

Making Manifest Grounding Islam

by
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A thesis
presented to the University of Waterloo
in fulfilment of the
thesis requirement for the degree of
Master of Architecture

Waterloo, Ontario, Canada, 2009
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AUTHOR'S DECLARATION

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis. This is a true copy of the thesis, including and required final revisions, as accepted by my examiners.

I understand that my thesis may be made electronically available to the public.

Abstract

A Caveat: For many reasons, names have had to be concealed within this work. The events depicted are real and the discussions true. This is an attempt to legitimize the informal, seemingly mundane and sometimes personal: the author's experiences bringing a folly to the physical, while trespassing into a new world: Islam. This thesis documents a series of interventions at different scales within that world. There is a book, the chair, and the city of Makkah. The events themselves are superimposed onto the traditional language, or professional conventions, used to justify them. Here, they are relegated to the margins of each page. This is akin to how some of the first books were produced, by students in the confines of dark cloisters or hot desert temples, struggling to maintain historical integrity while fighting the natural tendencies of youth. Their master's voices always looking over the gutter from the opposite page.

The sketches for a new Makkah and a monumental demonstration in Canada unfold in parallel to a body of formal research. Together, as seemingly independently as they are, they paint the portrait of an Islam, while building a personality between the lines.

That being said: there isn't a correct way to read it.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

For their implacable support of my whims I thank my father and my mother.

For his patience, tolerance and wisdom I thank my supervisor Robert Jan Van Pelt, the professor.

For his curiosity and generosity, I thank Ryszard Sliwka. His Rome program not only gave me the freedom to build but also the chance to love.

For his fierceness and word, I thank Gary Michael Dault, the artist.

For her generosity and candor, Prof. Marta Braun.

For his attention, Gabe 'Hightower' Gonda.

For their brotherhood: Alessio Morglia, Federico 'Brokeback' Bacchochi and Med Hasan, without you this would have stalled.

For his guile: PooyaKasha

DEDICATION

for e*

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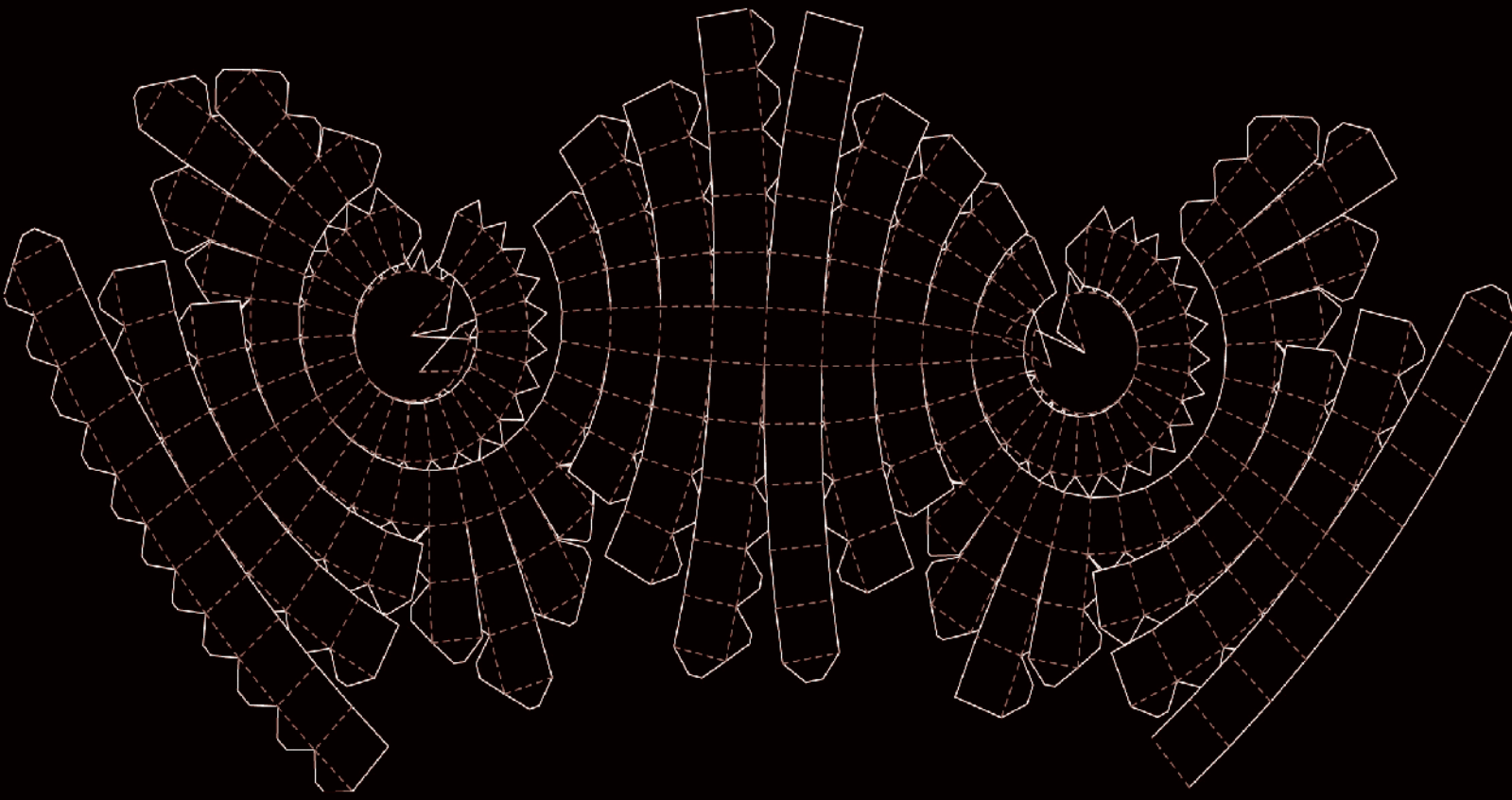


Figure 1 : The operation of unfolding a sphere taking place over the equator of a sphere. This is an effort to understand the topology of a 3D object, here the centres of rotation are conserved and the tabs seen on the edges are a theoretical method of reassembly.

Introduction: The Righteous Object

1 It will be useful to build on the idea of words and their meanings rather than definitions. In short, let this discussion
 2 breed from the trend. Manifestation is a word that has been in use since the French revolution. As if to describe the
 3 sudden welling up of an emotional energy repressed within the masses, what is manifest suddenly bursts forth in a fit of
 4 political action. It is an unfolding
 5 of the feelings left unsaid
 6 that defines that act, because
 7 eventually humans speak, they
 8 can only remain silent for so long.
 9 There are only so many doors
 10 they can open to find Kafka's
 11 flogger before they wake up. It is
 12 exactly this kind of spontaneous
 13 burst which is of interest to this
 14 document.

This story is about resistance, about politics, and about faith; it is the act of making manifest.

There are many ways that people have discussed the events that unfolded after the bombing of the World Trade Center in 2001 (9/11). So it goes, a decade later, like a wound being re-opened and salted day by day, year after year, so that it may not heal. Some have told stories, some that are paranoid, some about courage, some about love, some true and some false. Let me tell you this story, one that occurred somewhere far removed from those fateful events, one that—like history—loses its way.

16 The Latin roots follow from the
 17 Greek term φαίνω - which is
 18 pronounced Phaino, fah'-ee-no
 19 , creating the word Phainomai.
 20 That word finally forms the
 21 root of the familiar English
 22 term phenomenon. The meaning
 23 of this word, which predates
 24 the widespread use in religious
 25 language in the New Testament,
 26 means to shine, to come into ones
 27 sight, to be brought forth into
 28 the light, and suddenly appear. In
 29 some respects, to unfold what is
 30 hidden.

32 The other meaning of manifest has
 33 been at the root of the political
 34 use of the term manifestation. It
 35 is a noun that was originally used
 36 by the French military. A manifest
 37 was the list of munitions, activities or actions of a particular military campaign, it was the list of an army's potential. In
 38 a modern context a manifest remains the same except we add to that passengers on board vessels such as ships and most
 39 importantly planes, planes raining down from the sky, wherein architecture must burn.

41 What is revealed is not the truth or any particular reality, but rather another history. What could have resulted from those
 42 histories is presented herein.


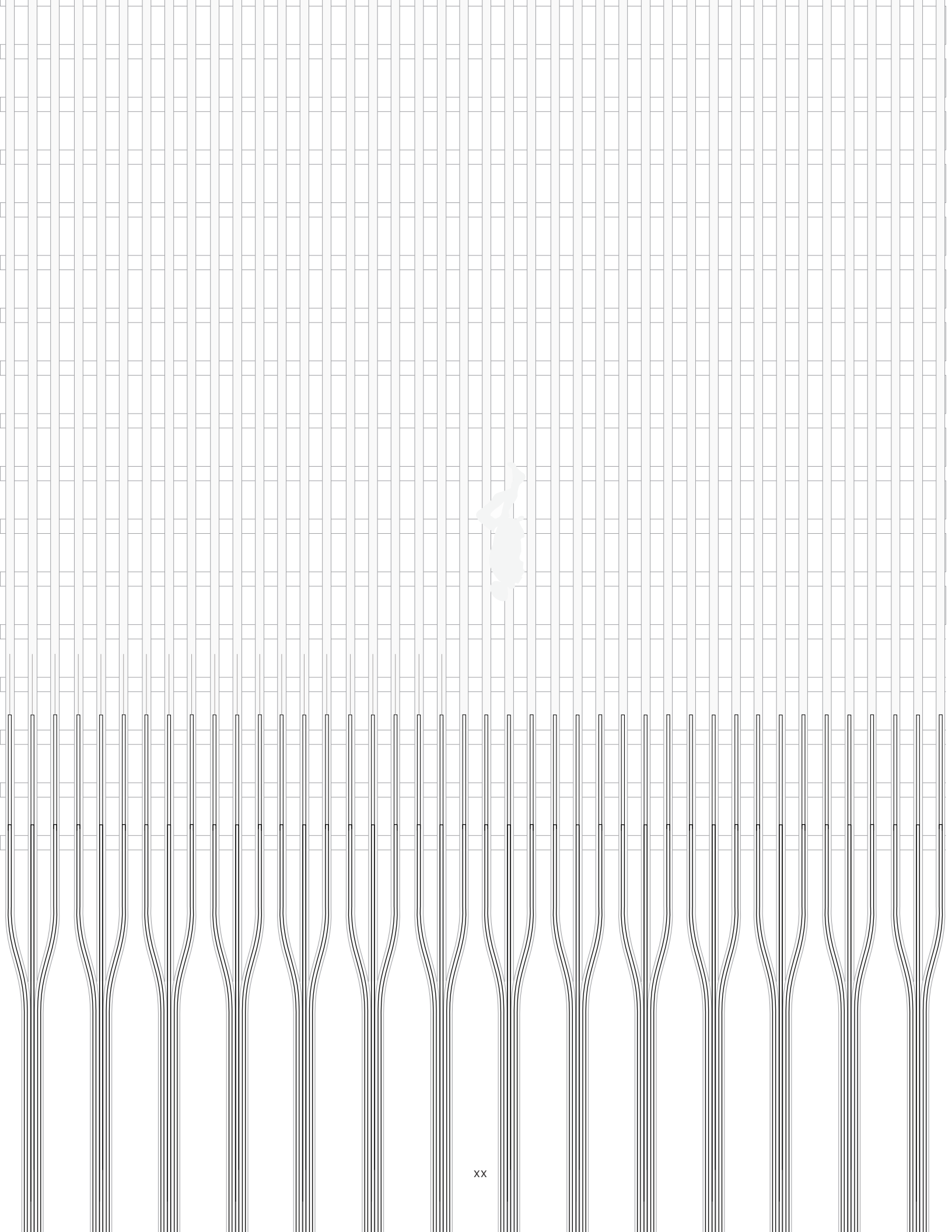


Figure 2 and 3: World Trade Center, Man Falling. Behind: Translation of calligraphy by Yusuf Ali: Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth. The Parable of His Light is as if there were a Niche and within it a Lamp: the Lamp [is] enclosed in Glass: the glass [is] as it were a brilliant star: lit from a blessed Tree, an Olive, neither of the East nor of the West, whose oil is well nigh luminous, though fire scarce touched it: Light upon Light! Allah doth guide whom He will to His Light: Allah doth set forth Parables for men and Allah doth know all things. Qur'an 24:35



On Waking Up

It was an unusually cold morning for September, I remember it vividly because we woke up already fighting... It would be my first day at university, September 11th, 2001. By 6:00am my roommate Sheniff had already finished his first rakket. Myself, now awake from the rhythm of the prayer, lay in silence.

As Salam Ale Kum, As Salam Ale Kum...

By 8:45am, Sheniff and I had sat down for breakfast, we tuned the television to the news—CNN. We watched **BREAKING NEWS** streaking across the screen; the first tower of the World Trade Center burning. ‘It’s clearly a terrorist attack’, but Shenniff went silent. He rolled his eyes, and laughed, “man you are so naive”, as if to say nobody can really know. Knowing is a kind of faith in itself.

We didn’t stay to see the second plane hit, getting to our first day of classes early was the only thing on our minds.

I walked through a field that separated my subdivision from the rest of the town. Then down the abandoned train tracks that led to a road girdling the university. My mood was anxious; it was my first day of studio lectures and, after all the courting and leadup, I didn’t know what to expect.

But those feelings were drowned out by that burning building and Sheniff—his comments about the plane being an inside job. He was a contradictory kind of character, an Ismaeli with a buzz cut, piercings and facial hair trimmed precisely into chin straps. He prays earnestly in the mornings and through the day, then slips into a rhythm of drinking and drugs at night. He was entitled to be a hypocrite, but deep down I wanted to believe in something too. It was early, and a little chilly, the dew had settled on the brush and it smelled pungent, the way the suburbs have to.

My family had arrived in Canada when there was next to nothing there, in 1826 and more later on in the early twentieth century. Romanian immigrants from the Carpathian Mountains home to dark days and fantastical stories of blood-thirsty counts. They weren’t typical Eastern Europeans, they were slippery enough to avoid oppression, so none of these kinds of paranoid delusions became part of my psyche. It was too removed in the distance for me to feel any of those things, or a holocaust but these ideas are sticky, they lie dormant, colouring everything else.

I floated along the tracks and arrived at 9:10am. The university was almost empty. I saw a couple of Asian guys running with



Figure 5 : The Earth projected using a Mollweide transformation, showing the lines of orientation to

Makkah from Rome, Italy, Toronto Canada, and New York, U.S.A.. These arcs are bent by the projection terms that are obligatory when representing a sphere in two dimensions. Thus, the arcs appear more like lines of electromagnetic radiation.

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Here it would be good to include the point that freedom can be profiled, drawn, but never defined: it is a consequence of flows. It is a residue with a particular perfume, with the power to attract some as much as repulse others. Let us use the example of the car. In the free world freedom shows its face while driving, if you have been lucky enough to have purchased one. In the free world one may be pulled over for speeding in that car, thereby breaking the law. In the free world, the primary role of most law enforcement is centered around the control of flows in the public and virtual environment. Be it stocks in trade or information over the internet or speeding tickets. It isn't the physical identity of freedom that is important anymore in the new world, it is where freedom is taking a language by itself. This new language is a force of self annihilation inherent to democratic free societies.

'There are no hard distinctions between what is real and what is unreal, nor between what is true and what is false. A thing is not necessarily either true or false; it can be both true and false.'

Harold Pinter, Nobel Prize Laureate. His acceptance speech was directed at the willingness of Western societies to judge others around the world.

their backpacks, and then the die hard shorts-in-the-winter type Caucasian computer scientists ahead. The campus was a ghost city on the outskirts of a university town. It was one of those places that can be the centre of another world, one where other continents cease to exist, as long as you stay within the ring road. Where the sidewalks are clad in unilock pavers instead of concrete. It was a movie set, empty, waiting for the director's cue to start the action. Motors on, scene 7 take 10, Our Future, Starring Alexander Josephson. It wasn't right to make this an academic discussion.

The school of architecture, a place I aspired to attend since the age of six, was my destination. Here it was, at the technical university, where the beginning of my dreams would unfold: a whole faculty stuffed into a low, two-storey red brick building on the edge of campus. It was the ideal setting for a fairy tale, a struggle, there was even a well tended ivy on the south facade enclosing the adjacent parkette. It was utilitarian compared to the other faculty buildings, which lent to its charm. The university needed the architecture school; it was a symbol of their global cultural considerations, so it was operating on a bare bones budget. All I could think about was the rejection letters that came streaming in from abroad earlier that year. I didn't really want to be there, it was not the institution that would help make my ambitions any more tenable. It was not trendy.

Inside, the digs were Spartan, it was clear that nobody would have a foot up. The professors seemed to disappear and reappear out of thin air, their offices being located on what was a secret floor accessible only by two claustrophobic staircases. They came across with an aloof confidence, strolling down the studios in their own particular ways, some with a little more swagger than others. It was a group of architects who believed in the position of positionlessness, a phenomenological approach that gave credence to any idea. Or at least as much as one's ability to convince was concerned, thus to seduce with ideas.

Back to the particulars of that first day—I arrived, took the flight of cast concrete steps to the second floor and strolled through the narrow aisle dividing the two vast open studio spaces separated by a bank of bathrooms and three lecture halls. There were thoughtful graffiti on the white partitions and columns, such as a solar system with the sun represented by the word architecture, Pluto being sleep, and thoughtful phrases like “when going through hell, keep walking” written above a sink. People were trying to cast a spell, create a magical space, in hope that perhaps one of us may one



Figure 6 : A map of the direction of influence of early Islam and the subsequent Muslim nations. Initiating in Makkah and Medīna, the religion becomes popular in Iraq, Egypt and what is now Iran. Eventually, Islamic tradition would flirt with Hindu and Sikh cultures around the areas of India. Below, the urban plan of Makkah and Masjid al Haram, the mosque.

89 It is not beyond our imaginations to conceive of such confusion or accept such complexity. We have always known this,
 90 but for the sake of clarity and efficiency have denied its existence in reality, simplifying the world around us. A complexity
 91 is being ignored, for what reason perhaps a sociologist might expound. The struggle between the three Abrahamic reli-
 92 gions to establish a global control
 93 on morality is an example of that
 94 tendency. It is a pattern toward
 95 simplification that denies the dig-
 96 nity of human differences, choices.
 97 Yet, there are global organiza-
 98 tions such as the United Nations,
 99 founded on the idea that there is
 100 a singular way of civilization. Only
 101 one path deemed acceptable.¹

102
 103 A new type of authority has
 104 established itself in the free world.
 105 This is a world conveniently
 106 dubbed 'Western'. The name itself
 107 exudes legitimacy and permanence
 108 of place. Western is a symbol of
 109 the good, fair, rich and free. They
 110 are the Western secular cultures,
 111 herein their perfect form today
 112 and projected into the future
 113 indefinitely. Since September
 114 11th, under the pretense of a new
 115 unnamed faith, in the war against
 116 terrorism, these cultures have, for
 117 some reason, violently attacked
 118 their own democratic systems
 119 through the destruction of their
 120 enemies. The difference between
 121 Western and Islamic cultures, is a
 122 simple truth: one denies the politi-
 123 cal reality of religion, while the
 124 latter holds religion as politics.

125
 126 More so than the West have done to any other sovereign nation, group or individual, they discredited themselves. It is not
 127 the attack against Islam in the wake of September 11th that is uniquely brutal, rather the attack on democracy itself in
 128 the name of peace. All of this under the veil of a defense against an enemy with no face, simply a word. The Department of
 129 Homeland Security established new authorities, but they weren't just physical, they were emotional. It is the best example of
 130 a monument to secure the presence of eternal fear and that is the most dangerous weapon of all.

131
 132 Both of those elements of authority are the basic conditions that the revolutionaries of bygone eras fought against in France

as a solar system with the sun represented by the word architecture, day
 rise to a certain level. One where total freedom results. How to get there
 was something of a more polemical discussion. One thing was for sure, the
 ubiquitous sleepless night before a deadline, the all nighter, would become
 the red herring of herd mentality. The studios should have been filled with
 young students, but they were empty. Perhaps everyone else stayed at home
 to watch and, I am, by dint of my presence here an insensitive bastard? Or
 maybe bad timing, not yet late but maybe early. I was confused.

Then I found them, at least thirty or so, students and professors that didn't
 stay home, packed like sardines into the utility room nestled between the
 studios. They were standing there starving themselves of oxygen, fixated
 on an old university television flopped onto a black plastic roller dolly.
 Everyone watched the first tower collapsing. I was on time, after all.

There wasn't really a drawn out silence, nor a scream, it was more like a
 gasp for air. People were talking, they were stunned yet very capable of
 talking. I noticed a couple of girls and a young man crying, holding on to
 each other, but I couldn't bring myself to do the same. I felt nothing, it felt
 like I was watching an action movie. I was wishing that I could have taken
 part, been there, experiencing that realness. I thought, the best thing to
 have done was take a photographic series of the television, but my cell was
 nowhere near that sophisticated. Regardless, the smell and details of what
 people were wearing lingers in my mind.

Then the second tower fell perfectly into place.

After a few minutes most of them dispersed. I and about twenty others
 stayed behind for an ad hoc lecture in cultural history given by a man who
 had dedicated his life to the architecture of catastrophe. They didn't need to
 disband, they were surely all going to talk about the same things regardless:
 endless classes, lecturer upon lecturer explaining why or how the attack had

133 and America, forming new states. What is disguised under the convenient label of patriotism or the universality of democ-
 134 racy is actually a faith, one that is unquestionably tied to the Abrahamic religious and European political traditions. This
 135 is not a decadent reaffirmation of communism, it is an observation.

136
 137 happened and what the consequences were. Some of the discussions would
 138 be gripping, others a bland excuse to hear one's own voice.

139
 140 I took a seat, fourth row from the front, on the aisle. After about thirty
 141 minutes of lecturing the history professor started asking for feedback. I
 142 liked attention, so I participated in the speculation as much as everyone else.
 143 Jockeying with the classmates for attention.

143 .."Rather than speaking of fear
 144 here, we should speak of fears.
 145 And this is why I say they are
 146 "liquid" because they are free
 147 to move easily, to detach and
 148 attach themselves to one sphere
 149 or another.

150
 151 And then there is social insecurity
 152 that comes from knowing that
 153 in the same way as we are
 154 given a place in society, it can
 155 sometimes be taken away. As we
 156 go ahead we remain attached
 157 to this social position, because
 158 we are afraid of losing it. The
 159 promise of governments and
 160 organized society was to free
 161 people from this type of fear,
 162 deriving from social insecurity.
 163 This principle was the basis for
 164 Roosevelt's ideas: make a citizen's
 165 position secure, respectable and
 166 honourable, justified, something
 167 to be proud of. And this was the
 168 social state project, designed to
 169 liberate people from the fear of insecurity. For example, society would take care of the weakest when ill and this social aspect
 170 would be guaranteed for every human being. This was a system that allowed citizens to go ahead, thinking that it was right to
 171 take risks and be brave. Today we have lost not only personal security, but also the ability to think in terms of society, with an
 172 individual approach to problems of security..."

173
 174 Zygmunt Bauman speaking at the World Social Summit on the subject of Fear.

In one instance it was said we were at the dawn of an Islamic Reformation. I would have been interested to see my roommate Shennif's reaction. People were drawing parallels to the bloodiest events in mid-Christian history, except they were many millions of victims short.ⁱⁱ Some scholars have shown that almost half the population of what became Germany was slaughtered during the Thirty Years War. There was no fight: in a classroom on the outskirts of a small town in Canada, we made a conscious choice, the one to be afraid.

There were fourteen Jews and three Muslims enrolled in the entire school of roughly three hundred. There wasn't a single Muslim professor. The one reprieve was that the most acclaimed mind was an authority on the architecture of genocide, the same one that began the lectures that day. the mechanics of war from an architectural standpoint. The perfect person to appreciate the precise feeling of what this new history would feel like in the making.

I would replay my emotions of that morning like a broken record. Except, I was watching something else on TV each day, not the actual events in New York, rather something more pornographic. Just images and words on screens and pages. Before September 11th the World Trade Centre did not occupy that emotional place, and who cared about Islam outside of a few exceptional individuals? While being vanquished, a new monumentality



Figure 7 : a cemetery in Northern France's battlefields with Jewish graves.

175 "As it determines this moment in
 176 time, the mind necessarily withers
 177 away and, stretched to the limit,
 178 desires this withering. Myth and
 179 the possibility of myth become
 180 impossible: only an immense void
 181 remains, cherished yet wretched.
 182 Perhaps the absence of myth is
 183 the ground that seems so stable
 184 beneath my feet, yet gives way
 185 without warning.

187 The myths which, in the white
 188 and incongruous void of absence,
 189 exist innocently and shatter
 190 are no longer myths, and their
 191 duration is such as to expose
 192 their precariousness. At least in
 193 one sense the pale transparency
 194 of possibility is perfect: myths,
 195 whether they be lasting or fugitive,
 196 vanish like rivers in the sea..."

198 *From George Bataille, The*
 199 *Absence of Myth.*

201 Myth didn't disappear, it was
 202 replaced by the new reality,
 203 a digital divide blinding our
 204 judgement of what should be fake.

207 The subject that is always under
 208 scrutiny is Islam, not secularism
 209 and its discontents. Any mention
 210 of these issues as said before, is forbidden.ⁱⁱⁱ Just as the holy city of
 211 Makkah is forbidden to non-Muslims, so is the subject limited, forcing
 212 everyone to the extremes. The surprise is that all of that resistance
 213 in this case was coming from Westerners, not Muslims. Oppression
 214 is most successful when people perform it upon themselves, when
 215 the state no longer even needs to. It is an endgame far graver than
 216 any Orwellian nightmare with observable systems and structures of
 217 oppression. It is the saddest ending to a dream that was supposed
 218 to be a free one, whereas now everyone is scared to death of being

flowed into both of them. That day marked a new age full of mystery and
 faith, made true in real-time. Even better were the immediate conspiracy
 theories; one couldn't conceive of a better way to mythologize an event than
 with disbelief. It isn't to diminish the loss of life in New York by calling it a
 myth, the loss of life was tragic. Turning it into myth through intrigue and
 speculation actually elevates it to epic proportions. Into a story of worship
 for an unnamed faith, a western, American faith—one that had a new
 longevity to take it right through to the end of history, a superfaith.

Instantly, Islam became synonymous with evil and the Judeo-Christian
 America the wounded victim, though now it all seems much more nebulous
 than that. Islam became the poster child for human rights abuse, illegal
 immigration, cultural nihilism and ignorance embodied by pictures of fifty
 year old Talibanees marrying seven year old virgins. At least in our eyes,
 at that point, everyone on our side of the earth on the island separating
 Europe from Asia thought they were innocent. Nobody, not even the so-
 called unbiased Western media spoke of anything beautiful or valuable
 about Islamic culture, and if they did it was always a hedge against the
 regular sensational scandals.

Professors tried to begin classes normally in those weeks, but the topics
 would devolve—digress into a discussion about Islam and September 11th.
 They even segued into steel structures and mechanics of materials lectures,
 an engineering course. The lazy-eyed professor, a legend of sorts in that
 field who hailed from Germany, explained that the building's engineering
 might have been at fault. The hypothesis was that designers and builders
 were to some extent responsible for the loss of life—the structure was too
 efficient. What about the architects, after all, it was they who materialized
 the symbols of difference, the temples of ideology. It was a little too much,
 nothing could ever be built to withstand those kinds of forces. The discussions
 lasted a couple of weeks, then slowly withdrew into the background, like a
 haze lifting in the heat of midday.

When it came to design, the professors didn't digress from condos in small
 town Canada or private residence pavilions for
 visiting scholars on main campus. The entire
 curriculum was in the hands of a regulatory
 body. I was feeling very comfortable in such
 projects. I didn't even blink, perhaps an
 appropriate substitution for these abstract
 structures and scholarly homes would have
 been to design an on-campus mosque, or
 to orient the house to Makkah. It would
 have been a coup at a university founded by

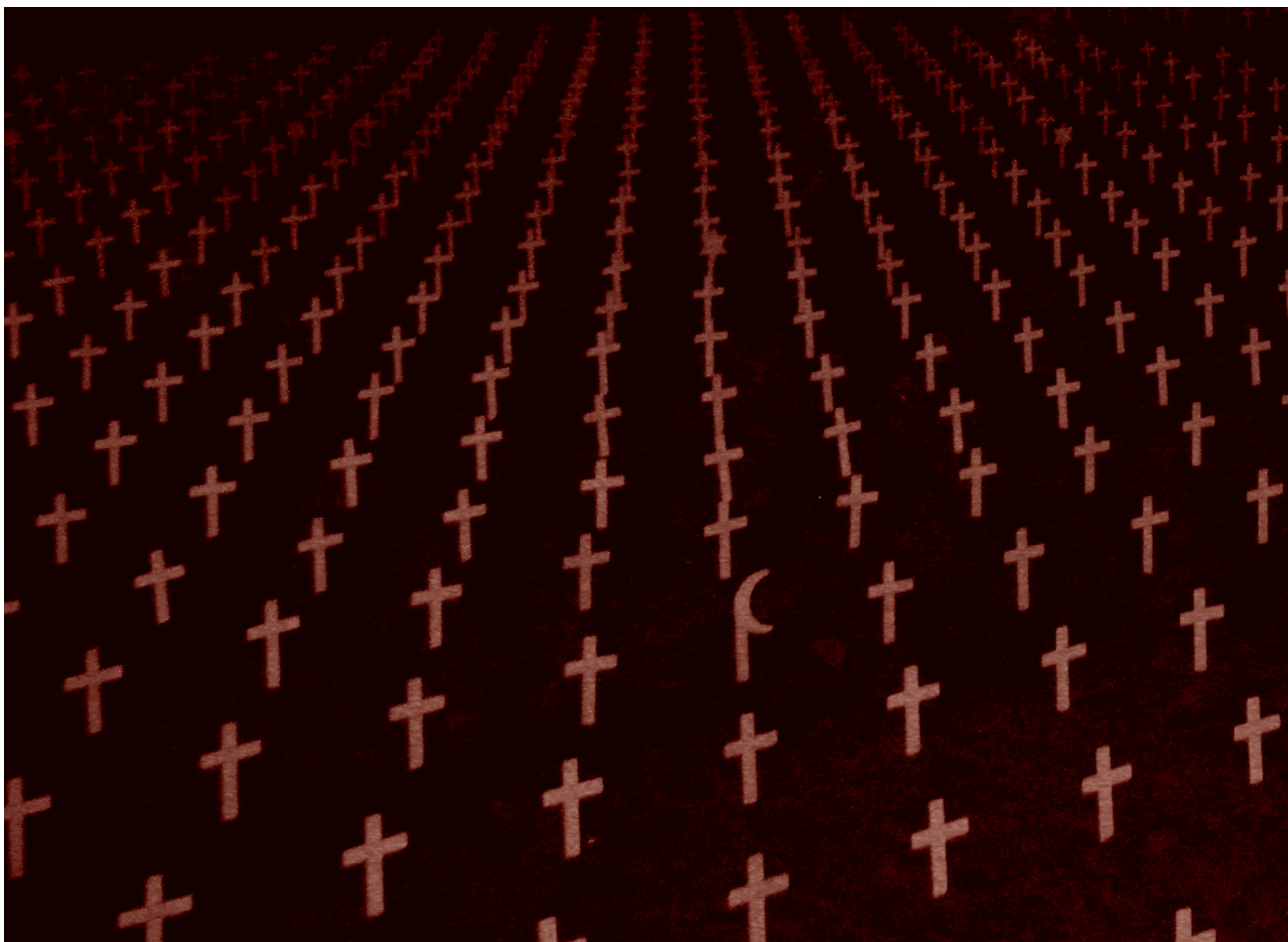


Figure 8 : A cemetery with a lone waxing moon.

219 free. This is the Western promise:
 220 to be free and at the same time
 221 so scared of it that intellectual
 222 imprisonment results. What have
 223 we now but our fight against the
 224 atrophy of imagination.
 225
 226 This is a story about confronting
 227 that authority and seeing the pos-
 228 sibility for outside interventions
 229 or provocations about the Western
 230 promise. The purpose is not to
 231 reconcile Western civilization with
 232 Islam or any other, but rather to
 233 show how close the two are, which
 234 is more frightening for some.

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What is not spoken enough of in
 the architectural community is its
 role or fault in the current state of
 global culture clash. The objects,
 be them in good faith or not, that
 represent each culture are always
 most recognizably architectural icons. It is the architect that create
 the cultural symbolism that then become targets of assassination.
 Are these buildings alive, no. Perhaps there are certain pieces or
 objects of our collective cultural histories that can be addressed
 through destroying or augmenting existing architectural icons. More
 specifically, the objects that we have collectively deemed sacrosanct
 and immutable, may be developed further.

Lutherans. Regardless, I was producing at the top academically, even if
 I hadn't the slightest clue how to make architecture. I was fiddling on a
 drafting table in 2001, drawing spaces from triangular rulers.

September 11th was a blip on my academic radar: nothing changed at the
 school. Actually, things couldn't have been better. The next three months
 would be a blur of project proposals and briefs retrieved from the same
 stockpiles as they had always been. I even achieved my first all-nighter,
 something that I was proud of, like a badge of merit, a true sign of a mediocre
 disorganized mind. Still, instead of punishing this kind of behavior it was
 rewarded generously, the perfect way to unlearn what it means to live life.

September 11th toppled the stock markets, but it couldn't move the
 'course drop/change date' assigned by the university on new electives. Our
 discussions had come to naught, no physical manifestation in relation to the
 degree of change occurring elsewhere ever happened.

Instead, there was utopia at the technical school, a wealthy aerospace-
 millionaire decided to give a chunk of cash to fund a move for the school of
 architecture from its roots on campus to a nearby town. The new site was
 a sprawling abandoned silk mill on the banks of an economically distressed
 town called Galt about half an hour from the campus. It was a storied place,
 the Manchester of Canada, once an economic engine fueled by vast textile
 industries and a wealthy cadre of American Loyalists that had settled at the
 turn of the end 19th century and again in the early 20th. It would be bliss.

By the end of term two of my three housemates, including Shenniff, became
 increasingly withdrawn. Their presence in the house now so erratic, it felt
 empty in the mornings. It appeared that they were sleeping during the day
 and working or partying by night. I had noticed one afternoon that, on a
 chance encounter with Shenniff, he had grown his baby fingernails to an
 absurd length. I could easily have thrown up at his feet when he told me
 it was for the guitar lessons he was taking. They stopped paying rent and
 were acting irate. I was so broke from the emotional and physical expense of

the program that it became clear that the only
 solution was work, to enter the commercial
 flow, working for someone, if not myself.

I decided to drop out.

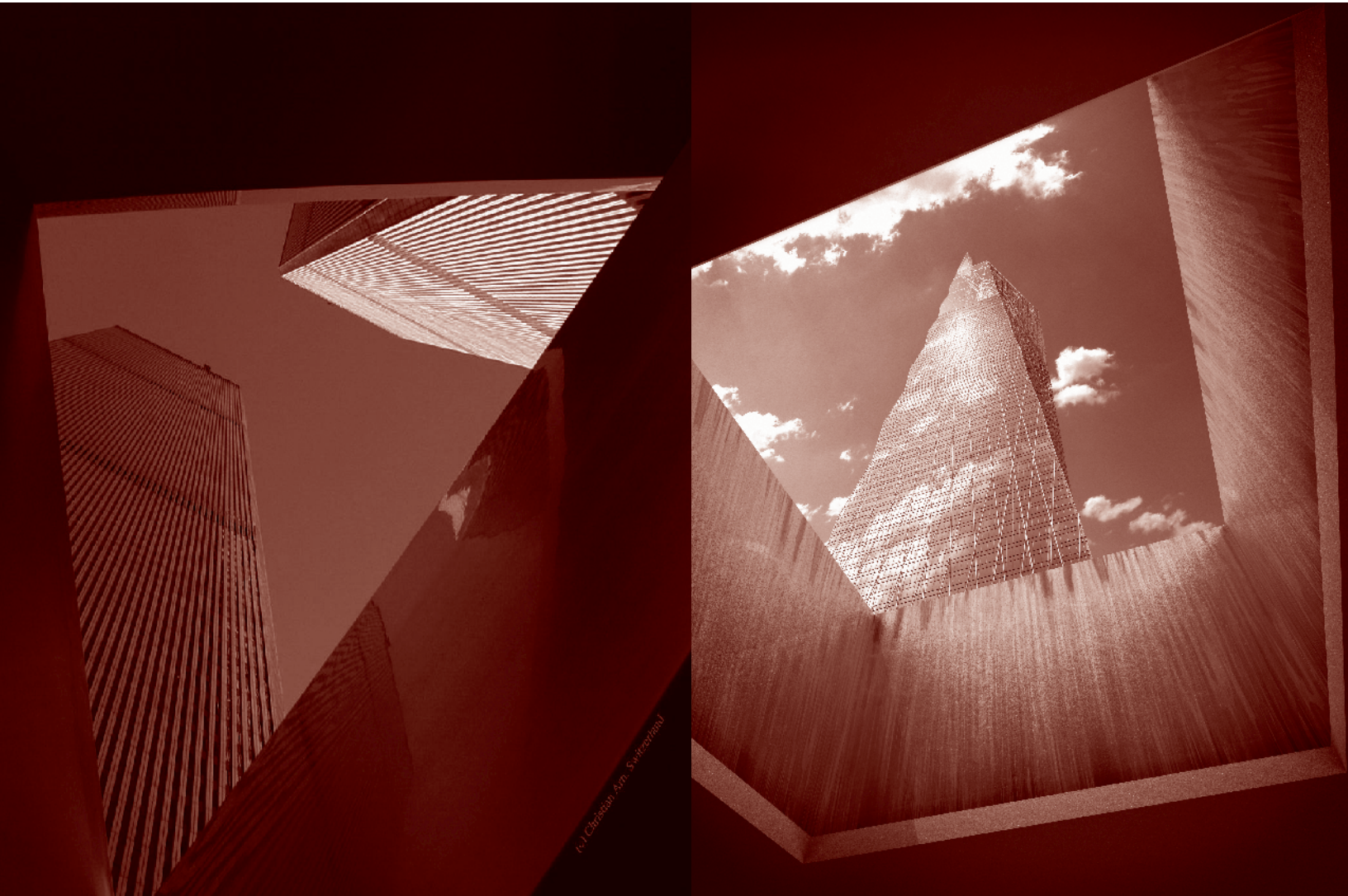


Figure 7.1 : The world trade center towers before the attack (left) and the proposed view from the memorial (right).

LEONARDO DiCAPRIO

CLAIRE DANES

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE'S ROMEO + JULIET

FROM THE VISIONARY DIRECTOR OF MOULIN ROUGE

SPECIAL EDITION

The Bees

Figure 9 : Romeo and Juliet, unknown author, posters for the Hollywood production featuring Leonardo Di Caprio and Claire Danes.

The story of Leila and Majnun is echoed in almost every cultural tradition spanning the globe, from the Italian Petrarch and Laura to the Anglosaxon Romeo and Juliet. It is part of human nature that these tales of family interference and tragic unrequited love exist in all cultural strands. Yet if human beings see Islam as a threat to those who aren't, why do we not speak of these shared traditions?

If anything they are evidence of our broader shared beliefs.

The role of love and romance between men and women of Muslim faith has been maligned by the Western media. The story of Leila and Majnun is one of the rich and beautiful stories that are at the centre of many Islamic cultures, including Sufis and Ishmaelis.

Ironically this kind of reckless criticism is nothing new, the story of Leila and Majnun has never made it into a popular frame: a movie

2 ...*Tumultuous passion danced upon his brow;*
He sought to woo her, but knew not how:
He gazed upon her cheek, and, as he gazed,
Love's flaming taper more intensely blazed.
Soon mutual pleasure warm'd each other's heart;
Loved conquer'd both - they never dreamt to part;
And, while the rest were poring o'er their books,
They pensive mused, and read each other's looks:
While others for distinction strove,
And thought of fame, they only thought of love:
While others various climes in books explored,
Both idly sat - adorer and adored....

Their only taste was love, and love's sweet ties,
And writing ghazels to each other's eyes.

Yes, love triumphant came, engrossing all
The fond luxuriant thoughts of youth and maid;
And, whilst subdued in that delicious thrall,
Smiles and bright tears upon their features play'd.
Then in soft converse did they pass the hours,-
Their passion, like the season, fresh and fair;
Their opening path seem'd deck'd with balmiest flowers,
Their melting words as soft as summer air....

By worldly prudence uncontroll'd,
Their every glance their feelings told;
For true love never yet had skill
To veil the impassion'd looks at will.
When ringlets of a thousands curls,
And ruby lips, and teeth of pearls,
And dark eyes flashing quick and bright,
Like lightning on the brow of night -

When charms like these their power display,
And steal the wilder'd heart away -
Can man, dissembling, coldly seem
Unmoved as by an idle dream?
He saw her beauty, saw her grace,
The soft expression of her face;
And as he gazed, and gazed again,
Distraction stung his burning brain:
No rest he found by day or night -

or best selling Western analog. What we see in the West, is never the good or the sophisticated, we act superior as if to be anglosaxon aristocracy isolating the nouveau riches. We see young girls married off to Talibani middle aged men. Let us not forget the extremes in our own cultures.

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Leila for ever in his sight....

(Nazami c 597th year of Hijrah, 1221CE)

Eventually Leila and Majnun would be torn apart, their families forbidding their love. In the end Majnun fled to the desert and lived amongst wild beasts, only coming back to civilization upon hearing of Leila's death. To mourn her, he lay upon her grave screaming and tossing for weeks on into months, all the while being protected by his tribe of wild beasts. He finally succumbed to the elements and time, and his remains, lying flawless upon her grave, were intombed beside hers so that their undying love would remain unstayed.

I would take my lunch in the same place every day. I first saw her standing in the piazza reading in the sun. When her perfect suspecting eyes that couldn't be just one colour, smiled at me that first day, I had no choice but to introduce myself. That courage never came. It wasn't until after the third week that we finally met. I almost flattened her walking around the corner to the office, when she spoke to me. After watching her pass by so many times, wandering through Piazza del Monte Di Pieta, we were about to speak and it wasn't under my own will.

“Aren't you the American who is friends with Veronica?”

“Yes, yes absolutely, that's me”. I smiled, I had no idea who Veronica was, but she asked if I had been at such and such a party and I played it off as if I knew what she was talking about. So our relationship was starting on an honest footing.

“My name is Elisa, nice to meet you.”

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That piazza where we met is a secondary space just about a hundred metres southwest of Campo Dei Fiori, where the statue of Giordano Bruno stands, patinated in black, resisting the fires that burned him alive almost six hundred years earlier. The dark weedy hole in the Ponte Sisto sits just a stone's throw to the west. But around the corner from there another miracle was brooding, an architecture firm was changing the world, from a group of rooms with flayed plaster walls infecting that perfect powder blue Palazzo with young minds perfectly choreographed by the captain of this Nebuchadnezzar. It was humming and trembling with ideas.

That Christmas I ended up getting a job as an assistant model maker in Rome, Italy. I was not in the mood of being light so I chose the city that I thought would be the most alienating, to see if I could survive and work. I landed a job at Massimiliano Fuksas' Studio. There wasn't anywhere else in Italy that one could find better people, perhaps the last of a particular breed. My first week there was the most humiliating experience in my life. I was unable to properly converse with my superiors. Their pace was unrelenting—and it all started with a dexterity test. I was the only North American in the office.

To live, I found a place near Piazza Navona in a converted courtyard. It was a cavernous space characterized mostly by the scaffolding assembled in the main living space for a mezzanine, coupled with the damp musky smell of being on the raw Roman ground level. The ceiling above was perforated by cracked glass blocks, the deck of my neighbours above. I could hear them in the morning watering their flowers as the droplets splashed against the blocks, trying to drip in.

My first weeks of work were shell shocking, I nearly ended it then.

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The people around me were building kilometre long glass veils and clouds docked inside stadiums while I could barely ask for the glue. They worked harder than I had ever seen anybody work before, and they did it with more grace, with less. They managed to have a life and laugh, then leave and enjoy the world.

If the attacks on New York hadn't changed the world, they had at least revealed the new realities of America abroad. Italians have a way with words. It isn't difficult to see why; there are words everywhere. Newsstands openly compete for pennies on almost every major streetcorner and piazza in the country, from small town Sicily to downtown Milan to the forum in Rome. They don't just sell rags; you can find Danté and Faulkner on the streets. Talk of conspiracy was not only normal for Romans, but the standard doctrine in the Italian press. Every morning I would hear the word Chee-ya, Chee-ya, which after a while I figured out was actually the way they pronounce C.I.A—rather than the hairy, grass growing ceramic sculpture consumed by the millions. It wasn't that they asserted that as truth, but that it wasn't overt heresy was enough to understand the intelligence of the general public.

Italy in any given year usually has one of the highest number of architects per capita in the world—the Greeks and Japanese also compete. It is much like studying general arts in Italy; it simply makes sense given their history. At this point the global architectural community was galvanized by the tragedy in New York almost a year earlier. It was producing its own pre-emptive strike. They formed teams of super-architects, bands of famous minds from fields far flung, to propose fantastic new ideas to heal New York. The tower would be called *freedom*, but the architects committed mutiny. It turned into a

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corporate real estate insurance grab, bereft of any value to architecture. Some of the most impressive urban architectural ideas developed in decades were proposed. Yet, the Jury chose a conservative design and they would eventually pare it down to something unrecognizable. The gumption and unassuming creativity of New York’s founders were forgotten, without even a fight. It all boiled down to insidious politics and back-door dealings of reprehensible proportions.

But they didn’t see it back on the island, that continent across the Atlantic called America. There was nothing to worry about for architects: at some point the leftover proposals, that could have actually changed the world, would be developed in real-time in Dubai, with much more luxurious materials, not to mention profit margins and creditors. It is the absolute proof of a profession that lost, one in which the younger generations, even students, have deified the giants before them. Never before had there been such a lack of general protest by the gods that proposed the best ideas.

The global architectural community bares latent pathological responsibility—fault. It created symbols of indifference and corporate greed, not those of freedom or democratic values. A twin tower would have sufficed. People refused to admit there was a problem deep down. Perhaps I am being a little overzealous, but that is because I still believe architects could be powerful enough to say no. Today it seems that less truly is more. They occupied a unique position able to solve our civilizational problems. It runs consistent with idea that architecture has evolved most during total collapse and global crisis, through wars and strife.

Before she left me in the Piazza that day, I had asked her for her phone number. While she wasn’t paying attention as I kissed her on the cheek twice, I slipped my Domori chocolate bar carefully into her purse and walked away.

“So, do you miss your good---black 70 chocolate? Too bad, it is all gone”...



On Suicide

1 **Figure 10 :** Samon and Delilah,
2 Peter Paul Rubens.

3 *She stepped out of a black town car that pulled up on Columbus Avenue
4 just south of the corner at Broadway. It was just far enough away from the
5 curb that when she rose to meet it, her legs revealed themselves from the vent
6 in her long black dress.*

7 *She was far more cultivated than I and it was clear that the less I pretended to
8 know, the better our night at the opera would unfold. It was embarrassing to watch
9 something that made such an intense physical impression. To her it was normal;
10 these things were the basic language, she wanted to be so touched, or to cry. It was
11 the evidence of the steely foundations of her ancient European culture proven in an
12 instant. It wasn't until later that I realized how well the opera's themes echoed the
13 events in New York three years earlier. In another time, along a brook, Samson the
14 Israelite fell deeply in love with Delilah, the enchanting Philistine girl. Having
15 fallen for her against all counsel, and madly at that, he told her his only weakness—
16 his hair. Delilah did not reciprocate. She feigned love and took advantage of his
17 weakness—cutting his long tender locks while he slept upon her lap. The Philistines
18 followed up with hot pokers to Samson's eyes – blinding and then enslaving him to
19 grind their wheat. To entertain themselves, the Philistines forced Samson into their
20 temple of Dagon during a sacrifice to regard him in humiliation. There Samson
21 asked to rest against the grand pillars, "Then Samson prayed to the Lord, 'O Lord
22 God, remember me, I pray thee, and strengthen me, I pray thee, only this once, O
23 God, that I may be at once avenged of the Philistines for my two eyes.' (Judges
24 16:28)." Samson said, 'Let me die with the Philistines!' (Judges 16:30) Down
25 came the temple on the rulers and all the people in it. Thus he killed many more as
26 he died than while he lived." (Judges 16:30).*

27 The move to New York was a last-minute decision. It was probably mostly
28 because of her. I couldn't stand the idea of not being nearby. It struck me how
29 in-over-my-head I was seconds after arriving at Penn Station and dragging
30 my bags up the unending staircases to the curb on Broadway at 32nd Street,
31 only to be flattened by the rushing crowd to get around my slow moving mass.
32 The verticality of the art deco brick buildings and overhead bridges clad in
33 patinated copper was more potent than the photos. I hailed a taxi and took it

34 to my cousins' apartment on the Upper East
35 Side where I could stay temporarily while
36 trying to find an apartment. It is said that at
37 any given moment in Manhattan there are
38 over one hundred thousand people searching
39 rabidly for apartments. It is one of the most
40 interesting activities imaginable.

41 My cousins, Lawrence and Jodi, were a new
42 family having just given birth to their first
43 son. They moved there in the beginning of
44



Figure 11 : Samson in the Temple of Dagon, most likely drawn by Giulio Romano in the mid 16th century. Note that in this representation, Samson's suicidal act of bringing the temple down over the philistines was by toppling two columns (or towers) not one.

45 Legend has it that Samson fell in love with more than one Pagan girl and when he refused to listen to his family when
 46 they told him to stay away from Dalilah, the consequence was his life. After Dalilah helped the Pagans capture and poke
 47 the eyes out of that exquisit specimen of a man, Samson fought back by sacrificing himself. He toppled the Pagan temple
 48 of Dagon killing thousands of
 49 people along with himself. Nobody
 50 can actually agree if Samson
 51 toppled two columns or one in
 52 order to destroy the Pagan temple
 53 of Dagon. One could believe it
 54 were two and since there were
 55 two towers in New York that fell,
 56 there is room for comparison.
 57 Regardless of the number or
 58 specifics, the self sacrifice is all
 59 the same, so was the outcome.

61 The story of Samson and Delilah
 62 is part of a tradition of approval
 63 that follows the Judeo-Christian
 64 histories. By celebrating Samson's
 65 story there is a fundamental
 66 sympathy toward that behavior:
 67 the human body as a weapon, a
 68 political device or at the extreme
 69 even a bomb. Western culture
 70 has approved and celebrated
 71 Samson's act through some of the
 72 greatest art in history, from opera
 73 to sculpture. Some of the most
 74 important paintings in art history
 75 are depictions of Samson.

77 The body as a weapon is a device
 78 that is celebrated, in some way
 79 by almost all major religious and
 80 cultural groups on the planet. It
 81 is the ultimate weapon, the denial of any value of this reality in exchange for the unknown held up by a faith. These histories
 82 are part of the foundations of Western thought; by dint of this, they are facets of that culture, though undeniably part of a
 83 distinctly violent religious history. Between Samson's sacrifice and for example, Usama Bin-Laden's 'fatwa'—a primer to
 84 self destruction—there is an important parallel to be drawn. Both are intended to destroy the 'infidels' or 'pagans'. The
 85 destructive power of the body is the common tactic shared by both stories. The difference between Samson and a 'Terrorist'
 86 is critical, because it requires a bias. It would necessarily imply a judgment and that is not the motive of this project. Both
 87 stories are founded in what historians would have us believe are religious, rather than cultural differences. On the contrary,
 88 In these stories, religion and culture are one and inseparable. It is the same issue echoed in the basic struggle today for

2002 in the wake of the attacks because Lawrence was hired as a wildcat
 trader: the foreigners that were hired to replace the deceased financiers at
 the WTC. Cantor Fitzgerald, whose offices were totally wiped out bought
 his Bond Trading business back in Toronto and moved him to New York
 City. It was lucrative and somebody had to do it. New York wasn't waiting
 for anyone anymore, you needed an invite.

I wanted to work for Steven Holl, so when I got an interview I was quite
 excited. When I arrived at their offices there was a catch. At the table in the
 meeting room were three young men, all Middle Eastern. They introduced
 themselves and then informed me that Steven wouldn't be coming and the
 office wasn't hiring. Essentially, it became clear that they invited people into
 Holl's offices so that they would have a good applicant pool. They were too
 young to have a dignified space of their own, at least if they played by the
 rules. Makram, the trendy good looking one, told me they were opening an
 office that would complete a major project of Holl's already in construction
 and that they would be opening their own first space immediately, I would
 work there. They called themselves LEFT, I asked why and they said it was
 because they worked in the smallest work station in the office, on the left
 side of the main studio space. Indeed, it was a closet of a space, but they were
 doing good things.

They basically hired me immediately. I was desperate, so the idea of working
 for three young Middle Eastern guys opening their first office in NYC seemed
 exciting and the pay was good. This was just before the war between Isreal
 and Hezbollah broke out and the three principals were extremely worried;
 it was the right place at the right time to hear a Muslim's perspective. I
 was shocked to hear that my bosses were so secular. These guys had their
 heads securely fastened to their bodies—when they weren't partying, there
 wasn't anything radical about them. In fact, their views were far more

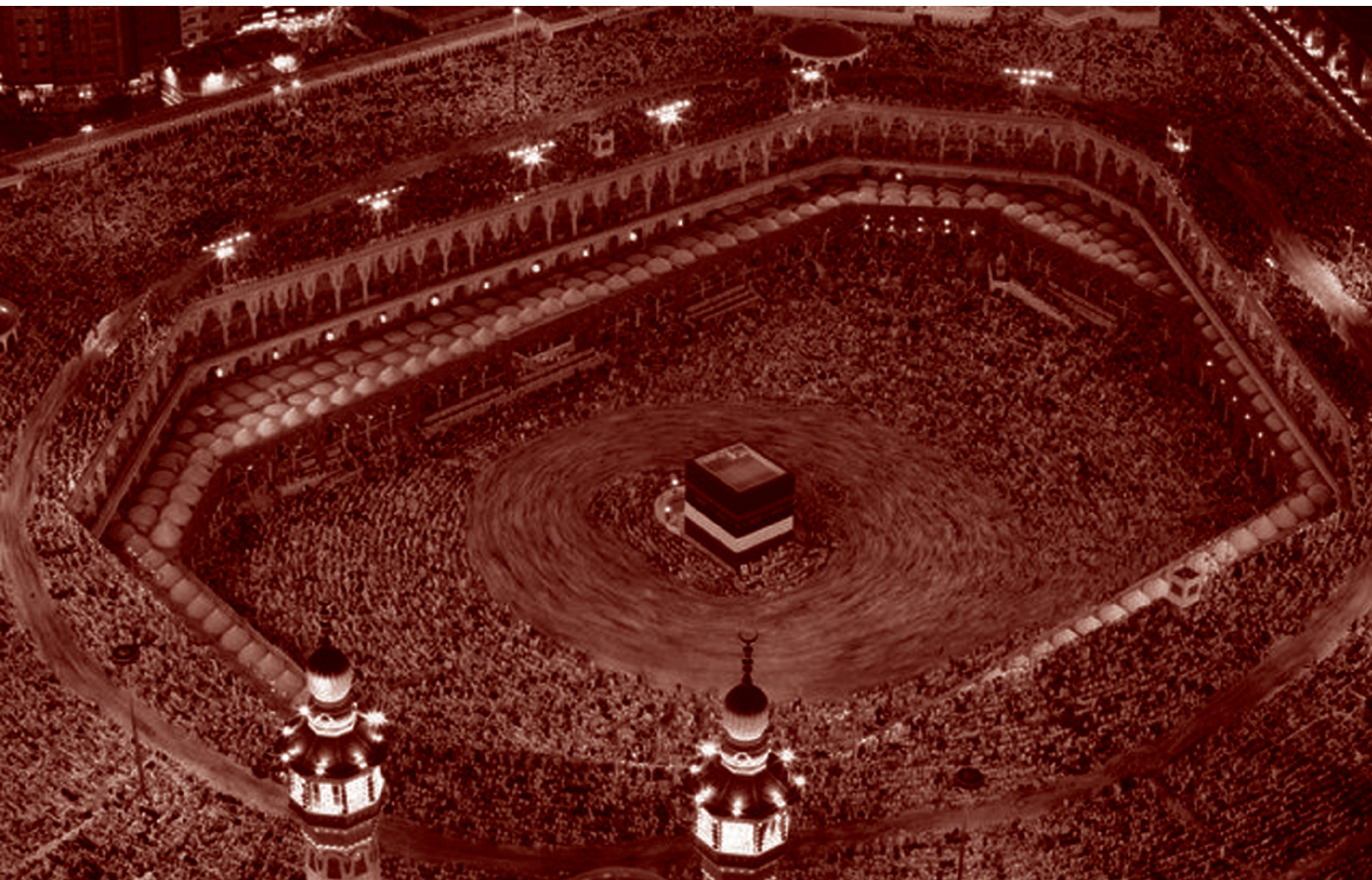
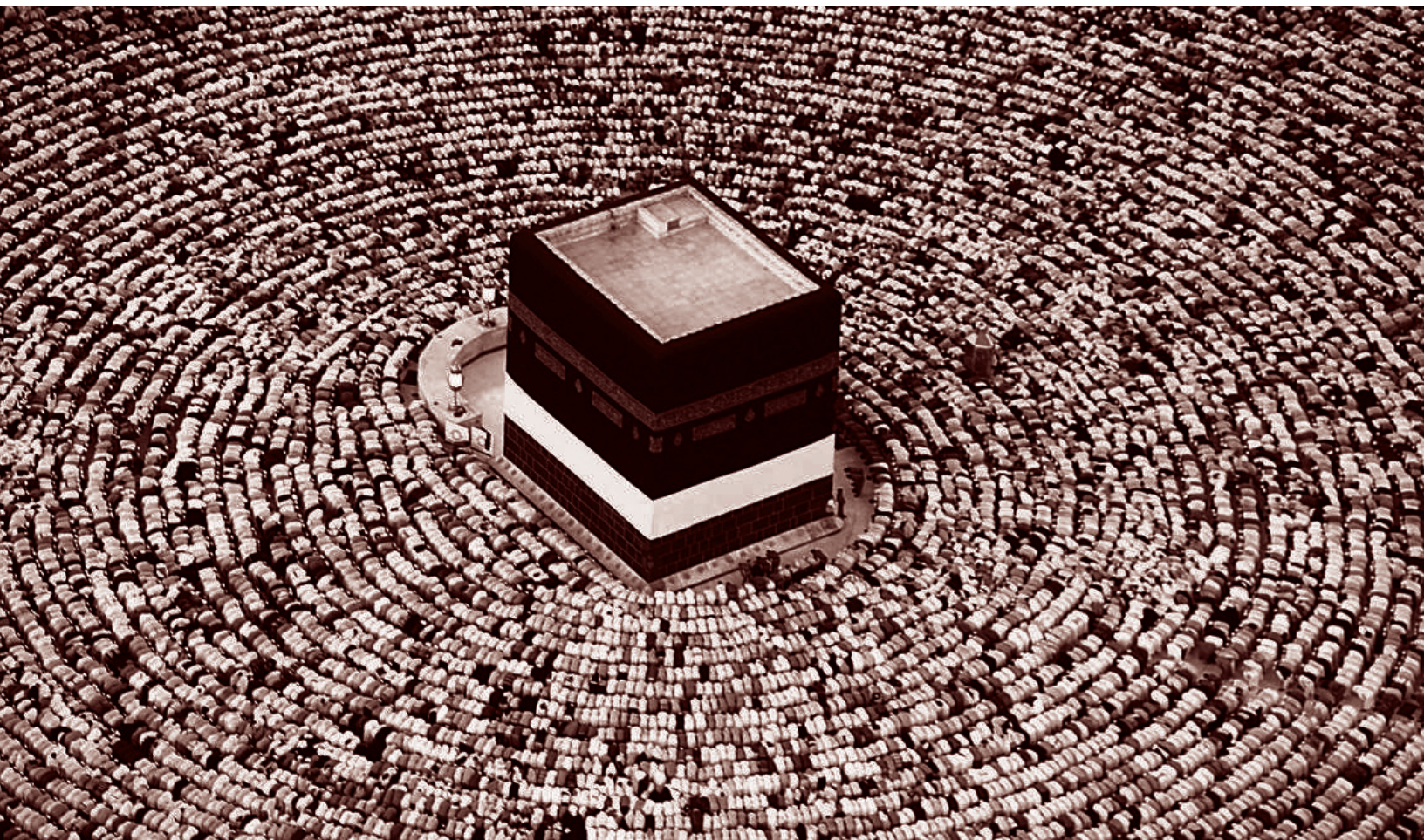


Figure 12 : The Ka'Bah in time lapse during Hajj with worshippers navigating the center of the temple.

89 religious-based laws or states. The human body as suicide bomber is a cultural phenomenon.
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 91 The body presents a contradiction in Islam. It is the kinetic medium of prayer through which precise daily rituals of
 92 submission and resignation
 93 take place, while also rejected understanding and compassionate than those of the so called Westerners.
 94 as worthless matter. In Islam,
 95 humanity was not created in the It took me almost a month to find my own place. By that point my hosts had
 96 image of God. This belief separates grown tired of my late comings and goings. It was a small place in the West
 97 humanity from God, allowing for Village with mice, but not a roach in sight. It was a corner building and my
 98 a paradox of meaninglessness to bedroom window had a view to the North, where you could see the Empire
 99 mortality. The body is to be left State Building. There was a cafe on the ground floor, owned by a Parisian
 100 behind after death and upon entry couple. Metropol became my morning coffee before taking the subway to
 101 into paradise. It is at once isolated work in midtown at 26th and Sixth Avenue. It was there that I became
 102 by that fact but then thrown back friends with a young man, Blair, who drank Irish coffee every morning.
 103 into importance of the Hajj at After a couple of days I learned that he had witnessed the bombings of the
 104 Makkah—the second largest- WTC while on a cigarette break at a previous job in Tribeca. He cameoed
 105 pilgrimage in the continuum of as a currency trader while struggling to sell his paintings, his true passion
 106 history.^{iv} The prayers performed being wealth and the trimmings that go along with it. I would later learn
 107 are meant to be done in groups, that he was being trained by a convicted con who had duped millions from
 108 with people touching shoulders investors including his mother. I guess the trade-off for Blair was to take
 109 as if to assert that importance some training from the man who had already taken so much from himself.
 110 of the collective even more and
 111 the insignificance of the body or
 112 individual. You are always one but
 113 again part of a group, the role
 114 and mortality of the individual or
 115 group is always a question.
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 117
 118 Jihad, as it was originally defined,^v
 119 is a struggle or inner turmoil
 120 within oneself. Only in its most
 121 base, unthoughtful translations
 122 has the Quar’an ever shown it as
 123 an outright violent reaction to
 124 religious differences. It does not
 125 require force or mortal retaliation to external circumstances; it was a philosophical understanding of struggle for ourselves
 126 through our own lives—trying to be better. It is not supposed to enforce Islam as the only religion, as the prophet said ‘‘Unto
 127 you your religion, and unto me my religion’ [Qur’an; the unbelievers]. It was an idea about self control and a search for
 128 dignity in a world with many competing faiths—some of which, like Judaism, were very important to the prophet and are
 129 protected peoples in the Quran. If one choses to interpret things in the most base and bigoted ways, then no justice is done to
 130 the document regardless of the so-called piety of the follower.
 131
 132 To some Shiites, Whabbists, Kajrites, and fundamentalists, the sixth pillar of Islam after the five common to almost all types



133 is called Jihad. However, just as
 134 Christianity is not homogeneous,
 135 nor is Islam. It is fragmented,
 136 and to many Muslims, this word's
 137 meaning has been hijacked by
 138 illiterate fundamentalists. Yet even
 139 more stunning is that the Western
 140 media do the same on a daily
 141 basis and who by due diligence
 142 continue to ignore history, because
 143 it serves their ratings and culture
 144 to do so. As a result, everyone
 145 stays afraid and keeps tuned in at
 146 six in the evening.

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 149 **Figures 13 and 14 :** Opposite
 150 Above, The Ka'bah, during the
 151 Hajj. Opposite Below, Makkah
 152 urban plan.

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 158 The Ka'bah, or Cube, seems a
 159 monolithic object. This is enforced
 160 physically and psychologically, to
 161 the detriment of understanding
 162 more about it. It is reinforced
 163 by the black silken shroud that
 164 adorns its regular geometry and
 165 continually replaced. It is the
 166 object of directional focus during
 167 prayer. It is not the object of
 168 prayer, but rather the generator of community, through the shared
 169 participation in time and space of the Muslim Diaspora during prayer.
 170 In fact, the Ka'bah is not monolithic; it is void, and it is precisely
 171 that state of emptiness that is so critical, the act of voiding that
 172 architecture is the second founding act in Islam. A fact that cannot
 173 be emphasized enough.

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 175 The Ka'Ba predates Islam. It was the central Pagan shrine
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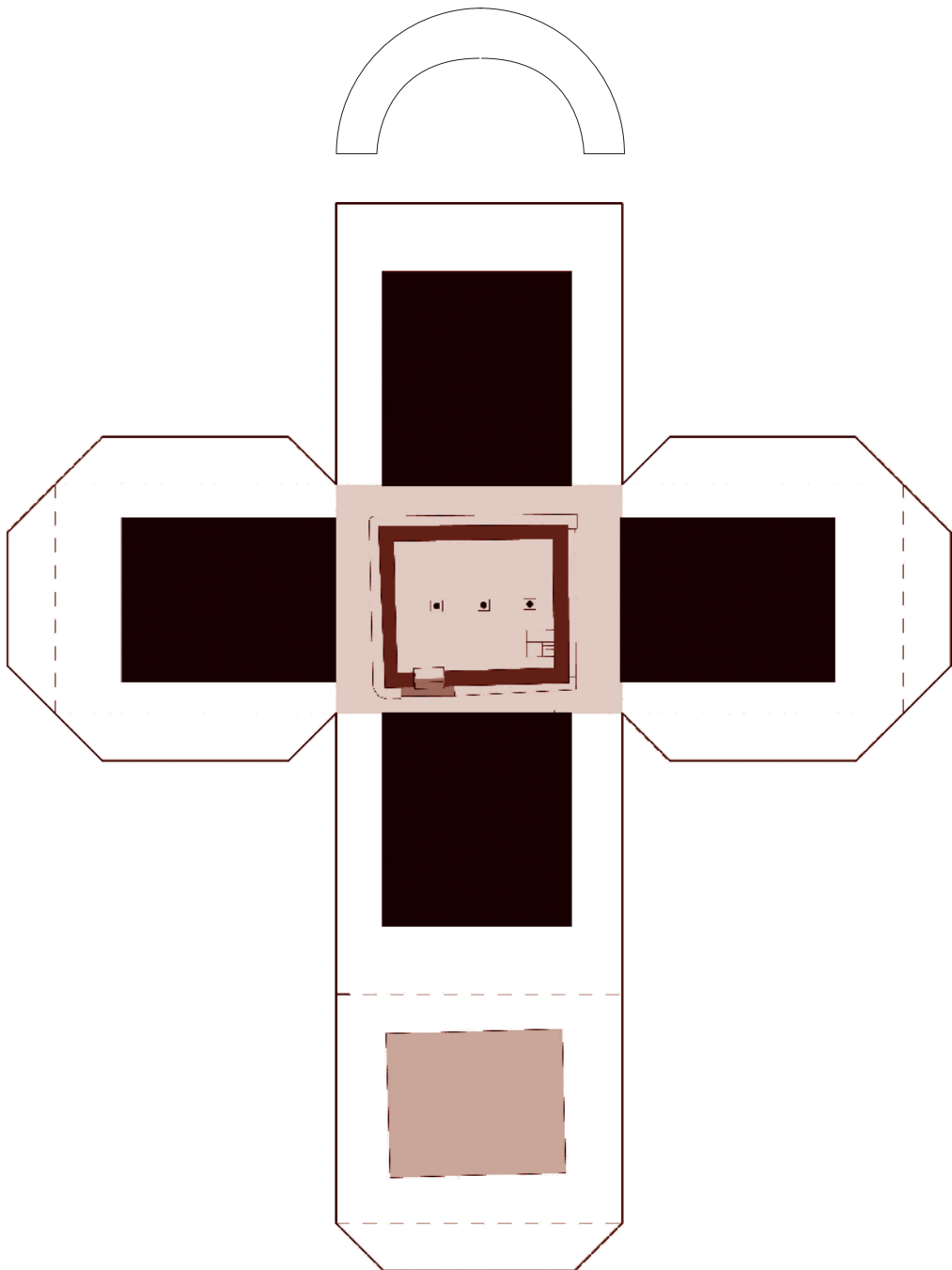
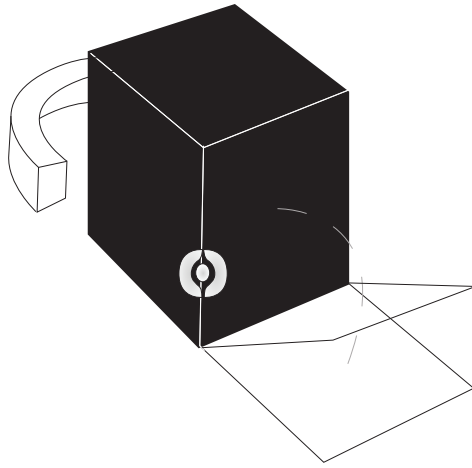
In a generation of wealthy Westerners who had never come close to any real suffering, something had to fill that void—if not fictionalized, at least staged. At that point, all I was thinking of was how to design the events of my life such that I would become worthy. Except there was no social revolution taking place; I would have to construct those events and rebel against a fictitious Red Brigade.

Sometimes education can be romantic enough to be a beginning, but not everyone is so lucky. Universities are founded on that kind of separation from events, the observer from afar, but the privilege of criticism is fundamental to that model—it doesn't work if it is real. That isn't experience, it is a dress rehearsal. They simulate a role in the event through distanced observation, or authority through respect, above all through reputation.

I visited Ground Zero for the first time at the end of the first month of work. The disaster area, which by this point had been transformed into a construction pit, was nondescript except for scale. It was very bleak and disappointing. There wasn't a sign of the surreal remains of the first floor columns of that fantastic building after its collapse. I was upset because I couldn't really fathom the forces that had been in play in that space years earlier. Nothing remained except the feelings of blame and fear.

On the day of the attacks there were people in many buildings simultaneously. One that strikes me is the mosque at Makkah, because it is the centre of any Muslim's world. Through time something else connected them. What I saw in that pit were two architectures juxtaposed, the Western twin towers and the Middle Eastern Ka'bah at Makkah. The simplicity and power of them both fighting for survival, one against the wrath of the markets and the other to maintain faith. I was imagining the fluid metallic skin of the World Trade Center facades in contrast to the perfect black silk veil bellowing in the hot Sirocco over the ancient mortar of the Ka'bah at the center of Makkah. The Ka'bah is a modest structure, a black cube, grey and void. From above, it looks like a strange remnant at the center of an explosion, a static core with a vibrating mass around it. Yet the height of the Ka'bah in the hearts of its believers trumped any faith in the other that day.

Everything I imagined that day was in opposing groups, always in pairs. Always one or the other, the twin towers, right and wrong, life and death. Our brains are a reflection of that paradox. Maybe that is



177 in the region and the source of
 178 economic prosperity to the city
 179 (esposito, watt, et al). The shrine,
 180 which the Quran states was built
 181 by Abraham, was described by
 182 Plutarch, Ovid and even Dionysius
 183 of Helicanarsis as having the same
 184 structure as that of the universe.

185
 186 Many scholars link the foundation
 187 of Islam to powerful geopolitical
 188 and economic forces in the area
 189 resulting from Ka’ba’s importance
 190 as a universal pagan shrine. In
 191 some ways this makes Islam
 192 the most inclusive rather than
 193 exclusive Abrahamic strand.

194
 195 The exterior walls enclose a room
 196 of equal proportions within, devoid
 197 of contents. When Muhammad
 198 returned to Makkah in 622
 199 C.E. the first thing he and his
 200 followers did was to destroy all of
 201 the Pagan idols stored within it.
 202 Destroying the Ka’bah’s contents
 203 was to proclaim Makkah as the
 204 new gravitational center of the
 205 monotheistic Islam. The seal of
 206 the three Abrahamic religions,
 207 wherein humans were not made
 208 in the image of God, the new
 209 description of God was in abstract
 210 terms: God is light upon Light.

211
 212 **Figures 13 and 14 :** Opposite Above, The Ka’Bah, during the
 213 Hajj. Opposite Below, Makkah urban plan.

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 216
 217 But if the religion would be about a more powerful and abstract concept
 218 of God and community, why would the early Muslims and Muhammad
 219 not have also destroyed the Ka’bah, leaving in its place a point or
 220 abstract dot in the centre of a space?

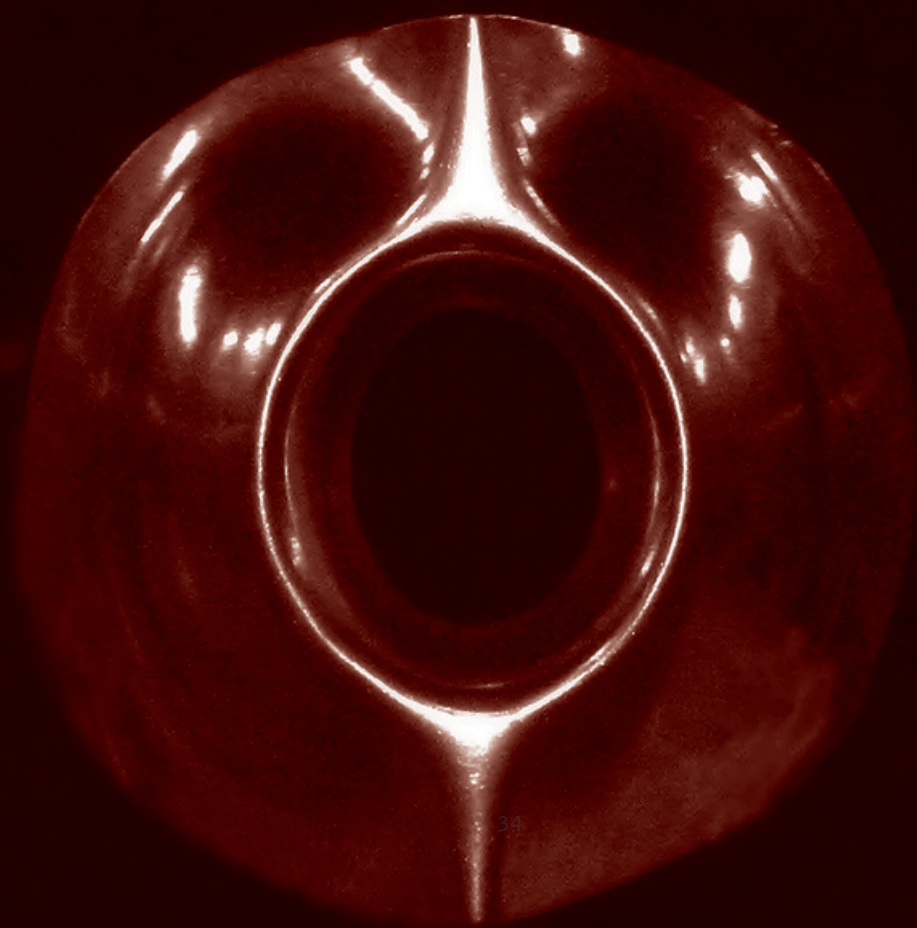
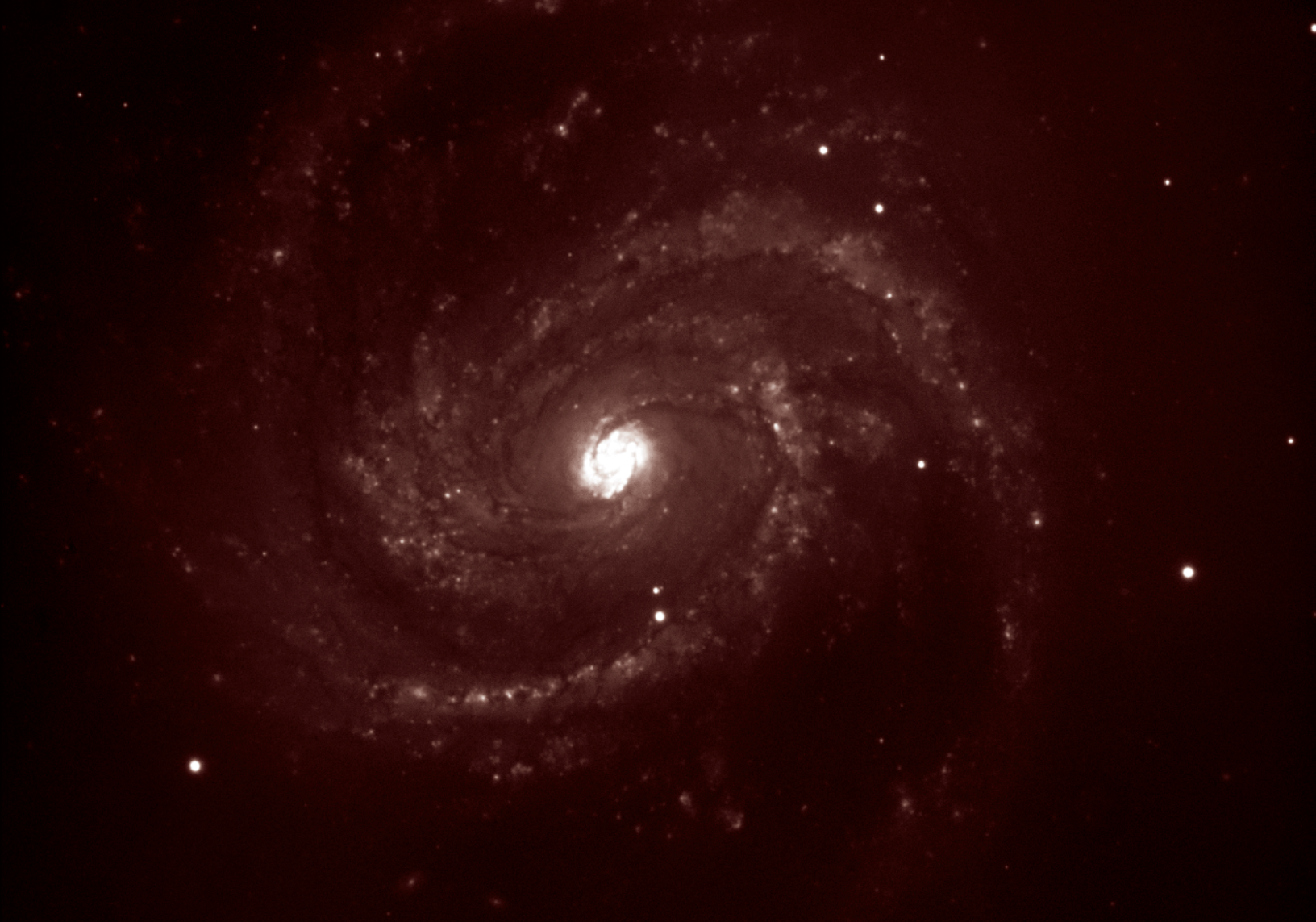
the reason; after all, we have a left and right brain, separate and distinct;
 seemingly in contrast from one another. Perhaps the simple fact that two
 things exist and act in opposition to one another, creates a net reaction such
 as consciousness. ^{vi}

The tragedy in 2001 showed the confluence of two cultural rhythms, not a
 clash of civilizations. Two rhythms that have followers that truly believe in
 them. There is no doubt in my mind that a faith exists in America and it is
 so strong in some that it smacks religious. On that day both groups were
 submitting themselves to their higher powers, some throwing themselves
 off towers, in desperation to escape the heat and ensuing collapse, others
 bowing down before the abstract presence of God facing toward Makkah.
 The images of those people, flying through the air, are seldom mentioned,
 they are too painful. But they also have a frightening peacefulness, as if the
 faith in a better moment or future was proclaimed by their act. Halfway
 across the globe another kind of solemn peace was proclaimed bowing
 down in worship toward the Ka’bah. People resigned themselves to a higher
 power, in hopes of something better. It was a continuous event, it was a
 prayer amidst the acts of suicidal maniacs a world away.

But where do people face when the object of their goal no longer stands?
 Or when that object is always moving beyond their horizon? Where will we
 go into the future, and toward what star is our trajectory aimed? Ironically,
 all of this was allegedly precipitated by a group of young men who were in
 violation of the most basic rules of Islam, some being drunk the day of the
 attacks ^{vi}. But regardless, it gave Western opinion makers and politicians
 free reign to extend the mutual hatred that existed since the conquest of
 Granada in 1492 or earlier, when Spanish Muslims were forced to leave
 that country or face death. These events, far in the past, don’t sublimate;
 they have strong presence in contemporary emotions. “There are, above all,
 times in which the human reality, always mobile, accelerates, and bursts into
 vertiginous speeds. Our time is such a one, for it is made of descent and fall.

^{vii} History has made such an impression that it simply needed to be repeated
 over and over again. Like a prayer, every
 Sunday at church or even five times per day
 facing toward the Ka’bah.

There are two types of New Yorkers: those
 who experienced the attacks first-hand and
 those that didn’t. The two have a different
 concept of fear—one is real and the other
 is virtual. I represented perhaps the third
 untouchable caste of post 9/11 New
 Yorkers: immigrant workers, the people



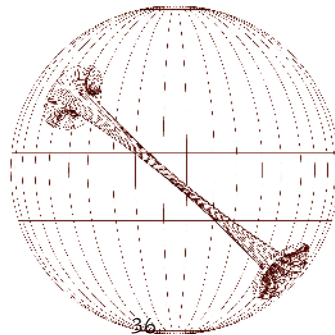
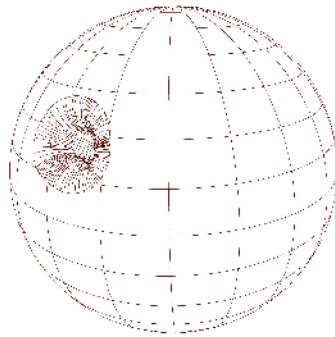
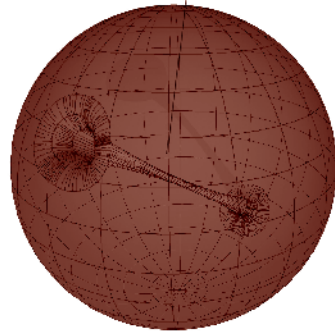
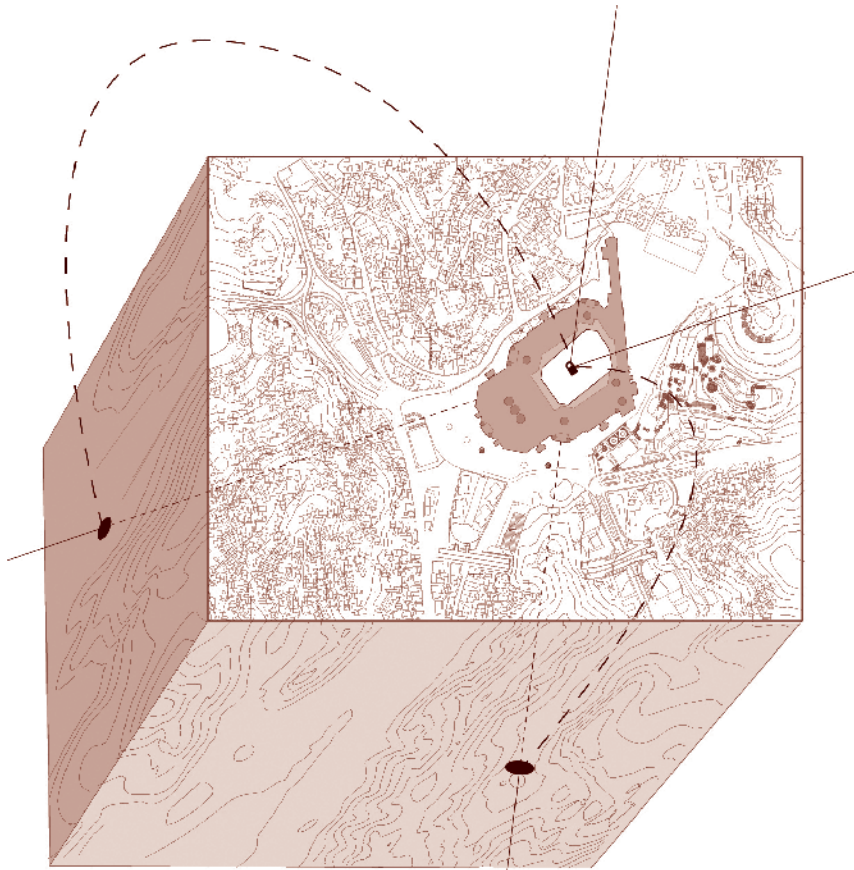
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Thus, this Pagan site of pilgrimage became a powerful symbol of cosmic proportions. Much like the gravitational centre of a galaxy, all of its followers would look to Makkah as their spiritual and moral epicentre. It would even be adorned by the pieces of a comet-meteorite that is the center of the ritual of the rights of Umrah. The black stone, or Hajar Aswad, brings the Ka'bah a cosmic dimension, with the center of gravitational or spiritual energy being the paradoxical supreme power of the void within. It is the very same process as a star supernova expelling its excess burnt or extraneous matter, only to recombine into the most powerful force in the universe: a black hole, a place in which all physical laws break down, where the gravity is so intense that we cannot prove its components. Leaving us to question where and who we are in this seemingly infinite system of dimensions.

Figures 16 and 17 : Opposite Above: The Pinwheel Galaxy with supermassive black hole at center. Below: The silver frame protecting the rock of the Ka'bah, The black stone, or Hajar Aswad, a meteorite dedicated to the prophet Abraham.

who came to grow there in the city's wound. We had gone West instead of East, like bourgeois morons, wherever the world continued toward a wild untouchable horizon and we the decadent came to fill in back West. Those who were always there were now part of the nucleus of a new world defined by the immediacy of real fear; the fear of falling architecture, of temples and capitals. The others on the periphery would become the scared and protected public, huddling in an emotional suburb.

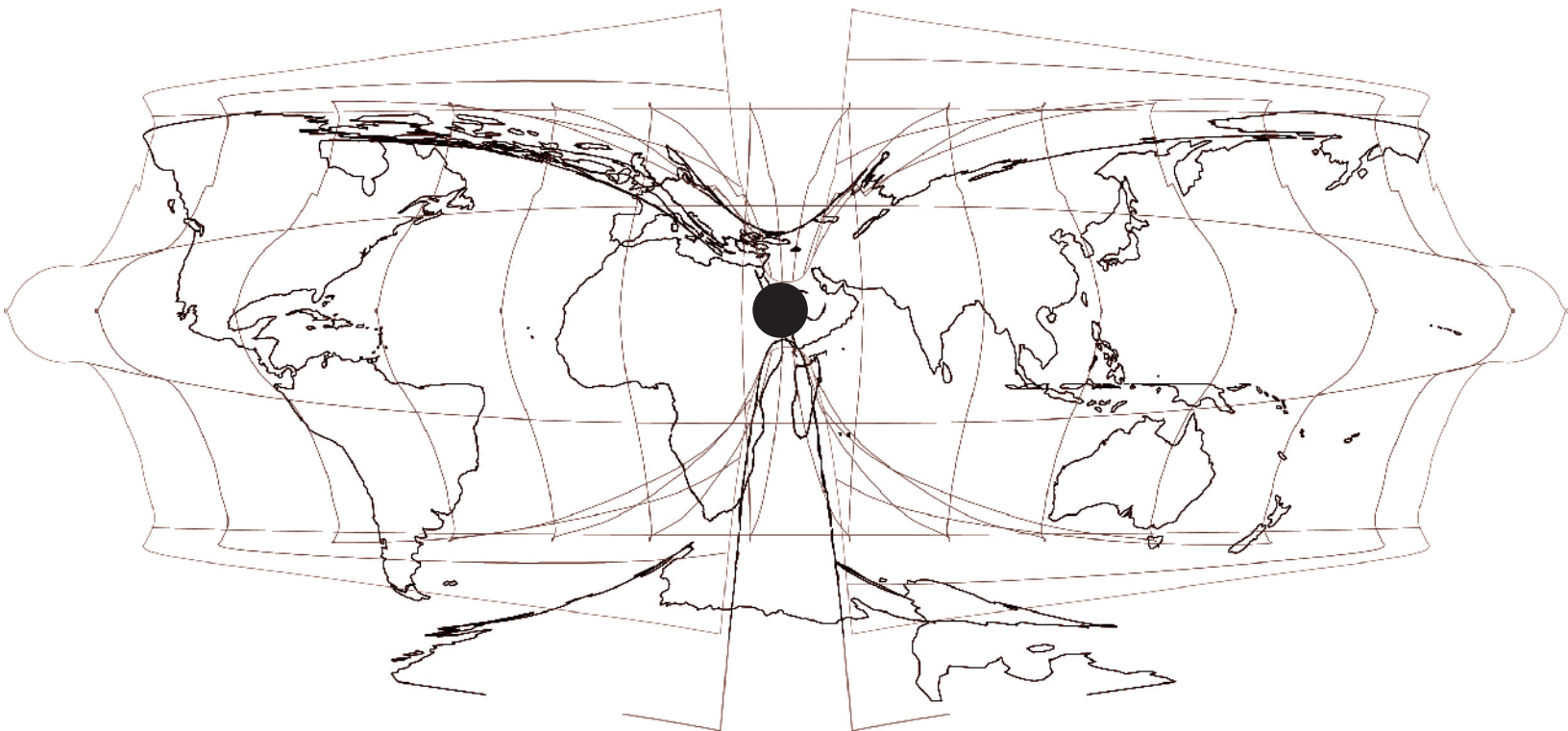
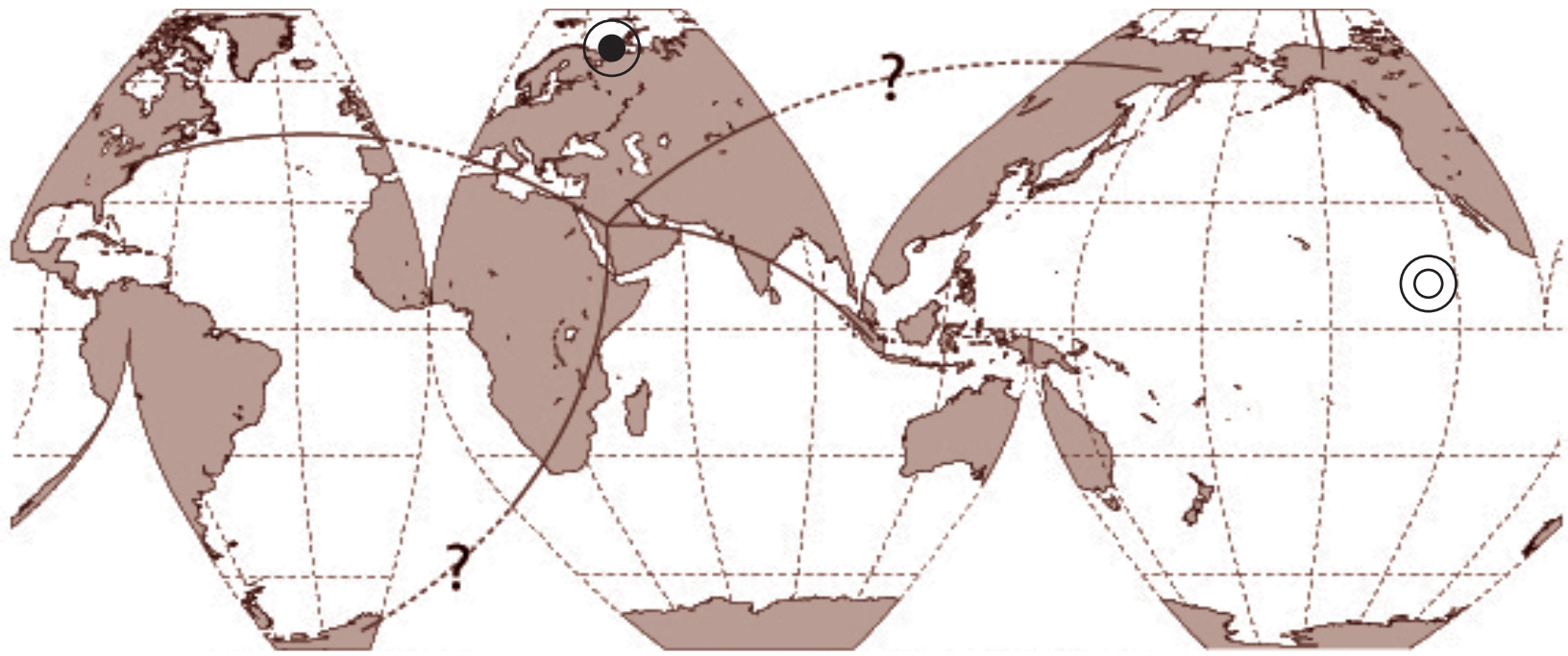
Whether real, or hypothetically through 'threat levels,' the consciousness of vulnerability became a cultural reality. That event, though not unique, made an impression in the fabric of civilizations. Another temple had fallen, and just like Solomon's, its foundations would be preserved for eternity. The people touched by that attack became part of the underpinnings of a new history, a new chapter—one more night being added to the two thousand and one already written.



260 **Figures 18 and 19:** Opposite
 261 Above: Cubic Plan 1. Makkah
 262 and the post enlightenment Globe.
 263 With illustrative curves and lines
 264 of intersection with orientation to
 265 the Ka'bah. Opposite Below: The
 266 earth with imaginary bridges to
 267 Makkah.

268
 269 In the year 623CE, the prophet
 270 Muhammad received a revelation
 271 ordering his followers to face
 272 Makkah. They had previously used
 273 another focal point, Jerusalem,
 274 during prayer. The world did
 275 not have distinct boundaries or
 276 form at that time—in fact, most
 277 cultures believed it was flat.
 278 Orientating toward a destination
 279 was done using stars. The sun was
 280 used on particular days of the
 281 year when it would be directly
 282 90 degrees perpendicular to a
 283 location, in this case Makkah was
 284 perfect as it is almost equatorial.
 285 Today, on a spherical Earth, at
 286 greater distances the idea of
 287 orientation changes, ironically, it
 288 becomes in a sense paradoxical:
 289 do you orient to an arc that a
 290 plane would fly or to latitude, or
 291 through the mantle of the Earth?
 292 This has architectural implications
 293 for the orientation and design of
 294 Mosques and public squares in
 295 Muslim cultures.

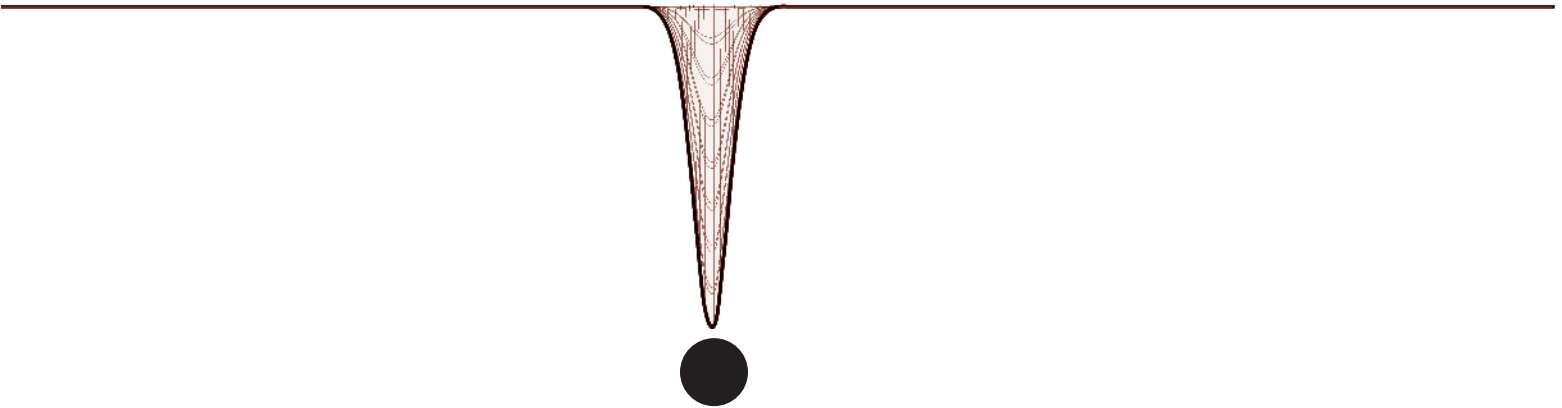
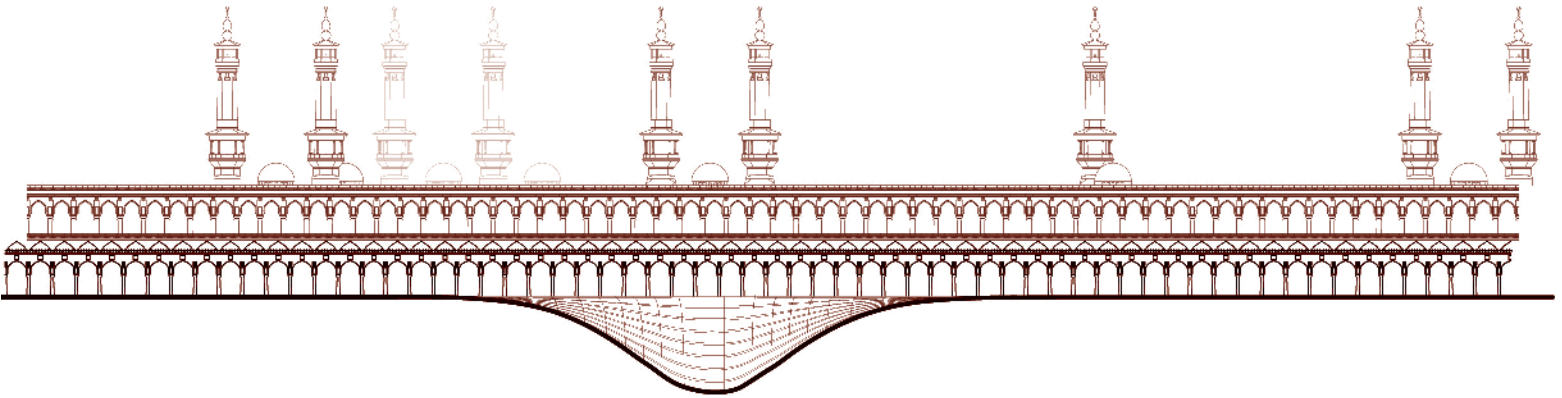
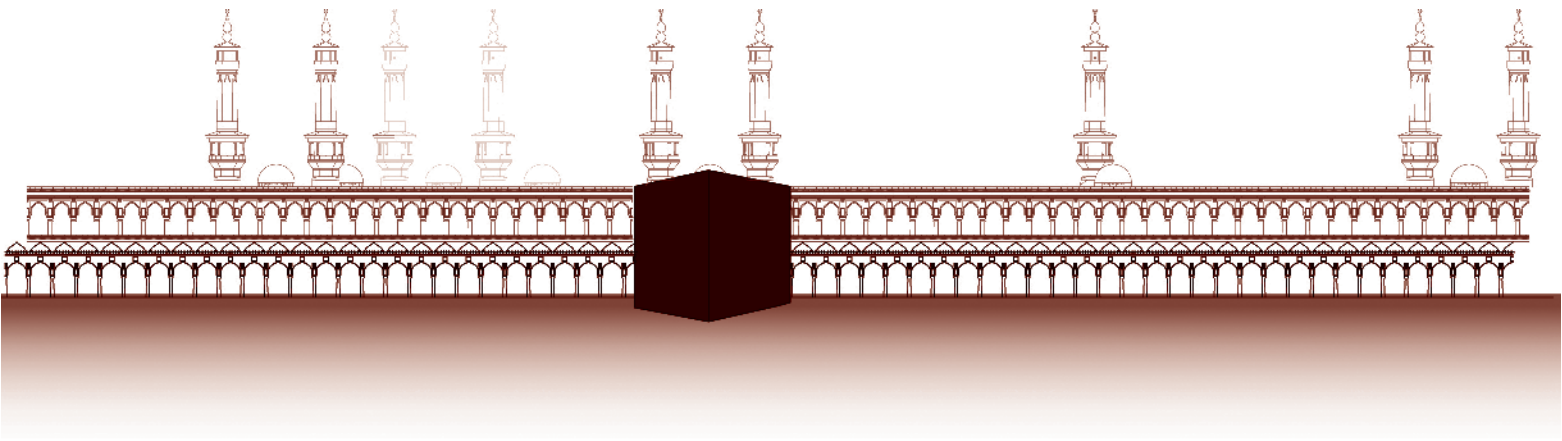
296
 297 There are a few ways to see the orientation of prayer in Islam.
 298 The first is to see it as an abstract concept without real physical
 299 importance, thus the idea of orienting toward Makkah can be done
 300 inexactly. The second is to follow the methods of rhumb lines and arcs
 301 to establish the orientation of the shortest line in distance to makkah
 302 or a line that travels without 'curvature', but in fact both have that
 303 property. Ironically, when this is done, two focal points result, the



304 antipode of Makkah lies in one of
 305 the most isolated regions of the
 306 Southern Pacific Ocean. The third
 307 way is to see oneself in relation to
 308 Makkah and draw a line traveling
 309 within the earth to the Ka'bah,
 310 this is an angle cutting into the
 311 ground and directly intersecting
 312 the Ka.Baa. This third method is
 314 never followed by Muslims, but in
 315 fact, it would be the most direct
 316 orientation. The fundamental point
 318 is that these rules, though stated
 319 in the Quran, cannot be seen as
 320 static.

321
 322
 324

325 **Figures 20 and 21:** Opposite
 326 above: A standard pseudocyclical
 327 map of the Earth with arcs of
 328 orientation to Makkah.
 329 Opposite below: Makkah as the
 330 new gravitation center of the
 331 earth.



332 There is nothing new about changing historically important aspects of mosques across Islam. The best precedent for this
 333 was the changes made to Isfahan by the Sfauid Kings in the early first millenium. In fact, these changes were almost
 334 always political rather than religious.

335
 336 The recent crisis in Makkah is
 337 population and crowd control,
 338 they have to expand the scale of
 339 the mosque to accomodate the
 340 Hajj. But what about expanding
 341 the nature of the Hajj itself,
 342 the nature of the centre of the
 343 mosque, not only its exterior?

344
 345 **Figures 22 and 23:** Opposite
 346 above: The main central zone of
 347 Makkah and the Ka’Bah. Opposite
 348 below: The Ka’Bah removed and
 349 replace by a depression in the
 350 floor of the Mosque.

351
 352 For example, to get the rest of the
 353 Makkahns to convert to Islam, the
 354 prophet Muhammad changed the
 355 focus of prayer to Makkah rather
 356 than Jerusalem [Quran Surah 2,
 357 The Cow, Lines 120-160, Qibla].
 358 This was the way to get the most
 359 powerful and politically important
 360 people in the city, such as the
 361 Quraishi (keeper of the Keys),
 362 to convert to Islam. Essentially,
 362 he aligned the socio-economic
 364 interests of the most powerful
 365 clans in Makkah with the religion.
 366 Thus, the religion is very political,
 367 physically, always changing.

368
 369 Change is Islamic, it is not the horrible static object depicted by the ignorant. The temple at Isfahan, one of the most
 370 important cities and temples in the Muslim world, was changed to help create one of the most spectacular public plazas in
 371 history. When the square was built for the city, the Sfauid Kings, who were sufis that converted to Shiite, actually moved the
 372 friday Mosque to activate the public plaza in front of the royal palace and gardens! It became essentially an extension of the
 373 procession marked by the bazaar and royal garden. This place is still evolving, they changed the name to the Imam Khomaini
 374 mosque, which is further evidence of politics in religion; the original name was the King’s Mosque.

375



376 In Isfehan, the top of the square
 377 is the kings palace, it used to be
 378 separate, however they joined
 379 them and then built the square,
 380 isfehan was built for ceremonies.
 381 so they matched the square to
 382 the palace. thus the major public
 383 space was oriented to the political
 384 power, not the religion within
 385 the mosque. In fact, it is widely
 386 understood that the Ayatolla
 387 was far more active in politics
 388 during his life than he was ever a
 389 religious cleric.
 390
 391 The way to get the people back
 392 to the square, the only way they
 393 could get the population to come
 394 to the square was to move the
 395 friday mosque to the bottom end
 396 of the square, thus also rotated
 397 toward makkah, seemingly in
 398 no relation to the major public
 avenues. Very convincing work
 has been done proving this set of
 evolutionary characteristics by
 a young Iranian Architect and
 Historian, Pooya Baktiash (see
 appendix).

Figures 24 and 25: Opposite
 above: The center of Makkah and
 the Ka’Bah. Opposite below: The
 Ka’Bah removed and replaced by
 a depression in the floor of the Masjid Al-Haram. This becomes the
 new naval of the earth, the spot where our greatest aspirations of the
 abstract and the greater than life are manifest.



On Authority

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In The Absence of Myth, George Bataille rejects that modern humanity can produce myth. This may have felt real and easily argued at the turn of the century, but it couldn't be further from the truth today. Twenty-first century humanity produces myth and propaganda more realistically than in any other age. Postmodern human cultures began creating the perfect myths, because they are taken as truths projected over infinite time scales via software and technology meant to attack our ability to decipher real from fake. It might be interesting to art historians to accept the contrary, for reasons of nostalgia, but we can consider it debunked on the morning of September 11th 2001. Today is an age where story is truth, bias becomes faith. The age wherein people discuss creating life from nothing* to solve fossil fuel shortages or managing our global climates with geo-engineering.^x Tomorrow, a young woman will strap bombs to her bosom and take down another temple, just like Samson. Next week is a new mythology that does not speak of an afterlife, but rather the immortal life just out of our reach. But being inserted into the frameworks of the media has solved that problem already. It has legitimized our most outrageous fetishes.

Figure 26: Opposite : A series of prayer rugs, from left to right: Ladik 17th-18th C.E., Melas 18th C.E, South Persion, 18th C.E.

4 *In another time, in a desert oasis on the southern tip of the Arabian peninsula, there lived the queen Sheba. Her beauty was irresistible, and her powers alchemical. It was long before the birth of Christianity or Islam, in an area where Pharaohs, Pagans and Jews reigned. Sheba was so captivating and her lands so fertile that she was said to be one who could control matter and its states, affecting destiny. Nearby, in the land known as Kanaan, a King named Solomon was building one of the greatest temples in history, His First Temple. It would have been close to 1000/1623B.C.E. When Sheba heard of Solomon's great efforts and of his greatness she decided that she must meet him in person. But instead of going to him, she would bring him to her. Using her powers, Sheba created a flying carpet large enough to hold his entire court. With it he could fly them all speedily across his kingdom, across the desert, to see Sheba in hers. It was an object made out of desire.*

A competition was held in New York in the Winter of 2002-03 to design a piece of furniture for the twenty-first century. I decided to enter. At that point, the website counter indicated more than nine hundred groups submitting designs. After all, it was just a drawing, nothing had actually been given the responsibility of being real.

The organizers released a competition brief offering the definition to work from: 'a chair is a device with four legs and a back to support a person, it can also be a position of authority and dignity.' Based on the exact constraints of times passed, they wanted something 'hot,' something for the future. They used the slogan of being in the hot seat. Their rules needed to melt into thin air. The story of Sheba's flying carpet is more open to the future than their avant-garde nostalgia. The chair, or any object for the twenty-first century, would need to support different definitions and functions than a back.

I asked Blair, my breakfast partner, if he was interested in looking at some ideas, perhaps even working together. I began with tiny sketches of things like chairs with various functions, starting with one that could accommodate bodily secretions: the diaper chair. This evolved into various other explorations including sexual positioning, but alas, I found out that this too had already been achieved—even mass produced by Karim Rashid. Anything I dreamed of and drew up in my original investigations were parts of well-mapped terrains. I needed another vessel, or at least a vast ocean that nobody had crossed yet. Perhaps a chair for a terrorist? Or perhaps a chair made of the remains of the WTC, left at a dump on Staten Island? Blair suggested that we create a bean

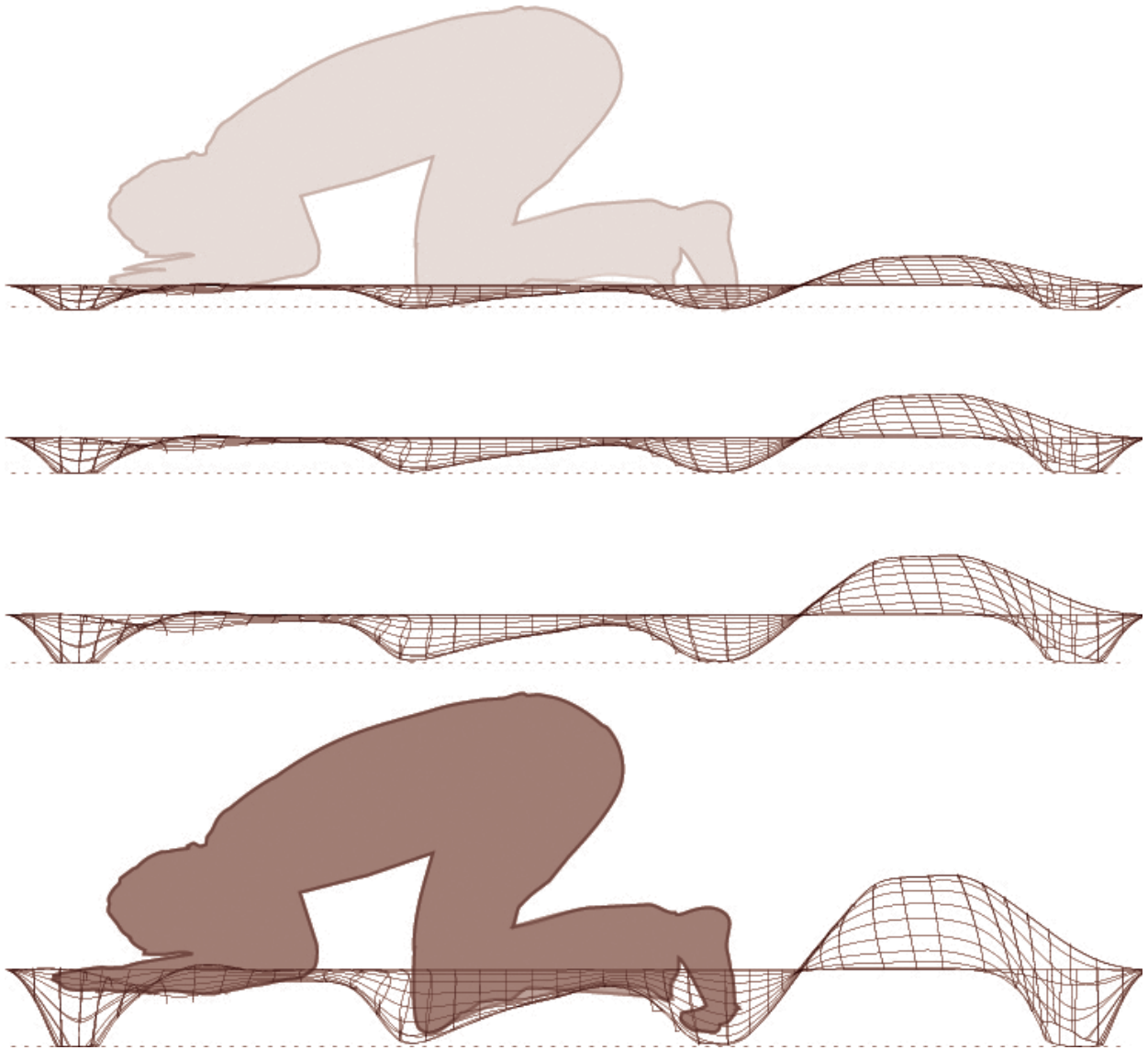


Figure 27 : Developmental renderings of the monuments for prayer.

45 The prayer rug is never mentioned in the Quran; it is a device that evolved out of necessity, not doctrine. Nonetheless, it
 46 has become an icon in depictions of a Muslim's life and faith outside of Islam. Because prayer is central to a religion that
 47 is more orthopraxic than others, the rug is simply a clean practical medium upon which to perform it. Indeed, textiles and
 48 pattern-making became essential
 49 aspects of Islamic cultures, thus
 50 these rugs also came to be seen
 51 as objects of joy and pride. It
 52 made sense for those objects to be
 53 depicted in legends. Specifically,
 54 the Arabian Nights tome was
 55 full of Pagan stories retold and
 56 understood in the Arab peninsula.
 57 ^{viii} These stories helped form the
 58 icons or windows into Islam; they
 59 made it popular.

60
 61 In Islam, the prayer rug and
 62 prayer itself are icons that
 63 define its form, and they have
 64 rich history. Salaat, the position
 65 that must be held precisely and
 66 accurately five times daily became
 67 the epicentre of this experient. In
 68 some way this is a familiar kind of
 69 ergonomic furniture, a chair with
 70 a purpose and general function.
 71 The most compelling aspect of
 72 this impression is the possibil-
 73 ity of tiling it over large spaces.
 74 The field that results echoes the
 75 function and collectivity of the
 76 source, which is also part of the
 77 experience in a Mosque, as in a
 78 field of beings.

79
 80 The word 'Islam' means to submit
 81 oneself, before God^{xi}. More subtly, it is a condition of being resigned to the existence of God, the act is continuous. Submis-
 82 sion is not only a linguistic law, but a bodily activity, ritualized. The concept runs through the heart and body of the religion
 83 manifest in Salaat, the word for prayers. It is part of daily existence regardless of any circumstance. A chair based on these
 84 histories and faith would be an extension of the magic carpet. This design is a myth manifest physically.

85
 86 Salaat is the central act in a Muslim's life, one's day is meant to begin and end in prayer, a rhythm set by the cosmos as moon
 87 dances around Earth. It is fundamentally different than those of Christianity or Judaism. It is not concerned with repentance,
 88 rather the universality of God and the act of submission to that force into perpetuity. It is the only abrahamic religion in

bag stuffed with the remains, or ashes of the victims of September 11th. The
 recovery effort that ensued immediately after the towers had collapsed was
 made next to impossible due to the heat the fires within produced. Melted
 steel beams effervesced a hot slaggy tang. I abandoned the work for a while,
 not seriously thinking that an entry would happen.

It was noon on a January morning and absolutely frigid. I was walking
 along the street thinking of the current state of this nonextant chair. Then I
 stumbled on a man prostrate upon a carpet of crumpled newspapers, wedged
 between the concrete curb clad in steel and a filthy Ford F-150, facing east:
 he was praying. He must have just run out of time to find a peaceful place,
 so he made his own, right there in the street. I could imagine that the layer
 of slush supporting the paper would have been rather comfortable, perhaps
 even ergonomic. The newspapers were just able to hold back its wet deluge
 creeping around the edge of the street.

The chair was going to support that precise act and position in space and
 time: a prayer chair. That hot, droopy, ergonomic plastic and runny resin
 from all the studios I had frequented was infecting me. It was only natural
 that the grid and rational forms that we always experienced would melt
 again; it needed software to heat the line, make autocad vectors bend and
 move.

I didn't know anything about Islam. It was something I had only an
 impression of through the media. It was a new place for a kid who grew
 up in a Jewish neighborhood, so I began there. Everything had come full
 circle from the first days of school on September 11th, 2001. By now it was
 the trendiest field to investigate, from literature to genetic science. Nobody
 could escape from the constant media barrage: terrorism and war were
 everywhere. Everyone getting on a plane was now looking manically for any

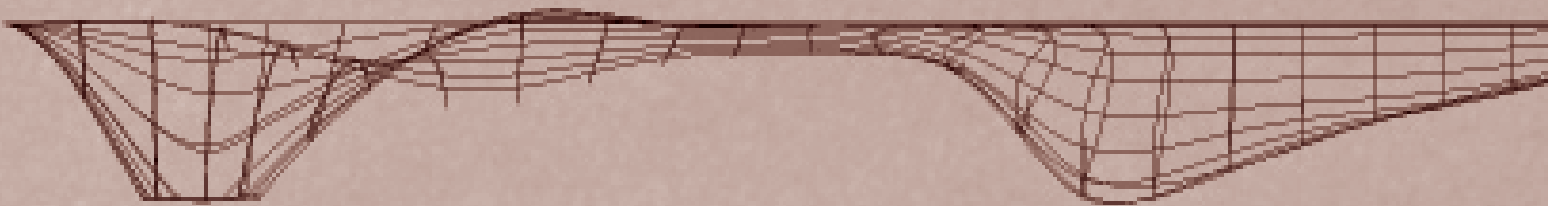
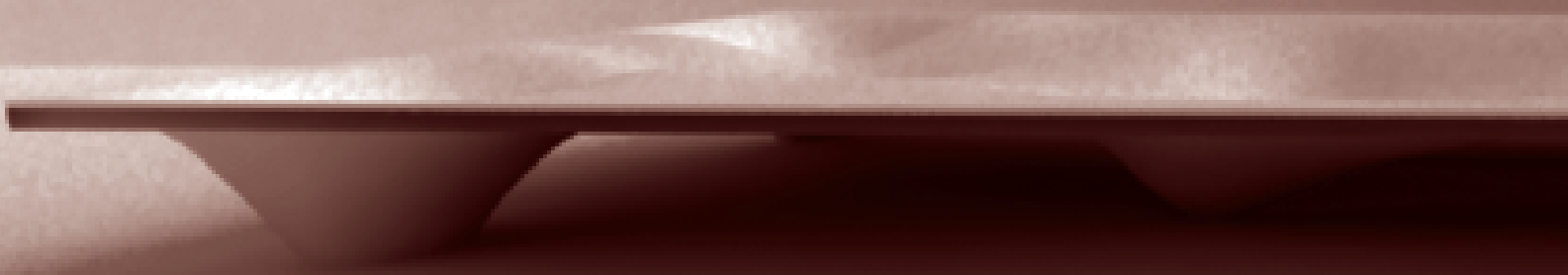
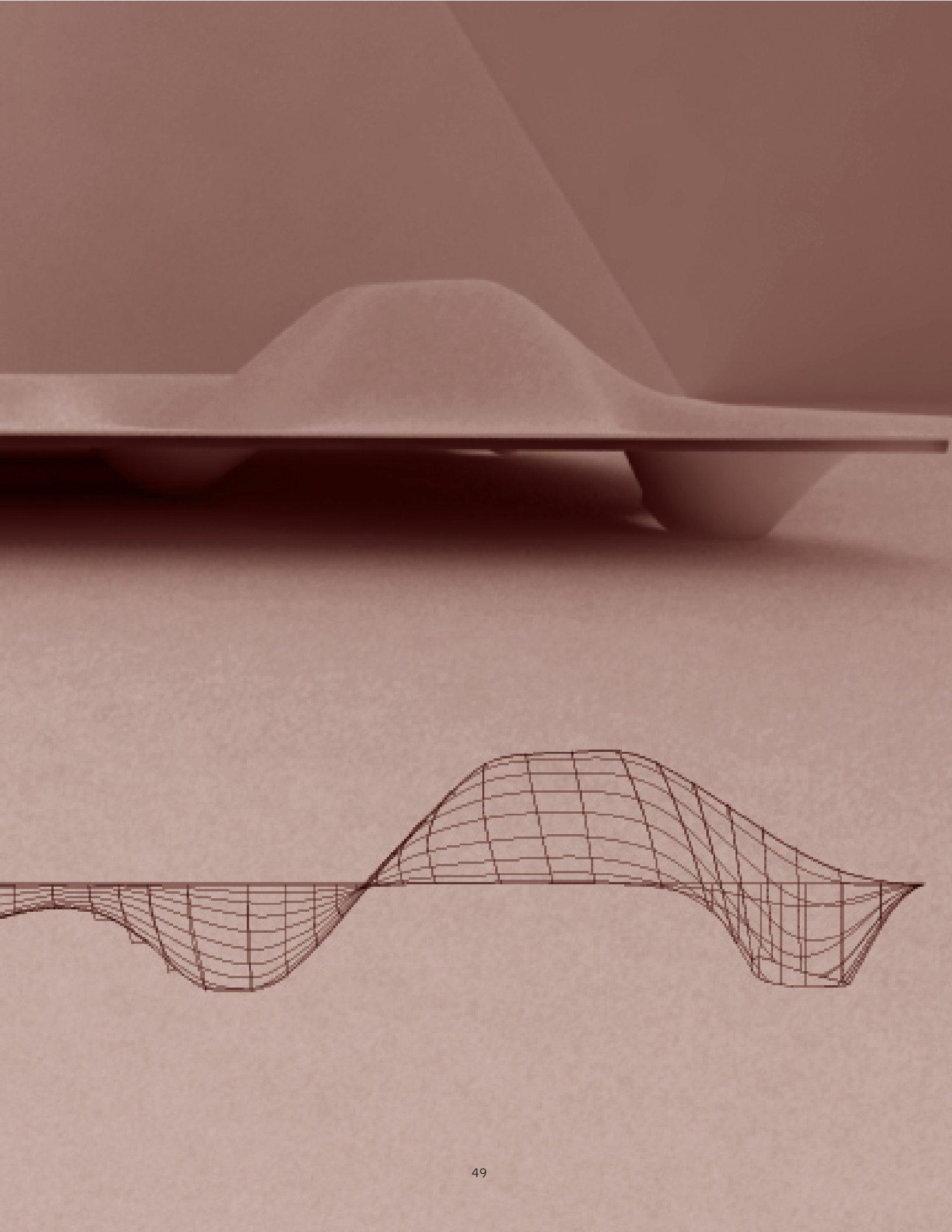
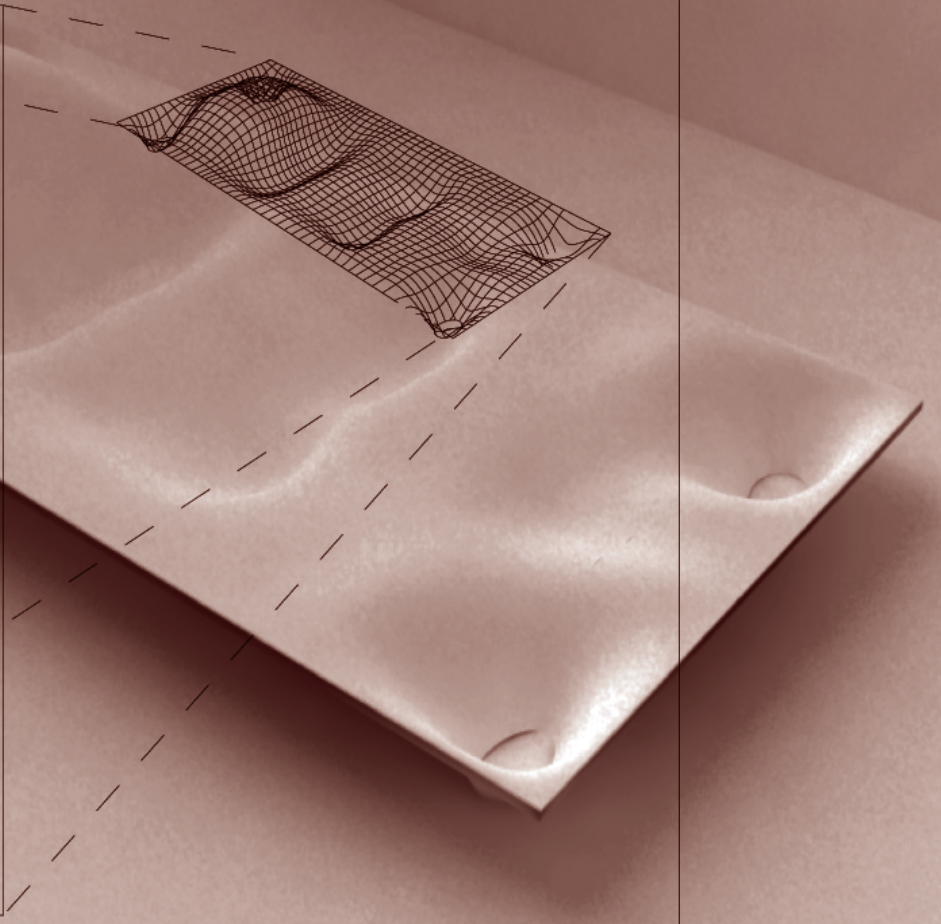
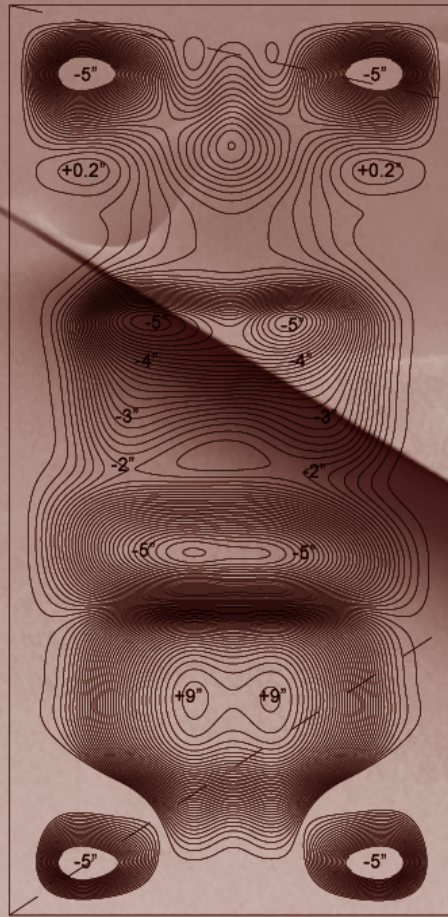


Figure 28 : *Developmental renderings of the monuments for prayer.*





89 which a specific spatial dimension in the present is tied to another, the orientation to the spiritual locus at Makkah and as
 90 well as the metaphysical space of It involves a specific set of movements choreographed precisely for men and women
 91 apart.

92
 93 Salaat prayer begins with an ac-
 94 tual gesture wherein the hand and
 95 palms are lifted to besides ones'
 96 ears as if to sign the world being
 97 left behind for the rest of the
 98 prayer. In Salaat, the absolute res-
 99 ignation to Allah is choreographed
 100 through a set of physical moves.
 101 They place god not as a human
 102 being or idol but as a force beyond
 103 comprehension and representa-
 104 tion. 'God is Light upon Light;
 105 God guides to His Light whom He
 106 will [Qur'an 24:41]. During this
 107 prayer repentance is not the goal,
 108 this space is not about guilt but
 109 about the faith in Allah's unique
 110 authority to our world. By submit-
 111 ting to him and only him, your
 112 redemption is certified.

113
 114 The prayers are oriented not only
 115 in terms of a choreography of the
 116 body and earth (to the Ka'bah)
 117 but also in another space and
 118 time. The lunar cycles are used
 119 to break the day into 5 prayers
 120 beginning in early morning and
 121 late at night. These times change
 122 daily and are broadcast all over
 123 the world through various outlets.

124 The lunar calendar, which is a 28
 125 day cycle also defines the holy month of Ramadan. The connectivity of the prayer and ritualistic sequences of Islam are part
 126 of a very interrelated whole.

127
 128 Each impression is the residue of a moment in worship, the point during Salaat where the worshipper is most precarious
 129 and vulnerable. It is a position that is inescapable. It is a particular moment in space and time that is repeated ad infinitum
 130 around the world. five times per day. It is a reflection of the lunar cycles and it is a testament to the intense routine required
 131 by law in Islam.

132 What this does is bring the worshipper in tune with a collective consciousness of all Muslims during prayer. You are present

Muslims in line at the boarding gate. What does a Muslim look like? A fear
 perfectly packaged for the consumption of Westerners, by none other than
 our unbiased Western media. It is a fear toward Muslims with no legitimacy
 except to the most hardened. After all, why or how could anybody be afraid
 of Americans?

I thought it might be nice to loosen up a bit, but the whiskey bottle didn't
 last too long. Blair and I decided to hole ourselves up in my apartment until
 something was finished. The wail of heavy metal one minute contrasted
 the solemn tones of Arvo Part the next; we had different tastes, but for a
 banker, Blair had a nonsensical mood set that would change at any given
 moment. I always imagined financial types being decadent characters with
 limited emotional connection. The drinking, started after a couple of hours
 of inertia, prevented us from accomplishing anything—we just sat there
 talking and arguing. By about midnight my friend Neri, who was working
 for a famous architect during her time off from school at Yale, came over.
 She was a demure type, highly academic, with a facade of total control and
 cool intelligence. Her mother had moved to Canada from Barbados, she was
 undeniably sexy, her rabid logic barely held back what lay beneath. We were
 wrecked by the time she arrived and Blair had already begun asking me to
 shave off his hair with a trimmer.

By the time the second bottle of whiskey was half through, his hair was all
 over my floor, and I passed out on the bed in the centre of the space. He and
 Neri had made some kind of attempt at love on my couch, how so I have no
 idea. But by this time Blair had stumbled back up and over near me at the
 bed, Neri having left presumably just before. I woke up to the sweet stench
 of warm steamy urine; he had mistaken the bed for the toilet.

I sprang from my position under the duvet. Blair was so startled that he fell
 over as I hit him, his head making square blunt contact with the hardwood

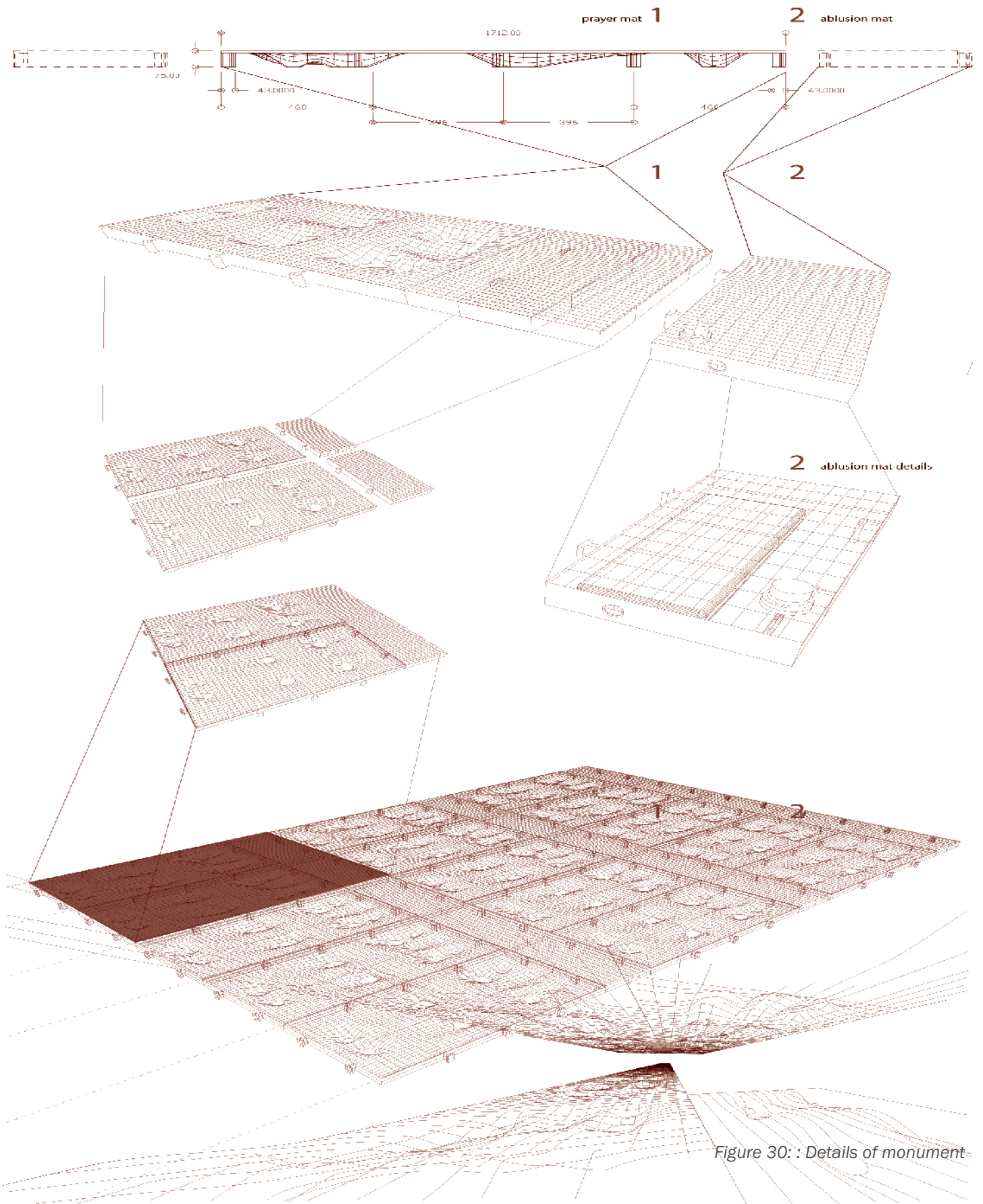


Figure 30: : Details of monument

133 and absent simultaneously as all
 134 other Muslims pray around the
 135 globe. They all face Makkah, if
 136 not symbolically, very accurately
 137 through the positioning of
 138 minarets or a niche in a mosque
 139 which is in itself always orientated
 140 to Makkah, as to suggest the
 141 layering and multidimensional
 142 aspect of a spiritual space.

143
 144 In Islam, humans are not made
 145 in the image of God—Allah is not
 146 physically comprehensible. It is
 147 the singular point that defines
 148 Islam from the other Abrahamic
 149 cultures. Anthropomorphic and
 150 figurative expressions of Allah
 151 became frowned upon by Muslim
 152 religious scholars. This changed
 153 the development of the arts in
 154 Islam in relation to the West
 155 where sculpture and figurative
 156 interpretations, even idolatry
 157 became so important. Islam
 158 developed other arts, textiles,
 159 mosaics, and music are free
 160 of the rules classical western
 161 models abide to. An appreciation
 162 for mathematics and geometry
 163 became popular, as the works
 164 of Pythagoras had traveled
 165 through to the Arab peninsula in
 166 the years before. Algebra, from
 167 Al-Jabr in Arabic, was developed
 168 in a Muslim treatise by Muhammad ibn M s al-Khw rizm .The
 169 Calculation with Hindu Numerals written in about 825 spread swiftly
 170 from the Arab Peninsula through Europe. This also coincided with
 171 the founding of the first university in the world in what is present
 172 day Morocco. Highly complex pattern systems with mathematical
 173 foundations became iconographic in greater Islam, affecting
 174 everything from architecture, textiles, to calligraphy, and other forms
 175 of communication.
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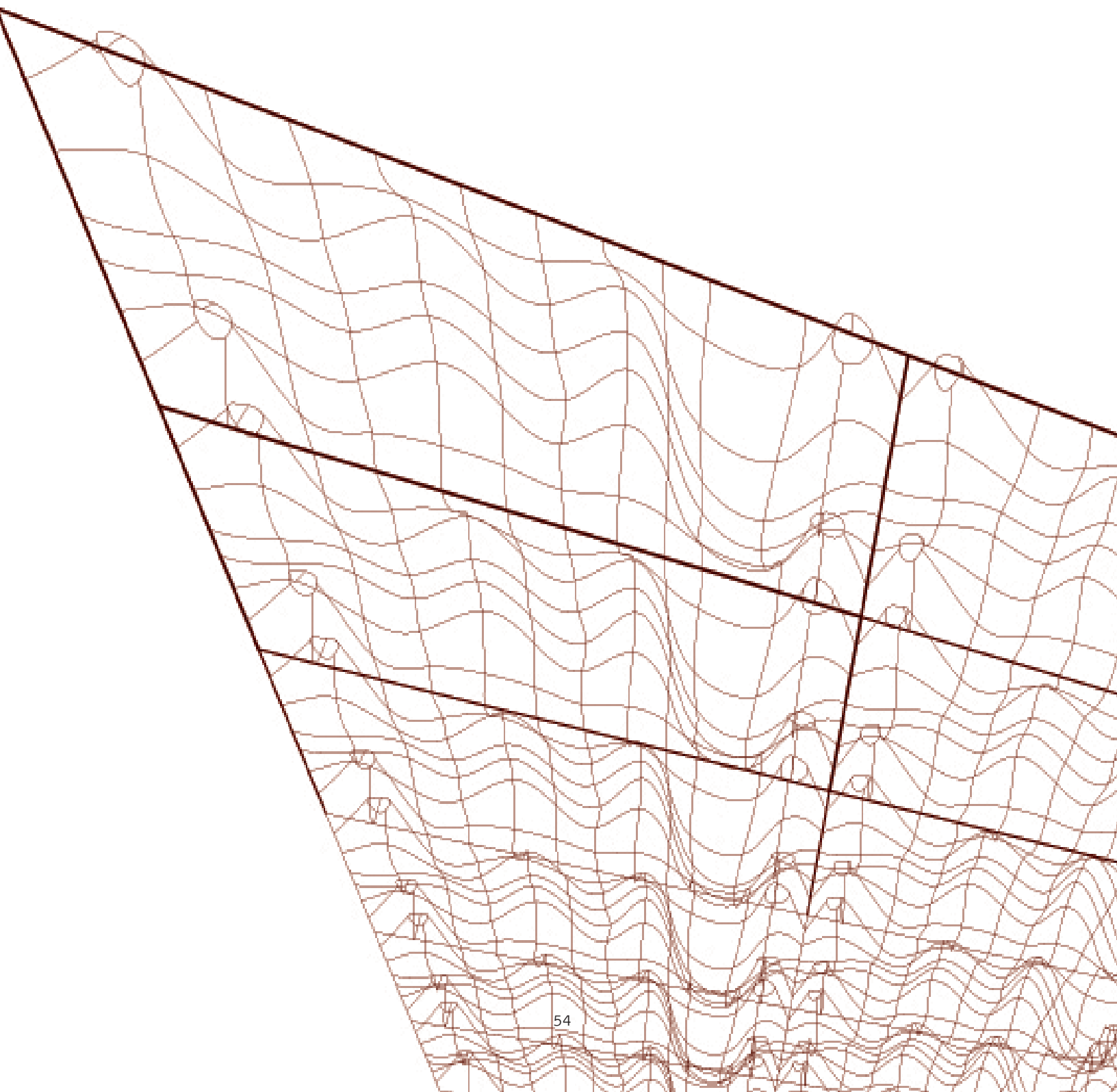
floor. He stopped moving. A small stream of blood dripped from his brow. His whole face now bloodied, he turned to me standing over him. Within a second, his head turned as his eyes rolled back and then slammed home again on the hardwood. He passed out as good as dead. I decided to drag him into the bathroom. I gripped the soiled sheet on which he lay half astride, and proceeded down the hall and left him to vomit on himself in buccus on the tiled floors. I slept comfortably that night, in a new set of sheets.

Late in the night I heard him wake up periodically, still too drunk and in pain to pick himself up, he would cry out. Screaming that he loved her, as if I knew who he was talking about. I have never done anything I didn't want to do while drunk, regret was an emotion reserved for a class I hadn't accessed yet. My mind was set that this would be the last occasion we would spend real time together, the memory of his humor all over me was seared into my brain.

The next afternoon I got back from work and he was still there, sitting in his stench, but awake. It wasn't that he seemed angry, the first thing he asked was why I punched him in the face. I told him that I had no choice, that he urinated on me and that it felt like an affront to my dignity. He would touch the orbit of his left eye every so often, it looked dreadful. The fact is I was happy to make him think I had been the primary cause of the bleed, but it ate me up inside that my nature didn't bring me to right to it, instead all I could muster was a pathetic shove to a drunkard with the fortune of a wood floor to break the fall. I should have brought him to the hospital, but I was too pissed off to bother. Plus, the scar was going to be part of his brand, it was a favor probably.

At work I had already done some drawings that morning and sent them to as many people as possible, to see how they would feel about the idea. First, to the only professor I had kept in contact with after dropping out and second to some contacts in the Middle East. One of these was a man who had been the first major collector and gallery owner in the region.

Not thinking twice, I sent an informal e-mail with some images. It turned out that the man happened to be a major industrialist in the Emirates, who was generous enough to respond with a number of personal e-mails.



177 That the first universities such
178 as Bologna founded in the 12th
179 century or Cairo's Al-Azhar in
180 the 10th offered only studies
181 in the arts such as religion, law
182 or philosophy (mathematics
183 included) is not commonly
184 understood. Founded mostly as
185 seminary institutions, they also
186 produced stunning books of
187 which many are held in museums
188 and classical art galleries.
189 Islam played a large role in the
190 academic foundations built up
191 later in Europe.

192 *Figure 31:* : Monumental fields
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Thu, Jan 24, 2003 at 12:02 PM

Muhammad Kanoo <Muhammad.kanoo@gmail.com>

Thank you for your kind comments yesterday.

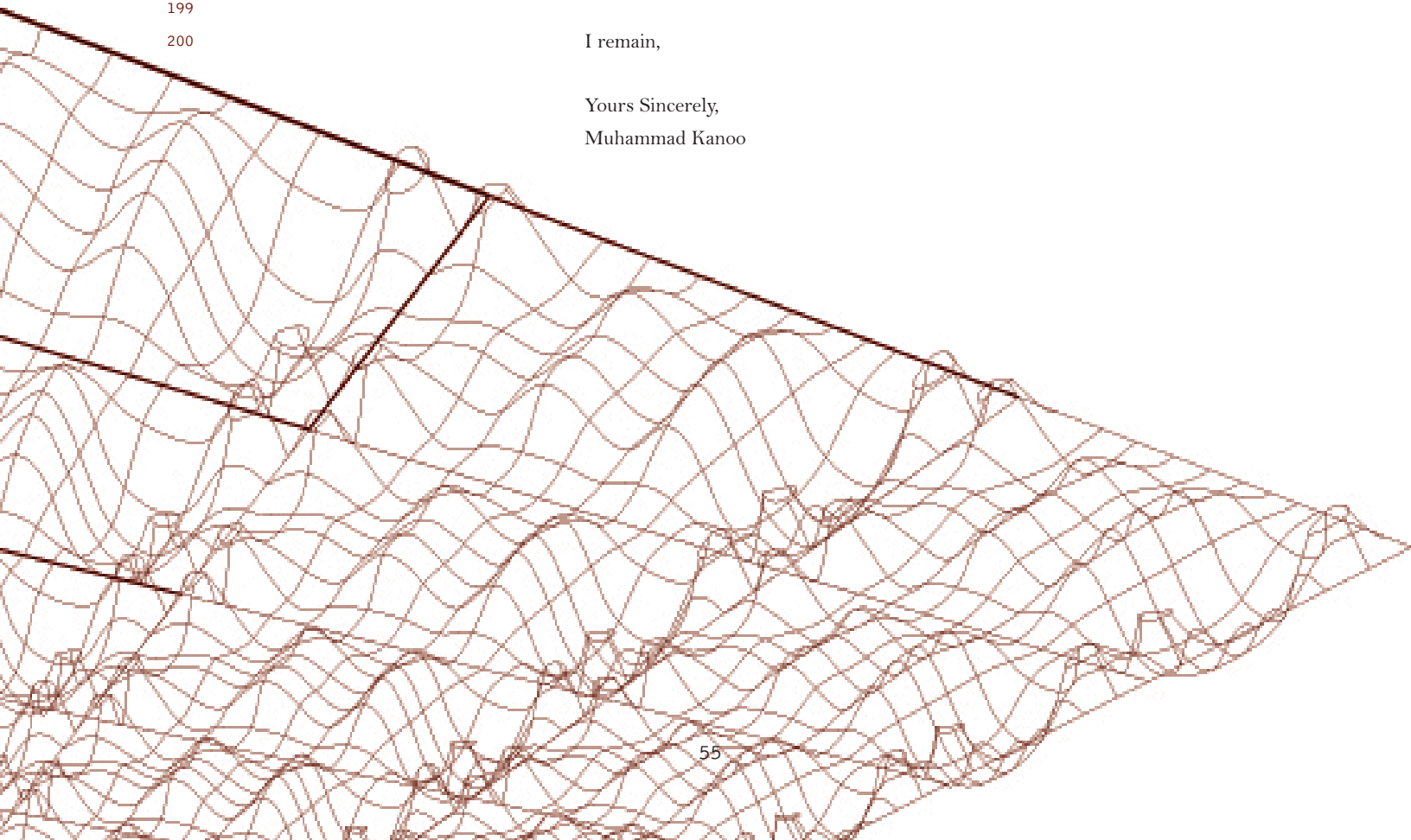
I am of two minds about the work you have shared. From a contemporary art perspective I feel it is most creative and intriguing.

Further to your interest to exhibit it here in the Middle East, whilst we both (I spoke with my partner) appreciate the spatial aspects and political commentary associated with such a bold work, I fear it may not be construed, or understood here as such and may cause offense.

At this critical conjecture in our cultural evolution, we both agree that it would not be the right time now to present this, lest it de-rail all our efforts to popularize art and culture. For that matter, anything which may be construed as provocative to Christianity or even Judaism would not be exhibitible, as there remains a deep rooted respect to these religions.

I remain,

Yours Sincerely,
Muhammad Kanoo



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Wed, Feb 28, 2003 at 7:19 AM

rjvanpel@engmail.techu.ca
To: I I <Alexanderjosephson@gmail.com>

Dear A,

I have given the situation some more thought, and I really must advise you to go gently on this one: perhaps it would be good that you discuss it with the chairman of the Canadian Muslim Congress, who is a professor in engineering at the University.

You need backing from within the Muslim community to prevent the kind of paranoid hysteria that has accompanied past attempts to raise the issue of the place of Muslims in the Western world—or for that matter any representation of Muslim religion and culture that is not Muslim generated. It is one thing to do a good theoretical project, another thing to launch it in the world as a large demonstration.. Especially one that comes across as opportunistic, which is another thing all together. My gut instinct is that if you did it after you have also completed the Jewish and Christian pieces, and would present it as a celebration of all Abrahamic religions, much of the likely controversy could be avoided, or if there is controversy, the Jews, Christians and Muslims could agree on attacking you jointly—which would be a first agreement in many centuries. But a demonstration that only focuses on the Muslim prayer machine provides no opportunity to create a lateral “escape.” Perhaps I am too cautious, but in this case I prefer to err on the side of caution.

It is a pity I am out of the country, and you will be back in Rome by the time I return. So e-mails will have to do the job.

Sincerely,
Robert Jan

The e-mail from the Sheik was a rejection letter I couldn't have begged to pay for, proof that e-mail can be so revelatory when people let their better judgement go. For some reason we pour our words out uncensored into the electronic ether. To some degree,

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because of confidentiality riders, it becomes even easier to be offensive, if not at least politically incorrect. After all, it was absurd that the Sheik could have been frightened of wrecking the Middle Eastern commercial art market by offending people. The note fortified my resolve to see the project through, so I replied to the Sheik by asking if he would like to commission a personal copy of the form in solid gold. No response.

These were educated and respected people. Why they didn't see the value of a solid gold functional prayer mat evaded me, it would have been a stunning investment—gold has doubled in price since. It would have been a financial instrument, not just a chair. But it wasn't just the Sheik; others were saying that I had no right to make something that had to do with Islam. They were offended by the materialization of the pieces. They told me that I had no authority to comment on anything religious, because I wasn't Muslim, I wasn't religious. People didn't even censor what they wrote in their e-mails, as if they thought what they were saying would disappear into nothing simply because of the disclaimer in fine print below their words. I even did a survey that was sent out, which I couldn't include here due to ethics rules.

But the critics weren't limited to a few conservative Muslims; for the most part they were secular and not Muslim. These were the people, friends and classmates. The reversal of logic was nauseating, it was unfathomable in a so-called free Western society. It was repression, the ultimate stage of democratic society: one in which we repress ourselves and become our own worst censors, either out of fear or consideration of unspoken rules. The object did not separate religion and politics, it obliged them to a duel. Here, instead of two people and guns, it involves a cultural instrument, a seemingly innocuous chair.

People were uncomfortable and began distancing themselves. The problem was that it only goaded me to keep pushing to make it real. The only logical conclusion was to extend that to the masses and the real scale of a congregation. To create fields of impressions and to allow the stories, ideas and facts to inform any group of people regardless of their faith. For a drop out, it would be an insurmountable financial cost.



Figure 32: Opposite: The entrance to Makkah, signage forbidding infidels to enter the holy city.

Paratactical Dejection

1 Sat, Nov 5, 2003 at 09:12 AM

2

3 Hi Majid,

4

5 Thank you for your note, I hope
6 that I can interest you more in my
7 research into Islam and that we
8 may be able to work together on
9 an experiment I have conceived.

10

11 I would like to make a depiction
12 of the individual movements of
13 Salaat. The kinetic and volumet-
14 ric aspects of Salaat are what I
15 am interested in. Would you be
16 interested in helping me create a
17 photographic series of the move-
18 ments? I have attached an image
19 of a study done by Muybridge in
20 the late 19th century, based on
21 movement. I would like to create
22 something similar in order to bet-
23 ter illustrate Salaat.

24

25 The photography I am asking you
26 to help me with would take place
27 in a dignified way, in a studio with
28 a black background.

29

30 Let me know if you feel like help-
31 ing me out with this. I would want
32 to schedule it for later next week
33 when you have some time.

34

35 Best wishes,

36

37 alexander

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Sat, Nov 9, 2003 at 11:26 AM

From Majid Morza <majid.morzid@gmail.com>

Hi Alex:

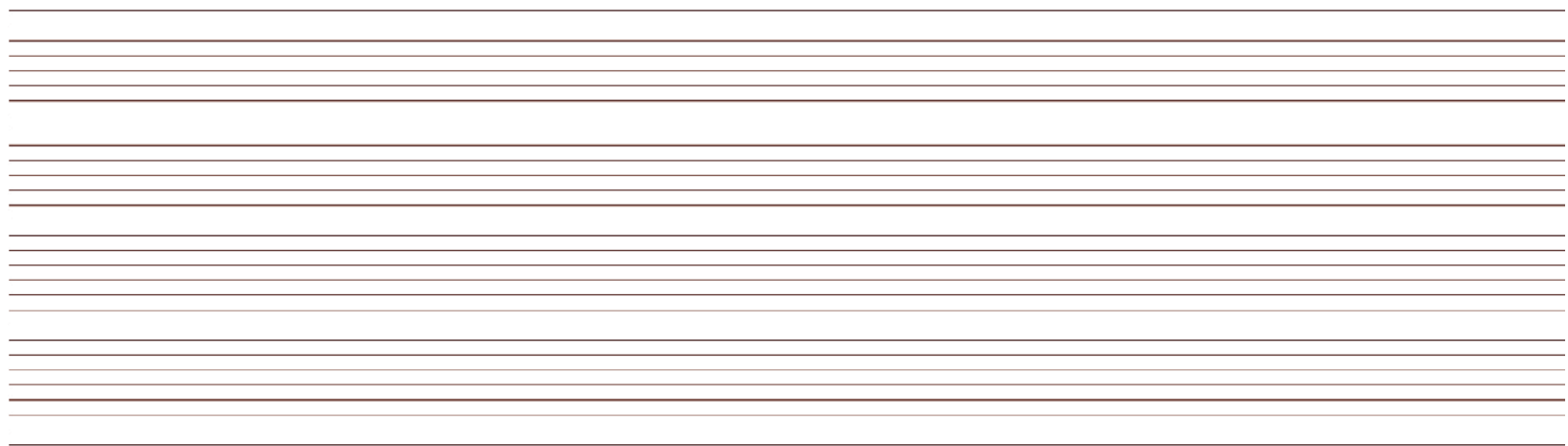
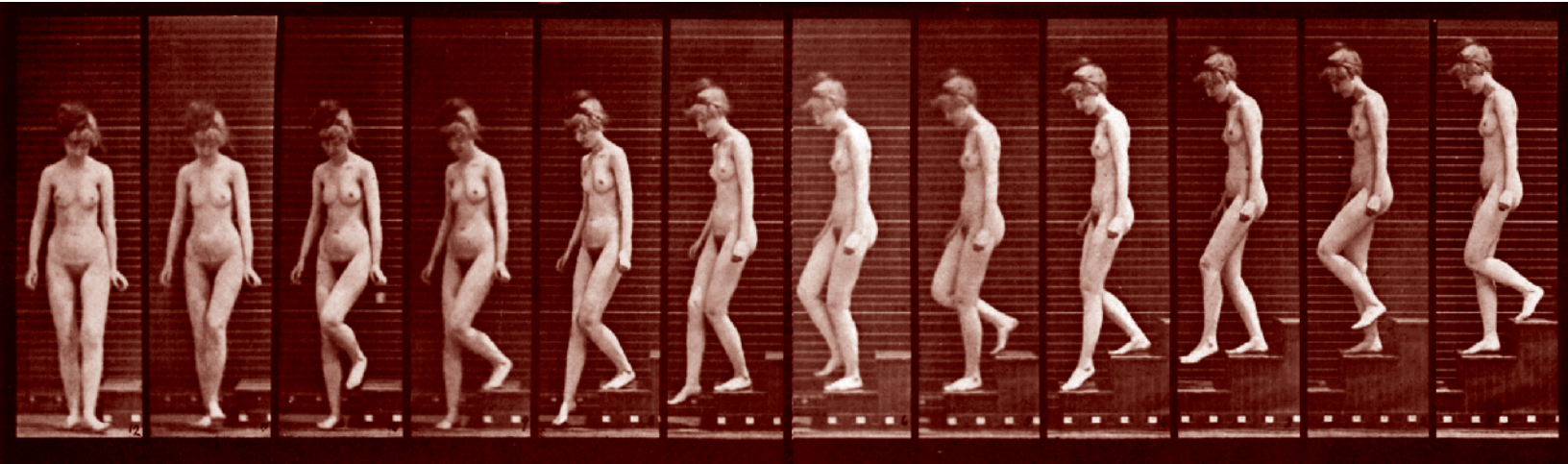
Thanks so much for your response. Please forgive me if my previous reply sounded at all stoic. Its the e-mail paradox where 80% of the feeling is lost due to lack of tone and body language :)

I re-read the description of Making Manifest and would have to decline this request, for the simple reason, that I, personally, think the sincerity and sublimeness of Salat might be diminished by bringing in external elements. Namely the object and secondly that your methods may not quite appreciate the fidelity of the act. Our two sources are the Quran and Sunnah (example of the Prophet) and although some of the greatest artistic and architectural endeavours were carried out by prominent Muslims, these were kept independent of acts of worship. On the other hand, if you wanted to participate in a prayer gathering at a Masjid (mosque) or Islamic Center I would be happy to arrange this for you, but you aren't Muslim, so it is always a question of motivation, why would you want to do this?

Thanks for giving me the opportunity to consider this :)

Majid

5 At this point the debate over what is valuable comes to a catastrophic end. The difference between what is real and unreal blurred so gretaly that total breakdown occurs. The weeks I had spent calling and emailing for participants in the study had now come to a perverse end, the responses consistently more saddening and offensive. My own frame of reference, what I called history writ large, was a seemingly naive and two dimensional assumption. The assumption was that there were no bounds to what we can see or choose to design. But that frame of reference was wrong; Majid was questioning my rights. The student wasn't alone though, many people would later tell me I had no right to read this subject in a critical way. What is more, the sheik's earlier excuse about ruining his plans to legitimize culture, seemed a nice rejection, but it feels more sinister. Right or wrong, he is simply a



Figures 33 and 34: Opposite from top to bottom: In the beginning and toward the end of the nineteenth century artists began to examine the dehumanizing effects of the industrial revolution. They were now armed with the corresponding weapons (technology) of their times. They critiqued Modernist thought and the new political systems being imagined, history was increasingly becoming the product of empires.

Victory became the directive of truth. Thus, art found meaning in exclaiming what reality or histories were unfolding, right or wrong.

Almost everything the human being perceived as being natural law was on the verge of being flipped upside down. People began to realise new possibilities for civilization, as well as the mechanics of how they perceived the world. History became a moving picture, news became subject to advertising.

Technology was becoming more and more of an extension of our senses. Conversely, humans were also becoming one with technology, our lives were to become more and more about routines. The possibilities were seemingly endless and there were many people who embarked on world changing investigations. One of the most intriguing, perhaps misunderstood, of those first experimenters in photography was Eadweard Muybridge. The impetus for his studies on motion was in fact just such a history, such a sinister one that it is almost a joke. His work would bring art practice into a new dimension of time and space that would be the inspiration for a major strand of art practice that is dominant even in contemporary works.

Behind Muybridge's studies, lay an excuse: Science. It was the only currency of his age and the only means by which he could mask what was less clearly a vast cultural project: a kinetic portrait of humanity. His efforts to align himself with contemporary scientists to understand velocity and to have a frame of reference for each of his photos, betrays his true actions, his true motivations. Some would have us think his serial photography had a fidelity of perspective, they are wrong.

man in a place . To preserve his real identity the most one could say is that he is a prominent industrialist and one of the original patrons to the arts in the United Arab Emirates. His words represented an appraisal that opened a fissure so great in the set of ideas that when I tried to stare it down, it shot back blaringly clear what was always going to be missing. I would never be legitimate, I was not Muslim, I was not faithful, I could convince no Muslim to produce a valuable analysis of prayer with me, or even more so, to take the credit for the project and act as a front. I couldn't care less about credit, I was too aggravated by now. The forms of this idea would be a hollow stump waiting to collapse as a product of movement without intent and intent without comprehension. It would always be an approximation based on inference rather than observation, thus a new kind of register was required.

If the powers that be needed a Judas of the ilk, then I would give them one. By this point, the fact that anyone, let alone so many voices of opposition, wanted to discourage me from seeing this project through, made me realize that I had passed a point of no return. I actually started to believe in it. Their presumption was that for the project to have any value it needed to be functional, and to be so, a Muslim needed to be willing to sell his soul. Because in their eyes creating an anthropomorphic object directly for the act of prayer and sajida was not only a sacrilege, but an illegitimate pursuit for a non-Muslim. A constitution is a set of words, a veil hiding the ugly face of our natural proclivities toward exclusivity and segregation. This is a frame of reference that is always attenuated by circumstance and interpretation.

We no longer read signs, we act them out as if in a diorama. We are all the celebrities of our own newscast, recording our lives on YouTube. It is logical in a time where we no longer speak of virtual reality—there is only digital reality. Realism is a pre-requisite. Why actually know something

Muybridge's decisions while putting together his final plates lie squarely in the realm of aesthetic order, subjective will, in the arena of art not science^{xxxx}. His placement of a grid or set of white lines as a rational reference (as seen above), is a truly clever conceit toward the scientists he required for funding, to complete his studies of human cultural activity. Acts that betray the controls of science that would have eliminated differences such as sex or race or species from the kinetic actions he and his biographers exclaimed to be so paramount. In many ways he painted the portrait of our pavlovian life, the increasingly serial nature of our existence.

His studies show men wrestling, women carrying food stuffs, animals hauling carriage, or women exposed in their buxom sexuality. These were hardly necessary nor ideal in their specificity to understand human muscle or ligature kinetics. What they paint, in sublime serial beauty, is the oppressive and yet picturesque reality of our world in his age. This is twofold in its genius, he had simultaneously given legitimacy to his work as science, thus allowing his work to be published in the main stream, and second this allowed artists to then be even more comfortable to draw from his work, see Duchamp's *Nude Wlaking Down The Stairs*, and by extension *On Kawara*).

The background, or conceit, made perfect sense in an age wherein the ability to capture three dimensions mechanically on a two dimensional medium was revolutionary. If one were to perform the same kind

when you can depend on e-mail or Google to search it out whenever you need it again after you forgot? An example of information that travels in this void is the presence of extremist websites. They are exceedingly difficult to find and only through supposedly non-extremist 'tracking sites or research institution sites' can these violent sites be readily found.

The idea of making an ethical object was raised by a friend, who thought there was a responsibility in our generation of architects to be circumspect, not to alienate or judge through design. This is a time when heat guns and plastic are as much a part of the process as the most important literature, let alone the final large-scale production of architectural components. Politically, I had already sold my soul; there was no reason to realise the idea except for pride and to resist those who told me I should not. These may be efficient operations, but they are energy-intense. They require massive quantities of embodied carbon through the petroleum cycle and electricity cycle, be it nuclear or not.

The objects of our imaginations are residual—they carry with them frames of reference, in this case the ability to change a frame of reference, to make it up, to physically go from a world that sees in two dimensions to one that can read time, feel space and read the dimensions of space and time. It is the right to contemplate the form of what necessarily cannot have one. In a post-theoretical age, the products of our imagination bear their fruits in the forms they assert emotionally, not physically. Our physical creations become increasingly pornographic, wherein the very existence of the product is more elicited than the physicality of itself alone.

That summer, they announced the competition results. The prototype for the prayer mat had not been given mention nor was it included on the Internet with the hundreds of other submissions. Was it censored by the competition administration? I had no proof. I sent out a number of e-mails under other identities in order to probe the situation and did not receive a response, except that the competition had reserved the rights to

exclude any submission and to not respond to queries by the entrants. One thing was clear; our visas to remain in the U.S.A. were coming to their end and I wouldn't be able to stay and fight the fight. I guess I could have, but the thousands of dollars required to pay the lawyers to argue before the Department of Homeland Security that their clients are aliens of extraordinary and unique ability just didn't excite me. I was either heading back to Canada, or going back to Rome;



87 of study today, the technology
 88 exists to take those dimensional
 89 parameters even further, to go
 90 into the three dimensional, in a
 91 sense a physical scan based on a
 92 two dimensional photograph: the
 93 inverse of Muybridge, the ultimate
 94 recording device.

95

96 The background needs to change,
 97 but the content stays the same.
 98 The following graphic is an active
 99 graphic, one in which the paper
 100 literally becomes a medium and
 101 frame of reference that allows
 102 digital photography to become
 103 a three dimensional, real-time
 104 scanner.

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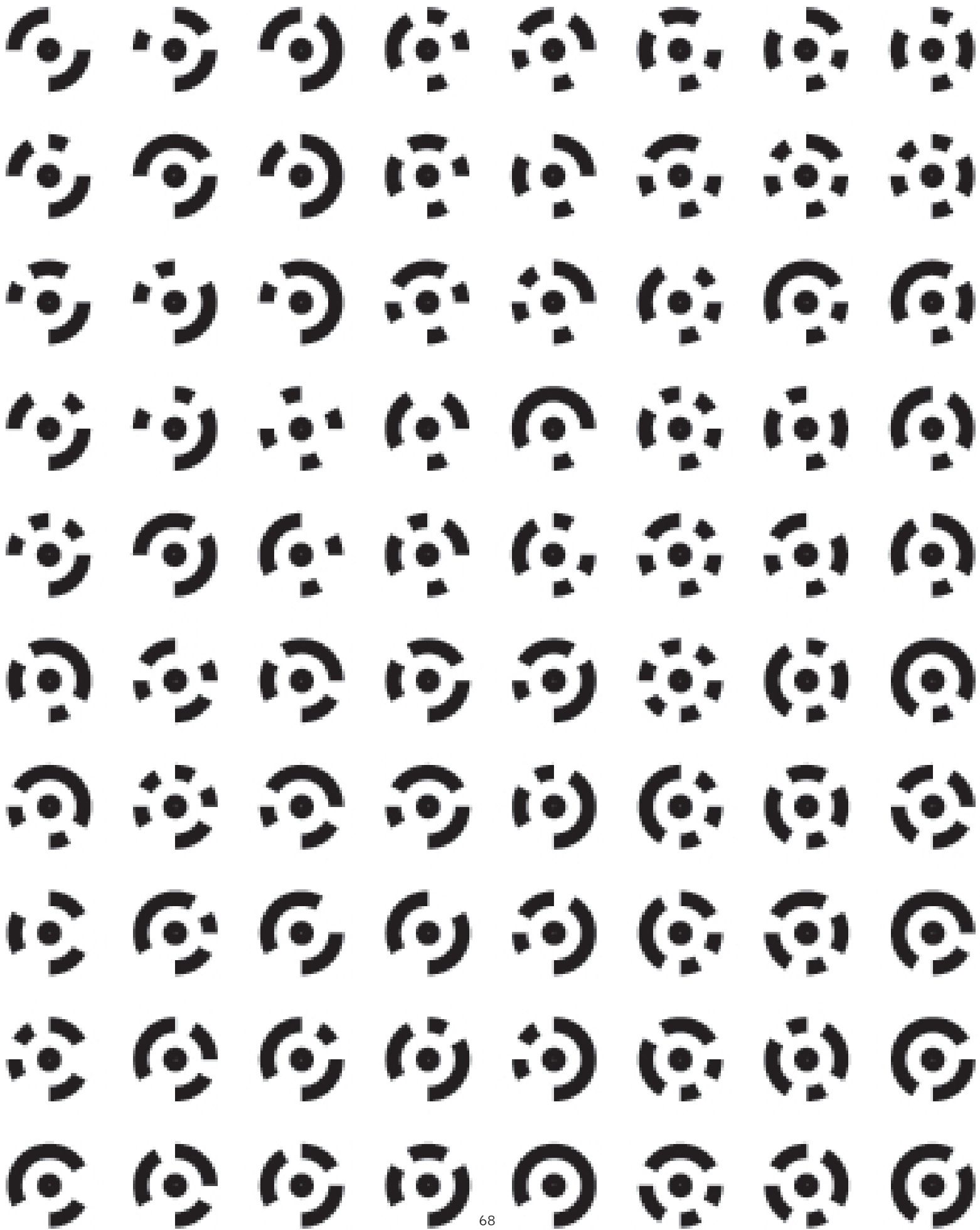
106 **Figure 35:** Opposite: The
 107 concept of a photograph is no
 108 longer a static one, nor simply
 109 a representation of three
 110 dimensions within the plane of
 111 two. The properties of light and
 112 shadow can now be extended
 113 into the physical world. New
 114 developments or rather, extensions
 115 in optics now allow us to capture
 116 motion and even moving-three
 117 dimensions using two dimensional
 118 technologies. The grid is now
 119 replaced by cones and targets,
 120 objects that, instead of being
 121 familiar to the human are the
 122 language of computers. The seemingly pleasant and graphic panels
 123 of dots and circles allow a basic webcam or still camera to create
 124 stereolithographic models of the contents within this new frame.

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127 **Figure 36:** Following Page: photographic targets.

either way, home by this point was a very abstract concept.



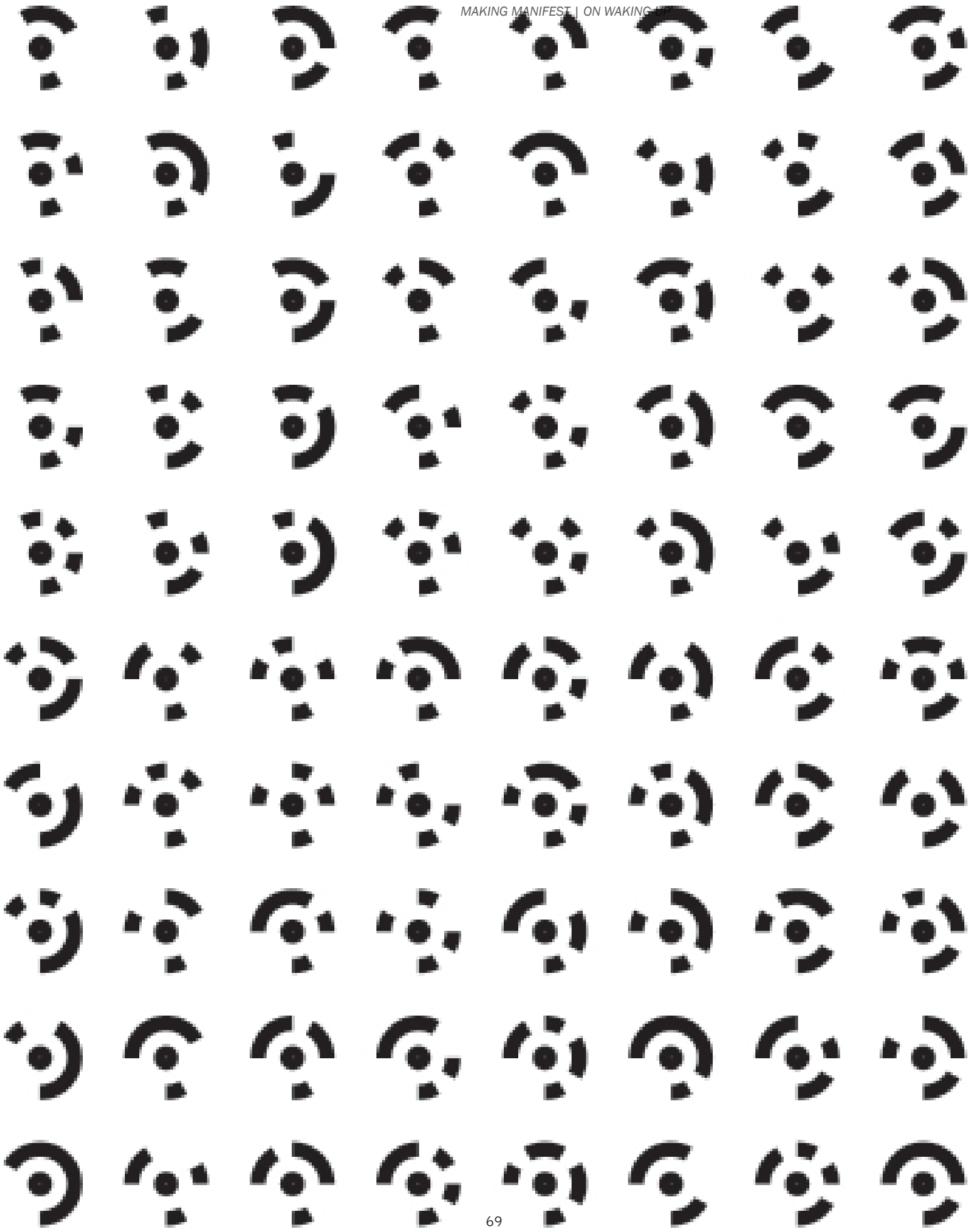




Figure 37: 'A haboob is a type of intense sandstorm commonly observed in the Sahara desert (typically Sudan), as well as across the Arabian Peninsula, throughout Kuwait, and in the most arid regions of Iraq.[1] African haboobs

result from the northward summer shift of the intertropical front into North Africa, bringing moisture from the Gulf of Guinea. Haboob winds in the Arabian Peninsula, Iraq and Kuwait are frequently created by the collapse of a thunderstorm. The southwestern deserts of Arizona, including Yuma and Phoenix, also experience haboobs. During thunderstorm formation, winds move in a direction opposite to the storm's travel, and they will move from all directions into the thunderstorm. When the storm collapses and begins to release precipitation, wind directions reverse, gusting outward from the storm and generally gusting the strongest in the direction of the storm's travel.'

On Angels

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In the birth of Christ is embodied not only the concepts of resurrection and redemption but; by result, what we call the Common Era. Time is manifest though the miracle of his virgin birth. The end of all other eras was marked by a virgin birth and a new zero was implied.

In Islam the concepts of era and time are equally important. Its new era begins 623 years after the birth of Christ, but instead it is marked by the year of Muhammad’s first revelation not his birth. The difference is subtle, but similar. Christ represented an immaculate conception, his body the physical manifestation of God and then his resurrection, whereas in Muhammad case things were more practical. He was an orphan born naturally on all accounts. The early followers of Islam were left no other choice; they decided the new era would begin from the year when God spoke through Muhammad, rather than his birth. Thus time begins at revelation. It is consistent with the important point that in Islam the human body and matter are secondary, everything is trained toward the future, to the afterlife.

The prophet’s physical birth is either 552CE or 570CE. Most of the seven holy academies of Islam claim that it is indeed 552CE, which corresponds to the Year of The Elephant, which is a surah in the Quran. In the Ahmed Ali Princeton press version of the Quran, he places the chapter/surah ‘Elephants’ or ‘Al-Fil’ on page 552, ironically

6 *One evening in the year 552 A.D the sun set behind the Ancient city of Makkah and cast songs of shadow and red light into the horizon to the East. There, from the city walls, the army watched it from their positions as this light flickered upon the giant cloud of dust in the distance. The ensuing hoards would have seen nothing but light, that is, until their final approach. It would only be a matter of hours before the full blows of the attack, but the Mekkans weren’t ready. The smell of sweating bodies readied for war was the only sign of fear in the final throws of the desert day. As time went by the cloud thickened and drew a line across the horizon that began to spread like a black outline, wider and wider. First the feint signs of vibration, movement, and then the definition of legs and heads thundering toward them full speed. The elephants carried three maybe four soldiers at once, thousands of Camels swarmed between them. There must have been a hundred thousand men and animals.*

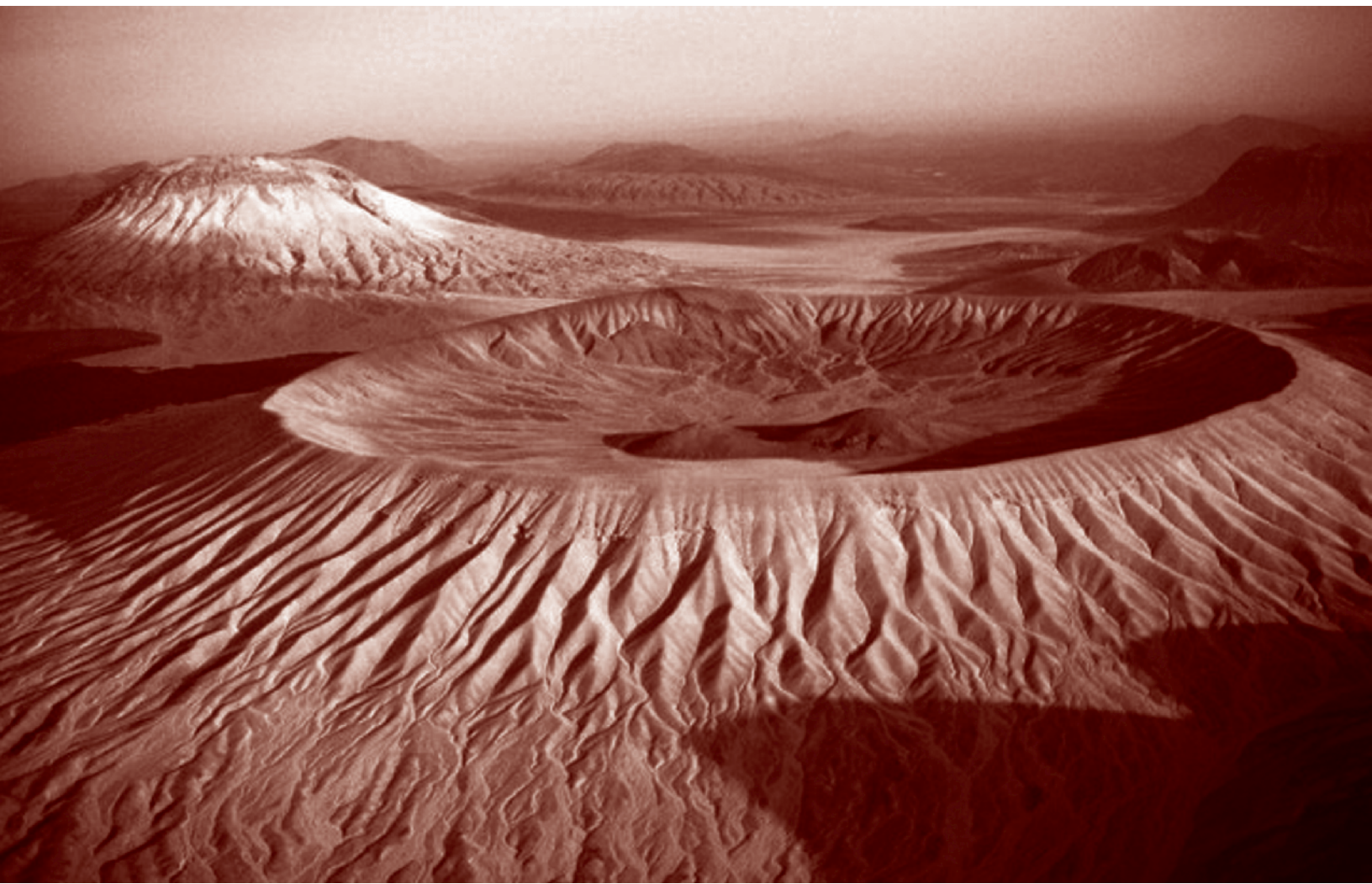
For the Mekkans, fear became overwhelming. They were clearly outnumbered. Abraha had come for the Ka’bah and all of its contents, intent to unseed Makkah as the economic hub in the region.

Then, in just an instant came darkness. The air thickened even more and nobody could breathe. There were only screaming voices. The red dust covered everything and rained down a hail of stones. A violent wind brought the sand in fifteen foot drifts up the sides of the walls—pushing, scraping and overcoming it all. The hordes were massacred by the larger pebbles, the elephants collapsed instantly, soldiers fell on the dunes and slowly suffocated. Lighting and thunder flickered vaguely inside the dark storm and within hours there was nobody left standing.

The early summer in Rome can be inclement, one minute it’s sunny and twenty eight degrees Celsius, but then dark cumulous clouds appear and unleash a maelstrom of cherry sized hail, only to disappear barely minutes later. They come from nowhere and the next thing you know you are in the center of a concert, car hoods Mazzeratis and Cinquecentos alike, their windshields pounded and in some cases obliterated by the weather.

The week we moved back was difficult, I was having a hard time finding a place, living and working in Elisa’s house was not going to work. Into our second week she had already begun filming the scenes of a short film commissioned by the state media board, I admittedly wasn’t trying hard enough.

One night she arrived late and I hadn’t prepared anything for her. She opened the



45 This is most likely the year in which the Pagan Makkahns were attacked by Abrahah and subsequently won by dint
 46 of a storm of birds in flocks, striking them with stones of baked clay, so He rendered them like straw eaten up'... The
 47 Makkahns saw this as a miracle and later associated it with the prophet's birth—thus also a miracle. This even though
 48 the prophet was orphaned at least
 49 four times in his infancy which
 50 would have made any practical
 51 attempt of dating his birth almost
 52 impossible to achieve.^{xiv}

54 That year was said to be that of
 55 Muhammad's birth because the
 56 events that year were prescient.
 57 Through the prophet's birth the
 58 city of Makkah was saved, and
 59 it foreshadowed the symbolic
 60 importance of eventually
 61 destroying the Pagan idols stored
 62 there. Makkah was the largest
 63 shrine of Pagan idolatry in the
 64 region and it was the center of its
 65 economic prosperity. It resulted
 66 in jealousy, sparking the attack
 67 by the Abyssinians. The prophet's
 68 birth follows that idol worship
 69 would be doomed. That set of
 70 events is an integral influence
 71 on Islamic culture—not only
 72 the religion itself but specifically
 73 the arts. Many forms of idolatry
 74 place the human form and
 75 representations of it on a pillar.
 76 This is central to the Old and
 77 New Testaments. Islam rejected
 78 idolatry and brought with it a
 79 critique of anthropomorphic
 80 representations of God, humans,
 81 and the cult of materialism. In fact, one of the surahs in the Quran is called 'Ornaments of Gold,' ornament being diminutive.

83 Muhammad consistently preached the importance of Christians and especially Jews. Until the year 630CE, the direction of
 84 Qibla or the direction of prayer in Islam was to Jerusalem, not to Makkah.^{xv} The Jews and Christians were protected peoples
 85 and are still named as such in the Qur'an. One can also find repeated reference to unbelievers though, which leads many critics
 86 to contend that the treatment of any non-Muslim by the Quran is violent and unjust. But the Western media does not want
 87 the fact of this positive history to be well known or widespread.

door to me sitting like a deer in the headlights of my laptop, perched on
 the antique black lacquered Chinese desk in the dining room. She erupted
 instantly, her talent with a word more potent than a bullet. I threw my
 mouse against the wall and screamed. The window doors facing the piazza
 were wide open, the droves of old timers sitting on their folding chairs
 below must have been watching everything. She went for the knives on the
 stainless steel kitchen island and charged me. I could barely think, she was
 screaming so loud. I ran through the living room and into the bedroom
 adjacent slamming the steel encased glass sliding door behind me to shut
 her out. She wouldn't let up, I thought it was a joke, but something in me
 cracked. I let the sliding door open slightly and grabbed her arm holding
 the knife then I flipped her in one perfect motion onto the rock hard
 wooden flooring. Up and over my shoulders she went. The knife went
 flying through the air, and with a break her head had slammed home. I
 looked down in a fit of adrenalin and saw her reach for the back of her
 head, a streak of red flashed before my eyes, flowing through her fingers.

I picked her up into my arms, she weighed nothing, and ran for the door.
 All I could think of was the hospital on the island literally two hundred
 yards from her place. I would run her to the emergency room. We floated,
 her person in my arms like a feather. It was inhuman how strong I felt.
 Then I heard a laugh, when I got to the front door she started to laugh,
 she was holding her wrist in front of my face with her arms around my
 back and neck to hold on, she was grasping the end of about 10cm of deep
 red lace. It was a Buddhist bracelet she had been given a day earlier. When
 she went to grab her head we had both thought it was blood.

After begging friends, an acquaintance of mine gave me a lead on a place.
 A live-work studio in an old Palazzo in Trastevere, the left bank of Rome
 where the lower class and servants lived until the late twentieth century



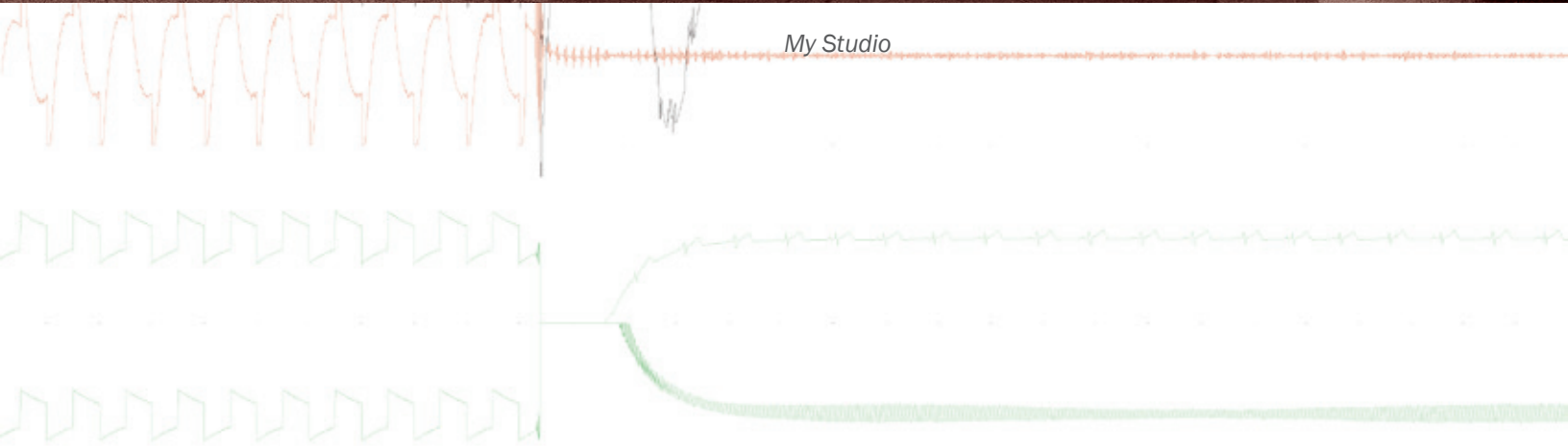
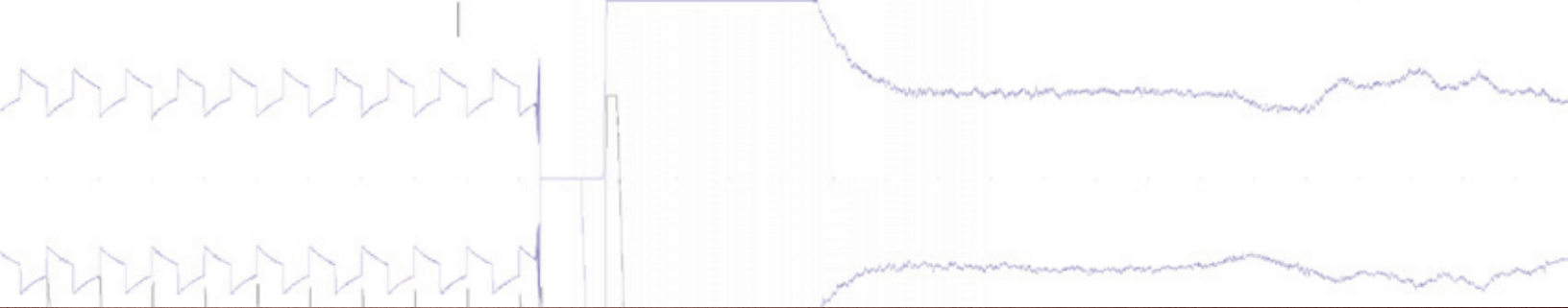
88 The histories are clear: Islam did not exist in isolation and its development went alongside pagan Arabs and the other
 89 Abrahamic religions—Judaism and Christianity. In fact, the sabbath as well as the dietary requirements of Islam are
 90 shared with Judaism. The Jews who lived outside of Makkah in 622CE accepted Muhammad’s plea for refuge in the
 91 town known as Yathrib, a Hebrew
 92 derived name, now replaced by
 93 the city called Medina. It was
 94 originally founded by Jewish tribes
 95 and is now the second holiest site
 96 in Islam. It would seem that if
 97 people put aside their prejudices
 98 and simply looked at the initial
 99 events in history, more tolerance
 100 would result, yet this is not the
 101 case. Muhammad founded the
 102 first mosque, his home, on what
 103 was purportedly an abandoned
 104 cemetery given to him by the
 105 tribes of Yathrib. These stories
 106 have gone virtually untold in the
 107 media.

109 The development of Islam began
 110 not only through revelation, but
 111 also in Muhammad’s rejection of
 112 idolatry. The entire Muslim world
 113 orients toward the Ka’bah during
 114 prayer. Five times per day, based
 115 on the lunar cycles, Muslims pray
 116 toward Makkah, their collective
 117 will aligned. In fact, the first
 118 location that the Muslims
 119 prayed toward from Yathrib and
 120 Makkah was to Jerusalem. Salaat
 121 is a powerful collective activity
 122 conscious of a perpetual rhythm.
 123 This is not Sunday mass, it is
 124 not an energy spike once a week for atonement, it is a daily dedication. The Ka’bah has a cosmological significance, it is
 125 a gravitational singularity in some way. The Hajj and circumnavigation of the Ka’bah is an astounding vision of the human
 126 religious energy. It all appears to vibrate; the arcades and terraces are proportioned so that they suggest a spin into the
 127 heart of the great mosque. Even the black stone of Ishmael is a cosmic object. All of this builds up to a set of powers that
 128 beg for a cosmological comparison. It is no surprise that the centre of worship in Islam is directed through architecture.
 129 At that, the simplest idea of it—an empty box. There is an intriguing history of how the Ka’bah was emptied, in fact, the act
 130 of emptying it of its contents marks the initial victory of Islam. This is the rejection of idol worship and anthropomorphic
 131 representations of God(s).

when foreigners began to take a liking to it. Indeed, by this point, the seat of two governments and countless movies had made the cost of living in the centre almost intolerable to the most fortuitous individuals, let alone the super rich. I was lucky; my friends helped generously with the space. This one in particular had been occupied by an elderly woman of about eighty four years who had passed away inside only to be found weeks later due to the stench in the hallway. She had not paid any substantial rent in over thirty years. The water was drawn into the apartment from a tank on the roof space. It smelled of moth balls, and old photographs. I wasn’t complaining; any space was good space, especially since I wasn’t going to be working for anyone but myself.

Without the help of a Muslim I decided that I would drive further into the heart of the subject. Perhaps if I couldn’t make a form or derive a site I could create a space or spiritual zone for myself. With two compressors and sixty kilograms of pure titanium white pigment, Federico and I sprayed the entire space, floor to ceiling. There was even an old, leather-bound travel box for a camera left on the sideboard that we sprayed. I finally had a space that I could call my own.

The last time I was in a spiritual place—because it was a slog reading through the Quran I tended to drift mentally—was a synagogue for my great aunt’s funeral. She had spent a month in bed losing the excruciating fight against cancer of the intestines, which spread to her stomach and liver. She had never had children and her husband, who had died decades earlier, was rumored to have driven her totally insane. I remember phone calls wherein she would talk and I would physically fall asleep for as much as twenty minutes, which seemed to have no effect on her whatsoever. After the ceremony, which was attended by scores of mothballed widows and widowers, the Rabbi approached me outside of the foyer where the



My Studio

132 The Ka’bah at Makkah, more than fourteen centuries later, represents a new political epicenter in the world. It is the
 133 site of an annual pilgrimage that is a sight to behold, though it is a place limited to Muslims. The Hajj and its ritual of
 134 circumambulation about the stone of Ishmael and the Ka’bah, even from photography, is powerful. Herein the collective
 135 will of Islamic history and

136 currents of faith are manifest. It is simultaneously an act of
 137 collective will while also affirming the singular nature of faith itself,
 138 the Ka’bah being the singularity or gravitational object binding all
 141 Muslims to the faith. Nowhere else
 142 in the world is any public display
 143 of beliefs expressed in this scale; over one million Muslims can be
 144 present in the shrine during the
 145 Hajj season. It eclipses political
 146 rallies in the United States as
 147 well as Chinese communist party
 148 demonstrations.
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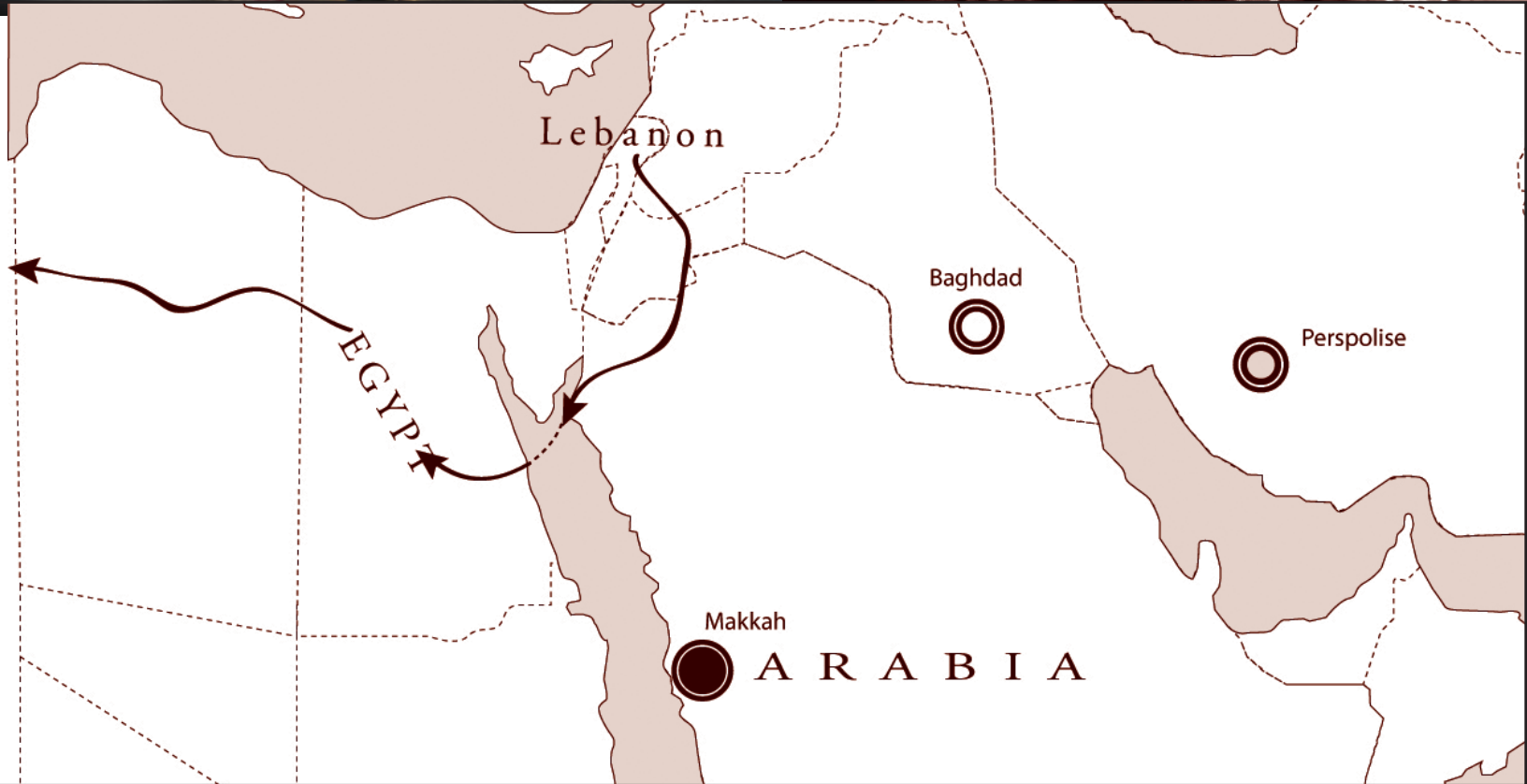
150
 151 The Hajj is an annual event that
 152 is the world’s most powerful
 153 political symbol. It is this event
 154 that prompts this project to
 155 manifest a political identity. It
 156 shows an unfamiliar territory
 157 where the laws of religion
 158 and state are interdependent. This contravenes most things
 159 secularism take for granted, it
 160 is an extraordinarily powerful
 161 schism. It brings to bear the fact
 162 that two very large groups of
 163 people in this world have such
 164 black and white contradictory
 165 rationales to society. Taken to a
 166 further extent, religion is near banned in Communist China.
 167
 168
 169

170 In Islam prayers are made by individuals in close physical proximity to each other. (Shoulder by shoulder). There are carefully
 171 measured spaces between each `impression` in this project. This emphasizes individualism and mortality rather than the
 172 collectivity of the faith community. It is about the absence of those items. This is a sociological criticism built into the
 173 project based on the paradox of a suicide bomber or martyr being completely isolated, when the communal and collective is
 174 more important. Instead they are searching for the collective in heaven, and also the mortality here. It is in response to the
 175 Western tradition of burying soldiers in the earth at equal intervals as seen at cemeteries.

two yellow brick modernist buildings kiss. He wanted to make small talk
 but his real point was to remind me of my obligations. That my family
 had founded that temple when they arrived in the country more than a
 hundred and forty years ago. That it was the first built in the city, that I
 should take part more often and cherish that history.

Perhaps it is foolish, but to me the idea of believing had next to nothing
 to do with what my family thought or did. I actually would have begged
 to believe. It would have been a gift like no other to have that tender
 sensation of righteousness, or even comfort that such a religion could
 offer. The Rabbi’s speech—there was no gravity there, nothing telling me
 that those reasons, such as community, should make me feel like these
 stories were seductive enough.

My close friend Federico Bacciochi, a young architect, told me about a
 friend of his that would be perfect for the project. He had been exiled from
 Tunisia and now resided in Pantelleria, a strategic island near the very tip
 of Italy’s reach beneath Sicily. He explained that Med was the son of an
 aristocratic family in Carthage, where they presided over a vast interest
 on the coastal portlands. According to Federico Med’s family disowned
 him upon his return from university. He had studied in Lebanon in the
 early seventies and had fought as part of the Muslim resistance during the
 Karantina massacre. He was forced out afterwards and drove all the way
 back to Tunisia by way of Jordan and eventually took a ferry to avoid the
 conflict in the Sinai, in a used BMW.



176 **Figure 40:** Opposite top : Roman
 177 political demonstrations. Children
 178 dress up as anarchists during
 179 weekly political rallies.
 180 Opposite Bottom: The route Med
 181 took back to Tunisia

Fri, Feb 16, 2003 at 9:54 AM

II <Alexanderjosephson@gmail.com>
 To: med—hasan@hotmail.com

Dear Med,

Thank you for talking with me the other day about my project.

Federico is going to be working very closely with me on this and we couldn't ask for a better collaborator than yourself. Would you be willing to help out the next time you pass through Roma?

Some people find this project opportunistic because I am not Muslim, but I am confident I will be able to extend this work to other faiths. I aim to make physical the metaphysical, the act of prayer. Perhaps we can strike back at bombs with another type of weapon. The prayer impressions, which are monuments, that I have attached images of are a kind of sculpture or painting perhaps of the residue of prayer. This has intonations of being functional, with some limitations regarding size. It is very raw at this point and I understand that there may be some other religious laws that need to be abided by regarding positions of prayer and anthropomorphism. I would be very grateful if you might comment honest and candidly.

Gratefully,

Alexander

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206 **Figure 42** : Opposite Top: The Jewish Ghetto in Rome is one of its kind in the developed world to retain its
 207 isolation in a dense metropolis. Unlike the other Piazzas in Rome, it is long and narrow, like a large street, rather than a
 208 rectangular-or square-sided space. It is worth mentioning because there is no Muslim Ghetto in Rome, even if the history
 209 between Italy and the Empires
 210 of Islam is so profound and rich. The largest mosque in Rome was
 211 constructed on the edge of a less
 212 than public road in a knuckle of
 213 the city almost no tourist would
 214 ever glimpse. What is more is
 215 that it is runoured to be badly
 216 orientated toward Makkah.
 217
 218 The startling aspect of the
 219 Jewish Ghetto is that it is in fact
 220 aligned to within an astonishing
 221 one degree to Qibla. It is the
 222 only major axis, or piazza of
 223 any significance in the urban
 224 fabric that is aligned so closely
 225 to the Ka'bah. It is ironic that
 226 two religious groups that have
 227 seemigly drifted so far apart from
 228 their orginal relationship can be
 229 held together so subtly in that
 230 artifact. Even if the alignment is
 231 a total fluke. Perhaps the Jewish
 232 Ghetto in Rome is a harbinger
 233 to an eventual reconciliation, a
 234 closing of the gap between history
 235 and time and the hate in between.

238 **Figure 43:** Opposite Bottom:
 239 Golden Gate Park Cemetery, San
 240 Francisco California. Collage
 241 Panoramic

Mon, Feb 19, 2003 at 5:56 PM

Med hasan <med—hasan@hotmail.com>
 To: Alexanderjosephson@gmail.com

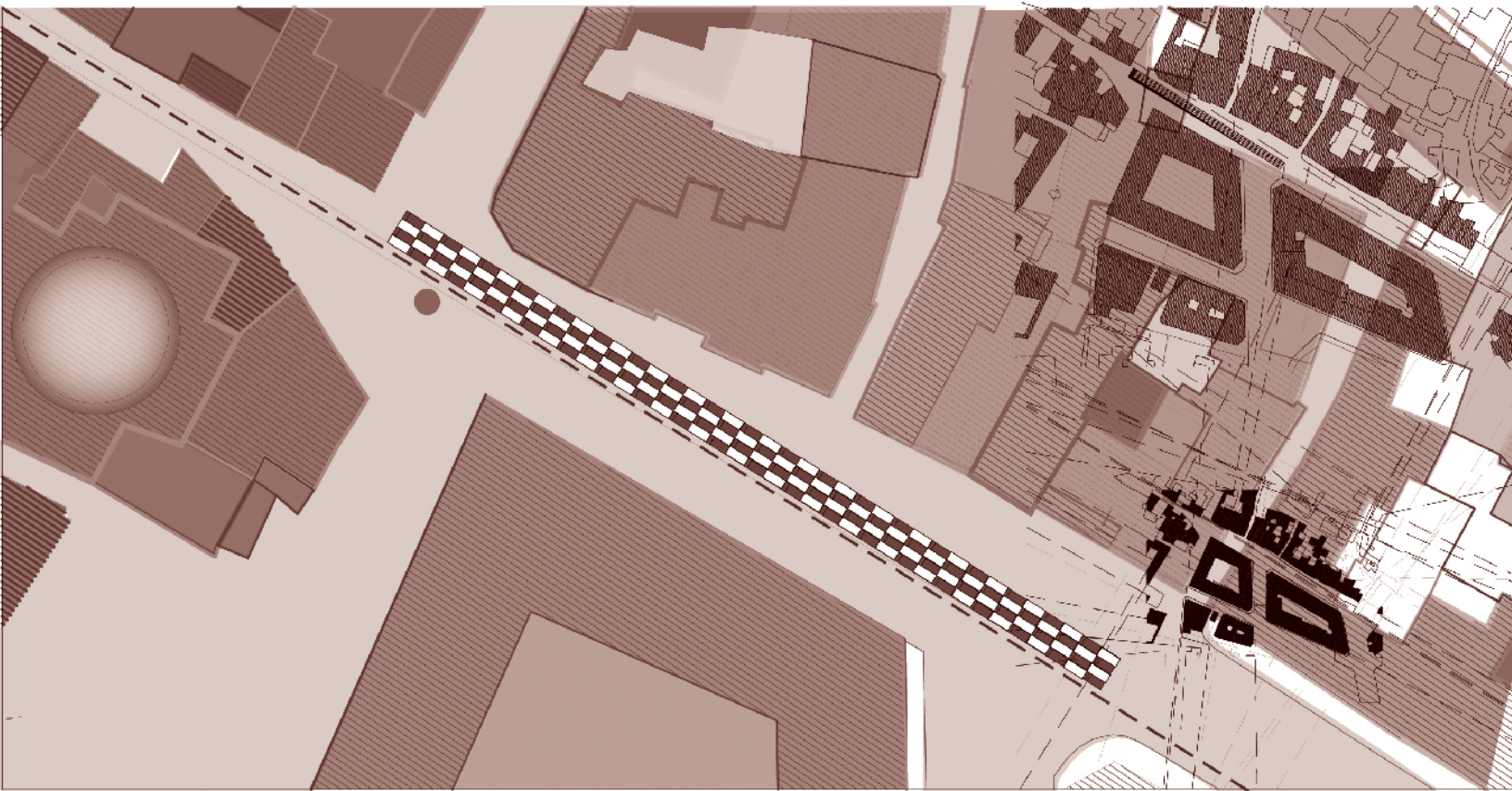
Hi Alexander,

I would be happy to lend a few words, I spoke to Federico and he has given me some idea of what you are doing.

From what I see you are making a type of sculpture/impression in some material. It looks like you're trying to capture the impression of prayer in the earth? As if to capture the body in the desert sand dunes. It is fine to me, and I don't see why anyone would have a problem with it. If you are using an actual person in photos you might want to be careful... If you do they should be wearing clean clothes and generally in a clean environment. Someone wouldn't necessarily pray in or on just anything. Of course this is not always true as you can pray on anything clean. Are you close to being finished? Let me know about your progress, this sounds interesting, but you didn't send me enough to be really candid yet.

Good luck, keep me in the loop.

Peace,
 Med



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Figure 44: Opposite: plan of the roman ghetto with monumental field.

Tue, Feb 20, 2003 at 2:50 AM

Alexander I <Alexanderjosephson@gmail.com>
To: med—hasan@hotmail.com

Dear Med,

Many people seem to think that this will garner death threats and other malaise. But, I disagree. I believe Muslims will appreciate this and all of the rules it seems to question. At this point, paranoia is strikingly Caucasian. As if the rules we invented to stabilize our society are fighting back against us.

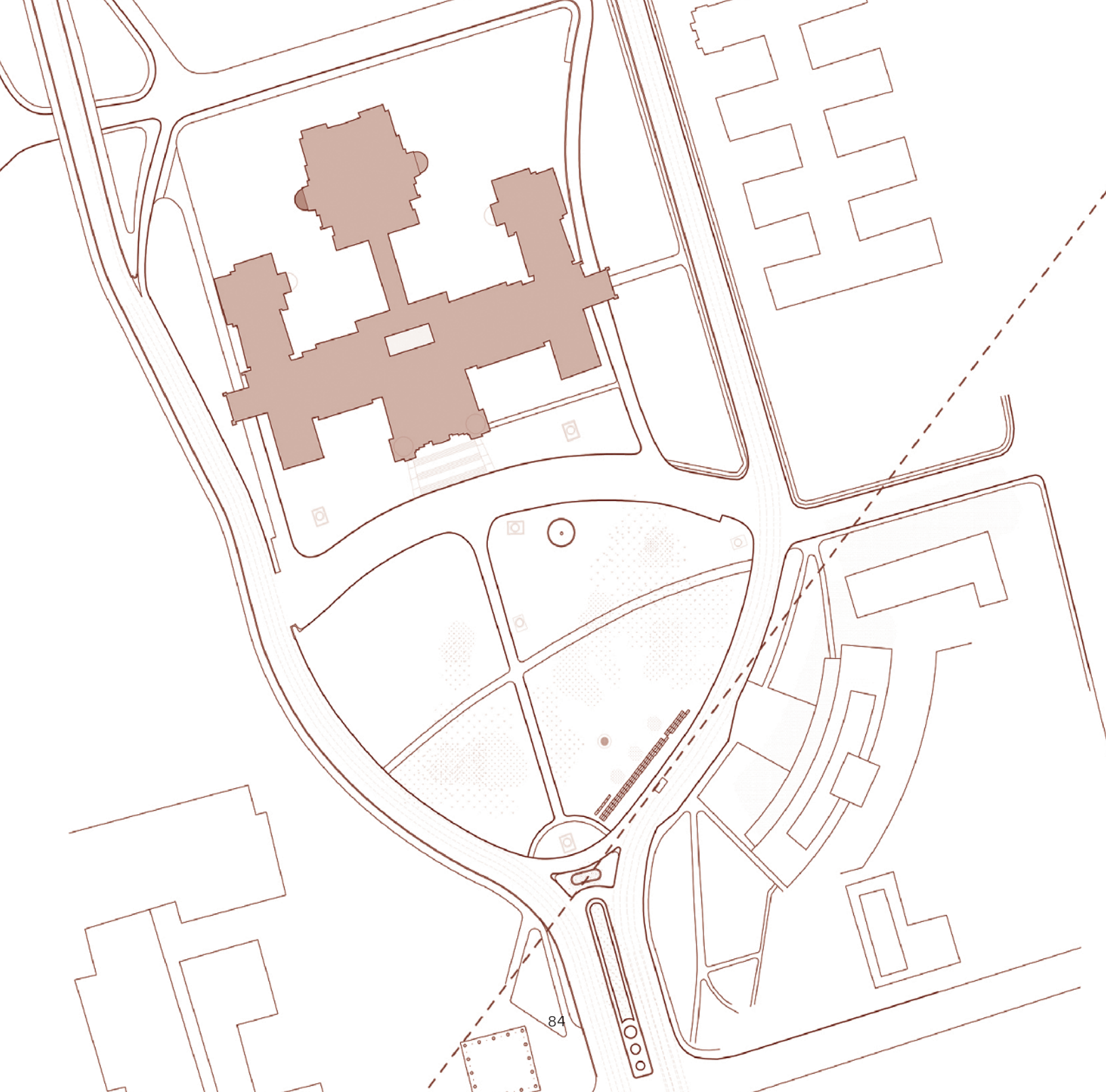
I have decided that the impressions should be made of either solid gold or possibly a black glossy plastic—a derivative of crude oil. A slight reference to the economic underpinnings of the seat of Wahabbi Islam in Saudi Arabia. The gold would be in reference to the Sura 'Ornaments of Gold' in the Quran, where opulence and consumption are criticized—a backhanded statement about inconsistencies in contemporary Middle Eastern monarchies. Not to mention the special economic zones they have created such as Dubai, wherein our Western attitudes are supported. This is about Islam in the age of liquid consumerism.

I want to extend the single form into a field of them, creating a manifestation for lack of a different word. Wherein the forms function for prayer, while also bringing Islam into the public eye in a different political context.

The form you saw in the picture is like a tile in my mind, imagine many hundreds of these tiled over a large surface indoors, but perhaps outdoors also. It becomes a spiritual space or a mosque even. The idea is to create a large number of these in the formed plastic versions or another very light material that could potentially be stacked and these placed in front of say Parliament in Ottawa. Perhaps even in Washington at the ellipse, oriented to Makkah, like a compass.

Be Well,

Alexander



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Figure 45 : Making Manifest,
Queen’s Park panoramic,
the South Lawn reserved for
demonstrations.

Figure 46 : Making Manifest,
Queen’s Park proposal plan view
of the grounds and orientation
toward Makkah.

Tue, Feb 20, 2003 at 10:29 PM

Med hasan <med—hasan@hotmail.com>
To: Alexanderjosephson@gmail.com

Hi Alexander,

I don’t know if I said it in the last e-mail but I’m not fond of the gold impres-
sion... Gold was seen as a sign of extravagance at the time of the prophet and
prayer is supposed to be plain. I think a gold chair would be a symbol for
everything wrong with Islam regarding material idols. Why would you do
this when you can get it made out of wood or something and use the money
you save to help out people in need. You seem adamant about making one
out of gold, to use as a symbol of the problems with Islam...I also dislike the
name prayer chair. Usually only old people or the disabled use things called
prayer chairs, monuments are a better one. Perhaps it isn’t even a functional
chair in the end?

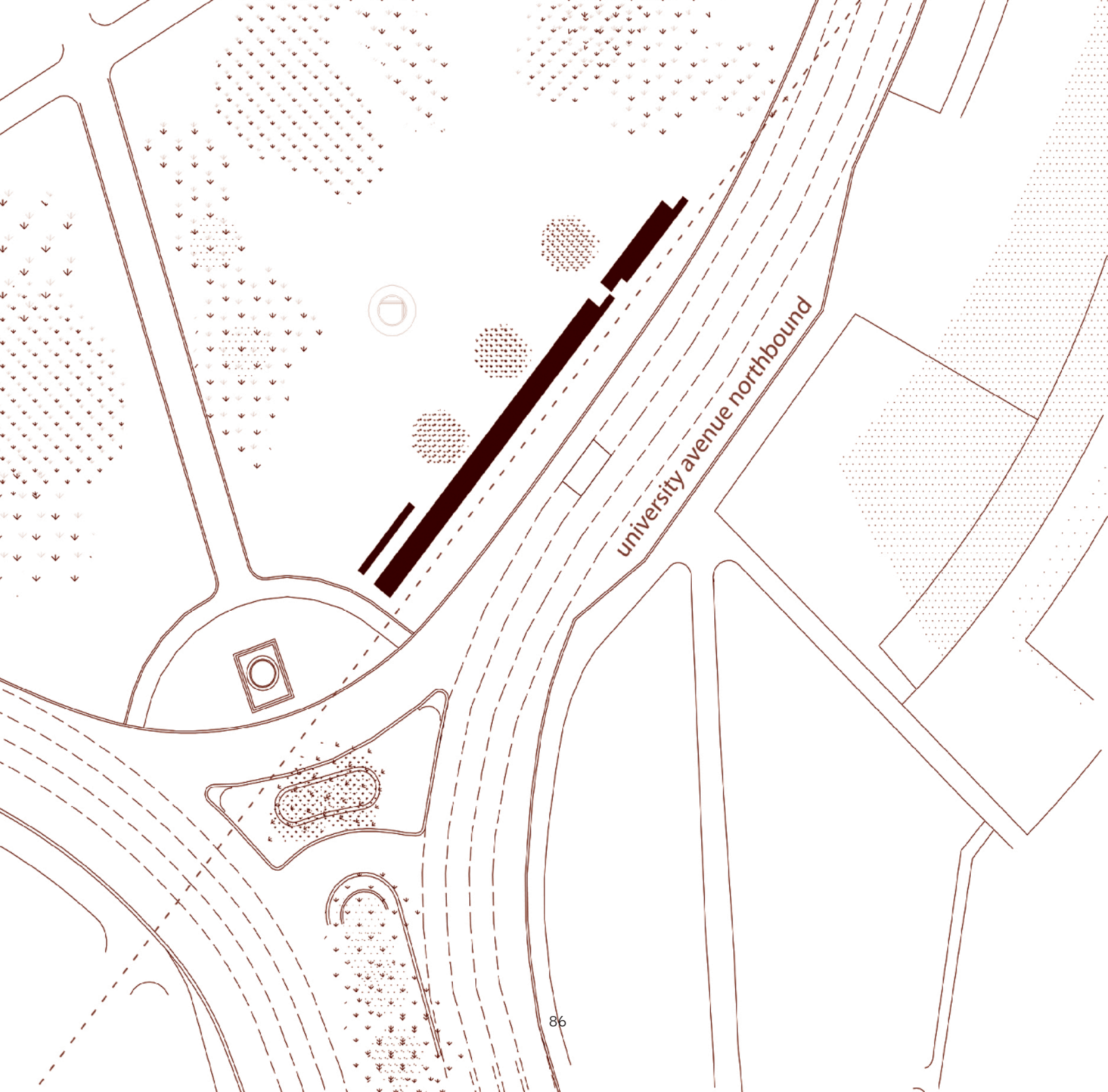
The prayer usually, unless in emergency cases, includes cleaning yourself
with water or in some ancient ways with sand. I don’t remember if I men-
tioned that, but the impressions you are making also brings to mind craters,
or rather impressions in the dunes of the open desert. There is mention
of this in the hadith, though I can’t remember which one at the moment,
something about the ground boiling up beneath the feet of the followers of
Muhammad as they prayed.

Keep me posted.

Peace,

Med

It already appeared to be an uphill battle to
get permissions in Rome. The optics for the
politicians and city officials were all negative
on allowing a public monument to Islam to
be exhibited in the streets. When the Roman
Muslim community went to create its cen-
tral Mosque, the land they ended up occu-
pying was in the armpit of the city, wedged
between major transport arteries. It would
happen, but in years not months. It was at



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Figure 47 : Making Manifest, Queen’s Park proposal rendering of full field of impressions.

Figure 48 : Making Manifest, Queen’s Park proposal plan view of the field and orientation toward Makkah.

this point that home started making some sense to me. There is a widely known convention in Toronto that any kind of political demonstration or act of faith can be represented at the Parliament buildings there. It is a natural part of a city that, over time, has nurtured some of the worlds largest inner city minority populations.

There was still no site, or physical context available except an abstract set of histories and rules. The park was a long shot, at least for someone like me with no experience. Furthermore, according to so many of my critics I wasn’t even allowed to discuss or design unless I was religiously sanctioned.

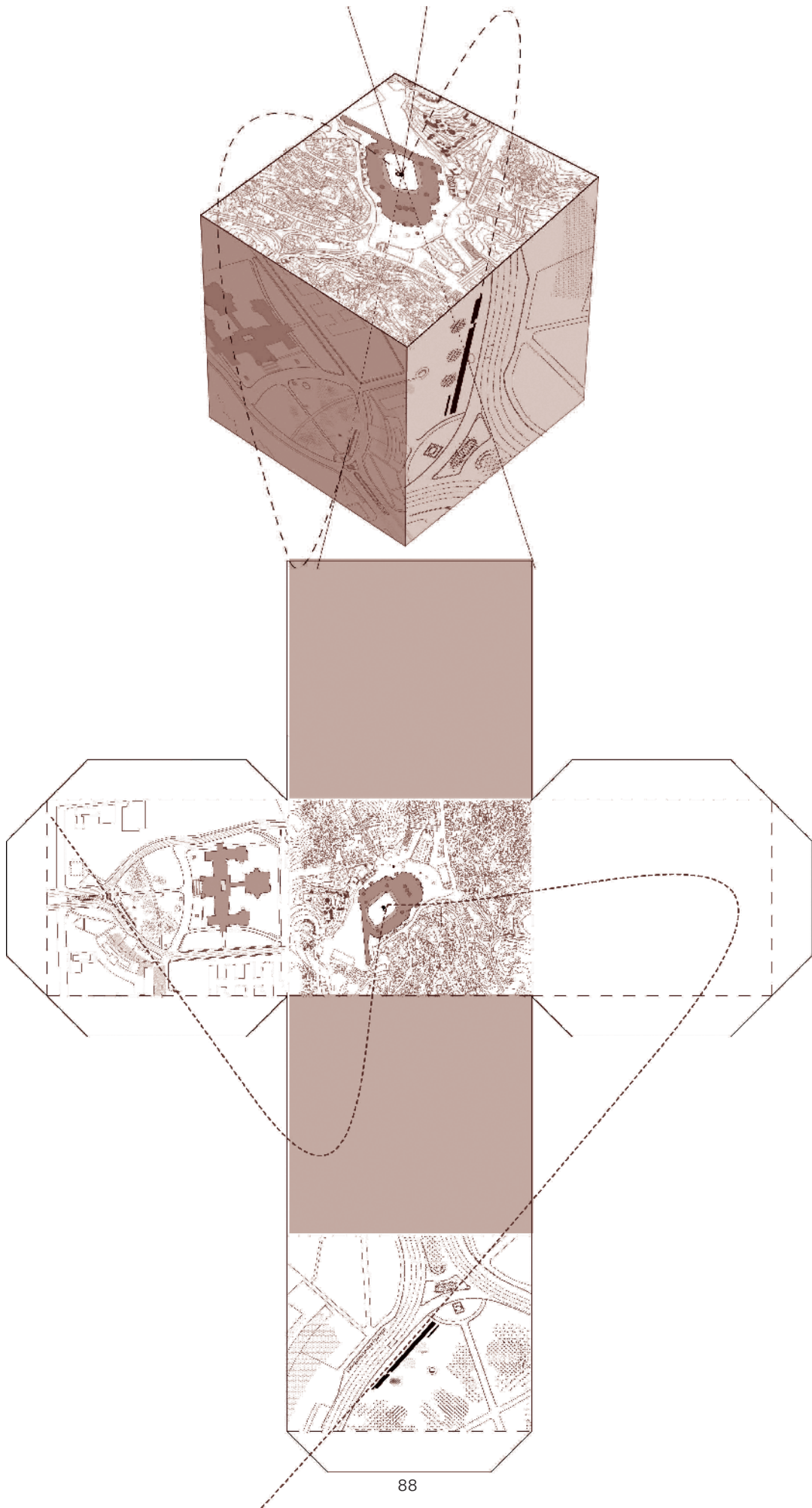
These are the kind of people that believe in rules, ones that in each religion, contradict historical sciences as they have developed. For example, in Canada in 2008, one couldn’t count the number of cases of tricinosis infected pork on one hand.

Tue, Mar 6, 2003 at 2:24 AM

Alexander I <Alexanderjosephson@gmail.com>
To: Med hasan <med—hasan@hotmail.com>

Dear Med,

I want to invite you to participate on the project, come to Rome, I know Pantelleria is distant but I would be happy to help you get here. At the moment I am in negotiations with Queens Park in Toronto, well, I have sent them a request with a rendering of the idea. Then there is the Canadian Parliament Ottawa, and now Washington D.C. to get permission to set up a field of 570 (the year of the birth of the prophet or also 552) impressions. Queens Park



361 *Figure 49 : Cubic Plan 2. The Globe, a pre-enlightened plan of the earth with one side being*
 362 *Makkah and the other Queen’s Park in Canada.*

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 365 seems to be the most likely place, given their open policy about demonstra-
 366 tions, plus it is in the city where I was raised.

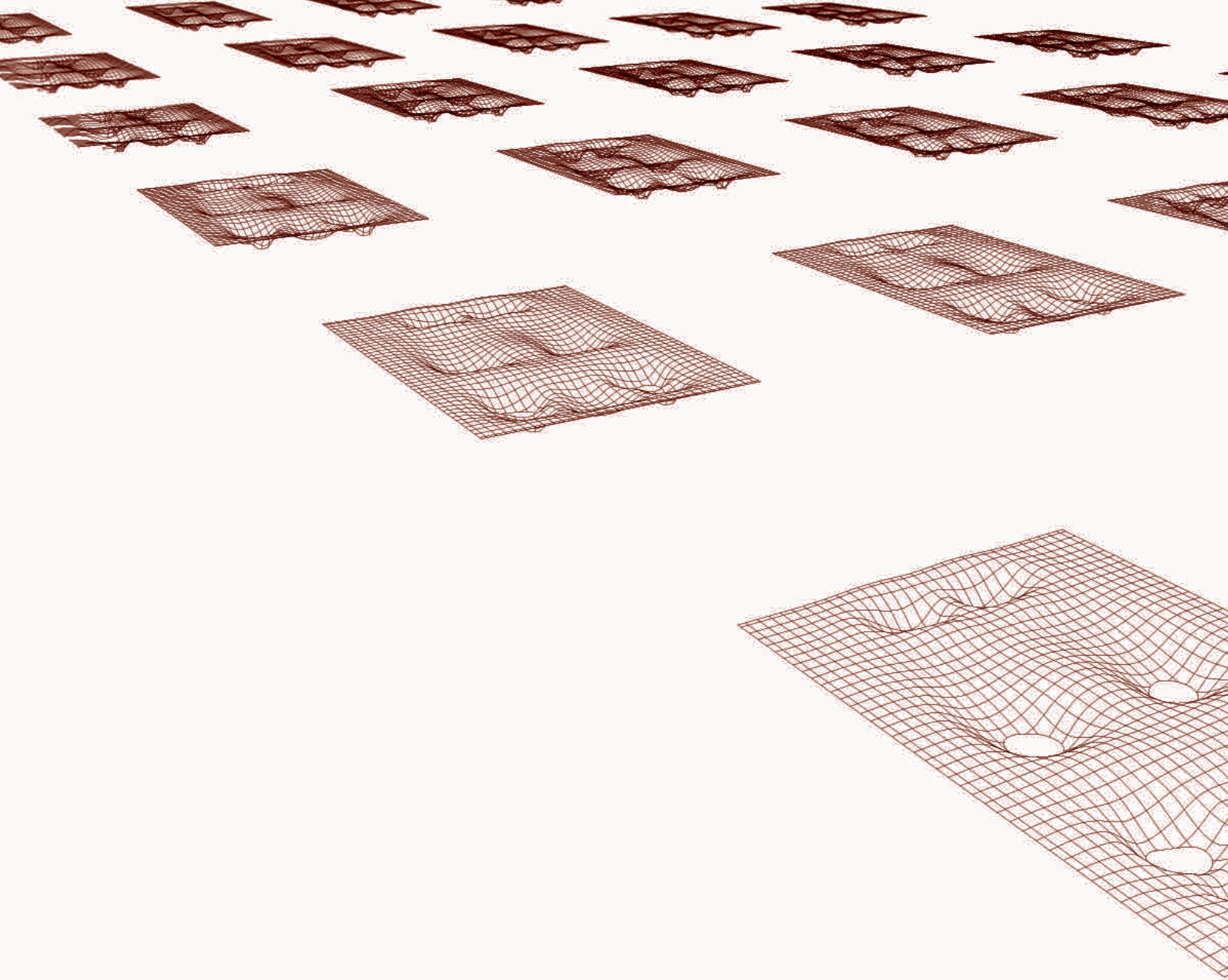
367 *Figure 50 : Unfolded Plan*
 368 *2: Makkah at 1:200000*
 369 *and Queen’s Park Toronto*
 370 *at 1:130000 and 1:2000.*

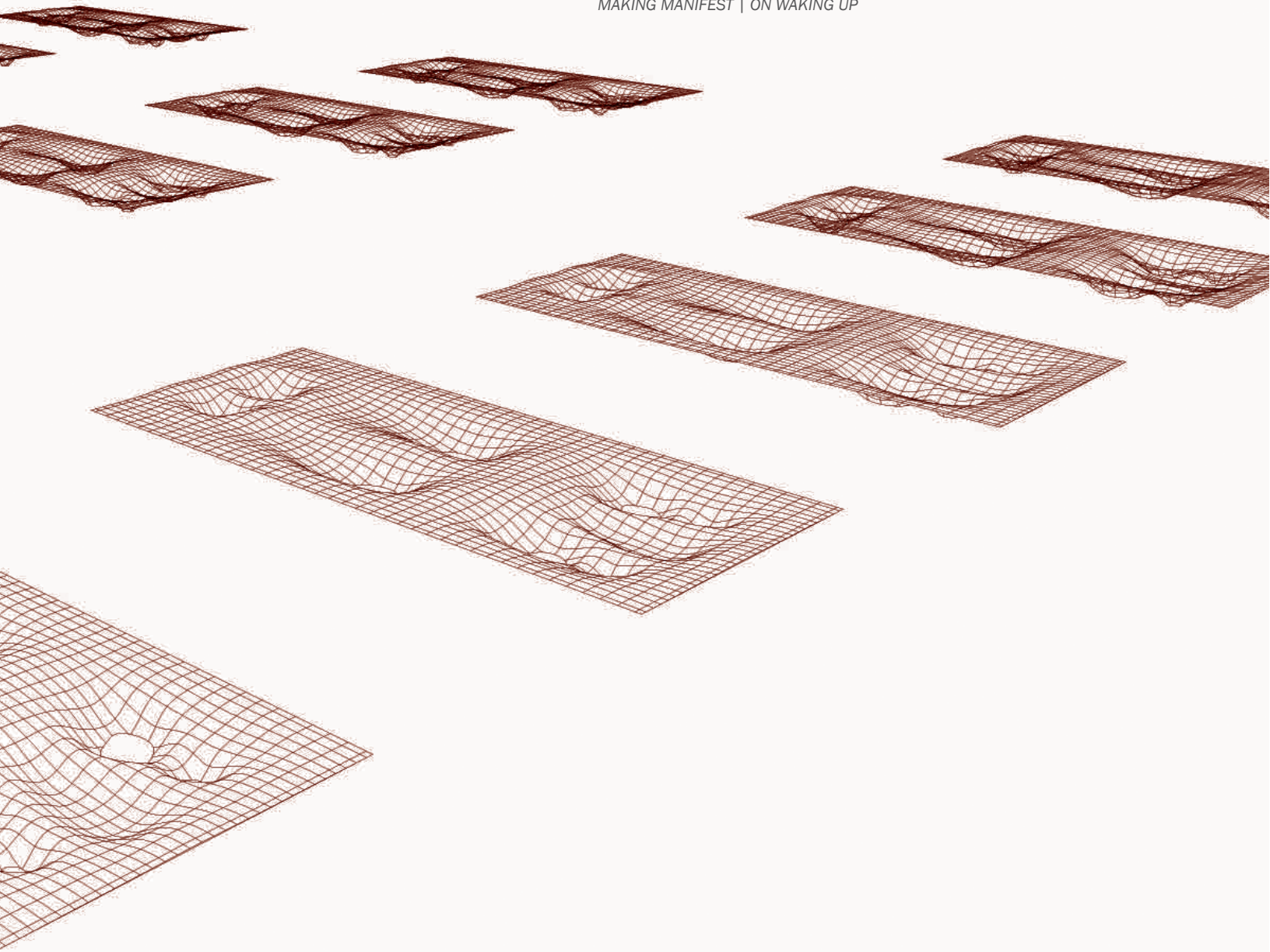
371
 372 Would you help, if for at least the possibility that they say yes and I have
 373 that you have been advising in the design of the impressions and that its
 374 intentions are toward the better understanding or acceptance of Islam in
 375 Western contexts. We need mention nothing of any critique as it will only
 376 infuriate people. I have attached the demonstrations permission form that I
 377 am submitting in the next 48 hours to the Sergeant at Arms office at Queens
 378 Park.

379
 380 I want to ask them for July 16th, which at 12noon as you may know is one
 381 of the days when the Sun is DIRECTLY over Mecca and the Ka’bah. Thus
 382 our shadows will fall in the opposite direction of Mecca and this will be how
 383 we map the site at queens park for the giant field of impressions. The same
 384 method the ancient tribes used to orientate themselves. It will be a kind of
 385 overlaying of a new cosmic order, which always seems to exist at a strange
 386 opposition to Western planning (such as the Ontario Parliament buildings).
 387 I want to leave the demonstration standing for hopefully a week.

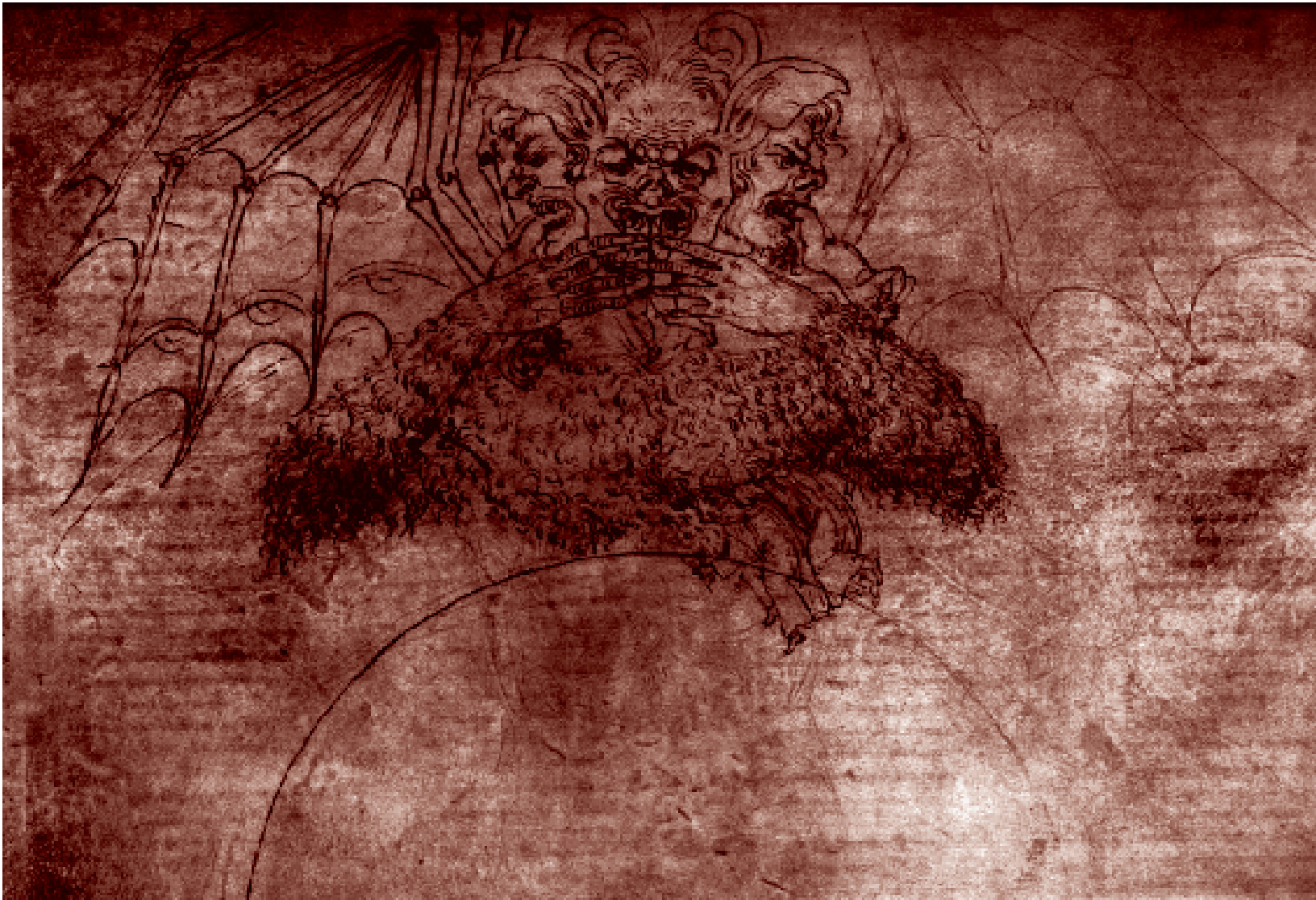
388 Fondly,

389 Alexander





390 **Figure 51** : The Homogenous
391 Field, a grouping of impressions
392 such that the rules of Salaat are
393 followed through contact, each
394 piece abuts the adjacent.



Building Faust

1 **Figure 52 :** Circle 9, Canto
 2 XXXIV , 1480s Sandro Botticelli
 3 (Alessandro
 4 Filipepi).

7 *The bed sat at the center of a vast library, an old monestery converted into a giant repository. Papers and manuscripts lay strewn all over the olive wood flooring and mohogony tables. It was late, the candles had filled the room with the stench of honey, flickering across the mediocre but charming fresco of the three muses on the ceiling. They cast shadows of bodies across the sheets, Latin, Italian, and the wild strokes of Arabic flashing across the pages. Exhausted and drenched in the sweat of a visceral yet loveless act, the young poet rolled off his mate. Gemma panted and her breast heaved as she struggled to catch her breath, her arm fell across Dante's chest as if to acknowledge her presence but not her comfort. Yet her suffering would not last long; she would fall into a deep sleep, leaving the contractual bonds of their youth to rest even for just a few hours while he would rise and continue:*

14
 15
 16 The Hadith Volume 1, Book 2,
 17 Number 49:
 18
 19 Narrated An-Nu'man bin Bashir:
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 21 I heard Allah's Apostle saying,
 22 'Both legal and illegal things are
 23 evident but in between them there
 24 are doubtful (suspicious) things
 25 and most of the people have
 26 no knowledge about them. So
 27 whoever saves himself from these
 28 suspicious things saves his religion
 29 and his honor. And whoever
 30 indulges in these suspicious things
 31 is like a shepherd who grazes (his
 32 animals) near the Hima (private
 33 pasture) of someone else and at any moment he is liable to get in it. (O people!) Beware! Every king has a Hima and the Hima of Allah on the earth is His illegal (forbidden) things. Beware! There is a piece of flesh in the body if it becomes good (reformed) the whole body becomes good but if it gets spoilt the whole body gets spoilt and that is the heart.

Now new punishments I must fit to verse,

Shaping the subject for my twentieth canto

Of the first canticle on the buried damned.

Already I was fully set to look

5 *Far down into the depth that opened to me
 To see its bottom bathed with tears of anguish,*

When through the valley's circling I described

*People coming hushed and weeping, at the pace
 Followed by processions in this world.*

10 *As my fixed gaze descended lower to them,
 Each seemed bizarrely twisted at the neck
 Between the chin and top part of the chest,*

Because their faces turned round to their haunches



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Figure 53 : Med in my studio in Rome sitting inside a 3dimensional scanning stage.

*So that they were compelled to walk backwards
15 Since they could not possibly see ahead.*

*Perhaps a stroke of palsy once has twisted
Someone so completely, but I doubt it
For I have never seen a case like this.*

*May God so grant you, reader, to find fruit
20 In your reading: now ponder for yourself
How I could keep the eyes in my head dry*

*When I saw close at hand our human image
Contorted so the tears streaming from their eyes
Bathed their buttocks and ran between the cleft.*

*25 I wept, surely, while I leaned back against
A rock there on that rugged ridge; my escort
Said, "Still like all the other fools, are you?"*

*"Here pathos lives when its false meaning dies,
Since who is more pathetic than the person
30 Who agonizes over God's just judgments?"*

Dante Alligheri, La Divina Commedia, False Prophets Canto

Tue, Mar 20, 2003 at 5:59 PM

From: Med hasan <med—hasan@hotmail.com>

I will be in Rome in two days, then we can begin. You have your Judas my little prophet. You will have two months to finish and produce the forms, that is, if you can chase the path of the sun.

PEACE

Med

(see ethics approval forms for volunteer subjects in appendix °Y)

When he arrived it was one of those days, sweltering heat after days of near-frigid and damp conditions. Heat was going to become more important than I had imag-

The Italian scholar Enrico Cerrulli was the first to question the origins of Dante's Inferno, the three part serial poem describing Dante's ascension to paradise through hell. His conclusion was that Dante was most likely influenced by a story called the Mi'raj, which is the story of the ascension the prophet Muhammad took in one night, around the year 621CE, to paradise. It is important because this was translated into Latin just prior to Dante's birth in the early 13th century, and it is widely regarded to be the first detailed account of the conditions in hell, which are extraordinarily similar to Dante's. Those were then adopted almost unanimously across western cultures.



Figure 54 : The Heretics, Circle 6,
Canto XI. 1480s Sandro Botticelli
(Alessandro Filipepi), part of the series
of studies and paintings he completed

for the entire work.

80 and there is the infidel tribe of
 81 Mudar intervening between you
 82 and us. So please order us to do
 83 something good (religious deeds)
 84 so that we may inform our people
 85 whom we have left behind (at
 86 home), and that we may enter
 87 Paradise (by acting on them)."
 88 Then they asked about drinks
 89 (what is legal and what is illegal).
 90 The Prophet ordered them to do
 91 four things and forbade them from
 92 four things. He ordered them to
 93 believe in Allah Alone and asked
 94 them, "Do you know what is meant
 95 by believing in Allah Alone?" They
 96 replied, "Allah and His Apostle
 97 know better." Thereupon the
 98 Prophet said, "It means:

- 100 1. To testify that none has the
- 101 right to be worshipped but
- 102 Allah and Muhammad is Allah's
- 103 Apostle.
- 104 2. To offer prayers perfectly
- 105 3. To pay the Zakat (obligatory
- 106 charity)
- 107 4. To observe fast during the
- 108 month of Ramadan.
- 109 5. And to pay Al-Khumus (one
- 110 fifth of the booty to be given in
- 111 Allah's Cause).

112 Then he forbade them four
 113 things, namely, Hantam, Dubba,¹
 114 Naqir Ann Muzaffat or Muqaiyar; (These were the names of pots in
 115 which Alcoholic drinks were prepared) (The Prophet mentioned the
 116 container of wine and he meant the wine itself). The Prophet further
 117 said (to them): "Memorize them (these instructions) and convey them
 118 to the people whom you have left behind."

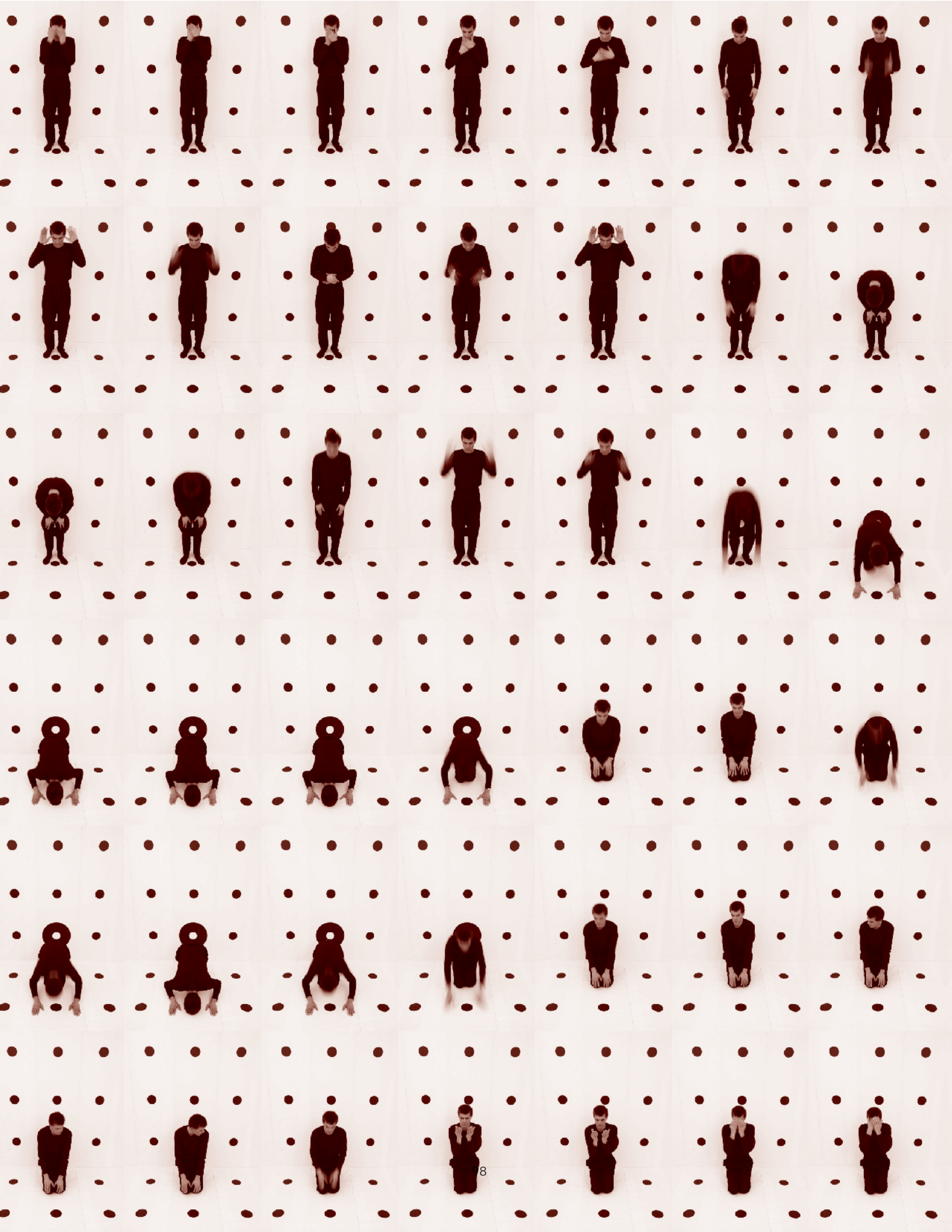
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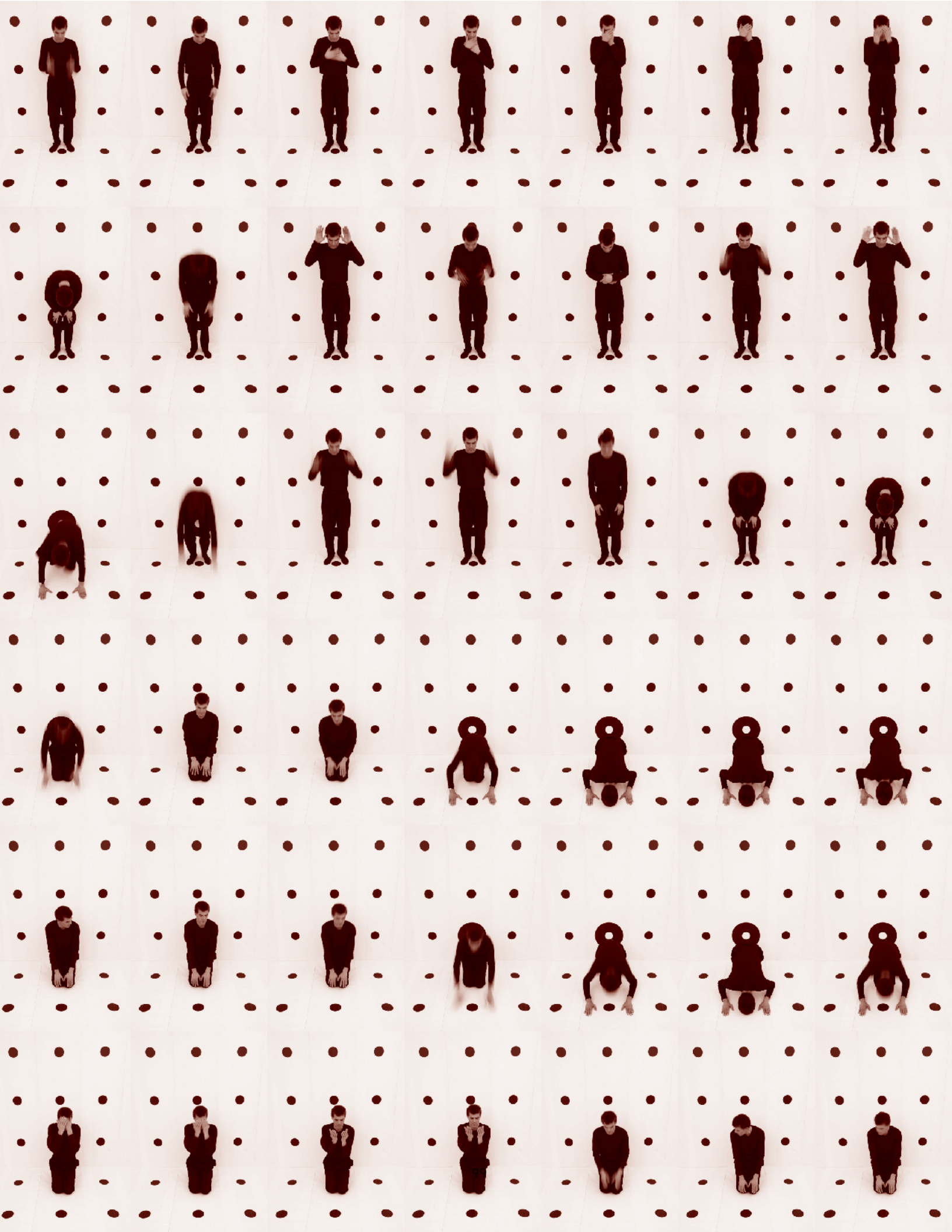
ined. All wasn't a complete loss; the buildings in Rome hadn't become giant scale radiators yet, this needed to wait till June. That didn't mean things weren't already hot enough in general; elsewhere the bombings had already begun, images of Baghdad being ripped into shreds were everywhere. Somehow the cameras and reporters in the city had the perfect vantage point, planned precisely to capture the most spectacular angle of the explosions from their perches atop high-end condos or hotels. This was all taking place at dusk so as to avoid killing the important people planning the so-called attacks within. A couple of janitors and building custodians would have to be a worthy sacrifice; after all, they only made sure the building kept standing.

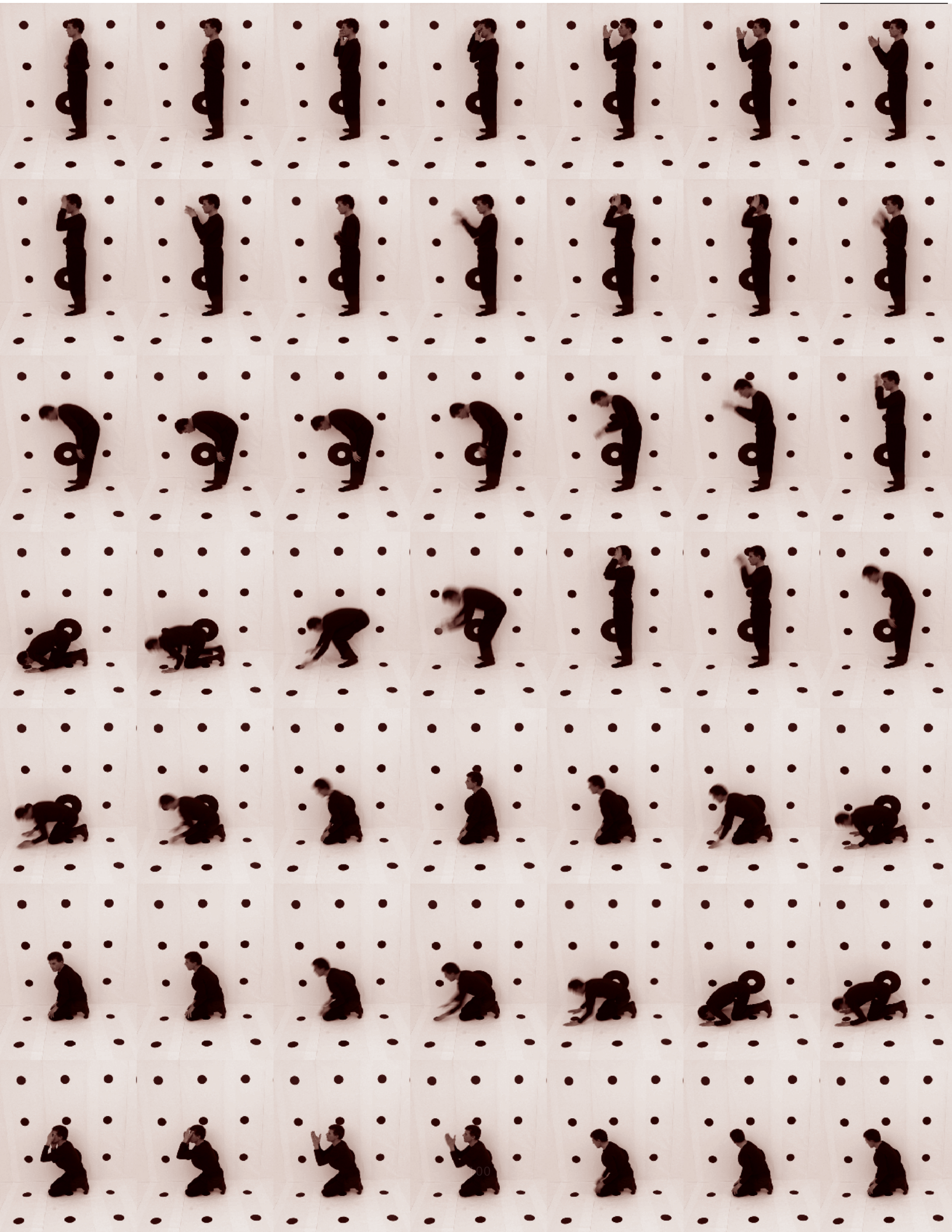
I had been preparing the studio for Med's arrival for days. The rooms were immaculate. The notion that this angel was descending upon my studio to do things that every Muslim let alone confidante of mine thought impossible was still not real to me. When Federico brought him by my studio that afternoon, except for his tall sinewy frame, he was everything I wouldn't have expected from a refugee. Elegant, with a cream-coloured linen jacket and a black scarf, his mottled face of deeply tanned skin supported two of the most intense black eyes I have ever seen. They were huge, disproportionate things that you expect on some other sort of being. His eyebrows were so long and bushy they curled on end as if to extend the curly locks of his dark Arabian hair. He must have been in his fifties but looked no older than forty and had the energetic presence of a teenager. In a raspy voice the first thing he asked me was in which language would I prefer to speak to him. Italian? English? You said you were originally from Canada, how about French, he gibed.

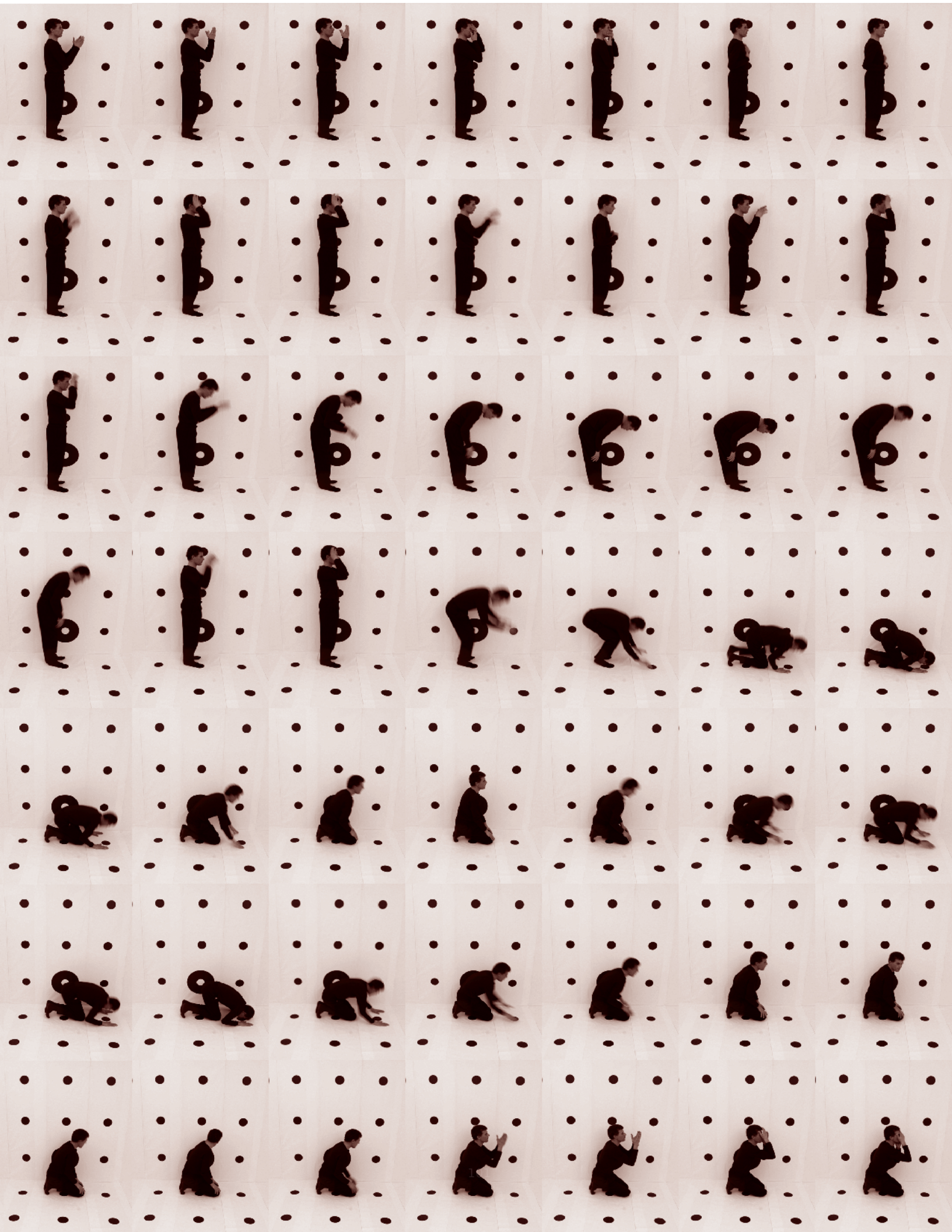
When I asked how religious he was, he told me that until this trip he hadn't prayed in over two decades.

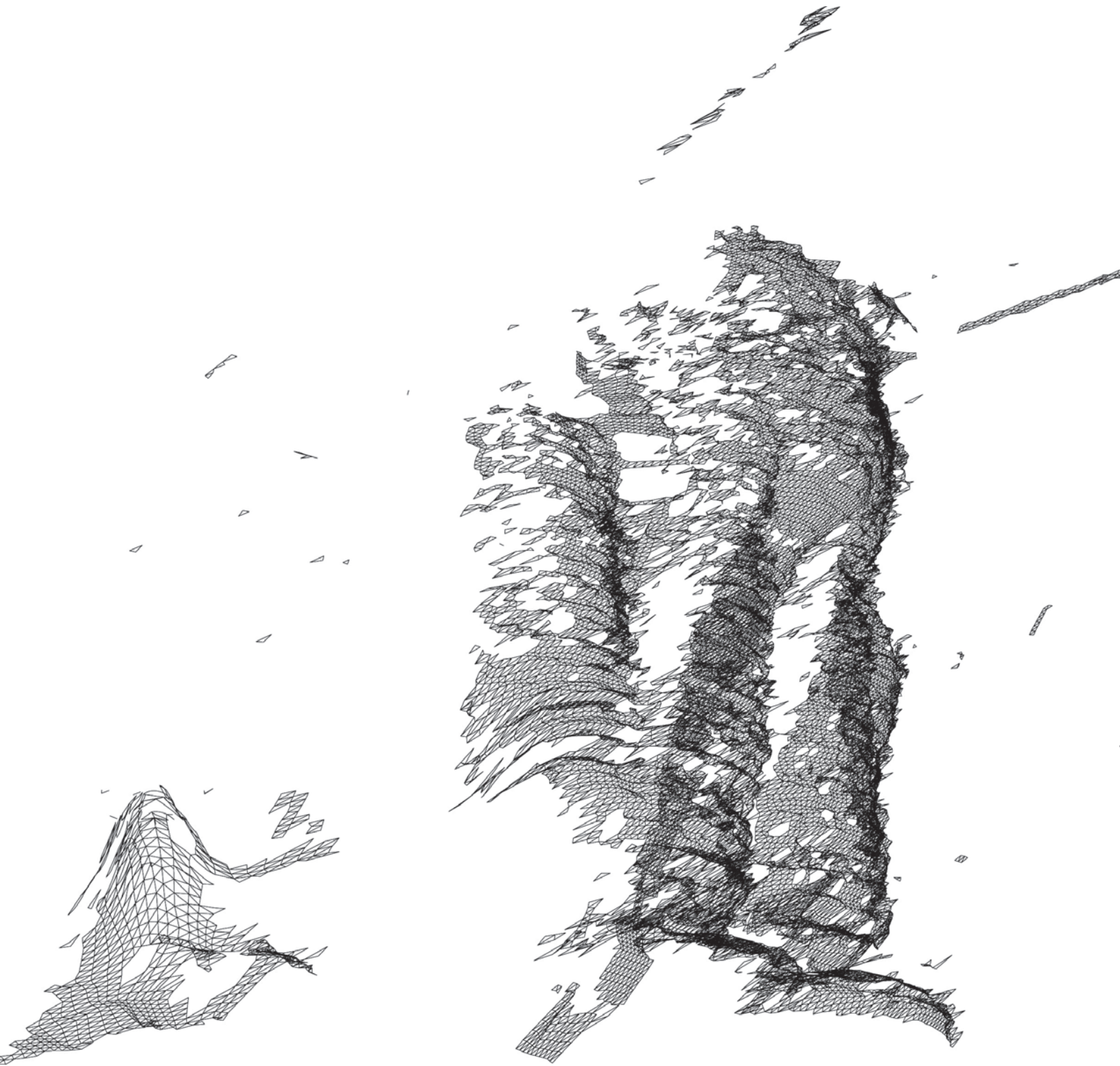
There is a condition that some people have dubbed the Jerusalem Syndrome, whereby upon visiting the holy city they begin to have delusional or even psychotic breaks of a religious kind. It might be likened to the Stendhal effect in Venice. Sometimes Rome has a similar effect on certain visitors, they enter a kind of self-revelatory condition—well, let's call it an experimental stage. Med was going through something similar; his excitement was palpable. The idea that some random atheist, let alone a Jew, from another time and place needed him to perform was borderline ridiculous. Needless to say, he was driven to











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Figure 56.1: Digital scan of Med during Salaat, see hands being brought the face and the knees below the arms.

do it well.

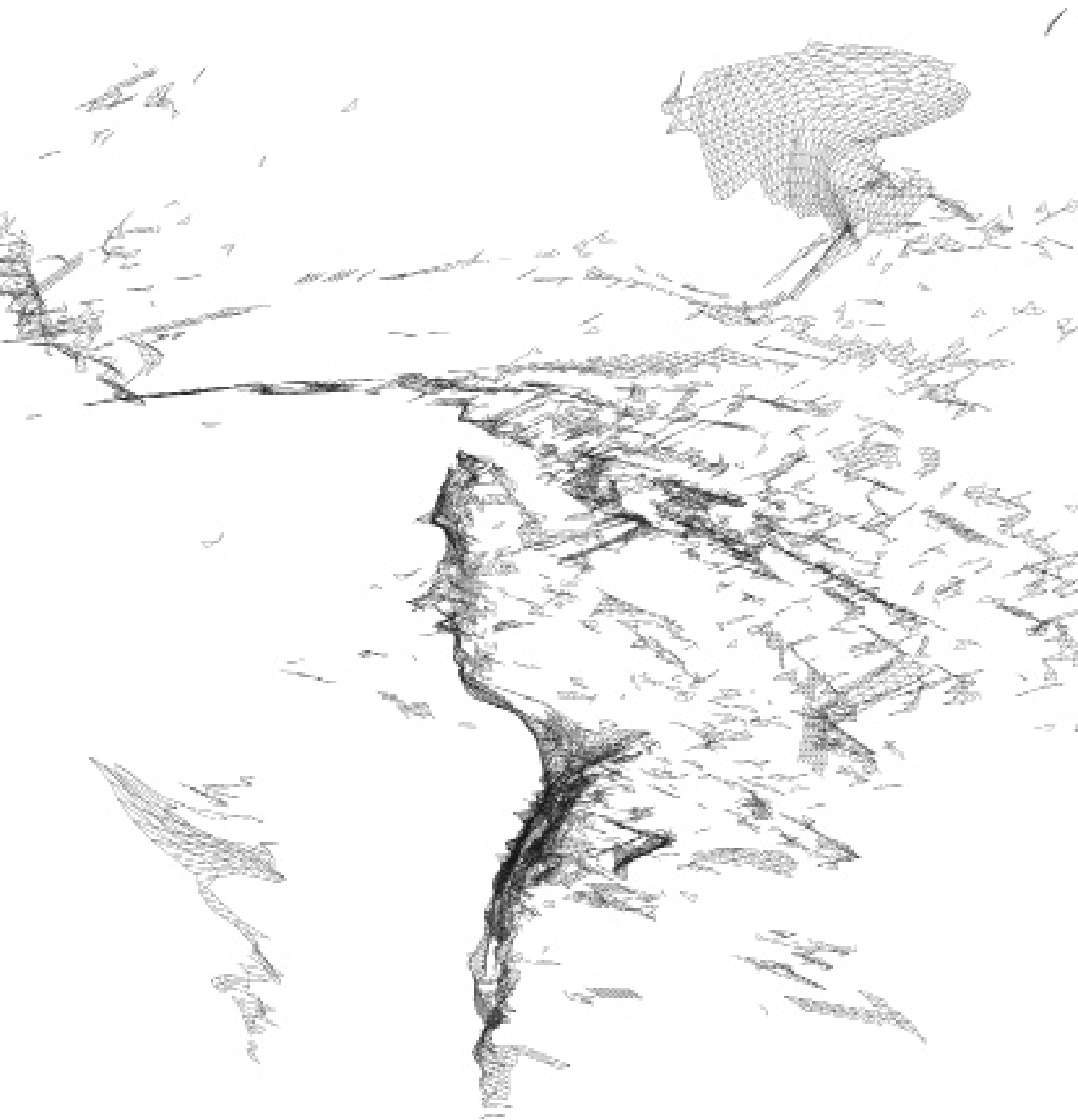
It was right down to business, he really wanted to just start and let us learn. The studio was all setup facing Makkah so he began by washing himself. I had assembled two basins of warm water. Explaining every point during the process, he washed his hands twice, then fingers and then all the way to the elbows. He rinsed his mouth out twice very gently, being very careful to grasp the water with his right hand which he also did for his nose, sending the waste into a third basin. He then rinsed his sweating forehead moving in a smooth circular motion down to his neck and then the back of it. He finished with his ears before moving down to his feet.

Then he stood up and began to speak softly. Allahu Akbar... Allahu Akbar... God (the one god) is Great...

The hair on the back of my neck began to slowly stand on end until the tingle had translated all the way down my arms and shoulders. His voice had changed completely, it was gentle and rhythmic combined with the sound of his garments creasing as he gestured down and across his chest. It was musical. The choreography of it completely transformed the atmosphere in that studio. It was no longer a factory, it was a temple.

By the end of the prayer, he looked both ways and said something over both of his shoulders, as if there were people right there with him. When he was done he looked over to me and said that this is when I say my peace to the good and bad devils of me. He broke out laughing. It was as if he had never stopped; the position of his left foot, his arms, the tone of his voice, the idea that he hadn't done this in twenty years was impossible.

Med was a more willing collaborator than I could have ever asked. He didn't feel as if he were blighting the prayer, even when we attached LEDs to his clothes to capture the movements with light. The countless rejections I had received from other Muslim students or otherwise were trivial now, they meant nothing. To Med, his spirituality wasn't a static concept wrapped up in the ancient language of tradition. His was the part of that religion that is so intoxicating, the parts that are about a progress and change. After each prayer, during which he would recite a different section of the Quran, he would chat with me about life and religion—writing poetry. He told me that after he moved to Beirut in the seventies he had started to write and described a life enriched



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Figure 56.2 : Med scanned in the profile position at the beginning of the prayer standing up.

through making art and readings that weren't available at home.

He had an insatiable appetite for culture. His religion, or the practice passed down to him, was no more important than any other menial activity. He wrote me a poem that first night at the trattoria Augusto in Trastevere after the gruelling session of more than eight hundred photographs over six hours. Trastevere was a mess at that time of the year; American students at the plethora of satellite architecture schools were everywhere, the piazzas were concert halls of body.

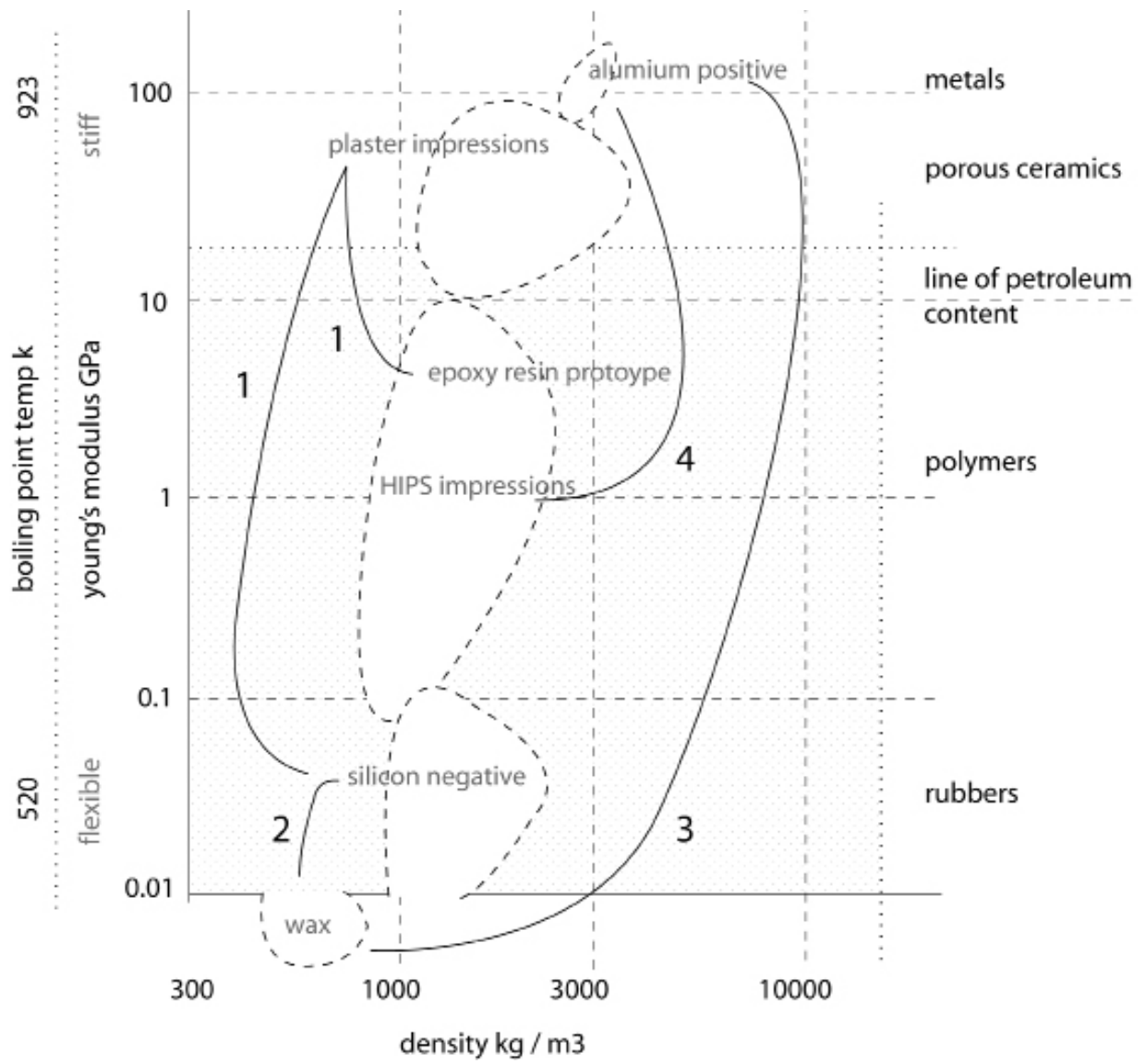
A person once told me that if you are less than thirty years old and not ideological then you have no heart, but if you are older than thirty without having rejected them, then you are a fool. Med was exiled from Tunisia at barely twenty six and still a practising Muslim: his socialist leanings in Lebanon hadn't taken his soul, much to the chagrin of his conservative family, who couldn't possibly reconcile the implications of his politics. He became an active demonstrator in Carthage with a young group of French and Tunisian situationists. The straw that broke his back was when they conscripted an entire factory of textile workers to lock down and demand unionized wages. The police and military were brought in and massacred the entire place. No less than fifty people would be beaten to death that night, October 4, 1968.

It was after he was deported to Pantelleria, the Italian island paradise just off the horn of Tunis, that he atrophied. The indigenous locals still resemble the Persians that first settled there centuries earlier, most likely Muslims themselves. At sunset you can see the horn of Tunisia on the horizon, with Tunis just behind it. He eventually rustled up enough money to help out local politicians and restore boats to purchase a small patch of land on the leeward side of the island where the volcanic soil was perfect for farming. It's the kind of soil that with the combination of infernal heat in the mornings and cool evenings can grow something tree sized in mere weeks. The olive orchard he planted became one of the best in southern Italy and slightly notorious in the great kitchens of the world for the oil he named after the son that he would never have: Per mio figlio.

Med insisted we start at the break of dawn the next day, the time of Fajr was at about 4:47am. We would spend the day like a practicing Muslim would in the Middle East, well at least the prayers: Fajr (Dawn), Shorook (Sunrise), Zuhr (Noon), Asr (Afternoon), Maghrib (Sunset), Isha (Night). He decided

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that we would bounce off to the local cafe called Sacchetti on Piazza San Cosimato between the hours and have something to drink or to snack. He never left without a red pad he carried around, like a Chinese citizen under the cultural revolution, except he filled his with poetry, if he wasn't talking he wrote poetry. That is, if he wasn't drinking a cold Peroni Riserva—he preferred beer with a little ice after lunch.



Building on Heat

8 Behind the doors protecting my face from the heat, the plastic slumped, dancing on the edge of being a liquid and solid. The machine was more like a room, with a gaping set of vertical hung shutters punctuated by three thick glass apertures about the size of a standard oven pan. Its guts ran up and down, overhead and then across, then disappearing into perforations along the but-tressing keeping the walls and floor in perfect stillness. Fans, pumps, and rushing gas through elements vibrated and spread a thick stench of industrial burn into the air. A pair of enormous black tanks about the size of a small liquid transport truck were tucked in behind the giant tower of green powder coated steel lining the furnace. The three windows stood in the centre of a giant door that you could have driven a truck through. They couldn't contain the heat and the noise was deafening. The feeling of being inside an oven is less awkward than one can imagine. The fear of making contact with anything rings hard at every second; you try to protect yourself but eventually you are resolved to the fact that you will burn, and your feet become the limiting agent of your time within as your soles melt onto the elements underneath them.

Figure 57 : During each stage of production a different set of material resistance levels were surpassed, beginning with non-material human movement. In an age so deeply concerned with energy consumption and petroleum preservation, the flow and process of production can be traced through petroleum cycles, each material involving more and more energy and consumption of petroleum. Each system was interrelated and connected through a set of proprietary actions, choices that influence appearance.

In a time in which people discuss greening the world, sustainability, and lower carbon cycle materials. It is interesting to note, each material and process in this project required richer and richer carbon contents, not only inherently through chemical compositions, but through the intensely energetic processes in order to complete each phase.

Getting to a mass producible object is a particular process, each stage bringing you close enough to kiss the next, and that approaching the level of tolerance only a machine can perceive. The problem is that there is no tolerance; a machine has no eye nor imagination, it follows the lines of least resistance. Those in turn either become the points at which production grinds to a total standstill or, if they are properly accounted for, allow the run to come to fruition. What is hard to avoid is forgetting the ungraceful parts, the temptation to move right into the heat of the final moments.

While still in Rome, before I had ever known the scale of the furnace that would finally meld this idea into solid form, Med and I began creating a set of physical impressions while he prayed. We did this in many different substances, anything to approach the form of the computer prototypes: plaster, sand, resin, and parafin wax. Using bare skin at first against giant latex membranes or ultra thin wax sheets I had made by pouring gallons

of wax onto sheets, then plaster and even epoxy. Each material had some kind of human characteristic, skin, bones, flesh. I had no choice but to start with the most economical approach: plaster castings and industrial seran sheets in four foot wide rolls from a city works depot called SAPIG on the edge of Rome's periphery.

It was unlike most corner hardware stores. Across the street a wall separated it from



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Figure 58: Latex is one of the more common materials used in protective garments. It is found in the sap of the Para rubber tree, takinh its name from the state of Pará, Brazil. In 1876 Henry Wichham transported the seeds of these trees to Malasia where labor and climate would provide for the most economical and political environment to serve the West's latex rubber consumption needs.

Figure 59: Med in the process of praying on a bed of resin.

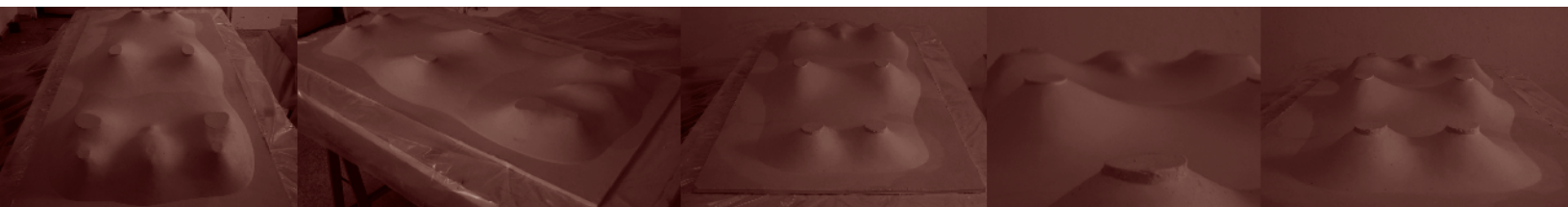
Figure 60: First Plaster prototype.

Figure 61: First Plaster prototype, finished and sealed for next stage.

giant bridge spanning twenty lanes of railway track and highways buffeted by the ancient cemetery Campo Di Verano. The dead were never allowed to be buried within the city walls of ancient Rome. To this day that tradition continues, not just in Rome, but in many other cities and towns. There, in what we could call the suburbs, the cemetery sometimes became another city outside the city. Da Verano was now in the centre of a transportation knuckle, with dense mixed-use buildings populated by the lower and middle classes. It was the perfect place for a store like SAPIG. The owner there is an older man named Saporito, which sort of sounds like the words flavour or tasty in Italian.

The cost of materials in Italy was a fraction of what they had become in other countries. Perhaps the motive is that so much of the Italian economy is an unaccounted-for super engine in global manufacturing. But Italians really have the world fooled into thinking they are the most inefficient, unproductive cultures. To me it is their coup d'etat, as long as the world believes this ignorant stereotype they can continue doing things their way. Sicily is one of the most incredible civilizations in the world, yet everyone seems to think it is some Mafia-ridden cesspool. This is not to mention that they are in the G8, without including the open truth of widespread black markets. Italy's corruption index really isn't even in the lower half of the studies released each year. The cultural price of black labour and black economies has become nothing to be ashamed of to the masses there; they are open about this. Some try to fight this, but it can be extraordinarily dangerous.

I didn't have any problem with it either I guess; plaster in Italy cost me at least one tenth what it did in North America. I was saving a fortune on labor and materials—twenty-five kilo bags could be procured for about four Euros at the time and my peers were willing to help me in other ways for



79 **Figure 62 :** RTV-880 is a general purpose condensation cure RTV silicone rubber. It has good heat
 80 resistance, high resilience, and exhibits good vibration resistance which makes it popular as a high
 81 performance insulator. It has a density similar to that of organic flesh and it has an elastomeric quality
 82 that prevents laceration.

83 Depending on platinum or
 84 tin cured types, the heat of
 85 evaporation during set times
 86 can exceed 80 degrees Celsius,
 87 though platinum curing
 88 varieties are expensive their
 89 shelf lives after cure are
 90 indefinite in ideal conditions.
 91 [Wikipedia entries].

94 **Figure 63 :** Waxes may
 95 be the natural secretions
 96 of plants or animals,
 97 artificially produced by
 98 purification from natural
 99 petroleum or completely
 100 synthetic. In addition to
 101 beeswax, carnauba (a plant
 102 epicuticular wax) and
 103 paraffin (a petroleum wax)
 104 are commonly encountered
 105 waxes which occur naturally.
 106 Earwax is another oily
 107 substance found in the
 108 human ear.

110 Chemically, a wax is a type
 111 of lipid that may contain a
 112 wide variety of long-chain
 113 alkanes, esters, polyesters
 114 and hydroxy esters of long-
 115 chain primary alcohols and fatty acids.

117 They are usually distinguished from fats by the lack of triglyceride esters of glycerin (propan-1,2,3-triol)
 118 and three fatty acids. [Wikipedia entries].

nothing but a mention as long as there was a strong purpose. Perhaps it could have cost even less in areas outside the historic centre where real estate commands the greatest premiums in the world. It didn't make things any more practical; the process of lugging two hundred kilos of material up four flights of stairs to my ancient studio was maddening.

In the middle of all this, the Ontario Parliament had been in contact with me about the proposal I had sent them for an Islamic prayer park and temporary monument. The only way I could word this work in their terms was to depict it as a religious intervention wherein the public was welcome to participate in some way, when in my mind this was a solemn monument. I had sent them plans for a laceration like strip of impressions measuring 250m x 25m, composed of 570 forms. It was a stretch and they clearly knew I was testing their better judgement by the socio-political ground I had intentionally placed them. If they denied the proposal it would have been grounds for controversy at least given that they allow almost any political demonstration, let alone annual iconography in celebration of Jewish-Christian holidays—a giant menorah, Christmas tree and the nativity. These also weren't gallery owners or architects, they were police officers who could care less than an iota about anything except public safety. They obviously wanted to know that there were some members of the community willing to support the project or that a Muslim had been involved.

My efforts with students finally turned a corner at the University of Toronto. The Muslim Students Association was much more diverse and interesting than I had experienced at the University of Waterloo. There weren't any members asking me what the point in art or interesting architecture was, in fact, they wanted to help improve the work.



Tue, May 28, 2003 at 5:59 PM

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Figure 65 : fondaria
Anselmi, in rome.

Zane Hussein <zanehussein@gmail.com> wrote:

Hey Alex,

There were no objections whatsoever to the research, in fact I got nothing but offers of support from the other executives at the meeting, so I'm glad to tell you that the University of Toronto MSA and its more than 3000 members are officially on board for Making Manifest.

Now there's a little more than a month until the event so we need to figure out a few more things such as advertising this to city and scheduling.

Let me know as soon as you get a chance.

All the best,

Zane

Figure 65 : Although aluminium is the most abundant metallic element in the Earth's crust (believed to be 7.5 to 8.1 percent), it is one of the most energy intensive to produce: electric power represents about 20% to 40% of the cost of producing it, depending on the location of the smelter. The melting point of aluminium is 660.25 degrees Celsius. Smelters tend to be situated where electric power is both plentiful and inexpensive though light and maleable, it represents an end state of human resource consumption.

By this point the momentum was great enough that I poured all of my resources, even a lot of my savings into building the monuments, the mat that everyone wanted to function after all. The thing is that after so much work, when I sat down inside the final plaster forms, I realized that they were completely impracticable. They were uncomfortable, which in terms of Islamic Law, isn't really a problem as the specific aspects of Salaat are in fact supposed to be awkward, but the universal size issue was nagging. Everyone has a different body, it was so clear that this was not ever going to be used by anyone unless it was custom made.

Corrosion resistance can be excellent due to a thin surface layer of aluminium oxide that forms when the metal is exposed to air, effectively preventing further oxidation [Wikipedia entries].



154 **Figures 66 and 68 :**
 155 Polystyrene was discovered
 156 in 1839 by Eduard
 157 Simon,[3] an apothecary
 158 in Berlin. From storax,
 159 the resin of Liquidambar
 160 orientalis, he distilled an oily
 161 substance, a monomer which
 162 he named styrol. Several
 163 days later Simon found that
 164 the styrol had thickened,
 165 presumably from oxidation,
 166 into a jelly he dubbed styrol
 167 oxide ("Styroloxyd"). About
 168 80 years went by before it
 169 was realized that heating
 170 of styrol starts a chain
 171 reaction which produces
 172 macromolecules, following
 173 the thesis of German organic
 174 chemist Hermann Staudinger
 175 (1881–1965). This eventually
 176 led to the substance
 177 receiving its present name,
 178 polystyrene. The I. G.
 179 Farben company began
 180 manufacturing polystyrene
 181 in Ludwigshafen, Germany,
 182 about 1931, hoping it would
 183 be a suitable replacement
 184 for die cast zinc in many
 185 applications. Polystyrene is
 186 about as strong as unalloyed
 187 aluminium, but much more
 188 flexible. [Wikipedia entries].

After Med left it took me almost three weeks of day and night work with help to get the form completed so that I could pour a one centimeter thick negative out of wax. This would serve as the form for a classical lost wax die from which cheap plastic versions could be fabricated using thermo-plastic vacuum forming. The same process used in almost all plastic packaging products, such as egg containers. Whatever it was that I was producing could never be as beautiful as the process to get to it, the vanity of all this.



Building in Toronto: Massochist City

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Figure 68 : Toronto is a city that tends to prefer the Void or Tabula Raza, meaning the city has built itself up by tearing itself apart. To the knowledge of this author, no other city has performed such massochistic acts of urban planning. This is on some level normal in developing North American Cities where great mistakes were made, but instead of correcting mistakes, Toronto continues to make them.

The first example of this is the attempt to blame the city's lack of connection to its lakeshore on the elevated highway known as the gardner expressway. What nobody has come to realize is that this piece of concrete infrastructure could be the perfect artifact to establish a new kind of super-dense urban core fed by a working highway. Instead, this infrastructure will be eliminated in favor of a slow moving boulevard with proxy green planning. It will bring Toronto in line with every other city in this world trying to act green. Instead of a fast future, Toronto will have a slow one.

The real problem (which is actually an asset) in Toronto, is its railway infrastructure, a dense set of lines that lascerate the city below its knees one kilometer north of the lakefront. There, hundreds of acres of developable lands are held in a virtual occupation by a national railway system that is itself, a public

9 *The security booth in the entry vestibule of the legislature is a raised oak hexagonal podium to the right of a grand ascending stair clad in warn red carpeting. The booth feels like a lecturn in a large church, except, instead of a priest a police officer stood imposingly. Ironically, once you're in close enough to the booth your body is already directly underneath the halls of provincial parliament, a strap on weapon would be enough to take out the entire government if you were to arrive at the right time. Nonetheless, they take security quite seriously in there. I was given a badge in a laminated plastic pin on a clip, with my name and status as a visitor clearly printed. It was all very official, I waited there until a pickwickean woman arrived, The Sgt. At Arms, the one that holds the gavel and protects public representitives at the parliament.*

The rights of passage into this inner sanctum seemed a shadow of their former glory. The halls of panelled oak and dusty carpeting insulated the creaking wood floors below my feet betraying their purpose to hide the noise. This was, after all, once built in service of the people founding a new place, a place where a dream was to take place in real-time.

The offices were in a converted indexing space, a giant room room in the bowls of the building with strange dimensions. Inside were a two story block of gangways and mezzanines, that seemed to hold something like books, but the shelves looked more mechanical than anything for a book. Flanking this machine were offices separated by makeshift drywall partitions.

When she said yes, I remember looking out the window into the interior courtyard and feeling a strange sense of dissatisfaction.

I was born in this city, "the place where trees stand in the water." ^{xiii} Toronto's name likely comes from the native Iroquois people's word tkaronto which roughly translates into this ideal marshy condition. What I like



41 transportation disaster. These tracks should be expropriated from the railways by the city. Then, the city
 42 should hold a competition to architects to design sections of this land which could then be auctioned to
 43 developers on the cheap under the condition of a public or affordable housing ratio.

44
 45 These things being said, there
 46 is no city like it in the world.
 47 Nor so many with these kinds
 48 of opportunities.

52 **Figure 69 :** CN tower,
 53 toronto.

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 50 about its name is that it has an ironic cultural reality. Centuries later the
 51 devout Anglican-Protestant urban fabric is blessed by the good fortune
 52 of being punctuated, torn and knotted by minority ghettos. Like the trees
 53 poking out of the serene waters, they are the most important ghettos in
 54 the world, so large that Toronto has become the world's most diverse city.
 55 I don't say this out of pride, nor do I use the words to demean this city.
 56 Except perhaps that it has created a culture that trusts outside opinion and
 57 foreign cultures more than its own, which with all of these ingredients is
 58 totally unique. It is the model of the city of the future. The result of these
 59 attitudes is a city that has a very tenuous relationship with history, allow-
 60 ing greedy interests to profit all too effortlessly off of the extensive urban
 61 fabric. The examples of this are various, from the City Place developments
 62 beside the Dome Stadium and CN Tower, to the sprawling suburbs which
 63 continue to grow unabatedly with grave consequences to the liveability of
 64 the overall urban form.

65
 66 The proximity of all the cultures and this rampant development is precise-
 67 ly the reason that I could force this project into the public eye quickly. The
 68 city has had to develop a series of free and available venues for a variety
 69 of cultural expressions, ranging from the political to the most inoquous
 70 farmers market, on the streets. None of these has ever been an expression
 71 of Islam.

72
 73 Toronto is one of the few places in the world where mounting a full scale
 74 public exhibition at the houses of political power is very easy, in fact, dem-
 onstrations of all kinds are encouraged. The authorities are forced, by dint
 of the shear scale of the minority populations, to allow projects address-
 ing those cultures at Queen's Park as well as other public lands. This is
 remarkable seeing that the city has no record of violent demonstration.
 What it has is the constant reminder of how many different beliefs and

Legislative
Assembly
of Ontario



Assemblée
législative
de l'Ontario

Sergeant-at-Arms and
Precinct Properties Division
Legislative Security Service
Room 411, North Wing
Queen's Park
Toronto, Ontario M7A 1A2

Division du sergent d'armes et
des locaux de l'enceinte parlementaire
Service de sécurité de l'Assemblée législa
Bureau 411, aile nord,
Queen's Park
Toronto (Ontario) M7A 1A2

Thursday April 12, 2003

Mr. Alex Josephson
112 Kilbarry Road
Toronto, ON
M5P 1K9

Dear Mr. Josephson,

This correspondence is to advise that the Sergeant-at-Arms has approved the application you submitted to use the Legislative grounds. The application was submitted on behalf of the Prayer Park Event for use of Legislative Assembly grounds on the 16th and 17th July 2003.

As per our discussion, use of the Legislative grounds is contingent upon availability and adhering to the policies and procedures of the Legislative Assembly as agreed upon.

- The event is scheduled from 0500-1930 hours July 16th and 17th 2003.
- Estimated attendance is 50 participants.
- The Prayer Park will consist of 52 Prayer Mats on the South East Quadrant.
- The affected area will be approximately 10 feet in width by 60-75 feet in length.
- The Prayer Mats are to be removed and reassembled daily.
- Parking on the grounds is not permitted. Attendees should be encouraged to access the Precinct via public transit.
- Washroom facilities in the building may be made available. Alternate locations are advisable ie. Local Hospitals and or the University of Toronto.
- The Prayer Park Event may not be the sole users of the grounds on the aforementioned date.
- The Legislative Security Service is the sole security provider for the Legislative Precinct; officers must be notified of any incidents on the grounds including any medical emergencies.

If you have any questions regarding your event, please contact me at 416-325-2426.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'K Seymour', written over the word 'Sincerely,'.

Staff Sergeant Kathy Seymour
Investigative / Liaison Unit
Legislative Security Service
Legislative Assembly of Ontario

75 *Letter of Acceptance, Legislative Assembly of Ontario signed and stipulated by the seargent at*
 76 *arms.*

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cultural systems exist in careful balance there. The city is not a woven quilt of multiculturalism, it is the raw yarn on a loom with knots tangling and growing as fabric grows. It has its roots as a Loyalist city, always in opposition to the European mode of Montreal, yet somehow smarting.

What all this added up to was that when I finally made it through to the Seargent At Arms' offices, it became obvious that just showing up in a pressed suit and being civil would be more than they were used to. The process of getting permission to demonstrate at Queen's Park is a judicial one: they presume your innocence. The rule is that the park is the space of public dissent and celebration. The tradition of open debate subsequently has led to the space becoming every citizen's space, the collective's own front lawn per-se.

They announced that they had accepted my application (see appendix x), except with one catch, it would only last three days and it would have to be dismantled each evening or else security would need to be on hand all night. The final number of forms allowed would be 70, rather arbitrary from their point of view, but convenient to some of the numerological points I was trying to make in my plan of 570 monuments, 552 plus 18. With 70 I could create a field of 52 forms plus 18 to make 70. What I wouldn't tell them is that in fact there would be a series of 10 extra forms installed to create a kind of abstract multiplier, forms created in a different material, to achieve a kind of compromise. It wasn't perfect, but there was no way to build all 570; it would have been an enormous financial burden.

I strong armed them from the beginning. I enquired about the possibility of erecting an Islamic analogue of the Christmas Tree and Minora that are installed permanently at the park. They informed me that it was in fact

109 an act of provincial parliament that paved the way for these. My attitude
110 was to take the stance that a temporary Muslim spiritual space should
111 be granted the same status, or else it would appear rather closed minded
112 of them to exclude them. The city is, after all, populated by hundreds of
113 thousands of Muslims as well. They would feel pressured, and I knew this,
114 so my strategy was to submit the request for all 570 knowing full well that
115 they would reject it for a smaller number. Which is exactly what they did
116 in the days leading up to the final meeting with them at the Parliament.
117 This is also how developers get permission for awful larger buildings in
118 most cities.

119
120 The Sgt. At Arms office was trying to look supportive, but I expected a
121 run around to prevent the work from being mounted.. Their last stand was
122 by inviting the Park's grounds keeper into a sign-off meeting a few days
123 after the first. He exclaimed that no object would be allowed to be placed
124 without a contract stipulating that I would resod any damaged lawn. In
125 fact, he said, under no circumstances could objects larger than a book in
126 area be placed on the grass. I had already seen this coming, so I designed
127 the forms to sit on pressure points formed by the impression of Med's
128 knees, hands, and feet in the final mold. I stumped them, so he capitulated,
129 with me signing the contract it was written in stone. July 17 to 19 the
130 exhibition would be installed.



The Post Critical Era: Architecture in the Age of Righteousness

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manifestation (architecture)

1 a: the act, process, or an instance of manifest b (1): something perverse that manifests or is manifest (2): a perceptible, outward, or visible expression of a perverse individualism c: one of the forms in which an individual is manifested d: an occult phenomenon; specifically : materialization: a public demonstration of power and purpose. The creation of a creator, the righteous creator of legitimate objects.

The events of September 11th, 2001 were a great force of perversion, orchestrated by perverse individuals. It has, for good or bad, changed Islam and Western cultures. If not in the popular sense, in the most extreme poles, a surge of will has formed. The result has been a new faith in both of them. So strong that it made manifest the wrong as it had never been revealed before. If anything, these changes are evidence of the great flexibility in both. inherent to Islam, it is a protean form, one that can be interpreted in so many ways over so many eras: for better or worse.

But the more seductive new faith, is redirected internally, upon oneself rather than external forms or theories (bibles). This is an age characterised by the ideas of the individual, not the masses. Not just ideas of the self, but of the larger mythologies: unique circumstances of each possible creator. Unique spaces and ethics in different cul-

This thesis, before anything was designed, was tainted. It was a desperate attempt to create a cultural experience that for various reasons I lacked. It was an attempt to frame a person. I was born in a safe city to a safe family, yet by reading history I learned to require more. I developed a hunger, to be a part of anything less boring, perhaps even fighting for a cause. This is why I decided to leave Canada and school so young, but I didn't find what I needed. What I discovered and contributed to was a cultural insecurity that I now have to face upon returning to the homeland. But we are what we are, born into more or less comfortable circumstances, and a witness to varying degrees of societal banality. Others are less comfortable, but perhaps they are aware of their importance to a changing world. This set of actions was a conscious battle to take part in that struggle. It was an attempt to build a person rather than a building.

I had an idea and I decided to run with it, now that it is over, I am lonely. I wanted that fatwa that people exclaimed as inevitable for proposing such ideas! But it never came. It would have been defining, it would have been a priveledge to feel so relevant. It didn't matter if they ran full page spreads in newspapers and televised interviews, I wanted that something that lived beyond the moment. This is a classic confession of immaturity, but I am a literalist sometimes, which makes banal things like this engaging. I wanted to see the fear in the flesh; perhaps I didn't show the right people?

This was an act of historication, it is the idea of making history that is such a curse, for there are others willing to go much farther than I and actually hurt someone to make their mark. Perhaps without history and the people so desperate to understand it, I wouldn't have had a need to create such a project, because the problems that beg for it would not have existed. Without history, human beings could probably look at eachother through the blissful amnesia of the introduction. But we will never escape history, that is what humans do, we remember.

The attention to the event, unlike the subject of religion, is so fleeting. This is a dialog that perhaps nobody can see unfold in a lifetime let alone a moment in time during a balmy Toronto summer. Everything unfolded exactly the way my drawings had specified them to, even the alignment of the monuments was achieved to within mere centimeters of accuracy.



175 tures, it is a beloved chaos. We have become the stars of our own studios, our own reality TV shows. This is the architec-
 176 ture of the circus of the individual.

177
 178 Faith is conserved, it is not
 179 eliminated and the celebrity is the
 180 expression of this in a mass media
 181 world. There will always be a place
 182 for new icons and characatures.
 183 The only place left to explore is in
 184 the designer's own individual fe-
 185 tishes. These perversions will lead
 186 to new places and landscapes: it
 187 is our only salvation.

188
 189 There will always be a cohort of
 190 the moral: architects who give lip
 191 service to a new corporate hege-
 192 mony. It is a faith in the machine,
 193 a faith in numbers, and a faith in
 194 the dehumanization of the indi-
 195 vidual. Human nature ensures this
 196 pack mentality to some degree.

197
 198 Theory, much like religion requires
 199 a certain kind of faith, in this age
 200 many scholars call a post-critical
 201 one, theory and criticism have
 202 fallen from grace. It is a natural
 203 process when something goes from
 204 the avant-garde or perhaps some-
 205 thing even more revolutionary to
 206 the popular. Fine architecture
 207 is no longer a cult practice, it is
 208 becoming as popular as designer
 209 clothing. These were only until
 210 recently reserved for the ultra
 211 wealthy and powerful.

212
 213 Yet, unlike fashion, which was always accessible and forced to the limits of production, architecture lagged behind, now that
 214 it has caught up, it is studdering. Forces within the profession are dying to keep it an elite and descrete practice defined by
 215 certain modes of technical expression and worse by the creation of theory. These are some of the most powerful and elite
 216 institutions n the world, they care not about quality but about controlling the profession in general. They will fail, the force
 217 of the market to create celebrity and the general public's desire for protagonists is a stronger force of perversion than any
 218 institution may ever have.

Everything fell exactly into place the way it had been planned. The twenty gallons of fresh hot Starbucks and the gourmet croissants and pastries were all on hand. The University of Toronto Muslim Student Association, almost three thousand strong, fully supprted and advertised the project. Their executive board, as well as dozens of friends attended, along with reporters and news crews from several networks/papers.

The only thing left is to pass the torch of examining the most sacred and profane to be carried by someone else, perhaps a true prophet. Prophets do not understand the ramifications of their actions in their own times, because what is happening to them is not constructed, it is natural. This is a topic that is best left for the ages, one far beyond the confines of this work nor anything else any single person achieves in a lifetime.

It never happened. Nothing ever happened. Even while it was happening it wasn't happening. It didn't matter. It was of no interest ^{xxvi}.













But what is this word: perversion. It is a stronger way of saying 'change'. The anxiety to produce a unique cosmology outside of any theory for a given context is a great source of perverse beauty in contemporary design, it is not a negative force. This an age in which we either go back to following theory or make the choice to explore the limits and depths of our own whims.

This is manifest by the production of the righteous object. Perversion brings us to a new age in design when each object of difference has absolute legitimacy. As faith is directed inward, the objects created become more and more whole. The complexity and completion of architecture is today breaching the barrier of what looks naturally occurring, or grown, rather than built. This is the ultimate realization of the minimal object: where the form is not of any concern, but rather the distance between the human hand and what is their work, becomes infinite or imperceptible. These tendencies toward the righteous object transcend schools and fashions of design.

Each of these has a devout set of followers or supporters. A minimal object in the true sense, in that it no longer seems to be wrought by the mere mortal but of some perversely higher power. The distance between what seems human made and divine shrinks, enhancing the boundaries of what is considered natural. As everything is natural, so will architecture tend to achieve the living qualities of that word. it has authority in that moment ^{xviii}. They become the majority in a specific place and time.

The street has become secondary as much as our bodies, probably even tertiary tomorrow. All that will remain is an impression, a nostalgic picture of our physical selves and our appetites. Second lives can be had through online Avatars and we can step back from what might have been called the real world. The two are equally valid and real.

The people who come to the streets, as violent as they can be, act out a predetermined set of scenes based on historical precedent. The incisions made by Haasman's Plan on the fabric of the city was the first attempt to nullify the body into a meaningless casualty of city planning, a analog version of the internet. It was, instead of allowing electric impulses to flow, allowing control to flow.

The space of authority was finite before and now it is infinite. Tomorrow that space will already have morphed, moved into a world that is only limited by how many servers and how much bandwidth can be accommodated. What has been created, possibly inadvertently, was a vast void, wherein the bounds of it are defined loosely by the new scales of authority-the street without traffic jams. Any resistance to that scale is futile. Its greatest power is that it is next to impossible to perceive, while still making us feel like we can touch, taste, see, hear, or smell.

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ENDNOTES

N^o Source

- I Cramer, Kevin. The thirty Years War, University of Nebraska Press: 2007. In some areas it was believed that more than 60% of the population was killed. It is more certainly known that 30% of the pre war population of what became Germany was killed, roughly 20million people. pgs 178, 187.
- II Ki Moon, Ban. In one of his first speeches at the U.N. Headquarters as the Secretary General, he states that Democracy is the unique path to a civilized world. 2006
- III During the initial stages of this project a series of three questionnaires were distributed to thirty people in the school of architecture at the University of Waterloo. Because of the nature of these questionnaires, an ethical clearance and thus the permission to use that specific data in this document were forbidden. The data clearly shows, that people Muslim to Atheist felt strongly that I had no business to continue with my investigations.
- IV The largest pilgrimage is not the Hajj, rather it is the Maha Kumbh Mela held in rotating locations in India. The 2001 and 2004 pilgrimages were attended by more than 60million people. 1. <http://www.kumbhamela.net/> 2. <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/01/15/AR2007011500041.html>
- V Depending on the type of source and translation of the Quran one chooses, this word Jihad is most rationally and non-violently stated as a personal and inner struggle. As associated with that battle to remain faithful. Ahmed Ali's translation of the Quran clearly states this version of the word. Armstrong, Karen. The Battle For God. pg 37.
Aslan, Reza. no god but god. Indonesia's President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono called for greater democracy and efforts to improve the plight of Muslims and spread Islamic values, in a speech to the 57-nation Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) summit. "The possibility of an Islamic Renaissance lies before us," Yudhoyono told the summit, but first, he added: "We need to get our act together as an organisation of Muslim nations. "When the Islamic Renaissance comes it will be the natural fruit of a peaceful and constructive 'jihad'."
- VI Sgaier, Sema. Sema Sgaier is a Ph.D in Neuroscience at New York University and Brown University. She describes the development of the brain as an enfolding of two rows of cells that she visualized, using gene color coding. www.subtletechnologies.com/2006/symposium/Sgaier.html
- VII Ibid. Primary sources such as the Quran describing the destruction of the idols that were held in the Ka'Baa are also affirmed by Armstrong. Pg 38. The discrepancy of the dates of the prophet's birth were sourced through much of Esposito's work and in the Koran Surah
- VIII Venter, Dr Craig. The Venter Institute, TED TALK. We are creating life and new chromosomes to deal with our current problems and potential fuel shortages. http://blog.ted.com/2008/03/craig_venter.php
- IX The definition of the word Islam is literally to submit to god. This is echoed by Karen Armstrong and other scholars as well as the translation from Arabic to English. See Battle for God, by Armstrong pgs 37-38.
- X Where Toronto Got It's Name, government of Canada natural resources: http://geonames.nrcan.gc.ca/education/toronto_e.php