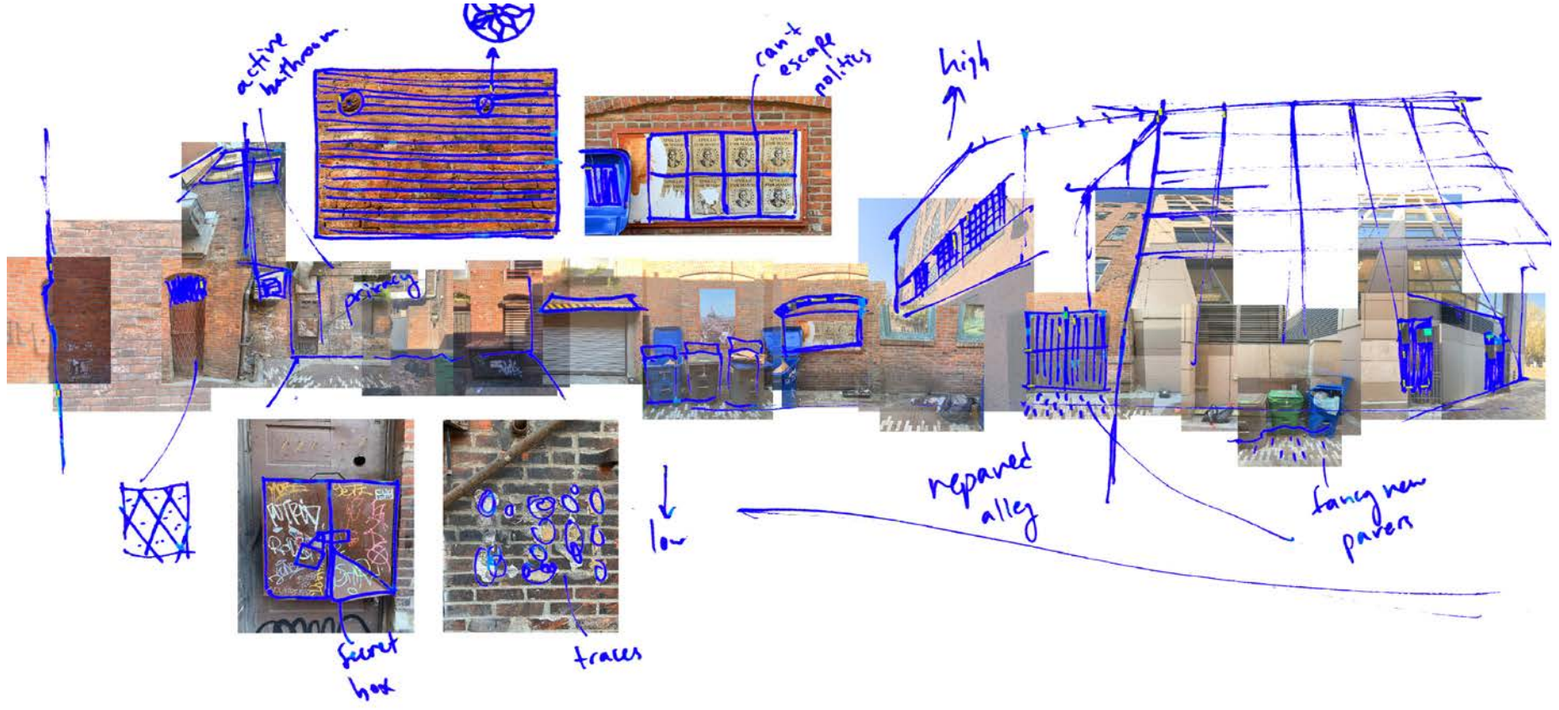


Figure 37: Alley 11 Annotated West Facade. Graffiti and poster art lined the walls and made for an interesting alley exhibit.

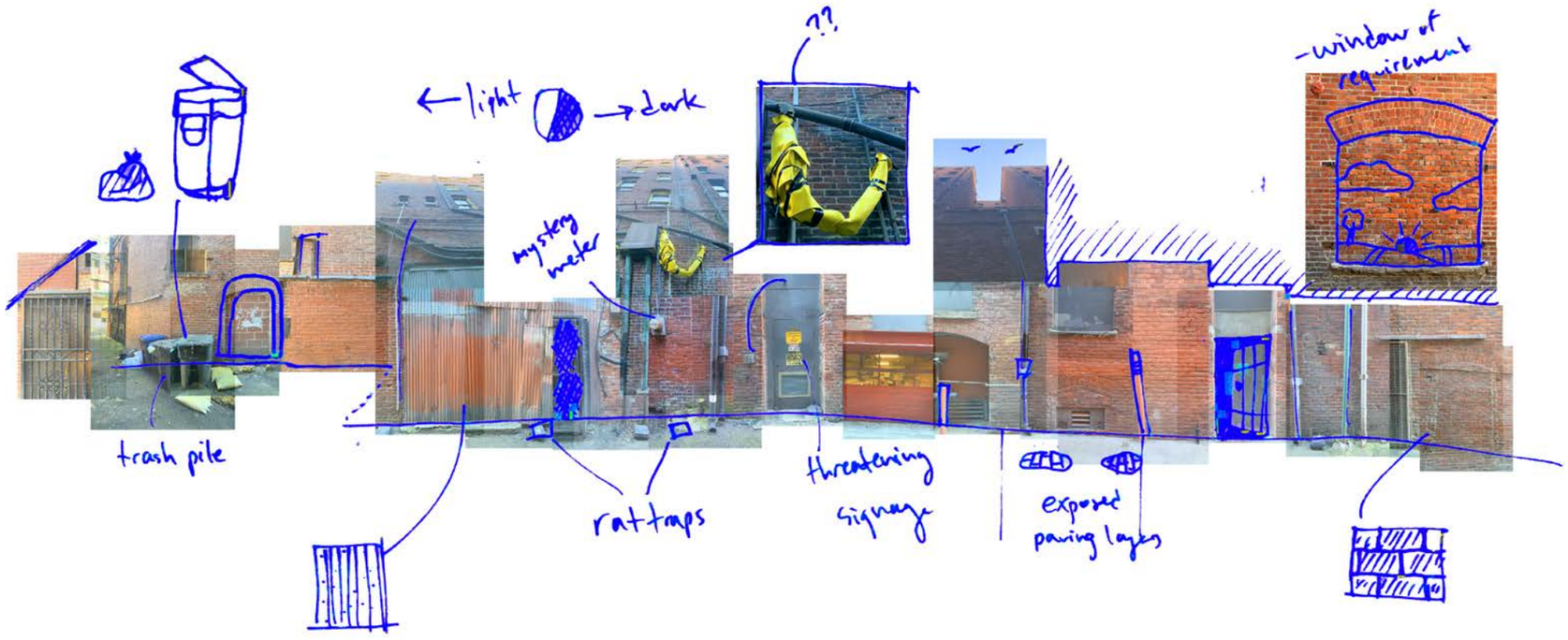


Figure 38: Alley 12 Annotated East Facade. Old windows were bricked over, leaving traces in the facade.

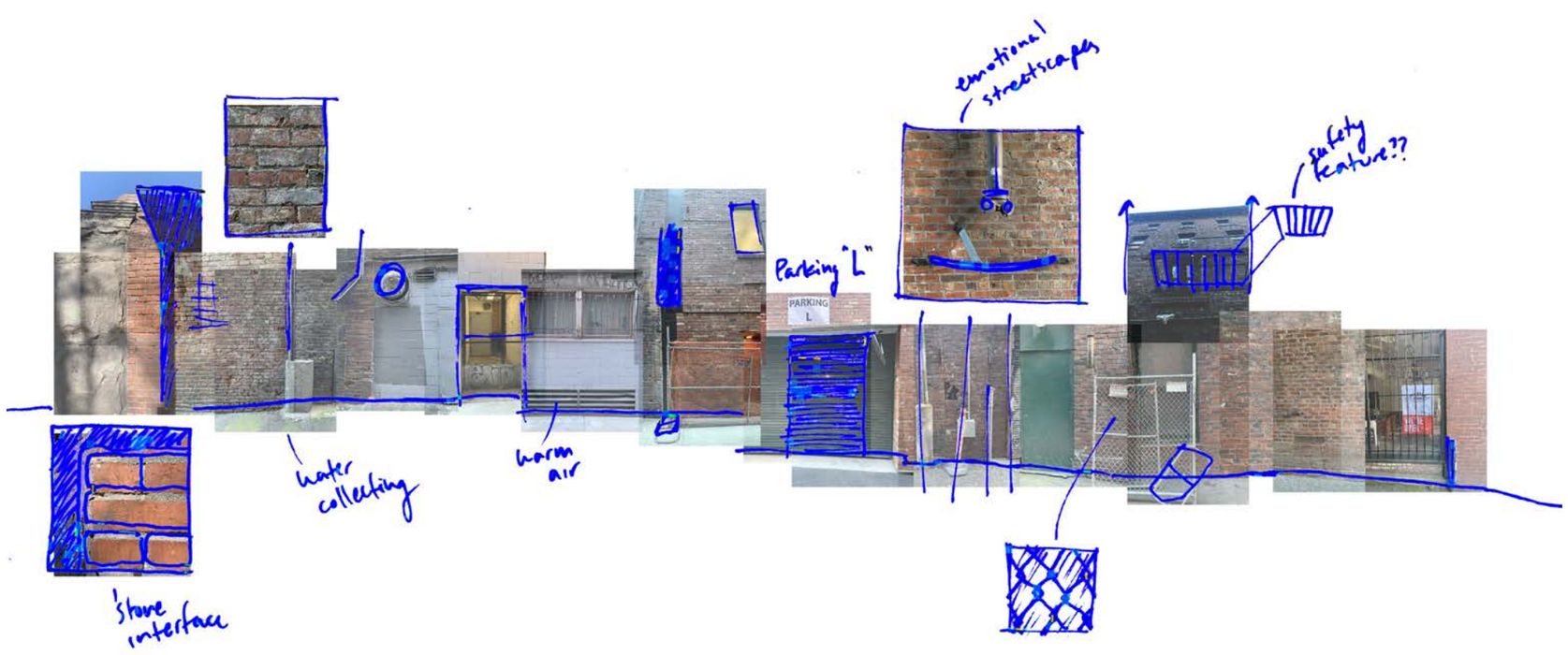


Figure 39: Alley 12 Annotated West Facade. Lots of vertical infrastructure including water utilities.

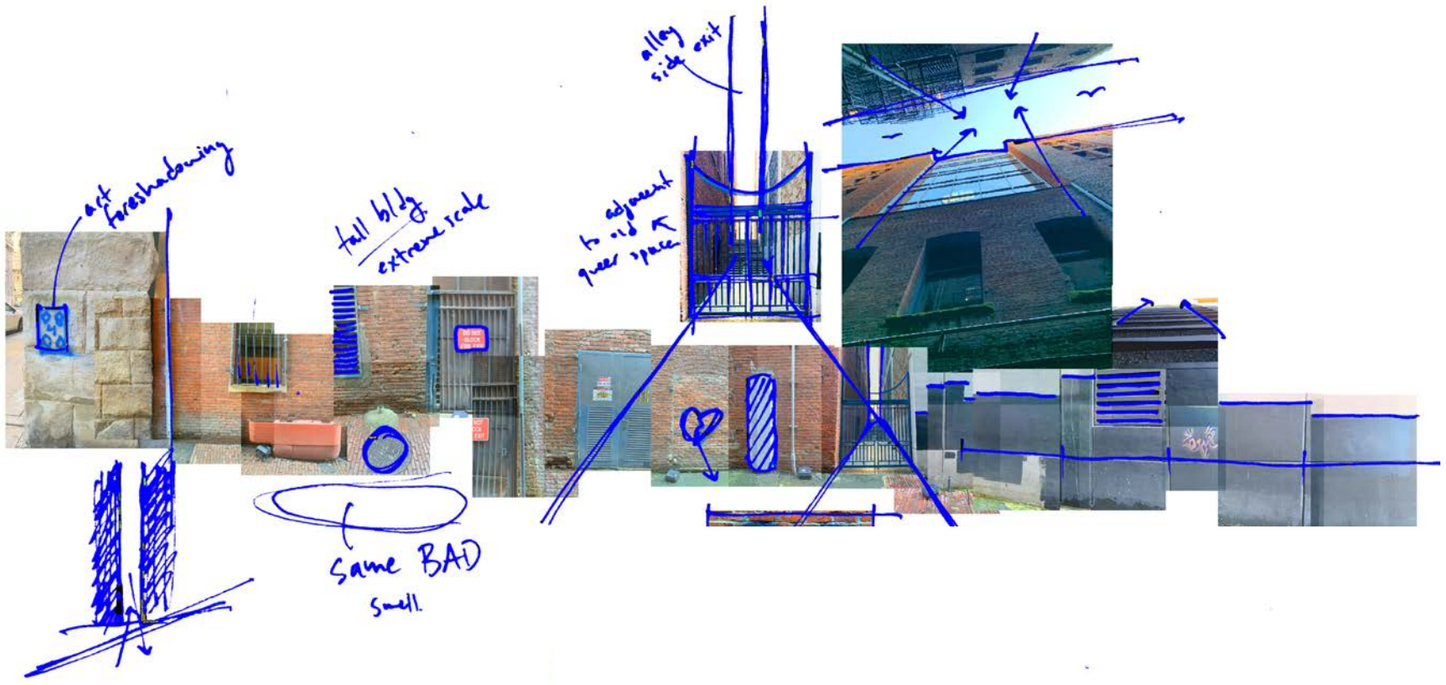


Figure 40: Alley 16 Annotated Northeast Facade. High building walls directed my view upwards and a perpendicular alley entrance was gated off.

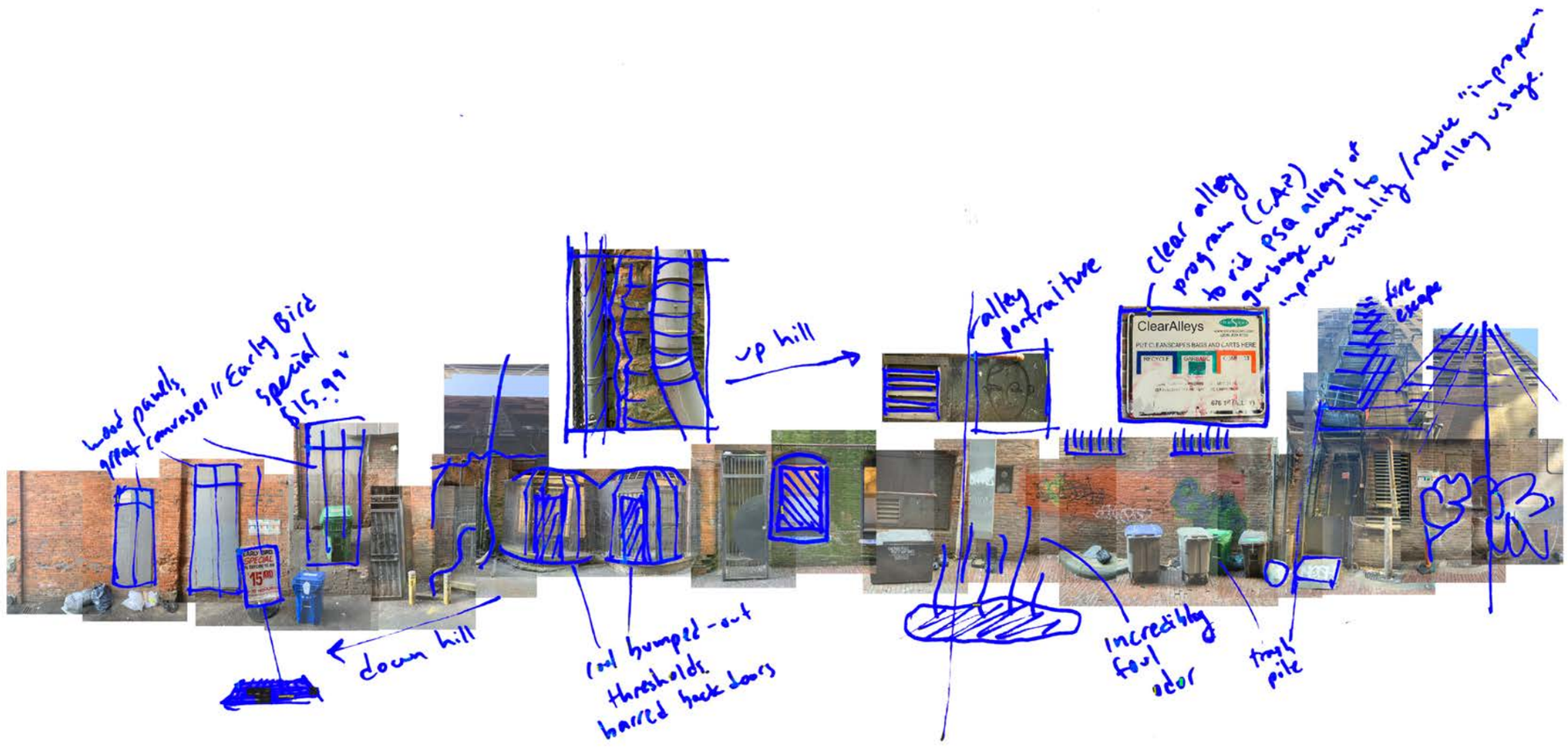


Figure 41: Alley 16 Annotated Southwest Facade. Rear building entrances were blocked by iron cages and the smell was intensely bad.

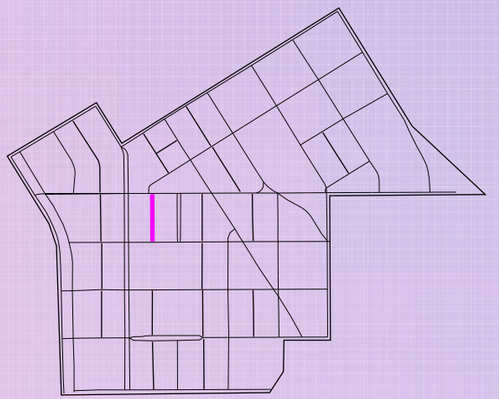
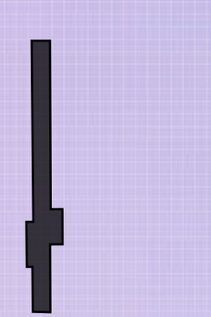
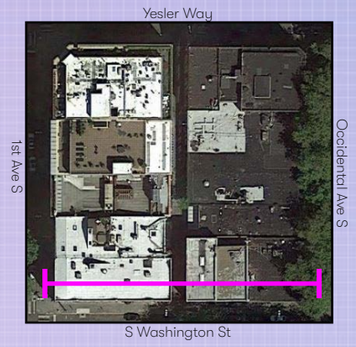
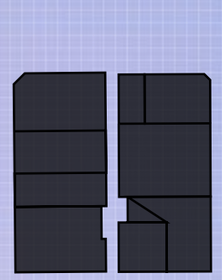
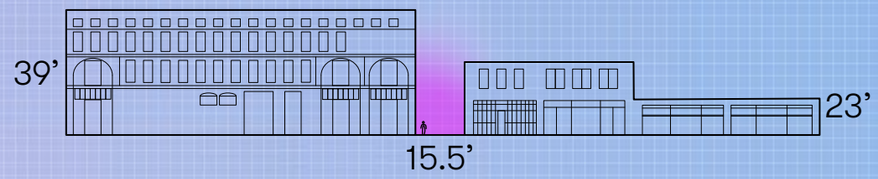
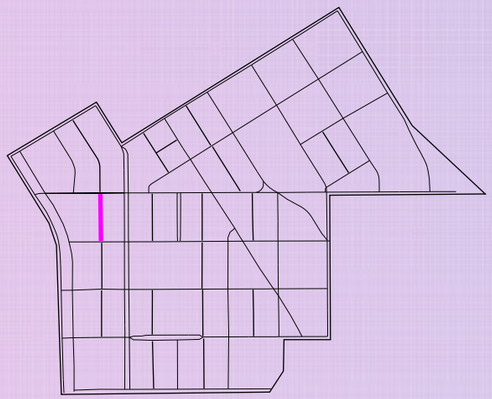
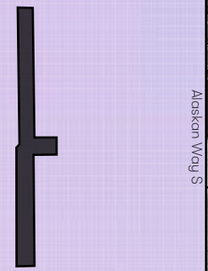
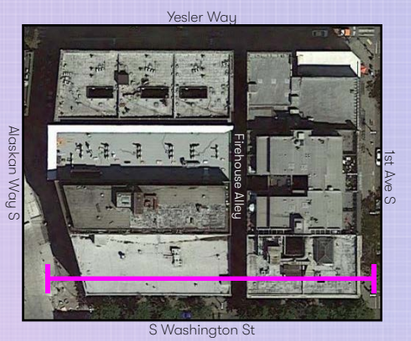
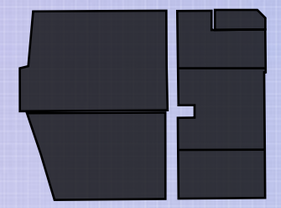
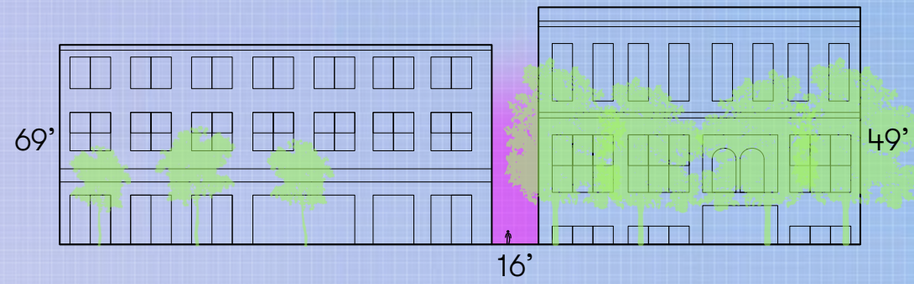
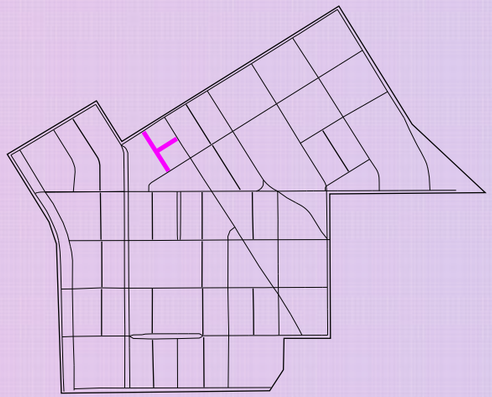
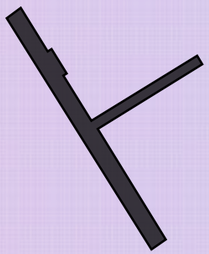
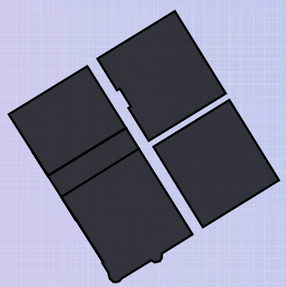
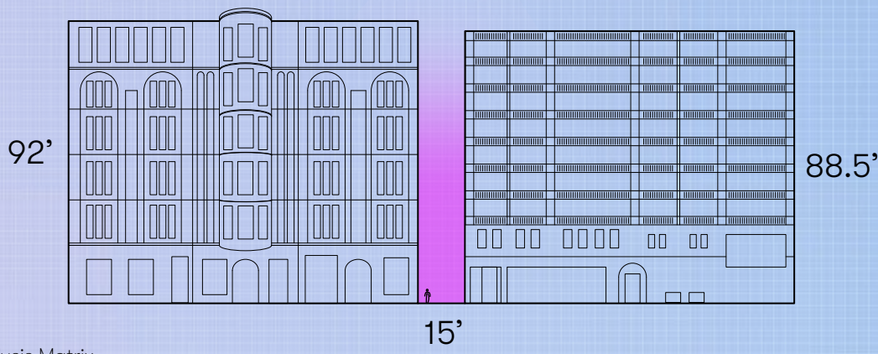
Context	Figure	Aerial	Plan	Section
Alley 11					
Alley 12					
Alley 16					

Figure 42: Conventional Analysis Matrix.

Surficial Transformations

Following the site reading process, I propose a process of generative dismantling through collage operations that explore how three-dimensional spatial constructions could inform site transformations. Adding dimension and layers to different aspects of the design process can be seen as queering because of queerness' beneficial transformative characteristics. Transforming two-dimensional surfaces into three-dimensional spaces through collage operations is a queering of the early stages of the design process, as it is an explicit act of transformation that is productive of new forms.

Collage practices were mined for operations that could translate to the making of three-dimensional space. Quick and simple paper models, or maquettes, begin exploring methods for transforming two-dimensional surfaces into three-dimensional manifestations. After analyzing various queer collage techniques, I extracted and reinterpreted the operative processes of splitting, slicing, trimming, outlining, bending, creasing, rolling, beveling, stacking, placing, removing, and adding. Although these operations are traditionally used for two-dimensional collage exploration, I translated these procedures into three-dimensional processes. Exploring collage operations as verbs, and the potential each verb holds for spatial transformation and performativity, reveals the power of process. An operation like splitting, for example, does not simply result in two discrete, split elements. Conceiving of splitting as a process renders it a powerful act that has unlimited capacity for transformation.

To honor and investigate the potential of operative collage verbs, each maquette went through several iterations. The most successful maquettes were selected and recorded based on the quality of transformation and how well the operations created space (fig. 42-43). Successful operations were then synthesized and categorized as either cutting, folding, or assembling based on the type of operation (fig. 44).

The paper maquettes revealed the ability for collage operations to be applied in many different dimensions of working. This emphasizes the power of process and potential. They provided clues into how surfaces could be transformed from two-dimensions into three-dimensions, and the spatial performativity required to achieve transformative processes. They also call attention to the different ways alley surfaces and edges are already in the process of transformation. While this exploration seeks to make those shifts, the alley boundaries are in the midst of folding, splitting, layering, and crumbling. This is important as alleys themselves are agents of their own spatial creations. Just as designers and users perform identities that constitute alley (re)production, alleys are spatially performative in their effects on designers and users. Taking cues from agentic alleys already in process and deconstructing collage operations to create newly transformed spaces, centers the act of making and unmaking that informs queerness and its potential in design processes.

Deconstructing Alley Edges

The paper maquettes informed my thinking and approaches to an alley through three-dimensional modeling. Generating form from surface through collage operations relates to how surfaces and edges of alleys can be reconceptualized. Dismantling static alley edges and walls can generate potentially new and imaginative alley formations. Applying transformational lessons from earlier explorations, I explored how an open-ended dynamic model that frames the alley can be generative in processes of making, unmaking, and remaking.

Alley walls are highly porous and display a high degree of articulated surfaces. Walls are lined with windows, pipes, plants, metal boxes, out-of-place bricks and concrete, and other assorted material protrusions. Alley walls are not even. Building by building, different surfaces are extruded and recessed, displaying a vertical topographic landscape. All of these surfaces and articulations are composed of various materials with textural

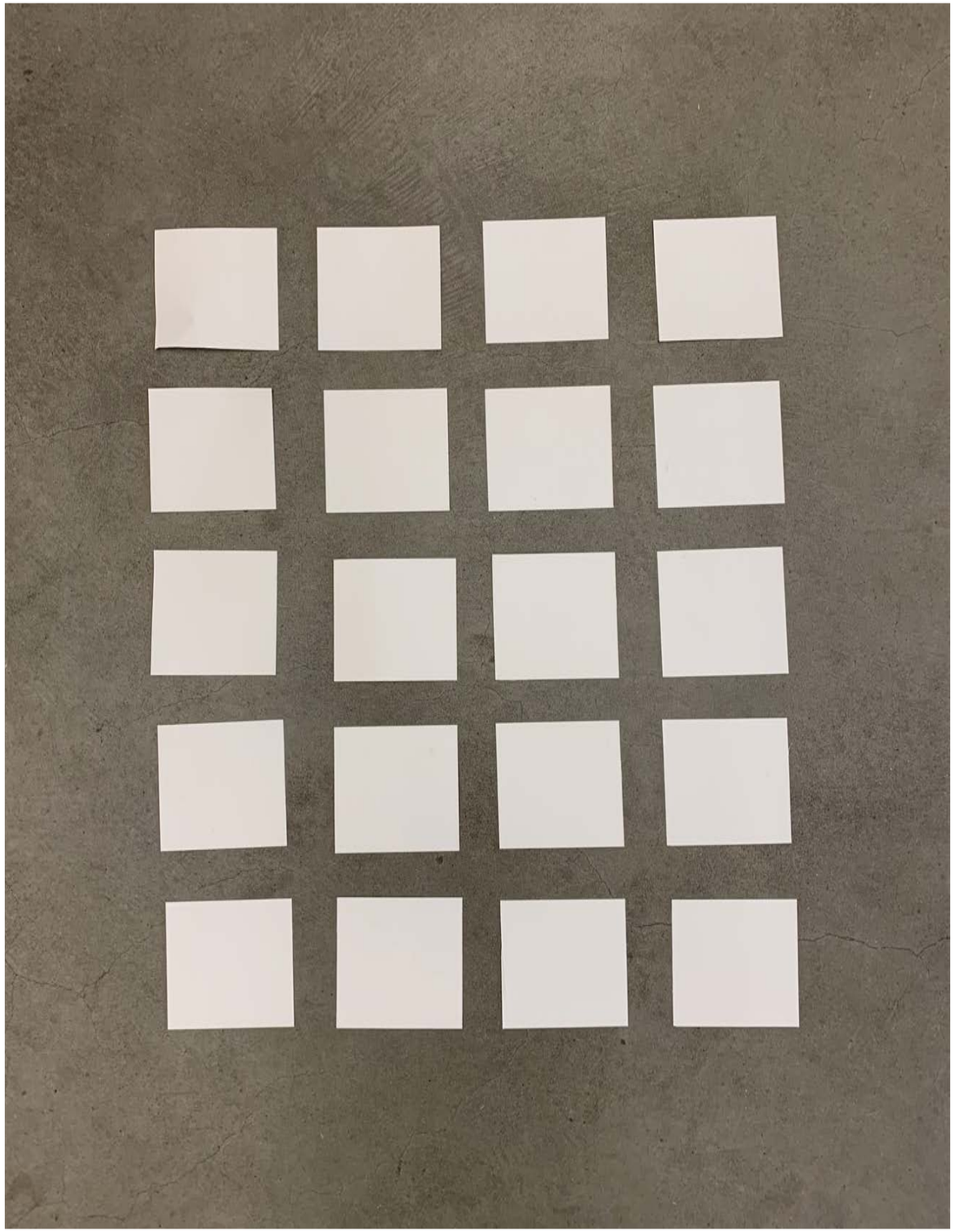
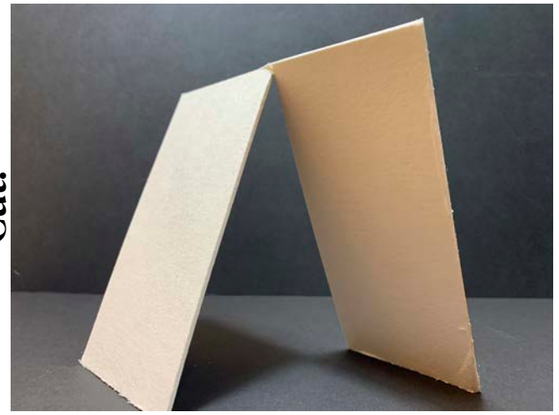


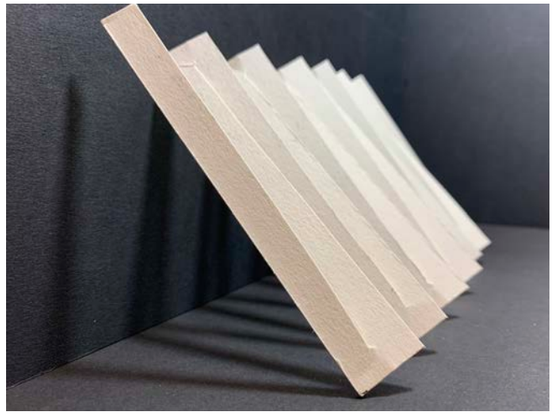
Figure 43: Pre-Surficial Transformations.

Figure 44: Post-Surficial Transformations.

Cut:



split

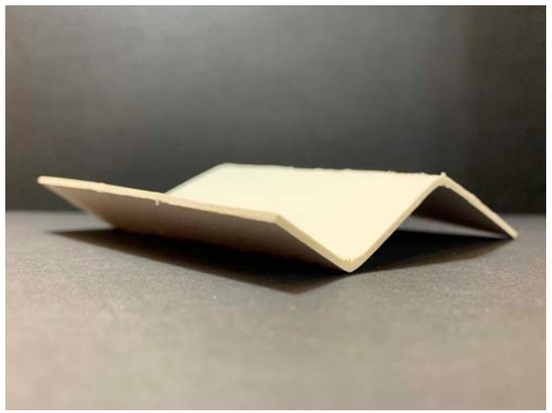


slice

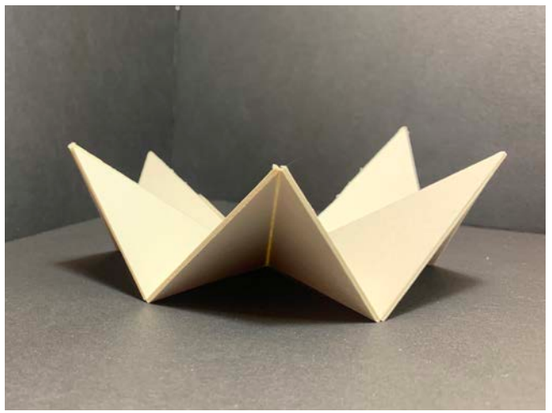
trim

outline

Fold:

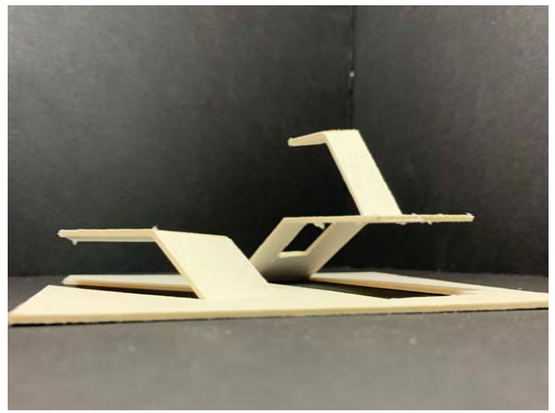


bend



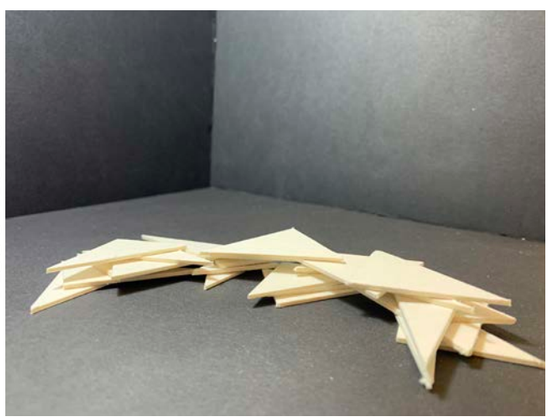
crease

roll

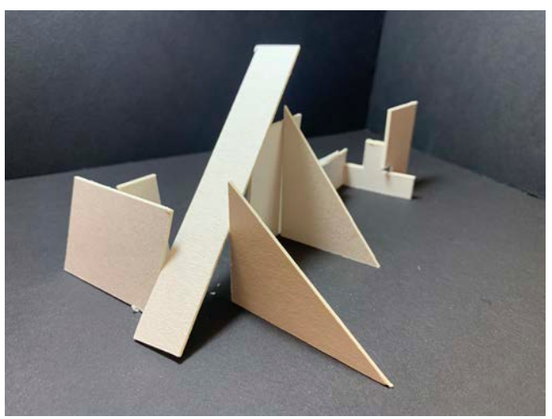


bevel

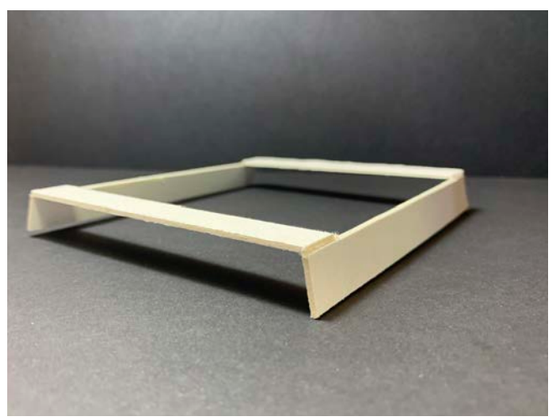
Assemble:



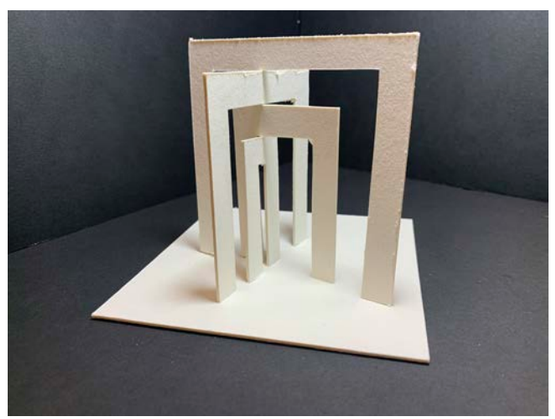
stack



place



remove



add

Figure 45: Maquette Transformations.

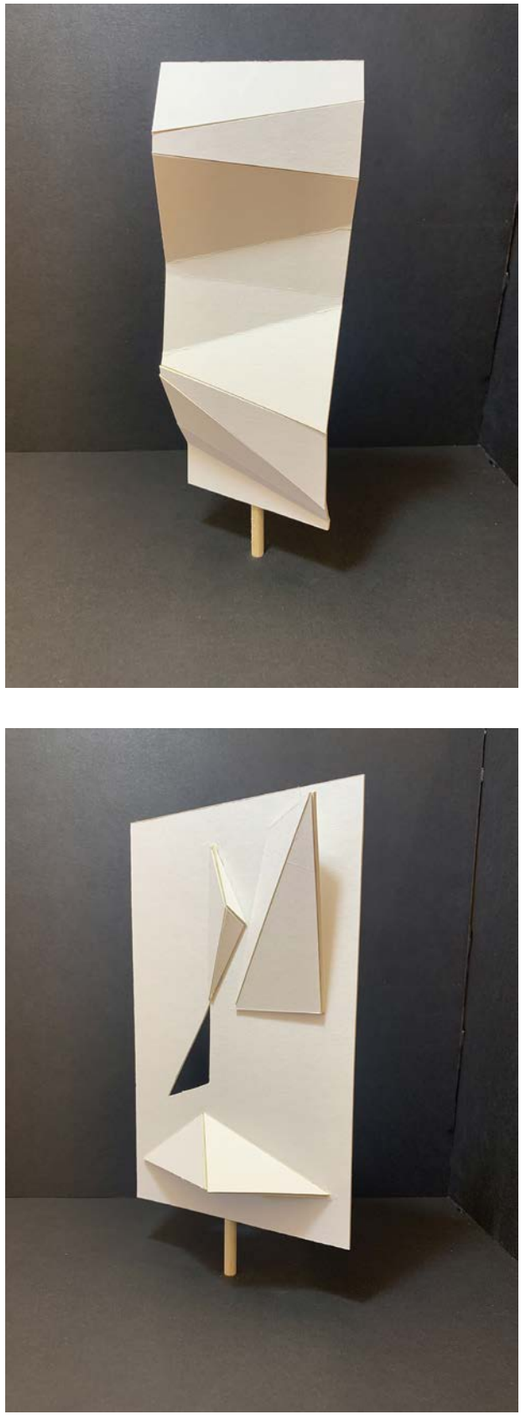
qualities. The most common materials found in PSQ alleys are brick, stone, concrete, metal, old and new, glass, paper, and biotic materials. The dense collage of material exhibits equally numerous textures; rough, stubbly, sandy, gritty, sharp, smooth. Depending on the position of the sun the surfaces heat up and cool down, adding another ephemeral sensory layer to the materiality and texture.

To reflect this material variance, I constructed 24 alley wall segments, each of which was made using collage operations that explored a particular aspect of form or materiality. I considered four categories of design elements when creating the wall segments: articulation, material, texture, and color and light. I chose these design element categories to highlight the nuanced qualities that make alleys visually and spatially interesting. The categories connect to the material layering and deposition that shift the alley's physical quality and display a material performance for users and observers. I constructed the wall segments by cutting, folding, assembling, gluing, tearing, or layering, and at varying heights and widths, to mirror the variety found in alleys and to provide the maximum potential for users of the model (fig. 47-50). I then mounted the wall segments onto dowel rods, to be placed and oriented in the model base.

Once the wall pieces were completed, they could be inserted into the base. The base of the 1" =5' scale alley model was created using a wooden frame that was 24"x24". The frame was beneath a ¼" piece of plyboard and many consecutive ¼" holes were drilled at 1" intervals on center through the top, using a section of pegboard as a guide, to create an equidistant grid (fig. 46). Once the holes were drilled and the surfaces sanded, ¼" dowel rods could be inserted anywhere along the surface, creating a grid for alley wall segments to be inserted. The wide range of spatial options for insertion was

Figure 46: Alley Model Base. Gridded insertion points allow for high variety in placement.

ARTICULATION



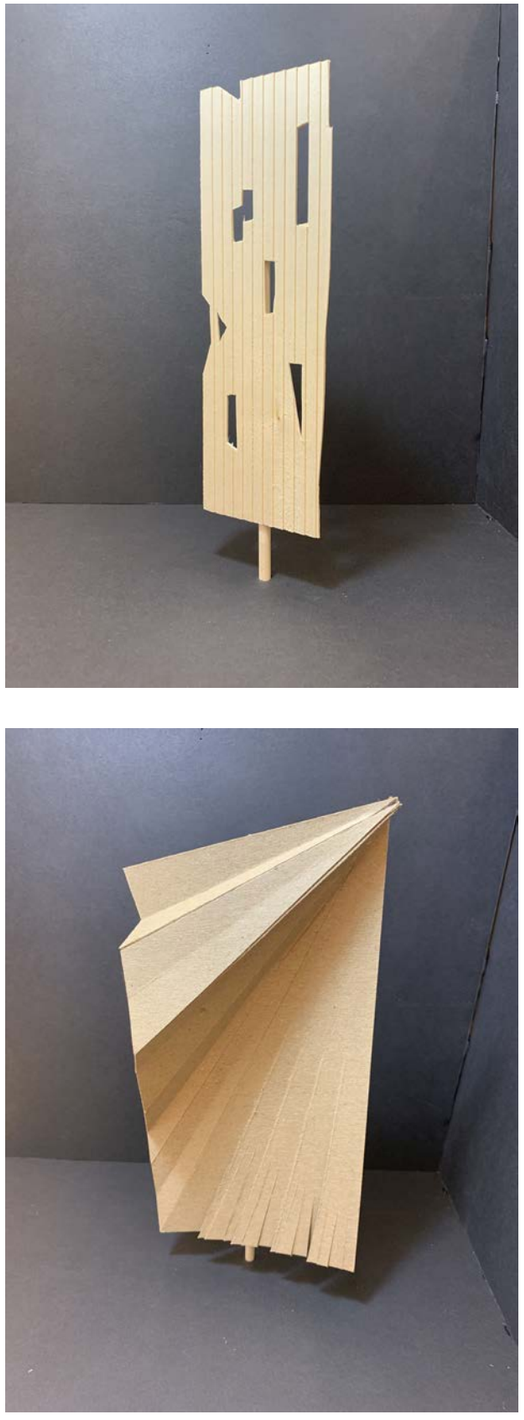
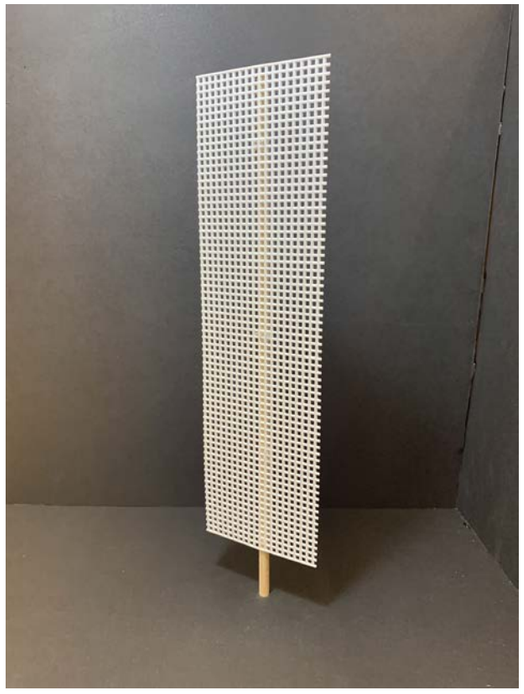
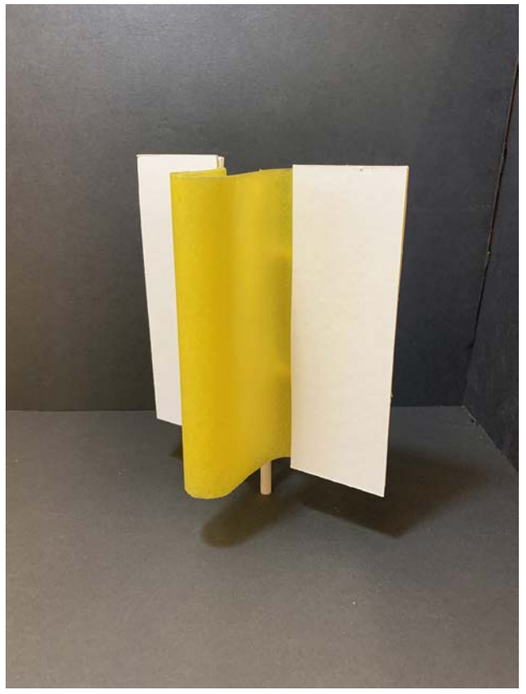


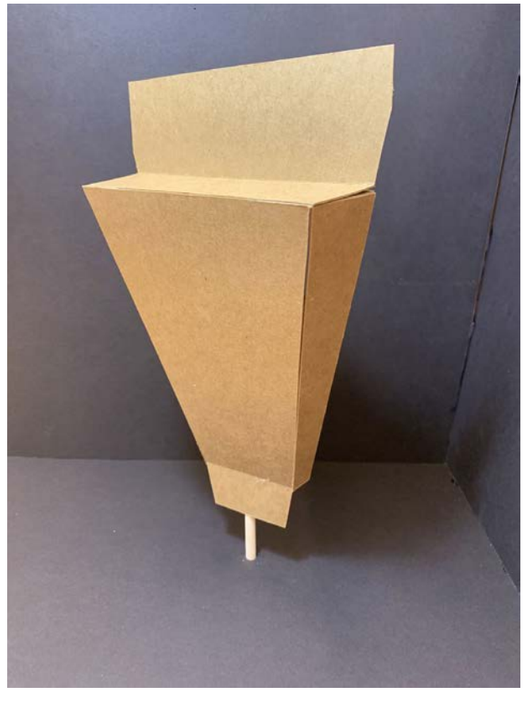
Figure 47: Alley Wall Segments: Articulation.

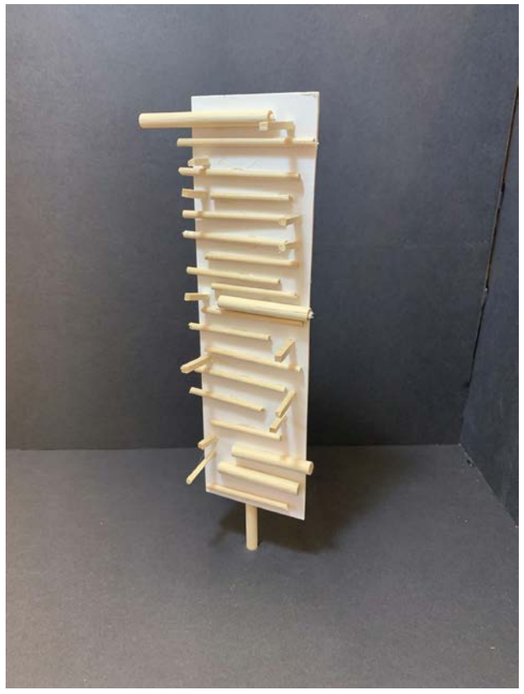


MATERIAL

Figure 48: Alley Wall Segments: Material.

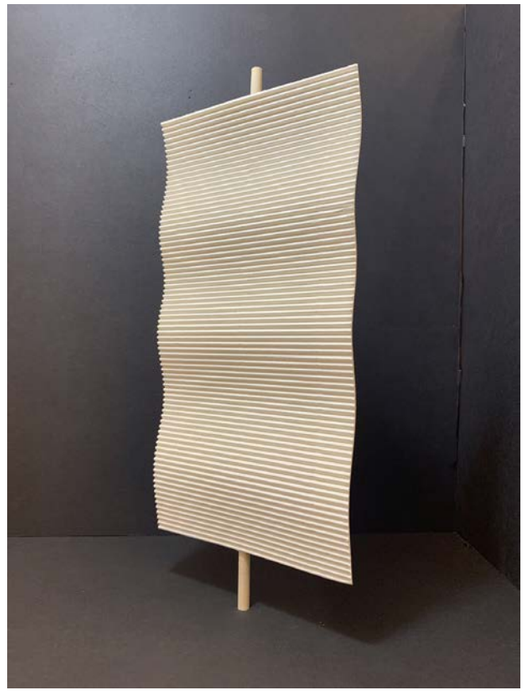






TEXTURE

Figure 49: Alley Wall Segments: Texture.



COLOR AND LIGHT

Figure 50: Alley Wall Segments: Color and Light.

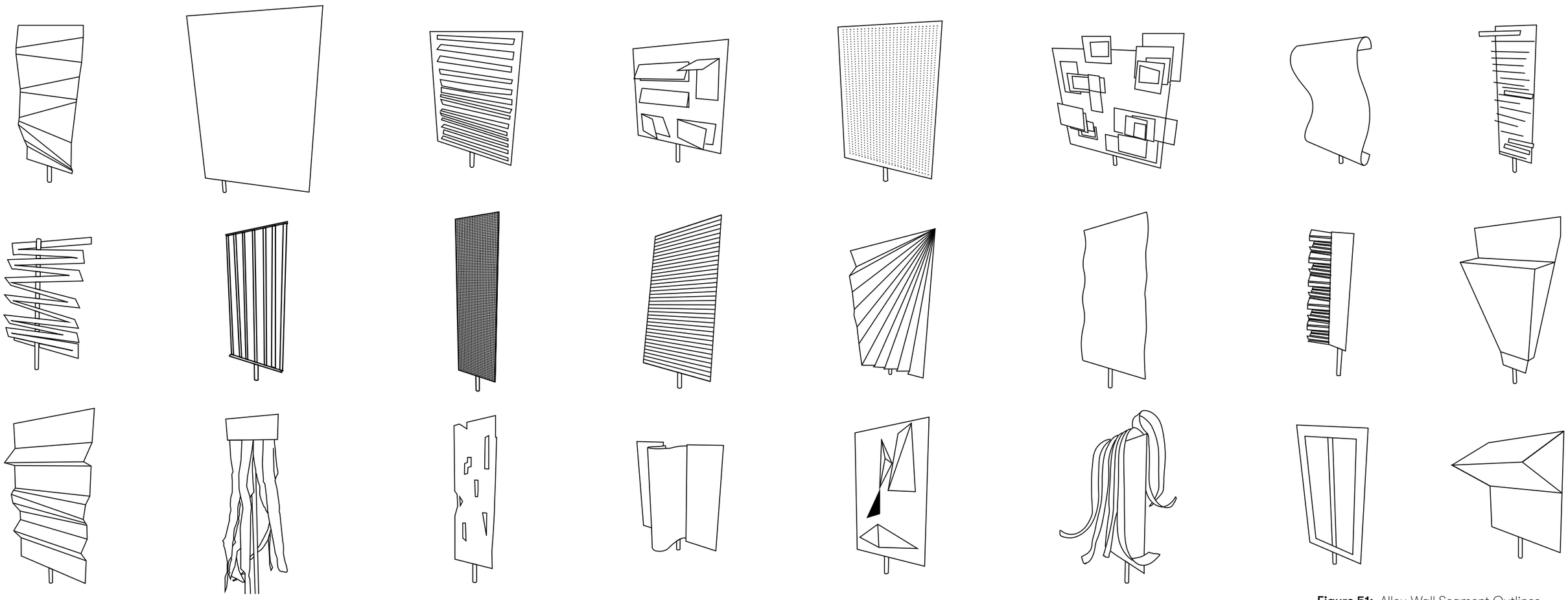


Figure 51: Alley Wall Segment Outlines.

motivated by providing maximum editability, which references the way Reed positions urban observers, or designers in this case, as imminently capable of affecting space.[3] The holes were in 1" rows and each row was 1" apart, so there were spaces where a dowel rod could not be inserted, but much of the board was usable by different alley wall segments. A future iteration could potentially use magnets, Velcro, or another adhesive mechanism to allow for wall segments to be inserted anywhere.

After completing the model base, other designers explored the model and participated in "building" an alley (fig. 52-56). Peers experimented with the model by taking turns reconfiguring alley panels to generate various assemblages. The possible arrangements and patterns are essentially limitless. The democratic nature of the model, in which each iteration and orientation is at the whim of the users as makers, reflects the collaborative nature of queerness. Inclusive of multiple narratives, this queerly designed model is an analogy for the way people and identities are agentic in space. The unbounded potential of spatial actors within design processes represented by the model is a way to design an alley queerly and make the process playful and repeatable. As the model remains unfinished and forever in process, it becomes a metaphor for alleys. Centering the performance of peers as a plurality of spatial co-creators foregrounds the processes of making and unmaking and queers design by expanding potential and removing predictability. The model further serves as a demonstration of generative dismantling by breaking down notions of spatial creation and encouraging users to generate design alternatives that influence the present design of an alley and its future potential.

The model is partly limited in that the alley wall segments are useful in considering the dimension and scale of the alley, but they focus on the surfaces and edges of the alley, rather than the alley as a space itself. A rigorous exploration of the alley space as figure and its transformative qualities requires additional processes and methods of making and unmaking. Identifying the alley space as figure lends further agency to the alley as a subject of spatial change. The alley model focuses on the edges and bounds of an alley, reducing the alley to a container, or object. Future explorations would orient the alley as subject and explore its agency and identity as a queer space that is always in process.

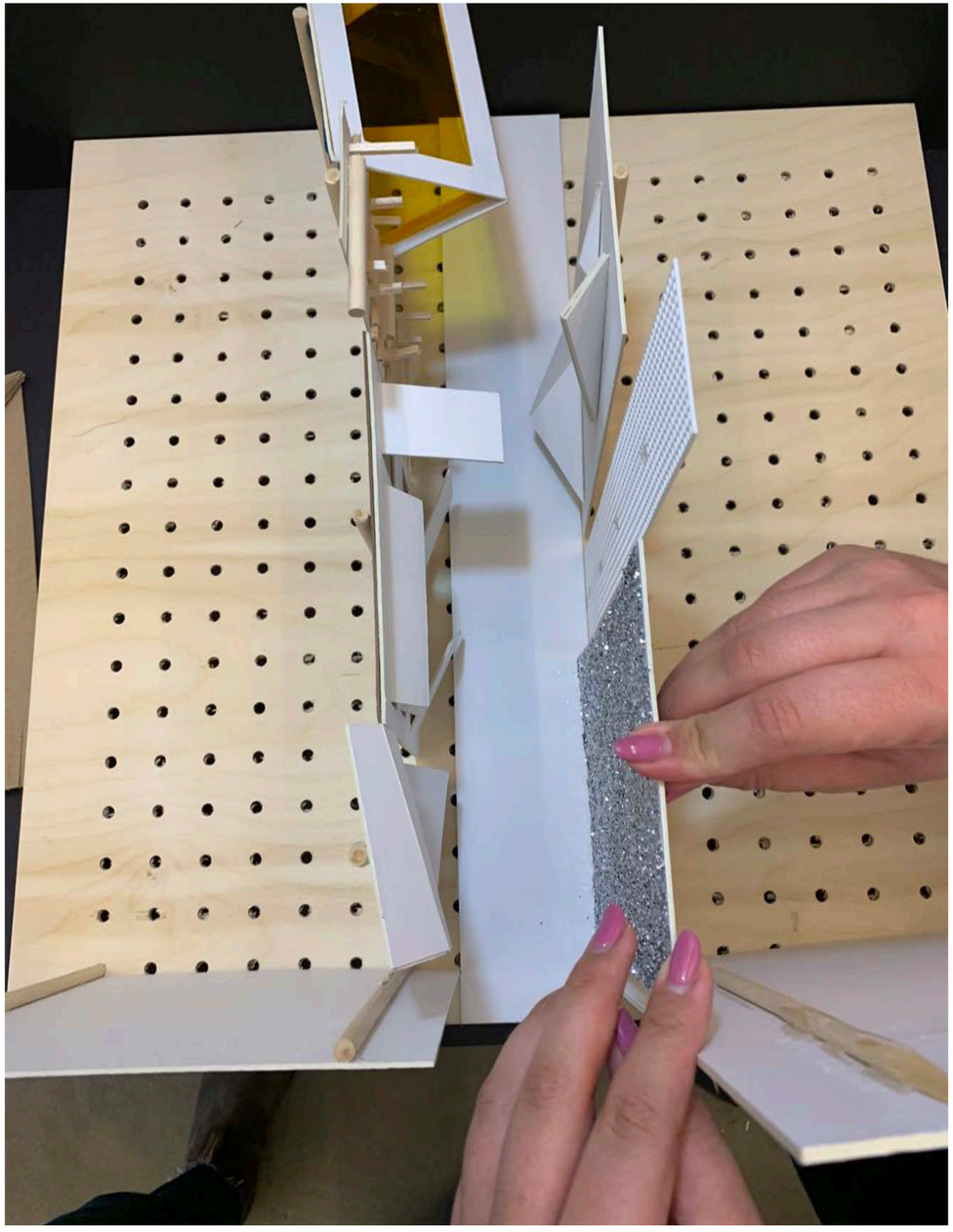


Figure 52: Peer Model Transformations 1. Lena assembles her alley.

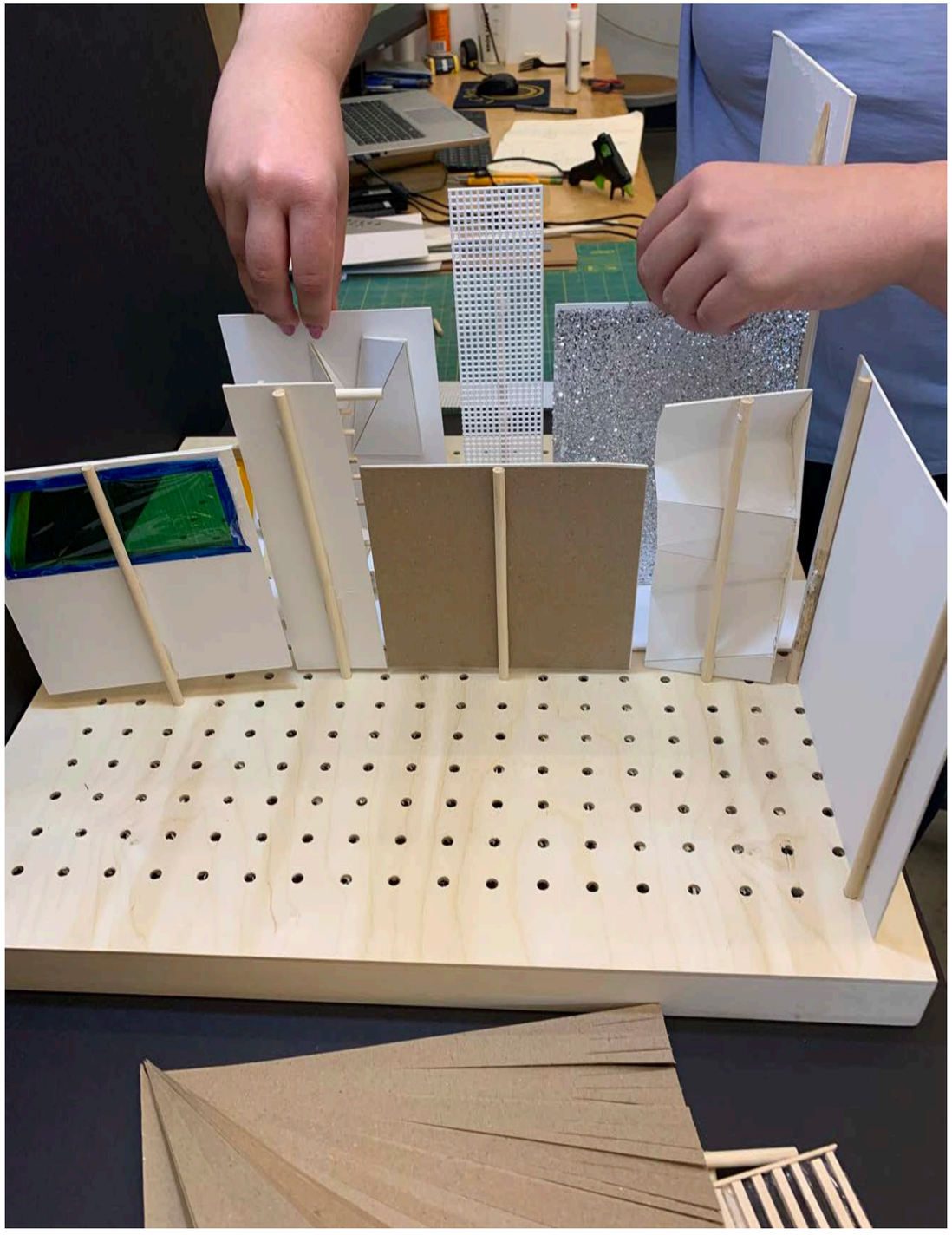


Figure 53: Peer Model Transformations 2. Lena editing her choices.

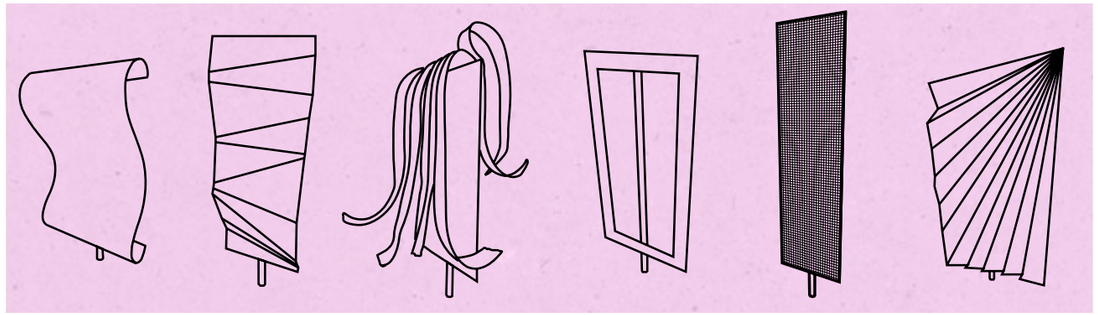


Figure 54: Peer Model Transformations 3.

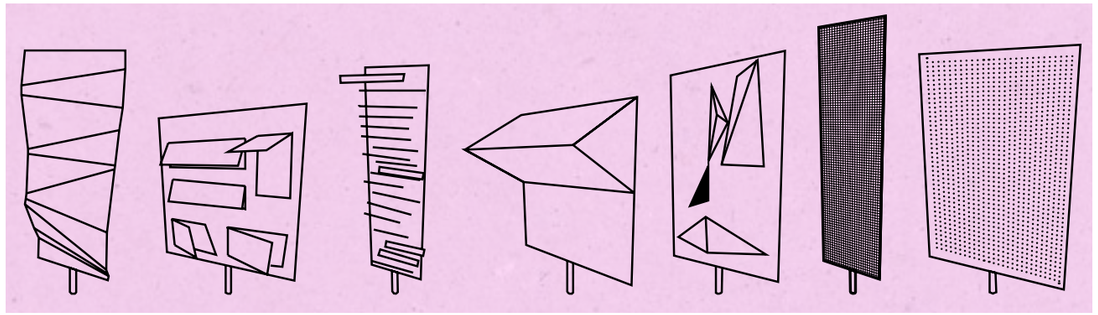
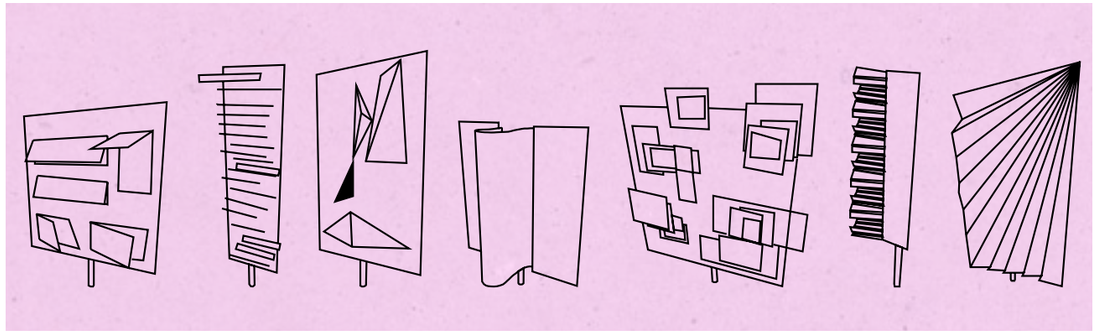


Figure 55: Peer Model Transformations 4.



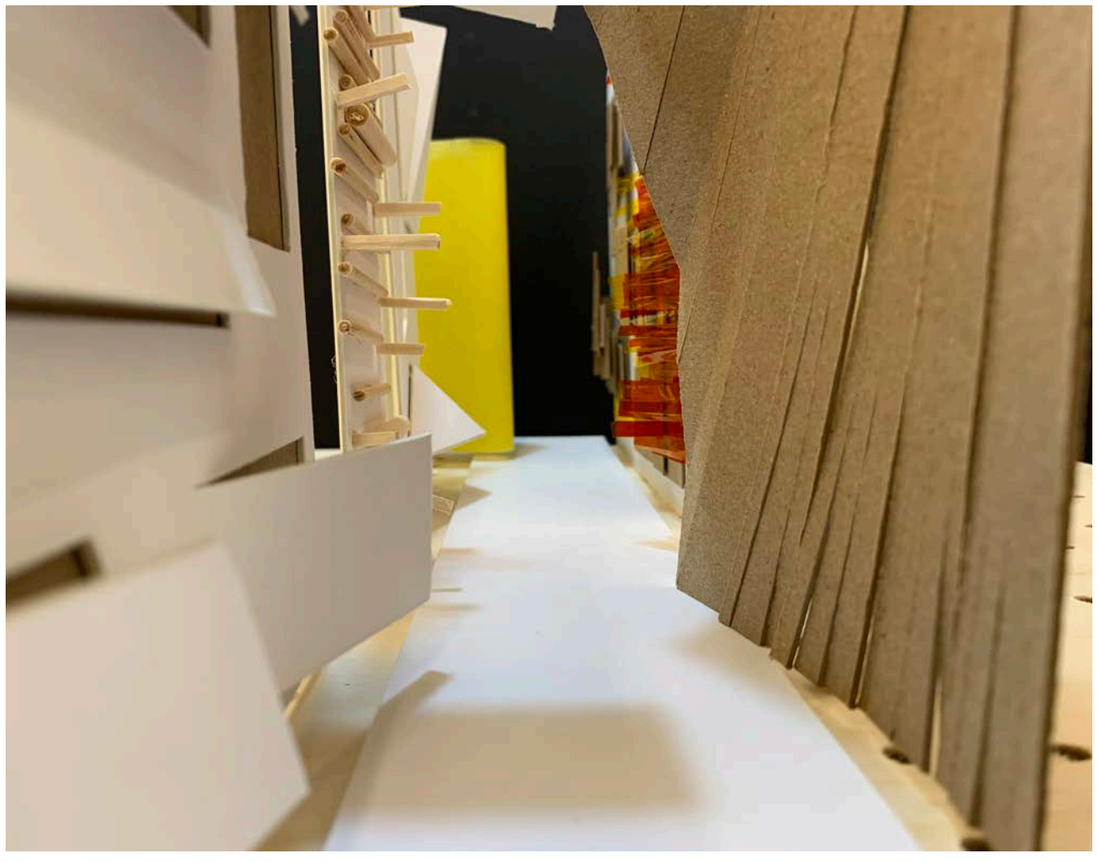


Figure 56: Peer Model Transformations 5.

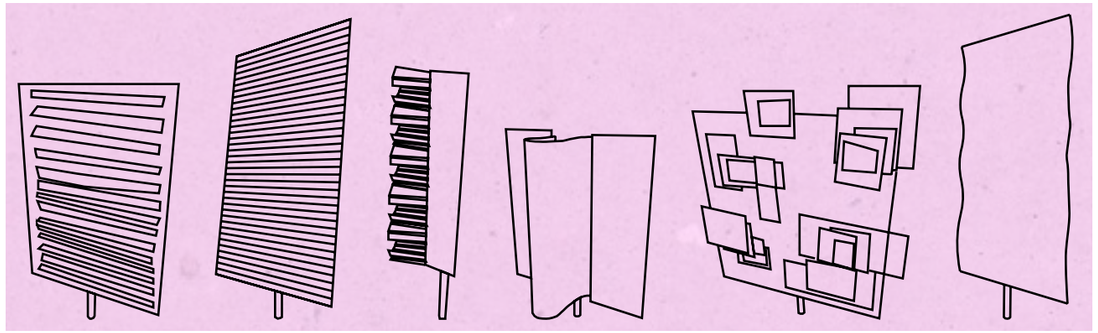


Figure 57: Peer Model Transformations 6.

~~2D operation =~~
~~conventional design~~

3D processes =
performative potentials

Queering Site Design

Queerness, as transformative potential, can influence conceptions of site and processes of site design through collage methodologies. Using generative collage operations such as *cutting*, *folding*, and *assembling*, the designer can dismantle the site and reconstruct multiple two-dimensional iterations of it, exploring its physical and materials qualities as well as latent and invisible codes, meanings, and histories. Adding a third dimension to typically two-dimensional design processes expands the role of collage in design, and speaks to the transformative and performative effect of queerness.

The three methods of queering site design processes explored - site reading, surficial transformations, and the alley model - are initial experiments for how to queer the design process that provide possible pathways toward alternative design outcomes. Using queer collage methods as a process of generative dismantling and a demonstration of spatial performativity, queerness infuses design process with a queer ethic that acknowledges the powerful, agentic relationships of people and space.

I critiqued conventional site analysis by performing a process of site reading, which places greater value on ephemeral and experiential qualities of a site as an addition to conventional analysis techniques. This was explored through two-dimensional collage and annotative layers that imbue the exploration with vulnerable observations that function as a mode of dissent and spatial (re)production. This affective recording of site experiences acknowledges how bodies and identities are registers of spatial knowledge in addition to their effect on space as agents in spatial performativity.

I transformed two-dimensional surfaces into three-dimensional spaces using collage operations that give clues into the process of queering space. Collage operations are expanded when conceived of as verbs that are full of potential and engaged in process. These transformations were explored through paper maquettes to show multiple formal possibilities.

The alley model explores the performativity required in queer spatial creation and emphasizes process over product. The model is collaborative and exhibits a simultaneous designing through use of modular pieces versus a singular designer using non-dynamic pieces. The many possible arrangements of the model represent the unlimited potential of collaborative design processes. This is a method of designing queerly as it includes multiple perspectives and is additive rather than supplementary and fosters a process of continuously dismantling site as a generative and radical activity for site design.

The three explorations show the potential of queerness when applied to design processes. Through a generative dismantling of form and space, bodies, identities, and non-living beings, alleys are revealed as agentic in their performance and transformative in their relationships. The ideas explored and put forth here can shift the ethics of site design processes to be more inclusive, alternative, and filled with potential.

Endnotes

1. Corner, "*The Thick and Thin of It.*"

2. Bustamante, "*Learning from the Nolli Map.*"

3. Reed, "*Imminent Domain: Queer Space in the Built Environment.*"

INCONCLUSIONS

Figure 58: Future Horizons 1.

Adhering to the tone of a thesis that explores designing queerly, the thesis ends queerly. To conclude queerly is to recognize the limitations of a singular and static ending. Instead, concluding queerly requires inconclusions. Inconclusions understand ending as multiple narratives and reorient the singular ending as plural beginnings. With inconclusions, the resolution of the original question is a new expanse of questions and concepts. Inconclusive explorations yield a clearer understanding of their subjects through more personal, in-depth study, but obscure the larger picture as revealed processes become layered and dynamic. The inconclusions drawn here, while firmly grounded in queer theory and design discourse, suggest a conceptual connectedness that results in radically queer alternatives.

This thesis explores the concept of 'generative dismantling' by engaging in processes that dissect normative landscape design processes and infuse queer spatial theory to engender alternative design futures and queer ethics. The performative collage methodologies that form the basis of my explorations enable a deeper understanding of queerness in relation to design and reveal spatial implications of a queered design practice. I have grounded my thinking in an entangled collage of queer spatial theories that position queer as potential and a queer future as a utopian endeavor. Like queerness, design operates in the realm of potential. This similarity figures both queerness and design as operative agents that when layered and reconfigured, result in an epistemological assemblage greater than the sum of its parts.

Generative dismantling can also be a useful framework for reflection. Through the documentation and evaluation of design processes, it is possible to break down the steps taken and employ the lessons learned to design queerly. The retrospective aspect of generative dismantling is different from standard iterative design practices because iterative design overemphasizes the outcome, the noun, whereas the process of generative dismantling centers the (de)construction, the (un)making, the verb. To focus on the process of making or unmaking, versus the product, is an inherently queer practice because it centers the performativity of identity and honors the agency and value of every element, the designer, the site, and the future.

Following the trajectory of queer potential, the queering/designing assemblage is situated within a framework of futures. In *Cruising Utopia*, Jose Muñoz spatializes a utopic queer future through the concept of horizons. For Muñoz, horizons as a metaphor for queer futurism represents a spatiotemporal location that is neither *here* nor *now*, but rather *there* and *then*.[1] *There* and *then* refer to a distant time and place along the horizon with unknown spatial and temporal coordinates but that exist in relation to our current contexts. Conveniently, sorting out the *there* and *then* is well within the expertise of landscape architecture as a practice. If landscape designers are able to shift their thinking and can view *there* and *then* through a queer lens, horizonal queer futures may not be as far off as they seem.

Aiming for horizonal queer futures is a critical alternative that can disrupt the use of conventional design as a tool for structures that uphold whiteness, racism, masculinity, homophobia, transphobia, colonization, and capitalism.[2] Designers that work without feminist, queer, critical race, and/or decolonial politics are complicit in the advancement of dominant power structures that enact the oppression of non-dominant identities, bodies, and communities. Designers must instead take aim at the "violent normativities" that shape our past, present, and potential future, through an infusion of radical politics and a look towards the horizon.[3]

Horizons are naturally captivating to humans. They are enticing destinations and useful road maps. They provide a goal, a pathway, and a direction to begin our journeys. As a metaphor, horizons are conflated with desire and dreaming. The notion of a distant

Figure 59: Future Horizons 2.

time and place calling to us, like a nostalgic foresight, is queer in its romantic associations. Muñoz states, "Queerness is a longing that propels us onward [...] that thing that lets us feel that this world is not enough."[4] This perspective demonstrates queerness' relation to ideas of liberation and emancipation. The positioning of queer as counter to dominance and oppression represents a will for an emancipatory justice. Muñoz' poignant description of queerness' inherent longing for a world that is "enough," suggests an intrinsic desire for transformative, lasting movements towards justice that can be located on the horizon.

Horizons represent *tomorrowness*, a constant and reliable existence of a near future. They instill hope through constant movement and assure its followers of a new day.[5] In this way, horizons also never arrive. Their destinations, though tempting, are unreachable and perpetually just beyond our grasp.

Spatially, the horizon as queer utopia is still in the process of assuming form, and therefore formless.[6] Accordingly, queer space defies physical manifestation and is instead defined by process, performance, and dynamic operation. The formlessness of queer futurity invites growth, effort, and iteration in exploring its amorphous boundaries. In this way, queer futurism encourages design processes and designers to do the work of queer spatial investigation. Design is then positioned as an agent of queerness, which is an essential paradigmatic shift away from design as a tool of singularity and hegemonic power.

The formlessness of queer futures changes how horizons are conceived visually and representationally. In, *Queer Assemblage as Queer Futurity*, Keeley Gogul explains that a queer futurism is not defined by normative reproduction but instead by production through assemblage.[7] When this idea is applied to representational media, collage as an assemblage is uplifted as a means of producing queer futures, rather than violently normative futures, produced by linear, unhybridized creative processes.

The explorations throughout this thesis are then justifiably generative in their dismantling. Selfie collages produce a queerer version of a queer body. Layered, hybrid site readings re-see alleys with a queer lens and project their intrinsic value outwardly and into the future. Deconstructions of alleys as three-dimensional spaces using two-dimensional collage operations embrace a queer ethic of transformation and unlock potentialities unknown to uncritical designers. And finally, horizons are transformed from singular, linear, and horizontal representations of space to plural, broken, multi-directional intersections of space and time.

The queer, spatial explorations in this thesis will impart lessons that will inform my professional and academic practice, and more importantly, the design process. Through queer theory, I have found powerful agency in my queer identity and inherent ability to read, value, affect, and critique space and spatial processes. Through this queer academic work and a generative dismantling of landscape design processes, I have been encouraged to continue infusing emotional vulnerability, exuberant playfulness, and political advocacy into design. If by sharing these lessons, designers are encouraged to integrate personhood into their work, then more inclusive and thoughtful design processes are on the horizon.

Horizons as a metaphor for queer utopian futures inspires broader and deeper explorations of queer design that reach farther into representational methods and conceptual realms. It encourages us to leave behind the here and now, and lean into there and then, pushing queerness and design as leaders of a future marked by transformational justice and wholeness. Though romantic, and likely naïve, a queer futurism engenders an ideology that relies on potential and possibility, which belie hope and effort for more inclusive built environments and a more just world.

Endnotes

1. Muñoz, Cruising Utopia: The Then and There of Queer Futurity.

2. Gogul, "Queer Assemblage as Queer Futurity."

3. Ibid.

4. Muñoz, Cruising Utopia: The Then and There of Queer Futurity.

5. Puar, Terrorist Assemblages: Homonationalism in Queer Times.

6. Muñoz, Cruising Utopia: The Then and There of Queer Futurity.

7. Gogul, "Queer Assemblage as Queer Futurity."

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