

CONFLICT RESPONSIVE URBAN LANDSCAPES

The selection rests on three intersecting criteria:

- Counter economic freefall with food-and-livelihood security.
- Tackle climate change in infrastructure-poor urban settings with water access and heat relief.
- Address war-scarred landscapes and conflict through commemoration and emergency shelter.

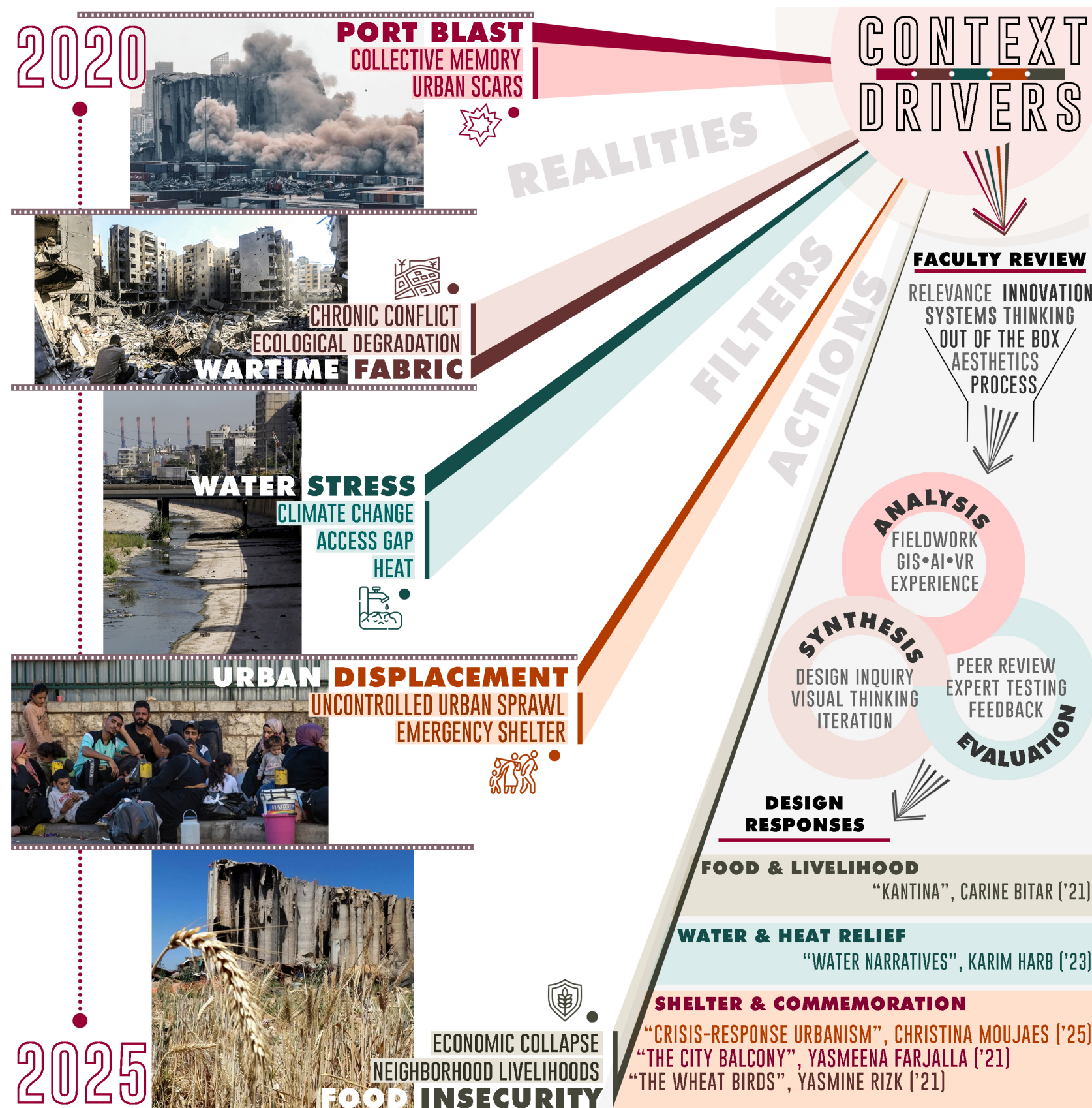
“Kantina” addresses economic freefall and space scarcity by stitching neglected plots into a neighborhood food network and linked public green in Karantina.

“Water Narratives” tackles heat stress and water scarcity by daylighting a buried stream and reinstating shared water rituals along a cooled blue-green corridor.

“Crisis Response Urbanism” treats recurrent displacement as city-scale civic infrastructure, using existing public schools to deliver shade, water, hygiene, and healing landscapes that support refugee wellbeing.

“The City Balcony” converts a blast-damaged highway edge into Beirut’s continuous overlook, folding daily movement into a place of collective mourning.

“The Wheat Birds” reorganizes port logistics around the damaged grain silos to open an accessible memorial field and regenerative habitat within the working harbor.



The Department of Landscape Design and Ecosystem Management at the American University of Beirut works from Lebanon’s Eastern-Mediterranean setting, where economic collapse, water scarcity, chronic warfare and mass displacement coincide. Students confront an unpredictable context that pushes the discipline’s limits.

For the 2025 Ribas Piera Award, faculty reviewed all graduation work from 2020-2025 for thematic relevance, design process, innovation, aesthetic consistency and ability to carry concept through development. Selection criteria stem from the last five years: natural degradation, uncontrolled urban development, corrupt governance, and several crises: economic collapse, social uprisings (2019), the Beirut Port explosion (2020) and the recent war (2024), which sensitized students to act.



Country/City Lebanon / Beirut
University / School American University of Beirut / Department of Landscape Design and Ecosystem Management
Academic year 2020 / 2021
Title of the project Kantina: Agriculture and community life in karantinas residential neighborhood
Authors Carine Bitar

Title of the project	Kantina: Agriculture and community life in karantinas residential neighborhood
Authors	Carine Bitar
Title of the course	LDEM 242 & 241: Landscape Capstone Project I & II (Studio)
Academic year	2020 / 2021
Teaching Staff	Dr. Yaser Abunnasr, Dr. Beata Dreksler, Dr. Mona Khechen, Dr. Serge Yazigi
Department / Section / Program of belonging	LDEM / Bachelor of Landscape Architecture (BLA)
University / School	American University of Beirut / Department of Landscape Design and Ecosystem Management



Written statement, short description of the project in English, no more than 250 words

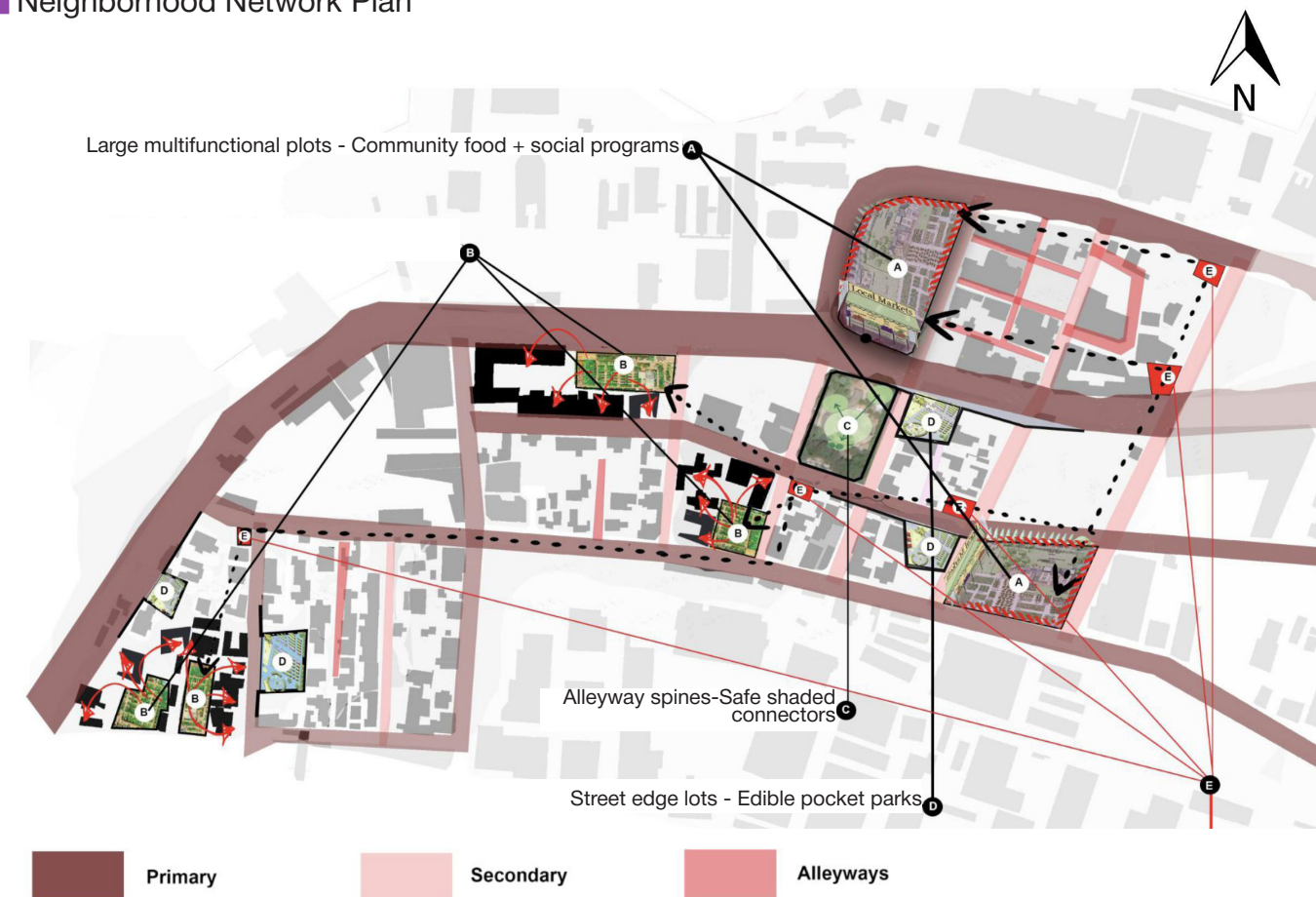
Lebanon’s economic collapse and associated hyperinflation have severely affected food security across the country, especially in underprivileged neighborhoods such as Karantina - an area severely destroyed by the 2020 Beirut port explosion and composed of three adjacent yet socially fragmented sub-neighborhoods that lack shared public infrastructure and trust. “Kantina” addresses this issue by converting nine vacant plots (1.2 ha) into a network of place-based urban ecology hubs for food production and shade while rebuilding social cohesion. Courtyard parcels become resident-managed micro-gardens; street-edge lots transform into edible pocket parks with integrated seating; two larger sites host grey-water-fed drip-irrigated community farms, a teaching kitchen, a Sunday market and youth sports courts; scattered micro-sites function as recycling-and-compost hubs that cast plastic boards for benches and planter boxes. A shaded green spine links every plot to the district’s lone public park, offering safe, cool circulation in an infrastructure-poor setting. Year-round harvests are projected to meet 15% of local vegetable demand, while gravity-fed irrigation cuts municipal water use by a fifth. Phased roll-out (soil remediation and compost centers, micro-gardens, then anchor farm) matches NGO funding cycles and builds neighborhood stewardship. By coupling food production, waste recovery and public realm, “Kantina” offers a replicable model for low-income urban districts adapting to economic stress and hotter, drier summers - a form of landscape democracy in contexts where civic agency is often fractured.

Barcelona International Landscape Biennial

Contact via email:
biennialadm@coac.net

Venue:
COAC - Col·legi Oficial d'Arquitectes de Catalunya
Carrer Arcs 1-3, 08002 Barcelona - Spain

Neighborhood Network Plan



The neighborhood network is developed, where each typology is transformed into spaces that would serve as urban agriculture that is applicable for different criteria: area size, context. Large lots will be transformed into multifunctional spaces that accommodate most food production and variety of social activities.

Edible Networks for Urban Resilience

Field-Court Synergy: Production + Play



From Field to Market: Linking cultivated plots with community food access.

Strategy will use this analysis to create a relationship between the field and the court to benefit from each other and transform them in a convenient way keeping into consideration the idea to preserve the court function for the kids to enjoy since they view it as an important place for them.

Typology Panel: Food-and-Livelihood Security in Space-Scarce Karantina

Key Plan

Legend

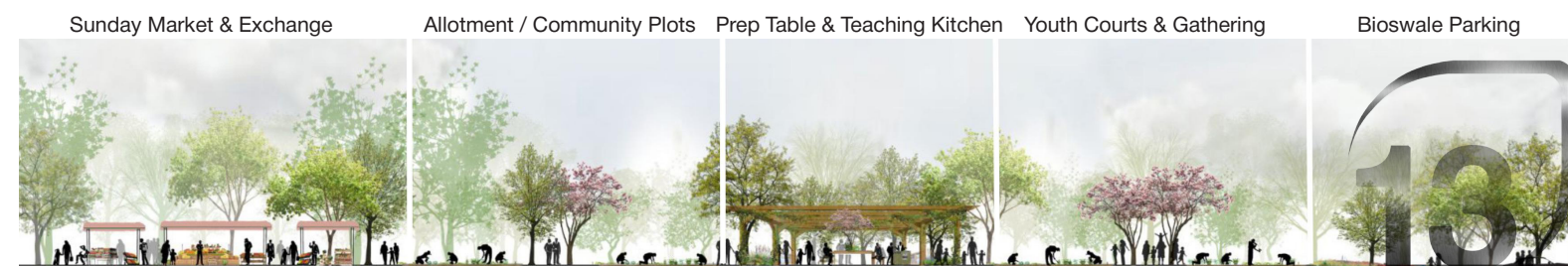
- A. Community Production Beds (drip irrigation)
- B. Bioswale / Water Harvest
- C. Teaching Kitchen + Prep Table
- D. Sensory / Learning Garden
- E. Football Court Retained
- F. Car Drop / Market Access
- G. Orchard Buffer
- H. Shaded Pedestrian Spine
- J. Allotment Plots
- K. Sunday Market Set Up
- L. Community Seating Terraces

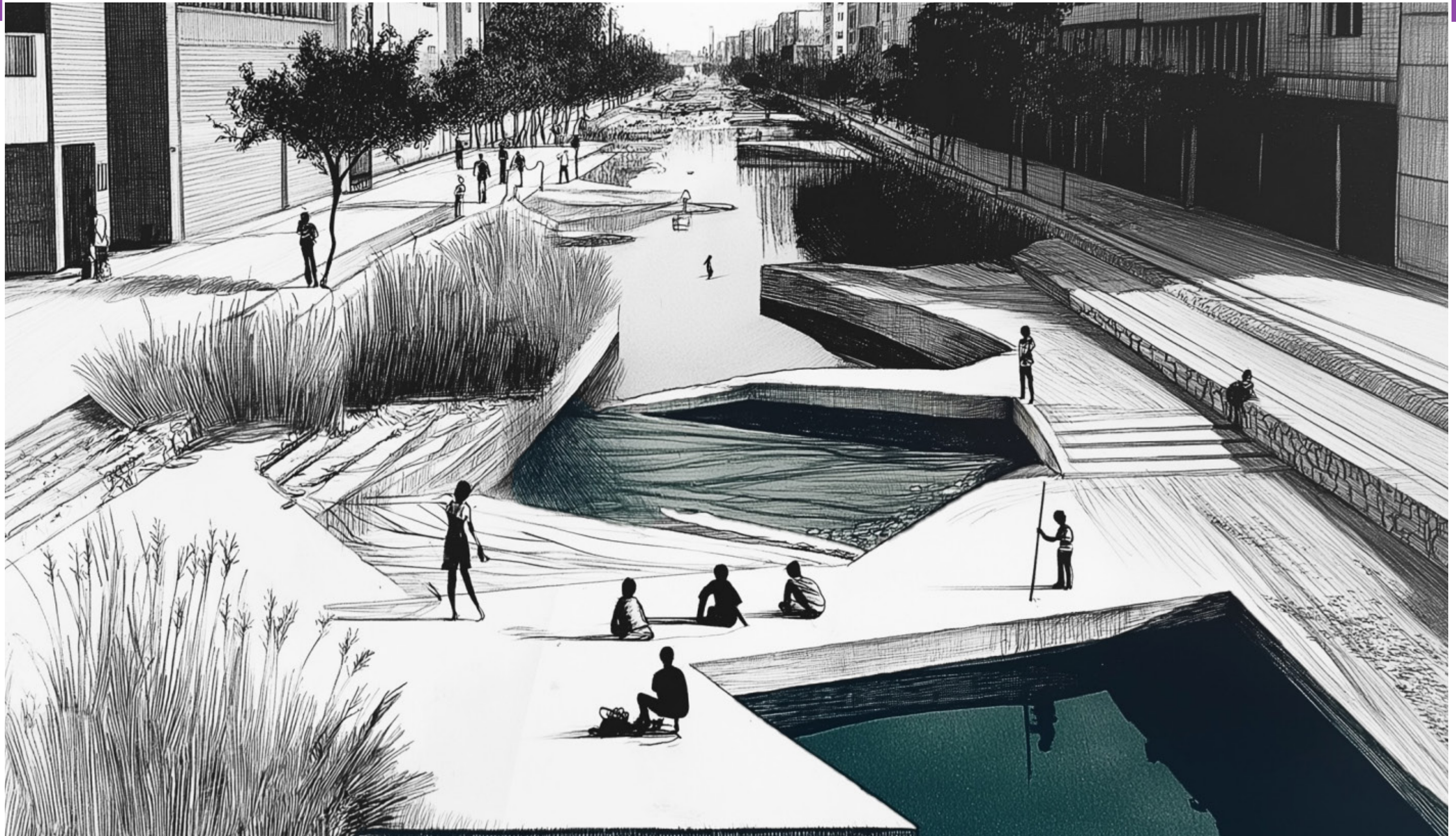


The community hub will act as a space for gathering and agriculture production where there will be a community kitchen and cultivation area on the right side close to the residential household to access and on the left side there will be a sensory exploration garden with seating areas for the community to enjoy.

The areas are connected with playful pathways that lead you through discovery and moments. the parking area on the top side will welcome visitors from outside karantina or residential people to park and will experience the garden through the pathways and will lead them to the Sundays market.

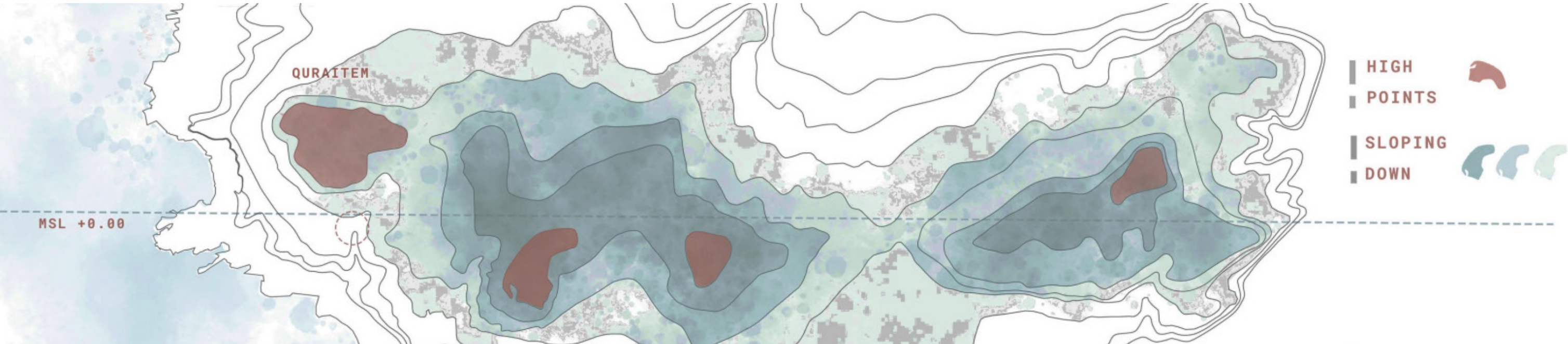
Community Productive Spine: Growing, Cooking, Sharing





Country/City Lebanon / Beirut
University / School American University of Beirut / Department of Landscape Design and Ecosystem Management
Academic year 2022/2023
Title of the project Water Narratives: Resurfacing a Forgotten Water System
Authors Karim Harb

Title of the project	Water Narratives: Resurfacing a Forgotten Water System
Authors	Karim Harb
Title of the course	LDEM 242 & 241: Landscape Capstone Project I & II (Studio)
Academic year	2022/2023
Teaching Staff	Dr. Yaser Abunnasr, Dr. Serge Yazigi, Dr. Nadine Khayat
Department / Section / Program of belonging	LDEM / Bachelor of Landscape Architecture (BLA)
University / School	American University of Beirut / Department of Landscape Design and Ecosystem Management



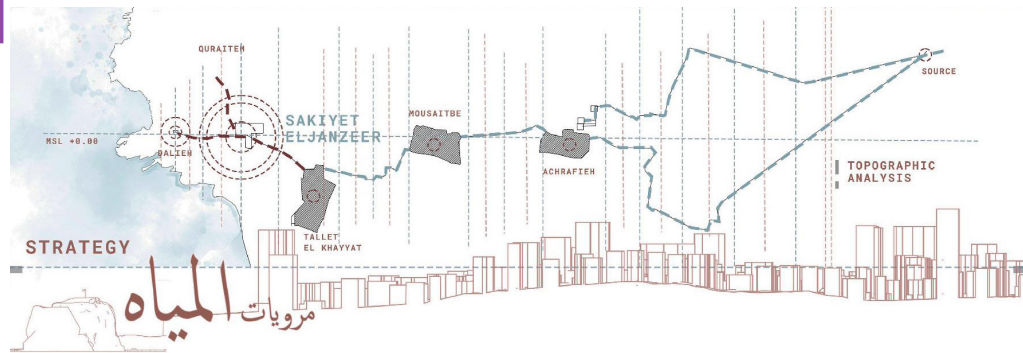
Written statement, short description of the project in English, no more than 250 words

As global warming intensifies and cities seek relief from rising temperatures, Beirut’s own climate vulnerabilities demand renewed attention to its lost hydrological systems. Sakiyat El Janzeer - once a seasonal stream that gave its name to a central neighborhood, now reduced to a buried drain - can no longer remain a silent infrastructure. “Water Narratives” resurfaces this forgotten watercourse to restore evaporative cooling and revive cultural connection. A 1.3 km clay-lined channel is interwoven with rain gardens and detention lawns sized by canopy-moisture mapping. Interpretive sabil fountains, holographic overlays and kerb-edge panels recount the sakiya’s cultural role and revive shared water rituals, while kiosks distribute filtered runoff for ablutions. Phytoremediation squares of poplar, oleander and rosemary drop surface temperatures and trim peak runoff 25 %. At city scale, the renewed blue line stitches the neighborhoods of Msaitbé, Achrafieh and Tallet El Khayat into a continuous walk-cycle grid that leads residents from upland springs to the sea. Staged delivery - excavation, planting, then public realm upgrades - keeps costs aligned with anticipated municipal budgets. The project merges water-sensitive design with heritage storytelling, bringing back historical water practices to address present-day heat stress, water scarcity and alternative infrastructure.

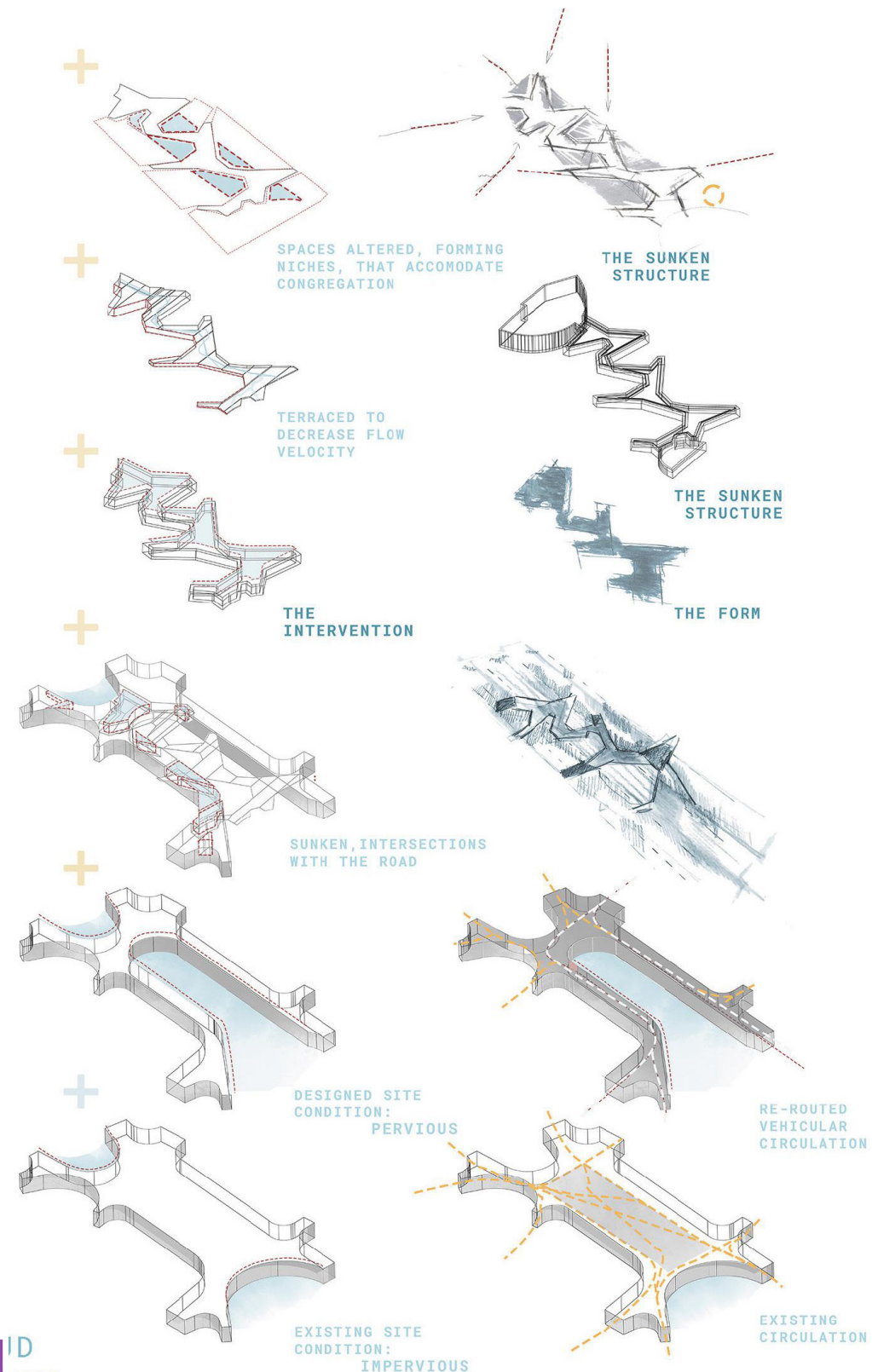
Barcelona International Landscape Biennial

Contact via email:
biennialadm@coac.net

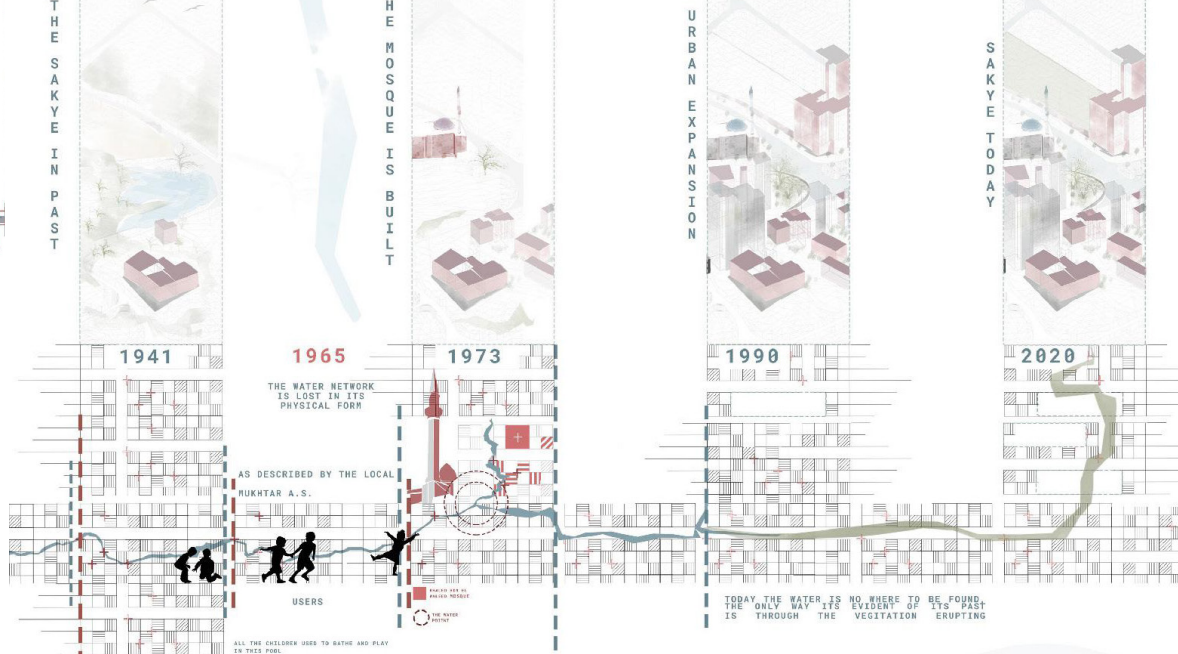
Venue:
COAC - Col·legi Oficial d'Arquitectes de Catalunya
Carrer Arcs 1-3, 08002 Barcelona - Spain



Microstrategy: From Drain to Reviving Rituals in Sakiyat El Janzeer

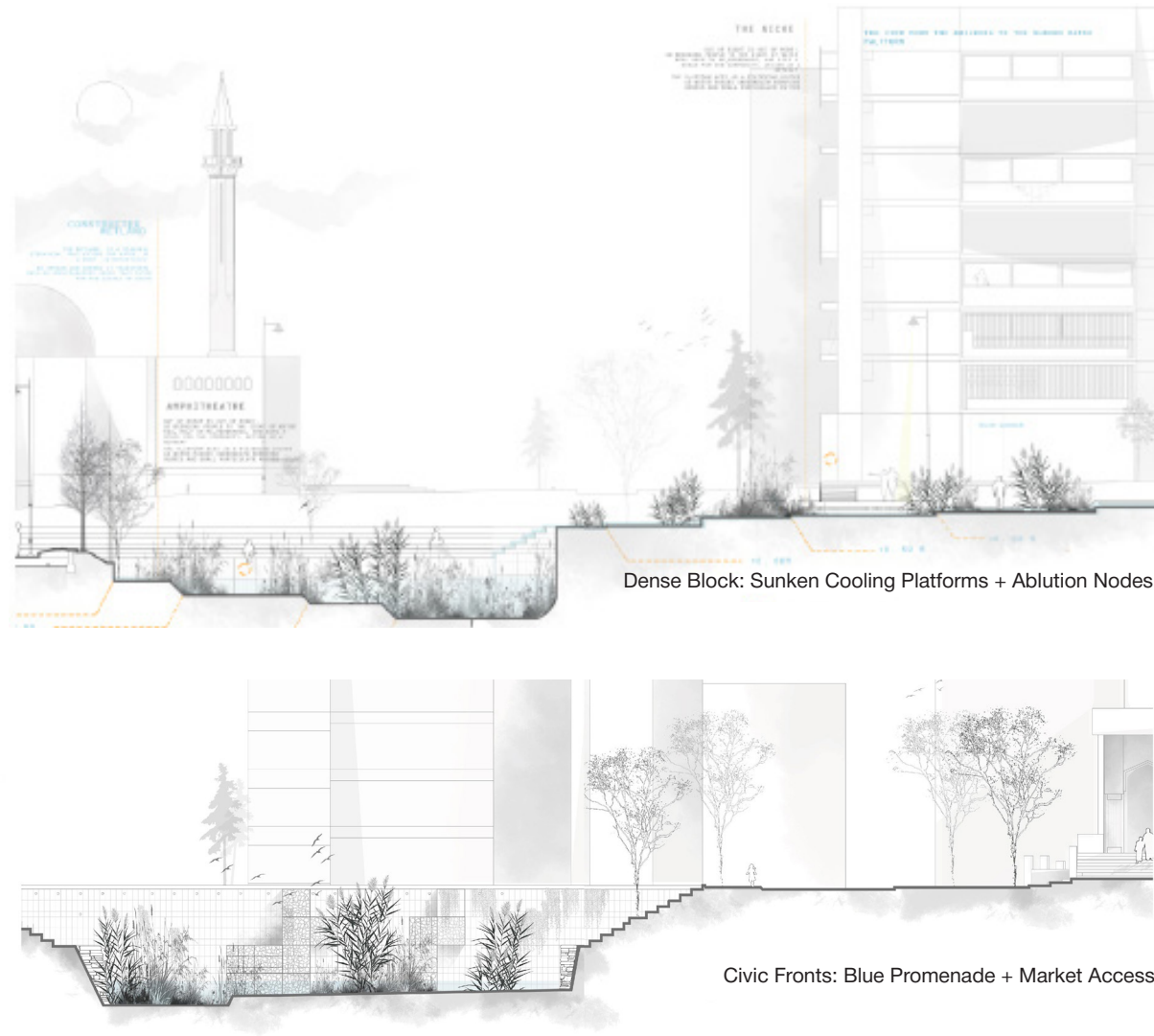


From Sakiya to Storm Drain: Burial & Revival (1941-2020)



Urban densification buried the stream reach by reach. Loss of open water erased cooling, access and the shared rituals that named Sakiyat El Janzeer. Daylighting reactivates that civic memory. A 1.3 km buried reach is reopened as a clay lined channel threaded with rain gardens sized by canopy moisture mapping. Sabil nodes and ablution decks return water customs to the street edge. The blue line cools surfaces, stores storm pulses and links Msaitbé, Achrafieh and Tallet El Khayat from upland springs to the sea.

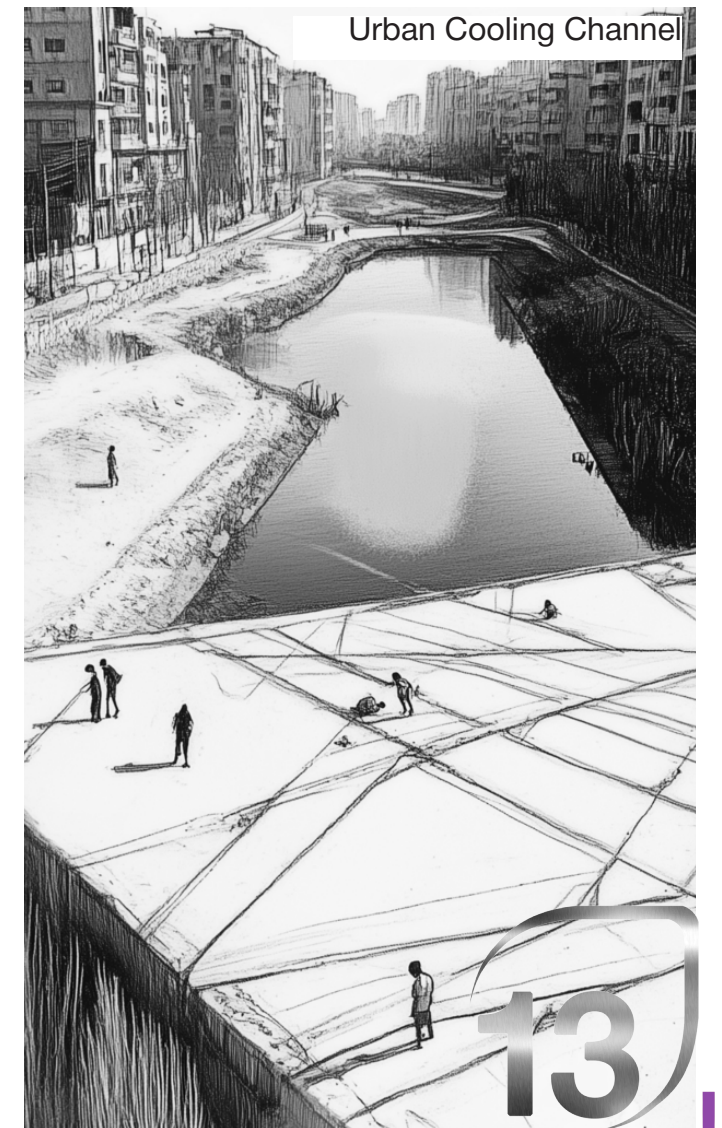
Section Typologies - Dense Block to Civic Reach



Water Ritual Platform

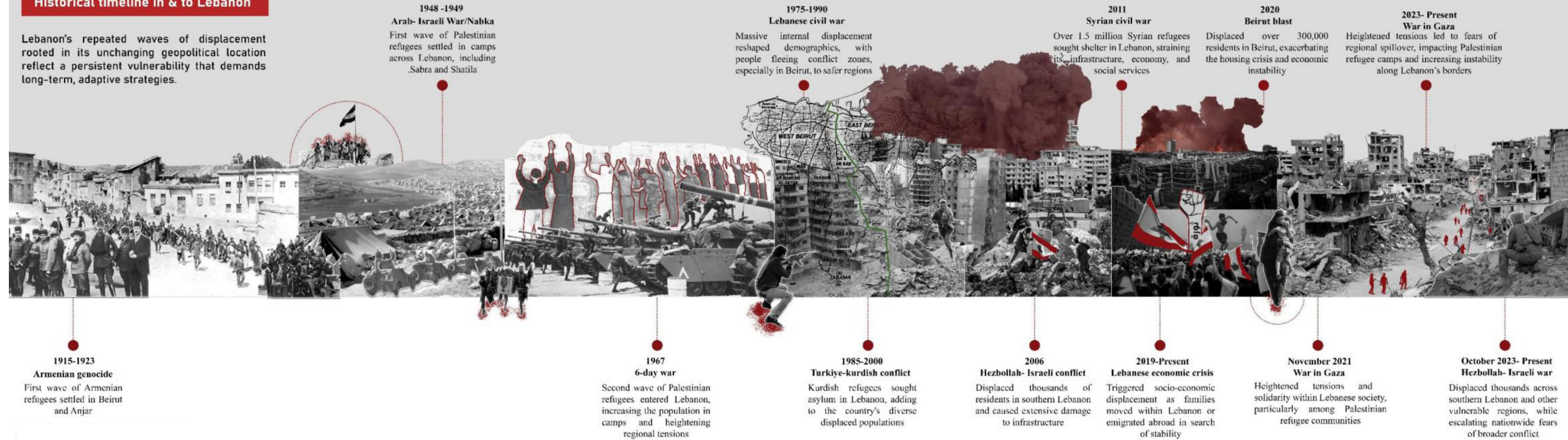


Urban Cooling Channel



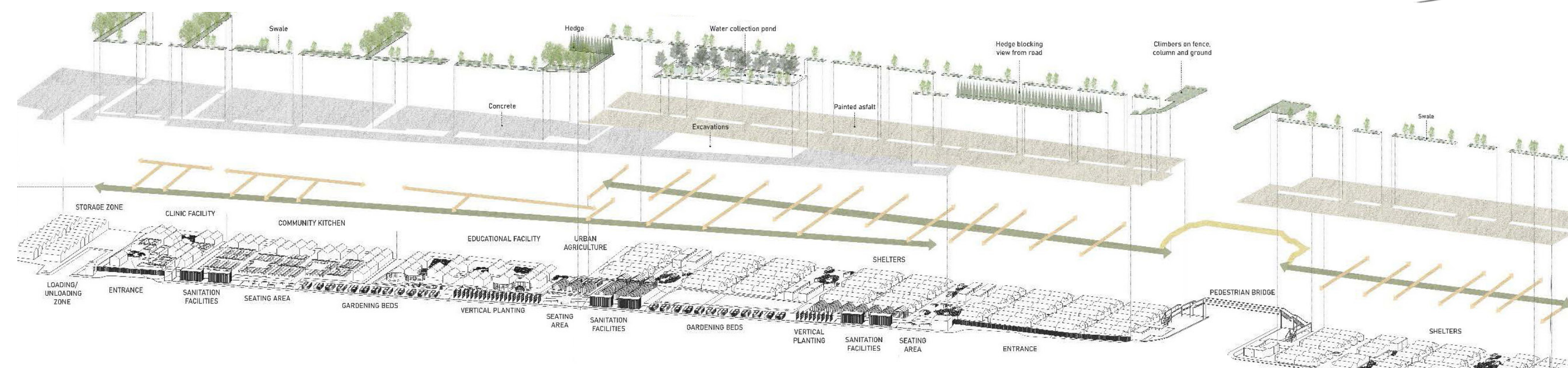
Historical timeline in & to Lebanon

Lebanon's repeated waves of displacement rooted in its unchanging geopolitical location reflect a persistent vulnerability that demands long-term, adaptive strategies.



Country/City	Lebanon / Beirut
University / School	American University of Beirut / Department of Landscape Design and Ecosystem Management
Academic year	2024/2025
Title of the project	CRISIS- RESPONSE URBANISM: A Landscape Approach for Refugee Well-Being
Authors	Christina Moujaes

Title of the project CRISIS- RESPONSE URBANISM: A Landscape Approach for Refugee Well-Being
Authors Christina Moujaes
Title of the course LDEM 242 & 241: Landscape Capstone Project I & II (Studio)
Academic year 2024/2025
Teaching Staff Dr. Yaser Abunnasr
Department / Section / Program of belonging LDEM / Bachelor of Landscape Architecture (BLA)
University / School American University of Beirut / Department of Landscape Design and Ecosystem Management



Written statement, short description of the project in English, no more than 250 words

In Beirut, displacement is recurrent: war, explosion, system collapse. “Crisis Response Urbanism” treats emergency shelter as city-scale civic infrastructure, activating a network of public schools and existing municipal hardstands as rapidly deployable host sites. When conflict forces evacuation, flat-pack modules mobilize within two weeks to the eight mapped school sites and a repurposed city market hub. Landscape provides the spatial framework for camp life - shade trees, planted courts, swales and planted care beds that moderate heat, manage runoff and create humane outdoor rooms that support refugee wellbeing. Kits deliver shade canopies, potable-water kiosks, hygiene pods and medicinal planting beds sized to UNHCR standards for 2,400 residents while ensuring spatial dignity. A green network of tree-lined streets, swales and rain gardens links each school to the hub, moderating heat and storing stormwater in an infrastructure-poor setting. Under an elevated municipal bridge, light steel ribs carry community kitchens, clinics and learning decks; locally fabricated units are dimensioned so forklifts can lift out components without surface damage as crises ease. All parts are catalogued in an open-access deployment manual for replication. When dismantled, the system leaves a refurbished marketplace, permeable paving and an expanded canopy of native trees that improve infiltration, support nature-based processes and enhance biodiversity. The scheme converts humanitarian metrics into lasting civic assets, showing how landscape structure can deliver swift, evidence-based relief while supporting long-term refugee wellbeing in conflict-exposed cities.

Barcelona International Landscape Biennial

Contact via email:
biennialadm@coac.net

Venue:
COAC - Col·legi Oficial d'Arquitectes de Catalunya
Carrer Arcs 1-3, 08002 Barcelona - Spain

Citywide Shelter Clusters

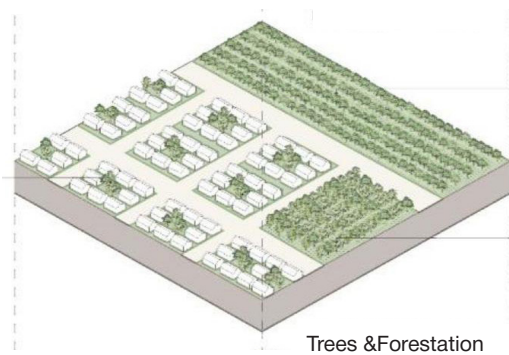
Pre-mapped school anchors with open space catchments



Landscape Support Toolkit



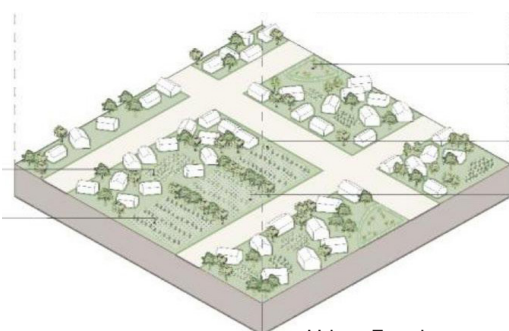
Green Corridors



Trees & Forestation



Drainage Solutions in Non-Arid Settings

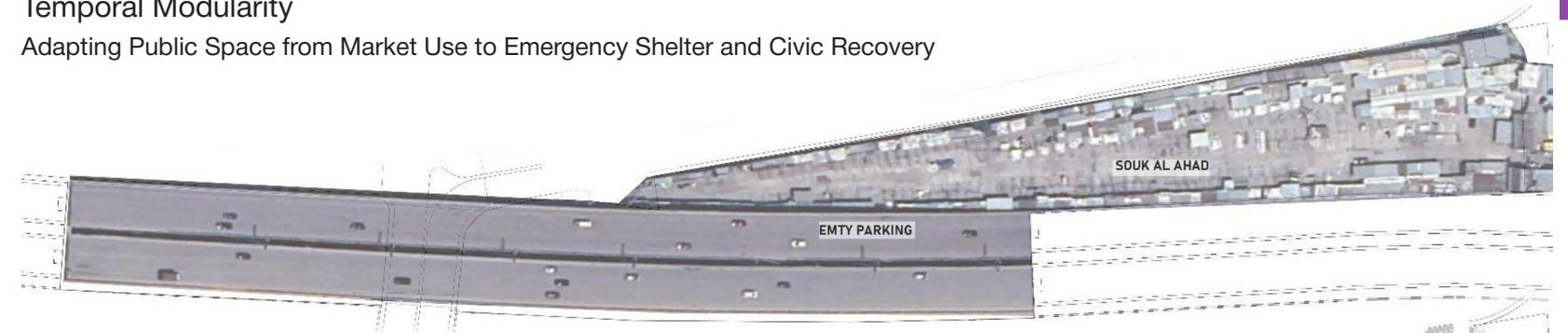


Urban Farming

Recurrent displacement demands routine readiness. Existing public schools across Beirut are pre mapped as host nodes; modular kits deliver shade, potable water, hygiene and planted care courts within two weeks. Landscape structure organizes the camp environment and moderates heat. Decommission returns upgraded civic space. A replicable urban protocol for refugee wellbeing in conflict exposed cities.

Temporal Modularity

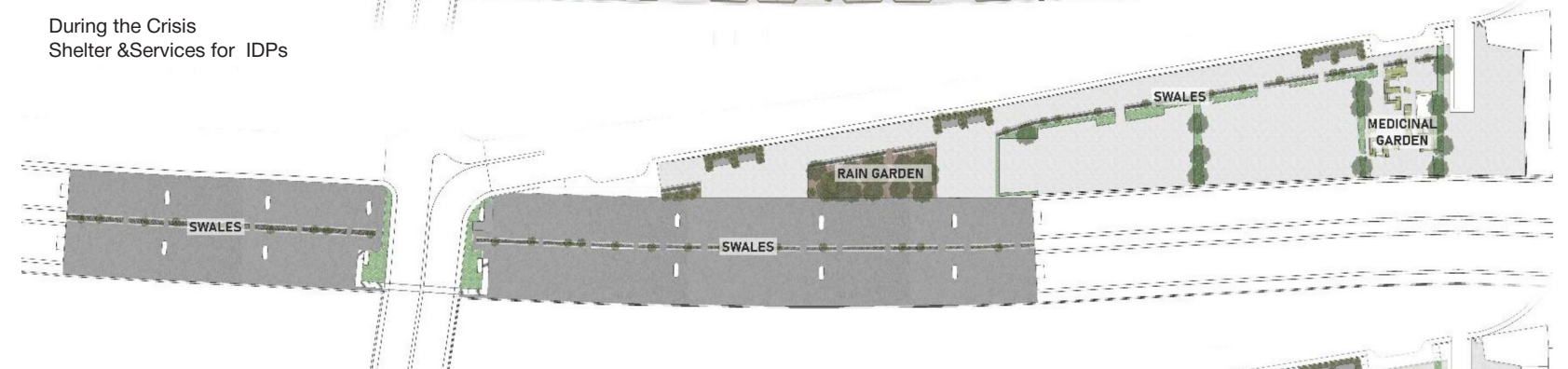
Adapting Public Space from Market Use to Emergency Shelter and Civic Recovery



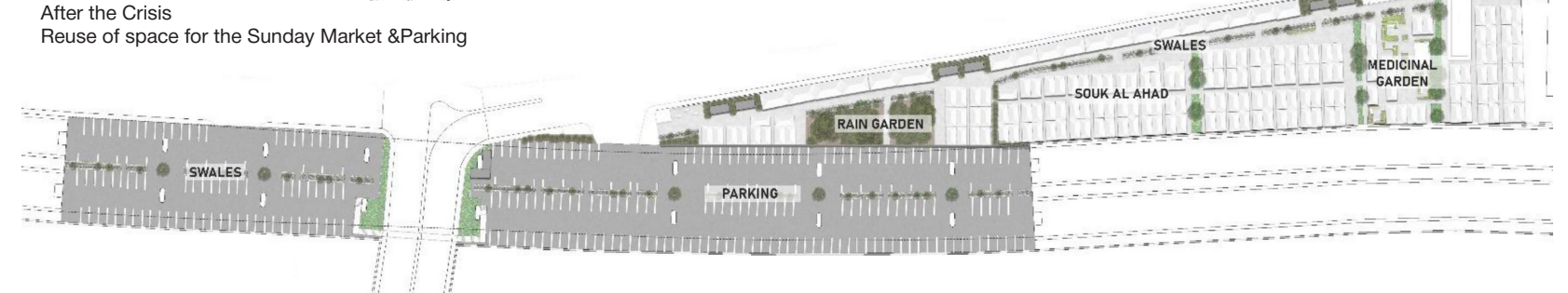
Before the Crisis
Sunday Market & Parking during weekends



During the Crisis
Shelter & Services for IDPs



After the Crisis
Reuse of space for the Sunday Market & Parking



Crisis Infrastructure

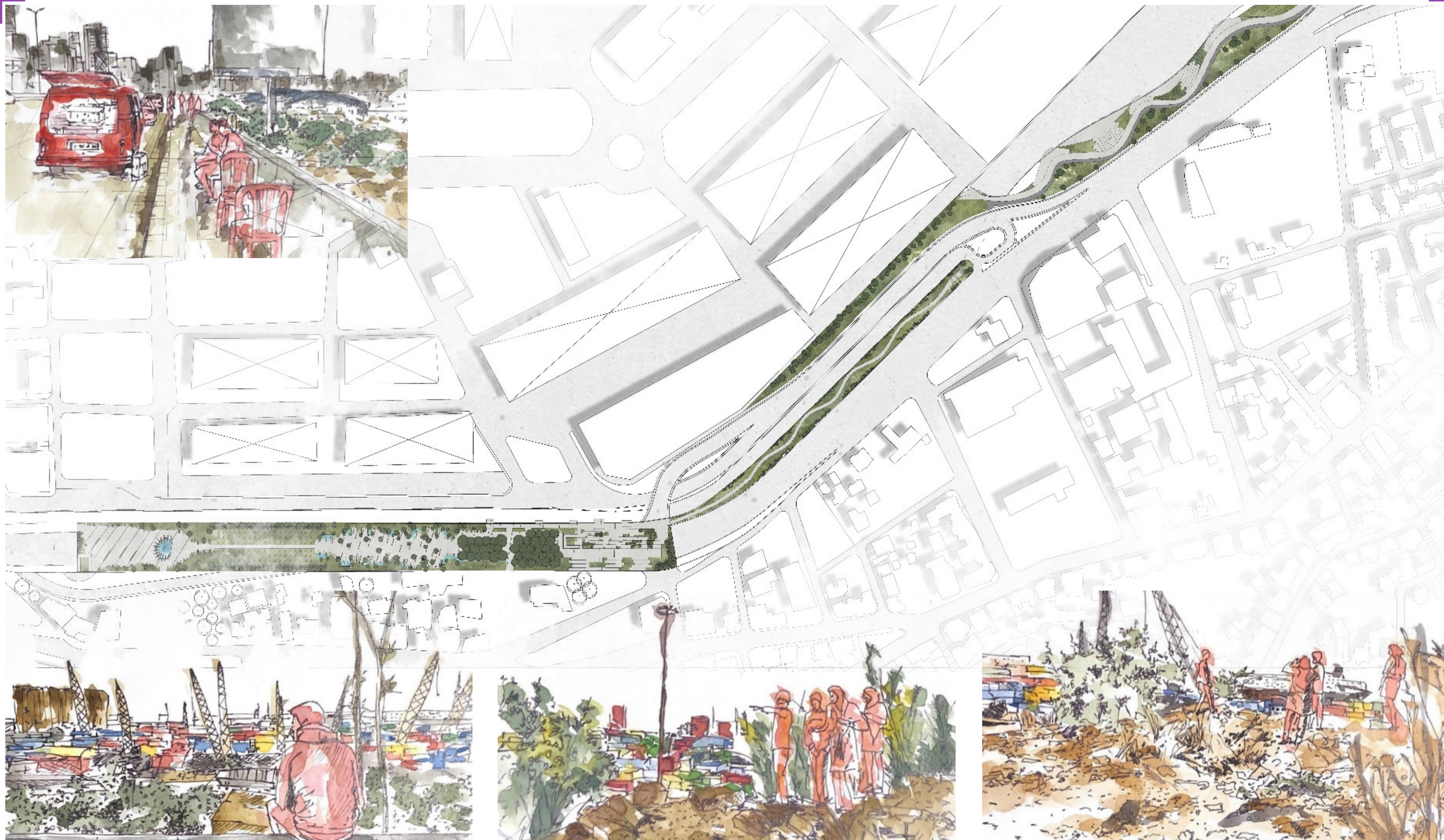
Shelter, water, and garden bands along existing fabric



Market Hub Activation



Water Capture & Shelter Bands



Country/City

Lebanon / Beirut

University / School

American University of Beirut / Department of Landscape Design and Ecosystem Management

Academic year

2020 / 2021

Title of the project

The City Balcony

Authors

Yasmeena Farjalla

Title of the project	The City Balcony
Authors	Yasmeena Farjalla
Title of the course	LDEM 242 & 241: Landscape Capstone Project I & II (Studio)
Academic year	2020 / 2021
Teaching Staff	Dr. Yaser Abunnasr, Dr. Beata Dreksler, Dr. Mona Khechen
Department / Section / Program of belonging	LDEM / Bachelor of Landscape Architecture (BLA)
University / School	American University of Beirut / Department of Landscape Design and Ecosystem Management



Written statement, short description of the project in English, no more than 250 words

Beirut’s northern entrance highway - a multilevel structure with four parking floors adjacent to the seaport - recorded the highest casualties of the August 4, 2020 Beirut Port blast, one of the most powerful non-nuclear explosions ever recorded. In the days that followed, its guardrail became the city’s informal overlook. “The City Balcony” formalizes that moment, redirecting traffic to the lower floors and freeing a 1.3 km elevated pedestrian promenade. By transforming this transportation infrastructure into a memorial garden for the victims of the explosion, the project makes public room for grief within daily movement. Cantilevered platforms extend over the blast zone; a shaded walkway guides visitors through overlook terraces, a tree-canopy walk, an outdoor linear museum of perforated story-plates, a victims’ names court, and a plaza with a seasonally wet crater-pool. Embedded light strips fix sightlines on the explosion’s epicenter after dark. Bridges from the neighborhoods of Mar Mikhael, Gemmayze, and Karantina land on replanted access gardens, stitching east-west pedestrian flow long severed by road infrastructure. Without impeding port logistics, the project merges everyday movement with collective mourning, providing the city a continuous civic balcony for reflection and healing.

Barcelona International Landscape Biennial

Contact via email:
biennialadm@coac.net

Venue:
COAC - Col·legi Oficial d’Arquitectes de Catalunya
Carrer Arcs 1-3, 08002 Barcelona - Spain

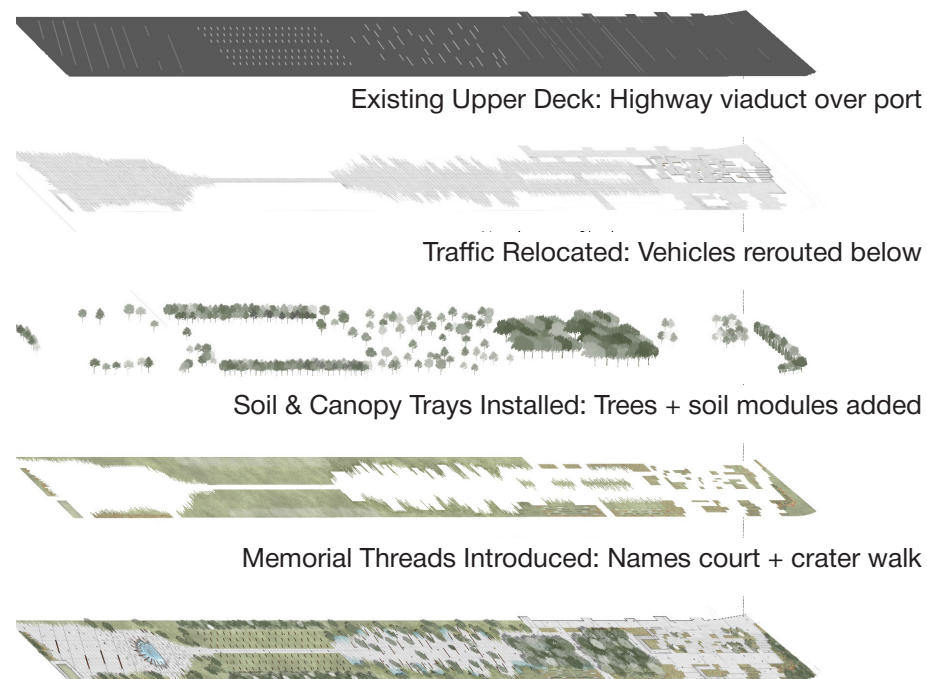
Memorial Garden Plan: 1.3 km Elevated Highway Transformation



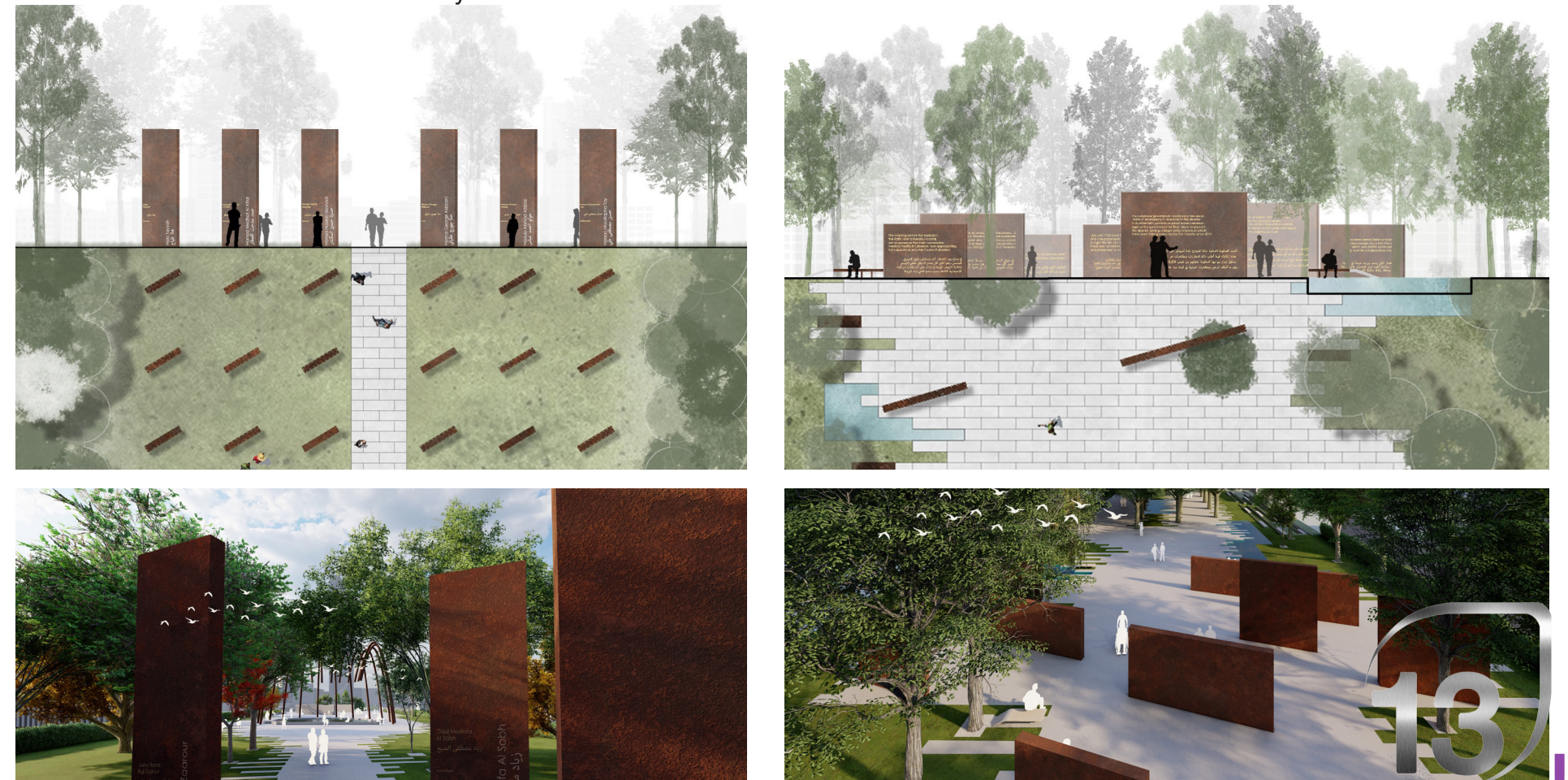
Elevated Deck: Traffic Below, Reflection Above

Daily infrastructure is reimagined as a space of civic ritual. Light, shadow, and seasonal change guide a collective choreography of mourning. The elevated memorial allows remembrance to unfold within everyday motion. Grief becomes part of the city's rhythm held, not halted, by design.

Highway Reclaimed: Memorial Garden Sequence



Immersive Memorial Garden with Story Walk





Country/City Lebanon / Beirut
University / School American University of Beirut / Department of Landscape Design and Ecosystem Management
Academic year 2020 / 2021
Title of the project The Wheat Birds: Port of Beirut Memorial Park
Authors Yasmine Rizk

Title of the project The Wheat Birds: Port of Beirut Memorial Park
Authors Yasmine Rizk
Title of the course LDEM 242 & 241: Landscape Capstone Project I & II (Studio)
Academic year 2020 / 2021
Teaching Staff Dr. Yaser Abunnasr, Dr. Beata Dreksler, Dr. Mona Khechen
Department / Section / Program of belonging LDEM / Bachelor of Landscape Architecture (BLA)
University / School American University of Beirut / Department of Landscape Design and Ecosystem Management



Written statement, short description of the project in English, no more than 250 words

The grain silos that held much of Lebanon's wheat reserve were destroyed by their proximity to the August 4, 2020 ammonium nitrate explosion, spilling grain across the quay and deepening an already fragile food security crisis. In the days after the blast, birds flocked to feed on the scattered wheat - a brief scene that revealed unexpected ecology amid ruin. "The Wheat Birds" draws from that moment, reconciling port operations with remembrance by preserving the silos' silhouette while rerouting freight inland. Precast slabs shift cargo lanes, opening 14,000 m² of quay for public access. Visitors arrive via a new waterfront promenade where perforated Corten-steel panels list the victims names. Native coastal scrub stabilizes contaminated soils; porous concrete paths filter stormwater runoff. Elevated canopy walks frame sea-and-mountain vistas before descending vegetated plinths where migratory birds nest among silo remnants monitored by local ornithologists. A crater amphitheater - its rim seeded with wheat that ripens each August - hosts civic vigils and silent gatherings. Seasonally flowering groves, meadows and shaded tunnels cool quay surfaces while Corten pylons mark pressure zones where engraved names appear in low morning light. A circular skywalk over the blast void offers -360degree orientation of harbor, city and coast without hindering cargo flow. Built from port-grade concrete and steel for minimal maintenance, the design merges industrial heritage, ecological repair and collective memory while sustaining the port's economic role - constructive urban ecology born from conflict.

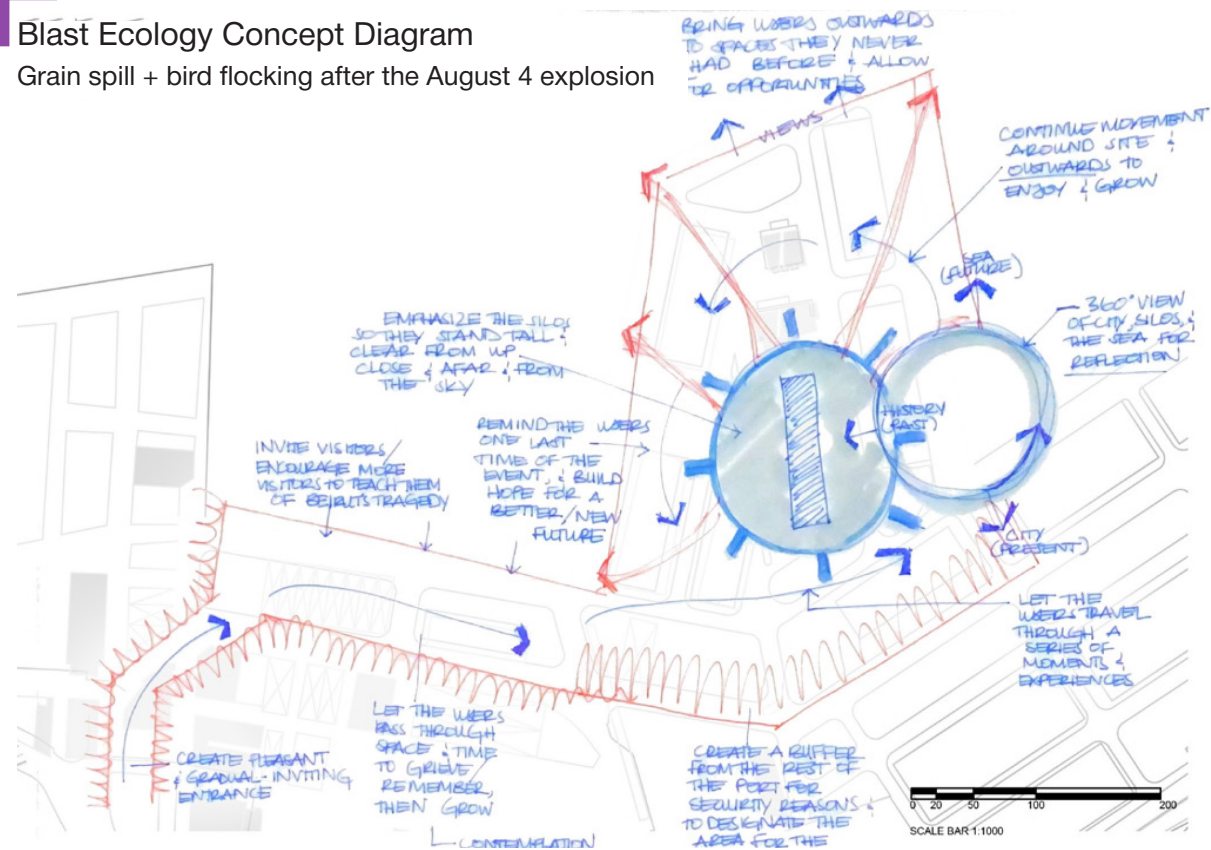
Barcelona International Landscape Biennial

Contact via email:
 biennialadm@coac.net

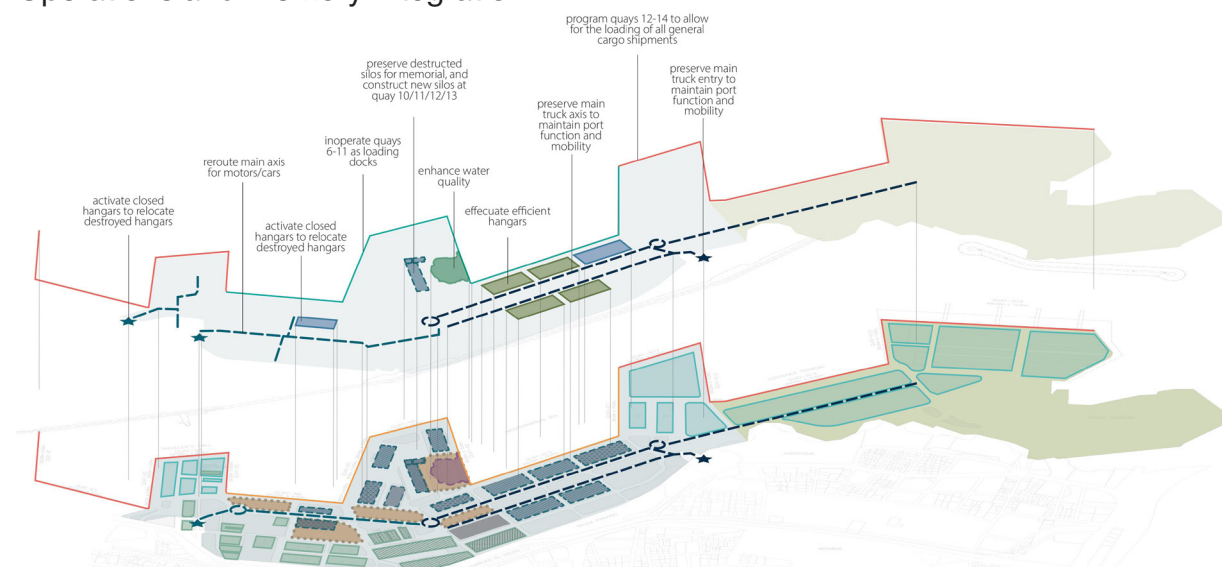
Venue:
 COAC - Col·legi Oficial d'Arquitectes de Catalunya
 Carrer Arcs 1-3, 08002 Barcelona - Spain

Blast Ecology Concept Diagram

Grain spill + bird flocking after the August 4 explosion



Operations and Memory Integration



“The Wheat Birds” preserves the silo silhouette and reroutes freight to free 14,000 m² of quay for an ecological memorial. Wheat sowings recall the blast; birds return to coastal scrub; and memory walls mark loss. Port and public life now coexist, mourning and metabolism entwined.

Crater Grove, Bird Walk, and Civic Circle



Memorial Silo Promenade Section

Living scaffold, memorial wall, porous deck above port lanes



Ring of Remembrance

Memory, habitat, and civic use layered through radial gardens

