

FINAL FANTASY:

A TWO-PART ARCHITECTURAL FAIRY TALE

BY

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ABSTRACT.

Architecture exists through the process of thought and imagination. The idea or desire for a building can be conceived as a fictional story imagined by an architect. It begins as an idea, which becomes a design, translated into a drawing, and constructed as a realized development of the architect's fantasy. However, the representations of unrealized "utopian" architecture can be more convincing than the architecture itself. The building inhabited by a user, or observed by a viewer, is a narration of the final plot of the architect's dream. The connection between architecture and its ability to tell stories exists within the representation of architecture; here in this thesis, where Art Deco as a style, flourished through fantasy. Throughout the early 20th century, New York Art Deco was successful in illustrating the style's associated era and triumph, imagining an optimistic future associated with the Industrial Revolution. New York City's theatrical facades provide residents and visitors with an architectural stage that performs the tale of the "American dream". As for the rest of the world, following World War I, architects felt responsible to reimagine cities and present a hopeful future for the public through utopian ideals presented throughout Europe. Thinking about the contemporary world and the on-going issues society faces, today an optimistic future is hard to imagine. This thesis will begin by exploring the pleasurable qualities of the New York Art Deco, the utopian theories presented by European Architects, and the unfavourable qualities of fictional dystopian fantasies. It envisions what might be an unsettling contemporary fairytale for the future of our cities, while warning readers that this two-part fictional story could be true—if current tendencies prevail.

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PROLOGUE.

As I walk through the streets of New York City, I have this inexplicable feeling. This feeling of excitement and curiosity, yet I am hesitant and overwhelmed. I want to take in every inch of the streetscape. I want to see, touch, feel, and smell, the aura surrounding the century old Art Deco buildings. Walking down E 42nd Street from Madison Ave, I come across the Chanin Building, Chrysler Building, and the Daily News Building. My eyes follow the verticality of the Art Deco Skyscrapers and I can't help but imagine the triumph and ostentatiousness of the roaring 1920s. I blink my eyes and suddenly, my hair is cut to a short boyish style, I am dressed in a glamorous, Erté gown, linking arms with equally alluring friends, as we skip over to the Waldorf Astoria Hotel. I am swiftly free of my worries. I feel alive. I blink again, and that fantasy is gone, but the buildings remain. The fantasy exists within the buildings' flamboyant style. For me, Art Deco tells a story like no other. The style's phenomenal ornamental craftsmanship, subtle hidden messages and geometric forms, brings these buildings to life. They stand prominently on the street with a radiating aura. I can feel their energy. I can feel the emotions emanating from the construction of these buildings and the powerful accomplishments associated with that time. They are the mementos of the past, the true "spirit of the age".

My spirit awakens in New York City, one hundred years later...

MANIFESTO.

No metropolis is perfect. We are not perfect. Yet, we strive for perfection as we struggle to progress as an individual or as an entire city; we remain focused on attaining utopia. But utopia is not achievable. It is a realized place of imaginary structure. We as humans cannot solve the problems of the world. We are faced with daily issues of race and gender, war and violence, immigration and displacement, and the irreversible effects of climate change and global warming. If we were able to solve these problems and miraculously achieve utopia, we would create havoc in another form. We cannot be perfect. But we can live progressively through embodying utopian ideals. The imagination of architects and planners' visions for a utopian society exist in our world today. Their efforts take part in creating a better living environment for us as inhabitants. But through these efforts, the fantasy is mostly in the contemporary architecture of today. We blink and no longer imagine an alternative reality; but rather, the reality is that this is not a fantasy. The thought of imagining Ginger Rogers and Fred Astaire dancing onto the balcony no longer exists within our imagination, and our spirits lie dormant. Architects hold the power to the future. Architecture can dictate our emotions. Ornament is not a crime. Ornament is not simply carvings and sculpture fixed on a façade; but rather the attempt to create a fantastical space through material and motive. A space that awakens our spirit. The theories and drawings of great architectural thinkers have assisted my imagination, in envisioning what a fairy tale for the future—could be. I believe buildings should tell stories; they should be **fairy tales**.

This thesis is my architectural fairy tale.



Fig.02 / New York

“Oh music in stone, poetry in sculpture, song in architectural marble, prayer in granite, an ecstasy in steel and gold, singing city of the great heart, singing city, You are Manhattan!”

- Edwin Curran

INTRODUCTION.

The architecture of the past holds evidence of concepts and imagination revealed in its very fabric allowing viewers to witness an alternative reality presented through a building's ornament and style—an architectural narrative. Stories that are physically depicted within a building's façade, tend to visually educate viewers on a building's identity. For architecture to succeed in providing an imaginative narrative for its visitors, it does not need to demonstrate historical accuracy; rather it should offer provoking and fantastical experiences that awaken our spirits from within the depths of our imagination. While contemporary architecture may be more concerned with pragmatic and economic issues, the need for an expression which demonstrates to future generations the 'spirit' of our time and preoccupations of deeper social significance remain relevant. In the 1920s, after the devastating effects of World War I, architects and theorists were focused on utopian visions for improving human life and providing a hopeful future for society. Specifically, German Expressionists were dedicated to rehabilitating German societies by restructuring cities for the future. Their focus was on achieving a realized place that was able to generate dream-like qualities as a form of escape from the known, ensuing crises. These visions were best depicted in fictional narratives and film scripts which aimed to forewarn society of the impacts of modernizing cities and the potential terror the world could experience. Perhaps the need for contemporary narratives with similar prophetic warnings has returned. This is where the fairy tale begins.

Fantasy

“implies an architectural composition that is strange and unfamiliar to the eye, sometimes within the realms of possibility, but usually...fantastic.”¹

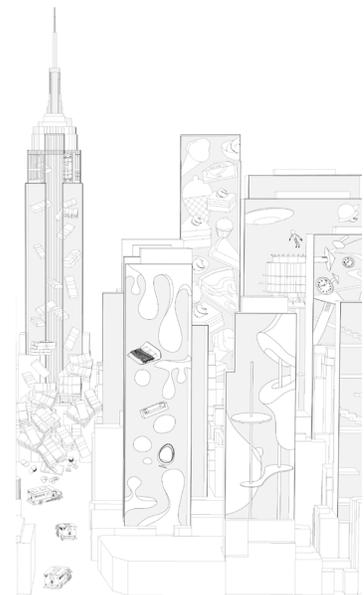


Fig.03 / Our Deep Fantasy

Blank Space's *Fairy Tales* is a New York-based competition that requires architects and designers to envision architecture as an imaginative story that challenges "architecture to rethink its role in society, by speaking about things we can all relate to". Their theory that "architecture can do more", is thus aligned with the imaginative characteristics of Art Deco explored in this thesis, utopian theories of post-war Europe, and fictional, dystopian futures of modernizing metropolises, in order to permit viewers to escape reality and enter a realm of fantasy. The competition is comprised of creating an imaginative short story, along with visionary images that take readers away on a journey, allowing architecture to play a theatrical role in storytelling, engaging the public in believing something that isn't real – or built. This thesis presents a two-part modern fairy tale for our future that reflects upon the theories analyzed throughout this thesis while adapting current issues into illustrative posters with individually expressed conditions of a possible future. The posters and their associated stories are attempts at making society conscious of what our architecture might communicate to future generations. *Final Fantasy: Part One*, a submission for Blank Space's 2020 entry, is a true "fairy tale", envisioning a harmonious, utopian future for the year 2220 that solves issues relating to the current world. "Part Two" continues to address these issues, while imagining what will happen if these heterotopic conditions worsen over the next ten years. Five short fairy tales that illustrate extreme conditions – revealing circumstances that are emerging in our world in the year 2020. The following chapters lead to this modern-day "fairy tale" that will take readers away on a not-so-illusory journey.

ART DECO

The architecture during the 1920s and 1930s in New York City managed to express the city's economic success and an optimistic future through the architectural style: Art Deco. Post-World War I Manhattan saw a rebounding economy in 1922 through the rise of the Second Industrial Revolution. According to Jason M. Barr in "Building the Skyline: The Growth and Birth of Manhattan's Skyscrapers", Manhattan was described as the nation's capital of communication, finance, and trade; where business owners and shareholders were providing the city with an overall affluent economy.²

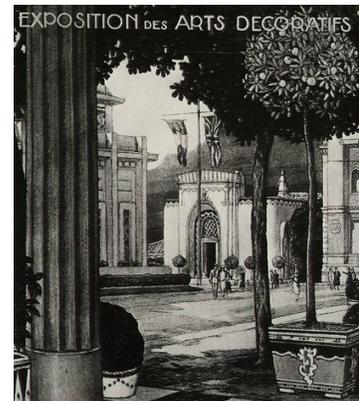


Fig.04 / *L'Exposition Internationale des Arts Décoratifs et Industriels Modernes*, illustration cover, 1925

The smell of wealth was in the air. Women were liberated with the right to vote, immigrants and migrants were flocking to the city, the jazz age was flourishing, the automobile was born, alcohol was cheap, and life was marvelous. Dreams of optimism were envisioned through the design and ornament of the building, as Norbert Messler points out in "The Art Deco Skyscraper in New York"³.

"Form followed desire"⁴.

The skyscraper, with its symbolism of masculinity and man's need for stability, progress, and aspiration, was morphed into the ornament and decoration of a building's façade; while providing a narrative event of fantasy and exotic escape.⁵ Such thinking and expression resulted from the popularity and success of the *L'Exposition Internationale des Arts Décoratifs et Industriels Modernes*, held in Paris in 1925; the event that established the magic of Art Deco.⁶ The style quickly became all the rage, with the rise of this new "skyscraper style"⁷.

Marketers strategically used Art Deco's recognizable geometric forms and symmetrical patterns as advertisements to promote consumer goods. Consumers wanted to be immersed in the fantasy of Art Deco;¹⁰ the fantasy that was created within the style, a culture that was unique to the age. **Can we reimagine the stylistic qualities of Art Deco in architecture today, in reviving the fantasy that décor and ornament provided, as a form of storytelling?**

After the stock market crash in 1929, Art Deco skyscrapers continued to rise; their ornament reflected the sentiment that "things will get better" through the Great Depression in the following decade. The optimistic fantasy remained in the message and ornament of buildings through New York City's tough times encountered in the 1930s.

UTOPIA

European architects and theorists during the 1920s were focused on utopian ideals to instill hope within residents after World War I. Many drawings and theories were working against the dystopian views of destroyed cities, to reimagine them as realized developments of utopian fantasy. The plans for utopian cities by German Expressionist architects will be analyzed and discussed, as architectural expressions of optimism, providing better conditions for humanity.¹¹

"Form followed desire"

Phrase coined by historian, Norbert Messler in *The Art Deco Skyscraper in New York*, 1983.

Skyscraper Style

"Building that tapers upward in conformity to the 1916 Zoning Law"⁸... "a legislative factor which caused an obsession with stepped-back pyramidal forms in the 1920's and '30's"⁹.

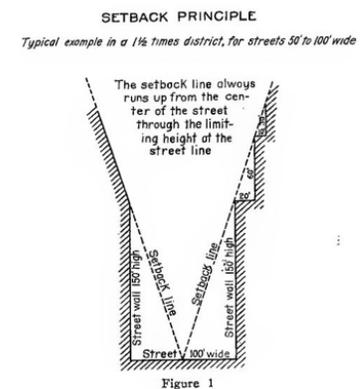


Fig.05 / Setback Principle Diagram, New York's 1916 Zoning Principle, 1916

Their dreams for new civilizations, living harmoniously with nature, were architectural fantasies expressed as urban tales. Here architecture can be said to exist in parallel with fictional stories. **Can we argue that contemporary architecture has separated from its connection to fictional stories?** Nathaniel Coleman, an architectural theorist, believes that architecture should provide the same imaginative quality when a building is erected, as imagined through the design process.¹² In “Architecture and Utopia”, Coleman claims that the design process is like a fictional story that leads readers to believe that the story is true. **If architecture can be imagined as a fictional story, similar to a work of art, then shouldn't architecture provide the same unexpected and refreshing sentiments?**

Here, architecture is envisioned as utopian stories where architects are responsible for providing living environments that should improve current or past conditions. Regarding temple architecture, Greg Kerr, in “Utopian Architecture of the Temples in Mid-Nineteenth-Century France”, describes how sacred spaces have the power of revealing an unanticipated experience for its visitors. This experience is often described through the characteristics of the Gothic Cathedral, in offering comfortability and rejuvenation within a space. Coloured glass was believed to create the sensation of astral fantasy and provide dream-like qualities that could benefit inhabitants. Stained glass featured in Gothic Cathedrals emulated colours found in nature; perfectly made, as organic elements of the earth in order to heighten our emotional experience. **Can we achieve a utopic expression if we are able to reunite architecture with nature? By uniting elements found in nature, will these utopian qualities provide us with more imaginative living conditions for the future?**

The sensation of experiencing architecture that emanates joy and enhances the emotional well-being of inhabitants and visitors are held within the implications of utopian qualities. These theories are essential elements in *Final Fantasy: Part One*, a utopian fairy tale that imagines a renewed, harmonious world that resolves the troubles of the current world.

NON-PARADISE

Through the era of industrialization, technology was becoming increasingly popular as a mode of advancing society towards modernity. In some media,

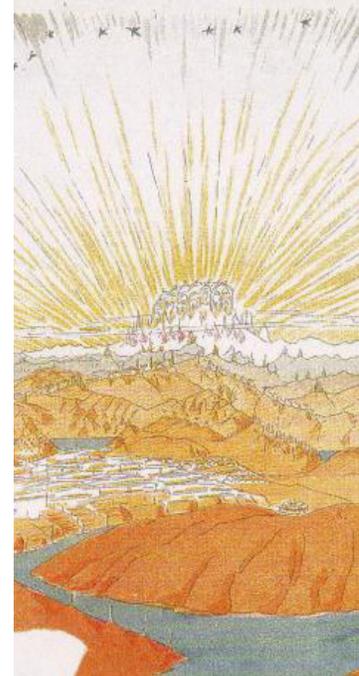


Fig.06 / Sample. Bruno Taut, *Das Baugebiet, vom Monte Generoso gesehen*, 1919

the foreboding power of technology was also envisioned as a dystopic projection that would ultimately destroy society. This fear of technological progress was expressed through film, cultural critiques, and fictional stories, where the future metropolis embodied fatalistic characteristics. These dystopian qualities are initially imagined as utopian realities, naively disguised as modern fantasies. In reference to Fritz Lang's *Metropolis* (1927), according to Anton Kaes in "Metropolis: City, Cinema, Modernity", the film embodied utopian characteristics of Art Deco interiors, futuristic technology, and fused this with the unity of the Gothic cathedral.¹³

As expressed by Anton Kaes, *Metropolis* was said to illustrate eternal social peace. However, workers became dehumanized and incarcerated by the technological advancement of the machine, and the divide between societal classes was reintroduced to resist modernity. **Can we say that today, the contemporary world faces the challenge of being incarcerated in the advancement of technology?** Architects have become more efficient through production methods which make their work increasingly pragmatic. Architects such as Frank Gehry and Zaha Hadid use technology to keep the fantasy of architecture alive.

In reference to L. Frank Baum's *The Wizard of Oz*, the main character, Dorothy, is found dreaming of a fantastical place that would free her from her every day worries. When she is finally confronted with the dream-like place of "Emerald City", she finds herself wishing to return home, repeating the phrase: "there is no place like home". This can be understood through the concept suggested by Alan Colquhoun, that "the architecture of the future would return to the true traditions, in which it was believed, a harmonious and organic unity had existed between all the cultural phenomena of each age"¹⁴.

Has our contemporary architecture returned to this "true" tradition in combining the cultural qualities of each age? Can we say that this idea relates to Paul Scheerbart's thoughts that "culture is a product of our architecture"? **In that case, by being completely immersed in the fantasy of the crystal skyscrapers present today, are crystal skyscrapers the expression of our current world view?** These questions are posed in determining what the expression of our time may be while reimagining it as a fantasy that no longer wishes to be true.

Architecture requires a balance of utopian ideals and optimism that heightens inhabitants' emotional response to their living conditions, through architecture's ability to tell stories. However, we must be conscious of the tragic endings fairy tales can forecast, which may be nascent in our contemporary world and the challenges we currently face.



Fig.07 / *Blade Runner* (1982)
Film still showing the predicted future of the year 2019

ARCHITECTURE MUST BE RECONSIDERED AS SPACES THAT CAN AWAKEN OUR SPIRITS AND REMIND US OF THE JOYS OUR WORLD CAN BRING, ARCHITECTURE BEING ONE OF THEM.

This thesis then sets out as a two-part story for the future, making humanity think about our actions that may lead us to a more troubling future, if we continue to neglect the issues of the current world, while uncovering topics that are believed to alter our moods and enlighten our spirits – elements that our world may be in need of, in order to reconnect man with art and nature. *Final Fantasy: A Two-Part Architectural Fairy Tale* will reflect upon our contemporary architecture and what it communicates about our current world, in comparison to the hopeful future that was envisioned for North America during the roaring twenties.

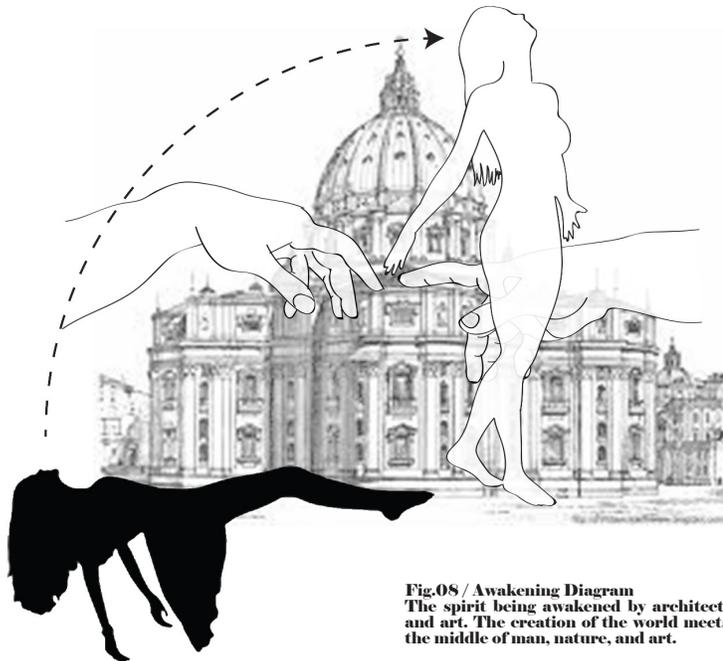


Fig.08 / Awakening Diagram
The spirit being awakened by architecture and art. The creation of the world meets at the middle of man, nature, and art.

IT'S STORY TIME.

THE ONE IN...

Art deCO

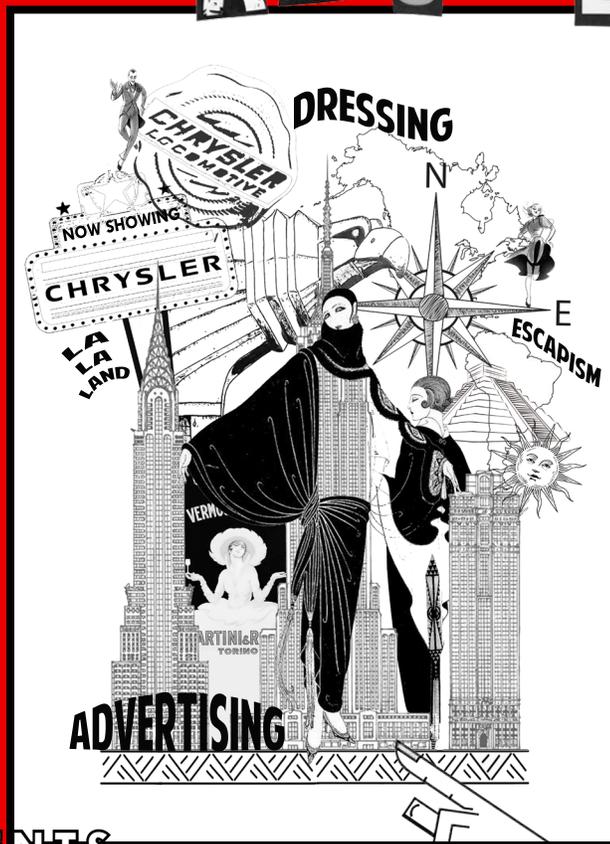


Fig.09 / Art Deco Theme Collage

EVENTS
1900s-1930s

DRESSING
ESCAPISM
ADVERTISING
LA LA LAND

01:00

01:00

ART DECO

The architecture during the 1920s and 1930s in New York City can be viewed as expressive in displaying the city's economic success through the architectural style: Art Deco. This representation was achieved by the stylistic qualities that were carried through the optimistic ideals held in the culture of the style; formed by the city's revival through the rise of the Industrial Revolution in the early 1920's.

"Form followed desire", as Messler suggests, the ornament and form of Art Deco skyscrapers were said to symbolize the nation's desires. The concept of displaying the nation's desires through architecture is crucial, as contemporary architecture tends to demonstrate the same elements, but through technological proficiency. These elements should be depicted as stories through architecture that illustrates the city's success achieved by all residents; uniting society through everyone's contribution.

According to Anthony Robbins, in his text "Art is Advertising", in *New York Art Deco: A Guide to Gotham's Jazz Architecture*, he states that the style began to draw upon fantasies of exotic places, sourcing from the European, Classical tradition of the École des Beaux-Arts in Paris.¹ Art Deco architects intended to create the metropolis of tomorrow by erecting "powerful expressions of an urban enterprise", imagining New York City as the capital of the world.² Where Messler described that, architects associated the art deco skyscraper and the skyscraper city, to the "drama of the time", while displaying it through the imagery of fantasy and exoticism.³



Fig.10 / Men having lunch on a steel beam for the RCA Building (now GE Electric), New York City, New York, September 1932



Fig.11 / *The New Yorker* cover, August 1926



Fig.12 / *Wisdom*, Lee Lawrie, (Main entrance of the Rockefeller Center) 1933

“Wisdom is considered the creative power of the universe, and the figure’s commanding slant, intimidating expression and biblical quote help convey his strength, impact and control over man.”

The Art Deco style was considered a new way to celebrate the city's achievements and the anticipated success—i.e. fashion, design, etc.

Art Deco became recognized through consumer goods by strategically advertising products in the style's familiar patterns and forms. Consumers wished to be immersed in the fantasy of Art Deco; moving towards their most modern self and the progress of the city.⁴ New York City was characterized by the Art Deco style and was developed as a culture attainable for the massive middle-class population.

After the stock market crash in 1929, Anthony Robbins claims that Art Deco skyscrapers continued to rise, however, their ornament reflected the sentiment of hope through the Great Depression into the following decade, arguably stating that the optimistic fantasy remained in the message and ornament carved into the Art Deco skyscrapers, through the tough times that New York City faced in the 1930s. The themes presented in Art Deco during the early 20th century have a direct connection to the thesis as it goes on to analyze whether the utopian ideals exist today. We will then pose the question of whether an interpretation of Art Deco as a utopian fantasy is relevant in approaching contemporary architecture. To pursue this, the term 'dressing' and its metaphorical links to this enquiry is examined.

01:01 DRESSING

Louis Sullivan, an American architect of the Art Deco period, believed that, like humans, buildings must be dressed, as clothes are the “**details of decoration and adornment**”⁵.

Can we then say that clothes are the element that enhances beauty? For example, it may be considered that a female is found more alluring when dressed in a beautifully detailed, formal gown, than when dressed in everyday clothes. Not that casual clothes do not flourish in displaying her beauty, but the dress seduces a viewer in a fashion that casual clothes cannot. The viewer becomes transfixed in a state of “hypnosis”, as Jean Baudrillard, French sociologist, philosopher, and cultural theorist, may suggest. What then is ‘dressing’? We might consider French philosopher, Vincent Descombes’s theory on self-image, in exploring this concept further. He writes:

*“It is seductive to be seduced, and consequently, it is being seduced that is seductive. In other words, the one seduced finds himself in the person of seducing. What the person seduced sees in the one who seduces him, the unique object of fascination...”*⁶.

In Jean Baudrillard’s book, *Seduction*, he claims that it may not necessarily be the femininity of something that seduces you, but rather the fact that the seductive quality of an object or imagery is directed at you and finds the viewer caught in an obsessive gaze.⁷ Is Baudrillard right and can we extend this to buildings? What is captured in a trance, through observing a beautifully coloured, and detailed garment, which just happens to be worn by a woman? Can this relation-

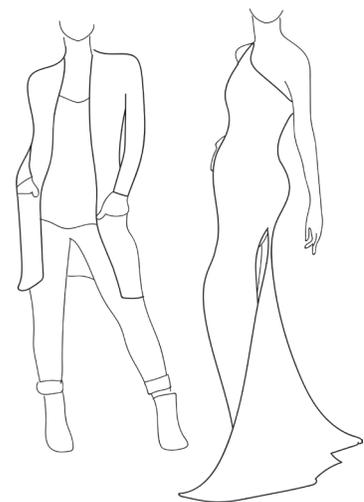


Fig.13 / Dressing Comparison, Casual vs. Formal

ship be transferred between building and viewer?

Women may choose to dress in seductive clothing to attract viewers of the opposite sex; ultimately, enhancing beauty. Just as a woman feels more powerful and confident when she is dressed in a garment that captures viewers, does the same hold true for architecture? Are dressed buildings more powerful? Erté, a French-Russian artist, shows seduction in women during the early 20th century with mesmerizing drawings of female fashion. How might we apply this idea to today's gender fluidity expression?

Relating this back to the viewer's point of view, can we argue that he/she is more attracted and intrigued by a building that is 'dressed', rather than a façade that solely caters to the building's function? So, what then is a dressed building? Can viewers be caught in a state of hypnosis when confronting a powerfully dressed building?

If "form follows function", did Louis Sullivan contradict himself? Sullivan's facades were noticeably ornate. This was Sullivan's way of expressing that a building's mass must follow the building's intended purpose. However, Sullivan's simple form and ornate exterior are rejected by the popular American architect, Ely Jacques Kahn who claimed that "ornament should never compensate for a poorly planned structure"⁸. At the time, a poorly planned structure may have been a building that lacked the intricacy of set-backs that some architects took advantage of in planning a building in the Art Deco style, whereby the ornament would have had to compensate for the need of visual stimulation. This does not mean that Sullivan's buildings were poorly planned, but in the eyes of an Art Deco architect, his choice of simply formed buildings may have been disputed. True an assembly line production may require a long, linear building but can we not still say that many Art Deco buildings in New York City were dressed in an ornament and style that depicted the building's program? A program of desire and beauty?

A program of narrative escapism?

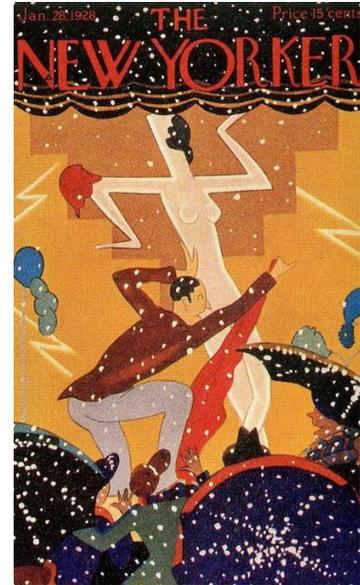


Fig.14 / The *New Yorker* cover, January 1928



Fig.15 / Detail. Guaranty Building, Louis Sullivan. Buffalo, New York, 1896



Fig.16 / *Fountain of Youth*, Ezra Winter. (Lobby mural in Radio City Music Hall) 1932



Fig.17 / Dressing Comparison, Erté vs. Radiator Building

01:02 ESCAPISM

Art Deco functioned as an expression of escapism and vehicle for seduction. According to Norbert Messler, many Art Deco buildings in New York City erected in the 1920s, illustrated decorative elements that were found in Mayan, African, Egyptian, Persian, Japanese, and Chinese cultures. Art Deco architects believed in bringing the fantasy of a foreign place to the streets of Manhattan. Buildings became robed in the exotic. In the 1920s, travel was only for the elite, few had the opportunity to visit these foreign places. Escape had to be local for all residents to experience it. The exotic imagery used in Art Deco facades were said to be influenced by the foreign pavilions in the 1925 Paris World's Fair.⁹ Countries from around the world contributed by implementing their vernacular style and culture into the decoration and ornament of interior decor, furniture, fashion, jewelry, and household objects.¹⁰ Was this a form of dressing architecture?

Art Deco facades by Ely Jacques Kahn can be seen as wondrous examples that take the viewer on an exotic adventure. Kahn traveled widely during his career, utilizing geometric forms and colours that he often found in places he visited such as North Africa and the Middle East.¹¹ He believed that facades should create a "union of function and emotional expression" that "glow with intelligence and imaginative courage"¹².

In observing Kahn's Two Park Avenue building, he uses coloured terracotta panels in red, blue, yellow, and green, with decorative trim that might resemble his familiarity with Egyptian culture. The building serves as an office



Fig.18 / Detail. Chanin Building, Sloan & Robertson, New York City, New York, 1927



Fig.19 / Detail. 2 Park Avenue Building, Ely Jacques Kahn, New York City, New York, 1928

building that added to the lively atmosphere of the 1920s through its elaborate dressings. A typical “stage-set” design for Kahn to shape “elements into a pattern with such repetitions and contrasts as he may find desirable in materializing his mental image”¹³. Therefore, the designs of Kahn’s facades were forms of showcasing his personal knowledge of exotic travel.

The General Electric Building by Cross & Cross (1931) was initially designed for the Radio Corporation of America and commissioned by them. The building embodies ornament that suggests electricity and current, which was easily transferred to the General Electric Company after the company’s split in 1931. The building’s recognizable figure at the top of the building may be interpreted as female, as she seems to carry an energy radiating headdress. The figures and faces, the details carved along the sides of the building, together with the zigzag patterns meant to represent energy and current may resemble qualities of the ancient Mayan civilization. This is a dressed architecture.

The ziggurat temple style and bas-relief used for depicting stories of past Mayan dynasties, seem to be an influence for the decorative elements of the General Electric Building. Viewers were able to fantasize about the culture of these foreign places. We might ask, did they dress accordingly, and did advertising start feeding into these images? Why is electricity dressed in Mayan culture so seductive? What can we learn from cultured escapism that manages to seduce the passer-by? Does embellishment serve advertisement and the promotion of a new lifestyle?



Fig.20 / Detail. RCA Building (Now General Electric Building), Cross & Cross, New York City, New York, 1931

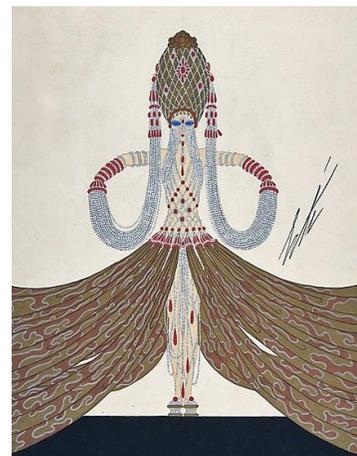


Fig.21 / *La Richesse*, drawing, Erte, 1923

01:03 ADVERTISING

As we proposed dressing as a metaphor for Art Deco buildings, consumers were seduced by advertising and by all things that resembled the style. Art Deco buildings became massive forms of advertisement. Let us return to Anthony Robbins, who claimed that the Art Deco style was used as “an advertising art for its clients”¹⁴.

Can we speak of narcissisms here? As Vincent Descombes suggests, in order to reach the state of hypnosis through the seduction by an object, the viewer must see “his own seductive, charming self, his lovable self-image...”¹⁵. Are not some of the most alluring Art Deco facades seductive through their narcissistic qualities, dressed to depict the ego of the client and age?

Take the Chrysler Building in New York City by William Van Alen for Walter Chrysler in 1928, for example. The building is dressed in Chrysler’s identifiable automotive symbols and decorated in metals that emphasize the idea of the technology and the automobile while being one of the tallest developments of advertisement present in the New York City skyline.¹⁶ The emphasis of the “Chrysler image” becomes seductive through its strategic ornament, form, and materials. It is a monument of fascination seen through Walter Chrysler’s pride and success.

Although the Chrysler Building was never intended to serve the function of the automobile company, its form was expressive of Chrysler’s achievements and futuristic vision. It was so successful as a visionary expression that it became one of Manhattan’s most iconic Art Deco skyscrapers. Is the Chrysler Building considered such a beautifully rendered rendition of Art Deco due to its criticism of

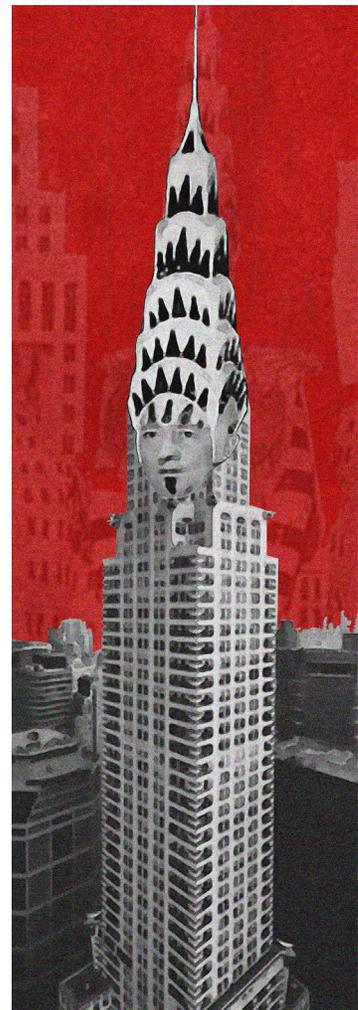


Fig.22 / Architect Ego

being viewed as a feminine skyscraper, compared to the robust, masculine design of the Empire State Building? Does an overly dressed “feminine” building lead us into a state of La La Land?



Fig.23 / Detail. Chrysler Building, William Van Alen, New York City, New York, 1928

01:04 LA LA LAND

In the 1920s, prior to the Stock Market Crash of 1929, a flamboyant lifestyle became increasingly more desirable; particularly for the workers who rose from poverty to newfound comfort. Immigrants and New Yorkers were seen as equal, through their work opportunities and the achievement of the American Dream. The constant celebration of the city's growing economic success was generated by the workers, business owners, and stock market shareholders. The ideal city was becoming realized through the city's architecture and economic status. Were buildings mimicking the aesthetics of the liberated woman? Was the entire streetscape, as well as the people inhabiting it, living in a dream? This was a special La La Land.



Fig.24 / *Diggers of Broadway* (1929)
Film still depicting typical party of the 1920s.

THE ONE IN...

UTOPIA



Fig. 25 / Utopia Collage

EVENTS
1890s-1920s

ARCHITECTURE &
LITERATURE
UTOPIAN TEMPLE
GLASS UTOPIA

02:00

02:00

UTOPIA

“Our business here is to be Utopian, to make vivid and credible, if we can, first this facet and then that, of an imaginary whole and happy world.”

- H.G. Wells (1905)

Following the tragedy of the First World War, architects believed that they had the means to solve the problems of the world. Post-war catastrophe resulted in destroyed civilizations and discouraged populations, that were in search of new beginnings. This provided modern architects with the opportunity to re-imagine or imagine, cities that could express utopian ideals and instill a future of hope for its residents.¹ These principles supported the idea of escaping our current troubles and starting a new life elsewhere. This was often the focus of German Expressionists; whose theories will be explored herein. German Expressionists architects dedicated their lives and work to improving the lives of others. During the early 1920s, Germany was conscious of its need for change, whereby the country's hope for modernity was set in the drastic transformation that its architecture had to undergo. Visions for new cities consisted of **harmonious and organic unity** between all the cultural phenomena of each age; uniting all societal classes in advancing towards modernity.²

Ruth Levitas defines “Utopia” as a “theory”, rather than a “definition”, emphasizing that the “one function of utopia is the education of desire [...] in the context of an analytic rather than a descriptive definition”³. Levitas thus suggests that almost any “activity, cultural artifact, or program may be utopian”⁴. Utopia

Definition of Utopia via Merriam Webster:

1. a place of ideal perfection especially in laws, government, and social conditions
2. an impractical scheme for social improvement
3. an imaginary and indefinitely remote place

exists within the subconscious. Architects dream of creating the perfect building, with the perfect plan, and the perfect resident residing in that plan. However, architects cannot meditate residents' actions, but they can facilitate residents' moods through utopian ideals in an attempt to create a more desirable living environment. Nathaniel Coleman, an architectural theorist, explains how Tower Sargent identifies the value of city plans and architectural designs as forms of utopian imagination:

According to him [Tower Sargent], a city plan or an architectural design may be a form of utopian imagination (or spring from it) but only insofar as the as of yet "non-existent" plan or design describes the new condition it proposes "in considerable detail," enough so to adequately explain how individuals or groups imagined as inhabiting either might actually do so "in time and space." Likewise, such schemes must delineate how what is proposed could become the setting for a society "considerably better than the society in which" we presently live. ("Defining Utopia within Utopian Studies: Prolegomenon to the Problem of Architecture and Utopia" 4).

This view of utopia was perceived through many forms of thinking, from architects around the world, and at various scales. Architects imagined endless opportunities for architectural fantasies that could be translated into realized developments with an ideal society.

Utopia is associated with the concept of fantasy, suggesting that utopian cities are imaginary places that may only exist within the imagination. Architects with great imaginations produced drawings of realized fantasies; where, depending on the dreamer, the vision of a utopian city was illustrated according to the romantic idealisms of the architect.⁵

Similar to the symbolic metaphors of Art Deco ornament; expressing the success of the roaring twenties and the optimistic futures following the Great Depression, architects perceived visions of utopia, through their personal desires of what their "perfect" utopia might reveal while imagining that they may through their work, "solve the problems of the world".

The concept of utopia is thus described as a place greater than the current condition. An imaginary place that can exist within a realized world containing ideals of bettering what already exists. Levitas uses a broader definition of utopia claiming that utopia is an "expression of desire for a better way of living".⁶

Utopian visions are essential. They are what drives our desires.

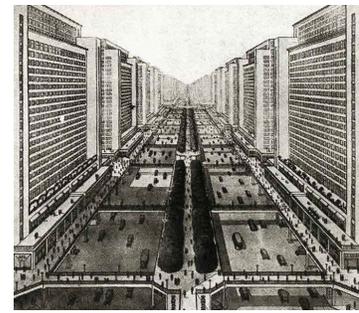


Fig.26 / Le Corbusier. *Ville Radieuse*. 1930



Fig.27 / Peter Cook. *Plug-in City*. 1964.



Fig.28 / José Maria Sert. *American Progress*. Painting. (Lobby ceiling mural in Rockefeller Center), 1937.

Architecture cannot exist without utopia.⁷ Architecture and utopia play with reality by “**inventing new worlds and imagine worlds within worlds**, drawn out of experiences of what exists in the present”.⁸ This is often accomplished through the relationship between literature and architecture, as the imaginative quality in storytelling often engages in a similar manner as to how architecture is imagined. A world where we make memories from inhabiting a space—a world within a world. Our homes should be our oasis from reality while incorporating elements we enjoy from our environment.



“Let us be quite clear: these grey, hollow, spiritless mock-ups, in which we live and work, will be shameful evidence of posterity of the spiritual descent into hell of our generation, which forgot that great, unique art: architecture.”

- Walter Gropius (1919)

This image displays the future advancement of the drone dropping the pleasing design and hopeful sentiment of Art Deco within a “spiritless” city, as Walter Gropius might suggest.

Fig.20 / Gropius's Utopia

02:01 ARCHITECTURE AND LITERATURE

Regarding literary utopia, studies often begin as an idea or desire, whereby the imagination provokes thoughts that work towards a fictional story.⁹ A book becomes published through modes of reproduction and read by many, who become immersed in the fantasy created by the author. By engaging the imagination with the words described in the telling of the story, the reader begins to occupy the fantasy; imagining that it is real.¹⁰

The same holds true for architecture. Nathaniel Coleman expresses that “if a book only finally becomes ‘real’ in the imagination of readers through reading, a building only becomes ‘real’ through its occupation by inhabitants”¹¹. This suggests that the intersections between architecture and literature, exist within the invention and representation of utopia.¹²

When a story is read, it reveals something new to each of its readers; something that may have not been expected or anticipated. French philosopher, Paul Ricoeur, communicates a similar theory to architectural theorist Ufuk Ersoy, when stating that an author who writes dream-like fantasies of events which have not yet been experienced, is the same as when an architect imagines and designs a building that has not yet been experienced.¹³ This, in principle, insinuates a utopian potential, whereby in these dreams, both the author and architect create a “dimension of time—‘present of the future’”¹⁴. This can be understood through the logic that architecture represents imaginary stories, where the built representations of these stories become a reality, as long as their fantastical qualities remain once they are inhabited.¹⁵

May I repeat...

...ARCHITECTURE REPRESENTS IMAGINARY STORIES, WHERE THE BUILT REPRESENTATIONS OF THESE STORIES BECOME A REALITY, AS LONG AS THEIR FANTASTICAL QUALITIES REMAIN ONCE THEY ARE INHABITED...

Ricoeur believes that literature and architecture hold a strong relationship through narrating and building. This relationship offers a utopian potential that is combined through the dream of a better life.¹⁶ For architecture to be constructed, it must offer some form of optimism, that envisions a better form of living from what is presently offered.¹⁷

Architects attempt to offer solutions for the programs that they are commissioned for, Coleman states that the architecture that is distinguished as “remarkable work”, from the “unremarkable work”, depends on the architect’s ability to draw poetic solutions that respond to the “failures of past projects” in attempt to “surpass them with more successful future ones”.¹⁸

However, for a building to be characterized as being “utopian”, it must “**embody social imagination**”, in the way that “literary utopias and intentional communities envision the same”.¹⁹ Coleman explains that the architecture must be “as purposeful as both fictional and intentional communities are”, to unify architecture’s imaginative quality.

REMARKABLE WORK
=
POETIC SOLUTIONS

02:02 UTOPIAN TEMPLE

According to the post-Revolutionary French progressives and social radicals, “the utopian temple was intended to provide a spiritual setting distinct from the church of Roman Catholicism that would serve to construct social experience” and occupy “a central position in contemporary visions of the future city and society”.²⁰ The temple was considered a place to **rejuvenate the soul** while celebrating “diverse manifestations of human culture and ingenuity throughout history”.²¹ The utopian temple displayed meanings through representations as a counterpoint to religious constructs.

The “constructive ‘system’” and “decorative ‘style’” of the utopian temple, according to Louis-Auguste Boileau, a French architect in the late 19th century, were present in the Gothic cathedral through the “complex configurations of overlapping iron arches and stained glass, materials” that would “maximize colour, luminosity, and space...**heightening the emotive and sensuous impact**” on its visitors.²² Is this not an important part of creating remarkable architecture? Bruno Foucart, French art historian, comments on Boileau’s theory, expressing that these Gothic cathedral elements were incorporated into many religious spaces such as; Roman, Byzantine, Islamic, Hindu, and “other architectural traditions as successive ascending ‘syntheses’ reflecting a fusion of constructive ‘system’ and decorative ‘style’.”²³ In the text, *Paris Futur* by Théophile Gauthier, an enormous temple is illustrated, which Greg Kerr, French architectural historian, describes as the manifestation of “technological and ornamentative devices such as golds, murals, organs and the telephone”, which Kerr claims to reveal Gauthier’s utopian



Fig.30 / Interior of Sainte Chapelle (1248), Paris, France, 2019.

aspirations in **enhancing the spectator's emotion and sensuous impact through the amplification and use of incandescent colour.**²⁴ The idea that a church is able to create a holy sensation through poetic design while being able to illustrate the “imaginative activity” of religion. The architecture helps us believe in a spiritual experience that we may have never witnessed.



Fig.31 / Taut's Utopia

“The church is missing from the idea of the new city. In all epochs, we have gravitated to the house of God; as the only building capable of representing our deepest feelings about mankind and the world.”

- Bruno Taut (1919)

This image depicts an early 20th century blimp placing the gothic cathedral within an image of modern day New York, as Taut suggested that the church was a place to enhance our emotions, rejuvenate our souls and project utopian behaviour amongst us.

02:03 GLASS UTOPIA

Bruno Taut, a German Expressionist architect from the early 20th century, along with German poet, Paul Scheerbart from the late 19th century, were conscious of the fantastical relationship between narrative and building. Their comprehension of the powerful connection led them to parallel thoughts on Utopia.²⁵ During the early 20th century, German Expressionists were dreaming of a new society that would embody the utopian ideals of light and colour in architecture.²⁶ The dreams of the German Expressionists were against the dystopian realities of Germany, following the Great War and the German Revolution in 1919.²⁷

Scheerbart's fictional fantasies involved astral journeys that would embark his readers on trips to **exotic locations found on earth**, where utopian architecture would exist through the ideals of colour and transparency.²⁸ This suggests that Scheerbart believed in a realized utopia that existed on earth, possible of being achieved. Scheerbart believed that architecture was a gifted art that could **uplift the human spirit**, and even bring human beings to a universal relationship between one another, and with their surroundings.²⁹ The collaborative work of Scheerbart and Taut presented imaginative fairy-tale-like experiences to its visitors. Taut's intention for the *Glashaus* Pavilion for the Werkbund Exhibition in 1914, was for "serious visitors" to "be **released from their entrapment within a banal and profane world of commerce**", liberating them from their worries in experiencing a work of art.³⁰ Shouldn't our architecture reflect this ideology by immersing our inhabitants within a work of art?



Fig.32 / *Glashaus*, Bruno Taut, Cologne, Germany, 1914

The principle of objectivity, as a “synthesis of artistic creativity”, was thus redefined as “a new kind of architecture that was closer to **crystalline, abstract, non-historical forms**”, which was in contrast to the robust architecture in Berlin, at the time.³¹ Taut believed that art failed to exist within the world, and he was determined to reunite the disciplines of **art, sculpture, and painting**, into the *unique* art of architecture.³² Although we currently live in a world of technological advancements that seem to conform to Taut’s thoughts on creating “crystalline, abstract, non-historical forms”, are we really moving away from robust architecture? Does the implication of art, sculpture, and painting (similar to the characteristics of Art Deco), need to be reintroduced into our contemporary architecture?

The *Glashauss* was expressive in its experience; interlacing reason and fantasy.³³ Taut was able to emancipate architecture from its rigid technicality by embracing the primal elements of the building; “accomplished with pure ‘ornamental forms’ such as colour, light, and line”³⁴ in order to achieve his form of expressive, modern ornament that was akin to the romantic effects experienced in Gothic cathedrals.³⁵ Taut expressed that his work was “**built out of fantasy**”, as he believed that he was able to retransform architecture into art; revealing visitors’ artistic spirit through the relationship of nature and architecture.³⁶ The dome, influenced by the Gothic cathedral, was “heightened to the point of passion” and presented the essence of security in being sheltered by the religious form of the house of God.³⁷ Taut intended for the pavilion to be “jewel-like”, as the dome acted as a complex arrangement of triangular panes of coloured glass; allowing the dome to present itself as a diamond.³⁸ The diamond, for Taut, was an expression of the earth, as it was an element found in nature and emanated natural colours.³⁹ The crystal, akin to coloured glass, provided a metaphor of creativity and significance, as it was able to **change the depressing atmosphere of an industrial city to embodying an illuminating spirit**.⁴⁰ These points are crucial for how *Final Fantasy: Part One* will be formed as a utopian journey.

Similar to Taut, Scheerbart did not enjoy objective buildings in 19th century Europe, as they lacked colour and did not fulfill his fantasy of artistic ornament.⁴¹ Scheerbart used color as his “tool of fantasy”, to verbally enrich his “poetic language” and increase the “semantic ambiguity” of his writings.⁴² According to Scheerbart, the effects of coloured glass was able to **transform the body into an astral being**, whose “desires and emotions would then come under the full control of the mind”⁴³. Taut describes that the glowing crystal held radiant visions; which was advocated by Scheerbart in claiming that “**coloured glass**



Fig.33 / Scheerbart’s Utopia

“Coloured glass destroys all hatred at last.”

- Paul Scheerbart (1914)

This image displays a helicopter inserting crystals within a mountainous landscape, as Taut believed in escaping the troubles of reality to a new city in the mountains where coloured glass skyscrapers will aid in the emotional well-being of its occupants.

destroys all hatred at last" in 1914.⁴⁴ Suggesting that coloured glass could solve issues of violence, as the threat of war was imminent. Through Scheerbart and Taut's concept of freedom associated within the context of German Romanticism and the poetic effects of the Gothic cathedral, they were able to envision utopias that would exist on earth and allow visitors/readers to escape through the reference of astral journeys associated within the space.

In 1919, Bruno Taut's preoccupation with the beneficent powers of coloured glass continued with the publication of his text "Alpine Architecture". The book consisted of visionary images of coloured glass constructions and glass cathedrals set high in the Alps; imagined as visions of **escape from social constraints and the economic realities of Germany**.⁴⁵ Mertins Detlef explained that during the 1920s, it became characteristic of progressive architectural modernism in Germany to strive for the "restoration of that pre-modern community, order and harmony that had been shattered by industrialization and metropolitanisation, not by rejecting technology, but rather by **(re)turning to nature – to the primitive and originary – through the most advanced building science and technology** set in the open landscapes of the German garden cities".⁴⁶ These thoughts on romanticism can be imagined through Taut's drawings from *Alpine Architecture*, where his visions for a future city at the top of the Alps, was his response to Germany's post-war trauma. The images suggest that Berlin had undergone corruption and it was imperative that the residents escape the city and start a new life. Taut believed that fantasy was more "real" than reality, and "intuitive visions were more likely to point the way forward than rational analysis".⁴⁷ Taut's cosmic constructions of coloured glass and pure fantasy, were conceived both as a **"protest against the insanity of the war and as a pointer to a better society, which would devote its energies to peace and understanding rather than self-destruction"**⁴⁸. Should we not create architecture that radiates peace and understanding in an on-going chaotic world? If we cannot solve the issues of war and violence, our architecture could at least help, as it is the middle ground between violence and the people.

Can we then say that the incorporation of coloured glass could transform society and rediscover it as a place of peace and understanding? Can we reimagine this statement as utopian visions for our contemporary world? Taut's religious beliefs were exemplified through his thoughts on the qualities of what cities should possess. Taut believed that the body could become spirit through transfiguration, in the same way, the spirit could be given "physical, built form through the



Fig.34 / Schwitters's Utopia

"Art is a spiritual function of man, which aims at freeing him from life's chaos. Art is free in the use of its means in any way it likes, but is bound to its laws and to its laws alone. The minute it becomes art, it becomes much more sublime than a class distinction between proletariat and bourgeoisie."

- Kurt Schwitters (1923)

This image displays a dove placing Laugier's Primitive Hut back into a sublime landscape, in essence returning to the past, where art is healing and reminds us of our primitive values.

medium of the architect".⁴⁹ This suggests that his "Alpine Architecture" would be a perfect interpretation of "mortal and divine spirit"; in being a place of "**Heaven on Earth**", similar to the emotional sensation experienced by the Gothic Cathedral.⁵⁰ Taut's drawings for *Alpine Architecture*, consisted of restructuring society by uplifting residents' moods through utopian escape; consisting of leaving mendacious reality and relocating to a new city that would provide a *tabula rasa*, in the expectation of a completely new, formed society through architecture. The unison of nature, religion, and crystals are set in the vast sublime landscape, inhabited in silence; offering peace of mind between them—Taut's ultimate utopia.

In analyzing the theories above, Bruno Taut and Paul Scheerbart's thoughts encompassed many utopian visions for how architecture should be expressed, to emotionally benefit residents and provide **optimistic futures** for the ways in which architecture is to be inhabited. In the early 20th century, Bruno Taut believed that the church was missing from "the idea of the new city", admitting that in the past, we as humans, were inclined to visit the house of God as it was "capable of representing our deepest emotions about mankind and the world"⁵¹. Taut was aware, at the time, that people possessed different views on religion, however, he believed that in modern times, the human spirit would await "its resurrection, its radiant transfiguration and crystallization in [...] glorious edifices", where architects were responsible in rediscovering their "priestly and divine profession", in order to uncover the treasures that laid deep within "the depths of the human spirit"⁵². This would ultimately unite all societal classes in advancing towards modernity. However, he accused architects of creating crystalline towers that did not possess their crystalline substance, in saying that **buildings were lacking their fantastical, crystal qualities**. Our contemporary architecture has the ability to mimic crystalline forms through the advancement of technology, however, do we lack the fantastical experience that Taut poetically identifies?

Bruno emphasized that **architects should create tall, colourful towers, that would liberate inhabitants' minds from the troubles of everyday life**. Although contemporary architecture may be intentionally utopian through its design, however, does it become "aesthetic or economic objects or commodity fetishes"⁵³? Contemporary cities become a series of "forms without utopia", that satisfy developers' needs and capitalist endeavours for real estate investment.⁵⁴

Taut believed that architects' main purpose was to awaken the soul by constructing a city that would elevate the senses; resulting in the unification of people; creating a community of seductive, imaginative architecture.⁵⁵

Definition of Tabula Rasa via Merriam Webster:

1. the mind in its hypothetical primary blank or empty state before receiving outside impressions
2. something existing in its original pristine state

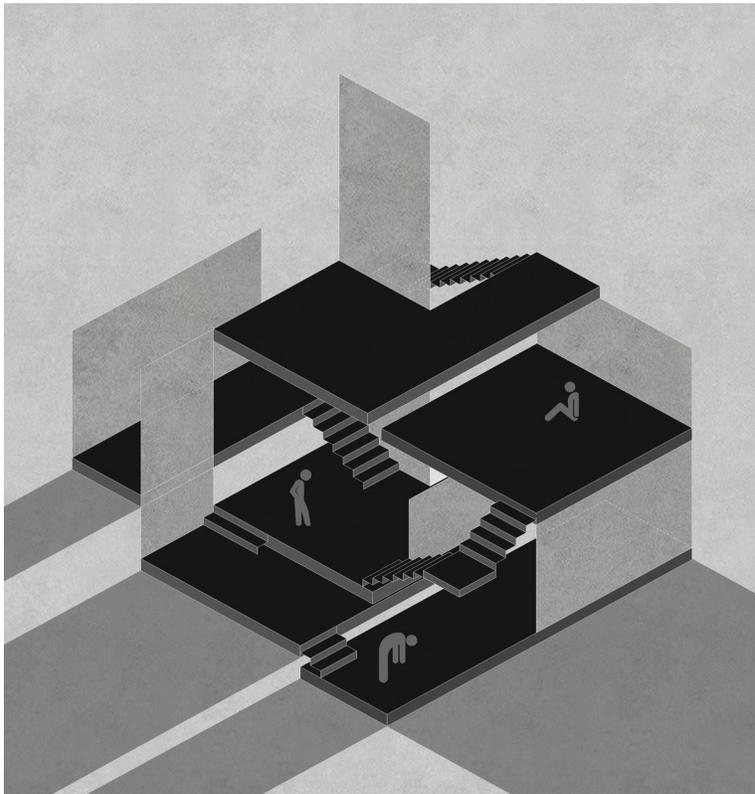
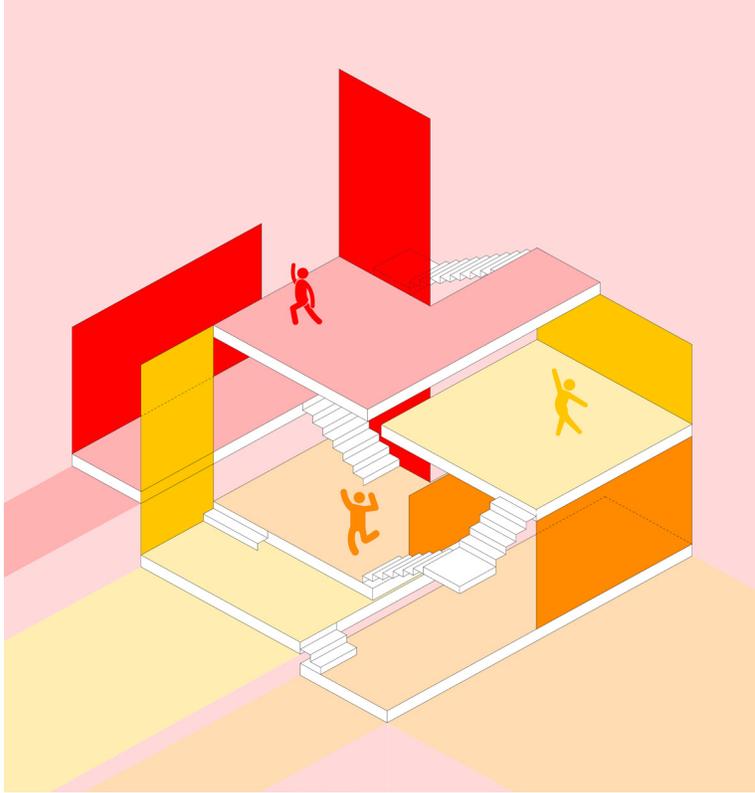


Fig.35 / Coloured Glass vs. Mundane Exercise

The top image demonstrates the emotional impact coloured glass can have in a space and on an occupant, in comparison to cold materials and colours in the bottom image.

THE ONE IN...

NON PARADISE



Fig. 36 / Utopia Collage

EVENTS
1910s-1940s

METROPOLIS
THE WIZARD OF OZ

03:00

03:00

NON-PARADISE

Fairy tales are often imagined as fictional stories with happy endings, but what if the illusion of the fictional story is masked in utopian ideals that depict tragedy? As we refer back to the concept of buildings being the realized fantasies of architects; convincing visitors that the final construction is a believable utopian ending, then why do we find ourselves in search of better living conditions or the return home? **Is it because our current living conditions aren't ideal, and the reversal of fantasy becomes destructive, or do we return home in search of a culture that is not present in our current conditions?**

Why is it crucial that architecture is able to play out its story and convince users of its final plot? The contemporary world is often seduced by the technological advancements that come with the tools of BIM (Building Information Modelling) or rendering software, that we are sold the dream of utopian living conditions or superfluous designs.

However, the design or sculpture of a building is just a portion of what architecture is. What do we benefit from having a sculptural building if it limits the space we inhabit? Design interventions that are not focused on improving society's social vision. And most often, these monstrous designs are built, and they fail to fulfill the dream that was initially prescribed. We should be sold on a space based on the fantasy of physically inhabiting that space. In reconsidering fairy tales as fictional stories that succeed in convincing a reader that the story is true, the same should prevail for architecture; where the construction is the realized fantasy. The following stories will be examined as examples where utopia is avoided due to the negative effects that are said to persist if the fantasy continues.

Definition of Dystopia via Merriam Webster:

1. an imagined world or society in which people lead wretched, dehumanized, fearful lives
2. anti-utopia



Fig.37 / .Metropolis, movie poster, 1927

03:01 METROPOLIS

The film *Metropolis* (1927) by Austrian-German film director, Fritz Lang, is a German Expressionist science-fiction film that depicts the future metropolis.¹ This film can be examined as a fictional story that predicts the horrors of the future of a modernizing world, which is masked by utopian ideals of progress. This is important to this thesis, as it demonstrates to us how utopian characteristics can sometimes perform negative effects, which can be said to take place today, with the advancement of technology.

The film's sharp divide between the working class and elite is shown through the mistreatment of workers, situated in the underworld attending to the machine that controls the city. The authoritative head of the working population encounters a scientist who has just mastered the robot, who then uses it to hypnotize and destroy his disobedient workers who are in rebellion against the societal divide. The metropolis is in a state of complete chaos, due to the false authority given by the seductive robot. The story ends with the workers burning the robot to the stake and the caring son of the authoritative head becomes positioned as the new mediator who overlooks the city for the betterment of society.

The film *Metropolis* succeeds in providing us with a fairy tale that admittedly contains a happy ending. However, the science-fiction story that came with the chilling plot of a future society, left viewers feeling uneasy in our advance into the modern world. Metropolis the city, is an expression of urban modernization through the technological advancements of the machine and society at large. However, the utopian ideals associated with the advance masks the dystopia that



Fig.38 / 29:59 .Metropolis (1927)
Still frame displaying Freder Frederson working the Machine in the underworld, while tired workers continue to do their jobs.

is notably taking place. Not only is the machine taking over the lives of workers, but it will proceed in replacing the jobs of the working class. The period of German Expressionism and Art Deco in the early 20th century, embraced technology as they believed that it would assist in societal progress, however, the utopian ideals that were presented by the introduction of the machine, advocated destruction. This is an important link as we will be examining how the plot of *Metropolis* is projected onto today's architecture.

Can we say that today's technology has advanced society in causing destruction? Is technology to blame in further dividing societal classes?

The machine in *Metropolis* was certainly not our ideal vision for the future; illustrating a final technological dystopia.

Today's society recognizes **technology** as a tool that aids us in completing everyday tasks; where we have become overly dependent on our technological devices, that when they malfunction, we **self-destruct**.

In architecture, we use technology as a tool to construct our fantasies, in providing us with an illustration of how our buildings might present while providing ease within the process, however, if we predict that technology will malfunction, similar to the events performed in *Metropolis*, our architecture is bound for destruction. This becomes relevant as we continue to explore the undesirable characteristics that can prevail if utopian ideals are over-realized.

Some of the most detail-oriented and story-telling architecture came before the invention of technology, therefore, **if we have the power in creating utopian architecture, why do we use it to simplify our designs or create conditions that do not improve the lives of inhabitants? Maybe technology needs to malfunction in order to return to our process of mastering a building without technology?** Antonio Gaudi managed to do it.

In *Metropolis*, the feminine robot was depicted as the extreme form of a dystopian reality. Anton Kaes, professor of German and Comparative literature, as well as Film Studies at Stanford University, claimed that the feminine robot performed "a lascivious dance before a male audience, attracting the spectators' desiring gaze and at the same time deceiving them, she became an emblem for the cinema as such: a product of technical ingenuity, incarceration of visual pleasure, and a temptress out to delude anyone who falls for the illusion of a replica."²

Do we become deceived by dressing? Or seduced by the lack thereof? The stripping of detail and ornament, which is considered a form of dressing, has deceived us as inhabitants. We are seduced by images that deceive us in questioning



Fig.39 / Sagrada Família, Antonio Gaudi, Barcelona, Spain, date. TBD

the desires of our living environments.

Looking back at Jean Baudrillard's theory on *Seduction*, he declares that seduction always occurs in the form of evil or the world. The same way a viewer is seduced into a state of hypnosis by a woman dressed in detail-oriented clothing.³ This may be problematic if we project this concept onto architecture today, by linking seduction and evil with architecture and technology.

In Anton Kaes's text "Metropolis: City, Cinema, Modernity", he explains that the "woman" in the 1920s was being regarded as a threat, through the emergence of women being sexually liberated and through organized acts of sexual feminism.⁴ Kaes claims that the robot Maria as the "new woman", tore "the social fabric asunder, inciting the workers to rebel and seducing them into self-destructive acts", where the robot was regarded as a witch.⁵

The film collapsed "the fear of women and machine into one", where Germany was seduced by modern American mass culture and its connection between technology, visual pleasure, simulation, and fantasy."⁶ In understanding this, can we say that these same elements are warnings? **If architecture were to create a connection between technology, visual pleasure, simulation, and fantasy, would architecture be perceived as a threat to our future society?**

The curiousness of modernization that German Expressionists were experiencing in the 1920s, expressed through *Metropolis*, contradicts the tendencies of the future in terms of inhuman technological progress, as well as industrial rationalization.⁷

German Expressionists were aware of the utopian visions that were being implemented into the world and as the fairy tale created by Fritz Lang was unsettling, it anticipated the potentially horrific future that was forthcoming. The film thus illustrates the reaction of "German modernism against an overpowering modernity, one that had undermined and negated its emancipatory and utopian potential"⁸.

So, can we say that the utopian potential seen through technological advancements was masked in the thought of advancing society in the film *Metropolis*, to the point where society was in a state of self-destruction? Then we can understand that if a building is attempting to perform the final act of fantasy through the plot of a fictional story, then we must be cautious of the dystopian effects associated with the utopian ideal of technological advancement.



Fig. 40 / 1:16:15 .Metropolis (1927)
Film still displaying robot Maria doing a lascivious dance

New Woman

According to Lucy Fischer, when Anton Kaes refers to Maria as the "new woman", he is not necessarily referring to the literal "new Maria", but rather to the women of the 1920s. Women were liberated with the right to vote, which influenced their behaviour overall. Women became more dominant and embraced their sexuality, which was a threat to the modern man.



Fig.41 / 16:36 .Metropolis (1927)
Film still displaying the Metropolis of the future

03:02 THE WIZARD OF OZ

“a real, truly live place. And I remember that some of it wasn’t very nice, but most of it was beautiful. But just the same, all I kept saying to everybody was, ‘I want to go home.’ And they sent me home”⁹

- Dorothy, *The Wizard of Oz*

Frank L. Baum’s fictional story, *The Wizard of Oz* (1900) produced as a film in 1939, is an early 20th-century fairytale that incorporates the technological achievements and growing anguish of the war that occurred in the second decade of the 20th Century. The protagonist, Dorothy, is dreaming of escaping her banal, rural life to a fantasyland which she eventually encounters. However, on her adventure, she comes to realize that it is not the joyous place she thought it was. The seductive, crystalline, skyscraper city situated within a pristine landscape deceives Dorothy; a battle of good and bad makes her cognizant of her entrapment.¹⁰ According to the novelist, Salman Rushdie writing on the film and how the Art Deco city embodies utopian elements suggests “in its most potent emotional moment” the film is unarguably “about the joys of going away, of leaving the greyness and entering the colour, of making a new life in the ‘place where there isn’t any troubles’¹¹”. This sounds like Bruno Taut and Paul Scheerbart’s ultimate fantasy. However, through the terrifying events that occur, Dorothy finds herself in search of the return home. Dorothy becomes fascinated by the mesmerizingly seductive “good” witch, Glinda, who instructs her to fantasize of home - the true place she wishes to be. This occurs in the repetition of the phrase “there’s no place



Fig.42 /*The Wizard of Oz* (1939)
Film still of the Wicked Witch of the West and Dorothy

like home". American film studies professor at the University of Pittsburgh, Lucy Fischer, claims that the film, *The Wizard of Oz*, was produced towards the end of the Great Depression, where Americans, especially New York City residents, were forced to create an exit in "fantasy mode" to withstand the painful effects of the nation's economic downfall.¹² Fischer also explains that the film arrived at the moment towards the end of the 1930s when society was questioning modernist interventions and the "skepticism of adventures and advances of urban contemporaneity"¹³. Paul Nathanson in *Over the Rainbow: The Wizard of Oz as a Secular Myth of America*, explains that Dorothy's journey of self-growth was similar to Americans at the time, indeed for "Americans to 'grow up' as a nation... they must also 'go home'"¹⁴. This speculation reflected a widespread "traditional, rural utopianism of the agrarian or populist, world view."¹⁵ Amidst those threatened by war and displacement, Nathanson describes "going home" as not only the literal definition of returning home but rather the return to the wilderness. If Emerald City is meant to represent an urban, industrial city, such as New York City in the early 1900s, then Dorothy's return home to her rural life is akin to New York residents' journey of growth and their necessary return to the wilderness. In order for New Yorkers to outgrow the stress and pressure that comes with living and working within a metropolitan city, then they require a "return to a state of **balance and harmony with nature**"¹⁶.



Fig.43 / *The Wizard of Oz* (1939)
Film still displaying Dorothy, the Tin Man, the Lion, and the Scarecrow, walking towards the Emerald City

Concepts featured in the story of *The Wizard of Oz* may be comparable to German Expressionist theories and their proposal for relocating residents outside the city to a sublime landscape, where inhabitants can be free of worries, as well as their belief on the emotional benefit of coloured glass and its relationship to Gothic Cathedrals. Although Dorothy does encounter a place that is similar to Taut's crystalline city in the mountains, one can recognize that utopian elements can exist even if the people who reside within it are not utopian. Coloured glass may heighten our emotional senses and influence our behaviour, however, we as humans are not utopian. The crystalline metropolis embodied Art Deco motifs, suggesting a futuristic age that brought out optimism, progress, and technological advancements. The "Emerald" city is made entirely out of green ornament, representing money and power, quite likely symbolizing New York City's status prior to the Great Depression. However, a city in an overly saturated colour also brings out the idea of an unrealized place. As much as Bruno Taut and Paul Scheerbart may have dreamt of a city akin to the "Emerald City", residents would have discovered themselves a desire to return home. After all, fantasy is only temporary. The escape into a theatrical performance or fictional narrative only lasts for as long until viewers are wishing to return home or to reality. However, society needs breaks from reality to enhance moods and mental progress. Utopian elements exist within our current world, but it is the balance between reality and nature that provides us with a world we can live happily within, amidst the dystopian issues we face collectively.

When considering further the literal meaning of any "return home", we may associate home with the place we grew up with as a child. It is the place where we created the most memories, whether good or bad. As we "grow up", we tend to find an oasis of our own where we can become an independent individual in search of our identity. This may be an adventure to an unknown place or settling within a lively downtown core of a city. We take this opportunity as an escape, making new memories in the next chapter of our lives, yet we return home as we are in search of something that is not present within our new "journey". What is that place that may not even be utopian, or have the magic qualities of a crystalline skyscraper? Although a crystal is as close to nature as possible, the warmth offered by the nurturing care of our mother or our childhood friends enwombs our memories. This way makes them inescapable and provides a possible "unidealized" architecture as the place we feel most at home.

Dorothy can testify to that.



Fig. 44 / *The Wizard of Oz* (1939)
Film still showing Dorothy, the Tin Man, the Lion, and the Scarecrow, approaching the entrance to Oz



Fig. 45 / *The Wizard of Oz* (1939)
Film still showing Dorothy waking up as her return home from Oz and being greeted by her family



**LET'S
ESCAPE...**

FINAL FANTASY FRAMEWORK

The story of the future sets out to create a relationship between the viewer and the object through the seductive qualities and a dressing imagined from the design principles of Art Deco. Can such an imagined city heighten emotions? Is this a seduction or hallucination? This future city proposes an imaginary journey through “sensations, ideas, and memories”, which are associated with one’s desires in this imagined cityscape. How can we emotionally benefit from a journey of escape?

What might the desire be of a utopian city to permit us to escape the current world issues? Is it only a La La Land? Issues of human rights, race and gender discrimination, war and violence, immigration and displacement, and climate change, all challenge contemporary architecture, today. Instead, we will seek ways to show how a future city might offer freedom, security, and safety on a healthy planet, using utopian qualities and strategies. The desires of this serious La La Land are by “form follows desire”. How to touch the lost souls of Art deco today?

The city’s poetic nature will attempt to provide a sense of comfort expressed through the liberating issues conceived by today’s world. Comfort, in architecture, can be felt through the care offered by architects to one’s living environment, and in reality, it may be the gentle touch of a woman. Considering the economic stability that North America currently enjoys, compared to the Great Depression in the 1930s, this new style will imagine a pleasurable environment and uplifting experiences for its inhabitants.



Fig.47 / *In a Dream*

Although it reminds us of better times, we have to attempt a way of being optimistic about what the future will hold. In this future fairy tale, human identity will be fluid in support of non-binary definitions of gender and race. In this future, we will be considered one.

The skyline will express a return to a fundamental coexistence of humans within their environment. Elements of beauty found within nature will be heightened for inhabitants, in becoming aware and grateful for what society has been gifted and leave the mendacious realities of our worries behind.

The buildings that will be organized in this city, will emit a radiance through dressed and seductive qualities categorized by form, ornament, and material. The imagery itself will be utopian, free of discrimination, and neglect.

Final Fantasy: Part One will set the stage for a utopian story that embodies the concepts above while imagining a peaceful future for the year 2220.

THE JOURNEY HAS BEGUN.



Fig. 48 / Metropolia

FINAL FANTASY: PART ONE

THE ONE WHERE WE START OVER

There is something different about Metropolia. The air is fresh, the water is clear; we are safe, we are one. My mom used to read me stories about what the world used to be. My energy would dull. She said we used to be beings with arms and legs, and hair! Can you imagine that! Here, we are different colours, but we are all the same. We are glowing balls of energy that have been revived from the sleeping souls of the ones before us. The ones that lived in the “Contemporary World”; a world of minimalist shelter, shades of grey, drained souls; working to live on a sick planet. Whereas we now live in Crystal Communities that are decorated to enhance the beauty of our living conditions; in recharging our spirits.

But there is one thing mom told me about the past, that would remind me of Metropolia, today, was this domed structure with coloured glass, where people would go for self-rejuvenation and amalgamate as a community. The place where spirits would be awakened, much like we are here. But every time I ask her to tell me more about this place, she says to me, “Leona, to brighten your glow to mine, you will need to read the walls to find the story of the past”. I never seemed to understand that, why can she not tell me about this place? Is it something I need to figure out?

A couple of days had passed, and I couldn’t stop thinking about what my mother said. This time I wanted to get the real story. I floated down from my community, Blue Crystal, to the main street of Metropolia. I had to “read the walls”. I tried to radiate my energy and maybe receive some energy back from the Metropolitans and animals around me. Suddenly the animals began to move in,

making a circle around me with a bright white glow. Then I noticed everyone gave off a little brighter glow. Was this it? I received a pulse. It was drawing me closer towards the Orange Crystal. As I floated near it, I began to analyze the walls. I always thought that the decorative façade was just elements to make the building beautiful, but something was urging me to unravel it. I noticed a landscape that looked just like where I was standing; a crystalline mountain top with a radiating glow. It displayed a group of what looked like previous beings, walking towards the top of the mountain. I swear that wasn't there before. Then I noticed a light orange glow that was revealing the path of where to go! The ornament holds the story of the past! I need to get to the mountain top!

I quickly floated through Metropolia to the mountain top and as I was approaching it, I came across what looked like relics of Concretia? It was dated "2020", with a description stating: "The Great Depression that never left". It was stamped beside a conglomeration of extruded box volumes... were those buildings? That's how major cities provided for their inhabitants? I was baffled at this sight; we are supposed to be living in beautifully coloured and ornate skyscrapers that look at bettering our living environment. As I continued upward, the landscape began to change. It went from snowy mountain tops to beautiful palm trees with an ocean view. The same trees that we find at the most southern point of Metropolia.

The energy I felt from the blossoming flowers, the pure salty water, the humidity radiating from the tropical leaves; it was heavenly vitality. In the distance, I noticed colourful light reflecting from what looked like another Crystal Community. As I got closer, I noticed the shape was... a dome! A SPARKLING DOME! Oh my Metropolia, I found it! I entered the grand arched entrance, and my energy began shaking uncontrollably. What is going on?! I was beginning to shapeshift. My energy was leaving my body? Oh no, this is bad, maybe I came to the wrong place. Then all of a sudden, I heard a loud but soft voice...

"You are not in the wrong place Leona. Your curious and determined spirit brought you to the place of wisdom. Welcome to the Temple."

As I felt somewhat at ease by the nurturing voice, I looked over at the colourful stained-glass window and noticed a figure. I stared, focusing on the window, and I noticed that the figure was a reflection; the figure was me! I had morphed into a previous being and the voice calmly affirms: "Leona, it is time that you learn about the past... Over 200 years ago, in the early 20th century, after World War I, architects or as you know them, "Dream Builders", were focused on

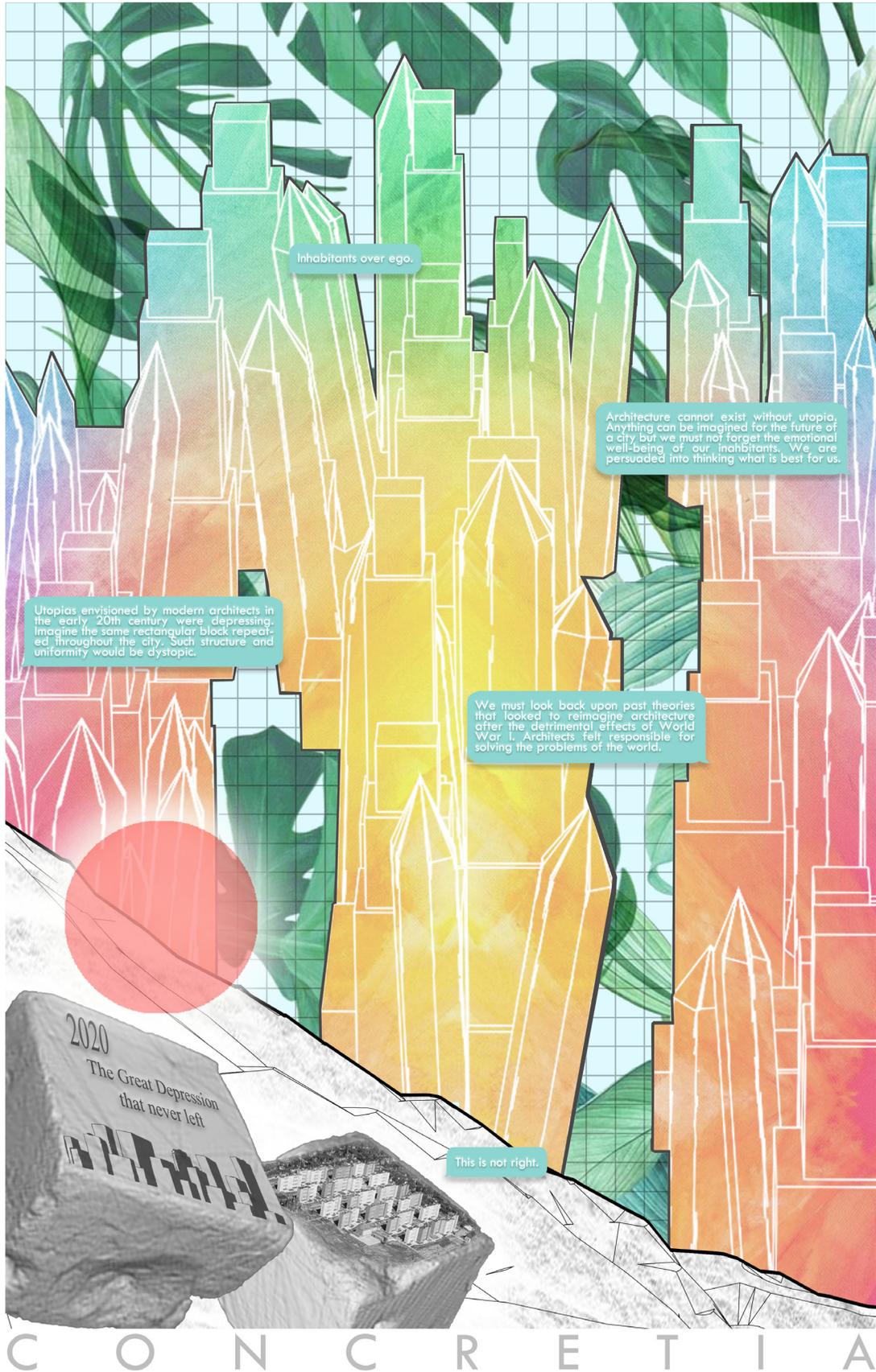
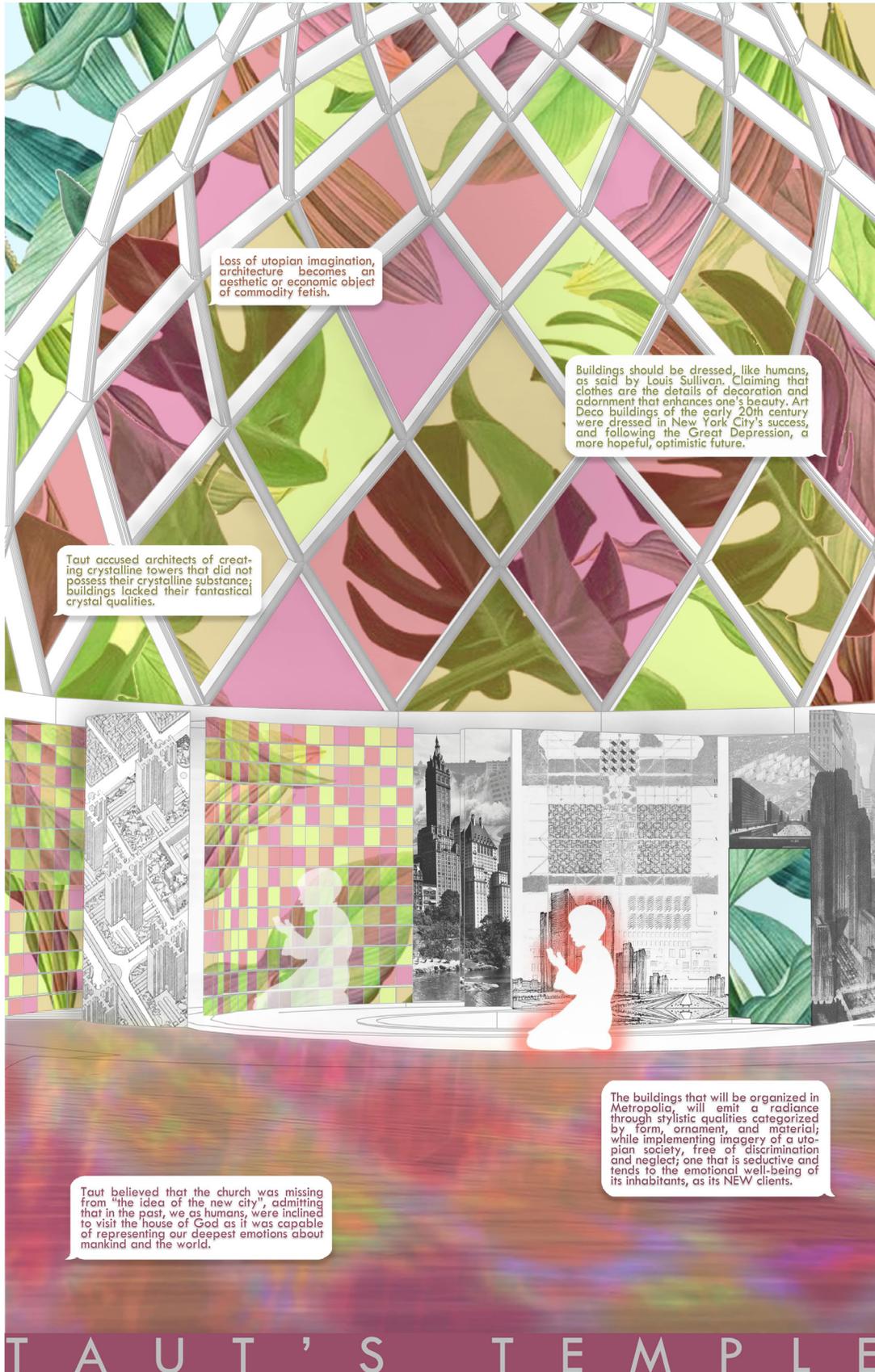


Fig. 49 / Concrete



Loss of utopian imagination, architecture becomes an aesthetic or economic object of commodity fetish.

Buildings should be dressed, like humans, as said by Louis Sullivan. Claiming that clothes are the details of decoration and adornment that enhances one's beauty. Art Deco buildings of the early 20th century were dressed in New York City's success, and following the Great Depression, a more hopeful, optimistic future.

Taut accused architects of creating crystalline towers that did not possess their crystalline substance; buildings lacked their fantastical crystal qualities.

Taut believed that the church was missing from "the idea of the new city", admitting that in the past, we as humans, were inclined to visit the house of God as it was capable of representing our deepest emotions about mankind and the world.

The buildings that will be organized in Metropolia, will emit a radiance through stylistic qualities categorized by form, ornament, and material; while implementing imagery of a utopian society, free of discrimination and neglect; one that is seductive and tends to the emotional well-being of its inhabitants, as its NEW clients.

T A U T ' S T E M P L E

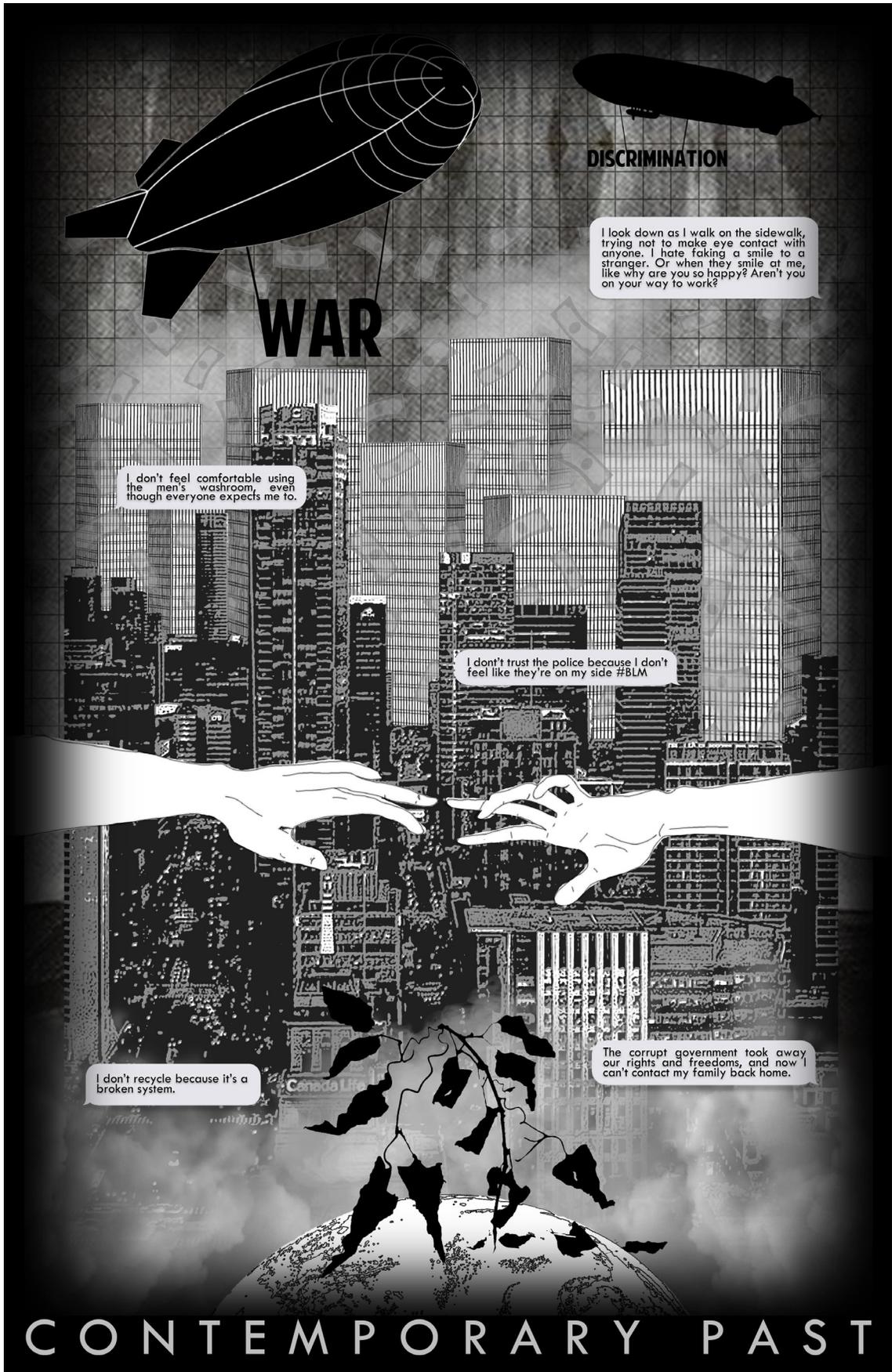
Fig.50 / Taut's Temple

solving the detrimental effects caused by the war. Dream Builders felt responsible for reimagining cities that would incorporate utopian ideals to better the living conditions and awaken the discouraged spirits of its inhabitants.

These utopian elements were often found through religious spaces such as cathedrals, mosques, and temples. Religious beliefs would differ, but the spaces would all offer the same utopian qualities. Qualities of togetherness; awakening the spirit where elements of coloured glass and ornament could rejuvenate the soul. These utopian elements were incorporated into city dwellings as ways of dressing buildings, in beautifying industrial cities. However, Dream Builders trained in modern and minimalistic techniques began to reject decorative styles. Modern Dream Builders believed in providing a blank slate and offering minimal, purist aesthetics. This style took dominance well into the 21st century, offering bland and neglected living environments for inhabitants, even though the affected cities had transformed themselves back into stable, affluent cities. In the 21st century, the world had forgotten about the joys that Dream Builders could bring to the world. The world became so obsessed with capital that dwellings and inhabited spaces were lifeless, and they dismissed utopian ideals that were once envisioned; draining the souls of the once, awakened spirits.

Until one day a female Dream Builder named Drea came across a utopian temple that reflected a place of freedom and equality; a sacred space with no issues or worries of war and violence, race and gender, displacement and immigration, and the adverse effects of climate change. Drea felt as if her body was radiating an energy that was once familiar to her. She looked up at the beautifully arranged stained-glass dome and ornamental carvings of utopian plans that laid in the walls of the temple and she exclaimed 'what happened to our world, God? We have forgotten about the fantasy of achieving utopia'. She continued: 'I will dedicate my life to creating utopia. I want a realized fantasy of where we can live in a problem-free society and seen as one. Where the Temple will be a sacred space for practicing religious beliefs. Not in opposition to them; we believe in the same optimistic future of progress and advancement. We will thus live in safe cities that will encompass beautiful architecture, beholding the dreams that we once dreamt; a place where our spirits will be awakened'.

Drea quickly felt relieved and determined to make a change, as she got up off her knees, her energy began to take over her form, shaping her into a glowing ball. As she questioned what she was experiencing, she heard a voice explain, 'Drea, your courage is celebrated. Spread your energy and values amongst



WAR

DISCRIMINATION

I look down as I walk on the sidewalk, trying not to make eye contact with anyone. I hate faking a smile to a stranger. Or when they smile at me, like why are you so happy? Aren't you on your way to work?

I don't feel comfortable using the men's washroom, even though everyone expects me to.

I don't trust the police because I don't feel like they're on my side #BLM

I don't recycle because it's a broken system.

The corrupt government took away our rights and freedoms, and now I can't contact my family back home.

CONTEMPORARY PAST

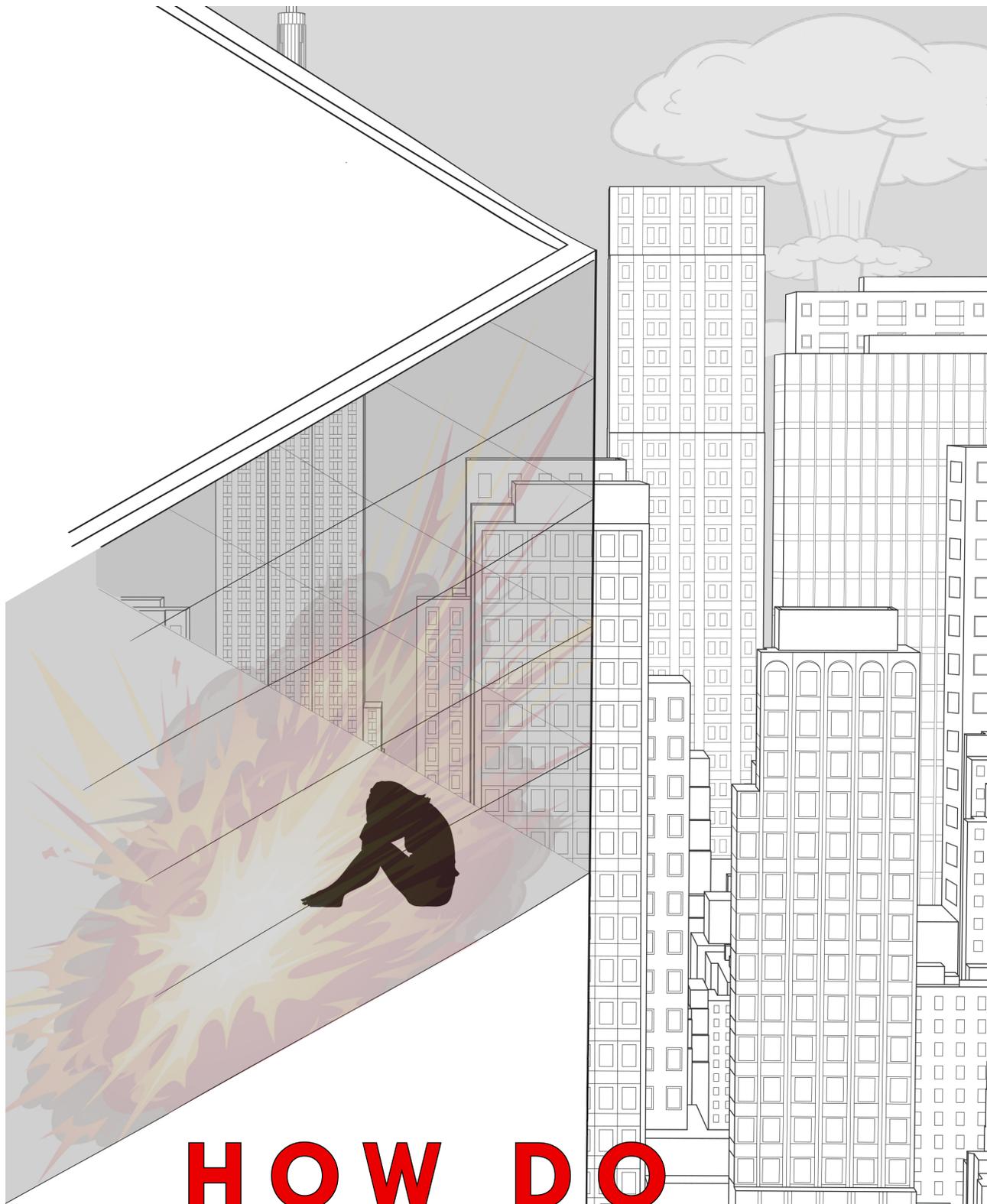
Fig.51 / Contemporary Past

the world. You are now one. No judgement, no inequality. Go build your dreams and remind us of the joys of life and the pleasures we can rediscover within architecture.' She nodded in confirmation and had indeed succeeded in changing the world for the better.

'Leona, you now live in Metropolia, a place conceived by the morals of the greats, who followed Drea in the belief of the utopian world. You have found that Temple and are now aware of the dreadful past of the Contemporary World, and grateful for the changes that were made. You will now be dedicated to achieving this utopian vision, like the other brighter-glow Metropolitans conscious of their blessings'."

Leona looked up in amazement, proud of the knowledge she had been awakened to. As she was ready to take on the world, she revealed... "I am not lost. I exist here. Here is home. **Utopia is real.**"

TO BE CONTINUED...



HOW DO WE ESCAPE?

FINAL FANTASY CONTINUED...

Our lives are our personal unwritten stories, whereby we continuously uncover the plot with each day that passes. The things that we encounter and the moments that we create, help build the story of “us”. We live in a world that is not utopian nor dystopian, but rather the in-between. We experience elements of both places and we often question the world that we inhabit, why some things may be a certain way, and why some things may not. We may use our imagination in coming to terms with things that we wish were better or hold onto the moments that remind us of the good. As we continue to figure out who we are with each passing day, our memories are the short stories that exist within our lifelong story. Our memories are what make us who we are, they differentiate us from one another, as no other human may experience the same story. Our childhoods often hold those inescapable memories. As Stephen Parcell, “we are never without the world, and the world is never without its memory”¹. We come into this world as tourists, constantly making connections throughout history and around the world. We are in that way following “tourists of history”². When we are faced with elements that exceed our life on this planet, we consciously solve the mystery with the timeline of events that we have been taught or learned throughout our life. For example, when we come across a building in a specific style, we consciously date that building with the knowledge we may know about the particular architectural style and its associated period. However, we may come across contemporary replicas of a certain style, where the condition of the building seems relatively new and we can be deceived by the building’s actual history. Museums, as Michel Foucault

Tourists of History

Phrase coined in Stephen Parcell’s, “The Re-Creation of History,” in *Carleton Book: Directors Postscript* by Alberto Pérez-Gómez, 1986.

explains in, "Of Other Spaces", are "heterotopias of indefinitely accumulating time"³. They are places that hold everything—an archive of all times, all epochs, all forms, and all tastes. According to Foucault, a museum is a "place of all times that is itself outside of time.... an indefinite accumulation of time in an immobile place... the whole idea belongs to our modernity"⁴. In understanding this, we may treat a historic building as a museum, where rather than holding the artifacts within it, the building itself becomes the artifact. However, Art Deco buildings further this concept by having the story of the "artifact" physically engraved in the façade. The decorative imagery of an Art Deco façade depicts a story for "tourists of history" to navigate and understand. We are faced with a museum that does not require us to inhabit it. The story of its age, meaning, and understanding are publicly on show, cited for its viewers. Similar perhaps to how prehistoric cave art illustrated real events for future generations, Art Deco buildings illustrate and hold memories from the era. We can then consider ourselves the museums of our past, where we verbally tell stories to inform one another who we are. Art is our way of communicating our story without relying on someone to physically tell it. Art Deco architects relied on the dressing of a building to tell its story, whereas we, as humans, do the same using tattoos or in our clothing. Do we not become more seductive as we reveal who we are through the story of our exterior? Our chosen "art" allows us to tell our story to someone who has not yet experienced us, similar to an Art Deco building or a fictional story. It isn't until we experience the interior or "plot" that we become immersed in the fantasy; we escape the real world and enter a new world. When someone uncovers this and our story, they become entranced in our world; we then become someone else's story—their world. Whether a person or a physical home, our "homes" are supposed to be our oases, our utopian escape in a world in-between. Our world is not perfect, and we are not perfect; however, even our current world struggles to imagine its future. Society in the 1920s was hopeful of a future of advancement and modernization, and as much as we can say that we have advanced as a society, we are affected by the things that we have done to our world. Climate change for one! The earth was potentially utopian but through our mutual neglect, it will inevitably deteriorate. Religion may still exist as an entity that navigates our behaviour and thoughts, but we are heterotopic beings, possessing both good and bad behaviour.

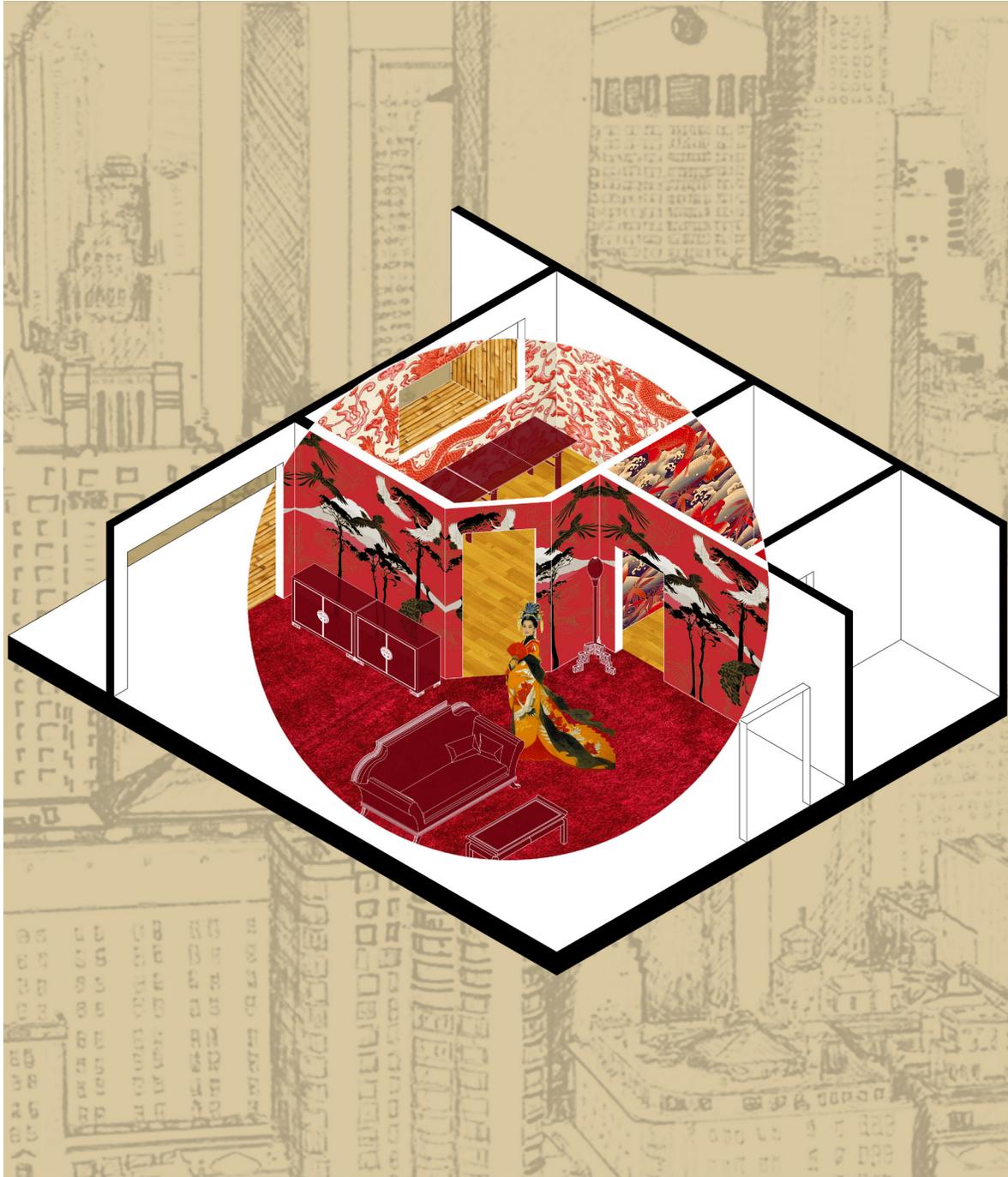


Fig.54 / Home Oasis

Our homes are our oases. They are our personal escape from mendacious reality and the place where we create everlasting memories. They may even be our exotic escape to a place that reminds us of a happier place or a place that exists within our memories. Our homes are who we are.

Each new place or experience is a mystery to us at first, as Ufuk Ersoy suggests “the architect who imagines and designs a project dreams into existence a place yet to be experienced”⁵. Each fictional story, dream-like fantasy, holds events that may have not been experienced yet by every reader. We don’t all experience the same story or building that may enlighten our spirits, seducing us to take a journey of everlasting happiness, but the art that we experience throughout our lives may act as a behavioural aide in influencing our moods. We might consider art as that “thing” that helps us fill the void in this in-between place. The in-between that illustrates moments for us of the good; our memories, our dreams, our fantasies, no matter our class, gender, or race. Art is our universal language. Although we may not all interpret it the same way, we are compelled by its ability to communicate to all. Architecture is that art. Architecture is what stands as a monument within the “in-between”, it is the middle ground between people and the conditions of our current world. All architecture is expressed through its moments in history, where today’s contemporary architecture stands as a sculpture and not as an artifact. How do we design monuments that communicate the spirit of our age through technology and storytelling that are capable of being inhabited? What might the Noah’s Ark of today, resemble?

The idea of the world as an in-between comes from the French philosopher, Michel Foucault, and his concept of *Heterotopia*. In *Theater and Performance Design: A Reader in Scenography*, editors, Jane Collins and Andrew Nisbet in the preface to Foucault’s “Of Other Spaces”, they describe his heterotopia as “spaces which exist somewhere between the real and the utopian and serve to neutralise or invert normal spatial convention. He includes theater in this designation as a real place that is capable of ‘juxtaposing’ on the stage a ‘whole series of places that are foreign to one another’”⁷. Foucault’s “heterotopia” is a place where things do not have a place in society, because of what society has done. A prison, for example, is a place that falls within the realm of heterotopia, as it is a detention facility for people who have done wrong within society.⁸ Our world is a conglomeration of heterotopic conditions. Where the spirit of our age may be that panic point of “oh shit, what have we done!?”. So again, through analyzing the 1920s and the optimistic hope for the future, we might ask, what is predicted for the upcoming decade of 2020?

The future in fictional stories such as *Blade Runner* and George Orwell’s *1984*, may have predicted that today’s virtuality is in fact virtual. Foucault describes how a mirror is utopian as it is a “placeless place”⁹. However, when we



Fig.55 / Faced with a mystery
Entering a space that is not expected but is fantastic by offering a new experience.

Heterotopia

Concept developed by Michel Foucault in the 1960s and described as the place of the “other”, where things are a reflection of society. Heterotopias are worlds within worlds, mirroring the disturbing and unsettling conditions of the outside world.⁶



Fig.56 / Heterotopic Fantasy

In this image, escapism is imagined by a deconstructed house that blurs our perception of openings between the indoors and the outdoors. The house provides “escape” to heterotopic places, surrounded by utopic conditions; existing within the *in-between*.

stand in front of the mirror, we encounter a version of our virtual self, existing within that placeless place—this is a *heterotopia*. Instead of reading a fictional story in a book, we read it on a tablet. We are no longer able to escape our mendacious reality—technology has enveloped us.

Art Deco buildings may be considered heterotopic as they juxtapose several places into a single real place. Foucault suggests that this concept may be akin to a theater stage and its ability to convince its audience that they are inhabiting a story.¹⁰ A theater set is thoughtfully designed to successfully take its audience away on a journey to an unknown place. A world can be created within a tiny place, as a set designer, Es Devlin, suggests in Netflix produced documentary, *Abstract: The Art of Design*-season 1, episode 3 “Es Devlin: Stage Design”. In this episode, Devlin claims that we create things to fill voids and we fill those voids with art. We can escape reality and occupy a fantasy. She expresses that music is a form of poetic escape, performative poetry. It tells a story in rhythmically, heightening our emotional connection. It situates itself in our memory. A specific song may associate itself with a certain memory. The theater is an experience that affects all senses, where the experience itself engages our memory and perception of a space and story that we can all understand and place ourselves within.

Foucault uses the juxtaposition of multiple places into one, through the example of Persian carpets. “The traditional garden of the Persians was a sacred space that was supposed to bring together inside its rectangle four parts representing the four parts of the world... the navel of the world at its center and all the vegetation of the garden was supposed to come together in this space, in this sort of microcosm. As for carpets, they were originally reproductions of gardens (the garden is a rug onto which the whole world comes to enact its symbolic perfection, and the rug is a sort of garden that can move across space). The garden is the smallest parcel of the world and then it is the totality of the world. The garden has been a sort of happy, universalizing heterotopia since the beginnings of antiquity”¹¹. Persian carpets were made as representations of these gardens and can be put anywhere within a space. The carpet represents happiness. This is a utopic condition that exists as a piece of art, reminding us of a sacred place, existing within a heterotopic world. The carpet reminds us of a place within a placeless place, offering an escape to a happier place. According to Foucault, the carpet emanates the colours found in nature, providing inhabitants with a little piece of our environment that we can enjoy within our homes.

As we proceed in bringing together all previous strands, we now move into “Part Two” of the fairy tale to form a story that imagines the future of our current world. No longer will we imagine a placeless place, but rather take up our in-between position. Five new conditions will be imagined, five different narratives where architecture monumentalizes each story. More cautious of the reality foreseen, and less the fantasy of La La Land envisioned 100 years ago.



Fig.57 / 2020s

This image is meant to represent the “spirit of the age” - no matter its condition.

ENJOY, BUT BE WARY.

FINAL FANTASY: PART TWO

THE ONE WHERE NEW YORK CITY FLOODS

It's 2029. New York City's floodplain has increased by 13% from the beginning of the decade due to the effects of climate change. New York City has been experiencing heavy rainfall over the past two days, where over 500,000 residents have been affected on the perimeter of the city. This morning, I woke up to an emergency alert: "WEATHER WARNING: New York City is set to receive approximately 26 inches of precipitation today. Please avoid floodplain zones and relocate to higher ground areas, as per NYC Department of Environmental Protection. Families and Residents who are stranded please call 911. The Government of New York City is issuing a state of emergency and calling all inhabitants of sector 17B from E 29th Street to 34th Street (Korea Town) and sector 18A from W 42nd Street to W 57th Street (Hell's Kitchen) to relocate to the Musk-Empire State Building until further notice."

My mom and I gathered our things in a hurry and rushed to the Musk-Empire State Building. The city was in complete chaos. New Yorkers up to their chests in water, all subways closed, streets barricaded. The only way to move is UP. We finally make it to the tower. Everyone is shoving themselves through the building's turnstiles. For over 10 hours, people have been filtering their way to the 102nd floor. Tons of food, water and supplies are available for everyone. It is now the next morning and the rain has not abated. In fact, the entire ground plain of Manhattan is flooded to a depth of 2.5 meters. Emergency helicopters from the state government have been pulling hundreds of people out of danger over the past 4 days. Streets are deserted; the skyscrapers are crammed.

It is now day 5, 3:09 am. We suddenly feel an abrupt grumble in the building, which quickly grows louder. Are we experiencing an earthquake? Suddenly the building begins to rise forming a gurgling and bubbling raft of seawater. The Musk-Empire State Building begins a steep ascent over the Hudson River with its pointed tip aimed at northern California. Travelling at the speed of a rocket, with the Atlantic Ocean vanishing behind us, we immediately see the coastal mountains of Death Valley ahead.

We splashed down in the North Pacific 1000 kilometers NW beyond Hawaii. We've been travelling for a week now on the S.S Musk-Empire State. With no direction but the water's guiding current. Plastic waste has latched on to the building and acted as floatation devices for New York's most triumphant building. In no way was this building going down after its ostentatious reputation. But who would have guessed that secretly, it was being fit-up with missile launchers by Elon Musk its current owner and namesake. But we've now embarked on a journey, in the heavens and now at sea, about to make new marks in history.

Aboard the S.S Musk-Empire State, land is becoming visible in the distance and we are heading straight for it! As we get closer, it appears to be... Japan! We have embarked on a journey of exotic escape!

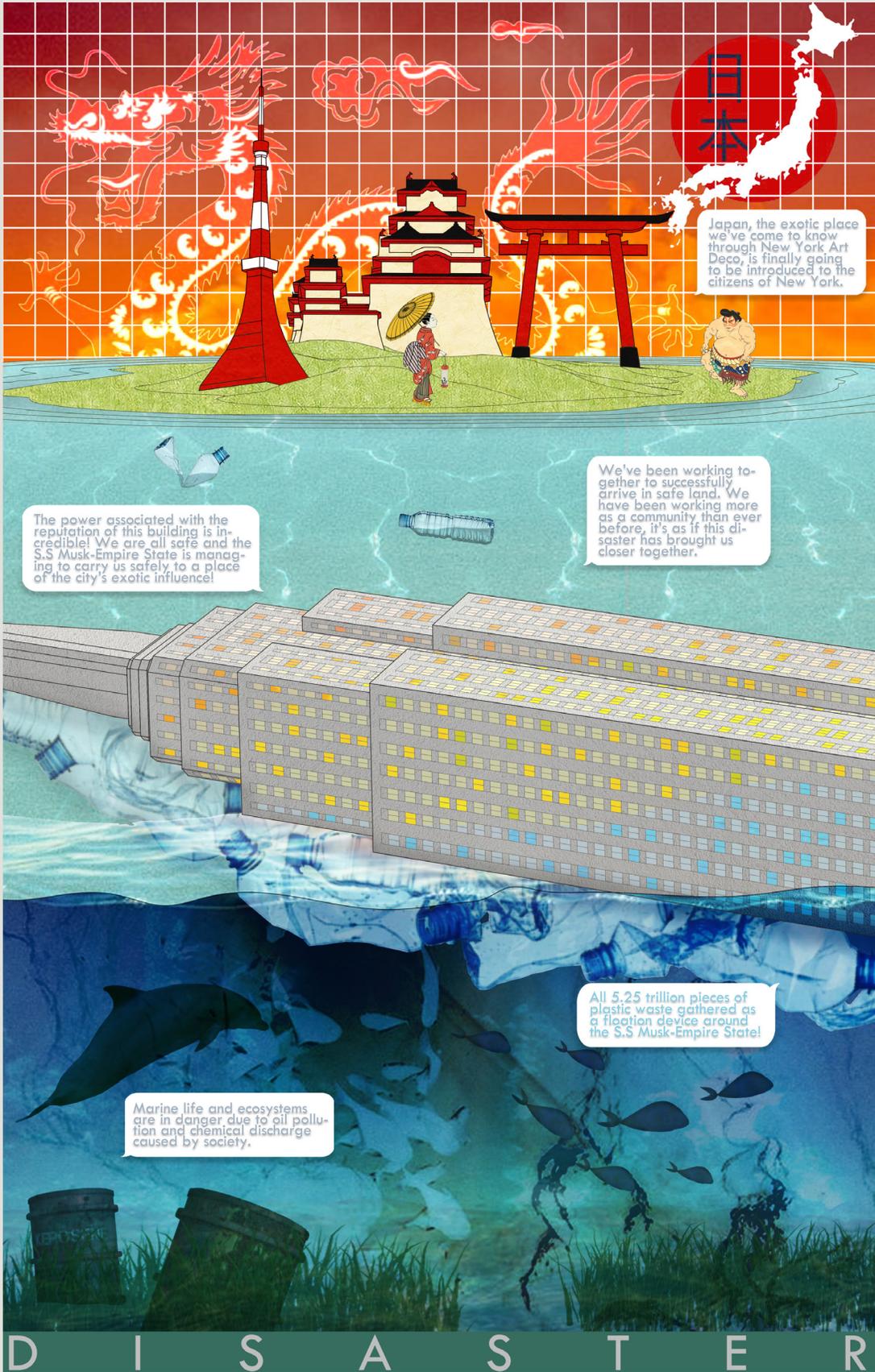


Fig.58 / The One where New York City Floods

FINAL FANTASY: PART TWO

THE ONE WHERE WE'RE QUARANTINED

The year is 2022. The return and mutation of COVID-19 has grown into a world-wide pandemic. The streets are vacated and the whole world has undergone isolation. The deadly virus is known to live on surfaces for approximately 15 days, with no successful vaccine to date. People are either confined in their homes or under quarantine in emergency care shelters. Those infected by the virus tend to alter in skin pigmentation to a purple tone. The infected are identified and through the government database are forced to admit themselves into a pop-up care facility to undergo treatment. However, with more than 70% of the population infected, survival is slim.

It has been 2 weeks now that all major cities have sustained apocalyptic tendencies. All moral behaviour has been lost - we are in survival mode. The National Security Agency of the United States has released an emergency evacuation procedure for all those uninfected. NSA has collected their names and has issued a plan of action for saving humanity. The NSA has contacted our household, regarding the relocation to a safe-structure located on the outskirts of Elk City, Idaho. We are being forced to start over—chance for human life to again thrive on earth.

Quarantine blimps came to collect the healthy participants through a sanitation pod, where all bodily vital signs were measured and evaluated. Once cleared, we received a vaccination that would make us immune to the virus. The vaccine was limited and very expensive so only the wealthy ones were able to receive it—I guess we are the lucky ones!

We have been situated within the safe-structure for a few days now and life here is beautiful. The seductively advanced building represents the spirit of our age, with state-of-the-art technology and overall improved habitation conditions for residents. It incorporates nature, colour, technology and art, into a beautiful little world within a building. We are happy here. Living harmoniously with nature, free of our worries; free of illness. It is our chance to start a new life.

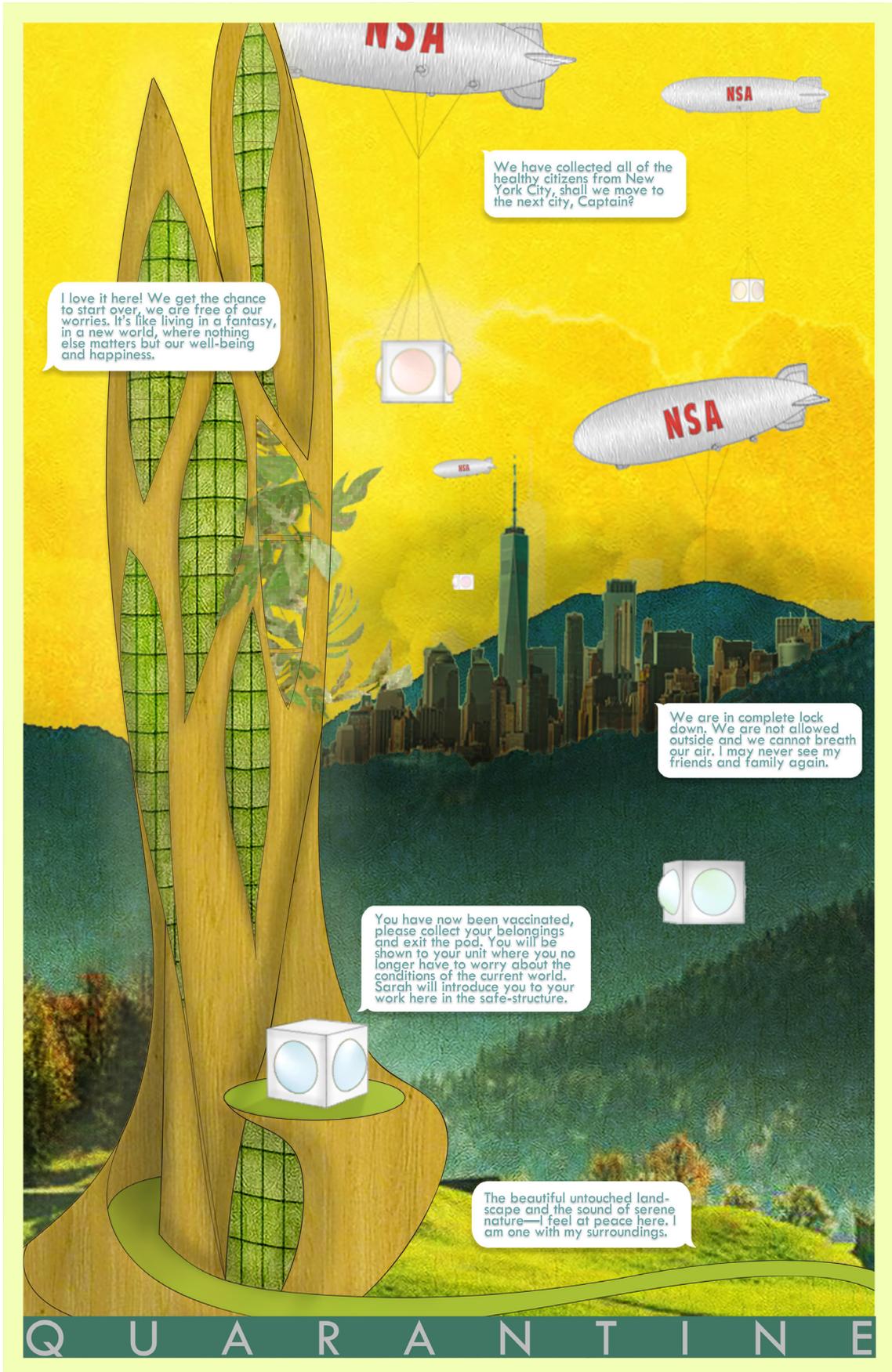


Fig.59 / The One where we're Quarantined

FINAL FANTASY: PART TWO

THE ONE WHERE WE PROTECT HISTORY

What if war and violence doesn't stop? Countries fighting each other, threatening to demolish cultures—who have we become? Senseless robots? Our culture is our identity, it makes us different from one another. Culture is our historical art and we are constantly the tourists of history, being exposed to things beyond our time.

Let us imagine the year 2025. Threats of war have been on-going between the United States and the Middle East. For the past few months, continuous bombing and chemical warfare have been suffocating the streets of New York City. The American President again threatens to demolish a mosque in Isfahan, Iran dating back to 1397, if the rivalry continues. The back and forth intimidation has been troubling and puts all at risk; people are unsure of what will happen. But, as civilians know we must protect our culture and history. Streets are filling with smoke and fragments of buildings are scattered across the city from the damage caused by warfare. We hurt only ourselves. What is the outcome of this power trip? Museums and libraries are containers of knowledge and our architectures are artifacts of our historical timeline, that may never return if lost. We must protect our identity, our humanity.

For the sake of our future, people from around the world have come together to fight against the violence government officials have been exposing. Without our memory and identity, we are nothing. The American government has finally responded to the public's concerns and is willing to safeguard landmark buildings, literary and physical artifacts. The government has released informa-

tion that they will be protecting these buildings with crystal casings that will not only preserve the interior contents and the exterior surfaces but also the environment surrounding the building in order to maintain its current condition forever. They will be cased in coloured glass crystals that will not only protect them from the elements of the world, but they will mimic natural elements that have arose from the earth, while heightening our emotional experience within them. Government authorities are coming to realize that there will be no gain or benefit in destroying a culture. The protection of our artifacts by whatever means must be executed across the globe.

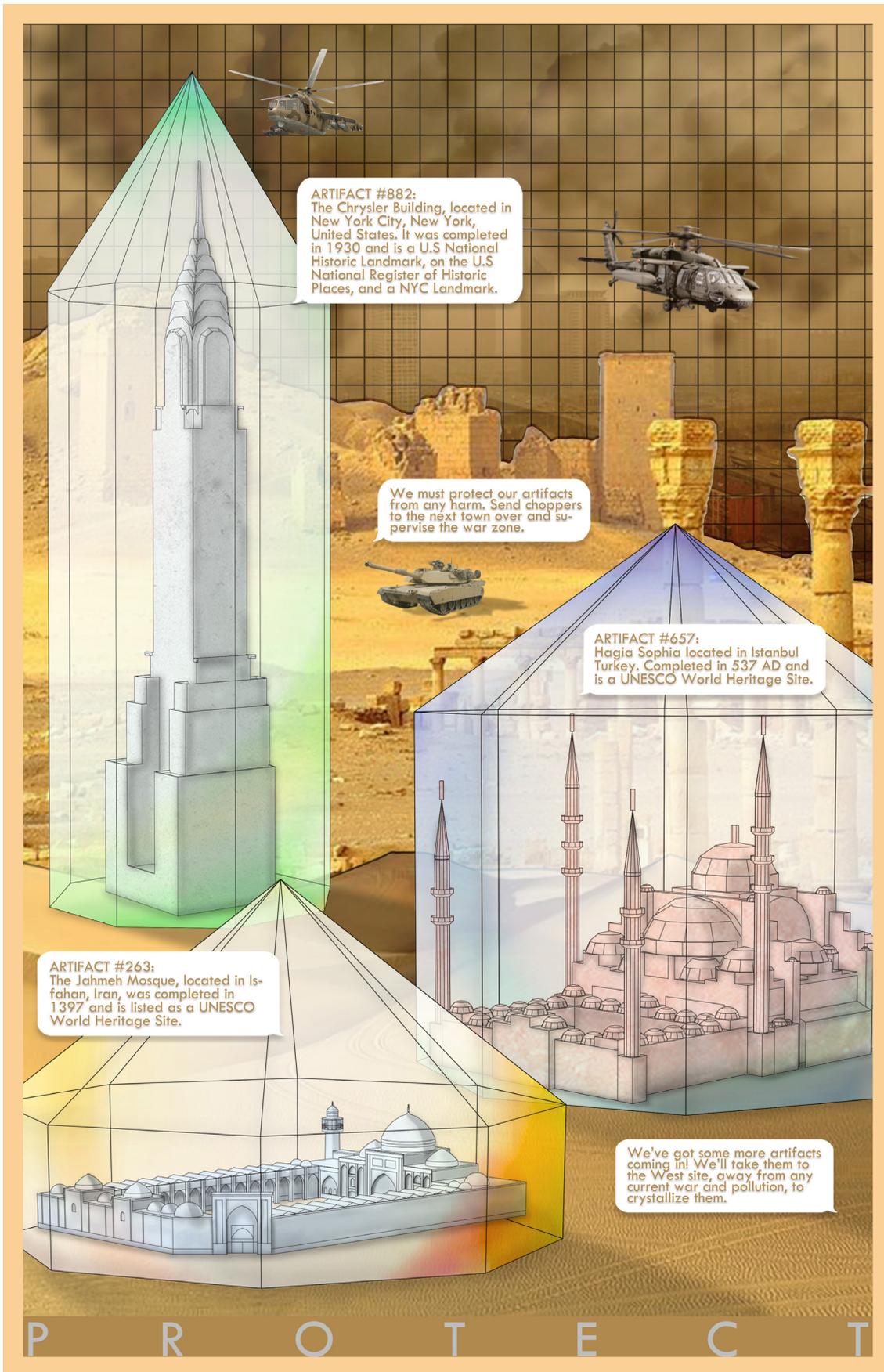


Fig.61 / The One where we protect History

FINAL FANTASY: PART TWO

THE ONE WHERE WE ACCEPT OUR IDENTITY

It was a simple logical reversal at first... What if the Drag show viewers became the viewed? From Mayoral Race to Drag Race, RuPaul has proven to be a most influential mayor since the defeated de Blasio in the 2024 Mayoral Race.

Instead of average citizens going to watch a Drag show, what if Drag Queens came to watch average people perform their jobs? Or Drag Queens performed average jobs and vice versa? We are seduced by things that challenge the everyday. Drag Queens entertain us through their extravagant behaviour, performance, and flamboyant dressing. The experience of attending a Drag Show is meant to enhance our mundane life, stimulating us through an episode of escape from reality and into a fabricated micro world within a theater. But if Drag is a Drag Queen's reality, why has drag not emerged in the streets of the everyday? Why is a main "drag" not their runway? Their dressing is their identity, as their personality does not change; rather they are their innermost self enhanced in drag. When we attend a Drag Show, we are conscious of what to expect, but what if Drag was expected in everyday reality?

The year is 2024, Drag has grown to be the most popular form of entertainment. The American Government has agreed to pay Queens an annual salary to populate the streets of New York City. The emotional benefit they bring to the lives of residents is invaluable. The streets of New York City have become an entire stage set. Not only is Broadway just an internalized theater district but has been externalized to engulf the entire city. The architectural stage of Art

Deco buildings were yearning—once again for a lively streetscape. New York architecture has been anticipating the return of its Fantasy Land performance. Our lives are now the very escape from reality.

Drag Queens dressed in all manner of styles and cultural influences, are accepting of the city's diverse demographics. The New York streets are populated by exotic cultures that have dressed and influenced the architecture for hundreds of years. By accepting and showcasing each culture for who they are and what makes them unique; New Yorkers have grown happier. Everyone is able to express their true selves without being judged or discriminated against. We are now comfortable in our city and not just our homes. The productivity of workers has increased, and death rates have decreased. There may be no place like home, but there is no place like New York.



"We started out this show to celebrate the art of drag, and in doing so we brought along a bunch of kids who had varied backgrounds. We have challenges that are fun, but these kids bring their courage and their stories, and that is what the heart is." - RuPaul Charles

The streets of Manhattan will be our stage, not only for drag queens, but for everyone as well. Our identities will be liberated, everyone will be seen as equal. The theatrical escape performed by Drag Queens will help uplift the spirits of all inhabitants and visitors.

In this society, we will be accepting of all cultures, races and genders. We will continue to add life to the street and perform on our theatrical, architectural stage.

"Oh music in stone, poetry in sculpture, song in architectural marble, prayer in granite, an ecstasy in steel and gold, singing city of the great heart, singing city, You are Manhattan!" - Edwin Curran

The Madison Belmont Building 1925: decorative Art Deco iron work facade of trumpets and fountains by Edgar Brandt

I D E N T I T Y

Fig.62 / The One where we accept our Identity

FINAL FANTASY: PART TWO

THE ONE OF MY CHILDHOOD MEMORY

Let us imagine a future apocalypse by the year 2030. Through all the dystopic things that took place in our world due to the conditions caused by society, all evil has been destroyed and a higher power is now free to decide whether humankind should be allowed to thrive and its cultures recreated. Our childhood is inescapable. During this time, we are curious and experimental beings—our experiences shape us. Some of us are brought up with religious beliefs or just a moral code that ultimately influences our behaviour. We believe in different models of how mankind came to be and optimistically how it could now be reinstated. With no surviving humans on earth, our memories no longer exist within people. It is then up to art to tell our story.

When I think of my childhood, I picture myself as a six year old playing with my dolls in the living room of my childhood home. Our television, sitting within a wall unit adjacent to the fireplace where my parents would spend most of their time watching the news, is the only form of immediate mass communication. Although the internet was becoming more accessible to the average family, the only form of technology was the television. One early morning in September 2001, I woke up to the sound of my mom talking frantically on the phone. As I came down to the main floor, I looked at the tv and saw live footage of a tower up in smoke after an airplane crashed into the side of it. My mom seemed painfully disturbed. I was unsure of what was going on, but I knew it was something big.

As I look back at some of the most significant events that have occurred during my lifetime and the documented events that happened way beyond it, no

matter what religion or beliefs we hold, mother nature may very well survive it all. No matter the severity of a virus, disastrous earthquake, or terrorist attack, we are not quite sure why catastrophe often emerges from a well-intentioned utopian vision. But if humanity no longer exists, we know the power of nature will always persist. Massive forest fires are a part of the circle of life, and often needed for a forest to regenerate. Nature will always be utopian even if The Garden was not.



Fig. 63 / The One of my Childhood Memory

POSTSCRIPT.

Reflecting upon the analysis and exploration of this thesis, a number of items are being reconsidered. Given that the thesis defence, under the current circumstances of the global pandemic, was present virtually, we begin to truly appreciate the layered meanings of heterotopia. We dwell in the in-between and things like climate change, discrimination against race and gender, war and violence, all happen because of us, humanity. So, although we may find ourselves wanting to escape from our homes during challenging times, where the outside becomes the journey to an unsure place – today’s circumstances bring a whole new meaning to the phrase “there’s no place like home”. No longer is home a place we always go back to but it’s where we feel the safest. However, as we stay confined in our homes trying to survive, nature is out there reviving itself. Polluted cities are seeing clear skies for the first time, the Venetian Canal is the clearest we have seen in 60 years, animals are exploring natural areas that humans previously infiltrated driving them away. Although crises like global pandemics, may be seen as dystopic to our world, they may also be blessings in disguise, a chance for the world to start anew. Which brings us back to the question: **what stands as an architectural monument of our time, in the new 20s?**

The idea that most art exists through a fictional narrative, whether that story is considered true to the reader, depends wholly on that specific individual’s context and points of reference. Quite often the representation of fantasy, whether through drawing, rendering or film, is presented at its best when it remains in the realm in which the viewer was originally seduced. This does not mean that the

fantasy of a seductive rendering cannot be brought to life by the architecture itself; rather technology has the capability of making each element within the image nearly picture-perfect. Do architects only create visionary fairy tales? A fictional story succeeds in sending its reader away on a journey. Similarly, an architectural representation can present a narrative experience to a viewer; both contain fantasies of living within a perfectly curated space. This does not mean a space itself cannot achieve these sentiments, but quite often the dream is better than the reality. This thesis was not only an academic exploration but offered life lessons as it developed. We are not perfect, yes that is obvious, but it became more apparent throughout this thesis. Architects can only do their best in making a better living environment for their inhabitants. Architecture may in fact merely be the art of convincing by engagement. If inhabitants can be made to believe that they are living in an ideal condition, then perhaps their thoughts and imagination will persuade them to, in fact believe this, thereby improving their overall well-being. Architecture as art, enhances the aesthetic experience of buildings, paints a picture, figuratively and literally in the spirit of the building's context and age. Like Art Deco buildings in their own time, architecture itself can be the representation of the story. In Art Deco buildings we can read the fantasy, the underlying narrative; it is the moment of escape, whether it is to an exotic place or to a time that established the city of New York. Again, this is not a claim that contemporary architecture is not as seductive or does not represent its current era – current monuments such as Calatrava's Oculus and Frank Gehry's 8 Spruce Street, prove otherwise. However, the Art Deco skyscraper is perhaps, more explicitly, an enhanced version of narrative architecture that adds to the streetscape and the civic journey and historical timeline manifested in form. The monuments of New York City, one of the leading cities in the world, are a reflection of its grand story and the lives of its inhabitants.

Final Fantasy: Part Two, tells the story of our world as it moves into the 2020s, and raises the concern for what might happen over the next decade. The constant challenges facing society are only getting more acute while we, collectively, become more secluded and less hopeful for positive outcomes. This lies in stark contrast to the "Roaring Twenties" which preceded the Great Depression. Or does it? It seems that today's society fails to realize that the fictional story of the world ending is only becoming more probable as our world manages to demonstrate on a daily basis. Perhaps the world is in need of fictional stories that make readers believe in their unsettling plots, reinforced by seductive images.

Even though the story of our current age may not be physically embedded into the walls of our architecture, we are using cutting edge technology to design and promote the dream of architecture that mimics geometries and forms found in nature but has nothing to say about who we are as a society. A Zaha Hadid building may sell us the dream, but what does the architecture say about us to future generations? We create fictional stories to inspire others to believe in a brighter future. If they are convinced in the same way as film, then maybe they can be convinced by the changes society needs to make in order to look forward to a healthy, harmonious future. The stories and images are not intended to critique the actions of organizations and officials, but rather shed light on the situation and create a conversation – hoping that readers can visually fantasize where we stand in comparison to one hundred years ago. In taking this thesis forward, hope guides enlightened readers to the Art Deco Style and the powerful presence it still holds in New York City. Have we highlighted the optimism even naivety of utopian ideals, the concerns associated with reality, and the incarceration of fantasy? Have we sent the reader on a journey that offers no fairy tale ending, but rather a reality that will hopefully be resolved before we potentially encounter the Next Great Depression of 2029? Standing in the threshold between our memories and our imaginations, our past and our future, we express these storylines in the representations and expression of our architectural images – a projection of our current age onto the world of our future. So, I leave with the question, **what will our architecture say about the “spirit of our current age” to future generations if we are no longer there to tell the story?**



Fig.64 / Future Contemporary City Skyline

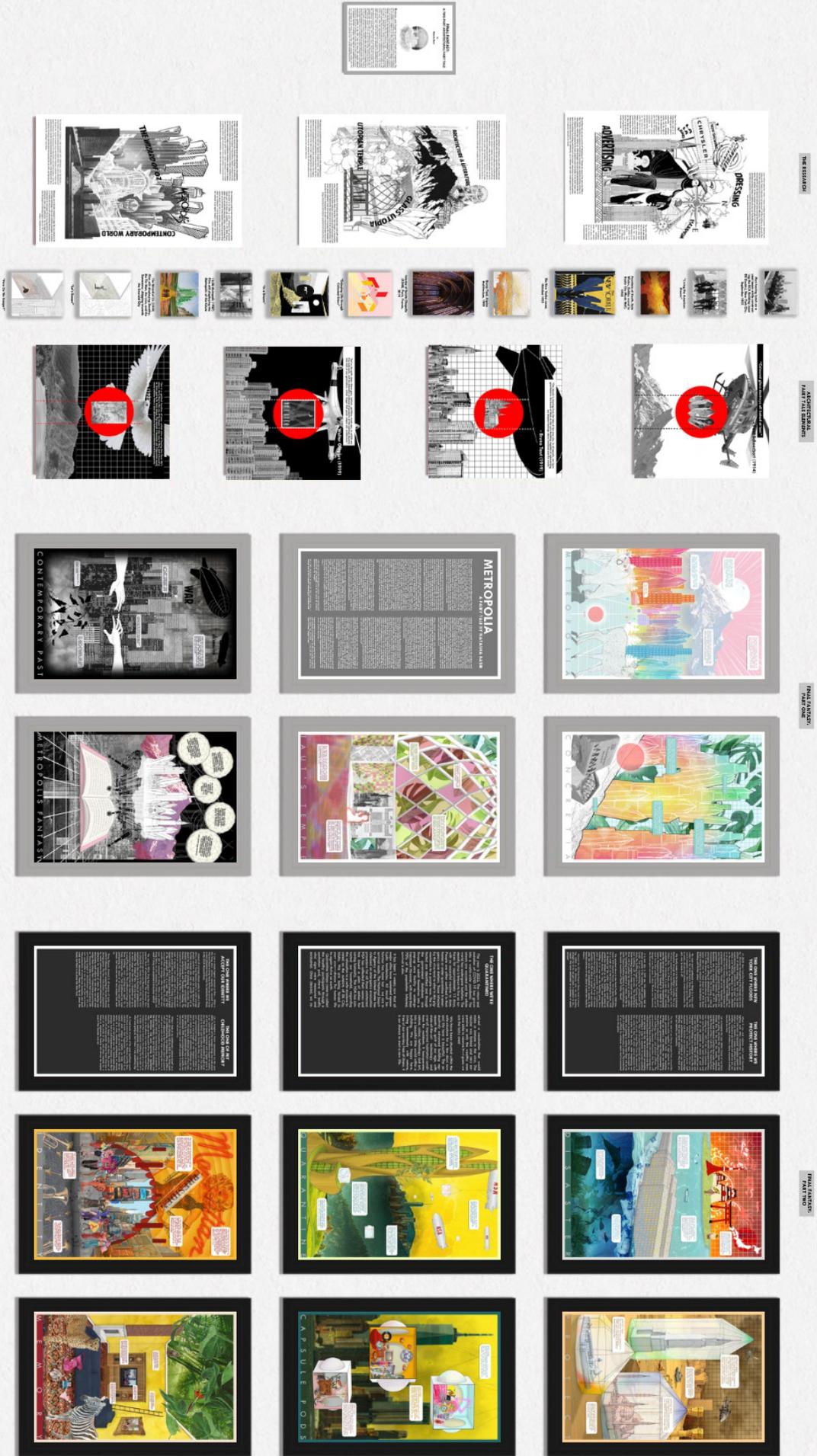


Fig.63 / Final Display
 This is an image of the "wall" that was set up to defend this thesis: virtually, due to COVID-19. It is an accurate representation of what would have been the "real" final display.

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