



Temporary Urbanism

Spatial Democracy in the Temporary City

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Master of Landscape Architecture, RISD

Temporary Urbanism

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Shijie Li

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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	12
Introduction	
Abstract	
Vocabulary	
Thesis question	
CHAPTER 1 SPATIAL RIGHTS AND SPIRITUAL NOURISHMENT	24
Spatial Rights	
Temporary City	
CHAPTER 2 TEMPORARY CITY CASE STUDY	42
Burning Man	
Kumbh Mela	
CHAPTER 3 GROUNDING AND ENVISION	88
Spaces in Protests	
RISD Strike 2023	
Thesis Conclusion	
Reflection	
BIBLIOGRAPHY	118



Isolation, segregation, alienation

Isolation, segregation, alienation

**SPACE!
SPACE!
SPACE!**

Fig 1: Stinson, Liz. "Dizzying Pics of Hong Kong's Massive High-Rise Neighborhoods", 2023

Introduction

It all started from my own feelings of loss – a spiritual sense of loss, alienation, and a lack of belonging. This loss is both a sense of disconnection from the vast global system, as well as from the city I have always called home.

Then I began to think about whether there was another part of the world with which I could make a more profound connection, whether I could get a completely different life script at a fork in the road, and how I could reach these people and opportunities. Then I started to feel that I didn't resonate strongly with the current city. Why is that? Is it because it's a capitalist mechanism of operation? Is the city inhospitable? Are the people in the city incapable of empathy? The answer could be as simple as you may not share the same values and beliefs as the people around you.

In a neoliberal consumer-oriented society, the division of labor in social production is gradually refined, and the relationship between people and objects, and interpersonal relations are gradually penetrated by market relations. On the other hand, the modern city is the result of

the spatial distribution of material production, urban space is political and oriented to the distribution of power, and citizens are deprived of the subjective qualification and right to participate in the creation of urban cultural space. There are many factors that have led to the monopolization of human participation in urban space, the weakening of the spiritual connection between people, the intense focus on self, and the increasing loss of collective values and memories.

Planners and urban designers are trained to build up large-scale infrastructure permanently to comply with the primitive pursuit of eternalness. However, there's a growing temporary mentality and land use triggered by shrinkage and vacancy of urban land that dates back to the 1980s. That attitude of living ephemeral along with the economic downturn has motivated the temporary use of spaces.

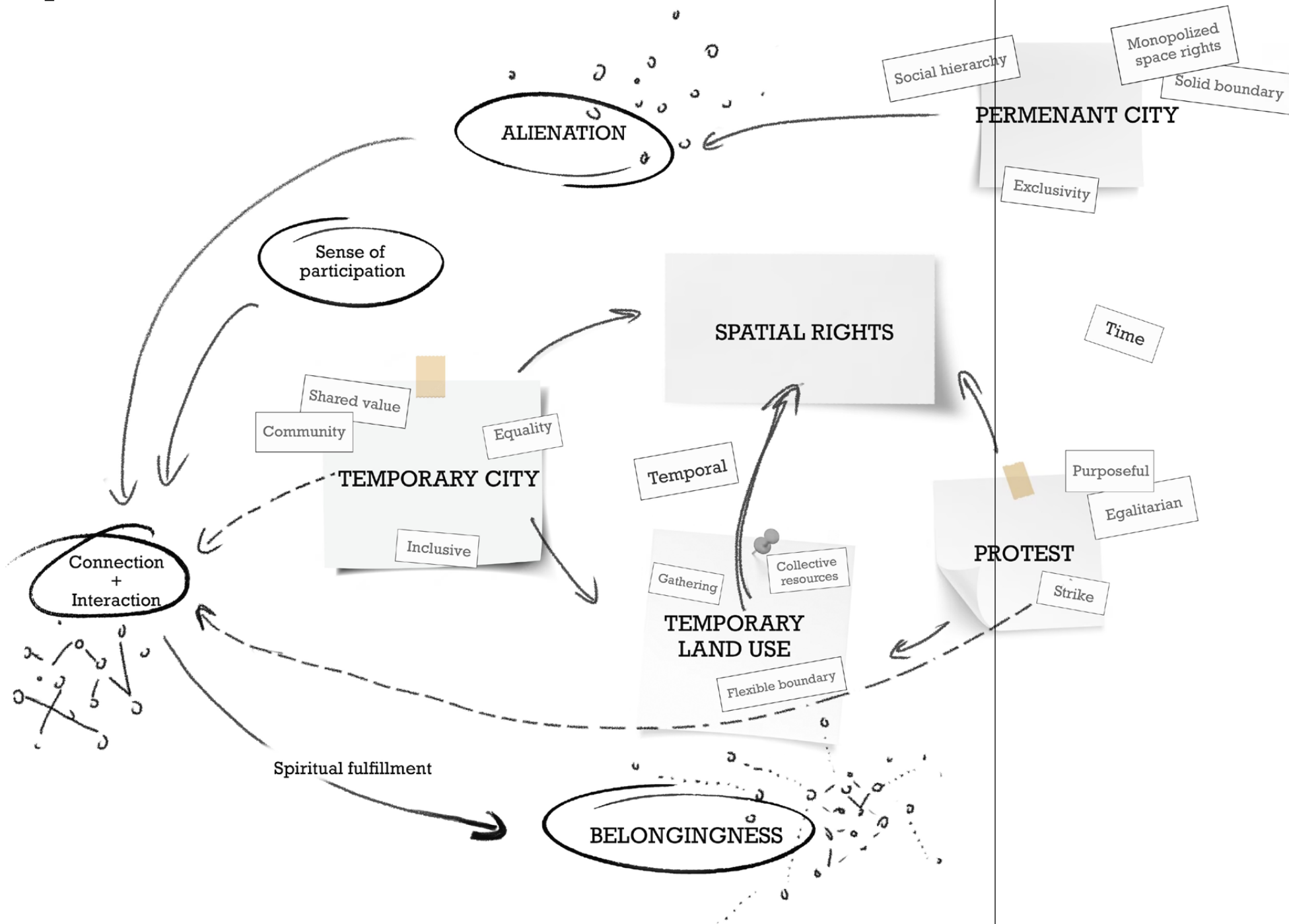
And temporary cities do exist in different parts of the world. Temporary cities are similar in nature to religious worship and festivals, placed by a certain purpose, not dependent on permanence or a particular time span. Unlike the modern city, temporary cities, created to hold major events such as music festivals, religious gatherings, or Burning

Man, are shaped by shared purpose and values, collective beliefs, and communally-forged memories. They are highly adaptive and agile in nature and balance bottom-up decision-making with top-down oversight and management, which could create more rooted connections between people and people, people and cities.



Fig 2: My crow, my Yoko, Masahisa Fukase

Thesis Outline



Thesis Abstract

This thesis is committed to exploring and discussing the way people behave in the temporary urbanism, perceive and deploy their space arrangement rights and how this nourishes relationships between people, between people and society, and brings a greater sense of spiritual identity and belonging to people.

The modern city is the result of the spatial distribution of material production, urban space is political and oriented to the distribution of power, and citizens are deprived of the subjective qualification and right to participate in the creation of urban cultural space. Many factors have led to the monopolization of human participation in urban space, the weakening of the spiritual connection between people, the intense focus on the self, and the increasing loss of collective values and memories.

The spaces in temporary urbanism are formed more intentionally and purposeful by every citizen with shared values, collective beliefs and memories. For example, Burning Man, Kumbh Mela and Mecca, they are either temporary cities themselves or temporary land use in permanent cities.

By taking RISD strike 2023 as a base to further discuss spatial democracy as the continuation of the case study, and on the other hand, I could further sort out and compare the four cases deeply since I experienced the whole process. I could better appreciate how connections have been made between people, igniting new conversations.

In the last part of the thesis, I got to comprehend and apply those principles on a small scale where I live daily.

Space Self-organization

The concept of space self-organization has implications for various disciplines, including urban planning, physics, and sociology. It highlights the importance of understanding the emergent properties that arise from the interactions among individual elements within spatial systems. By studying these self-organizing processes, we can gain insights into how to design and manage urban space to enhance spatial resilience, efficiency, and functionality.

Spatial Informality

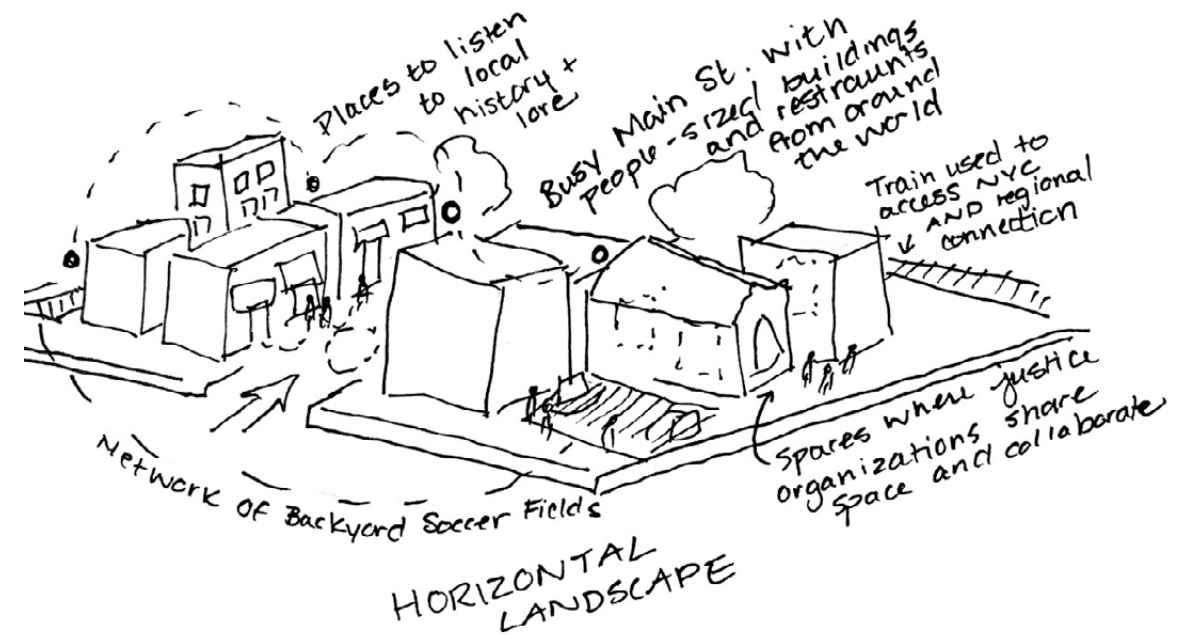
In the context of urban areas, space informality often related to informal settlements, which are residential areas that develop without legal recognition, adequate infrastructure, or formal land tenure. Informal settlements typically arise due to various factors, including rapid urbanization, poverty, limited affordable housing options, and exclusion from formal urban planning processes.¹

On the other hand, it encompasses economic activities and livelihoods that operate outside formal regulations and institutions. It includes a wide range of informal occupations, such as street vending, small-scale manufacturing, waste recycling, and informal transportation services. These activities are typically characterized by low levels of organization, limited access to social protection, and informally negotiated work arrangements.

1. Roy, Ananya. "691 Urban Informality: The Production of Space and Practice of Planning." In *The Oxford Handbook of Urban Planning*, edited by Randall Crane and Rachel Weber, 0. Oxford University Press, 2012. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780195374995.013.0033>.

2. Burning Man. "The 10 Principles of Burning Man." Accessed May 25, 2023. <https://burningman.org/about/10-principles/>.

3. Hagerty, Bonnie M.K., Judith Lynch-Sauer, Kathleen L. Patusky, Maria Bouwsema, and Peggy Collier. "Sense of Belonging: A Vital Mental Health Concept." *Archives of Psychiatric Nursing* 6, no. 3 (June 1, 1992): 172–77. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0883-9417\(92\)90028-H](https://doi.org/10.1016/0883-9417(92)90028-H).



Shared value

Events like Burning Man and music festivals often foster a sense of community and belongingness among attendees. They create spaces for social interaction, connection, and shared experiences, bringing people together from diverse backgrounds.² This sense of community can lead to long-lasting relationships, collaborative initiatives, and a strengthened sense of local identity and pride.

These events provide platforms for artistic expression, cultural exchange, and the celebration of diverse forms of creativity. They showcase various art installations, performances, and music genres, promoting cultural diversity and appreciation. Through these experiences, attendees gain exposure to different perspectives and artistic practices, fostering a greater understanding and respect for different cultures and identities.

Sense of belonging

A sense of belonging to a space or environment refers to the feeling of connection, attachment, and identification with a particular place or setting. It involves a deep emotional and psychological connection to the physical surroundings and the people within that space. When individuals have a strong sense of belonging to a space, they feel a sense of ownership, comfort, and acceptance within that environment.³

Fig 3: <https://olmstednow.org/an-introduction-to-spatial-justice/>

Spatial justice

Spatial justice, most simply, is the intersection of space and social justice¹. Spatial justice seeks to create spatial environments that are fair, inclusive, and sustainable, ensuring that all individuals and communities have the opportunity to thrive and access the resources and opportunities they need to lead fulfilling lives.

Temporary land use

It often refers to temporary utilization of land for a specific purpose or activity for a limited time span. It involves the activation or repurposing of land for a temporary period, often for a specific event, project, or interim use until a permanent use or development takes place². Temporary land use can be seen as a flexible and adaptive approach to land management and urban planning, allowing for experimentation, innovation, and the activation of underutilized spaces.

1. Olmsted Now. "An Introduction to Spatial Justice," April 26, 2021. <https://olmstednow.org/an-introduction-to-spatial-justice/>.

2. Németh, Jeremy, and Joern Langhorst. "Rethinking Urban Transformation: Temporary Uses for Vacant Land." *Cities* 40 (October 2014): 143–50. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cities.2013.04.007>.

Fig 4: "Baf302d22c34f16a60b71016a99b2e83.Png (497x663)." Accessed May 25, 2023. <https://i.pinimg.com/originals/ba/f3/02/baf302d22c34f16a60b71016a99b2e83.png>.

temporality

alienation

ritual
pilgrim
nomad

anarchism
Chaos Theory
flows

interim/provisional
dismantle

ownership
belongingness
identity
self-expression

informal
political
cosmic
harmonic
agile
adaptive

commoditization
personalization

spatial distribution
material production
spatial rights
social hierarchy

growth and
decay

restoration
govern framework
monopolization
eternalness
ephemeral

impermanence

gather
escape
pull in
break up
extrapolate
nourish

mobility
removable
unplug

capitalism

familiarity
inclusion

shared memories
connections
interactions

spiritual fulfillment

solid hierarchy
boundary
porous

permanent

participation
cooperation

community

egalitarian

flexibility
purposeful
devotional

order
disorder

TIME

Temporary urbanism:

Exploring the transformative potential of spatial governance and its impact on relationships, belongingness, and identity.

Thesis Question

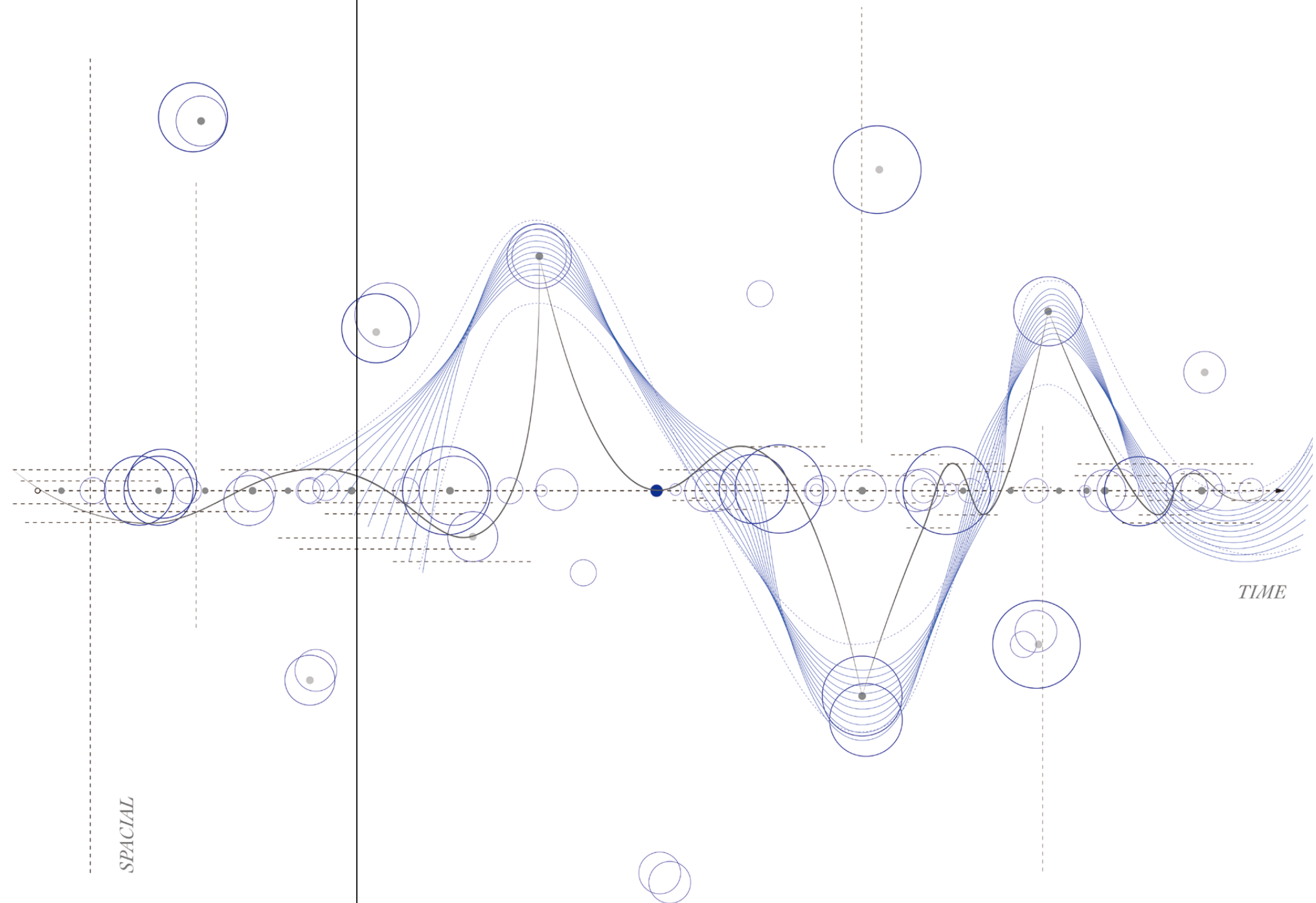
Temporary urbanism has the potential to be the most critical paradigm to practice the return of spatial governance to the people. The dynamic flows significantly nurture relationships among individuals, between people and society, and bring a greater sense of belonging to people.

How do people behave in temporal social events differ from individual's daily life?

How do people perceive the space and deploy their spatial rights in temporary urbanism through dissimilar spatial quality and time constraints?

How does the utilization of space in temporary urbanism foster a sense of belonging, spiritual identity, and meaningful connections among individuals and communities?

What lessons can be learned from temporary urbanism for permanent city land use, and how can permanent cities accommodate and embrace the concept of temporal flux?



This diagram illustrates the inclination of individuals to participate and gather with groups who share their values in time and space.

The loss of spatial democracy in permanent cities

Apart from the dualistic land ownership, and distinct private and public spaces, there are other subcategories emerging where the privatization of public spaces is occurring gradually or partially. These spaces can be described as either partially privatized public spaces or fully privatized spaces that still permit public access. This can be observed in spaces like malls, food courts, and theme parks, where the primary focus is on consumption rather than the expression of ideas, opinions, and mutual interactions.¹

The *privatization of public spaces* raises concerns about the *potential infringement on cultural rights, the emergence of social discrimination, and the influence of profit-oriented interests in urban spatial planning*. Moreover, the dominance of investors in urban spatial planning further reinforces the trend of privatization. This shift can lead to the prioritization of profit-making and commercial interests over the broader needs and rights of the community. Public spaces, which traditionally served as gathering places and platforms for cultural expression, may be replaced or overshadowed by these privatized spaces, resulting in the erosion of cultural rights and the marginalization of certain groups.²

Also, to some extent, the modern city is the result of the spatial distribution of material production. Urban space in permanent cities is political and oriented to the distribution of power. All the attributes above let citizens be deprived of the subjective qualification and right to participate in creating urban cultural space.

1. Marco Kusumawijaya, "Common space and public space in contemporary urbanization" in *Public Space in Urban Asia*, by William S.W. Lim (World Scientific Publishing Company, 2014), pp. 138–153.

2. Smithsimon, Gregory. "The Right to Public Space." *Métropolitiques*, March 10, 2015. <https://metropolitiques.org/https://metropolitiques.org/The-Right-to-Public-Space.html>.

Fig 5: Berma, Nina. "How Worried Should We Be About Our Democracy?" *The New York Times*, 2022.



“When public space is eroded, our civic culture suffers, even our democracy.”

Richard Rodgers

However, it is important to note that in some cases, private creative spaces have been seen as positive developments, particularly in contexts where public entertainment spaces are limited. Examples of such spaces can be found in Karachi and Lahore, Pakistan, where the establishment of private creative venues is viewed as a continuation of the traditional village fairs (melas) that served as a public gathering and entertainment spaces. These spaces offer opportunities for expression and cultural engagement that might otherwise be lacking in the public sphere.



Fig 6: Shutterstock. "Amravati Maharashtra India 22 January 2018 Stock Photo 1410789464." Accessed May 26, 2023. <https://www.shutterstock.com/image-photo/amravati-maharashtra-india-22-january-2018-1410789464>.



Why is the spatial democracy matter?

Meanings of spatial democracy for human well-being

Social significance:

Spatial democracy emphasizes the democratic principles of **participation, inclusivity, and transparency in shaping and governing space**. It advocates for the involvement of diverse stakeholders in decision-making processes, enabling citizens to have a say in how their environments are planned, designed, and managed.¹ It seeks to address power imbalances, amplify marginalized voices, and consider the diverse needs, perspectives, and aspirations of different groups. This representation enhances **social equity, diversity, and social cohesion**.² Spatial democracy aims to challenge top-down approaches to spatial governance, decentralize power, and promote a sense of **ownership, accountability, and shared responsibility** for the well-being of the community and the built environment.

1. Mitchell, Don. *The Right to the City: Social Justice and the Fight for Public Space*. New York: Guilford Press, 2003.

2. CultureHouse. "Spatial Justice and the Right to the City." Medium (blog), November 20, 2018. <https://culture-house.medium.com/spatial-justice-and-the-right-to-the-city-55b8dcc4e5b5>.

3. Masey, Doreen. "Philosophy and Politics of Spatiality: Some Considerations. The Hettner-Lecture in Human Geography." *Geographische Zeitschrift* 87, no. 1 (1999): 1–12. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/27818829>.

4. Ph.D, Melissa Madeson. "Logotherapy: Viktor Frankl's Theory of Meaning." *PositivePsychology.com*, July 28, 2020. <https://positivepsychology.com/viktor-frankl-logotherapy/>.

Spiritual significance:

Spatial democracy encourages active citizen participation in spatial decision-making. It allows individuals to voice their concerns, contributes local knowledge, and collaborate with community members, government institutions, planners, and tons of stakeholders. Once people get through the process from discussion, negotiation to grounding and practice, they recognize the **interconnectedness³ of all beings and spaces, promoting a deeper connection to the world around them**. This process encourages people to get the sense that every individual, community, and ecosystem is an integral part of a greater whole. This understanding facilitates **empathy, compassion, and a sense of responsibility** toward the well-being of others and the environment.

In the meantime, the process provides opportunities for reflection, self-discovery, and the exploration of deeper existential questions for each individual, offering a sense of purpose and connection to something greater than oneself.⁴



Pedestrians walk on a banner placed on the ground next to tents on Connaught Road Central outside the Central Government Offices in the Admiralty district of Hong Kong, China, on Wednesday, Dec. 10, 2014.



Alienation driven by spatial undemocracy

When people are denied equal opportunities to engage with and benefit from public spaces, it can lead to feelings of *marginalization¹ and alienation*. The inability to freely occupy and participate in public spaces can reinforce social divisions and create a sense of not belonging or not being welcome in shared environments.

Spatial injustice can be demonstrated through the *segregation of communities based on socioeconomic status, race, or other factors*. When certain groups are systematically marginalized and confined to specific areas, it can create physical and social barriers that limit interactions and opportunities for social integration.

1. Massey, Douglas. "Chapter:13. Residential Segregation and Neighborhood Conditions in U.S. Metropolitan Areas" In *America Becoming: Racial Trends and Their Consequences: Volume I*. Washington DC: The National Academies Press, 2001

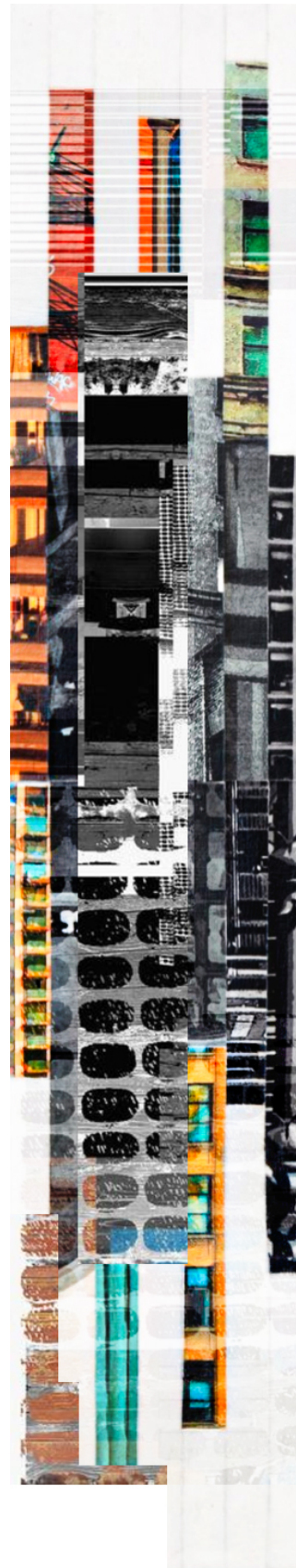
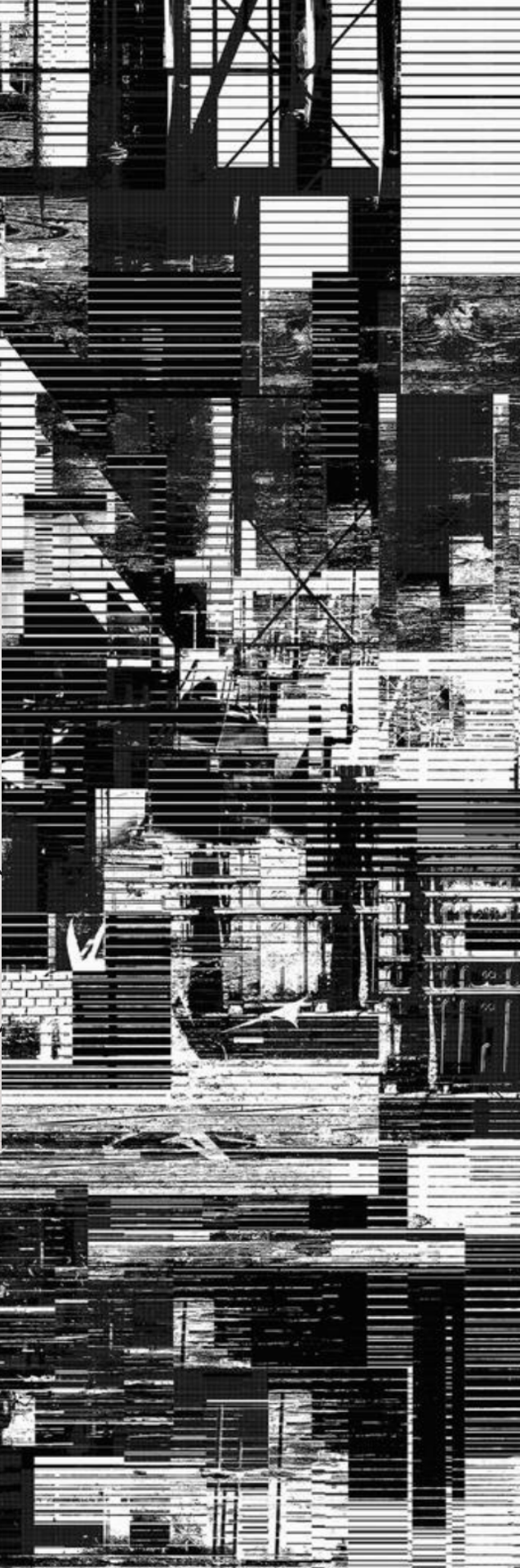
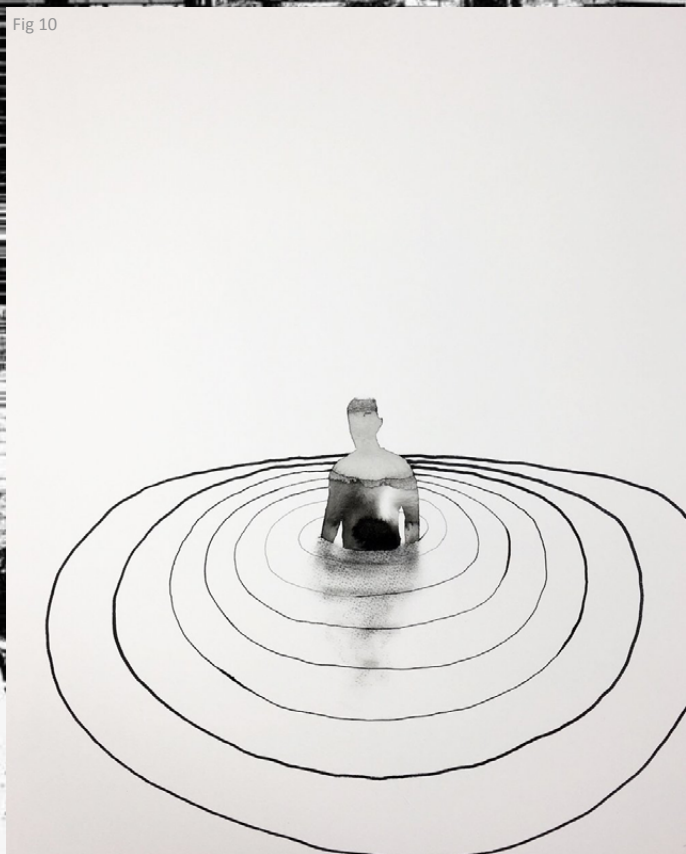


Fig 10



1. Allen, Kelly-Ann, Margaret L. Kern, Christopher S. Rozek, Dennis McInerney, and George M. Slavich. "Belonging: A Review of Conceptual Issues, an Integrative Framework, and Directions for Future Research." *Australian Journal of Psychology* 73, no. 1 (March 10, 2021): 87–102. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00049530.2021.1883409>.

2. Strandberg, Carola. "Let's Stay Together – The Mediating Role of Self-Congruity and Place Attachment on Residents' Likelihood to Stay." *Journal of Environmental Psychology* 87 (May 1, 2023): 101989. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jenvp.2023.101989>.

Fig 9: Terzic, Milan. "Procesing No.106 Artwork." 2023.

Fig 10: https://assets.tumblr.com/assets/html/like_iframe.html?v=66c22ab5319d742bca5762b8d18f9d06#name=mydarkenedeyes&post_id=182715606503&color=black&rk=gc8yB8lf.

Belongingness driven by spatial democracy

It involves a deep emotional and psychological connection to the physical surroundings and the people within that space. When individuals have a strong sense of belonging to a space, they feel a sense of ownership, comfort, and acceptance within that environment. Developing a sense of belonging to a space or environment can have numerous benefits. ***It promotes well-being, mental health, and overall life satisfaction. It fosters a sense of rootedness, stability, and social support.***¹

A sense of belonging often involves a deep ***emotional attachment*** to a space. Individuals feel a strong positive bond, affection, and familiarity with the place, which elicits positive emotions and a sense of happiness when they are in that environment. Belonging to a space allows individuals to express their identity and values. They may feel that the space aligns with their personal characteristics, interests, or aspirations, enabling them to be authentic to themselves. This ***sense of congruence***² between their identity and the space reinforces their sense of belonging. Positive social interactions and a sense of community contribute to a stronger sense of belonging as well. Besides, shared experiences and memories like significant events, celebrations within a space lead to belongingness.

Creating an environment that fosters a sense of belonging includes fostering inclusive and welcoming spaces that promote social interaction and community-building activities and considers the needs, preferences, and desires of the individuals who inhabit or visit the space. It needs to recognize the diverse identities and perspectives of the people who occupy the environment and provide opportunities for meaningful connections and shared experiences. ***And these are the main components and efforts to advance spatial democracy.***

Temporary urbanism
*represent a prominent
paradigm for the
implementation of spatial
rights, often providing
individuals with a
significant level of
spatial democracy.*

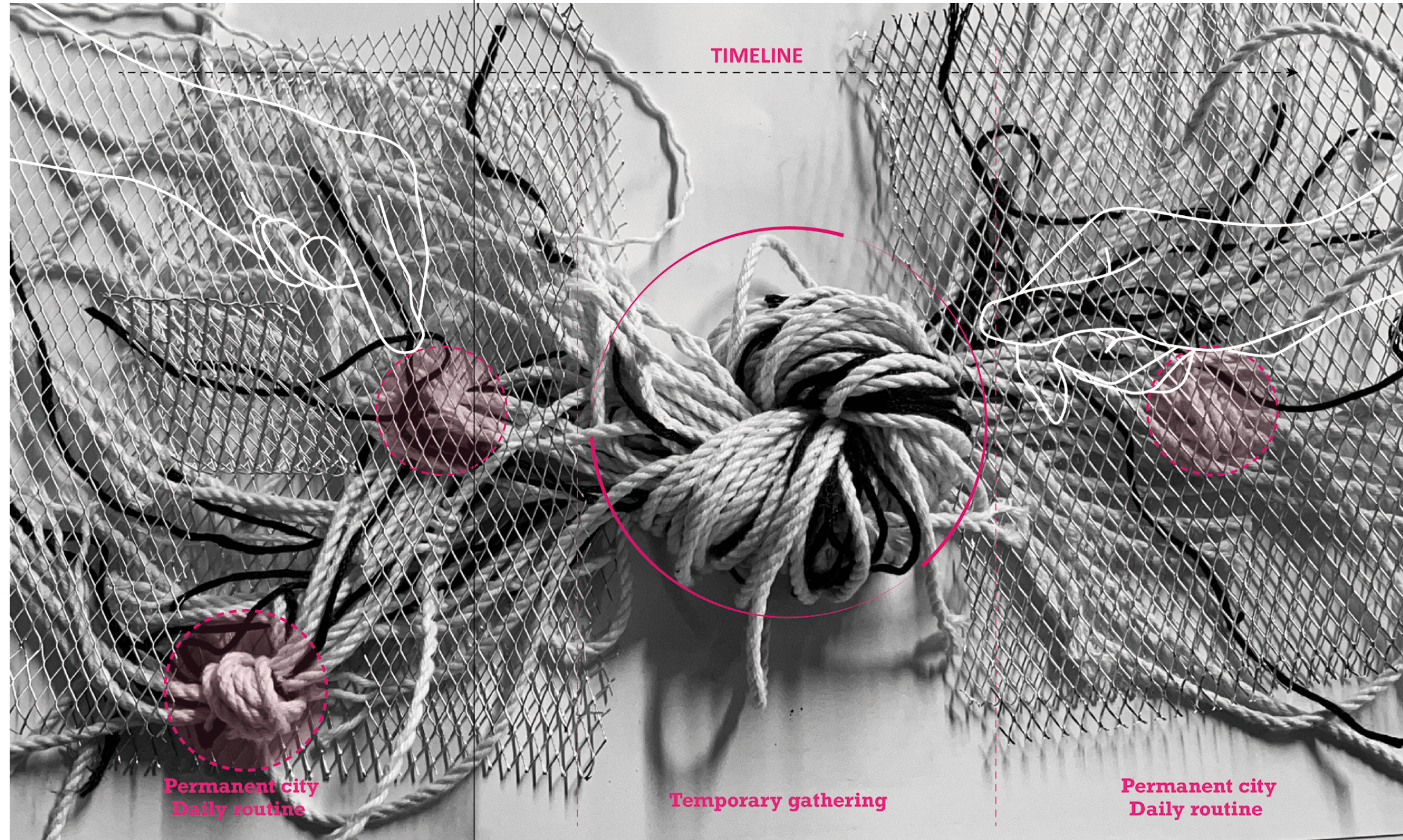


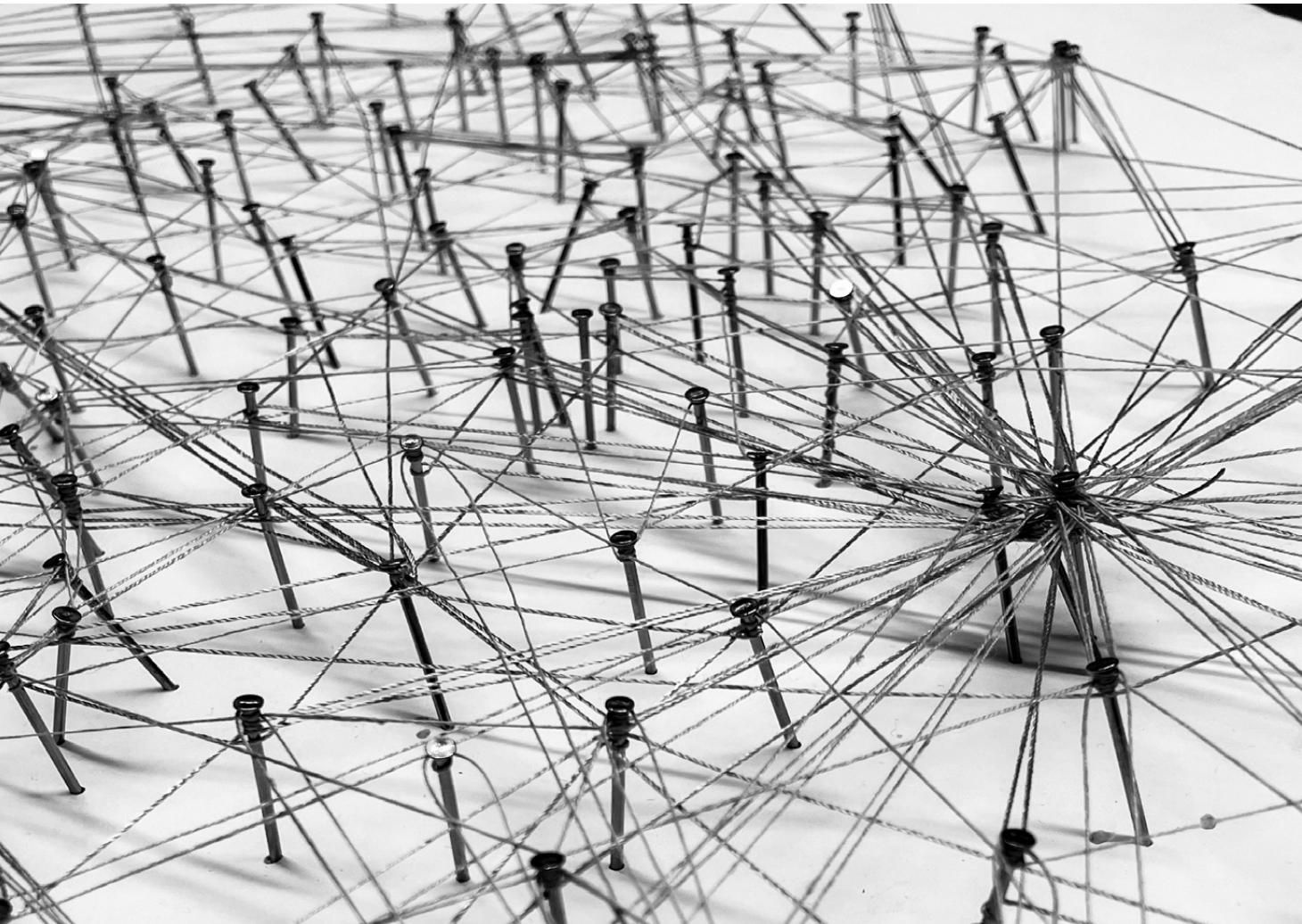
Fig 11: Jiva Gupta. <https://worksthatwork.com/4/constructing-the-worlds-biggest-disassemblable-city>

Conceptual model:

Space arrangement power in temporary urbanism

This conceptual model illustrates how I interpret the interplay between the movement of people in permanent and temporary cities. Each string symbolizes an individual or a group of people. The ropes on the left and right are constrained by an iron mesh above and below, representing the stability and established social system found in permanent cities. However, in the middle, where there are no barriers, a sense of freedom emerges. People converge and intertwine, forming a knot, temporarily escaping from their everyday lives before eventually returning to their routines. Temporary urbanization serves as a powerful catalyst for bringing people together from diverse backgrounds, enabling a multitude of possibilities and connections to unfold.



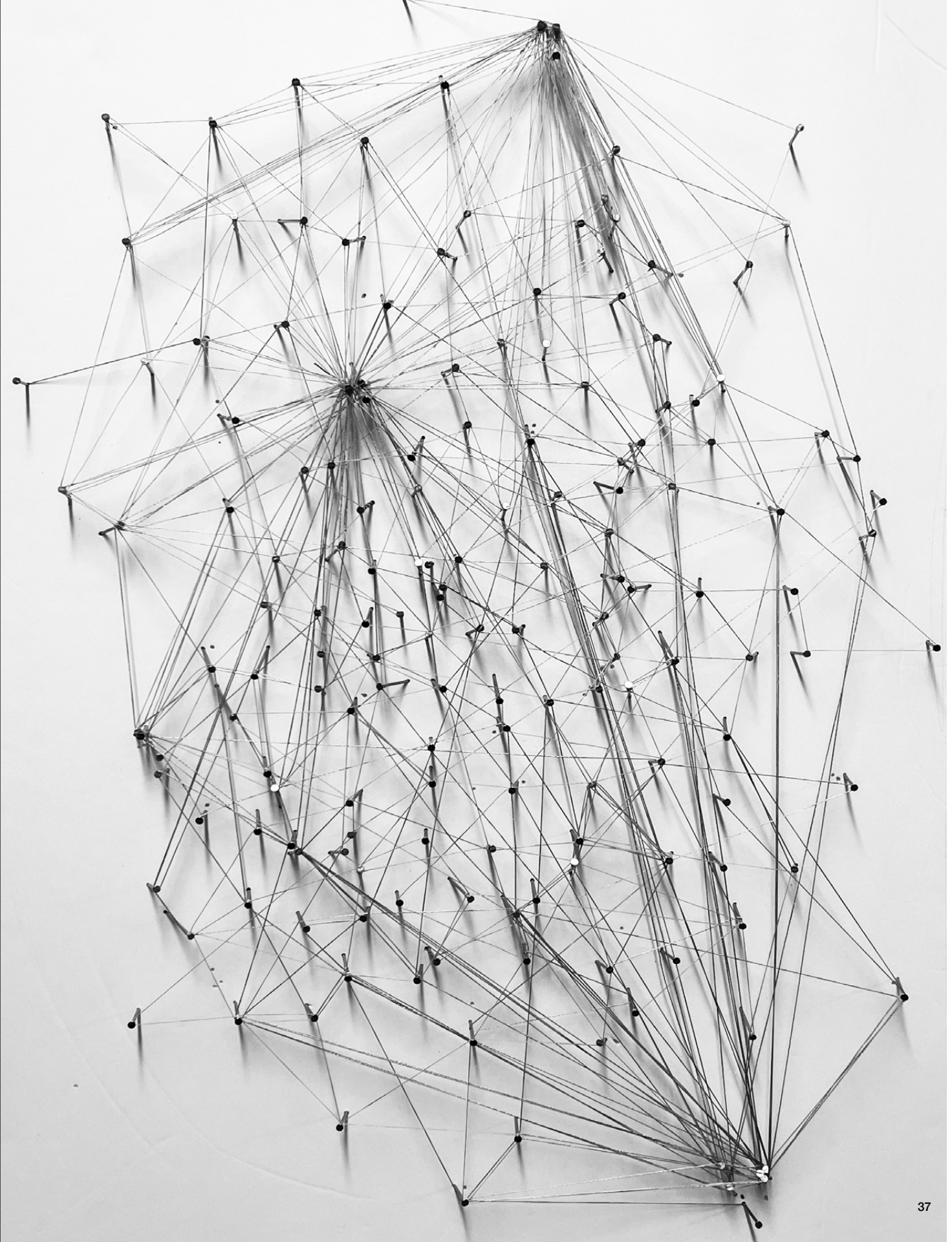


Temporary cities *rely on the robust support of permanent cities in terms of material foundations and infrastructure*. These include designated sites, transportation systems, legal frameworks, medical services, and more. It is this support that enables temporary cities to emerge and thrive as quasi-utopian enclaves that can be found in different locations around the world.

Spatially demonstrate how temporary urbanization pulls in and dismantles the flow of people and materials from permanent cities over time.

Conceptual model:

Temporary urbanism exist as intermediary spaces situated between permanent cities.



Overall, temporary urbanism is a global phenomenon that showcases the potential for creativity, community engagement, and transformation within urban environments. It offers an alternative perspective on urban planning and development, emphasizing the temporary activation of spaces, fostering a sense of place, and promoting community interaction and participation.¹

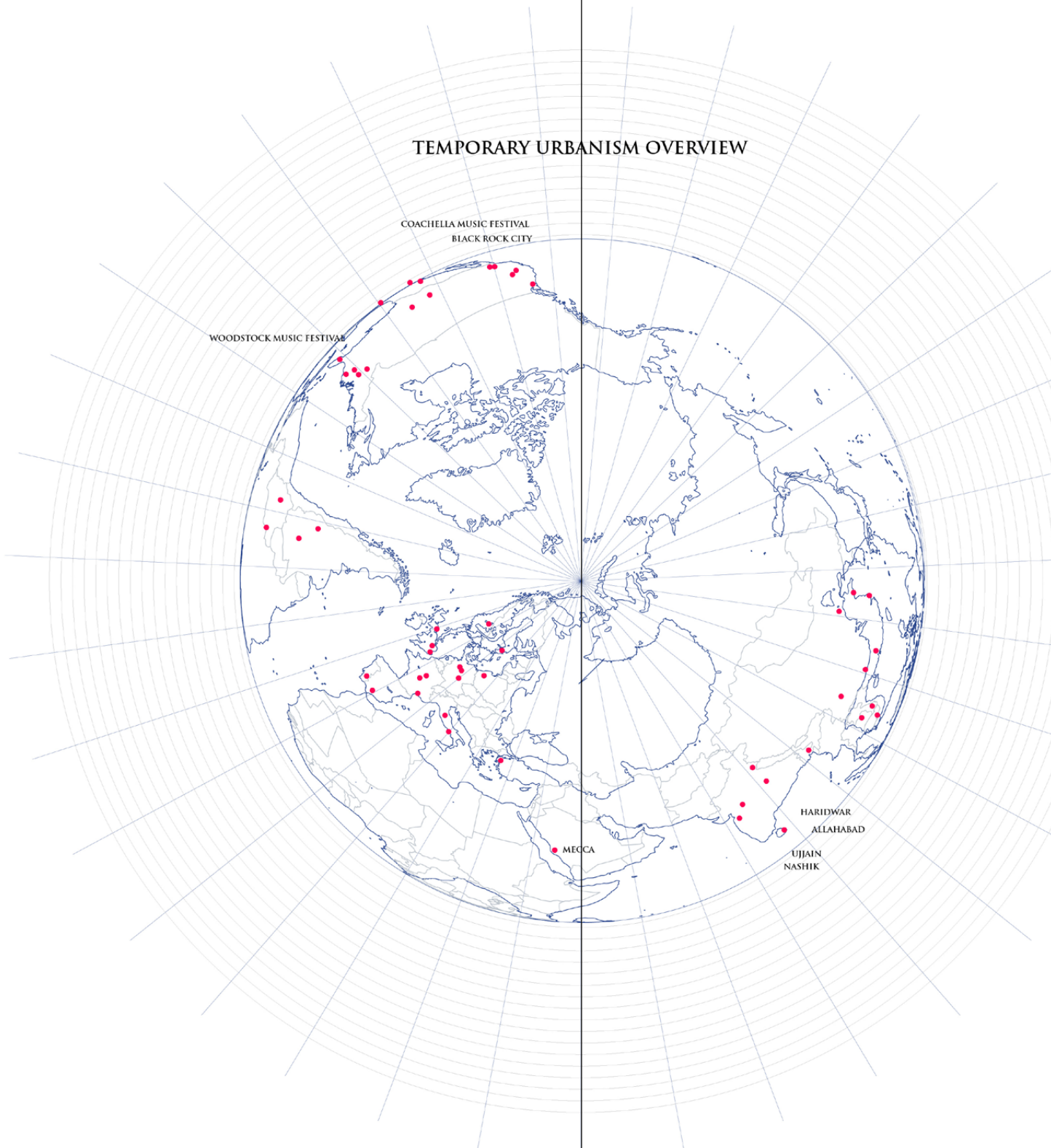
Here is an overview of temporary urbanism in the world:

Cultural Festivals and Events: Celebrating art, music, food, and diverse cultural expressions, attracting residents and visitors while fostering excitement, cultural exchange, and community engagement.

Pop-up Parks and Plazas: Transforming underused areas into vibrant community gathering spots with seating, greenery, art installations, and recreational activities.

Temporary Markets and Pop-up Retail: Showcasing local vendors, artisans, and entrepreneurs through temporary setups, helping economic development and providing platforms for small businesses.

Temporary Installations and Artistic Interventions: Transforming public spaces with temporary art installations, enhancing aesthetics, and encouraging public engagement.²



How do people behave in temporary urbanism differ from individual's daily life?

How do people perceive the space and deploy their spatial rights in temporary urbanism through dissimilar spatial quality and time constraints?

How does the utilization of space in temporary and meaningful connections among individuals and communities?

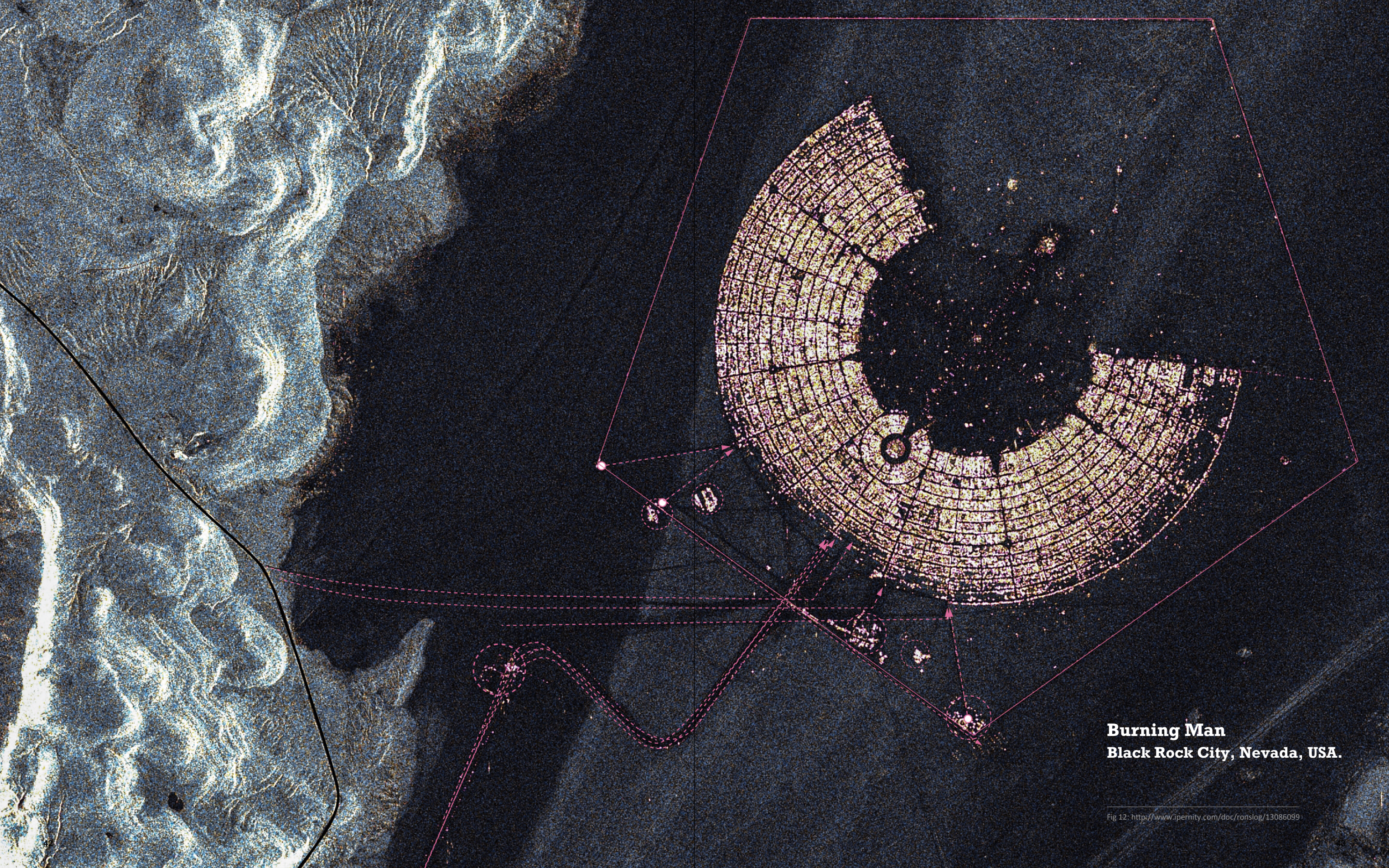
How is the land allocated and constructed?

How are the boundaries of public and private space defined in the temporary city, and what kind of boundaries are they?

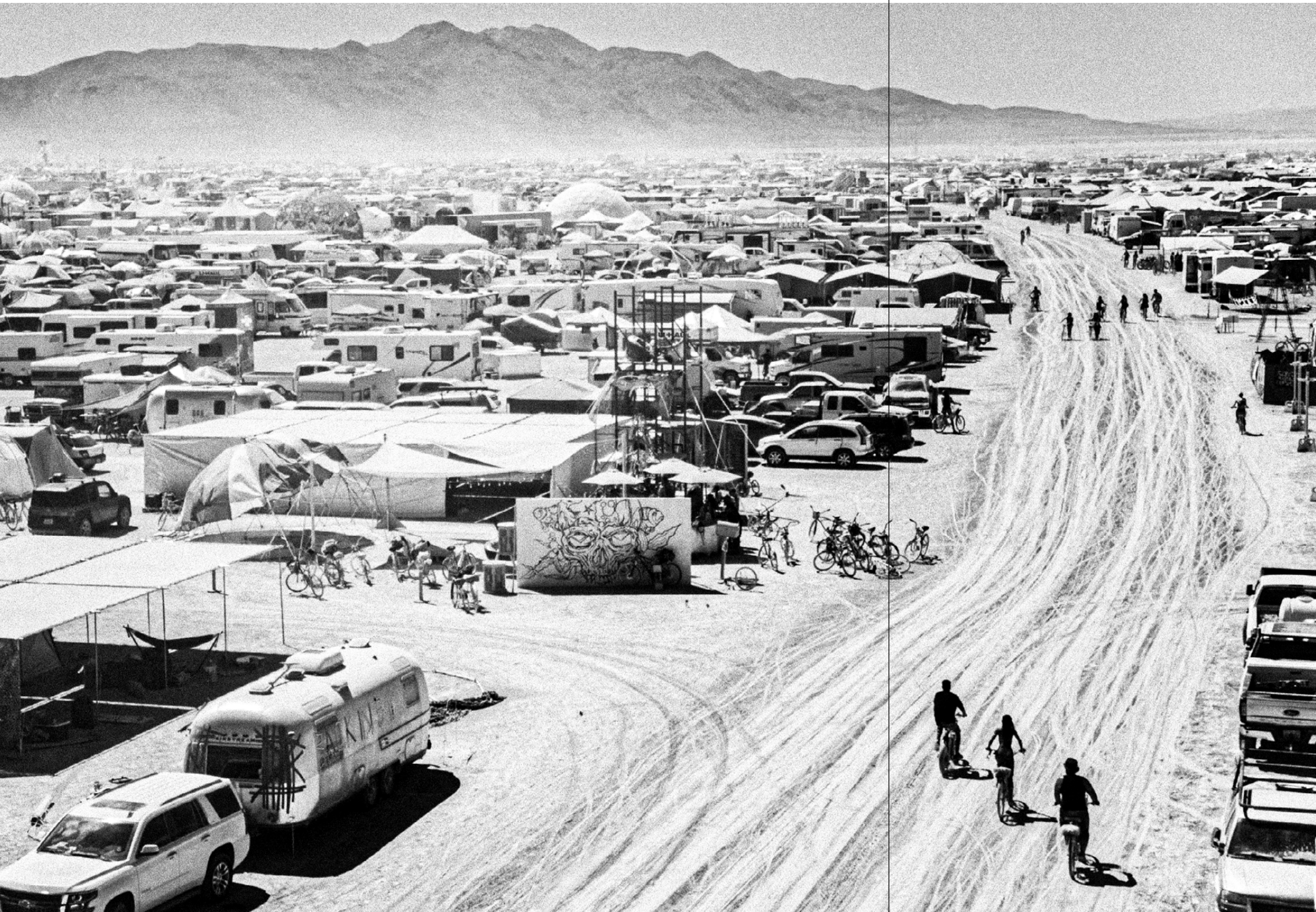
How are the temporary urban areas in these cases similar and different?

1. Andres, Lauren, John R. Bryson, and Paul Moawad. "Temporary Urbanisms as Policy Alternatives to Enhance Health and Well-Being in the Post-Pandemic City." *Current Environmental Health Reports* 8, no. 2 (June 2021): 167–76. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40572-021-00314-8>.

2. Bishop, Peter. Lesley, Williams. "The Temporary City". Routledge, 2012.



Burning Man
Black Rock City, Nevada, USA.



Black Rock City (BRC), located in the Nevada desert, is a temporary city that emerges through the collective efforts of participants in the Burning Man event. This unique gathering is largely driven by voluntary contributions, where individuals come together to construct the city's layout and infrastructure. ¹Volunteers dedicate weeks before and after the event to build the foundational aspects of the city, while the attendees themselves create themed camps, villages, art installations, and individual camps.

The city's central camp, established by the host organization, serves as a focal point. Additionally, large themed camps are constructed by groups of individuals sharing common interests or characteristics, while the village is an amalgamation of smaller camps that collectively shape the envisioned atmosphere of Black Rock City.²

Burning Man, which originated in 1986 on Baker Beach³ in San Francisco, is centered around community, art, self-expression, and self-reliance. It has evolved into an annual event held in Black Rock City since 1991, spanning nine days leading up to and including Labor Day. In recent years, the event has attracted an estimated 70,000 attendees, creating a vibrant and immersive temporary city experience.

1. "Burning Man." In Wikipedia, May 17, 2023. https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Burning_Man&oldid=1155311199.

2. "Burning Man Timeline - 2019." Accessed May 26, 2023. <https://burningman.org/timeline/>.

3. Burning Man. "The 10 Principles of Burning Man." <https://burningman.org/about/10-principles/>.

Fig 13: <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/travel/article/burning-man-shows-how-riotous-festival-can-be-accessible>

Through official annual interviews with participants, it has been consistently found that the primary motivation for attending the event is to experience a profound sense of belonging. Additionally, reasons such as seeking temporary respite from the outside world, personal growth, spiritual connection, and more are also highly ranked. Many participants view Burning Man as an escape from the confines of the outside world, a place where they can detach from societal norms and explore personal growth and spiritual connections.

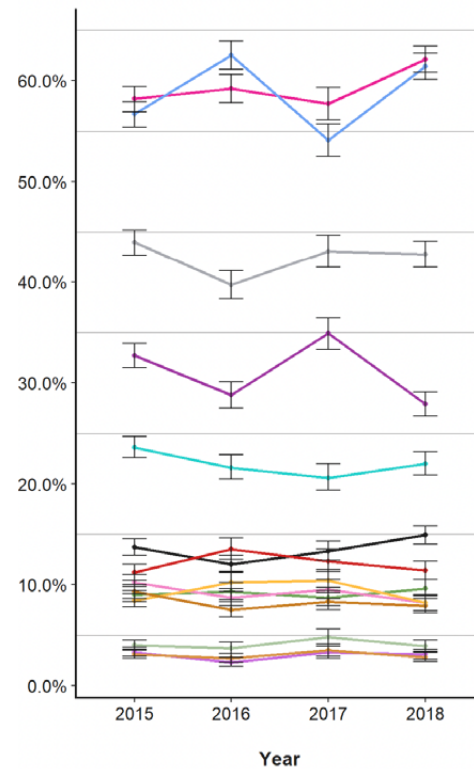
The census reveals that the event provides a unique platform for self-expression, creativity, and experimentation. Participants engage in various forms of artistic expression, contributing to the vibrant and immersive atmosphere of the temporary city. Through these creative endeavors, individuals not only express themselves but also forge connections with others who share their passions and interests.

The experiences at Burning Man foster a deep sense of connection and interdependence. Participants form bonds and build relationships that extend beyond the event, creating a sense of community that transcends geographical boundaries. The event serves as a catalyst for personal transformation and introspection, allowing individuals to reflect on their identities, values, and relationships with others and the world.

Moreover, the census data affirms the positive impact of Burning Man on participants' spiritual well-being. The event provides a space for individuals to explore their spiritual beliefs, connect with a higher purpose, and experience personal growth.

All figures in this page: "BRC Census Population Analysis, 2013-2019," n.d. <https://burningman.org/wp-content/uploads/BRC-Census-Population-Analysis-2013-2019.pdf>

Burning Man Attendance Reasons for Going to BRC This Year

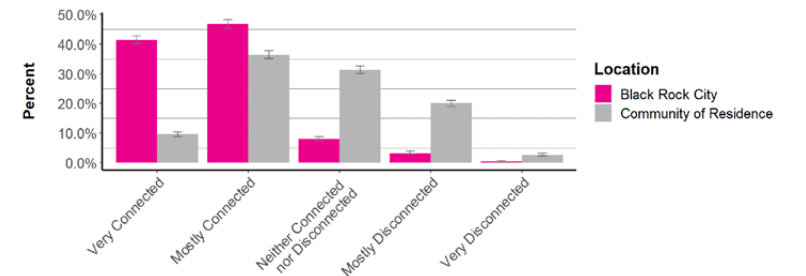


Reasons for Going to BRC

- To Feel a Sense of Belonging**
- To See/Experience the Art
- To Play and Experience Freedom
- To Escape the World for a Time
- To Grow or Connect Spiritually
- To Create/Work on a Project
- To Meet People Who Are Different from Me
- To Express Myself
- To Experience Gifting and Decommodification
- To Satisfy My Curiosity***
- To Rely on Myself and Practice Useful Skills
- To Consume Intoxicants
- To Perform and Practice Artistic Skills
- To Satisfy Someone Else's Wish That I Be There

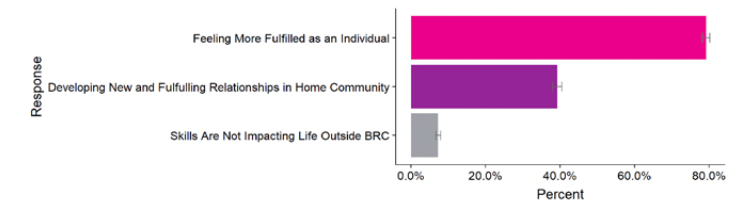
Experiences in Black Rock City

Evaluation of Feelings of Connectedness in BRC and Community of Residence

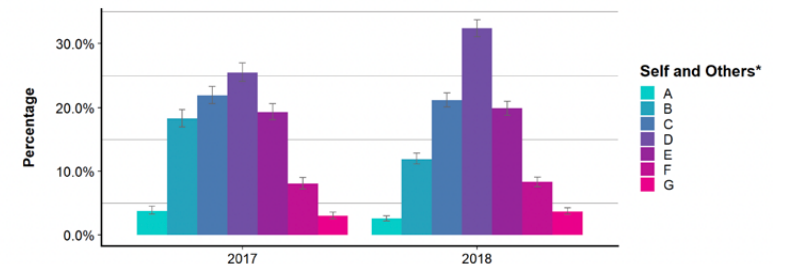
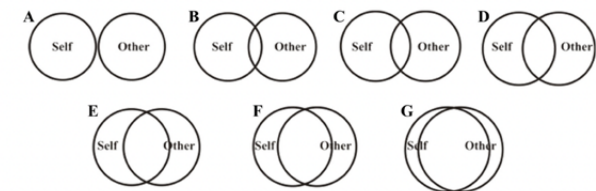


Skills Inspired

Impact of Skill(s) Outside of Black Rock City*

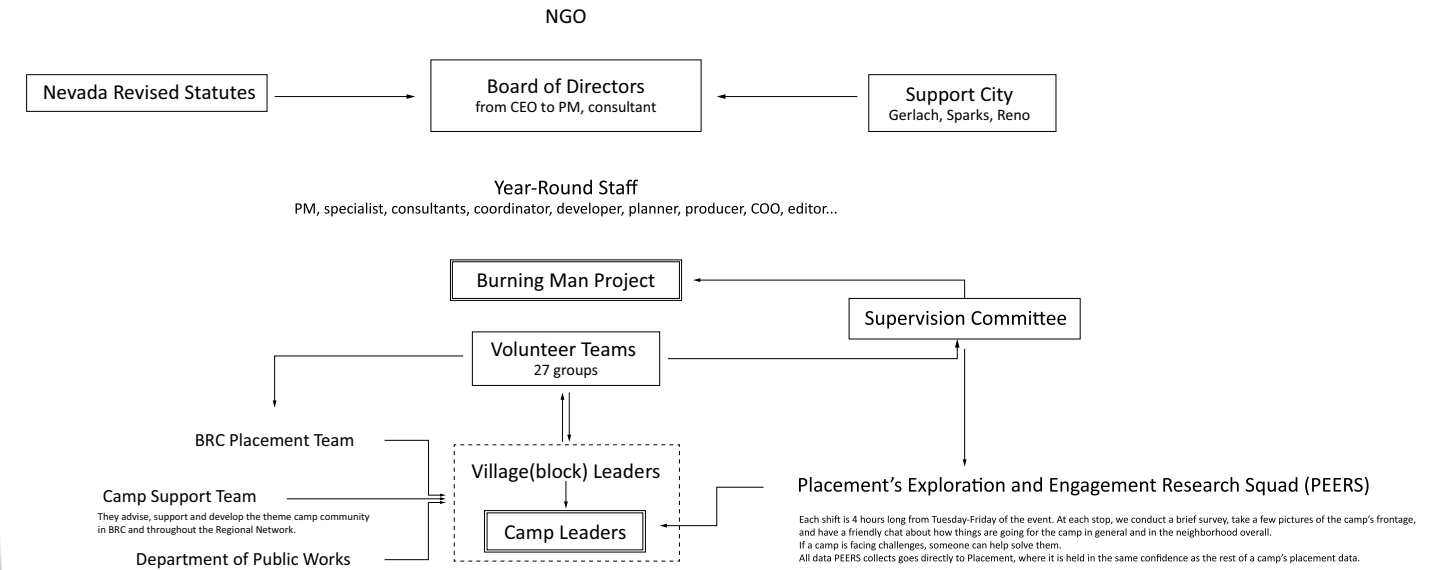


Evaluation of Current Relationship Between Self and Others

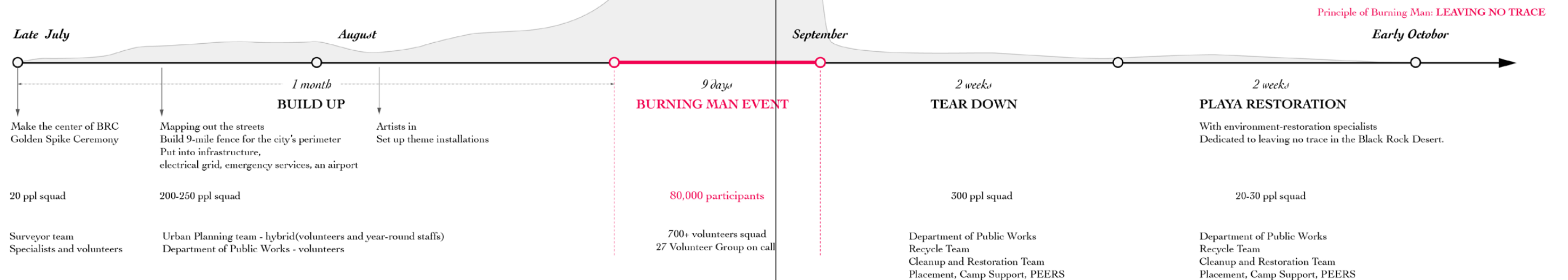


How did the BRC go from assembly to disassembly to leaving no trace?

Governance Framework



Timeline of BRC every year



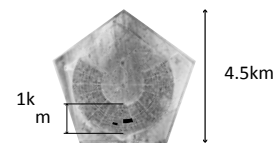
How to describe the BRC spatially?

Below is a set of comparisons of BRC's scale with other American cities in terms of spatial dimensions, with the population of the city being controlled to be constant at 80,000. When considering the footprint and block size, BRC is more similar to Manhattan. However, it is important to note that the vertical height of Midtown Manhattan leads to significantly higher population densities compared to BRC.

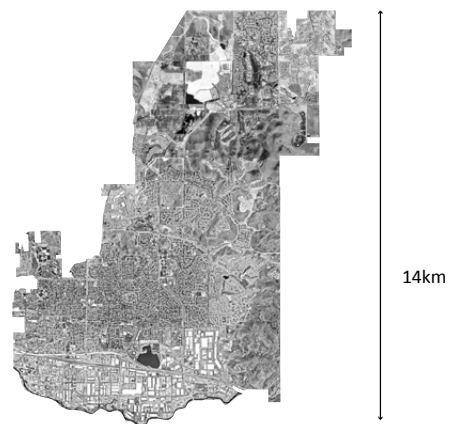
By making these comparisons, we can gain a tangible understanding of the scale of Black Rock City. It becomes tremendously evident that the event holds immense significance due to its unique size and the experiences it brings.

US city comparison with 80,000 population

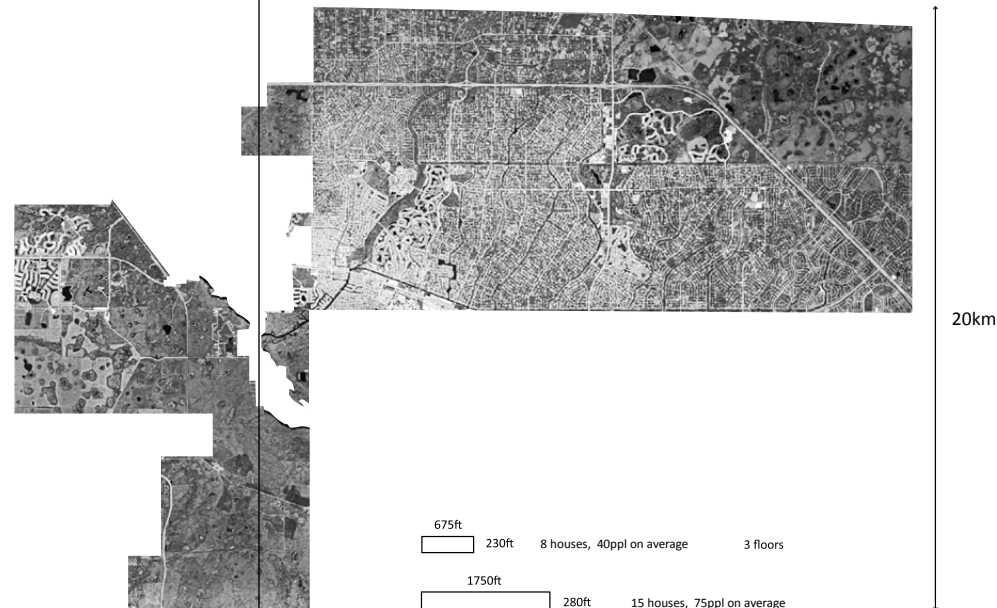
Black Rock City, NVS



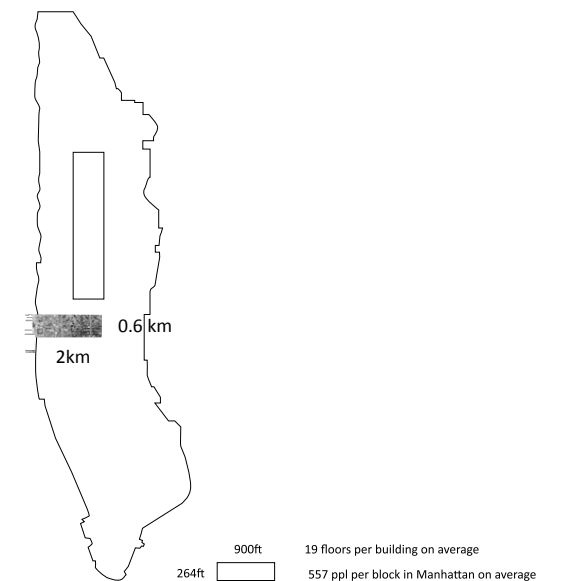
parkes, NV



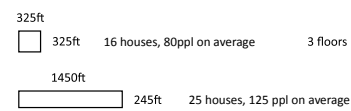
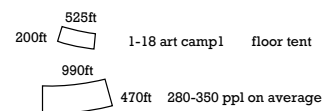
North Port City, FL



New York, NY



Basic block size comparison



Spatial democracy in Burning Man



Fig 14
52

Black Rock City undergoes a subtle location change every year, adding an additional layer of dynamism to its nature. Each year, the event organizers select a new site within the Black Rock Desert in Nevada for the temporary city's construction. This location change introduces a sense of novelty and discovery for both returning participants and first-time attendees.

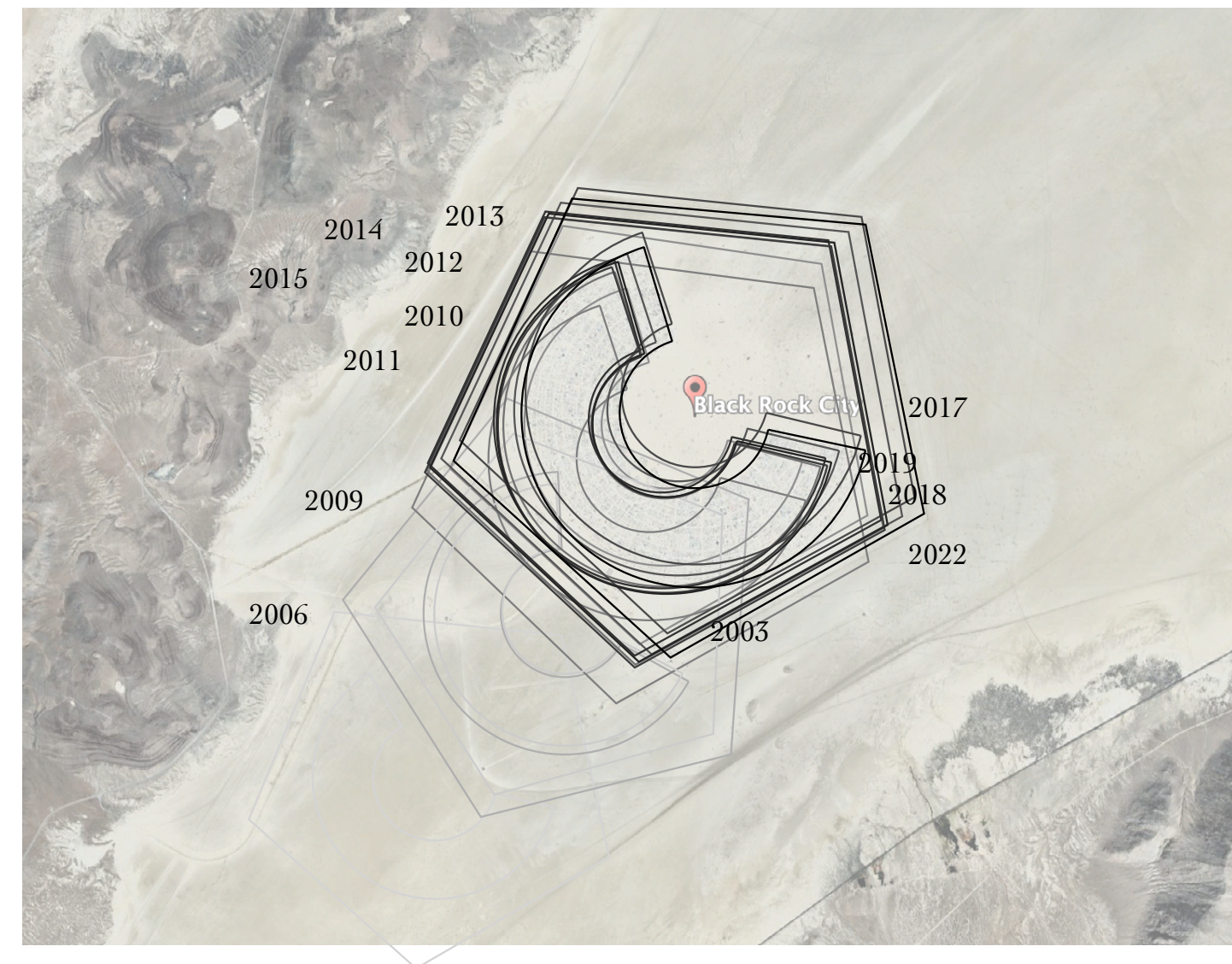
This fluidity in location contributes to the ephemeral nature of Black Rock City, reinforcing the notion that it is a transient and ever-evolving entity. The change in location not only adds excitement and variety but also fosters a sense of impermanence and the appreciation of the present moment.¹

"There is no other city that you can go to where the city planner can take information from the previous years and then change the city plan based on that, and then study it in person and see how it affects Black Rock City," photographer Shalaco said.²

1. Equinox. "JCA Book Reviews: The Archaeology of Burning Man: The Rise and Fall of Black Rock City by Carolyn L. White." Equinox Publishing (blog), January 13, 2022. <https://www.equinoxpub.com/home/jca-book-reviews-archaeology-burning-man-rise-fall-black-rock-city-carolyn-l-white/>.

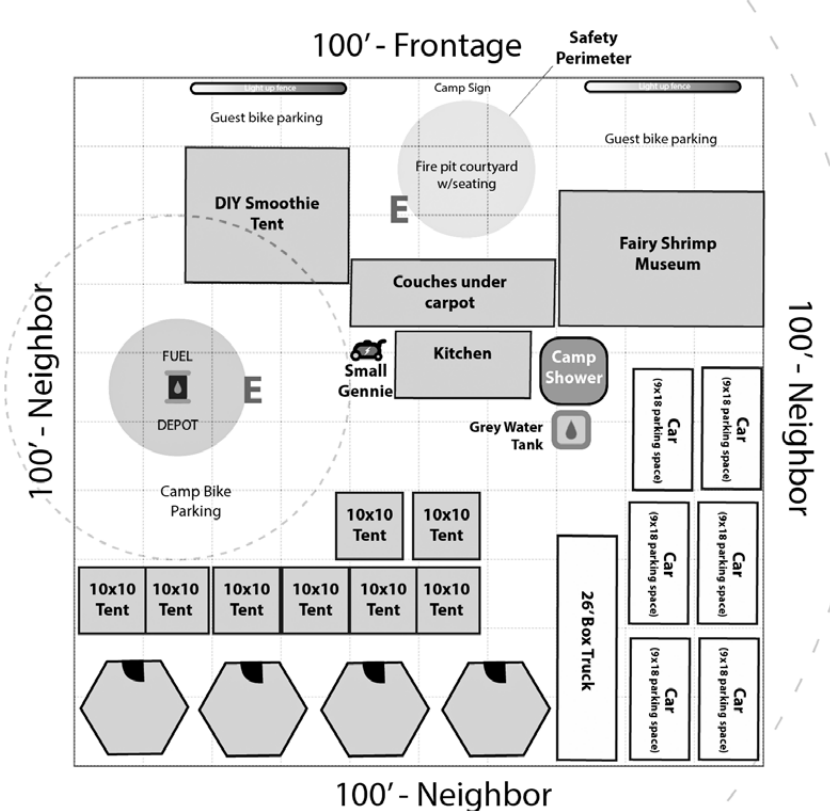
2. Kotecki, Peter. "How Burning Man's Black Rock City Rises into a 70,000-Person City and Vanishes in Less than 2 Months." Business Insider. Accessed May 26, 2023. <https://www.businessinsider.com/how-burning-man-black-rock-city-rises-from-the-dust-each-year-2018-8>.

Fig 14: <https://www.dezeen.com/2016/09/02/best-temporary-structures-burning-man-2016-highlights-photographs-pieterjan-mattan/>



Spatial democracy in Burning Man

The high level of spatial self-governance among participants is evident in their involvement in designing and configuring their own camp spaces within the community. Each camp leader is given the responsibility to make decisions regarding various elements such as parking areas, gathering spaces, and tent arrangements.



In this ongoing process of negotiating the boundaries of individual and group activity, individuals begin to connect with one another, forming a sense of belonging within the community. People develop an understanding of their fellow participants, establishing bonds and cultivating a shared identity as a cohesive unit.

The act of collectively shaping the space fosters a sense of ownership and agency among participants, reinforcing their engagement and commitment to the community. By actively participating in the dialogue and negotiation of space, individuals not only establish functional arrangements but also forge meaningful connections and a sense of belonging within the temporary urban environment.

Single unit plan view: single camp as a community

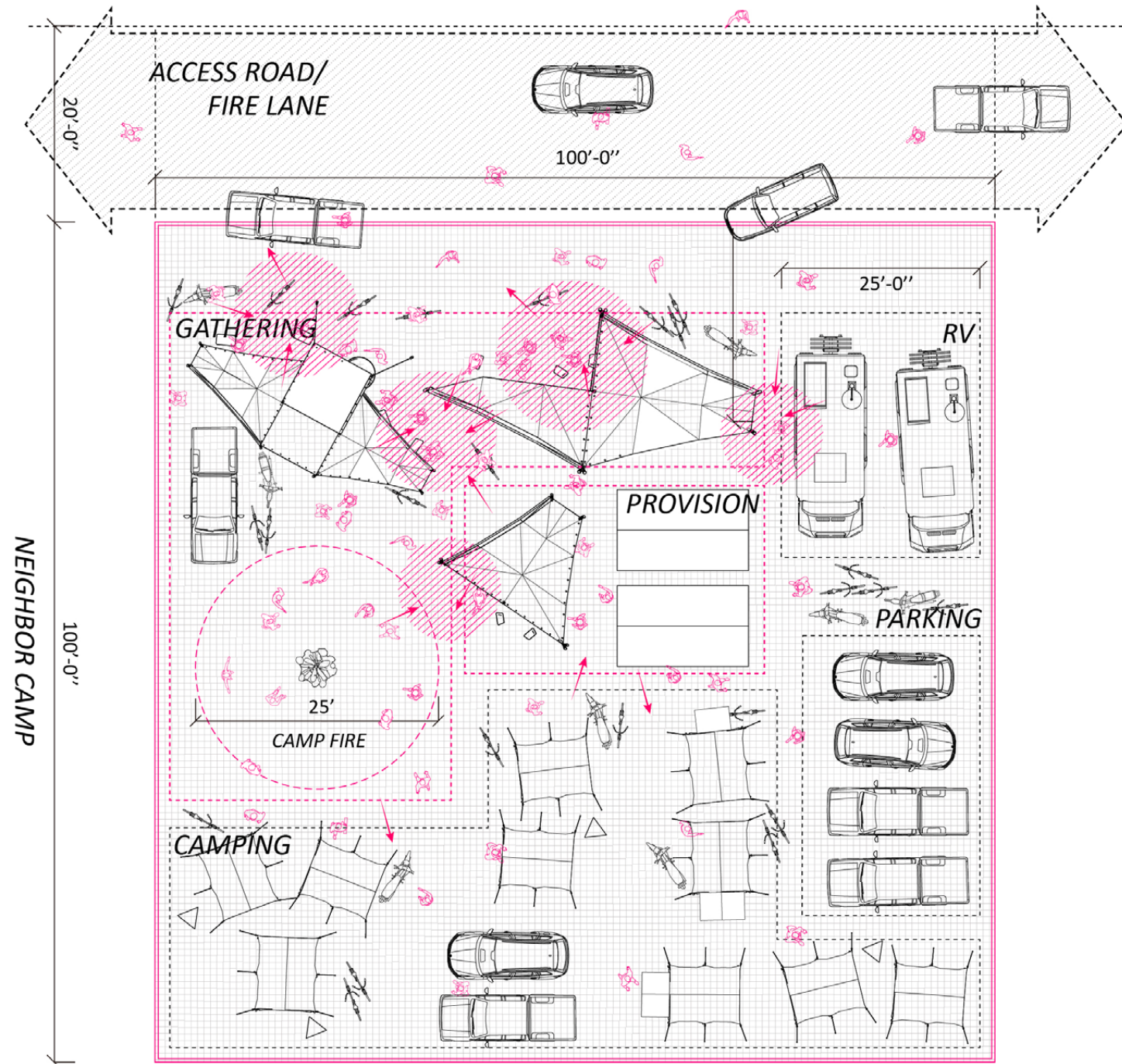
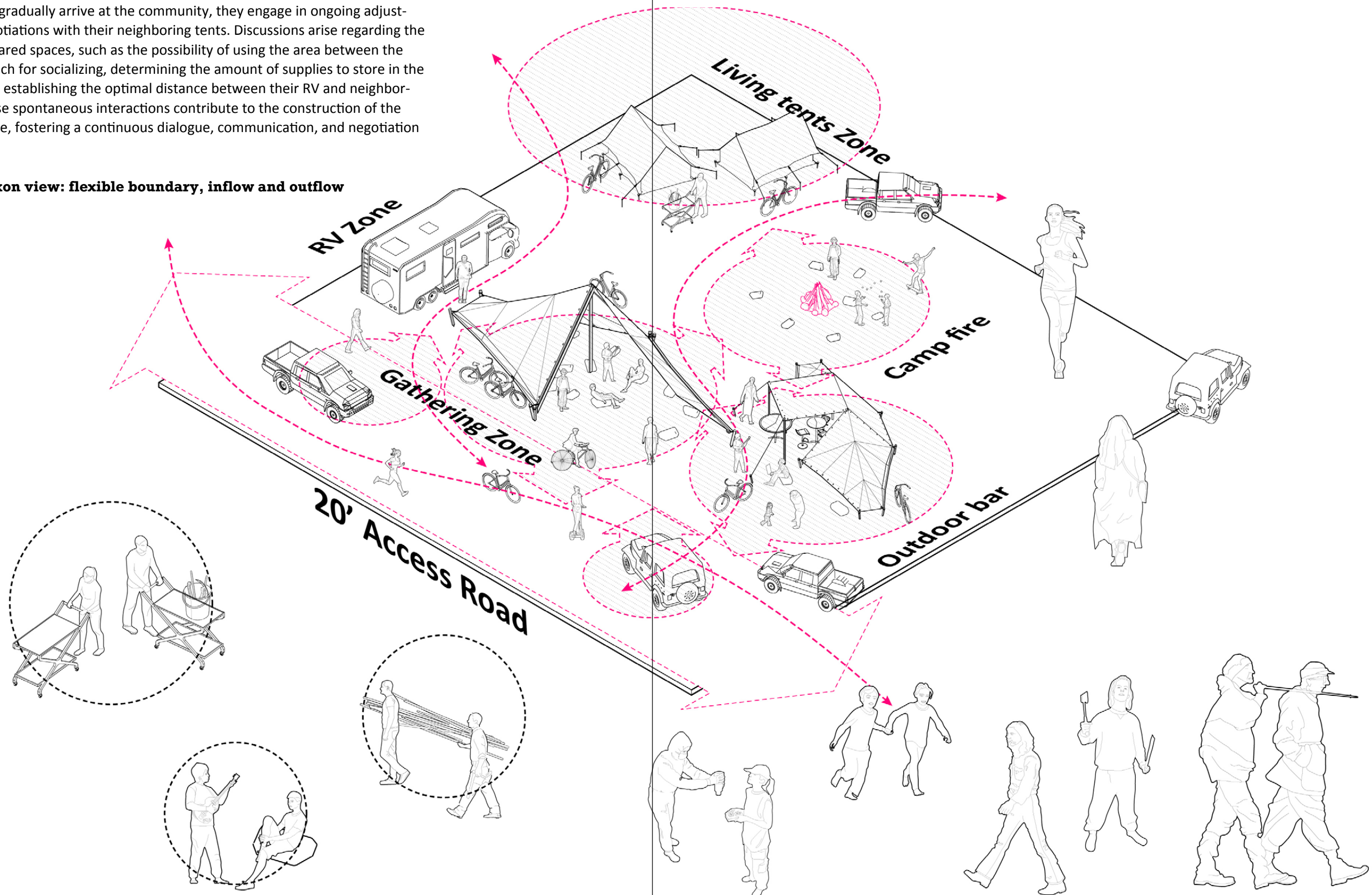


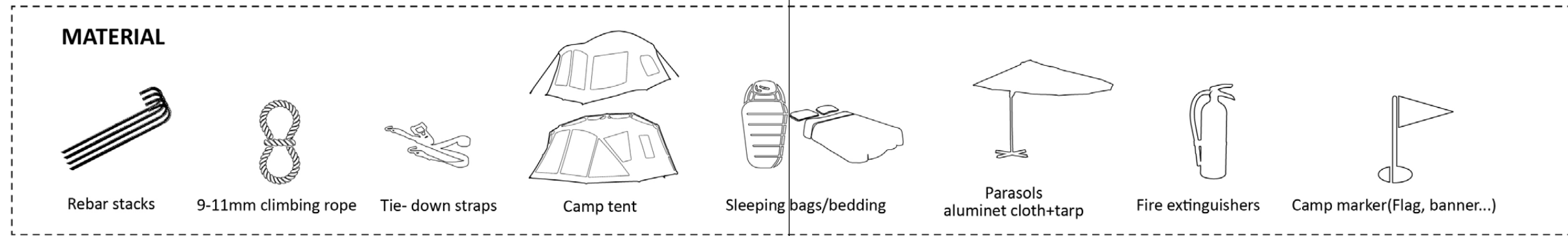
Fig 15: Burning Man. "Camp Layouts." Accessed May 26, 2023. <https://burningman.org/event/participate/camps/placement-process/camp-layouts/>.

As participants gradually arrive at the community, they engage in ongoing adjustments and negotiations with their neighboring tents. Discussions arise regarding the utilization of shared spaces, such as the possibility of using the area between the bar and the couch for socializing, determining the amount of supplies to store in the pickup truck, or establishing the optimal distance between their RV and neighboring camps. These spontaneous interactions contribute to the construction of the communal space, fostering a continuous dialogue, communication, and negotiation process.

Single unit axon view: flexible boundary, inflow and outflow



BRC Burner Toolkit



Perspective



The spatial perception within a single unit of a theme camp is shaped by various elements, including the arrangement of structures, the placement of communal spaces, and the incorporation of art installations or interactive features. These elements work together to create a cohesive and immersive atmosphere, providing individuals with a distinct sense of place and identity within the larger camp.

The structure designed by Mamou-Mani Architects envisioned a spiritual space characterized by 19 gracefully curved trusses¹ radiating from the center and ascending into an open crown, embracing the surrounding elements. Its construction relies on the dedication of volunteer labor from the Burning Man community.

The temple holds a profound significance as a sacred sanctuary for the community, offering a space for prayer, healing, and the release of grief. Within its walls, individuals come together to collectively mourn their losses, whether the departure of a cherished person or the shedding of their former selves.² The temple serves as a poignant backdrop for introspection, enabling a deep exploration of these emotions while fostering a profound connection between all who bear sorrow and hope.



Fig 16: "Format Engineers." Accessed May 25, 2023. <https://www.formatengineers.com/>.

Temple Galaxia

Burning Man Temple Crew 2018

1. "Format Engineers." Accessed May 25, 2023. <https://www.formatengineers.com/>.

2. ANNIE LOCKE SCHERER. "Galaxia: Burning Man Temple 2018." Accessed May 25, 2023. <http://www.alscherer.com/galaxia>.



Kumbh Mela
Ganges River, India

Fig 17: R.M. Nunes, India, 2013

Overview

Kumbh Mela is the world's largest congregation of religious pilgrims every 12 years. For the 2019 Ardh Kumbh at Allahabad, the temporary city, about 2500 hectares (almost two-thirds the size of Manhattan)¹ and housing over 70 million people, became the world's largest city. Annually, the monsoon season in the Ganges valley extends from April to September. To circumvent the challenging weather conditions, the Kumbh Mela strategically utilizes the flood plains as a temporary occupation, ensuring avoidance of the monsoon season. The period between the day the floodplains are sufficiently dry for construction to commence and the

arrival of the first inhabitants is approximately eight weeks.² Similarly, there is a span of approximately seven weeks between the departure of the last inhabitants and the subsequent return of the floodwaters.

Unlike many housing developments, refugee camps, or cubicle offices, similar to any permanently existing city, the Kumbh Mela possesses a wide array of essential infrastructure required for sustenance. It encompasses road networks, bridges, power stations supplying electricity, healthcare facilities and clinics, police and fire departments for security, as well

as transportation systems and telecommunication services.

Moreover, the festival site consists of regularly shaped but *autonomously conceived areas in which each community is authorized to organize its space in the way that most accurately expresses its own identity*. Some are more spontaneous, others more systematic. Although the procedures that regulate the allocation and organization of the spaces are well established, they have never been explicitly codified in any document.

1. Mehrotra, Rahul. Vera, Felipe. Kumbh Mela: Mapping the Ephemeral Megacity. Cambridge: HARVARD University South Asia Institute, 2015.

2. Baranwal, Annu, Ankit Anand, Ravikant Singh, Mridul Deka, Abhishek Paul, Sunny Borgohain, and Nobhojit Roy. "Managing the Earth's Biggest Mass Gathering Event and WASH Conditions: Maha Kumbh Mela (India)." PLoS Currents 7 (April 13, 2015): ecurrents.dis.e8b3053f40e774e7e3fdbe1b-b50a130d. <https://doi.org/10.1371/currents.dis.e8b3053f40e774e7e3fdbe1b-b50a130d>.

Fig 18: <https://worksthatwork.com/4/constructing-the-worlds-biggest-disassemblable-city>.

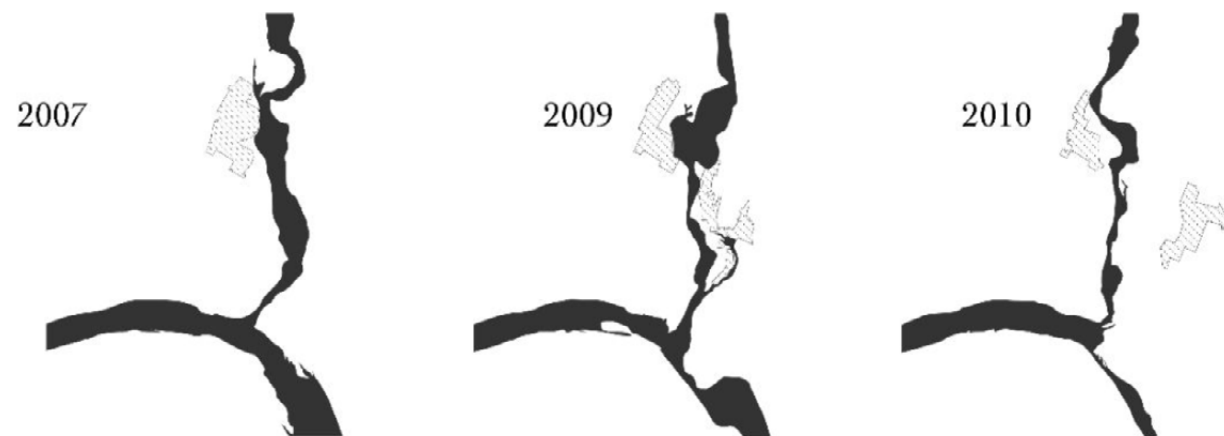
Fig 19: <https://worksthatwork.com/4/constructing-the-worlds-biggest-disassemblable-city>.



Fig 18



Fig 19



Kumbh Mela events are regularly held across different locations in India, necessitating significant temporary land use shifts to accommodate the millions of pilgrims who gather for religious festivals. These events are strategically planned around the annual monsoon season, which occurs from April to September in India. During this time, heavy rainfall is experienced in the Ganges River basin, resulting in a gradual increase in water levels that recede after September, maintaining a stable water level for a period of time.

In the case of Kumbh Mela 2013, for example, the preparatory activities for the event took place in October of the previous year, while the water level had already started to recede. The main focus of Kumbh Mela is the sacred rivers or their confluence points, where extensive temporary land use changes occur to create well-organized bathing spaces. These areas undergo remarkable transformations, as large sections surrounding the bathing sites are converted into temporary tent cities and camps specifically designed for accommodating the influx of pilgrims. These temporary settlements are typically established on flood plains, utilizing the available space effectively.

considering the densely populated nature of the surrounding areas in India. Simultaneously, the historical and religious significance of the chosen locations allows pilgrims to develop a sense of familiarity and forge a genuine connection with nature at these sacred sites.

In general, the temporary land use transformations seen during the Kumbh Mela events exemplify the adaptability of these gatherings, where careful planning and use of available resources create spaces that meet the spiritual needs of pilgrims while being in harmony with the natural environment.

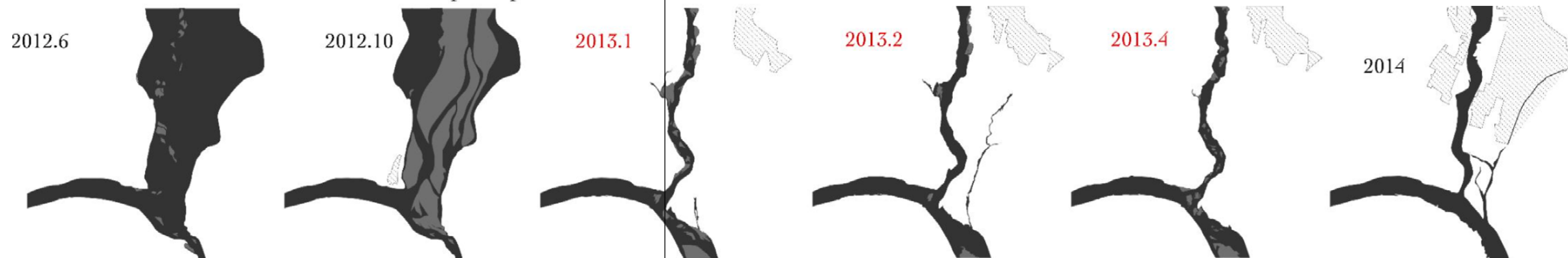
This set of diagrams below illustrates the fluctuations in water levels in the year preceding and following the 2013 Kumbh Mela festival. Utilizing seasonal sites for large-scale gathering events proves to be a wise and practical land use strategy, especially

Fig 20: Sridhar, S., P. Gautret, and P. Brouqui. "A Comprehensive Review of the Kumbh Mela: Identifying Risks for Spread of Infectious Diseases." *Clinical Microbiology and Infection* 21, no. 2 (February 1, 2015): 128–33. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cmi.2014.11.021>.

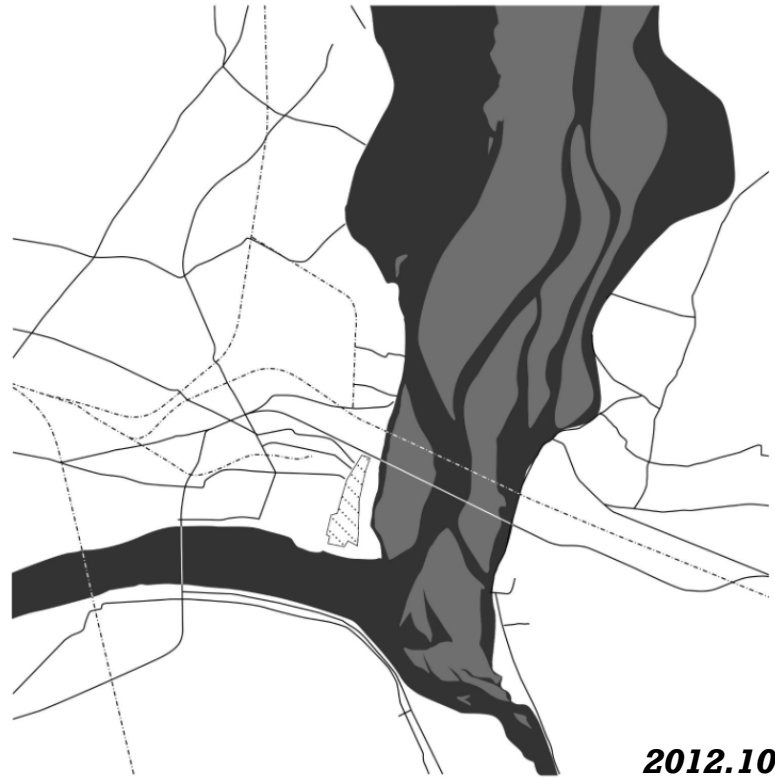
Monsoon Season: April-September



Fig 20







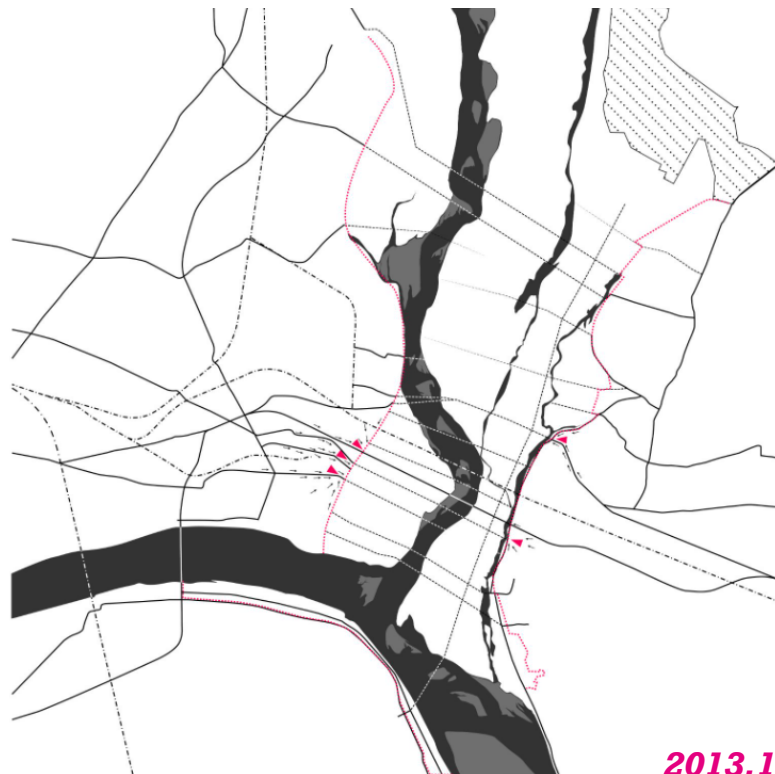
2012.10

Infrastructure Connection

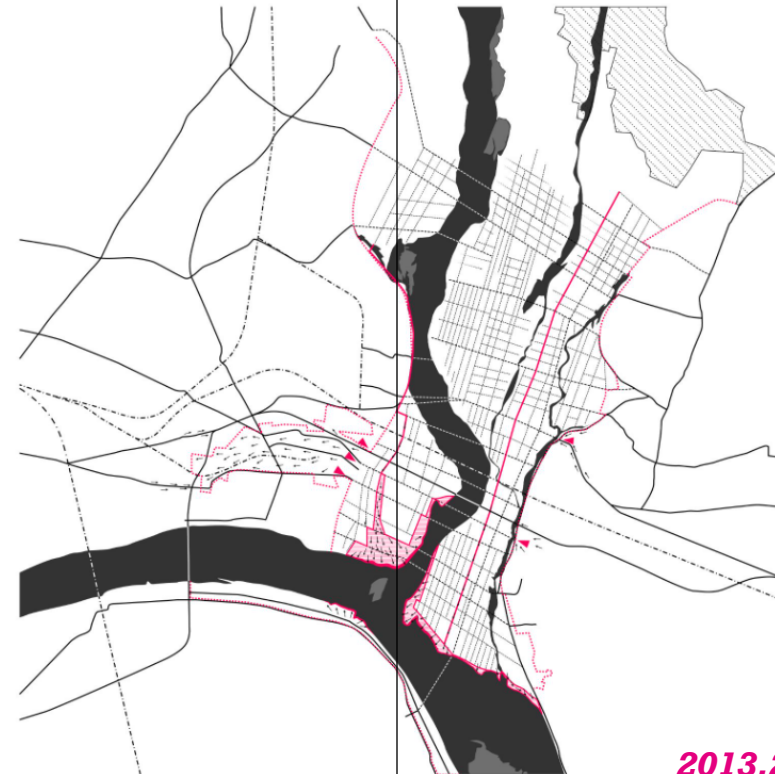
The diagrams below illustrate the infrastructure changes at the planning scale specifically for the duration of the Kumbh Mela event. The integration of Kumbh Mela's infrastructure with the permanent city is evident, with the road network aligned parallel to the permanent cross-river bridge and cross-river railway line. The physical and pedestrian flows heavily rely on the support of the adjacent cities on the west and east sides. However, the presence of the dynamic Kumbh Mela area, temporarily erected above the river, creates a deeper connection and dialogue between the two neighboring cities. They are no longer two areas neatly divided by the river flowing through them, but together they unite in the middle of Kumbh Mela as a whole urban cluster.

There are five main entrances to the Kumbh Mela site located near the government-defined official

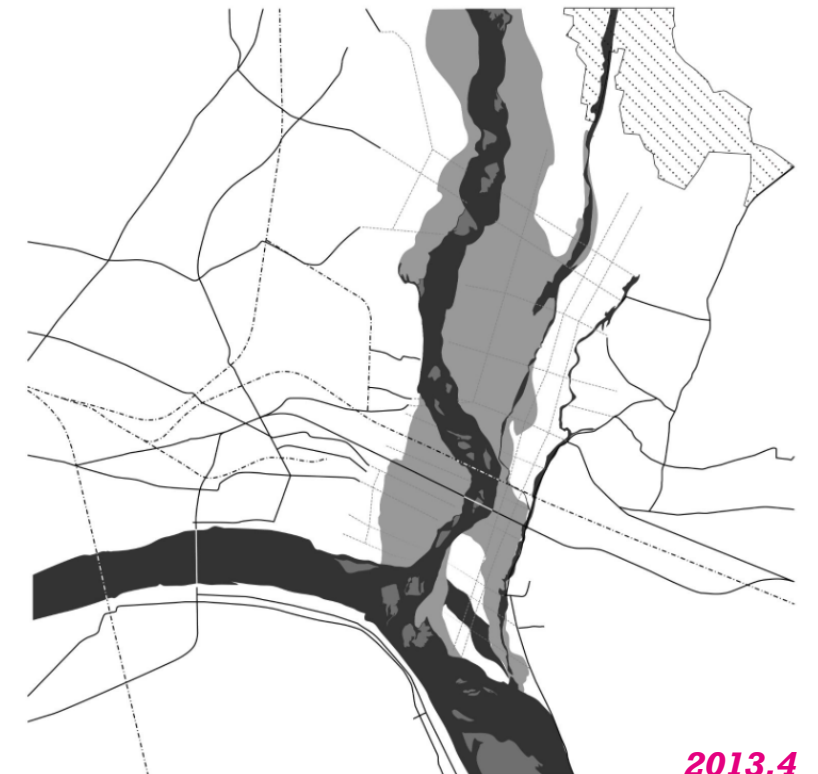
edge. Over time, the boundaries under official control have been subject to gradual adjustments influenced by informal forces, such as the informal economy and occupation. Similarly, within the main neighborhoods, significant road and tent displacement occurs due to the movement of people and materials. Following the conclusion of Kumbh Mela activities in March, when almost all structures are removed, a gradual increase in the water level of the river becomes noticeable.



2013.1



2013.2



2013.4



Fig 22: Joydeep Mitra, Allahabad, India- January 13 2013: Day 1 of the holy Maha Kumbh Mela once in 12 years the greatest congregation of humankind. <https://www.shutterstock.com/image-photo/allahabad-uttar-pradesh-india-january-13-1168511617>

Spatial democracy in Kumbh Mela

The primary intention of the Kumbh Mela is to provide an opportunity for devotees to attain spiritual growth, seek blessings, and purify their souls. The Kumbh Mela nourishes people's faith, rejuvenates their social bonding, and helps foster a harmonious society. People from diverse backgrounds, castes, and social statuses come together to participate in the event, transcending barriers and experiencing a collective spiritual journey. The gathering symbolizes the idea that, ultimately, all individuals are interconnected in their spiritual quest. And the democratic right to space significantly contributes to and deepens the spiritual nourishment of the participants.

Space allocation process from planning to bottom-up construction

Take the 2013 Kumbh Mela as the example. In the first place, the support for space democracy is integral to the effective organization of the Kumbh Mela, as emphasized by the event planners and government authorities. This commitment to space democracy becomes particularly significant considering the dynamic and rapidly changing urban landscape in India, which is one of the most densely populated countries in the world. Their support for space democracy highlights the recognition of the importance of democratic principles in shaping the spatial aspects of the event, ensuring its smooth operation despite the challenges posed by the ever-changing urban landscape.

In the Kumbh Mela, specific areas are allocated by the event authorities to different religious organizations, sects, and communities. Participants belonging to these groups enjoy the autonomy to organize their designated spaces in accordance with their unique customs and practices. They are free to design and arrange their sections within the broader Kumbh Mela site, fostering a sense of ownership and active participation in shaping the overall spatial layout.

In fact, it is a smart way of spatial organization, all strict block-specific planning and all spontaneity are undesirable. The conditions for spontaneous spatial organization can only happen at a relatively small scale, which is the perceptible scale for people. In a flat spatial expansion of no more than two floors high, within one block is a reasonable scale. This approach ensures a dynamic and manageable spatial layout.¹

From macro-planning to micro-configuration, the spatial organization of Kumbh Mela goes through the following process: first, it is divided into 3 administrative sections, which are then subdivided into 14 self-sufficient sectors. Parallel to this system, there are multiple top-down monitoring administrative districts, each measuring 20x20 meters, for policing and maintaining order. Using this macro-planning framework as a basis, further refinements are a layer of adaptive grid systems to support the overall spatial layout. Further reduced to the size of the block, a specific wall structure within the block becomes apparent. This structure uses two pieces of iron and two bamboo panels as the separating elements of the wall, which are used to define and separate the different spatial areas. This specific wall structure plays an important role throughout Kumbh Mela, providing privacy and security, and providing clear boundaries for different activities and functions. Through this detailed planning and configuration, Kumbh Mela is able to effectively organize and manage the large flow of people and activities. The holistic to detailed design allows participants to clearly understand and utilize the different spaces, promoting order and a smooth interactive experience.

1. Maclean, Kama. Pilgrimage and Power: The Kumbh Mela in Allahabad, 1765-1954. OUP USA, 2008.

Fig 23: PrakharTripathi, Prayagraj, India - February 10th, 2019: A group of Sadhus take part in a holy bath and offer prayers on the occasion of Kumbh Mela in Prayagraj which happens once in 12 years.



How people get involved in the process?

Participants often gather with like-minded individuals, forming camps or groups within the larger Kumbh Mela site. This collective approach allows them to share resources, divide responsibilities, and create a sense of community. Participants within a camp work together to construct shared spaces, communal areas, and facilities that cater to their specific needs. And within their respective camps, participants autonomously organize the spatial layout. They determine the placement of tents, communal areas, kitchens, and gathering spaces based on their preferences and practical considerations. This autonomy allows participants to optimize the utilization of available space and create a functional living environment. Besides, participants actively engage in the establishment and upkeep of shared facilities within the Kumbh Mela as well. This encompasses the collaborative creation of communal kitchens, dining areas, washrooms, and healthcare centers. Through their collective efforts, participants ensure the provision and accessibility of vital amenities for all attendees of the event.

Down to a smaller scale, people can bring their own tents, temporary structures, or even simple makeshift shelters to the Kumbh Mela. They have the autonomy to choose the type of shelter that suits their requirements, whether it's a traditional tent, a modern camping tent, or a unique self-built structure. Once on-site, participants have the freedom to personalize and customize their living spaces. They can arrange the interior layout, furniture, bedding, and decorations according to their own preferences. This autonomy allows individuals to create a comfortable and personalized environment during their stay. Certainly, people are responsible for managing their own living arrangements, including basic amenities such as cooking facilities, water supply, and

sanitation. They exercise autonomy in ensuring their daily needs are met, either individually or through shared resources within their camp.

According to Nalini, a volunteer at Swami Avadheshanand Giri's camp, the Kumbh Mela experience teaches the practice of being fully attached and fully detached simultaneously. Volunteers invest weeks of enthusiastic effort in setting up the entire camp, followed by nearly two months of successful operation. However, they are then required to dismantle everything and depart abruptly, demonstrating total detachment. This process serves as a practice ground for cultivating equanimity in a transient world. Another volunteer at Swami Chidananda's camp shared that the Kumbh Mela provides an opportunity to learn how to coexist harmoniously with others, understand their perspectives and make necessary adjustments for cooperative work. Additionally, they highlight the contribution made to society through their collective efforts.¹

Within a block during the Kumbh Mela, the space arrangement process is characterized by informality and flexibility, and it emerges organically based on the needs and preferences of the participants. The flexibility in space arrangement also extends to the scale of interaction. People within a block can influence each other's spatial configuration and activities, either consciously or unconsciously. Participants can make adjustments and modifications to their spaces as needed, ensuring the optimal utilization of available area and resources. The large number of participants and the close proximity between tents and structures create a sense of shared space and communal living. This spatial intermingling facilitates social interactions, cooperation, and a sense of camaraderie among the participants. The dynamic interactions and evolving connections among individuals, groups, and communities significantly impact the diverse boundaries, encompassing both the ever-shifting realms of social and economic

activities that continuously redefine the dividing lines.

Besides, the bustling informal economic and material exchange taking place along the official boundary of Kumbh Mela plays a pivotal role in shaping the actual boundary of the event. The high level of activity and informal transactions that occur in this zone contribute to the emergence of a vibrant and fluid boundary which extends beyond the designated limits. This informal economy, characterized by spontaneous markets, street vendors, and temporary stalls, creates a dynamic and flexible boundary that adapts to the needs and demands of the participants. It blurs the distinction between the official event space and the surrounding areas, resulting in an expanded and permeable boundary that accommodates the organic growth and diverse interactions of the gathering.

1. Eck, Diana, and Kalpesh Bhatt. "Understanding the KUMBH MELA." In *Kumbh Mela: Mapping the Ephemeral Megacity*, edited by Rahul Mehrotra, 38-48. Cambridge: HARVARD University South Asia Institute, 2015.

Fig 24: <https://www.india.com/news/india/kumbh-mela-2019-prayagraj-gears-up-for-religious-rituals-from-tomorrow-new-flight-services-in-operation-3522947/>





Construction process

Preparations for the 2013 Kumbh Mela began months in advance, involving the collection of materials from various regions and the construction of specific elements like floating bridges near the site. Once the Kumbh Mela concluded in March, the infrastructure was dismantled. Some components, like the reed roads, were left to be naturally absorbed by the river, while others, such as the floating bridges, were either transported intact to new locations or incorporated into the supply of construction materials for future structures. The majority of materials were stored for use in upcoming Kumbh Melas or other events. The assembly of the Kumbh Mela is intricately synchronized with the natural cycles of seasons and rivers, the recurring nature of different melas, and the expansion and contraction cycles that operate at regional and national levels. The architectural system of the Kumbh Mela is carefully calibrated to these spatial and temporal scales. Large fluctuations of people and the shifting of the river make the Kumbh Mela site an unpredictable environment for addressing even the most basic design challenges.¹

In unstable natural conditions and adaptable urban land, the rapid and extensive material flow, assembly, and dissolution of structures within a short timeframe inherently involve a certain level of uncertainty and informality. A similar case can be observed in the construction of world expos or garden expos within permanent cities, where there is also a certain degree of temporariness, except for a few permanent landmark buildings and venues. Similarly, when there is a rapid and intense flow of materials over a short duration, it can stimulate a degree of spontaneous activity within a defined scope.

The construction of infrastructure, such as roads, bridges, and amenities within the Kumbh Mela, often involves collaborative efforts among participants. People come together to build temporary roads, bridges, and pathways to ensure smooth movement within the event. This collaborative construction process fosters a sense of collective responsibility and community engagement.

1. Mehrotra, Rahul. Vera, Felipe. "The Ephemeral MEGACITY" In *Kumbh Mela: Mapping the Ephemeral Megacity*, edited by Rahul Mehrotra, 68-71. Cambridge: HARVARD University South Asia Institute, 2015.

Fig 25: PrakharTripathi, Prayagraj, India, February 10th, 2019: A group of sadhus take part in a holy bath and offer prayers on the occasion of Kumbh Mela in Prayagraj which happens once in 12 years.



From the aspect of construction materials, fences are constructed using bamboo (known as ballis), and pipes or trusses are utilized to support large lights. The dimensions of trusses can range from seventy-two to 120 feet⁷. The tents available come in different typologies and sizes, such as Darbaru (VIP) measuring 45' x 30' x 2', Swiss Cottage measuring 30' x 30', Staff Tent measuring 24' x 25', and Choldary measuring 18' x 18'.

Tents made of lightweight and durable materials such as canvas, nylon, or polyester are a popular choice among participants, bamboo or wooden poles as the framework for their temporary structures. Waterproof tarps and plastic sheets are commonly employed to provide additional protection against rain or harsh weather conditions. Moreover, they use ropes, cords, and fasteners like clips, hooks, and zip ties to secure the various components of their temporary dwellings. These help in stabilizing the structure and ensuring its integrity. In terms of staying overnight, mats made of woven grass, reeds, or synthetic materials are often used as flooring for the living spaces. People also bring bedding such as mattresses, blankets, and sleeping bags to ensure comfort during their stay. The simplicity of these building systems facilitates easy logistics and implementation, making it possible for just one or two people to efficiently carry and assemble them.¹

Once people are provided with these materials, they can independently decide how to construct their living spaces and assemble different materials down to the size of each screw and piece of material. They can also determine the relative distance between their tents and neighboring ones, as well as whether additional soundproof walls are needed, among other details.

1. Mayoral, Jose. Staudt, Johannes. "Physical Infrastructure VIGNETTE" In Kumbh Mela: Mapping the Ephemeral Megacity, edited by Rahul Mehrotra, 273. Cambridge: HARVARD University South Asia Institute, 2015.

Fig 26: PrakharTripathi, Prayagraj, India, February 10th, 2019. <https://www.shutterstock.com/image-photo/prayagraj-uttar-pradesh-india-february-10th-2230733169>

How do people behave in temporal social events differ from individual's daily life? How do people perceive the space and deploy their spatial rights in temporary urbanism through dissimilar spatial quality and time constraints? How does the utilization of space in temporary urbanism foster a sense of belonging, spiritual identity, and meaningful connections among individuals and communities?

Case Study Summary

Behavior

In Temporal Social Events vs. Daily Life: In temporal social events, people often exhibit different behavior compared to their daily lives. They may be **more open, expressive, and willing** to engage with others since they are exposed to a social environment of people with similar interests. Temporal social events create a unique atmosphere that encourages participation, self-expression, and exploration. People often let go of social norms and embrace a sense of freedom and creativity, leading to more uninhibited behavior and a willingness to connect with strangers.

Perception and Deployment of Spatial Rights

Unlike permanent urban spaces, temporary urban interventions or events offer an opportunity for individuals to engage with the space in unconventional ways due to the **temporal and transient** nature. This perception can shape their understanding and expectations of spatial rights within the temporary urban environment. Participants may view the space as a temporary realm of freedom and experimentation, which can shape their perception of spatial rights. Participants may have a heightened sense of agency and ownership over the space during the event, but they may also recognize that these rights are time-constrained and subject to collective agreements.¹

Moreover, the temporary event may also lead to a **collective sense of responsibility and stewardship** over the space.² Participants understand the need to respect the rights and needs of others who share the temporary urban environment. Negotiation and collaboration among participants become important in order to ensure the harmonious use of the space during the limited timeframe.

1. Tardiveau, Armelle, and Daniel Mallo. "Unpacking and Challenging Habitus: An Approach to Temporary Urbanism as a Socially Engaged Practice." *Journal of Urban Design* 19, no. 4 (August 8, 2014): 456–72. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13574809.2014.923743>.

2. "Mental Health and Function: Green Cities: Good Health." Accessed May 26, 2023. https://depts.washington.edu/hhwb/Print_Attachment.html.

3. Chaudhuri, Supriya. "Spaces of the Sacred: Religious Practice in Urban Interstices" In *Religion and Urbanity Online* edited by Susanne Rau and Jörg Rüpke. Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter, 2021. <https://doi.org/10.1515/urbrel.15817603>

4. Rossini, Francesco. "Temporary Urban Intervention in the Vertical City: A Place-Making Project to Re-Activate the Public Spaces in Hong Kong." *Journal of Urban Design* 24, no. 2 (March 4, 2019): 305–23. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13574809.2018.1507674>.

5. Falanga, Roberto. "Understanding Place Attachment through the Lens of Urban Regeneration. Insights from Lisbon." *Cities* 122 (March 1, 2022): 103590. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cities.2022.103590>.

Foster spiritual benefits

Temporary urbanism can create temporary **sacred spaces or facilitate the practice of rituals and ceremonies**.³ These spaces and activities provide individuals and communities with a **spiritual connection and a sense of meaning**. They can serve as places for reflection, meditation, prayer, or other religious or spiritual practices. The temporary nature of these spaces and activities can make them even more meaningful, as they become unique and fleeting experiences that are cherished and remembered.

Temporary urban interventions can transform underutilized or neglected⁴ spaces into vibrant and engaging environments. By activating these spaces and making them inviting, people develop **a stronger sense of place and attachment**.⁵ This sense of place fosters a feeling of belonging and a desire to protect and preserve the space even after the temporary intervention ends.

Temporary urbanism creates shared experiences and memories among participants. The collective participation in the temporary events or interventions fosters **a sense of unity and shared identity**. These shared experiences and memories become part of the community's narrative, strengthening the social fabric and collective history. They contribute to a sense of belonging and can serve as a foundation for future connections and collaborations.



ONK
TO

**RISD Strike 2023
Providence, RI, USA**

Fig 27: David H. Wells, Providence, 2023

Fig 28: Fiona McGill, Providence, 2023



Facts of RISD Strike 2023

Over a thousand people joined protests at Rhode Island School of Design (RISD) in downtown Providence, with strikes facilitated by custodians, groundskeepers, and movers starting on March 23.

Supported by Teamsters Local 251, the strike aimed to address worker pay and inequality. The striking workers, who earn around \$16 per hour with minimal raises, criticized the disparity between their wages and the board of trustees' compensation.¹

RISD has garnered local attention as students have shown strong support for the strikers. Hundreds of students have stood in solidarity with the workers, with academic departments encouraging participation and even facilitating walk-outs from classrooms. Some departments have sent letters to the administration expressing their support. The photography department highlighted the contradiction between teaching about equity and dignity while the administration opposes a \$2 cost of living increase for staff. A student alliance was formed to organize student activism, resulting in artistic posters and signs throughout the campus displaying solidarity with the workers.

The main way of the strike was to occupy the walkway in front of the RISD administration building and the parking lot near the illustration department building across from it. The protesters expressed their opinions and grievances by banging on metal or drums, blowing whistles and other acts in the grounds in order to create noise. On Friday, a significant march took place around RISD beach and

nearby blocks during noon and in the afternoon of the campus. As the strike progressed, more departments joined in support of the workers, and students designed and printed numerous flyers and posters highlighting the injustice of high tuition and ground pay while expressing solidarity with the workers.

Ultimately, the strike ended with a successful outcome on April 18. The Teamsters Local 251 union representing RISD's custodians, groundskeepers, and movers ratified a six-year contract with annual wage increases. The contract retroactively begins on July 1, 2022, and raises the average hourly pay rate for union members. Wages will continue to increase throughout the contract, and retroactive payments will be made to workers. The contract also includes parity language and a longevity bonus. The workers will return to work, and RISD plans to increase wages for non-temporary employees.²

1. The Cowl. "RISD Workers Strike for Fair Wages." <https://www.thecowl.com/2023/04/19/risd-workers-strike-for-fair-wages/>.

2. The Brown Daily Herald. "RISD, facilities workers ratify contract, concluding strike." <https://www.browndailyherald.com/article/2023/04/risd-facilities-workers-ratify-contract-concluding-strike>.

Fig 29: Nick, Providence, 2023





*Why choose to research
RISD Strike further?*

A fascinating shift in the proceedings of the RISD strike originated from the initial involvement of just workers and teamster leaders to the increasing influx of students and staff to support them in their protests. In the process, the students and workers had some interaction and provoked some reflection on their own interests, followed by demonstrations against the incredibly high tuition fees.

Then later, more and more members of the surrounding community joined this strike, and the larger and broader topic of salary fairness began to be spoken about. People went from communicating to being inspired and began to collaborate to break down the boundaries of the RISD campus buildings, the streets, and public riverfront spaces in the city of Providence... From just bringing in noise-making tools from home to using the campus printing facilities to mass print flyers, etc...

It was certainly an event in which space was unconsciously engaged in resistance and dialogue, thanks in part to the temporary quality of the event. Limited time can trigger more active and higher energy behaviors and thoughts in people.

In this process, the public spaces of the campus and even the interior spaces of the buildings, which are generally not open to the public, become temporary accommodations for the strikes. Similar to the temporary gathering of the case study, this is a temporary land use change that facilitates a democratic process, offering an opportunity for open expression and collective action within spaces that are not typically accessible to the public.

Protest

Protests are functional activities and powerful political tools for driving democracy, even if they are usually temporary. The right to protest reflects the right to the freedom of expression employing conveying a message or raising awareness on an issue and the right to pursue democracy as well. The process of citizen democracy is first to be seen and heard, followed by voting, petitioning, lobbying, and so on.¹ Even though more and more voices are being heard in the rapid development of social media, a large number of voices are still blocked by the information cocoon effect. Actions in the physical space attract attention more rapidly and can be organized more efficiently by a larger group of people with the same opinion.

"It's a place of encounters, translating how we practice space in relation to others. It ignites the idea that we are part of a collective effort, that we belong to this world... that we exist."³

Protest in spatial concern

Public, large, open

People with shared values or similar standpoints gather together to be exposed in public and voice their opinions constitutes the main content of the protest. Therefore, taking people's issues to the streets require public spaces to be the main platform/battlefields for dialogue. Public spaces have been considered as a place of exchange and connection. "large open spaces have taken on an even greater significance, especially among groups that might have previously shunned easily dispersed protest grounds." In the process, people encounter each other, motivate more connections, and acquire a sense of belonging.

Visible, dense, authority, safe

Its temporary space container is typically a highly visible, densely populated public infrastructure or a place of communication. From the protests against the Vietnam War, Arab Spring, Occupy Wall Street protest, and 2019 Hong Kong Protests to the recent Black Lives Matter Movements, it is no surprise that the protests are also taking place in locations that point directly to authorities. Protesters are reported to have adopted Bruce Lee's philosophy of "be water"² by moving in a mobile and agile fashion to different government offices in a short period of time to keep themselves safe.

1. Lanza, Edison. "Protest AND HUMAN RIGHTS," n.d.

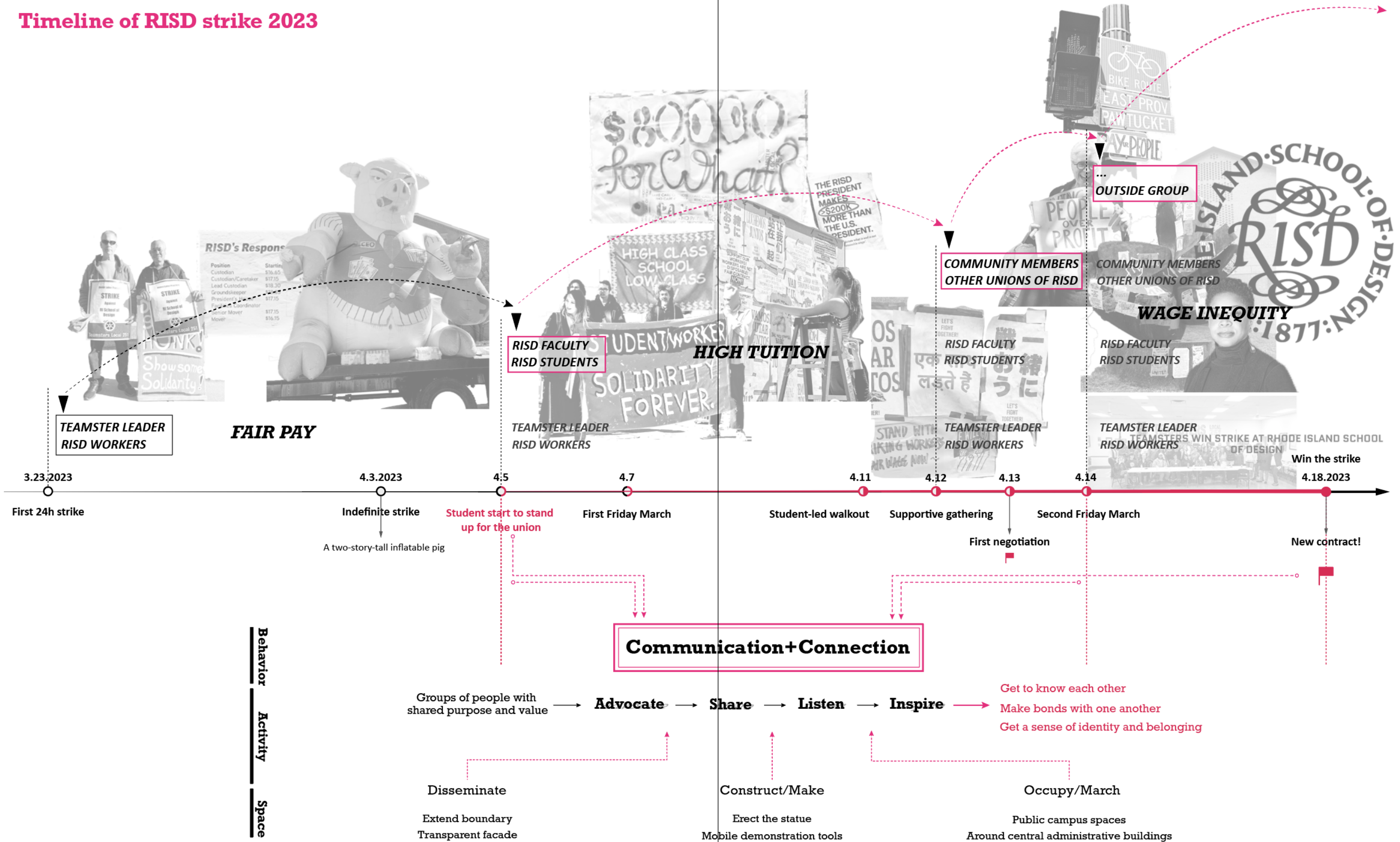
2. "Hong Kong Be Water Act." In Wikipedia, November 7, 2022. https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Hong_Kong_Be_Water_Act&oldid=1120461608.

3. ArchDaily. "Public Spaces: Places of Protest, Expression and Social Engagement," June 10, 2020. <https://www.archdaily.com/941408/public-spaces-places-of-protest-expression-and-social-engagement>.

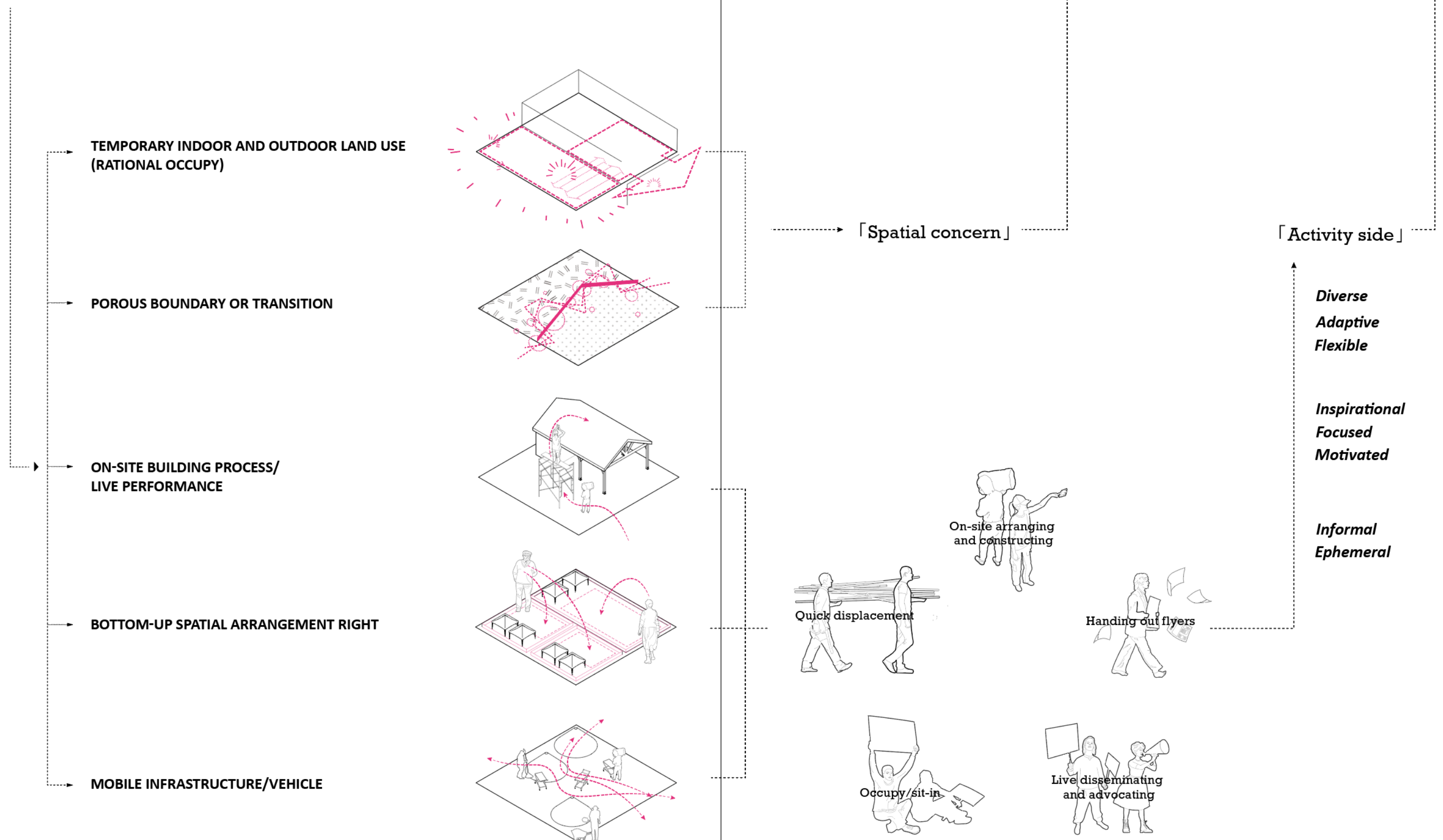
Fig 30: Fiona McGill, Providence, 2023



Timeline of RISD strike 2023



[SYSTEM PRINCIPLE]



TEMPORARY INDOOR AND OUTDOOR LAND USE
(RATIONAL OCCUPY)

POROUS BOUNDARY OR TRANSITION

ON-SITE BUILDING PROCESS/
LIVE PERFORMANCE

BOTTOM-UP SPATIAL ARRANGEMENT RIGHT

MOBILE INFRASTRUCTURE/VEHICLE

「Spatial concern」

「Activity side」

Diverse
Adaptive
Flexible

Inspirational
Focused
Motivated

Informal
Ephemeral

On-site arranging
and constructing

Quick displacement

Handing out flyers

Occupy/sit-in

Live disseminating
and advocating

RISD Strike 2023 Mapping

This map primarily depicts the sites that were primarily occupied by protesters during the RISD strike, with the RISD campus and main academic buildings in gray pattern. It is evident that there was no designated central gathering space, such as a quad, on the RISD campus. Instead, the small RISD beach, is located away from the administration building. So

people had to occupy a narrow walkway in front of the administration building, which caused inconvenience to vehicles and threatened safety by the driveway during the strike.

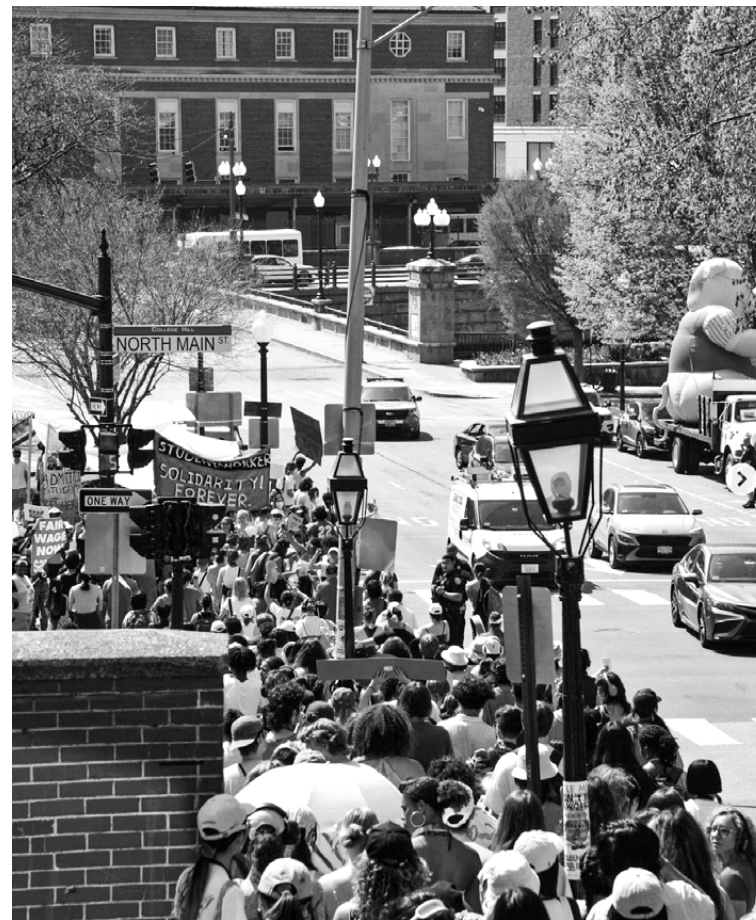
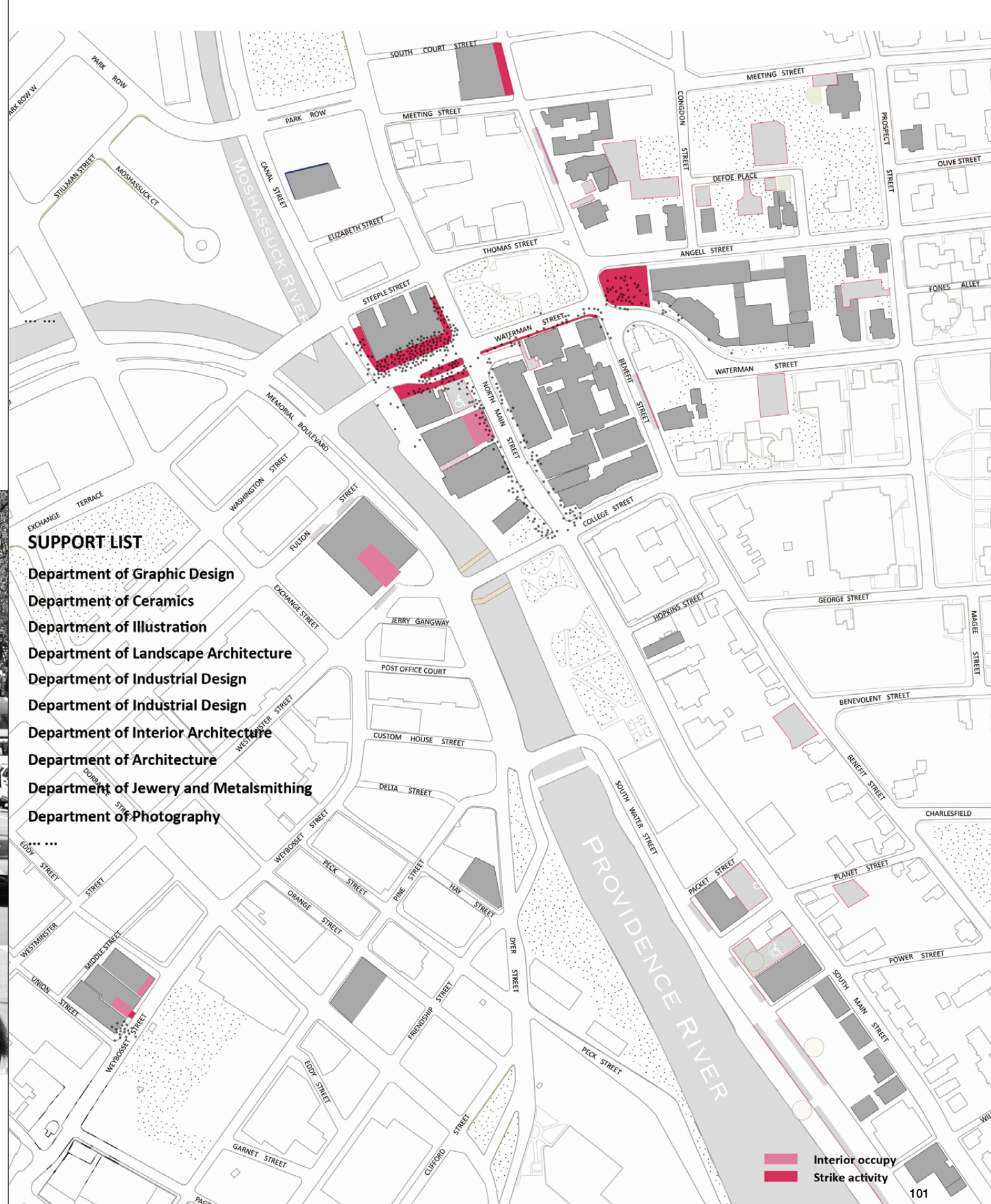


Fig 31: Holly Gaboriault, the RISD beach, Providence, 2023

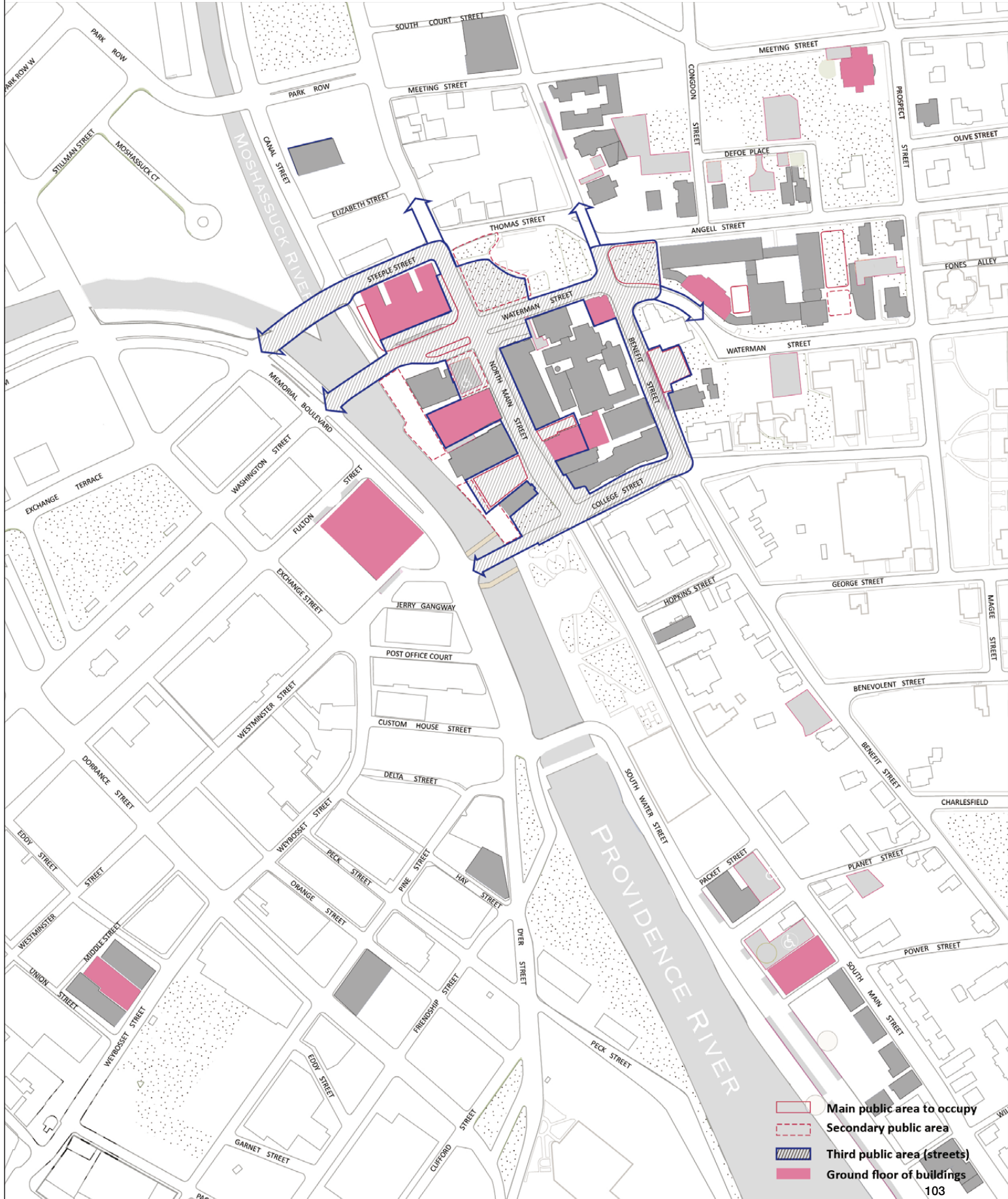
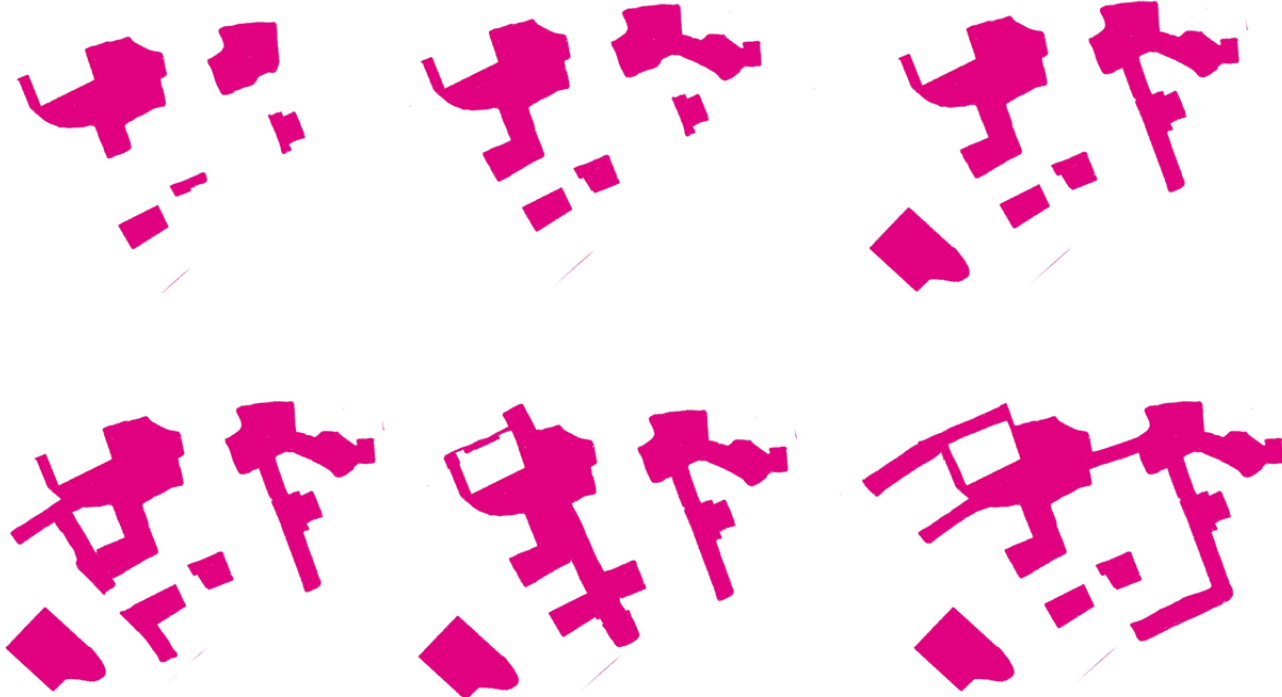
Fig 32: Zöe Vaspoli, the match on the street, Providence, 2023

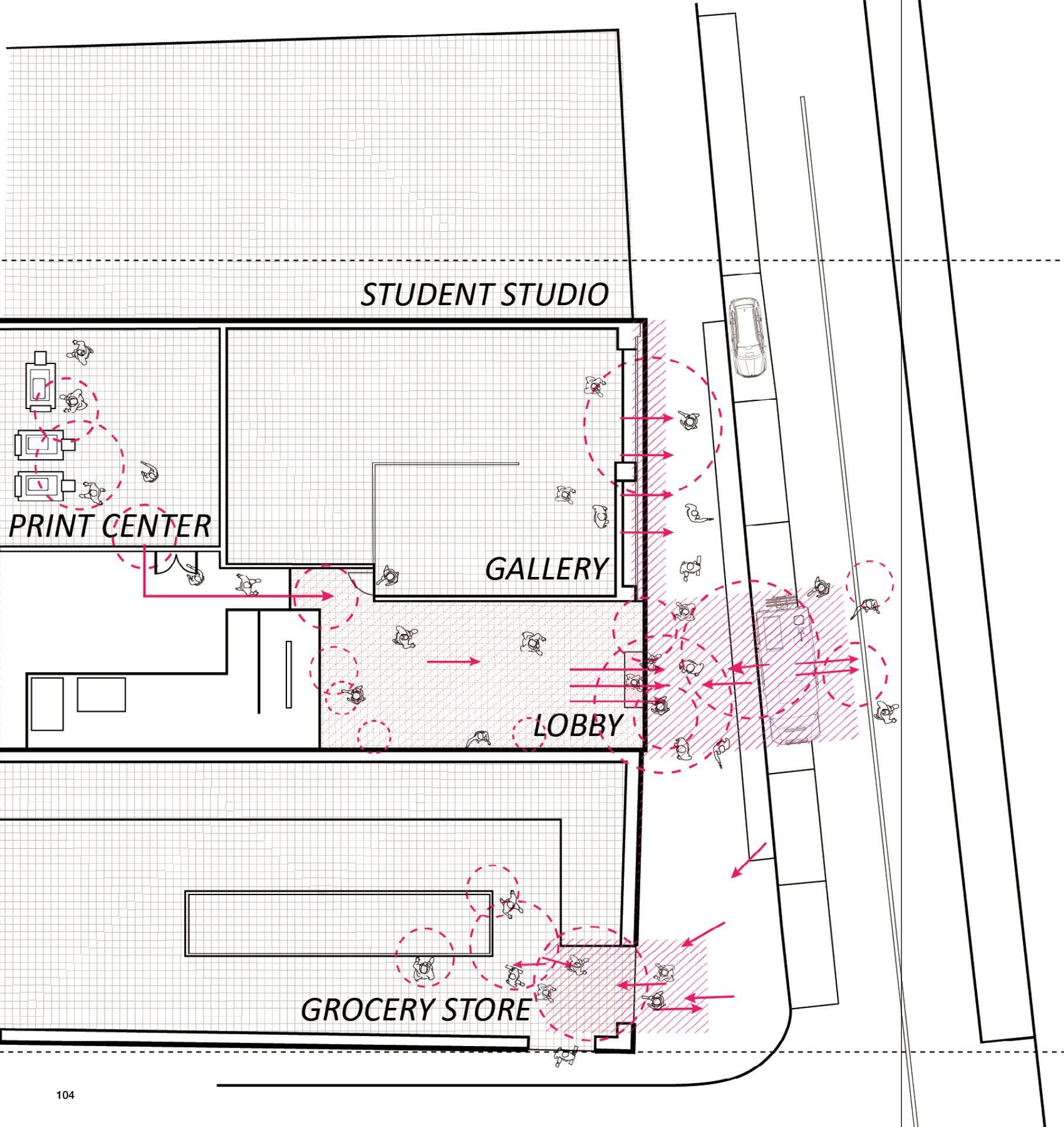


Campus Pop-up Event Proposal

The proposed diagram outlines a plan for the temporary utilization of available land on the RISD campus. The pink blocks indicate that the first floors of certain buildings can be used for temporary gatherings and occupancy, as they have a high degree of public accessibility. Additionally, the blue arrows represent streets that can be temporarily shut down, drawing inspiration from previous instances of temporary street occupancy during events like the RISD Craft event and Waterfire in Providence.

Temporary land use typology



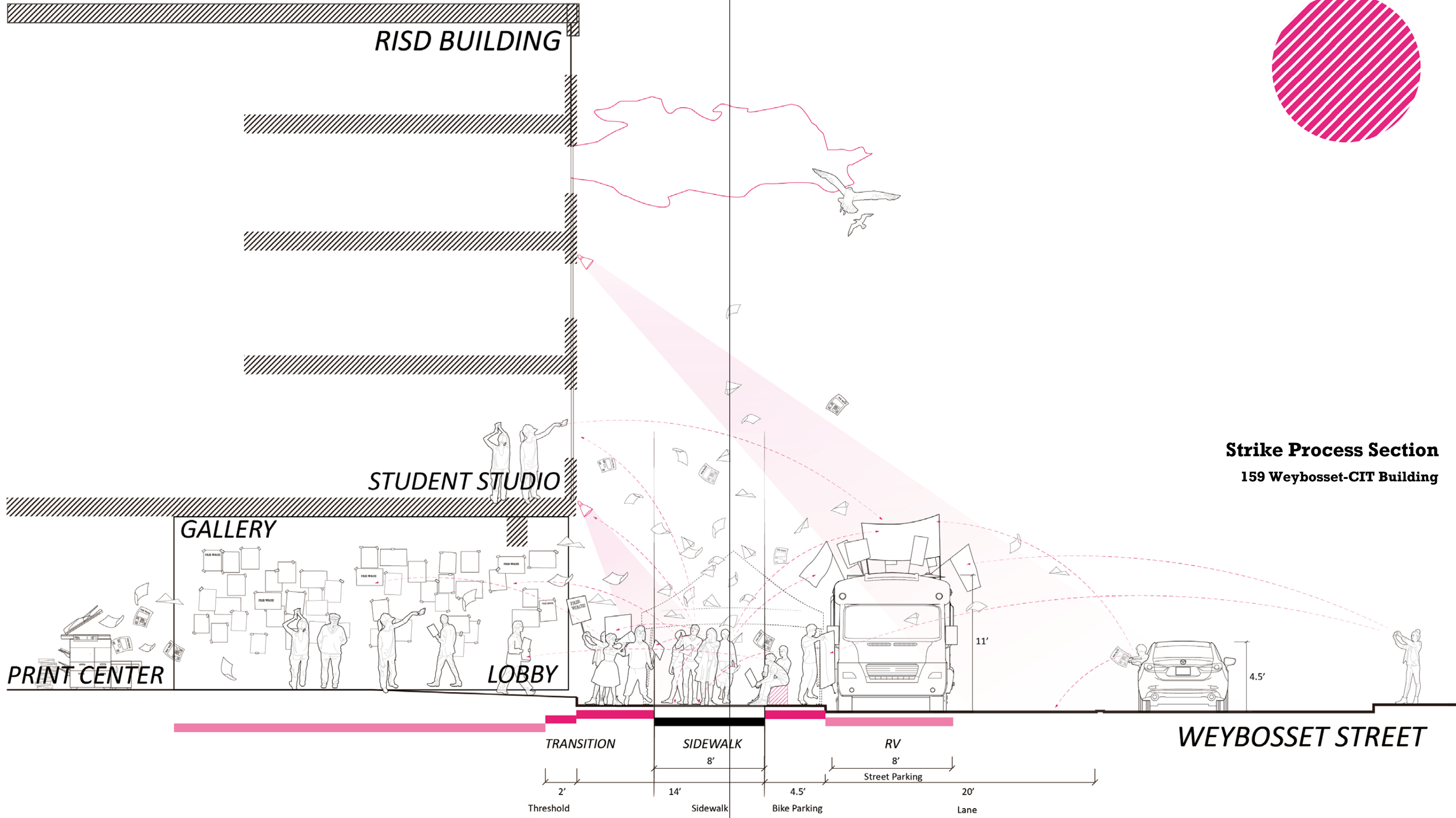
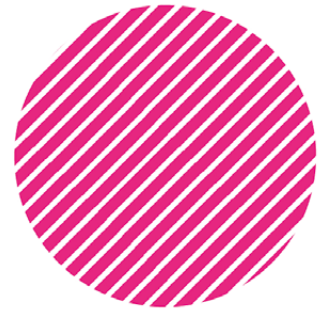


Strike Process Plan
159 Weybosset-CIT Building

Taking the 159-CIT building group on campus as an example, the following set of analytical diagrams clearly depicts the entire process of how people's protests during the RISD strike have used the school's public spaces and public facilities to express their opinions in various ways.

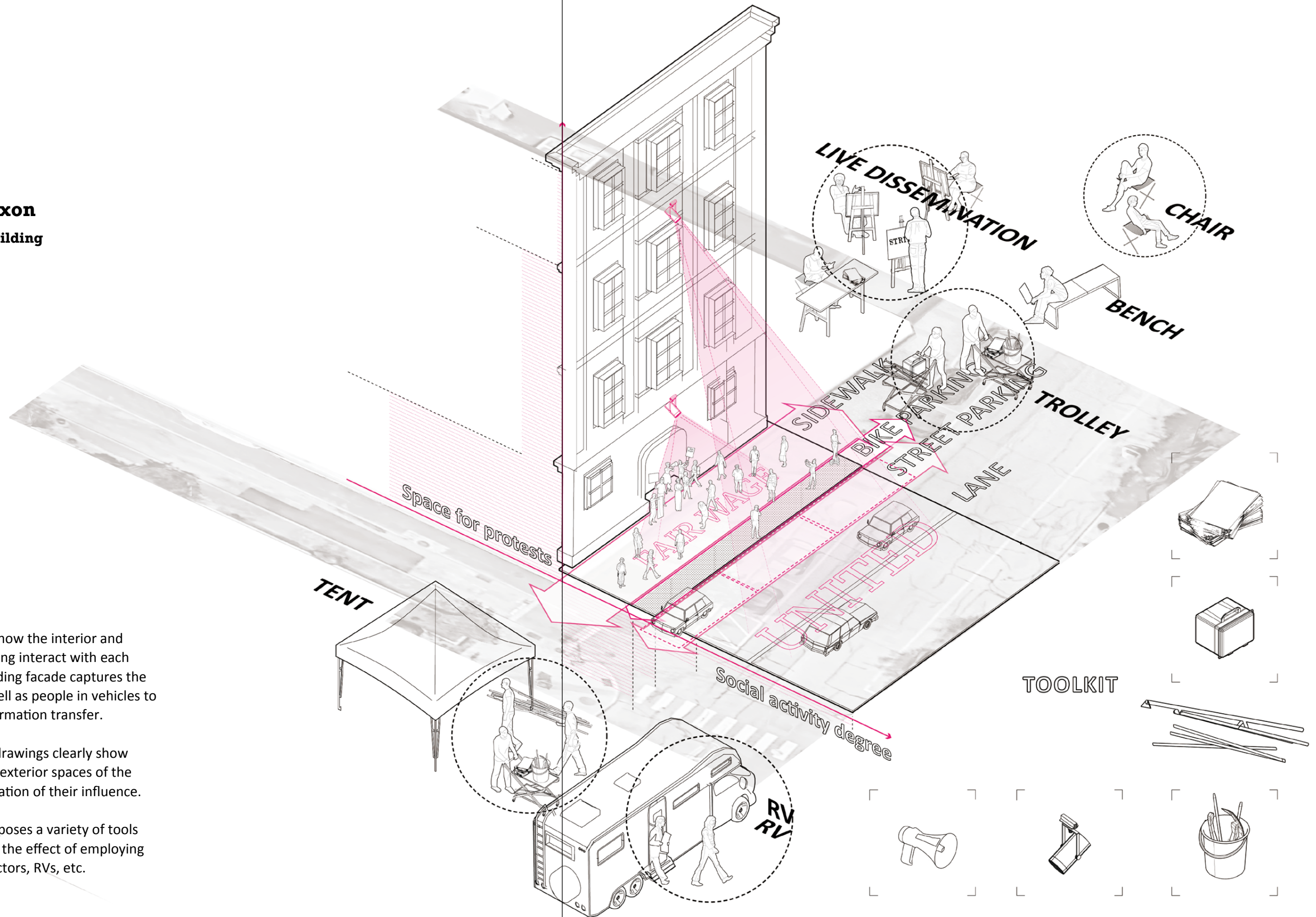
This set of diagrams is based on the analysis of what actually happened during the RISD strike and suggests spaces that could be further activated and how to concretely form the right to spatial democracy.

— The arrows and dashed circles in the diagram indicate the possibility of encounters between people and the generation of communication and connections.



Strike Process Section
159 Weybosset-CIT Building

Strike Process Axon
159 Weybosset-CIT Building



This diagram clearly shows how the interior and exterior spaces of the building interact with each other, such as how the building facade captures the attention of passersby as well as people in vehicles to achieve the function of information transfer.

Both the section and axon drawings clearly show how active the interior and exterior spaces of the building strike and the gradation of their influence.

In addition the drawing proposes a variety of tools that can be used to achieve the effect of employing spatial rights, such as projectors, RVs, etc.

1

Regarding the relevance and consistency of the first three case studies and the final RISD strike case, although their purposes, cultural contexts, organizational structures, and spatial configurations are very different, all three activities have their commonalities. This thesis focuses on their spatial organization, from macro to micro. In the process of in-depth research and case study, more clear arguments and conclusions are found to support why temporary urbanization can bring spiritual nourishment to people and how space should be understood to support spiritual benefits.

2

The personal feeling part: it is intangible indeed, but it triggered me to focus on the status of space using...and upon the comparative analysis of the results of the previous studies, how I could shift the study of such intangible question into an explanation of space use and an exploration of the democratic right to space. (since there are not only commonalities but also apparent differences in properties between them.)

Conclusion upon critiques

3

Focusing on the dialogue of the RISD strikes itself, the public aspect of the RISD campus changed in the process, from being open only to RISD students, faculty, and workers to sharing more outdoor spaces with the city as a whole and more people living in the city of Providence engaging with these spaces both inside and outside the building. In the process, RISD not only strengthened his own identity but also deepened his connection to Providence, whose identity and content were in dialogue with the RISD community in a more intertwined way.

Jumping out of the particular period of the strike, there is a tendency to perceive the authorities as anti-public. There is a denial attitude of openness in the boundaries of the RISD campus. There is clearly a place for private interests in the public sphere. Recognizing our right to public space can be a counterforce to privatization and allow us to protect human rights in a fuller, more meaningful way.¹

4

In studies of temporary urbanization, people tend to have more active, higher-energy behaviors and mindsets in a limited time. People blur the boundaries between public and private areas to the maximum extent possible. This is what I have learned from studying temporary cities. The purpose of public space is for human interaction, cultural activity, and artistic and political expression, but temporary use can greatly motivate this process.

1. Smithsimon, Gregory. "The Right to Public Space." *Métropolitiques*, March 10, 2015. <https://metropolitiques.org/https://metropolitiques.org/The-Right-to-Public-Space.html>.

Thesis Conclusion

In contrast to permanent cities, the privatization of public space often limits the democratic participation of individuals. The thesis highlights the concerns regarding the privatization of public spaces, such as the potential infringement on cultural rights, social discrimination, and the prioritization of profit-oriented interests over community needs through the research and analysis of several cases.

In the first place, the timeline of temporary urbanism is relatively short compared to the fixed objectives that permanent cities strive to achieve, such as product distribution and resource allocation. However, the temporary urbanization does not require stringent control over every aspect. Its essence lies not in creating efficient cities, but in fostering the perception of individual identity and facilitating socialization and connection among people.

During the temporary events, individuals are temporarily detached from their daily routines and the fast pace of life. Instead, they dedicate most of their time to religious rituals and various activities, all while sharing similar beliefs. These factors contribute to a rapid reduction in the perceived distance between people. In such unique temporary urbanization, people tend to have more active, higher-energy behaviors and mindsets in a limited amount of time. People blur the boundaries between public and private areas to the maximum extent possible, leading to promoted group spontaneity and camaraderie.

Secondly, the events in the cases of temporary urbanism gather people who share common or similar beliefs, and enable them to openly express their inspirations and perceptions of the world. Spatially speaking, several factors come into play. Firstly, the aim is to provide more equitable conditions for participation, unlike the disparities often found in permanent cities where

housing and space allocation can be uneven. In the context of the Burning Man and Kumbh Mela, everyone is granted the freedom to arrange their living environment in a more equitable and shared manner, utilizing the limited building materials available.

Thirdly, due to the temporary nature of the gathering, the living spaces are intentionally simplified and not designed to withstand long-term climate changes or the corrosive effects of time. This deliberate simplicity breaks down the barriers between individuals and encourages a sense of openness and fluidity in interactions. Solid walls of steel and concrete are replaced by movable partitions, allowing for the permeation of sound and other elements. This flexibility in living spaces promotes a sense of unity and fosters a deeper connection between neighbors and fellow participants.

Lastly, the mobile and adaptable nature of the living spaces. In the case of Kumbh Mela tents enable individuals residing near the river to adjust their living arrangements according to the water levels. Similarly, tents within the same vicinity can continuously adapt their relationships with the surrounding environment. This malleability encourages constant negotiation and collaboration among participants, emphasizing the importance of flexibility and mutual understanding. It is through this spatial context that spiritual exchanges between participants are greatly facilitated, enabling them to fully recognize their interconnectedness with one another and with the wider world.

In summary, temporary urbanism exemplifies the positive implications of spatial governance and the right to freely express one's faith. By creating an inclusive environment, participants are provided with equal opportunities to engage with other people, connect with the physical space, and experience profound inner transformation. The spatial arrangements, characterized by equitable participation, simplicity, fluidity, and adaptability, enhance the spiritual exchanges among participants, fostering a heightened awareness of their interconnection and unity within the larger world.



Reflection

In the course of the year-long thesis project, from the initial search for directions that interest me to the focus on my own feelings as the starting point, I searched for the overlap and connection between spiritual and physical, space and power, etc., along the way. Over and over again, I asked myself how to start. What should be the starting point for the study and learning of a case? How to envision the final outcome of the thesis project? Is it a text-based research or a utopian design? Unlike any studio project in a landscape architecture major's academic career, the thesis process is a continuous cycle of questioning, problem-solving, and self-reflection. Without a firm question, the path of inquiry becomes arduous and prolonged. Reflecting on the entirety of this thesis book, I am fortunate to have found answers to some initial questions while also discovering new ones. Further comparative analysis of the three cases studied in the thesis will provide more robust theoretical support for the thesis topic.

During this year, through conscious or unconscious communication with peers and the advice and support of RISD tutors (including elective tutors), I stumbled through my research on temporary urbanism in my graduate career. I express immense gratitude to all those who aided me along this journey, as well as to myself for persistently seeking clarity amidst the chaos of inspiration and theory.

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Fig 22: Joydeep Mitra, Allahabad, India- January 13 2013: Day 1 of the holy Maha Kumbh Mela once in 12 years the greatest congregation of humankind.

<https://www.shutterstock.com/image-photo/allahabad-uttar-pradesh-india-january-13-1168511617>

Fig 23: PrakharTripathi, Prayagraj, India - February 10th, 2019: A group of Sadhus take part in a holy bath and offer prayers on the occasion of Kumbh Mela in Prayagraj which happens once in 12 years.

Fig 24: <https://www.india.com/news/india/kumbh-mela-2019-prayagraj-gears-up-for-religious-rituals-from-tomorrow-new-flight-services-in-operation-3522947/>

Fig 25: PrakharTripathi, Prayagraj, India, February 10th, 2019: A group of sadhus take part in a holy bath and offer prayers on the occasion of Kumbh Mela in Prayagraj which happens once in 12 years.

Fig 26: PrakharTripathi, Prayagraj, India, February 10th, 2019. <https://www.shutterstock.com/image-photo/prayagraj-uttar-pradesh-india-february-10th-2230733169>.

Fig 27: David H. Wells, Providence, 2023

Fig 28: Fiona McGill, Providence, 2023

Fig 29: Nick, Providence, 2023

Fig 30: Fiona McGill, Providence, 2023

Fig 31: Holly Gaboriault, the RISD beach, Providence, 2023

Fig 32: Zöe Vaspoli, the match on the street, Providence, 2023

