

KAHNOWIIYAA “everyone” *Derelyne Raval, Tengun Bold, and Prof. Shawn Bailey*

Working in collaboration with Prof. Shawn Bailey and fellow student Tengun Bold, the project rooted its seeds in the dissection of Jessie Thistle’s definition of Indigenous Homelessness. After, an analysis of a site in North-Western Ontario intended to be the home for a community of people experiencing homelessness. Unbeknownst to us, the project would evolve into a meaningful inquiry into the intricacies of existence and relationship. Ideas were carefully expressed and exercised through drawing, collaging, and modelling. A series of thresholds inspired by Indigenous ways of knowing and the Ojibwe language devised by Prof. Shawn Bailey and Honoure Black were studied and further developed. These five thresholds (danakamigad, andotan, bawaajigan, meshkwad, and naagotoon) redefine the structure of current architectural practice, inspiring a sincere way of approaching the design process aimed at ridding the human-ego. in favour of embracing ceremony.



1. DANAKAMIGAD:

It takes place, happens in a certain place.



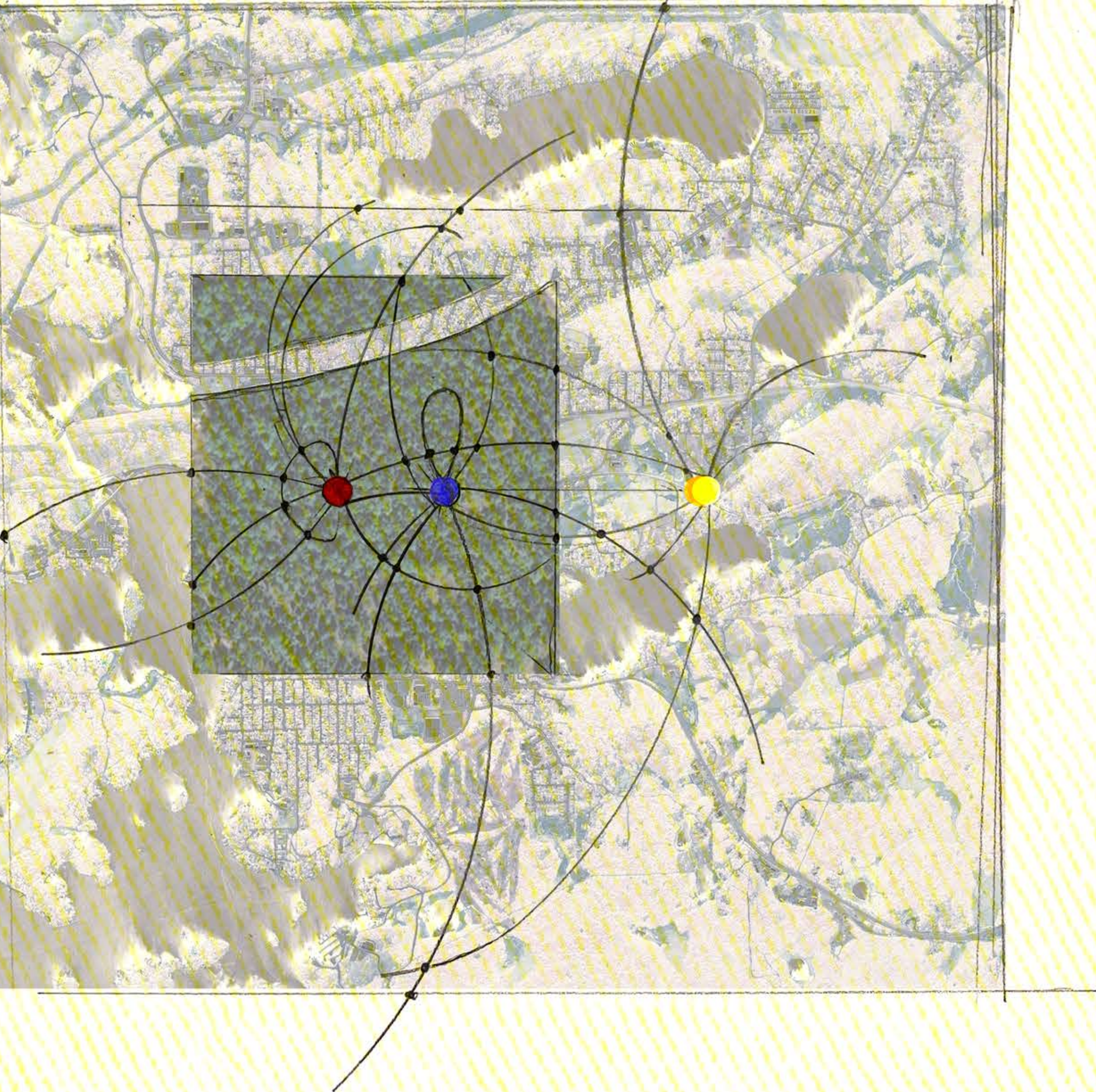
Jessie Thistle’s definition of Indigenous homelessness illustrates that ‘home’ goes far beyond the walls we construct. A sense of home emerges from connections to aspects such as people, nature, and language which all make up ones identity. Since the beginnings of colonization, these connections for Indigenous peoples have been brutally severed. Architecture’s role starts to emerge when we reconsider ‘home’ as relating to relationship.

The application of this definition began with looking at a site in North-Western Ontario, which has been bought with the intention of housing a community of homeless people in the area. Within this threshold, zoning and the technicalities of site were looked into and spatial moments were imagined and considered. Our explorations unintentionally relied quite heavily on our preconceived notions of constructed space.



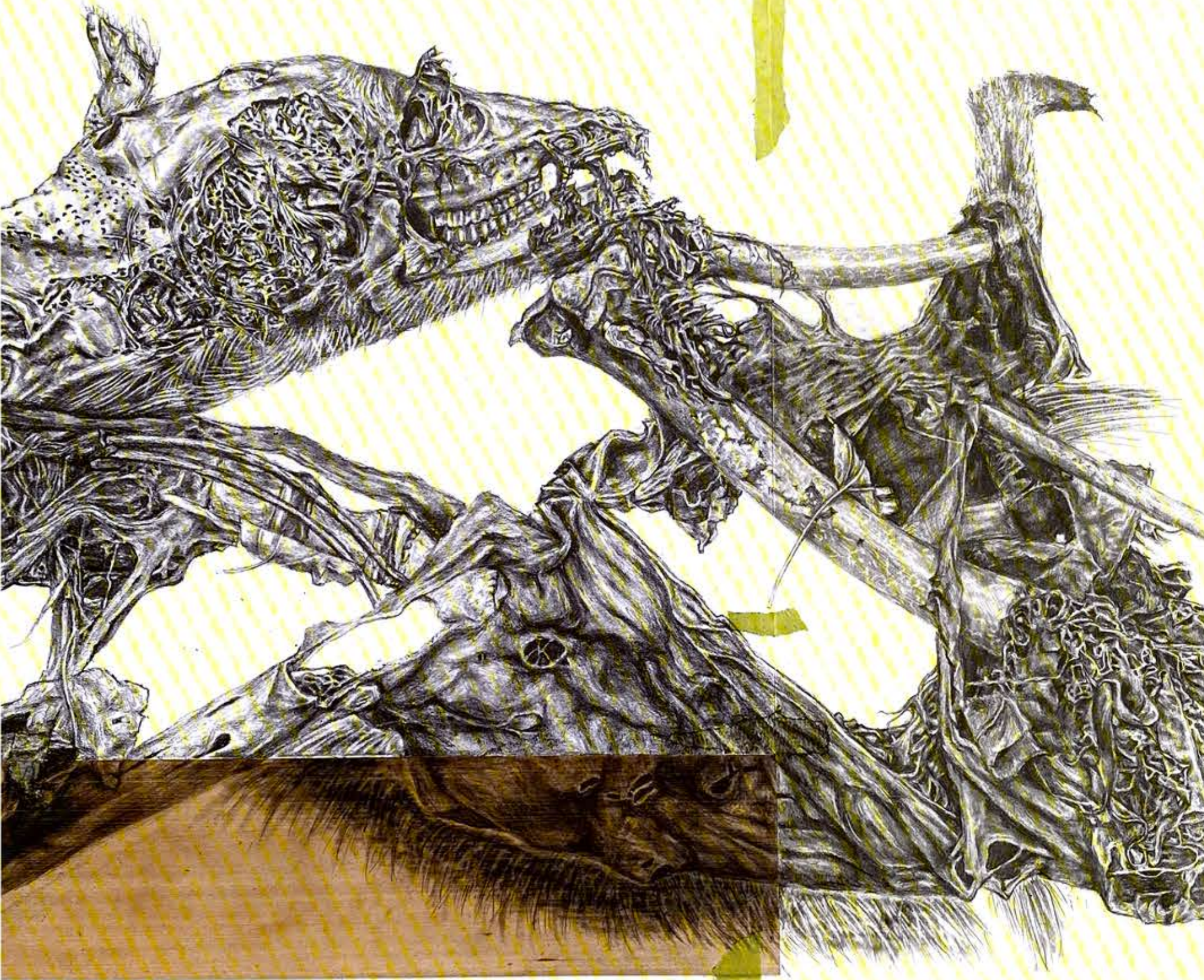
4. MESHKWAD:

In turn, in exchange.



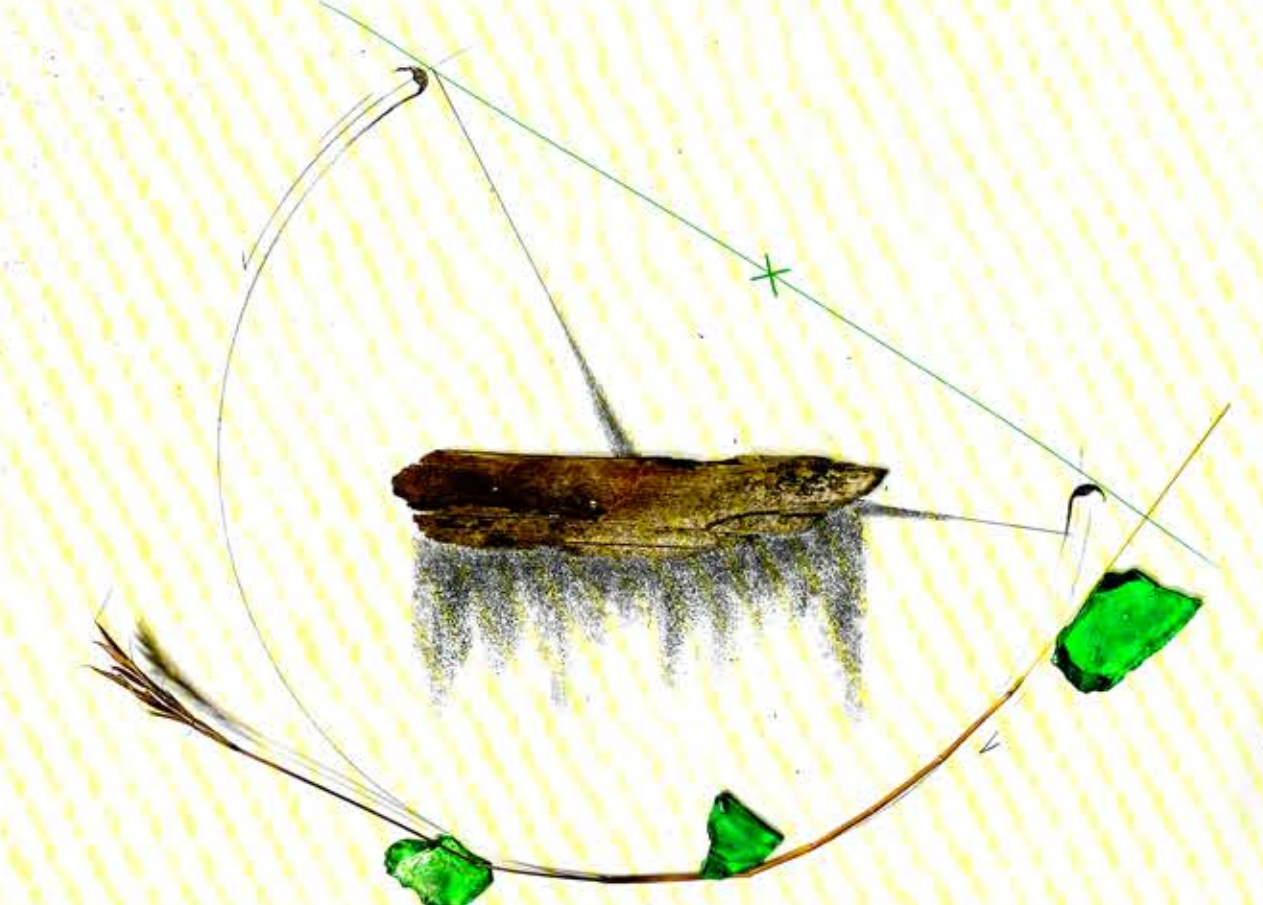
2. ANDOTAN:

Listen for it and wait to hear it.



Prof. Shawn Bailey explored the site one morning and came across a dead deer decomposing in its late stages. It’s unimposing yet powerful presence on the site became a source of inspiration when considering who we’re sharing the site with. The site is already inhabited by a multitude of life forms which rely on the land just as much as humans do. This realization made us question architectural intervention. Within this threshold we reconsidered architecture’s contributions to people, the land, and to understanding metaphysical realms of interpreting existence.

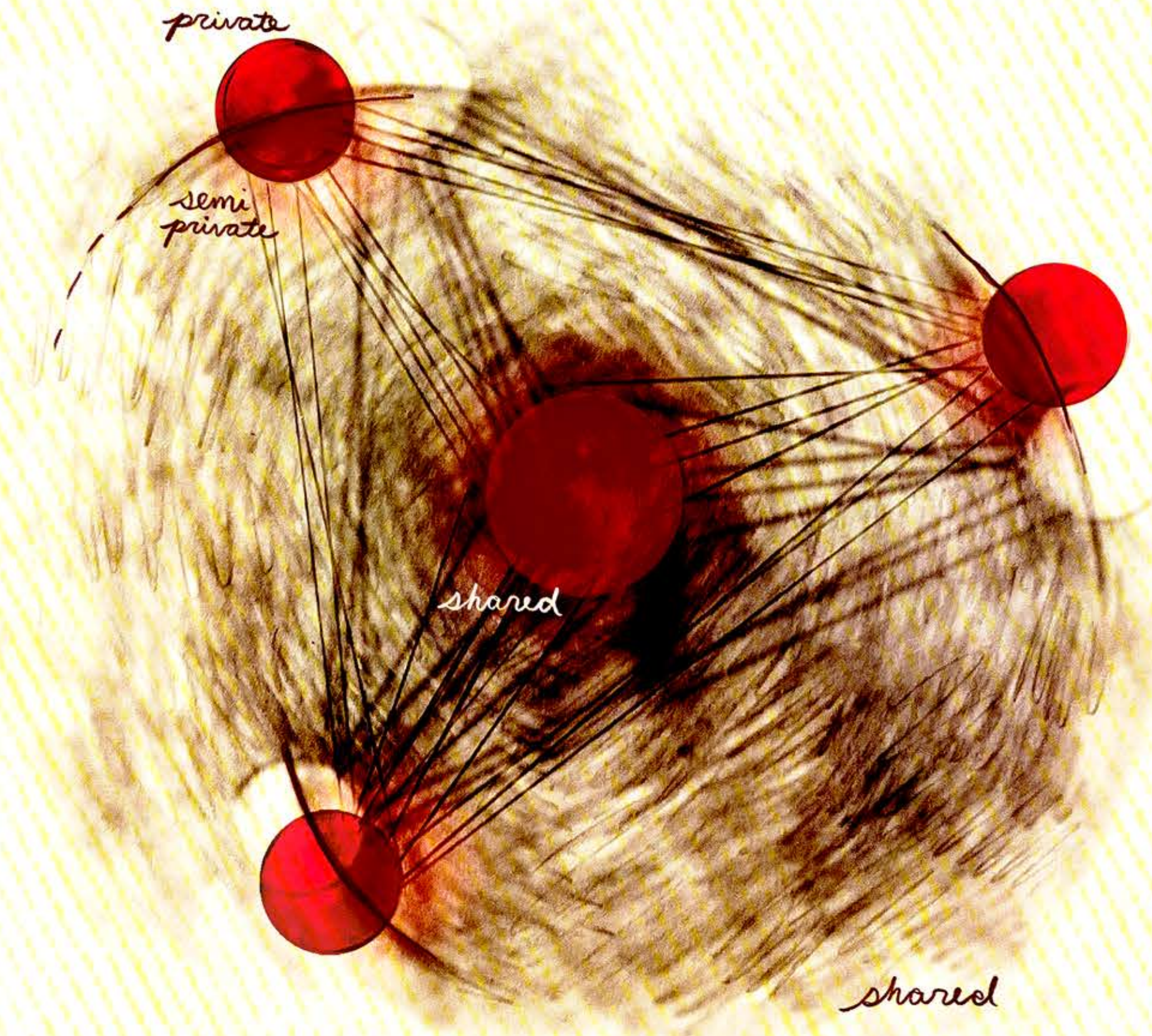
Reciprocity is a core aspect of Indigenous ways of knowing. This notion of giving back in return for what has been given applies to all scales within the living and the non-living world. Reciprocity is expressed heavily in Robin Wall Kimmerer’s book *Braiding Sweetgrass*, a book heavily referenced over the course of the work. Kimmerer outlines the components of the Honourable Harvest, a set of beliefs that Indigenous peoples have followed in order to take respectfully and sustainably from the land. The Honourable Harvest teachings were used to develop our phased approach. Allowing us to view architecture as a gift which can be given back in exchange for knowledge and storytelling.



3. BAWAAJIGAN:

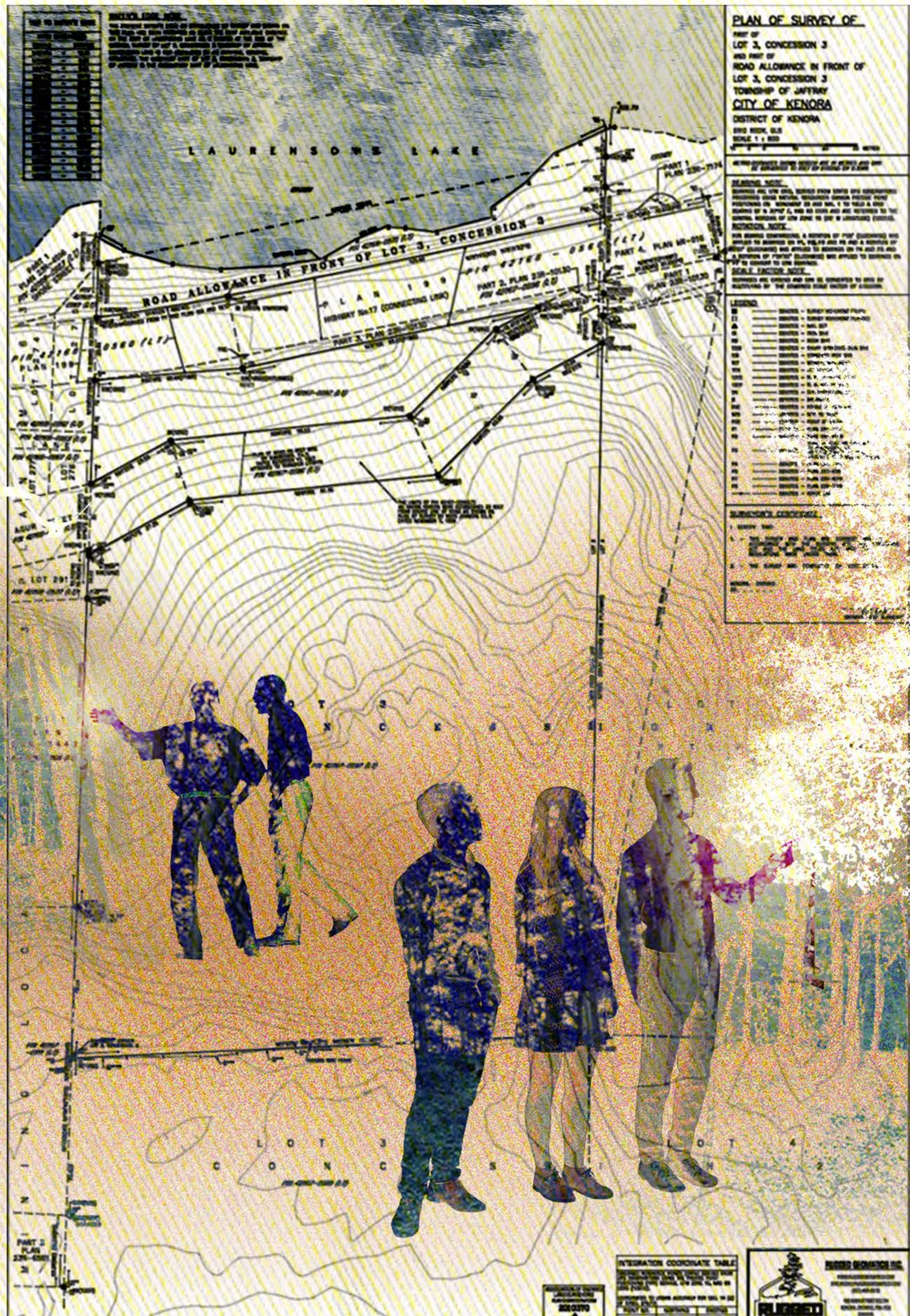
A dream, a vision.

Combining the realities of spatial planning and organization with our ideas and understandings of architectural intervention allowed us to dream into what the project could be and what it could do. The necessity of considering both shared and private spaces was taken into consideration. Realities of the winter conditions in relation to the need for space was also an aspect that reinforced our vision of a phased approach, where essential spaces are built first very early in the process, and as needs and wants arise, the architecture evolves in response. This phased vision of ours became the magnum opus of our research findings.



5. NAAGOTOON:

Make it show, reveal it, tell a good story.



The thresholds (danakamigad, andotan, bawaajigan, meshkwad, and naagotoon) paired with teachings of the Honourable Harvest were developed into a framework which aims to interpret the design process as ceremony. Designers need to take on the role of ‘spatial agents’, navigating the realms of spatial creation, organization, and destruction by considering who we are working with and designing for, and the areas outside of design we inevitably affect. The responsibility of the architect doesn’t end at the boundary of a site, it makes its way into the relationships and memories that are made. Architecture is a direct reflection of a society’s values and capacity to care for one another.