

The thesis takes a theoretical approach in liberating the earlier social condenser concept by creating an alternative typology that dissolve and adapt to the social situations, capturing traces of change and identity within the socialist context of Cuba.

SEED OF HAVANA DISSOLVING CONDENSER

an alternative socio-spatial preservation typology in Cuba

02 SEED OF HAVANA
DISSOLVING CONDENSER

Building on the spirit of collectivity and equal right to the city that Cuba has developed over the past 60 years of post-revolution era, the thesis takes a theoretical approach to invigorate the revolution aspirations by liberating Soviet Constructivists' social condenser concept.

"The only real voyage of discovery consists not in seeking new landscapes but in having new eyes."

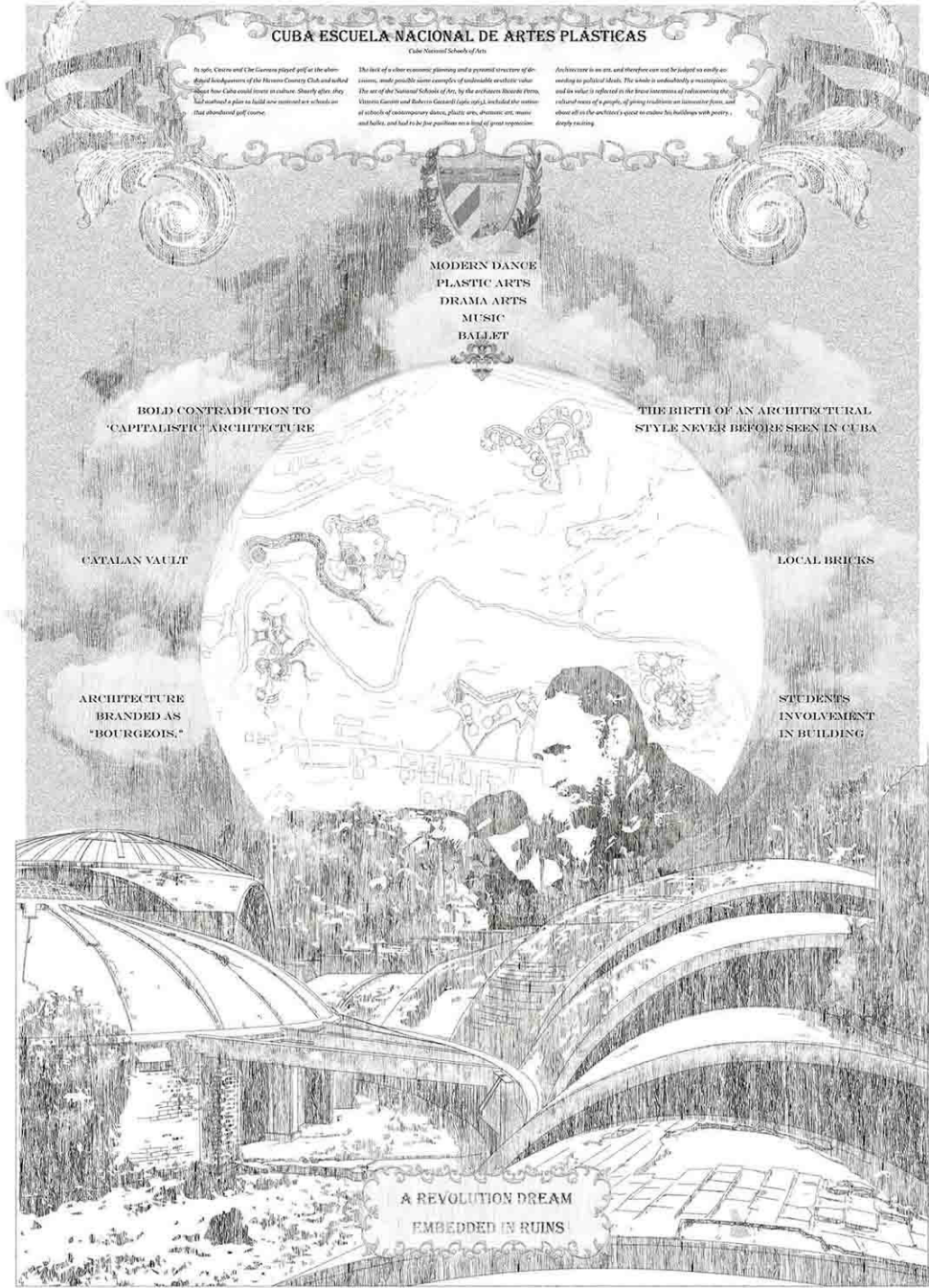
Marcel Proust

Challenging the architect's pride in creating exquisite, the project proposes an alternative architectural approach where the proposed scheme appears, dissolves and reappears across the city.

The SEEDS (Socio-Economic Empowerment Device) act as the dissolving condensers which are distributed and injected across the urban voids to construct situations for collective empowerment. The thesis mediates between the socialist structure and the rapid arrival of global capitalists in Cuba, forming a gentle subversion against the conventional façade-centric heritage conservation approach.

The proposed condensers - SEEDs growing from the voids forge new collective hope in rebuilding the city and reassembling architecture from crumbling façade leftovers, an evident Cuban resiliency of 'creating something out of nothing'.

The project becomes a process in perpetuity and eventually the city itself evolves into an ultimate version of new condenser of our time.



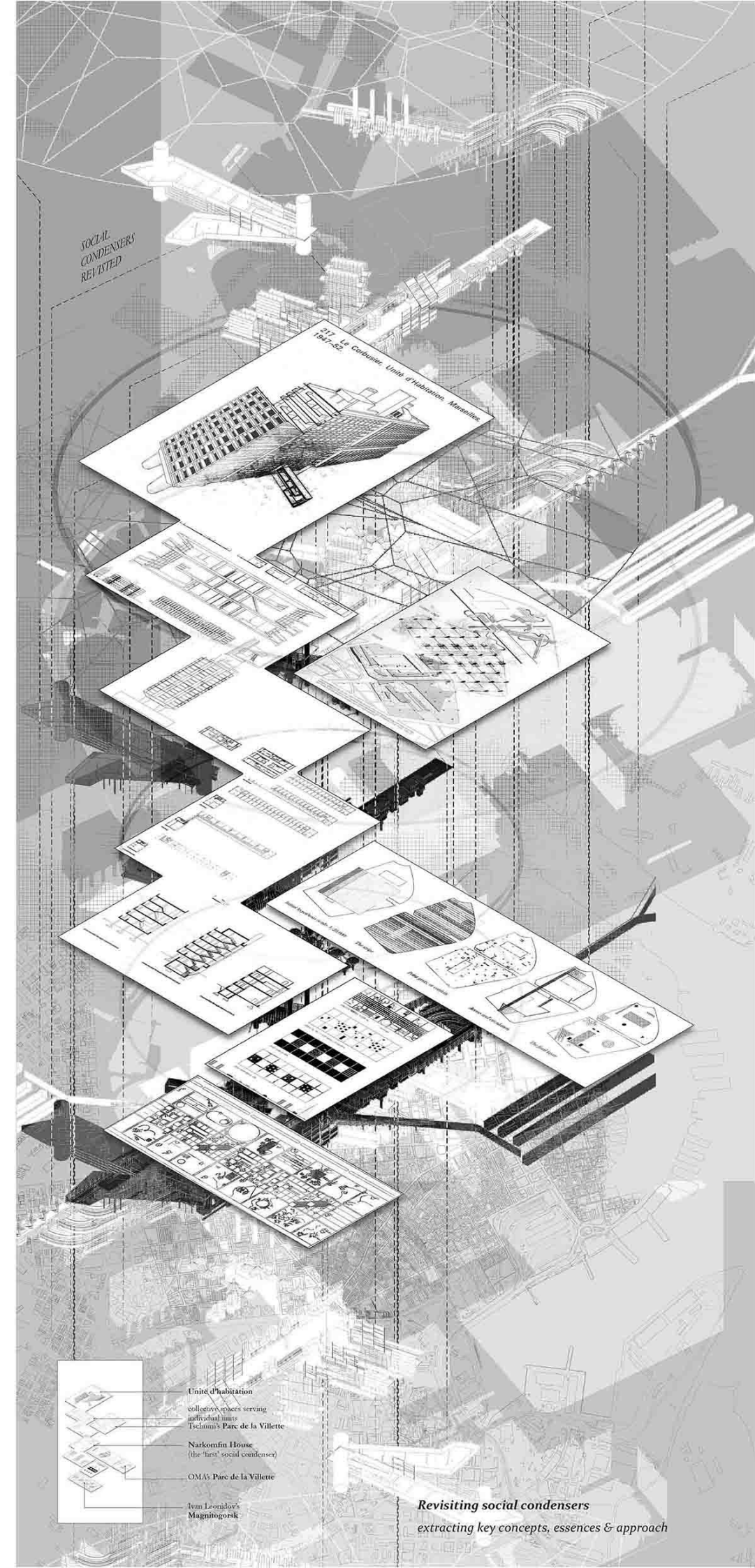
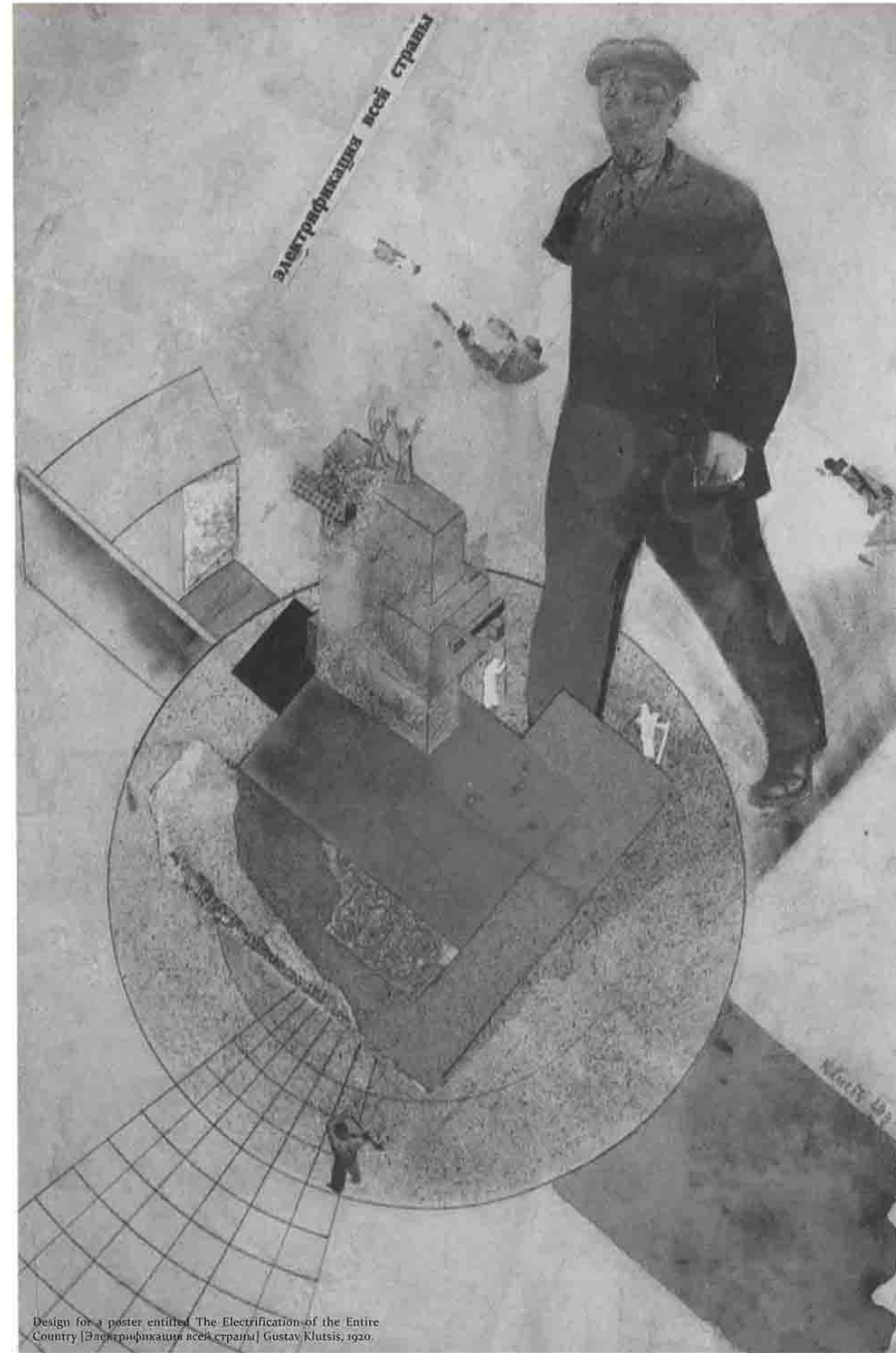
LEARNING FROM
SOCIAL CONDENSER

"VISION FOR COMPLETELY NEW KINDS OF HUMAN COMMUNITIES, AN ARCHITECTURAL DEVICE FOR ELECTRIFYING PEOPLE INTO A COMMUNIST WAY OF LIFE."

Constructivist

"... THE NEED FOR A SOCIAL-COLLECTIVE LIFE - THE WILL OF THE ARCHITECT IN THE CREATION OF A NEW ORGANISM - THE SOCIAL CONDENSER OF OUR TIME."

Moisei Ginzburh



Unité d'habitation
collective spaces serving individual units
Tschumi's Parc de la Villette
Natomfin House
(the first social condenser)
OMAS Parc de la Villette
Ivan Leonov's
Magnitogorsk

Revisiting social condensers
extracting key concepts, essences & approach

03 **BEHIND THE CHARM**
LIES A CRUMBLING CITY

Crumbling city and spaces of possibilities

Behind the colorful facades and lavish colonial architecture lies the everyday lives of the local Cubans. Looking beyond the surfaces allow another level of understanding of Havana under the egalitarian state and over half a century of U.S. embargo.

Crumbling buildings remains as people dwellings despite the apparent health and safety risks because of severe lack of income and resources for the people.



Scene from the film "Godfather II"



The charm of Havana

CUBA FOR SALE

**HAVANA IS
 NOW THE
 BIG CAKE
 EVERYONE
 WANTS A
 SLICE**

**The
 Guardian**

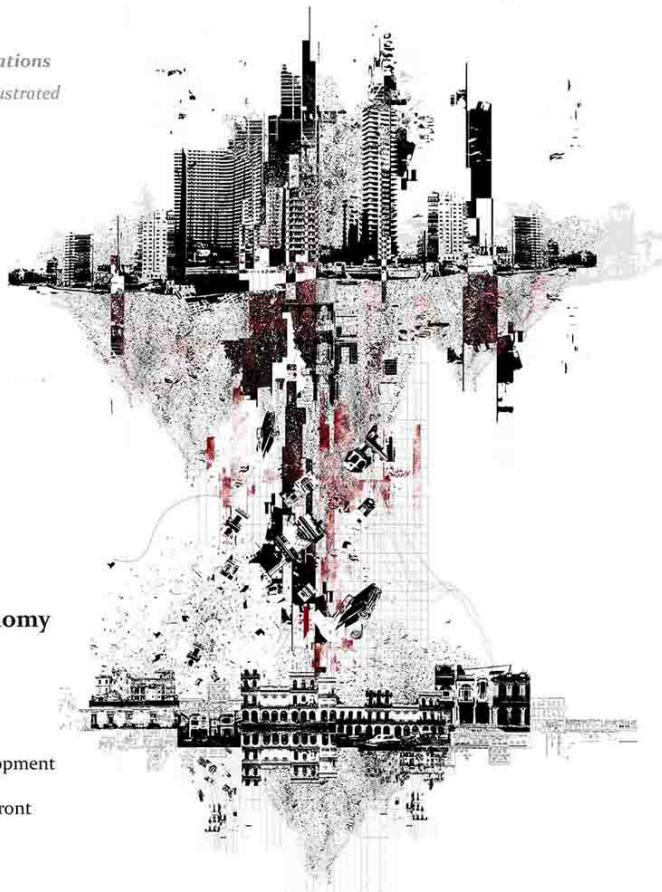
04 SPIRIT OF HAVANA
[DE]COLLAGED

de-collage & extract the situations
social and spatial conditions illustrated

De-collage:
Taking apart the presented
front to reveal the hidden.

Havana faces critical
situations of losing its
uniqueness due to the
uncertainties from political
and economical issues.

The recent tourism boom sees
instant benefits and diverts
most attention to cater to
the needs of the foreigners,
creating a greater imbalance in
society and daily life.

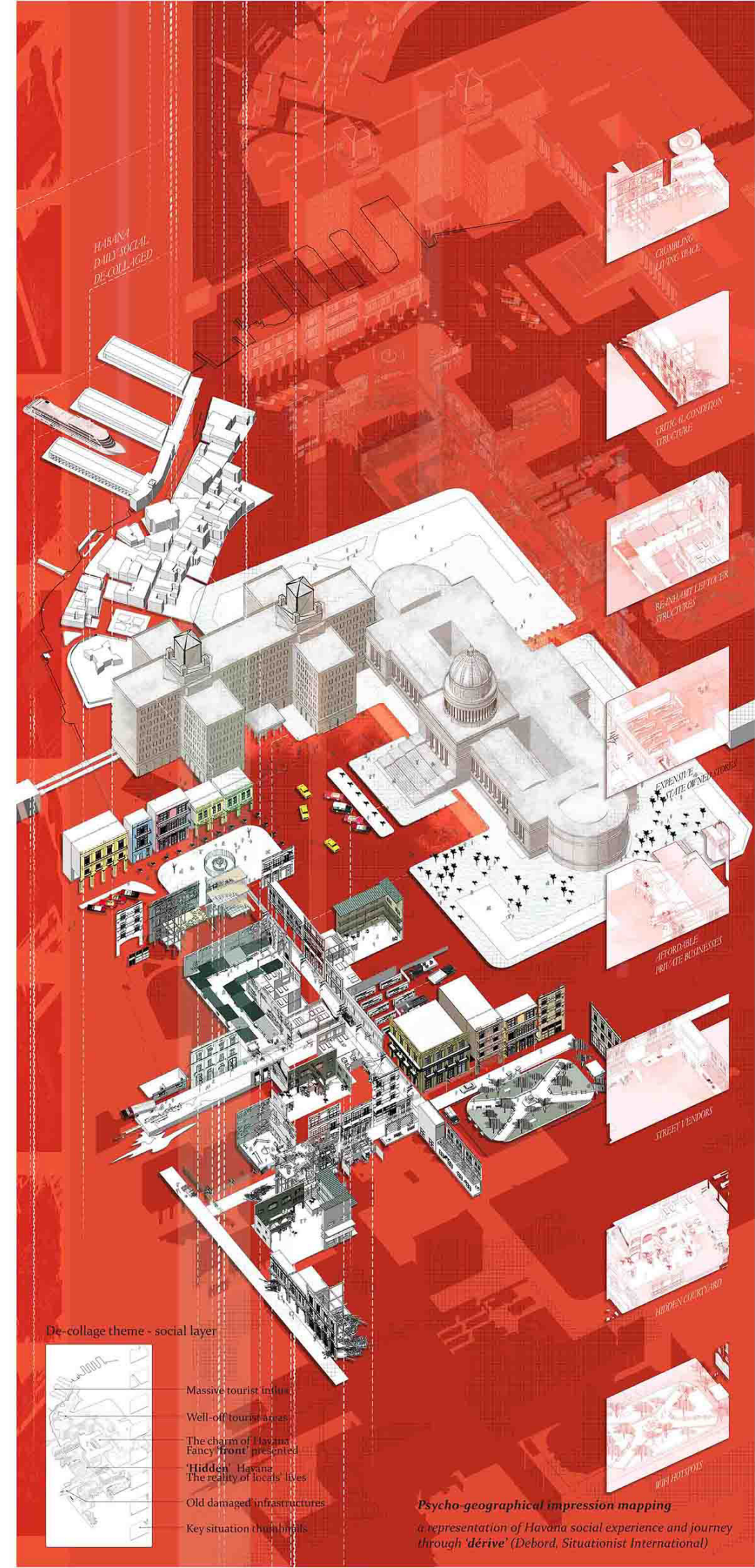
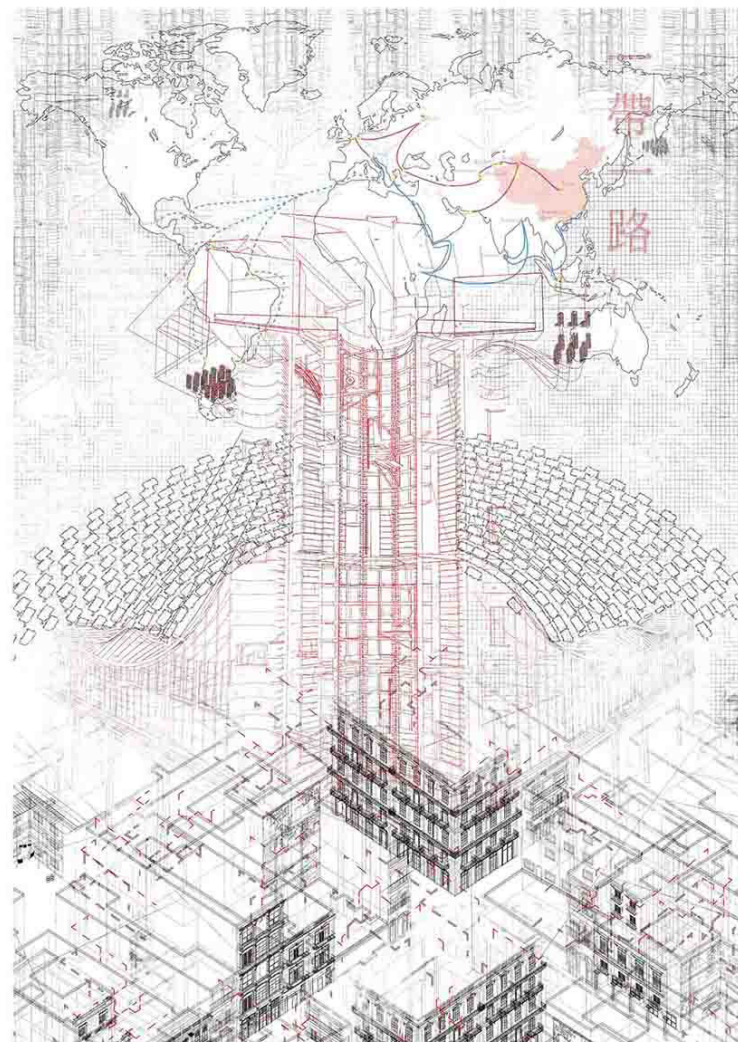
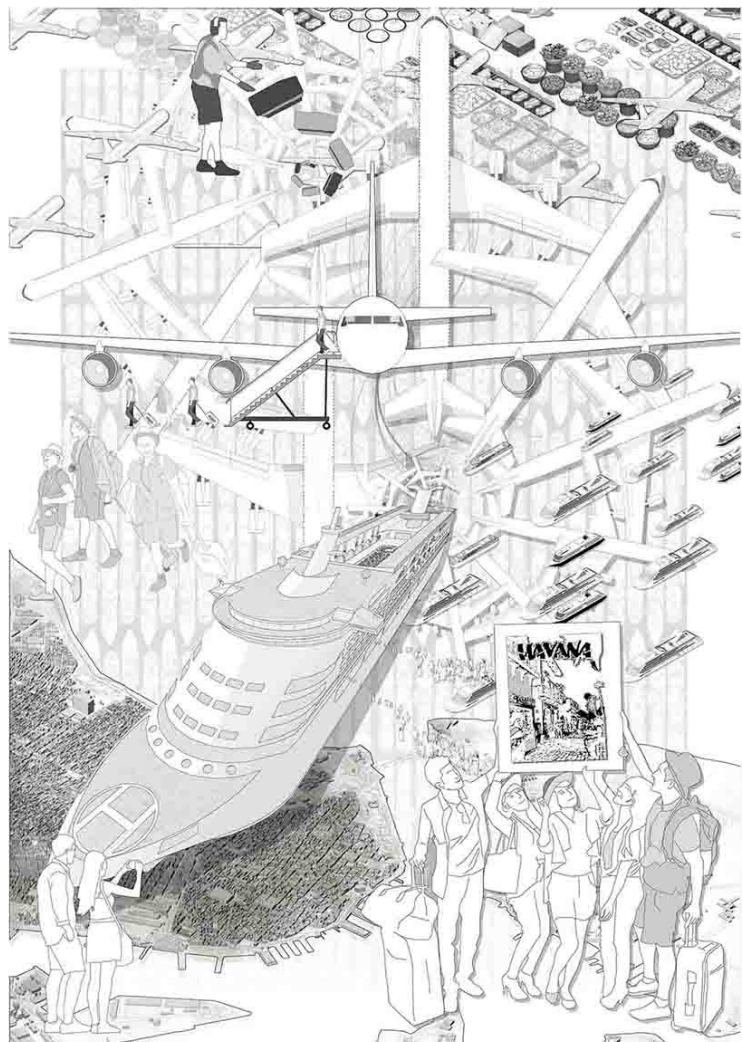


Imbalance Economy

- Tourist influx
- Food scarcity
- Selective redevelopment
- A new rendered front 'the charm'

Capitalist Invasions

- Foreign investments
- Privatized economy
- Social polarization
- Income inequality



De-collage theme - social layer



- Massive tourist influx
- Well-off tourist areas
- The charm of Havana 'Fancy front' presented
- 'Hidden Havana' The reality of locals' lives
- Old damaged infrastructures
- Key situation thresholds

Psycho-geographical impression mapping
a representation of Havana social experience and journey
through 'dérive' (Debord, Situationist International)

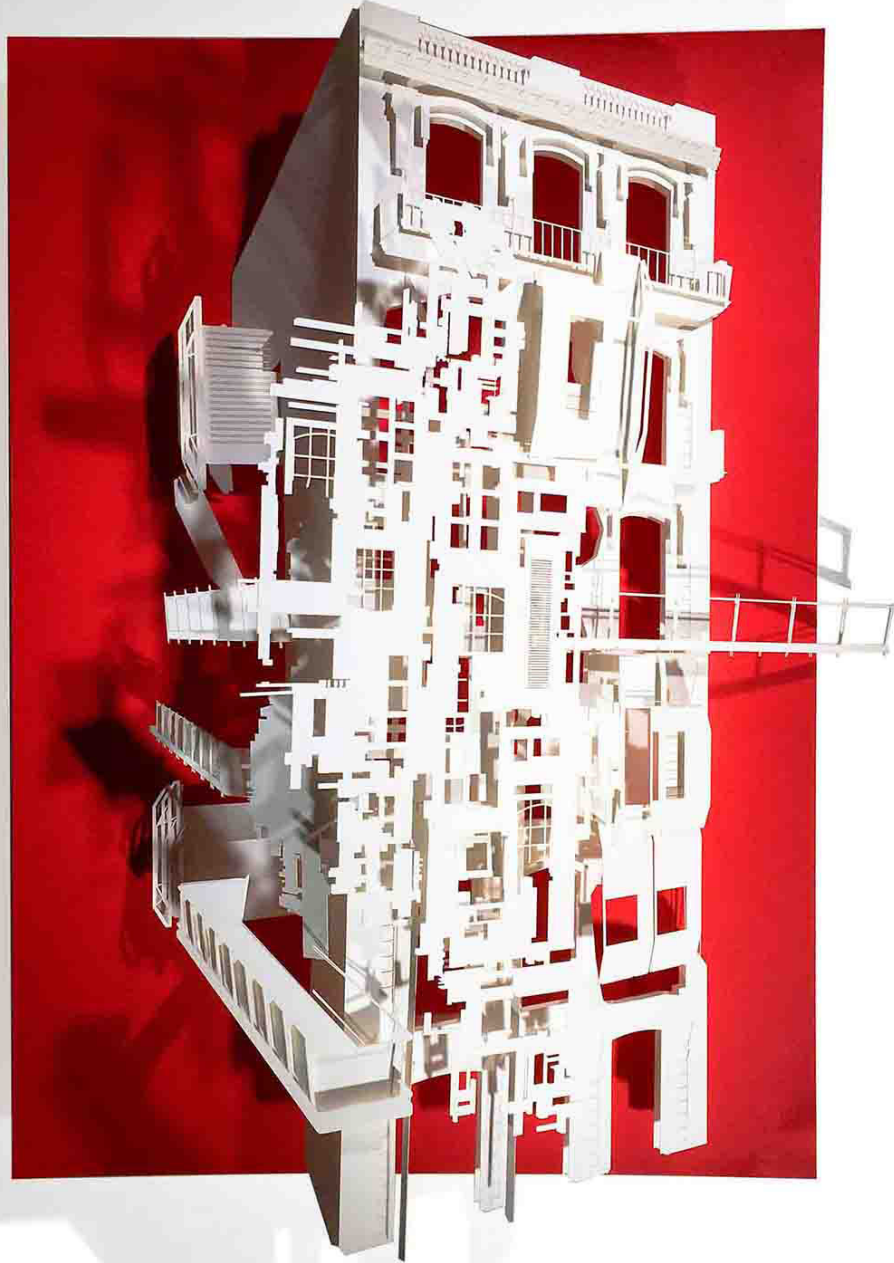
05 CHALLENGING FACADE-CENTRIC HERITAGE CONSERVATION

A new slice of Havana growing from the voids

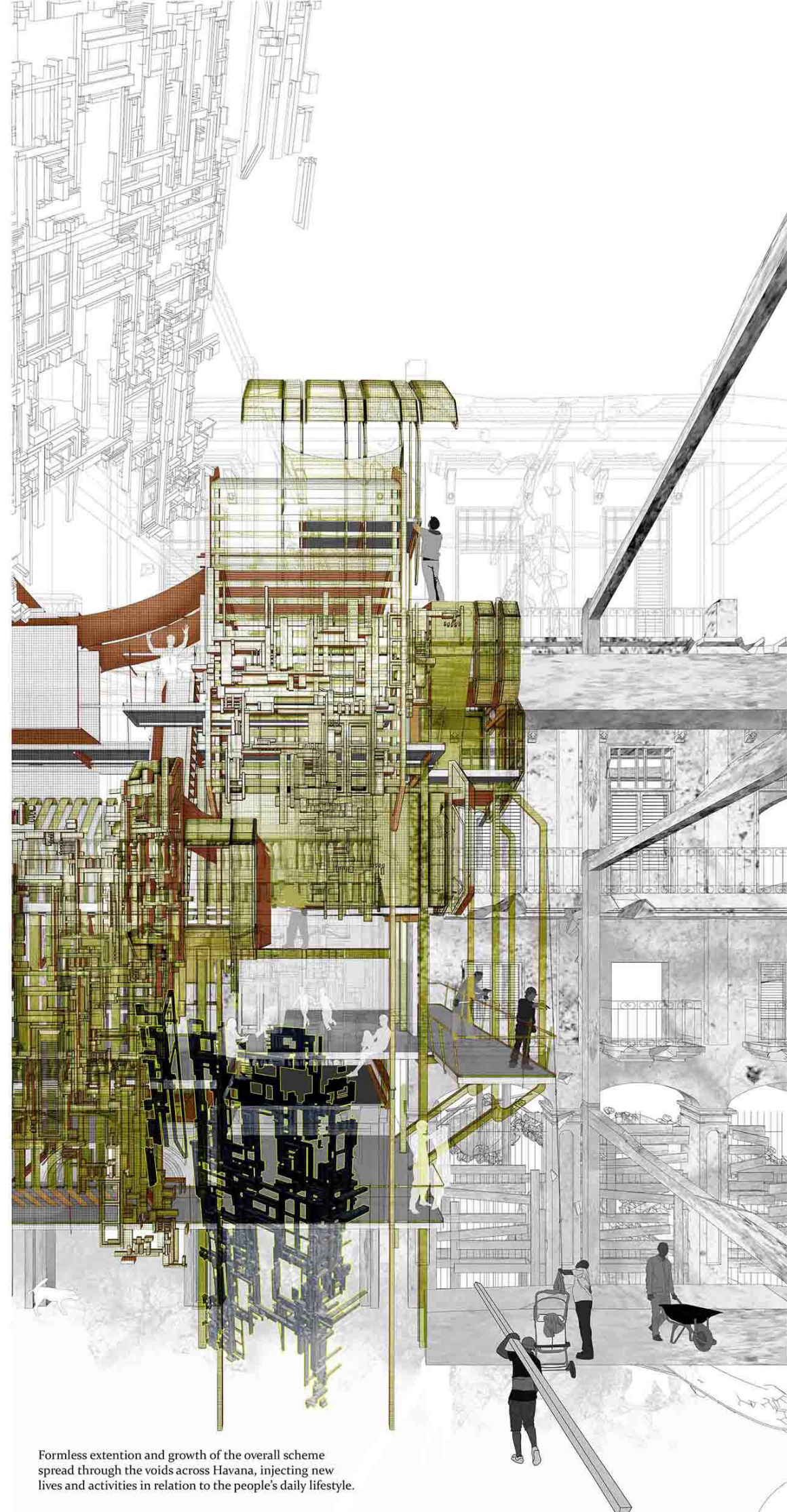
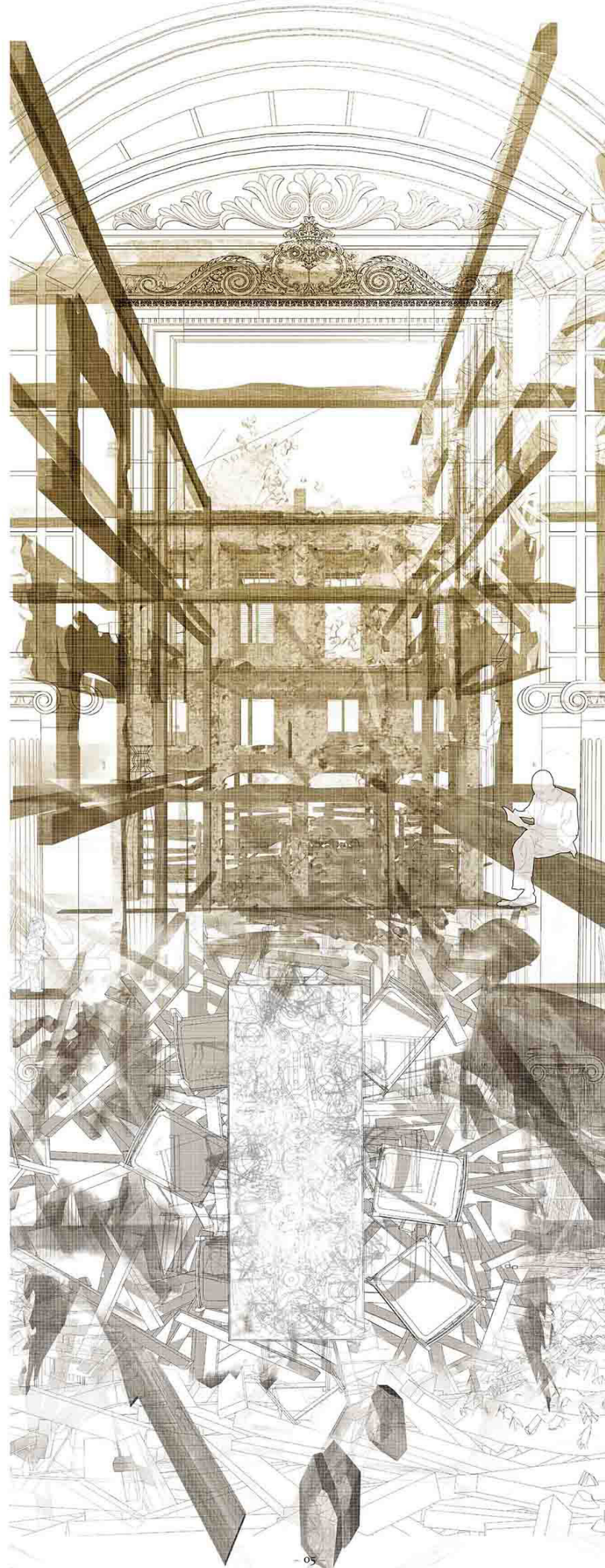
The thesis proposes an alternative sensitive conservation, challenging the conventional facade-centric architectural approach by incorporating the inhabitants' lives, thus to preserve the spatial qualities and not just the space.

By integrating social aspects and allowing the people to rebuild lives within their crumbling homes, a new architecture language is reassembled through voids. An architecture that grows without specific forms and evolves solely with its users but not the designers.

RE-ASSEMBLE ARCHITECTURE FROM LEFTOVERS :
CHALLENGE ARCHITECT'S EGO IN CREATING EXQUISITE



in between the glamorous facade and the crumbling interiors



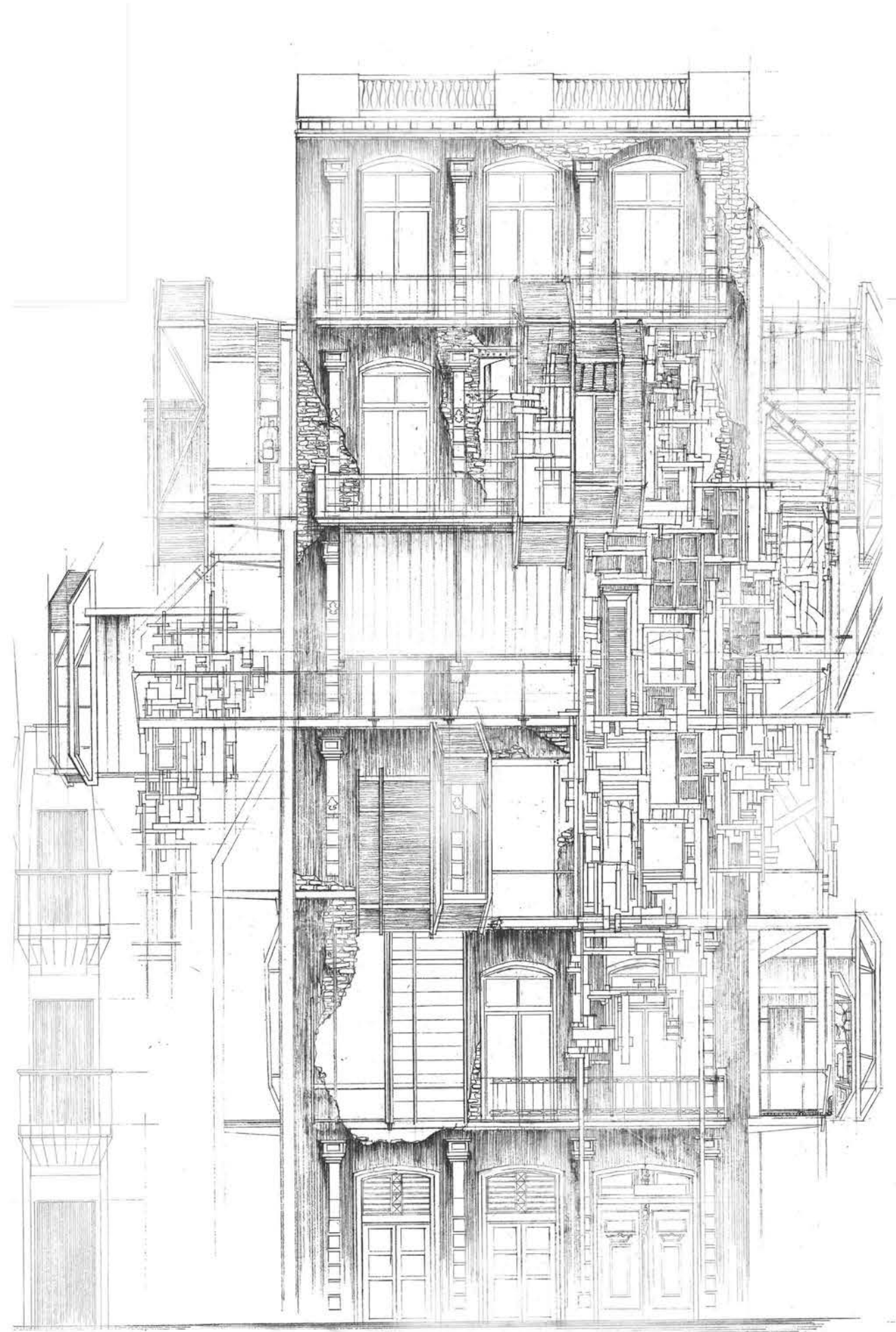
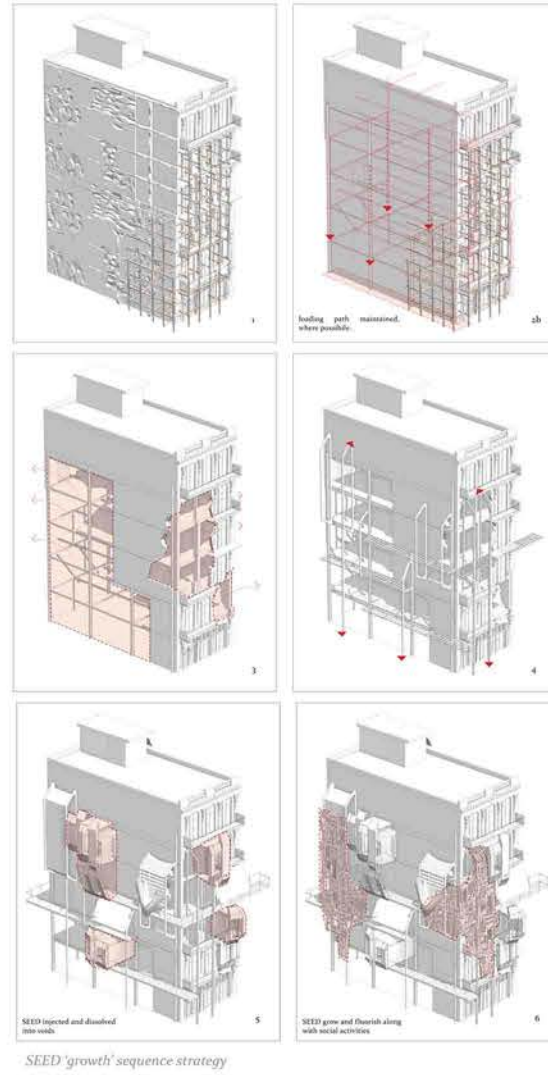
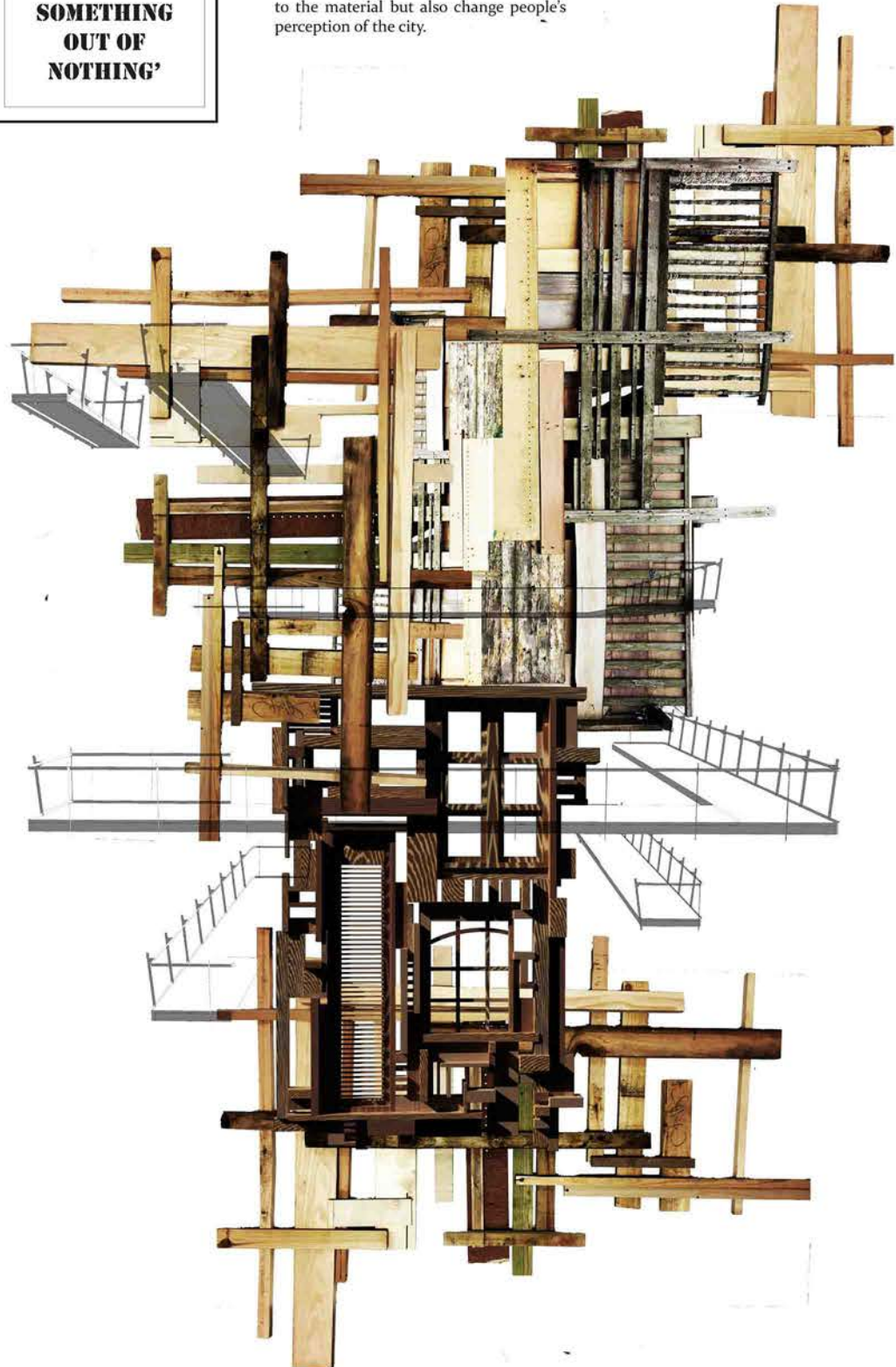
Formless extension and growth of the overall scheme spread through the voids across Havana, injecting new lives and activities in relation to the people's daily lifestyle.

GIVEN NEW LIFE

materials that previously held the fragile building up
now become the skin for new spaces & new possibilities

**CELEBRATING
CUBAN SPIRIT
OF
'CREATING
SOMETHING
OUT OF
NOTHING'**

Conceptual collage showing the strategy impression and its integration with the external extension spaces from the existing building. As an external screen it retains important part of memory for the people as these timber scaffoldings have become a significant element of Havana. This strategy gives not only a new charm to the material but also change people's perception of the city.



Integrate:
Mediating between old and new heritage conservation
that record the process of city evolving.

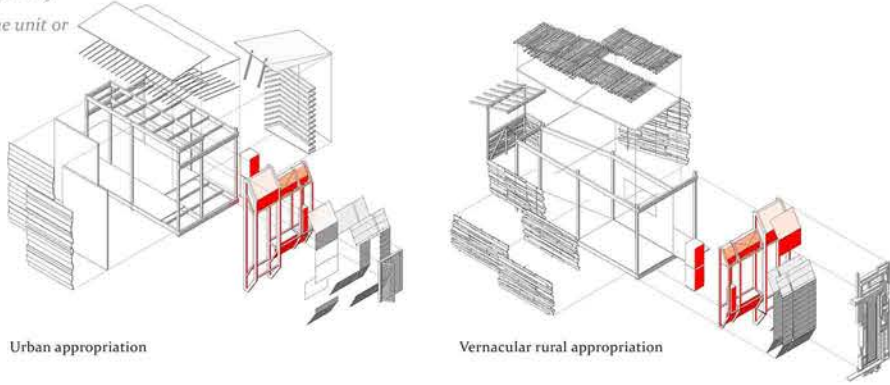
07 REAPPROPRIATED CONDENSERS:
THE SEED

Social-Economic Empowerment Division (SEED)
 Modular self-build unit flexible to be standalone unit or
 integrated as part of conservation strategy

**Integrated into building
 conservation:**

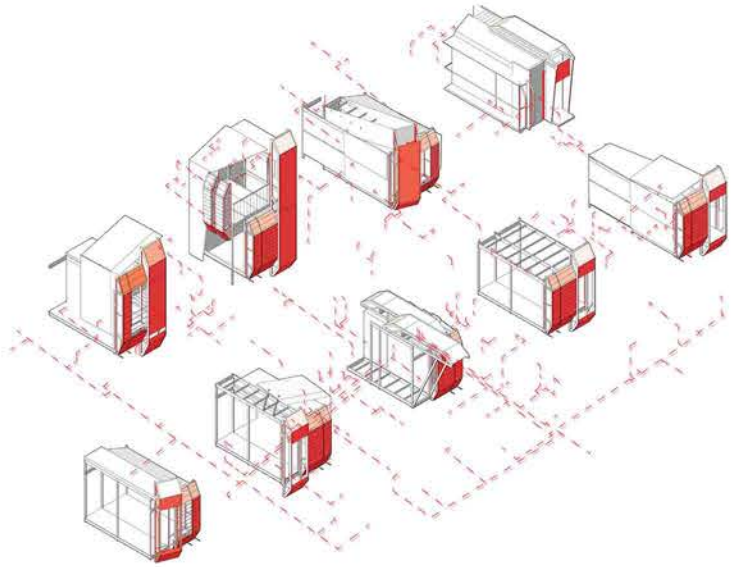
The SEED unit (shaded red) is 'planted' into voids or edges of the building, with services like electrical wiring and water pipe be directed through into the unit from the 500mmx500mm compartment.

The framework of the SEED unit is designed to allow maximum flexibility, encouraging the inhabitants to take initiative in making it unique and personal, for example in the method of construction of the body structure or the cladding material choices.

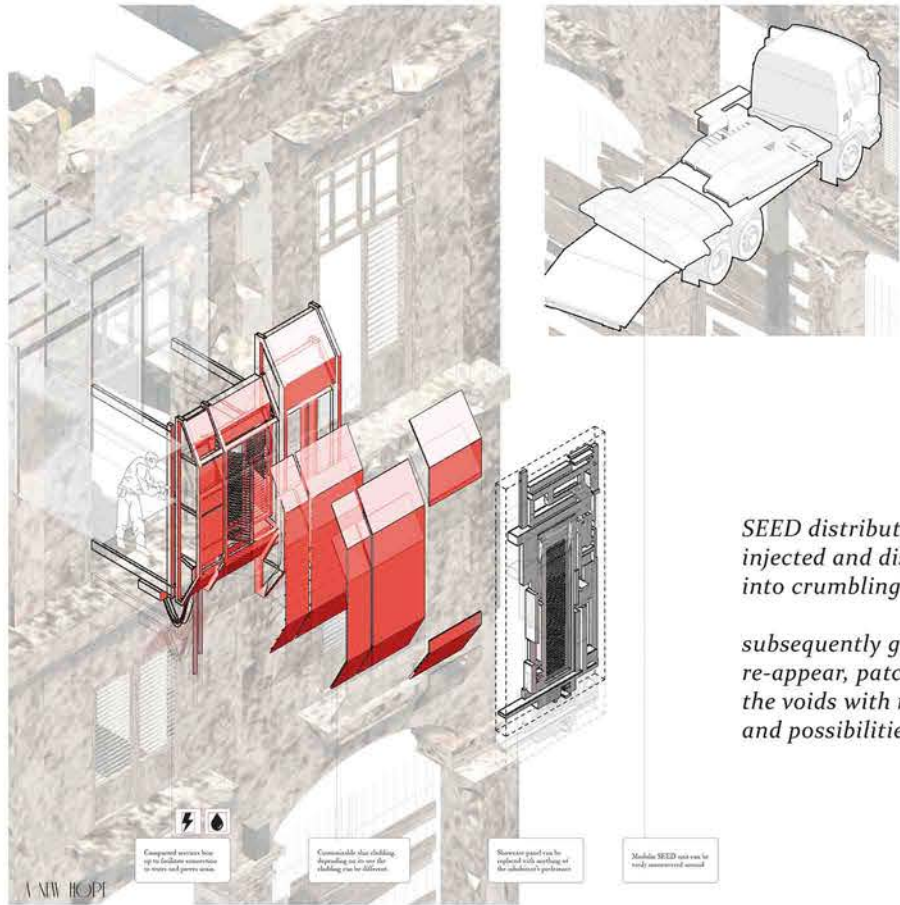


Urban appropriation

Vernacular rural appropriation

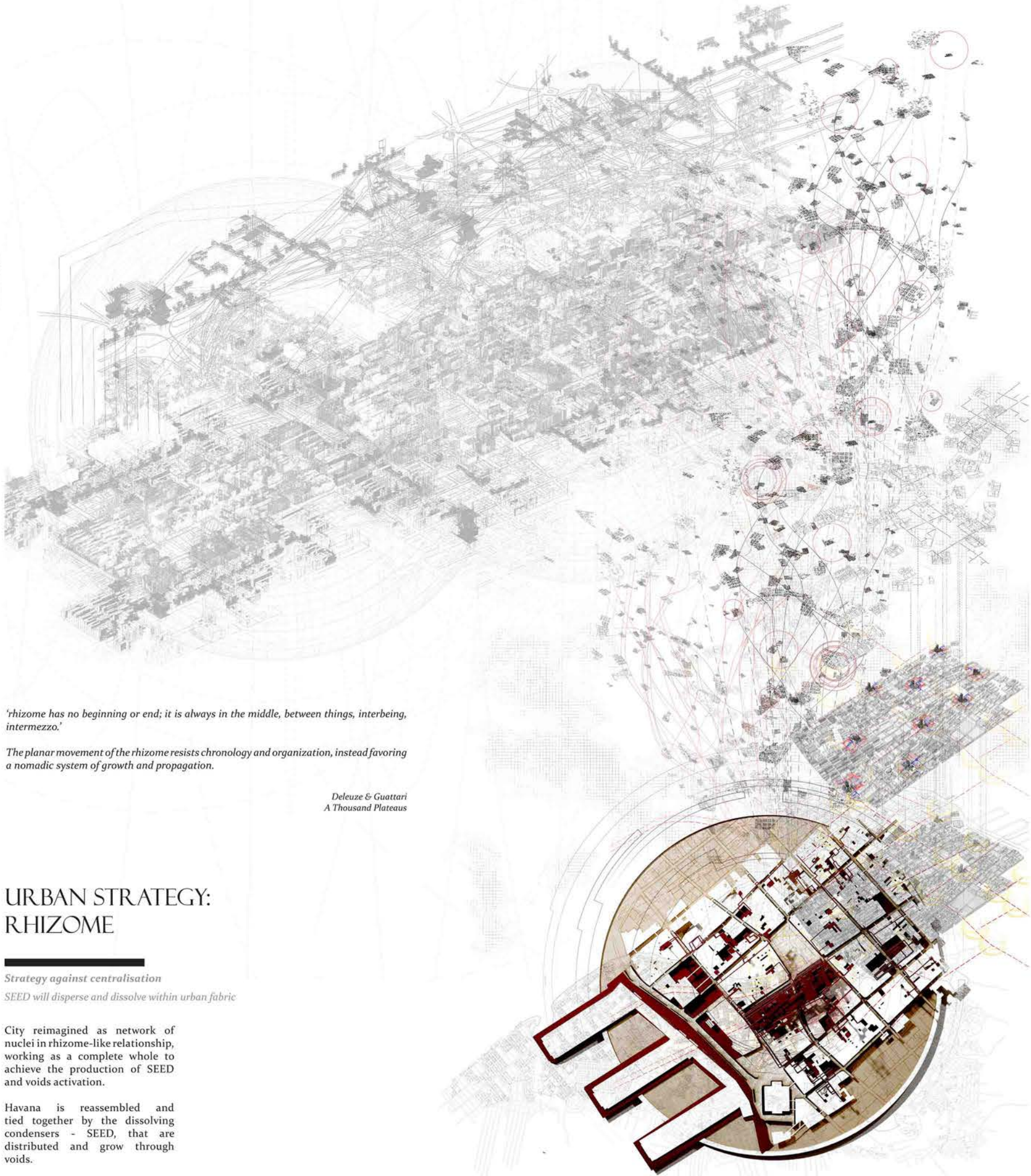


**ONE SEED
 ENDLESS
 POSSIBILITIES**



*SEED distributed,
 injected and dissolved
 into crumbling voids;*

*subsequently grow and
 re-appear, patching up
 the voids with new lives
 and possibilities.*



'rhizome has no beginning or end; it is always in the middle, between things, interbeing, intermezzo.'

The planar movement of the rhizome resists chronology and organization, instead favoring a nomadic system of growth and propagation.

*Deleuze & Guattari
 A Thousand Plateaus*

**URBAN STRATEGY:
 RHIZOME**

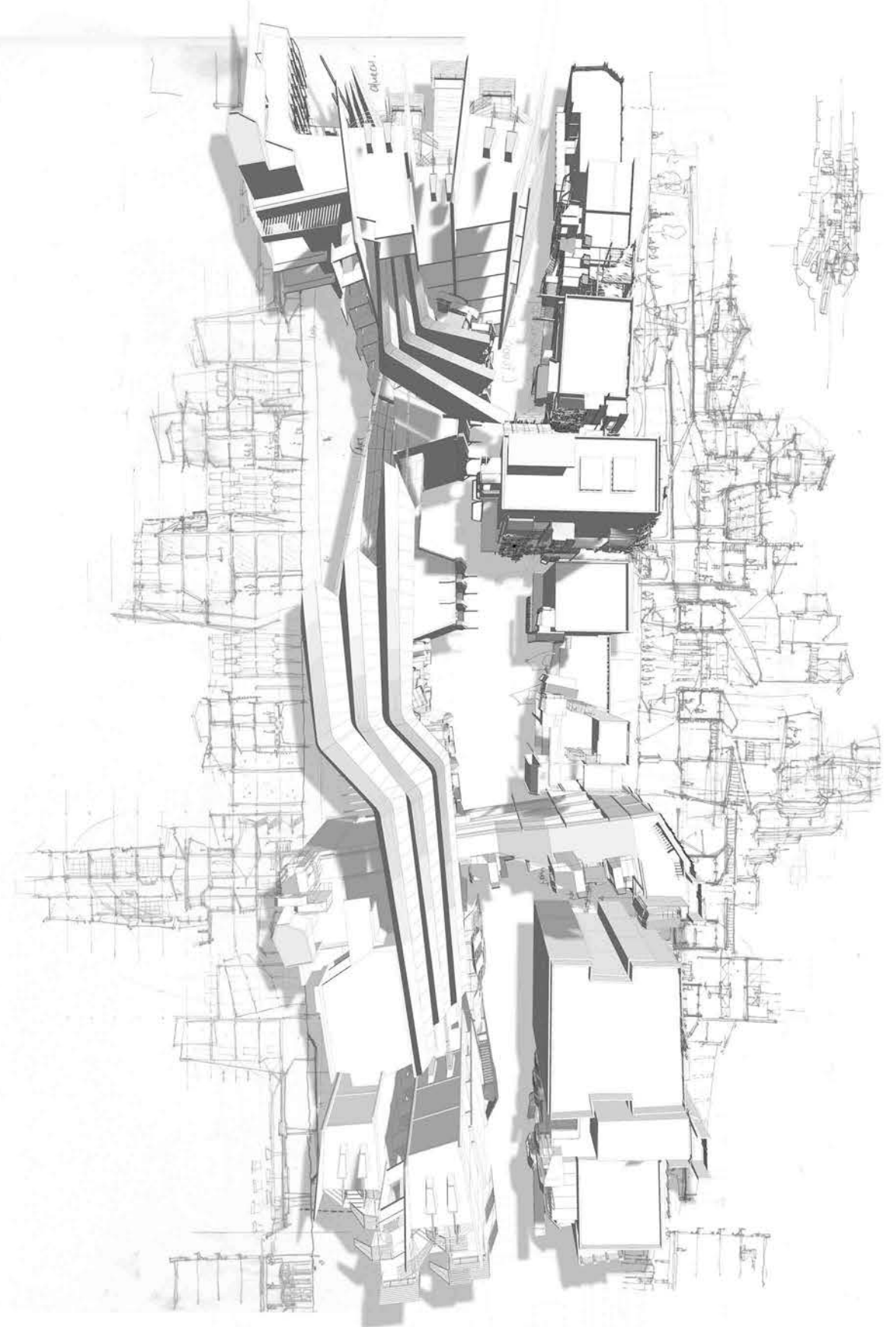
*Strategy against centralisation
 SEED will disperse and dissolve within urban fabric*

City reimagined as network of nuclei in rhizome-like relationship, working as a complete whole to achieve the production of SEED and voids activation.

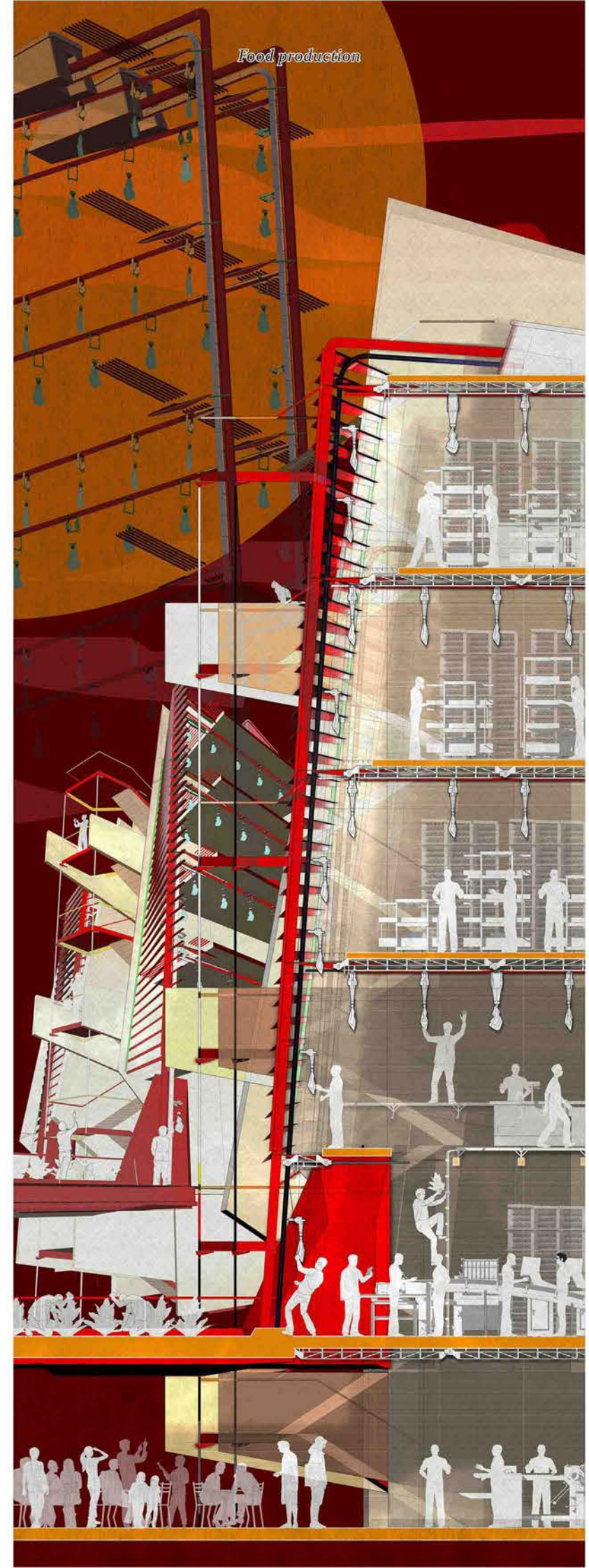
Havana is reassembled and tied together by the dissolving condensers - SEED, that are distributed and grow through voids.

PRODUCTION BEHIND FACADE

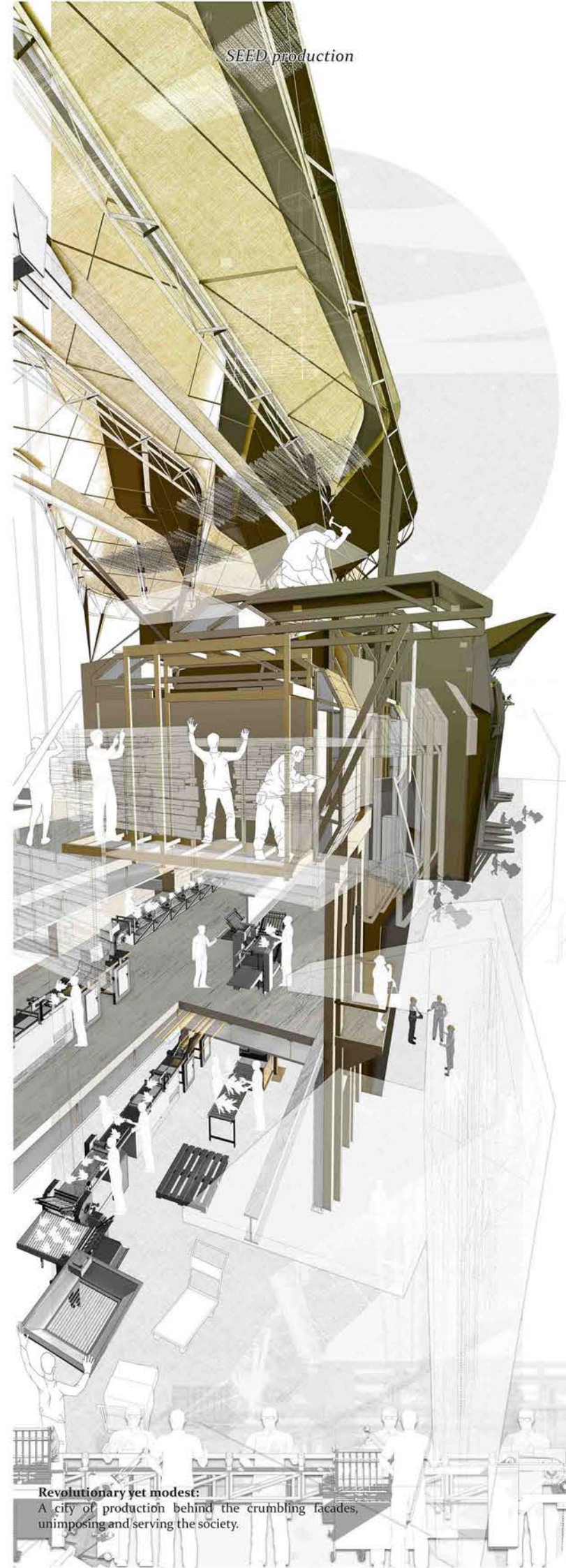
*Food and SEED integrated production
A new production spine behind the facades*



Production Activation



Food production



SEED production

Revolutionary yet modest:
A city of production behind the crumbling facades,
unimposing and serving the society.

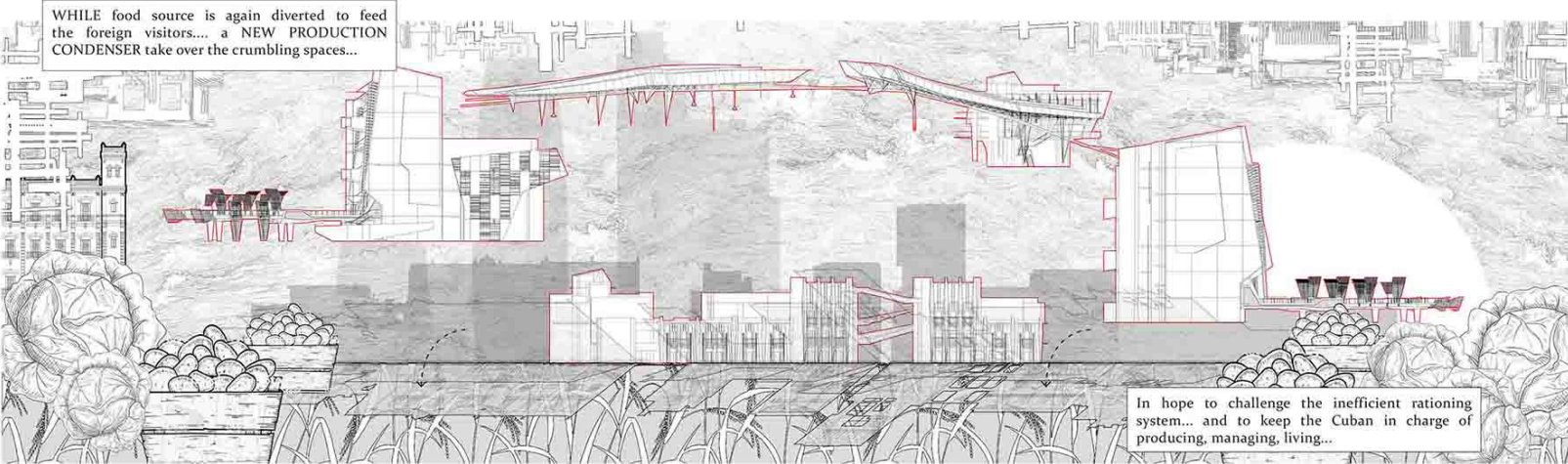
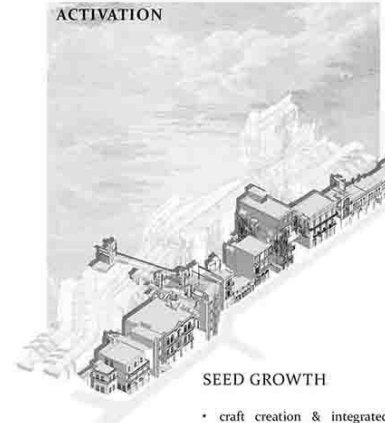
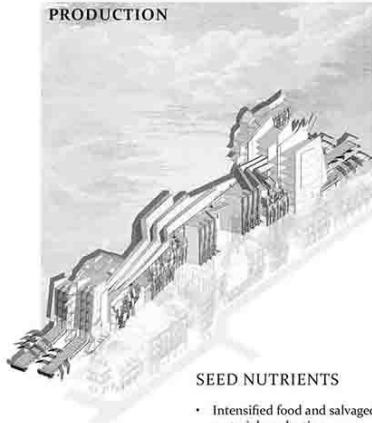
09 SEED OF HOPE
PATCHING UP HAVANA

SEED growing from the crumbling city symbolizes hope

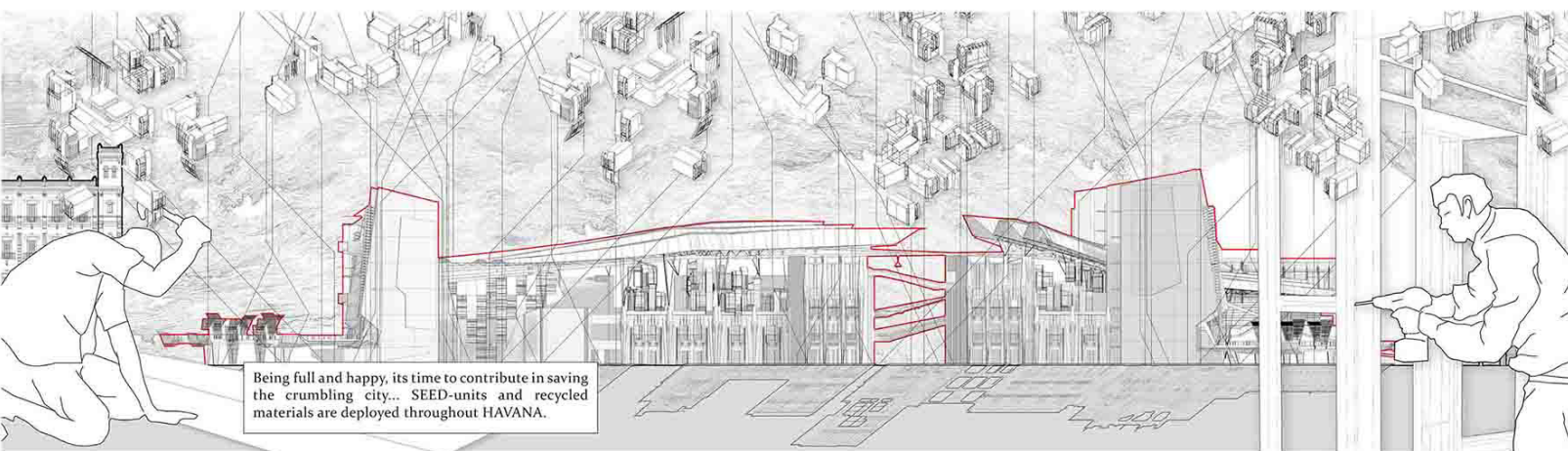
Rethinking the role of architecture:
 Main building is hidden behind existing facades while playing crucial role in supporting the activation and rebuilding of city.

While the proposed condensers - SEED, growing from the voids forge new collective hope in rebuilding the city and reassembling architecture from crumbling façade leftovers, an evident Cuban resiliency of 'creating something out of nothing'.

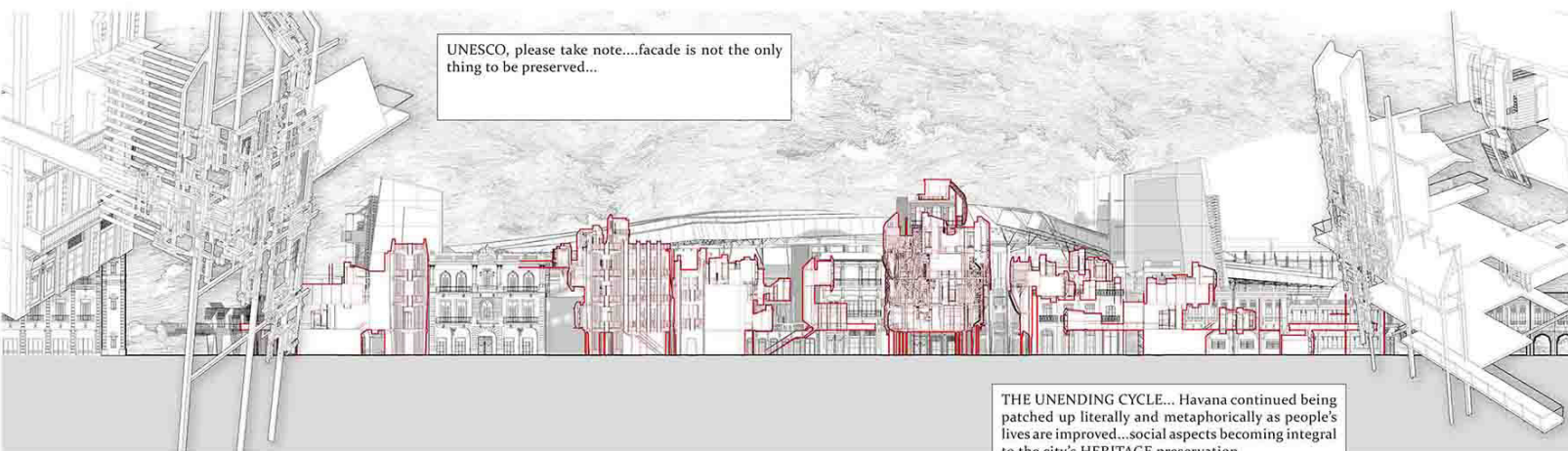
WHILE food source is again diverted to feed the foreign visitors... a NEW PRODUCTION CONDENSER take over the crumbling spaces...



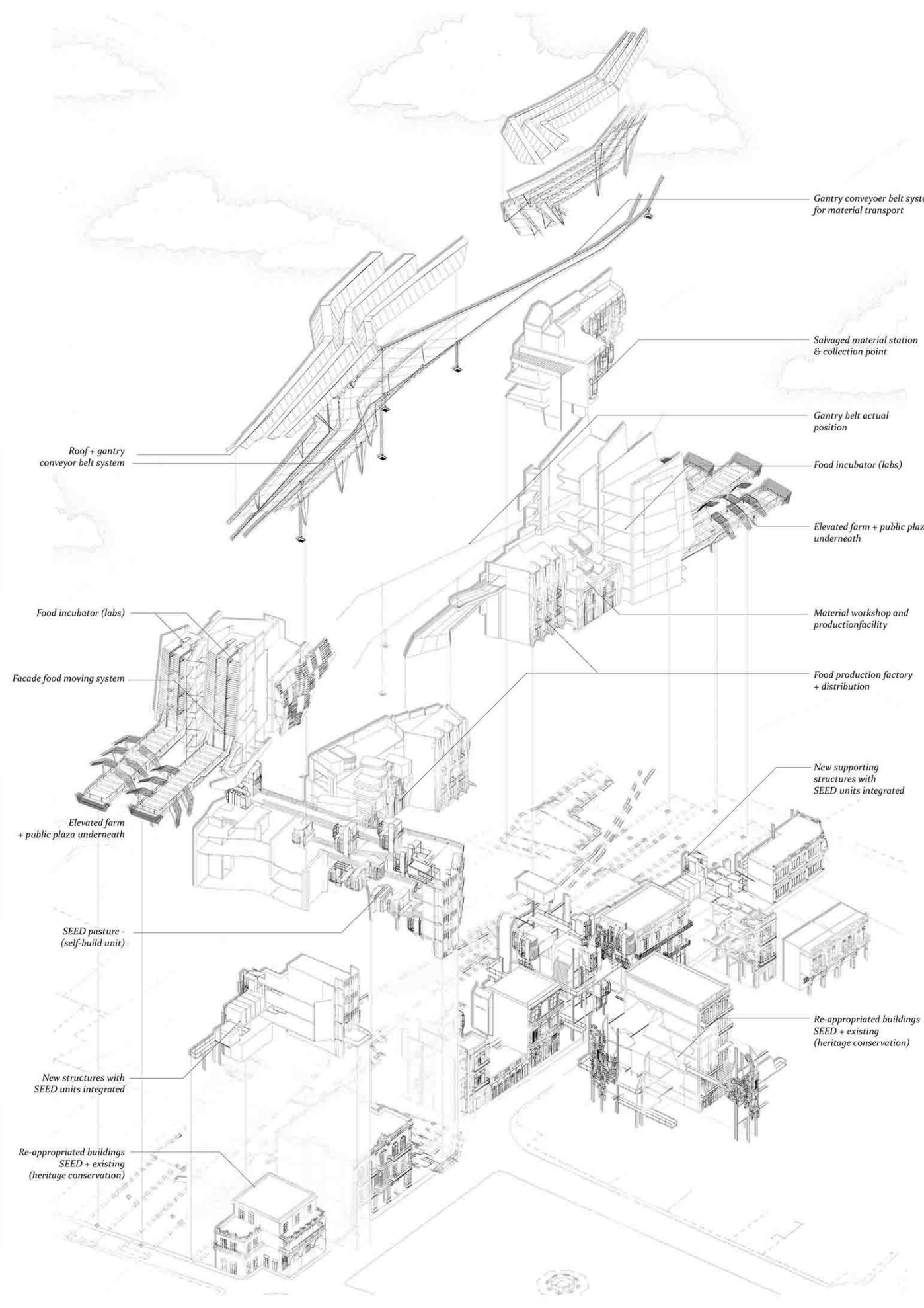
production behind the facade
APPEAR



voids activation intensified
DISSOLVE



a new wonder of Havana
RE-APPEAR





"The only real voyage of discovery consists not in seeking new landscapes but in having new eyes."
Marcel Proust

SEED OF HAVANA
DISSOLVING CONDENSERS

city evolves into an ultimate version of new condenser of our time

