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THE OPPELALAND

An Underground Refugee Theme Park in Aleppo

RUI BAO
ADVISOR: YUTAKA SHO

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ONE DAY IN OPPELALAND

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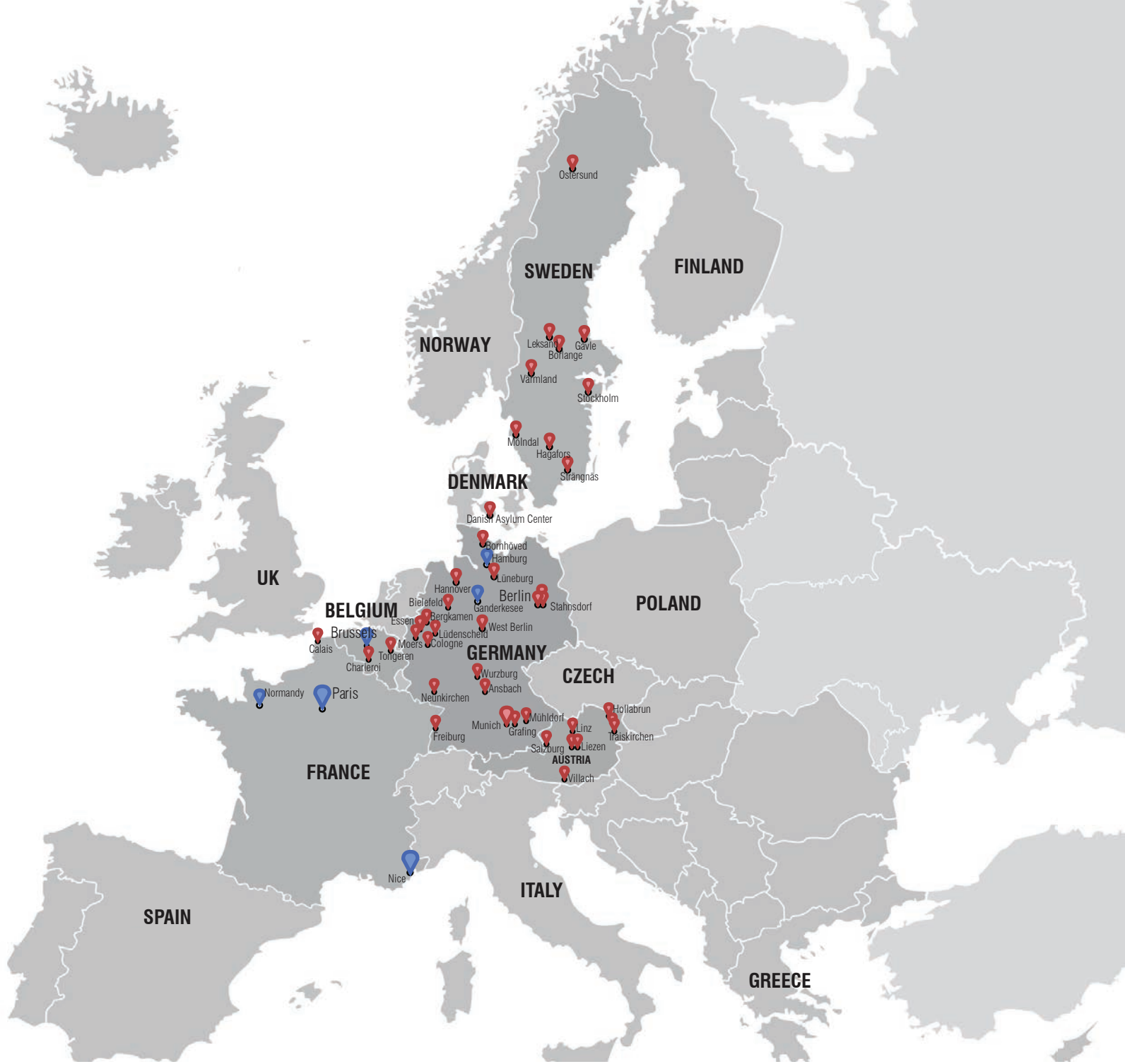
CONTENTION

This thesis operates on the perception of Syrian refugees as a threat and a burden to European countries by architectural means.

In emergency situations, architecture tends to act only after the conflict by providing temporary aid, such as refugee camps. This kind of emergency remedy displaces a large number of refugees to countries all over the world. Refugees may be discriminated and treated as second class citizens in the host countries. They may be restricted in small areas like prisoners rather than citizens with equal rights.

This thesis propose a hyper-real project in the form of "Refugeeland" to call attention on this problem and provoke the countries that secretly support or promote the Syrian war and reject to participate in betterment of refugees' livelihood. I presume that refugees are going to stay and imprisoned underground of their country. Tourists are going to visit this "Refugeeland" and have chances to experience to be "one".

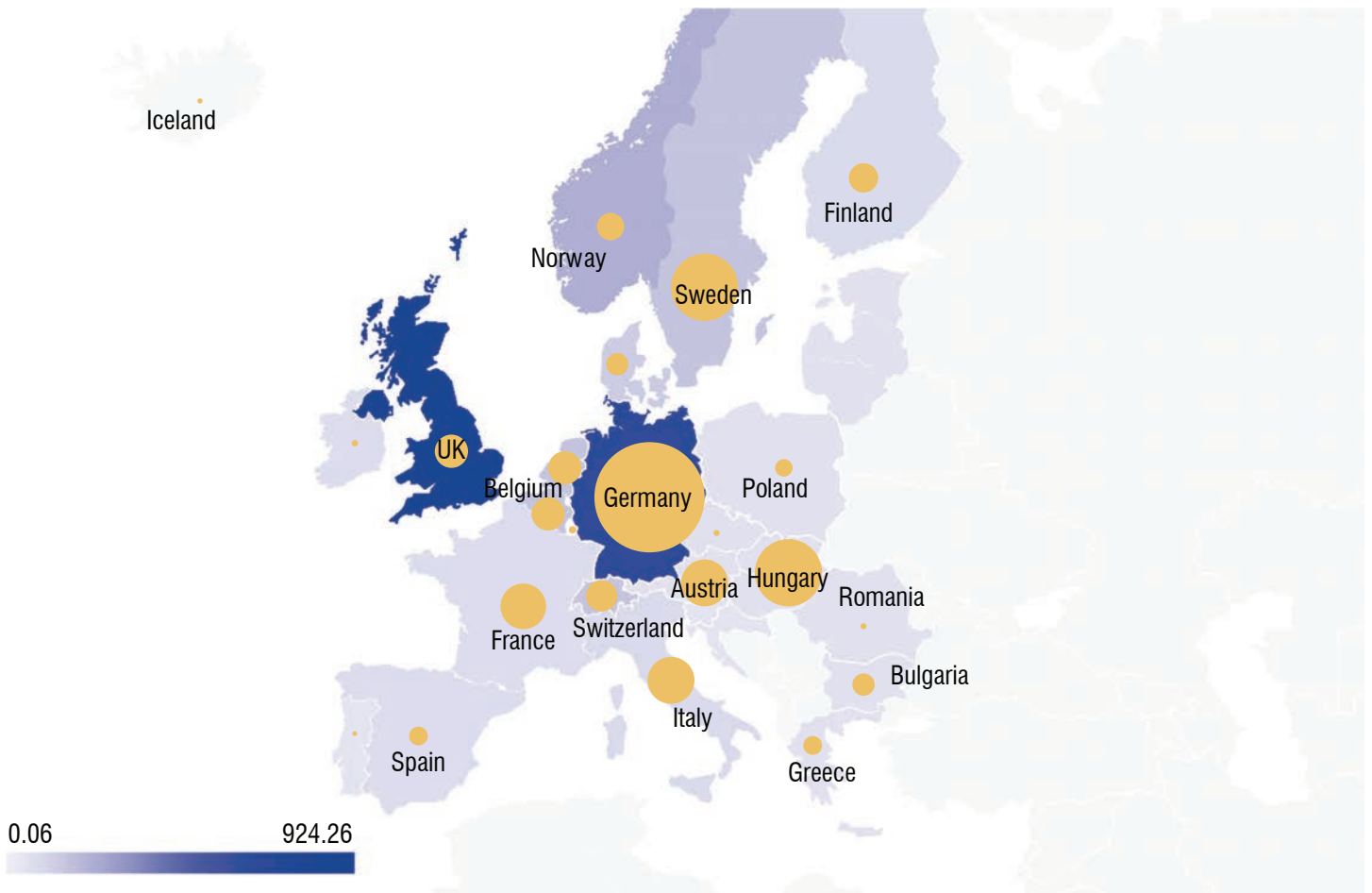




Refugee Crises in Europe

- 📍 Incidents caused by terrorists
- 📍 Incidents caused by refugees

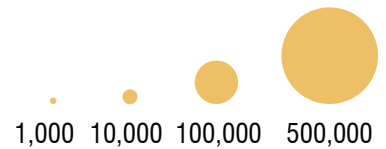
The refugee crisis has been witnessed continuously throughout Europe since 2015. The blue color shows the incidents caused by terrorists who posed as refugees to enter into Europe. And the red color shows the incidents caused by refugees. From this graphic, we can see Germany, Austria, Sweden happened a lot incidents through the past two years. That's because most refugees applying asylum in their country.



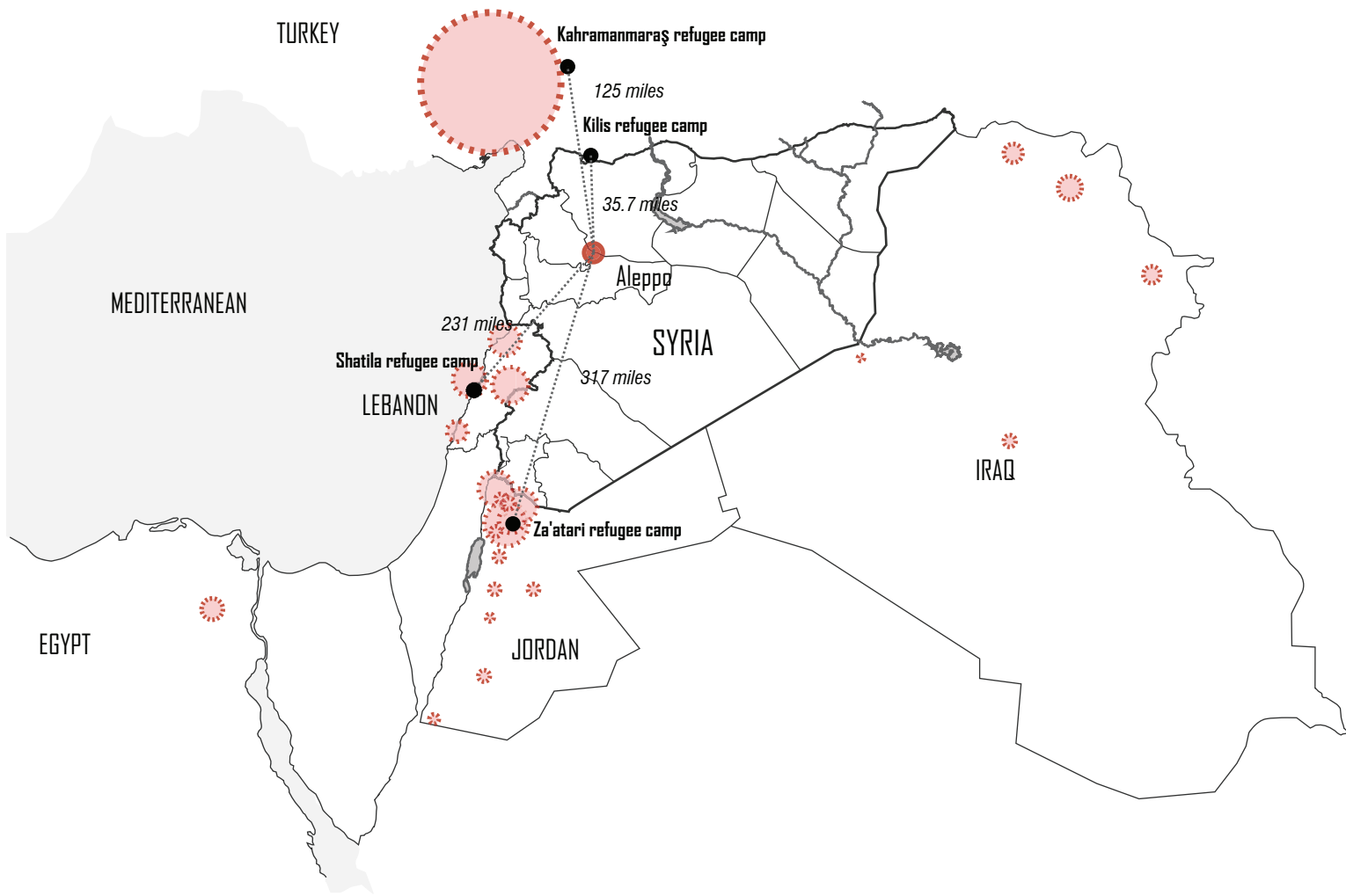
Humanitarian aid to Syria in million

Number of Asylum claims in Europe, 2015

Total EU Claims: 1,321,560



At the same time, European countries spend a lot of money to help refugees. Some countries would like to provide financial aid rather than let refugees enter into their country. The main reason that people flee to other countries is to escape the unsafe environment. Ironically, they become the "bad situation" in those countries.

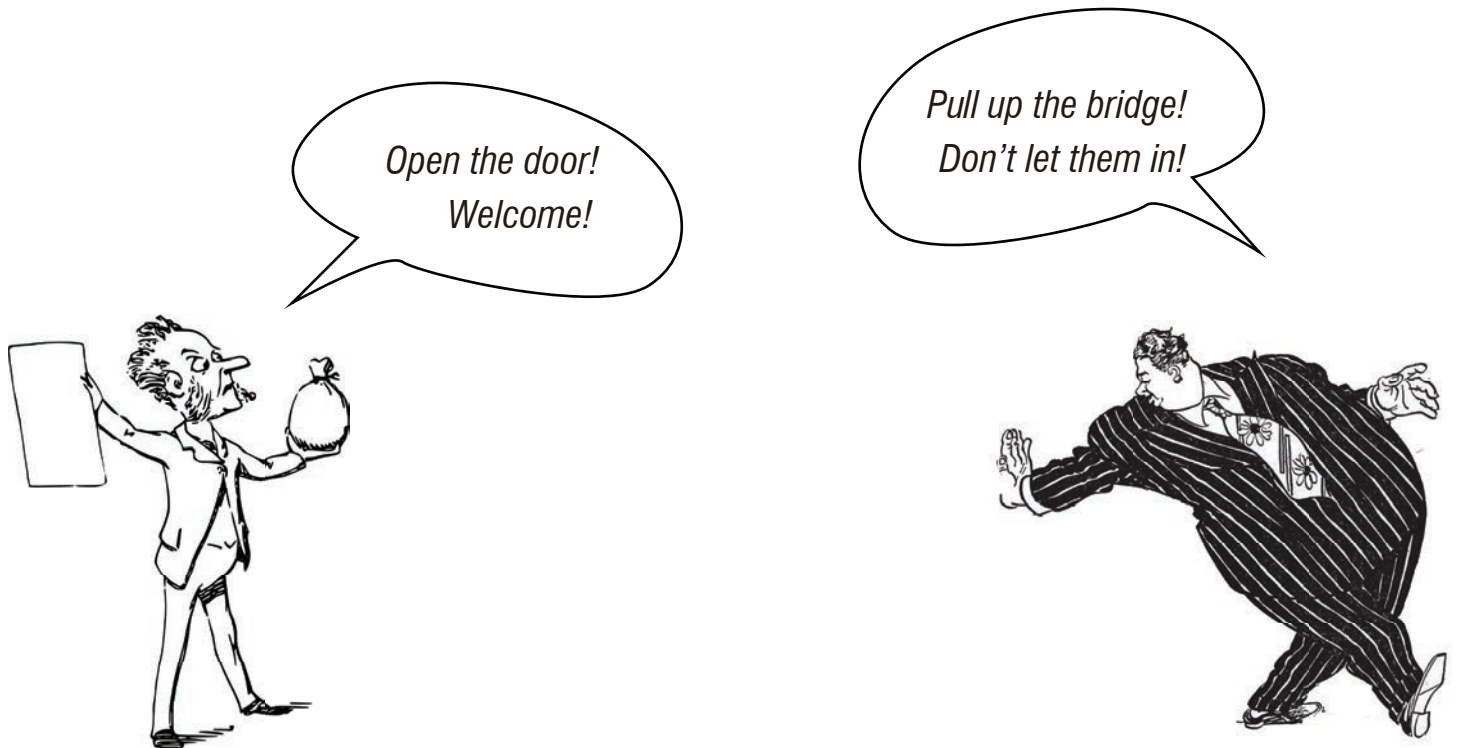


👤👤👤 The number of REFUGEES
According to data updated 25 Aug

Egypt	114,911
Iraq	239,008
Jordan	656,400
Lebanon	1033, 513
Turkey	2726,980

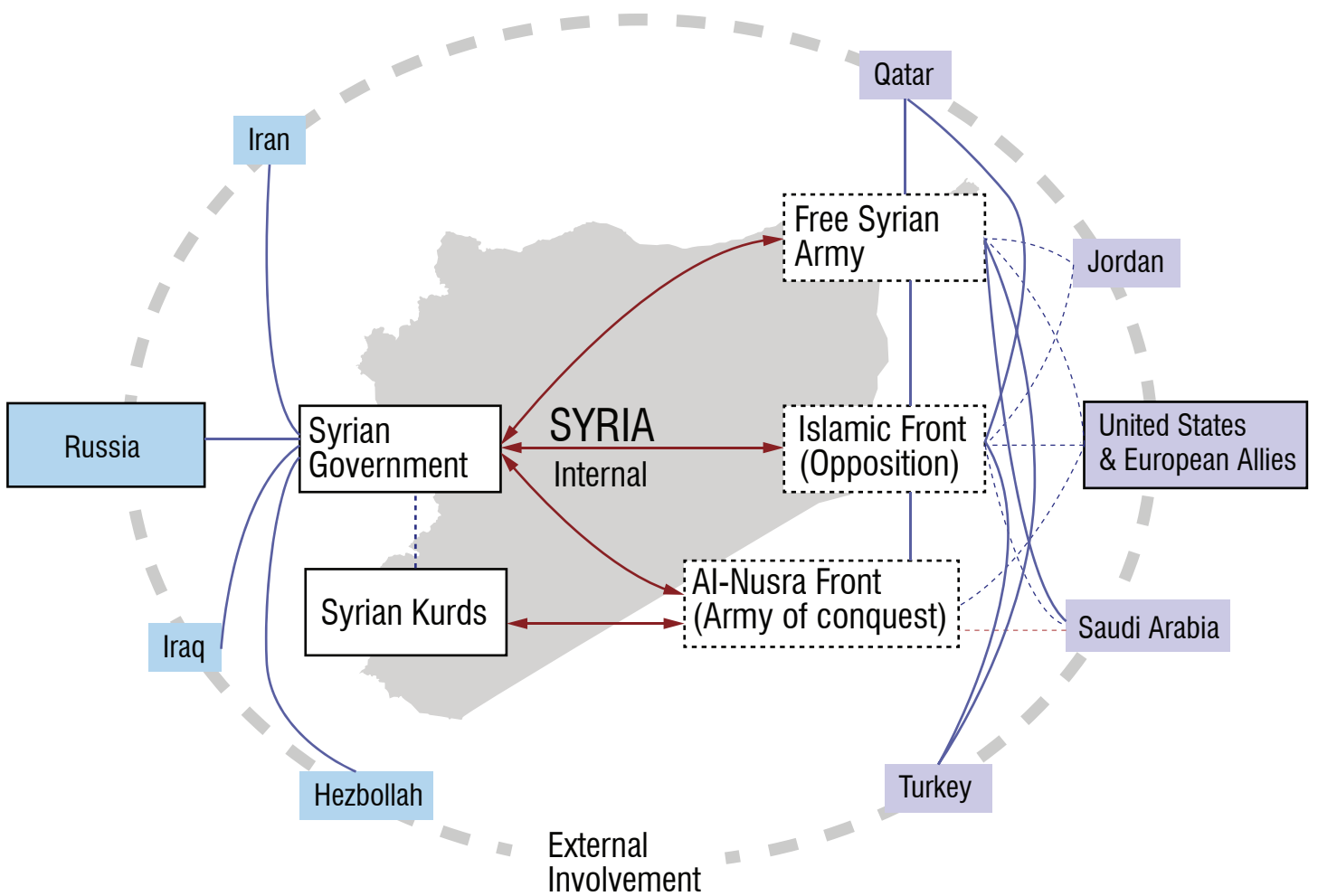
Syria is the major origin of people applying asylum in Europe. Since Syrian civil war happened in 2011, Syria became the major region of people applying asylum in Europe. UN estimates that more than five million refugees flee to Syria's neighbor countries. However, all the major refugee camps are settled into developing countries which near Syria rather than Europe.

Data from <http://www.takepart.com/article/2015/10/28/map-that-shows-how-huge-europes-refugee-crisis-really-is>



Zizek in his book "Against the double blackmail" mentioned, here are two solutions for refugee crisis: one is open our door as widely as possible, another is pull up the drawbridge. But both solutions are bad, he states, they merely prolong the problem rather than tackling it. In that case, why would we spend a lot of money to let them stay and pose Security threats to us.

So, I propose to create a new underground society for Syrian refugees in their own country and force them back.



Beyond the interior conflicts, there are a lot of countries involved into this complex situation. The Russian-led countries support Syrian government and fight against Syrian rebel army and US -led countries. The war had already become a world war rather than civil war. Because of the persistence of the conflicts, to construct buildings inside of Syria, the first element that should be considered is safety.

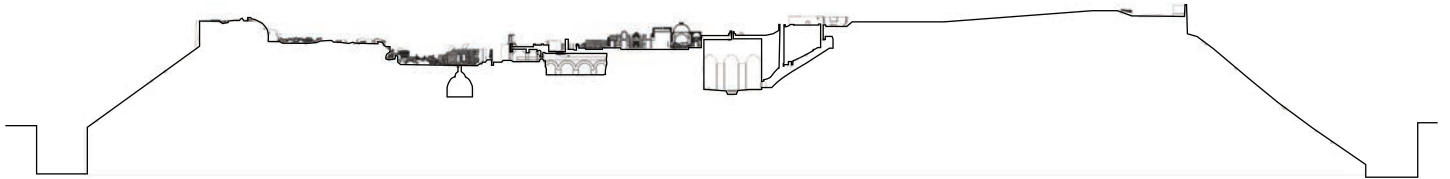
Architectural Types

To build buildings in side of Syria, the first element that should be considered is to deal with the conflicts which means safety is the most important issue.



The great citadel of Aleppo

<https://www.theguardian.com/cities/2015/mar/24/syria-war-citadel-aleppo-history-cities-buildings>



Section of the great citadel of Aleppo

Castle/Fortress

Castle or fortress are ancient, heavily protected and impenetrable building types.



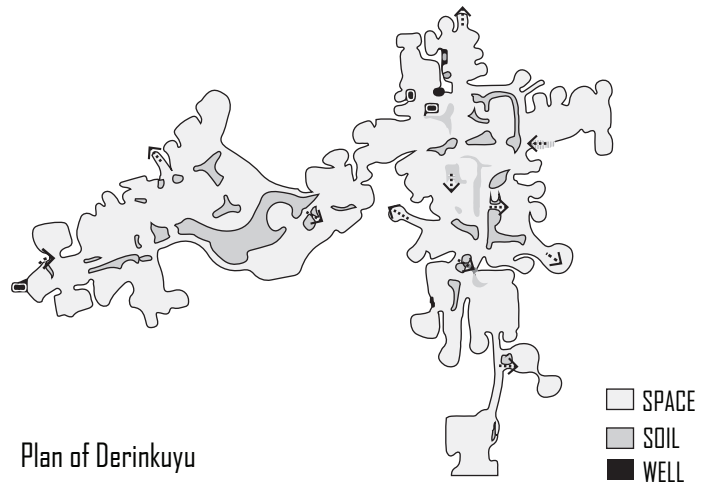
Section of Derinkuyu

<http://www.everythingturkish.com.au/culture/turkish-underground-city>



Derinkuyu

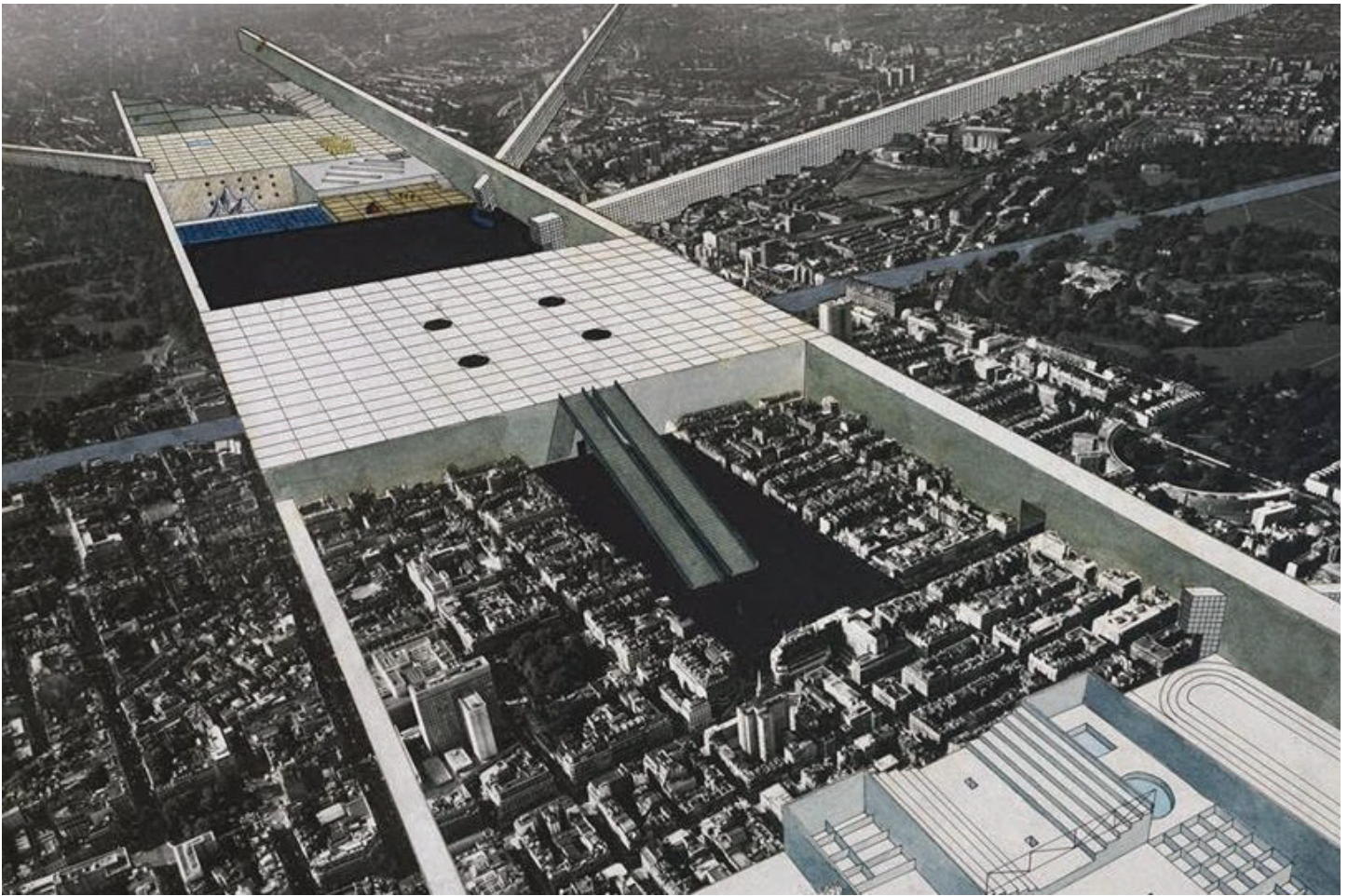
<http://www.everythingturkish.com.au/culture/turkish-underground-city>



Plan of Derinkuyu

Derinkuyu, Underground City in Turkey

Comparing to fortress or castle, underground tunnel is more suitable for today's situation, since people can avoid air attack or bombing in the underground shelters. The underground city in Turkey was to protect people from wars or bad situation. It is large enough to have sheltered as many as 20,000 people together with their livestock and food stores. People move all the normal life and social activities into the subterranean city during conflict time.



Koolhaas, Exodus

<http://humanscribbles.blogspot.com/2014/04/voluntary-prisoners-of-architecture.html>

Koolhaas, Exodus

"Once, a city was divided in two parts

One part became the Good half, the other part the Bad half.

The Wall was a masterpiece."

-- Koolhaas.

In this project, Koolhaas and his collaborators proposed a walled city within London as a way to create a new urban culture, one which would lead inhabitants to leave the rest of the city to fall to ruins. It is a metaphor for existing social and architectural conditions in which, in pursuit of happiness and wealth in a capitalist society, white people go so far to imprison themselves to protect themselves from Bad side, like blacks, latinos and the poor.

Considering about the character of dynamic of ongoing war, the project should talk about impermanence, smaller size, fragments rather than permanent and metropolis. Like English architect Cedric Price emphasized the necessity of architecture as a question of time and not just a question of space.



Cadavre Exquis Lebanese

<http://work.ac/cadavre-exquis-lebanese/?tag=urbanism>

Cadavre Exquis Lebanese, Beirut, Lebanon

Lebanon shared the similar context with Syria. It is a country that has an ancient and tolerant land of history and culture, a complex web of religions, languages and sensibilities, and have been enduring several years Civil War.

However, as the cliché says, "the phoenix rose from its ashes and the city restored its bullet-scarred façades, blasting skeletons of the city and replacing them with hotels, restaurants, bars, cabarets, luxury boutiques, valet parking, all eager to restore Beirut's place as a choice tourist destination."

Once again, Beirut was the Paris of the East! The city of all sins!

The idea of reconstructing and promoting the city can be studied as an example for revitalizing Syria. Several projects designed by Solidere and scattered around the city Beirut. Borrowing good memories, culture and people favorite activities from the past to design projects is a good way to revitalized the city.

<http://www.thenational.ae/thenationalconversation/comment/through-western-eyes-beirut-is-perpetually-partying-or-at-war>



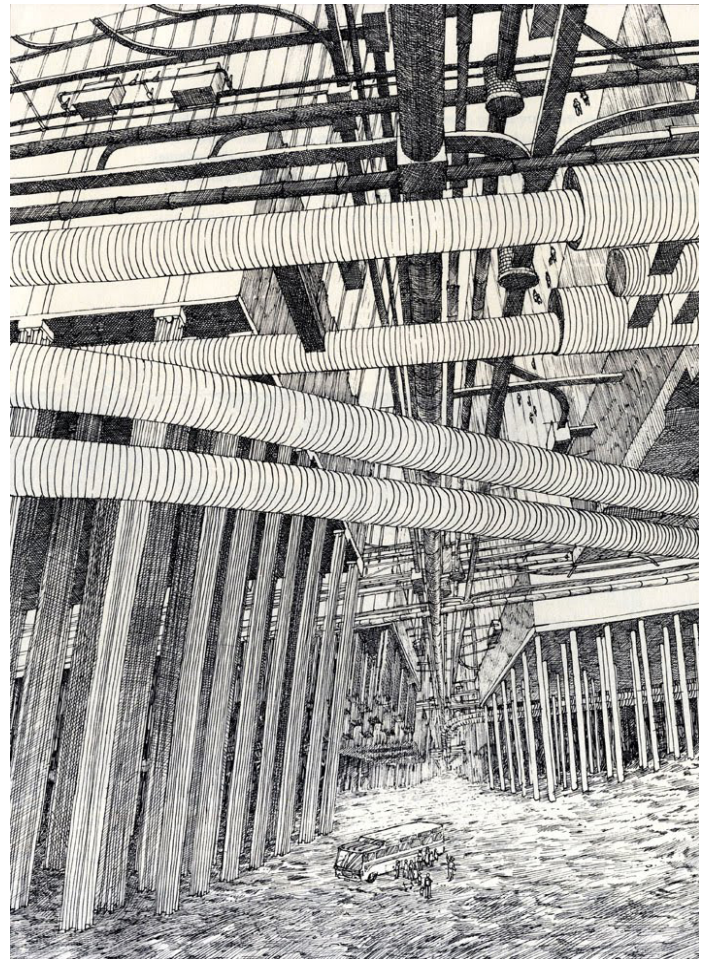
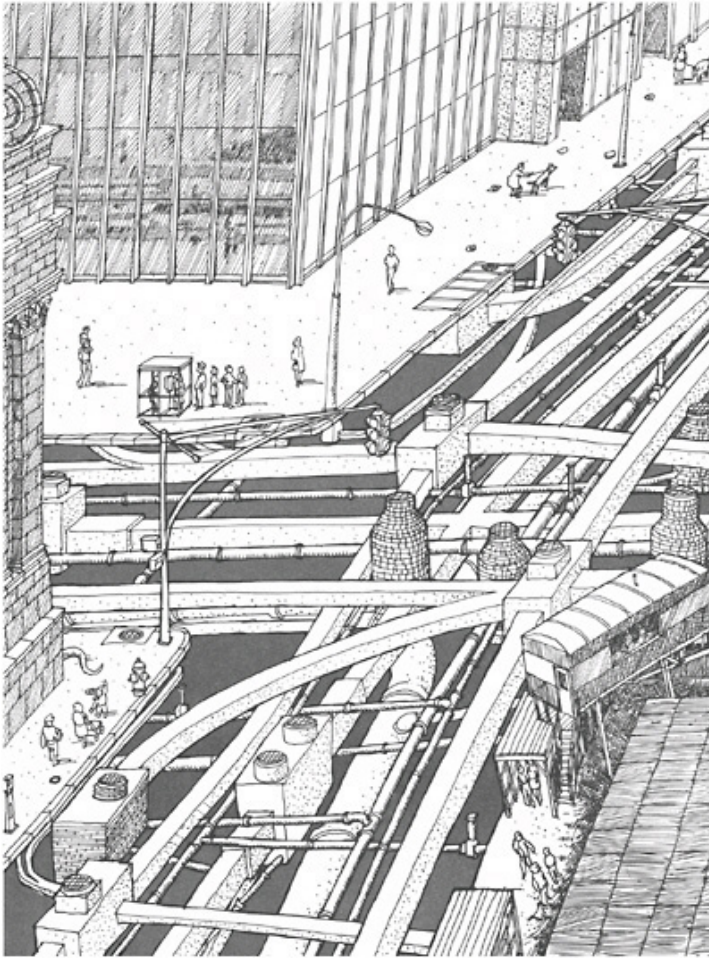
Bernard Khoury, BO18

<http://www.bernardkhoury.com/project.php?id=127>

BO18, Bernard Khoury, Beirut, Lebanon

BO18 is a music club designed by Bernard Khoury in Beirut port, it is a place of nocturnal survival.

BO18 refuses to participate to the naive amnesia that governs the post-war reconstruction efforts. This project addressed entertainment into an underground site. This underground club avoid the character of monument after the conflicts. And provide colorful life to local people to escape from the current situation.



Underground, David Macaulay

<http://boiteaoutils.blogspot.com/2010/09/underground-by-david-macaulay.html>

Underground, David Macaulay

Subterranean space as we know it has unfolded in a fairly benign manner: buildings were seen as a series of grafted limbs to an infrastructural sub-surface level, which holds networks of tunnels, sewers, pipes, and wires.

The layer of infrastructures can be recreated as new infrastructure layer for supporting living necessities to downtown and a layer which attach to the surface that can be enjoyed natural light and ventilation.

Programs

In regular refugee camps, because the amount of refugees is huge, the resources of host countries are rapidly consuming. Refugee camps cannot satisfy people with food, employment, school, and entertainment.



<https://www.newsdeeply.com/syria/articles/2016/05/19/against-the-odds-stories-of-survival-and-ingenuity>



https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zaatari_refugee_camp



<http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/fleeing-isis-tens-thousands-syrian-kurds-cross-border-into-turkey-1466641>



<https://chronicle.fanack.com/specials/refugees/refugees-war-syria/>

Proposal

Actually, war is a chance for both outsiders and refugees.
To stay in the room and enjoy the air attack happening around;
To sunbathe besides a "natural" pool;
And to enjoy the automatic vibration and roaring which brings by bombing in the club.
If this is life, then enjoy it.



HOME MADE & RESTAURANT



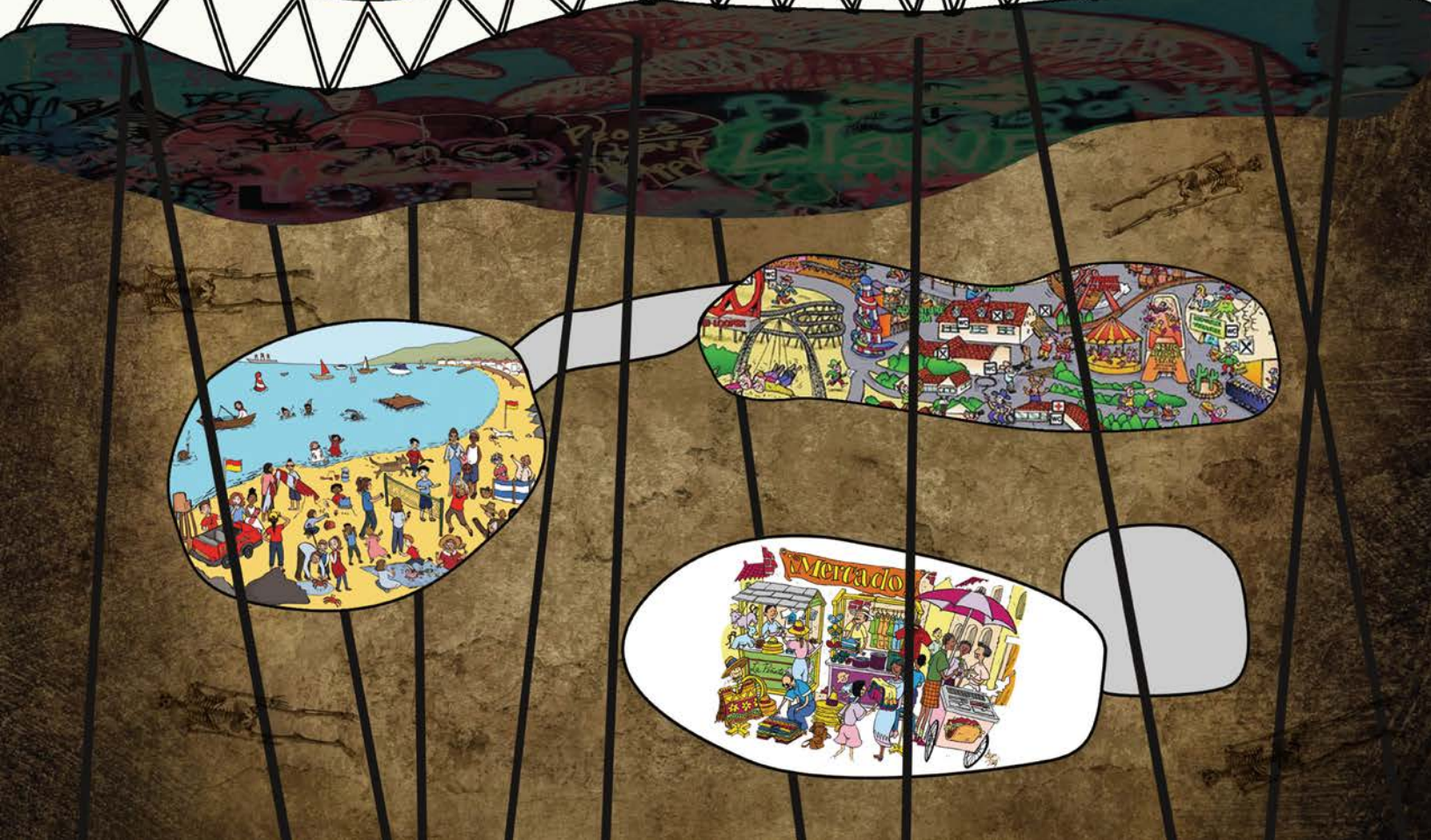
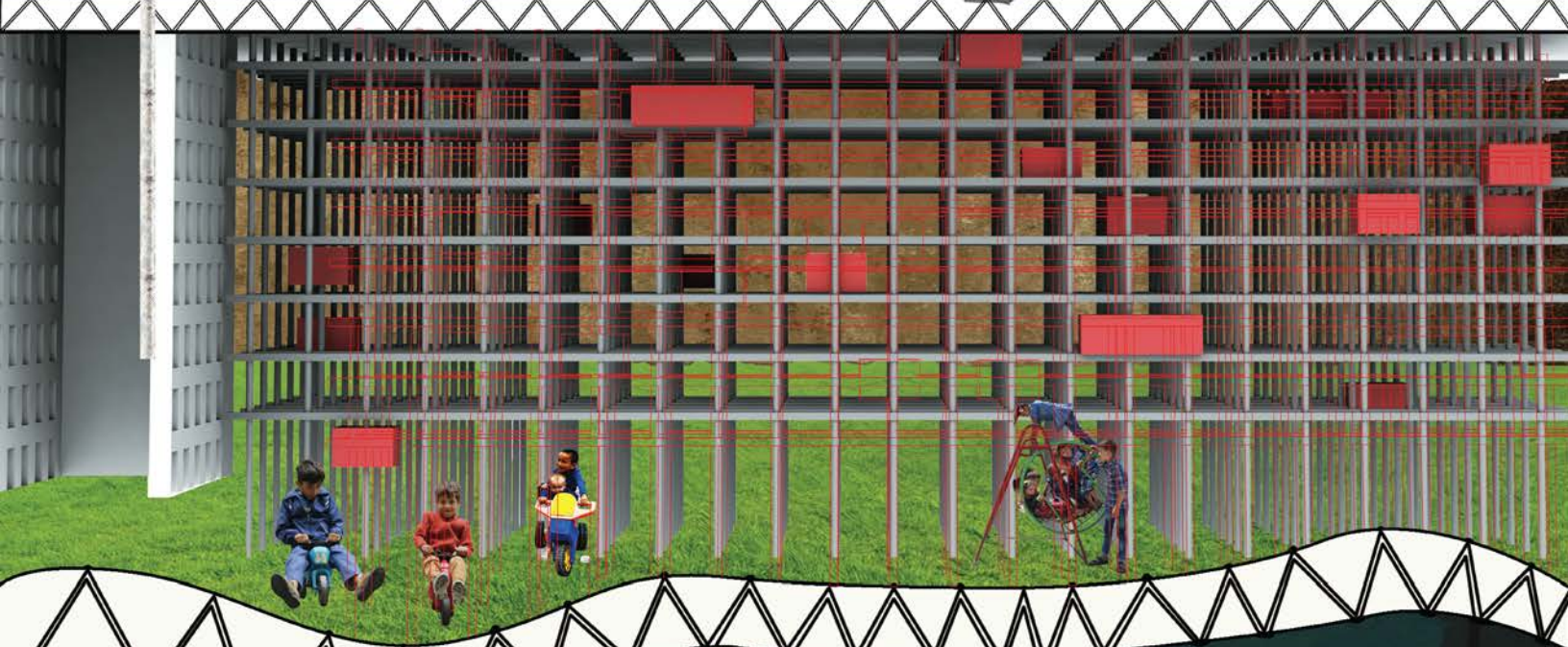
BAR & HAMMAM



PLAZA & NIGHTCLUB

Proposal

This project takes advantage of the war to create a theme park for tourists who are interested in refugee life and war tourism, at the same time, it creates a new society for Syrian refugees who must flee domestic and multinational forces fighting over their land. I called it Ooppelaland. Traditionally, city planning is in horizontal plane. However, the Ooppelaland will be re-organized in vertical direction. In this new land, tourists and refugees travel through different transportations, but they share air, space, water and food.



Site

Aleppo, the most populous city in Syria, acts as a testing site for this project. The old town in Aleppo includes a lot of famous heritage sites which are spiritual places for Syrians and populous tourists attractions for tourists. In my proposal, because those sites were damaged by the war, it is convenient for us to convert them to the entrances of underground world. At the same time, the existing infrastructures can be recreated for underground use.



j.



h.



g.



f.



a.



b.



c.



d.



e.

Landmarks of Aleppo

f. Souq of Aleppo

g. Madrasa al-Halawiyya of the 5th century.

h. The Great Mosque of Aleppo

j. Aleppo Public Park

a. The Clock Tower

b. Citadel of Aleppo

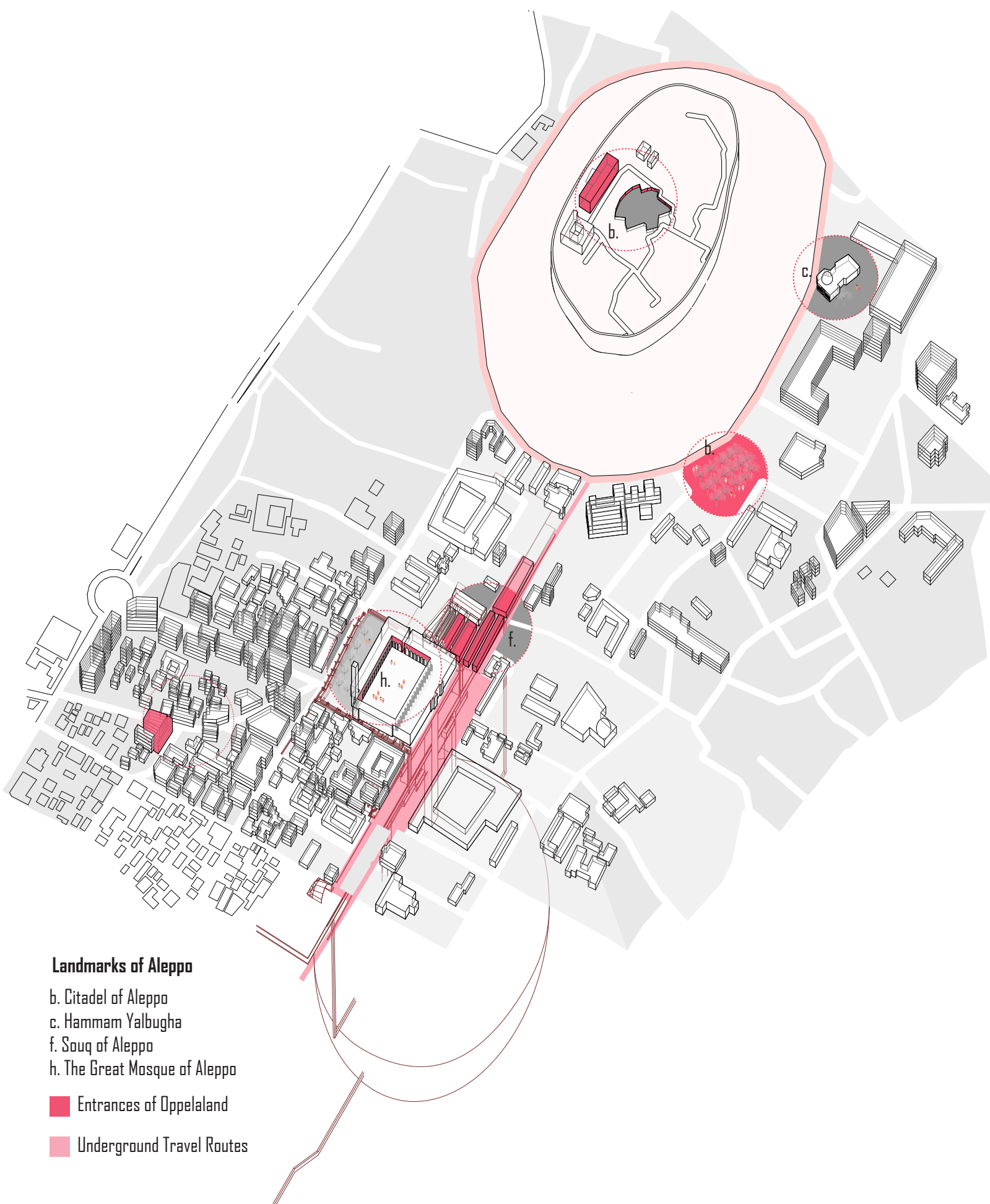
c. Hammam Yalbugha

d. Al-Sultaniyeh Mosque

e. Al-Shibani Church

Oppelaland

All the heriatge sites will be possible entrances of Oppelaland. Refugees will enter Oppelaland through the heritage sites they are familiar with. Tourists will enter the underground world from neighboring refugee camps and travel to Oppelaland by underground cable car.



Landmarks of Aleppo

- b. Citadel of Aleppo
- c. Hammam Yalbugha
- f. Souq of Aleppo
- h. The Great Mosque of Aleppo

- Entrances of Oppedalund
- Underground Travel Routes

Oppelaland

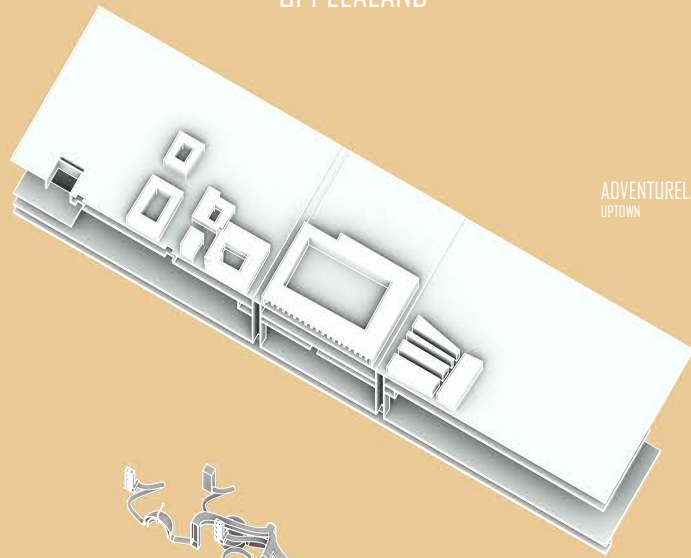
The Oppelaland consists of three layers: Uptown, Mid-town and Downtown, literally and allegorically.

Uptown is also called Adventureland, is the existing heritage sites of Aleppo that have become a space of nostalgia, history, and now "Open sesame" to the subterranean world.

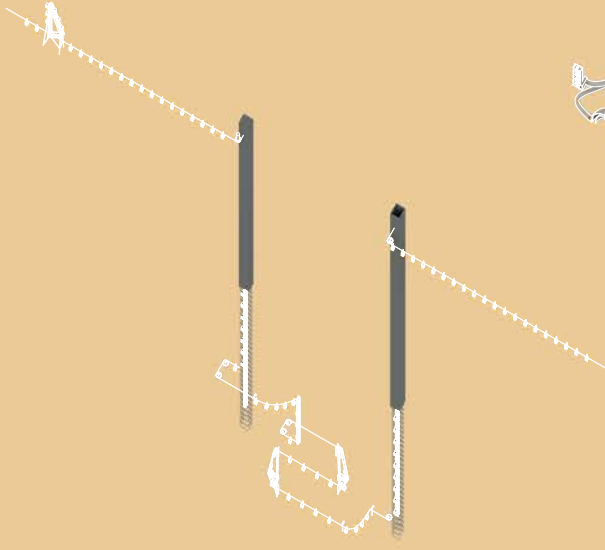
Downtown includes Libertyland, Fantasyland and Frontierland. Liberty land is where the refugee camps, tourists camping area are located. They live in the same space but different layers. It is a great chance for tourists to enjoy their "refugee life". Frontierland includes a hospital and a waste area which can be reached by tourists, volunteers and refugees through separate pathways. Fantasyland is the entertainment area for tourists have fun. It is covered by an artificial membrane sky, and includes a lake, a forest bath, a picnic "tree", an auditorium, and a mountain gallery.

Mid-town is a layer that connect Downtown and Uptown, it includes underground pipework and a Demilitarized Zone(DMZ) which is called Oppela Avenue since it is the entryway of tourists. It is a new area where allows different groups meet. In this case, this area becomes a new boundary. In DMZ, it is supposed to be the safest area inside of Oppelaland. However, since it is the nearest area to the Uptown, it is more dangerous than Downtown. This ambivalent zone give all sides a chance to "meet" with each other.

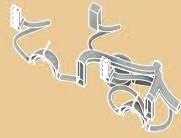
OPPELAND



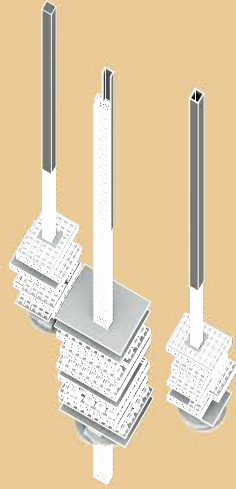
ADVENTURELAND
UPTOWN



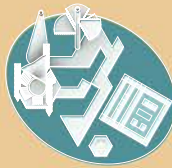
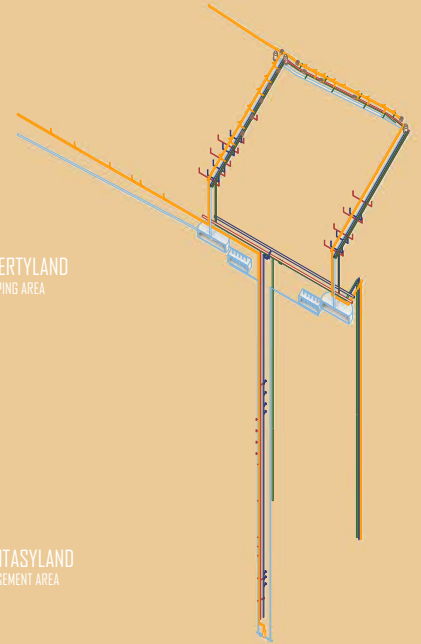
TOURISTS TRANSPORTATION



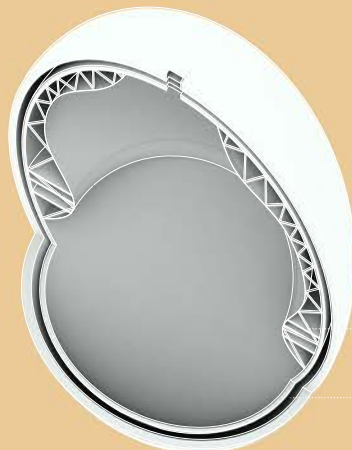
OPPELA AVENUE
DIMILITARIZED ZONE



LIBERTYLAND
CAMPING AREA



FANTASYLAND
AMUSEMENT AREA



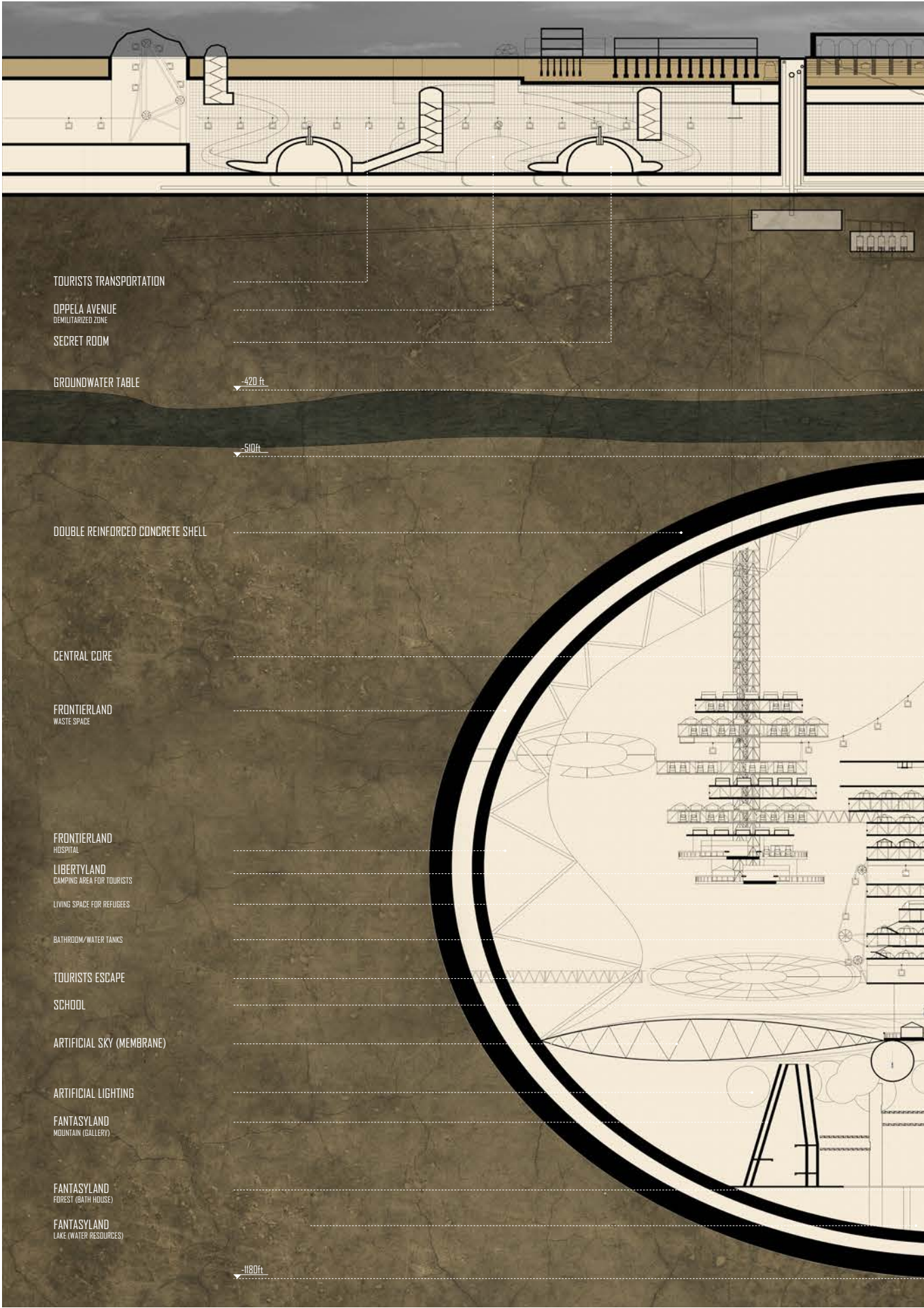
FRONTIERLAND

HOSPITAL

WASTE AREA

PIPEWORK

- AIR SUPPLY
- AIR RETURN
- WATER SYSTEM
- SEWER SYSTEM
- ELECTRICITY
- MANHOLE



TOURISTS TRANSPORTATION

OPPELA AVENUE

DEMILITARIZED ZONE

SECRET ROOM

GROUNDWATER TABLE

-420 ft

-510 ft

DOUBLE REINFORCED CONCRETE SHELL

CENTRAL CORE

FRONTIERLAND

WASTE SPACE

FRONTIERLAND

HOSPITAL

LIBERTYLAND

CAMPING AREA FOR TOURISTS

LIVING SPACE FOR REFUGEES

BATHROOM/WATER TANKS

TOURISTS ESCAPE

SCHOOL

ARTIFICIAL SKY (MEMBRANE)

ARTIFICIAL LIGHTING

FANTASYLAND

MOUNTAIN (GALLERY)

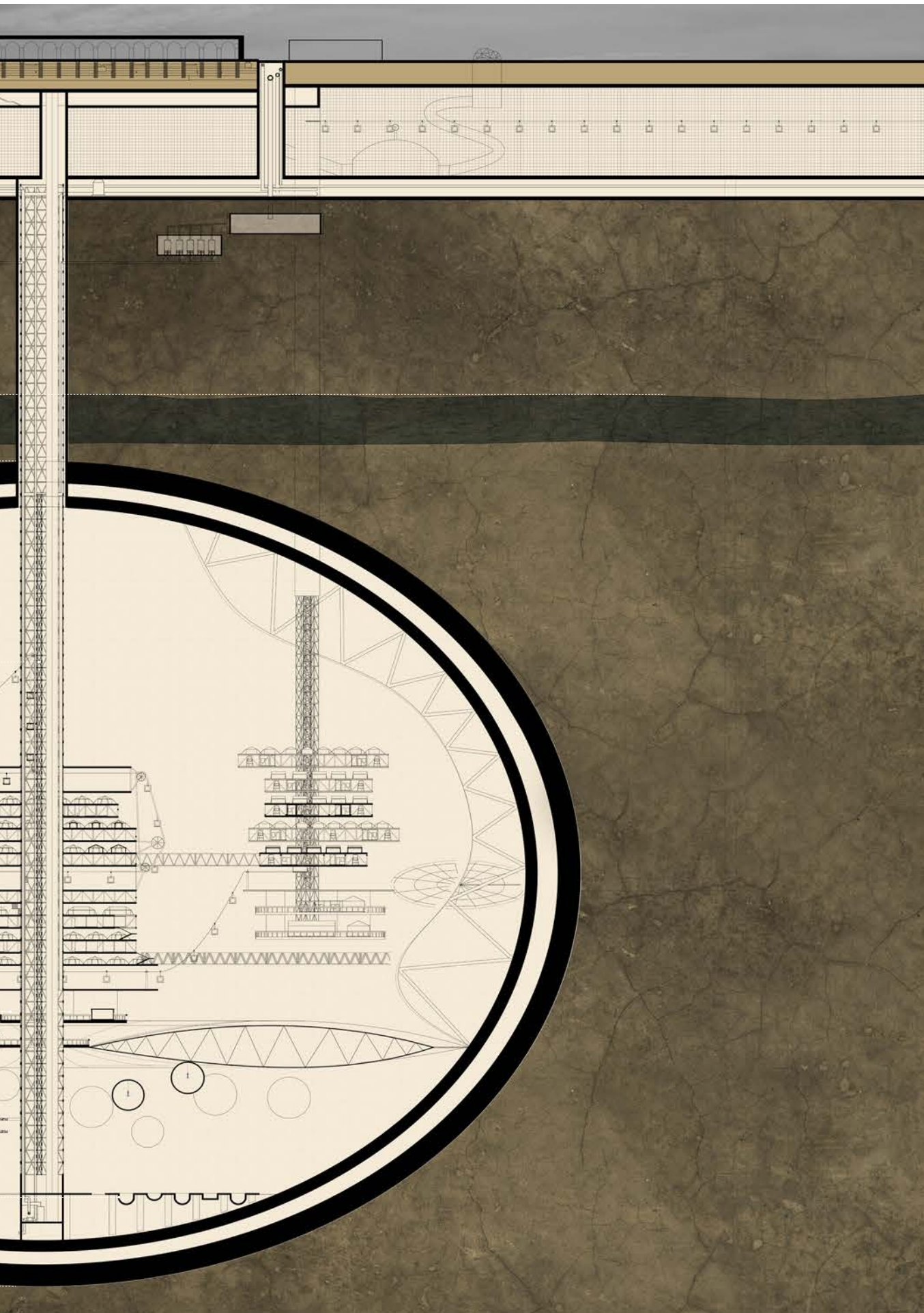
FANTASYLAND

FOREST (BATH HOUSE)

FANTASYLAND

LAKE (WATER RESOURCES)

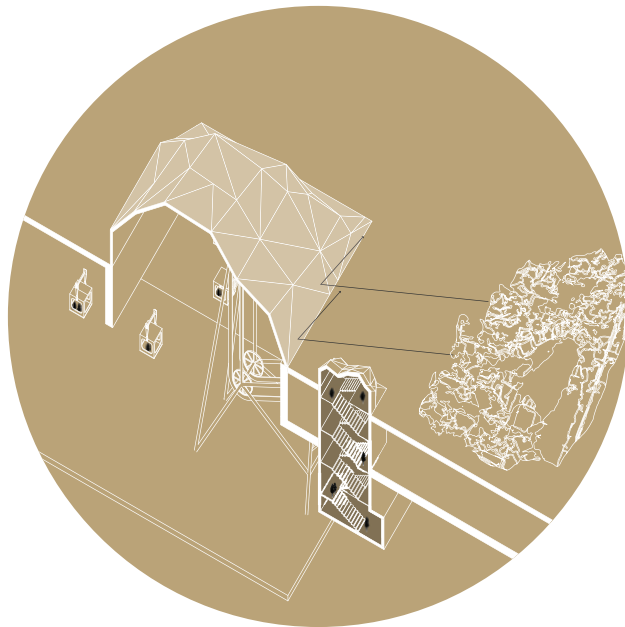
-1180 ft



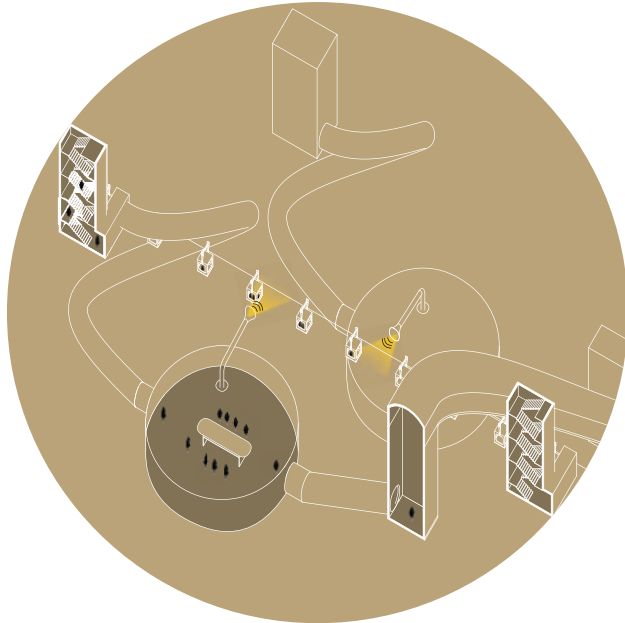
Camouflage is important and necessary for view point of tourists so that their safety is assured in conflict area. The view point used fragmentary mirror to camouflage. It reflects surrounding debris, so that armed forces can hardly find it from long distance.

In DMZ, there are several "secret" rooms sponsored by different organizations or countries. Some are negotiation rooms for Syrian army, some are warehouses for Syrians, some are food delivery center for UN provide stuff for Syrian people. They come from different sides through private tunnels. Even though they think it is secret, but tourists can hear their activities and their dialogues by trumpet which secretly connect to the rooms when they travel through, so this is a sort of live show and is the signal for tourists that they have entered the Opellaland.

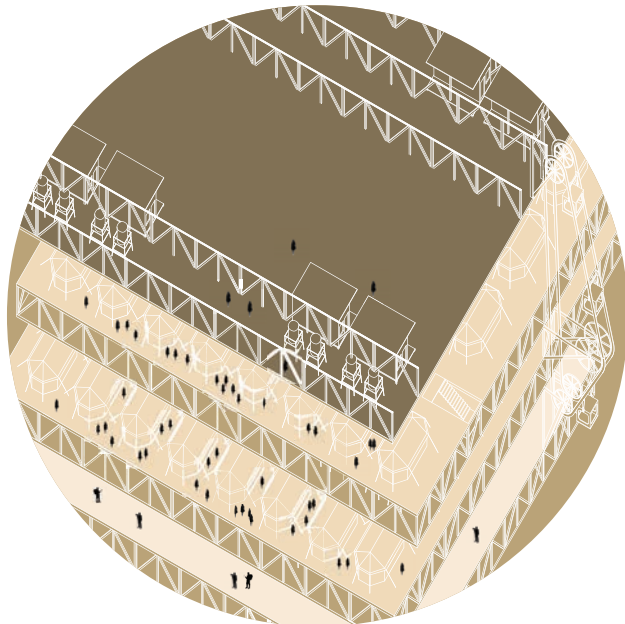
Tourists and refugees in Libertyland share same living area but in different layers. They can see each other but cannot touch each other. The layer for tourists is depend on the tourists transportation. Refugee camps are arranged in vertical direction: the sleeping area, water storage, restrooms are separated in different layers.



CAMOUFLAGE VIEW POINTS

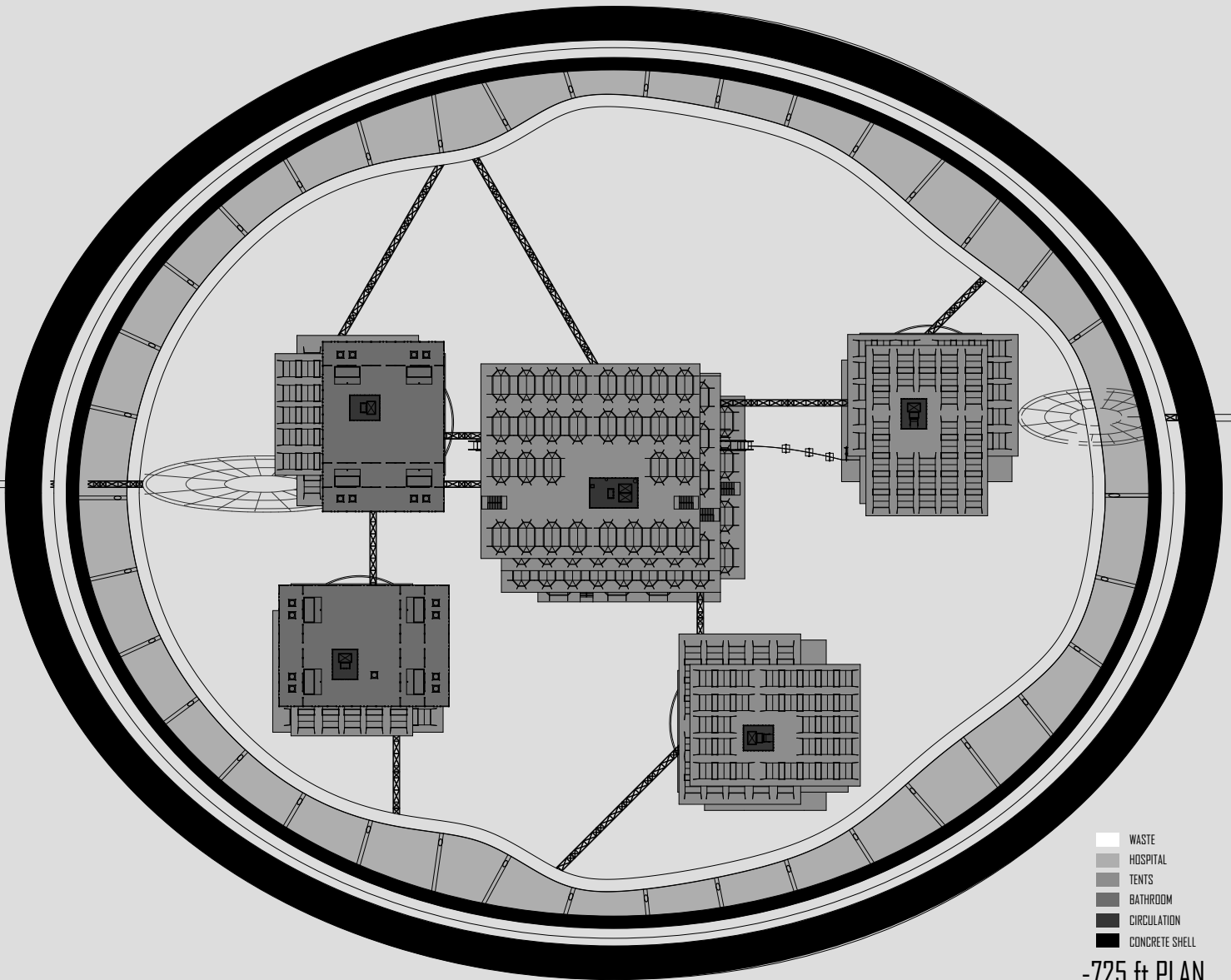


DEMILITARIZED ZONE



LIVING AREA

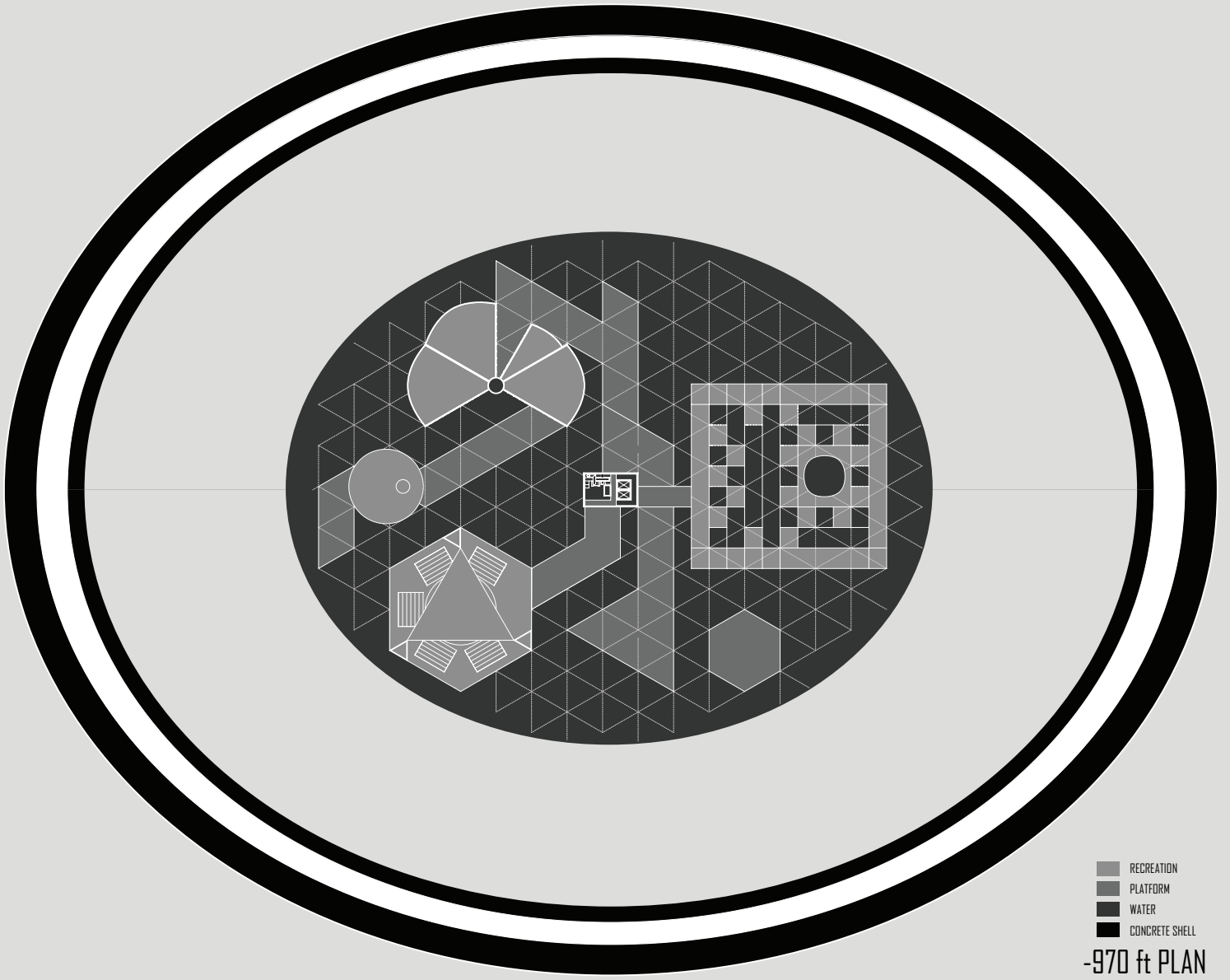
OPPELALAND



Plan

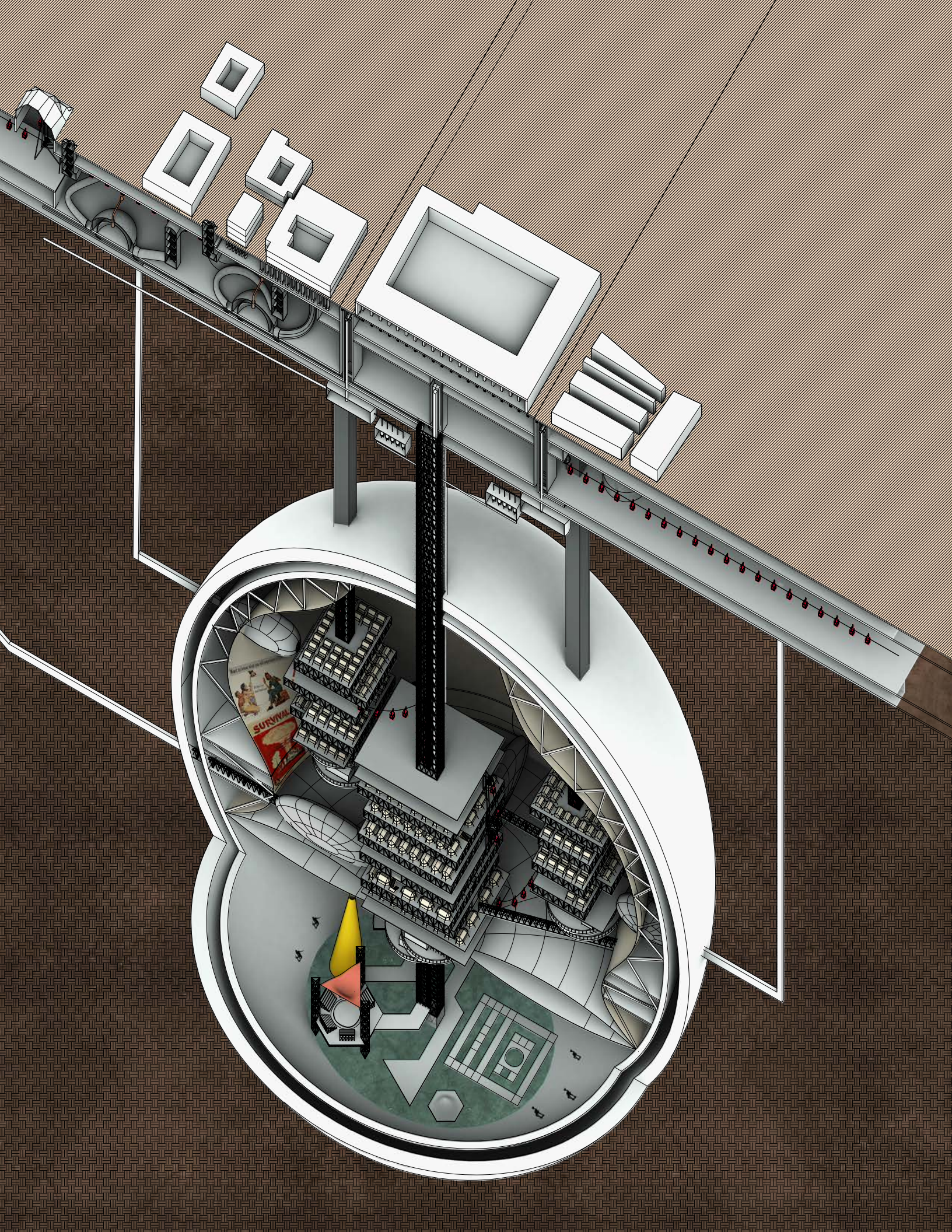
The plan of Libertyland mastered by several transportation cores, and each core connected by bridges with each other. The camping area is rectangular form which allows refugee camps settled into each layer.

OPPELALAND



Plan

The plan of Fantasyland is controlled by triangular geometry.



One day in Opperland

Please preview one day in Opperland. Welcome to join us in this fantastic Xanadu!

TOURISTS



8:00

At 8:00, refugees wake up, go to Oppela Avenue, and collect food for the day. Across town, tourists mount their cable cars, and are shuttled past barricades filled with debris, bones and tombs, a sure sign they have arrived at Oppelaland.

REFUGEES

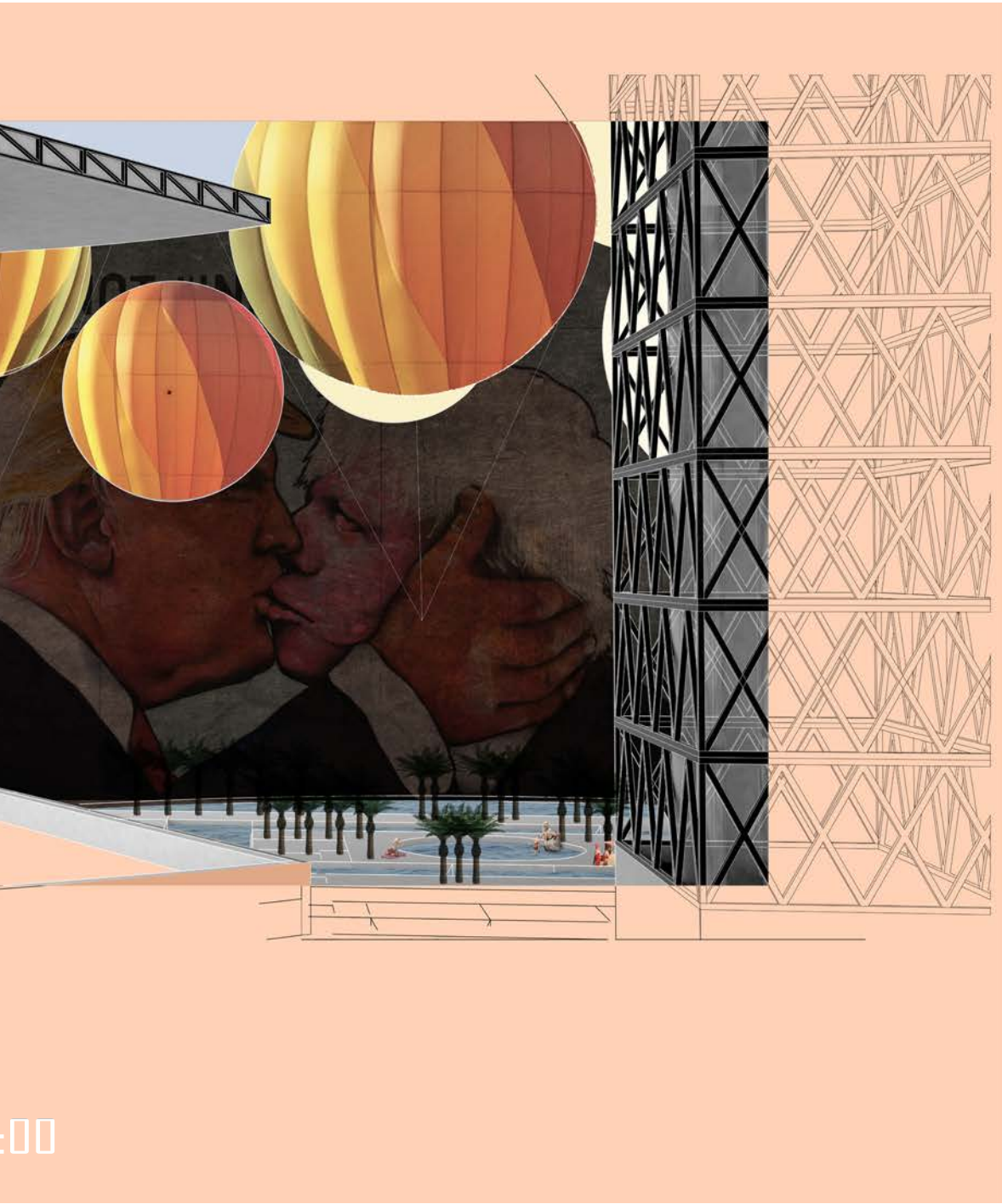


10:00

From 8 to 12, refugees need to check "neural networks" of Opellaland as usual. Children go to School to have classes by volunteers.



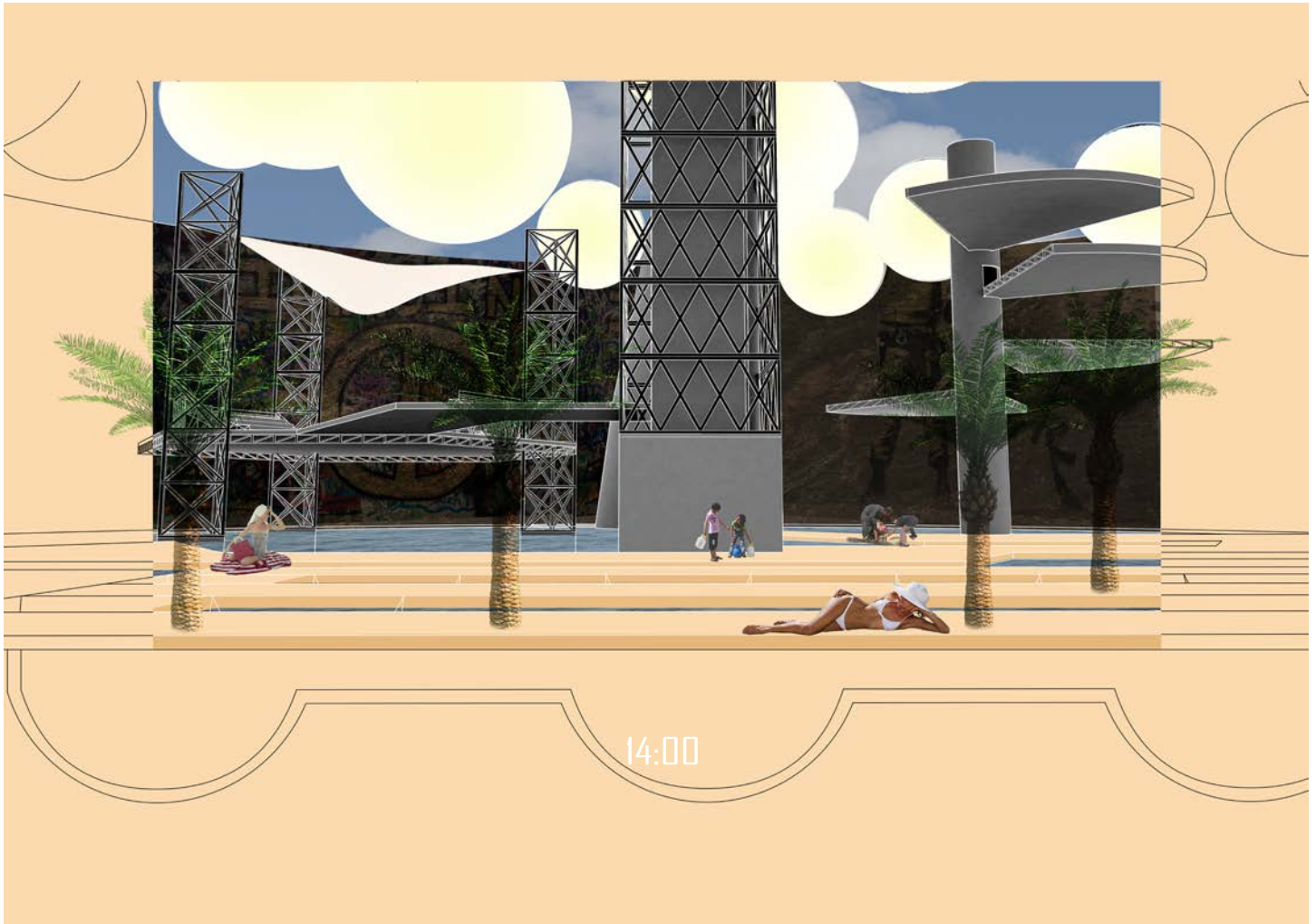
At 12. Tourists are offered a chance to meet refugees in the picnic "tree". They sit together



:00

under the concrete "branches", sharing food and have conversation in different languages.

TOURISTS

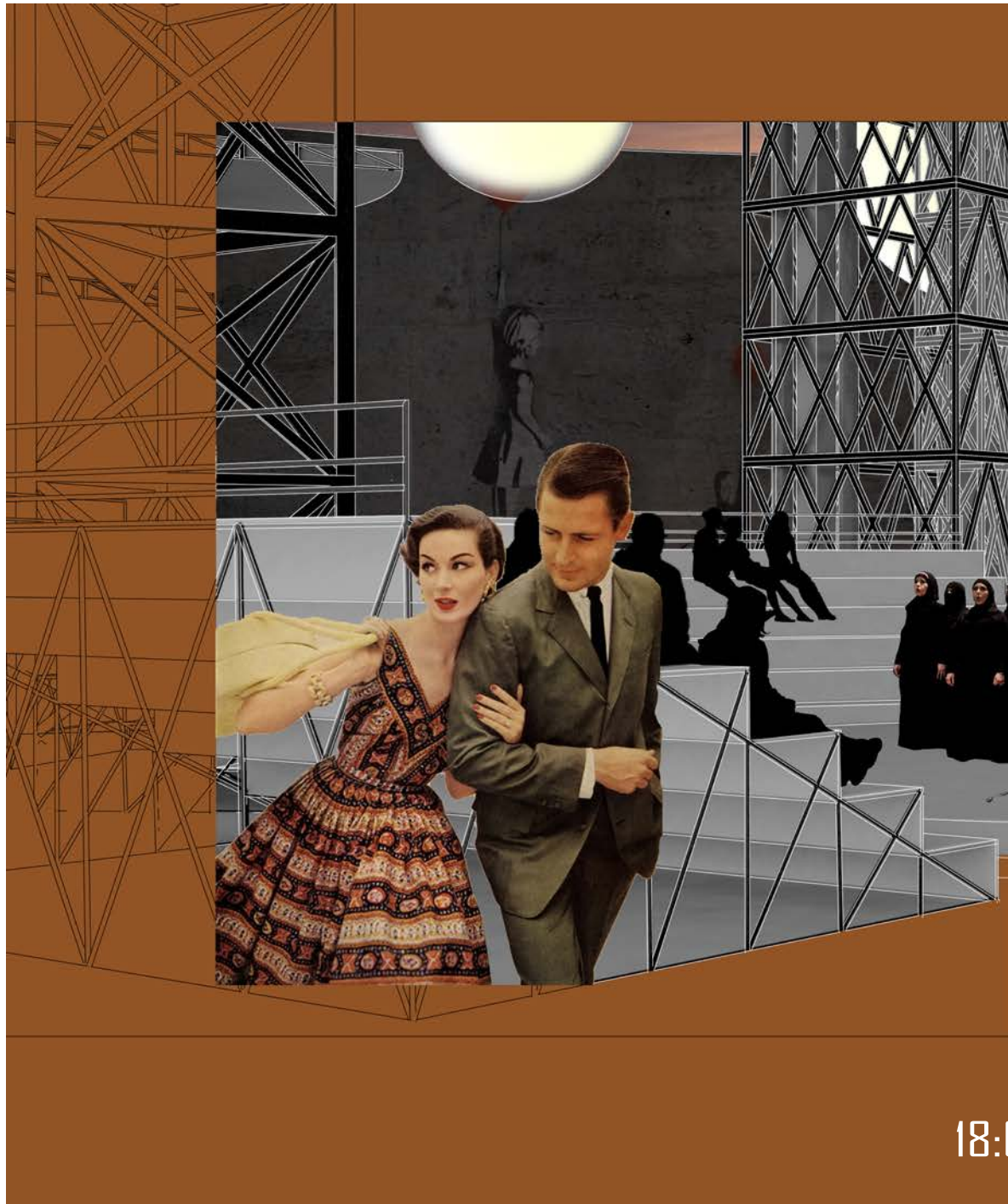


13 to 18. Is the most exciting time for tourists. They can visit sick people in Frontierland or go to Fantasyland to sunbathe in the forest bathhouse.

REFUGEES



Refugees at this time, usually do chores for the day. They go to Fantasyland to collect water, go to Frontierland throw household waste or go to hospital to take medicine care and visit their family.



18:

At 18. Refugees perform a well-prepared show for tourists. They celebrate the day together. And the



00

whole Fantasyland turns into a nightclub for tourists only. They drink, they relax, and they have fun.

TOURISTS



24:00

At 24. Tourists go back to their camping areas with memories of an unforgettable day.

REFUGEES



At 24. Refugees go back to their living areas. It is just another ordinary day.

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