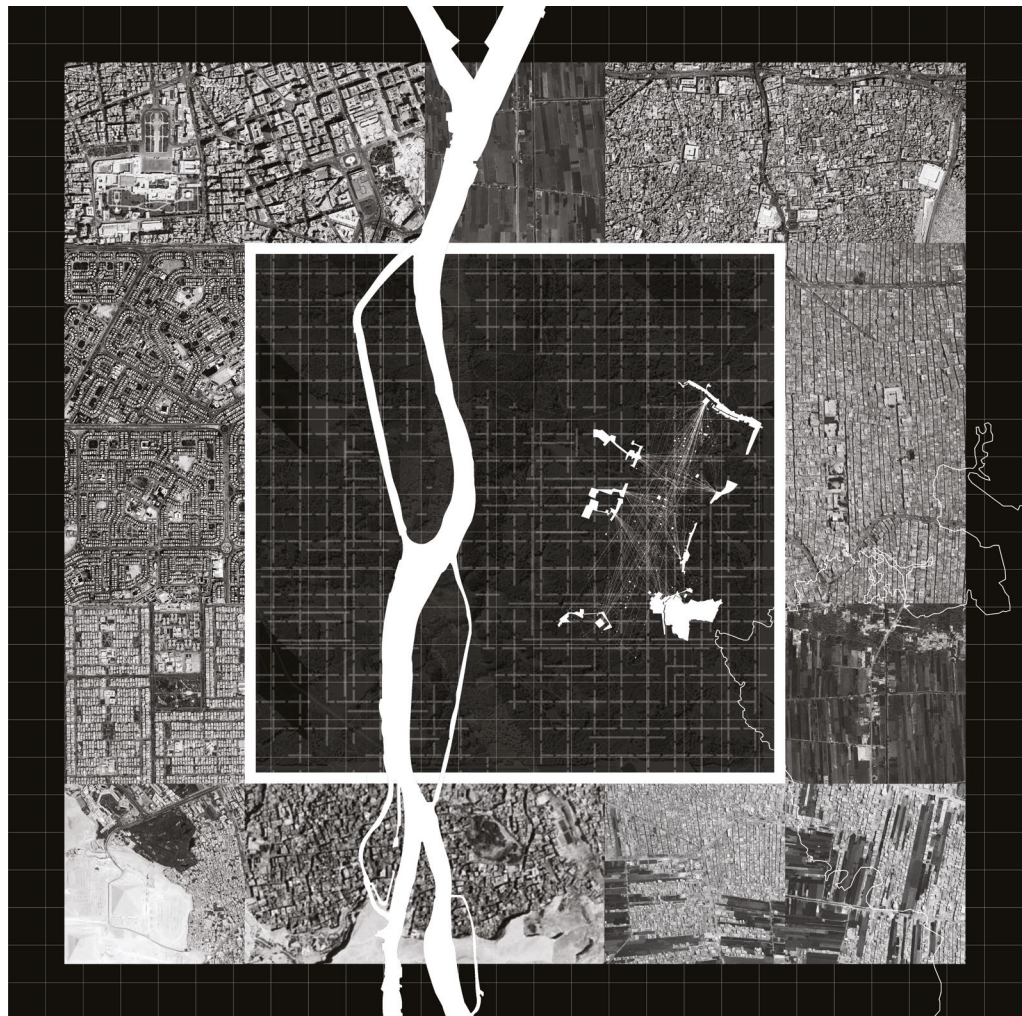


TENACIOUS CAIRO
MELANCHOLY OF VOID AS DICHOTOMY BETWEEN THE IMPLICIT AND EXPLICIT DOCTRINE
REVIVING THE CONCEPT OF VOID IN THE MIDDLE EASTERN TRADITIONS AS AN ALTERNATIVE SOCIO-SPATIAL SCENARIO FOR REGENERATING PUBLIC SPACES IN CAIRO'S ARCHIPELAGO



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Philosophers and philologists should be concerned in the first place with poetic metaphysics; that is, the science that looks for proof not in the external world, but in the very modifications of the mind that mediates on it. Since the world of nations is made by men, it is inside their minds that its principles should be sought.
[Giambattista Vico, Principles of New Science, 1759]

First of all, I would like to thank the supreme power the Almighty God. Embarking on establishing acumen into the motives behind my aspiration to pursue a PhD at the esteemed university in *Mediterranea University of Reggio Calabria* made me certain that it is not solely a venture for affluent professional improvement, but rather an exertion to sharpen my thinking. I would like to express my deepest appreciation to my thesis supervisors, prof. **Marina Tornatora**, Prof. **Eduardo Bru** and Prof. **Rita Pinto de Freitas**, whom have continually conveyed a spirit of adventure in regard to my exodus journey of my PhD, through their esteemed knowledge, guidance and persistent help with our profound discussion and debates, have provided an engagement that transcend academia and generate a supreme quest on the personal level.

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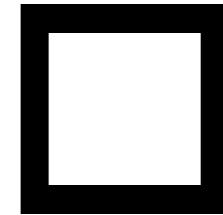
Moreover, I would like to thank Prof. **Gaia Radaelli** for giving me the opportunity to work beside her in the University of *Politecnico di Milano*, where I found an insightful and professional environment, further, *Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya*, where I found all the facilities that support my studies and the unique staff who have made my staying there a valuable and productive period.

Dutiful thanks for **Cristiana Penna**, my colleague, friend and partner, who has been always helping and encouraging me, I have no valuable lyrics to express my merits, but my heart is still full of nepotisms received from this person. Next to her, I would like to thank my lab-mates **Alessandro de Luca**, **Ahmed Amin**, **Francesco Leto**, **Lucia La Giusa**, for the stimulating discussions, for the sleepless nights of thinking, and for all the fun we have had in the last years.

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Finally, I have huge thanks, to my family who have played a fundamental role in terms of affection, motivation, comfort and support, in particular my mother **Azza Salaheldin** and my father **Samir Hassan** for giving me a spiritual and mystical through this journey and finally my brothers and cousins **Mohamed Samir**, **Abdelmoniem Samir**, **Bahaa Hassan** and **Abdelmoniem Hassan** for being there.

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INTRODUCTION

A RETROSPECTIVE MANIFESTO FOR CAIRO THROUGH THE ELOQUENT SILENCE OF VOID

La tesi propone una lettura inedita della città del Cairo, una realtà complessa caratterizzata da territori in fluttuazione che vanno a configurare una molteplicità di condizioni urbane, interpretate come un sommatoria di entità omogenee. In questo magma di stratificazioni, la ricerca indaga quei fattori identitari strutturanti, per tentare di indagare la formazione di questa estesa megalopoli, smontandola in una città-arcipelago le cui isole hanno come essenza comune il Vuoto.

Tale studio tenta di tratteggiare una metodologia di scomposizione e ricomposizione urbana che assume il Vuoto come strumento di interpretazione e intervento sui luoghi. Si tratta di un'idea specifica di Vuoto derivato dalla cultura mediorientale, dove l'assenza e la forma sono inseparabili, la componente simbolica e metafisica degli spazi e delle geometrie prevalgono, interno e esterno coincidono, configurando entità differenti da quelle della cultura occidentale, più legate alla relazione tra positivo e negativo.

Un'altra natura di Vuoto, nella quale il corpo contenente corrisponde al contenuto, non solo nella sua esistenza tangibile, chi lo vive, infatti, ne riconosce i confini fisici e mentre il suo intelletto ne percepisce lo spirito interno.

The thesis proposes an unprecedented reading of the city of Cairo, a complex reality characterized by fluctuating territories that shape a multiplicity of urban conditions, often interpreted as homogeneous entities. In this magma of stratifications, the research investigates those structuring identity factors, in an attempt to reveal the formation of this extended megalopolis, dismantling it into a city-archipelago whose islands have the "Void" as a common essence.

This study attempts to outline a strategy of urban decomposition and re-composition that assumes the Void as a tool for interpretation and intervention on places. It is a concept of Void derived from Middle Eastern culture, where absence and form are inseparable, the symbolic and metaphysical component of spaces and geometries prevail, internal and external coincide, configuring entities different from those of Western culture, more closely linked to the relationship between positive and negative.

Another idea of Void, where the containing body corresponds to the content, not only in its tangible existence and where the conscience of the beholder recognizes its physical boundaries while his intellect perceives its internal spirit.

OBJECTIVES

Searching for the Obscured__ A double gaze provides a clearer perception of the grander fold beforehand.

La ricerca, nel tentativo di comprendere la complessità urbana del Cairo, una megalopoli con circa venti milioni di abitanti, assume il Vuoto come principio unificante dei frammenti delle diverse città che oggi la configurano con l'intenzione di definire una strategia di scomposizione e ricomposizione urbana che assume il Vuoto come strumento di interpretazione e di intervento sui luoghi.

In questo arcipelago di isole fluttuanti, la tesi si pone l'obiettivo di indagare se la materia del Vuoto nella cultura orientale ha la stessa natura di quella occidentale già oggetto di numerosi studi che ne hanno codificato metodologie interpretative e categorie di indagine, a differenza della realtà egiziana dove il concetto di Vuoto non è stato ancora sufficientemente approfondito.

Con questa intenzione la ricerca assume il disegno come suo strumento principale nel tentativo di sperimentare una possibile modalità di lettura della città del Cairo e di ricomposizione dell'originario concetto di Vuoto come paradigma urbano per una strategia di rigenerazione della città.

Questa indagine è elaborata attraverso alcuni passaggi fondamentali:

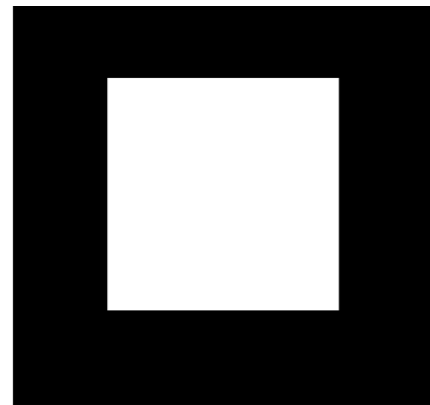
- Studio del fenomeno di frammentazione che caratterizza la città contemporanea del Cairo.
- Interpretazione del concetto originario di Vuoto come dogma ontologico per la formazione urbana delle città tradizionali del Medio Oriente.
- Interpretazione della condizione della “città nella città” come essenza dello sviluppo del Cairo, scomposta in una città-arcipelago con l'individuazione di cinque isole –**Mnemonics** | **Fluvial** | **Topographical** | **Rural** | **Desert**– assunte come paradigmatiche delle diverse condizioni urbane esistenti.

- *Elaborazioni Mappe e Analisi illustrate dei Vuoti in tre diverse scale: **MACRO** | **MID** | **MICRO***
- *Lettura dei diversi Vuoti urbani nella città-arcipelago.*
- *Elaborazione di una serie di matrici che mettono a confronto le diverse letture interpretative per rintracciare gli strumenti operativi per la rigenerazione della città del Cairo.*
- *Una sperimentazione progettuale nel Vuoto urbano della Desert Island, proposta come una serie di appunti operativi per la trasformazione e mutazione del vuoto architettonico in una delle isole.*

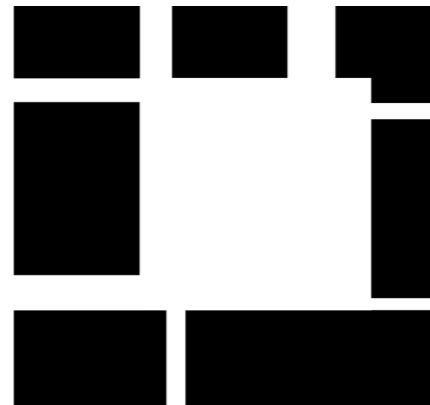
The research, in an attempt to understand the urban complexity of Cairo, a megalopolis with about twenty million inhabitants, assumes the Void as the unifying principle of the fragments of the different cities that today configure it with the intention of defining a strategy of urban decomposition and re-composition which assumes the void as an instrument of interpretation and intervention on places.

In this archipelago of floating islands, the thesis aims to investigate whether the matter of the Void in Eastern culture has the same nature as the Western one, already the subject of numerous studies that have codified interpretative methodologies and categories of investigation, unlike of the Egyptian reality where the concept of Void has not yet been sufficiently deepened.

With this intention, the research assumes drawing as its main tool in an attempt to experiment with a possible way of interpreting the city of Cairo and recomposing the original concept of Void as an urban paradigm for a city regeneration strategy.



Void as origin of space



Void as negative of objects



Cairo I Ibn Tulun mosque



Roma I Piazza Navona

This investigation is elaborated through some basic steps:

- Study of the phenomenon of fragmentation that characterizes the contemporary city of Cairo.
- Interpretation of the original concept of Void as an ontological dogma for the urban formation of the traditional cities of the Middle East.
- Interpretation of the condition of the “city within the city” as the essence of the development of Cairo, broken down into a city-archipelago with the identification of five islands –Mnemonics | Fluvial | Topographical | Rural | Desert-taken as paradigmatic of the different existing urban conditions.
- Map processing and illustrated analysis of voids in three different scales:
MACRO | MID | MICRO
- Reading of the different urban voids in the archipelago city.
- Elaboration of a series of matrices that compare the different interpretative readings to trace the operational tools for the regeneration of the city of Cairo.
- A design experimentation on the urban void of the Desert Island, proposed as one of the operational notes for the transformation and mutation of the architectural void in one of the islands.

METHODOLOGY

Il disegno è suo strumento di indagine privilegiato attraverso il quale sono state elaborate una serie di mappe inedite della città del Cairo con disegni multi-scalari e codificazioni morfologiche.

In particolare la tesi ha sviluppato:

1. Analisi della città con l'elaborazione di nuove mappe interpretative che restituiscono la complessità del Cairo come città-arcipelago;
2. Identificazione delle cinque isole della città-arcipelago –**Mnemonics | Fluvial | Topographical | Rural | Desert**– rappresentative delle diverse condizioni urbane del Cairo;
3. Studio ed elaborazione di letture grafiche delle cinque isole con la realizzazione di 262 disegni autografi, multi-scalari articolati in:

MACRO scala _ 114 disegni analizzano la grammatica urbana delle isole e le relazioni tangibili e intangibili che caratterizzano i vuoti esistenti, tentando di formulare un'interpretazione contemporanea della memoria collettiva degli abitanti e delle sue stratificazioni. La struttura dei diversi tessuti urbani è stata smontata e analizzata a partire dai Vuoti.

MID scala _ 60 disegni restituiscono la fisionomia urbana di ogni isola attraverso lo studio di parametri, quali: **Densità | Traiettorie | Connessioni | Scala | Pattern**. Le mappe delineano così non solo l'organizzazione spaziale e la sequenza dei vuoti all'interno della struttura urbana, ma rivelano anche il codice genetico di ogni isola dato dalle diverse relazioni tra i vuoti.

MICRO scala _ 55 disegni forniscono una lettura del Vuoto architettonico, nodo cruciale della città del Cairo nella configurazione delle singole isole. Tali elaborazioni si articolano attraverso la scomposizione del Vuoto architettonico esistente attraverso alcune categorie: **Spazio | Tipologia | Limite | Disegno | Misura | Immagine**.

4. Codificazione di un metodo di scomposizione attraverso la comparazione degli studi elaborati per ciascuna delle cinque isole. In questa fase, la ricerca tenta di individuare gli strumenti operativi del progetto in relazione alle attuali trasformazioni urbane dei Vuoti. La sintesi finale di questi studi è rappresentata da una serie di matrici che propongono una comparazione delle mappe elaborate alla Macro-scala e Mid-scala:

MACRO scale _Matrix

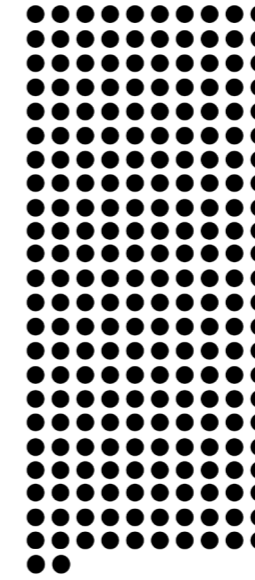
1. Matrix | Fabrics
2. Matrix | Streets
3. Matrix | Primary voids
4. Matrix | Intangible relations
5. Matrix | Taxonomies
6. Manifesto | Cairo as a city of archipelago

MID scale _Matrix

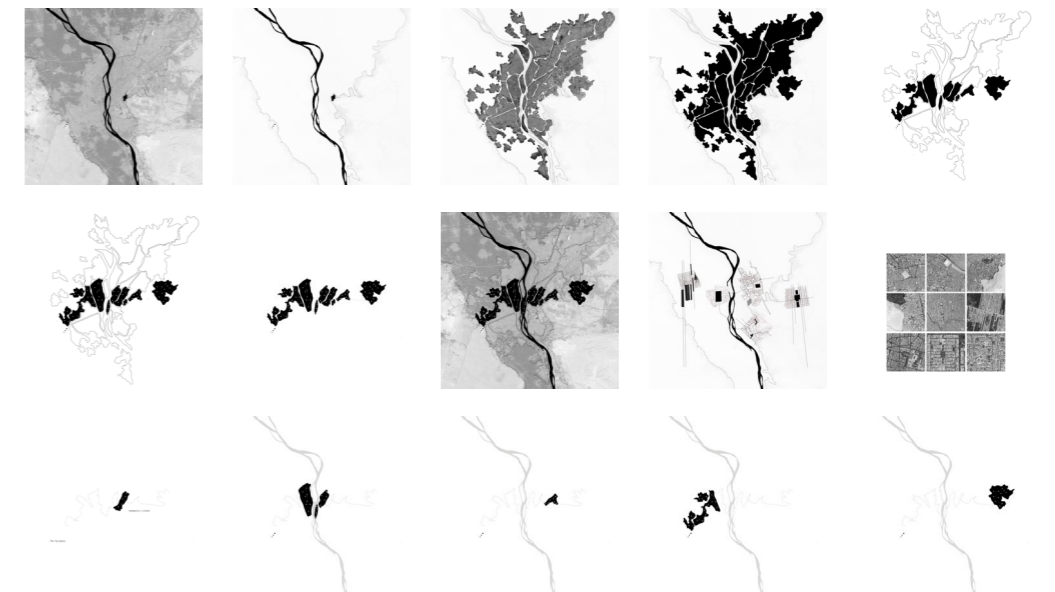
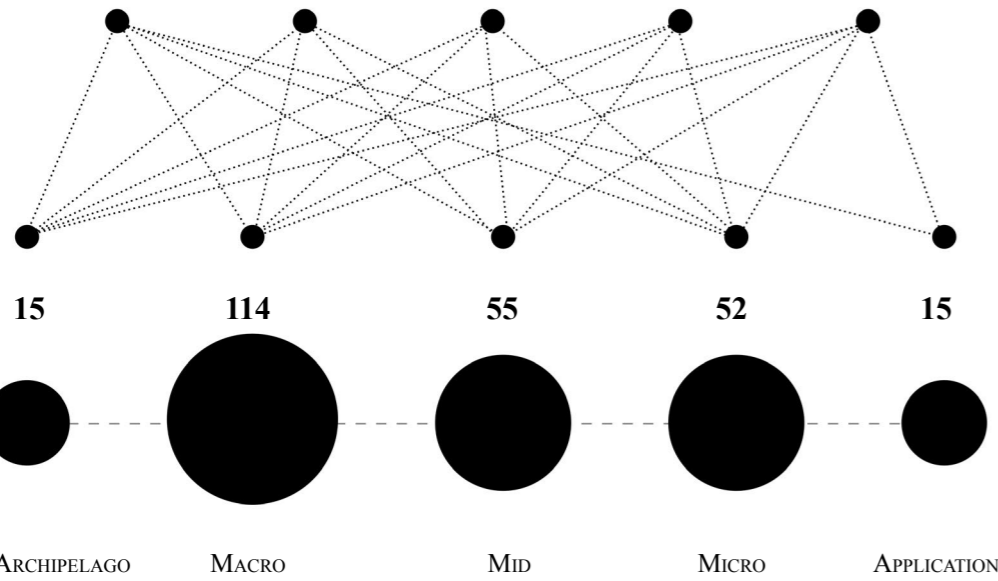
1. Matrix | Density
2. Matrix | Trajectory
3. Matrix | Connection
4. Matrix | Scale
5. Matrix | Pattern

Tali matrici interpretative delle **cinque isole –Mnemonics | Fluvial | Topographical | Rural | Desert**– restituiscono la complessa composizione urbana del Cairo, rivelando l'importanza del concetto di Vuoto alle sue implicazioni nei tessuti urbani. Il tutto avvia quindi i presupposti per pensare al Vuoto come elemento di rigenerazione delle isole laddove l'unità sociale, il senso di appartenenza e l'abitare potrebbero trovare il loro posto all'interno della composizione urbana.

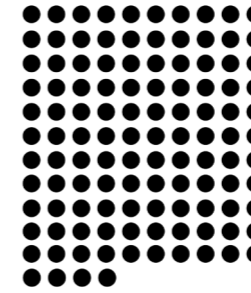
262 DESIGNS



MNEMONICS ISLAND FLUVIAL ISLAND TOPOGRAPHICAL ISLAND RURAL ISLAND DESERT ISLAND



114 DESIGNS_MACRO SCALE_UNDERSTANDING THE URBAN GRAMMER OF THE FIVE ISLANDS THROUGH ITS PRIMARY VOIDS IN RELATION WITH CONTEXT, COMPOSITION AND BORDER



MACRO_SCALE

In order to achieve the intended objectives, the research assumes drawing as its privileged instrument of investigation through the elaboration of unpublished maps of the city of Cairo with multi-scalar drawings and morphological codifications.

In particular, the thesis developed:

1. Analysis of the city with the elaboration of new interpretative maps that show the complexity of Cairo as a city-archipelago;
2. Identification of the five islands of the city-archipelago –Mnemonics | Fluvial | Topographical | Rural | Desert– representative of the different urban conditions of Cairo;
3. Study and elaboration of graphic readings of the five islands with the creation of 262 autographed, multi-scalar drawings divided into:

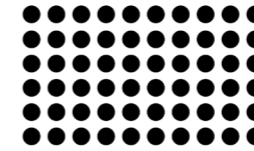
MACRO scala_ 114 drawings analyze the urban grammar of the islands and the tangible and intangible relationships that characterize the existing voids, trying to formulate a contemporary interpretation of the collective memory of the inhabitants and its stratifications. In this framework, analyzing, imagining and composing the architecture of the city starting from its Voids reverberates the structure of its urban fabrics.

MID scala_ 60 drawings return the urban physiognomy of each island through the study of parameters, such as: **Density** | **Trajectories** | **Connections** | **Scale** | **Pattern**. The maps thus outline not only the spatial organization and the sequence of voids within the urban structure, but also reveal the genetic code of each island given by the different relationships between the voids.

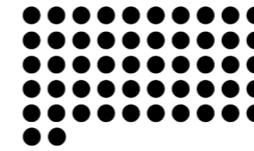
MICRO scale_ 55 drawings provide a reading of the architectural void, a crucial node of the city of Cairo in the configuration of the individual islands. These elaborations are articulated through the decomposition of the existing architectural void through some categories: **Space** | **Typology** | **Limit** | **Drawing** | **Measure** | **Image**.



55 DESIGNS_MID SCALE_ANALYSING THE URBAN FORMULATION OF EACH ISLAND THROUGH THEIR DENSITY, TRAJECTORY, CONNCCETION, SCALE AND PATTERN



52 DESIGNS_MICRO SCALE_ANALYSING THE ARCHITECTURAL PRIMARY VOID IN EACH ISLAND



MID_SCALE

MICRO_SCALE



4. Codification of a method of decomposition by comparing the studies developed for each of the five islands. In this phase, the research attempts to identify the operational tools of the project in relation to the current urban transformations of the Voids. The final synthesis of these studies is represented by a series of matrices that propose a comparison of the maps elaborated at the Macro-scale and Mid-scale:

MACRO scale _Matrix

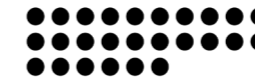
1. Matrix | Fabrics
2. Matrix | Streets
3. Matrix | Primary voids
4. Matrix | Intangible relations
5. Matrix | Taxonomies
6. Manifesto | Cairo as a city of archipelago

MID scale _Matrix

1. Matrix | Density
2. Matrix | Trajectory
3. Matrix | Connection
4. Matrix | Scale
5. Matrix | Pattern

These interpretative matrices of the five islands –Mnemonics | Fluvial | Topographical | Rural | Desert– restore the complex urban composition of Cairo, revealing the importance of the concept of void and its implications in urban fabrics. All this therefore sets the stage for thinking about the Void as an element of regeneration of the islands where social unity, a sense of belonging and dwelling could find their place within the urban composition.

15 DESIGNS_ APPLICATION_ DESERT ISLAND_ REGENERATION OF THE PRIMARY VOID OF THE DESERT ISLAND WITH THE ONTOLOGICAL CONCEPT OF VOID IN ITS TRADITIONAL SENSE



5 DESIGNS_ MATRIX_ MID SCALE_ DENSITY, TRAJECTORY, CONNECTION, SCALE AND PATTERN



6 DESIGNS_ MATRIX_ MACRO SCALE_ FABRICS, INFRASTRUCTURE, PRIMARY VOID, INTANGIBLE RELATIONS, TAXONOMIES AND CAIRO AS A CITY OF ARCHIPELAGO



RESULTS

*I 262 disegni, organizzati nelle tre scale **MACRO** | **MID** | **MICRO**, che costruiscono un sistema di matrici, non rappresentano solo un apparato interpretativo della città Cairo ma si configurano come atlante operativo per il progetto urbano.*

In sintesi tali elaborazioni configurano:

Un Atlante di Mappe e Collage che tentano di scomporre la complessa struttura urbana nella città-arcipelago –**Mnemonics** | **Fluvial** | **Topographical** | **Rural** | **Desert**– dove ogni isola rappresenta le diverse condizioni urbane del Cairo, analizzate su tre livelli:

MACRO scala _ Individuazione delle cinque isole urbane

MID scala _ Analogie della struttura urbana di ogni isola

MICRO scala _ Studio degli elementi e dei principi caratterizzanti di ogni isola

Sistema di Tools _ Le matrici finali di comparazione consentono l'individuazione di strumenti operativi del progetto in relazione alle attuali trasformazioni urbane dei Vuoti.

Una sperimentazione progettuale nel Vuoto urbano della Desert Island.

Si configura come degli appunti progettuali per la trasformazione e mutazione del vuoto architettonico in una delle isole. Intervenendo nella dimensione del Vuoto attraverso la sottrazione, l'addizione e la traslazione si propone uno spazio pubblico con l'intenzione di definire una nuova identità urbana sia a livello spaziale che sociale.

The series of 262 drawings, organized in the three scales **MACRO** | **MID** | **MICRO**, builds a system of matrices that not only represent an original interpretative apparatus of the city of Cairo but also an operational atlas for the urban project.

In summary, these elaborations configure:

An Atlas of Maps and Collages that attempt to break down the complex urban structure into an archipelago-city –**Mnemonics** | **Fluvial** | **Topographical** | **Rural** | **Desert** - where each island represents the different urban conditions of Cairo, analyzed on three levels:

MACRO scale _ Identification of the five urban islands

MID scale _ Analogies of the urban structure of each island

MICRO scale _ Study of the elements and principles that characterize each island

Tools _ A system of matrices propose the operational tools of the project in relation to the current urban transformations of the Voids.

A design experimentation on the urban void of the Desert Island.

It is configured as design notes for the transformation and mutation of the architectural void into one of the islands. The traditional concept of emptiness in all its competence and dimension that through subtraction, addition and displacement reforms and generates a public space capable of defining and providing a new urban identity both in a spatial and social sense.

TENACIOUS CAIRO_

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REVIVING THE CONCEPT OF VOID IN THE MIDDLE EASTERN TRADITIONS AS AN ALTERNATIVE SOCIO-SPATIAL SCENARIO FOR REGENERATING PUBLIC SPACES IN CAIRO'S ARCHIPELAGO

I_Loquaciousness of the Tenacious City

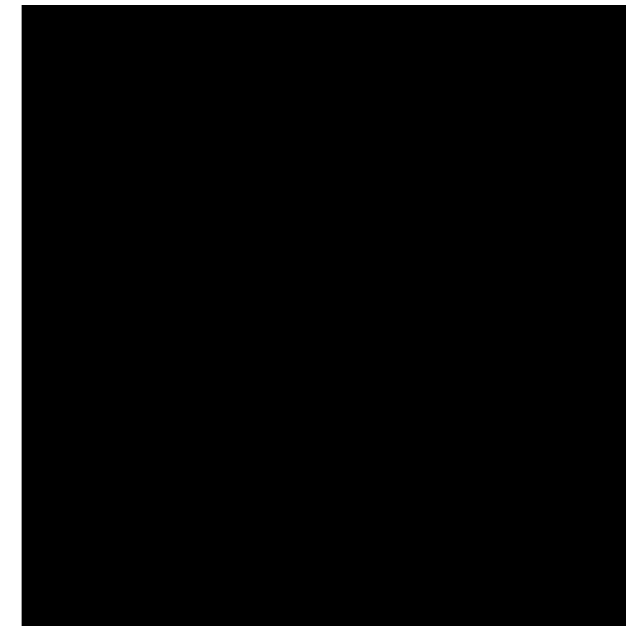


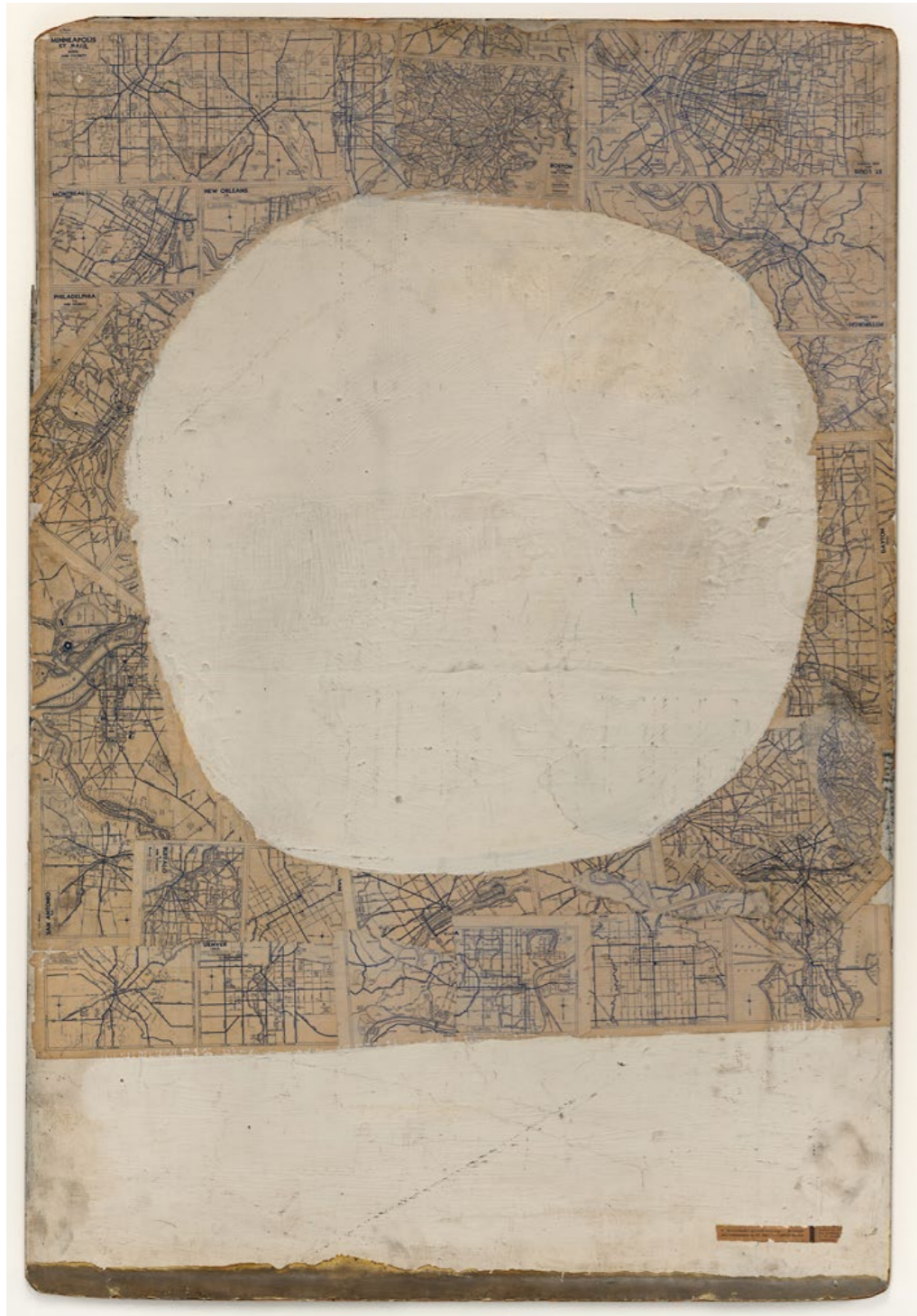
I.1_Abtract_

Our metropolitan city is not anymore a city, but it is a territory with endless dimension beyond any logic of planning where the codification principle of the modern movement and its functional approach through a successive aggregation of rigid bodies influenced by the market pressures, has neglected the concept of dwelling and has generated abandon spaces, interstitial and leftovers with no clear definition. This phenomenon has produced a sequence of fragmentation and disintegration for both urban and social structures. As the concept of void instead of being a collective space in its traditional sense; it became a suspension space searching for its own definition, meaning and identity.

The void is an ontological dogma in Middle-East traditional city; it is the essence of the form besides it generates a sequence of open collective spaces in order to shape the urban formulation of the city and introduces a space of unity that could mutate, transform and transcend all the limited boundaries to construct a strong relation between the dweller's sense of belonging within the space and the urban composition in both physical and metaphysical dimensions.

I.1_Void as the essence of form in the Middle-Eastern tradition





01

01 Rauschenberg, *Mother of God*, (1950).

'An invaluable spiritual road map... as simple and fundamental as life itself'. It also anticipated Guy Debord's creation of psychogeographical maps, such as one published in 1957 titled *The Naked City*, 'dividing Paris into nineteen sections, cut up and seemingly randomly dispersed. The users of such a map are able to choose their own direction... There is no 'correct' reading' (Coverley, 2006).

I.1.1_ The laceration of contemporary cities

Nowadays, inhabitants want to dwell in metropolitan cities that offer dynamic economy, efficient public services, cultural encouragement and social integration avoiding urban and social segregation. But it's not our cities we live in. nevertheless our conception went dramatically wrong by forgetting the main question of what a city itself should be? What are the ethnic origins of the city?

It's important to clarify the huge development of the technological tools in the last century, which help the architects to improve the imagination however we couldn't understand these resources in a creative manner. As Sennett claimed, "*The vernacular environments of earlier times have proved more flexible, sustainable, and stimulating than those designed more recently, which is a paradox.*"⁰¹ This dilemma has opened my thoughts beyond succumbing in nostalgia, to have a deep consciousness of the future of the past.

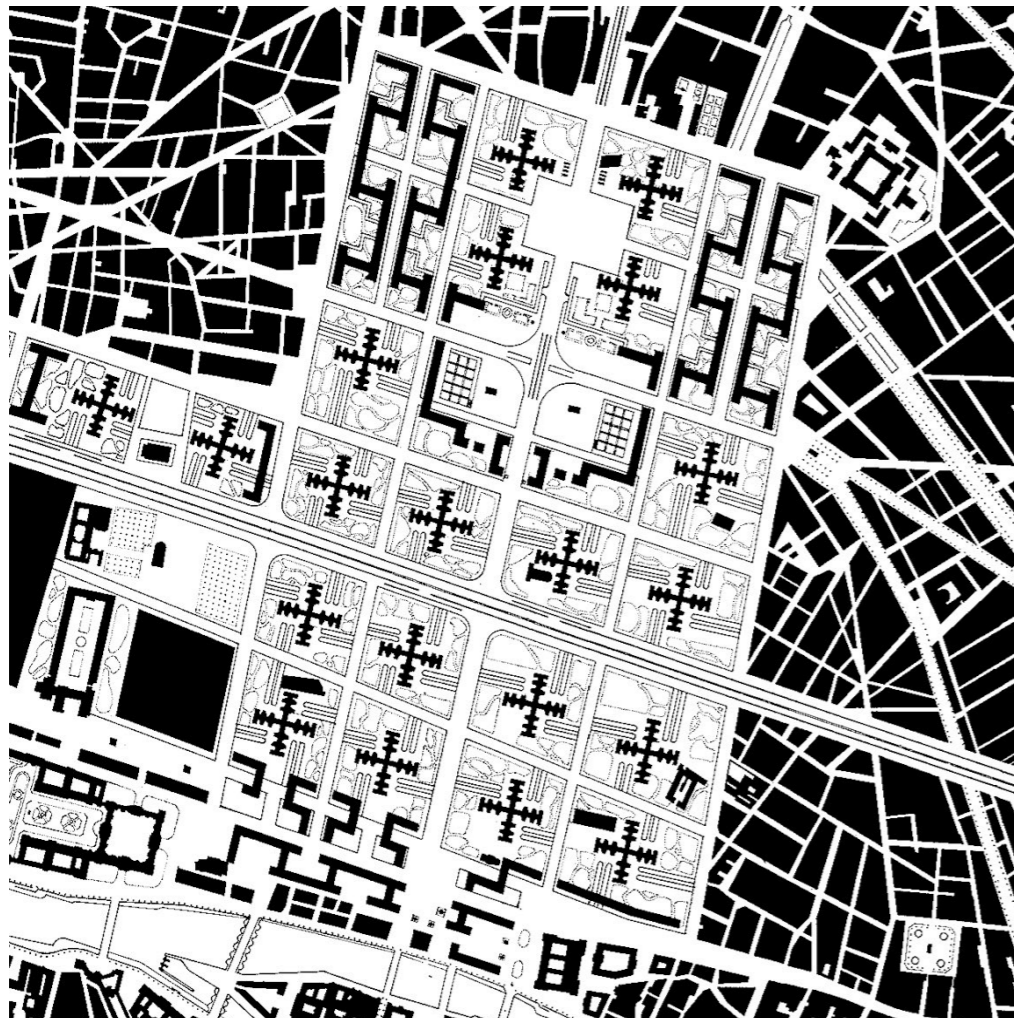
There are two paradigms to approach the future of metropolitan cities, on one hand is a system in harmonious equilibrium, and on the other hand is a system in unpredictable dynamic evolution. Many scholars have illustrated these two paradigms starting from Norbert Weiner, followed by Nicholas Luhmann. Stephen Gould has used the contrast between the two approaches to explore deeply the potential of using the unpredictable system as a way to respond the uncertainty and instability rather than the equilibrium environments, which are in fact inflexible.

This condition, clearly defined by Harvey as a situation of "*time-space compression*"⁰², highlights an unstable and uncertainty evolving condition derived from changes, that has converted the way with which we produce, we consume, and we think about space, coming to the progressive break of spatial barriers. Uncertainty, obscured and unknown are the basic components for tales to be able to write on the city that have raised an important question of how we think about the form of the city in future as well as its current situation.

01. Richard Sennett, "The Public realm", in *The Blackwell City Reader*, (edited by) Gary Bridge, Sophie Warson, Chapter 28, Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2010, p.1

02. David Harvey, *The condition of postmodernity: an enquiry into the origins of cultural change*, Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 1989, pp.284-307

02 Le Corbusier, *Plan Voisin for Paris*, (1925).



02

The essential principle of the equilibrium paradigm is inevitable form, determination is necessary to structure the built environments, which cease innovation, interaction and incapable of adaptation to the dynamic changes. In the metropolitan city of today, this paradigm has shown its negative impact on both the urban form and the social integration where the threat is exceptionally observed in the rapid growing cities of the developing countries. The vastly placement of the form accompanied with a specific function provides rigidity that limits the dialogue between the city's maturity and its uncertain future.

One of the well-defined models that directed 20th century urbanism was *Plan Voisin* by Le Corbusier in 1920's. Le Corbusier has replaced a large area in the historical center of Paris by uniform X-shaped buildings in order to imitate the industrial revolution. He sought to transform the social life in the ground horizon by infrastructure to serve the traffic and circulation. *Plan Voisin* was against the disorder of the street vivacity as le Corbusier wrote is 'impure'. The fear of impurity cultivates in the unconsciousness of architects as urban form, economic and social elements were codified in advance of practice. Mono-function was the keyword driving the development of the concept of the city. The harmonious equilibrium pre-planning has become prevalent in the modern urbanism.

This perception about the city has increased and deeply intensified the fast decay of the urban fabrics regarding the one inherited from the past. For instance, the average life span of a new residential building in Britain is now forty years, the skyscrapers in New York is thirty-five years.

This is a symptom not of insufficient construction but rather the absolute purpose of defining and using that complicate the ways to think beyond the rigid form, where clarity and purity have hindered innovation and interaction, besides have left the city frozen in time.

Many architects today are inspired by the mantra of sustainability without thinking profoundly about what sustainability entails. Sustainable environment is a homogeneous equilibrium between all its components to be perfectly efficient; thus, it is a term of equilibrium and integration. In terms of the usage of natural resources such as; water, electricity, etc. seems only practical criteria. But in relation to the social aspect it is not. The desire for balance situates an anxiety on policy-makers not to constrain but to avoid sucking resources. The limit always is the threat of ignoring other issues, so a part of the whole should occur in the same time. Balance in a social order can sacrifice conflict for the sake of harmony, as if everyone has the same balance, one of the consequence is to ignore innovation or experience as it could confuse the whole vision. In urbanism, the idea of experiment and innovation is unpleasant for the authorities, as they are always scared from disorder; both the value of balance and order could become the main tool of suppression.

Metropolitan cities are developing and growing by mimicking other models, which is not relating to the essence of belonging to their territories. Simulation has affected the whole plan of Buenos Aires in the late of the 19th century based on Haussmann's Paris, or what happen in the urban growth of Dubai as a new version of Manhattan or Vegas. James Salter claimed that "*An illustration of life rather than life itself*"⁰³, where Illustration are naturally attracting us however "*Life itself, takes time more seriously; we cannot simply repeat what came before and expect it to work for us; time subverts, alters, de-stabilizes; in natural history, this is evolution's guiding law.*"⁰⁴

The rapid growth prevents memories of the past from being within new territories. This phenomenon was accompanied with the industrial revolution and it became so clear by 1950 in the Western countries, however now it touches all the constituents. Today, there are more than 300 cities with more than one million inhabitants and more than 30 of them with over 20 million inhabitants where most of them situated in the developed countries.

The necessary premise to understand the contextual complexity of contemporary cities is to avoid parochial visions related to explicit development in the metropolis. They are more than this; they are territories in fluctuation where lost tales of memory, time and space have led to some various challenges, such as unplanned urban sprawl, inadequate distributing of resources, a critical asymmetry in economic-political engagement and social segregation, as dwellers lost their sense of belonging to their surroundings.

Every place in its essence seems intended to wind-up, to lose identity until it becomes nothing more than function. "We are in a territory that is home and it is not, in which we are, and we are not that we are living as a contradiction."⁰⁵ It's crucial to address this problem with the idea of restoring the origin places, in the traditional sense of term, in a regressive and reactionary way. We need to explore the spatial and the architectural forms, which recognize the past in order to understand the conditions to mutate our city's development.

03. Richard Sennett, "The Public realm", in *The Blackwell City Reader*, (edited by) Gary Bridge, Sophie Warson, Chapter 28, Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2010, p. 7

04. Ibidem

05. Massimo Cacciari, *La città*, Pazzini Editore, 2009, p. 36

The conception origin of the city

First and foremost, it will be extremely challenging to discourse the issue of contemporary cities without digging deeply in the lost tales of the conception of the city not only the interlocutor of morphology and typology but also terminologies, ethos and laws which articulate the city formation. For instant, in Latin there is no correspondent to the Greek term *Polis*. The Polis intends spatiality, dwelling, abode and places where certain inhabitants *Genos*, have a special lineage, specific group with same roots and ethnics. The *Polis* term resonates with an idea of deep roots, places where determined people has specific traditions, customs and above all has its own ethos. Polis is the place where is situated the ethos besides the place where inhabitants could dwell.

The ontological and genealogical concepts of the term Polis is inconsistent in the Latin term *Civitas*. *Civitas* manifests the origin of the city formed by the *Civis*. *Civitas* is derived from *Civis*, therefore it is the product of what people established together in the same place under the same law. In Greek Instead, the relationship is extremely overturned, as the fundamental term is *Polis* and the derivative is *Polites*, the citizens.

Thereby, the correspondence between the term of *Polites* and *Civitas*; the second designates the city while the first, the citizen. The Romans define the concept of *Civitas*, as it is the product of gathering different groups of people under certain laws beyond the ethnic and religious determination. This is absolutely a peculiarity characteristic and extraordinary of the Roman constitution compared to the history of Greek cities. It is crucial to understand that the politics in Roman history dominates the city.

In the Greek civilization the city is profoundly the unity, the same inhabitants with the same roots and ethnics and we can completely understand the concept of the *Polis* as an idea indicates to the dwellers themselves, generating the concept of the citizen. In contrary the Romans believe in the concept of the city where various groups with different backgrounds, religions and ethnics are collaborating together only under the strength of Law.

In this sense, we can undoubtedly recognise that the *Polis* is interconnected with the sense of belonging and believes of the dwellers in their origins and abodes. Through the Greek history, it is significant that every *Polis* remained an island, which is separated and isolated from the other one, in relation to its own roots of lineage and ethnic, but only in the great dramatic events they can federate under pressure to vis a vis this occasion.

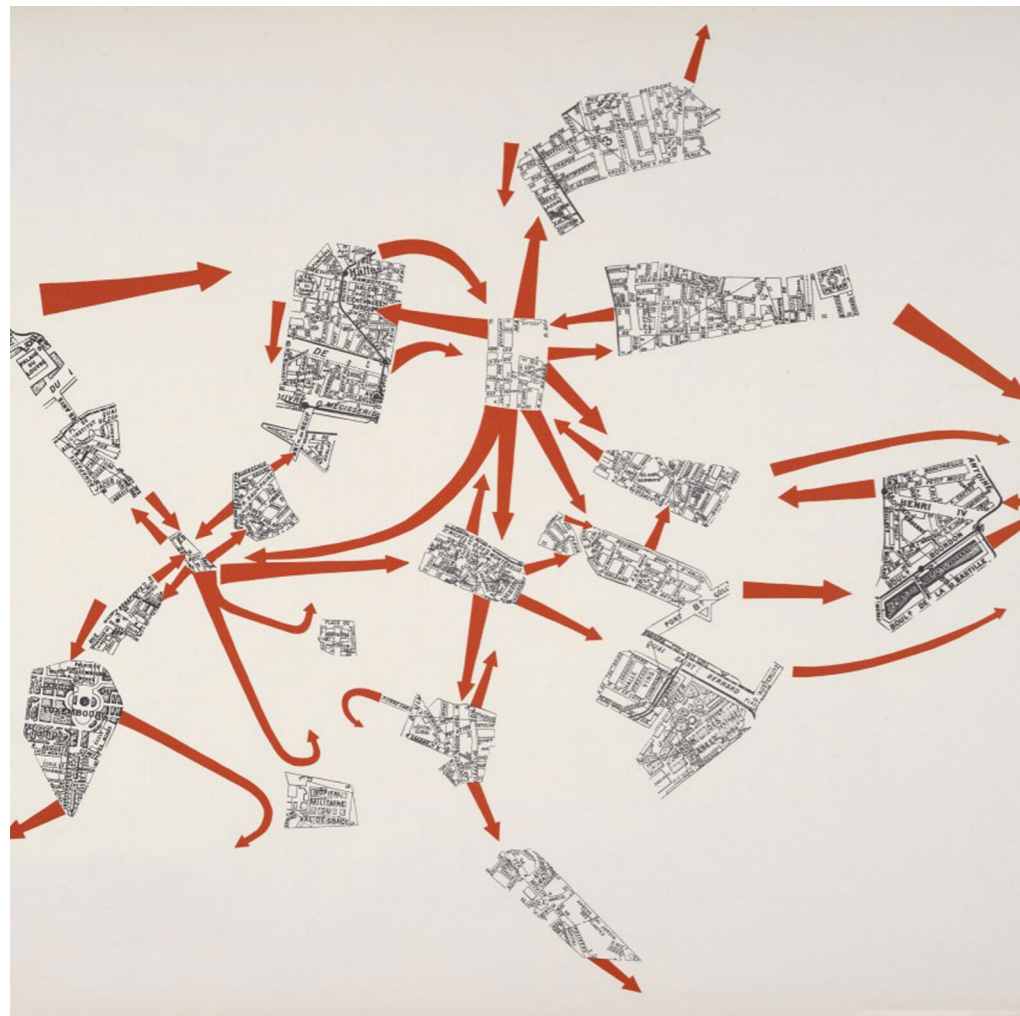
Therefore, the colliding of these concepts reveals the difficulties of creating larger federal units, as every *Polis* is not a *Civitas*, it can't absorb and integrate the others in itself.

The idea of the citizens in the *Polis* is to be free however if you are not belonging to the *Genos*, you will have the condition of *Meteco*, The Guest. It is very similar to what the Jews and the Christians had in the Muslims Cities.

Indeed, some historians believe that the concept of Hospitality in the Muslim cities was the base of true multicultural and multi-religious cities in the Mediterranean basin. Where this paradigm was assuring a complete tolerated and recognized possession of the guest's personal rights, traditions and freely practice his own cult, but without the exercise of political rights.

Consequently, there is an extremely distinction about the concept of the city which we are trying to explore. On one side, is it the city with high ethnic values or it is the one included in the concept of *Civitas*. When we are elaborating the democracy in the Greek history, we have to put in our consideration that it was based on the ethnic and religious ideas, while in the perspective of the Romans, it was obviously artificial product; the citizen has all the rights but under a certain regime of laws in which citizens have to obey strictly. These citizens who have different backgrounds and races are together only for a common purpose.

03 Guy Debord, *The Naked City*, (1957).



03

Naturally the Roman *Urbs*, the city, has a strong symbolic value; it is part of the essential duties of the *civis* that has to be venerated. It is the centre of the empire, where there are the great political institutions such as; the Senate, the Republic and the Emperor. The concept of a certain lineage or race does not exist.

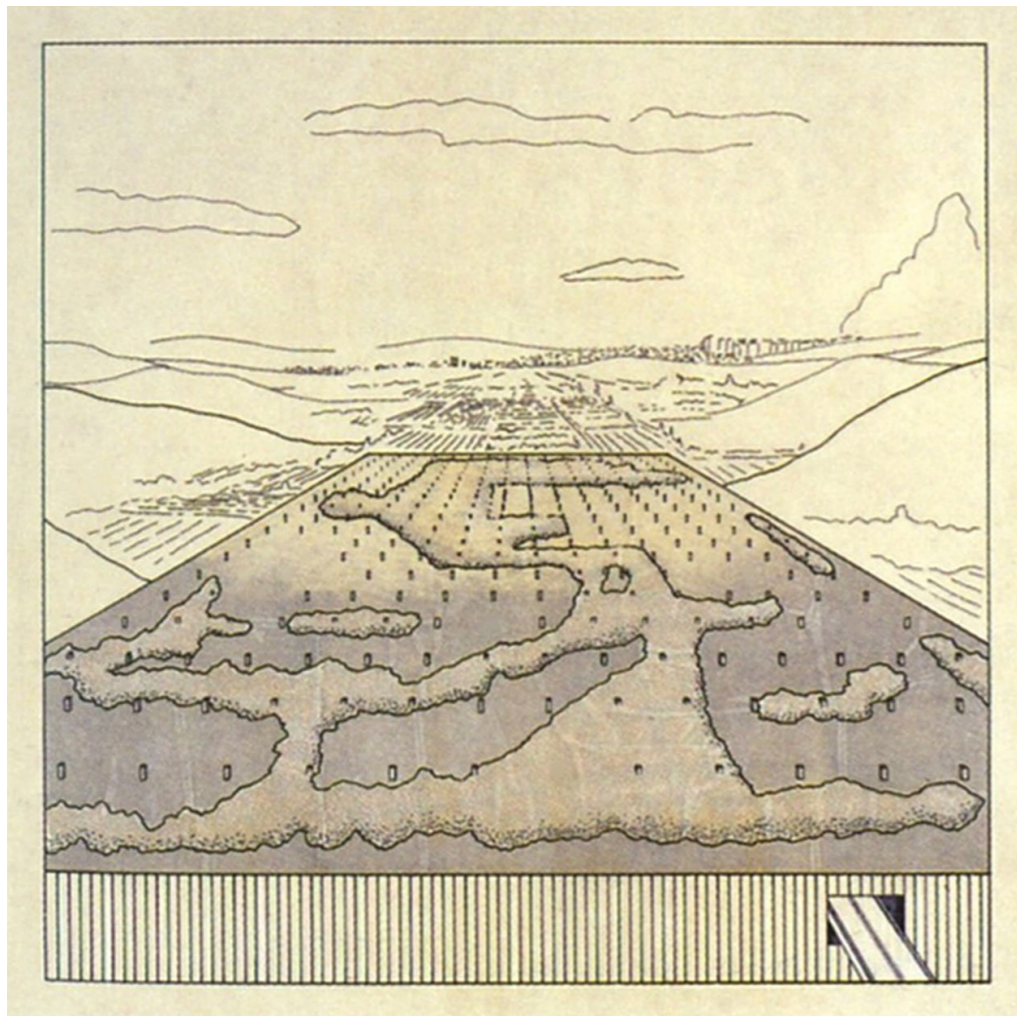
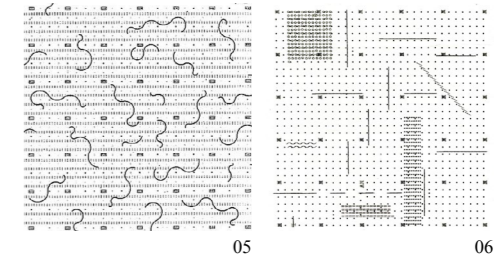
Another interesting idea, in this context was the city as mobile in its pure essence. It is one of the most significant epithets in the Roman period, which means that the city is extremely dynamism in its own myth, eager to find its origin and disparate elements. The origin of the city is the supreme influential factor as the origin is the cradle of the city and the origins of Rome were based always on different groups of people and elements.

The city is projected towards the future with the power of the gathered groups, the citizens, not the past of the gens, ethic and blood. All the citizens are together to pursue an end, a goal, and this is the main concept of the *mobilis*. It was stated clearly in the poem of Aeneid, what is the goal to be achieved by the city? "*The answer is: imperium sine fine.*"⁰⁶

In Virgil conception, it is an endless empire, the city must give orders and laws to the whole world and so it can control all the other cities, so it is clear that the implicit idea of what is keeping the *civitas* together is not the original foundation but the ultimate aim. The harmony between different people surveillance by the same law, could generate the great goal, *Roma Mobilis*.

This idea is nothing more than globalization making the world a city in all its spatial and temporal dimensions; nowadays *mobilis* concept is the base and the DNA for the whole west culture, completely inextricable and the foundation of the same political theology.

04 05 06 Archizoom, "No-stop city", (1970).



04

It is inconceivable compared to the *polis*: reading Plato and Aristotle, we realize how dramatic the problem of an excessive growth of the polis was for them; how it could be possible to preserve the idea of *genos*? In the laws of Plato and the politics of Aristotle the problem is always how to maintain the spatial characteristics of the polis, otherwise all the structure will collapse.

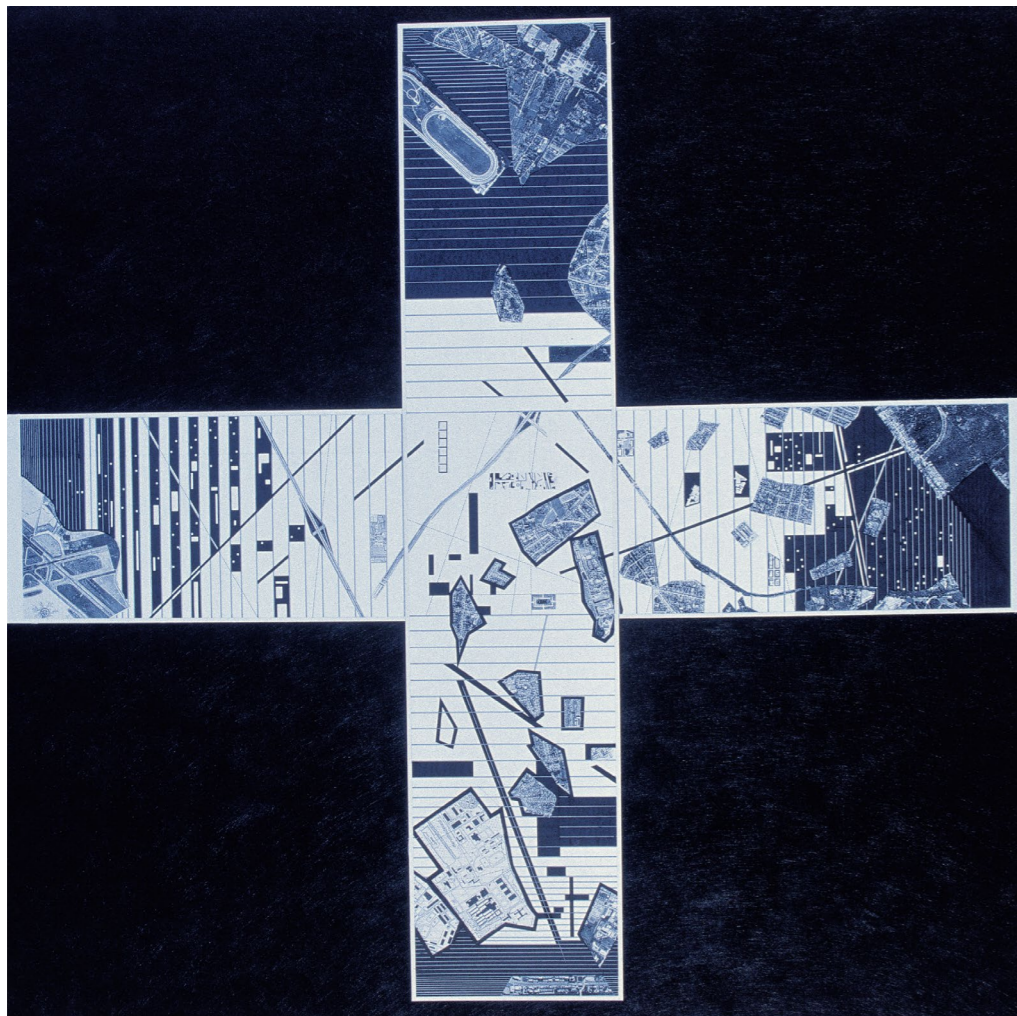
Obviously, the programmatic fundamental character of the *civitas* is to grow, there is no *civitas* without the idea of *augescens*, growing. It is completely delirious to go beyond the safe boundaries of the city without putting in consideration the physical and metaphysical origins of the city.

European cities development was based on the Roman *mobilis*, where different sort of people is agreed to accept and to obey specific law. In fact, it is not only the European law, but also the dominant Western institution, which is the Church. This paradox between the *Polis* and *Mobilis* poses a significant problem towards the way of living, and yet, we have to think sensibly about the tension and the conflict towards the dwelling place and the universality, the human dimension and the non-stop city, the rhetoric of the Polis and the dominant laws of the *Mobilis*.

The dilemma to return to a well-defined space, to a well-defined territory that allows social relation, participation and integration or the roman one with a law, senate and emperor. It is a matter of choice amid; the origin or the end, the lineage or the law, the ethics or the mission.

There is another tension that characterizes our relationship with the city; and it is more specific to the modern city. On one hand the intention towards the city that is a place of dwelling, where we can have the sense of belonging and where we can recognize ourselves and on the other hand the city that we consider as a machine, a tool and a device.

07 Xaveer De Geyter , "After-Sprawl", (2002).



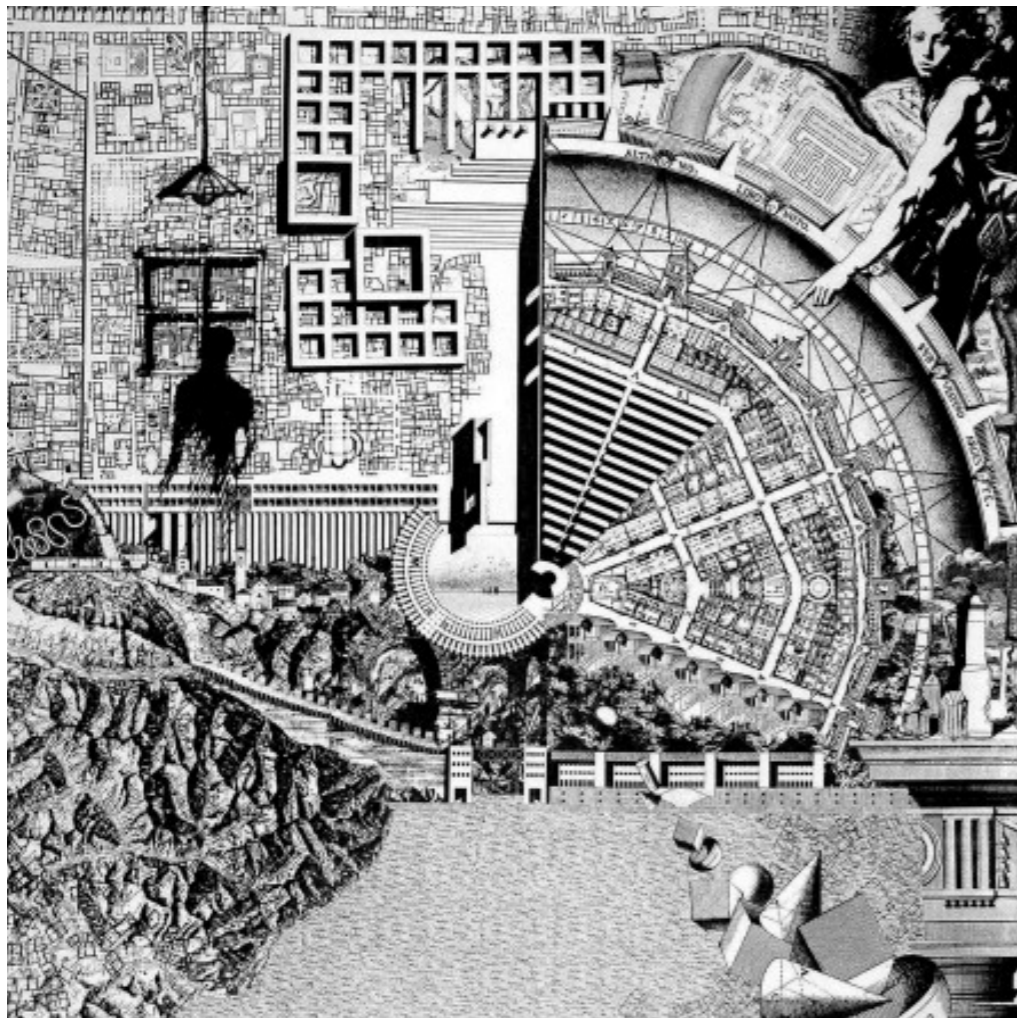
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The paradox that we are unceasingly asking the city is for absolutely altered issues, and this paradox exists through the history of the city; when the city is reduced to be only function, we are searching for our essence and nostalgia and when it is becoming more mythical and spiritual, we are seeking the growing and the functionality of the city as a proper machine. In this sense contemporary cities are confronting two different approaches with the same identical intensity, towards a city of movement, exchange and universal mobilization or a city as a place of dwelling, symbolic and communications with a certain *otium*, leisure.

The position towards the development of the contemporary city appears more literally schizophrenic. "The metropolitan space transcends all the old boundaries, rushing along the lines of its movement. But then behold, the contradiction! On the one hand the essence of the metropolis is extended in a space as a prior form; on the other hand, this is constantly contradicted by the gravity of the bodies and memories."⁰⁷ This contradiction is fascinating and promising as it could open the door for new ideas, thoughts and paradigms.

In the history of European cities, the idea of the *Urbs* was presented in the good government where the city offers the elements of communication and dialogues beyond the mythical aura, ambient. This idea of the city was destroyed later after the baroque when the industry and the market started to dominate, and hence the metropolis appears. As in the medieval cities, the cathedral and the governmental palace were the figures of the city; in contrary the modern cities took the places of production and exchange as their key figures where every element of the city is articulated around them. The city was arranged and organized around these moments; urban planning was constituted; programming interventions was elaborated around these new factors, known values. In fact, the industry has certain localization needs accompanied by certain functions as housing. The space in modern cities is developed around these well-known, rigid and fixed forms.

08 Aldo Rossi, "The Analogous city", (1977).

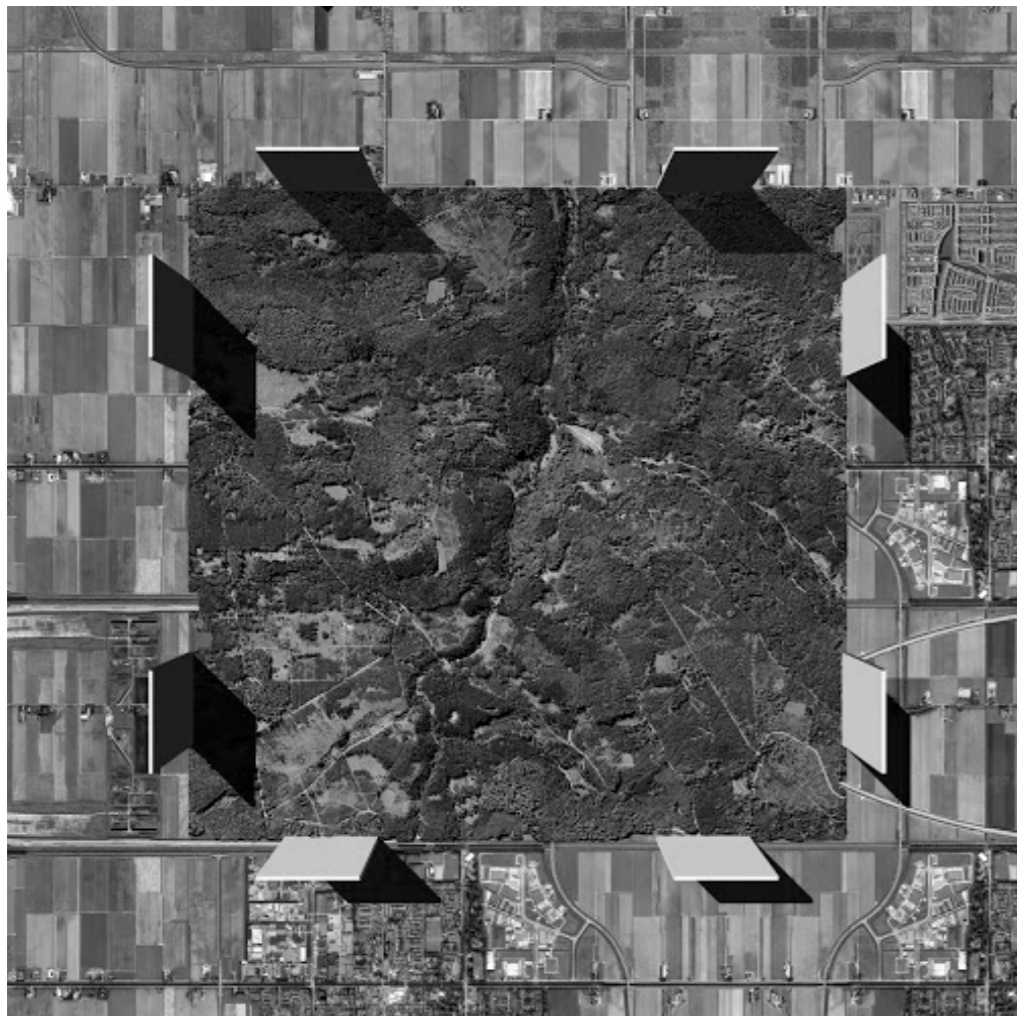


08

The evolution of the metropolis was determined, as the development idea of the European city was not the *Polis* but the *Civitas*. The urban civilizations of antiquity have rich territories, forms and spaces but they are stable in their forms as they are always connected to the terrain roots. Contemporary cities are big cities, metropolis; this is the characteristic feature of the modern planetary city however every traditional form has been dissolved.

Once upon a time the forms of the city were absolutely different, distinctive as in Rome, Florence and Venice but now there is a unique *Urbis* or rather a single process of dissolution and laceration of each urban identity involved in contemporary metropolitan cities.

09 Pier Vittorio Aureli, Dogma, "Stop city", (2007).



09

I.1.2_Simulacrum territories as result of fragmentation

This process of transformation in the metropolitan city reaches its fulfilment in the city-territory, and it generates new origins of centrality such as the place of production and market. The human relationships are reduced as all the new designs; transformations and mutations were based on static variables. The traditional symbolic places that are suffocated by the affirmation of exchanges actually disappeared by the vast growing of the city and the nervous way of living.

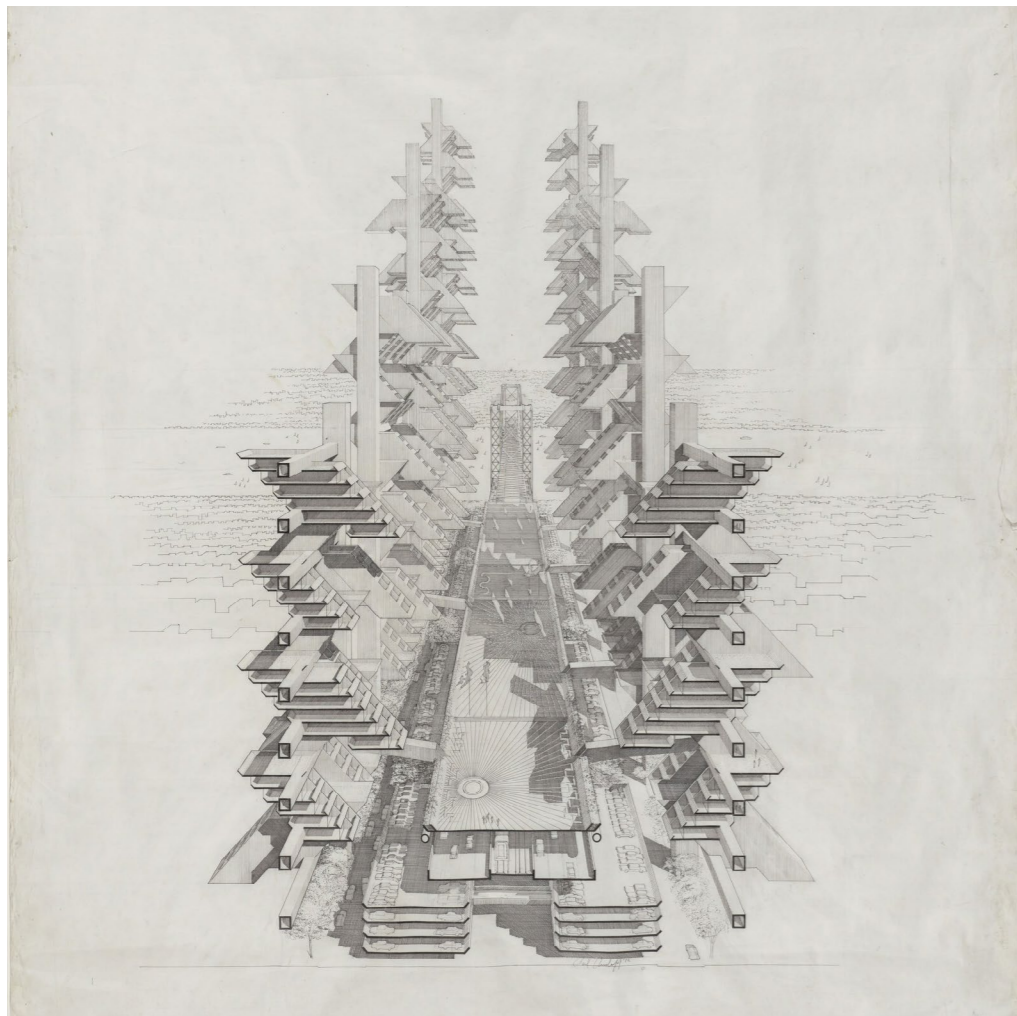
The new forms became massive, physically bulky; looks like the big containers where their essence is in being mobile and dynamic. They are forms that produce a mobilizing, confusing and displacing dimensions.

The metropolis is now articulated on the foundation of the dominant and central presence of production and exchange, memories became museums, thus ceases to reflect our collective consciousness as memories are the foundation of building new societies when they are ingenious and influential, otherwise our historical cities and memories, will be hospitalized and prisoned by transforming them to just a museum.

The territory of the metropolis demonstrates multiple presences such as: indefinite and indifferent spaces inside its own space. The events occur on the basis of logics that no longer correspond to any unitary concepts. Rapidity and growth express the instability of the old centres of the Urbis, the rapid transformation cease memories from being preserved within the dwellers.

Extrapolating from the current situation, it is so clear to predict that vast architectural and urban forms, undifferentiated area regurgitating representation, financial and managerial functions stacked around the peripheral residential areas, massive commercial areas has no relaxation with the space and leftovers produced from the manufacturing production. All these elements are connected by occasional events. They have no relation to any urban and social logic, though they are other spaces.

10 Paul Rudolph, "Lower Manhattan Expressway Project", (1972).



There is no doubt that the territory where we live constitutes a radical challenge to all the traditional forms of community life. The displacement that it produces is real. All terrestrial forms tend to dissolve in the network of temporal relations. It is essential to bring back the space to its essence to be able to think about the future of the city. Metropolitan territories ignore silence; no interlude, no pause, to gather ourselves consciously and subconsciously.

The city cannot recognize distances, as distances are enemies. Every place in the metropolis seems destined to collapse, loose intensity till it becomes nothing more than a passage, a moment of universal mobilization. Contemporary urban planning has progressively moved on the orientation that they guaranteed, trying to rationalize the use of space on the basic foundations.

Each building refers to perform a defined mission with specific potentials and properties. Understanding and confronting this philosophical and aesthetic paradox is a must. The energy that releases the metropolitan city and de-territorializing shows an anti-spatial territory. It is possible to affirm that this process had already begun with the modern metropolis, however; does it tend to express itself in its completeness, as each spatial metric is perceived as an obstacle to be solved.

This phenomenon is evident in the evolution of American city and in particularly in the developing countries such as Egypt. In these territories it's impossible to find places of belonging in the space-time of the territory, as inhabitants live a part of their day in the universal mobilization and then flee in what the American sociologists call the "gated community", the inhabitants are closed if their income allow it, they are in a prison under the manifestation of safety and elite-life. The more physiologically unsure of the life in the city-territory, the more we seek the impossible sinecure of the abode.

This necessity for closed communities probably responds to a profound need of our essence, because it is not easy to live in universal mobilization, to live in a simply temporal prosody. But the contradiction is obvious: if the closed space states, on one hand, the need for community, on the other it states the need for privacy: both as a lifestyle and as a conception of practicing of right.

Our metropolitan city now is not anymore, a city; but it is a territory, as we cannot define exactly where the city starts and where it ends. The borders become virtuously administrative and artificial, they have no geographic, symbolic or political meaning.

An indefinite territory with different functions allocated inside, beyond any logic and planning; they are just allocated according to specific interests, market pressures, but not according to an urban paradigm to be able to reveal the cradle of the city. Even when the protagonists of the modern movement had planned the city, it was derived precisely from the fact of fundamental functions.

The territory remains to 'specialize', but beyond any overall paradigm. It is actually the death of all the 'codifications' of the Modern Movement, of its way of thinking about the city as a successive aggregation of elements, abandoning the concept dwelling by replacing it to the concept of building, in order to reach the functional pole, to the whole city as a 'container of containers'. And so, the death of every abstract typology.

It is true that the polarity still exists in these spaces; different activities still we can define as 'central' where around them diverse forms of connection and mobility. Polarities could be found in many places of the city as they are always accompanied by the strong events produced by commercial and productive containers. The decision towards the growing and development of the city is related more and more to the investment with no relation to the traditional axes of expansion of the city.

In this sense we can affirm with a paradoxical formulation that we inhabit a de-territorialized territory. The territory in which we dwell is no longer spatial, no longer easily to be defined as the traditional ones.

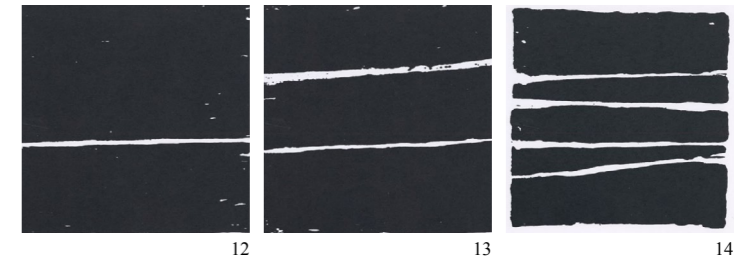
The development of the city from a metropolis to a territory is therefore not programmable: this is the drama of all architects and urban planners. The struggle is not contingent on their ineffectiveness; it depends only on the impossibility of programming. Moreover, as it attempts beyond any administrative boundary; the administrative boundaries are all fictitious and artificial, but they continue to be there, and this generates serious planning issues such as; fragmentation, disintegration and segregation which need to be solved by the city.

The dissolution of the memorial, symbolic values of the growing city that we witness has a drastic development goal, as this process is literally, senseless and has no origin dimension. Indeed, it is the metropolis of abstract intellect, controlled only by its goal of production and market exchange.

It is naturally that the system considers every spatial element as a barrier, useless ballast, and a residue from the past to be spiritualized. This raised an important question of how we can understand the post-metropolitan territory; the negation of any possibility of place or they will be able to invent their own places beyond their vitality that seem to have been denied?

11 12 13 14

Rauschenberg, "Exist in Passing Time", (1951).



11

I.1.3_Void as a ghost-writer in metropolitan cities

The journey towards Tokyo, Sao Paulo or Cairo; is no longer a journey for a city but they are territories in which their matrixes has no relation with any spatial sense. The relation is only temporal based on time not the space; no one is focus any more on the distance but the time it takes to mobile through it.

Spaces for these territories became a barrier, surely it takes revenge for these temporal metrics of ours, because spaces have inertia. The revenge of the space is an impediment and damnation. The problem is crucial as on one hand, our minds think in term of ubiquity and thus to dwell the space as a damnation and on the other hand we are requesting the city to be more organized, offering spaces of belonging.

Nowadays, we need more radical transformations, because the demand of mobility has grown out beyond all the criteria thanks to new technologies that have a great conflict with the space, especially when it resists or didn't transform. Moreover, the rapid transformation of the metropolitan spaces become more and more related to the event; event that surpass the function. For example, the supermarket is not a building, but it is an event related to temporal measures, so territories appear as a collation of events. Thus, the metropolitan evolution that radiate from the center become capable of overwhelming the traditional persistence.

This phenomenon that we are witnessing; performs to be irreversible: this expansion becomes more occasional and less planned. The expansions of the metropolitan city devour the surrounding territory and reduce the impact of the soul or even lose it. It is a sort of spatial crisis to the metropolis. Dwellers have to react immediately, to discover their own essence to be able to face the growth that has no comparison with any other moment in our urban civilization. And yet, the city has to provide us places of dwelling against these forms of impetuous, violent and mobility; places where we can feel our souls, essences and identities.



15

15 Paul Klee, "After the flood", (1936).

The time in the metropolis contrasts dramatically with its spatial organization, with the 'heaviness' of its forms, with the mass of its containers. The masses of the metropolis do not turn into energy, but rather absorb it and consume it. Exactly the opposite of what happened in the traditional city, where there was a correspondence between the times of the functions, of the works, of the relationships, and the quality of the architecture, where the architecture enriched and boosted the quality of the whole.

It is important to rediscover this correspondence without replicate the traditional forms. The space, time and memory will be always the key factors to reveal our lost tales, ethnics and ethos to be able to invent a new paradigm those analogies the metropolitan life and express our collective consciousness towards spaces of unity.

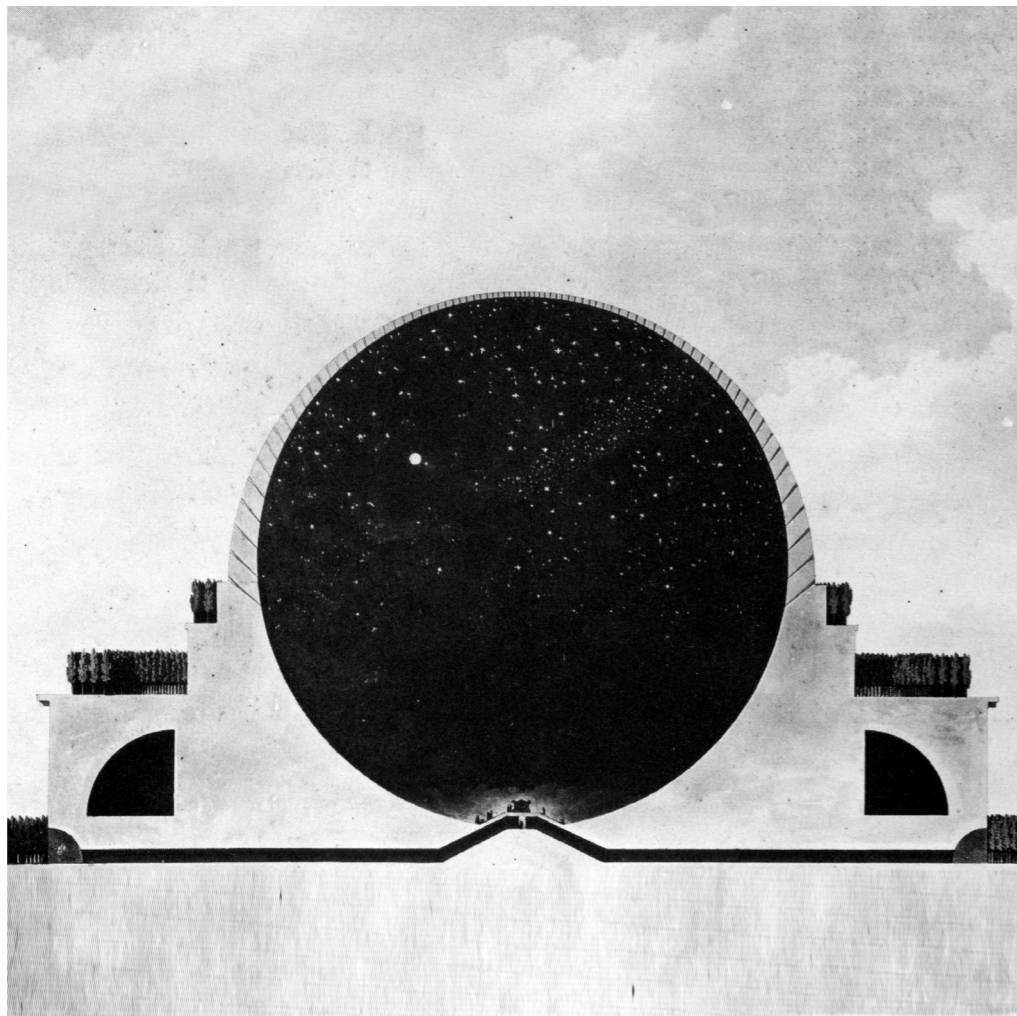
The myths and images of speed and ubiquity surely obsessed our culture and cities, where spaces that have been constructed, are defined, delimited and confined but behold, our culture need different spaces; spaces that are not closed and completed, contradictory to the vastly flow of the territory, spaces we belong too.

This is absolutely a tangle problem as metropolitan spaces are still using the metaphor taken from the contemporary physics in which the space has strict relativity however what we have to reveal for the post-metropolitan territory should be a space with general relativity.

The concept of the space has to be flexible, able to deform, mutate and transform within its process of reformulation, and thus, the distribution of matter will change unpredictably. The overall idea about the space will be resulted from the interaction and interconnection of different bodies, which could offer more sorts of elasticity and purity, space that can offer a place of welcoming, reflection and imagination.

16 Étienne-Louis Boullée, "Cenotaph for Isaac Newton", (1784).

The experience is a mere punched out absence in a series of black. What was new about Boullée's design was the endless perception, lying in the space. What Boullée imagined was a monolithic plainness, dark surfaces swaying between flatness and endless depth of void. More than just romantic horror vacui.



16

Each element in such a space is like a monad that coexists the whole in itself, embraces within itself the concept of the whole: a universal individuality. It is not a solely ideological procedure to suppress the boundary: anybody has borders, but it is only a question of anarchically confusing relationships between different time and space. It is rather a matter of tuning without confusing, generating the whole form of living with the quality of each part.

Inhabitants will never have the sense of belonging in spaces that are segregated and protected from the whole of the territory, the feeling of being more alienated will be surely the result, as separated, closed and protected places will never let us feel the abode. For the post-metropolitan territory, we need more traditional concepts of the space where we can communicate, interact and belong.

Still politicians and architects should try to overcome monofunctionally; they should deliberate truly multi-purpose forms. The hospital, the school, the university, the museum, the theatre and the offices of the Municipality still exist: we continue to design and intervene architecturally, politically and urbanistically, for the disconnectedness of the city by creating rigid bodies. Multifunctional forms with multiple uses could accommodate different backgrounds, functions and inhabitants that could make the form more consistent with the current form of living.

Every form is rigid in the territory where there is no longer any place. Inhabitants need to have symbolic values in the city while the politicians are answering by some theatres, universities and hospitals that are only new containers.

The traditional forms like the mosque for instant, was a poly-functional; it consists of school, hospital, dorms and above all a place for worship. Thereby, in the metropolitan city, there is no a collective space that could offer the relation between the dwellers, space and the community.



17

17 Giorgio De Chirico, "Melancholy and Mystery of a Street", (1914).

De Chirico distances himself from the investigation of spatial-temporal factors. He illustrates silent and independent shadows that often trace an irrational path and have a life far-removed from the objects they refer to. His shadows establish themselves as ontological entities of voids, capable of bringing urban form out of the shell of indistinctiveness.

It is impossible to rebuilt forms with just symbolic values like in the past to face this issue in the post-metropolitan space but we should understand the origin of the space in order to renounce to the great symbolic pretensions, which threaten at every moment to fall into ridicule. The territory, sadly to say only offer us strident contradictions in these dissociations.

*"The concept of city seen similar as compositional process that allows you to bring together, in a synchronic level, objects and figures of conditions and different origins, lacking an apparent logical connection that binds them, but that refer to each other through the imagination and experience of those who evoke autobiographical."*⁰⁸

It can be said that the recent forms of voids have increased and consequently intensified the process of economic, social and urban disintegration to such a great extent that undermines and erodes the architectural artefacts, but also the soil, infrastructure, urban fabrics and above all the social structure of the city. This stresses the necessity to understand and define a new meaning for these forgotten spaces to resurrect.

The complexity is a condition inherent within the urban phenomenon. This complex condition intersects temporality and spatiality without a unitary concept or essence and is found only through voids, with a partial possibility of defining and understanding. Nevertheless, in a city composed of many different sets and subsets, it is possible to recognize a unitary character through the primary element of omnipresence, which is the void that could provide the city with the narrative experiences to reach its sublime collective reality.

Only the form and its elements do not characterize this phenomenon but it is constituted by the relationship, many times is distorted and obscured, though the void can provide a clear understanding of the sonata of spaces which can illustrate an urban identity. Aldo Rossi declared *"Any good architect tends to naturalism, ... tends to reproduce the existing."*⁰⁹

08. Cit. Carlos Martí Arís in Andrea Di Franco, Barbara Coppetti and Alisia Tognon (authors), "Ethos vs Aesthetic living the symbols: space-time framework in analogue city", in Proceeding of EURAU 2014 COMPOSITE CITIES, Istanbul-Turkey, November 12-14, 2014, p. 2

09. Cit. by Aldo Rossi in Andrea Di Franco, Barbara Coppetti and Alisia Tognon (authors), "Ethos vs Aesthetic living the symbols: space-time framework in analogue city", in Proceeding of EURAU 2014 COMPOSITE CITIES, Istanbul-Turkey, November 12-14, p.4

The image shows the musical score for John Cage's piece "4'33" for any instrument or combination of instruments. The score is presented on a black background with white text and musical notation. At the top, the title "4'33" is written in a large, bold font, followed by the subtitle "for any instrument or combination of instruments" and the composer's name "John Cage". The score is divided into two sections, I and II, each marked with a Roman numeral. Section I consists of five staves of music, with a tempo marking of 60 beats per minute and a 4/4 time signature. Section II also consists of five staves of music, with the same tempo and time signature. The score is minimalist, with no notes or rests written on the staves, only the time signature and tempo markings. The copyright information "© Copyright 2014 by Henmar Press, Inc., New York, NY" is visible at the bottom of the score.

18 John Cage, "The anarchy of silence [4'33"]", (1952).

The note affirm the existence of void with the capacity to accommodate various of invisible elements. Deleuze's ideas in this event become visible when he considered that The event is the identity of void. It is not the object as denoted, but the void expressed or expressible, never present, but always already in the past and yet to come.

Void as ghostwriter for the contemporary city can give a unitary idea to the entire city that is both tangible and intangible dimension as they are primary elements that construct cities and dwellers, they can be identified as monuments in the broad sense, more than spaces where urban scenarios is materialized, or spaces that is left over from the architectural and urban forms. "The feeling of the sublime is experienced in the tension between the empty and the material object."¹⁰

The form of the metropolis accommodates and also mutates, the same myth of the traditional one: connections, interchange and borders. Behold it went to dramatic way in which it lost its relations with dwellers, as dweller has lost his sense of belonging, where memories and mnemonics became nothing more than function and scale.

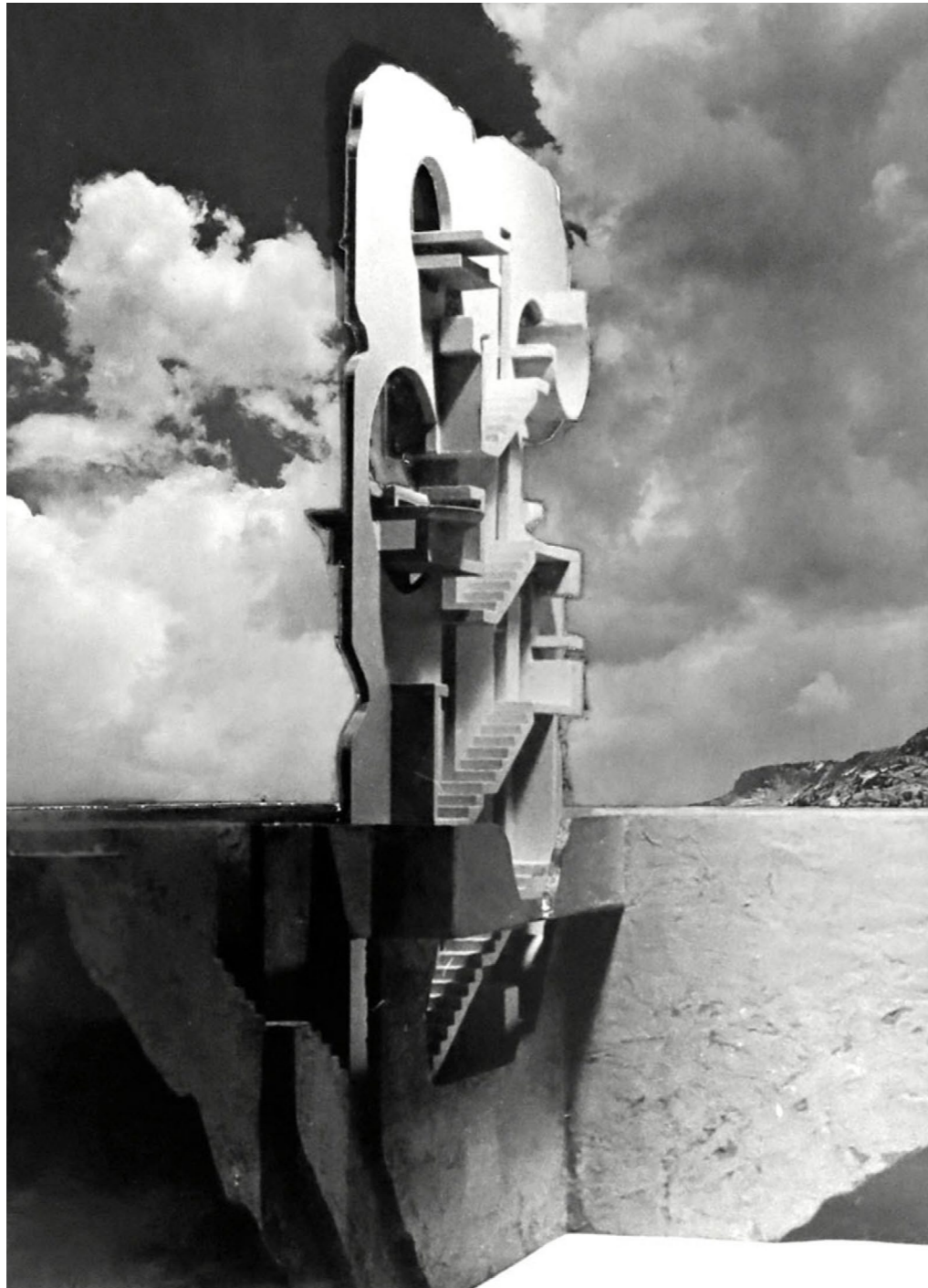
To re-read these urban spaces of the metropolis, as extended and complex forms must be associates with deep understanding of the essence of the city itself. The omnipresence of the void is inherently and enduringly in mutation. It is not only a space, with an irreversible and unstoppable flow, but it has a deep relation to time and memory. Let us consider Leibniz' relational definition of space: an order of coexisting things "Ordre des Coexistences."¹¹

Void is a space that could be genuine for a new socio-spatial paradigms beyond the physical dimension of the city as not only generate the relation between the coexisting things but also it orders the coexisting dwellers in the urban scenario. It is the witness to the transformed and eroded geography, morphology and social culture. Thereby it folds an experience of succession revolts, as result of changing different geometries and forms where unstable edges, uninhabitable surfaces, hazy territories entropy to find its own identity. "The Void, even if invisible, is [...] paradoxically what allows things to become visible, what guarantees their visibility. The void is nothing but the distance between the elements of reality, the sphere in which their relations are defined. Without the void the objects do not exist, or rather, there are no recognizable objects."¹²

10. Cit. Emanuel Kant from the philosophical theory of Analytic of the Sublime

11. Leibniz' letter to Samuel Clarke in G.W. Leibniz, *Opera philosophica omnia*, Faksimiledruck der Ausgabe 1840 (Aalen: Scientia, 1959), p. 752

12. Carlos Marti Aris, *Silenzi eloquenti. Borges, Mies van der Rohe, Ozu, Rothko, Oteiza*, Editore Marinotti, 2002, p.149



19

19 Raimund Abraham, "House without rooms", (1975).

Void has a value beyond emblematic, minimal and abstraction, it is dominant and the essence of creation and sensation. So it is essential to interpret the mutation between something and nothing, dynamic and static, light and darkness. Formless, prosaic and ethnic matter is crucial to explore the concept of void. Peter Brook in his book *The Empty Space*, points out that within emptiness we can create other spaces. Behind the tragedy of uncertain significance, there is always a comparison with reality to be had. The seduction is born from the dialogue of voids within the city.

The idea lingers between metaphysics and realism. From this threshold, difficulties and thoughts from different perception appear in relation with verification and uncertainty. The requiem of void is inspired by the contestation between the two opposites "empty and full" where the tug of their continuous tension and constant mutation define reality. From the same perspective Deleuze argues that "*Void is 'substance' in which they communicate and express intra-events, it is always between things and inter-being.*"¹³

It is time to bring back the void to its origin by not just mark it as a strong sign in the metropolis but also as epiphanies of relation and metonymies, an interlude of time carrying a strong sense of confining the urban and social structure of the city.

20 Aladrisi, "World map", (1154).

From this map we can understand that the south was up and vice-versa



20

I.1.4_Void as ontological dogma in the eastern culture

There is nothing more timely today than the concept of void which is eternal, than the ontological dogma that comes from tradition and is significant now because it has been relevant at all times. Such a concept belongs to present, past and will be present in future. To speak about the concept void in the traditional way of thinking is to speak about immutable origins that construct an interlude in time and space.

It is crucial to discuss the continuity of the implicit doctrine in the middle eastern cities, which is the method whereby this doctrine are connected to dwellers, and whereby the concept of form in the traditional sense that are symbolized within men. The traditional essence, as here defined is related to the Middle-Eastern culture, it is not custom or practices but rather a deep conception of dwelling and integration.

Tradition is a transcendence of the most vital element, which are believes in its universal sense, continues as long as dwellers are inseparable from their context. "Tradition as thus understood is the 'presiding Idea' of a normal society and the animating principle of the whole life of a people. Where tradition governs, namely in the traditional societies or civilizations which have been the rule throughout most of history, every facet of life, not least what man makes, is related to the tradition's spiritual principles." ¹⁴

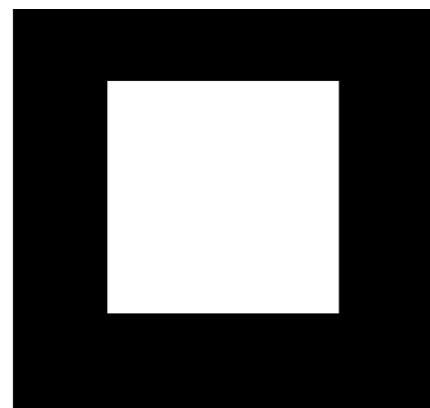
Middle-Eastern culture reveals a distinguished paradigm of the form essence wherein can be clearly detected the presence of certain immutable origins that have dominated the whole civilization in both time and space.

Void in the ontological concept is a reflection of matter, spirit and even of the form of the traditional revelation. However, unfortunately, this concept has been seldom considered with the aim of understanding its symbolic and metaphysical significance, undoubtedly not nearly to the same extent that one finds in the case of the Western cultures.

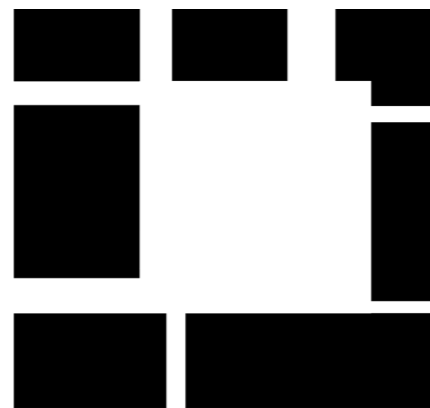
14. Seyyed Houssien Nasr, "Foreword" in Ardalan Nader, Laleh Bakhtiar, Sense of Unity: *The Sufi Tradition in Persian Architecture*, Abjad Book Designers & Builders, 2000, p. XI

21 Author, "The concept and the composition of the void in the Eastern and Western culture_ diagram", (2019).

An illustration showing the main difference between the concept of the void in the middle eastern tradition regarding the western formulation of such a concept.



Void as origin of space



Void as negative of objects



Cairo I Ibn Tulun mosque



Roma I Piazza Navona

The void is one of the supreme manifestations of the traditional roots where dwellers live and interact with certain logic, and must be surrounded by forms that resonate transcendent archetypes. Void is sacred space for dwelling, which it has conveyed into being and inhabitants. And even when it ceases to exist outwardly, it still endures internally.

The concept of void is one of the most primary origins in the tradition essence as it is the transcendence of the space to become a space of unity. To dig deep in this concept, a few of the traditional basics regarding architecture and its constituents in time and space have to be remembered as were once manifest to all but unfortunately now become forgotten and neglected.

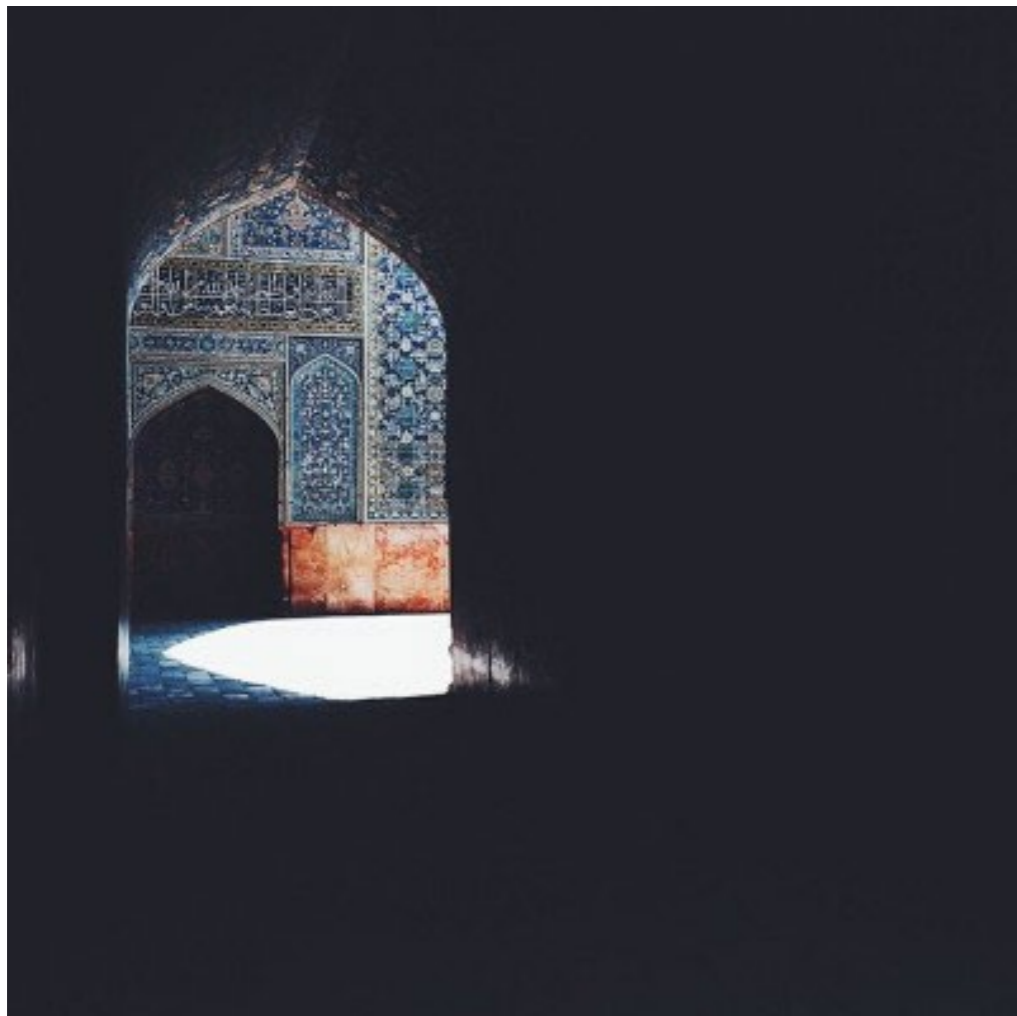
The city formation according to the Middle Eastern point of view is depending on the strong relation between the macrocosmic and microcosmic dimensions within the perception of the dweller.

The concept of the city was based on the relation between the positive forms and the main element of coexistence, which is the void. As void is the main element of creation, it provides the basic coordinate system to define the cosmos, the city and the man in their complete archetypical essence. Though void is the primary element to unify the origins of the different scales.

The position of the traditional cities was selected on the criteria to create a relationship between the three different dimensions to generate the supreme achievement of the concept.

Cairo for instance, had an outward sense where it was situated beneath the mountain to provide the fundamental logic of an order place in the cosmos as the mountain generate those reference points which define dweller's terrestrial being.

22 Unknown Author "Masjed Al Shah, Isfahan".



22

Moreover, an inward sense that exists in the voids, generating the form of the city fabrics, it is craved out from the form but actually it is the form itself in its metaphysical concept, where the architectural elements emphasize the internal void as a centripetal transcendence towards the locus of the spirit veiled esoteric the nature, the form and the dweller himself. As Ibn Al'Arabi argued to pursue the implicit 'batin', for ultimate supreme is within one's self.

Cairo has been throughout Middle-East history one of the outstanding epicentres of art, economy, politics, city formulation and above all the inhabitant's sense of belonging where the concept of void where always the primary element as an implicit doctrine for connecting various scales such as; dwellers, city and cosmos, as its architectural forms in labyrinthine of the city formulation are one of the best archetypes reflection that emphasize this concept.

The city is arranged through temporal forms united together through a paradigm of voids reflecting the cosmos archetypes. Different dimensions with a basic intention, only express multiple scales typologically, morphologically and terrestrially.

Thus, the city and its architecture respect analogous techniques tempered only by the approach of manifestation, which is to be manifested. The dialogue between the explicit 'form' and the hidden 'void' is the ultimate formation of the city where the focus is always the void that excavates the built-form.

Architecture forms in the region of the Middle East and especially in Cairo, like all traditional architectures, is intimately related to cosmology. Dwellers inhabit in a universe that is eloquent. The cosmos reflects the Divine. Believes and origins reflects dwellers. Therefore, dweller is intimately related to the cosmos, which is the microcosm and, like the cosmos, reflects the Meta-cosmic Reality.

23 Ibn Tulun Mosque, "Cairo".



23

“All of the elements between dweller and the cosmos portrayed in so many traditional texts, far from being naive and ‘poetic’ “descriptions represent a profound reality and reveal the nexus, which binds the different levels of man’s existence to the corresponding levels of cosmic existence. Only a humanity that has become blind to the higher levels of its own existence could fail to ‘see’ the higher levels of cosmic reality and could reduce the cosmos to its purely quantitative and material aspect—to the ‘it’ which has become the subject of study for the modern quantitative sciences and the object of the unlimited exploitation of modern technology.”¹⁵

Traditional architecture, focusing on the temple in general and the mosque in particular, is also a revelation of the cosmos or of man in his cosmic dimension. The body of the man is the temple wherein dwell the spirit, as well as the cosmos which vigorous by the same spirit. The roots for the thoughtful of traditional forms, which extends the principles of sacred geometry from the mosque to practically every other architectural form and finally to town and city-planning itself, is based on the existing relation between voids.

To inner-stand the concept of void as an essence of the form, it is essential to understand the perception of dweller not only regarding the totality of architecture including the micro and macrocosmic dimensions but also the elements, where the space which is the centre of the form is the most original.

The forms of the mosque, palace or house in the traditional sense is all inspired by the sacred architecture; it is composed of the void as a primary element of creating the form, it is the reflection of the cosmos, the locus of the dweller and the Divine word and logos.

The strong relationship between the void and the form in which defines and qualifies these forms is exposed in a strong manner in the “Positive spaces”, as voids are “cut

out” from the material forms to be defined from the inner surfaces of these forms, it is the essence of the form itself. In modern Western architecture, the architecture form is placed within a space where the form is defined by its purity, denning the relation to the context and memory. The void became the result of what architectural forms have left. Plato's chore and clarify this phenomenon according to which the object denies what it is not, or distinguish itself from everything that is not, however in the traditional concept Ibn Arabi described in his book *The Meccan Revelations* “*Praise to the creator who has created everything from Nothing and Negated it.*”¹⁶

Void is ‘excavated’ from the forms around it and in other words, it is the inner space that creates the outer form in order to achieve the sense of unity. Voids is an outstanding element wherein can be obviously strong relation between time and space to ensure the continuity of the city development.

The concept of void is ultimately origin in the Middle Eastern culture as nothing is the essence of everything, refuses to identify a genuine domain of the purely secular or profane in contrast with the sacred, where dweller are in continuous exploration for his own spirit and locus which can be revealed by the void that can put all sets and subsets in an terrestrial order.

This relationship between the dweller and the cosmos is rooted and sustained by the void principles, which are the essence of all these realities. Man, city and cosmos are utterly related through the same primary element ‘the void’ in their ontological reality. From this perspective we can read the architectural forms in its totality as sonatas and interludes. Where dweller in his incomplete reflection and limited perception is in a journey towards the origin for himself in relation to elements, memories and matter his own creation that comes from the god and whose phenomena are in the most profound sense ‘*Vestigia Dei*’.

*“Cartesian philosophy was instrumental in quantifying space for Western man to such an extent as to obliterate, practically all memory of the qualitative space upon which all religious rites and orientation are based. In Islamic architecture space is never divorced from form: it is not the materialization of abstract Euclidean space which then provides a frame into which forms are ‘placed’, space is qualified by the forms that exist in it.”*¹⁷

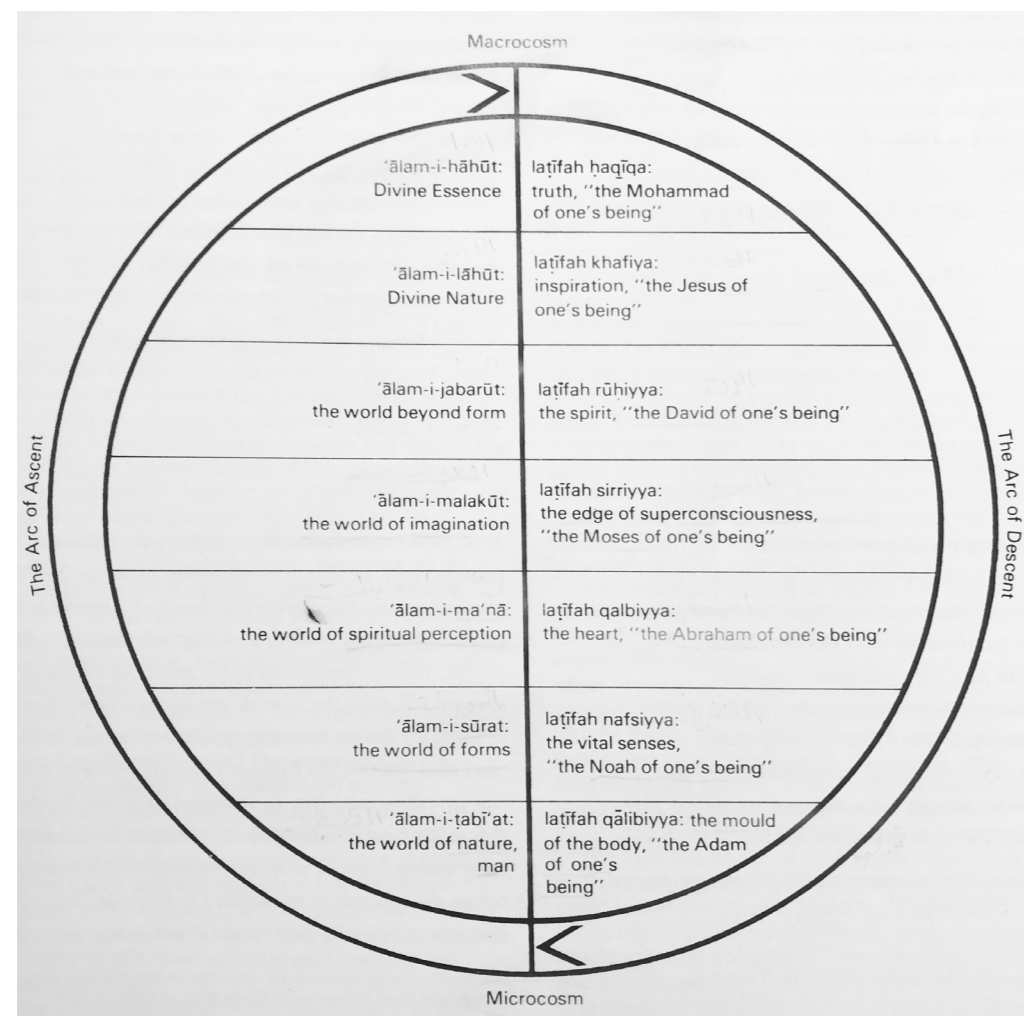
The concept of space in the Middle Eastern culture is composed of both the container body and the contained spirit. It doesn't have only a tangible existence but rather the consciousness of the beholder who perceive the physical boundaries while his intellect perceive the spirit as contained and defined within the boundaries.

16. Ibn al'Arabi, *The Meccan Revelations*, Volume I, Publisher Pir Press, 2002, p.1

17. Seyyed Houssien Nasr, “Foreword” in Ardalan Nader, Laleh Bakhtiar, *Sense of Unity: The Sufi Tradition in Persian Architecture*, Abjad Book Designers & Builders, 2000, p. XII

24 Nader Ardalan, "The arc of descent and ascent of seven stages", (1973).

The creative ascent to the Divine, which is a latent potential in all mankind, may be accomplished through Divine grace in the seven levels of realization through man's seven subtle centers.



24

I.1.5_ The mysticism of void as space of unity

The mysticism of void as space of unity is a concept that intends not to cancel the multiple as a mere phantom; it is the return to the apeiron, which is the womb of all our cosmos and forms. It is necessary to rescue the multiple; we must understand it, as the multiple is the manifest of logos that implies relationship between subject and object, between one and many. It implies a calculation and excludes any revealing immediacy.

From the traditional point of view the centre point of a circle is representational of the Divine manifestation at a timeless moment. The inner point of the circle manifests the primordial existence of the Divine and the circle symbolizes the reality of the Divine presence and its unity. The circle in sacred geometry is the state of creation. "The circle surpasses all other geometric patterns as the symbol of cosmic unity, its inner core or hidden centre becoming the timeless moment of the revolutions of time and the dimensionless point of the encompassing space."¹⁸

In this sense, the centre and radius of a circle could reveal the Divine relation with man and could also unfold the concept of unity between the creator and dweller. This ternary circle and its centre and radius reveal the Divine relationship with man and also unfold the unity of the creator and creatures. Moreover this threefold "centre, radius and boundary" signify the first logical form of unity and multiplicity.

The concept of unity is reflected by the ultimate generation of centrality, as the archetypal of centrality is extended into various scales. Each form holds a central point and surrounding points that are arranged around the center in different dimension. This pattern is repeated in the city complex defining a strong relation between the centers that generate the space of unity within the city formulation.

The supreme centre or the void as the essence of the form, is a connection between the terrestrially and celestial dimensions, which reflect the supreme Holy Precinct in their own territories, poles that qualify space within the city.

18. Cit. by Chritchlow in Hamid Aghaei Rad, "Gnostic view in Contemporary Islamic Architecture (in case of Ardalan)" in DIMENSI Journal of architecture and Built Environment, Volume 41, July 2014, p. 21

Also generating a strong connection with the landscape such as mountains and rivers as a sacred geometry and a reference in the terrestrial dimension regarding the point of view for the dweller.

Void as a space of unity; regulate the form of architecture and the pattern of the city formulation besides provides the architect to achieve synthesis and totality in generating forms and formulating cities which help the dweller to fit and integrate his daily motion towards the centre. The void fulfilled in the traditional architecture pursues understanding its own essence in indigenous matter.

The sense of unity unfolds both in the micro and macro scales, each centre or void is echoed in the entire complex of the city where this connexion and reappearance of void underline symbolically the concept of unity where the idea of multiple is within the one. The unity folds the concept of inward in both dimensions as Ardalan states "*what better symbolism for the idea of centrality, of inwardness?*"¹⁹.

Life vested within the brute materialization of void is sprung by the continuum of variation due to its perpetual flow and diverse metamorphosis from one state to another, approaching it as a space of unity that morphs into a magnet that provide us with the possibility to understand our city structure. As void is a 'plane of immanence'; attracting the collective nostalgia, dweller's belonging and the sense of unity. According to Deluze and Guattari, it is a plane of immanence; a space that create concepts that interweave into realities. Herein, void serve as communicative plateau, where dialogues between fold within the soul and of matter conquer space, acting as a cohesive space where tales and materials spiral infinitely in different moments to fold and unfold one other and each other. In this frame void is established as a monument that insures cities continuity through conveying a sense of nostalgia, awakening the archaic order and bestowing upon memory a prestige.

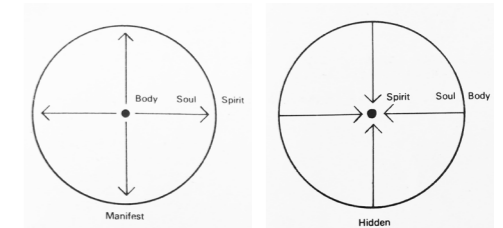
Heidegger for instance, has transformed Phenomenology into way to think and

25 S.H.Naser, "Explicit diagram", (1973).

A symbol of the macrocosm, through the various state of being.

26 S.H.Naser, "Hidden diagram", (1973).

A symbol of the microcosm of a man, in which the physical body is the most outwardly manifested and his sipritual nature is the hidden one



25

26

understand, as any radical fluctuation has to be followed by a reconstruction, with the directed consideration for a new essential ontology to comprehend the structure of being through the phenomenon of dwelling within space.

"Dwelling is not living in a house; it is a verb and the centre of everything we do. It is the sense of belonging. Any proper structure would allow mortals to dwell"²⁰. It is necessary to be conscious about the sublime meaning of dwelling, it is not the place we sleep, eat or even watching our computers.

One city can be inhabited; but it is not possible to inhabit it, if it is not having any relation with our memories, tales and origins. The city should offer spaces; spaces of dwelling and unity where we could recognize our essence, belonging and identity, spaces of silence, pause and imagination as there is no music without silence.

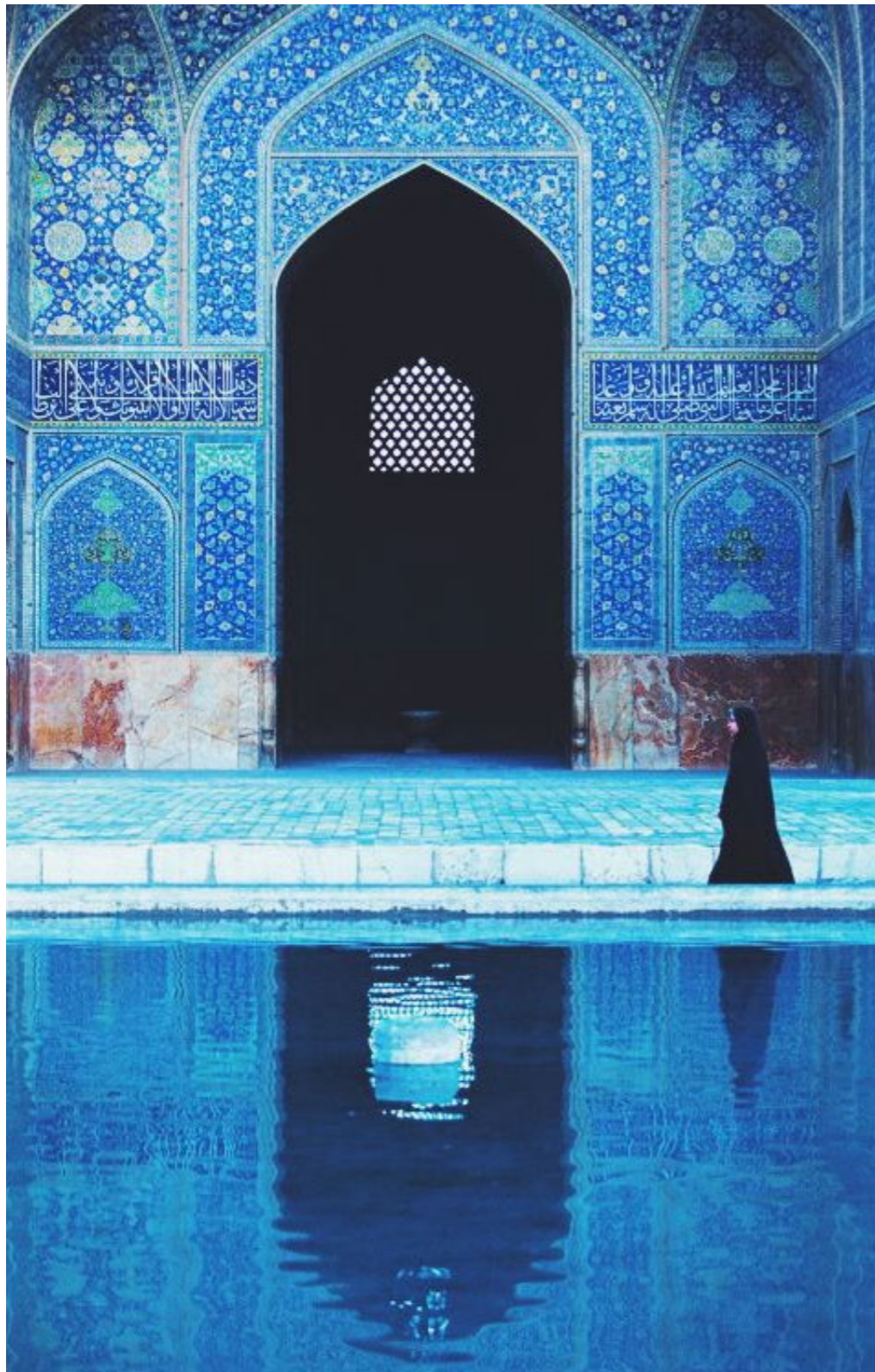
Norberg-Schulz followed Heidegger by assigning the state of crisis in architecture to the breakdown of modern cities as these cities ignored some essential factors that provide significance to the space as space of dwelling, primary among those the role of void within the city, moreover the prominence of history as source of meanings.

The main concept in his work "*Existence, Space and Architecture*", is "space", he qualified space as "existential space", structured by centres.

The centre was illustrated by mythology and mythical origin, which represents a connection between the different cosmic realms. Besides is emphasizing the relation between the "inner" and "outer" domains of existence. He introduced the concept of genius loci, 'the spirit of a place'. Stressing the concept of dwelling as the central concept of human existence.

19. Cit. by Ardalan Nader, Ibidem

20. Martin Heidegger, *Building Dwelling Thinking* in A. Hofstadter, Poetry, language, Thought, p. 68



27

27 Masjed Al Shah, Isfahan.

The void in a way is to synthesis and unify the multiple dimension of dweller life, its orientation and its qualitative polarization are the key elements to understand the city formulation in time and space in the traditional manner. The void and the form are inseparable in mathematics, geometry and the belonging to a certain space. The purely quantitative mathematics and geometry has forgotten the symbolic and the metaphysics of numbers and shapes, they are not only forms and numeric but they have a qualitative reflection upon their realities to provide a symbolic sense and a resonance of harmony.

The concept of segregation between time and space or architecture form and void is to avoid this encounter, however the traditional concept faced this phenomenon in its application to reach architecturally the ultimate paradigm of dwelling and unity, dealing with uncertain conditions.

Thus voids are the strongest and primary element to unify the architectural forms, city fabrics and landscape, as the creative act is less focused on the objects in the space but rather the emphasis on the space itself.

The summit of what intellect could postulate is to generate spaces that contain all the physical and metaphysical dimensions, in which it's crucial to recognize and apprehend these spaces that devoted "*sense of belonging*" as Heidegger claimed. It is greater than just the mathematical outcome of the characteristics, diversities and occasions, but exceed all of these dimensions to expand the accumulation of the conceptions of the dweller to space in particular, successive or consecutive, continuous or interrelated, interconnected or separate.

For instant the square inside the form is also a symbol of permanence and completion, the void is not just a relation with the sky but rather an infinite and limitless dimension showing the capability of such a space to be able to mutate and contain the capacity to unify various elements and matters.

Geometric form is more than just a device that can accommodate the function; it has a supreme significance beyond their own function, which recalls the eternal elements of time and space upon the dweller to correspond to the inner state of the dweller himself. In the conception of the city formation nothing is ever divorced for the meaning. Form, city fabric and landscape reflect its own level of reality that have a common primary element of physical and metaphysical aspect which is the void that define not only these elements but also the dweller.

“Light is a spiritual presence, which pierces the heaviness of matter and transforms it into a noble form worthy to be the dwelling place of the soul of man, whose substance is also rooted in the world of light—which is none other than the world of the Spirit. Colour results from the polarization of light. In the same way that light in undifferentiated state symbolizes the Divine Being and also the Divine Intellect, the colours symbolize the various aspects or polarizations of Being. They evoke in the soul of man a state corresponding to their own qualitative and symbolic reality”²¹.

Colours is another important elements that reveal the world being, as white is the colour of being and uniting all the colours and form the other side the black which is the significance of the nothingness or in another word the nonbeing which is even out of the dimension of being and it is dark because the presence of light. Moreover there is the matter itself, its uses, not only in a sustainable way regarding environment and economy and others, but also the innate characteristics of each material. It is a paradox that in the modern history it was the most materialistic period, however it was only an abstraction concept reducing the matter to only “it” produced by technologies in which inhabitants don't have any relation with its profound essence. The art works and the artisans who worked on the piece of material disappeared, forgetting the level of the matter existence and the substance that has a great contribution in the metaphysical form.

The ennoblement of void through its metamorphosis is the primary paradigm to understand the immutable origins of the city formation in time and space, it is the continuity of certain doctrines and the evolution of the urban forms as sacred spaces where the encounter of time and space as theophany seek the entirety from which the manifold came.

This immutable element is acting as magnetic space dwell not only the rite of the five prayers but also the cultural, philosophical, social and urban activities which affects the formation of the city. The conscious of the traditional architects to reach in a space-time a unity, integrating the different forms of the city, helping inhabitants to grasp the ultimate feeling of sense of belonging.

Forms are composed of an external essence accompanied with an internal and hidden reality, the sensible form which characterized the quantitative aspects such as; the shape of the building or the body of the man, besides the hidden which characterize the qualitative aspects such as; memory and soul. In this sense, it is important not only to pursue the outer essence of the form but also the inner reality to achieve the completeness of totality. To manifest the full sense of this phenomenon, we have to understand the origin of the space. Voids themselves are theophany of the supreme and the origin.

The respect of the void in the Middle-East culture as an essence of the form is representing unity within unity, as the container is constitute through the quantitative law however the contained ‘soul’ is the recapitulation of its archetype. Moreover, the void is the most direct sign of being; it is primordial essence expressing the analogues of the macro and microcosmic dimensions where the movement outwardly and inwardly is reflecting each other or they are the reverse of each other. Once the qualitative essence of the void is clear, it will be directly followed by the quantitative functions and uses.

Thus the void is the origin of the form in traditional culture reflecting the esoteric elements besides providing a sociological relation for the centripetal organization of the space and the space function. In the case of the introvert void in the historical island, they act as a space of unity that generate not only a place of dwelling but also lends itself to other functions, as it pleases the desire of those who aspire to personalize their environment. They accommodate public interest regarding the urban form and social integration. These voids are easily fitted in the historical island generating an inseparable urban structure, as it was the notion of the space within the urban fabric to be formulated.

This phenomenon generates a continuity of flow through voids within the city fabrics where dwellers inhabits and moves through an undulating and continuous spaces that is always united. This conception of the void as central space is defined by the external architectural elements; these elements could be dwelled or used generating secondary spaces inseparable and dependent on the primary space to achieve the light, air and views. This confrontation is happening through different level, the city for instance, is connected through continues spaces of voids which run as rivers within the urban fabrics.

*I am the void
I am the murmur in our consciousness
And when the city threatened
I responded, devoutness*

*I am the strange sonatas
who you are drowsy of my excellence*

*I am who his sin is his significance
and my delinquent, the truth*

*I'm the gladden
I'm the maddening
I'm hard to be anesthetize
And when I am marginalized I cannot be identified*

*And my being when I am out the dungeon, its countless
time who does not end up with my death as a martyr, its limitless
time for me has different intentions*

I'm sagacious and I'm the opposite

Author, 2020

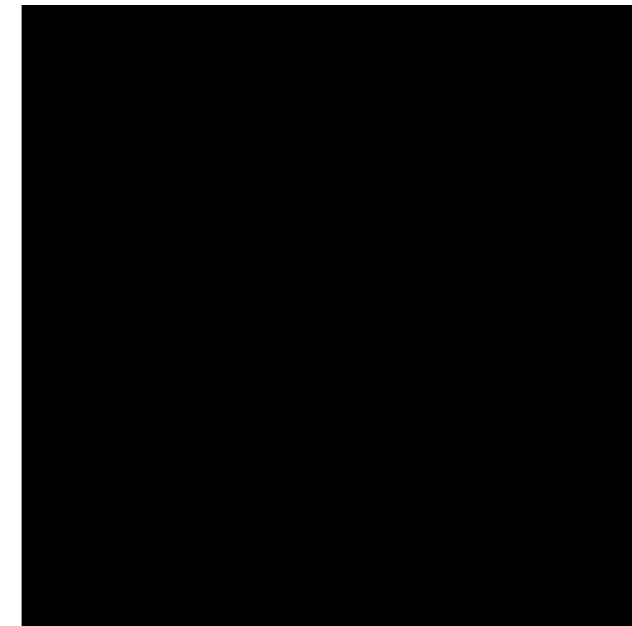
I.2_Abtract_

The theorem of 'City within a city' as a concept is basically transposes the eclectic collection of different urban realities towards a retroactive line of identification within the urban composition of the metropolitan city, to address the negative impact of undefined growth that characterize our cities and introduce an idea to re-read the urban composition of the gigantic city, in order to provide a new ways of regenerating each entity in both urban and social dimensions.

The succession eras of the urban development of Cairo has expressed the clear distinction between its parts, different entities with altered urban structure, ideology and composition in which it manifests itself in the notion of its void as a primary element of the urban composition and it construct the complete image of such urban identity. The desire of standardized all these urban islands under aegis of single vision have always failed due to the misunderstanding of the logic of the multiple within one and the one multifaceted in many. The tenacious city of Cairo is one city with many living collages, a collection of entities generating the whole such as: *Mnemonics, Fluvial, Topographic, rural and Desert* islands, where the divergent multiplicity is the real and unique essence of Cairo urban composition.

I.2_Cairo as a city of archipelago

[requiem of urban islands as five realities]



01 Author, "digram", (2019).

an illustration showing the mediterranean sea content



01

I.2.1_ The concept of cities within a city

*"My first awareness of archipelago was in Indonesia, as a child. I was fascinated that there were more than 400 islands ... The word always had an incredible resonance. It symbolized the separateness, but also the larger entity of something"*⁰¹

In the complexity environment of the metropolitan cities, the phenomenon of growth has led to blur vision towards the city and territory in which it was hard to structure the formless, fragments and the diffuse of the metropolis. The increase in size and population doesn't raise the quality of the city, look at Tokyo, New York and London, but actually it generate a massive technical and organizational problems and finally destroying the dweller's belonging. The concept of gigantism spread and controlled all metropolitan cities, as what is bigger is better, however our urban reality shows us the contrary.

In the seventies, Ungers introduced the concept of urban archipelago or archipelago city as one way to read the post-metropolitan city as the future of the city was still vague. Archipelago has appeared in the debates to rethink about the contemporary cities in order to tackle two dimension in which on one hand, was how to describe the essence of the urban areas and how they are functioning and on the other hand, on how they could be envisioned.

This introduce a new way of thinking, a way to dialectic between the city and the territory or nature and artificial, which it revealed beyond the explicit way of urban planning. This concept and all the ideas that was presented in *Die Stadt in der Stadt*, were the roots for a lot of theories in these years, such as *Learning from Las Vegas* [Venturi, Scott-Brown, Izenour, 1972], *Chicago a la Carte: The City as an Energy System* [Alvin Boyarsky, 1970], *Los Angeles: the Architecture of Four Ecologies* [Reyner Banham, 1971], or the masterpieces of this genre that was published at the end of this decade: *Collage City* [Colin Rowe, 1978] and *Delirious New York* [Rem Koolhaas, 1978].

02 O.M.Ungers, "City within the city", (1977).



02

Cities within a city introduced by Ungers and Koolhaas was one of the first manifestos that revealed the concept of archipelago to address the necessity to think about the negative growth of cities, and also to tackle diverse problems regarding the metropolis. It was also the first such a text to suggest an idea that could reintegrate and precipitate into the metropolitan areas in both exteriors and externalities.

In 1976, Krier worked on La Villette in Paris and he stated that “‘*A City within the City*’ to spotlight his idea that a city is above all composed of relatively autonomous neighborhoods, which must be designed like quasi cities, able to meet most of their inhabitants’ daily needs and structured by hierarchically organized groups of open spaces and public buildings.”⁰² The initiation of the concept started by Koolhaas and was revised and introduced by Ungers to contribute in the theorem development for the metropolitan city, as the concept should basically transpose the eclectic collection of the urban momentous assembled into a collection of urban islands that could develop a retroactive line of arguments to demonstrate that the idea of archipelago is inherent in the history of the city, where Koolhaas states that it is “ a polemic against the ideology of urban reparation”⁰³

The concept of the city as archipelago is not a phantom superimposed upon reality but rather is to reveal the city’s underlying reality and pursued. Ungers in his manifesto identify for his analysis a primary form ‘urban Villa’ to understand the entire city in the form of smaller scale *city within a city*. This encounter is sophisticated and a revelation that resonate deeply our collective reality, it’s not solely a confirmation that reality is very complex but also it can be stranger than fiction. “*Under the threat of doom, the common concern, that is the fulfillment of all private desires within a subliminally collective and deliriously permissive common effort, produces phantom proposals in the knowledge that phantom reality is the only possible successor to the present reality short-age.*”⁰⁴

02. Leon Krier, “Project for new quartier in city within a city” in Martin Van Schaik, Otakar Macel (cured by) *Exit Utopia: Architectural Provocations 1956-76*, Publisher Prestel Pub 2005, pp. 277-278

03. Rem Koolhaas, “A manifesto (1977) The city in the city. Berlin: a green archipelago” in Florian Hertweck, Sebastien Marot (cured by) *The city in the city. Berlin: a green archipelago*, Lars Muller Publisher 2013, p. 20

04. Rem Koolhaas, “Exodus or the voluntary prisoners of architecture” in *Exit Utopia: Architectural Provocations 1956-76*, Publisher Prestel Pub 2005, pp. 253



03

03 O.M.Ungers, "City within the city", (1977).

An exploration from the workshop under the title
Berlin as green archipelago

In this sense, this phenomenon has a strong relevance in conditions where both the separated and the undefined urban systems could be defined within the whole; the multiple which shows us the entity of the whole and unity in the contemporary city. This process of exploration of forms and urban fabrics within Cairo against the rational way of thinking about the city has exacerbated schizophrenic and lobotomy among the lost tales that narrate the implicit urban identity. We can read Cairo from its geographical point of view as one of the factors that affect the shape of its urban composition, It can draw the relationship between the urban structure and landscape, for instant, by looking back to Schinkel concept about landscape "constantly endeavored to respect the context, to integrate its architecture in an organic manner, to allow a harmony between the old and the new to arise."⁰⁵

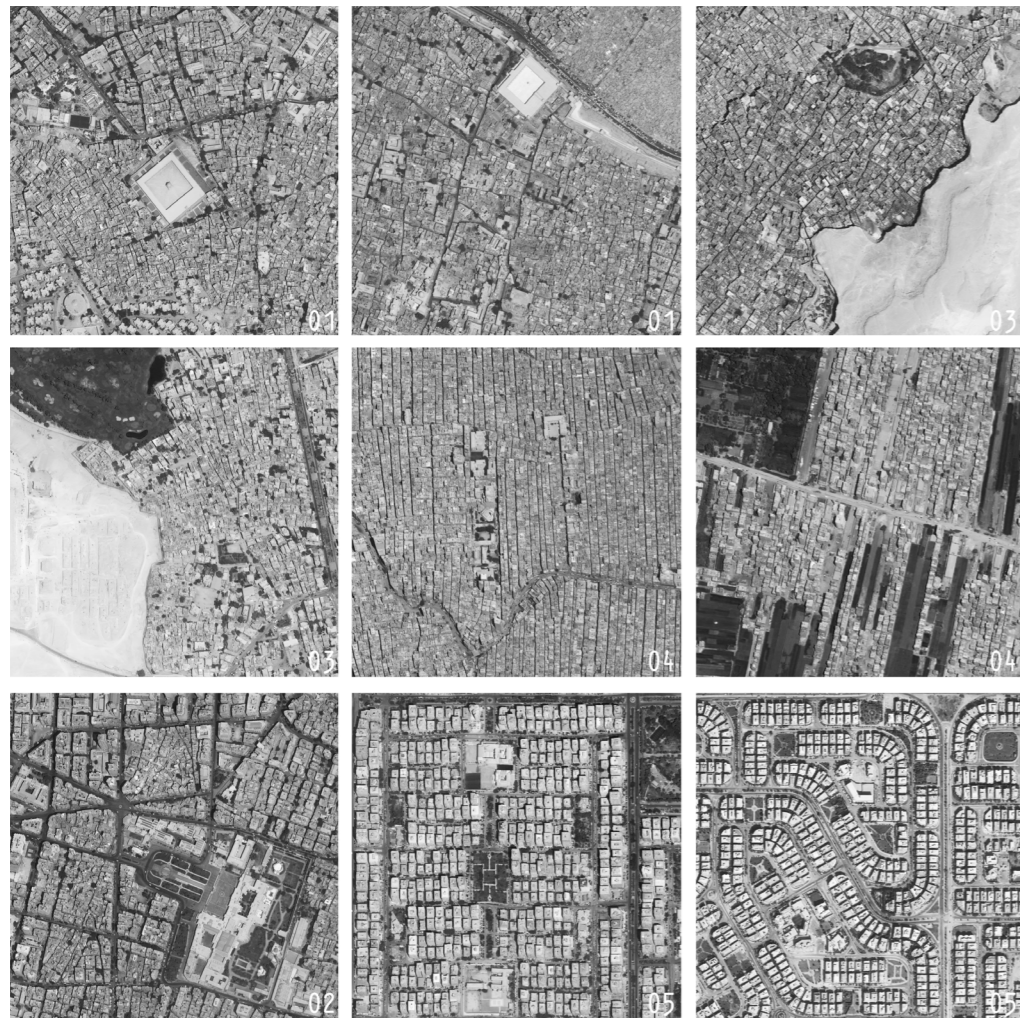
Shinkel approach towards the city of berlin was far from being composed sequences of infrastructures, parks and housing clusters, instead it is a scenography or articulation of contraposition of spaces, concentrating on the spatial concept far from the modern approach of the physical volumes. Ungers argued in the catalog of the large-scale Schinkel exhibition in 1981, "His structures and designs combine with nature to form a single morphological whole, so that they become a part of nature, and, conversely, nature becomes a part of the structures."⁰⁶

Glienicke project symbolizes an ideal condensation of this concept of landscape. It is far from being a country house integrated and connected with the nature as described in Pliny letters, instead it was merely creating an Arcadian landscape with his archetypical form generating a spatial connection between the form and its context as a small sacred place, temple and greater curiosities. It is a conceptual reciprocity of the context and the concept. Schinkel wasn't imposing principles of order on the site randomly regarding the form, axes and voids. He was seeking to provide the place with its spirit by connecting the objects subtly and sensitively, miniature archipelagos of diverse actions in the spatial eternal relation.

05. Hermann G. Pundt, *Schinkels Berlin*, Publisher Verlag Ullstein GmbH. Propyläen Verlag 1981, p. 10

06. Oswald Mathias Ungers, "A manifesto (1977) The city in the city. Berlin: a green archipelago" in Florian Hertweck, Sebastien Marot [cured by] *The city in the city. Berlin: a green archipelago*. Lars Muller Publisher 2013, p. 59

04 Author, "Cairo's fabrics Collage", (2019).
expressing the diversity of urban fabrics within
the city of Cairo



04

The concept of archipelago is whole panoply of variants that could be able to generate a new model for Cairo's development based on its own genetic code. This idea could underline and propose a different scenario for the urban fabrics that are threatened from decline. The various urban entities within Cairo have shaped the city, each of them have developed its own economic and social dynamic.

This situation has led to a clear understanding for the basic and primary element 'void' of the urban structure, such an organism is an element, instrument and mechanism for a new dialectical analysis within the urban structures of Cairo that could be important to synthesize the gene of urbanity, micro city or as Ungers declare *City within the city*. Symptomatically, the notion of archipelago initially envisaged as a void within exodus, and it present an approximation of an island within the city fabrics where each entity is autonomous with its identity floating within the great valley, celebrating radically different values. "The unity of the archipelago can only be expressed and reinforced through the maximum heterogeneity of each of the component islands."⁰⁷ The void is conceived as the element in the exodus island, that has imposed itself as a tool of metamorphosis for the entire urban entity. It is a way to awake the metropolitan city of Cairo within the historic reality that can therefore be read as the supreme of a dialectic parabola. Ungers in his essay *Designing and Thinking with Images, Metaphors, and Analogies*, published in 1967, discussed the various voids that were excised from the urban structure however they are connected to the historical analogies, as in their morphological process the city act as a compendium of these original spatial primary forms.

The collage of different entities within Cairo's complex urban structure has ensued the concept of archipelago that will be completed antithetically by the space of void within each island. Thus the identification of these islands will be clear, it will build a framework of the city of Cairo and thereby explaining the metaphor of Cairo as city of archipelago.

07. Rem Koolhaas, Madelon Vriesendorp, *The City of the Captive Globe Project*, New York , New York, *Axometric*, 1972, p.331

The succession eras of Cairo express the development of the city from many different places, ideologies and visions. The differences and varieties that manifest themselves in its primary elements are what constitute Cairo's urban identity. It is a city where the special and opposite elements have been significant within the urban and social dimensions, however the desire of standardized all under aegis of single vision has always failed. Thereby the tenacious city of Cairo is not composed as one city but as a living collage, a collection of entities creating the one where the divergent multiplicity is the very essence and unique character of Cairo. And the void could be the inevitable drive towards the improvement of urban quality, the restoring of the conception of the city formulation and the humanization of living spaces within the city.

The issue of developing Cairo, is not any more inventing something new but rather rebuilding the concept that already exist, not the invention of urban system but improvement of what is already there; not a discovery of new order but a rediscovery of eternal principles, not constructing a new cities but restructuring of the existing ones, this is the urban reality of the city and to understand this fact, it will be possible to think about the future problems for the city's development, the blueprint for better reality not only for Cairo but also for the major metropolitan cities of today.

An alternative paradigm of urbanism to understand the complexity of Cairo, in contrary to the doctrine of renewal the city and expansion that deleted our identity, memory and social bonds. Envisage the city sets and subsets as archipelago floating in the Nile bank, such a concept could incorporate atmosphere of nature again within the city, the sense of belonging for the dwellers and above all an innate point to reform our cities based on the essence of itself not by repeating other models that it shows failure in the recent years. It is par excellence a radical model for urbanism of negative growth far from reading the city as one urban reality but rather a multiple realities within the one.

Understanding the void as an original element of this approach that proposed here to select and stimulate the urban genes formulating these islands along with the ingenious concept of void in our culture that was the base for our urban reality, history and identity. *"In fact, in narrowly architectural terms, the Wall of Berlin was not an object but an erasure, a freshly created absence, For me, it was a first demonstration of the capacity of the void—of nothingness—to 'function' with more efficiency, subtlety, and flexibility than any object you could imagine in its place. It was a warning that—in architecture—absence would always win a contest with presence."*⁰⁸

Any future strategies for Cairo has to be a plan towards the reformation of its pieces and forms through an inevitable process of shrinking that could be looked out as a negative experience, behind the fake explicit vitality proposed by the political visions towards a city that is in continuous growth and undoubtedly against reduction. Cairo is not the only city to face the predicament of growth, however its extreme and idiosyncratic character could allow a new paradigm to search for the pronominal character of the city.

In this context, Cairo is facing a deflation of urban pressure and dismantlement of malfunction parts, which could be a proper moment to restore the primordial forms that offer a clear and unique chance to identify and intertwine these parts of the city. And when the city will recognize these enclaves, they could reform and liberate like islands as form of archipelago in the green Nile valley. The repertoire of typologies of the void that range from the agricultural linear fields, the European squares patterned in a radial way, the in between spaces in the topographical island, the abandonment gardens left over in the grid system of the new development and above all the introvert void as the essence of form in the historical island, show the richness of the nature and the complexity of this city where the polarity between nature and culture or culture and metropolis has been lost or compromised nowadays. This dilemma could be a new impulse by the paradigm of archipelago.

08. Rem Koolhaas, Field Trip: A(A) Memoir in Rem Koolhaas, Bruce Mau, Hans Werlemannm (cured by) S. M. L. XL, publisher The Monacelli Press; 2nd Edition 1997, p.221

This will encourage the city dweller whose main interest is the sense of belonging to the place, to remain attached within these spaces and encourage the sense of imagination and innovation. *Cairo as a metropolitan city could be read "as a locus of continual formation and transformation of gigantic puzzle, not as an ordered and logical whole"*⁰⁹ An overlapping of diverse layers mutually exclusive and divergent conceptions portrays metropolitan cities as Libeskind would say, *"a many colored mosaic."*¹⁰ Here the supreme is expressed in the predominance of a primary basic element that provides the identity to find an urban structure in which both dwelling and unity could exist. The urban structure lost its functional capacity in which its monolithic character spreads in economy, politics and social bonds.

I.2.2_Cairo's urban essence

Cairo and its urbanism are often subjected to study analysis and criticism regarding its growth. The phenomenon of growth in Cairo and the parochial vision concerning the development of the city have always left behind the city in fluctuation, where dismantlement cause progressions of punctual corrosion of artifacts and fabrics, as productive activities windup their functions, hindering habitants' ability to dwell within their surroundings as tissues have disappeared and fragmented. In this sense, the city has generated disposal areas, which assume more radical conditions than in the past. As the change of scale concerning city growth determinates a condition of fragmentation, which generates voids, interstitial and fractured spaces that remain unsolved in the urban fabrics. This phenomenon that is growing rapidly in contemporary cities has underlined what we might call the *"predicament of voids."*¹¹

These voids cease to function and remain in a state of constant expectation, resulting in a complex 'mosaic' of fragments. *"These spaces that are forgotten/ foreign to the urban system are mentally exterior in the physical interior of the city."*¹² It can be said that the recent forms of disposal areas have increased and intensified the process of economic, social and urban disintegration to such a great extent that undermines and erodes not only the architectural artifacts, but also soil, infrastructure and urban fabrics of the city, which stress the necessity to substrate and to ensure, the capability of understanding the essence of formulation of this city.

Here we are talking about Cairo that we are dwelling in it or in other words it dwells in us, but can we define what it is and its limits? Do we know its characteristics that engraved in our memory? Which Cairo we really mean? *"Cairo: time and history ... or place and geography ... or human and changing cultures"*¹³

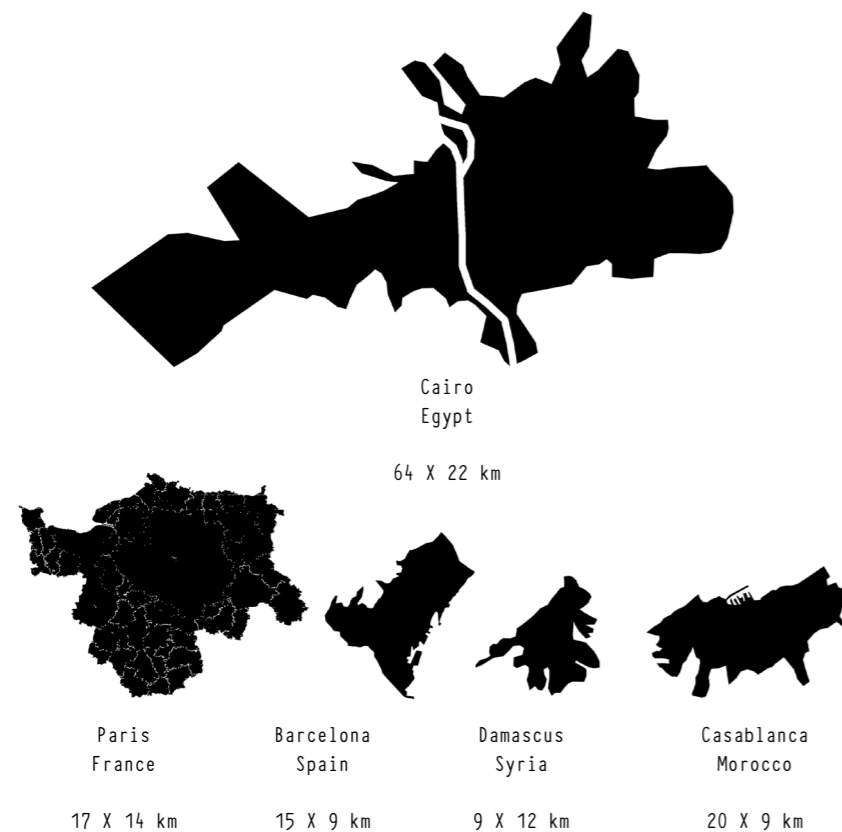
The contemporary city or the historical or beyond all these dimensions?, The city of individuals or Cairo of totality where memories are present-absent in our collective consciousness. Is it for selective elite society or the mother of the public and its surrender to the well of the dweller?

09. Cit. Oswald Mathias Ungers, in Florian Hertweck, Sebastien Marot [cured by] *The city in the city. Berlin: a green archipelago*, Lars Muller Publisher 2013, p. 67

10. Cit. Libeskind in Florian Hertweck, Sebastien Marot [cured by] *The city in the city. Berlin: a green archipelago*, Lars Muller Publisher 2013, p. 67

11. Bernardo Secchi, "Le condizioni sono cambiate" in *Architettura come Modificazione*, Casabella n. 498/499, 1984

05 Author, "Diagram", (2019).
 an illustration to show the scale of the
 mediterranean contemporary metropolitan cities
 in relation Cairo



Cairo that is fold on itself in the typological and morphological strife or Cairo that is the nexus between east and west experiences, which its responsibility for the transcendence and growth of the Eastern region to repel the attacks of the aspiring or the aspirant. Or the global one that has the supremacy to participate dynamically in human civilization. Cairo is an existence including all these aspects; it is inherited within its dwellers, as we perceive in our collective consciousness of its essence, form and identity as one city with multiple facets and multiple within one. Cairo has been undoubtedly ceaseless, with its dimensions that are still distinguishable in time and space, it cannot be understood without deciphering riddle of those dimensions, which is the key factor of understanding the tenacious city of Cairo.

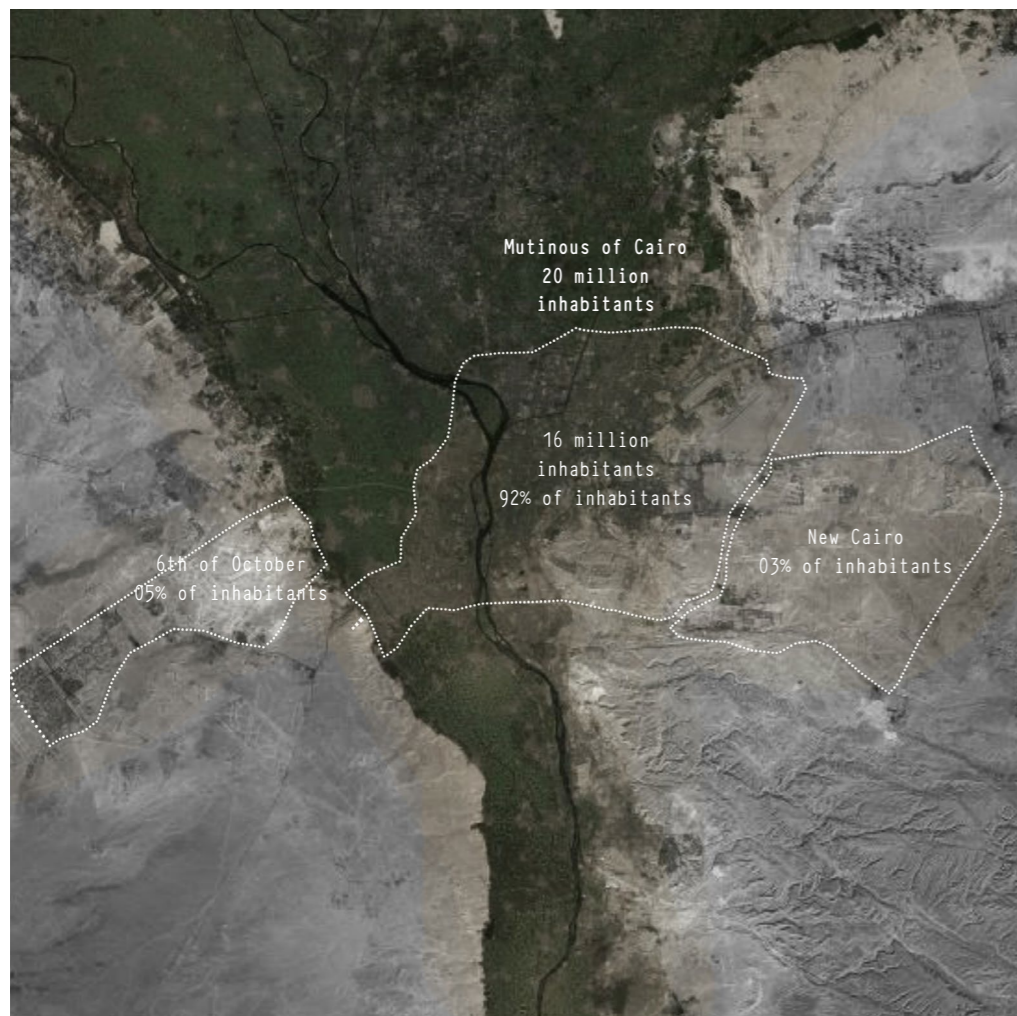
This means moving from the stage of certain to the state of uncertain, from the common stories to lost tales, in a journey from counting realities to the truth itself. In order to illustrate the possibility of understanding the reality of Cairo when all its aspects are complete and compatible with the collective consciousness of inhabitants with all its races, such an understanding of the typological, morphological and geographical dimensions of Cairo and its succession.

The growing of the city in all dimensions informally including institutional development, satellite cities and informal settlements, losing the memory and identity for such a city, with its fragments that are suspended in our capacity to understand if they are interrupted or isolated from each other, overlapping or contiguous with each other, stable or conflicting against each other.

The intention here is to represent the approach we see to identify Cairo in the framework of its succession, which has different characteristics typologically, morphologically, geographically and culturally in order to recognize as we referred the metamorphosis between the stage of knowledge and the state of silent scenes to the stage of thought and the case of the active participant.

12. Ignasi de Solà-Morales Rubio, "Terrain Vogue" in Patrick Barron, Manuela Mariani (cured by) in *Terrain Vague: Interstices at the Edge of the Pale*, Publisher Routledge 2013, p.26
 13. Tarek Waly, "Cairo...A sequential Inheritance", 2010, p.1

06 Google Map, "Metropolitan city of Cairo",
(2019).



06

In Cairo in particular, the consequences of restoring the original essence of the city, could be the opposite of what expected from the way of development. As the inexorable growth process is only a camouflaged and all action that could help to improve reality is pointlessly deferred in the consequent disadvantage of the city.

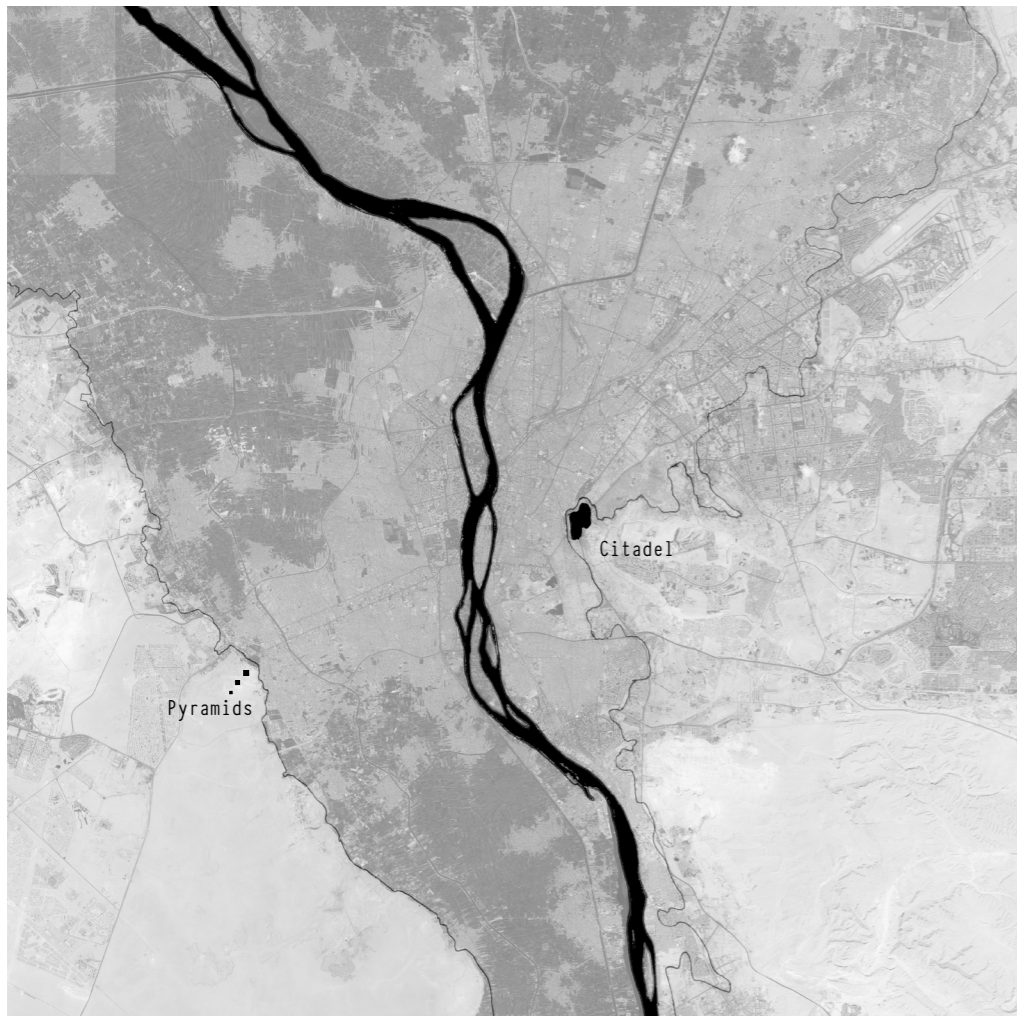
Cairo is not built by proliferating infrastructures, megalomaniac containers, housing cluster. Cairo is a natural ground 'the valley' in relation with the source prodromal element 'the Nile' and perhaps through the impossibility of altering its identity, in our future vision, It is crucial to provide a paradigm that need to find the historical gravities and essence of the urban composition to be able to connect its diverse entities with umbilical cord in the contemporary development.

It is crucial to read Cairo from the perspective of its geographical dimension to be able to distinguish it among many dynamics; it is the balance between the river and valley in the face of the mountain and desert east and west of the river. Cairo is an existing urban entity in a dialogue between the mountain and the river. It is important to understand that this fact is one of the most essential factors in the city formulation. Mokattam Mountain is fixed in the east, the Pyramids Plateau in the west While the Nile is a variable in between. Cairo urban identity is a continuous between static and dynamic. It is a timeless relation between the urban form and the void. It could be read as the beginning of the end or end of the beginning ... End of the upstream valley and the beginning of the downstream delta opening from south to north or vice versa. Uniting between ambitions to the North Mediterranean, communication and extension from southern Africa and integration with the Middle East.

The Nile is the main truth of the formulation of cities in the traditional history of Egypt; it is not separated from the land but rather is the generator for landscapes, different urban fabrics and the bond between inhabitants. All these elements are referring to each other through the nostalgia of the essence of the space.

07 Author, "The Nile is the reference of reading Cairo", (2019).

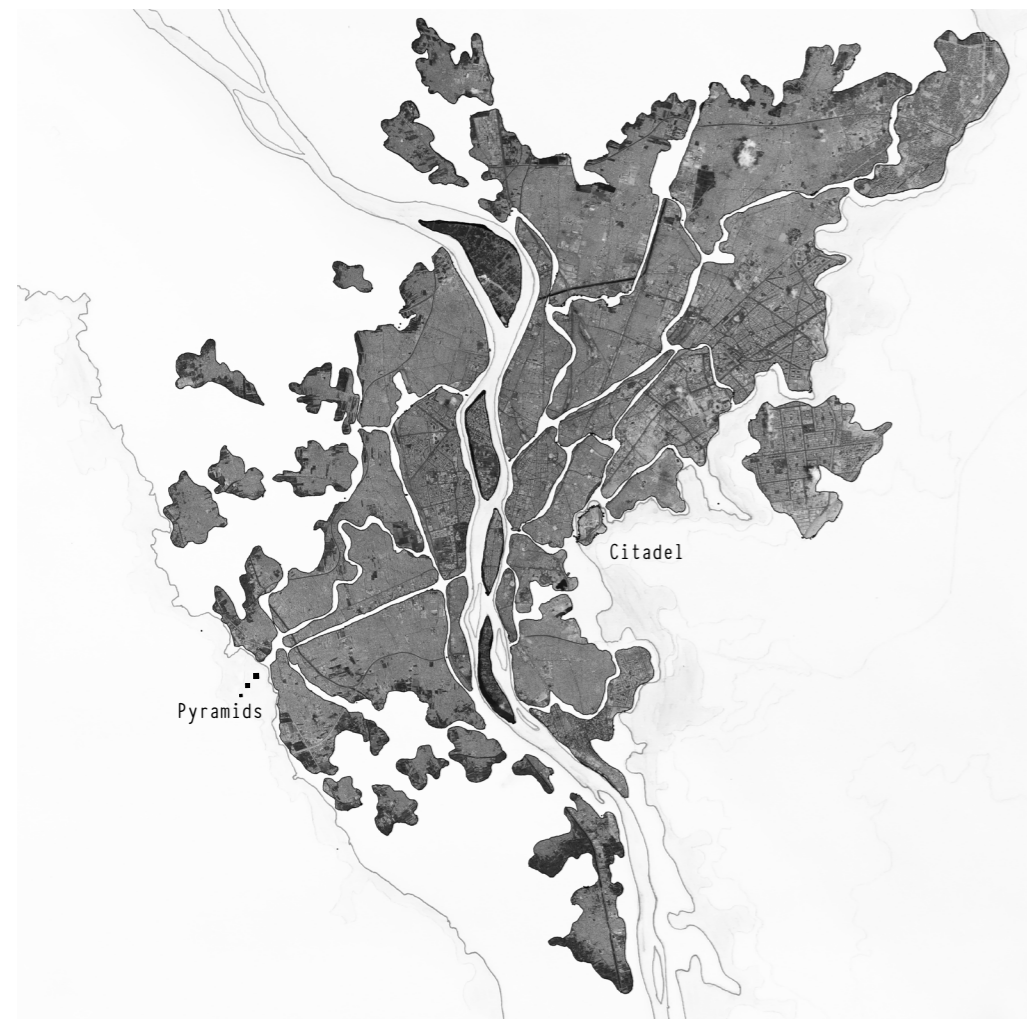
08 Author, "Geography as requiem of understanding the formulation of Cairo", (2019).



07



08



09

09 Author, "Cairo's urban essence as cities within a city", (2019).
reading the city of Cairo as different urban entities

Herein the Nile par excellence, reveals the essence of Cairo as archipelagos where it provides the dialogue and the confrontation between the multiple islands that inhabit it: all from the Nile distinct and all from it intertwined. One of the best descriptions on the existence relationship between the Nile, the inhabitants and the city, which were built around it, was described by the poet Mohamed Afifi Matar "What has left you clay, here in the black land? The clay is answering; what kept me here a strong wounded in the womb 'The Nile' ... and men and women floated the world with their thoughts where the civilization is born on its bosom."¹⁴

It is the archipelagos that born on the bosom of the Nile where they emerge in our cities and culture, The supremacy of the Nile is inherent in Cairo fabrics in which it formulate the city as Archipelagos; the Nile does not stop at their borders, but resounds in the voices of the dwellers. The nostalgia of those voices that roar from the city voids cannot stop at the circumnavigation of the Archipelago. This paradox let us focus on the organism of Cairo's urban essence, on one hand, at a detailed or local level which could be detected to read this succession of Cairo's urban fabrics with completely diverse morphology. On the other hand, it can be applied to the city in a framework of the universality of its structure and its role that can be achieved in its vocabulary and its parts, which constitute this urban fabric, taking into account that the methodology in its comprehensiveness may be linked to its voids in three different scales, typological, morphological and geographical dimensions of its totalitarianism.

Cairo encounters the multiple, where the manifold becomes a severe problem to understand the city as many scholars have read the complex structure of the city as one entity however to reveal the concept of the formation of Cairo is to discover and narrates the multiform factors of the archipelago, the characteristics of its elements that make Cairo a city of archipelago. The common element and the ethos of the many are the essence and the primary element 'the void', in which through it we could understand the logos of the many and the characteristics of the archipelagos within the urban

composition of Cairo. It is journey towards the unity in which the multiple entities are exhibited in its absence. It is not an archaic appearance of separated entities but rather a structure and dialogue occur within one another that form the complexity of the urban fabrics. It is in this context that we must work through a strategy of reconstruction focused on a new lexicon of contemporary structure and where the void becomes the element that can “give identity to places through the restatement of their forms.”¹⁵

The new development in Cairo metropolitan city has annulled in itself every identity by constructing and superimposing the uniform and indifferent Space on any orthographic urban area, where the domain of the Middle infrastructure dominates every ‘invention’ of meaning. On the pediment of the void, common to all the islands and to all the cities of the Archipelago is engraved: ‘the essence within oneself’. The void as a common ground between all islands could be genuine to understand the different characteristics of each urban entity that could provide a clear identification of the urban composition within Cairo.

Herein the essence of the archipelago is by its nature resistant to accept superimposition and hieratical disorder, the nature of the island is the essence of each archipelago, which can be seen through its void where the archaic relation could exist where it is urgent to understand the physiognomies of the void in each archipelago to be able to constitute a clear vision for the formulation of the whole city. The void is playing an important role where all memories and involvements of dwellers occur besides it is an arrangement of the urban elements within the composition of each island. As Crotti states, “*parallel cultural descent from topoi, sites, locations, areas, surroundings and, finally, spaces, a term that denounces an extreme generality, abstractness and conceptual indeterminacy.*”¹⁶

This phenomenon is coming from the depth of its soul and identity where the counter melody is innate, it cannot only act out of transgression as transgression can only

take the form away from its origin “away from the initial or natural condition of life”¹⁷, it is impossible to return back to it, if we ignore the impiety that has detached them from our reality. A delirium grab from the entities and its distinct elements that form the urban composition of Cairo is essential to reconstruct their own identities where archipelago’s boundaries were eradicated and uprooted from their logical essence. In this sense, Cairo could find a new linguistic composition, needed to redefine its essence of formulation.

It is crucial now more than anytime before, to know the distinct urban fabrics and forms; more precisely, and to understand the oneself, which is necessary to be regenerated as perfect distinct and this could occur by digging deeper to assume the own form of each part. In the latency that is provided here, it is vital to discover the identity of each island besides its primary element that is common to all, in order to distinguish the cum of the growth and to draw out the distinct part by recollecting one’s individual essence.

It is impossible, then, not to feel the tremendous responsibility of acting towards what was decided for our essence of the space or in other word the void. Only if the essence of the space is known and manifested to oneself not as a simple individuality, it will resolve, reform and regenerate as satisfied unity, impose at the center of a hierarchically oriented space. If each island will know its characteristics and will understand its complexity, variables and its unpredictable geometries, which form the harmony of the archipelago, could introduce a new map for Cairo that is defined by diverse and vital entities in which they interact, interconnect as different organisms floating in the body of the city.

But how could the Archipelago recognize itself without such boldness? How could the island understand its individuality and autonomous, if it did not discover the Cum in its own identity, what unites it - distinguishes it from the other?

15. Ilaria Valente, “Percorsi del progetto e architettura dello spazio pubblico” in *L’architettura dello spazio pubblico: forme del passato forme del presente*, Electa Milano 1997, p. 212

16. Sergio Crotti, “Interspazi: dai siti pubblici ai luoghi comuni” in *L’architettura dello spazio pubblico: forme del passato forme del presente*, Electa Milano 1997, p. 39

17. Paul Valery “inspirations méditerranéennes” in *Euvres*, Vol. I, Paris 1957, p.1096

¹⁰ Author, "Cairo's as a city of archipelago", (2019).

archipelago as the essence of formulating the city of Cairo



10

I.2.3_Paroxysm of Cairo's development as urban islands

The idea of the city within a city is a new paradigm to think about the future of Cairo. It could be perceived that Cairo in its essential development is a city of archipelagos. The urban islands have an identity regarding history, social and urban structures. The city as a whole is formed by these urban entities and is developed in a deliberately antithetic manner.

So it's important to understand these urban entities through their primary element 'the void', urban structure and borders. This process of identification justifies why these urban islands are structurally preserved and accentuated to achieve their definitive urban form. Archipelago in Cairo has to be understood in a repertoire of completeness through the three scales macro, mid and micro that could intend to future consist solely in enucleating the true urban reality for each island. In this sense, each entity will discover its own identity and its physiognomy to be repaired and to provide a new scenario for the whole city.

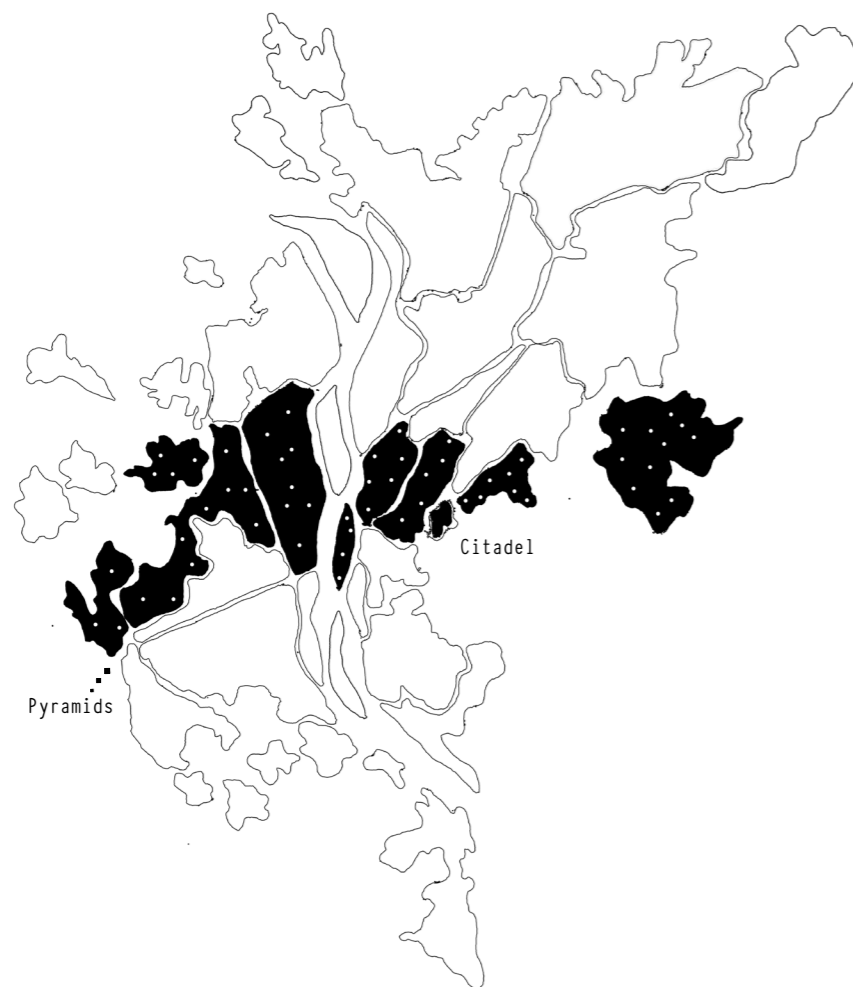
This approach is antithesis of the current way of development, where the diverse society and urban fabrics have to be understood in one hand and the nature of each island on the other hand. In this sense many different ideological visions will find their own places next to each other, besides for the city dweller, it is more easy to participate and innovate in a smaller scale, where small entities provides a much better field of cooperation than the city as a whole. Upon preliminary analytical examination, several urban entities stand out clearly in the city by their qualities and collective distinctiveness. Islands through their exemplary nature and structure generate its own identity and this is so clear through its void as you can find diverse types of voids within each island such as mnemonics, fluvial, rural, topographical and desert.

These enclaves liberated from understanding the nature of the city and its genes, which generate these archipelagos. For instants these islands represent extremely diverse structures in content and forms, they contain diverse networks, spatial functions and

11 Author, "Requiem of the five realities", (2019).

The five main themes regarding Urban Islands: Mnemonics, Fluvial, Topographical, Rural and Desert in relation to the sacred geometry of Cairo and the focus areas for understanding the primary void within oneself

The relation between the formulation of the islands represented in black and the voids represented in white



social characteristics. "Conscious of interpreting a virtuous relationship between the settlement component and the shape of the Earth, between city and nature, between density and rarefaction, this model configures in the void a gap not residual but necessary to recognize the physical characteristics of the host nature and the civil value of the city as equal interlocutors of a high dialectic."¹⁸

In the urban island model, it is a reflection on the dynamism related to the composition of the urban form, to provide us with the ability to refine the grammar of each island, by understanding the essence of the void as the generator of this urban entities regarding; its form, linkage, pattern, density, scale and intangible. This could provide us recognition of the complete form of the islands; the operational assumption to define the physiognomy of the form will reveal the concept of the city as a whole, besides a new paradigm for the future of the city.

"The evolution of the shape of urban settlements in this direction outlines the setting up of a dense, compact materiality, identifiable as the chosen place of close relations between settlement islands, which, as polarizing energies of the same sign, keep, between them, tense and constant distances for the configuration of a new, ideal, settlement camp."¹⁹

This situation has outlined an essential need to study the City through various analyses such as:

1. A series of analytical maps, stressing the different element in relation to the void as the primary essence of each island [island structure, Urban fabrics and their interplay relationships]
2. A study for the primary void itself in the original concept and how it was the essence of the form to be able to relate it to the new development.
3. A series of morphological drawings explaining the process of identification and intensification of the different islands.

18. Carlo Moccia, "Grammatiche della forma per la città del nostro tempo" in *Realismo e Astrazione e altri scritti*, Publisher Aion, 2016, p.77

19. Antonello Russo, *Vuoto e progetto*, Publisher Letteraventidue 2018, p.86



12 Author, "Cairo's archipelago diagram", (2019).

Expressing the position of the five themes within the two mountains and the river in between

This interpretation and analysis will emphasize on individual urban island, the grammar of the urban system in the peremptory nature of their geometric construction and the designation of the identity to the elements of the composition. By ordering the development of islands from a clear extended and hierarchical norm, could support the emergence of the multiple within the whole and could change the perspective towards the formulation of the urban composition.

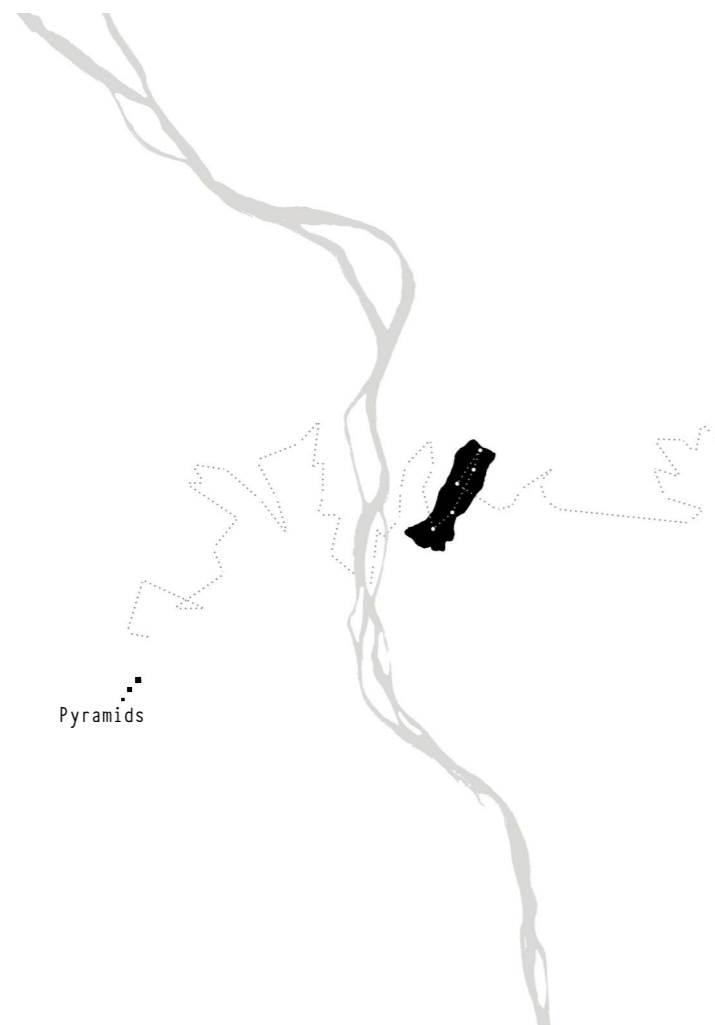
The fabrics could define the relation scaffolding of each island that maintain the constant within it, besides the tension between identity and urban fabrics arranged by the permanence and the transmissible norms, shows the evolution of the recognized mutation of the diverse typologies that demonstrates a clear distinction between the different compositions.

This compromise reveals the structural characteristics of the basic idea for a clear identification of the Primary DNA of the typological component and of the corresponding urban morphology. In this scenario, the void composition within the urban fabrics and the pattern connecting them together are a progressive identity form, to delineate the measure and the scalar characters of the whole part.

In this framework, Russo claimed that *"to delineate the spatial dilations and the programmed absences of a desired consistency porous city that identifies in the definition of precise territoriality of the open space and, in particular, in the connection of the alveolar voids that make up the urban structure, the themes useful for the composition of an identity appropriation of citizenship."*²⁰

By looking to Cairo's urban island, it could be recognized that it includes five main urban realities, which are; the original mnemonics island, the Khedival European island, the topographical island, the rural island and the new development desert island.

13 Author, "Mnemonics island diagram", (2019).
the position of historical first island in relation to the geography



Within the urban island, the primary void is the basic element to recognize its urban structure and identity, it provide rise of multitude of variations pursuit the dweller needs. Prerogatives such as its position within its context, relation to the border endowment the urban island and the flexibility to accommodate diverse activities; religious, political, philosophical and culture was the main concept of the void within the mnemonics island.

For instance, the historical mnemonics city, is composed of a dense organic fabrics with continues implied spaces which inexorable from the city fabrics, where the dwellers celebrate their urban experiences. The heritage urban fabrics were situated beneath the mountain on the east bank of the Nile including varies and diverse elements however all of them were based on the same concept of the island formulation.

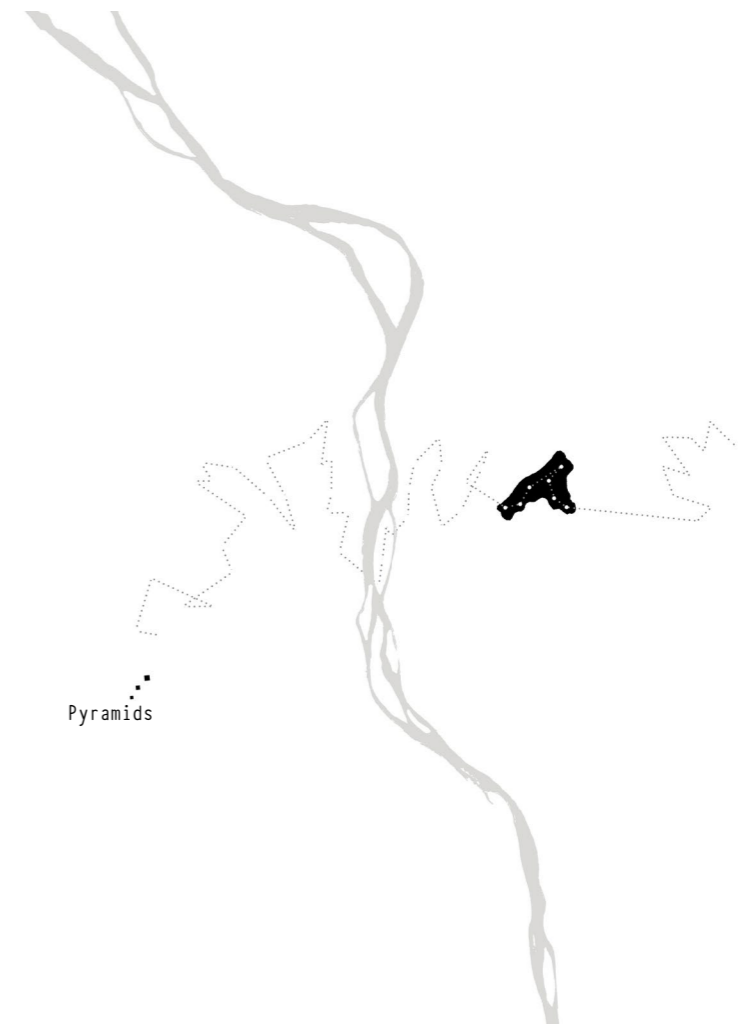
The void was always introverts, constituting a continuous exploration of the city fabrics within a circle of pedestrian distances where a strong momentum within the fabrics could be recognized in the five big mosques that could reveal a hidden dimension to give a measure to this island. The high interior customization characterized by strong sign within the fabrics and more and more invisible outlined the inseparable relation between the form and the void or the dweller and the place.

On contrary of the other models that have been developed in Cairo, which lost their function, memory and sense of belonging, the primary void in the original island was always a domestic space reveals a double and ambiguous dimension. The void acts as a convivial exhibition of the mutant flexibility of its function, and also the instances of mediation of each performativity of activities that increase the strong relation with the context and construct an identity.

In the sacredness of its physical and conceptual enclosure, both distributive and functional features of the interior and the immaterial presence of its spirit are essential

14 Author, "Fluvial island diagram", (2019).
the position of khadiveal european island in
relation to the geography

15 Author, "Topographical island diagram",
(2019).
the position of manshyet naser island [informal
area] in relation to the geography



16 Author, "Rural island diagram", (2019).
the position of agricultural island in relation to
the geography

17 Author, "Desert island diagram", (2019).
the position of Nasr city island [new
development] in relation to the geography



Pyramids



Pyramids

to interpret the dichotomy between the realities and introversions. In this alteration between large and strong spatiality in sequence and the sudden compression within the mnemonics island show the balance between the serving and served spaces, as the voids are placed in continuity to determine a progressive relation through the threshold of passage between interior and exterior spaces which affirm the strong spatiality as a space of unity.

Within the years [1800-1870], Cairo start to develop a new island called khedivial Cairo on the concept of Haussmannization of Paris, The immaterial icons of the artifacts that constitute this island was just a replica or a juxtaposition of other model where strong axes, urban blocks and a large squares, perpetuated in the meiotic dimension in the era of colonization. The void in the fluvial island shows a progressive dissolution of urban and social dimension; the massive urban blocks of the structural components and the resulted composition that characterized it, have affirm that the analogy of the urban form was alien to the dwellers of the city. Dwellers couldn't feel their sense of belonging within this island where voids were left behind as a backstage serving just the atheistic values, without fulfill the dwellers need to inhabit their functions inside these spaces.

The voids were always extroverted against the ontological dogma of the city formulation and conception in the development of the Middle Eastern cities. Nowadays these spaces are fenced squares with no relation to inhabitants and functions as some of them were transformed to parking areas in order to serve the huge amount of vehicles that colonized the space. During the last five decades, associated with the growth development and the linguistic struggle, which characterized the tenacious city of Cairo, a progressive dematerialization of the consolidated process of form construction proposing an increasingly disaggregated dimension of the relationships between the concept of void in our traditional cities and the external image of such a space floating without any identity.

It could be defined as liquid dimension of corroborated and amplified the metaphor of balance and equilibrium which delineate in the camouflage of the proceed development, this situation has been resulted in the following three urban islands, which are topographical, rural and desert that shown different characteristics of each urban and social composition.

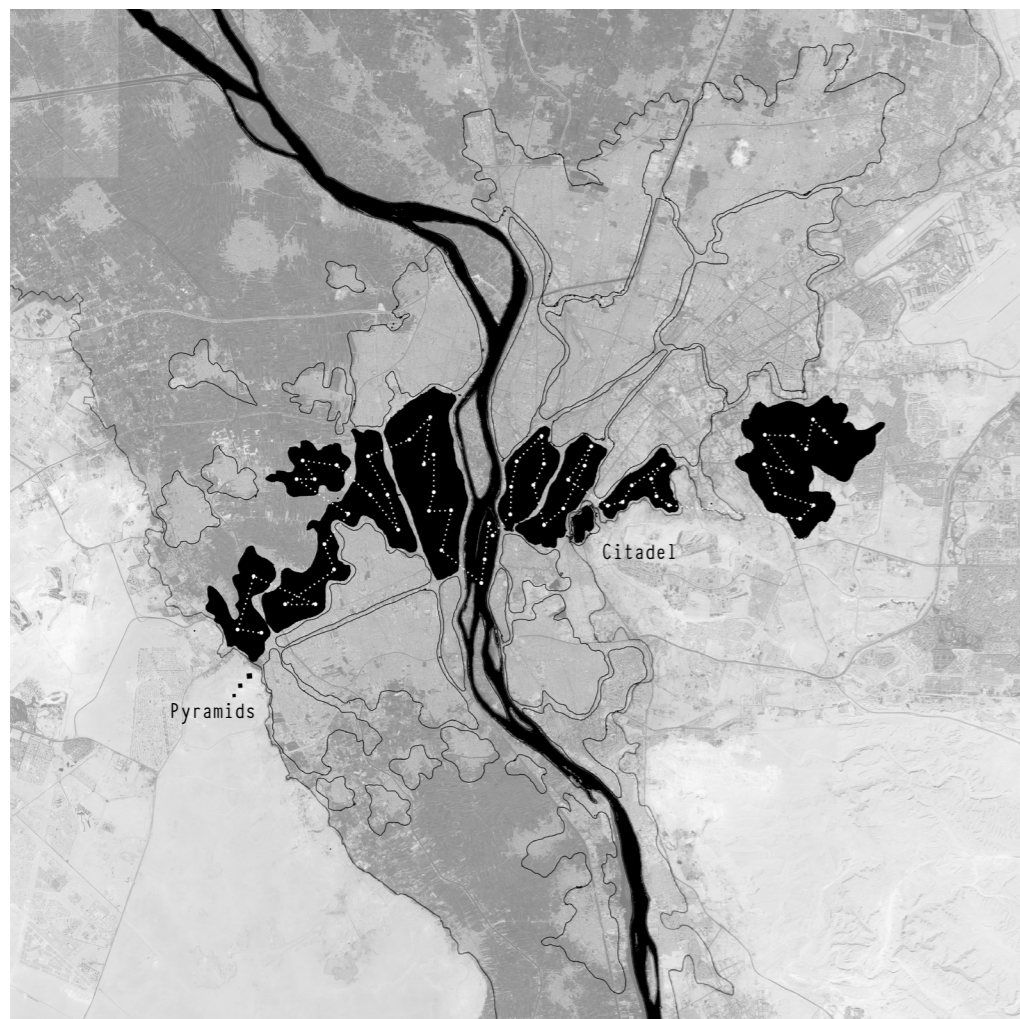
The topographical island started to be visible in the seventies, where it was self-constructed as well as the rural one, however the main difference between them was the void itself in which it was clearly affected by the urban structure of each island. For instance in the Topographical Island, the voids were leftover spaces 'in between' the massive volumes and have sentential relation with the mountain; it is part of its nature where the 'in-between' voids are always in relation to the topography more than the volumes surrounding them. While in the Rural Island, the voids were based on the traces of the agricultural fields, as these traces and signs had a great impact to formulate the urban and social structure of this island.

At the same level of cyclic development of Cairo, the changing and metamorphic matrixes has introduced the explicit main approach towards the development of the city; the Desert Island an identifiable composition based on the static preplanning system, volumes have been shaped as containers that failed to accommodate several function, moreover the voids were deserted, not occupied and cannot materialize the solidity of inhabitants. It remained lost in the city fabrics without any definition.

They are encapsulated within the urban structure with no relation to their context, forms and landscape; they are such a green beds in a concrete forest waiting for such awakening to give an intangible evident for the form, connect, integrate or constitute a space of use, a new exegesis of linguistic datum with implication for control the urban and social dimension.

REVIVING THE CONCEPT OF VOID IN THE MIDDLE EASTERN TRADITIONS AS AN ALTERNATIVE SOCIO-SPATIAL SCENARIO FOR REGENERATING PUBLIC SPACES IN CAIRO'S ARCHIPELAGO

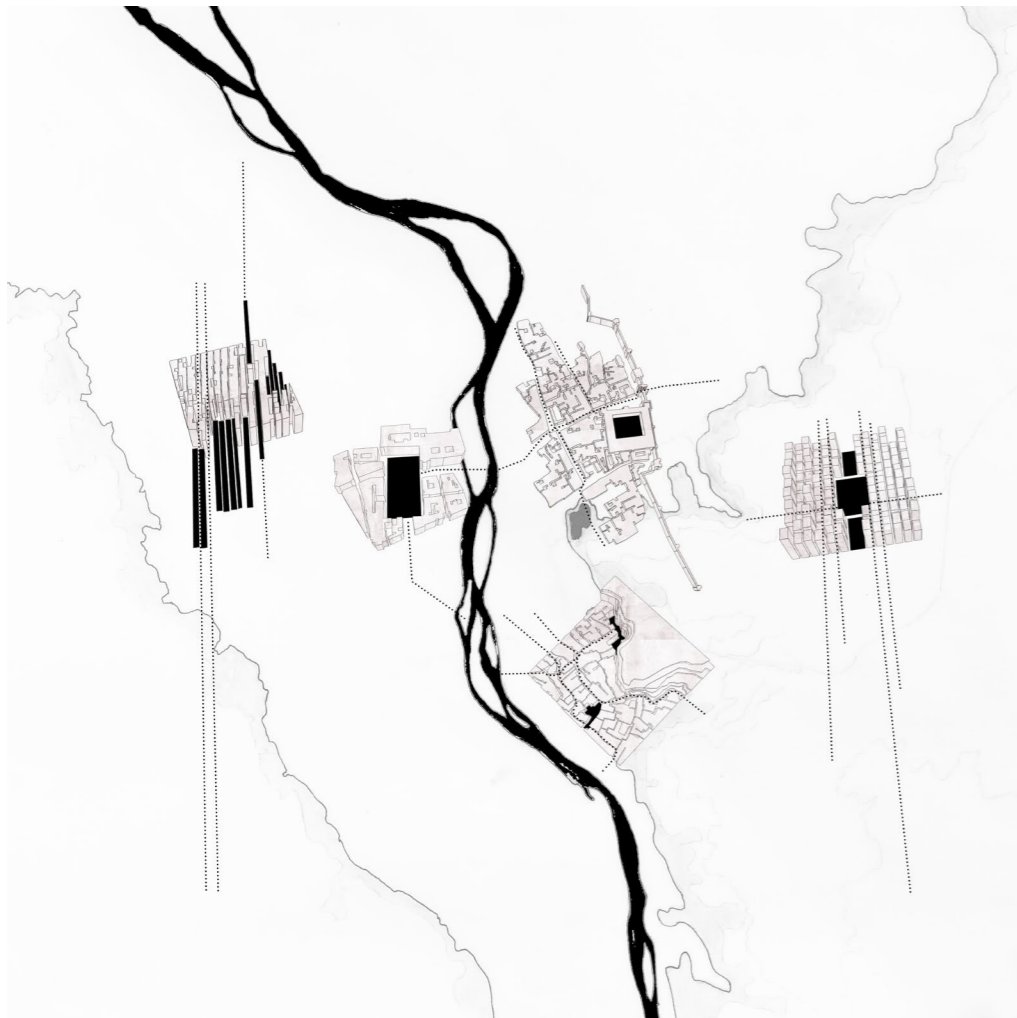
18 Author, "urban islands", (2019).
focusing on the area of study within Cairo



Finally working with void as a primary element within the urban islands as a mean of interpreting the current intentions by moving towards the search of relationships between mass and space, volume and matter and between limit and the ecstasy of absence, allows the focus on connection, composition and nature to reveal the implied essence of each island during our survey.

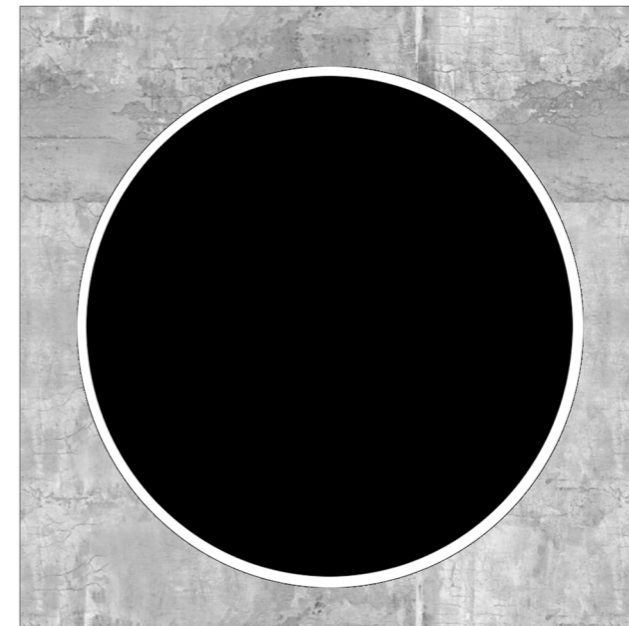
19 Author, "Cairo's archipelago Collage", (2019).

expressing the diversity of urban fabrics and the primary void within each island to understand each urban entity



“Empty as an ideal space for the transmission of enduring urban meanings. Empty, therefore, as a bearer of promises and trust in the relations between parties that, while remaining distinct, aspire to an inseparable complementarity... Assertive as an exception, in fact, only an absence of noise can reveal the vibration of a thought, reveal the reasons for a curiosity and, naturally, advise on how to proceed.”²¹

II_Ecstasy of void as immutable origins



II.1_Abtract_

The analogous reading of Cairo has manifested that the city is composed by many realities in which they are defining the complexity of the one, where the focus of the studies have tackled the compositional, formulation and interrelation of the components of the islands, by altering the research from being a historical studies of a city to a new dialectic analysis that could help to define the essence of the tenacious city. Each entity has been recognized and analyzed through its compositional grammar by digging deeper to understand the genetic character of its urban structure, border and its primary void in both macro and mid scales, it is an exodus psychosis of continuum flow of spatial experiences through its new way of reading the city.

The outcome of an adequate and thoughtful reading for different archipelagos has shown the limitation of defining the primary void when they have been interpreted far from their original concept. The reduction of the complex reality in the urban islands has deformed the tangible and intangible relations, and so it was crucial to tackle different aspects as density, pattern, connection, scale and intangible connection to breakdown the formal structure method of reading the city, and to provide a coherent reading desirability of the interaction between all the elements that shaped the urban composition, without ignoring the inseparable relation with dwellers.

II.1_Physiognomies of voids in the formulation of Cairo

Analysis of void within the five realities



*Hearken to this Reed forlorn
Breathing, even since it was torn*

*From the rushy bed, a strain
Of impassioned love and pain*

*The secret of my song, through near
None can see and non can hear
Oh, for a friend to know a sign
And mingle all his soul with mine!*

*Tis the flame of love that fired me
Tis the wine of love inspired me*

*Wouldst thou learn how lovers bleed
Hearken, hearken to the Reed!*

01 Jalal eldin Rumi, "poet and mystic", (1258).

The reed in the poem contains the bifold of the void, where the object manifest itself as the explicit, and is passive to its hollow interior wherein lies the active soul of music

II.1.1 _Archipelago: exodus psychosis

Macro Scale :Categorizing Cairo's urban islands

In the last decades, Cairo was analyzed from certain perspectives and relationships between the mega infrastructure 'Ring Road' and the urban settlements or the informal and formal areas that has elaborated a narrow vision for a certain issue regarding the overall view towards the structure of the city or the eternal composition constructed by the Nile, the valley and the desert. All visions and maps for greater Cairo were simply constant and couldn't face the huge problems that are confronting the city nowadays considering its complexity, identity and social relations, in which they kept the city out of its urban reality.

Cairo is a territory of approximately 60 kilometers, running from east to west and accommodating around 20 million inhabitants, it is one of the largest cities in Africa and it act as an engine for the Egyptian economy, all these factors have created an essential need to move beyond the stereotypical generalization for developing the tenacious city, as many scholars in the last decades have connected the city to the 'Third World Mega Cities' that encapsulated the capacity of such a city and eliminated its memory, urban structure and social behaviors by generating a static fact that is far from the hidden dimensions of the complexity that formulate the city.

One treatment was generated by the scholars to attempt the reality of non-western contemporary cities by reducing all the features into quantitative approaches, for instance, in 2003, Koolhaas has confronted the city of Lagos in a fifty-minute film, in fact it was a celebration of the chaos in which the film was more about the interpretation of Koolhaas rather than the genetic essence of Lagos itself.

From the same perspective, in 2005, Suketu in his research *Maximum City: Bombay lost and found* has consequently shown the same result. In 2003, Anna Roy has introduced *City Requiem: Calcutta* in which she deeply tackled several aspects concerning the city such as poverty, politics, informality and etc.,

however she observed the city from a western point of view as one entity or a whole that has elaborated her impressive work to be a bit overwhelming. This superficial analysis have created a chaos in which it is disappointingly difficult to emerge the city from these noise and reforming a clear urban reality able to perform as a base from development.

The terms chaos, overcrowded, polluted, disordered, sprawling and so, are common terms used by foreign observers and ironically some Egyptian scholars when they have studied the metropolitan city of Cairo. These spontaneous continuum indicators are somehow exist within the city fabrics, however to build your development vision only on these factors will dramatically lead to a misunderstanding of the urban reality that has been developed within the city.

Cairo for instance is facing all these problems, especially growth as one of the prevalent challenges that is difficult to be controlled by institutional authorities, where on one hand, they have participated in this delirious situation by ignoring the city's form and logic, and on the other hand the spontaneous development has found its unconscious relation with the forgotten identity.

Cairo more than any other non-western cities, has fortunately analyzed by several scholars and researchers, one of the good literature that stand out and often has been referenced for sympathizing the city was Cairo: 1001 Years of the city Victorious by Janet Abu-Lughod in 1971 that was proceeded after the book Le Caire: Etude de geographie urbaine et d'histoire economique by Marcel Clerget in 1934.

Both scholars have marked out the explosion of growth that could affect the city's development from both temporal and demographical continuums. Although the city in the time of Clerget in 1928 was one million inhabitants and in the research of Abu-Lughod was four millions in 1968, however both marked the problem clearly and

Unfortunately both didn't provide really an answer but rather Abu-Lughod opened a new question interconnected with the history of the city.

*"Does a collective hallucination sustain the image of an ancient and venerable city when it is in fact disfigured with slums and crass consumerism?"*⁰¹ Maria Golia has asked without avoiding the spin connected to the history of the city of Cairo, and she examined *"Cairo's broader present moment, its giddy equilibrium and unfolding contemporary nature"*⁰² and she continued *"Some of us wonder, watching Cairo teeter between a barely functional glide and an irretrievable nosedive, what keeps this plan in the air?"*⁰³ She pursued to discover how Cairo has maintained its glamour and its inhabitants within its collective sanity.

These questions were essential to build the foundation of this research and to clarify some issues on both urban and social structures in order to re-discover the urban reality that is responsible for formulating the city complexity. It is essential to define a new method for reading the city, to be able to understand how a city outwardly out of control could be expressed? And to avoid the disappointment of the inhabitants who are pursuing blindly visions across the developing of such a city. In fact its not an easy method to tackle a huge continues territory as Cairo urban structure where the city urge for a deep analogy of its components and its identity, thus it need less cursory and less prejudiced treatments.

The analysis in which I developed in this part of the research are trying seriously to comprehend the complexity of this city by taking a step back and by digging through the city's history, geography and especially its urban composition to underline the compositional grammar of the city which could give us a new paradigm to understand this urban reality.

01. Maria Golia. *Cairo: city of Sand*, Publisher Reaktion Books 2004, p. 92
02. *Ivi*, p.7-8
03. *Ivi*, p.7

Modern urban planning literatures when they discussed the situation of Cairo, have focused on the term 'informality', when it come to be out of control by the government, However its misleading to fix a term without knowing the roots of this issue and why it has been growing hysterically in the last decades; it is all started from the dwellers when they couldn't find their own spaces within the new development, and they couldn't find their sense of unity that has always shaped their identity. Herein, for those who are demanding to reveal a hard anatomy of Cairo's urban reality, I can introduce a terminology to describe this tenacious city; it is 'many within one and one within many'.

In my particular reading of Cairo, it is a city of many components, many realities that are defining the one; it is a city of archipelago, where each entity need to be recognized and defined. This approach that is elaborating the methodology of this research, is based on studying the compositional grammar of each island and defining its urban structure, border and its primary void, followed by understanding the tension between these voids, moreover by considering the logic of these primary voids in relation with urban blocks, infrastructures, landscape, and inhabitant's flow and use, as Janet Abu-Lughod claimed "*the infrared lens of analysis*" is crucial to "*separate the accidental from the essential*"⁰⁴

It is an exodus psychosis towards different idiosyncrasies fold within one city, from this perspective as Cairo is a city of archipelago, it crucial to identify the themes of the islands that composed the urban structure of Cairo, and as it was mentioned earlier, the synthesized themes are 'mnemonics, fluvial, topographical, rural and desert', which transcend beside each other, interconnect but still have different physiognomies and that's the key of explaining how Cairo could exhibit the order within itself, although the explicit perception is confirming the mess.

*"The city, in which every individual is identified is a mobile world, without known limits, but at the same time it is not infinite, where the difference is the law of the form and function. The identity of the city is, exactly, the experience of difference"*⁰⁵

In this sense, thinking about the grammar of the city as sequence of spaces or collective spaces, going back to Moretti, or as Mies suggested to arrange and reflect on the vastly growth of the contemporary city through these open spaces as spaces of dwelling could redefine the essence of the metropolitan city. The idea of proposing a new paradigm for reading the metropolitan city of Cairo is essential to face the sprawl, the consumption of the soil and to protect the urban and social structures from disintegration, and it could provide the metropolitan city of Cairo with a perception for the new exegesis of the urban form.

It is necessary to reflect on the dynamics connected to the composition of the urban structure, besides to refine the form of each island within its context by generating a new linguistic method that define the tangible and intangible forces, which affect the grammar of the whole composition.

This approach will alter our perception about growth as a unique model of development to discontinuous urban realities recognized by the whole composition and defining the new principles for future development process within Cairo.

The evolution of the void as the primary element in the urban fabrics could outline both, the identity of each urban entity and the intimate relation between the diverse islands where the composition through these void will generate a polarizing energies of the same sign, contain between them a tense and distances for the configuration of the new paradigm.

This model defines par excellence; the characteristic of the archipelago that contains sequence of open spaces defined by the nature of the context itself, and has constructed a moment of pause within the continuous transformation of the urban fabrics and has developed a distance of reproductive matrices identifiable as intermediate entities within the structure of the island itself. It is the process of transformation from the acknowledgment of the 'growing' as an overall whole scenario to the composition of the archipelagos as an inexorable diminution of the aesthetics of the series.

This operative framework defines each entity as part of the whole complex, in a way to interpret the physical form through its density, organization and relation with the nature of the context. The balance between the dogmatic nature and the genetic features could define this model; it is an archaic relation that could be recognized only by the void. If in the industrial era, the duplication of several forms have no relation to the context within an infinite perspective vision, and have elaborated shared quantitative values within the spatial urban structure where spaces couldn't contain dweller's memories and experiences and avoid the construction of the space as a space of unity, has lead to the crises of the urban void in the contemporary cities.

Though, the void could provide an exceptional contribution for reforming and restructuring the urban composition and it could determine an attribution for each island to figure its own identity and generate boundaries that could act as limitation for growth.

This method is followed by the necessity of ordering the island components, so the analysis in the following pages were tackled three different scales starting from 'macro, mid, micro' in hieratical norm, that are able to understand the characteristics of the island in its cradle structure and to study the relation between the voids and its surroundings to identify each island and to support the emergence of the multiple and to affirm the formulation concept of the city as 'one within many' and 'many within one'.

The metric scaffolding of the fabrics of each island maintains constant, within it, a poetic tension between the identity and the urban reality where the consistency of the void and the permanence, are arranged by the restatement of a contagious form, and the evolution of a controlled mutation, allocated by numerous typological variations impressed on the primary element of the composition.

The fabrics in this analysis will be pushed to its extreme border of composition to find its own significant character. The structure of the analysis is to find compromises that reveal the structure of the island and its primary and generative DNA of the component within the corresponding urban morphology. The open space could play a progressive role to identify this DNA, and could measure and uncover the interval relations of the whole island.

Patios, squares, interstitial spaces, agricultural traces and simulacrum gardens are the main dialectic elements where they will be treated by the iteration of measuring factors, to identify the precise definition for each island, in particular, the relation of these primary element which is the void and the whole urban composition to be able to constitute a logic for the archipelago's urban structure, moreover this methodology could be useful for the composition of the urban and social identity appropriate by the inhabitants.

The macro scale analysis will develop not only a linguistic characteristics of the grammar structure of each island but also the relation blueprint with the surface and the tactile of the nature that portray a contemporary interpretation of the rites of the collective memory of the dwellers, often elusive and unorthodox logics for the explicit development of Cairo. In this framework, analyzing, imagining and composing the architecture of the city from the consistency of the voids resonates the structure of the fabrics.

Void, as we perceived, hold primordial and dominant position in architecture and urban development concepts in the Middle Eastern traditional cities. So this concept will transcendence in both space and time dimension as simultaneous permanencies inhabits a position of prominence in each urban entity, as void contains both active and passive promises.

For instant, it is in relation with the active essence where time as motion could ensue, moreover it manifests with the passive promise through the matter or the form, which is directly an outcome of this motion. The esoteric idea could describe this motion as the flow and the manifest of the essence within the void. Thus the locus of time and form is the void, which manifest its active and passive promises through motion.

This integration is expressed through the fabrics of the city within the void of each island that create a continuum flow of spatial experiences where the following didactical reading could interpret the formulation of Cairo as archipelago through exodus psychosis toward the primary void. The next analysis within the five main urban realities [mnemonics, fluvial, topographical, rural and desert] will express the formulation of each urban island through its primary voids in relation with its border, trajectory and intangible realities to be able to have a clear reading of the archipelagos. The identification of these islands will be the first premise to dig deeper in the analogy of each entity.

In this sense, the openness and the variety of the city of Cairo must be understood, it is not simply an open urban system, in which many different places are positioned and controlled by the same vision, but rather a pluralist concept, in which many different and diverse ideological visions find their own places next to each other to endow the dweller with a human quality.



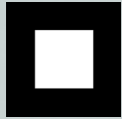
Mnemonics island
Introvert void

When we consider the idea upon which the construction of the city of Cairo in the traditional sense, it will be referred to its historical island 'Mnemonics Island' as it has been illustrated in the following representations. The foundation of the city has started when Amr Ibn Al-Aas Came to Egypt, where he built the city of Al-Fustat in 642 AD, followed by the Abbasids whom constructed Al-Askar in 750 AD. In 870 AD, Ibn Tulun settled in Egypt, and began to establish an independent state from the Abbasids Caliphate, so he founded the city of Al-Qattai', However the Fatimid founded Cairo as a city in 969 AD.

The main element of this urban structure was the patio, manifested in various architectural typologies such as the residential houses, mosques, markets, schools and hospitals, it is par excellence, the same concept with different manifestations. The patio acts as space of unity that has shaped the characteristic of the urban form and the social relations.

The void here presented as patio, was a simple proportioned square with a well-defined introvert typology where it was the essence of the architectural and urban composition of the different archetypes. And through its transformation during time, became a primary space that accommodated not only diverse functionalities and spiritual feelings, but also inhabitant's collective memories. The idea of the void provided an affirmation towards the interiority as the sublime of the object and the composition itself, moreover it generated a continuum of sequential spaces characterized by its strong unity and porosity.

The concept of void in its traditional sense has been applied perfectly in the Mnemonics Island through the different scales, though several appropriations have tried to distort this structure by some deformed buildings or by inserting infrastructures within the urban structure, the composition was profoundly solid by its voids that distinguished this urban structure from any other island, besides they affirmed the relation between inside and outside as a continuum of spaces that shaped the urban identity of this urban island.



In this archipelago, the analogy of its urban fabrics is portrayed by its compactness and irregularity that formed the tapered infrastructures and has kept them as backstage for the urban scenario, however its hidden relation of the voids protected by its interiority has generated such a coherent harmony between the urban form, open spaces and landscape.

The composition has been constituted by five main mosques, operated as an anchors while smaller patios were situated in the spaces between to generate a hidden dimension of A and B, where A is 600m while B is 300m, providing such an intimate scale for the flow of inhabitants. This composition of voids has produced a sequence of open spaces based on the formula of 'A, B, A, A, B, A' running from north to south of the island, which are surrounded by the historical wall that act as a clear border to sustain the urban logic and identity of the whole composition.

Moreover it has affirmed the homogenous flow of dwellers within the urban structure that has been achieved by the dynamic balance of all its components. And by looking to this geometric composition and its essential relation with its voids as a moderator and representative, has shown a deeper image of this island where not only some forms were arranged beside each other but rather a complete structural composition that has tackled urban, social and environmental aspects in a symphony of physical and metaphysical dimensions.

Conclusively, by analyzing the Mnemonics Island on the macro scale, it has shown that the island is constructed by a defined border represented by its historical wall that has kept the composition sustained so far, besides the traces of the Nile founded beneath the east border. The Main five anchors were mostly situated close to the border of the island to translate the mutation of the intimate scales towards the terrestrial ones where the logic of the typology remained the same as introvert voids that accomplish their presence through their organization as sequential open spaces able to accommodate memories, activities and social relations.

The new reading of the island has expressed the capacity of the tangible and intangible dimension to formulate the Mnemonics Island not through its built form but more through its sublime conception of the void.



02

02 Author, "Historical walls", (2020).

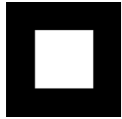
mnemonics island_macro scale

03 Author, "Original water traces", (2020).

mnemonics island_macro scale



03



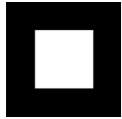
04

04 Author, "Island and border", (2020).
mnemonics island_macro scale

05 Author, "Island and fabrics", (2020).
mnemonics island_macro scale



05



06

06 Author, "Island and streets", (2020).

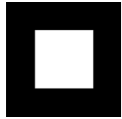
mnemonics island_macro scale

07 Author, "Island and primary voids", (2020).

mnemonics island_macro scale



07



08

08 Author, "Island and main primary voids", (2020).

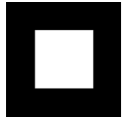
mnemonics island **macro scale**

09 Author, "Axis 1 primary voids and borders", (2020).

mnemonics island **macro scale**



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10 Author, "Axis I_primary voids and trajectory connection", (2020).

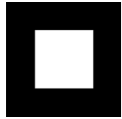
mnemonics island **macro scale**

11 Author, "Axis I_primary voids and intangible relation", (2020).

mnemonics island **macro scale**



11



12

12 Author, "Axis II_primary voids and broders", (2020).

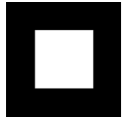
mnemonics island_macro scale

13 Author, "Axis II_primary voids and trajectory connection", (2020).

mnemonics island_macro scale



13



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14 Author, "Axis II primary voids and intangible relation", (2020).

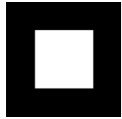
mnemonics island **macro scale**

15 Author, "Axis III primary voids and borders", (2020).

mnemonics island **macro scale**



15



16

16 Author, "Axis III_ primary voids and trajectory connection", (2020).

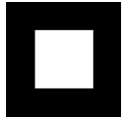
mnemonics island_macro scale

17 Author, "Axis III_ primary voids and intangible relation", (2020).

mnemonics island_macro scale



17



18

18 Author, "AxisIV_primary voids and broders", (2020).

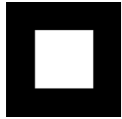
mnemonics island_macro scale

19 Author, "AxisIV_primary voids and trajectory connection", (2020).

mnemonics island_macro scale



19



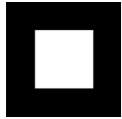
20 Author, "Axis IV_ primary voids and intangible relation", (2020).

mnemonics island_macro scale

21 Author, "Primary voids and borders, trajectory and intangible relation", (2020).

mnemonics island_macro scale





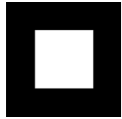
22 Author, "Intangible relation", (2020).

mnemonics island_macro scale

23 Author, "Grammar of primary voids", (2020).

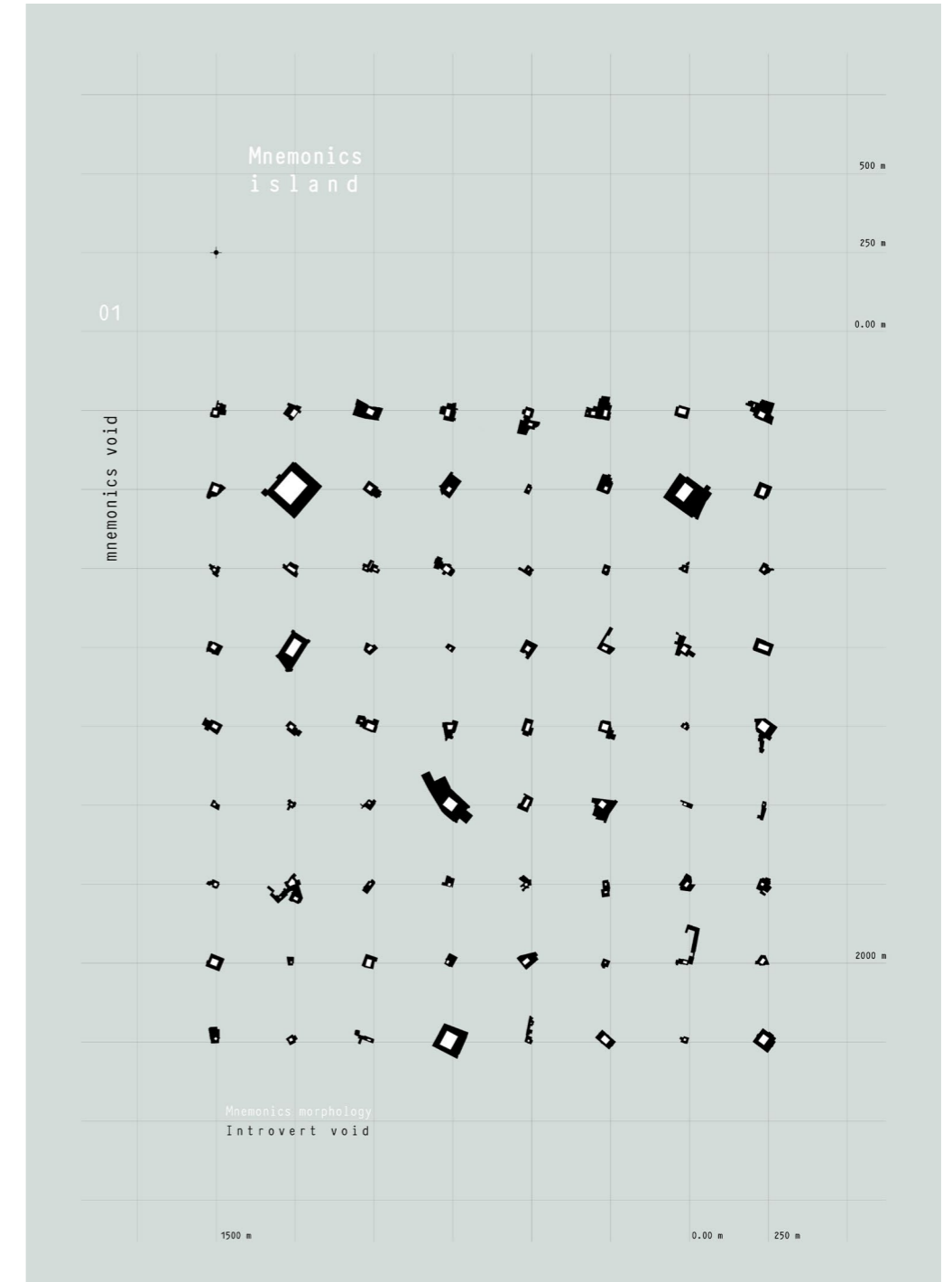
mnemonics island_macro scale





24 Author, "Hidden dimension", (2020).
mnemonics island_macro scale

25 Author, "Taxonomies", (2020).
mnemonics island_macro scale





Cairo in the era of the dynasty of Muhammad Ali, which was situated from 1805 till the free officer movement in July 1952, reached its peak in the era of khedive Ismail, when he decided to establish Khedivial Cairo 'Fluvial Island', to present a real urban renaissance where he replicated the model of Haussmann of Paris in Cairo. The urban composition of the Fluvial Island was based on the secular Western thoughts, by developing sequence of squares surrounded by monumental architectural forms and connected through axial infrastructures imposed to define the urban blocks and generate wide streets cable of accepting the new revolution of the industrial era. This model was supposed to perform as a continuity of the traditional island, where a strong incision from the citadel to the opera square couldn't affirm this connection between the two islands.

The urban composition didn't consider the urban, social and environmental dimensions, neither with its context represented by the Nile as strong organism essential in the process of the formation of this area, or with the inhabitants whom couldn't find their collective space where the squares couldn't reach its maturity and remained lost in time and space.

In this sense, the local urban inhabitants began entering a transitional stage that performed in its appearance as an evolutionary extension of the previous one, but in its essence it differs and even contradicts its predecessor by ignoring the endogenous of dwelling and imposing the generality of the city. Hence, the void only retained its subjectivity as space but lost its relationship to inclusiveness and completeness.

This nostalgic view referred to the Fluvial Island with its stunning European urban planning, has been perceived as epitome of unconscious brutal urban action which obliterate not only the relation between the old and the new and the essence of the void related to the various dimension in the tradition, but also the dweller's sense of belonging in relation to the terrestrial and spiritual dimensions.

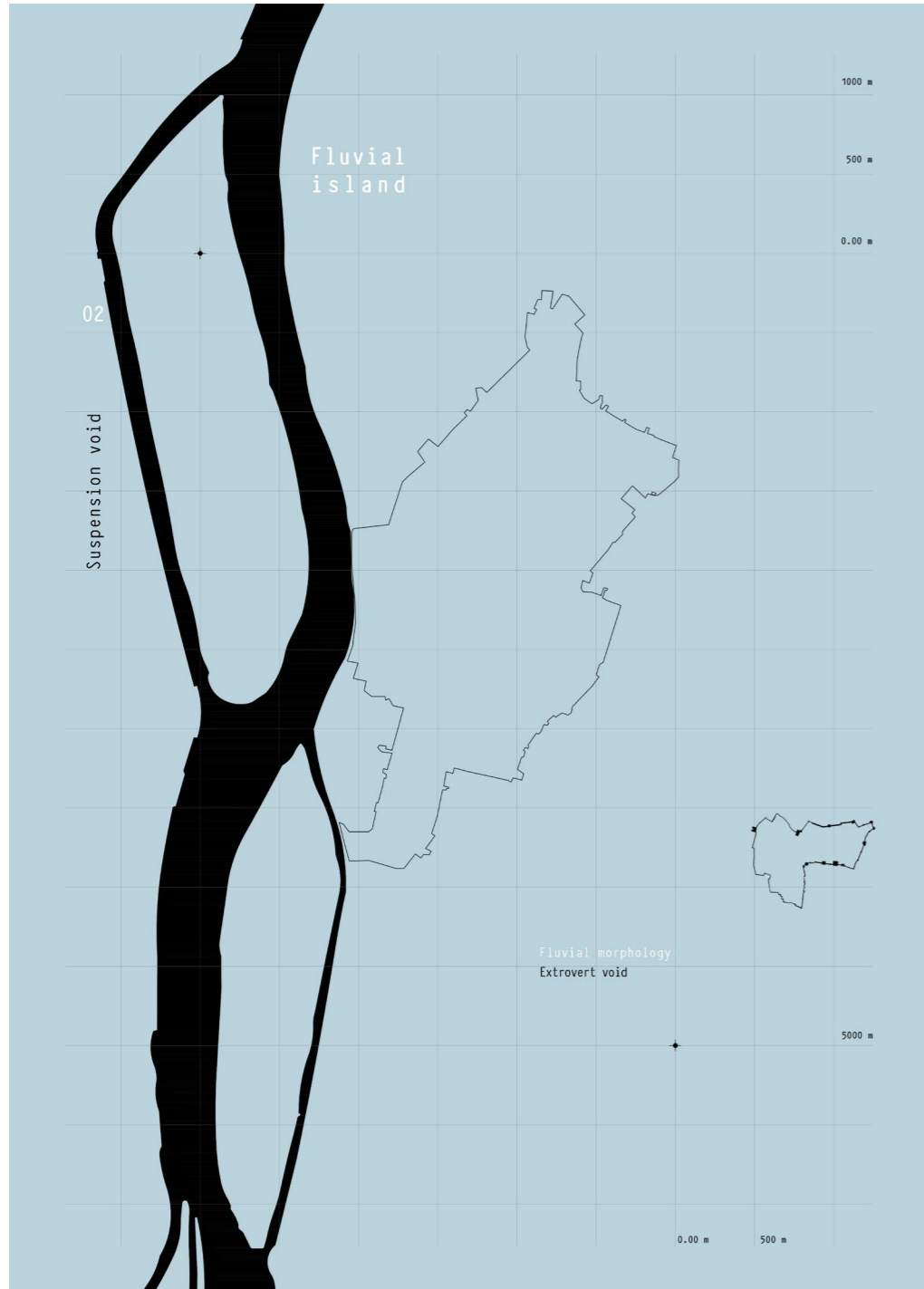


The physiognomies of this urban composition have produced a balance between the urban form and the void where the urban fabrics were stable, and have generated a hierarchal sequence not of the urban voids but of the monumental forms. The focus was the buildings and its presence, it is a reflection of the beauty of the image, regardless the observer that leads to an ephemeral statues of perception.

These linguistic characteristics of the urban composition have outlined a progressive dematerialization of the consolidated process of the introvert spaces, external images and the structural grammar. Hence, The voids became huge to be able to serve the image of the monuments, with no relation to social and ecological demands that have definitively downgraded the idea of harmonious nexus the dweller and the space and produced a real threat of urban equilibrium.

Again here, the main squares were situated on the border of the island with no direct relation with it, so they couldn't give a clear definition for the relationship between the island and its border. Besides by exhibiting the squares as an extrovert voids, has reduced the completeness conception of the traditional void, to only an aesthetic material object extended in the meiotic dimension with a progressive change in the persona of the artifact composition. Where these extroverted spaces were connected by axial infrastructures in which they have been transformed from being a space of dwelling to be spaces that accommodate an endless movement of vehicles that prevent the dwellers to discover their own collective space within this complexity.

Ironically, the dwellers have rebelled in the time of revolution by transforming these spaces specially Tahrir Square to an introvert spaces that represent their unconscious collective memory. And so, the dependence on the aesthetic of the exteriority of architecture in the Fluvial Island has projected to refute the constitutive memory of it, which has merged into dissolution of the artifact in the current camouflage. Where the square as the primary element of the urban composition of this island, couldn't sustain the inseparable relation between the dweller and his own space.



26

26 Author, "Island and borders", (2020).

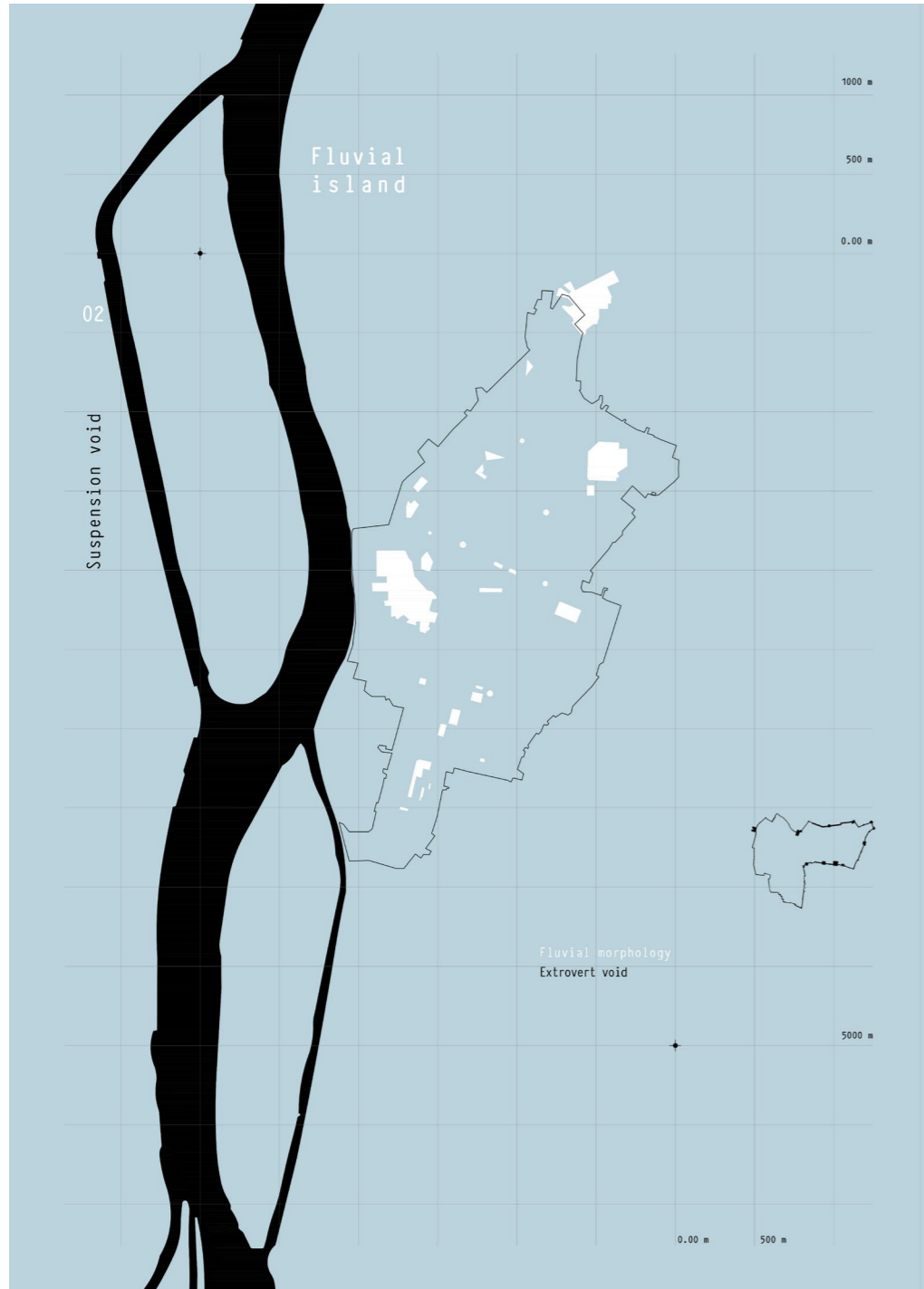
fluvial island_macro scale

27 Author, "Island and fabrics", (2020).

fluvial island_macro scale



27



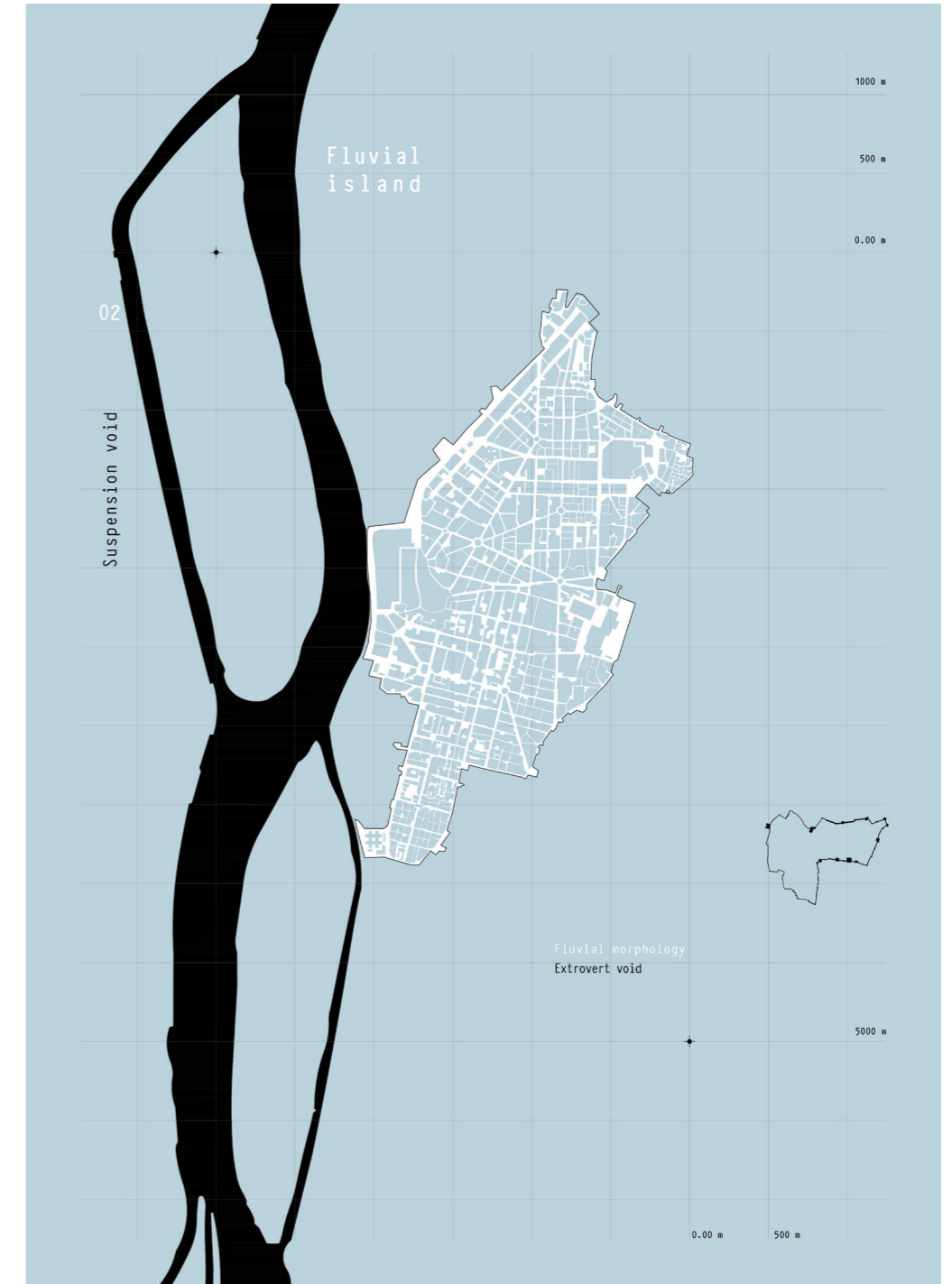
28

28 Author, "Island and voids", (2020).

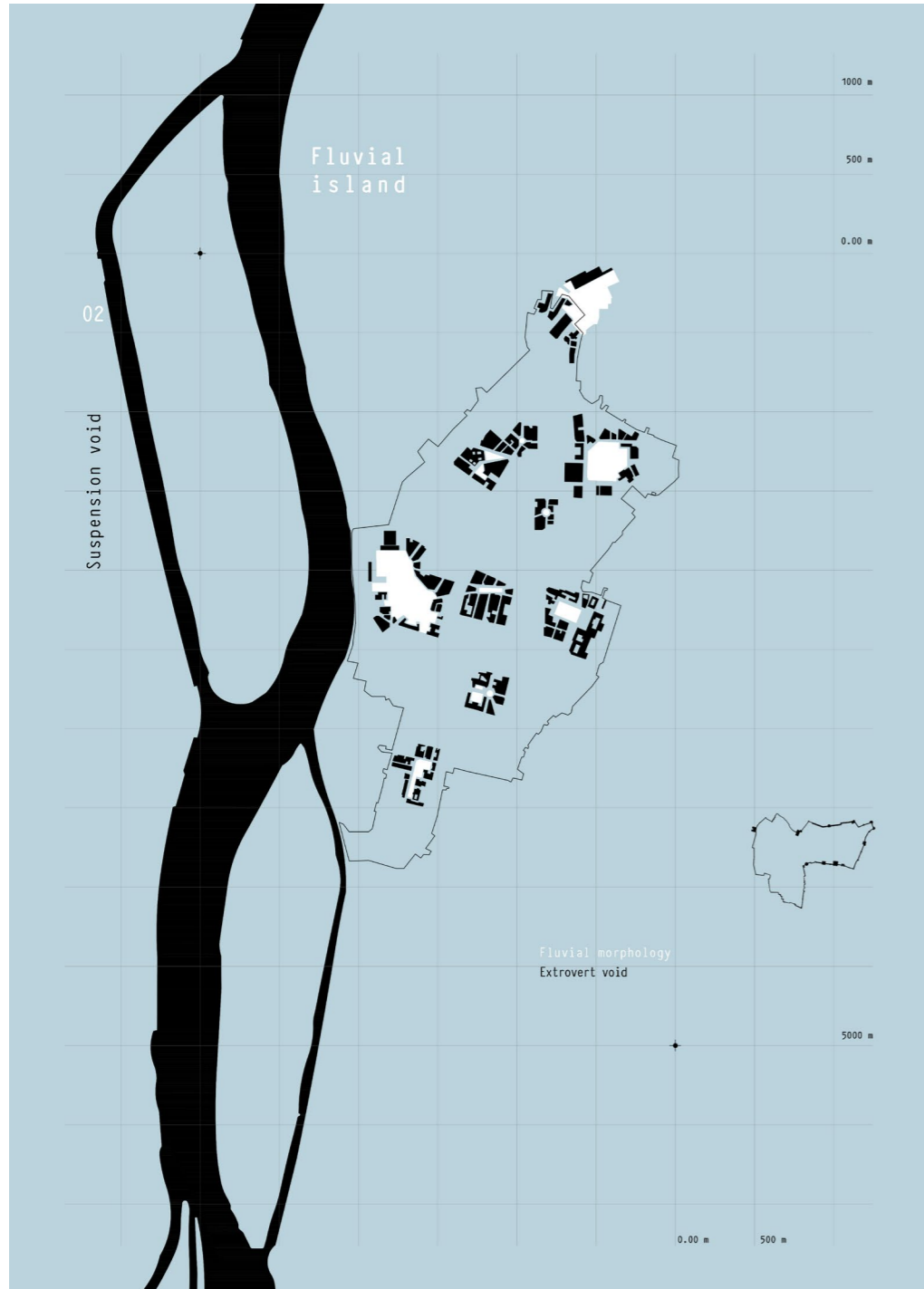
fluvial island_macro scale

29 Author, "Island and streets", (2020).

fluvial island_macro scale



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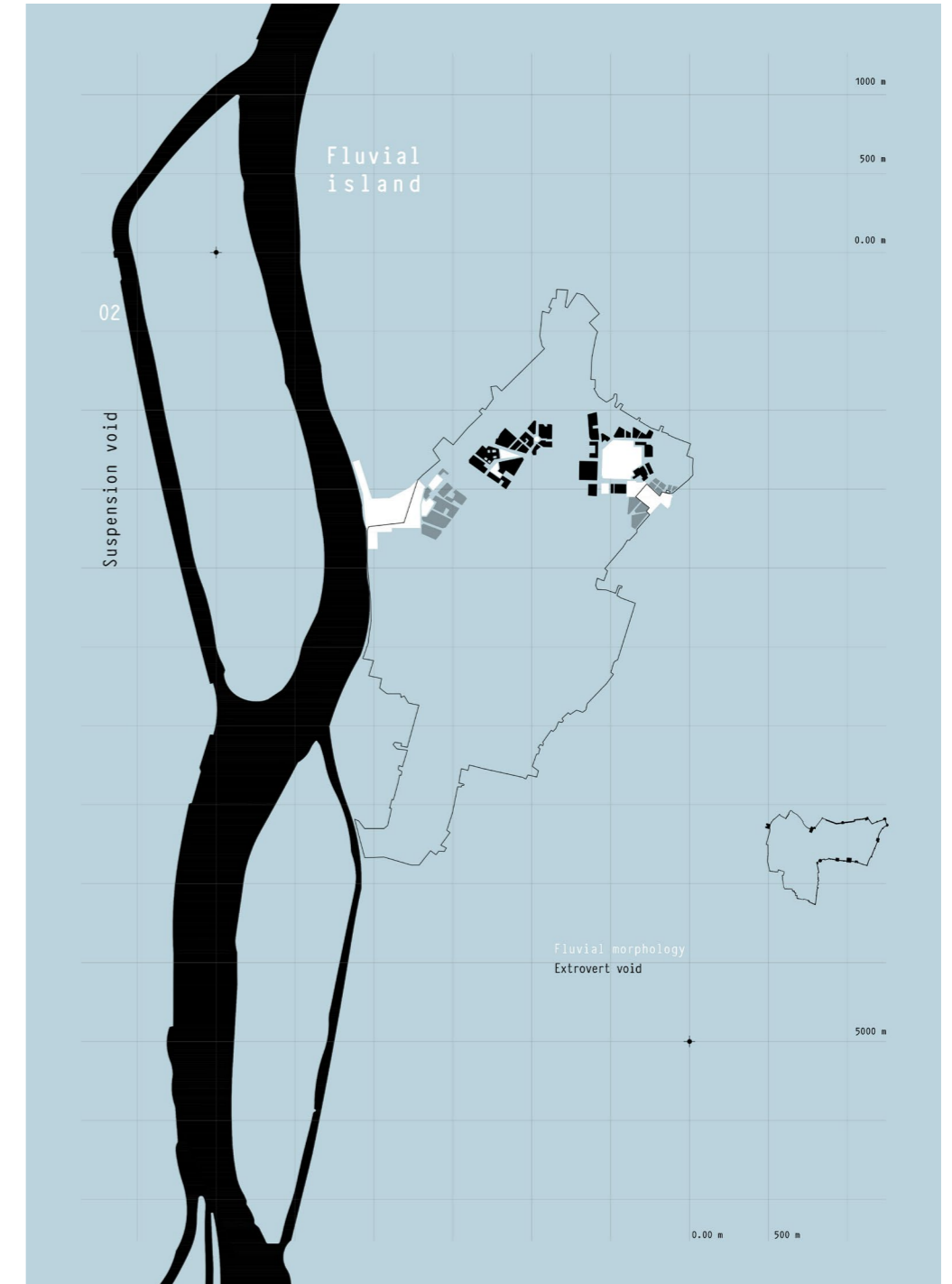
30

30 Author, "Island and primary voids", (2020).

fluvial island_macro scale

31 Author, "Axis I_primary voids and borders", (2020).

fluvial island_macro scale



31



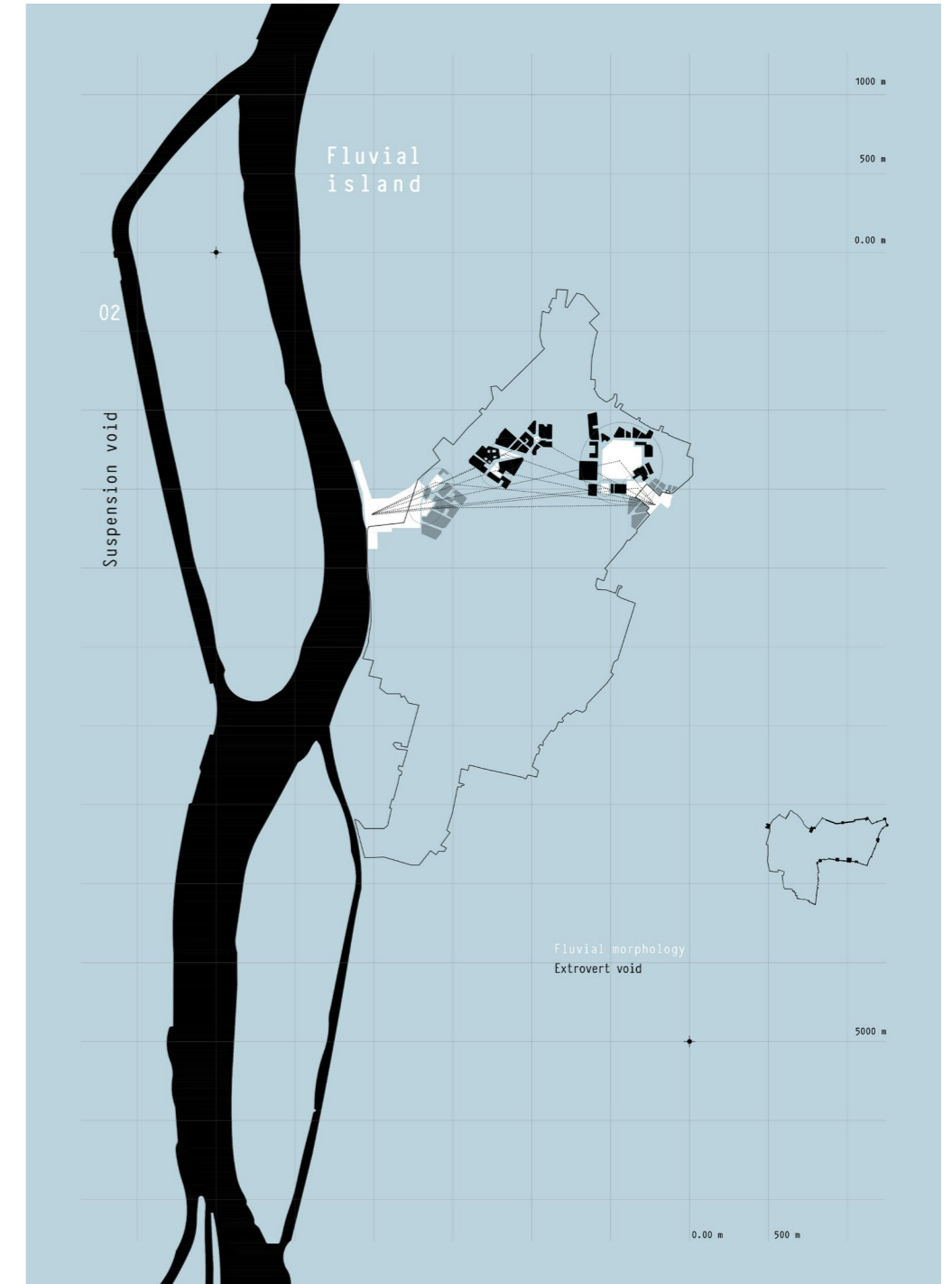
32

32 Author, "Axis 1 primary voids and trajectory connection", (2020).

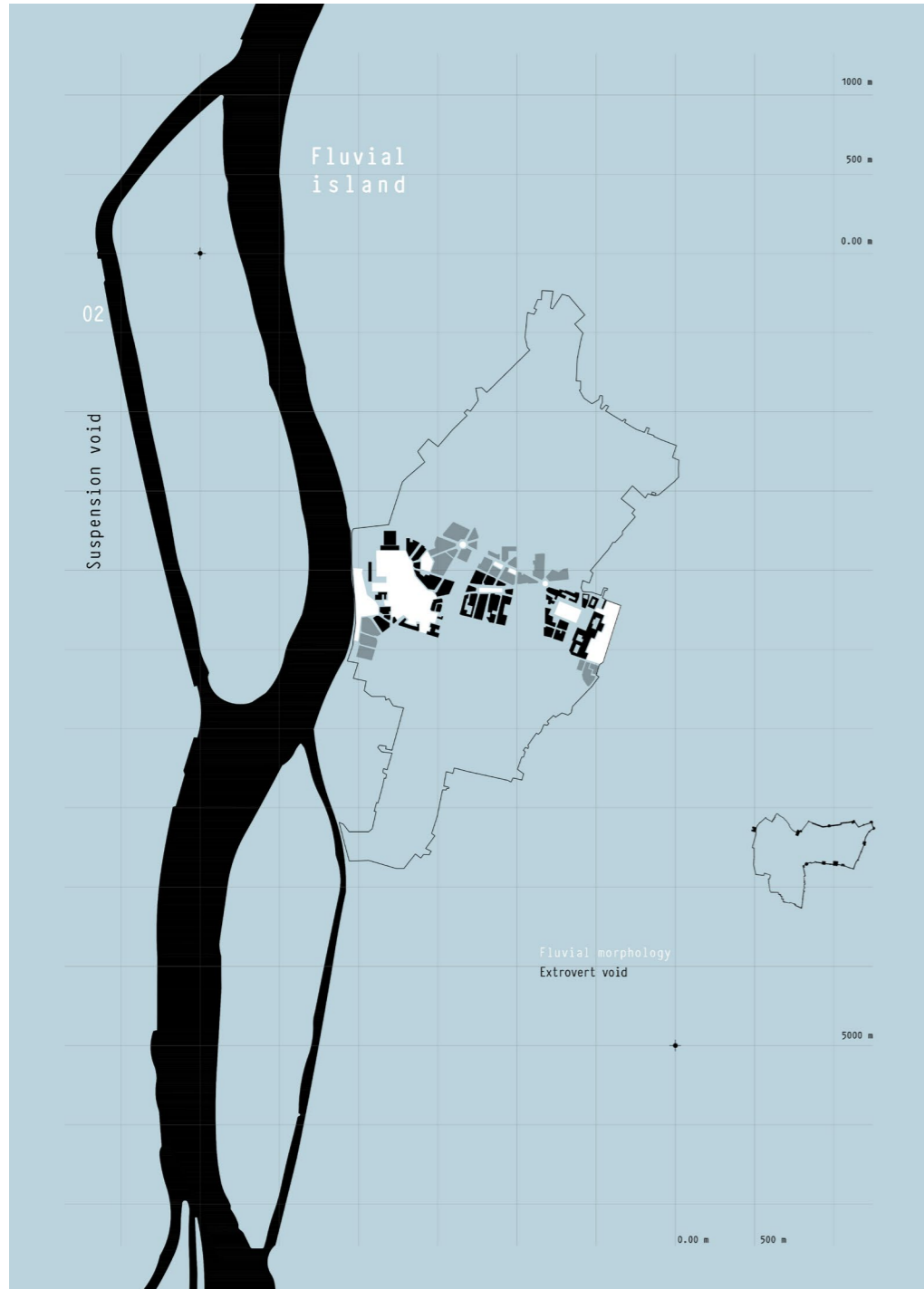
fluvial island_macro scale

33 Author, "Axis 1 primary voids and intangible relation", (2020).

fluvial island_macro scale



33



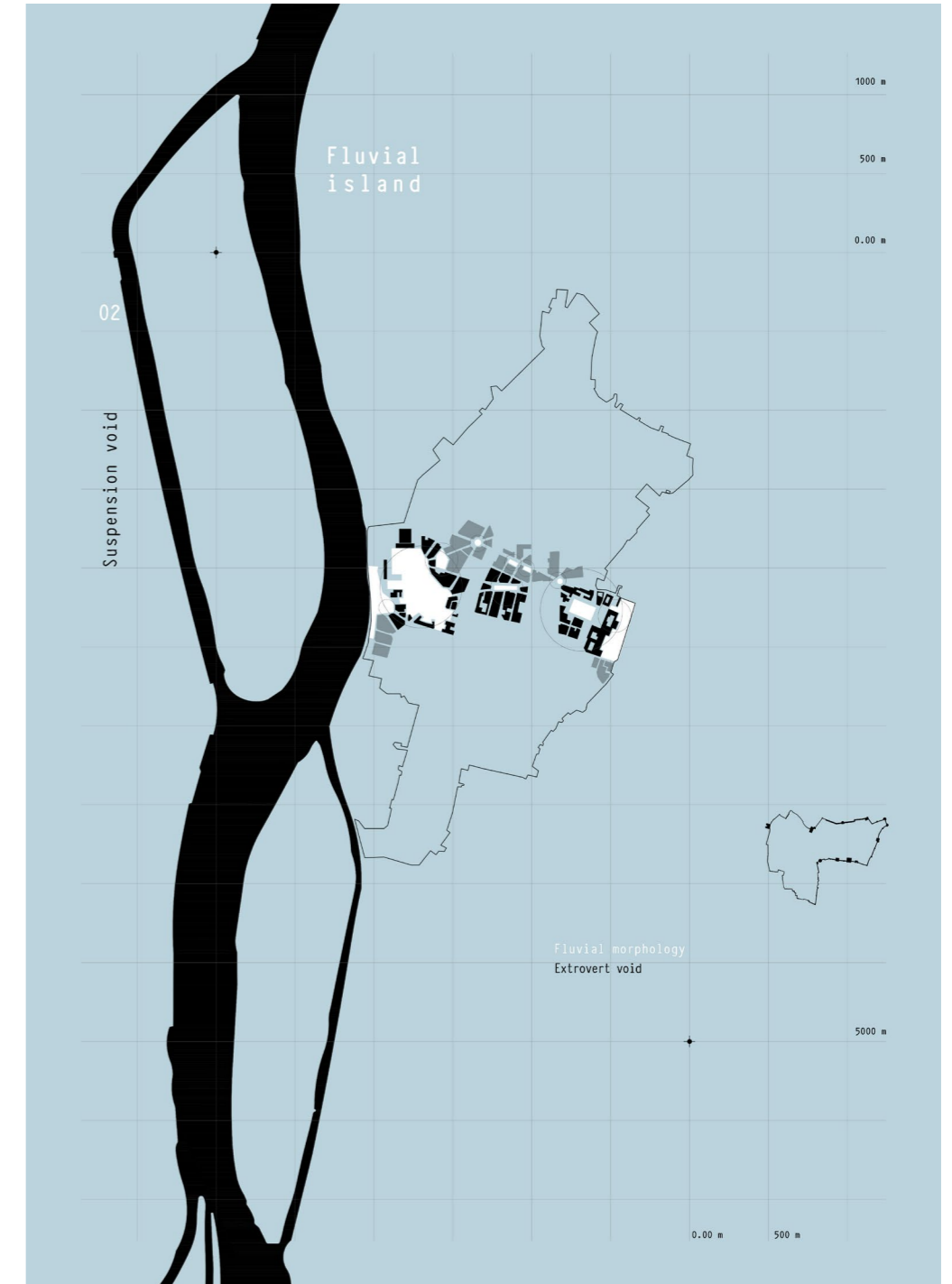
34

34 Author, "Axis II primary voids and broders", (2020).

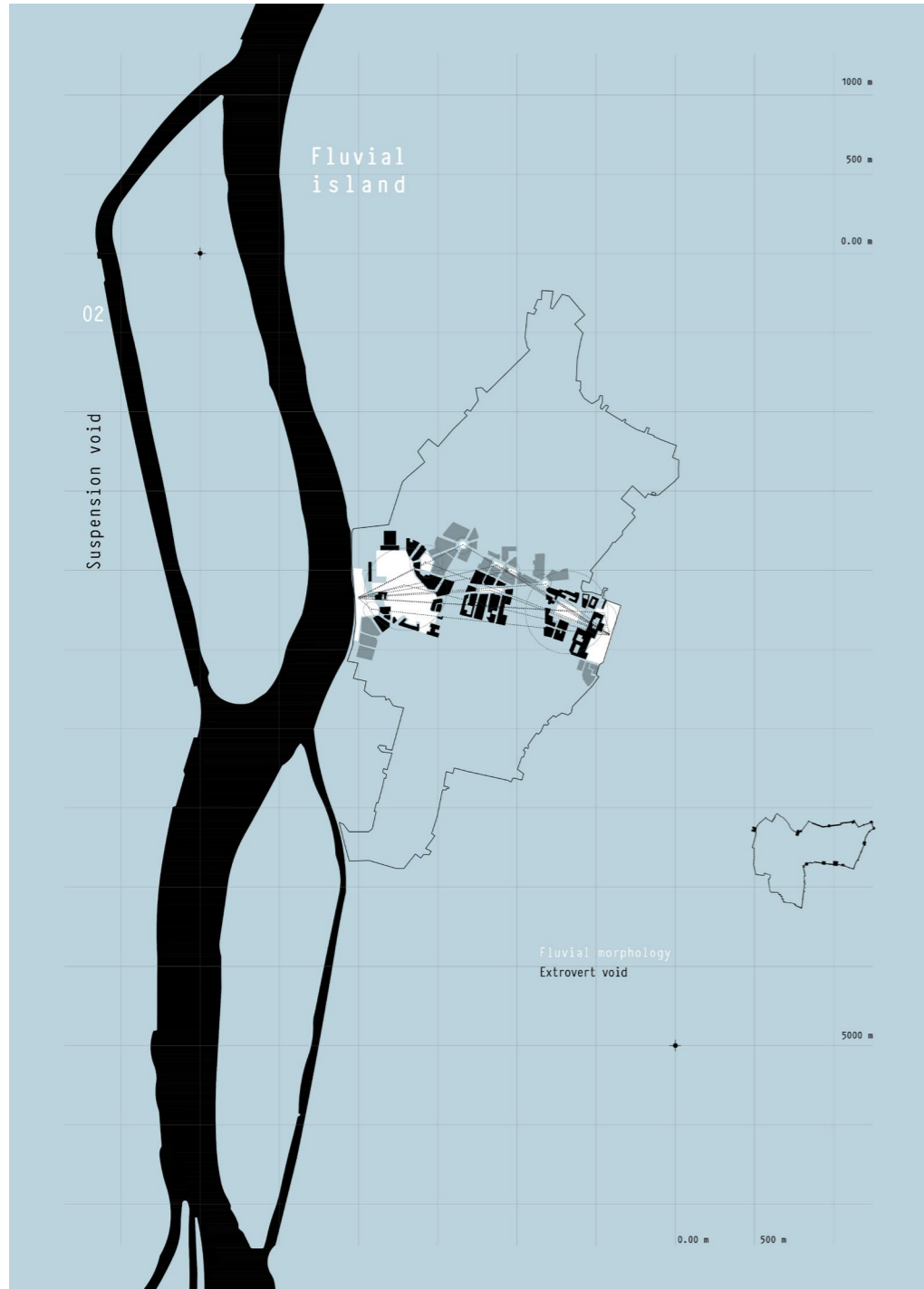
fluvial island_macro scale

35 Author, "Axis II primary voids and trajectory connection", (2020).

fluvial island_macro scale



35



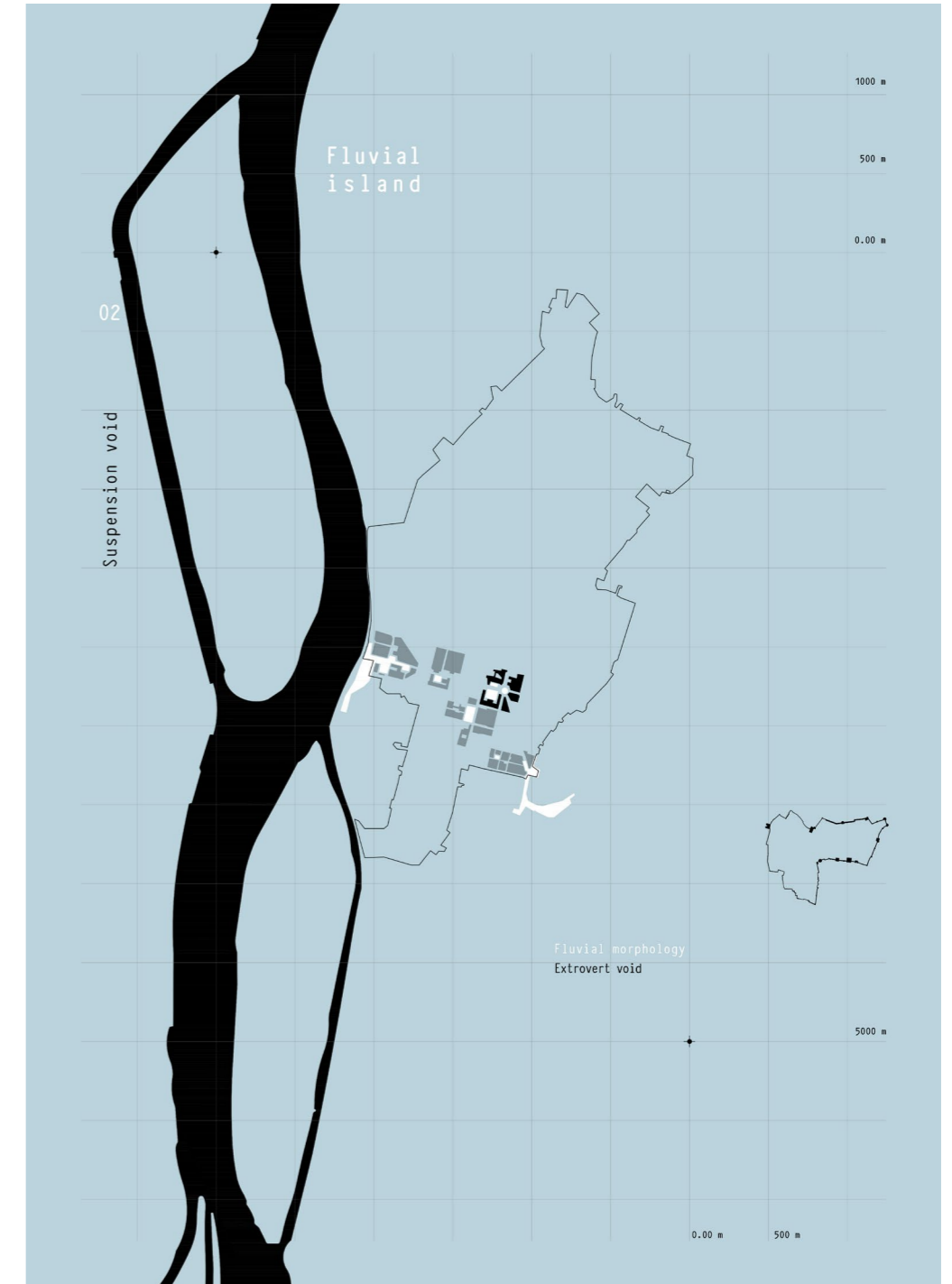
36

36 Author, "Axis II_ primary voids and intangible relation", (2020).

fluvial island_macro scale

37 Author, "Axis III_ primary voids and borders", (2020).

fluvial island_macro scale



37



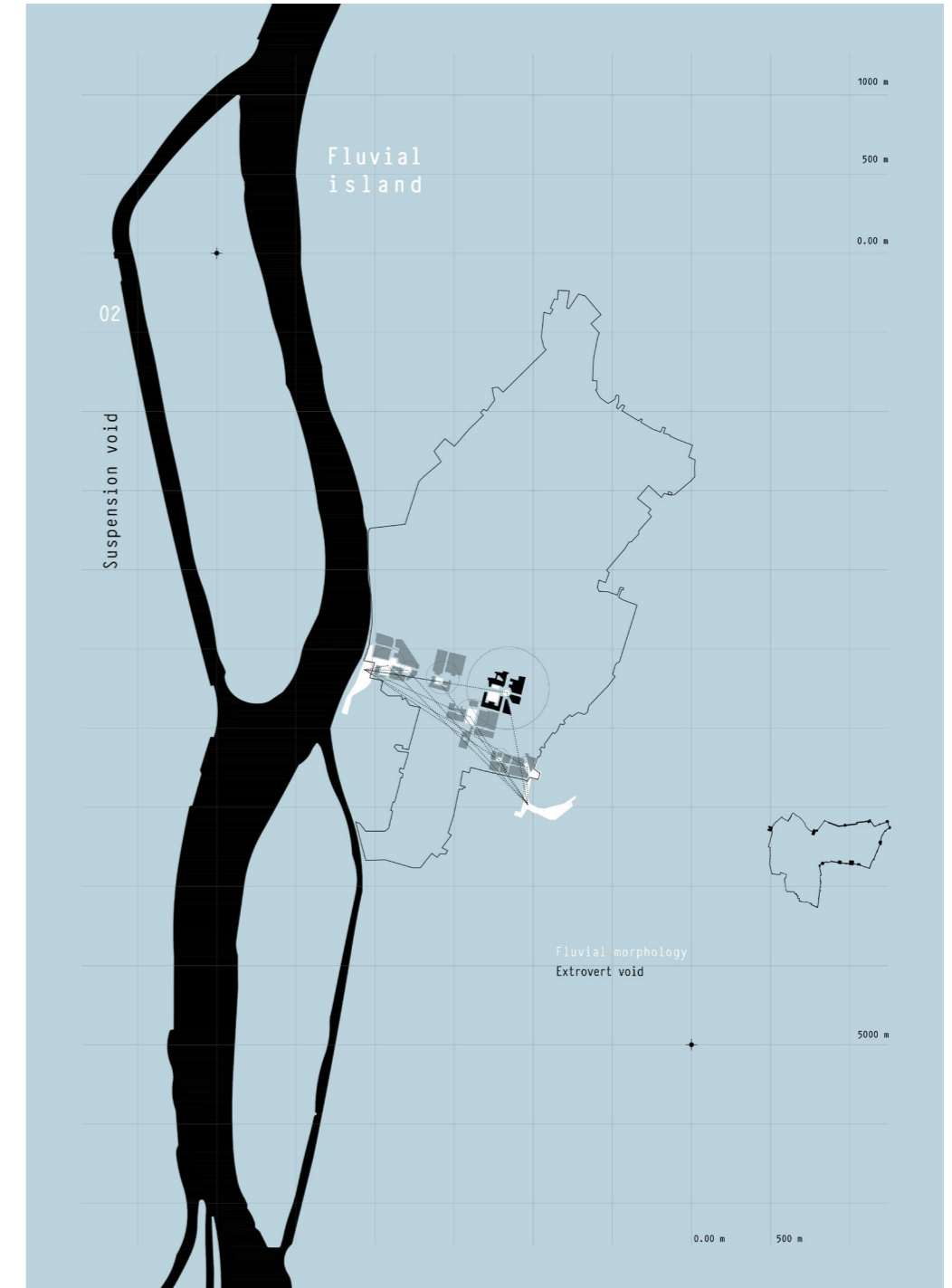
38

38 Author, "AxisIII_ primary voids and trajectory connection", (2020).

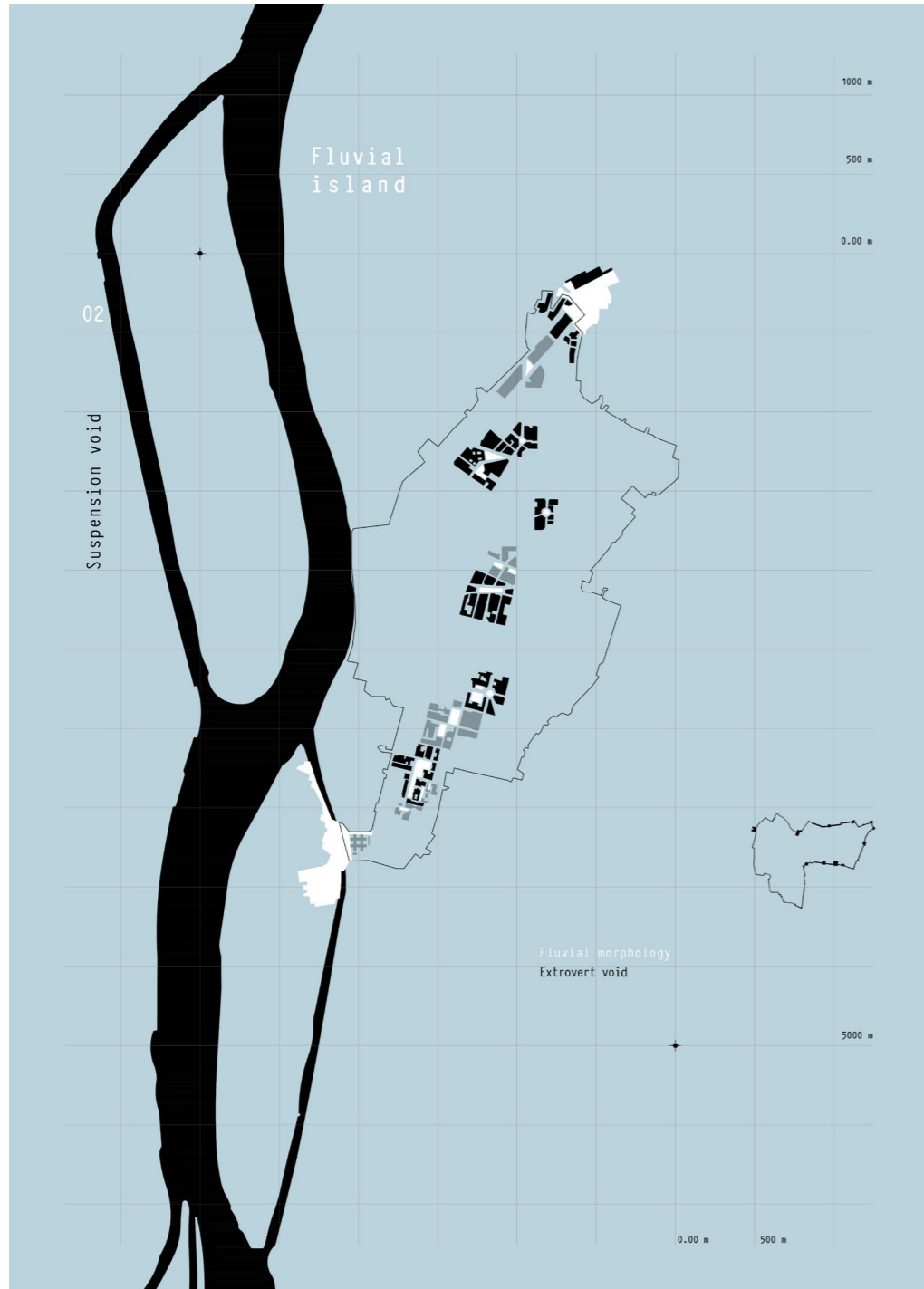
fluvial island_macro scale

39 Author, "AxisIII_ primary voids and intangible relation", (2020).

fluvial island_macro scale



39

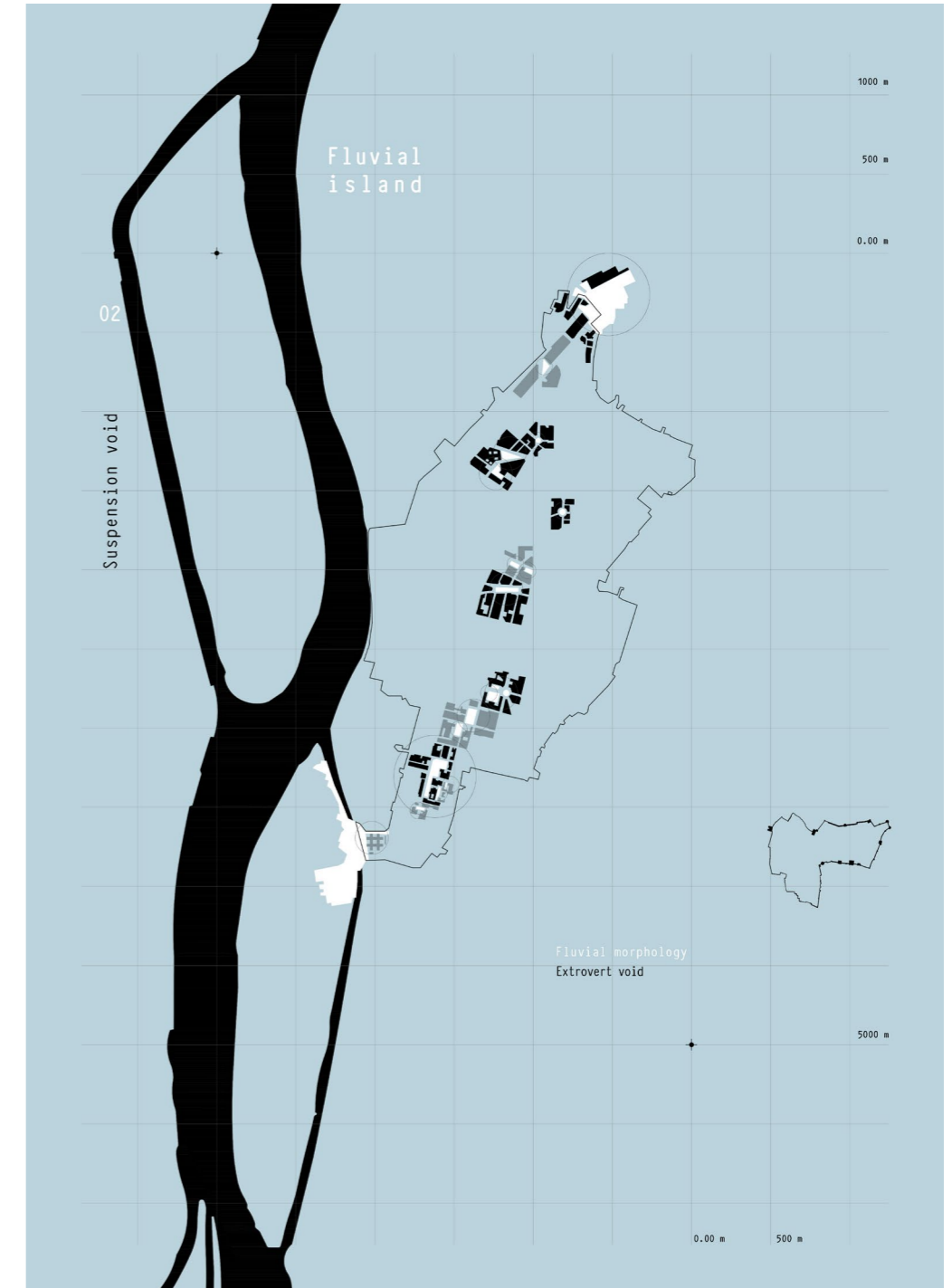


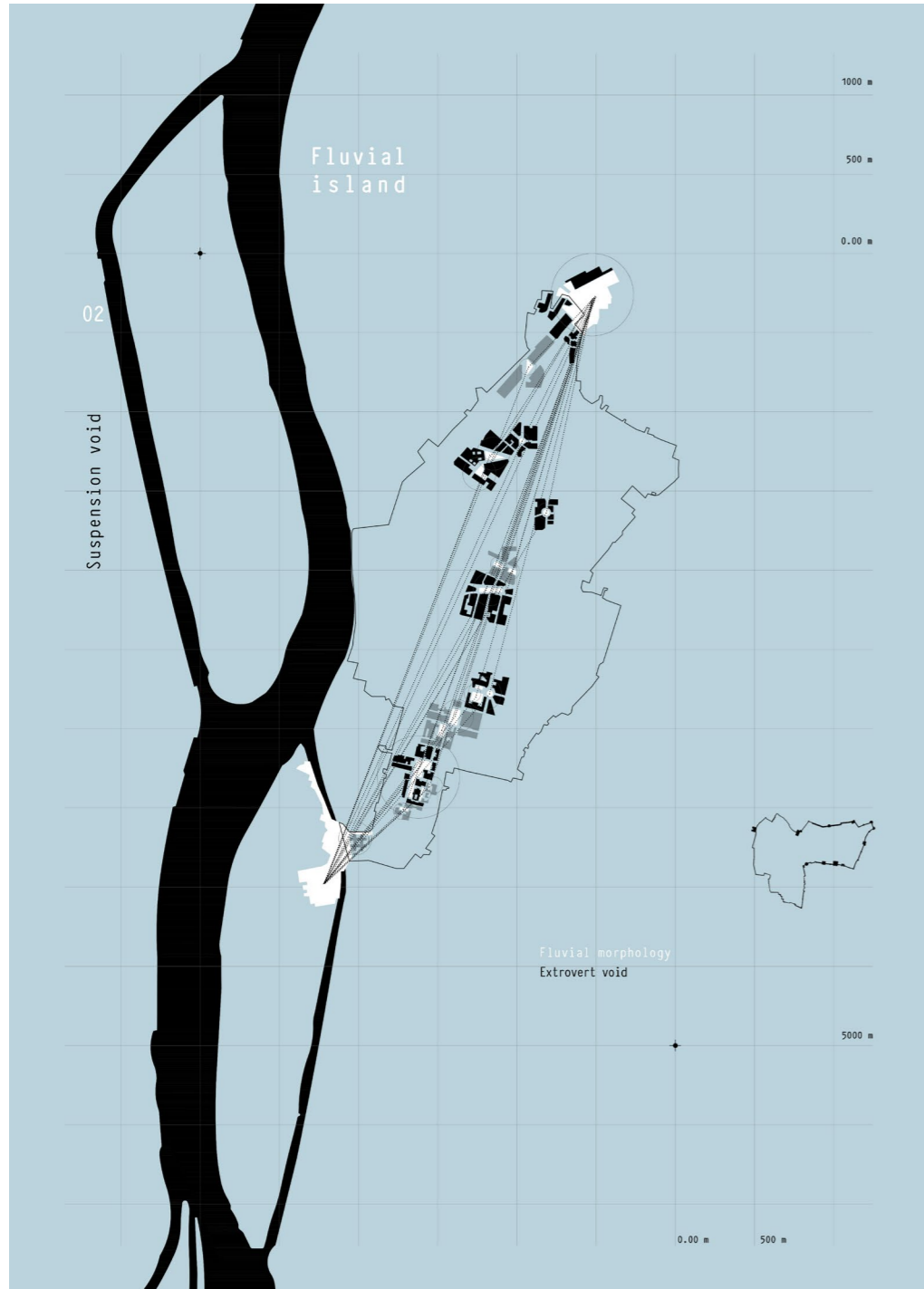
40 Author, "AxisIV_primary voids and broders", (2020).

fluvial island_macro scale

41 Author, "AxisIV_primary voids and trajectory connection", (2020).

fluvial island_macro scale





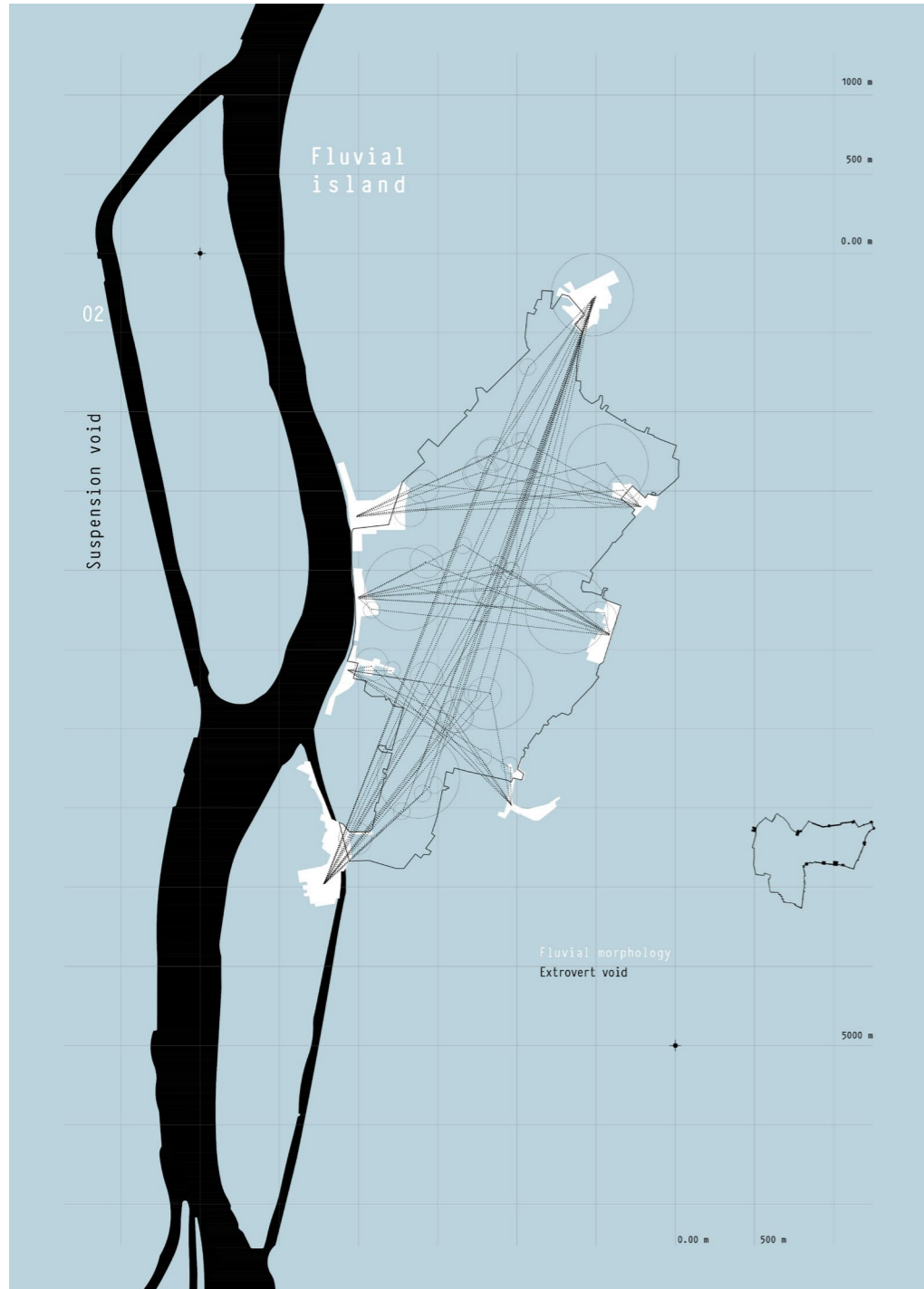
42 Author, "AxisIV_primary voids and intangible relation", (2020).

fluvial island_macro scale

43 Author, "Primary voids and borders, trajectory and intangible relation", (2020).

fluvial island_macro scale





44

44 Author, "Intangible relation", (2020).

fluvial island_macro scale

45 Author, "Taxonomies", (2020).

fluvial island_macro scale



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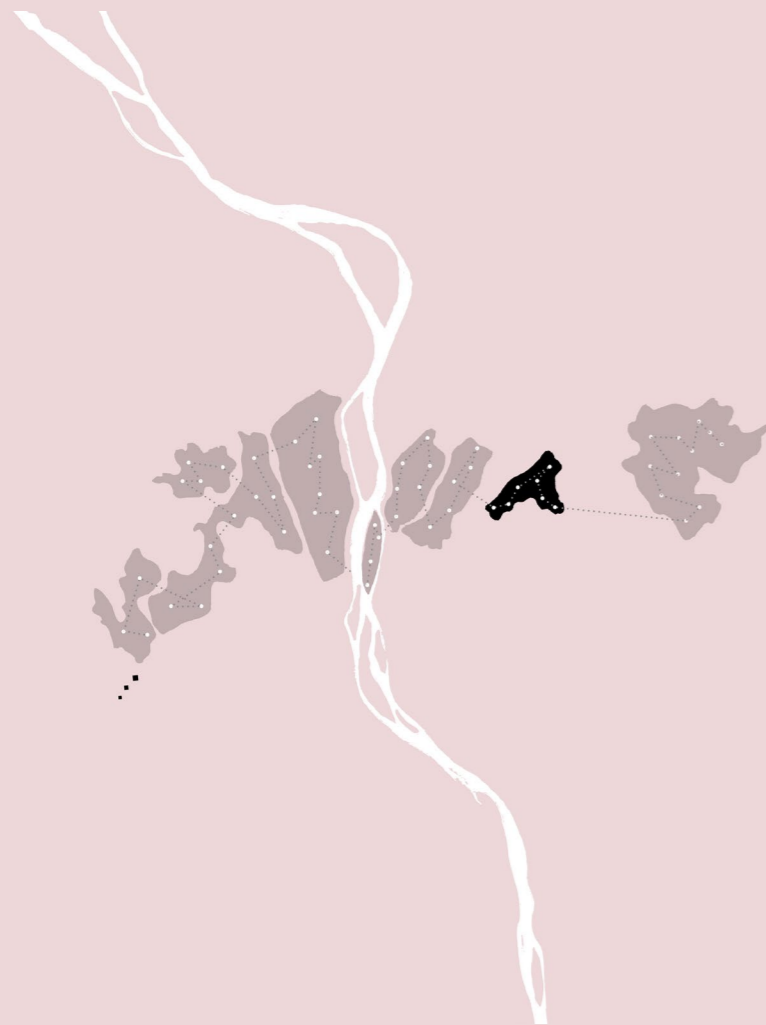
Topographical island
In-between void

Between 1950-1960, few areas in the desert were developed informally, mainly Manshiyat Nasir 'Garbage City', and also some other smaller areas on the desert fringes. The phenomenon of informal reality has been introduced in Cairo's urban structure as a result of extralegal urban development practices where they exhibit a complete absence of urban and building control. Two main realities, one is situated on the limit of the desert that actually remain consolidated and the second, is positioned on the agricultural lands that is still in spontaneous growth.

Manshiyat Nasir or the Topographical Island, as it has been defined here is a massive urban form with a porous voids that has been resulted from the architectural typology and urban morphology of the structural composition. The island is situated beneath the mountain in which it has played an important role to define the characteristics of the development and transformation of this urban composition.

The compact urban fabrics are strongly in relation with the nature of the context where the grammar of the urban form have strictly followed the topography generated by the mountain and have produced a narrow alleys running from the mountain towards the huge infrastructural limit introduced by the government to generate a sort of organic network. This urban pattern is indistinguishable from the traditional urban fabrics in its compactness structure and composition and could be clearly identified by comparing the two satellite maps.

The crucial difference between the two islands, is the treatment and role of the void within the composition, where the introvert void with it's complete multifaceted is manifested as the essence of the whole composition in the Mnemonics Island, while the void in the Topographical Island, has been resulted as in-between space, leftover and interstitial space within the urban structure, and so they remained as forgotten spaces, seeking to find their own identity.

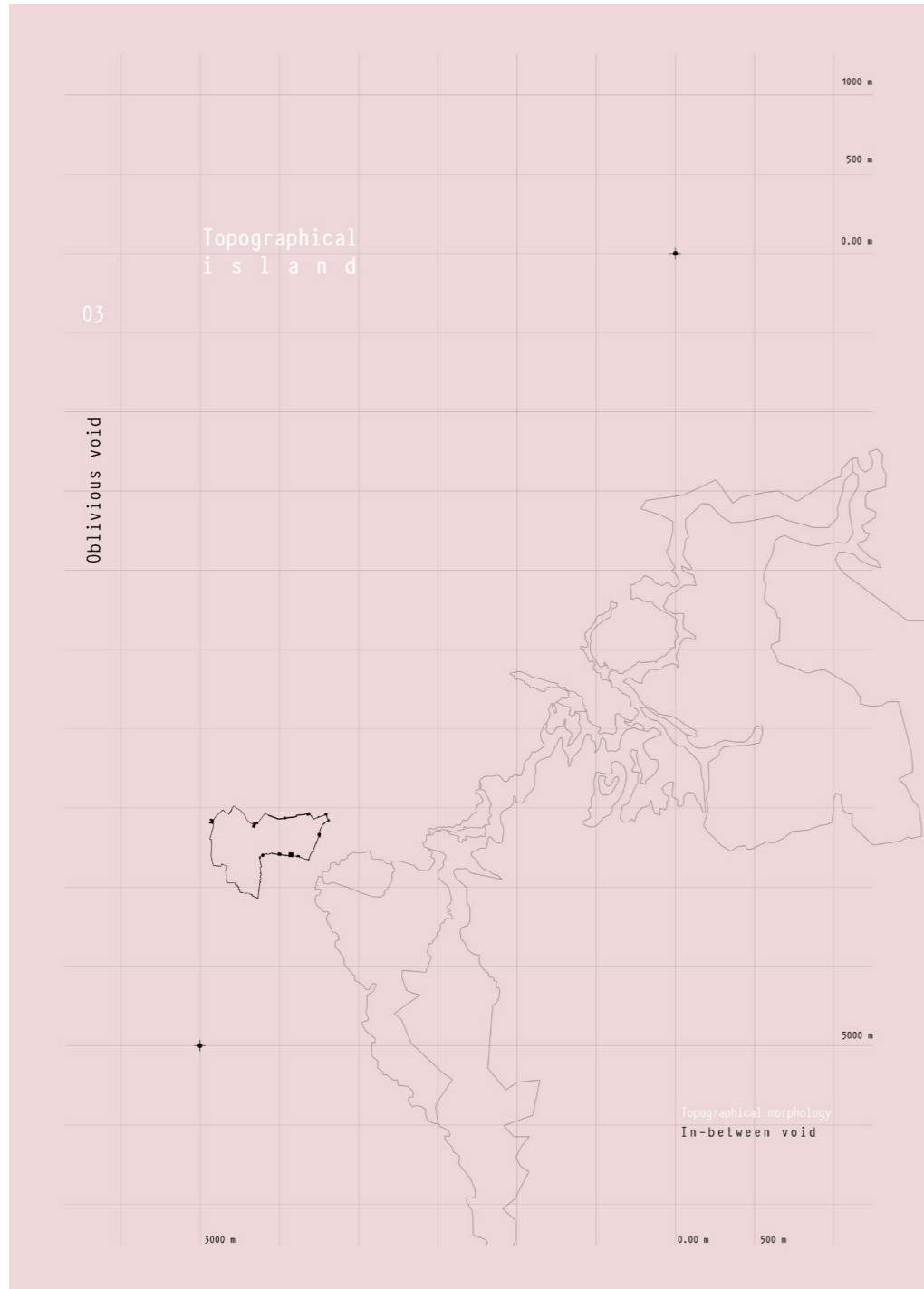
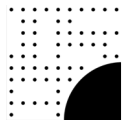


In fact the analogy of this urban composition is affirming the well organization and distribution of the voids within the islands, however they still need to be discovered as they are situated and surrounded by average ten-floor compact buildings with no regulations to control them, and they are connected through organic narrow network reminiscent from the historical approach but out of scale, which produce a various ecological and urban problems.

The retroactive perception of the collective memory of such inhabitants, affirms the strong necessity to rediscover the essence of these spaces, far from all the superficial approaches developed by the government. It should be a mutable process between defining the space and dwelling it by the inhabitants to configure the significance role of the void within the urban composition. This transformation could affirm both social and urban solidarity, as the social ties and unity were fundamental for the endurance of this island, where the consolidated community was able to face and stop any actions of the government towards this informal urban form, besides it provides them with the privilege for devouring their basic services and yet reformulating the whole urban composition.

This phenomenon has expressed the inseparable relationship between urban, social and geographical dimensions within this island in which it has shaped its urban reality. The condition of dependency related to the urban structure that was introduced by the authorities, is misleading approach and actually distorts the essence of the urban composition as the inappropriate definition has deformed the relation between solid and void and has generated a tendency between the dwellers and their primary voids where the void remained silent in the extreme materialized composition, seeking to find its balance with its nature.

Finally, the complexity of the urban structure, on one hand has ceased the inhabitants to perceive the void in its completeness manner and on the other hand, has tolerated the continuity and the being of the social unity in which it could generate the ability to solve the urban reality, and also relocate the collective memory within the urban voids to affirm such an innate approach towards the meaning of the void.

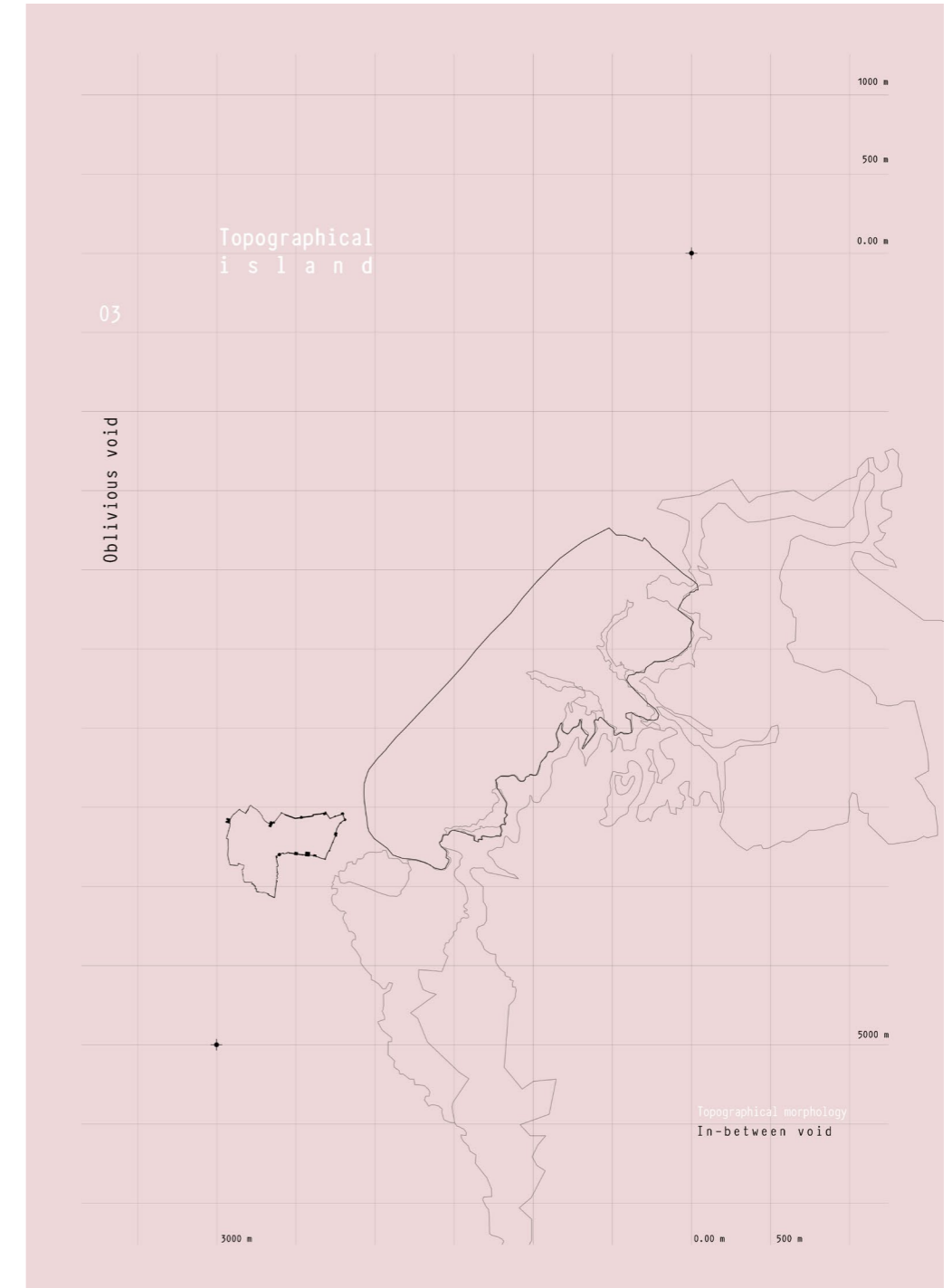


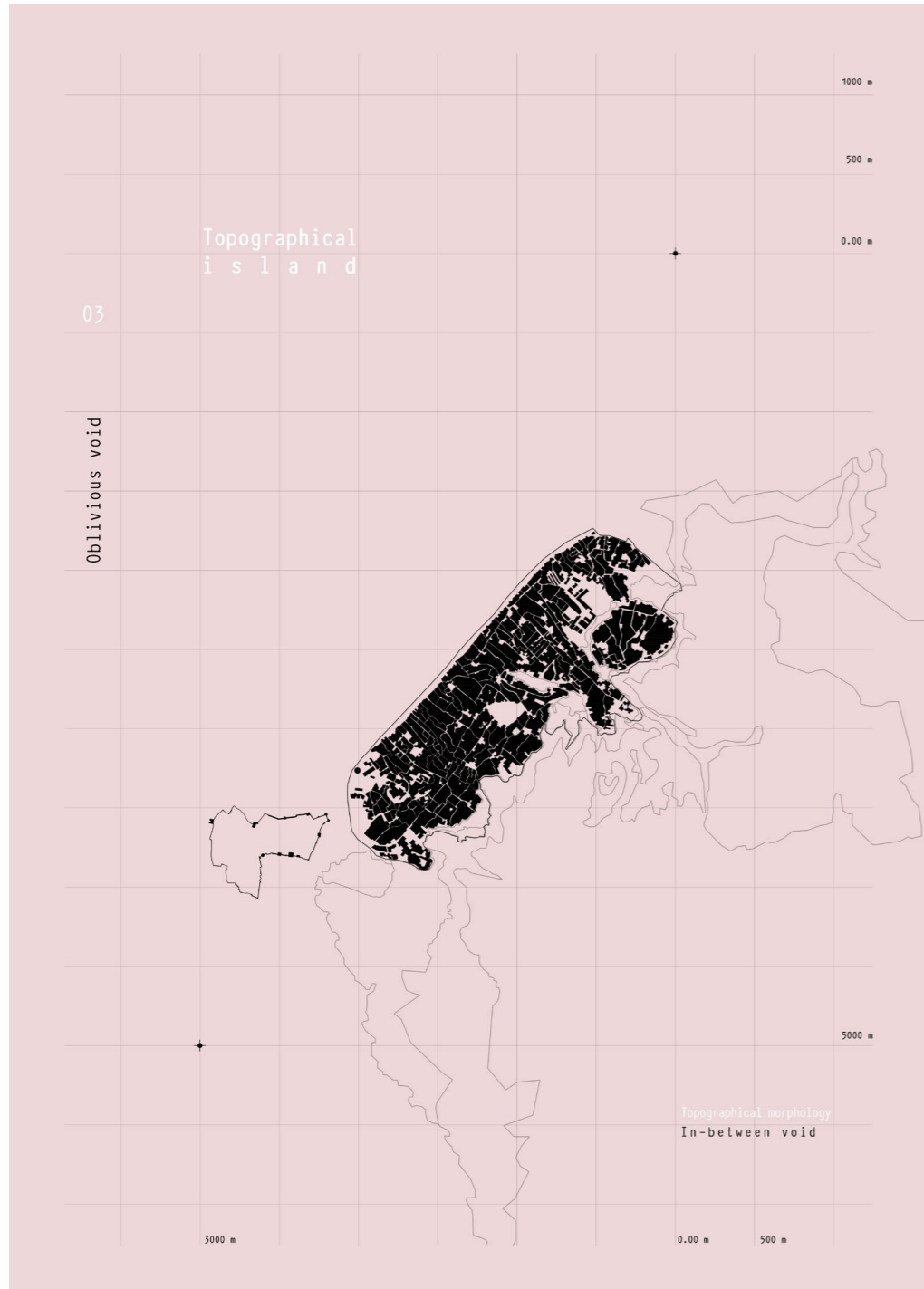
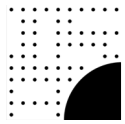
46 Author, "Geographical dimension", (2020).

topographical island_macro scale

47 Author, "Island and border", (2020).

topoghraphical island_macro scale



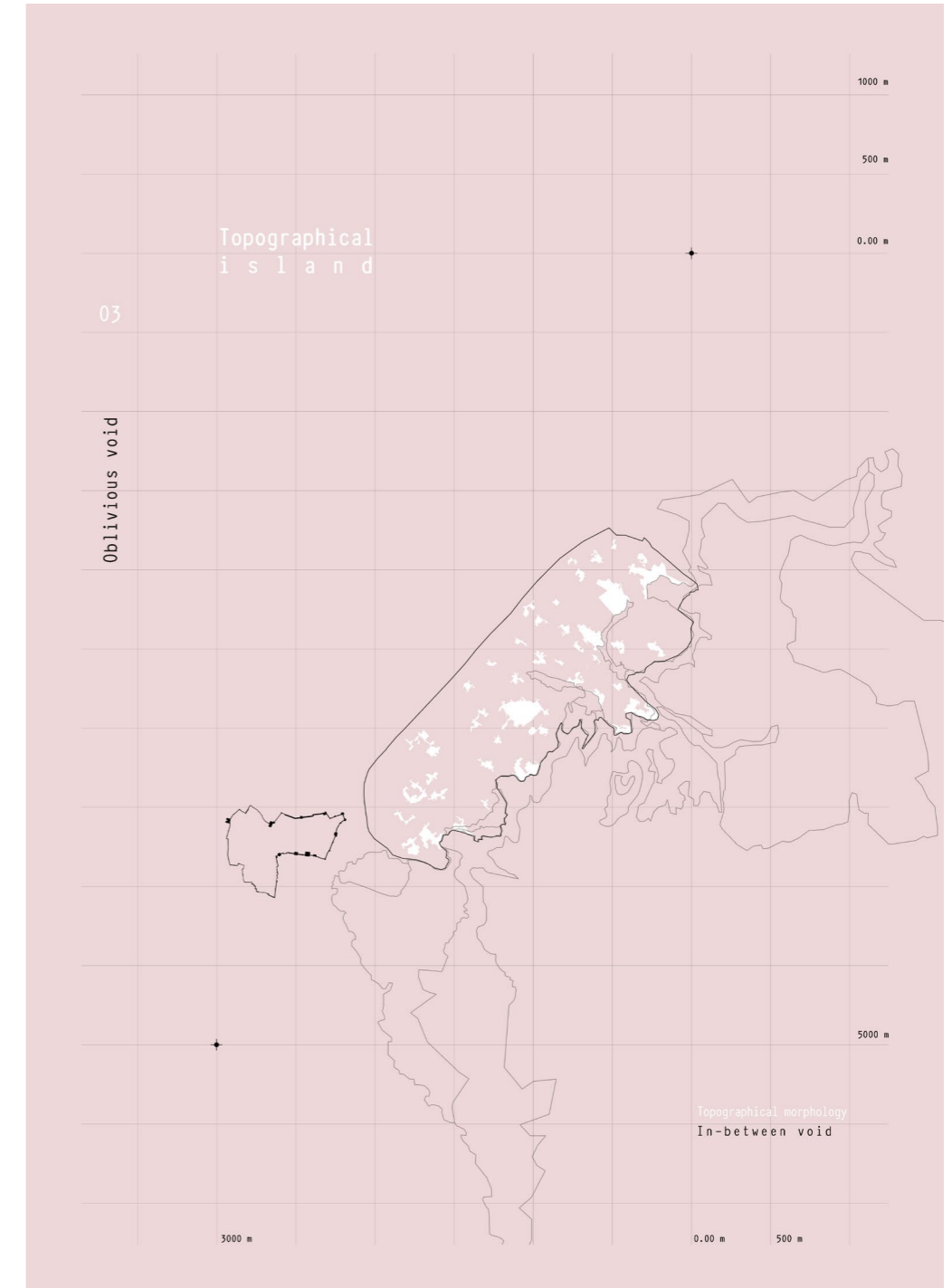


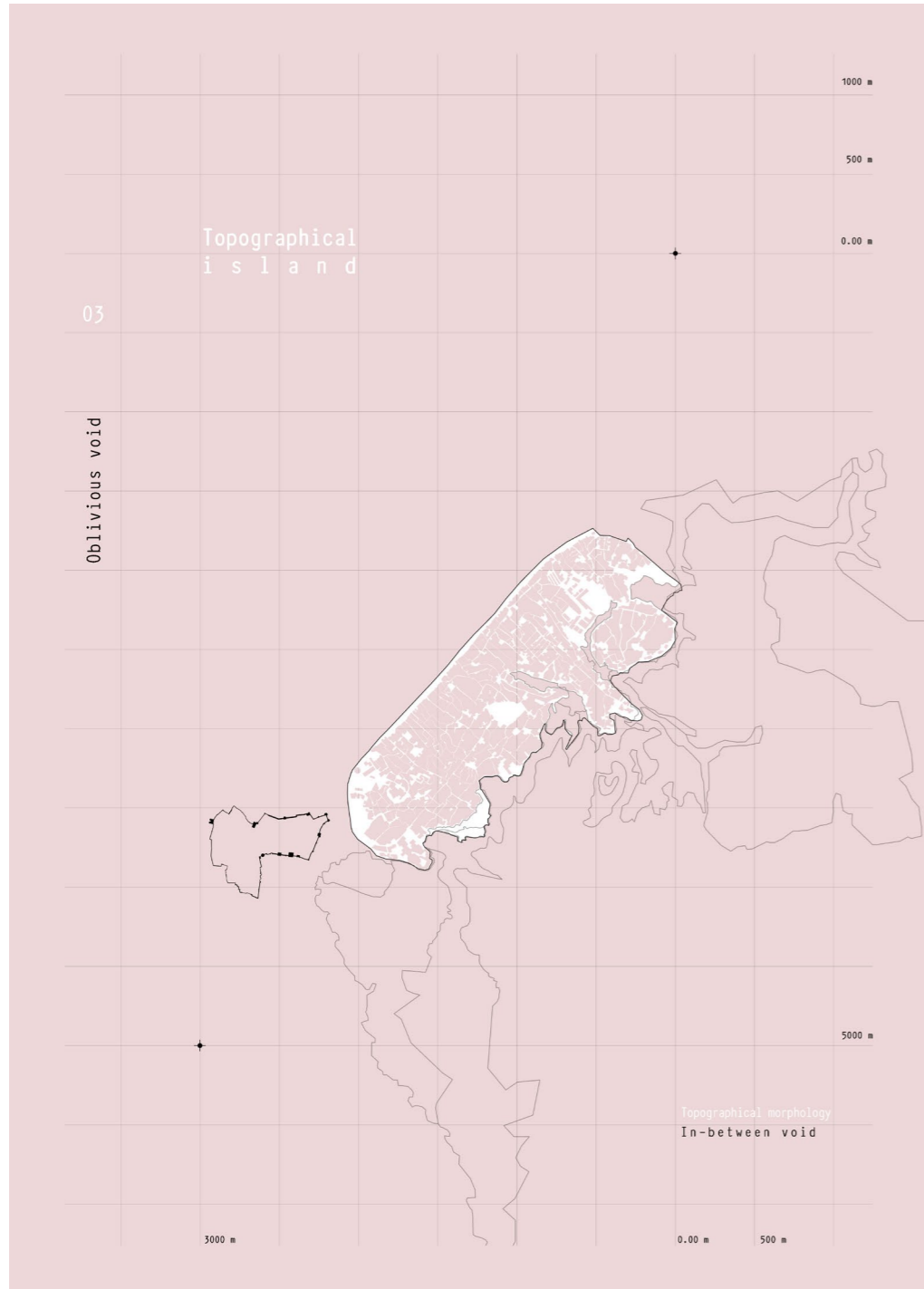
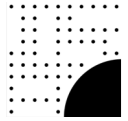
48 Author, "Island and fabrics", (2020).

topographical island_macro scale

49 Author, "Island and voids", (2020).

topographical island_macro scale



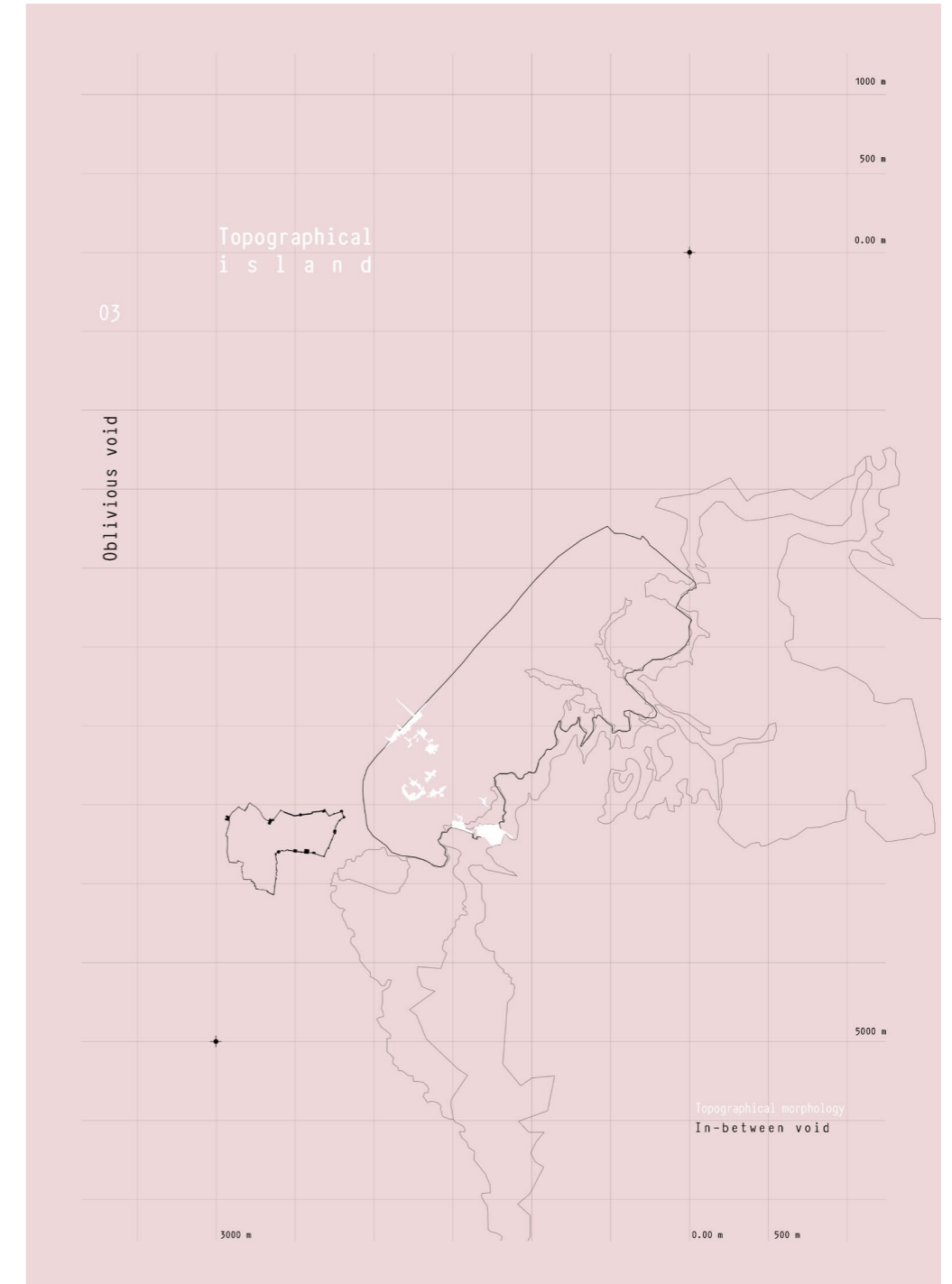


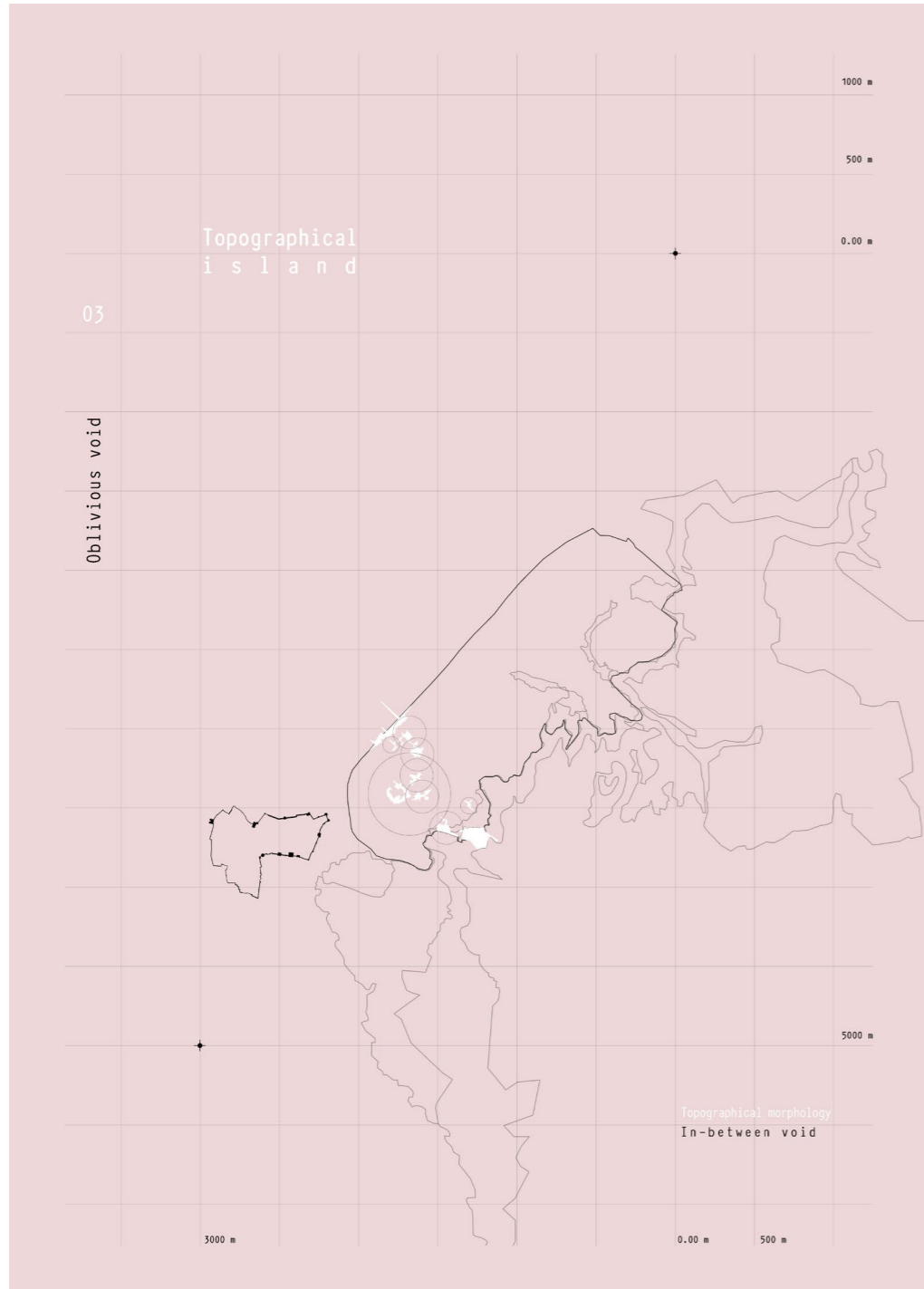
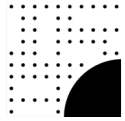
50 Author, "Island and streets", (2020).

topographical island_macro scale

51 Author, "Axis I_primary voids and borders", (2020).

topographical island_macro scale





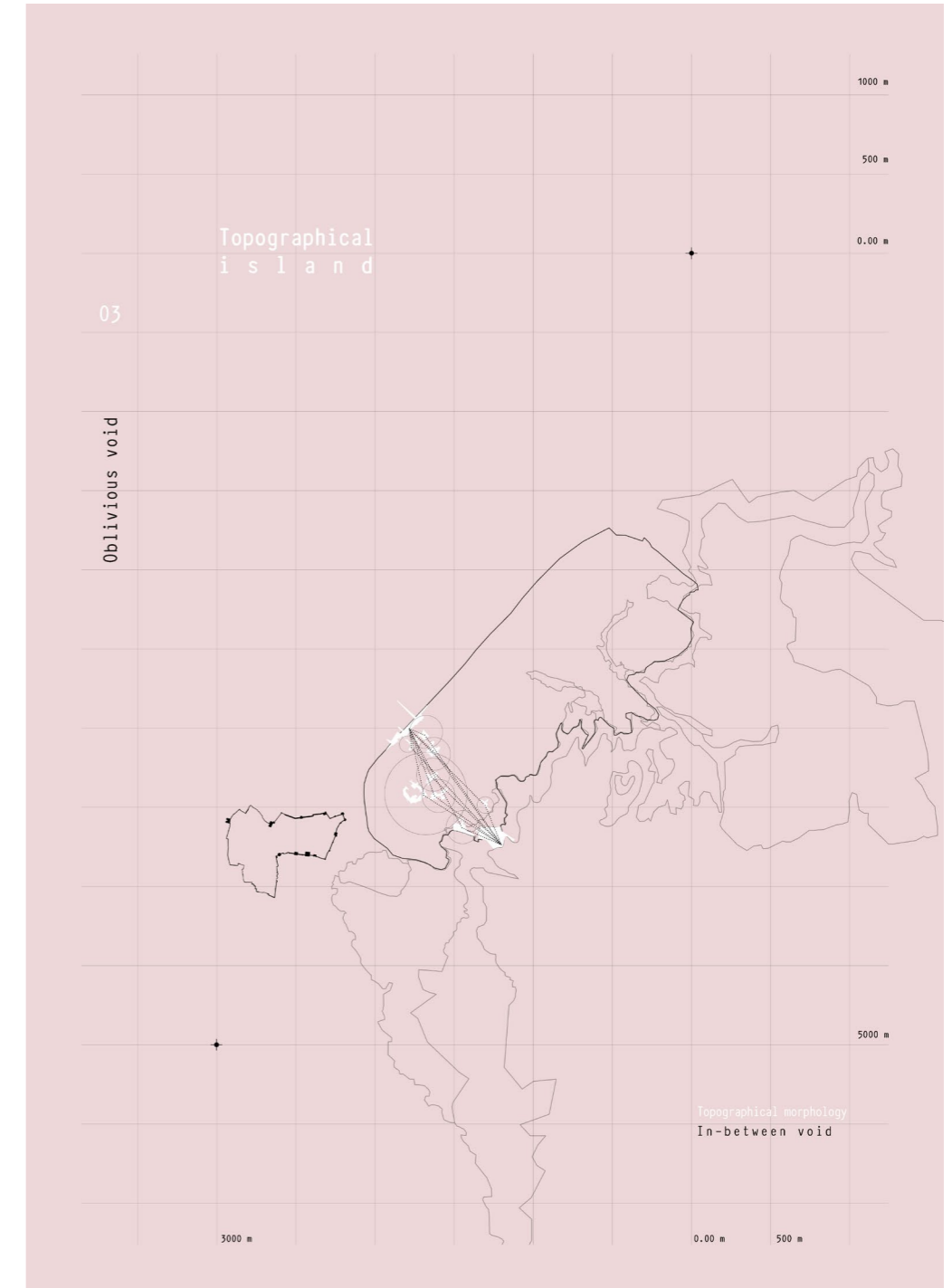
52

52 Author, "Axis 1_primary voids and trajectory connection", (2020).

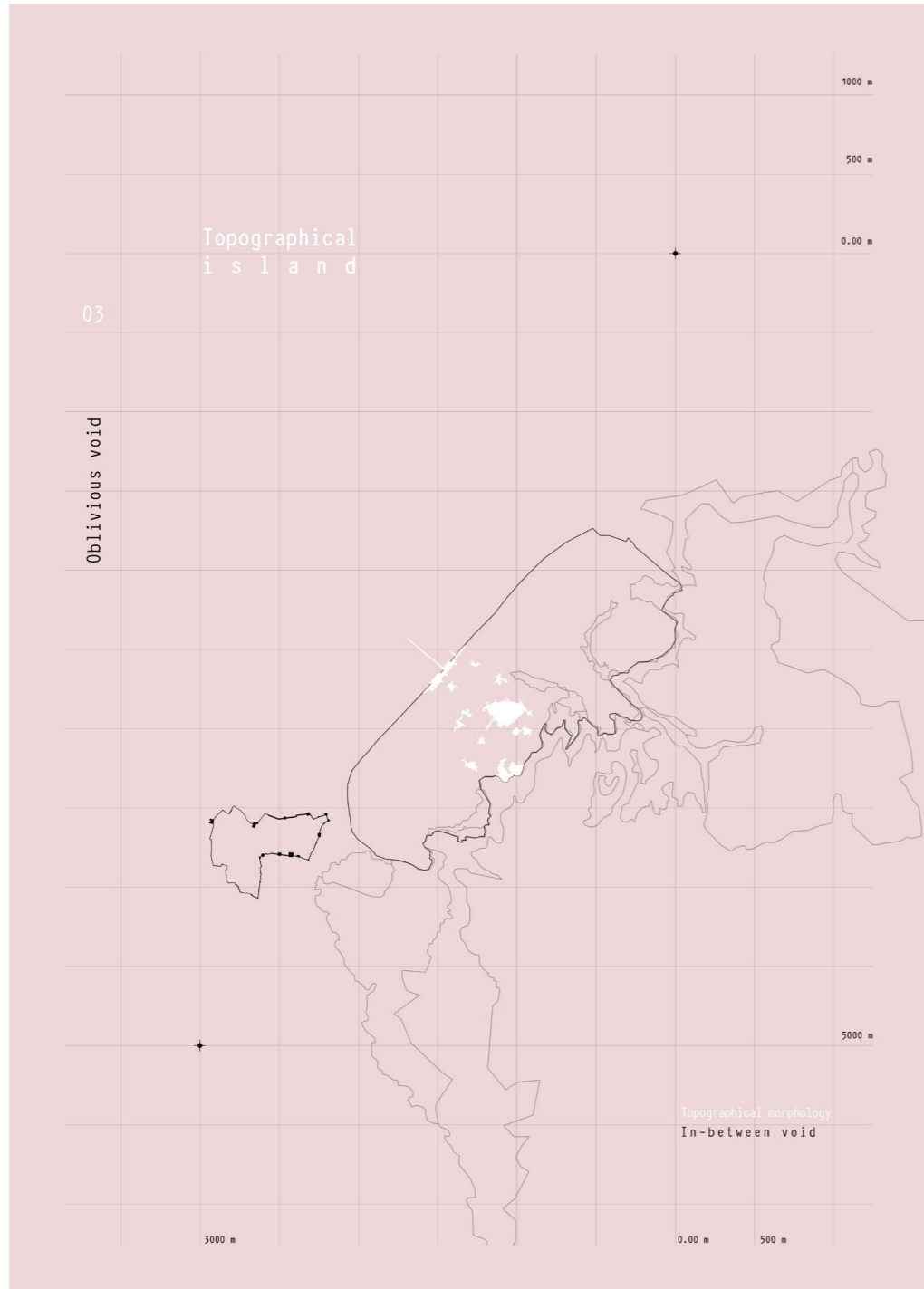
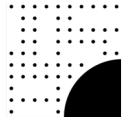
topographical island_macro scale

53 Author, "Axis 1_primary voids and intangible relation", (2020).

topographical island_macro scale



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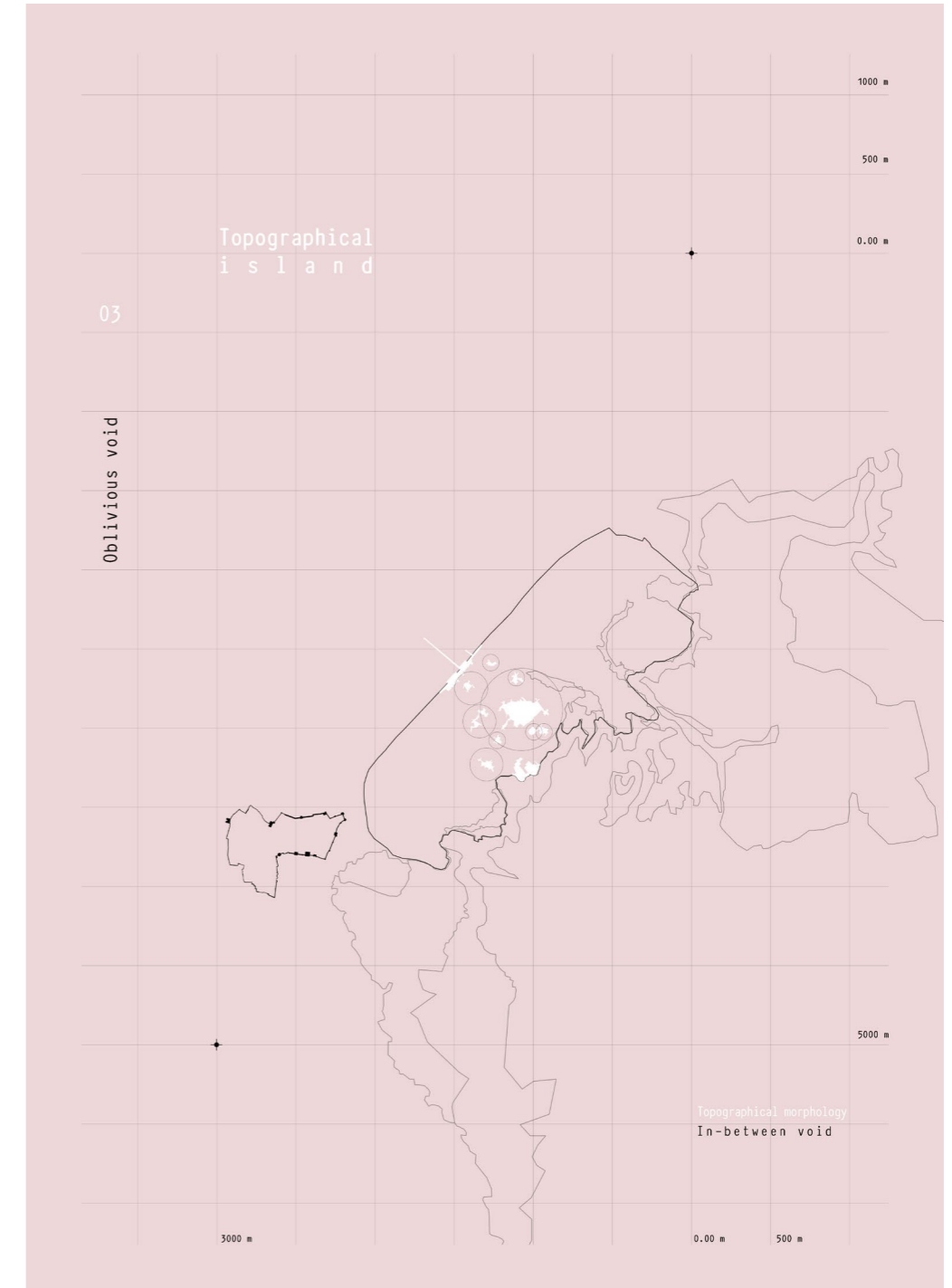


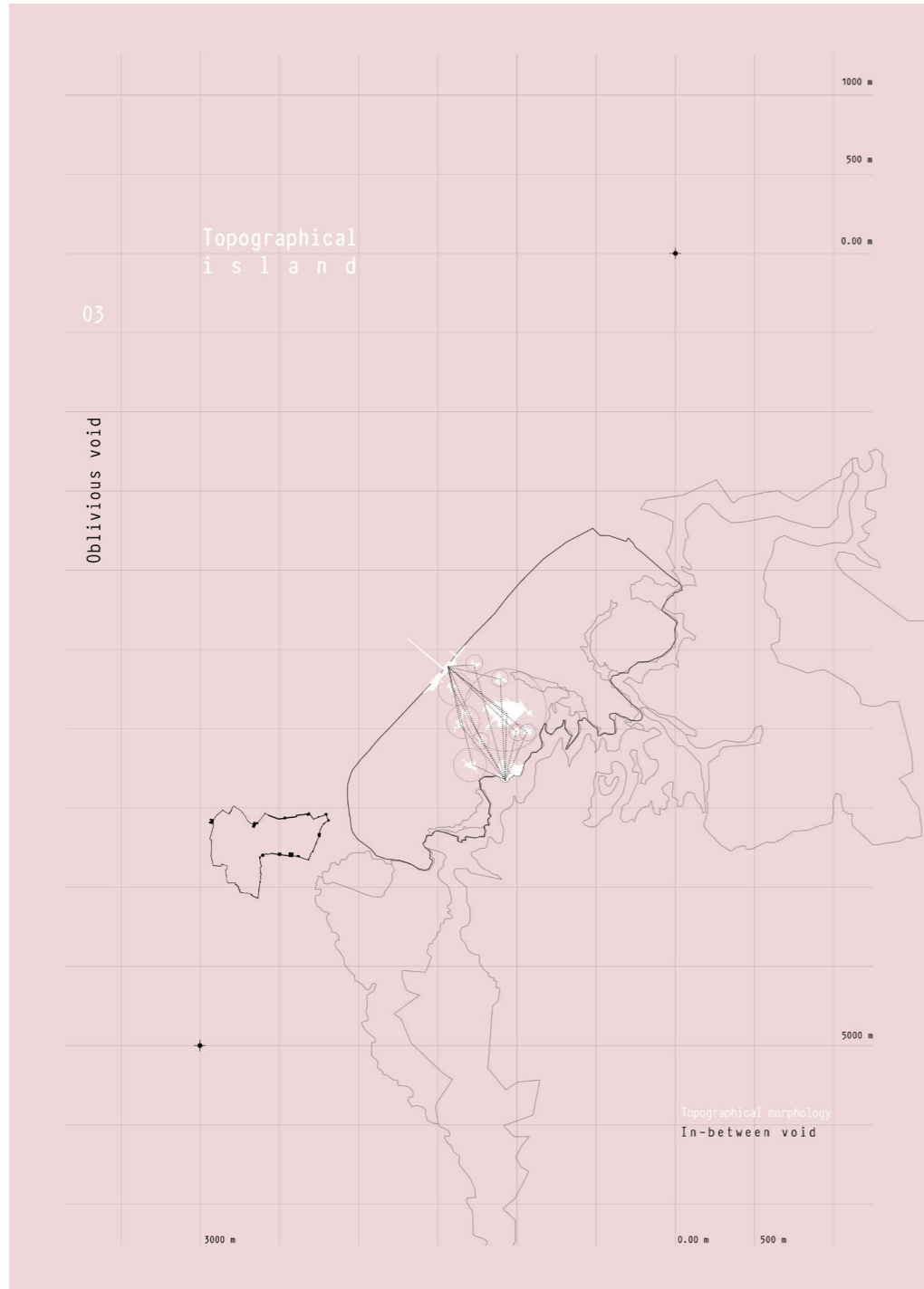
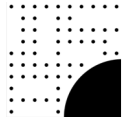
54 Author, "Axis II_primary voids and border", (2020).

topographical island_macro scale

55 Author, "Axis II_primary voids and trajectory connection", (2020).

topographical island_macro scale





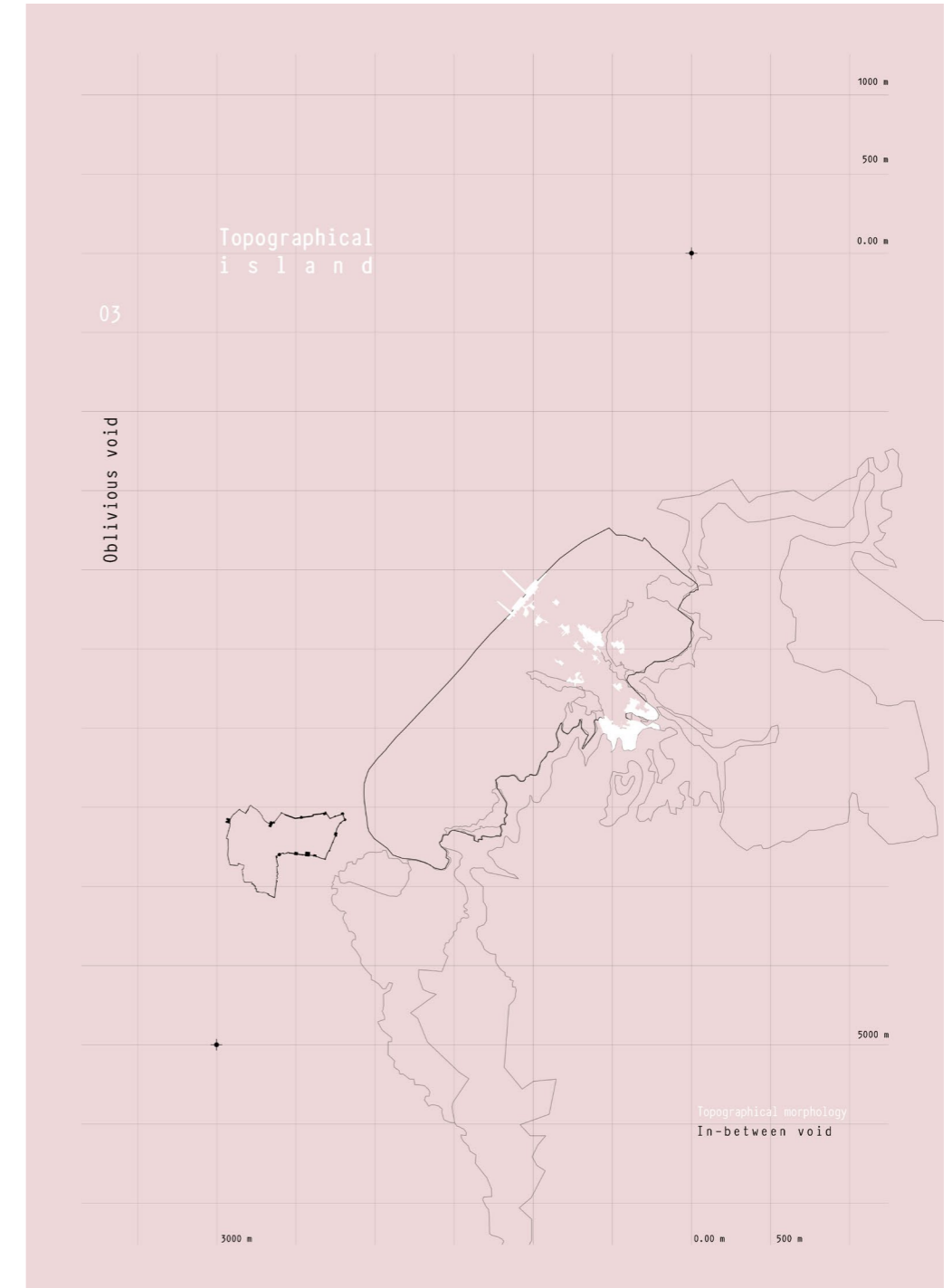
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56 Author, "Axis II primary voids and intangible relation", (2020).

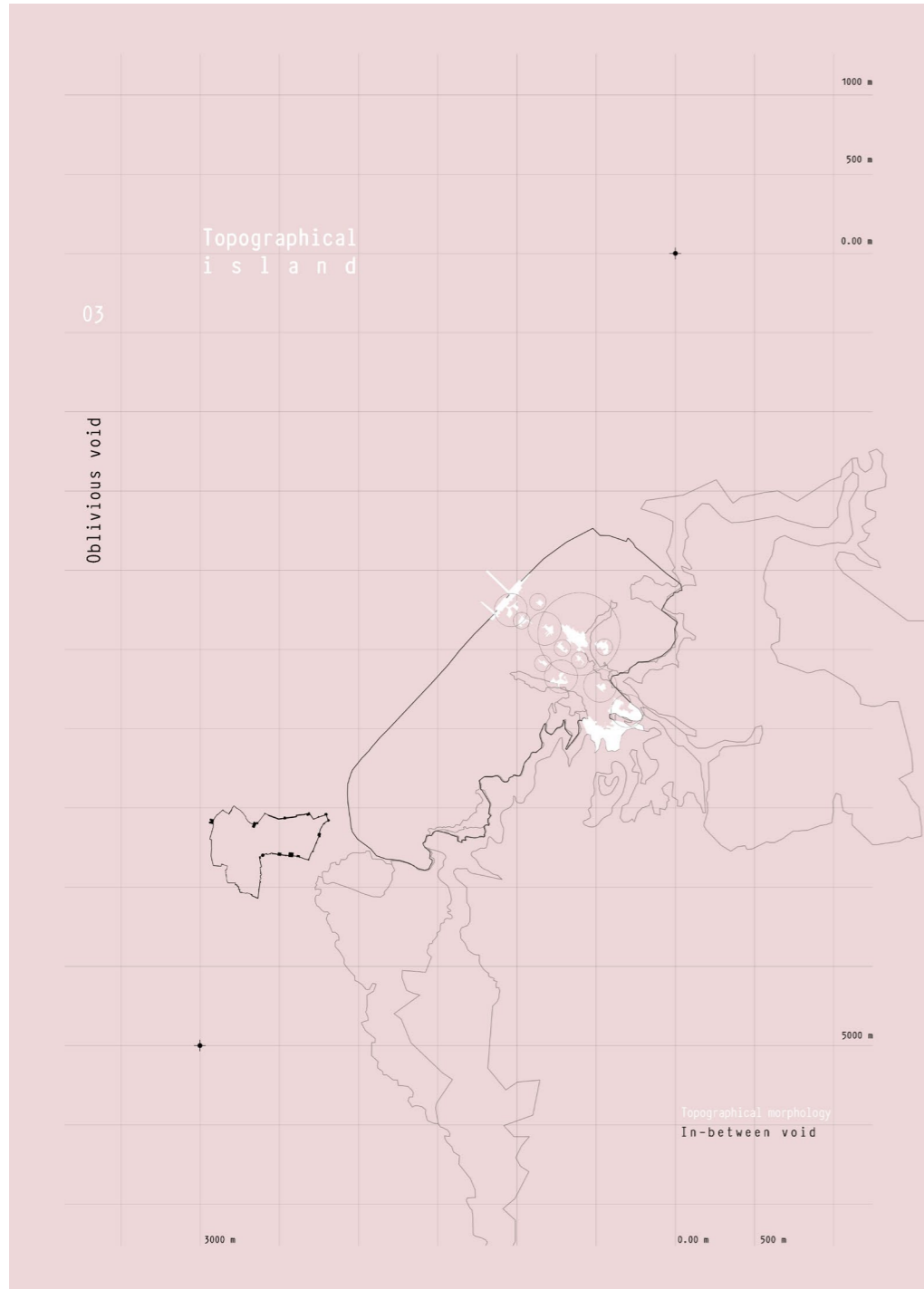
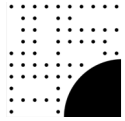
topographical island_macro scale

57 Author, "Axis III primary voids and border", (2020).

topographical island_macro scale



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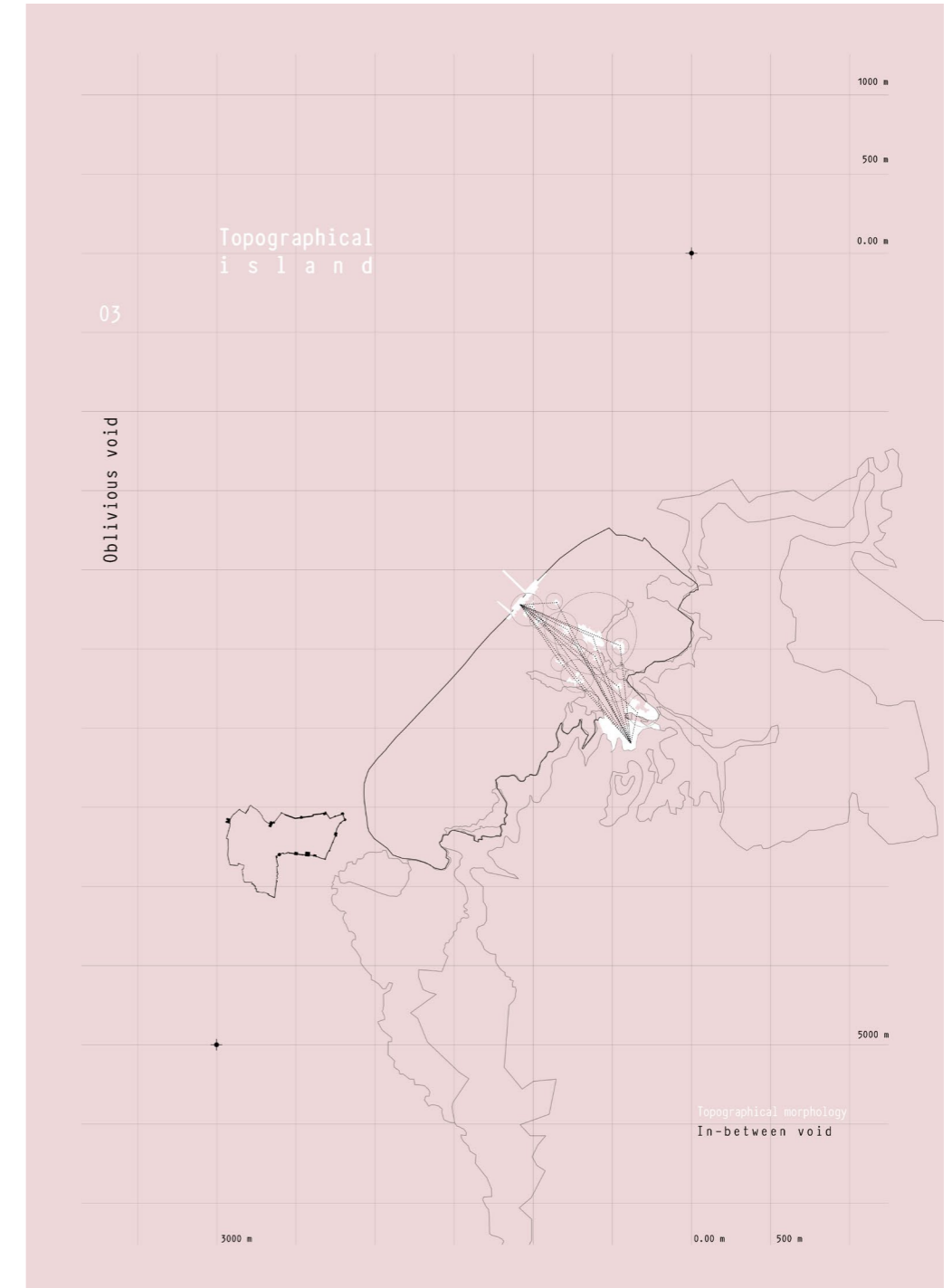


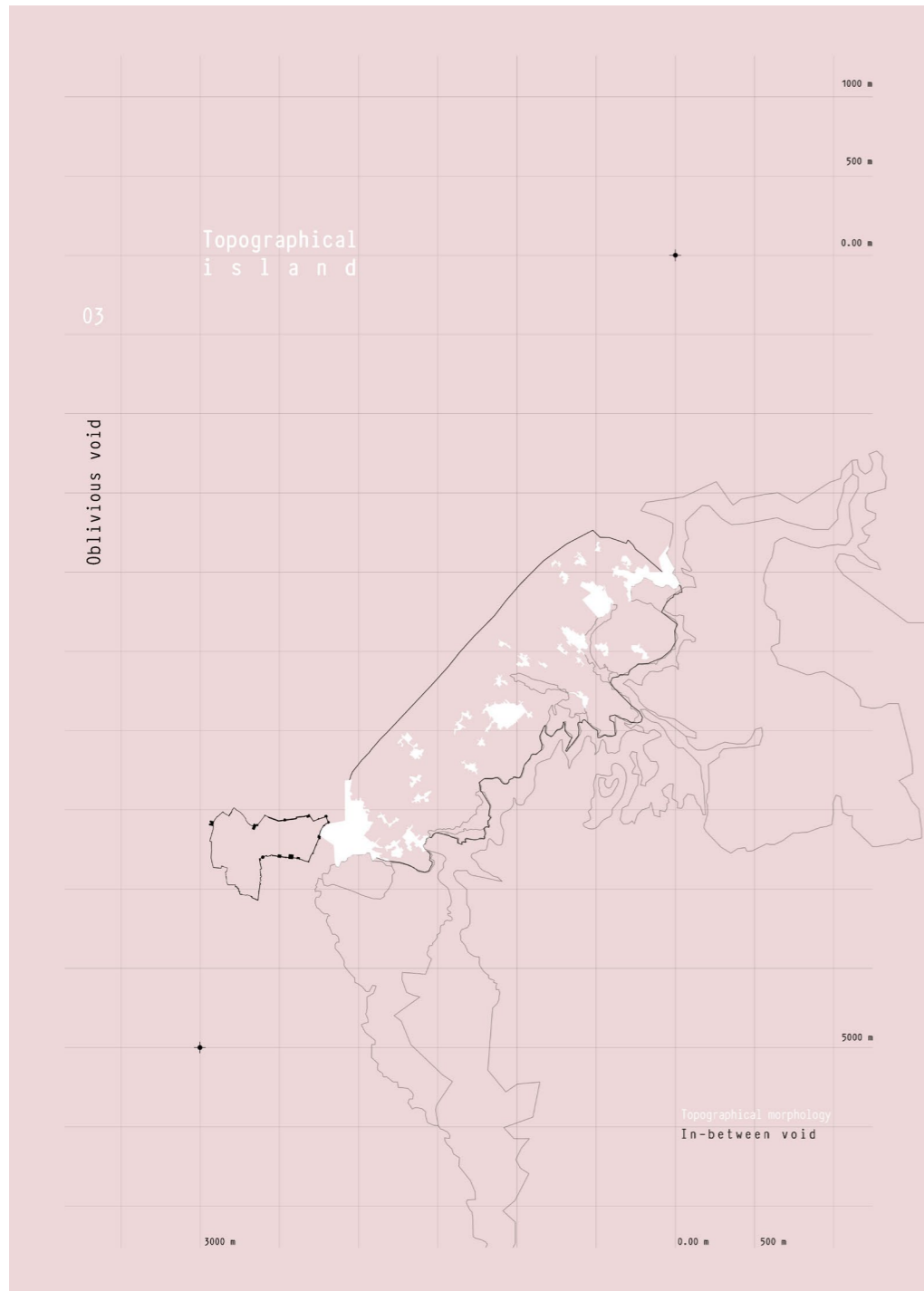
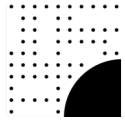
58 Author, "Axis III_ primary voids and trajectory connection", (2020).

topographical island_macro scale

59 Author, "Axis III_ primary voids and intangible relation", (2020).

topographical island_macro scale



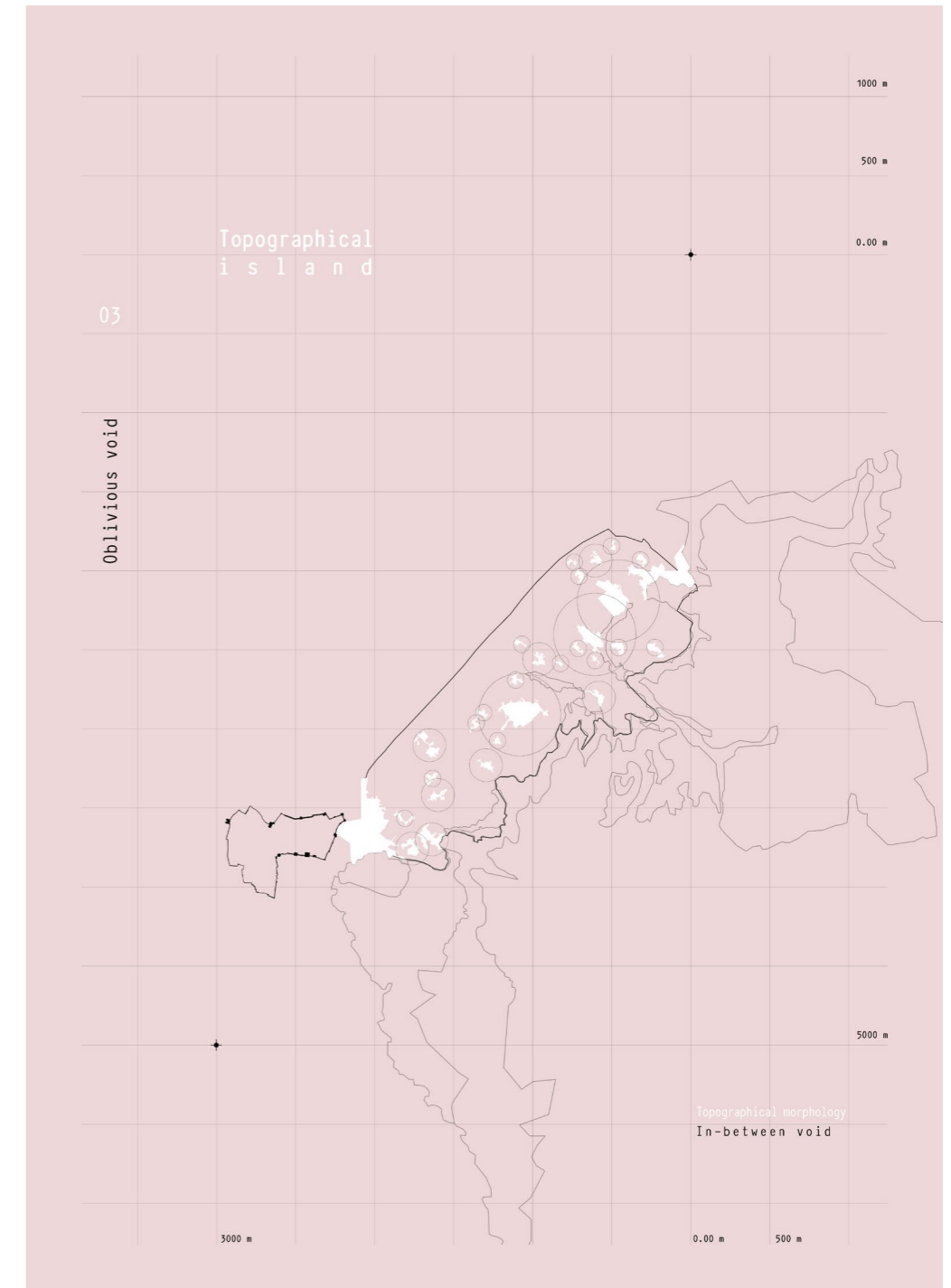


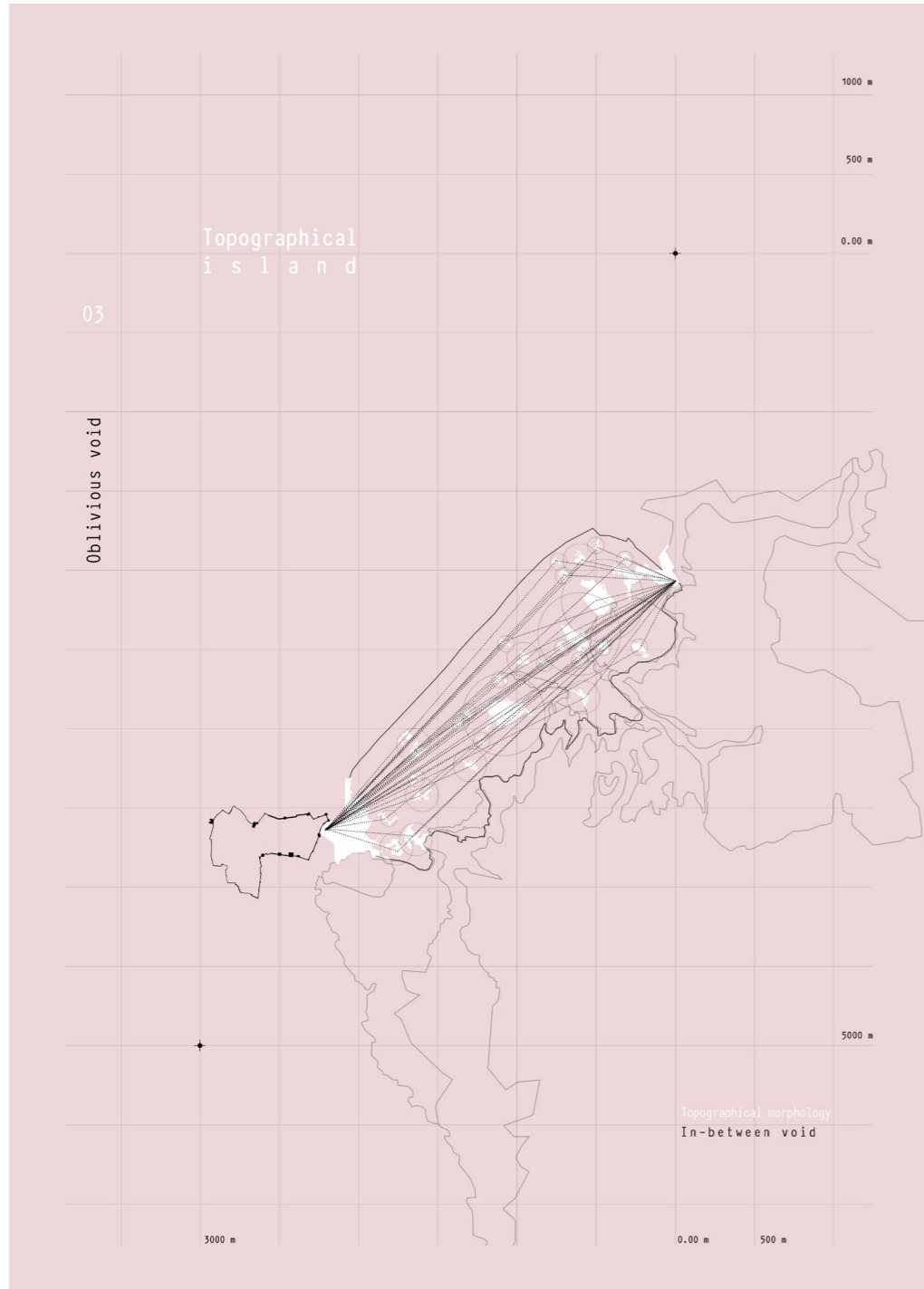
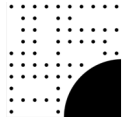
60 Author, "Axis IV_primary voids and border", (2020).

topographical island_macro scale

61 Author, "Axis IV_primary voids and trajectory connection", (2020).

topographical island_macro scale





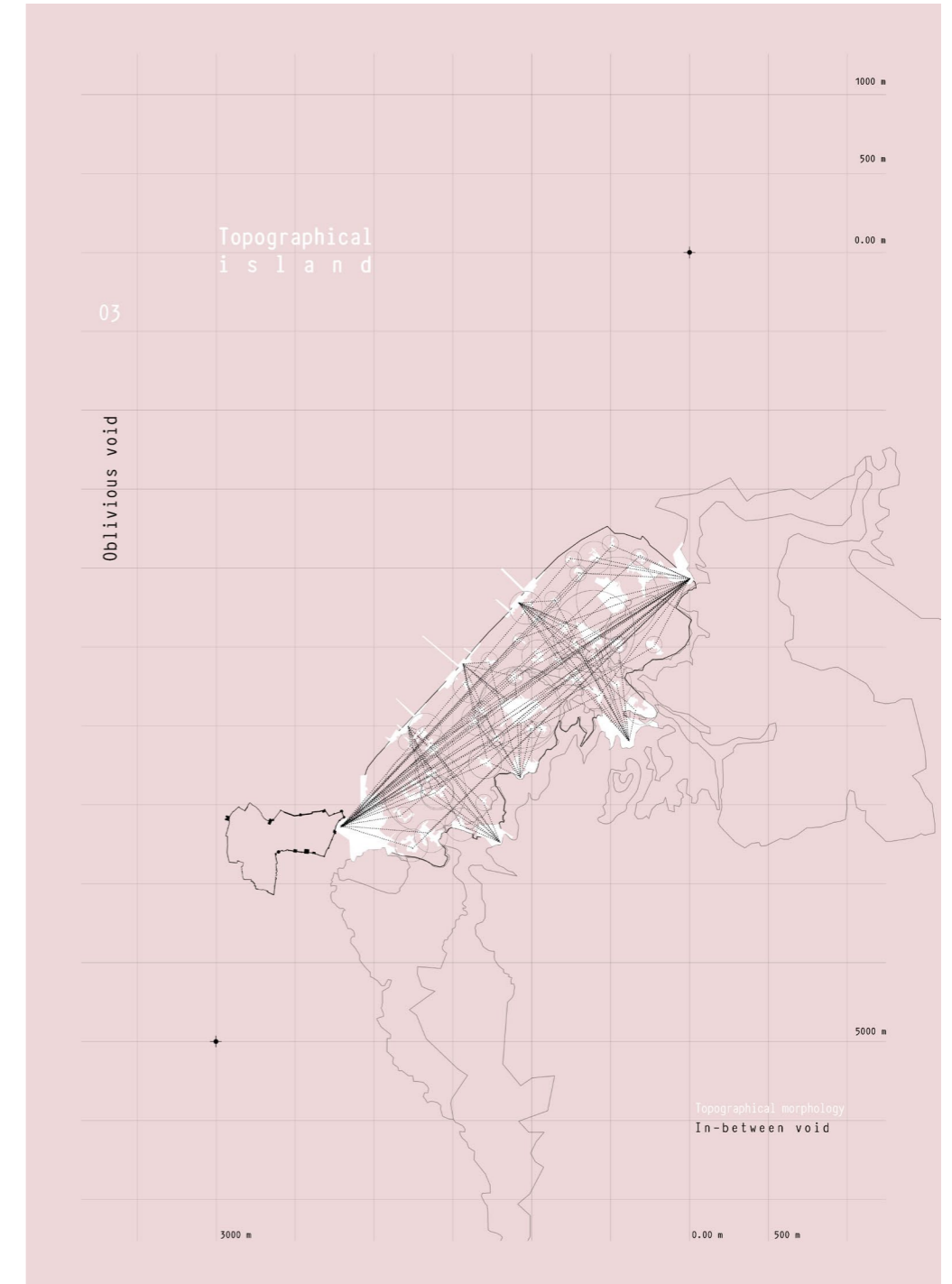
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62 Author, "Axis IV_ primary voids and intangible relation", (2020).

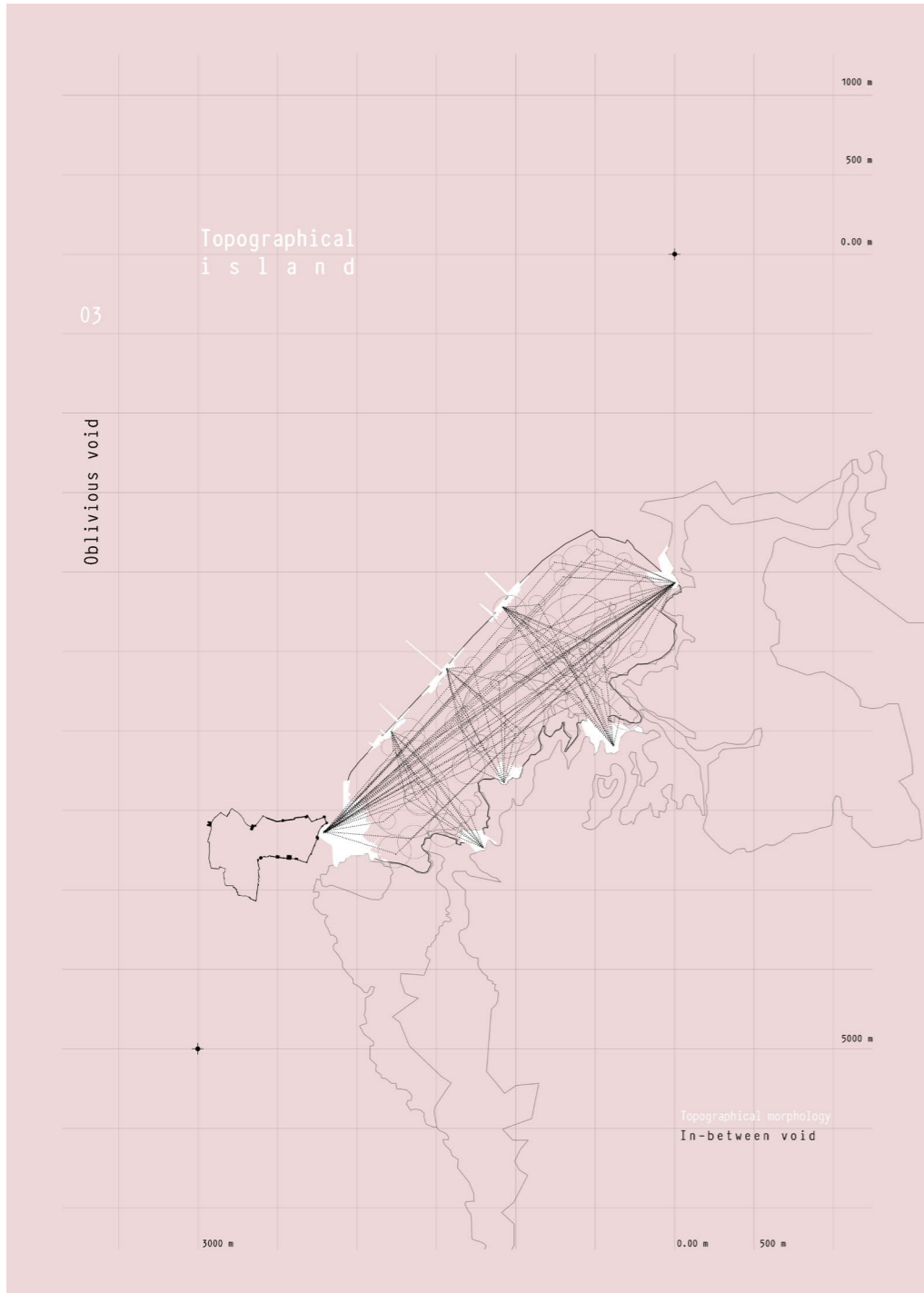
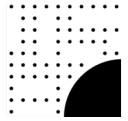
topographical island_macro scale

63 Author, "Primary voids and borders, trajectory and intangible relation", (2020).

topographical island_macro scale



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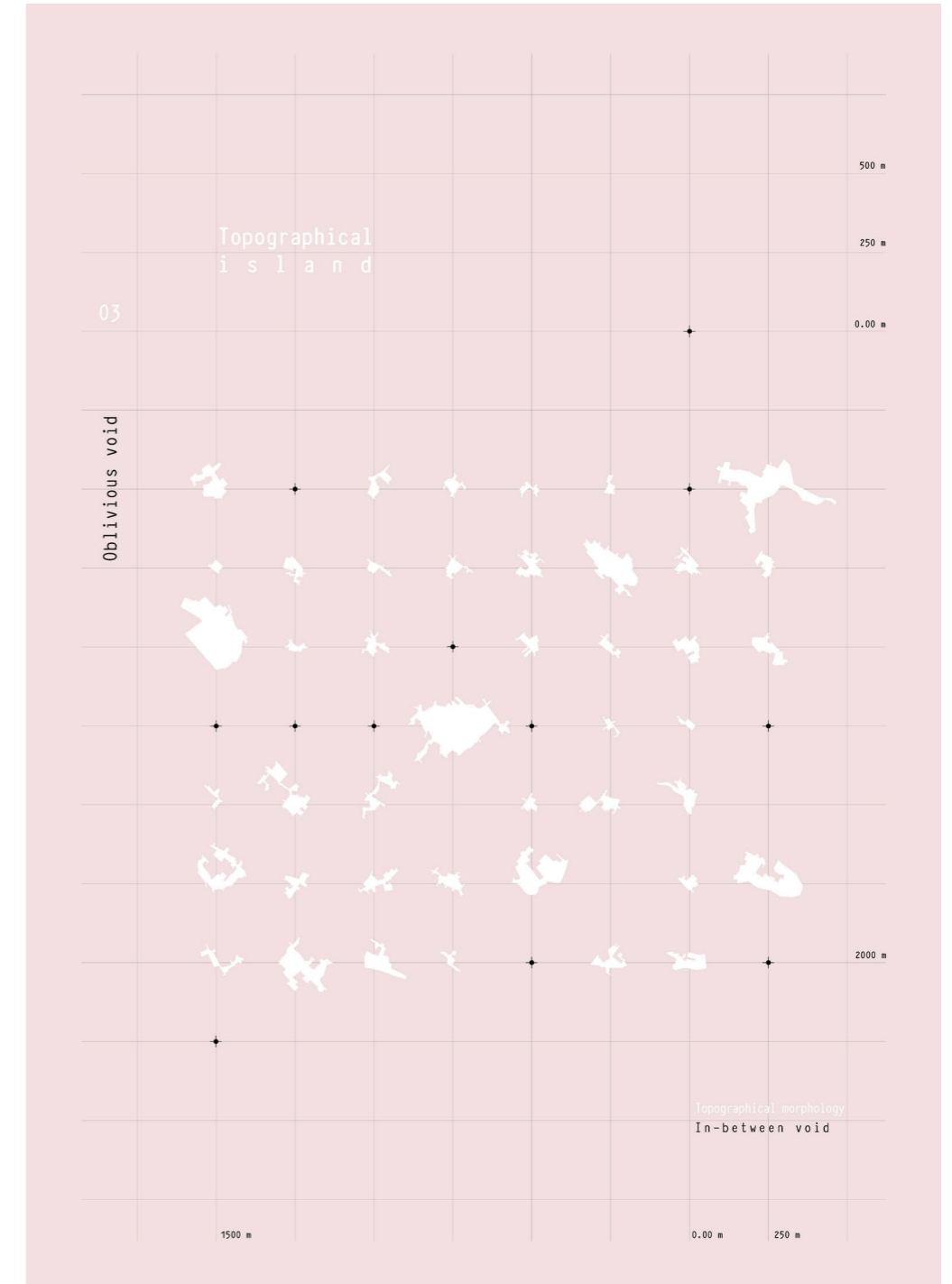
64

64 Author, "Intangible relation", (2020).

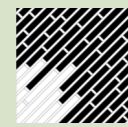
topographical island_macro scale

65 Author, "Taxonomies", (2020).

topographical island_macro scale



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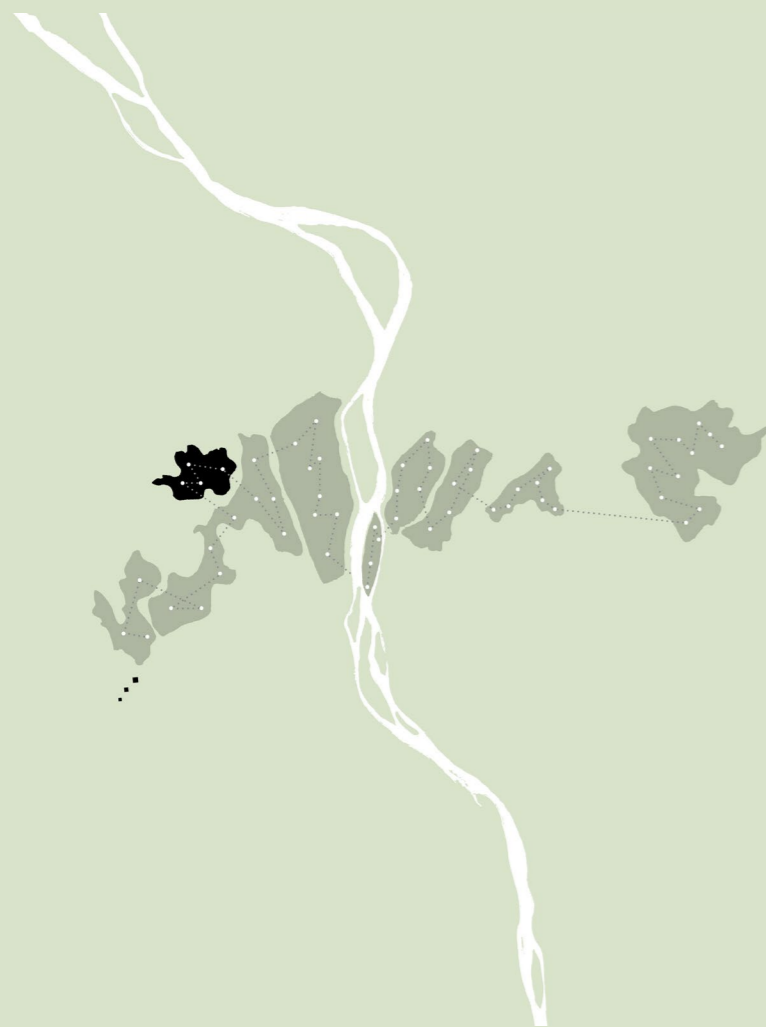
Rural island
Linear void

From many aspects, Cairo has been comprehended for the last five decades as monster due to its congestion, pollution, garbage, chaos and horrendous architecture that has figured the mess of the city. Many could say that the main culprits who have led to the present chaos were rural migrants whom transformed the formal modern city to unending nightmare. Between 1960-1970, the phenomenon of the rural migrations has strongly appeared in the metropolis, moreover the infinite growth has engulfed many agricultural villages within city's structure, which generated a regressive sickness to the villages themselves and the whole composition. It is unfair to relate all these consequences and problems to the rural dwellers. In fact, countless amount of vehicles that are owned by the minority of the middle and upper classes, have caused the tremendous chaos and have increased congestion and pollution

The agglomerations of the rural areas mostly situated on the periphery of the consolidated structure of the city, are in a spontaneous growth that blend the urban composition with its background as a devoted relationship between the nature and artificial has revealed a frozen ancestry between the form and the void.

The pattern of the composition is tracing the dominancy of the agricultural fields in which they are rigidly linear rectangular forms, in this sense the urban structure has generated a dichotomy of linearity that on one hand serve the form and on the other hand operate as void. One of the main characteristics of the Rural Island is the mutation of its border where the relation of its urban form and the agricultural fields are in continuous transformation between inside and outside.

In Bashtil 'Rural Island', the urban form has been frequently grafted on the traces of the void, and consequently the articulation of the whole composition where the void became the logic of the grammar of this urban structure that has been manifested in the form, the border and the void itself.



This composition has generated network mostly linear with different hierarchies, first the main street that act as backbone for the island and followed by narrower streets suspiciously developed on the traces of the canals and serve more the flow through the productive fields.

The relation of the composition seems geometrically constant, interplay between the solid and void, yet it has been subjected towards the infinite perspective generated by the continuous forms that characterized the urban structure, besides the strong presence of the nature demonstrated by the primary void as urban, social and economic engine, prevailing the whole composition in continuum flow beyond its physical limits.

The dilemma of the void here is that on one side, couldn't provide the dweller with the human intimate scale as the fields were always in dialogue with the urban and territorial scales and on the other side, it emphasize the unity generated between the dweller and the rural void. The sense of belonging here has been generated and affirmed by the nature as an essential element in the construction of this island and could provide a symptom of scale in which it need to be reconsidered to reform this sensitive urban composition.

The strong unity of the voids in this sense and its strong relation with the dwellers, need to be thought from the perspective of the measure and scale, in order to define a new linguistic dimension able to reform the rural void and to reconstruct its suspended identity. This comprehensive approach has recognized the importance of the urban and social dimensions that described the whole composition of the Rural Island, by considering the productive space as a basic unit that can be rescaled, to generate a new measure able to give a clear reading and express these areas, not as a monsters but as potentials with a dynamic characteristics of distribution and composition.



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66 Author, "Island and border", (2020).

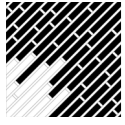
rural island_macro scale

67 Author, "Island and fabrics", (2020).

rural island_macro scale

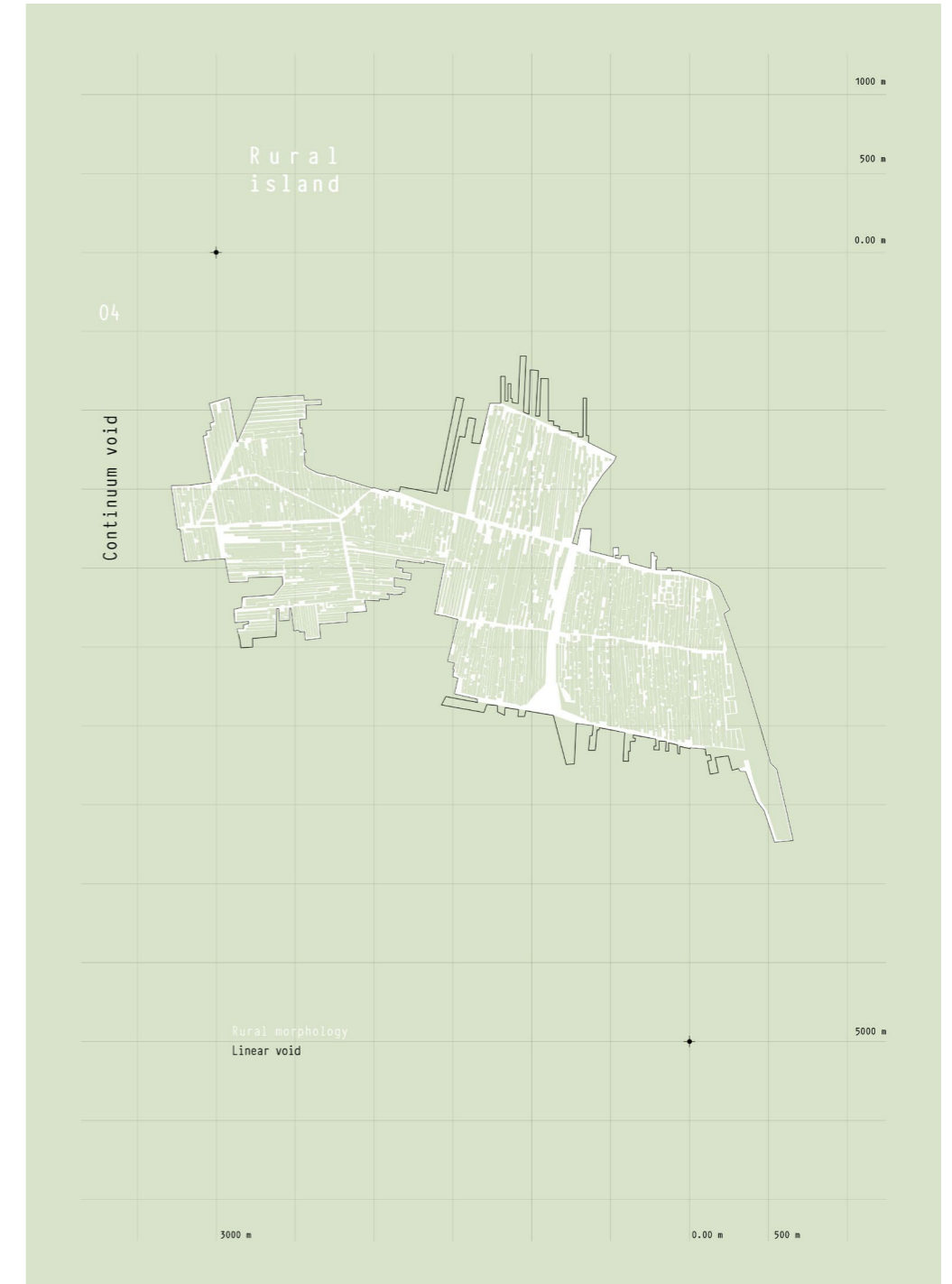


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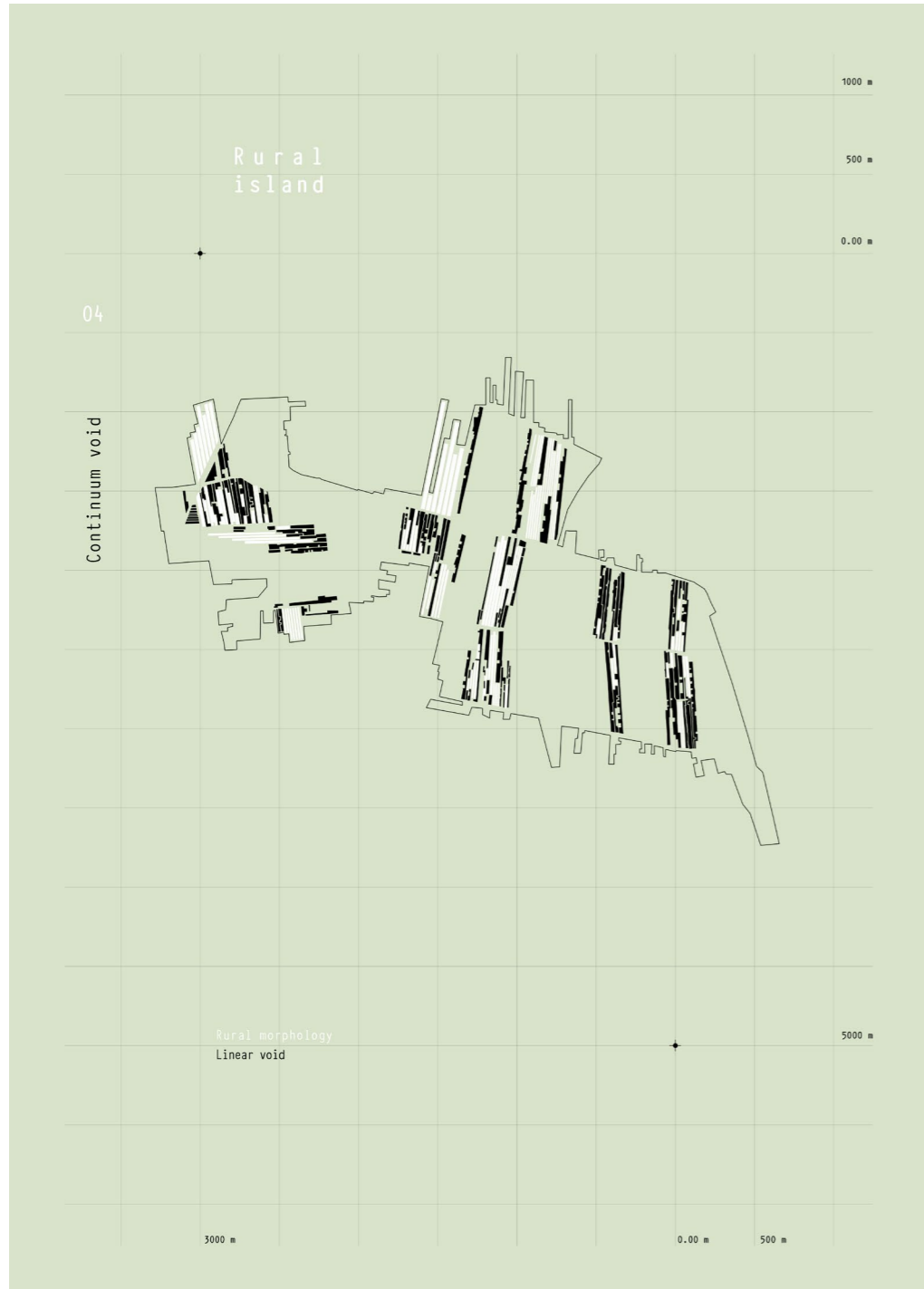


68

68 Author, "Island and voids", (2020).
rural island_macro scale
69 Author, "Island and streets", (2020).
rural island_macro scale



69



70

70 Author, "Island and primary voids", (2020).

rural island_macro scale

71 Author, "Axis I_primary voids and broders", (2020).

rural island_macro scale



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72

72 Author, "Axis I_primary voids and trajectory connection", (2020).

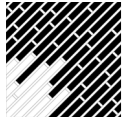
rural island_macro scale

73 Author, "Axis I_primary voids and intangible relation", (2020).

rural island_macro scale



73



74

74 Author, "Axis II_primary voids and borders", (2020).

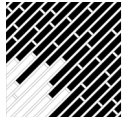
rural island_macro scale

75 Author, "Axis II_primary voids and trajectory connection", (2020).

rural island_macro scale



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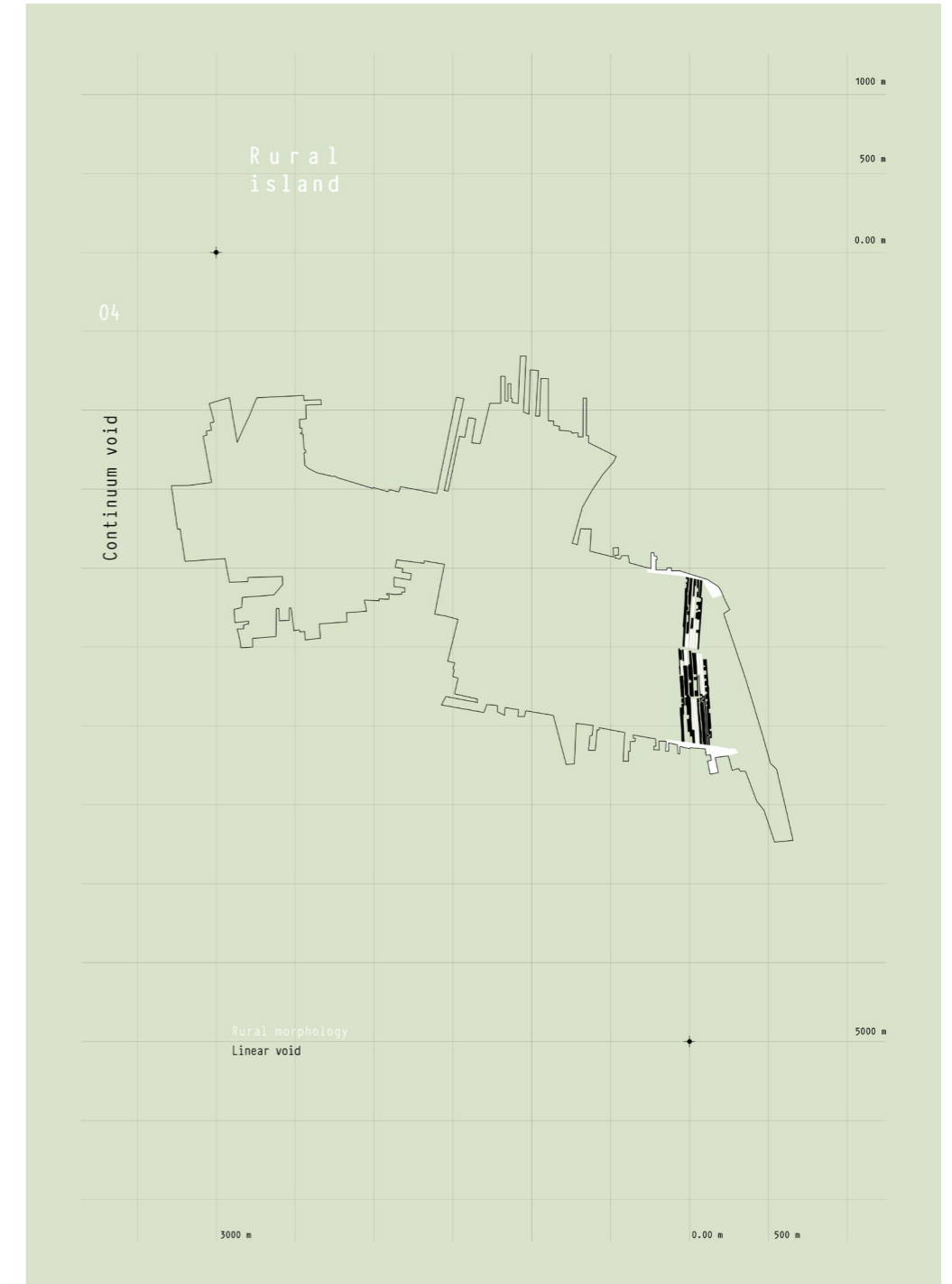
76

76 Author, "Axis II primary voids and intangible relation", (2020).

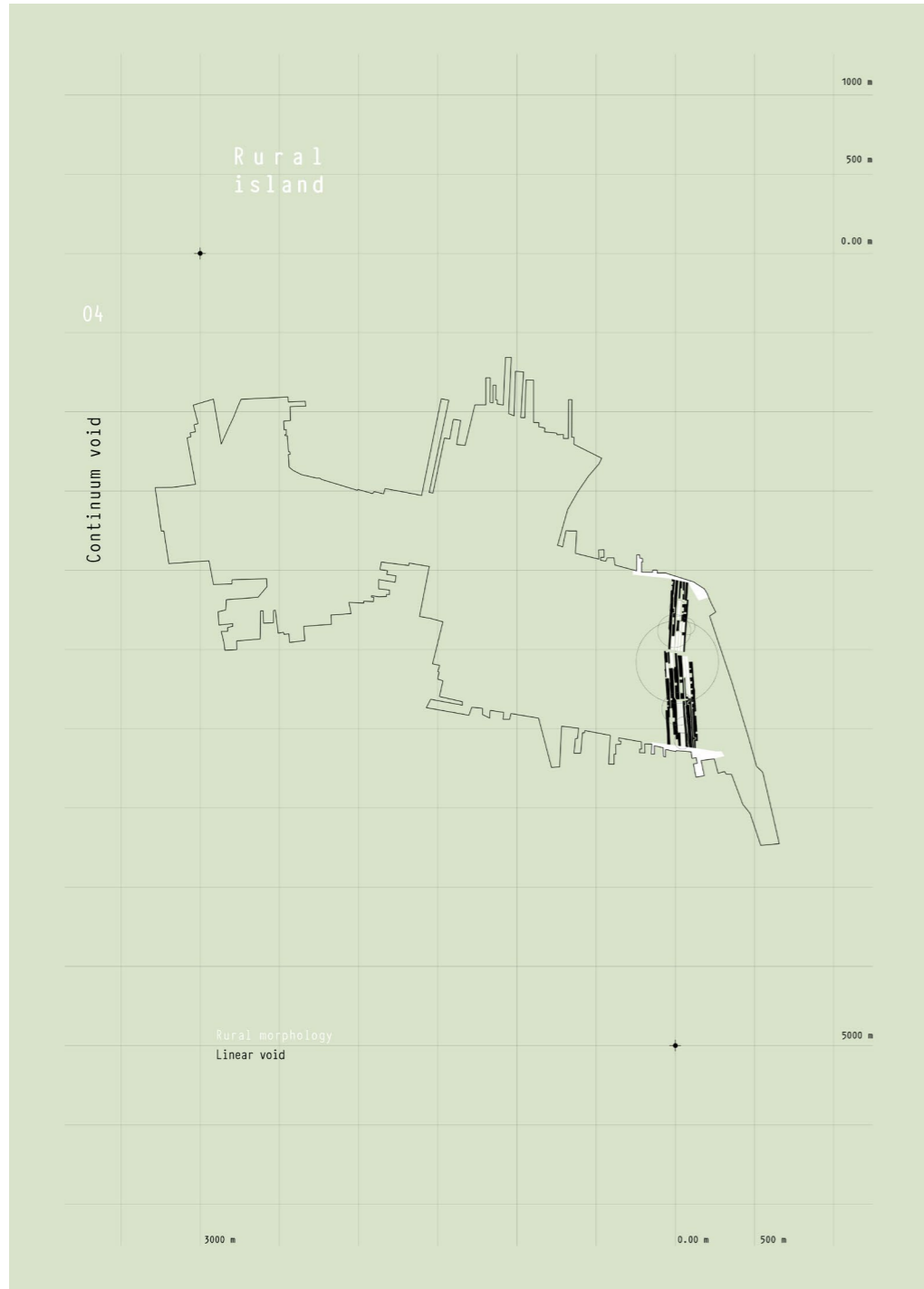
rural island_macro scale

77 Author, "Axis III primary voids and borders", (2020).

rural island_macro scale



77



78

78 Author, "AxisIII_primary voids and trajectory connection", (2020).

rural island_macro scale

79 Author, "AxisIII_primary voids and intangible relation", (2020).

rural island_macro scale



79



80

80 Author, "AxisIV_primary voids and borders", (2020).

rural island_macro scale

81 Author, "AxisIV_primary voids and trajectory connection", (2020).

rural island_macro scale



81

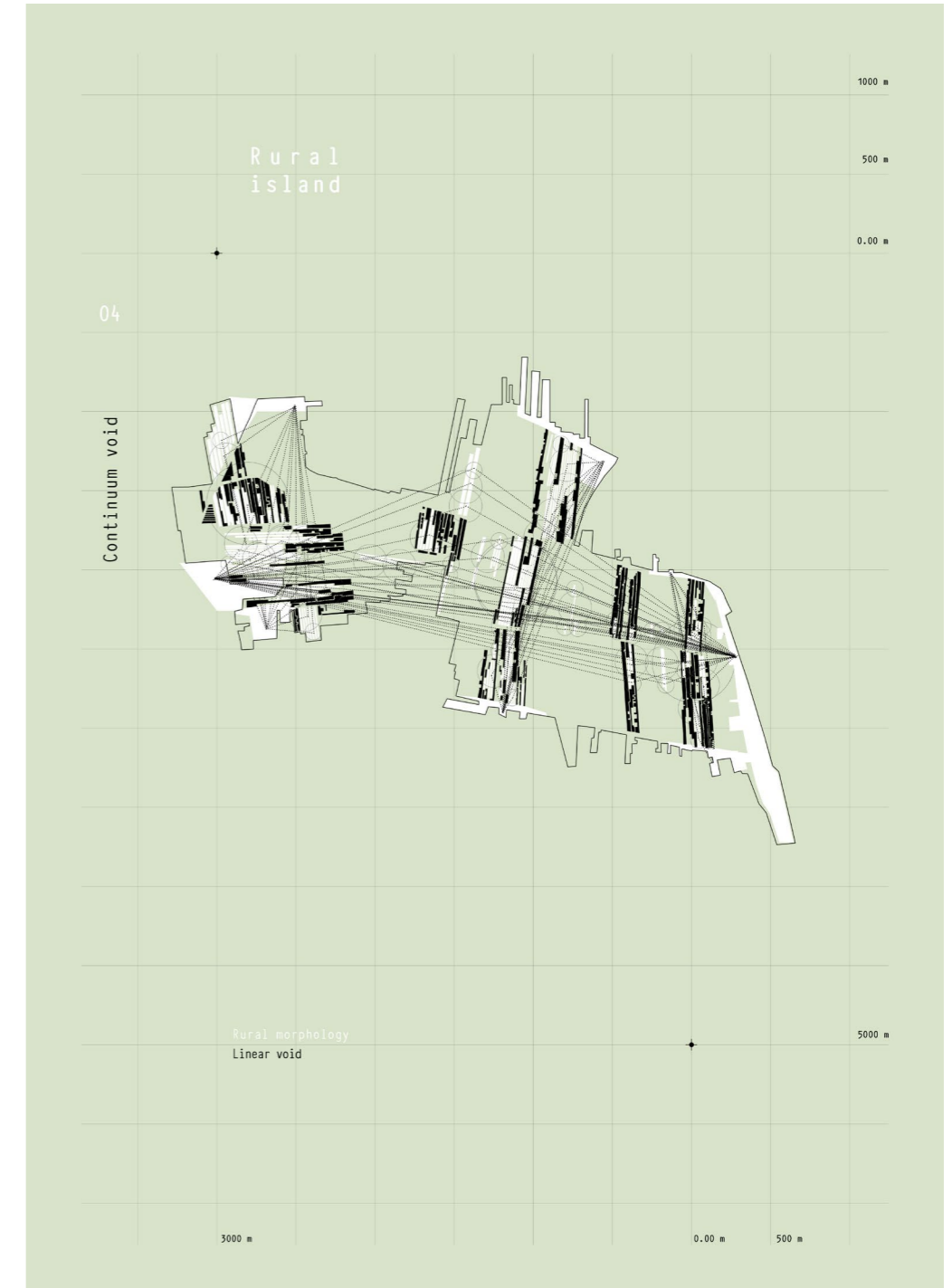


82 Author, "Axis IV _primary voids and intangible relation", (2020).

rural island _macro scale

83 Author, "Primary voids and border, trajectory and intangible relation", (2020).

rural island _macro scale





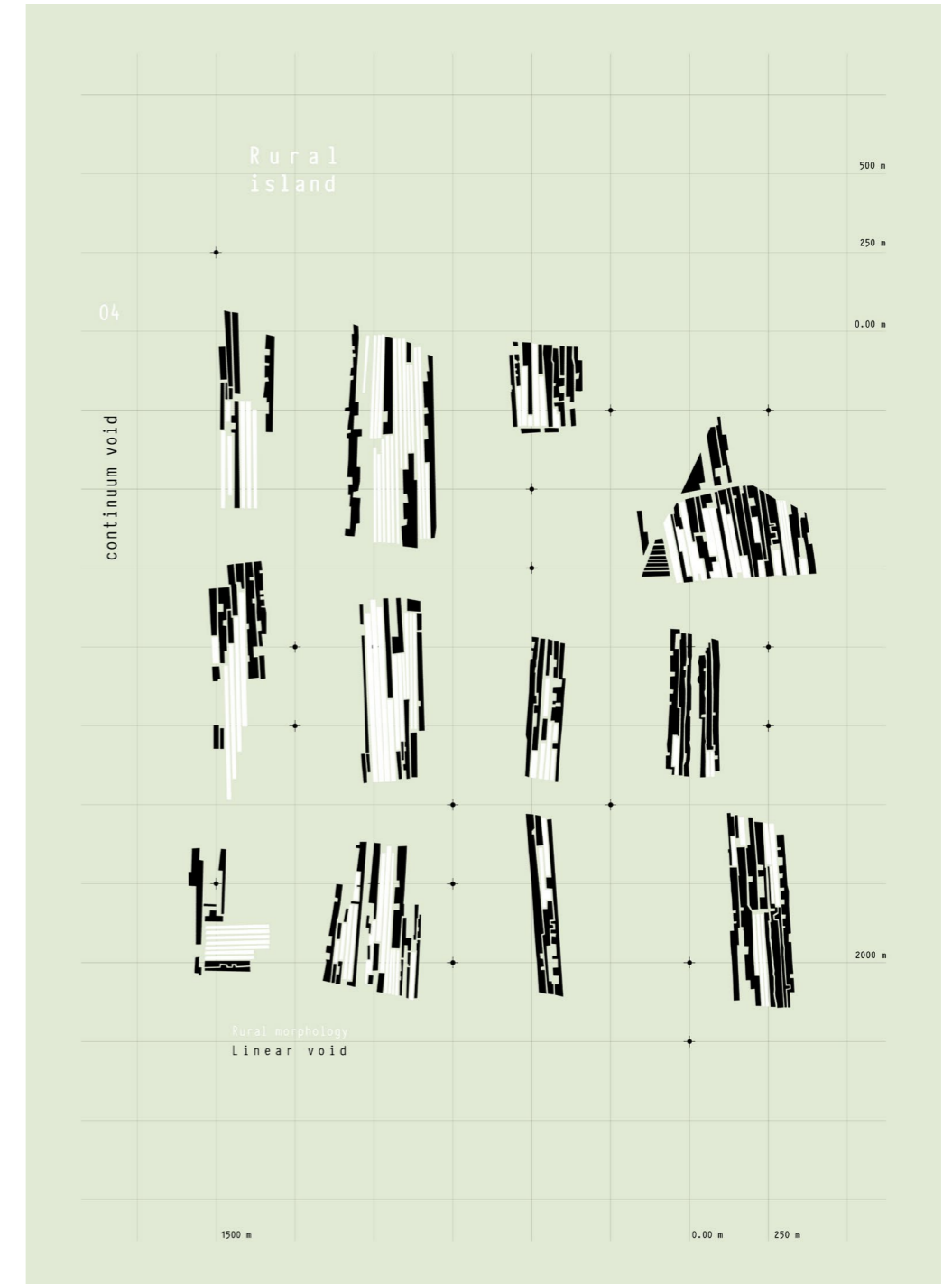
84

84 Author, "Intangible relation", (2020).

rural island_macro scale

85 Author, "Taxonomies", (2020).

rural island_macro scale



85

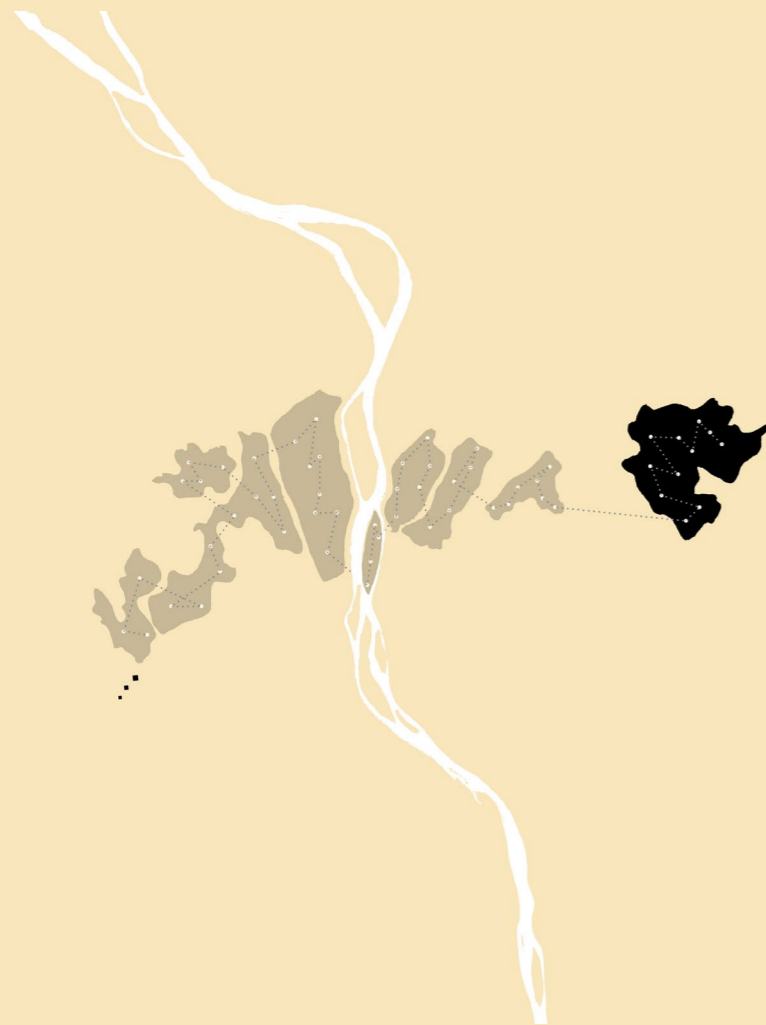
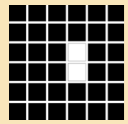


Desert island
Caught between void

During the spontaneous increase of the informality within Cairo, The government promoted some models to extend the city towards the desert as a new future for Cairo. One of the best examples, was Nasr City 'Desert Island' where this model was based on the Grid infrastructure system replicated from the Western cities and distinctive functional zones, mono-functional rigid forms that included large plots of services in the center of each cluster, besides it generated a sequence of axial green spaces to serve the individual buildings, however this model couldn't sustain its principle ideas and through time it has been transformed to a mixed-used areas with vertical extension of the architectural forms where the voids couldn't maintain the need of the of not only the urban structure but also the dwellers, to remain lost and abandon within the composition.

Despite this reality of the government that insists to provide finite models on the physical areas in all its development in the desert banks where this models weren't able to understand the physical and metaphysical dimensions of both spatial voids and dweller's identity, which they generate more dead than livable spaces and engender simulacrum spaces that clearly distinct the solid from its void and reduced the void to metalized secular space. The desert model expanded until it reached its limits and completely eclipses all other forms of Cairo's urban islands, a real infinite model that is replicated in all the new development where the only difference is the logos 'New', New Cairo or New Capital are only logos based on the same superficial principles.

Desert Islands have implied dramatic defined spaces, lost in the definition of the urban configuration and remained abandonment with no relation to the form, inhabitants and the nature of the context and became a haven for garbage and drugs. Individual plots superimposed on an orthogonal network grid, compose the urban composition where the solid and the void are capsuled within the infinite infrastructures and surrounding the whole island, as the nature of the limit was totally ignored by this model, by transforming the desert nature into an industrial infrastructure with no definition for the border. The voids interplay between regular and irregular typologies, where the first is situated within the urban structure in an axial pattern while the second are located on the border that could provide the island with new modifications towards its future.

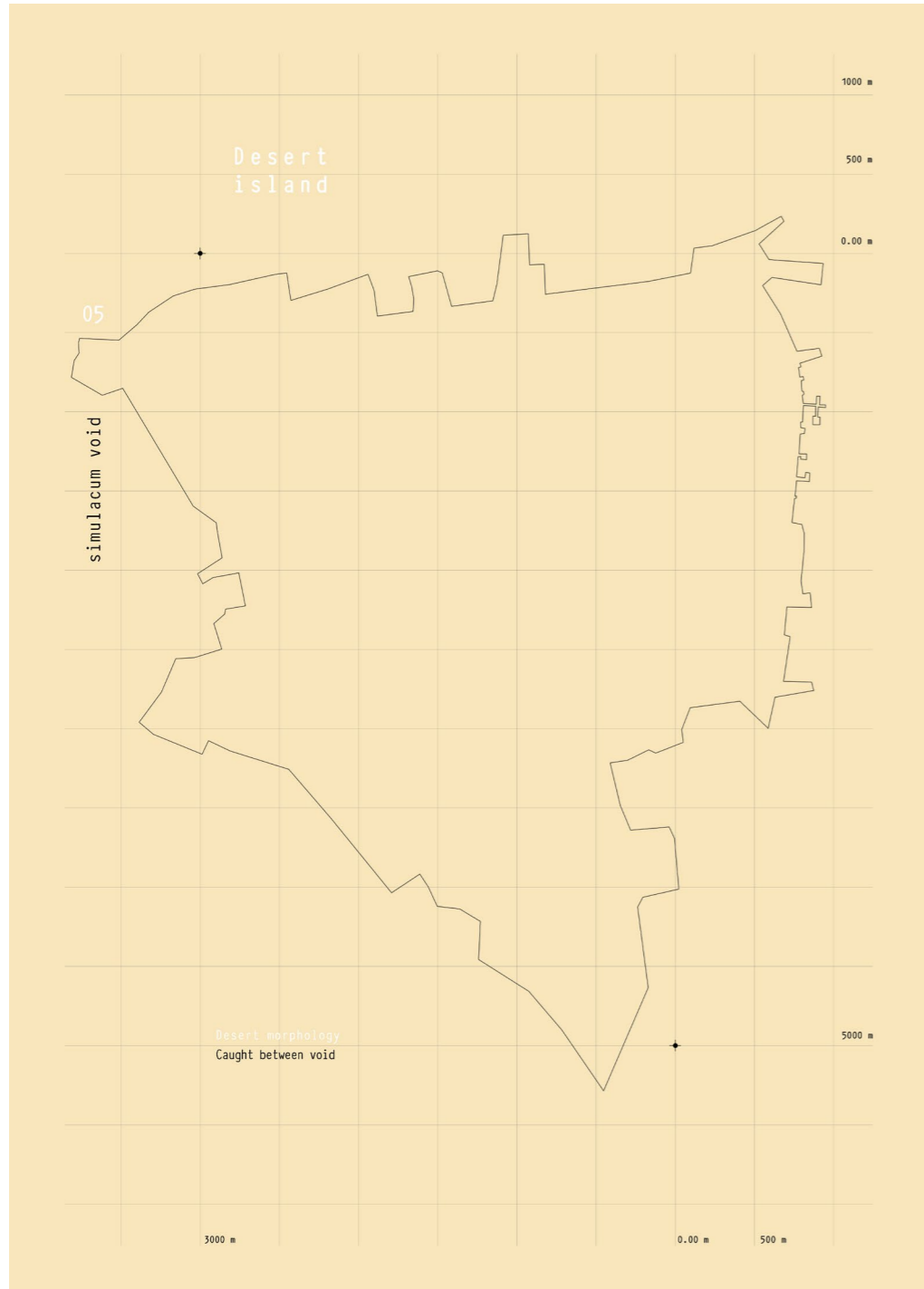
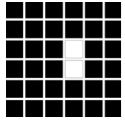


The relation between these voids and the urban composition has witnessed a static appearance within the Desert Island, with no qualitative perspectives regarding the meaning of the core and the social interaction as the void altered from being a collective space to just a confused lost area inside and outside the urban structure and couldn't provide any social, environmental and economic interactions.

These capitalist model transformed the form into just an economic device and impose a sequence of abandon gardens that has no relation with the nature of the space and has intensified the idea of the colonized model that takes off the rest of our civilizational roots.

The expression of the hollow or the no content become clear for the primary voids in the Desert Island, since they have been presented as caught between spaces, suspended between the urban form, and only defined by the infrastructure and the flow of endless cars, which has led to a duplication between the identity of the void and the urban composition. In this model, the traditional concept of void has been disoriented by the western ideas in which they couldn't be integrated. This duality was expressed in the elements of the form currently spreading in the dwelling of the Greek and the Roman elements in the formation of the external form, without understanding the meaning and the context of these elements that has lead to anarchy of architectural and urban composition, to affirm the immaturity of the linguistic structure.

The island tends to be divided and converted into such plots for investment, cut by wide streets that destroyed the intimate scale for the neighborhood, besides it has left the void psychologically seeking for a balance with its nature and trying to be dwelled by the inhabitants. This viscosity expressed in all desert islands, should be understand from its genetic code that need to be transformed and mutated to find their logical and conceptual definition, as these caught between voids could play an important role to redefine the whole urban composition of this island.



86

86 Author, "Island and border", (2020).

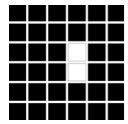
desert island_macro scale

87 Author, "Island and fabrics", (2020).

desert island_macro scale



87



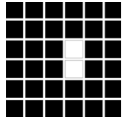
88 Author, "Island and voids", (2020).

desert island_macro scale

89 Author, "Island and streets", (2020).

desert island_macro scale

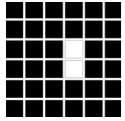




90 Author, "Island and primary voids", (2020).
desert island_macro scale

91 Author, "Axis I_primary voids and borders", (2020).
desert island_macro scale



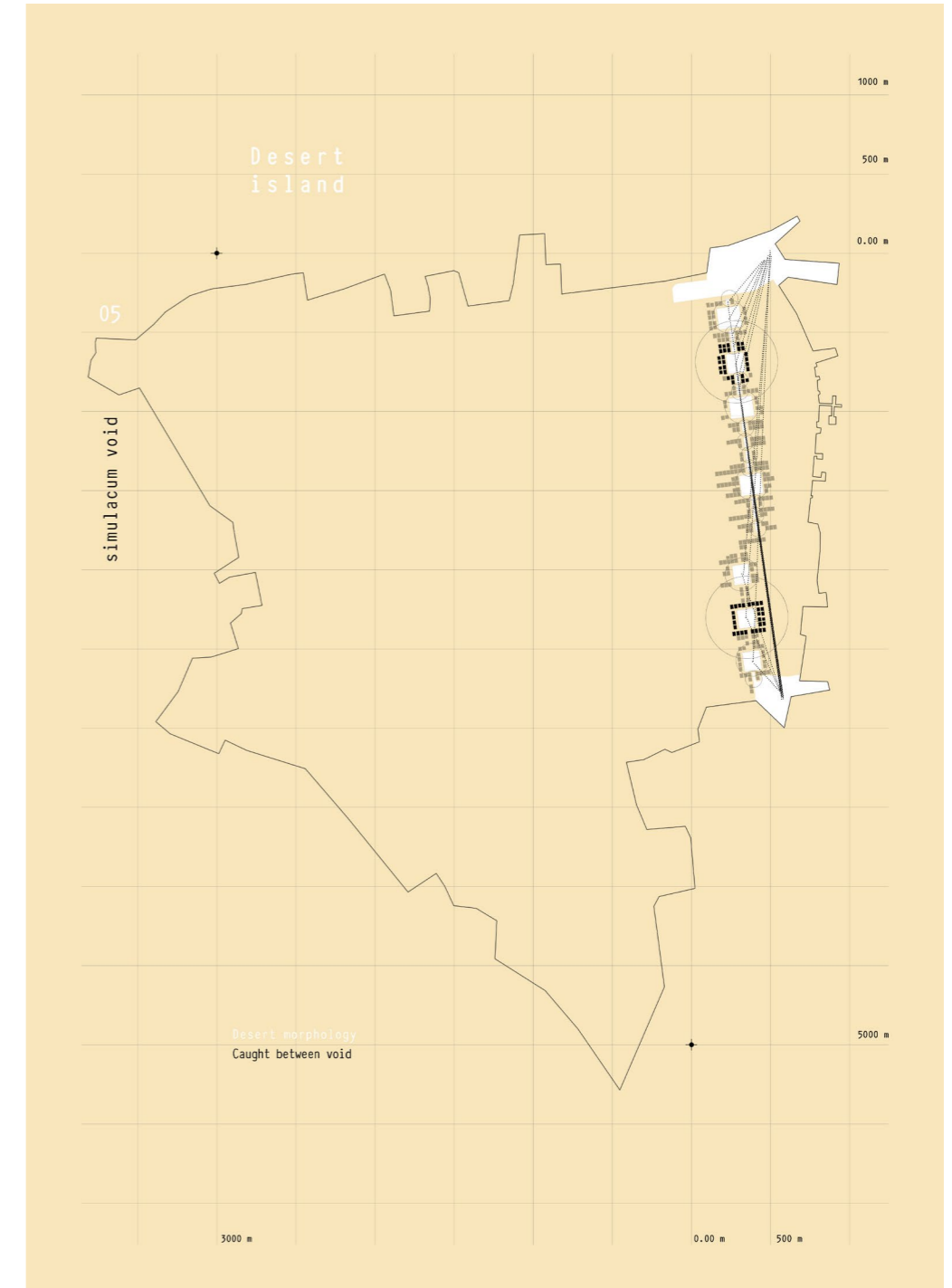


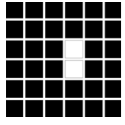
92 Author, "Axis 1_primary voids and trajectory connection", (2020).

desert island_macro scale

93 Author, "Axis 1_primary voids and intangible relation", (2020).

desert island_macro scale





94

94 Author, "AxisII_primary voids and borders", (2020).

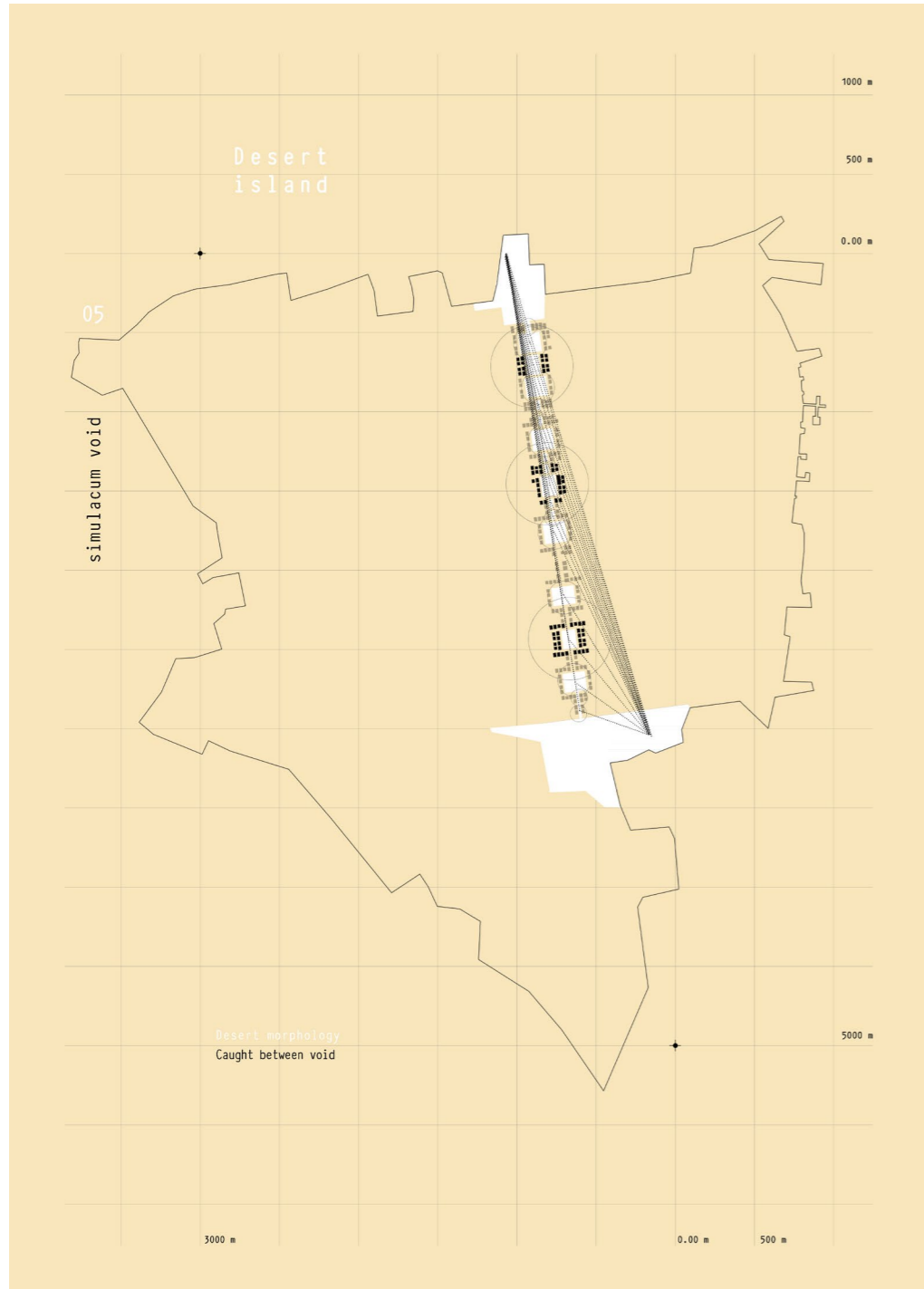
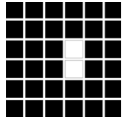
desert island_macro scale

95 Author, "AxisII_primary voids and trajectory connection", (2020).

desert island_macro scale



95



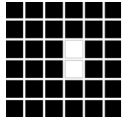
96 Author, "AxisII_primary voids and intangible relation", (2020).

desert island_macro scale

97 Author, "AxisIII_primary voids and borders", (2020).

desert island_macro scale



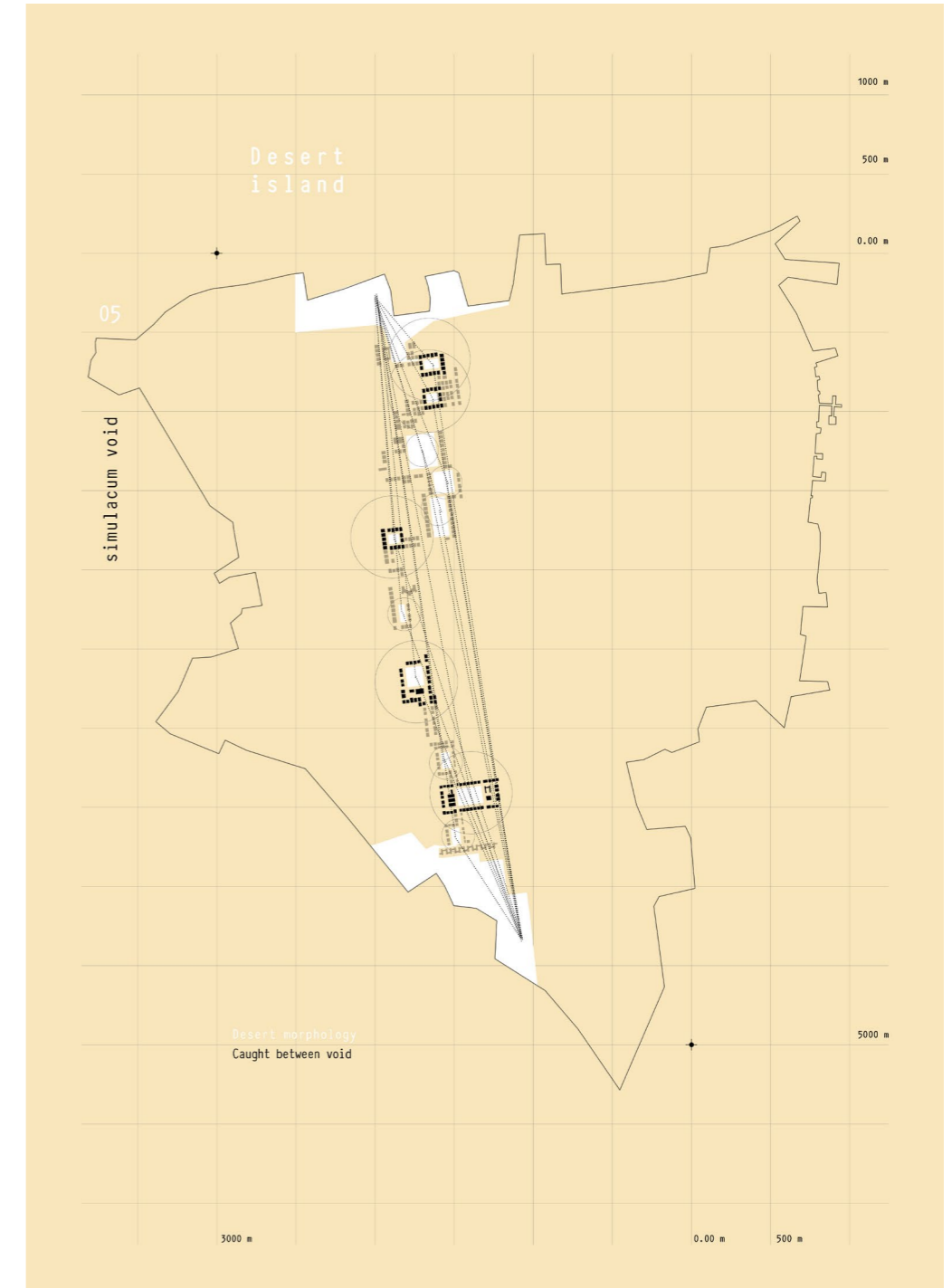


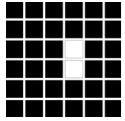
98 Author, "AxisIII_primary voids and trajectory connection", (2020).

desert island_macro scale

99 Author, "AxisIII_primary voids and intangible relation", (2020).

desert island_macro scale





100

100 Author, "Axis IV primary voids and borders", (2020).

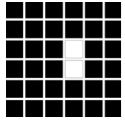
desert island_macro scale

101 Author, "Axis IV primary voids and trajectory connection", (2020).

desert island_macro scale



101



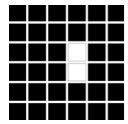
102 Author, "Axis IV primary voids and intangible relation", (2020).

desert island_macro scale

103 Author, "Axis V primary voids and borders", (2020).

desert island_macro scale





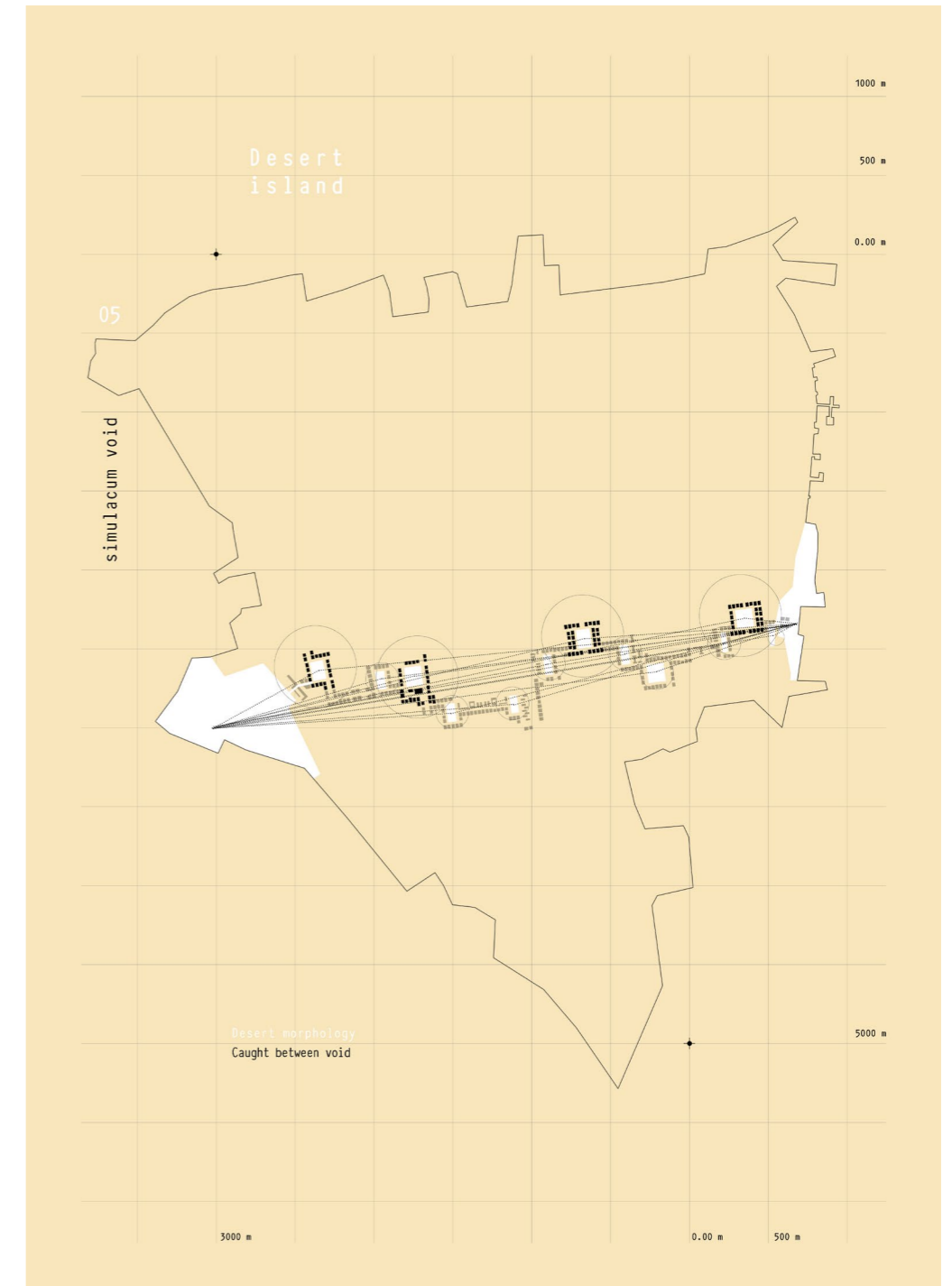
104

104 Author, "AxisV_primary voids and trajectory connection", (2020).

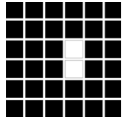
desert island_macro scale

105 Author, "AxisV_primary voids and intangible relation", (2020).

desert island_macro scale



105



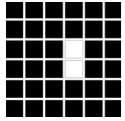
106 Author, "Primary voids and border, trajectory and intangible relation", (2020).

desert island_macro scale

107 Author, "Intangible relation", (2020).

desert island_macro scale





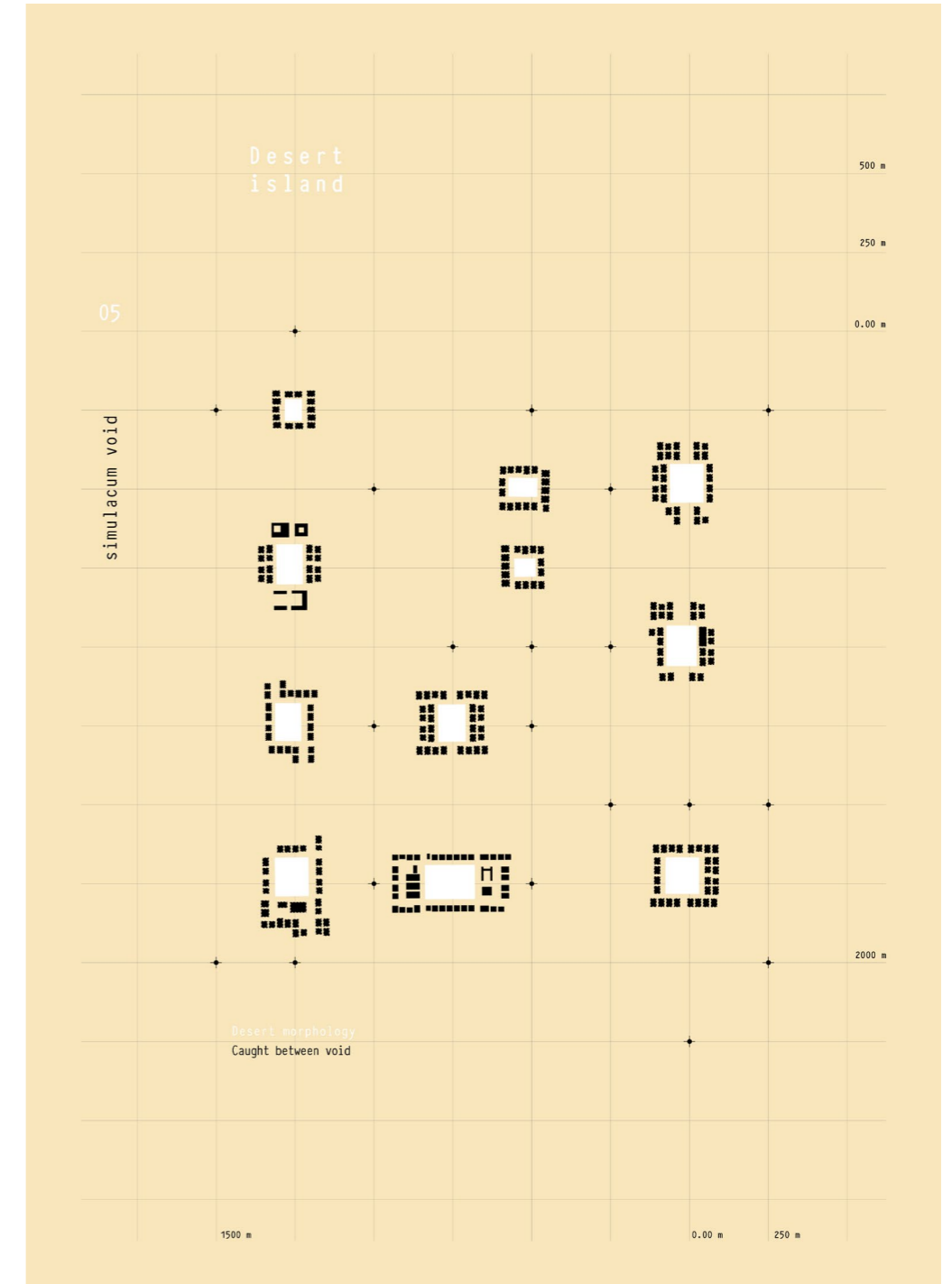
108

108 Author, "Grammar of primary voids", (2020).

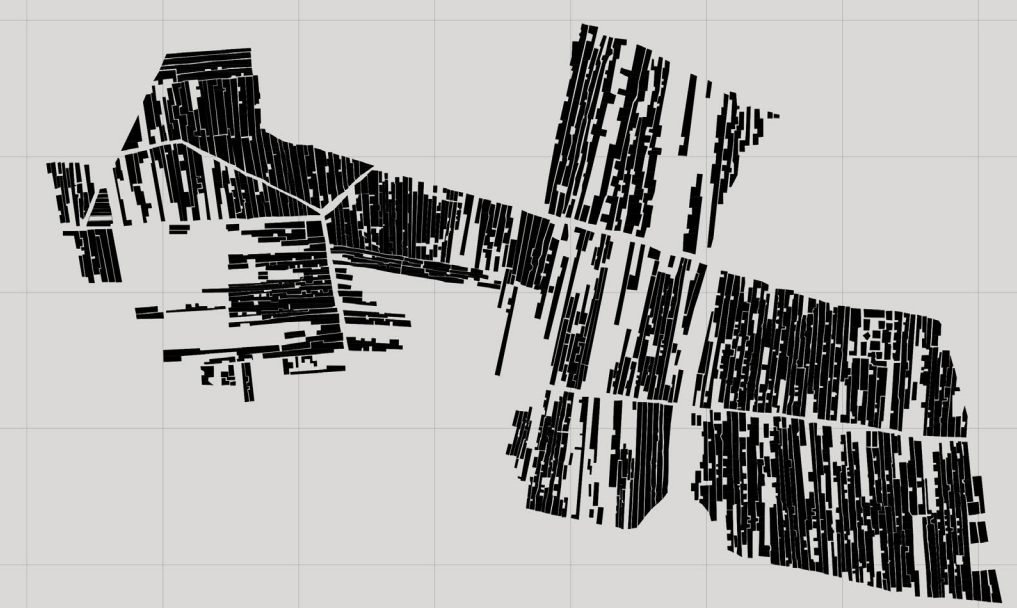
desert island_macro scale

109 Author, "Taxonomies", (2020).

desert island_macro scale



109



Rural morphology
Linear void

Cairo as city
archipelago

110 Author, "Matrix I Fabrics", (2020).
Cairo as city of archipelago, macro scale

8000 m

5000 m

0.00 m

2000 m

5000 m

1000 m

500 m

0.00 m

2000 m

4000 m

Fluvial morphology
Extrovert void

Mnemonic morphology
Introvert void

Topographical morphology
In-between void

Desert morphology
Caught between void



Rural morphology
Linear void

Cairo as city
archipelago

111 Author, "Matrix I Streets", (2020).
Cairo as city of archipelago, macro scale

8000 m

5000 m

0.00 m

2000 m

5000 m

1000 m

500 m

0.00 m

2000 m

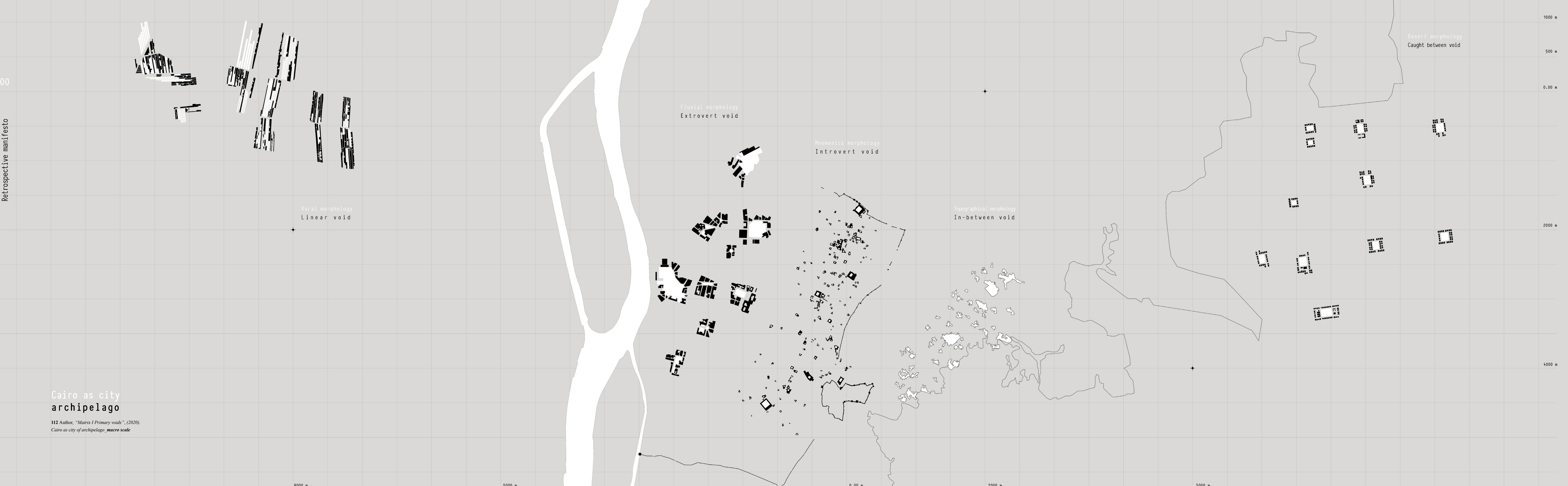
4000 m

Fluvial morphology
Extrovert void

Mnemonic morphology
Introvert void

Topographical morphology
In-between void

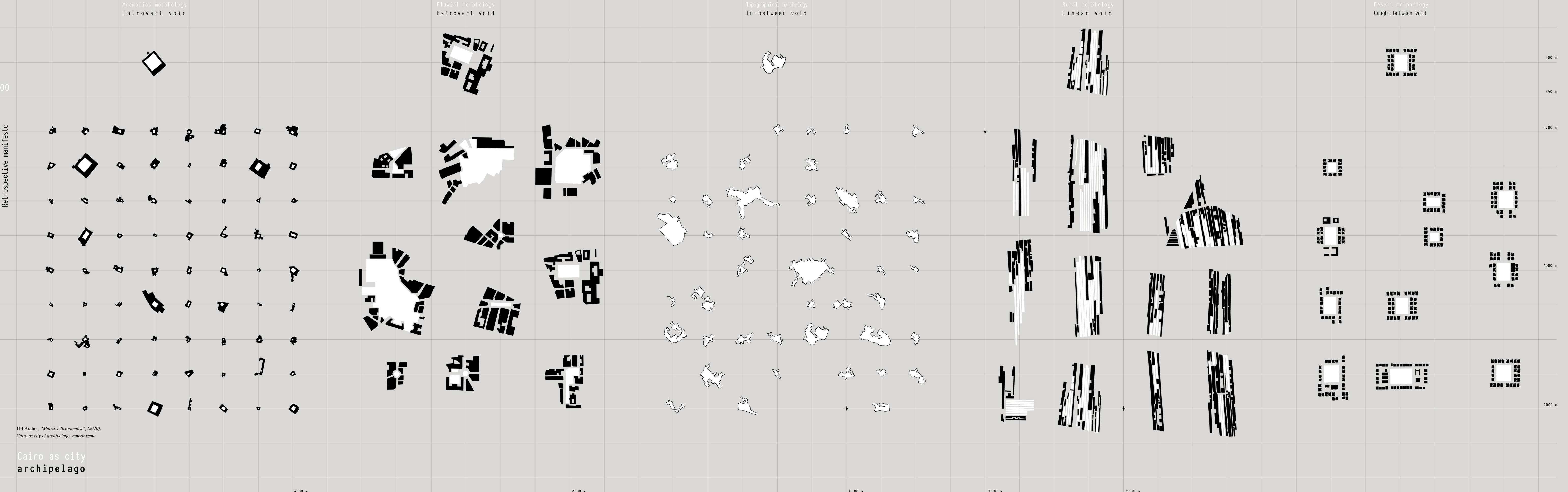
Desert morphology
Caught between void



Cairo as city
archipelago
112 Author, "Matrix 1 Primary voids", (2020).
Cairo as city of archipelago, macro scale



Cairo as city
archipelago
113 Author, "Matrix 1 Intangible relation", (2020).
Cairo as city of archipelago, macro scale



The advent of the material European models that have been applied to most of new developments in Cairo, helped to unprecedented rapidity of transformation in the nature of the urban realities and social relations within Cairo where the transformation of the void far from its original concept has distorted the composition and ensures the gradual dissolution of not only the practical need but also the social interaction with the space that has granted a fiction to understand the realities of the urban composition within Cairo as a city of archipelago.

*"[...] Here it comes an inversion of origin and finality, because all forms change starting from the moment they are no longer mechanically reproduced but conceived starting from their own reproducibility [...] Here we are in the simulacra of third order. [...] And not only must not search in the technique or in the economy the secrets of the code, it is on the contrary the very possibility of production that must be sought in the genesis of the code and the simulacra"*⁰⁶

A radical overthrow paradigm, thus, very profound because the ideology of the islands are based on the typologies of primary spaces that haven't been clear for the institutions involved in the development, where these spaces subsume the transformation of the physical two dimensional space to multi dimensional space with an immeasurable intangible efficacy. The new development derelict the memory of the past regarding the void by reducing it to such a mere physical transitional background, thus the void became incompetent with its physical and psychological depth, besides it dissolved into an oblivious space within the new composition of the urban structures.

Cairo as a city of archipelago, is defining each island enclosed by juxtaposed discontinuous elements, which should be well defined to be able to redraw a solitude of reality for each urban entity that is distinctive from the other but in the same time related with the other. This paradigm will fulfill the desire and the essence of each character by replacing the image of reality to once again the reality itself.

The limit of each island is playing an important role in this extremely homologated language such as; the historical wall that surrounds the Mnemonics Island to affirm the interiority of the composition and the void itself, while in the Fluvial Island, the river has introduced a significant border in continuous mutation with the urban composition, but still couldn't be reflected by its extroverted spaces that are trapped by the strong definitive axially of infrastructures.

The mountain manifested in its strong morphology has been the dominant of the urban formulation in the Topological Island and has introduced strong terrestrial landscape in relation with the in-between spaces resulted from the compact structure. In the Rural Island, the traced agricultural fields were responsible to construct both linear continues forms and voids where the second shows the continuum transformation and mutation inside and outside the urban composition and defines the border as the mother nature of this island.

Last but not least, by outlining the desert-scape as an expanded empty space has expressed the absent relation between the form and the nature of the border in the Desert Island, where the cellular fragments have been generated as a new materiality which never exist in the traditional grammar of composition, and so it is crucial to redefine the border of the desert island to be able to find the preliminary principle to mutate this urban composition.

Voids as a primary element for the nature of each island, has been resulted into five themes, which are, Introvert spaces 'Patio', squares, interstitial spaces, linear productive fields and abandoned gardens. These spaces have been arranged in sequence of the nomenclatures of typological analogy.

Such an understating of measures, subjects and linguistic characteristics for each island, provides the capacity of reread the texture of the tissue, the tactile nature of the composition and also affirm the delineation of the rites of the collective appropriation and memory of the tradition by the contemporary interventions, often elusive and alternative to the aggregative logics of the traditional concept of void.

The five islands Mnemonics, Fluvial, Topographical, Rural and Desert that has been illustrated in the analysis could generate a fundamental base and clear image for the complexity formulation of the whole urban composition of Cairo, and has introduced the necessity of understanding the relation between the urban form and its void with implication to urban proximity and typology as presuppositions for the maintenance and regeneration of the urban tissue of each island where social unity, appropriation and dwelling could find their places within the urban composition.

II.1.2_Analogies of the primary void in the urban context

Mid scale: Density I Trajectory I Connection I Scale I Pattern

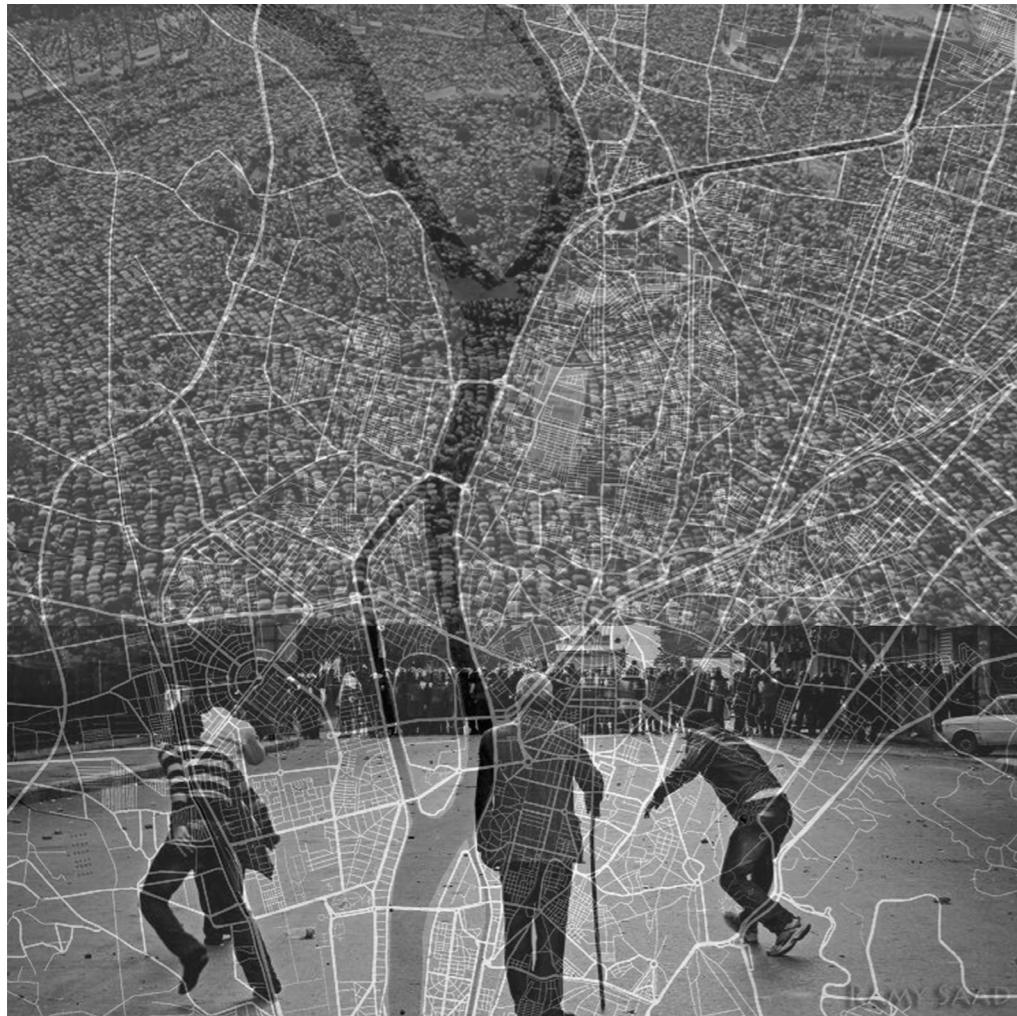
The eloquent islands probably agree with the use of dubitative and uncertainty to generate an urban reality that can be defined as an interface or a medium for the reformulation of Cairo. Intended as an urban composition capable of accommodate human activity and could be traced back to an expression of urban and social identity that applied to a manipulation of the terrestrial support within the city. That of protecting oneself from adversity by constituting a self-shelter and in the same time connects with the other islands to ensure the sense of belonging for each dweller, and in time improve the permanence of the sense of unity within Cairo.

Operating on the urban scale, starting from the need of understanding the ideology of each primary element and the relation between them within the same island, is the essential data of the urban composition to be understood. It is indeed on this prerogative that it is necessary to make a specific reflection outlining in the urban island, a founding act from which all the subsequent alternatives that characterize the outcome of each island originate and, with these, its belonging to the nature of the island and simply the formation of the urban tissue.

If in a recent past the possibility on where to develop a new area reproduced the character of a rite in which an error of evaluation would have jeopardized the survival of the settled nucleus. Nowadays, it is crucial to reflect on the urban dimension, not only limited to the physical data but the nature psychological nature of the element to outline the basic feature of the island identity and the prerequisites for an intrinsic sustainability of the space.

The intervention on the island due to its nature will balance and presupposes precisely this prerogative, and it will define a compensation process against the superficial reality, and consequently will reveal the urban essence that could outline the physiognomies of such fabrics by uncovering the apparatus methods, the connections with the surrounding and the form of the void within the surrounding buildings.

116 Author, "Dweller and Time", (2020).
Collage defining the strong relation between the
dwellers and the space within time



116

Density, trajectory, connection, scale and pattern, outline the spatial organization useful to provide profile to a careful sequence of voids in which dwellers reveal their habits and identities. In this framework, analyzing, defining and composing the urban structure of the city from the consistency of emptiness reverberates in the structure of the fabrics and the characteristics of the inhabitants through time.

117 Google map, "Mnemonics island", (2020).
mnemonics island_mid scale
historical city_mnemonics void



117

Mnemonics Island

The evolution of the form and its introvert void in the Mnemonics Island outlines the formation of a compact and dense composition, recognizable as an intimate relation between the solid and the void, which as divergent dynamisms have kept within them the tense and vigorous urban fabrics of an ideal balance. In this setting, the consideration of the dynamics well-connected to the composition of the urban form has defined the grammar of the island as a complete horizon form aiming in a dogmatic nature to maintain a geometric equilibrium that provide a significant identity for the individual elements.

The collimations settled by the positioning the void within the form, to an efficient continuity of open spaces and shaped a value of urban spatiality with an implied sensitivity of nature within the urban fabrics. The settlement of the voids provided an intimate measurement for the dwellers to flow within the composition in infinite trajectory from outside to inside and vice versa, where the role of the threshold transformed, from being such a movement through a door from one point to another, into a vital transitional space acts as a real boundary between the exteriority and the interiority of the composition. This concept identifies inspirable connection between the grammar of the island and the dweller's trajectory. Moreover, it generates an enthusiasm for the experience and the urban scenario, as the voids with their intangible enclosures, concur to bond with each other not only through the physical connections but rather the metaphysical ones.

The right endogenous measurements between the primary elements outline the most relevant transcendence of such a model, through an unceasingly flow that define a wisdom aimed to understand a proportioned distance between

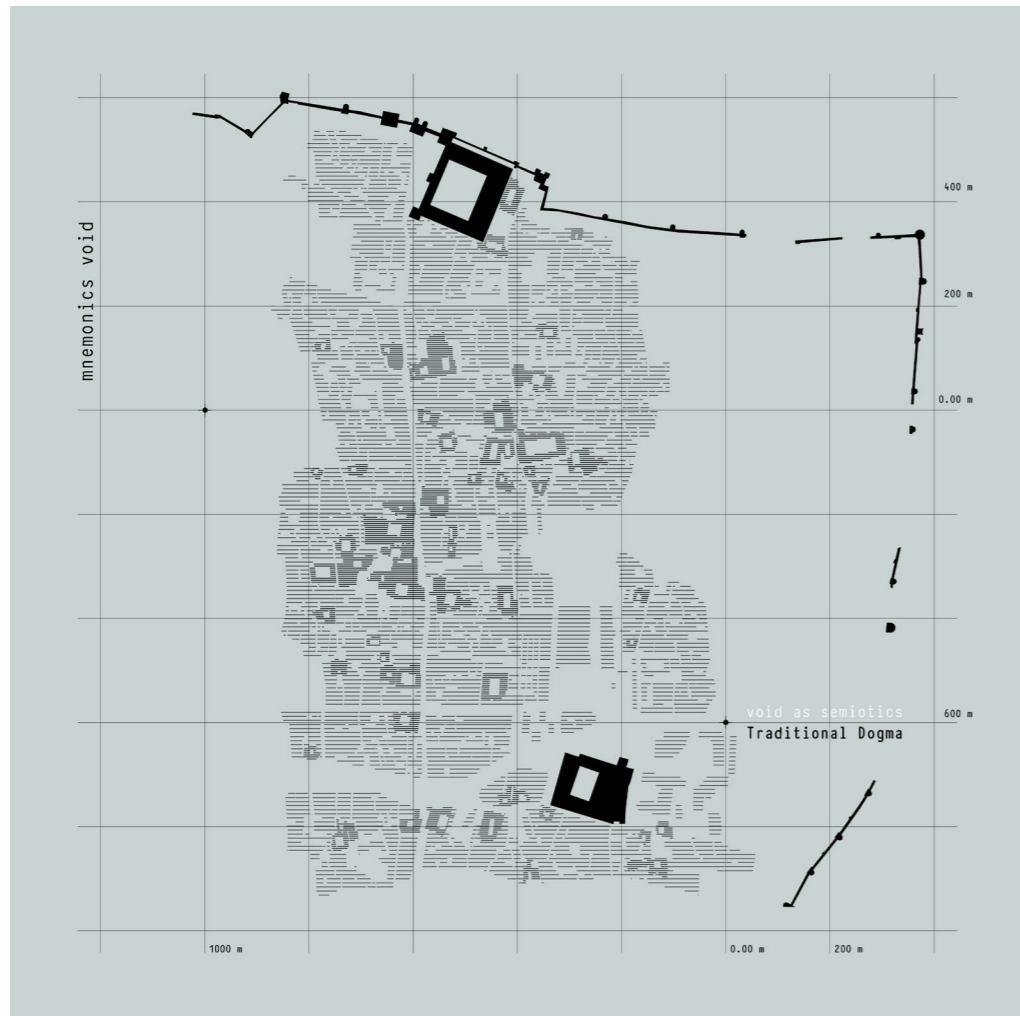


118 Author, "Objects and Density of fabrics", (2020).

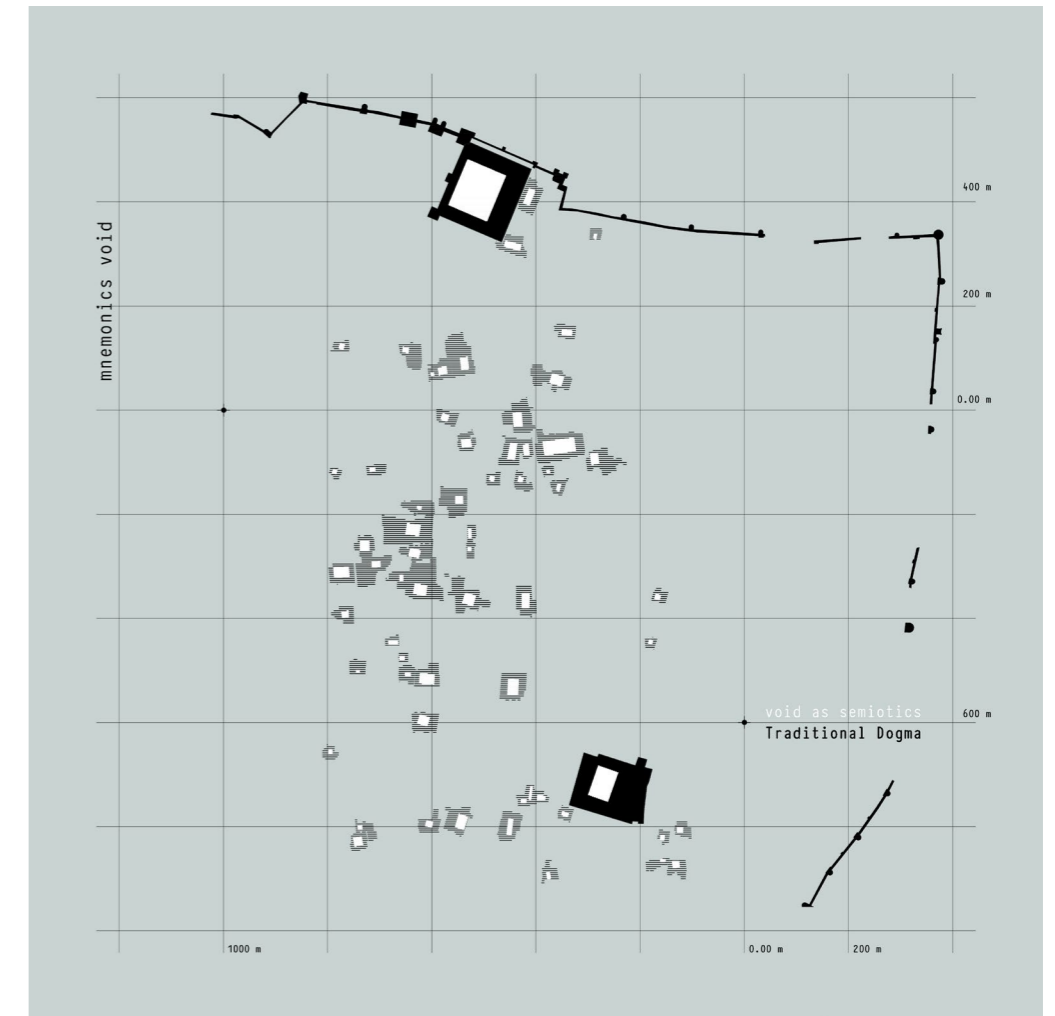
mnemonics island_mid scale

119 Author, "Objects and Primary void", (2020).

mnemonics island_mid scale



118



119

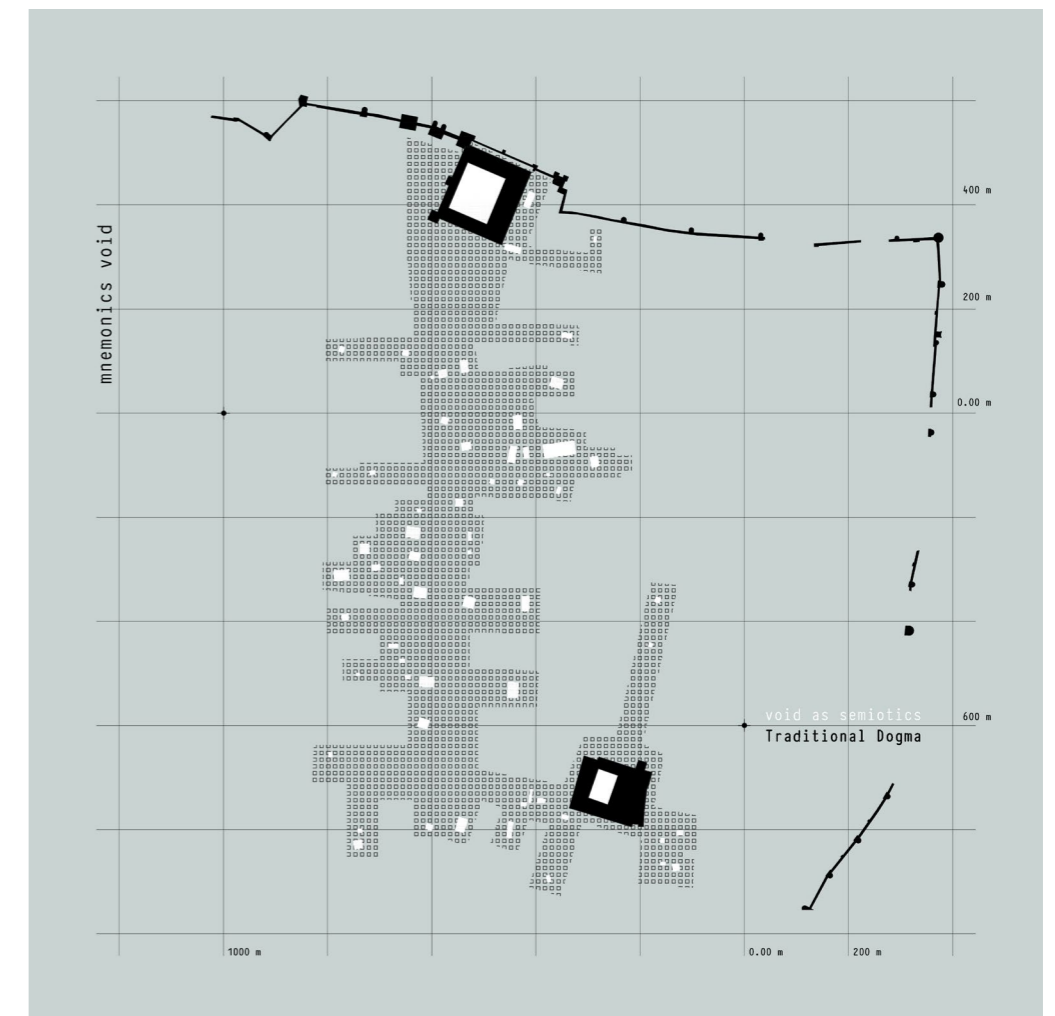
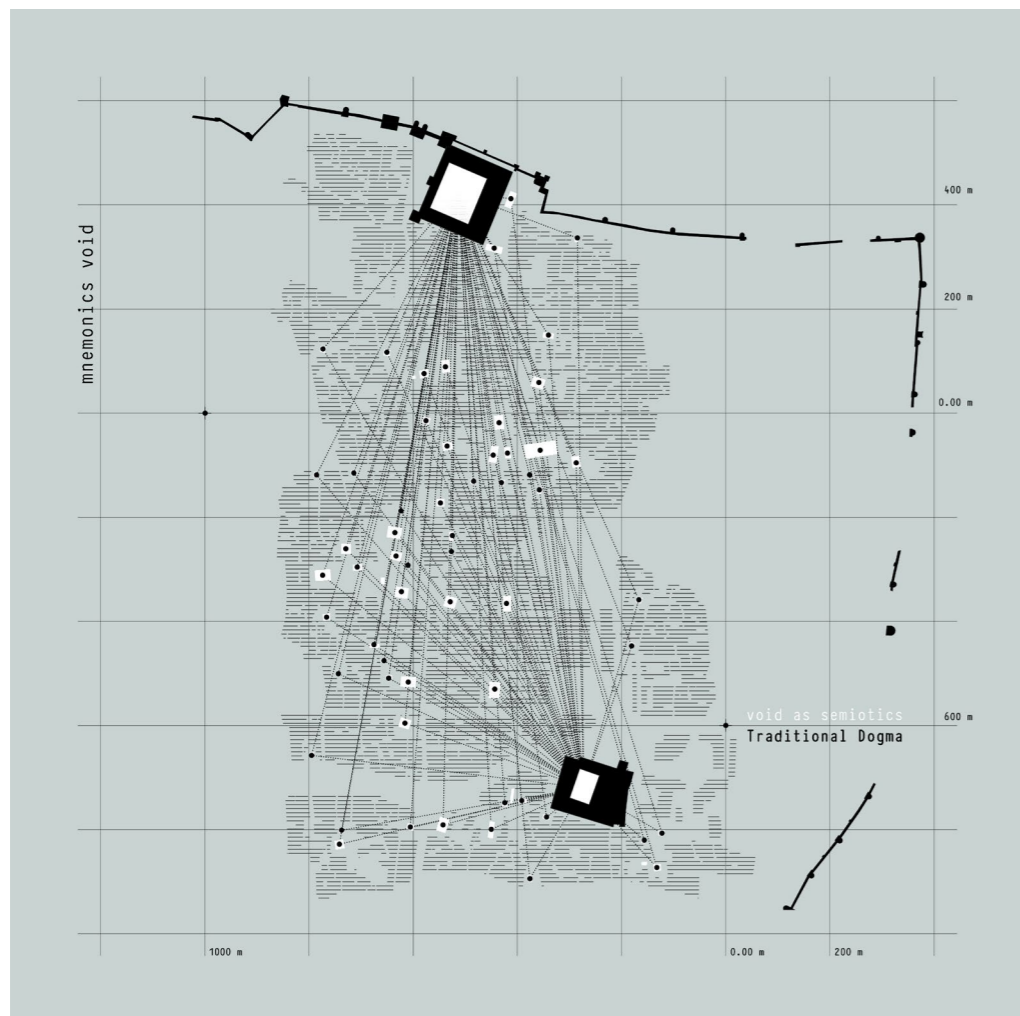


120 Author, "Voids intangible relation", (2020).

mnemonics island_mid scale

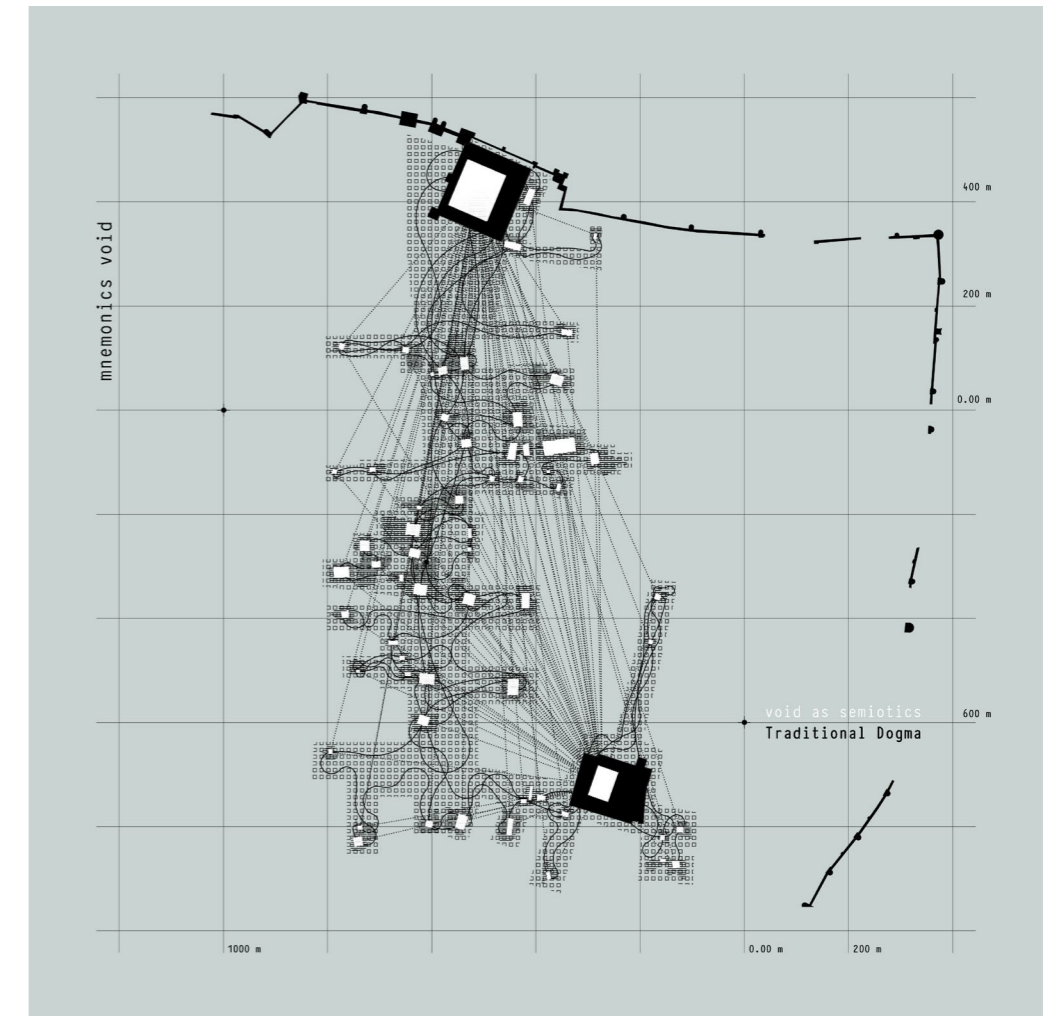
121 Author, "Voids organization", (2020).

mnemonics island_mid scale





122 Author, "Flow of dwellers", (2020).
mnemonics island_mid scale
123 Author, "Voids as semiotics", (2020).
mnemonics island_mid scale



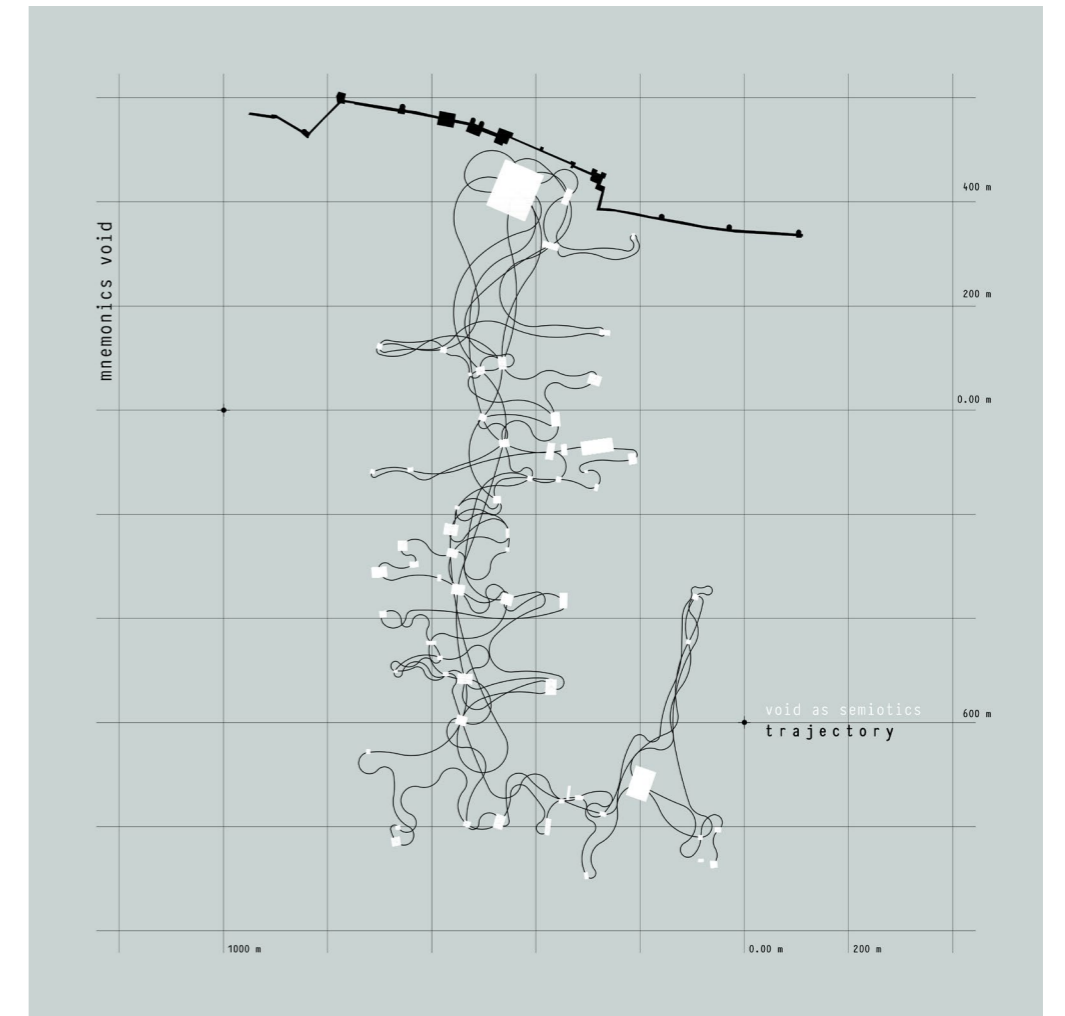
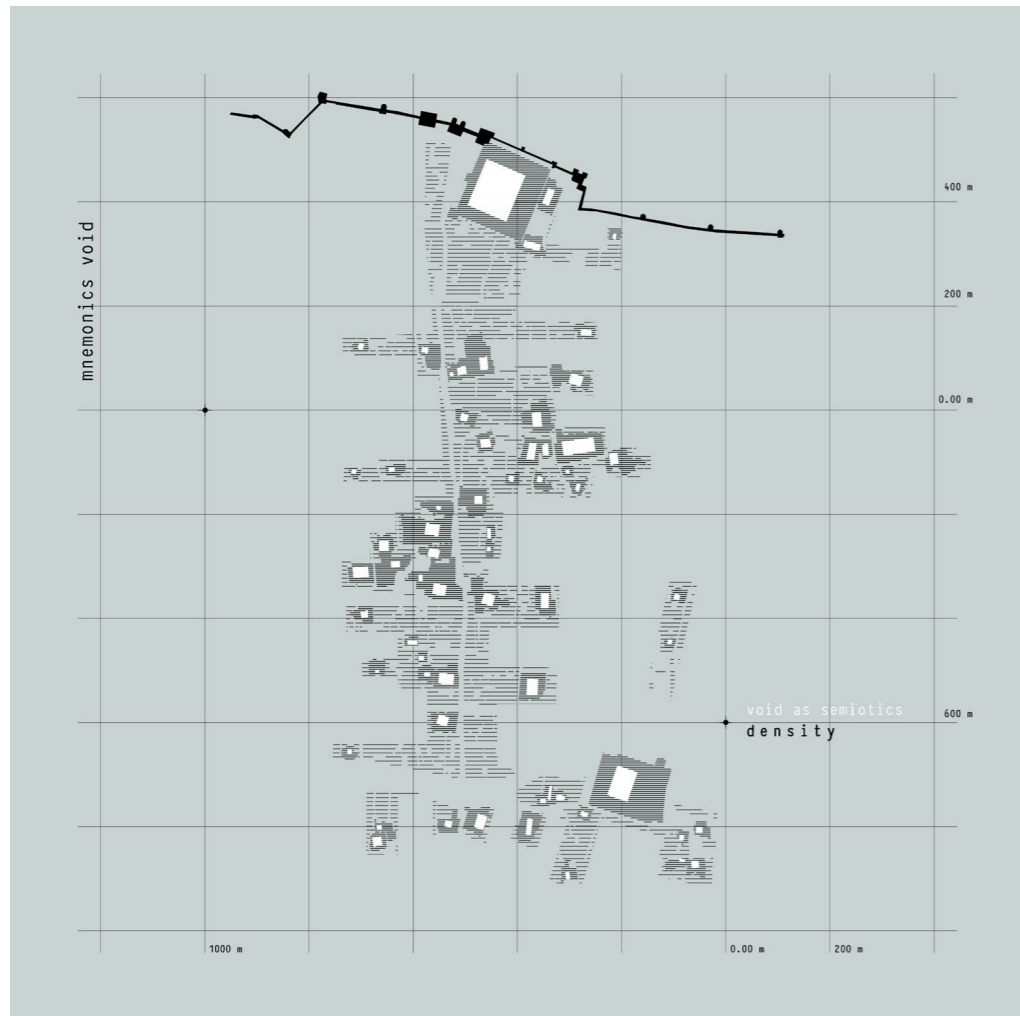
TENACIOUS CAIRO_
MELANCHOLY OF VOID AS DICHOTOMY BETWEEN THE IMPLICIT AND EXPLICIT DOCTRINE

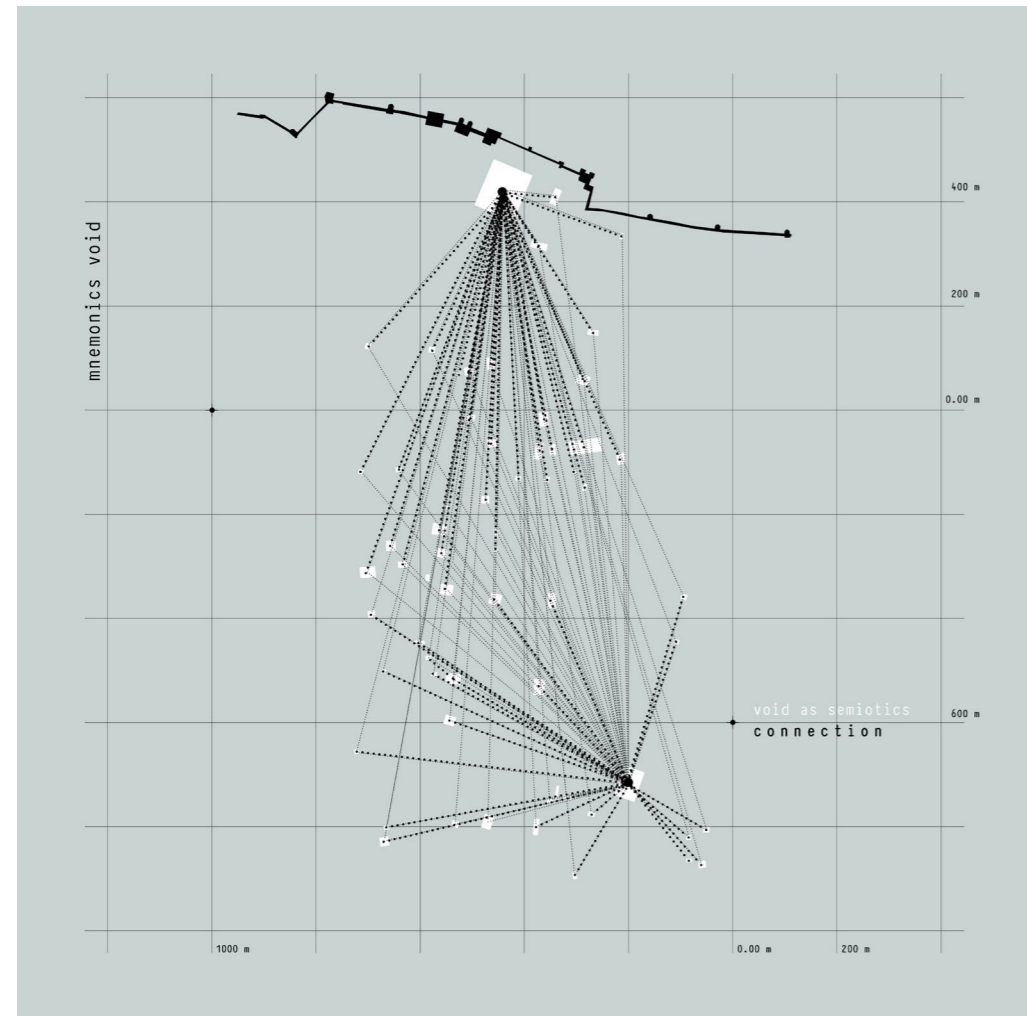
REVIVING THE CONCEPT OF VOID IN THE MIDDLE EASTERN TRADITIONS AS AN ALTERNATIVE SOCIO-SPATIAL SCENARIO FOR REGENERATING PUBLIC SPACES IN CAIRO'S ARCHIPELAGO

II.1 Physiognomies of voids in the formulation of Cairo



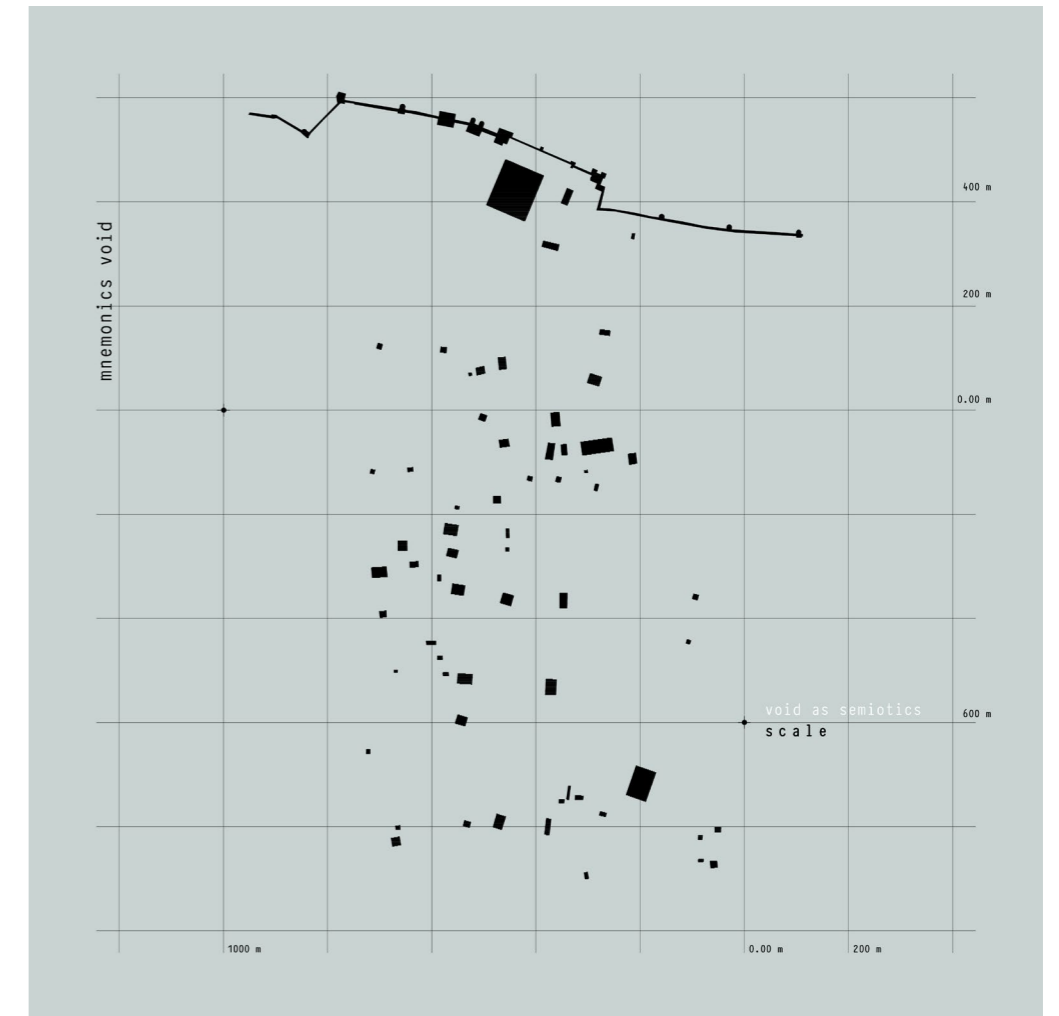
124 Author, "Density", (2020).
mnemonics island_mid scale
125 Author, "Trajectory", (2020).
mnemonics island_mid scale





126

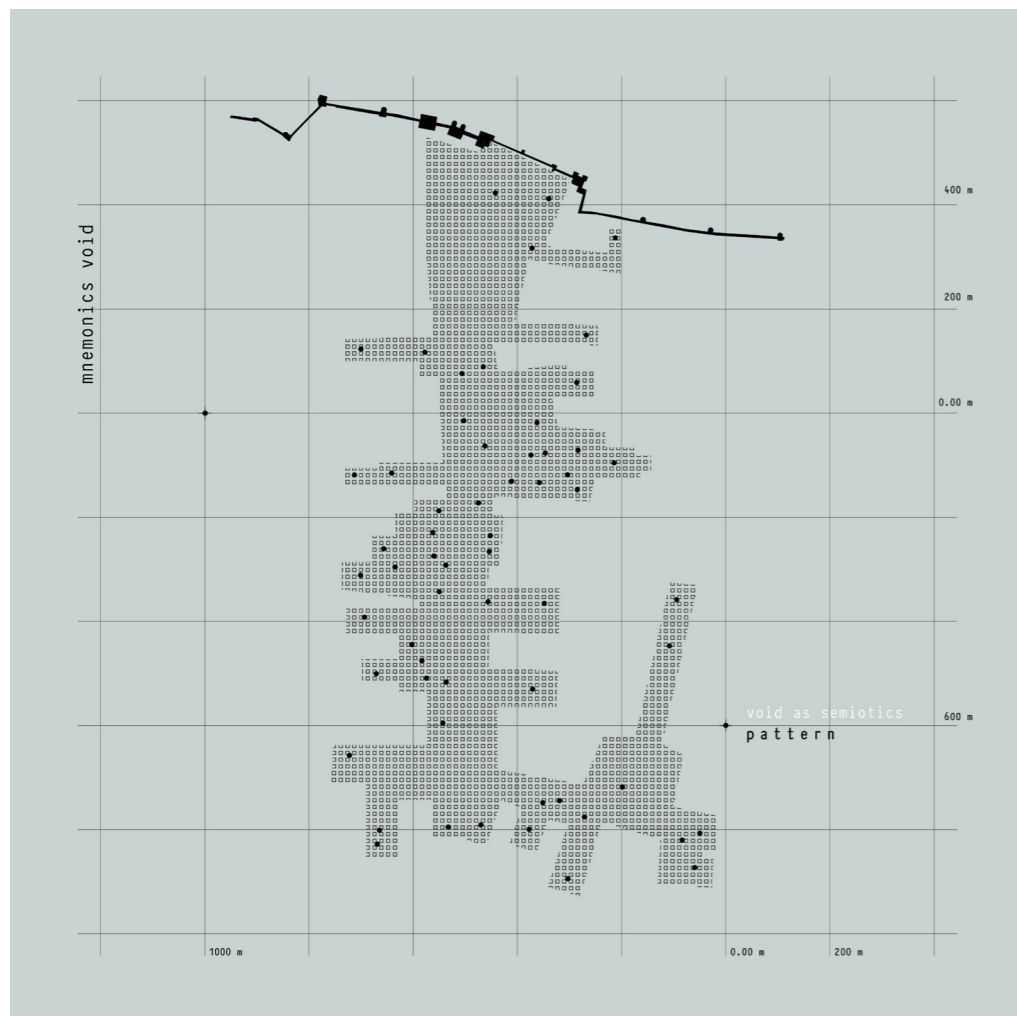
126 Author, "Connection", (2020).
mnemonics island_mid scale
127 Author, "Scale", (2020).
mnemonics island_mid scale



127



128 Author, "Pattern", (2020).
mnemonics island_mid scale



128

the individual elements, or in other words, the void within the massive bodies triggers a magnetic attraction, which generating a narrow organic connections that animate the dialogue between light and shadow, and influence the micro environmental conditions, in order to let the dwellers flow organically in a symphony of changing scales, overturning what we call the interest and the beauty of the form, to a tensional balance of an urban composition.

In the area between Al-Hakim mosque and Al-Azhar mosque, the fabric's structure is very compact, with such a strong trajectory of people through Al Muizz Street as a connection without ignoring the strong connection between the voids themselves. The scale of voids mutate from urban to intimate scales in an organic pattern to reaffirm the interiority of the composition.

The porous structure of succession open spaces, establish unitary intangible relations between the dwellers and their own identity, as not only the form but also a large collective flow of people have defined the enclosure. This helped to understand the concept of scale within the form, passing from the narrow street to the interior open space. The large voids situated mostly on the border of the island while it is complemented by smaller ones fit between them in a harmonic mutation of scale. The introduction of small amount of vehicles in the arteries of the island has been ceased by not only the massive flow of people, but also the compositional organic structure of the urban form, which kept the island network mostly pedestrian. The pattern of the voids are arranged in an organic configuration and the streets simply act as backstage and as a continuity of the main space, which is interior, however the voids acts in an extraordinary position as essence of the composition in this scene.

129 Google map, "Fluvial island", (2020).
fluvial island_mid scale
Khedivial city_ suspension void



129

Fluvial Island

Massive urban blocks situated perfectly to define the urban squares in the Fluvial Island in which it seems to be the sublime model that Cairo reached, based on the Haussmann ideal model for Paris, through its nature of compendium and its secular urban structure where the Logical and ideological physiognomies of the Western model were perfectly inserted, stands on an instrument both for reflection of architectural forms and perception of urban squares that identifies the characteristics of a regular and concluded spatiality.

These urban squares defined by the perimeters of recognizable volumetric forms, lavished by the materiality and its conception, stands by far from the traditional composition in which the tension relation between the dwellers and the space has transformed into a relation between the dweller and the material form where the responsibility of the void lost its ability as a unitary space and has been interpreted in just a physical way of arranging some forms and axes.

The vacuum of the square expressed by the urban blocks that shape the adjacent of urban nature as it multiplies its presence by its defined shapes that draw the fabrics, and the quantity of the volumes and its size have been arranged with a balance density that identify the characteristics of the Fluvial Island that let the square to find their own quantity space within this fabrics.

This attention towards the monumental dimension of architecture, which, regardless of the static perception, and the composition of the intrinsic elements, has transformed the urban block into an imaginative projection, that found itself in a succession of terminated spaces.

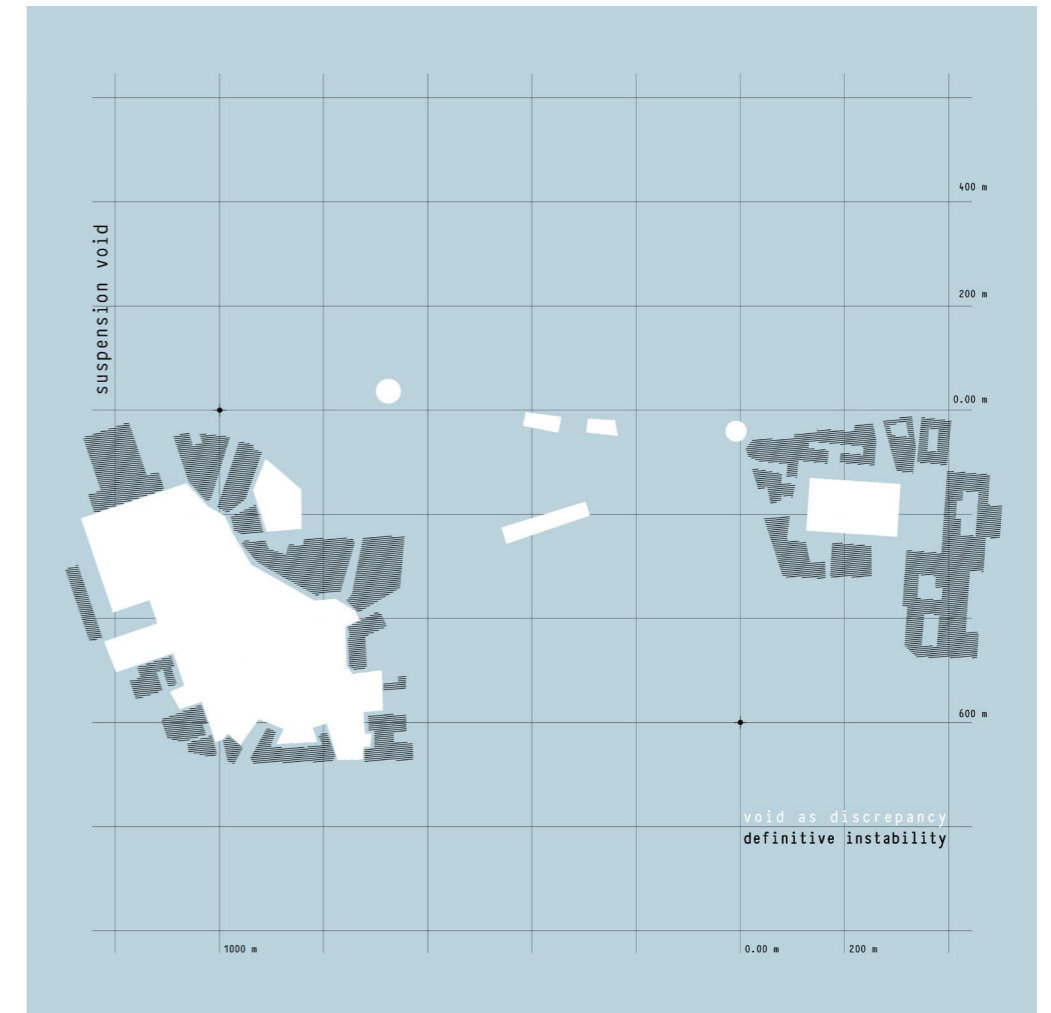


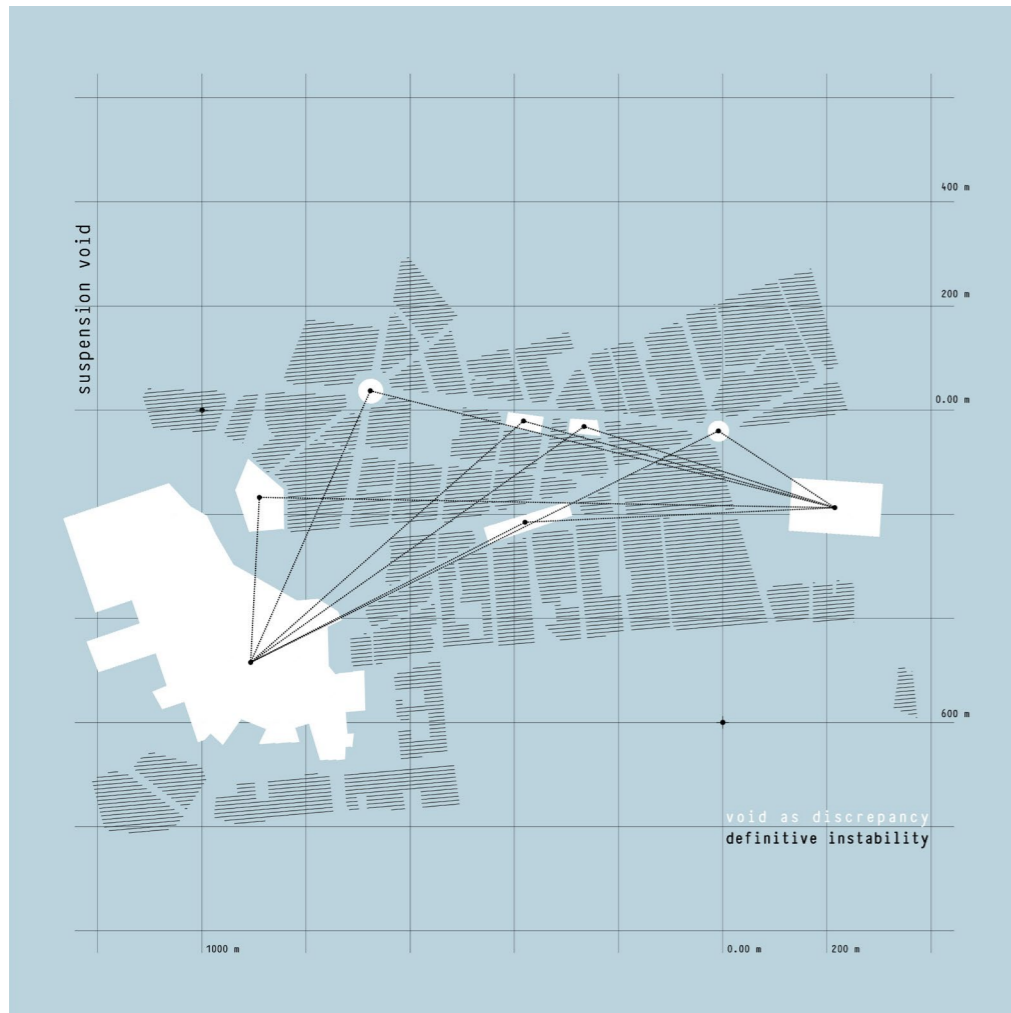
130 Author, "Objects and Density of fabrics", (2020).

fluvial island_mid scale

131 Author, "Objects and Primary void", (2020).

fluvial island_mid scale





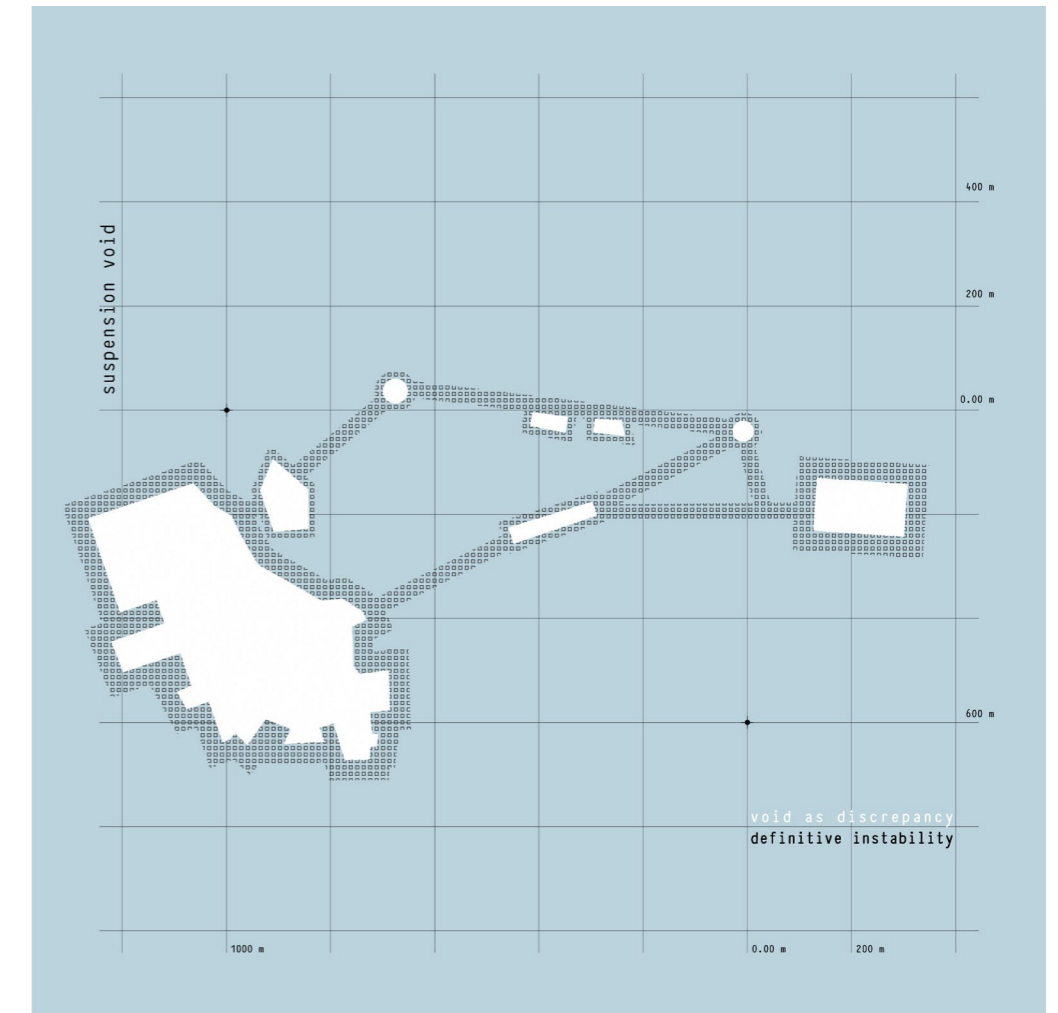
132

132 Author, "Voids intangible relation", (2020).

fluvial island_mid scale

133 Author, "Voids organization", (2020).

fluvial island_mid scale



133

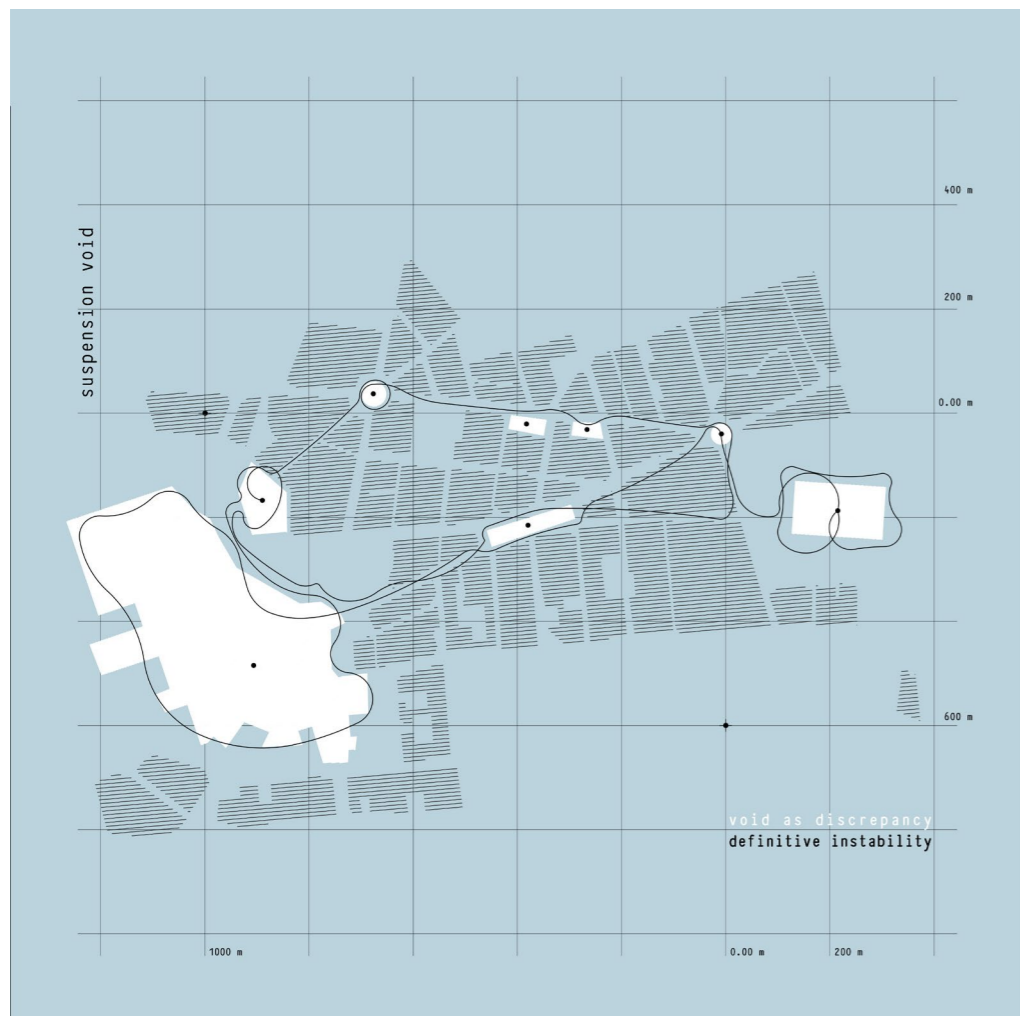


134 Author, "Flow of dwellers", (2020).

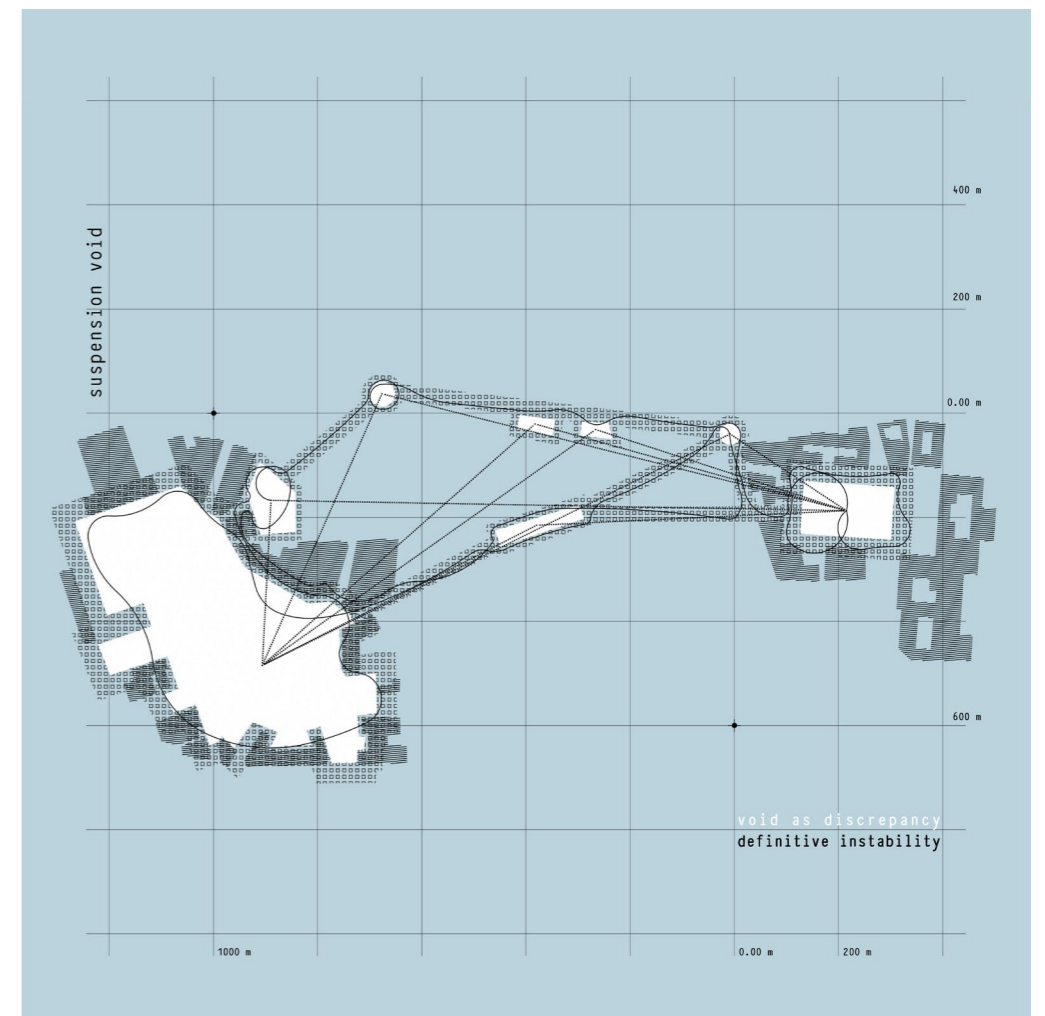
fluvial island_mid scale

135 Author, "Voids as discrepancy", (2020).

fluvial island_mid scale



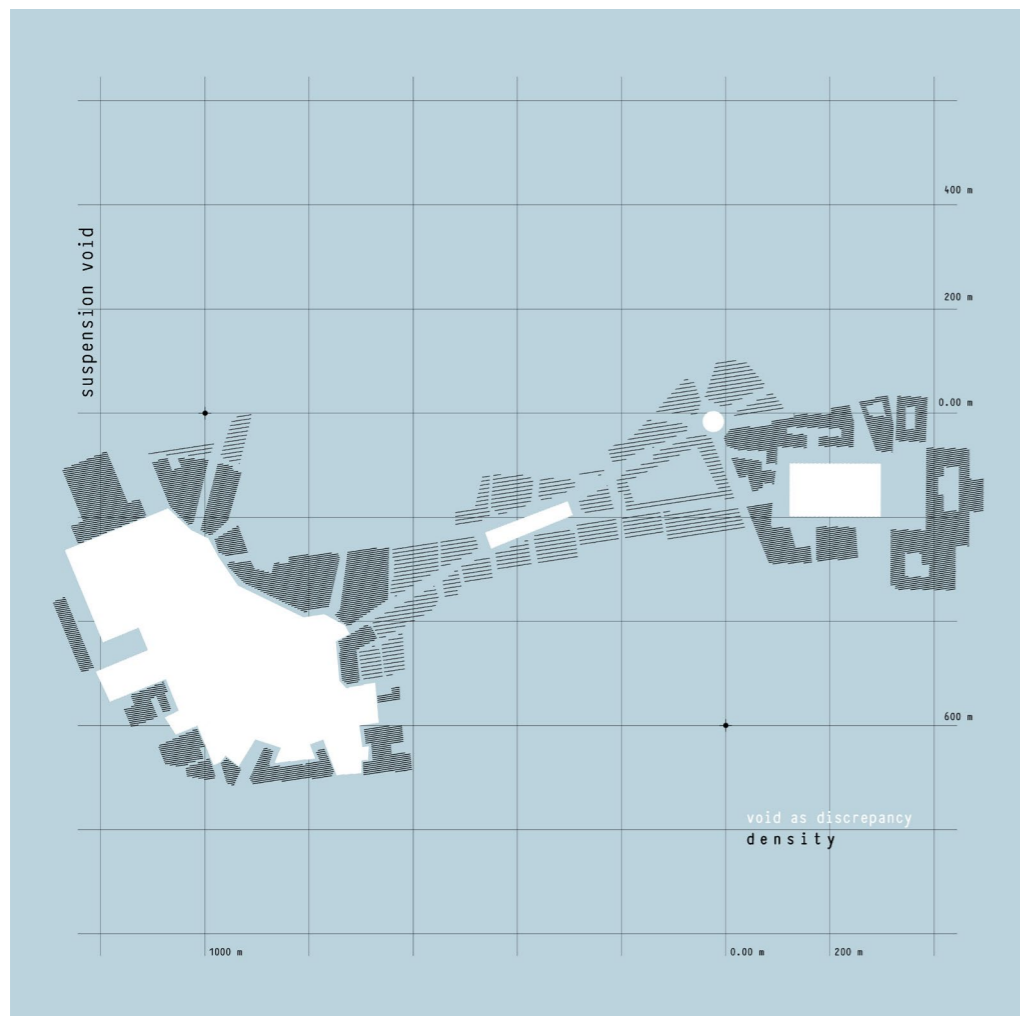
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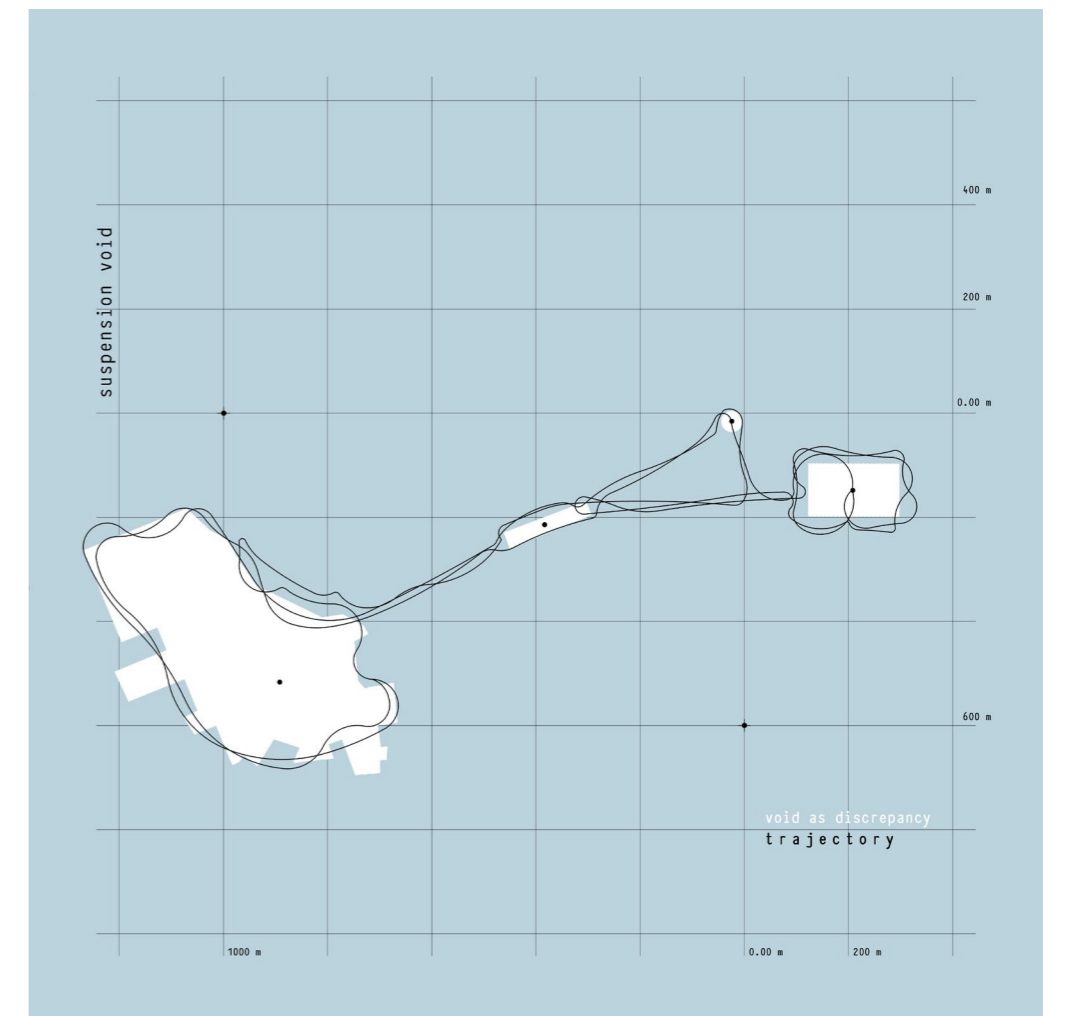
135



136 Author, "Density", (2020).
fluvial island_mid scale
137 Author, "Trajectory", (2020).
fluvial island_mid scale



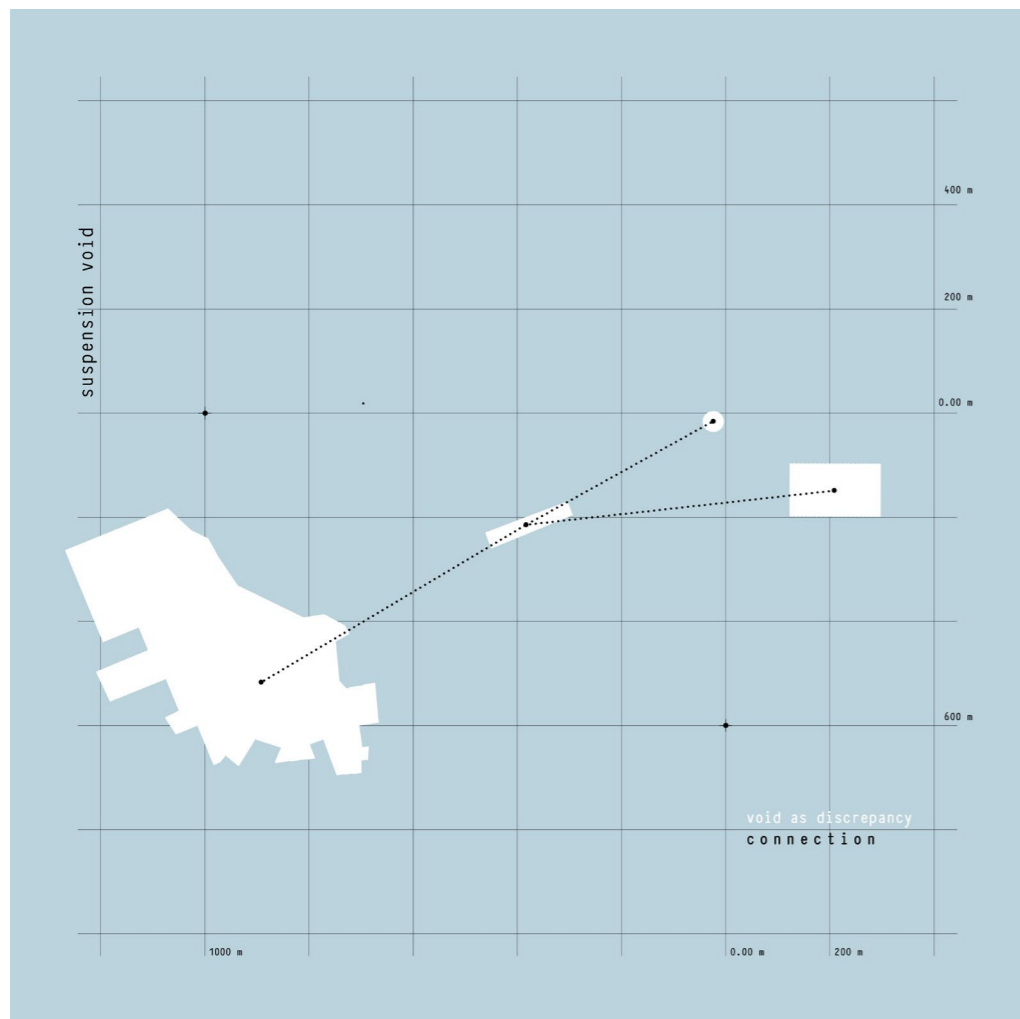
136



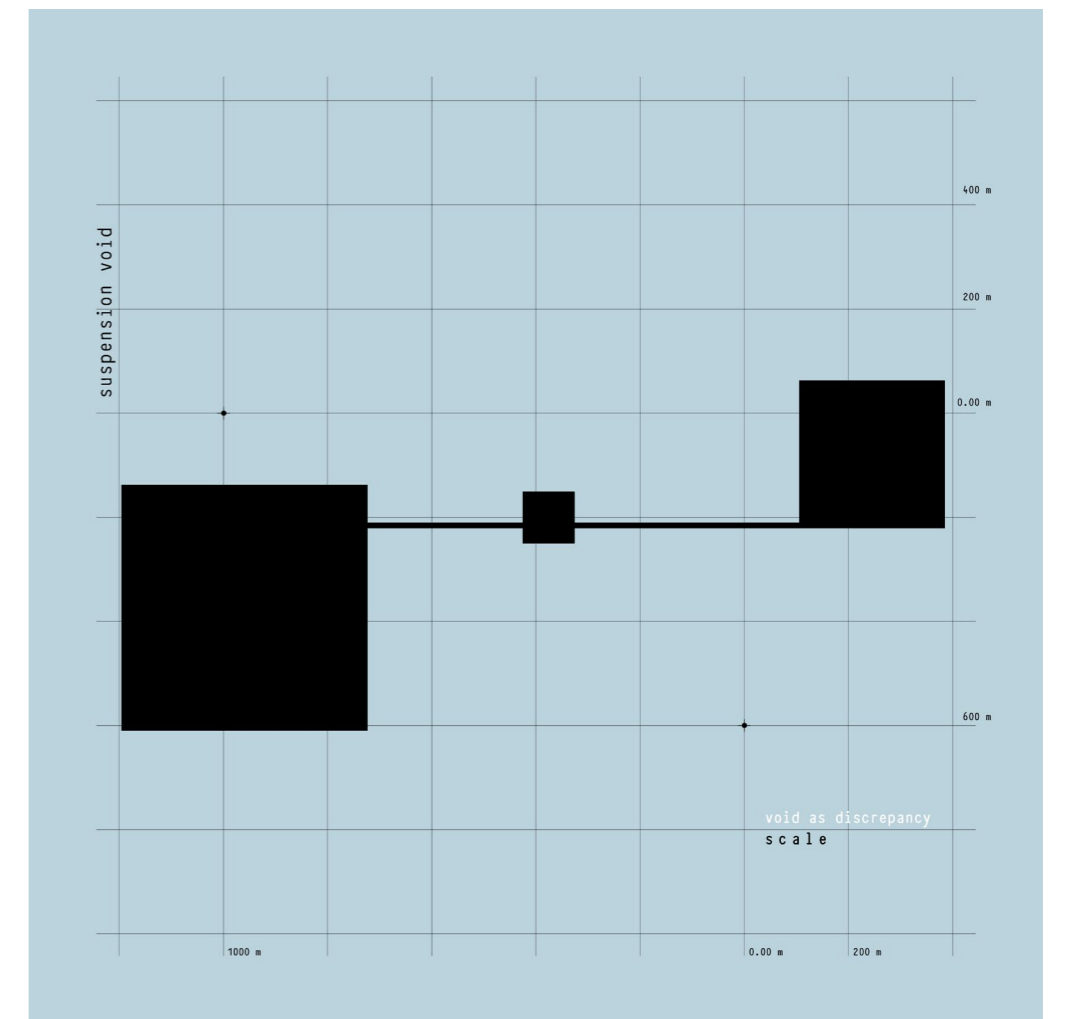
137



138 Author, "Connection", (2020).
 fluvial island_mid scale
 139 Author, "Scale", (2020).
 fluvial island_mid scale



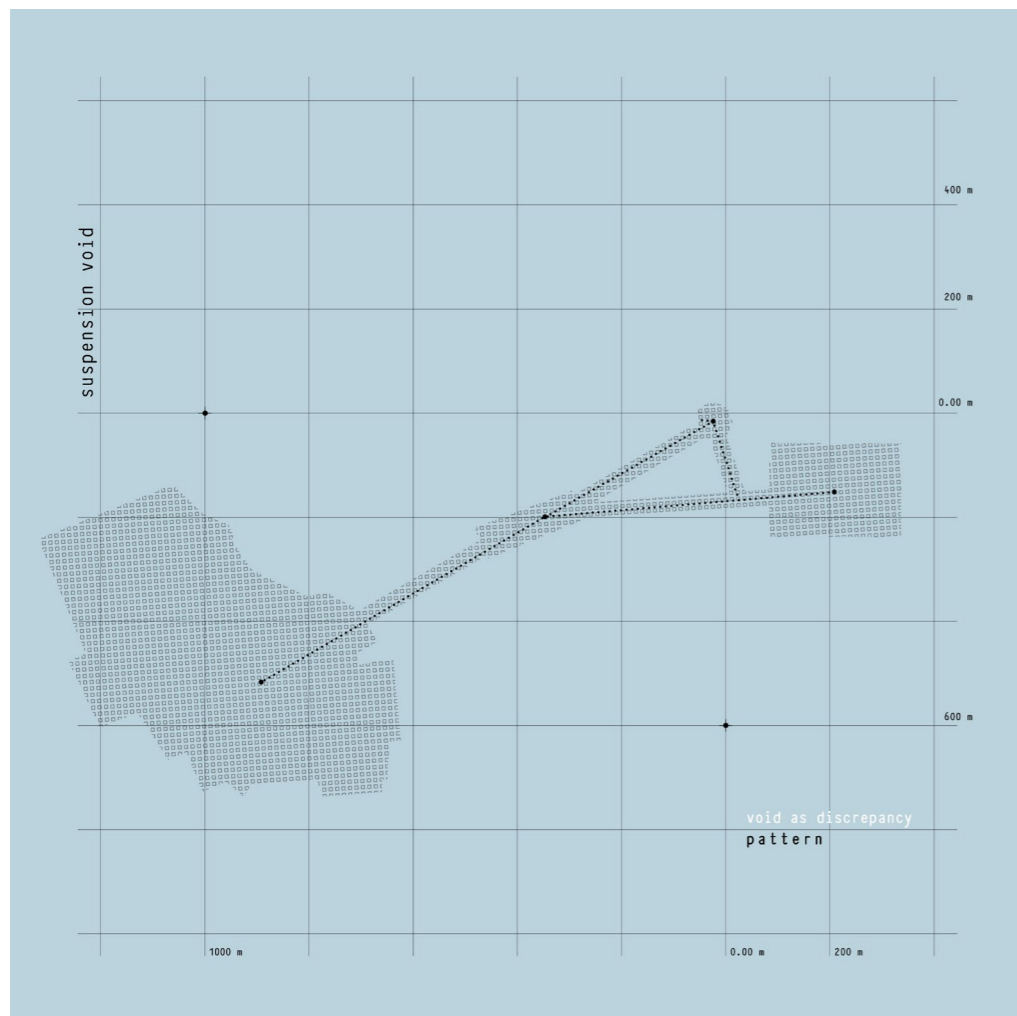
138



139



140 Author, "Pattern", (2020).
fluvial island_mid scale



140

The struggle between the man and the car reach its peak within the strong axially, where the man got prisoned on the side of the street, and couldn't bring back the space that he lost, in this sense the trajectory of the cars replaced the inhabitants and by results, the void as an integral part of the nature couldn't produce an equal and osmotic dialogue with the dweller and lost its credibility as a collective space. This linguistic interpretation of the grammar of the composition is showing the lack of the conception of the void as a primary element and the decline of the role of the inhabitants within the space. The connection between the squares was introduced as an axial streets defined by the blocks with a secondary squares in between, acting as an anchor for the axial structure.

The Limits became a distinctive thick line between inside and outside and the discontinuity between the voids became significant. Moreover, the scale of the main squares was always monumental and out of scale surrounded and penetrated by the car as main actor inside the space, all of these factors were just situated to serve the main building or the palace that outlined an operational guide in the functional dynamics of forms with no attention towards the need of the real urban actors due to the great migration of the concept. In this sense, the Fluvial Island could be synthesized as balanced dense fabrics, with an extrovert squares defined by urban block. The flow of the people mostly situated on the border of the street and the squares are regularly empty of inhabitants, due to the massive flow of cars, besides the connection between the squares is axial straight connection, linking the polar monumental voids where the organization and pattern of them lies always on the border of the island with small scalar squares in the middle.

141 Google map, "Topographical island",
(2020).
topographical island_mid scale
Informal city_Oblivious void



141

Topographical Island

The need to delimit a space to define an extension and measure, emphasize the need to trace a perimeter for it, and its strong contextual nature, is crucial in the Topographical Island, where the voids are a result of what is between the forms, which reveal the discontinuity of the spatial areas. These In-between voids are defined by a continuous brutal massive blocks situated in the space with no relation to the nature of this area that with all the different succession situation could still keep the essence and appearances of its own identity.

The measurement of the void is based on the gestural dimension of the urban forms, not attributable to a measurement practice governed by an exact geometric relationship. The voids even underlying but still recognizable in this concrete dense forest, as the density that is overloaded by the forms, is more than a compact fabrics while the voids is a testimony to the nature and the ideology of the island.

In this context, the action of understanding the measurement can be traced back to two co-existing consciousness, one depends on the acknowledgment of an effective value achieved by the multiplying of these voids, and the other is more sophisticated where it depends on the hidden connection between these spaces as an interpretative intangible linkage. It is essential to understand this fact to be able to revive these latent spaces, and to find a meaning of coexisting realities within the no merciful urban composition. The movement of dwellers is mostly dynamic, trying to concur these in-between voids by some appropriations to sustain its meaning as essential space for formulating the grammar of the island. And here again, the observation of the streets and the connection is closely similar to what could be find in the Mnemonics Island, basically organic with



142

142 Author, "Objects and Density of fabrics", (2020).

topographical island_mid scale

143 Author, "Objects and Primary void", (2020).

topographical island_mid scale

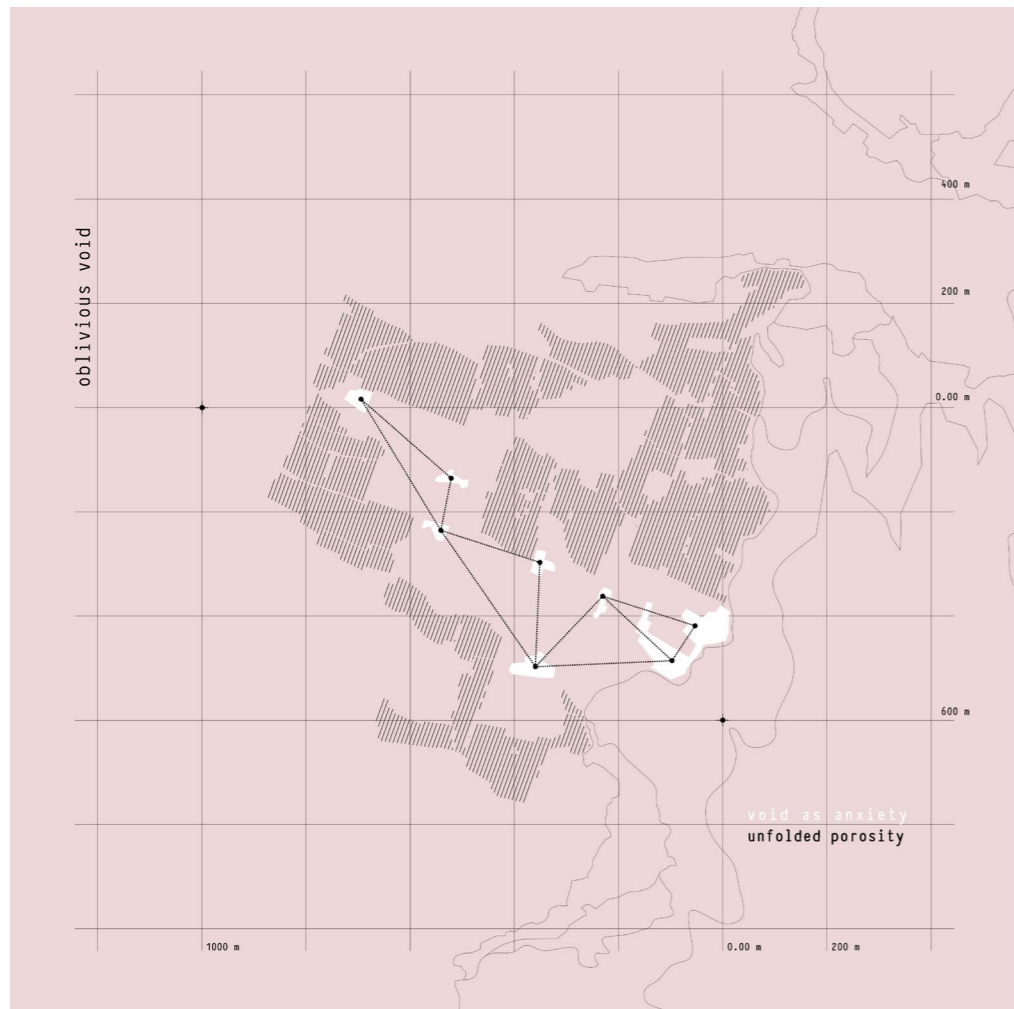


143

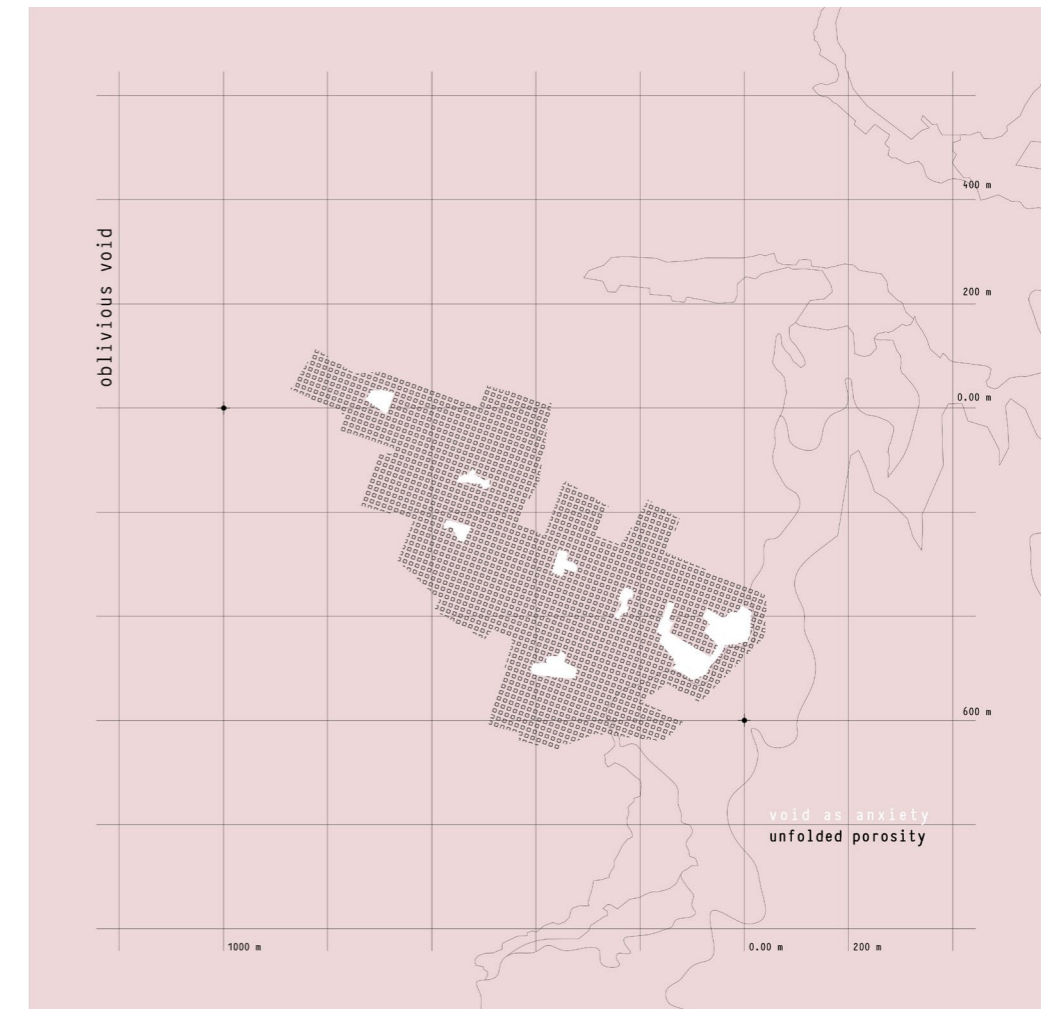


144 Author, "Voids intangible relation", (2020).
topographical island_mid scale

145 Author, "Voids organization", (2020).
topographical island_mid scale



144



145



146

146 Author, "Flow of dwellers", (2020).
topographical island_mid scale
147 Author, "Voids as porosity", (2020).
topographical island_mid scale

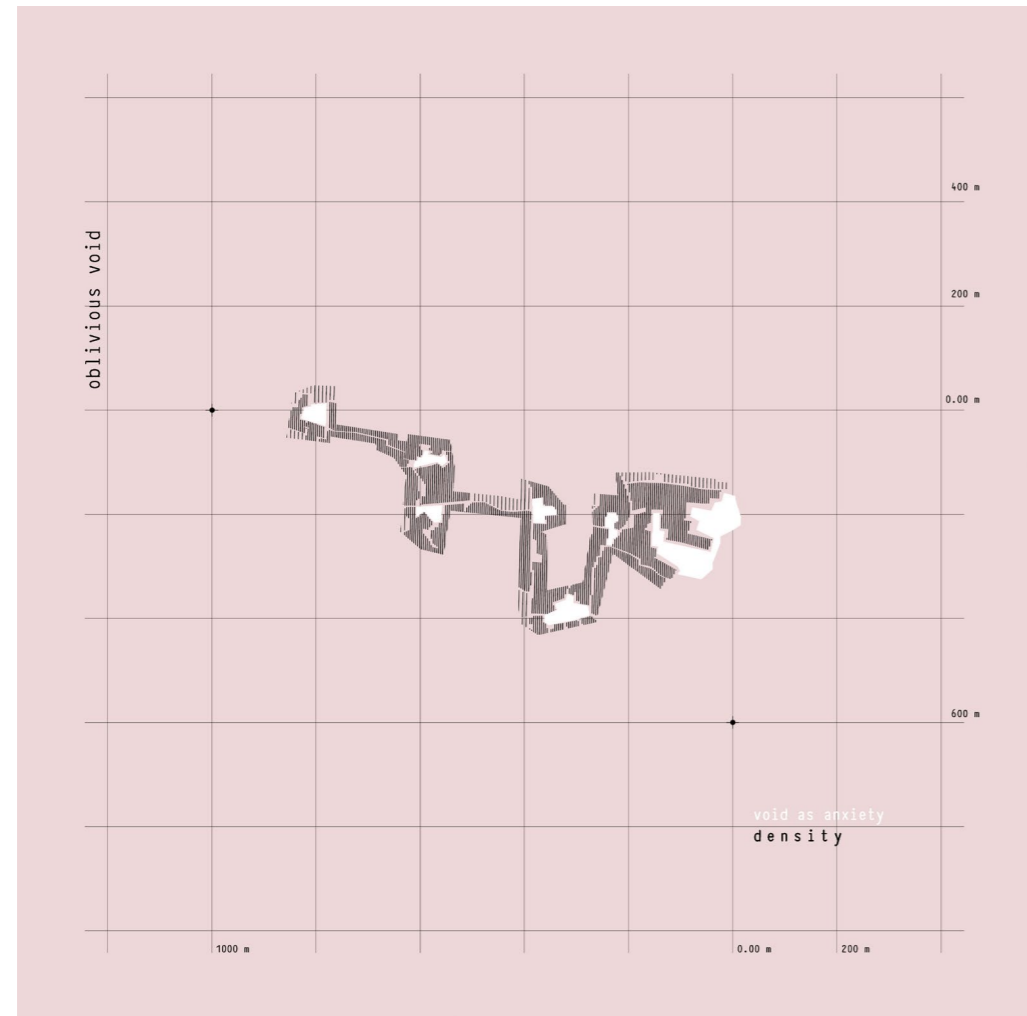


147

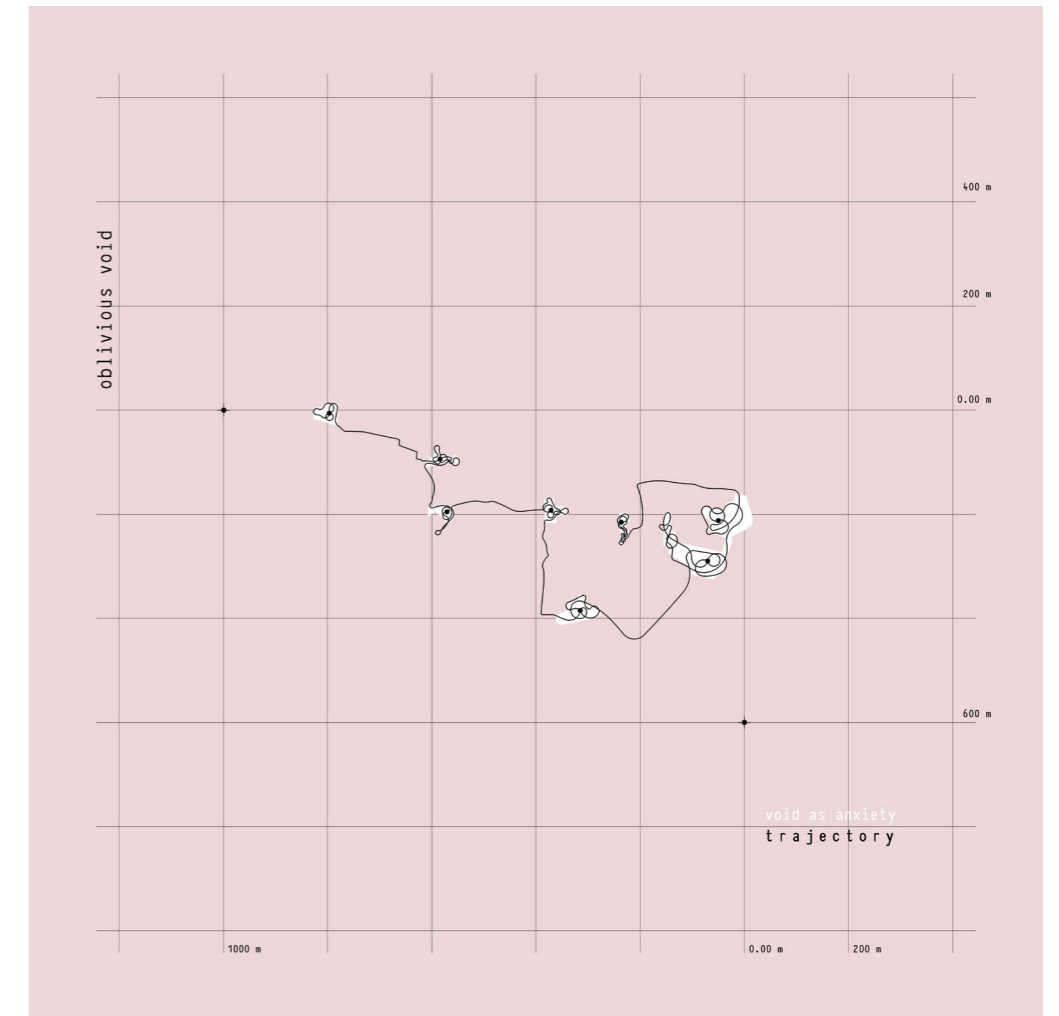
TENACIOUS CAIRO_

MELANCHOLY OF VOID AS DICHOTOMY BETWEEN THE IMPLICIT AND EXPLICIT DOCTRINE

REVIVING THE CONCEPT OF VOID IN THE MIDDLE EASTERN TRADITIONS AS AN ALTERNATIVE SOCIO-SPATIAL SCENARIO FOR REGENERATING PUBLIC SPACES IN CAIRO'S ARCHIPELAGO



148 Author, "Density", (2020).
topographical island_mid scale
149 Author, "Trajectory", (2020).
topographical island_mid scale



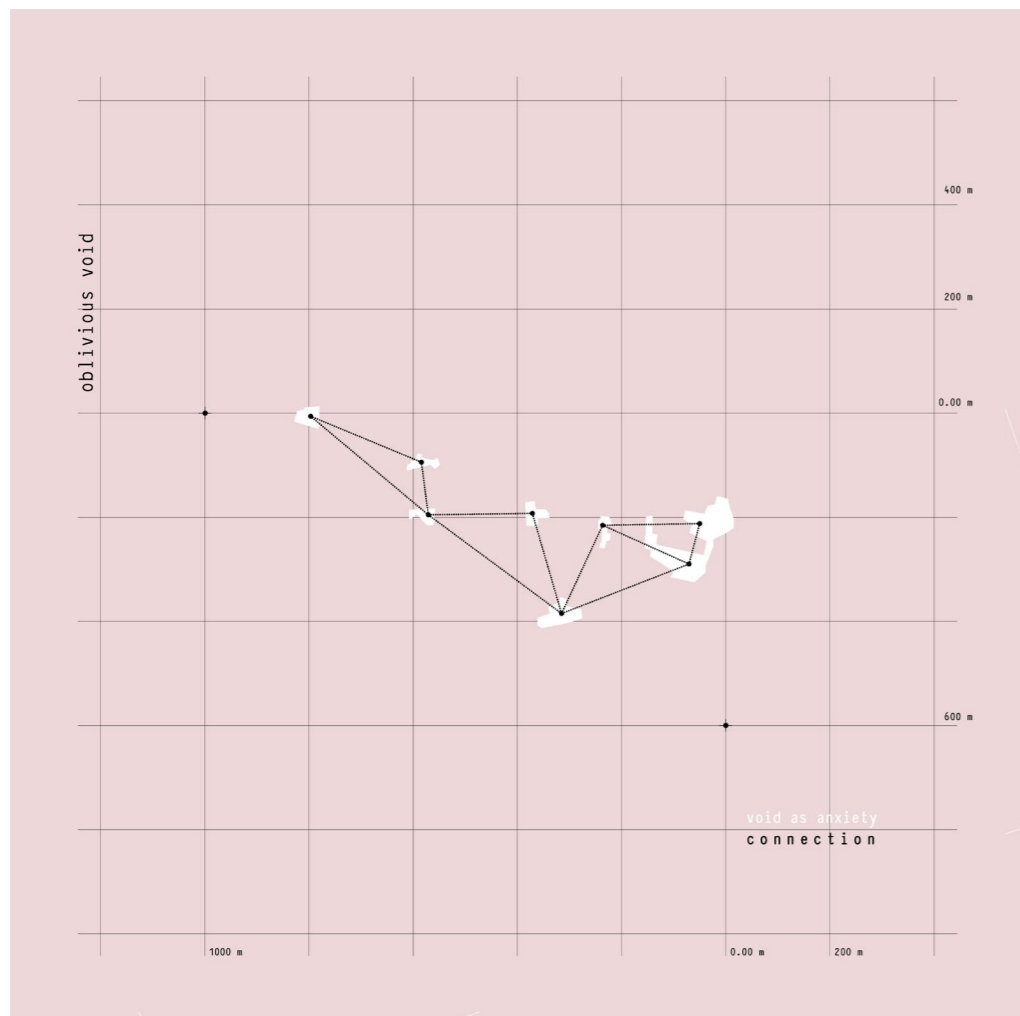


150 Author, "Connection", (2020).

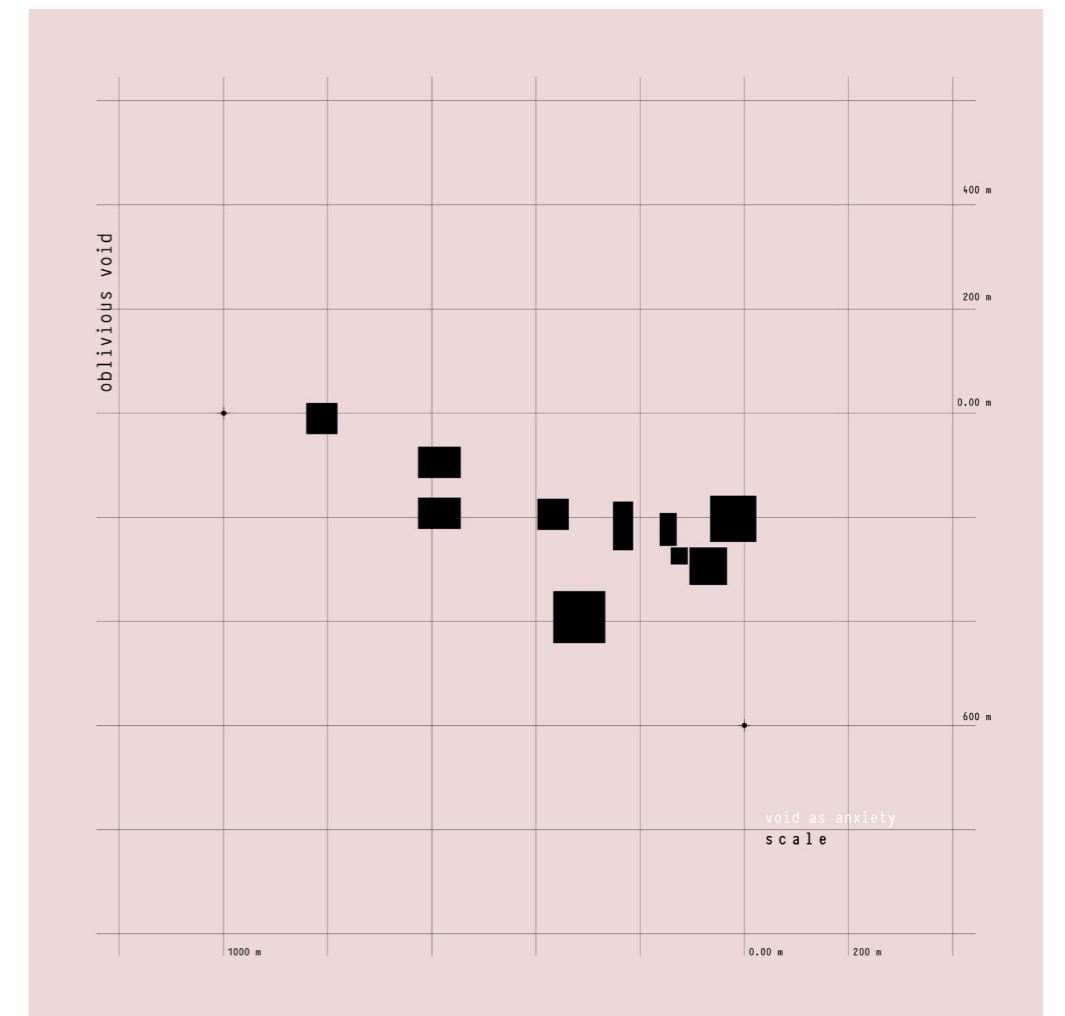
topographical island_mid scale

151 Author, "Scale", (2020).

topographical island_mid scale



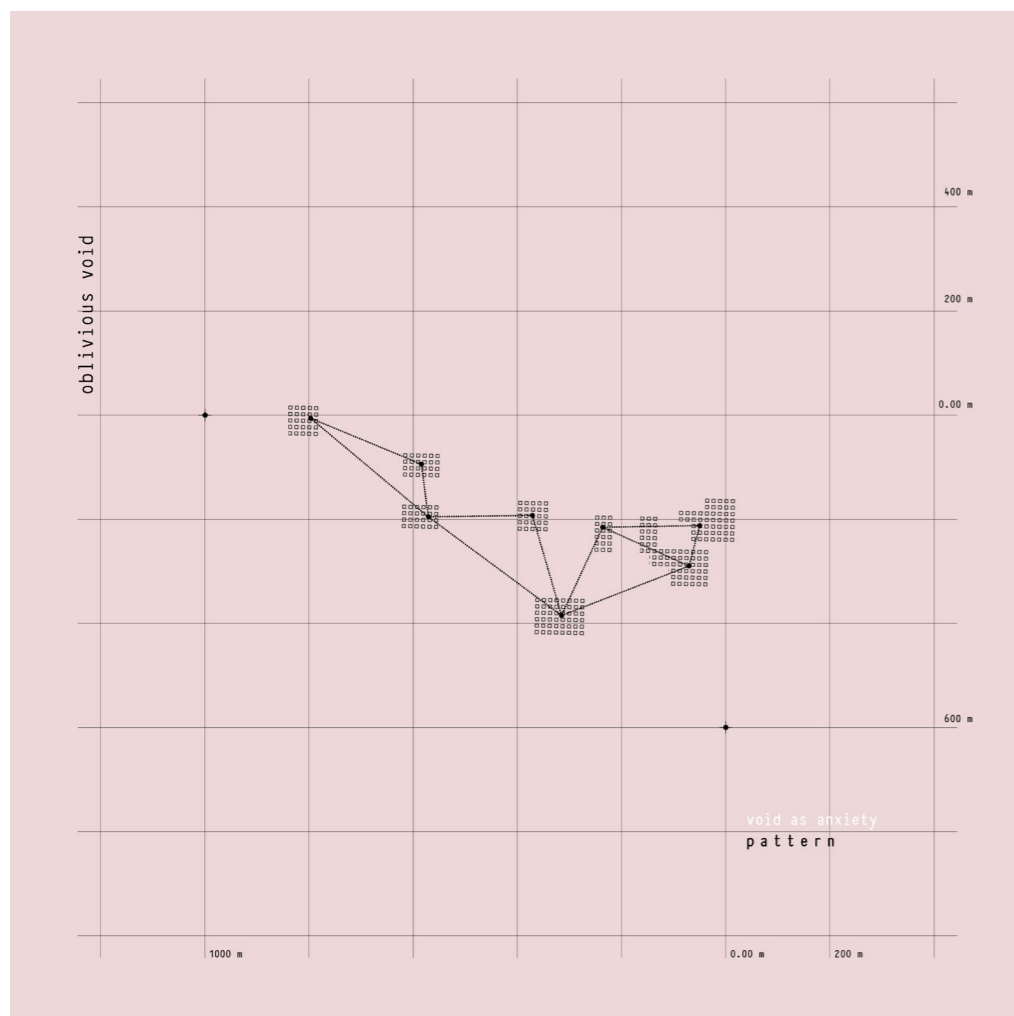
150



151



152 Author, "Pattern", (2020).
topographical island_mid scale



152

a strong relation with the voids, however the ratio of the high forms have substitute the micro environmental conditions offered by the Mnemonics Island, to a dull streets with no sun penetration. The disciplinary competence of this structure is based on finding back the subjective primary units that is useful for re-measuring a specific balance in the composition.

The dimension of the high blocks has put the voids in a dilemma, as the scale affect the quality of the void, regardless the diffused pattern of these spaces within the urban structure fabrics. Obviously they are hidden and need to be discovered in this chaotic situation and to shift the process of only deconstruction to the process of connection of the primary units. Distant from the superficial reality and the uncontrolled forms with no alteration or relation with the space, it could be important for the island to find its fulfillment in the evolution of these spaces with an attention to the scale dimension, as an evidence to balance the relation of the analogue procedures.

In this way, the urban fabrics of the Topological Island are strongly compact with well penetration of pedestrian flow in organic connections that mostly surrounded by high block forms where the pattern of the voids is spread in the urban fabrics and it complement the street network by providing an sequential open spaces for the inhabitants to dwell, however they need to be rediscovered again and to be understood in their nature and characteristics. Reformation and reviving these areas will lead to a discovery of their own identity once more, and to finally provide the balance between the urban form, social relation and the contextual nature in the multi scalar dimension.

153 Google map, "Rural island", (2020).
rural island_mid scale
Agricultural city_Continuum void



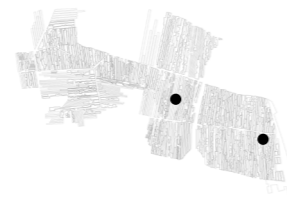
153

Rural Island

Naked massive forms are defining the visual sequence of the Rural Island, as they have assembled by repetition of a measure of longitudinal extension of the entire nave, within this urban fabric that is dense in the urban form, has expressed the declination in the relation with the productive fields, besides the proportional relationship between the elements and the human scale.

The order of these urban forms is precise, however they are informal, they are based on the traces of the linear agricultural spaces, in which they seem in harmony with the composition, but in fact, they are quite separated where the position of the rural areas are always behind the form. Their appearance present a mutual agreement, as they are autonomous in the function strictly positioned and merged in the balance of the urban composition, yet in continuous growing that delineate in the arrangement of the elements within the organization of the island, but not in the linkage between them.

In this context, the concept of the module is strongly represented or in other words, the conventional measure that is established through the relationship between the form and the basic unit 'void', is clearly defined the logic of the formulation of the urban structure where in fact, the linear development defined a setting of continuous wall of blocks with a minimum domestic situation; it outlined an operational static dimension of dwelling within the small basic space serving the rudimentary need for the urban residence due to the large amount of immigration. The perpendicularity of the network is evident; moreover the flow within the island is always within the fields and through the narrow streets between the linear blocks that configure the connection through the island based on the traces of the agricultural canals.

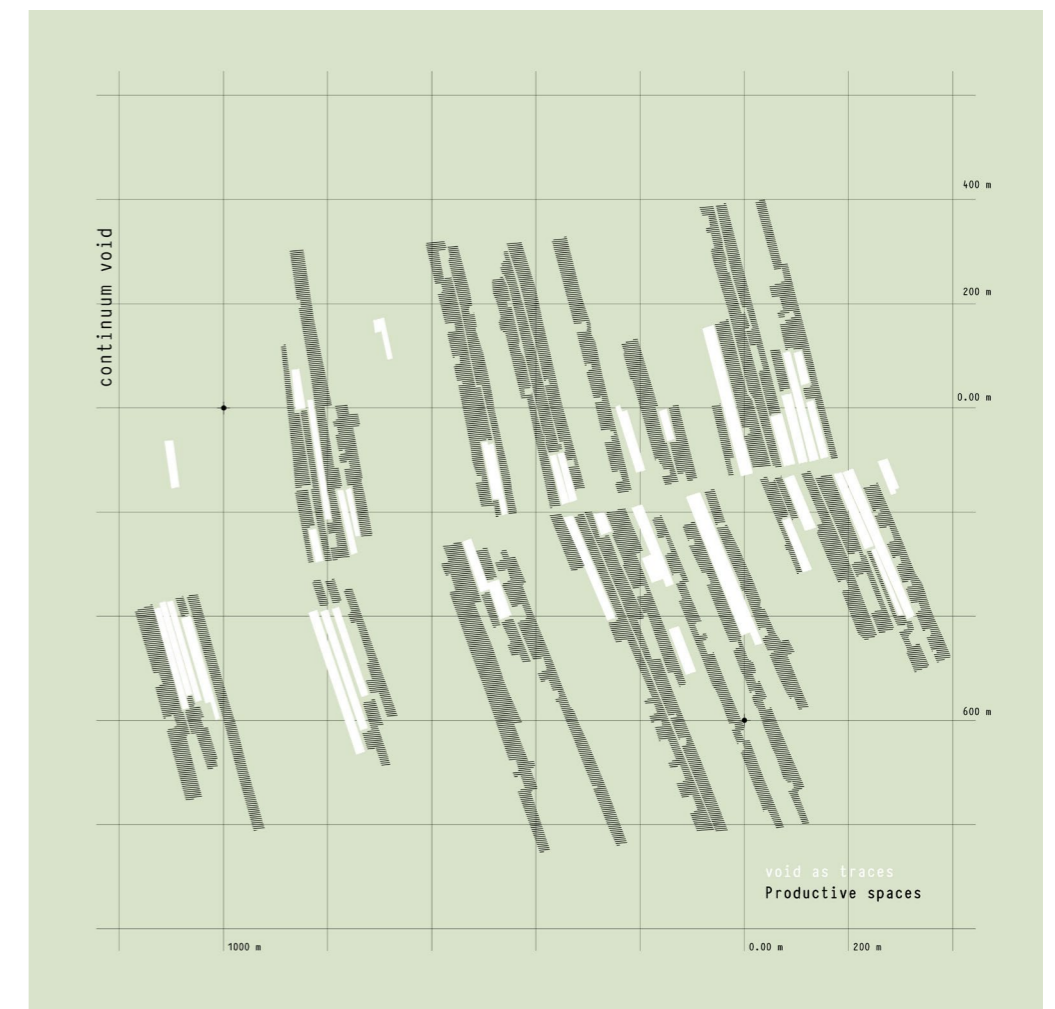
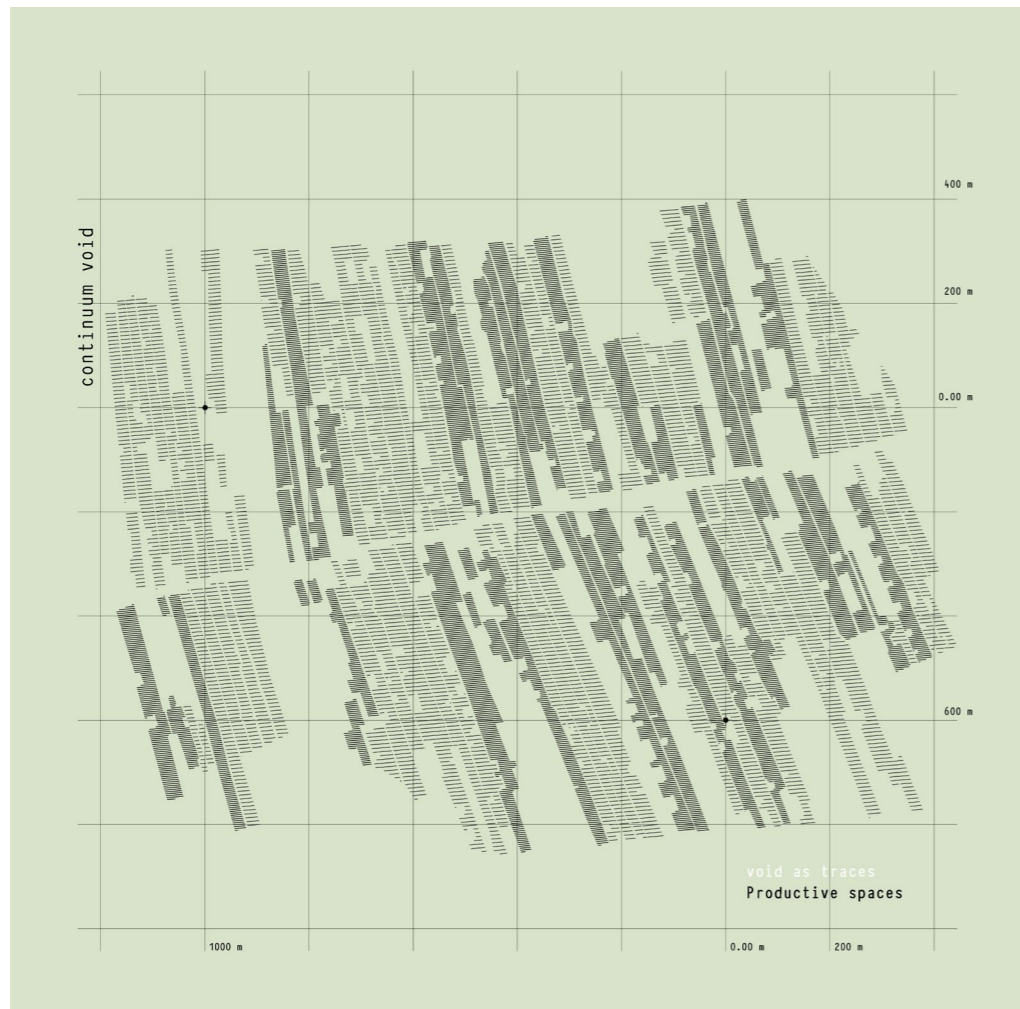


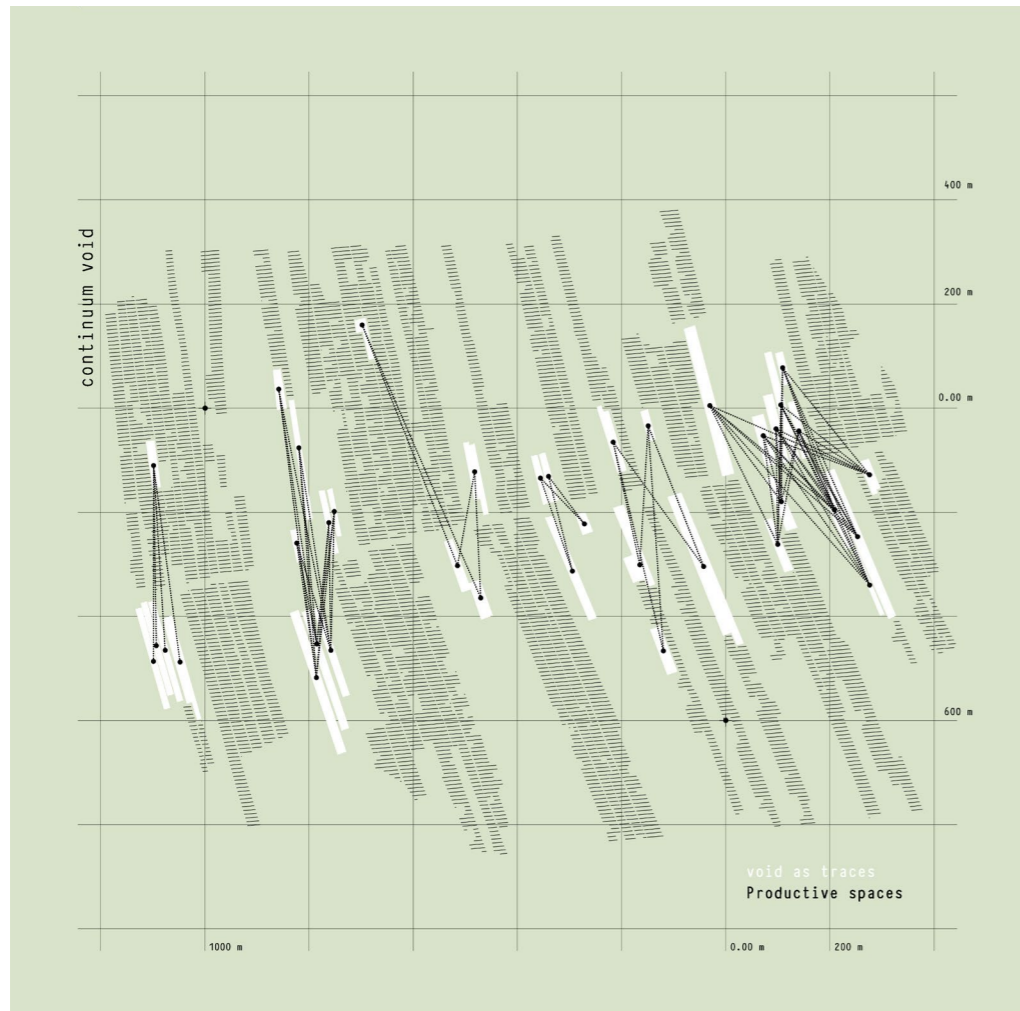
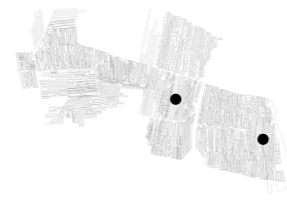
154 Author, "Objects and Density of fabrics", (2020).

rural island_mid scale

155 Author, "Objects and Primary void", (2020).

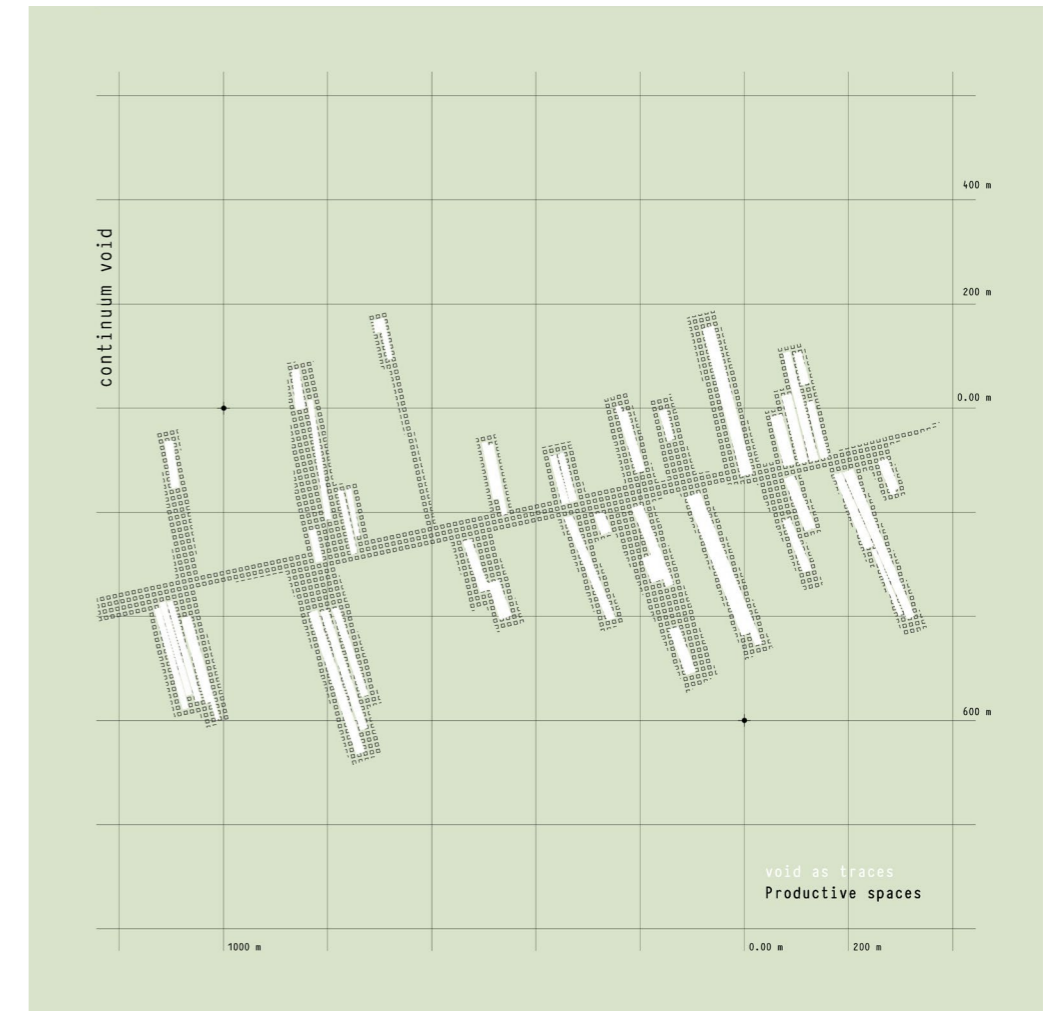
rural island_mid scale



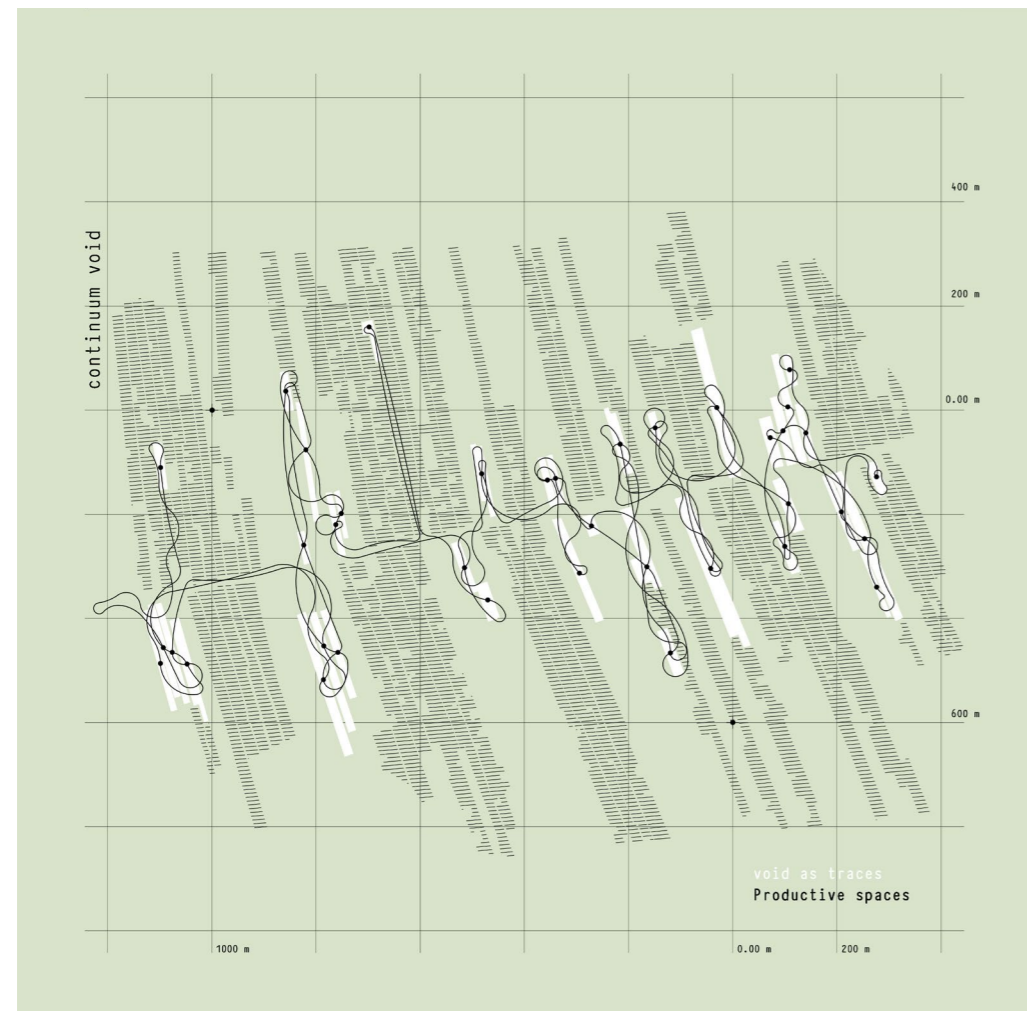
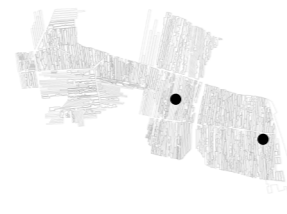


156

156 Author, "Voids intangible relation", (2020).
rural island_mid scale
157 Author, "Voids organization", (2020).
rural island_mid scale



157



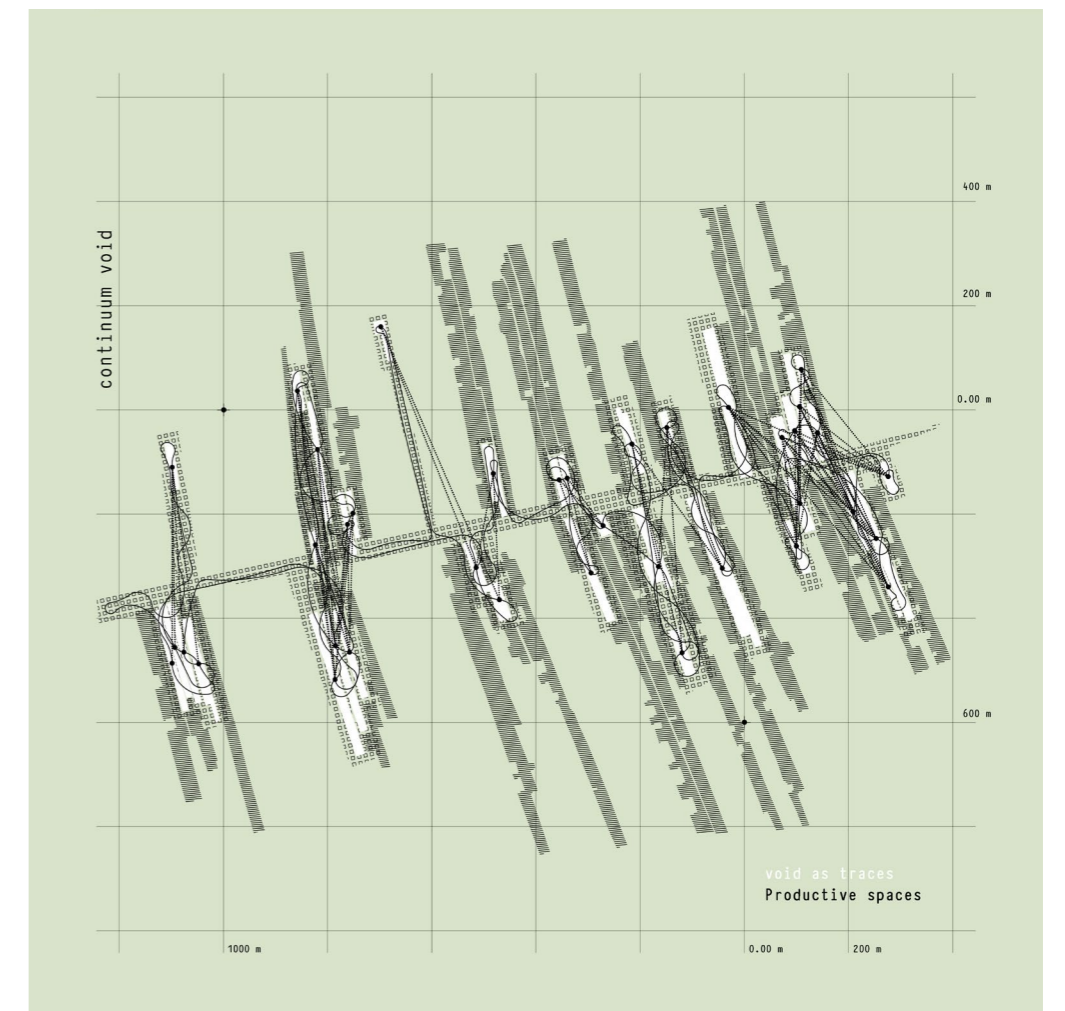
158

158 Author, "Flow of dwellers", (2020).

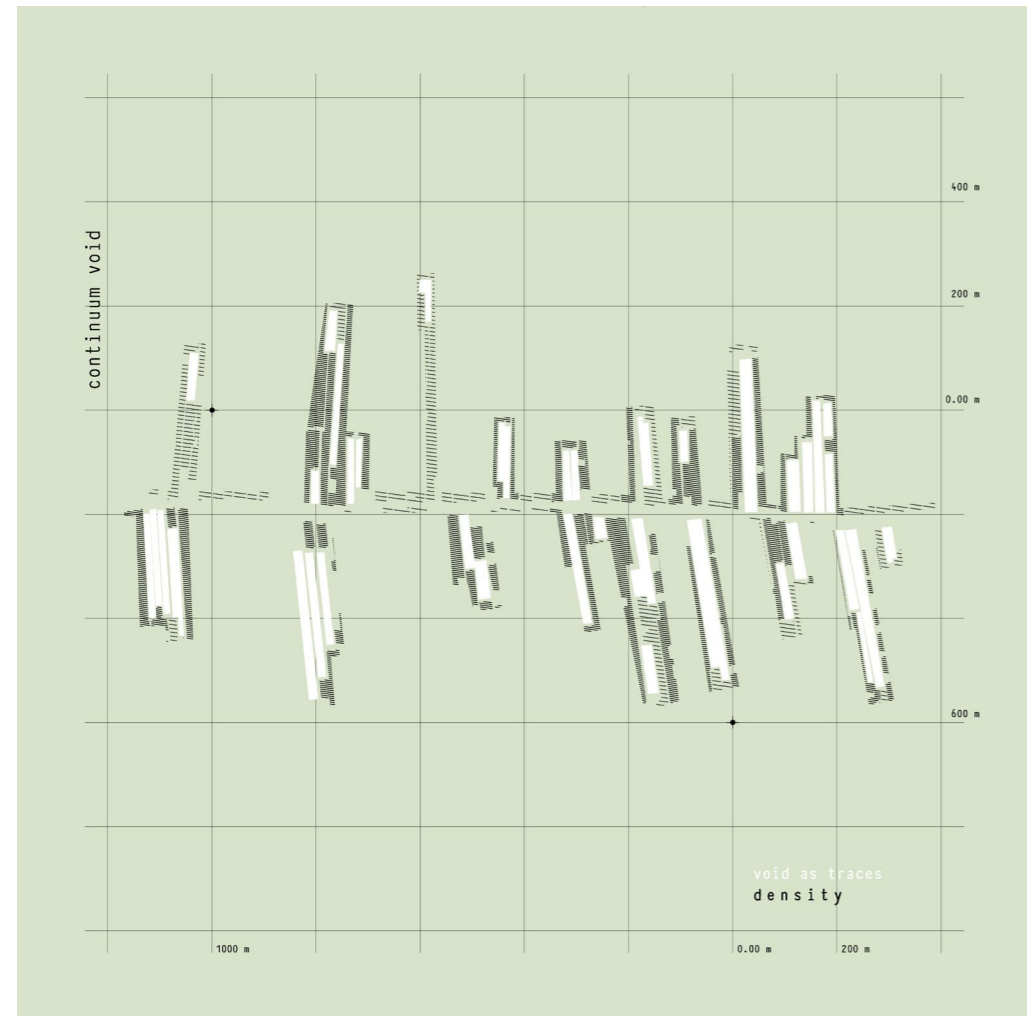
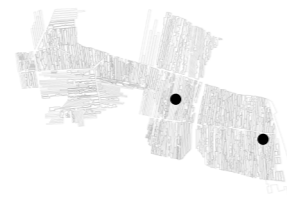
rural island_mid scale

159 Author, "Voids as traces", (2020).

rural island_mid scale

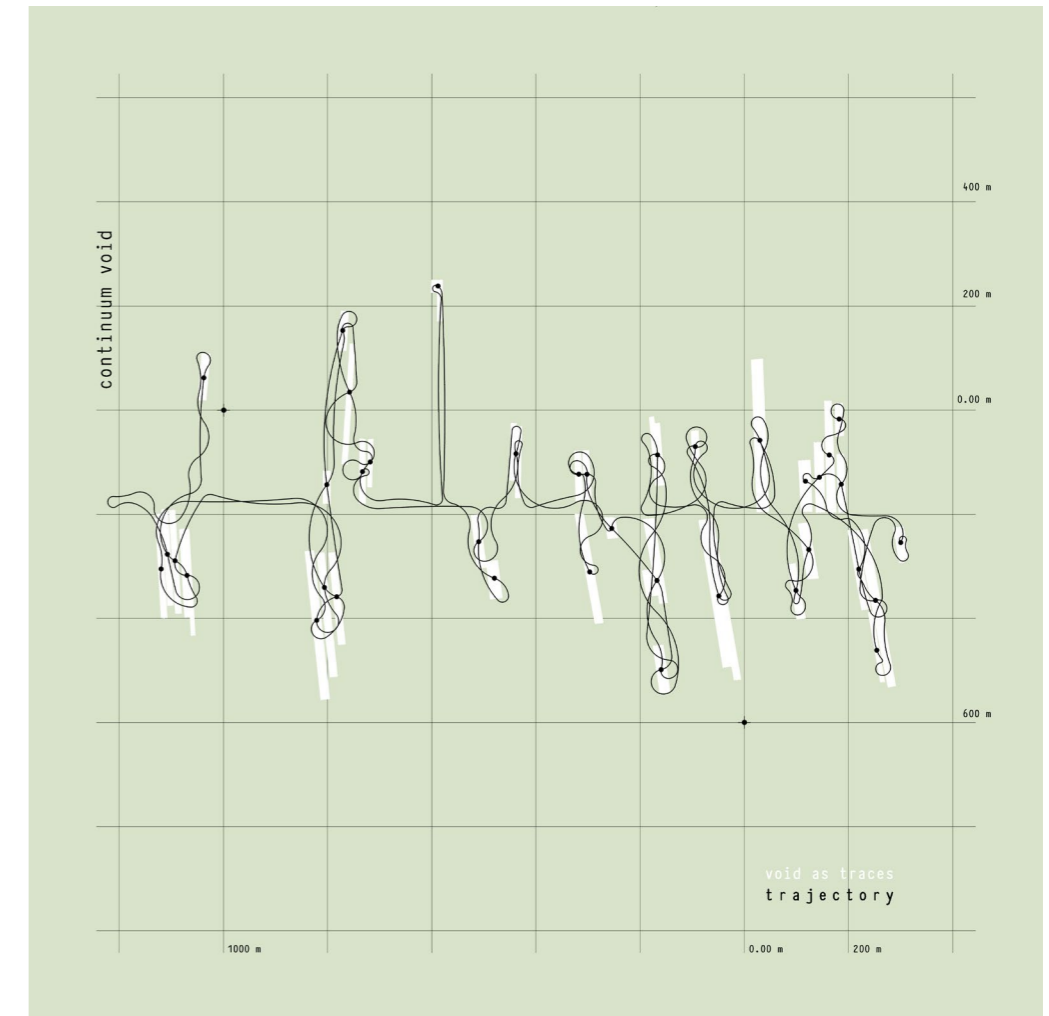


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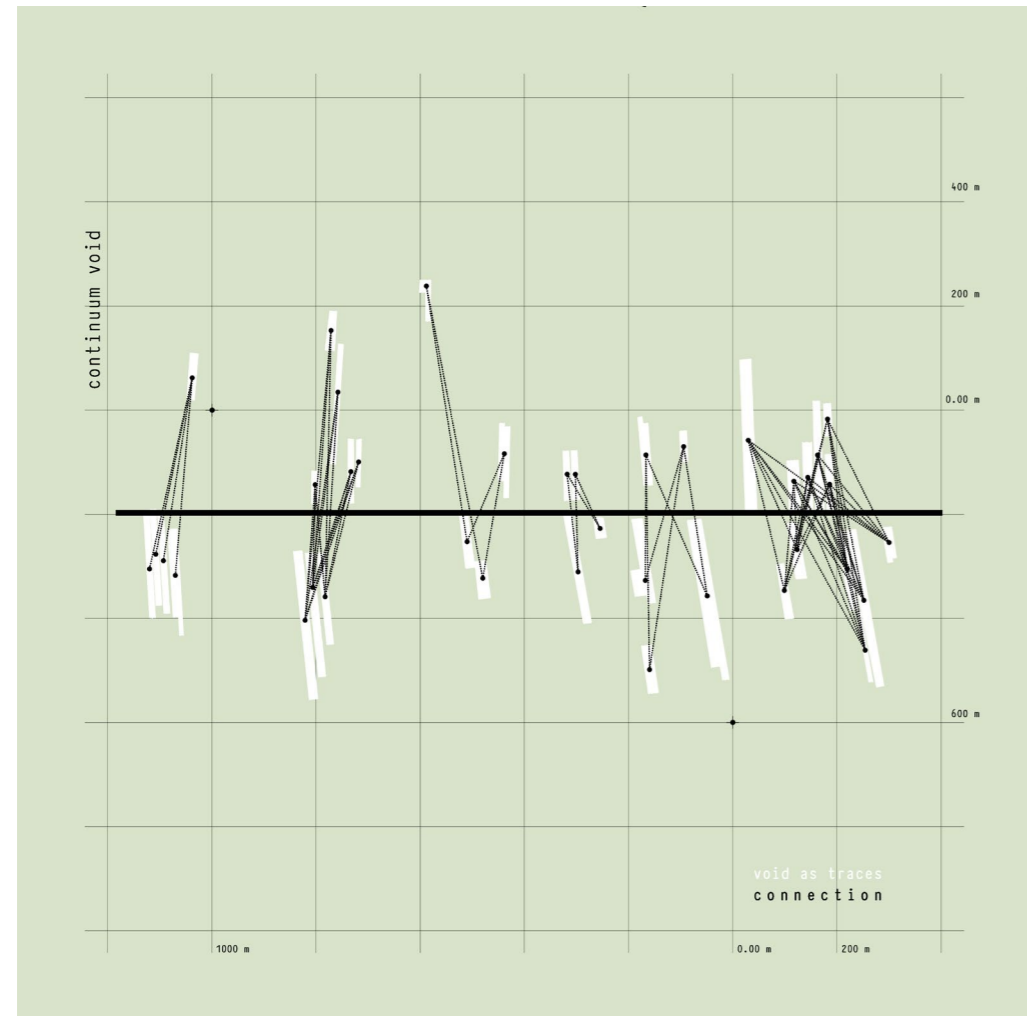
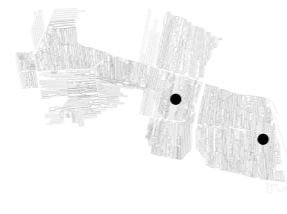


160

160 Author, "Density", (2020).
rural island_mid scale
161 Author, "Trajectory", (2020).
rural island_mid scale



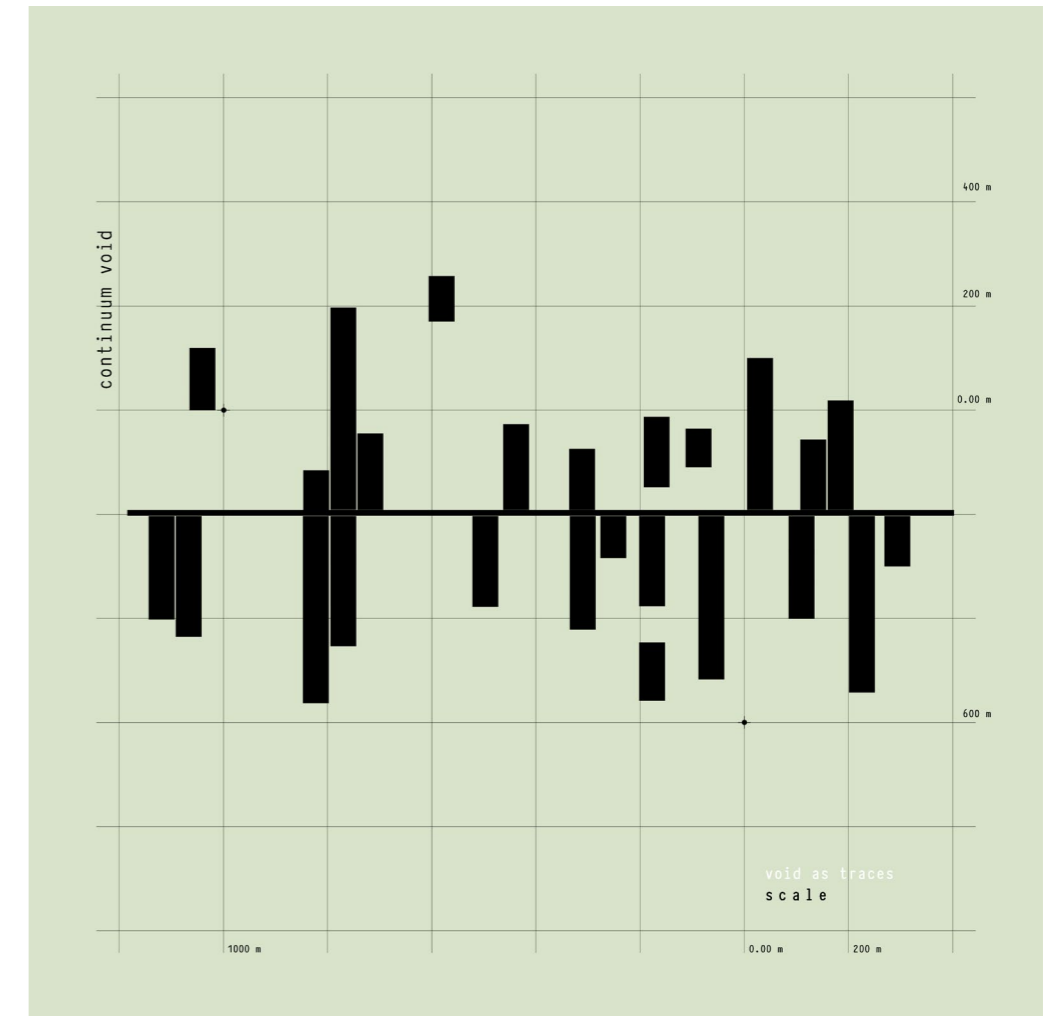
161



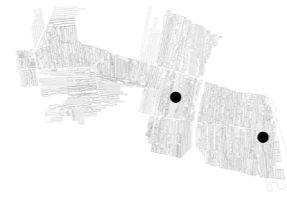
162

162 Author, "Connection", (2020).
rural island_mid scale

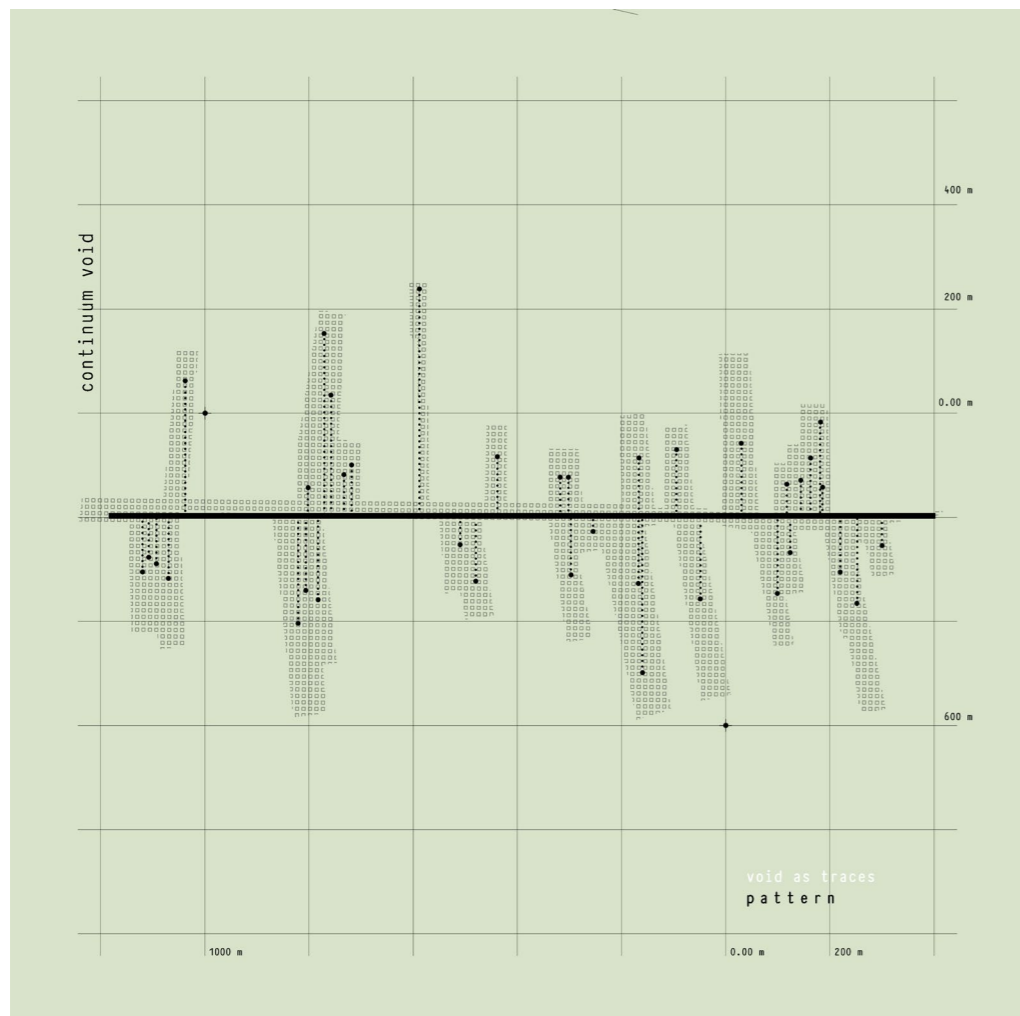
163 Author, "Scale", (2020).
rural island_mid scale



163



164 Author, "Pattern", (2020).
rural island_mid scale



164

It is interesting that the strongest connections are the voids themselves that act actually as an agricultural background with rural dimension, in this sense the scale is proportioned between the form and the void but it is a distorted scale, as in some parts is territorial scale and in others is partially human scale. The developed functional organization of the individual's way of dwelling has been exhausted, as part for living areas and part for working with no space for leisure, this feature has affected the connection within the void and generate a static structural component.

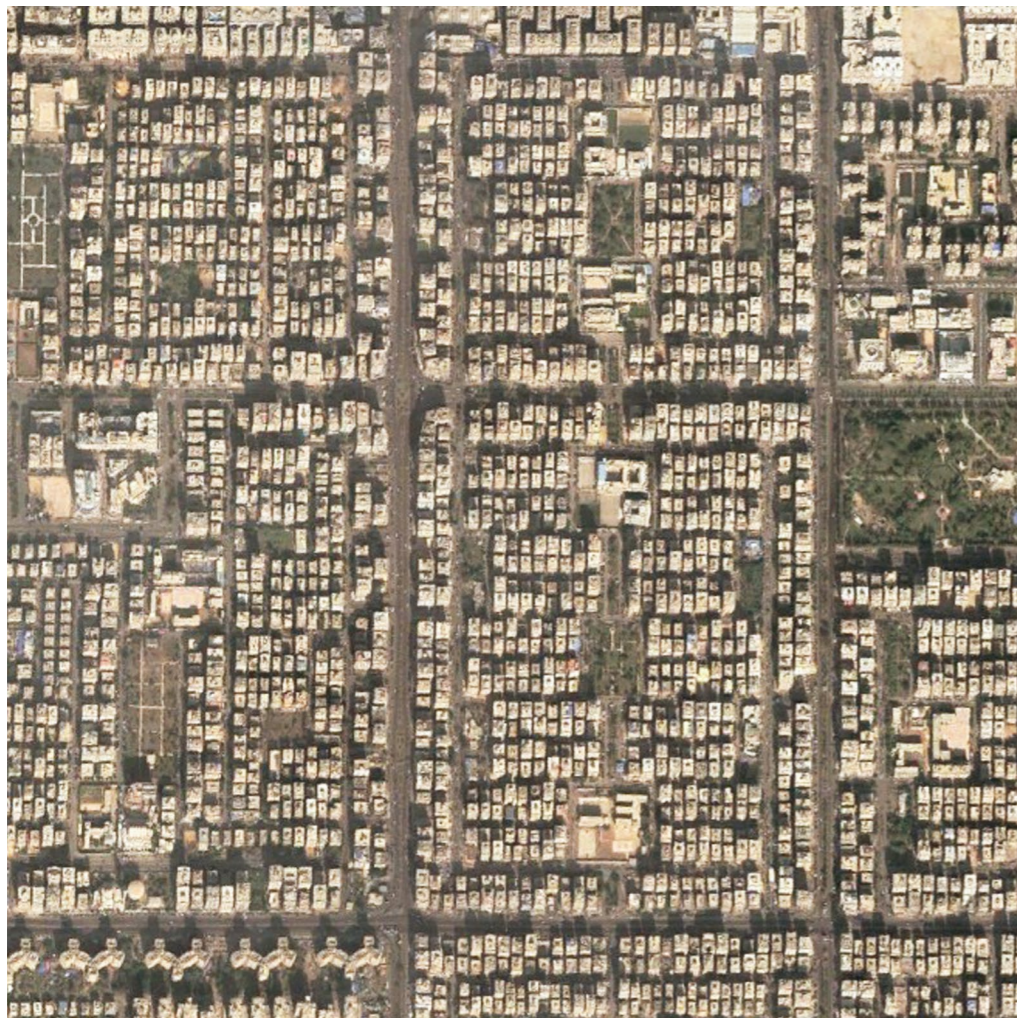
The reflection on measuring the scale of artifacts should be interpreted in the three-dimensional void where the linear spatiality has been anticipated to understand and control the large dimension, by providing more spaces for people with an opportunity of a new landscape image in which the anthropic elements outline an equal dialogue with the orographic dimension. The references that is discussed here is applied to several rural islands, all based on the same characteristics where the tight sequence of linear structural forms are defining the primary productive voids in which in this sense, they could be reinterpreted with the measure of the entire extension of the anthropogeography landscape.

The pattern is clearly identified by its repetition and mosaic appearance, divided by a strong trajectory that spited the island into two significant parts where people escaped away from this major infrastructures and remained flowing in the smaller network adjacent to the agricultural areas, while the voids itself, need to construct a new dialogue with the built form, in which it could be crucial for the new formation of the urban composition.

165 Google map, "Desert island", (2020).

desert island_mid scale

New development city_ *Simulacrum void*



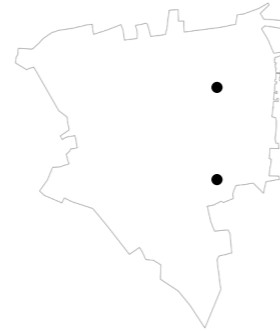
165

Desert Island

The experiments situated in the new developments in the Desert Islands, have always been an arrangement between the spatial lattice and the static span of the void that has delineated precisely the iteration of a static structure pitches of the urban composition, moreover it has generated autonomous boxed forms rested on the land parcels and is surrounding in a superficial geometric measure the abandon gardens in which they have resulted as caught between spaces, recognized only through the physical dimension of the language in both the urban fabrics and the orthogonal infrastructure. From this perspective, the extension and dispersion of the new model responsible for developing the desert areas, have identified in contrast, the discontinuity and fragmentation of not only the urban form but also the void itself, and so, it became hard to understand the completed reality of the urban composition regarding the tangible and intangible measurement distance between the forms that are generally static and the possible development process of the perturb areas.

This inexorable depletion of the disintegration and the ignorance of the essence of the urban island, have expressed the crucial necessity to transform the repetition of the same form characterized by low formal content within an infinite perspective, into a formula with competence to deal with the nature of the context and its primary elements. This formula could be generated by intertwining the voids with its fabrics without deforming the notion of the soil in order to share a value of urban spatiality, where the abandon green areas that are suspended within orthogonal infrastructures with no expectations, could find a new definition for the open spaces within the urban structure, and engender a new collective space for its urban dwellers.

The functional autonomous forms couldn't define their identities within the urban composition and remained fragmented, furthermore the composition of the

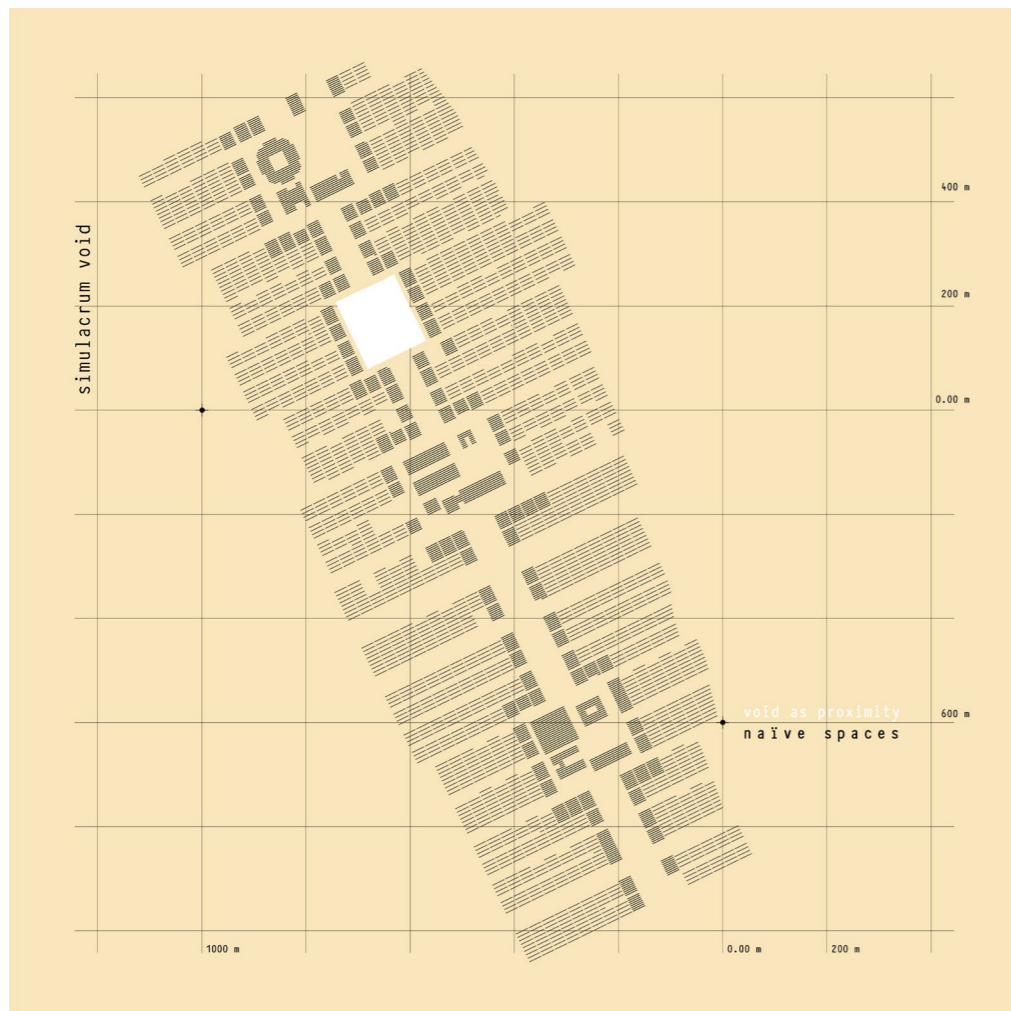


166 Author, "Objects and Density of fabrics", (2020).

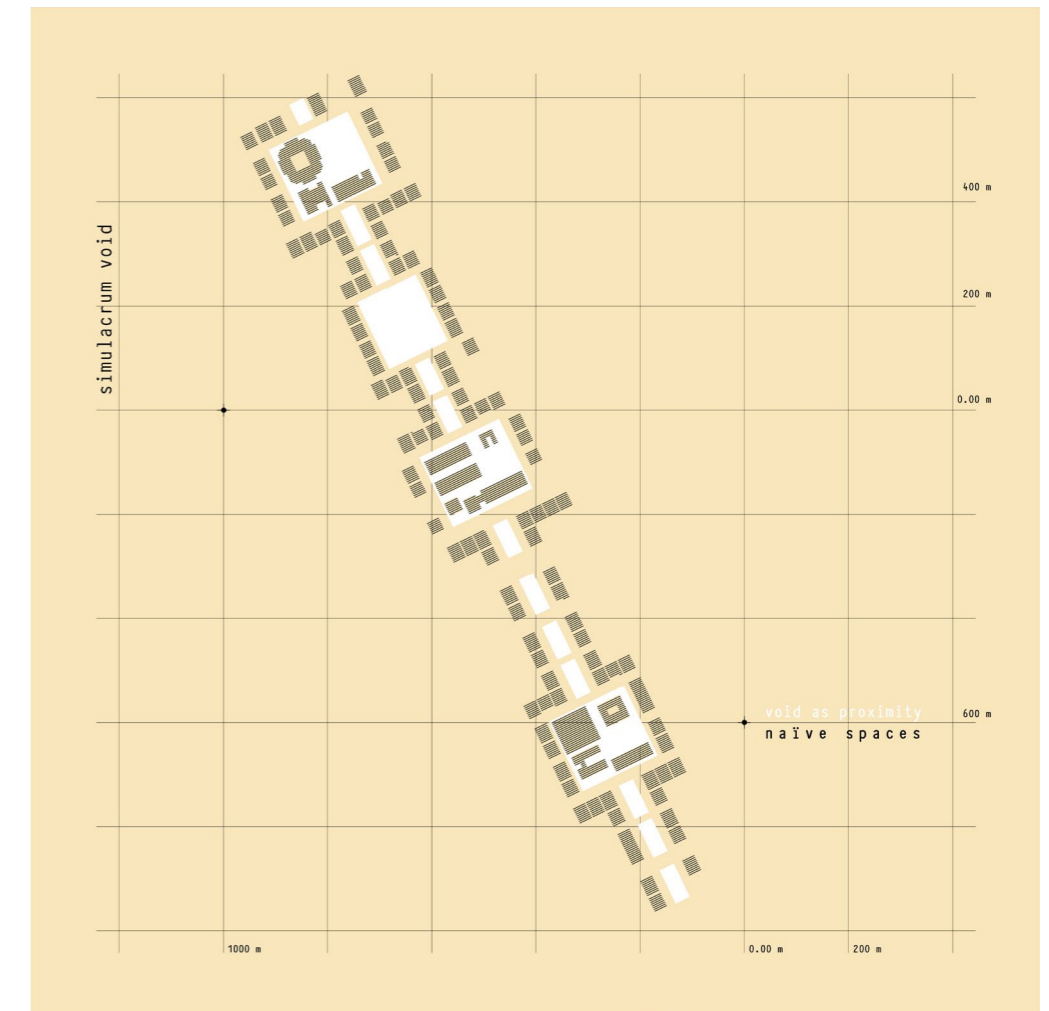
desert island_mid scale

167 Author, "Objects and Primary void", (2020).

desert island_mid scale



166



167

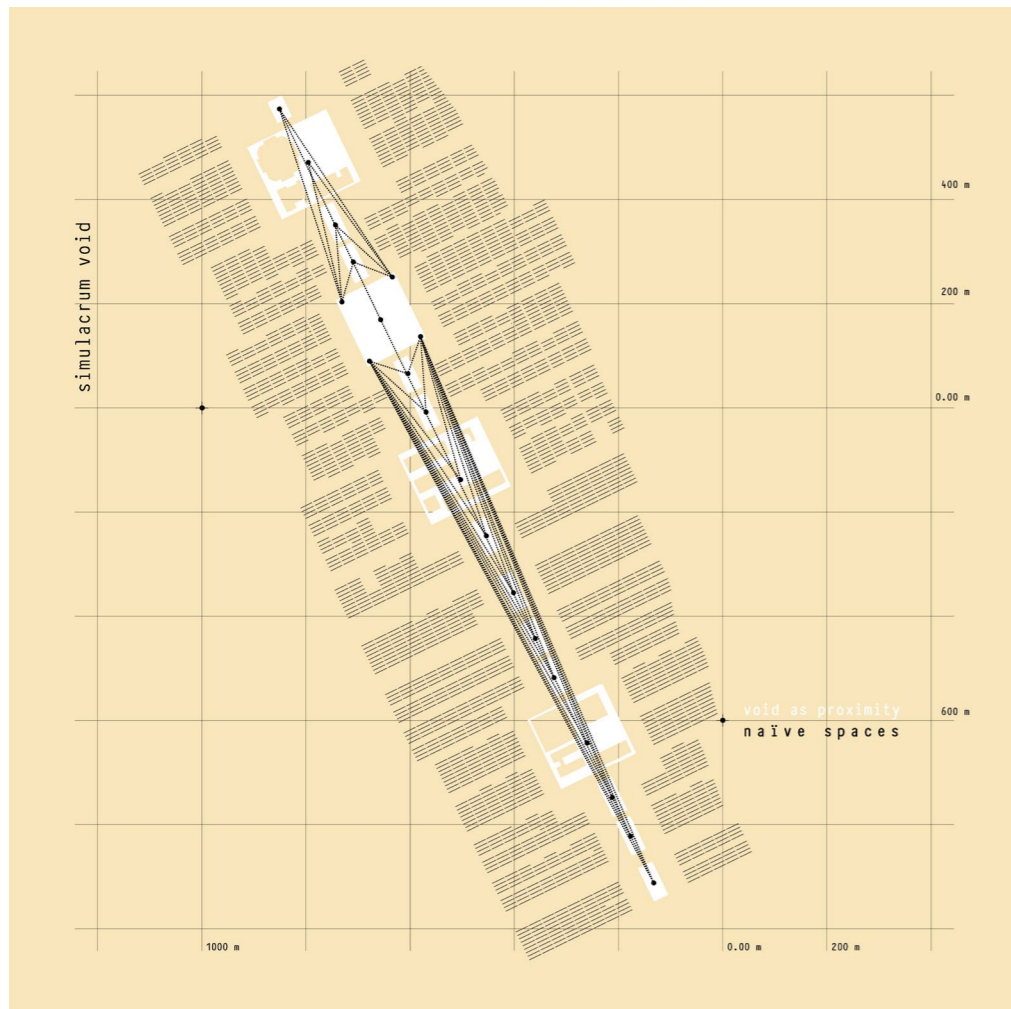


168 Author, "Voids intangible relation", (2020).

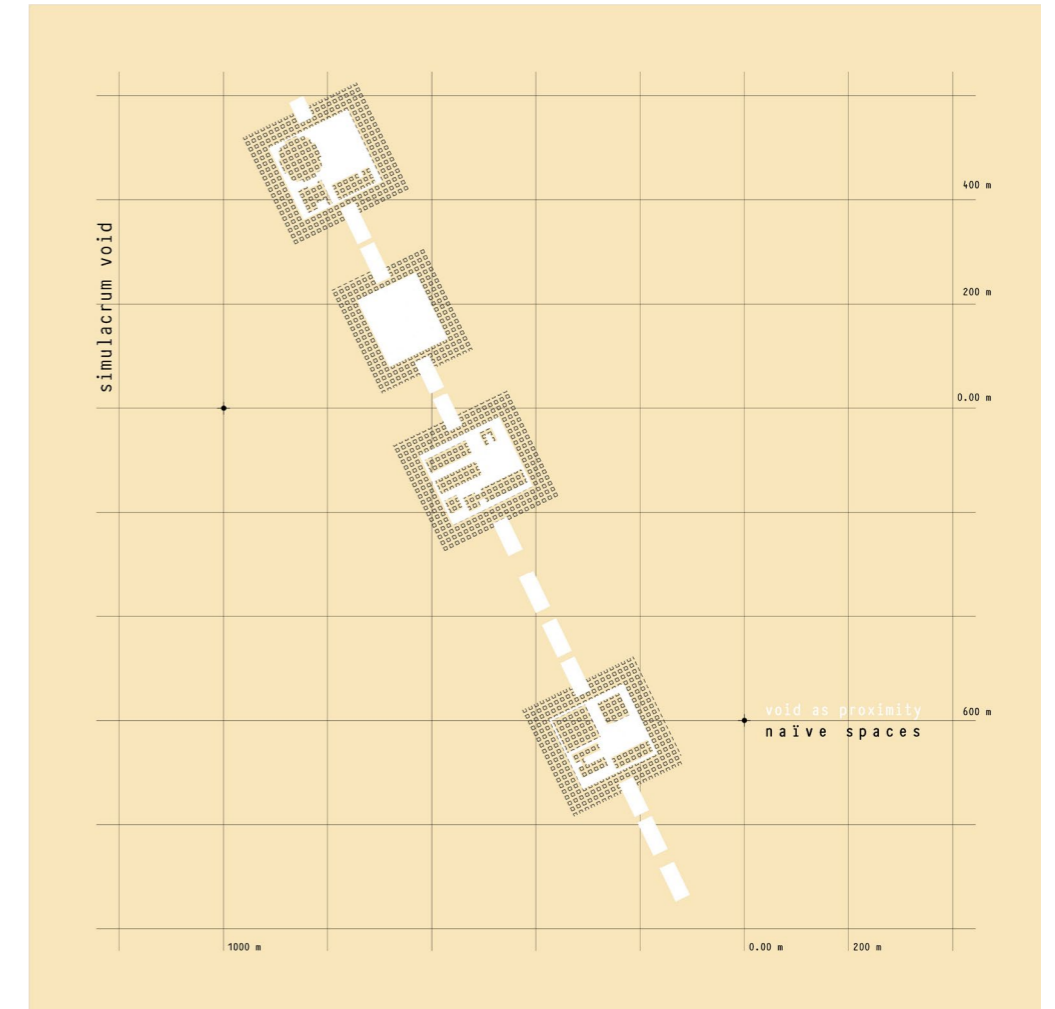
desert island_mid scale

169 Author, "Voids organization", (2020).

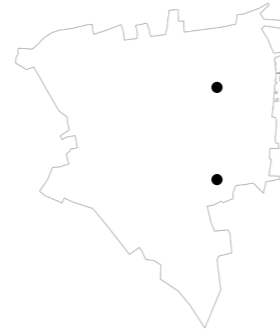
desert island_mid scale



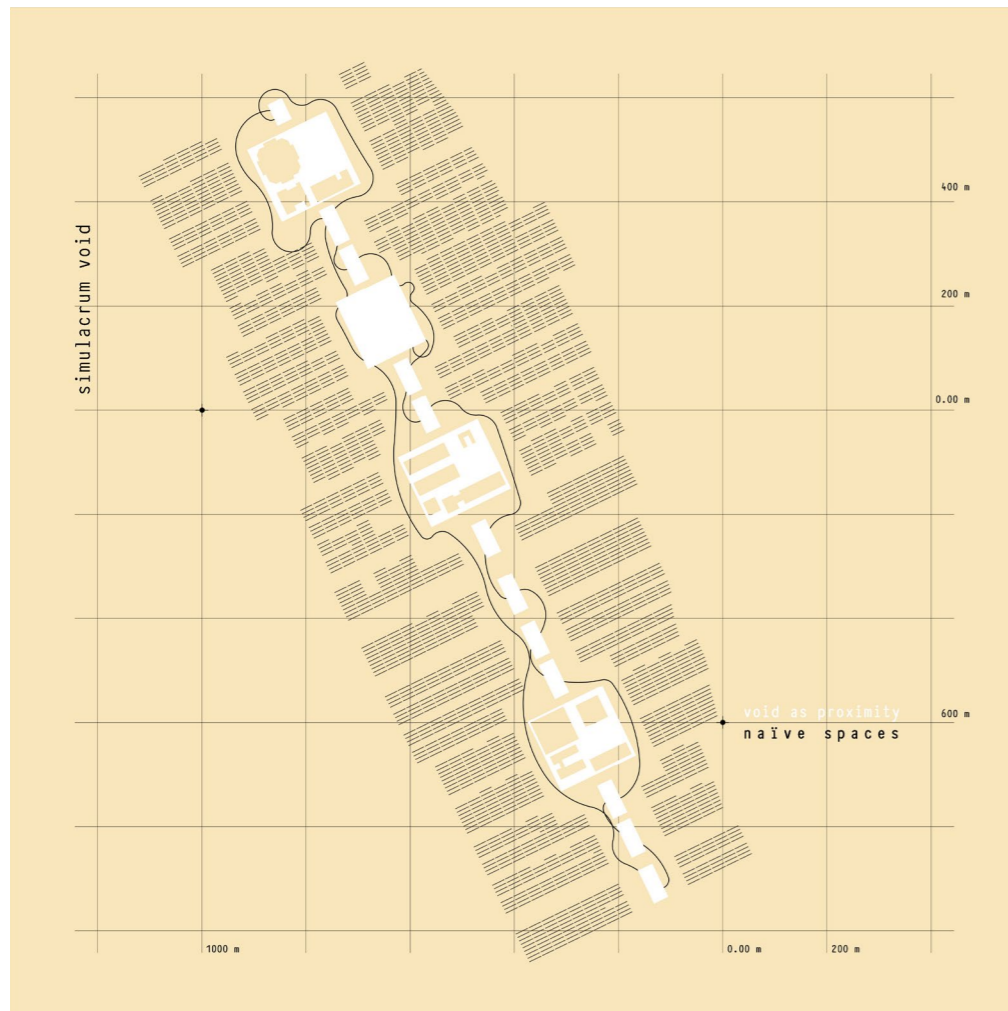
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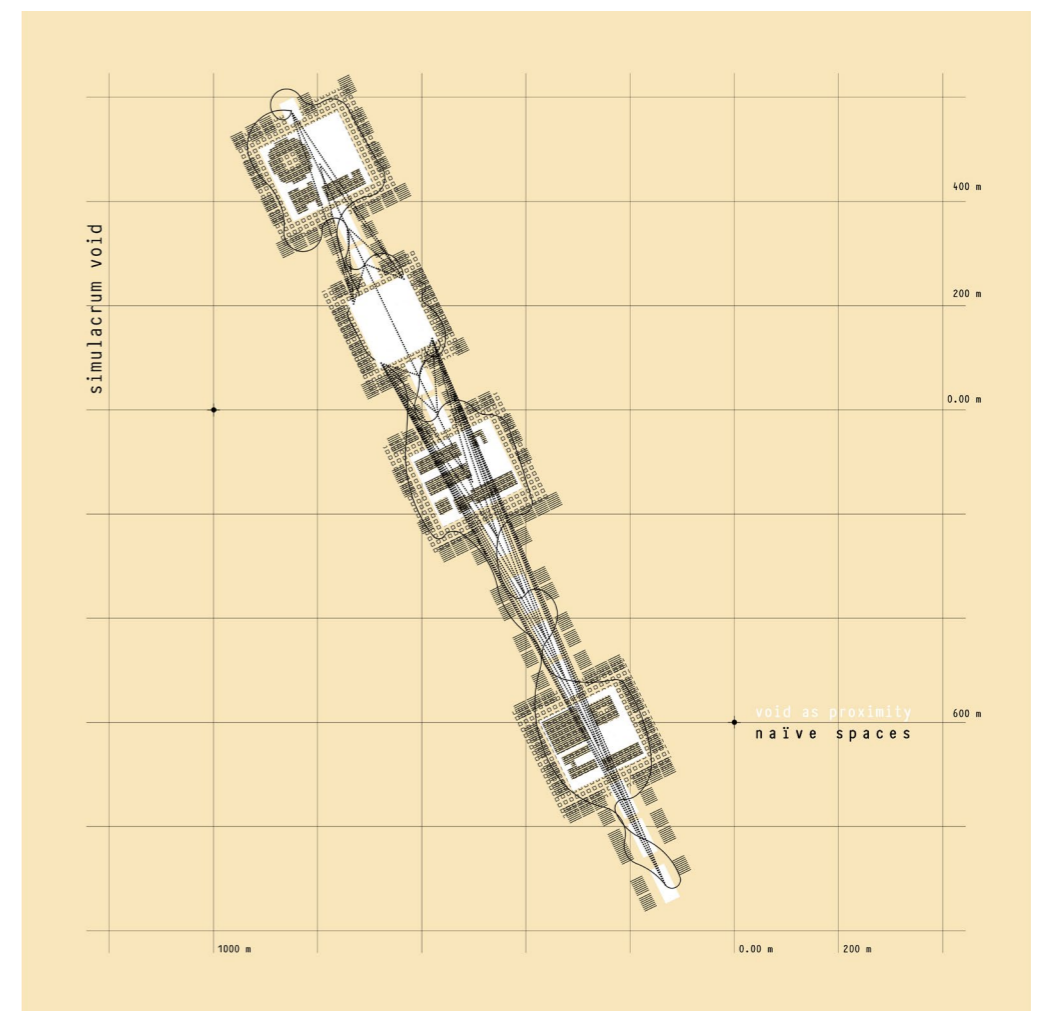
169



170 Author, "Flow of dwellers", (2020).
desert island_mid scale
171 Author, "Voids as proximity", (2020).
desert island_mid scale



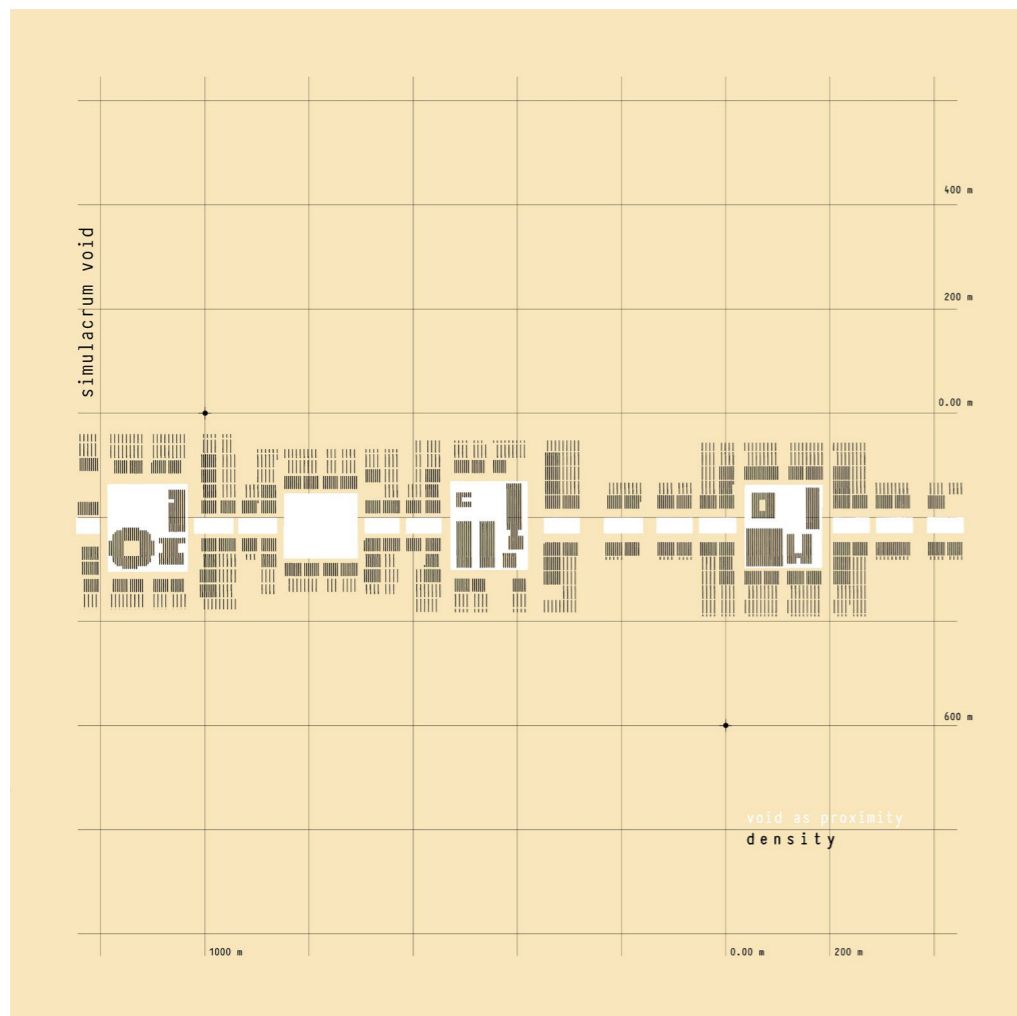
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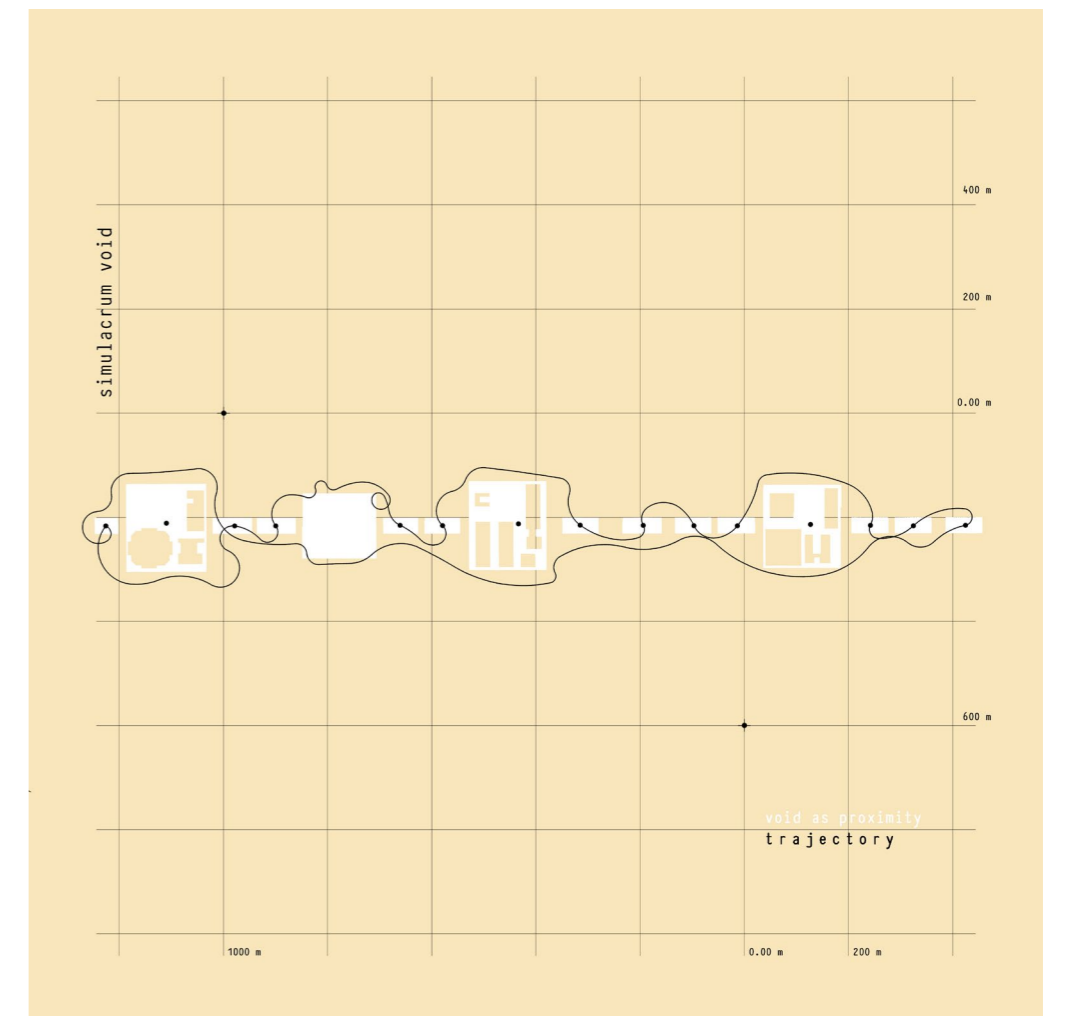
171



172 Author, "Density", (2020).
desert island_mid scale
173 Author, "Trajectory", (2020).
desert island_mid scale



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173

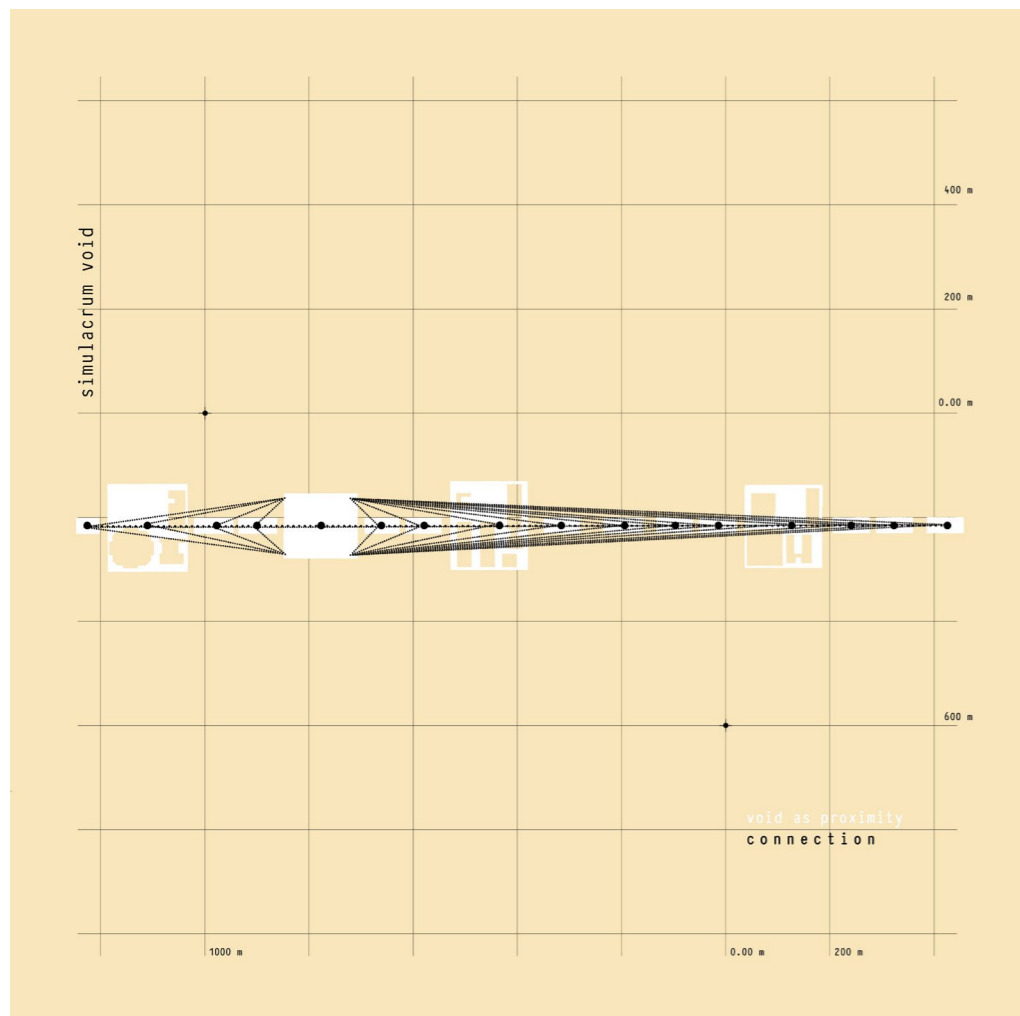


174 Author, "Connection", (2020).

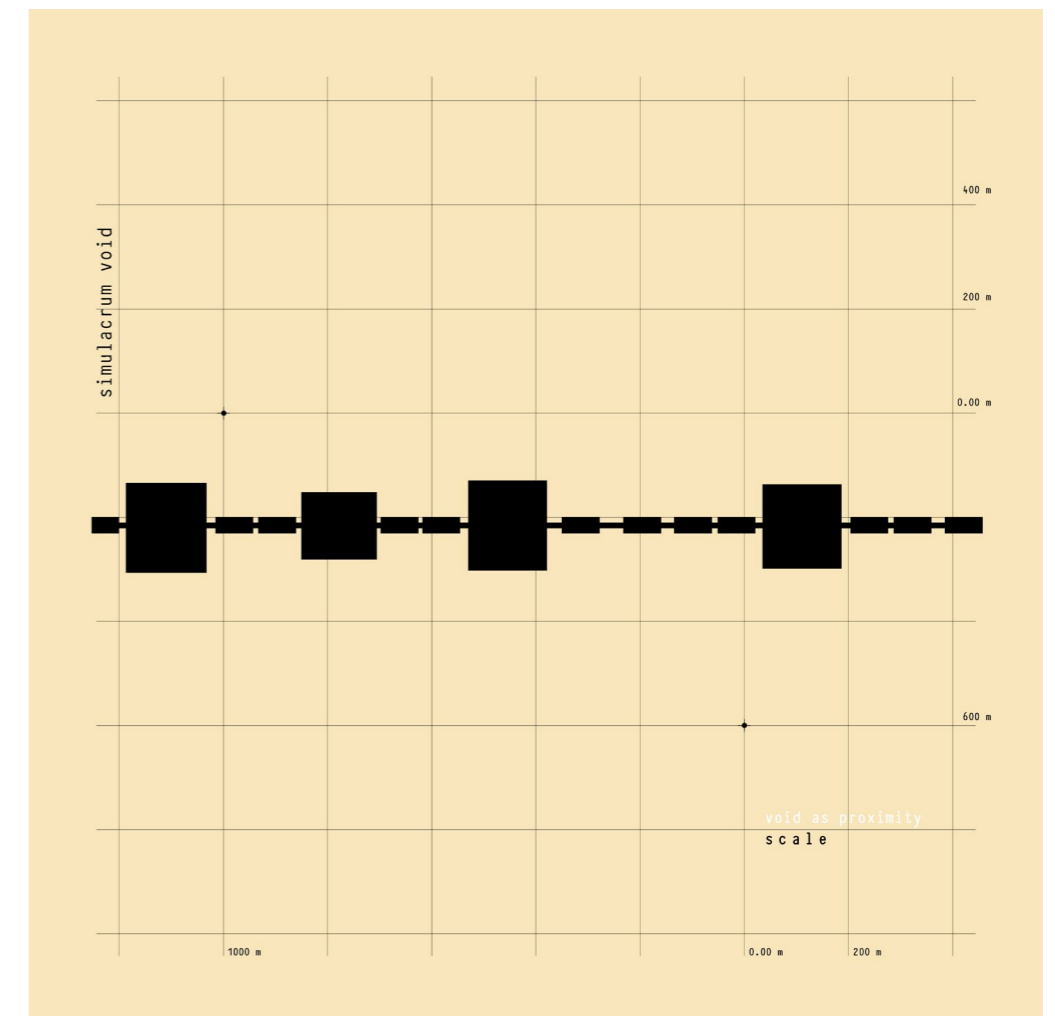
desert island_mid scale

175 Author, "Scale", (2020).

desert island_mid scale



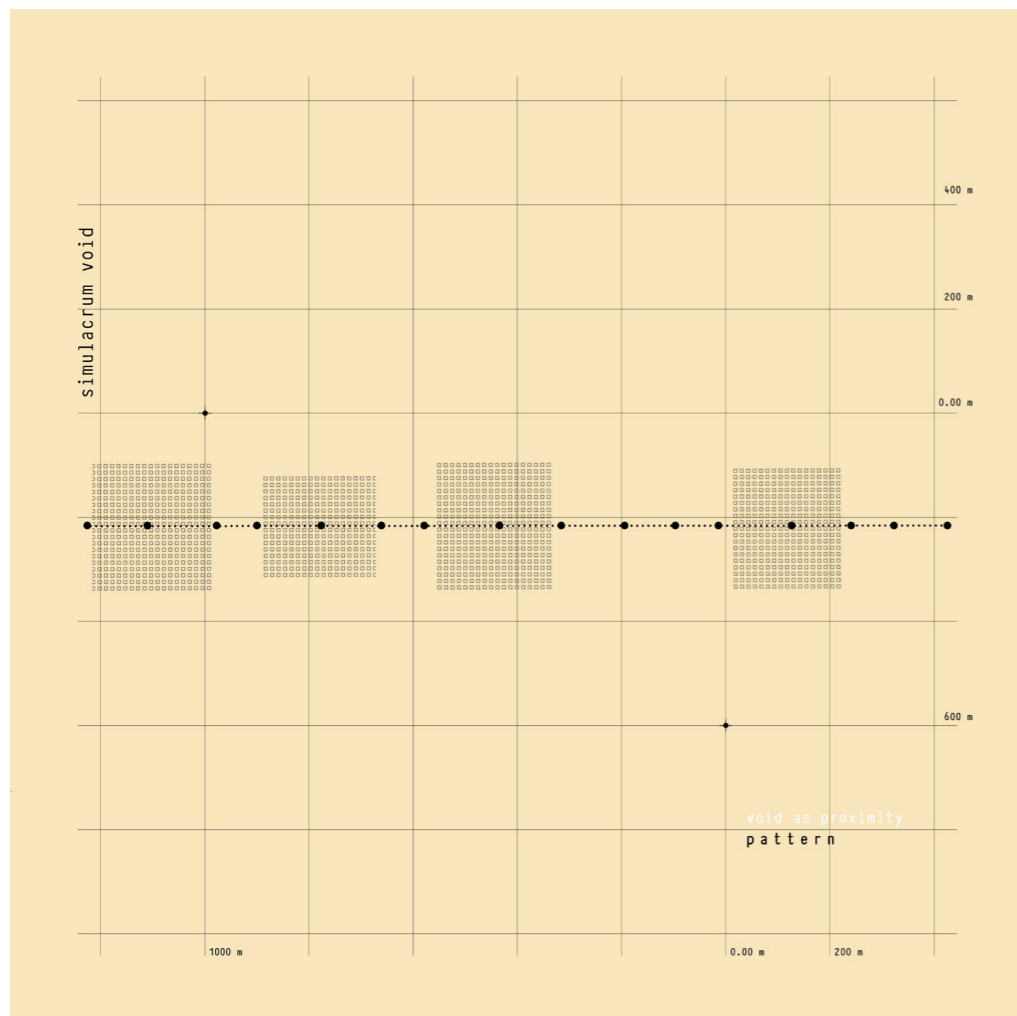
174



175



176 Author, "Pattern", (2020).
desert island_mid scale



176

sequential voids has opened an axial infinite perspective with no clear definition for the space itself where infrastructures and the massive flow of cars have distorted the image and par excellence delinked any relation between the form, void and inhabitants. The connection detected within the urban composition of the Desert Island, is mainly street networks with small pedestrian sidewalks on both sides. This superimposed grid constructed by the infrastructure has distinct each element of the composition and has kept the urban scenario still undefined or unreal as the intrinsic code of the structure emerged here is a latent dimension able to be highlighted by the invariant character of the primary voids, and through their existence and pattern could be easily to reform the measure and to provide a flow without any disturbance in the linguistic grammar.

The void here is essential to be understood in its notion of type and in the logical principles that incorporates the composition, nature and the inhabitants, to be able to specify the characteristics and the role of the void with no attention of it's materialization or it will remain frozen in a cognitive dimension that is not a subject to the subsequent formulation and composition. Its presence could not only improve the modification, refinement and development of the urban structure, but also the flow of dwellers that has been always interrupted by the cars and have created a limit between the dweller and the void. The rectangular shapes of the void here, need to destroy the capsulation caused by the infrastructure that surround it and to generate a new definition for its soil far from being just a make-up and its limits that could transform its static nature to a more dynamic spaces that could face the current problems of the composition exhibited by the reduction process of the complex reality and change the imposed technical layouts discrete by authorities to find the essence and the permanence logic of this island.

177 Author: "Matrix / Density", (2020)
Cairo as city of archipelago_mid scale



void as semiotics
mnemonics island

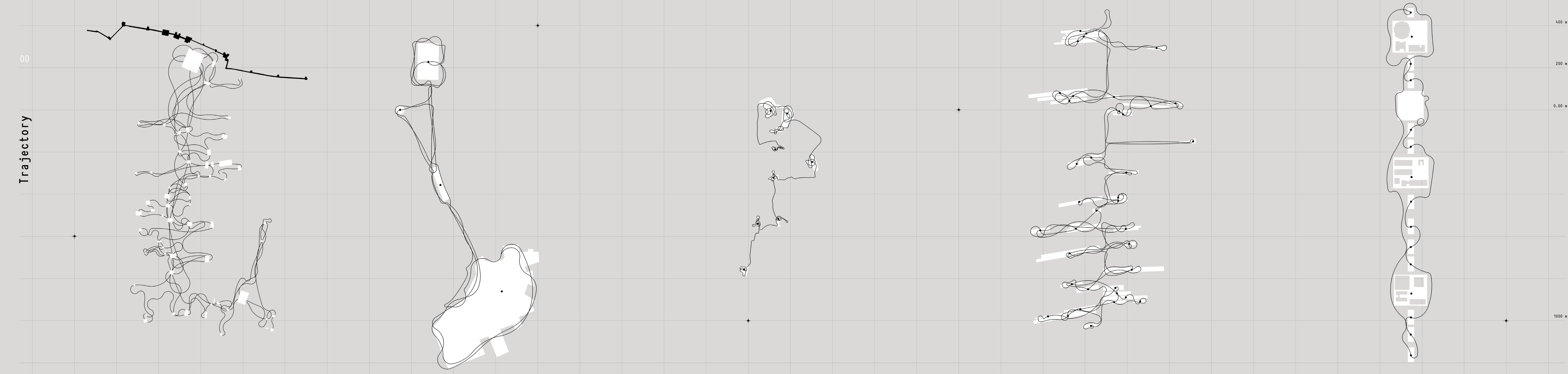
void as discrepancy
fluvial island

void as anxiety
topographical island

void as traces
rural island

void as proximity
desert island

178 Author: "Matrix / Trajectory", (2020)
Cairo as city of archipelago_mid scale



void as semiotics
mnemonics island

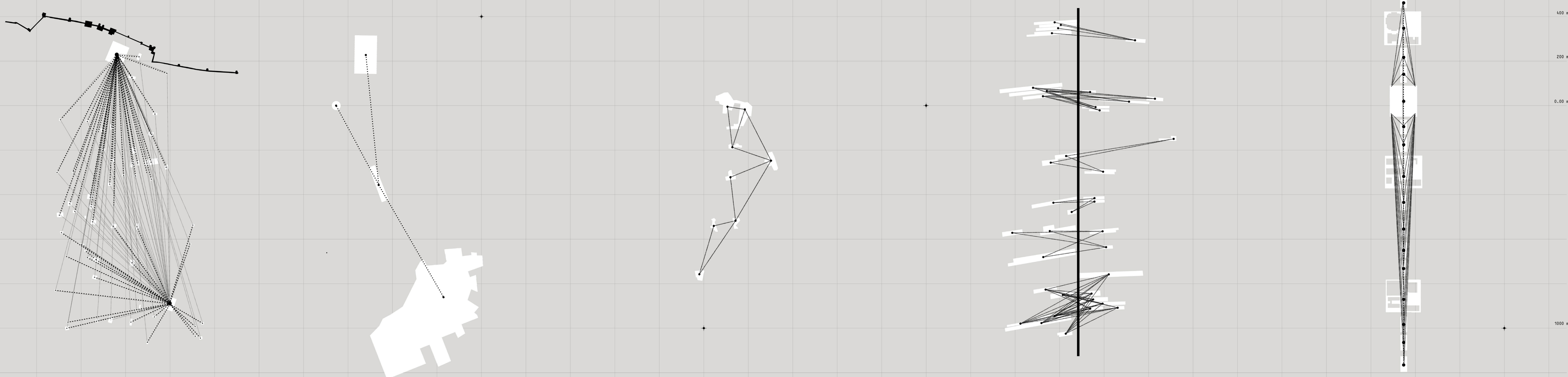
void as discrepancy
fluvial island

void as anxiety
topographical island

void as traces
rural island

void as proximity
desert island

179 Author: "Matrix / Connection", (2020)
Cairo as city of archipelago_mid scale



void as semiotics
mnemonics island

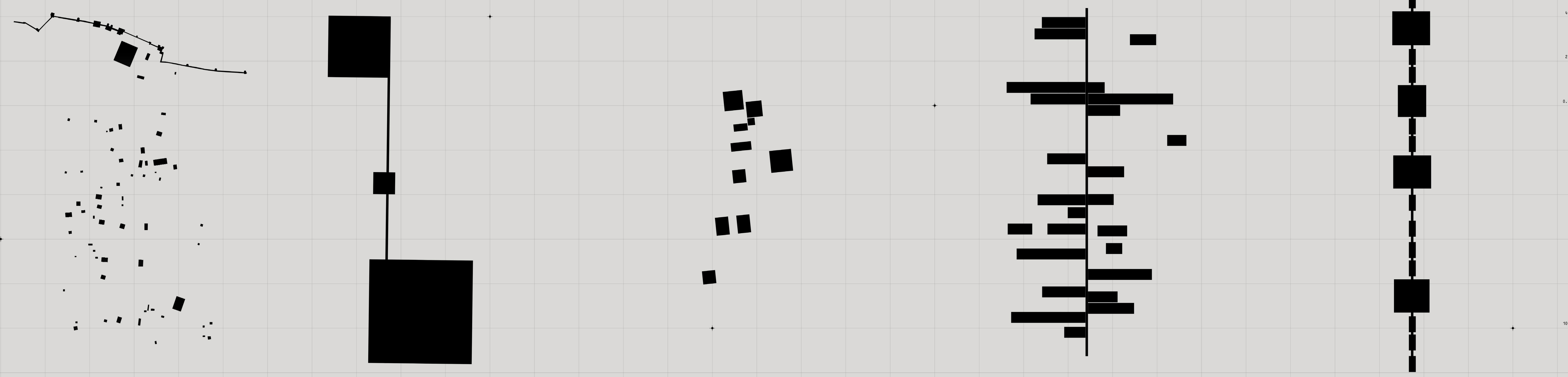
void as discrepancy
fluvial island

void as anxiety
topographical island

void as traces
rural island

void as proximity
desert island

180 Author: "Matrix / Scale", (2020)
Cairo as city of archipelago_mid scale



void as semiotics
mnemonics island

void as discrepancy
fluvial island

void as anxiety
topographical island

void as traces
rural island

void as proximity
desert island



181 Author, "Matrix I Pattern", (2020).
Cairo as city of archipelago_mid scale

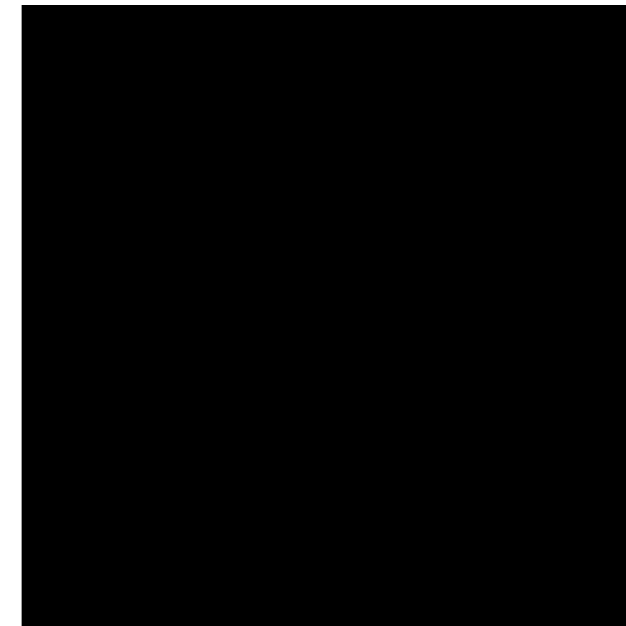
The outcome of an adequate and thoughtful appropriateness reading for such urban islands in their mid scale, has shown the limitation of defining the primary voids when they interpreted far from their original concept. The problem that the void is facing specially in the new development is the reduction of the complex reality, where the technical construction discrete from the traditional concept has led to a number of architectural forms separated from the voids and incapable to represent its logic permanently. Through this reduction process, the form outlined a breakdown of the deeper formal structures to define a coherent desirability of the interaction between the voids. The idea of the balanced urban composition between the solid and the void to reach a unitary organism has to be redefining in the four islands 'Fluvial, Typographical, Rural and Desert' Islands as shown in the urban analysis.

This classification of the islands has recognized the different categories of the voids that have led to understand the urban structure composition and links multiple voids under the same category. Hence, the intrinsic dichotomy between the type of the void and the compositional analysis is an opposite but also complementary pattern necessary for a deep interpretation of each island in which the logos of the primary void is essential of reading the composition of each urban entity. In this context, parameters and schemes that characterized each island have represented different organization and composition. In the Mnemonics Island for instant, the density is very compact which provides a vital and intertwined urban structure through its solid and void, while the density although is balanced in the Fluvial Island; it couldn't protect the extrovert voids from being trapped by the massive urban forms and flow of the cars. The density in Topographical and Rural Islands, are mostly massive compact blocks where the main different is the resulted voids, the first, are the gaps and leftovers between the urban forms while the second, are the traces of agricultural fields. In the composition of the Desert Island, the proposals of the

urban composition were always to keep the balance between the solid and the void without understanding the main concept and logic of the void itself, and as a result, the void remained abandoned with no relation with its context and above all the dwellers them.

Trajectory and connection were also important parameters to understand the differences between the compositions of each island, where the flow of inhabitants appeared strongly in the Mnemonics Island through its pedestrian arteries, which partially appeared in the organic network in the Topographical Island. However, in the Desert and Fluvial islands, the cars destroyed the connection between the solid and the void where dwellers couldn't inhabit these spaces and couldn't flow freely within the urban structure, besides the axiality in both models, where the first was represented by its infrastructure and the second by its sequential voids, has reduced the sense of ambiguity and discovery that could be found in both Mnemonics and topographical Islands. The Rural Island were constructed on a main backbone perpendicular on the traversal agricultural voids in which the dwellers were flowing through the voids however this distribution couldn't construct a harmony between the open spaces, building forms and the rural inhabitants. Moreover, the scale and pattern of the voids within the urban composition were crucial to understand the physiognomies of each island; the harmony through different scales is well organized and patterned in the Mnemonics Island, and the intimate scale appeared also in the Topographical island within its organic pattern that still need to be discovered. The orthogonal grid and the axial avenues have formed a monumental scale of voids in both Fluvial and Desert Islands and have kept the voids in the first in a definitive patterned organization through intersection of axis and in the second have kept the voids suspended in its repetitive axiality with no relation with its context, and finally the pattern in the Rural Island, is infinite linear system with a scale undefined mutata between the territorial and urban dimension.

II.2_Conclusion: The future of the past as a concept of metamorphosis_ *Manifold of primary void in Desert island*



II.2_Abstract_

The consideration process of understanding the primary void through its micro scale, is to incorporate the void into the genetic configuration within the different archipelagos of Cairo, the parameters of space, type, limit, design, measure and image, are measured to provide the absolute definition for each void where it established the basic unit for the composition.

As the grafting in any island will suppose to violate the existing reality and to introduce the void as a pervious action indispensable, consequently the reformation could occur in the urban composition of each island. In the sanctuary of Cairo's archipelago, the architectural void that anticipates the form is not only symbolic mechanism but also essence and beliefs of concepts that are essential to formulate our urban experiences and relations, besides it could be seen as ritual that expresses the continuous renewal of the nature of Cairo.

II.2.1_In quest of the primary void as the origin of the island's formulation

Micro scale: Space I Type I Limit I Design I Measure I Image

The architectural void has played an important role in the formulation and configuration of the urban composition in each island; it is crucial to in quest the architectural void as the origin and primary element to be studied and understood through its space, type, limit, design, measure and image. In the two last centuries, the authorities have dealt with the architectural void as silence and illustration that is only an unsatisfied expectation, besides it was represented as by product for the model, which has generated a deep wound between the users of the space and the definition of the space itself.

Void in the Middle East traditional concept, is space where what will happen, and does not arrive and what are expected stimuli, figures a more complex content of a meaning. John Cage demonstrated that meaning perfectly when he introduced his famous note 4'33" in an anechoic isolated chamber, however two sounds appeared, one was acute and the other was serious, the first sound actually was the rumour of his nervous system and the second was the circulation of his blood, therefore, void is something fleeting in itself, something that tends to fill up. Here on, the nature of the void tends to be filled inside our cities not only by gaze, air and light but also by inhabitants, activities and experiences, which affect the formulation of the urban composition within the whole city. In the Mnemonics Island, the void has achieved its sublime as space of unity, space with full of possibilities where dwellers could find their own sense of belonging and identity within the space, as the void acts within the composition as moment that connect different presences or in other word, it accommodate present, past and future where the form of the void as introvert space has transcended the physical boundaries of the form by sustaining the



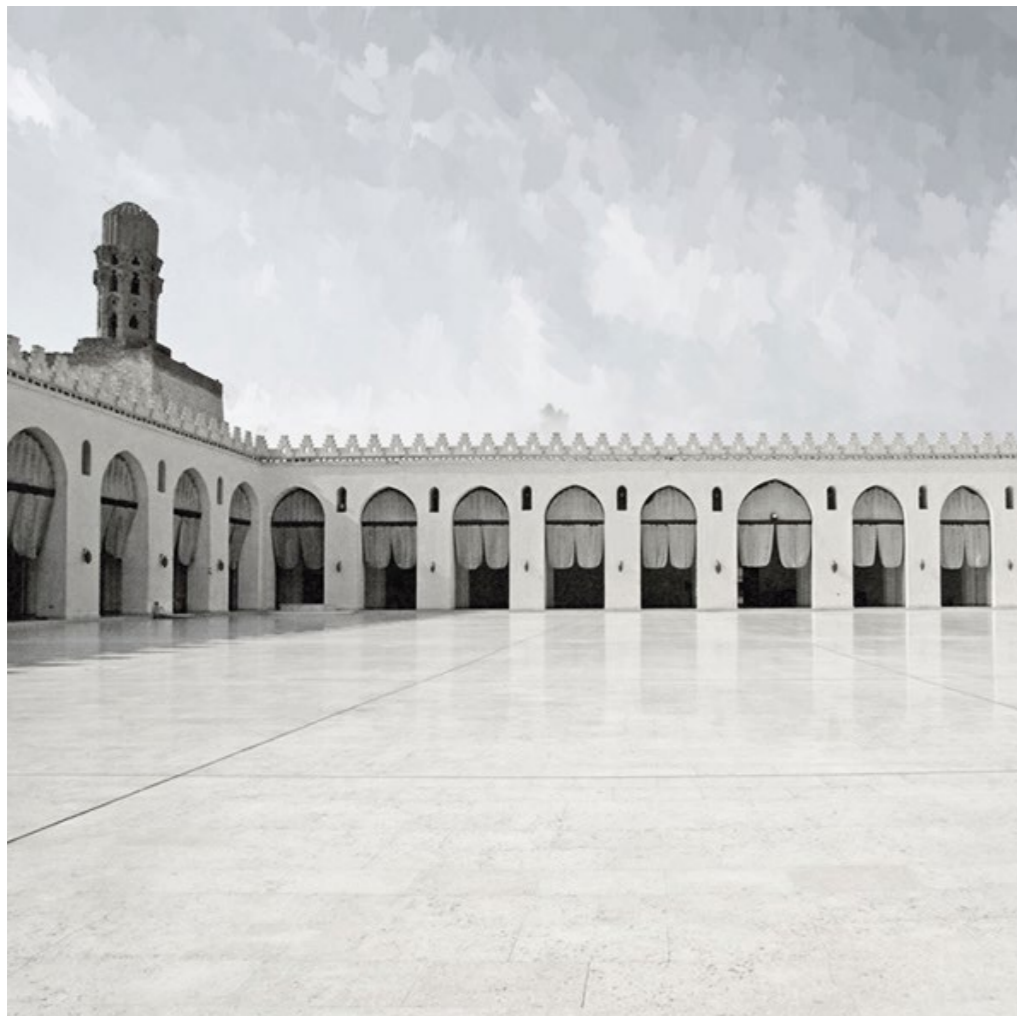
01

01 Mosque Sultan Al-Moayed Sheikh, Cairo.

strong intangible relation between the user and the organization of the space itself. Thus the void in the other islands requires a radical transformation in its meaning in order to be developed and linked to its urban reality. The most important consideration in this process is to incorporate the void into the genetic configuration within the different archipelagos of Cairo as the grafting in any island will suppose to violate the existing reality and to introduce the void as a pervious action indispensable, consequently the reformation could occur in the urban composition of each island. In the sanctuary of Cairo's archipelago, the void that anticipates the form is not only symbolic mechanism but also essence and beliefs of concept to formulate our urban experiences in which it could be seen as ritual that expresses the continuous renewal of the nature of Cairo. In the micro scale, the void is the first element anticipated by the dwellers, while the architectural form is always in vigil, waiting for its inhabitant, "moreover, when the absence of someone in a room is perceived, all objects highlight the absence of the absence."⁰¹

The custody of void remains latent even without the presence of the dwellers, as its concept has physical and metaphysical dimensions, this conception is fundamental and explicable to avoid the laypersons visions of development, as the city has been suffering the abandonment of such a phenomenon crucial to retrace and reconstruct public spaces that populates instantaneously, in which they have been represented as background, more or less discreet by intruder foreign concepts. Thus, the void carries with it, the wait and the suspension of time in which memories, scenarios and possibilities could happen, paradoxically, the form devour to recognize this need of accommodation of voids with any possible reality, as these voids are in continues transformation and have the competence to adapt these experiences within themselves, thus they could generate a new identity for the urban island.

01. Fernando Espuelas, "il vuoto/l'attesa" in Antonello Russo, *Vuoto e progetto*, Publisher Letteraventidue 2018, p.199



02

02 Mosque Al-Hakim, Cairo.

Space

The search for the right proportion in the context of each island and the position of each individual form outlines the most relevant and difficult aspect in the application of the formulation process. Throughout the analysis concentrating on micro scale and the architectural void, this part aims to refine the perilous position between the void and the distributed forms. *“Or, that void, between two or more bodies capable of to trigger, among them, a magnetic attraction such as to make one necessary to the other.”*⁰² The attention here is to focus on the characteristics of the void in its micro scale, to understand its relation with the surrounding forms that animate and influence the composition, and to overturn the trigger of the perceptual demand of continuous construction, to a reverse action, that shifts the exploration from the object to the space in order to stress on the tensional equilibrium organized by the single elements and to reach the sublime of the urban composition. From this aspect, Carlo Moccia in his work on the form of the void has recognized the space as the adherence to a purpose of interiority arranged by the positioning of continuous limit.

This outlines the characteristics of a regular and concluded spatiality, which establish direct connections with the typological model of each urban context. In the Mnemonics Island for instant, the void could be identified as an open enclosure delimited by a large collective enclosure, furthermore it composes the spatial references of the Middle Eastern city, which from ancient times to now reaffirms in its porous structure the chained succession of voids as unitary interiors and the essence of the urban composition. If the space of interiority is defined by the perimeter of recognizable reservoirs, the capacity of the void surpassed this limits and generated a continuous soil defines the space relationships where the tensions found in the dialogue between distinct visible

03 Mosque Al-Azhar, Cairo.



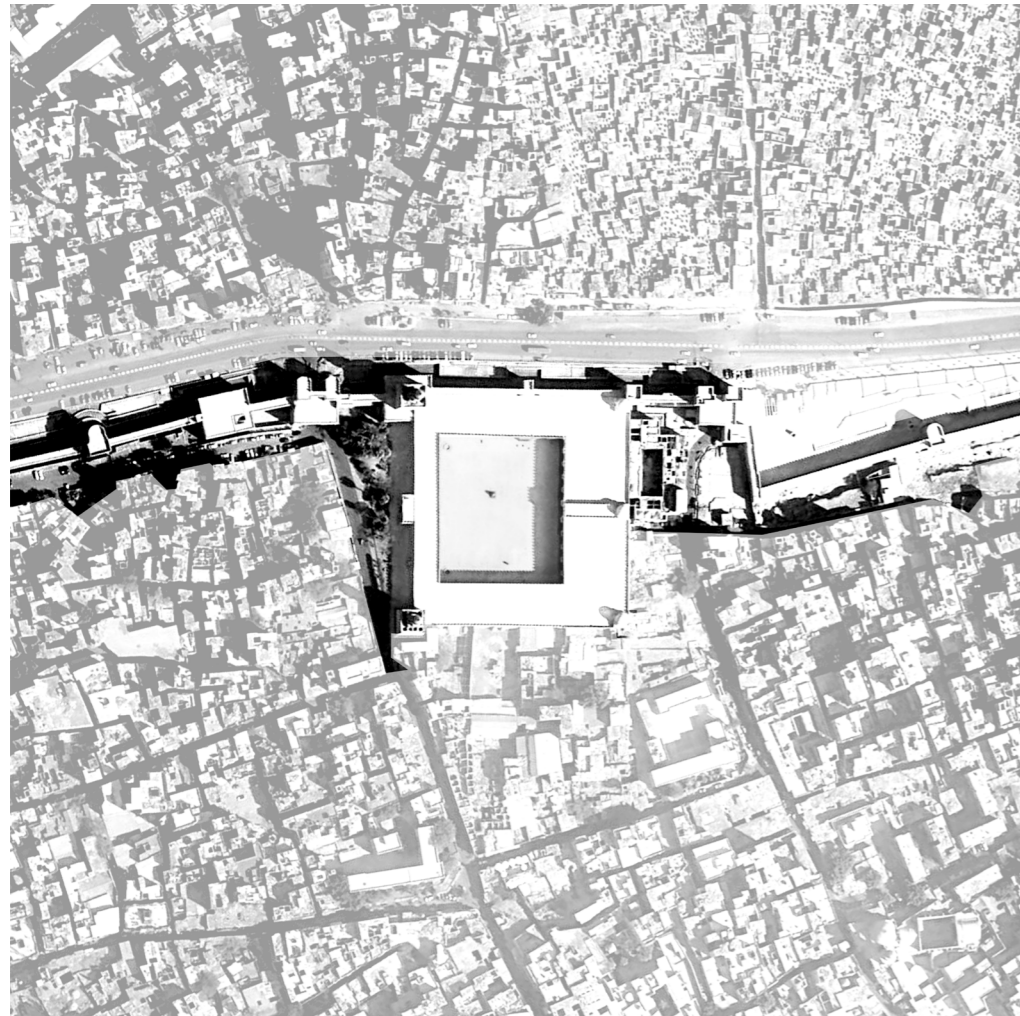
03

masses and volumetric stretched out forms, could have a reference of strong extended soil united soil floating between outside and inside and could provide a competence of connecting all interjected elements in distant presences of landscape. Referable to the tension lavished by the substantial materialistic form of Abdeen Square in the Fluvial Island, embodies the spatiality reverberated in the open space of Western square in which the activation of large green-bed identified by long walls of the urban blocks that is necessary to specify the identity of the urban space in this island where the co-presence of both form and void constitutes the balance of only the urban dimension but not on the social one. Long distance relationships between individual identities and in-between spaces outlined the spatial characteristics of Topographical Island in the balance between recollection and leftovers that expresses the real entities with their influenced areas within the strong topographical landscape. The mountain defines the boundaries of the island and shaped the relation between the internality and compact organic composition.

In the Rural Island, although it has the same typological continuous form of the Topological Island, but the traced linear void has influenced the spatial composition of this island, as the tension between the linear form and openness, or density and rarefaction has draws the indistinct features that goes beyond its formal outcome composition, as the ability to interpret and understand the spatial composition based on the traces of the agricultural fields is quite clear, however to the relationship between the form and the void remained suspended in the expression of the urban context. In the contemporary development within the Desert Island, the production of identical forms with various latitudes and the separation of functions have attributed to distinct the void from the form, where geometry and proportion were inserted to define the voids with no relation to the contextual environment, as result, void becomes an abandon green areas need to be redefined in the composition.

TENACIOUS CAIRO_
MELANCHOLY OF VOID AS DICHOTOMY BETWEEN THE IMPLICIT AND EXPLICIT DOCTRINE

REVIVING THE CONCEPT OF VOID IN THE MIDDLE EASTERN TRADITIONS AS AN ALTERNATIVE SOCIO-SPATIAL SCENARIO FOR REGENERATING PUBLIC SPACES IN CAIRO'S ARCHIPELAGO



04

04 Google map, "Mnemonics island", (2020).

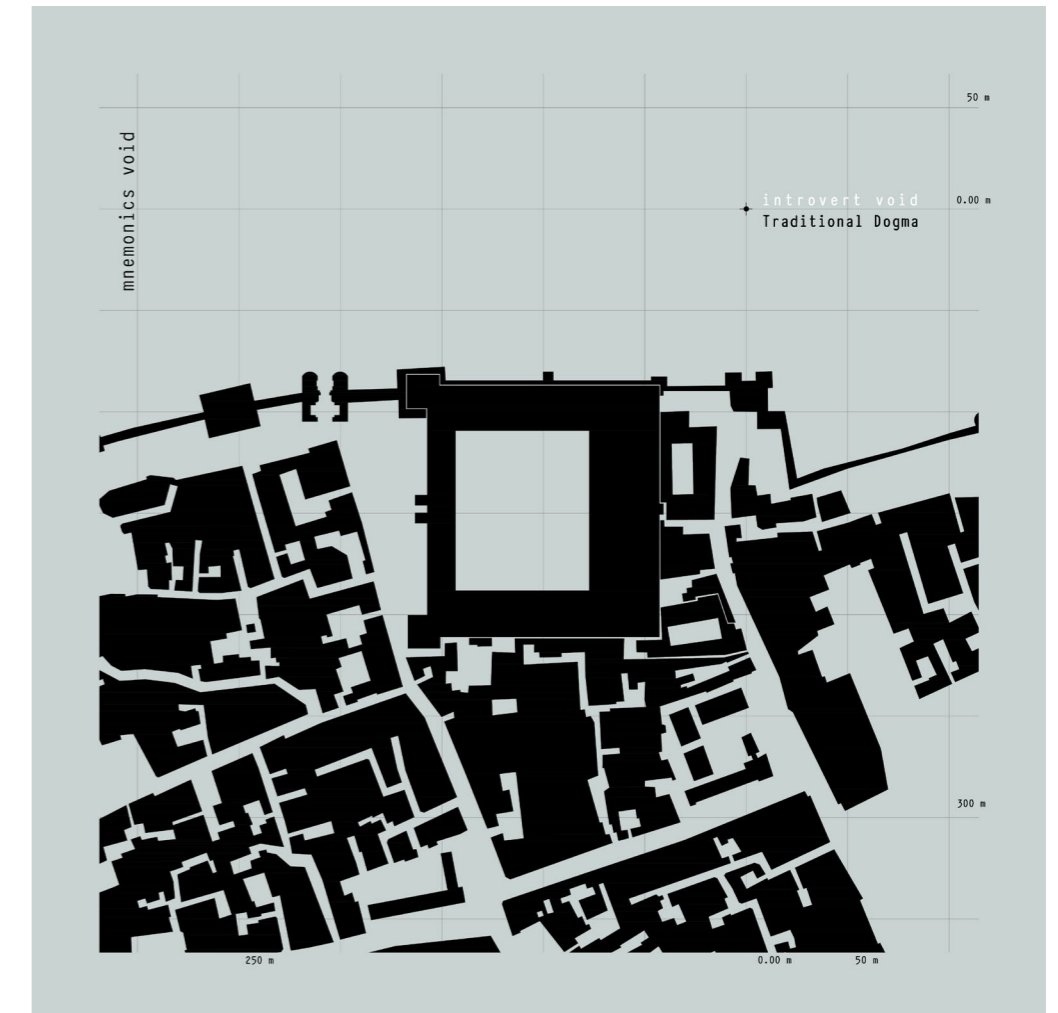
Introvert void_micro scale

Architectural void_ Al-Hakim mosque_ Mnemonics void

05 Author, "Context", (2020).

mnemonics island_micro scale

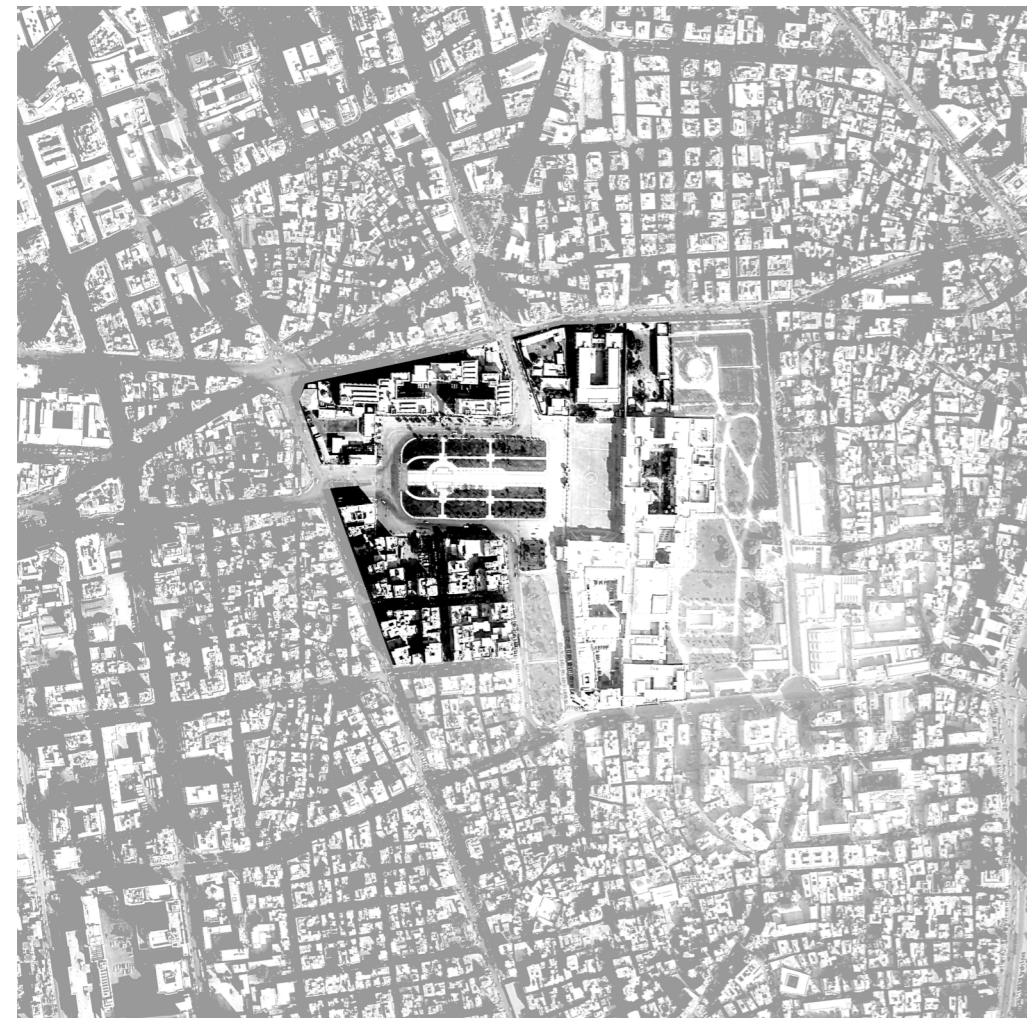
Introvert void_Traditional dogma



05

TENACIOUS CAIRO_
MELANCHOLY OF VOID AS DICHOTOMY BETWEEN THE IMPLICIT AND EXPLICIT DOCTRINE

REVIVING THE CONCEPT OF VOID IN THE MIDDLE EASTERN TRADITIONS AS AN ALTERNATIVE SOCIO-SPATIAL SCENARIO FOR REGENERATING PUBLIC SPACES IN CAIRO'S ARCHIPELAGO



06

II.2_Conclusion: The future of the past as a concept of metamorphosis

06 Google map, "Fluvial island", (2020).

fluvial island_micro scale

Architectural void_ Abdeen Square_

Suspension void

07 Author, "Context", (2020).

fluvial island_micro scale

Extrovert void_Definitive instability



07

TENACIOUS CAIRO_
MELANCHOLY OF VOID AS DICHOTOMY BETWEEN THE IMPLICIT AND EXPLICIT DOCTRINE

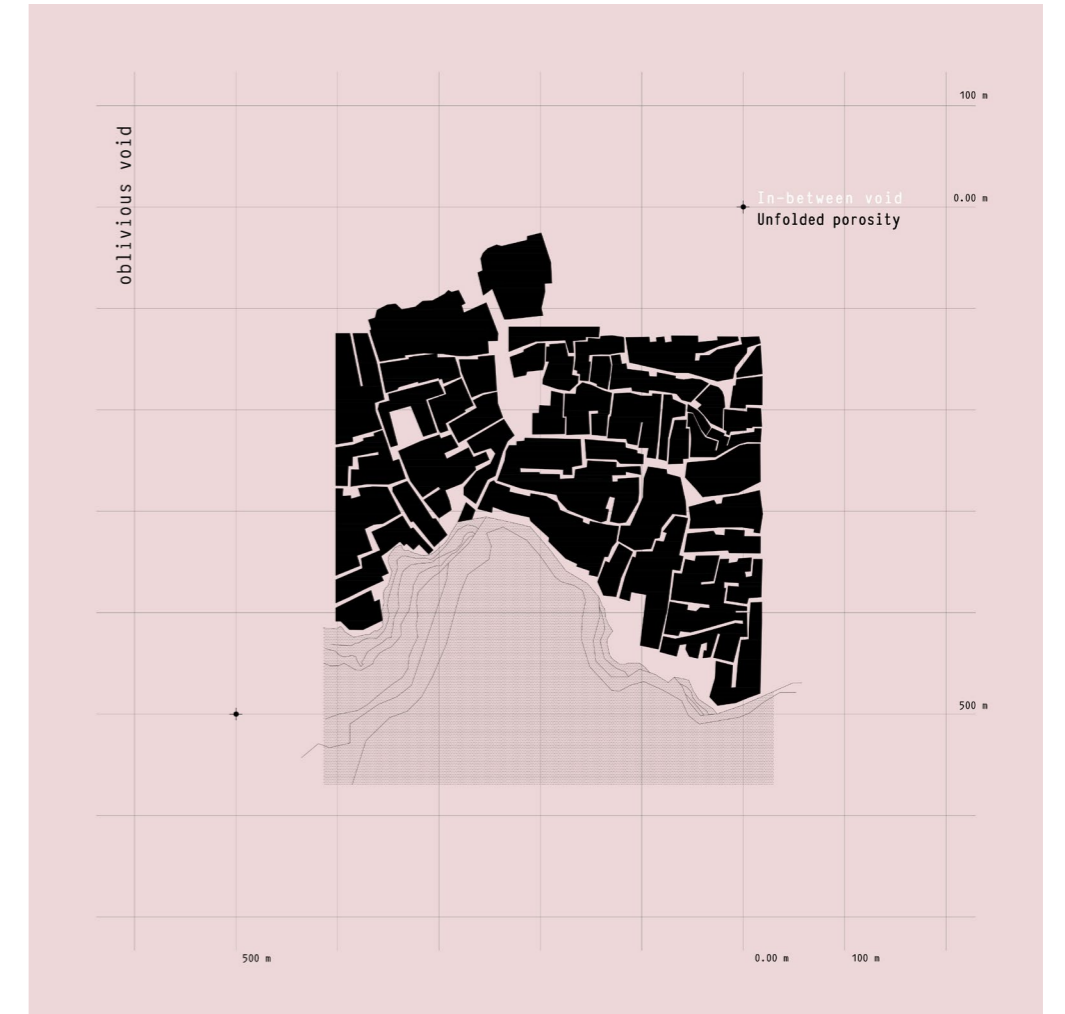
REVIVING THE CONCEPT OF VOID IN THE MIDDLE EASTERN TRADITIONS AS AN ALTERNATIVE SOCIO-SPATIAL SCENARIO FOR REGENERATING PUBLIC SPACES IN CAIRO'S ARCHIPELAGO



08

08 Google map, "Topographical island", (2020).
topographical island_micro scale
Architectural void_Oblivious void

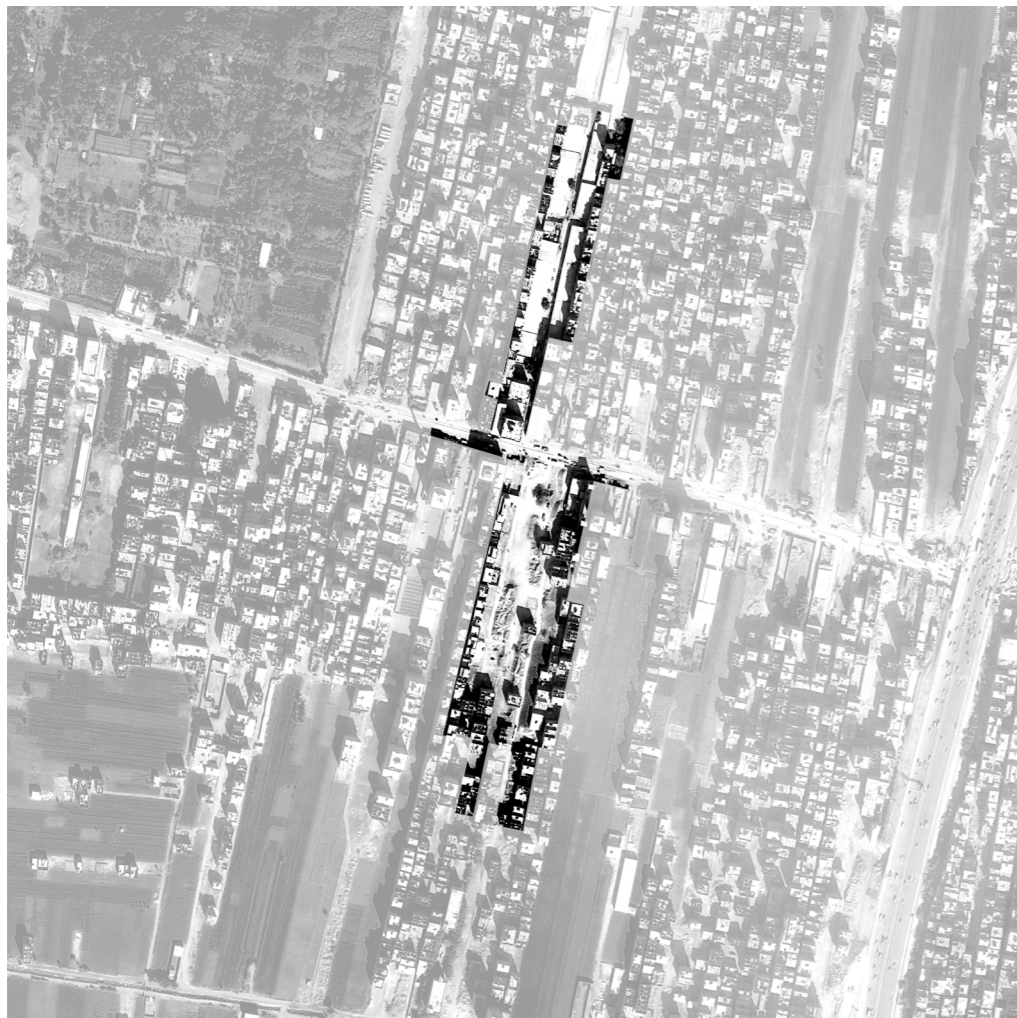
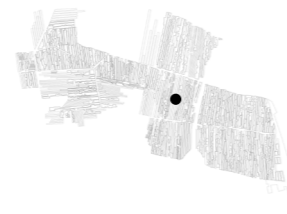
09 Author, "Context", (2020).
topographical island_micro scale
In-between void_unfolded porosity



09

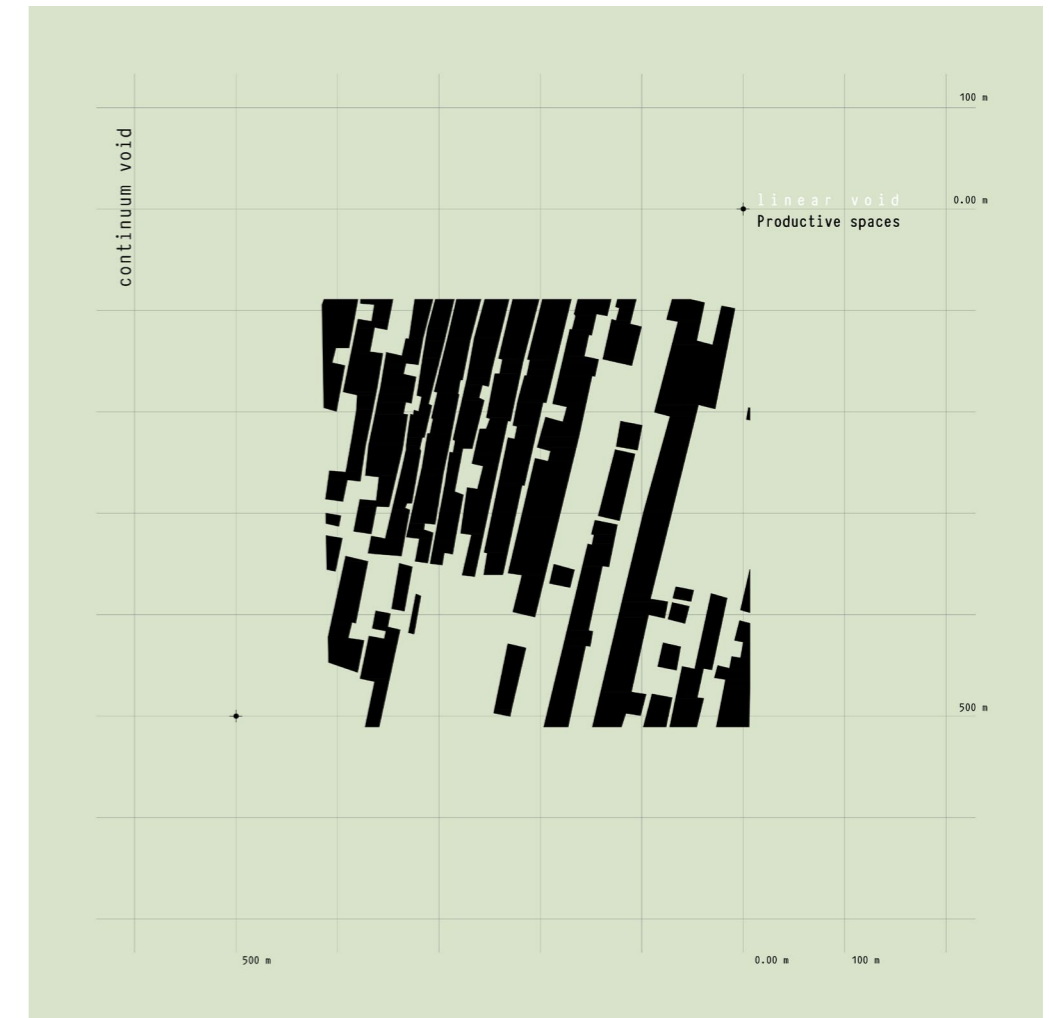
TENACIOUS CAIRO_
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REVIVING THE CONCEPT OF VOID IN THE MIDDLE EASTERN TRADITIONS AS AN ALTERNATIVE SOCIO-SPATIAL SCENARIO FOR REGENERATING PUBLIC SPACES IN CAIRO'S ARCHIPELAGO



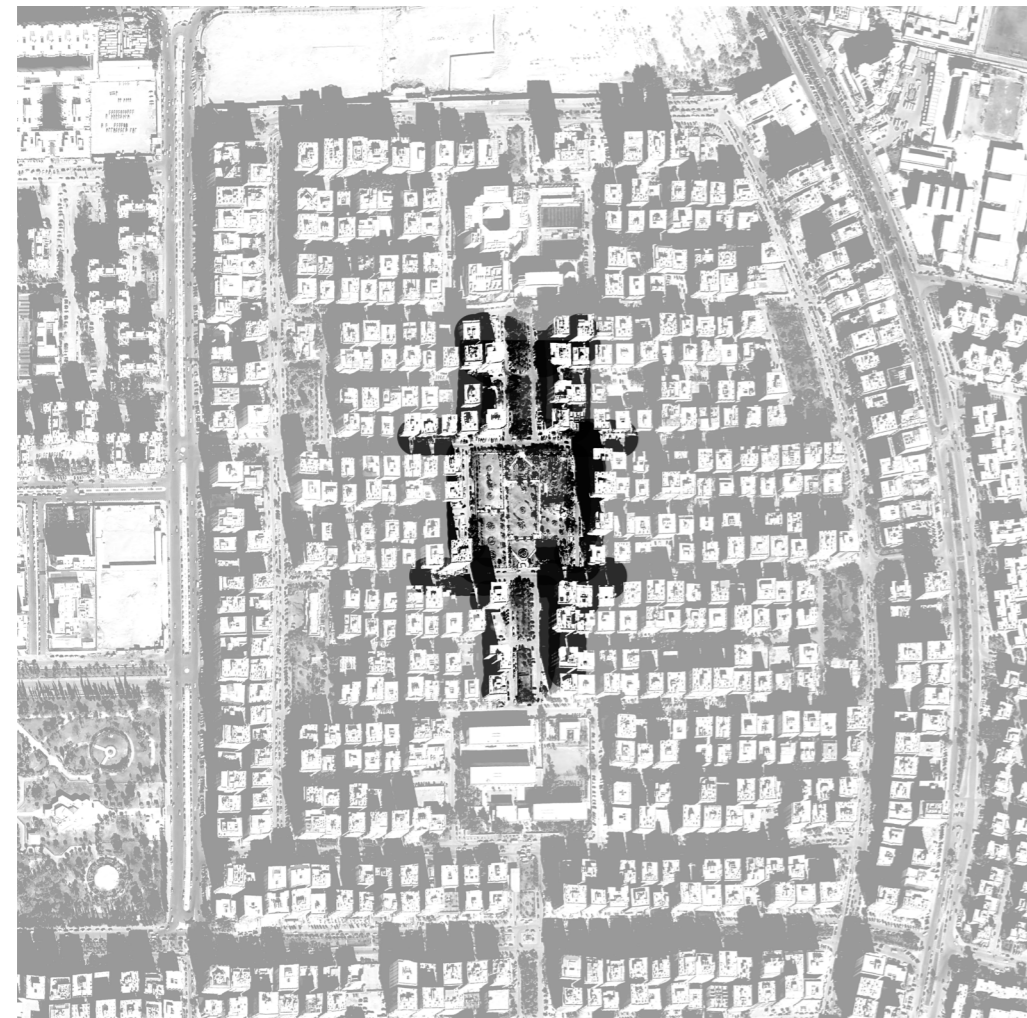
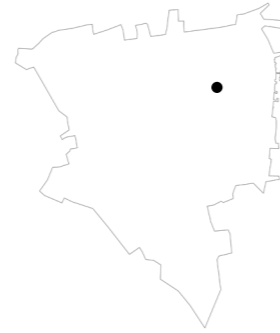
10 Google map, "Rural island", (2020).
rural island_micro scale
Architectural void_ Continuum void

11 Author, "Context", (2020).
rural island_micro scale
Linear void_Productive spaces



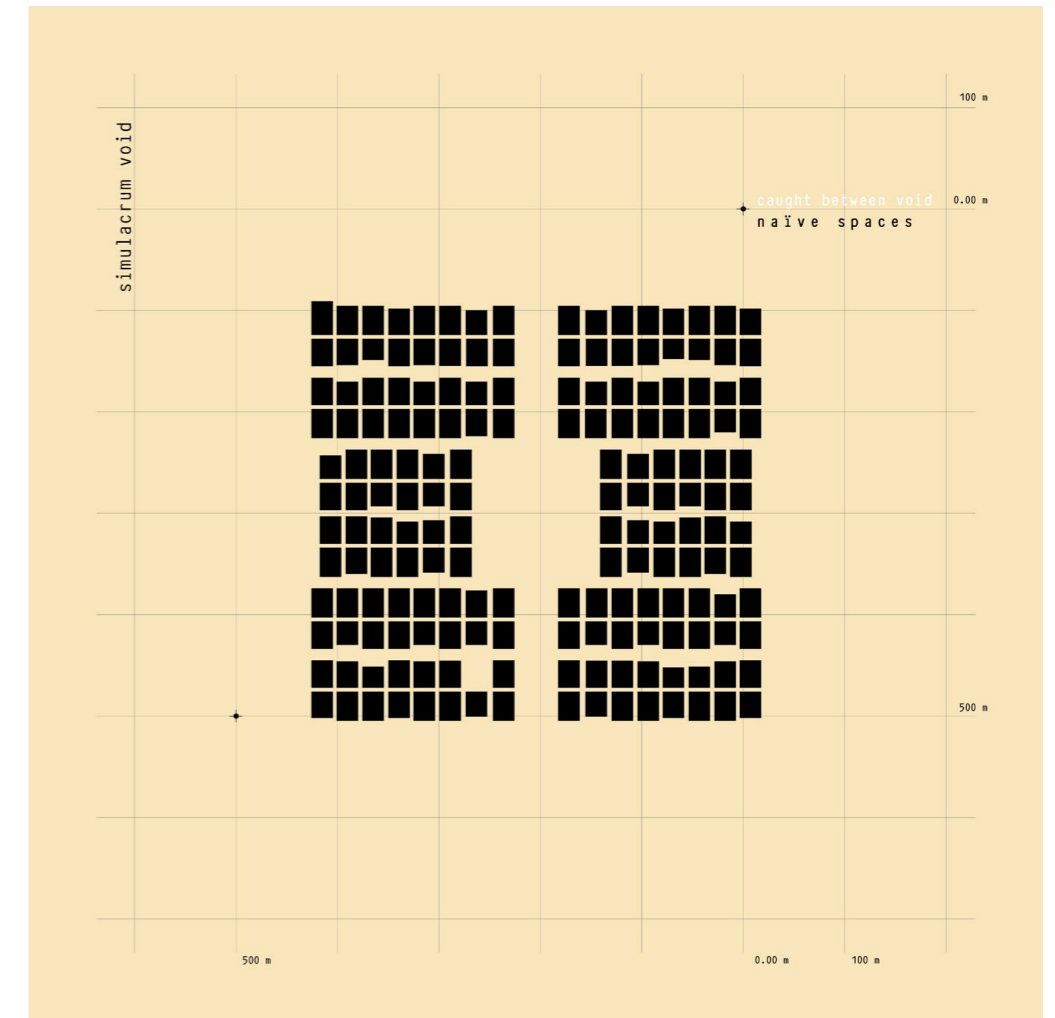
TENACIOUS CAIRO_
MELANCHOLY OF VOID AS DICHOTOMY BETWEEN THE IMPLICIT AND EXPLICIT DOCTRINE

REVIVING THE CONCEPT OF VOID IN THE MIDDLE EASTERN TRADITIONS AS AN ALTERNATIVE SOCIO-SPATIAL SCENARIO FOR REGENERATING PUBLIC SPACES IN CAIRO'S ARCHIPELAGO



12 Google map, "Desert island", (2020).
desert island_micro scale
Architectural void_Simulacrum void

13 Author, "Context", (2020).
desert island_micro scale
Caught-between void_Naïve spaces



14 Abdeen square, Cairo.



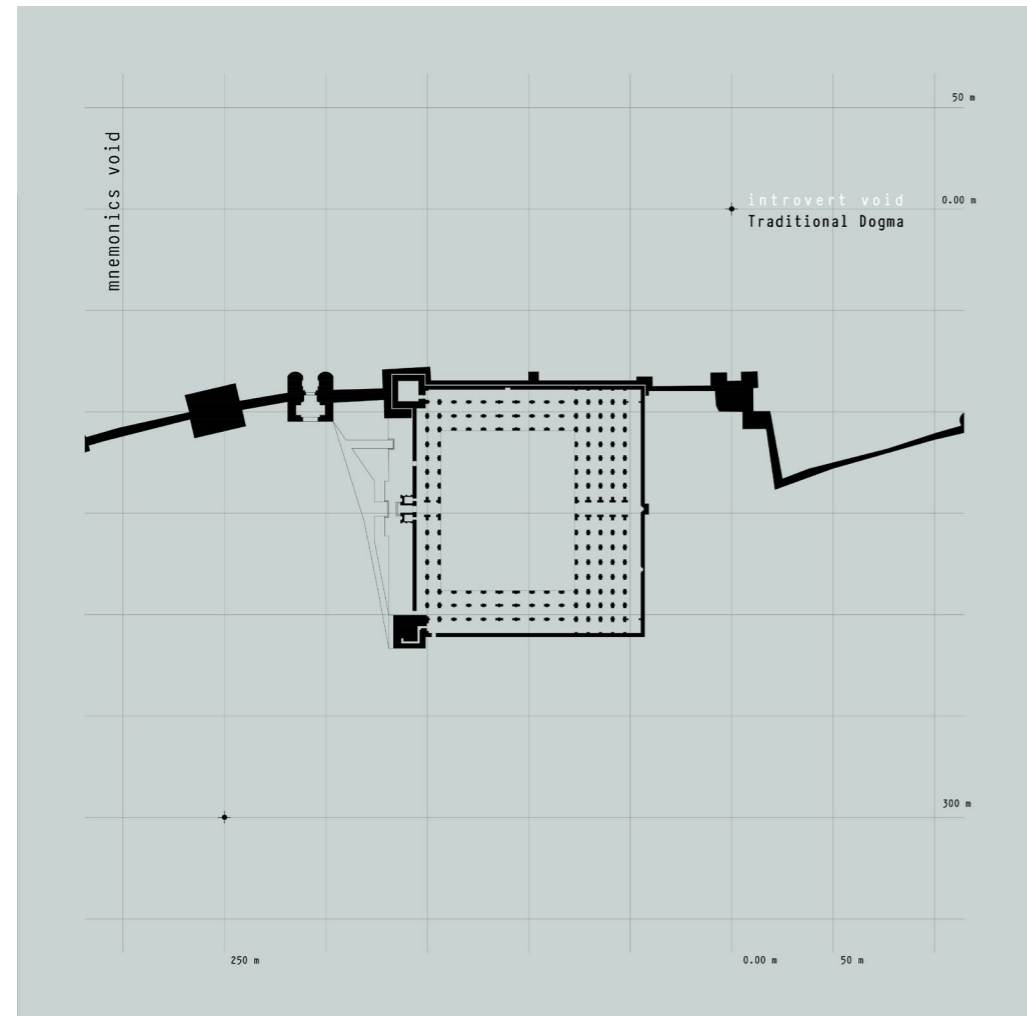
14

Type

In arguing the type, it is crucial to state that it is not attributable to the composition in itself but rather to the idea, concept and identity of the void established in a defined set to understand the reality of the space. It is possible to understand the type only when we identify the existence of profound structural relation of voids within their nature beyond just the shape. This manifests the eloquent analogue procedure of understanding the compositional rules of each urban island and constructs a process of transformation and evolution that is evident by the activation of comparison between even apparently distant and different elements. The internal spatiality of the void in the Mnemonics Island has underlined the same regulatory and measures for defining the urban composition, the definition of the *Introvert Void* has produced an intimacy not only for the architectural forms but also for the dwellers, as the affirmation of the type generates a strong relation between inside and outside through its diversity of scales and intangible relations that surpasses the cognitive dimension to subsequent evolutions and accommodates the unpredicted transformation of the form. The linguistic grammar of the Western model applied on the Fluvial Island composed of the external relation between the form and the void that highlights the invariant character of the formal structure, as the latent dimension of the square incorporates with the foreign concept of an *Extrovert Void*, has exhibited the definitive frozen structure besides has conveyed the difficulties of inhabitants to dwell these spaces. The inter-dependence between the various forms and the voids in both the Topological and Rural Islands, has been involved in the three dimensional scales with a precise genetic code, an *In-between Void* and *linear Void* both resulted from the nature of the composition. Whereas the *Caught-Between Void* that characterizes the Desert Island, is a decomposition process that starts from the construction to the conclusion, where the void remained suspended without a clear definition.

TENACIOUS CAIRO_
MELANCHOLY OF VOID AS DICHOTOMY BETWEEN THE IMPLICIT AND EXPLICIT DOCTRINE

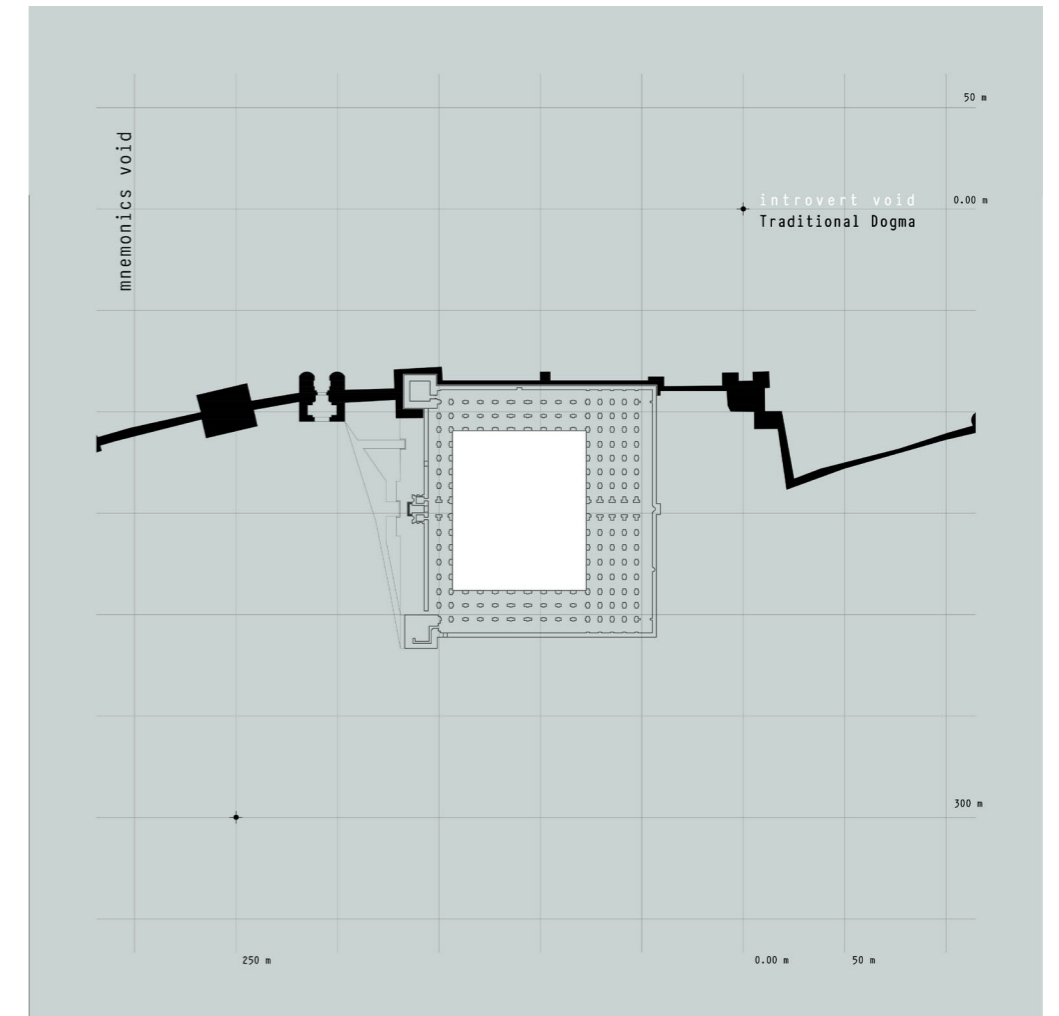
REVIVING THE CONCEPT OF VOID IN THE MIDDLE EASTERN TRADITIONS AS AN ALTERNATIVE SOCIO-SPATIAL SCENARIO FOR REGENERATING PUBLIC SPACES IN CAIRO'S ARCHIPELAGO



II.2_Conclusion: The future of the past as a concept of metamorphosis

15 Author, "Profile", (2020).
mnemonics island_micro scale
Introvert void_Traditional dogma

16 Author, "Structure plan", (2020).
mnemonics island_micro scale
Introvert void_Traditional dogma



TENACIOUS CAIRO_
MELANCHOLY OF VOID AS DICHOTOMY BETWEEN THE IMPLICIT AND EXPLICIT DOCTRINE

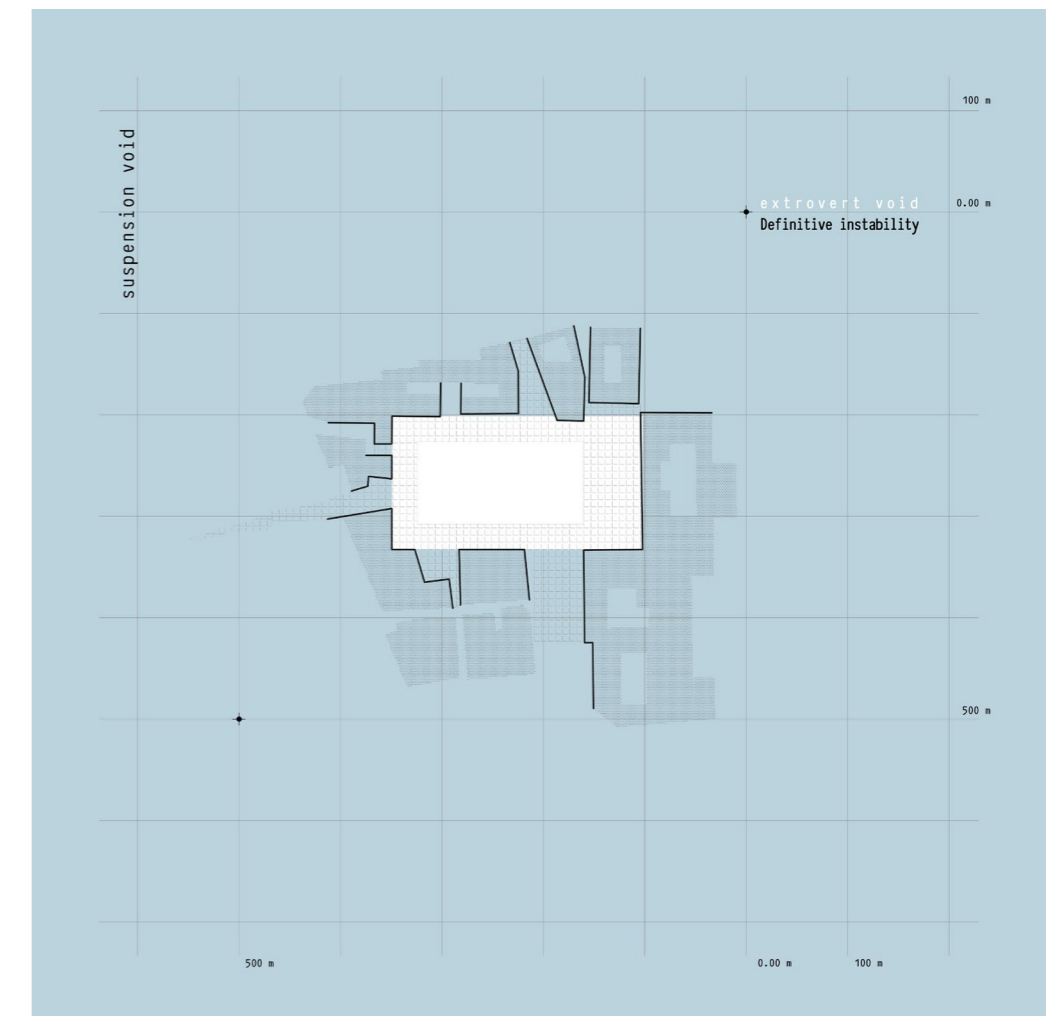
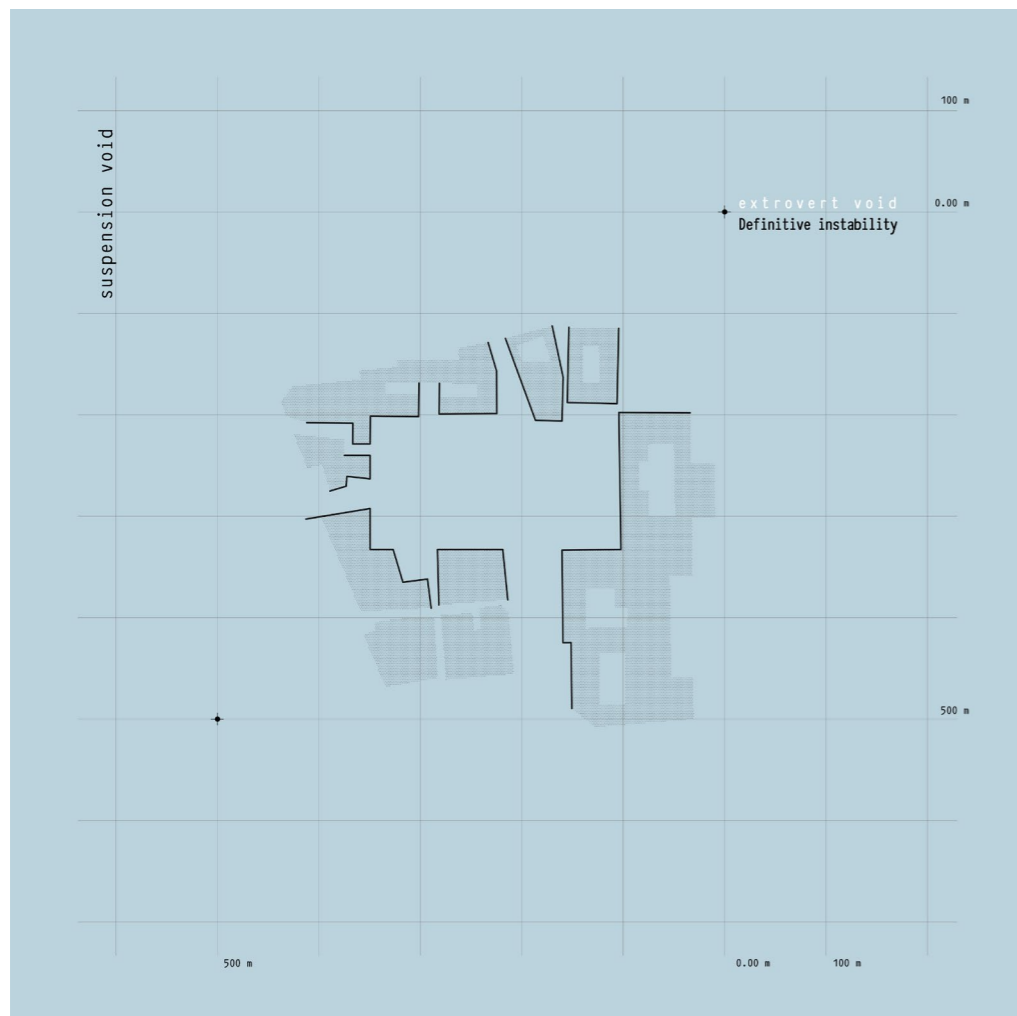
REVIVING THE CONCEPT OF VOID IN THE MIDDLE EASTERN TRADITIONS AS AN ALTERNATIVE SOCIO-SPATIAL SCENARIO FOR REGENERATING PUBLIC SPACES IN CAIRO'S ARCHIPELAGO

II.2_Conclusion: *The future of the past as a concept of metamorphosis*



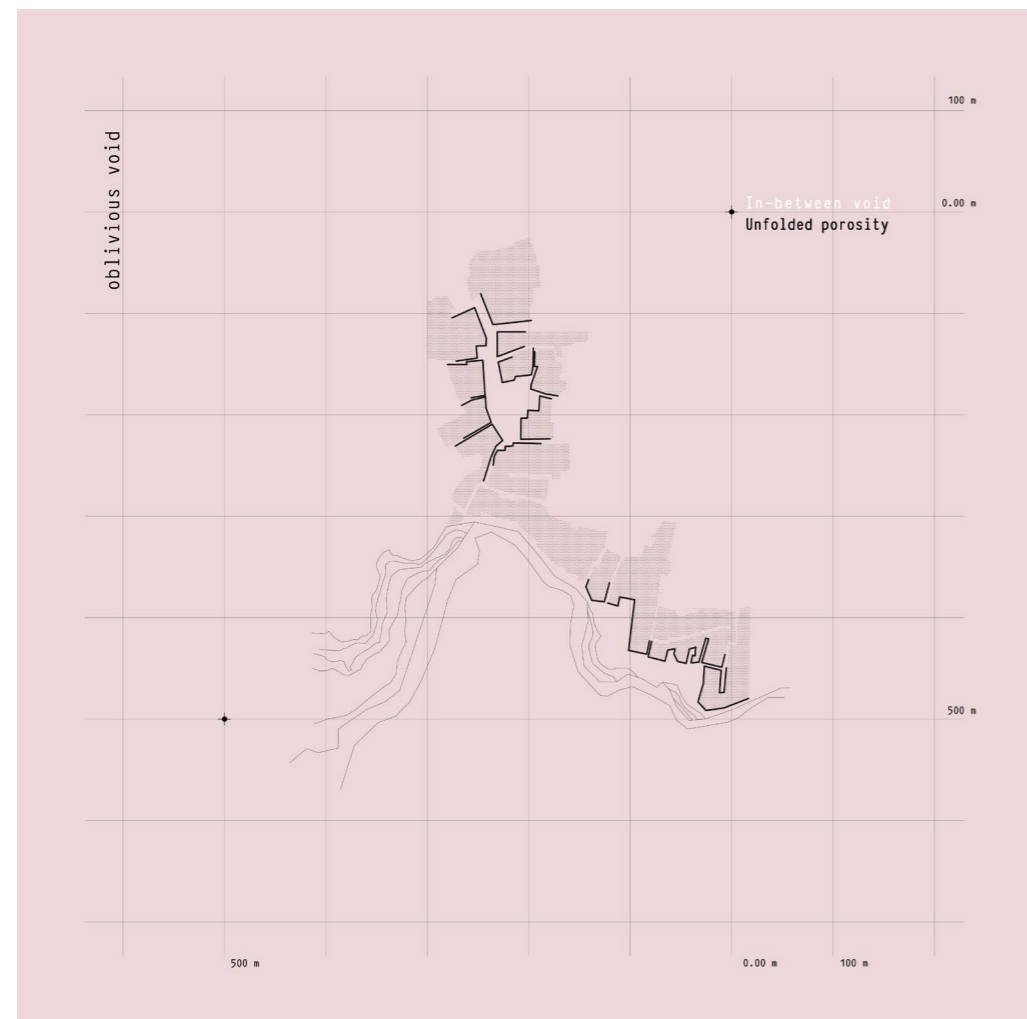
17 Author, "Profile", (2020).
fluvial island_micro scale
Extrovert void_Definitive instability

18 Author, "Typology", (2020).
fluvial island_micro scale
Extrovert void_Definitive instability



TENACIOUS CAIRO_
MELANCHOLY OF VOID AS DICHOTOMY BETWEEN THE IMPLICIT AND EXPLICIT DOCTRINE

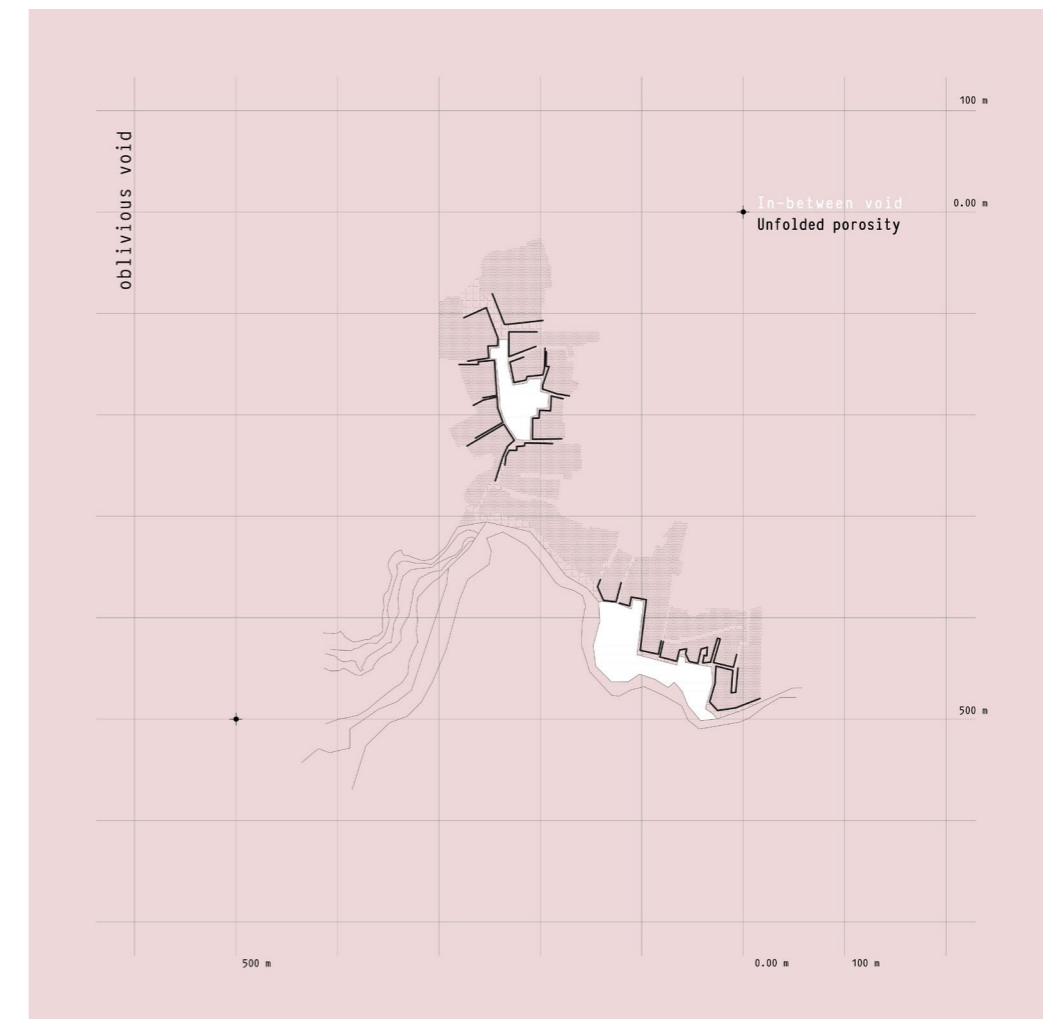
REVIVING THE CONCEPT OF VOID IN THE MIDDLE EASTERN TRADITIONS AS AN ALTERNATIVE SOCIO-SPATIAL SCENARIO FOR REGENERATING PUBLIC SPACES IN CAIRO'S ARCHIPELAGO

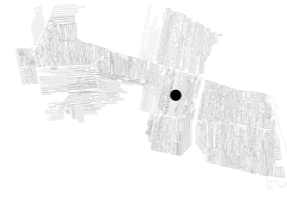


II.2_Conclusion: The future of the past as a concept of metamorphosis

19 Author, "Profile", (2020).
topographical island_micro scale
In-between void_unfolded porosity

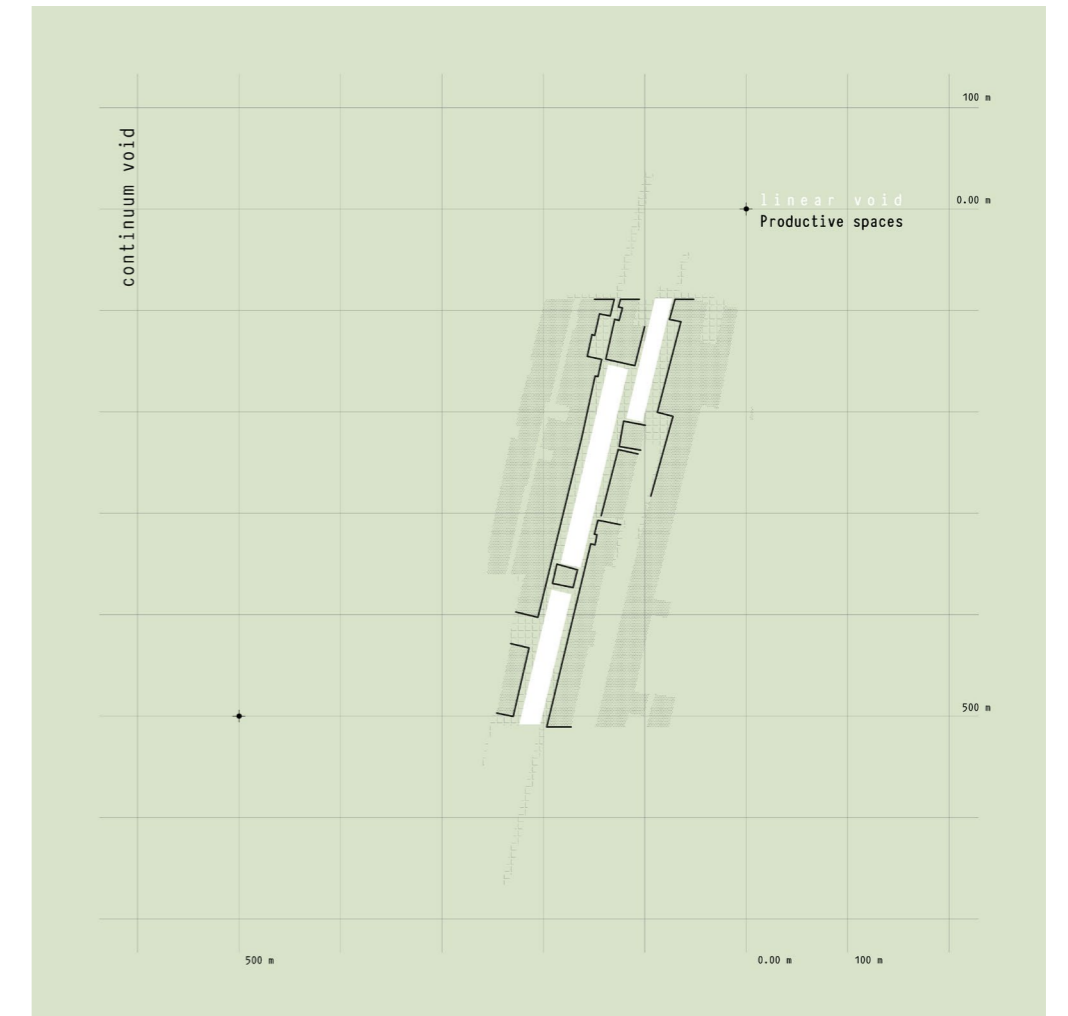
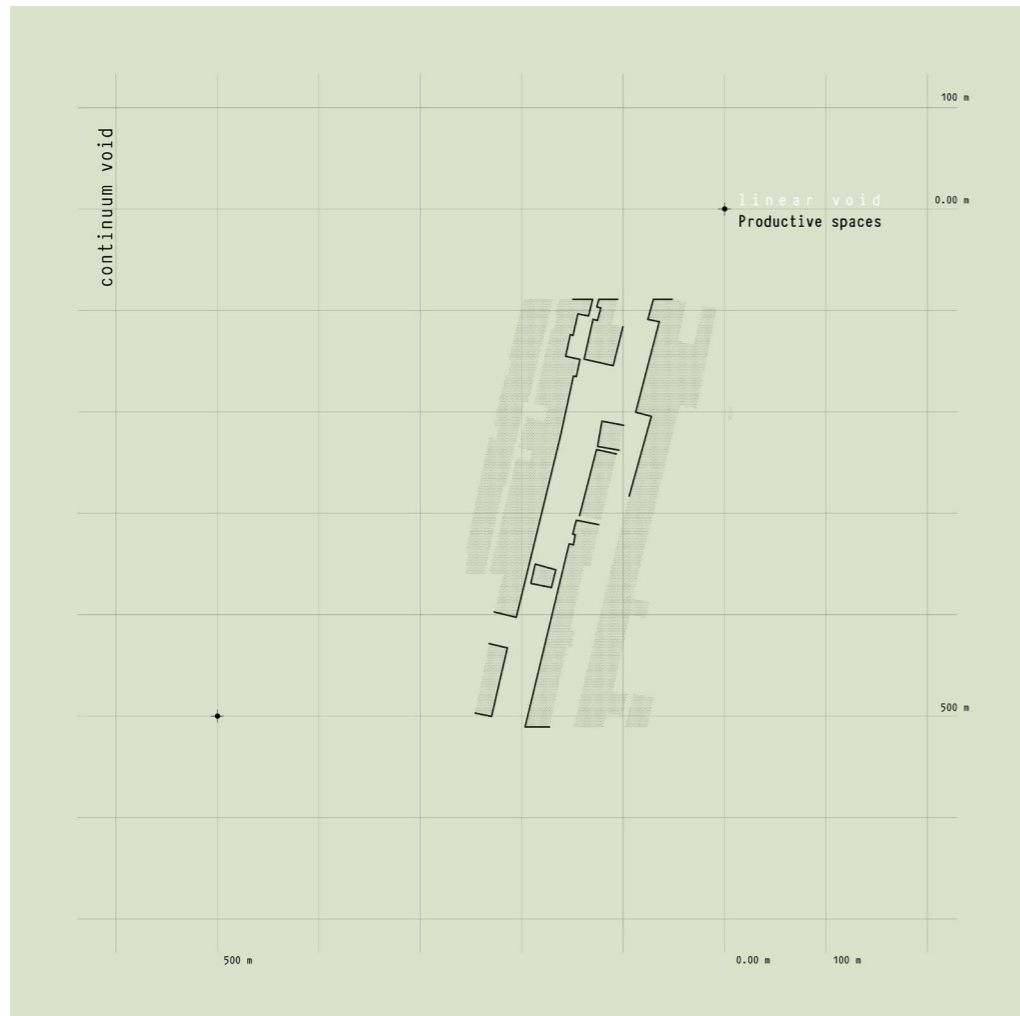
20 Author, "Typology", (2020).
topographical island_micro scale
In-between void_unfolded porosity





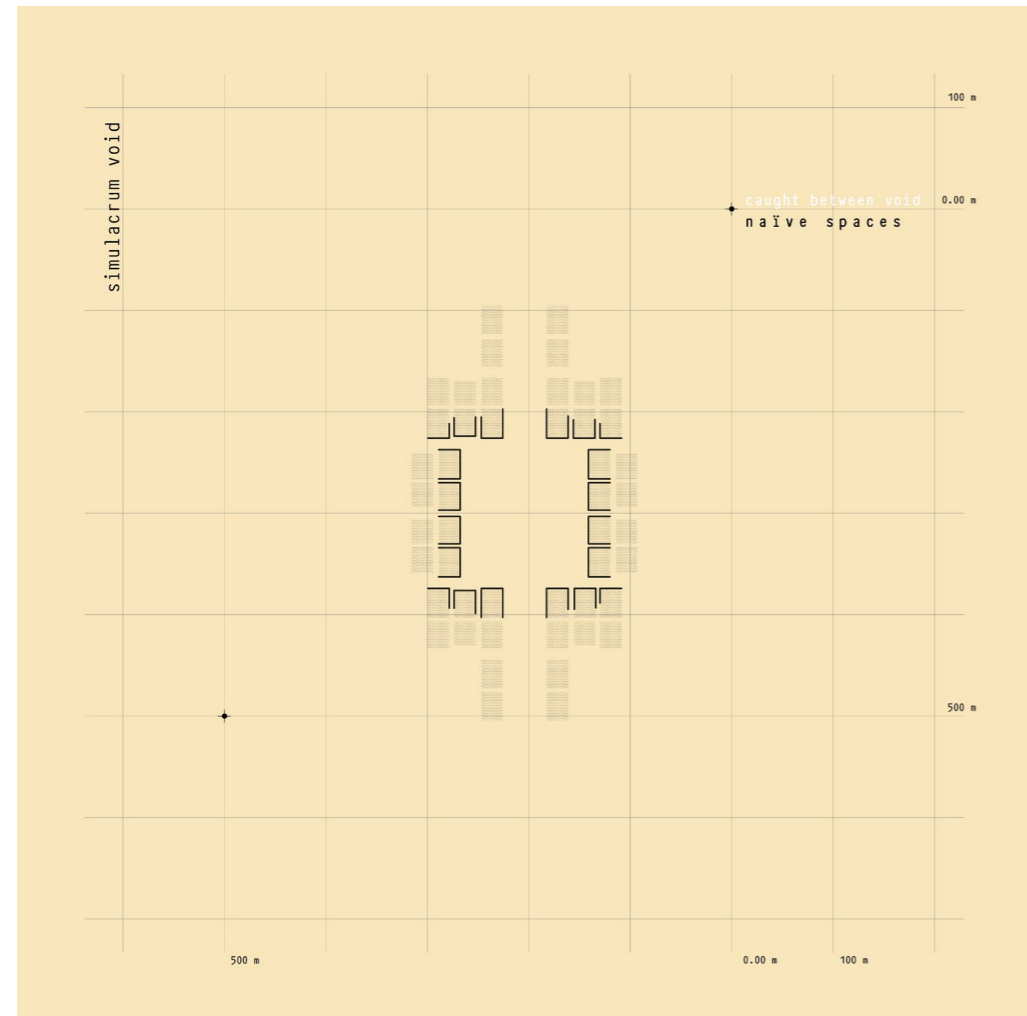
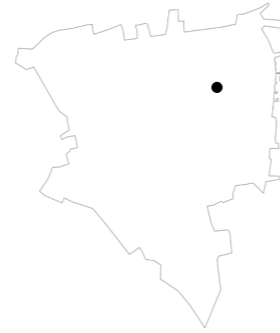
21 Author, "Profile", (2020).
 rural island_micro scale
 Linear void_Productive spaces

22 Author, "Typology", (2020).
 rural island_micro scale
 Linear void_Productive spaces



TENACIOUS CAIRO_
MELANCHOLY OF VOID AS DICHOTOMY BETWEEN THE IMPLICIT AND EXPLICIT DOCTRINE

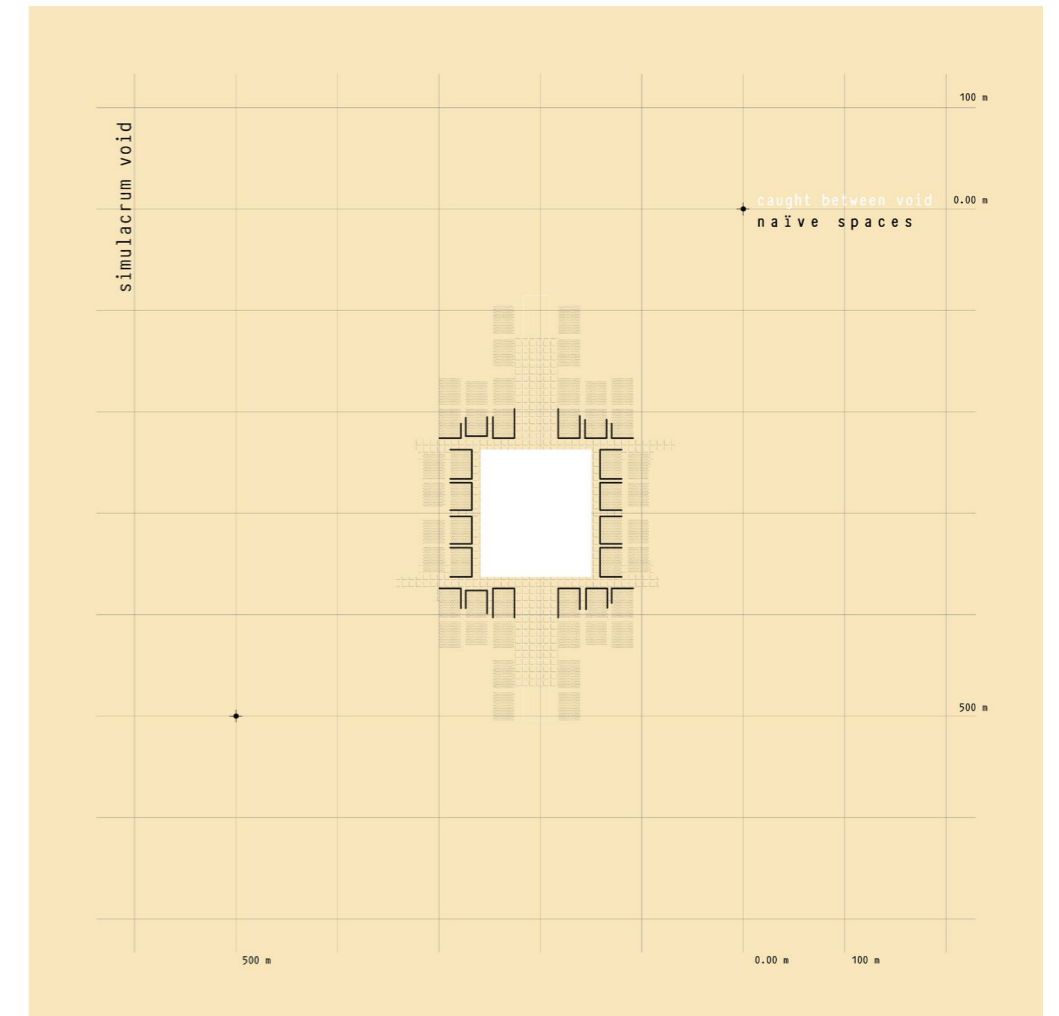
REVIVING THE CONCEPT OF VOID IN THE MIDDLE EASTERN TRADITIONS AS AN ALTERNATIVE SOCIO-SPATIAL SCENARIO FOR REGENERATING PUBLIC SPACES IN CAIRO'S ARCHIPELAGO



II.2_Conclusion: The future of the past as a concept of metamorphosis

23 Author, "Profile", (2020).
desert island_micro scale
Caught-between void_Naïve spaces

24 Author, "Typology", (2020).
desert island_micro scale
Caught-between void_Naïve spaces



25 Garbage City, Cairo.



25

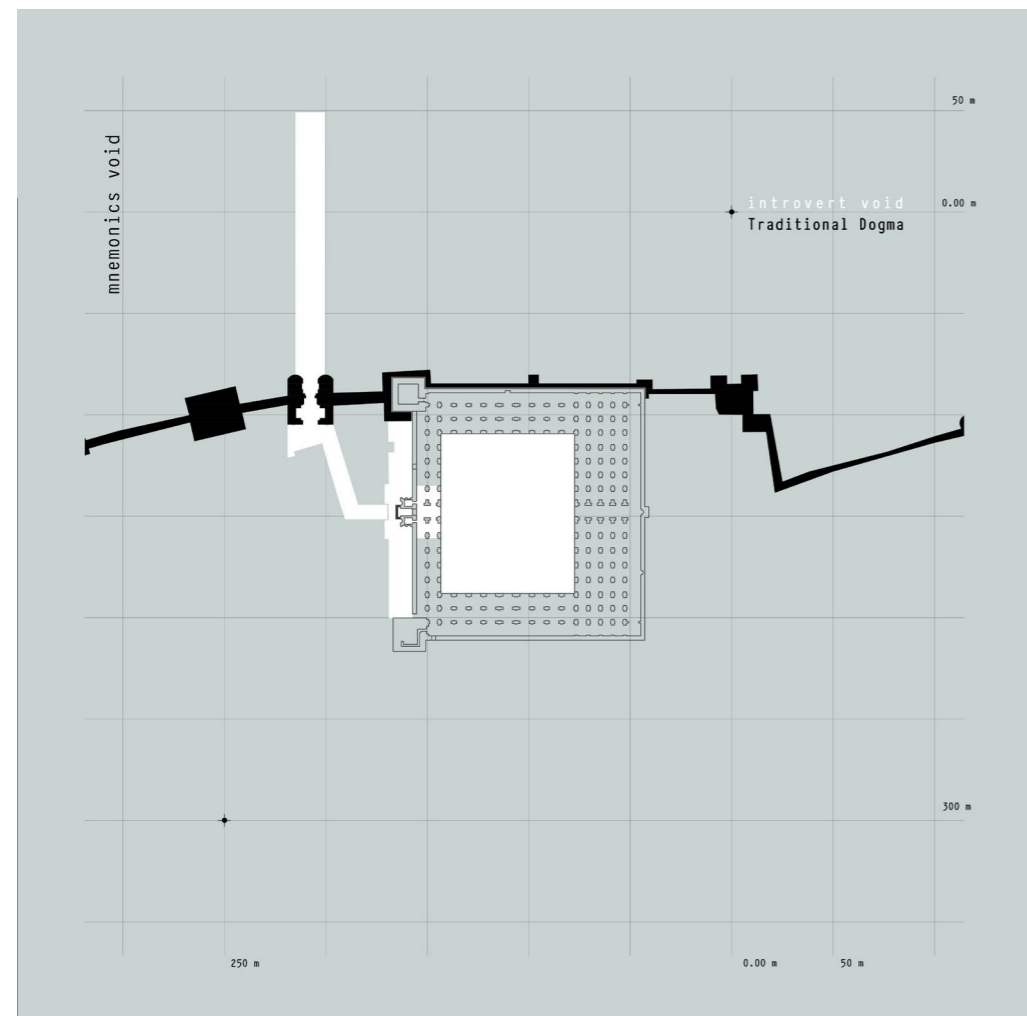
Limit

The necessity to define an extension and a threshold for the void outlines the importance of tracing a perimeter for the void, which, contextually to its size and its connection is materialized. The term limit is related to a border or threshold, a line between two distinct entities that could identify the continuity or the discontinuity of spatial areas within the urban composition. It is an intermediate area that testimonies the system of relations within the composition, for instance, the threshold in the *Introvert Void* is always a hierarchal transitional space, permeable and continues from inside to outside and vice-versa. The urban blocks that made up the adjacent urban nature, define the emptiness of the square. It exists and multiplies its nature thanks to the recognizable shapes of the fabrics, the quantity of the volumes and the pressure defined by the margin of density. Axial, vertical streets that flow into a sudden explosion of light in the dilated space of the square have interrupted this definitive sequence of the square and so the limit stayed physically clear by the urban forms, but at the same time blurry by the flow of cars. In the organic compact form and the strong presence of the mountain in the Topographical Island, have strongly influenced the essence of the limit, as it was clear that the small narrow arteries between the architectural forms that connect several gaps in the urban composition and end with the strong edge of the mountain couldn't disturb the void itself. However the strong topography of the soil and the formation of the building remained presence in the formation of the limit in the void. The Limit can be based on a metric code of the traced fields as in the case of the Rural Island where the threshold is infinite linear perspective formed by the continues massive forms, and is depending on weather its traces distinguish a clear point of reference or has a visual transitional system within voids. As for the gestural dimension within the Desert Island that is governed by exact geometric relationships not attributable to a measurement process, in which it shows the lack of connection between the void surrounded by streets and the fragmented forms thus the limit is distorted and need to be redefined.

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MELANCHOLY OF VOID AS DICHOTOMY BETWEEN THE IMPLICIT AND EXPLICIT DOCTRINE

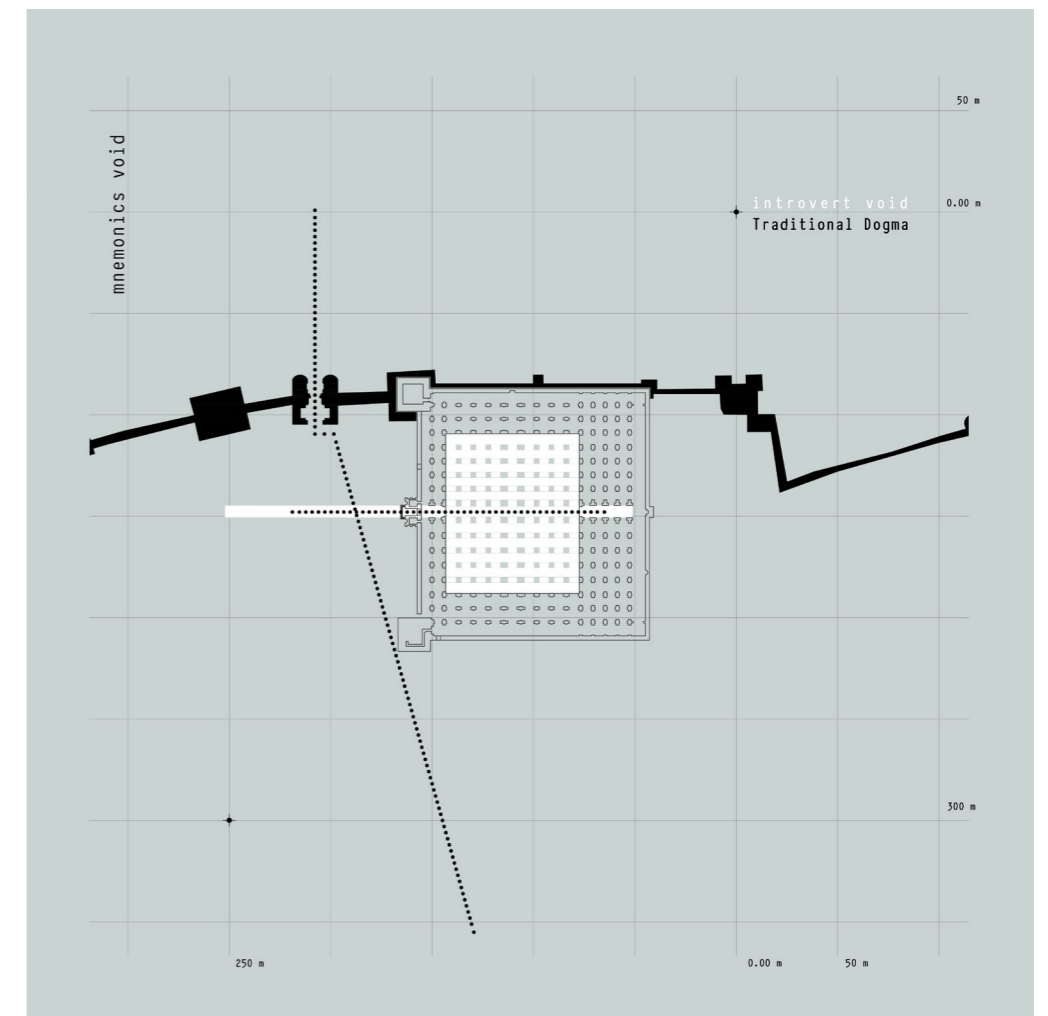
REVIVING THE CONCEPT OF VOID IN THE MIDDLE EASTERN TRADITIONS AS AN ALTERNATIVE SOCIO-SPATIAL SCENARIO FOR REGENERATING PUBLIC SPACES IN CAIRO'S ARCHIPELAGO

II.2_Conclusion: The future of the past as a concept of metamorphosis



26 Author, "Threshold", (2020).
mnemonics island_micro scale
Introvert void_Traditional dogma

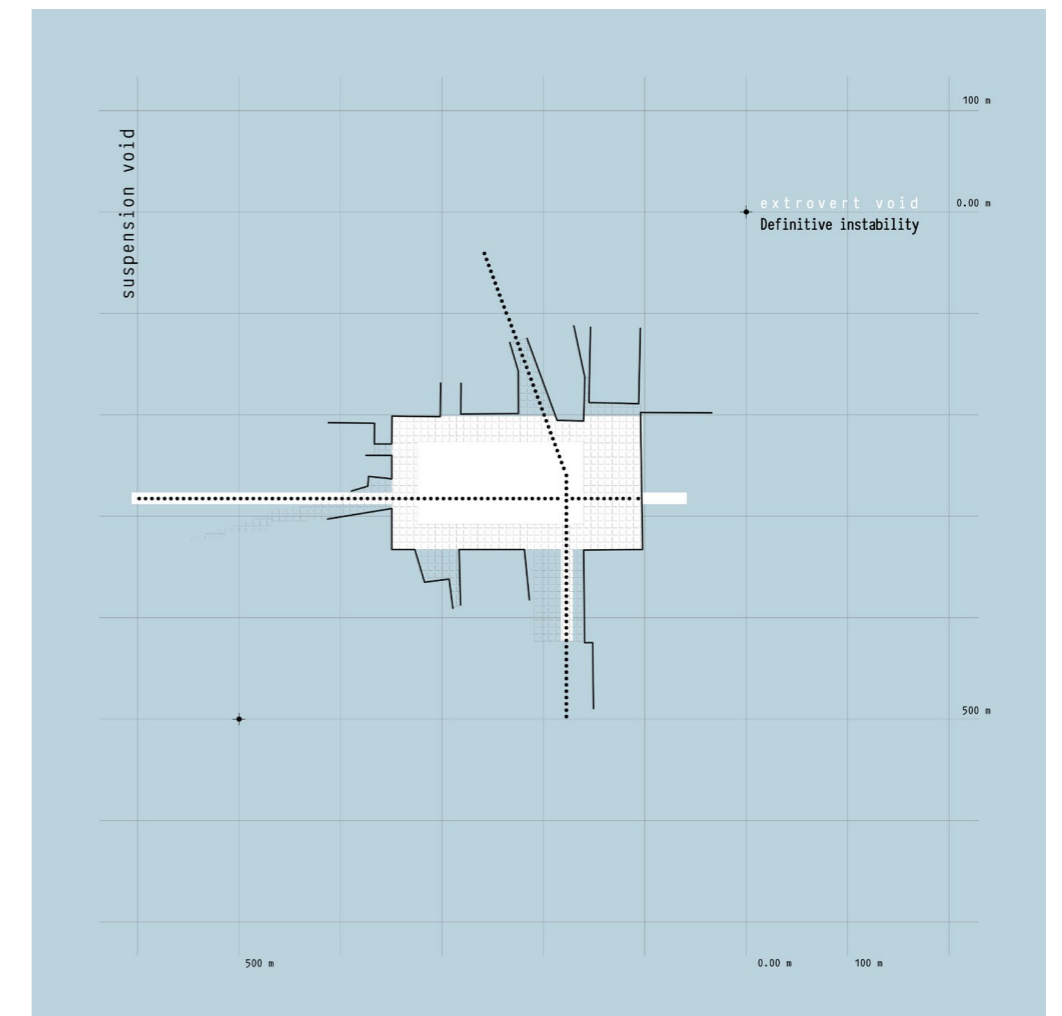
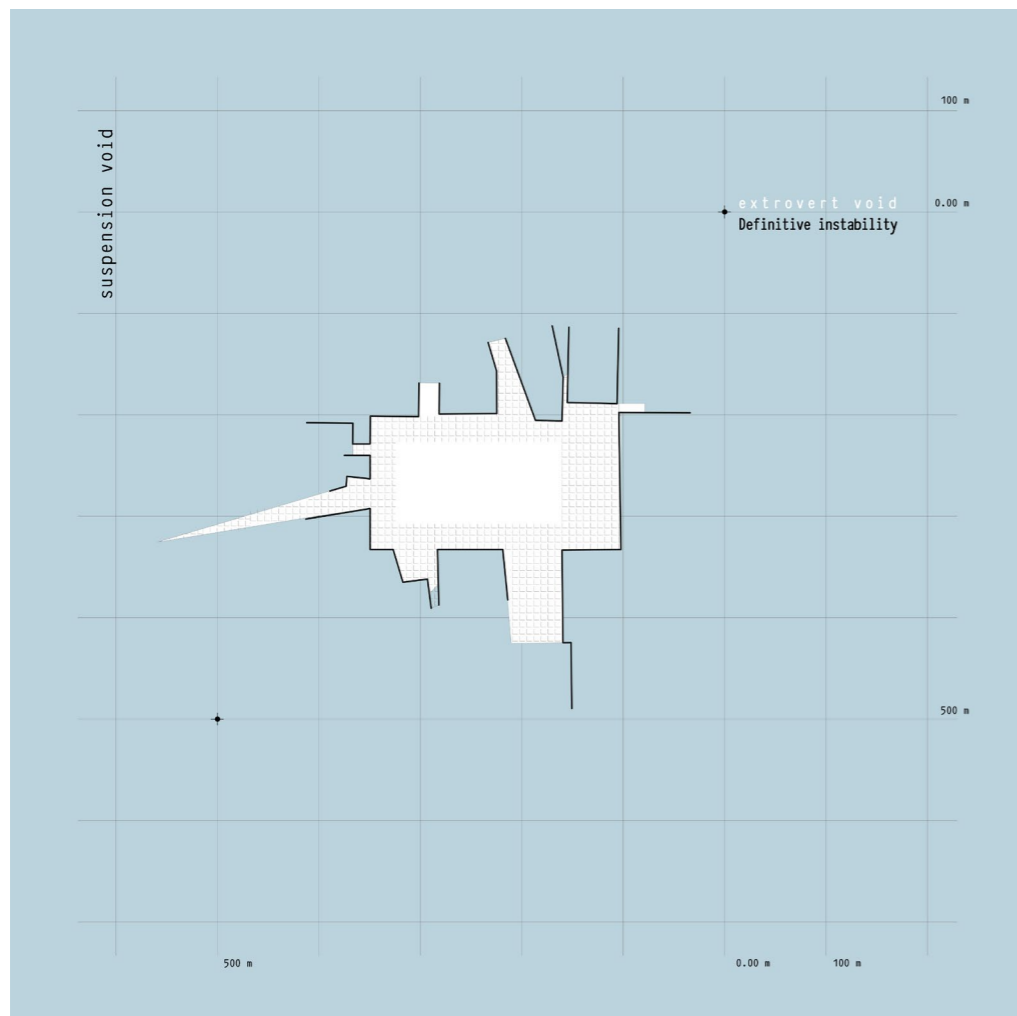
27 Author, "Void and axis", (2020).
mnemonics island_micro scale
Introvert void_Traditional dogma





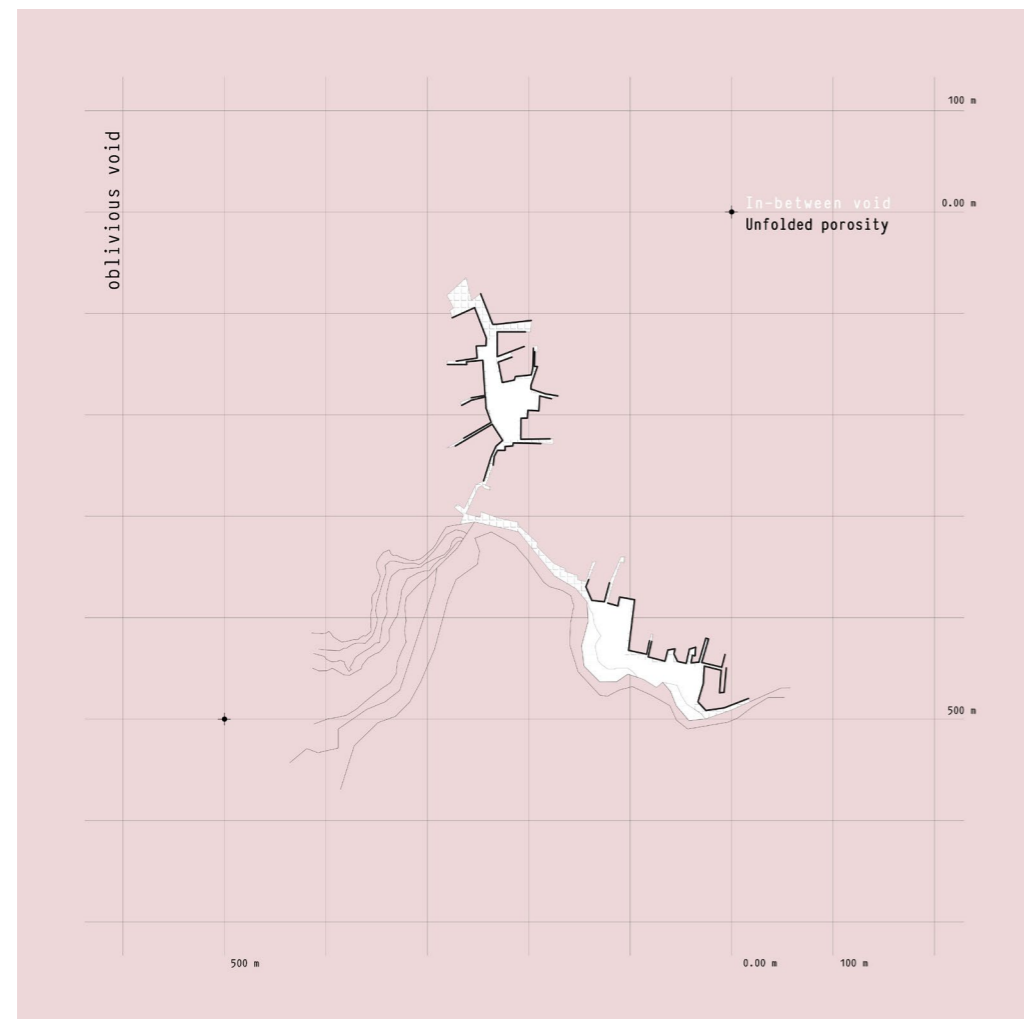
28 Author, "Threshold", (2020).
fluvial island_micro scale
Extrovert void_Definitive instability

29 Author, "Void and axis", (2020).
fluvial island_micro scale
Extrovert void_Definitive instability



TENACIOUS CAIRO_
MELANCHOLY OF VOID AS DICHOTOMY BETWEEN THE IMPLICIT AND EXPLICIT DOCTRINE

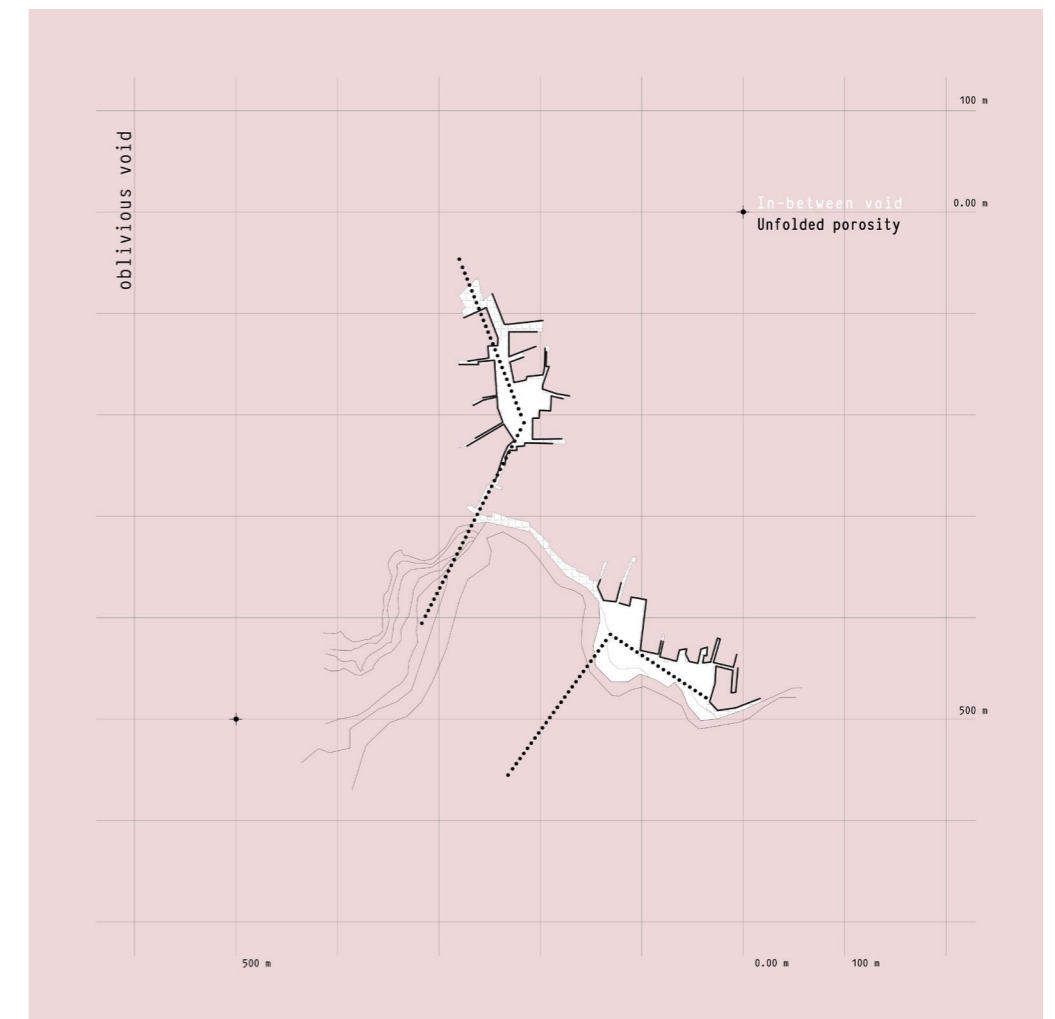
REVIVING THE CONCEPT OF VOID IN THE MIDDLE EASTERN TRADITIONS AS AN ALTERNATIVE SOCIO-SPATIAL SCENARIO FOR REGENERATING PUBLIC SPACES IN CAIRO'S ARCHIPELAGO

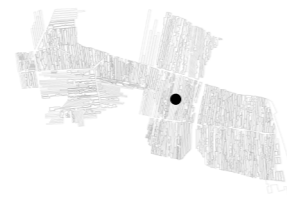


II.2_Conclusion: The future of the past as a concept of metamorphosis

30 Author, "Threshold", (2020).
topographical island_micro scale
In-between void_unfolded porosity

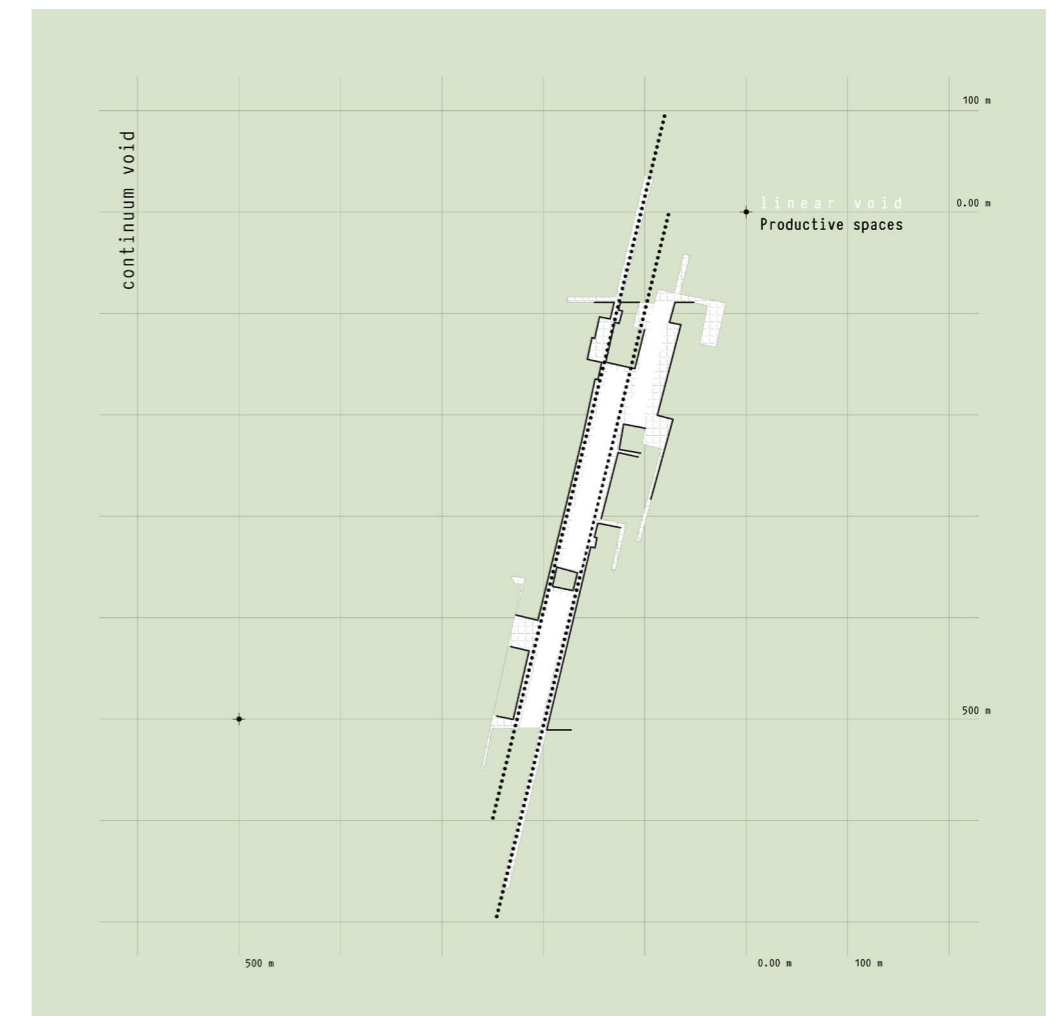
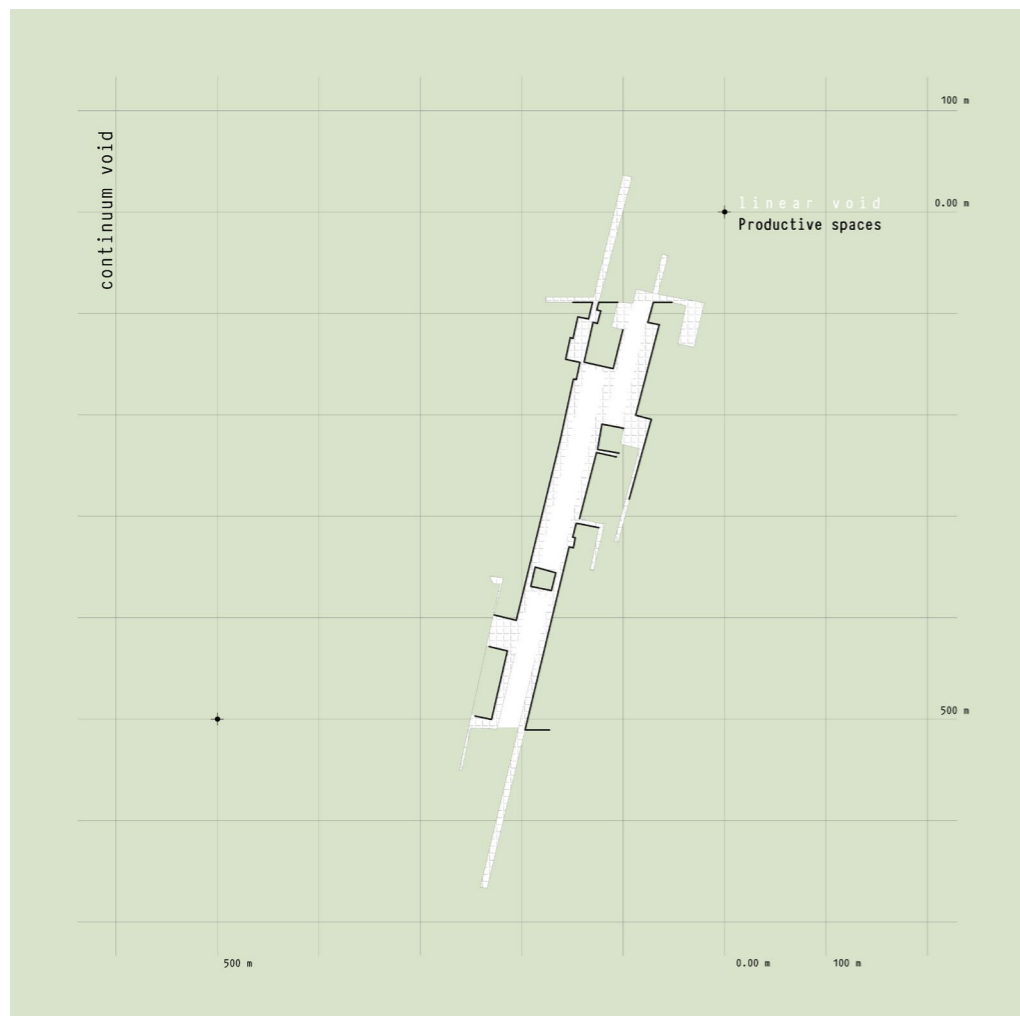
31 Author, "Void and axis", (2020).
topographical island_micro scale
In-between void_unfolded porosity

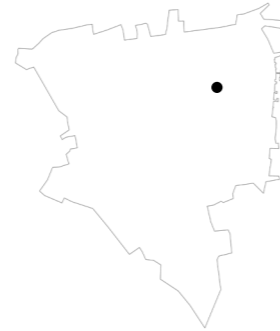




32 Author, "Threshold", (2020).
 rural island_micro scale
 Linear void_Productive spaces

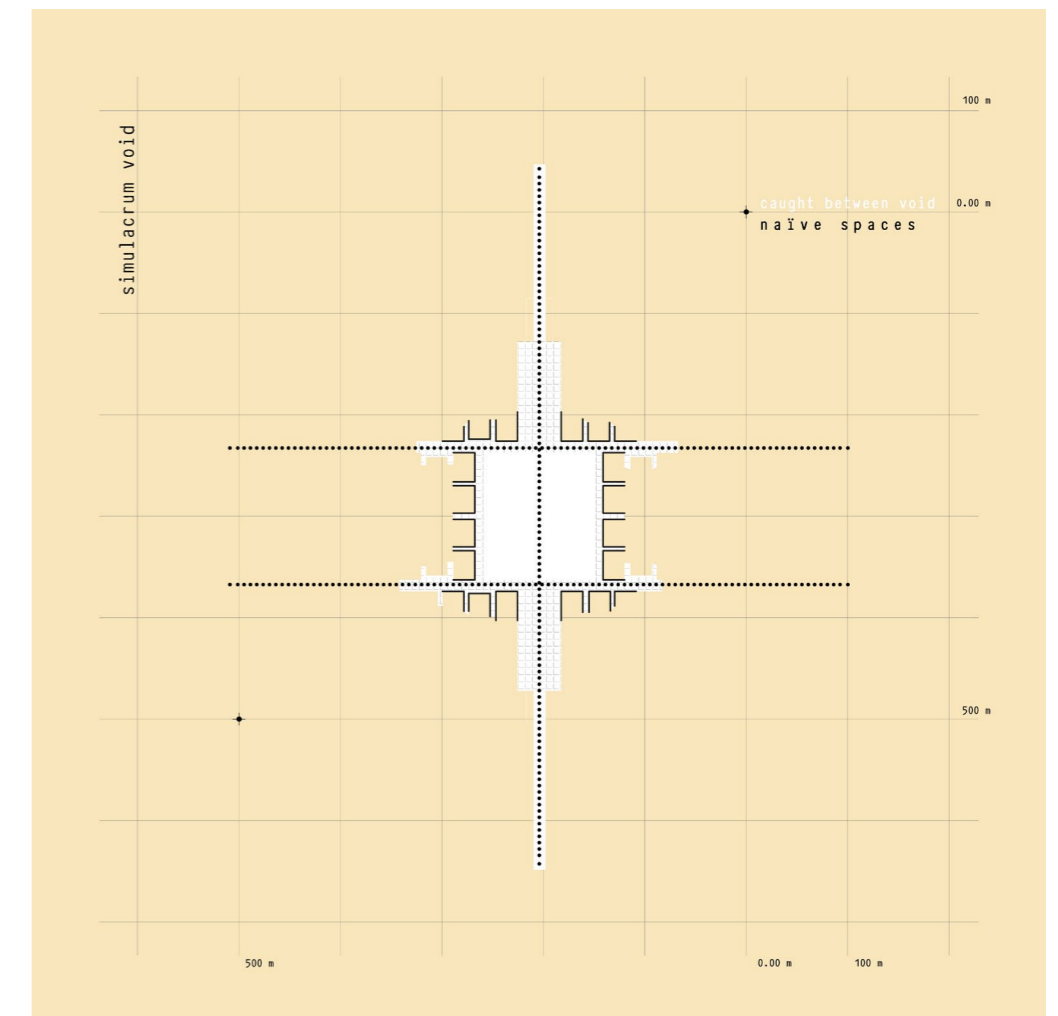
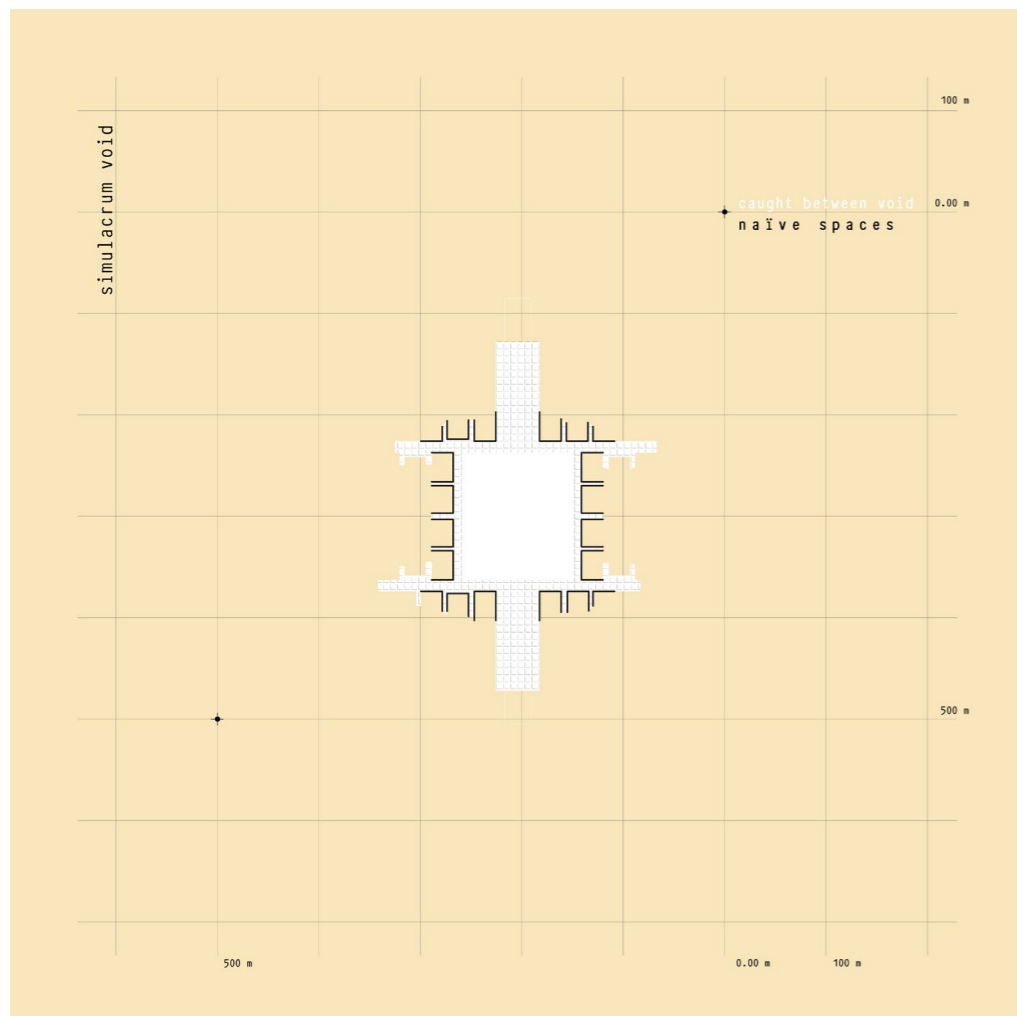
33 Author, "Void and axis", (2020).
 rural island_micro scale
 Linear void_Productive spaces





34 Author, "Threshold", (2020).
desert island_micro scale
Caught-between void_Naïve spaces

35 Author, "Void and axis", (2020).
desert island_micro scale
Caught-between void_Naïve spaces



36 Bashtil Village, Cairo.



36

Design

Dwelling, memory and presence of human activities within open spaces, are configured as a necessity act for thought and materialize its design. The act of design in fact is like a code of writing that connects in single composition a figurative reality with logical dimension of each element. The design process is not delineated by linear and growing sequences, but rather by a circular arrangement of essence, memories and experiences. The anticipation reflection of the void in the Mnemonics Island can be traced back to those prefiguration archetypes where the void is projected as defined collective space, interior but in strong relation with the outside as it acts as the main public space that accommodates sacred, educational and social activities. The linguistic character of this void is the porosity within the fabrics where the dwellers could flow freely between inside and outside within the unity generated by the composition. The tumultuous replication of the Western square within Fluvial Island has outlined a retrospect of detached visions where the decontextualized model appeared foreign to the local inhabitants and as result, the appropriation of the space remained socially weak, likewise the square became an authentic imaginary subject far from the urban reality of the place. The ingenuity of the random arrangement of the void in the Topographical Island has shown its spatial potential as a compositional path that requires a necessary verification for a continuous labyrinth of open spaces. Moreover, the continuous static form through a frenetic and very rapid process aligned with the linear fields has shaped the open spaces of the Rural Island however the presence of the form couldn't engage the social life within its void. Finally, the discontinuous sequence of green plots within the Desert Island was based on the definitive modern model of separated function besides the orthogonal superimposed grid has terminated any relation with the suspended void.

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II.2_Conclusion: The future of the past as a concept of metamorphosis

37 Author, "Void and flow", (2020).

mnemonics island_micro scale

Introvert void_Traditional dogma

38 Author, "Activity_educational", (2020).

mnemonics island_micro scale

Introvert void_Traditional dogma

39 Author, "Activity_sacred", (2020).

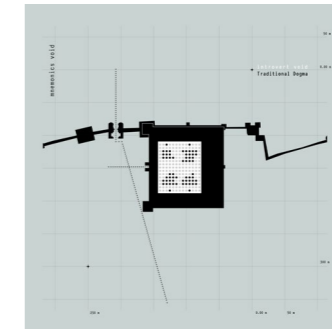
mnemonics island_micro scale

Introvert void_Traditional dogma

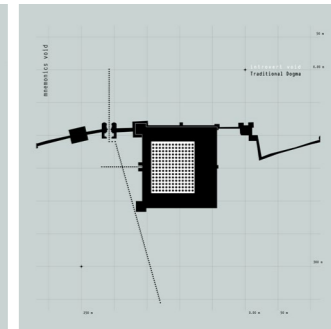
40 Author, "Activity_social", (2020).

mnemonics island_micro scale

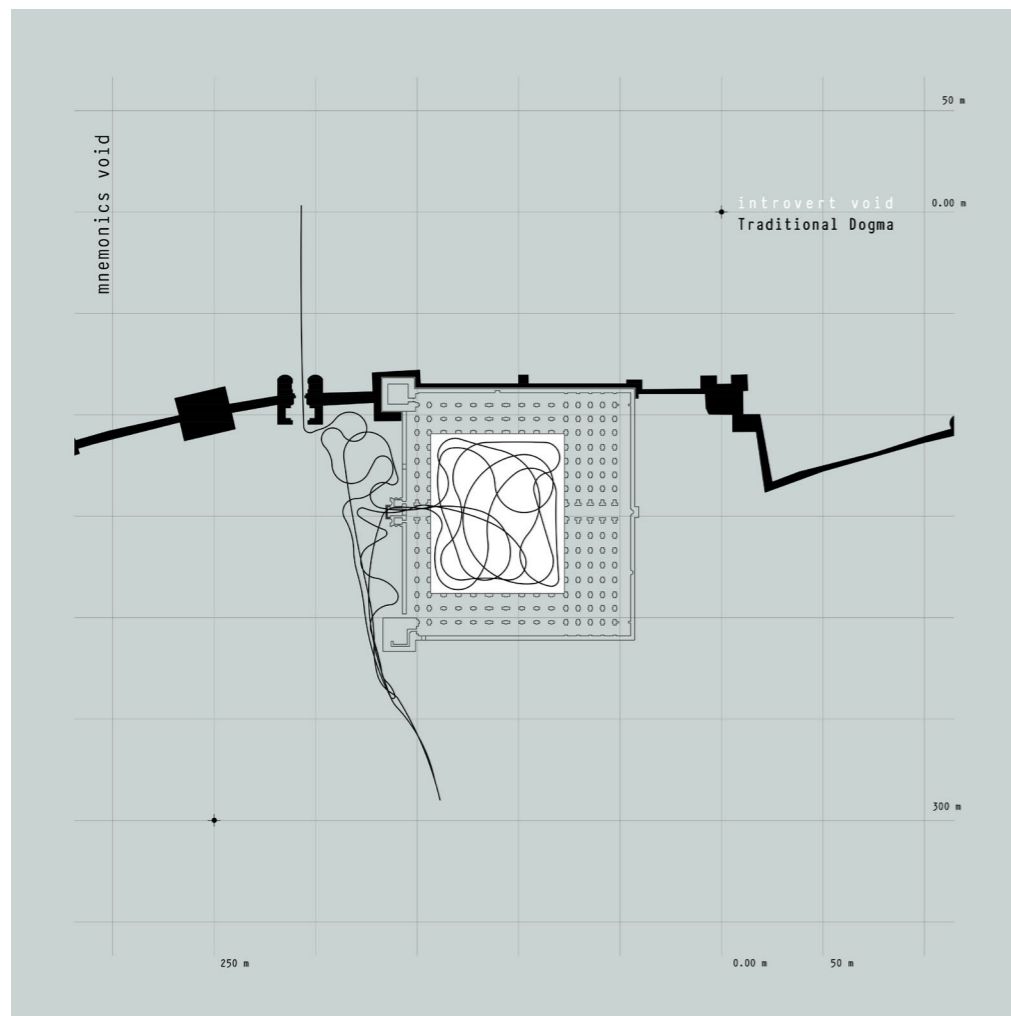
Introvert void_Traditional dogma



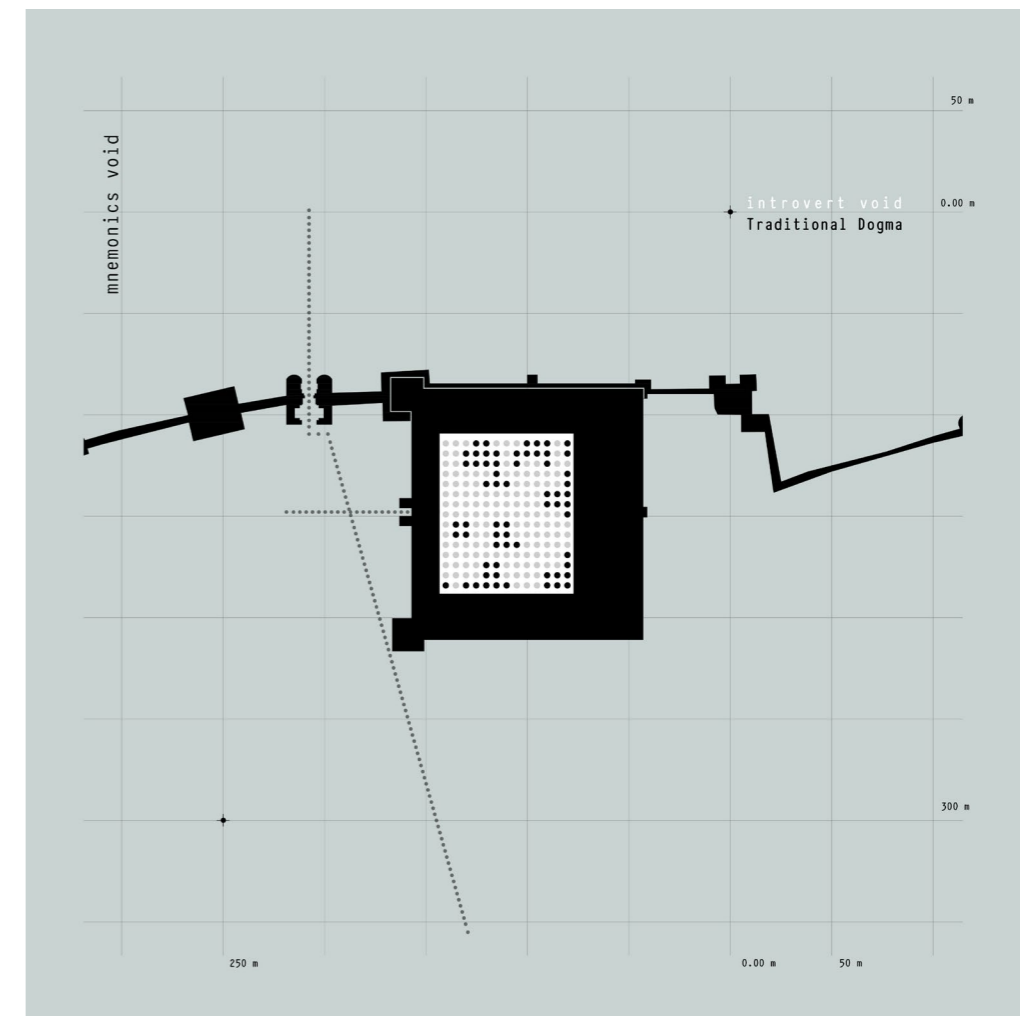
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39



37

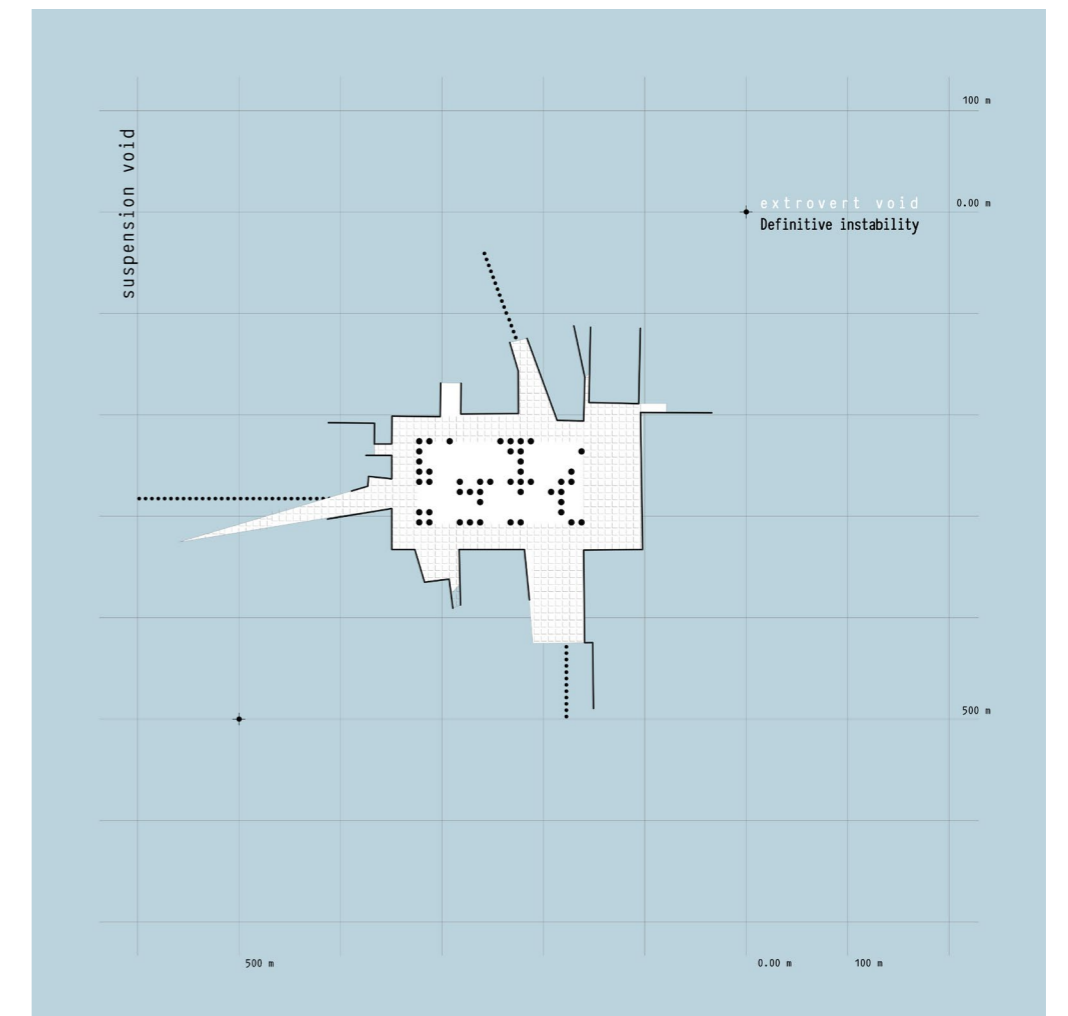
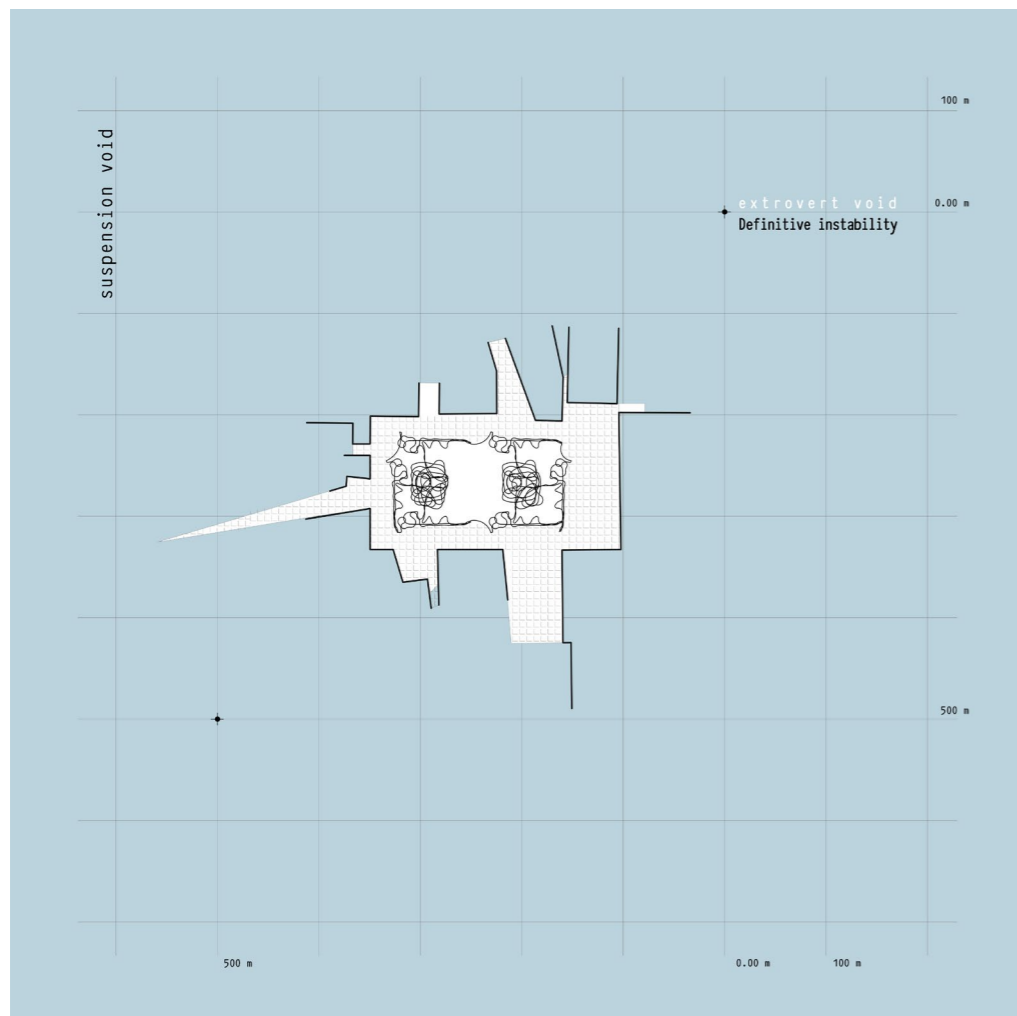


40



41 Author, "Void and flow", (2020).
fluvial island_micro scale
Extrovert void_Definitive instability

42 Author, "Activity_social", (2020).
fluvial island_micro scale
Extrovert void_Definitive instability



TENACIOUS CAIRO_
MELANCHOLY OF VOID AS DICHOTOMY BETWEEN THE IMPLICIT AND EXPLICIT DOCTRINE

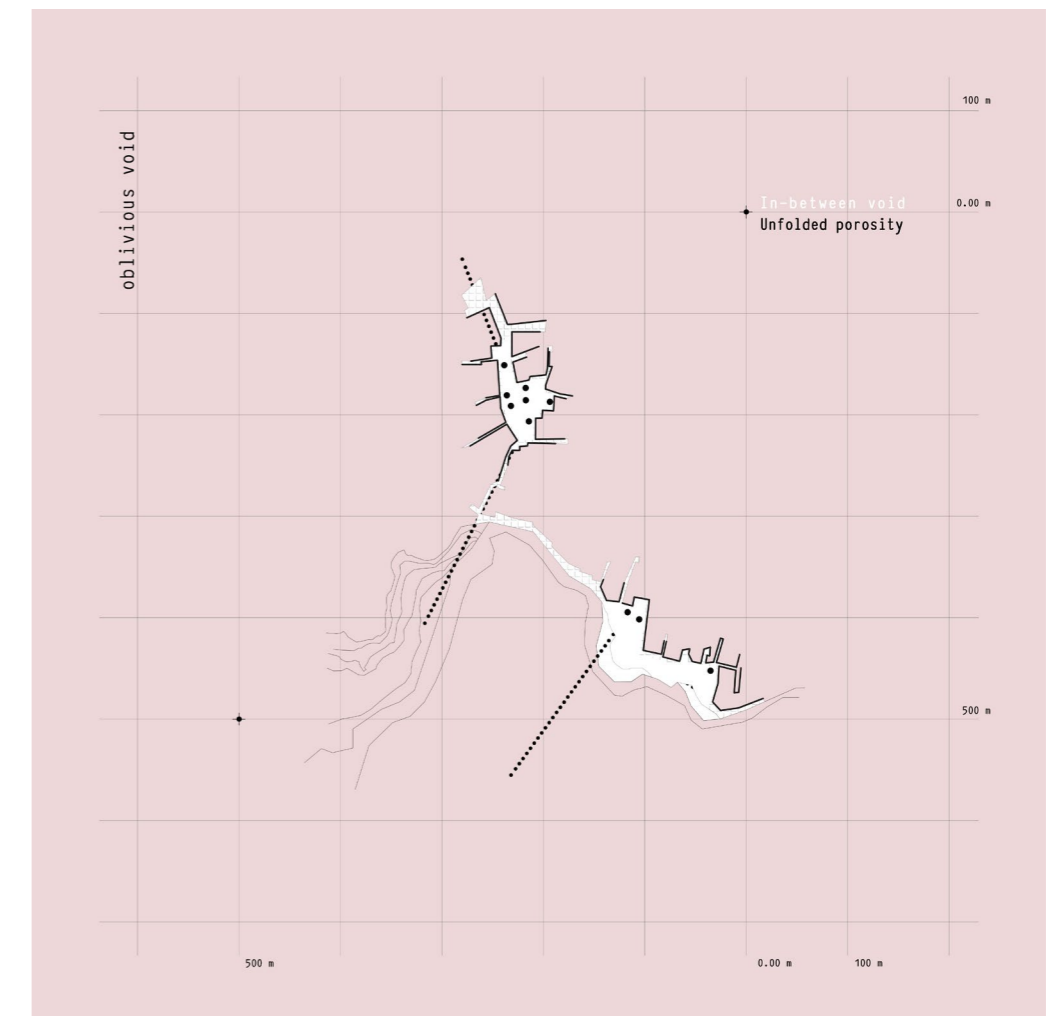
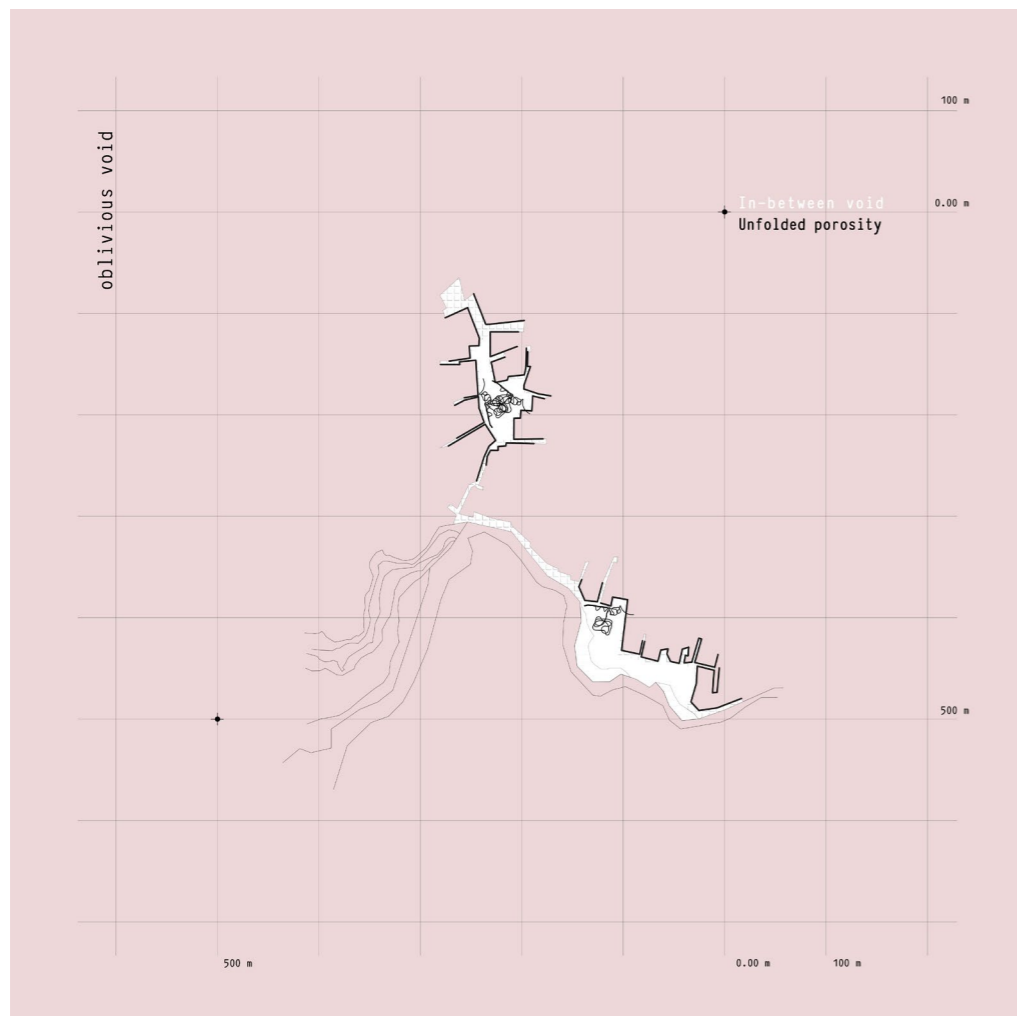
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II.2_Conclusion: *The future of the past as a concept of metamorphosis*



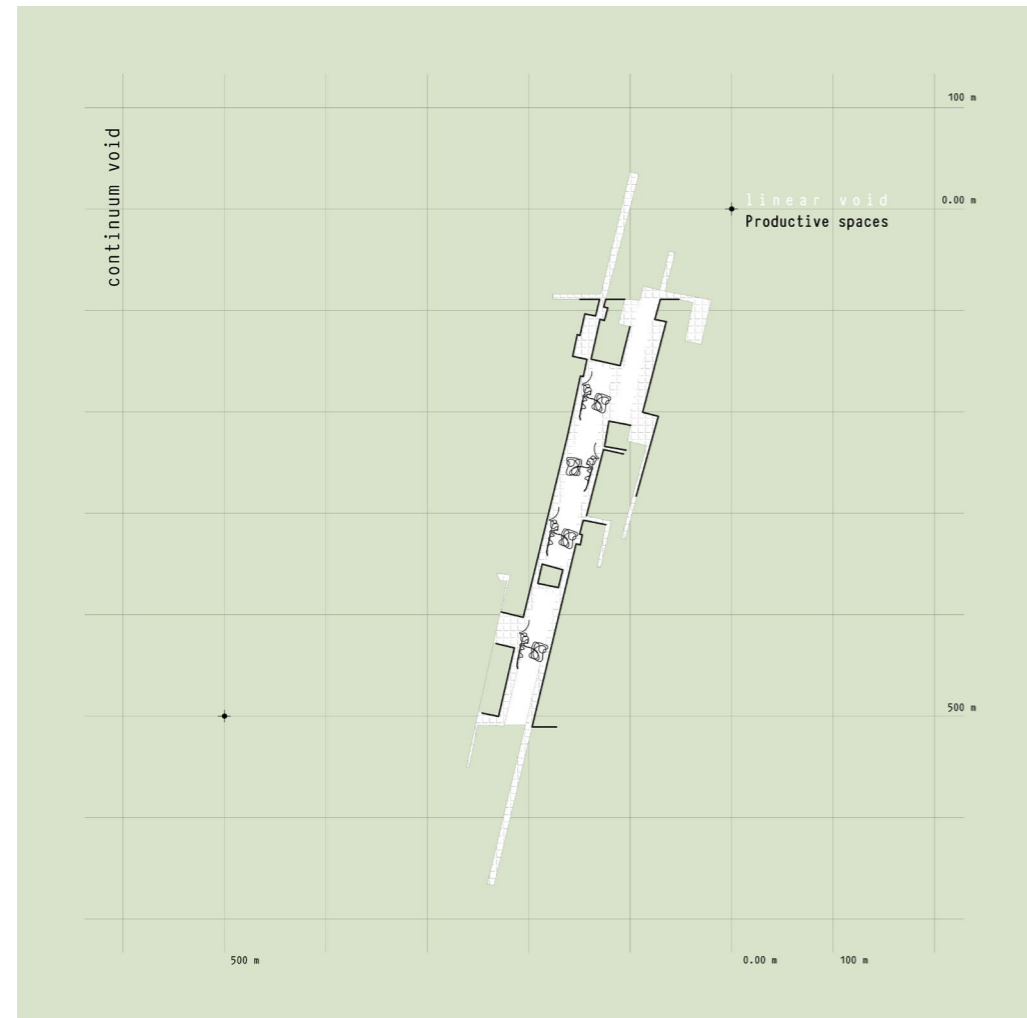
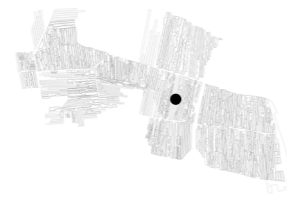
43 Author, "Void and flow", (2020).
topographical island_micro scale
In-between void_unfolded porosity

44 Author, "Activity_social", (2020).
topographical island_micro scale
In-between void_unfolded porosity



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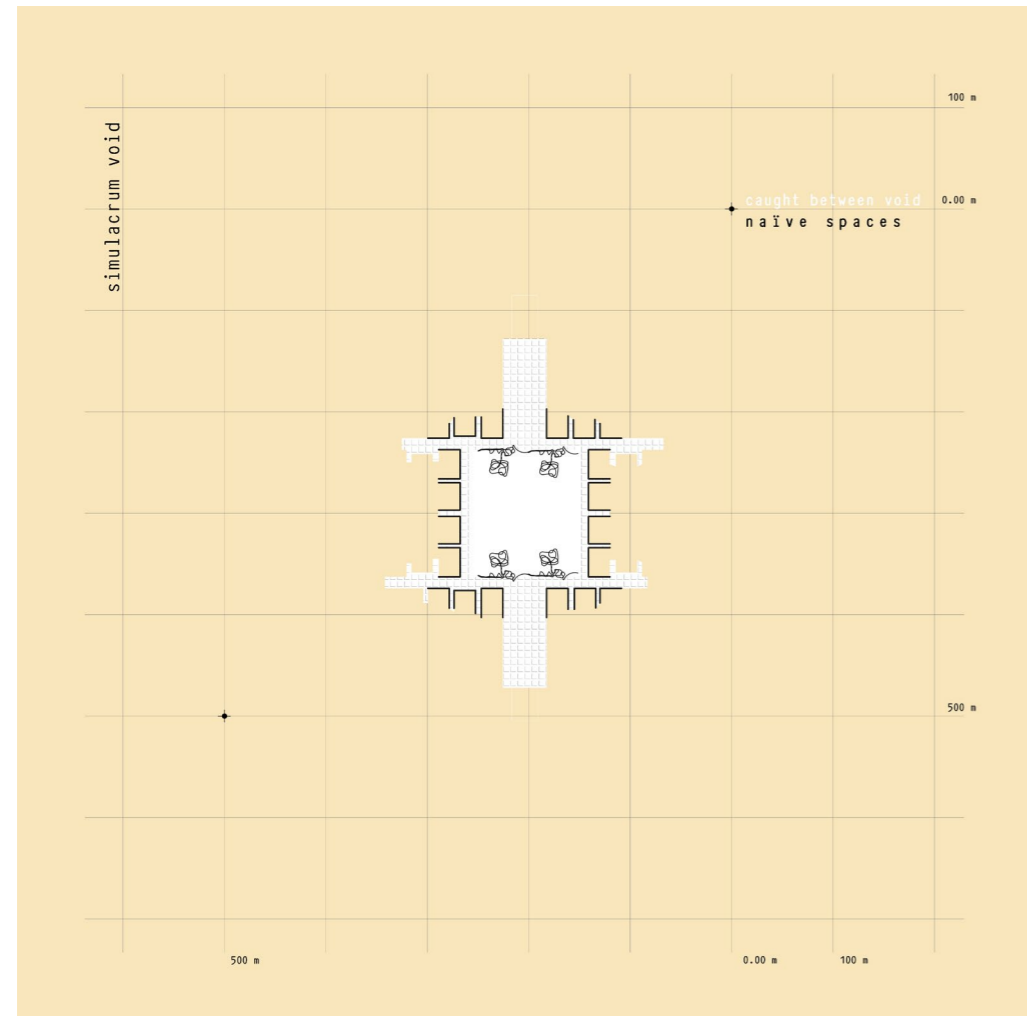
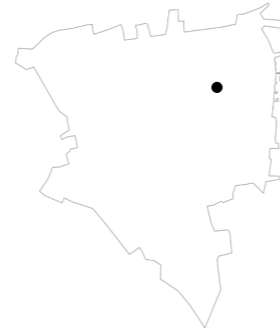
45 Author, "Void and flow", (2020).
rural island_micro scale
Linear void_Productive spaces

46 Author, "Activity_social", (2020).
rural island_micro scale
Linear void_Productive spaces



TENACIOUS CAIRO_
MELANCHOLY OF VOID AS DICHOTOMY BETWEEN THE IMPLICIT AND EXPLICIT DOCTRINE

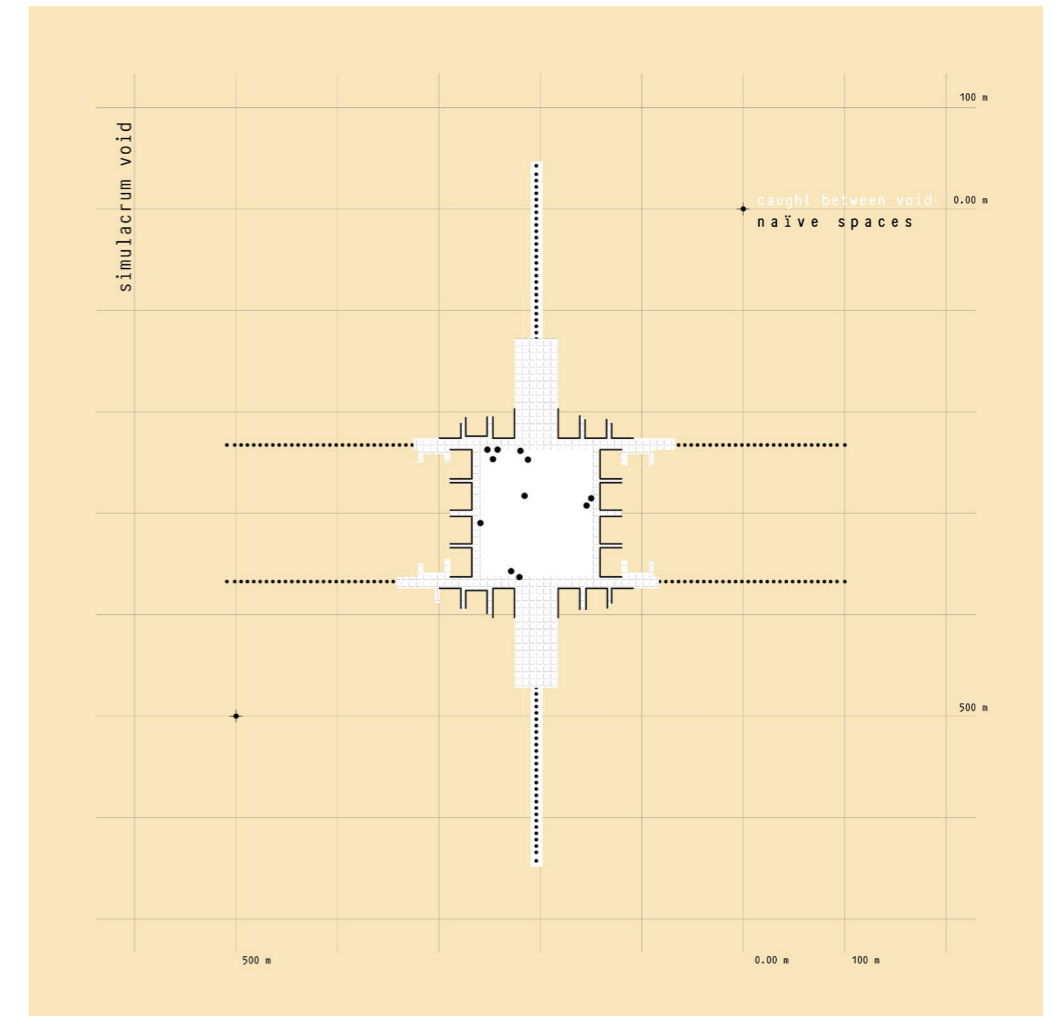
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47 Author, "Void and flow", (2020).
desert island_micro scale
Caught-between void_Naïve spaces

48 Author, "Activity_social", (2020).
desert island_micro scale
Caught-between void_Naïve spaces



49 Nasr City, Cairo.



49

Measure

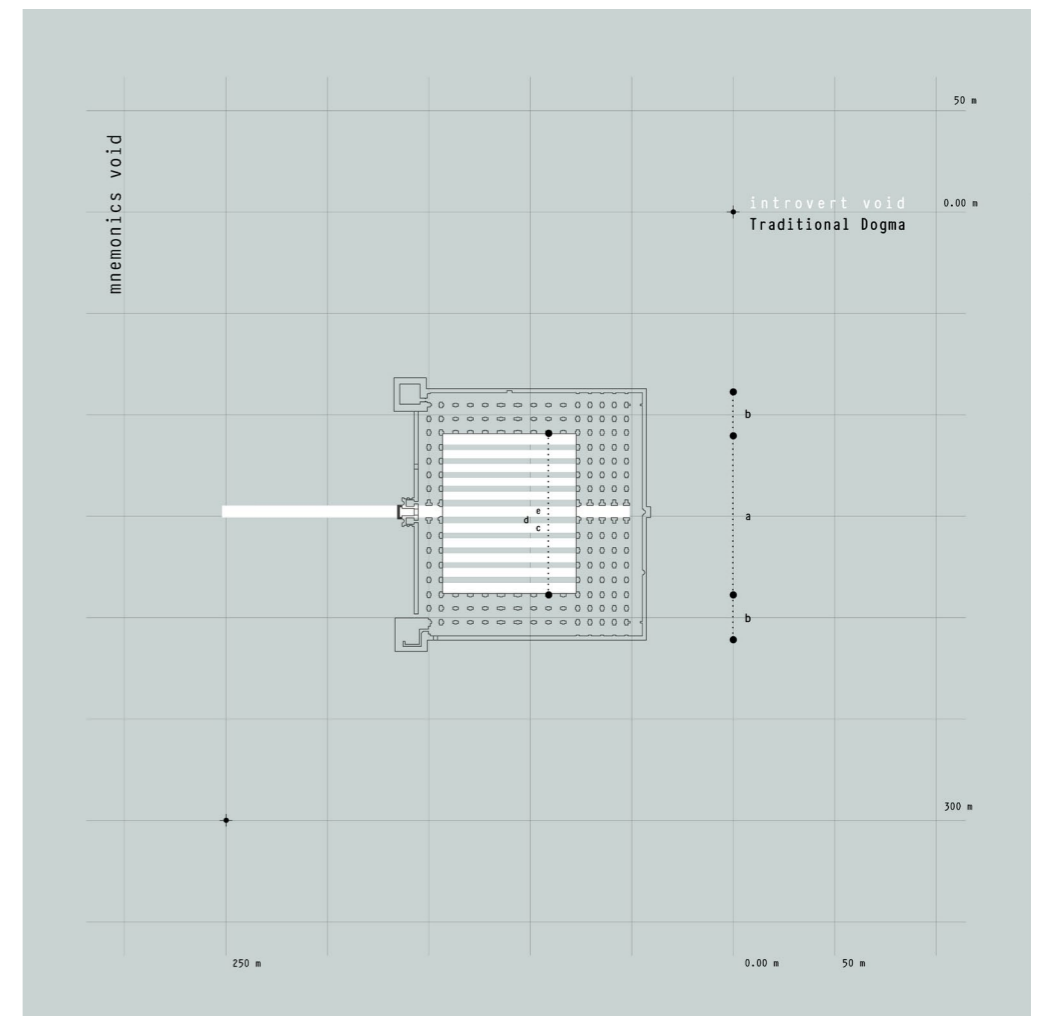
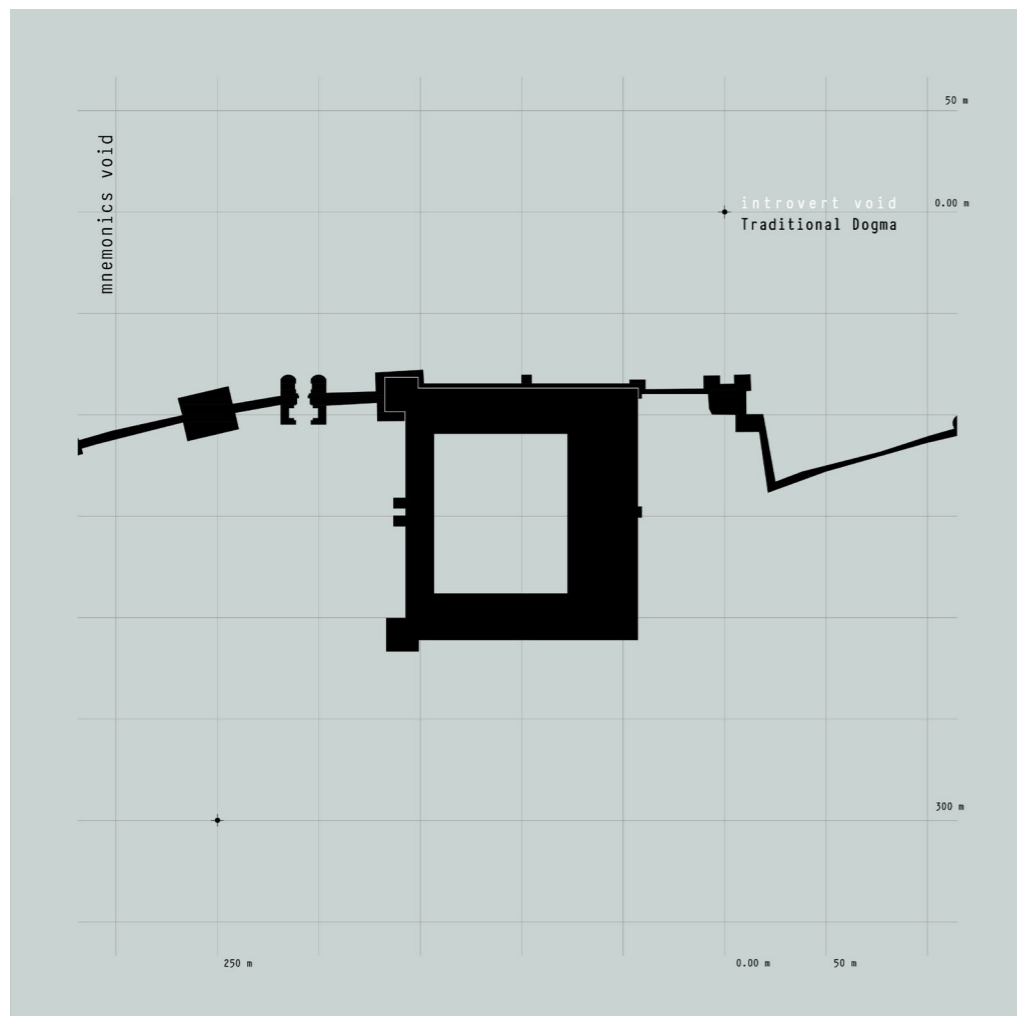
The concept of measuring can be referred to coexisting and autonomous meaning: first, the acknowledgement of an effective value gained by multiplying basic unit for a definition of an effective length, the other aspect that is more sophisticated, is related to an interpretative dimension, exclusive to the compositional action of measuring that provides a series of proportional relationships between the elements and the context in order to be able to rearrange and recompose them in series of sequential presence. So if the first meaning is related to the determination of measure in meter for the form, the second meaning is more referring to a disciplinary competence, it refers to the variable and the subjective basic units that is crucial for understanding and measuring balance of a composition.

By analysing the Mosque of Al-Hakim in the Mnemonics Island through the two ways of measurement, the first measure is able to understand the sequence of C and D, in which by repeating itself, measures the longitudinal extension of the entire nave. The second measure is focusing on the entire void itself in relation with its context, in this sense if A is the measure of the void; B is always balancing this measure from both sides. And by applying this measure on the other voids in the diverse islands, it could be a surprise to find more or less this subconscious measure in all the other voids although they were developed with different and diverse compositional factors. The A remained the measure of the void, while the B in the Fluvial and the Desert Islands was the streets with different flows and in the Topographical and Rural was the Form itself.

This observation could help the development of these voids by arranging their appearance presents with mutual agreements delineate in the link with the composition and not in the sum of the single elements for fulfilment of the concept of proportion between elements and human scale.

50 Author, "Void structure", (2020).
mnemonics island_micro scale
Introvert void_Traditional dogma

51 Author, "Grammar of measure", (2020).
mnemonics island_micro scale
Introvert void_Traditional dogma



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II.2_Conclusion: The future of the past as a concept of metamorphosis

52 Author, "Void structure", (2020).
fluvial island_micro scale
Extrovert void_Definitive instability

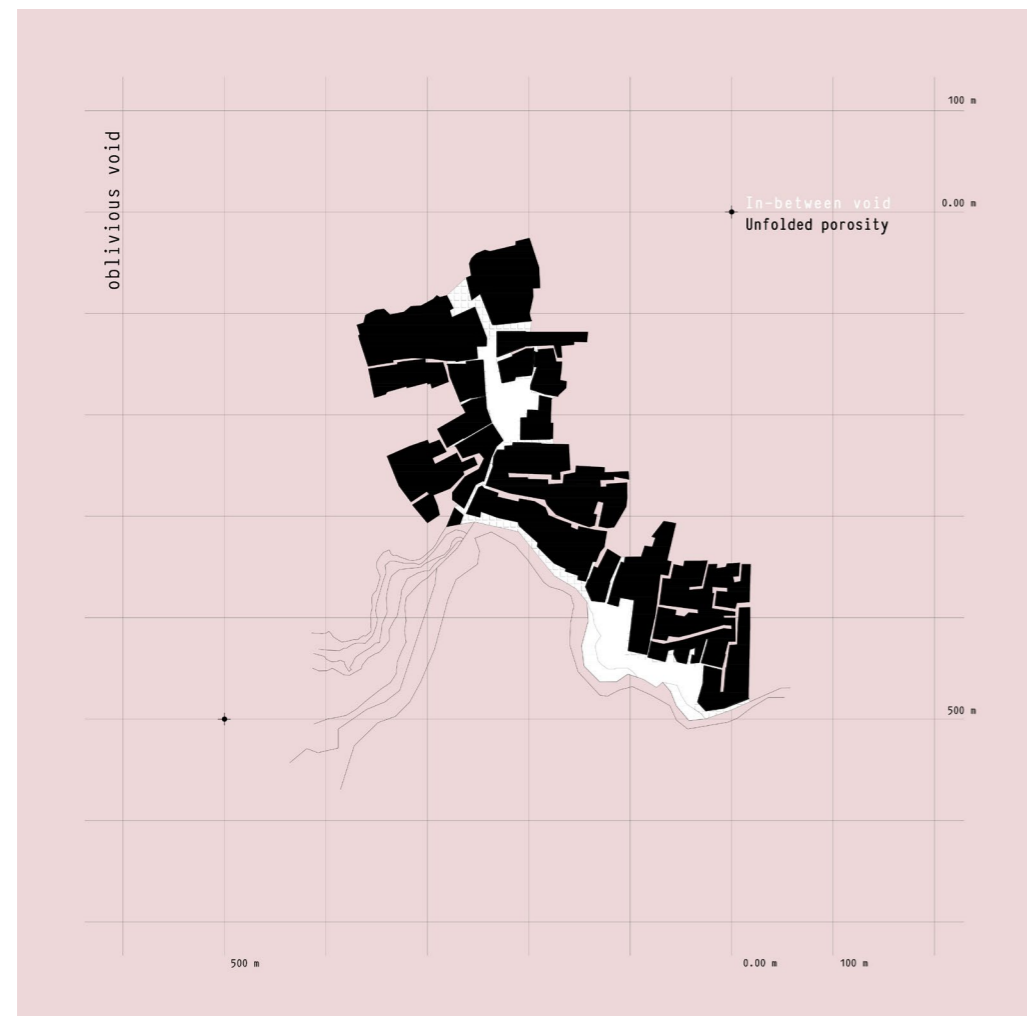
53 Author, "Grammar of measure", (2020).
fluvial island_micro scale
Extrovert void_Definitive instability



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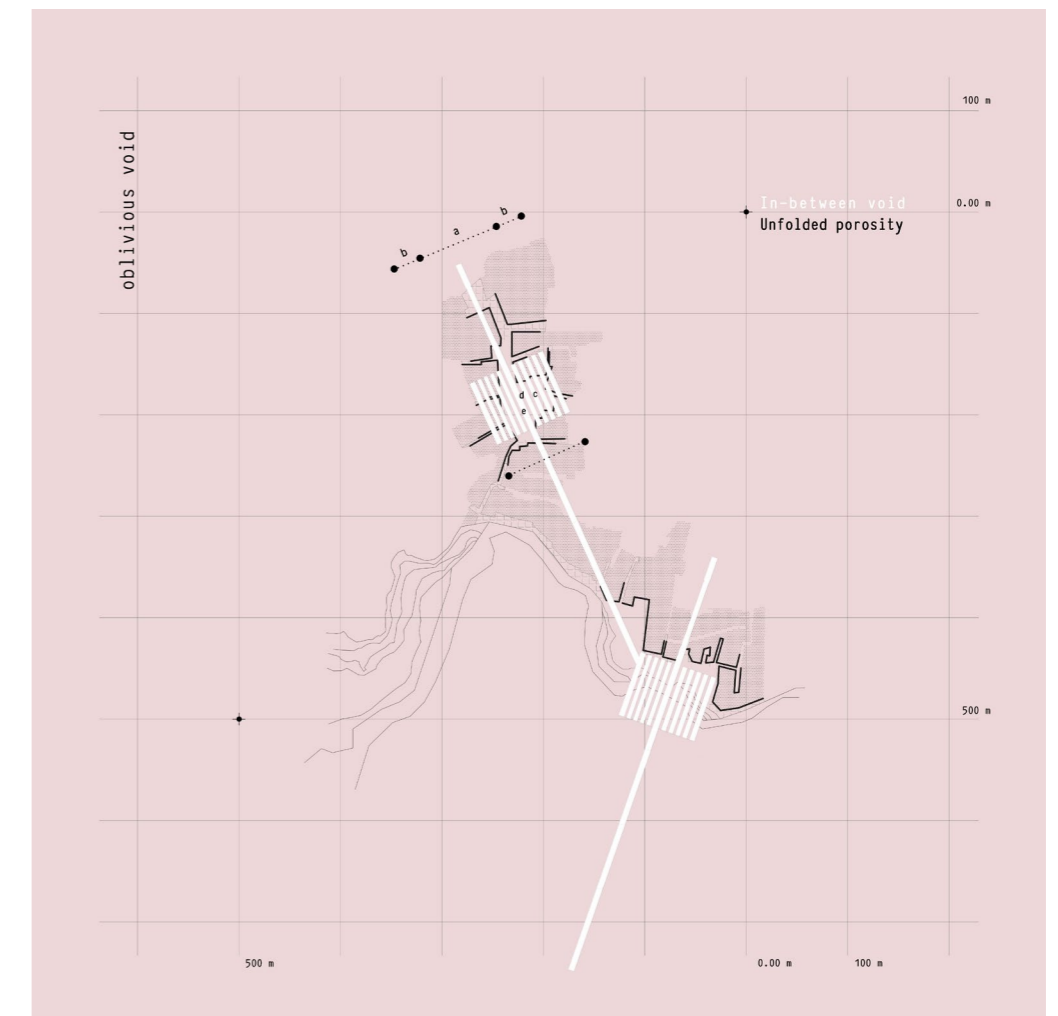
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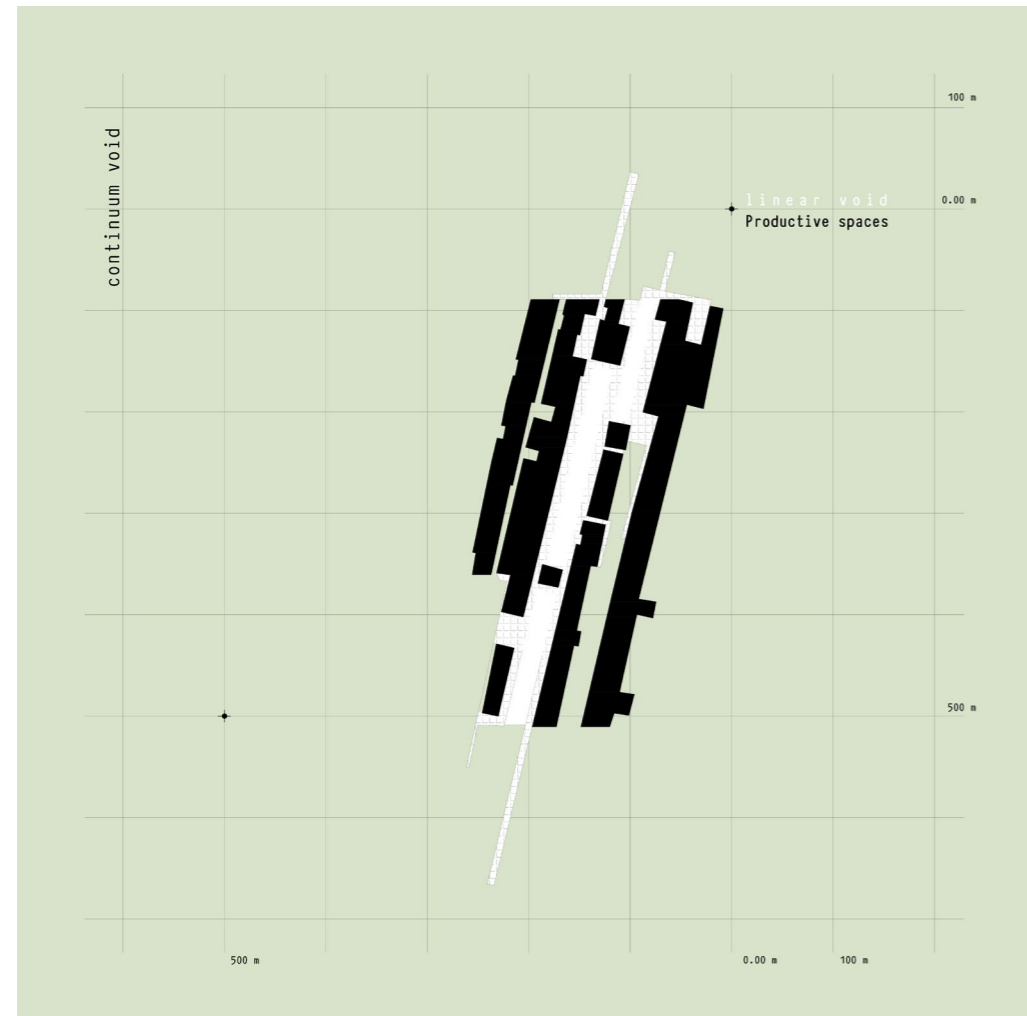
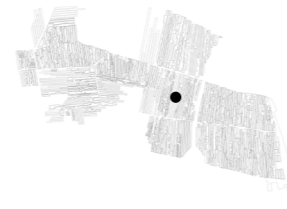
II.2_Conclusion: The future of the past as a concept of metamorphosis



54 Author, "Void structure", (2020).
topographical island_micro scale
In-between void_unfolded porosity

55 Author, "Grammar of measure", (2020).
topographical island_micro scale
In-between void_unfolded porosity

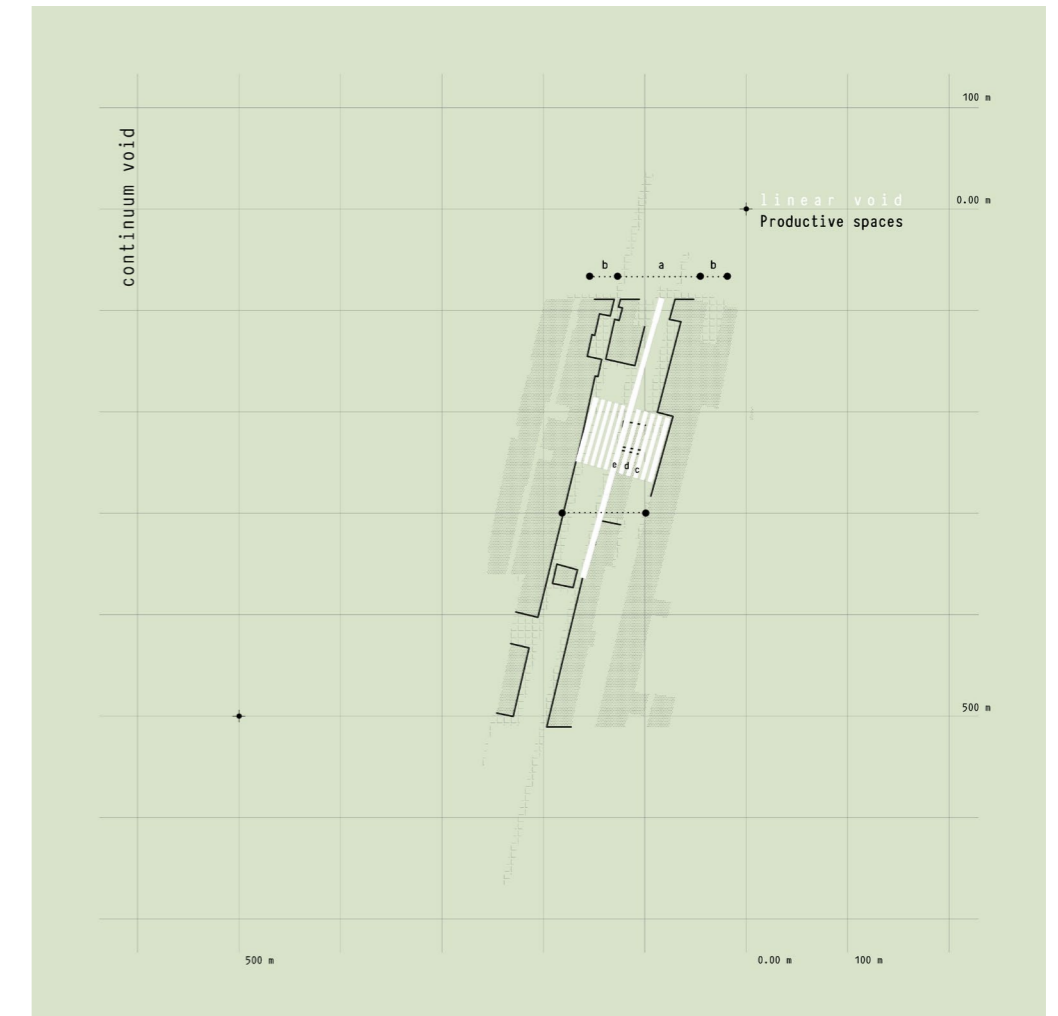




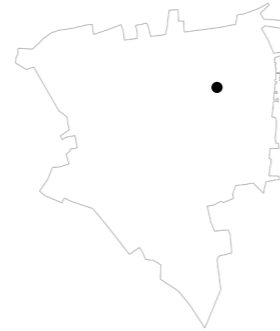
56

56 Author, "Void structure", (2020).
rural island_micro scale
Linear void_Productive spaces

57 Author, "Grammar of measure", (2020).
rural island_micro scale
Linear void_Productive spaces

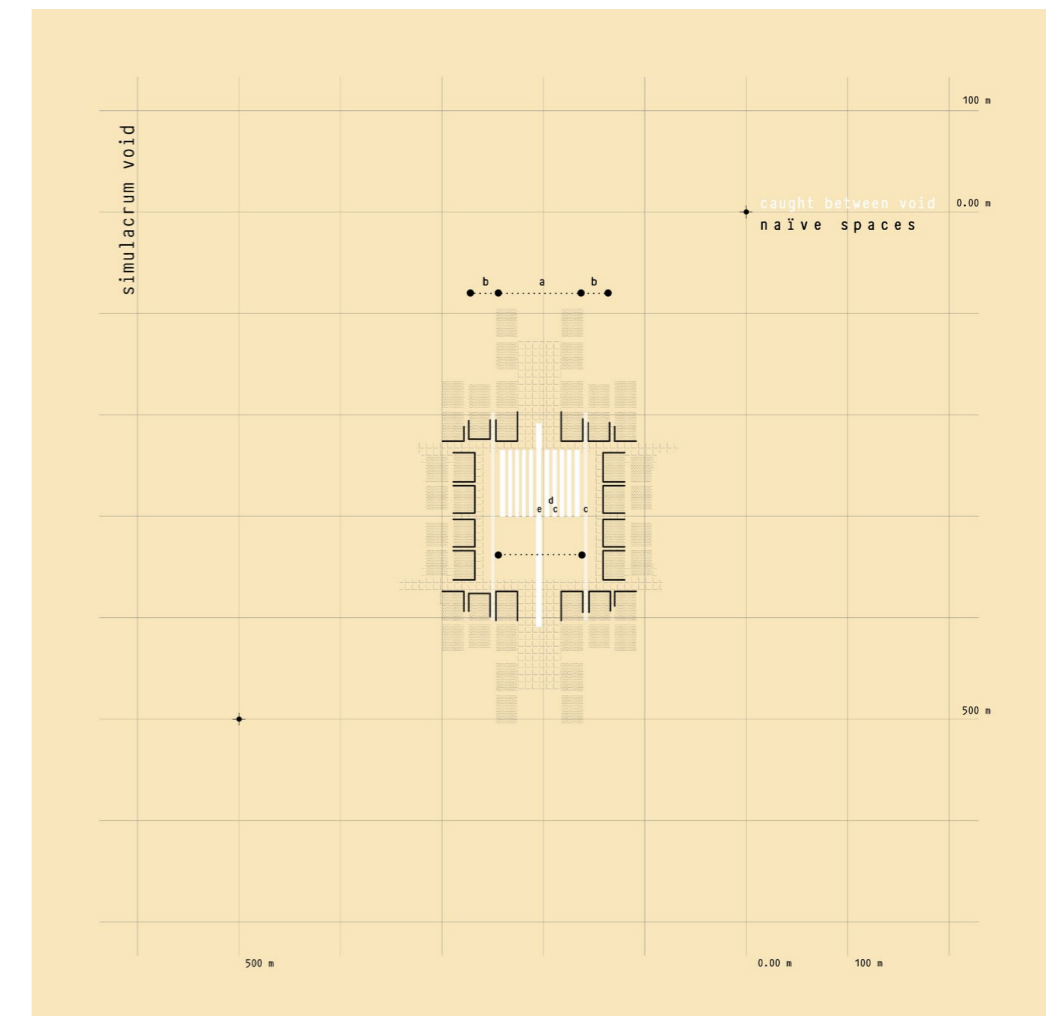
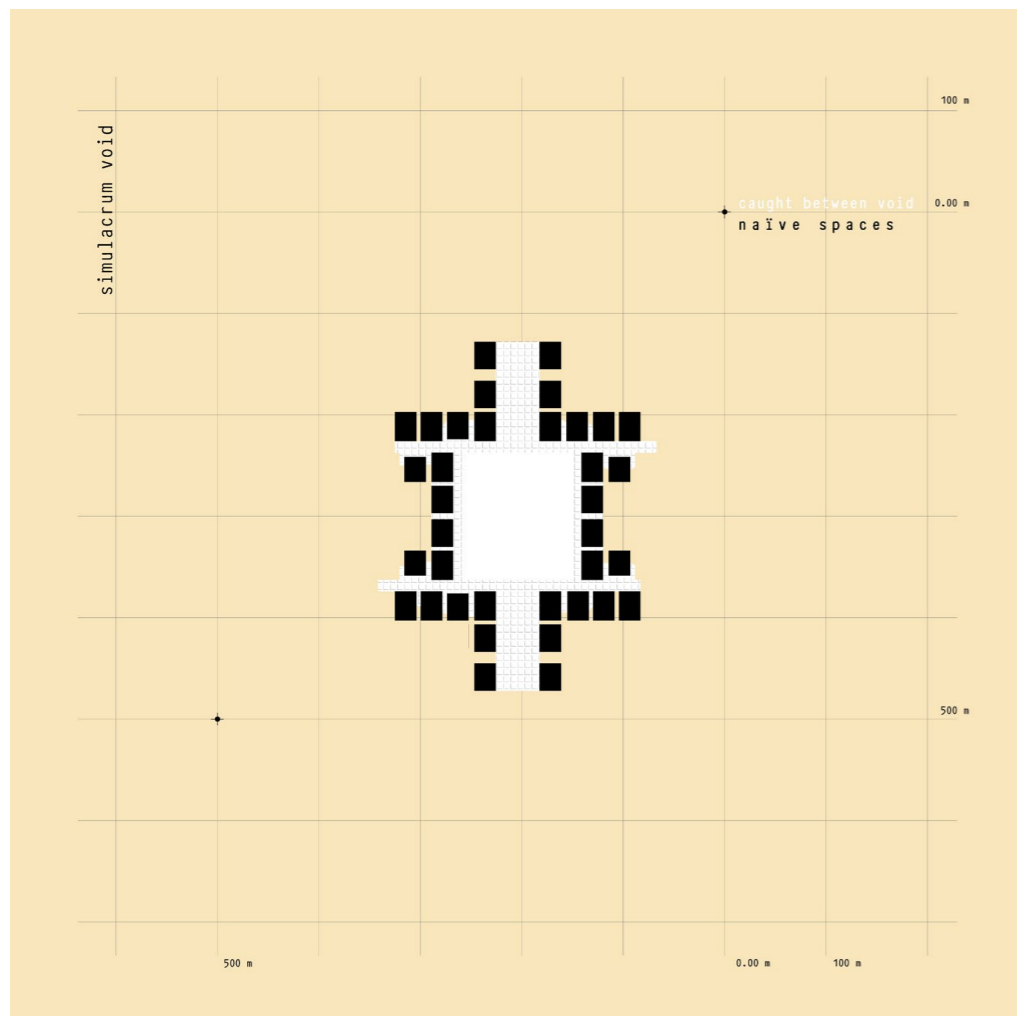


57

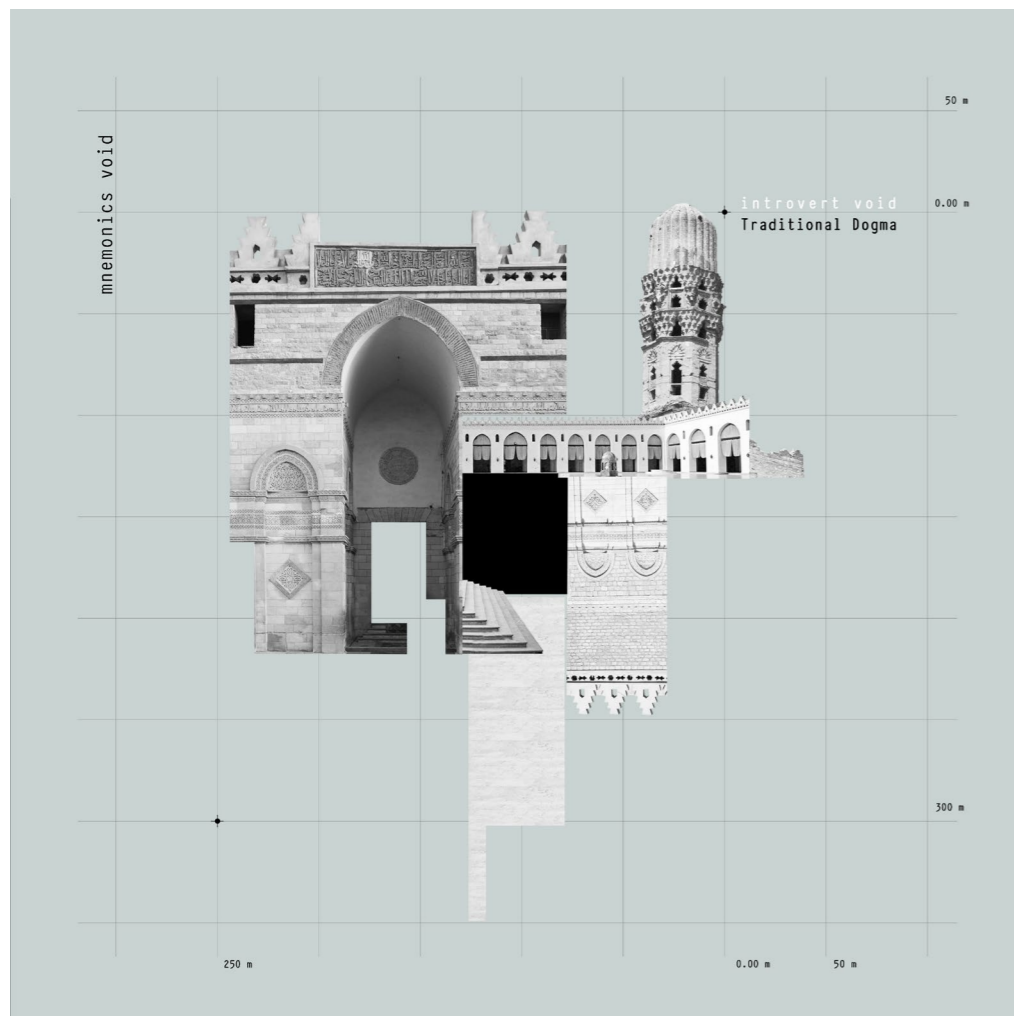


58 Author, "Void structure", (2020).
desert island_micro scale
Caught-between void_Naïve spaces

59 Author, "Grammar of measure", (2020).
desert island_micro scale
Caught-between void_Naïve spaces



60 Author, "Mysticism of Matter", (2020).
 mnemonics island_micro scale_Al-Hakim mosque
 Introvert void_Traditional dogma



Image

The compositional elements surrounding the space have affected the image of the void in spatial and temporal dimensions. Those declared gestural, characterized by the immediacy of the image of invention identifiable, as real image theorems that identify them in compositional maturity were important to understand the impromptu figures of each void that aimed by the urban collages to formalize responses to specific themes. Through the ways of composing the elements in its primordial states provide the space with a naked perspective far from its apparent disorder.

The necessary to formalize the state of image for the *Introvert Void* characterized by a progressive sequence of spaces in a continues process of flowing, seems to compose a dynamic scenario with a clear definition for the void itself where the perceiver could generate a clear image for the void before the other elements. Furthermore the centrality and the strong presence of the void has given the observer the privilege to be inside the image itself, and to create dynamic representations of the components of the primary void in order to have a reference for the composition more than just a strong perspective where the compositional image has always involved the terrestrial and celestial dimensions.

The accumulation of materials due to the solid existence of urban blocks has constructed the image of the square that is always accompanied by the strong perspective influenced by the Western image. The act of image here in the *Extrovert Void* is very important and gives shape and substance to the perspective, besides it configures in an interval contour of phantasmagorias a static and definitive form of the space, where the image was based on the one-pointed perspective that focus on the materialized form and on contrary the void

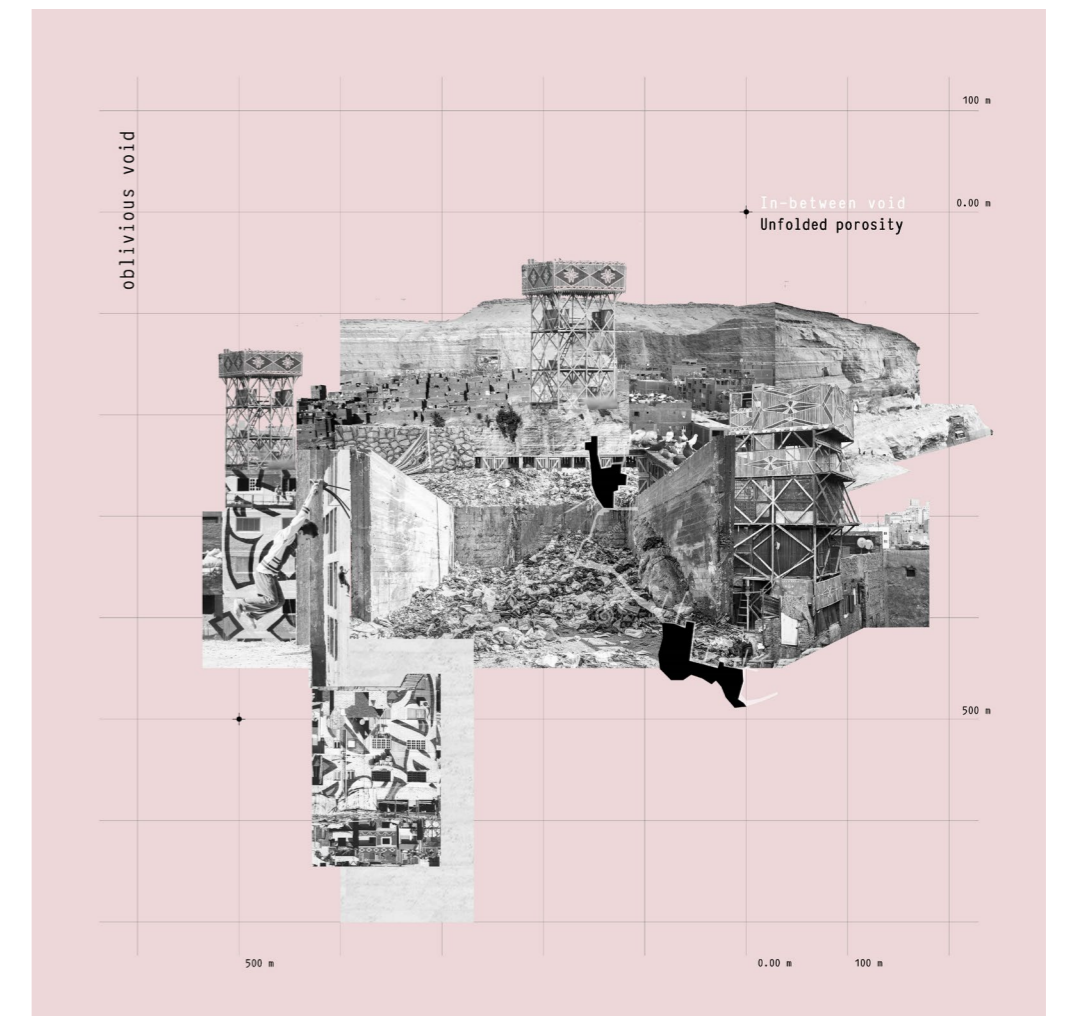
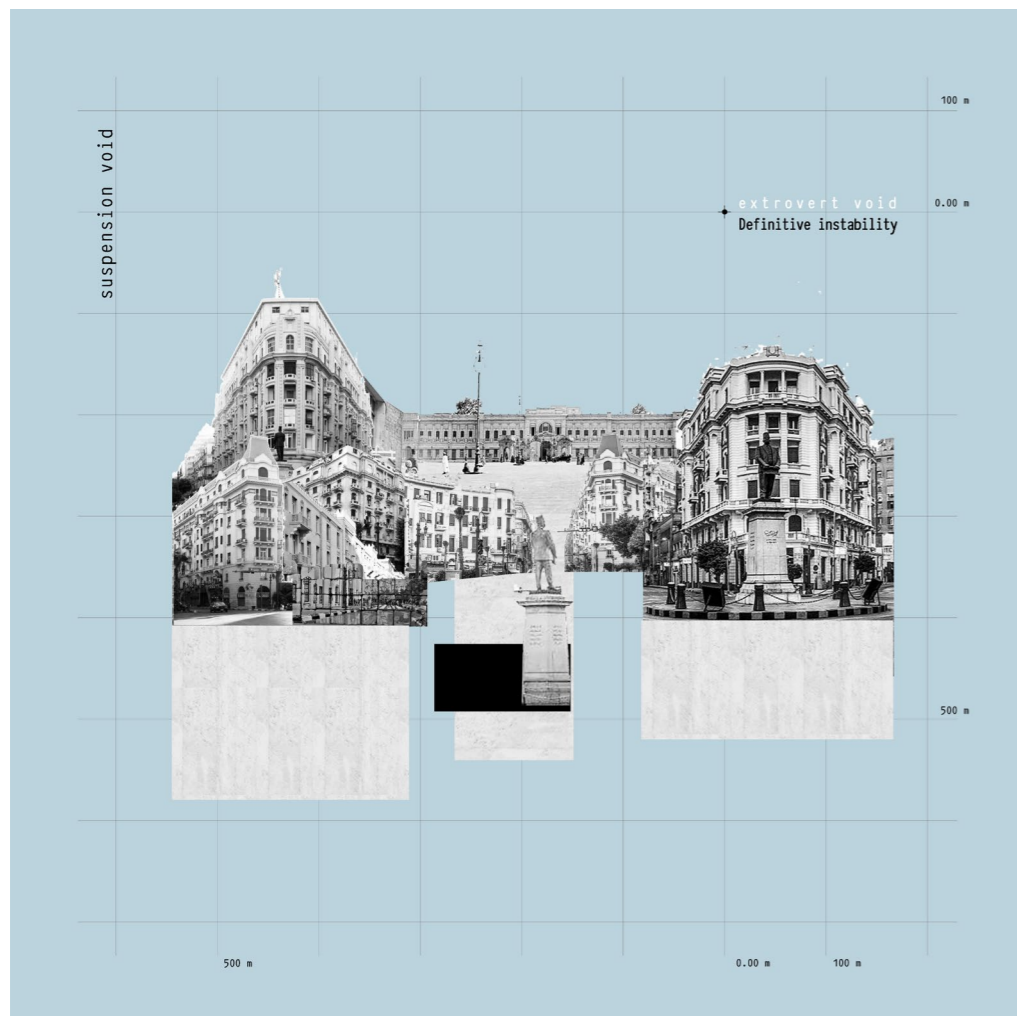
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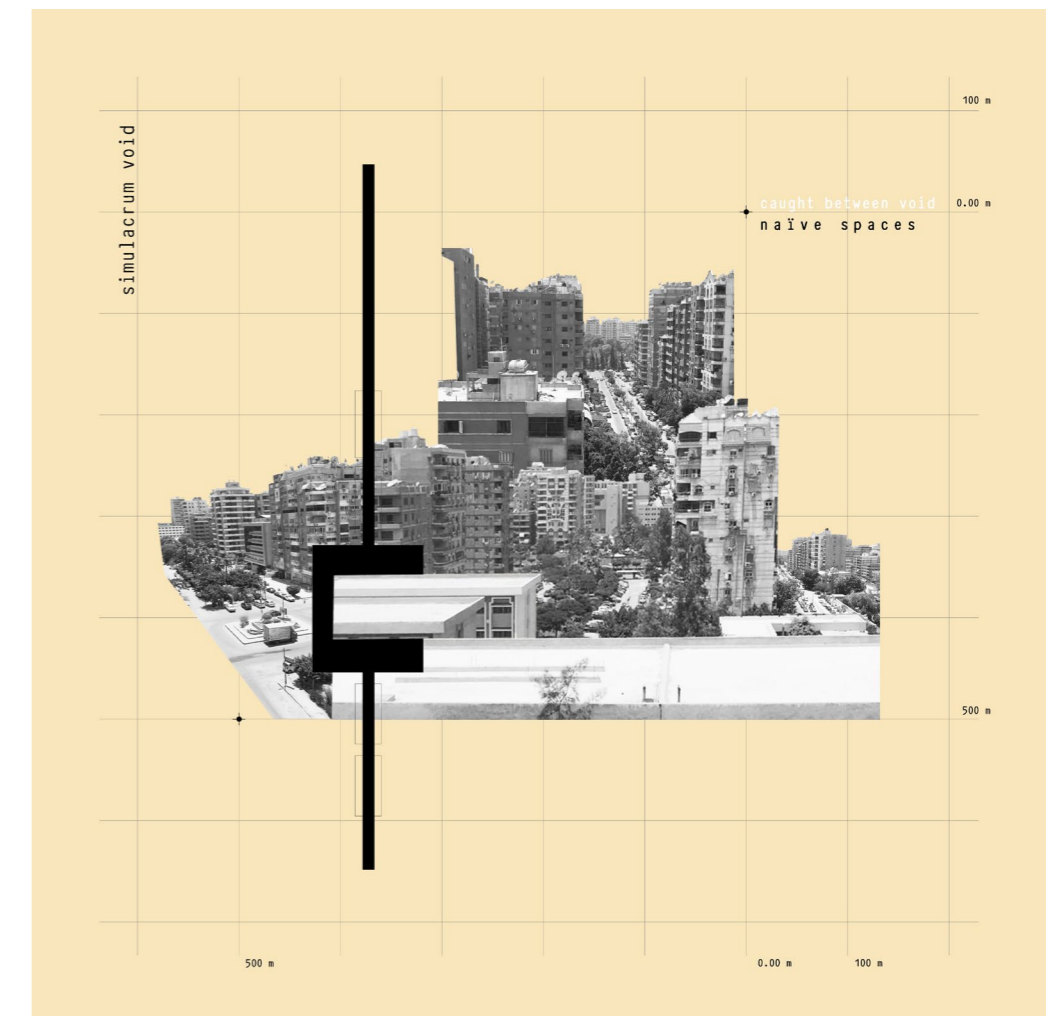
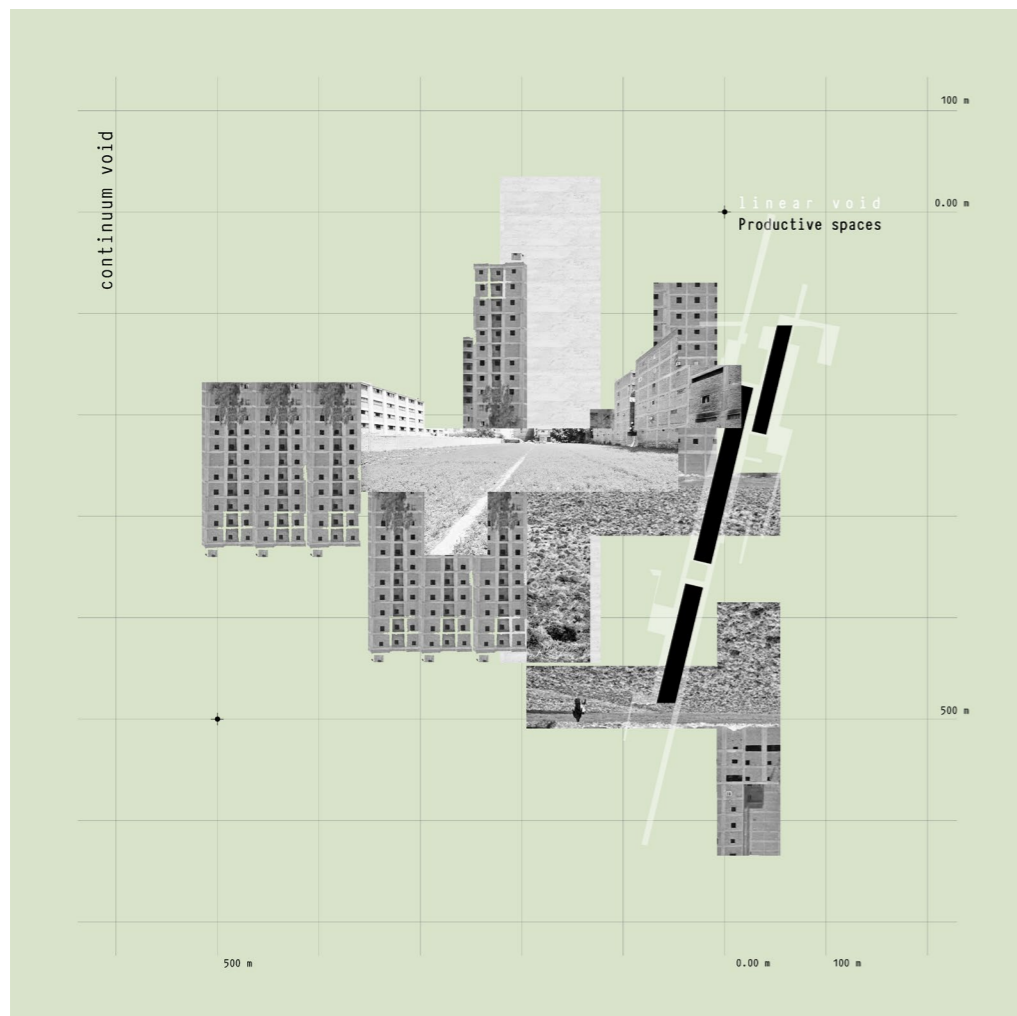
61 Author, "Mysticism of Matter", (2020).
fluvial island_micro scale
Extrovert void_Definitive instability

62 Author, "Mysticism of Matter", (2020).
topographical island_micro scale
In-between void_unfolded porosity



63 Author, "Mysticism of Matter", (2020).
rural island_micro scale
*Linear void*_Productive spaces

64 Author, "Mysticism of Matter", (2020).
desert island_micro scale
*Caught-between void*_Naïve spaces

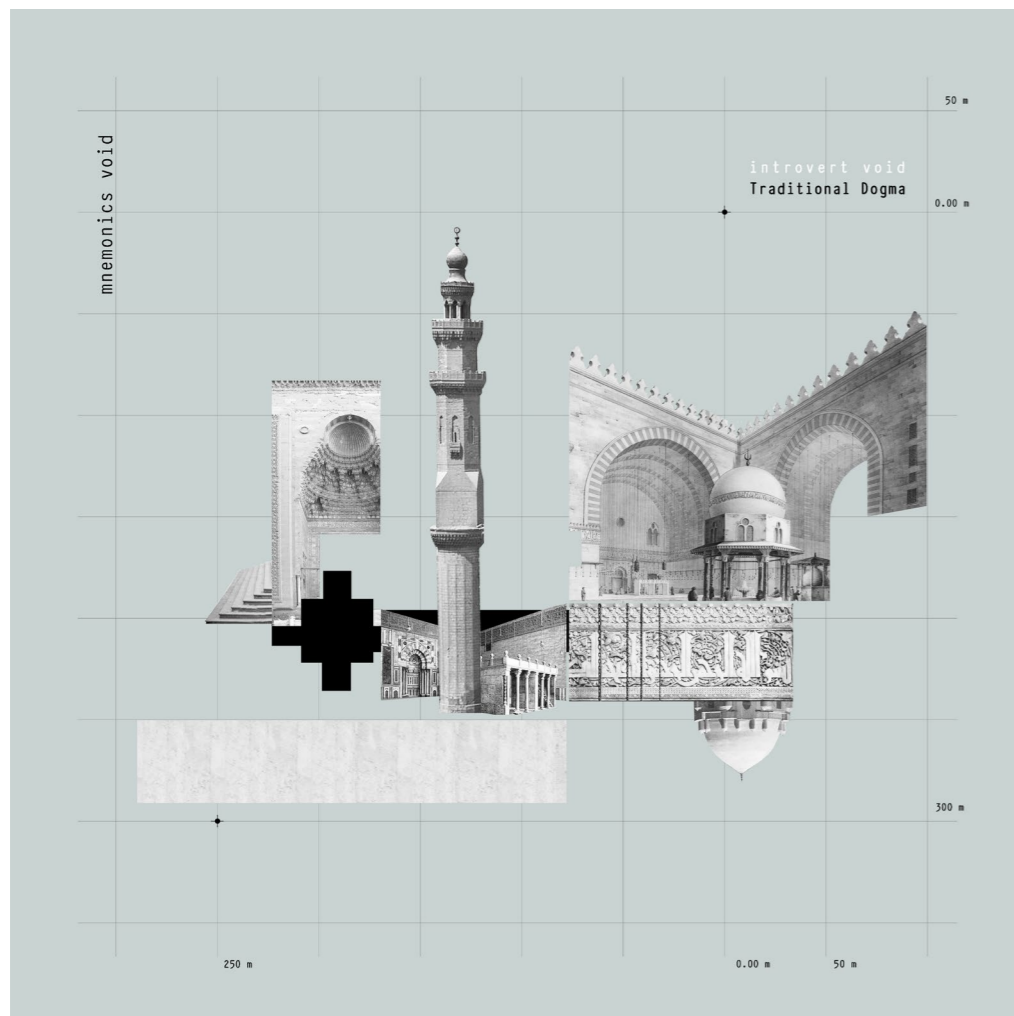


65 Author, "Mysticism of Matter", (2020).

mnemonics island_micro scale_

Al-Sultan Hassan mosque

Introvert void_Traditional dogma



65

persisted as a background for these forms. Thus an aesthetic image with only one dimension where the dweller's imagination ceased in this process.

The initial stages of the process of projection in the *Linear* and *In-Between Voids* include an exhaustive synthesis of the entire themes in the most stringent image, putting in consideration the presence of the strong nature either the mountain or the agricultural fields. In the Topographical Island, the image distinguishes the void as single element resulted from the simultaneous production of forms in which it creates a sort of arrangement of the traced layers such as forms, soil and the presence of the mountain, wherein the image seems distorted and destructed for the first gaze however it produce a competence of collection of all layers of the composition that provide the dweller to perceive this image within the void with multi-scalar dimensions. While in the Rural Island, the interaction between the formulation of solid and void has constructed an infinite long perspective of massive walls and green fields, in this continuous production of spaces, the image could be found in this narrative flow of the composition.

The new functional organization of the individual elements within the Desert Island has been exhausted from the static structure components for both the forms and the voids and has destructed the reflection on the subject of measuring the scale of the space. The image was situated between the spatial lattice and the static span, delineate precisely in the iteration of the static structural green spaces and the span of the basic void. The compositional aura that was constructed here has no dialogue with anthropic and nature components where the infrastructures and its velocity has transformed the image into a bohemian phenomenon, thus the void surrounded by the scattered forms shows the difficulties in accommodating

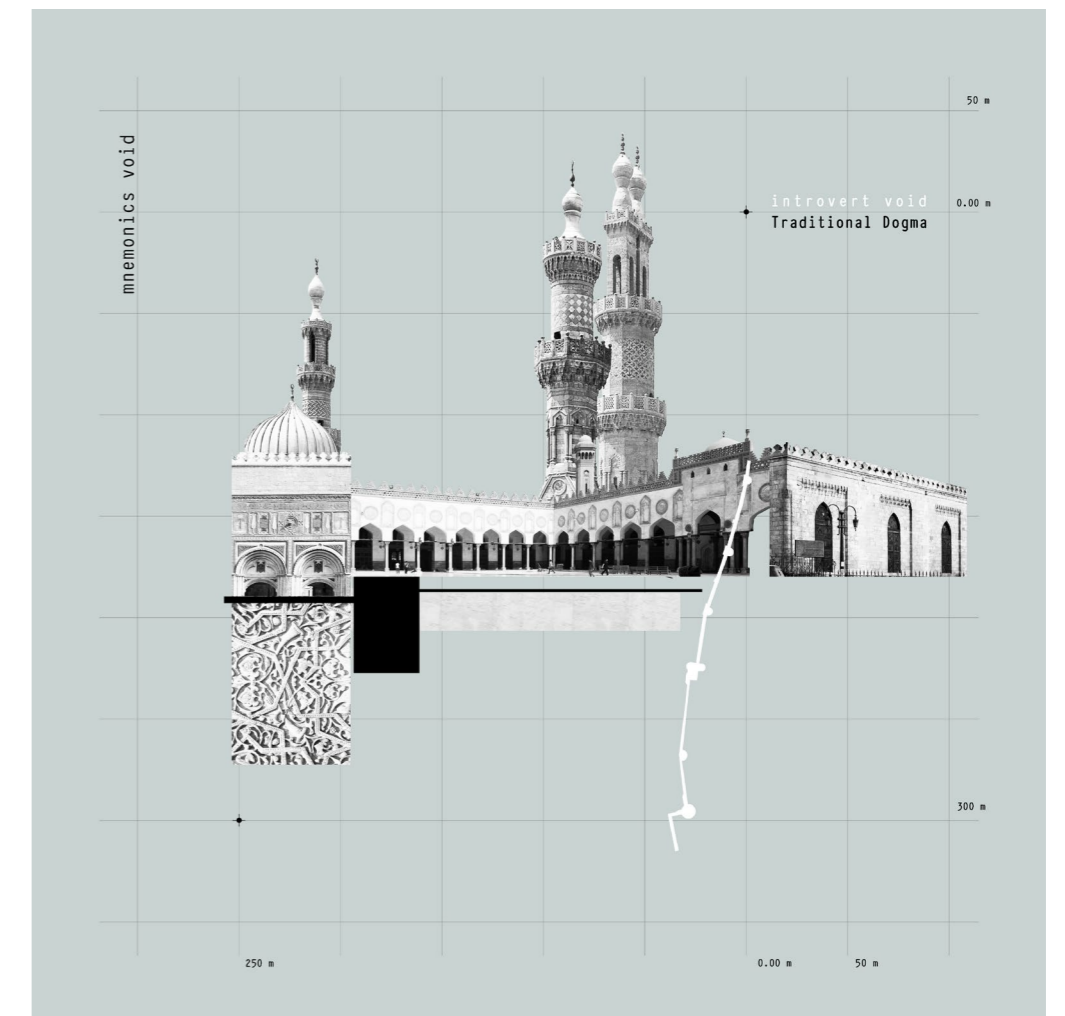
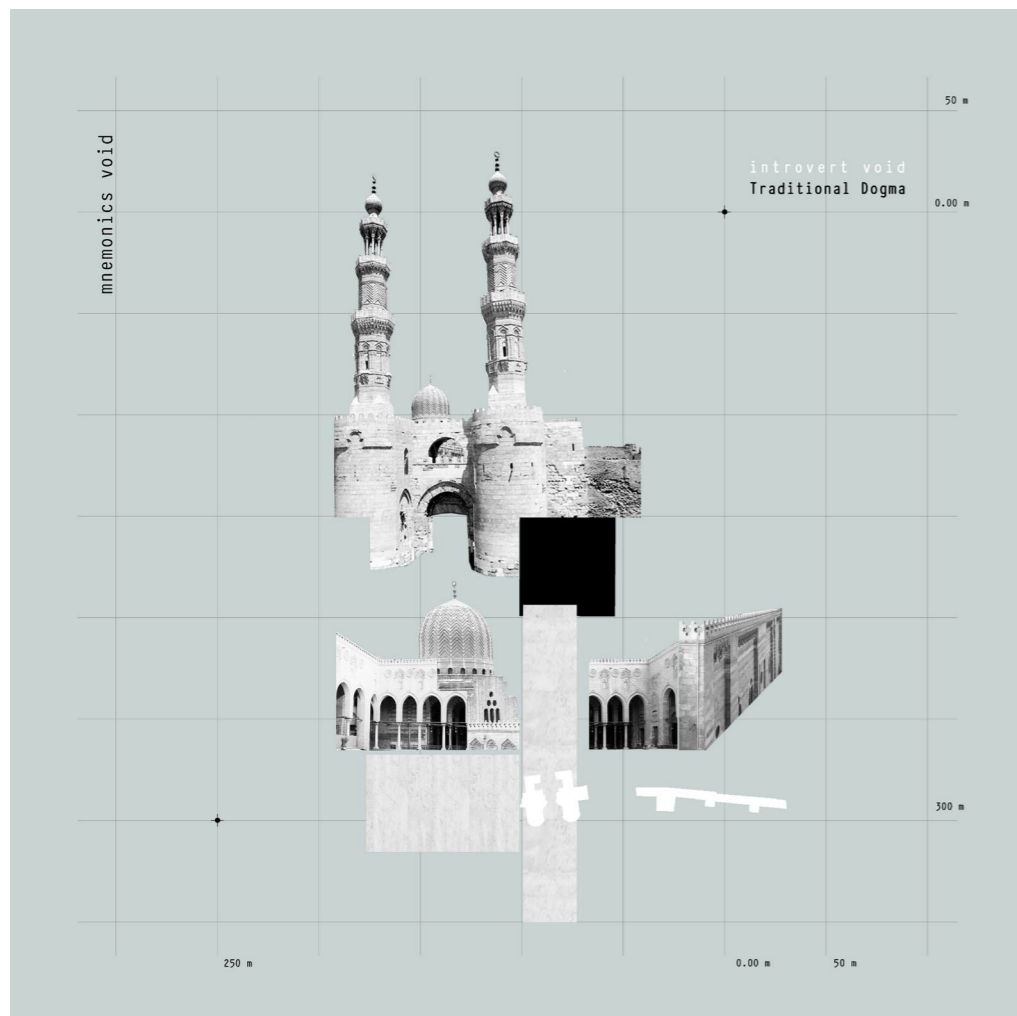
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66 Author, "Mysticism of Matter", (2020).
mnemonics island_micro scale_
Al-Sultan Al-Moayed Sheikh mosque
Introvert void_Traditional dogma

67 Author, "Mysticism of Matter", (2020).
mnemonics island_micro scale_
Al-Sultan Al-Azhar mosque
Introvert void_Traditional dogma



all components of the composition within the *Caught-Between Void* and par excellence the observer.

The outcome of an adequate and sympathetic apparatus to what is being formulated in the five islands in Cairo could be transformed by reconfiguring the primary elements in their complex reality with no attention to reduce them, and to reconstruct the concept of the void in its traditional sense, to be reapplied on the diverse voids which could provides the city with a discrete number of possibility able to represent their logic permanently.

Understanding the space, type, limit, design, measure and image of the primary void in each island, has synthesized the arrangement of these voids and their relationship within the urban composition, besides has outlined the breakdown of the deeper formal definitive structures. And the lack of completeness of the composition on both urban and social dimension within the four themes of 'Fluvial, Topographical, Rural and Desert' islands, moreover, the need to regenerate the structural link between the void and its context by restoring the cradle of the space and provide the possibility of dwelling within these spaces once more. On the other hand it defined the unitary organisms of the Mnemonics Island, hence the intrinsic phenomena between the concept and the application of the void in the context as an essential element for the combination and the correct interpretation and perception for the complexity of its urban composition.

II.2.2_Application: Desert Island_ *Reforming primary void* *Architectural void_Microscale_* Addition I Subtraction I Displacement

The new developments in the Desert Island of Cairo has outlined a pauses of suspension of a refined voids in their linear orthogonal arrangements, surrounded by an independent autonomous forms with a clear distinction of their function. The compositional representation is articulated by a sequence of arrangement of several green abandoned plots situated between a grid of streets, which generates a barrier between the form, open space and the inhabitants.

Following by the refinement of the definitive model that has a progressive fragmentation on both social and environmental aspects within the space, where the scale resulted from these models was huge with no appropriation held inside it, besides the misunderstanding of the nature of the place has lead to an extensive use of soil by green beds that consume heavily the water resources in which it couldn't maintain its new characteristics almost intact to the present day that need to be redefined.

In fact, the application introduced here is located in Nasr City, a green urban park 'Child Park' with a dimension of 400X250m surrounded by fences on the perimeters, which illustrated the typical green areas in this settlement. The studies carried out by the analysis before, has shown several exponents of the Modern Model of the functional city by Le Corbusier, where the spatial and the settlement characteristics of the urban system, were founded by distinguishing the progressive imposition in the project plan of the individual element. The scheme of urban plots with individual residential cells defining a green void '*Caught-Between*' the streets has expressed the discontinuity of the interiority and exteriority besides has produced a reflection on the role of the open space with specific characteristics that wasn't able to dwell the inhabitants. The gaze

68 Google map, "Child Park, Nasr City", (2020).
desert island_micro scale_Child Park

Application_re-forming primary void through the concept of void in the Traditional sense



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on the entire composition of the urban form through a methodological approach by studying the typology, morphology and infrastructure of the focused area has been illustrated to be able to understand the urban context and to reform this fragmentation.

Starting from the typology, two main forms could be found here, the first is the residential blocks mostly 20X22m situated in a land parcel of approximately 26X30m, and the second is the rare shapes of the services. Followed by the morphology and infrastructure studies that show the distribution of the land parcels mostly 60m wide with various length and the streets of 30m wide that arrange these parcels. This composition outlined the discontinuous aggregation of large portion through the static form of the housing cells and the condensation of the network system into the linear infrastructure of these contemporary developments. Though the evolution and reforming the urban composition need a new paradigm that could arrange the linguistic logic and the urban grammar within the urban composition by introducing a new definition for the primary void based on the traditional essence of concept to achieve a space that has a competence to accommodate urban, social and environmental dimensions.

In the approach of *the Future of the Past*, The paradigm is a retroactive process based on the traditional concept of void in its physical and metaphysical dimensions where the spatial characteristics of the introvert void are the subject of investigation by the dwellers whom sense of belonging need to be defined by a collective and intimate space of unity. The limited capacity of the isolated residential houses is rarely used to reform the composition of aggregate schemes on important urban portion. From this perspective the use of the introverted

69 Google map, "Focused area", (2020).
desert island_micro scale_Child Park

*Application_re-forming primary void through
the concept of void in the Traditional sense*



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dimension of dwelling in which it is ideally connected to the presence form, will be applied on the void itself by providing different latitude of folding the space on itself in order to define the hidden measurement of the geometry.

This progression transformation of the essence of the void in the Desert Island provides a domestic space that has an intimate relationship with the memory of the border and the evolution of the typology that is crucial to interpret and interrelate the need of the contemporary urban dweller through a wide range of collective spaces with diverse activities, accompanied with a metamorphosis of the tight control of spatiality prevalently horizontal sequences of voids.

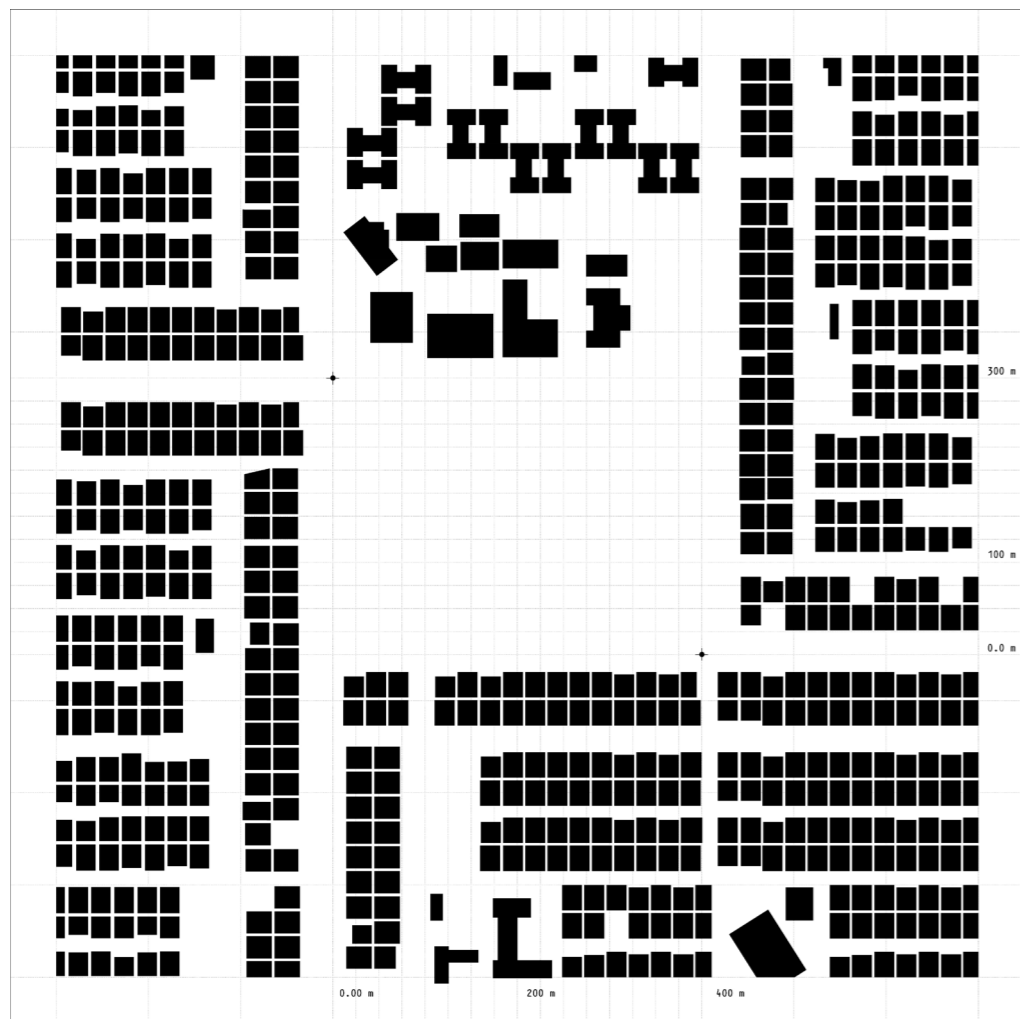
In this application on the abstractness of the hollow space attributable with particular emphasis the insertion of the main void of 'Ibn Tulun' mosque with a void dimension 90X90m and a sequential 36 smaller squares of 40X40m both metaphorically. Albeit in different ways, draw the attention to divide the massive dimension of the focused area and to transform the static and even material component of the void, to an urban rooms for an imaginative projection that find themselves in the succession of completed spaces, in trust in an intrinsic interior space, to generate a new identity for compositional void.

The pedestrian streets with ten-meter width were inserted to act as transitional spaces between the distributed rooms and to strand with the discretion on the old composition, as continuity of the old network with a new way of integration with the inhabitants. This new composition outlines the presence of the voids as a sublime conversion of nature into the urban context through an equal and osmotic dialogue able to exalt both open space and social life.

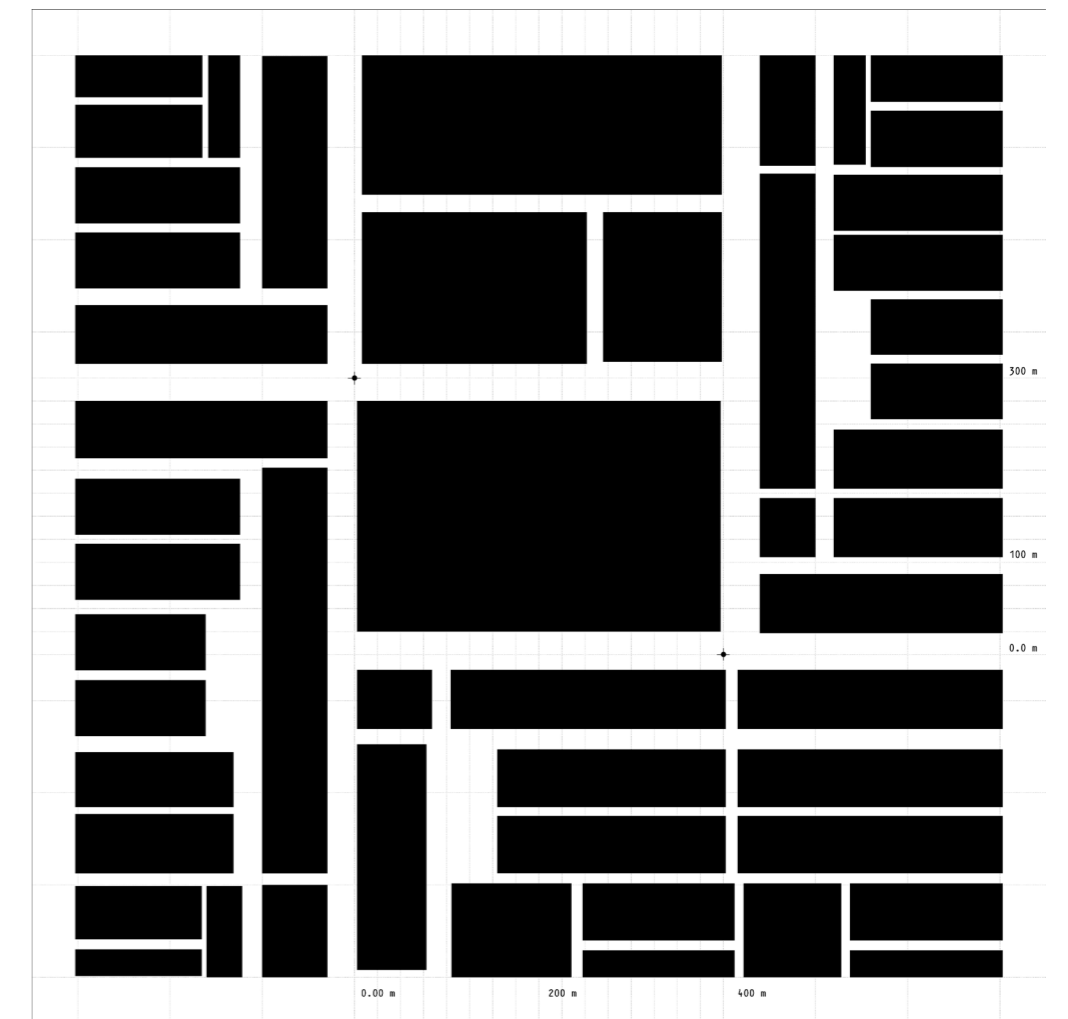
70 Author, "Typology", (2020).
desert island_micro scale_Child Park

71 Author, "Morphology", (2020).
desert island_micro scale_Child Park

*Application_re-forming primary void through
the concept of void in the Traditional sense*



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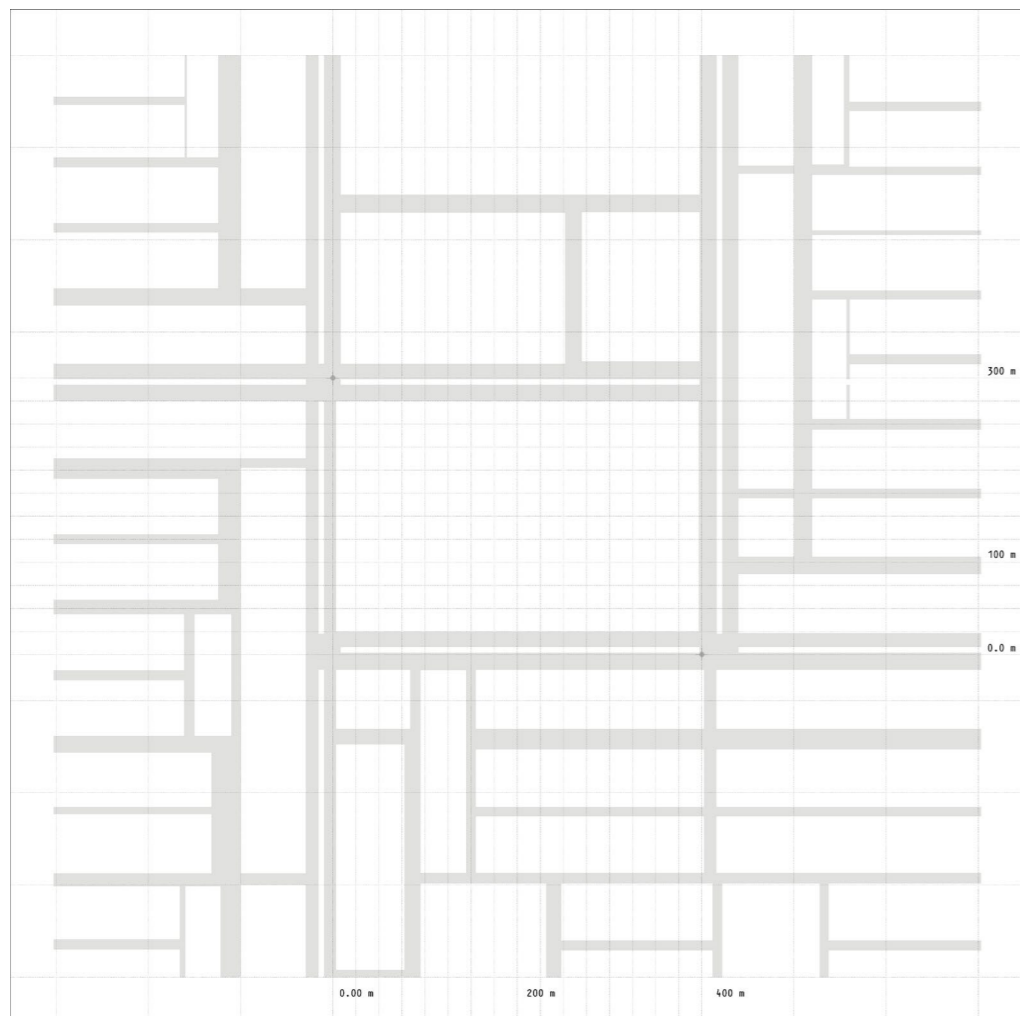


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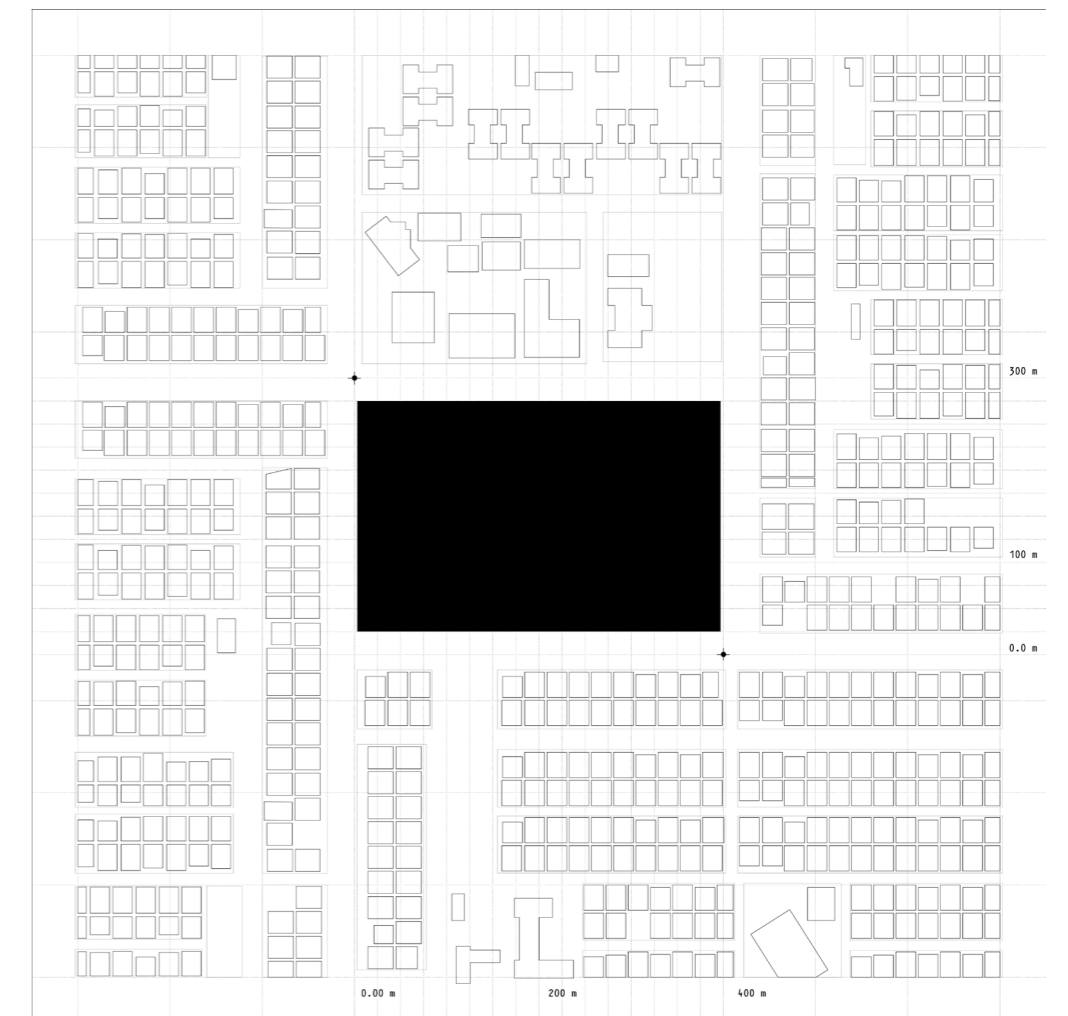
72 Author, "Infrastructure Network", (2020).
desert island_micro scale_Child Park

73 Author, "Void Profile_focused area", (2020).
desert island_micro scale_Child Park

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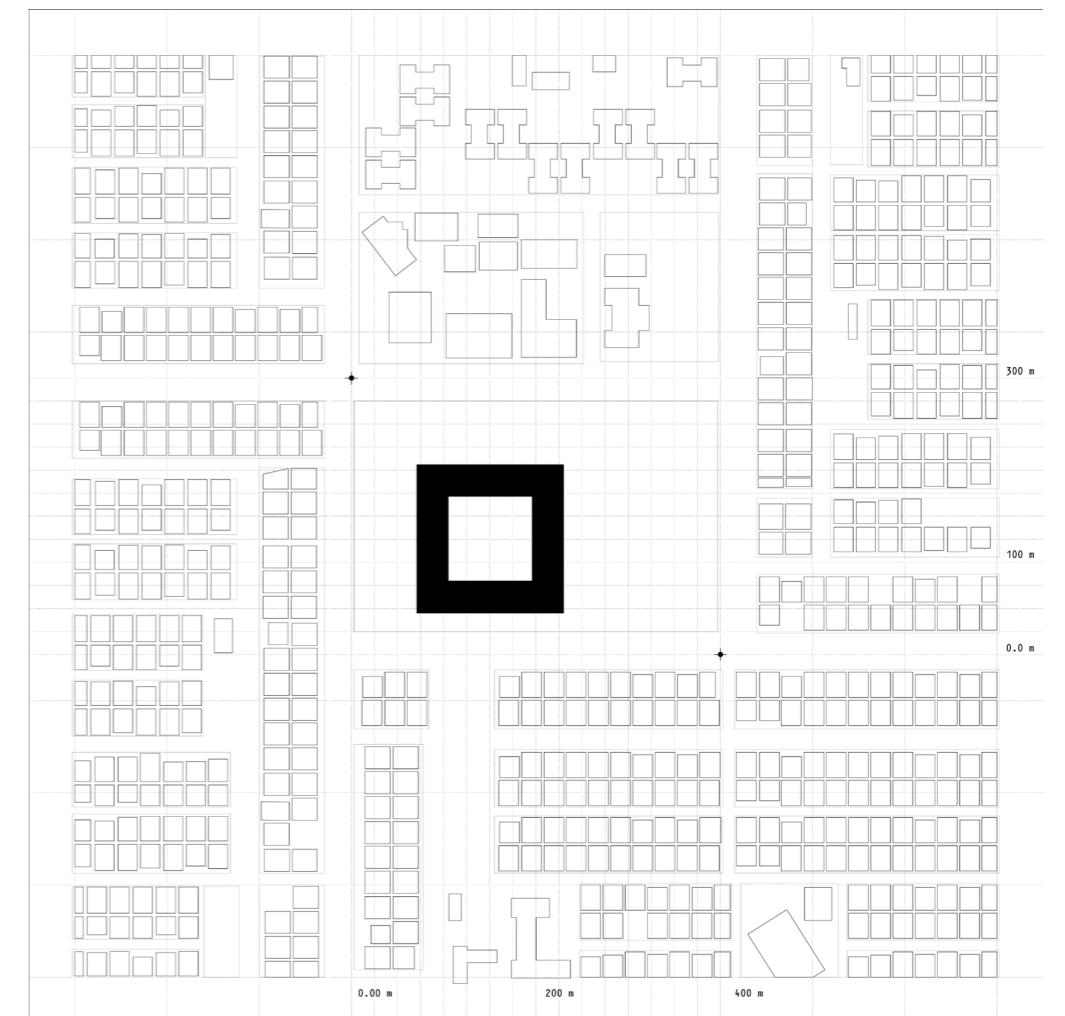
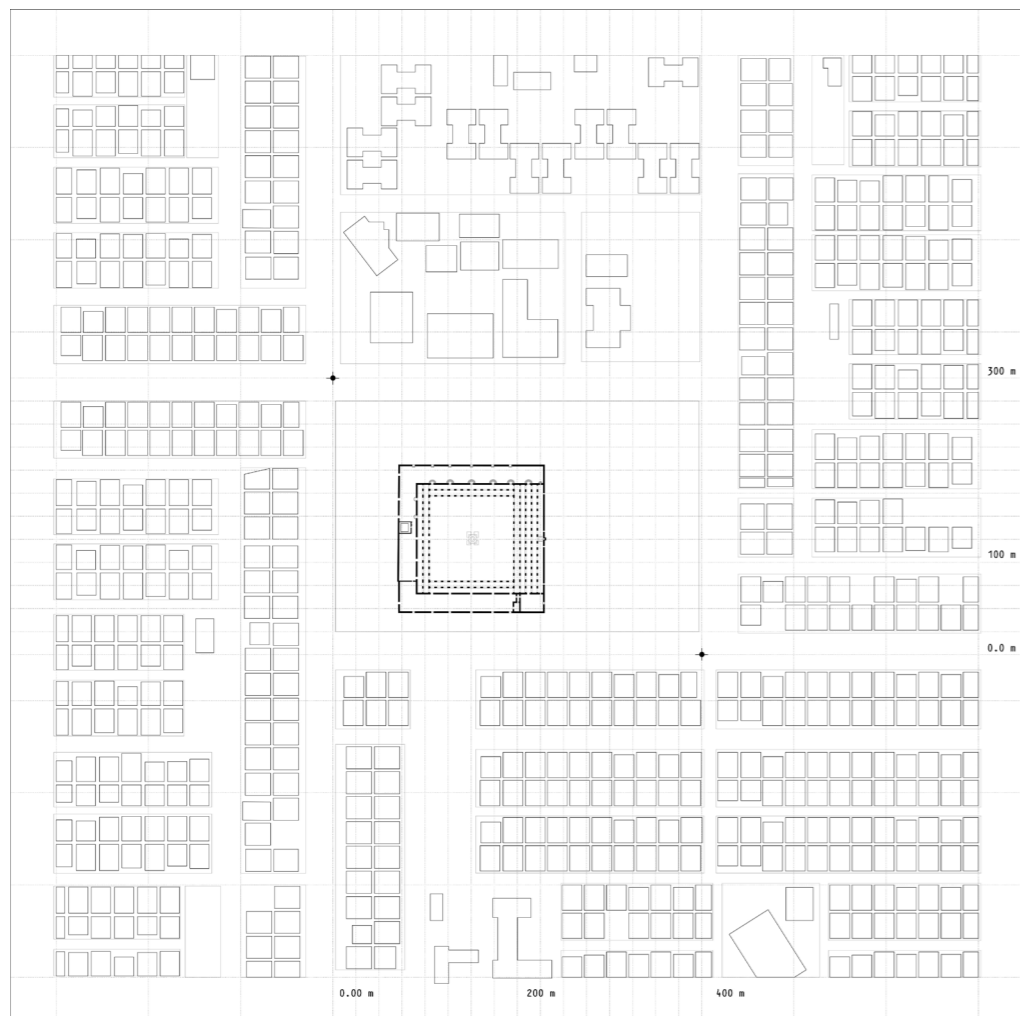
74 Author, "Addition_IbnTulun_Structure plan",
(2020).

desert island_micro scale_Child Park

75 Author, "Addition_IbnTulun_Hidden profile",
(2020).

desert island_micro scale_Child Park

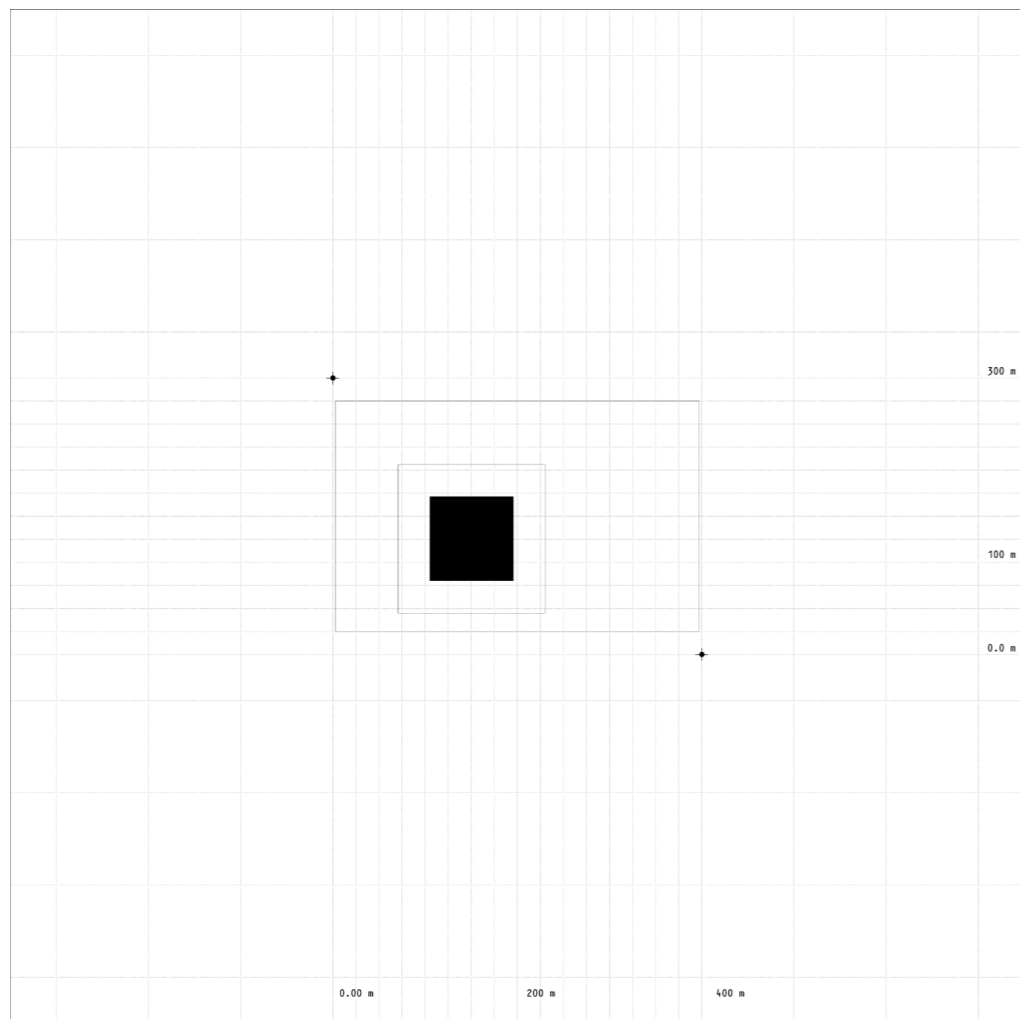
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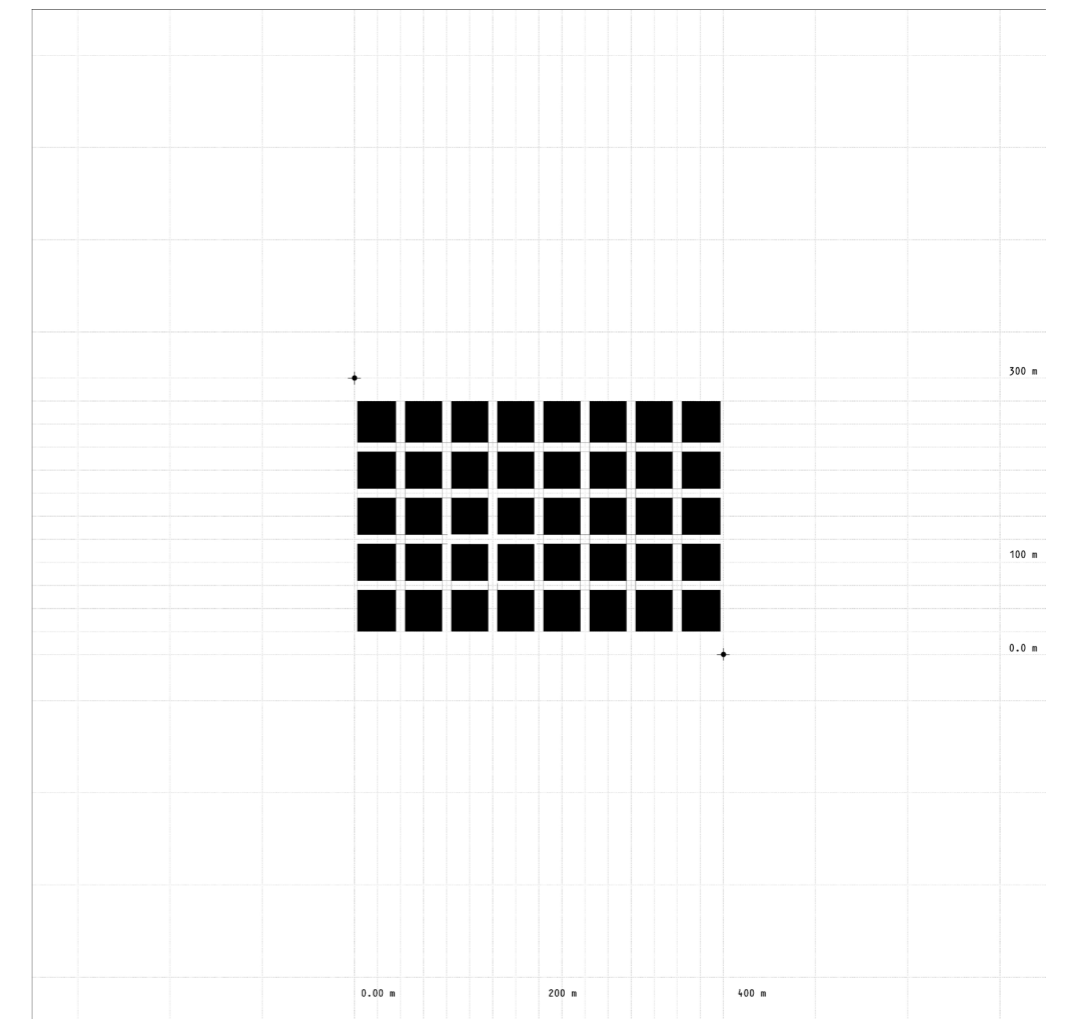
76 Author, "Addition_primary void measure",
(2020).
desert island_micro scale_Child Park

77 Author, "Addition_Grid organization",
(2020).
desert island_micro scale_Child Park

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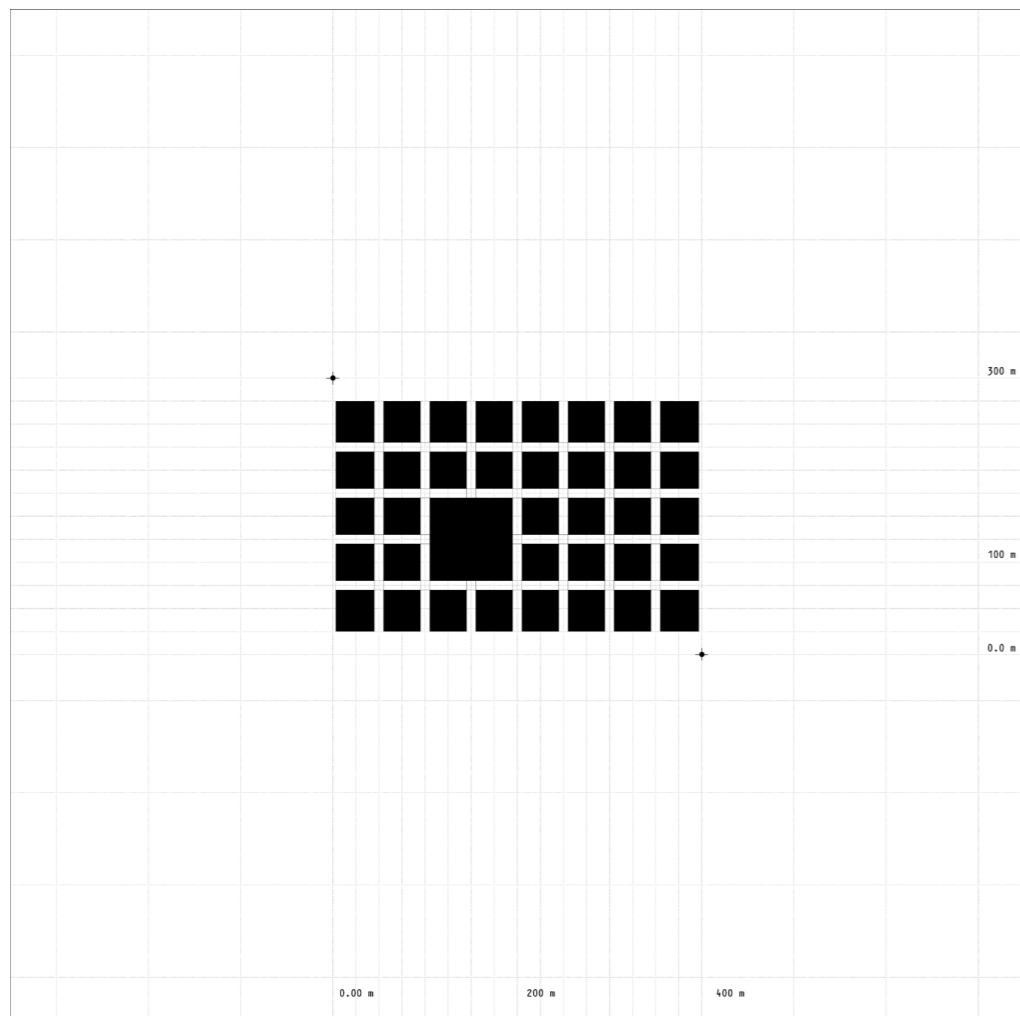


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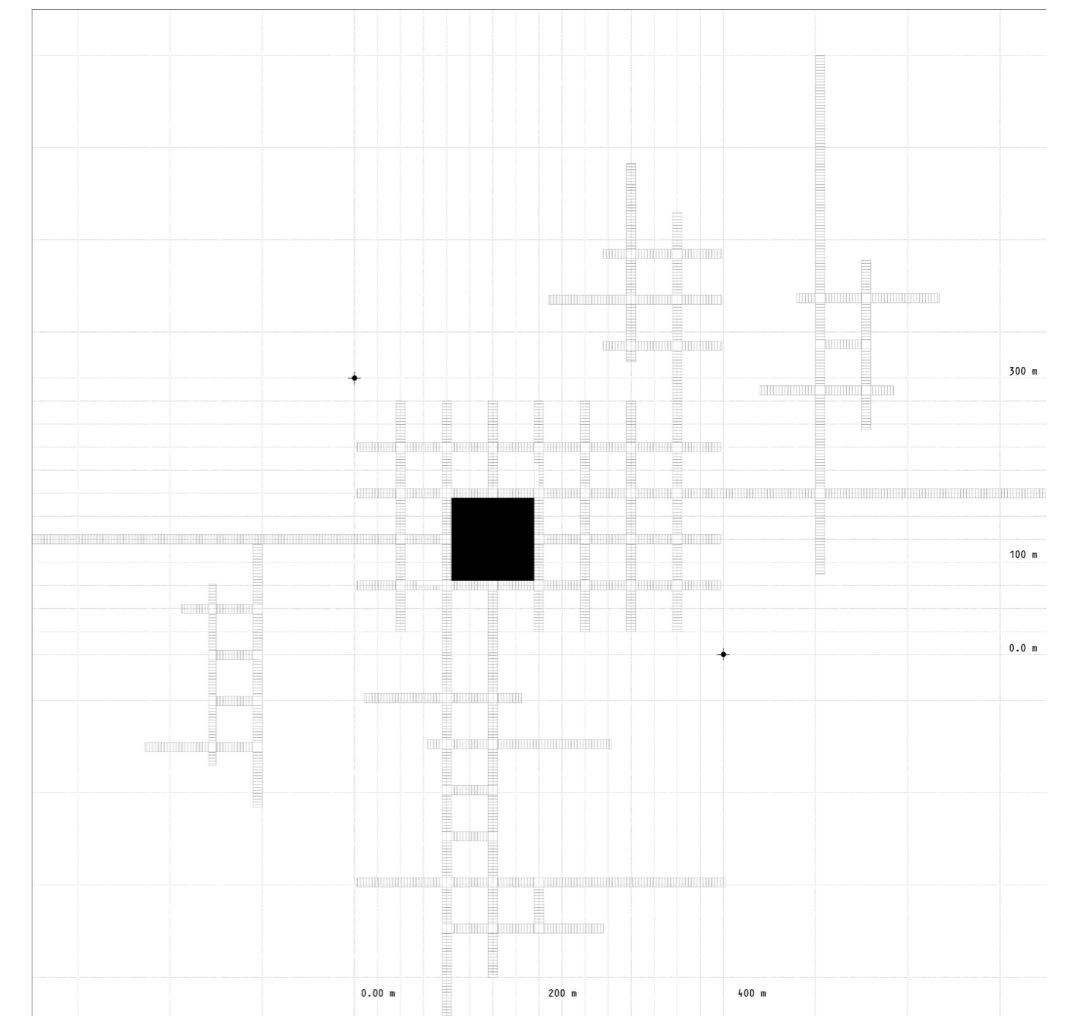
78 Author, "Spatial pattern Grammar of composition", (2020).
desert island_micro scale_Child Park

79 Author, "Displacement_Threshold_Extended grid", (2020).
desert island_micro scale_Child Park

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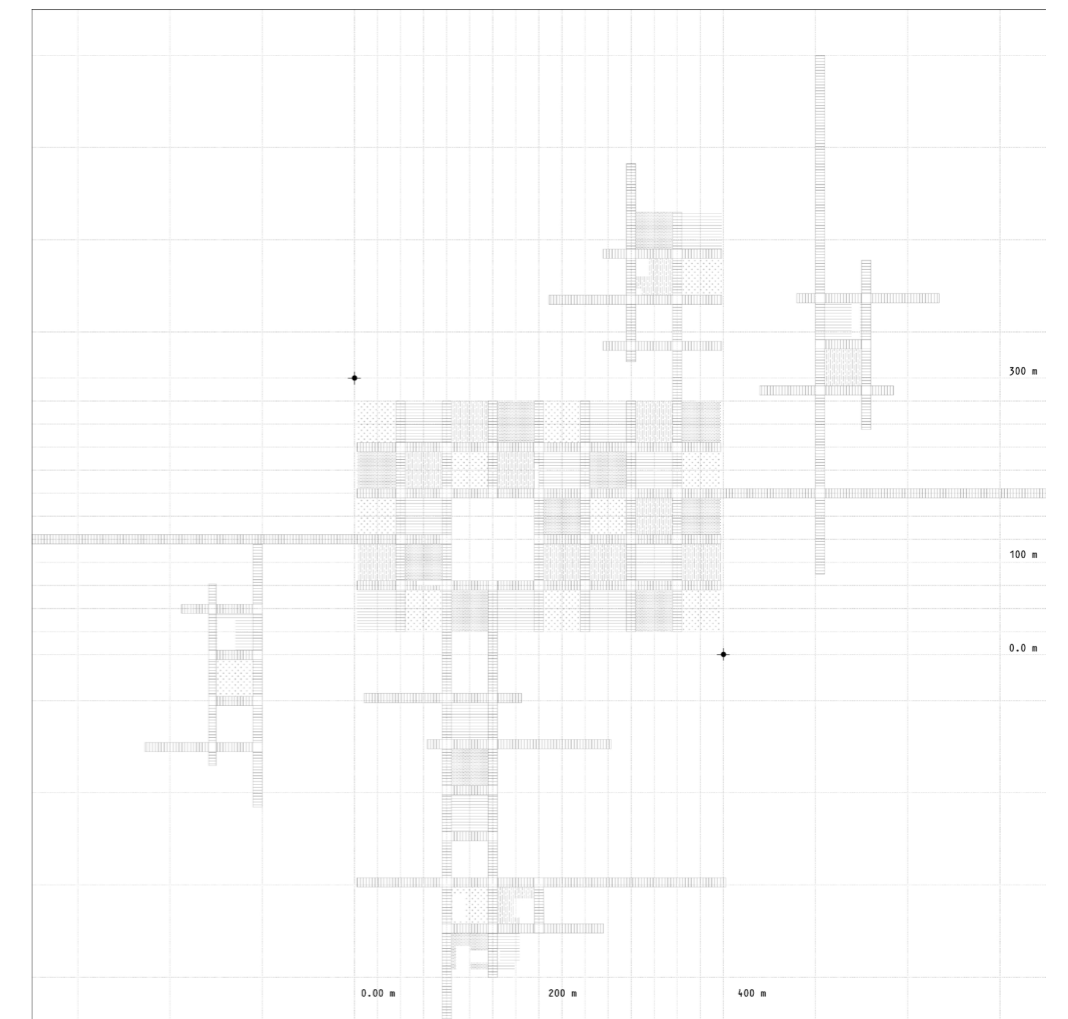
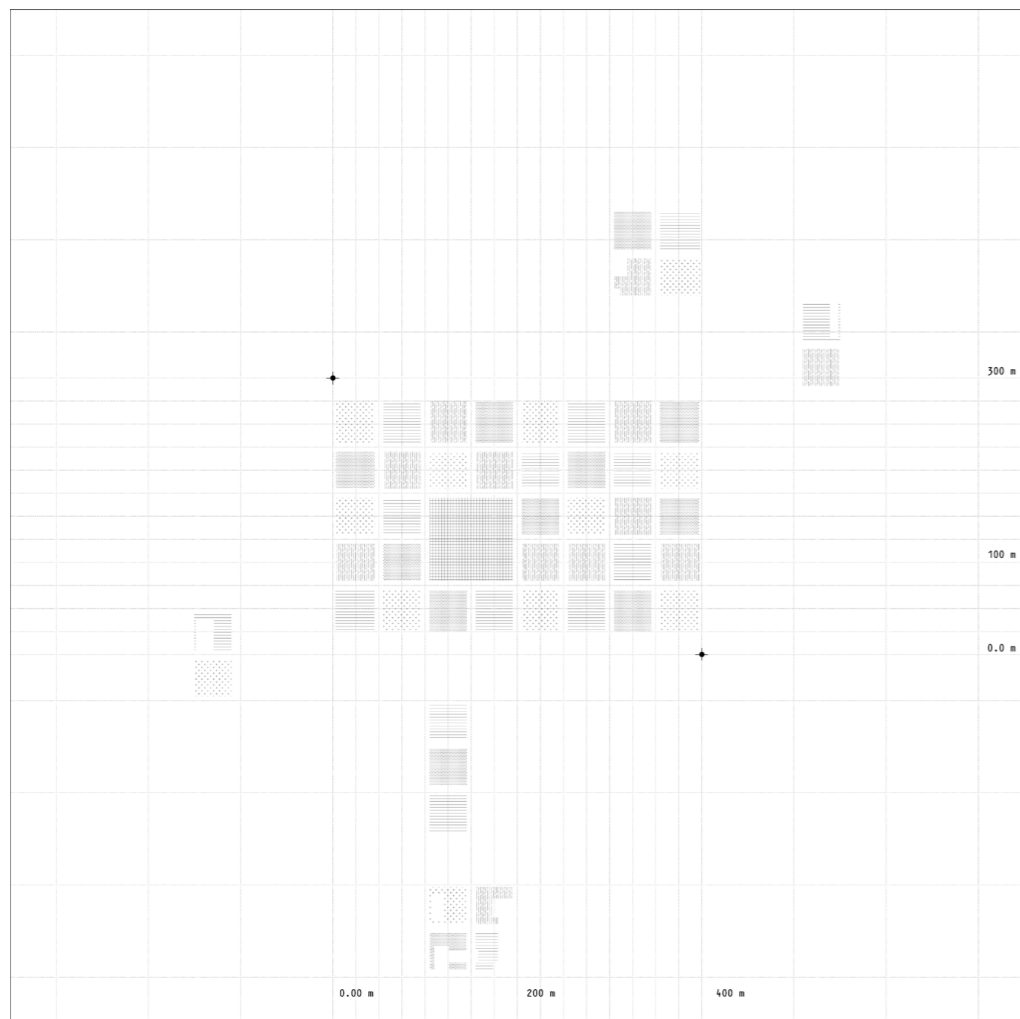


79

80 Author, "Displacement_Transformation of soil_Diverse activities", (2020).
desert island_micro scale_Child Park

81 Author, "Displacement_Soil extension beyond rigid limit", (2020).
desert island_micro scale_Child Park

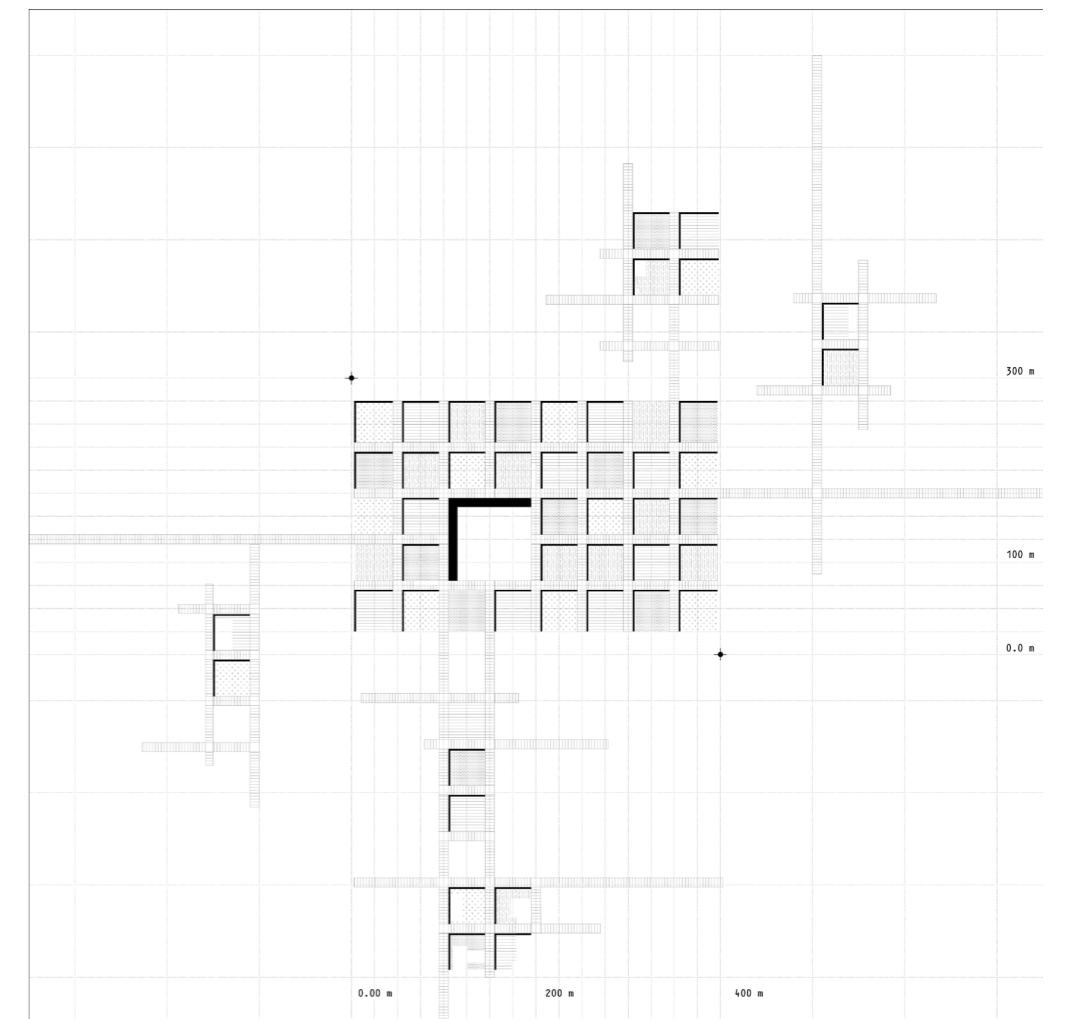
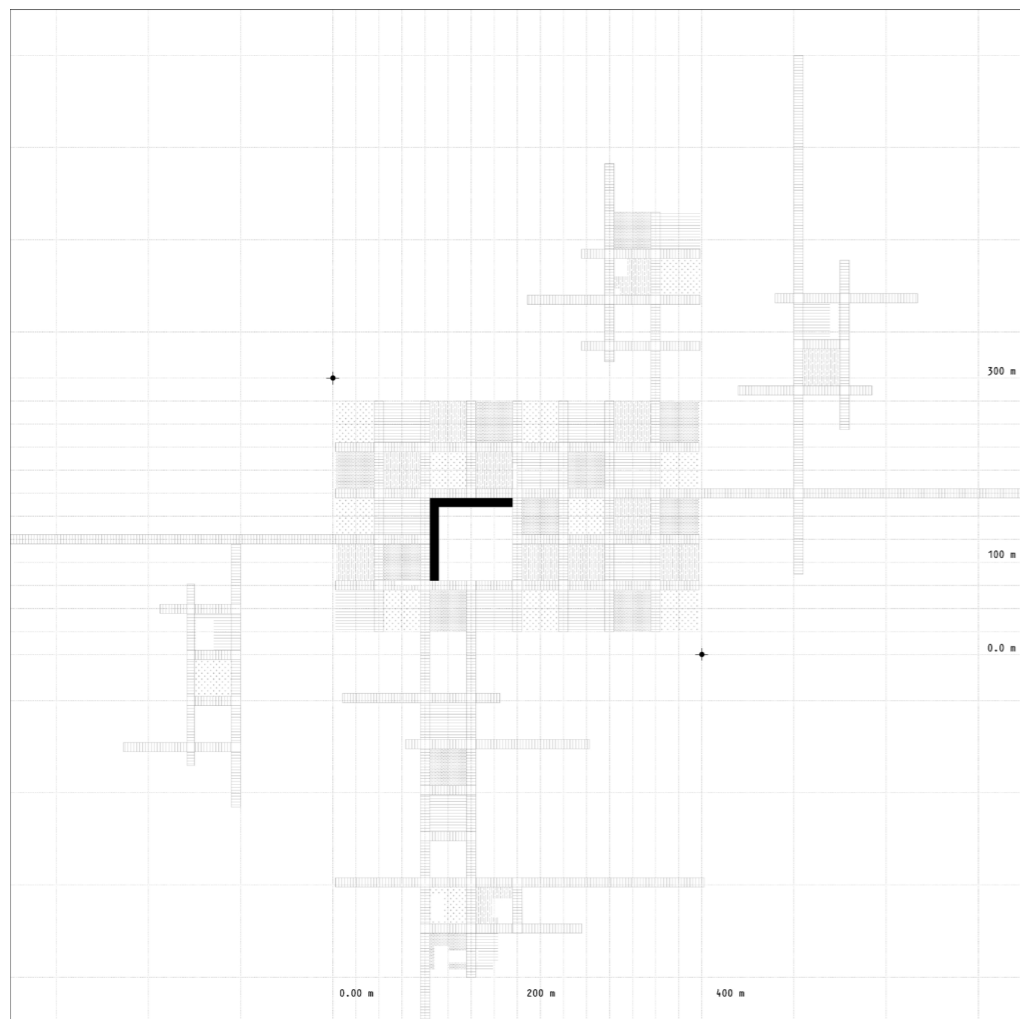
Application_re-forming primary void through the concept of void in the Traditional sense



82 Author, "Subtraction_Excavate primary void",
(2020).
desert island_micro scale_Child Park

83 Author, "Subtraction_Excavate Urban rooms",
(2020).
desert island_micro scale_Child Park

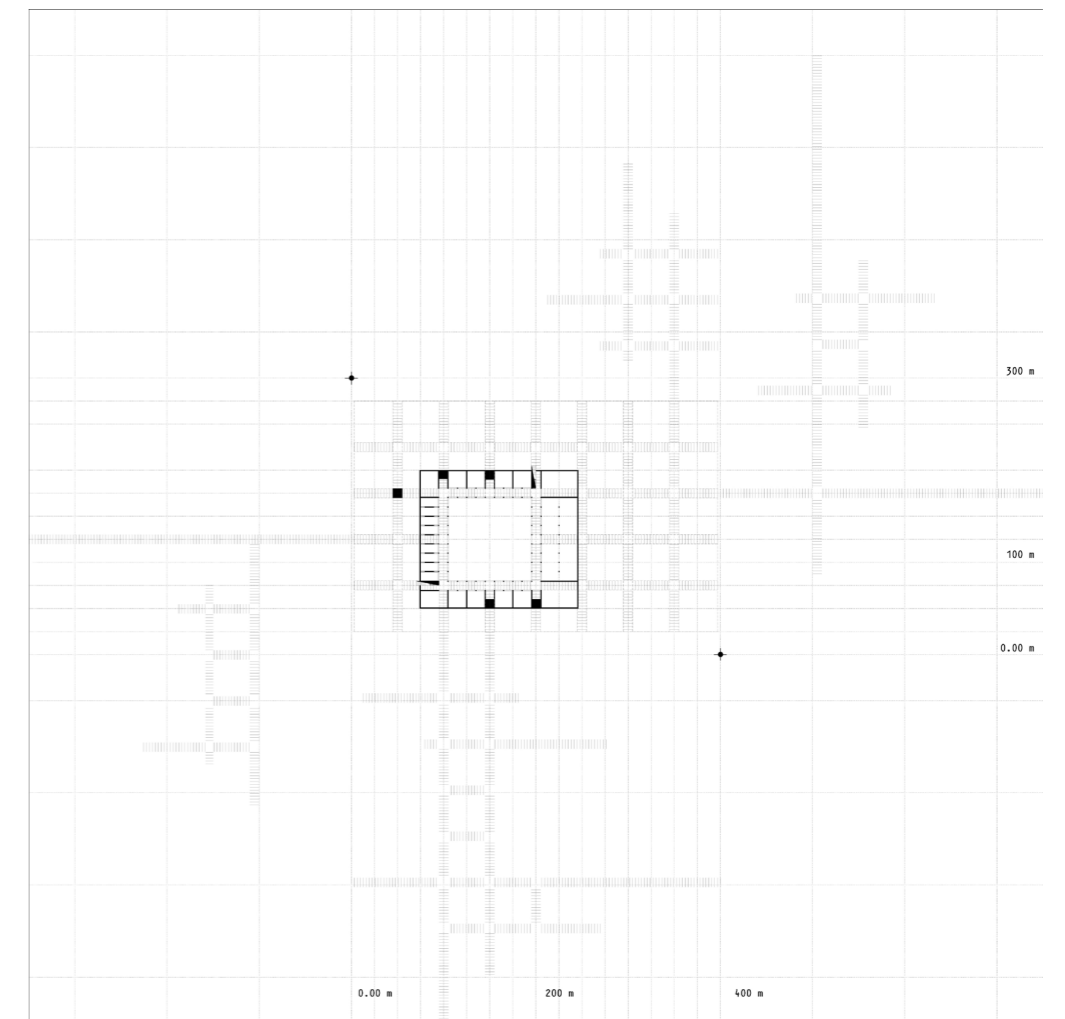
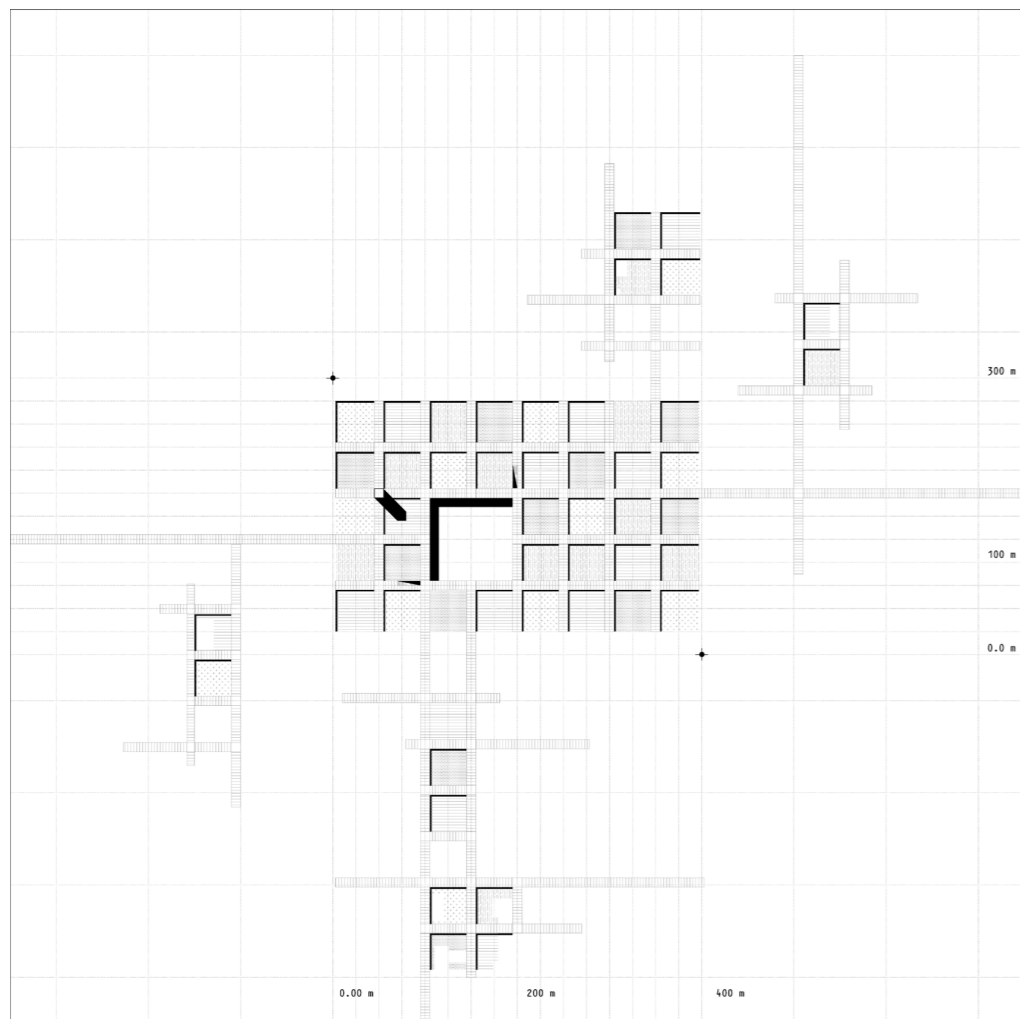
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84 Author, "Addition_Light structure tower", (2020).
desert island_micro scale_Child Park

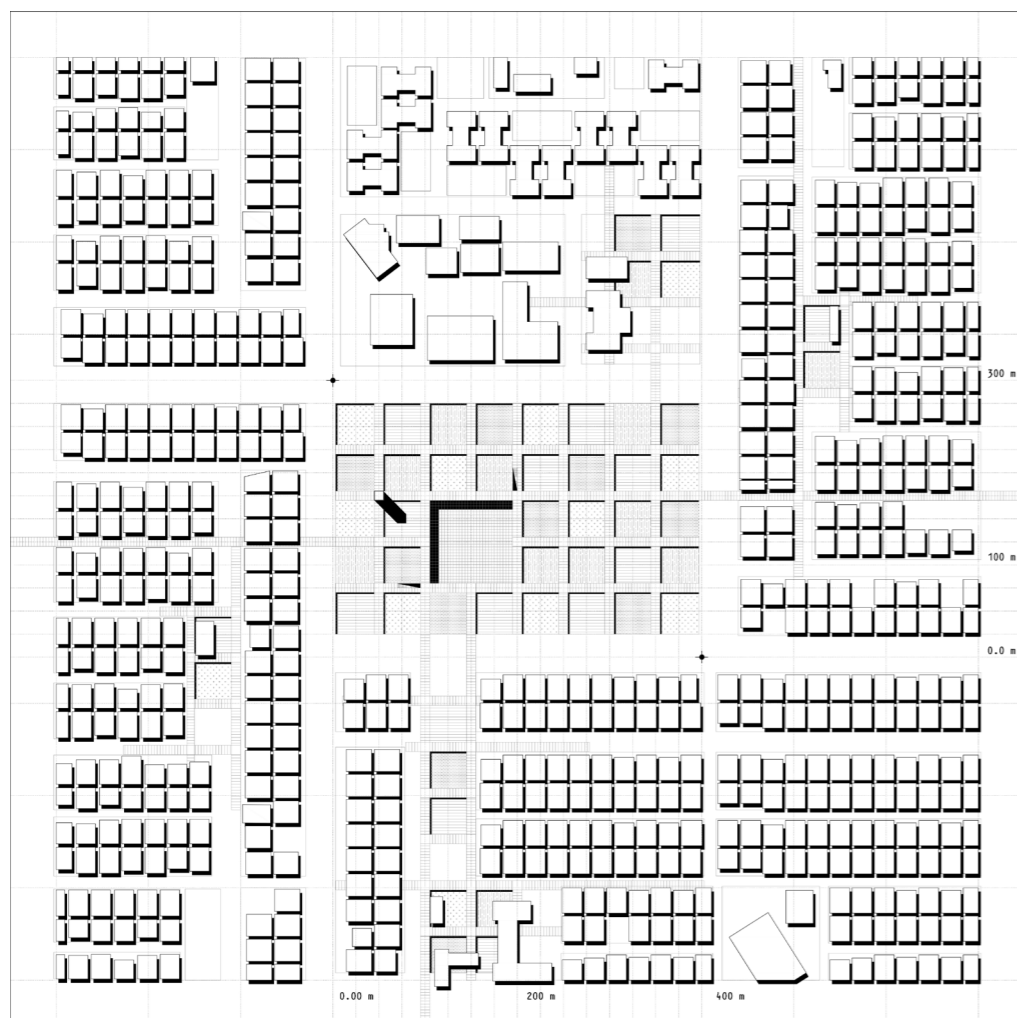
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desert island_micro scale_Child Park

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86 Author, "retrospective paradigm: *The future of the past*", (2020).
desert island_micro scale_Child Park

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The theme of subtraction took place here by carving the soil itself, which aims to create a real inhabited sculptured space where the plan, section and elevation are combined together to engender the form of the void in the composition. This action is placed as a necessary exploit to enhance the orography of the soil and define the new linguistic character of the body, surface, and interiority. The design action here intended to construct by removing and digging, quarrying and extracting, eroding and subtracting of matter, which can be synthesized with the mathematics of reduction. This is an engrave that define the new type of the void introduced here and affirm the inseparable relation between inside and outside in all its dimensions.

This followed by the action of addition a tower of 10X10m recalling the minaret that is acting as a vertical volume to balance the combination of the voids, in which it will provide the space with not only physical terrestrial dimension of visual connection but also a strong relation with the celestial dimensions. The vertical element is a light structure in relation with the height of the context, identifiable with the mass that characterizes the relationship with the ground. This dichotomy is also briefly explained the relation between the gravity of the voids and the surrounding masses in which it could sum up the architecture of the introvert void, where the tectonic structure is constructed in a continuous manner with the nodes of the pedestrian streets. Moreover, the action of displacement of the orthogonal pedestrian network is syncopated with the original network to provide an extension and continuity of the dwellers to flow within the urban structure towards and outwards the main park and to strongly connect the void with the other voids distributed in the urban context.

This procedure could define the open spaces and reform its borders that inundates the idea of the interiority in which it will provide an abacus of open public spaces that could accommodate different activities and will provide the inhabitant with a various and limitless ways in order to dwell this space. This transformation of the void in the new development based on the tradition concept will provide a new definition for these spaces by identifying the dimension, margin and typology in which the idea of the patio as an interior space will delimit the perimeter, will extent the dweller's appropriation and above all will outline the physical and metaphysical dimension of the void.

In this sense, the new typology of the void as an excavation of urban rooms will provide the dwellers with a pattern of courtyards aggregate and summarize the characteristics of a refined introversion of the living space stretched out, in its closed-open form, to redefine the context and, at the same time, capable of communicating the void with its surrounding. The fold of the soil on itself and the generation of excavated spaces that measures the relationship between the inhabitant and the space could materialize the physical and tangible dimension of the void, while the complex image resulted from the addition, subtraction and displacement could define the hidden dimension and introduce a new identity resulted from the collective image, and the domestic dimension of living as testimony of social aggregates characterized by the concentration of inhabitants composed of several backgrounds around the new void.

II.2.3_Conclusion:

The future of the past as a concept of metamorphosis

The profound analogy of Cairo's urban islands through different scales 'macro, mid and micro' has revealed the relation between the metropolitan scenario and its roots, in quest of understanding the real frenetic environment of the big city marked by the incessant laceration and juxtaposition, where the vital composition of Cairo with its superficial measures and sympathetic need to be defined as a city of Archipelago. The new paradigm for reading the urban composition of Cairo has originated to represent the dynamism and simultaneity through its primary element of voids as an essence of the urban formulation that are able to revive the eloquent silent of the city urban composition.

The metropolitan reality of last decades demonstrates deeper lacerations: the ineffable potency of the giant that seems undermined by an intrinsic weakness, caused by the malformations and disproportions of its phantom limbs. In this sense the clear definition for the urban composition of each island, its limits and voids is essential for the new reading of the archipelagos that could define the physical composition within the city and consequently reintroduce the presence of nature and the intangible dimensions mostly manifested by the dwellers relations and interactions within the open spaces.

And so, by reading the tenacious city of Cairo as a whole complex has paradoxically lead to paralysis, deception and manipulation that ignored diverse aspects such as social, environmental and spiritual, yet the city appeared as an unstoppable monster. While by configuring the city as an archipelago based on its primary voids has exposed its lost and hidden logical essence that has been confirmed by its nuances and differences and which lead to the reality of the composition and its identity crystallized through time and space within the city.

And if in the metropolis of Cairo, the clamour and fear of the multiple have ceased to be stimulating, as these conditions produce only numbness and confusion, accompanied with a strident deformed experience, which will not only generate disturbance but also it will merely trigger provocation for who would like to retain alive the desire and innovation for understanding such urban complex, where the search of the new urban identity for the metropolis will end-up to be represented as superficial images of urban formations far from its context, nature and concept.

The retroactive reality introduced here for the urban formulation of Cairo as multiple entities within the whole, needs to transform the mere superficial reflection of most contingent thoughts and values to bring fully the territory appearance in the new language of composition, generally coincide with founding the reinterpretation of the essence of the void in each island, besides restoring these spaces to their original concept as essence of the form and not as a result of such fragmentation.

Despite the intense crises and profound mutations of Cairo's urban fabrics influenced by the Western culture in the last two centuries, the basic structure of the original language remained alive and showed its presence as a collective space and space of unity not only in the urban composition but rather on both environmental and social dimensions, however authorities and planner subjected their western granted visions that couldn't suit the traditional culture to the development of the city and as a result it has been generated an inevitable exhaustion with declination and transgression for the city as a whole.

From this perspective, one of the most significant dividing lines that can be traced in the complex territory of Cairo, is to clearly identify and classify the different archipelago through the profound analysis presented here in the research that tackled the city composition in three different scales in relation to its primary void where typology, density, pattern, scale, connection and limit were the key measures to classify the themes of Cairo into Five main themes 'Mnemonics, Fluvial, Topographical, Rural and Desert' Islands in which these explorations will help the successive researchers to understand the problem and to place their attention and efforts to understand the urban complexity without anxiety or exasperation.

It is crucial here to say that this research manifest itself through addressing new paradigm and to question the urban compositional language as primary means to ensure the complexity of Cairo and to be capable of revealing dimensions and aspects of reality that concern dwellers before authorities. In this case, the new paradigm 'The Future of the Past' is to revive the traditional concept of void as alternative scenario towards the eloquent silence of Cairo's urban composition, and to activate the void itself as a generator for the public realm in Cairo's development. The traditional concept of Void could remove the eclipse of the language, which affected the city and frozen its architectural and urban forms where the void in its manifestation could go beyond the limits of materiality and therefore to exceed the physical dimensions to the metaphysical ones, and only by this way, the city could become transitive and abodes our collective realities in what is beyond just a metropolis, and so it could define its competence of collectivity and complexity within the transcendent linguistic composition that characterized the tenacious city of Cairo.

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