

# GRADIENT

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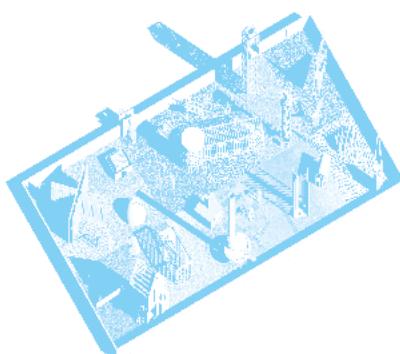


Theatre as tower by Xiaoye Li

## Studio Work

Mackenzie Anderson  
Lindsay Barranco  
Xiaoye Li  
Laura Lisbona  
Victor Mardikian  
Thomas McCormick  
Bruna Iunes Sanches  
Claire Shue  
Ye Wang  
Kei Wing-Wong  
Cynthia Yang  
Jielun Zhang

# STUDIO PAPER



Theatre as city by Victor Mardikian



Title

# ARCH 552 INSTITUTIONS: THEATRUM ORBI

Professor

EDUARDO  
MEDIERO



In 1619 English philosopher and cosmologist Robert Fludd published *Ars Memoriae*, his treatise on mnemonics and the art of recollection. On one of its pages is an engraving: an empty, cubic room with three, equal doors and square tiles on the floor. The title: **THEATRE**. Fludd had not only spatially defined the abstraction of the mind but also adopted an architectural typology that could serve as stage for our memories. Much more than a technical mechanism, the theatre has historically been a model to both depict and construct architecture, decisively determining the relationship between the building and the city.

Institutions studios are part of the *graduate architecture program*. Every year the studios select a different civic institution collectively, with each section bringing forth the research vision of the instructor. For Fall 2019, the collective institution studios focused on the design and documentation of theatres. Every student proposed a new theatre for different sites, studying the program at a variety of scales including site, massing, building envelope and interiors.

**Theatrum Orbis** made use of a sort of *mise-en-scène* to seek types and models for an urban architecture of today. The desire to work with pre-existing materials and references within a given framework was the attitude; constantly manipulating images and models as a way to operate with notions of flatness, depth, reality, action, or resolution. As a conceptual device, each student individually built a *teatrino*, with which proposed a visual scenario that would pose a critical stand towards contemporary architecture and its relation to the city. The tentativeness of bringing objects together gave rise to the developed proposal for a theatre in the city of Ann Arbor.

### TEATRINOS

During the first three weeks of the semester, the studio worked on the ideation and making of twelve *teatrinos*<sup>1</sup> device from which to reconstruct relevant existing images. The term *teatrino* evoked notions of naiveté, temporariness and simplicity; a fragile state that while uncertain could still pose critical questions in relation to the city and architecture.

The images were all existing pieces of twentieth or early twenty-first century art that in one way or another, could be considered relevant today for bringing to the discussion topics about capital exploitation, manufacturing of domestic realms and social identities, as well as, hyper-consumerism or economic disorders. As in theatre design, the manufacture of the *teatrinos* allowed students to establish close relationships with the various nuances present in their original images while simultaneously maintaining a virtual distance from which to critically analyze the piece and set it into a larger contemporary discourse. Moreover, the commitment to reconstruct three-dimensionally an existing two-dimensional piece drove the need to make decisions and compromises in order to bring to life an image that no longer belonged to its original author, but to a collective memory.

<sup>1</sup> noun; Spanish  
small theatre, puppet theatre

“I have always thought that the term *teatrino* was more complex than *teatro*; it refers not just to the size of the building but also to the private, specific, repetitive character of all that is fiction in the theatre.”

Aldo Rossi, *A Scientific Autobiography*, 1981



*Bigger Splash* by David Hockney, 1967; *Teatrino* by Claire Shue



*Die Wohnung* (the apartment) by Co-op Zimmer Hannes Meyer, 1913;  
Teatrino by Bruna Iunes Sanches



*Vertical City* by Ludwig Hilberseimer, 1924;  
Teatrino by Cynthia Yang



Grosvenor Estate by Edwin Lutyens, 1930;  
Teatrino by Jielun Zhang



Homes for America by Dan Graham, 1966;  
Teatrino by Kei Wing Wong



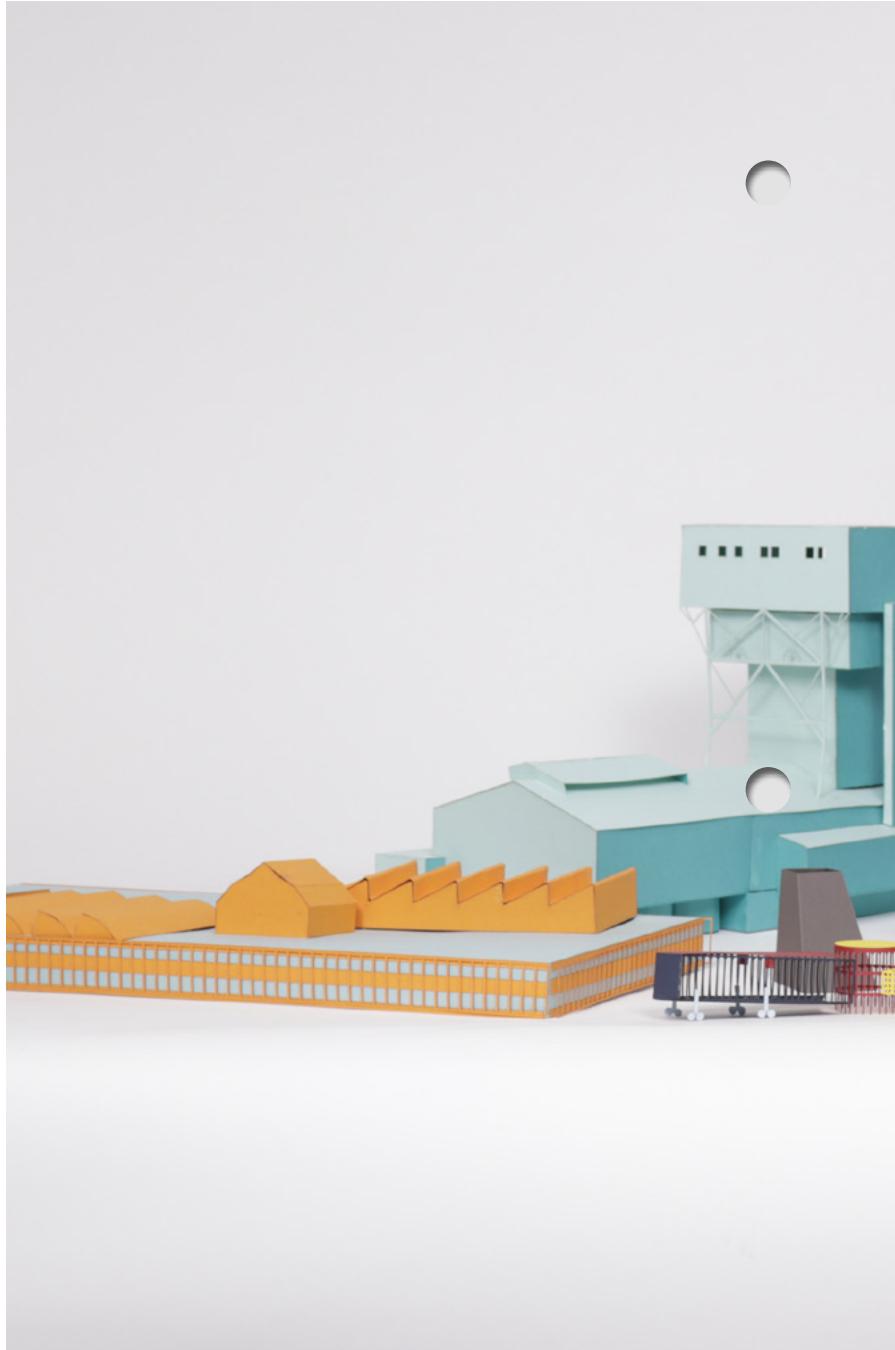
Standard Station by Ed Ruscha, 1964; Teatrino by Xiaoye Li



**Exodus** by Rem Koolhaas, 1972;  
Teatrino by Victor Mardikian



**Continuous Monument** by Superstudio, 1969;  
Teatrino by Lindsay Barranco



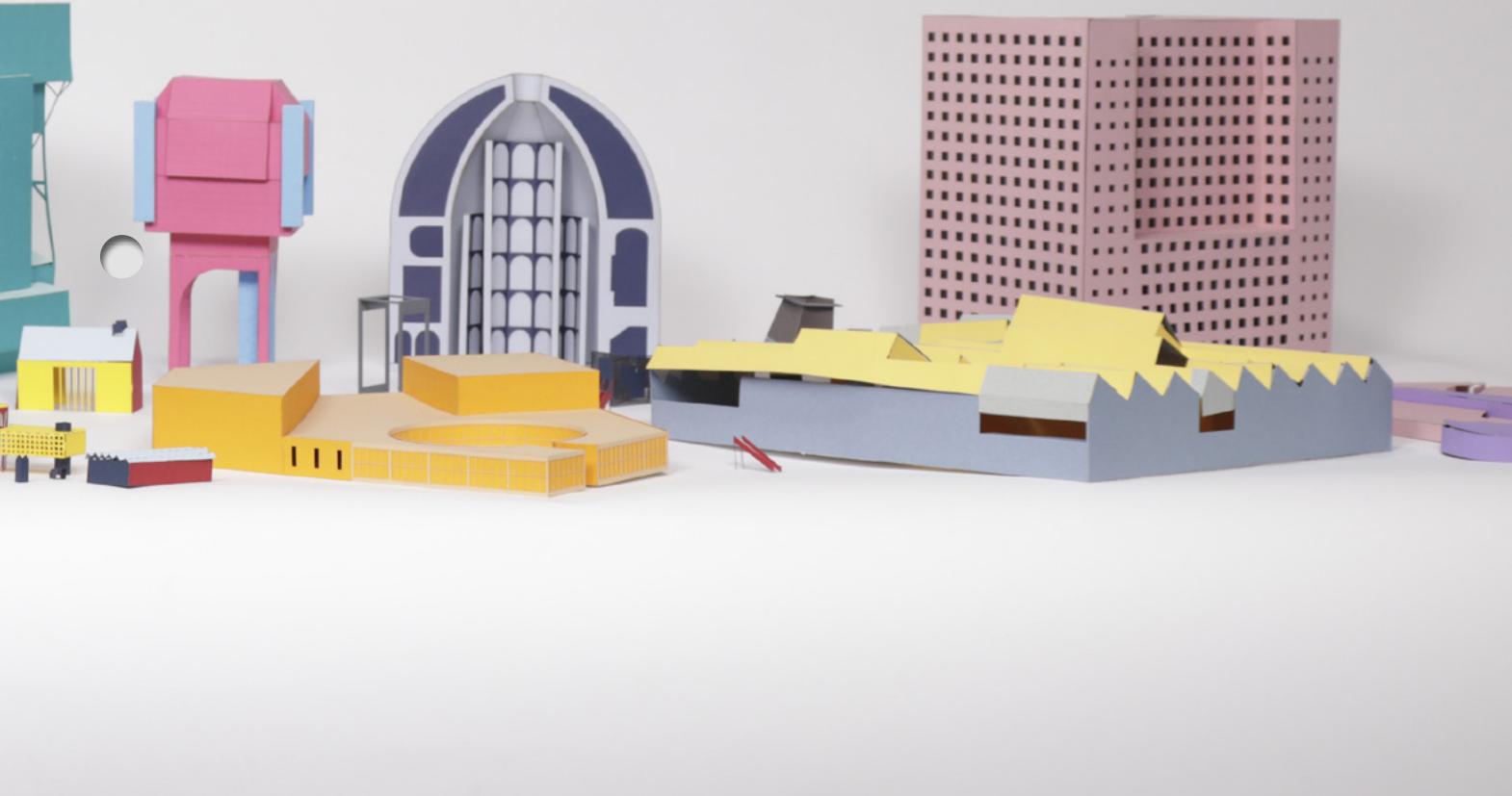
**Midterm Model Compilation:** models by Mackenzie Anderson, Lindsay Barranco, Xiaoye Li, Laura Lisbona, Thomas McCormick, Bruna Iunes Sanches, Claire Shue, Victor Mardikian, Ye Wang, Kei Wing-Wong, Cynthia Yang, Jielun Zhang



**99 Cent** by Andreas Gursky, 1999  
Teatrino by Thomas McCormick

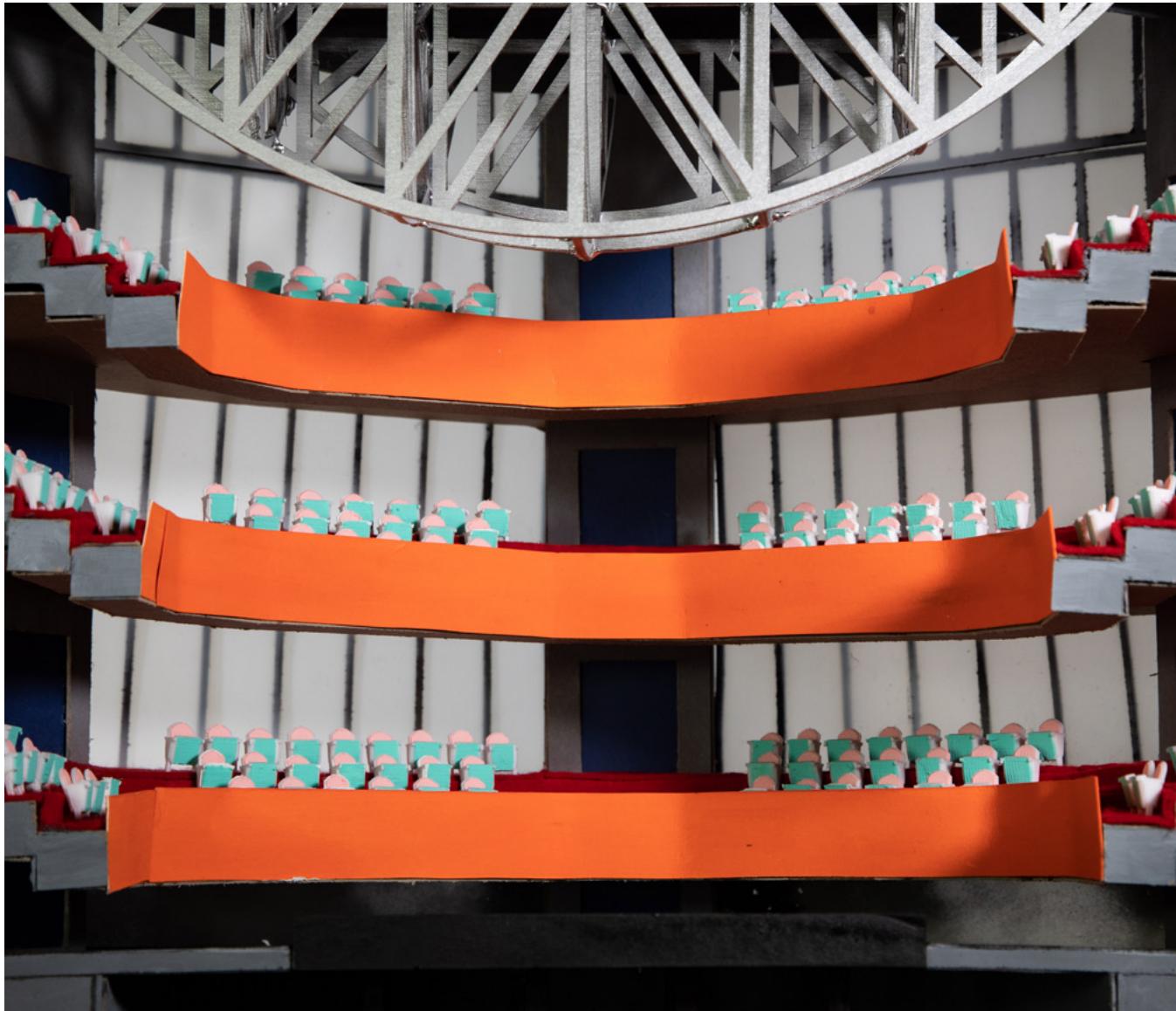


**Playtime** by Jacques Tati, 1967;  
Teatrino by Ye Wang

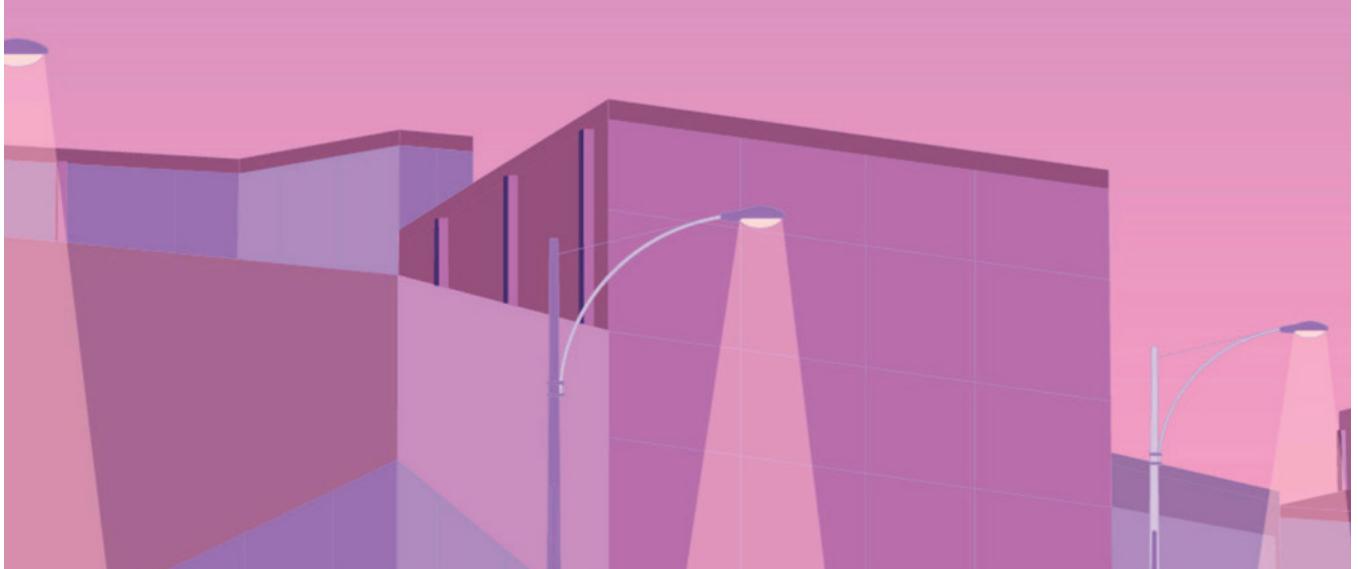


## TYPOLOGY (THEATRE AS...)

Following the construction of the *teatrinos*, the studio took a step back to critically analyze the many underlying nuances present in the original twelve images. Through exhaustive processes of elimination, students chose an architectural typology that could physically portray the discussions of previous weeks. To essentialize the many issues brought at the studio into one single typology was no easy task. The act of choosing could be considered reductionist. One could think that it is utterly impossible to contain everything in a single form. However, such a stance demanded heavy convictions and ideological positioning. It was subjective and thus open for critique and confrontation. (Acts that the studio constantly and tirelessly sought, brought about as only frictional, open discussions solutions can elicit.) Moreover, by tying the design of the theatre into an existing architectural typology, the studio distanced itself from established, given associations and looked politically into pre-existing references. The pieces of worked ranged in scale and scope. From the understanding of theatre as a home, to a stage that would evidence the underlying domestic structures of a household; theatre as a mall, or a scenario of late capital consumerism; theatre as office, a performance of labor structures in the work place: All twelve projects pose extremely pertinent questions in relation to architecture and its role in the construction of cities and societies.



Theatre as panopticon by Bruna Iunes Sanches

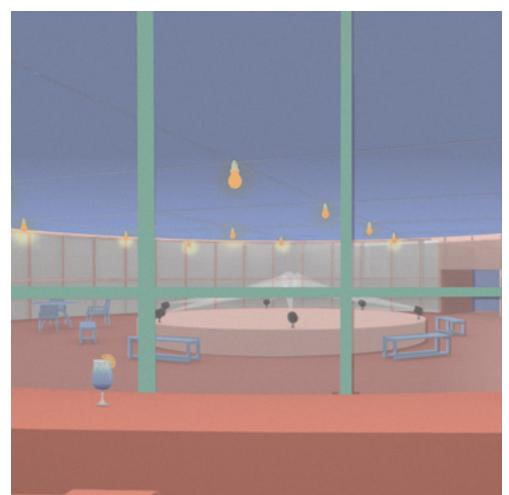


**Theatre as mall** by Claire Shue



See Building plans  
Fig. 1, Fig. 2 on Page 10

**Theatre as utilitarian** by Mackenzie Anderson ( $\rightarrow$  Fig. 1)



**Theatre as plaza** by Cynthia Yang ( $\rightarrow$  Fig. 2)

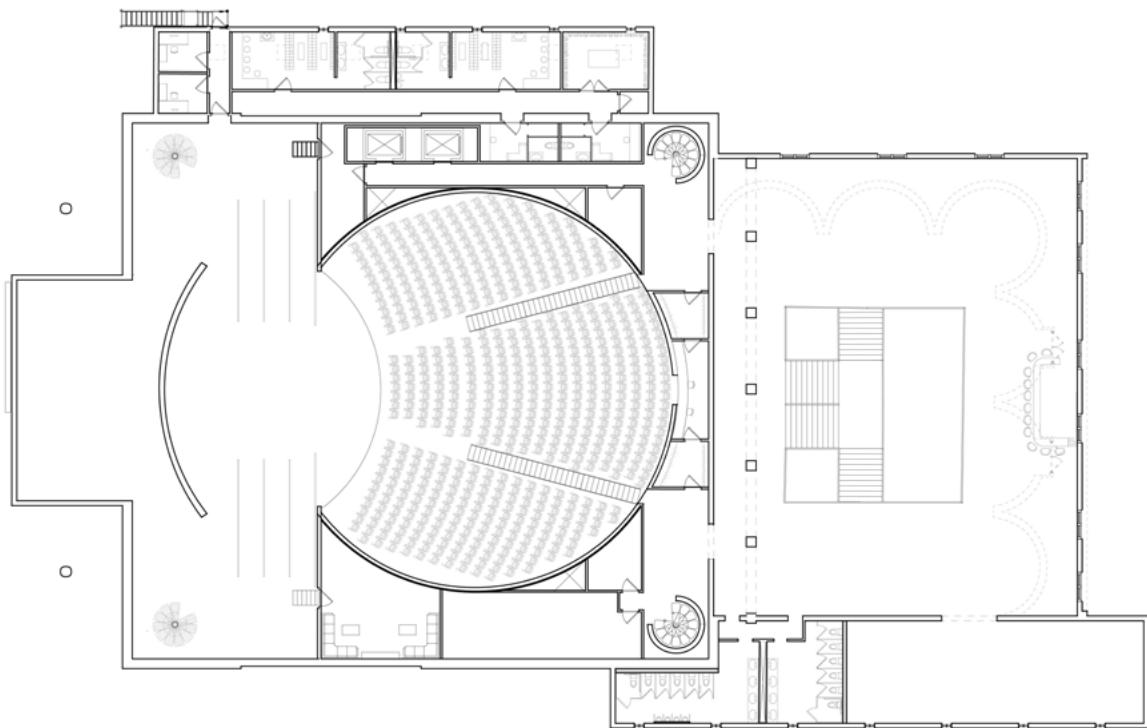


Fig. 1 *Theatre as utilitarian* by Mackenzie Anderson

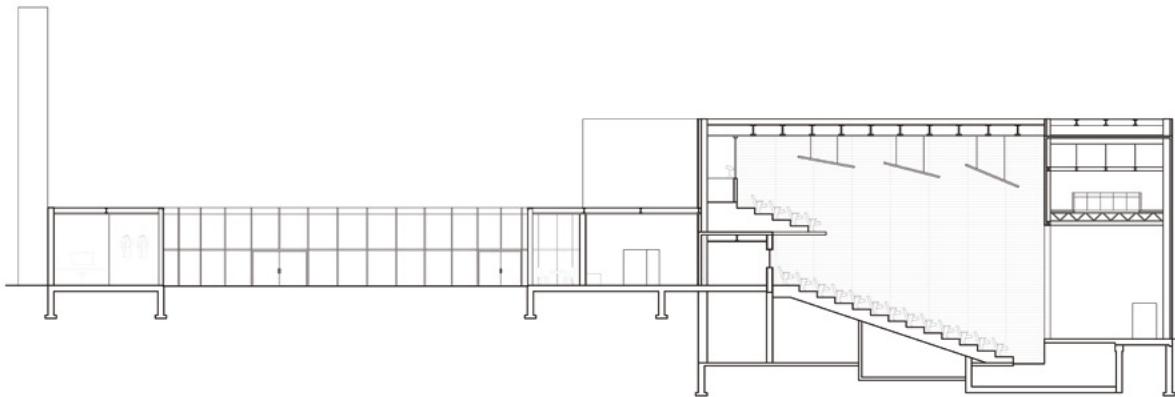
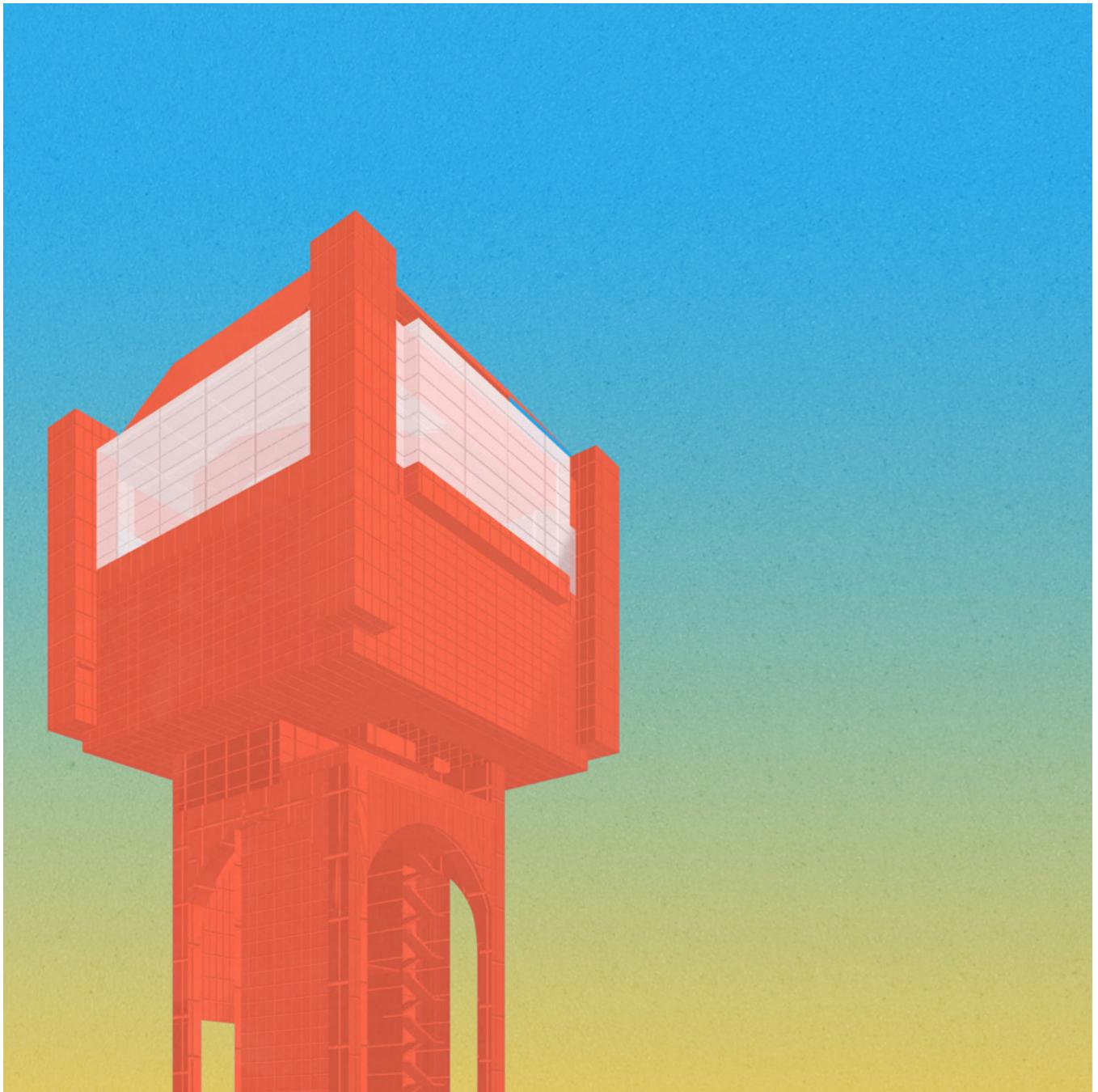


Fig. 2 *Theatre as plaza* by Cynthia Yang



Theatre as tower by Xiaoye Li



See Building plans  
Fig. 3, Fig. 4 on Page12

Theatre as market by Thomas McCormick

(→ Fig. 3)



Theatre as office by Ye Wang

(→ Fig. 4)

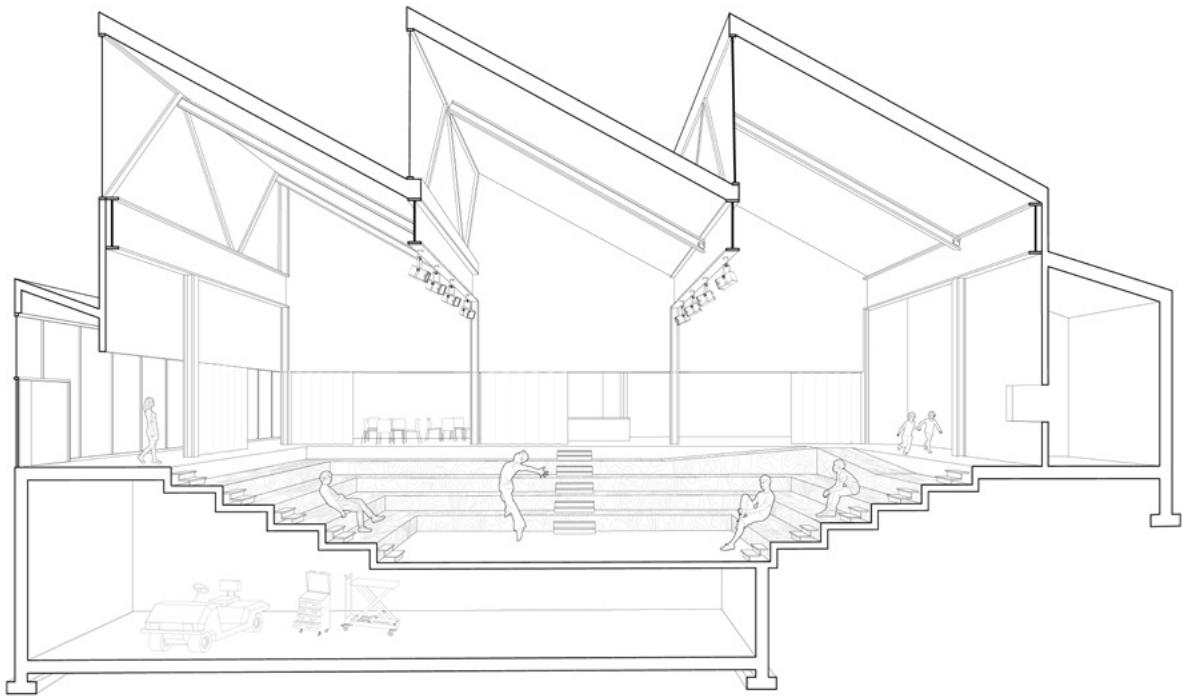


Fig. 3 *Theatre as market* by Thomas McCormick

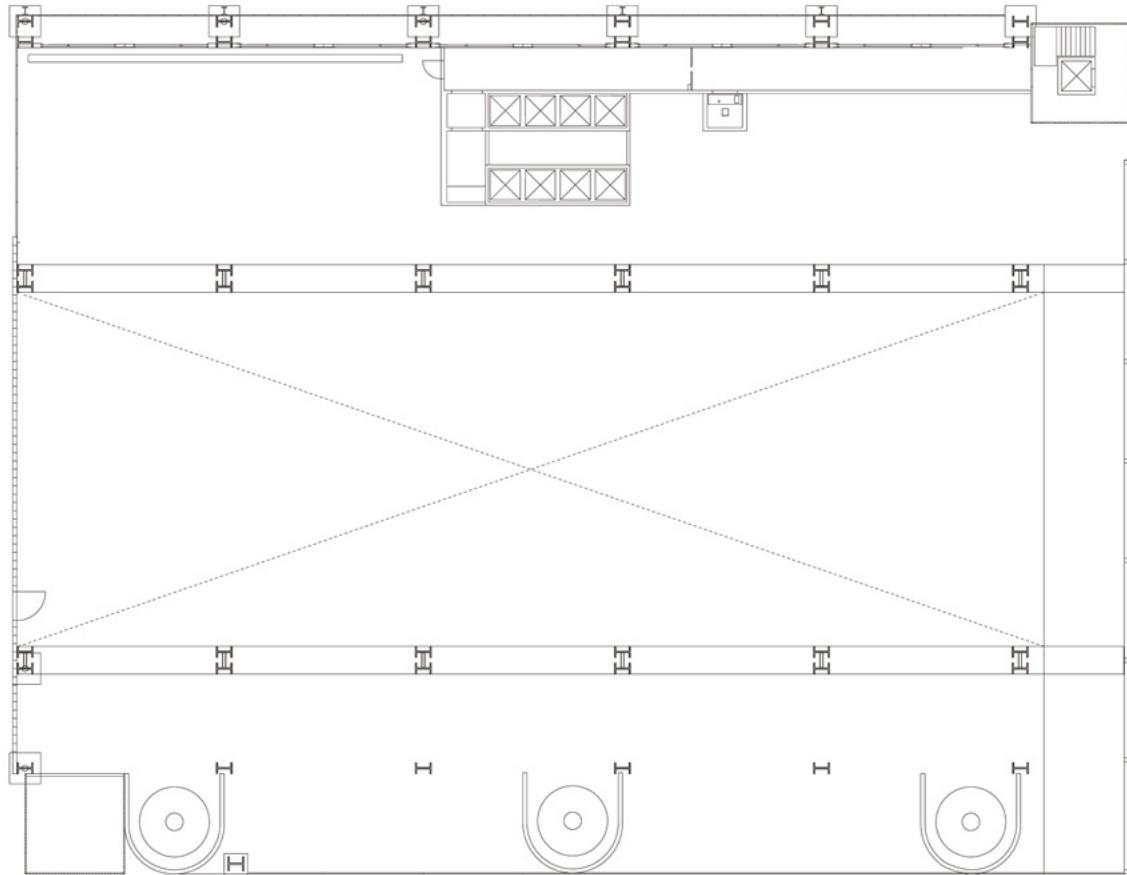
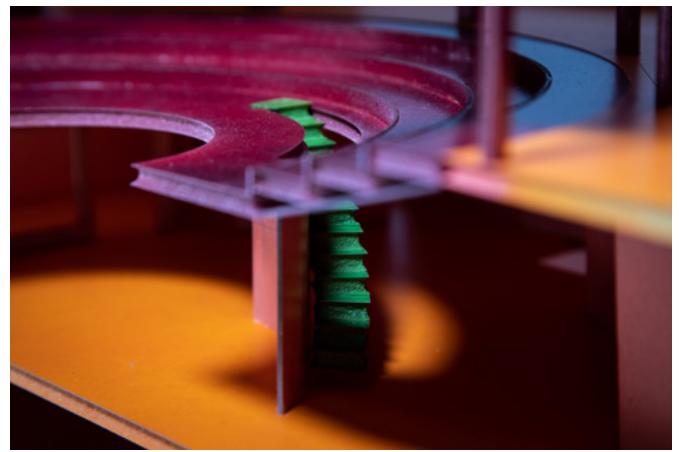
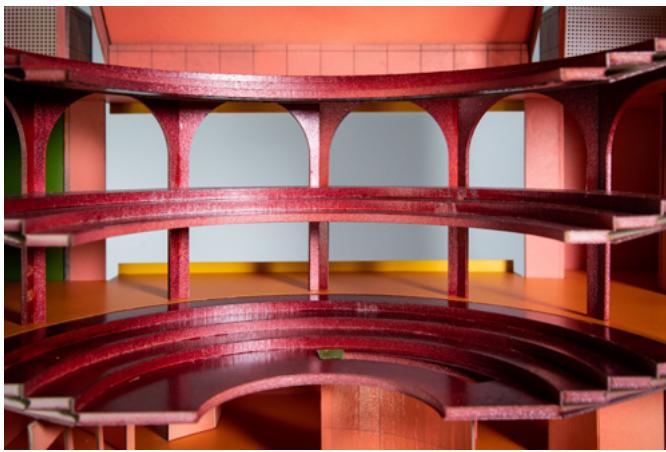


Fig. 4 *Theatre as office* by Ye Wang

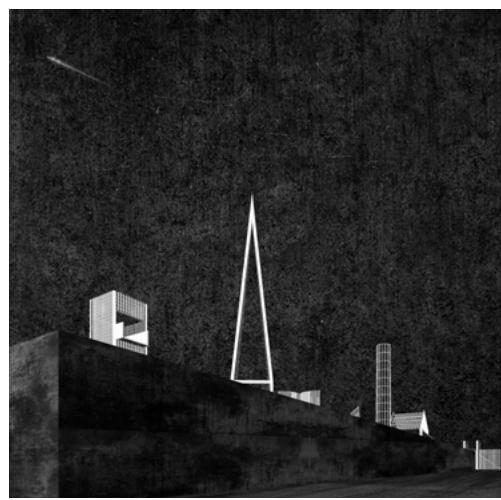
Studio Paper



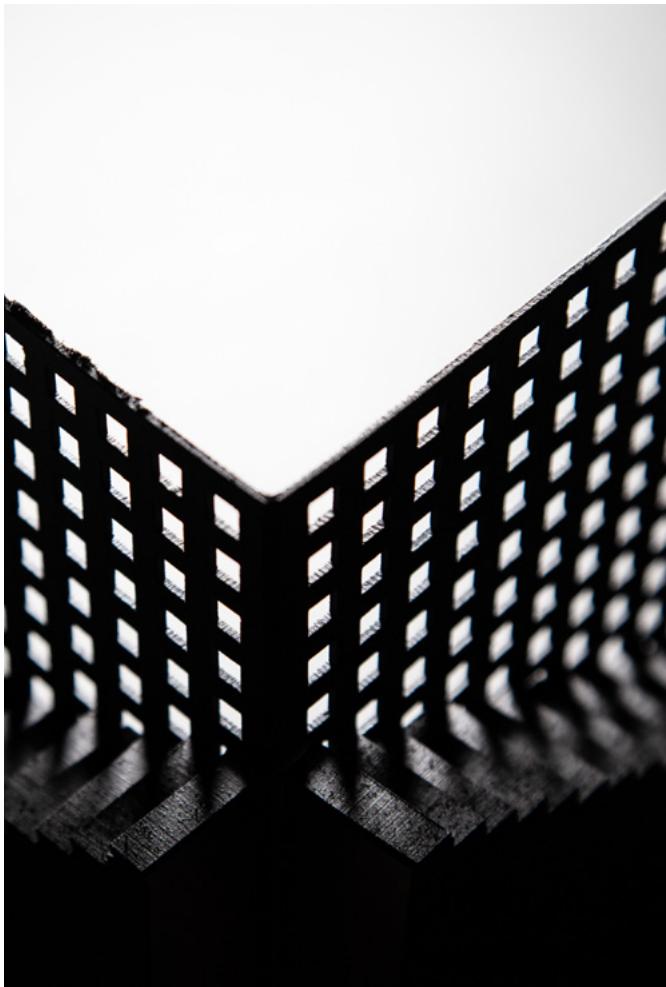
Theatre as tower by Xiaoye Li



**Theatre as Iranian tomb tower** by Laura Lisbona

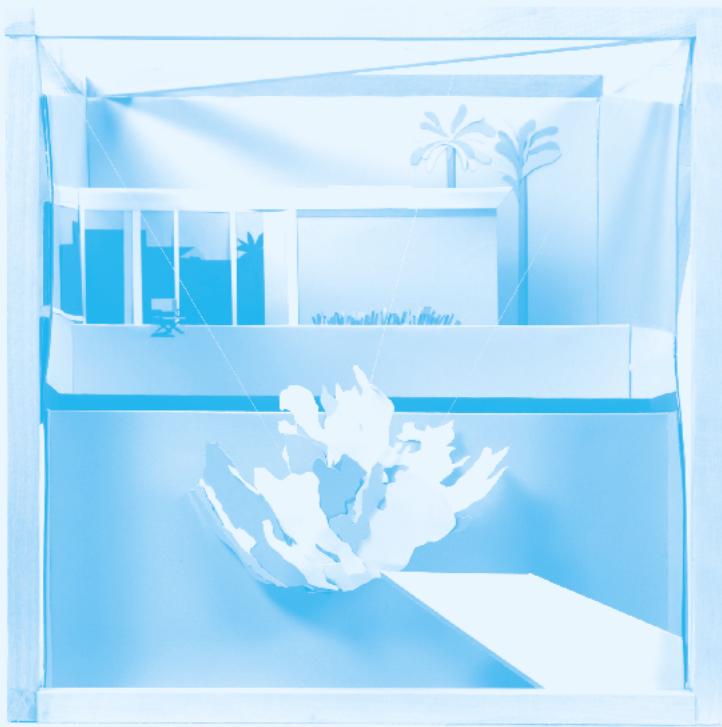


**Theatre as city** by Victor Mardikian

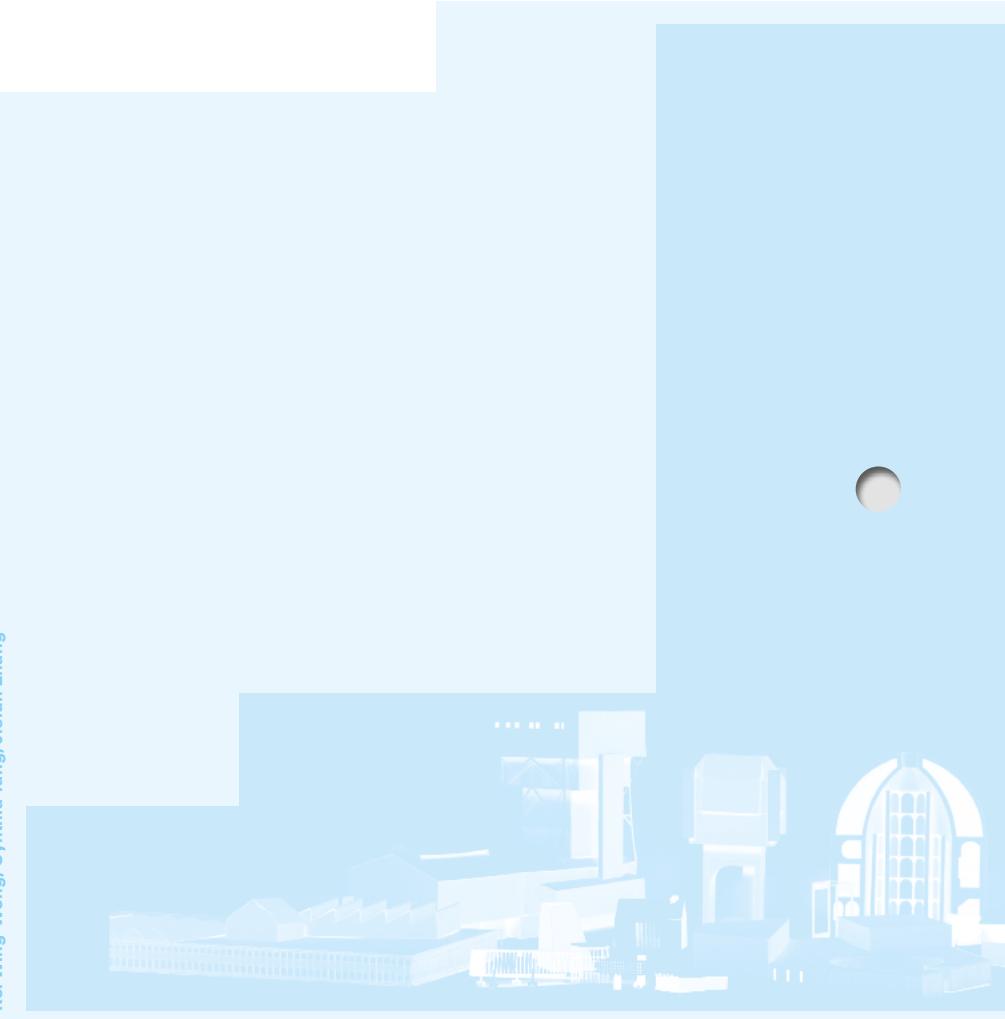


Theatre as city by Victor Mardikian

*Midterm Model Compilation:* models by Mackenzie Anderson, Lindsay Barranco, Xiaoye Li, Laura Lisbona, Thomas McCormick, Bruna Junes Sanches, Claire Shue, Victor Mardikian, Ye Wang, Kei Wing-Wong, Cynthia Yang, Jielun Zhang



*Bigger Splash* by David Hockney, 1967; Teatrino by Claire Shue



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