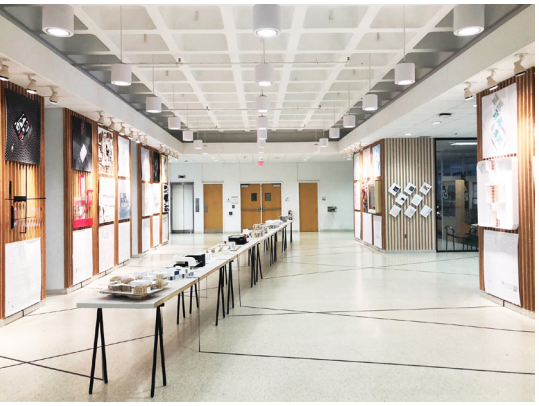


Between Neighbors:
Staging Domesticity in Multifamily Housing

Between Neighbors: Staging Domesticity in Multifamily Housing leveraged film as a vehicle for the study of multifamily housing design. The building program emphasized a study of part to whole relationships and the dynamics of communal life, bringing together private units and shared space.

As urban populations grow, many cities are experiencing booms in multifamily housing, a phenomenon compounded by aging postwar housing stock and declining rates of home ownership. Developers have taken the reigns on housing design, privileging the unit over the whole. Furthermore, ubiquitous technology has resulted in the social isolation of residents and the decline of communal social structures.

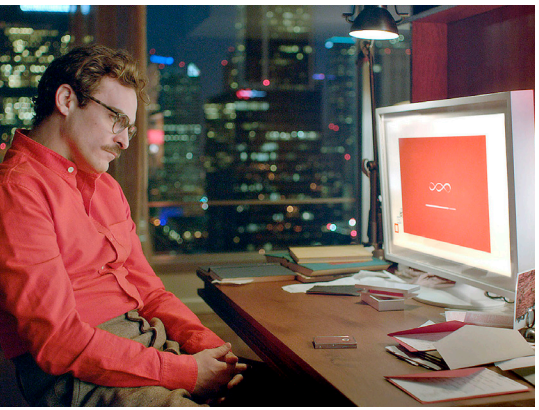
In response, students examined the relationship between neighbors and shared spaces, studying examples from film in which multifamily housing becomes a character within the drama. Building on the relationships revealed between human interaction and physical space, students created new models of residential living that preference the design of interstitial space in the vitality of the whole.

The project site was a generic corner lot within a low density urban fabric, and each student designed a nine unit complex. After drafting, modeling, and analyzing the shared spaces from his or her assigned film, each student designed a communal space as the seed of a larger building. These designs concentrated on mediating between unit entry and public space. Next, students scaled up to design the larger whole.

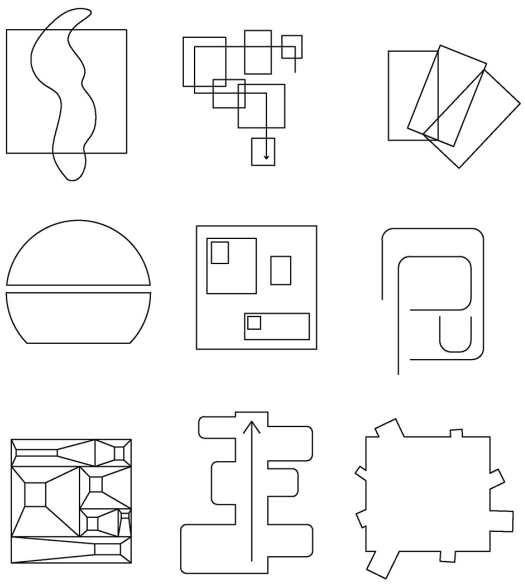
During the final two weeks of the course, students made films that staged their designs, using both analog techniques and animation software. Building designs served as the setting, the protagonist, and the narrative. This one man show was not a trailer, but a full narrative, albeit short: one to three minutes in length. The resulting films convey both conceptual frameworks for living and the physical spaces that might house them.

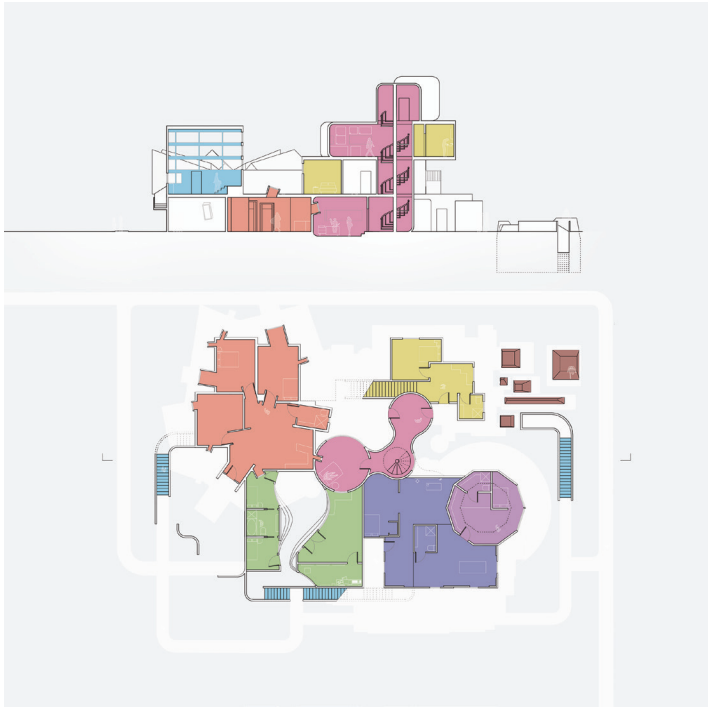
01 Re-Scaling Part to Whole

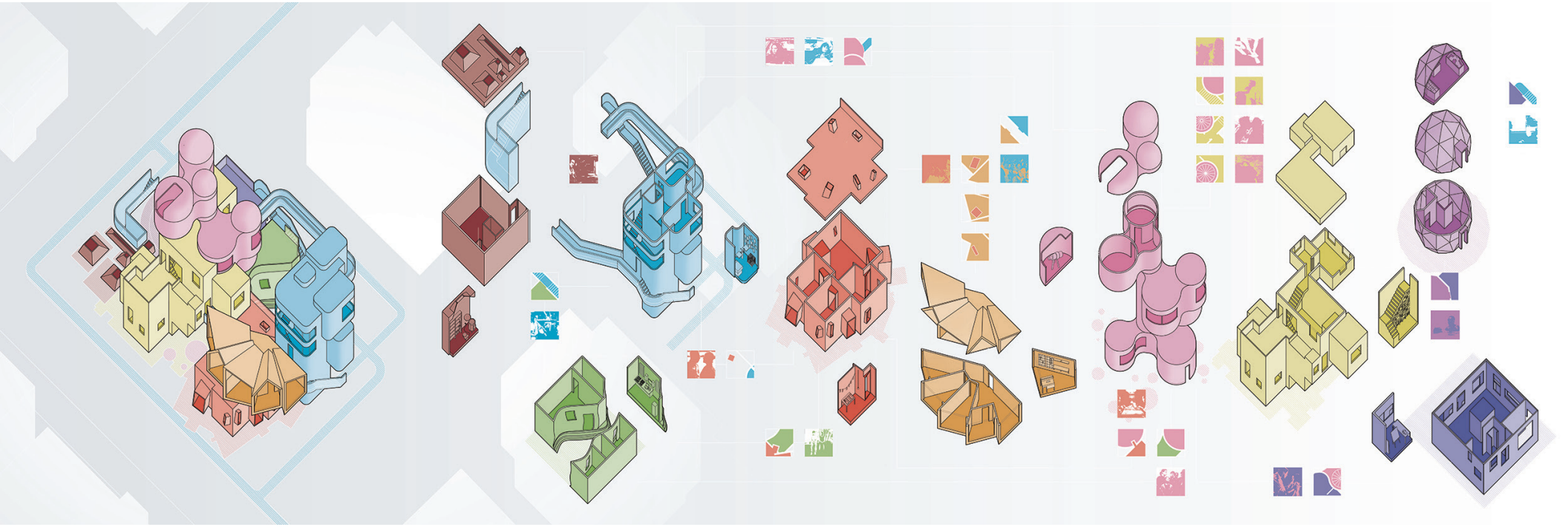
This apartment building reexamines the relationship of part- whole, specifically what constitutes an architectural whole. The seed of this query comes from the physical disconnection between individuals and their dependence on technology-mediated relationships in the film Her. By considering the apartment unit the whole, architecture becomes scaled to personalities and individual occupants.

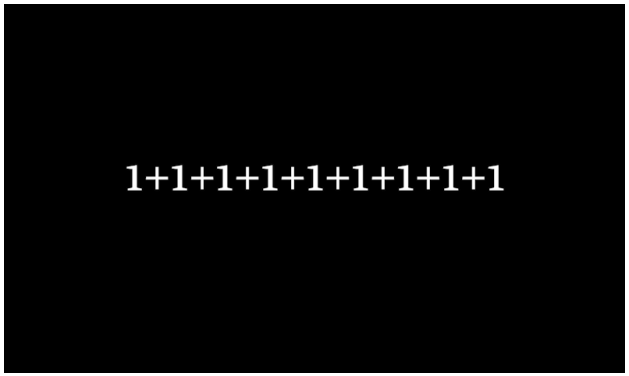


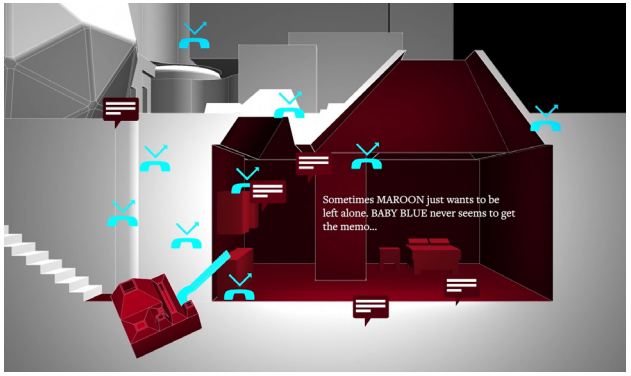
Her (2013)

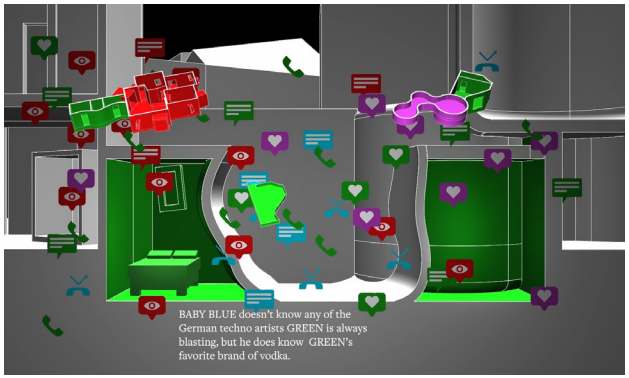


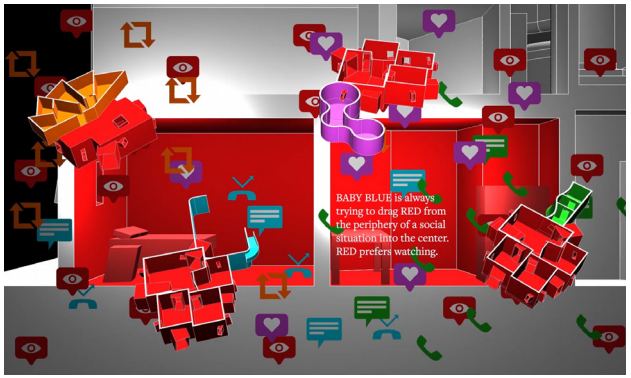


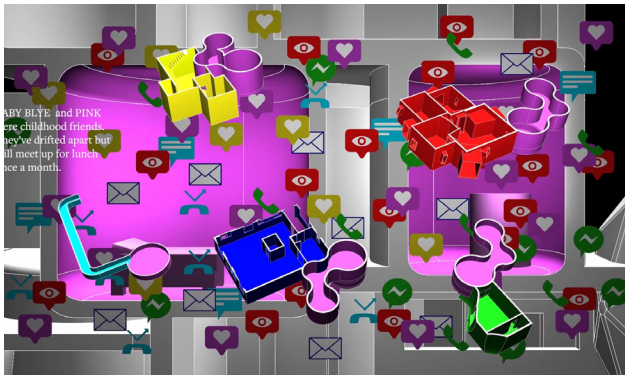








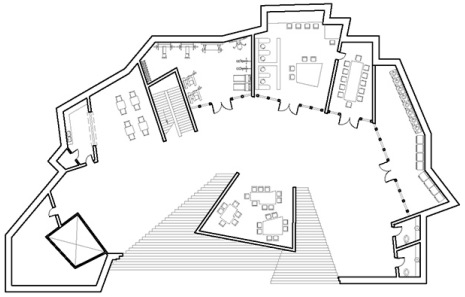




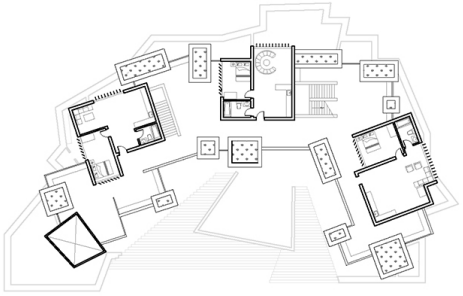
View Film: https://vimeo.com/350575518

Drawing on the hierarchical housing complex from the film High Rise, the project explores how verticality can liberate the building plan of the gridded urban context. The building's nine apartments are grouped by unit type, establishing a hierarchy from smallest unit to largest unit from bottom to top. As the building expands vertically, the unit geometries transition in shape from orthogonal to multi-angled forms that promote interaction.

High Rise (2015)



-1



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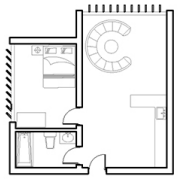
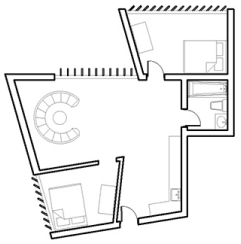
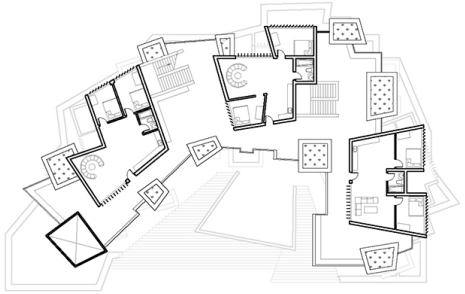


1 Bed



2 Bed



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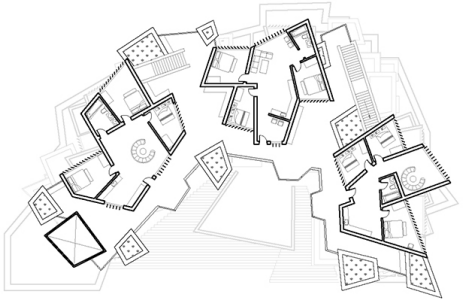

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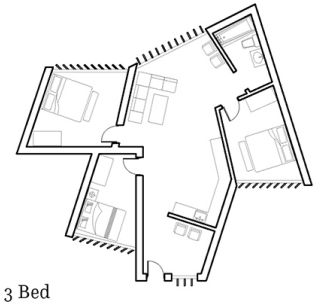
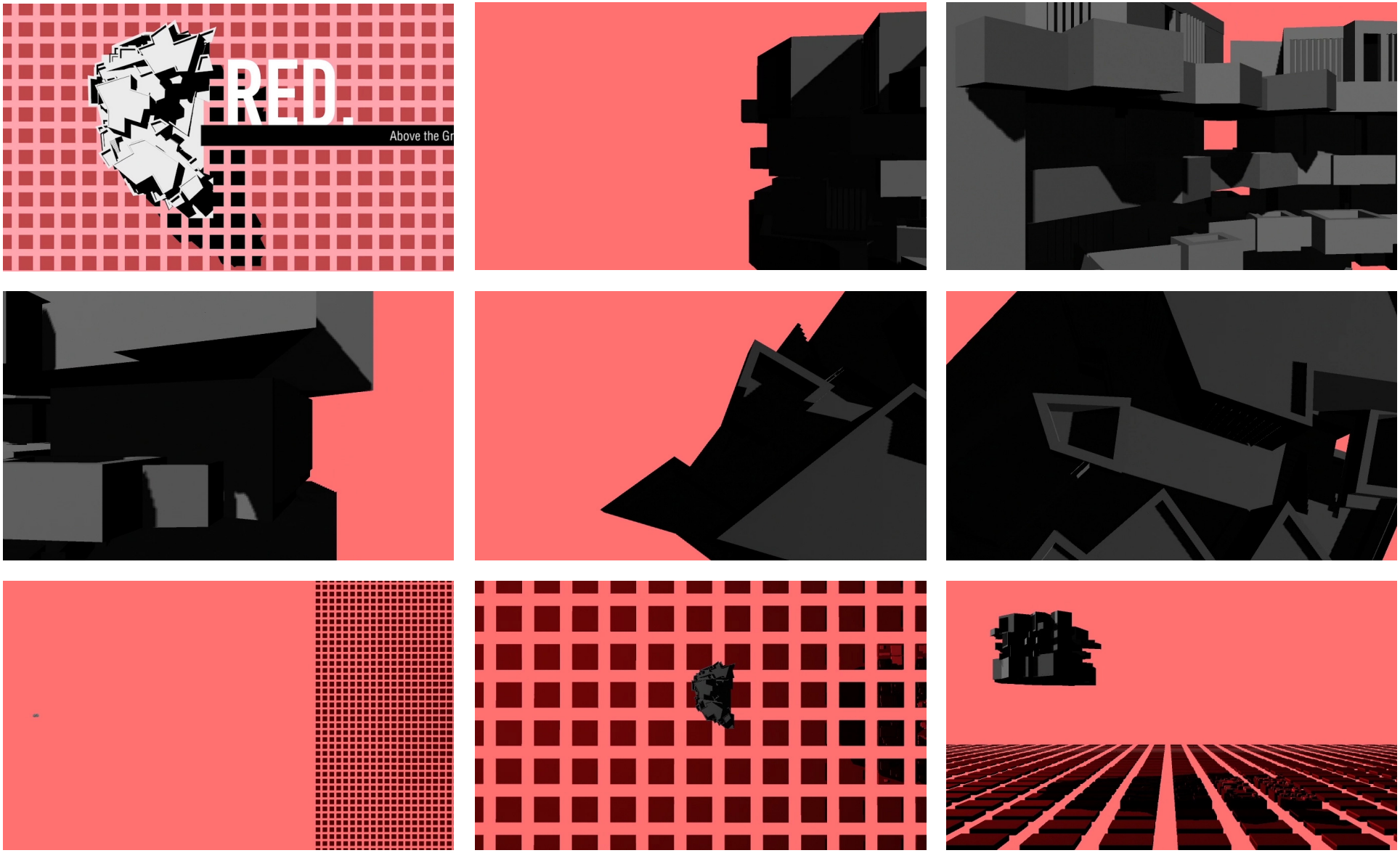


3 Bed

Drawings & Aggregation Studies

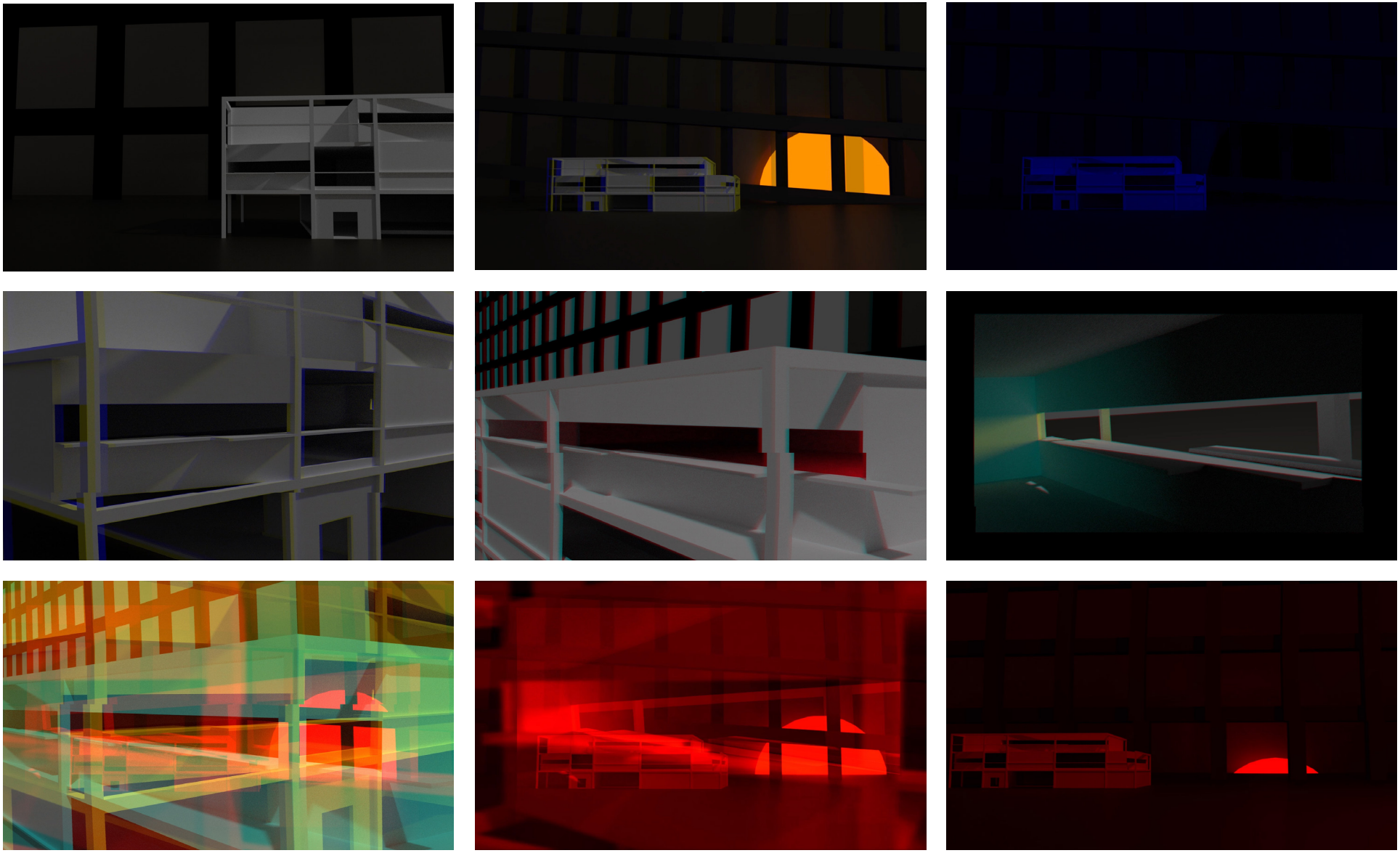


View Film: https://vimeo.com/350600126

03 Grid Shear

Playtime exposes the standardizing, uniformity of modernism, going so far as to create cublicles for living - glass boxes in which domesticity is on view. This building rejects the clear separation of such a uniform housing model, instead allowing parts of each dwelling to shear out into the communal space, for example, a table inside becomes a bench outside. The relationship between private is reframed as interior elements and exterior elements extend and conjoin to become one another.

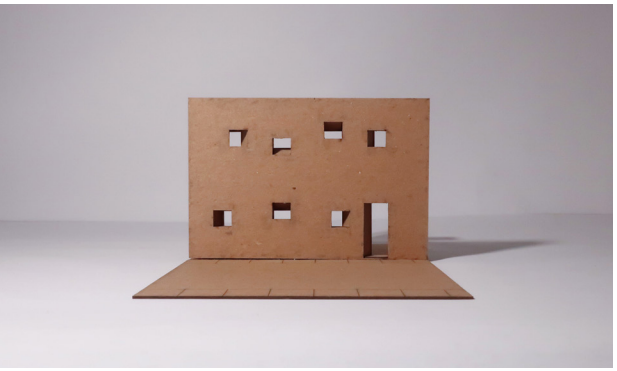
Playtime (1967)

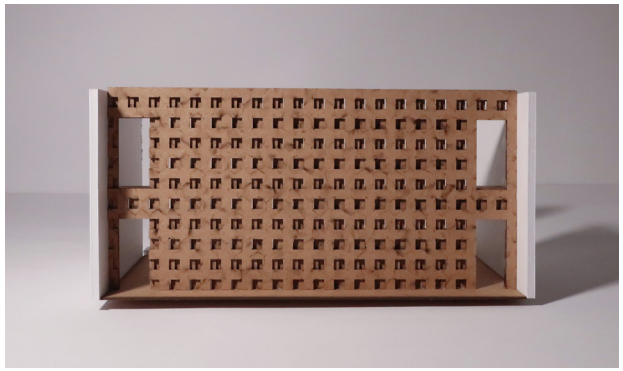


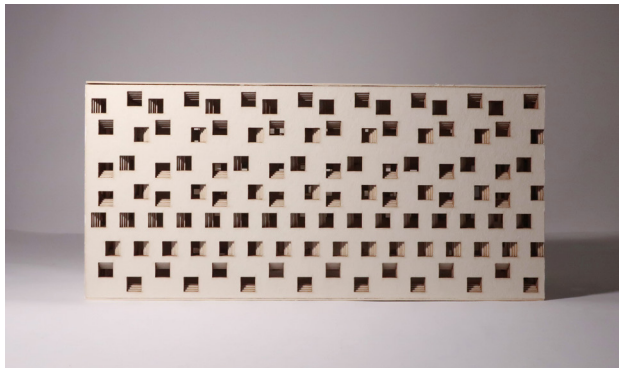
View Film: https://vimeo.com/350607132

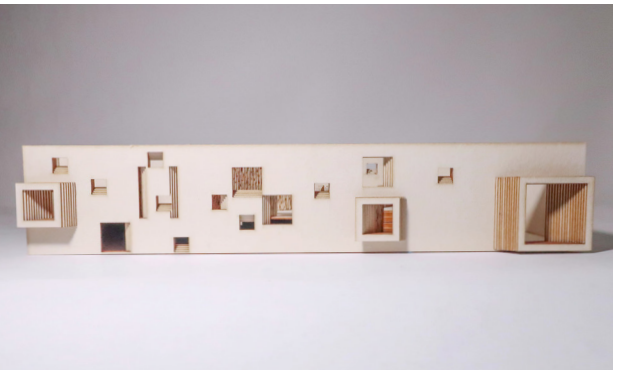
Playing off of the windows and tunnels that stage drama in the monumental, ornate streets of postwar Vienna, this building populates the wall with frames that allow for not only light and views, but also interaction and movement.

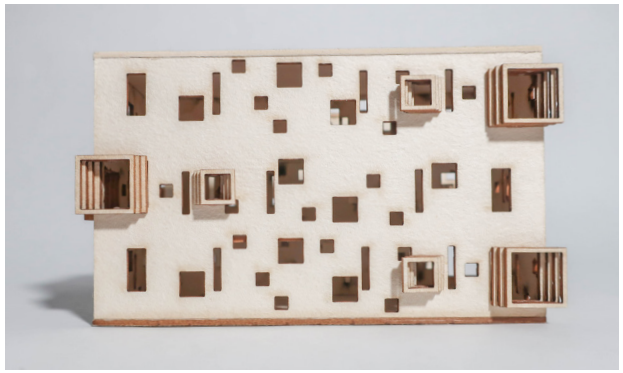
The Third Man (1949)

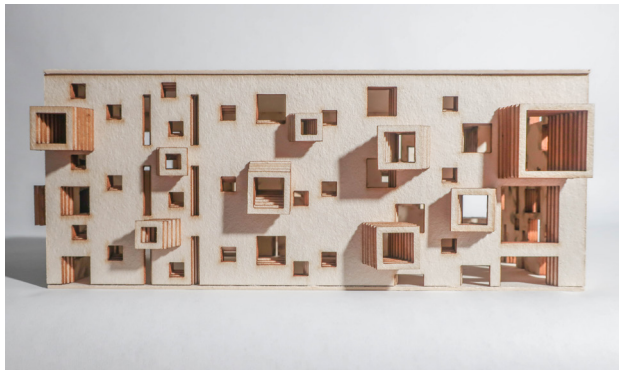




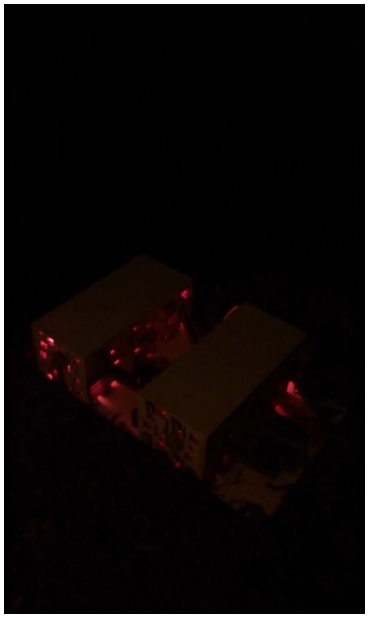


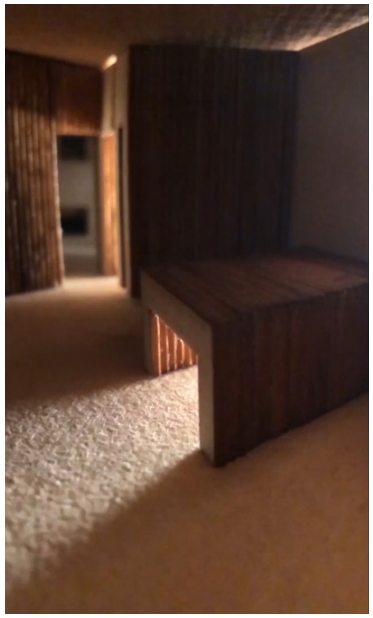
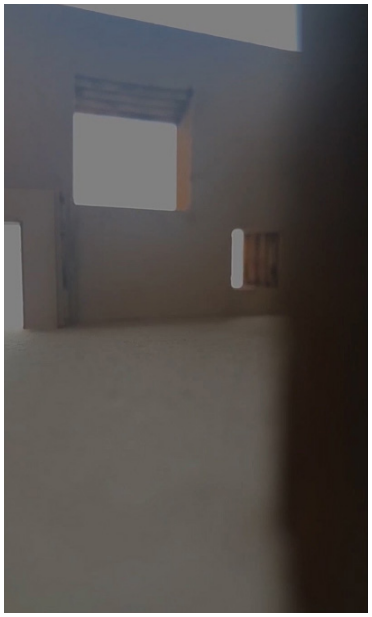
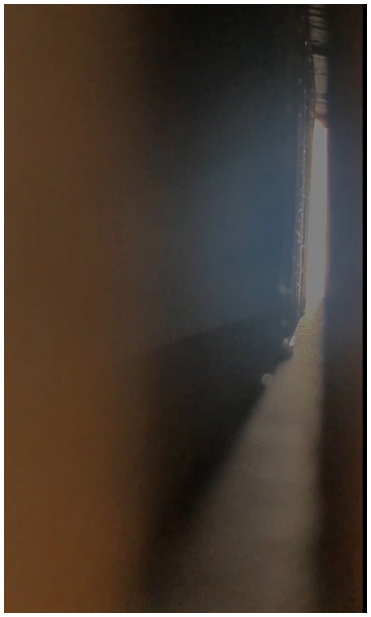
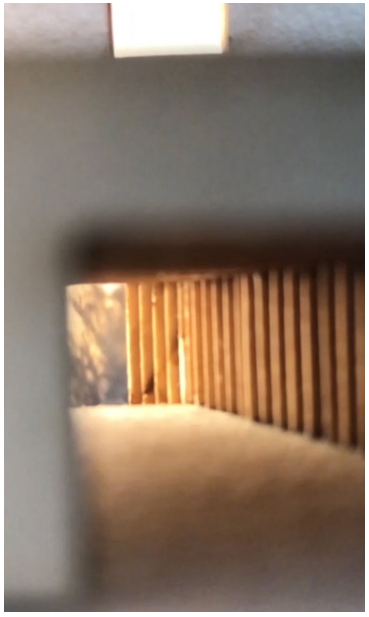
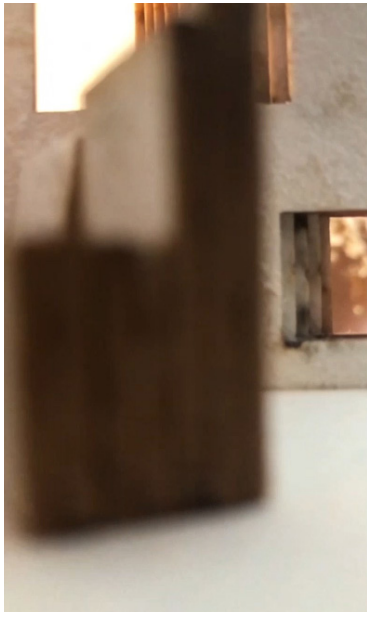


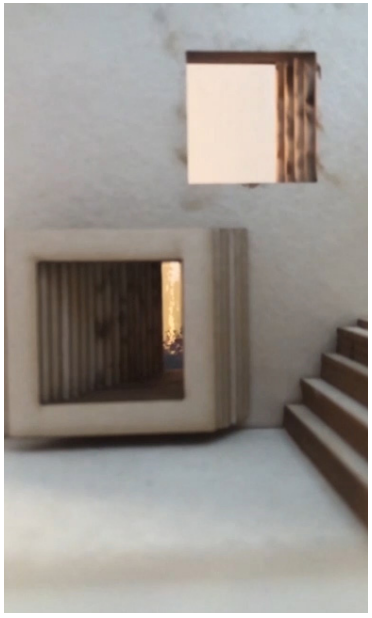




Facade Studies



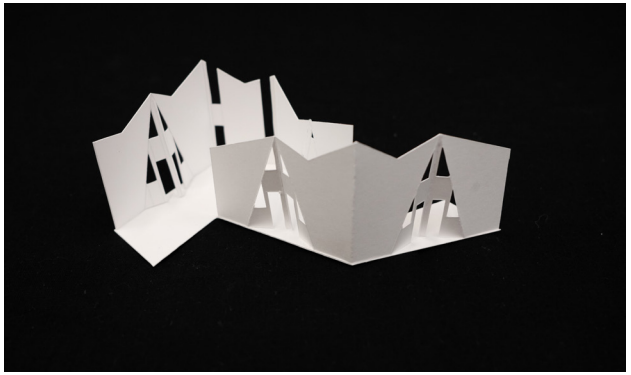
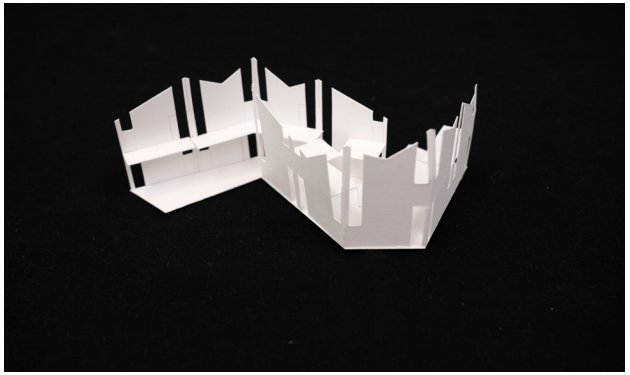
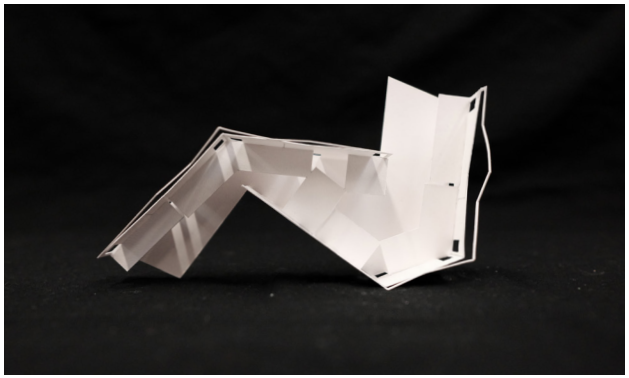
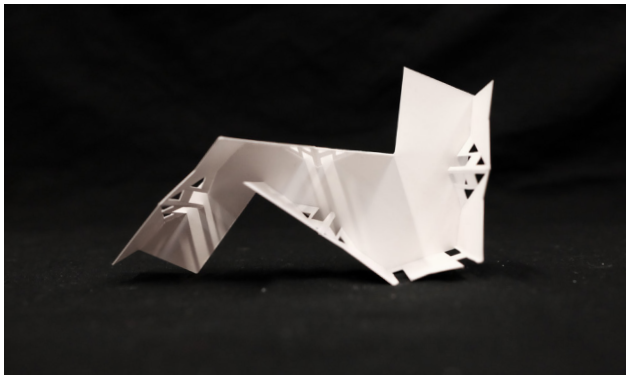
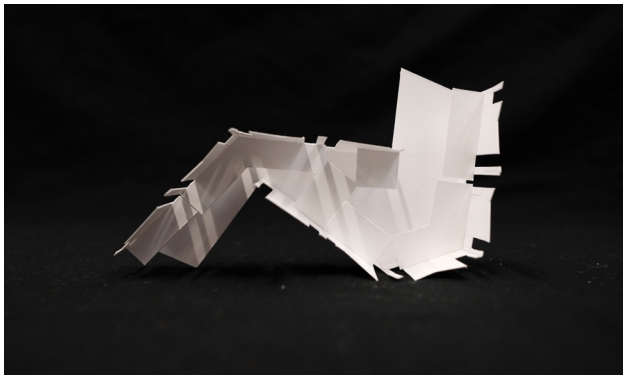
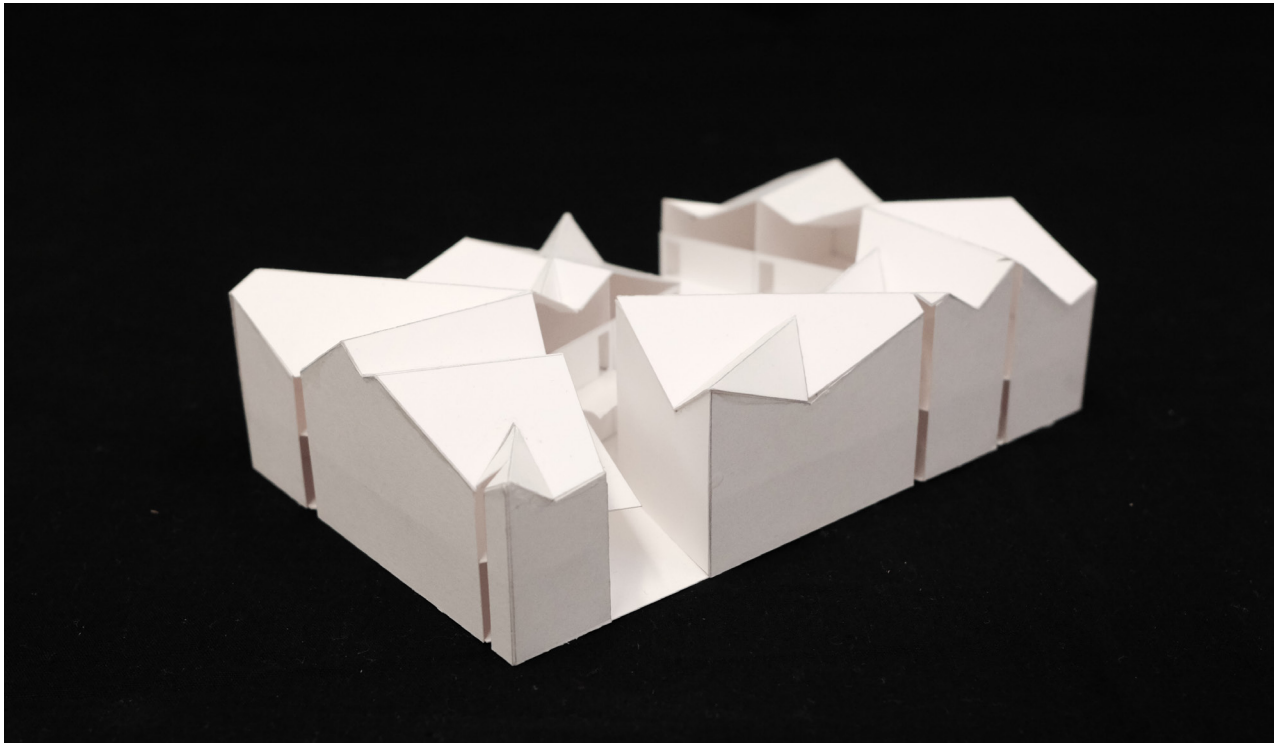








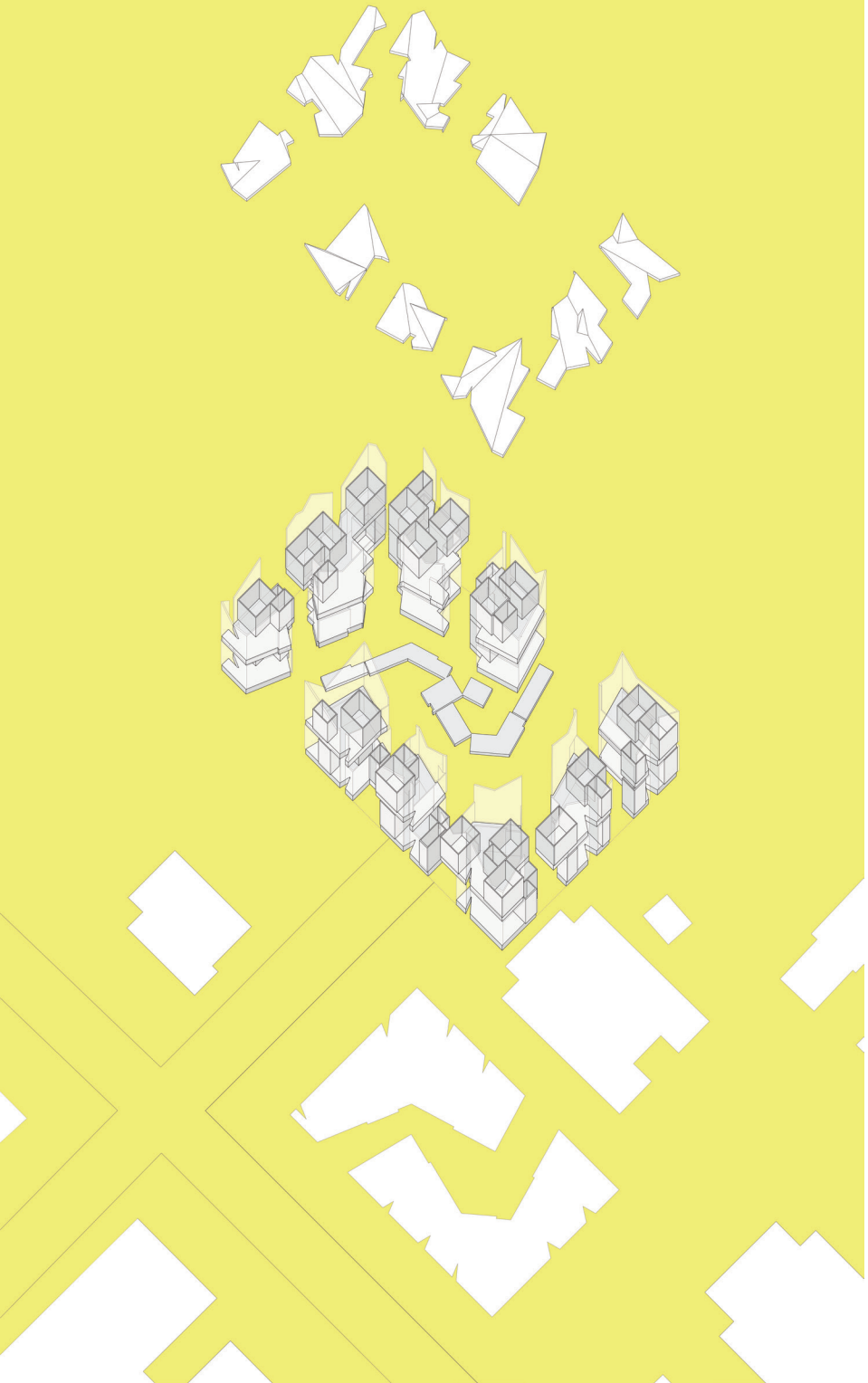
Film Stills

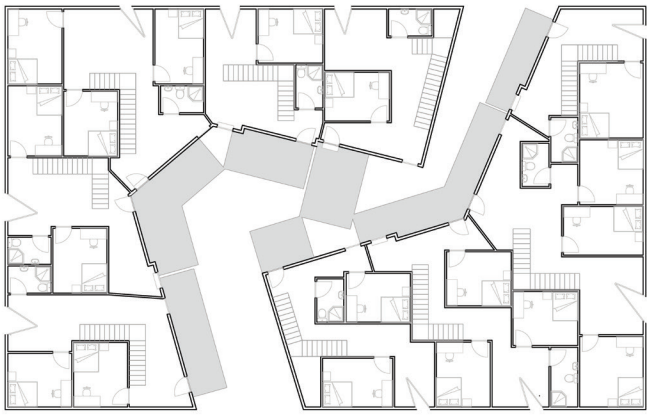
The project focuses on creating elemental systems that span between units rather than within one unit, to better unify the complex while blurring the lines between units. With this, the basis lies in the orthogonal grid, found in the rowhouse type. The interior becomes a rigid grid of interlocking volumes as a wholly private space while the communal spaces lined by the house faces is thrown off of the grid, pinching in and out in width, so that neighbors are more likely to run into on another at any time.

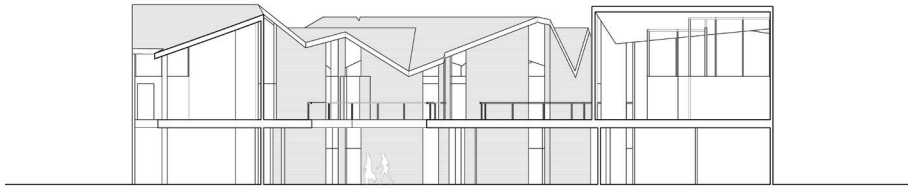
A Man Called Ove (2015)

Public Corridor Studies

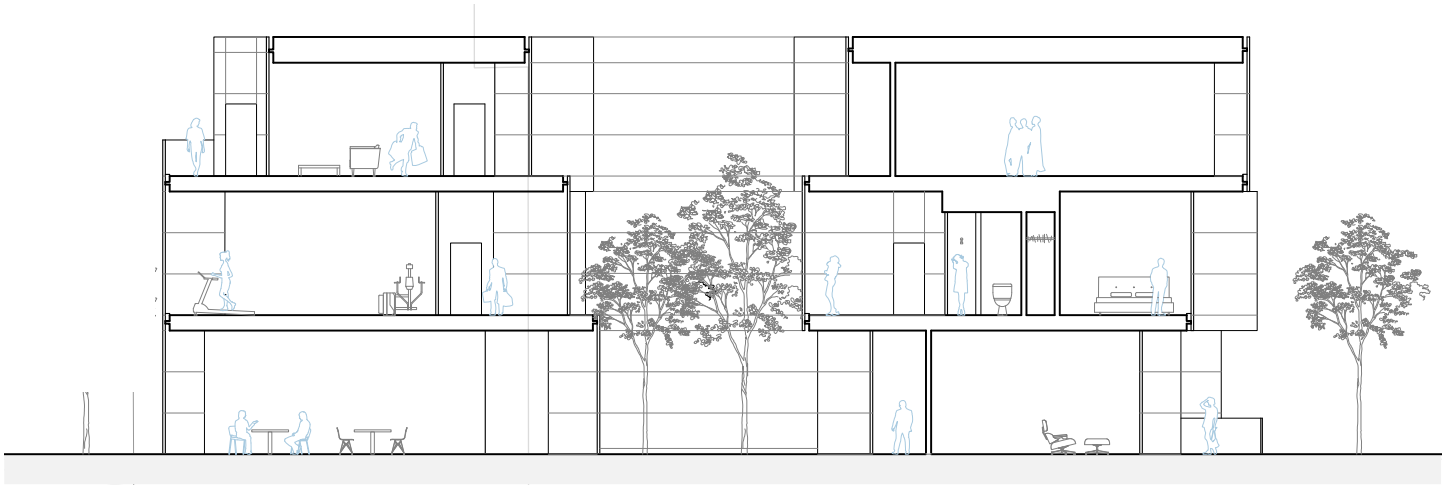


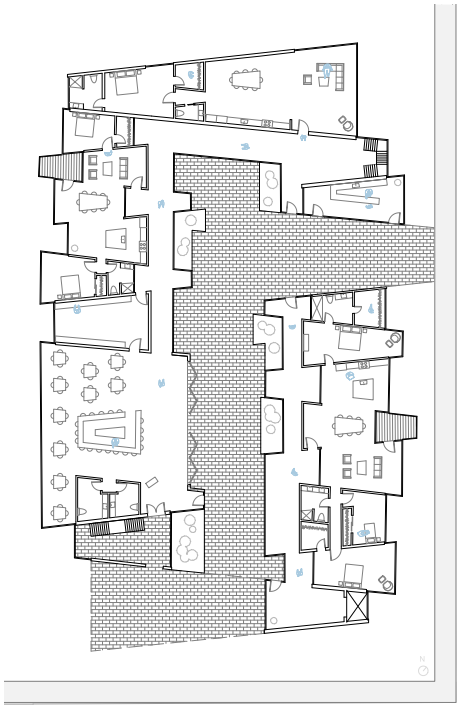


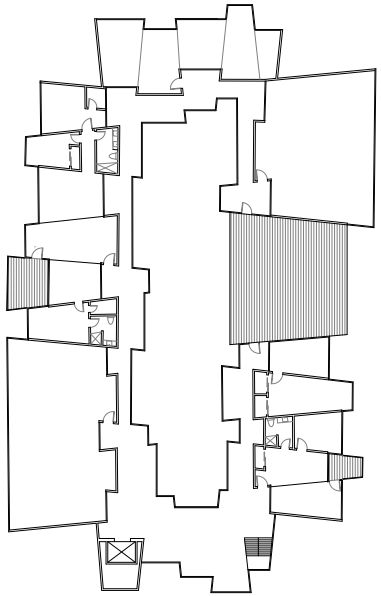


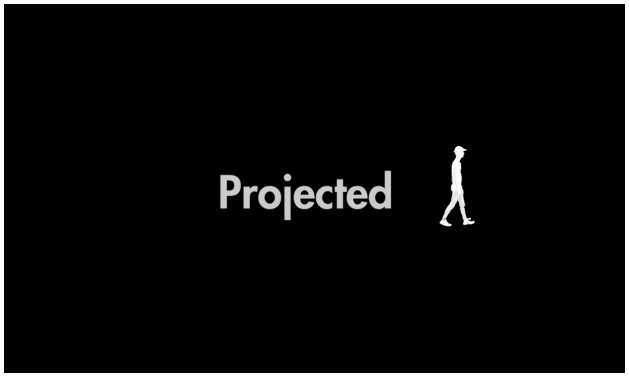
Building off of the interplay between seeing and being seen in Rear Window, this project uses glass as a vehicle for expressing domesticity. Glass blurs the lines between puplic and private, with a diffused glass on the front of each wedge and clear glass on the sides where the geometry shears, allowing residents views of downtown, while providing privacy inside the unit. The blurred facade gives a fuzzy hint of the goings on in each unit.

Rear Window (1954)

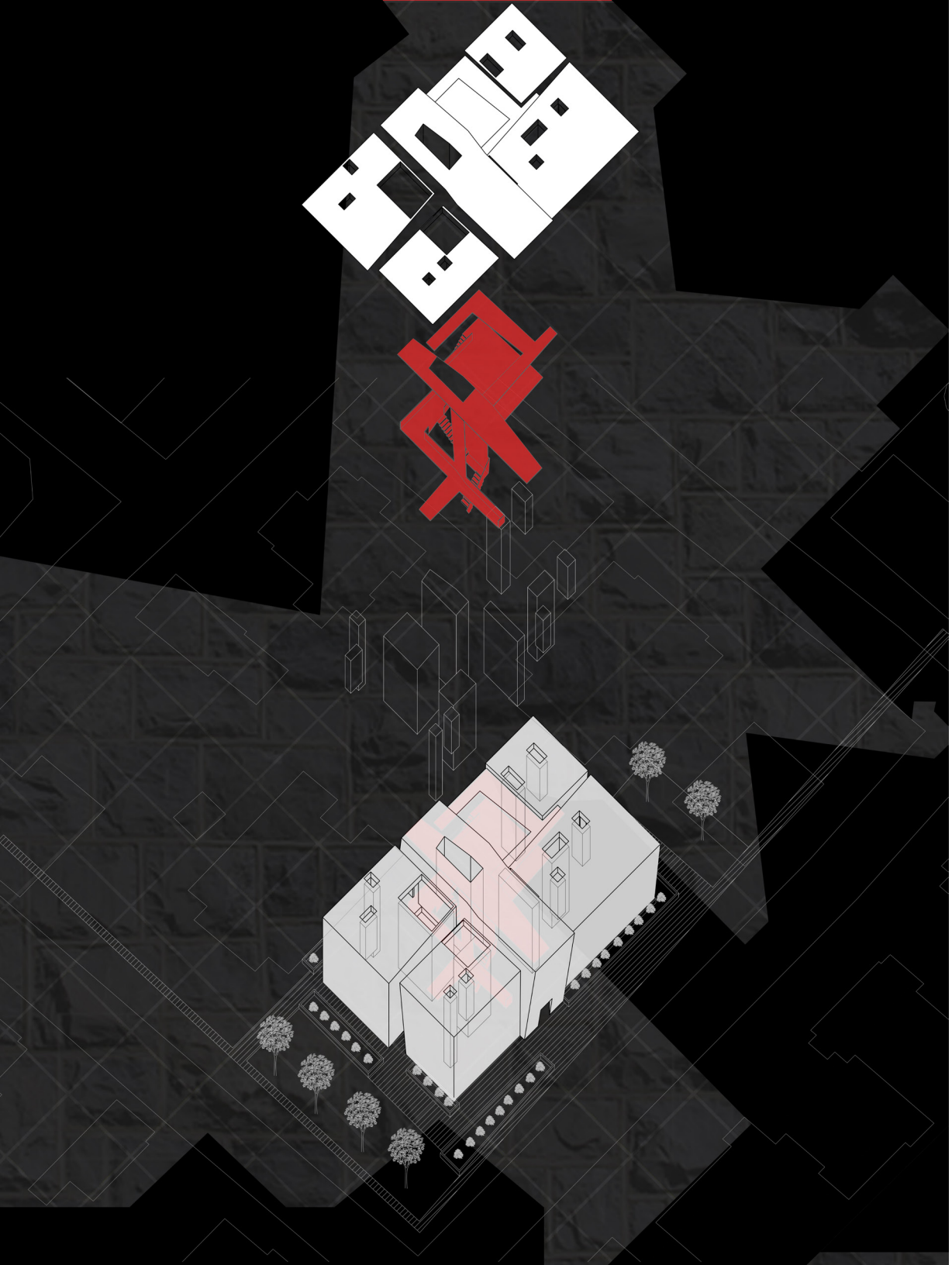
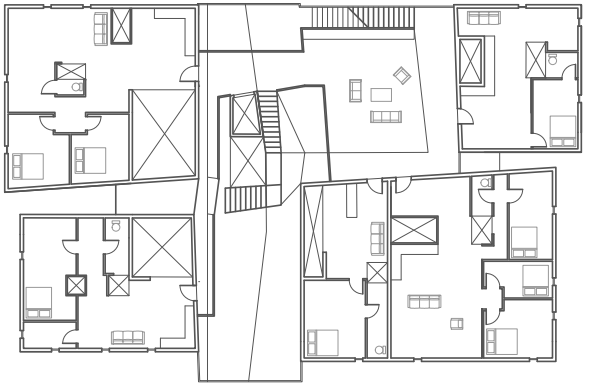
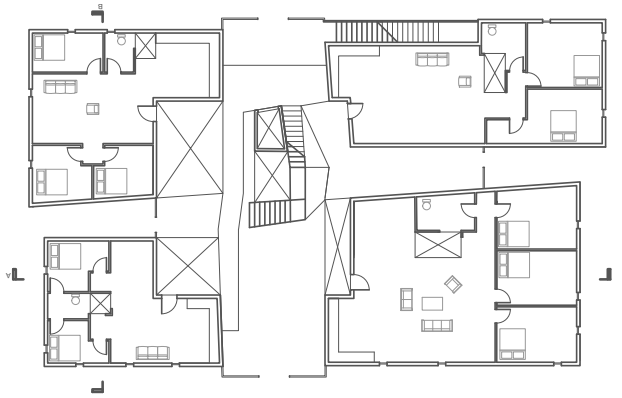








Film Stills

In The Searchers, the framing of views positions man in relationship to the wild. Interior views are dark, cool, and domestic, while the exterior is hot, dusty, and untamed. In this housing design, the duality between exterior and interior is mediated by frames of light which both provide views and bring light in.

The Seachers (1956)