Mengmeng Li works

2007 - 2010

Dialogue and Growing

Roller Coaster

How landscape receives urbanity?

Summer Practice

Hand drawings

01 Dialogue and Growing

Course description

Experimental architectural design. Studio B3 intends through its teaching to further develop a deeper understanding of architectural space and its nature, and in the same manner investigate its capacity to transform within present changes and challenges.

TITLE:TOWARDS AN ARCHITECTURE_NATURE_CULTURE. IV. ARCHITECTURE AS INFRASTRUCTURE.

Task: A broader architectural discussion based on a new understanding of architecture as a spatial infrastructure. Through design work and text production shall the infrastructure confront and revitalize an existing urban space. A clearer understanding of the infrastructures capacity to overlap, complement and infiltrate the selected urban space is regarded the challenge within the course

Professor in charge: Professor Per Olaf Fjeld
Additional staff: Associate Professor Lisbeth Funck, Professor Rolf Gerstlauer
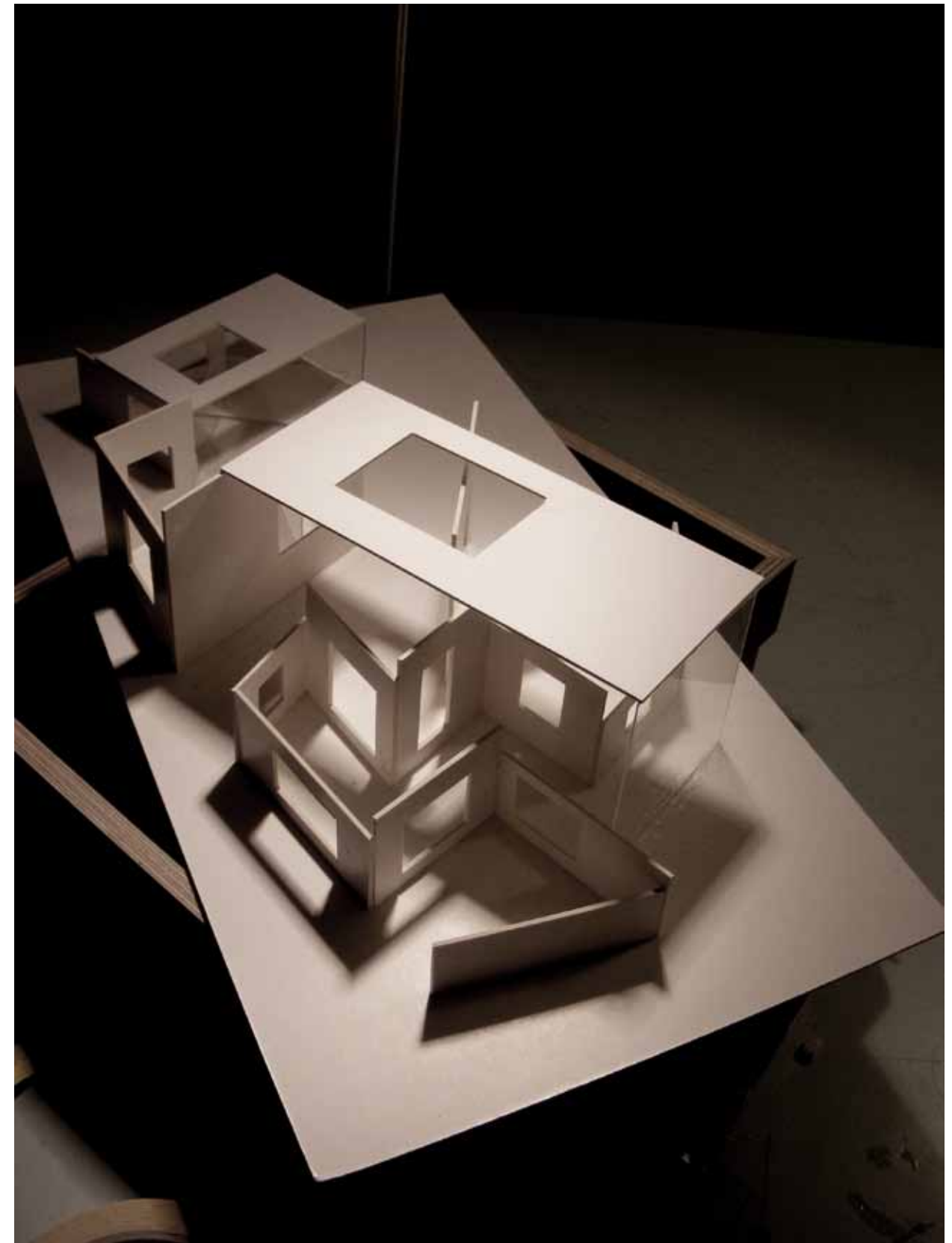
Urban Phenomenon : Dialogue

My urban phenomenon is 'dialogue'. I built some models which can show the concept of "dialogue". The first group of models was coming from very rational thinking. I started with the questions like "what is dialogue?" "Who makes dialogues?" "What are the reasons of dialogue?" There are some different types of dialogue, depending on situations and the one who participates. A dialogue can be made between two objects or more; also can just be inside one object. The information that starts from one part not all can reach the other; some of them stop on the way, or go too far. Dialogue will never be perfect. Because of nothing is simple and immutable. Sometimes, the dialogue is not controlled by the objects that made it. Just like, you see several dialogues which have no relation between each other, but when you turn your point, they become all related to another object, or appear a link between them.

Dialogues have different purpose and different attitudes. What most of dialogues have in common is the result, to bring about change, to mix two objects. To make a conversation, in another word, is to exchange ideas. Two different objects touch each other in some extent, one quotes or disagree another. A dialogue will push them into another stage.

The wall brings the space one more layer, the dialogue between both sides transpires through windows. At here, wall and window are the solid materialization of the dialogue. A continued wall, enclose a series of spaces. Here happen many dialogues: One space with another; one with others; open with narrow. A series of repeating spaces, each space has a lot of dialogues with other spaces. In another word, one dialogue joins in other dialogues.


1
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2

1 ,2 : Study models

2008, AUTUMN
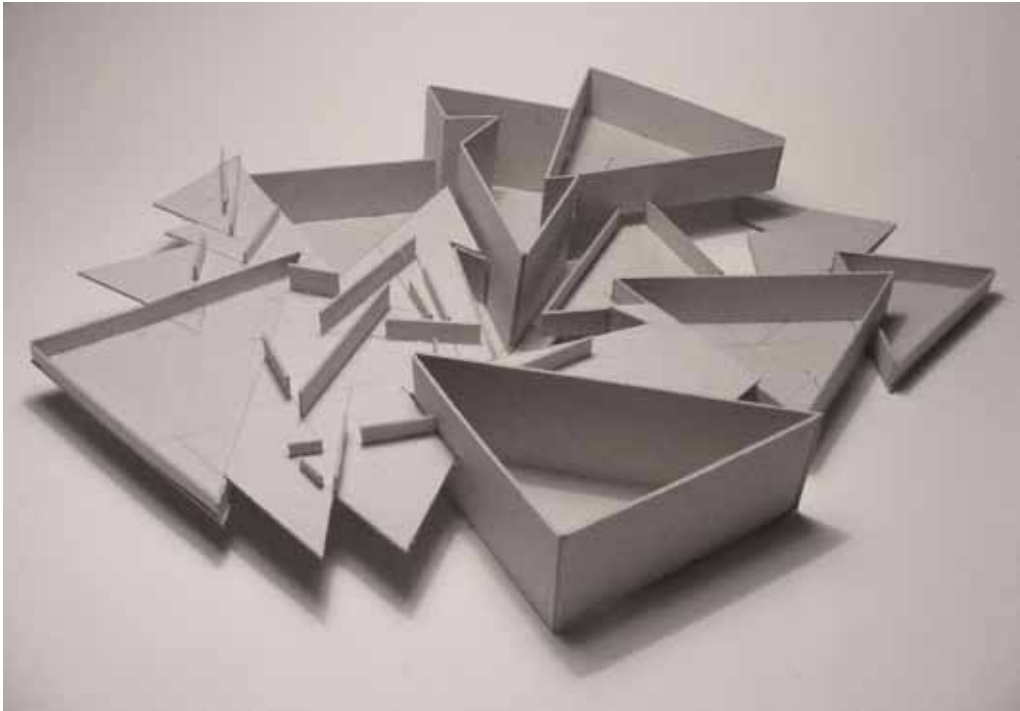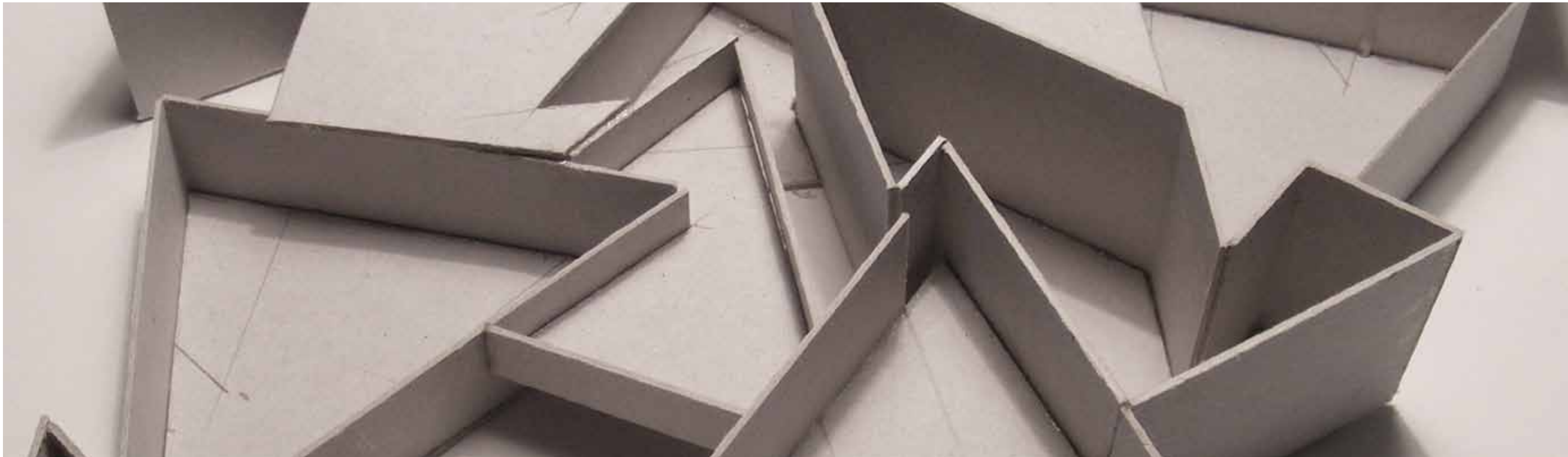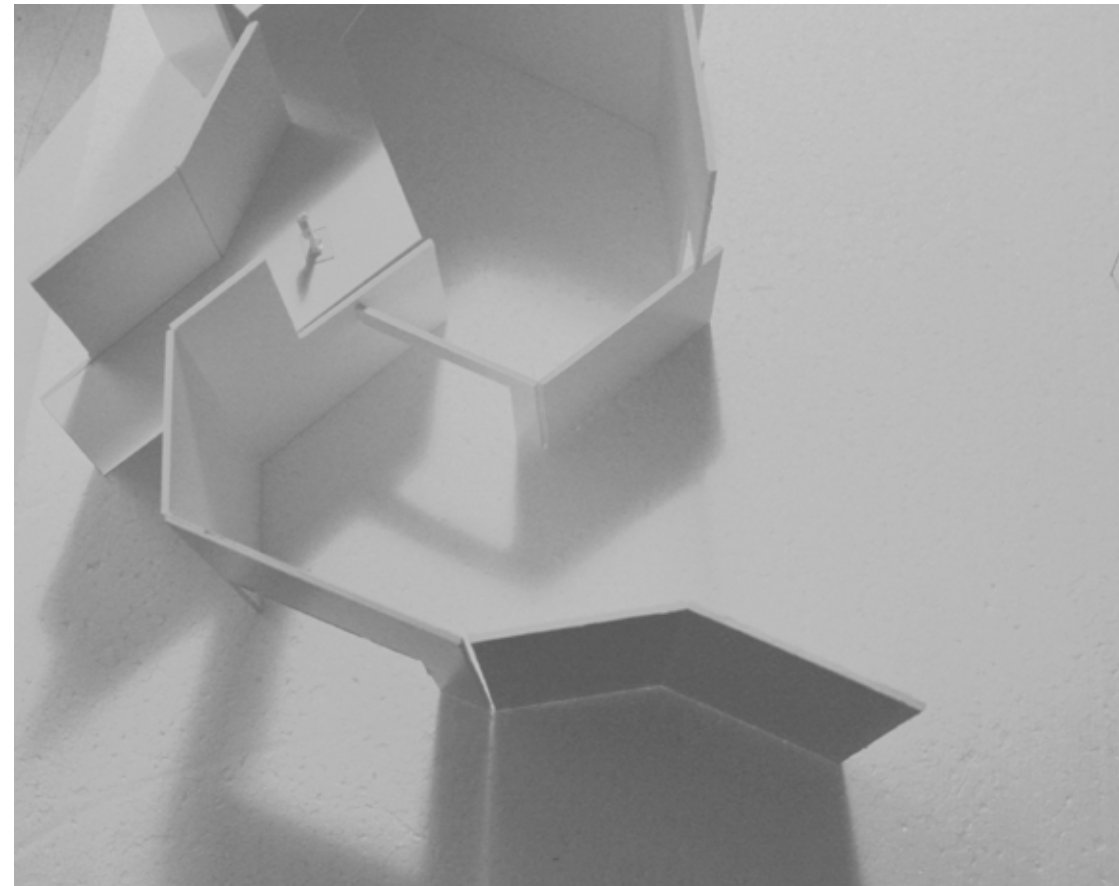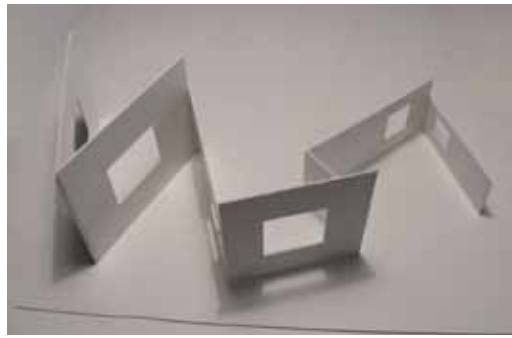
Nature Phenomenon : Growing

Growing is my nature phenomenon. It's a process from birth to death. Growing also means changing. From sunrise to set, nature gives us different view showing the process of growing and the meaning of life. The sky, the rain, the sunlight, the wind, all these phenomenons create a stage. Because of this stage, building itself is not changing, but the spaces are changing.
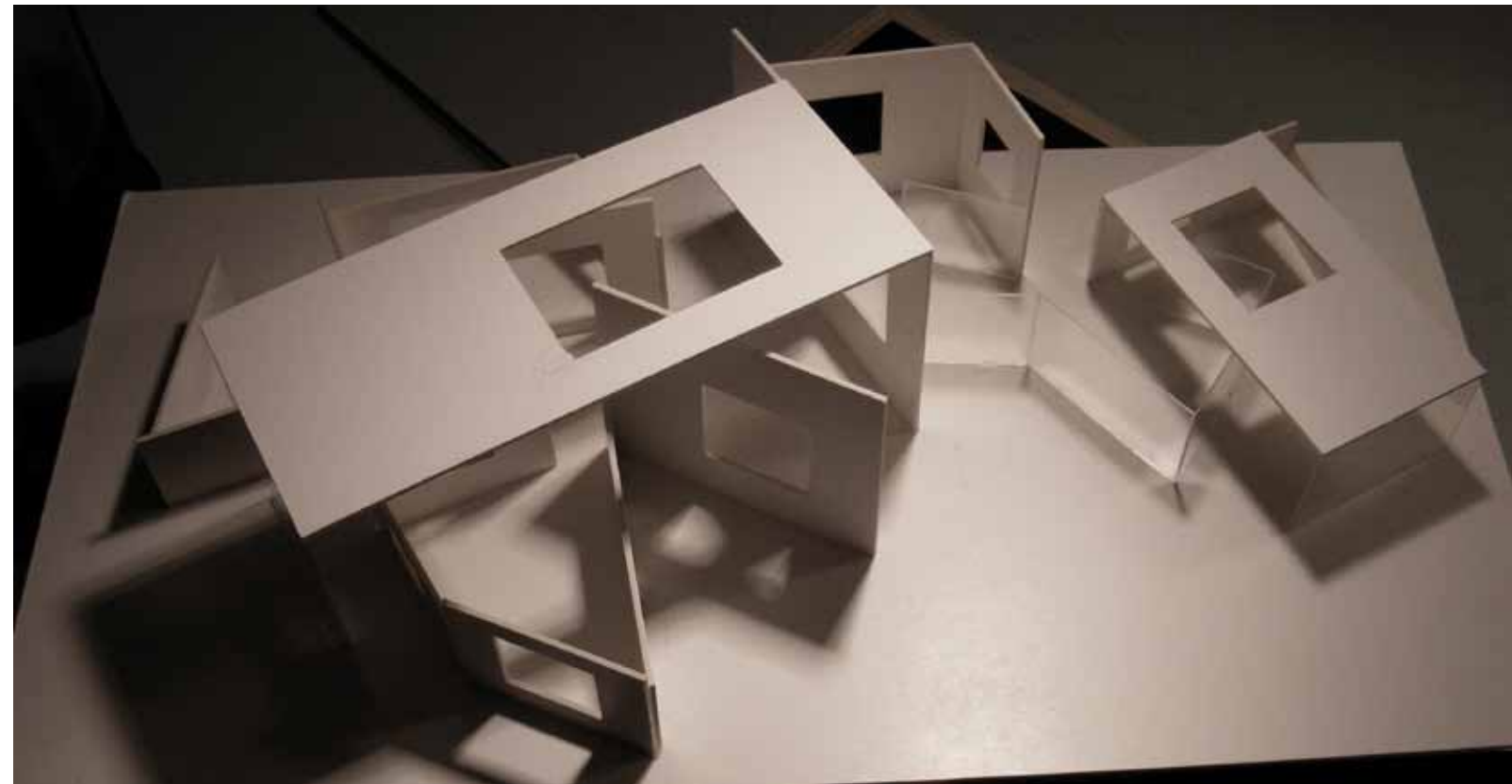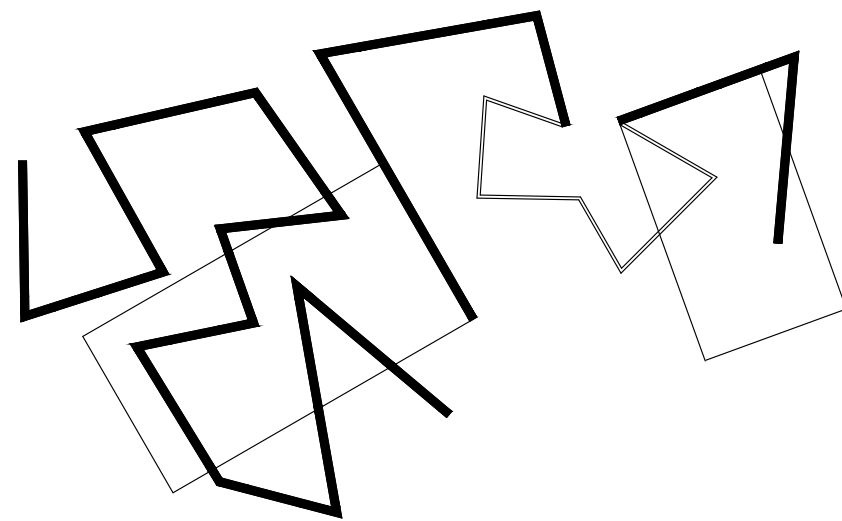

1	2	3
5	4	

1: A series of walls
2: The process of dialogue
3: A test model
4: Develop on the 1st model
5: Plan of model 4

One idea of the project is to make a place, in which people, architecture and nature have dialogues:

Dialogue between people and architecture
Dialogue between architecture and nature
Dialogue between people and nature

'Nature' is the most important aspact for the design. That is the reason why the building exists, and that is also the difference between buildings and sculptures.There are many examples from Le Corbusier's,siza ,Utzon and other architects showing an attitude of respecting nature.
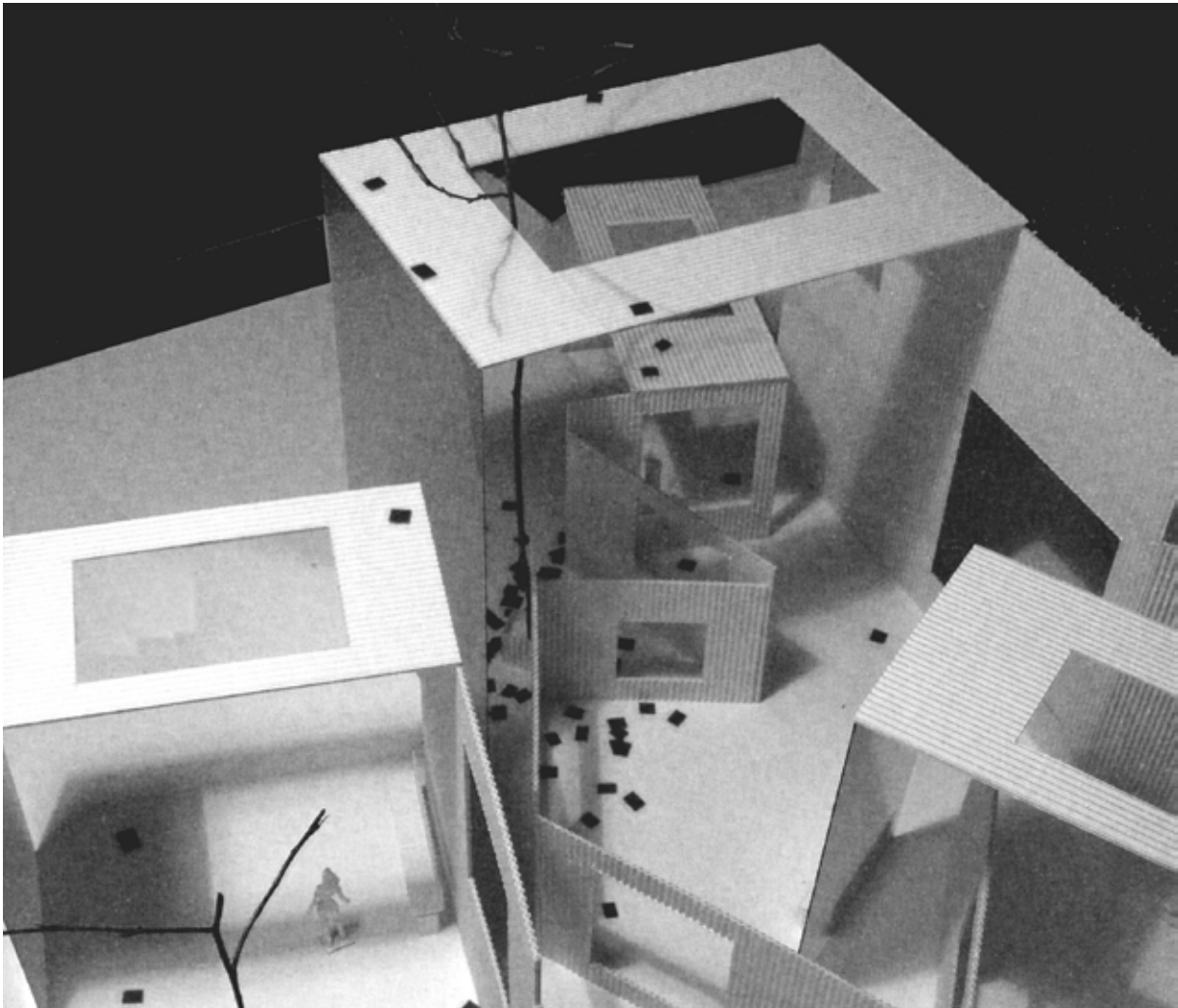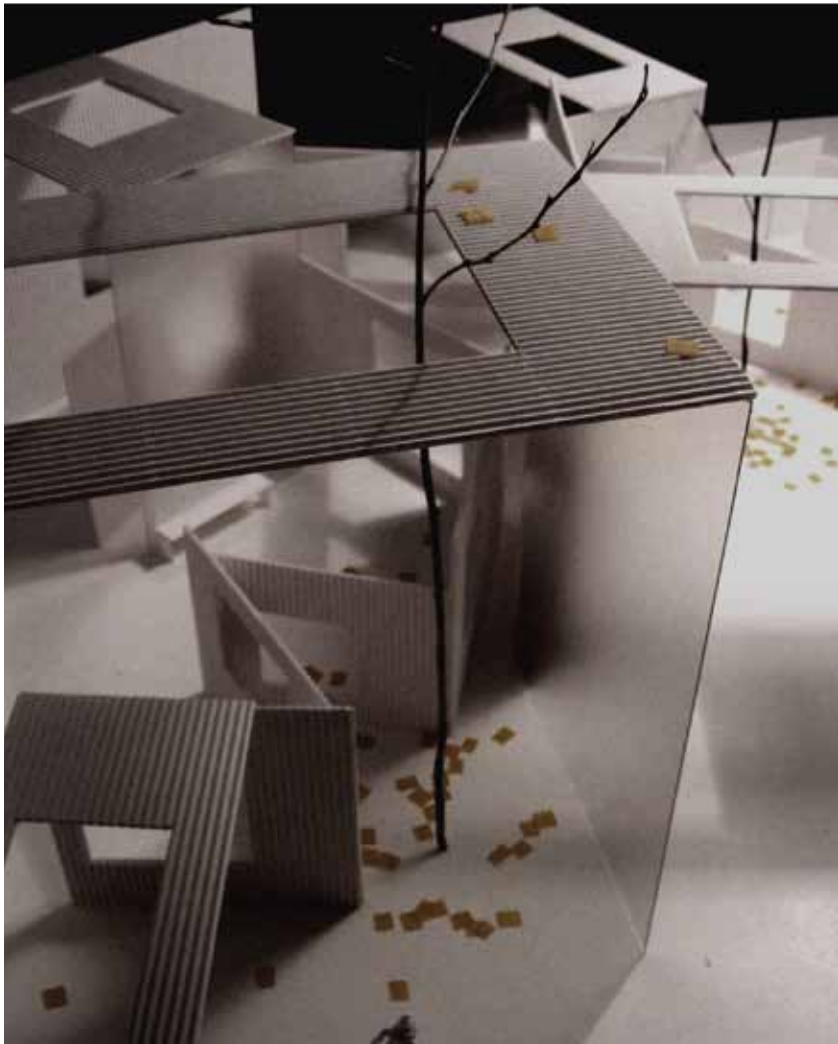
"Frank Lloyd Wright: wood, of course is the most friendly of all materials, nothing is so friendly to man as the tree. And the tree is wood. Wood has certain qualities- certain characteristics- and if you use it according to those characteristics and are especially in love with them yourself, you'll come out with a wooden structure that really is beautiful. "

1

_____

2

1,2: Model details
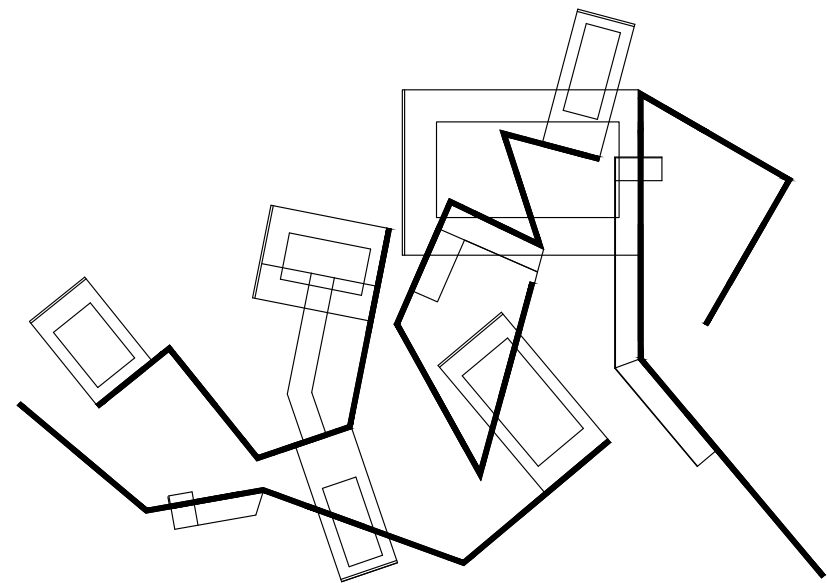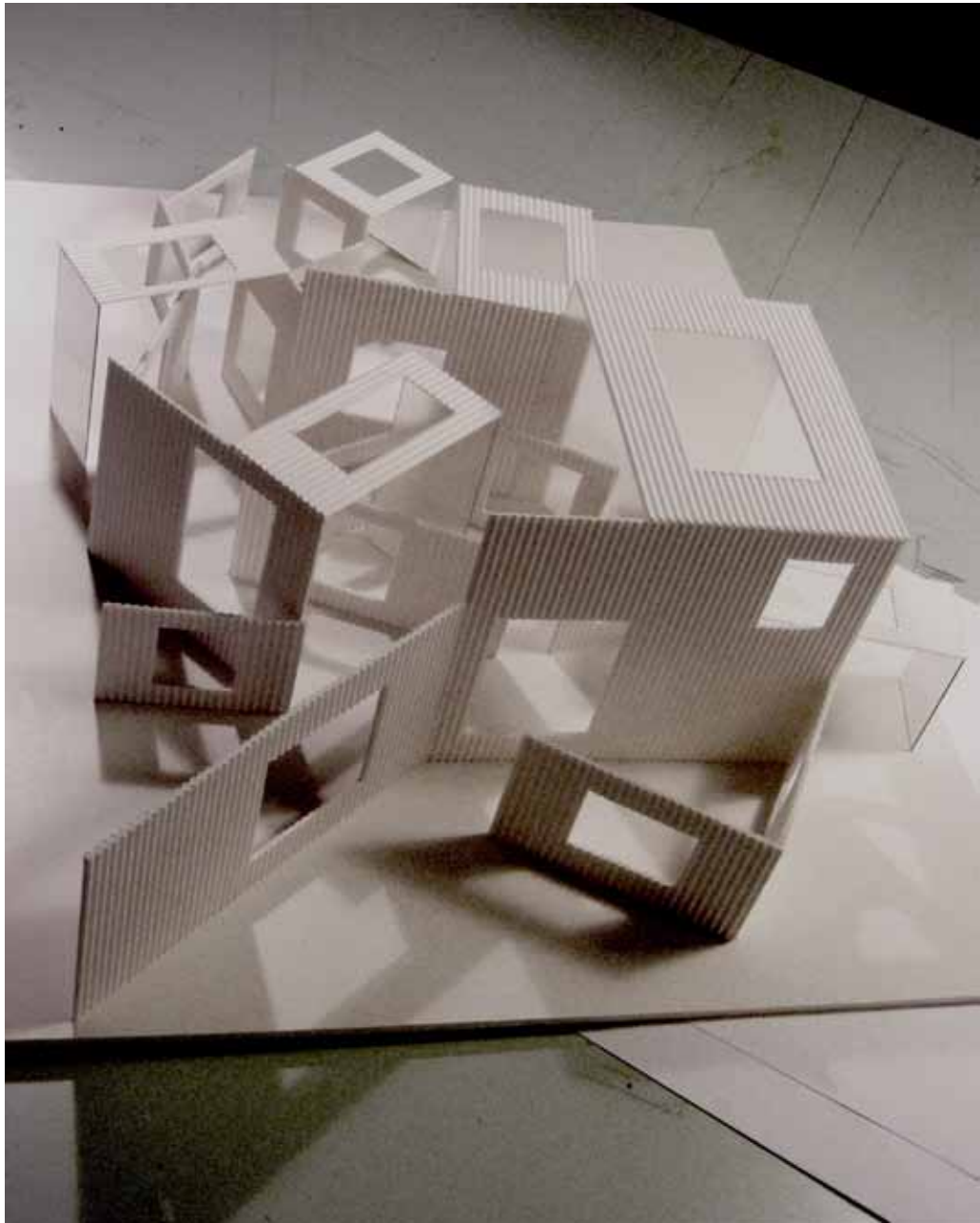
1	2
	3
	4

1: Model
2: Placed in landscape
3: Plan
4: Sections

2008, AUTUMN

02   Roller coaster

Two clues

The whole story began on a sunny summer day when a friend got some half price tickets to Tusenfryd and we decided to go there together. The entrance of the park was an escalator lifting people from the ticket control at a low level to an open ground. The Roller Coaster structure twists around the escalator on half way. The combination of these two technical structures forms a strong image, dropping a hint of the oncoming world. When one of my friends went for one attraction, the rest of us waited at an empty ground between the roller coaster and the bumper cars. We had a good location to watch the train passing and hear the noises and screams, at the same time eat ice cream. After the trip I had the roller coaster on my mind for several days, most images were about the places I looked at the attractions.

Another clue is from the trip to New York, where I visited a Starbuck café in an afternoon. The café had a staircase from the open downstairs to the 2nd floor; the spaces were quite narrow and crowd on both two floors; the main interior materials were dark and soft; outside was bright and sunny, a lovely day. The cafe was almost full, only one seat left when I arrived and I need to share the sofa with another two people. Luckily, the sofa was placed by the back wall on the 2nd floor which allowed me to watch the café in a full view. It was quite interested me at that time. A normal condition, some normal people and a cup of coffee gave me a comfortable afternoon with a satisfied mood. Actually, the café had reminded me of the places I had experienced the roller coaster.

The commons and differences between the two clues

The experiences of the roller coaster and café interested me to curies about the energy of the spaces in those conditions. Roller coaster consists of three parts: a structure holding the cycle pathway; a train running through; and some people watching or participating, they are spectators and riders. It occurs strong events in some special places. People wouldn't ignore it when the train running by, although the structure is not always physically a part of those places, sometimes it looks so weak that the structure almost doesn't touch the place, but the influences directly rush in when the meeting moments come. Everything in the place is set up for that event, including topography and the built. Roller Coaster and this surrounding landscape together create a complex environmental. Every section is telling one story. Roller coaster link all the meeting places, by different degree of touching, like an underneath power driving all the things forward. For some of those places, this link might be the only relation among them.

In the New York's café, there were some interesting communications between the people in different 'rooms' as I observed, a guy passing by, attracted the attention of an old lady sitting by the window lifting her head and looking toward outside; the guy sitting by the railing at 2nd floor, looking down to the 1st floor while he had his breaks from working, he might also look at the 1st floor lady. The event in the café was no longer rushing into the room and then rush out as roller coaster, but had been instead by filling into the whole space and staying. People observed the surroundings and enjoyed their coffee at the same time.
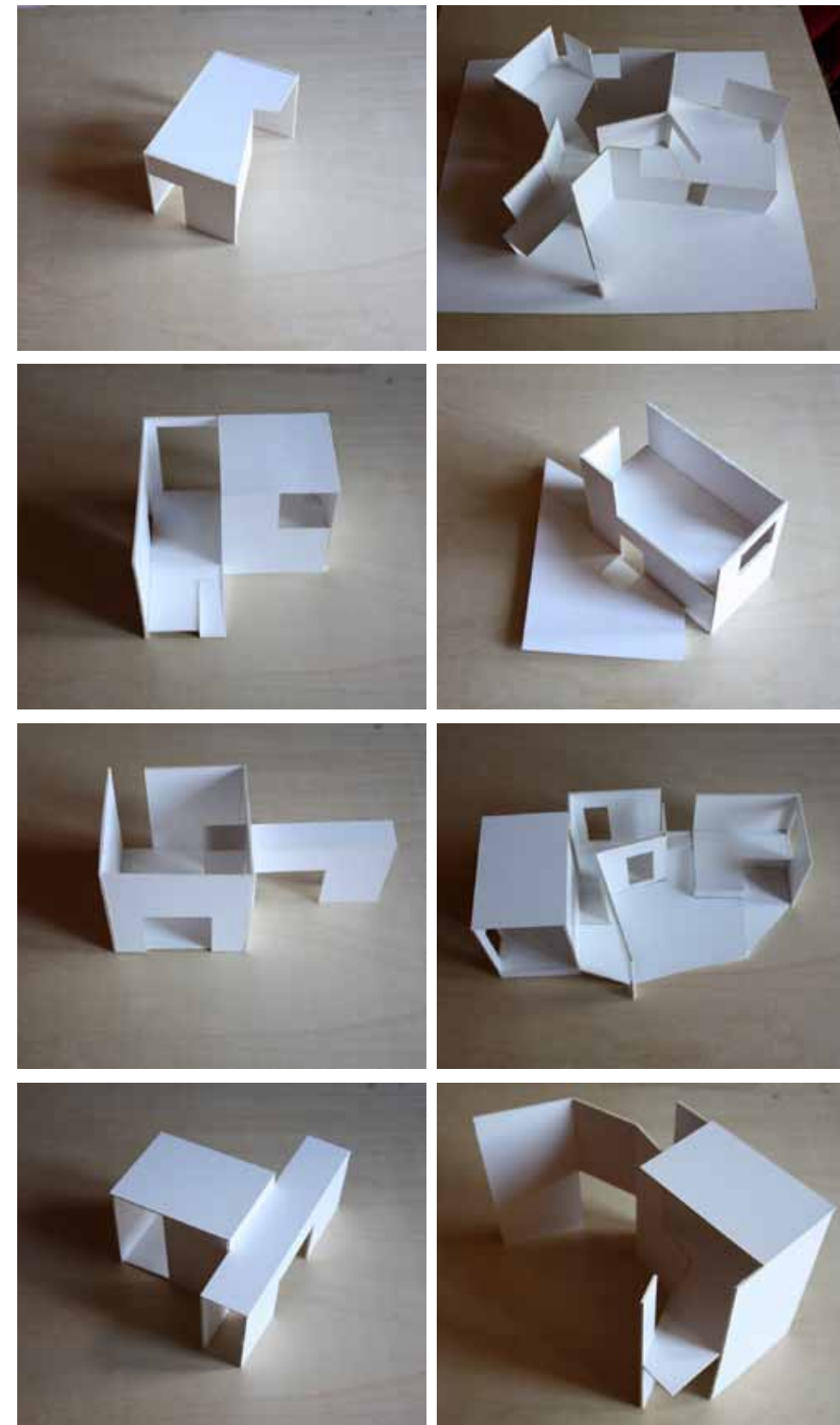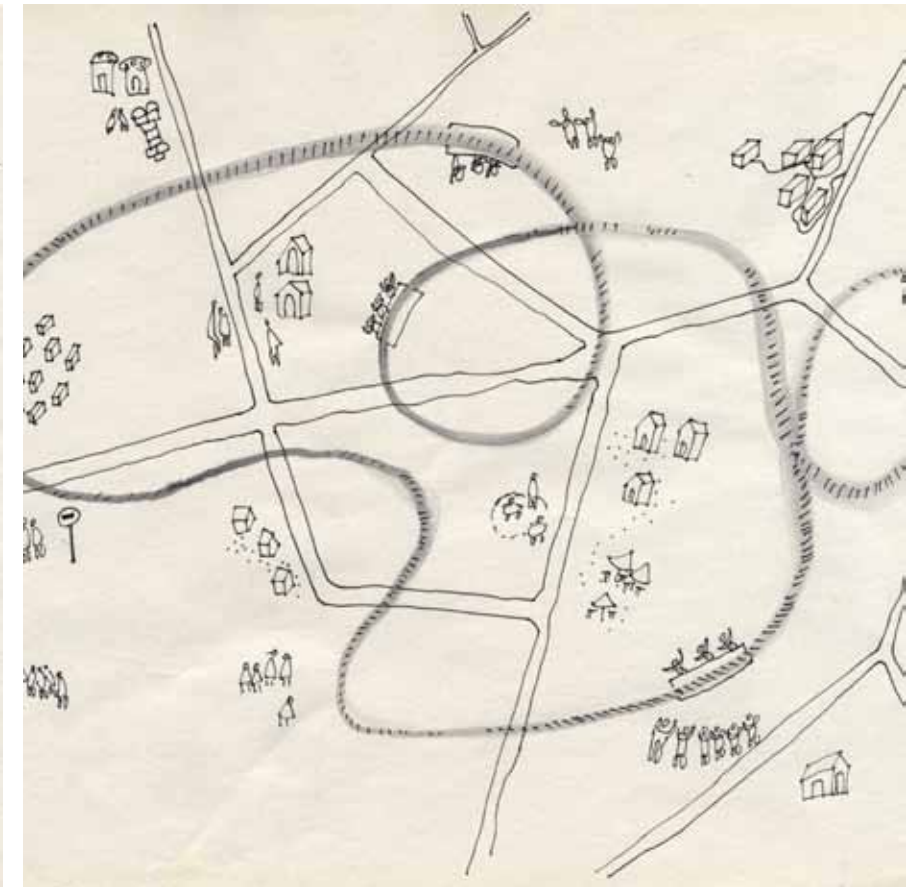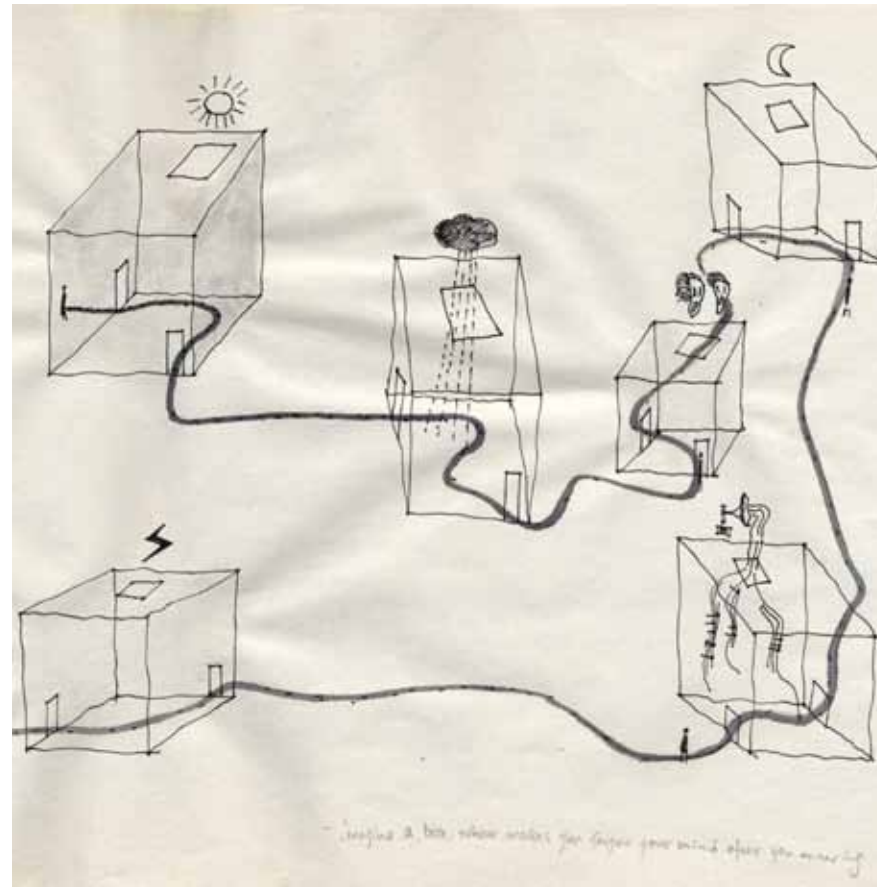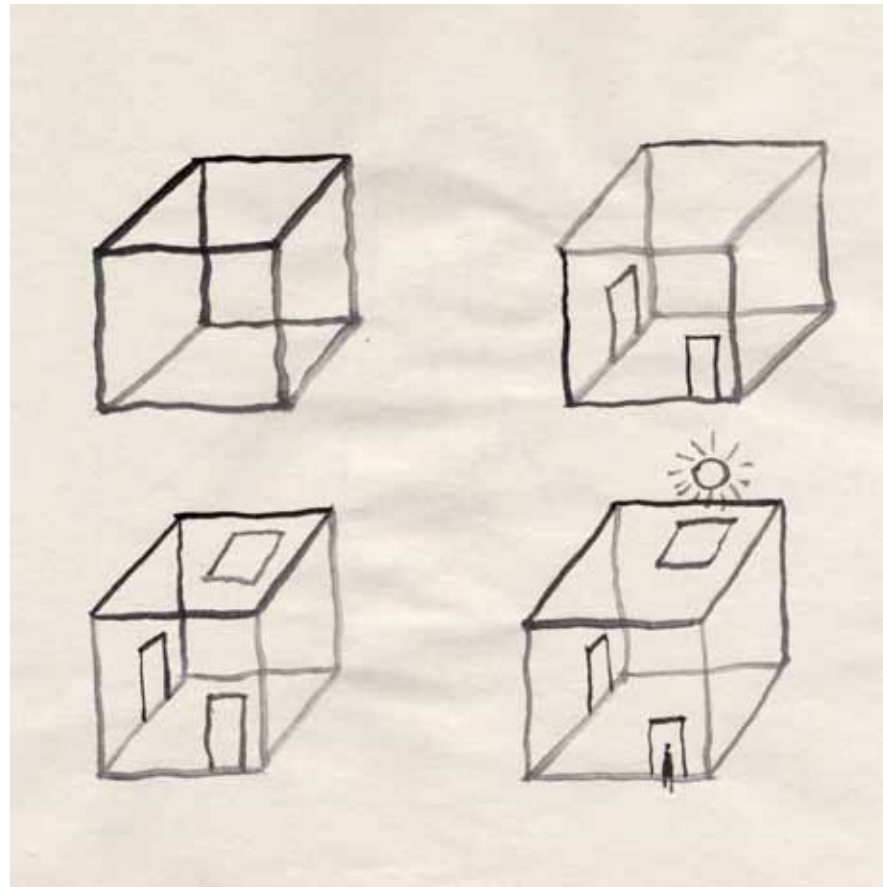
The First Clue: A Study of Roller Coaster

Participants: Rider and Spectator

Roller Coaster is a strong controller in the whole scene. Once the game switch on, no matter where you are, your experiences are certain. I found that Roller Coaster is just like maximum power architecture. The function is to challenge physical and psychological limitations of human body. It brings meetings of different groups. But these different groups are gathering for the same reason, high point and fast speed. When people decide to enter the game, their own personality become hiding behind, instead is joining into a "group" which sharing the same common emotion. The movement is simple, people wait and ride and go away. The riding experiences are slightly differences from people to people, because the track is designed by accurate calculation.

Riders are the ones sitting in the car. Here don't have individual but only group. Another group is spectators. Spectator is the one decide not to take the game. They stand around the structure, watching. In one hand, they are excited by the game, but they can also easily ignore it in another hand. For riders, the game takes longer time than real; this experience comes from the cheating of brain. For spectators the experience for the same time is different, they may think it is shorter than real, because of the speed. For riders, the time in the car is the main part of the game; for spectators, the game is a series of recurring with measured regularity movement. Roller Coaster and this surrounding landscape together create a complex environmental. Every section is telling one story. All the stories are same underneath. From the point of spectator, the meet with rider is an interruption. This interruption draws a mark on spectator's track.

Project Title : roller coaster
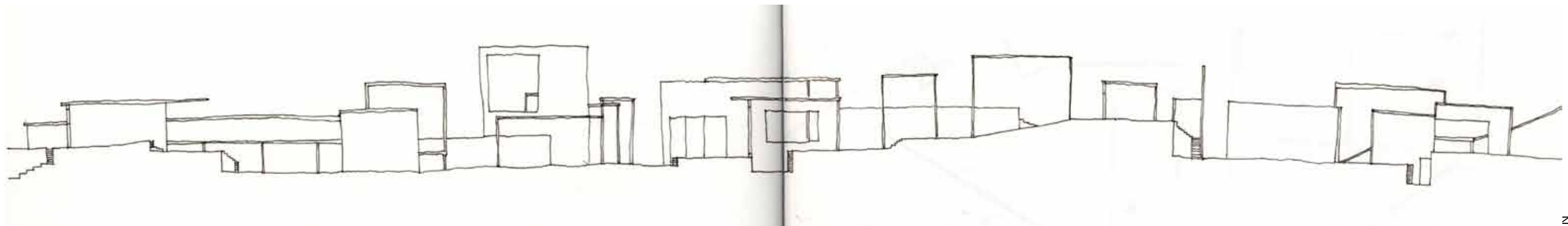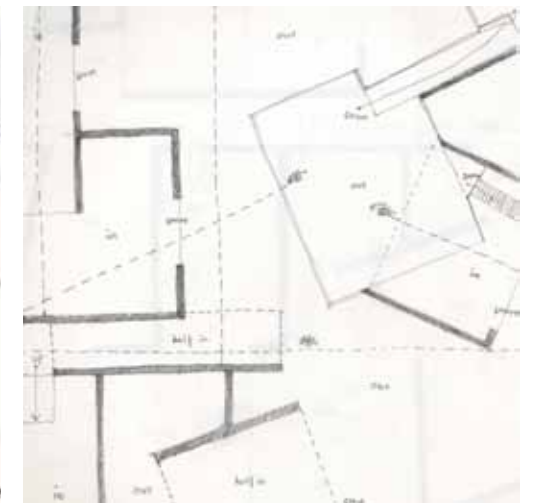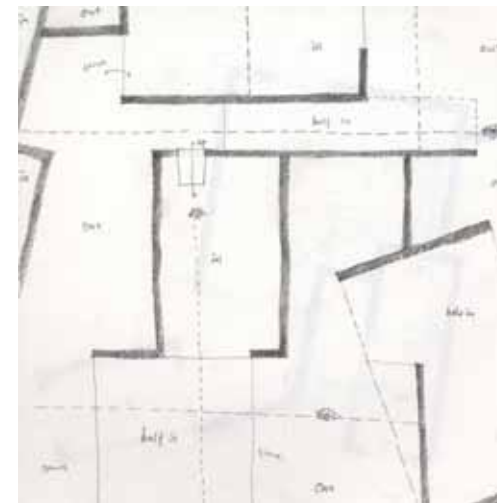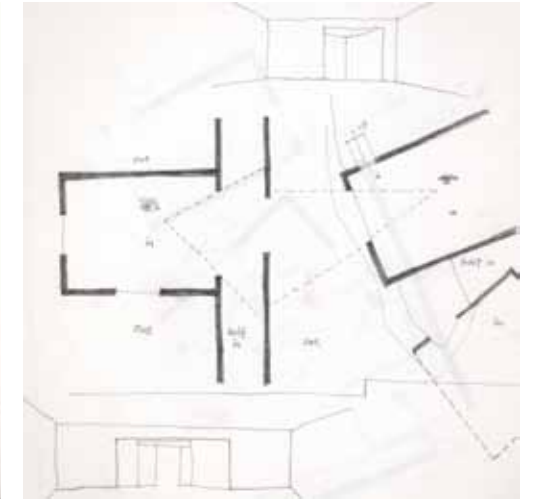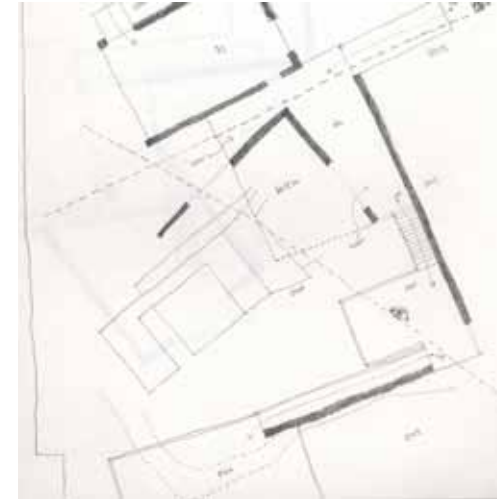
The Second Clue: A Study of Starbuck café
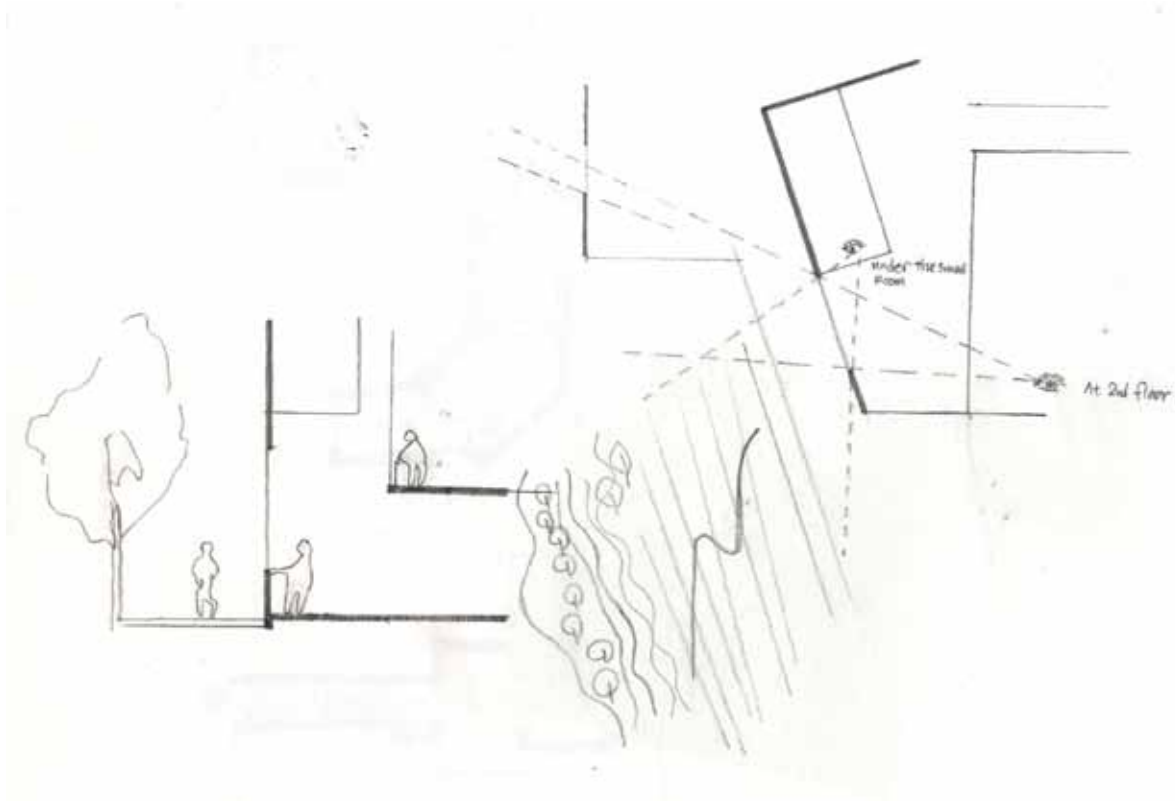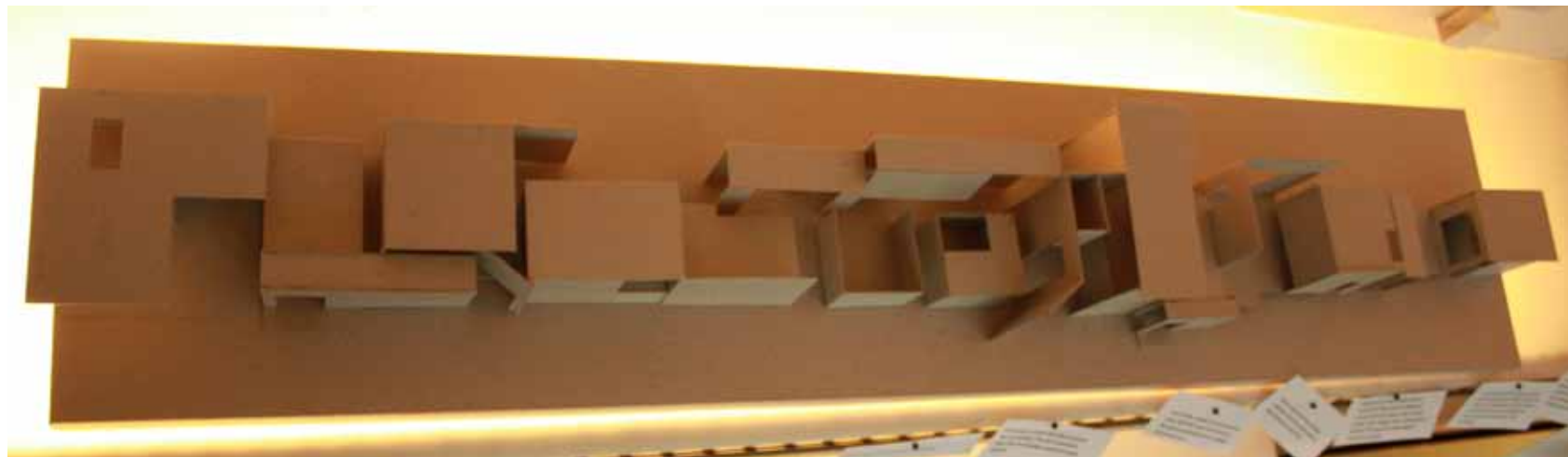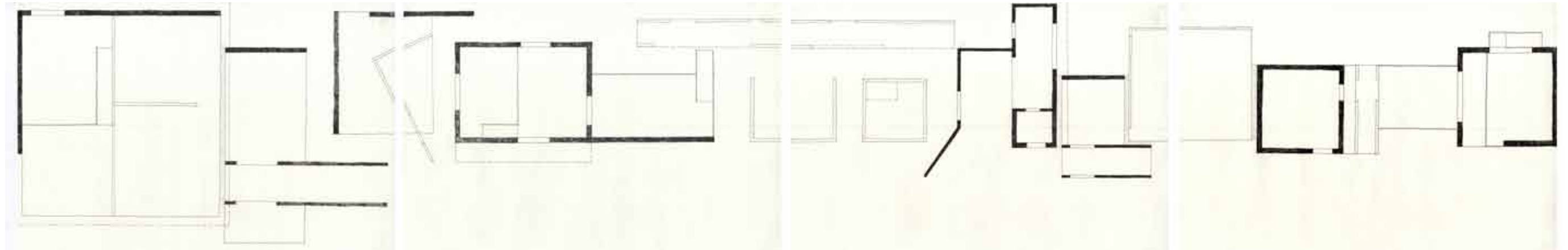
Participants: Me and others

This was a normal condition, a staircase from open downstairs to 2nd floor, the place was narrow and crowd, the main interior color was dark, outside was bright and sunny. The cafe was quite full, only one seat left and I need to share the sofa with the other two. The sofa was placed by the back wall which allowed me to watch the café in a full view.
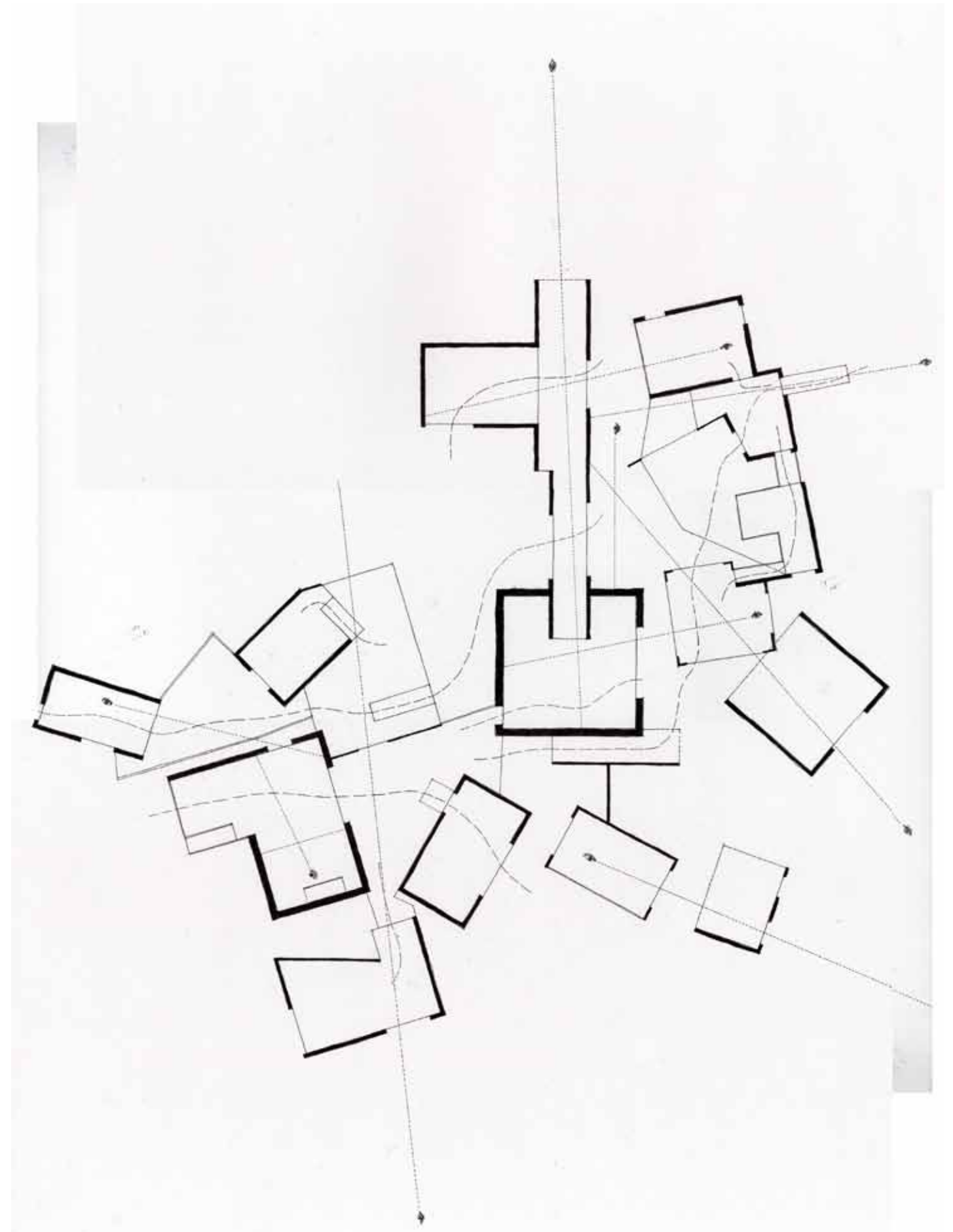
Infrastructure

My experiences of the Roller coaster and café gave me an image of the space that may be the one I have been seeking for. The space contents more possibilities than its own function, preparing for the event which may hide under the surface that also needs to be dug out; the existing of one space is depending on other spaces and it's context. One space will never isolated by its own; all those spaces do not have to relate functionally, the connections could be mostly built by nature, even there are walls blocking the view, by looking at the shadows or feeling the wind one can still imagine the other spaces. The relationship among all the spaces is contenting a sort of infrastructure idea.

Works

To test the possibilities of this infrastructure idea, I made two plans. In the first plan, Landscape was a part of the consideration during the design. I want to let the building fix the topography, use the natural up and down creating the different high for the rooms. There is always an outdoor area between the two rooms. Thus to reach another room, one has to go from inside to outside and then go inside again. This out-door area in-between area holds the idea of relating spaces by nature. People could walk into the building from many locations. I think this could make more complex and intricate interruption situation for people.

In the second plan, I tried to make all the spaces functional independent. They are re-lated by infrastructure, same as the first plan. People in one room cannot directly go to another room; even it's possible for them to see it. I want to use different materials and different levels form a extend space. The building is facing east and west, during the day, sun will bring dramatic shadows to the building.

03 Moraine city How landscape receives urbanity?

Course description

The design studio will be organized around three invited guest professors: Alan Berger from HarvardUniversity's Graduate School of Design (GSD), Gilles Vexlard from Ecole Nationale Supérieure du Paysage in Versilles, and Alex Wall from Karl-sruheUniversity in Germany.

The studio will emphasise a discourse on the Norwegian landscape with basis in both urbanism and landscape architecture. The site for the design research is the region of Stavanger, a region that today has the largest urban growth in Norway, beside Oslo. The region constitutes a urban territory that is marked by rural and urban areas, urban enclaves, remnants of agricultural land and transformed industrial sites. Participants will through the semester develop urban strategies and design proposals that explore the landscape as possible structuring device for a new urbanized territory. The studio will arrange a study trip to Paris to visit relevant projects in the cross-discipline between urbanism and landscape.

TITLE: RESEARCH ON THE NORWEGIAN LANDSCAPE: DESIGN STRATEGIES FOR THE URBAN TERRITORY OF STAVANGER

Professor in charge : Head of institute Dag Tvilde
Additional staff Guest professor : Alan Berger, guest professor Gilles Vexlard and guest professor Alex Wall. Teachers Marius Grønning, Espen Hauglin and Ellen Husaas
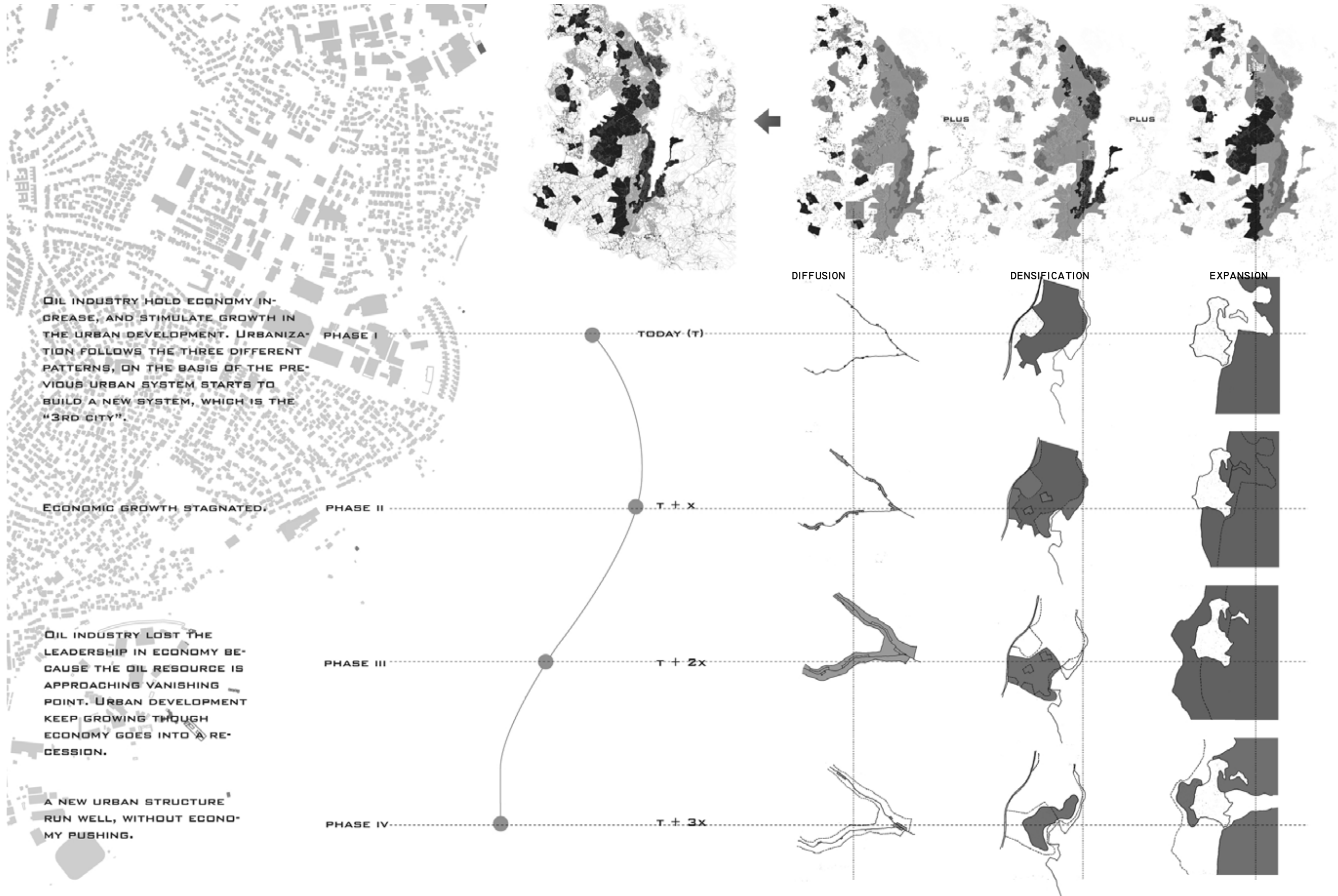

2008, SPRING

1st CITY

Moraine city

Look at the urbanity in the region as a result of different cycles of urbanization. I observe 1st system is a city rooted in the harbor in the beginning of the fjord; 2nd system is heavy industry structure rooted in the meeting point of main road and the bottom of fjord, the development happened between 1st center and 2nd center, which is the "band city". There has been increasing development outside of the band city. New cycle of urbanization not strictly located within the band city. That is I call the third city. How can we structure the 3rd city in a way that is well rooted in the landscape?

Urbanization is developed by oil economy. Future of 3rd city is depends on the future of oil economy. The diagram shows the relation between urbanization and economy growth. There are two possibilities of the development of economy, growth and decline.

It is in the phase of economic growth like now that one can make the interventions that will organize the shrinking city. It is now that one can determine the structure of a smaller city.
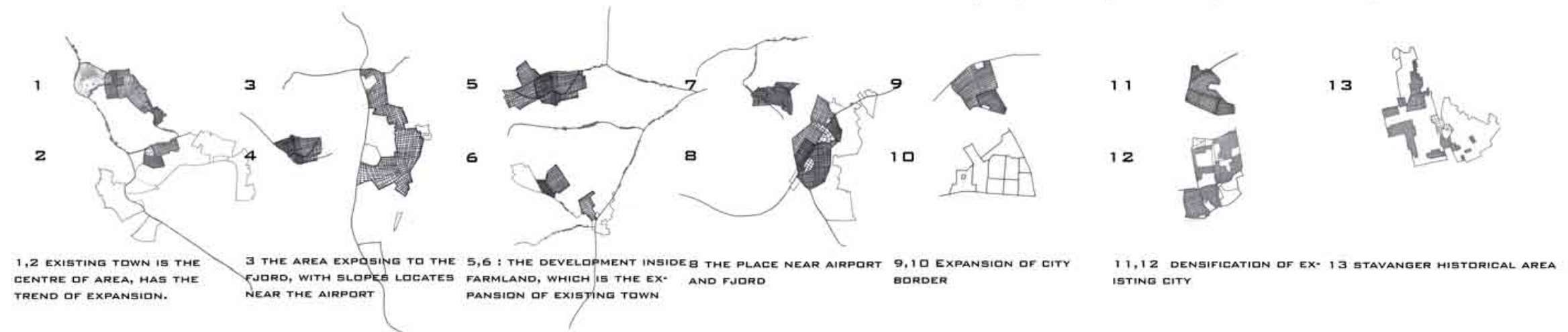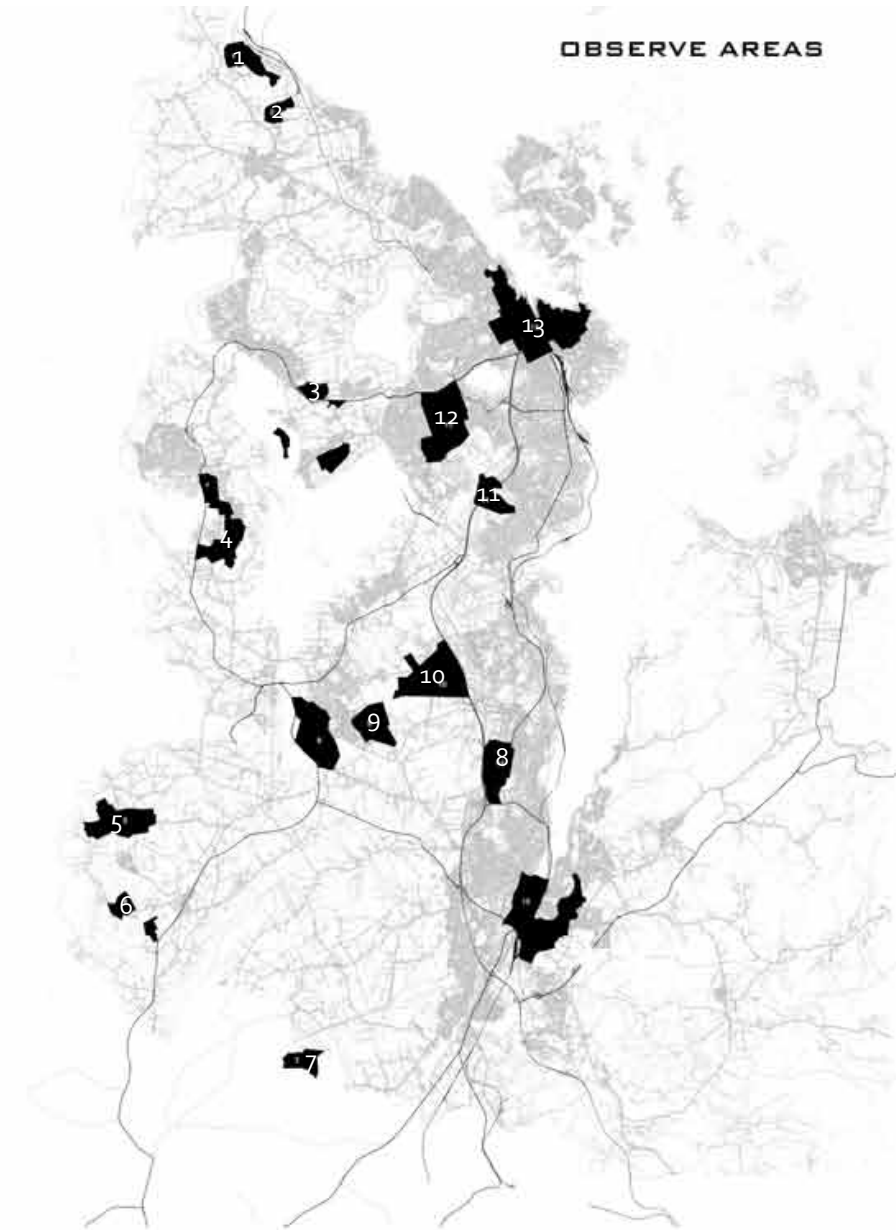

1860   1945   2007

THE THIRD CITY IS A PROCESS WHICH GOES ALONG WITH ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, USE LANDSCAPE AS INNER LOGIC, TO PREPARE AN URBAN STRUCTURE THAT CAN HOLD A COMPLETE SYSTEM WHEN ECONOMY ENTERS INTO A RECESSION.

2ND CITY

PROJECT TITLE : Moraine city ,HOW LANDSCAPE RECEIVES URBANITY?

DIFFUSION   DENSIFICATION   EXPANSION

OIL INDUSTRY HOLD ECONOMY IN-
CREASE, AND STIMULATE GROWTH IN
THE URBAN DEVELOPMENT. URBANIZA-   PHASE I
TION FOLLOWS THE THREE DIFFERENT
PATTERNS, ON THE BASIS OF THE PRE-
VIOUS URBAN SYSTEM STARTS TO
BUILD A NEW SYSTEM, WHICH IS THE
"3RD CITY".

TODAY (T)

ECONOMIC GROWTH STAGNATED.   PHASE II

T + x

OIL INDUSTRY LOST THE
LEADERSHIP IN ECONOMY BE-
CAUSE THE OIL RESOURCE IS
APPROACHING VANISHING   PHASE III
POINT. URBAN DEVELOPMENT
KEEP GROWING THOUGH
ECONOMY GOES INTO A RE-
CESSION.

T + 2x

A NEW URBAN STRUCTURE
RUN WELL, WITHOUT ECONO-   PHASE IV
MY PUSHING.

T + 3x

TYPES   FIGURES   NATURE   SETTLEMENT   OBSERVE AREAS

COASTAL SLOPES

WOODED SLOPES WITH ESTATE LAND

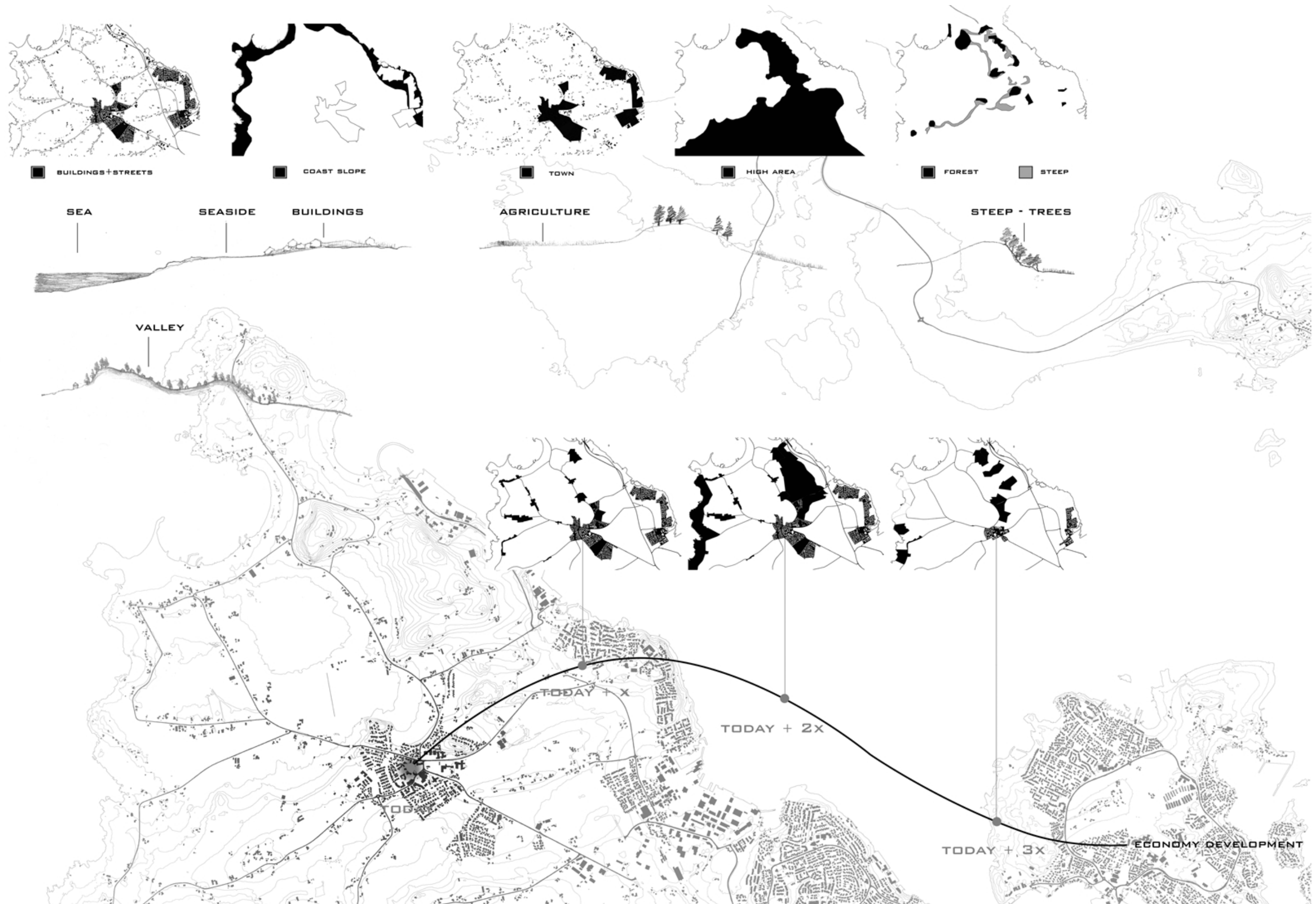FARMLAND WITH WOODLAND AND WETLANDS

ROLLING OPEN FARMLAND

RIVER VALLEYS

PRINCIPLE:

1   RETAIN THE FARMLAND
2   AVOID BUILDING AT EXPOSED AREAS.
3   KEEP WOODEN SLOPES WHICH ARE NOT ECONOMY TO DEVELOPMENT
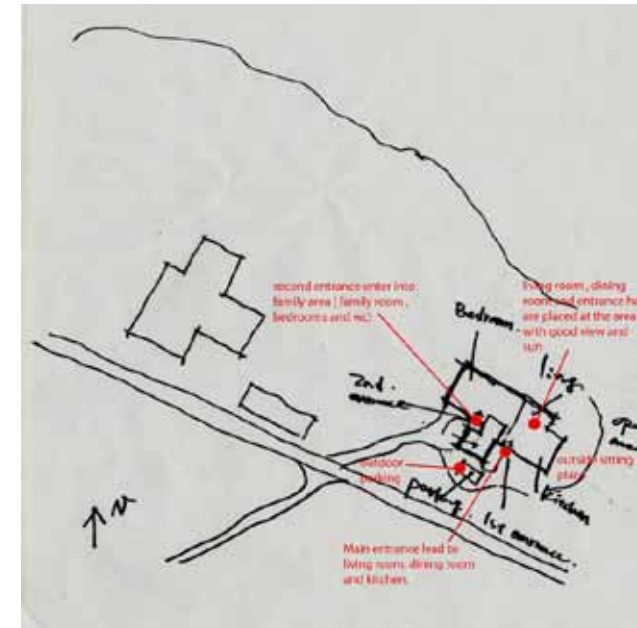4   ADAPT THE SETTLEMENTS TO THE SCALE OF LANDSCAPE FEATURES.

1,2 EXISTING TOWN IS THE CENTRE OF AREA, HAS THE TREND OF EXPANSION.

3 THE AREA EXPOSING TO THE FJORD, WITH SLOPES LOCATES NEAR THE AIRPORT

5,6 : THE DEVELOPMENT INSIDE FARMLAND, WHICH IS THE EXPANSION OF EXISTING TOWN

8 THE PLACE NEAR AIRPORT AND FJORD

9,10 EXPANSION OF CITY BORDER

11,12 DENSIFICATION OF EXISTING CITY

13 STAVANGER HISTORICAL AREA

Project Title : Moraine city , How landscape receives urbanity?

BUILDINGS+STREETS   COAST SLOPE   TOWN   HIGH AREA   FOREST   STEEP

SEA   SEASIDE   BUILDINGS   AGRICULTURE   STEEP - TREES

VALLEY

TODAY + X

TODAY + 2X

TODAY + 3X   ECONOMY DEVELOPMENT

2008, SPRING

04   Summer practice

1 | 2

3

1 Smøla wind park office building

2 Straw bale house in Hemne

3 Family house in Kristiansund

2008, SUMMER

05   Hand drawings
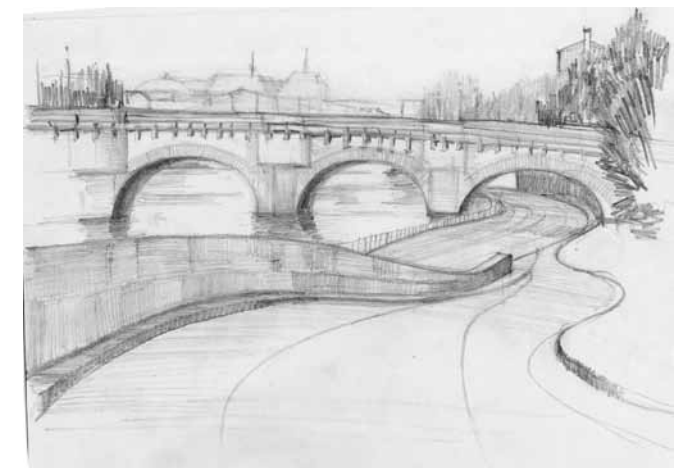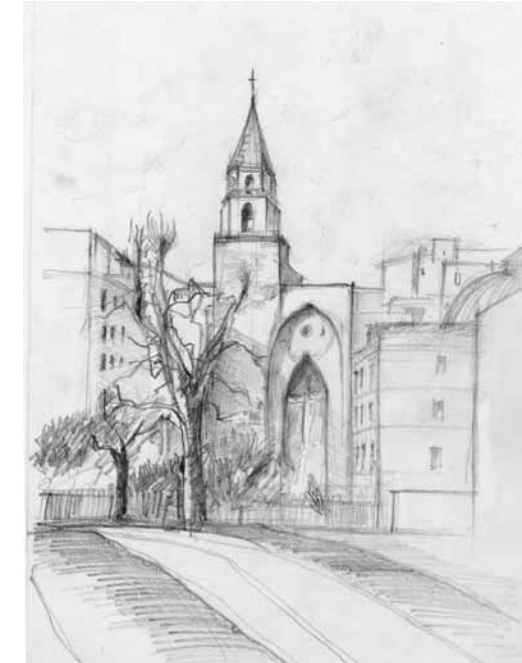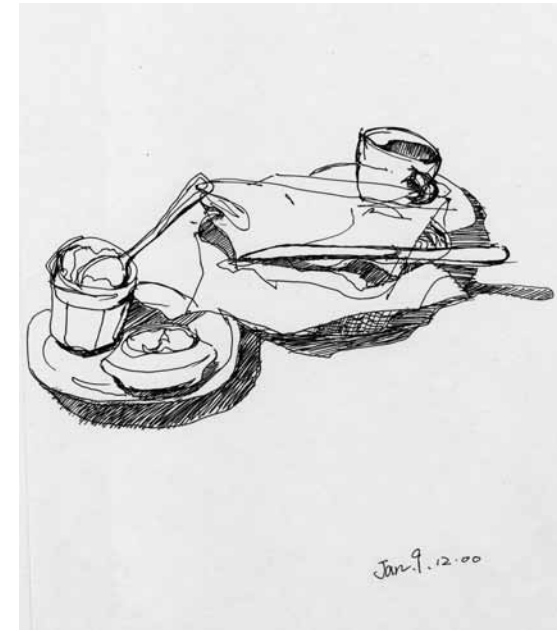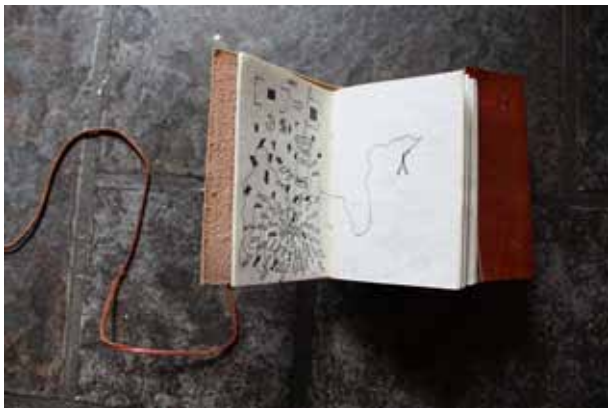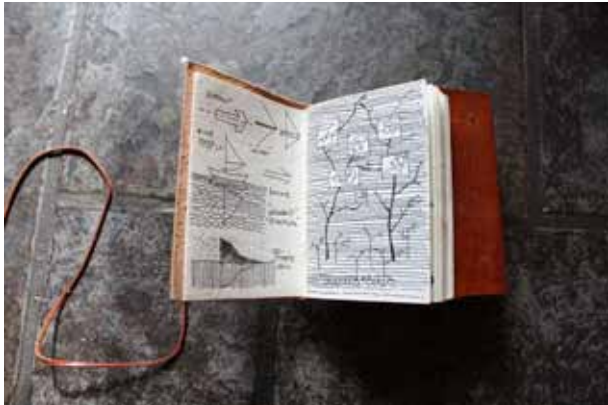
1 Summer Garden 2008

2 A girl called "Xixi"

3 Rose

4 Trees

5 Fishing

6 Bird