

HOUSE OF CUNTSTRUCTION

QUEER STRUCTURES AND ARCHITECTURAL DRAG

GERMO AUSIN

2023



LTH
FACULTY OF
ENGINEERING

House of Construction: Queer Structures and Architectural Drag

AAHMI0 / Degree Project in Architecture

Lunds Tekniska Högskola / 2023

Author: Germo Ausin

Examiner: Fredrik Torisson

Supervisor: Andreea Marcu

Co-supervisor: Paulina Prieto de La Fuente

CONTENTS

Introduction	6
Problem Background	7
Problem Statement	8
Research Questions	9
Aim	9
Methodology	9
I Theory	
Performativity	14
Cross-cladding	15
Queer use	16
II Queer and Queering	18
III Drag	22
IV Drag x Architecture	29
V Architectural Drag	57
Final Reflection	90
References	94

Abstract

“You’re born naked and the rest is drag” are famous words from RuPaul (1995), the queen of drag, capturing the performative nature of gender and self-expression into one sentence.

Hatarina Bonnevier (2012) describes that architecture is inherently performative and that bodies are connected to architecture. This in turn means that heteronormativity is encoded into the built environment around us, as by repeating the way in which we build over and over again, it becomes naturalized (Bonnevier, 2007).

This thesis researches how incorporating drag into architectural design, one could start to queer the fragments of urban space to question and break out of binary and normative ways of space-making.

For whom are our cities built? The project looks at drag queens to search for a spatial expression of drag. The result explores the topic of inclusion and diversity around multiple elements of urban space. A space that we all share but are not all included in. In honour of this year’s Baltic Pride, taking place in Tallinn, Estonia, where the LGBTQIA+ communities of three countries come together to take space, celebrate diversity and fight for equality, this thesis will use Tallinn’s urban spaces as testing grounds for the project.

The aim of this thesis is to contribute to the discourse of queer architecture and to explore through design how drag can contribute to a more inclusive and diverse future of architecture.

Acknowledgements

I am beyond grateful for the two years spent here at Lund University, everything I’ve learned, the people that I’ve met and who have taught me so much. I’m happy that it led me to this thesis and that I had the opportunity to choose this topic for it. My heart goes out to all the queer people and the struggles we have to face for living our lives. Especially in the parts of the world where it wouldn’t be possible to write a thesis like this.

I couldn’t ask for better supervisors than Andreea and Paulina. Thank you both for the energy and inspiration that you radiated every time I met with you. You’ve made the process of this stressful and difficult journey so enjoyable and fun. Thank you for thinking with me, pushing me, encouraging me and helping me reach this goal.

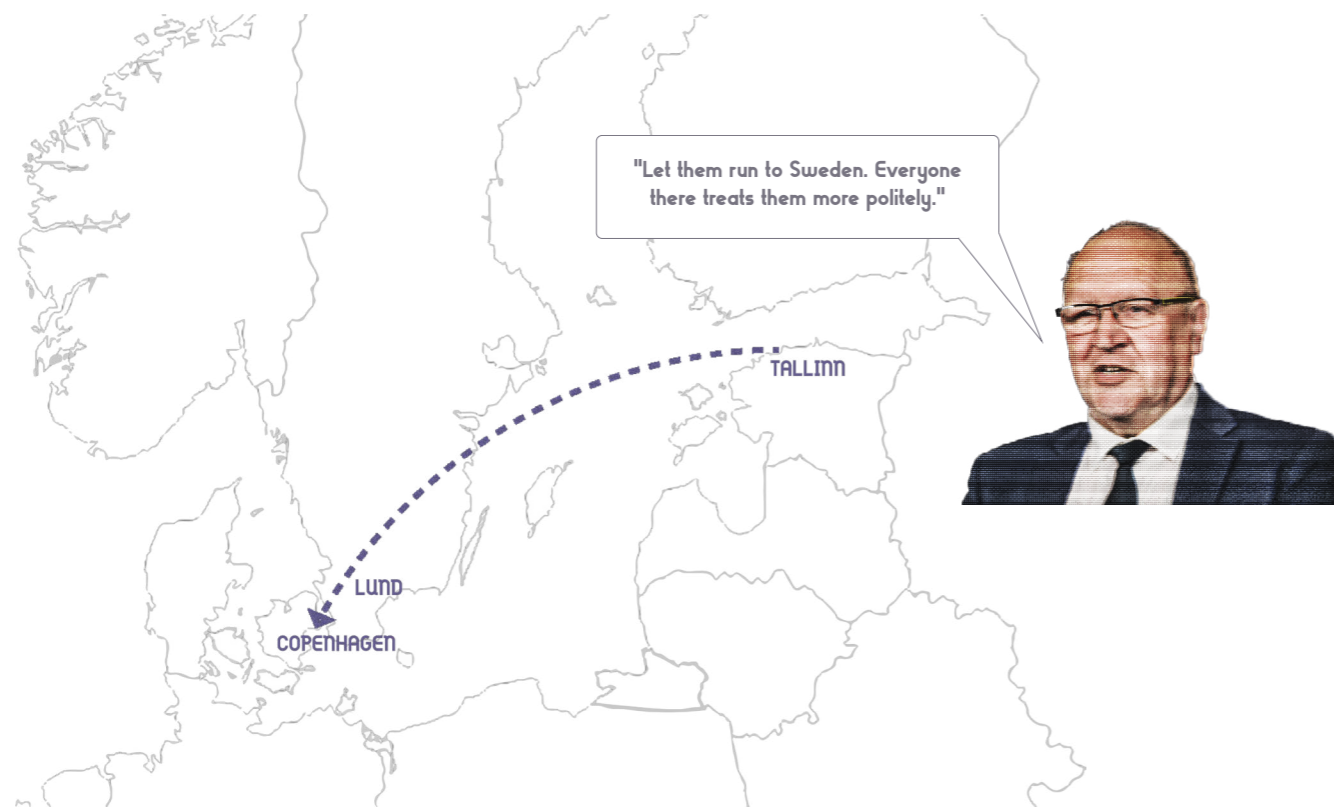
My rock in everything I do, Haarel, I thank you for always being there for me and for taking on this journey together. I couldn’t have done any of it without my favourite person in the world, and most of all thank you for being my beautiful partner, I love you so much.

Thank you to all my friends both back in Estonia and here in Lund, who have supported and cheered me on. You have made this journey so unforgettable.

INTRODUCTION

On August 2021 when I came to Sweden for my master's degree, I happened to follow the instructions given by the previous interior minister of Estonia - Mart Helme suggested that the gay people of Estonia "run to Sweden. Everyone there treats them more politely." (Deutsche Welle, 2020). As I landed first in Copenhagen, the city's Pride festival had taken over the urban scene with rainbow flags covering buildings and streets. Arriving in Sweden, rainbow-colored benches and same-sex couples holding hands in public spaces were suddenly a regular sight that indeed one wouldn't see in Estonia. Pride in Copenhagen happens every year and as a result, the urban space is queered by the queer bodies that gather

there and the rainbow colours and flags that dress the urban fabric. Once Pride celebrations are over, the city turns back into its regular state. That "Prideless" state of cities is the reason we must gather for Pride in the first place. Since the Stonewall riots in the United States in 1969, when thousands of people protested in the streets against police harassment, discrimination and for a right to exist freely, the Pride celebrations emphasize what's actually missing (Estonian LGBT Association, 2022). As we reproduce heteronormative environments and choose to selectively represent history and lived experiences, we are diminishing the diverse reality of actual lives (Catterall & Azzouz, 2021).



Buildings dressed with rainbow flags during Copenhagen Pride 2021 (Author's own picture)

Problem background

Marginalized groups of societies, such as members of the LGBTQIA+ community know first-hand how hostile public spaces are (Catterall & Azzouz, 2021, p. 5). "These groups generally modify how they present themselves in public spaces to avoid being targeted and some trans people avoid whole areas altogether" (Catterall & Azzouz, 2021, p. 5)

Ahmed (2019) captures the importance of having space to feel free and be yourself by describing how heterosexuality can start to take over one's life when it's constantly forced upon them - when one is living in a world where their true life is diminished, ignored and overshadowed since childhood when heterosexuality is an expected future.

"But just slowly, just slowly, as talk of family, of heterosexuality as the future, of lives that you do

not live, just slowly, just slowly, you disappear. As soon as you leave, you might have to get yourself quickly to the local gay bar so you can breathe! Sometimes to survive a restriction, we refuse an instruction. Creating our own dwellings becomes necessary given how queerness can be squeezed out of spaces." (Ahmed, 2019, p. 201)

Queer venues such as queer bars have played a crucial part in LGBTQIA+ people's lives, bringing people together and providing a space to realize that they're not alone. Urban planning for minorities is rarely a priority and thus a worrying disappearance of queer venues has taken place in many Western countries such as the UK where "between the years 2006 and 2017 the number of LGBTQ bars, clubs and performance spaces dropped from 121 to 51" (Shariatmadari, 2019).

Looking closer, as I've asked people around me about queer venues in Malmö, Sweden, it is apparent that after the Covid-19 pandemic, none of the queer venues of Malmö survived. As I am writing this thesis, no new ones have been opened since. The gatherings of queer bodies happen monthly at Guerilla takeover style event series which create a temporary queering of existing venues and signal a need for queer spaces.

"There is a dangerous myth that queer life didn't exist in a public way until the 1960s" (Wolde-Michael, 2019). That is not true as "historical scholarship has unearthed a world of saloons, cabarets, speakeasies, rent parties, and drag balls that existed since the late 1800s as

spaces where LGBTQ identities were not only visible but openly celebrated" (Wolde-Michael, 2019). The Harlem Renaissance (1920-1935) being one of the most influential intellectual, cultural and artistic movements of LGBTQIA+ history, "offered a new language that challenged social structures and demonstrated the ways that race, gender, sex and sexuality distinctions were actually intersecting, fluid and constantly evolving" (Wolde-Michael, 2019).

Problem statement

Queer theorists and social scientists use architectural language and metaphors of the built space when discussing social constructions, societal frames, and heterosexist hegemony (Halberstam, 2018). We need to break something down to build it back up again. He writes how "current debates about bathrooms and transgender bodies are only the tip of a large and quickly melting iceberg" (Halberstam, 2018). Instead of oppositions and static understandings, "we all seem to be verbs rather than nouns; evolving, shifting entities that are out of place and out of time" (Halberstam, 2018).

The idea of blurring gender lines, theatricality, and performativity is captured in the art form of drag.

"Drag is blurring the gender line and creating art. It doesn't have to be singing and it doesn't have to be dancing, it doesn't have to be comedy. If you are blurring the gender line and you're creating art, you're then engaging in drag." (Bob the Drag Queen, 2020)

Hatarina Bonnevier (2012) also describes a connection between drag and architecture - the dressing of a body and the dressing of architecture both involve gender and sexuality. Can we use drag in architecture as a way to challenge the heteronormativity and heteropatriarchy that is encoded into the environment that we've built?

Research Questions

How can drag be incorporated into architectural design?

How does architectural drag queer urban space?

What does architectural drag perform?

Aim

The aim of this thesis is to contribute to the discourse around queer architecture and queer spaces that have gone unrecognized for far too long and today are once again being threatened and pushed out of existence. I aim to research drag through architectural design and

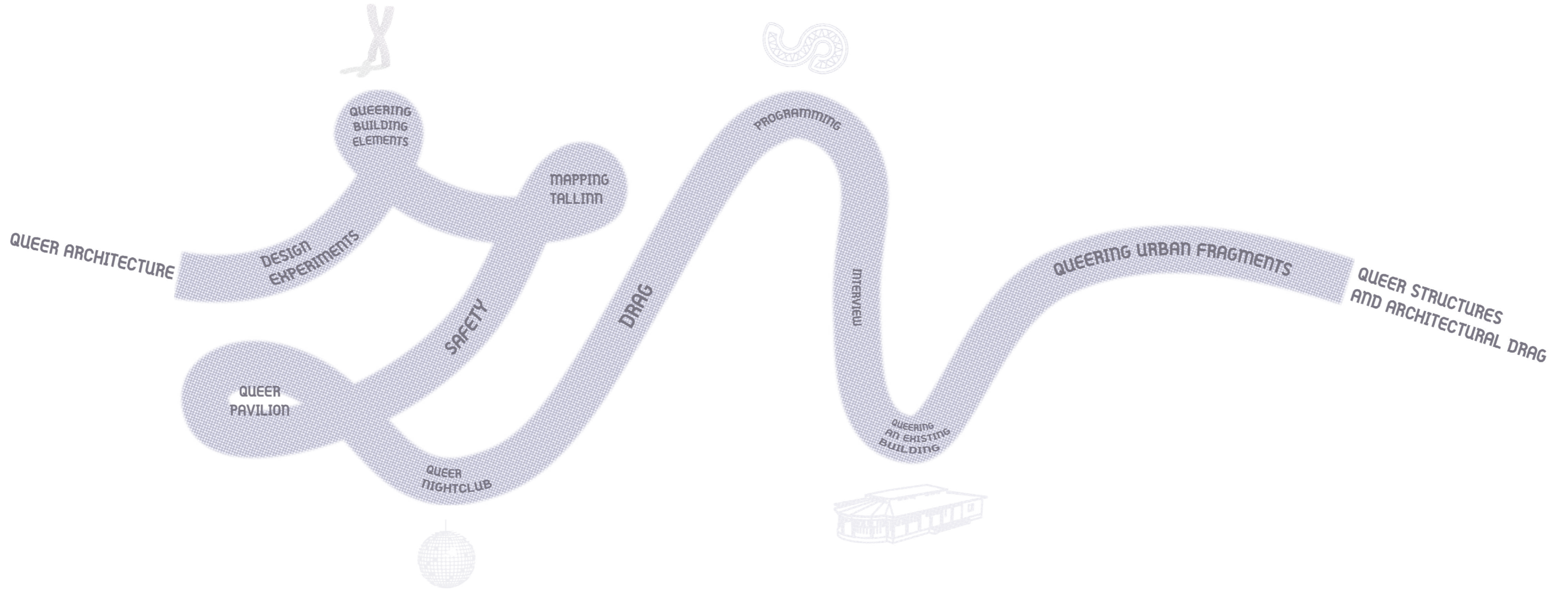
explore how to queer urban space through it. The goal is not to suggest a finalized design solution for a problem but rather a starting point or push for further discussion and design exploration on the topic.

Methodology

The method of research for this thesis project is research through design. Through an iteration of sketches and artifacts, I explore queer structures that perform architectural drag. I give an overview of existing theories such as performativity, theatricality, cross-cladding, and queer use in combination with research into drag culture and the queering of public space, which will feed the design exploration of this project. The final exploration deals with urban fragments dressed in queer structures, performing architectural drag.

The process of this thesis has been anything but linear. As there is very little research on this topic, the directions, and paths to go down for this exploration seem endless. Before reaching the current structure of the exploration, I spent time investigating typical architectural elements and how to queer them through design. Elements such as columns, stairs, openings, walls, etc. Then I looked into the history of queer spaces and venues in Tallinn, Estonia, and mapped out the networks of queer spaces

today and during the 1930s. I moved on to the topic of safety through design and typologies such as pavilions and queer nightclubs. Almost halfway through the process, I realized the potential of exploring drag in architecture and decided to direct the main focus of the thesis on architectural drag. Shortly designing for different programs such as gender-neutral public bathrooms, feminist libraries, runways, etc, before taking a step back to focus on drag queens and the dressing and expression of chosen looks to conduct a series of sketches based on them, that would lead me through the exploration. I then conducted a longer interview with one of the leading LGBTQIA+ activists in Estonia which gave me insight into the current queer scene and struggles of LGBTQIA+ people in Tallinn. I worked with queering and dressing an old tennis pavilion as the testbed for the queer structures. After a series of experiments with dressing the pavilion, I opted for multiple, more general urban fragments to be dressed which allows for the discussion and reflection of this thesis project to reach further.



I THEORY

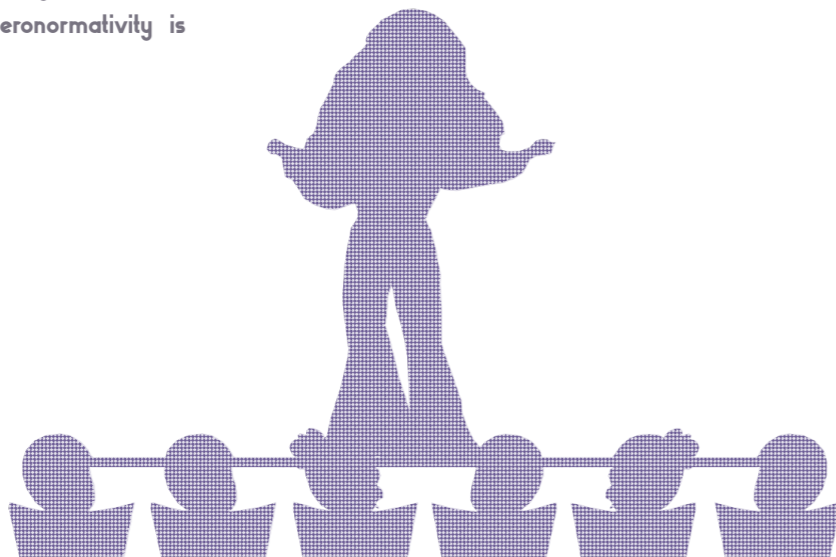
Performativity

Butler (1990) describes how gender is a social construction that through repetition has made a connection between male, man, masculinity and female, woman and femininity. We perform gender in social situations and it's the example of drag that shows us how reality is not as fixed as we think it is (Butler, 1990, p. нкiii-нкiv).

Katarina Bonnevier (2012) reflects on Butler's ideas and explains how all gender is performed and that all gender is in fact drag - "the drag show reveals that gender is drag through parody or ironic enactment" (Bonnevier, 2012, p. 713). She adds that "the drag king can be more masculine than most men" (Bonnevier, 2012, p. 713). She describes that "because all architecture is produced culturally, performativity is built into all architecture" (Bonnevier, 2007, p. 369). She explains how "architecture prescribes behaviour: bodies and social situations are engaged with building elements, settings and scenes" (Bonnevier, 2012, p. 717). If architecture is produced culturally and we live in a heteronormative society, heteronormativity is

encoded also into the built environment. "By repeating the same principles for how we build homes over and over again, these principles are naturalized" (Bonnevier, 2012, p. 717). She describes how "the family that is assumed when designing single family houses is a heterosexual couple with children", which then sets the programming for the house (Bonnevier, 2012, p. 717). Bonnevier (2012, p. 717) quotes Friedman (1998, 85) to explain how space is divided and given according to the patriarchal model and it doesn't take into account the diversity of existing people and households.

Reflecting on theories of performativity, Bonnevier (2012) states that there is a clear connection between theatre and everyday life. These theories of performativity and theatricality allow us to see architecture as an active part of our everyday lives not just static walls that we've put up for shelter.



Cross-cladding

"To cross-dress is to question the heterosexual norm that under false pretence of neutrality makes a 'natural' connection between femininity, female and woman" (Bonnevier, 2012, p. 714). She "links the theatrical parody of gender and sexuality with the masking and dressing of architecture" (Bonnevier, 2012, p. 715). Cross-cladding emphasizes how gender and sexuality are apparent in architecture and the display of architecture (Bonnevier, 2012). The term can also be thought of as to "contradict an established form" (Bonnevier, 2012, p. 717). The planning of buildings, the way space is

allocated and programmed, the interior design, and the shapes, ornaments, and materials that cover a building all deal with how the building performs and expresses gender and sexuality in architecture (Bonnevier, 2012). Cross-cladding is thus directly connected to drag and we can discuss how any architecture that we have created presents itself. This becomes a key approach when dealing with queering spaces or building elements through architectural drag.



Queer use

Ahmed (2019) describes queer use to refer to “how things can be used in ways other than for which they were intended or by those other than for whom they were intended” (p. 199). Further explaining that “it has become a design principle in architecture to create more flexible spaces” (Ahmed, 2019, p. 200). She points out that “buildings can be built with queer uses in mind and not all uses could or even should be foreseen” (Ahmed, 2019, p. 200). Space claimed by queer communities has a lot to do with what Ahmed (2019) describes as queer use as reuse. Queer use can also be thought of as freeing something from heteronormativity and heterosexism - “when we aim to shatter what has provided a container” (Ahmed, 2019, p. 209). She describes an example of when a boy is corrected for playing with ‘the wrong toy’ such as a toy meant for girls, then it’s not about correcting the behavior but “correcting how the

boy is boy” (Ahmed, 2019, p. 202).

“We are constantly being reassigned gender through doors”, like the signs on public bathroom doors - man, woman (Ahmed, 2019, p. 202). By saying “do not use that is saying, in truth, do not be that” (Ahmed, 2019, p. 204). Queer use can be when we “occupy a building or a street with the intent to disrupt ordinary usage, to get in the way of how that space is usually used “ (Ahmed, 2019, p. 210). I think that this approach, be it about considering the queer uses of something or queering an object or space, opens up a necessary way of thinking about design today. By queering something, one liberates themselves from heteronormative thought frames. By incorporating the process of queering or queer use into a new design, one can avoid the reproduction of heteronormativity.



II QUEER AND QUEERING

Queer

The core of this thesis is queer architecture which deals with a series of aspects all gathering around the central idea of breaking free from heteronormative constraints. Firstly, I use queer as an umbrella term to convey a range of gender identities and sexual orientations that do not conform to heteronormative constructions such as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, intersex, pansexual, asexual, or otherwise non-conforming (Catterall &

Azzouz, 2021, p. 5). Secondly, queerness has a performative force (Bonnievier, 2007). Queerness questions and challenges these heteronormative social constructions and the power structures that are tied to them (Catterall & Azzouz, 2021, p. 3). Linguistically, queer has a history - meaning odd, strange, disturbing, and used as an insult before being appropriated by LGBTQIA+ communities (Ahmed, 2019, p. 197).

Queering

Queering can be understood as an act of challenging heteronormativity and especially heteropatriarchy that's also embodied in architecture and public artwork (Catterall & Azzouz, 2021, p. 10). Another way white heteronormativity dominates public spaces is through monuments and sculptures that are a result of selective representation of our history and what we choose to remember and consider significant (Catterall & Azzouz, 2021, p. 10). Overwhelmingly underrepresented are women,

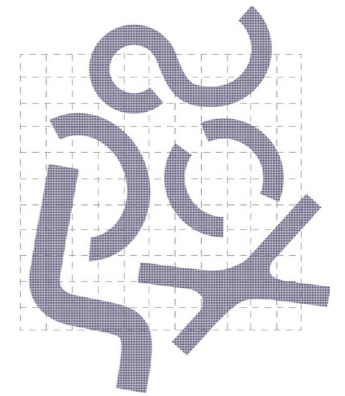
people of colour, and LGBTQIA+ people who have been marginalized and oppressed throughout history (Catterall & Azzouz, 2021, p. 8). For whom are public spaces designed? Through queering, we can try to broaden that answer. Inclusivity in public space is particularly needed for trans and non-binary queer individuals, who are often left behind even within LGBTQIA+ communities (Robinson, 2016).

QUEER PARAMETERS

Through previously discussed theories and a report on Queering Public Space by ARUP and University of Westminster, I've conducted a set of key parameters that act as a guide for my queer design exploration.

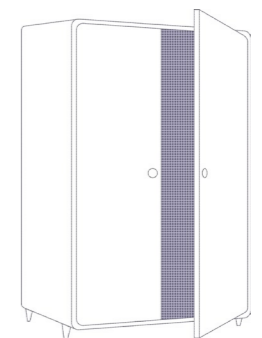
1 Deviation

Challenging normative ways of designing would mean breaking out of strict grids and avoiding straight lines.



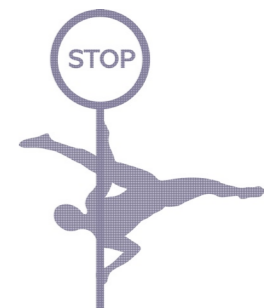
2 Visibility

Designing spaces that provide layers between the body and public space avoid leaving one too exposed. By representation and usualisation also in the material and physical realm, one can strive towards inclusion.



3 Flexibility

Designing for uses that can't be foreseen



III DRAG

DRAG

"You're born naked and the rest is drag." (RuPaul, 1995)

"Drag is blurring the gender line and creating art" (Bob the Drag Queen, 2020). Classic drag means dressing up and performing an elevated, exaggerated character that's hyper-feminine or hyper-masculine - drag queen or drag king.

What the now mainstream drag performances include are impressive lip-syncs, dances, splits, acrobatics, glamorous garments, and comedy, and all of that has become available even outside a queer performance venue. Actor, producer, singer/songwriter, product spokesperson, and self-proclaimed drag "supermodel of the world", RuPaul Charles is the queen of drag and host/mentor of the reality show RuPaul's Drag

Race that "has made drag queens and drag culture infinitely more accessible to global audiences" (Brennan & Gudelunas, 2017, p. 3). It has extended the reach of drag culture from "the gay bar/club scene to the mainstream" (Brennan & Gudelunas, 2017, p. 3). This has greatly helped usualise drag and LGBTQIA+ representation in many societies with other countries such as Sweden creating their own spin-off of Drag Race. Documentaries such as "Paris is Burning" and the popularization of voguing in addition to Drag Race have made this ignored and marginalized community a worldwide phenomenon (Vega, 2022, p. 5).



Ballroom scene from documentary Paris is Burning (Screenshot from Paris is Burning)

BALLROOM

Ballroom culture was created in the 1970s by the oppressed queer people of colour in New York (Vega, 2022, p. 3). Ballroom came as a response to the spatial and social oppression of the community when homelessness, the spread of AIDS, drug abuse, and prostitution were projected to the queer community (Vega, 2022, p. 3). A lack of safety and security in public spaces forced the community underground to use ballrooms to shape their own places for coming together and escaping the public eye (Vega, 2022, p. 3). The balls became an escape, a place to live the fantasy, and with the creation of Houses, they set up a support system (Vega, 2022, p. 3). The drag houses often provided shelter for their members, as many young queer people were left homeless after being

kicked out by their parents for being queer (Vega, 2022, p. 3). The houses walked/competed together in the balls as a team (Vega, 2022, p. 7). The houses are a chosen family with usually a mentor that's called the drag mother and the other members called drag children. The balls are thematic competitions and walking a ball means (much like in architecture school a final critique), performing in front of a jury and being critiqued for how convincing one is in a category. This didn't mean that they disappeared from public space as they were expected and suggested to - instead, they challenged the uses of public space, appropriating parks, piers, and whole streets and challenged the usual division between public and private (Vega, 2022, p. 3).



Ballroom scene from TV series Pose (Screenshot from Pose)

Vogue

The signature dance of the drag balls and fierce competition (or in more accurate terms: battle) is called voguing (Susman, 2000, p. 124). Competitors, through improvisation, calculate their every movement with rapid decision-making (Susman, 2000, p. 124). It's important how, when, and where certain poses and movements are performed in relation to the music (Susman, 2000, p. 124).

"Voguing the Old Way is slowly striking pose after pose after pose" (Susman, 2000, p. 124)

"The New Way may involve stretch such as the dramatic displacement of double jointed shoulders, leg splits on the floor or standing, or more athletic and gymnastic

movement such as head or shoulder stands, spins, and flips reminiscent of breakdancing" (Susman, 2000, p. 124)

"Butch queen vogue femme, also called cunt vogue. This is often performed with hyper-exaggerated effeminacy, with flopping wrists, small mincing steps, and dips, a dramatic step wherein a dancer who has one leg lifted high falls backwards to the floor and lands in an arched-back pose. This style is performed with much care, precision, and humor" (Susman, 2000, p. 125)



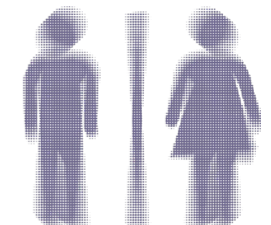
Cunt

Just like 'queer', another loaded word reclaimed by LGBTQIA+ people and drag culture is 'cunt' which mainly due to misogynistic social control has made the word so offensive (Mack, 2023). Mack (2023) writes that feminists have previously aimed to appropriate the word to take back control and power over it but it's not until recently that it has succeeded and become so widely used thanks to the popularization of drag culture and social media. He explains that "serving cunt" is an affirmation that one is doing something fierce, while "being cunt" means that one is bold and iconic (Mack, 2023). In RuPaul's Drag Race, RuPaul looks for Charisma, Uniqueness, Nerve and Talent, which is what it takes to become a drag superstar. Intent always matters and calling someone "a cunt" with bad intentions is still insulting and offensive (Mack, 2023).

DRAG PARAMETERS

1 Blurring gender lines

To deconstruct binary understandings



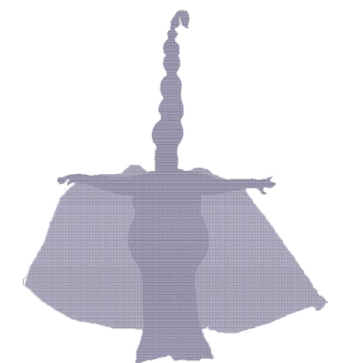
2 Couture

Specifically tailored to the body of the user and the context of the use



3 Exaggeration

Elevating the existing and exaggerating feminine and/or masculine characteristics



4 Protest

Challenge heteronormativity and heteropatriarchy

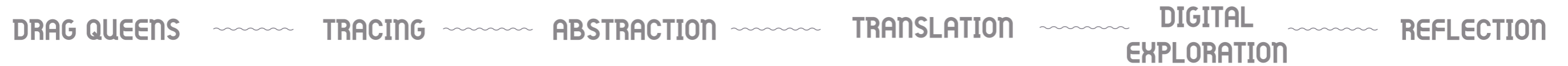


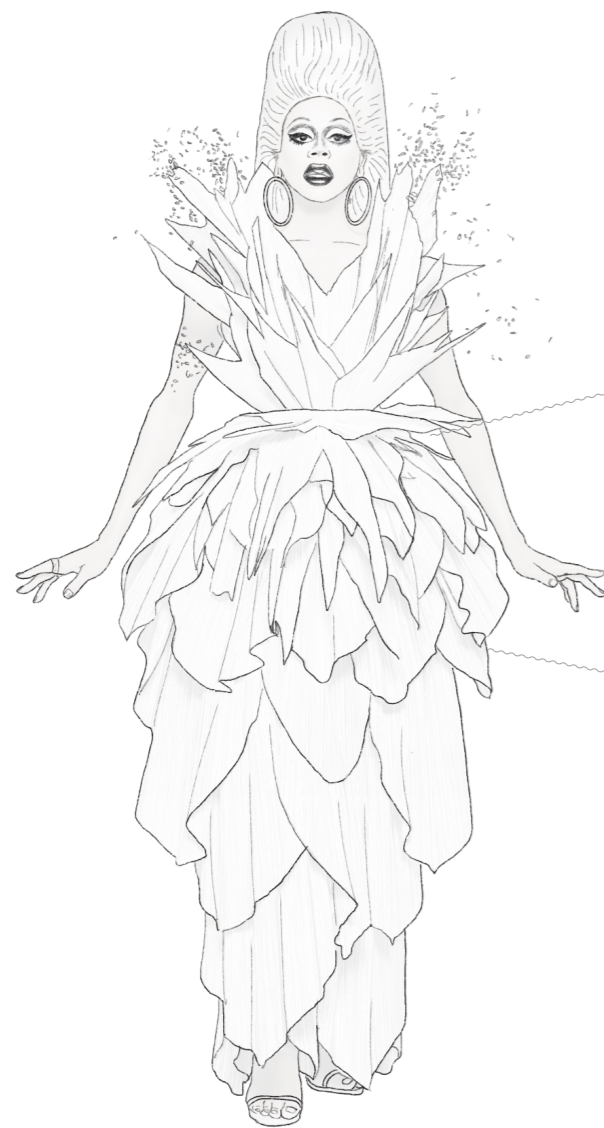
IV DRAG x ARCHITECTURE

I approach this exploration through sketches and the exhaustion of possibilities. I will look at 4 drag queens and one of their looks. Each drag queen's outfit speaks about the drag queen themselves and also the category in which I've placed these specific looks. The first one is Mother, symbolizing the drag mother/mentor that is RuPaul. Second is Extravaganza, with Blu Hydrangea's outfit representing a signature, over-the-top, elegant, and glamorous look. Thirdly Camp, with Raja's 3D-printed butterfly cage, expresses the ironic and humorous approach to drag. Lastly, Gender Blur, which is what Danny Beard's drag does, as they merge femininity and masculinity.



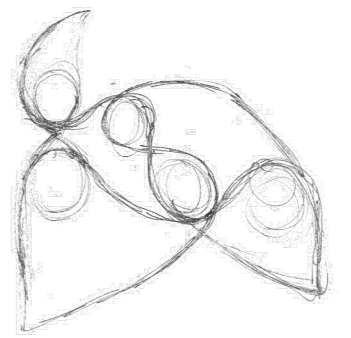
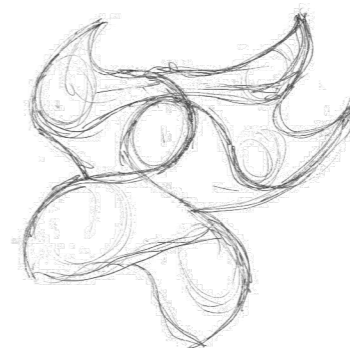
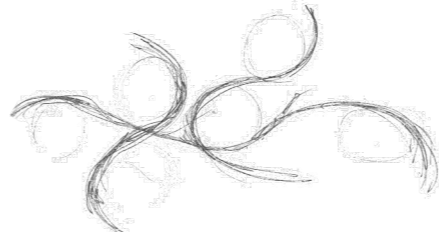
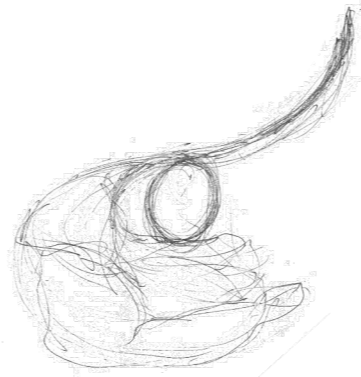
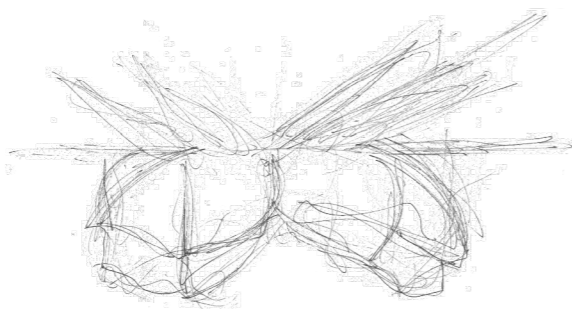
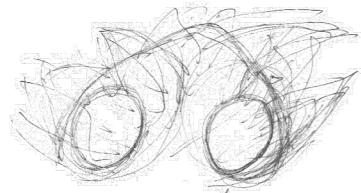
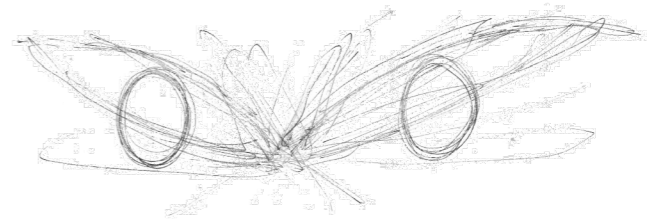
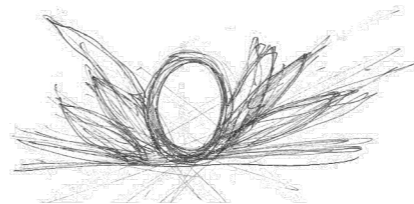
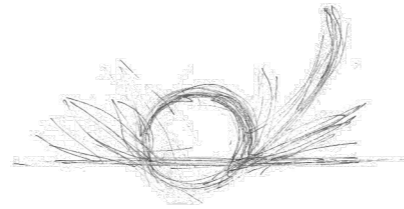
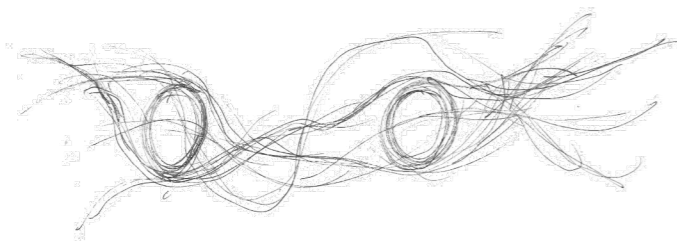
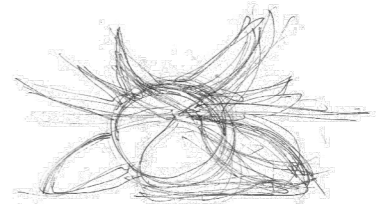
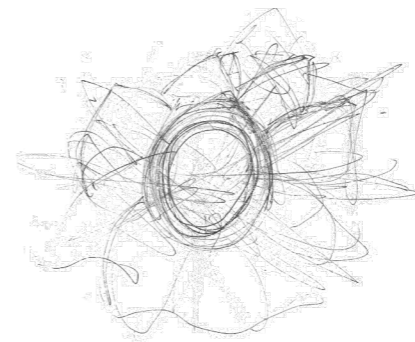
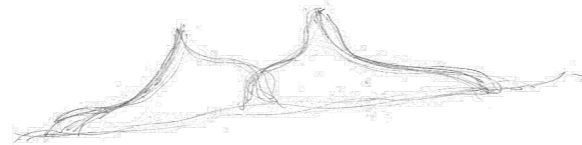
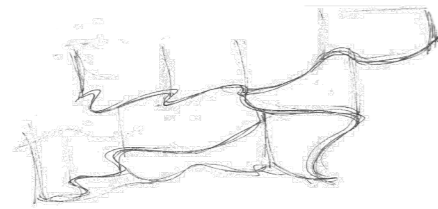
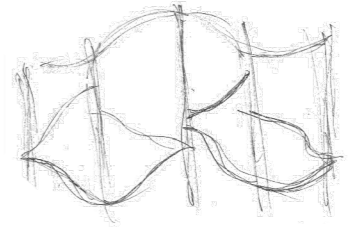
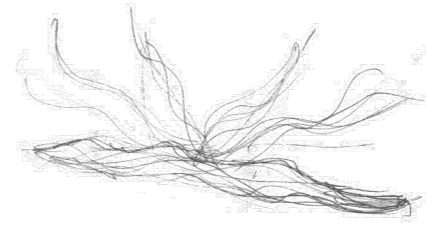
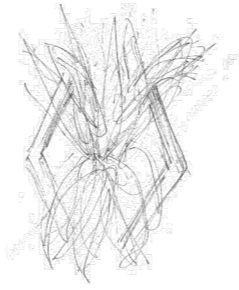
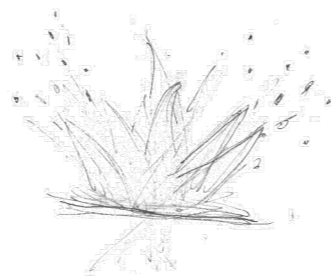
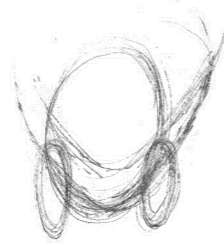
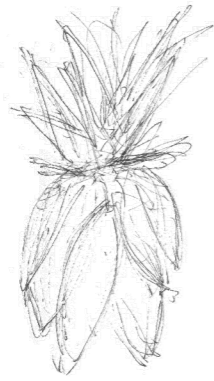
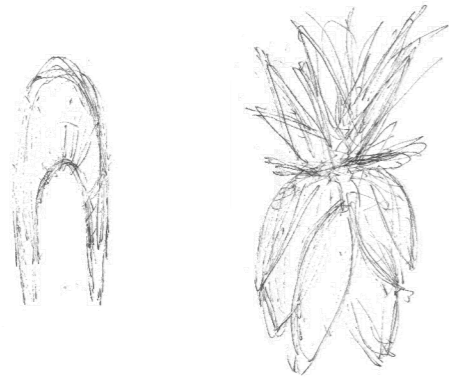
For each drag queen, a series of 10 traced sketches will be carried out from which an abstraction phase will follow in the form of around 20 sketches per drag queen. I will search for repeating elements from within those sketches and combine them into a final stage of sketching aiming for an architectural translation to come out of that. Then a series of digital explorations from the previous sketches will follow with the aim of moving toward a queer structure.

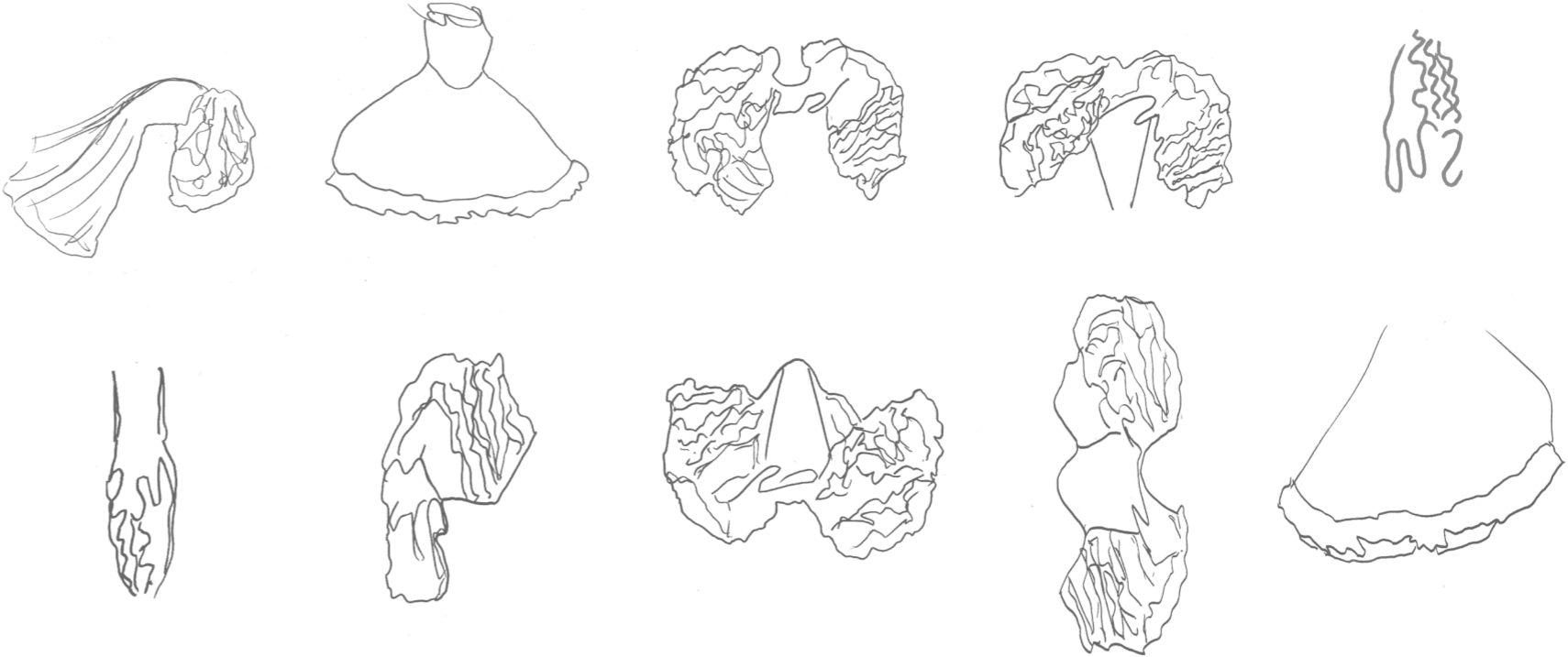




MOTHER

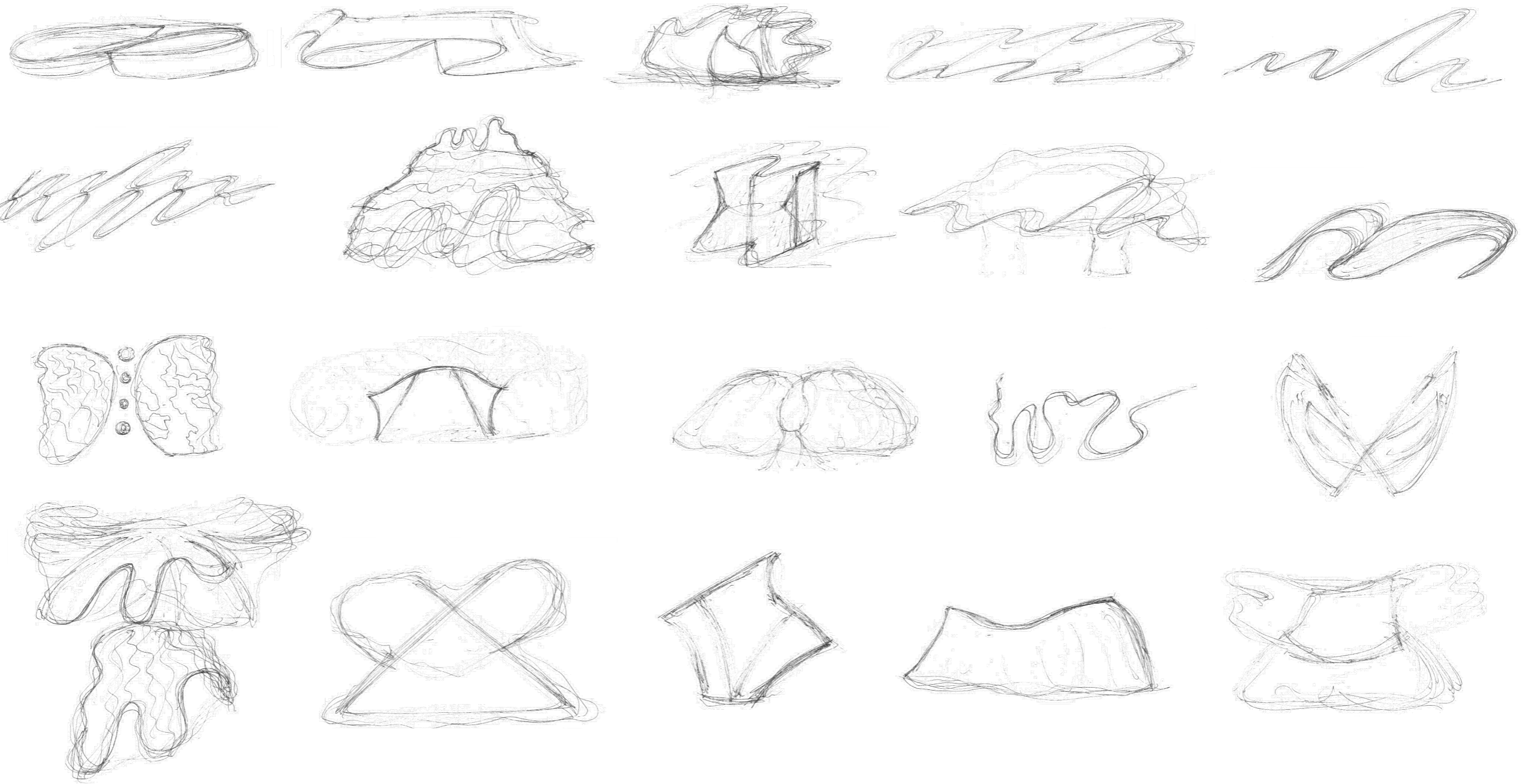
ABSTRACTION

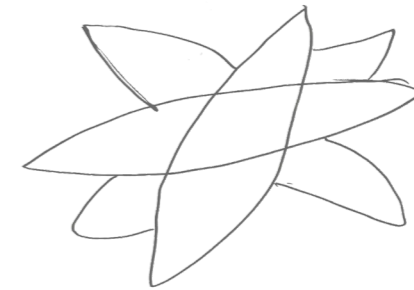
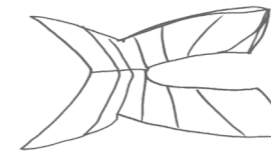
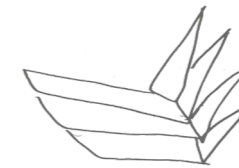
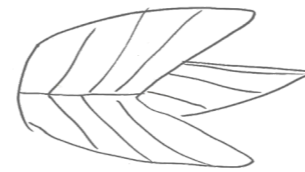
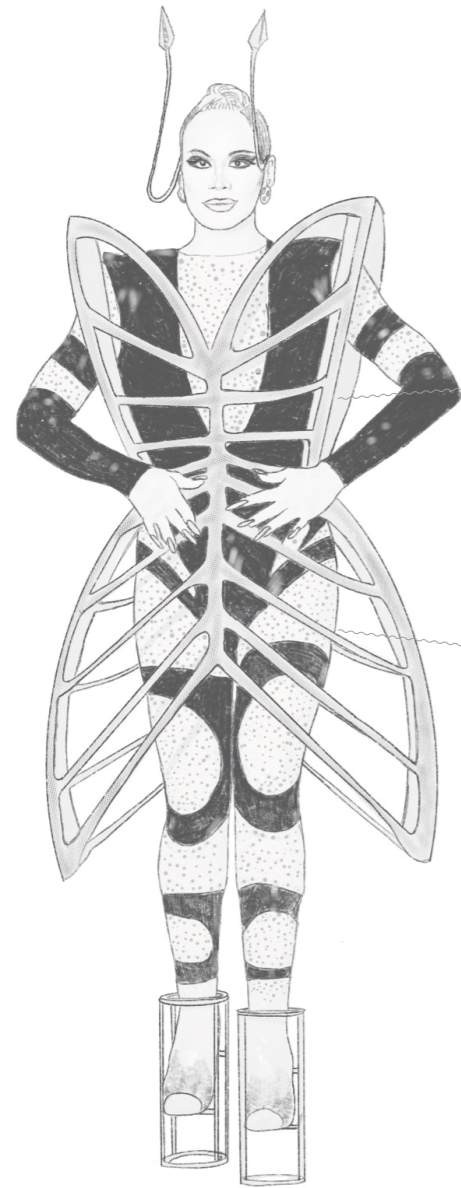




EXTRAVAGANZA

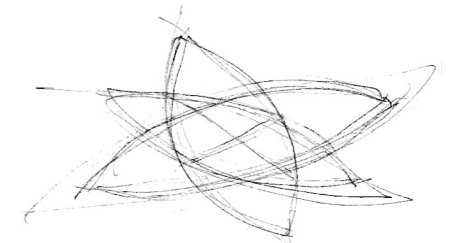
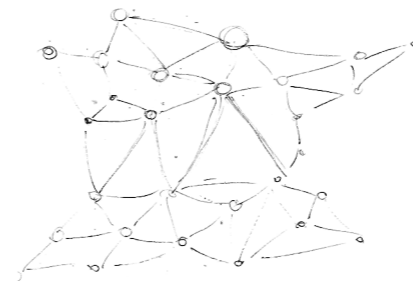
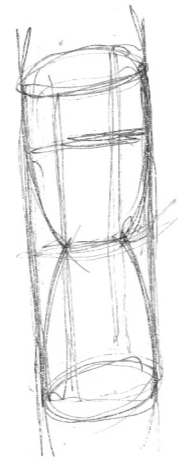
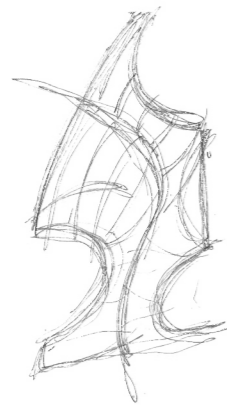
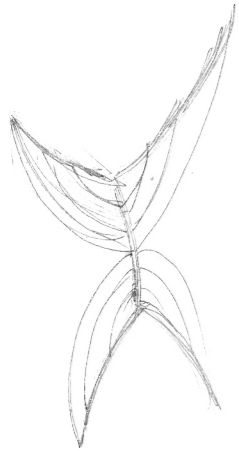
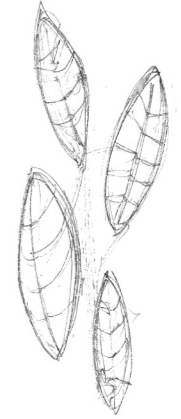
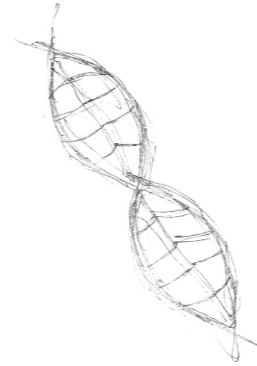
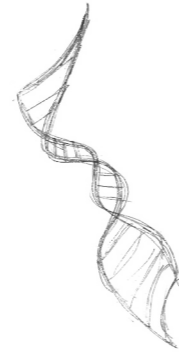
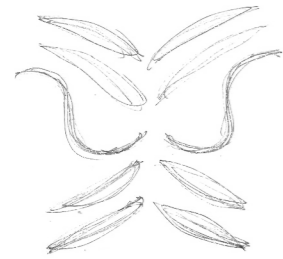
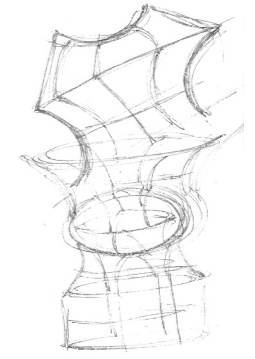
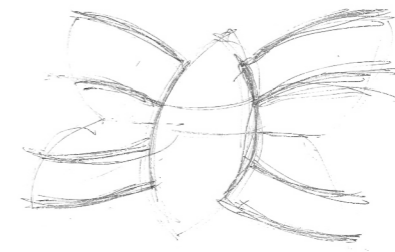
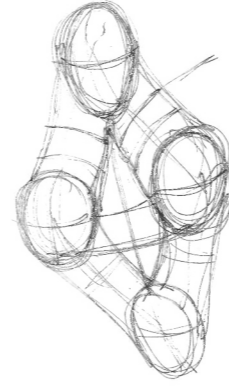
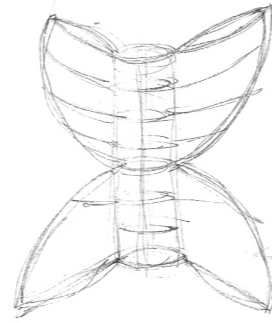
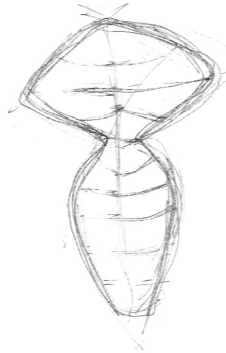
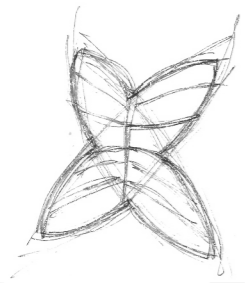
ABSTRACTION

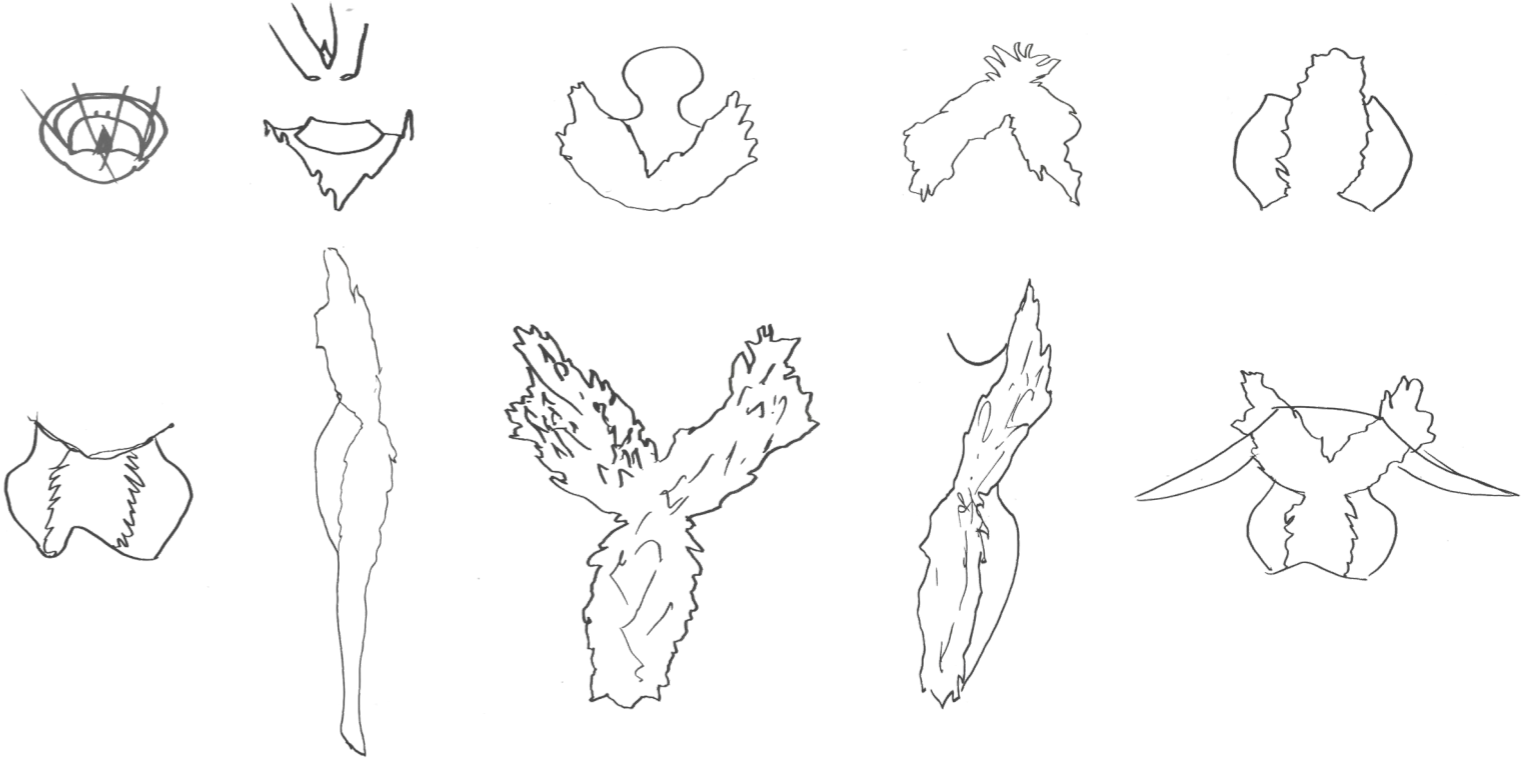




CAMP

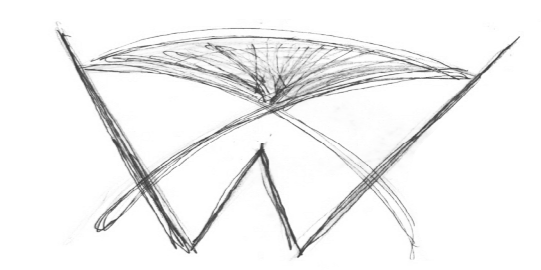
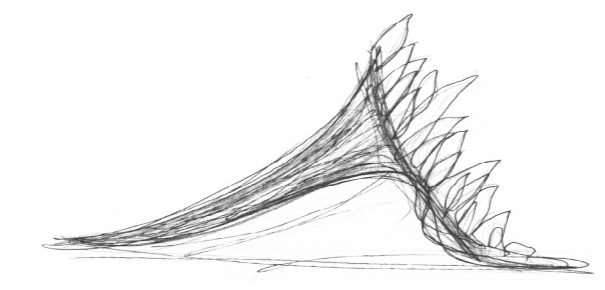
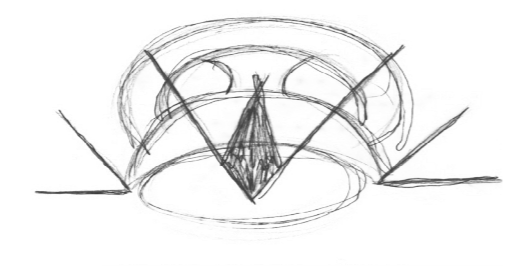
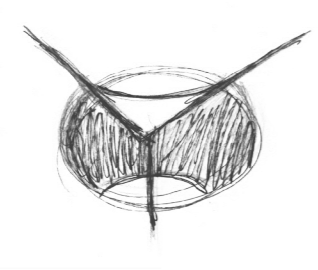
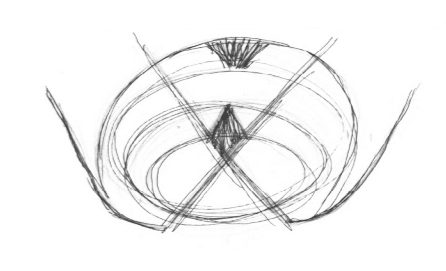
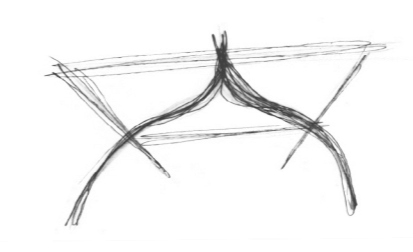
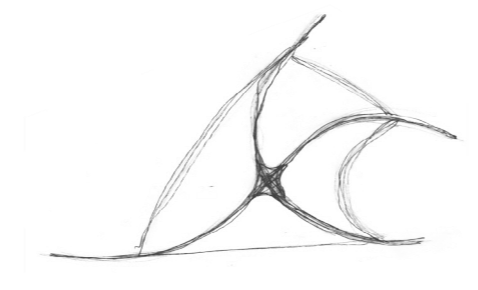
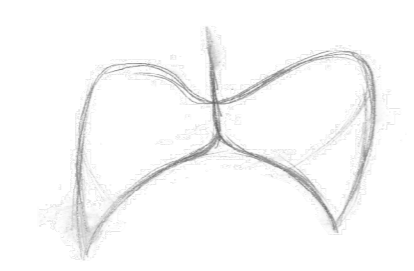
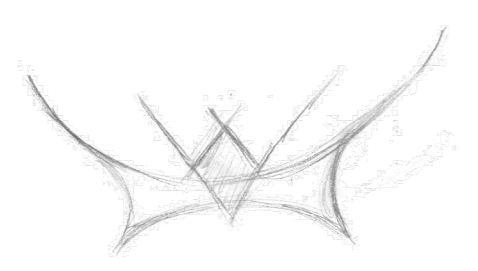
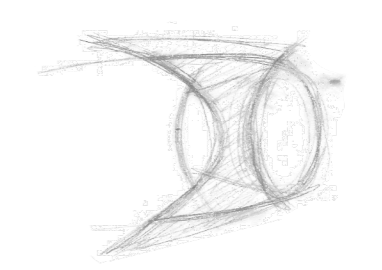
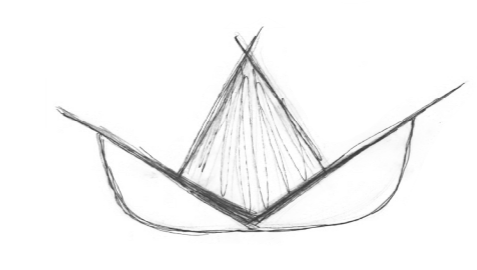
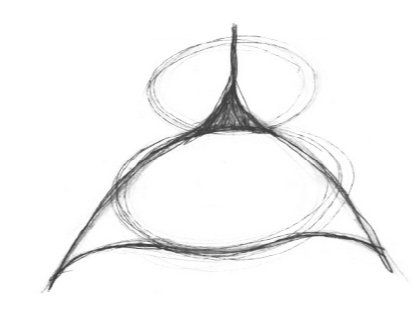
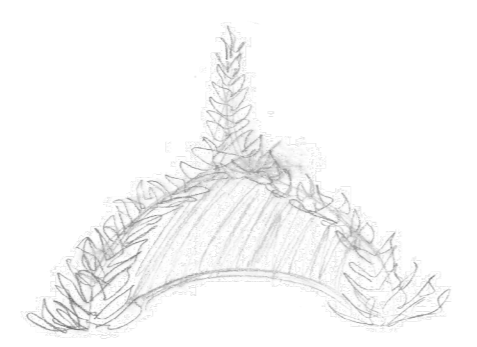
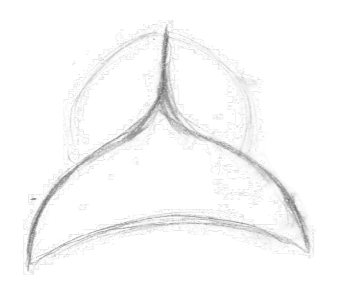
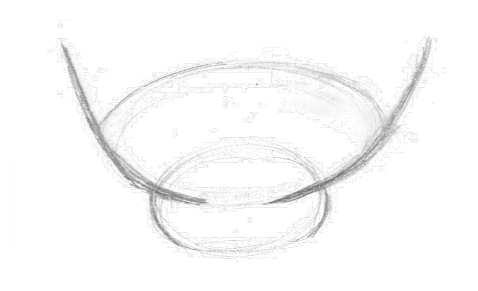
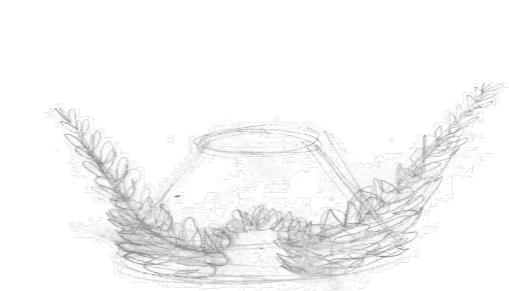
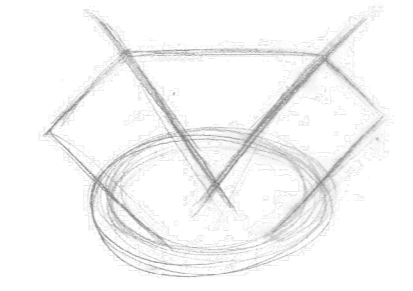
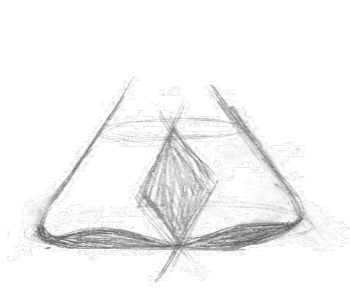
ABSTRACTION



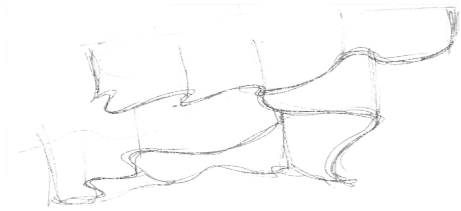


GENDER BLUR

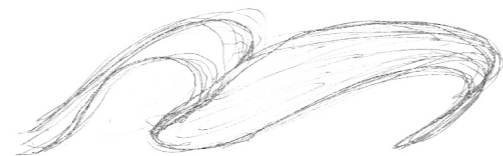
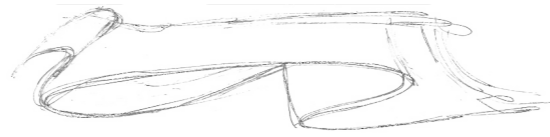
ABSTRACTION



REPEATING ELEMENTS



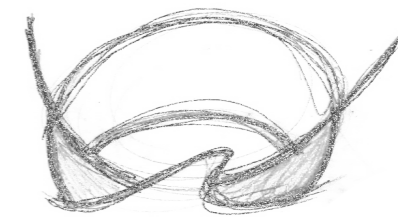
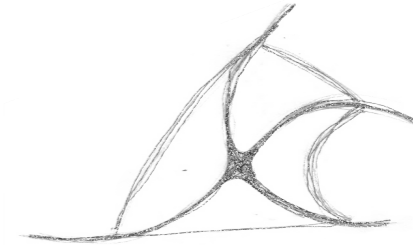
LAYERING



FOLDING

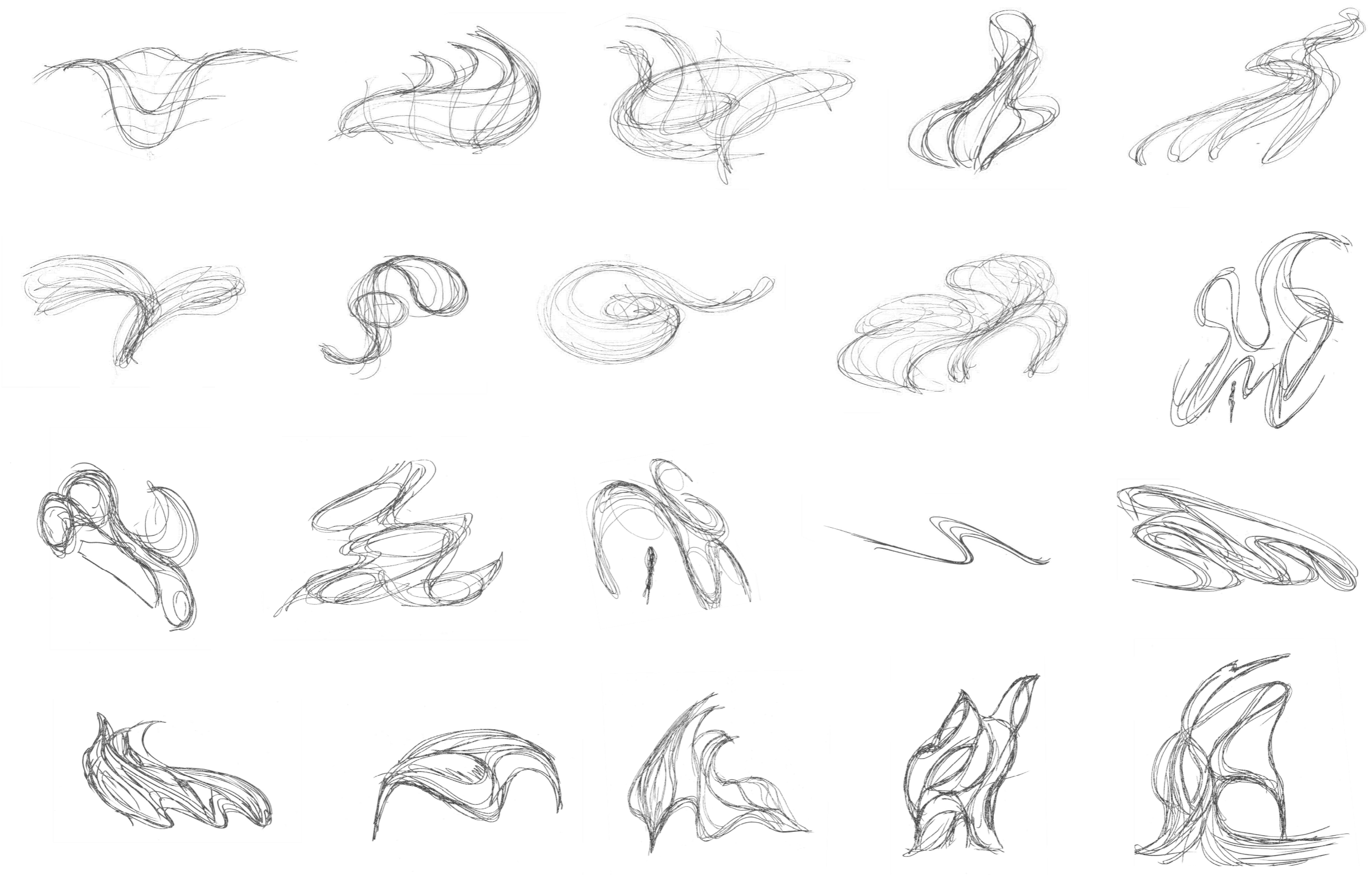


LATTICE

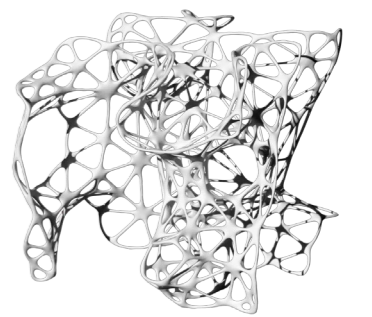
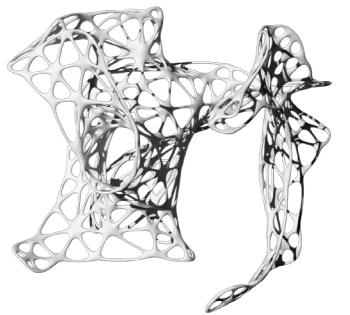
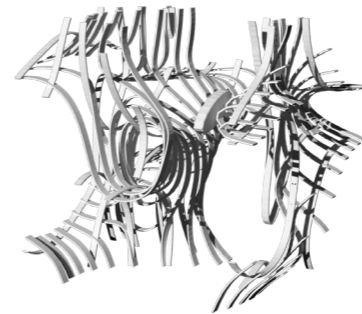
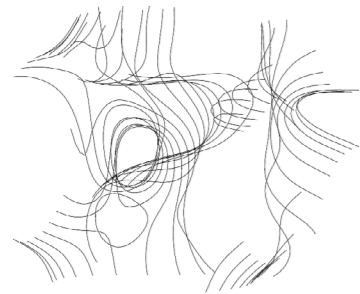
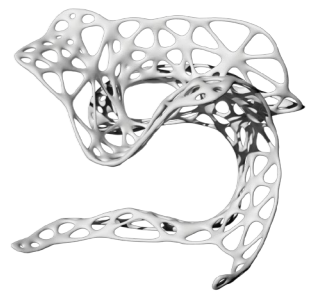
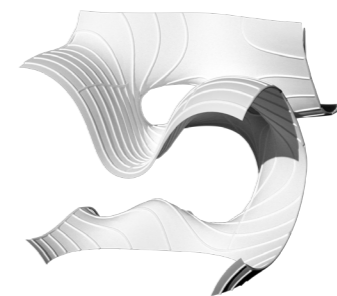
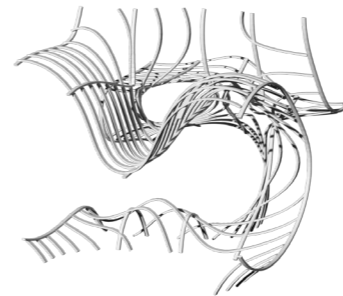
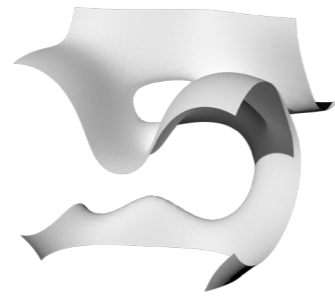
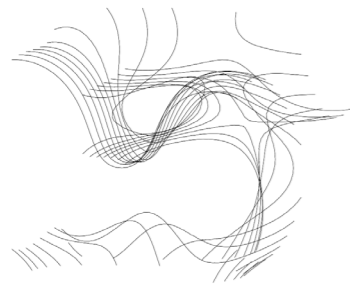


SHARP CURVES

TRANSLATION



DIGITAL EXPERIMENTS



REFLECTION

This exploration has led to a system of a queer structure that deals with the action of dressing or cladding an existing body that also has the ability to create space from itself. I argue that in and of itself that is drag. Drag is the dressing of a body but it's also a whole other persona and character of itself.

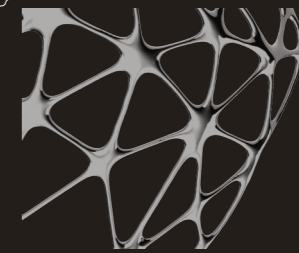
The materials of the structure take inspiration from the elegance of ballroom, with shiny, reflective steel as the body of the structure. The red fabric acts as dressing on the structure and symbolizes 'giving life' to the city (Campbell, 2019). The fabric acts as a more temporal element on the structure allowing for change and other materials to be used for the dressing as well.

The folding and twisting of the structure breaks out of conventional grids and straight lines in architectural design and allows the form to create space within itself and from itself. Together with the fabric dressing, the structure adds layers between the body that inhabits said structure and breaks the flow of the existing urban space in terms of movement, sightlines, and light.

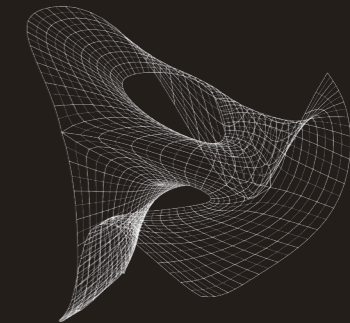
The organic lattice and shape of the structure relate to the bodies that inhabit it with the aim of elevating the body, encouraging it to interact with the structure in a wider range of movement and motion other than resting on flat surfaces. Thus, the unique shape of every structure can be read as structural voguing that in relation to another performing vogue dance battles on the dance floor that is the urban stage.

The structure meets the ground like the high heel of a shoe.

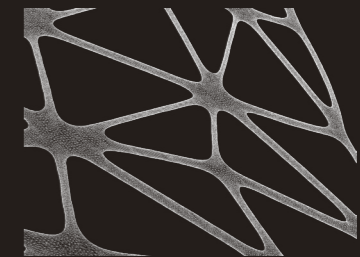
OPULENCE



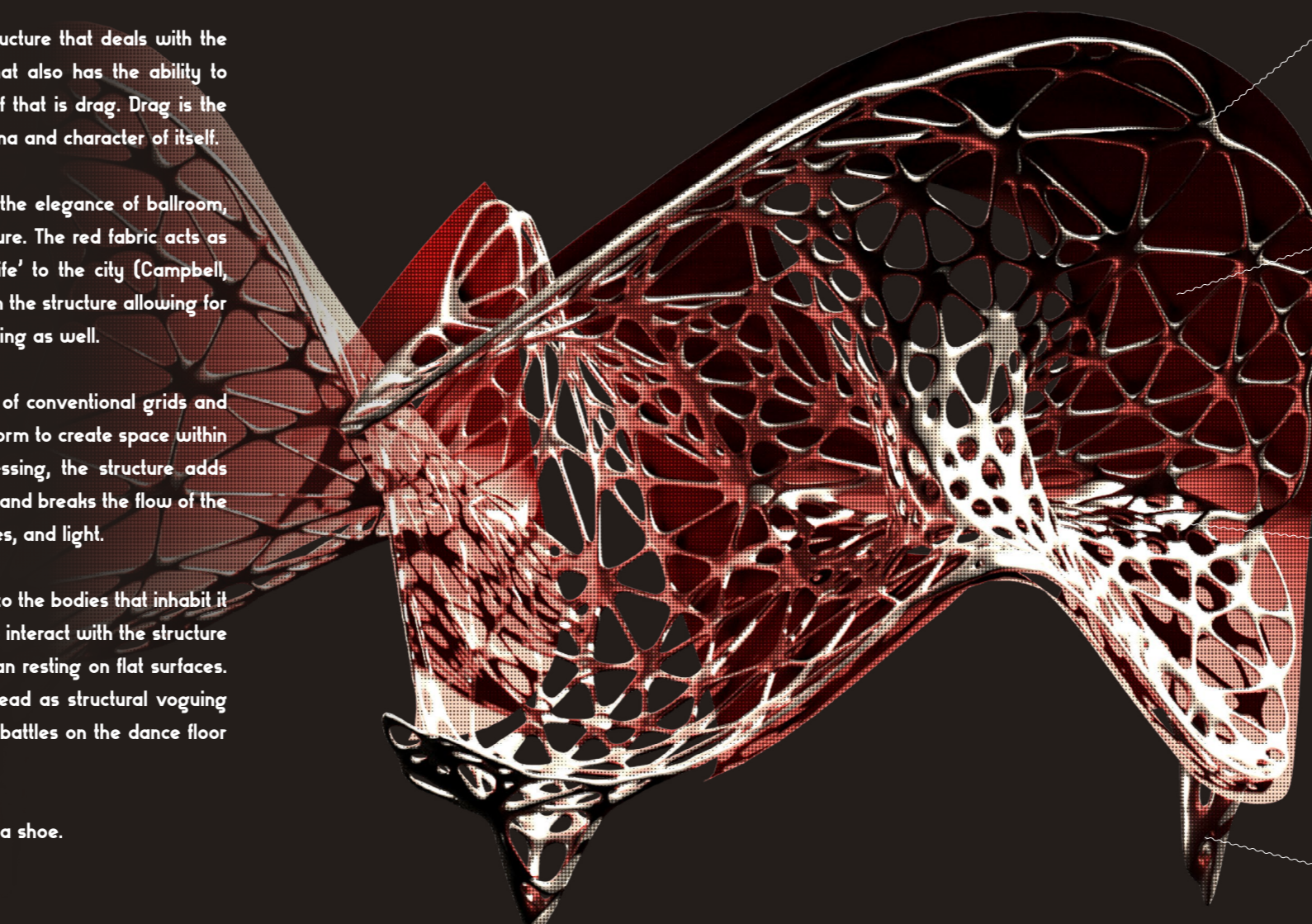
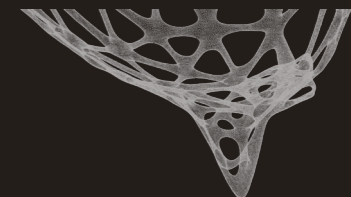
Giving life



Serving body-ody-ody



Slay the house down boots

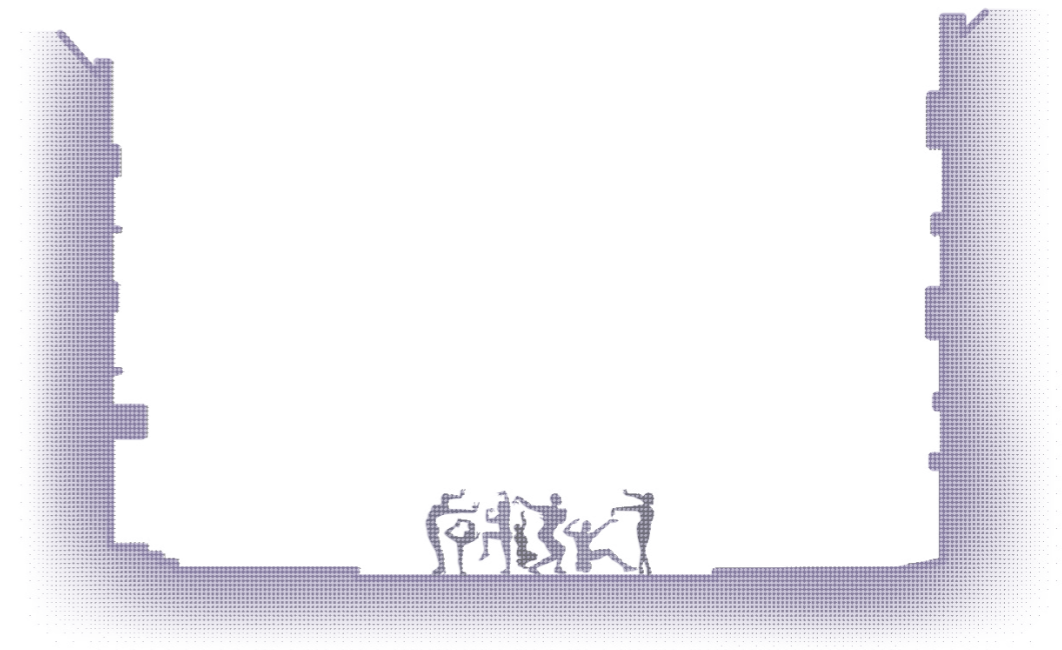
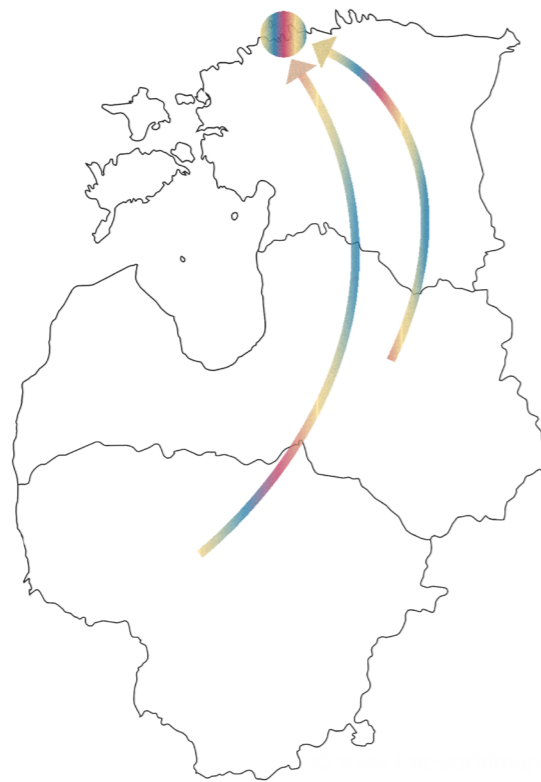


V ARCHITECTURAL DRAG

TALLINN & BALTIC PRIDE

Tallinn has a rich queer history with homosexuality becoming decriminalized in Estonia already in 1935 before being criminalized again during the Soviet occupation (Abrams, et al., 2022, p. 97). Many stories about the queer lives and spaces used by LGBTQIA+ people for gathering in Tallinn in the 1930s have been unearthed from an article series called "The Purple Horror" that appeared in 1933 (Abrams, et al., 2022, p. 99). We know a little bit more about the gatherings that took place and where, for example, Kaarli Boulevard in the city centre of Tallinn used to be a cruising spot not only for gay men, as has been the association with cruising grounds around the world, but also lesbian women at the time (Abrams, et al., 2022, p. 94).

After Estonia regained independence in 1991, homosexual acts were decriminalized in 1992 with many gay clubs opening up in Tallinn making public venues available again for the LGBTQIA+ community (Tiidenberg & Allaste, 2020). The first Pride in Estonia and all Baltic states was organized in 2004 in Tallinn with around 200 people attending (Tiidenberg & Allaste, 2020). Baltic Pride is happening in Tallinn again in June of 2023 after 6 years (Estonian LGBT Association, 2022). Pride has been organized around the world for around half a century since the Stonewall riots in 1969 and the main goal of Pride celebrations is to direct attention to the problems that LGBTQIA+ people have to face in everyday life (Estonian LGBT Association, 2022).

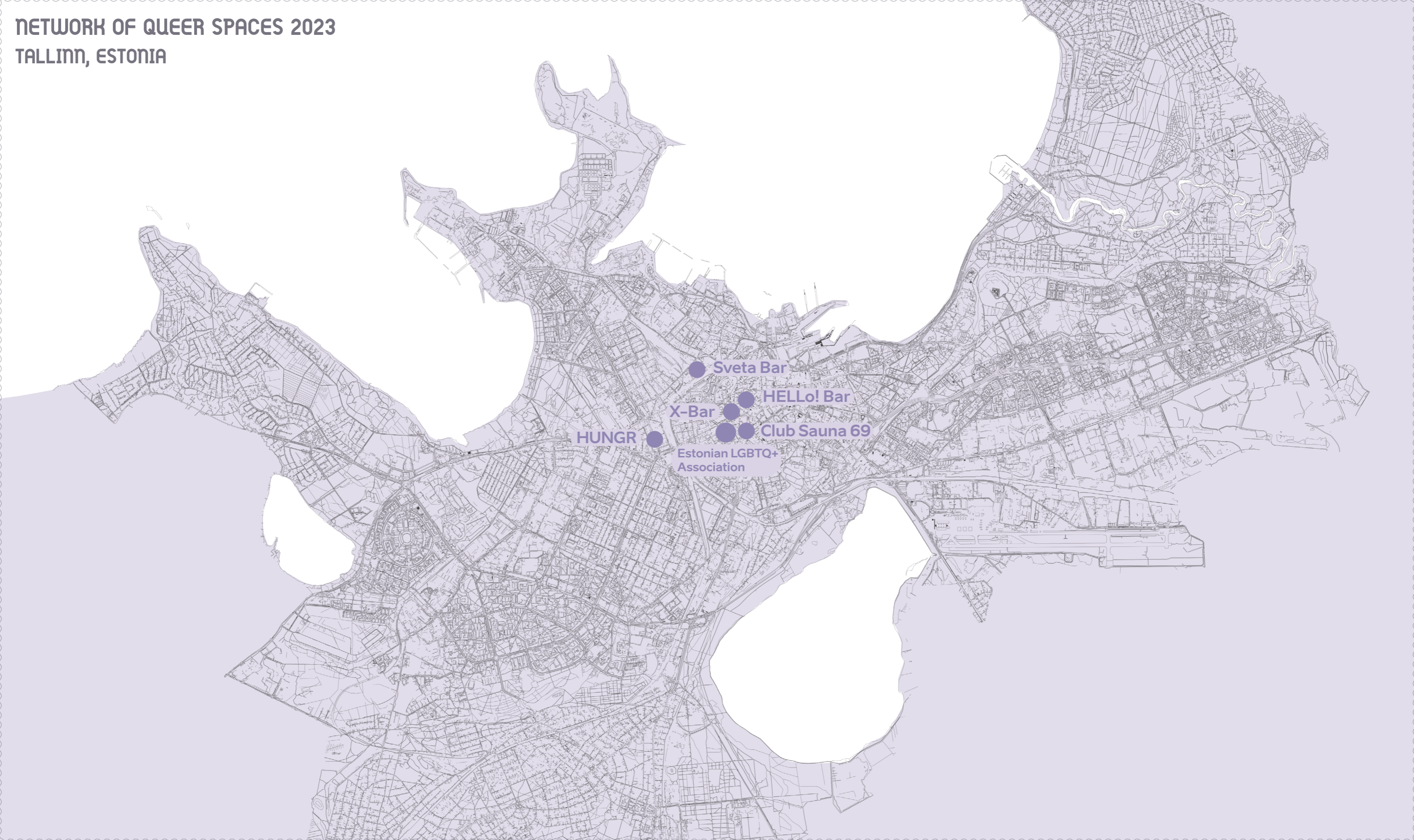


GATHERING & TAKING SPACE

Butler (2015) describes the similarities between every mass demonstration being the gathering and movement of bodies, the way they speak together and claim space as an action. They add that it's not just the bodies alone that make up these movements and demonstrations - the bodies together also collect the space, and the pavement and bring the architecture to life (Butler, 2015, p. 71). The built and material environment becomes a part of and supports the action (Butler, 2015, p. 71).

By creating architectural bodies that claim and take space we can help support the bodies whose voices get diminished when there are not enough collective bodies or at a time when there's no demonstration.

NETWORK OF QUEER SPACES 2023
TALLINN, ESTONIA



Sveta Bar

HELLo! Bar

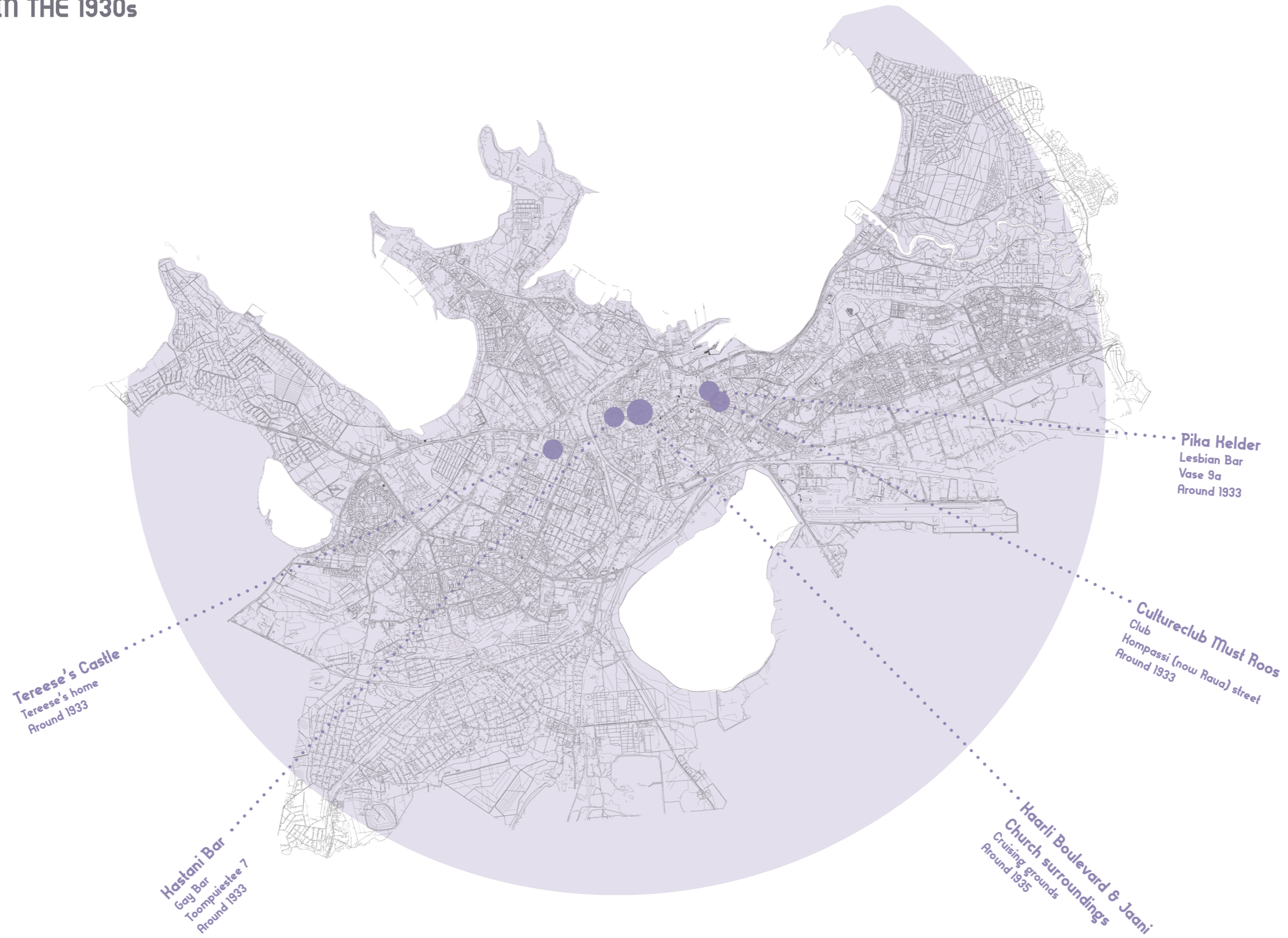
X-Bar

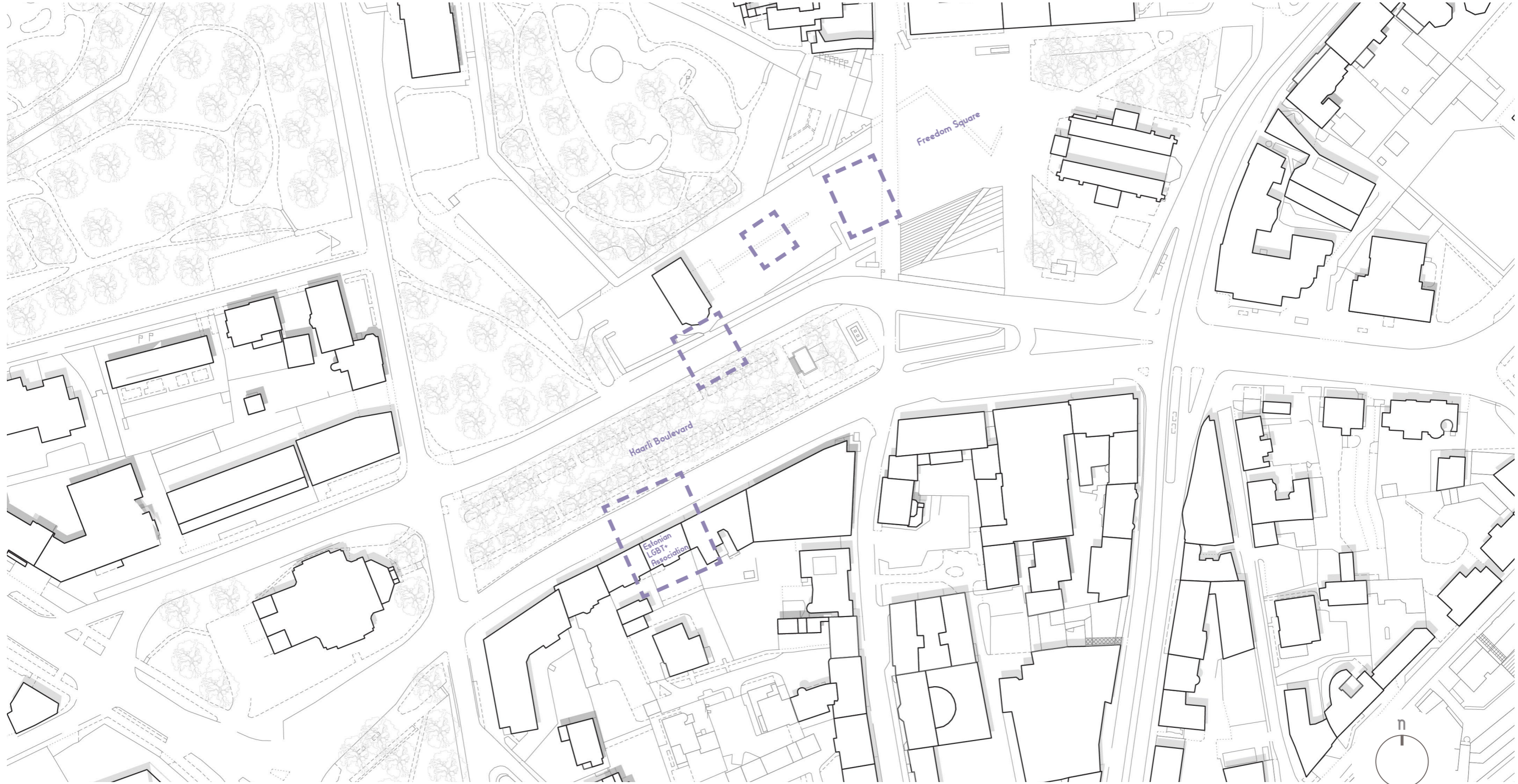
Club Sauna 69

Estonian LGBTQ+
Association

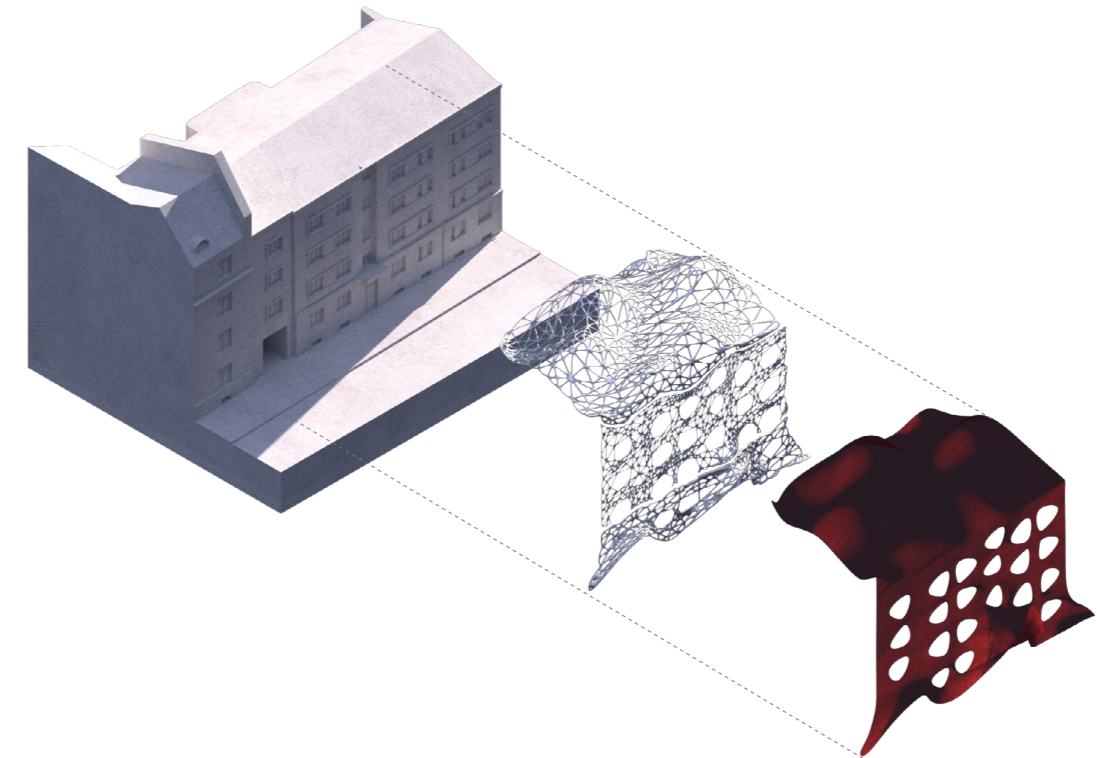
HUNGR

QUEER SPACES IN THE 1930s
TALLINN, ESTONIA

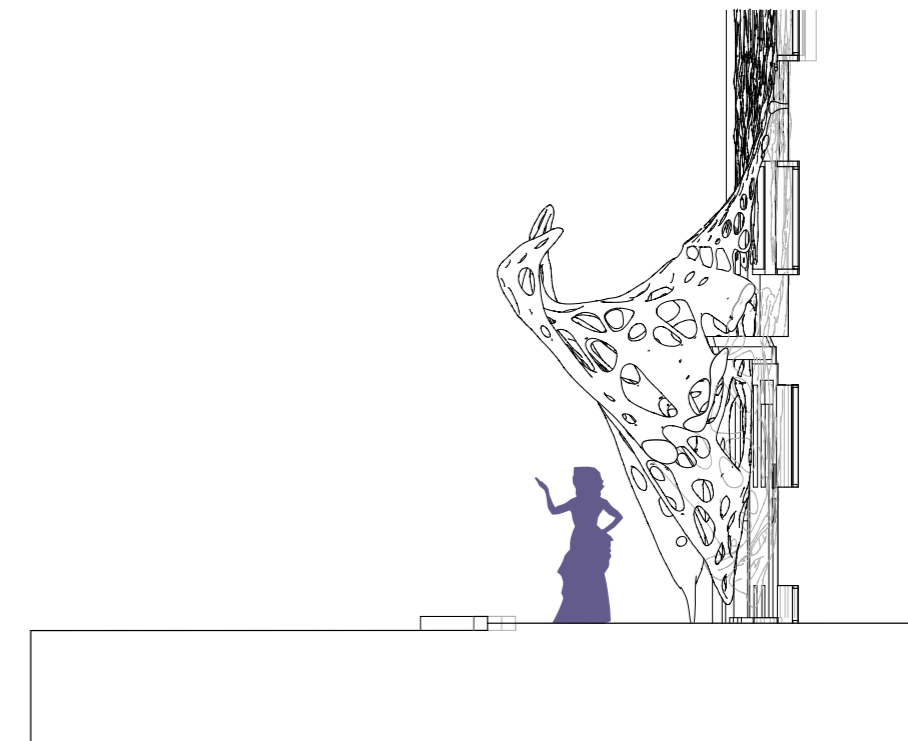




CATEGORY IS: DRESSING



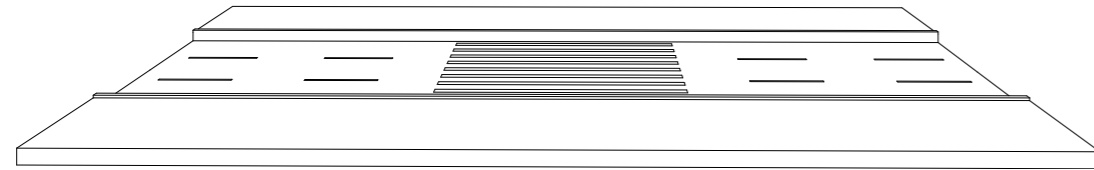
Dressing describes how the structure performs in the given context of the urban fragment. The fragment here is the building in which the current Estonian LGBT+ Association resides. This would act as the biggest queering intervention that is the starting point for all the other structures belonging to the House of Cuntstruction. The structure acts as the mother and all following structures as children of the House. The structure dresses the building and elevates it. The roof of the building is covered with a voluminous and wavy shape - like putting on an exaggerated wig. The facade is covered with a shape that follows the body of the building, emphasizing and revealing all the parts necessary. The structure then meets the ground with parts of it lifted and flowing along the ground, finally meeting the ground in an elegant and thin manner like a high heel meets the ground.



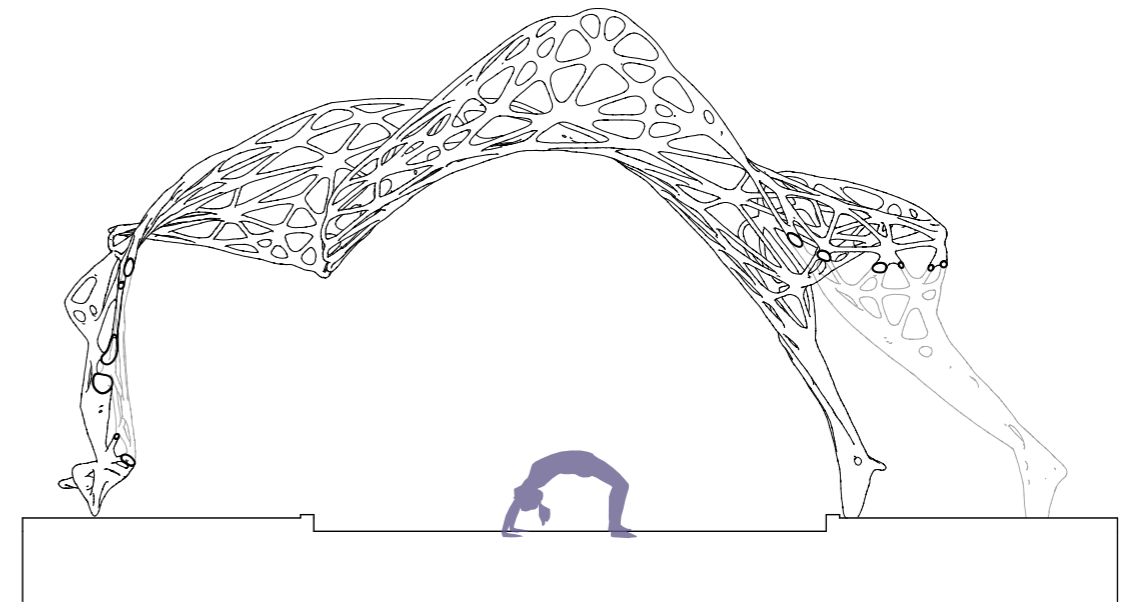
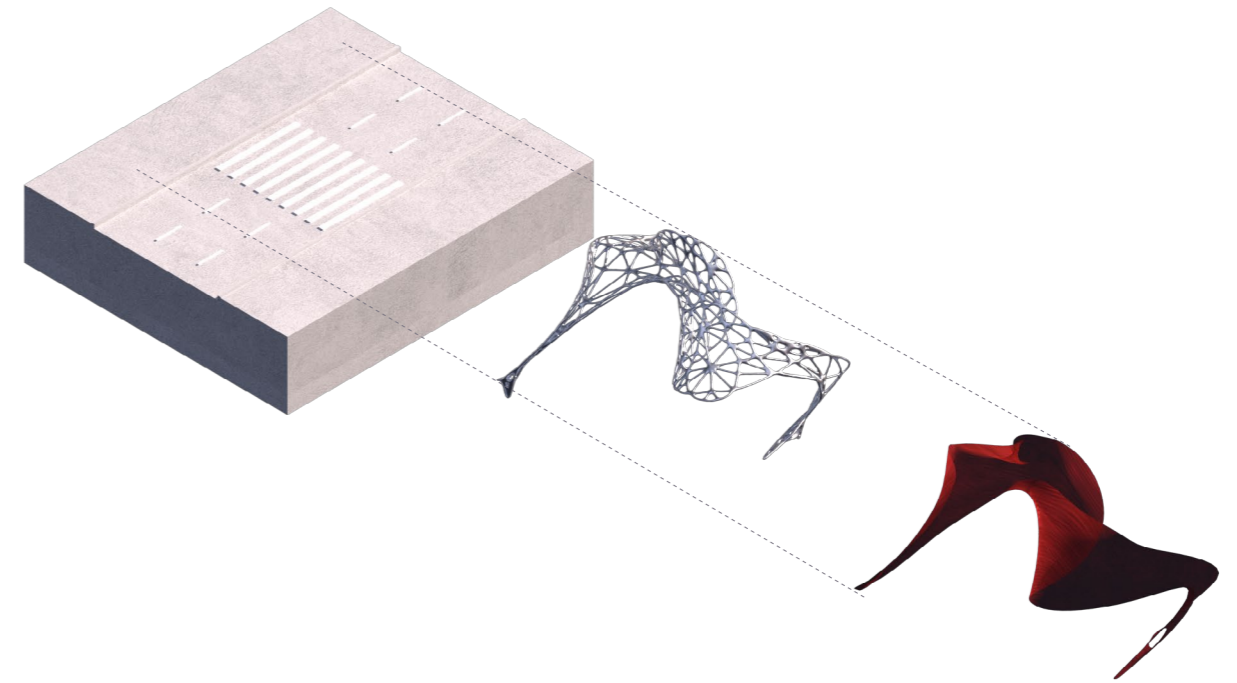


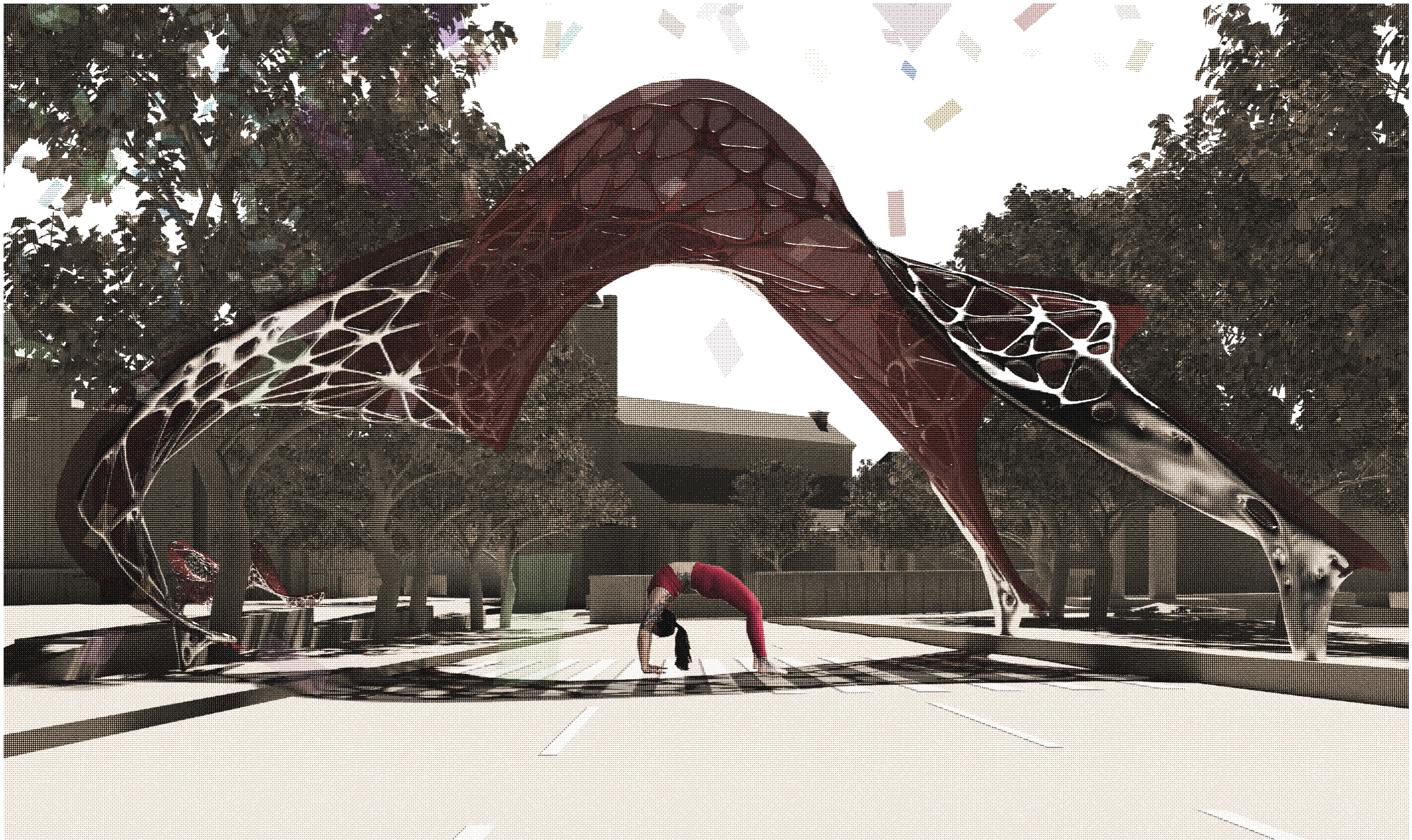


CATEGORY IS: BRIDGING



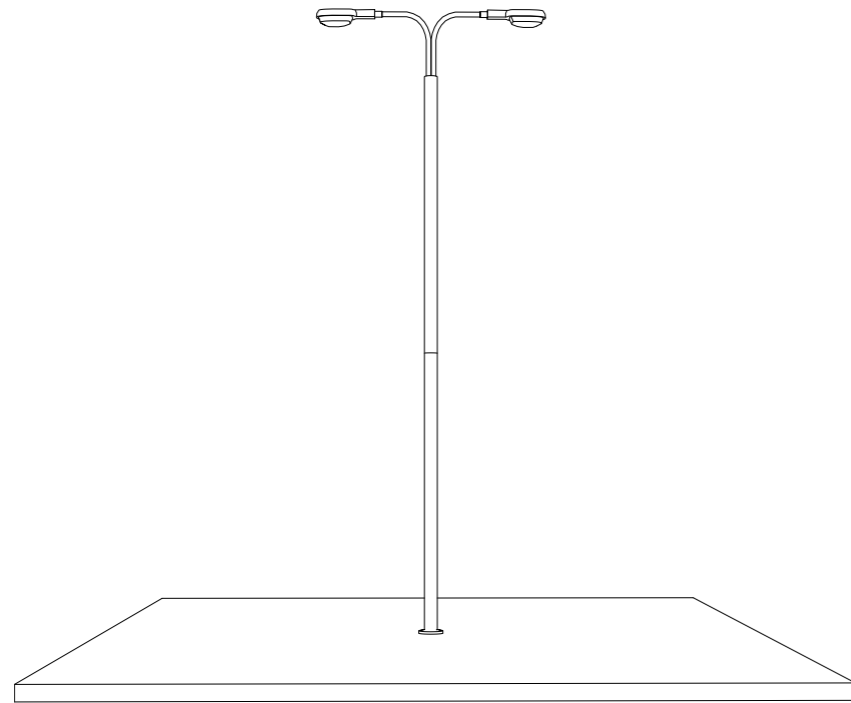
A car road stands between you and the bench under a tree that you want to reach. This structure bridges these gaps in the urban scene and elevates and prioritizes the free movement of bodies in the city. The structure arches over the car road and lands on the other side while twisting and spiralling in the air. The structure's position above the car road will cast a porous shadow on the road creating an environment where light and shadow dance on and above the ground as one crosses the road. The fabric's movement will play a role in how the light will pass through the structure.



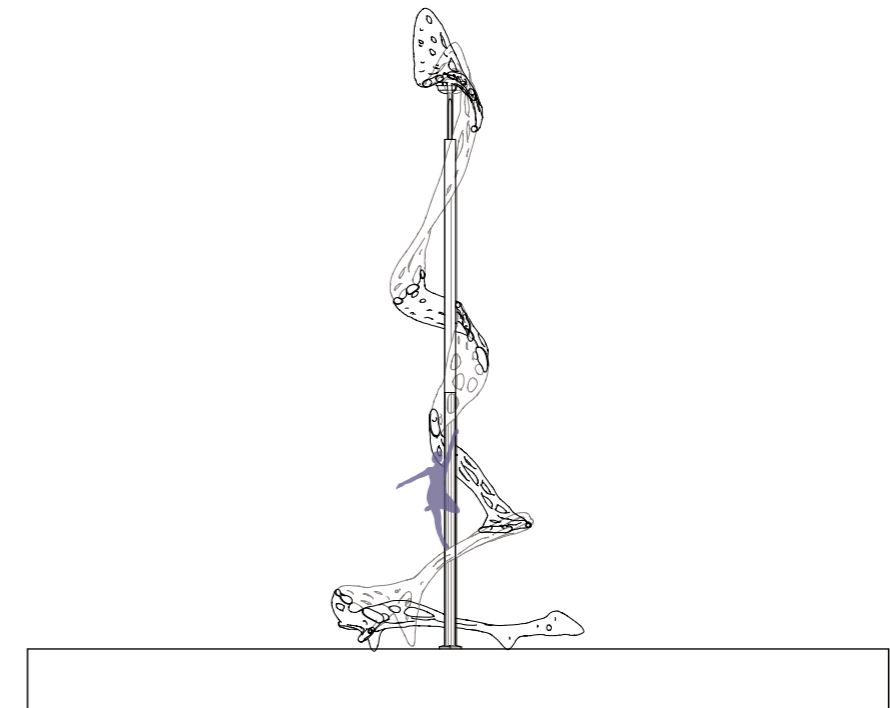
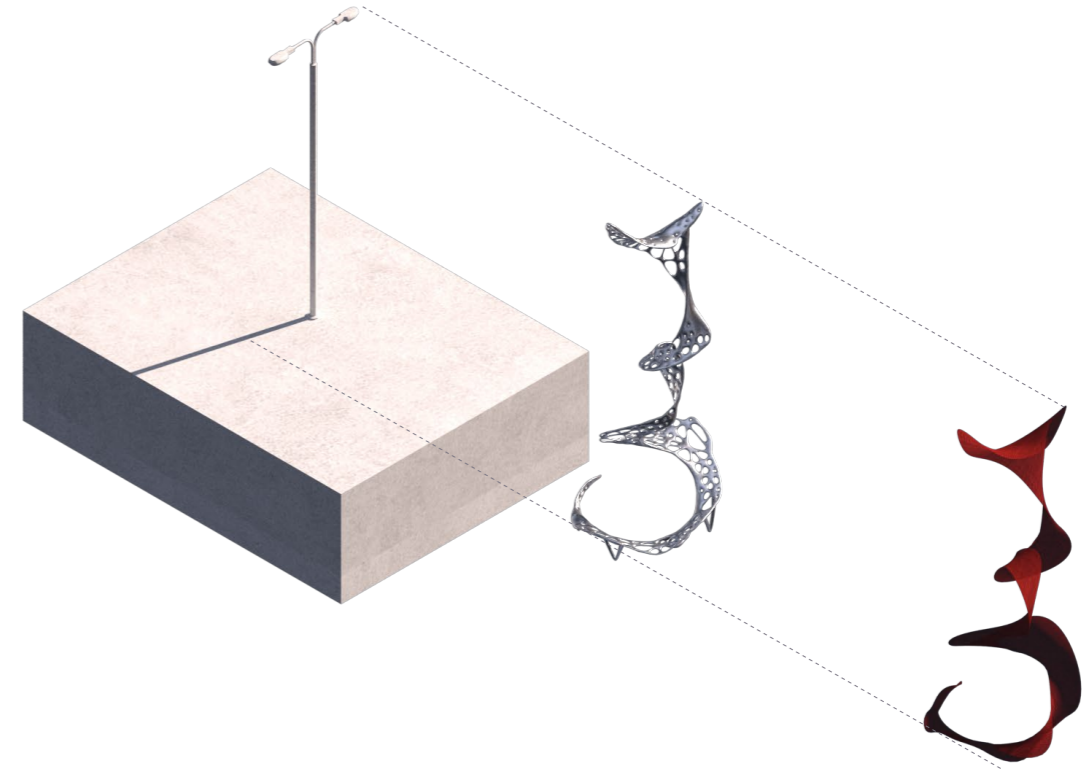




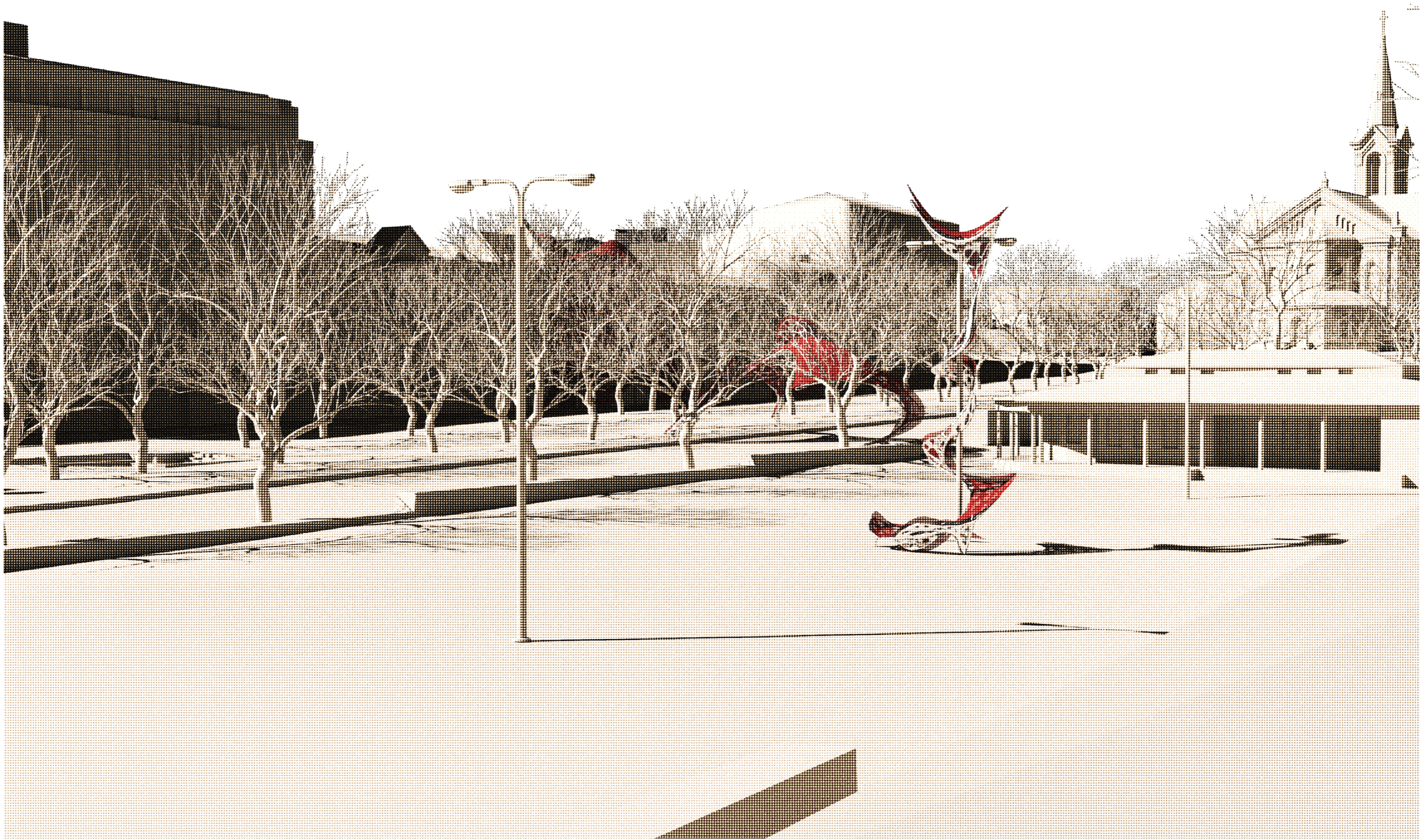
CATEGORY IS: RESTING



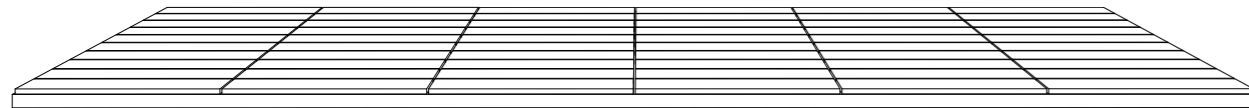
Dealing with a queer use of a lamp post. The structure eloquently wraps around the lamp post, elevating it but also giving it a new function - as the structure meets the ground, it flows along the same spiralling axis and lands on the ground in a pose that offers a surface for bodies to rest on.



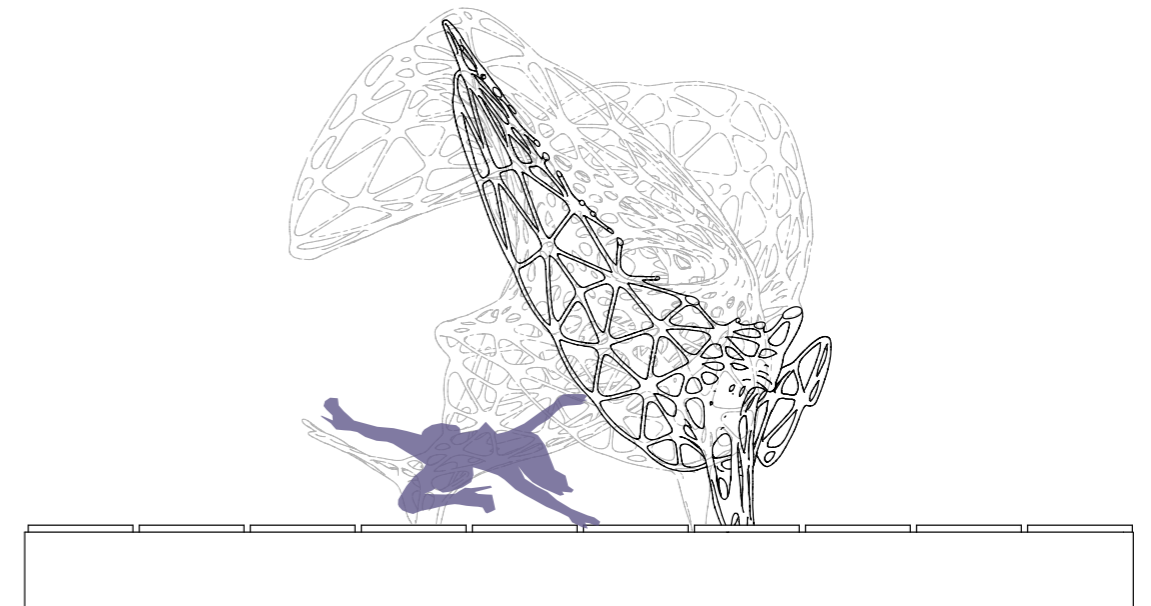
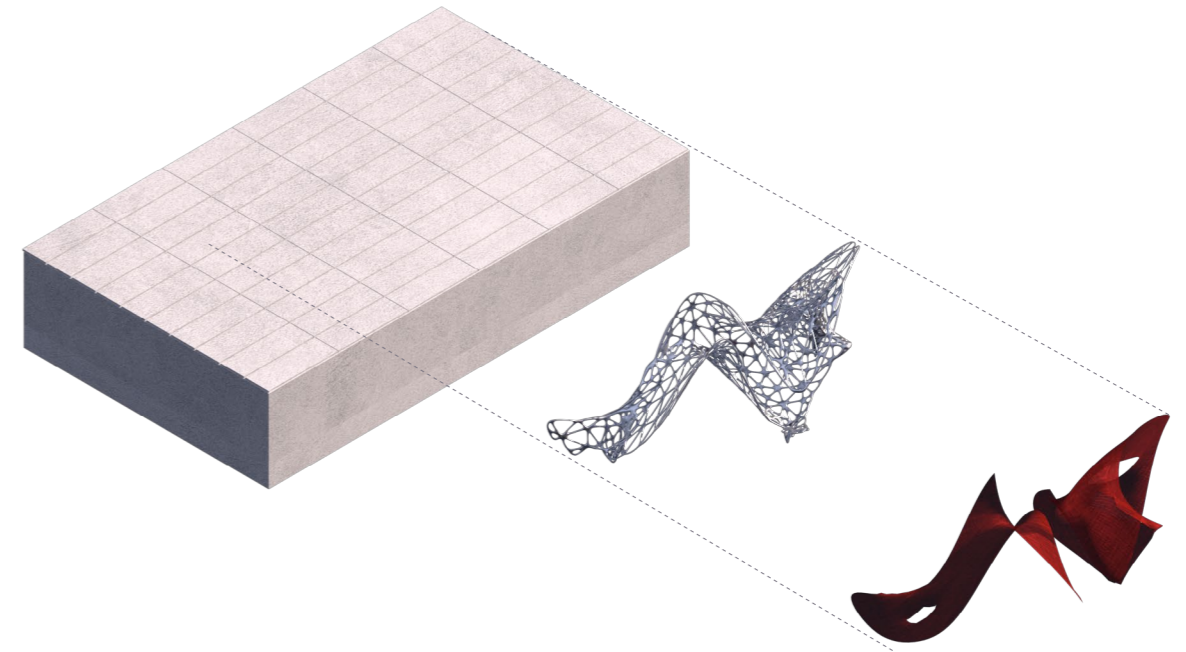




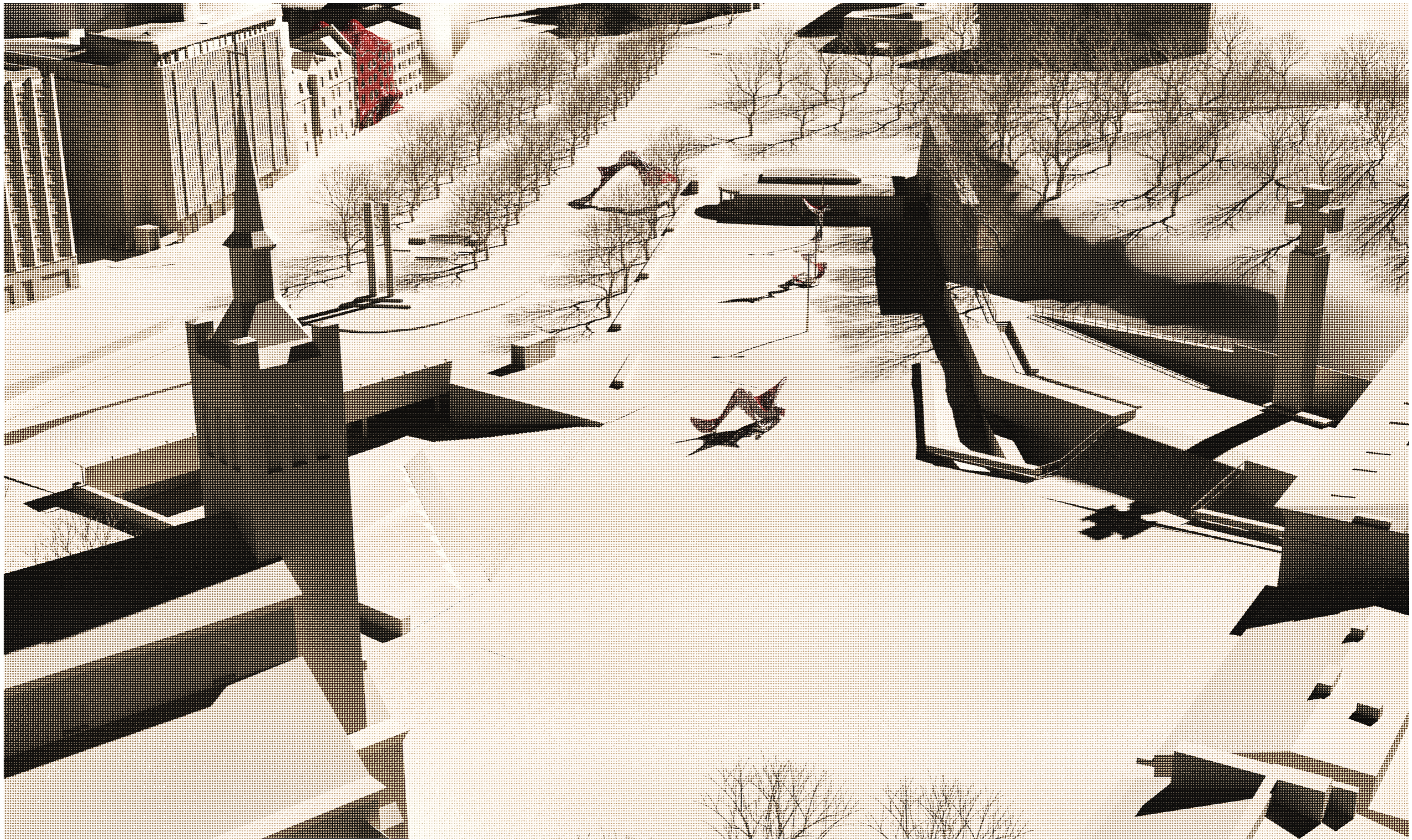
CATEGORY IS: GATHERING



The public square can be one of the most exposing spaces to be at. Butler's ideas on how collective actions gather the pavement and architecture are displayed through this structure (Butler, 2015, p. 71). As the structure stands and claims space, it steps into a dialogue with the pavement it stands on, the bodies that inhabit it and the surrounding views it now disrupts. The wavy, twisting shape of the body lifts up from one end and falls down from the other. It's performing a dance, vogue, and it invites people to dance with it.







FINAL REFLECTION

The common misconception is that queer architecture is exclusive to the LGBTQIA+ community. Breaking out of heteronormativity and heteropatriarchy both in the built environment and social environment benefits everybody as no one should be repressed into these frames.

I think the topic of this thesis already implies that there's no one way to do it or any finalized design for it. This thesis gathers and sets the frameworks and foundations for future projects on the topic. The thesis acts as a push for a discussion around the topic.

Architectural drag suggests that buildings shouldn't be seen as static structures. Buildings should be able to change their appearance and functions in time to relate to our needs and expressions. Cladding and queering existing buildings and building elements, contribute to a more sustainable approach to the lifespan of the architecture that we create as the environment we're surrounded by and interacting with is in dialogue with us and affects us deeply. With a mass-producing building practice, a lot of what's already built is not very appealing to look at and the spaces created are repeating and reproducing heteronormativity. I think this is an important aspect of architecture - instead of fast fashion, we should prefer tailor-made architecture.

Navigating this thesis journey was a rollercoaster and a lot of the decisions were made fast and on the go. As I read more theories and existing research, I applied and incorporated them into the project right away, which changed the trajectory of the thesis multiple times. This way of working and not having a clear vision in front of me was something I wasn't used to and made it difficult to trust the process. I learned much about my personal impatience and finally trusted the process and stuck with it.

This project can be taken forward by firstly diving deeper into the spatiality and function of these structures. What else can these structures start to perform, what spaces can the structures create and what other urban fragments could be queered? Secondly, the barrier between the indoor and outdoor spaces can be blurred and the structures could dress both. Thirdly a deeper focus on the structure, how it could be built, and what the technical aspects of it start to tell us.

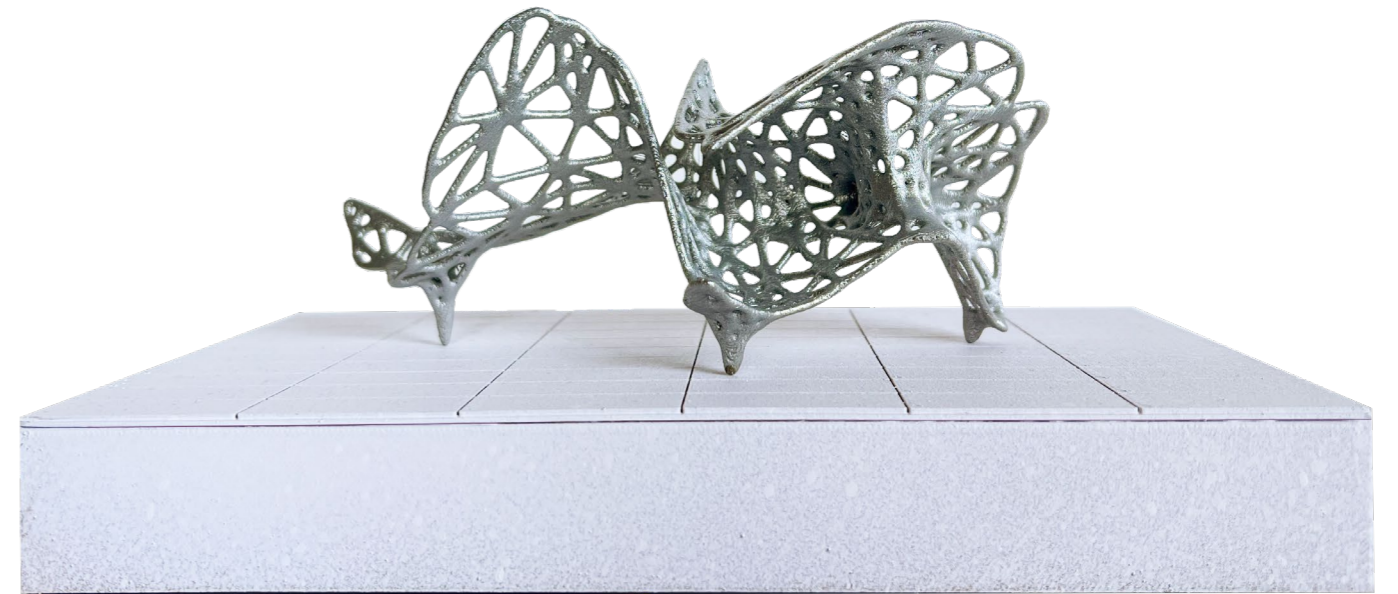
I think this thesis explores one way to approach architectural drag and the possibilities to take it further and explore it from different angles seem endless. With this exploration, I attend to the gaps in architectural design practice regarding inclusion and diversity. I investigate queer architecture, queering, and drag in architecture to challenge heteronormativity and search for queer structures that could perform drag. There is queer symbolism in this design exploration, and through different performances of the structure, it questions and challenges the already existing. Through this exploration, and through the act of dealing with the topic, I address these gaps and hopefully encourage more projects on the topic to be made.



Physical model of structure in the category: dressing (Author's own picture)



Physical model of structure in the category: bridging (Author's own picture)



Physical model of structure in the category: gathering (Author's own picture)



Physical model of structure in the category: resting (Author's own picture)

REFERENCES

Robinson, B. A. (2016). Heteronormativity and Homonormativity. *The Wiley Blackwell encyclopedia of gender and sexuality studies*, 1-3.

Catterall, P., & Azzouz, A. (2021). *Queering Public Space: Exploring the relationship between queer communities and public spaces*.

Reed, C. (1996). Imminent Domain: Queer Space in the Built Environment. *Art Journal* 55, no. 4, 64-70.

Ahmed, S. (2019). Conclusion. In *What's the Use?* (pp. 197-230). Duke University Press.

Bonnevier, H. (2007). *Behind Straight Curtains: Towards a queer feminist theory of architecture* (Doctoral dissertation, HTH).

Abrams, V., Arumetsa, S., Ird, H., Halkun, A., Hoppel, T., Marling, R., . . . Vinnal, H. (2022). Kalevi alt välja LGBT+ inimeste lugusid 19. ja 20. sajandi Eestist. *Eesti LGBT Ühing*.

Bonnevier, H. (2012). Dress-code: gender performance and misbehavior in the manor. *Gender, Place & Culture*, 707-729.

Halberstam, J. (2018). *Unbuilding Gender Trans* Anarchitectures In and Beyond the Work of Gordon Matta-Clark*. Places.

Shariatmadari, D. (2019, April 3). *Queer today, gone tomorrow: the fight to save LGBT nightlife*. Retrieved from *The Guardian*: <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2019/apr/03/queer-spaces-london-lost-gay-clubs-lgbt-nightlife-gentrification>

Queen, B. t. (2020, July 7). *Vanity Fair*. Retrieved from <https://www.vanityfair.com/video/watch/slang-school-bob-the-drag-queen-teaches-you-drag-slang>

Brennan, N., & Gudelunas, D. (2017). *RuPaul's Drag Race and the Shifting Visibility of Drag Culture*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

RuPaul. (1995). *Lettin it All Hang Out: An Autobiography*. Hyperion.

Butler, J. (1990). *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. Routledge.

Vega, N. A. (2022). *Spaces Beyond Ballroom: The impact of drag subculture on New York City's public space (1920-1990)*. Delft University of Technology.

Campbell, A. (2019). *Queer X Design: 50 Years of Signs, Symbols, Banners, Logos, and Graphic Art of LGBTQ*. New York: Black Dog & Leventhal Publishers.

Susman, T. (2000). The vogue of life: Fashion culture, identity, and the dance of survival in the gay balls. *disClosure: A Journal of Social Theory-University of Kentucky Libraries* 9.1, 15.

Wolde-Michael, T. (2019, December 13). Retrieved from Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture: <https://nmaahc.si.edu/explore/stories/brief-history-voguing>

Butler, J. (2015). *Bodies in Alliance and the Politics of the Street*. In *Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly*. Harvard University Press.

Tiidenberg, H., & Allaste, A.-A. (2020). LGBT activism in Estonia: Identities, enactment and perceptions of LGBT people. *Sexualities*, 23(3), 307-324.

Association, E. L. (2022). Retrieved from *lgbt.ee*: <https://www.lgbt.ee/baltic-pride>

Mack, D. (2023, May 15). Retrieved from *Rolling Stone*: <https://www.rollingstone.com/culture/culture-features/c-word-is-everywhere-lgbt-tucker-carlson-1234735324/>

Deutsche Welle. (2020, October 18). *Estonia president slams minister over homophobic comment*. Retrieved from *Deutsche Welle*: <https://www.dw.com/en/estonian-president-slams-interior-minister-over-homophobic-interview/a-55311378>

Friedman, A. T. (1998). *Shifting the Paradigm: Houses Built for Women*. *Design and Feminism: Re-visioning Spaces, Places, and Everyday Things*, 85.

