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The World's A Stage: The Strip's Privatized Areas Reimagined As A Performance Space

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THE WORLD'S A STAGE: THE STRIP'S PRIVATIZED AREAS REIMAGINED AS A PERFORMANCE SPACE



A THESIS ON LAS VEGAS' PERFORMING ARTISTS AND THE CITY'S SPACES
K.D. KAMPANA-VIDUYA
UNLV SOA | HD STUDIO

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FOREWORD

BY GLENN NP NOWAK

With some theorists postulating there is no pure hospitality, that there is always a pretense in being hospitable [and] acting a certain way toward another with the expectation of a reciprocal exchange, lessons from the performing arts may be among the most essential components of the hospitality industry. Klaire Viduya has delved into the psychology of placemaking, the desires of artists, and the expectations of pedestrians to question how public space in crowded areas can be designed to bring strangers together, to enhance the perception of performances, and to elicit emotional responses. The in-depth study of The LINQ, a popular promenade in Las Vegas, provides a lot of design thinking without drawing specific conclusions. With centuries old comparisons between architecture and music, dance, there may never be an authoritative answer on the relationships between them but Viduya is urging architecture (and all future architects) to keep striving.

UNLV SoA | HD STUDIO

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“In public spaces, you are directly present. You can interact with other people, you can watch them with your own senses – as opposed to seeing pictures on TV.”

- Jan Gehl

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BACKGROUND:
THE LAS VEGAS
STREETS IN
PAPERS AND
NUMBERS

INTRO

Las Vegas has been home to live performances since 1931, tying entertainment with the existence of hotels and casinos. A lot of focus has been put into the live music performances on a larger scale such as concerts and residencies throughout the tourist-filled Strip. Nowadays, major cities are promoting themselves through culture, art and the creative industries, developing new innovative urban spaces and business. According to a study by the *UNLV Gaming Research Lab*, throughout the past few years in hospitality, there has been a trend of the entertainment having less revenue compared to other sectors such as gambling and food and beverage. Going into a smaller scale, there have only been a few notable local acts here in Las Vegas. While Downtown Las Vegas has festivals such as Neon Reverb and First Friday, the local performance arts scene still hasn't been able to reach the general consensus of the tourists. If not found Downtown, musicians and dancers are often found on the sidewalks of either Fremont Street or the Strip. Acknowledging street and local performance as a creative activity can be a step towards a new conceptualization, use and valorization of this performing art creativity changes the image and dynamics of a city, welcoming people to discover new and innovative environments with better and personalized facilities and services. When the qualitative impact a city has on its citizens and visitors increases, the recognition and awareness of that city also rises in simultaneous with its attractiveness and economic power.





1940

El-Rancho, the first casino-resort on what is not the strip was built.

1944

Liberace becomes the first performer to establish the concept of concert residencies in Las Vegas

1959

The Welcome to Fabulous Las Vegas Sign was built and installed, making one of the first cultural attractions on the Strip

1989

The Musicians Union went on a strike against the casinos after they've decided to replace live musicians with synthesizers

1989

The Mirage opens with one of the first attractions in the Las Vegas Strip sidewalk

1991

MGM Grand becomes the first casino company to privatize its sidewalk as a part of their pre-development agreement.

1993

The first pedestrian crossing bridge was made to connecting MGM Grand to Excalibur

1997

The Venetian agreed with Clark County to create their sidewalk as a public right-of-way

2009

Street performers sue the Strip with ACLU to be able to keep spaces

2011

A Las Vegas City ordinance was passed to put restrictions on street performers on Fremont Street

A TIMELINE IN VEGAS

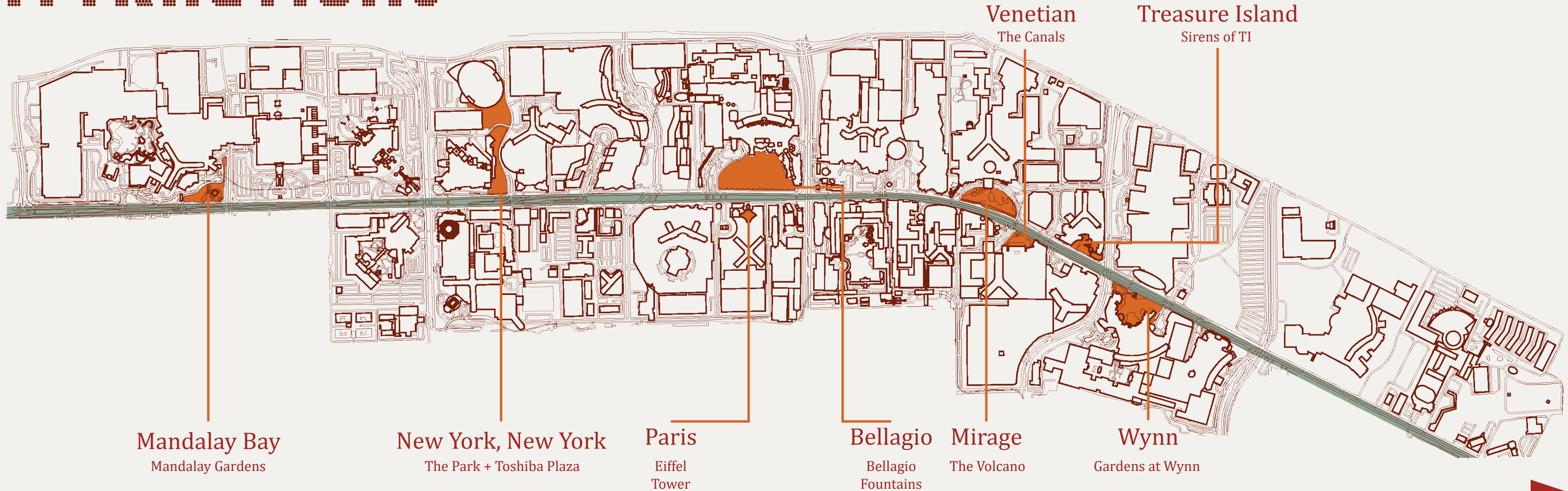


PRIVATIZATION OF SIDEWALKS

In a study by Evelyn Blumenberg and Renia Ehrenfeucht on the privatization of sidewalks in Las Vegas, there was a heavy emphasis on the move resulting from the want for desirability in the streets in both aesthetics and behavior of the pedestrians. “Many of the stakeholders also asserted that privatization allows the casinos greater control over the use of the sidewalks: in other words, along with private property rights comes greater aesthetic control, the ability to ban certain commercial activities,” (p. 341). An emergence of sidewalk attractions has been seen beginning 1989 in order to attract pedestrians and tourists into the resorts and casinos nearby. Redesigning the streets also resulted in

investment in landscaping, increase in security presence, and walkability. “Sidewalks are props in this pedestrian street culture as the resorts have extended their themes from their interiors to their frontages, and onto the sidewalks,” (p. 310). This notion of extending the what the casinos and resorts can offer into the streets heavily highlights the use and need for the existence of having control over the sidewalks of the Strip. However, disputes over who can use the sidewalks and freedom of speech are still prevalent over this topic. These civil liberties apply to not only people who use the space for protest but also performers.

SIDEWALK ATTRACTIONS

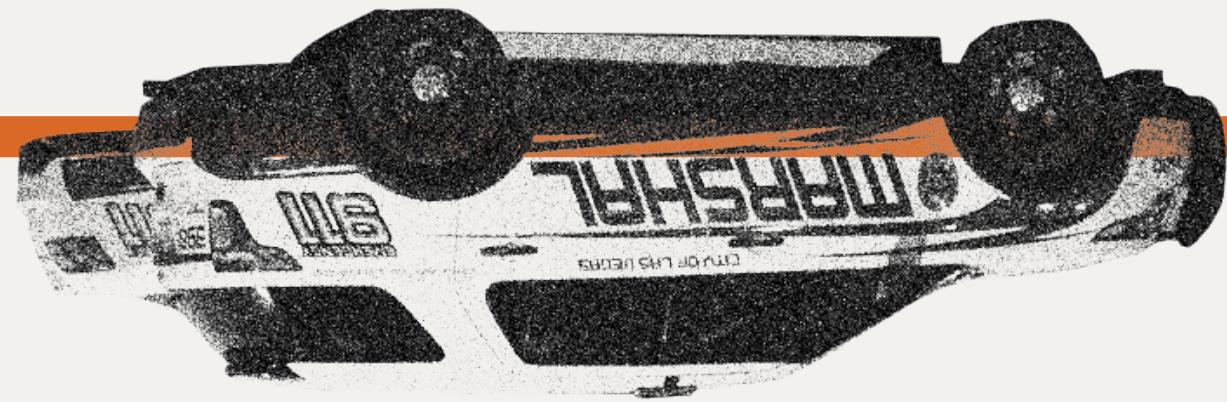


STREET PERFORMANCES

For many musicians street performance was the most common means of employment before the advent of recording and personal electronics (Baird, 2000). Continuing with this tradition, the notion of street performances has continued to exist as well as impact the cultural standing in a lot of cities. In a study of street performances in Portugal by Sara Rodrigues, the author found that “Functioning as a form of entertaining to tourists but also as a cultural attraction for those interested in an art cultural expression, street performance brings value to the tourist experience,” (p. 3). Similar studies have been done by more contemporary authors such as Ebert et al. (1994), Hall (2000) and Landry (2012) that delves into the term called “creative cities” in which major cities such as Barcelona, Los Angeles, Tokyo, and Silicon Valley has started the reinvention and rebranding of its urban spaces

using creative tools. Particular attention has been given to the relation between urban space and cultural and creative activities in recent years, mostly because of their potential in urban revitalization and strategies of regeneration, but also considering the role of creative classes and creative activities in enhancing urban competitiveness and development (Costa et al., 2011). The design of desirable public spaces is an essential characteristic of creative cities and a fundamental step into creating a creative city. Particular strengths such as attraction, liveliness, identification, diversity, economic value, partnership and public spaces are what brings creativity and drives the formation of a creative city (Kalantari et al., 2012). It is an activity working with intercultural communication constantly.





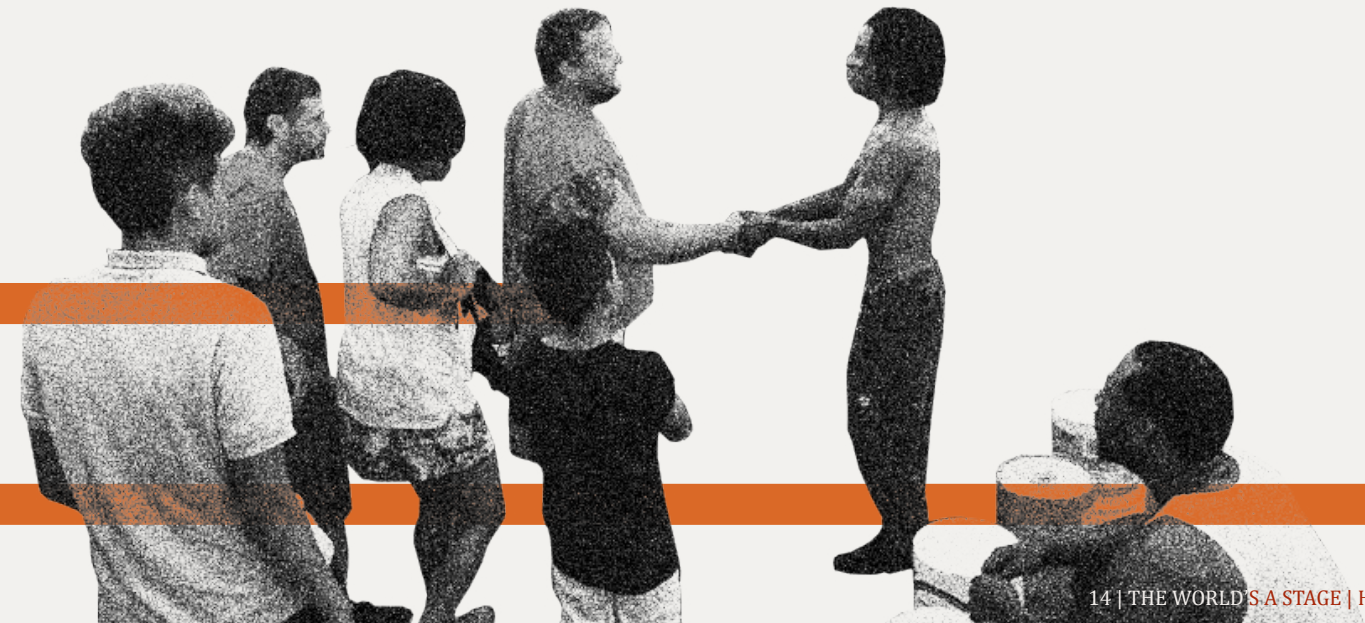
ENGAGEMENT

In the same study of the Strip's privatization of its sidewalks (Blumenberg et. al 2008) as well as reports from the Las Vegas Review Journal, there has been a highlight on local enforcement's interrogation on the use of these sidewalks and who uses them. The implementation of security came with the privatization of the sidewalks. Beginning from various disputes over the notion of "free speech" during Culinary Union protests on the sidewalks, these disputes have often ended in the favor of the privatized streets

still being labelled as public land (Packer 1999). Despite these wins, performers often find themselves interacting with law enforcement on the grounds of blocking walking paths that have been established in these sidewalks. The presence of street performers in the urban space implies the establishment of certain limits or rules regarding how they use the space. Street performance appears as an art demonstration, part of a city's culture, bearing in it creativity and attractiveness. (Rodrigues 2020).

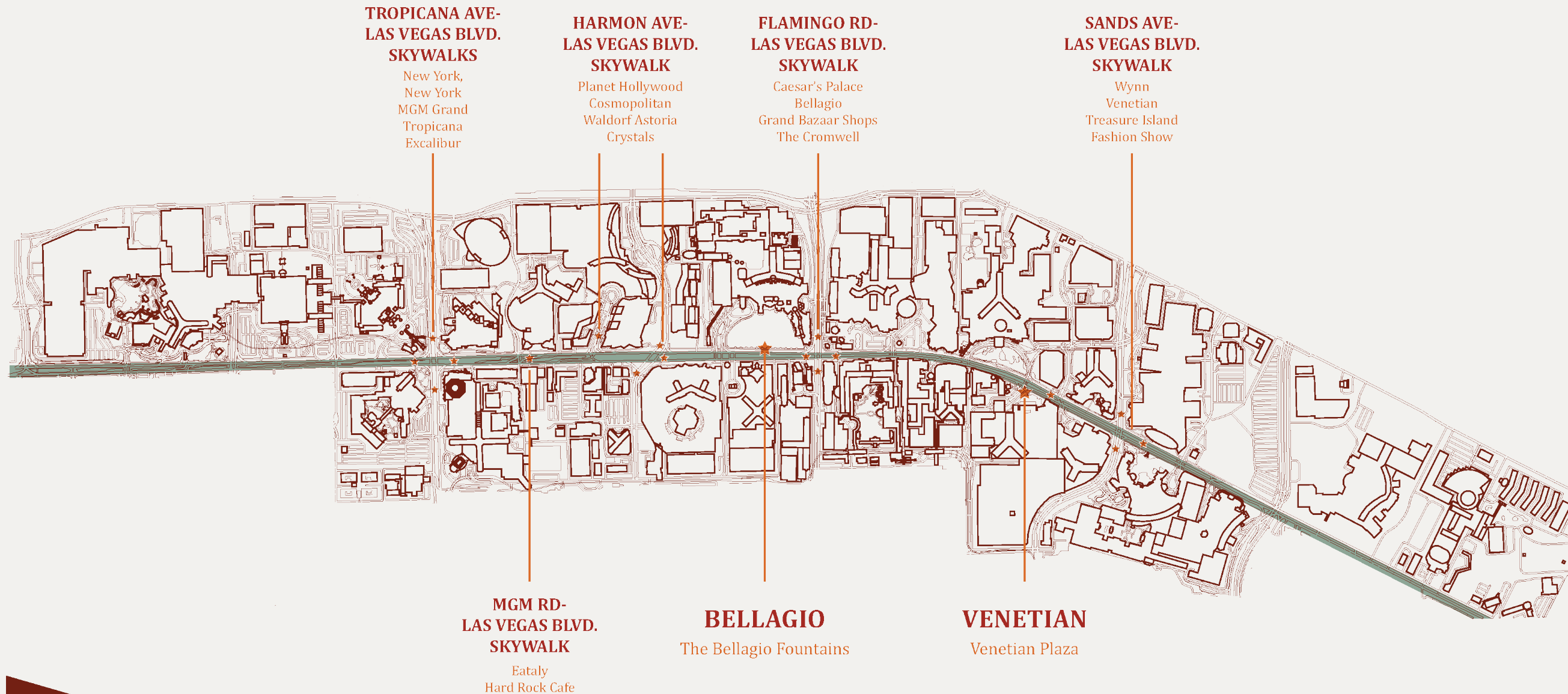
Clark et al. (2002) claims in their study that urban attractions, such as parks, museums, art galleries, orchestras and signature buildings, propel urban growth. Transforming our urban space into an 'entertainment machine', in an era where the driver of social and urban change is the consumerism of the individual, with the conversion of the city into a leisure place with the reinvention of our infrastructures and services, the affluence of people is enhanced and the

economic growth is boosted. Jayne (2005) also observes that "in recognition of the complex plurality of the contemporary urban villages, more prosaic 'low' and street culture, working-class traditions and ethnicity, sex and sexuality are also increasingly commodified in narratives of place." These performances creates a sense of place in public spaces and becomes the leading factor of people visiting certain parts of a city.



SAFETY

PERFORMANCE AREAS



**TROPICANA AVE-
LAS VEGAS BLVD.
SKYWALKS**

New York,
New York
MGM Grand
Tropicana
Excalibur

**HARMON AVE-
LAS VEGAS BLVD.
SKYWALK**

Planet Hollywood
Cosmopolitan
Waldorf Astoria
Crystals

**FLAMINGO RD-
LAS VEGAS BLVD.
SKYWALK**

Caesar's Palace
Bellagio
Grand Bazaar Shops
The Cromwell

**SANDS AVE-
LAS VEGAS BLVD.
SKYWALK**

Wynn
Venetian
Treasure Island
Fashion Show

**MGM RD-
LAS VEGAS BLVD.
SKYWALK**

Eataly
Hard Rock Cafe

BELLAGIO

The Bellagio Fountains

VENETIAN

Venetian Plaza

Through observation of the Strip, it can be seen and inferred that plenty of street performers at the Strip opt to perform in the public owned (Blumenberg et. al 2008) spaces such as pedestrian bridges and the plaza at the Venetian.

Some are often still found on public sidewalks around street attractions such as the Bellagio Fountains.

A small amount of performers sometimes will still perform in the deemed privatized areas, often encountering local enforcement while there. According to the resource website BuskLV, "While playing music for tips is not considered panhandling or solicitation, Clark County politicians found a way to solve the casinos' problem. So Metro began ticketing performers for "obstruction of sidewalk," (2019).

PERFORMERS TODAY

CIRQUE DU SOLEIL

Mystere, Michael Jackson ONE, KA



CONCERTS/RESIDENCIES

Katy Perry, Barry Manilow, Bruno Mars



POPULAR LOCAL ACTS

The Killers, P!ATD, Imagine Dragons



NEON REVERB

Festival of Las Vegas' indie music scene



VARIETY SHOWS

Blueman Group, Extravaganza, Celestia



MAGIC SHOWS

David Copperfield, Criss Angel



FIRST FRIDAY

Monthly festival featuring local works

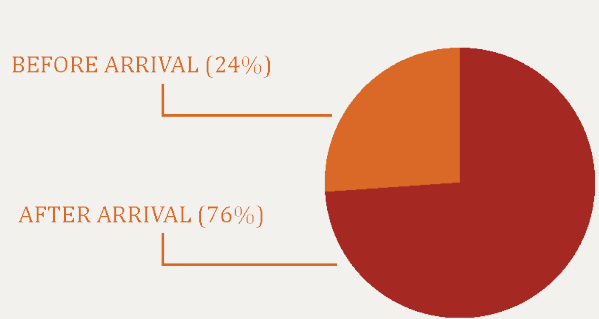


PUNK ROCK BOWLING

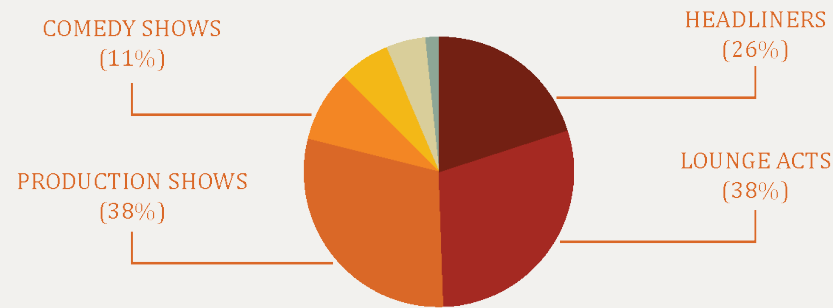
Festival of Las Vegas' punk music scene



ENTERTAINMENT: STATS AND REVENUE

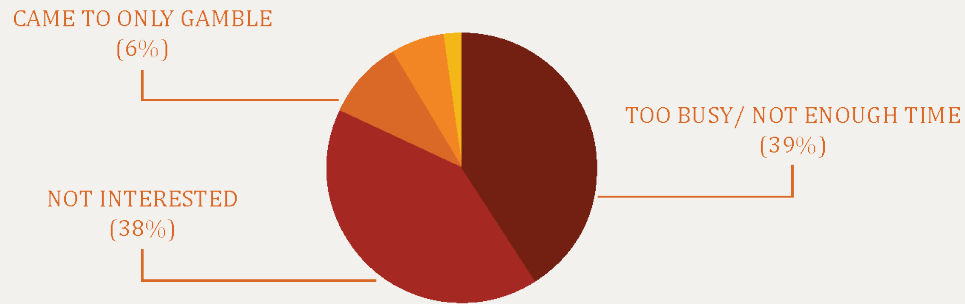


WHEN GUESTS DECIDE WHICH SHOW TO SEE



WHEN GUESTS DECIDE WHICH SHOW TO SEE

ALSO INCLUDES SPORTS EVENTS, MAGIC SHOWS, IMPERSONATOR SHOWS, AND CELEBRITY DJS



REASON FOR NOT ATTENDING SHOWS

ALSO INCLUDES HAVING ALREADY SEEN EVERYTHING, HAVING CHILDREN WITH THEM, AND THE SHOWS BEING TOO EXPENSIVE

GAMING

\$ 4,932,980,695

ROOMS

\$ 3,806,689,706

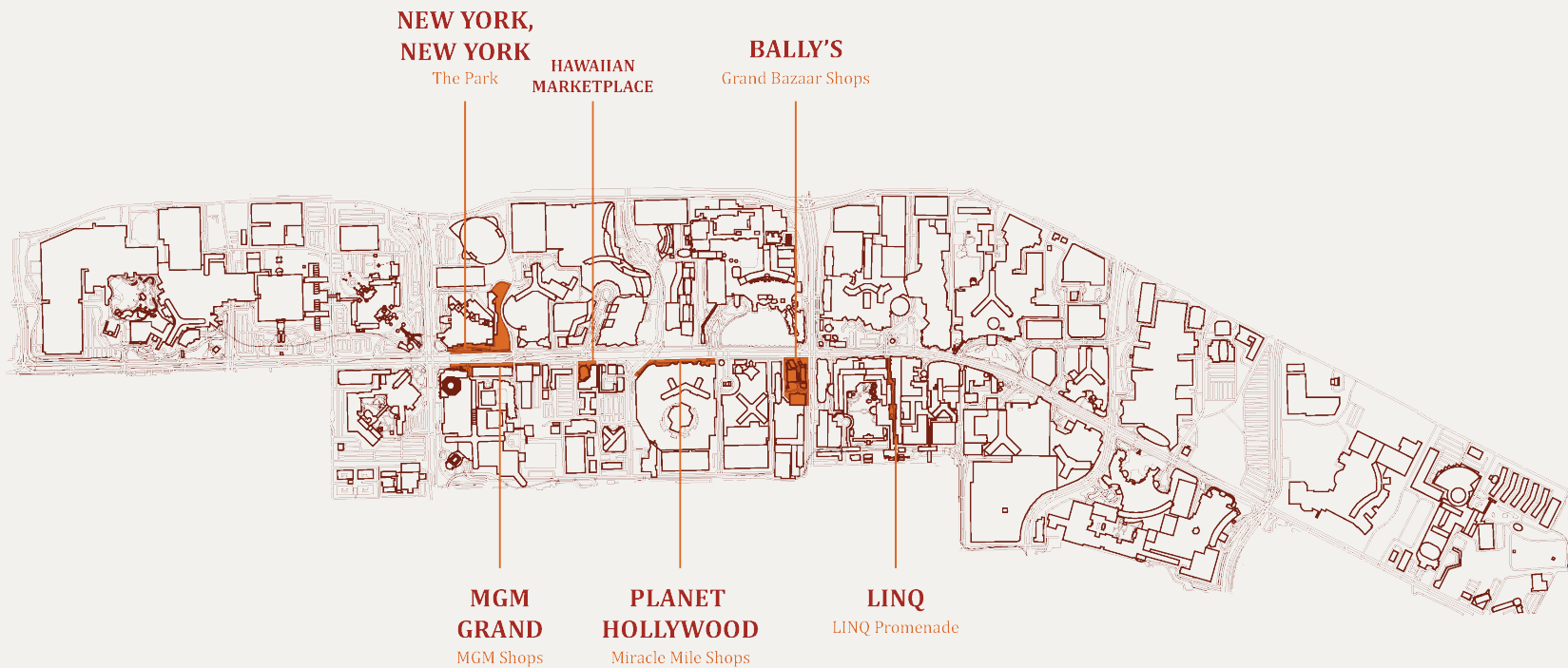
FOOD & BEVERAGE

\$ 3,176,257,201

ENTERTAINMENT

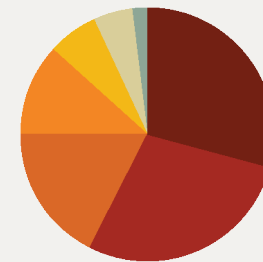
\$ 1,756,265,984

LAS VEGAS RETAIL



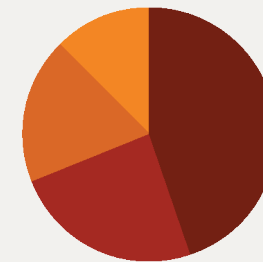
\$1,920,000,000+ IN SALES

RETAIL COUNT



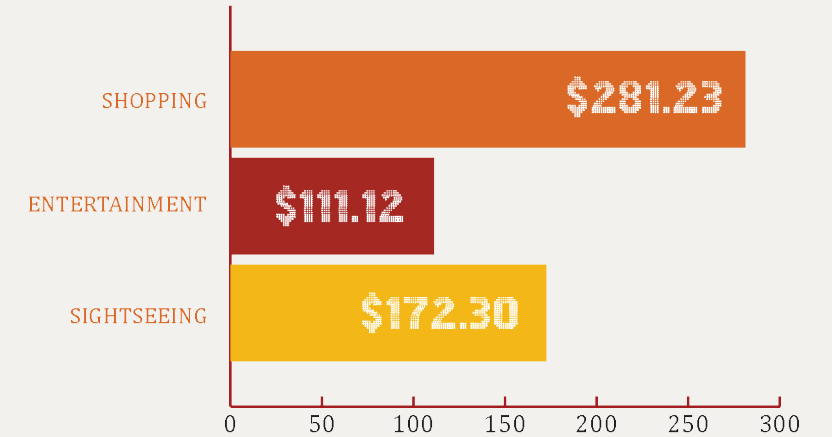
INDOOR SHOPPING

- FASHION SHOW (244)
- GRAND CANAL SHOPPES (238)
- FORUM SHOPS (146)
- MIRACLE MILE (97)
- THE CRYSTALS (55)
- THE SHOPPES AT MANDALAY (40)
- WYNN ESPLANADE (16)



OUTDOOR SHOPPING

- GRAND BAZAAR SHOPS (68)
- LINQ PROMENADE (37)
- LE BOULEVARD (28)
- SHOWCASE MALL (19)



AVERAGE TRIP EXPENDETURES

THE QUESTION
AND THE
PROPOSED
SOLUTION





RESEARCH QUESTION

As sidewalk pedestrians start increasing in the streets of the Las Vegas Strip and casinos increase efforts to start drawing people in their properties, could there be a possible incorporation of local musical and dance performances around the privatized sidewalks in the area? With audience engagement and interaction being the primary way to see how successful and effective a performance is, how can we create better audience interaction with the performers found at the Las Vegas Strip?

Could this be some sort of a local and cultural attraction found in the most populated and visited area in the city just as the live performances that have come before it and that are still alongside it? Could there be a symbiotic relationship between the larger performances and the local ones that could benefit both?

THESIS STATEMENT

With the integration of dance performance spaces along shopping areas of the Strip through the use of already existing built spaces, Strip productions and local shows can start creating a visual and cultural connection with audiences and performers alike to generate more accessible modes of performance art at the micro level.



PLACEMARKING:
BLURRING THE
LINES OF PUBLIC
AND PRIVATE

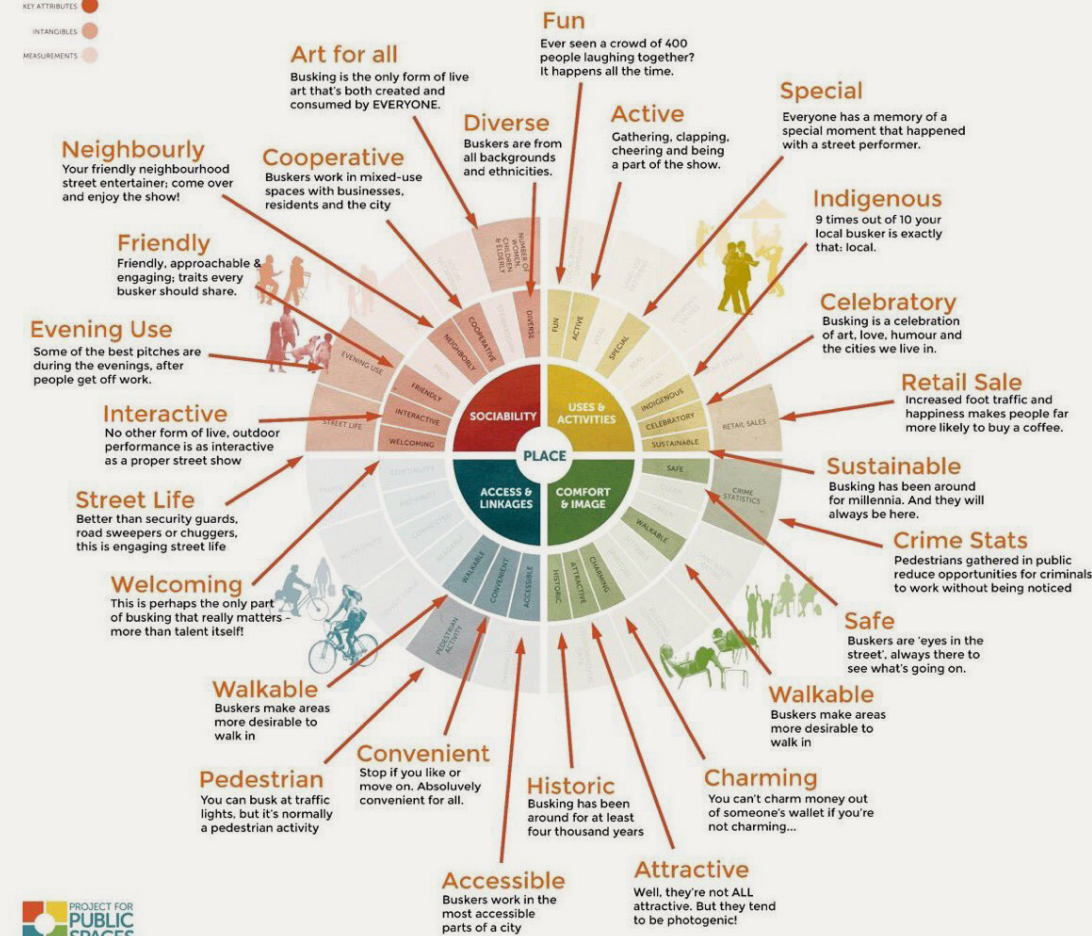


WHAT MAKES A GREAT SPACE?

PSYCHOLOGY

WHAT MAKES A GREAT PLACE?

KEY ATTRIBUTES ●
INTANGIBLES ●
MEASUREMENTS ●

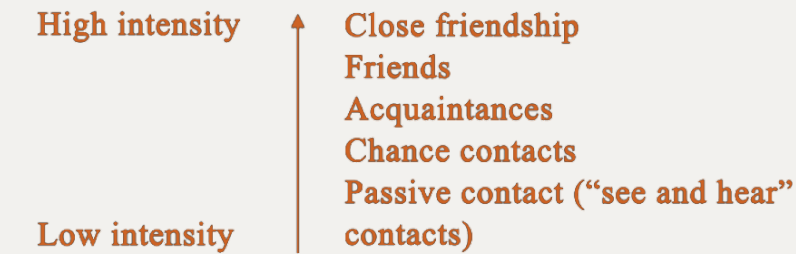


The creation of space, be it private or public takes into consideration the physical environment's impact on people who encounter it. Going back to studies by Elspeth Frew and Jane Ali-Knight, a space's form, aesthetics, lighting, and elements greatly affect how people perceive and city activities and documents how often quite simple physical alterations can improve the use of the city space noticeably" (Gehl 2011).

With this in mind, creating a sense of public space in some of the existing microspaces along the Las Vegas Strip holds the potential for an improvement in the use and experience for the public (tourists and locals) that will encounter said spaces.



SOCIAL INTERACTIONS



In Jan Gehl’s *Life Between Buildings : Using Public Space*, the author talks in depth about how social interactions occur in public places as well as the varieties and impact that it comes with. An exploration of social interactions is important in both the nature of creating public spaces as well as performance spaces for both performers, audiences, and passerby. “Opportunities related to merely being able to meet, see, and hear others include: – contact at a modest level – a possible starting point for contact at other levels – a possibility for maintaining already established contacts – a source of information about the social world outside – a source of inspiration, an offer of stimulating experience,” (p. 15).

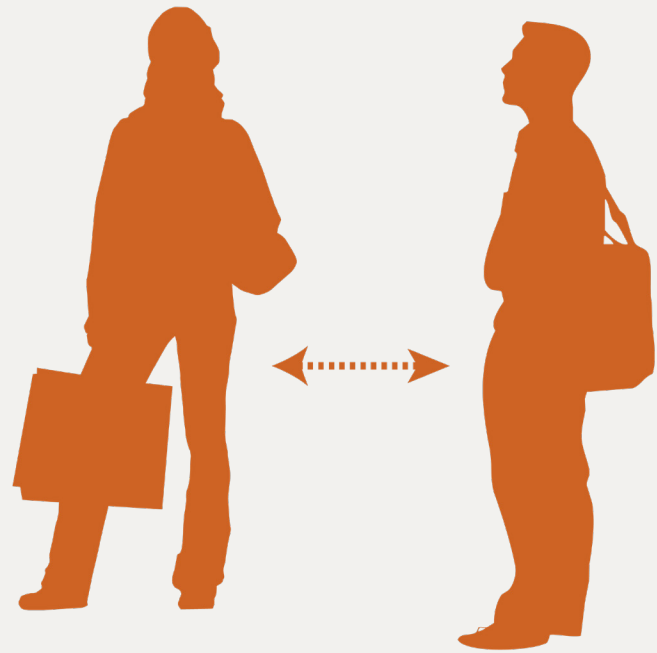
Designing for social interactions is created as a priority in order to achieve an effective positive public space.

	Quality of the physical environment	
	Poor	Good
Necessary activities	●	●
Optional activities	●	●●●
Social activities	●	●

FOSTERING CONNECTIONS

This need for fostering social connections is highlighted in Charles Montgomery’s *Happy City: Transforming Our Lives Through Urban Design*. Satisfaction and happiness in a city is directly correlated to how social it is. This connection not only extend to the mere psychology of socialization but also on the more important aspects that involve the city such as its economy and various social issues that involve poverty, discrimination, climate change, and inequity. The connections create a network.

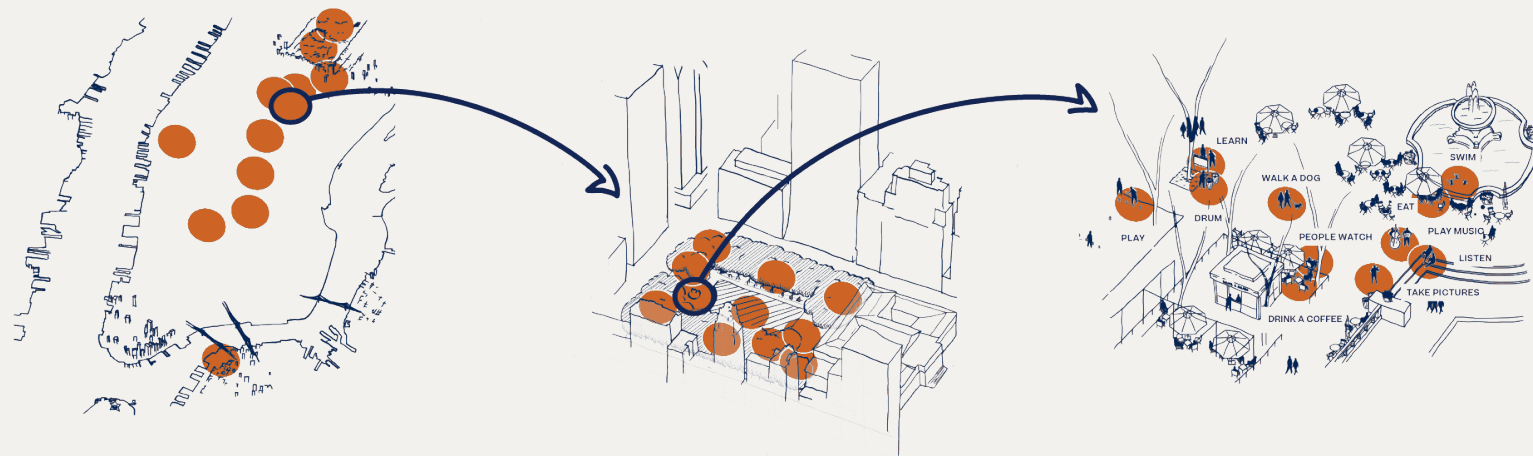
“A healthy social network looks like the root mass of a tree. From the most important relationships at the heart of the network, thinner roots stretch out to contacts of different strength,” (p. 53).



PLACEMAKING

When these various qualities for the creation of a more social and interactive space come together, it results in placemaking. Project for Public Spaces defines this as something that “inspires people to collectively reimagine and reinvent public spaces as the heart of every community. Strengthening the connection between people and the places they share, placemaking refers to

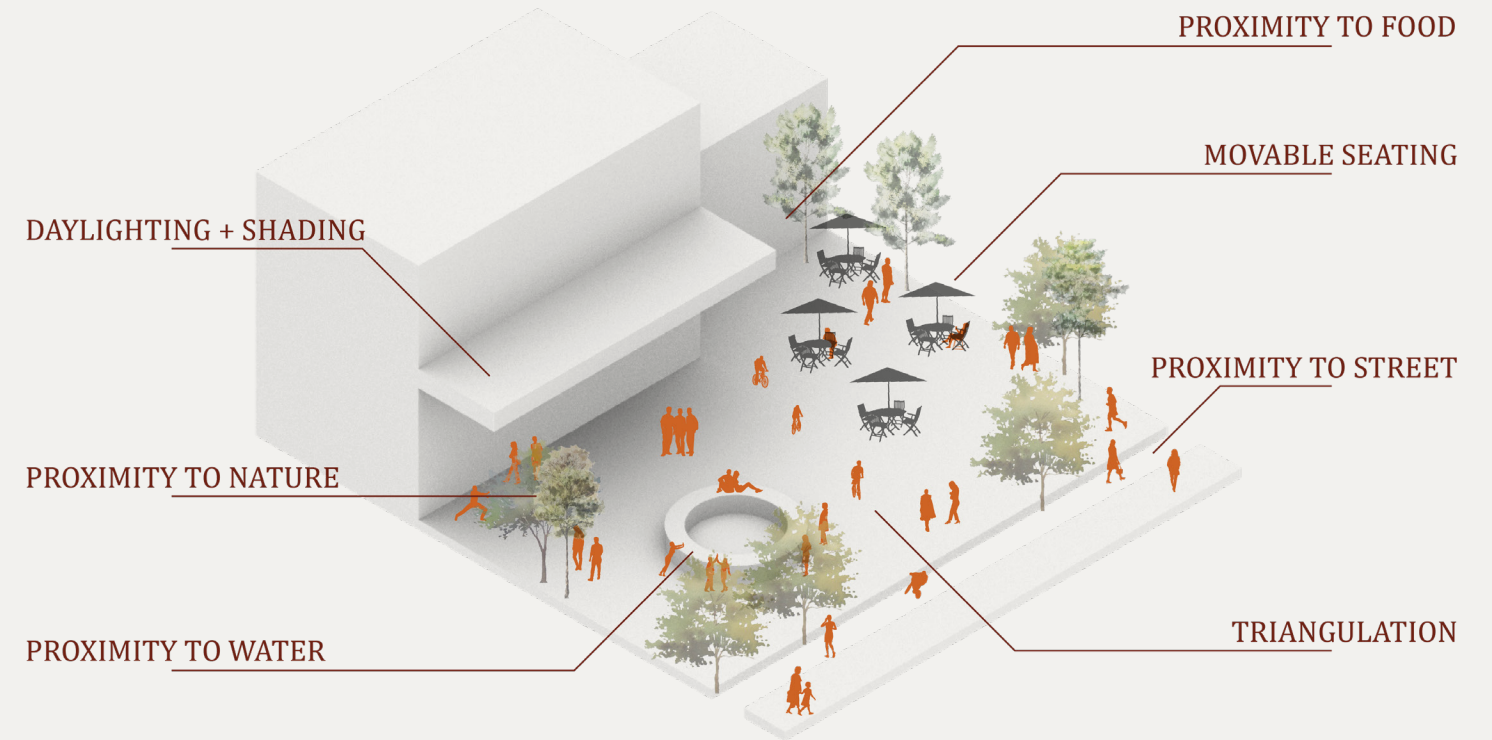
a collaborative process by which we can shape our public realm in order to maximize shared value.” This notion of placemaking can help make cities and areas such as the Strip become a more dynamic place to visit and learn from. It could also provide a sense of accessibility for activities that are often monetized.



CITY/REGION
10+ major destinations

DESTINATION
10+ places in each

PLACE
10+ things to do
(layered to create synergy)

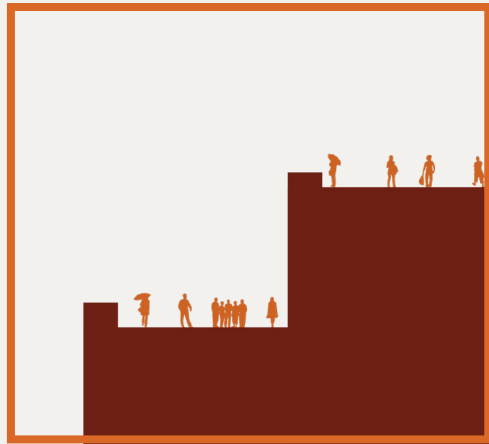


The Social Life of Small Urban Spaces by William H. Whyte goes in depth on what qualities are to be found in spaces where placemaking exists. These descriptions are integral to the site selection as the study aims to maximize how to create a quality space for both the public as well

as for the performers. Smaller urban spaces also apply to existing microspaces that are found in the Strip where the intended study is to be done. To circle around, the study zooms into one of the biggest proponents of triangulation: performers.

THE SITE: AN
EXPLORATION OF
A MICROSPACE IN
THE STRIP

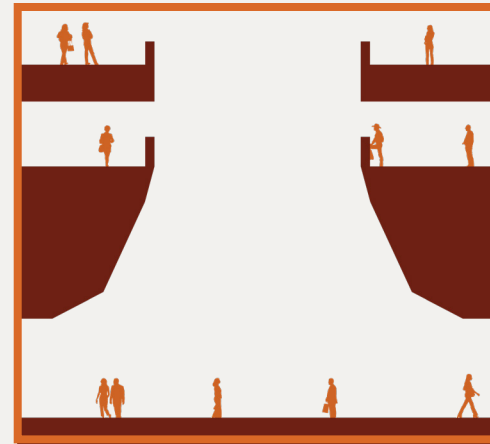
INTERIOR SPACES



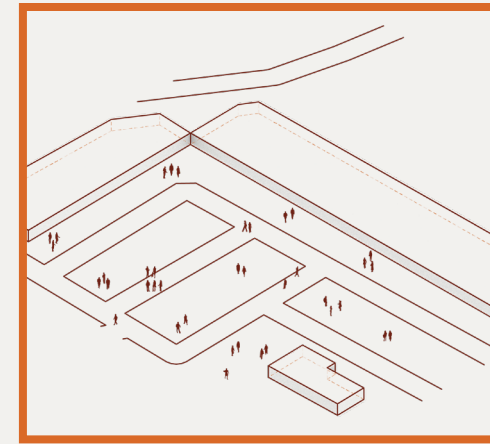
BALCONY



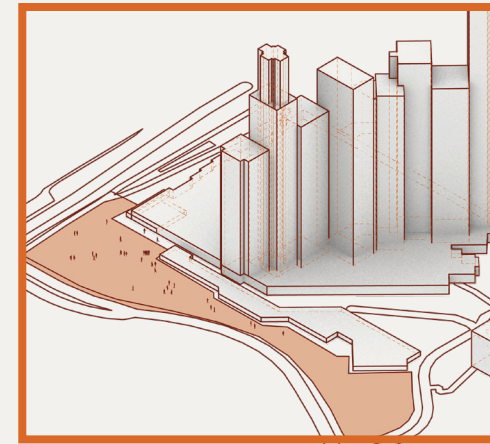
HALL



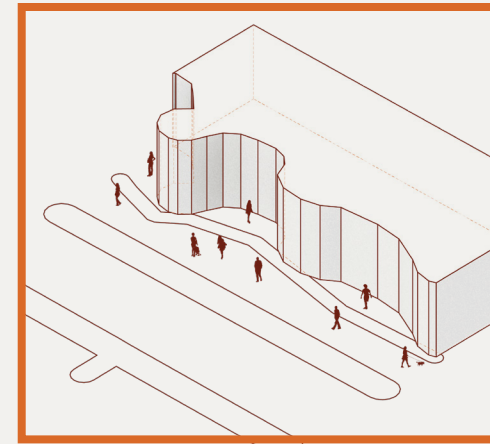
ATRIUM



PLAZA



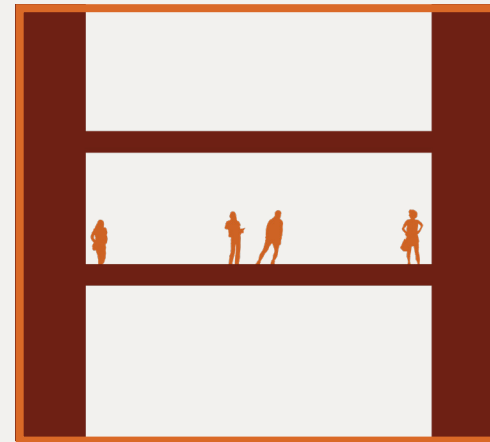
PARK



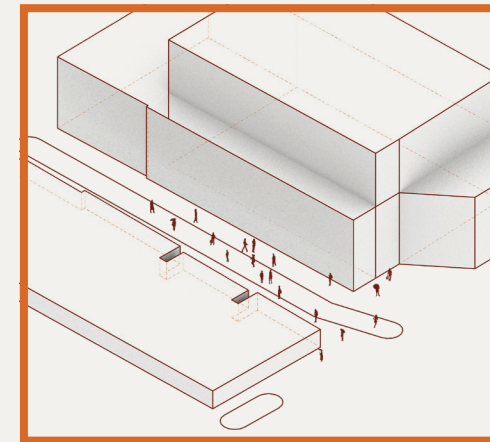
SIDEWALK



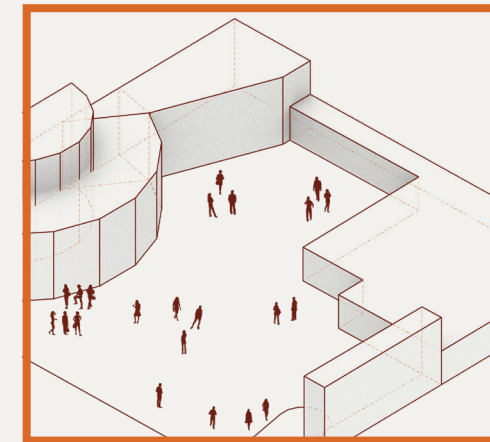
GALLERY



WALKWAY



PROMENADE



COURTYARD

LINQ PROMENADE

SOUND ELEMENTS



LISTEN FOR SOUND



People on the Ground: Walking, Conversations, Living Sounds



People in the Sky: Zip line Every 2.5 min, Screams of Excitement



Music of the Plaza from the Speakers on the Palm Trees



Water from the Plaza Fountain



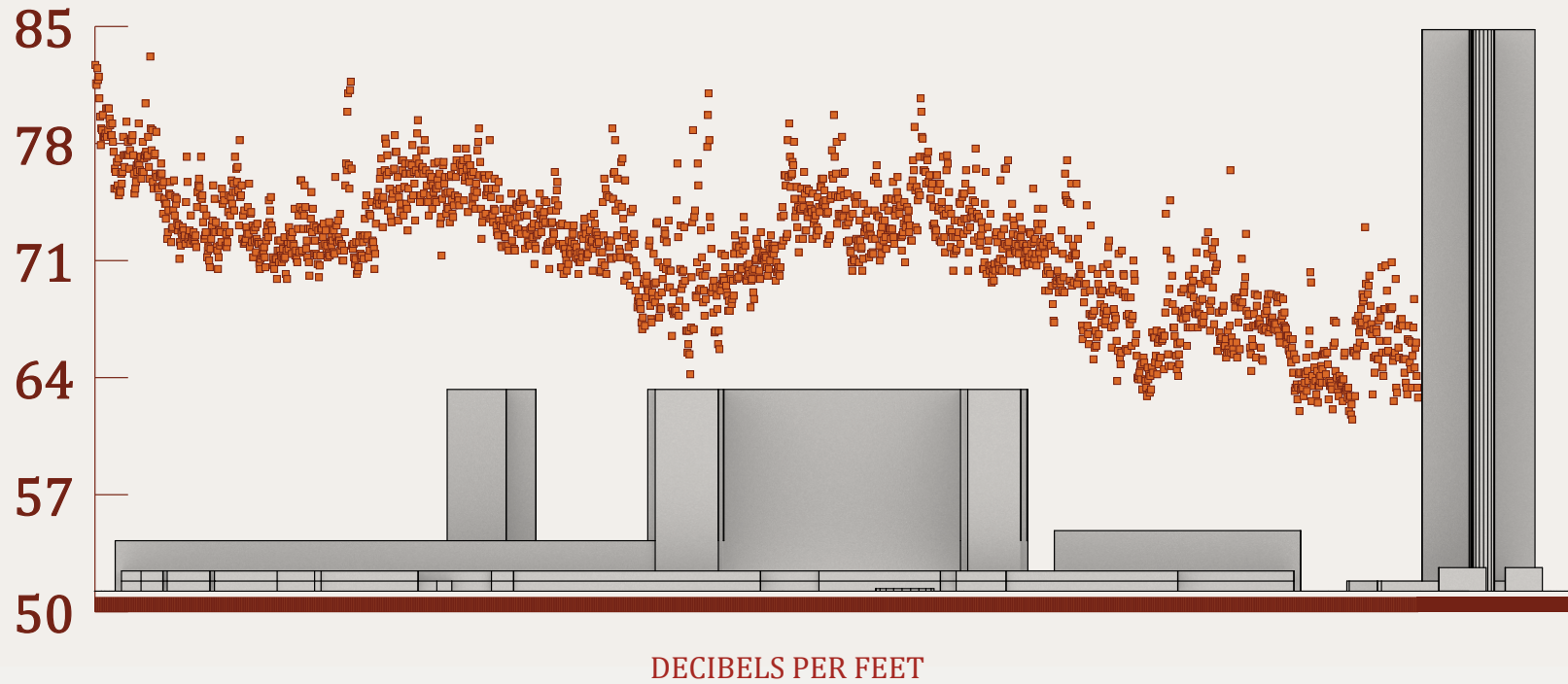
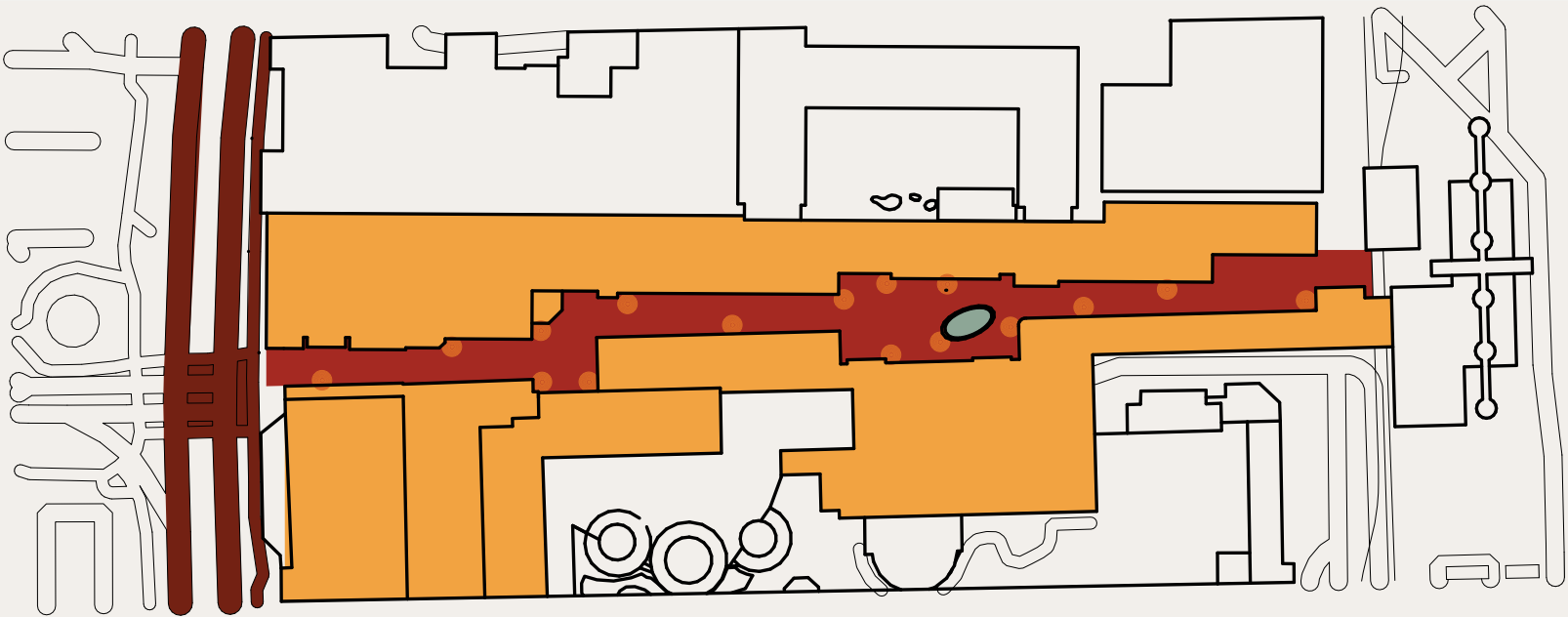
Music from Structures: The LINQ, Shops, and Restaurants



Sounds of Cars along Las Vegas Blvd.

A MAP OF SOUNDS

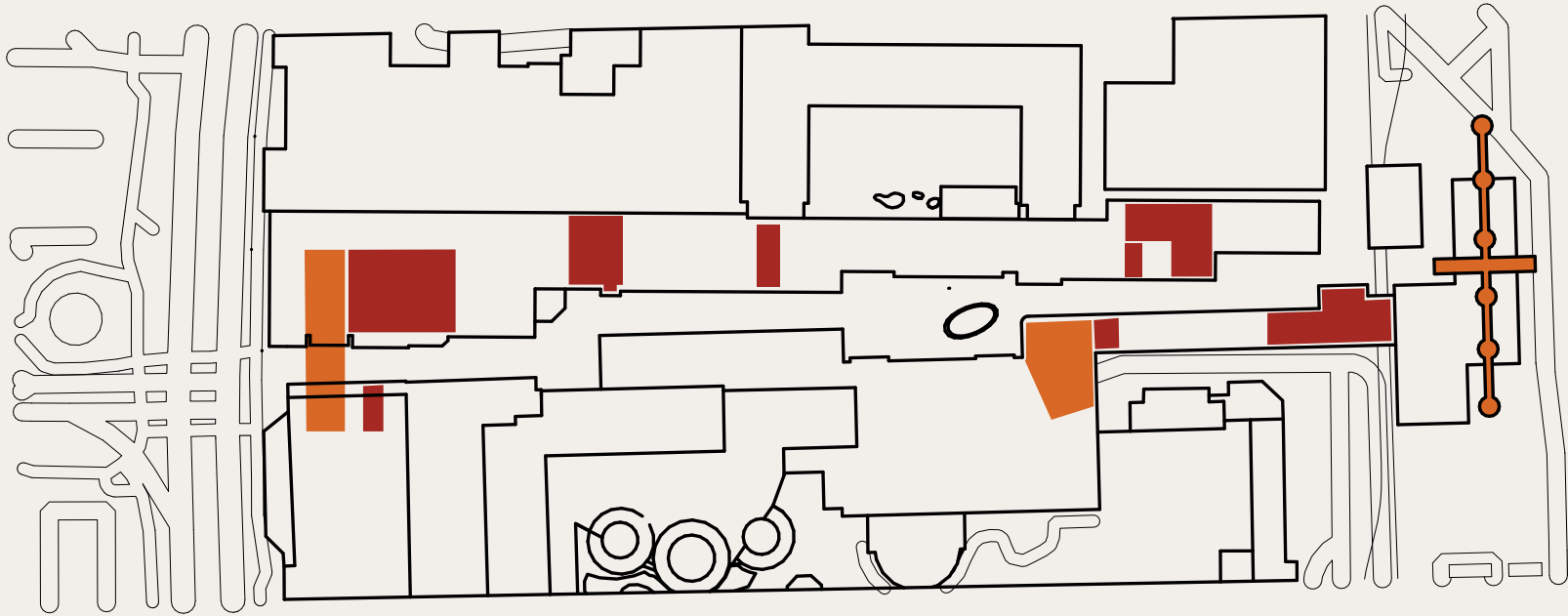
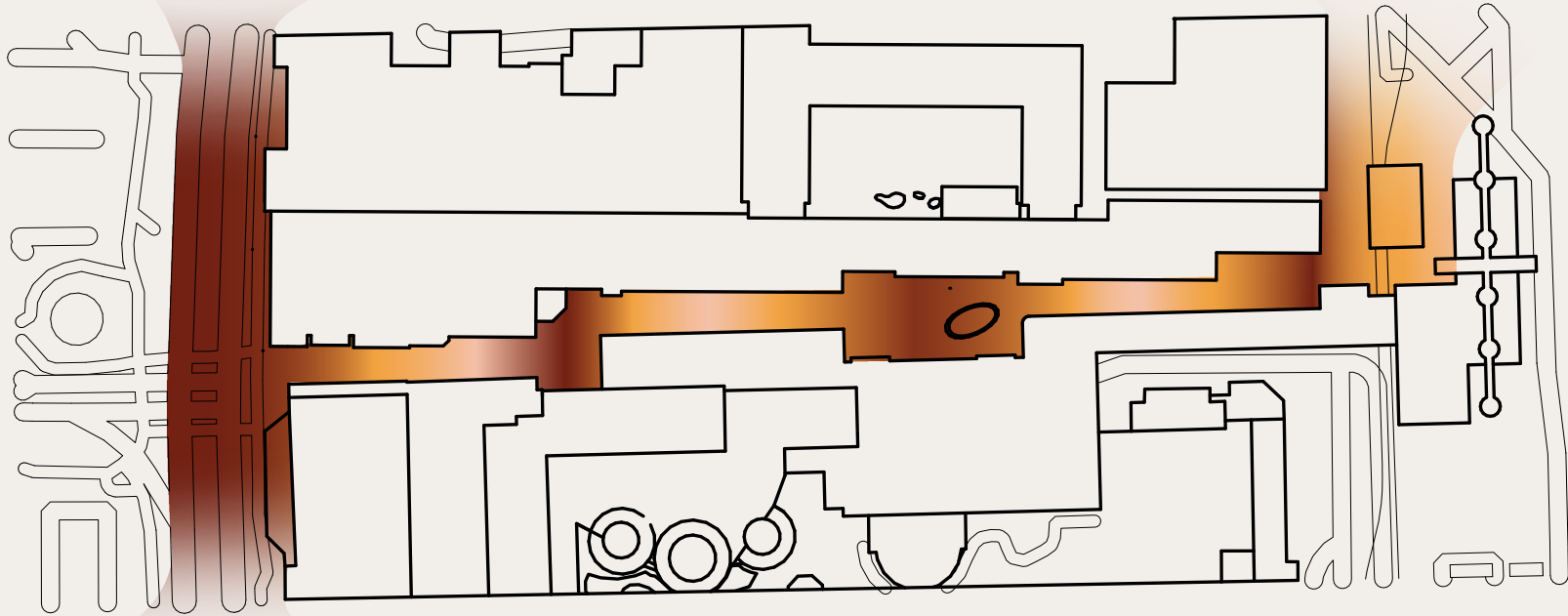
NOISES IN SECTION



- NOTES ON NOISE:
- The noise level seems to increase as the smaller plazas such as the LINQ and Flamingo Plazas are approached as most of the plaza areas are surrounded by speakers playing music
 - There is also an increased level of foot traffic and people staying and talking in the fountain plaza as it has seating
 - Most restaurants by the alleyway account for the rest of the noise because they play music from the building into the crowd outdoors

A MAP OF FOOT TRAFFIC

POINTS OF ENTERTAINMENT



NOTES ON ENTERTAINMENT SPACES:

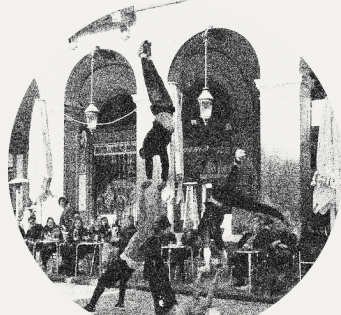
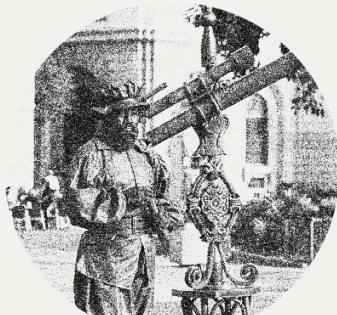
- Most does not interact with the street and 2/3 of those that do barely count for it
- Most people have to physically enter these spaces to see what's going on in them



CASE STUDIES

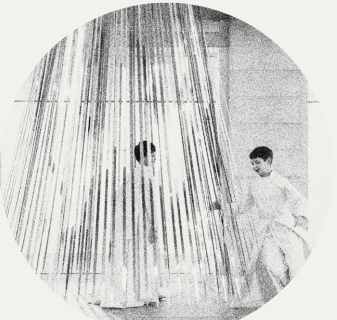
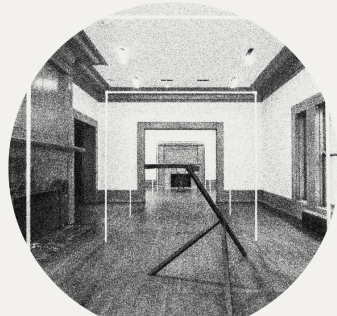
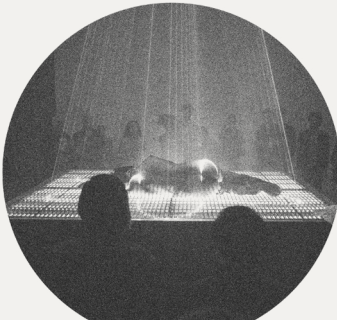


Ciutat Vella, Barcelona



La Ramblas, Barcelona

RELATED STRUCTURES



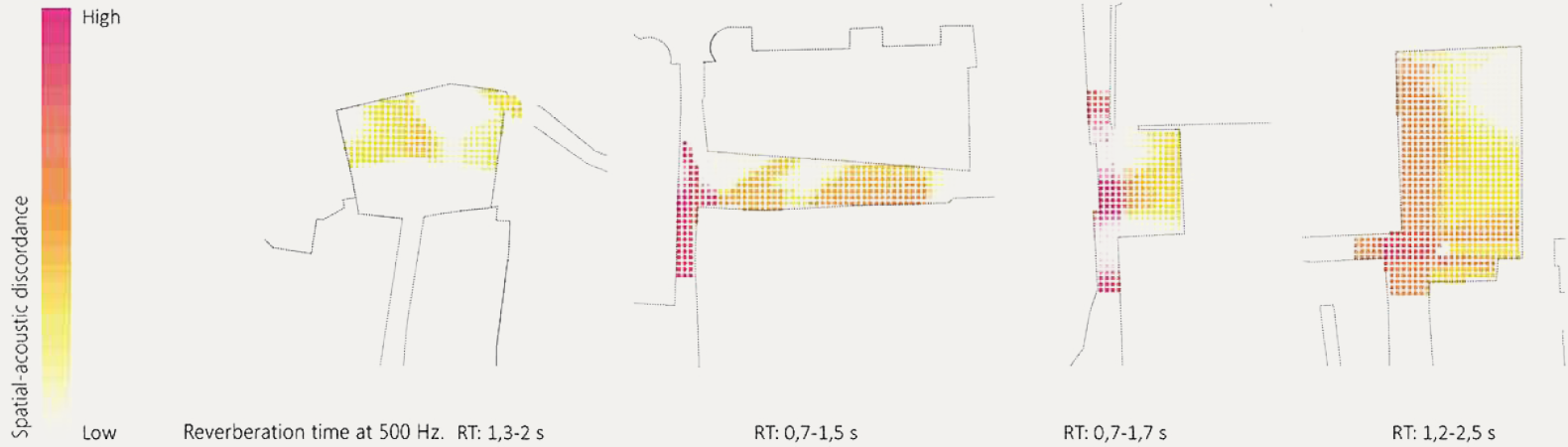
Performa Biennial, New York



Edinburgh Fringe Festival

CASE STUDIES

Ciutat Vella, Barcelona



Ciutat Vella is an old central area of the city where public spaces, numerous visitors and architecture landmarks converge in the historical street layout. The streets created an environment where street performing can thrive due to the fast moving pace of the foot traffic. The area presents a diverse amount of shapes created by the urban fabric which produces different factors to consider for performers. The public space is considered as the resonance box

for music, enabling proper interactions between informal activity and the form of the space. In this diagram from a study by Alvaro Clua on how the acoustics can work at Ciutat Vella, the form and shapes of the areas almost reflect how the LINQ Promenade is shaped. The narrower areas of the site can act as stronger acoustical spaces than the larger plazas. This starts to become a study on how unique plaza shapes and scale can create a more effective performing space.

“The areas with a dark color are those specific points with good acoustics but with a conflictive position in the movement pattern.” - Alvaro Clua



Pedestrians in the Streets



Water from the Ocean Nearby



Music from Other Performers



CASE STUDIES

La Ramblas, Barcelona



Music from Other Street Performers



Sounds of Cars the Street

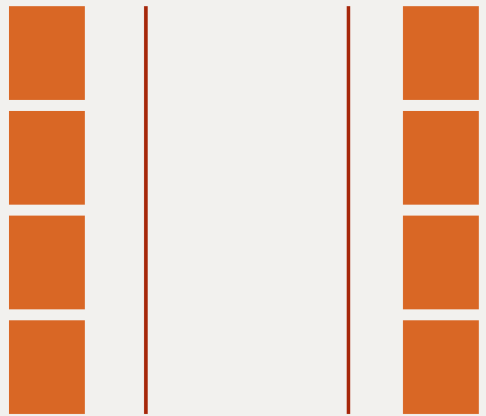
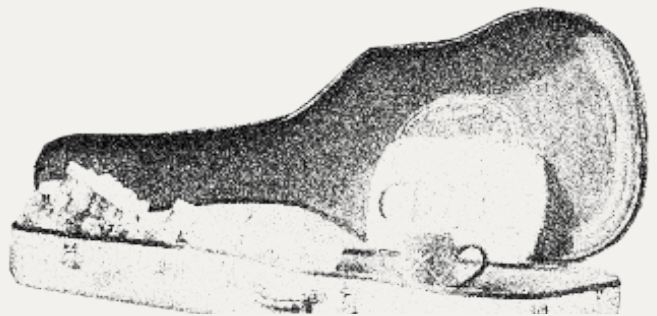


People on Walking in the Area



In La Ramblas, the street offers about a mile dedicated to a variety of street performers. Most of these spaces are nearby the street, shops, or restaurants and attracts viewers that aren't just walking on the outside. The seat is specifically set and made for the performances despite having various performers come in at different parts of the street. Alongside performing arts, visual arts has also been incorporated into the street to heighten the audience's interactions with local arts. In a 2019 study by Avi Astor, the

author investigates how street performers have situated themselves on certain spots on the streets, specifically in La Ramblas. "The status of buskers and their freedom to station themselves in public space depend critically on whether their presence is perceived as a desirable or undesirable element of urban life by relevant authorities," (p. 2). The paper goes in depth on how selecting an ideal space for performers that are often deemed as "undesirable" is possible using the notion of boundary gradations.



CASE STUDIES

Performa Biennial, New York

The festival presents new works by artists working in performance, first performance works by artists working in other mediums, and re-staging of seminal performance works from history. The objective in creating the festival was “to produce new work that was never seen before and have the miracle of working with artists who would make things of wonder. The second was to deal with [New York’s] history.” With the

incorporation of how to design structures for larger cities with an active tourist population, looking at the Performa Biennale’s works as a guide on how performers as well as audiences can start affecting various kinds of architectural moves that can be applied to performance spaces. The Biennale’s work goes beyond the conventional designs that are made for stages and theaters and could be good precedents.



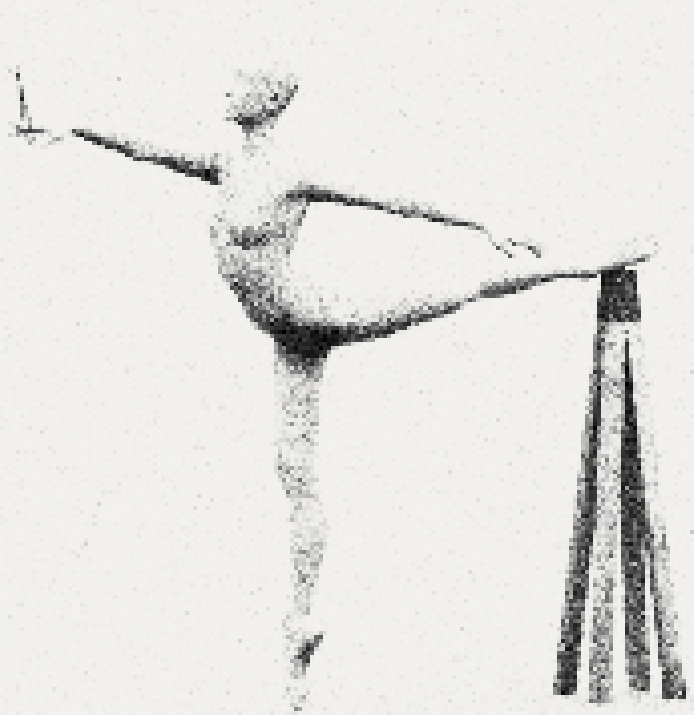
Pedestrians in the Streets



Music from existing structures



Music from Other Performers



CASE STUDIES

Edinburgh Fringe Festival, Scotland

The festival has an existing history of being created by “fringe” performers with the term originating when a critic remarked it was a shame the show was so far out “on the fringe of the Festival.” The two tenets of the festival’s history includes the lack of official invitations to perform and the use of unconventional venues. The festival also sees an interesting relationship between the fringe performances and the more formal ones that are backed by entertainment companies. It also presents in

a timeline what things are to be considered for a budding performance festival and how it was dealt with as it grew larger through the years. In the study *Independent theatres and the creation of a fringe atmosphere*, the authors explore how the atmosphere of fringe festivals has impacted audience engagement as well as tourism in the general area of Edinburgh every time the festival happens. Bringing in the more visual factor of the festival the authors have identified that “interesting and visual images

by the independent theaters supports findings that for a city to be successful, it needs to visually appeal to tourists,” (p. 210). The visual aspect of what’s present in the festival expands out to other considerations such as sensory stimulants like scents, lighting, temperature, and other more tangible things such as fixtures and cleanliness. These exist along the human factors outside of spaces that includes other audiences and performers, theme events and marketing strategies that are employed for

the festival. The creation of the atmosphere is attributed to ‘environmental psychology’ that is described in the paper as “the study of the direct impact of physical stimuli on human emotions and, the effects of physical stimuli on a variety of behaviors, such as work performance and social interactions” (p. 213). This addition of psychology can greatly influence how structure is designed and created as it could be catered towards the audiences.



Pedestrians in the Streets,
Performance Audiences



Music from Other Performers



Music from Indoor Shows

CONSIDERATIONS

FOR SITE + PERFORMANCE



Storage Spaces



Backstage and Changing Areas



Seating for Audiences



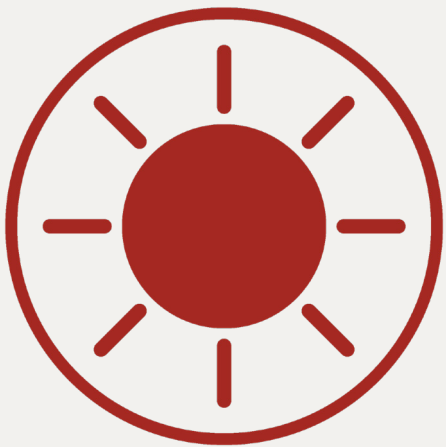
Flexibility



Framing and Composition



Entrances and Exits



Shading/Weather Protection



Electrical Systems



Good Flooring Materials



Site Context



Audience Interactions



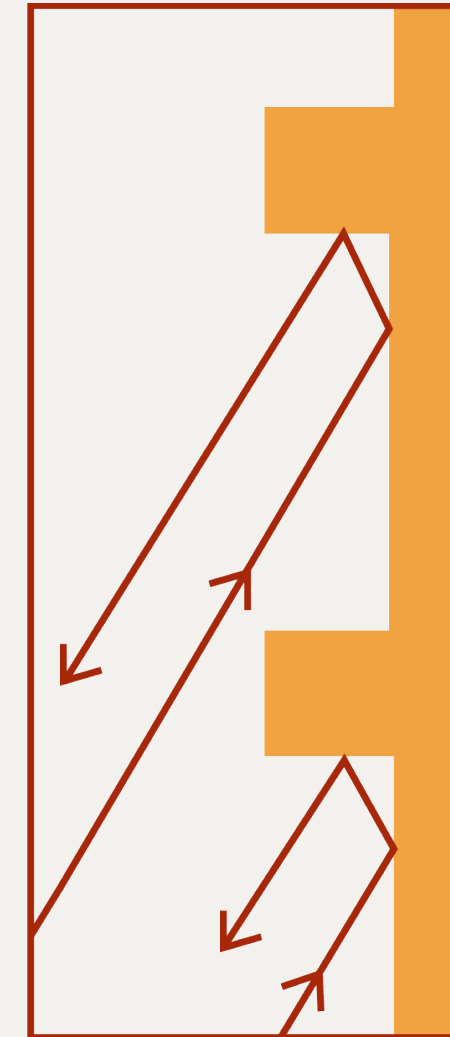
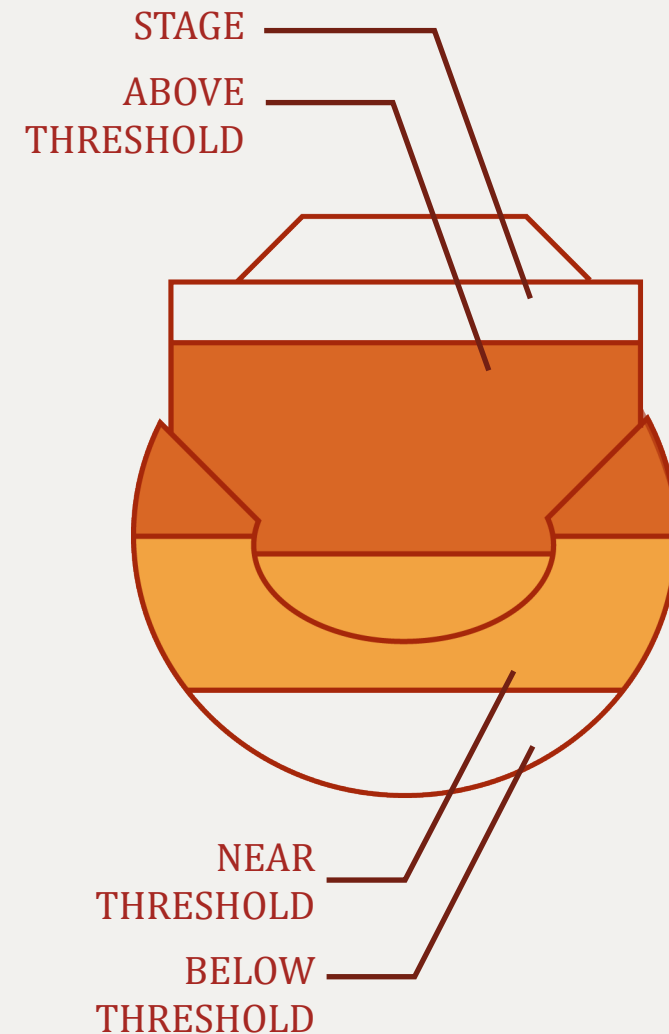
Lighting

THE ELEMENTS:
BASED ON
SYNTHESIS OF
INFORMATION

WHAT TO LOOK FOR

SOUNDS + FORM

In a paper by physicist David Griesinger, the audience engagement is something that's affected through how people can perceive sound; whether it sounds near or far as well as the clarity of which it is heard. One of Griesinger's suggestions as to how to incorporate this into design states, "A better solution is to add absorption, or perhaps some means of deflecting the earliest reflections to the ceiling, or into the front of the audience where they can be absorbed," (p. 64). This starts affecting how the form of the space looks like, especially when placed outdoors such as the LINQ Promenade. In the diagram to the right, the placement of audience seating can create various thresholds for sounds to appear. Notice how the areas where the sound is below threshold is smaller due to the shape.



Various shapes of facades as well as the use of filter-like canopies were also suggested for these spaces. "Rectangular wall features scatter in three dimensions... High frequencies are reflected back to the stage and to the audience in the front," (p. 68). This change in texture will add an additional dynamic layer to the design on top of engaging the audience with how the sound appears to be when perceived.

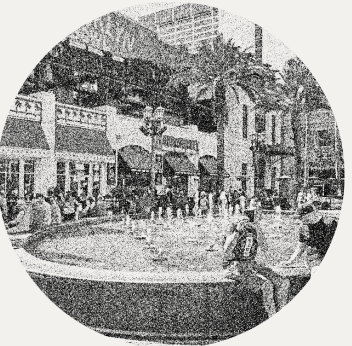
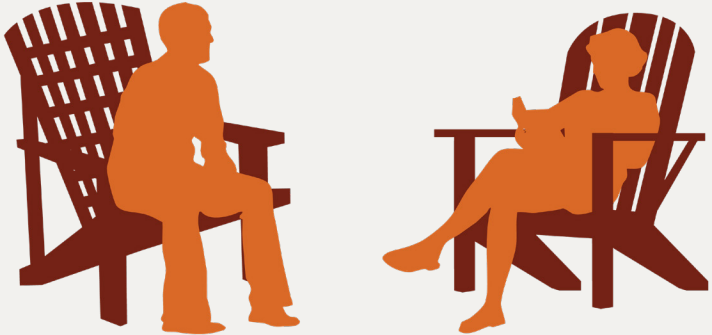
As for the canopies, Griesinger states, "A canopy made of partly open surfaces becomes a high frequency filter. Low frequencies pass through," (p. 67). Not only does this detail in the canopy enhance how frequencies are received by the audience, it also creates a more dynamic form outside of a structure's materiality.

VISUALS

In a retail sector such as the LINQ Promenade, the earlier study *Independent theatres and the creation of a fringe atmosphere* becomes relevant once again when looking at how sight, forms, and placements. While not studied, some of the more relevant avenues to look at on facade and placement can go back to things such as the exteriors. These includes marquees, storefronts, entrances, and the surrounding site (p. 213).

Similarly, in the works of John Gehl, the author identifies various ways into how to make a public space more interactive. Additions of entrances are encouraged as to create a sense of space as well as playing with the facade instead of making them more monotonous or not detailed (p. 20). Opportunity for viewing or sitting is also encouraged as it can give audiences and passersby alike an opportunity to be able to sit and witness performances.

SIGNAGE!



GRADATIONS

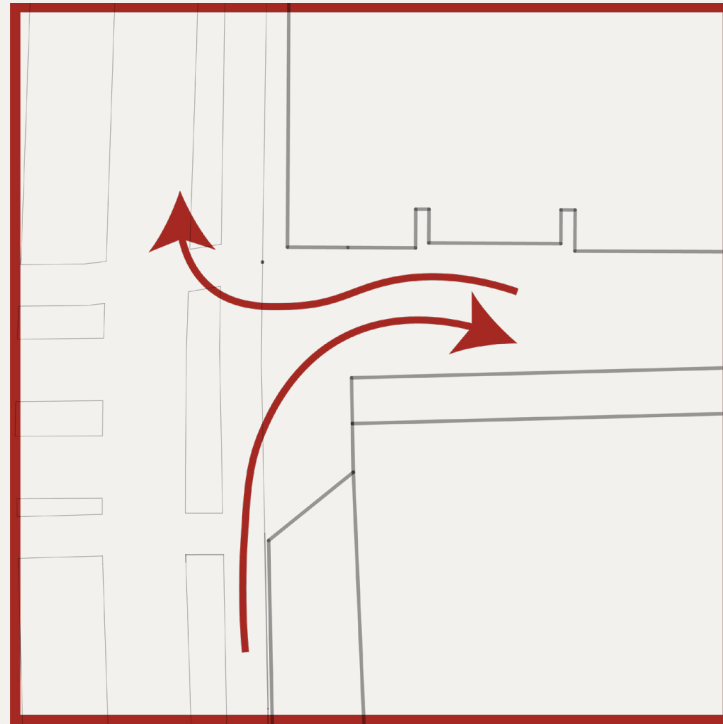
The study *Street Performance, Public Space, and The Boundaries Of Urban Desirability*, as mentioned earlier, focuses on how spaces can start creating a gradient between the perceived public and perceived private spaces in order to associate performer spaces as more of a positive addition to a place instead of a nuisance. The author states that in order to create gradations on what spaces are deemed as “right” for performers would include incorporating them into a city or area’s brand, traditions, and look, (p. 1081). In the context of the project, this would emphasize the incorporation of the site context of the LINQ promenade. The creation of a space that is of the site incorporates the performers in the area through design.

This however, will localize every design to the site that it’s going to be placed on. While not easily prototyped, as the study progresses, there could be pointers taken that are universal.

ACCESSIBILITY

As was previously outlined in *The Social Life of Small Urban Spaces* by William H. Whyte, in order to achieve placemaking, a sense of accessibility must be achieved. This includes accessibility to the street (in a way, to also create entrances and exits for the space), access to food, access to seating and infrastructures and access to activities that could triangulate the area such as performance spaces.

Audience aside, considerations for performers should also be done. One should ask the question of whether the space is accessible to the performer that includes the same questions for the audience that spans a place to sit down, food, access to entrances and exits, etc.



NATURE

Whyte also outlines the importance of existing and adding access to nature in the book. In the addition to how cities should foster the existence of sunlight and water into their public spaces, trees has been one of the biggest points of the discussion regarding nature. “This provides a satisfying enclosure; people feel cuddled, protected—very much as they do under the awning of a street cafe,” (p. 46).



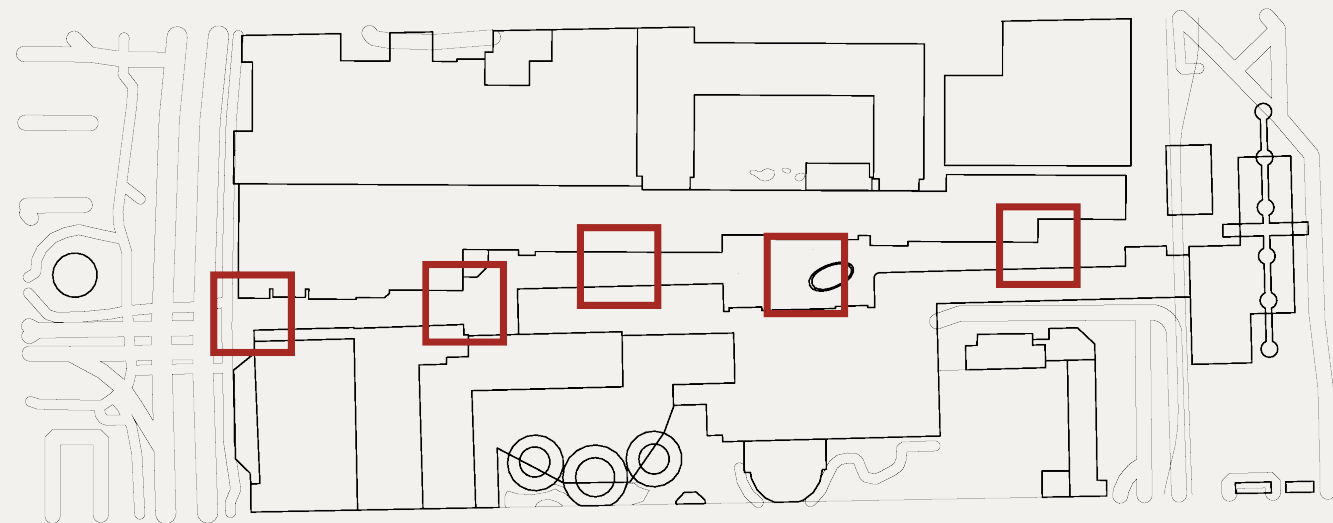
When looking at the LINQ Promenade, while there is an emphasis on a fountain in the middle of the plaza as well as an open top that people often use to zip line, there seems to be a lack of trees that are used for the purpose of shading. Existing trees are palm trees that offer a little bit of greenery and not much else. One should ask can nature in the area be enhanced and be more of use for a more engaging and comfortable placemaking.

DESIGN TEST

PEER EXPERIMENTS

In order to see other explorations on the project, a design brief was created for 4 students to produce 2 different schemes with the prior studies in mind. The goal of the design brief is to create a performance space that interacts with the existing site context, the needs of a performer, and the active and passive audiences of the site.

The project's site is to be localized to the LINQ Promenade as it's the area that has been studied the most. The LINQ Promenade is presented with various selected "ideal" areas that are measured around 1,000 sqft. to be used by the students. However, alternate sites are considered when presented with reason.



Each student is tasked to design 2 spaces for a dance performer of a selected dance type alongside 2 selections of reuse diagrams, and movement verbs based on their interpretation to reflect either how the design fits into the site, and/or how performances could apply to the design.

The project brief highlights various studies of form as well as presenting various potential of how people can interact with these selected and designed spaces.



ATTACH



CARVE



EXTRUDE



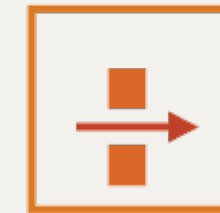
FRACTURE



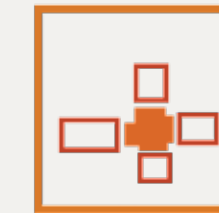
PUNCTURE (ADDITIVE)



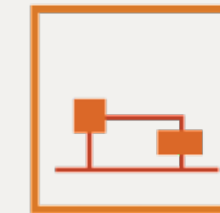
PUNCTURE (SUBTRACTIVE)



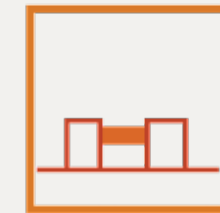
GATE



ALIGNMENT



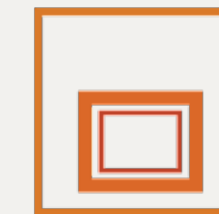
PARASITE



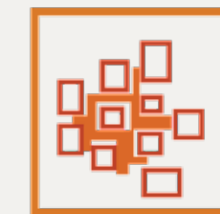
ROOF



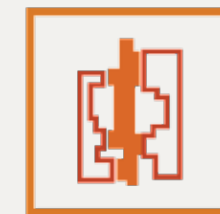
BRIDGE



SKIN



INFILL

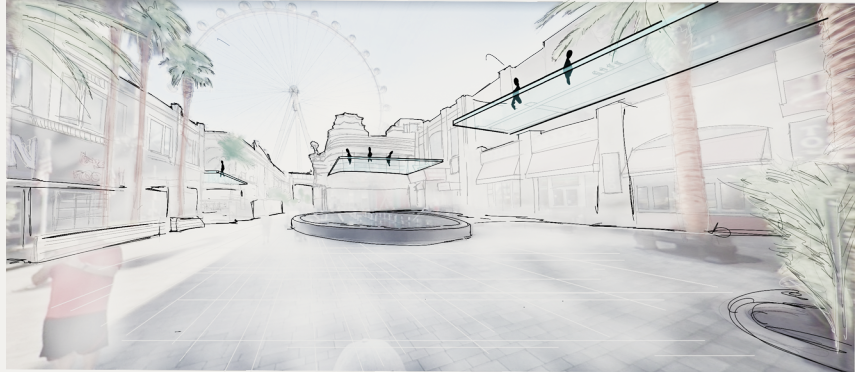


GLUE

PEER EXPERIMENT

Designs

HIPHOP - PARASITE + ATTACH



PARASITIC STAGES EMERGING FROM BUILDINGS PROVIDE ENTERTAINMENT SPACES FOR FOOT TRAFFIC PASSING BELOW. THIS DOES NOT AFFECT CIRCULATION ON THE STREET LEVEL. TRANSPARENT DECK MATERIAL PERMITS VIEWING FROM ANY ANGLE.

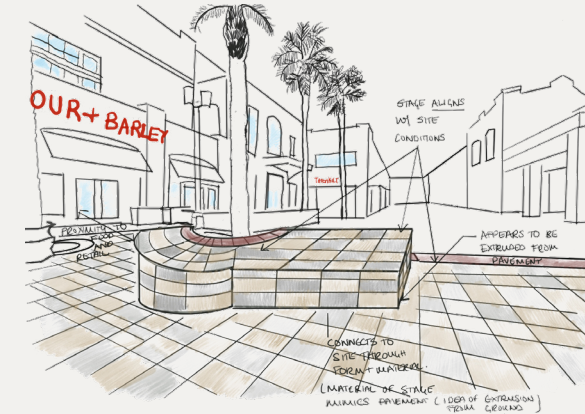
HIPHOP - ALIGNMENT + EXTRUDE



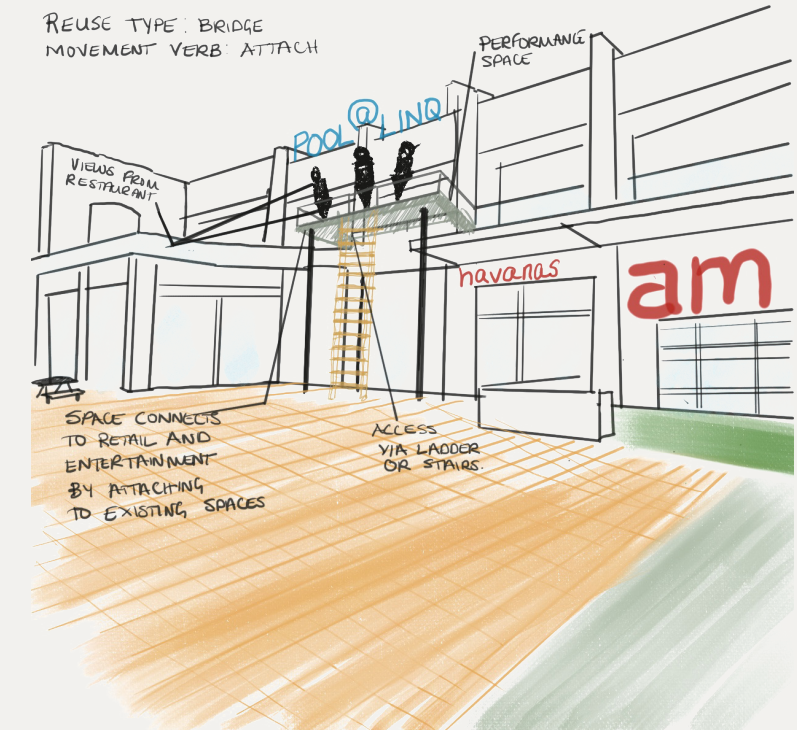
USING EXISTING PAVERS, THE GROUND WILL CONTINUE ITS CURRENT ALIGNMENT PATH, EXTRUDING UP THE FOUNTAIN, CREATING A STAGE FOR OUT DOOR PERFORMANCES.

In both designs by Maurice Gregory, one can observe the use of the combination diagram of a “parasite” that allows the space to be attached into the buildings and water fountain via platforms. To base it off the various characteristics on what to look for in a public space, the site selection within the LINQ Promenade provides for the majority of it. It has proximity to the water, food, some nature, and also offers a wide range of seating arrangements (albeit not as flexible). A few of the problems encountered with the first design however, comes from the lack of accessibility in sight (depending on the materiality), hearing, and entrances for the performers and audience alike. The second design gets rid of this problem by bringing the “stage” down through the process, it eliminates the seating.

Similar comments can be said for Lindsey McPhee’s design of her platforms and raised stages. The extruded stage is commendable in its use of the materiality of the LINQ Promenade but suffers the same problem as elimination of the seating as well as total disruption of the circulation. As for the second design, with added accessibility for entrances for the performers, the design still narrows itself down by the use of ladders. Connecting the design to an already existing balcony helps the performance in a sense that it still has an audience in the upstairs area. It however, gives a lot of disconnect to the passerby that are walking along the promenade.

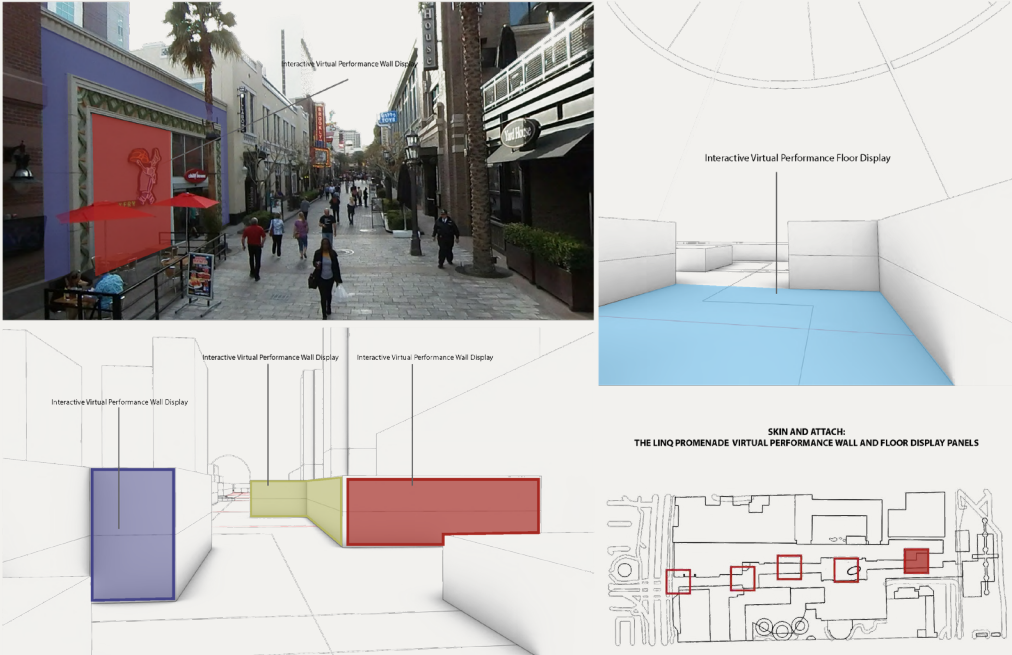
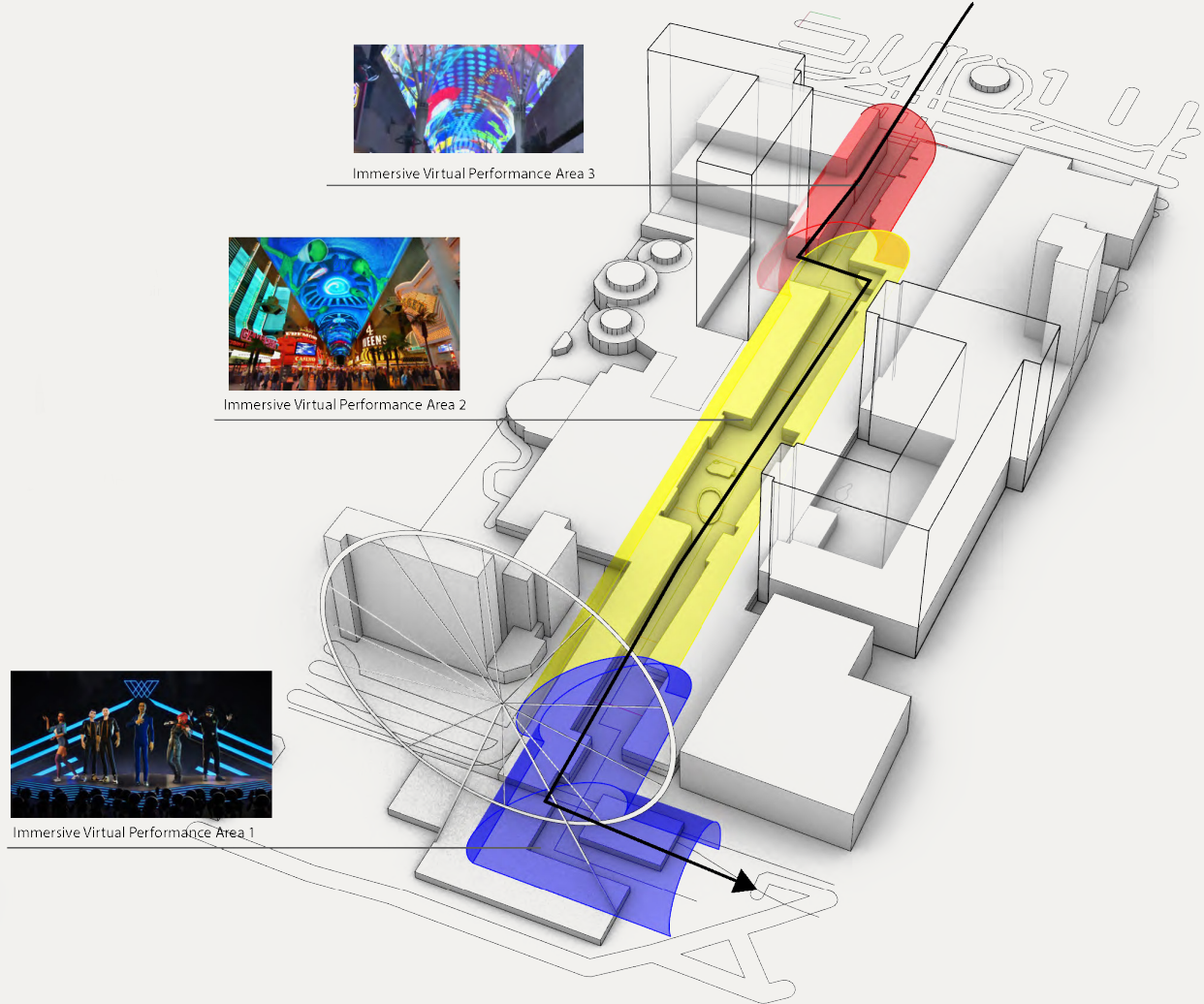


REUSE TYPE: BRIDGE
MOVEMENT VERB: ATTACH

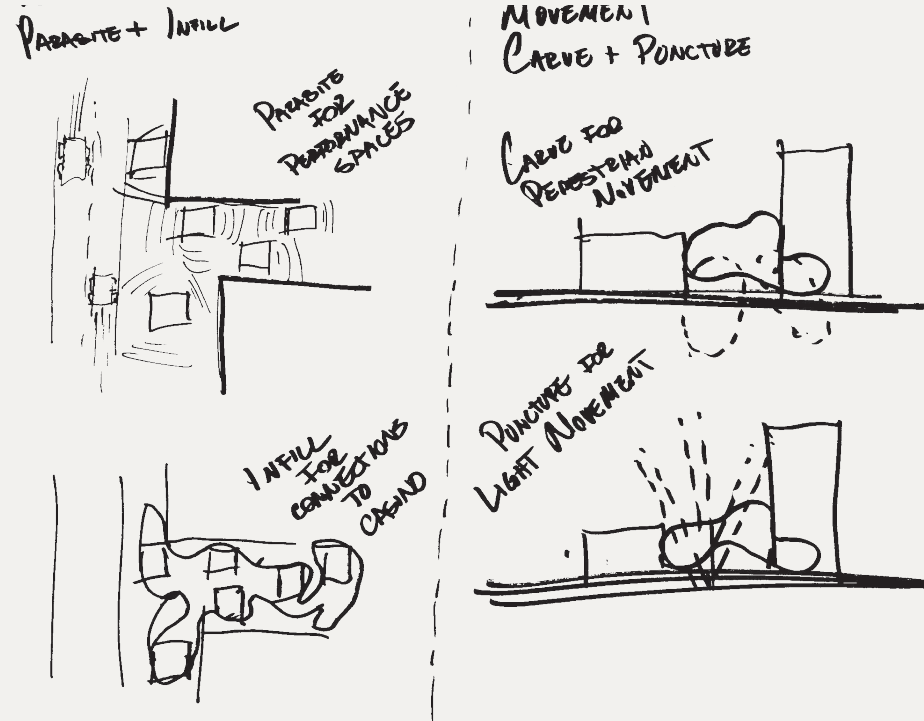


SPACE CONNECTS TO RETAIL AND ENTERTAINMENT BY ATTACHING TO EXISTING SPACES

ACCESS VIA LADDER OR STAIRS

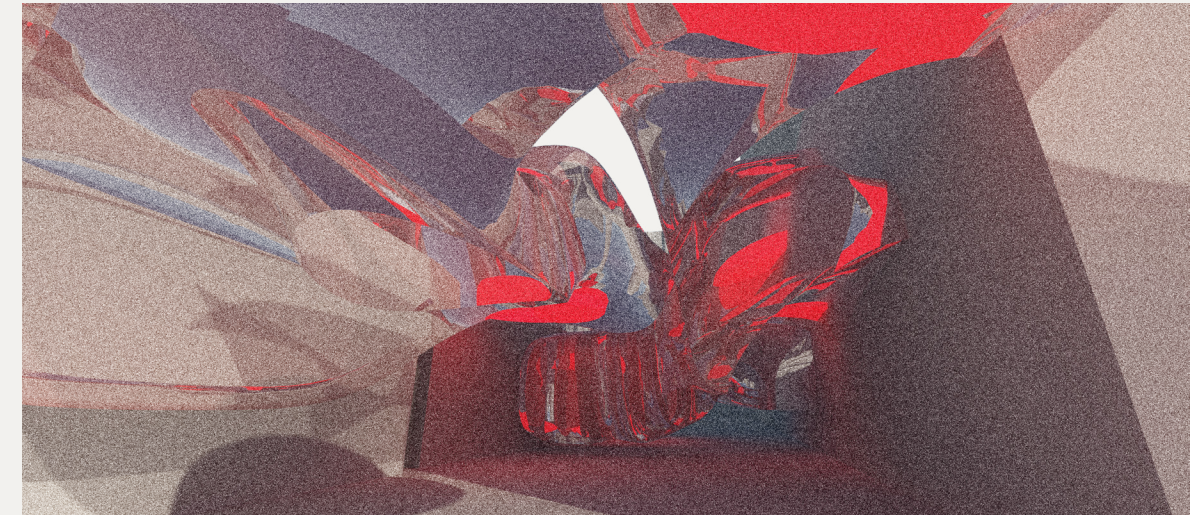


Victory Igbinobaro’s inclusion of technology within the microspace continues the language of architecture that is already existing in the Strip as well as the Fremont Street Experience. The possibilities that could arise from this are endless such as a performer or artist being able to livestream from various places in the world and the addition of digital art to said performances. These designs highlight the possible accessibility when done through newer and larger technology. One of the few things that could arise as this moves forward, however, is the lessened connection between audiences and the performer. Unlike typical streaming websites found on the internet, there couldn’t be a way for this interaction to exist unless made through a specific program.



Carlos Reynoso's solutions both focus on the interaction of the performance space and the existing buildings both in the interiors and exterior. The large shape at the head of the street creates a beacon that people could get curious about and invite them into the promenade. The platforms that float above the "blob" is able to invite both people from the sidewalk and the streets.

A possible addition that could be done to this design is to specify the materiality as well as do something with the space inside the "blob" as it is pretty sizable. One could add seating for the audience for more structured performances or a walkway for an increased number in audiences.



RESULTS + OBSERVATIONS

Looking at all of the designs provided by friends and peers, the emphasis on most of them is the existence of a platform to perform on and less about how the audience can interact with the performers through these means. There were a few good incorporations of the materiality and site context as presented in the first four designs and surprises such as the use of technology on the fifth and sixth design. The sense of place was achieved on the last two designs as it interacts

with the indoor spaces and covers the outdoor ones. The shape also creates a spectacle that passerby and audiences can both experience and remember, enhancing how they can recall the place and the performance. Overall, the various ideas found in the testing of the suggested elements enhanced how these added and adapted structures can be perceived, received, and altered.



DESIGN STUDIES:

REIMAGINED

MICROSPACES

FOR PEOPLE

STUDY 1

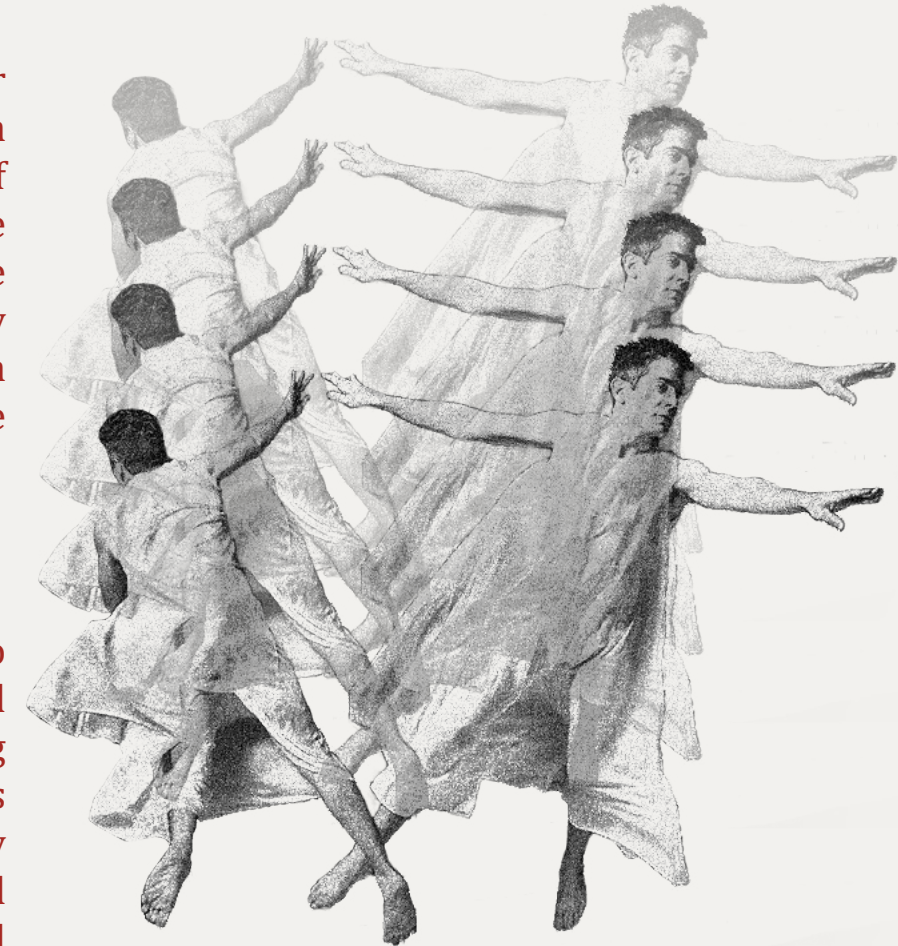
MODIFYING THE PROMENADE

ADVANTAGES:

Outdoor performances could have better interactions with audiences as they use a modified space and create more feelings of happenstance. Performances can take advantage of what's happening in the context such as the music from the speakers and the light show from the LINQ. It's easy to frame the space into a performance area where audiences can see the performances all around.

CHALLENGES:

The concrete of the streets can be painful to the dancers' bodies. New flooring material should be brought in to combat this. A moving audience provides various challenges such as the performance possibly blocking the flow of traffic to the performers getting distracted by audiences passing by. Storage, lighting, and system areas are harder to think about in these settings

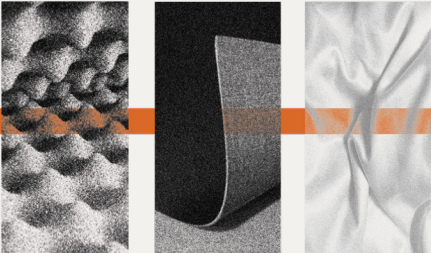


STUDY 1

Materials + Placements

The potential materials selected reflect aims to reflect the surrounding area while it transforms and adds to its existence. One of the tenets of earlier findings is to incorporate various elements found in the selected site and this includes materiality.

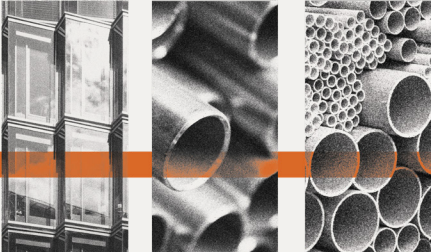
ABSORBENT



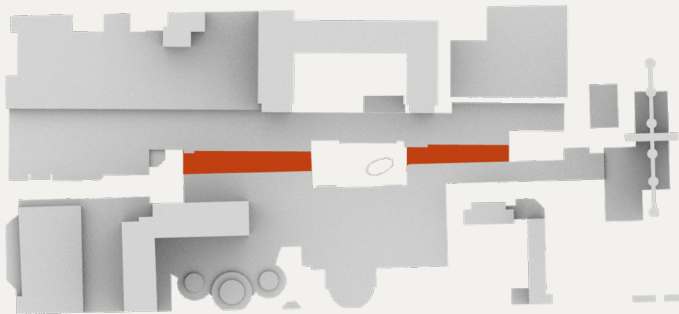
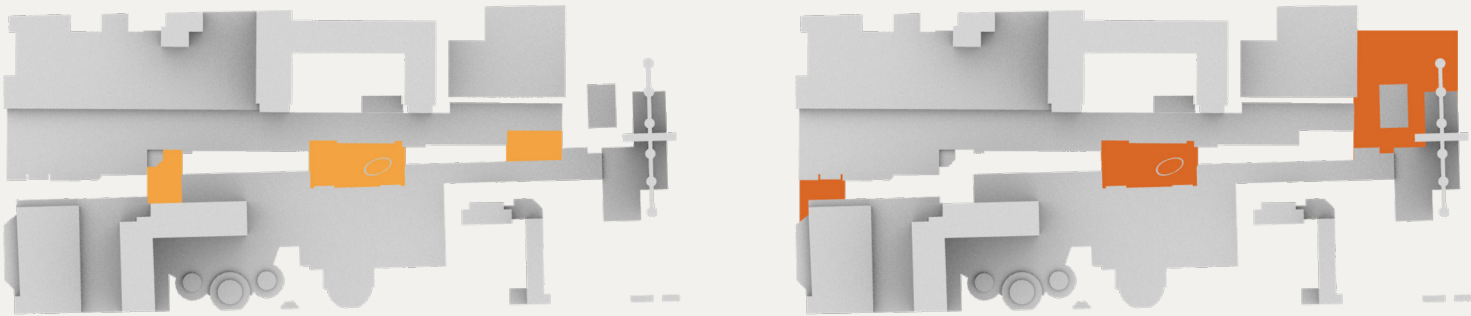
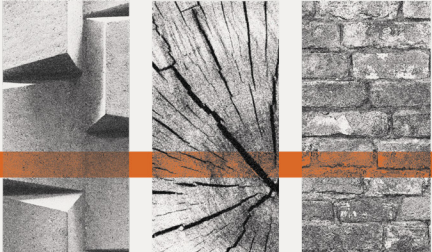
COLOR MATCHES



REFLECTIVE



SITE MATERIALITY



Placements to be considered are within spaces where people most congregate in the plaza given the foot traffic and area size.

STUDY 1

Elements Applied

Following the works that are presented at Rem Koolhaas' *Elements of Architecture*, the need for incorporation of a designed space into the context of the site comes back to basic universal architectural element. In this study, the LINQ Promenade will be reimagined and restructured as various means of architectural elements to possibly further a public space meant for

performances. Taking the three basic elements present in buildings: floor, wall, roof/ceiling becomes an inspiration on how to alter the site to highlight them. Within the next few pages, three studies on these are presented, explained, and identified, revealing what can and can't work both in how the place can be perceived as a good public space.

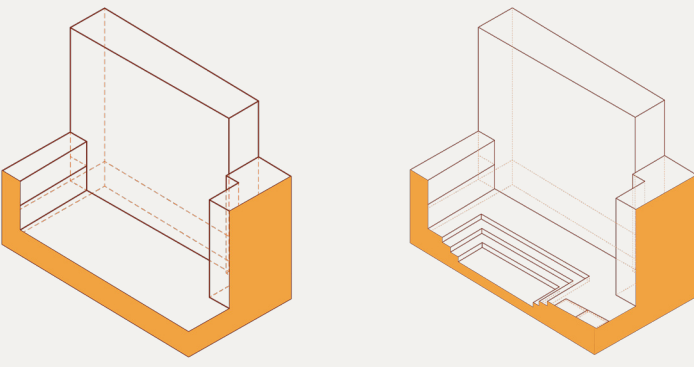
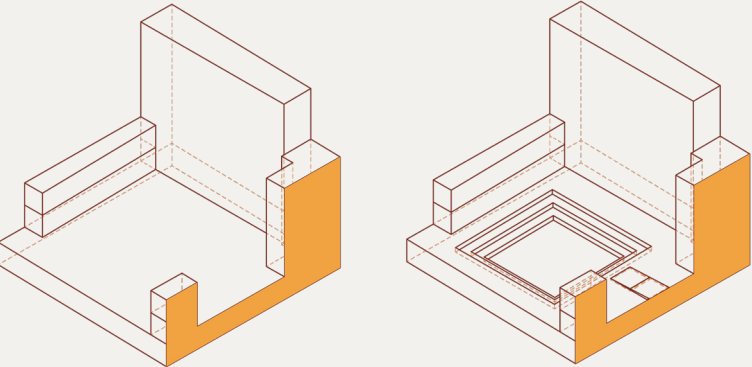


STUDY 1

Elements Applied

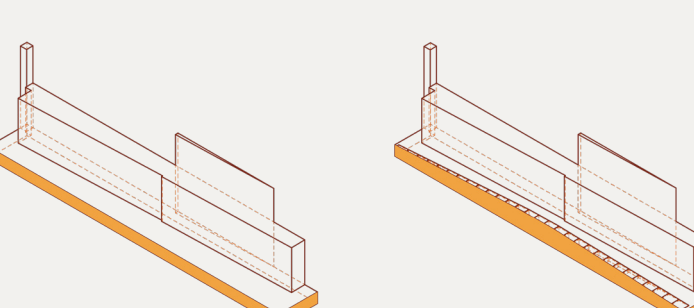
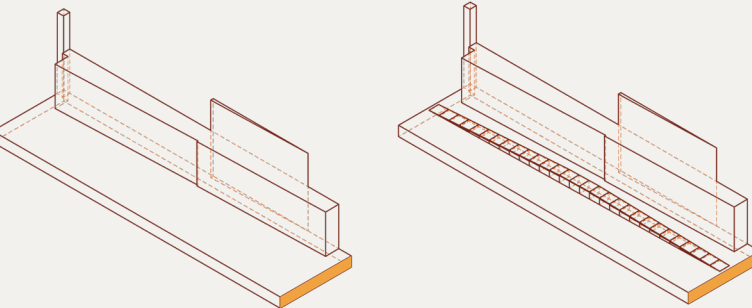
AXON

SECTION



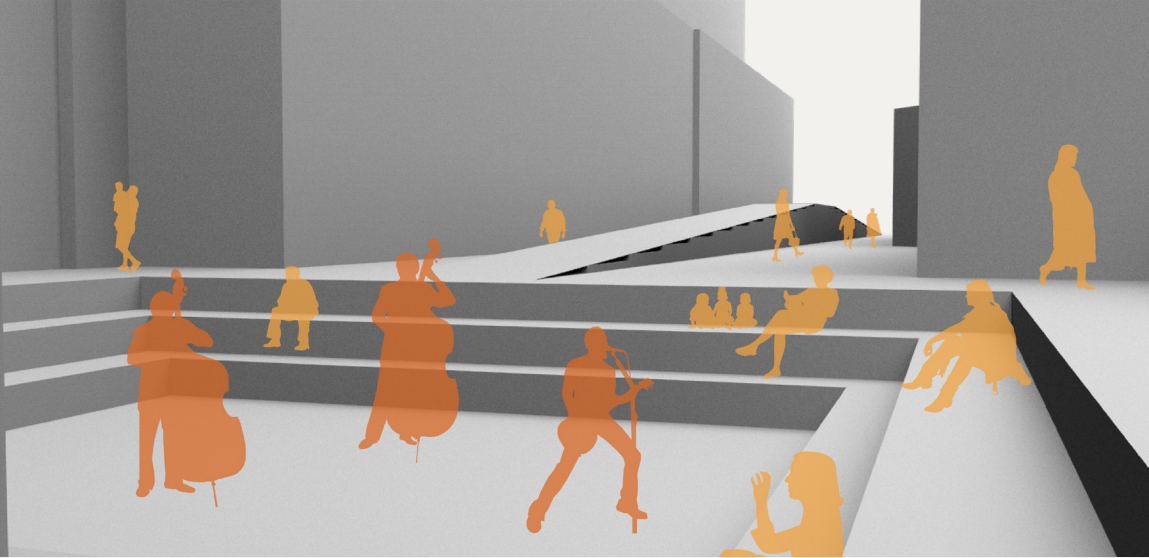
CARVING IN AXON

CARVING IN SECTION



EXTRUDING IN AXON

EXTRUDING IN SECTION

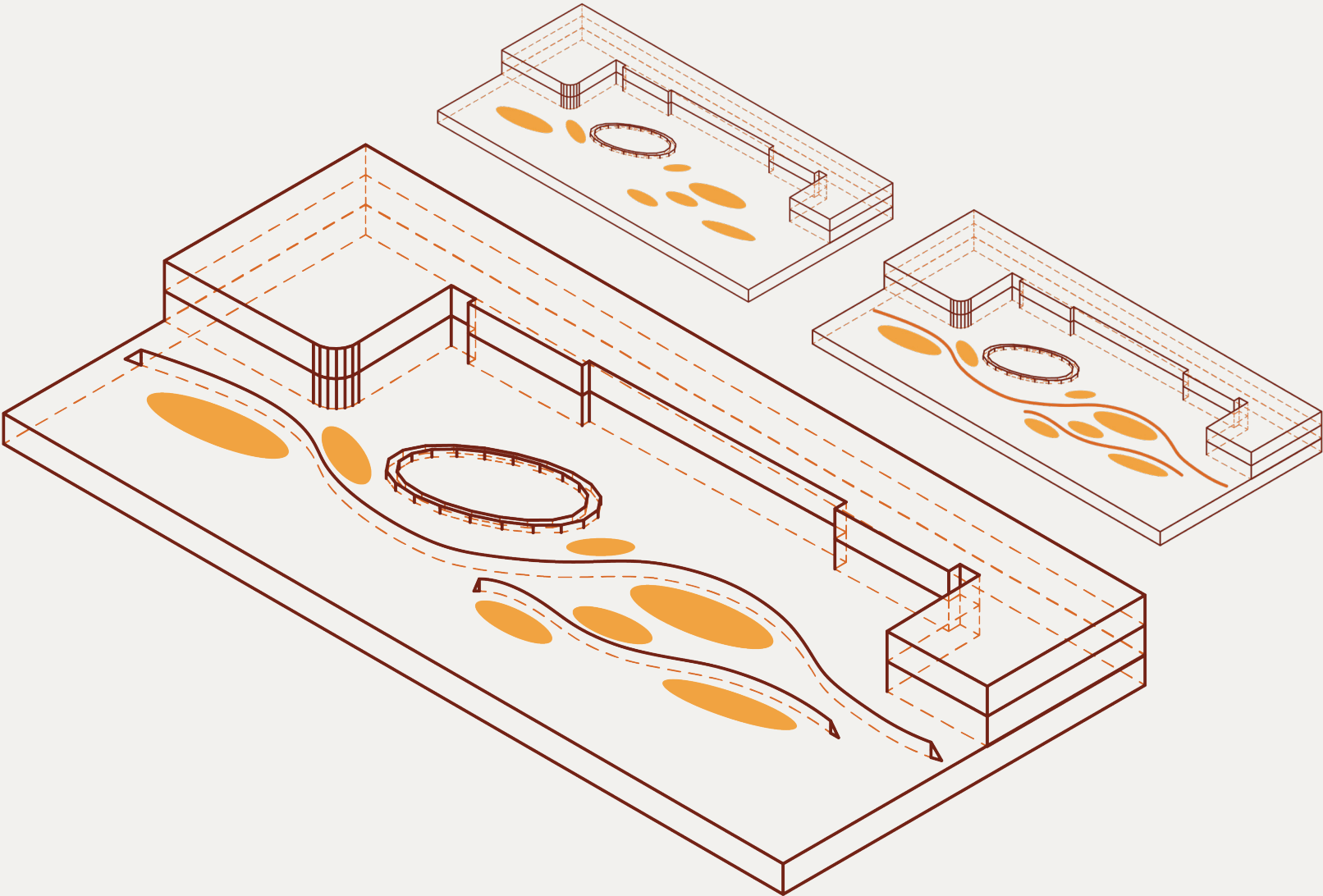


THE FLOOR

This study of the floor experiments with how the element can produce spaces by the movement of oscillation. The move creates a sense of carving and extruding from the ground and plays with how the upright body can interact with gravity. The design disrupts the regular flow of walking in order to highlight spaces to perform at as well as places to sit on. Some of the drawbacks that can be seen with this is the possibility of inaccessibility in areas where the ground is altered as well as the narrowing of circulation paths and spaces.

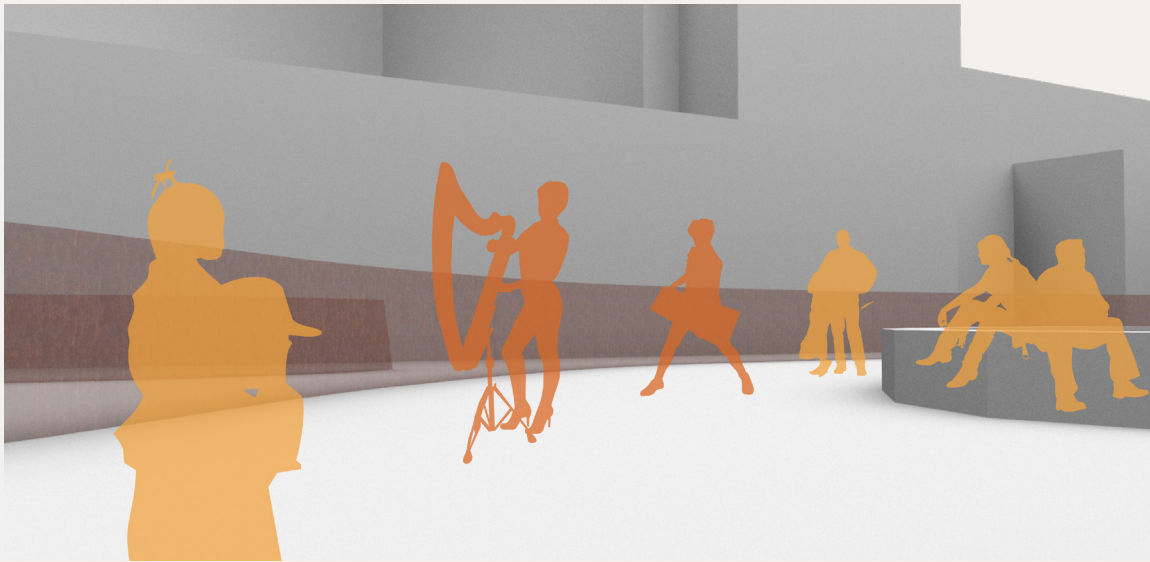
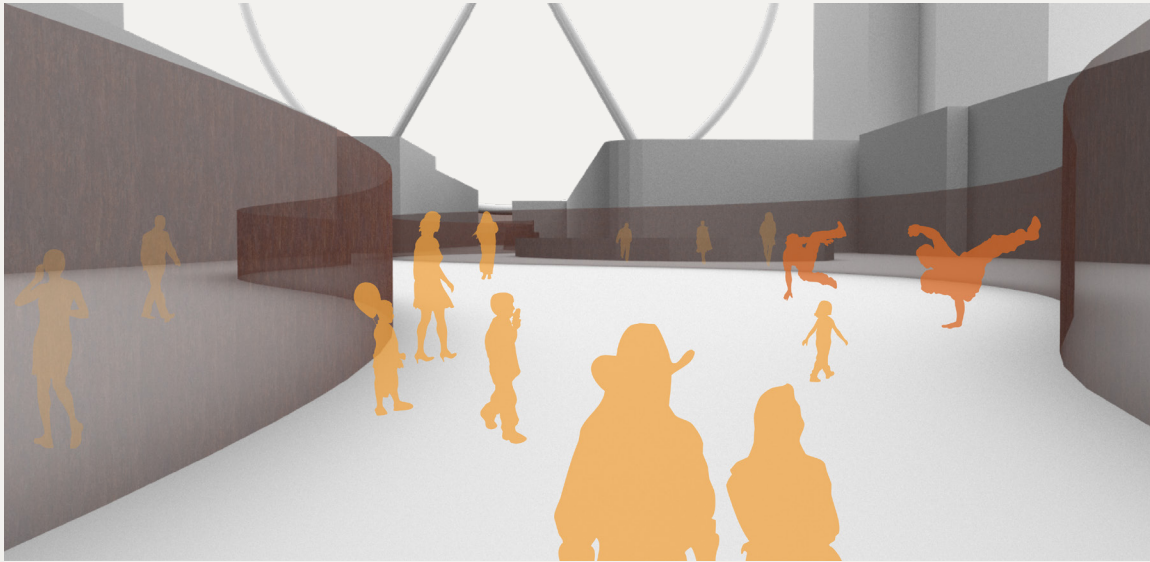
STUDY 1

Elements Applied



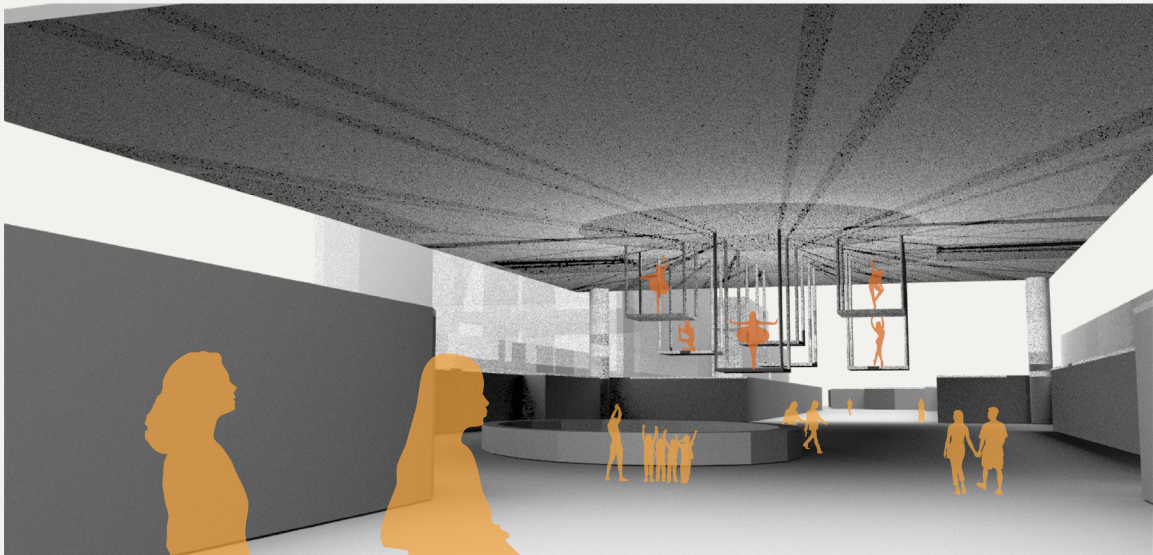
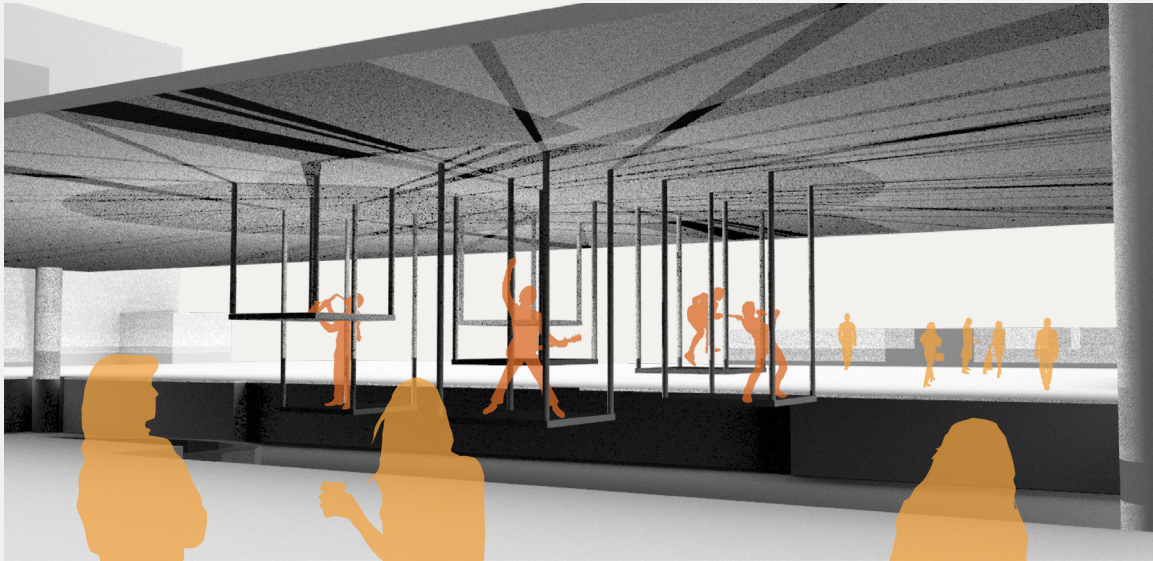
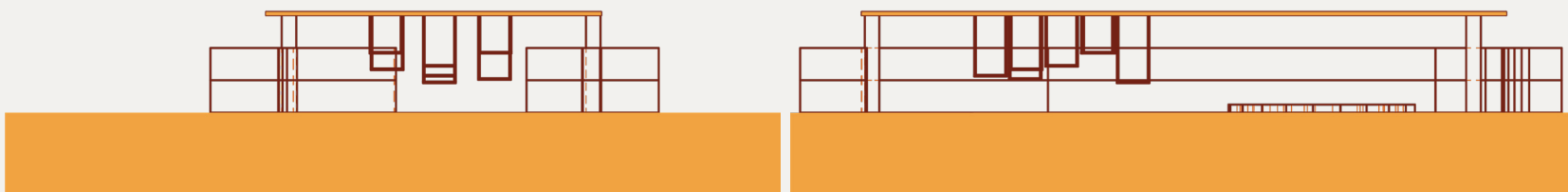
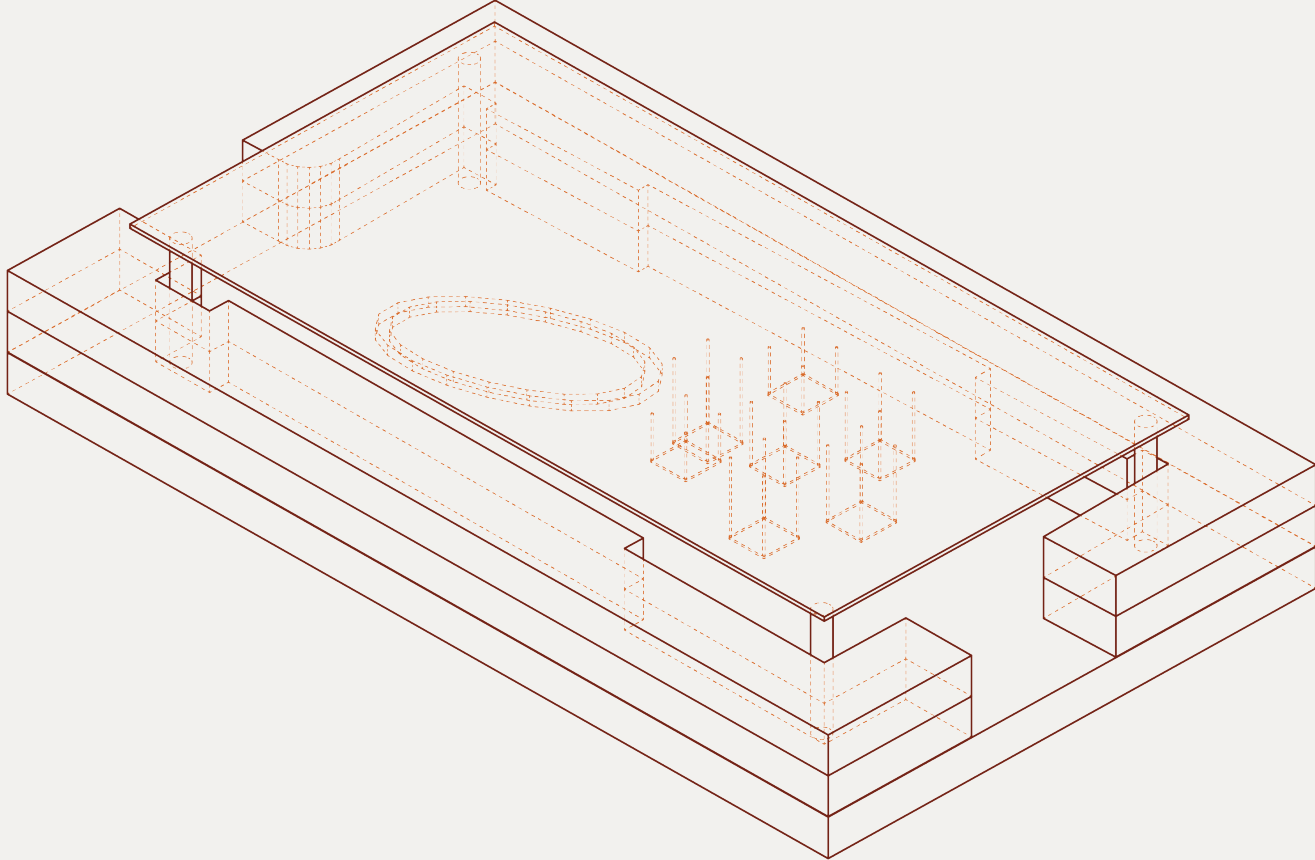
THE WALL

Addition of the wall in order to create space isn't a new thing in architecture. With the addition of this element into the central location of the promenade, it produces a divided area with a sense of choice on whether to meet and watch the performers or not. Interaction, still, is not only limited to this choice as the design goes a step further by adding materiality to the mix. With the more translucent material, meaningful interactions can still exist between performer and audience despite how fleeting it could be in passing.



STUDY 1

Elements Applied



THE ROOF/CEILING

Inspired by the way that acoustic panels are arranged and hang from ceilings, the design takes more than just the idea of a roof and expands it further to how the element can interact more with the ground. While giving benefits that are often associated with roof and ceilings such as protection from the sun and being the bearer of lights, the design also takes into consideration how the view is perceived by both people on the ground and onto the next floor, giving a wider range of audience a chance to experience various performances.

STUDY 2

CREATION OF AN INDOOR SPECTACLE

ADVANTAGES:

The use of already existing spaces can make the “stage” more flexible for future use as it can be designed per use. It’s a good way to revitalize the buildings in the area without the threat and waste from destroying the buildings. Turning to the interior spaces isn’t something new but could be something that revitalizes and renews activities from inside out.

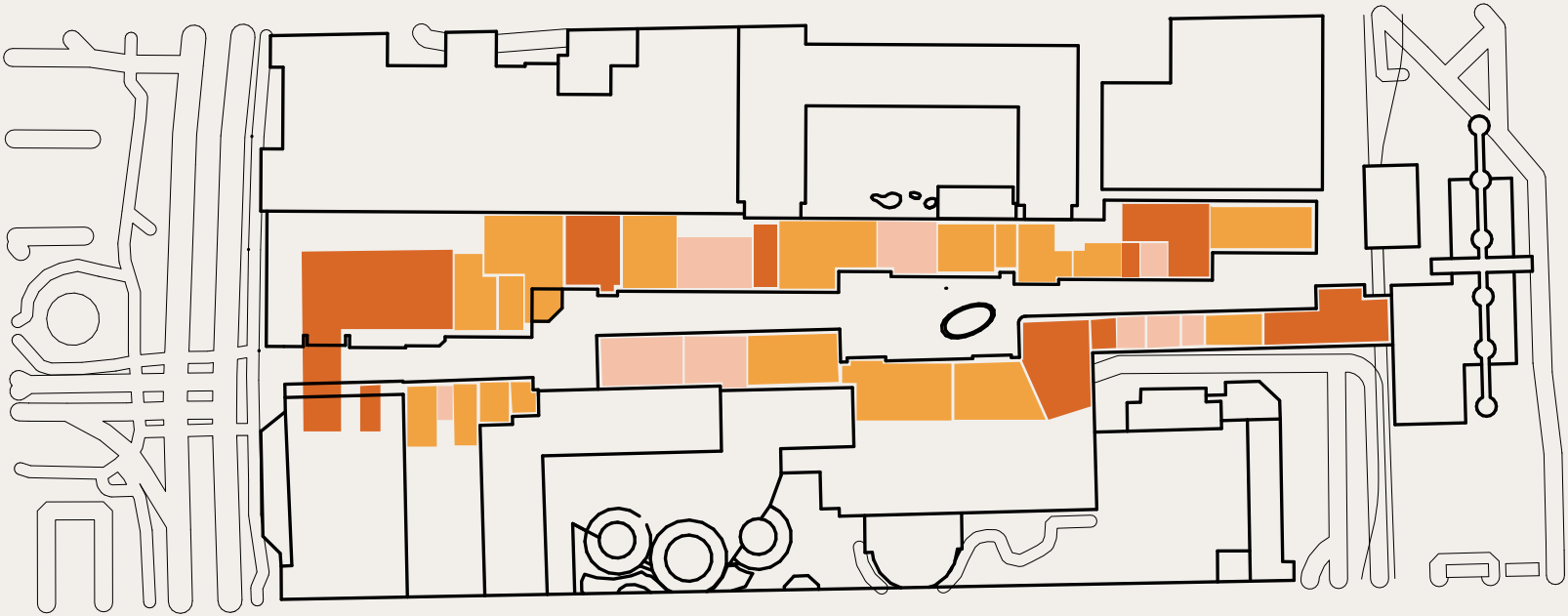
CHALLENGES:

Having indoor performances in pre-existing spaces doesn’t activate the street as much as an outdoor performance. People have to be led to the performance space in order to watch and this can lose the sense of intimacy that is often found in performances that aren’t in formal “stages”. The performance spaces have to compete with the other remaining shops and restaurants around the area.



STUDY 2

Placements + Reasons for Reuse



- RESTAURANTS
- RETAIL
- ENTERTAINMENT



STORE CLOSING TIMES
Stores are often closed at could be reused from 10PM to 10AM



HOLIDAYS
Performances could be seasonal with reuse



FOOT TRAFFIC/GUEST HEAD COUNT
Are some of these spaces being used less by guests/tourists?



REVENUES
Do some of these restaurants + shops make less revenue?

STUDY 2

Turning to Interior Public Spaces

REUSE OF INSIDE SPACE



MOVABLE/OPERABLE SURFACES

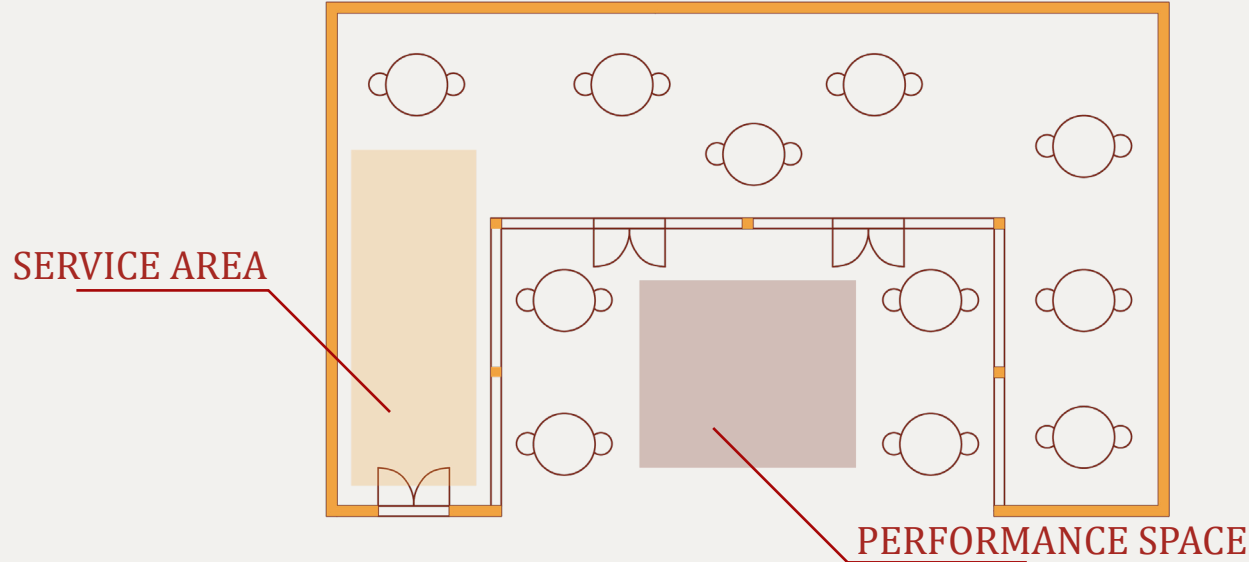


From looking at various elements on the outside into looking at the interiors, William H. Whyte talks about the potential and possibilities that can be done with interior public spaces. “One benefit of an indoor space is the through-block circulation it can provide for pedestrians,”

Reuse considers these already existing interior spaces and creates less exclusive and more interactive ways in which people can connect. In the terms of performances, the design can come down to the making of space in these areas as well as the addition of facades that will enhance how performances are depicted.

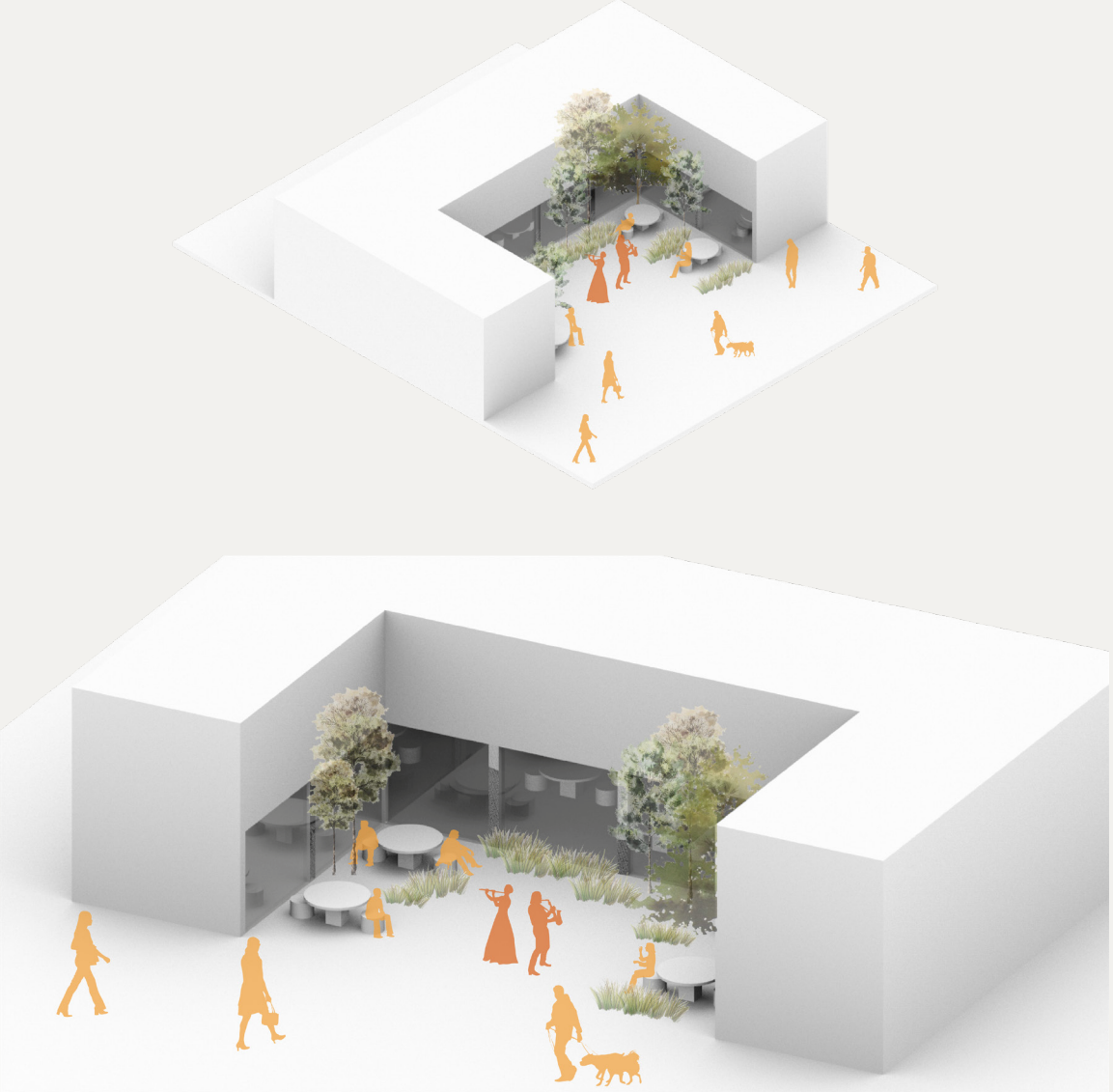
STUDY 2

Turning to Interior Public Spaces



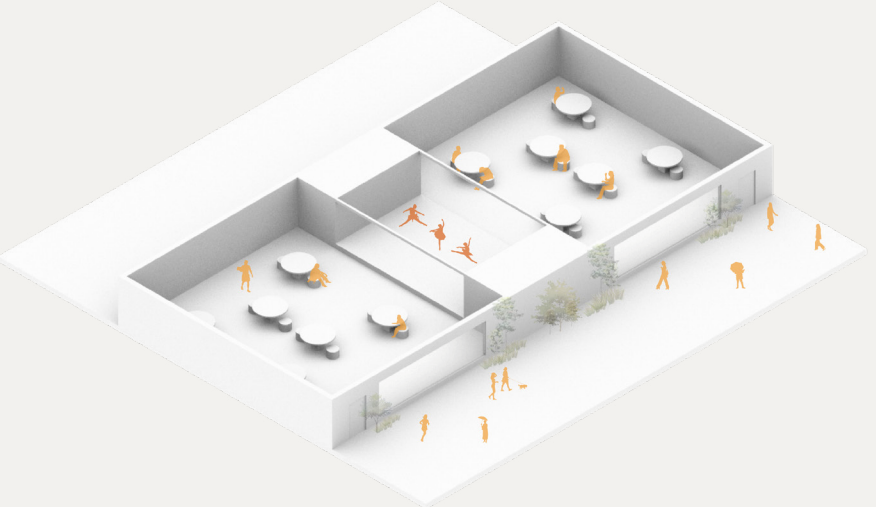
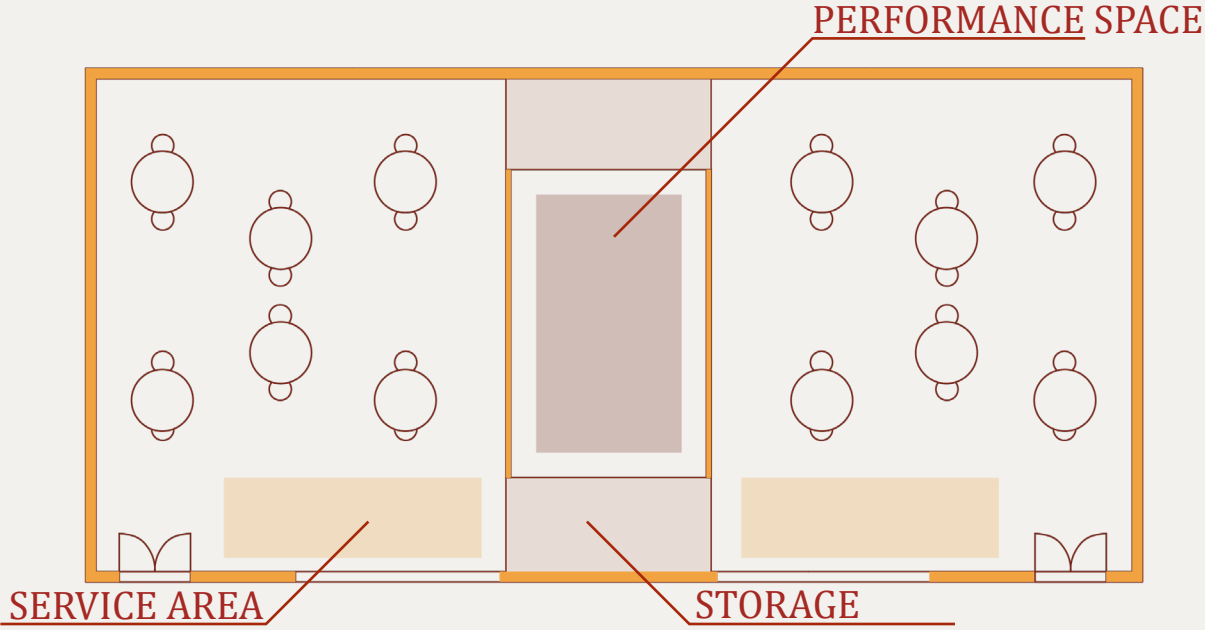
THE OASIS

Landscape is one of the main drivers of being able to reconcile indoor and outdoor spaces. The carving of an indoor space and the creation of an oasis in the middle of it gives the people indoors a chance to enjoy the sense of nature that's within the area and the people outdoors a chance at respite. With the existing lushness and greenery, performances in the oasis enhance the experience as it adds a sense of triangulation to the mix, making the area a more well-rounded place to visit.



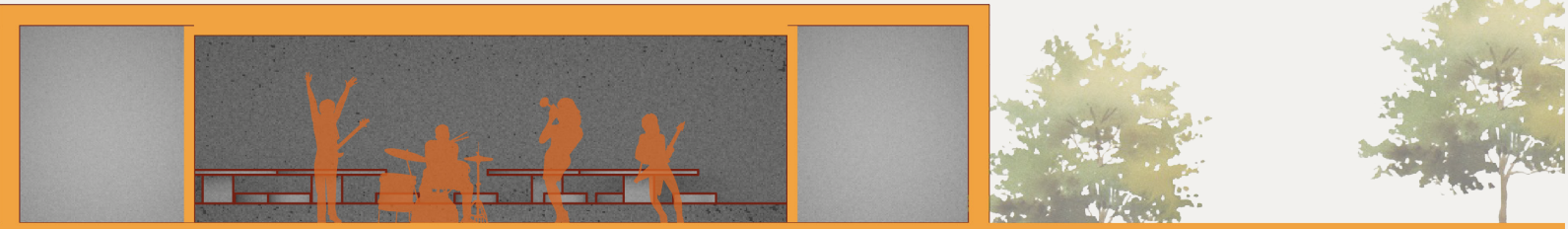
STUDY 2

Turning to Interior Public Spaces



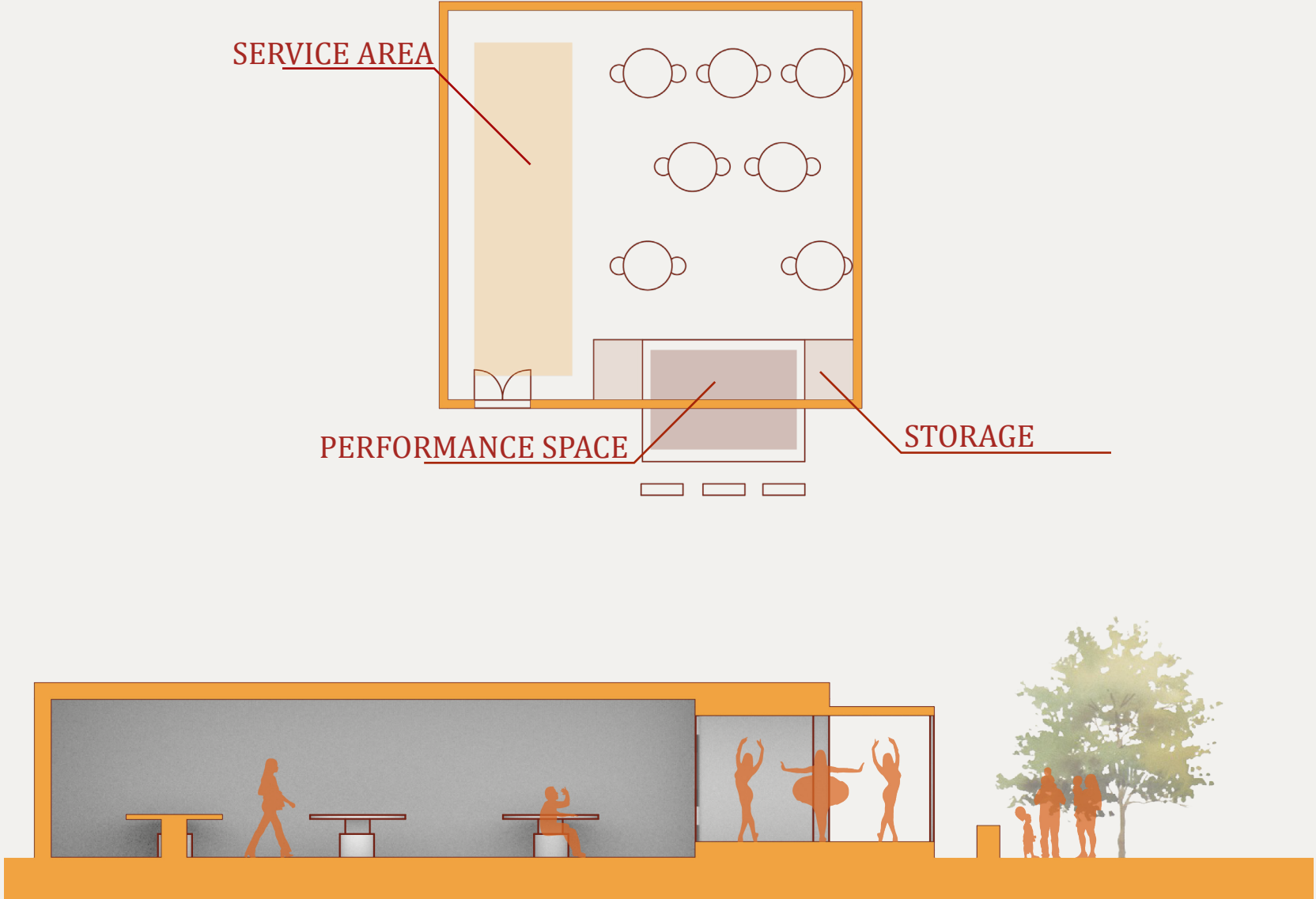
THE MERGER

Solely focusing on indoor spaces only, the design turns into a bridge that connects two different spaces into one with the help of performance art. Audiences from one side of the room can share a moment with the opposite end, creating connections that aren't just between the performers and audience but also stranger to stranger. The shared experience in a way, makes bonds more possible. Despite this, the existence of two different spaces still makes a different perception as the places aren't wholly alike.



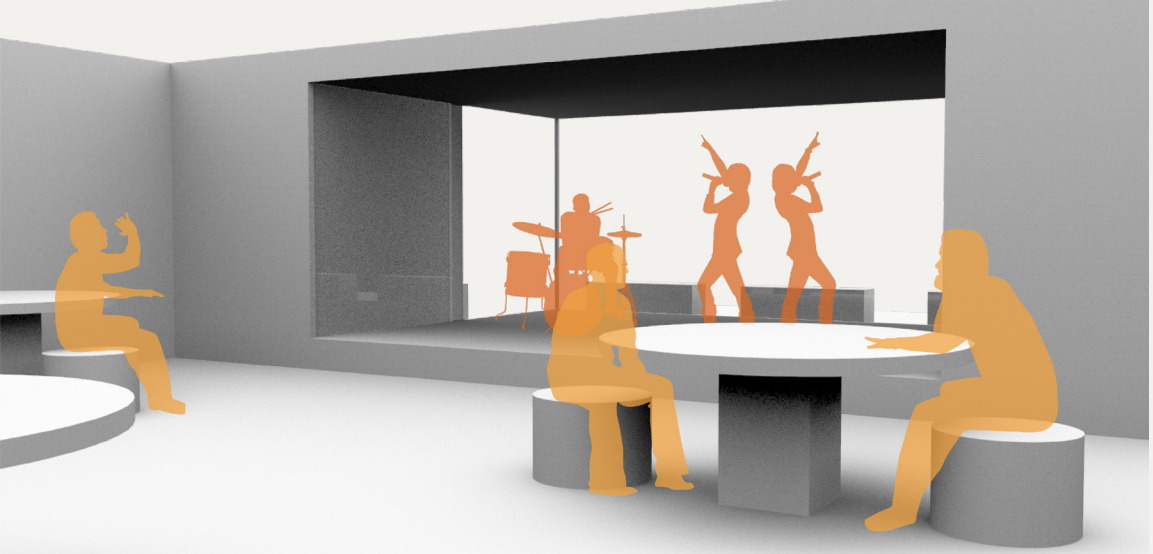
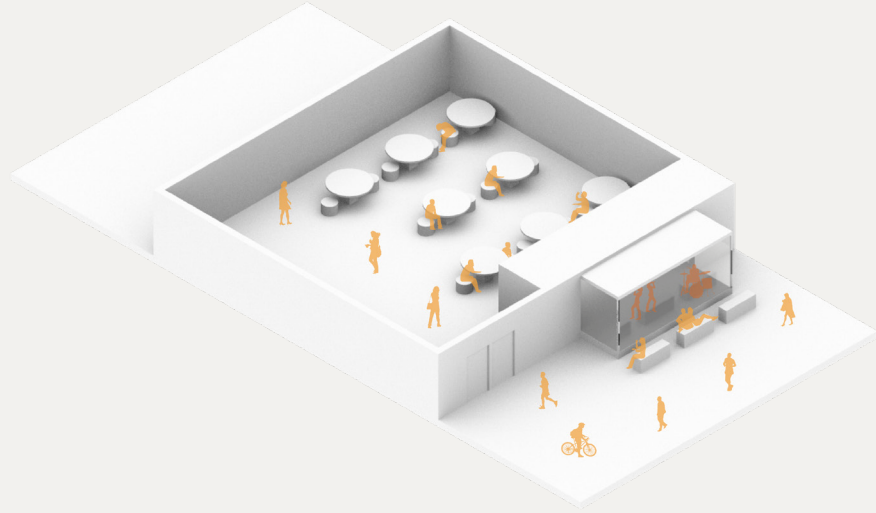
STUDY 2

Turning to Interior Public Spaces



THE STOREFRONT

Large windows such as storefronts have been used to sell stores and their products for a long time. Synthesizing the themes of the two previous designs, this one arrives at the center of shared experiences by people on both sides as well as the sentiment of blurring the lines between indoor and outdoor space. The performances being accessible to both ends and experiencing it differently as one side takes things slow by sitting down and enjoying a meal while the other walks by.



STUDY 3

ATTACHMENTS + STRUCTURES

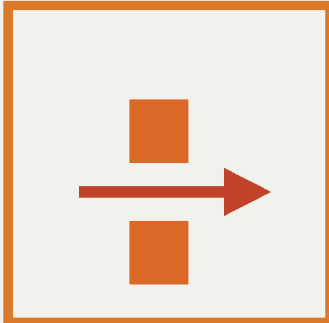
ADVANTAGES:

The flexibility of having a more permanent space to store the production equipment while still being able to engage with the street more. Designs could incorporate more design elements to the building facades and give the site a newer look. The addition of a performance space in retail and restaurants can also increase the number of interactions with.

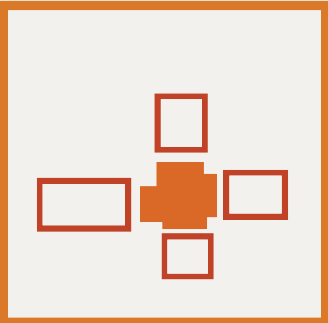
CHALLENGES:

Having an additional space inside could affect the programming of the retail spaces. The arrangement of the retail space should also be put in mind especially if things are going to be set aside for the sake of performances. The performances being outdoors could greatly affect the other entertainment spots that are around the area such as the zip line and the LINQ.

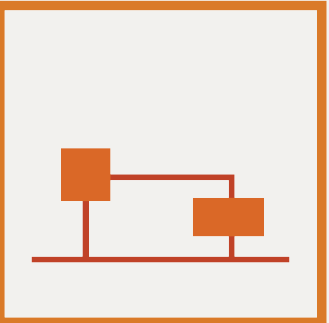




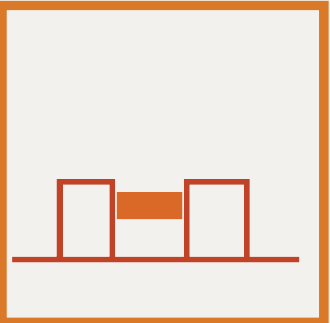
GATE



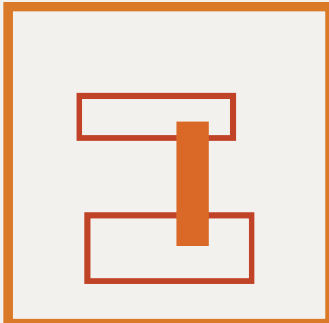
ALIGNMENT



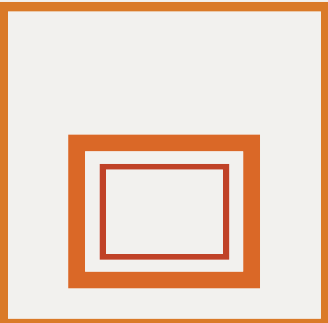
PARASITE



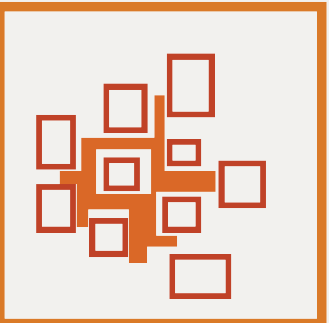
ROOF



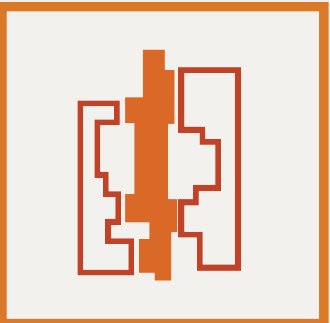
BRIDGE



SKIN



INFILL

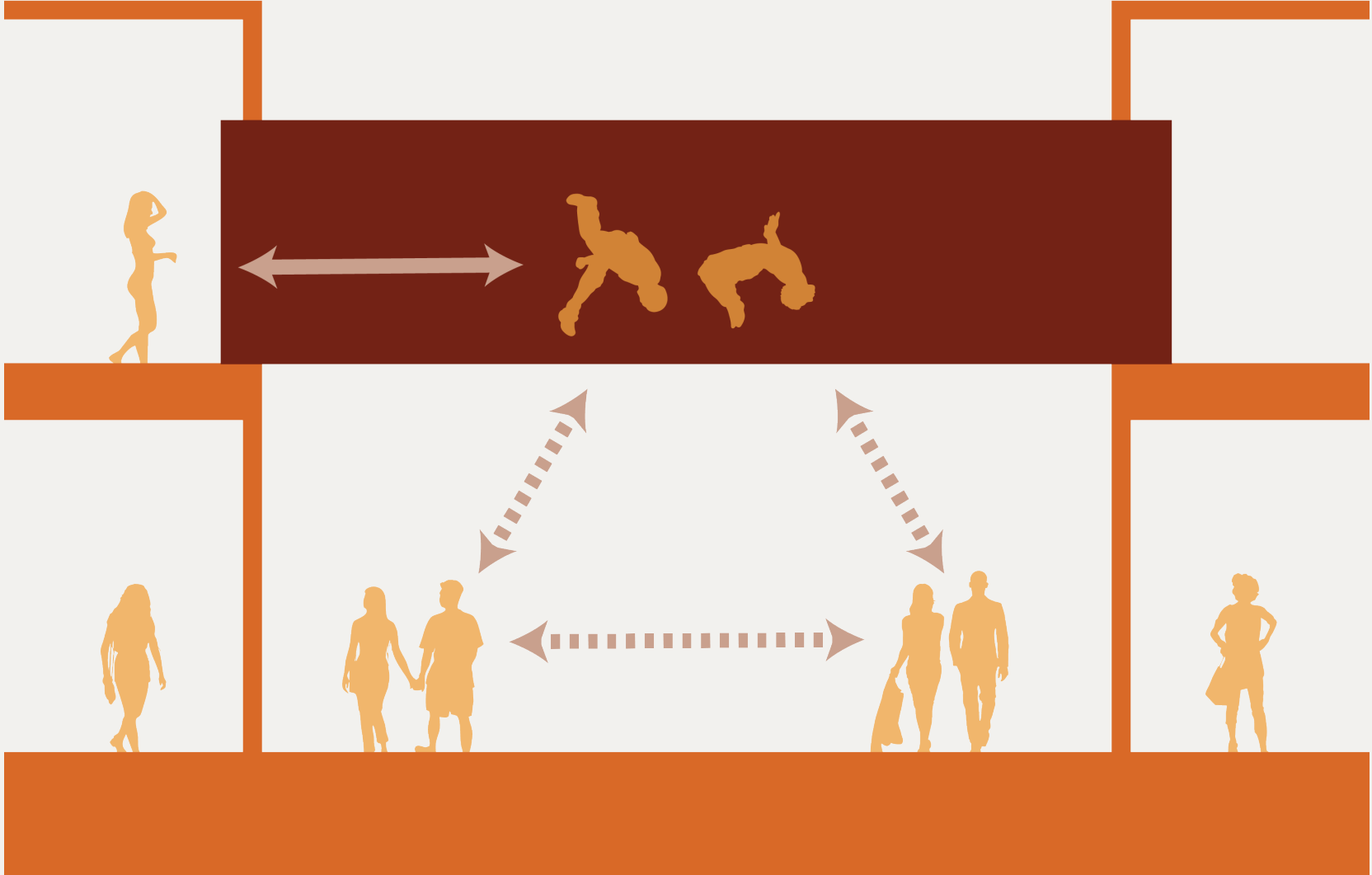


GLUE

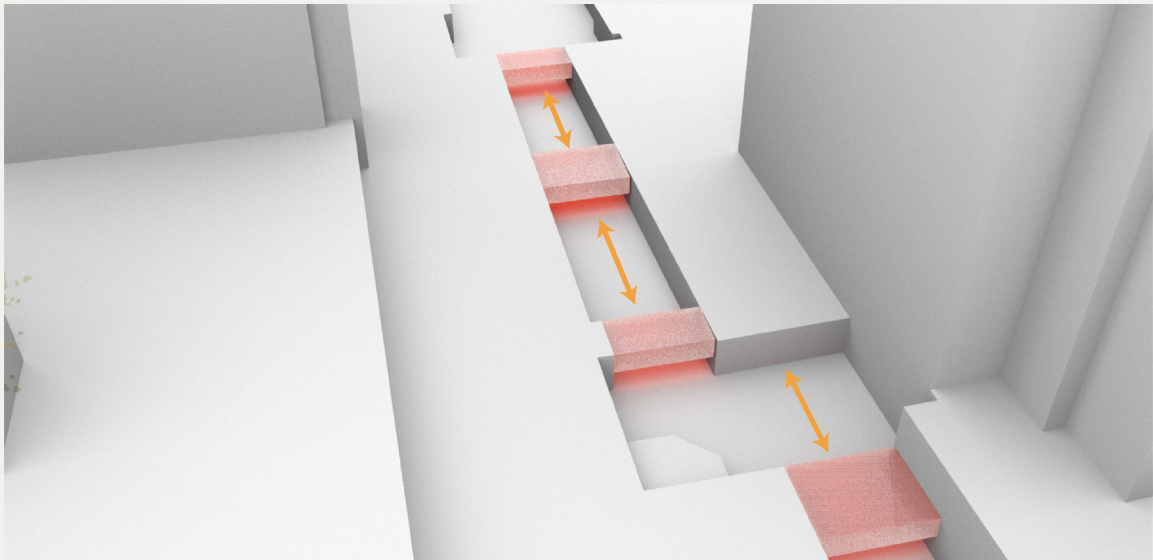
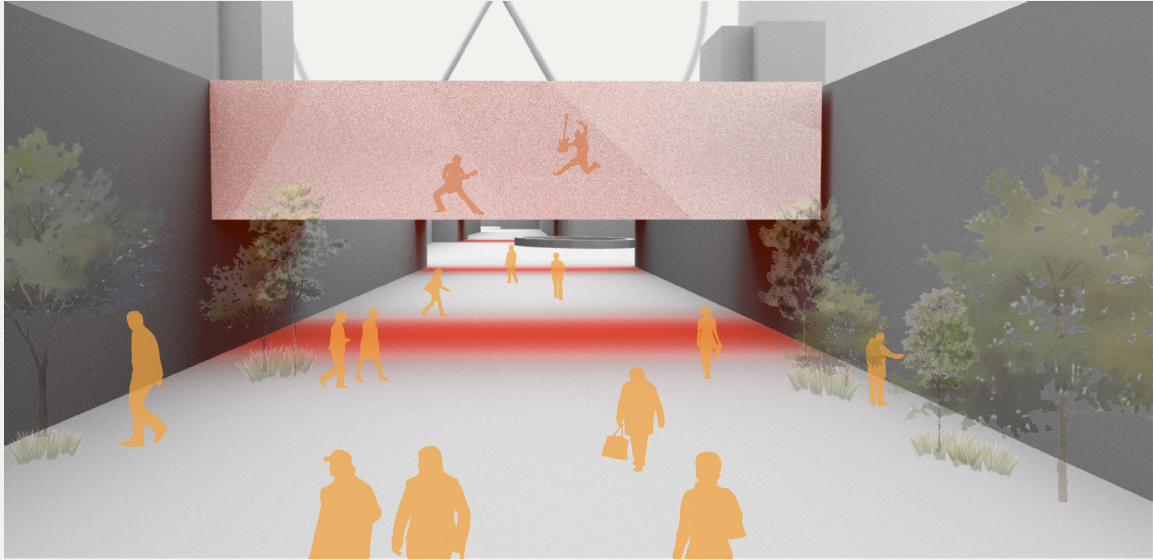
With both reuse and addition of structure in mind, the combination hypothesis adds the two previous studies into one. The design should be able to interact with the interior public space as well as create an external space for passerby to walk through, see, or interact with. The various reuse characteristics were taken and considered from *Adaptive Reuse Architecture Documentation and Analysis*. While the paper

has heavily documented various types, these are the ones that seem to relate to the shape of the site as well as the attributes that are in it. The diagrams start communicating a language that connects the interior spaces to the exterior ones and would be useful to make performance spaces more all encompassing when it comes to audiences.

STUDY 3



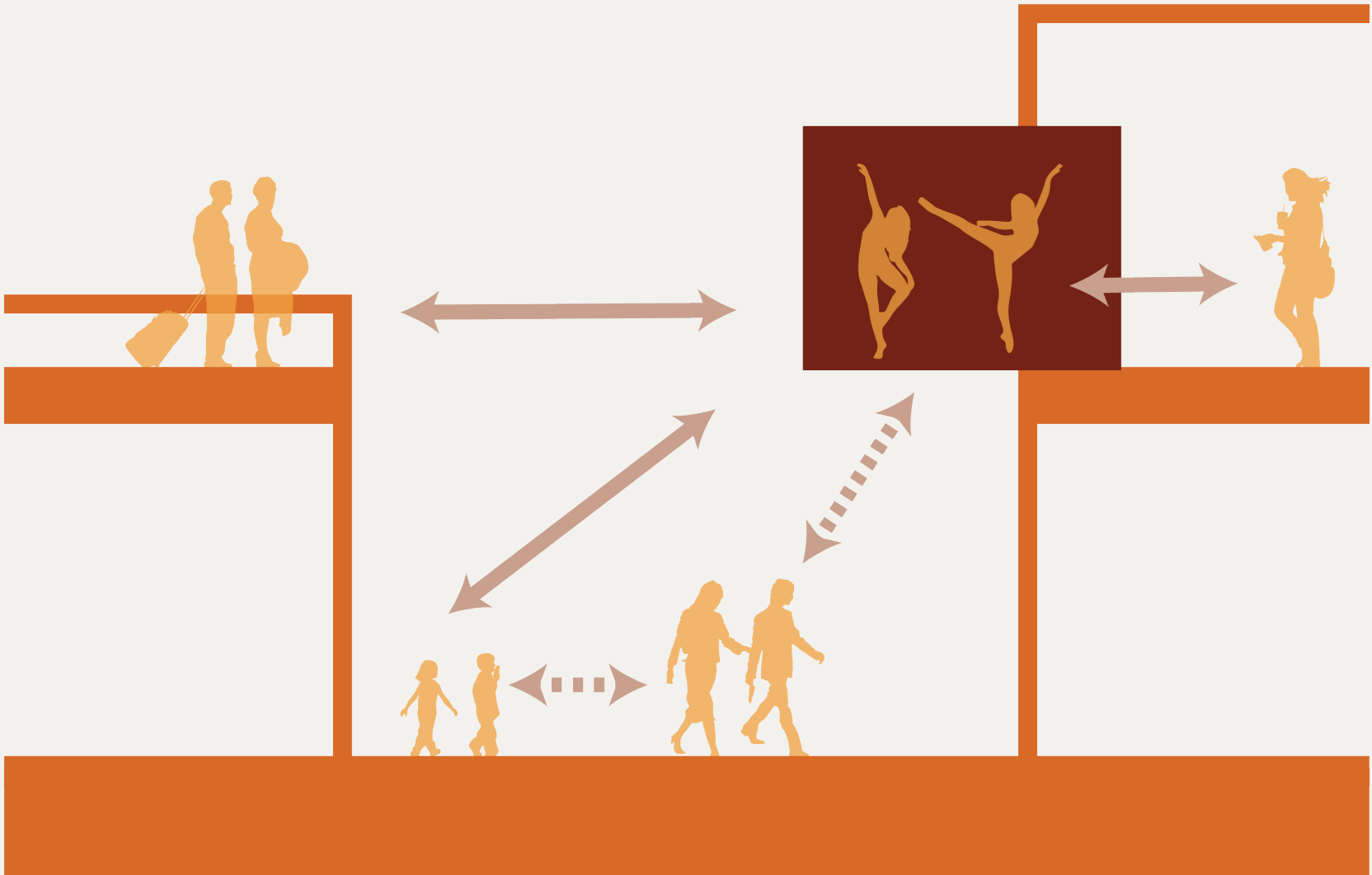
Adding and Adapting



BRIDGE/ROOF

The addition of this structure achieves three things: 1. The protection from heat and light as a roof does 2. Being able to be used as a walkway when not in use for performances as well as the flexibility to move from space to space 3. Being able to feature performances that people who are walking by can experience as they go to their destinations. The progression of the structures also lends the possibility of linear performances as people watch and experience a connecting narrative as they pass through.

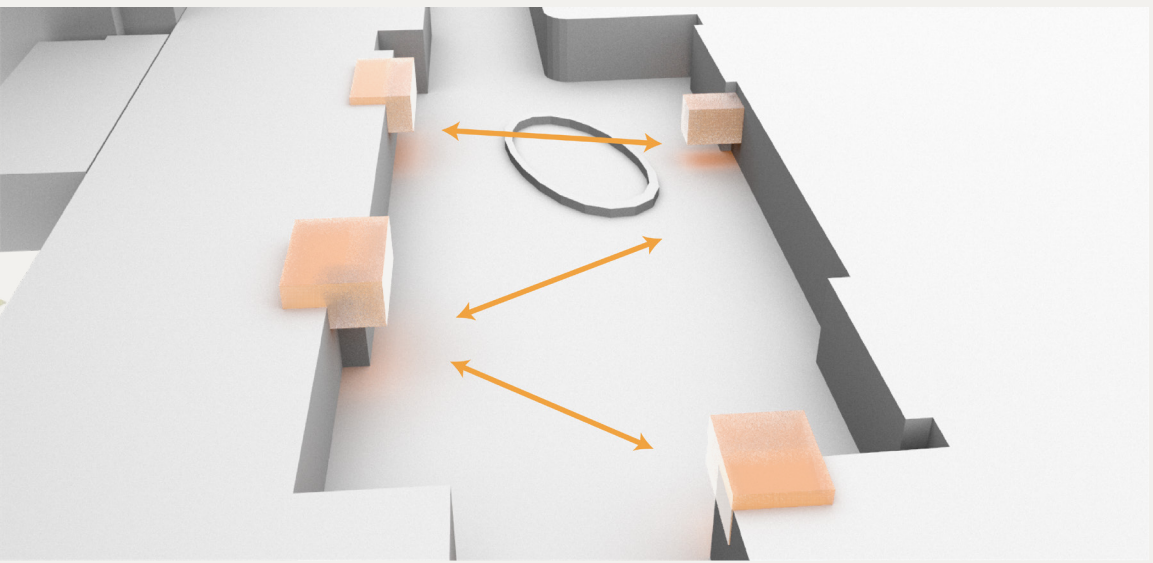
STUDY 3



Adding and Adapting

PARASITE

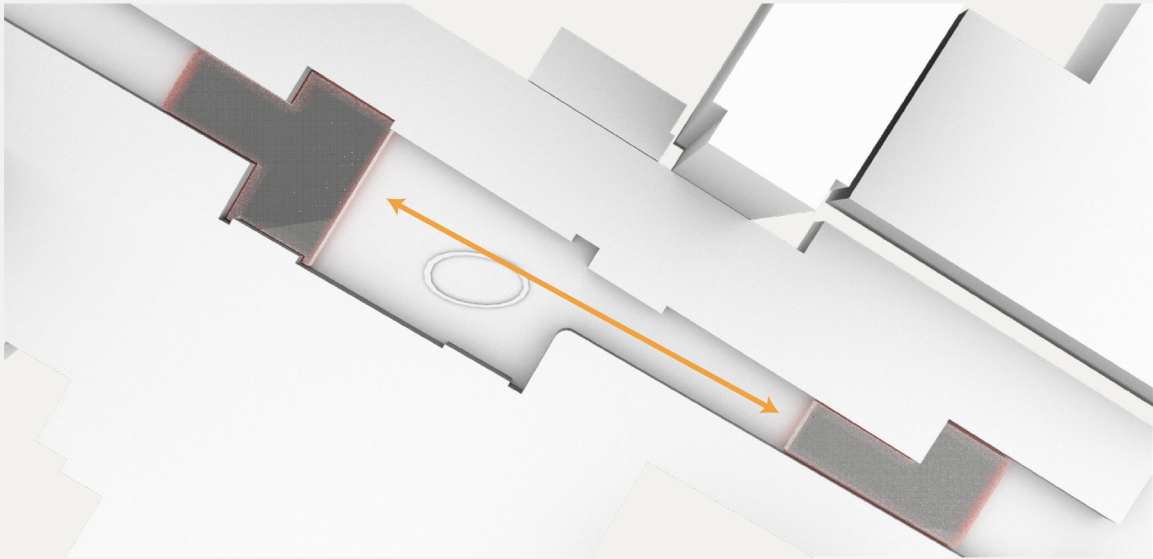
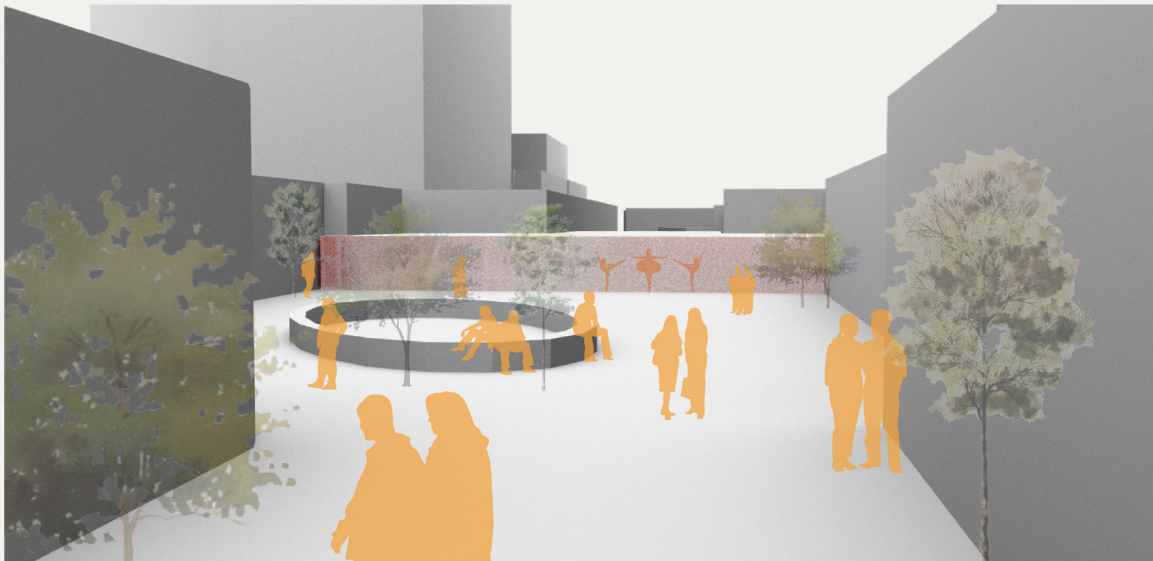
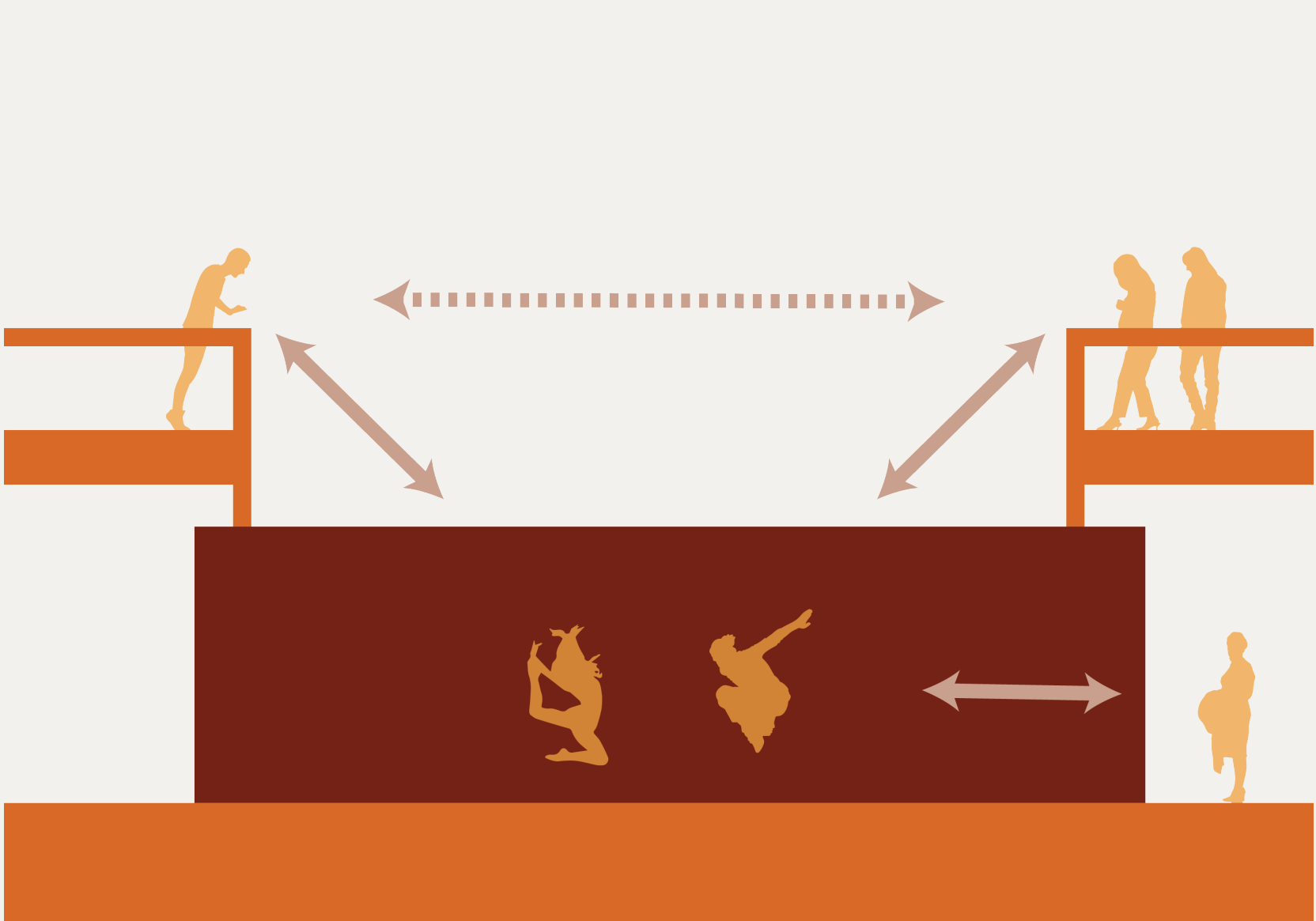
This addition grows through the building as if it's a natural being. The attachment gives the performers a way to be able to store things and access their performing spaces but also interact with passing audiences. Multiple additional growing structures can give the possibility of coordinated performances that are to be experienced in a 360 degree fashion. It also doesn't fall into symmetry, making the view more interesting to the audiences that comes across it.



STUDY 3



Adding and Adapting

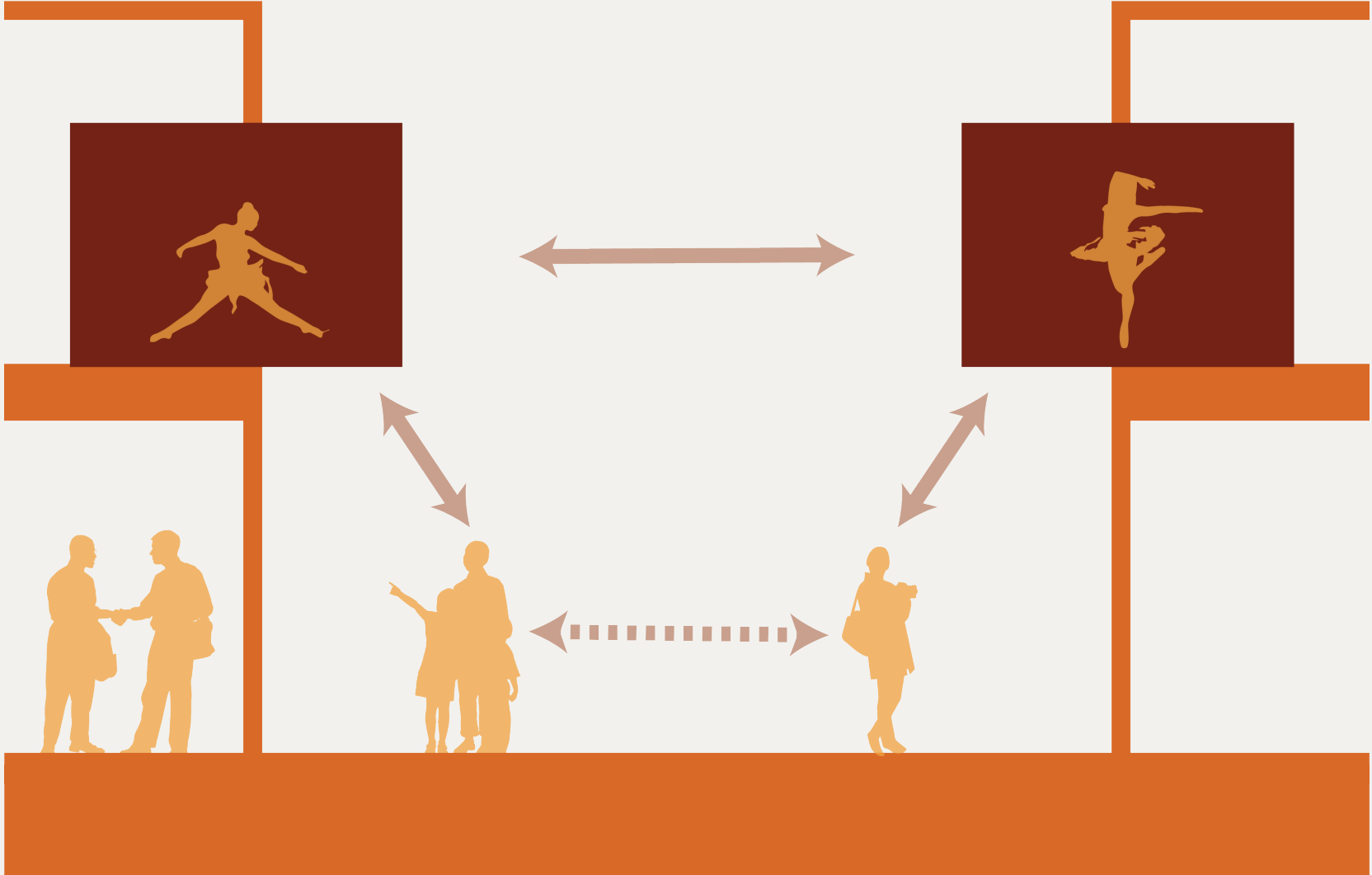


GLUE

This design's aim is to fill the gaps that was left in between buildings as it inserts itself as a part of the urban fabric. This design can play more with materiality as well as construction as it requires to be something that people directly interact with as they pass by and as something that's used by the performers that it houses. Like the previous design, the existence of multiples of this can create various chances for a connecting or cohesive narrative or theme by the performers.

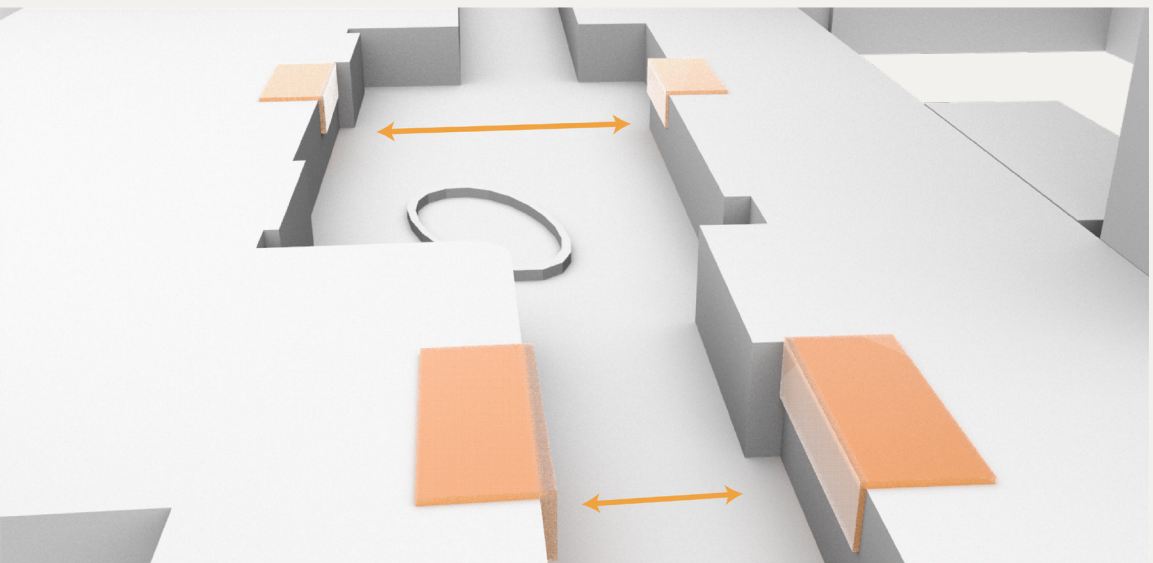
STUDY 3

Adding and Adapting



GATE

The symmetrical designs create a sense of balance as people enter space, being more of a signifier of an entrance and an exit. The performance as triangulation doesn't only become a part of a good public space but becomes a reason why people should enter it. One of the few advantages of the design is that it could be something that expands out but doesn't touch, already creating a narrative in its form before any performance can even begin. It could also be an interesting way to perform opposite performances simultaneously.



THE FUTURE:

WHERE DO WE GO

FROM HERE?

FEEDBACK

WORDS FROM MENTORS

“A thought to possibly explore - is there any value in comparing Las Vegas to a theme park? In a way, Las Vegas is like a theme park for adults. Theme parks do have “street” performances. How do theme parks create space for those performances to happen? Something else to maybe look at is at what time of day do street performances (or others) happen? Are you only looking at nighttime? From a lighting perspective, at nighttime it is easier to use lighting to draw focus outside whereas during the day the sun overpowers anything a lighting designer can do. I find your topic very interesting and definitely learned a few things from the research you have done.”

- Michael Jarett, Assistant Professor & Design Specialist
UNLV Department of Dance

“From a musician’s standpoint, playing both solo pieces and group pieces as a whole in an ensemble, you want to be able to connect with your audience. You really want to express that emotion and that comes from knowing your piece’s purpose and when you convey that well, your audience will be able to feel that. Having a space that amplifies that is really beneficial because when you have certain acoustics that rebound the sound and emotion from different angles it’s really more effective and overall makes the performance a better experience in general.”

- Venus Cruz, Musician
UNLV Department of Music & UNLV Geoscience Department

“As a performer, I believe that the most important part of a performance is the moment that you capture between you and your audience. When visitors come to a place and all they see is the lights, shops, and restaurants, it makes for an entertaining experience in the moment but in the long term, it’s not the most memorable. What is memorable is human connection and how [a performance] made you feel. These things add an element to spaces that can’t be replicated by just speakers and synthetic entertainment

If you go to a space and you hear music from a loud speaker, it’s not going to have the same effect on you as making eye contact with the performer, singing along with them, being pulled on stage by a magician doing an act. Those are memories that are going to last and play into the nostalgia people have when they remember the casinos or venues when they look back on them. It’s going to be an additional pull factor to bring [tourists] back and get repeat visitors as well. Human connection fosters all of this.”

- Emma Krilchev, Dancer & Circus Performer
New York University Circus Club

A MANIFESTO

At the heart of the project, human interaction and recognition is the most important with art such as dance, music, and architecture as the greatest equalizer for it. Following through the various books and research that are referenced throughout the books, this is a study that wants and needs to grow both in its aims as well as its design.

The author acknowledges that this study only takes a small part in tackling a larger question and problem in the city and how to make performances both accessible to the public and artists. While no prototype has been made, there are some pointers to keep in mind in order to keep this experiment going.

- 1. Start with people in both site selection and study. Ask questions on how do they interact with each other, the buildings, spectacles that are found in the area, with the circulation.**
- 2. Reflect on the sense of comfort. In these interactions and spaces, where does comfort come in and where is it coming from?**
- 3. Consider the site's context. This is the part where observation and design studies come in. Look at where the sun comes in, where the light hits, where the breeze flows.**
- 4. Experiment with various forms, shapes and configurations with the existing built environment. Study the material forms that could work with the space**
- 5. Investigate how the forms and design affects the spaces it's in as well as the interaction that happens to the people that use it.**
- 6. Incorporate the tenets of performance spaces into these design forms and see how it contributes to the atmosphere and if it can work for both performers and audiences.**



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Moving past presentations and finalizations of projects at the end of the school year, I'm writing this at the 5th floor of the Lied Library, surrounded by the bustling energy of people focused and passionate about what they're studying. It's often a surreal feeling to be in that moment, everyone striving to finish another semester with determination and then relief when it's over.

There are a few people who helped me in the making of this book. My parents, Rachel and Arnel, and my brother, Karl, comes first for their encouragement and putting up with me disappearing for months on end, deep in research, and the good food that greeted me whenever I come home. My mentors for this project, Michael Jarett, Louis Kavouras, Venus Cruz, and Emma Krilchev, thank you for the insightful perspectives and good conversations about performances, connections, and magic

that can happen between people. My mentor for the past few years, Eric Strain, for your constant guidance and words of inspiration, for making me and my peers better designers one class at a time. Thank you to my HD Studio cohort for being a solid group throughout the year, the great suggestions, and the witty texts in our various groupchats. Diane, Gabi, Jazmin- I will never be truly able to express my gratitude at all the love, wisdom, and laughter we've shared, through anything and everything. To Austin, for the late night coffee shop excursions, for picking up the phone at odd hours when an idea finally visits me, for the moral support when the sky and the clouds feel like they're about to fall. You're the best.

Lastly, God Bless Macklemore. To you and all the performers that ever existed.

“We rub shoulders with each other every day. We may not know each other but we may become good friends some day.”

**- Chungking Express (1994)
Dir. Wong Kar-Wai**

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