

WRITING ON THE WALL

By

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ABSTRACT

The Korean Demilitarized Zone, or the DMZ, serves as a buffer zone between North and South Korea. The DMZ is a four-kilometer-wide, 250 kilometers long, heavily militarized, de facto border. It is a physical metaphor of the aggression and conflict the two countries still share, and is host to tourists from all over the world who come to experience this unique sight seeing destination.

The role of architecture in the temporal context of the DMZ will be to create a space for North, South and outsider (tourist) interaction in a Jimjilbang Observatory sited on the Military Demarcation Line to infiltrate the DMZ under the façade of a tourist destination, where visitors can stop and experience the ultimate form of Korean leisure. Jimjilbangs are Korea's 24-hour bathhouse and reflective of South Korea's rise from a country oppressed by decades of colonization and war to one of the wealthiest countries in Asia.

To those who helped me through and will never read it, and to those who have.

Sheryl, Penny, I am eternally grateful.

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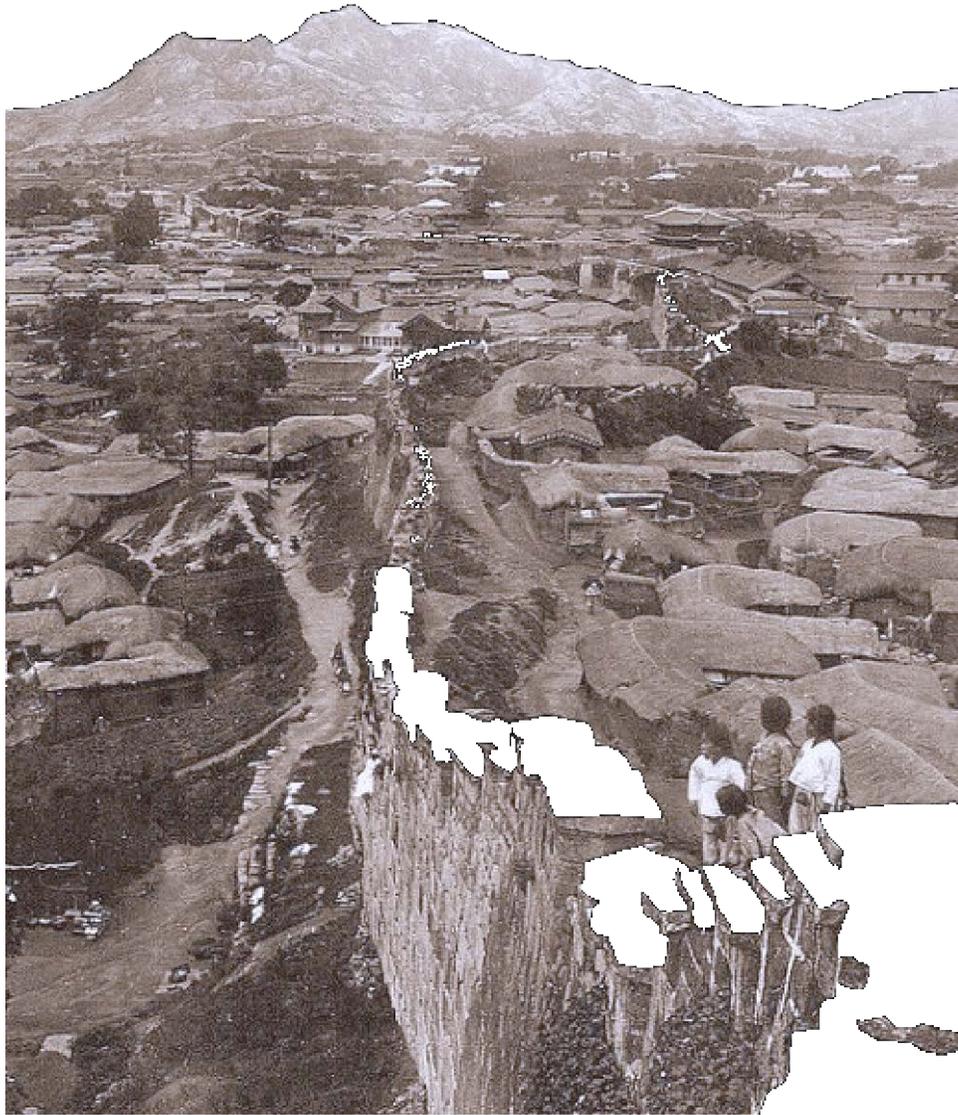


fig 1. THE CITY WALL SEOUL, KOREA- 1904
The Rose Stereographs



fig 2. LINGERING VESTIGES OF WAR
Collage

INTRODUCTION

On July 27th 1953, the Korean War ended with the establishment of the Military Demarcation Line (MDL) and the signing of The Korean Armistice Agreement in Panmunjom.¹ The agreement instructed both sides to pull back two kilometers from the front line to create a fortified buffer zone, referred to as the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ). The DMZ is a four-kilometer wide, 250-kilometre long, heavily militarized de facto border that serves as a buffer zone between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (North Korea) and the Republic of Korea (South Korea) roughly along the 38th parallel. The Northern Borderline and Southern Borderline indicate the limits of the DMZ and are two kilometers from the MDL with fences and signposts along the Korean peninsula. (Figures 3 &4) In addition to the North and South Borderlines, supplementary border lines are installed 50km of the MDL as a means of restricting civilian access and controlling industrial land development in the area. North Korea's border region lies within 50 kilometers of the Northern Border Line, and in the South, the Civilian Control Line (CCL) runs 10 to 15 kilometers south of the South Border Line. These lines make up the zones that ensure adequate insulation from the active military activity at the border for

¹ Shin, Michael D. *Korean History in Maps*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016. p 136

a country that is urbanizing at an accelerated rate (last measured at 82.47% according to the World Bank in 2015).²

Except for two villages on either side that were created by the UN for residents who were already living within the area,³ the DMZ is devoid of human settlement. Both governments have implemented supplementary buffer zones to control the development of land adjacent to the DMZ. In the South, the CCL delineates the Civilian Control Zone which restricts access to authorized pass bearers, residents, and soldiers. The Military Installation Protection Districts covers 50 kilometers south of the MDL which includes military bases and neighboring settlements.⁴ Regions within these zones have specific sets of constraints imposed on the area; for example, building code regulations that restrict high rise structures and special zoning which prohibits certain types of industrial development. The total surface area of Korea's MIPD is 5223 km², which is about 5% of the national territory.⁵ Activity in these border zones reflect the relations between the North and the South. While many of the prewar owners eventually returned to their villages in and outside the zones to reclaim their lands, the Cold War and unstable relationships between the North and the South discouraged development and kept land

² Mario. *Trading Economics*. April 26, 2017. <http://www.tradingeconomics.com/south-korea/urban-population-percent-of-total-wb-data.html> (accessed March 20, 2017).

³ (Yoo Na-Kyeong, Choi Jae Yeal, interview by Basselin Robin Navis Adam. "Life in the DMZ." *Radio English*. (May 4, 2014).

⁴ Gelézeau Valérie, De Ceuster Koen, Delissen Alain, ed. *De-Bordering Korea*. London: Routledge, 2013.

⁵ Gelézeau Valérie, "De-Bordering Korea", p 59

prices down. Since 2004, agents and locals say that land prices in the Civilian Control Zone and even the DMZ has risen so much that even areas with land mines have doubled or tripled in value.⁶ Although the two Koreas remain officially at war, improving relations with the North has loosened restrictions inside South Korea's Civilian Control Zone. The Southern Border Line has been brought closer to the DMZ, with local officials and residents pressing to make it even smaller so businesses can develop in the freed up space.⁷ Speculators started looking in these areas to purchase the under developed land for bargain prices with the expectation of reunification. Relaxing restrictions and the relocation of the Civilian Control Line illustrates the malleability of border lines that flank the DMZ and demonstrates border zones to be fluid and constantly changing within the confines of its edge conditions.

Richard Sennett defines the two forms of an edge as *the boundary*, which is established by closure or lessened activity, and *the border* as a liminal space where different groups are able to interact. The density of the DMZ border line that keeps this area in isolation contributes to the hostile environment and unnegotiable zones of conflict. The constant presence of North Korean, South Korean and allied military guarding the perimeter and adjacent zones of the DMZ intrigues tourists to come and see this unique condition. The tourists create a new permeable zone which is described by Sennett as a *membrane condition*, which describes the property of an edge that

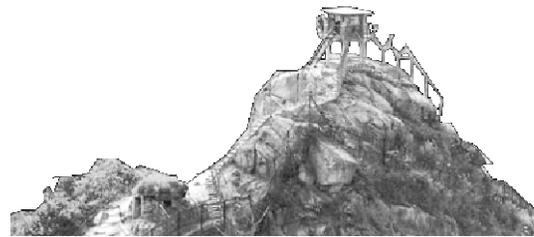
⁶ Gelézeau Valérie, "De-Bordering Korea", p 103.

⁷ Onishi, Norimitsu. *For Sale: Undeveloped Korean Land. DMZ Views*. October 5, 2007. <http://www.nytimes.com/2007/10/05/world/asia/05dmz.html> (accessed January 5, 2017).

combines porosity and resistance. This thesis considers the potential for architecture to create the spatial precondition that is required to encourage cooperation between people who differ. The line dividing the North and South Korean Peninsula will be thickened and materialized to create a *Jimjilbang* Observatory that overlaps the physical border line between the North and South.

Chapter 1

THE CONDITION





*fig 3. MILITARY DEMARCATION
LINE MARKER*
Wikipedia



*fig 4. SOLDIERS INSPECTING DMZ
FENCE PERIMETER*
Press TV



fig 5. DORA OBSERVATORY
Wikipedia



fig 6. 38TH PARALLEL
Britannica

READING THE DMZ

In an environment condemned to isolation for over six decades, this thesis will explore the use of Sennett's concept for an 'Open city' to explore the DMZ as a space shaped by a series of networks where links are provisional and divergent, and where the edge conditions are fluid and revisable. Richard Sennett's essay, *The Open City*, begins the task of programmatically defining and translating the idea of 'openness' into pragmatic techniques to integrate into sustainable urban fabrics. Sennett imagines the city as open, complex and in flux and advocates three points for consideration:

1. *Ambiguous edges*, or passage territories through porous walls, as movement between border zones.
2. *Incompleteness of form*, which extends to the context of buildings, because buildings acquire value from their relationship to the site and with one another; incomplete form stimulates the growth of buildings around it.
3. *Unresolved narratives*, a situation achieved by identifying and analyzing different and opposing possibilities and leaving these conflicts at play; this opens up a design system that grows by admitting to its conflicts and dissonance.

These three concepts are used to loosely map the scenario of the DMZ and design new elements. The stringent military milieu that has eroded over time and now allows for the coexistence of tourists and military in the same space, creates *ambiguous edges*. *Incomplete forms* will be employed to create awareness of the tourists' ability to change the landscape. Finally *unresolved*

narratives, will be used as a lens to view the changing DMZ environment and how the proposed *Jimjilbang Observatory* fits in that context.



▲
fig 7. JIMJILBANG BATHING ROOM
Lexparadise



▲
fig 8. TYPICAL JIMJILBANG
COMMUNAL SPACE
ARNABlog



▲
fig 9. TALKSHOW HOST CONAN
O'BRIEN RECIEVES A
TRADITIONAL INTENSE SCRUB
DOWN CALLED "SESHIN"
TeamCOCO

THE BATH HOUSE AND THE OBSERVATORY

Jimjilbangs are large, 24-hour sauna houses furnished with traditional hot tubs, showers, saunas and massage tables with the additions of snack bars, fitness centers, rooms for sleep and lounging, karaoke, and movies. There are two distinct areas of *jimjilbangs*: the same-sex nude baths called *mogyuktangs* (Figure 7) and the common areas (Figure 8) which are clothed, co-ed spaces with saunas and leisure activities. Korean bathhouses are nude affairs and do not allow bathing suits or articles of clothing and they require everyone to thoroughly wash prior to soaking in a tub. Intense exfoliation scrubs called *seshins* are offered in *mogyuktangs* for a fee for the ultimate cleansing, albeit painful, experience. (Figure 9) *Jimjilbangs* are an essential part of contemporary Korean culture that attract people of all ages who come to unwind and socialize. This thesis proposes the design for a building with the combined program of the traditional and culturally shared space of the *jimjilbang* overlaid with a critical interpretation of the “observatory” into an architectural proposal. The idea of observatory will be discussed in Chapter 3 in the forthcoming pages. The *Jimjilbang Observatory* will be sited over the Military Demarcation Line that divides the Korean peninsula in half and aims to infiltrate the DMZ under the façade of a tourist destination.

The three main aspects of the *jimjilbang*- socializing, water and cleansing will be reimaged to suit the context of the *Jimjilbang Observatory*. The cotton shirts and pants handed out at reception that are normally colored to distinguish male and female will be

used to identify which side the wearer originated from. The four *mogyuktangs* are separated by gender and side (North or South); each gender is located on different wings of the building and are divided by a glass wall. The heat from the *mogyuktang* creates condensation on the glass partition which is used as a slate where each side is able to communicate through writing. Opposite the glass is a mirror which flips the text therefore making it legible. The water that is used from the *mogyuktang* and saunas are filtered, and collected in the exterior water feature that separates the two entrances. The pool of water is converted into white vapor through the platforms that are in the middle of the water feature. The white vapor signifies peace between the two sides because the water used to produce the vapor is the gray water from cleansing which provide an opportunity to communicate with the other side. The *Jimjilbang Observatory* deconstructs the traditional Korean bathhouse as a system which can be used to create a space to help mediate between people have been divided by conflict.

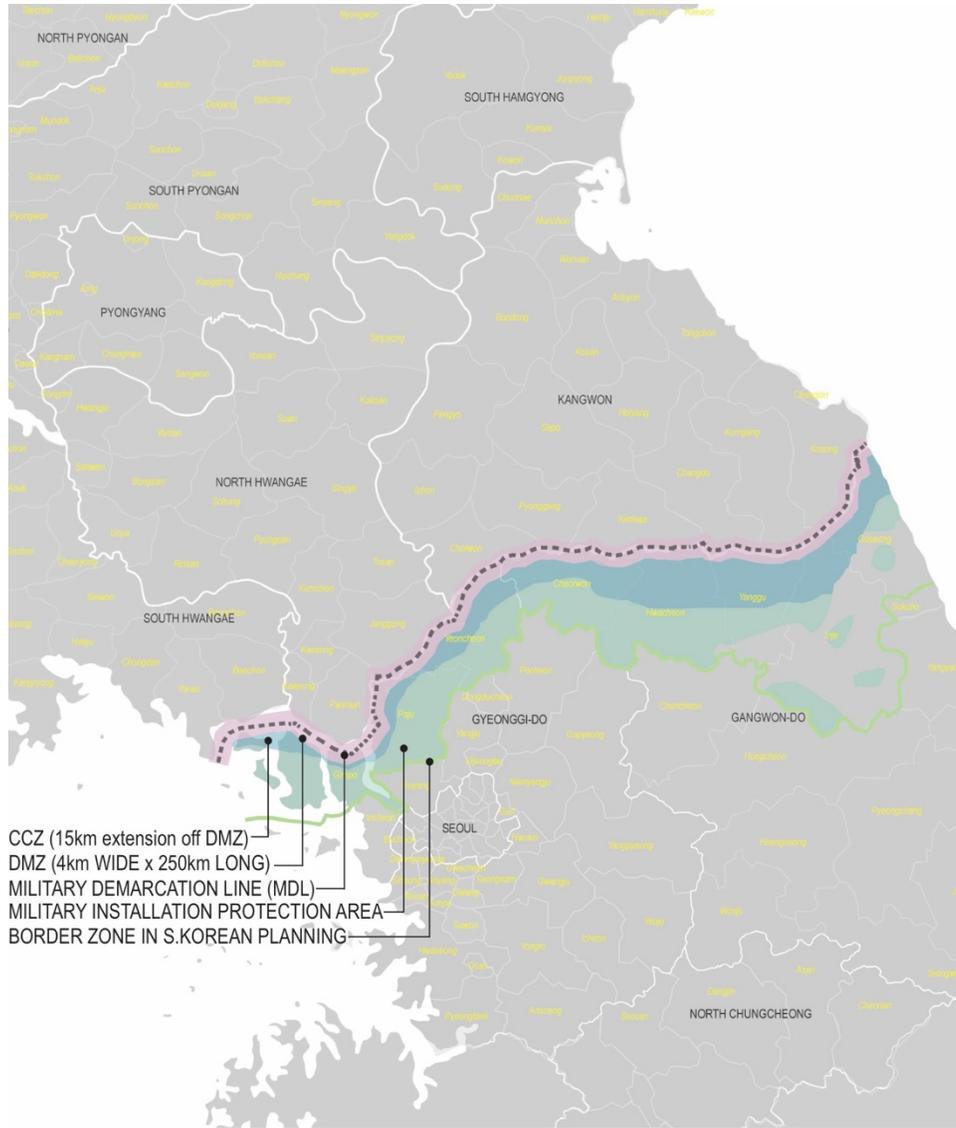


fig 10. MAP OF CURRENT BORDER CONDITIONS ▲

THE EDGE

Proximity to the militarized border and the plethora of constricting regulations have caused economic stagnation and developmental handicaps in border provinces. To remedy this underdevelopment, the Border Zone Support Law (BZSL) was created to support settlements within 20 kilometers of the Civilian Control Line by providing public financing for local economic diversification to reduce the exodus in these areas. In *Cheorwon* County, in the province of *Kangwon*, 99% of the population is covered by the MIPD and receive aids under the BZSL. In an effort to keep inhabitants in the area from leaving, several projects were set out in the tourism and agricultural sectors, funded by an annual 10 billion won by the South Korean government.⁸ Within five years, a new Peace Observatory in *Cheorwon* was constructed for tourists in the DMZ and opened in 2008 which offers a panoramic view of the DMZ and provides exhibition space for DMZ artefacts and photos. The South Korean governments' initiative in enhancing the economy in border provinces resulted in modifications of the Southern Border Line and Civilian Control Line to facilitate easier accessible means for tourists to come visit the DMZ and surrounding areas. The *membrane condition* of the Border Line provides opportunities for engagement between the military, tourists and civilians in this emerging tourismscape; military officers become tour guides (Figure 19), Koreans become

⁸ Onishi, Norimitsu. "For Sale: Undeveloped Korean Land."

tourists along with the foreigners, locals in the vicinity become tourism entrepreneurs, buildings and war artifacts are isolated and declared monuments or National Artifacts, and new infrastructure is built to accommodate the passage of tourists.

An unintended consequence of the Korean War caused by decades of isolation within the DMZ border barrier is the creation of a well-preserved ecological zone recognized worldwide.⁹ The North Korean government developed an interest in a DMZ-centered nature reserve in early 1991¹⁰ and approached UN Secretary-General Kofi A. Annan to explore the opportunities for research and funding as well as access to the area. Unfortunately, in 1992, North Korea withdrew any interest in being involved in the project. In 2015, South Korea sought international support to create an Ecological Peace Park at the Ramsar Convention, an intergovernmental treaty for conservation and sustainable use of wetlands. Despite South Korea's attempts to rally their Northern counterparts in this effort, North Korea consistently rejected such proposals and accused South Korea of attempting to further its profits from foreign tourists.¹¹ It is promising that both Koreas agree that this area must be protected in the future and agree that it would be in beneficial to use this opportunity to generate

⁹ Westing, Arthur H. "The Korean Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) as a Bridge Between the Two Koreas." *Institute for Cultural Diplomacy*. 2010. [http://www.culturaldiplomacy.org/academy/content/pdf/participant-papers/2010www/The_Korean_Demilitarized_Zone_\(DMZ\)_as_a_bridge_between_the_two_Koreas.pdf](http://www.culturaldiplomacy.org/academy/content/pdf/participant-papers/2010www/The_Korean_Demilitarized_Zone_(DMZ)_as_a_bridge_between_the_two_Koreas.pdf) (accessed January 01, 2017), p 4.

¹⁰ Westing, "The Korean Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) as a Bridge Between the Two Koreas," p 3

¹¹ Kim, Hyo-jin. *Seoul Seeks International Support for DMZ Park Plan*. January 26, 2015. http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/news/nation/2015/01/116_172419.html (accessed September 3, 2016).

revenue from eco-tourism, and research which is evident in their separate proposals to the international community. The DMZ provides potential for a joint Korean venture in developing their vision of an ecological peace park; unfortunately, until that day comes, the zone between the Northern and Southern Border Line remains untouched, wild and free from human habitation.



*fig 11. MORNING ROLL CALL AT
FRONTLINE UNIT ALONG DMZ*
Koreana

*fig 12. SOLDIERS LOOKING OVER
DMZ FROM GUARD POST*
Koreana



Chapter 2

CO-EXISTING

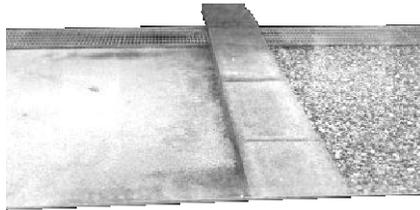




fig 13. TOURISTS AS SOCIAL BORDER OF THE DMZ
Collage

THE BOUNDARY

Both Koreas have installed razor wire fences two kilometres from the MDL to mark their side of the DMZ buffer strip that bisects the peninsula. It is an area dominated by and recognized for its military occupants as the DMZ is still an active war zone. The physical properties of the chain link and barbed wire-topped fence creates a duality of porousness and opacity; the wall must allow for a clear line of sight into enemy land, but discourage movement through the DMZ to reach the opposite side. The severity of the consequences for crossing border lines are not commensurate with the intent of the defector. Incidents have ranged from a 22-year-old Soviet man in the 1980s who decided to dash from the North to the South side of the MDL while touring the Joint Security Area¹² to a 53-year-old South Korean woman who accidentally wandered into a restricted zone by the Mount Kumgang Resort and was shot and killed in 2008.¹³ The event involving the Soviet man resulted in the deaths of one ROK United Nations soldier and three DPRK soldiers. A report by the Congressional Research Service published in 2007 covers over 150¹⁴ provocations and incidents between DPRK and ROK since 1950. Encounters along these edge environments have been, and still are, extremely volatile with little to no opportunities for engagement or negotiation.

¹²Haberman, Clyde. *The New York Times*. November 27, 1984. <http://www.nytimes.com/1984/11/27/world/dmz-defector-says-he-acted-freely.html> (accessed March 22, 2016).

¹³Watts, Jonathan. *The Guardian*. July 11, 2008. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2008/jul/11/korea> (accessed March 23, 2017).

¹⁴ Fischer, Hannah. "CRS Report for Congress- North Korean Provocative Actions, 1950-2007." CRS, Information Research Knowledge Services Group, Congressional Research Service, Washington, 2007.

The preliminary line between the two Koreas was drawn in 1945, when the Japanese surrendered to the Allies near the end of World War II. Before the surrender, discussions on what to do about Japan's colonies (Korea was one of the occupied colonies) were already underway. Originally, it was proposed to manage them jointly as a trusteeship without specifying zones of occupation,¹⁵ but Colonel Charles Bonesteel and U.S. Secretary of State Dean Rusk promoted the idea of a dividing line that would separate the two Koreas. The swift collapse of Japan prompted an urgent decision where this line should fall; the Americans wanted to extend the zone far enough north to include Seoul, but had to leave enough territory for the Soviets to get the line approved. Bonesteel considered using the provincial boundaries as the dividing line but did not have a map of the Korean peninsula to identify the exact location of the provinces.¹⁶ The 38th parallel line was hastily selected as the dividing line and, to the Americans' surprise, this proposal was accepted by the Soviet Union. The 38th parallel was Korea's first official intra-national boundary and was intended to temporarily divide the two occupation zones after the Cold War. Five years later, this line would influence the location of the Military Demarcation Line, which to this day still divides the Korean peninsula in two parts.

¹⁵ *Why is the border between the Koreas sometimes called the "38th parallel"?* November 5, 2013. <http://www.economist.com/blogs/economist-explains/2013/11/economist-explains-1> (accessed November 28, 2016).

¹⁶ "Why is the border between the Koreas sometimes called the "38th parallel"?"

fig 14. BLUE JOINT SECURITY AREA BUILDINGS
Cosmojin



fig 15. SOUTH GUARDS (LEFT) NORTH GUARDS (RIGHT)
CONCRETE MILITARY DEMARICATION INE IN MIDDLE
The Star



THE BORDER

Conflict generated by the hard-edged nature of the DMZ and MDL creates a difficult psychological experience for Koreans and real inter-Korean border confrontation. This dynamic zone has been shaped in isolation for over six decades and has created its own social and ecological network within the DMZ fabric, and has slowly disconnected from the booming economic development and rapid urbanization that South Korea has experienced over this time. These factors inherently create ideal conditions for unusual tourism landscapes.

In the South, tours to the DMZ require advance booking as there are only a certain number of buses permitted to travel to the zone at a time. Security measures for foreigners and Korean citizens are different; foreigners are able to submit their passport information 48 hours to 4 days in advance, depending on the tour service guidelines, while Koreans require a detailed ID check six months prior with the Ministry of Unification. Visitors are required to carry their passports or identification at all times during tours as checks are frequent. Under the surveillance of an armed soldier, visitors tour the DMZ either by bus or by DMZ trains. The trains were introduced in 2014 by Korail and offer themed trips from Seoul to *Dorasan* Station or *Baengmagoji*. The Joint Security Area (JSA) which is located 53 kilometers northwest of Seoul is the most popular DMZ attraction in Panmunjom, near the site where the 1953 Armistice was signed. Annually, 100,000 tourists travel to the JSA to experience this unique tourism

experience. The JSA is the only portion of the DMZ where North and South forces stand face-to-face, and where visitors are permitted to cross the MDL within one of the three blue conference rooms. (Figure 14) The concrete ledge that marks the location of the MDL (Figure 15) dictates the layout of the buildings, restricts movement and is a constant reminder of the unresolved conflict between the two Koreas.

Prior to the war, Panmunjom was a village called *Neolmun-ri*, which means “village of the wooden gate”. The original village encompassed a larger area than the current inter-military complex of the JSA but suffered major destruction during the war and now no longer exists. It is said that many years ago, the Korean king passing through the village wished to cross the *Sacheon* Stream that flows nearby, but was unable to because there was no bridge. The local villagers provided passage for the king by removing the wooden gates of their homes and salvaging the wood to build a bridge for the king to use. In the 1950s, only a handful of Korean mud huts providing accommodation for travelers, remained. This site was selected for armistice talks during the war due to its reasonable proximity to the front lines and direct route to the communist held city of Kaesong. The pavilion where the original Korean Armistice was signed is in North Korea and currently is used as a museum.

The atmosphere when visiting the JSA is reflective of the respective sides’ attitude toward one another. As a tourist coming from the South, strict dress codes apply including no camouflage prints, t-shirts (shirts must have a collar) or short skirts and

strangely, no ripped or acid washed jeans. It is said that images of unkempt tourists are used in North Korea as propaganda to show that Americans and the outside world are not able to afford new pants. Before entering the DMZ, the military requires visitors to sign a document indicating that the visit to the JSA means entering a hostile area that may cause injury or death as a direct result of enemy action. Tours are conducted by officers who brief tourists on appropriate conduct while in the JSA; visitors are discouraged from using any gestures that may seem hostile, advised to stay with the group and are restricted from communicating with DRPK soldiers. Alternatively, visits to the JSA from the North are a much more relaxed experience; there is no dress code, tourists are allowed relative freedom to do as they please in the area and to take pictures, as long as they do not step over the MDL. Two narratives emerge regarding military presence in the JSA; the South uses the site to highlight the dangers and the tension present between the North and the South, while the North slackens its control in the JSA in contrast to the lack of freedom that tourists have elsewhere in North Korea creating an illusion of tranquility.

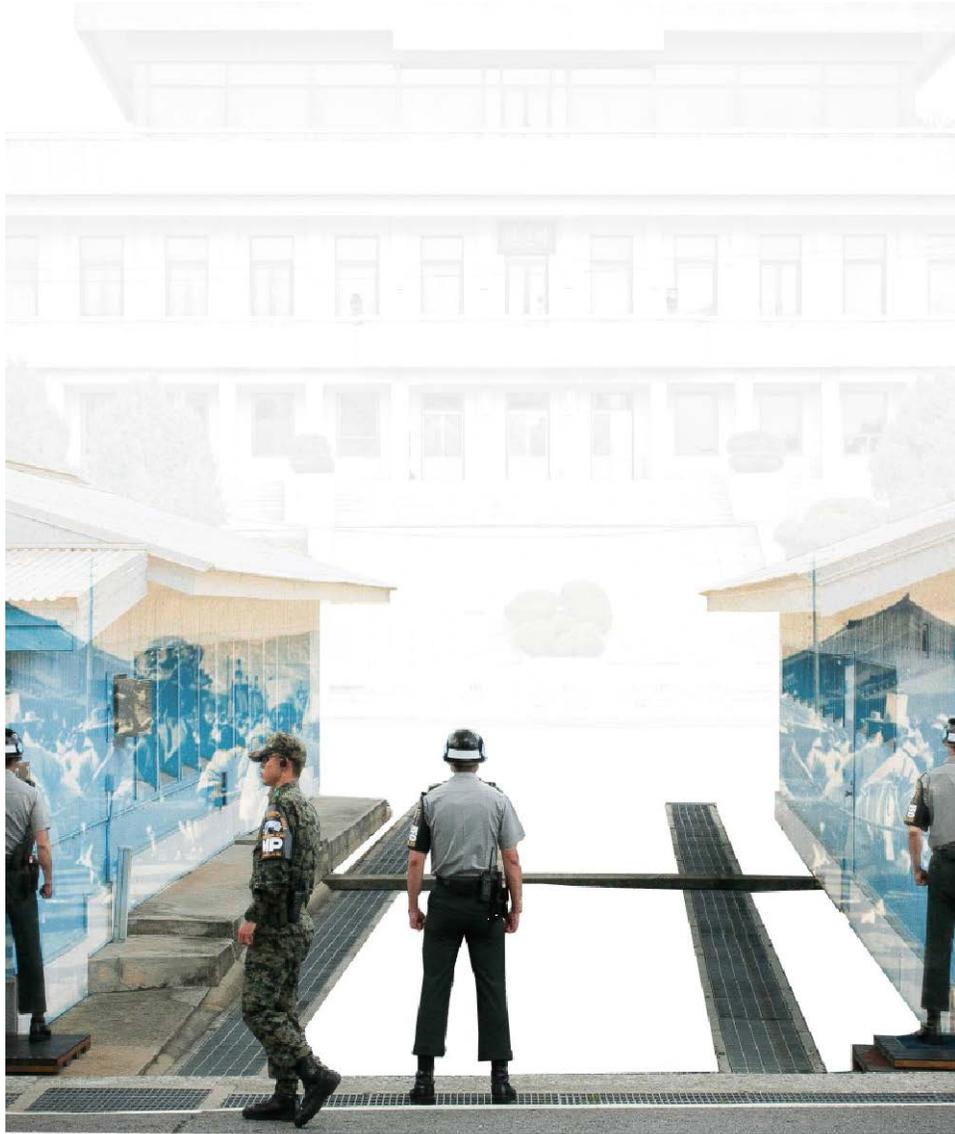


fig 16. JOINT SECURITY AREA & DEMARCATION LINE
Collage

BORDER TOURISM

The South Korean government have fabricated military-themed ‘objects’ and infrastructure around the DMZ that are often incongruent with this memorial place in an effort to increase border tourism. For example, *Imjingak* Resort, a park seven kilometers from the DMZ, is the furthest northern point that civilians are able to travel freely before the security border checkpoints. A Unification park by the resort was built in 1972 for families and friends who were permanently separated with the division of Korea; in the park are statues and monuments regarding the Korean War, pavilions for reunification, and oddly, a small amusement park (Figure 18). Dispersed among DMZ tour stops, visitors are greeted by cartoon-like mascots (Figure 17) that were introduced by the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism in 2010 as part of its tourism campaign of the DMZ.

While tourists slowly start changing the landscape of the DMZ, the infrastructure built to accommodate visitors leave significant imprints on the landscape. These ‘objects’ include amusement parks, souvenir stations, tour buses and trains with military guides, observatories, and educational centers. The *membrane condition* of the Border Lines was created by the South Korean government to enhance tourism to boost the economies of border provinces; however, these ‘objects’ do not take into consideration the future re-use of these facilities if and when the demilitarized zone is no longer militarized. In an interview titled *Why do Architects read Latour*, the philosopher Bruno

Latour states that “...the more you do things, the more opacity you build. Just the fact of doing something is opaque... it is not something that is going to change... making is opaque, the building is opaque...”¹⁷ Similar to the war artefacts and buildings that remain today that evoke memories to the past, the ‘objects’ of tourism installed in the DMZ in the present are traces of the process of reunification. The Demilitarized zone is still a work in progress, it’s history still being recorded and preserved by the opaque ‘objects’ placed on its surface. The tourists’ ability to change their surroundings, especially in an area as unique as the DMZ must be used to integrate culturally relevant programs that reflect traditional Korean culture.

fig 17. DMZ MASCOTS



fig 18. IMJINGAK UNIFICATION PARK

¹⁷ Latour, Bruno. "Why do Architects Read Latour?" *Perspecta* (The MIT Press on behalf of Perspecta.) 44 (2011): p 64-69, p 197.

fig 19. MILITARY TOUR GUIDE
Stripes Korea



fig 20. WAR ZONE OR TOURIST TRAP?
Asian Correspondent

Chapter 3

I M P A C T





▲
fig 21. PRESCRIBED SPACES
Collage

PRESCRIBED SPACE

In his book, *Post-structuralist Geography: A Guide to Relational Space*, Jon Murdoch describes a ‘prescribed space’ is one of the two different types of spaces identified by Murdoch which is used to identify different levels of control. Prescribed spaces are tight orders of consolidated relations that stabilize the building’s material and meaning by keeping internal conflict or external interference at bay.¹⁸ Tourists are catalysts for ‘prescribed’ spaces which are set in place to protect the integrity of the historical building, site, or monument. The old *Cheorwon* headquarters of DPRK’s former Workers’ Party of Korea (Figure 22) was labelled as Registered Cultural Heritage No. 22 on May 31st 2002. This official designation restricts access and human contact as a response to the hundreds of thousands¹⁹ of tourists who annually visit the site through guided tours.²⁰ As a safety precaution, tourists are unable to enter the building and can only observe from the perimeter. The intent of isolating the building is to “stabilize physical features, slow deterioration and ... exclude (the) unwanted forming of new networks.”²¹ This process includes all ‘objects’ of tourism, whether they are placed behind glass as war artefacts or in heritage designated environments that are only available for viewing. The

¹⁸ Guggenheim, Michael. "Building Memory; Architecture, Networks and Users." *Memory Studies* (SAGE Publications) 2 (2009): 39-53.

¹⁹ Organization, Korea Tourism. *Visit Korea*. <http://english.visitkorea.or.kr/enu/ATR> (accessed February 2, 2017).

²⁰ *TripAdvisor*. 2017. https://www.tripadvisor.ca/ShowUserReviews-g294197-d2194650-r326699798-Korea_Private_Tours_Day_Tours-Seoul.html (accessed March 20, 2017).

²¹ Guggenheim, “Building Memory”, 45

power to make decisions is held by the government and military and ‘objects’ of the touristscape are effects and affected by the enforced constraints within the DMZ. Isolation can be a powerful tool in creating and controlling new networks and cut unwanted ones to create truth.²² Authoritative interpretations, or written descriptions about the history of objects or places on sites can prevent interpretations by others and provide opportunities to create an experience that is defined through a choreographed narrative (in this case, guided tours) by carefully selected visitors.



▲
fig 22. BULLET RIDDLED FACADE
OF KOREAN
LABOUR PARTY BUILDING
(*Bravoyourcity*)

²² Guggenheim, “Building Memory”, 48

THE SITE: *CHEORWON* COUNTY

Cheorwon County, in *Gangwon* province is South Korea's closest urban settlement to the North Korean border. (Figure 29) This county was selected to be the site of the *Jimjilbang Observatory* for its central geographic location in the Korean Peninsula and MDL (Figure 28), nearly total coverage by the Military Installation Protection District, 'objects' of tourism, and the physical impact of the geopolitical border after the Korean War.

Cheorwon was an important railroad town during the Japanese colonial rule in the early 1920s and home to approximately 37,000 people during the 1940s.²³ During the Korean War, it formed the western leg of the Iron Triangle Battlefield, one of the most feared combat zones, and was virtually obliterated. The town belonged to North Korea from 1945 until the signing of the Armistice Agreement in 1953 that ultimately divided the country in half. Traces of the Cold War are still found in monuments, remnants of buildings, guard posts and signs warning of land mines that are sprinkled along the endless pastures and paddy fields. With the South Korean government's efforts to increase tourism in *Cheorwon*, security measures within the CCZ were eased and roads paved for pedestrians and vehicles, actions that helped attract 1.5 million non-

²³ The Korea Foundation. *DMZ The Forbidden Land Glimpsed through Barbed Wire Fences*. Vol. 30. Seoul: Samsung Moonwha Printing Co, 2016. p 25

Korean tourists to the region in 2012.²⁴ At that time, the South Korean Ministry of Tourism introduced regulatory parameters to protect historical objects from war sites in the area.²⁵

The *Kumgang* Mountain Electric Railway Bridge was constructed in 1926 under the Japanese colonial rule. The railway stretched 116.6 kilometres from *Cheorwon* Station (now in South Korea) to *Naekumkang* Station (now in North Korea) and had eight trains that transported iron sulfide, mining materials and tourists bound for nearby famous *Kumgang* Mountain. *Cheorwon* experienced a radical transformation as labourers, mostly peasants from the country²⁶ from all eight Korean provinces, rushed in to work on the construction of the railway. Currently, a part of the rusted Electric Railway passes near a dandelion field where the owners of the Frontline Rest Shop wait for the day the railway will be reconnected and bring trains filled with tourists to eat their specialty, spicy catfish stew. (Figure 25)

Woljeong-ri Station is an abandoned station in the Iron Triangle. At the back, the skeleton remains of a train that made trips from Seoul to Wonsan. The skeleton (Figure 26) lies adjacent to a sign that reads “the iron horse wants to run,” a fitting epitaph for this train that once made trips to the North on a line that had once connected the country. The fragmented pieces of *Cheorwon*'s history have changed into symbols of reunification and peace between the two Koreas. As

²⁴ The Korea Foundation, “DMZ The Forbidden Land”, p 26

²⁵ *A Day Trip to North Korea's Border*. January 2013. <https://www.lonelyplanet.com/travel-tips-and-articles/77360> (accessed January 2, 2016).

²⁶ Hyang, Na Do. *The Downfall of Ji Hyeong-geun*. Translated by In Young Choi. Seoul: Literature Translation Institute of Korea, 2014. p 5

mentioned earlier, tourists are catalysts for prescribed spaces. The underlying tone of these spaces look towards peace and reunification between the two Koreas, because tourists represent the gradual allowance of access to the once isolated DMZ.



▲
fig 23. ELECTRIC RAILWAY
YumKorea



▲
fig 24. DORASAN TRAIN
STATION PATROLED BY
MILITARY.
(Tripadvisor)



▲
fig 25. OWNERS OF
FRONTLINE REST STOP
Koreana



▲
fig 26. WOLJEONG-RI STATION
“THE IRON HORSE WANTS TO
RUN”
(Morningcalmtravel)

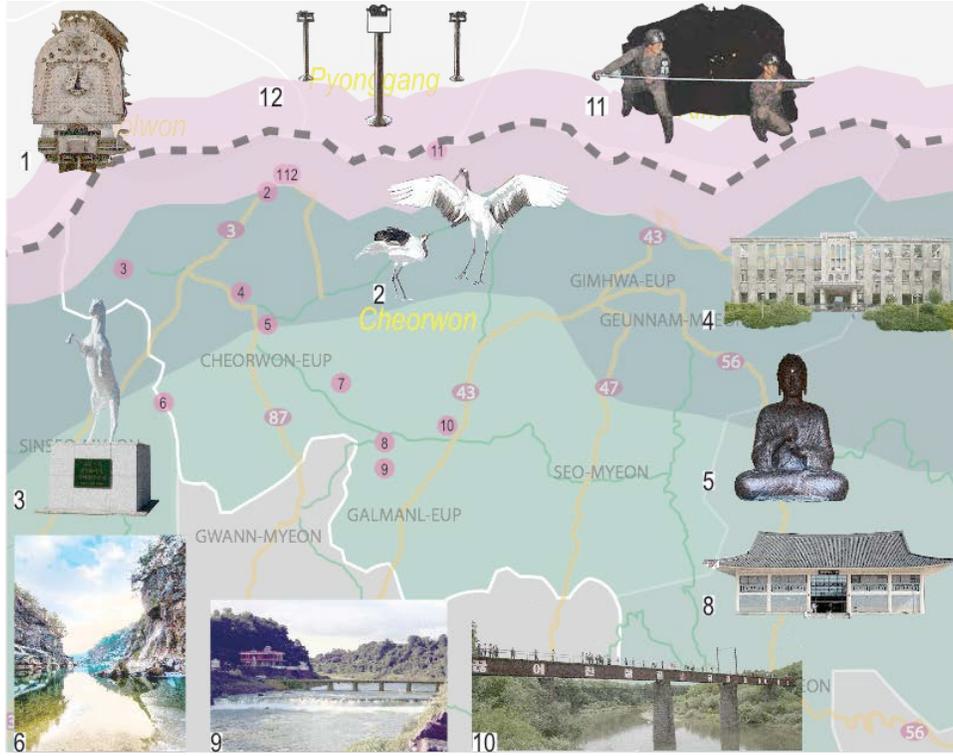


fig 27. CHEORWON TOURIST SITES

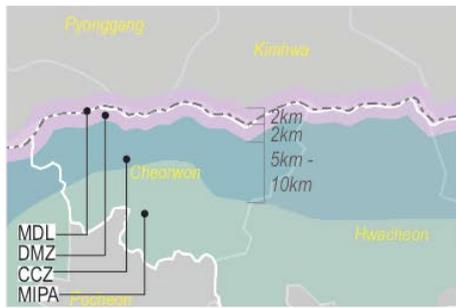


fig 28. CHEORWON BORDERS

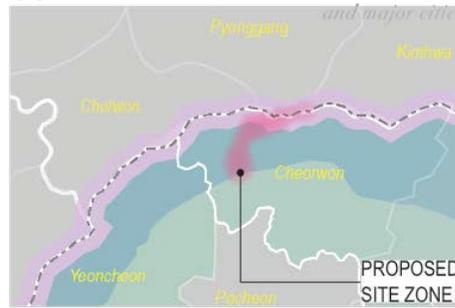


fig 29. PROPOSED SITE



*fig 30. CHEORWON, ROK (FRONT), DMZ (MIDDLE),
PYONGGANG , DPRK (BACK)*
Koreanna



fig 14. DPRK AND ROK MILITARY DRILLS
Collage

OBSERVING THE OTHER HALF

Sixty-four years after the war, an estimated seventy percent of international travelers to South Korea visit the DMZ²⁷ to witness the world's most heavily fortified borders, described by former U.S. President Bill Clinton as "the scariest place on Earth."²⁸ Observatories built along the DMZ are the most visible built features of border tourism. They feature a platform from which the North can be observed through binoculars, and are physical manifestations of the increasing number of tourists who visit sites relating to the Korean War. Statistics show that the nine observatories constructed since 1984 had received a total of 2.5 million visitors by 2005.²⁹ The observatories, *Goseong*, *Dora*, *Eulji*, *Typhoon*, *Odusan*, *Yeolse*, *Ganghwa*, and *Seungri* were opened in 1983, 1987, 1988, 1991, 1992, 1998, 2007 and 2008 respectively. Two of these observatories, *Typhoon* and *Goseon*, were constructed by army units while the other six were built by the South Korean government. Most of these places are observatory-museum hybrids that are integrated in guided DMZ tour itineraries. The museum portion of some of the observatories showcase a variety of basic objects such as shoes, cigarettes, shampoo and alcohol (Figures 33 & 34). Others set scenes of classrooms and middle-class homes

²⁷ Koehler, Robert. "Ecological Bounty Amid Scars of War." *Monthly Magazine KOREA* (Incheon Tourist Organization), June 2016: p 20-21.

²⁸ Havelly, Joe. *Korea's DMZ: 'Scariest place on Earth'*. August 28, 2003. <http://edition.cnn.com/2003/WORLD/asiapcf/east/04/22/koreas.dmz/> (accessed 01 2, 2017).

²⁹ Havelly, Joe. "Korea's DMZ: 'Scariest place on Earth'"

(Figures 32 and 35) that give visitors a peek of North Korea. Among these displays are fighter planes, and tanks (Figure 36) with information and objects from the Korean War. On the observatory decks are coin binoculars to provide views for tourists into the North and the ecology of the DMZ. Although the common theme of the observatories is seen as a visual gesture toward reunification, the museum-observatories often highlight the differences between the two Koreas by displaying mundane objects and scenes which emphasize the divergent developments of the two Koreas. Explicit *Unification Observatories*, like *Odusan* and *Goseong*, are built to “console the feelings of dispersed families...”³⁰ meanwhile the military purpose of an observation post is for soldiers to watch enemy movement. The coin binoculars also add to the sinister origin of the observatory, especially in a military charged environment like the DMZ; peering into the North makes almost a spectacle and game of playing “spot the North Korean.”

LONGING FOR THE OTHER HALF

The DMZ is not only a political and military environment, but an emotional one as well. Since 1953, thousands of families have been apart with little to no contact with each other since the war ended because no postal services available between the two halves. Reunions organized by the Red Cross have been held sporadically since 1988, but are dependent on the state relations between the two countries. Among the 66,000 ROK families waiting for reunions, only 18,800

³⁰ Korea Tourism, “Visit Korea.”

Koreans have been allowed to participate in the 19 rounds of face-to-face reunions since 1985.³¹ In the South, participants are selected at random by a computer that takes into account their age and family background. Potential participants are then interviewed and undergo a medical examination to determine if they are fit to travel to the DMZ.³² In the North, the selection process is believed to give priority to people deemed loyal to the government. The fortunate few who are able to attend these reunions are unlikely to ever see each other again, given their age and infrequent nature of these visits.

The Bridge of Freedom in *Imjingak* Village (Figure 37) was where nearly 13,000 prisoners of war were traded at the end of the Korean War. This footbridge was built as a walkway for this sole purpose, because the DMZ was heavily land-mined and existing bridges were destroyed during the war. Now it serves as a place for remembrance for separate families; at the North end of the bridge and along the SBL razor wire fence are brightly coloured ribbons tied to the wall with messages to family members in the North, or in memory of family members who passed. This act of writing on the wall demonstrates that the scale of reunification can happen at a human level, on the ground through indirect interaction.

³¹ *South and North Korean Families, Separated by War 65 Years Ago, Reunite Briefly*. October 20, 2015. <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/10/21/world/asia/south-and-north-koreans-separated-almost-a-lifetime-reunite-briefly.html> (accessed March 2, 2017).

³² *Korean families divided by war reunite in the North*. October 20, 2015. <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-34578320> (accessed January 3, 2017).

NEGOTIABLE SPACES

‘Incomplete’ architecture, or ‘negotiable’ spaces, are highly fluid environments that are in flux and have the potential to change. This change requires the tight lattice of relations between material and meaning be loosened allowing program to be changed in response to needs of habitation over time. Looking back to Sennett’s elements of an Open City, ‘incomplete’ forms stimulate growth around themselves and are able to acquire value from their relationship to one another. Sennett encourages a dialogue between architects, buildings and spaces to create a bridge between the visual and the social.

We have come around full circle. Guided by Richard Sennett’s theory of borders and porosity in the ideal *Open City*, we began by identifying the multiple properties of the border and studying how specific levels of porosity have created an opportunity for new social networks between military and tourist in North and South Korea. We have analyzed how tourists can influence and change the landscape into tourism-scapes, which requires ‘objects’ of tourism to be ‘prescribed’ to be protected from the public.



▲
*fig. 32. MUSEUM INSTALLATION
OF TYPICAL MIDDLE CLASS
NORTH KOREAN APARTMENT*
TheBlondeTraveller



▲
*fig. 33. NORTH KOREAN
PRODUCED BEAUTY
PRODUCTS AND SHOES*
TheBlondeTraveller



▲
*fig. 34. NORTH KOREAN
PRODUCED CANNED GOODS*
TheBlondeTraveller



▲
*fig. 35. INSTALLATION OF
NORTH KOREAN
ELEMENTARY CLASSROOM*
TheBlondeTraveller



▲
*fig. 36. PEACE OBSERVATORY
TANK, GANGWHA*
(Bravoyourcity)



▲
*fig. 37. FREEDOM BRIDGE,
MESSAGES TO FAMILIES AND
FRIENDS IN NORTH KOREA*
(WorldWalkAbout)

Chapter 4

WRITING ON THE WALL



JIMJILBANG OBSERVATORY

Bath culture in Korea is believed to have started during the Three Kingdoms Period (57BC-668AD), when communal baths were built by temples for religious purposes.³³ The Korean *moguktang* has two to three bathtubs with scrub areas and is used for cleaning in addition to relaxation purposes. The sequential process of disrobing, bathing, re-dressing in ‘uniform’ (Figure 45) at the spas will be used as a defining ritual where in the purposed *Jimjilbang Observatory* project. This building will create a shared space between the two Koreas and tourists on the Military Demarcation Line, and the movement throughout the space will be a process that will ease one into the other’s territory through a common cultural experience.

The *Jimjilbang Observatory* is also a modification of the post-war Korean observatory that is built as a tourist attraction to be able to observe the ‘others’ through and over their respective walls. By using a familiar program from Korean culture, this architectural ‘object’ in the touristscape introduces a functional space that will evolve with the the DMZ. The *Jimjilbang Observatory* is a shared space that allows observance of the other through sight, hearing, and indirect touch. The *membrane condition* of the border extends down into the space as the physical barrier that restricts movement but yet is visually permeable. The interpretation of the “observatory” is to create a space

³³ Brown Ju, Brown John. *China, Japan, Korea: Culture and Customs*. North Charleston: BookSurge , 2006. p 159

where the presence of the other is felt but unable to engage with except *through* the walls.



▲
fig 38. JIMJILBANG UNIFORM
TheNewYorkTimes



▲
fig 39. FAMILY AND FRIENDS ENJOYING TIME AT A JIMJILBANG
LexisKorea



▲
fig 40. INSIDE A TYPICAL SALT-THERAPY SAUNA
SeektheWorld



▲
fig 41. 24-HOUR JIMJILBANG SLEEPING ROOM
ChrisandMelmakeaBlog



▲
*fig 42. EXTERIOR RENDERING
Looking down from mountain to Jimjilbang Observatory Entrances*

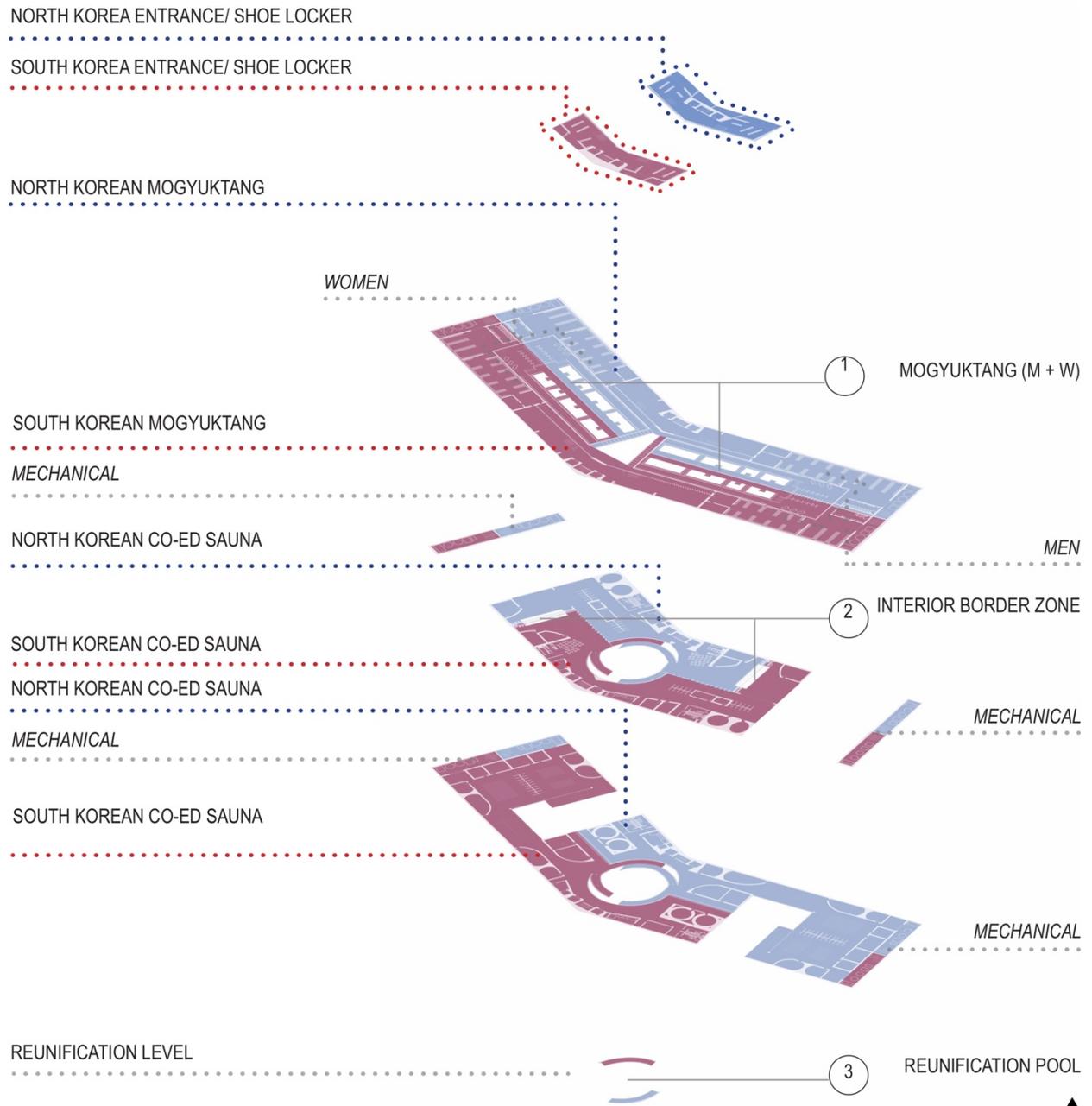
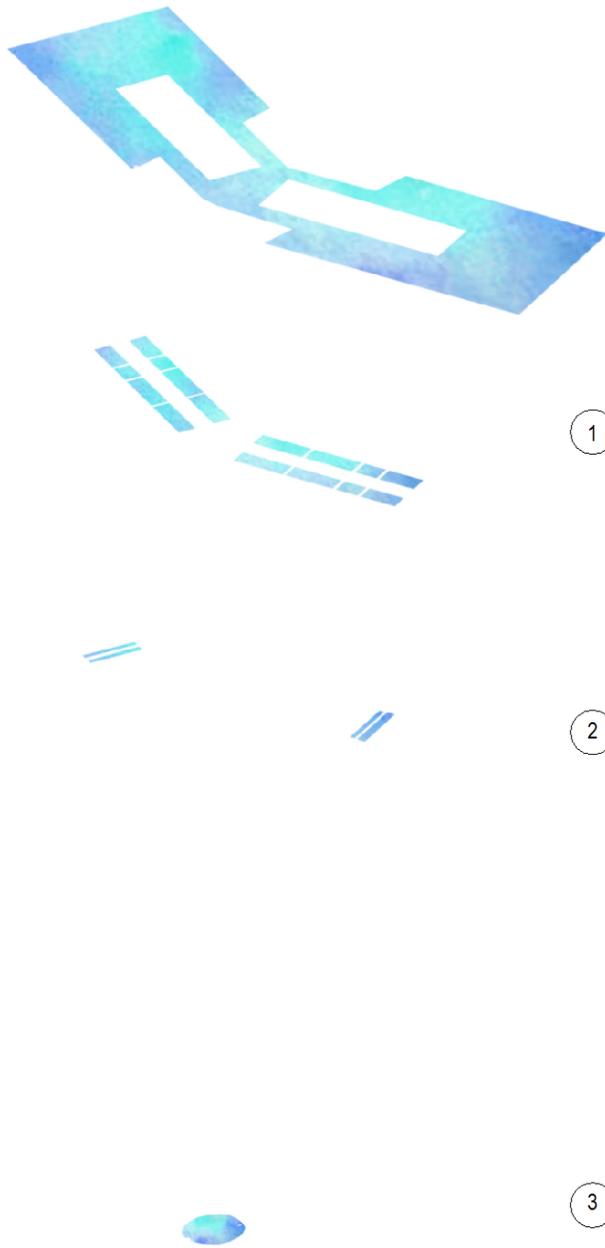


fig 43. CIRCULATION DIAGRAM ▲

While this building does introduce a new form of connection between the North and South, the DMZ is still able to maintain its unique identity with a tight network of consolidated relations between its membranes that insulates it from external interference. While the social network between tourists and the military is moving towards the direction of Sennett's envisioned "Open City", the 'objects' of tourism are constrained from evolving because they are often subject to functional systems that isolate them from being involved in other networks. While these enforcements are often necessary to ensure the longevity of war artifacts and sites, the critique on 'closed' buildings extend to new 'objects' of tourism that are built to reinforce the economy of border tourism. While the notion of the tourist may be negative based on the necessity to alter the landscape to accommodate for the profitable nature of their experiences, this thesis will use the *ability* of tourists to deterritorialize³⁴ space to infiltrate the isolated Demilitarized Zone in a culturally relative context that will fit in the current touristscape. The proposal of a *Jimjilbang Observatory* will be a gradual zone of social and cultural exchange between tourists and, the people of North and South Korea that is built in the framework of the present in preparation for the future of reunification.

³⁴ (Deleuze and Guattari, "Anti-Oedipus," 244)



▲
fig 44. WATER FEATURES

EXTERIOR WATER FEATURE

① MOGYUKTANG (M + W)

② INTERIOR BORDER ZONE

③ REUNIFICATION POOL



▲
fig 45. STRIPPING OF IDENTITY
IN THE JIMJILBANG

The *Jimjilbang Observatory* is a subterranean facility that straddles the MDL which is accessible from the North and the South, on their respective sides. With little to no visibility on ground except for the strip of vapor and shoe locker area along the DML as seen in Figure 42, the earth provides insulation from the politically charged decisions over aesthetics and special zoning requirements. Architecture of the *Jimjilbang Observatory* is stripped of its external visual identity and is able to focus on the programmatic impacts that the traditional bathhouse and sauna has on understanding the other in this divided building. The two entrances to the *Jimjilbang Observatory* are 40m apart, separated by a water feature. This distance is a scaled depth of the four-kilometer-deep DMZ; two kilometers on the North Korean side and two for the South. The baths will only operate if both the North and South allow access on both their sides: a white flag of water vapor from horizontal exhausts on the ground will indicate whether the bathhouse is open. Shoes are taken off, as traditionally done in *jimjilbangs* before entering, and placed in a shoe locker in the entrance. The key with the associated locker is one of the identifiers of which side the person is from and also ensures the person entering from one side leaves from that same side. On the floor below is the check in, where the cotton clothes are provided, blue for one side, red for the other. There are five floors to the facility which are connected by double helix ramps. When descending further into the building, the floor plates recede, which gradually compresses the two sides and reduces the influence of the Military Demarcation Line until there are no more

dividing lines, and both sides are able to meet together at the bottom. (Figure 43) The water feature refracts natural light through certain common areas, like the central ramp, hallways and reunification level, or at the bottom.

Glass will divide the two sides in both gendered bathhouses (the women's side will have a North and south side, as will the men's). In the *moguktang*, divided by gender, a glass pane which will be used to temporarily write messages with the condensation on the glass that is reflected onto an adjacent mirror wall, making it legible. The omnipresent DMZ will be reduced to a thin veil of condensation on glass dividing the two Koreas indicating its dividing nature, even below the surface. Its presence will mediate between the North and South sides of the bathhouse, where civilians will have the opportunity to stand face-to-face with their counterpart and even communicate with one another with temporary writings on the wall.

Vertical movement through the *Jimjilbang Observatory* create moments when both sides are able to see one another face to face, but only in passing. While the two Koreas are still in conflict, military will patrol, ensuring that no direct verbal communication is exchanged. In the co-ed common sauna area, frosted panes of glass separates the two sides. Interaction is possible through blurred sight and slight heat transference. (Figure 51). The bottom level, where the two sides are able to meet, will only be accessible when the two Koreas are reunified. This level extends farther than the other two co-ed sauna areas so one can look back up at the divided sauna levels and be always reminded of the time when the two Koreas were divided.

- A. 2nd INFILTRATION TUNNEL
- B. DEMILITARIZED ZONE
- C. SOUTH KOREAN ROAD
- D. MILITARY DEMARCATION LINE
- E. SITE

fig 46. SITE PLAN

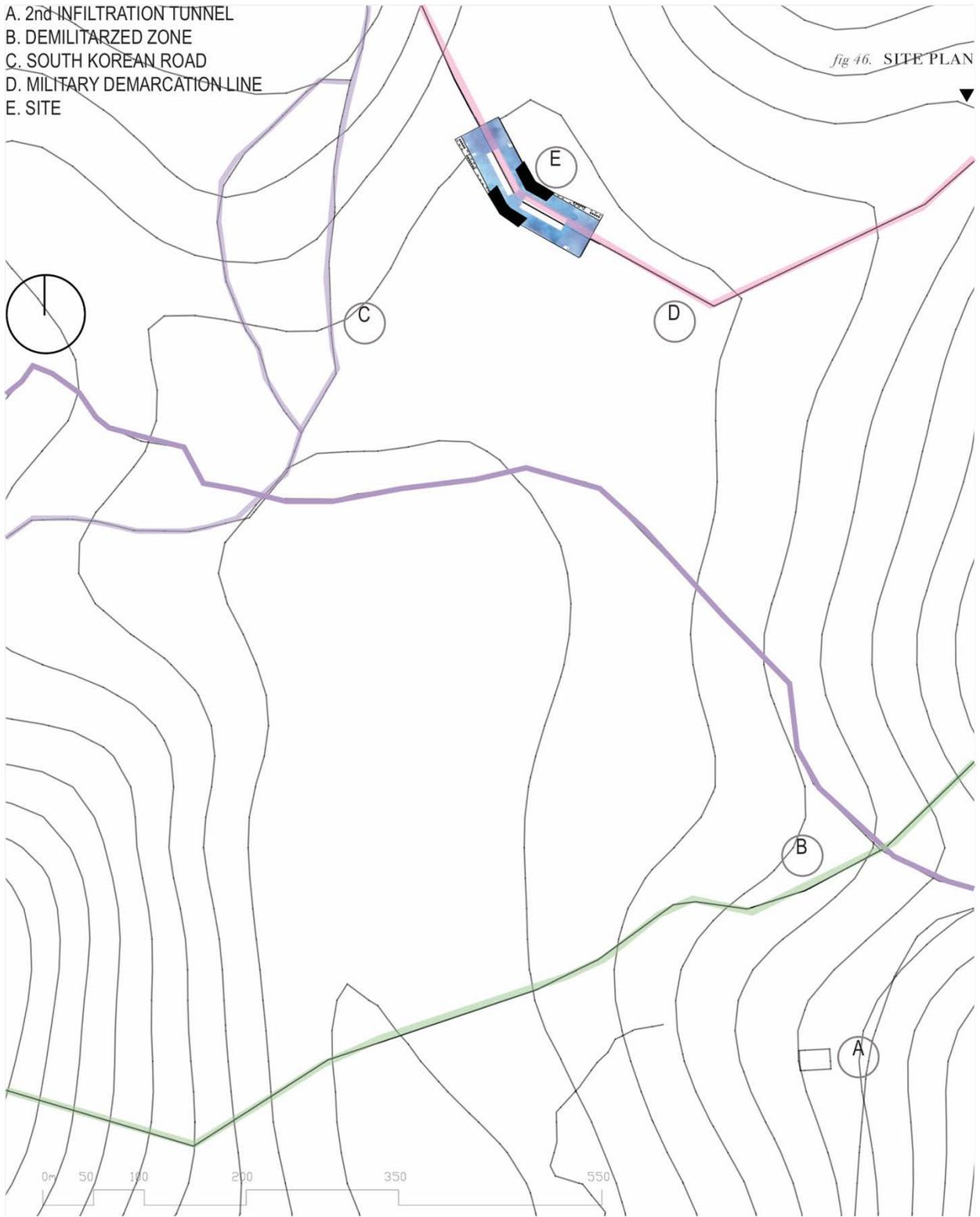


fig 47. SITE PLAN



- A. SOUTH KOREAN ENTRANCE
- B. MOGYUKTANG
- C. NORTH KOREAN SAUNA
- D. SOUTH KOREAN SAUNA
- E. REUNIFICATION LEVEL

fig 48. LOOKING INTO THE "OTHER SIDE" EXPLODED AXO:
The border loosening to reveal "the other side" in co-ed sauna zones

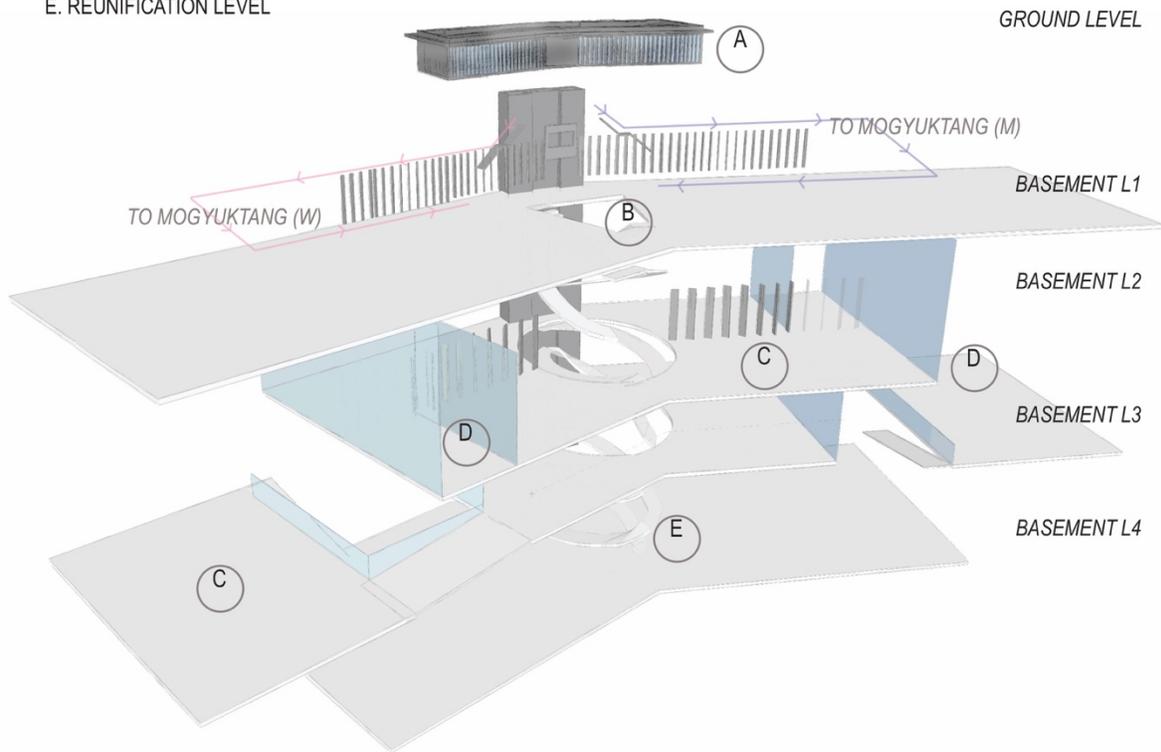


fig 49. MOGYUKTANG CORRIDOR WITH WATER REFRACTION

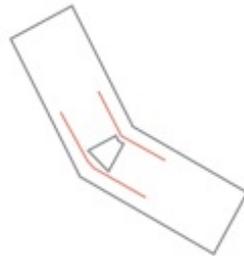


fig 50. JIMJILBANG MIRROR COMMUNICATION BETWEEN SIDES

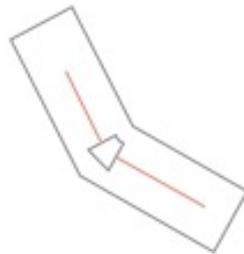


fig 51. CO-ED SAUNA AREA WITH GLASS PARTITION SEATING UNIT

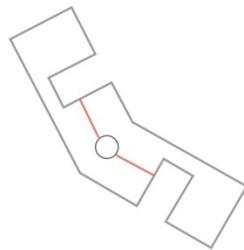


fig 52. CENTRAL CIRCULATION- Woven double helix ramp with seating areas- observing "the other".

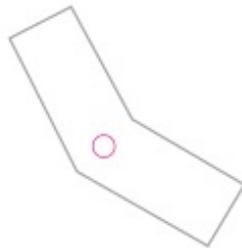


fig 53. GROUND FLOOR PLAN- ENTRANCE

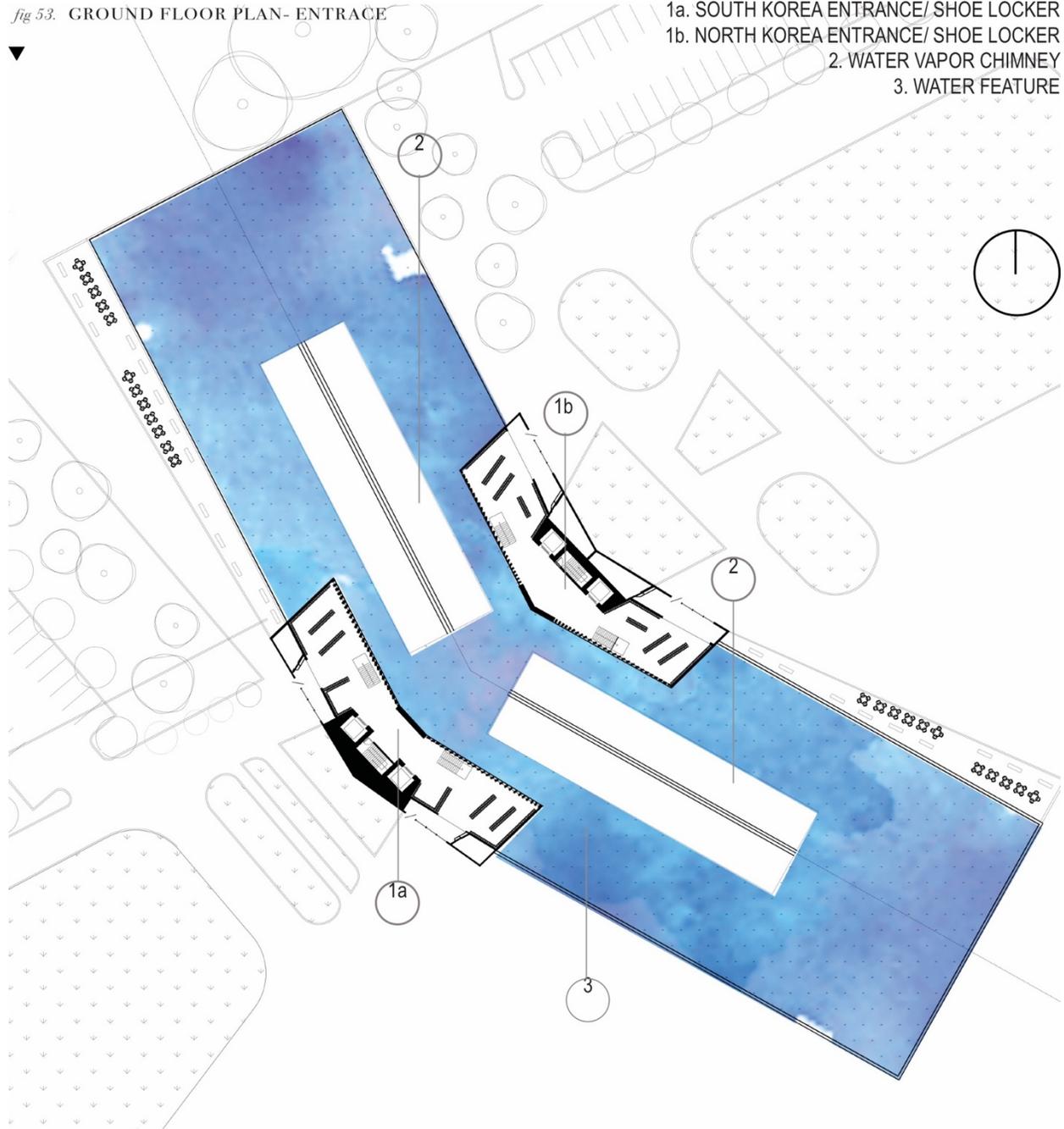
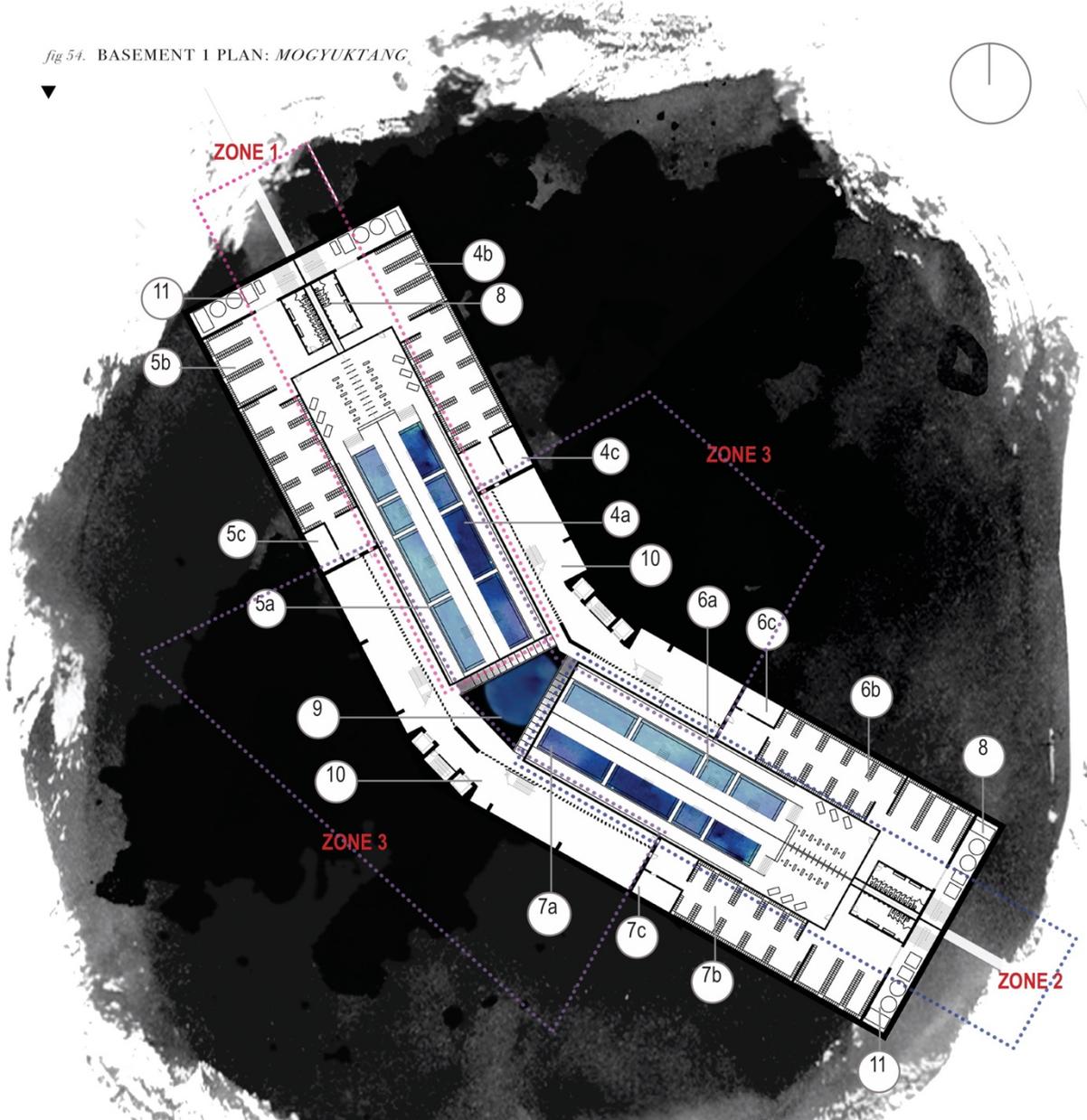


fig 54. BASEMENT 1 PLAN: MOGYUKTANG



ZONE 1

- 4a. NORTH KOREAN WOMENS' MOGYUKTANG
- 4b. NORTH KOREAN WOMENS' CHANGING ROOM
- 4c. NORTH KOREAN WOMENS' CHECK IN
- 5a-5c. SOUTH KOREAN WOMENS'
- 8. WASHROOMS (BOTH SIDES)

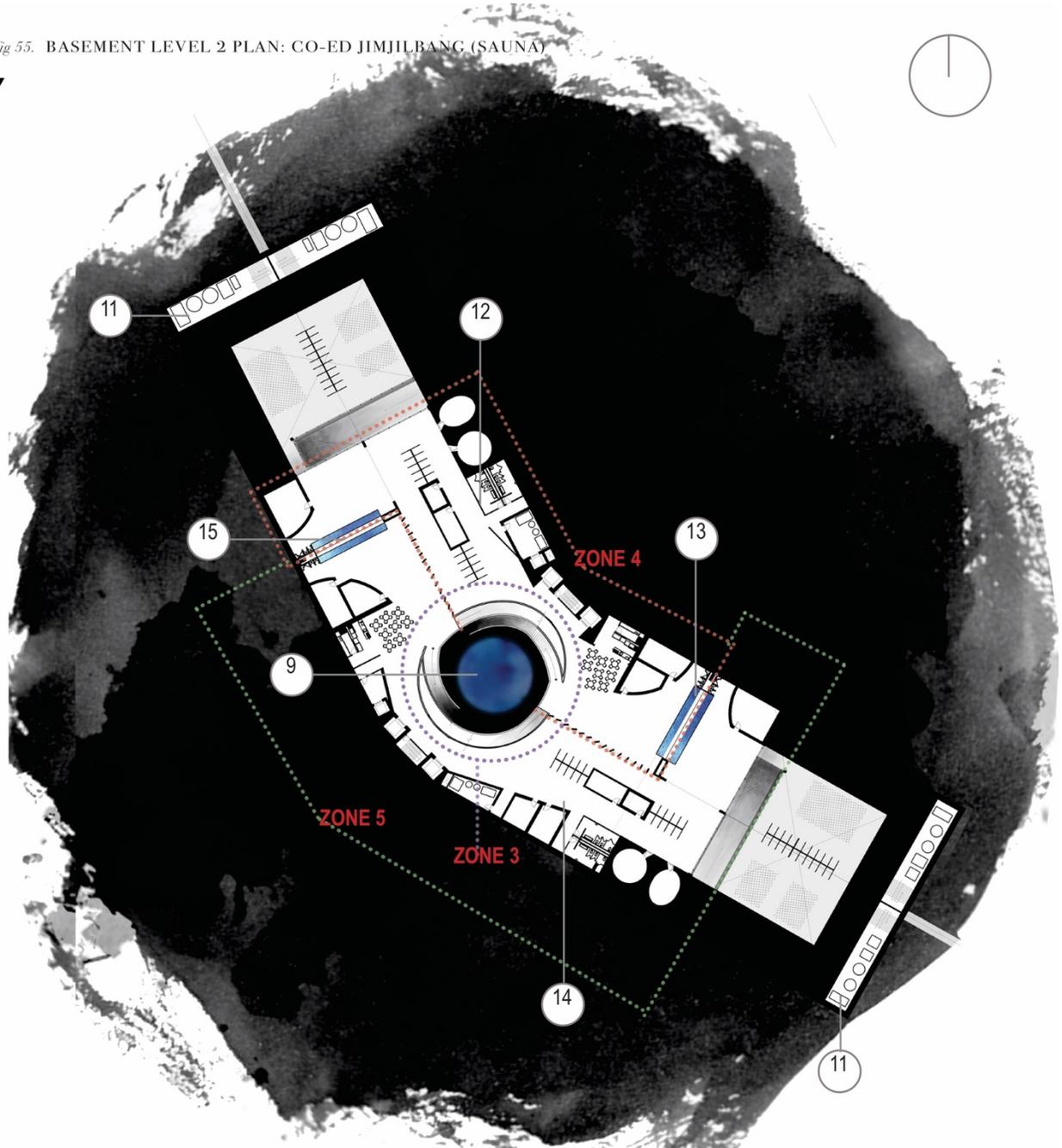
ZONE 2

- 6a. NORTH KOREAN MENS' MOGYUKTANG
- 6b. NORTH KOREAN MENS' CHANGING ROOM
- 6c. NORTH KOREAN MENS' CHECK IN
- 7a-7c. SOUTH KOREAN MENS'

ZONE 3

- 9. DOUBLE HELIX RAMP (STEPS FOR B1-B2)
- 10. CIRCULATION (Refer to fig 42.)
- 11. MECHANICAL

fig 55. BASEMENT LEVEL 2 PLAN: CO-ED JIMJILBANG (SAUNA)



ZONE 3
9. DOUBLE HELIX RAMP
11. MECHANICAL

ZONE 4
12. NORTH KOREAN CO-ED JIMJILBANG
13. INTERACTION ZONE

ZONE 5
14. SOUTH KOREAN CO-ED JIMJILBANG
15. INTERACTION ZONE

fig 56. BASEMENT LEVEL 3 PLAN: CO-ED SAUNA



fig 57. BASEMENT LEVEL 4 PLAN: REUNIFICATION LEVEL

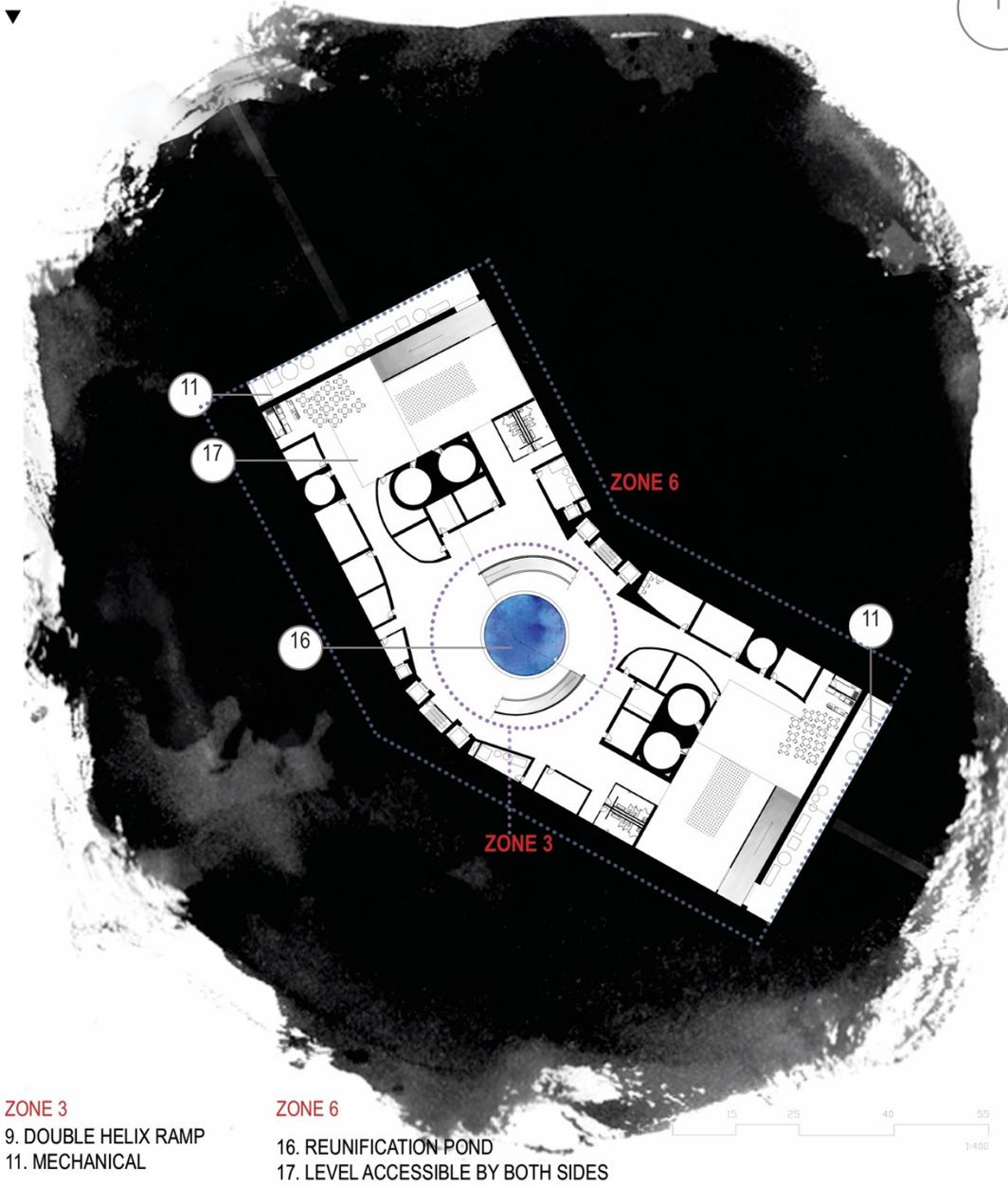
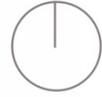
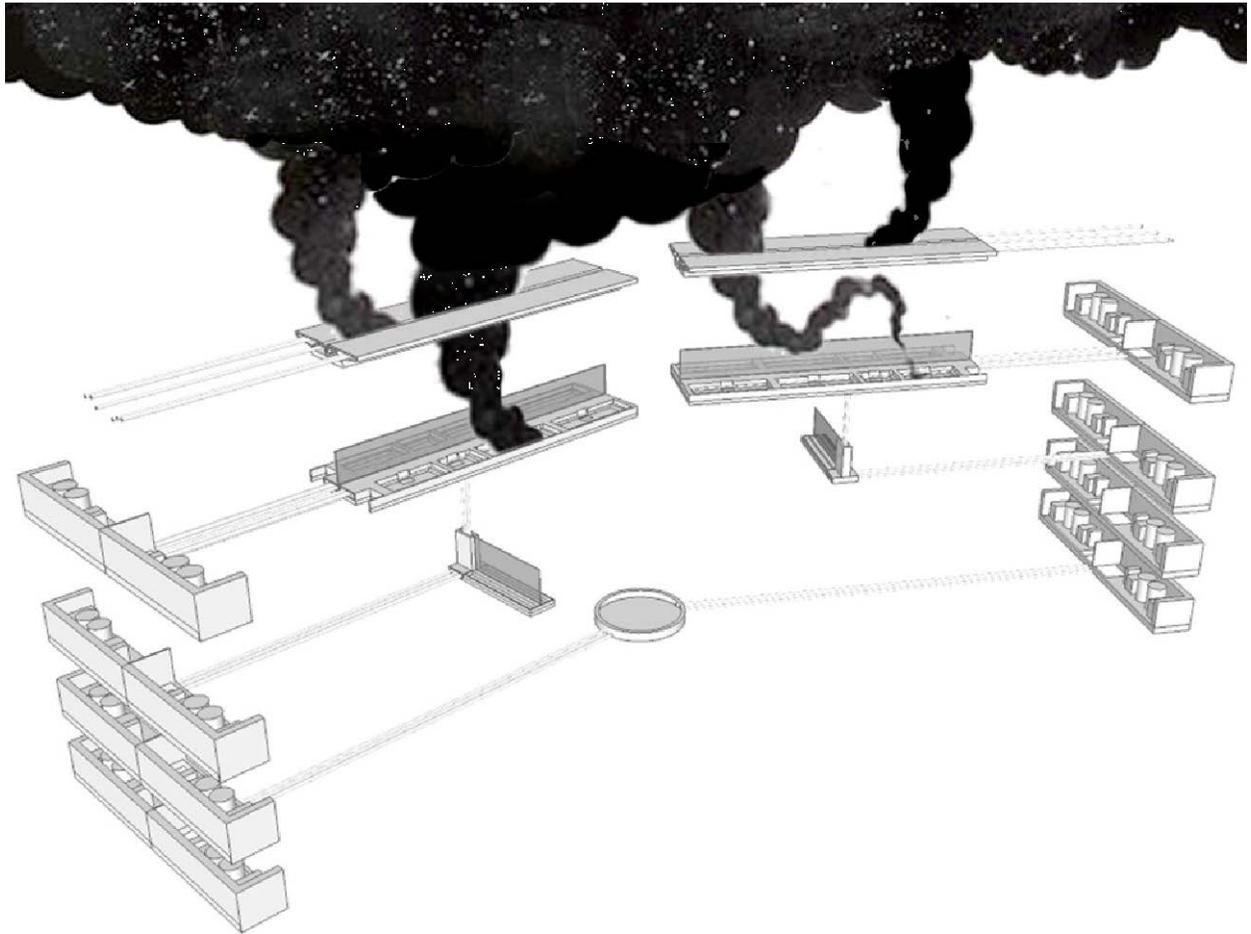
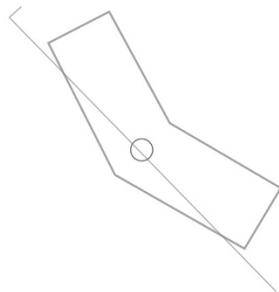
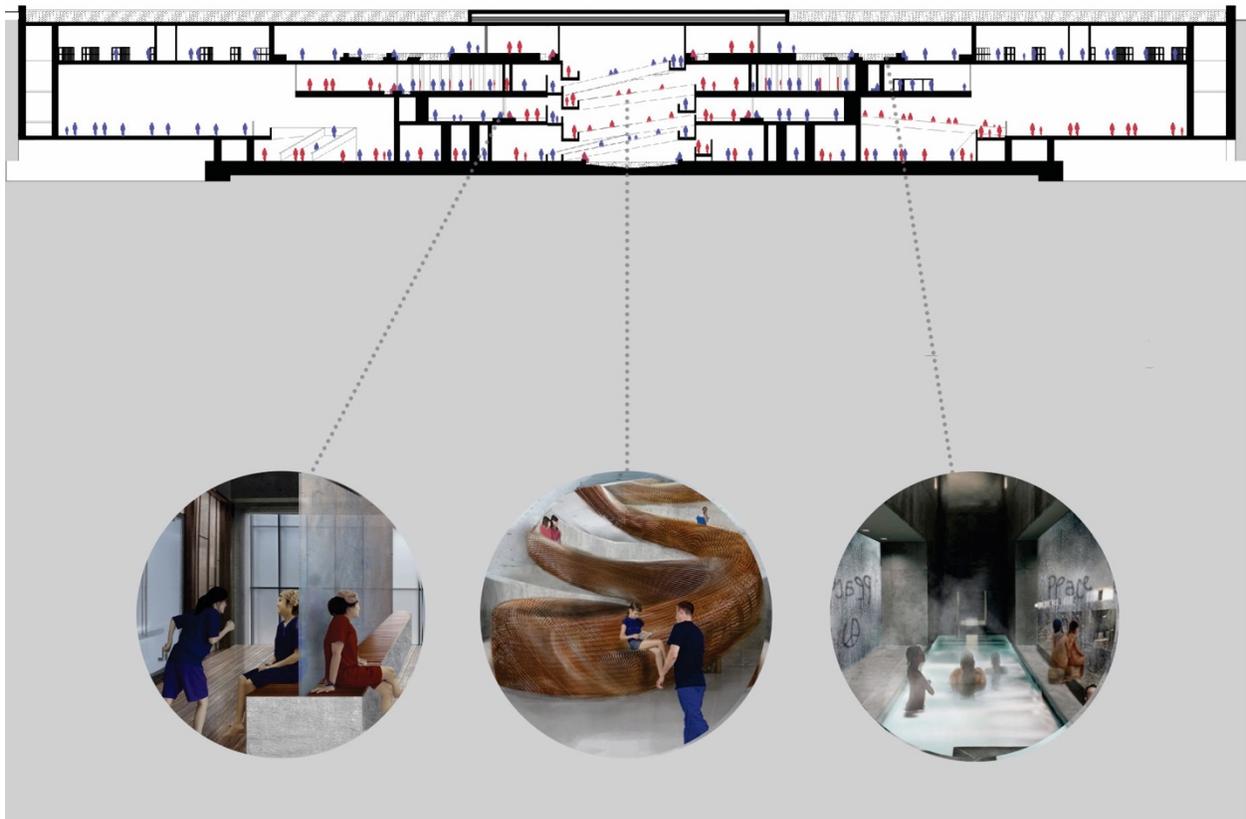


fig58. WATER CIRCULATION DIAGRAM:
Water used for bathing is used as white vapor that indicates peace.





▲
fig 59. CROSS SECTION

CONCLUSION

Sennett's three concepts as outlined in his essay, *The Open city*, are used to analyze the environment of the DMZ and also used as a design strategy for the proposed Jimjilbang Observatory. The DMZ is a physical manifestation of the aggression and conflict between the two countries, as well as being host to tourists from all over the world who come to experience the most heavily armed demilitarized zone in the world. The presence of tourists redefines the impenetrable perimeter of the DMZ as an *ambiguous edge*, where tourists and military are able to occupy this zone together.

Prescribed spaces are influenced by the increasing presence of tourists in order to preserve and identify tourist attractions. These sites inspire changes to the landscape, as seen by the development of 'objects' of tourism which are products of the *incomplete form* of the DMZ tourism landscape. The Jimjilbang Observatory responds to the DMZ's *unresolved narrative* by providing the walls that divide the two sides in the building to be methods of engagement with the other side. The intention of the space is to create awareness of the other- that someone, another human, is behind the walls of the *mokyuktang*; that someone is also using the sauna elsewhere in the building; that someone is also wondering what you, their someone, is doing now.

An interpretation of the present border condition of the DMZ is immortalized within the building; with an "open" space that awaits the opportunities of the future.

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Figure 38: “A Look at Korea’s Culture From the Bathhouse”, accessed November 8th 2016, https://www.nytimes.com/2014/02/09/travel/a-look-at-koreas-culture-from-the-bathhouse.html?_r=0

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Figure 40: “10 Steps to Enjoy a Bath at jimjilbang in Seoul, South Korea”, accessed November 9th 2016, <http://seektheworld.com/bath-seoul-south-korea/>

Figure 41: “Jimjilbang (Heated bath room) experience”, accessed November 9th 2016, <https://chrisandmel01.wordpress.com/2013/11/12/jimjilbang-heated-bath-room-experience/>

Figure 42: Image by Owner

Figure 43: Image by Owner

Figure 44: Image by Owner

Figure 45: Image by Owner

Figure 46: Image by Owner

Figure 47: Image by Owner

Figure 48: Image by Owner

Figure 49: Image by Owner

Figure 50: Image by Owner

Figure 51: Image by Owner

Figure 52: Image by Owner

Figure 53: Image by Owner

Figure 54: Image by Owner

Figure 55: Image by Owner

Figure 56: Image by Owner

Figure 57: Image by Owner

Figure 58: Image by Owner

Figure 59: Image by Owner

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