



RESISTANCE: Speculative Design Confronts Systemic Trauma of the Black Diaspora

By: Karla Roberts

Drexel University
Master of Interior Architecture & Design Thesis

“We need images of tomorrow, and our people need them more than most.”

Samuel R. Delaney

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part I: statement

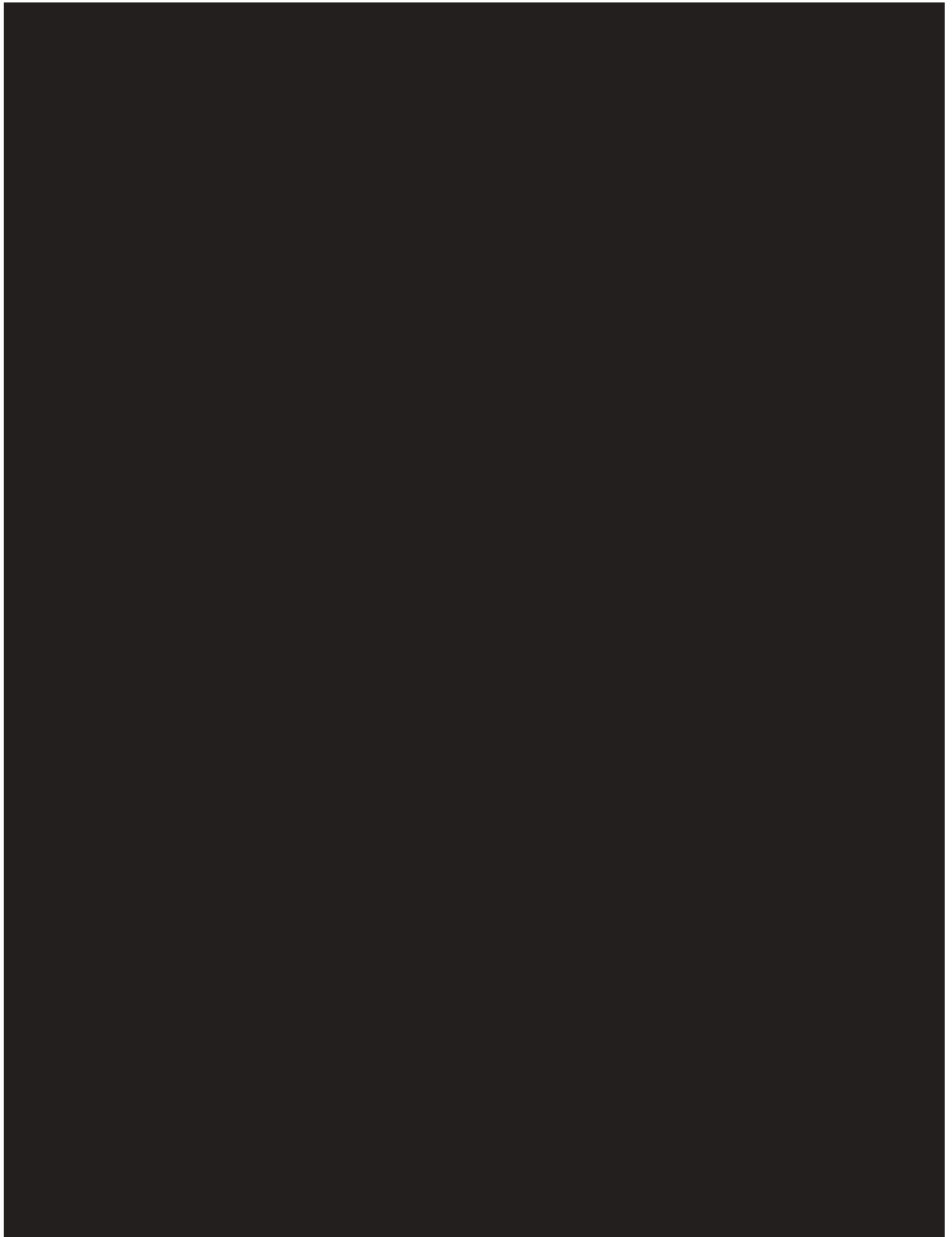
RESISTANCE: Speculative Design Confronts Systemic Trauma of the Black Diaspora

Grounded in Afrofuturism, this thesis explores architectural and interior spaces in a parallel universe using the narrative form of the graphic novel. The intent is to highlight the erasure of Black history prior to enslavement, giving space for a positive future unbound by anti-Black hatred. The past, present, and future of the Black Diaspora are synthesized utilizing history, technology, and imaginative outcomes.

part I: graphic novel



**THE
SOVEREIGN
REPUBLIC OF
UHURU** 🇰🇪



Dedication

To my Mother who endured through these 3 years with me. I hope you look at me and see all your love and dedication paying off.

To my Brother: For your goofy, loving kindness.

To my Grandmother: For your drive for achievement.

To my Stepdad: You were right. I could be more.

To my Aunts, Uncles & Prayer Warriors: For their open arms and open hearts, advocating on my behalf when I was unable.

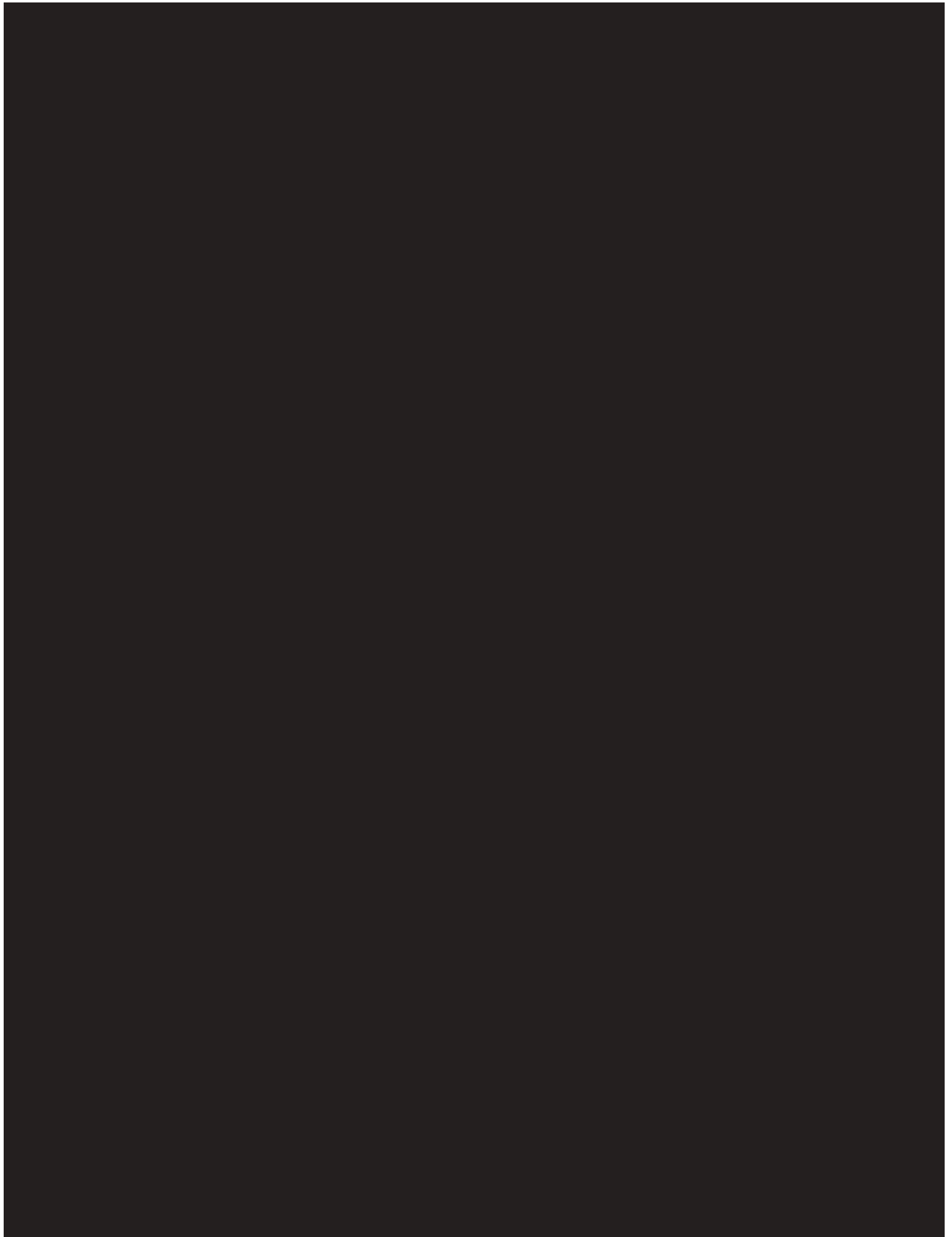
To my Friends: For the late night coffees and snack runs. For the prayers and crying at 3AM. For the texting through tears and laughs.

For Sarah and her faith in me, when I was unsure if I had enough for myself.

Thank You All From The Bottom Of My Heart.

Love,
Karla

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Adviser: Sarah Lippmann



Introduction:

This graphic novel format is based on the historical record of 14 women who were taken from west Africa on a slave ship. During the middle passage they freed themselves and jumped overboard. Out of the 14 that jumped, 6 were recaptured. "The Eight" were presumed dead. In this narrative, they did not die.

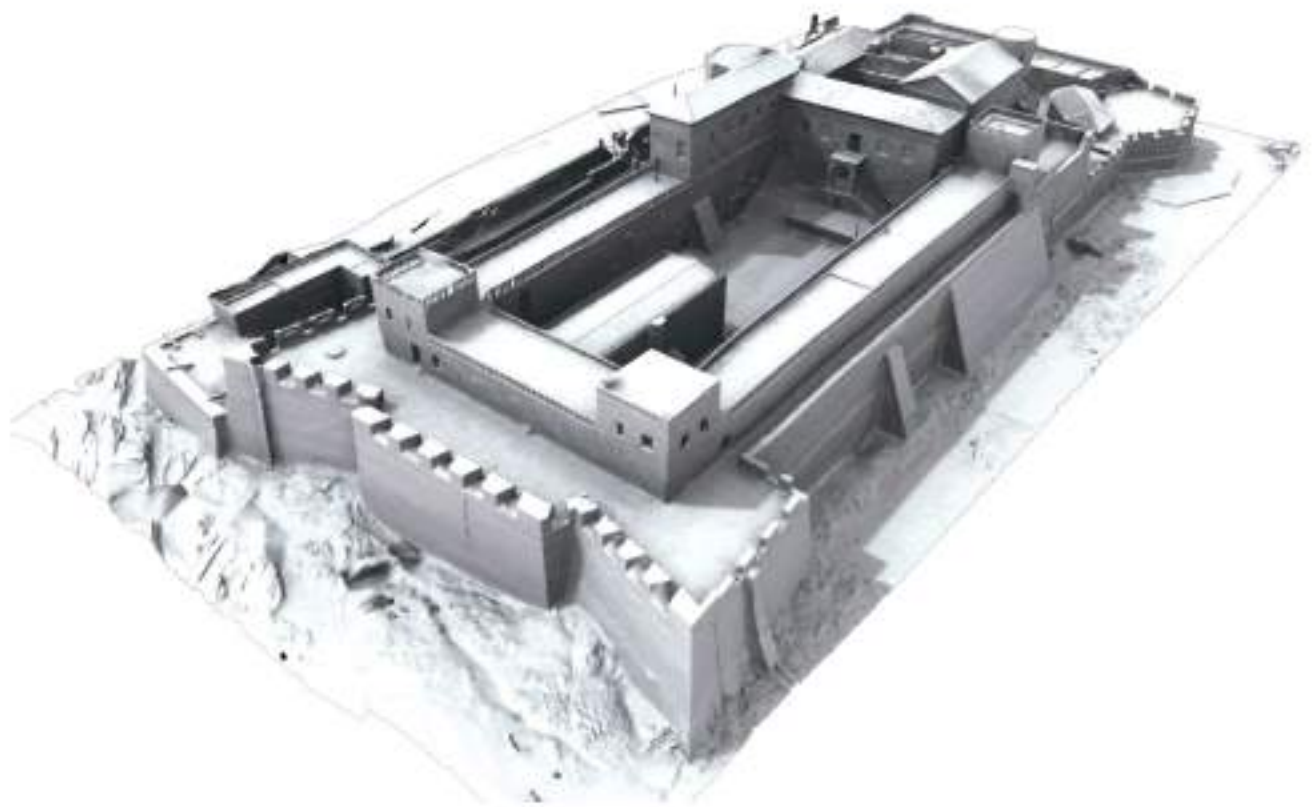
While drowning, they were transported through a portal into a parallel universe called the Sovereign Republic of Uhuru. Over the course of the next 10 chapters, they encounter spaces that represent steps within their journey in this new land. Each space was chosen (from Earth) as a representative of the struggles & triumphs of the Black Diaspora. The spaces chosen are often ones that represent Black trauma, now reclaimed & re-purposed for Black triumph.

Water is a major theme. Maritime travel and innovation helped steal native Africans from their homes. "Wade in the Water" is one of the freedom songs created to navigate the underground railroad. Water is both savior and killer. In many ways, water represents the dichotomy of the black experience. Proud of your survival, disheartened by how far you still must go and how much was lost. If the water helped steal us away, maybe it can also bring us home.

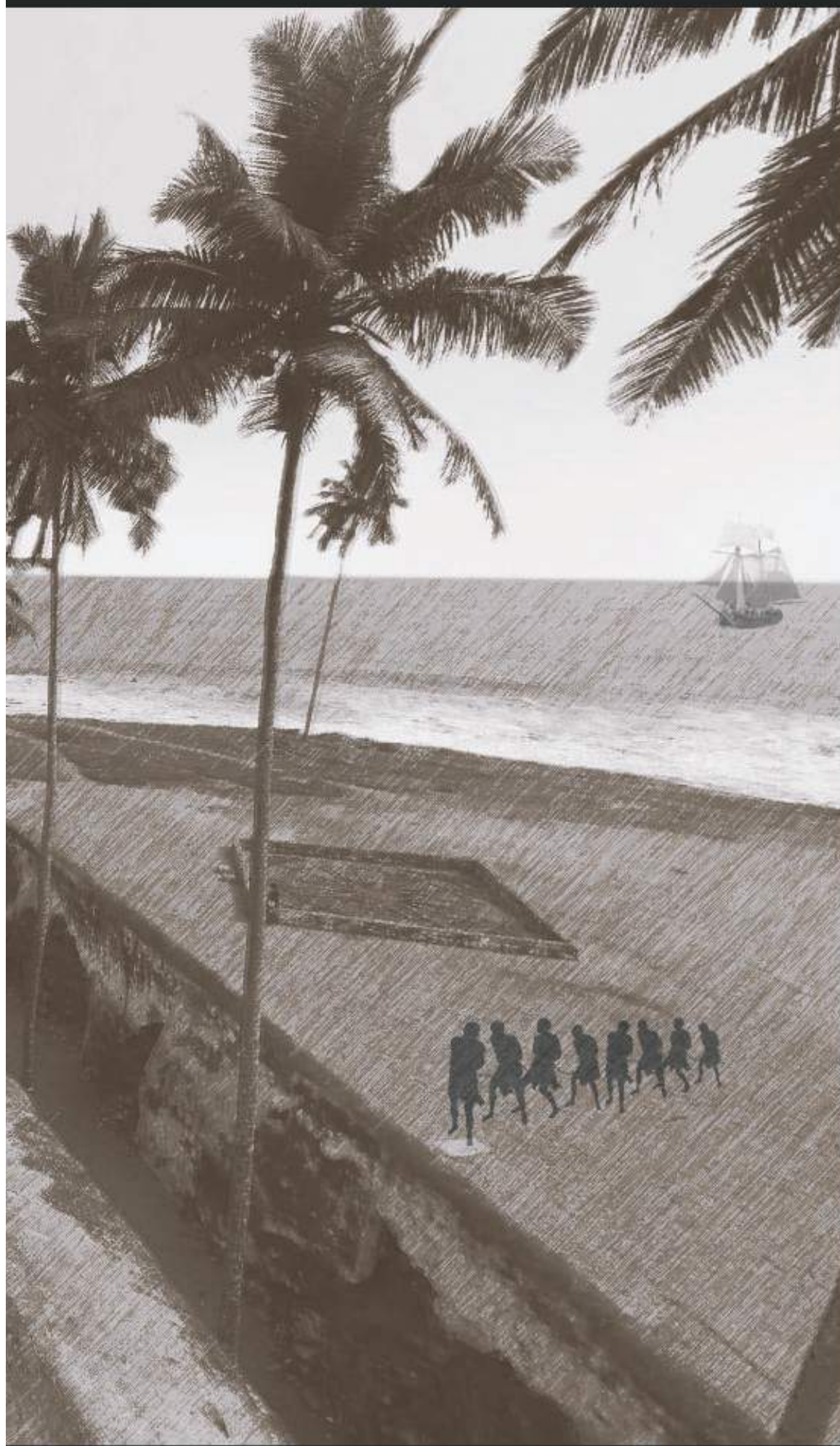


PROLOGUE

THE CAPTURE







ELMINA, GHANA
WEST AFRICAN
COAST:

COLLECTED
FROM ONE OF
MANY 'DOORS
OF NO RETURN'
ANOTHER GROUP
OF AFRICANS FIND
THEMSELVES
PREPARING TO BE
SOLD INTO SLAVERY.

SURVEYING THE NEW
CROP, A CAPTAIN
PREPARES TO SET
SAIL. HE LOOKS
OUT TO HIS SHIP
THE LE SOLEIL
AND REMEMBERS
HE CAN STILL FIT A
FEW MORE INTO THE
HOLD.

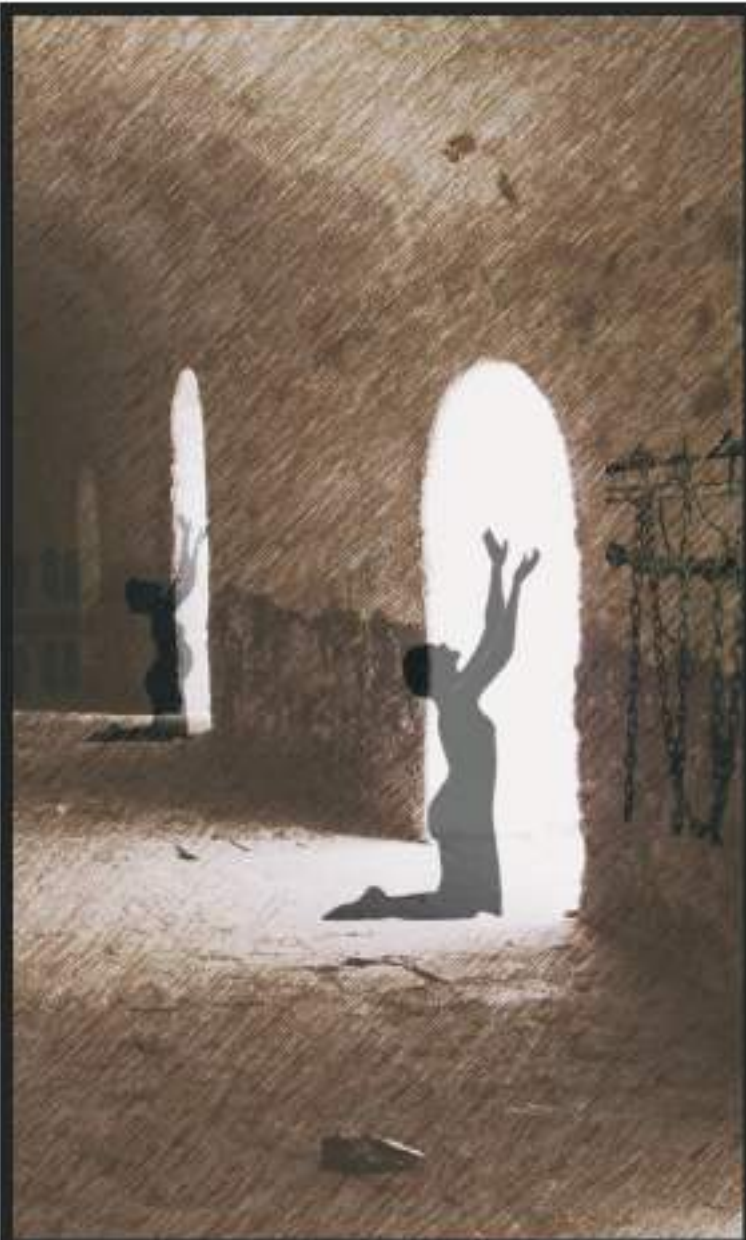
GIVEN THE CHOICE,
HE OPTS FOR A
GROUP OF WOMEN
RECENTLY ARRIVED.
THEY ARE FRESH,
WITH STRONG
BACKS, AND WILL
EITHER MAKE
GOOD PICKERS
OR BE GOOD FOR
BREEDING.

A WIN, WIN.

FLUNG INTO THE DARK, A GROUP OF WOMEN ARE PLACED IN THE DUNGEON.



SHACKLED & FORCED INTO BRUTAL POSITIONS UNDER THE HILL, THEY WHISPER & BEGIN TO PLOT IN THEIR NATIVE TONGUE. TWO SISTERS GRIP SHACKLED HANDS, ALL NOD & AGREE TO MAKE THEIR ESCAPE AT SEA.



COVERED IN FILTH, THEY ALTERNATE BETWEEN HIDING FROM THEIR CAPTORS, AND PRAYING FOR RESCUE IN WHAT LITTLE LIGHT CAN BE FOUND. FOURTEEN ARE CHOSEN.



THE WOMEN WORK TOGETHER TO FREE THEMSELVES,
BITING, & CLAWING AT RUSTED CHAINS.



CONTORTING TO ESCAPE THE COMPARTMENT, THEY PREPARE TO JUMP.
THE SHIP GOES QUIET AT THE SAME TIME EVERY DAY. THAT'S WHEN
THEY'LL MOVE.



THE TIME HAS COME...







EXPECTING ONLY
DEATH, & KNOWING
THEIR FINAL
MOMENTS MAY BE
OF SUFFERING...

THEY LEAP FROM
THE DECK & JUMP
FOR THE OPEN SEA!

DRAWN BY THE
CURRENT THEY ARE
SEPARATED.

SHARKS FOLLOWING
THE SHIP ARE SURE
TO BE UPON THEM
SOON.

BEFORE THOSE
FEARS CAN TAKE
HOLD...

**THEY ARE
DISCOVERED!**

SIX OF THE WOMEN
ARE ROPED AROUND
THE NECK & WAIST
& ARE DRAGGED
BACK TO THE SHIP.

EIGHT WOMEN
PLUMMET...

DOWN...

DOWN...

DOWN...





STRUGGLING FOR
AIR AND FIGHTING
TO STAY UPRIGHT,
THE WOMEN NOTICE
A GLOWING LIGHT IN
THE DEEPEST DARK.

PULLED
MYSTERIOUSLY TO
THE LIGHT THEY ARE
SUCKED THROUGH
A CRACK IN THE
WATER.

THE WATER SWIRLS
ABOUT THEM
PUSHING AND
PULLING. GRASPING
FOR ONE ANOTHER
IN THE SPIRALING
WAVES, THEY BEGIN
TO SEE PINPRICKS
OF LIGHT AND BLUE
SKY.

DEPOSITED IN
SHALLOW WATER
THEY EMERGE
NEAR A BEACH.
STUMBLING TOWARD
IT, HOLDING ONE
ANOTHER THEY
PAUSE ON THE
SHORE TO ASK,
"WHERE ARE WE?"

LE

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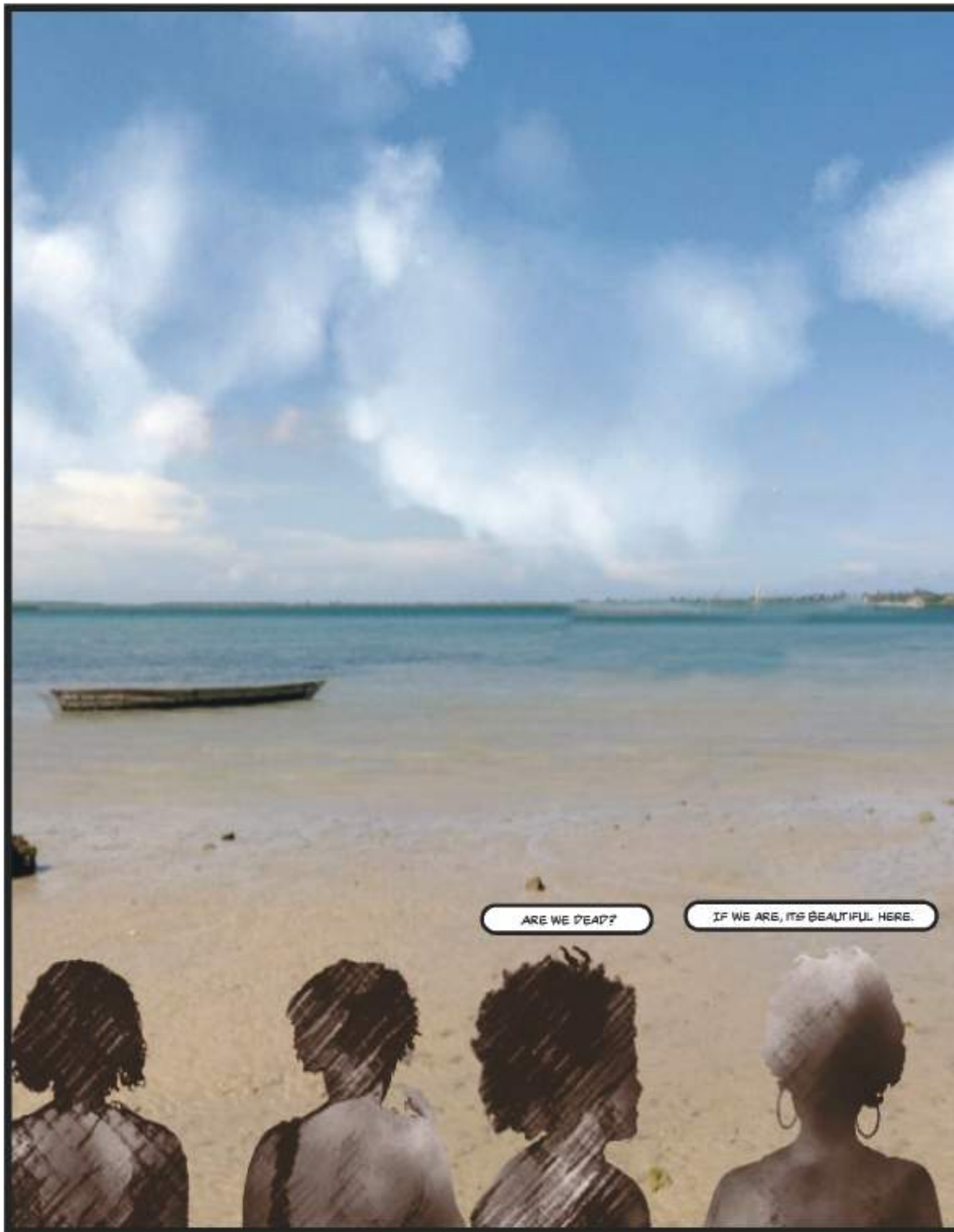
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THE BEACH

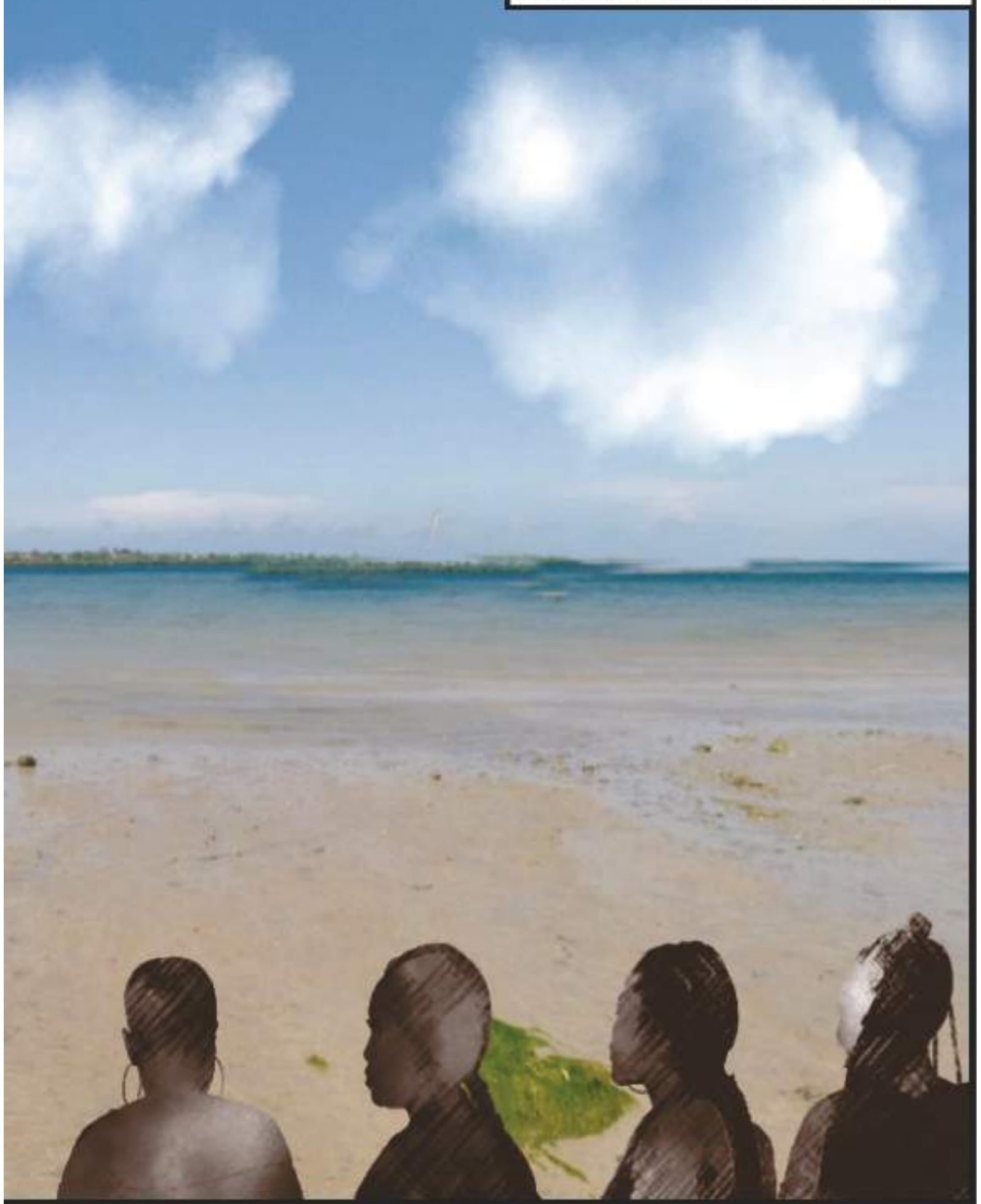




ARE WE DEAD?

IF WE ARE, IT'S BEAUTIFUL HERE.

THEY STARE BLANKLY AT THE SEA, LOOKING FOR ANSWERS. BUT THE ONCE SWIRLING WAVES ARE SILENT, GIVING NOTHING AWAY.



IN THE SILENCE THEY NOTICE MOVEMENT FROM BEHIND. THEY STAND BEFORE A CASTLE, NOT MUCH UNLIKE ELMINA, AND THEY ARE INSTANTLY AFRAID...



A GROUP STEPS FORWARD, ONE LEADS. SHE IS THE FIRST TO SPEAK. "DO NOT BE AFRAID..." THEY HEAR. THE WOMAN INTRODUCES HERSELF AS AN ELDER. SHE EXPLAINS THAT THEY PASSED THROUGH A PORTAL IN THE SEA. THEY ARE NOT ON EARTH, BUT THE SOVEREIGN REPUBLIC OF UHURU, A MIDDLE PLACE, A SAFE PLACE.



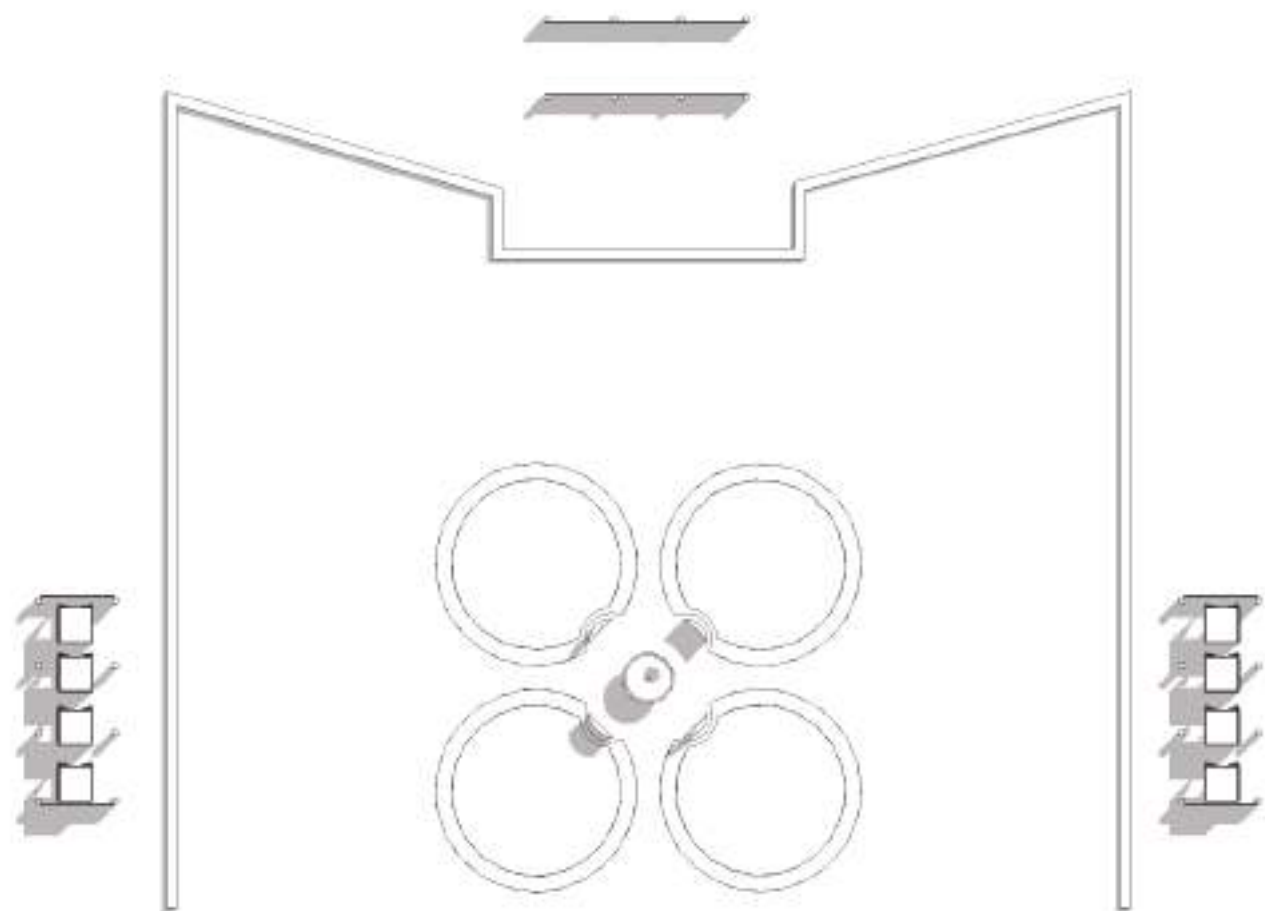
SHE MAKES THEM AN OFFER TO JOIN UHURU SOCIETY. THEY CAN RECOVER AND GO HOME OR, THEY CAN BEGIN A JOURNEY OF KNOWLEDGE THAT WILL TAKE THEM FAR AWAY AND GIVE THEM THE ABILITY TO SAVE THE FRIENDS THEY'VE LOST TO ENSLAVEMENT.



RECALIF

2

THE SHRINE





IN THE MORNING, THE 8 WOMEN AND THE ELDER LEAVE THE ISLAND. THEY ARE LED TO A SMALL SPACE WITHIN THE CASTLE TOWARD ITS CENTER. THERE IS A POOL OF SHALLOW WATER. THEY ARE TOLD TO CLOSE THEIR EYES & FOCUS ON THE VOICE OF THE ELDER & THE MOVEMENT OF THE WATER. PASSING THROUGH THE WATER RUSHING ABOVE, BENEATH & ALL AROUND THEM. THEY SEE VISIONS, COLORS SPREAD ACROSS THE DARKNESS, ALL LEADING TO THE LIGHT AT THE END OF THIS OPENING. THE MIRROR-LIKE SURFACE AT THE END OF THE TUNNEL, YIELDS TO THEIR HANDS AND THEY STEP THROUGH.



THEY REAPPEAR IN A GLOWING COURTYARD. THEY ARE REVIVED FROM THE WATER THEY ABSORBED. THE AIR IS DIFFERENT HERE, SACRED. THEY WALK CAREFULLY TO THE CENTER OF 4 POOLS, WITH A SMALL FOUNTAIN IN THE CENTER.

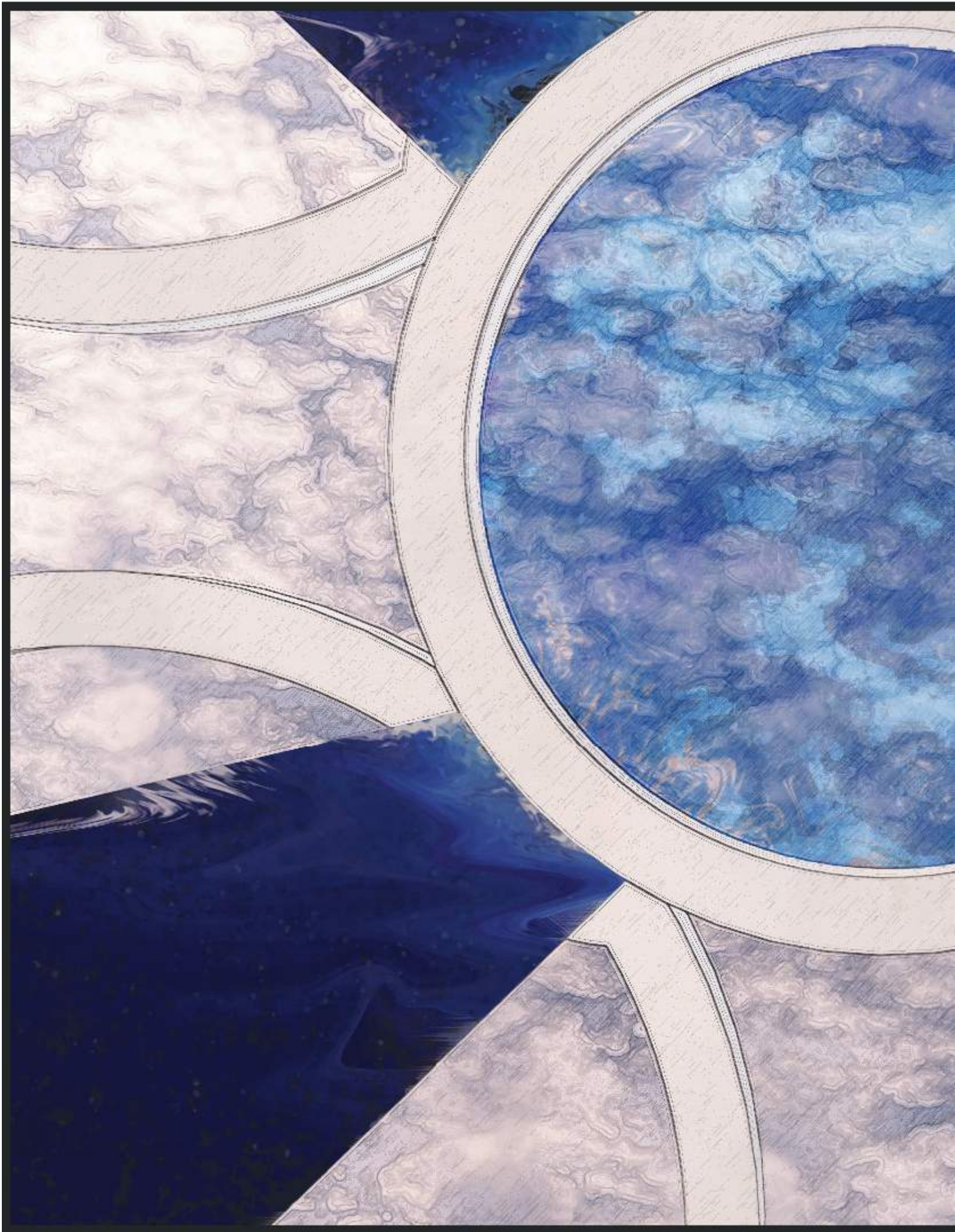


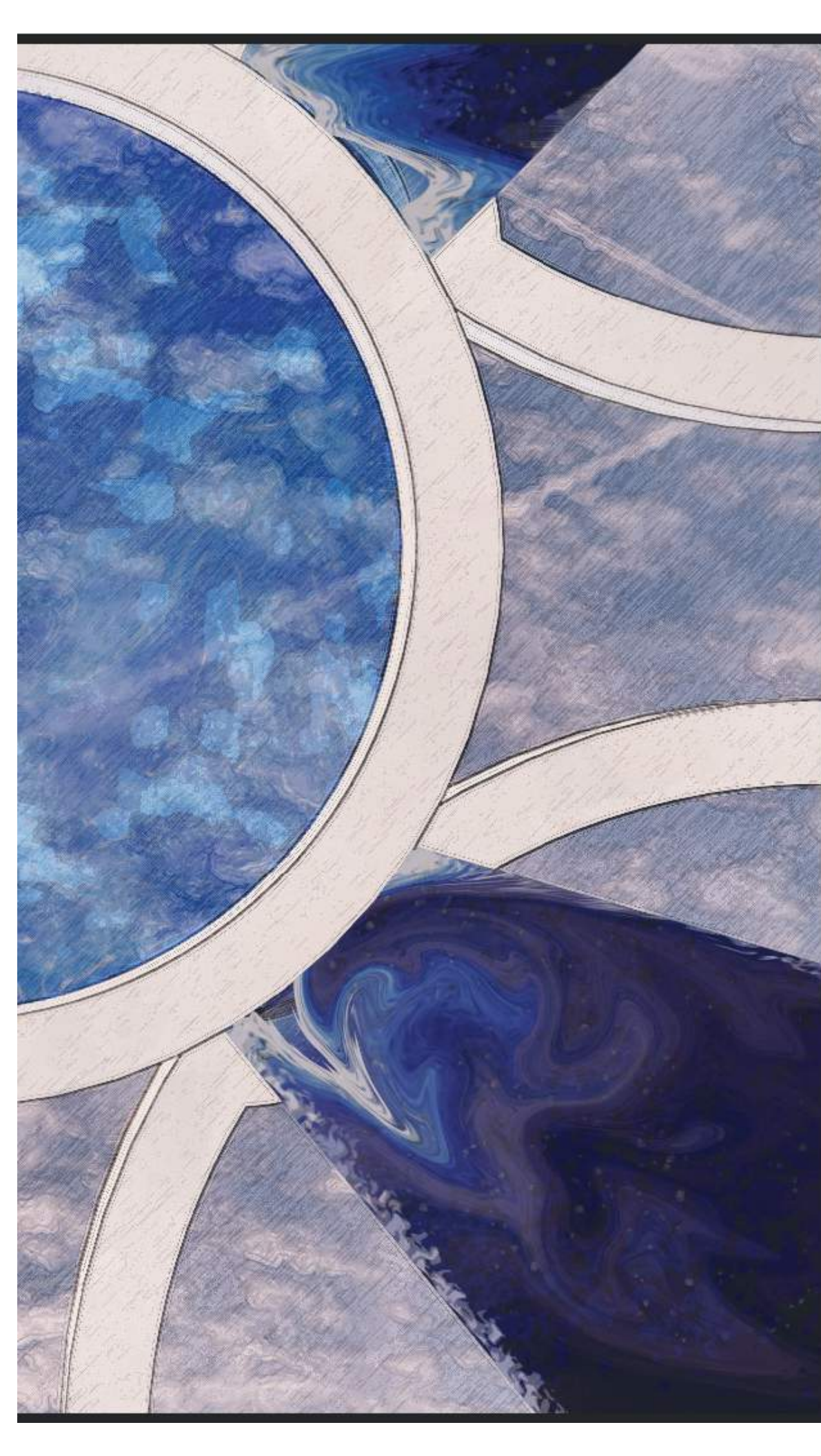
"THESE ARE THE POOLS OF TIME," THE ELDER WHISPERS.
"YOU WILL FIND KNOWLEDGE HERE & GAIN ABILITIES.
"I WILL LEAVE YOU WITH YE. YOU'LL BE SAFE WITH HER."



THEY NOTICE A WOMAN BATHED IN YELLOW. SHE HAS KIND EYES AND WELCOMES THEM.

CALL ME YE. I WILL BE HERE TO GUIDE YOU AT THE BEGINNING OF YOUR JOURNEY...





"ALL YOU ARE ABOUT TO
SEE ARE VISIONS OF
TIME FOR OUR PEOPLE.
THIS JOURNEY MAY FILL
YOU WITH SORROW.

UNDERSTAND, WHAT
I SHOW YOU WILL BE
REALITY FOR SO MANY.
YOU WILL AWAKE, THEY
WILL NOT.

HOWEVER, THERE IS
HOPE & MANY GREAT
VICTORIES & JOYS FOR
THE FUTURE. YOU WILL
BE ABLE TO TAKE THE
FORM OF THOSE YOU
SEE & FEEL WHAT THEY
FEEL.

I CAUTION YOU FROM
LEANING IN. BE
BALANCED OR YOU WILL
MISS THE DEEP TRUTHS
BURIED IN THEIR LIFE
EXPERIENCES.

YOU WILL RECEIVE
YEARS OF THEIR
EXPERIENCES IN
DOSES. AT THE END
YOU WILL UNDERSTAND
WHY THEY SURVIVED."

THE 8 LIE BACK AS
THE TWISTING TIDES
CONTINUE TO DANCE.
WHILE WATCHING
CLOSELY AS YE
INSTRUCTS, THEY FALL
INTO A DREAM-LIKE
TRANCE.

90 YEARS OF PAIN THEY
ENDURED IN A SINGLE
DAY.

THEY LIVED AS WOMEN,
MEN & CHILDREN
FROM SHIP TO SHORE
TO SUGAR, INDIGO,
TOBACCO & COTTON.
SOLACE WAS IN THE
WATER. SOOTHING
THEIR SPILLED BLOOD
FROM BROKEN BODIES
& SPIRITS. LOST
CHILDREN, TONGUES,
LIMBS & NEARLY LOST
MINDS.

THE SHIPS

NS da Ponta da Franca / NS do Rosario S Antonio e Almas / Bom Jesus e NS da Conceicao / S Joao Batista e S Maria Madalena / S Antonio e Almas / Santa Maria Joazeira e NS da Conceicao / S Antonio e S Luz / NS das Brotas e S Goncalo / NS dos Prazeres S Antonio e Almas / Beata virg Amaterdam / Dainsburg / Grote Tigger / Very Golden Gully / John Bonaventura / Constant Aligall / Marlborough / Mairmaid / Dolphins / Thomas and John / Aaron Frigate / William and Mary / Catherine Bonaventura / Cleon / Edwin and Joseph / Mary / Warsaw / Phoenix / Happy Returns / Pearl / Florence / Gaywood / Dorset / Adriansen / Jodith / Anselbury Gully / Dorothy / Dorote / NS do Rosario e S Antonio / S Francisco Xavier e NS da Ajuda / Bom Jesus da Branca S Antonio e Almas / NS das Brotas e S Goncalo / S Francisco das Chagas / NS da Ajuda / Constant Rachel / African Gully / Wakeing Cross / Conter / Pance / Samuel and Elizabeth / Larke Gully / Anstalt / Happy Returns / Colbaretta / Stacey Gully / Berkeley Gully / Charles / Sarah / Tiger / Suzanna / Lutteron Gully / Joseph / Joseph / Happy Returns / Rebecca / London Gully / Grand Content / Indigo Merchant / Mappin / Greenwell / Grand Content / Footpath Bon / Constant Rachel / Alexander / Olive Tree / Angola / Amiable / Providence / Thomas / Greenhead / Rosta / S Cristo e NS da Conceicao / Bom Jesus e NS da Conceicao / NS da Ajuda e Conceicao / NS do Rosario S Antonio e Almas / S Antonio das Caqueiras / S Antonio e Almas / NS da Ajuda e S Francisco Xavier / S Antonio e Almas / Todos os Santos / S Cruz e NS da Boa Hora / Catarina Christina / Koning van Portugal / Auritia / Philippus Johannes / Larke Gully / Mary / Escape / Berkeley Gully / Colton Gully / Happy Returns / Thomas / Royal Consort / Barbados Merchant / Dolphin G / S Clara / Christina Quatro / Kade Lester / Vliegende Hart / Come de Lantingen / Flying Jans / Sheffron / Seaford / Dainsburg / Virgalee Cox / Fashionsberg / Content Sloop / Queen Anne Gully / Stonehill Gully / Raper Gully / Barnard / monico e S Antonio / NS da Boa Hora e Almas / NS das Brotas / S Antonio e S Luz / S Margarida / Bom Jesus da Graça e S Joao Batista / NS da Conceicao e S Antonio / Jesus Maria Jose / NS da Ajuda e S Antonio / Santissimo Sacramento e NS do Rosario e S Antonio / NS do Rosario S Antonio e Almas / NS do Pilar e Monserrat / NS do Rosario e S Francisco do Monte / NS da Conceicao e S Antonio / NS da Nazaré e S Antonio das Barras / S Amaro e S Luz / NS de Guadalupe das Barras e S Antonio da Barra / S Estreito e NS da Luz / Bom Jesus e NS da Conceicao / NS da Ajuda e S Francisco Xavier / NS da Ajuda Conceicao e Santiago / S Antonio das Caqueiras / NS do Rosário e S Antonio / Misericordia / Katherine / Sydney / Mary / Charles / Sarah / Wishart Gully / Adelaide / Mary / Delight Gully / Prospero / Dewing / John and Constant / Carwood Merchant / Industry / Amy Gully / Eagle Gully / Spobs / Villa de Hamburg / Coventry / Catherine / Mar Antonio Gully / Barlow / Maxwell Merchant / Ann and Mary / Martin Gully / Dorset / Greenwell Gully / Fawcett Gully / Alexander / Harter Gully / Robert Advenera / Bonaventura / Valentia and Elizabeth / Annaboo / Leona / Whited Merchant / S Cristo e NS da Conceicao / NS de Nazaré e S Antonio das Barras / S Jose de Ribasara / NS da Ajuda e S Francisco Xavier / NS do Rosario e S Francisco do Monte / NS de Monserrat e S Cristovao / NS da Piedade e S Antonio / S Antonio / Adelaide / Almas e S Antonio / NS do Pilar e Monserrat / NS da Conceicao e S Antonio / Sheffron / Dorothy / Dolphins / Regard / Bleigwerk / Catarina Christina / Quaresa / Occochee Appel / Providence / Dolphin / Joseph Gully / Keed / Stonehill / Batus / Stadt Amsterdam / Acme / Rosenberg / Enzali / Harbison / Aditia / Jager / Fredericus Quatro / Mignon / Shuffberg / Larke Gully / Joseph Gully / Little London / Young Margaret / Mornald Gully / Saint Joseph / Amphitrite / Jacob / Mercier Volant / Poli / NS da Conceicao e S Antonio / NS da Piedade / NS do Pilar e Monserrat / NS do Rosario e S Francisco do Monte / NS da Ajuda e S Francisco Xavier / NS de Monserrat e S Cristovao / Sociedade / S Jose de Ribasara / NS das Brotas e S Goncalo / NS da Nazaré e S Antonio das Barras / S Francisco Xavier / NS da Piedade e S Antonio / NS da Ajuda S Antonio e Almas / S Antonio e Almas / Santissimo Sacramento e NS da Luz / Jose e Almas / S Pedro / Dolphins / Elizabeth / Fender / Adriansen / Stad Meulere / Richard and James / Dorotias / Fawcett Gully / Manchester / Raper Gully / Dolphin Gully / Martin Gully / George and Martha / John and Constant e / Eagle / Thom / Martha / Uskin Sloop / Anny Gully / Grove / Elizabeth / Hescate / Saint Pierre / Anstalt / Brilliant / Eclair / Leopard / Meros / Catherine de Choiseul / America / George and Catherine / Prins Duperon / Carlos Secundus / S Clara / Jonge Jacob / Nippona / Alexander Gully / Ann and Mary / Rogers / Flying Fame / Fintence / Williams / Sylvia Gully / Elizabeth / Enzali / Gallardé / Françoise / Duc de Bretagne / Dos Corras / Ppe Court / NS da Guadalupe S Jose / NS da Conceicao e S Antonio / NS da Conceicao e S Antonio e Almas / NS da Ajuda e Ajuda / S Helena e NS da Piedade / S Isabel Rainha de Portugal e Almas / NS do Rosario S Antonio e Almas / NS do Pilar e Monserrat / NS da Ajuda e S Francisco Xavier / NS da Costa Alegre / S Antonio e Almas / NS de Guadalupe Almas e S Antonio / Carwood Merchant / Howard / Johanna Mackbald / Elvina / Jager / Osh-banda / Victoria / John Gully / Little London / Joseph Gully / Raper Gully / Charles Gully / Fawcett Gully / Gully / Patricia / Indian Queen / Nancy / Queen Ann / Isaac / Douglas / Suspeto / Duc de Bretagne / Françoise d'Assise / S Joao Batista / S Anny Gully / Overstraw van Rijst / Popkowsky / Saint Thomas / Berkeley Gully / Dorset Gully / and Robert / John Gully / Three Crews / Duc de Bourgogne / Galant / Brilliant / Caplice / Anstalt / NS do Pilar e Monserrat / NS da Piedade e S Antonio / NS da Conceicao e S Antonio e Almas / NS da Guá e S Pedro da Guarda / NS da Conce / NS da Conceicao e Almas / S Antonio e Almas / Santissimo Sacramento e NS da Luz / NS da Ajuda e S Francisco Xavier / S Joao Almas / NS do Pilar e Monserrat / NS do Rosario S Antonio e Almas / NS da Purificacao e S Antonio da Barra / S Jo / raga e Almas / S Antonio e Almas / Bom Jesus Barras e S Goncalo de Amaranthe / NS da Piedade / Adriansen / Goules Appel / Canada / Pinder / Ann / Dove Gully / Portobello Merchant / Rachel / Schovers / Gully / Newport Gully / Fawcett Gully / Little London / NS do Boscoseco e S Antonio / Costa de Lantingen / Rode Lester / NS da Luz e S Estreito / S Clara / S Anthony Gully / Anne / Berkeley Gully / Florida Gully / Peterboro Frigate / Olive / Olive Branch / William / South Carol / gulle / NS e S Antonio / Tazoo / NS do Lantingen / NS do Popolo / NS do Anjo / NS da Piedade e S Antonio / NS da Guá e S Pedro da Guarda / NS da Conceicao e S Antonio e Almas / S Cecilia e Almas / NS do Rosario S Jose e Santiago / Isaac e Nazaré / Corpo Santo e Almas / NS das Augustas e S Jose / NS das de Deus e S Jose / NS do Rio e S Antonio / NS da Boa Hora e S Bonaventura e NS da Conceicao / NS da Ajuda e S Francisco Xavier / S Antonio e Almas / S Isabel Rainha / monico e NS da Luz e S Antonio / S Cristo e NS da Ajuda / NS da Ajuda Abadia / S Goncalo / NS da Conceicao S Antonio e Almas / S Joao Batista / NS da Boa Hora e S Cruz / Bom Jesus Barras e S Goncalo de Amaranthe / America / Amaranthe / with / Nightingale / Elizabeth / Abrahams and Isaac / Edwin Carter / Eble Gully / Mary and Elizabeth / Lantingen / Javos / Affliguall / Geeseville / Belair / Fitzroy / Popkowsky / Jager / Niopora Prins Duperon / Worsley Gully / Jonge Abrahams /



THE MARCHES

BY RAY DAVIS - SAMUEL DUBOSE - BRIAN
 - FELIX KUMI - KEITH HARRISON MCLEOD - JUNIOR PROSPER - PAT
 NY ASHFORD - TYREE CRAWFORD - INDIA KAGER - LA'VANTE BIGGS
 HARRIS PICKETT - MIGUEL ESPINAL - JANET WILSON - RANDY NELS
 ROQUEMORE - CHRISTOPHER DAVIS - MARCO LOUD - PETER GAIN
 SMITH - MARY TRUXILLO - ALTON STERLING - DEMARCUS SEMER - PI
 - JORDAN EDWARDS - AARON BAILEY - STEPHON CLARK - ANTWOI
 - ATATIANA JEFFERSON - CHRISTOPHER WHITFIELD - ERIC REASON

G E O R G E

• NS da Ajuda • Concoção • S Cristo • NS da Concoção • NS da Concoção • Almas • NS da Ajuda • S Antonio • Almas • NS da Concoção • Boracense • Santissimo Sacramento • N
 pida Zoa (Margaria Calhaz) / Prisco of Oraga / Royal Africa / Gould Frigate / Angola / Lark / Black Eagle / Saint Lawrence Victorias / Kook / Siam / Bridgwater / London / Jos
 / Africa / Suzanne / John's Adventure / Unity / Martin / Greenold / Thomas / Betty / Olive Tree / Pariah / Madenick / Amphirite / Bedine / Ararat / Faouca Franca / Com Primon
 / Resonance / Petraco / Cerca / Cerca / Pol / NS da Guadalupe Almas e S Antonio / S Antonio e Almas / NS da Luz e S Antonio / NS da Luz e S Antonio / S Cristo e NS da Conco
 / Renato e S Francisco do Monte / Boa Jesus e NS da Concoção / NS das Brotas e S Goncalo / Toldos de Santos / Rapard / Union / Stad Amsterdam / Betas van Amsterdam / Quorra /
 / No Brothers / William / Neptune / Eagle Gally / Samuel and Margaret / Faouca Anglia / Stad Moolou / Carlos Secours / Vispede Meri / Bridgewater / Neptune / Black Eagle / Cos
 / zonia / William / Union Gally / Haggie / Pol / NS da Ajuda e S Antonio / NS da Ajuda e S Francisco Maria / NS das Brotas e S Antonio da Barra / NS da Ajuda e Concoção / S Jo
 / sta / S Antonio e S Luz / NS do Rosario e Antonio e Almas / NS da Piedade e S Antonio / Boa Jesus e NS da Concoção / NS da Esperanca e S Antonio / Boa Jesus de Brotas e S A
 / dy / Young Margaret / John Bonaventure / Valentine and Elizabeth / Roberts Bonaventure / Adventure / Raper Gally / Dorset / Dunston Gally / Amantaboe / Anne Gally / Hope Gall
 / Elizabeth / Amabile / Neptune / William / Deering / John Gally / Bridgewater / Edward and Hannah / Dolphin / Alexander / Dolphin / Harvi / Mercute / Duc de Bretagne / Argona / A
 / das Neves / NS do Rosario e S Antonio da Barra / S Cristo e NS da Concoção / S Antonio dos Coqueiros / S Antonio e Almas / NS da Ajuda e S Francisco Xavier / NS das Brotas e
 / Almas e S Antonio / Santissimo Sacramento e NS das Neves / NS da Piedade e S Antonio / NS da Ajuda e S Antonio e Almas / Boa Jesus de Brotas e S Antonio e Almas / NS do Monte
 / Dorothy / Queen Ann / Amabile / Elizabeth / Stad Amsterdam / Katted Delazca / Colonel Gally / Dorothy / Dover Gally / Happy Return / Happy Return / Greyhound / Maria Gally /
 / y / Elizabeth and Hannah / NS do Rosario e S Antonio e Almas / Dolphin / Texas Gebroeders / Elizabeth / Flying Fame / Lark / Adrichem / Justice / Mayden / Berkeley Gally / Colonel C
 / Sweland / Queen Anne Gally / Alexandre Gally / Thomas and Hannah / Mary / Expedition / Thomas and John / Oriflamme / Opimiere / Gaillard / NS do Cabo / S Cristo e NS da Conco
 / Santissimo Sacramento e NS da Luz / NS da Piedade / S Cruz / Boa Jesus e NS da Concoção / NS da Ajuda e S Antonio e Almas / NS das Brotas e S Goncalo / NS das Brotas e S Ant
 / o Gally / William / Raper Gally / John and Thomas / Prisco of Indalheim / Bridgewater / Amabile Sloop / Combat / Duc de Bretagne / Comte de Teuss / NS da Maa de Deus / Boa Jesus
 / Anne Gally / George and Martha / Judith / Thompson / Dorset / Dover Gally / Martha / Adventure / Ann and Mary / Olive Branch / Flying Fame / Amabile / Ann / Cannwood Merchant
 / NS do Cabo e S Antonio / S Cristo e NS da Concoção / NS da Concoção e S Antonio e Almas / NS do Rosario e S Antonio e Almas / NS da Concoção e S Antonio do Vale da Piedade /
 / S Antonio e Almas / S Joao Almas / NS do Pilar e Monserat / NS da Monserat e S Cristovao / NS da Ajuda e S Francisco Xavier / NS da Concoção e S Antonio do Vale da Piedade /
 / so Gally / Harvi / Greenold Gally / Loyal Johnson / Healdick Frigate / Three Crowns / Berkeley Gally / Charles Gally / Expedition Gally / Happy Return / Hermit Gally / Joseph and
 / Prosperata / John and Robert / Rachel / Dolphin / Africa Gally / Berkeley Gally / Dover Gally / Elizabeth and Sarah / Expedition Gally / Indian King / Maria / Mary / Union Gally / W
 / ston de l'Isle do Principe / NS de Guadalupe Almas e S Antonio / NS da Piedade e S Antonio / Boa Jesus de Brotas e NS da Concoção / Santissimo Sacramento e NS das Neves / S A
 / nton e Almas / NS do Vi e S Antonio / NS da Piedade / S Antonio e Almas / S Boa Jesus de Brotas / NS do Vi e S Joao / NS da Nazara e S Anto
 / ny / Anne Gally / Recovery Gally / Dolphin / Swallow / Demithas / New Providence / Cyra / Saint Thomas / Ann / Anne and Dorothy / Bridgewater / Marnall / Neptune Sloop / Pellice
 / Fisse / Isaac / Penelope Frigate / Tyrion / Union Sloop / William / Mary / Dover Gally / Sarah Gally / Harvi Gally / Swift / Paegrina / Prosperata / Madisfield Gally / Rachel / Saz
 / tao e S Antonio e Almas / NS das Anzarias e S Joao / NS do Rosario e S Francisco do Monte / NS do Rosario e Joao e Santiago / Boa Jesus e NS da Concoção / S Isabel Rainha de Po
 / rtugeta / S Helena e NS da Piedade / NS do Pilar e S Antonio e Almas / NS da Nazara e S Antonio das Barreiras / NS da Concoção e Almas / NS da Soledade e S Antonio e Almas / S I
 / ally / Kacoran Gally / Swallow Gally / Dolphin / Raper Gally / New Providence / Falcon / Joseph Gally / Anne Gally / George and Catherine / Mercury Gally / Louis / Paris / Merit
 / ma / Cannwood Merchant / Sarah Gally / Abraham and Isaac / Easton and William / Dover Gally / Sarah / New Parteen Gally / Harvi Gally / Daven / Mary / Dauphin / Gaillard / Gal
 / NS da Piedade / Santissimo Sacramento / NS da Luz e S Antonio / NS da Concoção e S Antonio e Almas / NS da Ajuda e S Antonio e Almas / NS da Esperanca e S Antonio / S Antonio
 / de Portugal e Almas / NS da Piedade e S Antonio da Barra / NS da Concoção e Almas / NS do Pilar e S Antonio e Almas / NS da Cruz e Luz e S Antonio e Almas / NS da Piedade e S Ant
 / o e Sarah / Adventure Gally / Douglas Frigate / Dover Gally / Decolifield / Fame / Isaac Gally / Mercy Gally / Backwell Gally / Tonbridge Gally / Portoball Merchant / Otto Co
 / America / Elizabeth / Neptune / Verulph / North / Florida Gally / Amason / Carter Gally / Lovell Gally / Moving Star / Resolution / Northdale Gally / Union Sloop / Saint Thom
 / as Gally / Anne / Sime / Dorothea / Emma / Cecilia Gally / Anne / S Elizabeth / Cannwood / Commerce / Mocha / Mersina / Tenny / NS da Esperanca / NS do Rosario e S Antonio

THE WOMEN AWAKE
 TO FIND YE TENDING
 THEM BATHED IN THE
 HEALING WATER THEY
 ARE SLOWLY BROKEN
 FROM THE TRANCE.
 FROZEN, STARTLED,
 CRYING.
 AMARE BREAKS THE
 SILENCE, "I DIED IN A
 FIELD."
 BISA COMMENTS,
 "I LOST 2 OF MY
 CHILDREN. AS THE
 DREAM BEGAN TO
 BREAK I RESISTED
 LEAVING THE
 OTHERS."



THE DEATHS

YE NOOS, "WHAT IF I
 TOLD YOU WE MIGHT
 BE ABLE TO HEAL
 THE PAIN YOU FEEL.
 WOULD YOU RETURN
 TOMORROW?"
 ALL EIGHT NO,
 "YES."
 "THEN I'LL BE
 HERE."
 THE 6 RETURN
 FOR 7 MORE DAYS.
 TECHNOLOGY IS
 INTRODUCED &
 BLACK LIFE PREVAILS
 & SUFFERS.
 EACH HAS NEW
 MEMORIES NOW OF
 SPACES THEY'VE
 NEVER INHABITED
 & CHILDREN THEY
 NEVER BORE. THEY
 FEEL THE LOSS
 ALL THE SAME.
 FRUSTRATED, THEY
 DESIRE CHANGE.
 "GO NOW TO YOUR
 TEMPORARY HOME
 & MAKE IT YOUR
 OWN. IT'S THERE
 TO NURTURE YOU.
 THIS REST IS NOT
 A LUXURY. IT'S A
 NECESSITY FOR ALL
 THAT COMES NEXT
 FOR YOU IN UHURU."
 YE ASSERTS.

KEITH DAY - CHRISTIAN TAYLOR - TROY ROBINSON
 ERSON BROWN - DOMINIC HUTCHINSON - ANTHO-
 - JAMAR CLARK - RICHARD PERKINS - NATHANIEL
 ON - WENDELL CELESTINE - DAVID JOSEPH - CALIN
 ES - TORREY ROBINSON - KEVIN HICKS - SYLVILLE
 HILANDO CASTILE - PAUL O'NEAL - ALTERIA WOODS
 N ROSE II - BOTHAM JEAN - DOMINIQUE CLAYTON
 N - MICHAEL LORENZO DEAN - BREONNA TAYLOR
F L O Y D

R

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V

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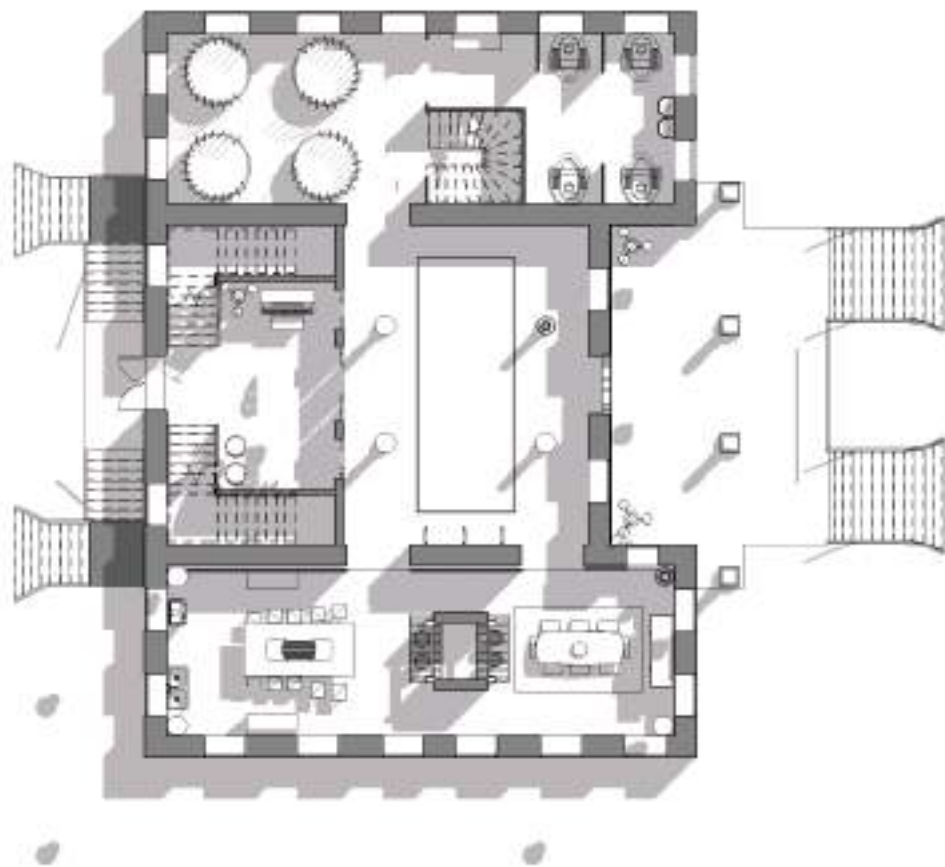
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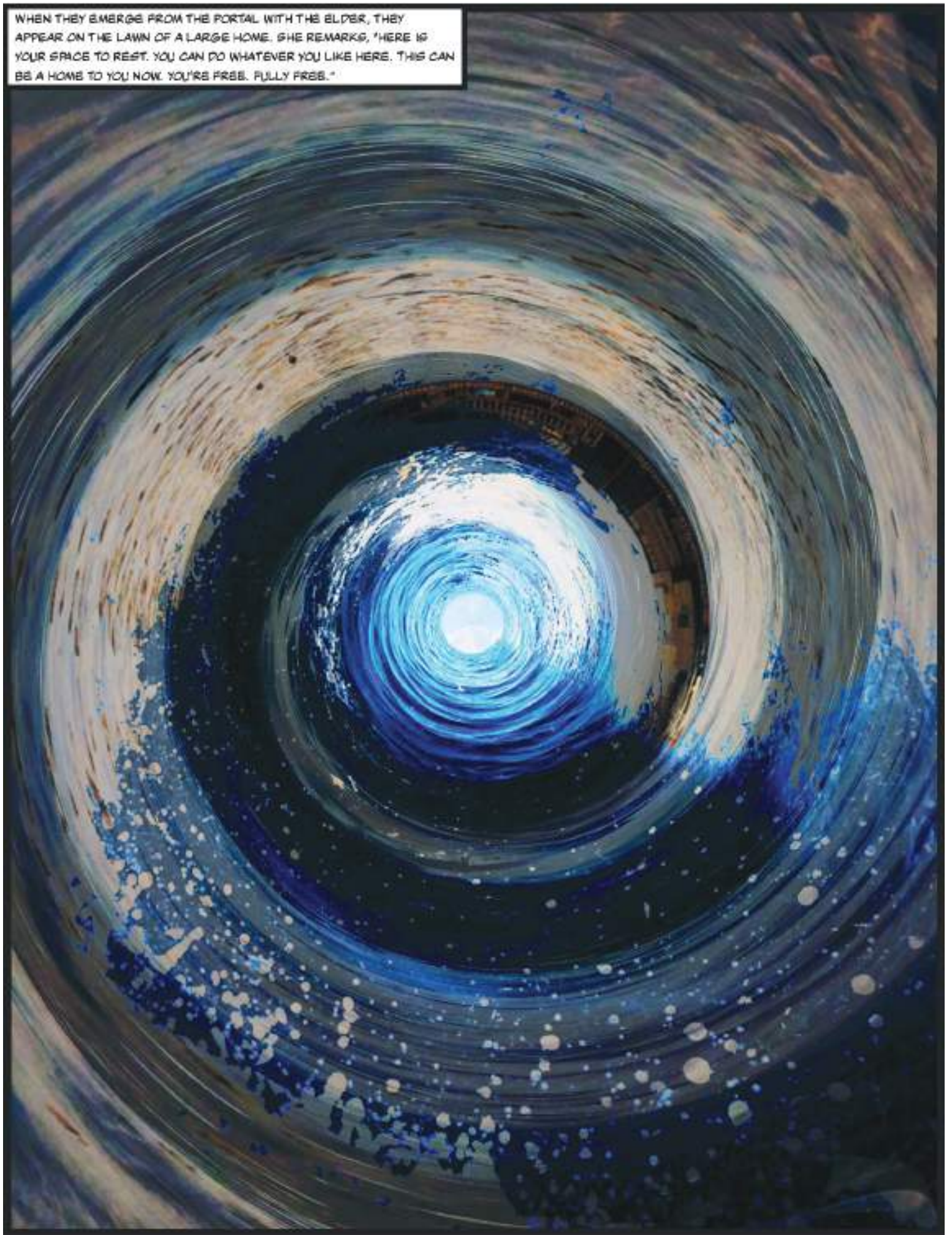
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THE RESIDENCE



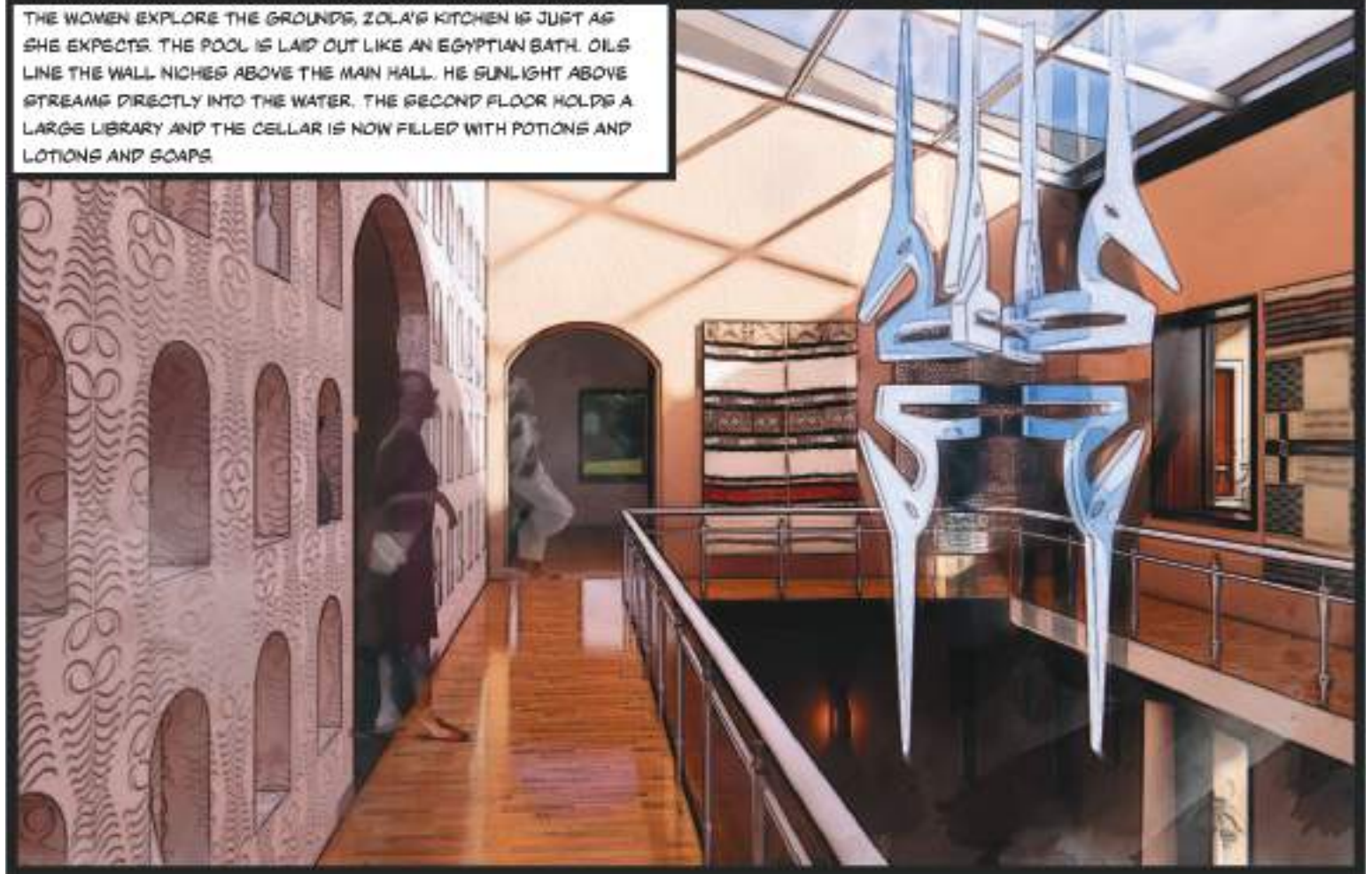
WHEN THEY EMERGE FROM THE PORTAL WITH THE ELDER, THEY APPEAR ON THE LAWN OF A LARGE HOME. SHE REMARKS, "HERE IS YOUR SPACE TO REST. YOU CAN DO WHATEVER YOU LIKE HERE. THIS CAN BE A HOME TO YOU NOW. YOU'RE FREE. FULLY FREE."





"I REMEMBER THIS PLACE," ZOLA WHIPPERS. "I WAS A COOK HERE. I HAD A FRIEND WHO WAS A GOVERNESS AND WE SLEPT IN THE CELLAR TOGETHER."

THE WOMEN EXPLORE THE GROUNDS, ZOLA'S KITCHEN IS JUST AS SHE EXPECTS. THE POOL IS LAID OUT LIKE AN EGYPTIAN BATH. OILS LINE THE WALL NICHE ABOVE THE MAIN HALL. THE SUNLIGHT ABOVE STREAMS DIRECTLY INTO THE WATER. THE SECOND FLOOR HOLDS A LARGE LIBRARY AND THE CELLAR IS NOW FILLED WITH POTIONS AND LOTIONS AND SOAPS.





I GUESS WE LEAVE
TOMORROW AND FIND OUT.

I WANT TO KNOW WHATS
IN STORE FOR US HERE.



SHOULD WE GO?

AS THEY PREPARE FOR ANOTHER HOME COOKED MEAL FROM ZOLA, THEY NOTICE A SOUND.

BUBBLING WATER

SPREAD OUT THROUGHOUT THE HOME, ONE BY ONE THEY HEAR THE CALL AND LOOK OUTSIDE.

THEY DISCOVER A NOTE FROM YE. A NOTE AND A SMALL PORTAL.

SHE OFFERS AN INVITATION TO THE CITY. THERE THEY WILL MEET THE FOUNDING MOTHERS AND CREATE NEW ROOTS AS CITIZENS OF UHURU.



I THINK I AM DONE READING. I WANT TO DO SOMETHING TO HELP.

THEN LETS DO WHAT WE CAME TO DO.



I THINK WE SURVIVED THE WORST OF IT. WHATEVER COMES, WE AREN'T ALONE.

AREN'T YOU CONCERNED? THEY AREN'T TELLING US SOMETHING.

The Elder gave us all a journal when we arrived here. She encouraged us to look into our memories and record them. We were told by Ye not to focus in too hard on any one of the memories we saw. We should experience them fully but, try not to lock in. I guess the Elder knew better. Because here I am, writing about a memory frozen in my mind.

I had a son. His name was Jacob. I was sent to work out in the fields. I can still remember the heat. I was far from the overseer, and I took a moment to pull the brambles from my fingers. As I looked, an old wagon came up the road. I am not sure how much time passed when it ambled back out of sight. Discovered daydreaming, and a few lashes later I refocused on my task.

When I returned home I expected to see Jacob, as always, dirty and curled up in his corner of the ramshackle shelter. He would be holding his blanket and a tattered book of fairy tales. To keep him busy and out of trouble, I'd been teaching him to read. But there was no Jacob, his blanket knotted beside the bloody hook. From behind I could hear footsteps... And smiling, I turned to meet my only friend here.

"They caught him reading."

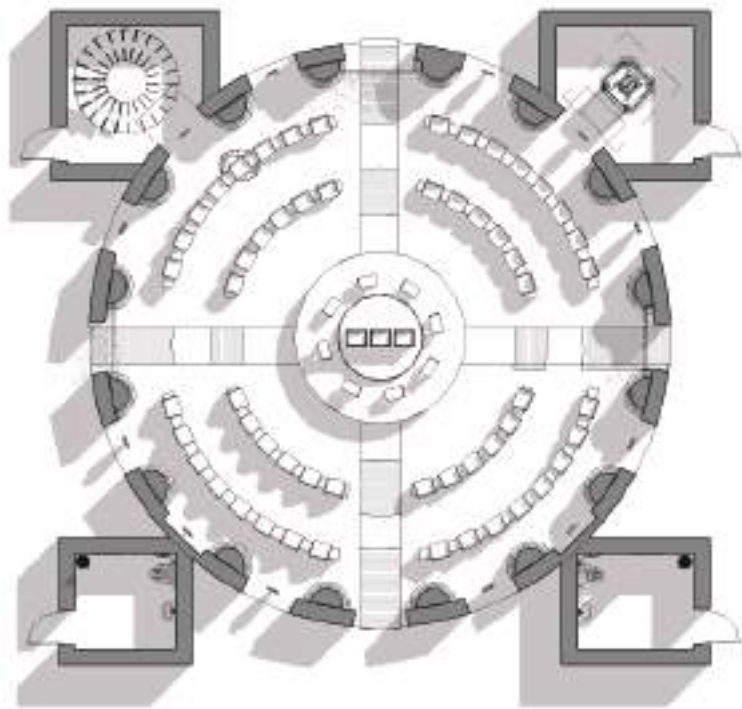
I turned for the bloody book. The last thing I remember was the sound of my own scream. I was sold to someone at Drayton House shortly after.

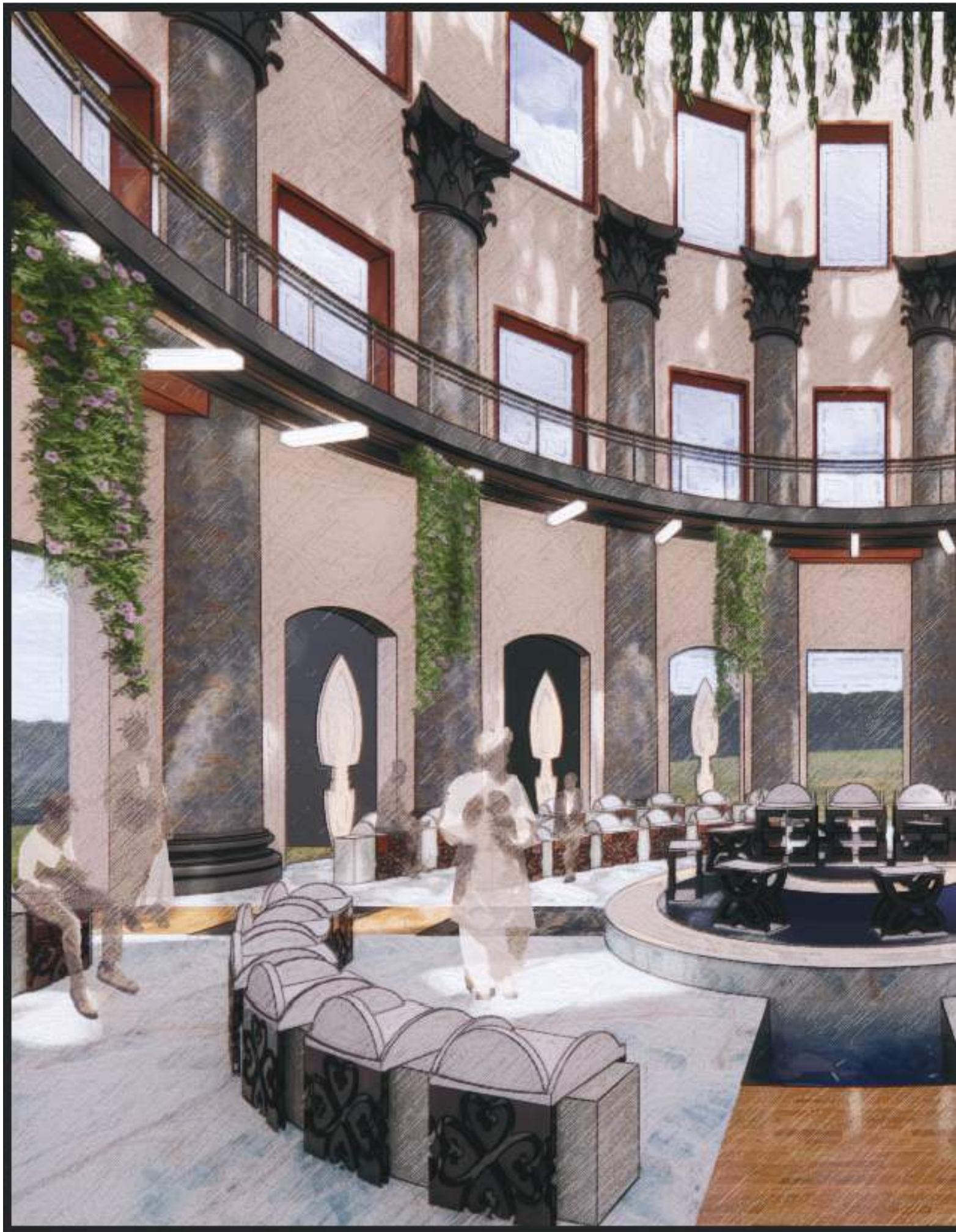
You'll love again.
Zola

REVIEW

4

THE THRONE







WHEN THEY EMERGE FROM THE PORTAL SENT BY YE, THEY FIND THEMSELVES OUTSIDE OF A PALACE.

SET LIKE A BEACON ON THE HILL, THE PALACE STRETCHES OUT WITH COLUMNS AND CANOPIES OF CLAY, BLUE & BROWN. THE FLOOR SEEMS TO BE TRANSLUCENT IN THE SUN & CHANNELS OF WATER ARE AT EACH PATH. ITS BUSTLING, PEOPLE ARE GETTING INTO POSITION.

WANDERING IN AMAZEMENT, THEY FIND THE ELDER OUTSIDE. AS THEY ARE ABOUT TO JOIN THE SOCIETY, SHE SHARES THAT THEY MAY CALL HER BIBI. LOSING TIME GETTING TO KNOW HER, THEY HEAR THE THRONE ROOM GO QUIET.

COLLECTING THEMSELVES, THEY REENTER AND APPROACH RECOGNIZABLE FACES & ONES ANEW.

BEFORE THEM THERE ARE 8 STOOLS BEFORE 3 THRONES. THE SPACE IS FULL OF WOMEN AND MEN IN COLORS AND GARMENTS OF ALL KIND FROM ALL TIMES.

STILL MISUNDERSTANDING THEIR PURPOSE HERE, BIBI NOTES, "YOU WILL FIND OUT IN A MOMENT, YOU ARE ALL SPECIAL."

"WELCOME, YOU ARE WELCOME. FOR NOW LET US MAKE YOUR PLACE HERE OFFICIAL." SEATED IN THE CENTER IS YE. TO HER LEFT IS A WOMAN BIBI CALLED OH, SHE IS QUIET & CONFIDENT. TO THE RIGHT IS A SERIOUS FACE, BIBI CALLS HER OLO. ASHA SPEAKS UP, "MY QUEENS, WE HAVEN'T DONE ANYTHING TO DESERVE THIS." YE MERELY SMILES AS THE CROWD LOOKS ON EXPECTANTLY. "CITIZENS, WE HAVE NEW SEERS." ALL GAVES AS ONE UNIT BY OUR ELDER, OLO, OH AND MYSELF. THIS IS A TRIUMPH! WE WILL ASK THEM TO TRAIN WITH OUR ELDER. OUR QUEST TO RECONNECT OUR FAMILIES BEGINS WITH THEM."



SEATED THE PLATFORM RISES AND BEGINS TO TURN. EACH ONE OF THE EIGHT FACE THE CITIZENS. A BLESSING FROM THE FOUNDING MOTHERS IS BESTOWED. EACH WOMAN'S NAME IS SPOKEN. ASHA, AMARE, BISA, DRYO, KALI, NIA, OLA, ZOLA. THEY ARE CONFIRMED BY THE WITNESSES.



BIBI FINDS THEM ON THE BALCONY AFTER THE CEREMONY HAS ENDED. "EACH ONE OF YOU IS A SEER. YOU CALLED TO ME FROM EARTH. YOUR SACRIFICE ACTIVATED THE FOUNDING MOTHERS' POWER. ALL OF US WERE ABLE TO COME TOGETHER THROUGH YOU. NOW WE CAN BRING HOME EVERYONE SEPARATED FROM US, INCLUDING THE SISTERS YOU LOST. WE HAVE BEEN WORKING ON THIS FOR YEARS. WHAT WE NEEDED WAS YOU."

The Elder is making me do this.

I don't want to remember. I saw all I could stand and relieving it will not give me peace. If she wants tears she can find another way.

The others don't understand. I guess I haven't given them reason to. If anyone else knew.

Any one.

I was his favorite. And I ran.

I was climbing a tree as the dogs closed in. One of the branches broke and I hit the ground. My mouth was busted and my head hurt when I awoke. I was chained up just like in Elmina. When they came in I could smell the stench of men before I could see. A bag was tossed over my head. Many months later the labor pains began. The master was Lumpkin.

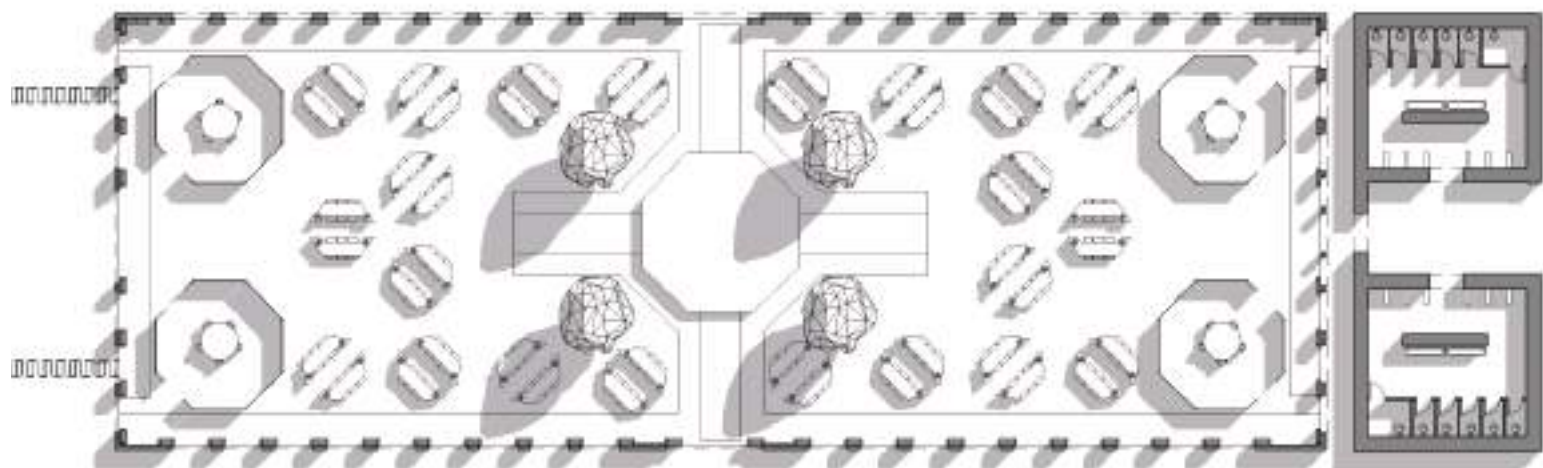
I'd rather die than repeat that to anyone.

-Nia

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5

THE WELCOME







THE PALACE EMPTIES
& THE 8 ARE TAKEN
TO A LARGE HALL.
THE SPACE IS WITHIN
WALKING DISTANCE

UPON ENTERING
THE ARCHED
DOORWAYS, THEY
ENCOUNTER ALL
PEOPLES WRAPPED
IN THEIR COLORS &
GARMENTS SEATED
AROUND LARGE
OPEN TABLES WITHIN
THIS GALLERIA.
HIGH CEILINGS &
BANNERS HANG
FOR EACH MOTHER.
THERE ARE STOOLS
FOR EACH GUEST &
SHARED PLATES AT
EACH TABLE.

LOCATING THEIR
TABLE WITH BIBI
LEADING, THEY SIT
& PREPARE FOR
DINNER. ALREADY
SEATED ARE WOMEN
CALLED WATCHERS.
THEY WORK TO KEEP
THE MEMORIES HELD
BY SEERS.

"MEMORIES ARE KEPT
IN WATER," SAYS BIBI.

"THAT'S WHY
WE COULD SEE
SO MUCH!" OLA
REMARKS.

"THE WATER DEEMED
YOU WORTHY. WE ARE
THE HISTORY BOOKS
OF THIS LAND, THE
MEMORY-KEEPERS &
THE ONES WHO HELP
OPEN THE PORTALS
ACROSS WORLDS.
OURS IS ONE OF THE
OLDEST GUILD"

DAYO ASKS "WAIT,
WHAT ARE GUILDS?"

OLA GIGGLES
BESIDE HER, "I TOLD
YOU TO FINISH THAT
BOOK, BUT NO..."





THEY ARE INTRODUCED TO THE GUILDS. THE MEMBERS EACH HAVE SPECIAL TALENTS, LIKE THEM!

SOME FOR BUILDING, SOME FOR CARE-GIVING, WHILE OTHERS ARE WARRIORS AND PHILOSOPHERS. THIS SOCIETY CONTAINS SO MANY PEOPLE WHO HAVE LOST LOVED ONES. THEY ALL APPROACH THE WOMEN WITH STORIES TO TELL AND LOVE TO SHARE.

THE WOMEN MAKE CONNECTIONS, AND FAST FRIENDS THROUGHOUT THE CEREMONY. THE WHOLE ROOM IS ARRANGED FOR PEOPLE TO INTERACT, THEIR TABLE IS FILLED WITH GUESTS & NEW FAMILY.

EXPLORING THE SPACE EACH ONE OF THE WOMEN VENTURES TO THE BALCONY AND TAKES IN THE JOYOUS SCENE.

AFTER A FILLING DINNER AND THRILLING INTRODUCTIONS THE 3 RECEIVE A CLOSING BLESSING FROM THE MOTHERS.

AND THEN, IN TRUE UHURU FASHION, THE PERFORMANCES BEGIN.



DAUGHTERS SHOWCASE
THEIR TALENT & DANCE IN
CELEBRATION

THE WARRIOR GUILD SHOWCASES THEIR
TALENT AS BIGA AND THE WATCHER UZO LOOK
ON IN AMAZEMENT.



IS IT ALWAYS LIKE THIS HERE?

ACTUALLY, YES. BUT WAIT UNTIL WE GET HOME.
YOU'LL LOVE WITNESS. ITS SO PEACEFUL.

I know Asha hates this but, I secretly love it. I know Biki said to keep these and try to write in them once a week. I've been writing once a day!

I spent the whole first part of my week talking about pain. I'm sick of pain. I want to talk about something good.

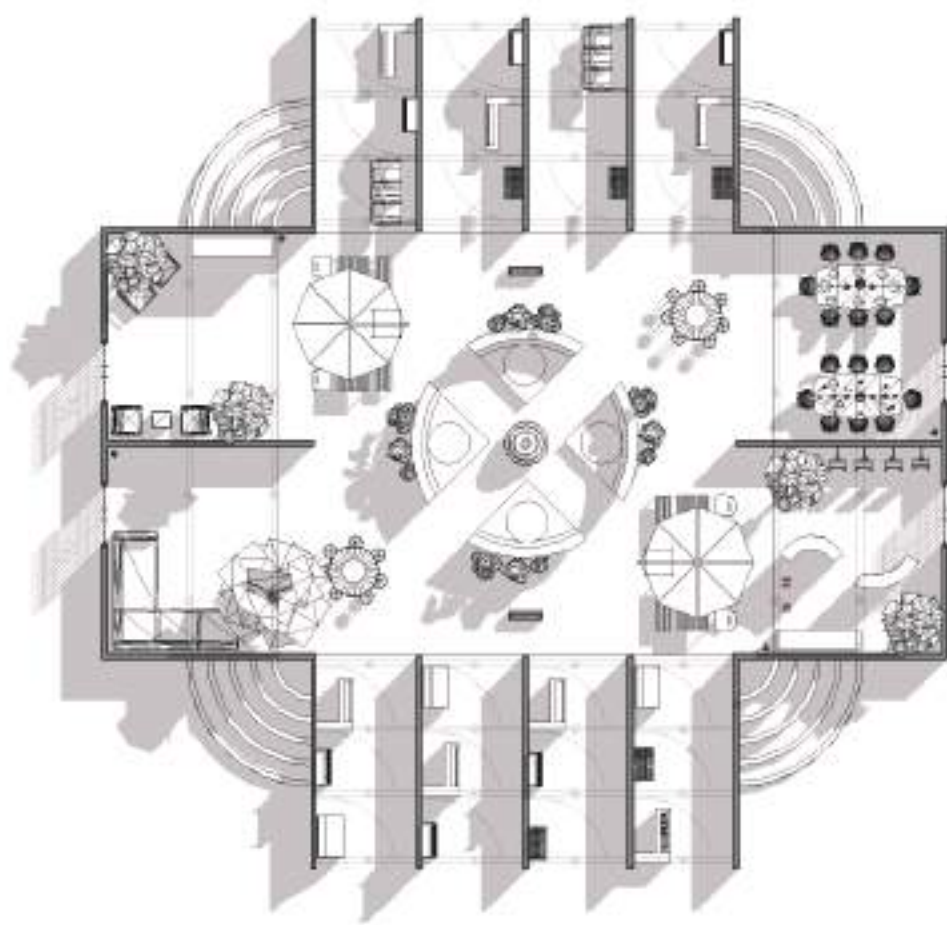
I was there at the beginning of it. Surrounded by brave and proud Black women. The day the first hall went up, I was elated. It meant we finally had a home. At first I couldn't read or write. I couldn't do much more than cook and clean. Miss Giles was stern and even mean at times. But I didn't care. I got books and spent my time in the basement of the church. I was almost never alone. There were 10 others learning along with me. We were all scared but discovered ourselves to be smart and capable. I think I am one of the lucky ones to have memories like this. I got my diploma from the Atlanta Baptist Female Seminary in Atlanta Georgia!

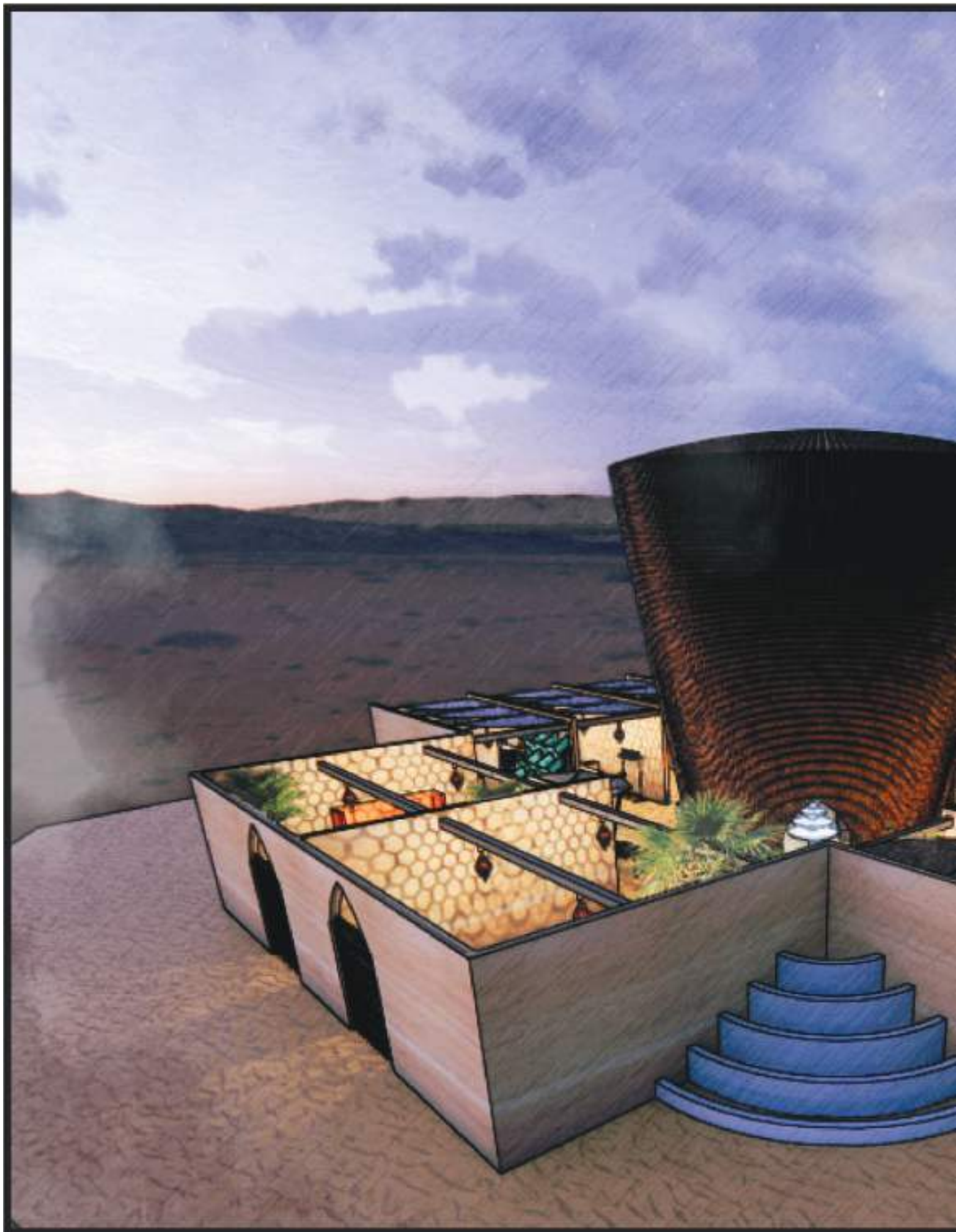
Proud Scholar,
Ola

CREATION

6

THE MARKET







NOT FAR FROM THE CITY, THE S, & THE WATCHERS WANDER THROUGH THE NIGHT MARKET.

KALI REACHES FOR A GLASS OF WINE, OVERWHELMED BY THE DAY'S ACTIVITIES, WHEN SHE REALIZES SHE HAS NOTHING TO TRADE.

THE MERCHANT STEPS TOWARD HER, "ARE YOU ONE OF THE SEERS? ONE OF THE S?"

KALI ANSWERS, "YES."

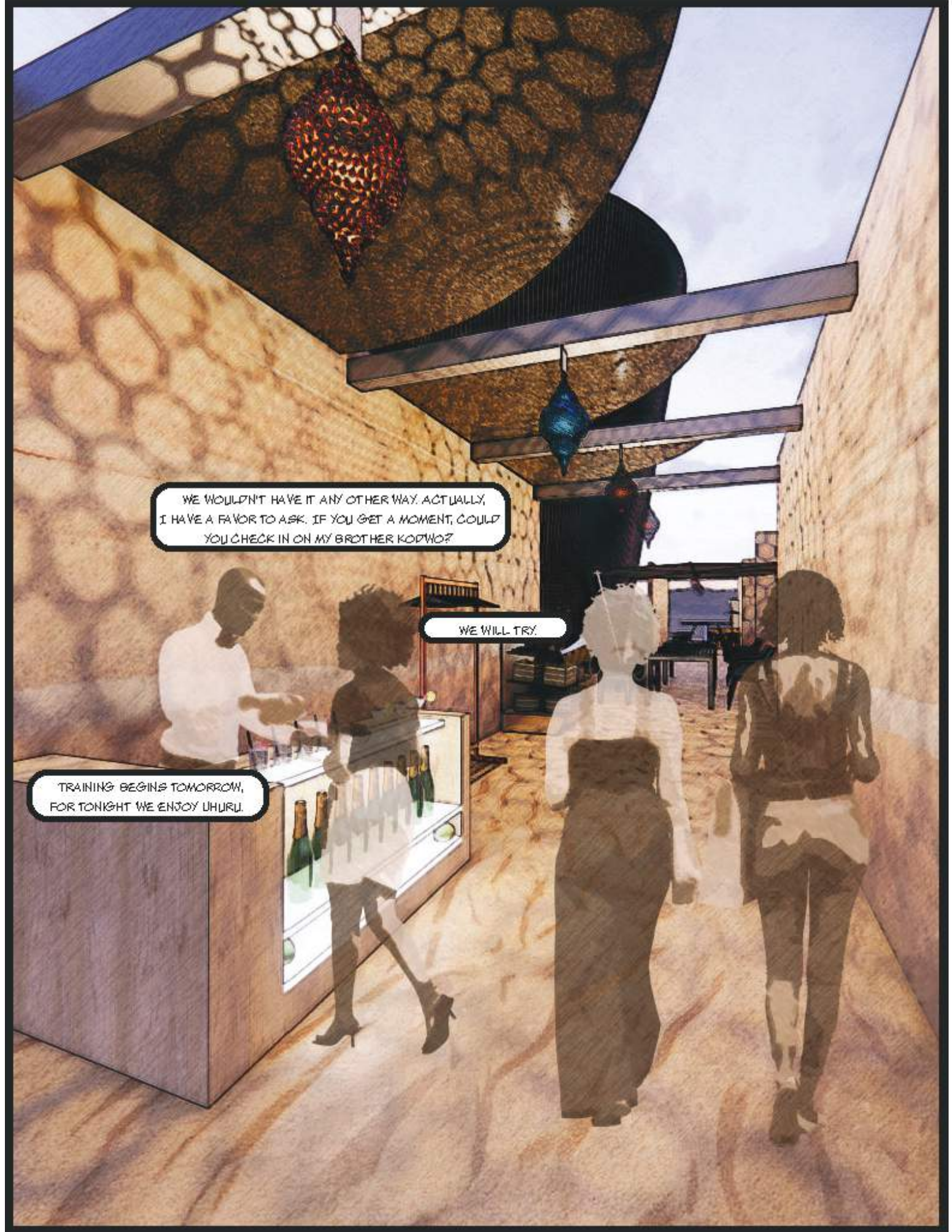
"IT'S ON THE HOUSE."

"WHAT, WHY?"

"WELL, IT WAS ALWAYS ON THE HOUSE HERE, BUT, I DO HAVE A FAVOR TO ASK OF YOU. IF YOU CAN, COULD YOU SEND A MESSAGE FOR ME.?"

KALI NODS, "I CAN TRY."

"IT'S FOR A BOY, OR MAYBE A MAN NOW. KODWO. I LOST HIM IN THE MIDDLE PASSAGE. WE WERE ON OUR WAY TO ST DOMINGUE, ONLY CHILDREN THEN. I CANT SEE HIM, BUT MAYBE YOU CAN. IF YOU COULD YOU JUST SHARE MY LOVE & A LITTLE WATER? HE MUST NEED IT." THE MERCHANT HAS HOPE THROUGH HIS LOSS. TEARS IN HER EYES, NOW GRASPING BIGA WITH OLA BY THEIR SIDE, THEY NOD. "WE'LL DO WHAT WE CAN."

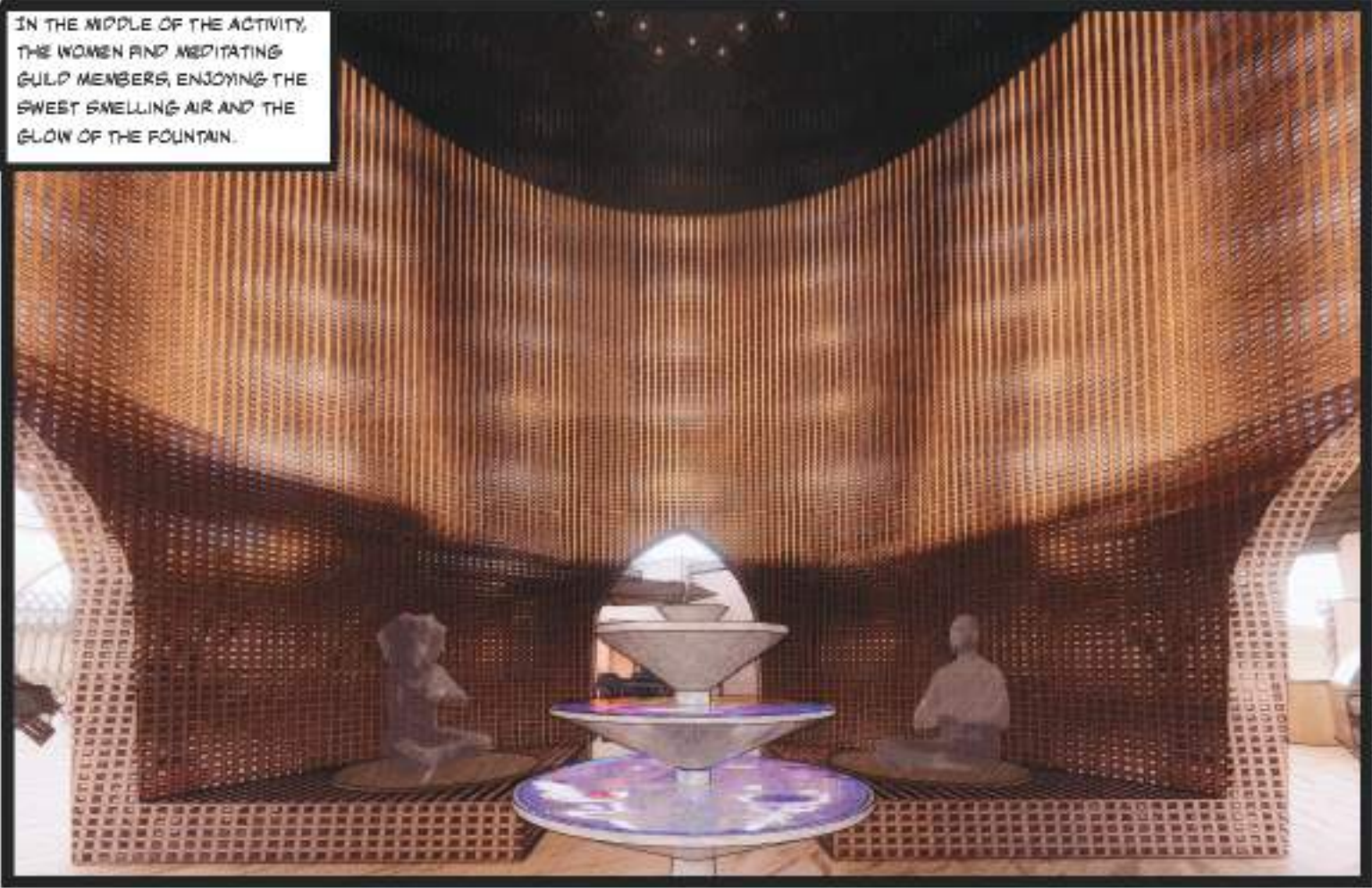


WE WOULDN'T HAVE IT ANY OTHER WAY. ACTUALLY, I HAVE A FAVOR TO ASK. IF YOU GET A MOMENT, COULD YOU CHECK IN ON MY BROTHER KODWO?

WE WILL TRY.

TRAINING BEGINS TOMORROW, FOR TONIGHT WE ENJOY UHURU.

IN THE MIDDLE OF THE ACTIVITY,
THE WOMEN FIND MEDITATING
GUILD MEMBERS, ENJOYING THE
SWEET SMELLING AIR AND THE
GLOW OF THE FOUNTAIN.



ZOLA, FINDS A KINDRED SPIRIT. THEY SIT AND LAUGH TOGETHER. ITS
THE MAGIC OF THE MARKET.

*I think I just need to get this out.
Bibi says we should be keeping our memories.
One in particular is always at the forefront of my mind.*

April 4th 1968

I was next to her when the call came in.

And the whole world stopped.

*Coretta did what she could to keep the children's tears at bay. She almost
looked like she knew it would happen.*

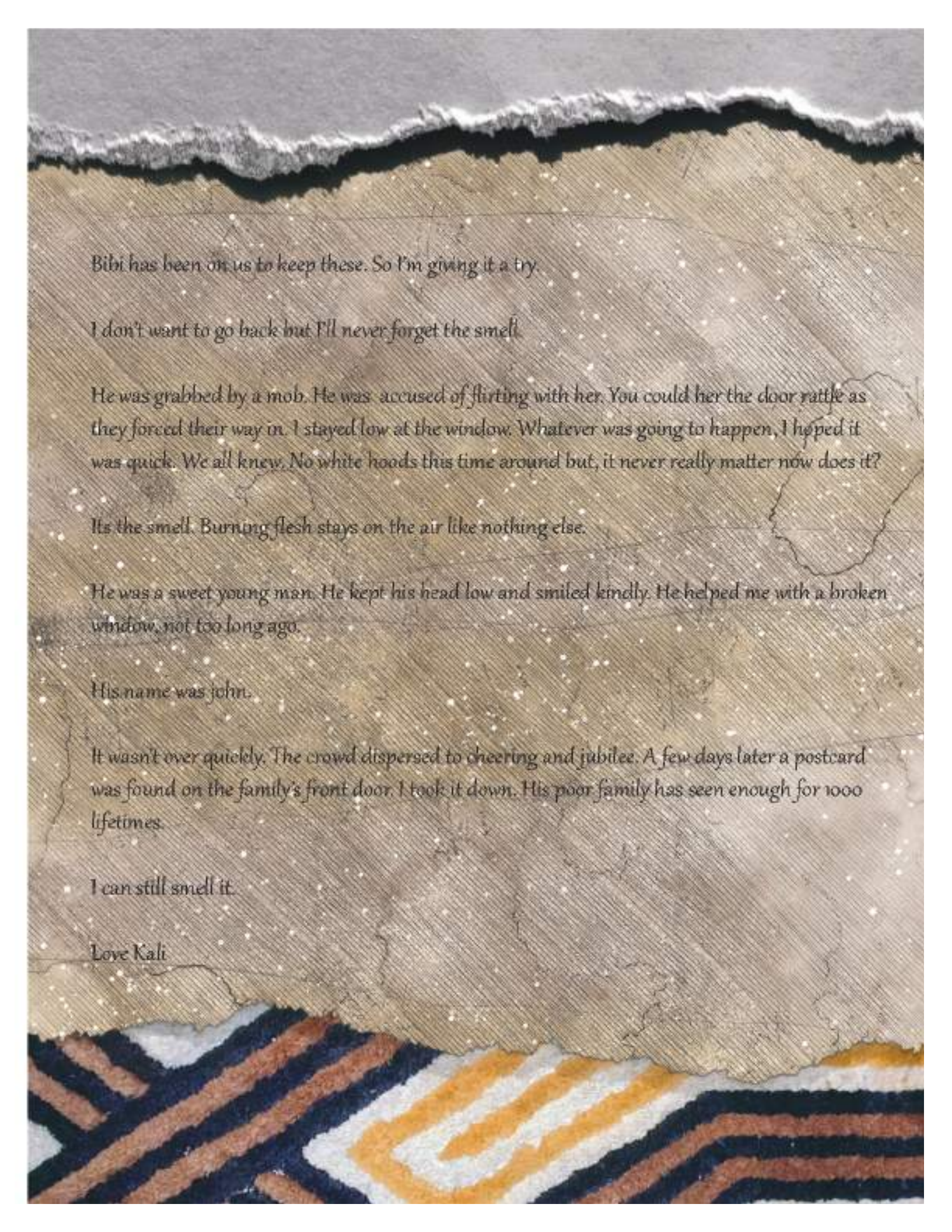
I didn't know.

*Like everyone, I believed he would go on forever. The threats were constant and
the danger was real but I never thought the Lord would call him home with so
much left to do.*

Her sobs still haunt me.

I hope she knows peace, wherever she may be.

Love, Bisa



Bibi has been on us to keep these. So I'm giving it a try

I don't want to go back but I'll never forget the smell

He was grabbed by a mob. He was accused of flirting with her. You could hear the door rattle as they forced their way in. I stayed low at the window. Whatever was going to happen, I hoped it was quick. We all knew. No white hoods this time around but, it never really matter now does it?

Its the smell. Burning flesh stays on the air like nothing else.

He was a sweet young man. He kept his head low and smiled kindly. He helped me with a broken window, not too long ago.

His name was John.

It wasn't over quickly. The crowd dispersed to cheering and jubilee. A few days later a postcard was found on the family's front door. I took it down. His poor family has seen enough for 1000 lifetimes.

I can still smell it.

Love Kali

LE

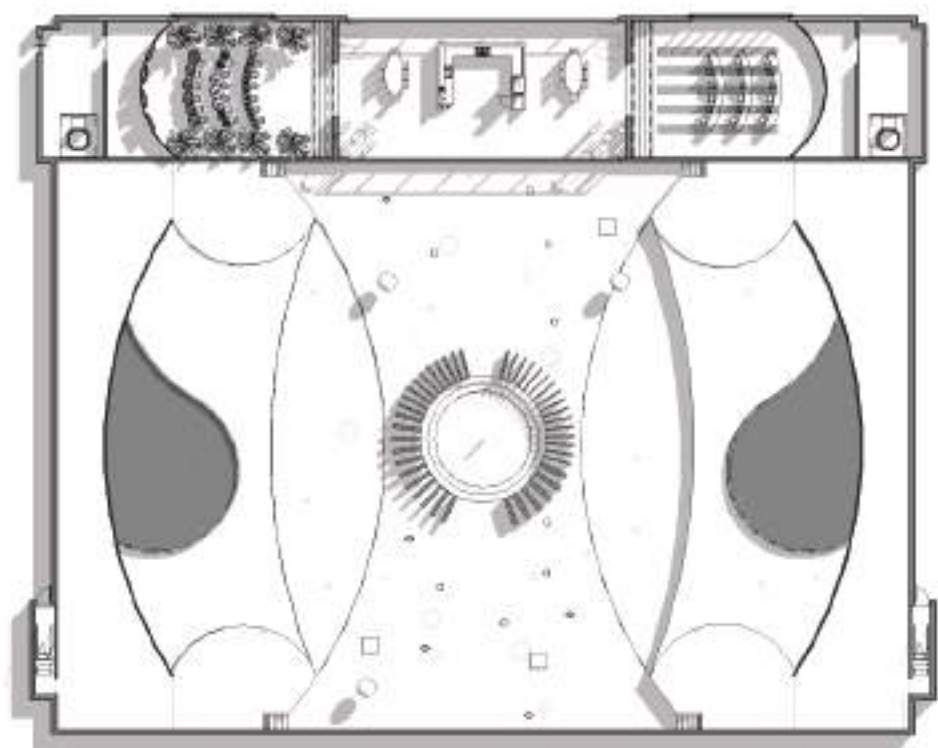
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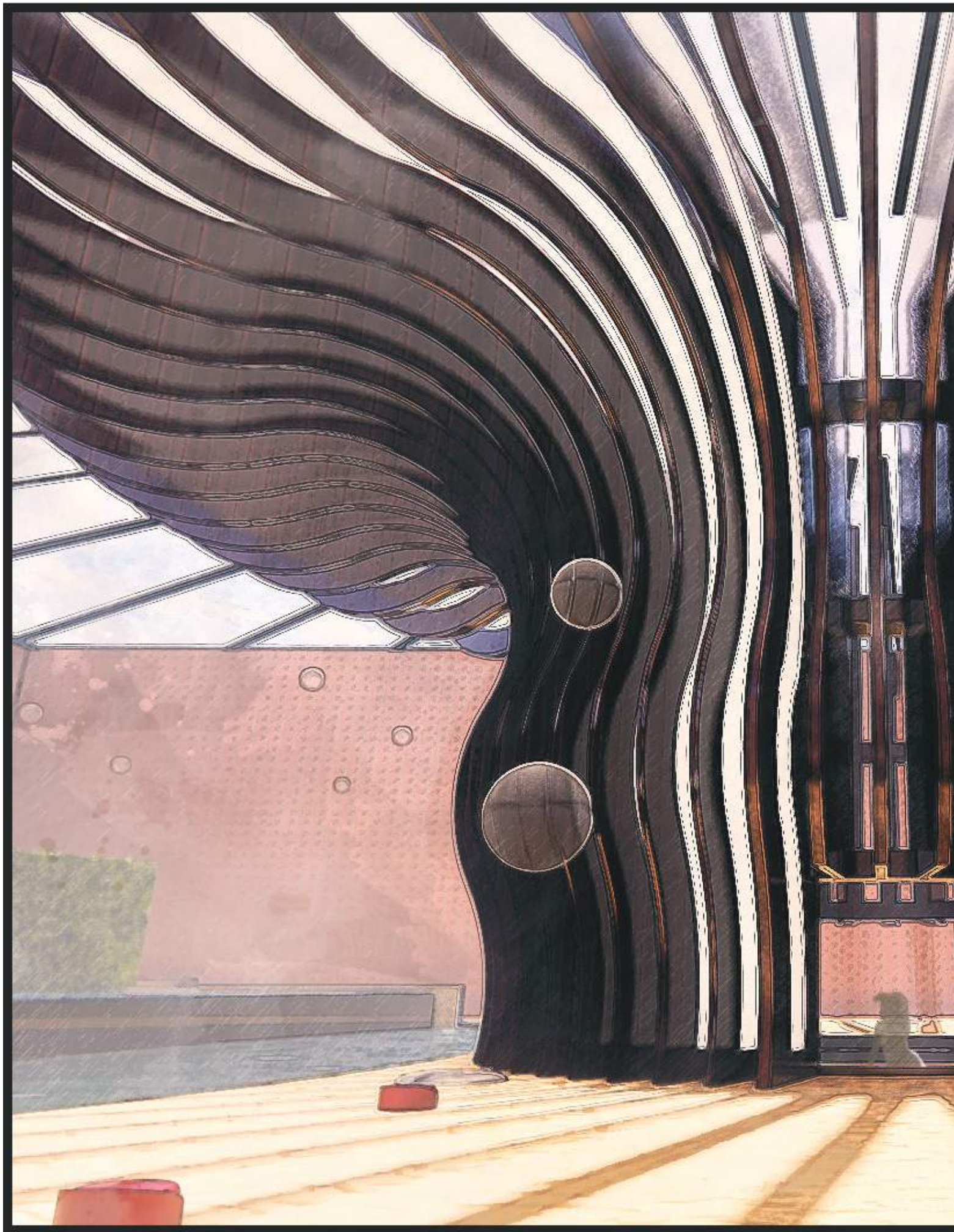
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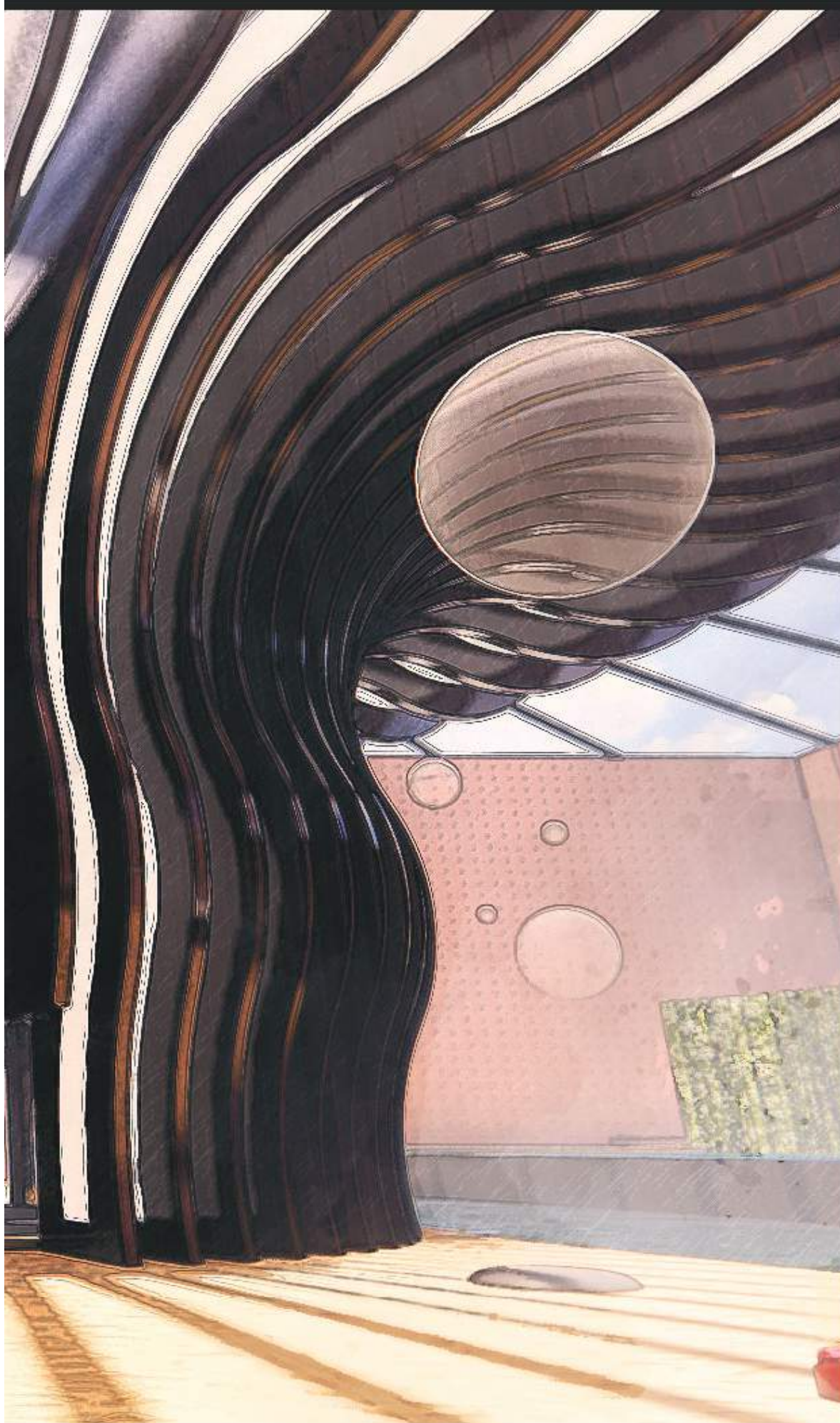
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7

THE GUILD







THE EIGHT ARE ADJUSTING WELL TO PORTAL TRAVEL ON THEIR OWN. THEIR NEW HOME IS, 'THE CENTER FOR KNOWLEDGE & SIGHT' OR WITNESS HALL. IT IS DOMINATED BY A TREE WITH AN AI CORE THAT STRETCHES OUT OVER THE ENTIRE ROOF LINE LIKE A COLUMN, THERE ARE SPACES FOR WATER TRAINING, RELAXATION & CONTEMPLATION, CLASSROOMS, KITCHENS, RESIDENCES AND MEMORIES.

BUILT LIKE A MASSIVE FORTRESS BUT COVERED IN GLASS AND SPARKING WITH LIGHT, OPEN TO THE RUSHING RIVER BELOW.

THIS IS WHERE THEY'LL LEARN TO MANIPULATE THE WATER TO SEE SO DEEPLY, THEY CAN MOVE PEOPLE WITHIN IT.

THEY ENCOUNTER BIBI & ANOTHER WATCHER, CHIAMA, WHO HELPS THEM SETTLE IN THEIR BEDROOMS. BEFORE DEPARTING FOR THEIR TRAINING SHE TURNS TO SAY, "THIS 1ST DAY WILL REQUIRE MUCH OF YOU. BUT, I UNDERSTAND YOUR EAGERNESS TO BEGIN."

CHIAMA NODS & WHISPERS ON HER WAY OUT "THANK YOU, I HAVE FAMILY TOO, OUT THERE SOMEWHERE. I KNOW THEY ARE SUFFERING, & I WANT THEM BACK. AS SOON AS I CAN HAVE THEM. WE ARE ALL EXCITED TO SEE WHAT YOU CAN DO."

OLA TAKES A MOMENT TO UNWIND NEAR THE TREE. TRAINING TODAY WAS TAKING BUT, THEY ALL FEEL A DIVINE PURPOSE IN DOING THE WORK.



YOU ALL DID AMAZING TODAY!

THANKS, CHIAMA. WE HAD A GOOD REASON TO TRY.



I COME TO VISIT THE HISTORY. I NEED TO KNOW WE ARE STILL OUT THERE.

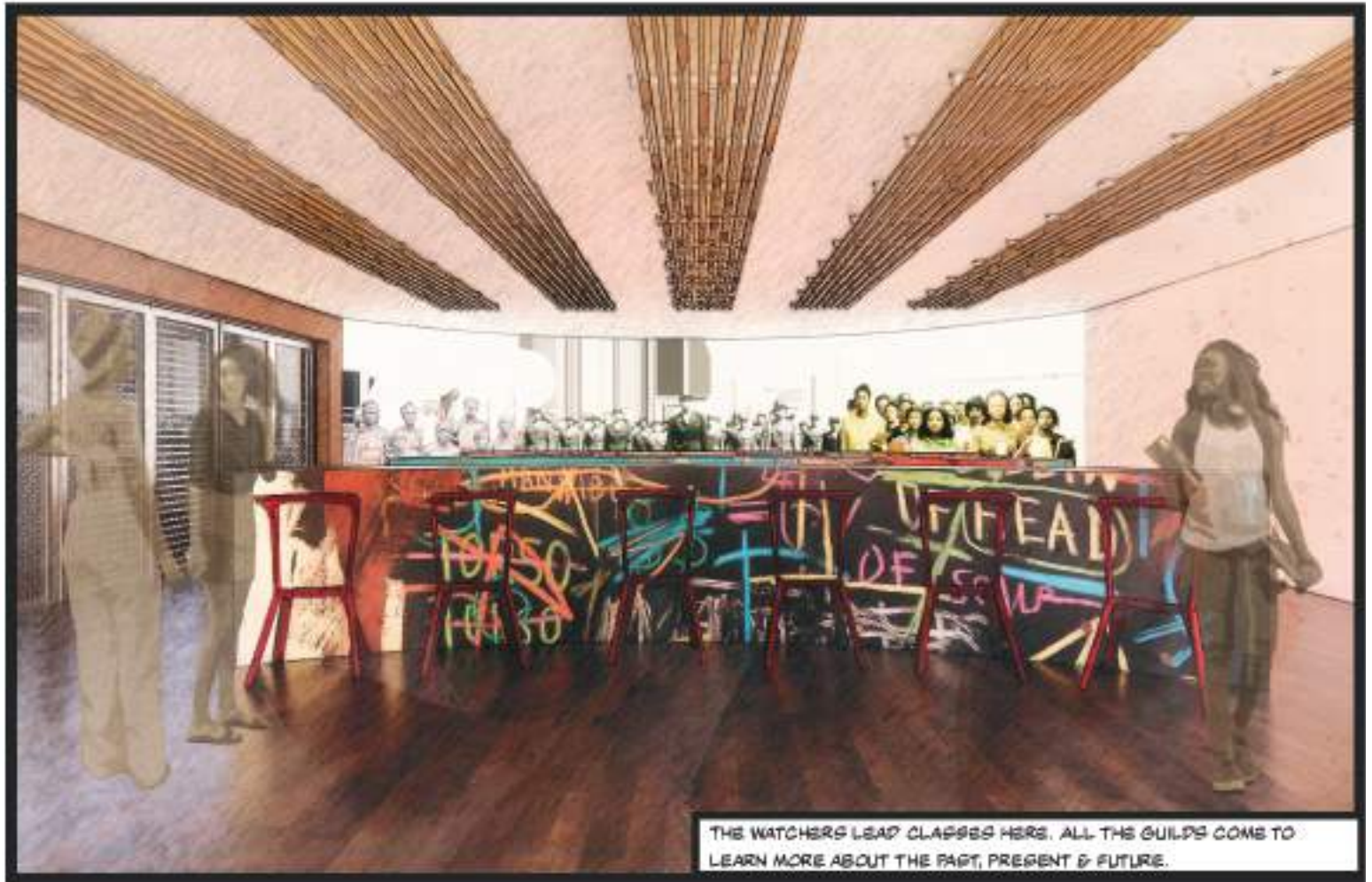
I COME HERE TO REMEMBER WHAT WE ARE WORKING TO DO

DAYO AND ASHA ENJOY THE HALL OF MEMORY TOGETHER, AND ARE OFTEN FOUND GAZING AT THE FACES AND FABRICS IN THE ARCHES.

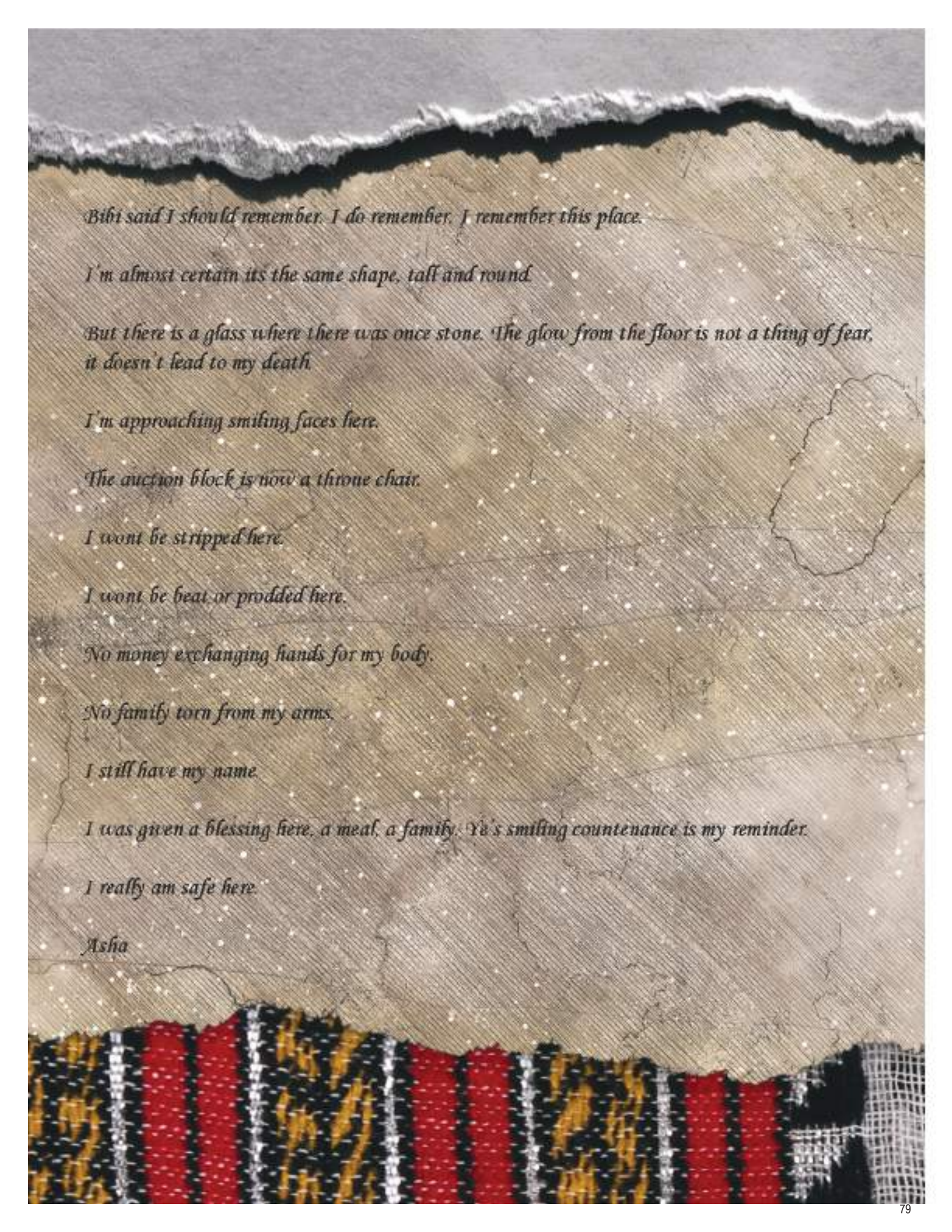
NIA FINDS SOLACE IN THE QUIET. SHE WATCHES THE LANDSCAPE & DAYDREAMS ABOUT THE RETURN OF HER OWN MOTHER. FAILURE IS NOT AN OPTION.

WE ALL HAD A LONG DAY BUT, IT'S GOING TO PAY OFF

I'M HEADED TO BED, MY MIND FEELS STRETCHED.



THE WATCHERS LEAD CLASSES HERE. ALL THE GUILDS COME TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE PAST, PRESENT & FUTURE.



Bibi said I should remember. I do remember. I remember this place.

I'm almost certain its the same shape, tall and round.

*But there is a glass where there was once stone. The glow from the floor is not a thing of fear,
it doesn't lead to my death.*

I'm approaching smiling faces here.

The auction block is now a throne chair.

I wont be stripped here.

I wont be beat or prodded here.

No money exchanging hands for my body.

No family torn from my arms.

I still have my name.

I was given a blessing here, a meal, a family. Ye's smiling countenance is my reminder.

I really am safe here.

Asha

I was on the side of the road. Streaks of white and burning fuel dashed across the skyline. When the ship disappeared into the blue, I raced back home to watch the single TV in our home.

I forgot about all the groceries. I forgot all about the dinner I promised Isaiah. As it turns out, so did he.

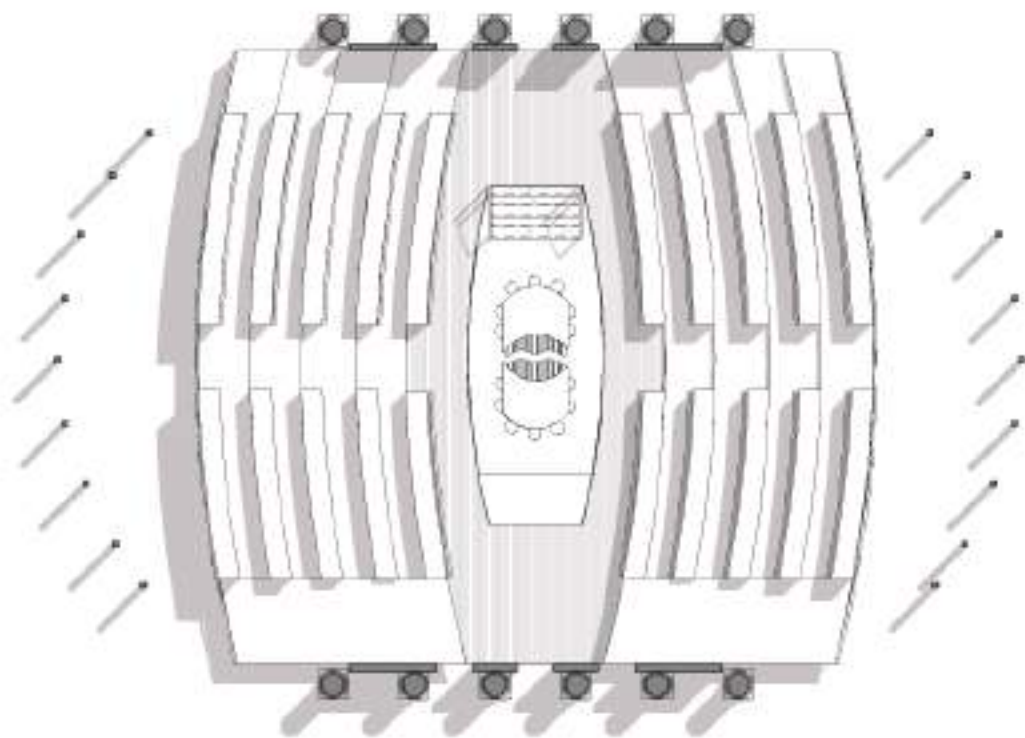
He sat down on the floor beside me. Watching in utter disbelief Isaiah whispered "She did it, Katherine did it!"

She doesn't know how to fail. I never got the chance to ask her all about it.

Signed,
Dayo

RESOLUTION 8

THE WAR ROOM







AS THE EIGHT CONTINUE TO TRAIN AT WITNESS HALL A MEETING IS CALLED REQUIRING THEIR PRESENCE. THERE IS A NEW DEVELOPMENT THROUGHOUT THE GUILDS THAT MAY HELP ACTIVATE THEIR PLAN TO RECONNECT FAMILIES MUCH SOONER.

TRAVELING ALONE NOW, THE EIGHT MAKE THEIR WAY THROUGH ANOTHER PORTAL TO REACH A PEAK ON A MOUNTAIN CALLED THE WAR ROOM. GOVERNANCE AND BUSINESS ARE CONDUCTED HERE.

THE CITIZENS OF UHURU ARE INVITED TO ATTEND. AS MANY ARE EAGER TO LEARN THE PLANS OF THE FOUNDING MOTHERS AND SEERS, THEY ALL ARRIVE TO HEAR THE LATEST NEWS.

WORKING TIRELESSLY TO RECONNECT THE BROKEN FAMILIES OF UHURU IS ABOUT TO PAY OFF. THE ROOM BUZZES WITH ACTIVITY AS THEY ALL WAIT FOR THE FOUNDING MOTHERS TO ARRIVE.

THE LIGHTS FOR BROADCAST ARE TURNED ON. ANYONE UNABLE TO ATTEND CAN NOW SEE THE MEETING VIRTUALLY.

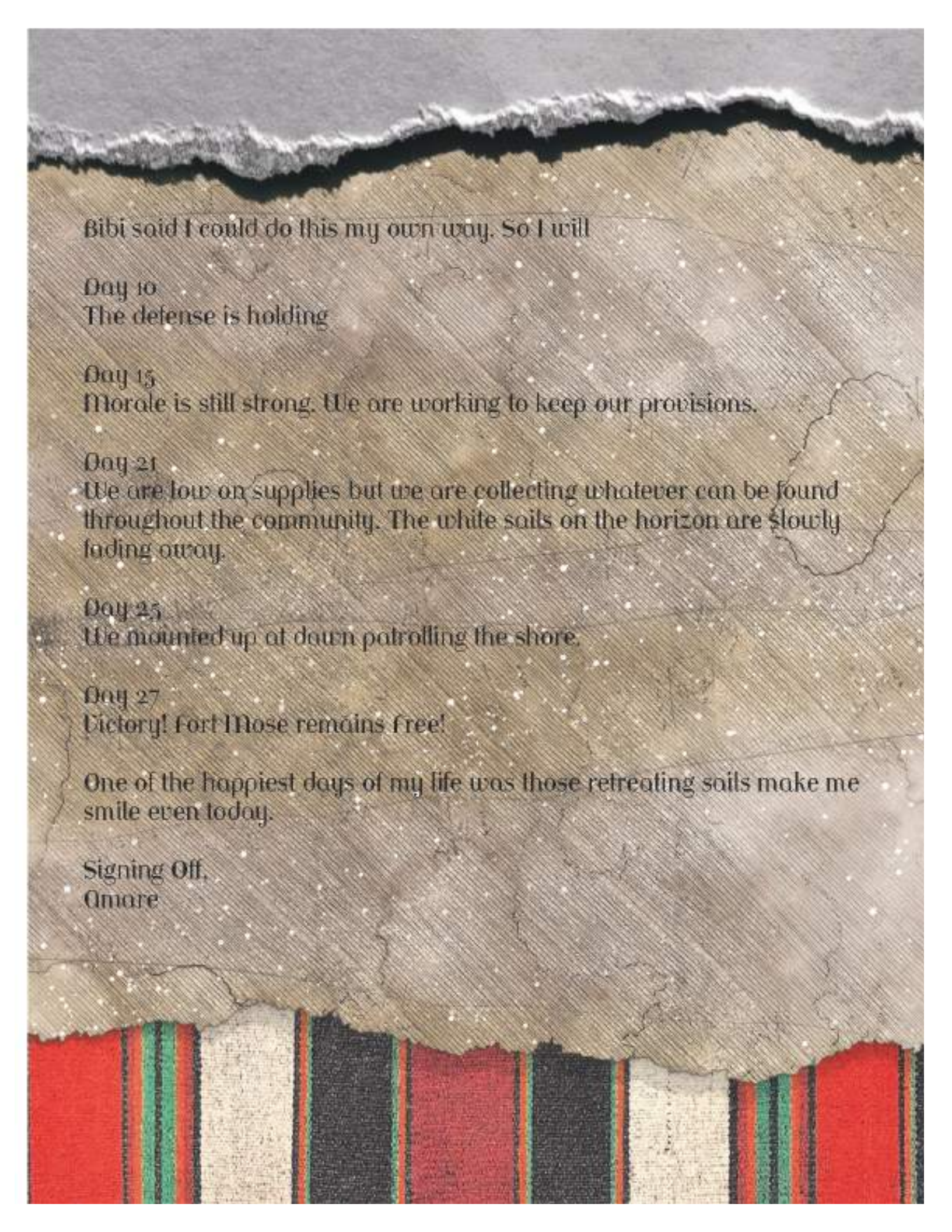


THE FOUNDING MOTHERS ENTER AND RECEIVE A GREETING FROM THE CITIZENS WHILE THE BIGHT WAIT TO BE SEATED.



OH CLEARSE HER THROAT AND BEGINS TO SPEAK. "WITH THE ADDED GUIDANCE OF THE MAKER'S GUILD, WE HAVE BEEN ABLE TO CONSTRUCT A DEVICE TO AMPLIFY THE POWER OF THE SEERS. OUR ABILITY TO COLLECT THOSE IN TRANSIT WILL BE MAGNIFIED. WE NO LONGER HAVE TO WORRY OVER THE NUMBER OR AGE OF INTENT, WE CAN COLLECT FROM EARTH. THIS MACHINE WAS A JOINT EFFORT ACROSS ALL GUILDS. WE CAN ACT, AND SOON, WITH YOUR HELP, WE CAN SAVE THOUSANDS, MAYBE MORE. WE WILL BEGIN WITH AMERICA. OUR GOAL IS TO FIND A FAMILY WILLING TO VENTURE INTO THE UNKNOWN."



The image shows a piece of aged, textured brown paper with a deckled top edge. At the bottom, there is a decorative border with vertical stripes in red, green, black, and white. The text is written in a simple, black, sans-serif font on the brown paper.

Bibi said I could do this my own way. So I will

Day 10
The defense is holding

Day 15
Morale is still strong. We are working to keep our provisions.

Day 21
We are low on supplies but we are collecting whatever can be found throughout the community. The white sails on the horizon are slowly fading away.

Day 25
We mounted up at dawn patrolling the shore.

Day 27
Victory! Fort Inose remains free!

One of the happiest days of my life was those retreating sails make me smile even today.

Signing Off,
Amare

C

L

B

U

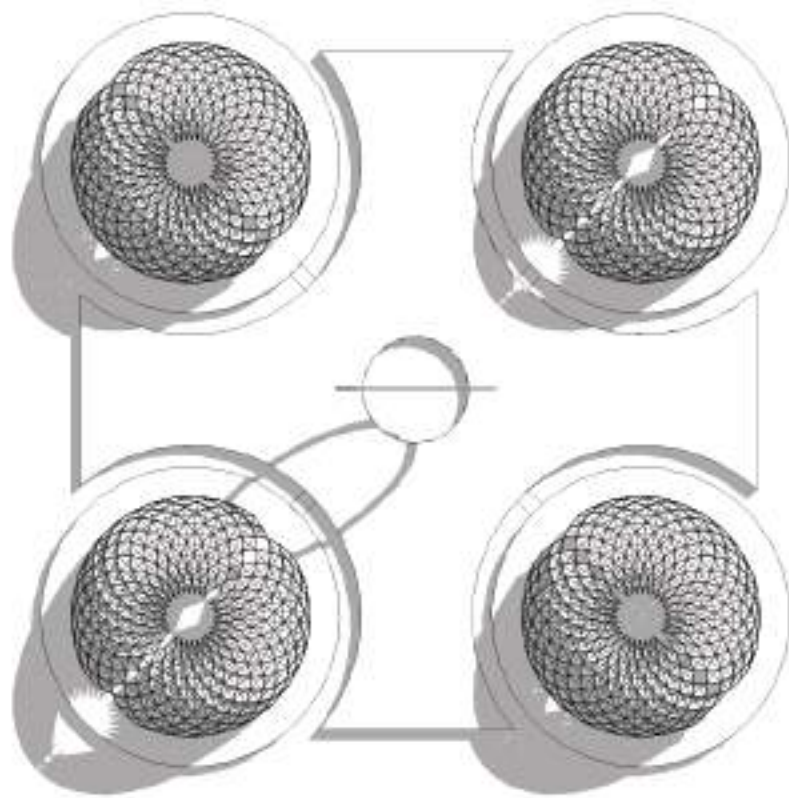
P

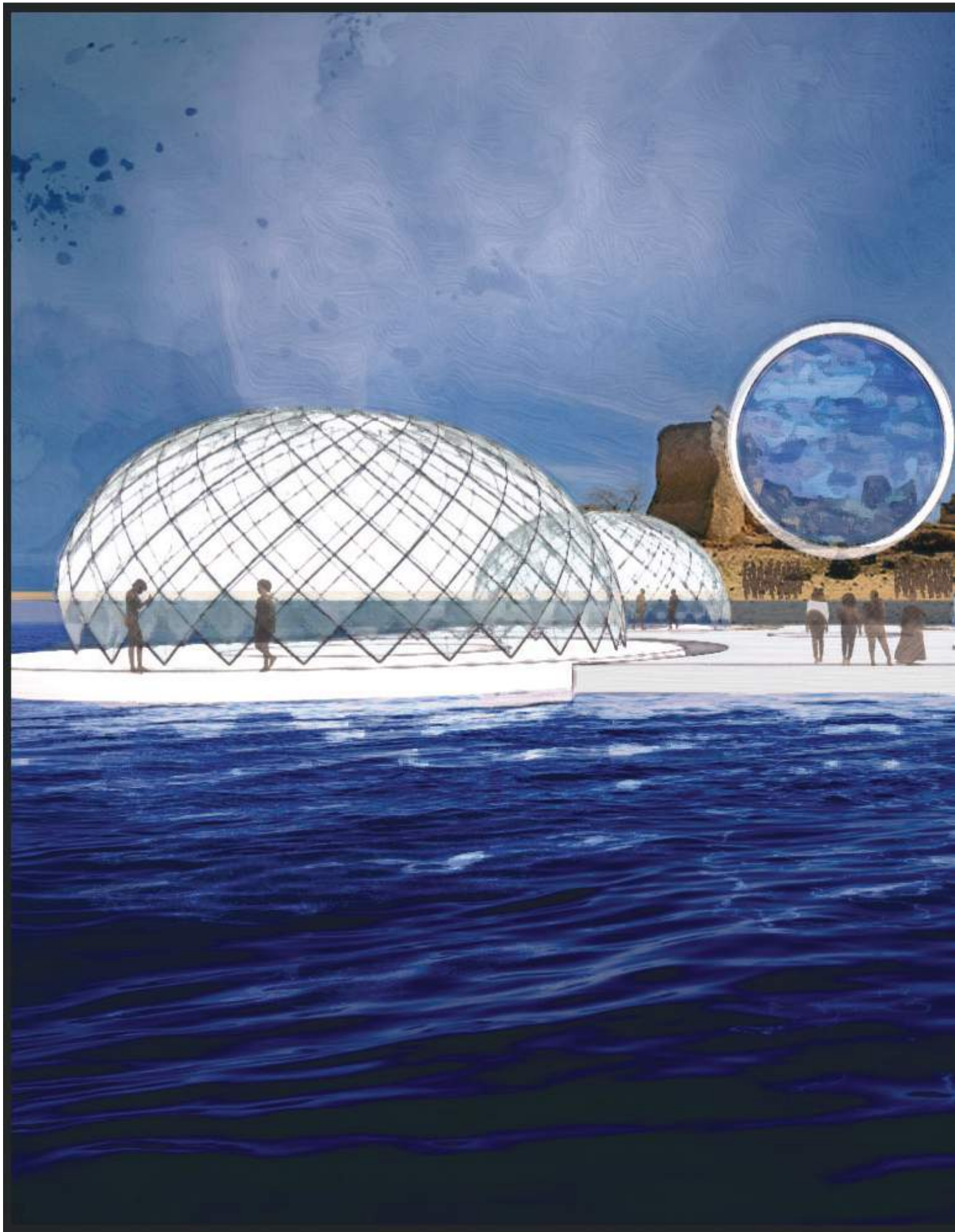
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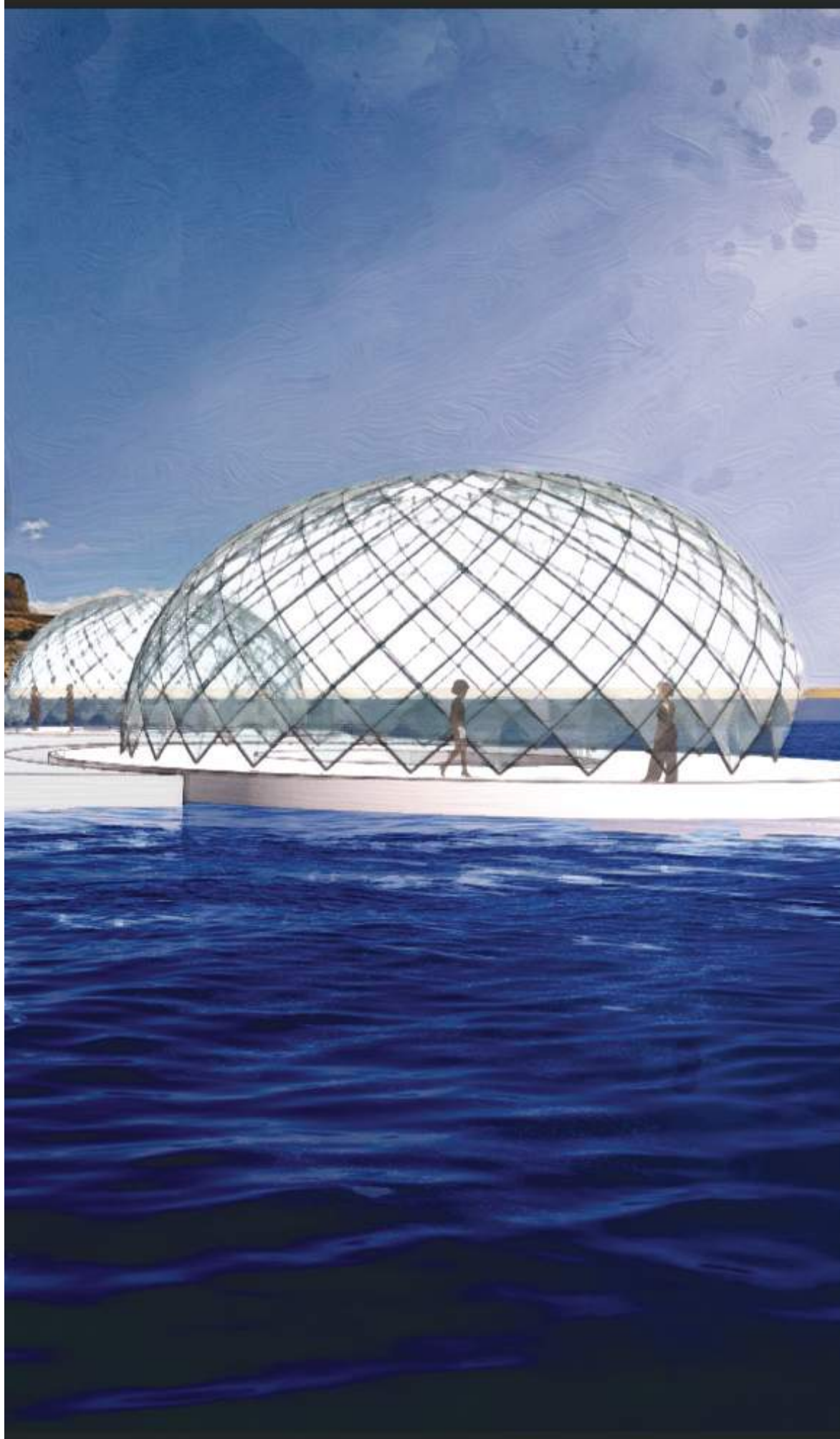
R

9

THE PORTAL







THE MACHINE NICKNAMED THE 'CHANGE ENGINE,' IS SET UP OFF THE BEACH. THE S, BIBI, THE WATCHERS AND THE FOUNDING MOTHERS ARE ALL THERE IN DIFFERENT CAPACITIES TO FACILITATE THE RETURN.

THE CHANGE ENGINE IS 4 GEODESIC DOMES WHICH SERVE TO REFLECT AND REFRACT THE WATER & LIGHT AROUND THE WOMEN. THEY WILL MOVE THROUGH THE NORMAL STEPS & MOTIONS TO OPEN THE PORTALS, AND LOCK ON A FEW PEOPLE AT A TIME TO CALL THEM TO UHURU. WITH ANY LUCK, THEIR POWER WILL BE MAGNIFIED ALLOWING THEM TO PULL FAMILIES FROM DRY GROUND AND CHILDREN WITH THEIR ROAMING MINDS.

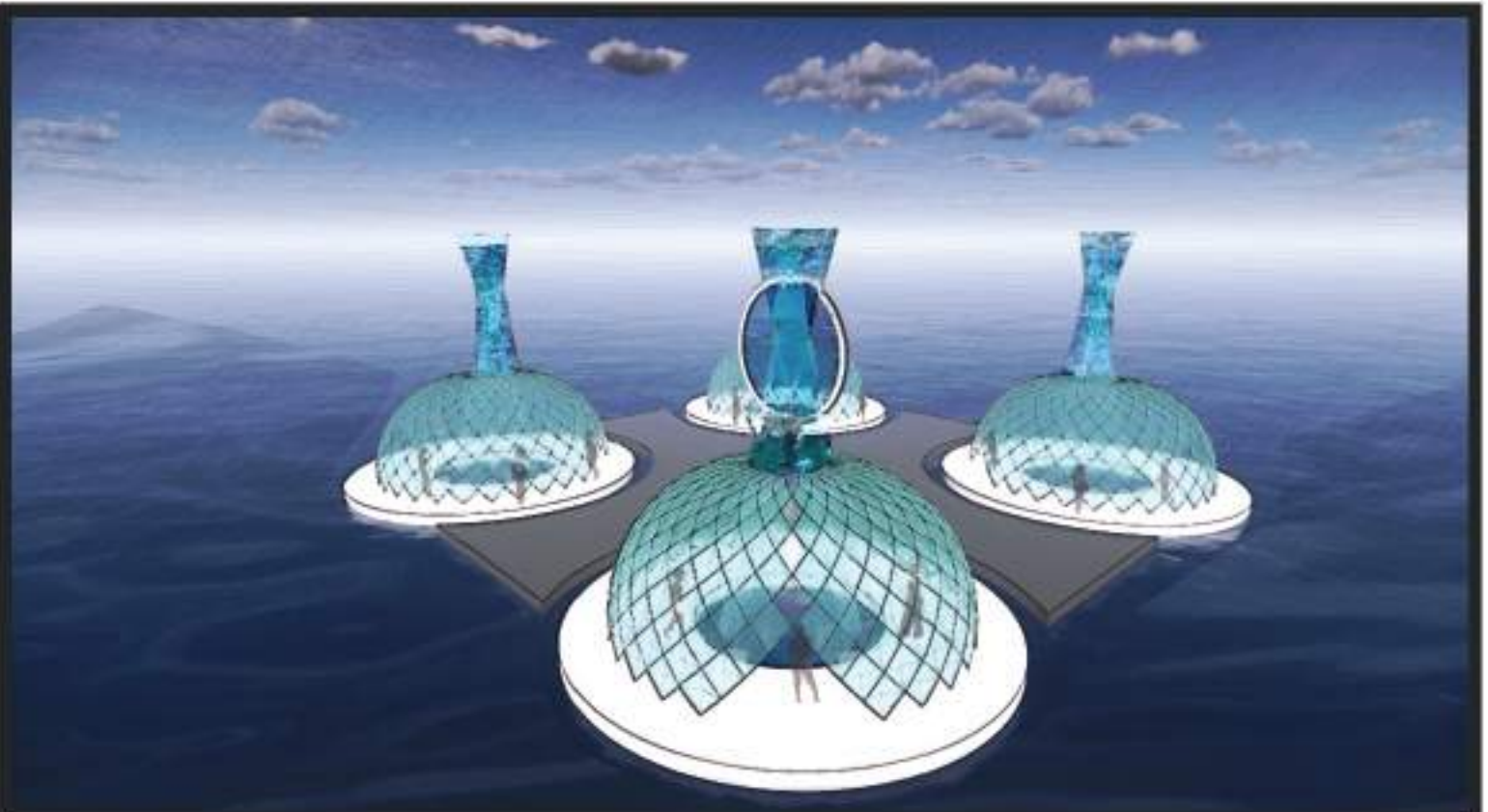
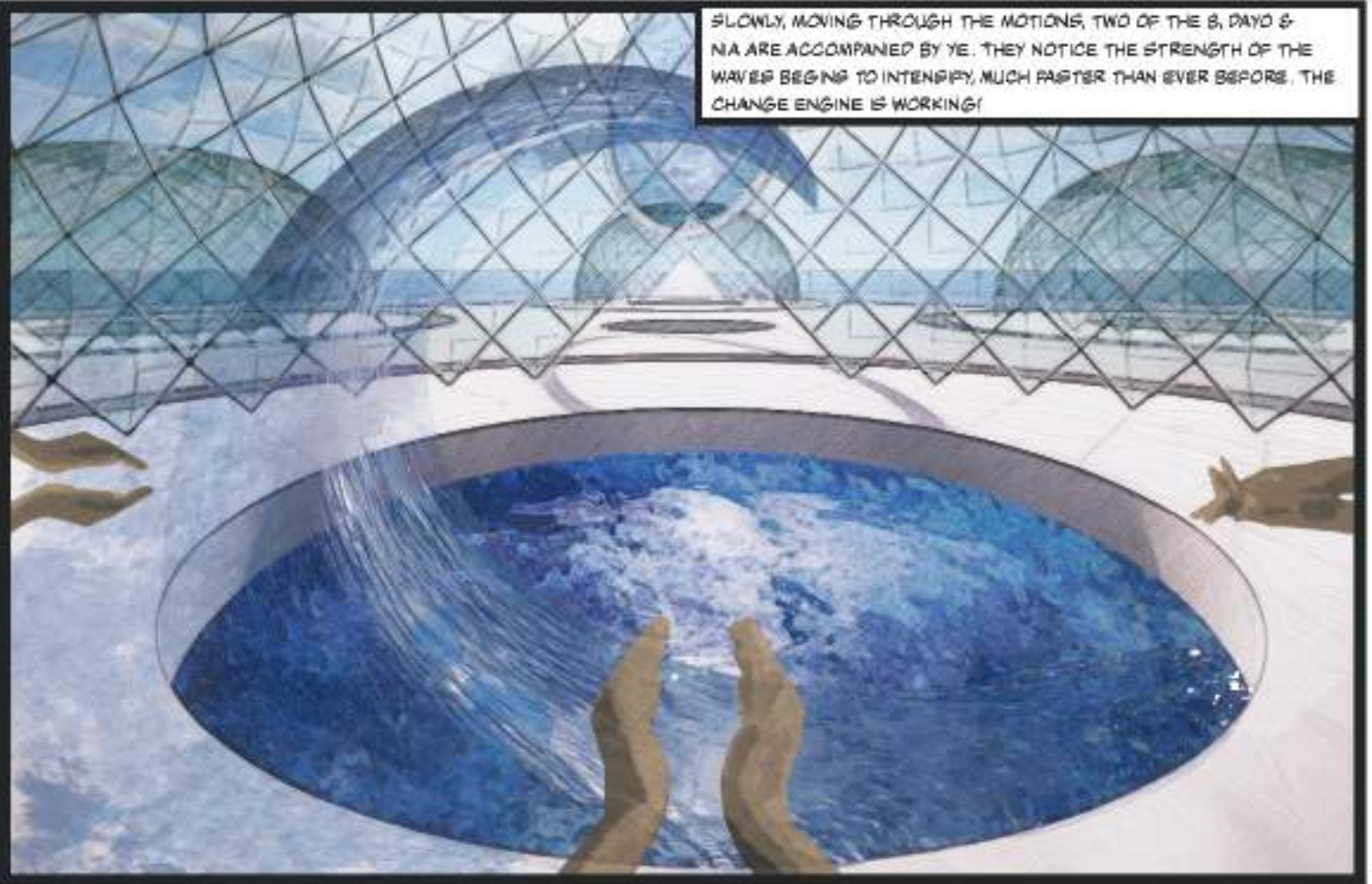
THE FOUNDING MOTHERS & BIBI STRIVE TO REACH AS FAR AS THEY CAN, PULLING AND COAXING THOSE WHO MIGHT BE FEARFUL. YE, OH & OLO HAVE THE ABILITY TO PULL PEOPLE FROM THE DEEPEST DEPTHS & THE SHALLOW WATERS, BUT THEIR SUCCESS STILL HINGES ON PEOPLE'S WILLINGNESS TO GO.

ON THE BEACH THE WATCHERS RECORD FAMILY HISTORIES & TREES IN ORDER TO RECONNECT THOSE WHO HAVE CHANGED AND GROWN OLDER.

ON THE CHANGE ENGINE, THE WOMEN GET INTO POSITION.

SONG CARRIES ACROSS THE WATER TO THE WOMEN. ITS A MASHUP OF SPOKEN WORD & MUSIC.

SLOWLY, MOVING THROUGH THE MOTIONS, TWO OF THE B, DAYO & NIA ARE ACCOMPANIED BY YE. THEY NOTICE THE STRENGTH OF THE WAVES BEGIN TO INTENSIFY, MUCH FASTER THAN EVER BEFORE. THE CHANGE ENGINE IS WORKING!



AS THE COLLECTIVE SINGING & MOVEMENTS INTENSIFY, THE PORTAL BEGINS TO CHARGE. THE WATER BELOW THEM CHURNS WILDLY, CONTROLLED ONLY BY THEIR GESTURES. **TOWERS OF WATER RISE FROM THE SEA!** FORMING A PROTECTIVE BARRIER AROUND THE PORTAL. BEFORE THE B WERE RESCUED, NO MORE THAN 3 PEOPLE COULD BE PULLED THROUGH THE PORTAL AT ONCE. LOCKING ON THE MINDS OF THOSE IN ANOTHER WORLD IS TAKING WORK... AND PROTECTING YOUNG MINDS IS EVEN HARDER.

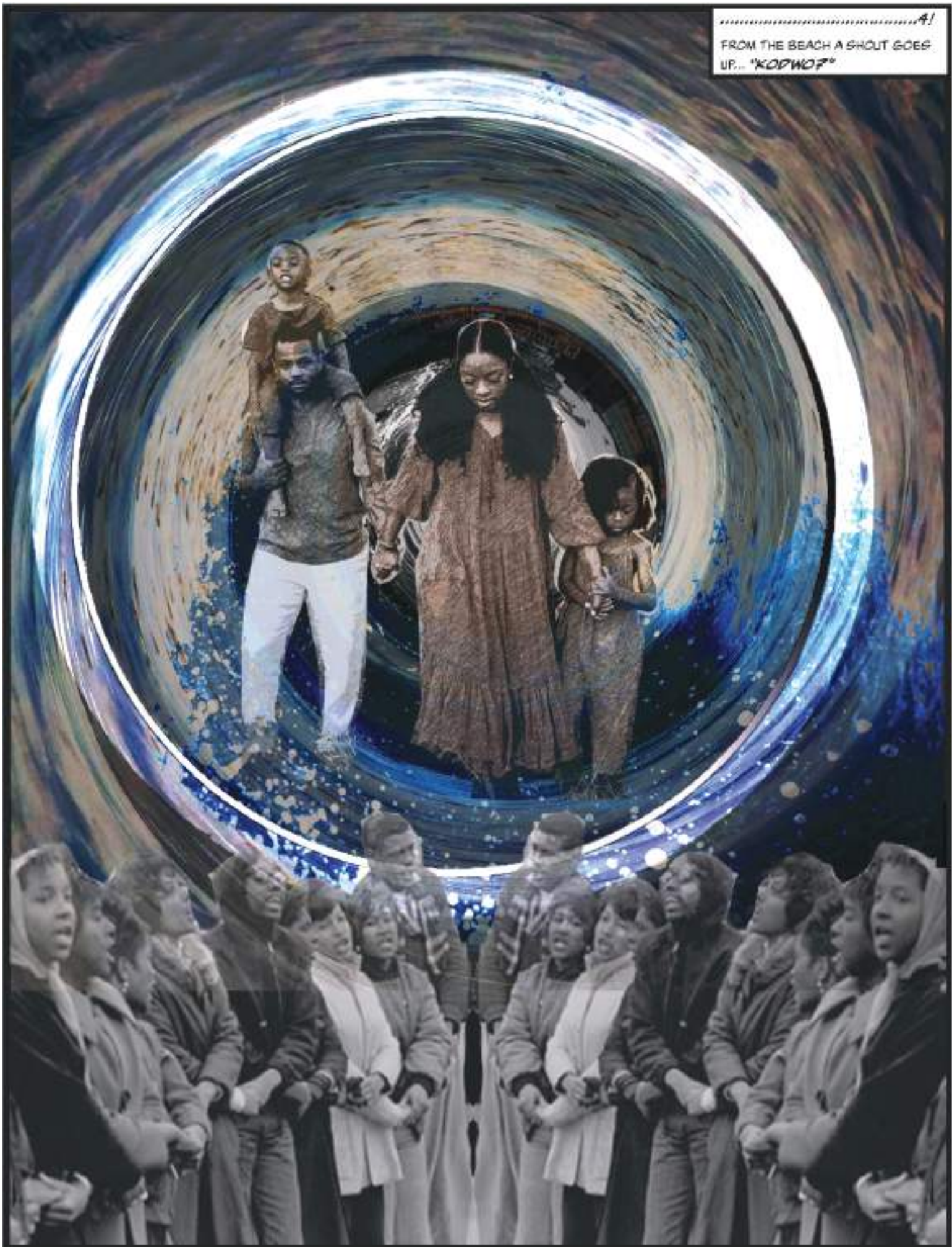
A HUSH COMES OVER THE CROWD AS THE PORTAL APPEARS TO SHIFT.



FUZZY SILHOETTES CAN BE MADE OUT IN THE SWIRLING WATER, I, MAYBE 27 37.....



.....4!
FROM THE BEACH A SHOUT GOES
UP... "KODWO!"





BOOK ONE



part II: site research & design intervention

Examining Uhuru

The following pages represent a breakdown of the world of Uhuru including Chapters 1 through 9. This breakdown provides information for the research, design decisions, and interventions that influenced the creation of this world. Though these spaces exist on earth, they have all been reclaimed for the purpose of building supportive Black futures.

Everything that is present throughout the key, acts as foreshadowing what the Eight will soon come to discover about themselves in this new world.

SITE FACTS

① Elmina Castle was established by the Portuguese in 1482. It continued to be the site of great horror passing from Dutch to British hands until its ruin in 1872 after the abolition of Trans-Atlantic slavery. It was the first trading post of its kind, referred to as a Slave Castle.



② At any given time up to 1000 men and 500 females were held captive in the various dungeons surrounding and below grade of the inner courtyard.



③ The site featured confinement cells for men who were considered dangerous or likely to attempt escape, and women were often chained to cannonballs in the courtyard.



④ The Captains quarters was light and airy with parquet floors, large windows and ocean views.

⑤ Death from disease due to exposure to human waste and menstrual fluids were common. The smell of blood is said to still be present in the women's dungeons.

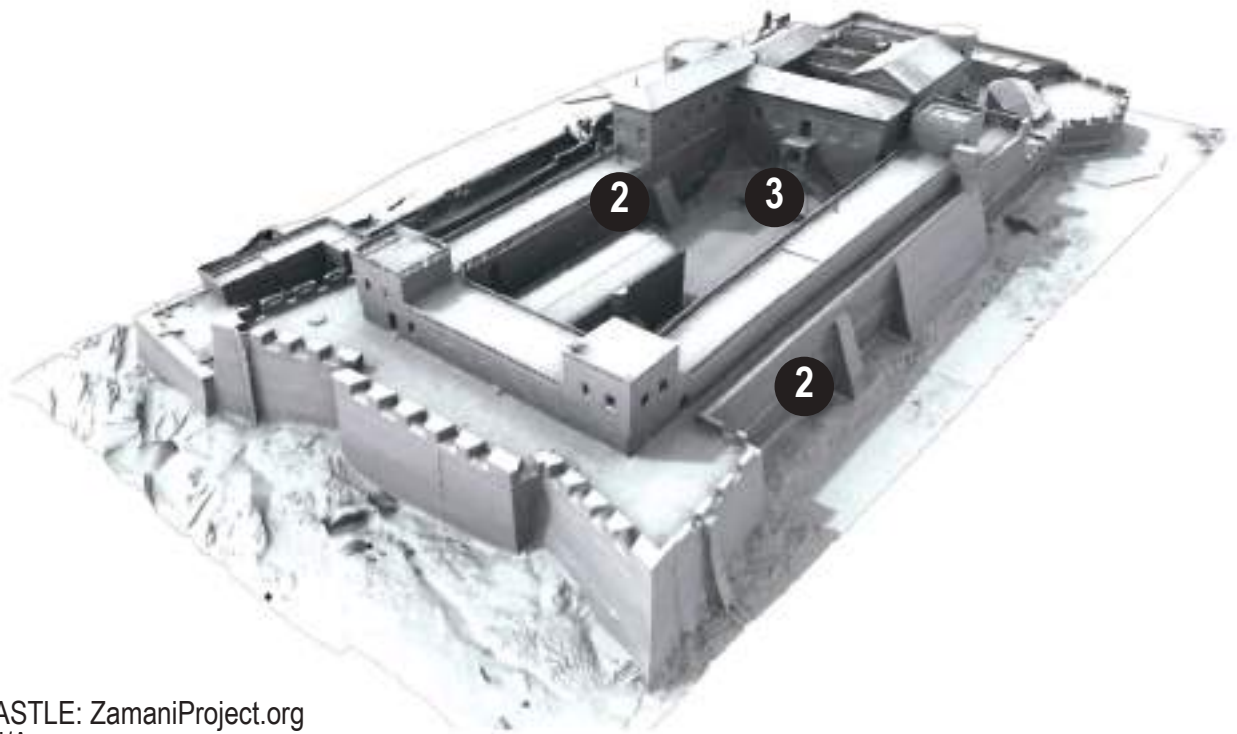


⑥ Captured Africans could be held here for up to three months while awaiting enough "cargo" to set sail for the western world.

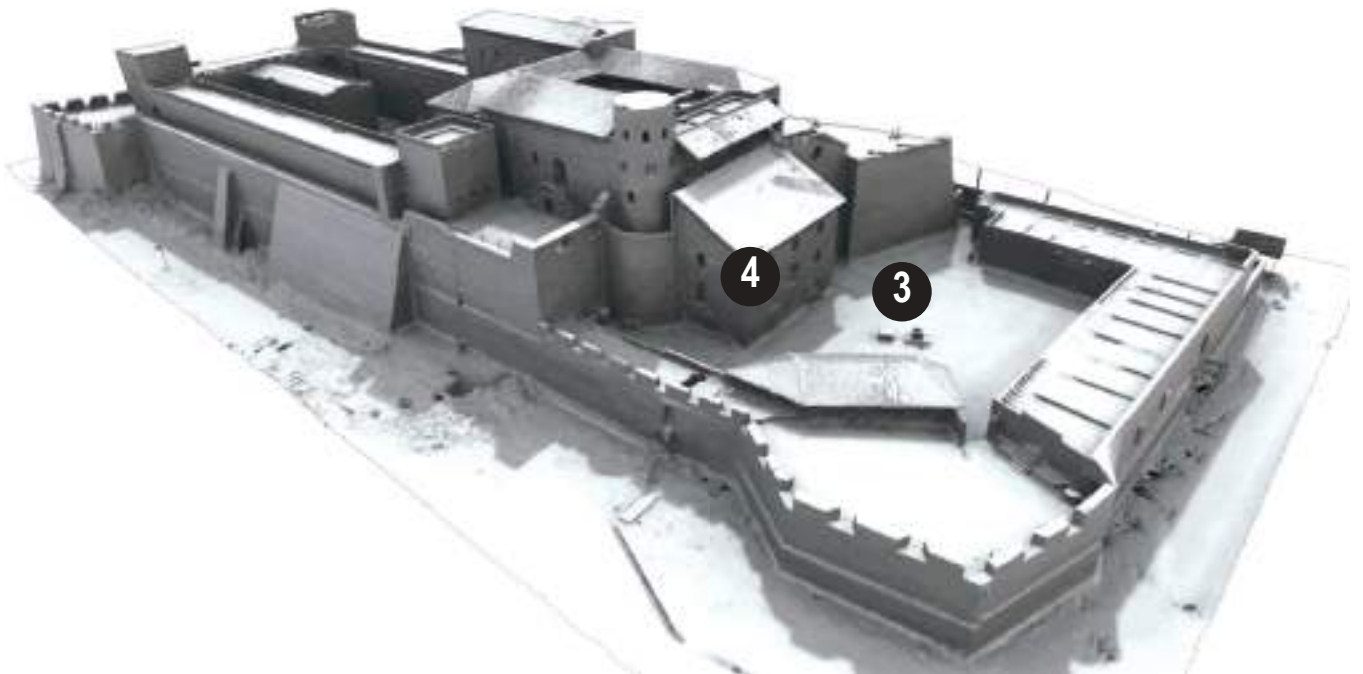


PROLOGUE

THE CAPTURE



ELMINA CASTLE: ZamaniProject.org
SCALE = N/A



ELMINA CASTLE: ZamaniProject.org
SCALE = N/A

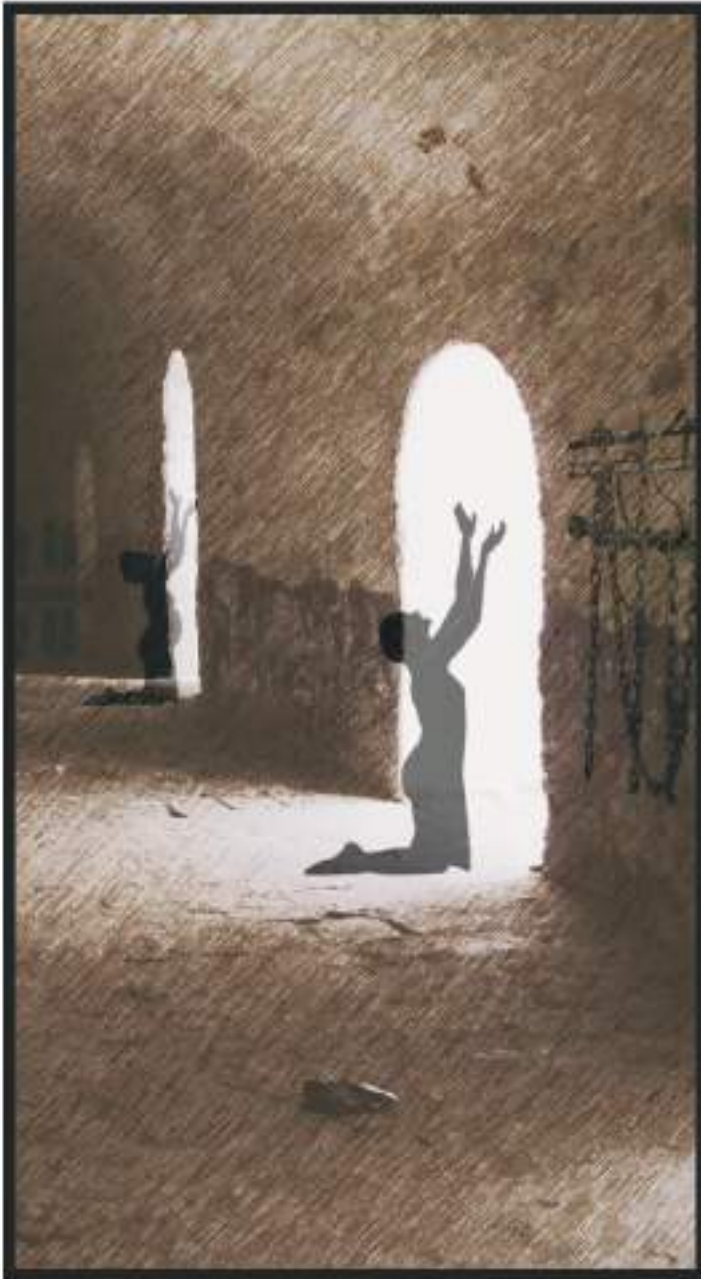
site history

Elmina Castle located in Elmina, Ghana along the West African Coast is the first location highlighted in this novel. Chosen for its relationship to the transatlantic slave trade as a departure point, the ships that would extricate many West Africans from their homeland in bondage sailed from this port. Elmina was a crucial part of the establishment of Europe on the West African coast or "Gold Coast" as it was once known as it was the first trading post to be established in 1482. It changed hands from the Portuguese, Dutch and British over its centuries long history and exists today as a place of remembrance to preserve the legacy of the African Diaspora. The Zamani Project completed a spatial documentation of the fortress in 2006 and produced 3D renderings that are used on the title page to show the structure of the building. As the first of its kind, it's no surprise that its architectural makeup appears to represent the Forts and Castles that followed its constructions. Composed of entrances guarded by moats and gates, a central courtyard, two floors with external and internal staircases, interconnected structures for operations, raised walkways along the perimeter for monitoring and several secluded dungeons holding their African cargo as they were collected in large groups for transport. A chapel for prayer was located on the upper floors. Elmina was a formidable stronghold with armed military outposts with cannons, and 360-degree views of the coastline and the craggy beach beyond that would grow to be a small city supporting the activities of the original Portuguese traders including a marketplace for the sale of slaves. Existing as part of a larger narrative of fortresses that would later be referred to as slave kingdoms these spaces represented the last stop and what's referred to as the "door of no

site history cont...

return" for newly enslaved Africans who may or may not ever reach the shores of the so-called New World. The dungeons of these castles where the enslaved were kept were encased with filth from feces and urine to vomit and menstrual blood exposing the captured to disease before they ever left the West African Coast. It is said that the stains of feces and the smell of menstrual blood are still present within the walls of the female slave dungeons, today. Men were typically restrained in irons shackles and kept in a separate dungeon also devoid of basic facilities or cleanliness. Women kept in the dungeons had additional struggles tied to their sex. In at least one of the dungeons in Elmina, a small door was cut through the thick walls to monitor the women. Occasionally one was "chosen." This resulted in the unwanted attentions of their captors and typically ended in a courtyard rape to establish dominance and prevent defiant behaviors. Examined in a series of subjugating tests to check their health from teeth to whipping to determine their ability to survive the lengthy journey to the Caribbean or the Americas, followed in many cases by branding to designate property.

Slaves passing through the Door of No Return were remanded to ships off the coastline and packed into the spaces below the hull in numbers anywhere from an estimated 250-600 per ship, per voyage. Stacked prone with only a few inches from side to side and potentially a few feet before the next deck of slaves was set above them. Typically, this meant they could not sit up or turn over without injury to themselves or others. Designated spots for the catching of defecation and urine were few and far between leading to an influx of disease, largely dysentery, smallpox, and intentional starvation due to suffering and smell.



SITE FACTS

- 1 Kilwa Kisiwani (KK) or the “Isle of the fish” is located on the Eastern Coast of Tanzania. This province is the home of the “Gereza,” (GF) a Portuguese Fort meaning “Prison” in native Swahili. The Great Mosque (GM) is the ruin introduced further into the journey with the Eight using the space to recoup. These spaces were unaltered and represented in their historical context.
- 2 (KK) The Kingdom of Kilwa was established by a descendant of slaves. Known for its beauty & pivotal location on the Swahili Coast, Kilwa was once a part of a vast trade route that connected the African & Mediterranean worlds through the Indian Ocean. It acted as a trading port for the sale & purchase of goods & people.
- 3 (KK) The land itself was the home of the Mtaka, Mrimba, Jasi & Bantu, people who would influence the overall development of the nation though their cultural offerings and core traditions contrary to the colonialist ideals set forth by 19th century researchers.
- 4 (GM) contains stone that is partially made of ground coral. Using a combination of barrel vaults & domed pendentives characteristic of structures like Hagia Sophia, this mosque predates nearly every stone structure in Eastern Africa.
- 5 (GM) contains 16 total domes with many interior rooms including those situated for prayer, water features like an octagonal pool, large wall niches & inner courtyard. Ornatly carved doors of wood, stone, & metal dotted the home of prominent families & members of this society.
- 6 (GM) The pool represented within is not the original structure as it was also in ruin, However, it is representative of the Islamic style of pools & courtyards which would’ve been prevalent during this time period.



GEREZA FORT



GEREZA FORT



THE GREAT MOSQUE

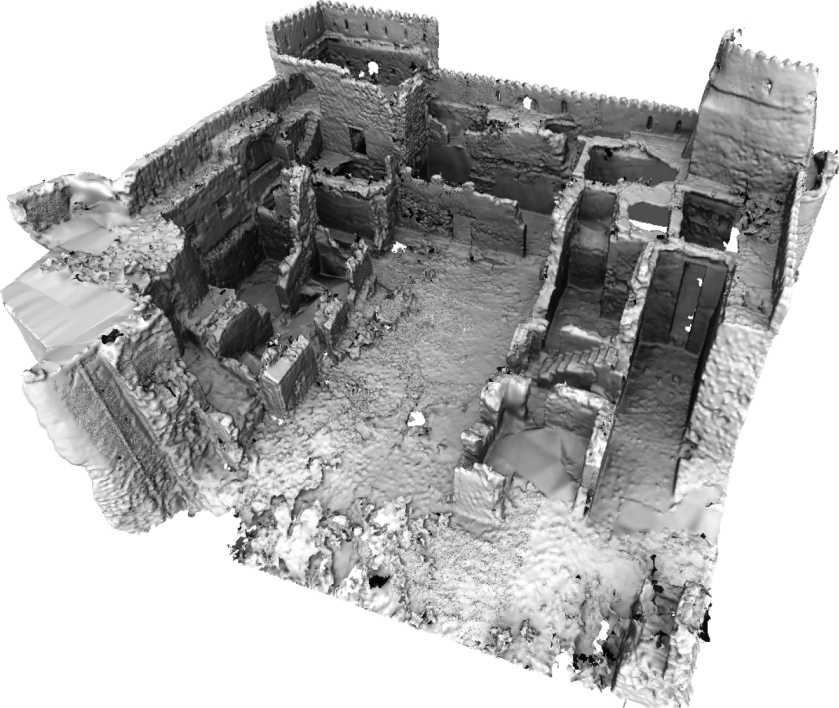


THE GREAT MOSQUE

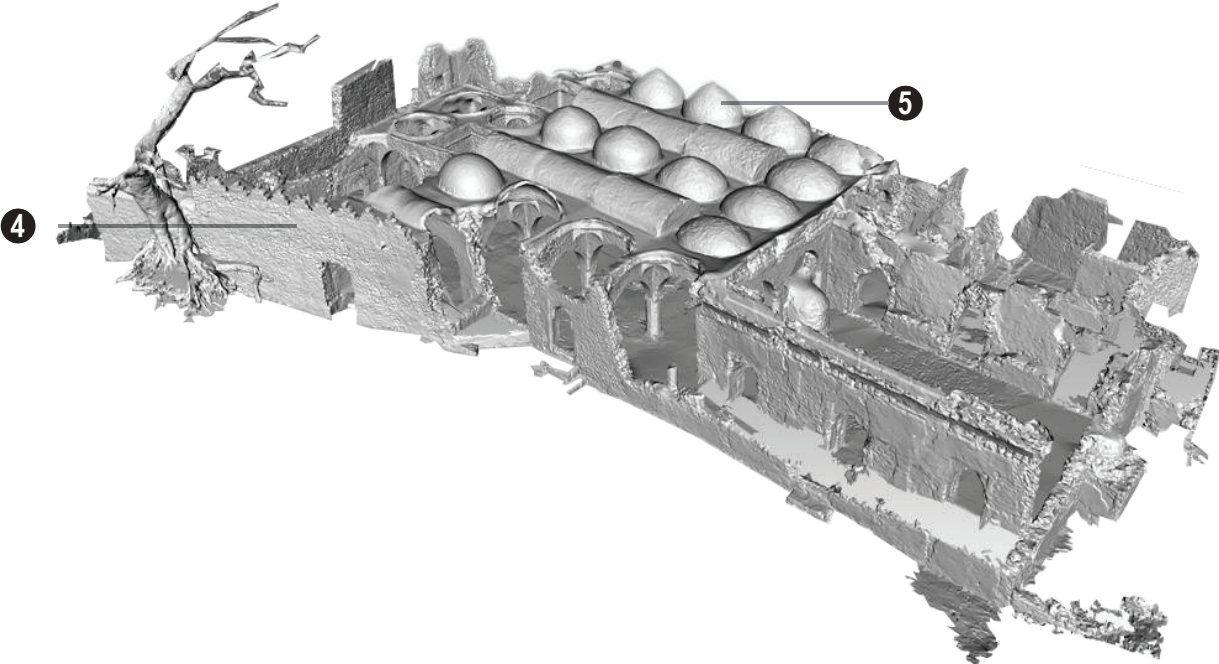


1

THE BEACH



GEREZA FORT: ZamaniProject.org
SCALE = N/A



THE GREAT MOSQUE: ZamaniProject.org
SCALE = N/A

site history

Ruled most notably by an Afro-Arabic Sultanate beginning with Ibn Al-Hasan under the Islamic faith and as a means to establish kingship, and Islam in the region.

Settled as early as the 4th Century with the military and maritime growth of Kilwa as a regional power increased.

By the 9th century, the capture of gold producing towns began to consolidate resources and power within the area. The sites represented here are reflective of 10th century growth and the expansion of the naturally well-fortified city. The structures, including the cavernous ruins of Gereza, are almost exclusively made of stone.

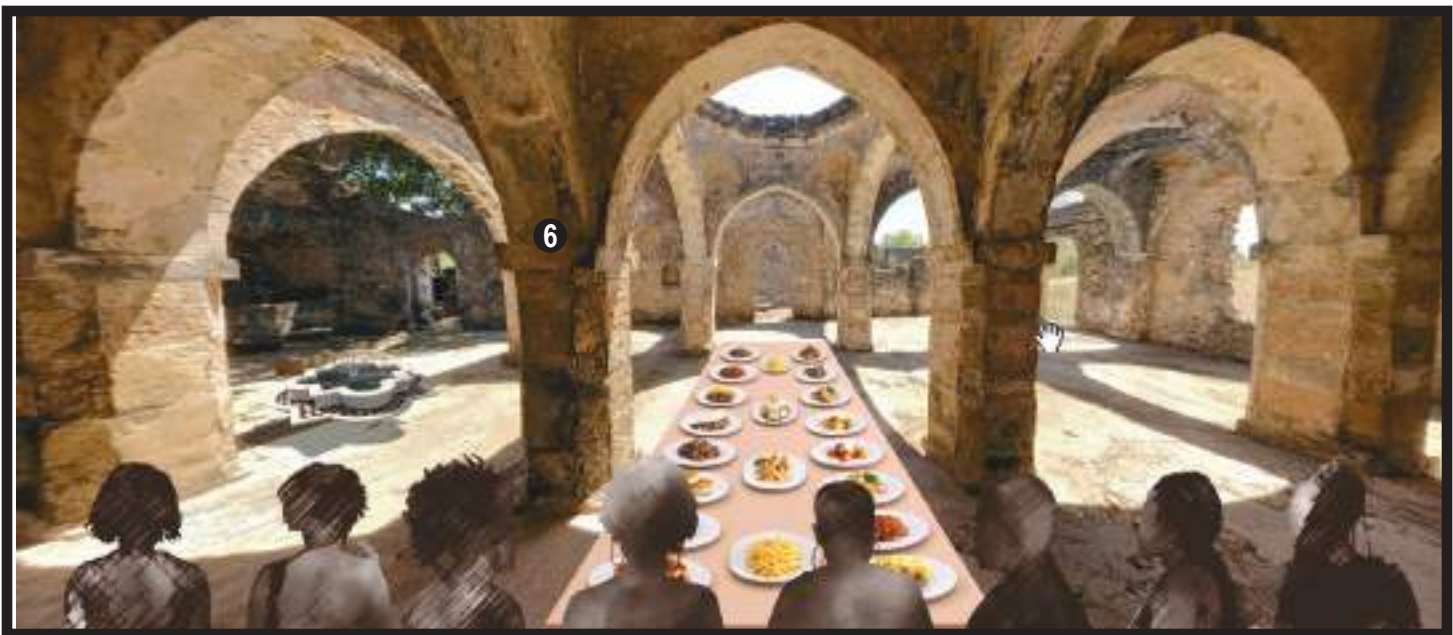
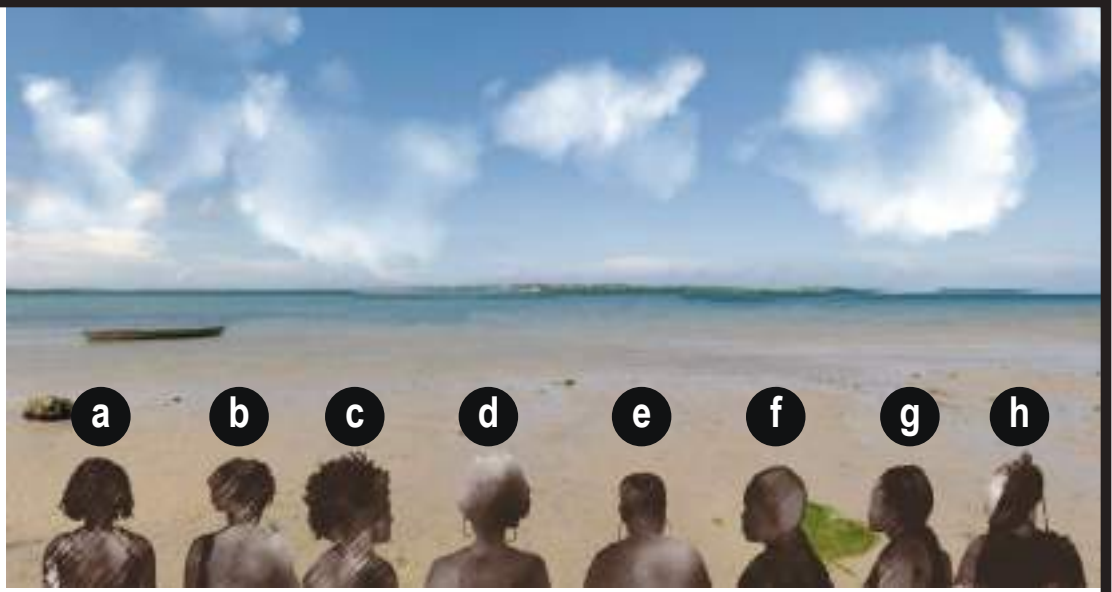
Ibn Battuta, a great explorer once called Kilwa the most beautiful city he'd ever seen. The wealth of the place was unmatched with access to the east prior to European incursion. Trading in precious objects such as textiles, spices, porcelain, gold, ivory, silver and carnelian stones the golden coins minted in Kilwa have been found as far out as Australia, challenging the historical narrative that African wealth was only discovered and nurtured by Europe. Unfortunately, what began as a means to trade and collect resources quickly became a way to traffic a more profitable resource, people.

Ultimately, the growth of this stone city as an old-world power with influences of Arabia and Persia attracted the attention of the Portuguese who would be responsible for the decline of the region. They would loot and ransack the city in 1505, envious of the prosperity of Kilwa.

design intervention

- 1 In Uhuru these spaces are departure points. They exist to establish a barrier before entry. This site functions in a similar but more humane way for travelers who might've reached Ellis Island. The Eight are provided with a choice to continue their journey or be returned safely to their homeland.
- 2 This picture of the beach is an accurate reproduction of the view from the shore of Kilwa Kisiwani. This space and the all those leading up to the transformative experience at The Shrine, are accurate representations of spaces on Earth.
- 3 The women are greeted by 2 groups of people along with the Elder. The first is women, dressed in the traditional way aligning with the time the Eight descended from. The second is men, in dress that represents status & guardianship with the shield and spear of protectors meant to ward off enemies. The inspiration for these men came from the Maasai warriors, a tribe located in Southern Kenya & Northern Tanzania, geographically close to Kilwa Kisiwani.
- 4 The Elder of this space is represented as a sage guide similar to the way extended family like Grandparents also guide and may raise their grandchildren. The Elder will eventually reveal that the Eight may call her Bibi, which means Grandmother in Swahili.
- 5 Allowing the Eight to remain here until they decide to join the society or return to Earth protects Uhuru from outside incursion. There is no going back once you accept the journey
- 6 Once they decide to move forward on the journey & work to become citizens for the purpose of saving their friends, they are brought further into the larger community. Acting as another gateway the Great Mosque offers provision designed to support that they are safe here. It also acts as an intervention as women would not typically be allowed within a Mosque during this time. Their admittance into this space begins to denote that the environment of Uhuru is different than that of earth.

- a** Ola: Precious
- b** Amare: Strength
- c** Kali: Energetic
- d** Bisa: Beloved
- e** Nia: Purpose
- f** Zola: Calm
- g** Asha: Lively
- h** Dayo: Joy



CREATIVITY

2

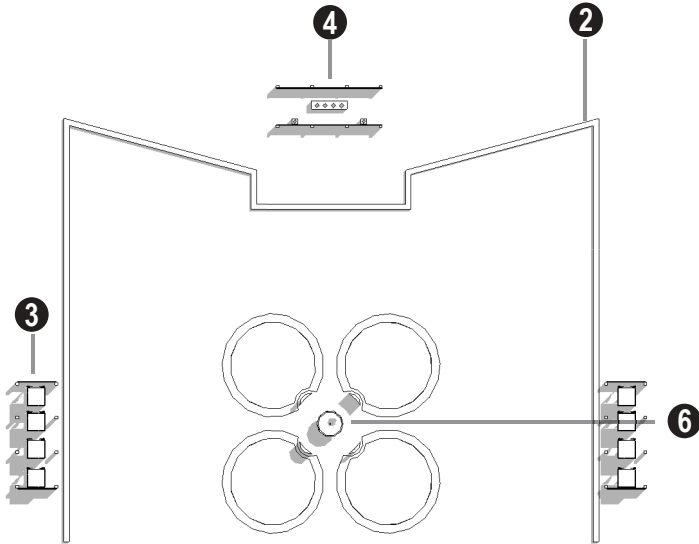
design intervention

- 1 The original Spanish Settlement of Fort Mose has been destroyed. This version was reconstructed through studying artistic renderings of the original space
- 2 Fort Mose was enshrined with an 8 ft tall earthen-work barrier in the shape of a modified “M” for protection from incursion and the marshland surrounding it. This was eliminated in favor of a low 2 ft wall intended to highlight the levels within the sacred space. Everything existing outside of the barrier is leading to hallowed ground within.
- 3 The structures that exist outside of the barrier are facilities for eating resting and bathing facilities. Posts sunken into the ground stabilize them.
- 4 These more private spaces exist in areas of shadow juxtaposed with the sacred structure itself which is entirely lit and meant to be visible from the water.
- 5 Vegetation surrounding the shrine is an amalgamation of what is found in Kilwa and what is found in similar environments that were used during enslavement in the US. South Carolina, as the largest Slave Holding state is highlighted throughout this project, acting as a representative of the confederacy but by no means encompassing all of the horrors or all of the locations this deplorable act thrived.
- 6 The central pool is fresh water for drinking, allowing for restoration throughout the process from the inside & outside.
- 7 The ceiling of the Shrine is held under mysterious tension from the vertical up-flowing towers of water. The space defies architectural rules much in the same way it defies the typical passage of time. It is an exploitation and manipulation of the rules of space-time.

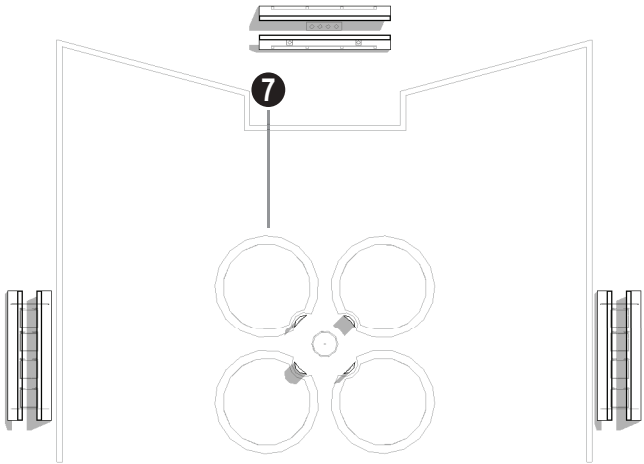


FORT MOSE ARTIFACTS

THE SHRINE



SITE PLAN
SCALE = 1/64" = 1'0"



TOP VIEW
SCALE = 1/64" = 1'0"

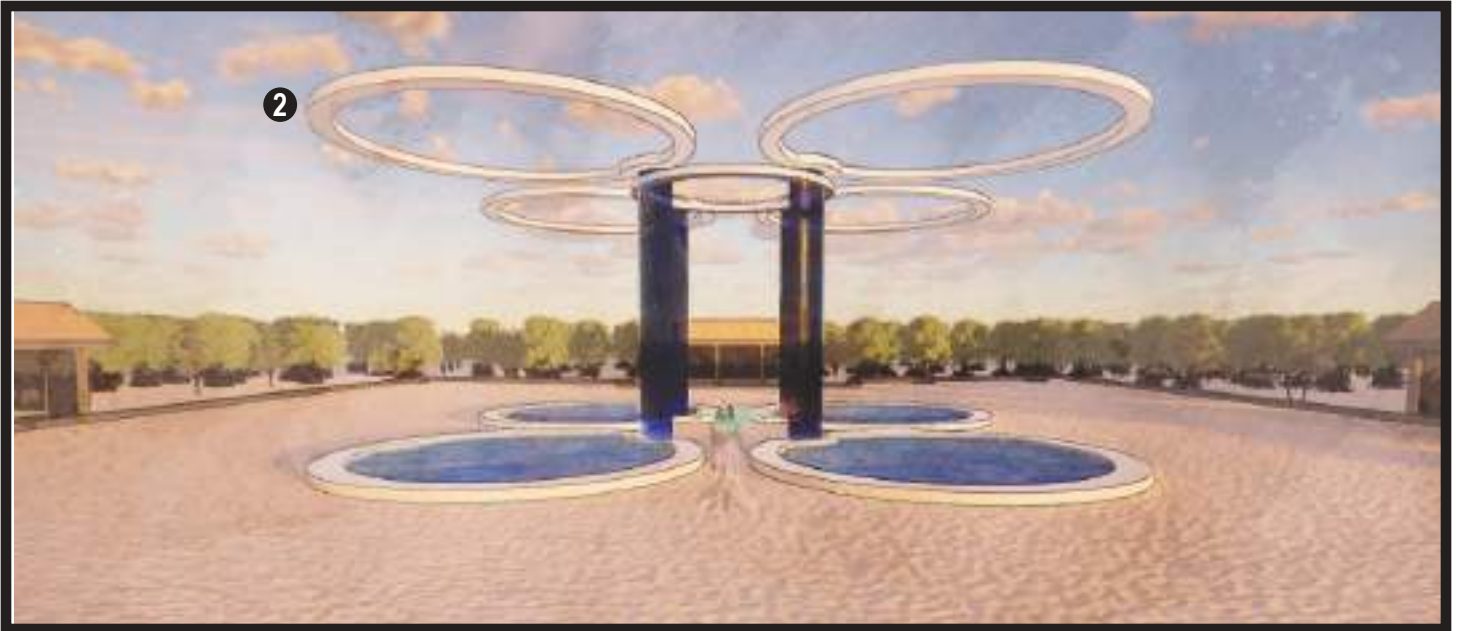
site history

The site utilized for Chapter 2 or “The Shrine” is represented by the United States’ First Free Black Society, Fort Mose, founded prior to the American conquest of Florida after a Spanish edict in 1693 allowing escaped slaves sanctuary from the British. Made up of free Blacks, escaped Slaves from the Carolinas, Indigenous populations and White Settlers, the community was legally established in 1738. Fort Mose stands as one of the first iterations of the underground railroad, Indigenous people and Africans worked to camouflage the movements of small groups to the Spanish occupied shore. Though not all survived the arduous journey, those who did entered into agreement with the Spanish. In return for their conversion to Catholicism and pledged fealty to the Spanish King, the enslaved would be freed and provided with a place within this society and full rights as citizens. These people would go onto become skilled workers, blacksmiths, carpenters, cattlemen, boatmen, and farmers with the women and children creating a fully functioning society with trained militiamen.

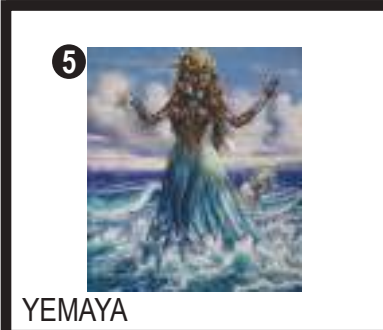
In 1740 this newly developed society was put to the test as British forces attempted to invade Florida to recapture the runaways and establish dominance throughout the Northeastern coastline. Before the arrival of the formerly enslaved, the Spanish hold on Florida had been dwindling, something the British were prepared to exploit. The forces of resistance led by a Black Militia Captain Francisco Menéndez resisted a 27-day-long attack by sea from the British. Menéndez was a key player as he petitioned for the freedom of all Blacks and formerly enslaved populations leading to the development of Fort Mose as a specific slave sanctuary city.

design intervention

- 1 The shape of this structure was developed by studying the “Adinkra.” These symbols inscribe meaning, value, history & heritage to the objects on which they are placed. The adinkra originated in Ghana with the Asante rulers & the Akan people, one of the largest ethnic groups in West Africa. These symbols are ubiquitous within the culture.
- 2 This one “Mpuannum” or “five tufts” is a hairstyle of joy worn by priests and priestesses. Its deeper meaning relates to the work of priestly responsibility. Mpuannum—“represents the devotion and faithfulness one displays when doing a task required of one. In addition, mpuannum means loyalty or the embodiment of lofty duty to a desired goal.”
*W. Bruce Willis, The Adinkra Dictionary
- 3 These thatched roof structures represent the style of the homes found in Fort Mose. These homes were built in small groupings aligned within the perimeter of the earthen-work wall.
- 4 The Mangrove trees are representative of the plants that grow around the beaches of Kilwa and in low lying coastal areas in brackish water. These areas include parts of the Carolinas, Georgia, Florida & New Orleans. All sites where slavery flourished.
- 5 The woman in this space is a Ye, she is a representation of the Yoruba goddess Yemaya. In Yoruba culture, Yemaya is a river goddess presiding over the surface waters who traveled on the slave ships with the captives for comfort.
- 6 In this iteration, she is acting as a mythological woman who is kind & comforting but burdened with knowledge. She represents Black Women in their strivings to balance awareness and remain peaceful. She also embodies healing, light & hope. In many ways she has taken on the characteristics of Jesus in the Christian faith consistent with what many Africans believed prior to European incursion.



2



5

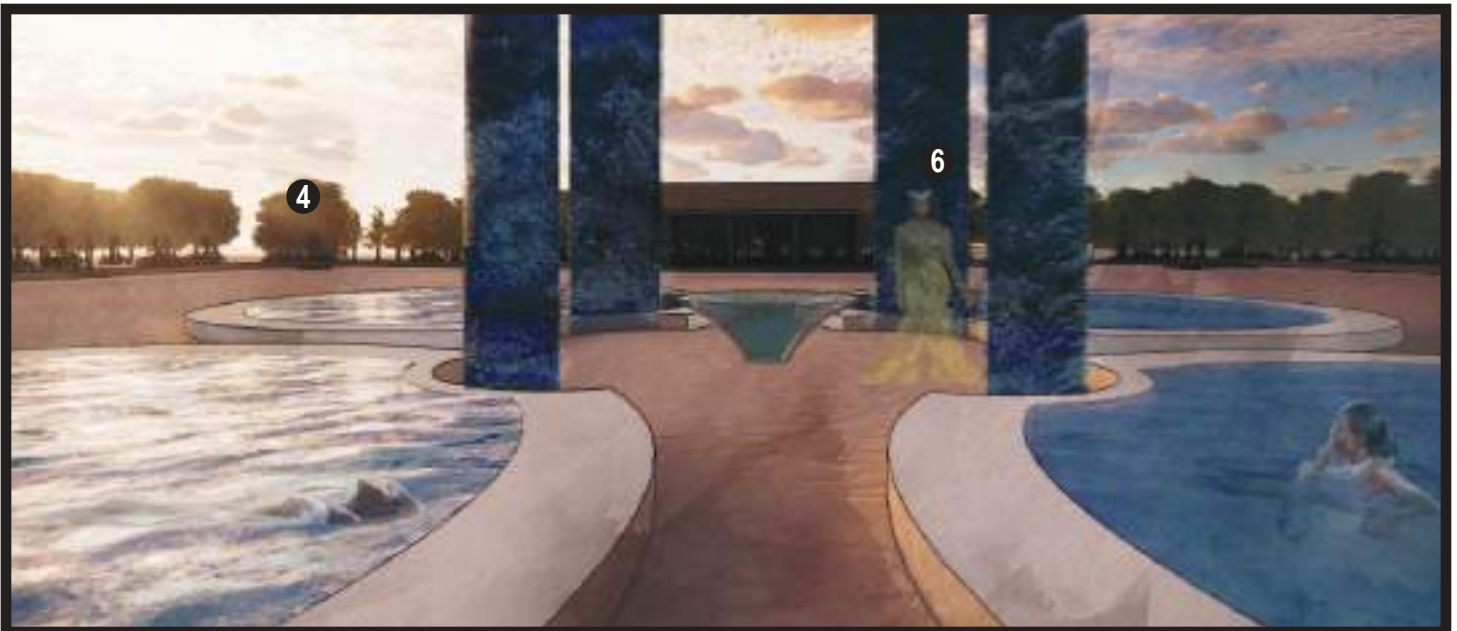
YEMAYA



YEMAYA & OSHUN



3



4

6

site history

Built entirely for the survival and development of the Black community that lived within its walls. This included thatched structures for home life, a church for worship and gathering, a lookout tower near the center and a clay/earthen work moat for protection from the rising waters and serving as a strategic barrier to resist incursion.

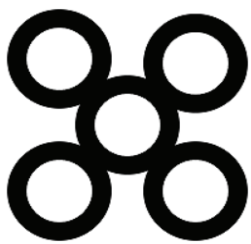
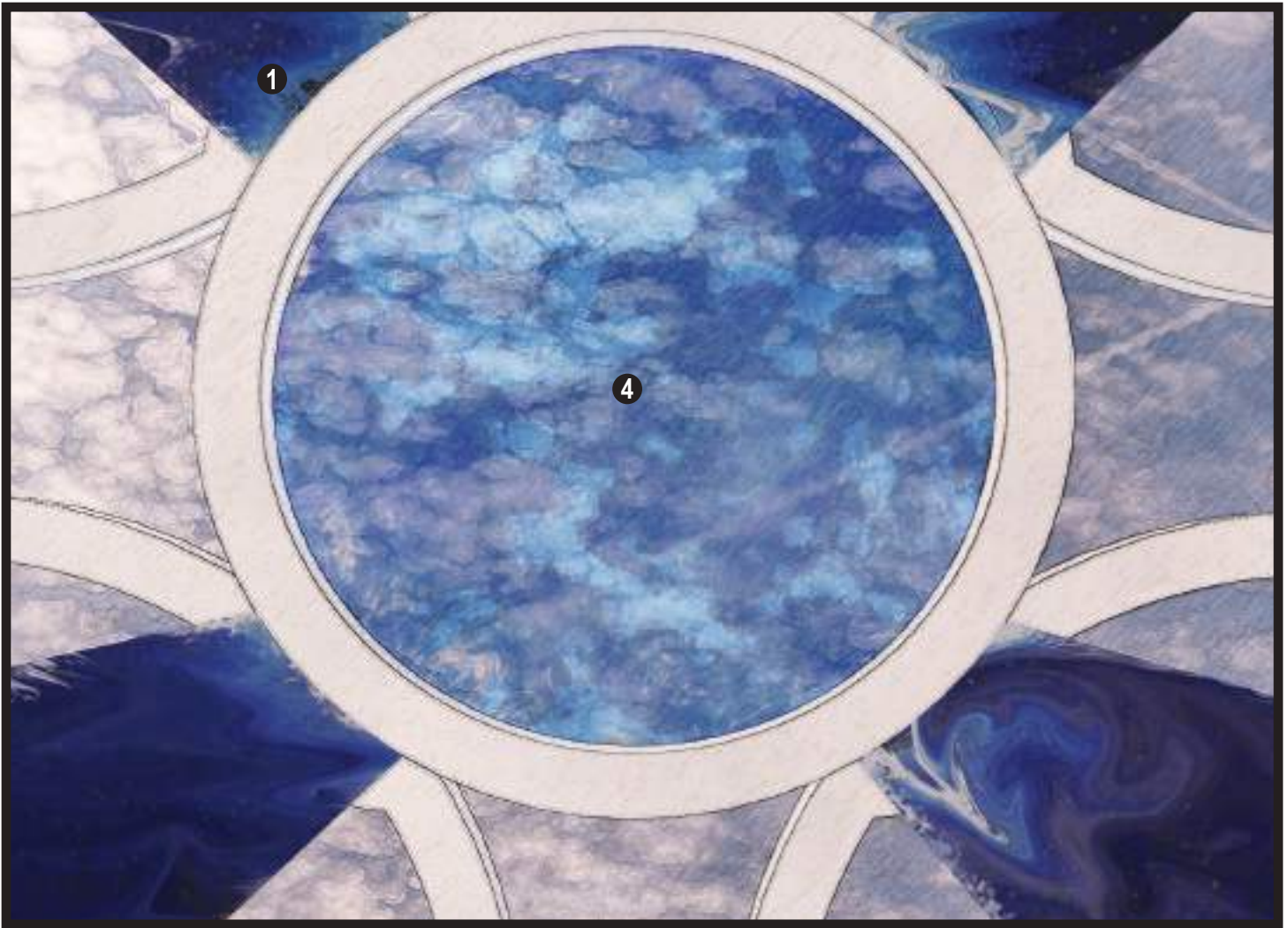
Known officially to the Spanish as Gracia Real de Santa Teresa de Mose, Fort Mose was ceded to the British in 1763 leaving the formerly enslaved and now free populations once again subject to their brutality and the totality of their slave-holding authority. Due to this loss of property and environmental damage, the site at Fort Mose is lost to the world. Archaeological evidence and some early maps reveal the exact location of the settlement recognized as a National Historic Place in 1994.

The Seminole Indians, who are the only tribe to successfully refuse treaty and charter from the United States government, allowed the formerly enslaved Africans entrance into their community.

This mutually beneficial relationship provided a home for the formerly enslaved and trained military support for the Seminole population. This aided in continued resistance from the US government intent on seizing their land.

design intervention

- 1 The pools & towers represent the four winds, & the four oceans. They speak to the essential environment, with a focus on water. Water, through all of its iterations in our world has a cyclical nature, not unlike time. It is essential to humanity's survival and yet often wasted, commodified and selectively withheld. Please refer to Flint, Michigan & Standing Rock for examples. Black people who were brought to toil in the environment understood its value. African cultures revered the natural world, even applying mythical powers to those presiding over it.
- 2 Aspects of Drexciya, a popular mythology of the 1980's and 1990's with its associated music and storytelling is employed here. The story of Drexciya speaks of the pregnant mothers who were thrown overboard during the middle passage. That their children survived and learned to breathe underwater, building a society mirroring aspects of Atlantis.
- 3 Consider the Negro Spirituals referred to as "freedom songs" which are "Go Down Moses," "Take Me to the Water," "Wade in the Water" & "Follow the Drinking Gourd," all relating to the healing power of water and alluding to the Christian Baptism amendment that freed many slaves before its outlaw. While fleeing plantations and evading capture, the water masked the scent of slaves who would otherwise have been tracked by the slave-catcher's dogs. These songs were also allegorical but also maps. Literal maps to help escaped slaves follow rivers and stars to freedom.
- 4 Sun Ra, who is considered a pillar of Afrofuturism is also referenced here through his seminal work "Space is the Place." Where he exists on a unique planetary realm where Black people are free and seeks to free the minds of Black people in bondage on earth. This style of expression where space can be detached from the laws of the physical world is being employed here in this portal.



MPUANNUM



FORT MOSE



FOLLOW THE DRINKING GOURD



THATCH



MANGROVE

CODE FACTS
 USE GROUP: 303.4 A-3 ASSEMBLY (WORSHIP)
 SQ. FT.: 21,716
 LOAD: 1004.6 (ASSEMBLY W/ FIXED SEATS)
 OCCUPANCY: 9
 PLUMBING FIXTURES
 LAVATORIES: 2
 WATER CLOSETS: 4
 DRINKING FOUNTAINS: 1

design intervention

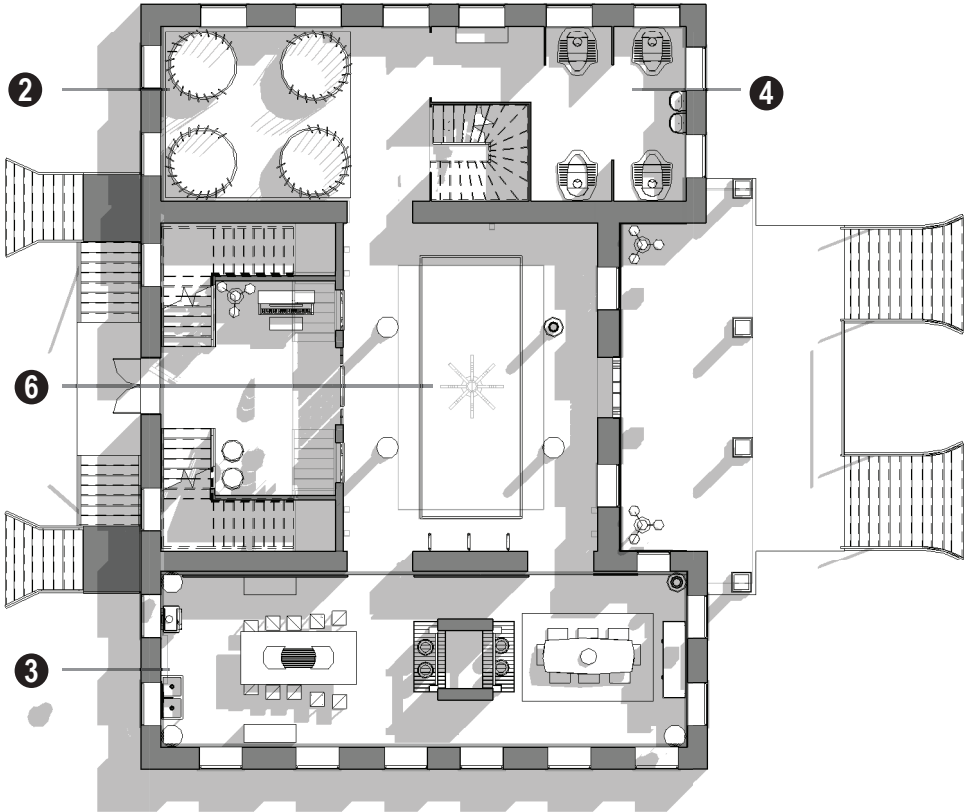
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3

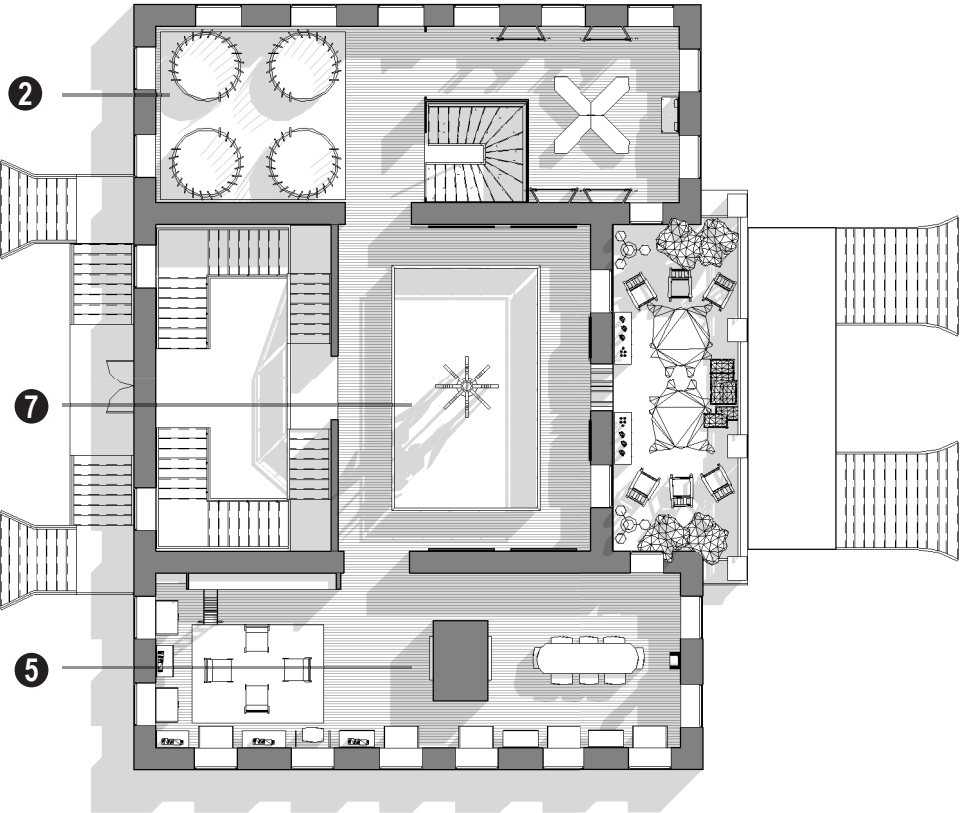
- 1 This Palladian structure is symmetrical. Originally the main room in the center was a Salon.
- 2 The Sitting room has been converted into a bedroom. The women are meant to stay connected so the lower bedroom has 4 round thatch-like beds, and a duplicate sits above.
- 3 These women are slowly being introduced to technology throughout the project. In a space that has no indoor plumbing we are introducing running water, gas power, and indoor plumbing.
- 4 Their toilets are low and typical of early iterations of toilets which are still employed abroad. As there is no intent for harm in this place, windows are prevalent and signal freedom without surveillance.
- 5 The rooms on the South are for Dining & Cooking. Dominated by a large fireplace separating the two zones whose flame is visible from either side. This emphasizes the “hearth” prevalent in American culture while touching back to the open flame often used in African culture.
- 6 The space was converted to a large pool in the main Salon, signifying the healing and restorative power of water. This space is meant for bathing, meditation & restoration.
- 7 The ceiling and roof floor were cut away to make room for a large skylight above the pool to ring nature inside the space and encourage rejuvenation through light.
- 8 This space was used for intervention. To intervene on the behalf of those who toiled within and without it, but had no power or sway on its occupants or use.



THE RESIDENCE



PLAN: LEVEL 1
SCALE = 1/16" = 1'0"



PLAN: LEVEL 2
SCALE = 1/16" = 1'0"

site history

The site utilized for Chapter 3 or “The Residence” is Drayton Hall in Charleston, South Carolina bordering the Ashley River. Drayton Hall cannot be discussed without considering the full scale of slavery in Charleston. Charleston’s history cannot be discussed without accounting for one of the largest slave-holding plantations in the state, Magnolia Plantation & Gardens. True terror was to be “sold down the river” to homes like Magnolia, and often resulted in the suicide of those remanded to this end. Up until recently Magnolia sought to “deemphasize” its role as a plantation created to facilitate enslavement, including the Drayton family’s involvement.

Drayton Hall is lauded as the best-preserved Palladian structure in the United States. It has survived natural disasters, & the Civil War. Drayton Hall is said to be a site of retreat for the Drayton family.

By the time of the arrival of John Drayton, who purchased and established this tract of land, the heirs of the Drayton family owned upwards of 100 commercial plantations on 76000 acres of land with one of the largest productions of rice throughout the state.

In an attempt to lure his wife from Barbados to South Carolina, the home was built to magnificent Georgian & Palladian standards and architectural details that communicate immense wealth and professional craftsmanship with extensive gardens surrounding the property.

design intervention

- 1 The dominating feature in this room is the table. Set in the kitchen instead of the dining room this table acts as a gathering & shared space for the Eight to reconnect & form bonds as a family. This is representative of the knowledge, stories, & histories that are shared in Black kitchens.
- 2 Kitchens, were once typically womens spaces, in many ways this made them safe. Dumplin, the cook in the Drayton household is represented here through the memories of Zola, who sits nearest to the fire and nearest to the head of the table, a place of honor that would typically be reserved for a man.
- 3 The highlighted area of the table is representative of Uhuru technology, called Moon Glass. This substance is activated by the sun and turns on in lower light. Acting as a solar power source throughout the land.
- 4 The shape of the space is one long room separated by a barrier instead of walls. The room and its shape is also indicative of the shotgun house. This was an invention of the enslaved and focused on crosswinds, high windows where the homeowner could see out but the outsiders were prevented from seeing in. Views through the home. A hearth, and limited entrances and exits to prevent unauthorized entry. Survival mean limiting surveillance.
- 5 Food and its preparation are important in Black culture. That provision is often wrapped up in prayer. The Gullah Baptism artwork by Bruce Chandler hangs above the hearth blessing the food below.
- 6 The items hanging on the walls as art, are textiles made in different parts of Africa as “prestige” objects that carry symbolic significance for the bearer/wearer. All these communicated wealth, honor, and a unique status amongst one’s people.
- 7 The large chandelier in the center was inspired by a mask worn by the Bamana people of Mali. It is a mythical female half mortal half animal antelope being named Ci Wara. Ci Wara ushered in agricultural knowledge in the Bamako region & is celebrated today for her gift. The legacy of that creature is here in Moon Glass collecting light & redistributing it below.



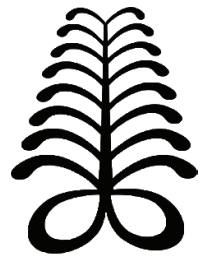
STAFF



BRUCE CHANDLER



CI WARA



AYA



site history

Built at least partially using the labor of slaves the home remains intact and was restored but never updated since its 1738 inception. The structure lacks plumbing, electricity and all modern inventions.

The disconcerting nature of Drayton as a perfect Palladian garden home juxtaposed with the brutal reality of the immeasurable human cost paid to arrive at such splendor is shocking. This coupled with the family's overall desire to conceal the presence of those who paid the cost through structures like secret slave stairwells & exterior basement entrances to the slaves quarters, made it a perfect candidate for reclamation.

The list of architectural details is too numerous to recount, so a few specific spaces/artifacts are identified. The withdrawing room, located on the first floor is mirrored on the east and west sides of the structure with a large fireplace acting as the threshold defining each space.

The main hall, grand staircase and portico dominate the center of the structure with a clear line of sight through the spaces with a compression and release effect beginning with the grand staircase.

The remarkable staircase is constructed in mahogany, detailed with seafoam green plaster and its brackets painted in translucent vermilion paint.

The details throughout the home represent the best preserved and only remaining hand-carved plaster-works from the colonial era including those found on ceilings, walls and doors.

design intervention

- 1 The walls in this space are engraved using an Adinkra symbol called "Aya" known as "the fern." This symbol represents "endurance and resourcefulness." As these women have recently experienced generational Black trauma, finding a way to represent their will to overcome was integral.
- 2 The ironwork and detailing on the palladian glass doors represents traditions only recently confirmed to be present in Africa. It was once believed that Africa's use of glass & iron came from Europe. Through archaeological research and findings this has been disproved. Iron was present at burial sites in Meroe, Sudan in large quantities, and glass beads and small trinkets were found throughout excavations which predate the arrival of Europe.
- 3 The Elephants on the wall are representative of masks worn by the Kuosi of Cameroon during ceremonies. They are sacred objects signifying kingship & wealth.
- 4 The colors & materials of the space represent the clay, mud-brick, and earthen-work structures ancient & Modern day Africans use in construction. They signify a return to natural materials and practices that may seem primitive but, were often extremely technologically advanced. These natural methods responded to the environment as it once was.
- 5 The balusters used along the railings are representative of a ceremonial staff used by the Luba people of the Congo with a seated female at the finial with crossed arms in a prayer or salute. In Luba society, women's bodies are receptors for spiritual power.
- 6 The tiles in this space represent a Spanish pattern done in ceramic that would be fired to seal it. These ceramic tiles would be generally resistant to water, and their engravings create a surface that is cool to walk on but avoids slip. These represent the tile-work completed by a group of African descendants called the Moors. They are often associated with the architecture found in some of Spain's most treasured structures.



CEREMONIAL JAR



WALL NICHES



TILE



ELEPHANT MASK



BRAND

CODE FACTS
 USE GROUP:
 310.3 R-2 RESIDENTIAL GROUP
 SQ. FT.: 6949
 LOAD: 200
 OCCUPANCY: 34
 PLUMBING FIXTURES
 LAVATORIES: 2
 WATER CLOSETS: 4

design intervention

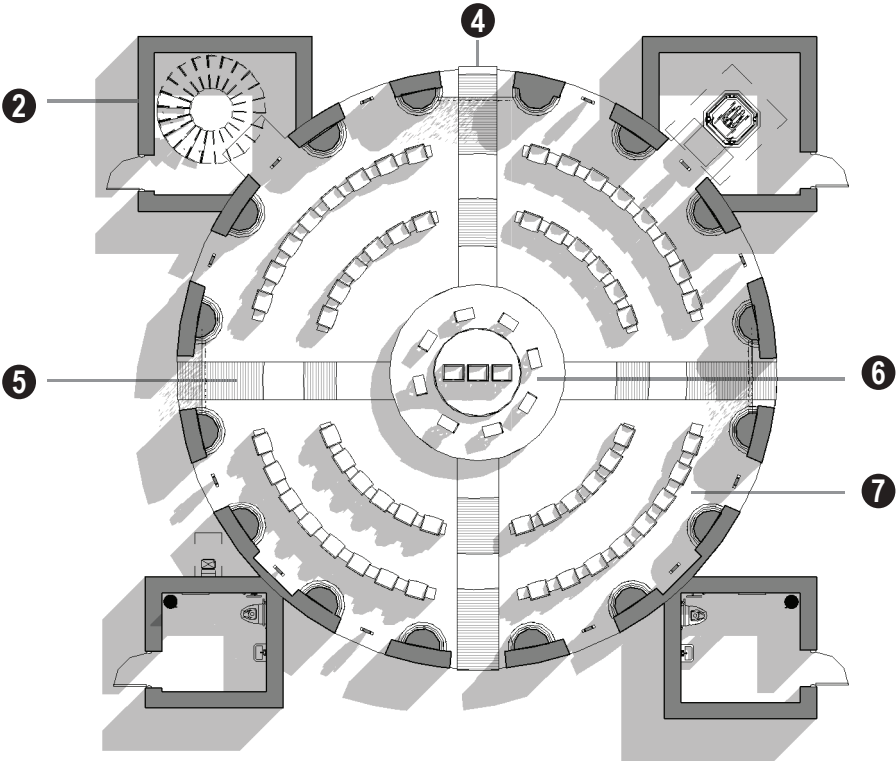
- 1 This Neoclassical structure with French influences was meant to be a palace for Creole citizens resembling the Rue de Rivoli of Paris.
- 2 The entire structure was carved away in this iteration to leave only the rotunda where slaves were sold. Four small outer structures for emergency exiting, elevator & ADA Baths were added with entrances through the sculptures that retract above allowing entrance & exit.
- 3 The large columns were retained & raised to support the dome structure above which was changed from masonry stone to glass with thin steel supports.
- 4 Water is present in this space in the form of 4 channels in a cross representing North, South, East & West unified at the center where a hydraulic stage & lift exists and turn 360 degrees to symbolically address all the land of Uhuru & the citizens within.
- 5 The channels are about three feet wide allowing for wheelchair access with grates that sit flush with the raised floor but below the water line allowing passage to each of the subdivided sections.
- 6 These seats of honor are reserved for the Founding Mothers on the top platform & the Eight on the platform below. The height change represents their unique status in this ceremony.
- 7 The citizens seats are laid out in the style of an amphitheater where a performance or a ritual takes place which requires participatory focus throughout the ceremony.
- 8 The materials for the space are representative of the mineral rich African landscape. This includes marble slab with cobalt veining, mahogany cedar & ebonized woods, rich red/pink clay & plaster, with copper, gold & metallic accents, & cobalt infused granite columns.
- 9 This space was used for reclamation. Originally used to sell Black people this place now welcomes & embraces them. Their unique names & abilities are acknowledged & elevated. Its the difference between bearing a cross & receiving a crown.



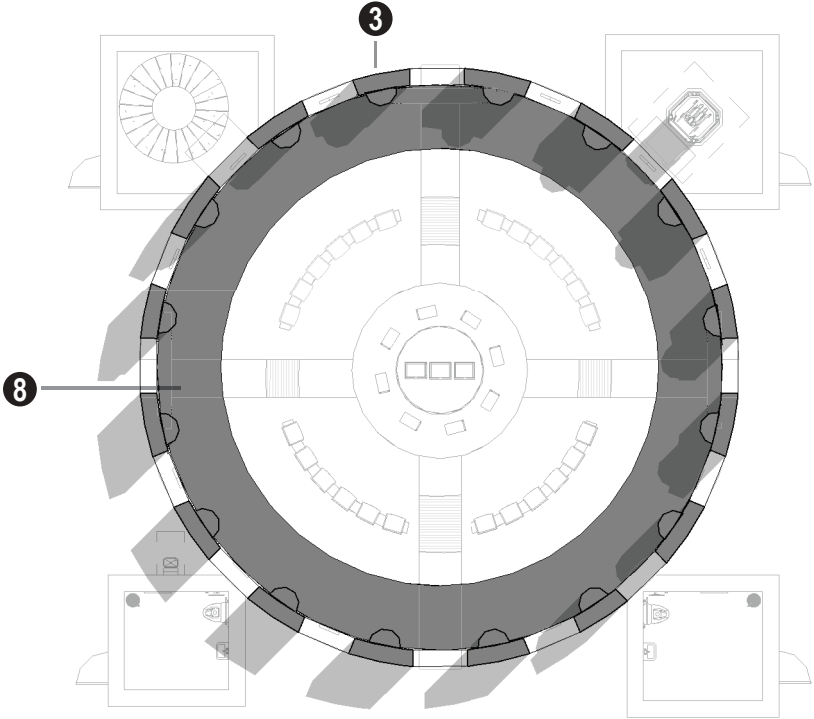
REVENUE

4

THE THRONE



PLAN: LEVEL 1
SCALE = 1/16" = 1'0"



PLAN: MEZZANINE
SCALE = 1/16" = 1'0"

site history

The site utilized for Chapter 4 or “The Throne Room” is the St Louis Hotel & Exchange located in New Orleans, Louisiana.

The St Louis Hotel & Exchange through shifting powers and narratives exists now as the footprint of the Omni Royal Hotel in New Orleans. The original structure went through many iterations and as a result of natural disaster was finally demolished in 1916. Known for its beauty and grandeur this space defied the narrative of slave auctions taking place in grimy back alleys and under the cover of darkness or shame.

In 1825 the St Louis Hotel and Exchange was at the height of its prevalence. The space had been a City Exchange, a Merchant’s Exchange, a coffee house, and eventually housed the Legislative Branch of the government of Louisiana. The current owner “James Hewlett, decided to make the building a “Creole Palace,” that would represent the European and Creole cultures of the city.” He enlisted “Jacques Nicholas Bussiere De Poillyte recreate the essence of the Rue de Rivoli of Paris. Even after a fire in 1841 destroyed the structure, its profitability was so secure that it was completely re-funded for rebuild within 2 years. The new St Louis Hotel & Exchange opened to rave reviews and fanfare in the summer of 1843.

design intervention

- 1 The walls in this temple-like space are represented by the soft pink hue found in many of the original structures made of mud brick, compressed or rammed earth, fired clay & a native version of plaster.
- 2 The columns in this space were retained and have been converted to a blue (indicative of azurite) and brown (indicative of topaz) granite with an Ebony Corinthian capital. The original structure showcased these towering columns across the floor levels. In this iteration, the levels were removed except for a spherical overlook acting as an observation platform for the use of citizens to take part in the ceremony.
- 3 The Wenge & alabaster overseat placed upon the stone block structures converts the simple row into one elevated to receive the elected members of society. The Adinkra symbol present on all of the citizens seats is called “Nyame Dua,” which represents the protection and blessing of God. The spot where Nyame Dua are laid is sacred. It is used as part of rituals and special ceremonies. The confirmation of new Uhuru citizens is a sacred rite.
- 4 The cobalt & azurite infused marble flooring with the other precious metals like gold railings and balusters, minerals & materials of the space concentrate attention on the wealth of the African continent before being stripped away for profit..
- 5 In addition to the ebony column capitals with bronze beams along the main entrances both materials are present as the platform & below it. The Moon Glass bars hung perpendicular to the bronze structure below the platform illuminate the shaded area below. While shadow is important, it is minimized in this space everywhere except the water to celebrate its mystery (an embodiment of one of the Founding Mothers) & to fill the space with energizing light.
- 6 This space and the welcome are created with the intention for those within and around it to be acknowledged. Like the slave auction block that once rested along the North rectangular opening, this space is for examination. Instead of examining Black bodies for the purpose of subjugation, we examine the character of those who are admitted into this community & family.



AFRICAN VIOLET



OSHUN



YEMAYA



IDIOPHONE



OLOKUN

CODE FACTS
 USE GROUP:
 303.4 A-3 ASSEMBLY (COMMUNITY HALL)
 SQ. FT.: 2290
 LOAD: 1004.6 (ASSEMBLY W/ FIXED SEATS)
 OCCUPANCY: 67
 PLUMBING FIXTURES
 LAVATORIES: 2 SINGLE USE (ADA)
 WATER CLOSETS: 2 SINGLE USE (ADA)
 DRINKING FOUNTAINS: 1

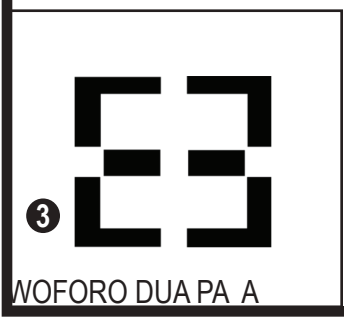
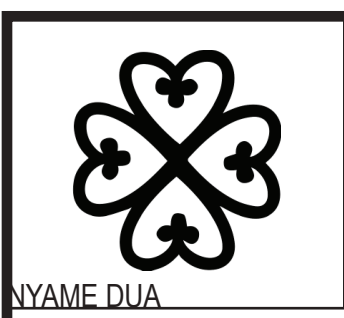
site history

Slaves waiting to be sold along with art and other commodities were typically kept in pens outside the structure along portions of the French Market. If the wait was short they were crammed into small rooms within the exchange to await examination on the block or along the pen wall before their sale. Kept in pens which were essentially jails, fed and paraded around an enclosure, those who landed at this major port would typically be sold to the highest bidder on one of the 2 identifiable wooden blocks within St Louis. The sound of the auctioneers, up to 7 at once, was typical thoroughfare. "Joseph Le Carpentier was an auctioneer at the exchange and, as an example of how lucrative this business could be, in 1840, he sold slaves at a value equivalent to what would have been more than \$1.5 million in 2015 dollars." Supporting the glamour of the establishment were barrooms, libraries, restaurants and billiards rooms to keep guests occupied. The environment was intentionally set to encourage free visitors to spend their time inside the walls.

The rotunda was one of the locations of a slave block. It featured Corinthian topped columns along the walls with extensive decoration and plasterwork. The dome itself gives way to light that permeates the space and moves around according to the position of the sun. Paintings and carvings of the day are etched into its walls. The second block was located below the rotunda in a no less decorative space. The 88 ft high dome and at least 40 ft deep rotunda were referred to as "Showcase Exchanges" for their splendor while the literal showcasing of human beings for purchase occurred within the walls.

design intervention

- 1 The sculptures in the doorway are representative of the Idiophone used amongst the Bozo people's of Mali. In this space it is suspended from the ceiling & is typically struck or scraped to call the meeting to order.
- 2 The green plants with purple flowers are representative of African Violets which grow in bright light. The Moon Glass above with the proximity to the doorways below encourages their growth.
- 3 The FM's thrones are also Adinkra symbols, meaning cooperation, support & encouragement. It is called "Woforo Dua Pa A" or "when you climb a good tree, you are given a push."
- 4 The women seated at the raised platform are Ye, as Yemaya (a), Oh as Oshun (b), and Olo as Olokun (c), three water deities of Yoruba religion and legend. They are featured here as leaders of the surface waters (Ye), leader of the rivers & streams (Oh), and leader of the deep unknown ocean (Olo). These are the Founding Mothers of Uhuru who guide and rule this land. The parallels to Christianity contained within their character are relevant as it is one of Africa's oldest religions. Ye is a protector. Oh is life giving as only her water can be consumed, & Olo represents the mystifying depths of the sea.
- 5 Water cascades from the copper beams above the doorways once the ceremony begins adding to the gravity of the ritual. The flow of water is used in Christian baptism & washing practices of Wudu ceremonies in Islam. As Africa is a conglomeration of indigenous religions & ones from the East this space seeks to recognize what was kept through the ages and survived the middle passage journey.
- 6 The importance of perspective both in space & relationship is signified through the views of the Eight. They are responsible to the officials they literally face, they sit slightly below the Founding Mothers facing them, & they experience the POV of the citizens who are above all after they are confirmed. Each view represents a layer of responsibility. Their stools of honor are the symbol of independence & freedom in the Adinkra noting that "Independence comes with its responsibilities," or "Fawohodie."



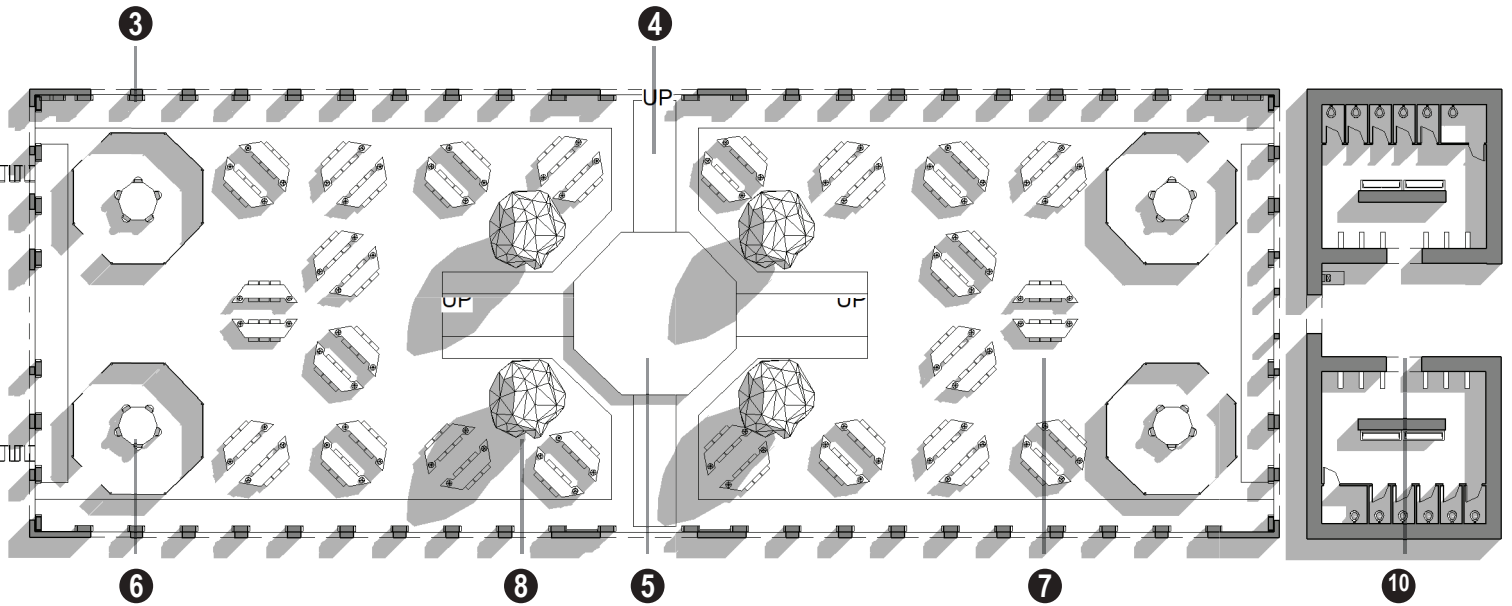
design intervention



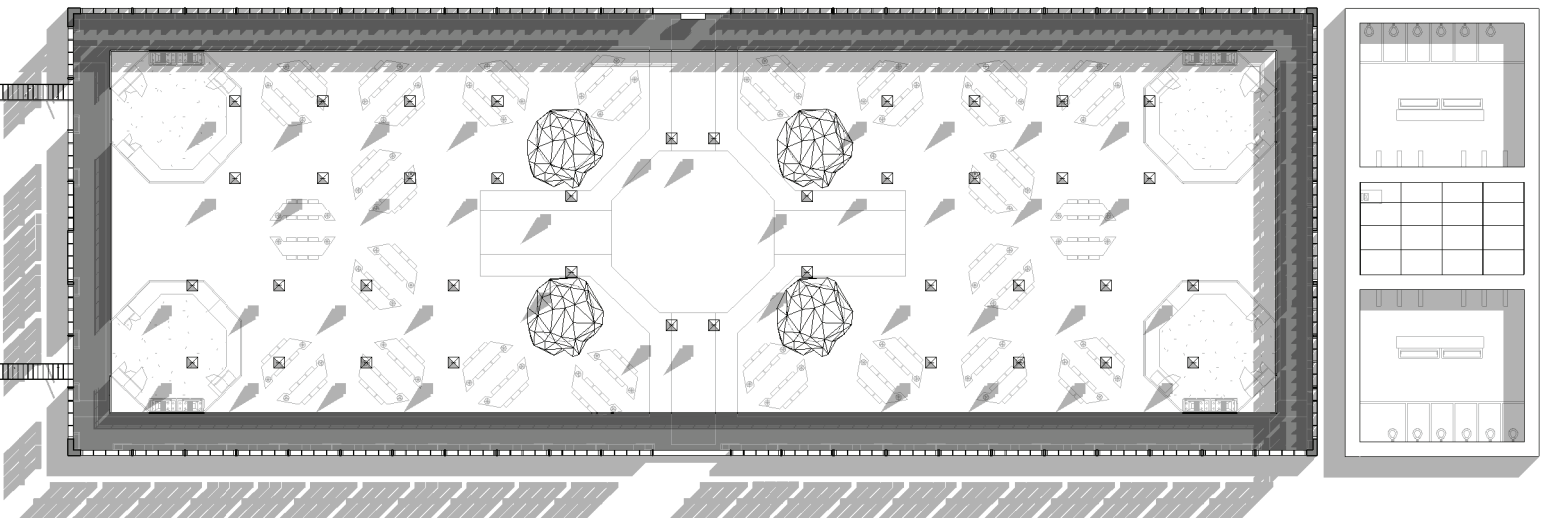
- 1 This Moorish inspired structure with Spanish influences was an exhibition space for landscape architecture during the 1876 Centennial Celebration located in Philadelphia, PA.
- 2 The entire structure was hollowed from to create a large open plan area for sight lines. The goal is to see and be seen.
- 3 The decorative stacked column system with Moorish inspired stone & industrial steel & glass dominates the structure. The exterior walls are open through arched colonnades promoting welcome with a sense of grandeur.
- 4 The water present in this space exists as a moat surrounding and insulating the people. Breaks in the moat are at the East, & West ends by the main entrances with ramps traversing the North & South entrances. There are additional openings for the raised kitchens at each corner.
- 5 The raised platform in the center is used as an exhibition & performance space in the original tradition, bisecting the space into quadrants.
- 6 The raised kitchens elevate those who serve to a place of honor. This also affords chefs and kitchen workers open air with a unique perspective. The cook is often cut off from experiencing the environment subject to toil and heat. The goal was to apply equity & value to this position.
- 7 The low open tables are intended to encourage communication & access. The angled shape of the tabletop creates a central focal point which can be used to address others at the table, and the open ends allow free movement, ease of serving, & ADA access.
- 8 The trees in this space acknowledge its original use bringing nature into a space full of rigid materials. Though there is rigidity, the materials chosen respond to the warmth of the body.
- 9 This space was once used to erase the presence of Black people & their contributions to America. This intervention alters the space into the penultimate Black expression of welcome: a cookout.
- 10 Exterior washrooms allow for traditional cleansing rituals & exterior stairs access the 2nd floor.



THE WELCOME



PLAN: LEVEL 1
SCALE = 1/32" = 1'0"



PLAN: MEZZANINE
SCALE = 1/32" = 1'0"

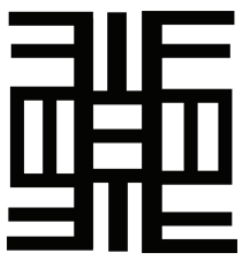
site history

The site utilized for Chapter 5 or “The Welcome” is Horticultural Hall part of the 1876 Centennial Celebration Philadelphia, PA. Horticultural Hall stands at an impressive size of 360 ft long by 160 ft wide. This space was meant to showcase the agricultural prowess of the nations of the world essentially becoming an exposition of landscape architecture. The event took place toward the close of the era known as Reconstruction and though Black people were free at the time, they were experiencing segregation at the hands of those who formerly enslaved them. Black America in its next few years would experience Jim Crow, Black Taxes, Voting Rights Suppression the acceleration of lynching’s and all the ensuing massacres around the United States. Ushering in a new time of fear in little more than a year out from the nation’s 100th birthday.

During the agricultural past of the United States, enslaved people were doing the majority of the farming and agricultural work. Unfortunately, when the time came, those populations were not invited to showcase their skills and were effectively banned from the exposition entirely. Memorial Hall, which was the main exposition and largest building in the world had no Black workers in its construction or labor force. There were no Black workers on the floor, no janitors, ticket takers or laborers of any kind and only a single Black artist allowed to exhibit through the vehement support of artist colleagues on the exposition floor. The presence of Black people in America according to the view of the centennial erased them from existence.

design intervention

- 1 The walls in this temple-like space mud brick and plaster with stone archways throughout in the Moorish style. The structure also represents the Beaux Arts movement in its symmetry, and ornamentation and use of metalwork, especially iron.
- 2 The trusses above are all custom created for the Centennial and were retained for this iteration. Using iron-working techniques, the trusses stabilize the structure and allowed for the monumental glass and steel roof and small dome. They cast light and shadow throughout the space reacting to the changing patterns of the sun.
- 3 Textile banners for each of the Founding Mothers are hung above infused with precious metals & minerals as thread. The lighting is representative of the pyramids of Egypt and Nubia projecting light from below and within using a thin plane of Moon Glass. They are arrayed in a loose grid meant to supplement the natural light from the glass and steel pitched roof & small dome directly above the raised exhibition & performance space.
- 4 The windows throughout the 2nd floor are set in decorative ironwork with custom engraved panes.
- 5 The tile work is marble, geometric and Moorish inspired, with hints of lapis lazuli a semi-precious stone prized over millennia found in places like Egypt & Mauritania along with beautiful blue sodalite.
- 6 The monumental arches present throughout the space allow the outside in while creating clear operable thresholds and barriers in conjunction with the moat and ramps. Ornamentation on the arches is present in engravings along the keystones, voussiors and imposts. At the great entrances a gold plaque is placed within the pier as a mirror inscribed with names lost to the generations in super fine etching.
- 7 Separating the entrance & the small gathering spaces beneath the raised kitchen platforms is moire glass panes. These juxtapose the use of stained glass often found in European Gothic architecture. This was at the height of its popularity during the dawn of the transatlantic slave trade. In some cases decorative glass was for the purchase of slaves.



NEA ONNIM NO SUAA, OH



NKYINKYIM



MOIRE GLASS



TILE



COPPER

CODE FACTS
 USE GROUP:
 303.3 A-2 ASSEMBLY (BANQUET HALL)
 SQ. FT.: 18306
 LOAD: 15
 OCCUPANCY: 1220
 PLUMBING FIXTURES
 LAVATORIES: 12 (2 ADA)
 WATER CLOSETS: 12 (2 ADA)
 DRINKING FOUNTAINS: 1

site history

It was decided that women would be surreptitiously shut out from the main hall. Acting as part of a committee that helped established the Women's Pavilion as a site for exhibiting their work, Black women were further erased by their White counterparts and told they would not be able to exhibit work within those walls either, even after their contributions.

The site based on Moorish construction with its triumphal arches and use of tiling, patterning and symmetry. The large barrel-vaulted glass ceiling was held aloft by custom trusses and an iron beaming system. The use of materials such as iron, decorative glass and finely crafted and painted stonework & plaster defined its glamorous interior. The Beaux Arts twist on each of the structures throughout the exhibition were fascinating but none more than Memorial Hall which would live on as the Please Touch Museum and influence the construction of the Reichstag in Berlin.

A final incident prompted the use of this site. The phenomenal writer, abolitionist, orator and statesman Frederick Douglass was invited to attend the Centennial and to deliver a speech. Upon his arrival his ticket was refused by Philadelphia Police. He was admitted when recognized by a senator and welcomed onto the platform to take his place amongst the distinguished guests including then President Ulysses S. Grant. This space meant to celebrate the advancement of America omitted its most notable moral correction by erasing the presence of free Blacks in favor of touting modern progress that was only possible through the forced labor of the erased.

design intervention

- 1 The large sculpture above the 2nd floor opening is one of the famous Benin Bronzes created for Queen Mother Idia. It is one of the first to be commissioned after her advice led her son to a major military victory.
- 2 The trees in this space are representative of African Oak trees which are tropical and coastal, native to many parts of Africa but prevalent in west & central. Their leaves have healing properties and can be used to treat sores & cure lice infections. These trees were over-harvested by the British & used for naval applications due to their strength & response to water. Consider the wood taken from West African trees in service of building British ships that would carry Native Africans into slavery.
- 3 The presence of stools in this space highlights its ceremonial nature. These stools, have an associated Adinkra meaning. These carry two symbols, "Nkyinkyim," or "twisting" symbolizing the dynamism, versatility & initiative of Black people. This is coupled with "Nea Onnim No Sua A, Oh," or "He who does not know can know from learning," celebrating lifelong education & the quest for knowledge.
- 4 The iron for this space would've been mined direct from the area referred to on earth as South Africa where large iron ore fields are located. Iron ore is the key component for the steel used in building around the world. Ancient deposits of iron for smelting were found as far away as east Africa in the Meroe Desert of Sudan which is associated with ancient Nubia. Other known contemporary deposits are in Mauritania to the west and Algeria north of the Sahara.
- 5 The last two spaces are here to promote & showcase freedom, generational wealth & belonging. Africa is the most mineral rich continent in the known world with access to many of the basic & most prized materials used in design & architecture. Yet, just as in the western world, fractions of that wealth & landownership reaches the native owner-occupants & workers responsible for its exponential growth. Slavery was the catalyst for the industrial revolution through the cotton gin & thus, modernity. Yet, Black people have yet to be fully recognized or remunerated for their sacrifices. In Uhuru Black people the world over belong, and their wealth is their own.



ARCHES



MEROE, SUDAN



BENIN BRONZE



AFRICAN OAK



design intervention

N

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T

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C

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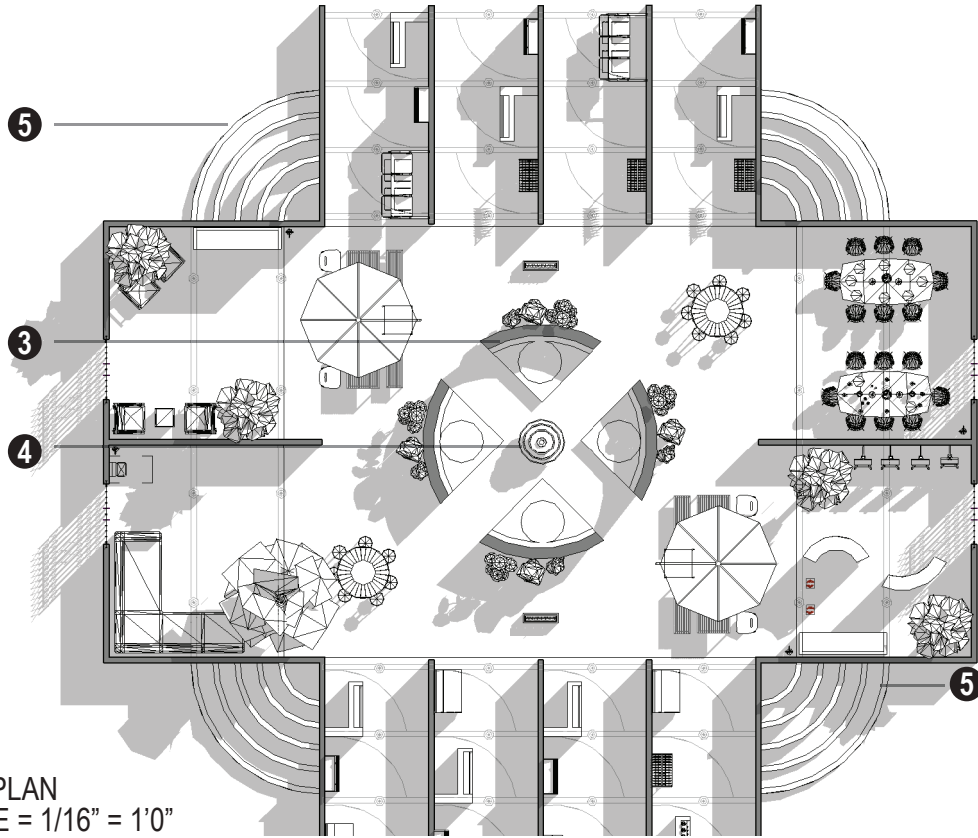
6

- 1 This Moroccan inspired structure fuses the warmth of a bustling marketplace with the energy of an outdoor retreat. The idea was developed using a portion of the estimated lot sizes of Seneca Village cut into aisles, rows & dead-end zones like the city that would later engulf it.
- 2 Jemaa el Fna Square in Marrakech was merged with the concept of a porch, and contemporary outdoor living spaces. The focus was comfort, gathering & slow introductions to modernity with traditional influences.
- 3 The space is dominated by a large indoor mud brick structure in the center where typically money might be exchanged, & services might exist. Those elements were pushed east of the site and the area within were repurposed for a meditation & focus zone with a reflecting fountain.
- 4 This central structure is inspired by the head wear of Queen Nefertiti called a Cap Crown. The crown was actually made of a mixture of limestone, stucco and pigments which are all building materials still used in the region. The shift in color allowed for experimentation with stacked stone and various other cultural infusions. The pyramids at Meroe one of sites of Ancient Nubia a challenger and conqueror of Egypt used a terracotta colored limestone mix to construct over 200 tombs for the Meroite Kings & Queens. Nubia connected with the dynasties of Kush (Cush-ites) from biblical times has ties to Christianity and Islam, thus its cruciform shape (reminiscent of Bete Giyorgis (Church of St. George) at Lalibela) & focus on circulation around a large central object (reminiscent of the Kaaba in Mecca Saudi, Arabia) notes the influences of both religions on the culture.
- 5 Water continues to represent life-giving power and freedom in this space that is arid and dry like much of the Moroccan landscape used for inspiration. However, the four oceans here are represented as pools watching the entrance. They are a reminder of the reservoir & nearby lake the residents of Seneca Village used to provide for themselves and their land.

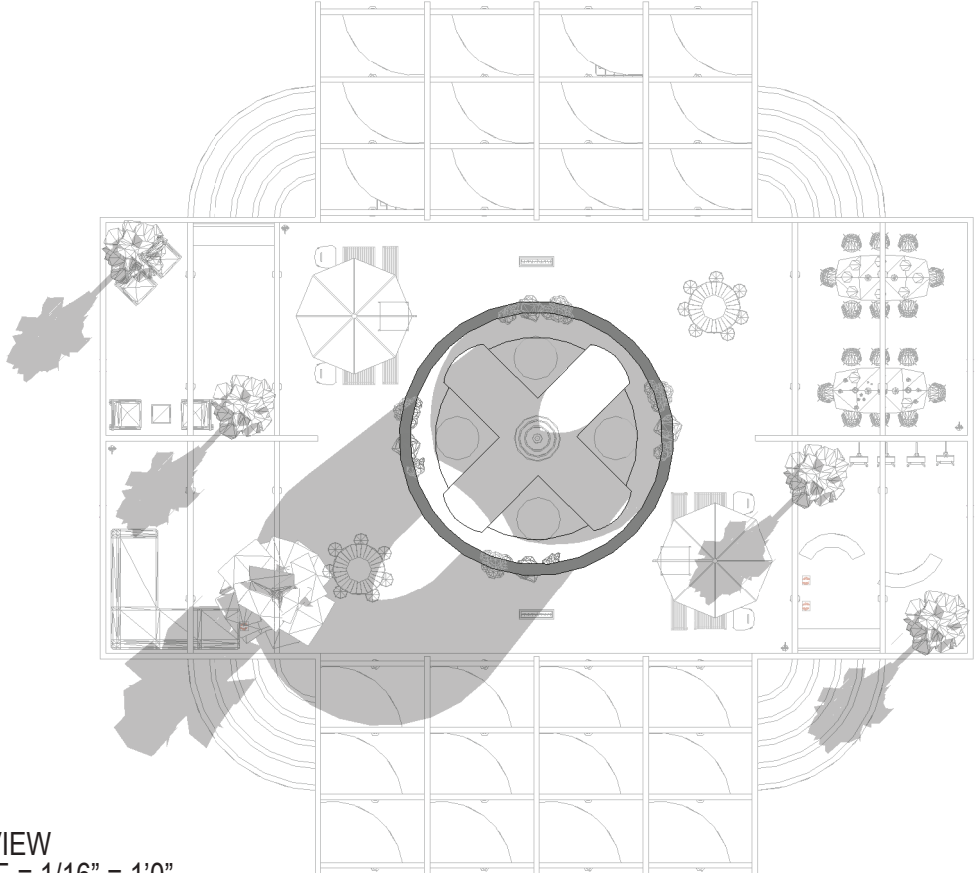
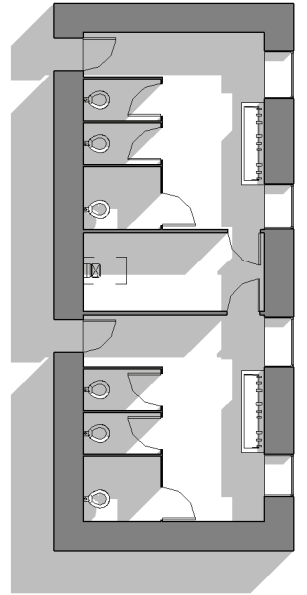


JEMAA EL FNA SQUARE

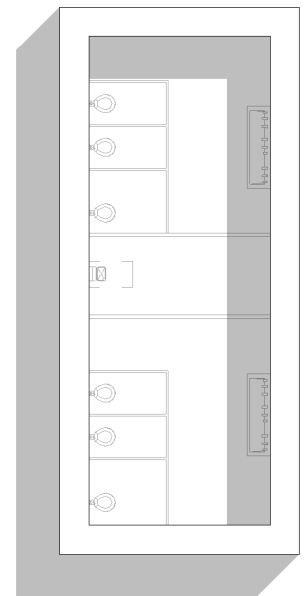
THE MARKET



SITE PLAN
SCALE = 1/16" = 1'0"



TOP VIEW
SCALE = 1/16" = 1'0"



site history

The site utilized for Chapter 6 or “The Marketplace” is Seneca Village a free Black society in New York City within the footprint of Central Park. Seneca was located near the Hudson River Reservoir between 82 and 89th streets along Central Park West. Built from the sale of large lots of farmland by Elizabeth and John Whitehead in 1825, free Black people purchased the majority of those subdivided lots with several named and prominent owners such as the AME Zion Church to escape the racism they found consistently in Manhattan. Though slavery had been outlawed in New York City by 1827, attitudes toward Black people were scarcely improved. Leading to the establishment of this small community to foster Black life.

Records from 1850 show that this thriving community had at least “Seneca Village comprised 50 homes and three churches, as well as burial grounds, and a school for African-American students,” along with farmland, access to clean drinking water through a nearby spring and separation from the crowding and disease of Manhattan. These individuals were often laborers within the city, and landowners and active voters within the village. It’s been falsely repeated that the residents of this area were squatters and the seizure of the land was rightfully and legally carried out by the Central Park Commission through eminent domain and at the behest of landscape architect Frank Olmstead who required the expansive space to create his masterpiece.

design intervention

- 1 The outer walls of the structure are representative of rammed earth as a stable and sustainable building material for arid places.
- 2 Structural girders are placed above to maintain the stability of the walls and are used to hide the wiring for the outdoor grid.
- 3 The Moroccan lights hanging from the girders are created using bronze and copper plating with their traditional and oxidized blue patinas which are both found in Africa.
- 4 The shaded overhangs behave like the awnings and tarps found in traditional marketplaces and under tension become an effective means of shielding the sun. They are also used as a creative ploy by the merchants. During the day as shoppers wander through the market under intense sun, merchants beckon them to their shaded displays. This hospitality often ends in successful sales.
- 5 Ironwork gates on the east and west sides represent the many “gates” within Central Park and are in the architectural style of Islamic & Moorish wrought iron grills set within pointed arches carved from the earthen-work that are unique to this architectural style.
- 6 This space uses the contrast of light and dark to create dynamic shadows that purposefully conceal some spaces creating a compression and release effect while others are bathed in warm light, warm tones and nature. The choice to embrace light in gathering spaces and darkness in more sacred spaces is an examination of light’s impact on mood. No unnatural white light is used in this space.
- 7 This space was meant for forming bonds & new relationships for the adult members of the community. It is essentially an extension of the “grown folks conversations” that typically develop toward the end of a cookout or family event. While the children are slowly being put to bed & the adolescents separate from their parents, adults group together & stories are shared here that are unique to the Black experience. These stories are only bestowed on those of a certain age and being invited to listen or tell a story is a rite of passage and proof of adulthood.



MOROCCAN LAMP



CAP CROWN



IRONWORK



AWNING



GIRDERS

CODE FACTS
 USE GROUP :309.1 M MERCANTILE GROUP
 SQ. FT.: 6267
 LOAD: 60
 OCCUPANCY: 104
 PLUMBING FIXTURES
 LAVATORIES: 6 (2 ADA)
 WATER CLOSETS: 6 (2 ADA)
 DRINKING FOUNTAINS: 1

site history

In 1871 two coffins were found on site which represented Black bodies buried in the Seneca Cemetery. Recently an effort to uncover the lives of those within the community was mounted and the site was chosen for archaeological excavation which took place in 2004, 2005 and 2011. What was unearthed there represented signs of a healthy lifestyle. Artifacts including “beef bones, dishes, buttons, bottles, smoking pipes, a toothbrush, and the sole from a child’s shoe,” were found. The findings support that this community was made up of middle-class families including free Blacks who comprised two-thirds of the population.

To add to its pivotal presence, it is suspected that Seneca’s basement church may have served as a stop along the Underground Railroad as its associations with Albro Lyons and Mary Joseph Lyons who were prominent abolitionists and “conductors” as well as members of the African Society. At its peak, the community is said to have supported 250 people owning and renting within the original lots and living well. That ended in 1857 as the land was seized and razed for Central Park, a phenomenon witnessed all over the United States even in modern times. Consider the messaging of the development of much of the West Philadelphia Area, the devaluing and destabilizing of property, the MOVE house, and the consolidation of North Philadelphia into what is effectively designed to resemble project housing when the population was exclusively Black, only to watch its slow development as it is consumed by Temple University and morphed into a space that bends toward an affluent, White centric gaze. All of this at the expense, whether through lost property, decreased access to resources, and rising living costs, of the original inhabitants.

design intervention

- 1 This central fountain with its pooling water and its iridescent coating over the stone is meant to represent Ethiopian Opal one of the World’s contemporary leaders in opal production.
- 2 The layering of mud brick created a moire pattern where light is obscured through the spacing. Allowing this meditative space to experience a light cross-breeze but with insulation from the hustle of gatherings outside. The platforms are low allowing those who participate to remain grounded with soft jute rugs beneath them.
- 3 In this space nature is not separate from structure. The sand of this space is soft and finely grained acting as a pumice for the feet and delivering minerals to the body. There are plants throughout the space representative of palms and palm oil which is overharvested in Africa for its cosmetic, food, & vitamin content. The open roof and views of the sky are meant to connect the people to the environment.
- 4 Limba woods are used here because of their versatility as furniture pieces, & cabinetry. The wood is found in the tables, the bar at the entry and the throughout.
- 5 Contemporary seating and place settings are prevalent throughout the space. The relaxed setting denotes the change in traditional furnishings. As these women are introduced to more of this society their access to technology and modernity progresses.
- 6 At night the Jemaa el Fna Square in Marrakech turns into a gathering ground for people to eat, drink and tell stories. Known as a UNESCO site for oral history and cultural exchange, markets like this morph into playgrounds for adults where merchants and their wares, the food and the teas and cakes are meant to entice you.
- 7 The spaces offer areas for respite, large gatherings, small gatherings and private areas for couples. Bonding is encouraged here and the stresses of the day are intended to fall away here.



SEATING OPTION



LAMP



LIMBA WOOD



PALM PLANT



design intervention

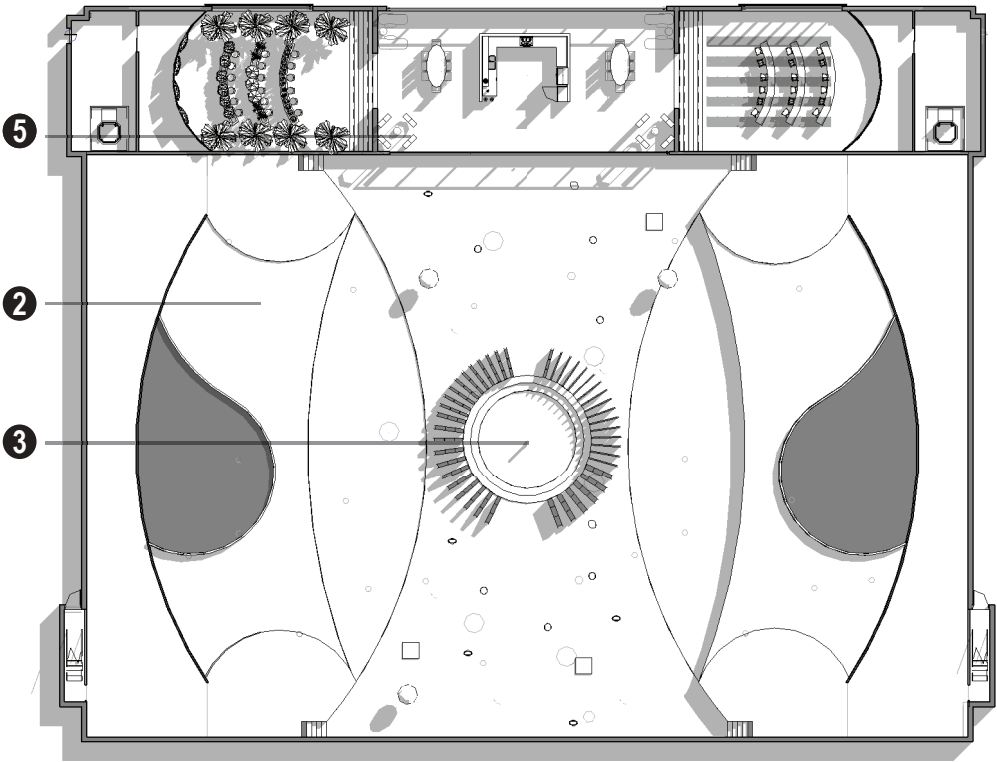


7

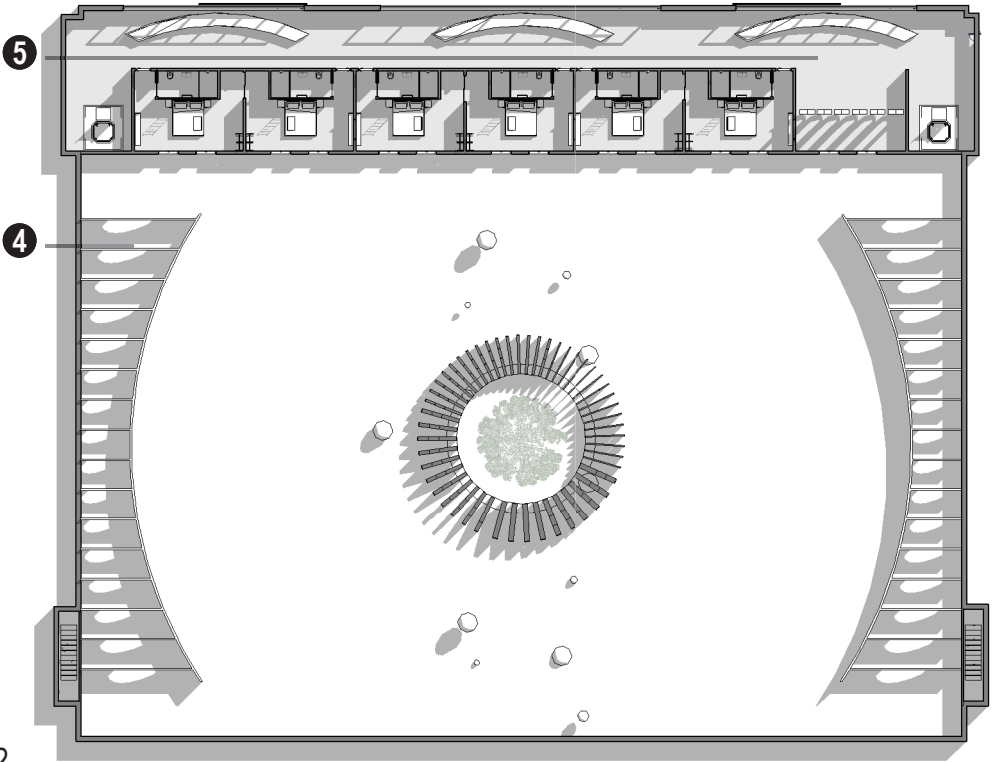
- 1 This is the domain of the Seers, each of the guilds is built specifically to fulfill the needs of its members and the community overall. This mixed use facility acts as a residence, a training facility, a school and a place for contemplation and discovery of oneself.
- 2 Dominated by pools on either side of the space this structure is meant to be a mirror image of itself. There are 3 major pools on either side of a large central AI tree. Each of the pools is set at a different depth and shape, representing the essence of the three Founding Mothers. The deepest pool is on the outermost side of the structure & is the darkest. The next pool stretches to both sides of the structure and molds around the depth of the first. The third pool closest to the sandy shoreline is clearest and calmest offering a sense of stillness.
- 3 The AI Tree of Life in the center extends throughout the entire structure acting as a column for stability while delivering technology throughout the space. Juxtaposing an element of nature with one of technology speaks to the fusion of these powers in this society. Technology can be used to support the natural world but, it cannot be used to replace it. Therefore, natural materials are ubiquitous in the space, including Wenge, mahogany, sand, water, green walls with White Freesias, & natural stone warmed by the bright sunlight above.
- 4 Floor 1A features a simple 5 step level change that leads people through 2 sets of archways which act as a museum holding the history of the Diaspora and of the Black family. Here what was accomplished and overcome on earth is remembered and celebrated.
- 5 The rectangular northernmost portion of this space houses a chef's kitchen that is partially outdoors mimicking aspects of the cookout and the African tradition using an open flame. On each side is a classroom. The western classroom is a seed-house referencing the agricultural past of Black people, & the eastern classroom is high tech where the screen mimics the 3D environments being taught by the educational leader. Above these sections are 2 floors of dormitories



THE GUILD



PLAN: LEVEL 1
SCALE = 1/32" = 1'0"



PLAN: LEVEL 2
SCALE = 1/32" = 1'0"

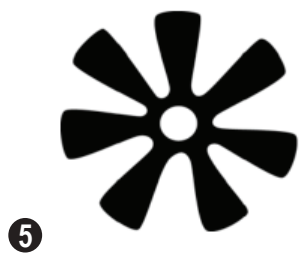
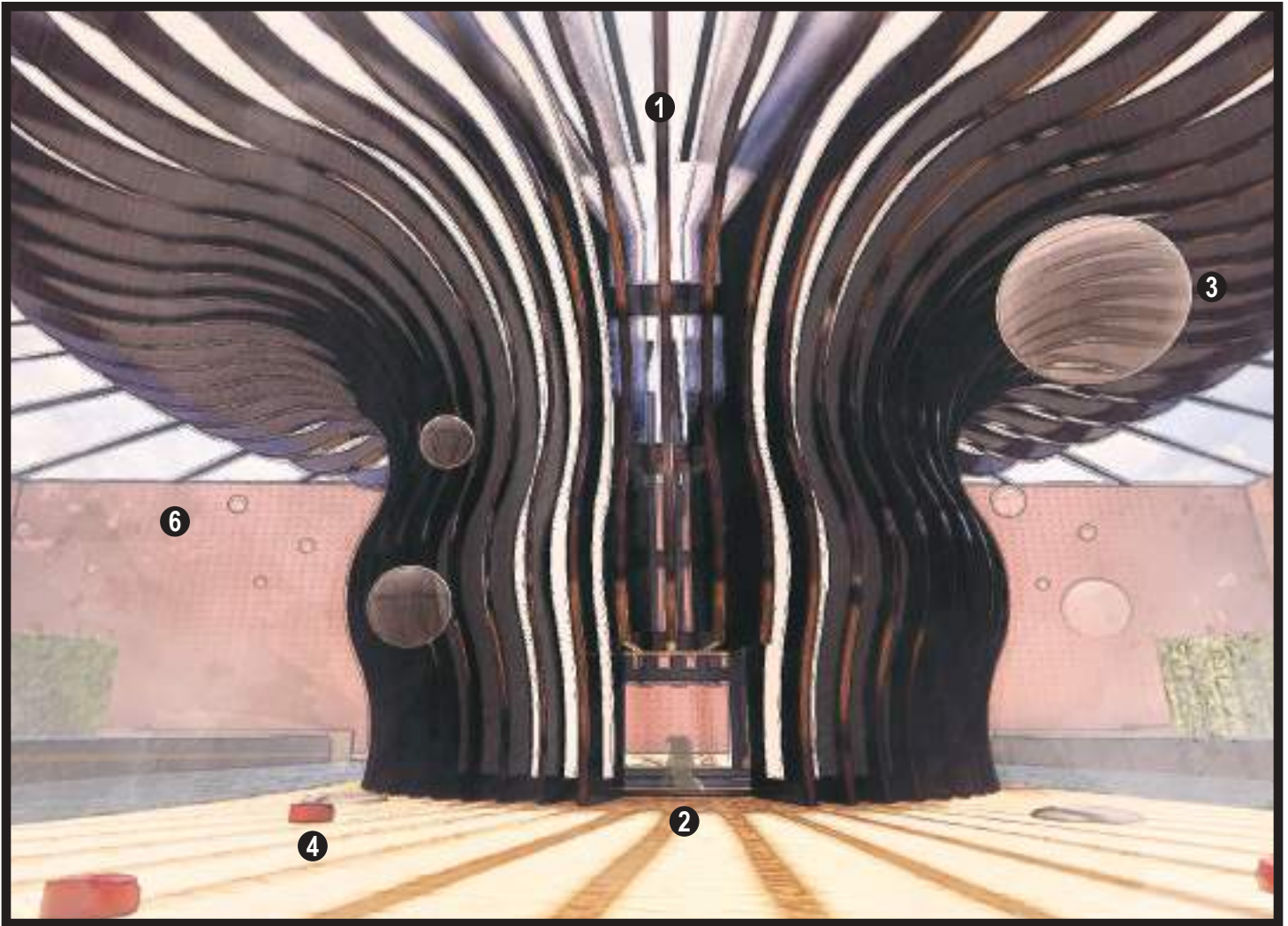
site history

The site utilized for Chapter 7 or “The Guild” is Read Hall. This building is a part of Spelman College which is the first, degree granting institution accepting Black Women in the United States. Founded in 1881 by Sophia B. Packard and Harriet E. Giles Spelman began its life as the Atlanta Baptist Female Seminary. The college in its earliest inception was run out of the Friendship Baptist Church basement under the care of Pastor, Rev. Frank Quarles. According to history, the doors opened on April 11th with 11 students that would eventually grow to 100. Though started in April 1881, grants for the project began early with contributions from the Women’s American Baptist Home Mission Society and the First Baptist Church of Medford Massachusetts. The catalyst and continued support came after the school was open from John D. Rockefeller who pledged a sum of \$250 and his continued support of the growth of the institution.

Originally, Atlanta would not grant more than a high school diploma to women, so the initial degrees emanating from the school were tied to a high school level education. Considering that the composition of the students were typically illiterate ex slaves and or freed-women, receiving a High School diploma was no small feat. Restricted to Victorian era standards by Giles & Packard, the women who attended woke before dawn to prepare their clothing including gloves and the full women’s regalia as a means of establishing them in society. The school’s focus was teaching and liberal arts, and eventually nursing and industrialized training, leadership created ways to center Black excellence and ejected calls for labor-only training programs.

design intervention

- 1 The AI Tree of Life dominates this space stretching its trunk and branches to support the entire glass roof, Made of ebony wood in its immense strength and resistance to water, portions of the inner branches are carved away and replaced with Moon Glass screens that project light and holographic images.
- 2 The sunken center is round and stepped allowing users to sit beneath the “rings” of the bark within the tree. The pools do not extend to this part of the structure protecting it from direct moisture.
- 3 Floating orb-like bubbles trap the sunlight and float throughout the main hall. Nearly weightless nano-material holds them together and they react to the electromagnetic spectrum produced by the tree.
- 4 Small spots for seating are spread throughout the space leaving the majority of the sandy center available for groups to rest for quiet contemplation. The tree is meant to cast shadow over the entire space depending on the positions of the sun. Nothing sits higher than the tree on this lower floor and a sense of grounding prevails when faced with its monumental presence.
- 5 From a top view the AI Tree of Life also represents another Adinkra symbol. This one is called “Ananse Ntontan” and is associated with the story of Anansi the Spider, a hero of Ashanti tales. The symbol represents wisdom, creativity & life’s challenges.
- 6 The inner rings of the tree are structural and the round portion is made of steam bent mahogany.
- 7 The walls are constructed of a mix of terracotta, earthen-work and limestone to protect from erosion.
- 8 This space shows the evolution of technology throughout the world of Uhuru. As Seer’s the Eight’s ability to speculate the future material capabilities has allowed for play with the materials typically used in Africa, the Americas and in general, on earth. The Afrofuturistic quality of the space posits a future of technological acumen for Black people.



5

ANANSE NTONTAN



FREESIA

CODE FACTS
 USE GROUP:
 304.1 B BUSINESS GROUP
 310.3 R-2 RESIDENTIAL
 SQ. FT.
 B: 25520
 R: 10136
 LOAD:
 B: 150
 R: 200
 OCCUPANCY:
 B: 170
 R: 50
 PLUMBING FIXTURES
 BUSINESS
 LAVATORIES: 2 SINGLE USE (ADA)
 WATER CLOSETS: 2 SINGLE USE (ADA)
 DRINKING FOUNTAINS: 1



TREE OF LIFE



ANATOMY OF THE EYE

site history

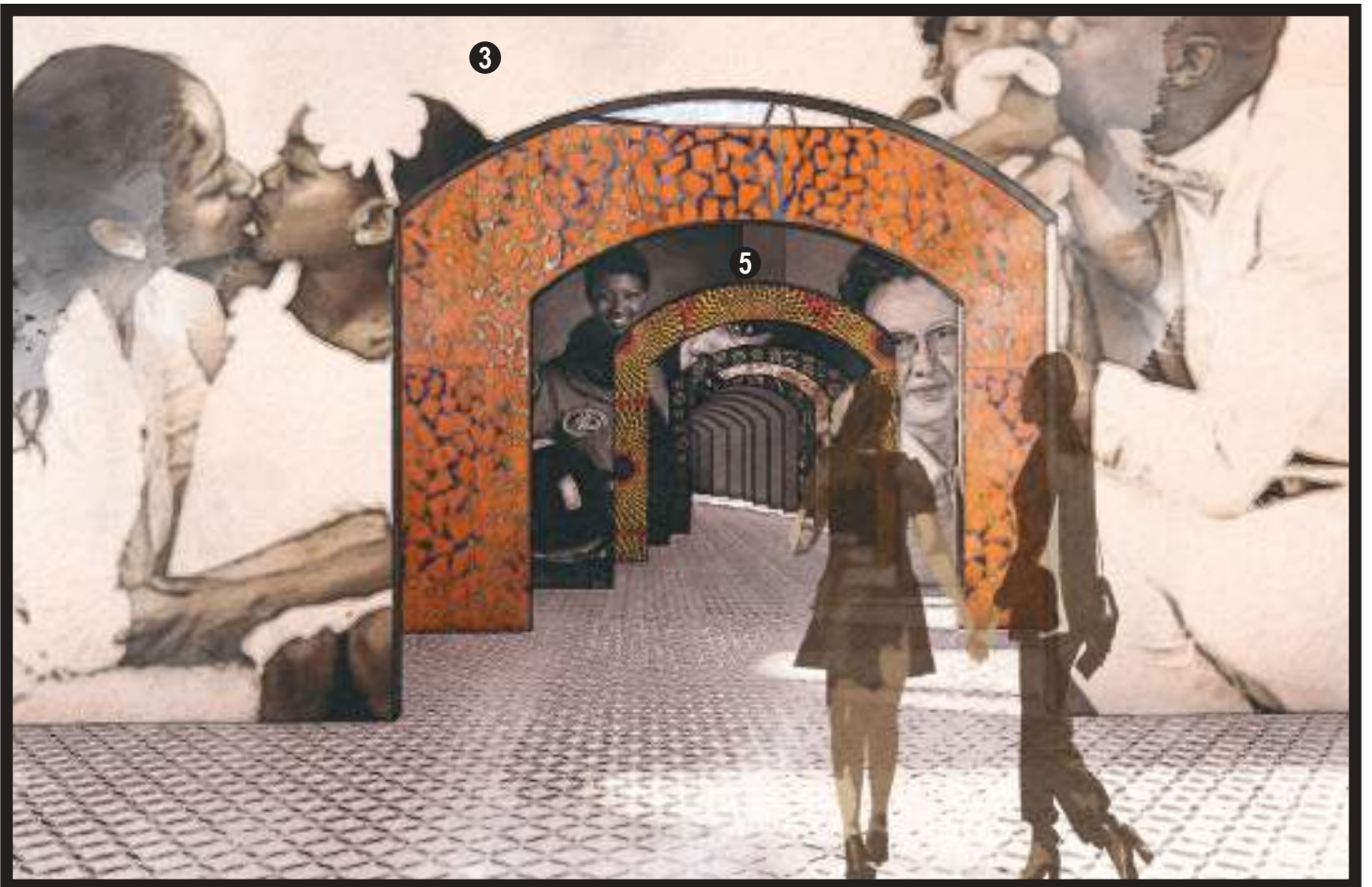
The new site established in 1883 allowed for the expansion of the student body with dormitories, official classrooms and facility support. The space captured for the evolution of this school was former Union army barracks and hospital. Conversion of the space continued into the first officially recognized hall named after Laura Spelman, the wife of John D Rockefeller who was also an abolitionist, Philanthropist and believer in women's education. The school was renamed in 1884 to Spelman Seminary in honor of the contributions of the Rockefeller family matriarch, and the first dedicated building on campus was Rockefeller Hall. The school produced its 1st class of graduated in 1887 under its new name and continued to grow into the degree granting institution of today serving thousands of Black & African women across the world with a total of 26 majors and 25 minors. Against the odds, the school became a degree granting institution in 1901.

Read Hall itself is one of the newest buildings on the Spelman campus opening in 2015. Built as a mixed-use wellness and athletics training facility it features an extensive gymnasium with a regulation Basketball Court, four-lane swimming pool, multi-lane track for running, test kitchen, meeting, study and collaborative spaces, across 2 floors on a footprint in excess of 53,000 square feet. The building is LEED Gold Certified.

This space is a representation of the innovation & societal change experienced by Black women throughout time. This legacy, and the countless names that follow in this tradition of excellence over-qualify Spelman as a place to utilize as a site of Black triumph for this project.

design intervention

- 1 The window wall beyond the AI Tree of Life is the location of the 2nd and 3rd floor bedrooms. All face the exterior with views of the tree and its glowing light at night if they so choose.
- 2 The walls separating the infinity style pools on either side of the tree are made of a thick glass with an iridescent coating that reflects the sandy beach and warm brown/pink walls around it.
- 3 The walls separating the deepest infinity pool from the Hall of Memories is encased in green leaves and White Freesias which are native to South Africa and parts of Kenya. Freesias absorb the bright light from above, the water from below and humidity in the air. These flowers require moist soil to bloom, & are hardy and resistant to disease and pests. They are often used to represent purity & deep trust between people. The Seer's often help to guide the futures of the citizens of Uhuru. Trust is essential. So much of Black culture, especially in the lives of children is characterized by the loss of their childhood innocence. When children are faced with everything from parental separation through enslavement/unfair prison sentences, to oversexualization from an unkind society, to death by police violence, retaining innocence is an act of rebellion. This flower, and the one worn by the young girl at the entrance of the Hall of Memories symbolizes the restoration of that innocence.
- 4 The sanctity of the Black family in all of its iterations is respected & elevated here. This is a part of the culture that consistently underplayed on earth. The Black family at its best is a manifestation of hope & in & of itself, a work of art. Consider all that's been done to ensure its destruction & yet it endures. A Freesia.
- 5 These walls represent the people, places and histories kept throughout the timeline of Black people. These are tech walls, with the ability to change the picture presented. In this iteration, the focus is on women & their accomplishments throughout the diaspora. That is manifested in the oral histories often locked in textiles, art, & the cyclical nature of achievement. Black generations benefit from standing on the achievements of those who came before them. Kathryn Johnson walked so Mae Jemison could run.



design intervention

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- 1 This space is representative of the Greek Revival style used in many municipal buildings throughout the world. These structures attempt to communicate power through the use of symmetry, height, expansiveness, and reliance on classical orders. This is reminiscent of ancient conquerors such as Rome and other Hellenistic dynasties.
- 2 Retaining many of the elements of the Greek Revival style, this structure rests on columns of the Tuscan order with simple entablature. The original entablature is Doric, and highlights the artwork of one of the first nationally recognized Native sculptors in the US.
- 3 The space is characterized by levels. The decision table at the center is sunken, signifying that the leaders of this society are beholden to those they serve. Access to this space is provided in 2 ways, hydraulic lift and simple stairs. This sunken area is filled with about 4 inches of water during sessions.
- 4 The walls are made of a structural glass that allows for 360 degree views. The glass has been cut to allow for 3 entrances on the north and south side of the structure. The site itself is raised atop one of the mountainous regions surrounding Uhuru's version of Kilimanjaro.
- 5 Amphitheater style seating dominates the space in rows that extend through slight level changes to ensure those at the top are capable of watching those in the sunken decision table.
- 6 An additional hydraulic lift offers access to these upper floors to accommodate all people and levels of mobility.
- 7 The upper rows are covered with a wing-like structure that extends from the entablature above and is supported from below by posts that have Moon Glass faces that illuminate.
- 8 The stone ceiling was cut to allow a gridded metal and glass skylight that illuminates the table below and floods the space with light.
- 9 Accessible restrooms & facilities are located to the east of the structure just beyond the winged awning.



FAIRMOUNT



FAIRMOUNT

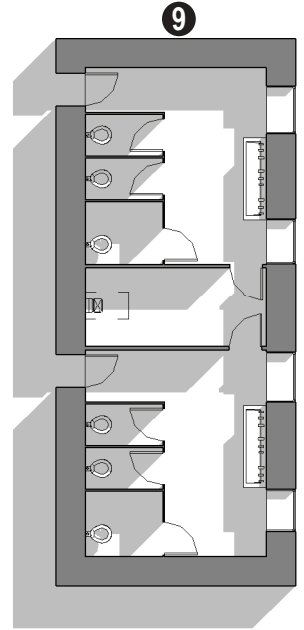
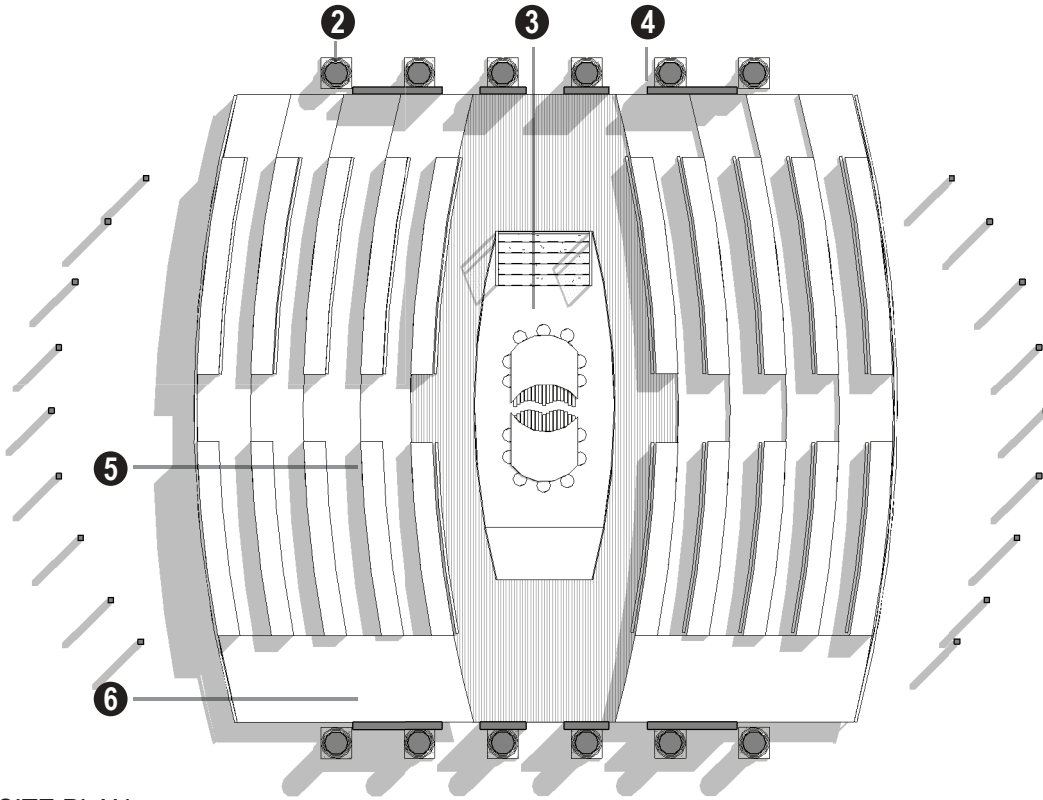


NATATORIUM

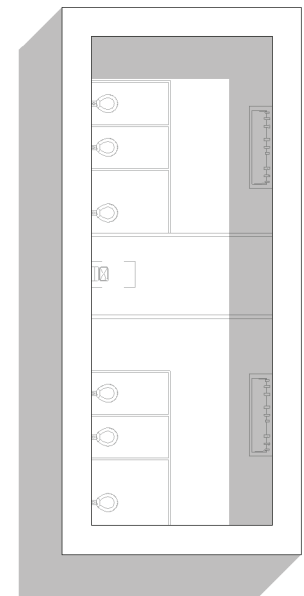
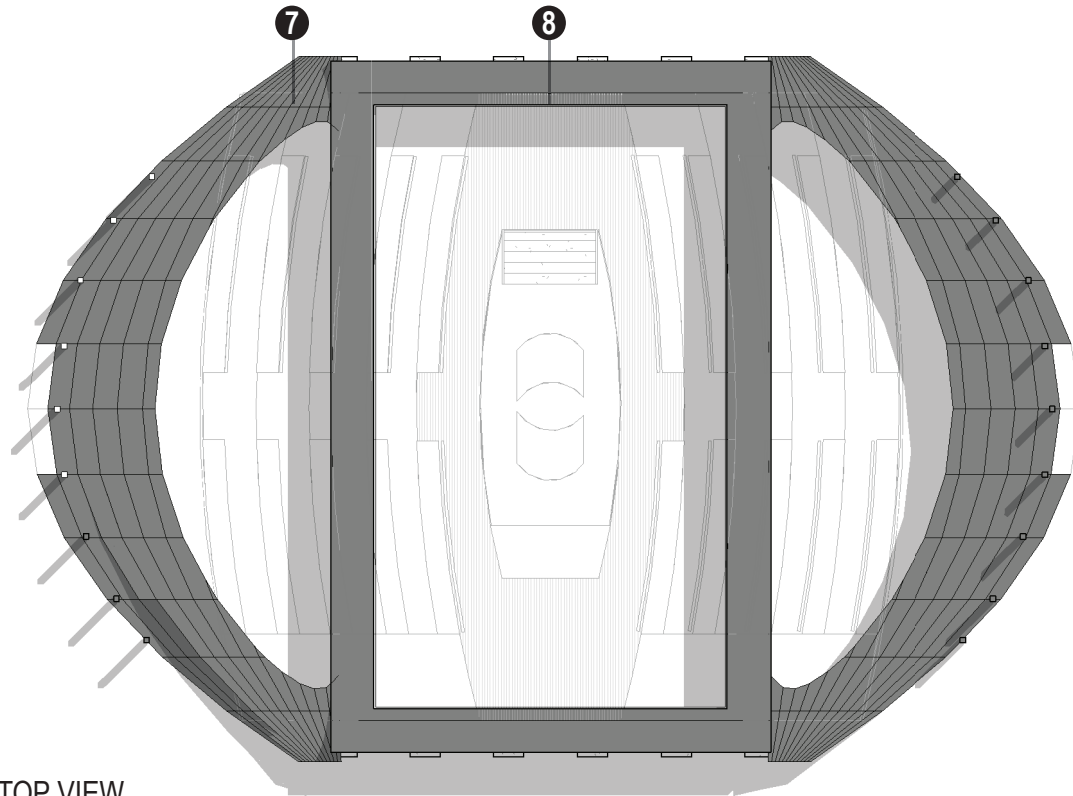


NATATORIUM

THE WAR ROOM



SITE PLAN
SCALE = 1/16" = 1'0"



TOP VIEW
SCALE = 1/16" = 1'0"

site history

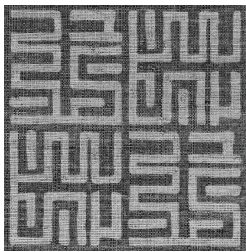
The site utilized for Chapter 8 or “The War Room” is one of the outdoor structures at the Fairmount Water Works and the Kelly Natatorium below. This building complex is significant for several reasons. The Fairmount Water Works was the first steam powered machine of its time. It was a mechanical pumping station designed to pull water from the Schuylkill River below into the city’s main piping system. This meant there would be clean water available throughout the city. The Kelly Natatorium which opened during the second life of the Water Works would be “championed by the Olympian John B Kelly father of Grace Kelly the Princess of Monaco.” Prior to the 1920’s separation of people was based upon socioeconomic class followed by gender (men and women had alternating swim days) and skin color rarely interfered with access to public pools. Philadelphia was one of the urban proponents of access to pools with up to 9 operating throughout the city, three located in areas defined as slums. While that may sound bleak, for Black people this indicated that an unchangeable fact about their existence was not actively being used to discriminate against them.

However, this changed after the 1920’s and the racial divide became the primary code for segregation. This continued through the 60’s and as spaces like pools began to desegregate as was required by federal, state and city laws, another form of white flight occurred as Whites flocked to member only institutions and social clubs, where the option for racial mixing could be controlled.

Fairmount Water Works and the Kelly Natatorium represent a tiny fragment of American history where access to water was not solely dependent upon one’s proximity to Whiteness.

design intervention

- 1 This space is intentionally devoid of typical walls. The tech powered awnings, & glass enclosures protect those within the structure without sacrificing sightlines. Perspective is important.
- 2 The low standing water highlighted in the sunken table here is representative of foot washing ceremonies. In Abrahamic religions, the act of washing feet provides a symbolic cleansing & serves as act of humility.
- 3 The open air space is symbolic of openness. Light penetrates most of the structure, there is no where to hide, intentions and motivations are on display here.
- 4 The seats in this space are representative of the unique materials of Africa. The dark rows are made of onyx infused marble. This material has been carved to represent mudcloth patterns used by the Kuba people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The light rows are white marble mined in the country known as Namibia on earth. These slabs are incredibly strong and can be carved for monuments.
- 5 The floors throughout the space are another form of Wenge that showcases its dark streaks.
- 6 This space is meant to be a decision room. It is the meeting ground for high level officials, guild leaders, & the Founding Mothers. Citizens are invited to participate in the ceremonies and vote in person or virtually. This space begins to speak to the validity of each unique voice and contribution to the world of Uhuru. It demonstrates the importance of leadership with the people’s interest at the forefront of their minds & their willingness to act to ensure those interests are carried out for the good of all.



KUBA



ASANTE GOLD



WHITE MARBLE



WENGE



STOOL

CODE FACTS
 USE GROUP: 303.4 A-3 ASSEMBLY
 SQ. FT.: 3267 SQ FT
 LOAD: 1004.6 (ASSEMBLY W/ FIXED SEATS)
 OCCUPANCY: 256
 PLUMBING FIXTURES
 LAVATORIES: 6 (2 ADA)
 WATER CLOSETS: 6 (2 ADA)
 DRINKING FOUNTAINS: 1

site history

What ultimately ruined the Water Works was the pollution drawn from the Schuylkill and its nearby manufacturing plants which were creating problems for the water supply. This issue is consistent with today's modern water access and quality concerns. Consider Flint Michigan and Standing Rock, where a malevolent authority is actively choosing whether citizens deserve access to water over corporate shareholders by race and socioeconomic status. Humans die without water, and unfit water can kill and set disease in motion. This creates physical and mental deficiencies that can travel through generations of people.

The structure chosen for this expression of technological advancement sits above the main Mill House where the machinery is stored. Built to Classical Revival standards, the Victorian Era structure was designed to hide its more industrial functions. A series of 6 wide and 9 long Tuscan fluted columns lift a Greek Revival post and lintel structure, complete with entablature and pediment. The beautiful sculptures represented on the pediment were done by the United States' first Indigenous sculptor William Rush. Crafted by Benjamin Latrobe, followed by Oliver Evans steam power then recreated by Frederick Graff with continued machine-related updates from wood piping to iron, from steam turbines to water wheels and the expansion of reservoirs holding as little as 57,000 gallons to 3 million gallons of water over time and for population growth. Beneath the mill house structure stood an aquarium which was replaced by the Natatorium. This structure has lived many lives and all were established, at least originally, for equity.

design intervention

- 1 The back rows are the most exposed, & as a result the awning extends significantly past those seats & curves down like the edge of a bird's wing to ensure any precipitation is drawn away. Buried in the ground and activated by sensor there is a railing that rises as a support for those back seats to ensure no one can fall.
- 2 The illuminated strips of light around the lower edge of the entablature are activated when meetings are about to come to order and is typically followed by the entrance of Uhuru leadership. These lights also activate the virtual broadcast allowing all citizens not in physical attendance to watch and participate.
- 3 As another way to communicate the wealth of this kingdom, gold is present as footrests, bands around the stools of the leaders, & the legs or teeth throughout the table. As the table will be set in standing water, this is both a showcase material & present for practicality.
- 4 In the sunken zone the railings rescind into the lower structure and the platform on the opposite side is typically slightly raised. The goal is to come to decisions or deliver news that will impact all in this space. The leaders officially depart once a decision has been agreed upon amongst them and the people.
- 5 The juxtaposition of the purpose of the space and the expansiveness of the surrounding environment is meant to demonstrate the prestige of the space. In ancient times places of significance, especially those for governance were placed atop hills. The procession to reach the space adds to its prestige.
- 6 Using the doors, the placement of the stools, and the Founding Mothers in the foreground, the perspective of the sunken floor and the significance of the 5 step height change add drama to the decision-making zone though the decision made here was unanimous.
- 7 Though there is no Adinkra representation in this space, decision to return for those who were lost is a perfect representation of Sankofa, meaning "Go Back and Get It" which signifies the importance of using the knowledge of the past to influence positive future progress. This is also a key facet of Afrofuturism.



design intervention



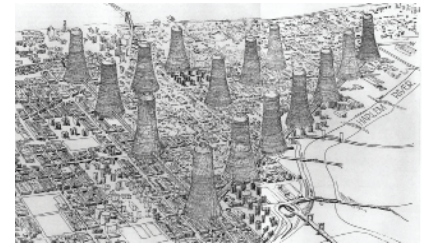
- 1 This space is representative of the futuristic building capabilities of the world. Using what is essentially an orb which has been omni-triangulated merges space and stability. While its original creator Dr. Walther Bauersfeld's basic premise is used, the idea was expanded upon and strengthened by R. Buckminster Fuller in the late 1940's. Fuller was an Inventor, Architect, and Patent Holder and is recognized as one of the worlds foremost speculative designers.
- 2 In this iteration a diamond shape panel of thin structural glass was used and replicated to establish enclosure. Panels on the opening sides and very top were stripped away for entrance and the movement of the water. While the structure itself is made of super-light steel with a platinum coating, giving it a white-silver appearance. This means it is non-reactive to water, but very strong and light allowing it to attach & float easily on the round platforms below.
- 3 The platforms below are a mixture of metal, wood & igneous rock like pumice that are capable of floating & bearing the weight of the dome structure above.
- 4 The platforms are connected through a small set of 3 ft catwalks that give users access from dome to dome & from dome to the center platform. The catwalks drop below the platform floor once the experiment begins. The structure itself is anchored from the central platform to the seabed below.
- 5 The portal above the opening is another relic of disassociated time and space. Closely related to the rings of the Shrine, the portal stands above the structure through use of mysterious tensioning of water and electromagnetic energy.
- 6 The offshore facility and its geodesic domes are used to magnify and increase the powers of the Founding Mothers, Bibi the Elder & the Eight Seers so they are able to activate the portal above allowing them to bring people across inter-dimensional time and space into Uhuru. The goal is to manifest a portal in place and lock onto an entire family.



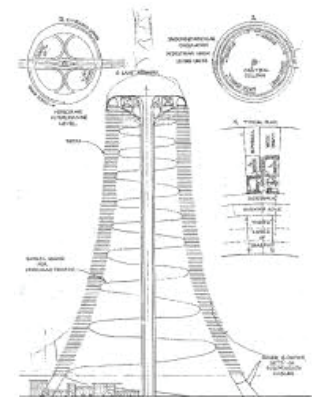
GEODESIC DOMES



GEODESIC DOMES

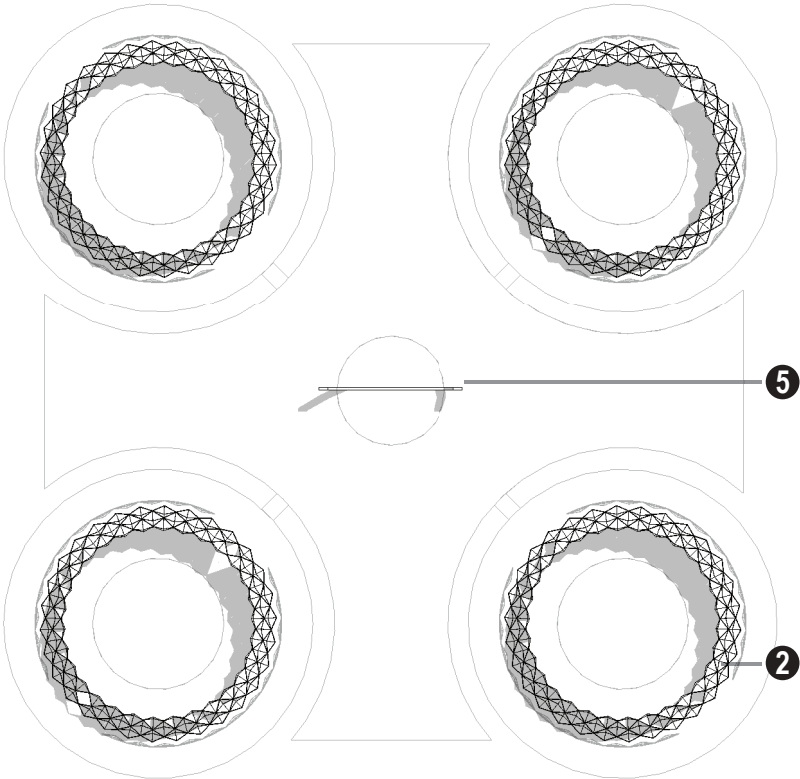


SKYRISE FOR HARLEM

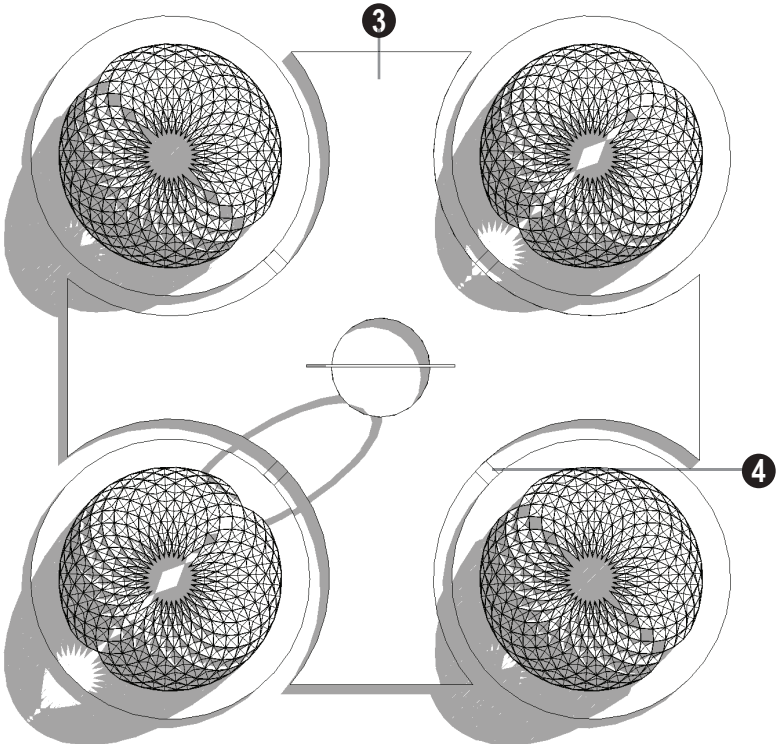


SKYRISE FOR HARLEM

THE PORTAL



SITE PLAN
SCALE = 1/32" = 1'0"



TOP VIEW
SCALE = 1/32" = 1'0"

site history

The site utilized for Chapter 9 or “The Portal” is representative of a culmination of speculative design thinking and social justice confrontation.

These portals represent the Geodesic Domes completed by Buckminster Fuller, the Adinkra symbols born out of Western Africa heritage, specifically from Ghana & Nigeria and the Skyrise for Harlem project by June Jordan & Buckminster Fuller.

The Geodesic dome represents the peak of Buckminster Fuller’s realized creations. Fuller held over 100 patents and was just the second leader of Mensa in its history. These domes were born out of Fuller’s complicated relationship with the technological limitations of his time. His commitment to the advancement of humanity using an interdisciplinary approach that fused invention with speculation and tech. He is often credited with being the father of speculative architecture & design. While the Geodesic Dome is not his original creation, nearly all of its future manifestations came about through Fuller’s work. He also produced the patent for the design. Fuller’s work was often centered around producing effective answers for the following concerns

- Environmental convictions,
- Desire for accessible homeownership,
- Love for simple and strong architectural constructions
- Mobile futures

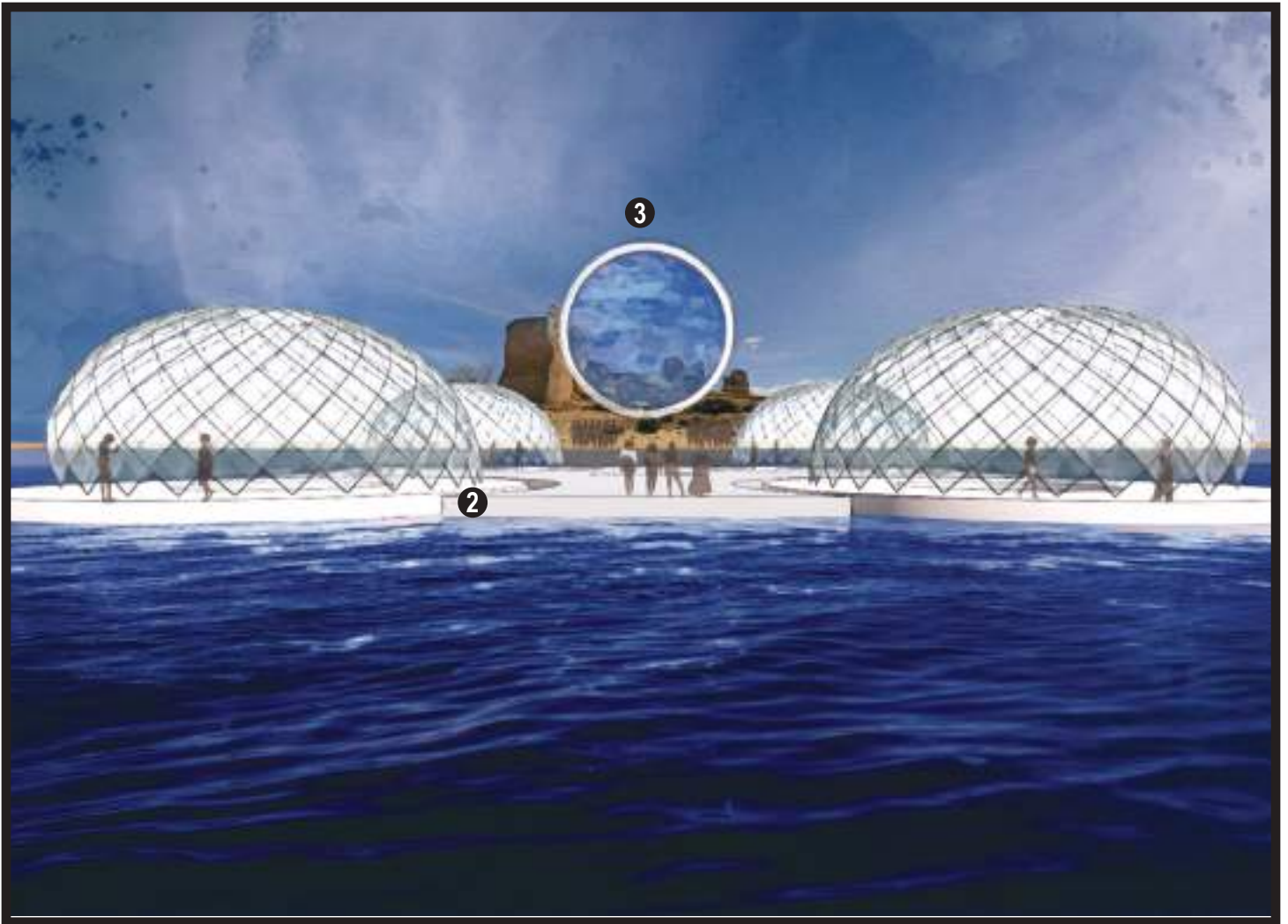
Use of a round structure afforded Fuller many inherent luxuries that rectilinear homes must work hard to achieve.

The domes receive:

- Increased airflow and distribution
- Fewer & simpler building materials
- Prefab construction reducing carbon footprint.

design intervention

- 1 The women within the space are using a form of dance/prayer hand motions to activate the portal. This can be associated with the movements of Capoiara, an Angola born martial art & Christian praise & worship dances prevalent throughout the Black church as a way to worship God. While in Capoiara the dance is usually led by men, in praise & worship, it is typically led by women or both sexes.
- 2 The platform charges in conjunction with the portal and changes color as its power grows.
- 3 The Adinkra symbol represented in this space is the “Dwennimmen,” known as the Ram’s Horns. This represents humility partnered with strength. A necessary trait for successful experimentation.
- 4 The women group in 3’s to use their combined power to open and close the portals. The Founding Mothers and Bibi disperse amongst the less experienced Eight to help guide them through the process. A strong generational circle of women is consistently cited as establishing ability & strength amongst young Black women. A tribal example of this is the Sister Circle.
- 5 The tribal songs being sung during this experiment are reminiscent of the songs sung by the enslaved. The songs that led them to freedom and the ones that warned them of the dangers they would face. In many of these songs water plays a role as a life-giving or life-taking force. Typically the act of being ashed clean in the water signifies a new beginning, a way to start over unburdened by the past.
- 6 Control, even partial control of the element that has aided in causing Black people great pain seemed a fitting tribute to the reclamation of power in this space. The Middle Passage is explained as the triangular trade routes over open Atlantic ocean that forcibly removed Native Africans (largely from the west) from their homes. More than power, the restoration of faith in the water, of reliance on nature, and the trust those things require is an expression of real freedom. A freedom that long been denied Black & Brown bodies. As humanity peaks in modernity we are slowly learning that our self reliance and misuse of the natural world & its beings have consequences.



PANEL



PLATINUM



WENGE



DWENNIMMEN



FLOATING PLATFORM



IRON ORE

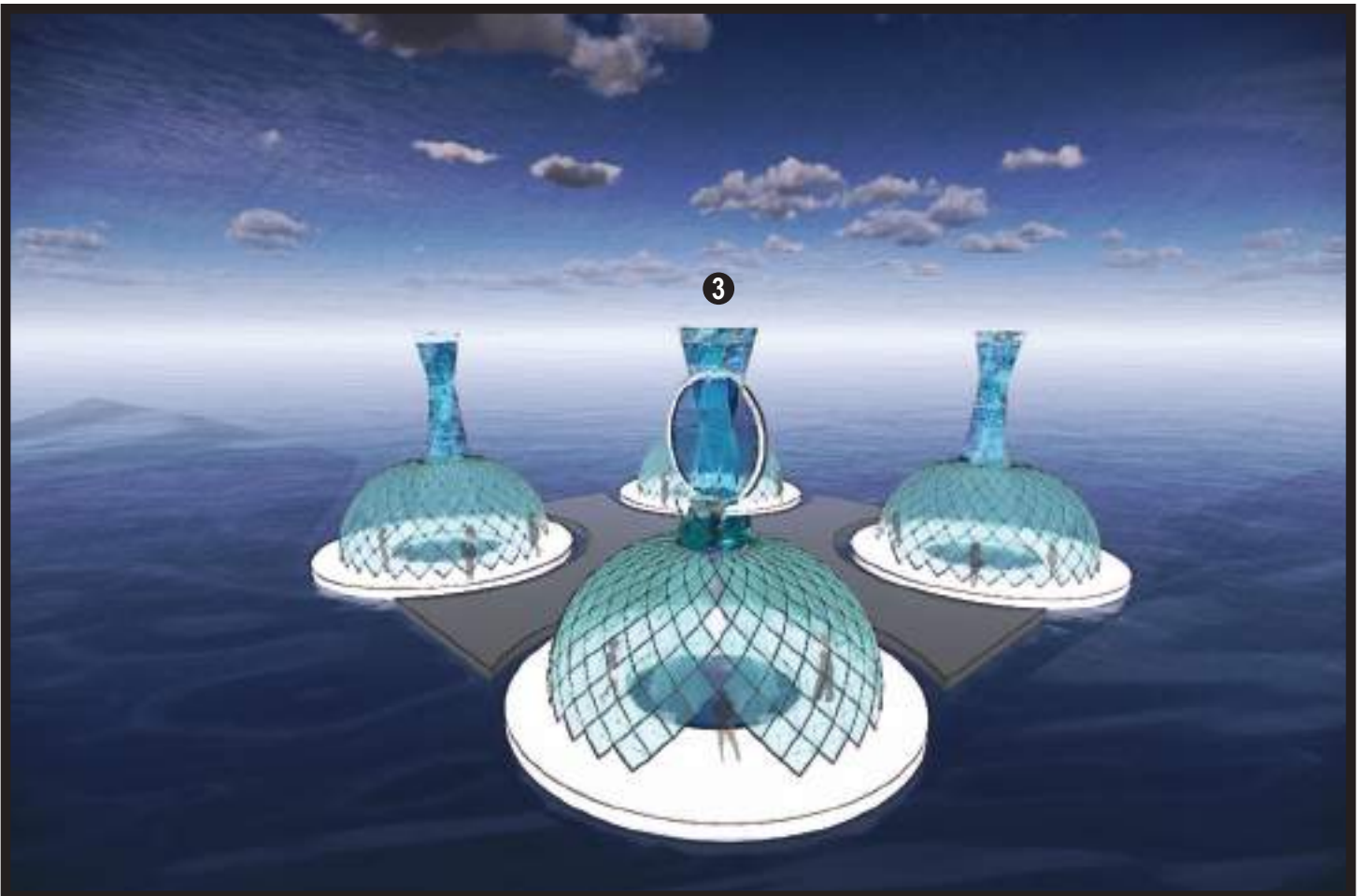
site history

The Skyrise for Harlem project was a collaborative effort by June Jordan and Buckminster Fuller. A frighteningly similar act of police brutality in Jordan's Harlem neighborhood occurred when an off duty White police officer killed a Black teenager in 1965. Frustrated with the systemic racism of her time including lack of police oversight, Jordan looked to architecture to create solutions. She would go onto contact Buckminster Fuller who was focused on the future of the geodesic dome as a means to relieve some of the pressures of housing insecurity. They would go onto build the unrealized project "Skyrise for Harlem" which featured cylindrical towers and raised catwalks above the din of the urban blight of New York.

More than just a creative solution to a complex array of racial, societal and systemic problems, the project challenged a key component of Black struggle, surveillance. From an architectural standpoint, raising these towers and the associated pathways provides open air and access to the sky. From a Black standpoint it literally gives disenfranchised Black residents the 'high ground' minus the stifling overcrowding of projects and slums. Surveillance requires the high ground (literally & figuratively), and it provides a military & battle advantage when retained. Disrupting the status quo in a way that flips the position of the water and the watched was an intentional act of resistance.

design intervention

- 1 Within the dome structure there are 4 openings. There is an entrance/exit on either side for safety and circulation. When the platform docks, it may attach to the shore on either side. The catwalks are aligned with the openings. The portal above sits high enough to walk beneath, and for those entering Uhuru from portal height water is brought upwards to bring them safely down to the central platform.
- 2 These dances are usually accompanied by music. Similarly to the way drummers were present in Reconnect, the citizens on the beach sing to keep time, & boost morale as the women work through this difficult task. The songs sung here act as a part of the experiment itself, channeling the power of all citizens into the moment.
- 3 As the power is combined and the portals begin to work the water below rises through the open center of the domes. The shape it creates are representative of the speculative project by June Jordan & Buckminster Fuller called "Skyrise for Harlem. The writer & poet Jordan became frustrated and disillusioned by the lack of police oversight in 1960's Harlem leading to a large riot fed by police brutality in the neighborhood. Already a student of the built world, she petitioned Fuller for assistance in creating a structure that was capable of rising above the din of the city where surveillance of Black citizens would no longer be a problem and allowed them access to clean air and views that extend past the concrete jungle. This resulted in a conical tower that rose above the city floor and were connected by highline style catwalks.
- 4 For Black people, so much of the past is defined by the loss. The loss of names, families and futures. The loss of power over the land and wealth it produced. The loss of autonomy even when freed, subjected to over-surveillance, lost and long denied rights, and then erasure from history and the vital part they played. In many ways Uhuru is an act of rebellion by just positing its existence. For in this space we are rescued, we recall our history, we recover our strength, we reconnect with our families, we take time for play & recreation, we rise to meet our purpose, we resolve to see our growth through to the end, and we reform our great republic.



part III:
cultural research
shrine experiences

Shrine Experiences within the Black Diaspora

The experiences of the Eight while they are being educated in the Shrine are captured within at the behest of their guide Bibi.

These experiences were Included in the graphic novel because they are representative of unique issues, traumas and triumphs within the diaspora. All of the moments are transformative and provoke a response from Black culture, whether positive or negative.

Some of these moments are very specific to the time in which they occurred. However, with a little examination, it should be possible to draw parallels from the past to current events which demonstrate the slow march toward racial justice.

The Elder gave us all a journal when we arrived here. She encouraged us to look into our memories and record them. We were told by Ye not to focus in too hard on any one of the memories we saw. We should experience them fully but, try not to lock in. I guess the Elder knew better. Because here I am, writing about a memory frozen in my mind.

I had a son. His name was Jacob. I was sent to work out in the fields. I can still remember the heat. I was far from the overseer, and I took a moment to pull the brambles from my fingers. As I looked, an old wagon came up the road. I am not sure how much time passed when it ambled back out of sight. Discovered daydreaming, and a few lashes later I re-ensued on my task.

When I returned home I expected to see Jacob, as always, dirty and curled up in his corner of the ramshackle shelter. He would be holding his blanket and a tattered book of fairy tales. To keep him busy and out of trouble, I'd been teaching him to read. But there was no Jacob, his blanket knotted beside the bloody book. From behind I could hear footsteps... And smiling, I turned to meet my only friend here.

"They caught him readin."

I turned for the bloody book. The last thing I remember was the sound of my own scream. I was sold to someone at Drayton House shortly after.

You'll love again.

Zola

Notes:

This short diary entry is the Shrine experience of Zola (calm).

Experience in the Diaspora:

Child separation on plantations.

Education as a stigma that often ended in punitive action.

Mental health in decline and generational trauma for mother & child.

The Elder is making me do this.

I don't want to remember. I saw all I could stand and relieving it will not give me peace. If she wants tears she can find another way.

The others don't understand. I guess I haven't given them reason to. If anyone else knew.

Any one.

I was his favorite. And I ran.

I was climbing a tree as the dogs closed in. One of the branches broke and I hit the ground. My mouth was busted and my head hurt when I awoke. I was chained up just like in Elmina. When they came in I could smell the stench of men before I could see. A bag was tossed over my head. Many months later the labor pains began. The master was Lumpkin.

I'd rather die than repeat that to anyone.

Nia

Notes:

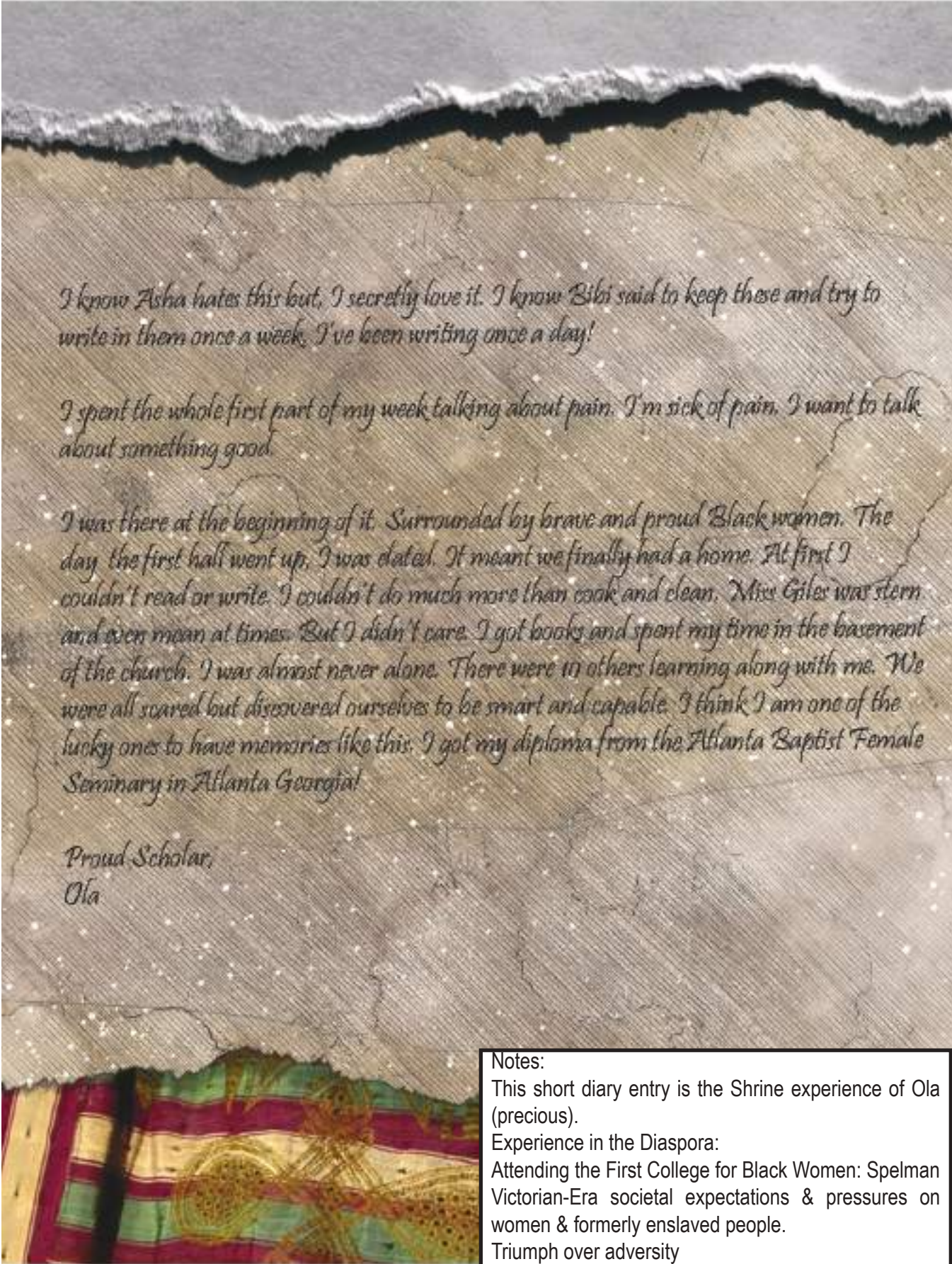
This short diary entry is the Shrine experience of Nia (purpose).

Experience in the Diaspora:

Rape and loss of bodily autonomy.

Subject to White male gaze.

Slave breeding in places like Lumpkin's Jail in Richmond, VA. This supplemented the Domestic Slave Trade after the outlaw of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade.



I know Asha hates this but, I secretly love it. I know Bibi said to keep these and try to write in them once a week, I've been writing once a day!

I spent the whole first part of my week talking about pain. I'm sick of pain. I want to talk about something good.

I was there at the beginning of it. Surrounded by brave and proud Black women. The day the first hall went up, I was elated. It meant we finally had a home. At first I couldn't read or write. I couldn't do much more than cook and clean. Miss Giles was stern and even mean at times. But I didn't care. I got books and spent my time in the basement of the church. I was almost never alone. There were 10 others learning along with me. We were all scared but discovered ourselves to be smart and capable. I think I am one of the lucky ones to have memories like this. I got my diploma from the Atlanta Baptist Female Seminary in Atlanta Georgia!

*Proud Scholar,
Ola*


Notes:

This short diary entry is the Shrine experience of Ola (precious).

Experience in the Diaspora:

Attending the First College for Black Women: Spelman
Victorian-Era societal expectations & pressures on women & formerly enslaved people.

Triumph over adversity



*I think I just need to get this out.
Bibi says we should be keeping our memories.
One in particular is always at the forefront of my mind.*

*April 4th 1968
I was next to her when the call came in.*

And the whole world stopped.

*Coretta did what she could to keep the children's tears at bay. She almost
looked like she knew it would happen.*

I didn't know.

*Like everyone, I believed he would go on forever. The threats were constant and
the danger was real but I never thought the Lord would call him home with so
much left to do.*

Her sobs still haunt me.

I hope she knows peace, wherever she may be.

Love, Bisa

Notes:


This short diary entry is the Shrine experience of Bisa (beloved).

Experience in the Diaspora:

Friend to Coretta Scott King, present when Martin Luther King Jr. was murdered.

Loss of Black fathers to systemic violence against them.

Loss of Civil Rights icons and unifying leaders.



Bibi has been on us to keep these. So I'm giving it a try.

I don't want to go back but I'll never forget the smell.

He was grabbed by a mob. He was accused of flirting with her. You could hear the door rattle as they forced their way in. I stayed low at the window. Whatever was going to happen, I hoped it was quick. We all knew. No white hoods this time around but, it never really matter now does it?

Its the smell. Burning flesh stays on the air like nothing else.

He was a sweet young man. He kept his head low and smiled kindly. He helped me with a broken window, not too long ago.

His name was John.

It wasn't over quickly. The crowd dispersed to cheering and jubilee. A few days later a postcard was found on the family's front door. I took it down. His poor family has seen enough for 1000 lifetimes.

I can still smell it.

Love Kali

Notes:

This short diary entry is the Shrine experience of Kali (energetic).


Experience in the Diaspora:

Witnessed a lynching & its aftermath

Loss of Black life at the hands of White Supremacy with impunity

Interaction with the White gaze turns deadly.

Even the home cannot protect the Black body.



Bibi said I should remember. I do remember. I remember this place.

I'm almost certain it's the same shape, tall and round.

*But there is a glass where there was once stone. The glow from the floor is not a thing of fear,
it doesn't lead to my death.*

I'm approaching smiling faces here.

The auction block is now a throne chair.

I won't be stripped here.

I won't be beat or prodded here.

No money exchanging hands for my body.

No family torn from my arms.

I still have my name.

I was given a blessing here, a meal, a family. Ye's smiling countenance is my reminder.

I really am safe here.

Asha

Notes:

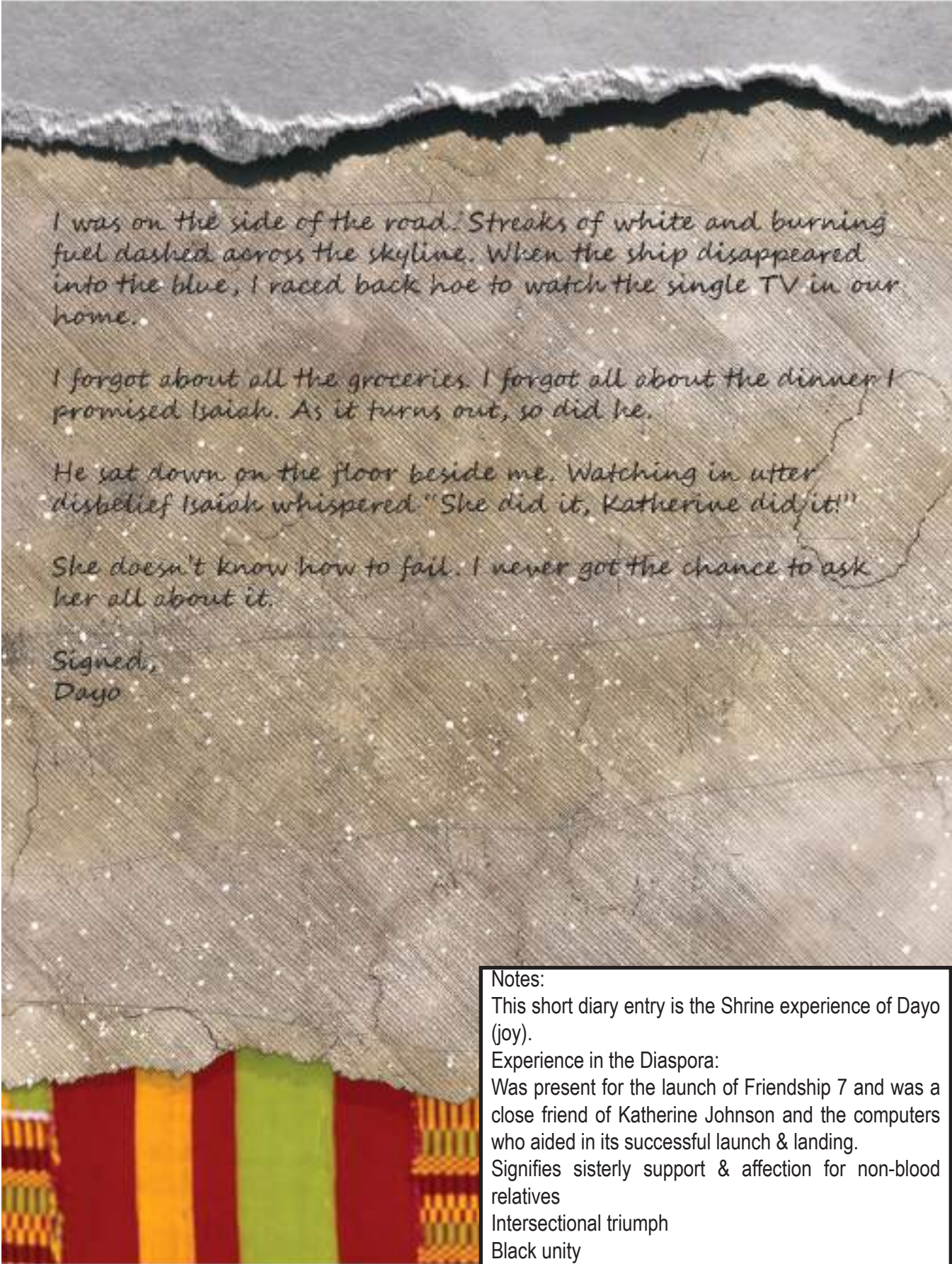
This short diary entry is the Shrine experience of Asha (lively).

Experience in the Diaspora:

Sold on the auction block at the St. Louis Hotel & Exchange.

Family separations & their inherent traumas including disassociation of self.

Trauma response & difficulty in feeling safe or relaxed.



I was on the side of the road. Streaks of white and burning fuel dashed across the skyline. When the ship disappeared into the blue, I raced back home to watch the single TV in our home.

I forgot about all the groceries. I forgot all about the dinner I promised Isaiah. As it turns out, so did he.

He sat down on the floor beside me. Watching in utter disbelief Isaiah whispered "She did it, Katherine did it!"

She doesn't know how to fail. I never got the chance to ask her all about it.

Signed,
Dayo

Notes:

This short diary entry is the Shrine experience of Dayo (joy).


Experience in the Diaspora:

Was present for the launch of Friendship 7 and was a close friend of Katherine Johnson and the computers who aided in its successful launch & landing.

Signifies sisterly support & affection for non-blood relatives

Intersectional triumph

Black unity



Bibi said I could do this my own way. So I will

Day 10
The defense is holding

Day 15
Morale is still strong. We are working to keep our provisions.

Day 21
We are low on supplies but we are collecting whatever can be found throughout the community. The white sails on the horizon are slowly fading away.

Day 25
We mounted up at dawn patrolling the shore.

Day 27
Victory! Fort Mose remains free!

One of the happiest days of my life was those retreating sails make me smile even today.

Signing Off.
Omore

Notes:

This short diary entry is the Shrine experience of Amare (strength).

Experience in the Diaspora:

Was an armed Militiaman at Fort Mose, the first free Black society in the United States.

Black capability, professionalism & unity

Dedication & drive toward a single cause can create societal change. The establishment of this community is said to have driven the Stono Rebellion.

Resistance to the status quo is dangerous.

**part III:
cultural research
textiles**

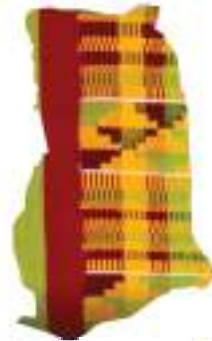
Cultural Research: Textile Palette

These textiles represent a subset of Western Africa that speaks to the deep cultural heritage locked within the stolen lives of the enslaved. Many of these patterns & colors reappear across the Atlantic as fabrics & decor. Messages & family histories are still locked within the colors, patterns & symbols chosen by the members of the diaspora everyday. Whether intentional or unintentional, memories of life before enslavement remain.

MADAGASCAR
Lamba Mena



GHANA
Kente



NIGERIA
Ase Oke



GHANA
Adinkira



NIGERIA
Okene



ETHIOPIA:
Ethiopian Shema



NIGERIA
:Adire



CONGO
Kuba Cloth



MALI:
Bokolonfini

part III:
cultural research
afrofuturism

Born out of a combination of music, literature and a left-of-center Black geek culture, Afrofuturism creates space in a narrative where Black people are often minimized or excluded. This is most recognizable across pop culture, science, technology and projections of future societies in the world.

This paradigm can be tied to the contributions of 3 pioneers or, pillars of Afrofuturism. One of these pillars is Sun Ra. This pioneer of the 1950's devoted his music, writings and appearance to the cosmos. Sun Ra crafted an entire identity around the paradigm of Black culture, space, and technology. The essence of his unburdened expression in "Space is the Place," exists throughout this project. The second pillar is George Clinton representing the cosmic influenced musical storytelling that is associated with the 70's through his spaceship iconography. Octavia Butler represents the third pillar with her expansion into literature. She connects past, present and future along a continuum with new technology and perspectives on race and its influence on humanity.

Many essential names exist. Additional mentions include musicians Lee Scratch Perry & Drexciya, and writers Greg Tate, Mark Sinker, and Kodwo Eshun. Notably Mark Dery and his critical lens in the genre, aided the advancement of this cultural movement. Afrofuturism created "a way out" for Afrofuturists. Often before they were even associated with the word.

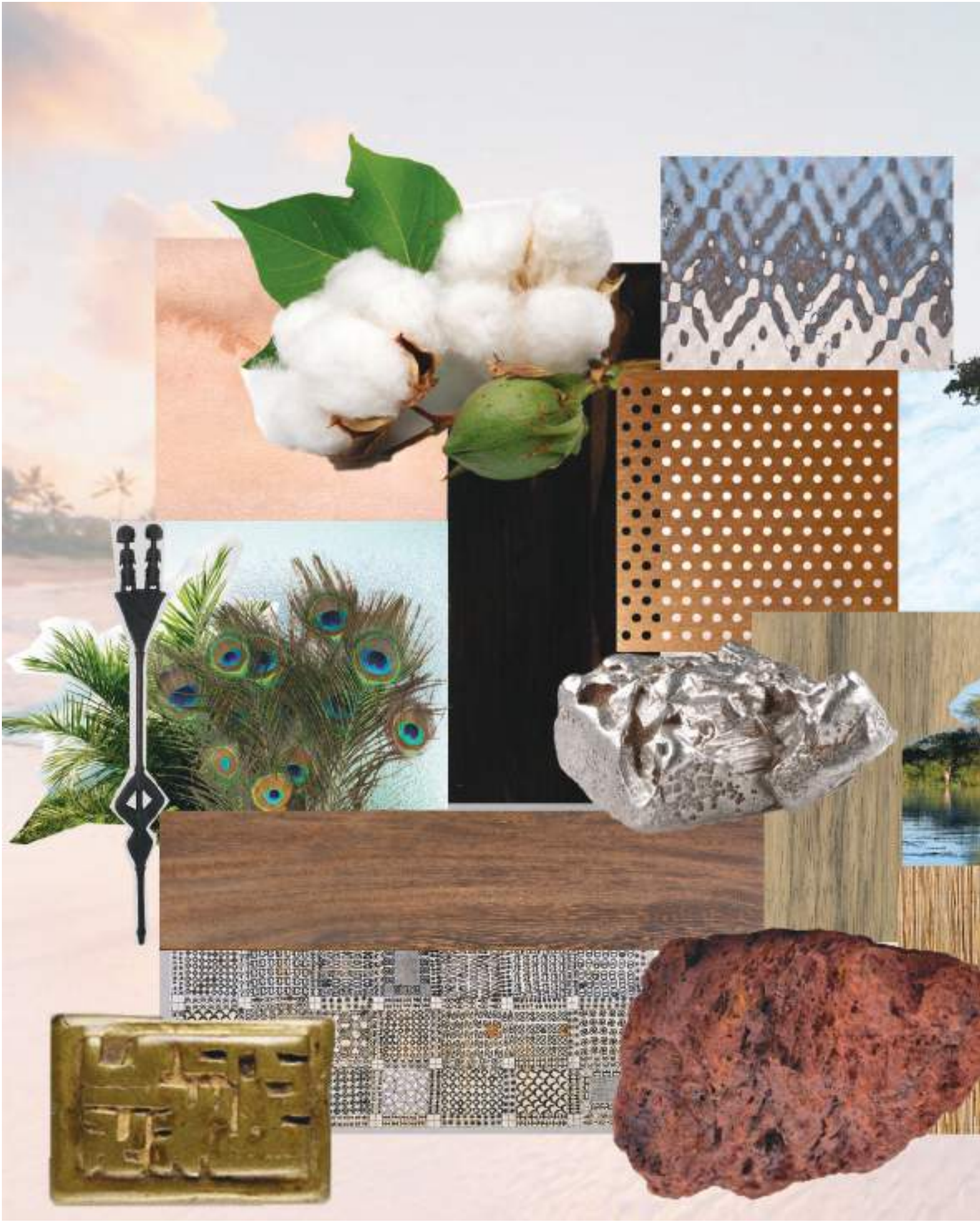
Afrofuturism and its roots in the diaspora and the homeland create a mashup of historical narratives, lived experiences, and future-focused expectation that challenge society-fed Black fatalism. Afrofuturism is a way to root oneself to the past without being mired in the legacy of enslavement. It remembers enslavement yet, is completely devoid of any of its shame. The chains are acknowledged, respected, and then intentionally broken. Histories can be rediscovered and adapted to modernity or flipped on their heads. Its very essence resists Whitewashing, because the core of its power resides in the generational links forged across the middle passage. "If you're going to imagine yourself in the future, you have to imagine where you've come from; ancestor worship is black cultures' way of countering historical erasure." Afrofuturism collectively celebrates native African & Black diasporic culture with its complicated history. It does this in the presence of a critical White gaze which it then chooses to satirize, challenge, or erase. So much of Black life all over the world is learning to live with and navigate within the White gaze. Freedom is in the ability to satirize, challenge, or erase it.

For the purposes of this thesis, Afrofuturism is the revelation that representation in spaces and space coupled with the act of world-building, presents opportunities which escape the trappings created by enslavement and the racism that followed. Everything that exists now was once an idea. The progression of the world was imagined before it was achieved. Thus, Afrofuturism is a vehicle for Black imagination and maybe one day, societal change.

part III:
cultural research
material palette

Cultural Research: Materials Palette

The materials collected for this collage were the inspiration for elements that informed the design of Uhuru. As shown in the final renderings as part of the graphic novel, Uhuru is a blend of the natural resources and riches of Africa and the possibilities of futuristic design through speculation.























part III:
cultural research
enslavement & site map

Cultural Research: Enslavement & Site

The sites captured throughout this thesis are real. Though their legacy on Uhuru is changed, their history on earth remains. These maps encompass the actual locations of the sites notated in this thesis, including the west African coast known for its slave castles like Elmina as shown in the prologue.



UNITED STATES

- | | | | |
|---|---------------------------|---|-----------------------|
|  | Lumpkin's Slave Jail |  | Fairmount Water Works |
|  | Nantes |  | Seneca Village Site |
|  | St Louis Hotel & Exchange |  | Fort Mose |
|  | Stono Rebellion Site |  | Laura Spelman Hall |
|  | Mason Dixon Line |  | The Jump |
|  | Drayton Hall |  | Kennedy Space Center |
|  | Horticulture Hall | | |
|  | Lorraine Motel | | |
|  | Whitney Plantation | | |
|  | Magnolia Plantation | | |
|  | Natl. Memorial for Peace | | |
|  | Elmina Castle | | |

The locations listed represent sites identified within this thesis as significant.

Purple denotes spaces of Black triumph.

Red denotes spaces of Black trials.

The "i" represents noted places in the diary entries.

The "*" represents sites used for reclamation.



AFRICA

- 📍 Ghana
- 📍 Senegal
- 📍 The Gambia
- 📍 Guinea-Bissau
- 📍 Guinea
- 📍 Sierra Leone
- 📍 Liberia
- 📍 Côte d'Ivoire
- 📍 Benin
- 📍 Nigeria
- 📍 Cameroon
- 📍 Gabon
- 📍 Republic of the Congo
- 📍 Democratic Republic of the Congo
- 📍 Angola

The sites listed on this map represent the movement of European conquest of the Gold Coast. Traveling from what was once Senegambia to Angola, nearly the entire western coast of Africa would be overrun during the height of the Transatlantic Slave Trade.

**part III:
cultural research
literature review**

Thrive in Plain Site

Architecture as Protection For Black Communities In America Facing Anti-Black Hatred Through The Lens Of Speculative Design

Key Terms:

Architecture, Design, Security, Protection, Urban, Place Identity, Self-Identity, Race[ism], White Supremacy, Black Diaspora, Slavery, Hate Crime, Terrorism, Speculative Design, Thought Experiments, Afrofuturism

Introduction

Build. Burn. Recover. This represents the cyclical nature of the lived experiences of Americans of African descent; the surviving lineage of the Transatlantic Slave Trade beginning in 1619 when the first slaves reached eastern US shores.¹ This definition has gone on to include a host of other mixed heritage people of African descent contending with slavery and colonialism referred to as "Black." To be Black in America consists of elevated vulnerability levels and hyper-vigilance; expending energy avoiding the fatalism that lurks in Black life. Attempts at establishing place & identity are systemically stymied. By using the pain of the past to root oneself, visions of an equitable future can abound. This literature review will examine the experiences of Black people in the wake of chattel slavery, and racially motivated terror. It aims to focus on why, from whom, and what methodologies might be applied, to establish actualized physical protection using architecture and design as the medium.

What is protection?

Protection is defined as an act of covering or "shielding from exposure, injury, damage or destruction or, to defend."² Architecture and design often focuses on the bodies interaction with space as protection from the elements. For the purposes of this literature review we also explore protection from human-to-human racially-motivated fear-based incidents or, acts of racial terror. The built environment uses two essential strategies for implementing protection from human harm. These strategies are active and passive security.³

Active security fits our perception of traditional security. These familiar measures are constructed in the form of barriers, high fences and balustrades. Active security is also classified as overt surveillance and supports the design theory of the Panopticon established by Jeremy Bentham. Bentham's hypothetical authoritative design is still used in high security environments. He posits that bad behavior can be controlled by visibility.⁴ However, studies have shown that visual deterrents such as cameras, guards and metal detectors⁵ also intimidate. They actively raise awareness to the public that the space requires protection. This, thereby heightens the sense of anxiety of these environments, and the subsequent vulnerability of the surrounding urban landscape.⁶ Consider the example of metal detectors and barred windows in a school. These images paradoxically enhance feelings of insecurity. James Timberlake of Kiernan Timberlake, Pritzker winning architecture firm has said that:

"In general, architects need to challenge the theory that overt visual deterrents, which are the most aggressive features in the landscape, are the answer."⁷

Passive security combines (passive) defensive measures such as threat deterrents, invisibility, and is predominantly product-less.⁸ These solutions are usually non-mechanical and don't run on electricity with low to no operating costs. Often described as Passive Defense, these measures are a set of "non-armed measurements increasing power or inhibition, reduction of vulnerability, continuance of necessary activities, improving national stability and facilitation of crisis management in coping up with threats and military measurements."⁹ Options ranging from lighting, wayfinding, annexes that control access,¹⁰ and art

¹ Hannah Jones et al., "Episode 1: The Fight..." (sec. 1 para. 14)

² "Protecting," Merriam-Webster

³ Huels et al., "Passive Security in Architecture" (sec. 2 para. 2-3)

⁴ Dickinson, "AIA Feature Designing for Security" (sec. 1 para 1)

⁵ Dickinson, "AIA Feature Designing for Security" (sec. 3 para. 4)

⁶ Coafee et al., "The Visibility of (In) Security" (pp. 502)

⁷ Dickinson et al., "Designing for Security" (sec. 4 para. 1)

⁸ Huels et al., "Passive Security in Architecture" (sec. 2 para. 1)

⁹ Shirzadi et al., "The Design of Residential Buildings" (pp. 1)

¹⁰ Peck et al., "Designing for Safety" (sec. 2 para 1. 3. 5)

panels that act as barriers¹¹ help acknowledge the importance of low-visibility security and the idea that there can be a disconnect with how safe we are, versus how safe we feel.¹² Establishing balance between overt and covert security measures for protection requires a holistic approach that involves design professionals at the outset of the urban planning process.

In the wake of a post 9/11 world, the desire by the state to appear defensible, has ushered in a “society of control.” One of the most heavily surveilled cities in the world, London is implementing facial recognition software into their surveillance. While some Londoners and activist groups have expressed concern for the loss of civil liberties, the act of watching and being watched is now part of the normalized cityscape.¹³ These groups are questioning the effectiveness and impact on citizens as “research continues to connect feelings of dissent with the way this particular aspect of security exacerbates and institutionalizes class, race, gender, geography and citizenship.”¹⁴

If public spaces within the urban environment offered suitable protection for the inhabitants to thrive, how do we account for the disparity in passive safety measures applied to some communities vs anxiety triggering active security measures in others? The effects of terror and the benefits of protection are not applied equally to all. This is where White Supremacy begins to reveal itself.

“They [White Americans] have a deep emotional investment in the myth of “sameness,” even as their actions reflect the primacy of Whiteness as a sign informing who they are and how they think.”¹⁵

Who needs protection?

What came first in America, slavery or racism? According to Ytasha Womack, author of *Afrofuturism: The World of Black Sci-fi and Fantasy Culture*, slavery or displacement came first, and racism rose to justify the act of dehumanization and erasure of identity.¹⁶ That is the sobering legacy of the people of the Black Diaspora, surviving under a repressive regime centered around their distance from White identity. This deliberate act of “othering”¹⁷ was steeped into the fabric of this nation. Spanning

the American Revolution even with the hypocrisy of desiring freedom while withholding others freedoms, African enslavement persisted and grew.¹⁸ Toward the end of the Civil War Abraham Lincoln had devised a plan to cripple southern production and with it, their battle success by, freeing the slaves. He invited a group of Abolitionist Black Ministers in to discuss how the influx of freed slaves would impact the country and suggested they be exiled from America.¹⁹

“You and we are different races. ... Your race suffers very greatly, many of them, by living among us, while ours suffer from your presence. In a word,” he said, “we suffer on each side.”²⁰

Lincoln’s solution to prevent an equal identity America was to untie the roots of the formerly enslaved. Place Identity as described by Proshansky is a sub-structure of the self-identity of the person consisting of, broadly conceived, cognitions about the physical world in which the individual lives.²¹ From memories and experiences to values and behavior this is how we relate to the world and define our everyday existence.²²

Interestingly, writer bell hooks reminds us that we are encouraged to remember and respect other attacks on place and identity, such as within Jewish legacies.²³ About trauma and terror hooks notes,

“Their [White Americans] inability to conceive that my terror... is a response to the legacy of white domination and the contemporary expressions of white supremacy.”²⁴

hooks uses her own Kentuckian experiences to explain her relationship with place othering and trauma. When remarking on specific threats of violence in place she mentions:

“Every black girl in our segregated neighborhoods knew that we had to be careful not to have any interaction with white males for they were most likely seeking to violate us in some way. While sexual violation was the dreaded form of white male racist assault.”²⁵

¹¹ Huels et al., “Passive Security in Architecture” (sec. 4 para. 1)

¹² Dickinson et al., “Designing for Security” (sec. 3 para. 1)

¹³ Perrigo, “London Police Will Deploy...” (sec. 1 para. 4-6)

¹⁴ Coafee et al., “The Visibility of (In) Security” (pp. 492)

¹⁵ hooks, bell. *Belonging* (pp. 92)

¹⁶ Womack, “Afrofuturism: The World Of” (pp. 25)

¹⁷ Womack, “Afrofuturism: The World Of” (pp. 28)

¹⁸ Hannah-Jones, “Episode 1: The Fight” (sec. 1 para. 35-36)

¹⁹ Hannah-Jones, “Episode 1: The Fight” (sec. 1 para. 43)

²⁰ Hannah-Jones, “Episode 1: The Fight” (sec. 1 para. 44)

²¹ Proshansky, “Place Identity: Physical World...” (pp. 77)

²² Proshansky, “Place Identity: Physical World...” (pp. 77)

²³ hooks, bell. *Belonging* (pp. 100)

²⁴ hooks, bell. *Belonging* (pp. 104)

²⁵ hooks, bell. *Belonging* (pp. 70)

The ability to establish belonging and self-worth is inhibited when identity is faced with consistent erasure, confinement, and trauma. A bodily example of the psychological horrors mentioned above and need for protection can be summed up in the experience of Harriet Jacobs, now Linda Brent,²⁶ whose physical imprisonment was preferable to her indefensible position within her Slaveowners presence. Both geographies are fraught with suffering. Binding the body in the garret of her grandmother's North Carolina home, within the narrow low top which served as her hiding place.²⁷ Barrett was confined to the physically disabling perimeters of the 9'x7'x3 'cell for 7 years.²⁸ Ironically, she found what little freedom she could capture in that cell while avoiding brutal sexual violence against her and her offspring.

Brent sacrificed place and parts of her identity to an 'in-between' prison lacking freedom or identity. And yet this option was preferable. These experiences provide a basis for the importance of established identity, roots, and protection and the lengths Black people will go to establish them even as the "frustration of movement"²⁹ continues.

Protection from Whom?

Othering through racial, gender and class biases create the foundation of White Supremacy. By 1705 a group referred to as the "planter class" ³⁰ acted to "slowly and forcibly socialize Europeans into aligning themselves with the ruling class and not with their black peers."³¹ Its legalities included:

"Banning people of African descent from, holding public office, bearing witness in court against a white person, lifting one's hand against a white person, or holding offensive or defensive weapons."³²

American bred racism also featured patriarchal biases. One example of both is "any European-American male could assume familiarity with any African-American woman."³³ This means sexual assault against even free Black women is sanctioned an indefensible. Resisting one's attacker could result in charges. This legitimizes the experiences of Brent and hooks above and connects the trauma-based fear Black people

experience. "There is no psychological practice that specifically focuses on recovery from racist victimization."³⁴

Paradoxically, White fear of Blackness is center stage and often reported on with bias.³⁵ Though White people on average kill more White people,³⁶ more people of all racial groups, and are consistently responsible for more than half of all race-based crimes against others and domestic terrorism,³⁷ Blacks are hit with targeted and inflated tropes like 'black on black crime 'that disproportionately highlight violence in Black communities.³⁸ This reinforces fear and silences conversation on racial injustice. Researcher Fernando E. Gapsin notes that to defeat this self-perpetuating system one must take an active-anti-racist stance. Abolitionist Preacher and leader of Berea, Kentucky John Fee invited people to live there on the condition of signing a pledge to build anti-racist systems in the community. His success culminated in the establishment of a need-based tuition-free college for Blacks and Whites, women and men to share knowledge and live as one community."³⁹ This effort was dismantled by a pro slavery uprising supported by politicians and White Supremacists in 1859 resulting in the exile of many townspeople including Fee. The Enforcement Act of 1870 was one of the first measures taken by the US to handle "racially motivated violence"⁴⁰ by groups like the Ku Klux Klan whose ideology mirrored these acts.

Through consistent findings supporting the escalating violence of White Supremacy, in 2019 the Domestic Terrorism Bill was introduced by Democratic Senator Dick Durbin of Illinois. Bill S.894 would allow focused monitoring and prevention of domestic terrorism in the United States with a focus on White Supremacists and Far Right Extremists who have been identified as "the most significant domestic terrorism threat facing the United States."⁴¹

Collecting research from 10 years of Hate Crime statistics, results show the largest victim set of race-based hate crimes were identified as Black or, African American, with the primary offenders being White.⁴² The results of a study on the link between hate crime and terrorism completed by Freilich Mills supports this research on White supremacy and reestablish the fear and resulting actions taken by a White majority associated

²⁶ McKittrick, "The Last Place" (pp. 309)

²⁷ McKittrick, "The Last Place" (pp. 309)

²⁸ McKittrick, "The Last Place" (pp. 309)

²⁹ Dery, Mark. "Black to the Future" (pp. 180)

³⁰ Gapsin, Fernando E. "A Nation Built..." (pp. 62)

³¹ Gapsin, Fernando E. "A Nation Built..." (pp. 62)

³² Gapsin, Fernando E. "A Nation Built..." (pp. 61)

³³ Gapsin, Fernando E. "A Nation Built..." (pp. 61)

³⁴ hooks, bell. *Belonging* (pp. 70)

³⁵ hooks, bell. *Belonging* (pp. 72)

³⁶ Schmidt, Axel. "Fact Check: False..." (sec. 1 para. 6)

³⁷ FBI Releases 2008-2017 Hate Crime Statistics." (2008-2017)

³⁸ Lynn, "Black on Black Crime..." (sec.2 para. 6)

³⁹ hooks, bell. *Belonging* (pp. 78-79)

⁴⁰ Mills, "Extreme Hatred" (pp.)

⁴¹ Durden, "Domestic Terrorism Act" (pp. 2)

⁴² FBI Releases 2008-2017 Hate Crime Statistics." (2008-2017)

with loss of place (either perceived or real) through statistics such as these findings:

“Ethnic heterogeneity create an increase in far-right hate crime at a rate of 93 times greater. Increases in far-right hate crimes see 9 times more far right terrorist acts.”⁴³

These findings support that White Supremacy and the othering of non-White bodies rooted white supremacy in place and established Black bodies as opposition. Any perceived loss of these roots inspires violent response. So, how might Black people in America establish trauma-free spaces of protection?

Methodologies of Protection

Speculative Design as Solution

Considering the difficulties facing Black history and Black present it may be useful to turn to Black futures as a path to invention of a more ethical world. Fictional worldbuilding can spur social change.⁴⁴ Design was once a thought playground where these speculative imaginings were galvanizing at best. Conceptual design is a field where ideas rule the landscape and design is used to “provoke and pose questions.”⁴⁵ Design team Dunne & Raby remark that “Design became fully integrated into the neoliberal model of capitalism that emerged during the 1980s, and all other possibilities for design were soon viewed as economically unviable and therefore irrelevant.”⁴⁶ This hyper-focus on the real and production value of the built environment has created a trap for design in which it has no “social or political possibilities beyond capitalism for design to align itself with.”⁴⁷ For design to thrive outside of the shell of capitalism a focus on the unreal and ideal is tantamount allowing us to critique the world, cataloging those critiques for idea generation. Some of the paths speculative design may take are:

“Thought Experiments”⁴⁸ allow us to craft ideas with a focus on difficult issues, “Counterfactuals”⁴⁹ that allow for altered histories, and “What If’s”⁵⁰ that explore ideas by focusing on core narratives.

Afrofuturism as Alternative Future

⁴³ Mills, “Extreme Hatred” (pp. 1208)

⁴⁴ Dunne, Raby. “A Map of Unreality” (pp.11)

⁴⁵ Dunne, Raby. “A Map of Unreality” (pp. 8)

⁴⁶ Dunne, Raby. “Beyond Radical Design?” (pp. 8)

⁴⁷ Dunne, Raby. “Beyond Radical Design?” (pp. 8)

⁴⁸ Dunne, Raby. “A Methodological Playground” (pp.80)

⁴⁹ Dunne, Raby. “A Methodological Playground” (pp.82)

⁵⁰ Dunne, Raby. “A Methodological Playground” (pp.86)

Afrofuturism is an intersection of imagination, technology, the future, and liberation and a way of imagining possible futures through a Black cultural lens.⁵¹ This lens is best represented by jazz pioneer and cosmic storyteller Sun Ra, writer Octavia Butler, and 70’s funk musician and space cadet George Clinton. All three studied race and its possible transformations through time with a future leaning perspective.⁵² In the case of Sun Ra, his entire identity became detached from this earth, for him “Space is the Place,” both a mindset, an alternative future without the trappings of historical erasure, and his seminal artistic work.⁵³

“We need images of tomorrow, and our people need them more than most.”⁵⁴ When prompted by Mark Dery who coined the term “Afrofuturism,” noted Black Sci-Fi writer Samuel Delany said “The historical reason that we’ve been so impoverished in terms of future images is because, until fairly recently, as a people we were systematically forbidden any images of our past.”⁵⁵ All collective cultural heritage was deconstructed and “every effort conceivable was made to destroy all vestiges of what might endure as African social consciousness.”⁵⁶ Each enslaved person was alone. Those separations bear on place identity. Each person was caged amongst strangers. How to organize when there is no surviving shared dialect? In this, Black people are unique. They retain nothing from their former home. There is no need for Sci-Fi narratives to explain that the first aliens were Black.

Imagining a future devoid of historical context is difficult, as place and identity establish belonging. If the only identity Black people have is based on a legacy of enslavement, Afrofuturism represents a way for Black people to free themselves from that “chained imagination”⁵⁷ and posit brighter futures unbound to the past.

Dery asks, “Can a community whose past has been deliberately rubbed out, and whose energies have subsequently been consumed by the search for legible traces of its history, imagine possible futures?”⁵⁸ Yes. The same energies that sparked movements to expand reality for inclusion, will transform the present. This change must be imagined first.

An Example from the Past

⁵¹ Womack, “Afrofuturism: The World of” (pp. 12)

⁵² Womack, “Afrofuturism: The World of” (pp. 110, 48, 49)

⁵³ Womack, “Afrofuturism: The World of” (pp. 47)

⁵⁴ Dery, Mark. “Black to the Future” (pp. 190)

⁵⁵ Dery, Mark. “Black to the Future” (pp. 191)

⁵⁶ Dery, Mark. “Black to the Future” (pp. 191)

⁵⁷ Womack, “Afrofuturism: The World of” (pp. 17)

⁵⁸ Dery, Mark. “Black to the Future” (pp. 180)

A crowning achievement of 12th century architecture and design is the 11 churches that stand at Lalibela, Ethiopia.⁵⁹ Commissioned by King Lalibela these churches were established by a subtractive process of carving away at the rock and stone to create subterranean places of worship when the pathway to the Holy Land was cut off by political unrest.

The churches are grouped by North, South and West. The Northern group:⁶⁰

Biete Golgotha Mikael,
Biete Mariam,
Biete Denagel,
Biete Maskal,
Biete Medhani Alem (the largest monolithic church in the world)⁶¹

The Southern group:⁶²

Biete Lehem,
Biete Gabriel Rafael,
Biete Abba Libanos,
Biete Amanuel,
Biete Qeddus Mercoreus

The lone Western Church is Biete Ghiorgis⁶³ with a preserved cruciform shape and its connected by tunnels to the remaining structures.

Design took influence from the Holy Land and the region established by the heavy influence of Aksumite culture.⁶⁴ As "New Jerusalem"⁶⁵ grew its civic origins should not be forgotten as some of the earliest constructions Biete Mercoreus and Biete Gabriel Rafael were likely royal palaces or fortresses built for defense.⁶⁶

Trenches and pathways established below ground to connect each of the sites served ceremonial and practical uses as they directed water from the tectonically active structures and mimicked the processional like journey in the Holy Land. These pathways linked the churches and attendant ecclesiastical structures, including tombs, catacombs, and storerooms. Ceremony and procession dominate the still-active churches as Coptic Christians travel miles on foot to worship in a place meant to symbolize the path from ascension from earth to heaven.⁶⁷ This symbolic journey also represents the one undertaken by Black Americans working their way through their American

heritage and African lineage to reconcile their past and present to establish brighter futures.

Conclusion

As Black people are living in an environment that is consistently hostile to their existence, imagining alternative futures and environments that may, one day, be capable of translation into the present, is not fantastical, it is an adaptation critical to survival. While race-based hatred retains a steady grip on Black life in America,⁶⁸ the desire to establish place, shed the burden of chattel slavery, and speculate anew is the foundation of Black progression. "Knowing yourself as a black person – historically, spiritually, and culturally – is not something that's given to you, institutionally; it's an arduous journey that must be undertaken by the individual."⁶⁹

The journey of Blackness in America moves from build, burn and recover to root, protect and evolve. To thrive in plain site/sight is a solution for the protection and preservation of Black life in America. As visibility rises with success and progression (root), so too does the threat of white supremacy and its violent response (protect). Thus thriving — hiding in plain sight — is moving forward with measured intentional steps to steadily rebuild (evolve). Site speaks to geography and place, interior and exterior, place and belonging. Sight alludes to awareness, foresight and identity through a past, present, and future connection. Architecture and interiors have the potential to provide more than basic protection. This research suggests that design can build new worlds and should be applied to trauma-free spaces for unprotected populations.

⁵⁹ Centre, "Rock Hewn Churches Lalibela" (pp 1)

⁶⁰ Centre, "Rock Hewn Churches Lalibela" (pp 2)

⁶¹ Centre, "Rock Hewn Churches Lalibela" (pp 4)

⁶² Centre, "Rock Hewn Churches Lalibela" (pp 3)

⁶³ Windmuller-Luna, "The Rock When Churches" (pp 3)

⁶⁴ Windmuller-Luna, "The Rock When Churches" (pp. 5)

⁶⁵ Windmuller-Luna, "The Rock When Churches" (pp. 7)

⁶⁶ Windmuller-Luna, "The Rock When Churches" (pp. 7)

⁶⁷ Windmuller-Luna, "The Rock When Churches" (pp. 3)

⁶⁸ Durden, "Domestic Terrorism Act" (pp. 2)

⁶⁹ Dery, Mark. "Black to the Future" (pp. 210)

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appendices

A set of questions were developed to help begin to bridge the gap between Blackness, Racism, Speculation & Design. These questions were then posed to a descendant of the Black diaspora who is using art, media and scholarship to reconnect and reclaim control of his own narrative. It was a pleasure receiving his candid insights.

Question: 1

Do you believe that racism is the primary cause for Black strife in the United States? Why or why not?

Answer:

Yes. Racism is the primary structural element for how society is organized in the United States from birth to death. It is absolutely ingrained as a system to facilitate every aspect of life from food, to housing, health care, the arts, design, public transportation, wellness, public safety, public space and even cemeteries.

Question: 2

If we stripped away racism as a (it could be considered "the primary") cause for Black suffering in the United States, what would be the next issue to confront?

Answer:

Sexism and patriarchy. I feel addressing and incredibly dissolving racism would inevitably dismantle several but perhaps not all aspects of class-ism because in this country the two are virtually inseparable. Yet gender issues are there own fortress of oppression that hold within it homophobia, transphobia and misogyny.

Question: 3

Please use your imagination to consider a space untouched by colonialism. Please describe 5 objects or 5 aspects of that space.

Answer:

- Resources are not hoarded or made scarce through human involvement.
- Resources are harvested equitably and with respect for localized and extended eco-systems.
- Land is not owned nor is there a concept of "citizenship".
- Technology works to reciprocally replenish resources from land, to animal, to crop, to human sustainably and resourcefully.

- Labor is distributed in cooperation across practices in regard to conditions for living based on geography, time relative to work, materials needed and personnel needed to achieve the task.

Question: 4

Name one place where you truly feel you belong and are safe. This may be a real, imagined, or conceptual space. (Ex. While Reading, Family Home, Social Media (specific entity/group), Classrooms, Theater)

Answer:

- Dancing
- Creating
- Reading
- Imagining
- Meditating
- Praying
- Singing
- In silence
- Designing

Question: 5

Please give me your favorite example of an existing place, piece of literature, or piece of media that represents the promise of Black futures from your perspective.

Answer:

- Film - Atlantique by Mati Dip
- Text - Claire Limye Lanye by Edwidge Danticat
- Music - Old Time Religion by Art Ensemble of Chicago
- Music - Soley danmbalab by Toto Bissainthe
- Music - Astral Meditations by Alice Coltrane
- Film - Daughters of the Dust by Julie Dash
- Piece of art - For Edouard Glissant by Jack Whitten
- The Undercommons by Fred Moten & Stefano Harney
- Dance - The Big Brick by Reggie Wilson
- Dance - Grace by Ron K. Brown
- Dance - Oba Qween Baba King Baba - by Ni'ja Whitson

Narrative Rules

As the world-building process began to develop, it felt necessary to establish a set of rules that would govern the progression of the narrative. Acknowledging the notes received through interview and expanding foundational research, a set of rules was determined to address the new community, its governance, and some of the activities of its inhabitants.

1. Uhuru is a parallel to our earth existing in a galaxy much like ours.
2. The seat of power in Uhuru is on the continent we identify as Africa.
3. Sites were identified that represent the complexity of Black life on earth.
4. On Uhuru, these sites have been reclaimed and amassed into a kingdom that nurtures Blackness.
5. Portals allow travel throughout Uhuru and interstellar travel “jumps” to places like earth.
6. The unified strength of the people & presence of water help to power the portals.
7. These ‘jumps’ almost always occur in or near water.
8. In this society people are organized into guilds & fields of expertise during adulthood according to their gifts.
9. There is a guild tasked with the act of opening and closing of the interstellar portals. That guild is down to 1 woman.
10. Leadership is female identifying. Including the Monarch & Founding Mothers.

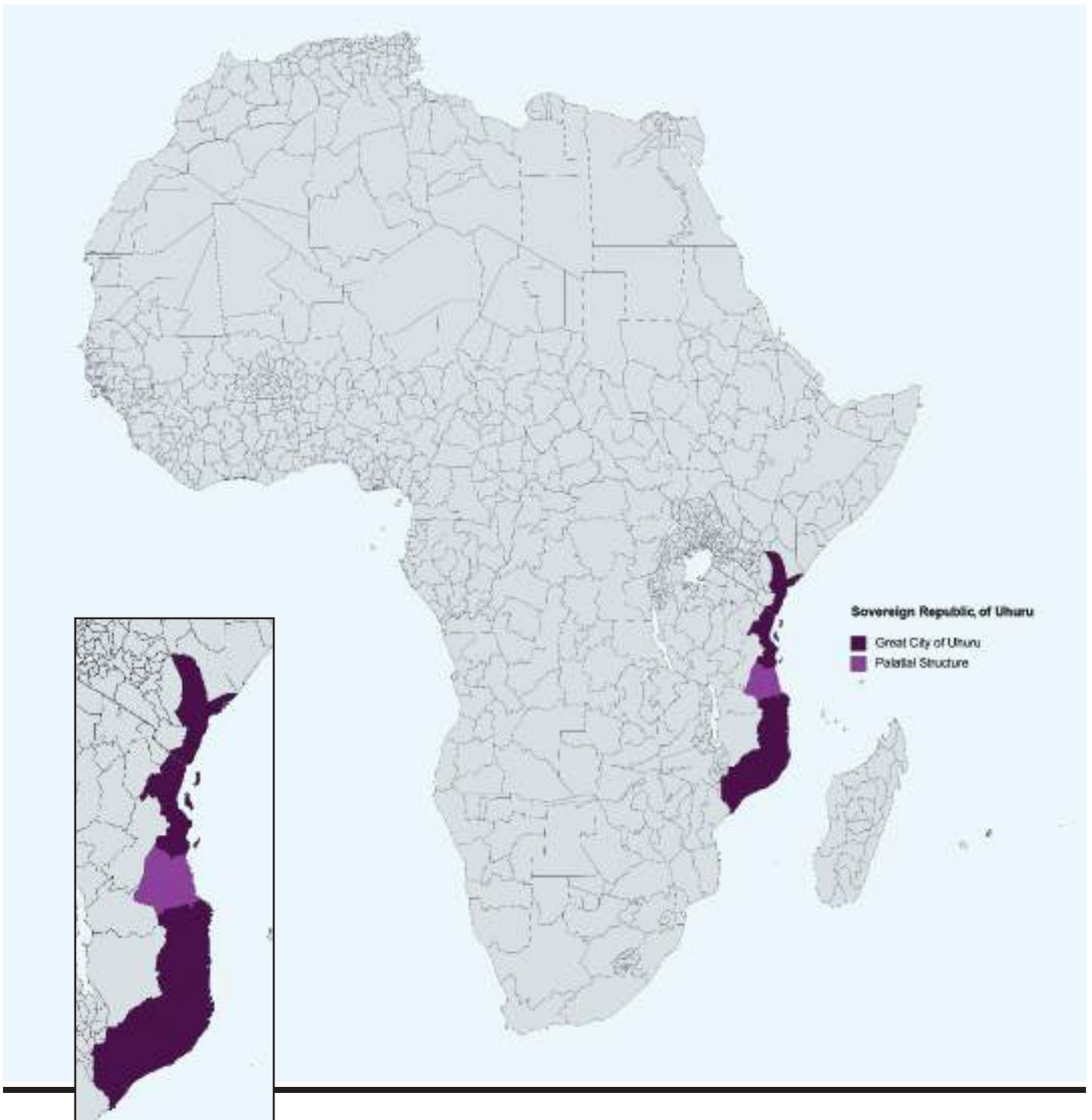
Comparative Maps: Uhuru vs Earth

The first map represents the Sovereign Republic of Uhuru including its Great City and palatial structure. On Earth, this location represents eastern Africa. Named the Swahili Coast for its primary language, it is the home of the Bantu peoples.

This location was chosen to serve three primary purposes. The first, was that the chosen site in Africa needed to be coastal. Relationship to water is a determining factor for The Eight and the Uhuru citizens. Settlements in ancient times were always established near water as its crucial for community stability. Second, it was important to acknowledge a nation of indigenous Africans who established and built great structures that were historically significant but lesser known. In accordance with the exploratory nature of this project, a different region of Africa offered a fresh perspective on indigenous innovation. Third, though the Swahili Coast experienced its own intersections with colonialism and subsequent enslavement, this was not the seat of power for the Trans Atlantic Slave Trade, and detachment from that legacy was useful for the development of this speculative world.

The second map represents the route taken by the *Le Soleil* out of Nantes, France. The human cargo is collected off the coast of present day Ghana. During the voyage through the Middle Passage, a total of 14 women leap from the ship into the Atlantic. While six of the women are recaptured and returned to the ship, the remaining Eight are deemed lost, and the voyage to South Carolina continues.

Map of Uhuru



Map of Trade Route



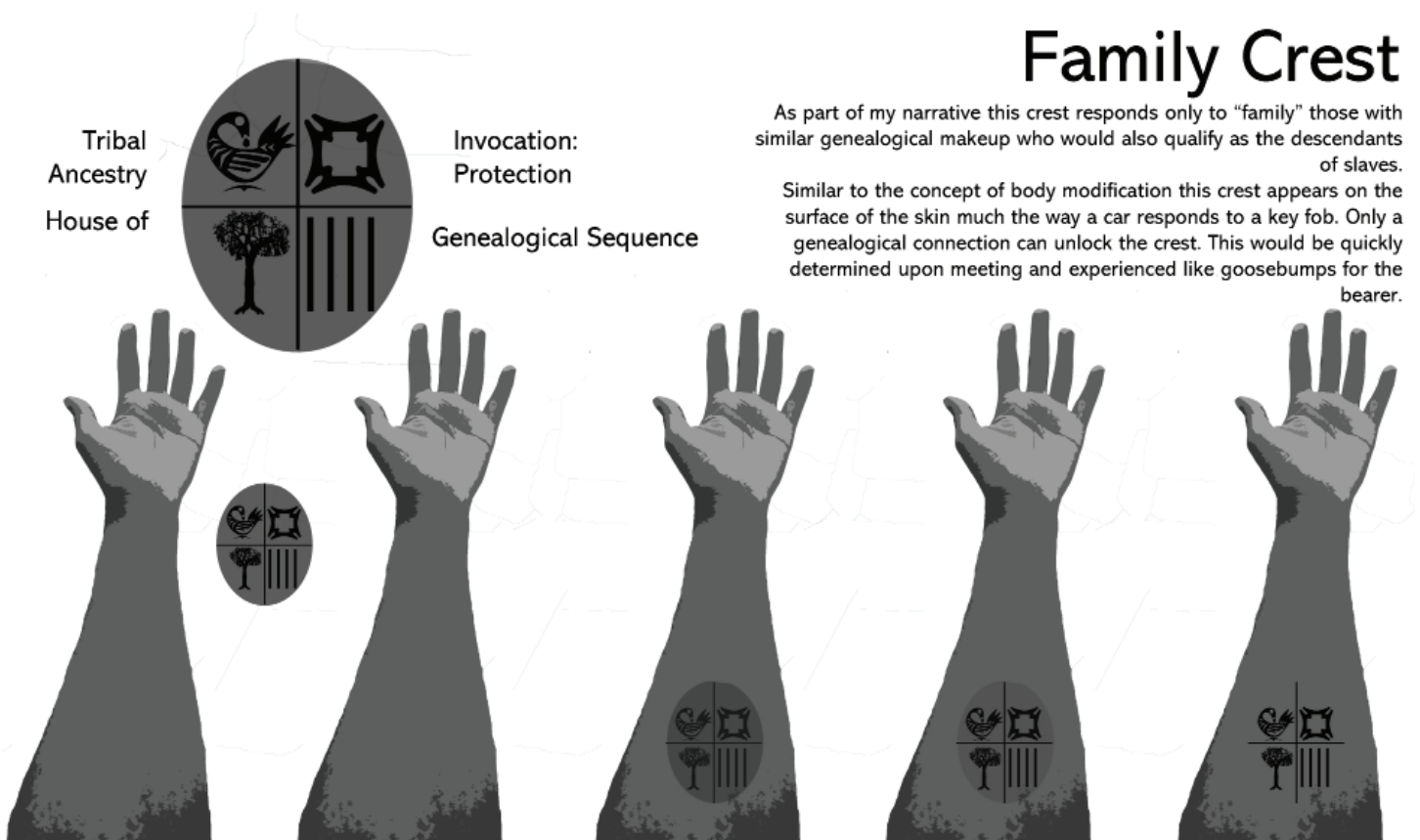
Design Probe 1 : Scale pt. 1

This probe considered scale by macro analysis utilizing mapping. Considering the underlying aspects of protection, innovation, and narrative, the Rock Hewn Church Complex of Lalibela, Ethiopia was selected. Working through observation of the landscape and site to visualize the tunnel system that allowed passage to 11 churches/palatial structures/ and funeraries throughout the complex.



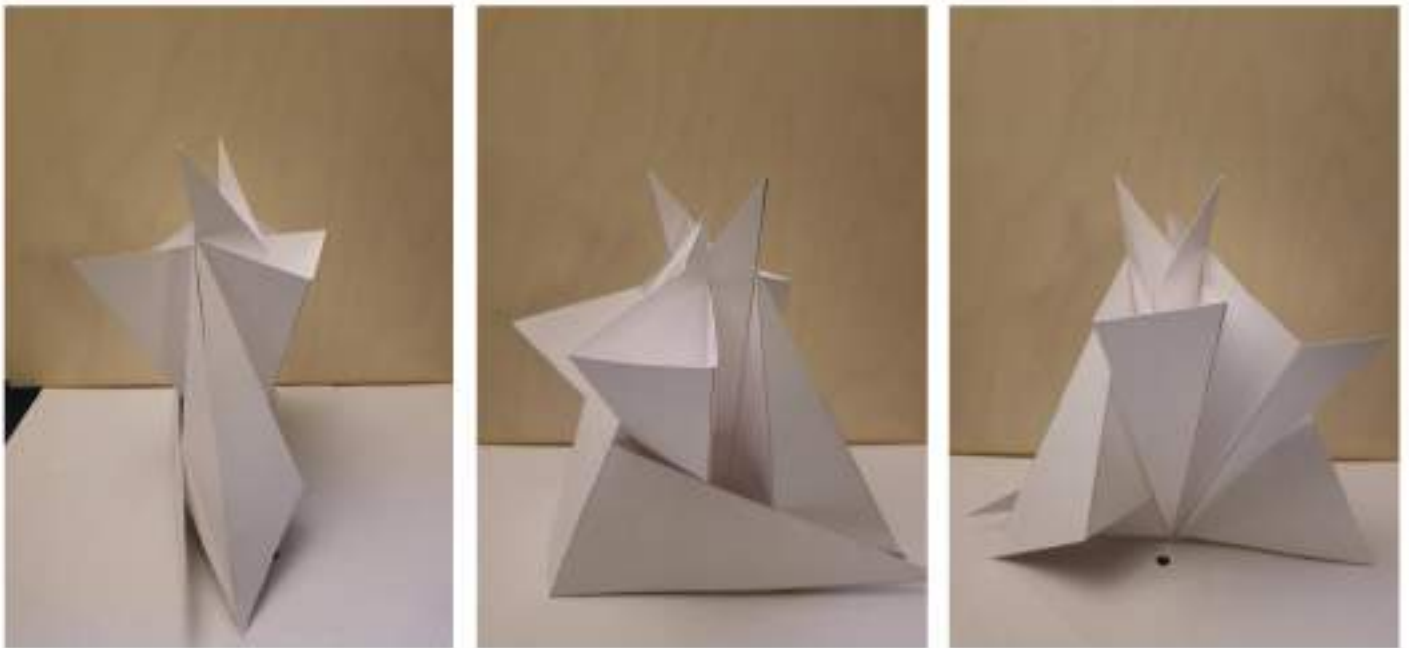
Design Probe 1 : Scale pt. 2

With Lalibela in mind and the initial considerations for a return to Africa, the second part of this assignment was produced. An object was designed using my own hand as the template for an embedded body modification, a crest that responded to genealogical bloodlines. Aiding displaced African Americans in locating ancestral kin.



Design Probe II : Material pt. 1

This design probe served as an exercise in working with concept through material and making. Creation of an object utilizing on-hand materials was used to begin to generate interior and exterior conditions of the spaces being considered. With the leading thought of protection and secondary thought of thriving this object became shard-like using bent planes to form defensive points. However, each point intended to stabilize the object and reach out and high from within it. Symbolizing the desire for connection. The accompanying material board followed a similar format of hard surfaces with visible layering symbolizing that strong presentation often hides a more weathered experience.



Design Probe II : Material pt. 2

This design probe served as an exercise in working with concept through material and making. Creation of an object utilizing on-hand materials was used to begin to generate interior and exterior conditions of the spaces being considered. With the leading thought of protection and secondary thought of thriving this object became shard-like using bent planes to form defensive points. However, each point intended to stabilize the object and reach out and high from within it. Symbolizing the desire for connection. The accompanying material board followed a similar format of hard surfaces with visible layering symbolizing that strong presentation often hides a more weathered experience.



Potential Actual Materials

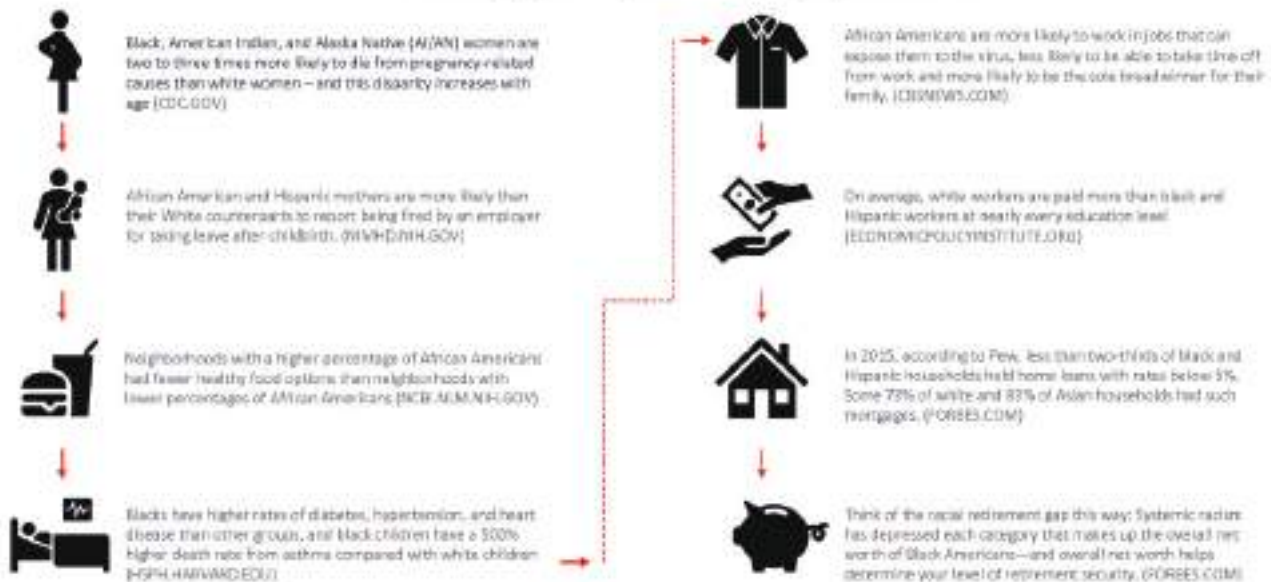
Here I am considering actual surfaces and how they might intersect with my project: burned wood, colored stacked rock, striations of rammed earth, recycled plastic used as cladding, deep surface fractures, soft layering & sharp points.

Design Probe III : Experience

This design probe considered lived experience and was meant to accompany interviews such as the Case Study listed in Topic II. This required examination of a condition related to the chosen topic. As concerns around the Transatlantic Slave Trade and stolen time rest at the core of this project, a deeper examination of their specific disenfranchisement was completed. Later, this research helped inform how time could work for Black people instead of against them.

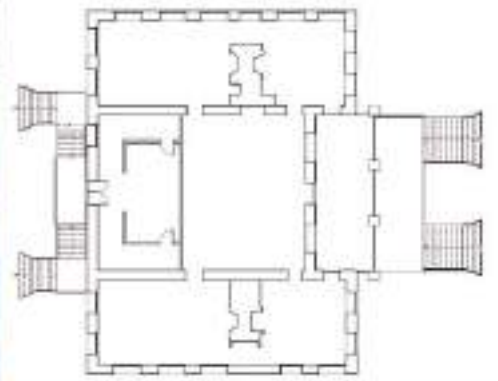
CONSIDERATIONS OF TIME AND THE DISPROPORTIONATE IMPACT ON BLACK, INDIGENOUS & POVERTY-STRICKEN POPULATIONS

It's been said that time is money. Money provides more than wealth, it provides Time.
So how might you bankrupt a community by temporal starvation?



Process Collage

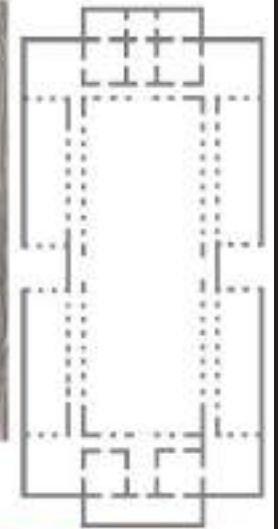
The items here are a part of the constantly evolving process work that was completed to develop the final graphic novel. Each space from Chapter 2-9 was carefully reconstructed/invented using inspiration images, materials, and concepts. Some of those initial thoughts, are represented here.



RECOVER



RECEIVE



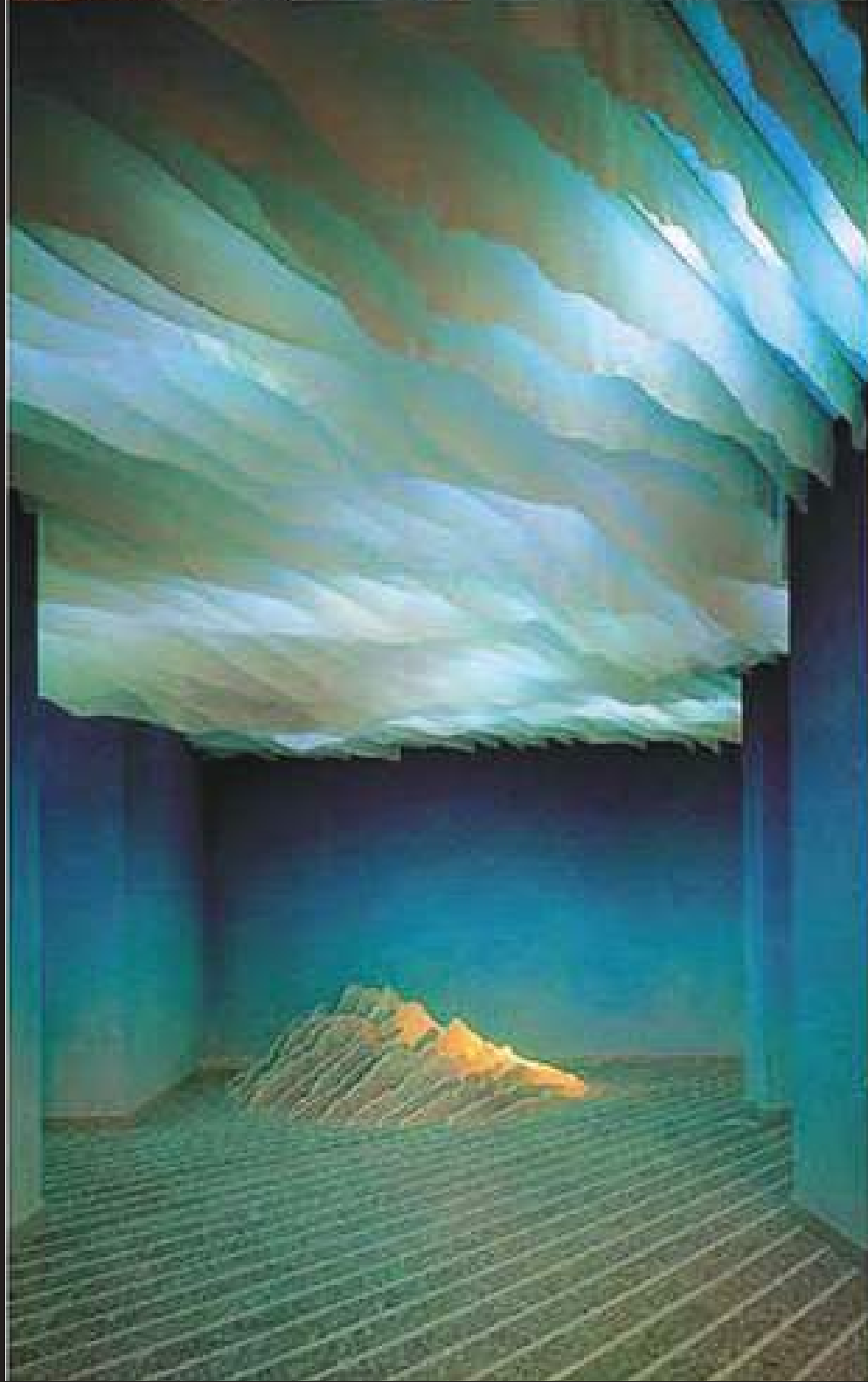


RECONNECT



REINVENT





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