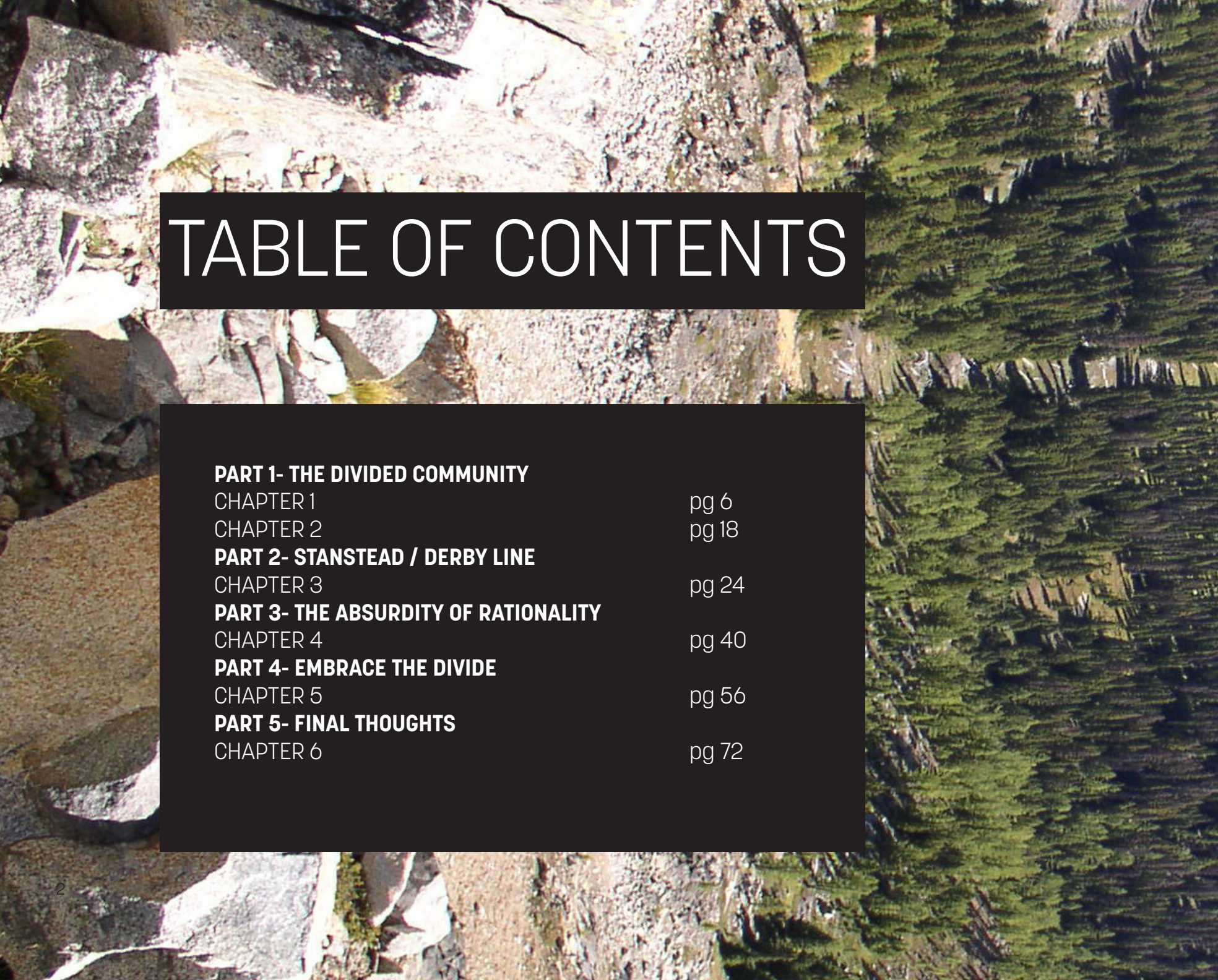
DO NOT CROSS THE LINE

KURT HILTON



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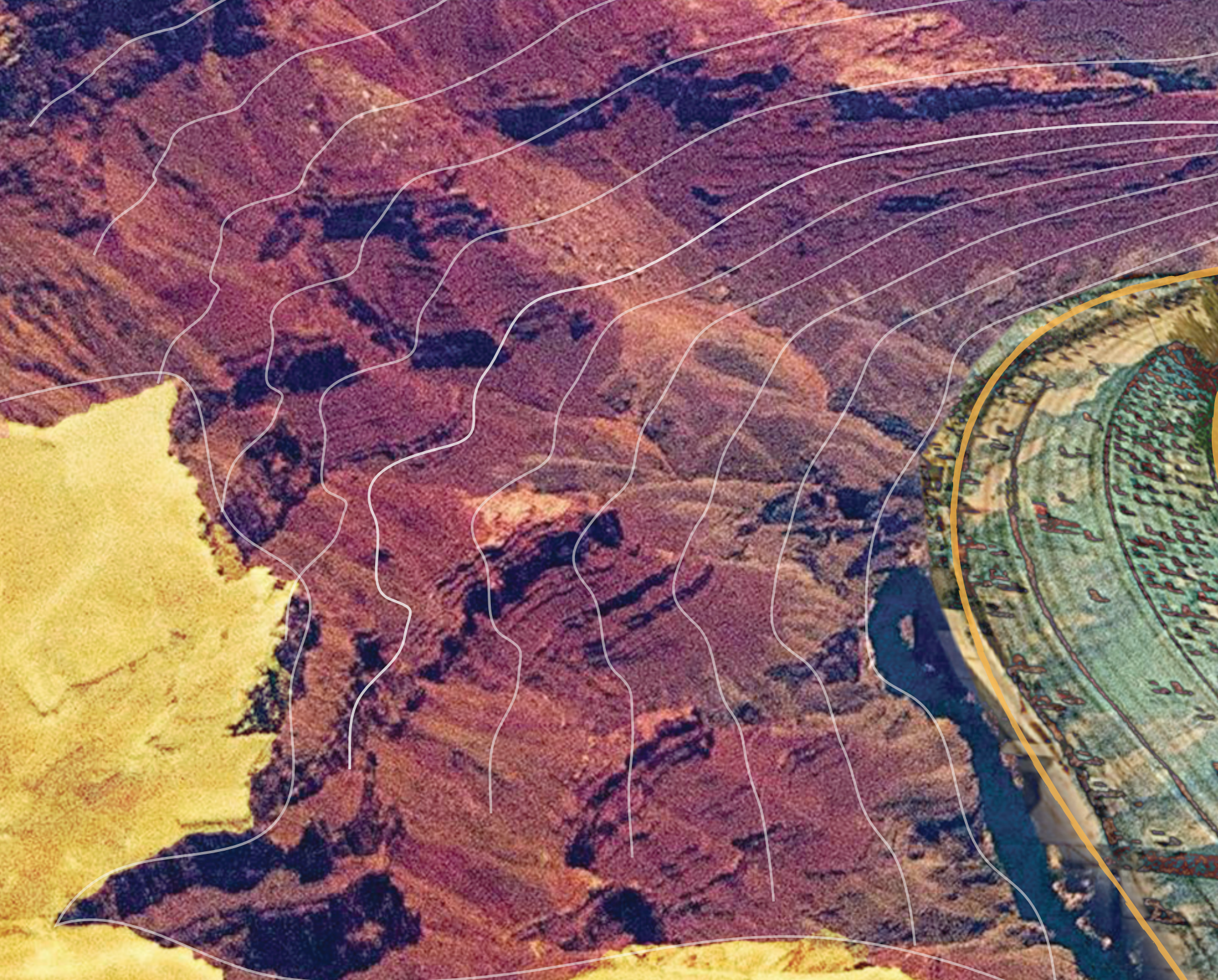


PART I
THE DIVIDED COMMUNITY

I

The exploration of this thesis began with the concept of the divide between two places. Specifically, those places that have a divide imposed upon them. Kevin Lynch in his work The Image of the City, defined spaces in a city in 5 broad descriptors. They were: paths, edges, nodes, landmarks and districts. Paths in particular, are interesting in that they both connect nodes, but at the same time can divide places. The most obvious real-world example of this is the effect that freeways have had on our cities. They enabled the connection of many distant places into and out of the city. But this came at the cost of fragmenting much of the cityscape, which further segregated who lived in what area of the city. It essentially created what I term an imposed divide. A physical change that happens to the landscape for reasons that are of little to no benefit to the community and neighbourhood most affected. In the most immediate aftermath, the residents closest to the disturbance are outright displaced from the community. Their homes are removed from the landscape permanently. The residents close to the imposed divide lose regular contact with the residents of the other side and eventually they become separate communities. The result is that what was once a tightly integrated community is no more. The last vestiges of this walkable neighbourhood replaced with maybe a bridge across the vast divide. A community lost ironically for the benefit of another far away, often more prosperous one. However, freeways are but one example of this phenomena.

Around the world, the globe is divided by political boundaries, all in varying states of enforcement and freedom; malice and benevolence. Unlike freeways, political borders are an abstraction. The author Arthur C. Clarke described the modern earth as a place divided "along symbolic lines visible only to politicians". The level of physical manifestation that these lines take depends entirely on the relationships between one country to the other. It is perhaps an extreme of our desire to rationalize space. Borders represent the limit at which the nation-state's rule of law applies. When a traveller crosses the invisible threshold that is the political border, he or she enters into a wholly different state with its own traditions, history and culture. Ironically, political borders rarely if ever reflect the true boundaries of a cultural or ethnic group. The imposed divide is a brainchild of groups of people that have little to no understanding of the territory they are about to divide. They have the ability to separate cultures and create ethnic strife. Families and communities can be torn apart and even future wars can be created as a result of the imposed divide. The partition of India into Hindu and Muslim states, and post-colonial Africa are all examples of this. The borders were drawn as an abstract line across a map. It results in borders that did not correctly reflect the traditional boundaries of the landmass. In many cases, it does not even reflect the geography of the region. A nation of tribe of people may get split in such as way that some people may suddenly find themselves a minority among a people that are their traditional enemies. Or some nations being cut off from certain areas simply because of the instatement of the border. The application of political borders is possibly one of the most absurd creations of humanity and it creates some of the gravest social injustices. It

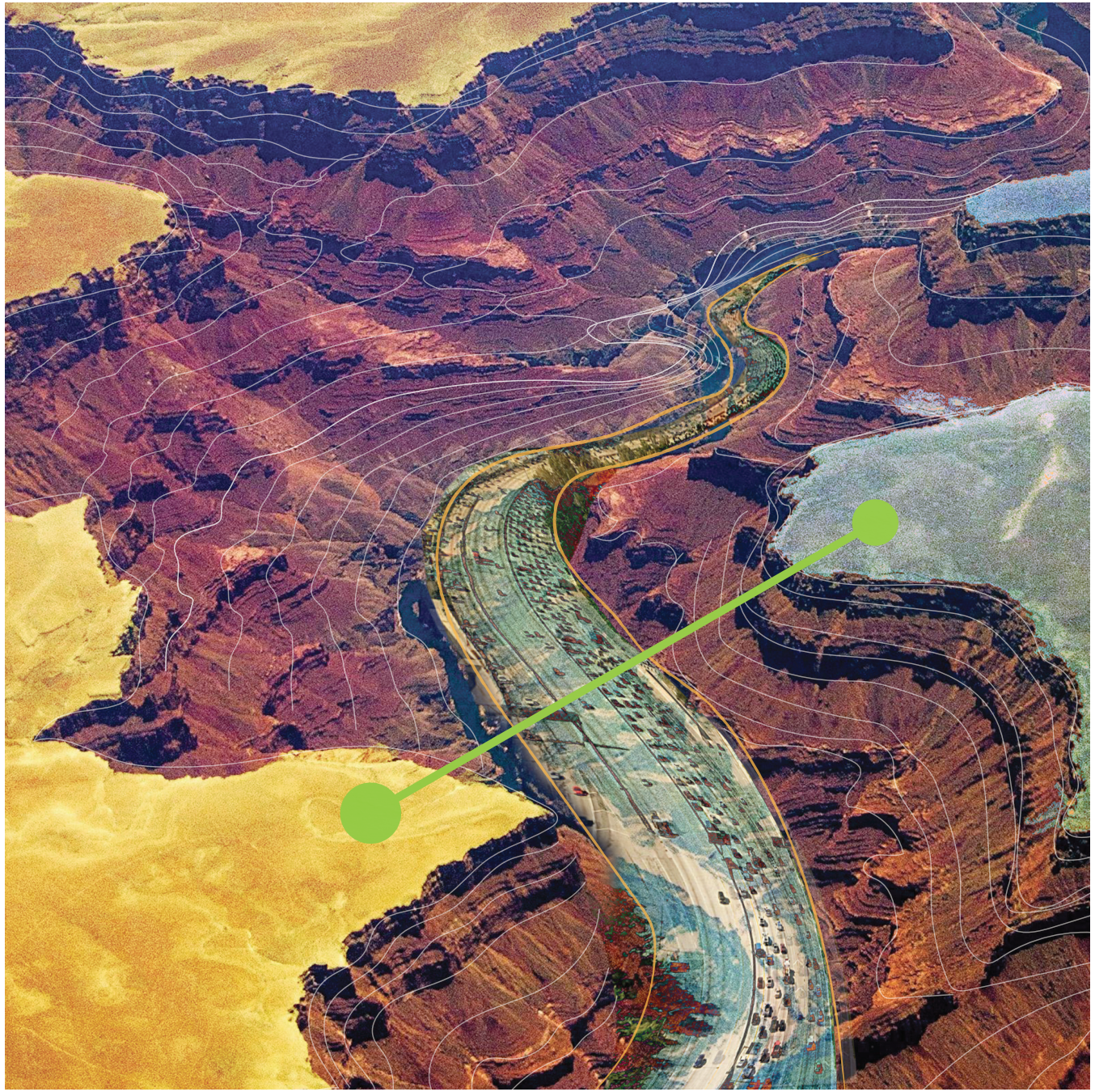


IMAGE:
An eidetic image depicting the erosion of connection in a community by the introduction of a dividing condition.

takes abstract ideas such as law and pushes them to the furthest physical manifestation that they can take.

I compared this injustice to how different colours of ink mix on paper. Ink by its very nature does not cleanly touch other ink. It blends with it, mixes with it and creates new shades and colours. The artist does not view this as the problem, but simply as a reality when working with ink. I conducted some experiments with coloured ink on paper. I washed different areas of the paper with different colours and watched as they touched each other and then inevitably mixed with each other. When the ink dried, I took a pen and attempted to trace out where one colour began, and another ended. This proved to be quite an impossible task as there were many spots there the colour wasn't quite one or the other. It was a mix and could not reasonably be placed into one category or the other. Similar to culture and people, unless there is a physical barrier in the way, such as a mountain or a lake, people and culture inevitably mix when in close proximity. It is natural and it has guided our evolution as a species since the beginning. Who are we to say that this condition of mixing must be stopped?

Rather than dwell on the issue and explore the consequences of such divides, I wanted to examine the solutions. Could we stitch a divided community back together? If so, how would we be able to do this? The Ponte Vecchio in Florence, Italy is a classic example of a medieval covered bridge. Spanning the River Arno, not only does it provide a method of crossing from one side to the other, but it also functions as a place unto itself. In fact the place that is the bridge is enormously successful in the urban condition. It was the traditional home of goldsmiths, and now it is a major tourist attraction. What if, in the face of upholding political borders, we could create a construct that reconciled the harsh divide of the border. Perhaps there could be some way for people of border communities to continue to interact with one another while at the same time upholding the regrettably necessary need for security. Admittingly this means that I am going with a biased assumption that political borders are inherently a problem that must be dealt with. In this modern era, political borders are a necessity. They are how nations stake out their sovereignty. There is no unclaimed land left on Earth, so it is imperative that land is very clearly staked out and that necessary security is enforced in order to defend such sovereignty. This thesis is more a statement about how border security can sometimes be heavy handed and do much more harm than good. If we can balance the needs of a community and a landscape with the politics of the border, we are in a step in the right direction for social justice.

While many borders are created out of war and political strife, there are others that are created by treaty or some form of higher level agreement. The Canada- US border is perhaps one of the more curious and subtle forms of imposed divide in the world. It has long held the title of being the longest, straightest and the most peaceful border on earth. The border stretches almost 6416 kilometres across the vast North American continent with about half of that running in a geographically straight line across the 49th parallel. However even this "straight" line isn't exactly straight. It is actually a series of zigzagging lines. Surveyors in the 19th century were tasked with mapping out this new border and were asked to mark out as straight a line across what was uncharted wilderness and mountains. Naturally, a straight border would have been impossible. How did such a border come to be? Indeed why is most of North America divided along perfect

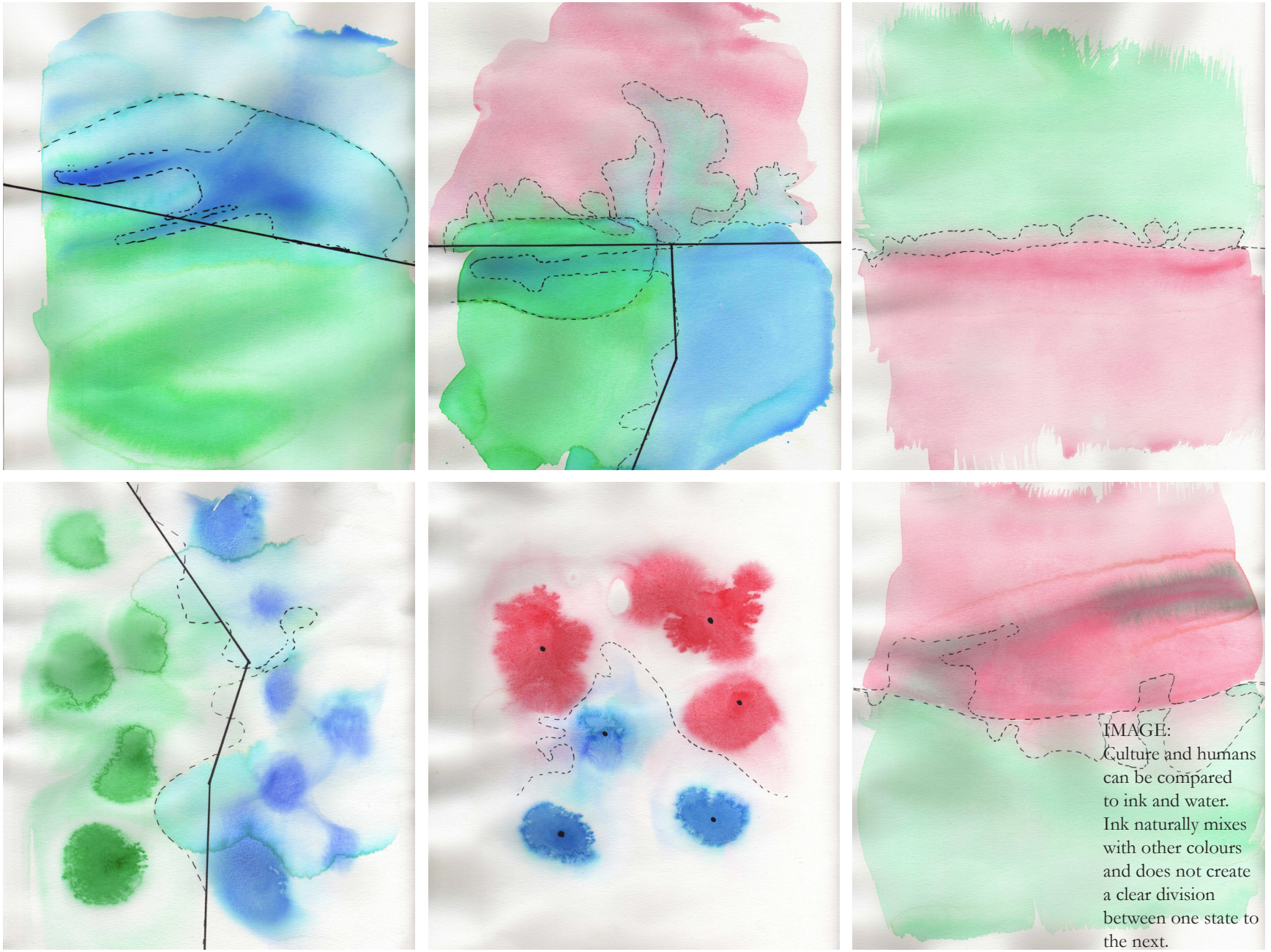


IMAGE:
Culture and humans can be compared to ink and water. Ink naturally mixes with other colours and does not create a clear division between one state to the next.

UNITED STATES
MEXICO
EL PASO
CIUDAD JUAREZ
FEUDALISM

IMAGE:
Border conditions in Ciudad Juarez/ El Pasa and the Kowloon Walled City.. Both are examples of borders being used as a legal loophole and its physical manifestation.

straight lines going along an East-West or North-South direction? Interestingly, the border for much of its length pays little respect to the geography it cuts through. The border can be observed cutting through rivers, mountains and even entire towns. The result has been awkward places that are cut off from their respective countries. While many of these strange border quirks might be interesting to the average geography student or somebody casually browsing a map, these quirks can have very real implications for how we get about in our day-to-day life. They range from effects such as useable farmland rendered unusable by a political border. They can mean a road has to be re-routed on a very long detour just to avoid foreign territory. On a more personal level it can mean having to clear customs to get from one side of your town to the other.

Canadians and Americans have had close ties, history and identity since the beginning. It has resulted in some strange human-made quirks in addition to the geographic ones. This is the existence of border towns. Towns that are quite literally straddling the border. These towns share everything from streets, to infrastructure and even buildings. A visitor to these towns who was not familiar with the United States or Canada would mistake these towns for a single entity. The reason for these towns existing varies greatly. Some were created to facilitate trade between the two nations, others even happened to exist before the border took shape and then had a border imposed upon them. What seems to be consistently common in all of them however, is the sense of a single community. For residents of these border towns, national identity seems absurd. They perceive themselves as one community and one people. Over time as post-9/11 security has taken hold, much of the connection these towns had is quickly being lost and with it that same sense of community.

To understand these border communities, I applied a metric to them to find out which of them might yield the most interesting results. They analyzed a variety of criteria, such as shared infrastructure, shared buildings, common streets, shared services such as schools and emergency services, and how visible border security infrastructure was in these places. I wanted to compare how many of these traits each town had to how connected they were as a community. The results were that some communities, especially out in the prairies, though had been once tightly connected, now bore little relationship to the other. By contrast, places such as Stanstead-Derby Line and the Akwesasne Mohawk Reserve were wholly dependant on the other and had a much stronger sense of community. Ultimately Stanstead- Derby Line proved to be the most interesting as it, unlike the other towns still had strong physical connections. It was also in a time of change, when many of these connections were starting to be severed and the sense of community was also starting to diminish. I sought to analyze these conditions further.

CANADA

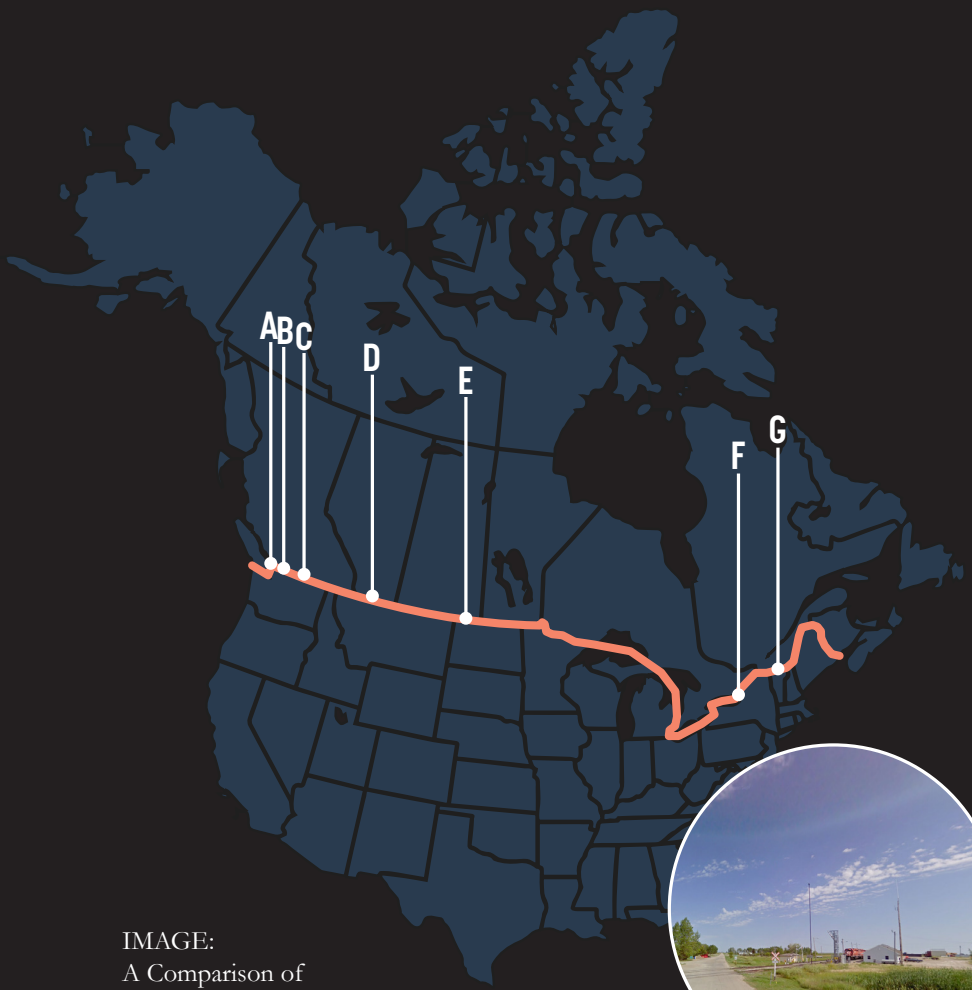
POP. 36,286,425
LAND AREA: 9.985 MILLION KM SQ.
3.85 MILLION MILES SQ.
LANGUAGE: ENGLISH, FRENCH
GOVERNMENT: PARLIAMENTARY DEMOCRACY

2,475 KM
1,538 MI

UNITED STATES

POP. 322,761,807
LAND AREA: 9.834 MILLION KM SQ.
3.8 MILLION MILES SQ.
LANGUAGE: ENGLISH
GOVERNMENT: CONSTITUTIONAL REPUBLIC

IMAGE:
North America is divided almost perfectly in half by Canada and the US. Both are extremely similar countries. In terms of culture and identity.



A. Pt. Roberts, WA/
Tsawassen,BC

B. Blaine, WA/
Surrey,BC

C. Sumas, WA/
Huntingdon,BC

D. Sweetgrass, MT/
Coutts, AB

E. Portal, ND/
North Portal, SK

F. Akwesasne Mohawk
Reserve, ON/QC/NY

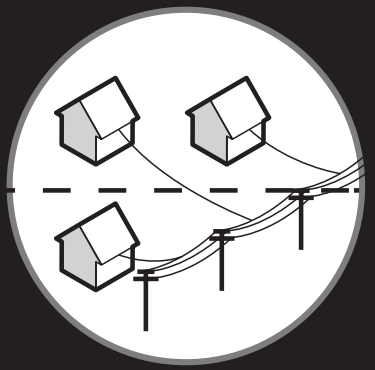
G. Derby Line, VT/
Stanstead, QC

IMAGE:
A Comparison of all the border towns in North America. I compared them using a metric that analyzed how physically connected they were.

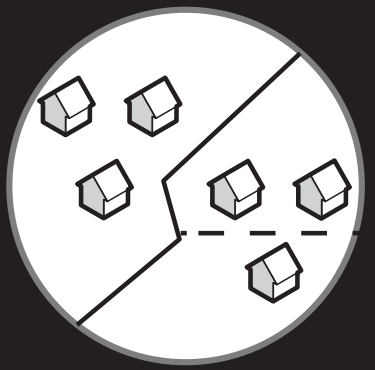
MEASURING THE INTERCONNECTEDNESS OF A BORDER TOWN

DOES YOUR TOWN HAVE...

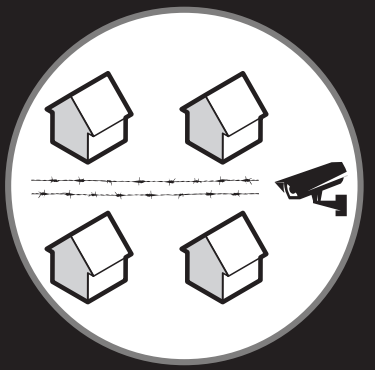
SHARED BUILDINGS & PLACES



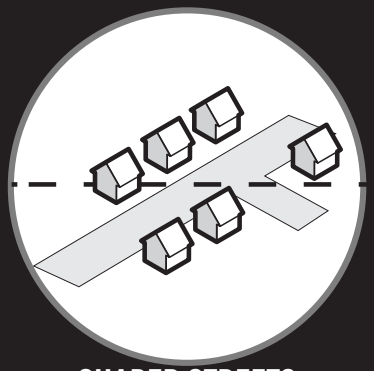
SHARED UTILITIES



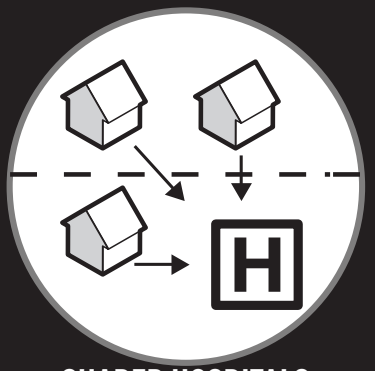
PRE-DATE THE FORMATION OF THE BORDER



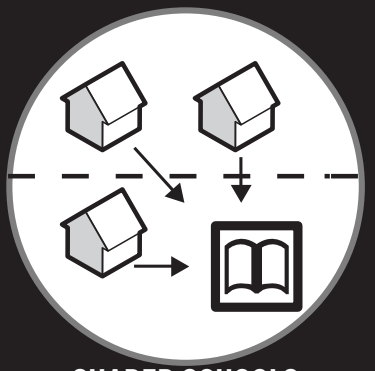
VISIBLE SECURITY INFRASTRUCTURE



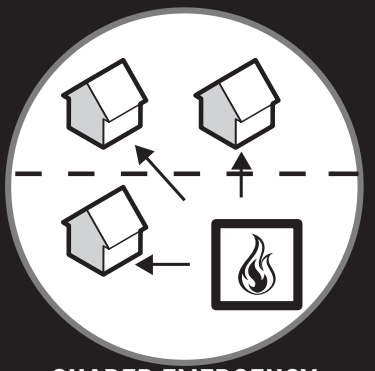
SHARED STREETS



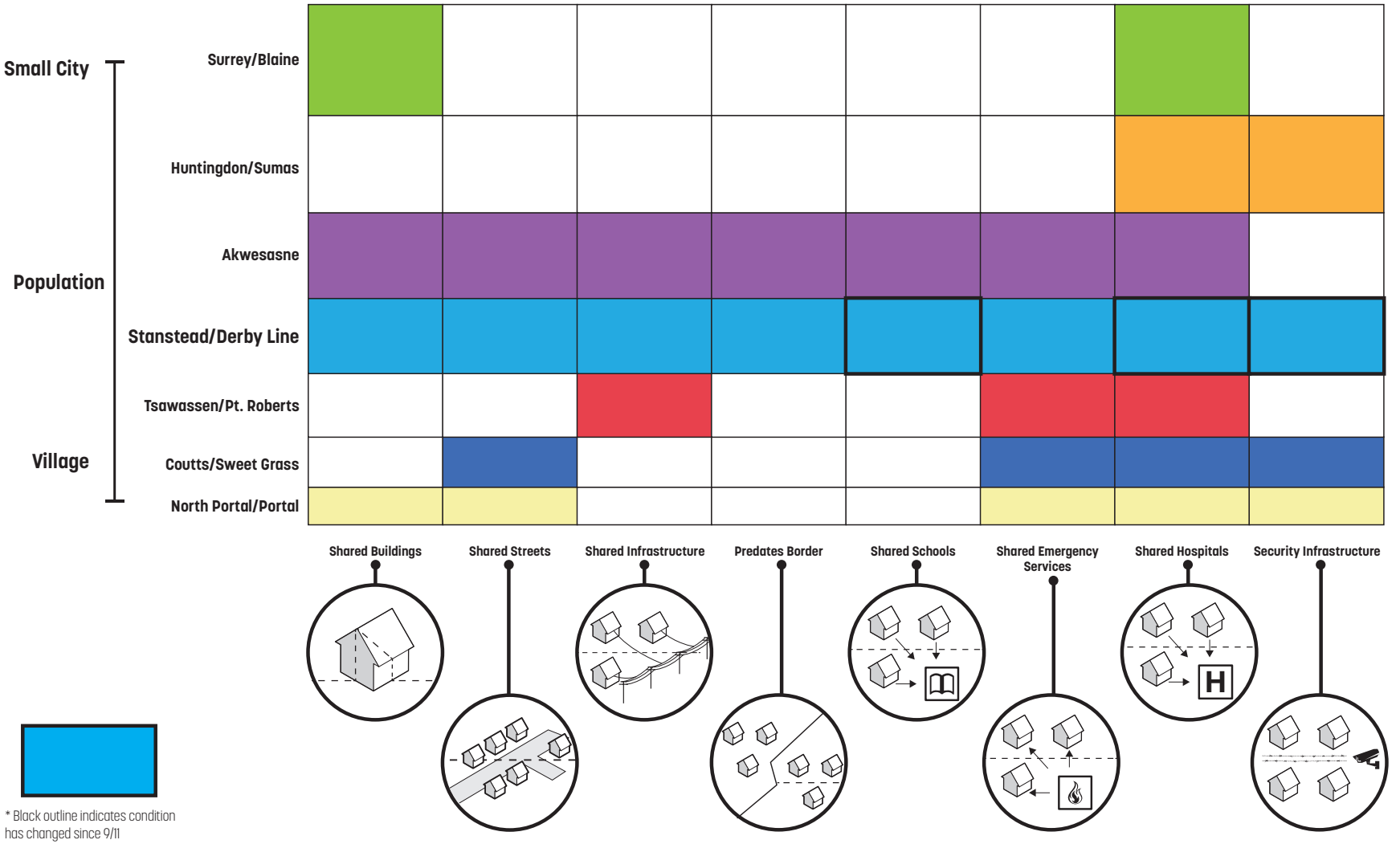
SHARED HOSPITALS



SHARED SCHOOLS



SHARED EMERGENCY SERVICES



* Black outline indicates condition has changed since 9/11

IMAGE:
The results from this test showed that Stanstead/ Derby Line was the most connected out of all the towns.
Right: The border in Stanstead/ Derby Line

W43 CEN

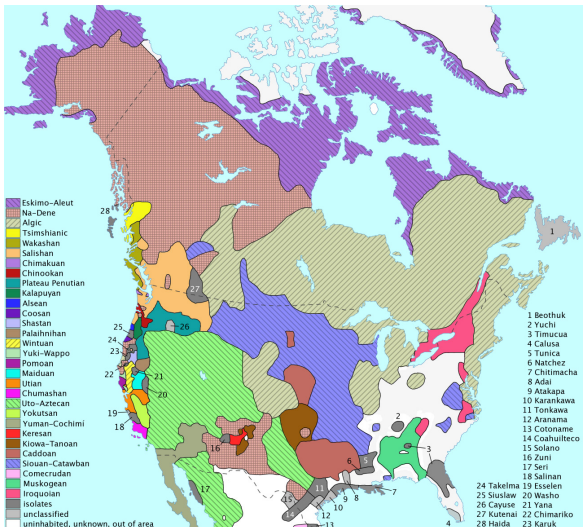
II

For thousands of years North America had been occupied by hundreds of different native tribes. Some estimates put the population density in some places as comparable to Europe. Their boundaries and politics bear little resemblance to the North America of today. In fact our understanding of the extent of these tribes is so poor that we can only estimate these lines among approximate cultural and linguistic lines. Needless to say though, for these first nations, the concept of the nation state in the European sense of the word would have been a strange concept. Europeans recognized the concept of land ownership in the sense of recognizable land improvements, the construction of permanent architecture and perhaps even legal deeds and title to the land. However, for the First Nations people, most tribes were hunter-gatherers. There was some agriculture, but even this was done in such a way as to appear much different from European agriculture. Native people would often mix together different crops, knowing that each crop could bestow nutritional benefit on the other. This gave native farms the appearance of almost being like wild land. Writing also did not exist and so the concept of titles or deeds were non-existent. On the scale of political borders, there would have been no clearly defined line in the sand between tribes. Tribes would occupy their lands as far as the eye could see. Physical barriers such as mountains, rivers and lakes would also define the boundaries between tribes. Even with the rise of early European colonies on the continent, because there was so much land in between settlements and forts, the boundaries continued to be relatively ambiguous.

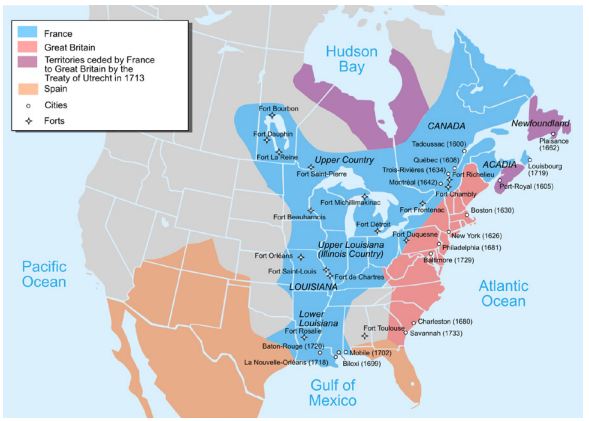
The area around Stanstead-Derby Line was occupied by the Iroquois. They were one of the most powerful tribes to inhabit the northeastern region of North America and were key players in the establishing of colonial North America. Allying themselves with the British, they continued to be the dominant force in the region for centuries, even sending war parties to attack Montreal, Trois-Riviere and Quebec City. The Iroquois had originally been hunter-gatherers, but with the introduction of agriculture around 1000 CE, they began to become much more sedentary building walled villages and more permanent structures. The outbreak of the Seven Years War saw the Iroquois assisting the British to fight the French and their respective native allies.

Following the Seven Years War, the French had been forced to cede almost all their territory in the New World to the British. The cost of the war had pushed Britain into a lot of debt and to compensate, they began taxing their colonies much higher. This inevitably led to a lot of anger among the North American colonies and by 1776 war broke out again on the American continent. By the time the conflict ended, British North America had been divided. There was a new Republic in the south, and the colonies in the north that had remained loyal to Britain. Trading resumed and tensions began to ease ever so slightly between the now independent Americans and the British. Treaties were drawn up and a border was drawn across a landscape that was still largely unexplored.

In the years following, Britain began investing resources



EXTENT OF NATIVE TRIBES IN
NORTH AMERICA



COLONIAL NORTH AMERICA
C. 1730's

NORTH AMERICA
POST-AMERICAN REVOLUTION
1783

in developing the colonies of Upper Canada (present-day Ontario) and Lower Canada (Quebec). Land was granted off and towns and cities began to take shape across the landscape. Initially the people to settle these lands had been United Empire Loyalists who had fled the revolution and were now beginning their lives anew. They were soon joined by patriotic Americans who were lured by plentiful cheap farmland. Before long in the area known as the Eastern Townships of Quebec, the area was almost entirely inhabited by American or British Settler with some French-Canadians. Families retained strong connections on both sides of the border and trade ties were extremely strong. In fact, these connections were so strong, that by the time of the War of 1812 trading continued between these towns.

In the mountains on the Quebec-Vermont border, war came very slowly to the region while tensions increased elsewhere. In the early 19th century it was very normal for every settlement to maintain a militia. During the war, Vermont raised a militia to defend the border, but these soldiers ended up having to shoot Americans who were continuing to trade with Canada. Nobody really wanted war in these border communities. Nobody wanted to put a bayonet through their best customer, or shoot their first cousin, even if it was in the best interest of their nations. In the town of Ogdensburg, New York, a businessman by the name of David Parrish owned a significant amount of land and industry in the town. He relied heavily on trade with Canada, and for him, war was bad for business. At the time, the US government was extremely short on funds for the war and refusing to raise taxes, became reliant on powerful businessmen like Parrish. Parrish offered to help fund the US war effort if he could decide where the war should be fought and he felt it should stay away from the St. Lawrence valley. This was good for his businesses, but bad for the war effort. Meanwhile in Ogdensburg, American businesses were happily selling goods and supplies to the British military. Sensitive information such as troop movements was getting across as well. In fact so much information was being passed on to the British, that the US government had to cut off postal service to Ogdensburg. When the government sent in troops to halt smuggling, Parrish had them arrested for trespassing and put them behind bars. While American commanders complained their troops were short on food, close to 30 000 British troops were feasting on American beef.

After the war, once again trading resumed between the British and the US and over the ensuing decades expanded to new heights. A curious thing to note however, is that the physical manifestation of the border at this point in time remained very ambiguous. It allowed for the construction of buildings on top of the border itself without consequence. In many places along the border it was very common to see shared public buildings like train stations, factories and libraries. These close connections remained until well into the 20th century.

IMAGE
The Battle of Chateauguay- a handful of British regulars, Canadian Militia and Native allies held off a numerically superior American force intending to lay siege to Montreal. The War of 1812 saw the rise of a Canadian identity.

PART II
STANSTEAD DERBY LINE

IMAGE:
The town of Stanstead, Quebec and Derby Line, Vermont. Streets and even buildings are divided by the border.

III

Perhaps the greatest embodiment of the absurdity that is the US-Canada border is the town of Stanstead, Quebec or Derby Line, Vermont depending on which side of the line you are on. This is a town where mistakes in surveying a new border caused the international boundary to rest right on top of the settlement. This means that streets and even buildings are left straddling two countries. It creates absurd scenarios where residents on one side of a road, must check in with customs to visit their neighbors across the street, lest they face a very unpleasant encounter with the authorities. Only the public library- which also straddles the border is open to both countries, as long as you leave from the side you came in from. For many decades that has simply been a way of life in town and it has simply been embraced about the uniqueness of the place. However, Since the Sept. 11th attacks, this condition has changed, and mounting security along the border has seen these once tight knit communities evolve into fortified and constantly watched security zones. The number of guards at the border has increased ten-fold, and there are frequent patrols and motion sensors installed in even the most remote places along the border. Unsurprisingly the sense of community has either been severely strained, or has vanished completely.

This situation is also unlikely to change, as there is enormous pressure especially from within the United States that there is a "weakness" in the northern border. Since 9/11 the pervasive myth surrounding the attacks has been that the terrorists snuck in from Canada, despite much evidence to the contrary. A Bloomberg poll showed that 41% of Americans over 18 agreed with the statement; "If a wall is good enough for the Mexico border, it is good for the Canadian border as well". Currently there are no joint authorities overseeing the border either, leading to a very haphazard and piecemeal implementation of security and laws. There is some progress being made however, for better and worse. Since the summer of 2016, US and Canadian border agencies now share entry and exit data with each other on each others' citizens. The Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative- promised to make border crossing and shipping more streamlined has been slow to be implement leading to more confusion and tighter security at the border. As it stands however, there is no clear, official plan for border policy. To exacerbate things, since a passport became a required document to cross the border, only 36% of Americans actually own a passport, vs 70% of Canadians leading to more thickening of the border.

I had the opportunity to visit Stanstead/ Derby Line in the Fall of 2016 and meet with the mayor of Stanstead, Phillippe Dutil. He gave me a very detailed tour of the town, explaining how the two towns share everything in terms of built infrastructure- roads water systems, even emergency services. Until a hospital was built near Stanstead, all the Canadian residents would be born in nearby Newport, VT which meant they all had dual citizenship. Post 9/11 changed all of that and the town took on more of an Orwellian Police State tone. Gates were put up on all side streets, cameras were installed on all light posts

IMAGE:
What happens when we build our walls higher? Does whatever is on the other side become that much more of a perceived threat?

HOW MUCH SECURITY IS TOO MUCH SECURITY?

"Everyone has the right to be secure against unreasonable search or seizure."
-Article 8 of the Canada Charter of Freedom and Rights

"The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures, shall not be violated, and no warrents shall issue, upon probable cause, supported by oath or affirmation and particularly describing the place to be searched, and the persons or things to be seized"
-4th Amendment to the US Constitution

Philippe Dutil- Mayor of Stanstead

and federal agents from both countries patrol the entire town stopping and questioning anyone who looked suspicious- which apparently could constitute standing somewhere for too long. Even for buildings along the border, the mayor told of a story about how a man was sitting on his front porch in a rocking chair, and every time he rocked forward, his feet would cross the border. This actually prompted homeland security to angrily tell him off for doing so. Dutil has been a very vocal advocate for his town and while he acknowledges that higher levels of security are necessary, he regularly fights with the federal government on how this policy should be implemented.

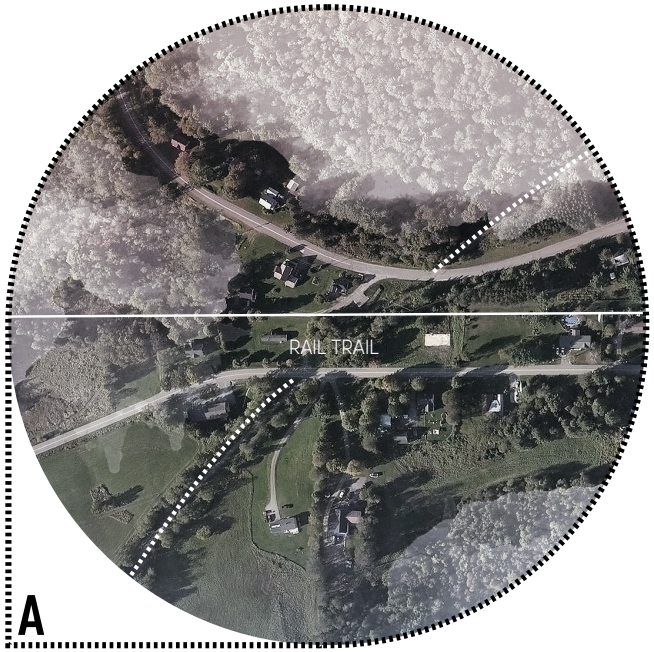
Perhaps unsurprisingly, the understanding of where the border should and is enforced is a grey area. It leaves a lot of anxiety as you aren't quite sure of where you can be in the town and not be suspect for law enforcement.

Stanstead/ Derby Line isn't the only place where the logical extremes of border enforcement occur. The Kowloon walled city in Hong Kong- due to a series of complicated treaties resulted in tiny Chinese enclave in the middle of Hong Kong. Out of reach of authorities of both countries, it quickly became hotbed of crime as well as the most densely built place on earth with a population density at its peak of 1.3 million people per sq. km.

Borders can also be used to take advantage of loopholes in the law. In the case of the US/ Mexico border, there are many manufacturing cities forming such as El Paso and Ciudad Juarez where American manufacturers take advantage of lower wages in Mexico, by building their factories just across the border and then shipping the assembled goods back into the US. It results in a sort of political feudalism where all of the administrative jobs remain in the US, but all manual labour and lower wage jobs stay in Mexico.

IMAGE:
Looking down Main St. from Downtown Derby Line into Downtown Stanstead.

LINEBORO
RAIL TRAIL TO MONTREAL, STANSTEAD
BEEBE
CANADA
UNITED STATES
QUEBEC
VERMONT
A
B
NORTH DERBY
BEEBE PLAIN
RAIL TRAIL TO NEWPORT
URBAN TREE | CUT LINE
STANSTEAD, QC/ DERBY LINE, VT
KURT HILTON


RAIL TRAIL
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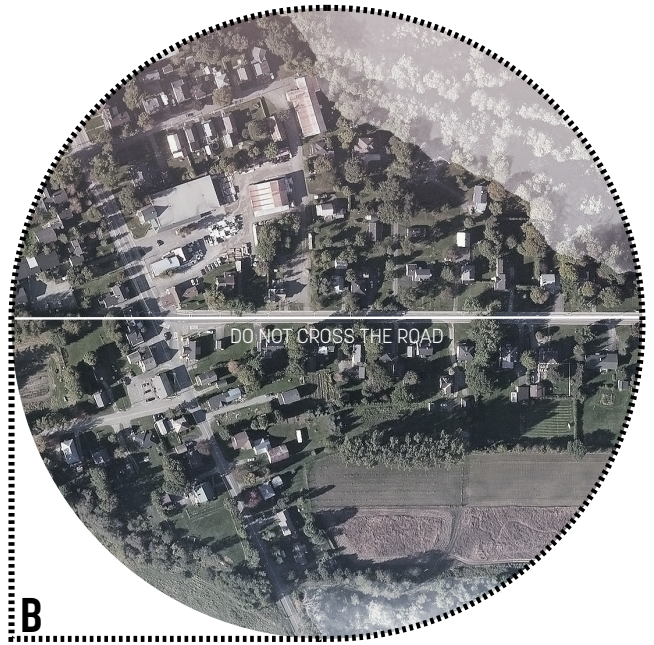
DO NOT CROSS THE ROAD
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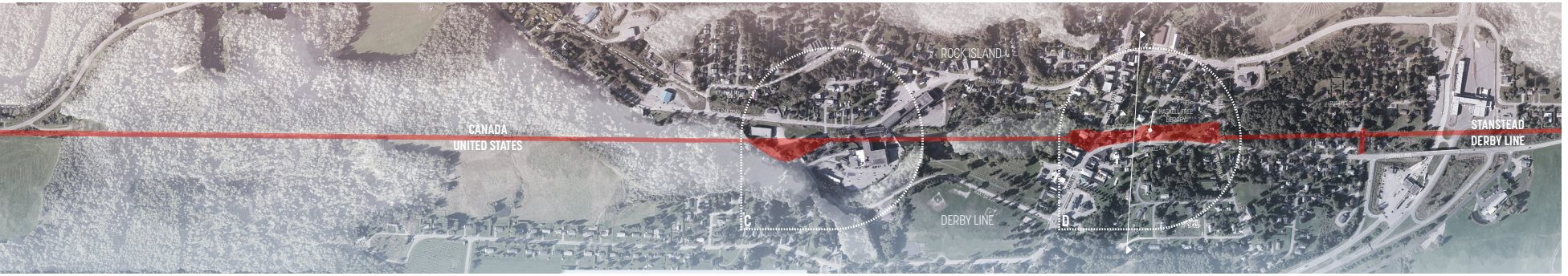
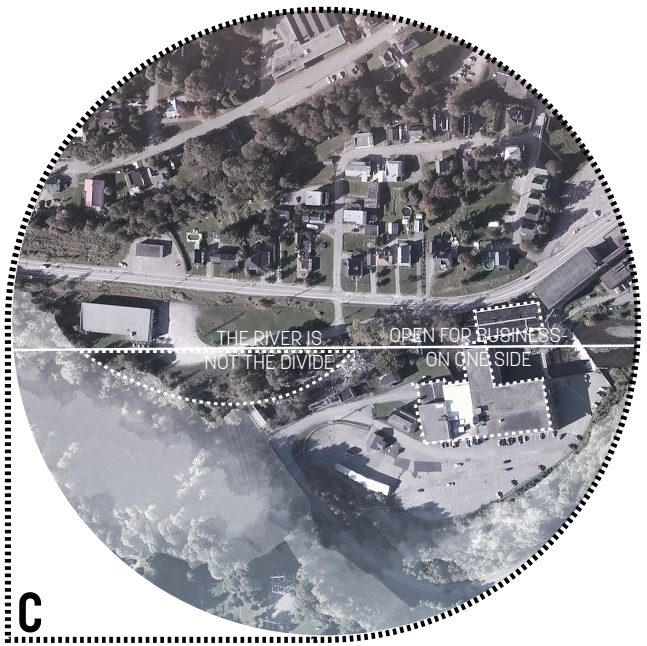




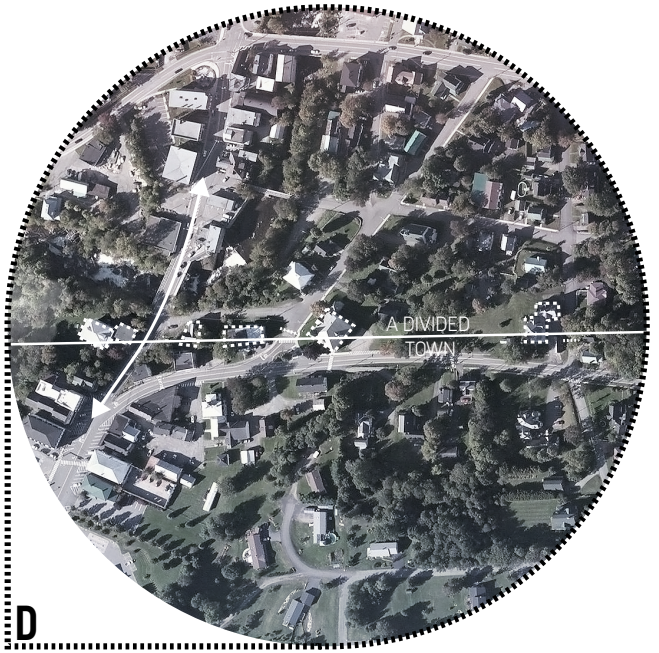


IMAGE:
The three towns that make up Stanstead. The strangest border quirks have been highlighted here. It is an example of how federal policy impedes community wishes and municipal policy.

Border security also creates a new reality- it is a place, where actions such as invasive searches of people and detainments on the whim of customs officials become the norm. It is one of the few places that even a democratically elected government can enforce policies more equated with far more authoritarian governments. - all done in the name of security. What happens when we build our walls higher? Do we feel safer? Or do the perceived external threats become much more terrifying? What if we could create a border condition that both enforces security of the border, but also became a far less hostile and intimidating place? A place where bridges are built rather than walls?

In contrast to the ambiguity of urban border enforcement in Canada and the US, the countryside paints a very different picture. For the entire length of the border, a line cuts through the vast forests of the continent measuring 20 american feet or 6 Canadian metres in width. It doesn't matter if that forest happens to be at the top of a mountain, or on an island in the middle of nowhere, that line stays clear. It provides physical marker of the limits of border enforcement. Cross past the line and you enter into either country. However, the line itself remains a sort of neutral zone. What if we could apply that to the urban context?

This ultimately led me to propose creating what I refer to as an Urban Tree Cut Line. A space clearly marked that would become both public space as well as a soft wall of security. Essentially a neutral zone that would clearly establish the limits and boundaries of both nations and allow residents the opportunity to be more aware of where they could or couldn't go. There is precedence for this, the Haskell Free Library functions exactly like this already. Anyone entering this zone, would willingly subject themselves to the scrutiny of intense surveillance and could possible even clear customs from within the zone to enter into the other country. It would help prevent the need for as much enforcement outside the zone and reduce the anxiety associated with the ambiguity of the urban border.

The town at present is already much more divided than it was in the past. And this is entirely because of the insensitive enforcement of border security here. Could these divisions be mended- ironically by the establishment of a wider divide?

IMAGE:
What does it mean to be a nationalist when your neighbours across the street are in a different country?

IMAGE:
Much of the Canada-US border is a 6m (20ft) wide tree cut line that passes through all forested areas.

CAN WE PRESERVE COMMUNITY EVEN IN THE FACE OF MORE SECURITY?

"Everyone's suspected of being a terrorist or lying. We used to feel like we were part of the same community. Now its like a member of your family that suddenly hates you, and you don't know why"

-Kim Prangley, Librarian at the Haskell Free Library

"It's funny how such an arbitrary line has such a deep signifigance in the way people live"

-Peter Scowen, Resident

IMAGE:
What if we could expand the neutral zone that is the Haskell Free Library. Could we changed a closed road to a park?

PART III
ABSURDITY OF RATIONALITY

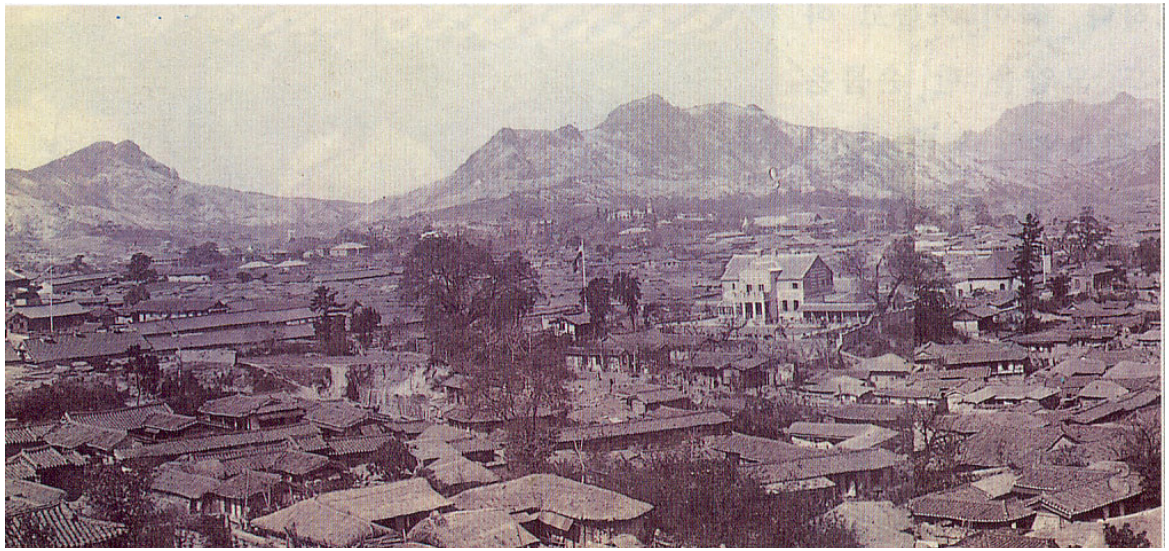


IMAGE:
The Korean DMZ. Before the Korean war, dozens of villages existed within its boundaries.

THE DIVIDED COUNTRY | 분할 된 국가

IV

To gain a better understanding of some of the larger elements in geo-politics, I decided to move away from Canada-US border and perhaps try to apply many of the teachings and methods learned from the previous semester to a new site and perhaps different levels of security and political climate. It was convenient then, that around this time, a colleague pointed me in the direction of a design competition that was going on. It was about the Korean demilitarized zone and constructing an underground bathhouse within the zone. The bathhouse would be open to both residents of North and South Korea and by placing the two peoples face to face, it was thought that perhaps relations could begin to soften between the two countries. I like most people, knew very little about Korea or the situation on the DMZ aside from the occasional news clippet every time tensions flare up in the area. But nonetheless, I decided to go with it. The idea of the DMZ neutral zone was often the first thought of a solution to Stanstead- Derby Line, so exploring the extremes of this concept in Korea was ideal.

Modern day Korea, is a place that has a rich and colourful past, but today is a tragic character in the play of global politics. For the first half of the 20th century, it had been occupied by foreign powers. First by Japan, then later the Soviet Union and the United States. When differing ideologies prevented an independant Korea from creation- the US had influenced the southern half to desire capitalism and democracy; conversely, the Soviets had pushed their own ideology on the north. War on the peninsula erupted and went back and forth before the country was torn in two on much the same lines as it had begun on. The two sides, guided by different ideologies and influences, developed into very different places in the ensuing decades.

The North, officially known as the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has been ruled by three generations of an all powerful, totalitarian regime- the modern day equivalent of the god-king. In order to preserve the regime, the nation shuts itself in from the rest of the world. The South, on the other hand is a hyper-capitalist nation. It is a nation that thrives on trade with the world and is a world leader in technological development.

Perhaps the greatest and most obvious physical scar left by the war was the De-Militarized Zone more commonly known as the DMZ. It is a 2.5 mile neutral zone that straddles the border between the two countries that are still technically at war. It was established to help keep an uneasy peace between the Koreas with entire villages and towns being erased to allow for its construction. It is a place of seemingly conflicting uses. Despite the name, the DMZ is one of the most heavily militarized places on the planet. It is still an active war zone, with South Korean and American troops stationed along the

DEMOCRATIC PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF KOREA
POP. 24.9 Million
LAND AREA: 120 540 km sq.
(46 540 miles sq.)
LANGUAGE: Korean
GOVERNMENT:
Unitary one-party socialist republic under de facto totalitarian military dictatorship

REPUBLIC OF KOREA
POP. 50.8 Million
LAND AREA: 100 210 km sq.
(38 690 miles sq.)
LANGUAGE: Korean
GOVERNMENT:
Unitary Presidential Constitutional Republic

North Korea has only 3 TV channels

South Korea has the fastest average internet speeds in the world

IMAGE:
A timeline of the Korean War.

whole length. Occasionally border skirmishes do occur and over the decades, almost a thousand soldiers from all sides have lost their lives. Yet attempts have been made to establish links between the two countries. The Kaesong Industrial Zone, was established by the two Koreas to allow some form of economic exchange. Though closed with recent tensions, it was a way for North Korea to get some much needed foreign currency while for the South it was a way for major companies to get products made with North Korean labour at a small fraction of the cost it would have been to have them made in the South.

It is in a way, another form of feudalism taking advantages of the conditions along a border.

Despite the area being an active war zone, this has not stopped the flow of tourism into the DMZ. Visitors to the DMZ are presented with a Disneyesque theme park complete with rides and cartoonish mascots. North Korea is almost presented as a zoo full of hostile animals, with tour guides informing visitors not to "provoke" the Northerners.
Another curious aspect about this neutral zone is that in the

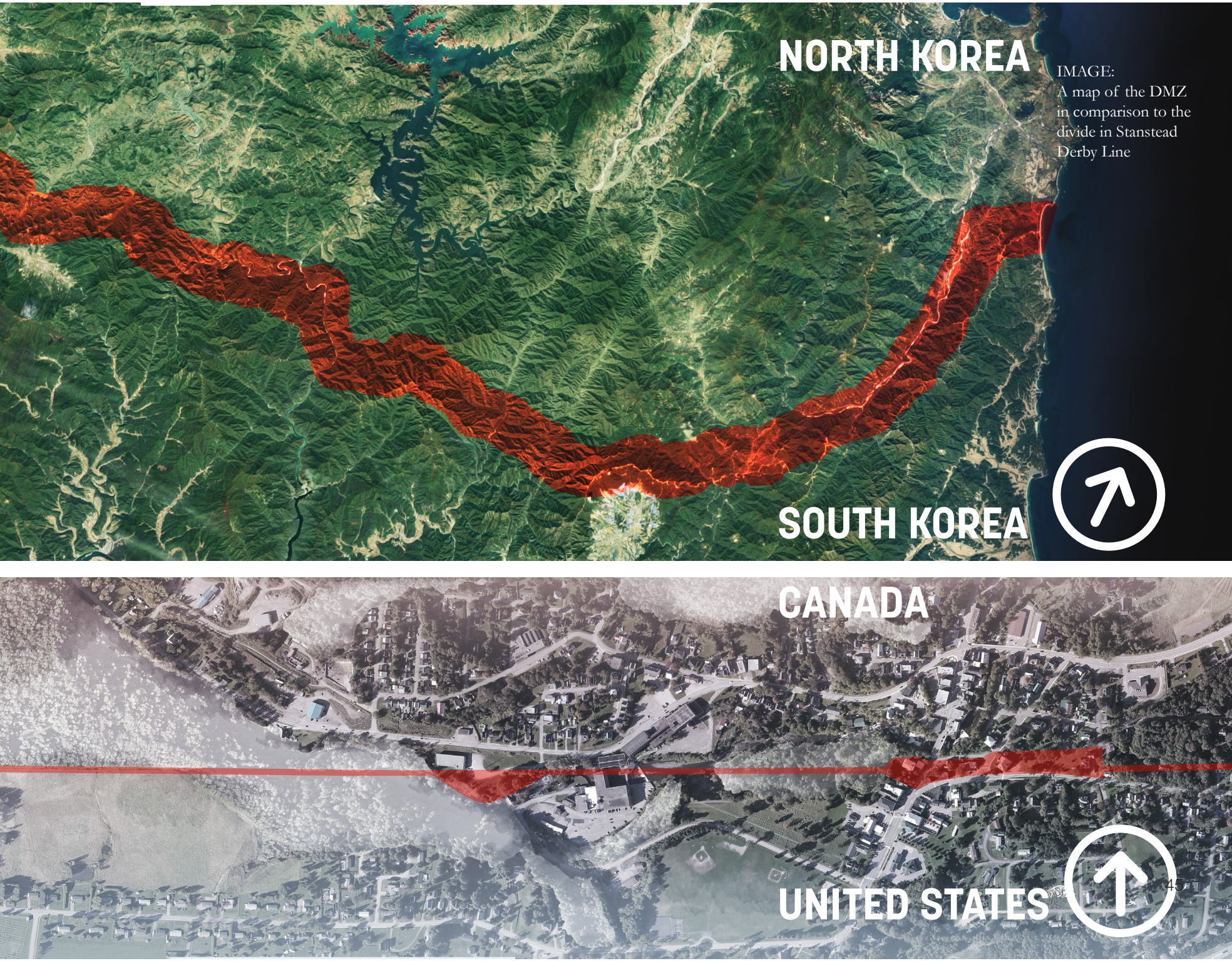


IMAGE:
A map of the DMZ in comparison to the divide in Stanstead Derby Line

absence of humans, nature has begun to take over, with the DMZ housing many endangered plants and animals often found nowhere else in Korea.

If the erection of a fence in a small town along the Canada-US border, can create coldness between people, a vast fortified gap can do unimaginable things to people's' perception of the other side.

In spite of the massive social and political changes to befall Koreans in the last 6 decades, many aspects of the Korean identity continue to exist on both sides. Koreans still speak the same language, many holidays and traditions are still practiced, and their food and culture are still largely intact. A common cultural and architectural artifact that remains ingrained in Korean culture is the bath house. It is a place that Koreans go to relax, to cleanse and to socialize. It is where business men go after a long day on the job, it is a place where families go. It is also a place where couples go to be intimate with one another- in Korea, most people do not move out of their parents house until their 30s. Gender segregated, it is customary to strip to the nude. Koreans feel that by being naked with one another, that they can truly consider someone trusted or a friend. There are several stages to a bathhouse, involving hot and cold tubs as well as hot and cold saunas. The entire process takes a whole day and as such, food is served within as well as having places to sleep- which in Korea means having a warm floor to lay out on.

In much the same way the DMZ has become a place of refuge for nature, the bathhouse in a way, is much like a refuge for Koreans; and it is steeped in memory. It is timeless- a common identity and a common way of life for a Korea that is losing touch with its other half.

The design competition called for having the bath house located on a site within the DMZ straddling the border. I proposed having the bath house straddle the border itself to make it clear that it belongs to Korea and transcends the conflict. By doing so, the bathhouse can function in much the same way the DMZ itself does- it is where a primal, natural Korea can grow from the ashes of war.

Entrance into the bathhouse begins with an entrance straddling the border between North and South. Visitors are funneled into a corridor that descends into the ground, twisting and turning and disorienting them. At different stages of the tunnel, guests must remove their material identity- first their shoes, then their clothes and finally a cleansing shower to prepare for entry into the space. This bath house does not segregate. You are simply a human standing naked with other humans. Nationality, gender and race are irrelevant.

Visitors emerge from the narrow confines of the tunnel into a vast voluminous cavern with a forest growing inside. A large oculus in the centre brings in daylight and takes in water for purification and use by the different baths. Being underground, visitors are in a new world, free from the conflicts of the surface. Here they are safe and free to cleanse and perhaps begin to break down the rigid barrier standing between North and South Koreans. The bathhouse grows from the ashes of war, purifying the earth and cleansing humanity of its conflicts allowing them to emerge refreshed and perhaps not viewing the other side as some sort of dangerous animal and maybe as fellow humans.

THE KOREAN DE-MILITARIZED ZONE

WAR ZONE

INDUSTRIAL AREA

CONFLICT TOURISM

NATURE PRESERVE

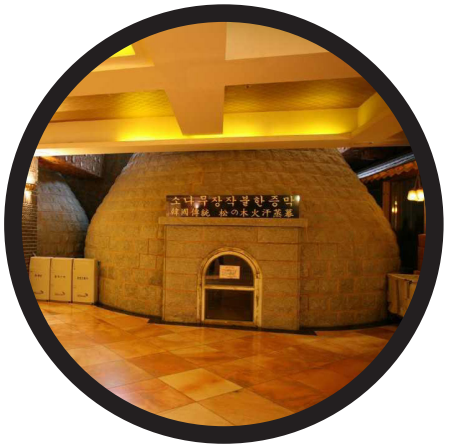
IMAGE:
The Korean DMZ manages to be simultaneously a war zone, joint industrial area, a tourist attraction and one of the world's largest nature preserves.

THE KOREAN IDENDITY

FOOD

한
국
어

LANGUAGE



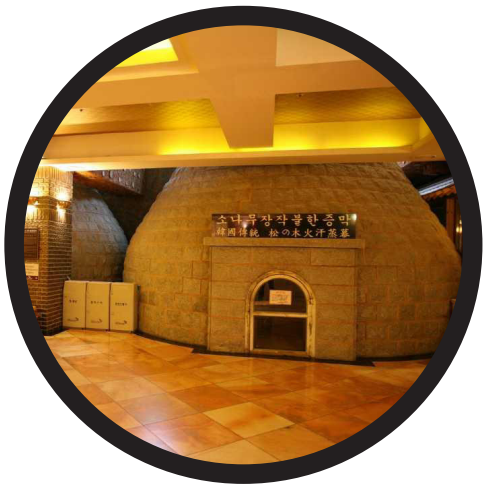
CULTURE

THE BATH HOUSE

SPA

COMMUNITY CENTRE

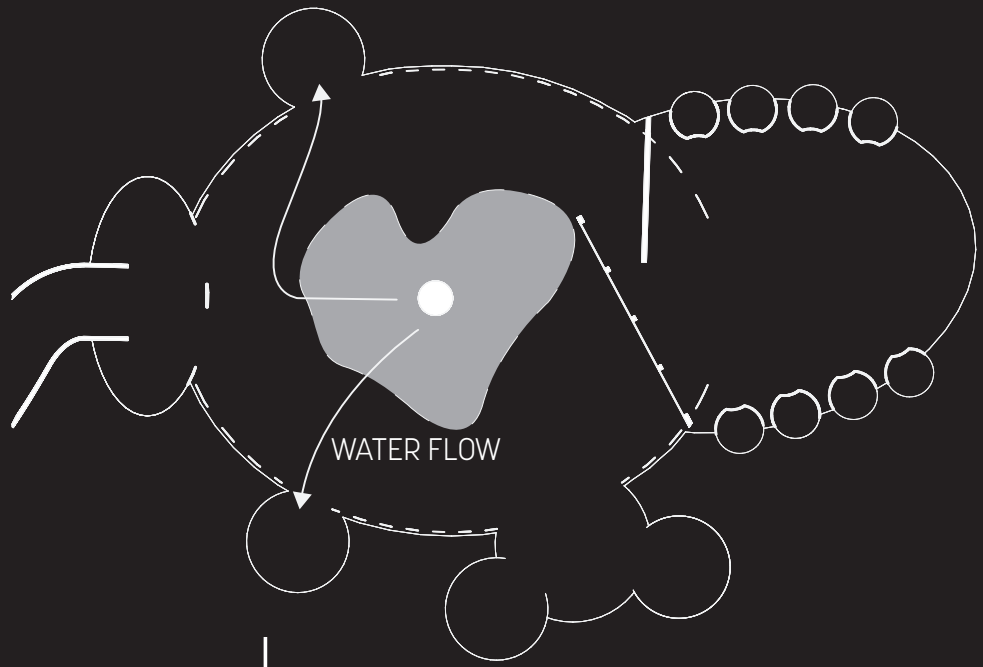
PLACE TO SLEEP



INTIMATE

IMAGE:
One of the strongest parts of the Korean idendity is the bath house or Jim Jil Bang. They are the place for all Koreans to recreate and relax.

IMAGE:
An underground bathhouse located within the DMZ. Visitors are required to strip down to the nude before entering into a cleansing and purifying space.

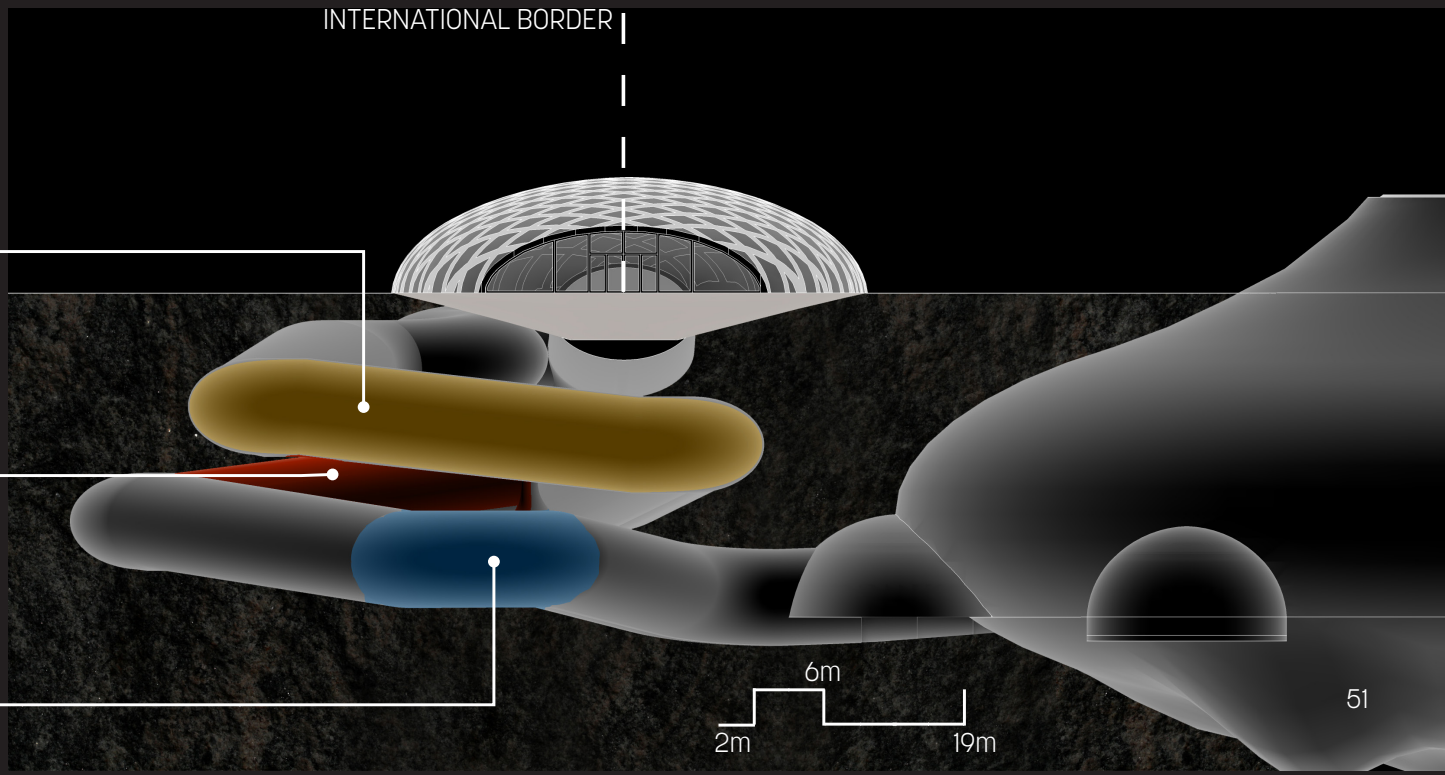


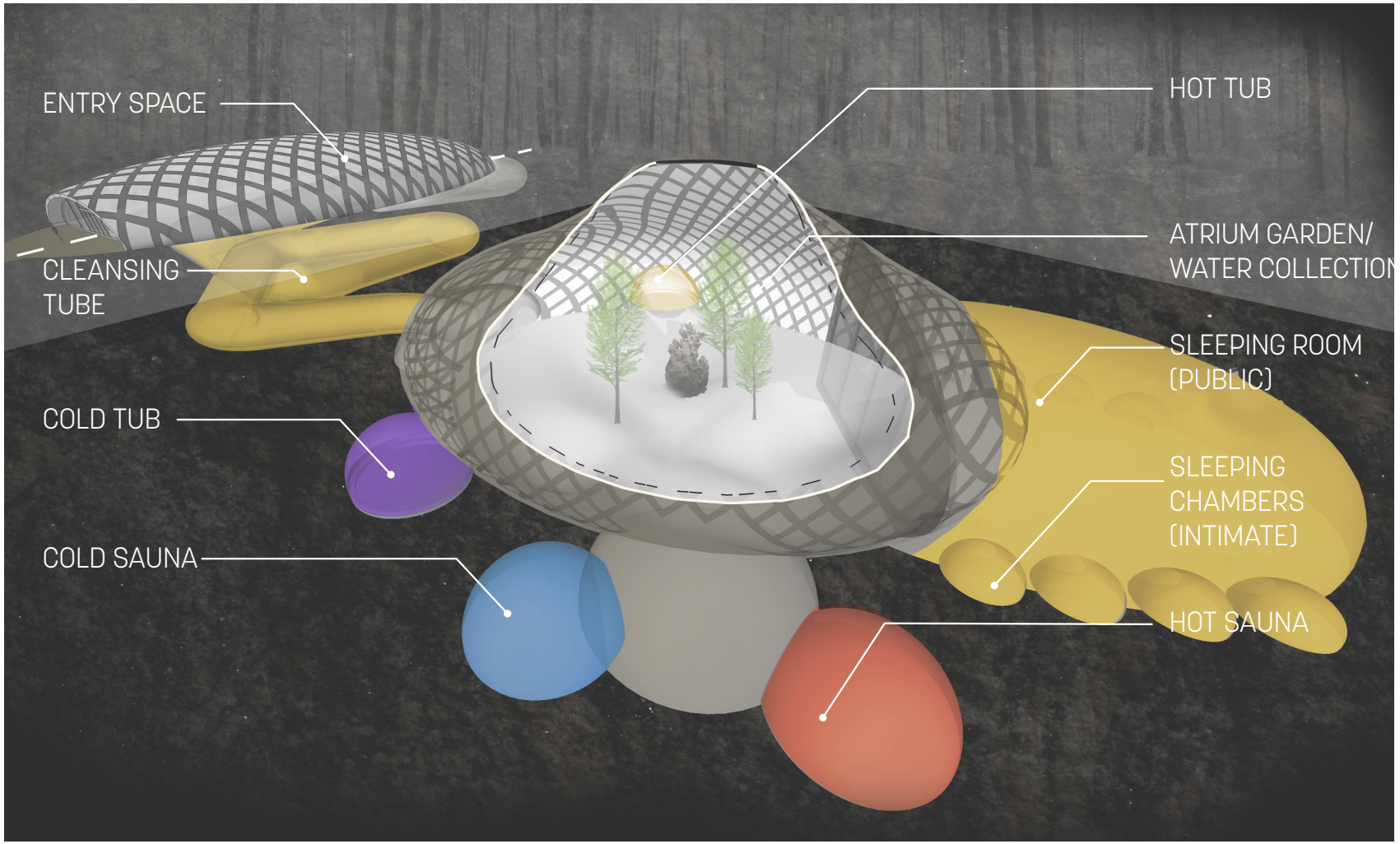
INTERNATIONAL BORDER

REMOVE SHOES

REMOVE CLOTHES

SHOWER YOURSELF





The Bath house for all its idealism is ultimately a thought process. It is a hyperreal solution to a very real situation. Both grounded in fiction and reality. But perhaps it is this exploration into fiction that can give us a clear idea of our goals in reality. Could a concept like the bathhouse be applied to other borders such as Stanstead-Derby Line? Or is this simply something that can exist in the very unique situation of Korea. Perhaps a common identity can be found among Canadians and Americans and perhaps this could be the key to helping to linking divided border towns to one another again.

I was intrigued with the notion of creating a place of common identity in the face of an antagonistic relationship. Could a concept like the bathhouse be applied to other borders such as Stanstead-Derby Line?

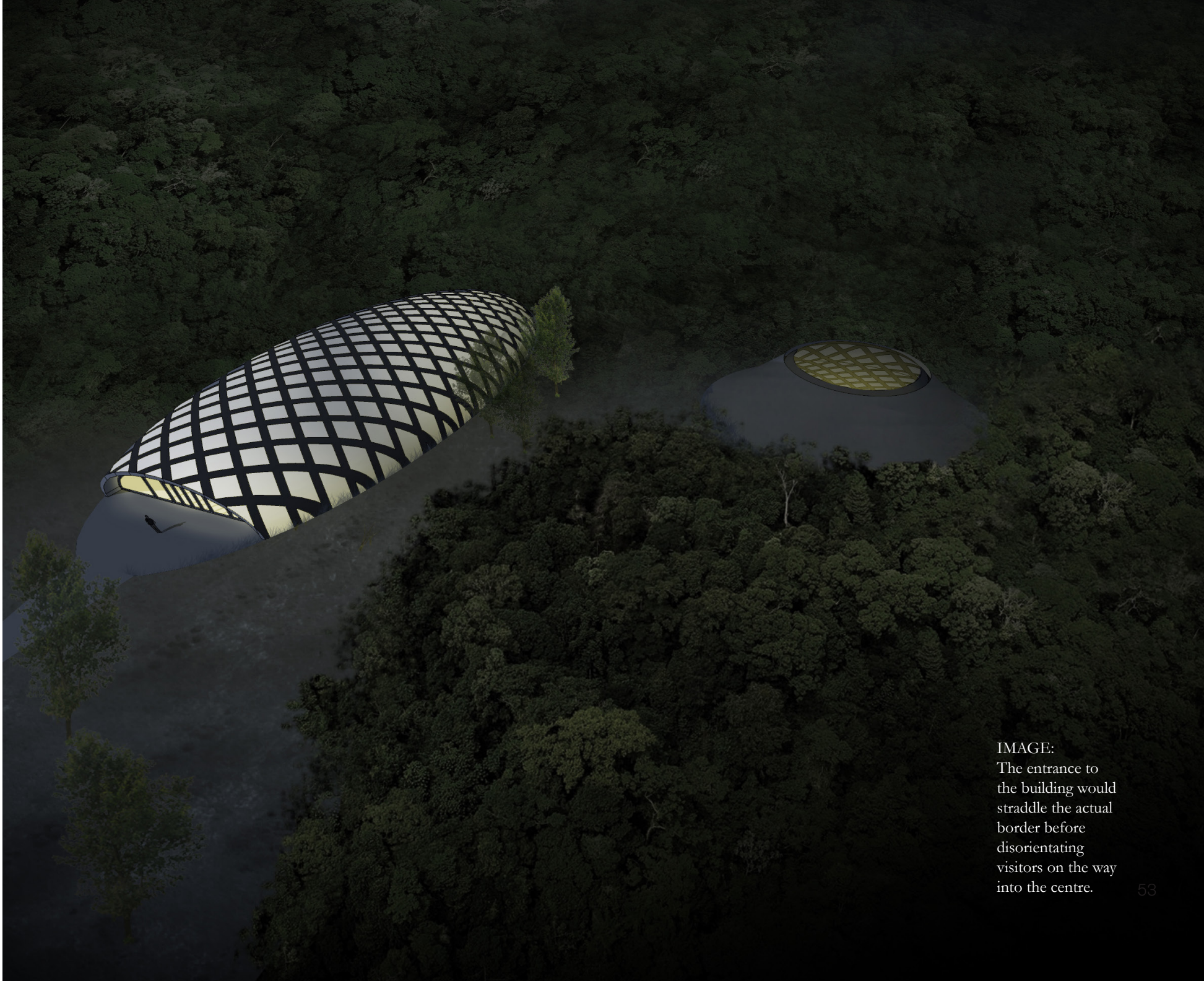


IMAGE:
The entrance to the building would straddle the actual border before disorientating visitors on the way into the centre.

BOK COP BAD COP

PART IV

EMBRACE THE DIVIDE

(OR HOW I LEARNED TO STOP WORRYING AND LOVE THE LINE)

V

Going back to Stanstead-Derby Line, I attempted to apply some of the lessons I had learned working on the Korean Demilitarized Zone. I approached the Canada- US border as to the relationship between North and South Korea. In many ways, they bore a surprising resemblance. Both had been forged in war. Both separated people of almost identical culture and the ever present security was steadily getting thicker. I needed to tap into the towns' shared identity to create something that both towns could rally behind. Both Stanstead and Derby Line share a rich identity that is intricately tied to the land. Their main industry is granite- something that the town is very proud of. They are very much in touch with their surrounding nature and embrace and celebrate anything locally made. In addition, much of the architecture throughout the town was very similar in terms of styling and materiality.

I also decided to take a re-look at the town library straddling the border, the Haskell Free Library. It functions as a joint library, theatre and community hub. It was built as a gift by Martha Stewart Haskell and her son, Colonel Horace Stewart Haskell and dedicated to Martha's late husband, Carlos who was a prominent lumber baron. Designed by James Ball and Gilbert Smith, its founders envisioned it being a place for the arts and learning for residents of both sides of the border. The building is a grand example of Late Victorian architecture and is somewhat a hodgepodge of different styles. It has since become the beloved and grandest landmark and symbol of the town. It symbolizes the fragile connection these border communities have and a constant reminder of what we can happen when we build bridges instead of walls. What if we could extrapolate the concept of the Haskell into a new construct or in a different way? What if Stanstead could get a complimentary landmark also straddling the border?

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It was also around this time that I found out some new information about the town. Gabriel Safdie, the brother of renowned architect Moshe Safdie had for many years been investing in Stanstead and had created a master plan for the town known as the Coeur de Stanstead. It envisioned the town becoming a hub for arts and culture, and by doing so helping to revitalize the struggling core of the town. Gabriel had already established a number of galleries, including one in an 18th century forge, restaurants and even a bar that helped celebrate everything the local area could produce. His efforts had already seen some moderate success as the downtown of Stanstead was clearly showing signs of vitality. Derby Line on the other hand; while it did not have as proactive a plan, called for the town to develop in a direction that would embrace many of the principles of the Coeur de Stanstead.

Using a similar concept to the bath house I endeavoured to create a new building in Stanstead that would be both accessible to the local community as well as a celebration of it. If the Haskell was the academic and educational hub of the town, this building would become the cultural and gastronomic hub. I commenced a similar format to the design competition and challenged myself to create an architectural solution for Stanstead in a little over two weeks.

COMMON IDENTITY OF STANSTEAD- DERBY LINE

GRANITE INDUSTRY

ARCHITECTURE

LANDSCAPE

PRODUITS DU TERROIR

IMAGE:
Stanstead and Derby Line have a lot in common including their industry, landscape and their love of locally made goods and produce.

"Le Coeur de Stanstead is to develop the heart of Stanstead as a cultural, educational and artistic center that will reach beyond its regional surroundings and let Stanstead be recognized well beyond its borders."

-Gabriel Safdie

The result is what I refer to as the Communite du Terroir. Occupying the land across from the Haskell, the site sits at the very center of the town as well as straddling the border. As a result it would form part of the downtown core of both towns. The building strives to be a place for the town to eat, to work and to celebrate the produit du terroir of Quebec and Vermont. If the bathhouse was about erasure of the divide, this building celebrates it. Occupants enter the building through doors that straddle the border and enter into the courtyard and market where outdoor performances occur and local wares are sold. Sugar maples line the border throughout the courtyard. An observation tower standing above the structure provides views of the surrounding countryside as well as being a gallery space for sculpture. The tower in essence becomes a new landmark for the town. Something the townspeople can simultaneously identify as theirs, while remaining accessible to everyone. The views of the countryside remind visitors that the landscape beyond and its nationality is irrelevant. It is a landscape for all. The building utilizes local materials- including stanstead grey granite in its construction. Together with the Haskell, a complex is formed including a park built on top of what was a closed street. Here the community can continue to be together- regardless of their passport. On lower levels there are more gallery spaces and artist studios. This is a place where the community goes to be a community. Here the townspeople are safe and free from harassment to visit their counterparts from the other country, buy their wares, and work together with them. Having plenty of windows and balconies overlooking the street help to extend the street wall of the two downtowns helping to stitch them together into one. If we can invest so many resources into border security, we should also invest into making our border communities retain their unique identity and preserve that for generations to come.

LA COEUR DU STANSTEAD

FOOD

ART

ENTERTAINMENT

IMAGE:
Gabriel Safdie has been investing heavily in Stanstead, establishing restaurants, entertainment venues and art galleries.

THE HASKELL FREE LIBRARY

LANDMARK

LIBRARY

THEATRE

COMMUNITY CENTRE

IMAGE:
The Haskell Free Library is the cultural and educational hub of the town, providing service in English and French.

STANSTEAD, QC
CANADA
LE COUER DE STANSTEAD
HASKELL FREE LIBRARY
DERBY LINE, VT
UNITED STATES

A CROSS BORDER COLLABORATION

MARKETS

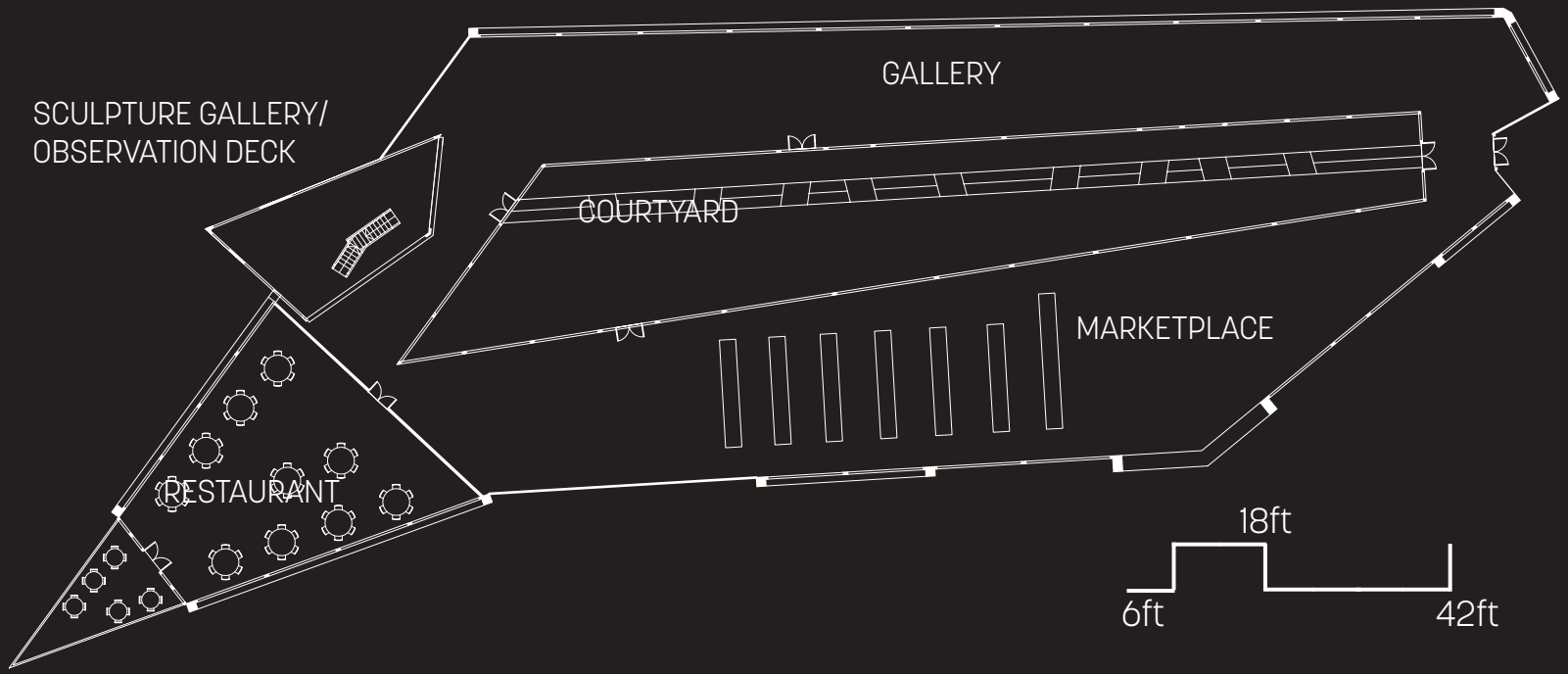
GALLERIES

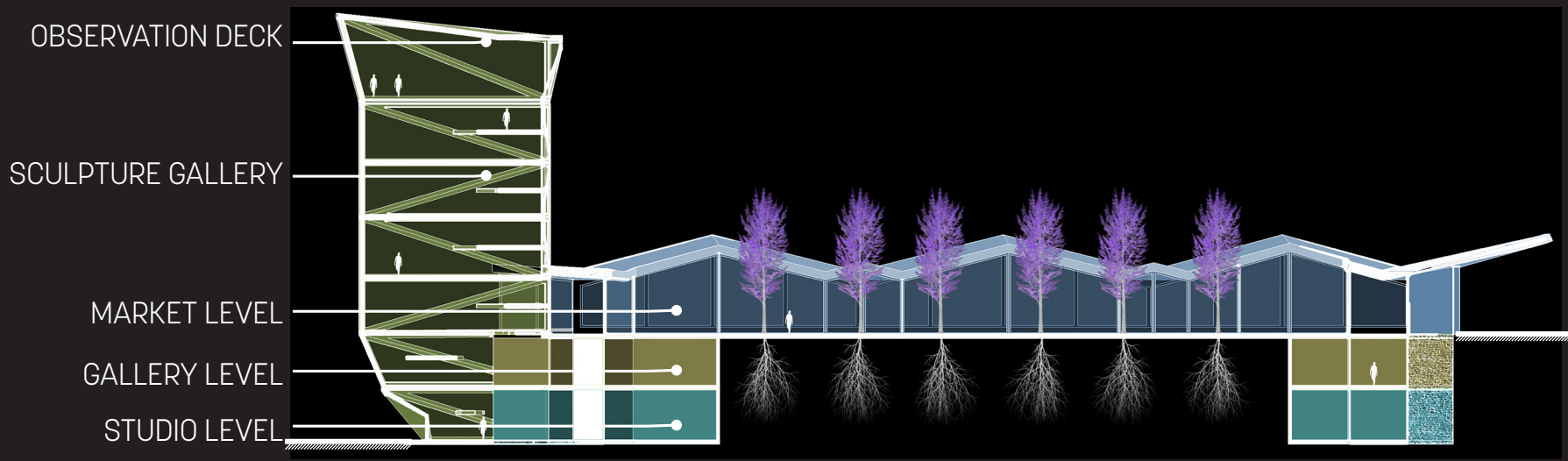
PERFORMANCE SPACE

ARTIST STUDIOS

IMAGE:
What if we could create a new building similar to the Haskell Free Library that services the other needs of the town.

IMAGE:
The Communite du Terroir would provide a new larger space for the community to be together inside. It would be a place to eat, to shop and to create.


SCULPTURE GALLERY/
OBSERVATION DECK
GALLERY
COURTYARD
MARKETPLACE
RESTAURANT
18ft
6ft
42ft


OBSERVATION DECK
SCULPTURE GALLERY
MARKET LEVEL
GALLERY LEVEL
STUDIO LEVEL

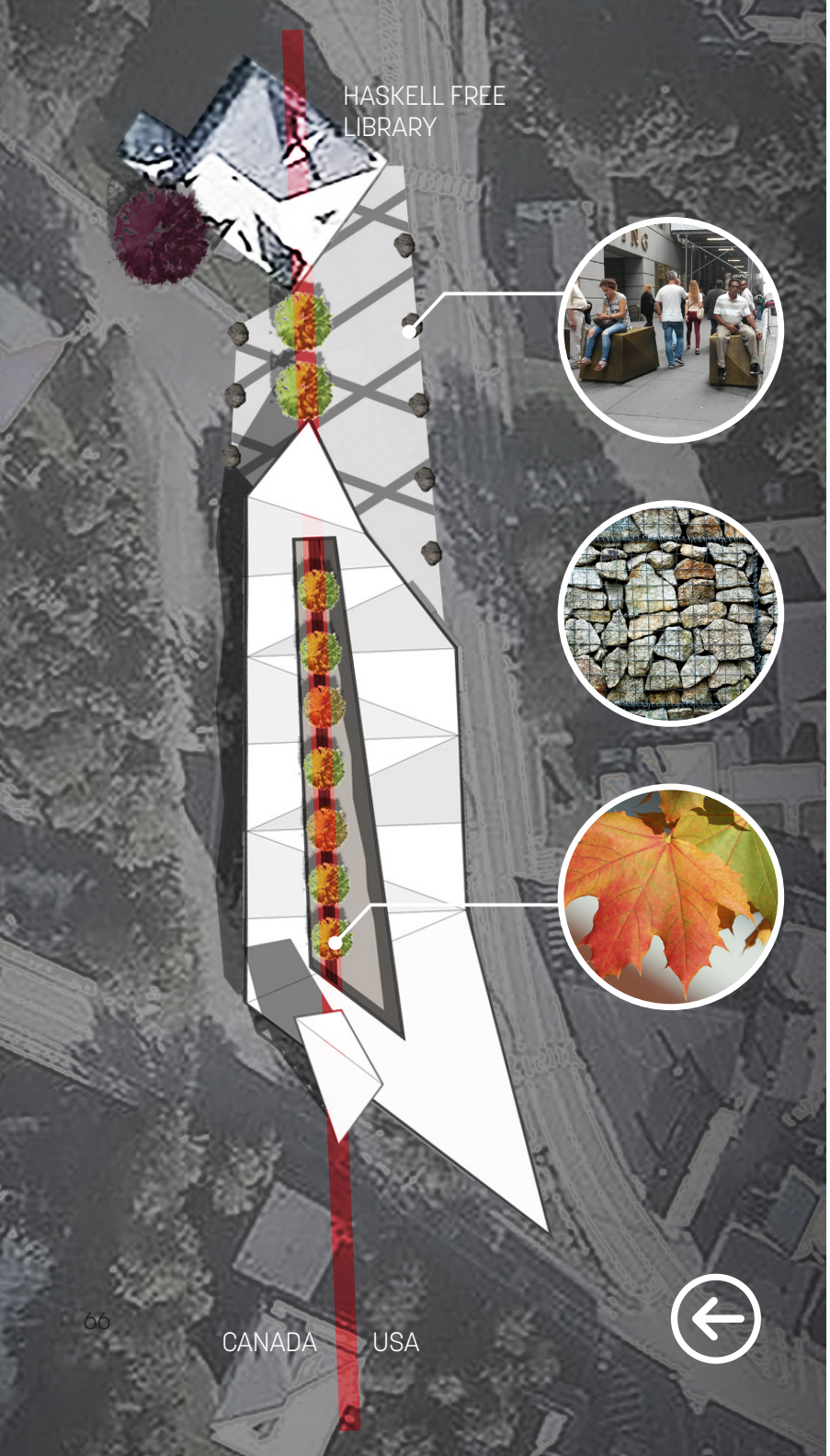
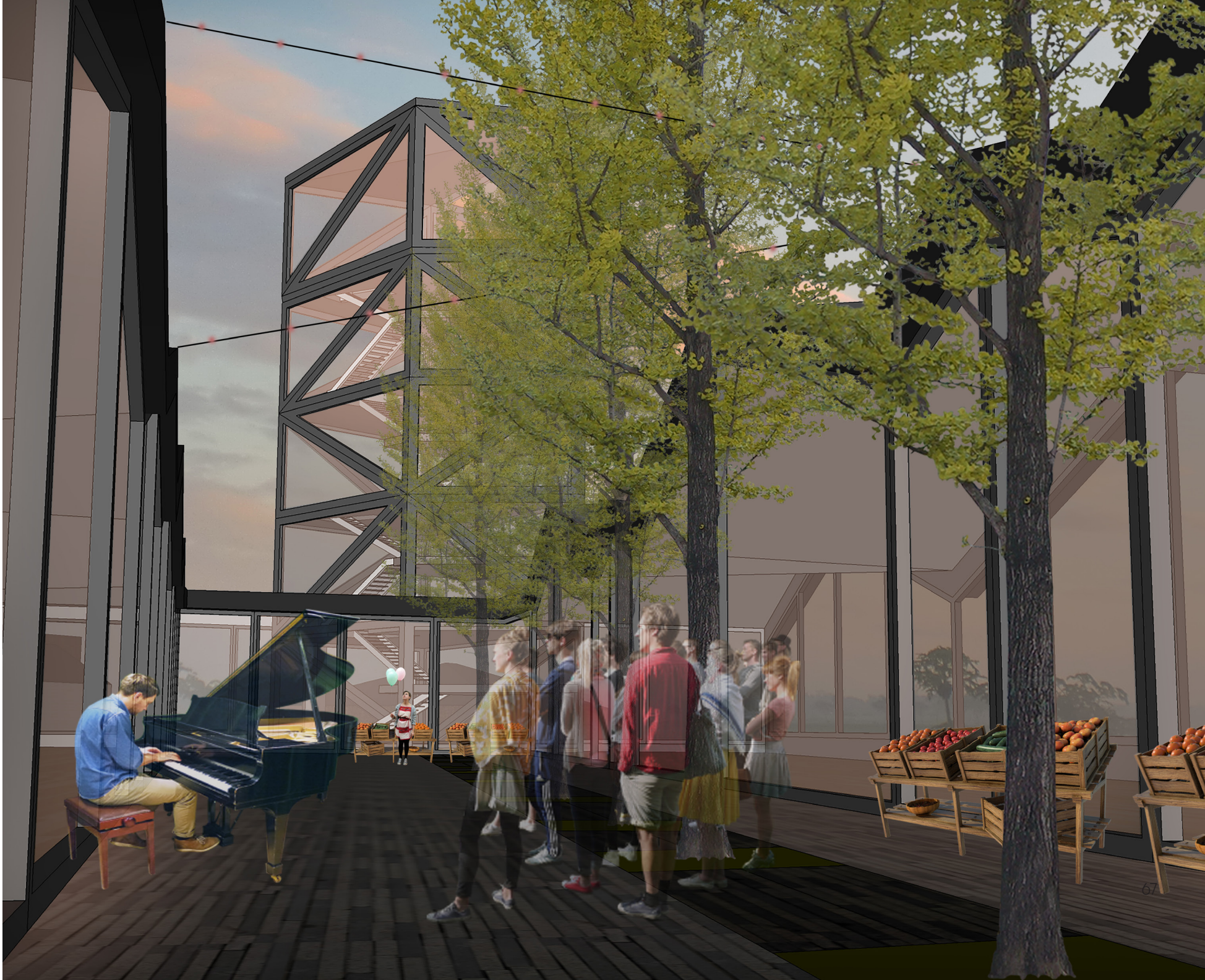


IMAGE:
The building would also feature an observation tower and a central courtyard that would play host to live performance events.



OPERA HOUSE

CUSTOMS

FINAL THOUGHTS

VI

Tighter border security is an unfortunate reality of the world at present. But let's not sacrifice community and togetherness in the process. Simply put, it is my hope that this intervention will help the unique culture and condition of Stanstead/Derby Line survive into the future. In these troubling global times, it's now imperative more than ever before that we work towards common issues. That we work towards building up bridges instead of walls. Talking to the residents of border communities, you get the optimistic sense that the current situation with security is only temporary. That like the Berlin Wall, these measures will not last forever. After all these border communities have managed to stick together even when their nations were at war with each other.

Moving forward, I feel that this thesis is only at the beginning. That my experiments challenge the notion of sovereignty. Perhaps the marketplace and the bathhouse can be labs for sovereignty. What happens when we let people of different nations freely intermingle with each other? What place does nationalism have in such a conversation. These are all questions that are poorly understood. Yet, their consequences can be far reaching. Perhaps border communities can serve as a model for how international politics should work. By working together as one we will become that much stronger as a human species.

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