

Reflection  
Architecture of Contiguity  
**A BATHHOUSE & LIBRARY IN  
SULTANGAZI, ISTANBUL**

Tou U (Mathew) Tong

5537762

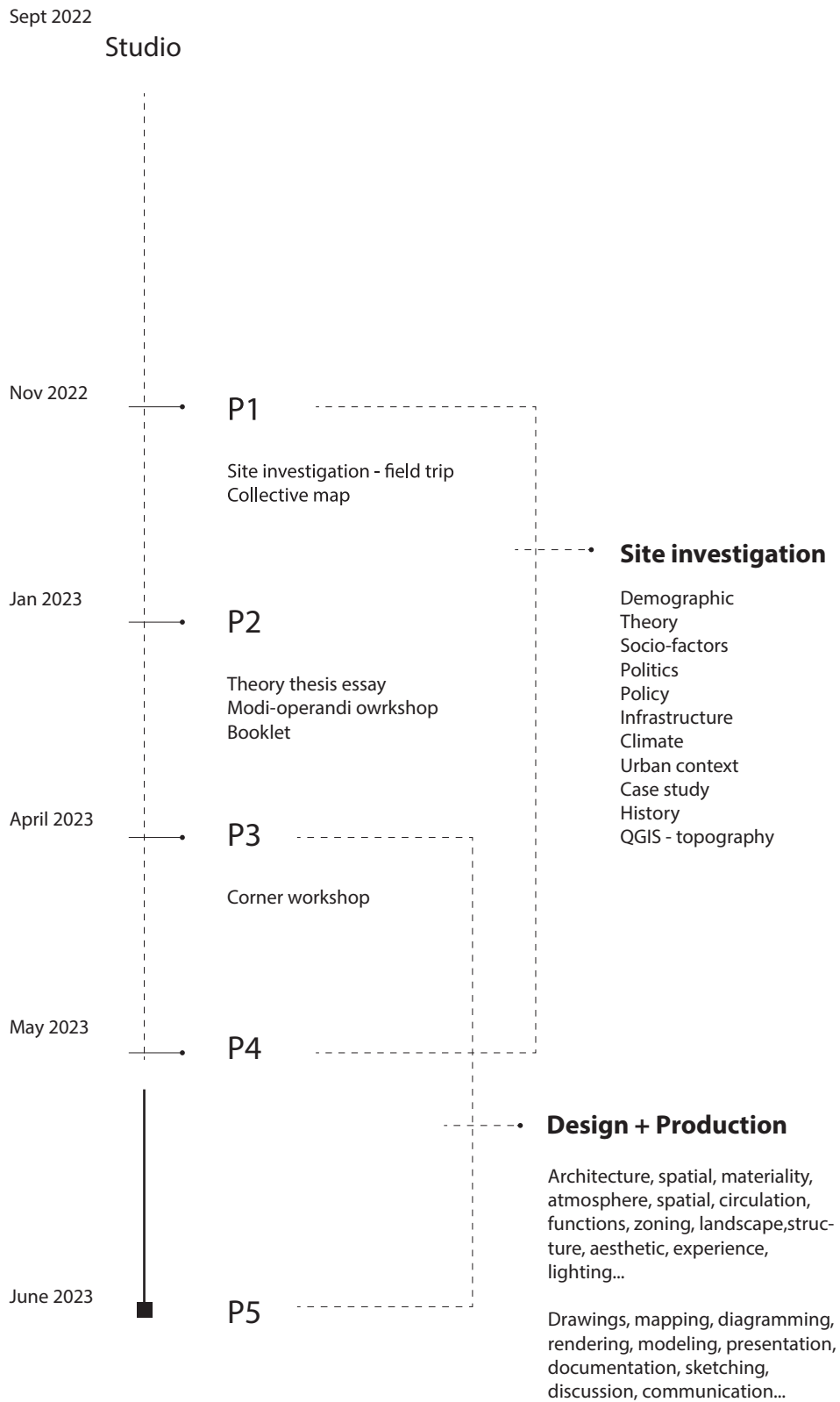
**Borders & Territories 22-23 gradation  
studio**

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Second mentor: Pierre jennen

Tou U (Mathew) Tong  
Borders & Territories 22-23 Graduation - Reflection

Architecture of Contiguity

# Timeline

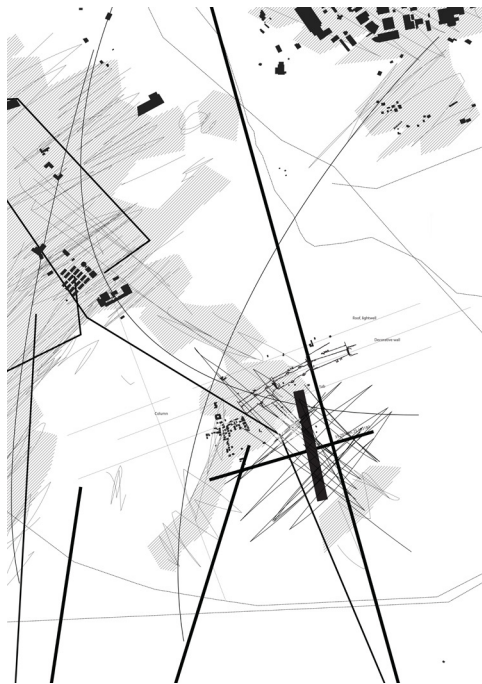


## Methodology

The studio methodology in *Borders & Territories* revolves around the use of “drawings” as a primary medium for various purposes such as documentation, conceptualization, contextualization, realization, and expression of ideas and projects. While conventional drawings are often perceived as two-dimensional representations on a flat surface, the studio emphasizes that they should not be limited to this understanding.

The act of “mapping” holds significant importance in the studio, emphasizing the exploration and understanding of spatial relationships and connections. Additionally, the *Modi operandi* workshop, conducted during the P2 period, introduces three modules focused on “site,” “form,” and “space.” In this workshop, students are encouraged to delve into the concept of “2.5 D,” which involves creating conceptual models that exist in between the two-dimensional and three-dimensional realms.

This workshop serves multiple purposes. It allows students to explore the method of drawings and its application in architectural theory, contest, reasoning, and their relationship to the project. It also introduces critical aspects that expand the students' perspectives. The result of this exploration is promising, particularly in the current project stage (P4), as it enables students to think, observe, and document concepts and notions. The drawings become a system of documentation, akin to a musical notation system, serving as a language for both the project and the specific architecture being developed.



Map. 01

The origin of bathhouse

Each dot and line in the drawings holds significance, representing various elements and ideas. When these individual components come together to form a composition, they create a cohesive and comprehensive “image,” which embodies the essence of the project. Thus, the studio methodology emphasizes the transformative power of drawings, their ability to convey ideas, and their role as a fundamental language of architectural expression.

## Istanbul, Turkey (On paper)

"Diversity", a word that best describes not only the development of Istanbul, but also within the society between social classes, and people from different ethnicity. Istanbul has always been one of the most vivid and busiest cities in the world, sitting in between the East & West, of which the history of it can be traced all the way back to Byzantine Period.

In today, with different regional and political complexity, in particular the middle east region. the city is experiencing national crisis, like illegal migration, terrorism, and poverty, which consequentially affects not only the society but also the spatial development of the city.

The division of Muslims between Sunni and Shia can also be understood as another important factor that contributes to the modern complexity of today Istanbul, while Saudi Arabia was (is still) a Sunni state, Iran was (is still) a Shia state. Both divisions seek external support from neighboring countries, like Kuwait (approached by Sudi Arabia), Iran, Syria, and Yemen (Approached by Iran). This eventually planted seeds of what would become today's situation - "proxy warfare." This domino effect eventually becomes an everyday phenomenon that affects our society, where our lifestyle is experiencing different degrees of disturbance from migrations crisis to global politics. The crisis in middle east eventually made Turkey the land of transit migration, a checkpoint to the West. Just in 2022, there were around 6000 people from Syria used Turkey as a transit point to migrate to the United State, and around 1000 people also from Syria used Turkey, to move to the Netherlands.



Map. 02

The intersection of politics, oil and religion

"The Intersection of Politics, oil, and religion" is a map that attempts to trace the sequential events that happened in the middle east region, using both a numerical annotation system and geographical map to record those situations, overlooking three essential aspects that dictated the development of the area in present days - politics, religion, and foreign interference. This is an example to demonstrate how the method of "drawings" has been applied into visualizing a complex situation in the beginning of the studio (P1), using a numerical system, as well as geographical maps to tell the sequential story of middle east, and international influences.



## Istanbul, Turkey (On site)

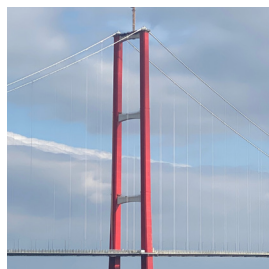
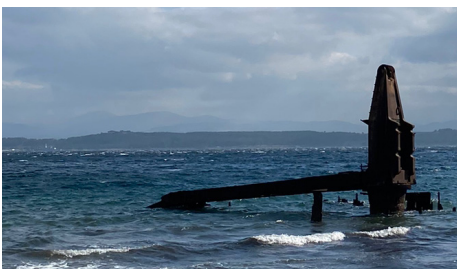
The visit to Istanbul was a captivating experience that exposed me to many intriguing elements. I observed a striking interplay of contrasting scales, wealth disparities, uneven distribution, and a sense of safety and danger throughout the city. The primary objective of our visit was to gain a deeper understanding of the real-life dynamics and context of the city where our architectural projects are located. As a first-time visitor, I initially expected the city's layout to revolve around religious focal points. I imagined the urban fabric would be organized around historically and architecturally significant buildings, with various settlements radiating outward from these central points.

I realized my assumption was partially correct after setting foot in renowned landmarks like Taksim Square, Hagia Sophia, and Galata Port. These sites embodied the essence of Istanbul's historical and religious significance, serving as focal points that shaped the urban fabric around them. However, what struck me the most was the complexity of the city's layout, the diversity of its people and culture, and the remarkable development of modern architecture, technology, and infrastructure.

Attempting to encapsulate the breadth and depth of my experience in Istanbul within a few words feels inherently inadequate. The city's grandeur and allure defy simple descriptions or summaries. It was a place where the historical and the contemporary coexist seamlessly, where ancient architectural marvels stand proudly alongside modern structures. The vibrant streets pulsed with life, revealing a tapestry of cultures, traditions, and stories throughout the city's fabric.

Every corner of Istanbul seemed to hold its narrative, an amalgamation of past and present, tradition and innovation. The labyrinthine streets of the Grand Bazaar whispered tales of centuries-old trade and craftsmanship, while the bustling waterfront promenades showcased the city's modern aspirations and global connectivity. Moreover, Istanbul's topographical diversity added another layer of fascination. From the picturesque shores of the Bosphorus to the awe-inspiring hills crowned by historic landmarks, the city offered breathtaking views that further heightened its allure. The seamless integration of natural landscapes and built environments created a harmonious coexistence, inviting contemplation and appreciation of Istanbul's unique setting.

Throughout my visit, I was constantly reminded of Istanbul's indescribable richness and depth. It is a place where the past converges with the present, diverse cultures intertwine, and architectural wonders tell stories of bygone eras. The experience left an indelible impression on me, igniting a passion for delving deeper into the city's complexities and exploring how I, as an architect, can contribute to shaping its future.





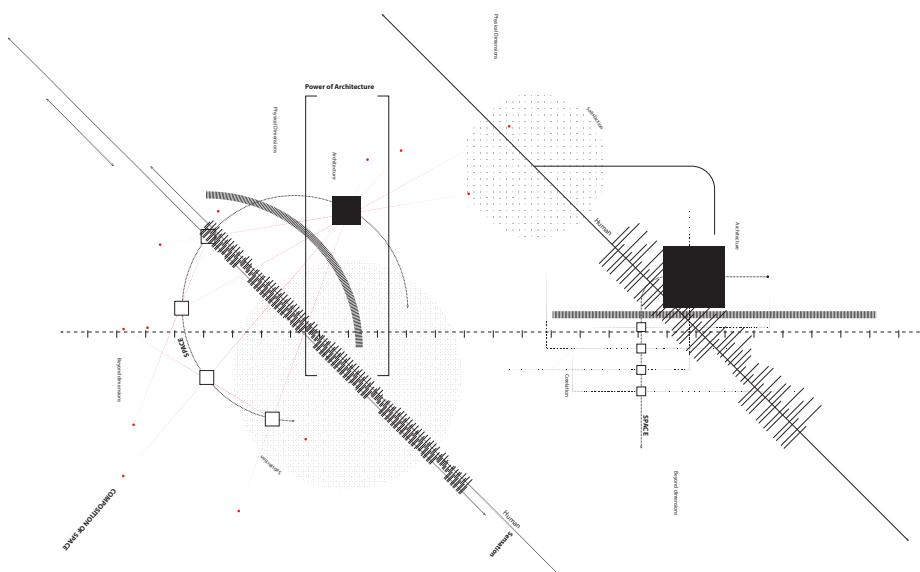
# Thesis - Titled "Hidden spaces - beyond dimensions: A research on the correlation between the composition of "space", sensation, and the "Power of Architecture".

The study of space and intangibility in architecture aims to expand our understanding and appreciation of the multifaceted nature of "space." It is important to recognize that "space" encompasses more than just physical dimensions, including intangible aspects that shape our experiences within architectural environments.

Architecture is the embodiment of spatial expression, offering opportunities for humans to navigate, measure, anticipate, project, and construct perceptions. The language of space consists of various spatial manipulative methods and tools that influence the way we perceive and interact with our physical surroundings. These methods range from theoretical concepts and educational insights to personal experiences that inspire and inform our architectural practices. Tangible tools, such as doors, windows, and walls, also affect human behavior by facilitating or restricting certain actions within a space.

However, it is essential to acknowledge that "space" extends beyond what our senses can perceive. The allure and impact of visually dominant architectural creations often lead us to believe that "space" ends where the site boundaries of a plot of land conclude. Yet, the realm of "space" transcends these limits, existing in dimensions that go beyond immediate comprehension.

By studying and exploring the intangible qualities of "space," we aim to understand how architecture influences our perception, emotions, and interactions within an environment. It is through this exploration that we can create truly meaningful and transformative architectural interventions. Architects can design spaces that resonate with the human experience on a profound level, offering environments that go beyond the physical and engage with the intangible aspects that shape our lives. Ultimately, the goal is to create spaces that evoke emotions, inspire connections, and enhance the quality of human existence.



Map. 04

The position of architecture

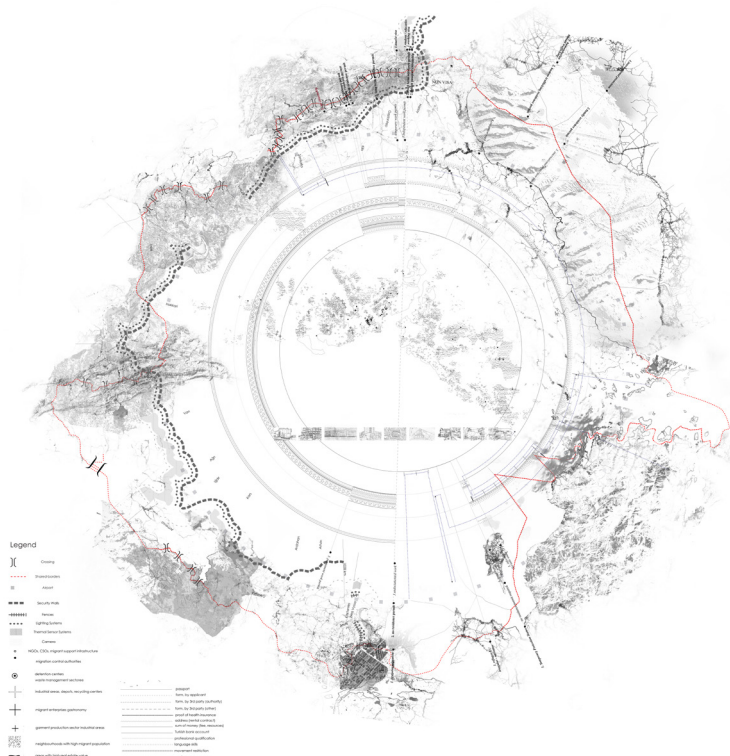
## Collective map

The purpose of creating a collective map in this research is to explore the control mechanisms of migration in the Istanbul region. The map visually represents these mechanisms and their spatial manifestations, going beyond traditional approaches that focus solely on statistical data. It aims to understand how border-scapes function as systems for filtering and controlling human migration.

The collective map serves as a valuable guide in the formation of architectural theory and projects. It challenges the conventional understanding of borders as simple lines on a map and recognizes them as complex social institutions marked by tensions between reinforcement and crossing. By examining the physical and virtual features related to migration control, the map provides insights into the dynamic nature of borders and the shifting role of architects in addressing migration issues.

The map takes into account the global nature of migration flows and their connections to other countries. It acknowledges the legislative aspects of migration control, such as visas, permits, and financial requirements, and their impact on migrants' experiences. It also highlights the social realities on the ground, including economic, social, family, and cultural practices, that incorporate borders into everyday life.

In understanding the multidimensional nature of migration control, the map helps inform the development of architectural interventions that address the challenges faced by migrants. It recognizes the individuality of migrant trajectories, which are influenced by factors like networks, skills, and financial capacity. By considering the complex interplay of physical, social, and cultural aspects, architects can create spaces that respond meaningfully to the experiences of migrants and contribute to more inclusive and equitable environments.



Map. 05  
Migration



## Modi operandi workshop

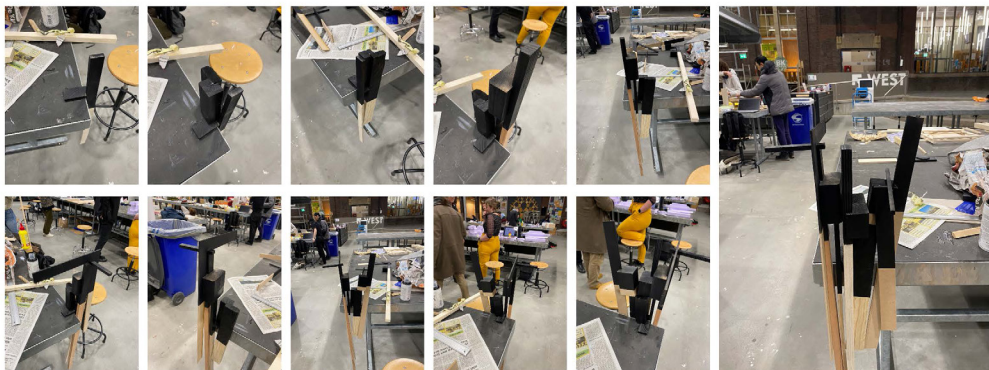
The Modi operandi workshop was a transformative experience that significantly influenced my architectural design and critical thinking. It aimed to challenge traditional notions and techniques by emphasizing the articulation of space, drawings, and architectural projects through the visualization, contextualization, and conceptualization of physical models. However, it went beyond the conventional understanding of three-dimensional models and encouraged us to explore the concept of "2.5 D."

For me, this workshop presented a unique challenge as my educational background had heavily focused on representational techniques. I was accustomed to using traditional architectural elements like walls, roofs, and columns as the primary language of my designs. Therefore, breaking away from this representational approach and shifting towards a model that implied ideas rather than explicitly representing them was a significant departure.

The workshop posed initial challenges, but its ultimate outcome was enlightening and rewarding. It provided a fresh perspective for the next phase of my design project, pushing the boundaries of traditional representation and fostering innovative communication of architectural concepts. I gained valuable skills in expressing ideas in unconventional ways, breaking free from conventional constraints.

The workshop deepened my understanding of the relationship between space, drawings, and architectural projects. It expanded my design thinking, challenging preconceived notions and encouraging exploration of new approaches. Through dynamic visualization and conceptualization, I explored innovative design solutions.

During the workshop, my second model focusing on "Form" led to the formulation of essential keywords like "Balance," "Equality," "Collective," and "Gathering." These guided my decision-making and informed the design process, shaping the direction of my project.



Modi operandi workshop

Model 02. Site

## Sultangazi, Istanbul

By employing mapping techniques, a comprehensive understanding of the space and site selected for my graduation project has been achieved. The intersection chosen serves as a microcosm of Istanbul, revealing its fragmented nature and offering insights into potential future development, both spatially and socially. With a high concentration of young residents and a diverse mix of ethnicities, including Bulgarian migrants and Turks, the neighborhood holds promise for growth and transformation.

To gain deeper insights into the site, it was imperative to identify its distinct borders. Firstly, there is the presence of the eight-lane Istanbul Cevre Yolu, a prominent infrastructure that divides the area and restricts meaningful interactions among its inhabitants. Additionally, natural borders, carefully preserved by the authorities, further segregate the two districts, visually isolating the northern settlements and hindering access to vital public amenities, such as transportation.

Moreover, mapping has revealed stark disparities in land use and topology within the junction itself, highlighting the diverse characteristics and typologies present in the area.

The utilization of mapping techniques has proven instrumental in establishing a solid conceptual framework for my graduation project. Through this process, a comprehensive understanding of the site's dynamics and existing conditions has been gained, providing valuable insights that inform my design approach. The visual representation of spatial divisions and borders obtained through mapping has deepened my comprehension of the site's intricacies.

The application of mapping has been pivotal in unraveling the complexities of the chosen space and site. It has facilitated the recognition of social, spatial, and infrastructural factors that shape the area. Armed with this knowledge, I can now navigate the design process with a comprehensive understanding of the site's preexisting conditions, effectively addressing its unique challenges and harnessing its potentials.



The intersection

The site and its surrounding

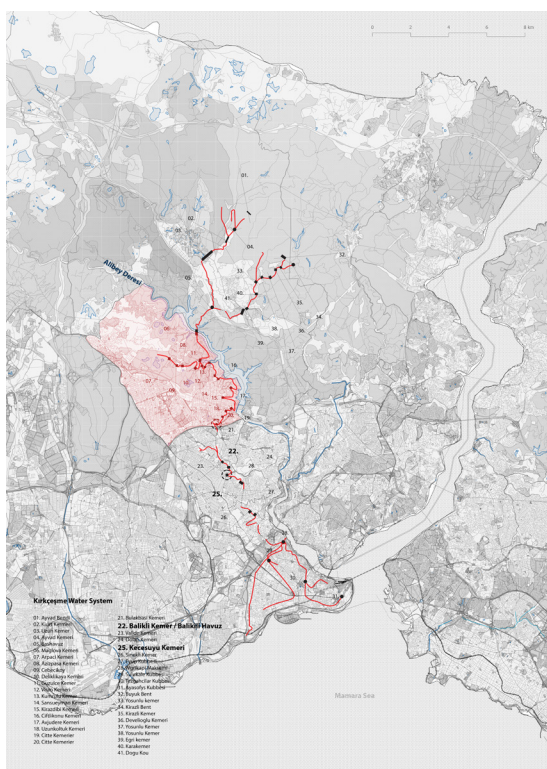
## Aqueduct & a ditch - A historical find from the site - the Balikli Kemeri Aqueduct 125m in length.

The aqueduct, an integral part of the Kirkcesme Water System constructed by Ottoman architect Mimar Sinan in 1563, played a crucial role in the water supply of the lower stream. This impressive water infrastructure consisted of 33 aqueducts, four dams, and seven water intake places with sedimentation pools. Reflecting on our visit to Istanbul, it sparked contemplation on the significance of water.

Water, acting as a connector between the East and West, holds immense importance in Istanbul's unique geographical location. The city's water channels, including the renowned strait linking the Black Sea to international waters, have shaped its architectural, economic, and military identity. However, while water has brought fame to Istanbul, it has also brought challenges, particularly concerning its complex maritime borders with neighboring countries spanning different continents.

This regional complexity has resulted in migrants from the Middle East seeking water as a pathway to hope, striving for a better future and escaping conflict, terrorism, and wars. Their perilous journey to the far West puts them on a delicate precipice, as the Union has implemented surveillance systems and armed forces to combat human trafficking and safeguard their borders. Tragically, the sea has become a site of chaos, claiming the lives of countless individuals, including innocent children, in their pursuit of a chance at life.

Amidst the use of water as a means of separation, a thought arises: Can water also serve as a source of connection? Can architecture provide a platform and common ground that fosters equality in a divided society? This notion prompts contemplation about designing spaces that integrate water, offering a shared space that encourages unity and equality among people.



Map. 06

Kirkcesme Water System



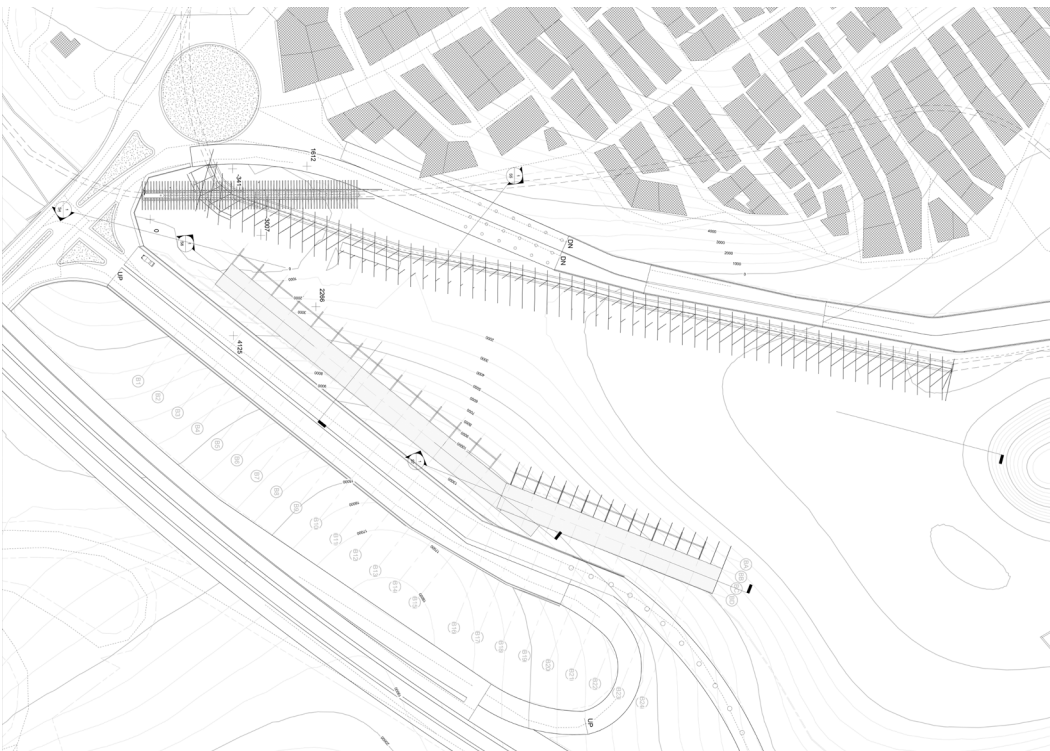
## Design studio - Research design - Design reserach

The design studio has played a crucial role in the finalization of my project. Through a combination of research, design, discussions, and tutoring, it has acted as the driving force behind the project's progress. Personally, the constant production of "drawings" and "mapping" has been instrumental in visualizing and addressing unidentified issues. Each iteration of production has led to new perspectives and fresh ideas.

My chosen program focuses on a bathhouse and library, both serving as community-oriented projects that foster gathering and communication. The linearization of the site has guided the orientation, shape, and form of the architecture. After weeks of iterations, the architecture now sits alongside the highway, respecting the existing site conditions. However, due to time constraints, the landscape remains untouched for now, and I plan to design it during the completion of P5. The landscape will follow the logic of the architecture, as initially intended.

These decisions have been the result of tireless discussions during tutorials and design iterations. Each tutorial session has provided valuable insights and feedback that have shaped the project's direction. Through this iterative process and ongoing discussions, the project has evolved and reached its current state of conclusion.

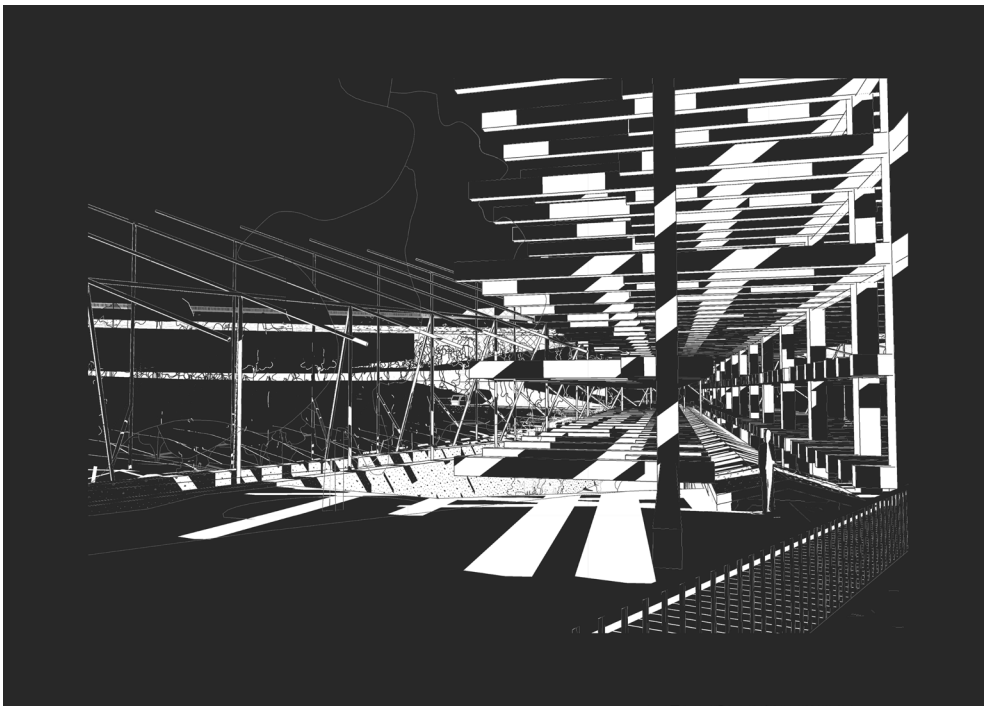
### Landscape iterations



Site

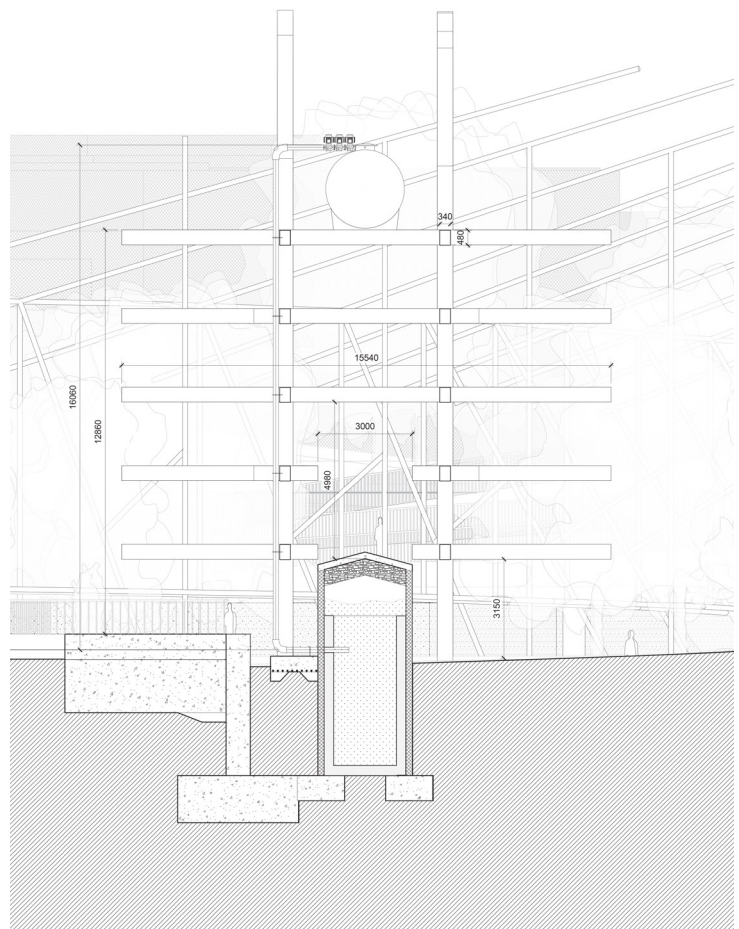
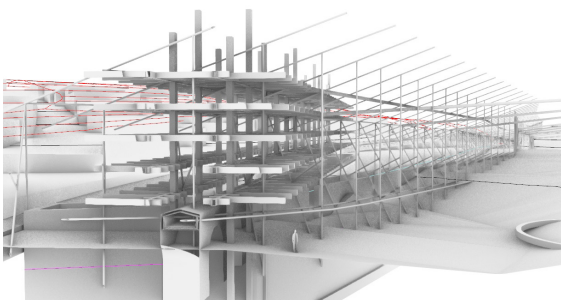
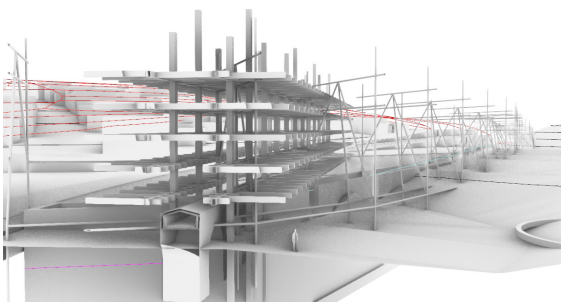
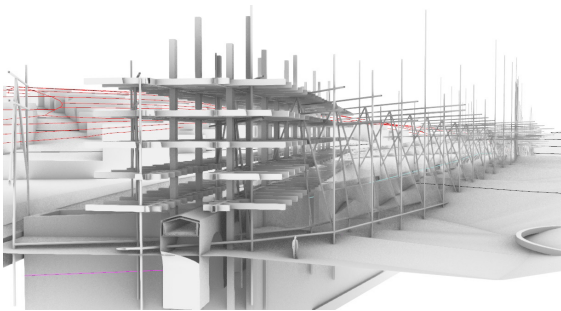
Site plan - Dated 5 weeks after P2





Perspective

Aqueduct & the Ditch  
(Entrance of the project)



Iterations

The conflict of water

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Section

Tap-in moment

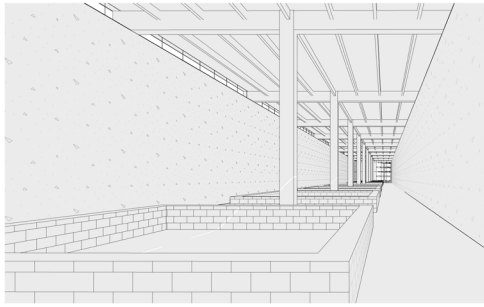
Architecture of Contiguity



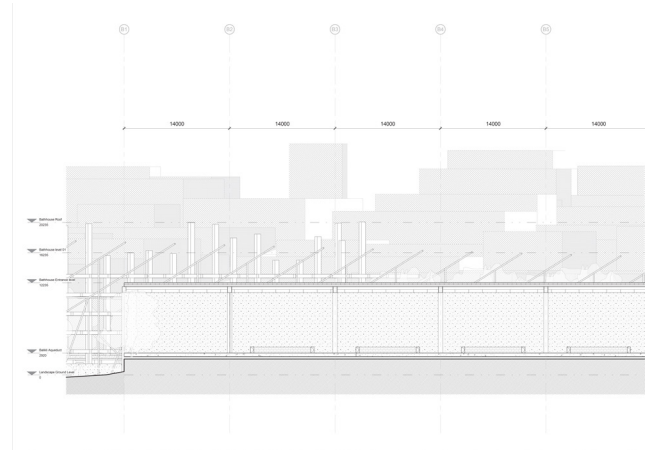
Aqueduct & the Ditch elevation



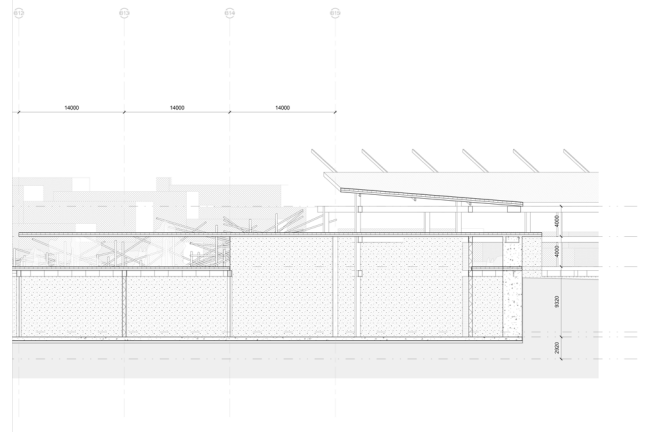
# Architecture iterations



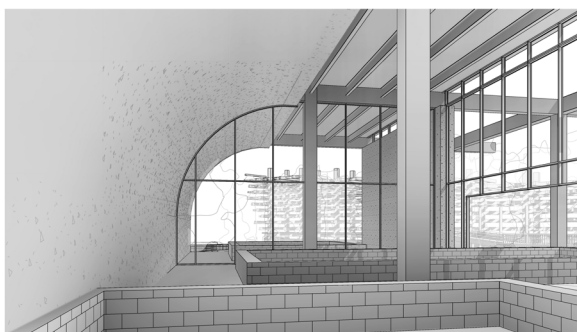
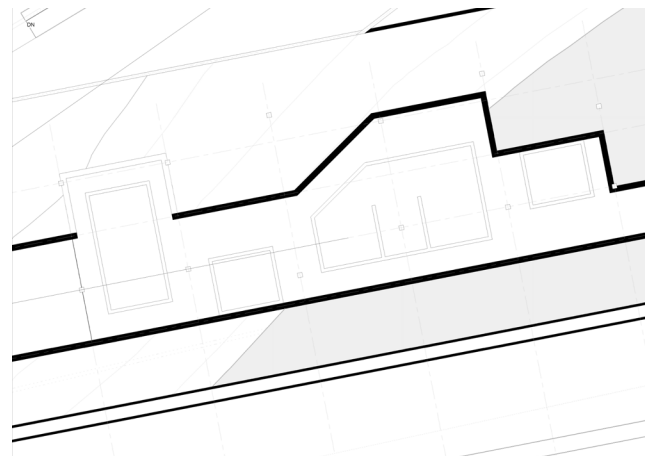
5 weeks after P2



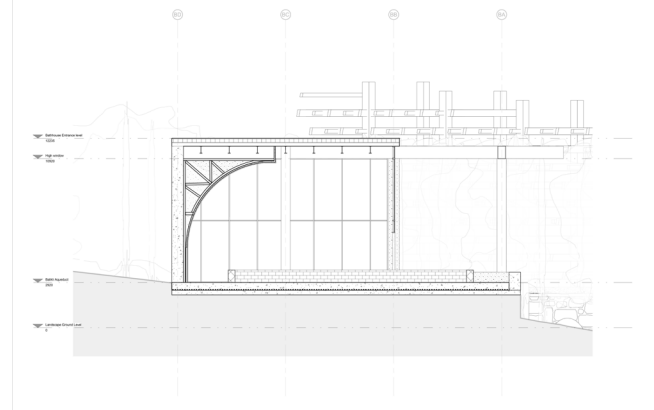
6 weeks after P2



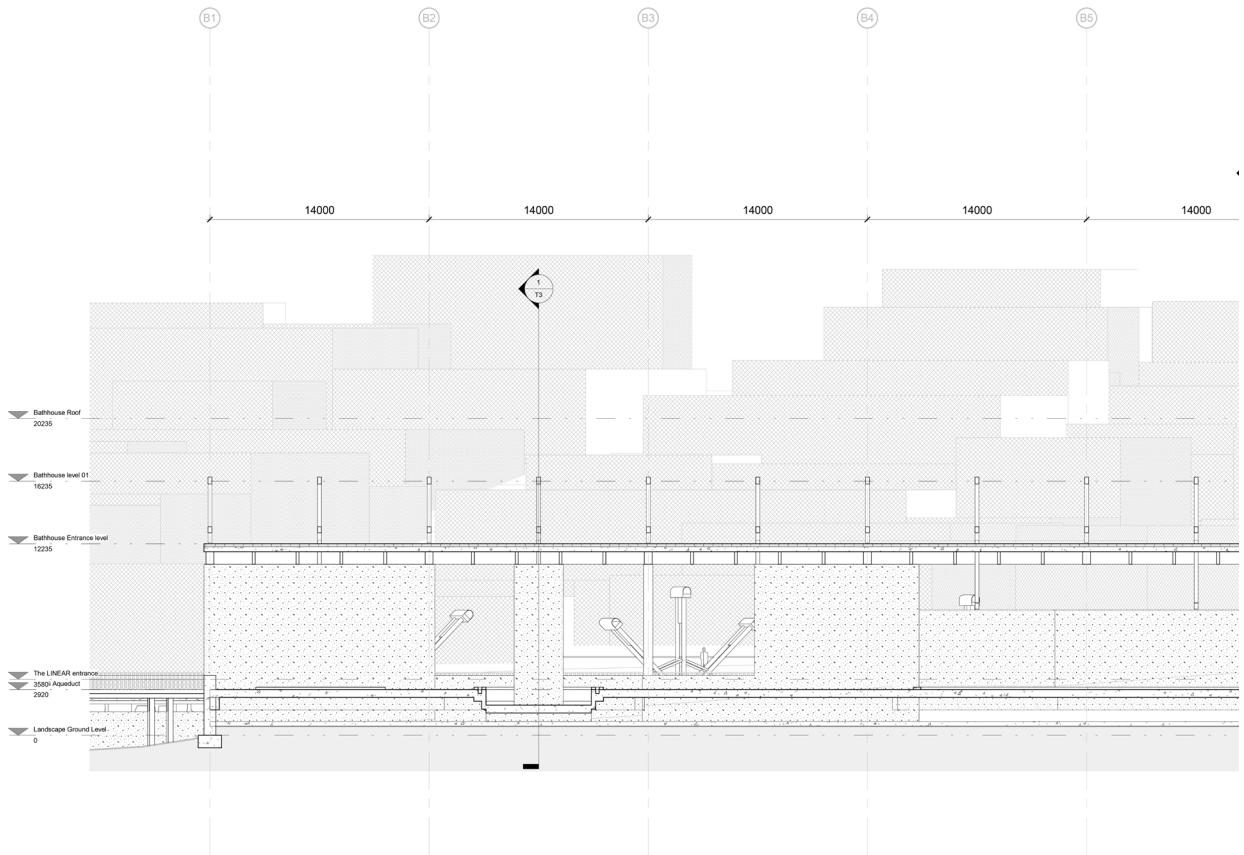
7 weeks after P2



8 weeks after P2







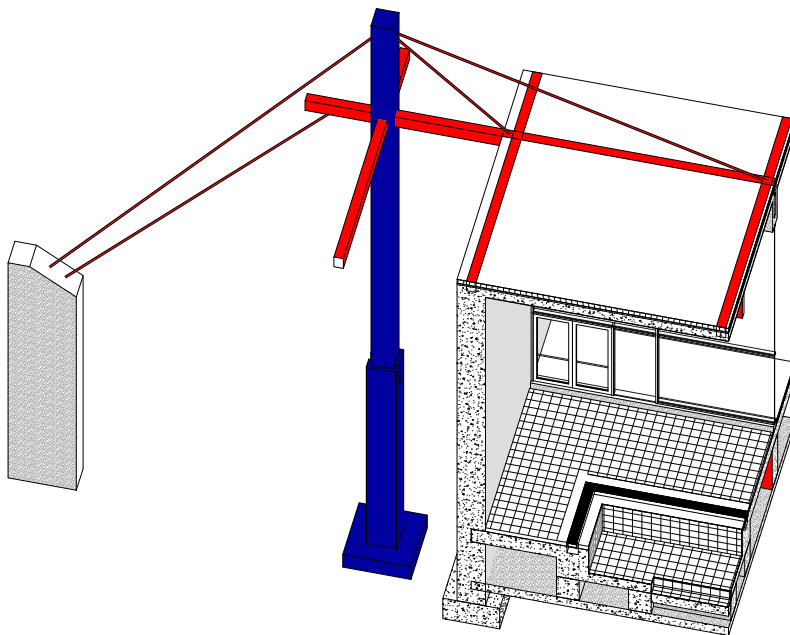
9 weeks after p2

## Corner workshop

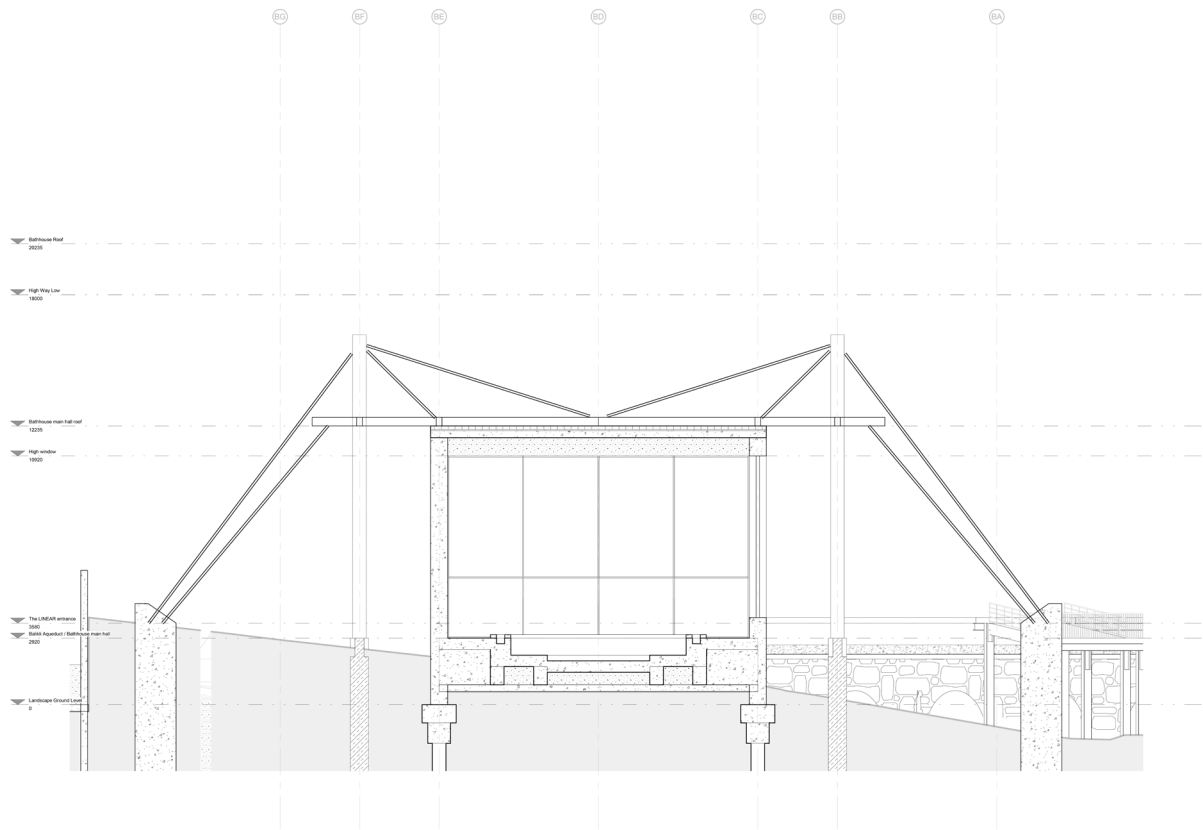
The Corner workshop, which took place before P4, focused on model making and specifically emphasized the development of a design segment. In my project, the concept of "Balance" has always been paramount, where the architecture should convey a sense of continuity within the interior space and express the idea of balance conceptually. To bring this concept to life, I chose to focus on the roofing element for the corner workshop, aiming to create a model that represented a balanced roof design.

This workshop provided a valuable opportunity to understand the physical constraints and challenges that arise when translating architectural designs into reality. I quickly realized that the process was more complex than initially anticipated. Despite the difficulties, I successfully created a 1:35 physical model of the corner of the bathhouse, which effectively showcased the expression of the "Roof" concept (pictures of the model will be displayed during P4 to illustrate the design process).

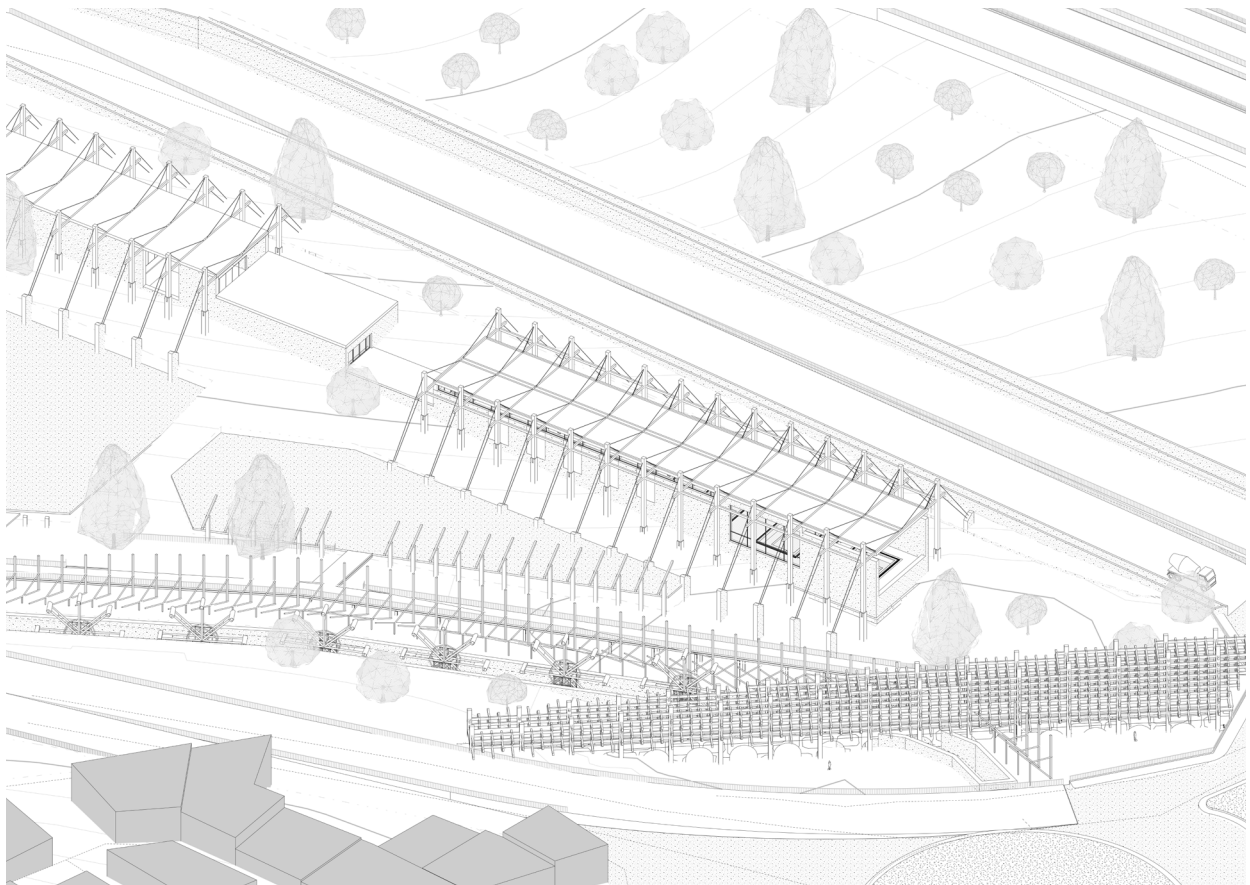
Following the P3 presentation, I engaged in ongoing discussions with my mentors to explore alternative solutions for the design. The objective was to achieve a more subtle and contextually fitting approach that would yield maximum results with minimal architectural elements and languages. These discussions were aimed at refining the design and finding the most effective design solution.



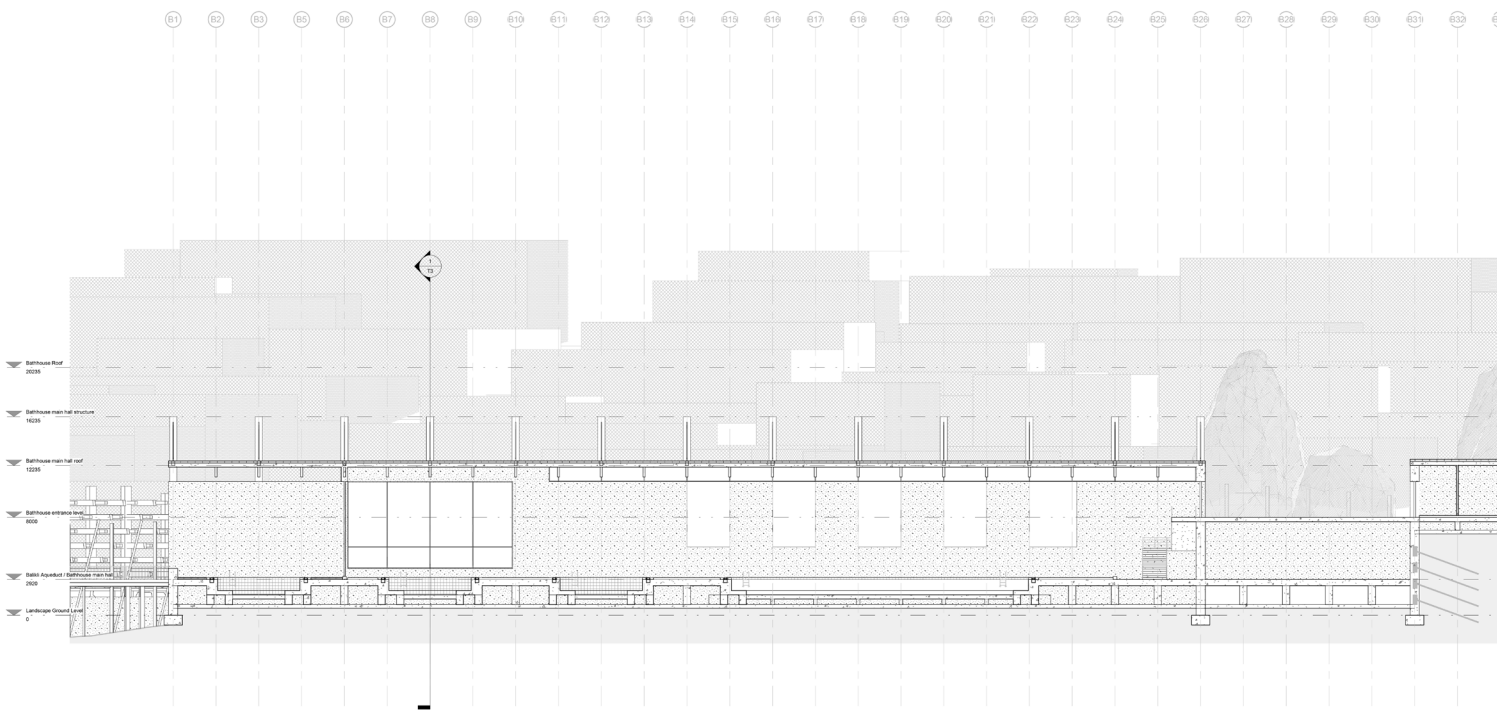
3D Iso  
The corner



Section



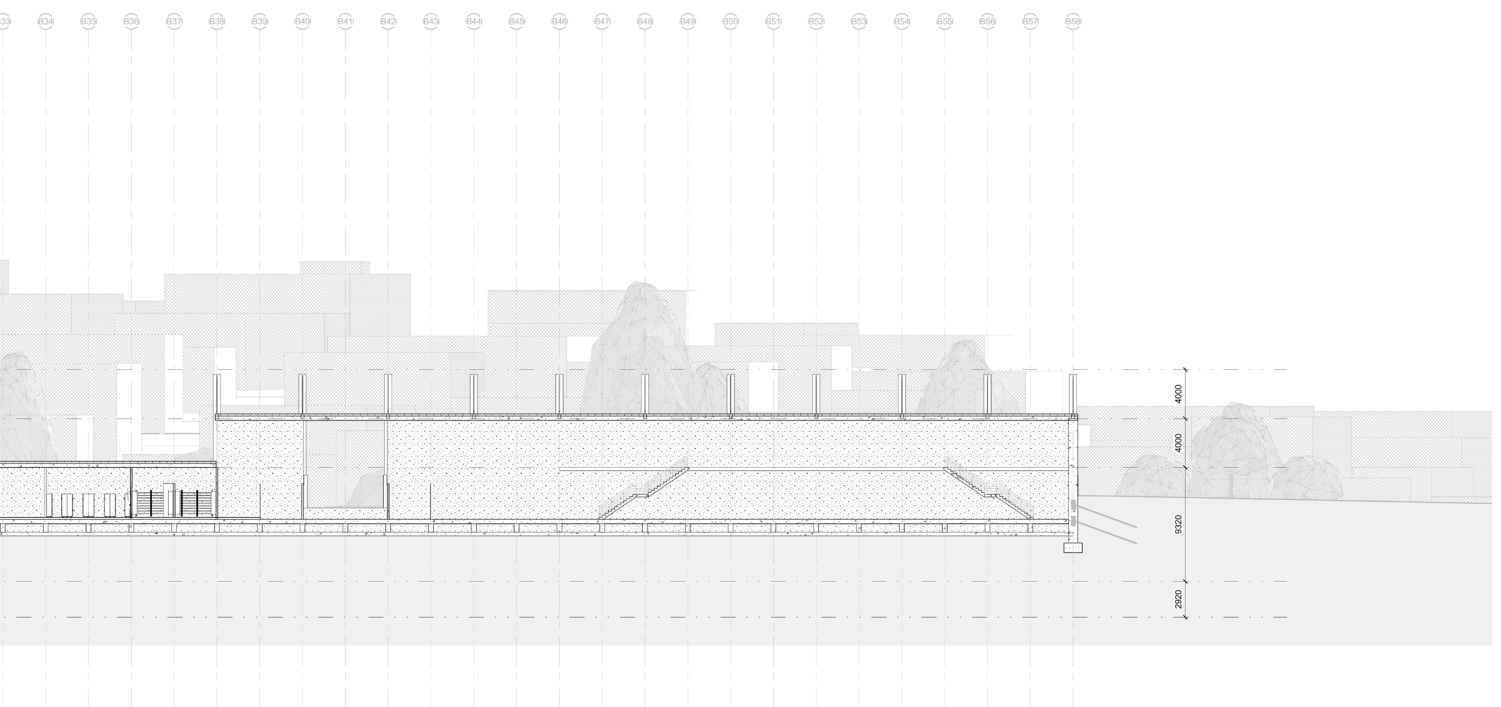
Iso



The Bathhouse & the Library - Long section

Dated: P3





## A Bathhouse & a Library in Sultangazi, Istanbul - Architecture of Contiguity

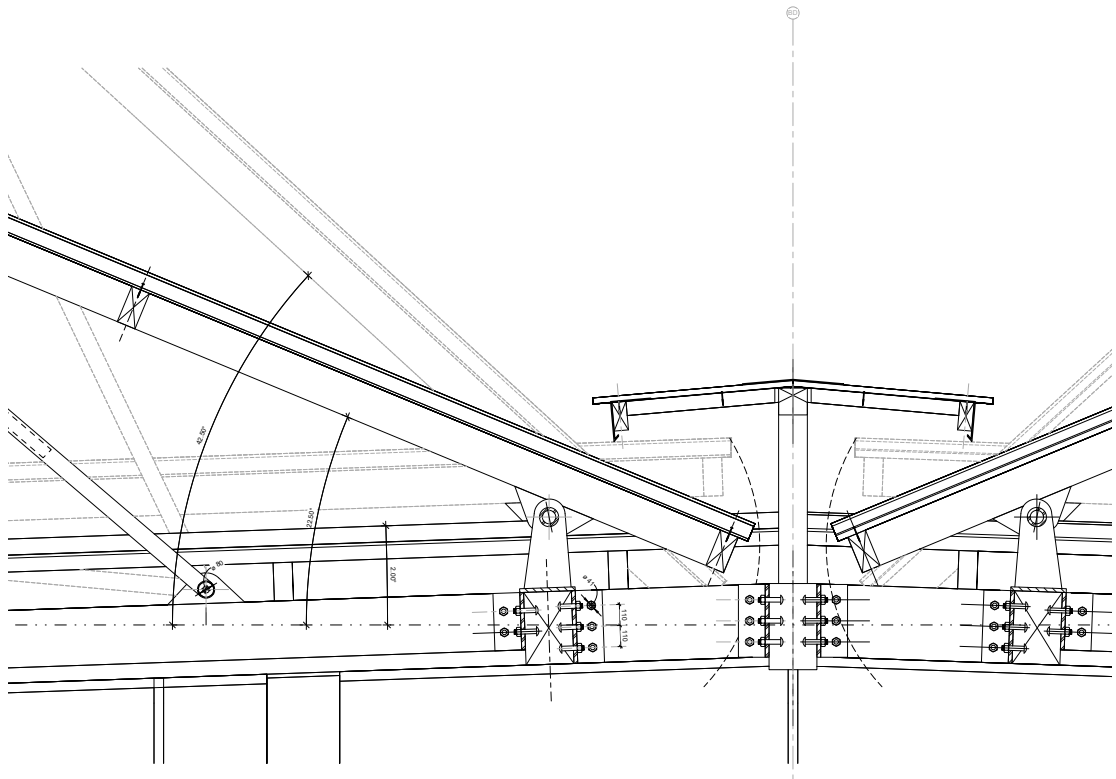
The bath of Sultangazi stands as a symbol of openness, simplicity, equality, and manipulation. It defies the divisions created by social class, ethnicity, and diverse backgrounds, aiming to foster communication, honesty, and transparency. The architecture of the bath reflects these values, expressing equality, directness, and a shared vision for the people of Sultangazi and Istanbul as a whole.

This achievement is the result of nearly nine months of intensive research, encompassing seminars, thesis work, collective mapping, studio sessions, and mentoring by Borders & Territories. While I find the outcome of my project personally promising, I believe there is untapped potential that could have been further developed. In hindsight, it would have been beneficial to allocate tasks related to climate conditions earlier in the process, ensuring a more comprehensive consideration of the impact of environmental factors. Additionally, a deeper exploration of the application and relationship between drawings and architectural theory could have enhanced the overall design.

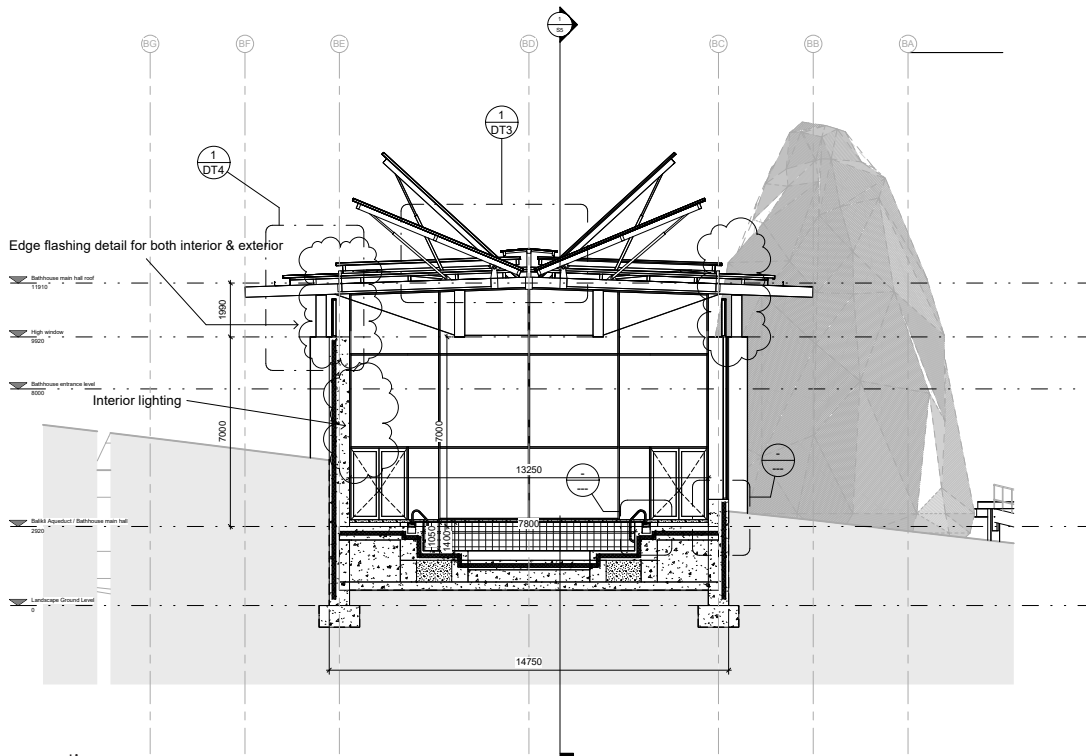
Despite these considerations, the bath of Sultangazi remains a testament to the dedication and effort invested throughout the entire design journey. It embodies the principles of inclusivity and unity, providing a space where individuals from all walks of life can come together, transcending social barriers and fostering a sense of belonging. While there is always room for improvement, the project stands as a testament to the power of architecture in creating spaces that promote equality, understanding, and a shared sense of purpose.



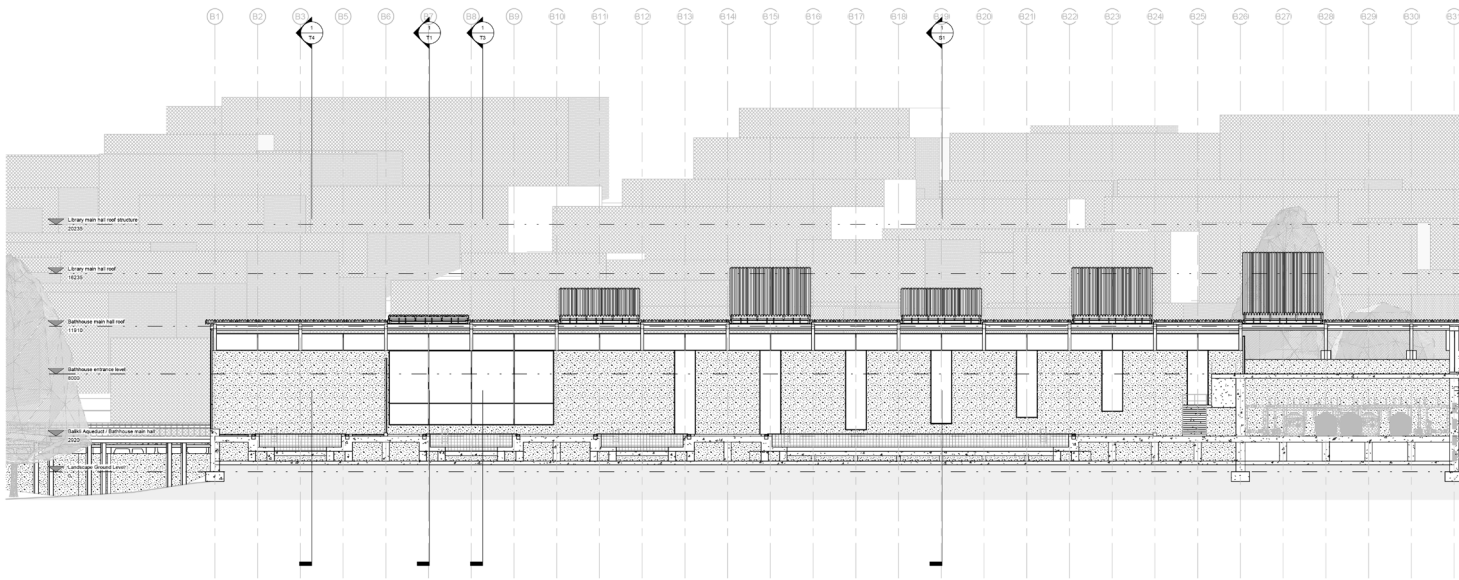
Bathhouse  
Perspective



Detail - Roof



Typical Bathhouse section



The Bathhouse & the Library - Long section

