

AN INFRASTRUCTURE
OF FRAGMENTS

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0 . A B S T R A C T

At the center of the inner workings of a city lies its all-encompassing essence that characterizes the nature of the connection people harbor with it. Seeing that people are intrinsic to cities, we advance that the individual relationships people nurture with a city is what constitutes its meaning. In a time where urban growth is too often dissociated with what holds meaning in the urban context; we propose to focus upon that which holds a connection potential to the spirit of the Mile End and Rosemont Neighborhoods of Montreal. With an urban apparatus superimposed on the Van Horne overpass, we draw a journey meant to involve the dweller in the stories held within the area, with the intention of setting a direction in which to ground future developments.

0 . 1 A C K N O W L E D G E M E N T S

I would like to personally thank the Azrieli School of Architecture & Urbanism for shaping my incredible and irreversible journey into the world of Architecture, as well as my advisor Inderbir Singh Riar who helped me navigate my thesis. I would also like to extend my sincere gratitude to my parents for their continuing support throughout my education and to my grandmother, May, for teaching me English. I am grateful for the many friends I have made along the way, whom share the delights as well as the scars inculcated by the discipline we find ourselves bound to. Finally, I would like to thank Hugo Latreille, my partner in and out of Architecture, for his invaluable love, support and insight throughout the process and beyond.

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1 . 0 P R O L O G U E | M E A N I N G

If we are to alter the fibers of a city, we cannot do so without raising the question of meaning. Even independently from our awareness, the parts of a city exist within an entity whether they are coherent or incoherent with one another. It would be an understatement to say that interfering with the content of its parts would have an effect on the meaning of the whole. Conducting actions within a city's layers heedless of its meaning can lead to a dissolution of its essence; and, however, we would be mistaken to venture that a city left alone would be anything at all.

No matter how historically relevant or architecturally articulated, a city carries no worth without people. Cities are born out of people's desires to surpass their basic needs; they answer to questions other than that of survival. They are the birthplace of Humanity and for that reason people and cities cannot exist in contexts apart from one another. The avenue of people shaping their meaning has been explored far and wide in architecture dissertations, including de Certeau's inquiry into the subconscious of everyday life. De Certeau links the city's meaning to people's unconscious meanderings, where people write its fleeting storyline with the geographical position of their steps on the chaotic map of their daily lives. Everyone plays a part in the story of the city, as long as they do so without knowing and simultaneously. «It takes a single city to

provide the stimulus, but it requires a multitude of people -- all unaware of their role in the creation of the city -- to provide the meaning »¹. In joining people's daily activity and the ongoing "urban text", he attributes meaning to walking, if only temporarily. In his work, de Certeau only links people and the meaning of a place for the sole moment that they are within it, after which it will disappear to be replaced by the next passerby's traces. Even though people's movements and activity within a city are intrinsic to its meaning, this is where de Certeau's point of view and the one we explore diverge. Rather than an unconscious and fleeting creation, we understand the meaning of the city as being present within every individual that harbors a relationship with its entity, shaping its essence. The more conscious of the bond they share with the city, the more meaning the city holds; and together with the network of other individuals, they edify, nurture and build the essence of their relationship throughout their lifetime. While the personal meaning of the city fades along with the life of its vessel, the vestiges of their relationship left behind in three dimensional form shape the city fabric, themselves being infused with meaning. Such objects form the city's essence, as long as the embodied

1 Michel De. Certeau and Steven Rendall, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984).

personal relationship within it remains perceivable. It is apparent that the stronger the relationship people have with a place, the more meaning it possesses. Religious sites, for example, could be at once historically relevant and without meaning if they did not stir any movement within people's inner lives. The same seems to happen when holy buildings are secularized, as they transition from a position of personal devotion and salvation to suddenly take on the lonely role of architectural edifice.

2 . 0 I N T R O D U C T I O N

In a time of rapid development, growth and change unapologetically transform cities while rarely considering the meaning of place. The responsibility new developments have towards the city is crucial in honoring, and also shaping its meaning. Anything other than intending to add to the story of a city can start a dissolve of its essence; and tapping into what brings human and city together is the key to keep building on it. The intention of this thesis is to set a direction for future developments in the “Mile End” of the City of Montreal to adhere to and build onto the meaning of the neighborhood, and ultimately that of the city. Montreal is a powerfully magnetic city that resonates strongly with a vast cultural sample of people. It holds meaning to its citizens and visitors from all over the world, which is a strong indicator of the presence of its essence. As an ode to the city, as well as important cities all over the world; we present an effort to build upon which that creates such arresting relationships within ourselves. We are proposing an urban infrastructure that prompts an emotional engagement, connecting people to their environment on a situational and experiential level. The effect of the intervention will establish a direction for the gradual and imminent developments affecting the area, guiding them along the intention that has been set forth. Consequently, urban growth can enrich the connection between

people and their neighborhood, staying engaged in the creation of the meaning of their city. To do so, we will explore methods of engaging with a place, and how the fragment is the truest part of a city's narrative - a mosaic city, Montreal is described by its infinite fragments that all play a substantial part in its story, without ever being described by any particular one. The use of the notion of the fragment will enable the connection between person and place as they journey through the neighborhood on the paths offered by the infrastructure. The proposed project is an urban apparatus that connects key places in the site to each other, as well as to the person navigating it. The infrastructure relies on the experience of walking throughout, using it as the key connector between people and place. To that effect, a pedestrian pathway designed to move the strollers and cyclists along the journey is hung from an existing concrete overpass that currently splits the site into dissociated factions. Starting at the foot of the striking Van Horne Warehouse, which is currently used as an underwhelming file depot, the path extends all the way to Blvd Rosemont in the adjoined neighborhood. Along its course, the path offers an immersion into a selection of key places within the neighborhood; emerging from a series of four nodes that are designed to integrate the essence of the area into the experience of the urban stroll. The dweller

embarking on the proposed urban apparatus is presented with the choice of staying on the main path, in which case it winds through the nodes without ever taking them to ground where the featured fragments of the site are situated; or can, as the alternative, choose to stray from the main path and explore the nodes. In the last scenario, the dweller can either remain onto the nodes and keep going on the complete path on an immersive journey, or they can disembark the apparatus and be on their way to their destination within the neighborhood. In any of those cases, the dweller is presented with a multitude of paths, all of which establish a connection with the neighborhood's fragment stories, and which were not presented as a possibility in the present-day situation. The first node holds two stories, being on the theme of arrival and of the Van Horne warehouse itself. Providing much needed connection between the warehouse and its immediate surroundings, the proposed apparatus will allow for pedestrian interaction and traffic flow to the building, inserting it into the dialog of the neighborhood once more. Further down the path, the second node takes the dweller below the bridge, where it tells the story of Montreal's concrete megastructures, and the experience of inhabiting the spaces created by them. The third node is highlighting le Champ des Possibles, an unexpected strip of wilderness in an otherwise industrial



figure 1: Barren Stroll
source: Izza Lapalice



figure 2: Dissociated Planes
source: Izza Lapalice



figure 3: Defining Boundaries
source: Izza Lapalice



figure 4: Uninterrupted
source: Izza Lapalice





figure 5: Isolated inlet
source: Izzy Lapalice

and urban neighborhood. The particular attachment the friends, or Amis du Champ des Possibles, have with the patch of land makes this node a weighty fragment within the story of the neighborhood. The fourth fragment speaks of the lumberyards. Formerly one of the biggest industrial areas of the region, Rosemont is now a densely populated family oriented neighborhood of the city that barely retains some of its original activities. Encapsulated in this node is also something that speaks of a story greater than that of the neighborhood or the city, but rather of the identity of the entire province and of French Canada. Woodworking is an omnipresent part of French Canadian culture, being brought from France with the arrival of the New World pioneers to extend the fine crafts tradition of the motherland. L'École d'Ébénisterie de Montréal is in fact situated nearby and the fourth node will integrate its heritage within its identity via a variance in material palette as well as an exhibition space for some of the school's work. Stretching over more than half a kilometer, the impact of the sizeable infrastructure on the identity of the neighborhood is meant to inform, over time, upcoming developments affecting the area of a direction upon which to focus; one that appeals for a reconnection with the meaning of their city.

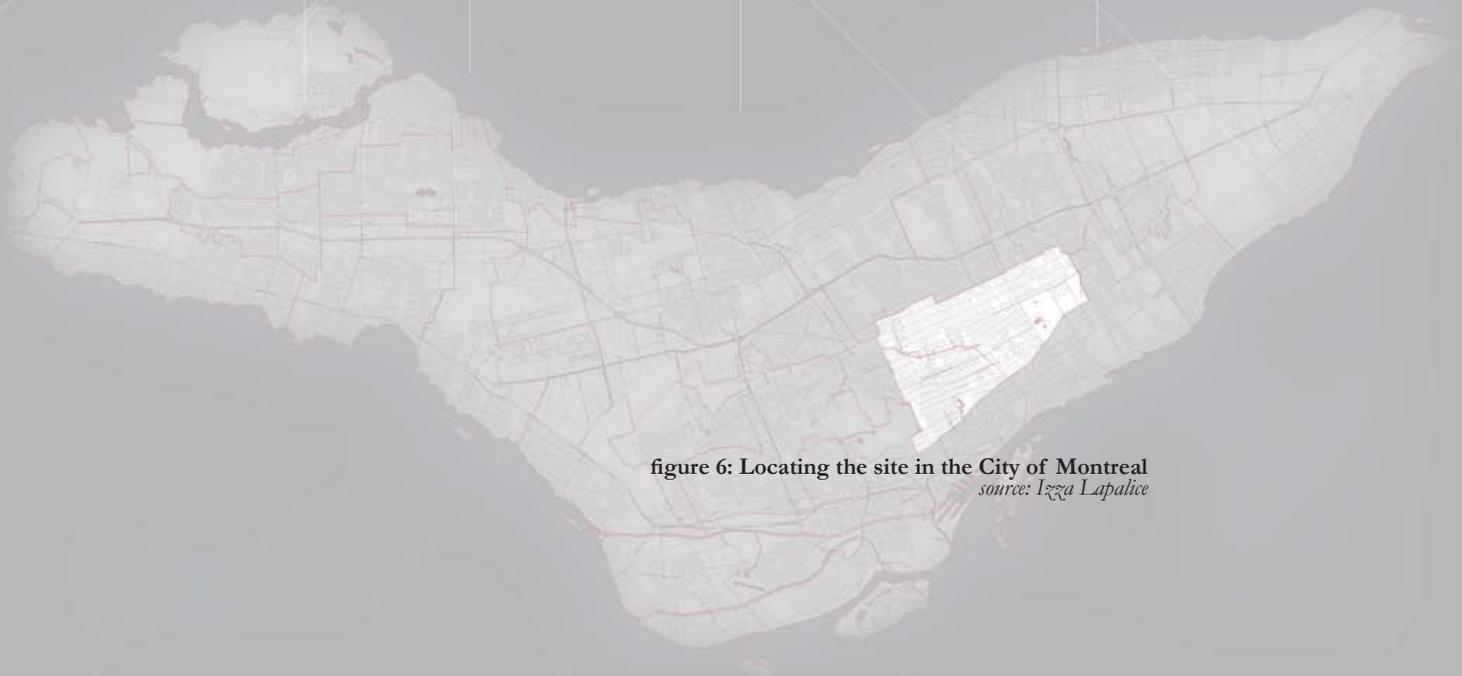
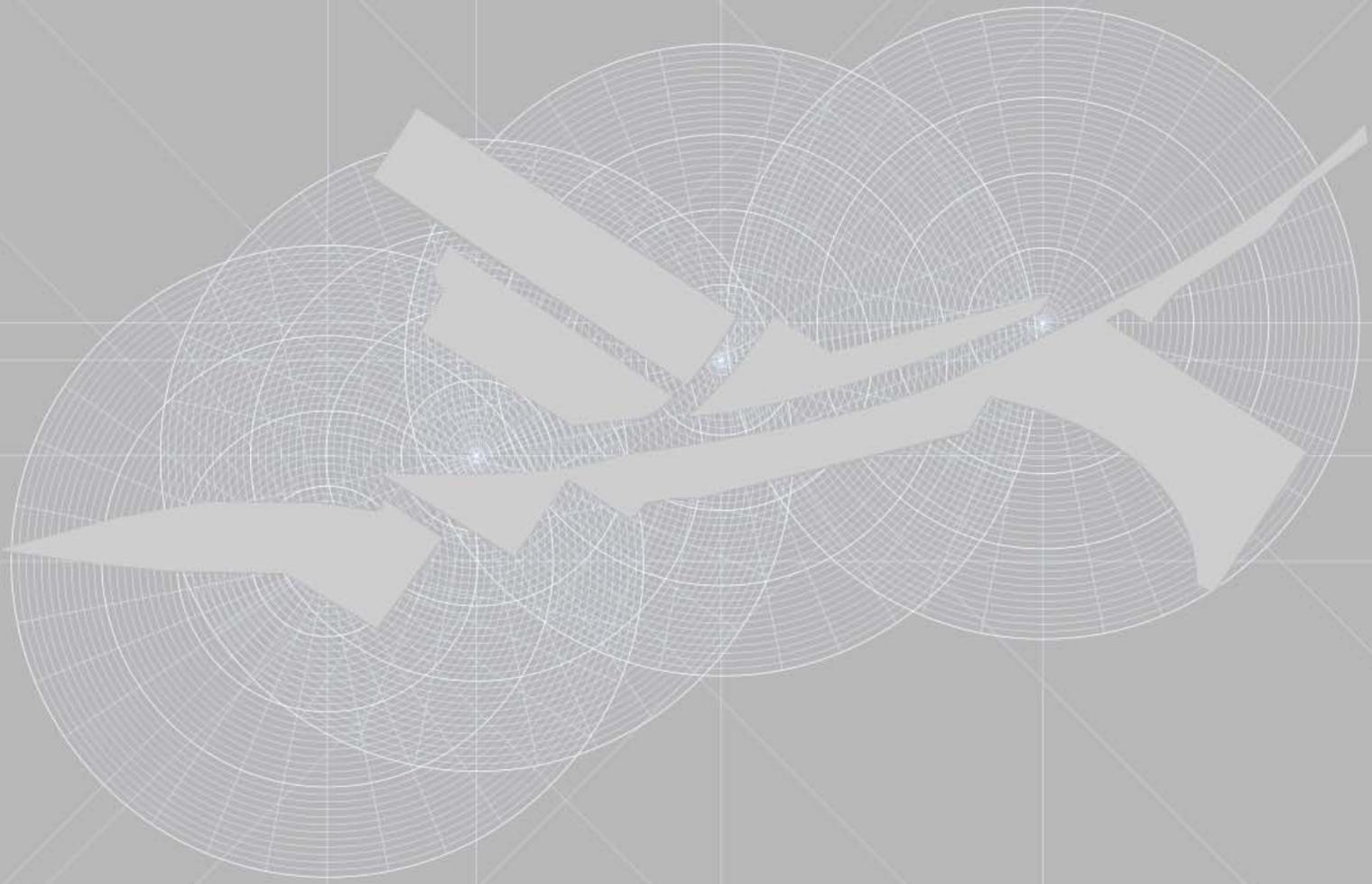


figure 6: Locating the site in the City of Montreal
source: Izzy Lapalice

2.1 READY, STEADY, GO!

Setting a direction that endorses a lasting transformation within a neighborhood can be done simply if it resonates with people and sets a narrative that suits the city perfectly through innovation and ingenious design work. An example of an effective intervention within a problematic neighborhood from an urban perspective is Ready. Steady. Go! , An urban project by the Austrian firm Janser Castorina that carries a strong impact even with minimal resources. The 750m-long installation created by Sandra Janser and Elisabeth Koller on the Jakoministraße and Klosterwiesgasse was conceived as a response to the competition Design month Graz 2010 that “called for a catalyst for the resettlement”² of the Jakomini district of Graz, Austria. The Department of Economic and Tourism Development and the City Management of Graz collaborated with Creative Industries Styria to found an urban development program in the Jakomini district of the Unesco City of Design. Previously a suburban zone, the district was formed by a number of houses erected by Baron Caspar Andreas von Jakomini in the eighteenth Century³.

2 Irina Vinnitskaya, "Ready. Steady. Go." / Sandra Janser and Elisabeth Koller," ArchDaily, 2010, , accessed July 8, 2016, <http://www.archdaily.com/98794/ready-steady-go-sandra-janser-and-elisabeth-koller>.

3 By Marie SENG, "Pilotprojekt Jakomini viertel – Graz," Human Cities, January 1, 2014, , accessed July 10, 2016, <http://humancities.eu/casestudies/pilotprojekt-jakomini-viertel-graz/>.

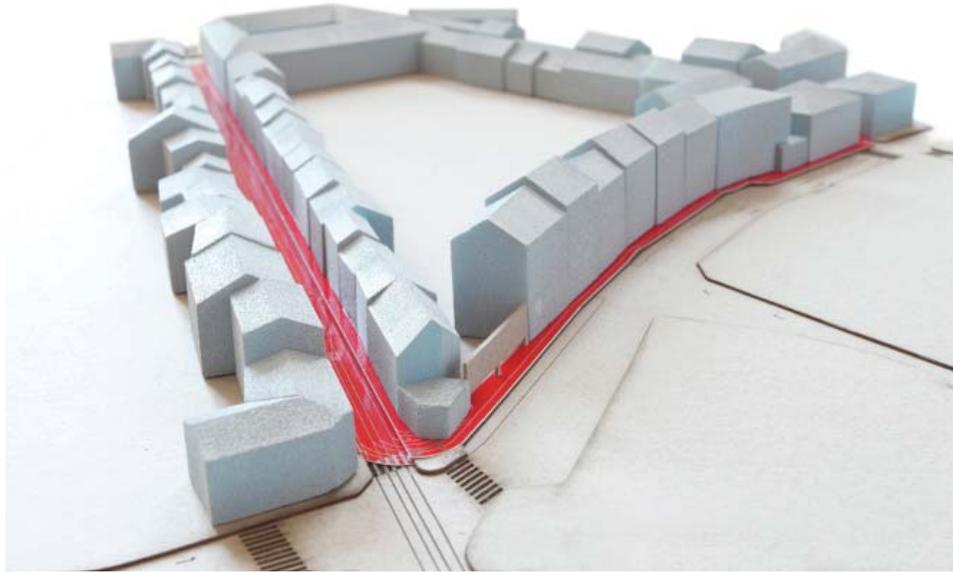


figure 7: Track Model
source: janser-castorina.at



figure 8: Painted Streets
source: janser-castorina.at

The constructions featured a workshop area at the ground level with superimposed living quarters, providing Jakoministraße, Schönaugasse and Klosterwiesgasse streets with services and a certain economic ease without ever being of strictly commercial nature. The Jakomini district has since been dwindling down in the past decade, allegedly affected by strong traffic noise, lack of atmosphere, and inadequate pedestrian amenities⁴. Featuring vacant spaces and an un-motivating character, the department for tourism and economics attempted to reanimate the Jakomini district with a new positive identity and a creative focus. With the launch of the design competition, Janser Castorina Architektur responded with a manoeuver that metamorphosed the dynamic of the area overnight. In an attempt to visually ground the area within a strong narrative, the architects transformed the defining streets of the district into a 750 meter long red running track around the neighborhood. In the words of the architects, the main idea for the proposal was the design of a clearly readable and positive identity. In a “kind of a visual exceptional circumstance”⁵, the running track is implanted in a city context that exclusively belonged

4 Sandra Janser, "Ready. Steady. Go! -," Janser Castorina, September 1, 2010, , accessed June 2, 2016, <http://www.janser-castorina.at/projekt01/index.php?idcatside=11>.

5 Ibid.

to the realm of cars and public transportation. Not only did this reversal warrant pedestrians with the right to inhabit the street, immediately revitalizing the area, it also anchored the neighborhood within a visual frame of reference. Aside from enjoying international recognition overnight, the area is now boasting with activity and commerce as a result of the intervention, succeeding in every aspect of the city's original intent of revitalization with nothing but paint and a strong design narrative involving pedestrian interaction. Now imbued with a new sense of identity, the neighborhood will less than likely stray from its convincing creative and interactive narrative that will inform its growth for times to come.



figure 9: Urban Track Aerial
source: janset-castorina.at

3 . 0 M E A N I N G O F P L A C E

The relationship between a place and an individual is susceptible to the way we navigate our environment. Strolling, either by walking or by bicycle, for example; enables a connection between a person and their surroundings. Whether this slower method of displacement is performed for the pretext of an activity or other less practical, but nonetheless important endeavours; it allows for an immersion within the context of a place that would otherwise barely or not at all happen in a vehicle. Roads are built for transit, while the rest of the walk-able space is connected to the entirety of the activity within a city. A sense of place, then, is best established when a person is on foot. Baudelaire's flaneur had as sole purpose to take in the flavour of the city and its occupants, a phenomenon he claimed possible with the creation of the modern city. However, the audacious claim does not eclipse the presence of enchantingly beautiful constructions throughout history, suggesting people revelled in the experience of beautiful cities long before Baudelaire laid pen to paper. Cities in China and Greece, as well as the Roman Empire boasted architectural marvels enriching the experience of those who would dwell within. We know of the transformative powers unfathomable landscapes and winding traveling roads that affected travelers and dwellers since they were able to recount their stories in writing form. The relationship



"The act of walking is the act of reflecting. The reflections of the street become fragments of an inner mirror - what seems like a logical linear collection of stones, asphalt and street signs is deconstructed through the mind: The outside is a troubled sea of disconnections, a loud mosaic of clashing colours and asymmetric alienations. Continuously walking, farther down the street, an inner conversation forms and aims to tame the fear, creating a perfect calm and steady symmetry as an antipole to the outer world."

-Ricarda Messner
Flaneur Magazine Iss. 3

figure 10: A Snowy Stroll
source: Flaneur Magazine Iss. 3

between people and places weave the essence of the entity of the city. The entity, as explained by Aldo Rossi, governs the relationship between a certain specific location and the buildings that are in it. The site, in this context, is understood as a 'situation', integral to inform its superimposed constructions. Guiding this relationship is the Genius Loci, historically a local divinity that "presided over all that was to unfold in"⁶ the site. In this theory, points of interest identified as Loci (locus), can exist in a greater universal space in which the Genius Loci itself exists. The Locus "emphasizes the conditions and qualities within undifferentiated space which are necessary for understanding an urban artifact."⁷ . In reference to Montreal, the proposed urban apparatus can function as the assembly of Loci, while the Genius Loci would be the essence of the city; the distinct personality that the buildings relate to, which have, in turn, a role to play in our relationship with the city and its Genius Loci. The Genius Loci is the presence we are trying to isolate and support with individual fragment stories so the future developments can be imbued with it, provoking a meaningful growth in relation to the city rather than

6 Aldo Rossi, *The Architecture of the City* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1982).

7 *Ibid*

a disconnected one. This presence is too subtle to identify, as the richness contained in a city is as unquantifiable as it is endless, so we rather turn to fragments to reference the Genius Loci, truer in their incompleteness than any finite description. A pointer, rather than a word, is more fitting to embody the nature of the essence of a city. A selection of stories and artifacts within the project will serve to identify and inform the Genius Loci, serving as enlightening fragments in the unfolding meaning of the neighborhood.

3.1 A LETTER

Before we met, I had heard of you. You were the infamous one, the loud popular one amidst a quiet, quaint, and often simple crowd. You refuse to blend in, and people love to brag about knowing you, of having been brushed by your immensity; making them feel a little bit less small and like they falsely belong. Some feel the twinge of their triggers unleashed by your unabashed sense of self, of how unapologetic you are. Those are cruel with their words, they wish you crushed; they wish you wouldn't look so radiant with all your sores. Those may be led by anger, but they are closer to knowing you than the ones who look to brighten their faintness with your limelight. You have been through lifetimes of trials, and when I got to know you it became clear you are not the one they sing about. Later, I would come to know that is exactly why I love you. The first time we met, I was young and attracted by your flames. I went to you seeking the thrill I was promised, and got caught in the web you spin to strangers like me. I was envious of those who seemed to belong with you, how they walked around, worthy of the real you I was not able to see. Your companionship seemed to grant them a pass to a parallel universe, unattainable and rich beyond measure.

I will always remember when we truly met. I was lost and far away from your gilded cathedrals and busy intersections. Time had stopped, and the small details livened the every day scenery. Wonder spawned from the most unexpected places; it flowed through the smoky delicatessen that had stood the test of time, faithful as a soldier; it stood behind a twisted iron staircase, and beamed like the sun on a stained "dépanneur" window. I marveled at how beautiful you are, so much so that a wandering admirer decorated one of your corners in vibrant neon graffiti, and how the pigeons love to coo huddled in your cornices. Children's games reverberate in alleyways harder and darker than I am accustomed to. Somber-clad passerby's hurry in hushed steps to their familiar dens. Then, at the end of a tired street, the horizon splits open and you inspire my heart once more. Silence. I had finally realized I had needed to silence my false expectations, my own shortcomings and fabrications. I needed to listen, and you would speak to me. Incessantly, you would never stop coming up with things to say; you are alive. And that is exactly why I love you.

-A love letter to Montreal



How unapologetic you are
source: : tefyanavk.wordpress.com



They wish you wouldn't look so radiant with
all your sores
source: Izga Lapalica



They are closer to know
who look to brighten

source:



Wonder spawned from the most unexpected
places
source: Izga Lapalica



Alleyways harder and darker than I am
accustomed to
source: synapticism.com



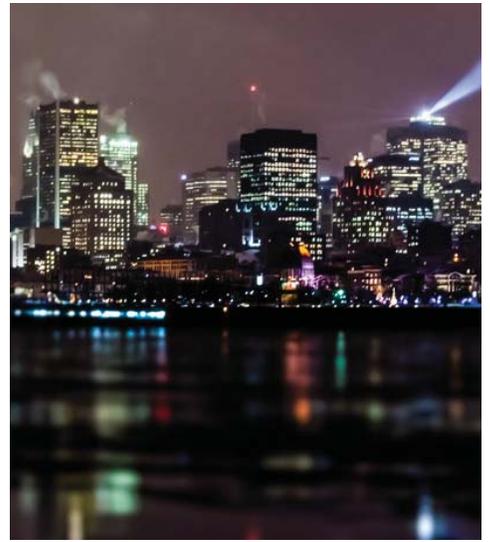
The horizon splits of



...ing you than the ones
...their faitness with your
...limelight
...source: *Flaneur Magazine* Iss. 3



You are not the one they sing about
source: Le-Nomade.com



Got caught in the web you spin to strangers
...like me
source: google.com / images



...pen and you inspire my
...heart once more
source: Izza Lapalice



Incessantly, you would never stop coming up
...with things to say
source: google.com / images

4 . 0 THE SITE SITUATION

The project unfolds at the edge of where three neighborhoods border in Montreal. The railway that serpents beneath the proposed infrastructure navigates the Plateau Mont-Royal, Outremont and Rosemont la Petite-Patrie. These neighborhoods could not be more different from one another, and unifying them along a pedestrian journey promises a future to build on rich with cultural exchange.

Rosemont sees its debuts as a small and quiet town named Côte-de-la-Visitation on the outskirts of the North end of the island of Montreal. The start of the area's characteristic industrial nature first develops with the exploitation of Montreal's notorious grey stone quarries in the late eighteenth century, followed by another chaotic burst of growth with the arrival of the tramway in 1893 and a massive immigration wave. With easy access to transportation, the quarter stays well connected to the industries, its main supporters. The sector is then so diverse that seven churches of different faiths got built in fifteen years, a testament to its woven cultural population constituted of the French working class and immigrants. The start of the twentieth century sees Rosemont's commercial activity develop rapidly on Saint-Hubert and the Saint-Laurent Blvd as well as industrial activity developing along the railway tracks. Among the industries located in the area are the lumberyards of



figure 11: Van Horne Overpass
source: Izzy Lapalice

Villeneuve & Cie, the municipal workshops, Montreal Street Railways depots, and Coca-Cola. Today, the industrial activity has dwindled down with the decreasing activity of the Canadian Pacific railway and led the way for other sectors of commerce to spread in the area. The municipal workshops, including a campus spreading over 40 000 square meters, have been vacant for over a decade and are bound to an urban renewal plan⁸ through which the City aims to incorporate greenery, mixed and low-income housing within the area. The survivors of the industrial era that has forged the neighborhood are holding on amongst dilapidated brick warehouses overlooking the railway and waiting on their impending makeovers as residential and office buildings. The Villeneuve & Cie lumber yards that lay next to the train tracks next to the Montreal Street Railways depots that now house STM (Société de Transport de Montréal) are some of the few reminders that form an industrial identity that the sector of Rosemont has left behind. The City's department of urban planning does not seem keen on including these ghosts from the past in the current growth plans it has for the future of the neighbourhood, leaving no option

8 Ville Montreal, "Le Projet De Mise En Valeur Du Si Te Des Ateliers Municipaux Rosemont," Direction De L'aménagement Urbain Et Des Services Aux Entreprises De L'arrondissement De Rosemont - La Petite-Patrie, 2007, , 2007, accessed April 6, 2016, http://ville.montreal.qc.ca/pls/portal/docs/page/arrond_rpp_fr/media/documents/anciens_ateliers_municipaux_rosemont.pdf.

for its residents to brush with the industrial reality of the area in their daily existence.

Dominantly adopted by the Anglophone population of Montreal, Outremont found its humble origins pre-dating the French colons as the natives of the land roamed the roads that would become Côte Sainte-Catherine⁹. As the French moved into the land, they organized farmland along a system that covered most of what became Outremont, characterizing the area as agricultural until the nineteenth century when the charms of the land called to predominantly Anglophone families. At that point, most families travel to the area on leisure and still resided outside of the sector - the real foundations of the neighbourhood we know today date to the twentieth century, when a large portion of the buildings was erected by a group of architects and promoters that built whole street segments at a time¹⁰, giving a sense of cohesion and order to sector. The area's fabric is mainly composed of residential and institutional establishments, which are often

9 Ville Montreal, "Aire De Paysage," PatriArch, February 1, 2003, , February 2, 2003, accessed April 9, 2016.

10 Ibid.

religious in origin, while the commercial activity of the area is limited to Laurier, Bernard and Outremont avenues. The educational, religious and cultural establishment that dot the stone-clad cityscape are crowned by the Convent Designed by the architects Louis-Alphonse Venne and Dalbé Viau¹¹ and funded by the sisters of Saints-Noms-de-Jésus-et-de-Marie on the side of Mont-Royal. Later, institutional establishments, most of which are now owned by the University of Montreal, were funded by the sisters whom parceled their land to foster their public endeavours and continue to set the tone of Outremont today.

Just like the other sectors, The Plateau Mont-Royal found its origins on the outskirts of the fortifications of the City of Montreal. In 1717, the peripheral growth towards the north of the island was facilitated by the construction of the Grand Chemin du Roy¹² (later to become St-Laurent Blvd.), meaning the great King's road, and was meant to enable a connection between the new

11 Ville Montreal, "Viau Et Venne," Viau Et Venne | Le Site Officiel Du Mont-Royal, , accessed May 22, 2016, <http://www1.ville.montreal.qc.ca/siteofficieldumontroyal/concepteur/viau-venne>.

12 Yves Desjardins, "Chapitre 2 : De La Tannerie Des Bélair Au Village De Côte-Saint-Louis 4," Chapitre 2 : De La Tannerie Des Bélair Au Village De Côte-Saint-Louis – Mémoire Du Mile End, February 20, 2014, , accessed June 16, 2016, <http://memoire.mile-end.qc.ca/fr/chapitre-2-de-la-tannerie-des-belair-au-village-de-cote-saint-louis/>.

farms and the city. Towards the end of the Century in 1792, the City of Montreal decides to expand the limits of the city¹³, where the Mont-Royal becomes one of its markers to the north. Towards the mid Nineteenth Century, the area around Henri-Julien and Mont-Royal streets grows in population as families get settled in to capitalize on the exploitation of Grey Stone quarries. From that activity, the town of Coteau-Saint-Louis was created, adjoined by the tanneries already established in the area. In 1863, a proposal made by the municipal council suggests to transform the Mont-Royal into a public park takes flight, leading the City to buy out land from their owners and inaugurate the park in 1876¹⁴. At approximately the same time, the railway that passes alongside the stone quarries initiates the development of the village of Saint-Louis-du-Mile-End¹⁵, the term Mile-End referencing the emplacement of the village at the periphery of the city. Along with the industrialization of the city, European immigrants come to Montreal pursuing the opportunities offered by the effervescing city, and many favour St-Laurent Street to establish their commerce. The street displays an array of cultures along its North-South

13 Michèle Benoit and Roger Gratton, *Pignon Sur Rue: Les Quartiers De Montréal* (Montréal: Guérin, 1991).

14 Ibid.

15 Ibid.



figure 12: Tammy the Florist
source: *Flaneur Magazine* Iss. 3

axis¹⁶, painting the lively and original character of St-Laurent Blvd. A dividing marker in the city, St-Laurent Blvd. marks the separation of the of the areas of the city, between the Anglophone and francophone, and any street crossing its axis are now annotated as 'East' or 'West'¹⁷.

Reflecting the immigration trend, the highly densely populated Plateau-Mont-Royal features a number of religious institutions that occupy the area, amongst which are protestant temples and synagogues. The demography of the Plateau further varies when the University of Montreal moves its location to the Mont-Royal in 1920¹⁸, provoking a dissolution of the bourgeoisie whom favoured other areas of the city that were less threateningly colourful. Since the end of the Second World War, the Plateau-Mont-Royal continues to be the home of ethnic communities at their arrival in the Country¹⁹. Having established their business quarter on St-Laurent Blvd., the Jewish community leave to find a home in Outremont and Côte-des-Neiges; while the Greek, the Portuguese, and the

16 "Boulevard Saint-Laurent, Montreal," Boulevard Saint-Laurent, , accessed June 9, 2016, http://www.imtl.org/rue_montreal.php?rue=-Saint-Laurent.

17 Ibid.

18 Michèle Benoit and Roger Gratton, *Pignon Sur Rue: Les Quartiers De Montréal* (Montréal: Guérin, 1991).

19 Ibid.



figure 13: Intersecting planes
source: Izga Lapalice

Vietnamese communities all stay in the area, bringing along with them important aspects from their countries of origin that enliven the cultural mosaic of the Plateau. Since then, the Plateau proudly boasts a vibrant, intellectual and artistic community that attracts students, artist and professionals alike; all sensing the endless possibilities that the rich and unshakable cultural tapestry the sector seems rooted into.

The Mile-End, fuelled by the effervescence of the Plateau Mont-Royal, took on an identity of its own. In a way, the industrial nature dating from the origins of the area counterbalanced, for a while, the Outremont effluxes trickling down into the neighbourhood. A certain sense of freedom seems to still roam vaguely along the train tracks, where buildings left alone seem to state, in their un-manicured appearance, that places in the city still can break free from the pressure belonging to foiling the urban fabric within an all-encompassing layer of presentation. The insecurity camouflaged behind many hasty urban renewal plans can infiltrate a neighbourhood as they proclaim to be the antidote to the lack of value it holds, throwing a disguise as a solution that answers to a trend and which in no way satisfies its essence; they do not speak of who that neighbourhood really is. The inhabitants of the Mile-end have a strong bond with their neighbourhood and are weary of such agendas; forming

coalitions with one another they fight for their beloved landscape to stay as it is. Numerous groups of the area get together in an effort to repress the threat of the hour, among which are developments that are deaf to the needs and spirit of the neighbourhood; and gentrification, as waves of authenticity-seeking American immigrants settle in the area and whom are tired of their over-explored stomping grounds in Brooklyn. Having heard of the wonderfully down-to-earth characteristics enlivening the Mile-End, young and trendy Americans flock to the areas of Bernard Street and threaten the social and economic eco-system of the area. The Mile-End is of modest origins, and its residents are being threatened by the rising prices of real estate, rental cost and commerce accompanying the influx of wealthier newcomers. Fundraisers for the less fortunate are a generous, but nonetheless feeble attempt to dampen the inevitable reality awaiting those who will no longer be able to afford to live in their neighbourhood. These factors are part of the equation on why the Mile-End is at the brink of imminent change, partly brought by the evolution of gentrification, as well as the involvement of the city and other developer agents that will act to supply the pressing needs of the evolving neighbourhood. In that light, our proposed project hopes to lend a guiding hand in the process of the area's impending growth, turning the attention of the citizens, the

dwellers, the city and the developers towards a meaningful connection with the affected neighbourhoods.



figure 14: Heartfelt Help
source: Izza Lapalica

4 . 1 THE SITE SITUATION IN RELATION TO FRAGMENTS

Including the dialog of a neighborhood in the process of development is unequivocally the starting point of the project. By doing so, new projects can belong in their context and hold meaning in relation to it. The dialog extends from the personal spectrum: the stories of the habitants of the neighborhood, their activities within it, their relationship to it; to the urban spectrum: the fabric of the neighborhood, and the stories it holds within it. At the starting point of the groundwork of the proposed project lies a conceptual model of the site relating geography and the built environment to a contextual dialog involved in the area and in the city. It includes quotes on people's lives, their opinions, history, political climate – past and present, the nature above and within the city, artists' poetry, writers' stories of the neighborhood, depictions of details, everyday life, neighborhood situations and unclassifiable elements interwoven together layered on the site plan.

In physical form, the weaving of the dialogs reveal an important aspect the connections formed as relationships are made between elements. The meaning of this discovery lies both in materiality and anti-materiality, where a relationship created a tangible link, and altogether a network of

elements informing the site, consequently adding to it. On the other hand, the physical traces of the connections created voids at their center, the fragments: essential emptiness in a city. Individual stories that are woven together in a natural occurrence in the context of interactions and free will are always going to create small gaps on their peripheries no matter how dense they pile onto each other in figurative three-dimensional space. The importance of the homeostasis of the woven elements versus a finite story where a plot leaves no room for fragments, such as a rigid development plan, lies in the very potential fragments hold, essential to a city's meaningfulness.



figure 15: Story Fragments
source: Izga Lapalica



figure 16: Story Fragments II
source: Izga Lapalica

5 . 0 F R A G M E N T S

In the context of a story, fragments and gaps allow for a continuation of the narrative, where the story can evolve. A story without fragments does not allow for the integration of additions, because it has been written as a totality and does not have any space left for growth. As a consequence, any new stories will be laid upon the original one without having any relationship to it, resulting in a stratification of stories. They do not add to each other, but simply exist as expansion on a linear time scale. Fragments, however, encourage growth to interact with the original story by generating it from their potential, sourcing their context from the surrounding story they are nestled in. In relation with a city, this type of growth can then adapt and evolve in the natural occurrence of interactions in free will, completely modeled upon the city and depending on its inhabitants, policy makers, nature, environment, and other factors. In this light, the fragment is key to the implementation of new developments that harbor a connection with the city. Fragments also play a forward role in the pursuit of meaningfulness in a city by promoting an active relationship with its citizens. The power of a fragment lies in its inherent potential, concentrated as people project possibilities onto a gap within the narrative, the fabric, the planning, the program, or anything that constitutes a city. From that inherent potential there is a

concentration of creative energy ready to be harnessed by anyone willing to create. Going back to the analogy of the story, citizens are empowered in a place where they are able to write their own story within the context of the greater story, the city.

6.0 PROCESS





figure 17: Ink Study I
source: Izga Lapalice

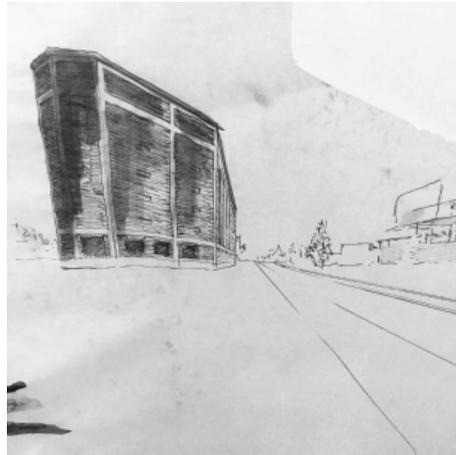


figure 18: Ink Study II
source: Izga Lapalice

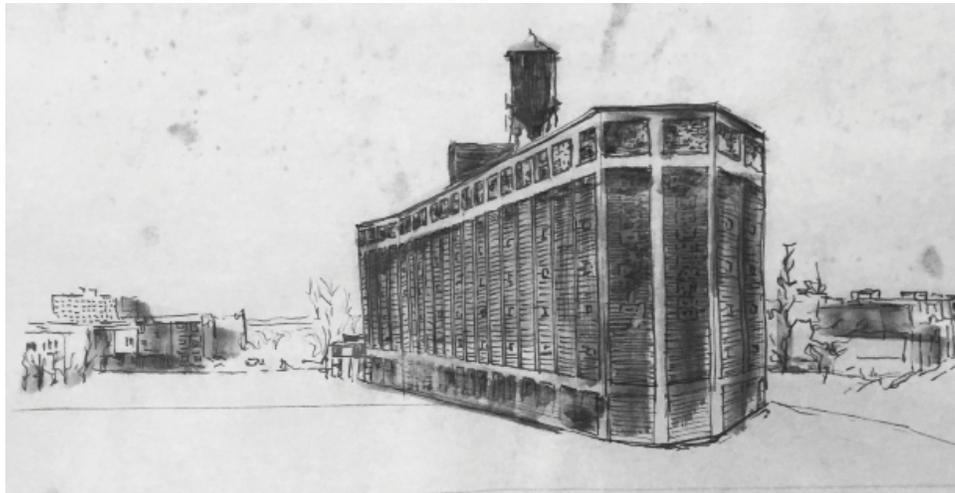


figure 19: Ink Study III
source: Izga Lapalice

figure 20: Fragment Conceptual

Model:

The thoughts, stories, poetry and musings of local writers inspired by their neighborhood in the Mile End constitute a conceptual model that seeks to give a formal nature to the exploration of the urban discourse of the area. Overlaid on a map of the site, the constellation of stories involving nature, politics, elements of the city, people, relationships and emotions weave into each other. Within the constructed network, fragmented voids appear as negative space, grounding the dialog in its context; giving it space and the opportunity to evolve. From this exploration, the concept of the fragment is deemed as crucial in rooting growth within its context, establishing it as an important intergation tool.

Method: plywood, paper, string and nails.

figure 20: Fragment Conceptual Model
source: Izzy Lapalice

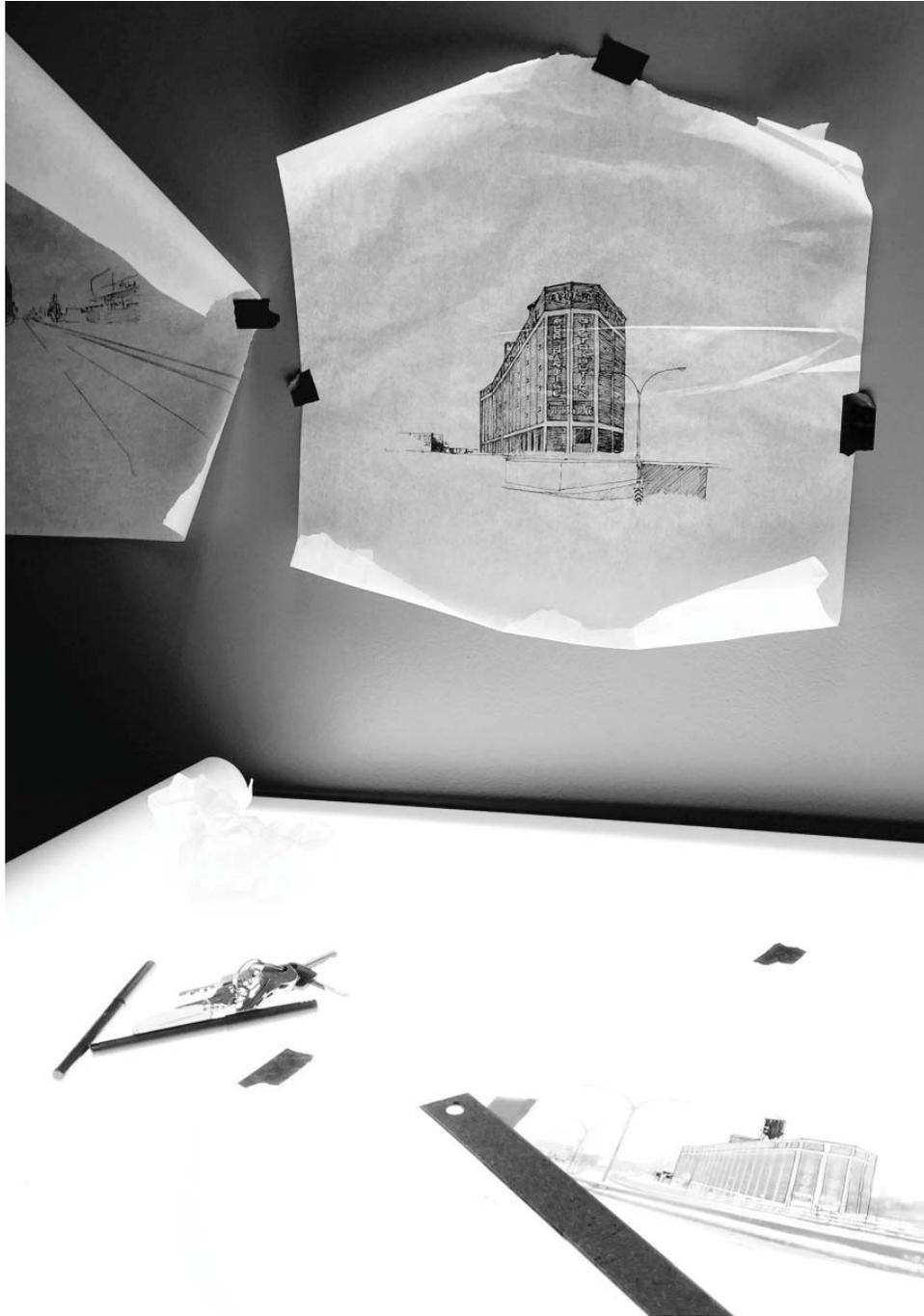


figure 21: Ink Studies
source: Izzy Lapalica

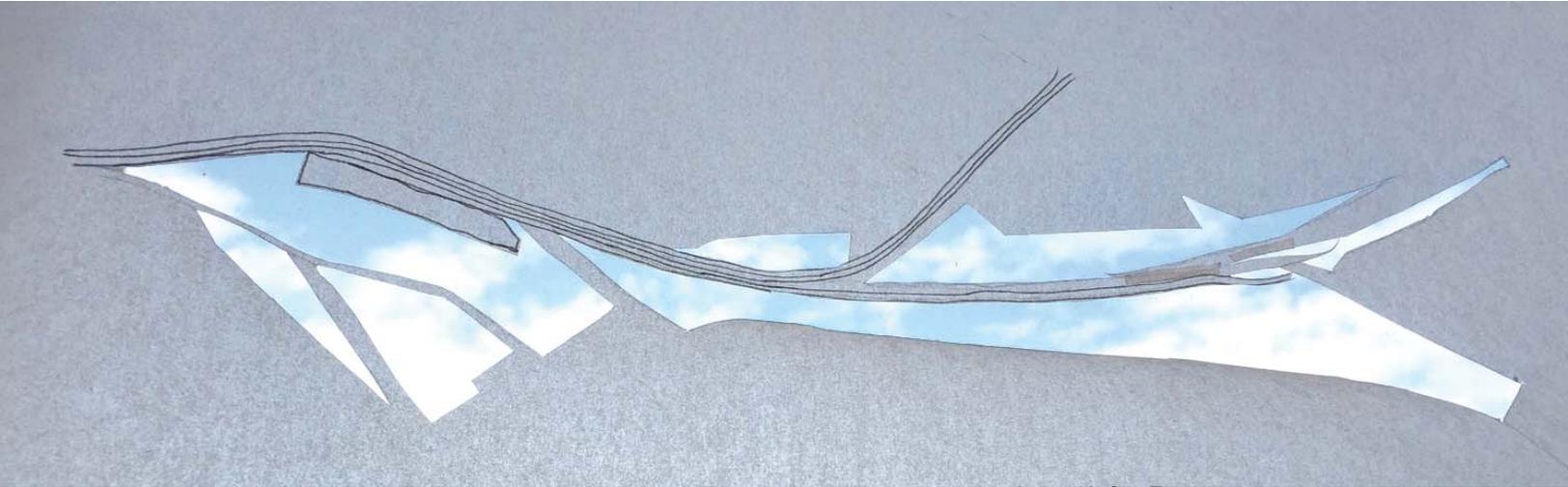


figure 22: Sky Fragment
source: Iszka Lapalice

Sky Fragment:

: Conceptual drawing exploring the spaces affected by the intervention. The spaces are represented as voids, referencing the notion of fragments in a figure-ground diagram. The affected space is cut out of the paper and photographed juxtaposed against the sky.

Grid Study:

Layered study drawing sketching out a grid system geocentered around each node in which a ground plan can emerge. Presents an early iteration of the project that positions the nodes along the traintracks rather than the Van Home overpass.

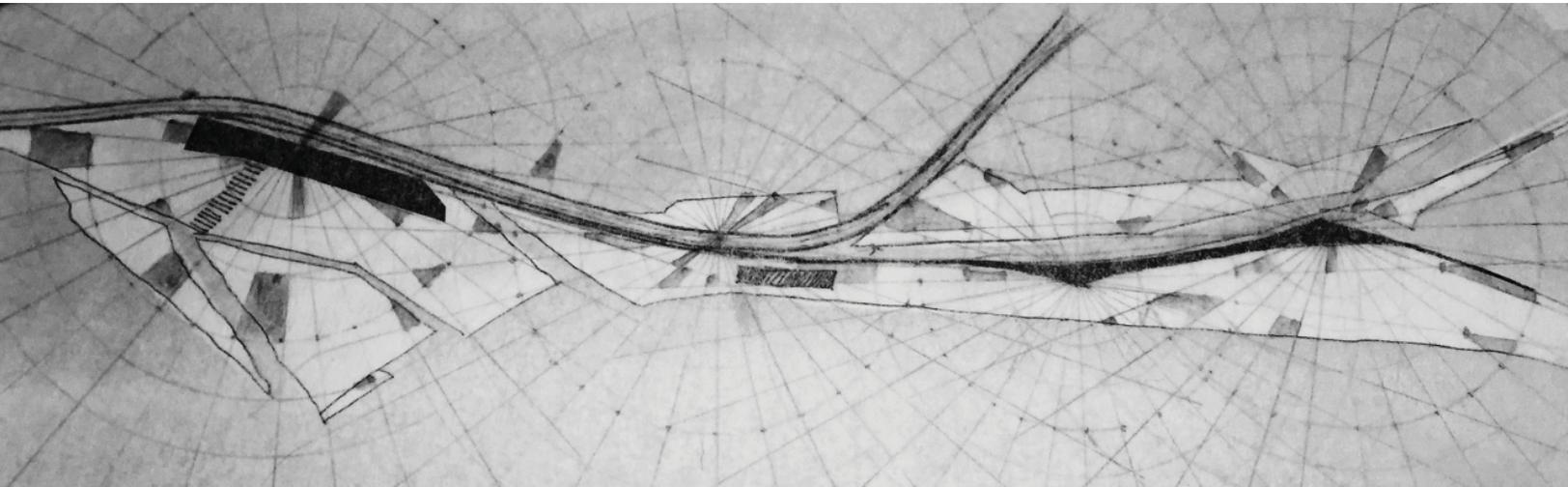
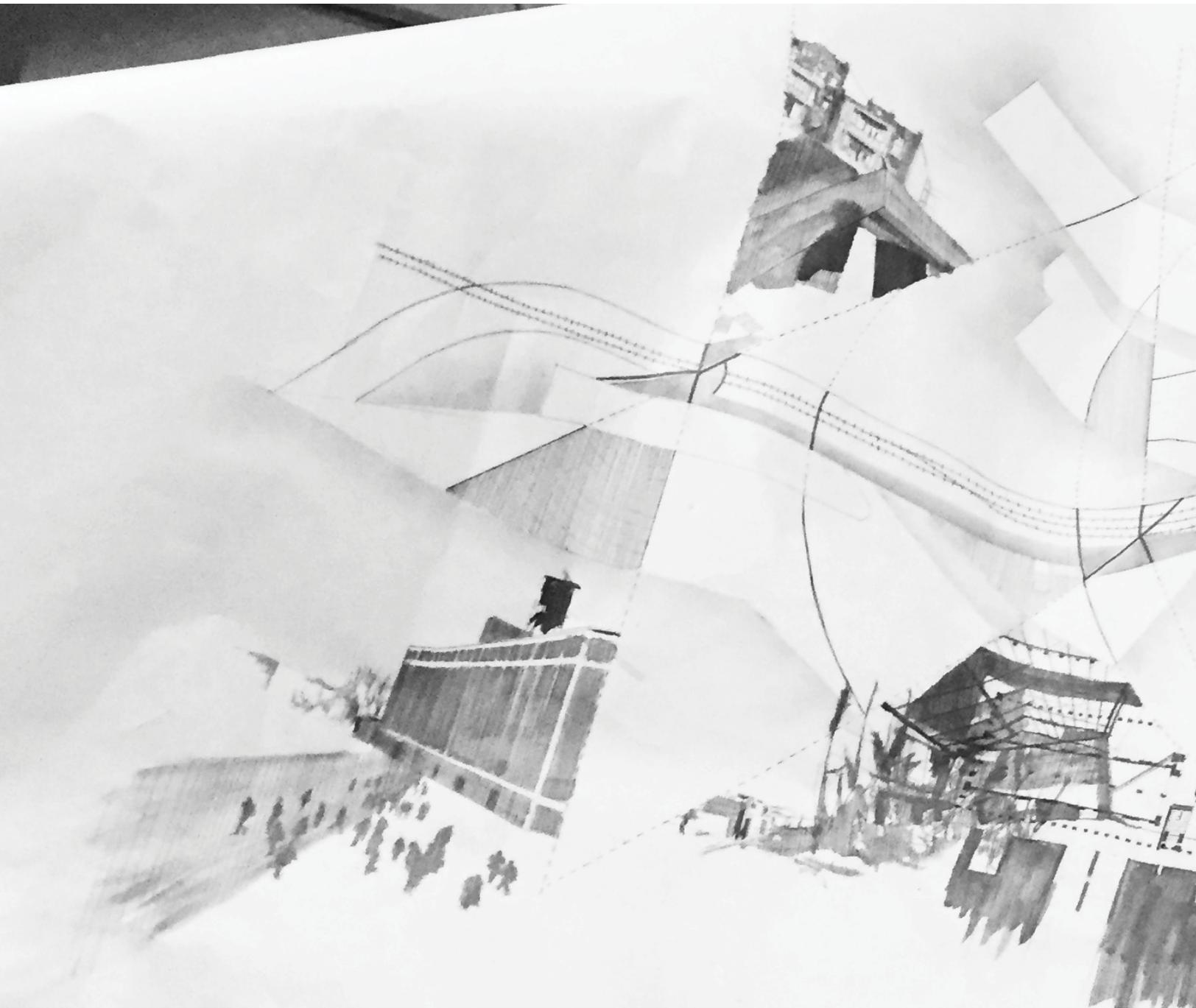


figure 23: Grid Study
source: Iszka Lapalice



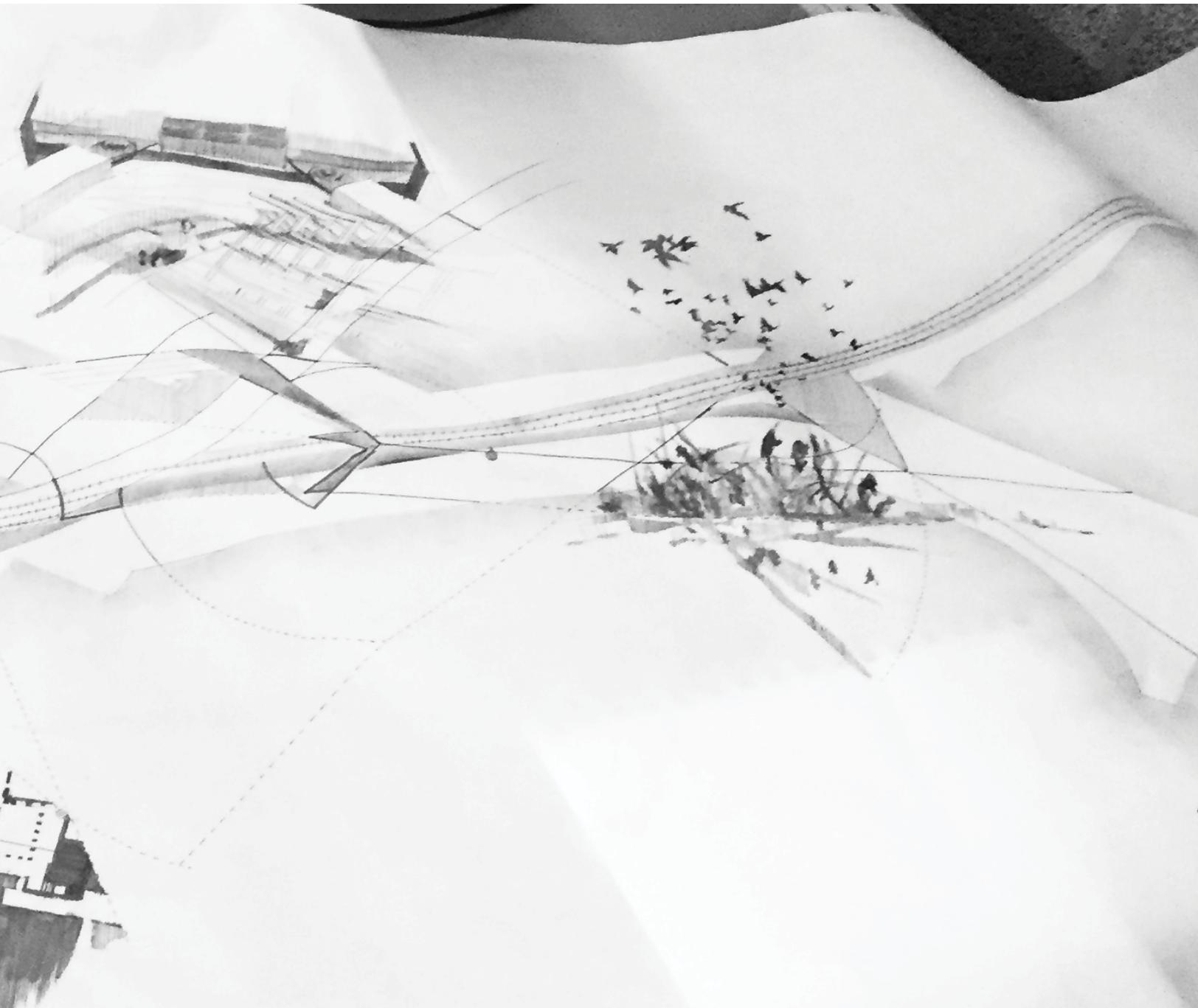


figure 24: Setting a Node Narrative
source: Izga Lapalica

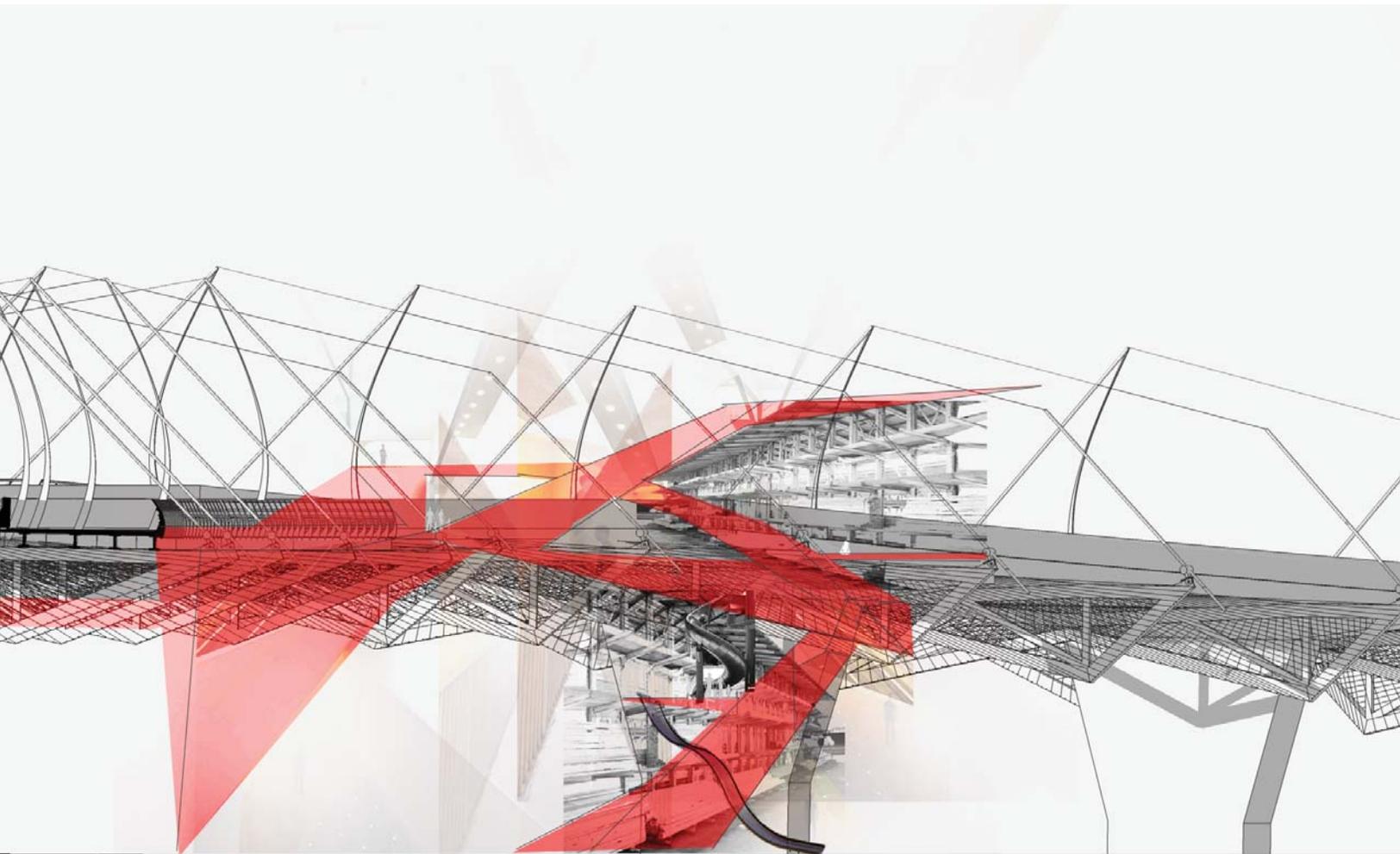


figure 25: Digital Collage of Node Concepts

figure 26: Hyperbolic Structure:

A rendition of a hyperbola constructed in an architectural 3D software. With this model, the potential of mathematical figures as elements in the architectural design process is explored.

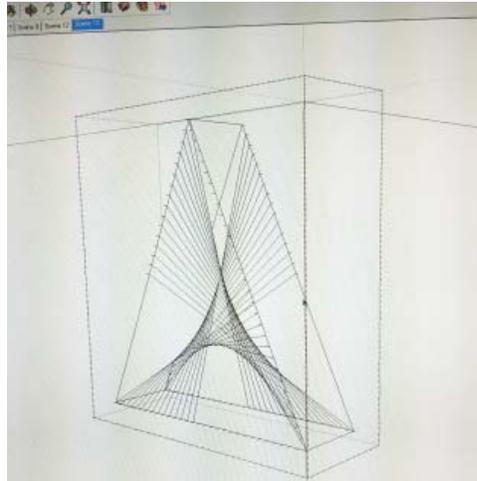


figure 26: Hyperbolic Structure
source: Izza Lapalice

figure 27: Hyperbolic Structure II:

Exploited in this project for reasons of structural and aesthetic integrity, the modeled hyperbolas serve as a model of reference to draw the sculptural node pillars; combining the visuals and theoretical foundation of mathematics.

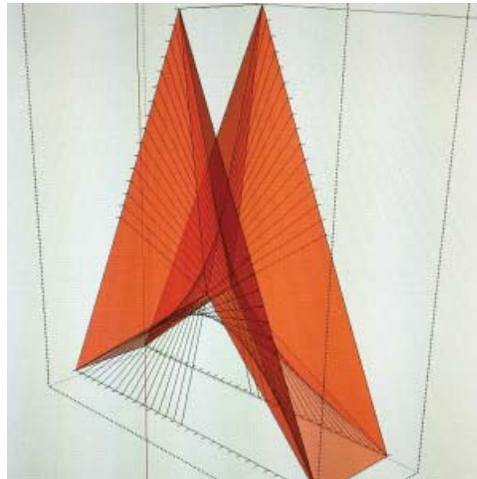
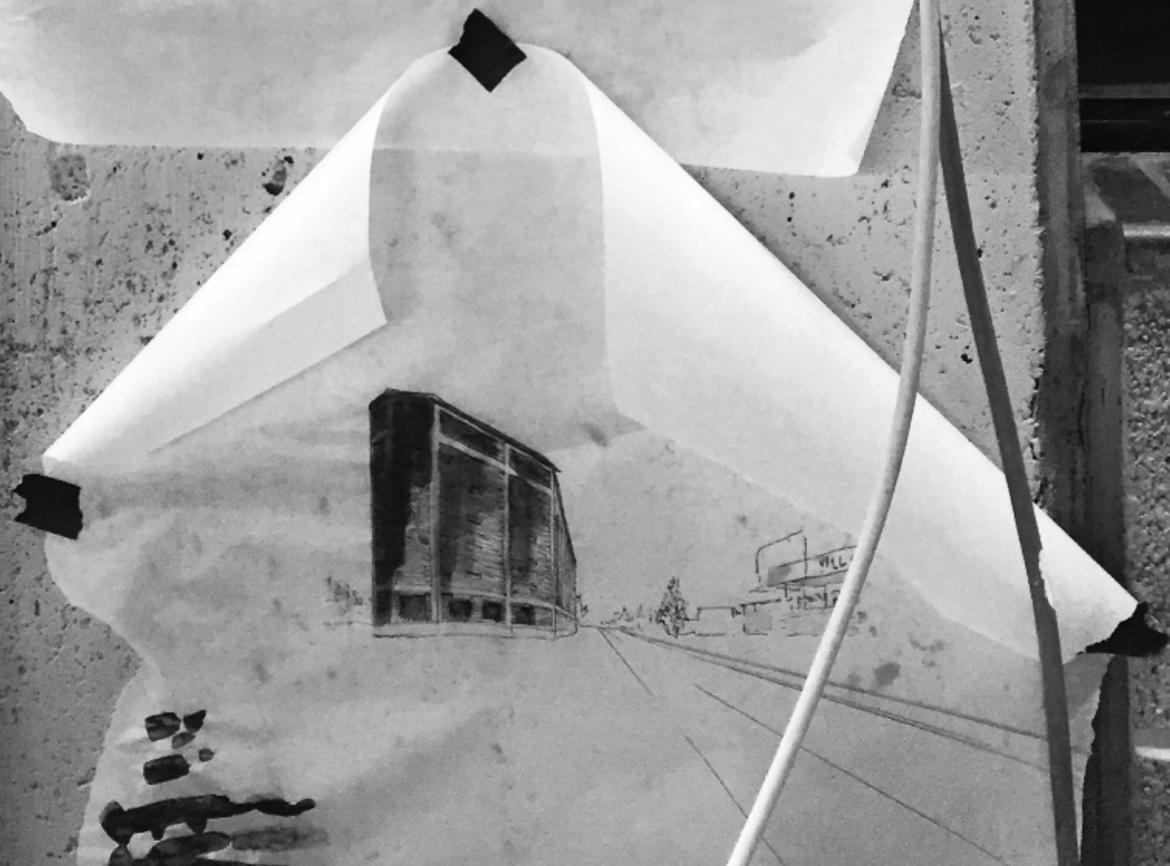
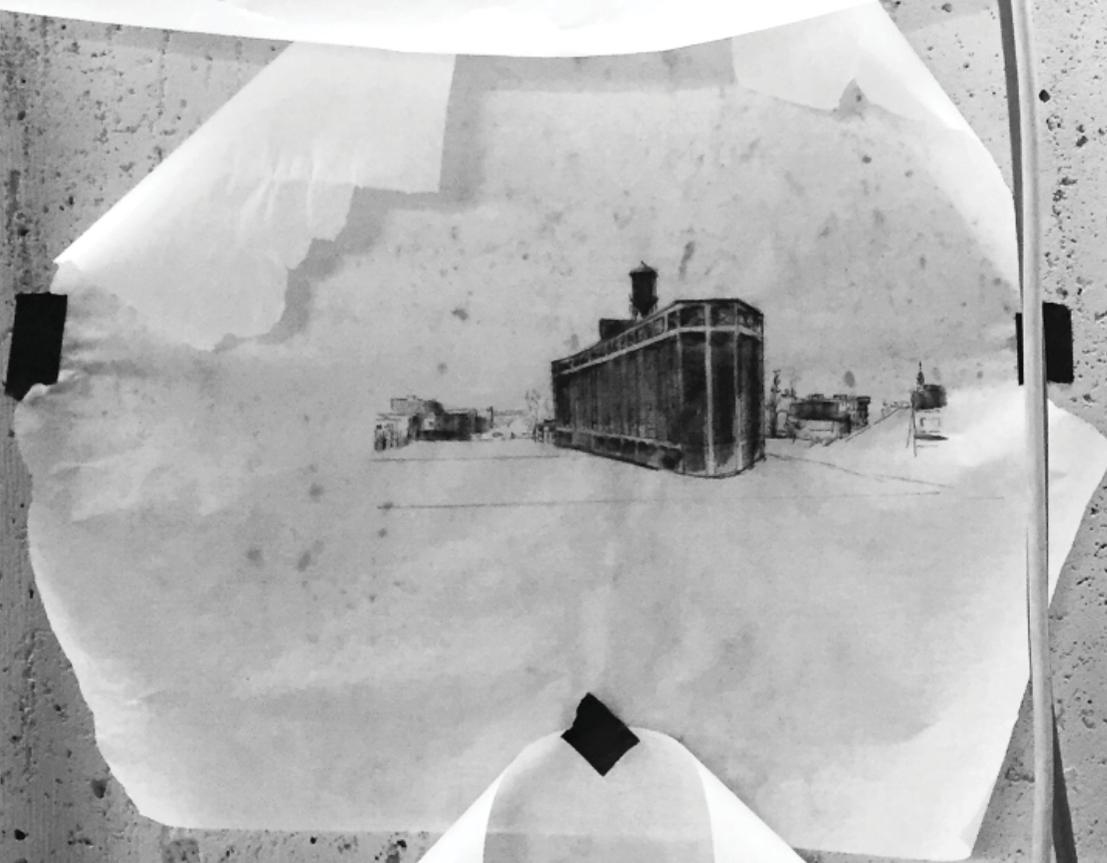


figure 27: Hyperbolic Structure II
source: Izza Lapalice



7.0 THE PEDESTRIAN BRIDGE

The Van Horne overpass is a typical specimen emerging from Montreal's prolific concrete infrastructure decades. Built at the end of the 1960's, the overpass was erected to facilitate the traffic flow of the area that was fenced out by the Canadian Pacific train tracks. Meant to enable a connection from Van Horne to Rosemont Blvd., its unavoidable vertical plane and imposing entry lanes ironically cause a series of disconnects at the pedestrian and urban levels of the area. At the start of the pedestrian journey, the St. Lawrence warehouse stands at the foot of the Van Horne overpass; a striking seven storey red brick construction that supplements Montreal's skyline with its protruding silhouette and slightly faded presence that speaks of other times. It stands on an isolated island bordered on either side by the busy lanes of Van Horne Boulevard and the train tracks of the Canadian Pacific railway. The proposed pedestrian bridge would unravel along the overpass, incorporating the warehouse into its path, sweeping across the site and landing onto Rosemond Blvd. in the adjoined neighbourhood. Currently taking commuters from a point to another without connecting to the city below, the Van Horne overpass' original program is unidimensional and transit-oriented. The program superimposed onto the overpass is one that spans the dimensions of

urban experience, taking the dweller onto an intimate journey that inspires a connection with the urban environment, as well as the space in which it stands – the sky, the changing light, the wind, the scale of temperature, animal and plant life and the presence of the city. When walking, our surroundings do not simply function as reference points in a travel itinerary. We relate to them internally, including the reading of our senses in our thought dialog as we measure ourselves against the world; and that is the reason infrastructure like the Van Horne overpass hold the potential to present an opportunity to connect people to their urban and natural environments. The sculptural and undulating nature of the proposed bridge component has for purpose to announce the compelling presence of an infrastructure that seeks to inspire those who walk the city; reaching out to individuals with the promise of discovery and connection. The tensile steel bows and cables' alternating patterns render an effort to communicate the path of the walkway from a distance, while lending a sculptural dimension to the form of the transformed concrete overpass. The 281/2-meter wide structural composite lumber trusses that are hung to the underside of the overpass serve multiple functions in the composition of the pedestrian bridge; the largest protruding portion of the truss holds the walkway itself, and alternates directions depending

on which side the path is located. The trusses serve a function at the bridge level as well as on the ground plane, where the inhabitable space below the bridge is transformed with the truss elements. The trusses are connected to one another with a spread of steel cables that create a three-dimensional web structure, forming a visually penetrable ceiling through which the concrete underbelly of the overpass remains visible and present in the experience of the underneath portion of the structure. From afar, the multiplication of the trusses arrayed along the concrete bridge create an ethereal form that adds a formal quality to the visual assembly of the structure. At every area of focus, the pathway collides with the node structures leading the dweller to an area on the site, which is highlighted along the journey. The traveller can choose to remain on the elevated walkway and keep going on the main path, but their attention has been taken by the sudden change of structure, material and color, until they re-embark on the familiar surface of the pedestrian pathway.

VAN HORNE WAREHOUSE

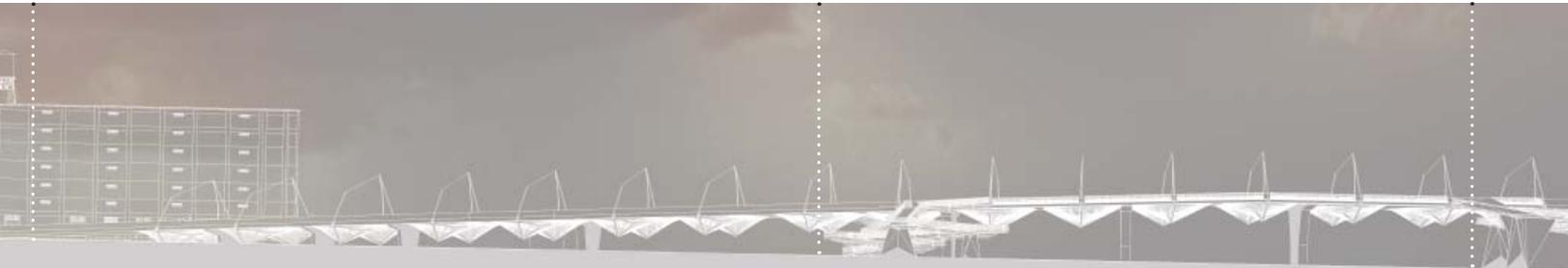
1 Avenue Van Horne,
Montréal, QC
H2T 2J1

BELOW THE BRIDGE

2 Rue Cloutier
Montréal, QC
H2T

CHAMP DES POSSIBLES

77 Rue Bernard E
Montréal, QC



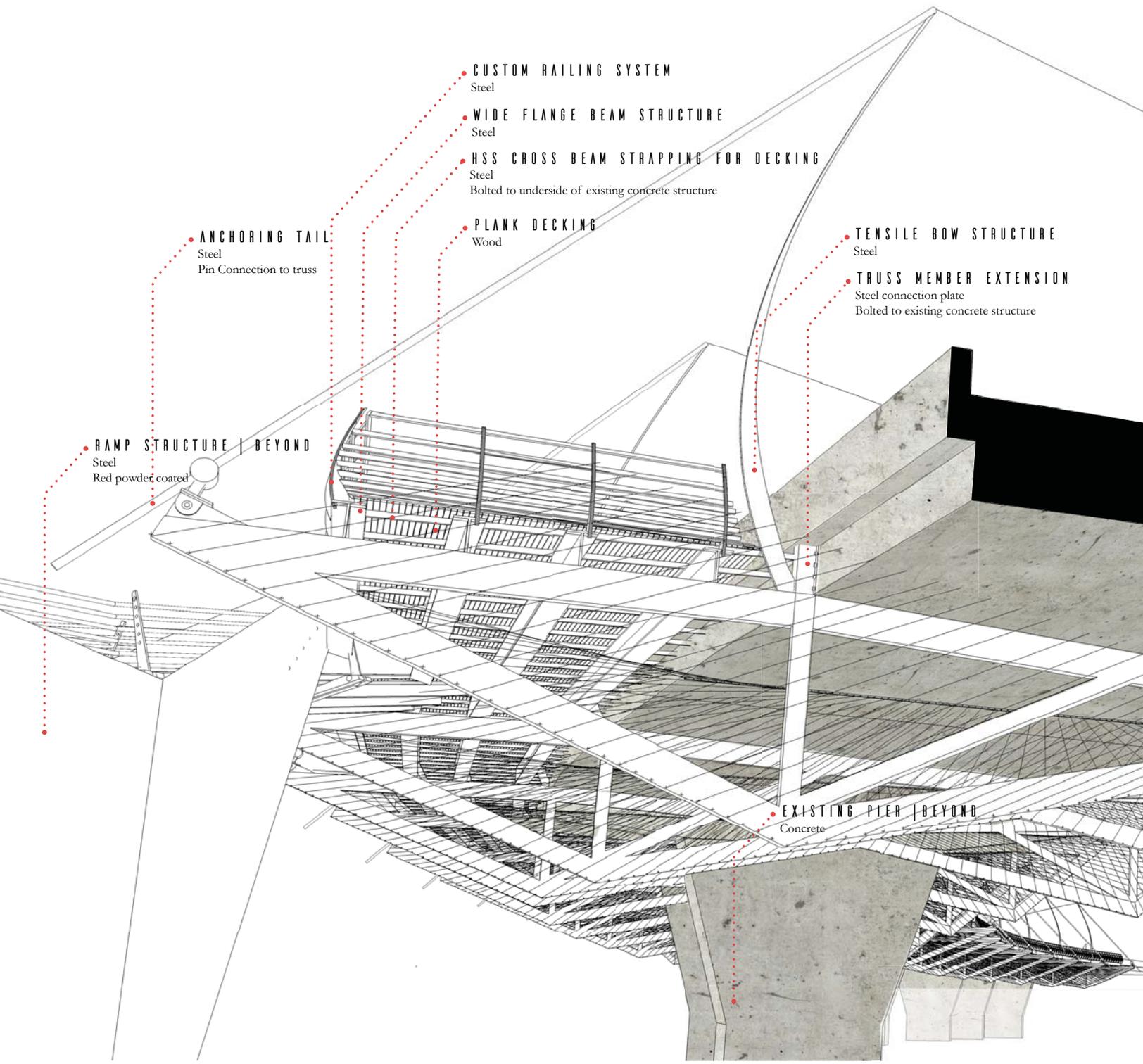
Montréal, QC
H2T

THE LUMBER YARDS | WOODWORKING

32 Boulevard Rosemont
Montréal, QC
H2S



figure 29: Bridge Elevation
source: Izzy Lapalice



CUSTOM RAILING SYSTEM

Steel

WIDE FLANGE BEAM STRUCTURE

Steel

HSS CROSS BEAM STRAPPING FOR DECKING

Steel

Bolted to underside of existing concrete structure

PLANK DECKING

Wood

ANCHORING TAIL

Steel

Pin Connection to truss

TENSILE BOW STRUCTURE

Steel

TRUSS MEMBER EXTENSION

Steel connection plate

Bolted to existing concrete structure

RAMP STRUCTURE | BEYOND

Steel

Red powder coated

EXISTING PIER | BEYOND

Concrete

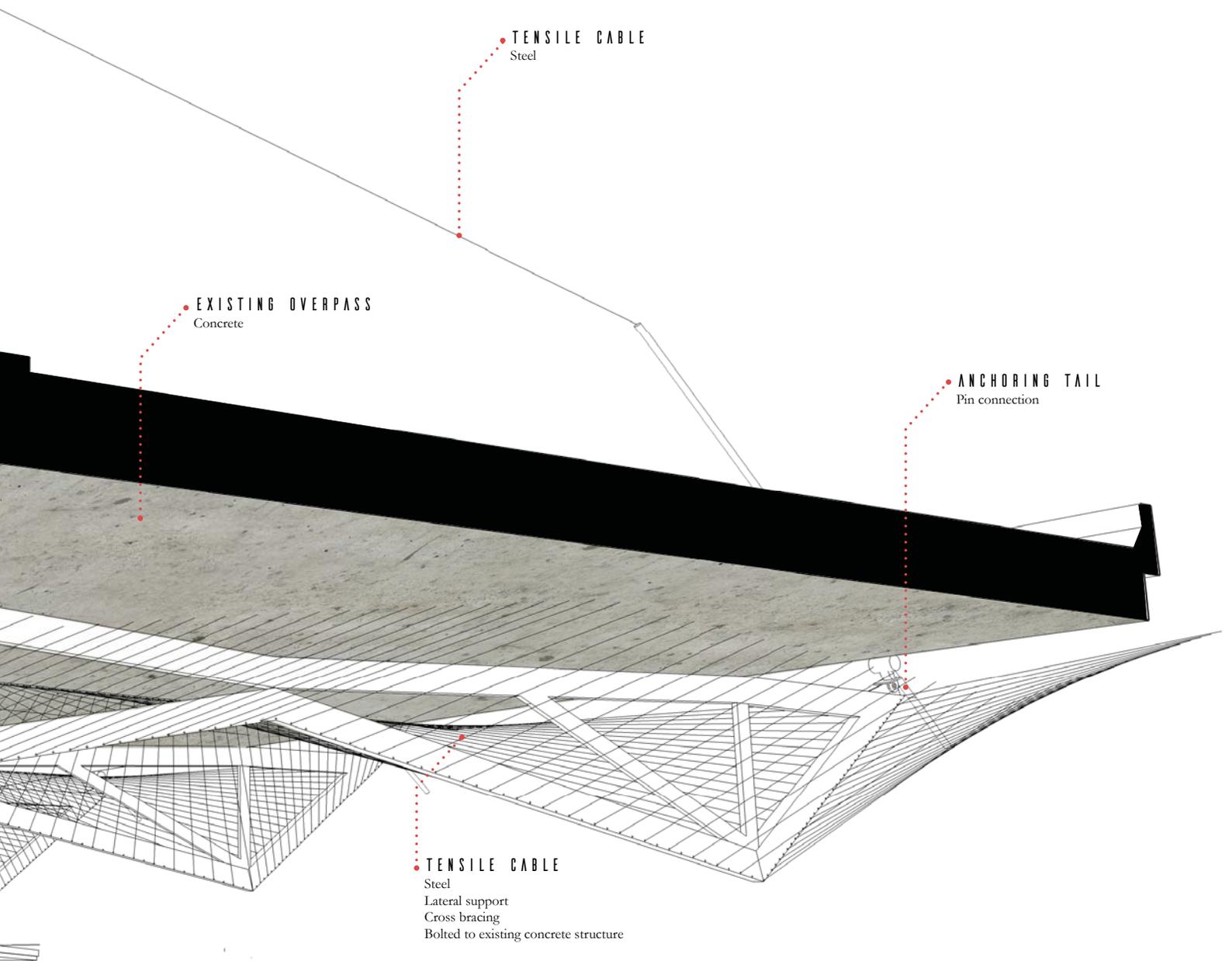


figure 30: Bridge Connection Detail
source: Izzy Lapalice

7.1 THE FLOATING PIERS OF LAKE ISEO

The explorative and transformative powers of walking were pushed to new limits with the journey that artist Christo has dreamed into reality. Magic can infiltrate the everyday when people are placed outside the elements of reference that govern their daily lives, and let go of the rigid boundaries encasing their sense of reality for the moment of a journey. For the Italian artist, walking on water, «Or perhaps the back of a whale»²⁰, is an experience he wished to present to anyone that was willing to walk the path he had laid out from Sulzano to Monte Isola and to the island of San Paolo in Italy. Knowing that the act of walking can help develop a connection between people and their environment, the path he designed pushed the boundaries of what is possible and encouraged the dweller to connect with their surroundings on another level; giving them the impression they are existing, for that moment, in a dimension other than the one we are accustomed to live our lives into. The journey started in the streets of Sulzano, where people would follow the textile path laid at their feet, discarding the familiarity of street paving and inviting the extra-ordinary into their perception. The experience ascended when they

20 Christo, "The Floating Piers," Christo J-C, July 2016, , accessed August 2016, <http://christojeanneclaude.net/mobile/projects?p=the-floating-piers#.V6zXBY6pJrE>.



figure 31: Christo Concept Sketch
source: christojeanneclaude.net

hit the town's edge at the water, and were able to keep walking upon the deep blue surface along the shimmering golden fabric that unfolded before them onto the open water. The portion of the path located in the water stretched on for three kilometers, allowing the dweller to fully immerse into the experience, inhabiting the lake and gazing at the mountains from a new perspective, and freeing them from the constraints of the ordinary. There were «no tickets, no openings, no reservations and no owners. The Floating Piers were an extension of the street and belonged to everyone. »²¹. Entirely funded by the artist, the installation was open to everyone and without restriction for sixteen days from June 18 to July 3d of 2016; after which its parts were recycled and the lake reverted back to belonging exclusively to the aquatic realm. During their short existence, the piers permitted to alter people's perceptions of reality and allowed them to connect with their surroundings in a way that would otherwise have been impossible.

21 Christo, "The Floating Piers," Christo J-C, July 2016, , accessed August 2016, <http://christojeanneclaude.net/mobile/projects?p=the-floating-piers#.V6zXBY6pJrE>.



figure 32: Carpeted Streets of Sulzano
source: christojeanneclaude.net

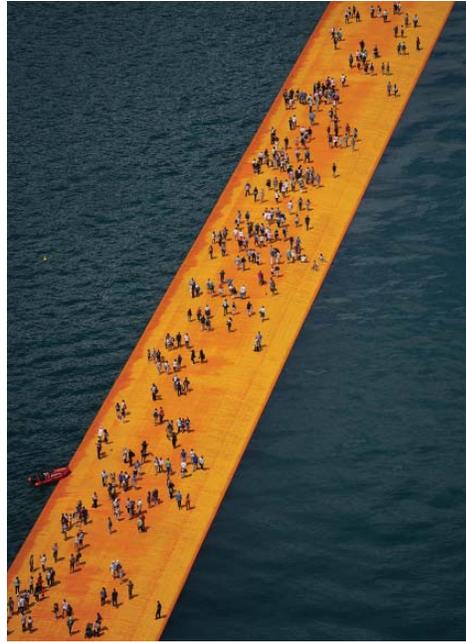


figure 33: Christo Floating Piers
source: christojeanneclaude.net



figure 34: Christo Floating Piers II
source: christojeanneclaude.net



figure 35: Christo Floating Piers III
source: christojeanneclande.net

8.0 NODES

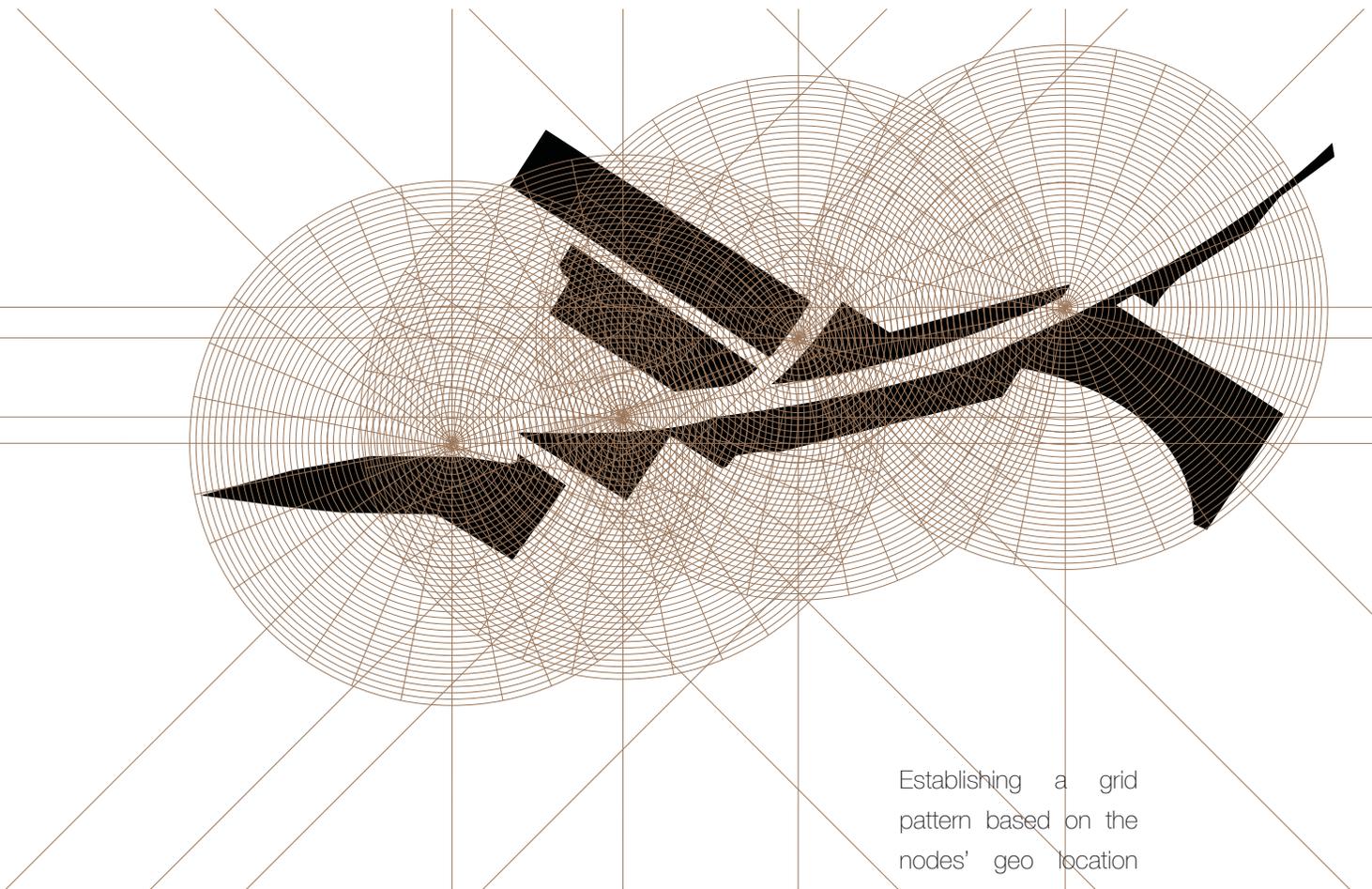
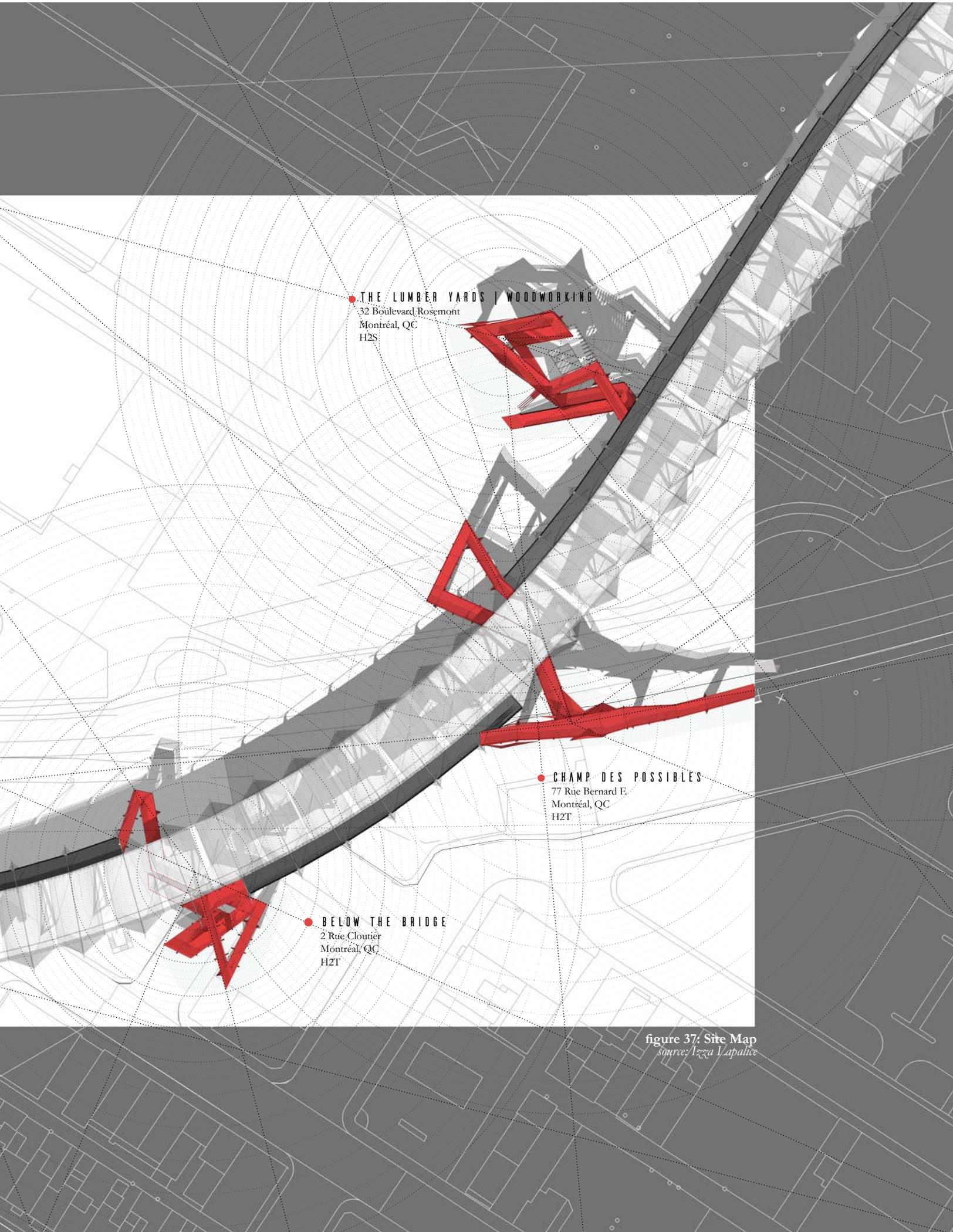


figure 36: Geocentric Grid
source: Izza Lapalica

• **ST LAURENT BLVD**
6224 Boul St-Laurent,
Montréal, QC
H2S 3C2

• **COURS A BOIS VILLENEUVE & CIE**
2 Rue de Bellechasse,
montréal, QC
H2S 1W1

• **VAN HORNE WAREHOUSE**
1 Avenue Van Horne,
Montréal, QC
H2T 2J1



● **THE LUMBER YARDS | WOODWORKING**
32 Boulevard Rosemont
Montréal, QC
H2S

● **CHAMP DES POSSIBLES**
77 Rue Bernard E.
Montréal, QC
H2T

● **BELOW THE BRIDGE**
2 Rue Cloutier
Montréal, QC
H2T

figure 37: Site Map
source: Izzy Lapalme

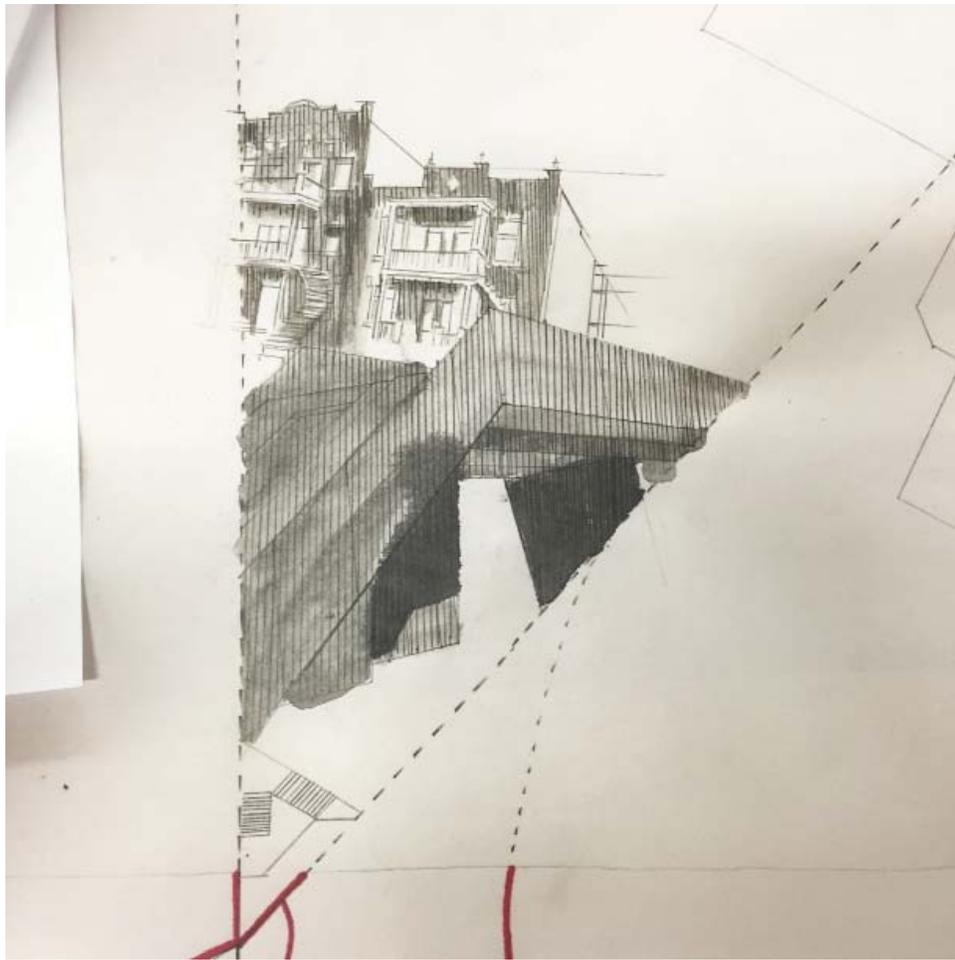


figure 38: Connecting to Rosemont (detail of figure 24)
source: Izzy Lapalice

8.1 THE THEMES OF ARRIVAL AND THE ST-LAWRENCE WAREHOUSE

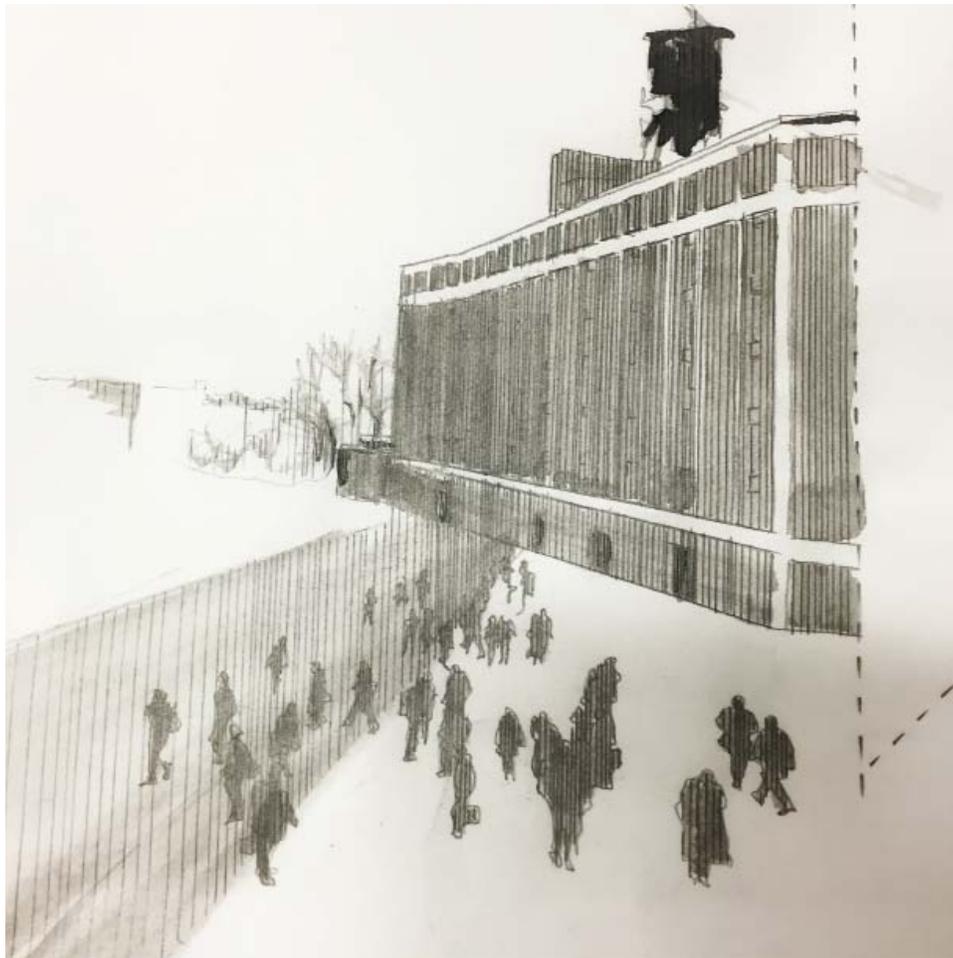


figure 39: Arriving at St-Lawrence Warehouse (detail of figure 24)
source: Izzy Lapalica





Essilor

Prenez le temps de choisir vos verres progressifs

PAIRE Parfaite

VARILUX

figure 40: Van Horne Warehouse
 source: *Izga Lapalice*

Trapped within its current site situation, the St-Lawrence Warehouse, known as the Van Horne Warehouse, does not stand in a place of urban importance like it once did when Montreal was a significant part of the rail industry. Its standing dwindled down with the decline of rail operations, and further cut off from its surroundings at the ground plane by the Van Horne overpass entry lanes, the neighborhood developed without the iconic warehouse in mind. Its current state is reduced to such a level of insignificance that the organization Héritage Montreal, which specializes in media relations in order to make known and defend the protection of the cultural heritage of the city, has placed it on their list of ten buildings that are in critical danger in their 2014 report²². All the sites on the list are chosen by a comity that evaluates the heritage value, the urgency of the threat to the building, and the exemplary value of each case. Despite suffering from urban insignificance, the Van Horne Warehouse is a powerful pole of visual interest and magnetism in the area, where it is hailed as the icon of the Mile End. Rooted in industrialism, people seem drawn to the authenticity of its unaltered state, a testament to other moments the

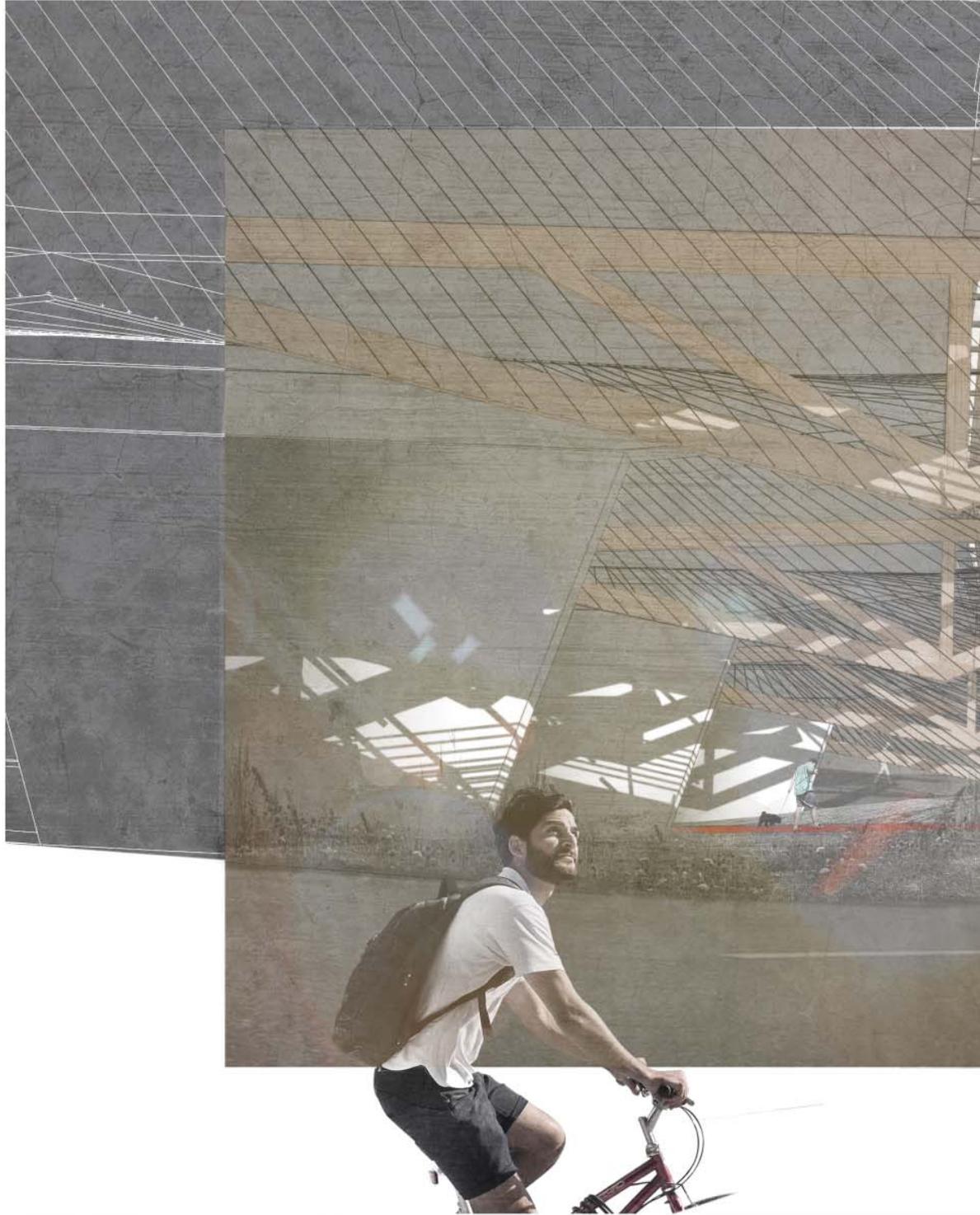
22 Héritage Montreal, "Rapport Annuel 2014," Héritage Montreal, 2015, accessed May/June 2016, http://www.heritagemontreal.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Rapport_annuel_FR_HM2014_web.pdf.



figure 41: Angular Profile
source: Izzy Lapalice

city has known. Anywhere its angular profile and corroded water tower appear from the vantage points of the city, we are reminded of the passing time; and with a glimpse we can settle in the silence of the artifact it has left intact on its ravenous path. In order to re-establish the relevance of the Van Horne Warehouse within the context of the neighborhood, we propose to project the theme of arrival onto the presence of the building, implanting it as symbol of destination and departure, anchoring it at the base of the journey along the project's infrastructure. The first node along the fragmented path of urban discovery integrates a double focus, being on the idea of arrival and the story expressed by the warehouse. The first node introduces the main path at the edge of the overpass after the dweller has been taken through the new plaza at the base of the building, standing at a slight elevation and rendered in the red metal and geometric folds that they will learn to recognize as the announcement of primary points of interest in the urban landscape. There would now be three ways of getting to the front of the building; one of which would be utilizing the currently sloping stale space below the overpass where those of unfortunate circumstance currently find shelter. With the revitalization of the underneath portion of the overpass, the sections below become vastly more welcoming and inhabitable. With the addition

of the urban landscape that features portions that have been selectively curated and intentionally leaving areas of the site as-is; people can inhabit the space in a circumstance that allows interaction with the site while allowing room to grow, expand and change as it may with the free will and intention of nature, people, community members, neighborhood associations, councils, the City of Montreal, and developers – illustrating the strength of the fragment within the evolution of a city that intends to build upon that which constitutes its spirit. Another entrance at the street level in the form of a crossing, and delimited with the insertion of the same material used for the plaza and the rest of the nodes, enables a direct connection within the ground plan of the neighborhood to the building's plaza. A further access to the back of the building opens the connection from Rosemont Area, allowing for a permeation to occur between the neighborhoods with the Van Horne Warehouse at its focal point. The plaza takes on the function of anchoring the building within the neighborhood with its three main access points, as well as grounding it as a focal point along the journey connecting people with the meaning and spirit of the city.



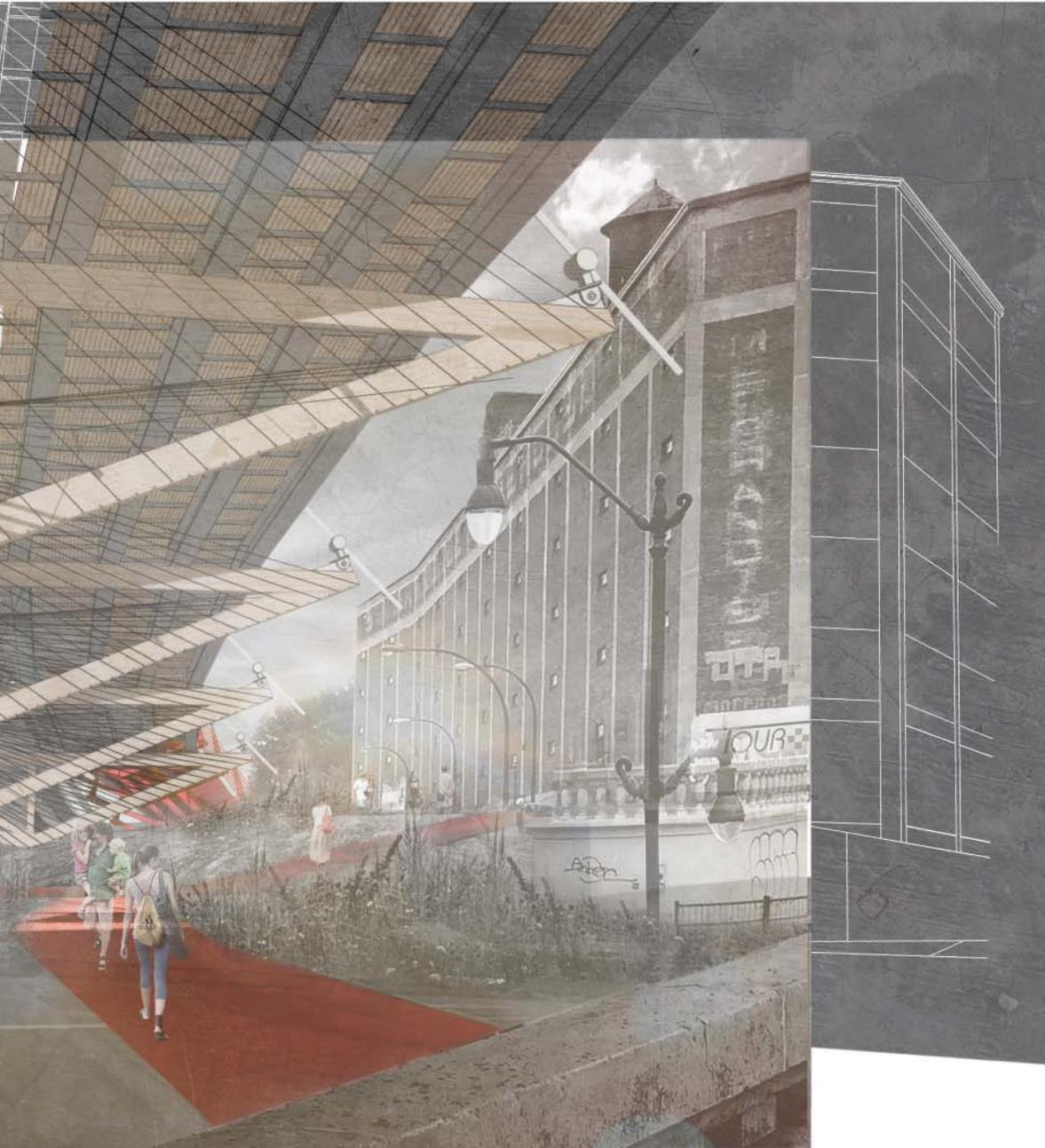


figure 42: Concept for Van Horne Warehouse Plaza
source: Izzy Lapalica

8.2 BELOW THE BRIDGE



figure 43: Connecting Programs (detail of figure 24)
source: Izzy Lapalica

The concrete infrastructure of the Van Horne Overpass lifted above the ground, extending through the varying urban surfaces of the bordering Rosemont and Plateau Mont-Royal neighborhoods is an image that is now part of the city's post-war identity. The development effervescence following the Second World War saw a rapid growth to the city's infrastructure and buildings, with expo 67 being at the apex of the concrete construction period. Since then, Montreal's civic life has been hosted within the planes of the raw material that forms a large portion of its surface. Melvin Charney, a Canadian artist and architectural critic, attributed an important role to such resulting ad hoc urban spaces: « The urban constructions in Montreal were in fact skillful and opportune transformations of neglected areas within the city ... Expedient adaptation, followed by opportune insertions and the subsequent reproduction of insertions as a formal urban type, characterize the city »²³. The author of the term Montrealness dedicated his attention to what unique characteristics could be attributed to forming the essence of the city of Montreal; one of which is the ability to construct urban spaces that happen as by-products of large-scale constructions issued from the

23 - Louis Martin and Melvin Charney, *On Architecture: Melvin Charney: A Critical Anthology*.



figure 44: Under Van Horne
source: Izzy Lapalice

1960's, such as the Van Horne overpass. Residual and accidental urban opportunities that are enabled, Charney advances, by the atypical urban grid of the city that originates from the parceling of farm land, and which he sees as having a pre-urban quality that lent itself more seamlessly than the undifferentiated framework of other cities for the foundation of an urban grid. Professor Réjean Legault of the University of Québec in Montreal describes Charney's Montrealness as a concept describing a Montreal architectural identity that finds its strength «in the street, in the neighbourhood, in the City as a physical and social identity, and insisting on the value of what francophones bring to the city»²⁴. Amidst an architectural culture, which, at the time, revolved around Mies' German romanticism²⁵, Melvin Charney was fascinated by what architecture North America was producing – an indigenous²⁶ architecture moulded directly from a geographical, sociological and cultural situation independent from the major movements existing anywhere else in the world. He found that

24 Nicolas Mavrikakis, "Melvin Charney, L'esprit Derrière La Montrealness," *Le Devoir*, December 18, 2016, , accessed July 2016, <http://www.ledevoir.com/culture/arts-visuels/393314/melvin-charney-l-esprit-derriere-la-montrealness>.

25 Jim Donaldson, "Melvin Charney Interview," McGill University, June 1999, , accessed July 18, 2016, <https://www.mcgill.ca/architecture/aluminterviews/charney>.

26 Ibid.





figure 45: Below the bridge
source: Izzy Lapalice

grain elevators were a direct expression of the connection of people to their environment, and emphasizing, for that reason, their significance in the state of contemporary architecture at the end of the modern period. « As well as the grain elevators, there was also Montreal as urban structure »²⁷ that emanated the essence of Montrealness, the constitution of a city that truly emerged from a connection with the totality of the elements within its place, and subsequently dissociated from foreign architectural rhetoric. Consequently, the importance of residual urban spaces can be traced to the very heart of the essence of the City of Montreal as central elements that compose its meaning. For these reasons, the area below the Van Horne overpass is made an integral destination on the path journeying through the stories of the neighbourhoods. The node's structure, hitting the pedestrian path, descends the dweller below the surface of the bridge, where they can peer out at the spaces below through the splayed cables traveling through the negative space under the concrete structure. Having been introduced to the vast sub-spaces tunnelling in the distance from either direction of the bridge, the dweller can serpent the red metal ramps back to the pedestrian path or choose to disembark amidst the

27 Ibid.

concrete domain that reverberates throughout the narration of the city. The intention supporting the node is to gift back to the dweller these sub-spaces that are niched into the spirit of Montreal, re-contextualizing them as spaces of urban discovery and occupation; rather than inconsequential leftovers that function as a pretext to vague and suspicious activities. The proposed approach in offering these spaces commits to tuning people's perceptions regarding their civic potential, thus, prioritizing the context in which they are presented over altering their components in order to swell the public appeal of the space itself. In that light, the ground treatment that permeates the project and which is channelling the local energy through the device of fragments is selectively uninvolved below the bridge; where the space is intended as an unadulterated experience in and of itself.





figure 46: Montrealness
source: Izzy Lapalice





figure 47: Active Subspace
source: Izzy Lapalice

8.3 LE CHAMP DES POSSIBLES



figure 48: Pencil in the Field (detail of figure x)
source: Izzy Lapalice

The strip of unbridled greenery along the train tracks in the Mile End is a rare example of natural solace one can find in an unplanned urban context. Passionately protected by its citizen defenders, the “Champ des Possibles” is dear to the neighborhood, a remnant of the wandering spirit the Mile End seems to inspire. The emotional attachment between the field and the inhabitants of the area is a testament to the bond people can cultivate with a city, and which makes the Champ des Possibles a key component in the urban journey into the meaning of Montreal. Founded in 2010, les Amis du Champ des Possibles, the ACDP, is a group consisting of citizens of the Mile End in Montreal that focuses on preserving the public and wild nature of the field as an urban reserve of biodiversity²⁸. Owned by the city since 2006²⁹, the field is the result of post-industrial abandon following the decline of railway activities in the sector. The field has been officially decreed as Natural Park in 2013³⁰, and the ADCP are aiming to nurture the industrially contaminated fields back to a standard of ecological stature that will leave it its spirit of freedom. Le Champ

28 Latour, Roger. "CATALOGUE DES ESPÈCES." CATALOGUE DES ESPÈCES, 2014. 2014. Accessed June 2016. https://amisduchamp.files.wordpress.com/2015/11/biodiversitec3a9_2015.pdf.

29 Latour, Roger. "CATALOGUE DES ESPÈCES." CATALOGUE DES ESPÈCES, 2014. 2014. Accessed June 2016. https://amisduchamp.files.wordpress.com/2015/11/biodiversitec3a9_2015.pdf.

30 Ibid.

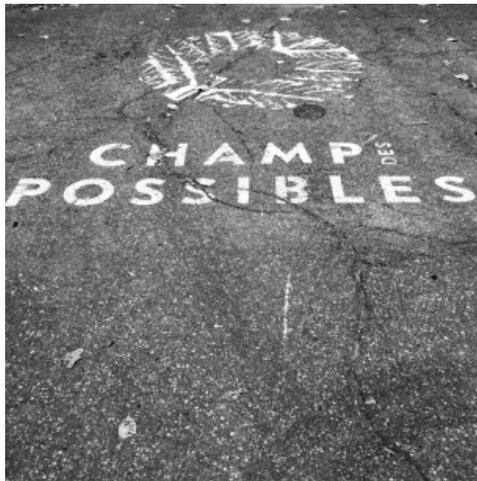


figure 49: Champ des Possibles
source: Izga Lapalice



figure 50: Ecological Occupation
source: Izga Lapalice

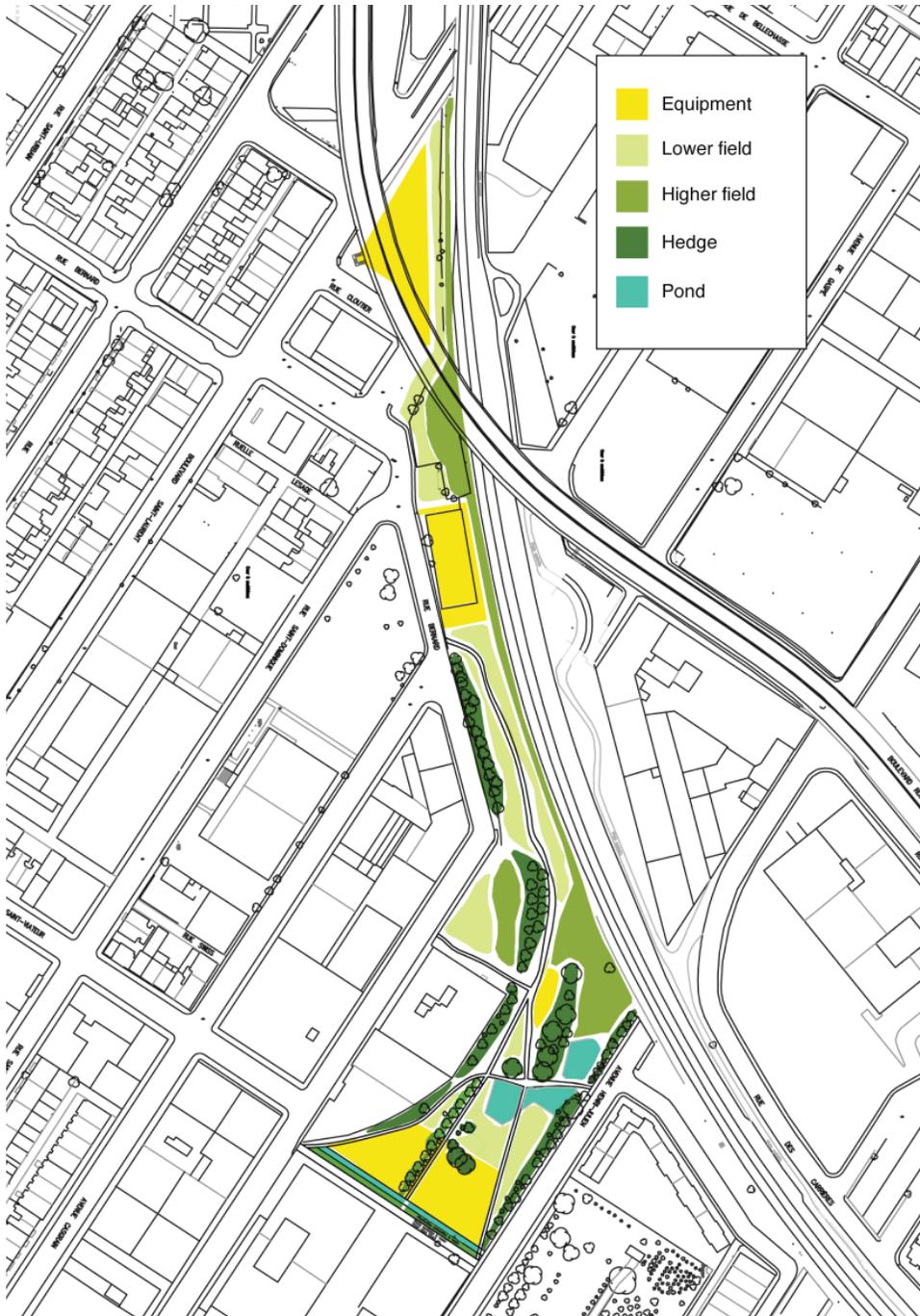


figure 51: Field Map
 source: amisduchamp.files.wordpress.com

des Possibles is no curated garden, and the people who love it intend to keep it that way. In an impressive effort of citizen empowerment, the group is taking the future of the area in their own hands, acting in co-management with the Plateau Mont-Royal council and producing documents for the city to consult as a reference in the case of any change affecting the concerned zones. The extent of the people's implication with the area is a wonderful demonstration of how emotional attachment can transform a neighborhood dynamic into an active and participative climate, and testifies of heartfelt action versus disengaged planning. The most recent citizen consultation resulted in a document in which their wishes for revitalization are communicated as the goal of the area³¹. Mostly consisting of minor infrastructure and amenities, the proposal is aiming for an active occupation of the designated zones, as well as the introduction of more greenery. While they hope to furnish the neglected spaces with benches, tables and rinks to facilitate the inhabitation of the area; they are also hoping to inject liveliness with shops, small businesses and the incorporation of housing. The way to ensure the longevity of the

31 Le Comité Des Citoyens Du Mile End, "LES ABORDS DE LA VOIE FERRÉE DU MILE-END Consultations Citoyennes DOCUMENT SYNTHÈSE," Les Amis Du Champ Des Possibles, December 2015, , accessed June 19, 2016, https://amisduchamp.files.wordpress.com/2015/12/document-synthecc80se_consultations_final_20-01-2016.pdf.

spaces they wish to save is in fact by drawing attention to them, and we propose to build around the identity of such spaces so they are forged within the dialog of the city rather than imposing a layer of activity onto lacking spaces, which make the changes vulnerable over time and do not necessarily suggest a direction for growth. One of the main concerns of the association of citizens is to tend to the ecological diversity of the area by following a detailed plan to reinsert and add native species in the field, which in turn support the population of local fauna and insects. Since the cessation of railway activities on the site of the Champ des Possibles in 1975, the field grew to host colonies of approximately a hundred species of plants³², which have since then been joined by newer species planted by the ACDP. The community assembled a detailed compendium of the field's native plant, insect, and mammal species in the hope of consistently adding to the ecological richness of the place. In the spirit of ecological preservation, we designed the Champ des Possibles node to infuse the dweller's experience with the aura of wilderness characterizing the field. The route is designed to have a minimal impact on the ground to keep the flora and fauna as untouched as possible while integrating the purpose

32 Roger Latour, "CATALOGUE DES ESPÈCES," CATALOGUE DES ESPÈCES, 2014, , 2014, accessed June 2016, https://amisduchamp.files.wordpress.com/2015/11/biodiversite3a9_2015.pdf.



figure 52: Crataegus
source: amisduchamp.files.wordpress.com



figure 53: Cichorium
source: amisduchamp.files.wordpress.com



figure 54: Lotus corniculatus
source: amisduchamp.files.wordpress.com

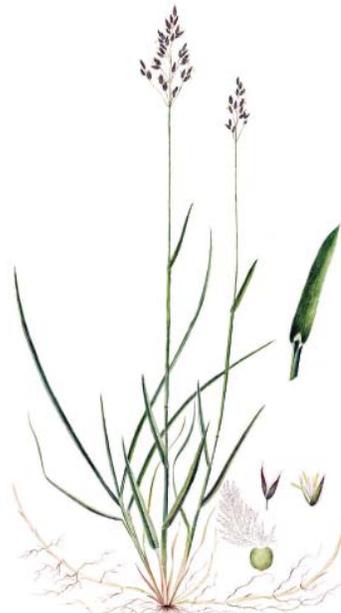


figure 55: Poa pratensis
source: amisduchamp.files.wordpress.com



figure 56: Melospiza melodia
source: amisduchamp.files.wordpress.com



figure 57: Danaus plexippus
source: amisduchamp.files.wordpress.com



figure 58: Megachile
source: amisduchamp.files.wordpress.com

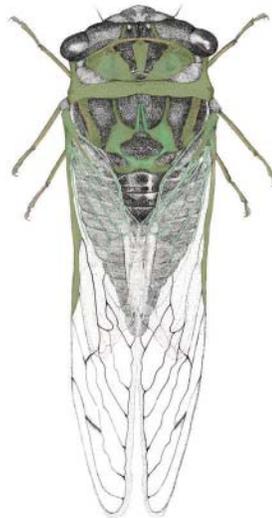


figure 59: Tibicen canicularis
source: amisduchamp.files.wordpress.com

and spirit of the ecological sanctuary into the journey supported by the infrastructure. One of the segments of the paths connected to the node reaches far into the field, allowing for a stroll from the bridge through the Champ des Possibles without the disruption created by pedestrian and bicycle traffic. The platforms of the node are populated with beds of local plants, as well as offering areas of rest, viewing and contemplation. The structure reinforces human connection with moments that initiate involvement, both tactile and emotional. Rainfall becomes an integrated element of the experience as it is presented to the dweller, transformed by the structure into a cascade of water; offering an opportunity to cherish the elements that are vital to sustaining the field in a new context. The segment leading to the main pedestrian bridge sweeps the dweller below amongst the fanned cables and presents an occasion to pause and observe the train tracks below and curving ahead. The space opening on the path below the bridge is a designated rest and hydration station designed to host the array of butterflies inhabiting the field, supporting the survival and expansion of the species. The decline of butterflies and bees are correlated with a reduction of plant biodiversity, which is conveyed by monoculture and the human transformation of landscapes; a condition that the community supporting the Champ des Possibles hopes to counter

by fostering butterfly and insect life with as many nurturing plants as possible³³. The revival of the butterfly species can become a whimsical and immersive experience as commuters move amongst the delicate winged creatures, adding delight to their daily existence.

33 Roger Latour, "CATALOGUE DES ESPÈCES," CATALOGUE DES ESPÈCES, 2014, , 2014, accessed June 2016, https://amisduchamp.files.wordpress.com/2015/11/biodiversitc3a9_2015.pdf.

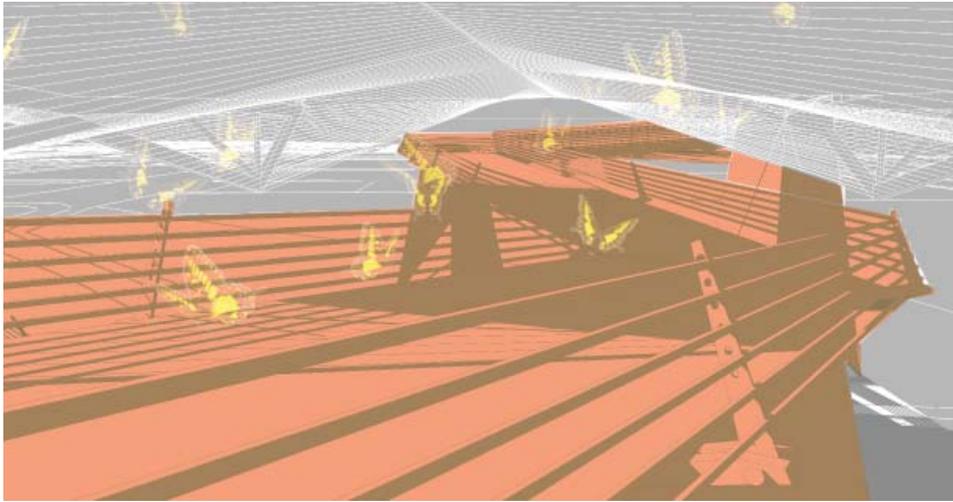


figure 60: Butterfly Underpass
source: Izzy Lapalica





figure 61: Field Under Construction
source: Izga Lapalice





figure 62: Urban Respite
source: Izzy Lapalice



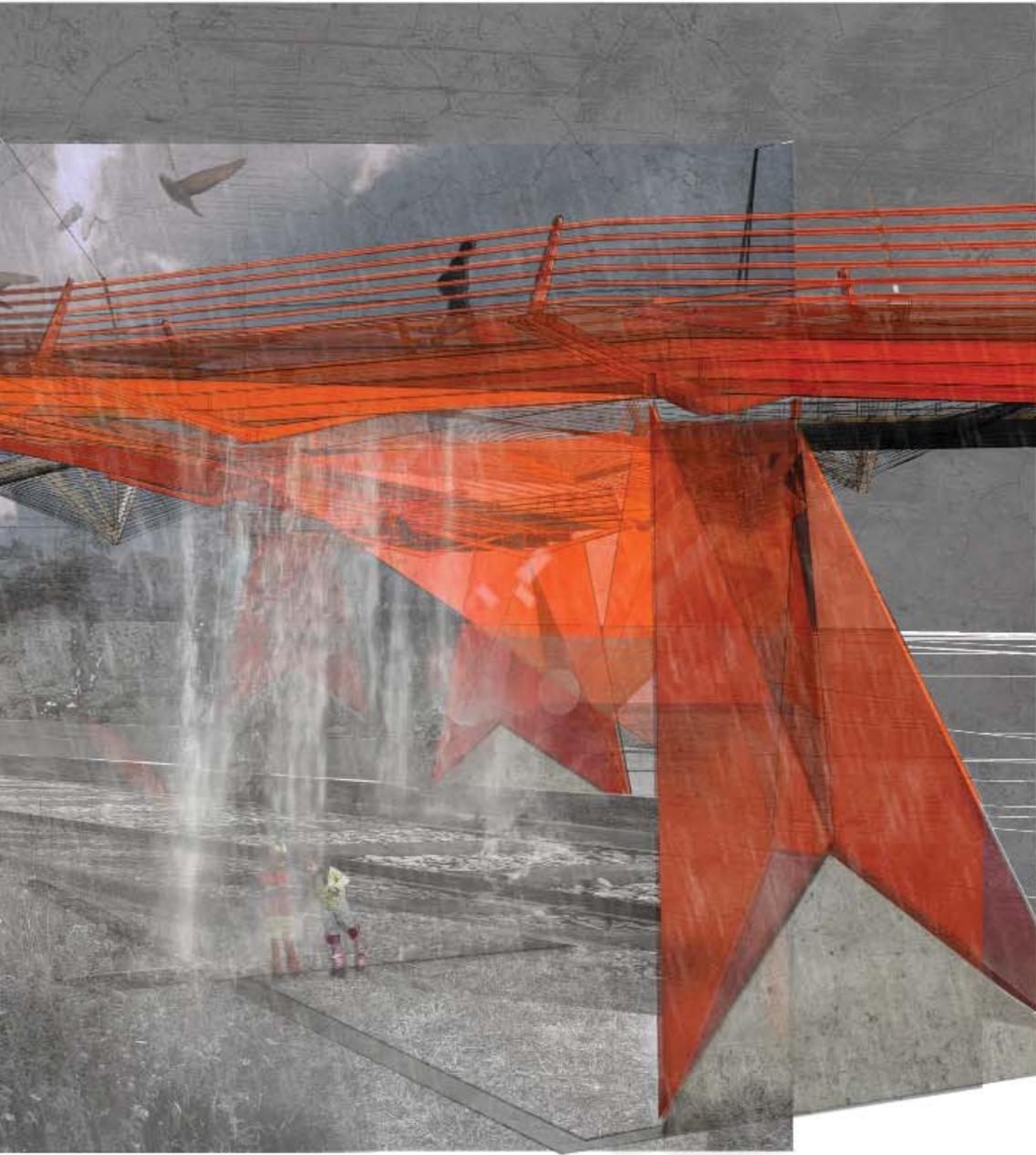


figure 63: Field Node
source: Izzy Lapalice

8 . 4 THE LUMBERYARDS AND THE ART OF WOORDWORKING

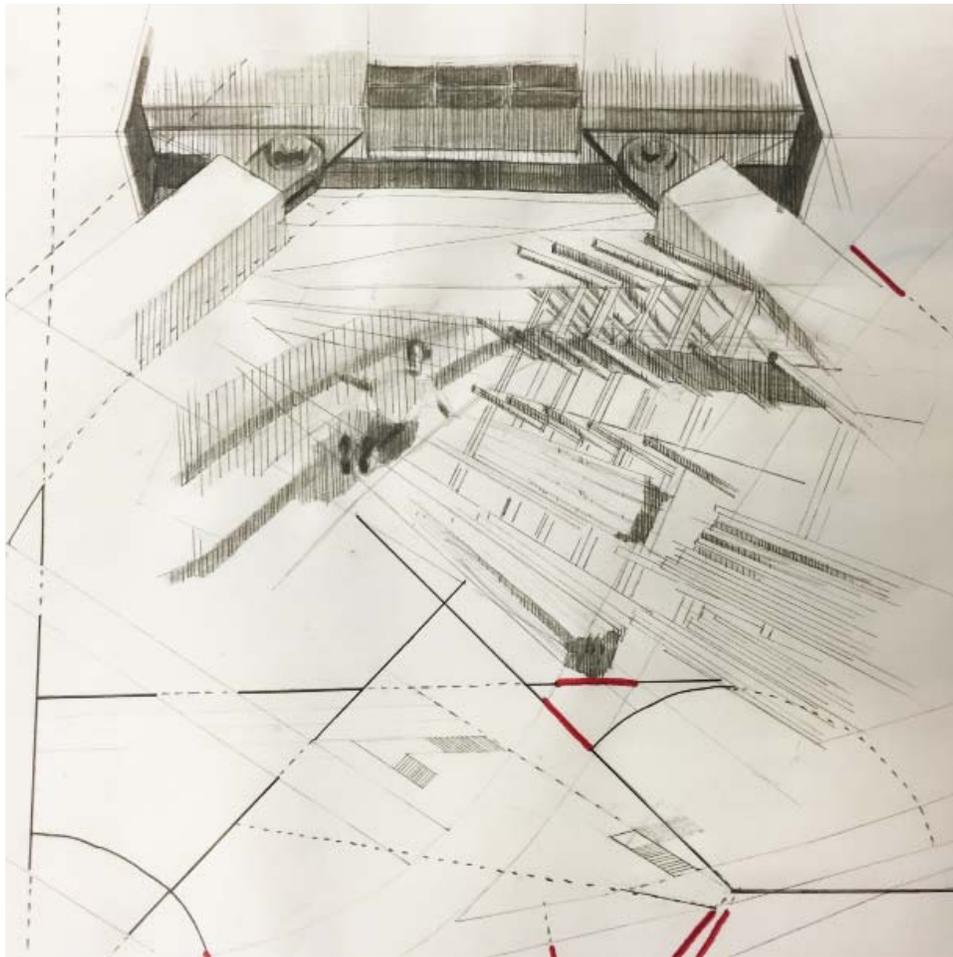


figure 64: Build and Play (detail of figure 24)
source: Izzy Lapalice

The decline of the city's industrialism is particularly felt in the Rosemont neighborhood of Montreal. Formerly bustling with activity, one of the largest industrial sectors of the region, the sector Bellechasse has now taken on newer occupations and moved on. Some remnants persist, islands rooted to the past and standing on deserted grounds; holding on to what is left of industrial memory in the context of a vast residential neighborhood. The sentiment that the sector is struggling to stay engaged within today's urban discourse prompts an understanding that the fleeting industrial sector of Bellechasse is at the brink of change. Rosemont La Petite-Patrie of Montreal is pushing for a revitalization of the area, anticipating an industry outburst and a higher pedestrian occupation rate. In their urbanism program, they wish to maximize greenery, open a network of pedestrian and cycling pathways, incorporate more parks, reduce car-centric activity, and introduce an influx of housing. We suggest to invite growth in the area by drawing on the elements of value that favor a connection between people and the meaning inherent in the fabric and urban configuration of the area. Nestled on the flanks of the Canadian Pacific Railway, the lumberyards of Villeneuve et Cie present an opportunity to draw on the energizing aura surrounding manual

labor emitting from the lumberyards, creating a beautiful condition for a contemporary city that embraces all of its parts. The lumberyards seem to be connected in the industrial sector's narrative involving manual labor and the art of woodworking, an important component in the origins of Canadian History that finds itself in the institutions of sector Bellechasse. Traced back to Fourteenth Century Paris³⁴, the trade of woodworking evolved into a specialization of the profession through the Seventeenth Century, where Quebec finds its woodworking influence under the 150-year occupation of the King of France. The manual art composes an important part of French Canadian History and culture, demonstrated by the support the Quebec Government lends to the then-struggling profession during a census of its artistic heritage in 1937³⁵; leading to the foundation of the prominent woodworking school of Montreal. As a result, the profession experienced a renaissance from which l'École d'Ébénisterie d'Art de Montreal and l'École des Métiers du Meuble de Montréal blossomed with the resurgence of interest invested in the art form. Both institutions are located in the sector, and together with the

34 Celine Dubord, "Métier D'ébéniste Au Québec," Encyclopédie Du Patrimoine Culturel De L'Amérique Française., 2007, , accessed July 5, 2016, http://www.ameriquefrancaise.org/fr/article-113/Métier_d'ébéniste_au_Québec.html#.V99JZq22o_x.

35 Ibid.

area's industrial cradle form a compelling narrative tying the manual arts and the heritage of the lumberyards, along with relics of the former industries. Building on that narrative holds an opportunity for people to connect with the site and its fertile history, which defines the purpose grounding the last node of the journey. This particular node features the most inhabitable space, and hosts a defined program in order to support the manual craft and labor facet of the site. When approaching Rosemont Blvd., the dweller is presented with the foretelling red metal ramps, angled and stacked around a sculptural enclosed wood structure. When stepping off the pedestrian bridge, the dweller is guided to an angular offset platform where they can take in the industrial aura of the grounds and gaze into the horizon; placing them in context before they further connect with the elements of the place. They are then guided down as they outline the platform that offers another level of viewing, as well as utilizing the language of lumberyard warehousing in the expression of details, such as a reinterpretation of the lumber rack and featuring wood connections. The level is also the launching platform of the slides that land in the playground below and which is accompanying the structure. The playground echoes the energy involved in manual labor and creates a dynamic involvement with the narrative of the area. The path following

the ramps wind down to the wooden structure that is intended to display a selection of works issued by the woodworking schools of Montreal, celebrating the craft that plays an important role in Quebec's art legacy.



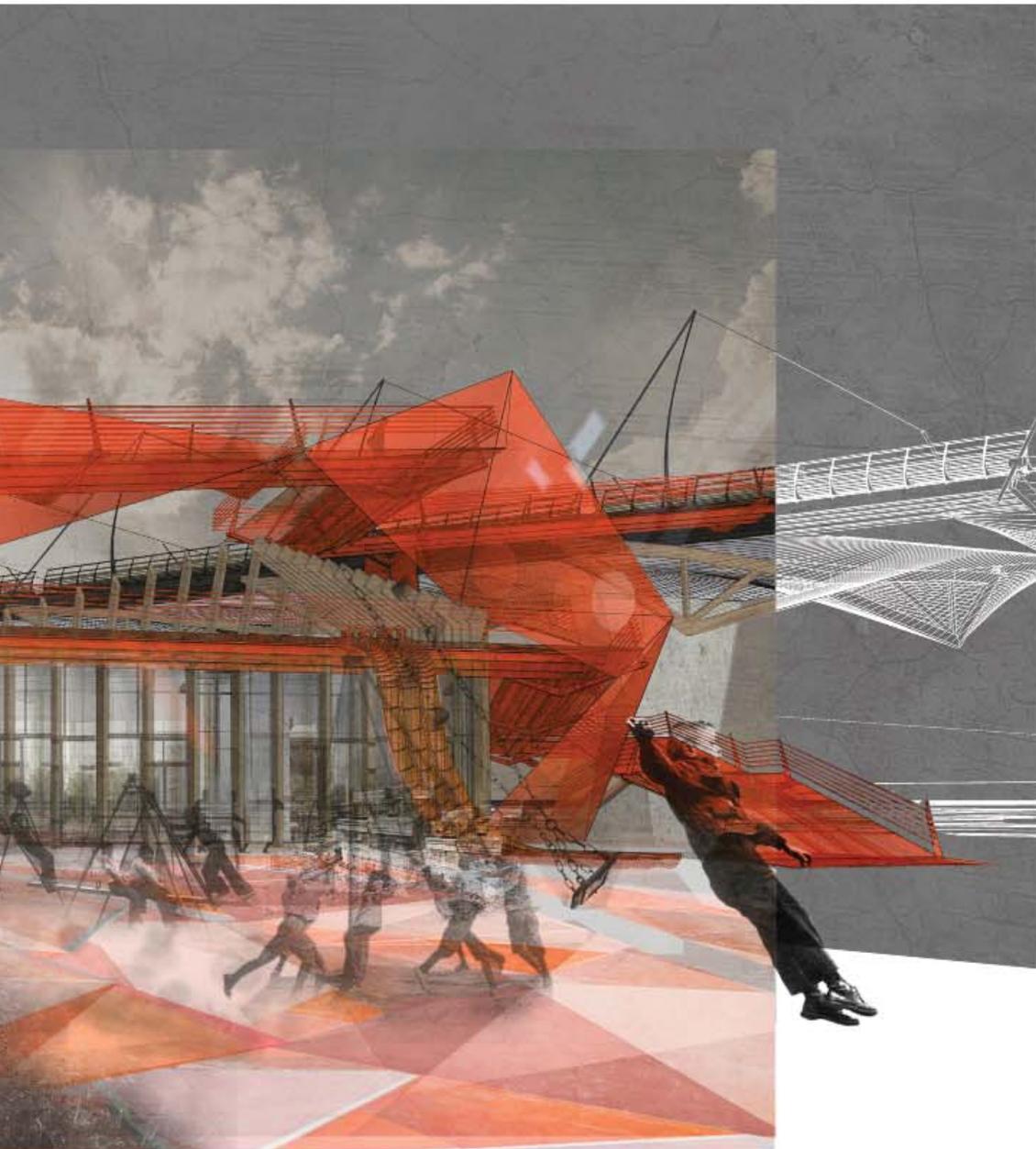


figure 65: Lumberyard & Woodworking Node
source: Izzy Lapalice

9 . 0 C O N C L U S I O N

L O O K I N G T O T H E F U T U R E

As long as they are inhabited by people, cities are bound to change. Evolution is a direct consequence of the human condition; and as people progressively transform, they modify their environment to better suit their needs. A stagnant city is one that has lost its place amongst people, a condition that sees its spirit extinguished. In order to ensure that the transformation of Montreal evolves upon its defining essence, we prioritize moments that build an emotional connection within people to the city and its spaces, thus edifying its meaning. The Van Horne overpass in the Mile End exists in a current dissociating condition with the neighborhoods it borders, which are all at the brink of change. The Mile End, the Champ des Possibles, the Bellechasse sector and the areas below the overpass have all been identified by citizens, as well as urban comities as lacking movement and inhabitable urban space. We proposed to guide the impending developments with an urban gesture that grounds the elements that are deemed of value to the city, and which set a narrative that people can strongly connect to. The Van Horne warehouse, the sub-spaces below the bridge, the Champ des Possibles, and the industrial setting of the Lumberyards in relation to the art of woodworking are all identified as valuable fragments that are part of the constellation

defining the city. Bound in the experience of a pedestrian journey, the urban bridge and its sprawling nodes perform as a vehicle of intimate discovery allowing for people to relate to Montreal. The resulting surge of activity defined by the narrative, and propelled by the scale of the infrastructure describes a strong direction for urban developments to come. Supporting an interactive approach, the project offers space within the ground treatment for anyone who wishes to get involved with the city, reinforcing the connection to any intervention within the context embodied in the journey.

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