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PLATE

CORNELL UNIVERSITY AAP DEPARTMENT OF ARCHITECTURE

OPTION
STUDIO

S O L E P R I N T

WITH ESSAYS BY
MAURICIO PEZO+ SOFIA VON ELLRICHSHAUSEN

Spring 2020

Sole Print

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Associate Professors
Mauricio Pezo
Sofia von Ellrichshausen

Visiting Critic
Rodolfo Reis Dias

Students
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Victoria Grey Clarke
Joyce Jin
Anbar Oreizi-Esfahani
Chae Yeon Park
Laura Stargala
Brennen Brynes Stenke
Chi Yamakawa
Mengyi Yan
Jeonghyun Yoo
Jiarui Zhang
Yuyang Zhang

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Cornell University
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139 East Sibley Hall
Ithaca, NY 14853

Design + Editors-in-Chief
Andrea Simitch
Dillon Pranger

Editor
Laura Stargala

Contact
cuarch@cornell.edu

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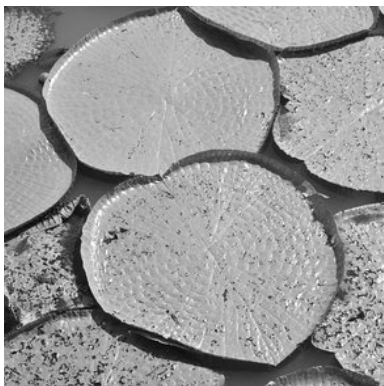
Introduction

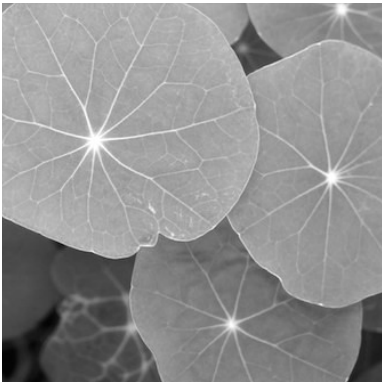
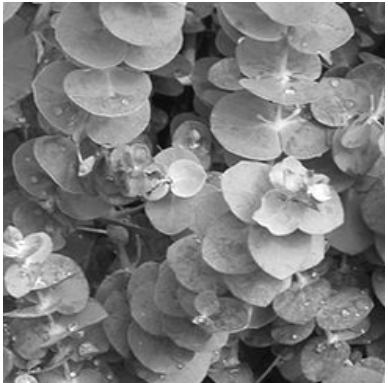
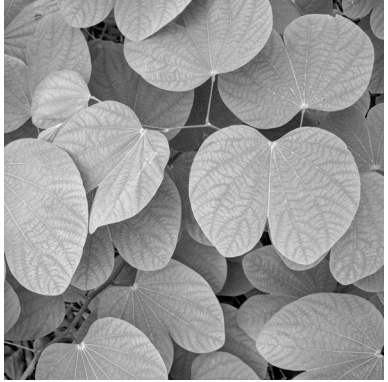
Mauricio Pezo + Sofia Von Ellrichshausen

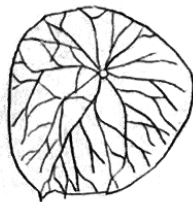
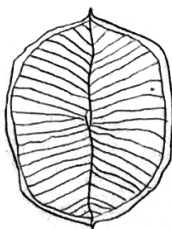
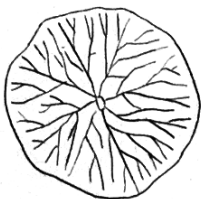
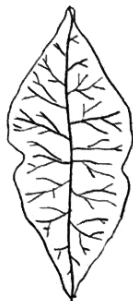
01. A monoprint is a form of printmaking in which the image can only be made once. Unlike etching or engraving that allow for multiple originals, a sole print erodes the reproductive capacity of the plate. Becoming a kind of instant painting, this form of human record could be read, following Panofsky's words, as an autonomous idea, as lasting statements that "do not age". Similarly, a building on a pristine natural setting can be understood as a sign of itself: a manmade thing in the world, an inscription, a marker, a gravestone, a monolith, a more or less ruined footprint of a forgotten meaning. Within the format of a tower (opaque and robust for the purpose of the semester's project) it becomes an explicit contradiction: its minimal footprint allows for its maximum visibility (not only to see beyond but to be seen from afar). The context for this tower will be the dramatic desert of southern California, on a buffer zone that surrounds the legal frontiers of a National Park. Beyond the refusal of an overcrowded, polluted urban life and its counterweight (the idealized return to a primordial origin, to pure wilderness), the tower will function as a destination place for a traditional, yet highly sophisticated and specialized practice: the art of print-making. Thus, the house-workshop

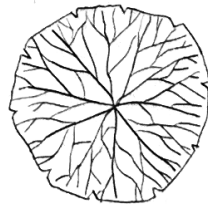
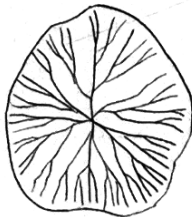
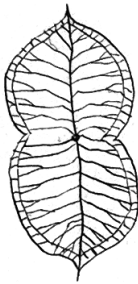
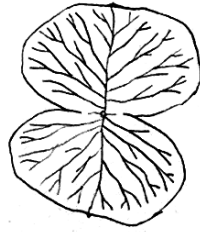
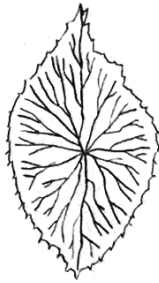
will frame that solitary encounter between a host craftsman and a guest contemporary artist. Labour and leisure, once more, will exceed their usual prejudices. Following our Naïve Intention program (an intimate research on the apparent contradiction between intentionality and chance, rationality and futility, prediction and circumstance, authorship and anonymity), every student will elaborate a precise “inventory” of architectonic propositions, a selection of which will be developed through handmade models, drawings, and paintings. 01. A monoprint is a form of printmaking in which the image can only be made once. Unlike etching or engraving that allow for multiple originals, a sole print erodes the reproductive capacity of the plate. Becoming a kind of instant painting, this form of human record could be read, following Panofsky’s words, as an autonomous idea, as lasting statements that “do not age”. Similarly, a building on a pristine natural setting can be understood as a sign of itself: a manmade thing in the world, an inscription, a marker, a gravestone, a monolith, a more or less ruined footprint of a forgotten meaning. Within the format of a tower (opaque and robust for the purpose of the semester’s project) it becomes an explicit contradiction: its minimal footprint allows for its maximum visibility (not only to see beyond but to be seen from afar). The context for this tower will be the dramatic desert of southern California, on a buffer zone that surrounds the legal frontiers of a National Park. Beyond the refusal of an overcrowded, polluted urban life and its counterweight (the idealized return to a primordial origin, to pure wilderness), the tower will function as a destination place for a traditional, yet highly sophisticated and specialized practice: the art of print-making. Thus, the house-workshop will frame that solitary encounter between a host craftsman

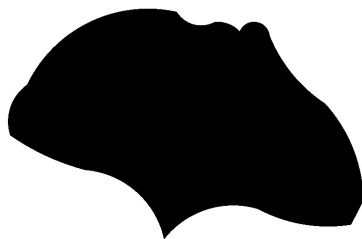
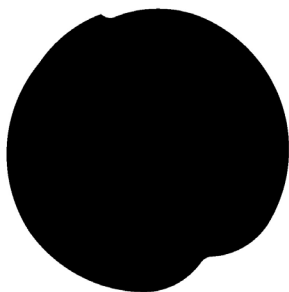
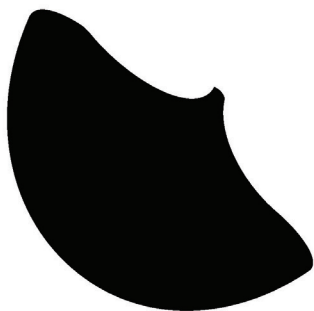
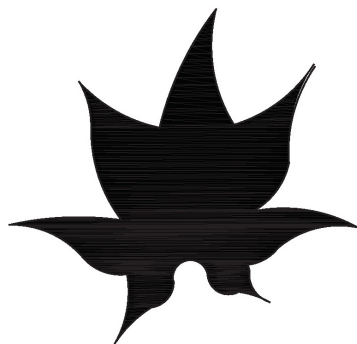
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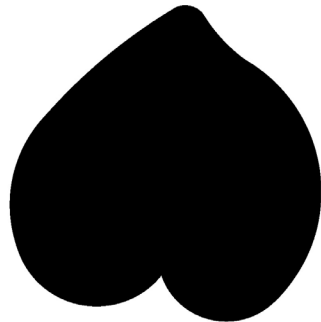
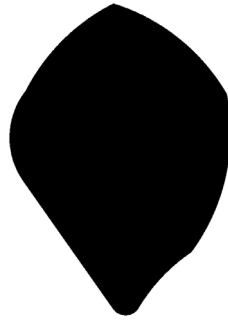
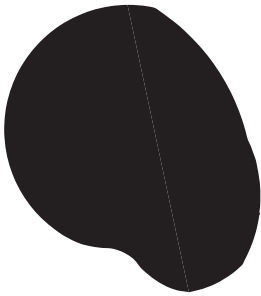
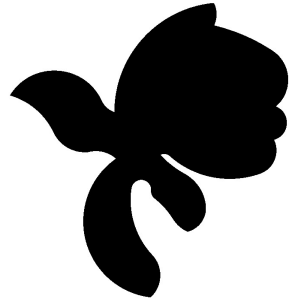
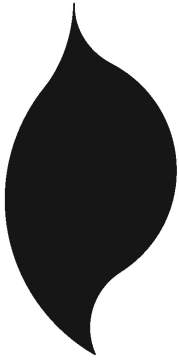


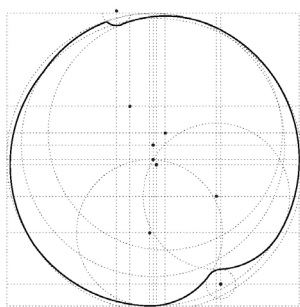
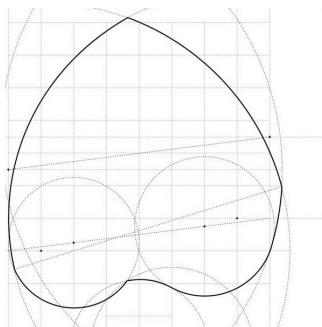
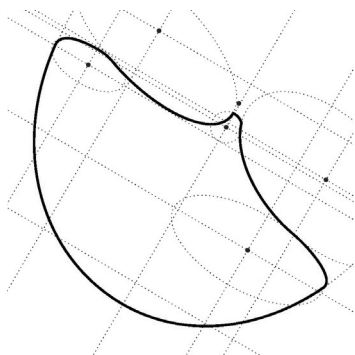
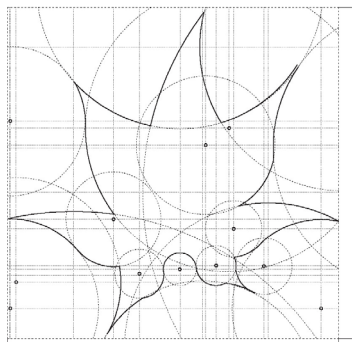
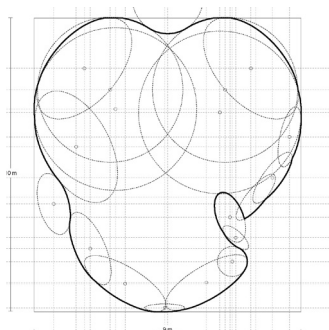


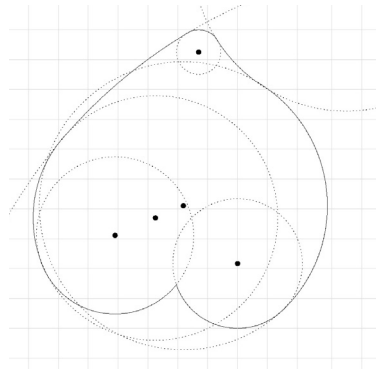
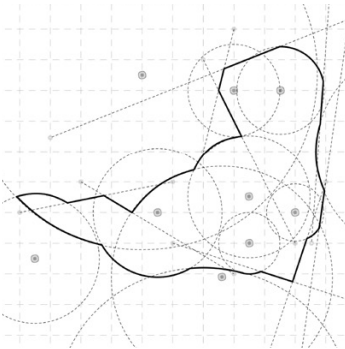
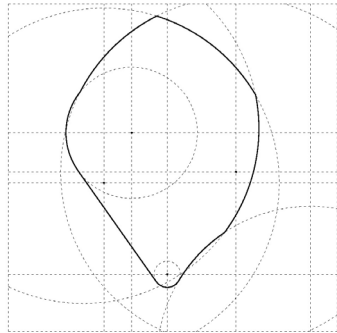
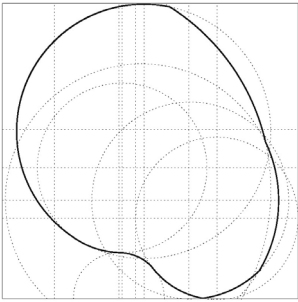
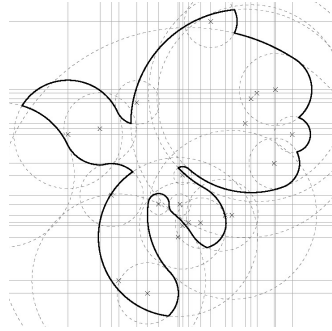
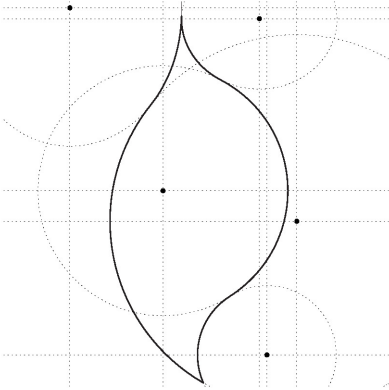






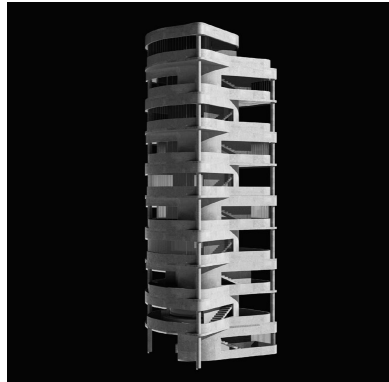
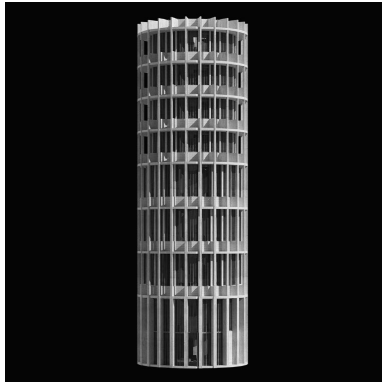
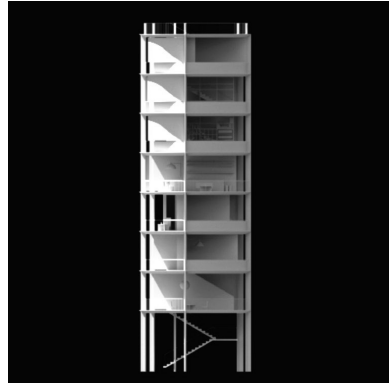
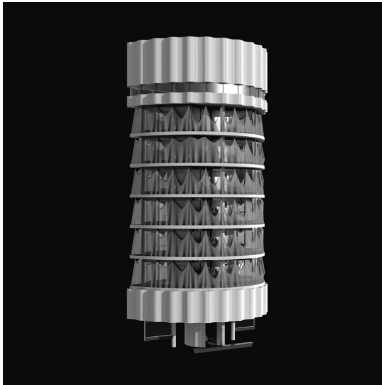
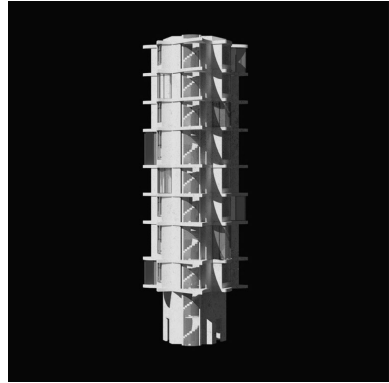
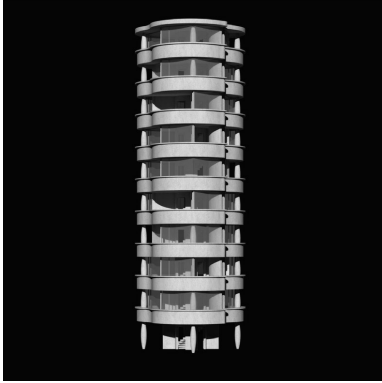


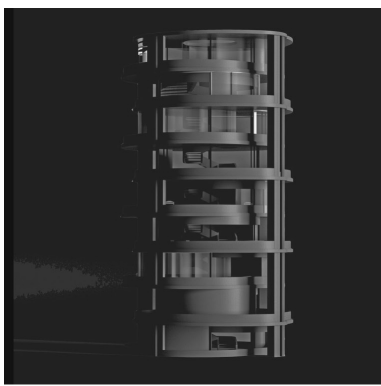
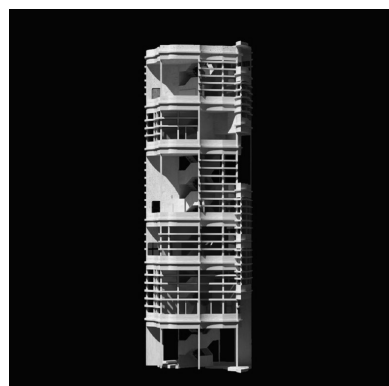
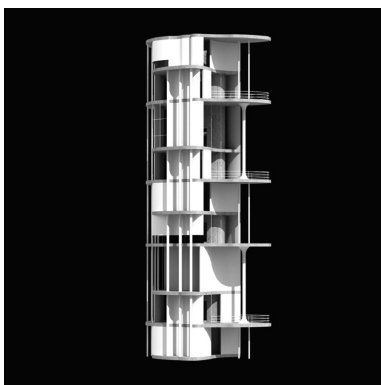
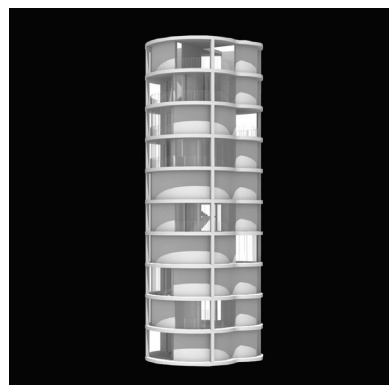
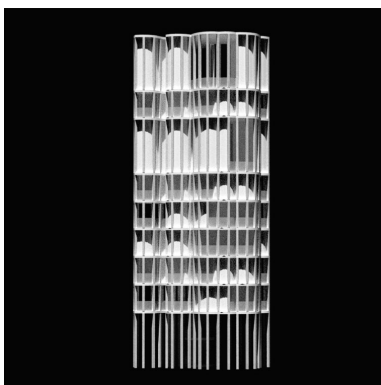
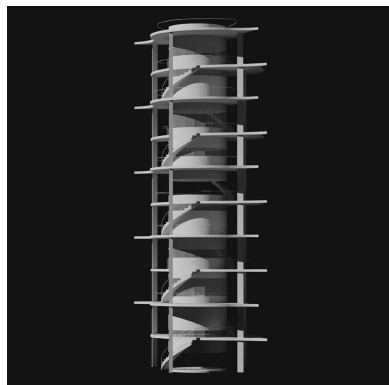


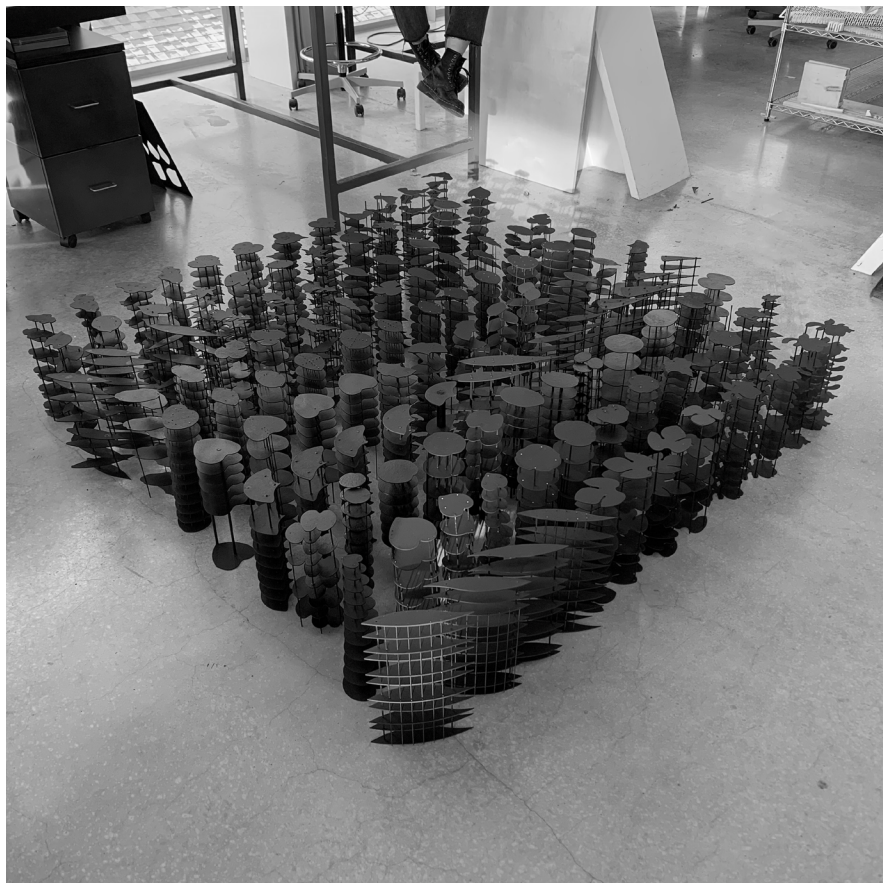














Naive Intention

Mauricio Pezo + Sofia Von Ellrichshausen

02. Naive Intention is a term introduced on a lecture we gave at the Center for American Architecture & Design (University of Texas, Austin, 2014) and later published as an essay book (New York: Actar, 2017). Its central paradox is simple: nature is unintentional; artefacts are not. We keep thinking that even the infinite field of sources of our supposedly total network is not enough to annihilate the inertia of our most traditional beliefs. In our over-connected metropolitan territories, and more so in the marginal reservoirs left between one periphery and another, there is still a need for basic fantasies, myths and desires. Being a cultural invention, any work of architecture is both a physical and a mental construction. Despite the complexity of the current technologies (and their associated economies, regulations and politics), we believe there is a fundamental need for an authentic and somehow “natural” projection of unbiased intentionality; for a kind of “autopoiesis”. Therefore, the scale of a building does not merely depend on its size. It is not the artificial condition what fascinates our limited human understanding, and by extension the indulgencies of the architectonic wonders, but the very human capacity to return, over and over again, to a critically demarcated and

receding nature, to the romantic idea we have about it. Naïve Intention is a sequence of courses that explore the necessary spaces for nostalgia, meaning, uselessness and fiction within the contemporary world. The central aim of our exploration is not so much to focus on the specific phenomena and their causes but in their potential to be translated into a work of architecture, this is: a synthetic (even ascetic) object, a unitary and self-centered structure that ultimately refers to itself. Both in the studio and the seminar framework, our main concern is the problematic bridge between our own subjectivity and that of the architectonic object.

03. Replacing the notion of native as indigenous by that of innate, projects are going to be developed as a self-referential research on spatial integrity. Thus, observations will be empirical by definition yet subjective by necessity. If in previous studios we have explored the articulation of basic regular forms, this studio extends a new path into the distinction between free and regulated form (using descriptive geometry as a mediation device to go from one form to the other). Unbounded by rational projections, the so called “free form” is a loose, undefined, unregulated figure. This “purely abstract” form, following Kandinsky, is organic by definition, with a kind of living pulsation, a natural tension towards inner harmony. For the purpose of translating these formal qualities into our architectonic propositions, we deliberately avoid the use of concepts, metaphors or any reference whatsoever. Instead, we prefer to employ the “inexhaustible vitality” of nature “itself” as an endless source that allows us to accelerate creativity while eroding our formal prejudices. This source will be produced at the beginning of the semester in the format of a series

of hand drawings of a catalogue of tree leaves (an organic figure with its own internal structure). An extensive leave catalogue can be found at the electronic guide Leafsnap (<http://leafsnap.com/species>). Each student will select 12 different figures to be hand drawn on a cooper plate and printed as a black solid shape on 3:4 grid (A4 vertical format, 400 g/m²). Each student will then enlarge 3 selected figures and propose their structural geometry (A4 vertical, line drawing). After those geometries are “rationalized”, they will be “extruded” as an aggregate of horizontal plates (3mm thick) within a virtual volume of 10 x 10 x 30 cm (length x depth x height). The “artificialized nature” of the leave should be translated into a unified totality (a translation that implies re-inventing its outline). Thus, students are expected to propose: amount of plates, distance between plates, supports to separate the plates (amount, position and size, not shape yet). Four formal variations for each figure will be produced. This personal inventory (12 cases per student) will be depicted by a single floorplan (A4, line drawing) and a scale-less model (black painted cardboard or mdf).

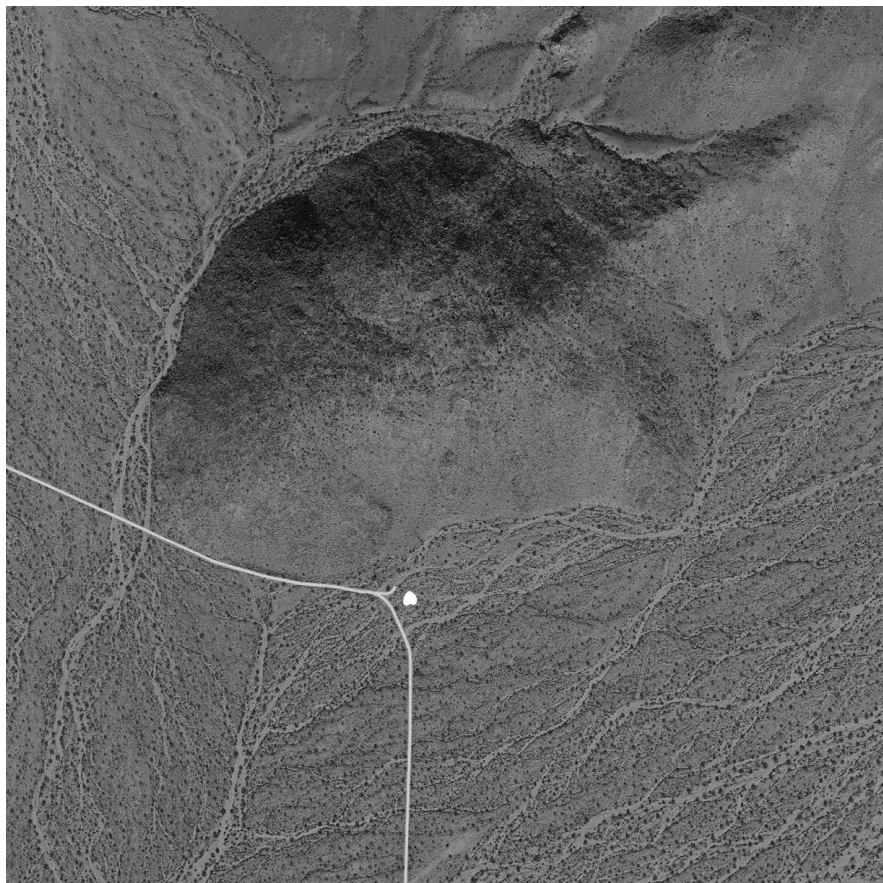
04. From the inventory only one case will be selected and developed individually as a detached tower. For this sculptural structure, a more detailed inventory of staircases, columns, beams and voids will be produced (through fragment study models 1:50) This sculptural object will be occupied with a double program: it will be both a house and a printing workshop. As an alternative to the academic practice, the artist residency program allows for a total life-work engagement. In this case, the permanent dweller is a master craftsman who transfers the specific savoir-faire of printing paper (lithograph, woodcut, engraving, etching,

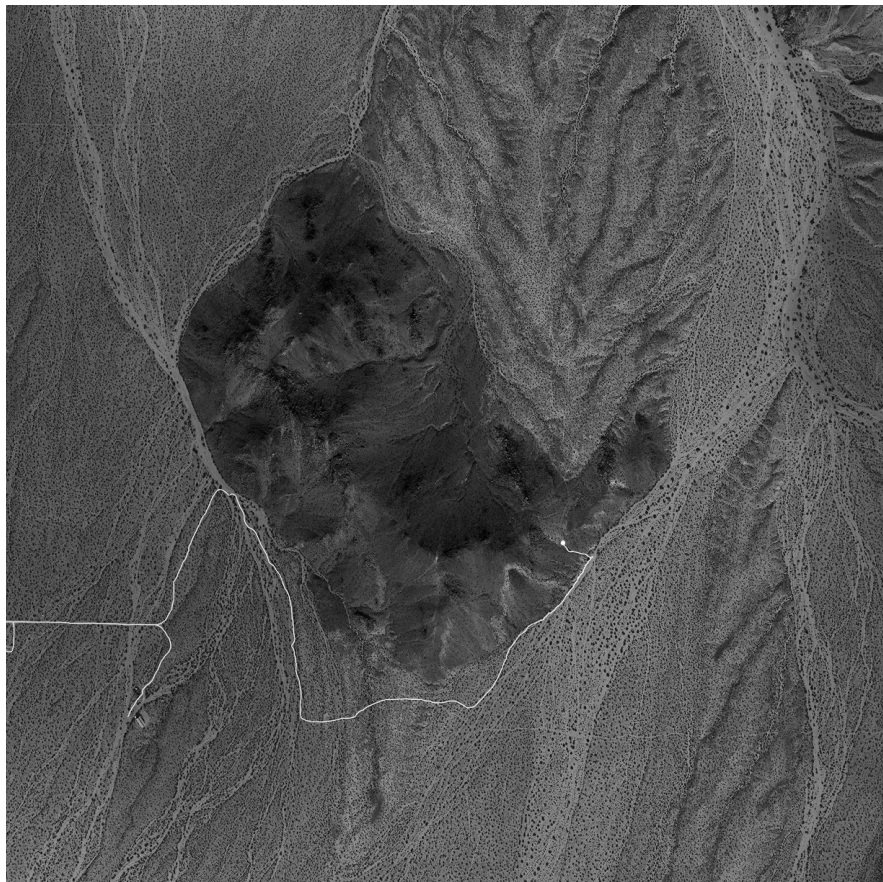
mezzotint, aquatint, etc.), to a visiting apprentice or to another professional artist in search for high quality limited editions, a kind of creative collaboration on a detached destination. Thus, the scale of the building will be rather modest: in the hinge between intimate and monumental. Its function should articulate the small keeper lodge with the guest residence, and these with a workshop for printing process and small scale exhibition spaces. Buildings should be around 500 m², no larger than 10 m in plan and 30 m in height. Formal propositions should be ideally conceived as autonomous spatial relationships, as archetypes without history, context or material.

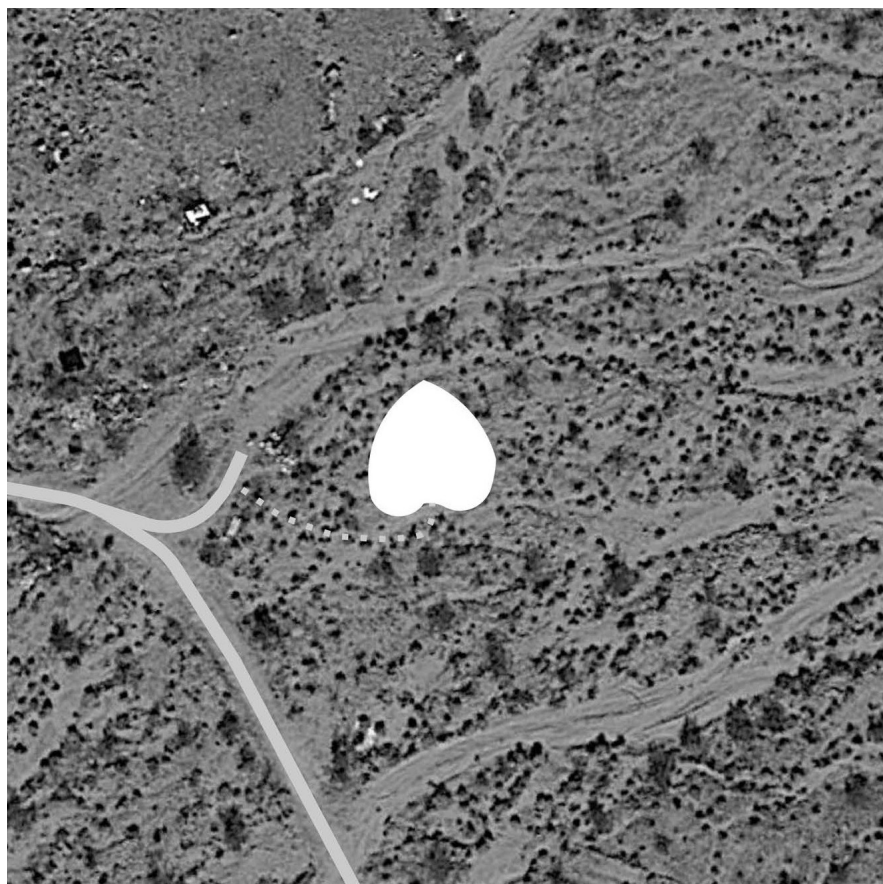
05. Since the studio is based on the assumption that architecture is both an interruption and an extension of the so-called “nature”, our field of action is that difficult territory that derives from the legal demarcation of a domain; that of a national park, a place that artificially cancels the threat of human intervention. Following the US National Park System, this semester the proposals will be positioned in different sites at the boundary of Joshua Tree National Park in south-eastern California (designated in 1994, it covers a total of 3.200 km² of dry desert landscape). Each student will be assigned a different site specifically located on a given reference map. The student should further analyze and translate the particular conditions of each place (topography, weather, vegetation, visual landscape, arrival routes, etc.). Every building should be a reflection on the overlap between those natural conditions and a temporary occupation by a permanent resident and a temporary visitor. Following the rough material context, the proposed constructions should be understood as monolithic pieces of reinforced concrete,

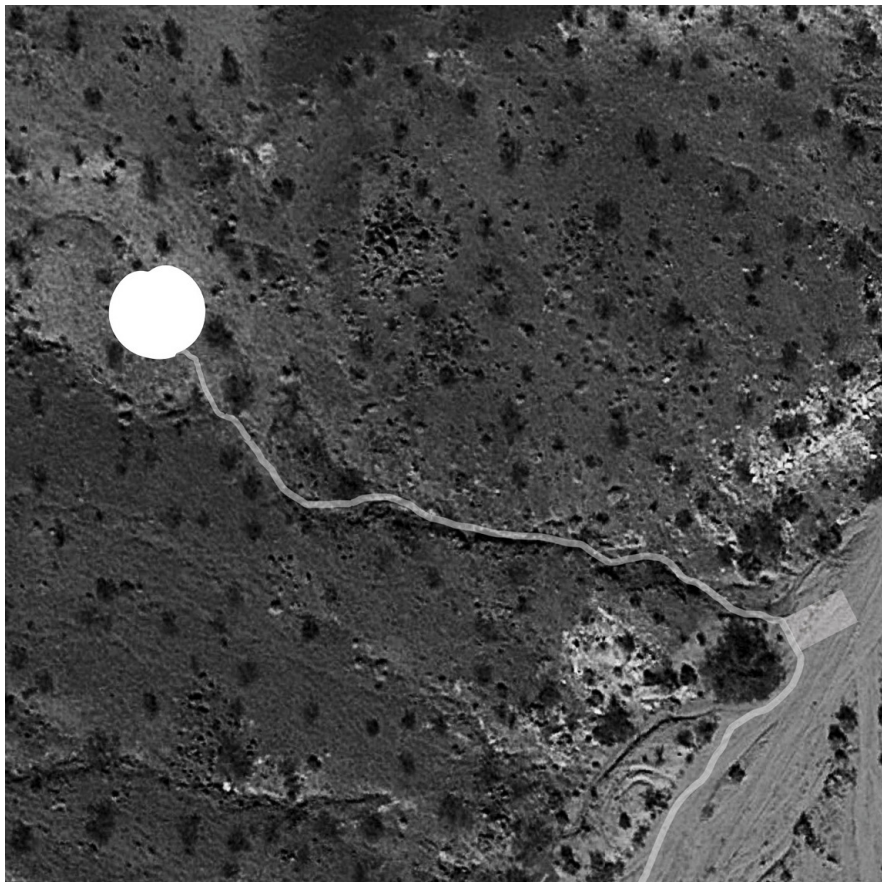
with an open range of treatments for their mass and surfaces (texture, color, thickness, etc.).

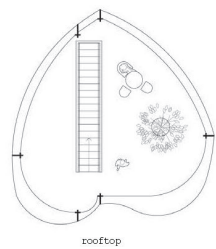
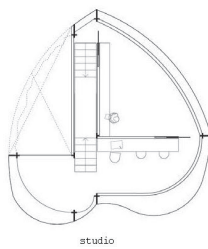
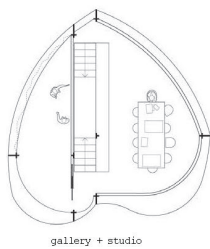
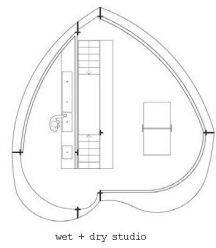
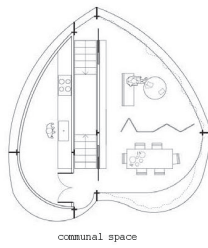
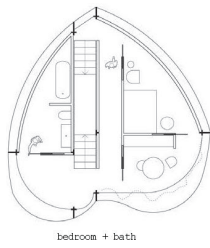
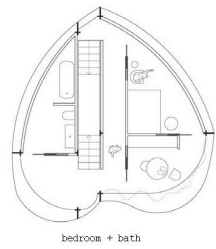
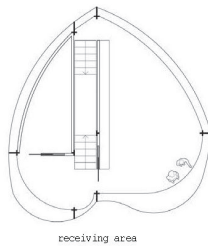
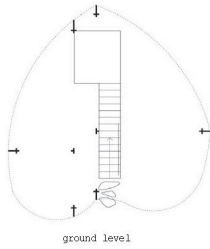
06. Students are expected to put forward a personal position about their architectonic proposition. The workshop-house should be conceived as a statement about the problem of “living in nature”, in other words, of what does it mean for someone to retreat far away from the urban context while being actively engaged on a cultural (social or productive) scene. Since the studio is rigorously committed to the translation of intentions to architectonic means, the observations might refer to other disciplinary fields (biology, sociology, psychology, philosophy, literature, etc.) as long as they mirror back into specific architectural elements (spatial proportions, sequences, sizes, proximities, directions, etc.). Thus, the studio is addressed only to students with architectural backgrounds.

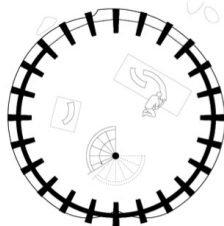




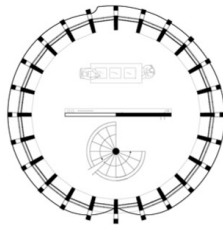




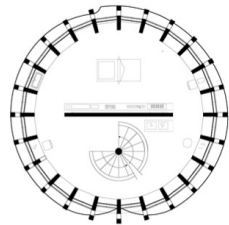




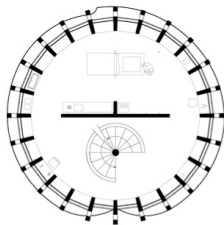
L_0
Entrance



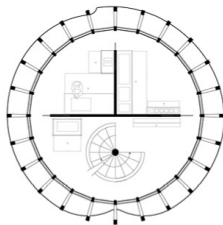
L_1
Conversation Room



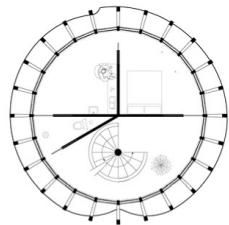
L_2
Print Shop



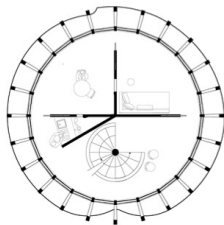
L_3
Print Shop



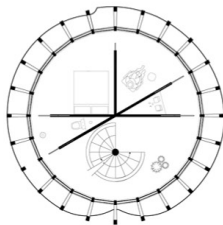
L_4
Print Storage



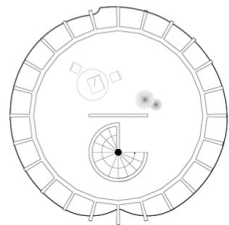
L_5
Artist's Residence



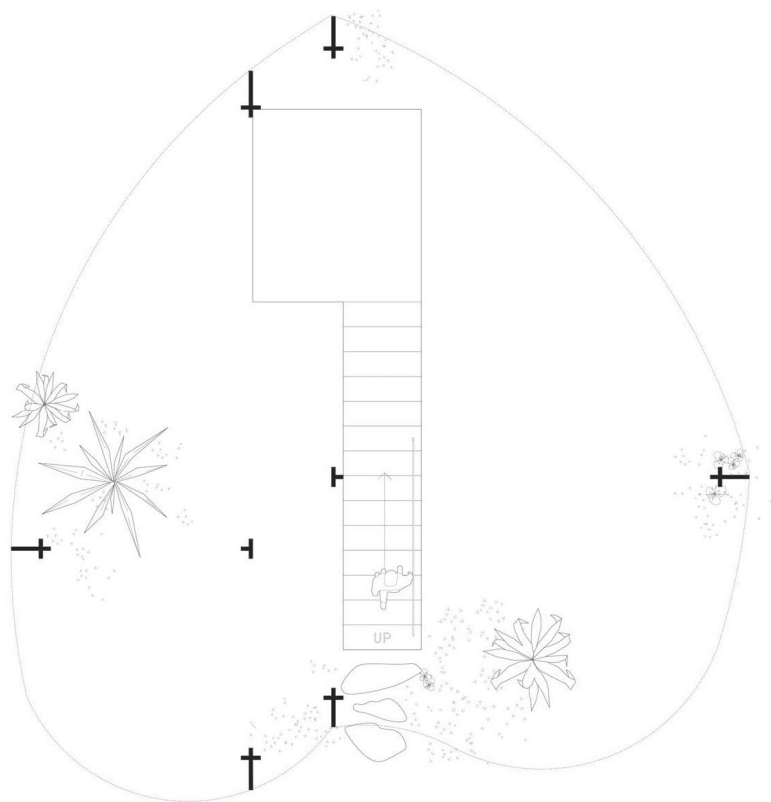
L_6
Dining + Living

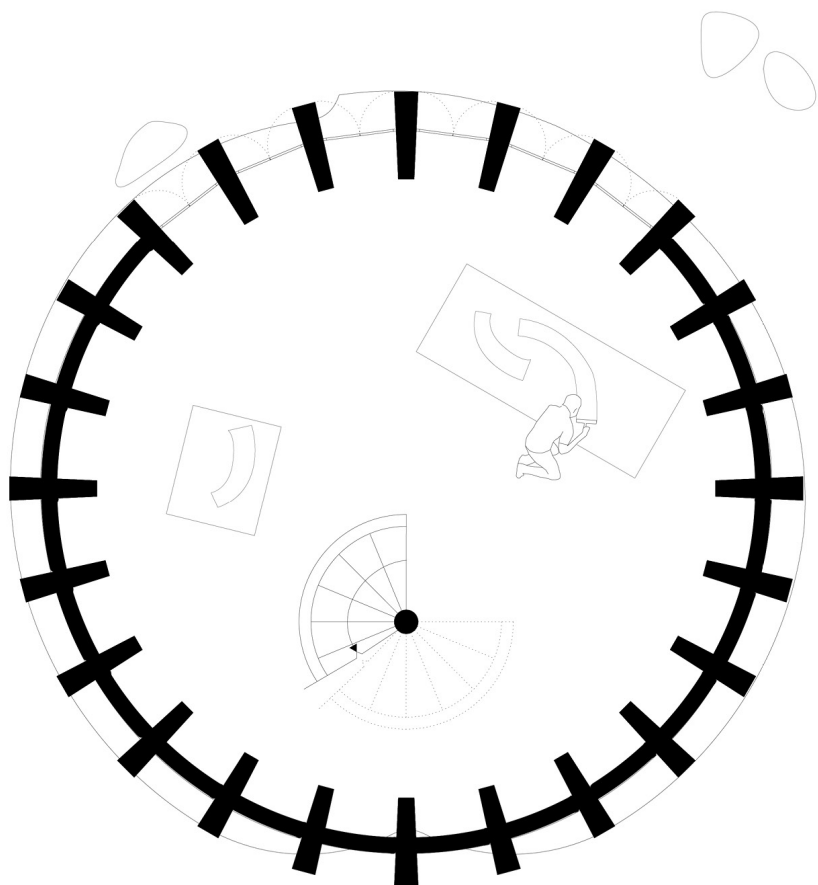


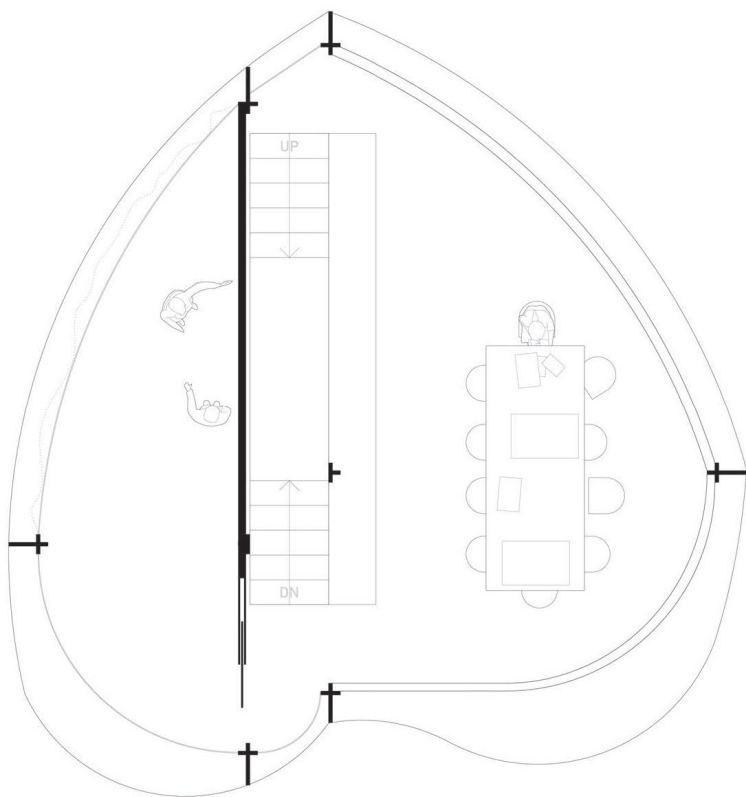
L_7
Print Maker's Residence

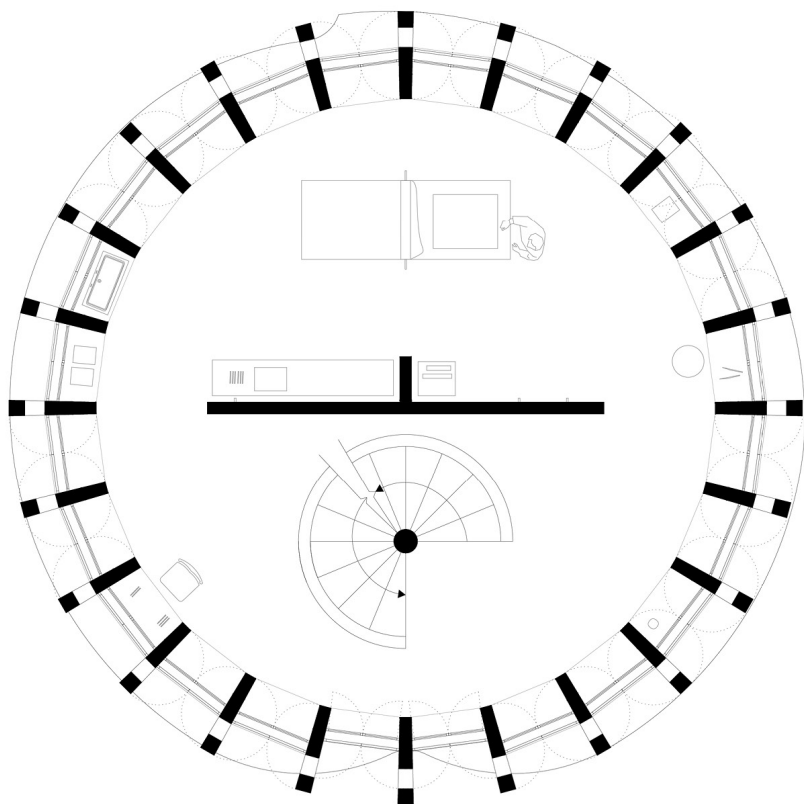


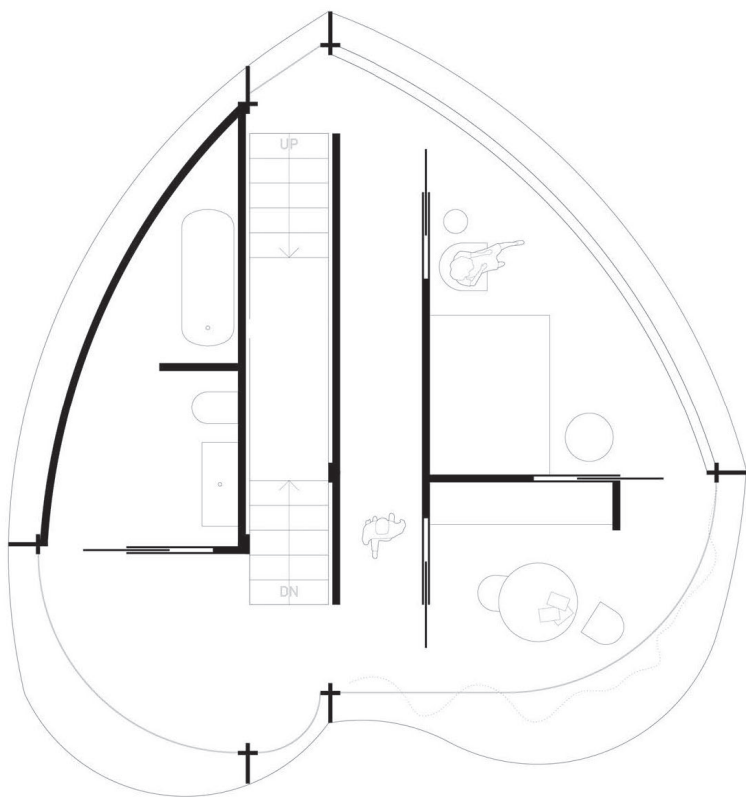
L_8
Landscape View

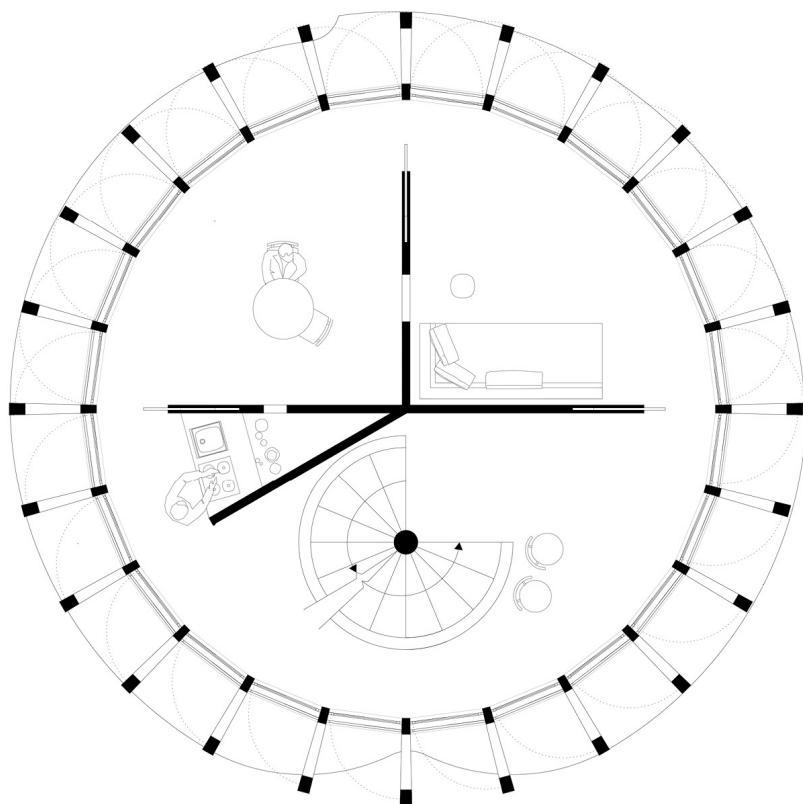




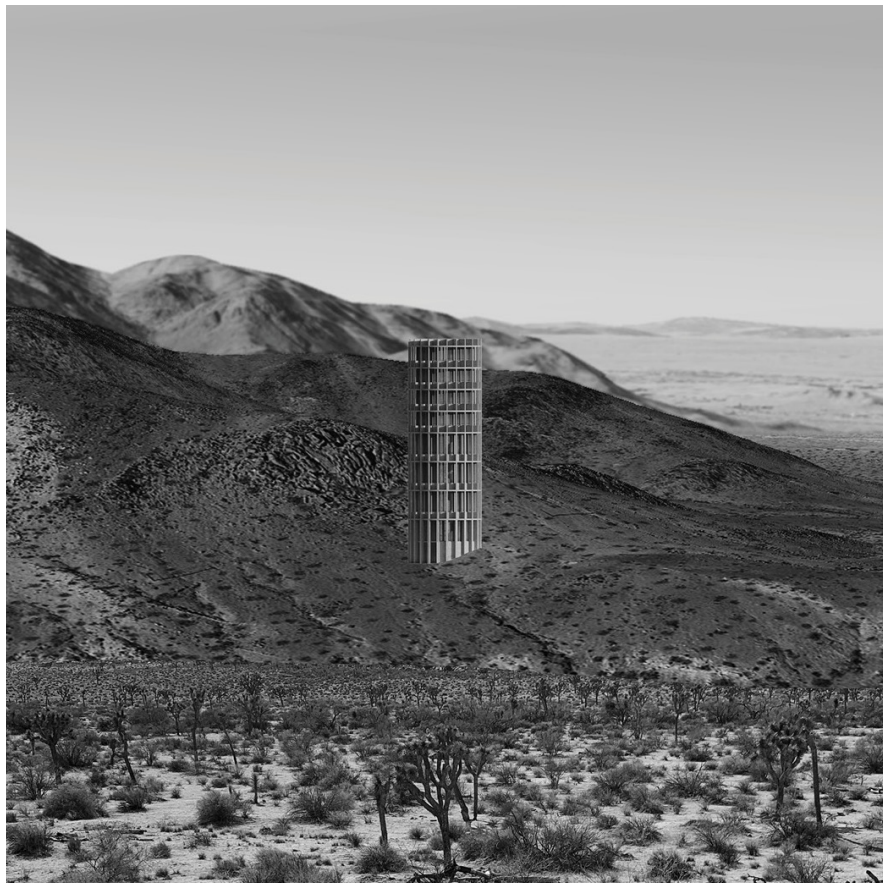
















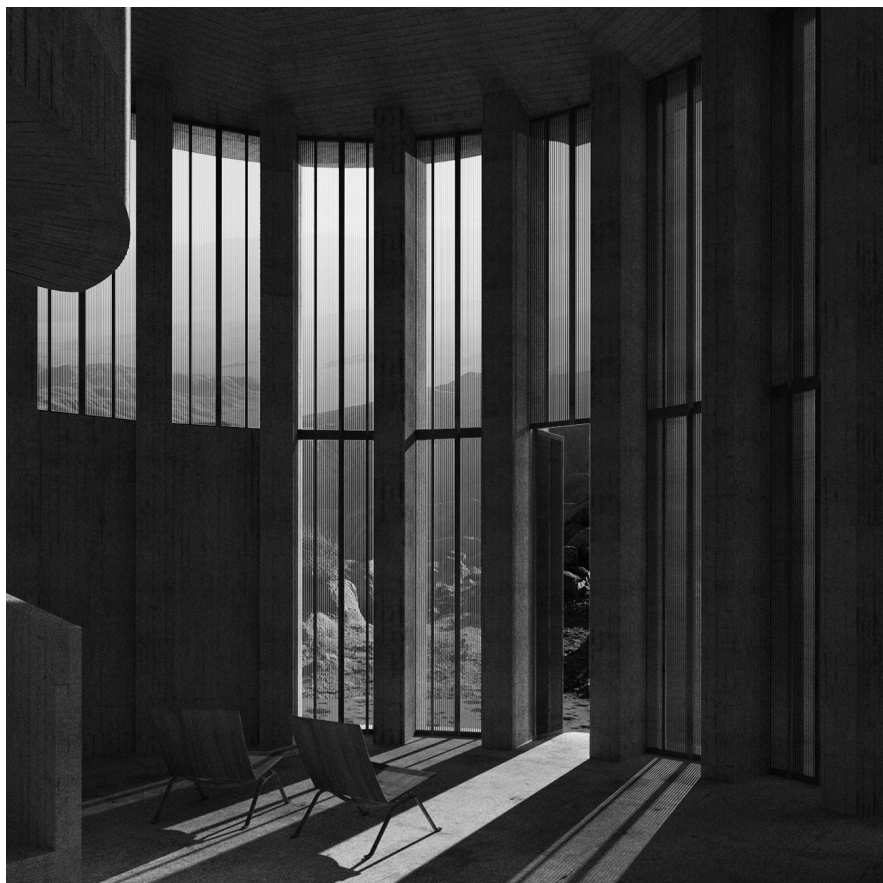




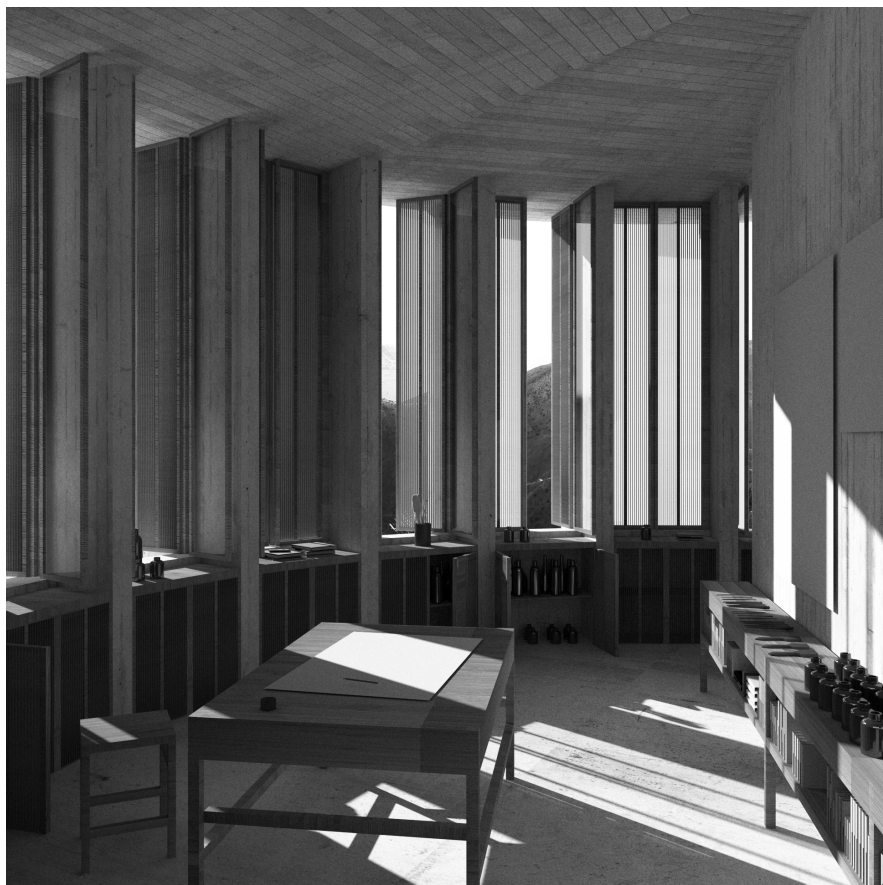


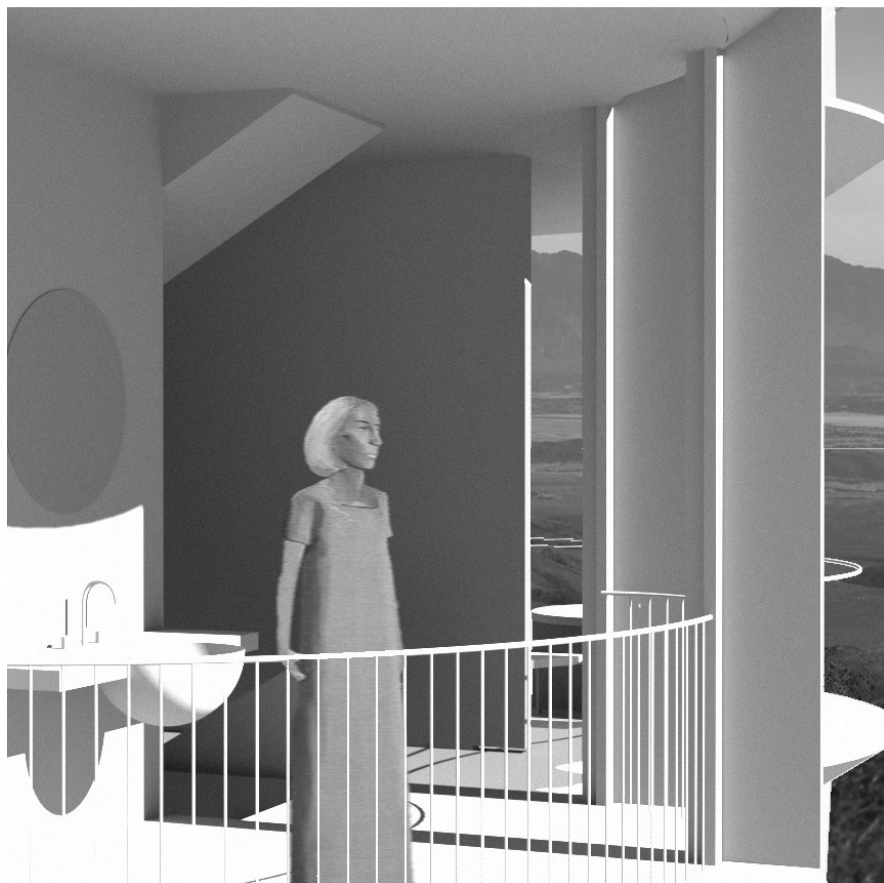


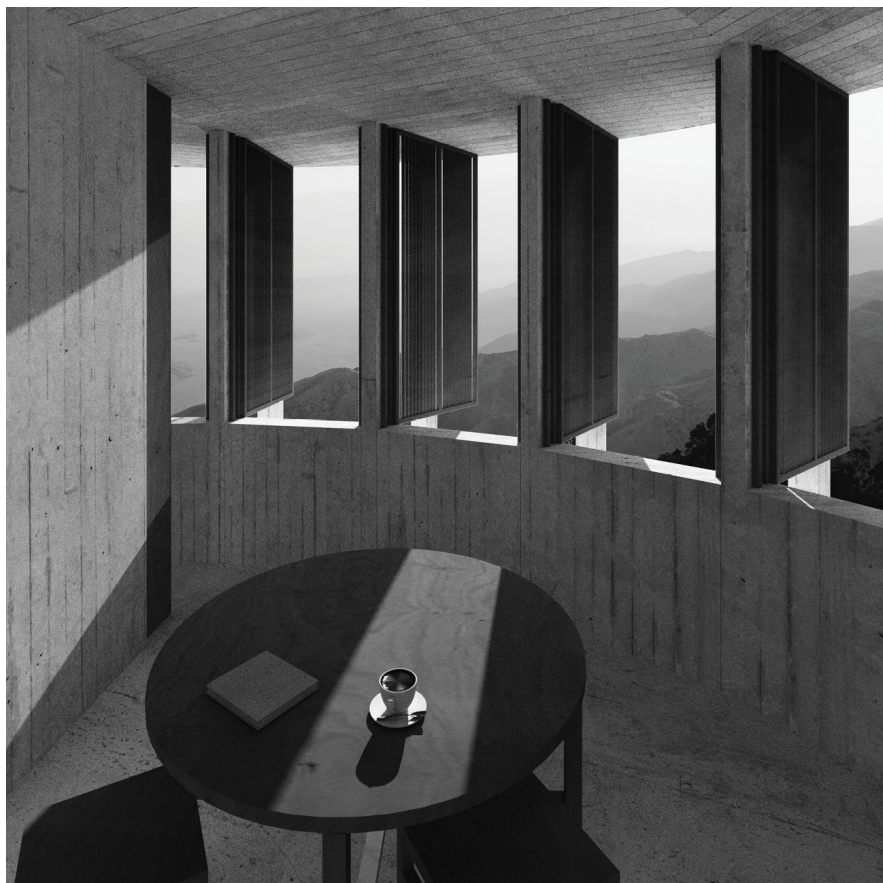


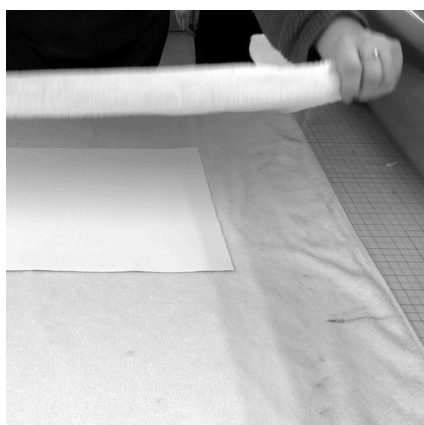


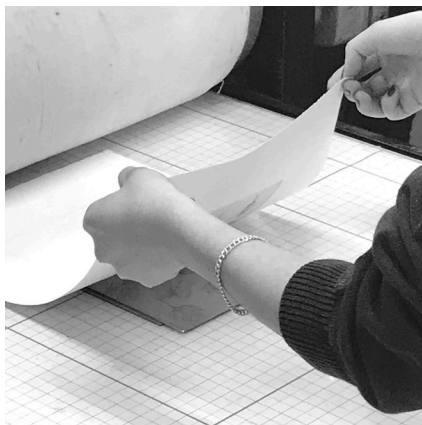
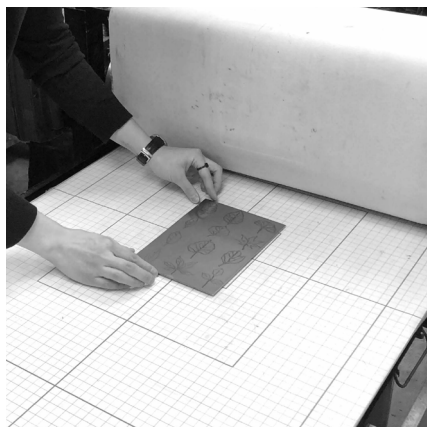
























Credits

work credited by page number

Introduction

Mauricio Pezo + Sofia Von Ellrichshausen

10-23

Laura Stargala
Selin Cebel
Victoria Grey Clarke
Joyce Jin
Anbar Oreizi-Esfahani
Chae Yeon Park
Laura Stargala
Brennen Brynes Stenke
Chi Yamakawa
Mengyi Yan
Jeonghyun Yoo
Jiarui Zhang
Yuyang Zhang

Naive Intention

Mauricio Pezo + Sofia Von Ellrichshausen

30-57

Chae Yeon Park
Laura Stargala

58-63

Rodolfo Reis Dias + Laura Stargala (photography)

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