

RM 1005

THE COURT COULD BE DESCRIBED AS "TIMELESS" NOT BECAUSE ITS GENERIC AND CODIFIED FORM IS INDIFFERENT TO TIME, BUT BECAUSE THAT HISTORICALLY-DERIVED FORM HAS PROVEN ROBUST ENOUGH TO ENDURE CHANGES IN PLACE, MATERIAL, AND TIME. AARON GOLDSTEIN

"THE BUILDINGS IN QUERÉTARO'S HISTORIC CENTER ARE NOT 'DECORATED SHEDS', BUT RATHER 'MYSTIFIED SHEDS'. BY MASKING THE CONTRADICTION OF PRESERVATION AND THE COMMODIFICATION OF THE CITY, THE FACADE MYSTIFIES, AND THEREBY CONTRIBUTES TO A CRISIS OF REPRESENTATION." AARON WELLES

POETICAL IRONY ... IS THE DEEP PERSONAL EMBRACE AND FRAGMENTARY INCORPORATION OF EVERY SINGLE PIECE OF SOURCE MATERIAL, NO MATTER HOW IRRECONCILABLE ... IT EMBRACES ITS SUBJECT, AND LIVES IT, LOOKING FOR BEAUTY IN THE MESS, VIGOUR IN OPPOSITIONS, AND POETRY IN AMBIGUITY. ADAM NATHANIEL FURMAN

IF ARCHITECTURE IS REAL AND IMMERSSED IN TIME, HOW COULD IT ALSO BE TIMELESS? ALTA SCUOLA POLITECNICA OPEN BUILDING RESEARCH GROUP

I WANT TO RE-MAKE HISTORY'S TROVE OF THINGS AND OCCASIONALLY I WANT TO USE HISTORY AS A SITE. I HAVE NO INTEREST IN QUOTATION, NO INTEREST IN COPIES. ANDREW HOLDE

ALL WALLS MUST BE UNIQUE AND BEAUTIFUL. ANDREW KOVACS

THERE IS PERHAPS NOTHING MORE TIMELESS THAN ARCHITECTURE'S OBSESSION WITH APPEARANCE. BAIRBALLIET

THE BIOLOGICAL END OF LIFE IS NO LONGER THE END OF YOUR EXISTENCE. COMMON ACCOUNTS

ARCHITECTS SHOULD BE DIRTIER, BUILDERS SHOULD BE CLEANER. CORALAUTZER COOPER ROGERS

IN ARGUING FOR A NEW AND UNIVERSALIZING PARADIGM FOR DESIGN, A PATTERN LANGUAGE'S AUTHORS ULTIMATELY AIM TO KEEP THE OBJECTIVE EXPERTISE OF THE DESIGNER INTACT. ERIC PETERS ON

WE CAN NEVER COMPLETELY HAVE IT AND EVEN IF WE DO WE PROBABLY WOULD NOT KNOW. EMMA LUBBER

CULTIVATE NATURE UNTIL IT BECOMES ARCHITECTURE. FILIP TEJCHMAN

COPY-PASTE ... IS AN INSTANT REPRODUCTION THAT TAKES NO TIME. RATHER, IT IS A TIMELESS REPRODUCTION. JI SHI & IVY FENG

WE'VE ALL LOST TRACK OF TIME. IT'S NOT AS IMPORTANT AS IT USED TO BE. JOSH N. STOUT ON

THE DISCIPLINE OF ARCHITECTURE IS CONSTANTLY REVITALIZED BY THE RECURRENT COLLUSION BETWEEN HISTORY AND DESIGN, AND BETWEEN ANALYSIS AND PROJECTION. KYLE MILLER

WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR US TO HOLD ON TO THE PHYSICAL? TO HOLD ON TO BUILDINGS AS OBJECTS, DESTINATIONS, COLLECTIONS OF EXPERIENCES? LEVON FOX

ITS DEFINITION BENDS AND CHANGES ACCORDING TO THOSE WHO USE IT. LUCAS ALMASSY

AXIALITY IS TIMELESS. ANONYMOUS

...TIMELESSNESS... HAS A LOT LESS TO DO WITH THE CAPACITY OF ARCHITECTURE TO DEFY TIME AND CHANGE BUT RATHER WITH THE CAPACITY TO ABSORB TIME. NICHOLAS DE MONCHAUX

...IN A SENSE, IT IS THE AUTHORITY THAT IS TIMELESS. AMINA ALKANDARI

...THE LAS VEGAS SIGN, TO ME, IS TIMELESS. CARMEN G

...TIMELESSNESS IS A REALLY SUBJECTIVE THING. LIEYAH DAGAN

ARCHITECTURE THAT IS NOT AN EXPRESSION OF ITS TIME MEANS IT IS NOT "GREAT," BUT "TIME-LESS." KRISTEN TON

...TIME AND TIMELESS MAY BE IN A DIALECTICAL RELATIONSHIP, AND PERHAPS A PARADOXICAL ONE. WE NEED TO UNDERSTAND WHAT OUR CULTURE'S CONCEPT OF TIME IS AND WHY IT INVENTED ITS PARTICULAR BRAND OF TIMELESSNESS. ANDREW SHANKEN

THE AIM WAS NOT TO SIMPLY REPLICATE AND REINSTATE VARIOUS HISTORICAL TECHNIQUES [...BUT] TO AUGMENT A SERIES OF FRAGMENTED HISTORICAL ARCHITECTURAL ELEMENTS AND COMBINE THEM INTO THE CONTEXTUAL PRESENT. MATTHEW KERAN

ANXIETY IN PSYCHOANALYSIS AND TRANSPARENCY IN MODERN DESIGN ... WORK IN THE MEDIATING SPACE BETWEEN THE TIMELESS AND THE TIMELY, THE SPACE OF TRANSLATION AND, CRUCIALLY, OF MISTRANSATION. MICHELLE RADA

BY IMPLSION, I MEAN A NUANCED SUPERIMPOSITION OF MULTIPLE TIMES AND VANTAGE POINTS EMBEDDED IN THE NEAR-PLAUSIBLE DEPICTION OF REALITY. NEYRAN TURAN

ARCHITECTS AND FASHION DESIGNERS PROLIFERATING THE WORKING-CLASS AESTHETIC IS THE VEHICLE IN WHICH THE 'TIMELESS' IS CREATED AND SUSTAINED. PAUL HUMPHRIES

PORTO IS A CITY IN ARCHITECTURAL CRISIS, WHERE HISTORIC FACADES HIDE ABSENT STRUCTURES AND DERELICT BUILDINGS AROUND. PETER KORNER

THE PURPOSE IS TO REDESIGN THE ORIGIN FOR ARCHITECTURE. — ROBERT CRABTREE

MEMORY HAS NO PAST. THE MEMORARY SEMINAR

...I AM SEARCHING FOR A CONNECTION TO HUMANITY'S COLLECTIVE CREATIVE PAST, FOR AN ANACHRONISTIC SYMPATHY... SIGVE KNUTSON

EACH OF US WOULD LIKE TO BE A FULCRUM BETWEEN THE PAST AND THE FUTURE IN SOME WAY, LARGE OR SMALL. THOMAS M. GORDON

SOON, ALL THAT REMAINED WAS PETRIIFIED INTO A SOLID TONE OF TAUPÉ. TIMOTHY WATSON

CEDRIC PRICE WAS PREOCCUPIED WITH TIME, BUT NOT WITH BEING TIMELESS. WHITNEY MONTON

TIMELESS

ROOM ONE THOUSAND

ISSUE 5





Can Images Implode?

Neyran Turan

Imagine Pieter Aertsen's 1552 large painting titled *Christ in the House of Mary and Martha* (Figure 1). In the foreground of the painting, we see a still-life composition of food, various kitchen utensils such as flagons and jugs, flowers and a pile of folded sheets. In the background, we see a room in which a religious scene is presented almost like another painting. While Aertsen's painting presents what is now named as one of the first examples of the idea of split painting, or a *painting within a painting* in Western art history, this splitting of the picture plane allows for two important things to happen. First, by taking the very idea of painting as its main subject matter, the painting alludes to the idea of a self-aware image, i.e. an image that acknowledges its representational imperative explicitly while presenting itself as a non-illusionistic depiction of reality.¹ Second, by juxtaposing the two very contrasting techniques of representation on the same picture plane (still-life of everyday objects in the foreground vs. the rendering of a related religious history in the background), the painting allows for two vantage points of the same reality to coexist in the space of representation.

For architecture, from Joseph Michael Gandy's *Comparative Architecture* which stacks imaginary architectural orders together on a fictional building, to Mies van der Rohe's photomontages, and from Aldo Rossi's *Città Analoga* to Rem Koolhaas' *cadavre exquis* of vertical superimpositions, bringing elements that belong to different realities onto the same architecture or picture plane has a long legacy within the history of architectural representation or design. Yet, although being different in intention and technique, what is common in all of these examples is the main emphasis given to the promise of a striking novelty in the new whole's imagined or fictional quality. By focusing the attention to the unprecedented condition of the imagined architectural proposition, the distinction from reality is foregrounded and celebrated in these examples.

While acting as the very precedent to this architectural legacy, the eighteenth century *capriccio* painting provides us another nuance to this lineage. Developing in the context of a renewed interest in the ruins of antiquity during the Grand Tour of Europe as well as in the new techniques of representation in Baroque theater stage design, *capriccio* painting imagined either fictional buildings on a real urban

OPPOSITE: Figure 1. Pieter Aertsen, *Christ in the House of Mary and Martha*, 1552. Oil on panel, 60X101.5cm. Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna.

or landscape setting, or presented existent buildings (either as ruins or reassembled wholes) combined and painted in an imaginary landscape. Seen in this light, *capriccio* was neither about a true representation of reality nor creating a utopian fiction, but rather about a slightly distorted image based on that very reality. In other words, while depicting imaginary characteristics, one of the main features of the *capriccio* painting was its interest in verisimilitude or slight (in)familiarity (Figure 3). This emphasis on the subtle distortion of reality was evidenced further in the use of human figures where the ones from the ancient times were juxtaposed with modern day users with their eighteenth century clothing. Similar to the Aertsen painting mentioned earlier, because of the complementary yet the same time contrasting depiction of the two realities on the picture plane (between everyday objects and religious scenes in Aertsen, and between buildings and landscapes in *capriccio*) the *capriccio* made one self-aware of the very gap in between. Unlike the architectural examples mentioned above, because of the delicate spatial and temporal dislocations (buildings misplaced or deliberately presented in decay), the productive tension between plausibility and unlikeliness create a distinct territory for the *capriccio*. The paintings not only render the familiar *slightly* altered but make us aware of the uneasy relationship between its realism and abstraction through a focus on the time span.

One could perhaps see best examples of this puzzling aesthetic tension evidenced in the work of contemporary photographers such as Andrea Gursky, Thomas Struth, Thomas Demand, Victoria Binshtok, Jeff Wall, and Lauren Marsolier, for instance. Consider the collapsed layers of time in Lauren Marsolier's slightly distorted realisms of everyday life in her *Transition* series or Jeff Wall's *A View from an Apartment* or his *Morning Cleaning*. Both in *Transition* series and in *A View from an Apartment*, the images are digitally collaged with everyday realities from discrete times resulting with narratives that are left incomplete but still look visually plausible as non-illusionistic depictions of reality. In Wall's *Morning Cleaning*, where the interior of Mies van der Rohe's Barcelona Pavilion is shown with a cleaner at work early in the morning, the usually unnoticed duration of building maintenance is emphasized. Instead of limiting the multiple perceptions of a Mies van der Rohe building to a sequence of visual effects reliant on movement and view, *Morning Cleaning* forces us to expand the limit of the multiple view to include the mundane and the overlooked.² In photographs by Marsolier and Wall, we are not only presented with a particular kind of temporal *implosion*, but also with a much deeper and nuanced engagement with reality through abstraction. By *implosion*, I mean a nuanced superimposition of multiple times and vantage points embedded in the near-plausible depiction of reality. And, finally, Victoria Binshtok's

World of Details, a series of photographs that are composed of twenty-eight series of pairings, add a final nuance to this lineage. In the pairings, Binshtok couples found images from the GoogleStreetView archive with her own close-up photographs of the existing details from these actual sites. Each series not only contrast or "split" reality through two different modes of seeing (human and machine), but because of the time span between the GoogleStreetView image and Binshtok's own photographs taken later at the same spots, the particular sites depict subtle and unexpected alterations and everyday realities (Figure 2A, 2B). Here, the pairings are collapsed in the same place but are separated on the picture plane, and this very parting alludes to the conceptual space in between. They understand the nature of implosion in detail and subtlety. After our contemporary hangover in architecture from a total trust in seeing images as the true representation of *a priori* design process (digital or infrastructural organization), *de facto* justification (diagramming), or fantastical lavishness, *implosion* provides an overload of bareness, all waiting to be dissected into its very pieces and to be reassembled.

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Attached images depict two of our recent projects at NEMESTUDIO and expand on the idea of temporal implosion in two distinct ways. Prepared for the 2016 Architectural League Prize exhibition, the nine drawings included in the *Nine Drawings, Seven Models* installation combines NEMESTUDIO's most recent projects altogether in a fictional setting while depicting one continuous imaginary territory. Similar to the *capriccio* painting where architectural ruins are collected and compressed in an imaginary time and space, the observers are invited to experience and imagine our recent work all together in the landscape of one large drawing. In the drawing, each NEMESTUDIO project lands onto this imaginary territory with its original context. As such, each project gains a new specificity or resolution such as a new detail, a new program, a new scale, a new design feature, or simply goes through maintenance, and the projects build novel relationships among themselves through their contextual adjacency on this territory (Figure 4). While depicting one continuous canvas together, each one of the nine drawings uses a particular oblique projection (plan, elevation or cavalier) and complicates the part-to-whole relationship of the collective canvas. The human figures that populate the buildings allude to the specific conceptual conversation around each project as they all enjoy this giant open-air architectural museum (Figure 5). While two men and a woman from Eduard Manet's *Dejeuner sur L'Herbe* are having picnic in the forest of the New Commons project, the David Hockney figure from the *Portrait of an Artist* is looking down at the pool of the Porcupine Pavilion project thoughtfully. Reyner Banham is biking.

Nine Islands: Matters Around Architecture project, on the other hand, examines the under-conceptualized long-span of architectural materiality (Figures 6, 7, 8). From the recalcitrance and the extraction of a particular raw matter from a specific geographic location, to its processing, transportation, and construction into a desired finished effect in a building and to its demolition, waste, and decomposition, the spatial and temporal span of architectural materiality is very wide (geographic) and deep (geological). The project showcases this long-span through nine case studies (nine islands) looking at particularly lavish or widely used nine building materials: certain types of marble, wood, glass, travertine, copper, aluminum, concrete, leather, and plastic. This project was exhibited at the 3rd Istanbul Design Biennial in 2016.

Here, the word “matters” used in the title of this project operates on two registers relative to these questions. First, “matters” depicts an expanded understanding of materialism, which does not reduce architectural materiality to a finished state but to an elongated temporality from extraction of raw matter to waste. Second, “matters” points to the kinds of “ordinary” activities that take place around the material practice of architecture.

Each drawing included the *Nine Islands* project is divided into two parts where each part depicts two different snapshots from the long-span of one of the nine materials. While the upper part of each drawing positions one building material through a particular architectural lens (elevation, section, plan, specification, detail), the lower part depicts a daily life scene from the wider life span of the same material (extraction at the quarry, shipping at the container port, demolition of the building ruin, roofing at the construction site, etc.). As the upper drawings depict architectural spaces or specifications as *still-lives* with human traces without their actual presence, the lower drawings showcase over-populated human activity and presence in the extraction, production, transportation, construction, demolition or waste site (Figures 6, 7, 8). While all this is happening, a coffee cup drops and spills on the skyscraper roof garden covered with leather.

OPPOSITE: 2A. Victoria Binschok, *World of Details*, 2012. Courtesy of Viktoria Binschok and KLEMM'S Berlin. Museum of Art.

Endnotes

1 For more on this painting, see Victor I. Stoichita, *The Self-Aware Image: An Insight into Early Modern Painting* (University of Cambridge Press, 1997), 3-10.

2 I am thinking of the canonical readings of Mies van der Rohe's surfaces by Robin Evans as well as Rosalind Krauss. Robin Evans, “Mies van der Rohe's Paradoxical Symmetries,” *AA Files* 19 (1990), 56-68. Rosalind Krauss, “The Grid, the /Cloud/, and the Detail,” in *Presence of Mies*, ed. by Detlef Mertins (Princeton Architectural Press), 133-149.





Figure 2B. Victoria Binschok, *World of Details*, 2012. Courtesy of Viktoria Binschok and KLEMM'S Berlin. Museum of Art.



Figure 3. Giovanni Paolo Panini, *Roman Capriccio: The Pantheon and Other Monuments*, 1735. Oil on canvas, 99.1X135.9cm. Indianapolis Museum of Art.

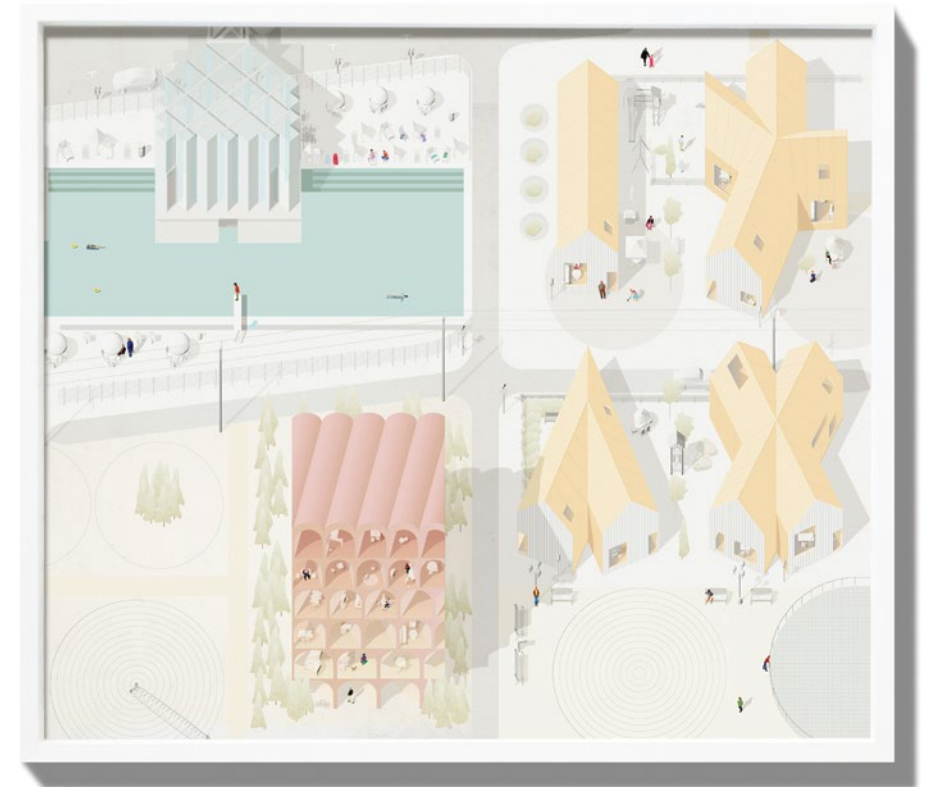


Figure 4. *Nine Drawings, Seven Models. Drawing 4.* Courtesy of NEMESTUDIO.



Figure 5. *Nine Drawings, Seven Models*. Drawing 9. Courtesy of NEMESTUDIO.

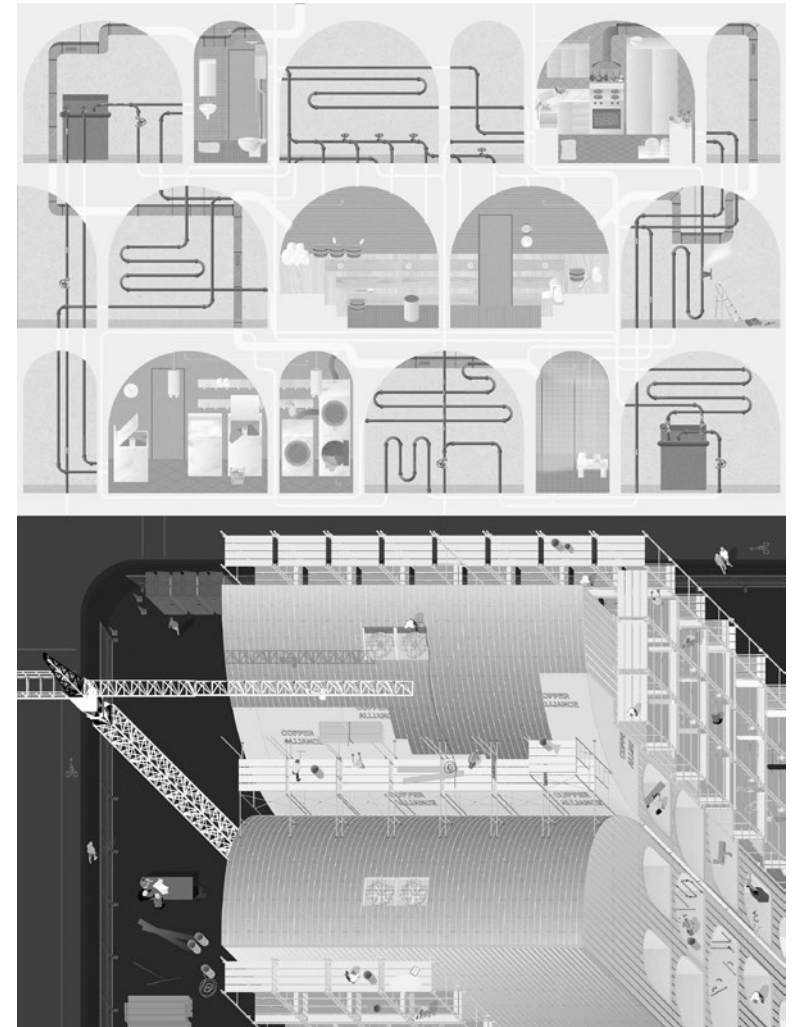


Figure 6. *Nine Islands: Copper*. Our saunas, kitchens and restrooms, all heated, air-conditioned or fire-proofed by copper pipes and HVAC systems, are waiting to be pampered by maintenance and repair. In the meantime, another building with a copper cladding is continually in construction. There is anxiety that the building will be in this state forever. Courtesy of NEMESTUDIO.

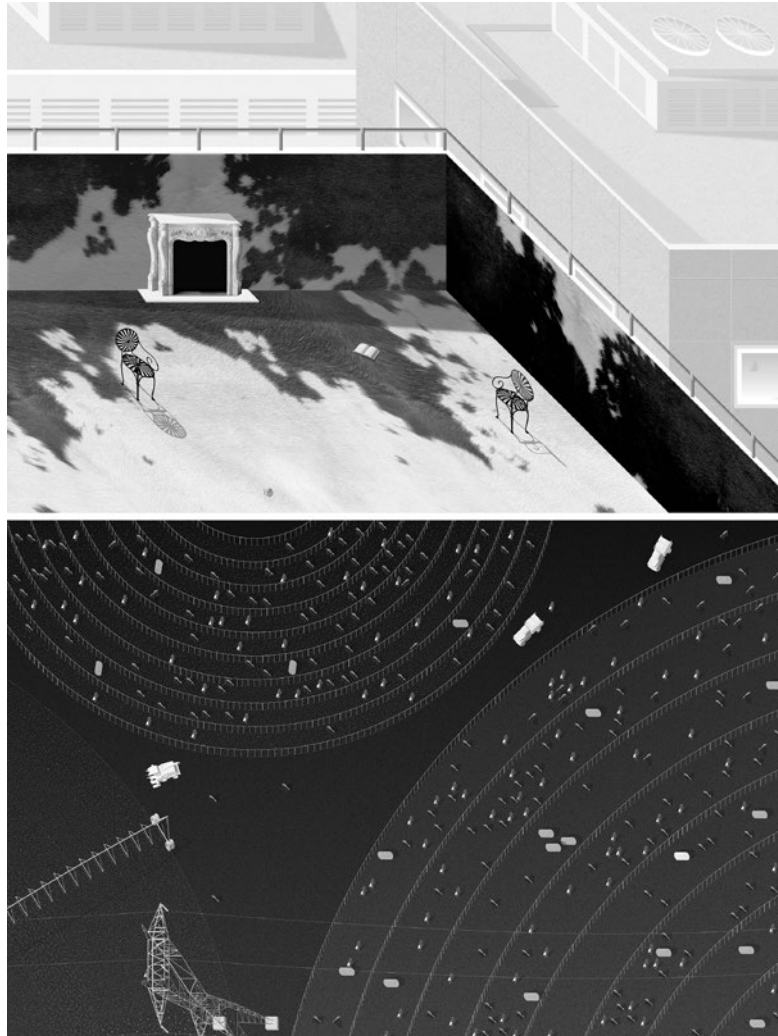


Figure 7. *Nine Islands: Leather*. A skyscraper roof garden covered with lush leather and a false rococo fireplace is a mischievous Corbusian paradox. Background view is not Parisian monuments but of the roof top mechanical chillers. Meanwhile, cows at the industrial farms are barely visible from Google Earth. Courtesy of NEMESTUDIO.

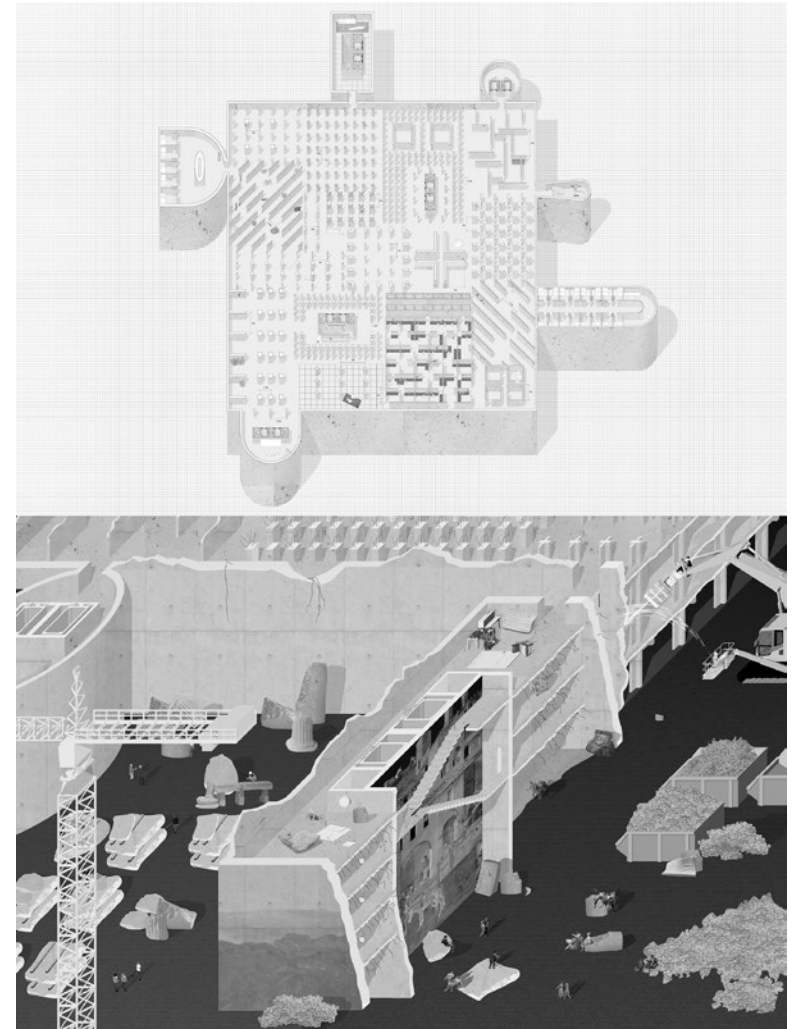


Figure 8. *Nine Islands: Concrete*. Our concrete cores, walls, columns. Eventually, All-That-is-Concrete-Melts-into-Rubble. Any concrete building to be demolished is another ruin for the city. Courtesy of NEMESTUDIO.