

Step into my Queerhouse: Queering the Now/Future

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Committee:
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Nicole Huber
Robert Hutchison

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Abstract

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The built environment reflects the major architecture of the dominant society, which is “territorial, apolitical, conservative of the status quo, and above all - normative.” This architecture of the everyday, of the celebrated, of the centered, claiming to be “neutral” and therefore representative of all bodies and ideas, in reality, represses the multiplicity of ways of being and becoming. What would the world look like if everyone had the agency, the space, and the empowerment to create their own architecture - redefining and reorienting their bodies and identities? How do these new bodies and identities rewrite the relationship with the built world? This thesis uses speculative fiction as a queer tactic to disorient and deconstruct the norm in architecture and therefore (re)construct queer architecture. New contour lines of deviation are created and pure lines of mutation emerge from the straight path. This deviation of a lesser line offers a place and a space of existence for those of disorientation.

Step into my ^{DoH} Fun *QueerHouse*¹

Queering the now/future
Michelle Hook



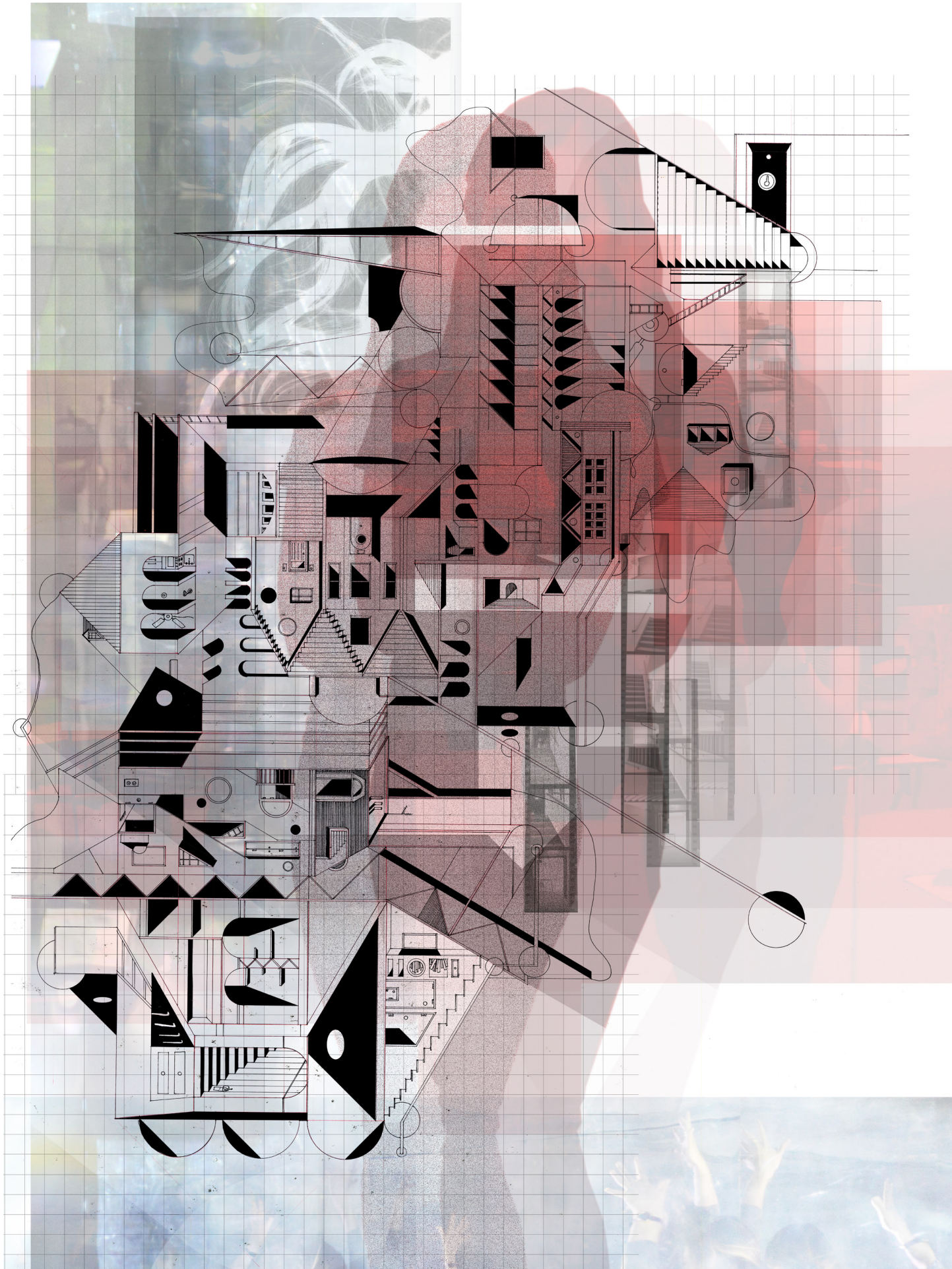
¹ "To make things queer is certainly to disturb the order of things"

the improbable made possible.

You unlock this threshold with the key of speculation. Beyond it is another dimension—a dimension not only of disorientation and transformation, but of mind. A journey into a wondrous land whose boundaries are that of imagination. You've just stepped into the queerhouse.

The built environment reflects the major architecture of the dominant society, which is "territorial, apolitical, conservative of the status quo, and above all - normative." This architecture of the everyday, of the celebrated, of the centered, claiming to be "neutral" and therefore representative of all bodies and ideas, in reality, represses the multiplicity of ways of being and becoming. What would the world look like if everyone had the agency, the space, and the empowerment to create their own architecture - redefining and reorienting their bodies and identities? How do these new bodies and identities rewrite the relationship with the built world?

This thesis uses speculative fiction as a queer tactic to disorient and deconstruct the norm in architecture and therefore (re)construct queer architecture. New contour lines of deviation are created and pure lines of mutation emerge from the straight path. This deviation of a lesser line offers a place and a space of existence for those of disorientation.



MICHELLE HOOK

Step into my *QueerHouse*

*Queering the now/future through theoretical
operations and speculative fictions*

*A thesis advised by Vikramāditya Prakāsh,
Rob Hutchison and Nicole Huber*



WhichCraft
Seattle 2020



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PREFACE // ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Stories are a means for understanding the world, for nurturing new habits of seeing, and ultimately, for projecting alternative forms of organizing life. *They are means of world making.*²

The question I've been asked most often in writing this thesis has been the following:

Why is this important?

The second most asked question quickly follows as:

Why is this important *to you*?

This thesis attempts to answer both of these questions simultaneously, in a way that weaves personal reflections with speculative fiction. There is an inherent understanding that the questions are not separate from each other, but rather, entangled within each other. To attempt to answer question, "why is this important to me?" already begins to answer the question, "why is this important to others"? and to a greater whole. The two questions together emphasize the self as a fragment of society, a partial perspective.³ A subjective stance is required for a better network of knowledge making, to include every accountable and situated voice. The collective is made up of situated knowledges, partial perspectives, and an interconnected web of histories, memories and experiences.⁴

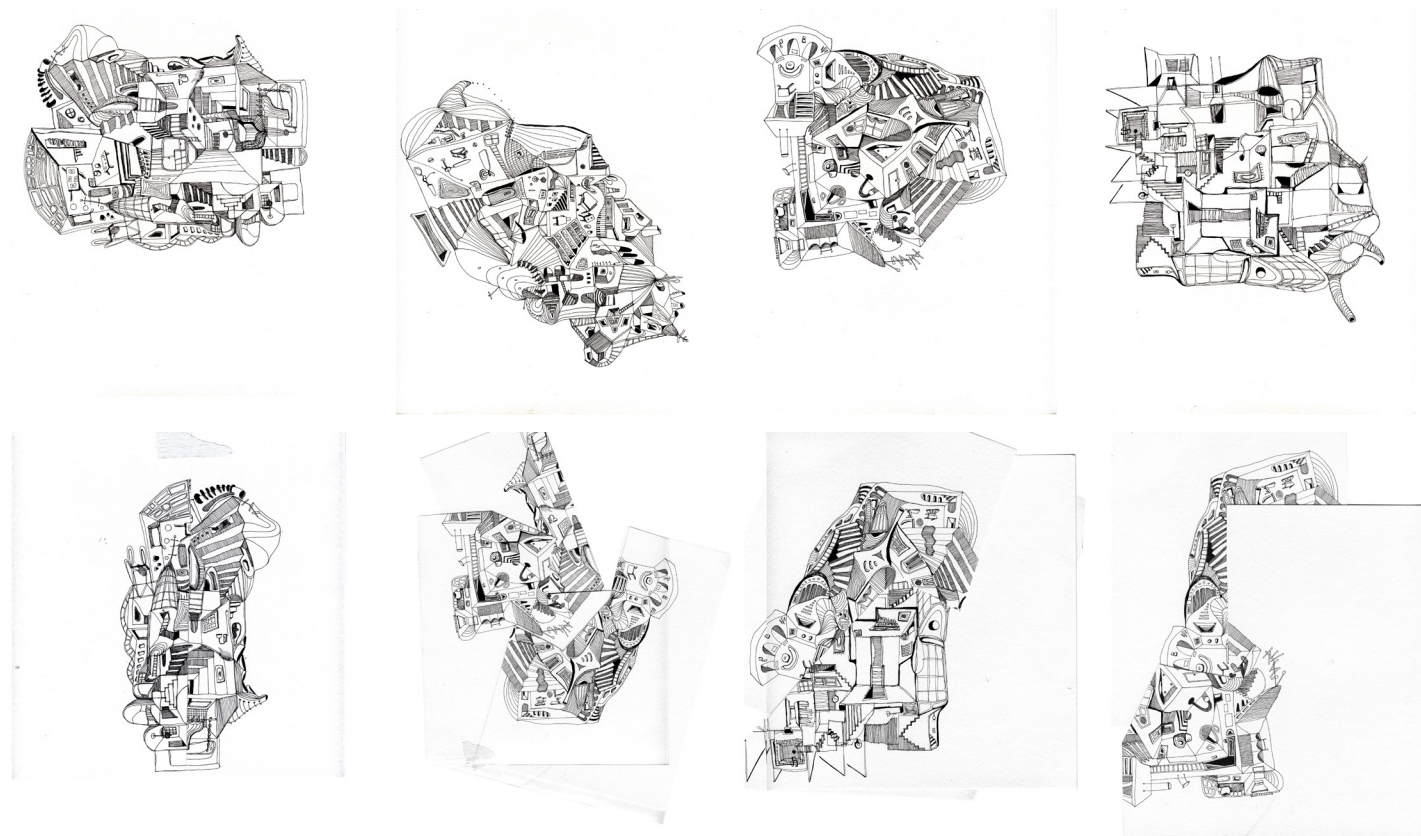
Even with the attempt to "answer" these questions, I must challenge the need for solution-based knowledge and theory making. Rather than providing clear cut answers to these questions and also to the questions that I, myself, am posing in this thesis, this work is written as a collection of short stories using speculative fiction with a glossary of terms, a series of theoretical acts, and story notes. I encourage you as the reader to participate with your own definitions, questionings, and future imaginings.

In creating these stories, (re)writing past reflections, and forming theoretical frameworks, I must endlessly thank Nicole Huber for her wisdom, her guidance, and for encouraging me to pursue an exploration of the self in our first studio together. Had it not been for this self-reflection of identity, I do not think I would have arrived to this thesis and true understanding of who I am. And for always asking "Are you having fun?" Because no question or project is worth pursuing if there is no pleasure in doing so. I thank Vikram Prakash, for constantly questioning and provoking, for always asking the "why" questions, and for leading so many seminars that I will blindly sign-up for. I thank Rob Hutchison, for asking the tough questions of practicality and helping me to create this thesis into something real and tangible so that others may access the information. I must also thank Dr. Regina Lee, Amelia Jarvinen, Sami Prouty, Dayton Clark, and Chris Vander Haak from our Which Architecture collective, VVitch Architecture, WhichCraft Publishing House, and The AIAIA. And finally, I must thank my mom, for if she were not my mother and I her daughter, none of this exploration would come into question.

² Ghosn, Rania, and Jazairy, El Hadi. *Geostories: Another Architecture for the Environment*. Actar Publishers, 2018. p. 13.

³ "The split and contradictory self is the one who can interrogate positionings and be accountable, the one who can construct and join rational conversations and fantastic imaginings that change history. Splitting, not being, is the privileged image for feminist epistemologies. "Splitting" in this context should be about heterogeneous multiplicities that are simultaneously salient and incapable of being squashed into isomorphic slots of cumulative lists. Subjectivity is multidimensional; so, therefore, is vision." Haraway, 586.

⁴ "The knowing self is partial in all its guises, never finished, whole, simply there and original; it is always constructed and stitched together without claiming to be other." Haraway, 586.



(Top) Doodles of once familiar architecture distorted, twisted, exaggerated, warped, until they become unfamiliar.

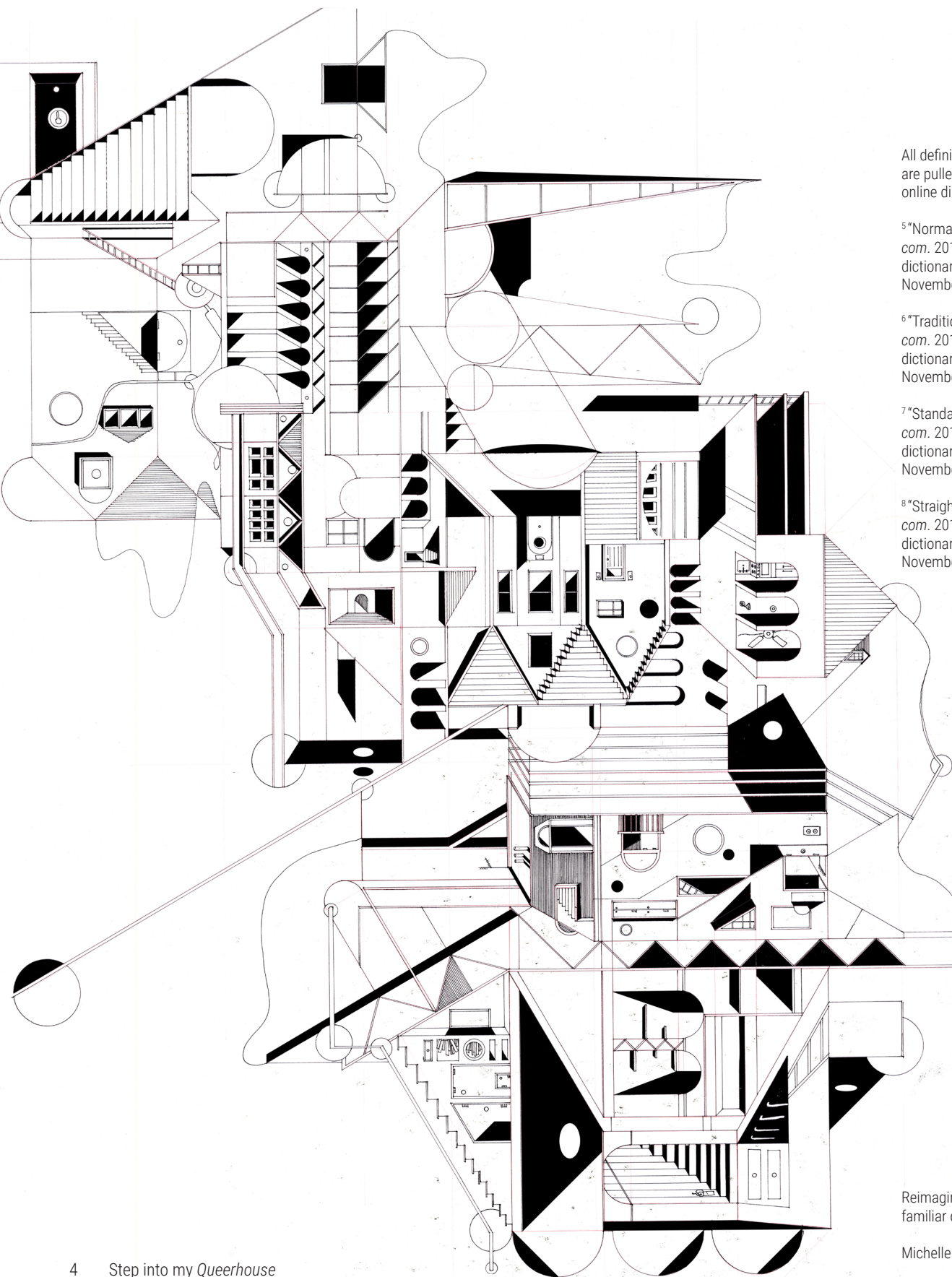
(Bottom) What happens when they are cut? Collaged recreations of the unfamiliar familiar doodles.

Michelle Hook, 2019.



The doodles as they are cut up.

Michelle Hook, 2019.



All definitions and pronunciations are pulled from Merriam-Webster's online dictionary.

⁵"Normal." Merriam-Webster.com. 2019 <http://www.m-w.com/dictionary/normal>. Accessed 12 November 2019.

⁶"Traditional." Merriam-Webster.com. 2019 <http://www.m-w.com/dictionary/traditional>. Accessed 12 November 2019.

⁷"Standard." Merriam-Webster.com. 2019 <http://www.m-w.com/dictionary/standard>. Accessed 12 November 2019.

⁸"Straight." Merriam-Webster.com. 2019 <http://www.m-w.com/dictionary/straight>. Accessed 12 November 2019.

Reimagining the unfamiliar familiar cut-up doodles.

Michelle Hook, 2019.

GLOSSARY // DEFINITIONS

This is not *normal*.
This is not *natural*.

- Said to me, by my mother.

Normal⁵ \ `nor-məl \ adjective

: conforming to a type, standard, or regular pattern
She had a normal childhood, one filled with doll houses, dresses, and dreams.

: according with, constituting, or not deviating from a norm, rule, or principle
Growing up in an American town with a Colombian mother, at times, her mother's parenting was stricter than normal.

Traditional⁶ \ trə-`dish-nəl , -`di-shə-nē\ adjective

: following or conforming to tradition : adhering to past practices or established conventions
Her family practiced traditional values of Catholicism, such as holidays, weekly masses, and rigid morals.

Standard⁷ \ `stan-dərd \ adjective

: well-established and very familiar
She lived in a standard suburban home, one with three bedrooms, two bathrooms, and a two-car garage.

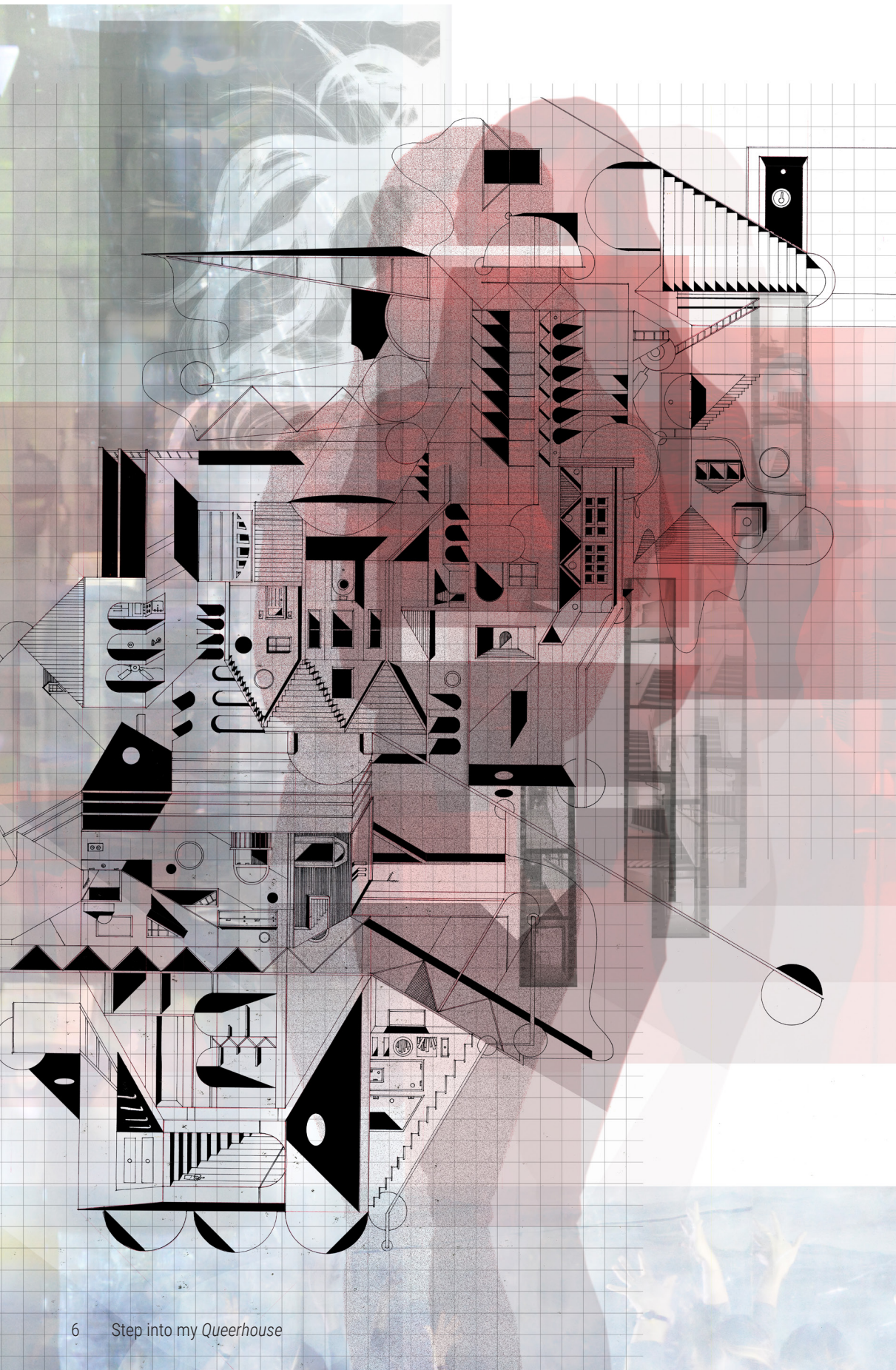
Straight⁸ \ `strāt \ adjective

: free from curves, bends, angles, or irregularities
As she grew older while living in this home, she attempted to fit in with current trends, like having straight hair and tan skin.

: not deviating from an indicated pattern
She was a good student in school, maintaining straight A's...

: exhibiting no deviation from what is established or accepted as usual, normal, or conventional
...and reading conventional women's fiction like romances and dramas.

: heterosexual
She had always considered herself as straight, dating only men who were all immediately approved by her parents.



All definitions and pronunciations are pulled from Merriam-Webster's online dictionary.

⁹"Different." Merriam-Webster.com. 2019 <http://www.m-w.com/dictionary/different>. Accessed 12 November 2019

¹⁰"Other." Merriam-Webster.com. 2019 <http://www.m-w.com/dictionary/other>. Accessed 12 November 2019

¹¹"Weird." Merriam-Webster.com. 2019 <http://www.m-w.com/dictionary/weird>. Accessed 12 November 2019

¹²"Queer." Merriam-Webster.com. 2019 <http://www.m-w.com/dictionary/queer>. Accessed 12 November 2019

But where does my own psychogeography fit in? What lies beyond the thresholds of this place?

Michelle Hook, 2019.

GLOSSARY // DEFINITIONS

Your drawings are weird and disturbing.
You are different.

- Said to me, by my mother.

Different⁹ \ `di-f(ə)-rənt , `di-fərnt\ adjective

: partly or totally unlike in nature, form, or quality: Dissimilar
Years later, she began to feel a change that was different from her past life.

Other¹⁰ \ `ə-thər \ adjective + transitive verb

: being the one (as of two or more) remaining or not included
After spending so much time in suburbia and small rural towns, she moved to the other landscape: a city.

: not the same: different
It was here where she met other kinds of people, and saw other ways of life.

: to treat or consider (a person or a group of people) as alien to oneself or one's group (as because of different racial, sexual, or cultural characteristics)
In this difference, she also began to feel herself othered, as someone outside the heteronormative realm.

Weird¹¹ \ `wird \ adjective

1: of strange or extraordinary character
People began thinking that her drawings were weird in nature, and her behavior had changed.

Queer¹² \ `kwir \ adjective + transitive verb

: differing in some way from what is usual or normal: odd, strange, weird
She had a queer feeling that her life was on the brink of transformation.

: of, relating to, or characterized by sexual or romantic attraction to members of one's own sex: gay, homosexual
Expectations of who she was and where she was going were shattered when she came out as queer.

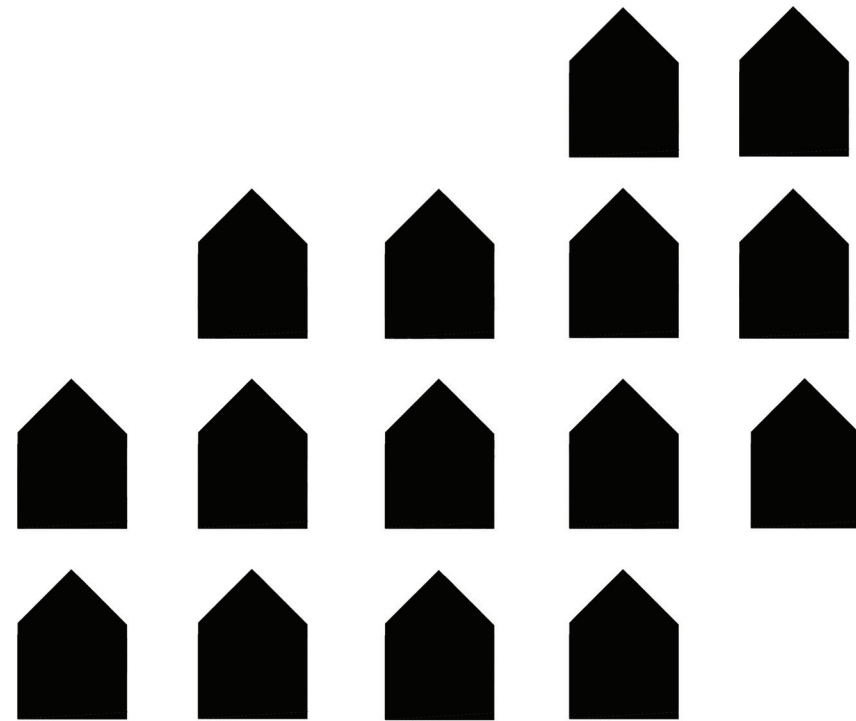
: to consider or interpret (something) from a perspective that rejects traditional categories of gender and sexuality : to apply ideas from queer theory to (something)
It is now that she begins to queer architecture.

It is here that she begins to queer architecture.

It is urgent that she begins to queer architecture.

INTRODUCTION // TOWARD A QUEER ARCHITECTURE

"Architecture represses plurality and queerness in favour of a heteronormative culture."¹³



¹³ Furman, Adam Nathaniel. "Outrage: The Prejudice Against Queer Aesthetics." in *Architectural Review*. Issue 1459. Mar. 2019 p. 55.

¹⁴ Ahmed, 161.

¹⁵ Ockman, Joan. "Toward a Theory of Normative Architecture." *Architecture of the Everyday*, edited by Steven Harris and Deborah Berke, Princeton Architectural Press, 1997, p. 123.

¹⁶ "Phenomenology reminds us that spaces are not exterior to bodies; instead, spaces are like a second skin that unfolds in the folds of the body." Ahmed, 9.

¹⁷ Sullivan, Nikki. "BIID"? Queer (Dis)Orientations and the Phenomenology of "Home." *Queer Feminist Science Studies*, edited by Cyd Cipolla et al., University of Washington Press, 2017, pp. 127-140.

¹⁸ To begin defamiliarizing with the current world through speculative fiction, we must first take what is familiar and estrange it. Only then do we recognize our current world within the fiction. Vidler, Anthony. *The Architectural Uncanny*. MIT Press, 1994. p. 18.

¹⁹ "Moments of disorientations are vital," defined by Ahmed as a way to unsettle the current world and question it. Ahmed, 157.

²⁰ Suvin defines the genre of Science Fiction as the literature of cognitive estrangement. Through the use of the novum, a defamiliarization or strange newness, one is able to look from the outside with a detached eye and recognize the familiarity of the invented world. Only then can the normative system be challenged with a new set of norms. Suvin, Darko. "On the Poetics of the Science Fiction Genre." *College English*, vol. 34, Dec. 1972, pp. 372-382.

This thesis uses speculative fiction as a queer tactic to disorient and deconstruct the norm in architecture and therefore (re)construct queer architecture. New contour lines of deviation are created and pure lines of mutation emerge from the straight path.¹⁴ This deviation of a lesser line offers a place/ space of existence for those of disorientation.

The built environment reflects the major architecture of the dominant society, which is "territorial, apolitical, conservative of the status quo, and above all - *normative*."¹⁵ This architecture of the everyday, of the celebrated, of the centered, claiming to be "neutral" and therefore representative of all bodies and ideas, in reality, represses the multiplicity of ways of being and becoming. What would the world look like if everyone had the agency, the space, and the empowerment to create their own architecture - redefining and reorienting their bodies and identities? How do these new bodies and identities rewrite the relationship with the built world?

Particularly in this thesis, the domestic home is investigated at different scales for deconstruction and (re)construction. Architecture of the surrounding world acts as layers to the body, with the home becoming the most intimate. It is like a second skin.¹⁶ So then, what happens when someone doesn't feel "at home" in any of these layers? In their city, in their neighborhood, in their own home (and even in their own body?)¹⁷

To arrive at an understanding of the depth of these questions, a methodology develops in the wake of dismantling heteronormative architecture. Deconstructing the norm happens through a series of act(ion)s, such as planned assaults, reorientations, splits and cuts, exaggerations and inversions of the norm. Hidden within these new extents, minor architecture (and eventually queer architecture) create space. But to construct a new architecture, one that may be inherently queer, speculative fiction becomes the tactic of world building, free from the constraints and the framework of the normative. The final act(ion) of imagining, and therefore *queering*, creates the new world.

So then, what does speculative fiction accomplish?

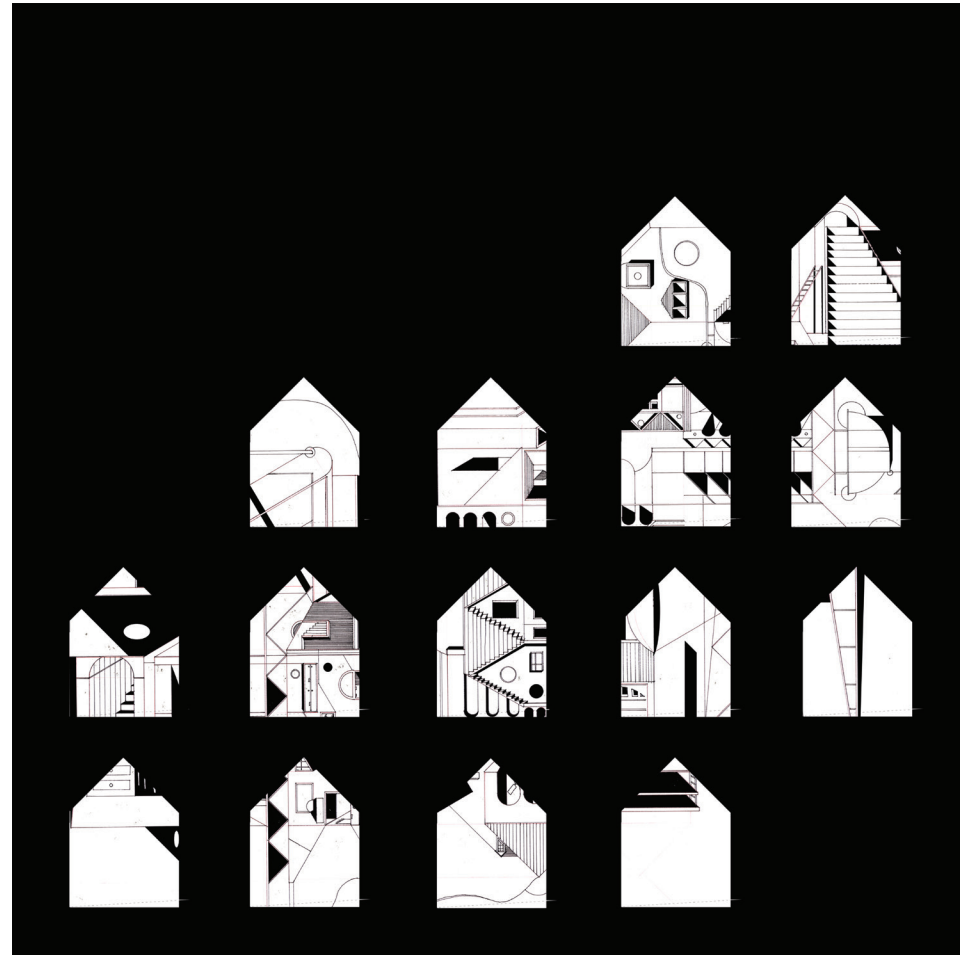
Defamiliarization (The Uncanny)¹⁸

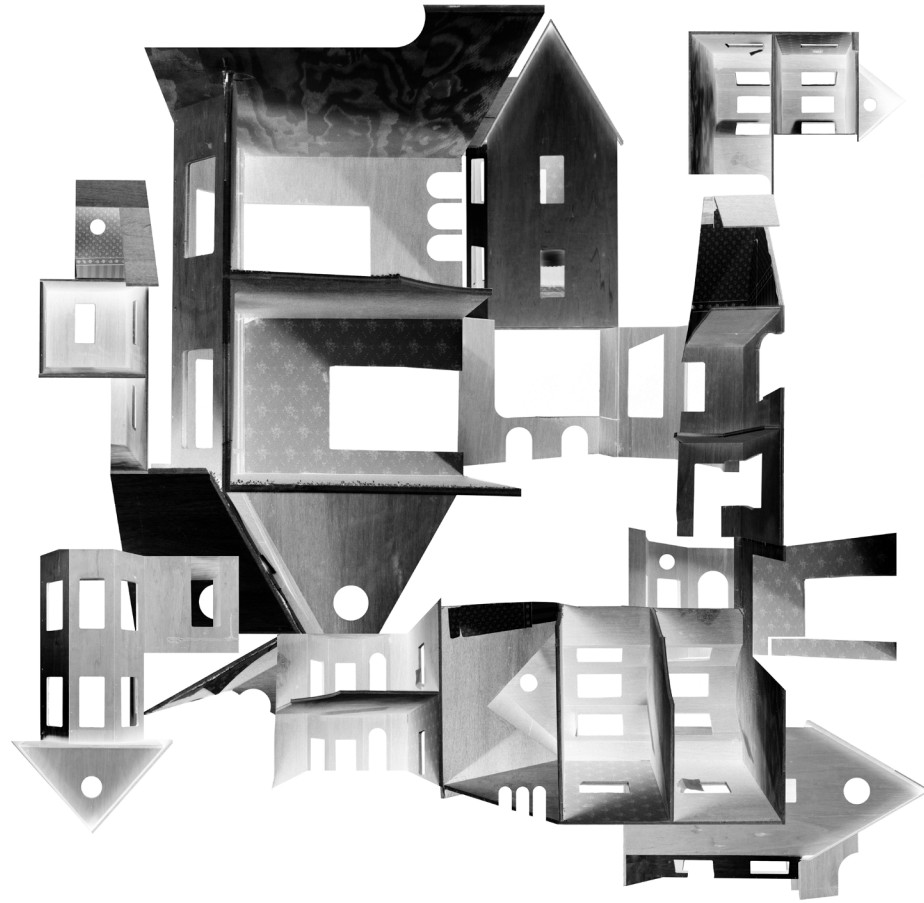
Disorientation¹⁹

And how is this accomplished?

A cognitive estrangement.²⁰

And finally, I am now the one asking, *why is this important?* Speculative fiction allows for a multiplicity of imagined futures and therefore realities. The best future can be and should be imagined by all subjective bodies. Once this future is thought of, the current normative and hierarchical culture can be transcended to get to this better future, one in which everyone makes it. Here enters architecture as a form of world-building and production of future narratives to include new social norms and intersectional identities, inclusive and fantastical desires, and re-examined and reclaimed past narratives.





²¹ Ahmed, 157.

²² Ahmed, 162.

²³ Ahmed, 161.

²⁴ Anzaldúa, Gloria. *Borderlands / La Frontera: The New Mestiza*. Aunt Lute Books, 1987. p. 109.

²⁵ Ahmed, 158.

INTRODUCTION // TOWARD A QUEER ARCHITECTURE

Here is my narrative. A personal retelling of my own story that also becomes fiction as the memories are recalled and reclaimed. Not too long ago, I began questioning the prescribed set path I found myself following - Why was I here? How did I get here? Did I really want this? I thought I did. Or rather, the world I was in conditioned me to seek this predetermined future.

I'll never forget the summer of 2018, where I spent five weeks back in my hometown in South Florida. This landscape, one that used to be so familiar and representative of who I was and where I came from, felt so incredibly foreign to me in my return. I think about the time I spent in my mother's new house. It was not the one I grew up in, so it became a container of things rather than memories. The house was a perfect container, coming with stock paint colors of white and off-white and beige. The walls were meant to be filled and the spaces meant to be arranged. This is the thought of the suburban home as an empty container. It is universal enough to be filled and appropriated by all people.

But who really belongs in the suburban home? What truly belongs on the walls? How is the furniture really supposed to be arranged? Even in this empty container, there are still rules set in place. Clearly the formal dining room has the electrical conduit hanging from the middle of the room. The threshold in the wall gives this space direct access to the kitchen and apparent family room. Floor plans of houses label rooms to show bedroom, bathroom, kitchen, living room, dining room, formal living room, and so on. These spaces are still programmed, even as empty vessels. I know how I am supposed to act in that dining room.

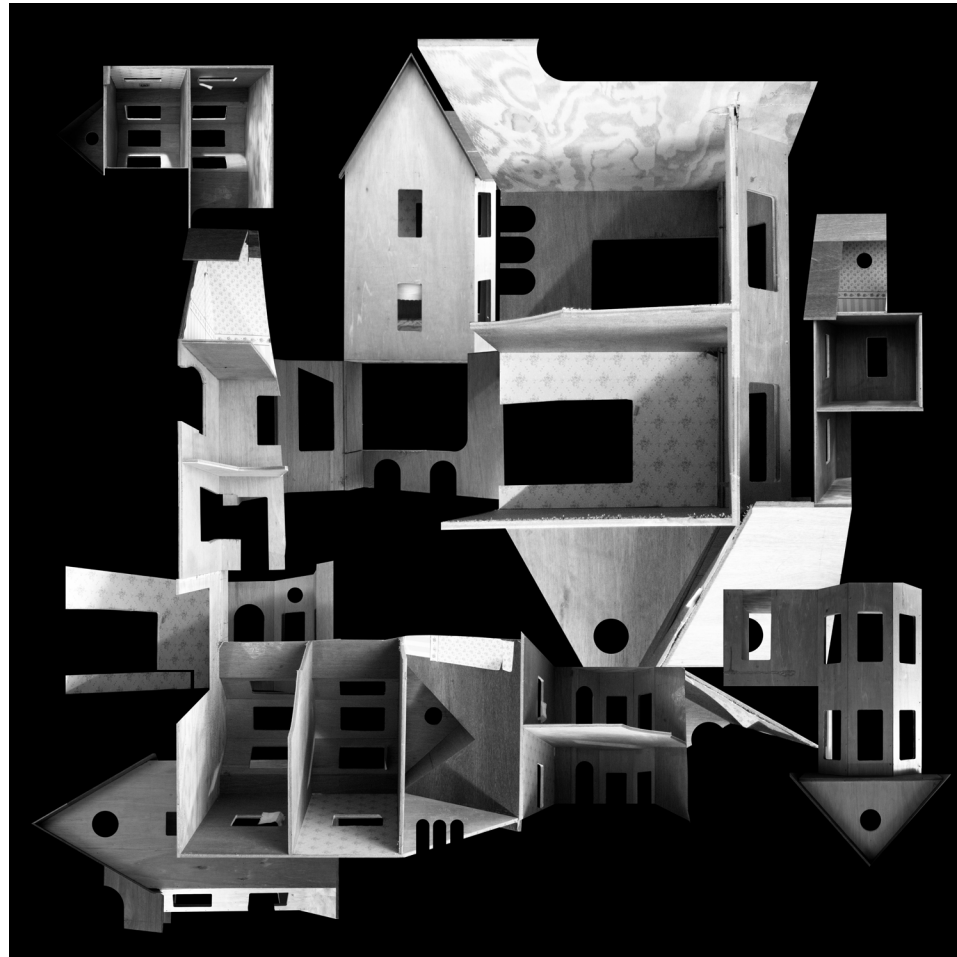
I question how I ended up in a house like this, and look to my mother's desires for a future. She is an immigrant from Colombia, having moved to the states in the late 80's and becoming a citizen in the mid 90's. For her, the American dream of suburbia, one of having a perfectly beige house with a yard and two-car garage, represented her necessity to fit in. As the only child and therefore a production of her manifested destiny, I was expected to follow a similar path. I realized that the very home we are born into is the home we are expected to own in our future.

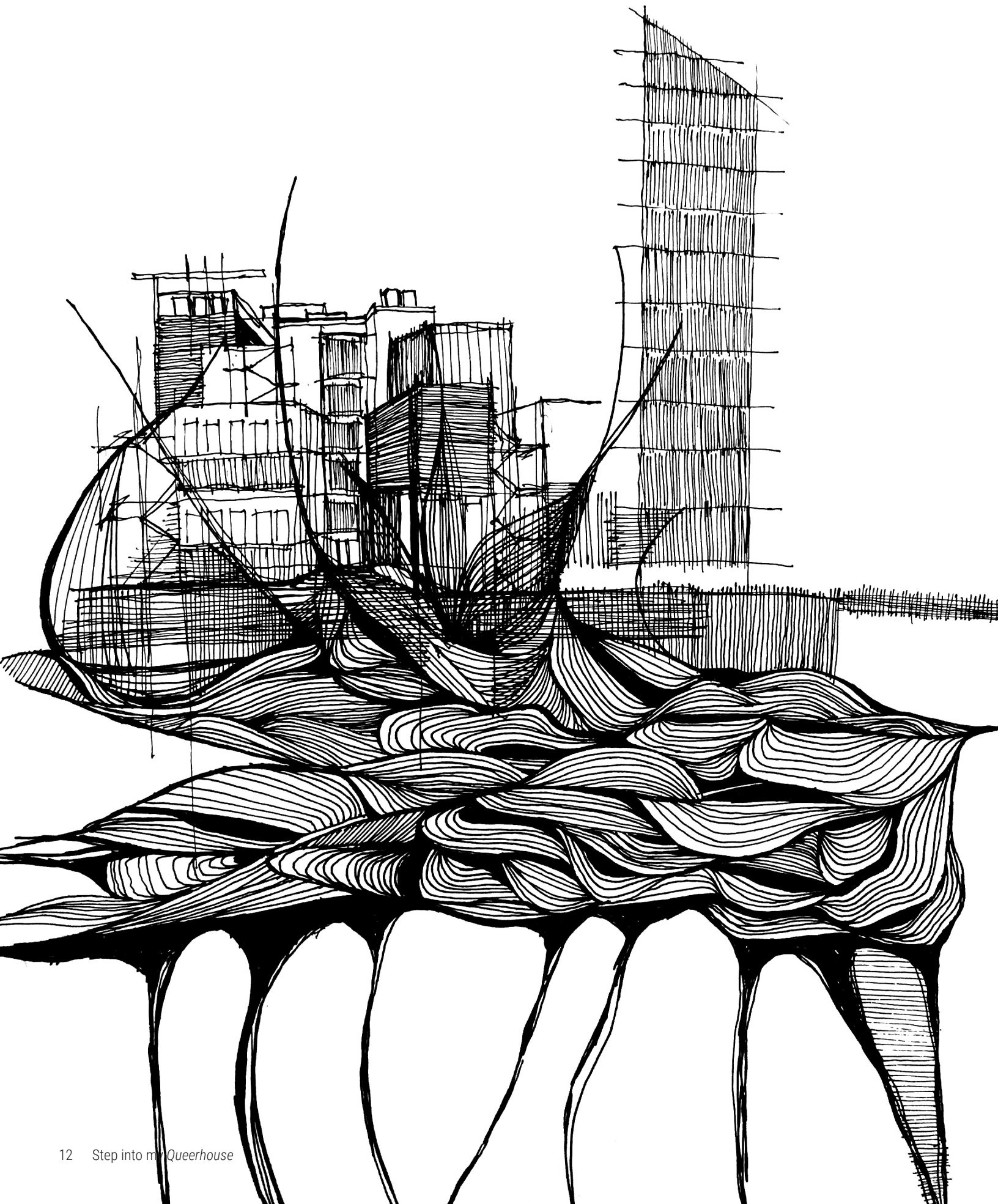
But after spending the summer in this container of a home, a moment of disorientation developed in my own emotional landscape. Quite suddenly, my body and mind (reading as one) unsettled and shattered the "confidence in the ground".²¹ I was searching for a reorientation to the path that I was previously on, but found myself forging a new one. One that was neither parallel nor perpendicular to the previous path, but instead "becoming oblique."²² In the words of Sara Ahmed, I was certainly queering my future by "disturbing the order of things."²³ However, given this moment of disorientation, it wasn't until I allowed myself the privilege to imagine this new oblique future in order to start to make changes towards this slanted future. Much like Gloria Anzaldúa in *Borderlands*, "I [became] obsessed by a vision."²⁴

"The point is what we do with such moments of disorientation, as well as what such moments can do - whether they can offer us the hope of new directions, and whether new directions are reason enough for hope." - Sara Ahmed, Queer Phenomenology²⁵

The dollhouse as it transforms, much like me, the one who lives inside.

Michelle Hook, 2019.





THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK // MANY SMALL ACT(ION)S

Two methodologies emerge for creating a new architecture. These methods are framed as :

1. Deconstructing the norm
2. Constructing the queer.

Deconstruction of the norm in architecture works within the boundaries already established by the order of the normative values of society. To begin with this method, one must first feel "othered" in and by the built environment. A desire to deviate from the path prescribed by the environment is a first step. Architectural investigations that disrupt the norm emerge. Traditional conventions of architecture are challenged. The following act(ion)s by each theorist are formulated by their doing - what are the necessary act(ion)s to deconstruct the norm?

The *many small act(ion)s* are as follows:

ACT(ION) 1 // CHALLENGING - *Minor Architecture*, Jill Stoner + Joan Ockman

ACT(ION) 2 // EXAGGERATING - *A Critical Queen*, Clark Thenhaus

ACT(ION) 3 // INVERTING - *Condemned Building*, Douglas Darden

intermission - A Place for Opposing Identities, Michelle Hook

ACT(ION) 4 // LIBERATING - *Planned Assaults*, Lars Lerup

ACT(ION) 5 // SPLITTING - *Cutting*, Gordan Matta-Clark + Mark Wigley

ACT(ION) 6 // DIS/RE-ORIENTING - *Queer Phenomenology*, Sara Ahmed + Nikki Sullivan



²⁶ Stoner, Jill. *Toward a Minor Architecture*. MIT Press, 2012. p. ix.

²⁷ Stoner, 2.

²⁸ Stoner, 2.

²⁹ Ockman, 122.

³⁰ Ockman, 122-123.

³¹ Ockman, 123.

³² Ockman, 123.

³³ Ockman, 123.

³⁴ Ockman, 123.

³⁵ Ockman, 152.

Emotional landscapes.

Michelle Hook, 2018.

ACT(ION) 1 // CHALLENGING

Toward a Minor Architecture by Jill Stoner
Toward a Theory of Normative Architecture by Joan Ockman

To start this investigation, we must first find ourselves within the established framework, the place that causes these feelings of “unhomely.” If we are already here, how do we move forward? Are we to run away? Are we to resist from within? How do we trouble the now and challenge the current state of things? After all,

“There is only *here*.”²⁶

A minor architecture identifies that there is no longer a “beyond” of dreamt up spaces imagining the impossibilities. Instead of placing ourselves amongst a new situation, and a new architecture, Jill Stoner argues for a minor architecture, one that dreams *through* a current situation. That is to say, a minor architecture starts by “reject[ing] a definite article, divid[ing] and branch[ing] toward multiplicity.”²⁷ Working within the framework established by major architecture, minor architectures “will alter and dematerialize the constructed world.”²⁸

Joan Ockman in “Establishing a Theory of Normative Architecture” brings in the discussion of minor literature and language as posed by Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari as they examine Kafka’s radical writing.²⁹ As someone who was a citizen of Prague, but spoke and wrote in German, Kafka’s language reflected his minority status. In his writing, three themes emerge to define the minor as it exists within the major:

1. The deterritorialization of language.
2. The political nature of language.
3. Language as a shared property, a collective.³⁰

So, then, how do these three notions work within the field of architecture? Ockman and Stoner both agree that a minor architecture is defined by “deterritorialization, intensified political consciousness, and the anticipatory assemblage of new cultural forces.”³¹ Therefore major architecture (in a binary sense), can be defined as “territorial, apolitical, and conservative of the status quo, or *normative*.”³² The architecture that finds itself in the position of the major is one that aspires for universality, neutrality, and produces movements such as the international style.³³ But it is important to note that the major and the minor, while defined as opposing points, must work in relation to one another. “The major is constantly redefining itself in relation to that which is minor, and that which is *minor is always potentially challenging or hybridizing that which is major*.”³⁴ Ockman ends her theory of normative architecture addressing the relationship of the minor within the major as the following:

“The strategy of the minor architecture might be incremental, subtle and persistent. Like the deterritorialized literary imagination of Kafka, it might entail a process that begins within the major, little by little appropriating it and making it strange, until the normative, the familiar, becomes something new, the inception of a different consciousness:

*Since the language is arid, make it vibrate with a new intensity.”*³⁵

ACT(ION) 2 // EXAGGERATING

A Critical Queen by Clark Thenhaus
Endemic Architecture

³⁶ The list continues on the Endemic Architecture website. Thenhaus, Clark. *Endemic Architecture About*. Endemic Architecture, <https://endemicarchitecture.com/About>.

³⁷ Thenhaus, Clark. "Mostly Darlings." The Cooper Union Visiting Lecture. 19 Nov. 2019, New York City, <https://vimeo.com/294209608>.

³⁸ Thenhaus, Clark. "Mostly Darlings." The Cooper Union Visiting Lecture. 19 Nov. 2019, New York City, <https://vimeo.com/294209608>.

³⁹ Thenhaus, Clark. *Unresolved Legibility in Residential Types*. Applied Research and Design Publishing, 2019.



Figure 1, Thenhaus No. 2, Endemic Architecture, 2018.

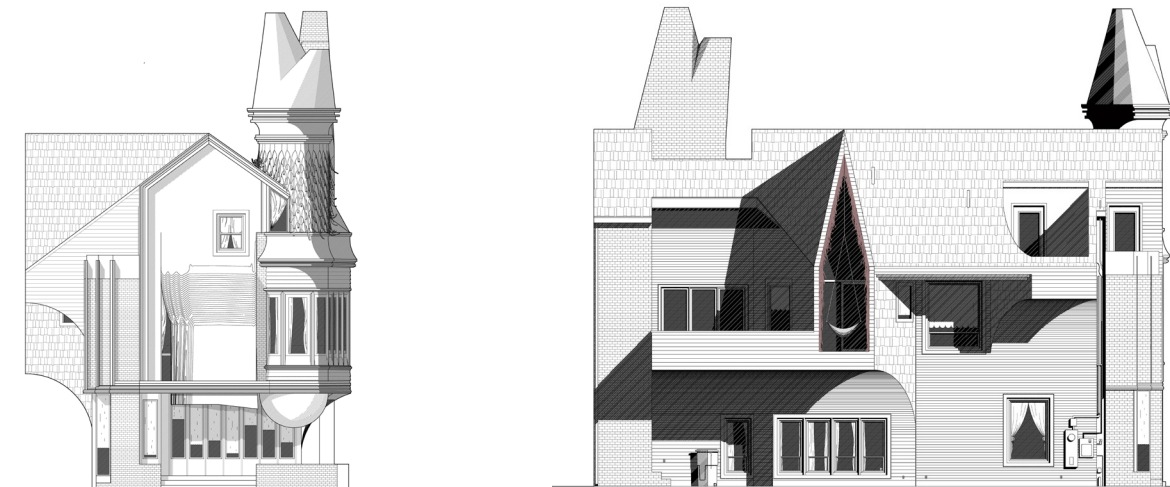
As the investigation continues, and challenging within the framework is necessary, what are examples of architecture that begin to subvert an established code?

As a firm, Endemic Architecture:

1. seeks to elicit delight and curiosity through architectural form, space, and order with a commitment to the social, cultural, and experiential aspects of architecture.
2. looks to *exaggerate, manipulate, abstract, or perverts* 'the familiar' in order to convene alternative forms of attention through architectural expressions and experiences.
3. prefers pluralism and mixed meanings over fixed messages, thus fostering open interpretations and associations.³⁶

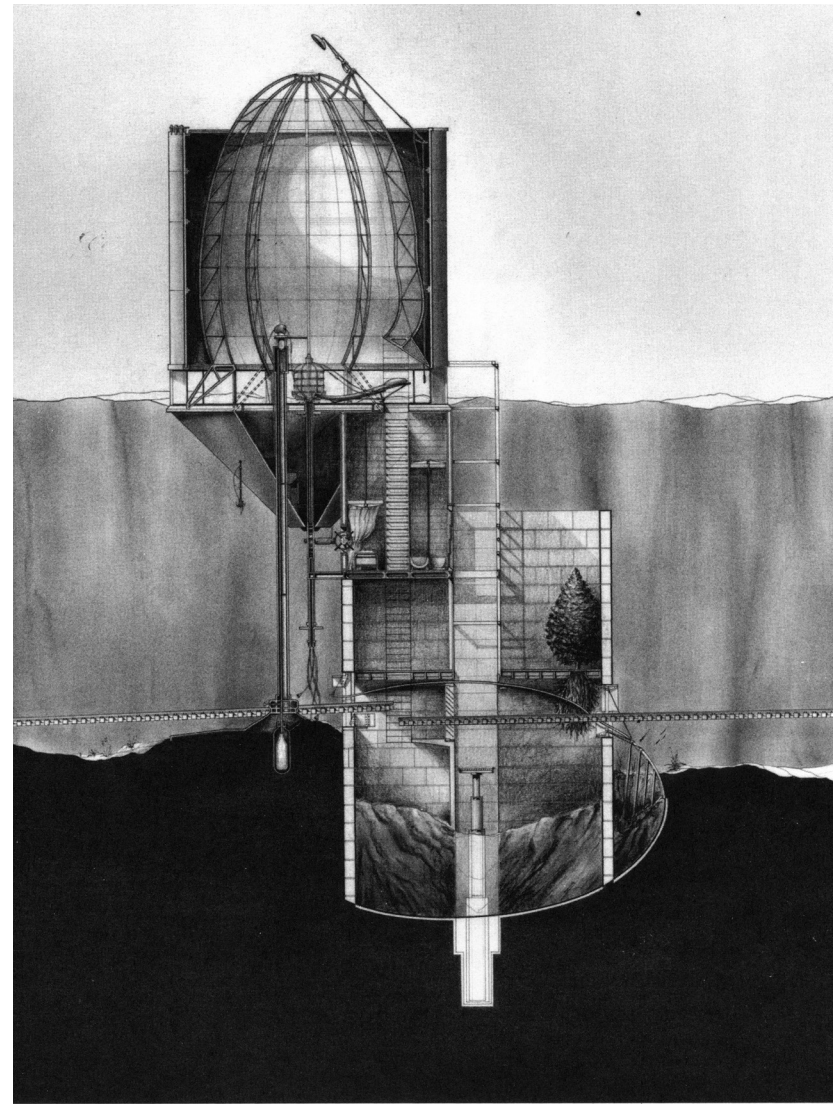
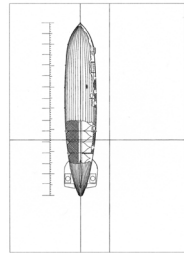
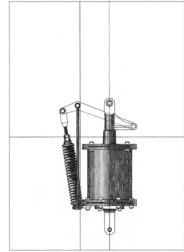
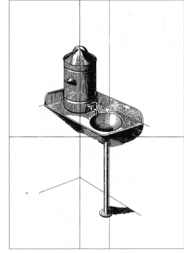
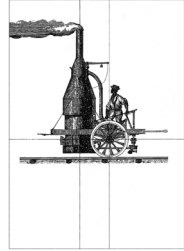
Looking specifically at his project *A Critical Queen*, Clark Thenhaus critiques the rigid, aesthetically based San Francisco Planning and Preservation Code of the Victorian House (Figure 2 and 3). What once was a space so unwanted that it was cheap to rent and occupied by counter-culture, has turned into "static representations of conservative planning policies."³⁷ In looking at these codes, Thenhaus asks the question, *what exactly is being preserved?* *A Critical Queen* is an exploration that "doubles down on this code by **exaggerating it, manipulating it, and perverting it** into something that calls for otherness and oddness at the margins of the codes intended limitations."³⁸ The Darlings of the code, that is to say, the "character-defining external features" that drive the code and include elements such as bay windows, turrets, gable roofs, shingles and so on, are inverted, extruded, exaggerated, and elongated as part of Thenhaus's deconstructing method (Figure 1).³⁹

Although Thenhaus is still working within the code, finding the loopholes to perverse what is aesthetically sought after, I still value his methodology as a means to "queering architecture." It fits into the notion of disturbing from within the established framework. After all, the origins of this thesis starts with the unsettled feeling of being othered in an established framework.



(Left) Figure 2, Elevation for a Queen Anne house in San Francisco, California, Endemic Architecture, 2018.

(Right) Figure 3, Elevation for a Queen Anne house in San Francisco, California, Endemic Architecture, 2018.



⁴⁰ Darden, Douglas. *Condemned Building*. Princeton Architectural Press, 1993. p. 9.

⁴¹ Darden, 9.

⁴² Darden, 143.

⁴³ Darden, Douglas. "Oxygen House: As I Lay Drawing," Installation, Volume 1. University of Colorado Denver. Fall 1992.

(Left) Figure 4, Oxygen House Composite Ideogram, Douglas Darden, *Condemned Building*, 1993.

(Right), Figure 5, Oxygen House Anatomical Section, Douglas Darden, *Condemned Building*, 1993.

With each of these canons and inversions, Darden imagines a project to enforce the opposition to the norm. To briefly dive into the last canon, *A house is for dying*, Darden creates the "Oxygen House" for a new act of breathing. The Oxygen House contains a man by the name of Burnden Abraham, who suffers from a collapsed lung. At the request of Abraham, this house is to become his final resting place. A house for the dying. To rid his necessity of always carrying oxygen, the house is filled with the gas and sealed airtight. The house becomes his tomb.⁴²

This inversion of the canon creates the fiction. However, Darden at the same time was dying from Leukemia, and perhaps writing this particular fiction was an act of personal storytelling through allegorical architecture.⁴³ The power of the narrative is that it is removed from him, yet still reflective of his situation. In the story, the man dies before the house is ever fully constructed.

To create these spaces, Darden's method combines imagery relating to the narrative of the character and the inversion of the architectural canon. This method of mashing and collaging seemingly unrelated objects together forms a composite ideogram that constructs the realities and imaginaries of the project (Figure 4 and 5).

ACT(ION) 3 // INVERTING

Condemned Building by Douglas Darden
Ten allegorical works of architecture

Here the investigation begins to introduce the imagination and storytelling as a means to legitimize speculative works of architecture. Although these works act as inversions, therefore existing in the binary world, they still act through the established framework of the expected. The following comes from Douglas Darden's Forewards in *Condemned Building*.

"The ten works of architecture cited in this book were constructed from a particular canon of architecture that has persisted throughout the centuries and the varieties of architectural styles. The buildings are like a turning-over, one by one, of those canons. Like the action of the plow, this was done not to lay waste to the canons, but to cultivate their fullest growth.

The following are the projects with their respective canon and *reversa*.⁴⁰

Museum of Impostors
A Portrait of Last Identity

Architecture posits the **authentic**.
Architecture posits the **fake**.

Temple Forgetful
A Sanguine Tete-a-Tete

A monument is for **remembering**.
A monument is for **forgetting**.

Clinic for Sleep Disorders
A Rondo on the Study of Sleep

Architecture **domesticates** our fears.
Architecture **locates** our fears.

Night School
A Surgical Lesion in Spectatorship

Light is the revealer of form.
Darkness is the revealer of form.

Melvilla
An Underline Reading

Architecture is the **reconciliation** with nature.
Architecture is the **irreconciliation** with nature.

Hostel
A Sliding Scale for Habitation

Architecture **takes possession of place**.
Architecture **displaces**.

A Station for Jesse James
A Ballad with Two Endings

Architecture is **accommodation**.
Architecture is **confrontation**.

Sex Shop
An Immodest Proposal

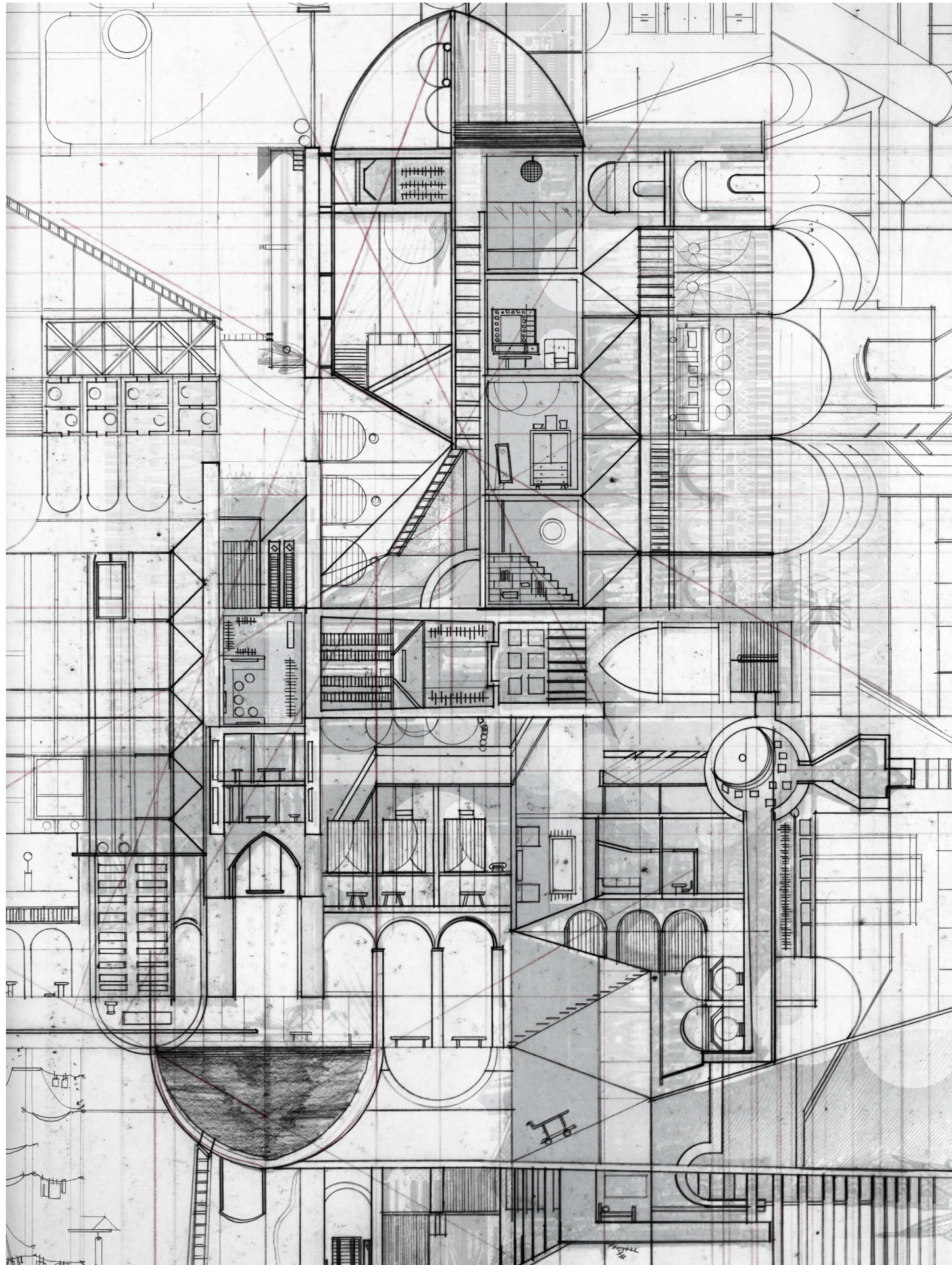
Architecture **fulfills** desire.
Architecture **objectifies** desire.

Confessional
A Station at Cross Purposes

Man is **at the center** of divine creation.
Man is **off-center** of divine creation.

Oxygen House
A Near Triptych on the Act of Breathing

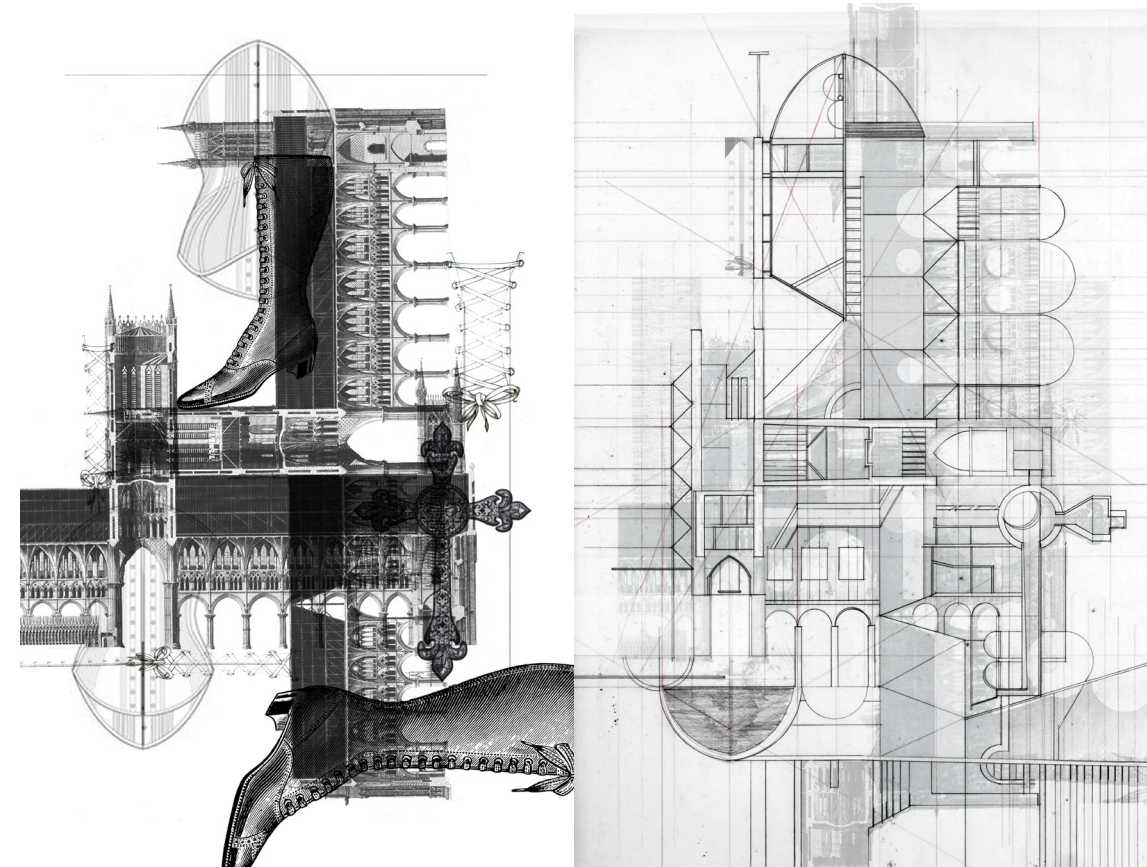
A house is for **living**.
A house is for **dying**.⁴¹



intermission // a place for opposing identities

Spring Party Studio 2018
Professor Nicole Huber

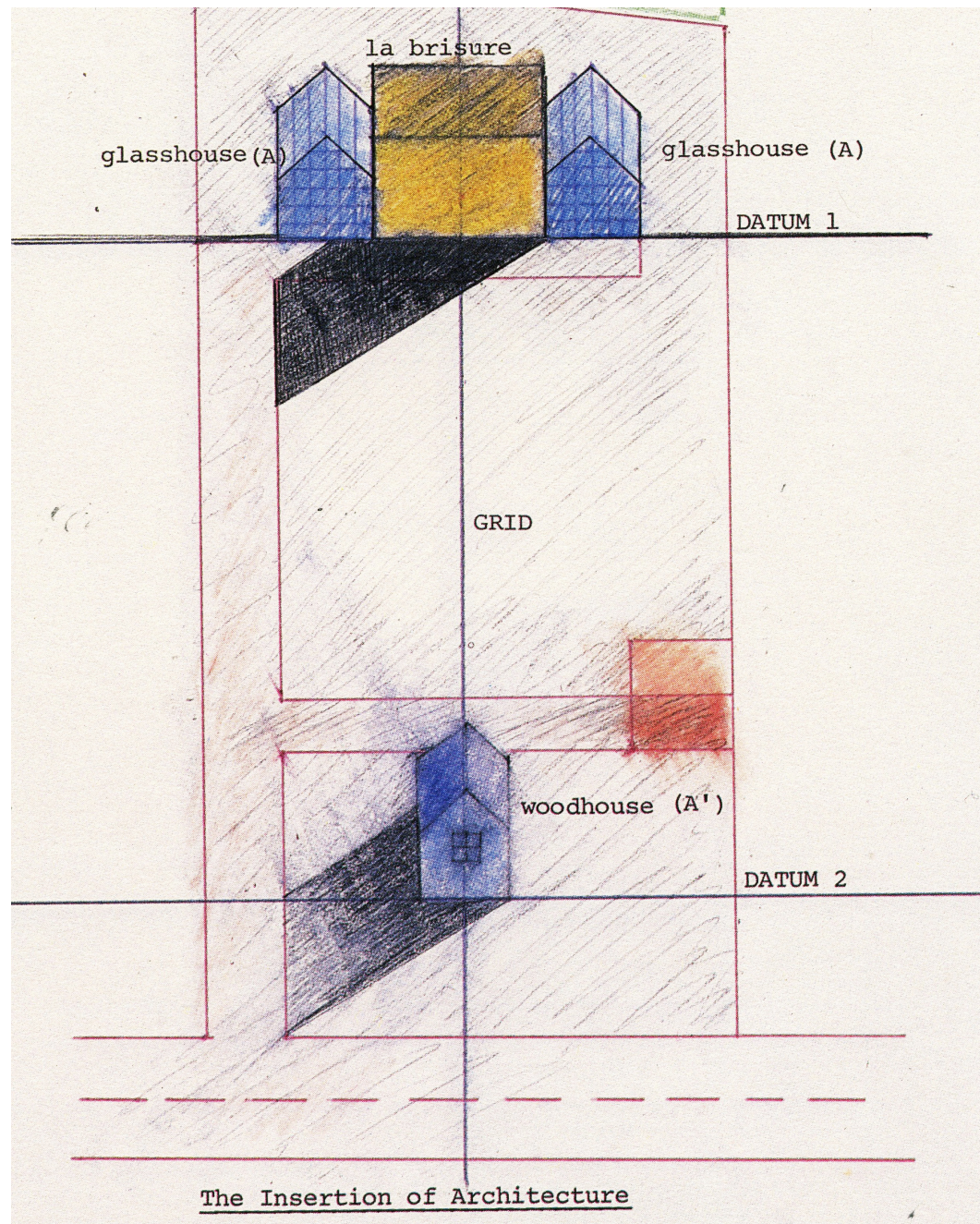
In this work you will find a self exploration of multiple identities. What would the world look like if everyone had the agency, the space, and the empowerment to create their own architecture? It would be impossible to master-plan such a place, like a city, and a world that reflected every individuals' self identities. The true beauty in an assemblage of space is found in the assemblage of identities. We look for the place of the difference. Here, spaces were imagined for *contrasting* identities, such as a woman who is Catholic school teacher by day and a sex worker by night. What are the elements that reflect both identities? This process follows a similar one to Douglas Darden, collaging imagery of religious architecture with 'promiscuous' clothing. Both are architectures for the body and give structure, yet at different scales. Where might this person feel "at home" in these different "skins?"



(Far Left) Final composite drawing for opposing identities.

(Left and Right) Process of collaged images and drawing.

Michelle Hook, 2018.



ACT(ION) 4 // LIBERATING

⁴⁴ Lerup, Lars. "The Nofamily House." *Planned Assaults*. Canadian Center for Architecture, 1987. p. 28

⁴⁵ Lerup, 15.

⁴⁶ Lerup, 20-26.

⁴⁷ Lerup, 32.

⁴⁸ Lerup, 32-56.

⁴⁹ Lerup, 53.

⁵⁰ Lerup, 54.

(Left) Figure 6, The Nofamily House: The Insertion of Architecture, Lars Lerup, *Planned Assaults*, 1980.

(Bottom Left), Figure 7, The Nofamily House: Dissection; The Locus of the Family, Lars Lerup, *Planned Assaults*, 1980.

(Bottom Middle), Figure 8, The Nofamily House: Dissection; The Locus of Architecture (Inside), Lars Lerup, *Planned Assaults*, 1980.

(Bottom Right), Figure 9, The Nofamily House: The Liberated Handrail, Lars Lerup, *Planned Assaults*, 1983.

Continuing through the investigation, how do physical assaults on a conceptual project liberate architectural conventions?

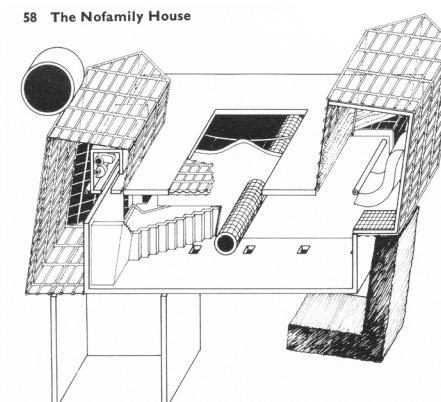
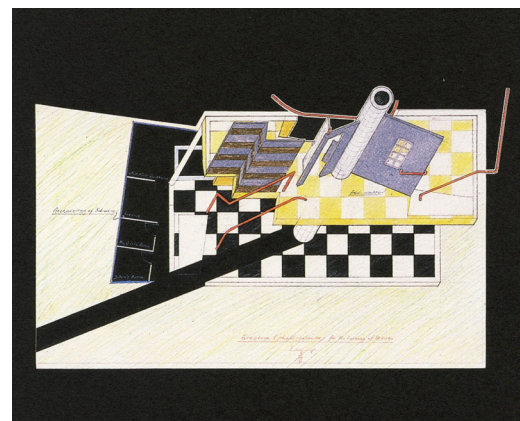
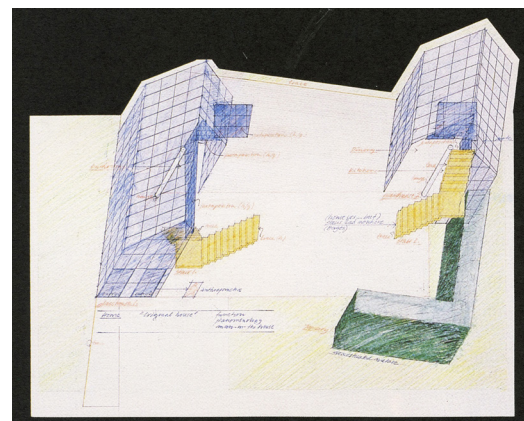
Lars Lerup describes his methodology of disrupting the norm through Planned Assaults on three different houses. Examining the NoFamily House specifically, he challenges "the function and the accepted social and economic structures which engender the single-family house across North America."⁴⁴ If one were to remove the "family" unit from the "house" in "single-family house," what is the transformation of the architecture?

He begins by questioning the ways in which we know a house and identify a house. The first being reminiscent of a child's drawing of a gabled roof and house from the outside (Figure 11). The second being the rigid floor plan, with a bedroom, bathroom, kitchen, dining room, kitchen, and garage. Both depictions are rigid and finite.⁴⁵ The assault on the first house, the Nofamily house, strips the gabled conventional house by making it entirely glass, mirrors it some distance away, and then inserts a piece of architecture between the two empty houses (Figure 6). It is in this third house that the assault emerges (Figures 7 and 8).⁴⁶

"Inscribed across the surfaces of the lump is another matrix of marks that serve to disrupt the narrative of the family."⁴⁷ Lerup refers to these disruptions as traps, to disorient the traditional convention of architecture and objects. Much like Marcel Duchamp's *Trebuchet*, where a simple line of hooks for coats becomes a trap when left on the floor as someone has to avoid its fangs, Lerup incorporates the handrail high above the hand, alleviating it of its necessary convention. The *Liberated Handrail* no longer follows the form of the opening, and is free from its constraining connotations (Figure 9). The same goes for the Useless Door and Stair to Nowhere.⁴⁸

"The arbitrary connection between the word and the object is revealed; even the function is set adrift."⁴⁹ The connection between object, language and human behavior is fluid."⁵⁰

The object and how we interact with the object has freed itself (Figure 10). How can this be extended to spaces, set programs, and roles? Instead of thinking of a house as its number of bedrooms and bathrooms, what could be designed if we imagined the activities and actions that fluidly happen in a space?



(Left) Figure 10, The Nofamily House: Axonometric from Under, Lars Lerup, *Planned Assaults*, 1981.

(Right) Figure 11, The Single-Family House: Figure, Stock Plans, *Planned Assaults*.

ACT(ION) 5 // SPLITTING

Cutting Matta-Clark by Mark Wigley
Gordan Matta-Clark



⁵¹ Wigley, Mark. *Cutting Matta-Clark: The Anarchitecture Investigation*. Lars Muller Publishers, 2018. p. 53.

⁵² Wigley, 60-61.

⁵³ Wigley, 61.

⁵⁴ Wigley, 61.

(Left) Figure 12, SPLITTING collage, Gordon Matta-Clark, *Cutting Matta-Clark*, 1974.

(Bottom), Figure 13, Pages from GMC *Splitting* book of September 1974 showing the third phase of the project, leaning half the building back at an angle of five degrees, Gordon Matta-Clark, *Cutting Matta-Clark*, 1974.

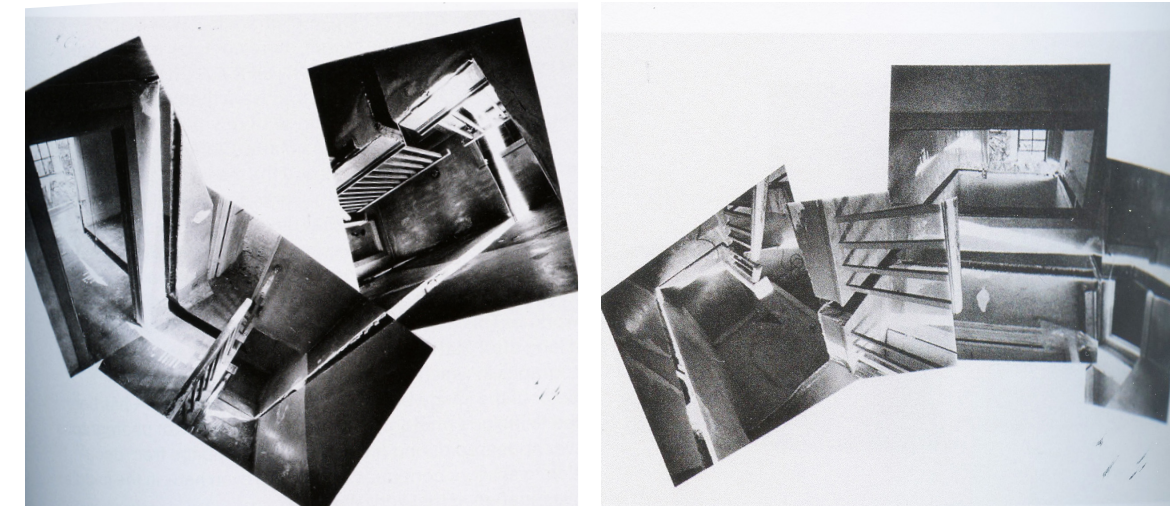
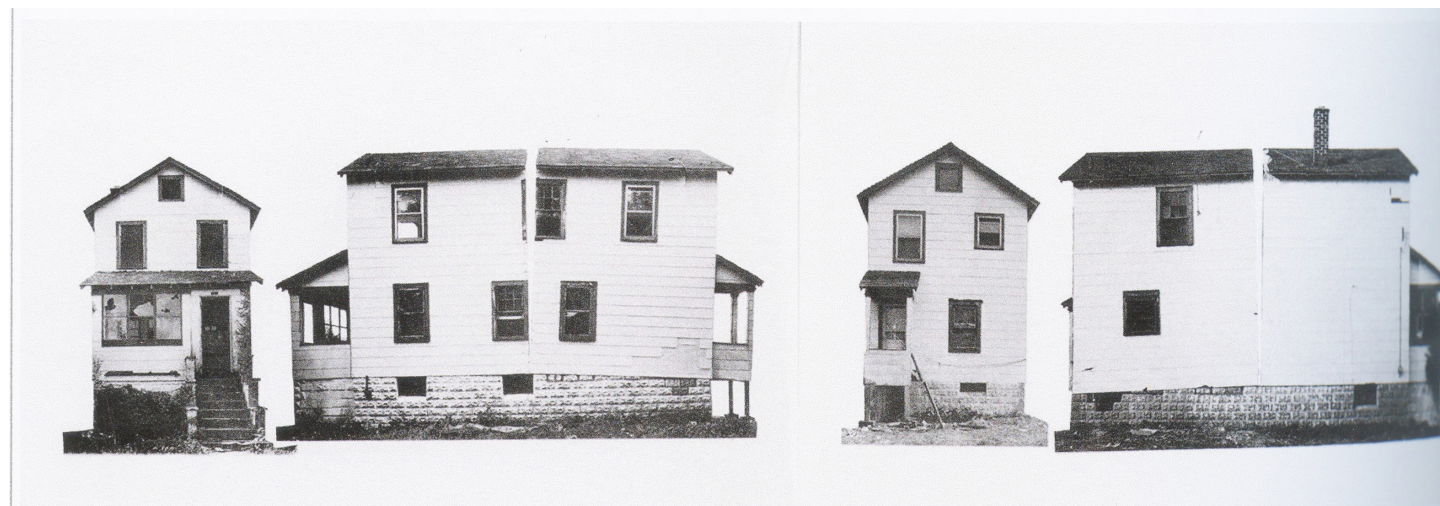
This moment in the investigation is perhaps the most physical act. Because the action exists in reality, being performed on tangible architecture, the imaginary takes shape as well.

Gordon Matta-Clark takes an approach similar to an assault on the house to liberate its confinement, using both physical cuts to split apart architecture and photography to stitch it back together. It is through his splitting and restitching that I find evidence of a similar method I am trying to produce. One of deconstructing and reconstructing.

When he secretly began cutting away at abandoned buildings in the Bronx, Brooklyn, the exercise became one that "allowed the eye to undo the sense of confinement by making its own extended diagonal cuts through the structure."⁵¹ The cuts create openings, the openings become more windows, freeing the eye from the confinement of the room (Figure 13). Yet these shapes that are cut into the house become both voids and objects within themselves, "suspended before us as if spaced around each other in a kind of collaborating galaxy."⁵² This is a double-effect, exposing the secrets of what is already there by dramatically altering it. The photographed cuts reveal the hidden internal life of the structures and all the layers that hide that anatomy, not just the patterns and textures of the surfaces that formed the backdrop of everyday domestic life, but their thickness, supports, and interconnections (Figure 12). At the same time, the forensic cuts create whole new spatial complexities and interconnections (Figures 14 and 15).⁵³

By exposing the secrets and creating new spatial complexities, Matta-Clark blurs between these two effects and "treats the new, vertiginous complexity as something that was already there, just masked by the **orthodoxy of traditional divisions** of spaces and our unwillingness to challenge that orthodoxy."⁵⁴

So this begs the question, what else is hidden behind the norm of architecture? What else can be uncovered by performing cuts, assaults, and the unveiling of curtains?



(Left) Figure 14, Undated collage of SPLITTING, Gordon Matta-Clark, *Cutting Matta-Clark*.

(Right), Figure 15, Pages from GMC *Splitting* book of September 1974 showing the third phase of the project, leaning half the building back at an angle of five degrees, Gordon Matta-Clark, *Cutting Matta-Clark*, 1974.

ACT(ION) 6 // DISORIENTING + REORIENTING

Queer Phenomenology by Sara Ahmed
"BIID"? Queer (Dis)Orientations and the Phenomenology of "Home" by Nikki Sullivan

Finally, the investigation ends with the beginnings of the queer.

As Sara Ahmed introduces the notion of orientation, she begins by asking an important question. "What does it mean to be oriented?"⁵⁵ Within this question there are so many other embedded questions. How do we come to find our way in the world? When are we oriented? Who or what are we oriented to? As she begins to answer these questions, she defines the feeling of orientation as being "turned toward certain objects, those that help us find our way."⁵⁶ While she uses objects as the things we are oriented to, I encourage us to write in architecture. When are we oriented towards certain architecture? Why are we turned towards certain architecture? For objects and architecture to attract our phenomenological and gravitational force, they must be *familiar* to us. Therefore, orientation becomes about how we "reside in space."⁵⁷ And if orientation is about residing in space, then it also becomes about feeling familiar in that space - feeling at home.⁵⁸

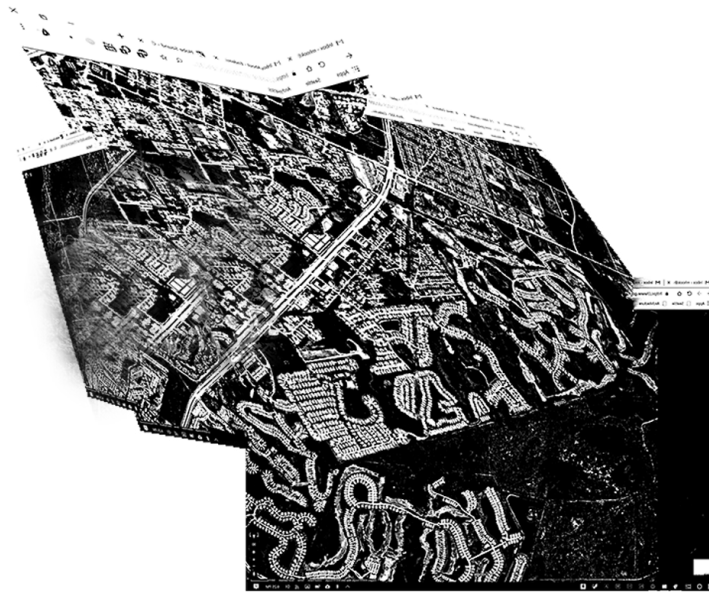
So what happens when you aren't able to orient to a space, an object, a way of being? This is no longer familiar to your bodily horizon⁵⁹. At first, there is a sense that you might not realize you are oriented because it is a familiar phenomenological experience. But when disorientation occurs, a new way of orienting emerges. Here enters Queer Phenomenology, as a way to start "redirecting our attention toward different objects, those that are "less proximate" or even those that deviate or are deviant."⁶⁰

Orientation has us directed towards certain objects, architecture, and ways of being. Embedded in these orientations is a sense of phenomenology; lived experience of inhabiting body. But what if we extend this phenomenological sense to the space we are inhabiting? "Phenomenology reminds us that spaces are not exterior to bodies; instead, spaces are like a second skin that unfolds in the folds of the body."⁶¹

If bodies and spaces are oriented, then ways of being emerge as common lines. "Lines are both created by being followed and are followed by being created."⁶² If everyone orients towards the same objects and same spaces, these "well trodden lines" emerge... So then, what happens when you deviate from an established line? From an established way of being? Your body feels the need to reorient onto the line. But if you can't reorient to the line, always staying oblique to it, you instead form a new line, one that others may start to follow.

Much like there may be disorientation when one does not feel "at home" oriented in a given space, the same can be said for those who do not feel "at home" in their own body.⁶³ The architecture and the body are both scales of inhabitation, layered amongst each other. Phenomenology in regards to orientation holds emphasis on lived experience of inhabiting body."⁶⁴

Therefore, "moments of disorientation are vital."⁶⁵ Disorientation from the path established allows for the creation of a new one. This new path may never cross the dominant, always staying oblique. From these new lesser lines of deviations, new ways of being are established.



⁵⁵ This is literally the first sentence written by Ahmed in *Queer Phenomenology*. Ahmed, 1.

⁵⁶ Ahmed, 1.

⁵⁷ Ahmed, 1

⁵⁸ Ahmed begins to introduce the idea of a feeling at home, that is further explored by Nikki Sullivan in "BIID"? Queer (Dis)Orientations and the Phenomenology of 'Home.' Ahmed, 7.

⁵⁹ Ahmed, 2.

⁶⁰ Ahmed, 3.

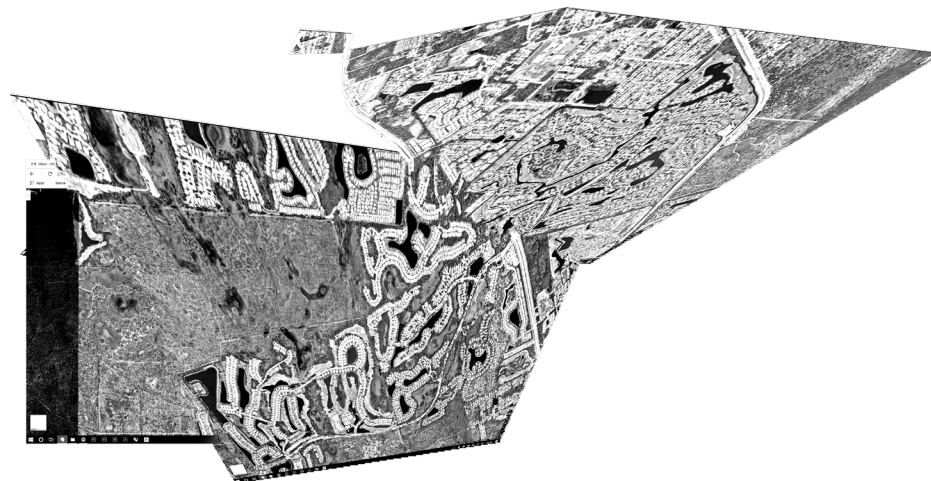
⁶¹ Ahmed 9.

⁶² Ahmed, 16.

⁶³ Sullivan.

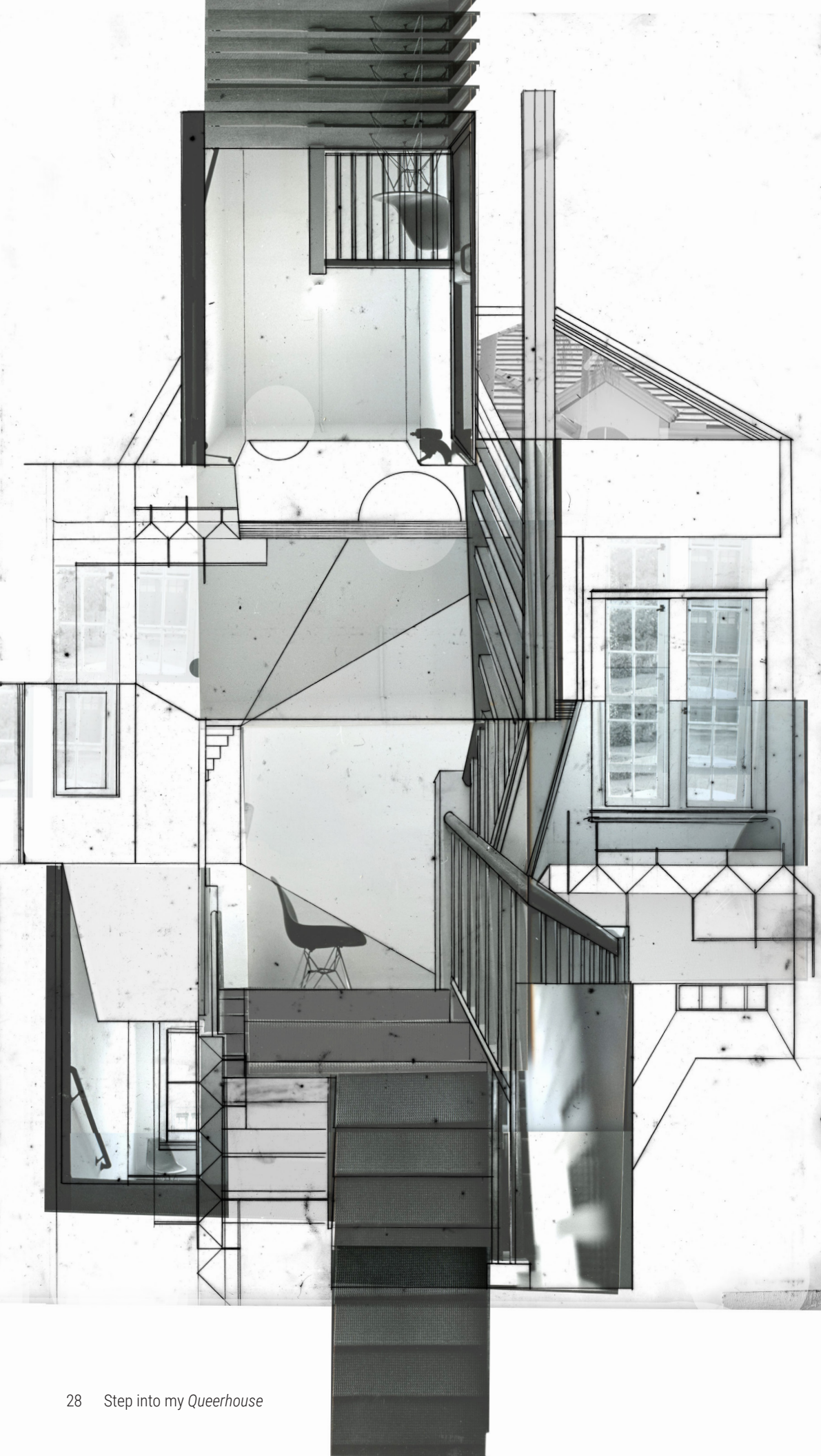
⁶⁴ Ahmed, 2.

⁶⁵ Ahmed, 157.



Defamiliarizing the landscape of suburban Florida.

Michelle Hook, 2019.



SPECULATION // THE FINAL ACT(ION)*

"Home is what you take with you, not what you leave behind."⁶⁶

Two methodologies emerge for creating a new architecture. These methods are framed as :

1. Deconstructing the norm
2. Constructing the queer.

Constructing the queer inherently works outside of established norms as a method. Speculative fiction creates the playground of experimentation for constructing the queer. New norms establish several ways of being and a multiplicity of imagined realities comes forward. The final act(ion) of imagining becomes queering and brings forth three speculative narratives. With each narrative, the fiction writing and world-building queers the notion of home, while including the previous act(ion)s of challenging, inverting, exaggerating, liberating, splitting, and (dis/re)orienting.

The three speculative narratives are as follows:

FICTION 1 // BEIGE SUBURBIA

FICTION 2 // DOLLHOUSE FOR MY DAUGHTER

FICTION 3 // MOTHER (H)EARTH - a collaboration with Amelia Jarvinen

At the end of each narrative, story notes are included for reference and reflection.

⁶⁶ Jemisin, N. K. *The Fifth Season*. Orbit, 2015.

When considering the power of speculative theory, Ursula K. Le Guin captures the need for it in *The Language of the Night*. "Those who refuse to listen to dragons are probably doomed to spend their lives acting out the nightmare of politicians. We like to think we live in daylight, but half the world is always dark; and fantasy, like poetry, speaks the language of the night." Le Guin, Ursula K. *The Language of the Night: Essays on Fantasy and Science Fiction*. Putnam Adult, 1979.

⁶⁷ "Action." *The Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary*, Merriam-Webster Inc., https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/action?utm_campaign=sd&utm_medium=serp&utm_source=jsonld. Accessed 10 December 2019.

"Fiction." *The Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary*, Merriam-Webster Inc., <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/fiction>. Accessed 10 December 2019.

Photomontage of an old apartment stair, disorienting the space.

Michelle Hook, 2018.

**A note: The root word of -fic- in fiction and -act- in action both come from the Latin meaning to "make."⁶⁷*



FICTION 1 // BEIGE SUBURBIA

Step into my ~~fun~~ Queerhouse

What happens when you look in the mirror? You expect to see your perfectly mirrored reflection staring back at you, right? What if that reflection wasn't really you? What if that reflection was what was expected of you? You've never been able to see beyond this complete reflection. You thought it was you this whole time. At least, that's what you were meant to believe.

So then what happens when you look back at it, and you realize that you no longer recognize the reflection? It's not like you've disappeared, you're not a vampire. But maybe you're of a different kind of deviant. Maybe you're a witch instead. And your reflection is your former, normal, society-abiding self. But that's when you notice...

Who is that standing in the background?

.
.

.

.

You see your mother, smiling first at the reflection that you no longer recognize as yourself.

But then she meets your eyes. How strange to see it in the reflection of her pupils. You finally see your true self. The witch that you are.

Her smile falls, her eyes twitch ever so slightly. You barely catch this movement.

In this moment, you think to turn around.

But as you do, you are surprised to see your mother is not behind you. The room remains empty, aside from the dark mahogany bedroom set.

So then, what do you expect to see when you turn back towards the mirror? You take a second to contemplate this as you slowly turn your head back. Your heart races, tiny sweat pearls form at your brow, your hands clench. You shut your eyes fast so that all you see is darkness in your mind. A quiet moment to yourself.

Then, with a quick motion, you open your eyes again facing the mirror. But as you do . . .

the mirror

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.

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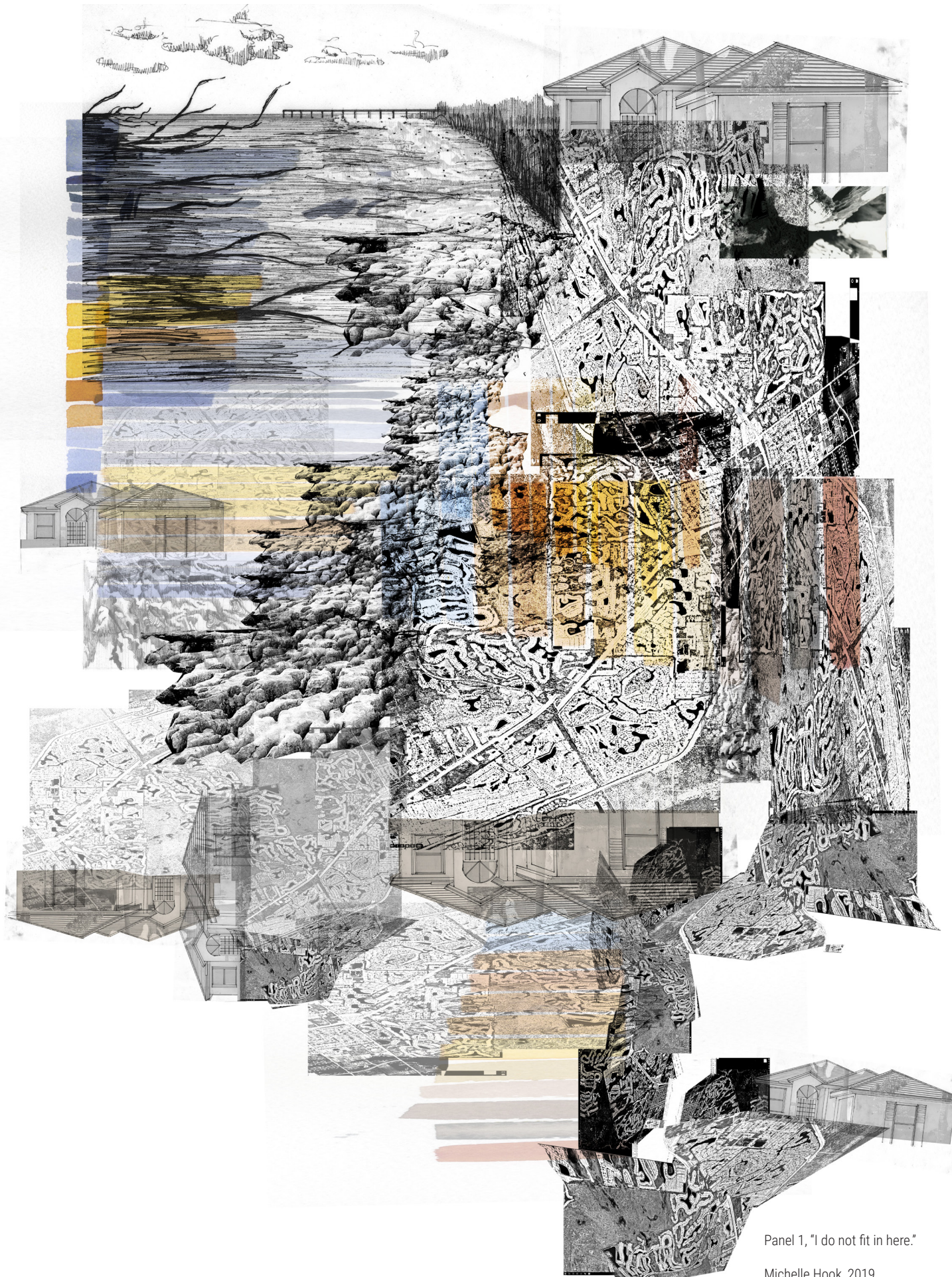
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shatters.

So then, what lies behind this mirror?
You take a step forward into the space beyond . . .

(Left) "As-built" of my mother's house and landscape.

Michelle Hook, 2019.



Panel 1, "I do not fit in here."

Michelle Hook, 2019.

FICTION 1 // BEIGE SUBURBIA

As you know, Last summer I spent three weeks living at my mom's house on the eastern coast of Florida. Her neighborhood, The Preserve, is gated with a Homeowners Association and situated among other gated neighborhoods. She lives "on the water." Now, I say this in quotes because it is not to say that she lives on the beach, or on the coast. Instead, she lives on a retention pond carved from the earth. Aerial views of these neighborhoods show black canals snaking around lollipop streets with replicating houses. The imagery becomes unnatural, defamiliarized and reminiscent of textures such as the karst limestone that sits beneath.

Within this lookalike house, I found myself surrounded by beige material. Beige carpet, beige tiles, beige curtains, beige walls. And if it wasn't beige, then it was white, or off-white. Same goes for all the houses on the street. White, off-white, light grey, light beige, light yellow, and even light pink. Everything is about fitting in. Very quickly I began asking,

"Where do I fit into this landscape?"

I could not orient myself to this beige repeating landscape. A disorientation emerged from these failed orientations.

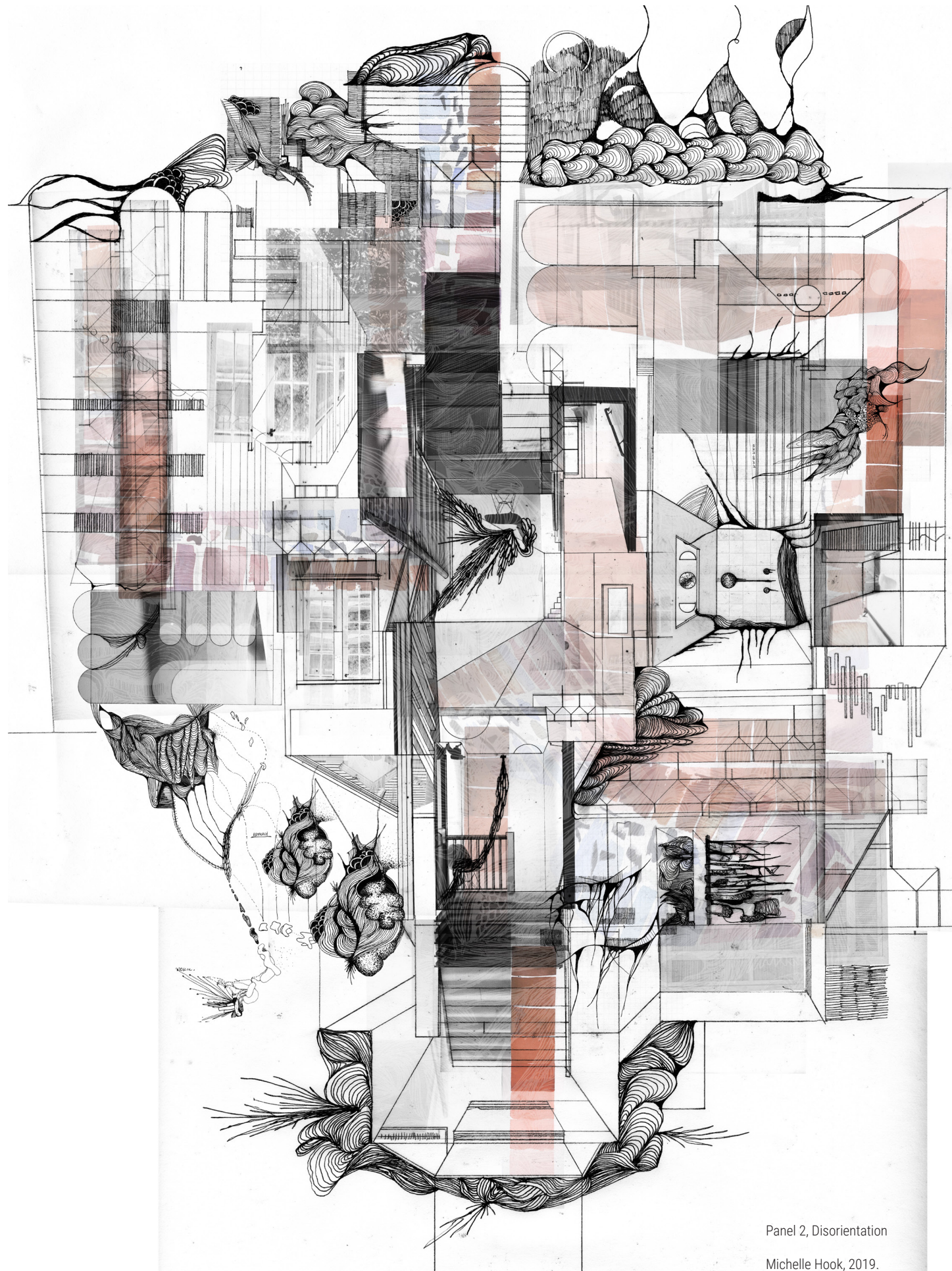
And then it happened....

The only moment of the house that I feel good in was the guest bathroom. The skylight above the shower acts as my own suburban Skyspace. With my face turned upwards towards the aperture, I could see both the sun and the moon in a single frame. I could connect with these celestial bodies and orient myself to them. In this moment, the water that was falling down my back began falling perpendicular my face, away to a new down. I turned the water off, stepped out of the shower and saw myself looking up from below me. The mirror that was once hanging on the wall now sat below my feet. A blink of the eye, and the mirror was back in place and my dizziness subsided.

Running back to the guest bedroom for clothes, I searched frantically through the closet for the few things I had hanging up. Pushing back the winter clothes my mom and Walter kept (idk why), is when I found them. Three panels rested against the back of the closet. I rolled them up, packed them in my suitcase, and came back to Seattle with them. I've been studying them, trying to make sense of what they are communicating. I cannot know the author (or authors, probably multiple). What I have been deciphering, I've started adding in with my own footnotes. The more I study these panels, the more I become aware of the information, the memories.

Here it is important to note that I did not grow up in this house. The few memories I've experienced all involve staying in the nondescript guest bedroom. The only material items that resemble my life are those that I bring with me, and those that I pack up when I leave.

So then I found it strange when weeks and months later dreams filled my head at night of distant memories of that house. The memories were not mine, or so I thought. I can tell it's that house because of the layout of space. But to be honest, I can't tell if it's the same house that my mother lives in now, or a neighbor's down the street. See, a friend of mine used to live in the same neighborhood. I've also



Panel 2, Disorientation

Michelle Hook, 2019.

FICTION 1 // BEIGE SUBURBIA

been inside one of my mom's new friend's house down the street. It's all the same, but the memories are different.

I felt that I had to go back. Perhaps I missed something in that closet. Or with the skylight. What else lies behind those beige walls, what are the secrets of this house? What has it not shown to me yet, or what has it started revealing?

After we last met, I bought plane ticket to head back to that suburban nightmare that had started haunting me. What I found next was unbelievable. Located in that same closet with the panels, behind those mirrored doors I found an ancient door knob, but without a door? It has since been destroyed so I cannot show it to you. But imagine the heaviness in your hands, yet somehow it was easy to pick up.

Next I find the necklace. Well first I found the bottle, then I found that it was attached to the necklace. Although the bottle is dark in color, I can tell there is a liquid inside. My curiosity has me spray it. The smell is a bit rancid, although a sweetness still lingers. The most curious thing though is that the air changes. A fuzziness appears in the area that I've sprayed, and other objects start to form that down quite make sense. My reality for a second erodes away as a different one comes into view. What am I seeing? I see cuts in the house, where the house was one complete, it becomes fragmented looking through the perfume cloud.

At this point, I turn back to face the mirrored closet doors. A strange phenomenon occurs as I look at them through the cloud of spray. They are both reflecting back to me, yet seemingly transparent beyond. I wanted to put the door knob on these, and so I did. What was once stood as my own reflection eroded away as a fleshy tunnel emerged. I didn't want what I could only see reflect back, I wanted more.

I walk through with the help of the door knob and spray, the artifacts that allowed me to lift the veil that is this the doll house?

When I walk through, the floor starts to slope down, the walls curve, my mind is flooded with new memories as I take steps further into this labyrinth. Somehow, I don't know where I'm going but I also don't feel lost. I follow one of the various tunnels until I feel the slope begin upward again. Just like I could see through the mirror in my room, I now stand on the other side of a similar mirror, but I recognize that I'm no longer looking into my mother's house. The bedroom is laid out the same, but the comforter is different, the dresser is smaller, the nightstand is oriented on a different side of the bed. I retreat, continuing to explore through the various tunnels. I come across several more transparent mirrors, upon many more bedrooms, each with different furniture. But the curious thing, the layouts are all the same. Why? Why does everyone put the bed there? And the dresser there? And why do they match? Bedroom sets are weird.



Panel 3, Becoming-with.

Michelle Hook, 2019.

FICTION 1 // BEIGE SUBURBIA

I start seeing other people through these mirrors.

I find a person peering through the curtains of their window. What/who are they watching? Can they feel me doing the same?

Another is making the bed, so crisp with folded corners and perfectly puffed pillows.

I come up to a wide eyed staring family, sitting in their matching beige recliners. They appear to be looking at me, but soon I realize that I must be in the tv. They chew their popcorn methodically, hands in the bowl without ever taking their eyes off the screen/me.

I come upon two children playing with a doll house, how peculiar. The bed was on its side, the table upside down, the chair hanging from the ceiling. They were manipulating their toy furniture. Why don't we all do the same?

At this moment I realized that I had been alone in these tunnels, aside from those on the other side of the mirrors.

But then I start seeing others. At first, I recognize that they are the most extreme deviants of society. This is their place, they've broken through the mirror too. Are they the authors of the panels? I start recognizing others. Some are from my past, high school, college, early Seattle days. And then, I even started to see some of you. But how were you there? I'd found you all here.

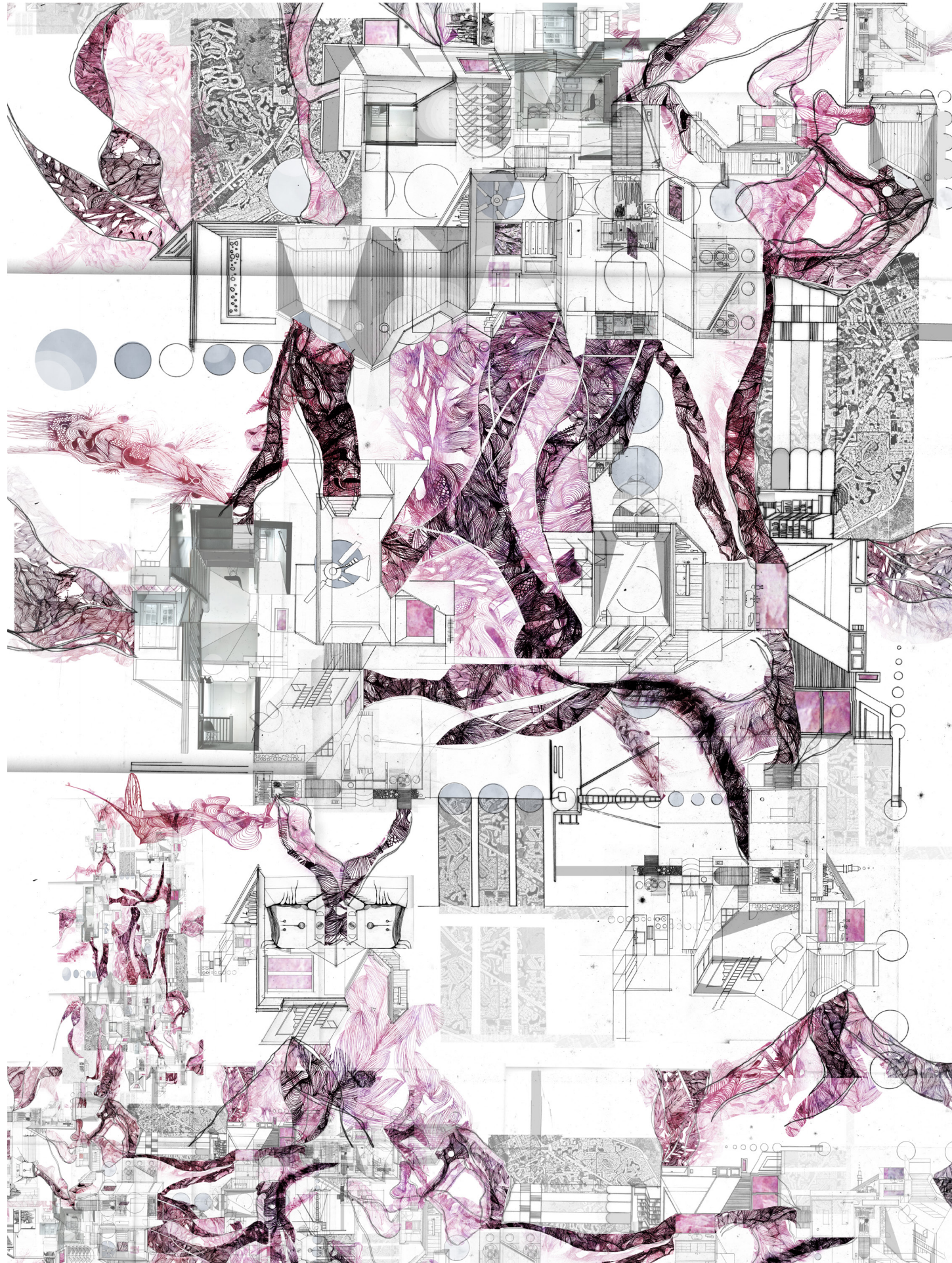
Language is absent from these tunnels, but our thoughts flow together, running in and out of our heads as we pass one another. I learn of your memories, and you learn of mine. I see your moments, breaking through your own reflections and finding your way down here. It's when I begin to understand that, everyone is a deviant in their own way. Everyone exists under here. Everyone has a feeling of not fitting in. Being down here doesn't mean you aren't existing in the world above.

At this point, I decide to find my way back through the mirrored closet doors that bore my entry. As I'm snaking my way through the last curves of these tunnels, something, rather someone catches my eye through the periphery. I whip my head to look at them properly, unconvinced that what I thought I saw was true. But of course, there she is too. She has found her way into the tunnels. Maybe not yet in your world timeline, But she will eventually get there.

I smile at my mom as we pass each other, and climb back through the mirror doors, back to my real world.

What can I make of this experience?

How do I make sense of these tunnels above ground? In this world? I know these places can exist here, and they already do. My goal then is to find my seat at the queer table.



STORY NOTES // BEIGE SUBURBIA

This story recalls a past memory of spending time at my mother's new house, known as the empty container among a beige suburbia. I didn't intend to write this story, in the way that I didn't want to reflect on this time in my life. But in starting to recall these memories, I realized this time spent in this place was the beginning of change. I needed to spend time in suburbia to experience disorientation from a prescribed path.

As I write this thesis and reflect back to this time, I look to a note I had written to myself while in this home. My own diary entry:

"Florida. The only thing original is the landscape.

Houses repeat.

*Plazas repeat.**

**The same beige or light grey or light yellow building, full of Dunkin' Donuts, nail salons, and the saving grace of Publix repeats.*

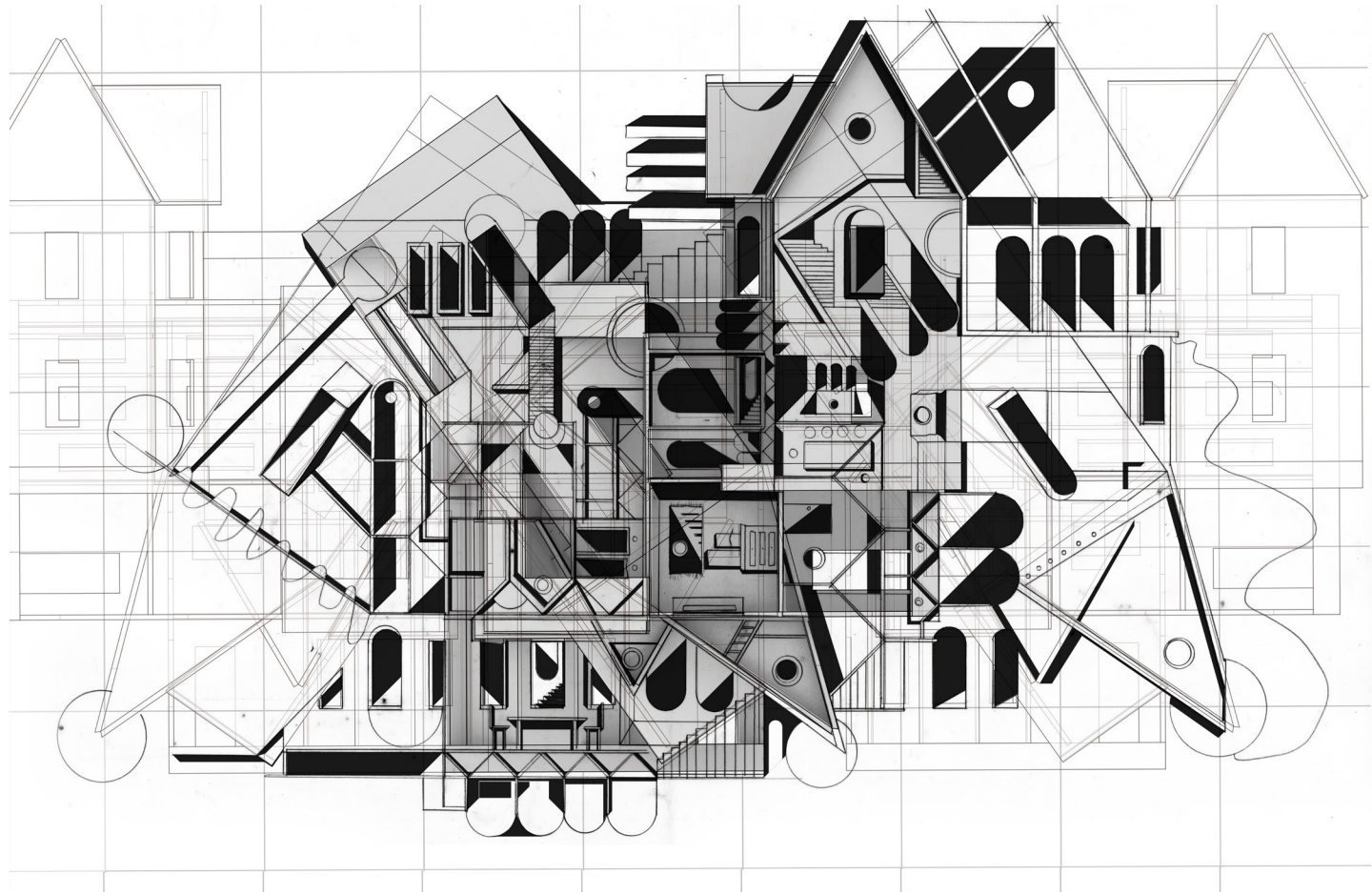
If we're going out to dinner - there's a 50/50 chance that we end up at a Duffy's/Olive Garden or other Americanized grub chain.

This is the beige suburbia."

So you can imagine my horror as my mother and I were driving down the main road one day, and I see the construction process of another strip mall, nearly done and already with its fresh coat of paints to include, you guessed it, beige, dark beige, and light beige for the undulating facade. However, in this realization of my contrasting views with my mother, I acknowledge her desires for beige strip malls and houses because she wants to fit in. But rather, it is an erasure of all other cultures that do not fit into the "American Dream Landscape.". Unless through the lens of exoticism, her architecture celebrating her culture is stifled among the beige suburbia.

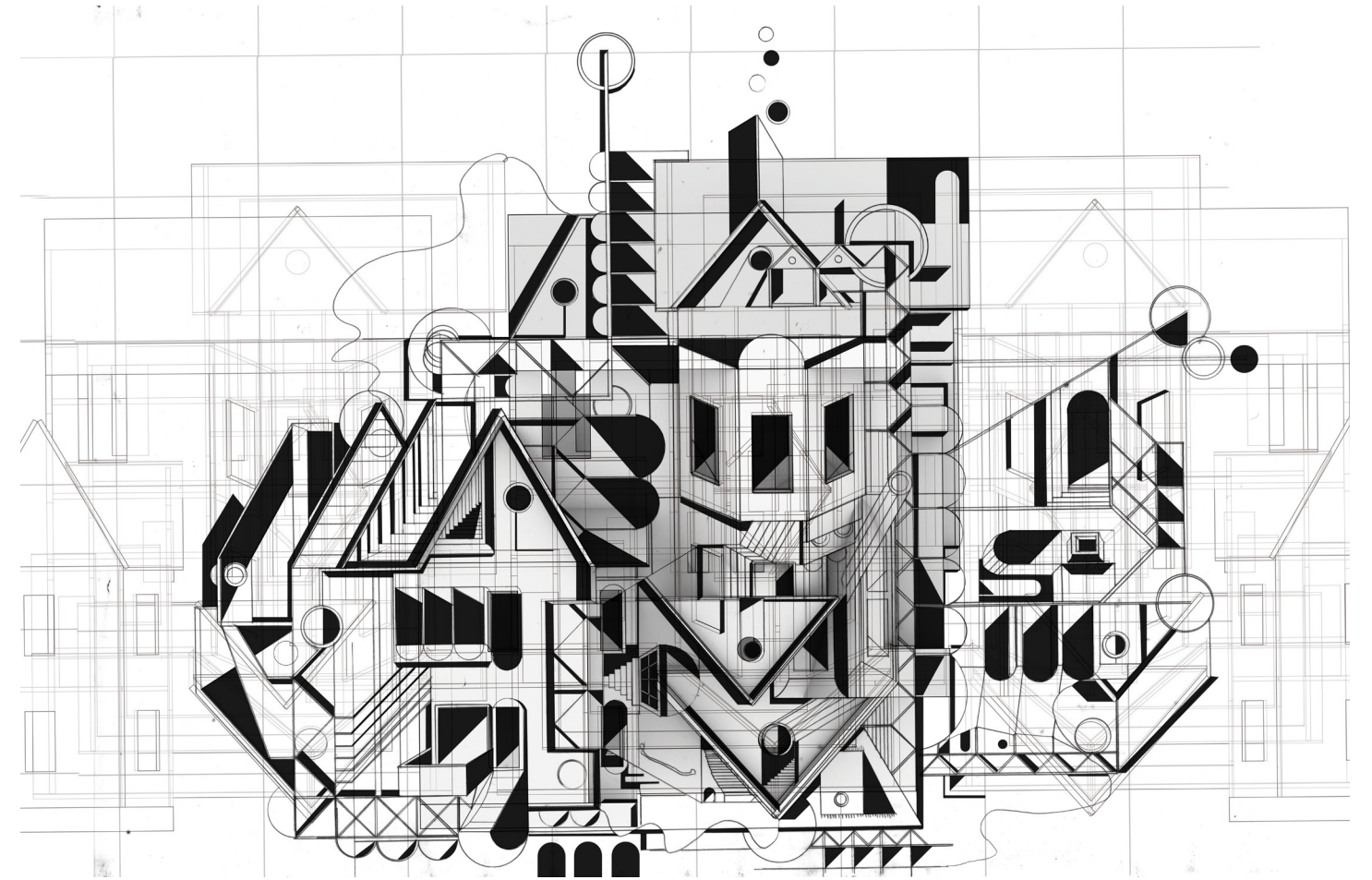
I'll never forget the conversation I had with my mom the first time I told her I was queer (and also that I broke up with my perfect heteronormative, white cismale boyfriend, who had a stable job and came from an upper middle class family) where she "blamed" this change on my new(ish) landscape - Seattle. Her words resonated in a way, that said, "you are like this because Seattle makes you."

"No, I am like this (now) because Seattle lets me."



The next step from the doodle.
Drawing the actions and fictions
on the dollhouse, version 1.

Michelle Hook, 2019.



The next step from the doodle.
Drawing the actions and fictions
on the dollhouse, version 2.

Michelle Hook, 2019.



FICTION 2 // DOLLHOUSE FOR MY DAUGHTER

Step into my dollhouse

A change happened, a big one. My life had flipped upside down. I was disoriented in my world. I was forced to pack up all that I owned. I collected my things, and stripped my body from my home. I moved house to a new one across town. An old brick Victorian with two stories and an attic. It was one with a small circular window perched high in the house, which became mine.

Living alone with this house, I could make the decisions, I could choose where to put the furniture. Sure the house gave hints, but I chose to ignore some of them. It was obvious that the room with the closet was meant for the bed, but I much preferred the open area just outside with the bay windows. With my bed nestled in the window pocket, I could stare up at the sky and sunshine from there. I left the other room meant for the bed mostly empty, undesired, with a few half-opened boxes..

What is the ritual I perform that makes this house part of me?

I wanted to cut to the room meant for a bed. Cutting would reveal the living area below, creating a lofted space. The house however, had other plans.

On the night of Oct 27th, I made my first cut. I began in a circular motion, the saw making contact with the floorboards and supports. When some of it finally gave way, I peered through the hole looking for hints of the living area below.

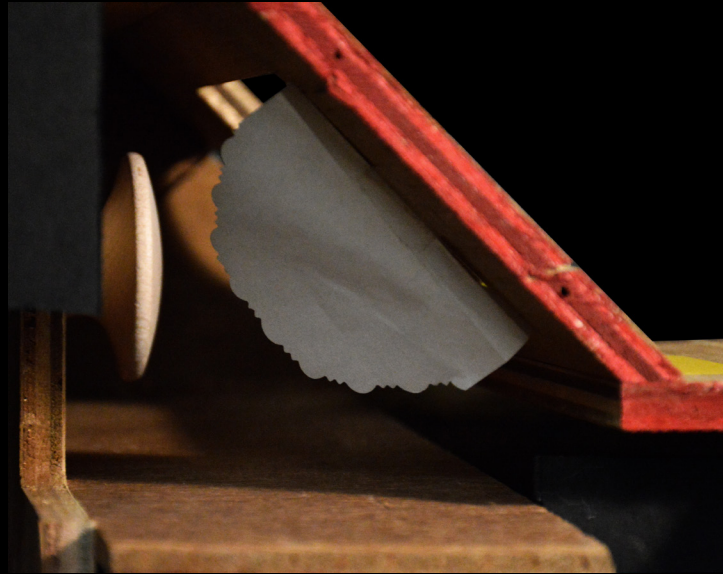
Instead I only saw darkness. This is strange, I thought, because the lights are on downstairs. If I wasn't looking into the living room below, where was I looking into, or what? I had original drawings of this house that showed no additional space between the floors. I shone the flashlight into the space but couldn't make sense of it. With my headlamp on, the saw in one hand and rope in the other, I jumped down into the dark space. Expecting this space to only be a few feet tall, I was surprised to fall further down. The floor beneath however, accepted my falling weight with grace, and I landed on my two feet without injury. I found that I could stand straight up and look above at the hole I had created. As I scoped out the space, I reached an edge and found that the walls were made of a material that wasn't familiar. It was like wooden earth yet spongy in texture.

Feeling brave, I decided to try something else. I brought over the saw and marked where to make a second cut into this strange material. In theory (and drawing), this wall should open to the outside. But as I began sawing away at the wall, I felt the house seize up. I heard the walls creak and groan, and perceived that the air had quickly cooled. Immediately sensing this change, I stopped and held my hand to where I had begun to make a cut. It was warm, and pulsing. Shocked, I backed away not sure what to think. I ran back up to grab the spackling, and patched up the incision I had made. I felt the walls relax, and the air warmed again. Before I could stop myself, I said sorry out loud, with genuine sympathy, to no one but the house.

After this night of cutting and discovering, I had a different sense of living in this house, in this home. We had an understanding of each other. This new space that had emerged became my secret. There were days when the sun was shining and the new wall would create voids allowing the sunlight to pour in. The first time this happened, I ran outside and saw evidence of this other material showing through the brick. Shocked, and with mouth agape, I stood there eyeing the house until a woman and her dog

Secrets revealed by the house.

Michelle Hook, 2019.



FICTION 2 // DOLLHOUSE FOR MY DAUGHTER

walked by. They looked in the same direction, shrugged their shoulders, and kept walking. I turned to them, asking what they thought of the house.

“Well, I mean, its a little brick Victorian I guess?”

“But do you see anything else? Anything different?”

“Well sure! The house doesn’t seem to be standing so straight?”

This other woman couldn’t see the bulge of material, the opening to my hidden room. I ended the questioning there, not wanting to give away the secret that was clearly only for me.

Over the following days I found myself nesting in this strange new room, hanging lights, strewing blankets and pillows, making it my own. I tested paint colors on the walls, seeing which ones would make their way into the main part of the house. My favorite books formed a stack near these half painted walls. The radio signal was strongest down here too. I found myself spending more and more time in this cozy space, doing my reading and drawing nestled among the house. I hid my most precious things here. I eventually shoved my mattress down the hole and began sleeping in this space, as the rest of the house was far too cold in the impending winter months.

In late November, I finally made a second cut. It was meant to be small, in that I was only cutting partially into a wall to adjourn a floor to ceiling mirror. The mirror was meant to exaggerate the sunny room with the bay windows that originally held my bed. I still loved that space, and spent sunny afternoons here with most of my house plants. In some ways, I was hoping to conceal the entrance to the secret room by using the mirror. But as I carved away at the wall with the same saw, I expected to make contact with the other side of gyp. Instead, the hole gave way to a different room. One that was entirely new. The saw dropped from my hand, and without hesitation, I stepped inside this new hidden room. I felt my body get pulled to the side wall as I fell onto it. I realized that the orientation of gravity was different here. What should have been the floor was the wall ahead. The hole I carved next to me was now above me. I managed to find my way back into the sunny bay window room. I still chose to install the mirror, but worked out a system so that I could open it like a sliding door and still access this new room if I wanted to.

It was at this point that I felt that the house had many more secrets than it had originally confessed.

Over the years, the house revealed many more hidden rooms as I transformed in those spaces. I never felt afraid in these new rooms, as they seemed to be the unfamiliar made familiar. As I changed, the house changed with me.

When my daughter came into this world, I spent the first few years snuggled with her in my favorite room, that first secret one. She learned to walk holding onto the mis-painted walls, and at times they would ever so slightly shift to keep her from falling. The floor had become softer for when she inevitably did.



FICTION 2 // DOLLHOUSE FOR MY DAUGHTER

As my daughter grew older, I would hear her running throughout her own secret rooms. Her laughter echoed along the walls while I read below the bay windows. At times, my daughter would reveal her own secret rooms in the house to me, but other times she would disappear for hours on end. I was never worried, knowing that the house was always keeping her safe. Plus, I could always sense her close by as I would place my palms against the smooth surface of the wall. Two faint pulses would respond to my touch.

As I began to age, I felt the house transforming in such a way that reflected my daughter more than myself, which I cherished witnessing.

The house was a home to us both.

I still read and spent time in my favorite secret room. My daughter would often join me, even though she had her own hidden room, one that she accessed through the attic and was full of her books.

I remember the day she came to me, and brought me into her secret room, the one that I had only frequented a handful of times over the years. This space was her home within the home. It was in this room that she revealed her secret to me, one that would eventually transform her in way. The walls around us seemed to hug us close that night, as we lay in her room, hidden from the outside world.

As I could feel my days coming to an end, I spent many of them in my secret room, whispering to the walls all of my thanks for the years of care and love. For not only allowing me to change it as a response to my own changes, but for becoming-with me. For being the home that helped raise my daughter, and created a place for her. For allowing her to feel as though she could be who she truly is inside this home.

And so as my eyes grow heavy with my palms resting against these walls, I go slowly, feeling their soft pulses, knowing that my daughter will be okay.

STORY NOTES // DOLLHOUSE FOR MY DAUGHTER

Step into my dollhouse

Why am I choosing to investigate, dissect, split, and queer the doll house?

The doll house is a sectional display, always from a privileged and omnipresent point of view, of staged events that are both an architectural and social framework. Through the doll, we are encouraged to “play” out our desires and feelings. The doll becomes the projection of potential self. The doll house therefore is the space of the mirror. In this doll house, the doll is contained by the decor, by the division of space, by usage.⁶⁸ The house is compartmentalized, like gender roles. Spatial territories are cut by family members of the house into “man space,” “women space,” “girl space,” and “boy space.”⁶⁹ Certain spaces call for certain programs, and therefore certain (gender) roles.

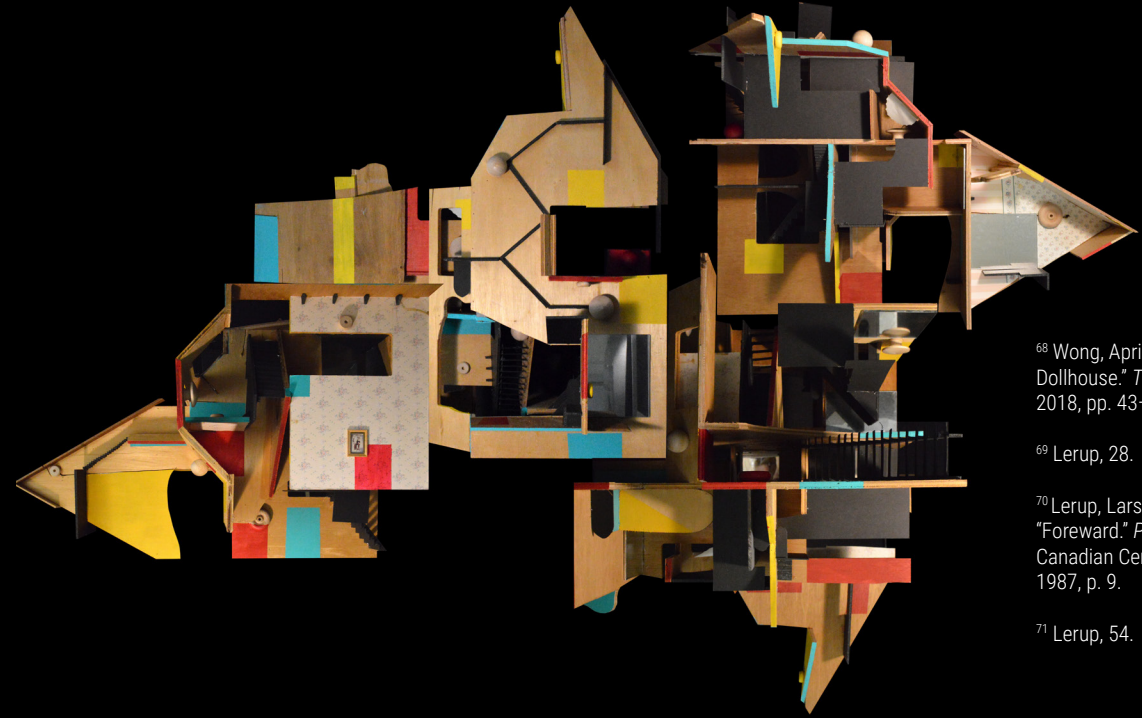
The doll house is bounded. What lies in the doll house that cannot be seen? It is the first place of performance dictated by the give space. The splitting of the house reveals the secret of the house. Splitting disorients the function and the completeness. The house becomes fragmented, unbounded.

The Queer Doll house acts as a “house” that “relates to states of being rather than to the physical reality of use.”⁷⁰ Spaces and therefore roles are not contained but flow from one to another in nonlinear ways.

Disorientation becomes a way to get here. The house functions in several orientations. What was a set of stairs in one orientation becomes shelving, built-in shelving, a wall fluctuation in another. Lerup’s and Duchamp’s notions of “traps” emerge throughout. Fan blades still create air on a sideways wall, but become an obstacle to maneuverer. By changing the orientation of an object, like Marcel Duchamp’s *Trebuchet*, the object becomes liberated from its expectations of form and function. By placing the readymade coat hanger on the floor, the universal functions erodes as a new tripping hazard emerges. “The form appears between the hook and the fang, yet the figure never quite leaves. The connection between object, language, and human behavior is fluid.”⁷¹ Lerup challenges the handrail similarly in his project, *The NoFamily House*. When a handrail appears high off the ground, out of reach for the hand, what does it become? When the handrail creates its own trajectory, not following the contour of the opening in the floor, how does coordination between hand and foot change?

Stairs and doors lead to nowhere and yet everywhere. There is always a hint of continuation of space and depth. Thresholds, stairs, apertures. What lies beyond the drawn curtain? In a traditional doll house, thresholds between contained spaces cease to exist. What is the point when the performer does not need them? The omnipresent point-of-view erases the threshold.

In this particular story, I see that it is hopeful, something I wish to pass on to the next generation, whether it is actually to my own daughter or not. I would pass it on to my younger self. I know that I would have loved to play with this.



⁶⁸ Wong, April. “Casting the Dollhouse.” *The Site Magazine*, 2018, pp. 43–51.

⁶⁹ Lerup, 28.

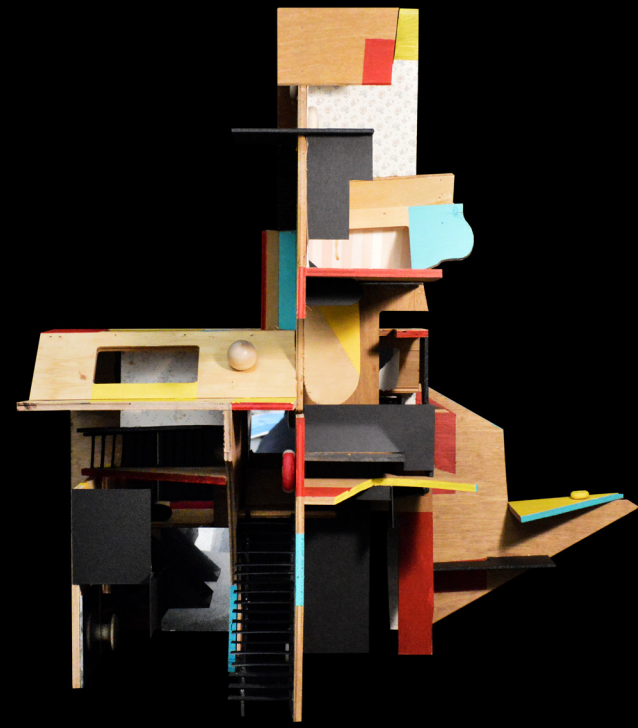
⁷⁰ Lerup, Lars, and Phyllis Lambert. “Foreward.” *Planned Assaults*, Canadian Centre for Architecture, 1987, p. 9.

⁷¹ Lerup, 54.



As it continues to transform.

Michelle Hook, 2019.



Elevations of the Queerhouse.

Michelle Hook, 2019.

(Right) Final transformation (for now).

Michelle Hook, 2019.



FICTION 3 // MOTHER (H)EARTH *a collaboration with Amelia Jarvinen*

Step into my mother Queerhouse

The home has always been part of our human cycle. At first, as a passive participant, housing and nurturing our children as they grow, sheltering us from the elements of the Earth, and providing an inhabitation of desire, of warmth, and of companionship. The home has always been a second skin - a machine for living in.

As we evolved together with our homes, our bodily boundaries began to extend and blend. Our bodies became systems, cybernetic - posthuman machines. Their bodies became organic, warm, pulsing flesh. Eventually, reproduction of the human was outsourced to our larger bodies of the home(n).

This is how our walls got pregnant.

This is how we became (s)cyborgs.

This is how mother (h)earth was born.

The first time I thought about you, about making you, I sat alone near the hearth of our homen. The fire in the walls warmed my aching soul, the soft texture pulsed and embraced my body as I sat with my head between my squeaking knees and shed salty droplets from my spectacles.

Em-Scy found me like this hours later. That night we did it. This is how you came to be.

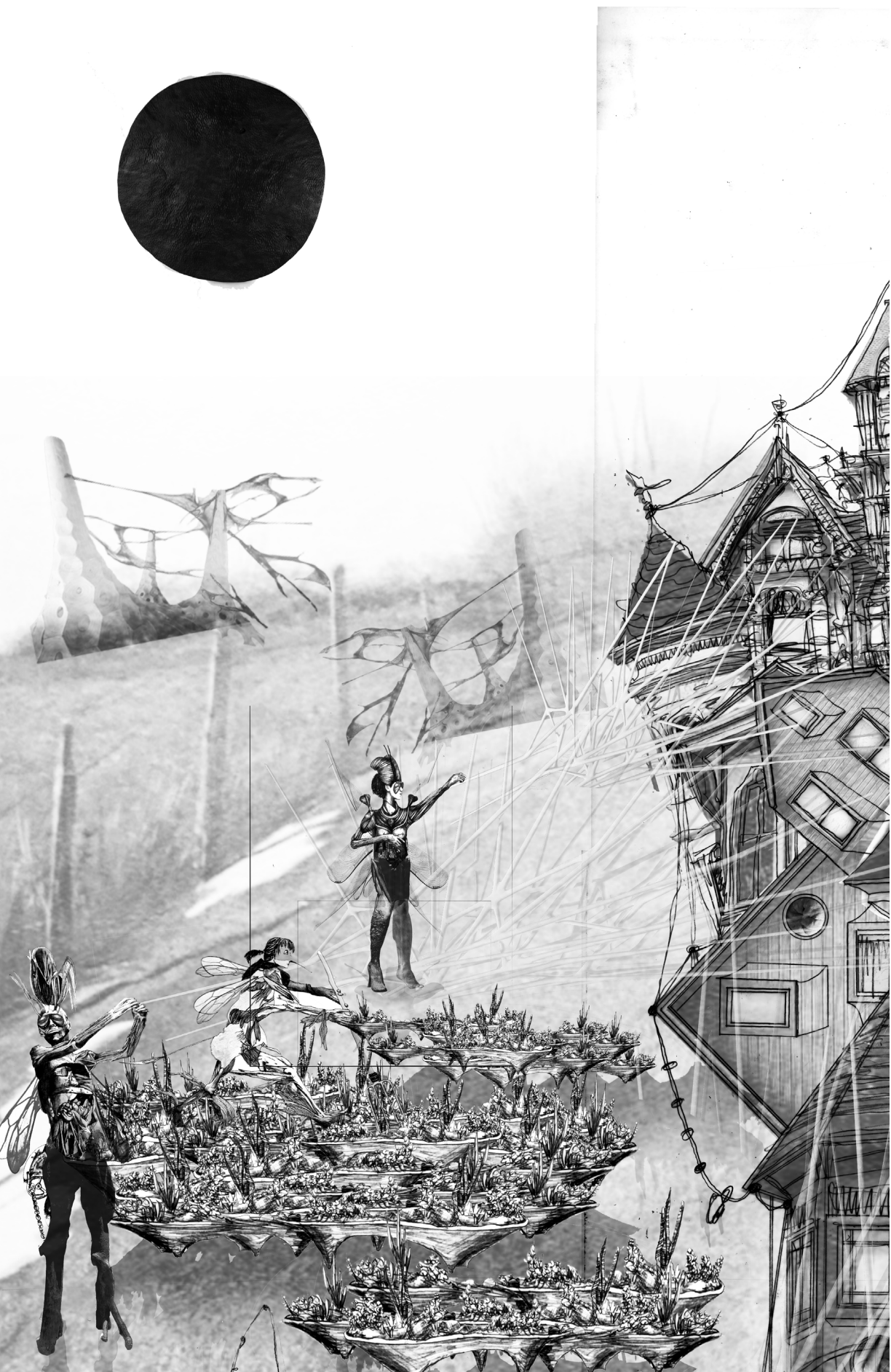
The ritual calls for a little bit of me, a little bit of Em, and the embrace of our homen. I had saved my tears from earlier, knowing that they would become useful for you. They carry love, empathy, and fluidity. Em shared their oil, and therefore shared their thirst for adventure, their curiosity, and their perceptive mind. Together, tears and oil swirled in the urn we've never used before. It was the kind of vessel meant to be on display, never to touch actual substances. We poured the fluids into the fire of the hearth, placed the urn on the shelf above, and sat waiting for the flames to slowly burn out.

Weeks passed as I constantly put my ear to the walls, listening for a new pulse to make throbs among the familiar one of our homen. We made sure to keep a slow burn in the hearth, encouraging you to appear. It wasn't until later that month, while we were both asleep in the loft, that I awoke suddenly to a soft, but fast beating in the walls below my head. I rushed down to the hearth to find the first hints of the walls bulging. A faint throb glimmered in the low light of the fire. You were here. You grew steadily through the coming months, as did the enduring fire in the hearth. Work didn't require our presence during this period, so we put all our time and energy into you and our homen. I spent hours sitting by your fire singing songs of our ancestors to you. Em fed you both small drops of honey from the bee garden, gently smudging the sweet, sticky nectar into the walls around your bulge. I trimmed our homen's overgrown extents outside to keep them healthy. We spent time every day chopping wood from the forest to keep your fire growing.

The walls began secreting plum and rose oils. We collected the oils and found that they soothed our joints, softened our hairs, and warmed our bellies. Our homen needed extra support while carrying

The Cycle of the Homan, 1.

Story and collage collaboration
with Amelia Jarvinen, 2019.



FICTION 3 // MOTHER (H)EARTH *a collaboration with Amelia Jarvinen*

you. We knitted a sticky web from the nearby silkworms and staked it to the ground to alleviate pressure points. Inside, the walls needed space to breathe so we pulled our surfaces away and took down our bookshelves. We kept our favorite books in a pile by the hearth to read aloud at night. We always hoped you were listening with your ears and feeling with your heart.

Eventually, the walls were bulging so much that we had to move most things out of the homen entirely, leaving them near the garden. We started sleeping next to the hearth with our heads against the squishy texture of the walls, enveloped by you and our homen and the fire. We were both outside readjusting the web of knots when we felt the homen seize up and heard the walls creak and groan. Dropping the threads from our grip, we ran inside to find the fire was entirely out, aside from a few smoldering chunks of wood. It was time. You were coming.

We massaged the walls, sang our sweetest songs, mopped up the excess oils, and after several long hours of the homen tensing and unwinding, you made your way through the hearth to us. We rubbed the oils all over your body to ease the pain of this new world. We couldn't believe it, you were finally here.

After three months in our world, you formed spectacles so that you could finally see us and that which surrounds you. The homen continued excreting plum oils to shine your new parts and its walls slowly absorbed back into place. The fire in the hearth was back to a slow burn. At six months, you sprouted your first set of braced limbs to enable mobility. We sustained your hunger with a mixture of honey from the garden and oil from the homen. We began moving things back inside and replacing the shelves on the walls. Reading to you from these shelves became a daily ritual. At nine months your neck extended to augment your view of the world. The walls that were once bulging had nearly returned to their original shape, sturdy and slim. We untied the knitted web from the structure, but left the stakes in the ground as a reminder. At one year we gave you our family chest plate for your heart, which you diligently shined with oils for many days to come. We often found you playing near the fire, running throughout the homen and whispering to the walls. When the hearth was without flames, you would curl up in the void to sleep.

At three, your curiosity became vocal. You began asking about your existence, about where you came from. Em and I took turns walking you around the homen, looking for your fragments of prior existence. We showed you where the walls still had marks from expanding. They were most prominent near the hearth. We showed you the stakes in the ground with remnants of the sticky web. You used all of your senses to discover the residue. We described to you how the homen carried you in the first part of your life. You'd ask where we came from, and if this homen had carried us too. No, but we came from other homens and other scyborg elders.

We often heard your giggles coming through the walls, as if you'd somehow crawled back inside. There were times when I couldn't find you, but I could hear you and feel you. Then you'd reappear close the hearth. I suspected the homen allowed you back in at times. Sometimes, I'd press my hands against the walls, and whisper my love to homen for carrying you, and caring for you. But also to express my worries that you might not come back out, even though you always did.

The Cycle of the Homan, 2.

Story and collage collaboration with Amelia Jarvinen, 2019.



FICTION 3 // MOTHER (H)EARTH *a collaboration with Amelia Jarvinen*

As you grew older, you asked harder questions about the role that the homens played in your creation. I'd tell you about our ancestors, and how they use to be the ones to grow and carry new ones, but that a divide existed among those that "housed" new ones and those who didn't. I didn't have an answer when you asked why this divide existed, or why it was those who carried that seemed inferior.

I did tell you how our ancestors used to only be made of warm flesh that was vulnerable and decayed. And that our homens were only made of metal, which was cold, rigid, and without life. At some point, that changed and we became intertwined. We now embody both materials. I told you how in that transformation, the homen took on the sacrifice of growing and carrying, helping us with our own reproduction. In this sacrifice, they gained the ability to transform themselves, gaining agency.

We were liberated from carrying, and therefore liberated from our division. You asked if there was a division among homens. I responded to you, no, because every homen can carry for every scyborg. In return, the scyborg cares and nurtures the homen. There has always been a mutual understanding. That night you nestled in the cavity of the hearth, even though it had been a couple years since you had last done so. I fell asleep hearing your whispers and giggles travelling through the walls once more.

There came a time when you were old enough to couple with another scyborg. Their name was Lun-Scy, and eventually they came to live in our homen. Em and I had grown older by this point, and our joints required far more oiling. Our matching chest plates were tinted and dented with age while yours still shone brilliantly. We enjoyed the company of Lun as they got to know our homen. Together, you took on the brunt of the work caring for homen, allowing Em and I to spend more days in the sun and garden. We laughed with surprise the day we came in to find you and Lun curled up in the hearth. Your whispers bounced throughout.

I remember the evening you told me you wanted one, a new scyborg that was part you, part Lun, and part homen. I shed salty tears, as did you, which you then collected for the ritual. Em and I spent that night outside with our hands pressed into the ground and our spectacles trained on the moon. We hummed with the earth beneath us.

Together, we waited over the next few weeks for a new pulse to appear. My ears weren't as susceptible as before and neither were Em's, so we used our hands to feel for the beat. We would find you and Lun inside the hearth at night, with whispers so low that I couldn't hear them, but I could still feel them.

After a few months had passed without a beat, you tried again.

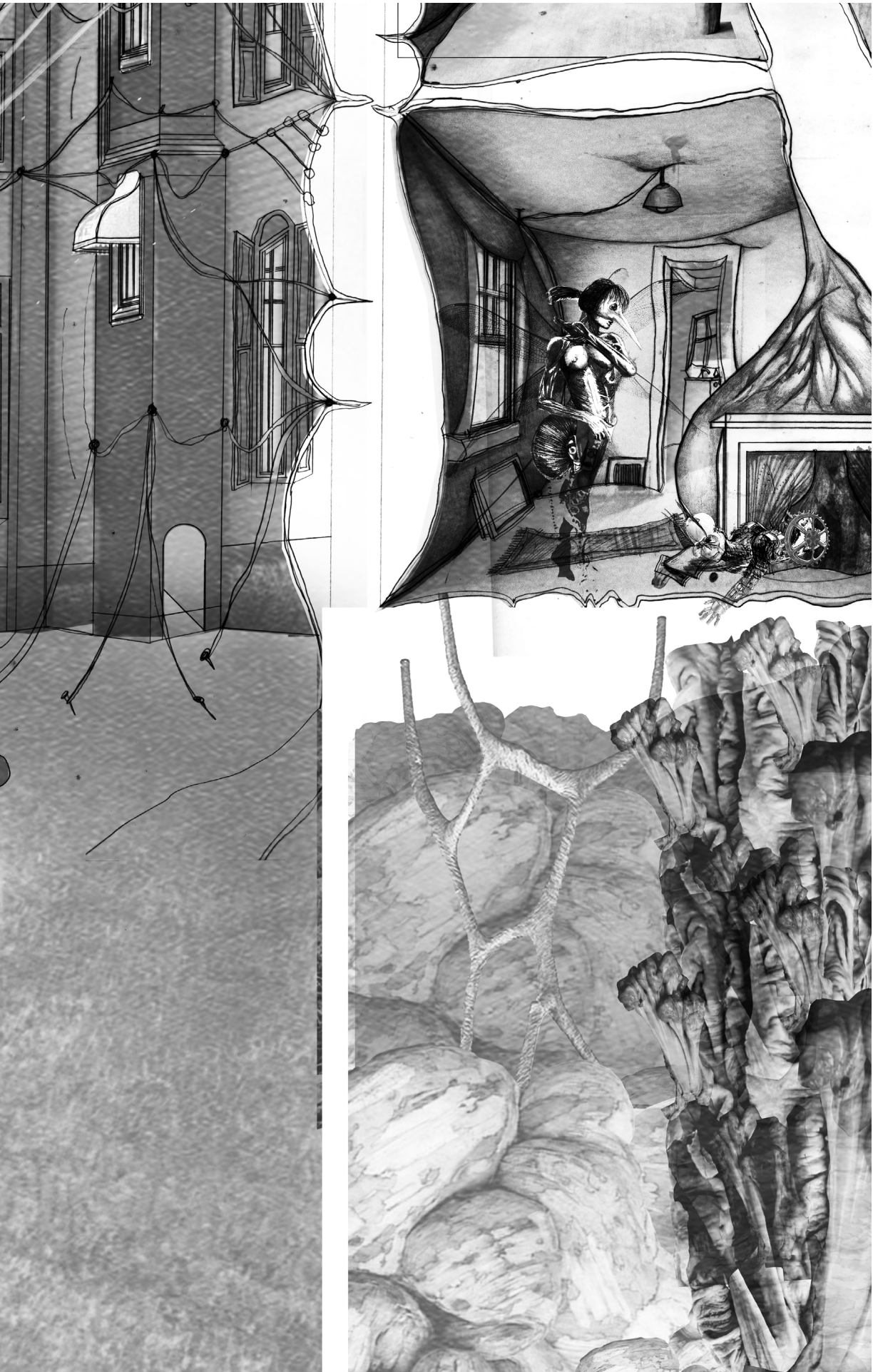
A new beat never appeared.

Em left us to return to the earth sometime after. I could feel that I was close to this departure as well.

On my last night in homen, I heard something that I hadn't in many months. Laughter and giggles echoed through the walls. And then, there it was, a new beat emerged, faintly at first, then stronger. With the small amount of energy left in me, I rushed to the hearth to look for the new bulge.

The Cycle of the Homan, 3.

Story and collage collaboration with Amelia Jarvinen, 2019.



FICTION 3 // MOTHER (H)EARTH *a collaboration with Amelia Jarvinen*

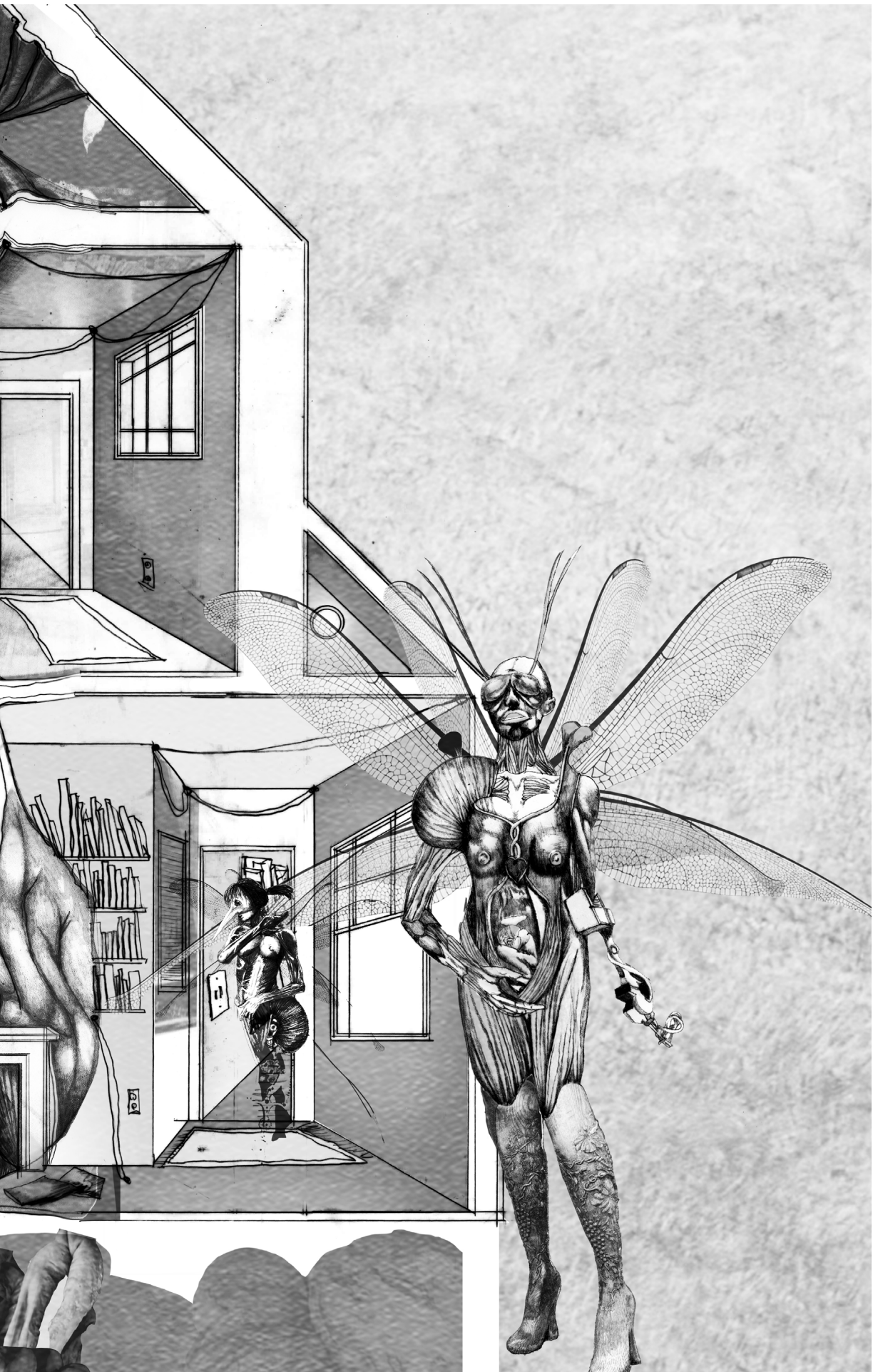
Lun stepped out from the hearth first, and then you followed. I looked to the walls but saw that they were still sturdy and slim.

It was then that you brought my hands to your chest so that I could feel the new heartbeat, one that wasn't coming from inside homem, but instead, it was coming from inside you.

This is how the scyborg got pregnant.

The Cycle of the Homan, 4.

Story and collage collaboration
with Amelia Jarvinen, 2019.



STORY NOTES // MOTHER (H)EARTH

in collaboration with Amelia Jarvinen

⁷² Here we refer to Ursula LeGuin's "The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas," and N.K. Jemisin's "The Ones Who Stay and Fight." Both short stories refer to a utopia named Omelas, which inevitably unfolds into a dystopia, bearing suffering and pain to the child of Omelas. Thus, with these short stories as context, we must ask the question, who in this story becomes that child of Omelas? Who gets left behind in Utopia?

Le Guin, Ursula K. "The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas." *The Real and the Unreal Selected Short Stories of Ursula K. Le Guin*, vol. 2, Small Beer Press, 2012, pp. 1-7.

Jemisin, N.K. "The Ones Who Stay and Fight." *How Long 'Til Black Future Month?* Orbit, 2018. pp. 1-13.

The first time Amelia and I sat down to come up with this narrative, we immediately were intrigued with the idea of removing reproduction from the body. Why would we think to do this? The female body is one that, historically, has been subjected to countless onslaughts of contestation, not simply questions of agency, but questions and oppressions at the intersection of identity politics, race, class, social positioning, and the list goes on. Who gets to have a child? Who has the agency to choose whether they have a child or not? We see this as foundational to inequality. This particular dimension of the body, we argue, is the root of many of the oppressions we see, and is intimately linked with the idea of "home" - where intimate power inequalities are acted out and as the locus of much "social formating."

Thus we ask, what would happen if we were to displace this dimension of the female body to outside the "human" body? What if we were to house our wombs in the walls of our dwellings instead? And what if our dwellings were not constructions, so much as they were intimately linked with and formed from the earth? Would humans, then, take more care of the Earth that cares for a nurtures their unborn babies? And finally, who would be left behind in this scenario? Who is the child of Omelas?^{xx}

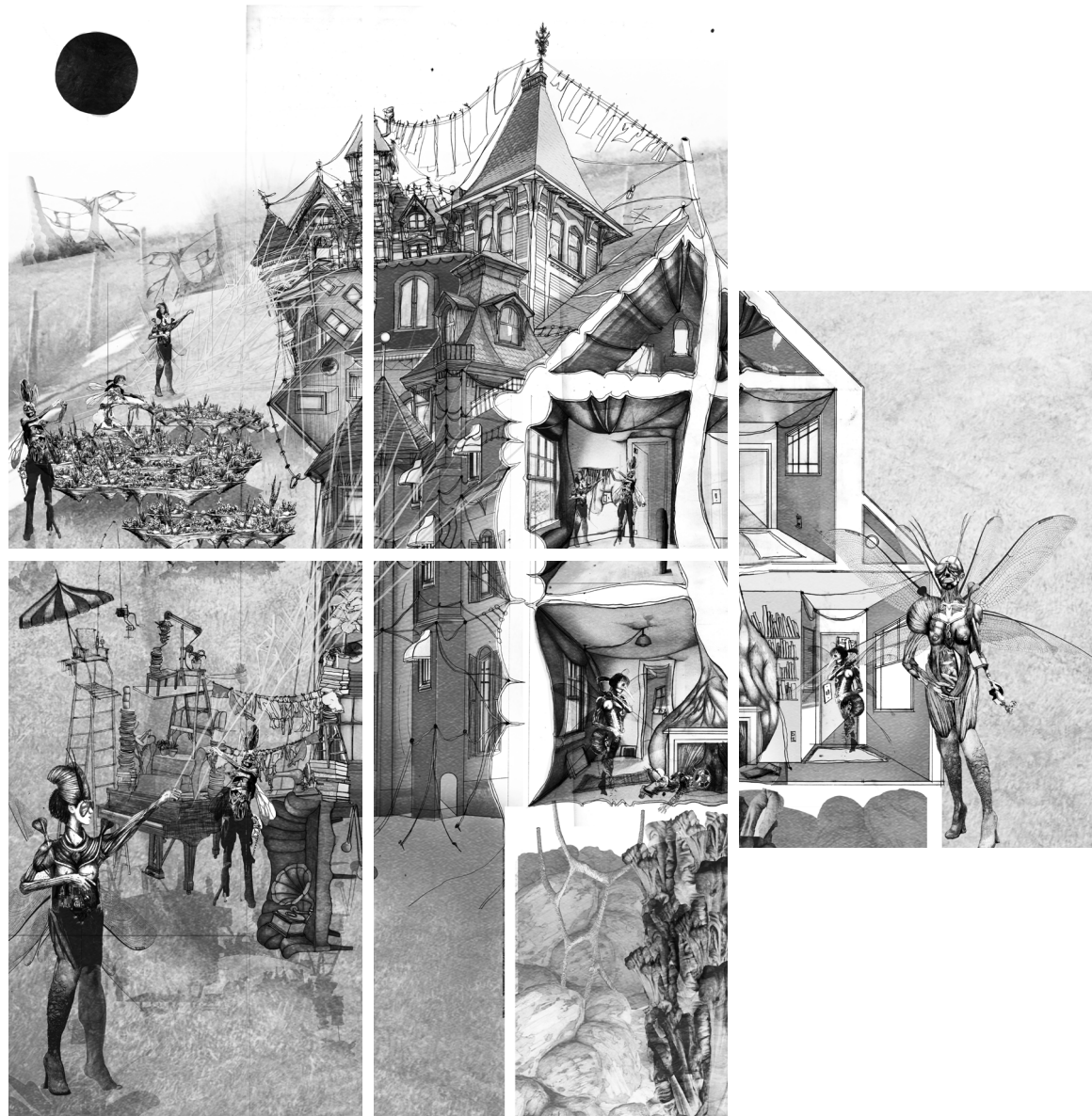
This series of questions leads to a few more. What are the new relationships between human and home? Where do their boundaries begin and end? How do they blend together?

The narrative is an attempt to answer these questions with speculative fiction. What can be learned from this kind of future?

The Cycle of the Homan, 5.

Story and collage collaboration with Amelia Jarvinen as an entry for Blank Space's Fairy Tale competition 2020.

More information can be found at <https://blankspaceproject.com/fairy-tales-2020-2/>

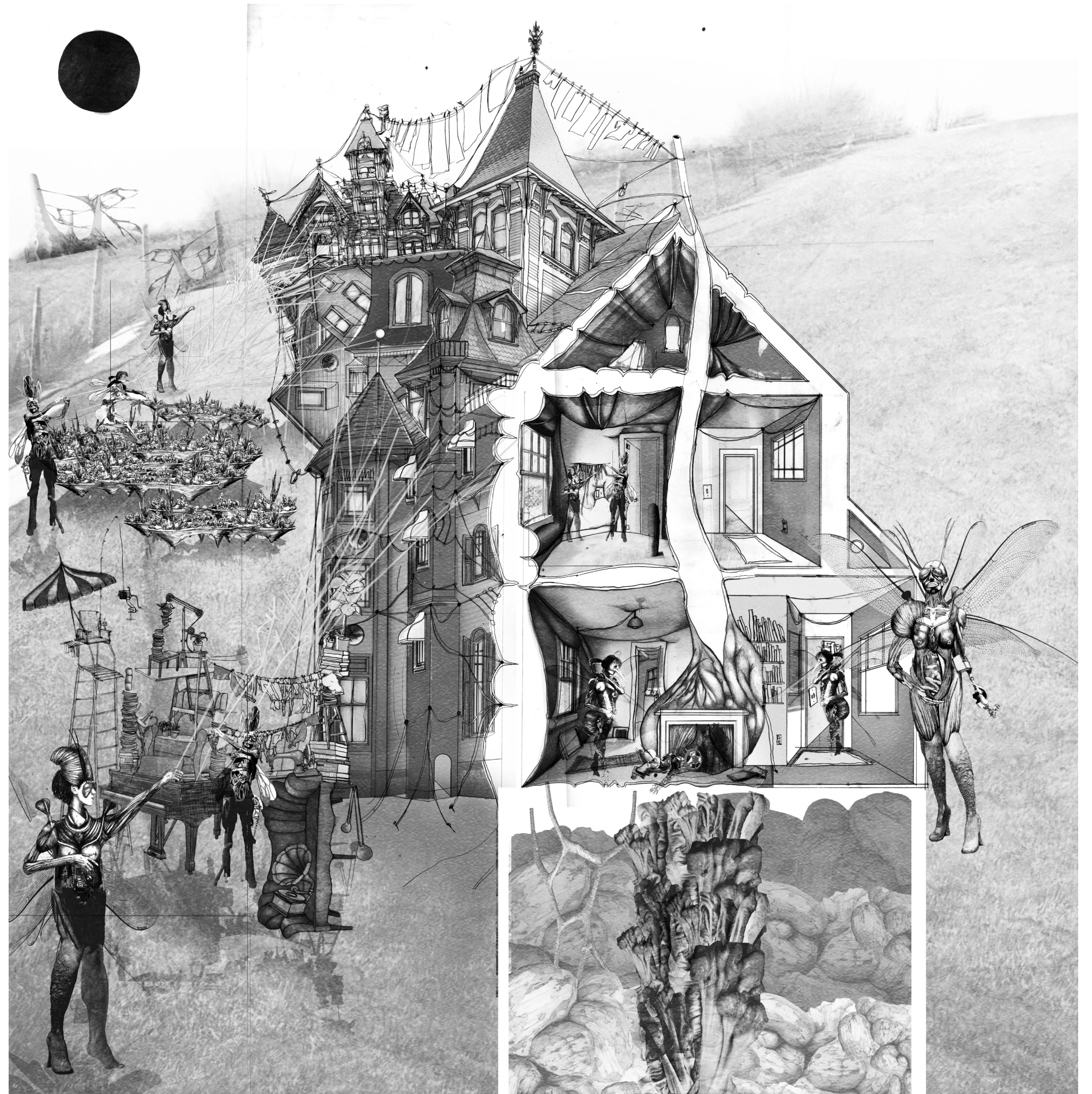


(Right) The Cycle of the Homan as fragments.

Collage collaboration with Amelia Jarvinen, 2019.

(Left) The Cycle of the Homan.

Collage collaboration with Amelia Jarvinen, 2019.





EPILOGUE // BECOMING

13 December 2019

I've come to this once blank page many times before, wondering how I'm supposed to write a conclusion on an investigation that doesn't seem to have a finite ending. If anything, I feel like I've just begun. Therefore, instead of a conclusion that answers all questions posed and perfectly wraps up this thesis, I'll write a reflection on the past few months, as well as speculate into the future (as I love to do).

This thesis feels as if it had started somewhere completely different in another galaxy far, far away from my own personal life here on Earth. While critiquing the ways of Earthly lives, I was able to distance myself from its core. How quickly that changed. I remember writing the first story about my mother's house. I didn't realize just how much I had inserted myself into this story until it became an emotional landscape that hit a little too close to *home*. I haven't visited her house in over a year, since before I began this investigation. This holiday season, I will be travelling back for the first time this year, and with my things packed, I bring my imagination of the underworld that now exists within this house. Even though I understand the fiction I created exists solely in my head (and as words on a page in this document), I can't help but feel that the space created is physical too. In writing that story, I've created the safe space I needed to exist and belong in that home. It's the small glimmer of hope that change is coming, for the better. I realize the necessity to allow myself to be vulnerable as part of this process.

And so, as the chapter comes to close, I write about becoming instead of finishing. A becoming as transformation. Becoming by fabrication. Becoming while also reflecting. Becoming while rewriting and reclaiming histories. Becoming through imagination. The point is not the end, but the way of getting there. These investigations of the queerhouse continue in various ways. Through Fairy Tales competition with Amelia. Through collaborations with Witch Architecture. And through every aspect of design, thinking, and being that has yet to come. What emerges is a process of storytelling and imagination through which I can both distance myself and place myself into the story as the main character. It took a great moment of disorientation to accept change and difference in a once rigid life. But with that disorientation come reorientation to a new way. Therefore, the process of always becoming continues.

P.S. 24 May 2020

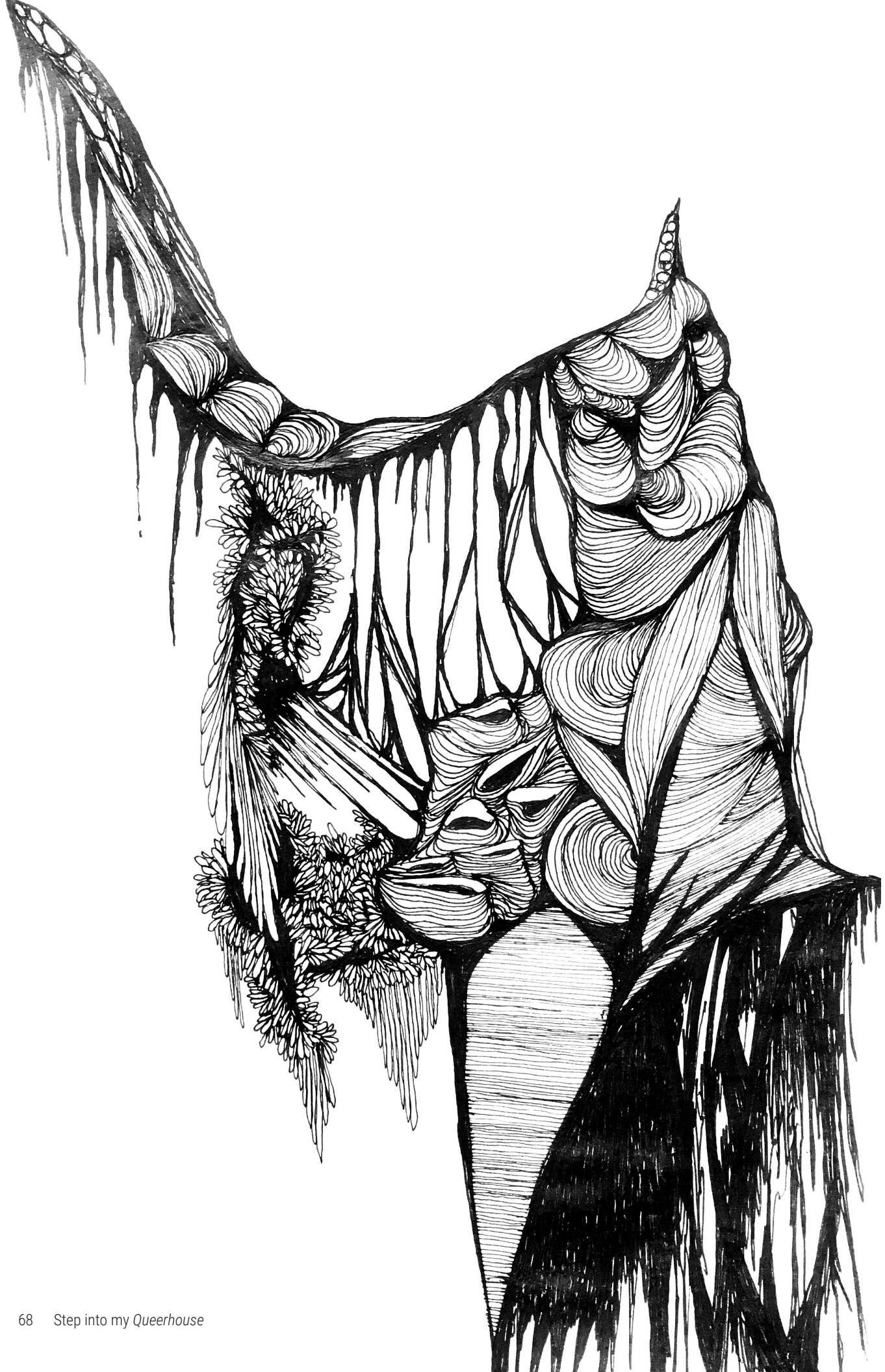
A lot has changed in the last five months since presenting this thesis and writing the previous reflection. For one, coronavirus. However, I won't spend much time on that here. On the other hand, I find myself living in a different country, on a different continent, redefining my home once again amidst the pandemic. I come back often to thinking of the way the home has been examined in this thesis and what it means to me as it continually changes. My mom has recently phoned me to say that she's thinking of moving away from the beige container to a farmhouse somewhere north. This new home, although it serves the same purpose of the beige container in being so unfamiliar to me, feels like a fresh start. It no longer represents the normalcy of one, rigid path, but rather a path that evolves and becomes new. My sense of home constantly changes, perhaps as it should.



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Images

- Figure 1, Thenhaus, Clark and Endemic Architecture. 2018, *Thenhaus No. 2*.
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- Figure 4, Darden, Douglas. 1993, *Oxygen House Composite Ideogram*.
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- Figure 6, Lerup, Lars. 1980, *The Nofamily House: The Insertation of Architecture*. Coloured pencil, graphite, ballpoint pens with blue and red ink and black ink, on white bristol board, 27.4 x 21.5. (CCA)
- Figure 7, Lerup, Lars. 1980, *The Nofamily House: Dissection; The Locus of the Family*, Coloured pencil, graphite, watercolour, wax crayons, and ballpoint pens with blue and red ink, on white bristol board, 39.4 x 47. (CCA)
- Figure 8, Lerup, Lars. 1980, *The Nofamily House: Dissection; The Locus of Architecture (Inside)*, Coloured pencil, graphite,

- watercolour, wax crayons, and black ink, on white bristol board, 39.4 x 47. (CCA)
- Figure 9, Lerup, Lars. 1983, *The Nofamily House: The Liberated Handrail*, Airbrush, black ink, and coloured pencil over a blackline Xerox print on white paper, 43.1 x 27.9. (LL)
- Figure 10, Lerup, Lars. 1981, *The Nofamily House: Axonometric from Under*, Black ink on vellum, 35.6 x 43.1 (CCA)
- Figure 11, Stock plans, no other complete information.
- Figure 12, Matta-Clark, Gordon. 1974, *SPLITTING Collage*.
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