

June - July 2018

Passage

process book

Venice, Italy



Venice is
eternity itself

-Joseph Brodsky

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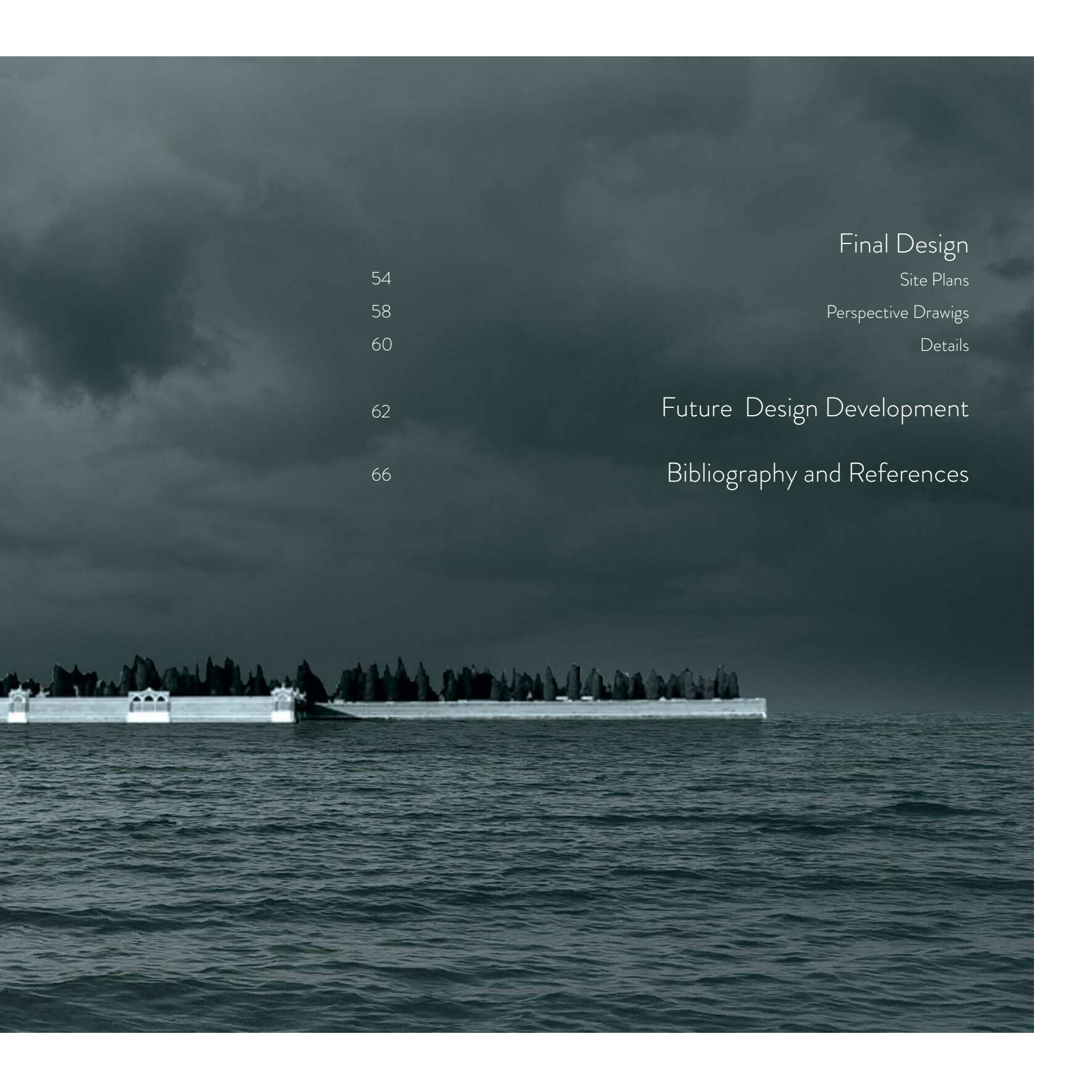
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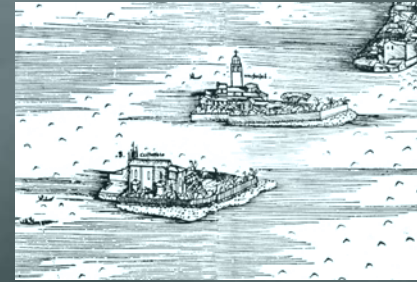
Site Background





The Capella Emiliana designed by Guglielmo dei Grigi was added.

1530



A neighbouring island of San Cristoforo della Pace was selected to become a cemetery.

1807

1469

Camaldolese monks asked Mauro Codussi to build Chiesa di San Michele next to their monastery - the first Renaissance church in Venice.



1565

Remains of those whose families were unable to pay for the maintenance, fees were shipped off to Sant'Ariano, often referred to as the island of bones. Common graves were dug to accommodate large numbers of human remains.

1836

The canal that separated the two islands was filled in, and the larger island became known as San Michele.

San Michele Island

Napoleon declared the island an official cemetery. Before that, Venetian practise had been to bury the dead under church floors or paving stones, which was deemed unsanitary given Venice's susceptibility to Aqua Alta, the floods which spread throughout the city several times a year.

1837

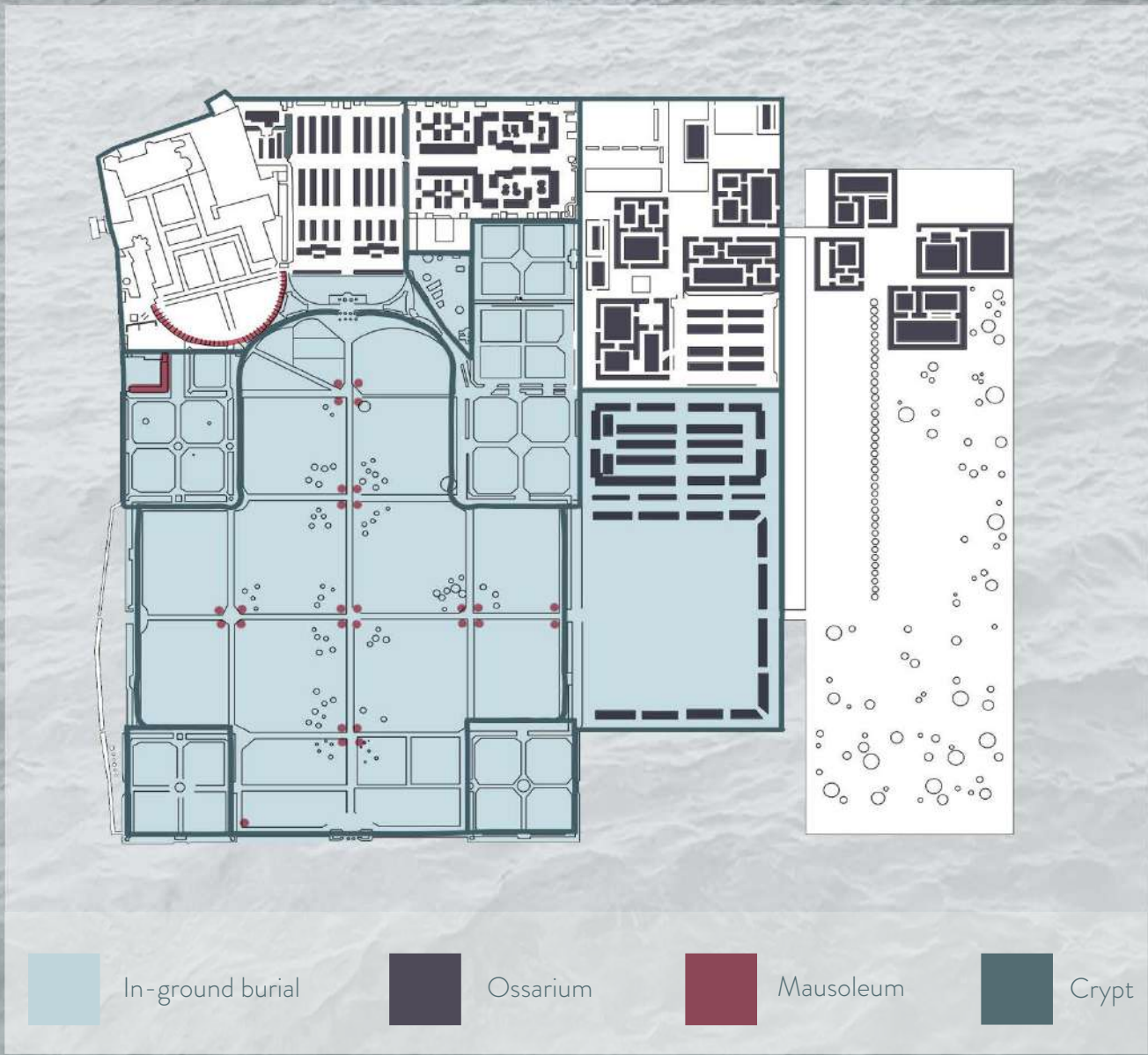
A new regulation was put: people can now only rest on the island for 10 to 20 years, or 99 years if buried in a family tomb. Afterwards, the remains are cremated or moved to another cemetery.

1995

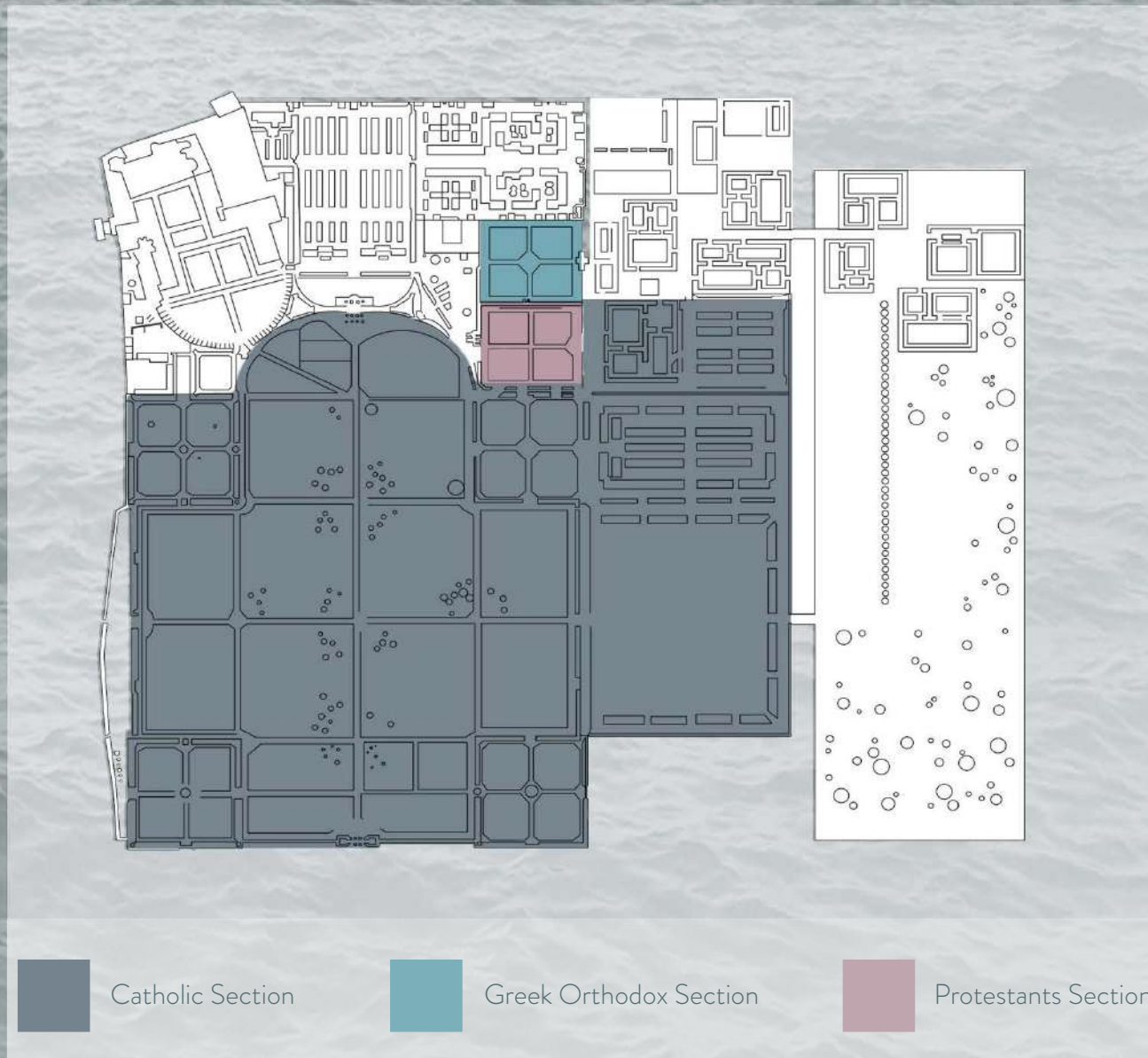
1933

By the time the island of Sant'Ariano was finally closed in 1933, a layer of bones three meters deep had amassed within its stone walls.





San Michele Island: Old and New



The island of San Michele has undergone significant changes and additions.



San Cristoforo
+
San Michele

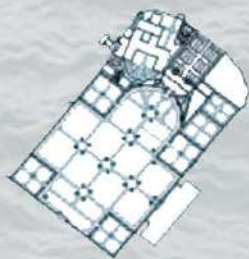


San Cristoforo
+
San Michele
cemeteries

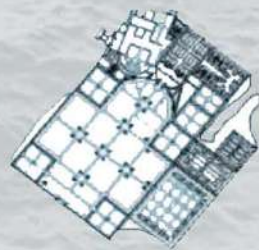


Bridge of San
Cristoforo +
San Michele
infill

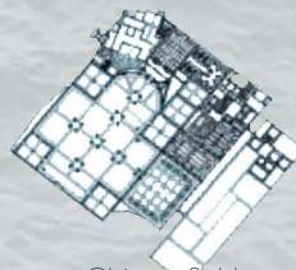
As population continues to grow, so does the need for another addition.



Cemetery of
Isolda
di San
Michele



1908
addition



Chipperfield
addition

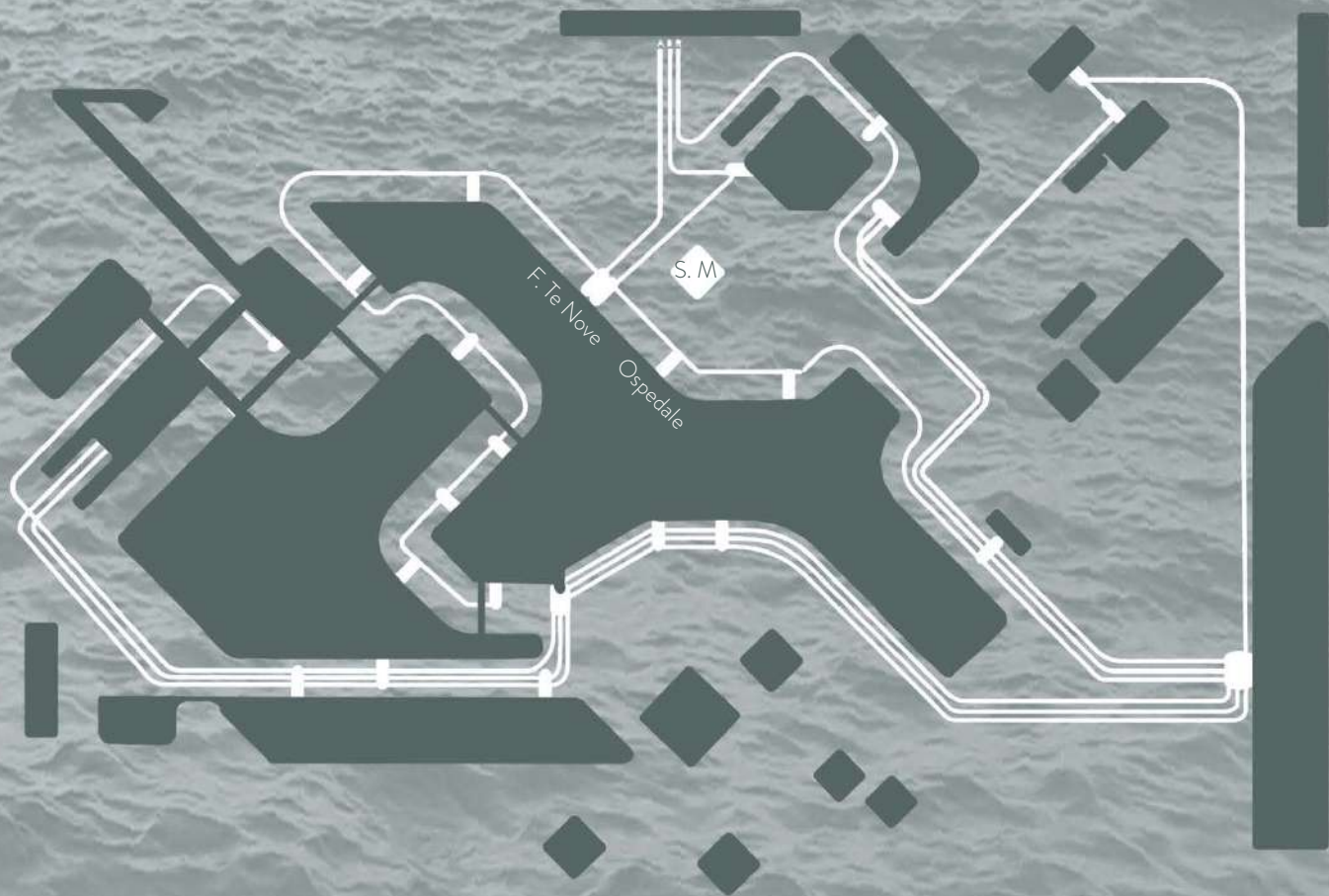
“I was born 500 meters away from here”

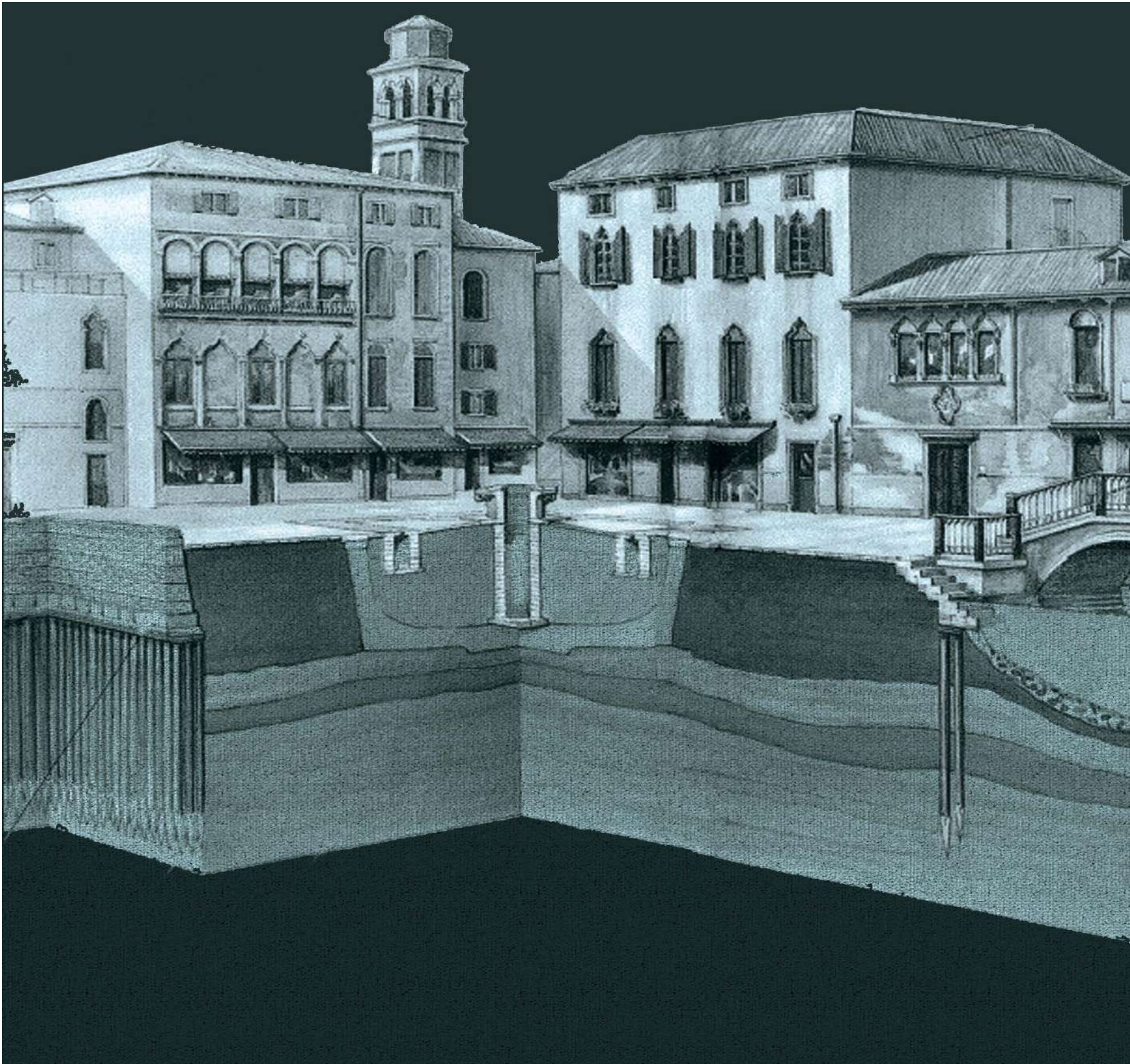
said one of the waiters at a restaurant at Fondamente Nove, pointing at the water.

The distance between Ospedale Santi Giovanni e Paola (General Hospital in Venice) and Island of San Michele is 860 m.

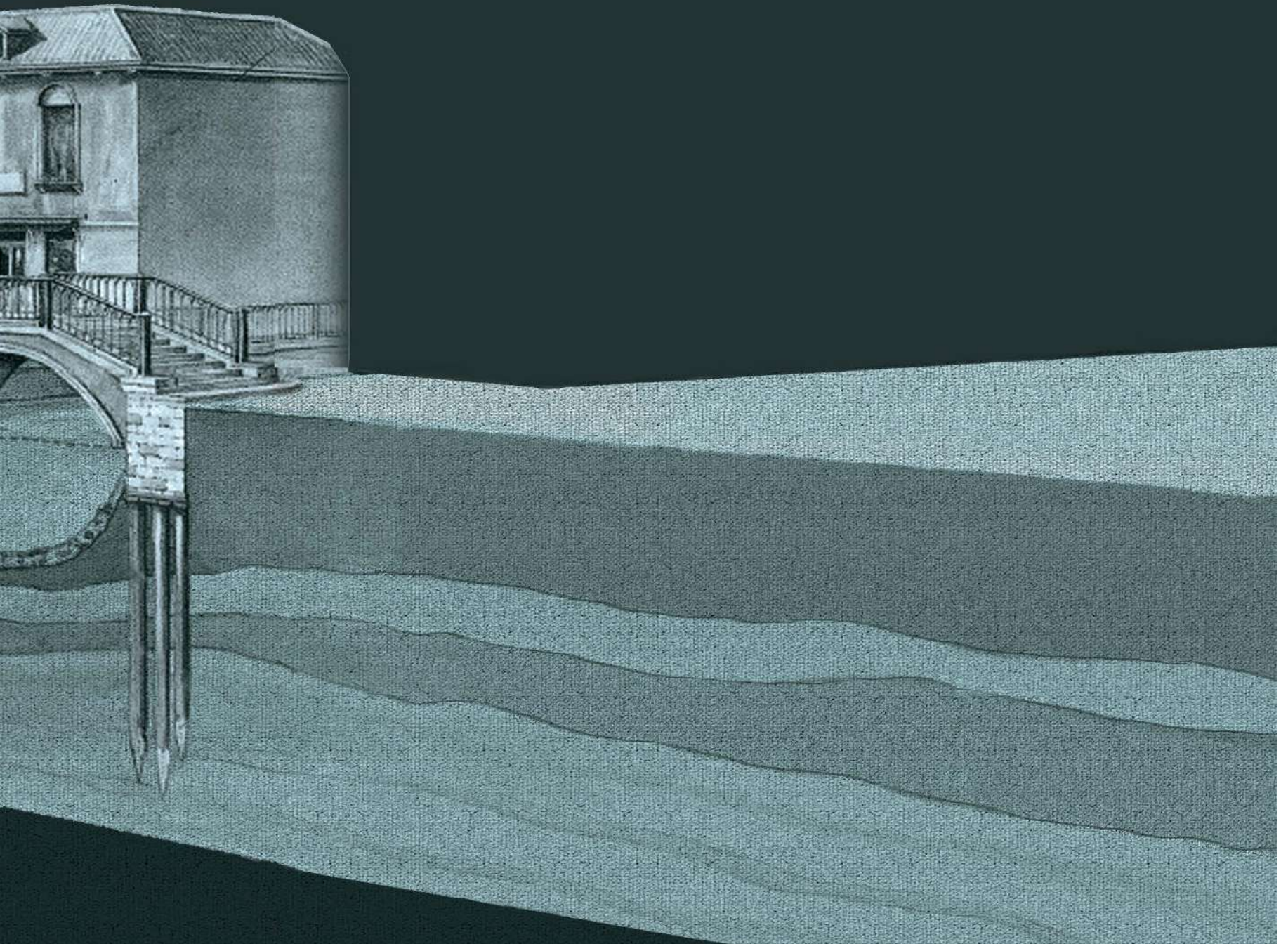
Both of the stops are located on the same line of Alilaguna.

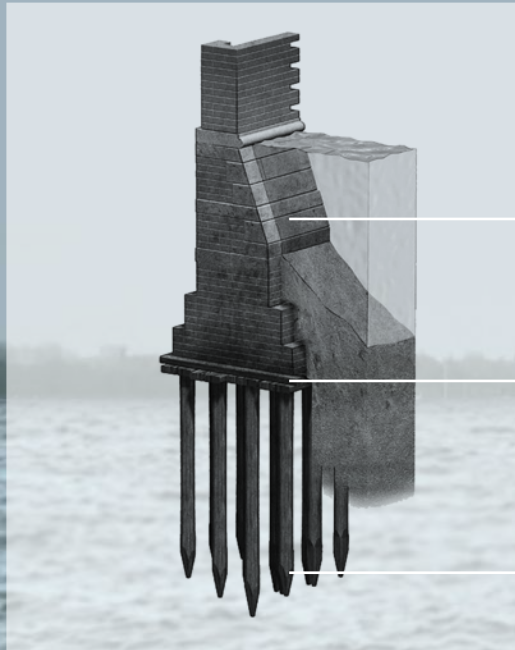
Death and birth essentially become two of the stops of the Vaporetto.





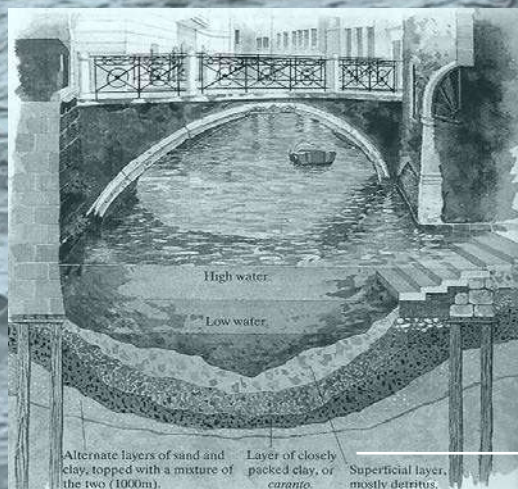
Architecture of Venice: Building on Water





The stones were the only parts to have contact with air and water; the wooden beams and poles stayed within the mud and *caranto* layers and as time went by they were affected by a mineralization process that made them actually even harder and more resistant.

On top of the poles there are 2 layers of wooden beams to support the actual foundation of stones (still underground / water level) and then the brick walls or columns on top of the stones.



Larch or oak poles into the underwater ground. The poles are 3 meters long, with a diameter of 20 cm and were driven underground until they reached the harder *caranto* layer composed of clay and sand. They were driven along the ground line (building perimeter) that had to support the walls.

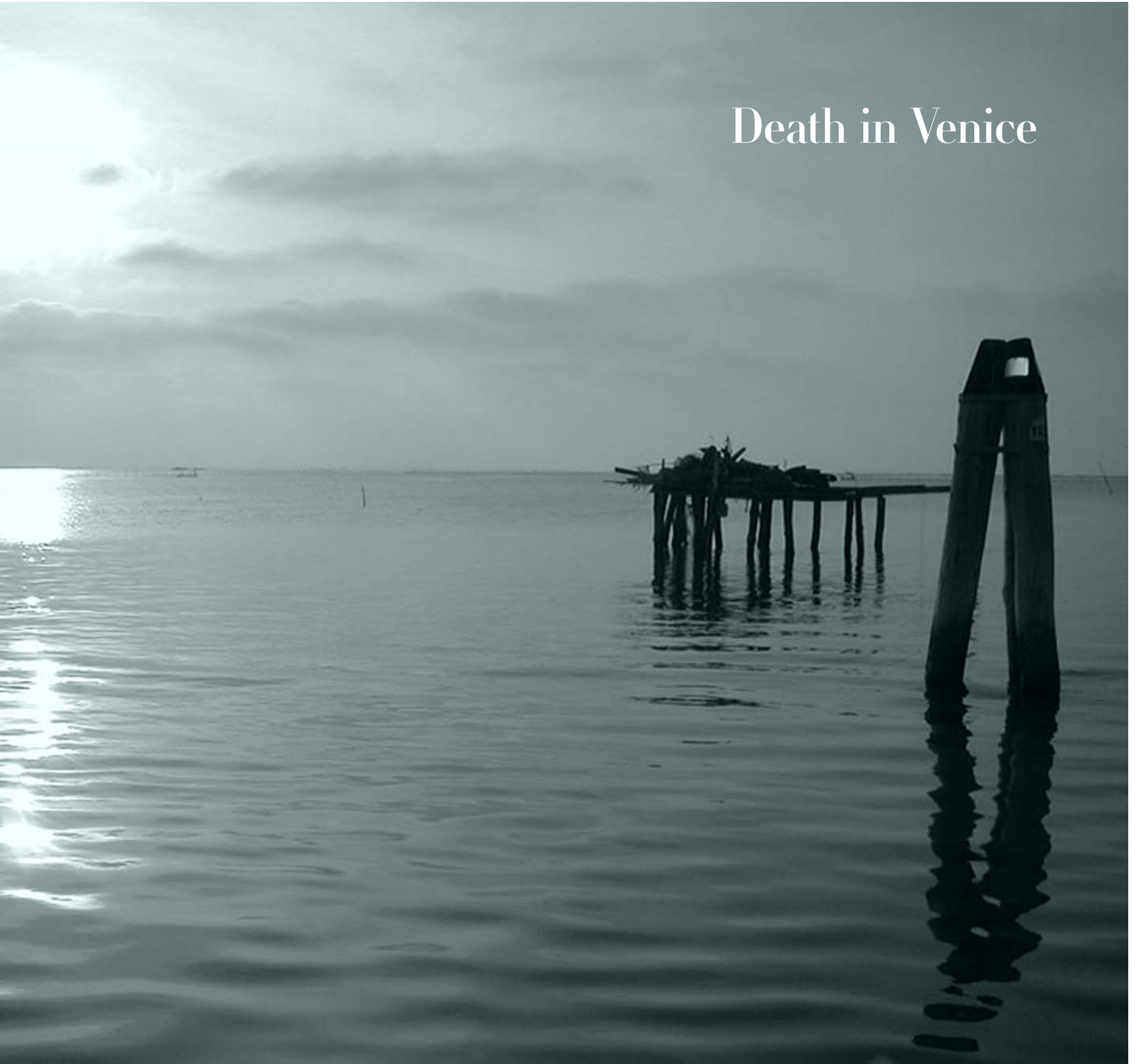
To build a city where it is impossible to build a city is madness in itself, but to build there one of the most elegant and grandest of cities is the madness of genius.

Alexander Herzen





Death in Venice



Besides San Michele Island, Venice is home to other cemeteries: old Jewish Cemetery (founded in 1380s) and a former Greek orthodox burial in San Giorgio dei Greci (built in 1547)





The old cemetery functioned until the 1770s when a new cemetery was opened: its entrance is now around the corner, a few hundred meters away. This cemetery is still in use by today's Jewish community — it includes grand family tombs and other monuments from earlier times.



Cyrillic inscription in the ancient former cemetery at the back of the Greek-Orthodox church, of San Giorgio dei Greci (Venice) (“Saint George of the Greeks”).

(Translation:

I was the first one to arrive to you/ And the first one to leave you/ Don't cry / I feel good here / I am home)



San Michele Island: 1808 - 2006

Almost every gravestone had a photo of the deceased and evidence of a recent visit... fresh flowers, handwritten notes and little mementos.

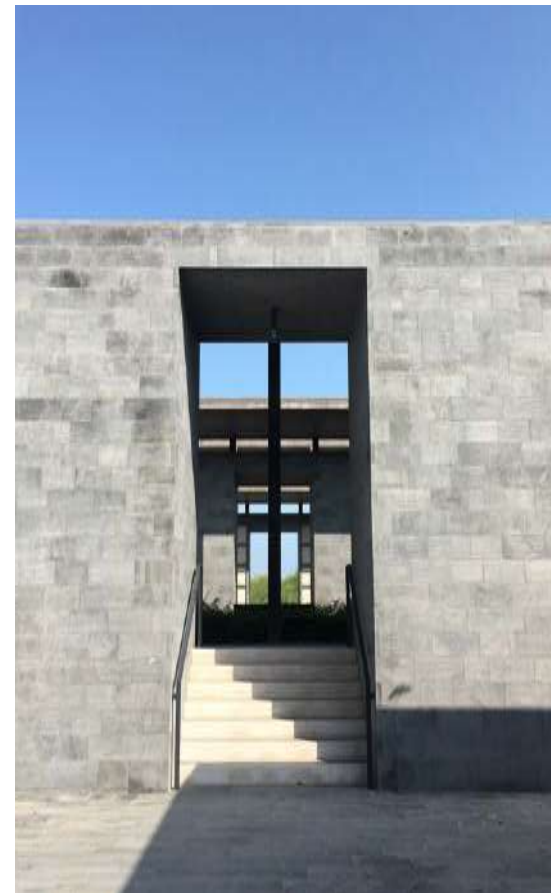
The more modern sections of the cemetery have long, towering rows of tombs with rolling ladders parked at each end. We watched family members climb ladders, replace fresh flowers, pass a kiss to the photo and cross themselves before climbing back down.



San Michele Island: Chipperfield Addition

The project itself comprises two phases: in the first, the burial grounds of the current cemetery are complemented through the construction of a series of new courtyards, a crematorium, and a chapel.

The second phase of the project involves the construction of a new island, running parallel to the existing cemetery but separated by a 15m-wide channel. This new island will feature four tomb buildings - designed as simple, sculpted blocks - together with a series of gardens at water level. Unlike the remainder of San Michele, built higher above the water line and with its perimeter wall, this new island looks to create a more open, accessible monument so as to provide a greater sense of place not only for the cemetery but for the lagoon and Venice as a whole.



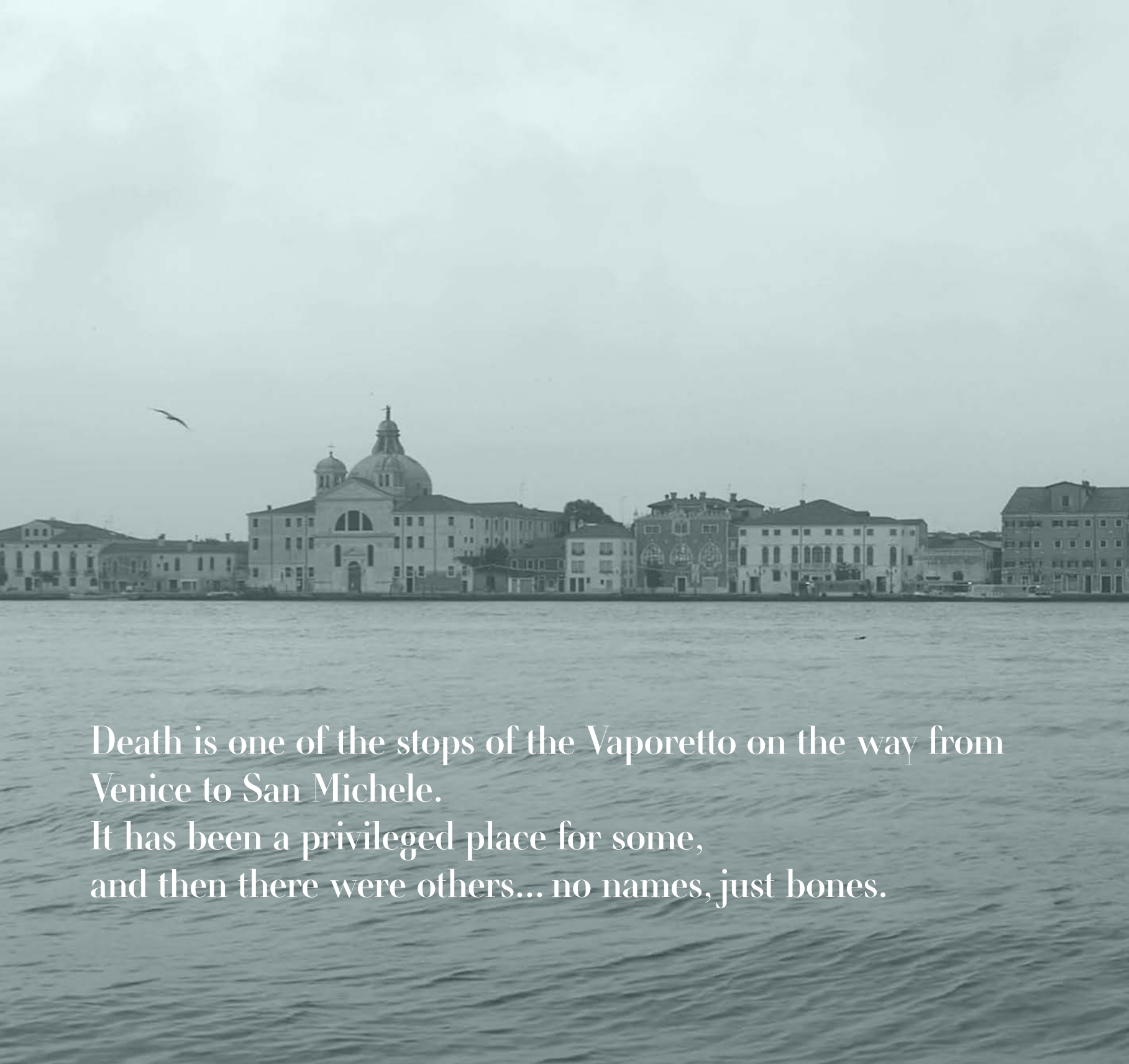
Until 1954, all private tombs in the city, whether below or above ground, were leased for eternity. Since then, the city of Venice has leased tombs for a varying number of years (12-30).

In some cases, leases can be renewed; otherwise, graves are exhumed and the remains can be cremated or deposited into the cemetery's common ossuary, usually with little to no information of those who are buried there.

Ossuary niches are renewable for 20 more years as long as families are able to provide payments.

For those occupants whose relatives are unable to pay the lease, the prospect of being forgotten for eternity looms ahead.





Death is one of the stops of the Vaporetto on the way from
Venice to San Michele.
It has been a privileged place for some,
and then there were others... no names, just bones.

A grayscale photograph of a Venetian canal. The water is in the foreground, with a row of multi-story buildings lining the far bank. The sky is overcast and cloudy. The word "Passage" is written in a white serif font in the upper right corner.

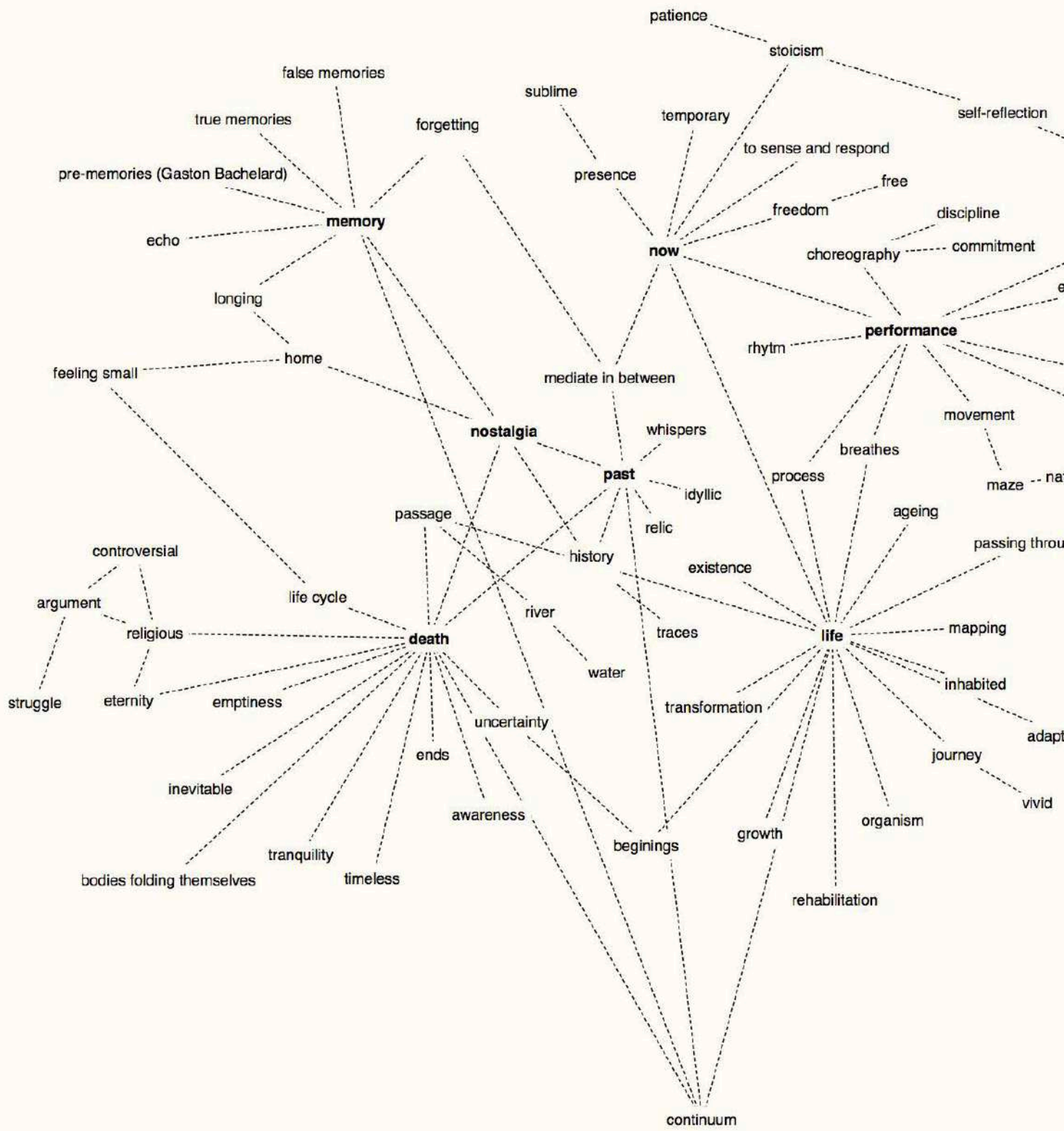
Passage

This is the place where water and sky are the gates to eternity.
This is the place to embed remains of lives lived and love lost.
This is the place where all can afford a final rest.
This is the place for death in Venice.

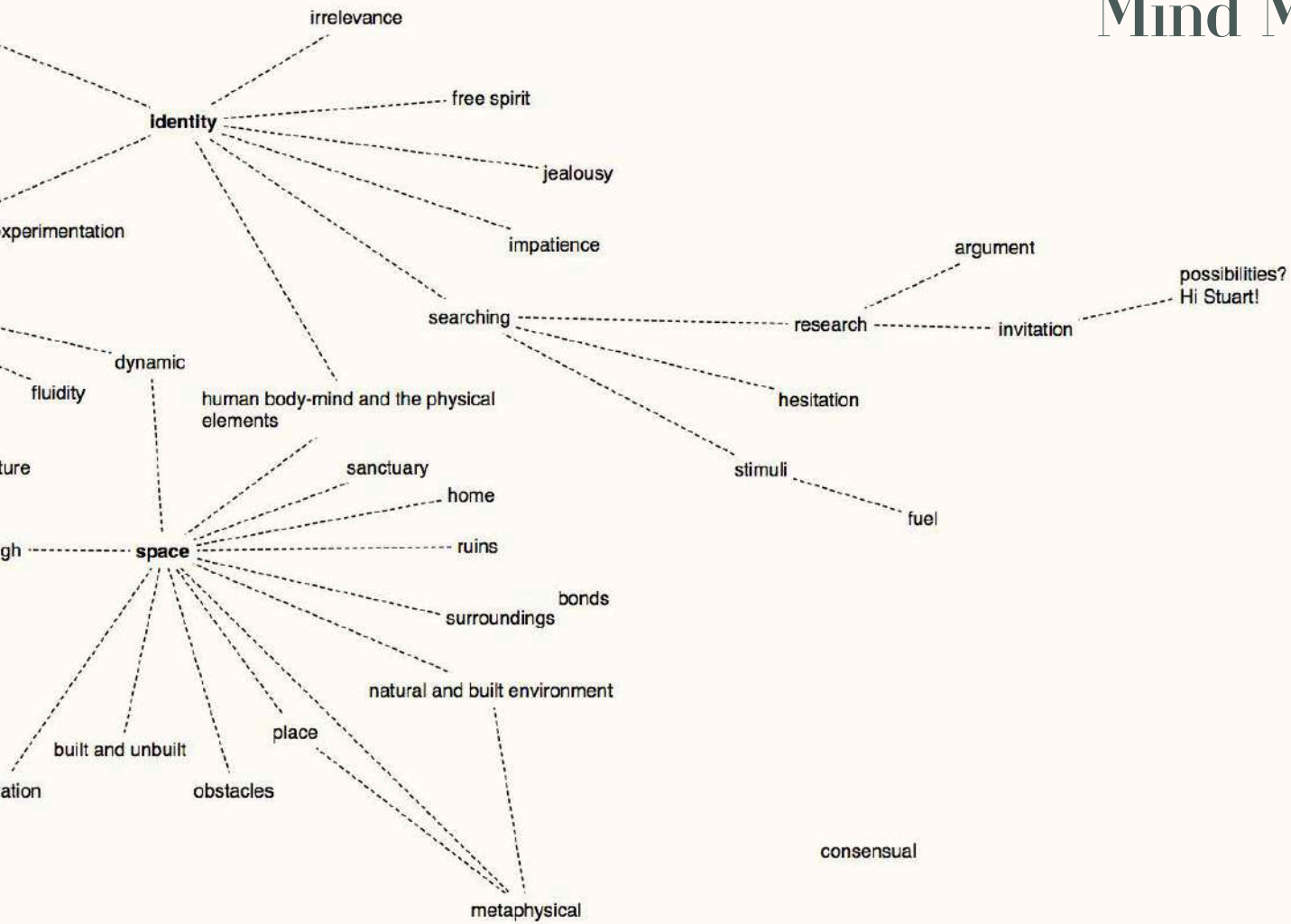


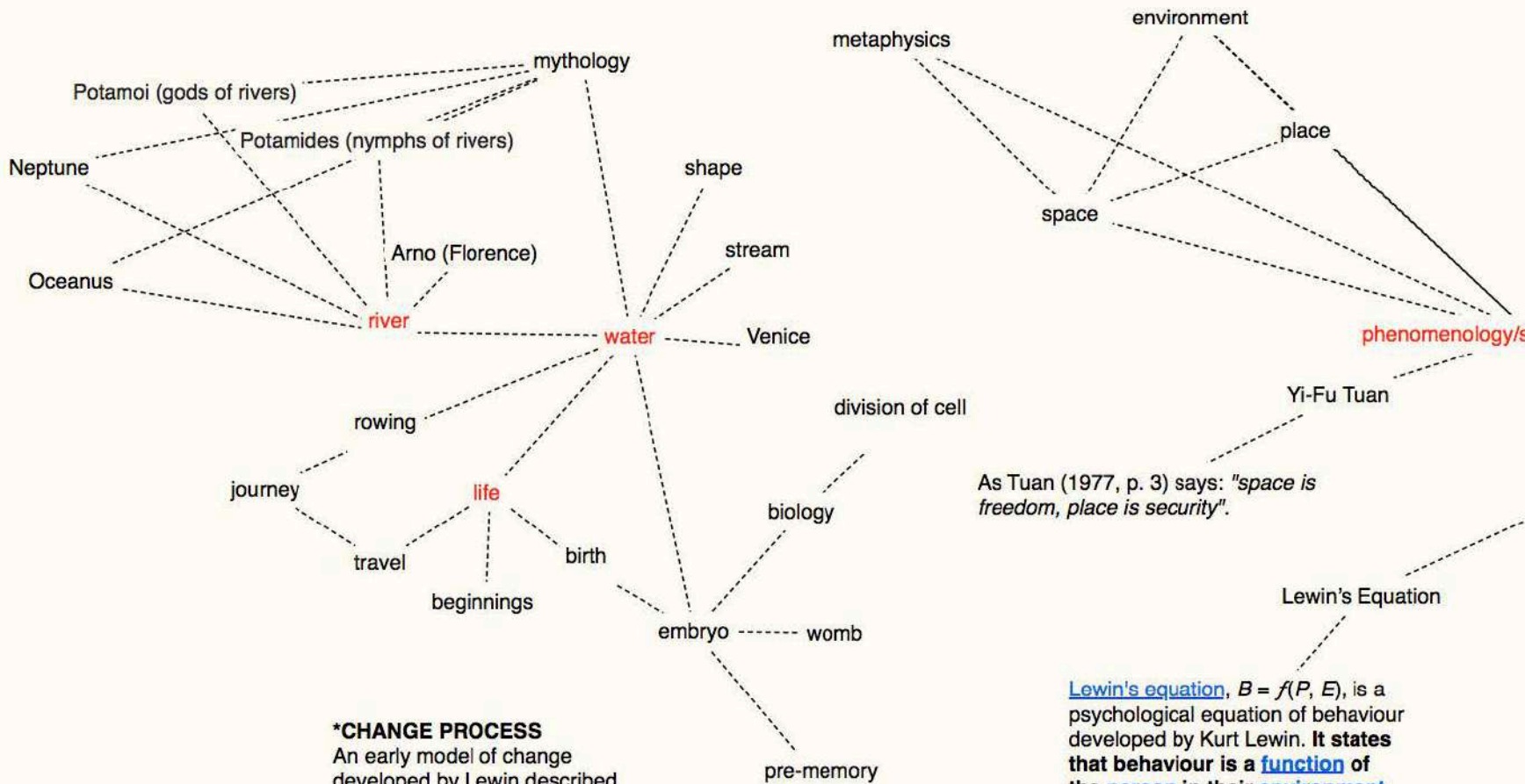
The Process





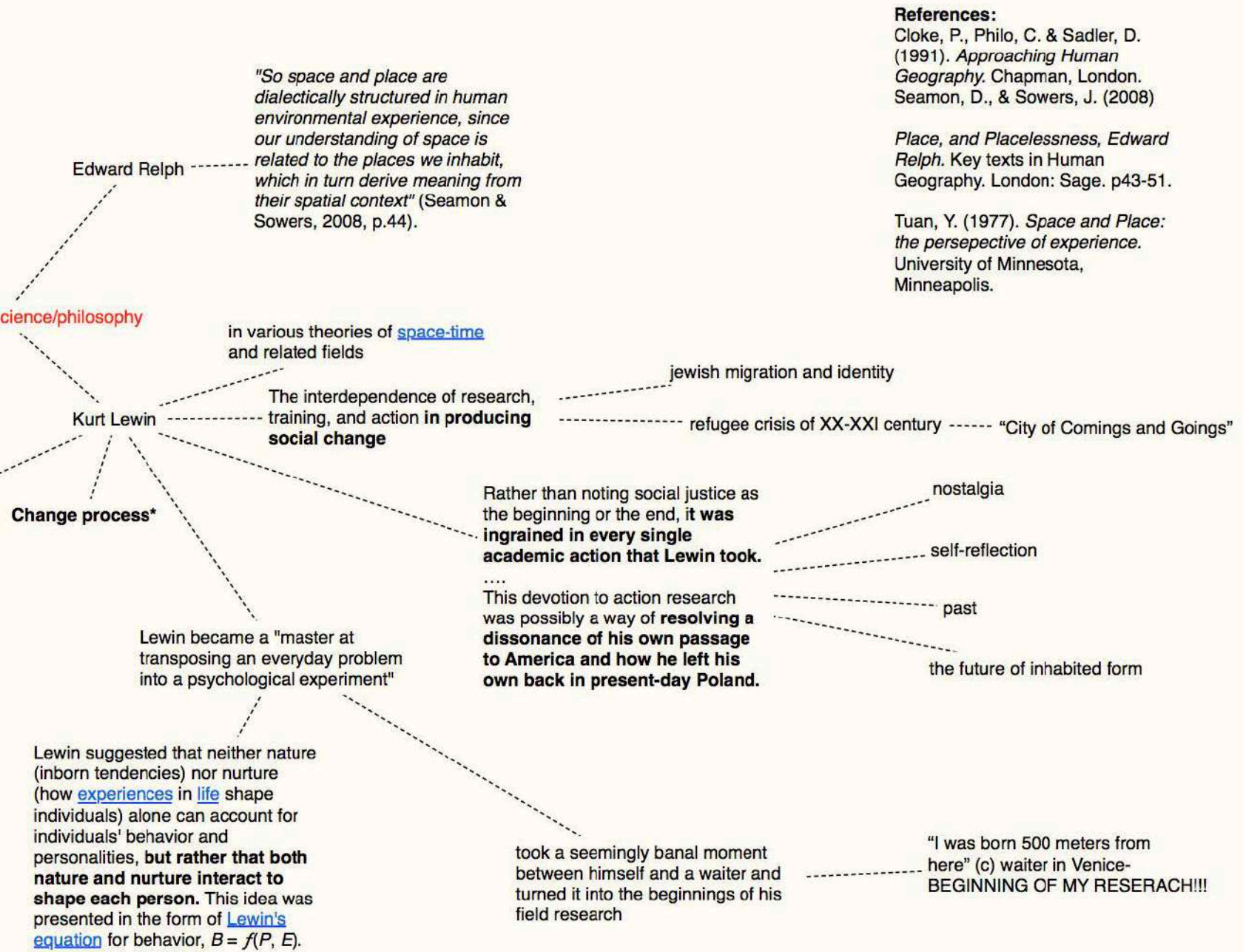
Mind Mapping





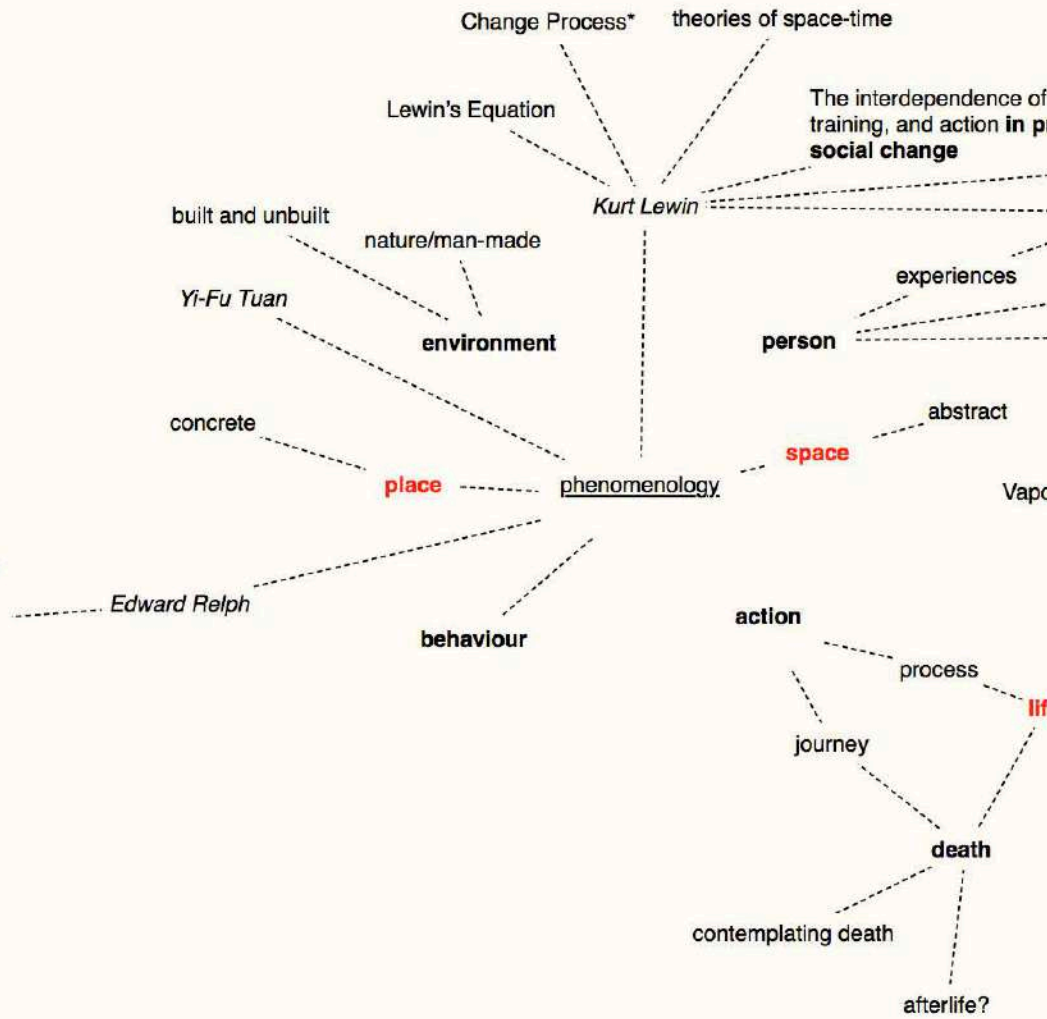
***CHANGE PROCESS**

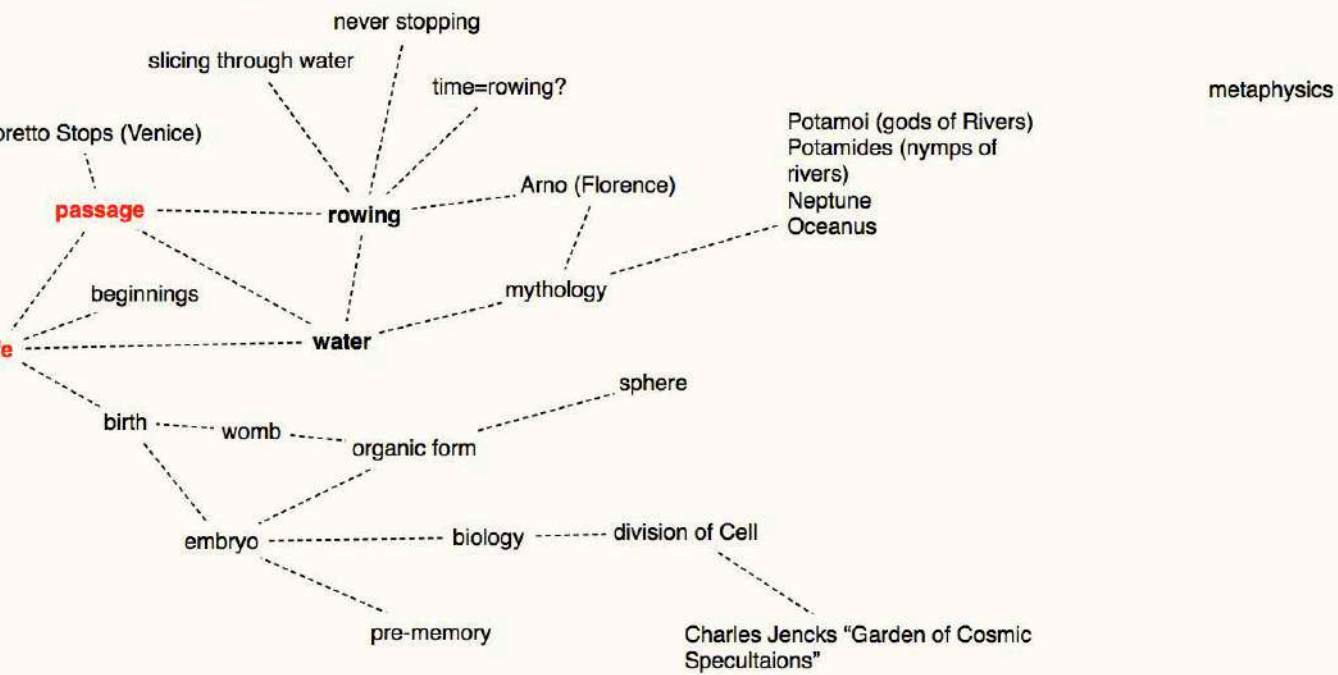
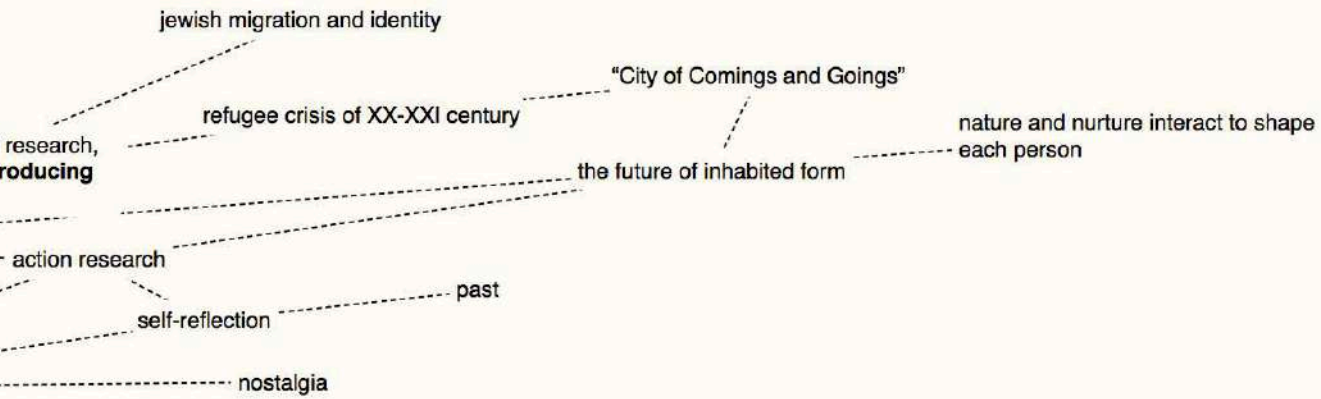
An early model of change developed by Lewin described [change](#) as a three-stage process. [16] The first stage he called "unfreezing". It involved overcoming inertia and dismantling the existing "mind set". It must be part of surviving. Defense mechanisms have to be bypassed. In the second stage the change occurs. This is typically a period of confusion and transition. We are aware that the old ways are being challenged but we do not have a clear picture as to what we are replacing them with yet. The third and final stage he called "freezing". The new mindset is crystallizing and one's comfort level is returning to previous levels. This is often misquoted as "refreezing" (see [Lewin, 1947](#))

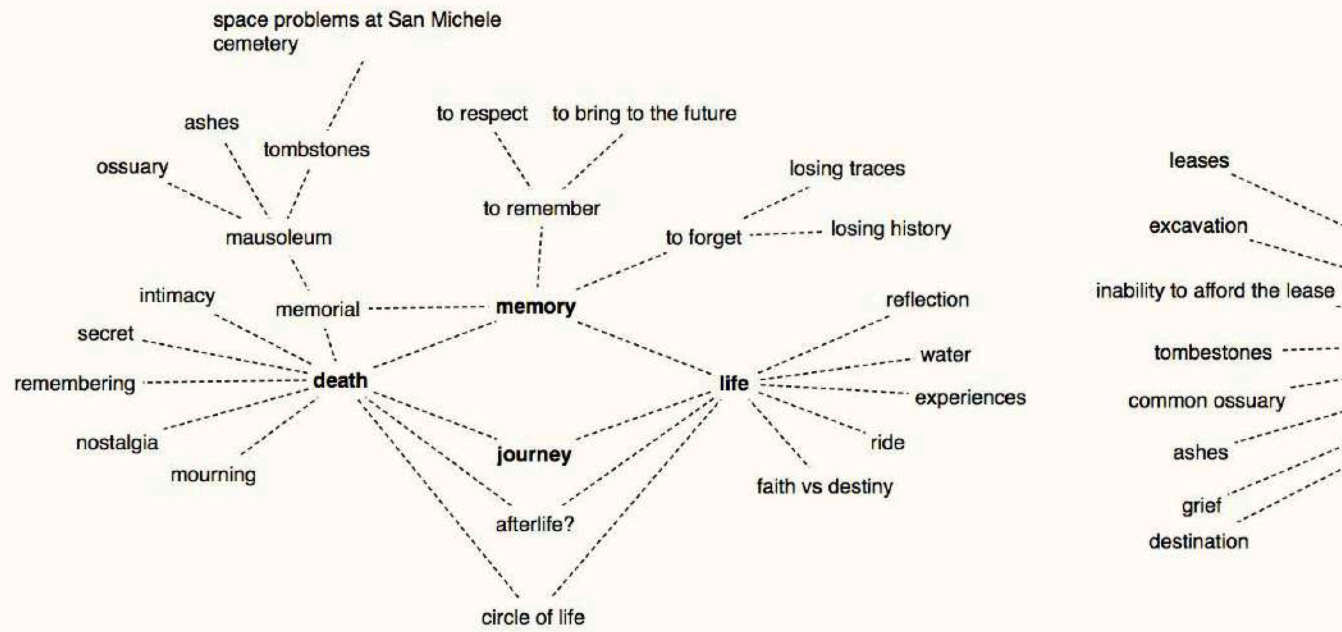


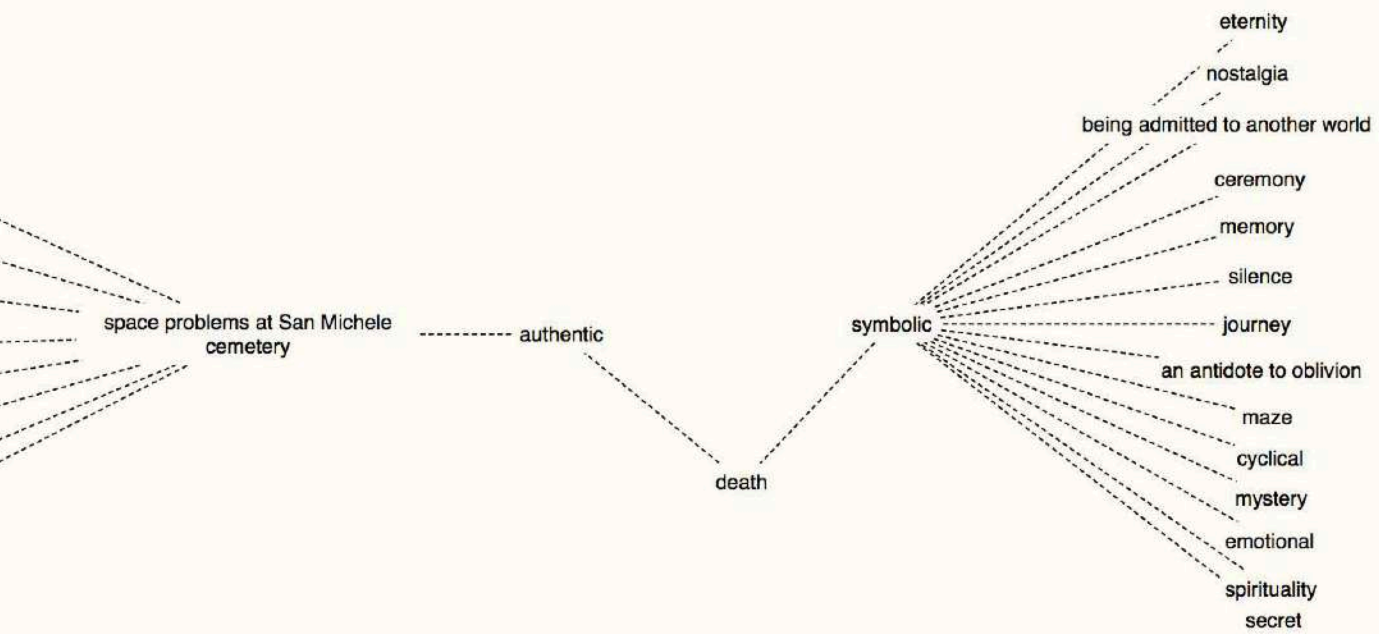
References:
 Cloke, P., Philo, C. & Sadler, D. (1991). *Approaching Human Geography*. Chapman, London.
 Seamon, D., & Sowers, J. (2008). *Place, and Placelessness*, Edward Relph. Key texts in Human Geography. London: Sage. p43-51.
 Tuan, Y. (1977). *Space and Place: the persepective of experience*. University of Minnesota, Minneapolis.

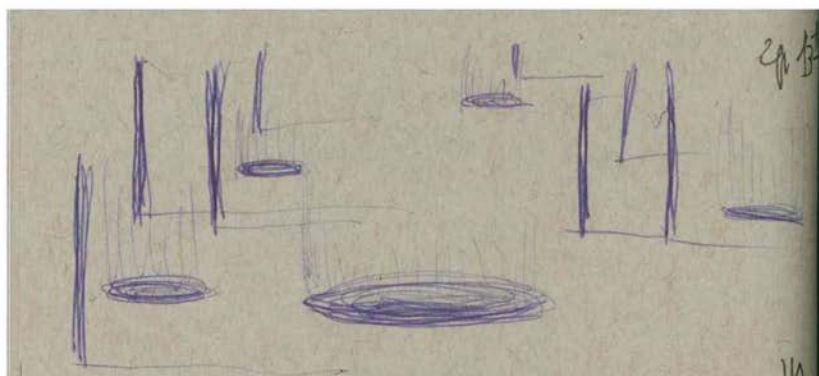
"So space and place are dialectically structured in human environmental experience, since our understanding of space is related to the places we inhabit, which in turn derive meaning from their spatial context!" (Seamon & Sowers, 2008, p.44).







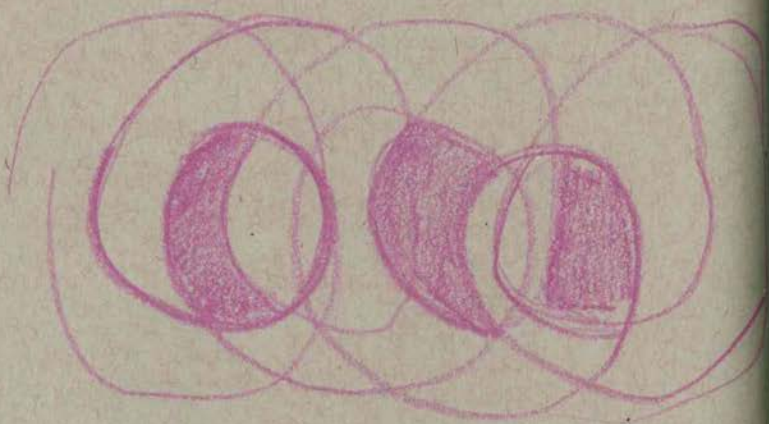




ep 13

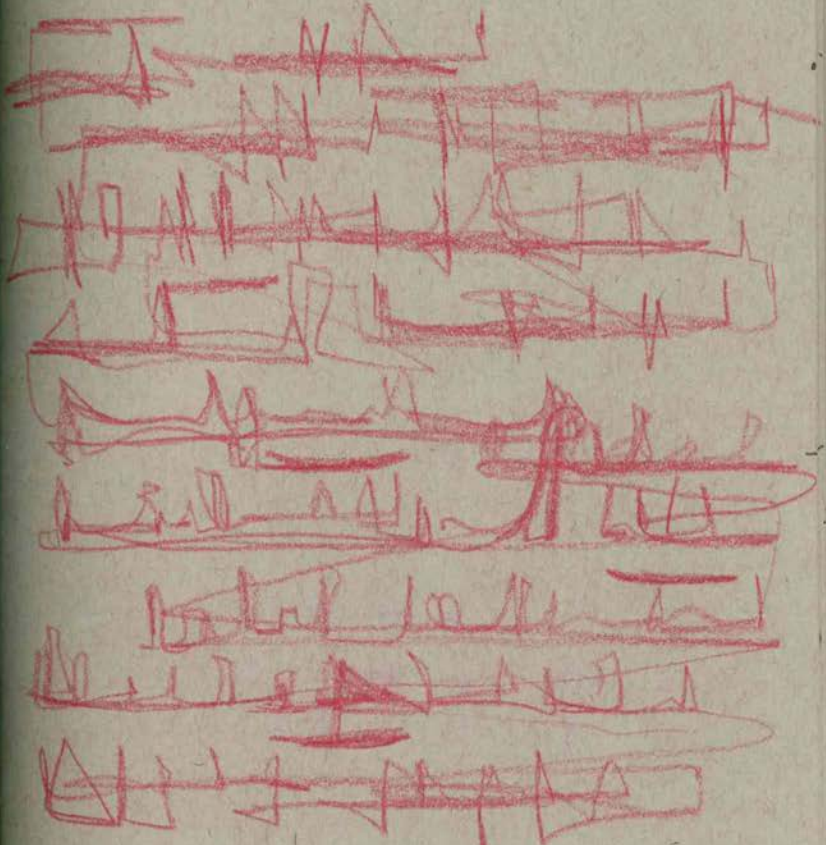
14

Handwritten text in brown ink, consisting of several lines of dense, repetitive characters that appear to be a stylized or abstract script.



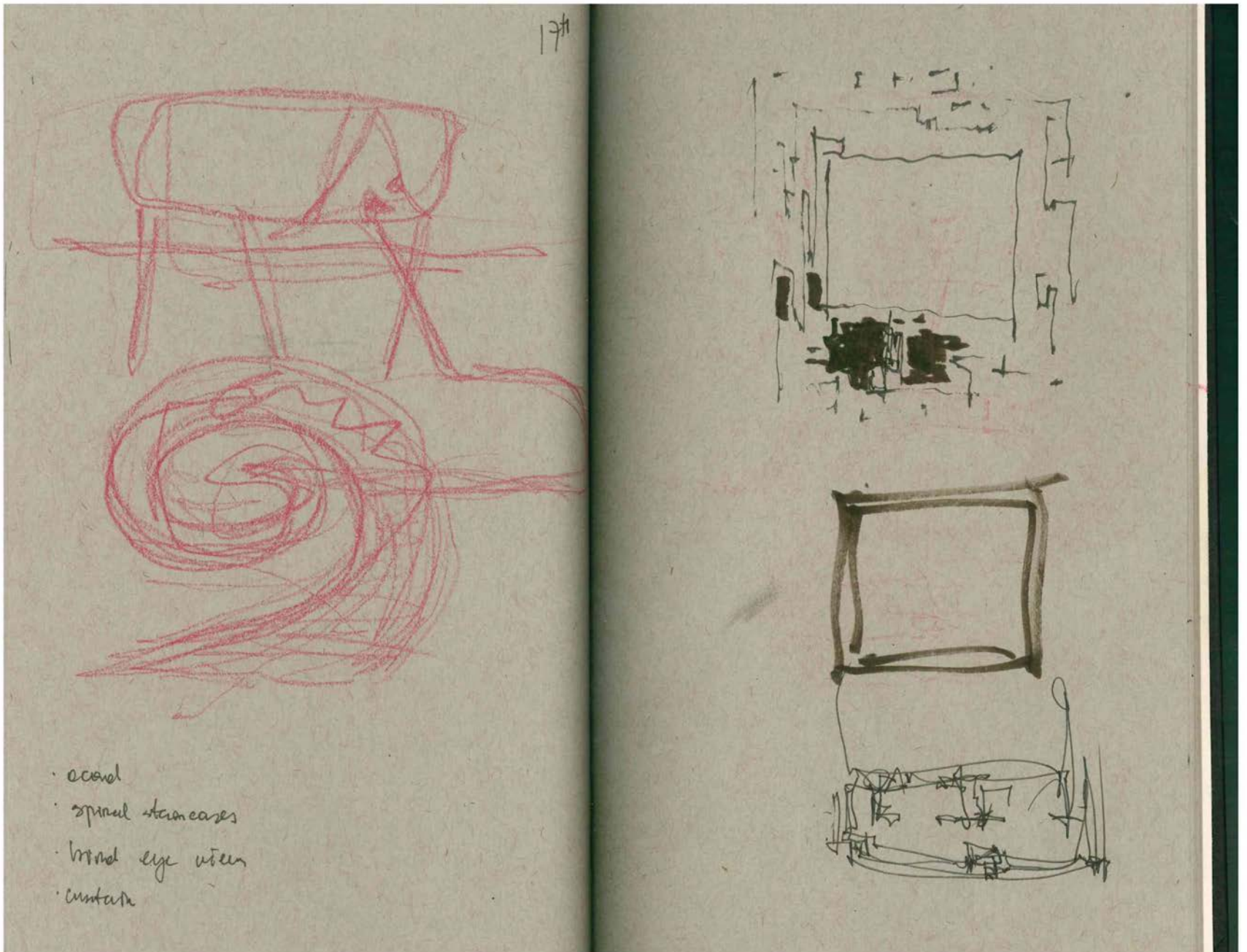
circles

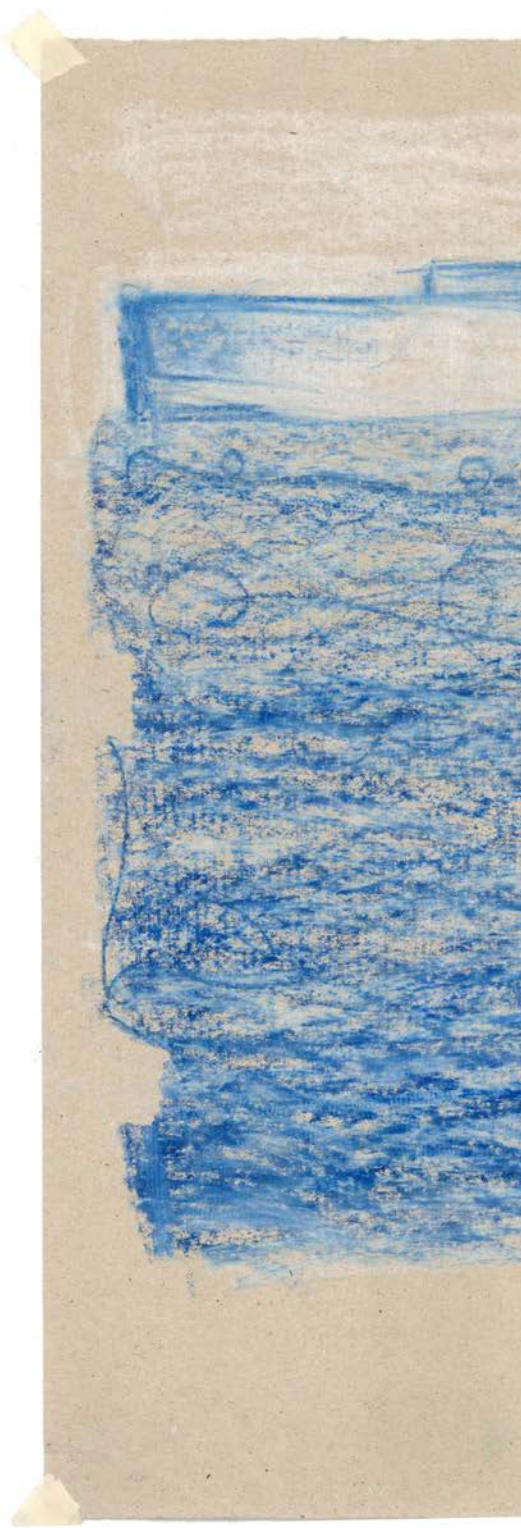
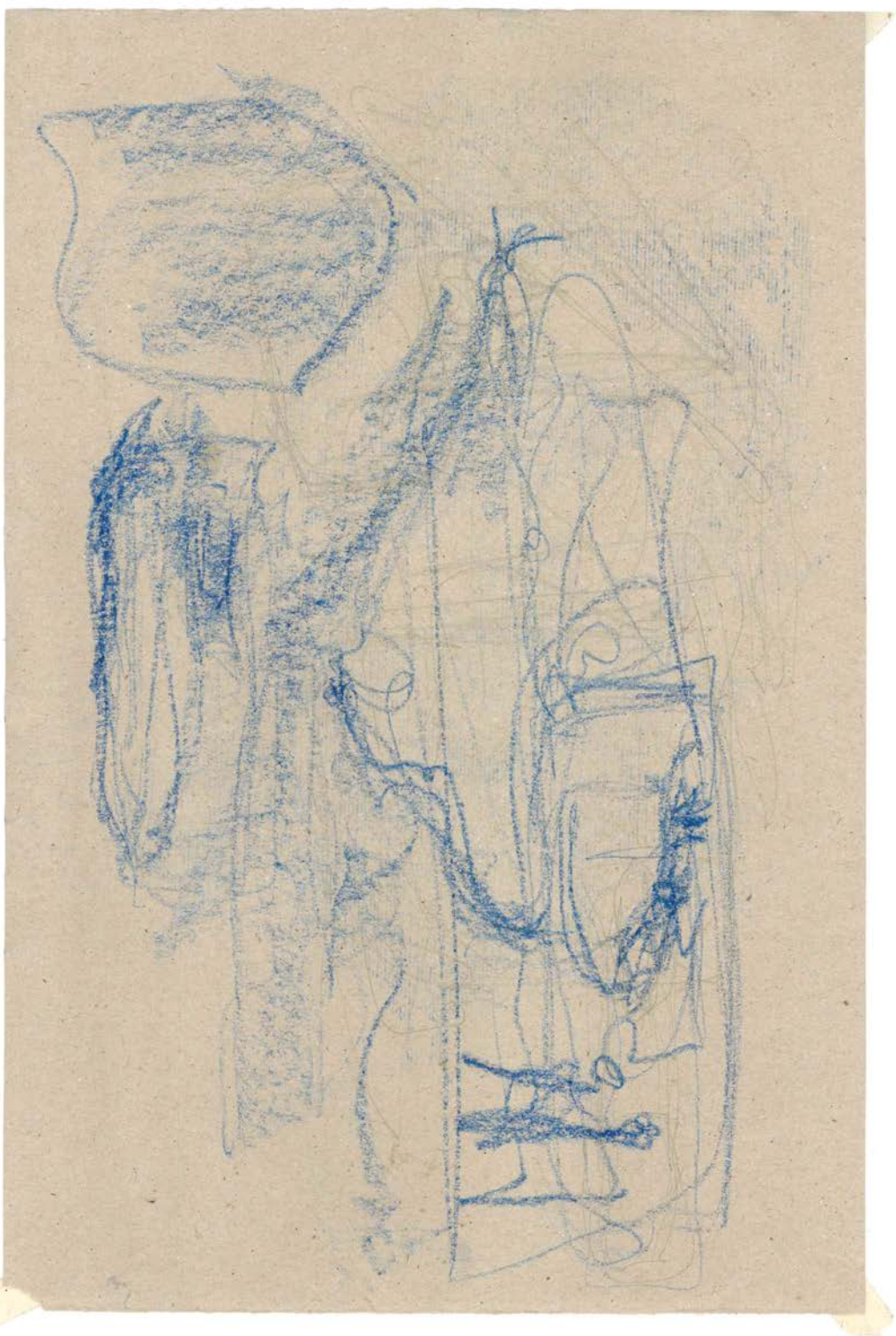
Kol

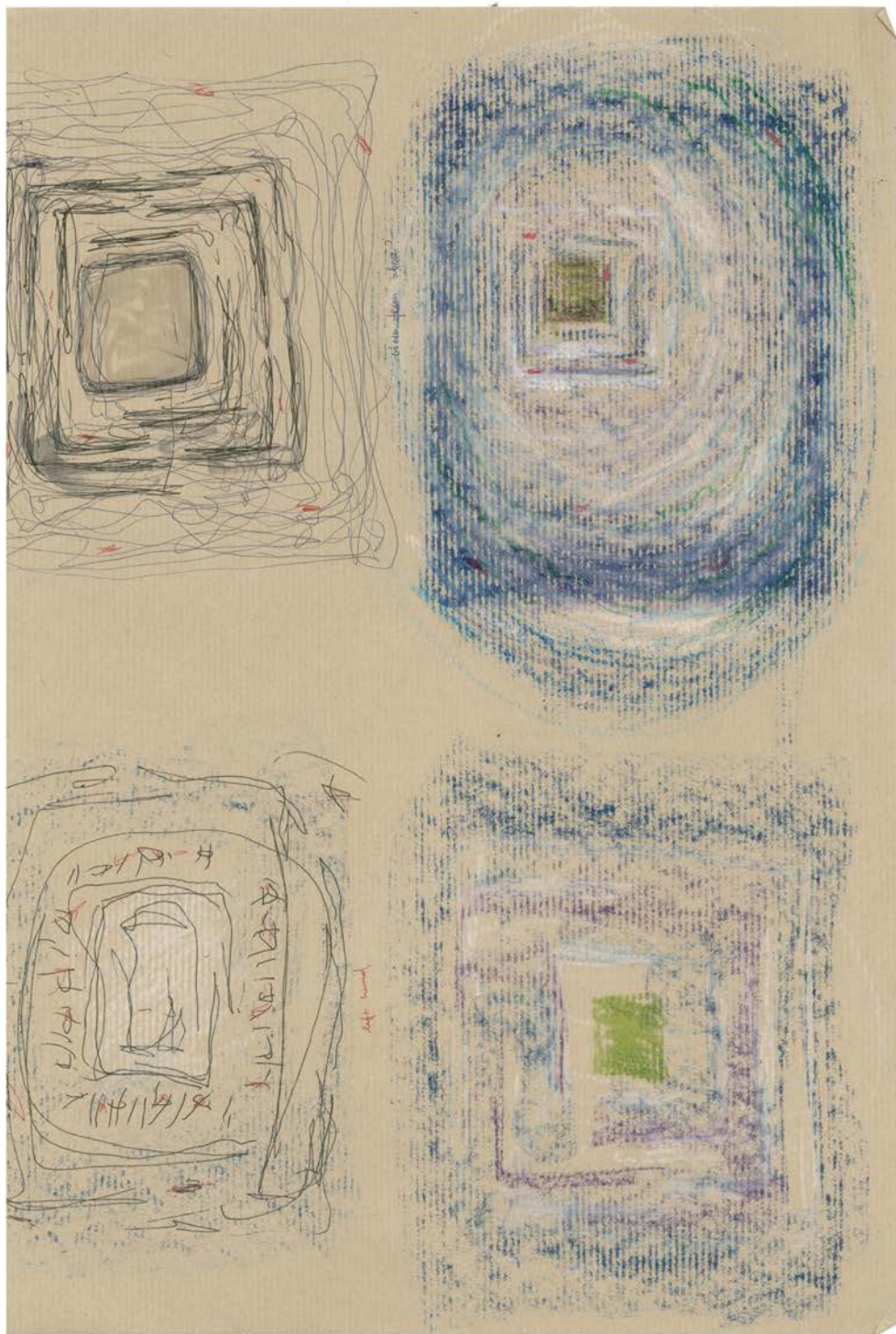


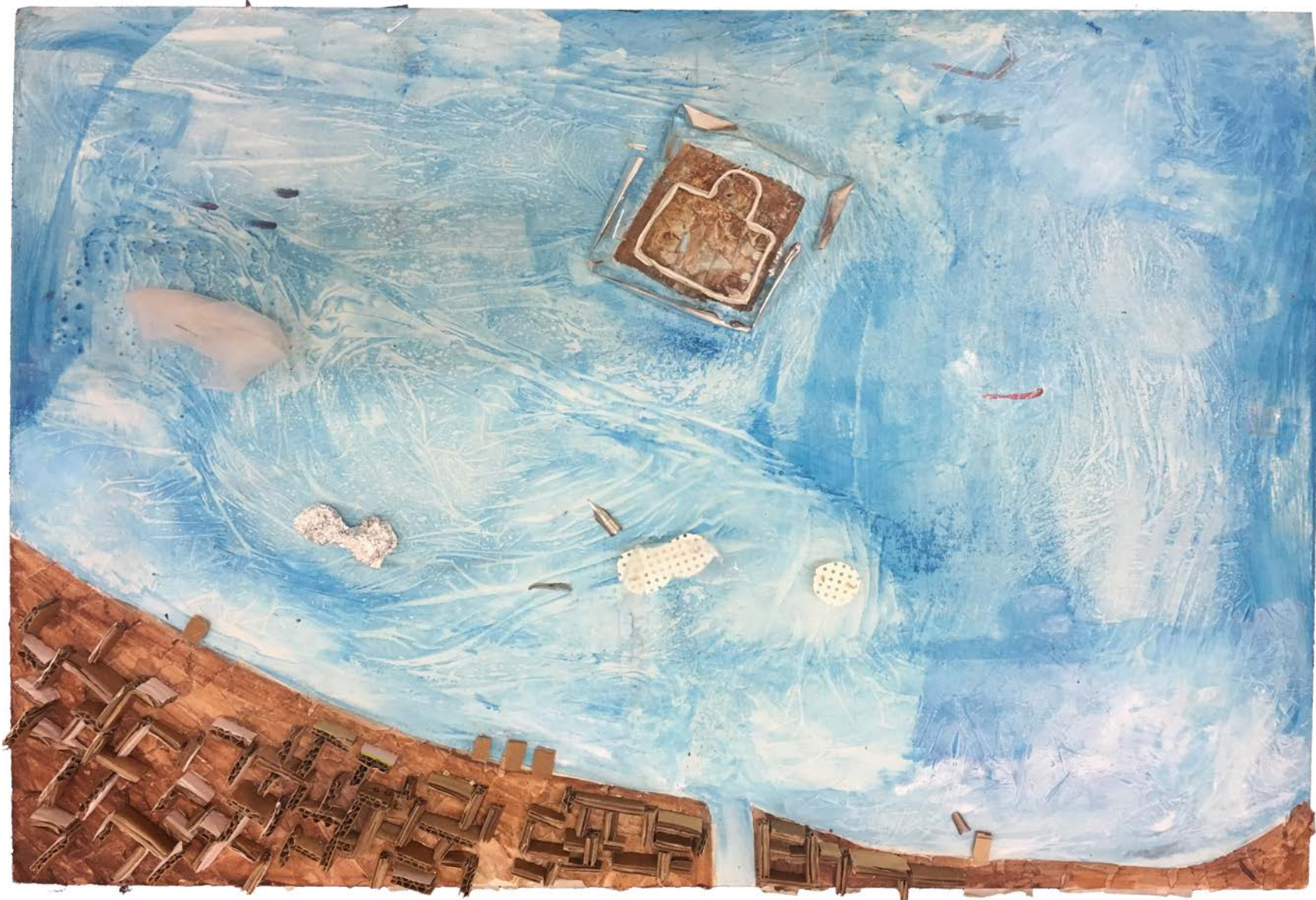
beats.

Dream Drawings









Concept Site Models



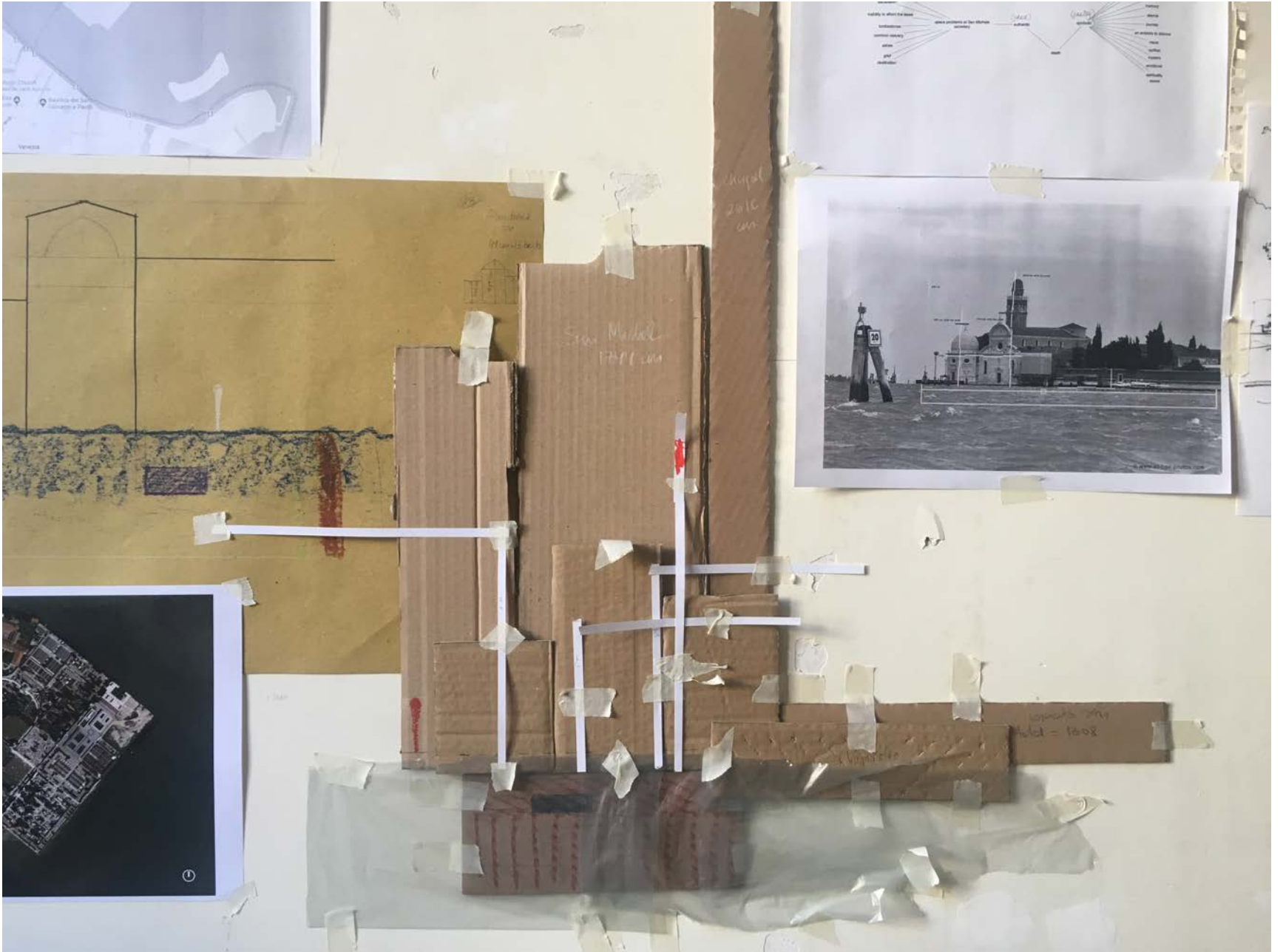
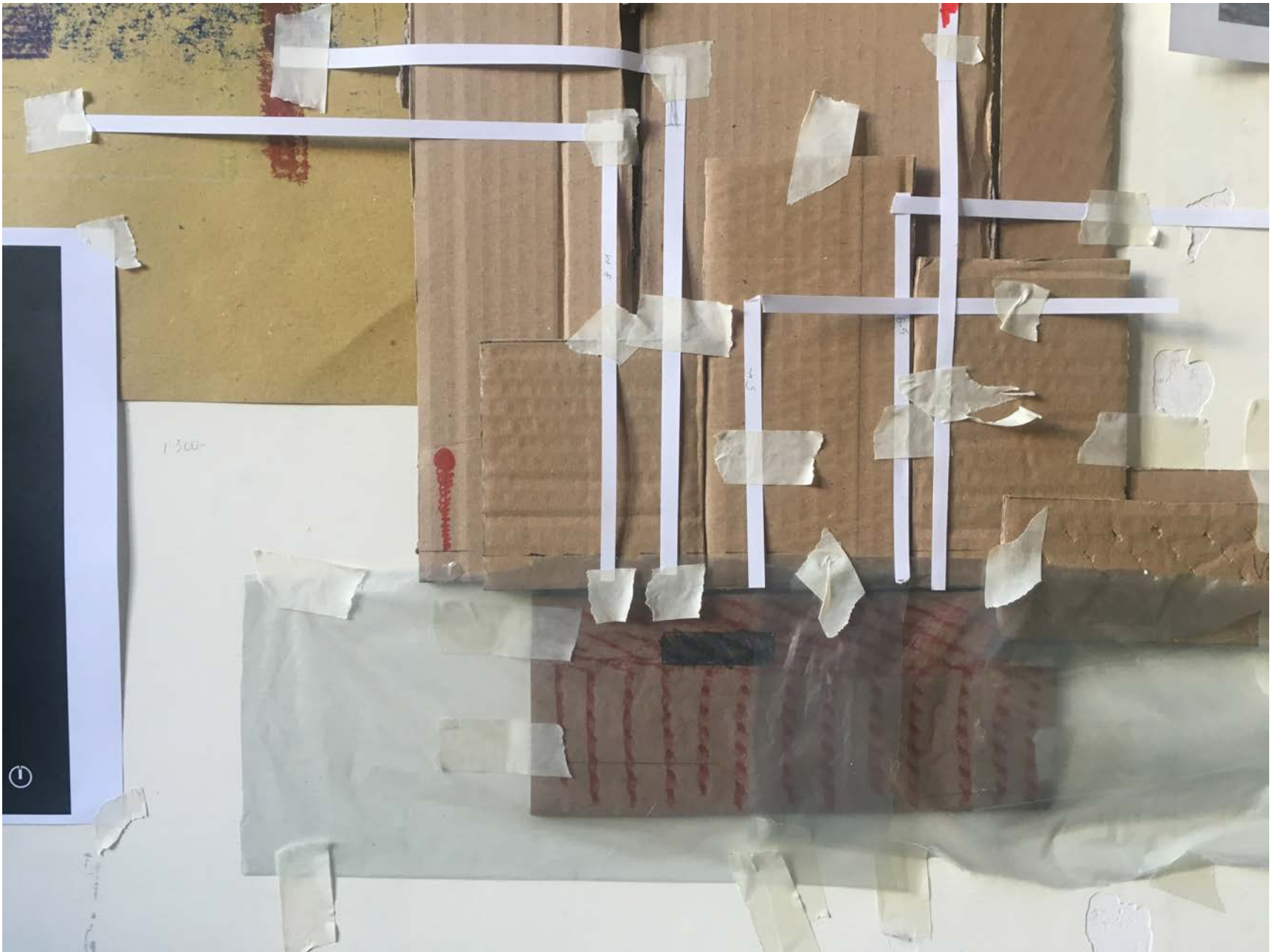
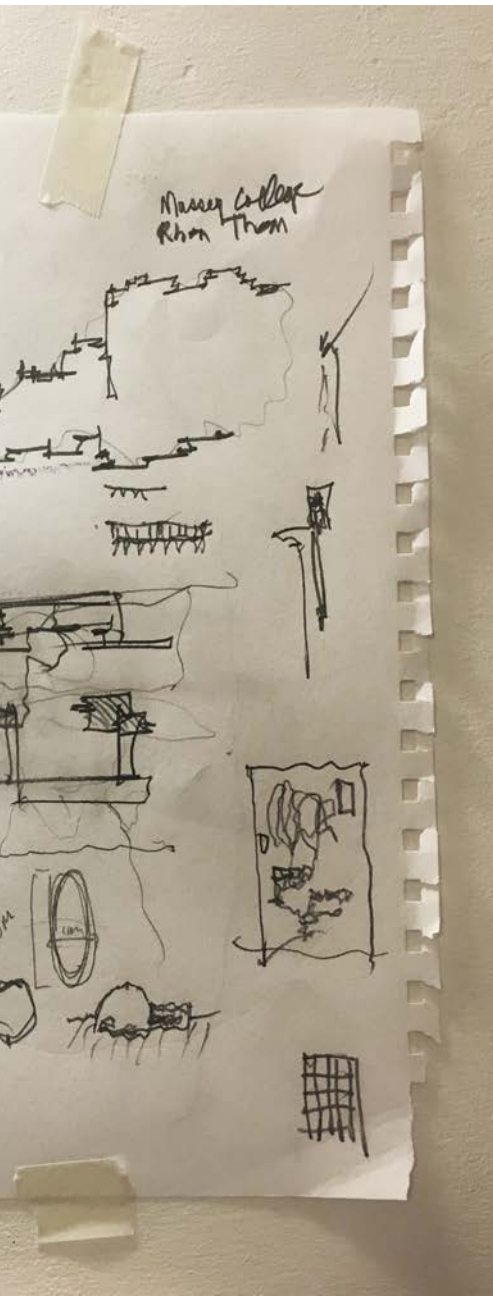


Figure - Ground Relation

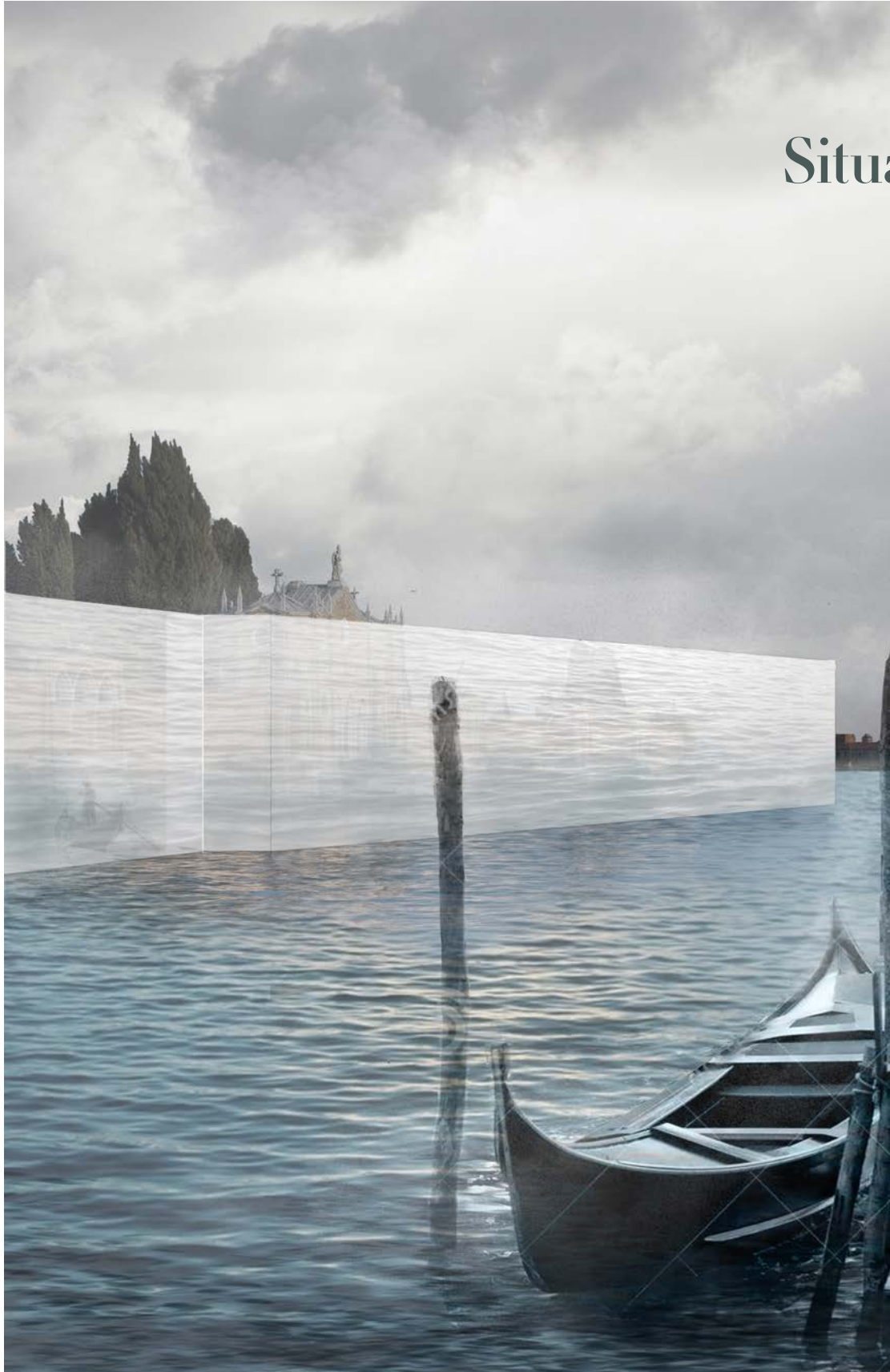


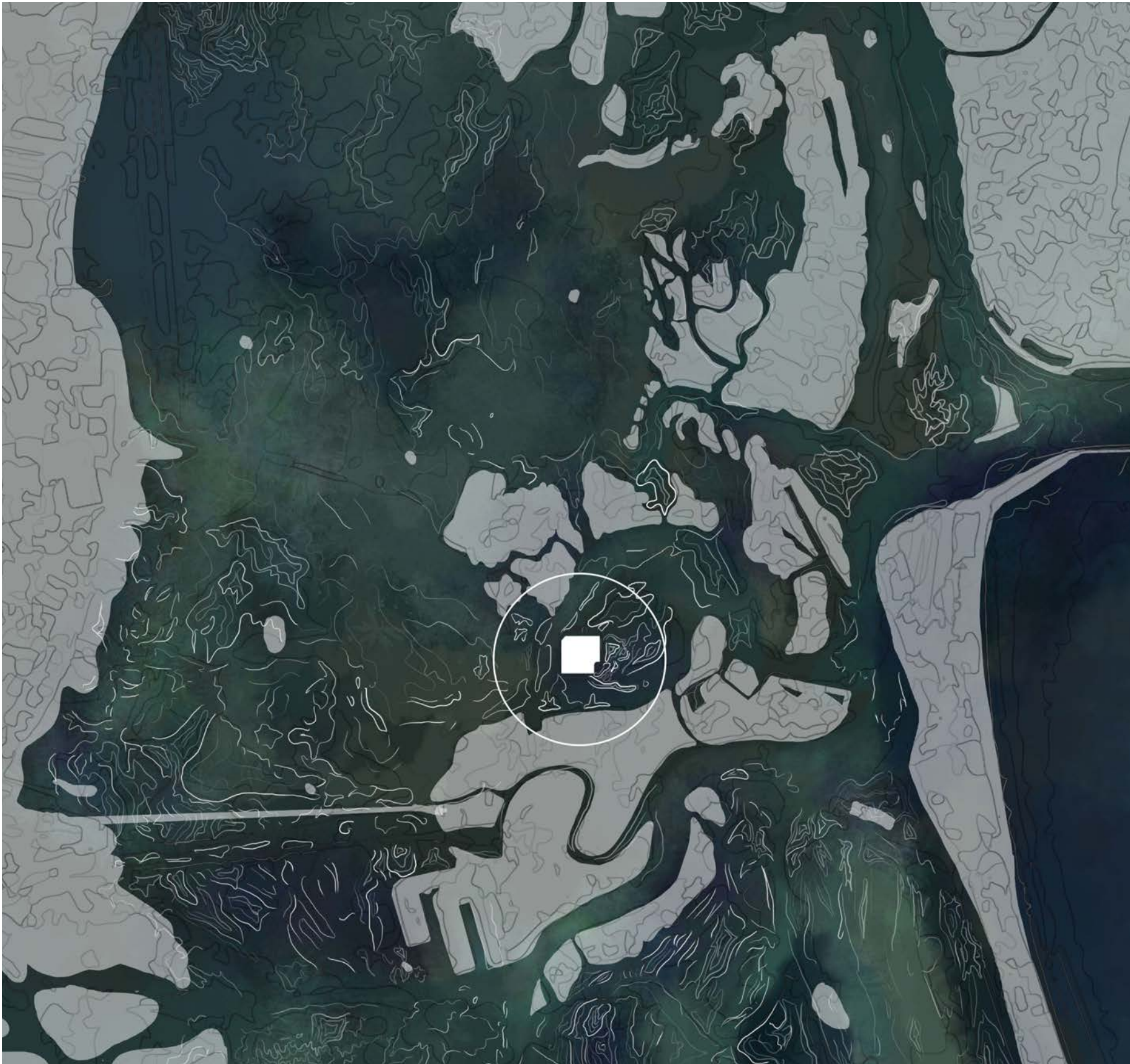






Situations





Final Design





Site Plans





An ever-growing columbarium in the Venetian Lagoon where everyone can afford a final resting place.

Washed by waves, translucent walls of the mausoleum let in and reflect the sunlight, shimmering through the clear water.

Death is not hiding from one's view - it stands still at the end of the body's journey and at the beginning of the soul's new journey.

A gondola ride to the cemetery is no longer a destination, but a ceremonial passage to the afterlife.

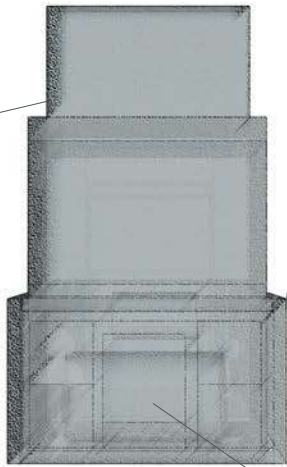
Passage expands as Venice population continues to grow, allowing more people to be able to afford a final resting place, regardless of their status.

Passage keeps memories, names, dates and photographs of those we loved and lost, and becomes an antidote to oblivion.

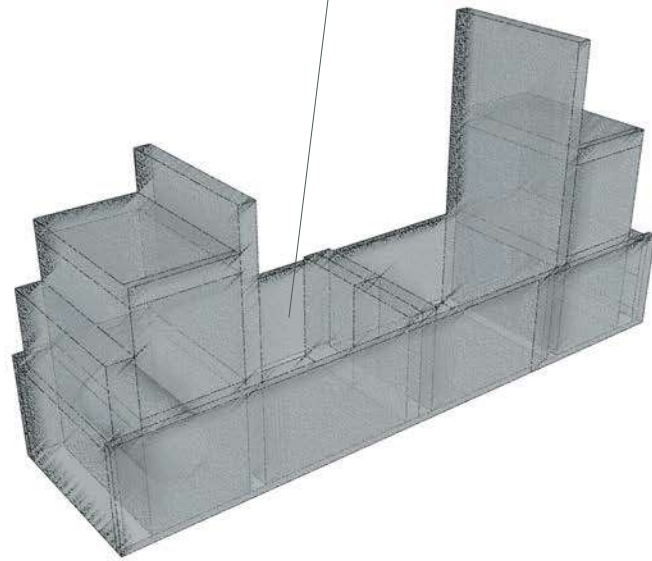




Overall niche dimensions are
40 cm (W) x 50 cm (D) x 25 cm (H).
Each wall is 2 inches deep and 25 inches high.



Enough space for multiple urns or a separate ossuary



Glass-front niches are seamlessly integrated into the space with aluminum trim work. Each plate has a place for a name, photograph, epitaph, candle and flower holders.



Future Design Development

1. Materiality and construction
2. Landscape and vegetation
3. Laws and policies
4. Maintenance

Венеция, постоянная
вдохновительница наших
успокоений

-Sergei Diaghilev



1. Cover: Dante and Virgil, sculpture by Georgy Frangulyan.
2. Lion of Saint Mark (p 2), a photograph by Jakub Hałun
3. Site Background: (p 6-7) <http://veniceapartmentrentals.com/foundation-of-venice>
4. Island of San Michele: a Timeline (p 8-9)
 - Chiesa di San Michele, a photograph by Didier Descouens
 - Cappella Emiliana (<http://archimaps.tumblr.com/post/137579009747/elevation-of-the-cappella-emiliana>)
 - Island of San Cristoforo della Pace (<https://oliaklodvenitiens.files.wordpress.com/2015/04/c3aeles-de-s-michele-et-s-christoforo>)
 - San Michele Island from Above (<https://www.mimoo.eu/projects/Italy/Venice/San%20Michele%20Cemetery%20Extension/>)
5. Island of San Michele: Old and New (p 10-13)
 - https://issuu.com/jeremiahwoodring/docs/comprehensive_program_proposal_book_41f0f05f27b765
6. Alilaguna Map (p 16-17) graphics by author
7. The architecture of Venice: Building on Water (p 16-17) <http://veniceapartmentrentals.com/foundation-of-venice>
8. The architecture of Venice: Foundations of Venice (p 18-19)
 - Venice Foundation, a photograph by Claus Lunau
 - Venice Waters: section (<https://www.veniceguideandboat.it/history-of-venice/venice-fundation/>)
9. Death in Venice (p 20-21), photomontage
 - Decorations on funeral barges, Venice; photograph from Ben Shneiderman Collection, 1950
10. Island of San Michele and other cemeteries (p 22-23)
 - (San Michele Island from above) <https://www.vivovenetia.com/en/guided-tours/venice-in-helicopter>
 - (Old Jewish cemetery) <http://www.museoebraico.it/en/ancient-cemetery/>
 - (Greek Orthodox Tombstone), a photograph by Jakub Hałun
11. Island of San Michele: before and after Chipperfield additions (p24-25)
 - all pictures are taken by an author
12. Ancient Funeral Gondola (p 27) <https://rexvalrexblog.wordpress.com/2015/03/23/la-mort-a-venecia-adaptacio-de-regi-vii-la-lugubre-gondola-anuncia-la-mort-per-amor/>
13. Giudecca Canal, Venice (p 28-29) <https://videohive.net/item/venice-giudecca-canal/14421002>
14. The Process (p 30-31) photograph by author
15. Mind Mapping (p 32-39), Scapple app
16. Dream Drawings (p 40-43), artworks by authors
16. Site Plans (p 54-55), Google Maps
17. Future Design Development (p 62-63), photograph by author
18. Statue of San Todaro (p 64-65), photograph by Stefano Bolognini

Bibliography and references

