Drifting Outside of the City

by
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Master of Architecture

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Authors Declaration

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I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis. This is a true copy of the thesis, including any required final revisions, as accepted by my examiners.

I understand my thesis may be made electronically available to the public

Abstract

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ABSTRACT

There are spaces in Toronto where the city's grid is forced to give way. Remnants of outdated infrastructure, deep geographic indentations, and natural elements appear, disrupting the constraints that govern our urban environment.

The spaces remaining have been shaped by industry, re-purposed or abandoned; they are subterranean, and uninhabited, or simply forgotten and absorbed by the growing city. This is an exploration of a found park, six existing terrains in Toronto including; a streetscape, inactive rail path, ravine, river valley and de-industrialized waterfront. Individually, these terrains are often hidden from the urban realm, disorientating and open to interpretation. Connected, they create a green loop around the inner city.

This is an exploration recorded in four methods; walking, photography, photomontage and projections. It is a record of my wandering in various terrains and the different lenses that I found and used to understand these spaces. This is a documentation of the existing, as well as an exploration of a perception of space. It is a record of the temporal experience of passage, of the unfolding of a narrative, and of the unique character of these spaces.

The result is a series of curated walks, amplifying the threshold between city and anti-city. I want to reveal the familiar as unfamiliar, and curate the experience of this hidden landscape, and connecting it to our built environment. I had to suppress the urge to fix the spaces, clean them up, connect them, smooth them out. I wanted to approach each of these spaces delicately, hinting at their past, present, and projecting ambitions for future relationships with them. Working with the themes of cultural memory, social dialogue, and geographic history to create new stories, and an evolving backdrop for city life.

Acknowledgments

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My advisor, Don Mckay. My committee, Anne Bordeleau and Rick Haldenby. My external reader, Fiona Lim Tung.

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INTRODUCTION

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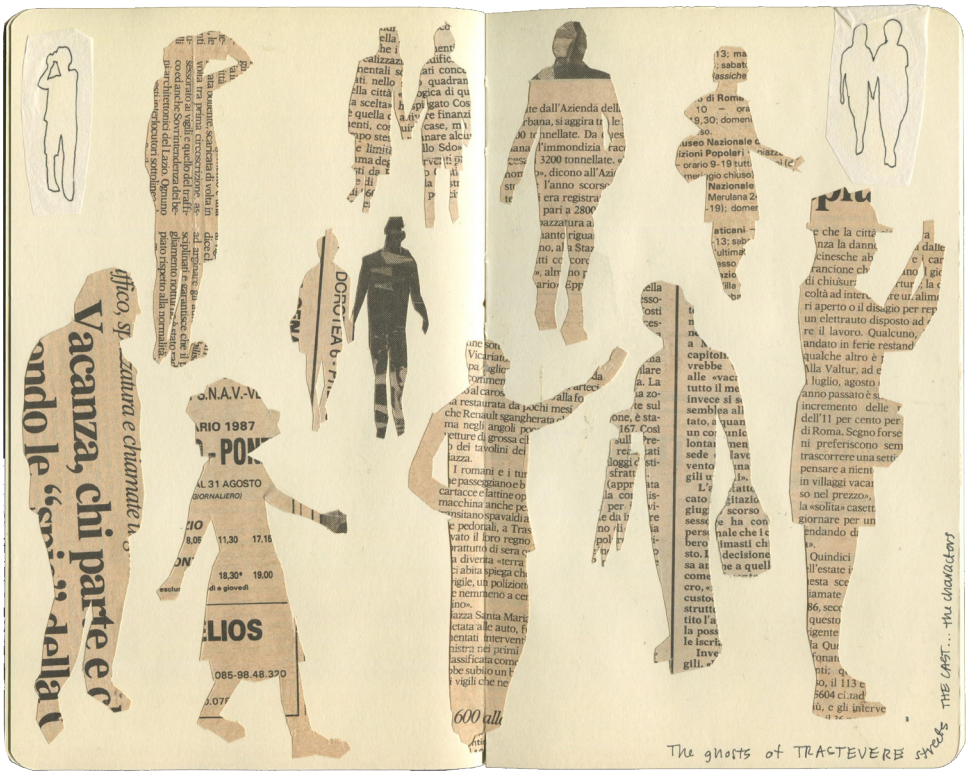
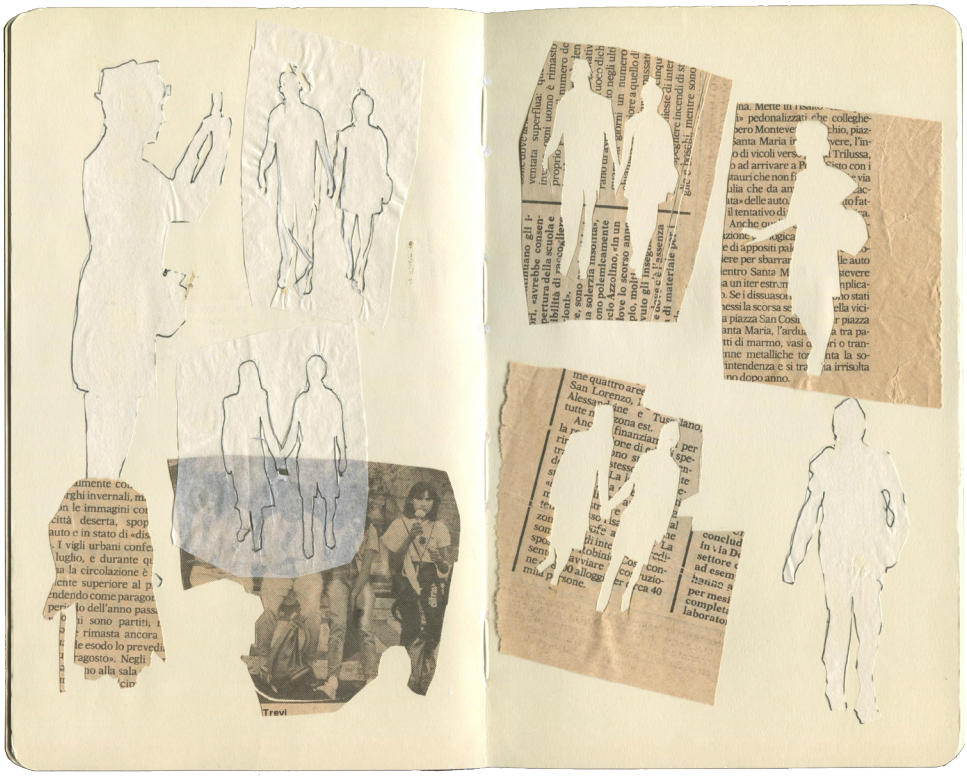

Vacanza, chi parte e
The ghosts of TRASTEVERE streets
THE LAST... the characters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INTRODUCTION

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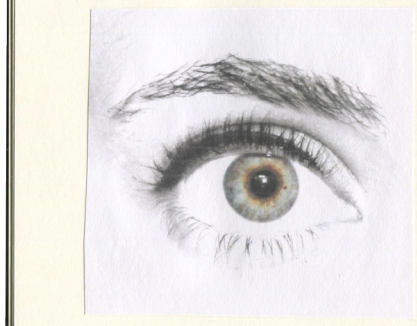
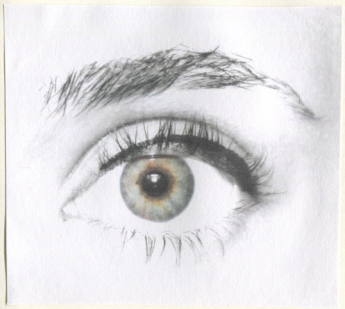
PREFACE

Inspired by Sophe Calle: A French artist known for her investigation of human nature which includes following people, looking through their private things and photographing them

Drifting outside the city began with a series of questions about the existing state of urbanity. I planned to wander the city without self-imposed limits, boundaries, or theoretical hypotheses, just a desire to experience and record urban life. My methods unfolded through trial and error. The project began in Rome, where I wandered, observed, and recorded urban life through film, writing, and photography. It wasn't about following one person or the other; it was about stalking a city. I wanted to learn about the street from the people who knew it intimately, or people who didn't. I followed old Italian men in suits who looked like mafia, curious characters who darted around like they knew the mazes intimately, and even tourists who had mundane conversations about their everyday lives while sitting in front of the Pantheon. Observing the mundane, I saw the familiar as unfamiliar, and record it.

Figure 1: Strangers on the Street Collage
Figure 2: Negative Space Collage





INTRODUCTION
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PERCEPTION

see: look with your eyes
percieve: is what your eyes do in combination with your other senses
cognition: the result of perception, learning and reasoning. The combination of your memory, and knowledge and its effect on what you see

Returning to Toronto, I turned this new lens on the city I grew up in. Initially, I was drawn to the ravines and rail corridors because I knew them well, and never saw them as foreign to the urban environment. From this new perspective I saw them as unique ex-urban experiences. For a long time these places only existed in my childhood memories, associated with learning to ride a bike, or going for walks on weekends. It wasn't until much later that I saw the ravines in another light. Like rings in a tree, these spaces act as markers of the history of Toronto. This became an exploration in four parts; walking, photography, photomontage and projections. It is a record of my wandering in various terrains and the different lenses that I used to understand the space. This is a documentation of the existing, as well as an exploration of a perception of space.

Walking, I attempted to *drift* through these spaces, recording the experience in a stream of consciousness. This went with a photo essay. These pieces brought back a memory, a portrait of the space. However, I was concerned that, to the subjective viewer they were rather flat. This was especially obvious to me in the case of the Don Valley, which is complex and vast. In a series of photomontages I worked to translate aspects of the space. Then in layers of representations I worked to reveal, interpret and amplify past, present and future realities for the sites, to make invisible narratives visible. In his essay *The Agency of Mapping*, James Corner asks that design, "make visible realities previously unseen or unimagined."[1] In the final layer of interpretation, in the chosen sites, I created a design to amplify the invisible cultural forces that resided there.

[1] Dodge, Martin, Rob Kitchin, and C. R. Perkins. *The Map Reader: Theories of Mapping Practice and Cartographic Representation.* Chichester, West Sussex, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011. P.95

Figure 3: Seeing
Figure 4: Cognition

"we are brought up in the ethic that others, any others, all others, are by definition more interesting than ourselves; taught to be diffident, just this side of self-effacing. ("you're the least important person in the room and don't forget it," Jessica Mitford's governess would hiss in her ear on the advent of any social occasion."

BUT OUR NOTEBOOKS GIVE US AWAY, FOR HOWEVER DUTIFULLY WE RECORD WHAT WE SEE AROUND US, THE COMMON DENOMINATOR OF ALL WE SEE IS ALWAYS, TRANSPARENTLY, SHAMELESSLY, THE IMPLACABLE "I". – pg. 136

a notebook for public consumption...

~~"In fact I have abandoned self-pity as a kind of parasitic exercise~~; Instead I tell what some would call lies. "That is simply not true," the members of my family frequently tell me when they come up against my memory of a shared event. "The party was not for you, the spider was not a black widow, it wasn't that way at all." Very likely they are right, for not only have I always had trouble distinguishing between what happened and what merely MIGHT have happened, but I remain unconvinced that the distinction, for my purposes, matters."

Joan Didion
Slouching towards
Bethlehem p. 134

and then my
eyes blurr...
and the lights
buzz... and I know
its time to sleep.

FICTION

Grey Gardens is a 1975 American documentary film by Albert and David Maysles. The film depicts the everyday lives of two reclusive, formerly upper class women, little Edie and Big Edie, who lived in poverty at Grey Gardens, a derelict mansion in East Hampton, New York.

In their void nature, these sites hold a certain mystery, illicit at times, and outside of the law, or optimistic and full of possibilities.

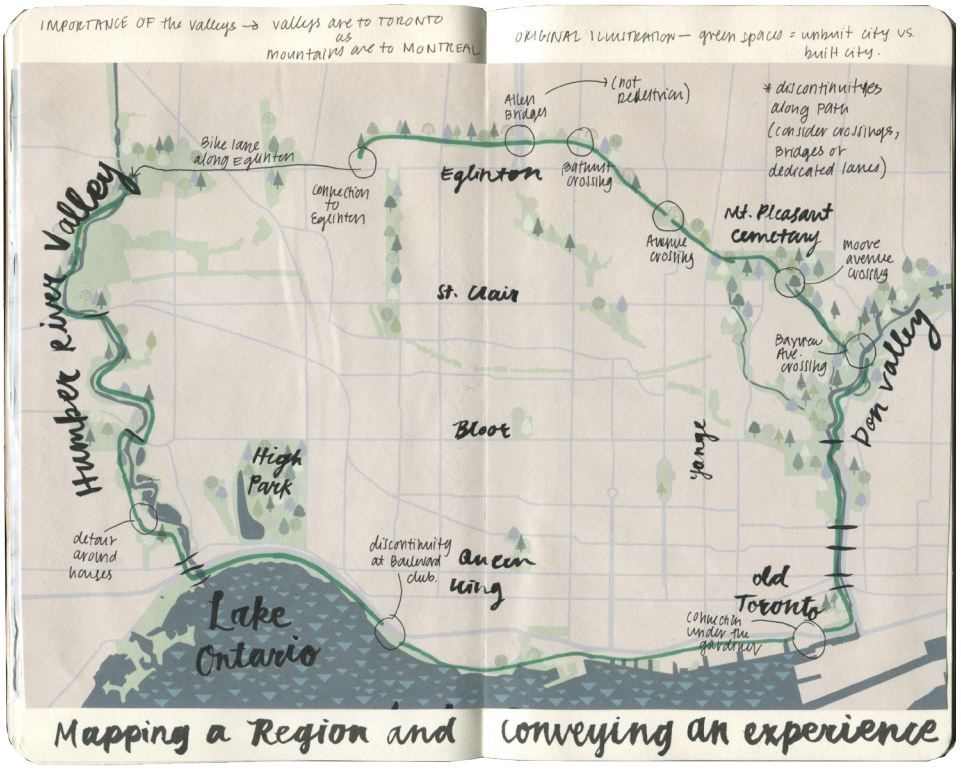
I began with the Toronto Belt Line Railway because I like the idea of starting with something that no longer exists. I was drawn to the Ravines because of their vast abandoned feeling; like the Grey Gardens of the city, they are filled with derelict character. It is clear that I was not the first to be drawn to the mysterious nature of these ex-urban spaces. Robert Fulford describes the Don River as Toronto's literary corridor, the Euphrates of Toronto books, home of our myths and legends. In an article in the Toronto Star in 2000 entitled Toronto and Margaret Atwood, he describes the literary terrain.

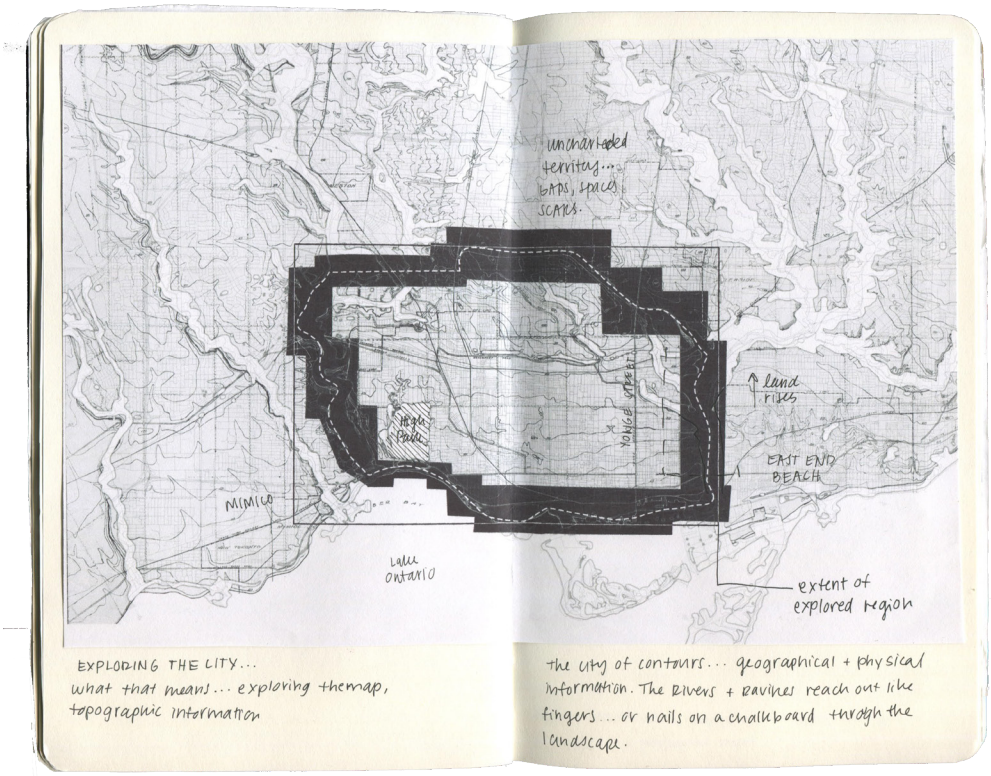
Head to the east and you find yourself in Ernest Thompson Seton territory, where that great Victorian naturalist (a favourite of Atwood's in childhood) did the private exploring that led to his classics, Wild Animals I Have Known and Two Little Savages. Follow the ravine south from the St. Clair Bridge as it joins the Don proper and soon you'll reach Bloor Street, where (with a little imagination) you can see Michael Ondaatje's characters from In the Skin of a Lion completing the construction of the Bloor viaduct in the 1930s. Keep going and you can glimpse, on the east bank that forms Riverdale Park, the lovers and dreamers who populate the young Morley Callaghan's novels of the 1920s, like It's Never Over, that intense account of claustrophobic urban frustration. Move on south to Gerrard and Dundas, glance to your right, and there are Hugh Garner's defeated Cabbagetown dwellers, sitting on the grassy slopes as they endure the Depression and wonder whether to volunteer for the war in Spain. Not far away, you'll run into the male protagonist of Catherine Bush's 1993 novel,Minus Time, that wonderfully Toronto-centric book; he tells us that as a 13-year-old he ran away from home and lived in the ravines, becoming briefly famous in the papers as Ravine Boy. Keep going far enough, reach the lake, make a right, and eventually you can find a major Robertson Davies character, Boy Staunton from Fifth Business, dead at the bottom of Toronto harbour, sitting in his Cadillac convertible, his mouth inexplicably filled with a large chunk of pink granite.[2]

These spaces play a key role in the subconscious of the city. They act as a basin for the folklore of the city of Toronto. This storytelling attracted me, and pushed me to unveil the hidden stories, fact or fiction, which the sites contained. Just as a designer places layers of history and outside forces on a site, I wanted to layer a story on the city.

[2] Fulford, Robert. *Toronto & Margaret Atwood*. The National Post, August 24, 2000

Figure 5: Sketchbook Quotes
Figure 6: Dark Canopy


IMPORTANCE OF the valleys → valleys are to TORONTO as mountains are to MONTREAL
ORIGINAL ILLUSTRATION — green spaces = unbuilt city vs. built city.
Humber river Valley
Bike lane along Eglinton
connection to Eglinton
Allen Bridges
(not pedestrian)
Eglinton
pathway crossing
* discontinuities along path (consider crossings, Bridges or dedicated lanes)
Mt. Pleasant cemetary
Avenue crossing
moove avenue crossing
St. Clair
Bayview Ave. crossing
Don valley
Bloor
yonge
High Park
detour around houses
discontinuity at Bathurst club.
Queen
King
old Toronto
Lake Ontario
connection under the gardiner
Mapping a Region and
Conveying an experience


uncharted territory... GAPS, spaces SCARS.
land rises
EAST END BEACH
MIMICO
Lake Ontario
extent of explored region
EXPLORING THE CITY...
what that means... exploring the map, topographic information
the city of contours... geographical + physical information. The Rivers + Ravines reach out like fingers .. or nails on a chalkboard through the landscape.

INTRODUCTION
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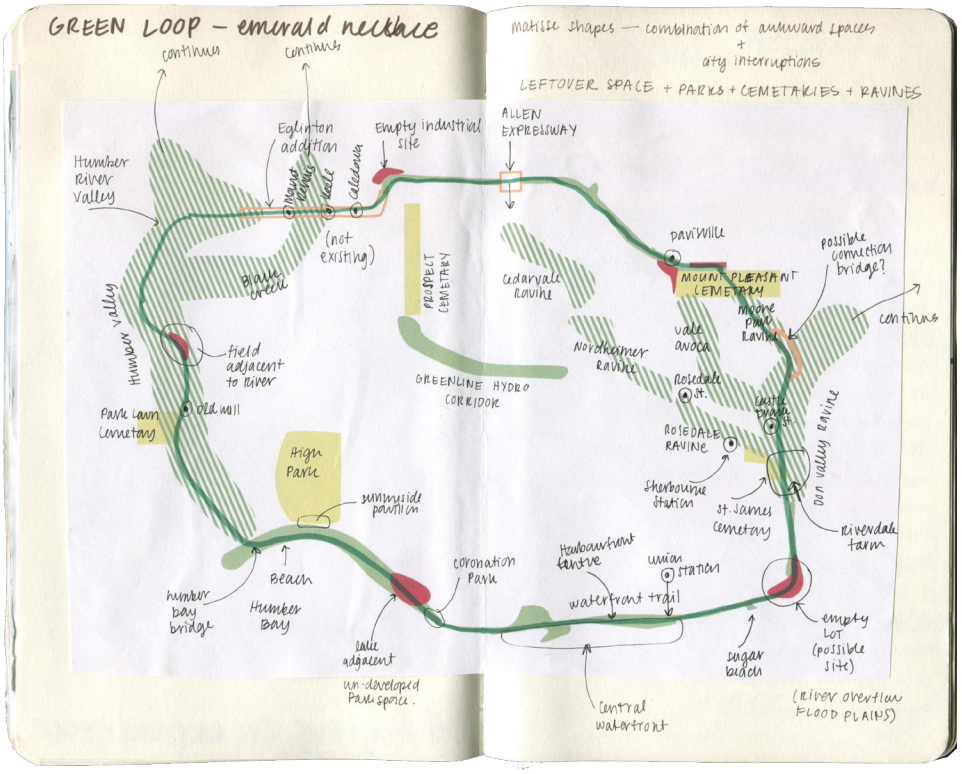
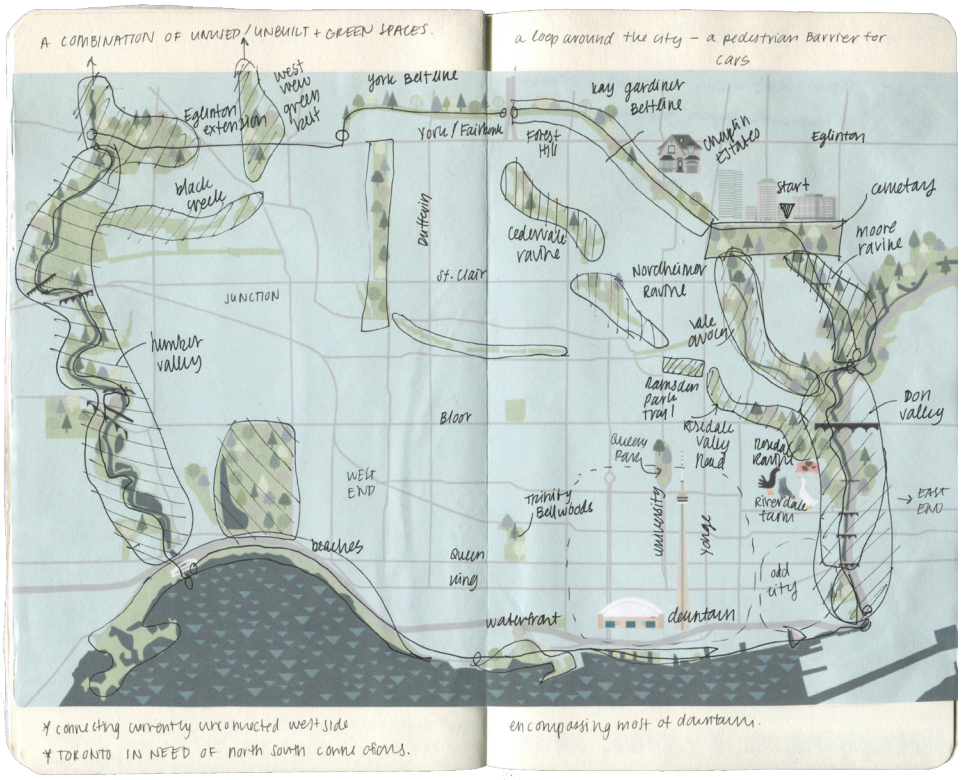
HISTORY

The city is a map to our communal memory, an identity and a mirror of our values. This documents the consequences of de-industrialization — the modern ruin and spaces forgotten in the city of Toronto. It is an exploration of terrain vague, a documentation.

Historically, the city of Toronto grew from a village at the mouth of the Don River to become the amalgamated Greater Toronto Area. The Don River, once a central provider for the settlement has become a polluted boundary between the east and central city. The Toronto Waterfront, once a major shipping hub, was largely abandoned by industry by the 1950s. The waterfront has been repurposed piece by piece for decades until the current ambitious Waterfront plan. In 1958, Hurricane Hazel's devastating floods swept away homes, violently returned the Humber River edge to an un-built zone. Marginalized, abandoned, and intermittently reclaimed by nature, these spaces weave in and around the city core. An alternate reality hidden within the city, they provide a unique perspective, intervening between the imposed city grid and natural forms, relics of the history of the city and its modern ambition, as well as unintended outcomes of growth and de-industrialization. Drifting outside the city situates itself in pivot points between the controlled and uncontrollable, conscious and unconscious, rationality and imagination.

Figure 7: Rivers and Waterfront
Figure 8: Topography and Ravines


GREEN LOOP – emerald necklace
continues
continues
Eglinton addition
Empty industrial site
ALLEN EXPRESSWAY
Humber River Valley
(not existing)
PROSPECT CEMETERY
Cedarvale ravine
DAVISVILLE
MOUNT PLEASANT CEMETERY
possible connection bridge?
continues
Moore Park Ravine
Vale avoca
Nordheimer ravine
Rosedale st.
Humber valley
field adjacent to river
GREENLINE HYDRO CORRIDOR
Park Lawn Cemetary
old mill
High Park
sunnyside pavilion
ROSEDALE RAVINE
Sherbourne station
St James cemetary
Don valley RAVINE
Riverdale farm
Beach
humber bay bridge
Humber Bay
coronation Park
Harbourfront centre
union station
waterfront trail
lake adjacent
un-developed Park space.
sugar beach
empty LOT (possible site)
central waterfront
(river overflow FLOOD PLAINS)
matisse shapes — combination of outward spaces + city interruptions
LEFTOVER SPACE + PARKS + CEMETARIES + RAVINES


A COMBINATION OF UNUSED / UNBUILT + GREEN SPACES.
west view green belt
Eglinton extension
York Beltline
York / Fairbank
Forest Hill
blade creek
Dufferin
St. Clair
JUNCTION
humber valley
Bloor
WEST END
beaches
Queen king
* connecting currently unconnected west side
* TORONTO IN NEED OF north south connections.
a loop around the city – a pedestrian barrier for cars
kay gardiner Beltline
Eglinton
start
cemetary
moore ravine
Cedervale ravine
Nordheimer Ravine
vale avoca
Ramsden Park Trail
Don valley
Rosedale Valley Road
Moore Ravine
Queen Park
Trinity Bellwoods
University
Yonge
Riverdale farm
EAST END
old city
waterfront
downtown
encompassing most of downtown.

INTRODUCTION
x

GROUND

In the post-industrial age, we are facing increasing density in downtown centers. As industry continuously moves overseas, opportunities emerge to reuse previously industrial spaces. The application of higher densities has created unique issues in the modern urban landscape. Interstitial, in-between spaces to create, connect, and maintain the surrounding neighborhoods. The ground condition of the city needs to be thought of as the social realm of the city. It has the potential, due to density, to become the piazza, the plaza or neighborhood park, the space where people meet, the site of interaction between citizen and building. The ground condition is the locus of new urbanization and the site of successful city planning.

The final phase of development of the city, if and when density allows, will be the fuller development of the ground level and the pedestrian realm. The insertion of activity and texture that increases the city livability requires the deconstruction of existing patterns. The city's ultimate attractiveness and its future development relies on the careful design of nothingness, the interstitial space, the ground plane.

Drifting outside the city is a portrait of the existing city, a celebration of Toronto mythology, history and imagination, and an optimistic, curated walk of through the city of the future.

Figure 9: Leftover Spaces
Figure 10: Overlaid in the City

TERRAIN

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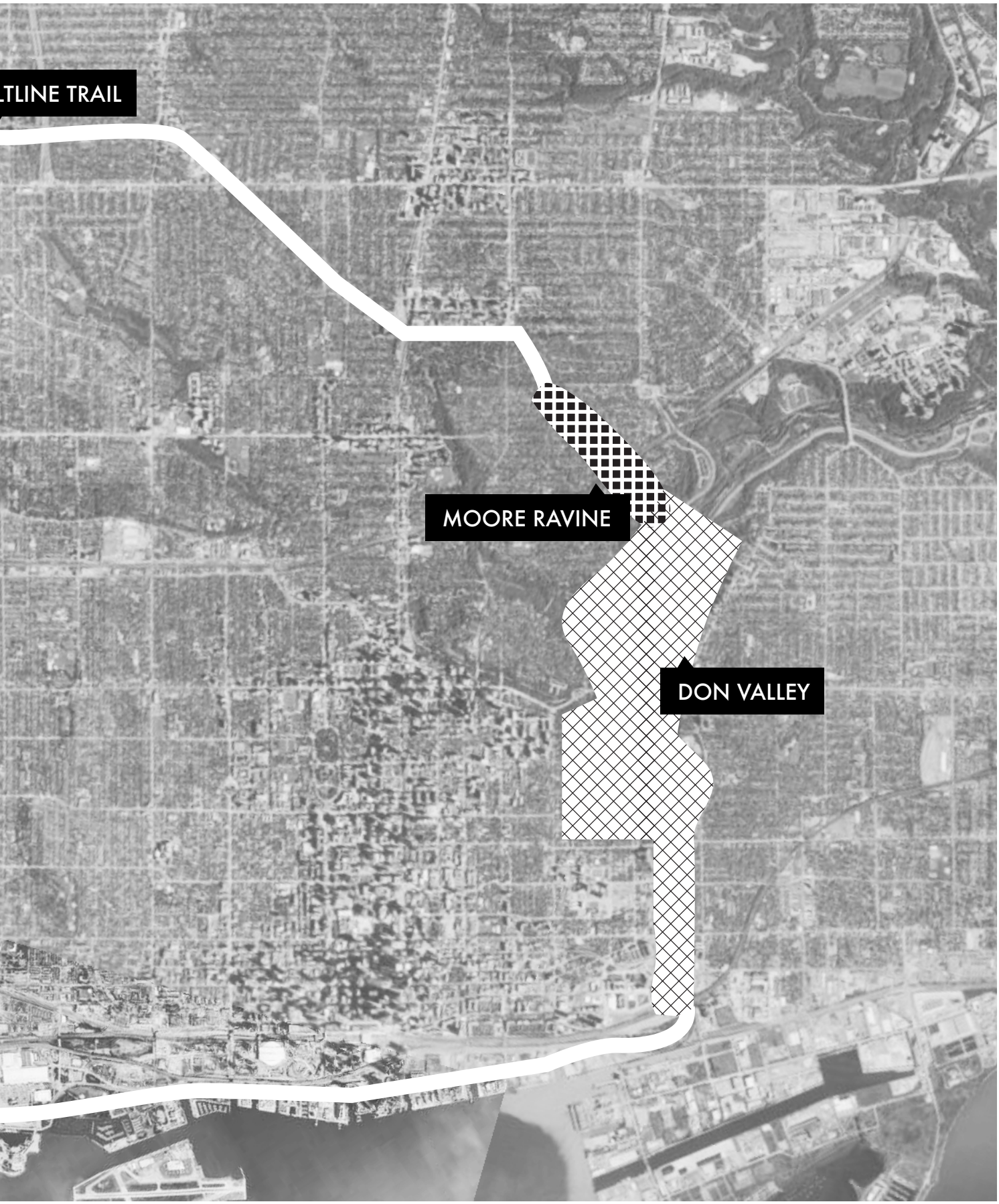
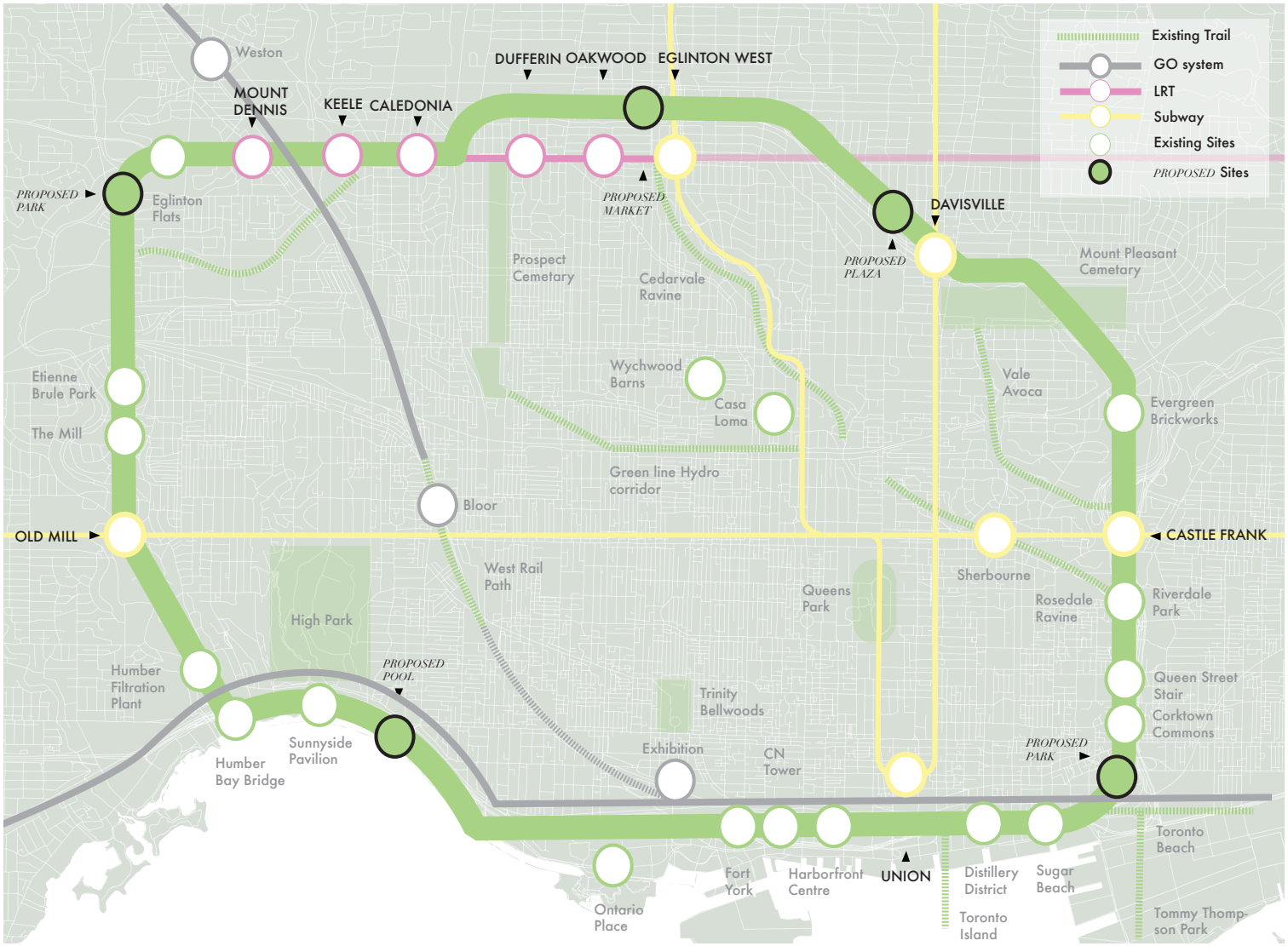
BEL
EGLINTON WEST
HUMBER VALLEY
WATERFRONT


LTLINE TRAIL
MOORE RAVINE
DON VALLEY


Existing Trail
GO system
LRT
Subway
Existing Sites
PROPOSED Sites
Weston
MOUNT DENNIS
KEELE
CALEDONIA
DUFFERIN OAKWOOD
EGLINTON WEST
PROPOSED PARK
Eglinton Flats
PROPOSED MARKET
DAVISVILLE
PROPOSED PLAZA
Prospect Cemetary
Cedarvale Ravine
Mount Pleasant Cemetary
Etienne Brule Park
The Mill
Wychwood Barns
Casa Loma
Vale Avoca
Evergreen Brickworks
Green line Hydro corridor
Bloor
OLD MILL
CASTLE FRANK
West Rail Path
Sherbourne
Queens Park
Rosedale Ravine
Riverdale Park
High Park
Humber Filtration Plant
PROPOSED POOL
Trinity Bellwoods
Queen Street Stair
Corktown Commons
Sunnyside Pavilion
Humber Bay Bridge
Exhibition
CN Tower
PROPOSED PARK
Toronto Beach
Fort York
Harborfront Centre
UNION
Distillery District
Sugar Beach
Ontario Place
Toronto Island
Tommy Thompson Park

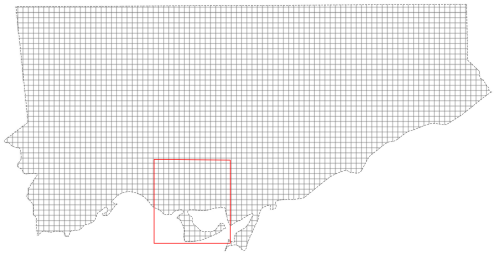
TOTAL DISTANCE	42 KM
EGLINTON	5 km portion from Caledonia Road to Scarlett Road. Runs through Mount Dennis
BELTLINE	Combination of the York Beltline and Kay Gardiner Beltline Park, which was previously part of a larger loop around the city. A Linear Park that features lush greenery that forms an arch over the walkway.
MOORE RAVINE	A ravine that follows Mud creek from Mount Pleasant Cemetery south to the Don valley.
DON VALLEY	The large valley at the bottom of which the city of Toronto was created.
WATERFRONT	Where the city meets Lake Ontario. The Waterfront has mostly been developed into a series of parks, connected by a bicycle lane and pedesrian walkway.
HUMBER RIVER	Pastoral parks flank the river running along the western edge of the city, separating the city of Toronto from Etobicoke.

Previous Page
Figure 11: Terrain Map

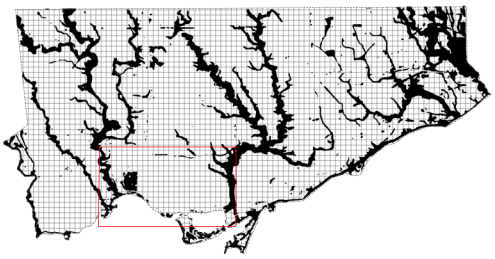
Figure 12: Transit Map

1. City Boundary

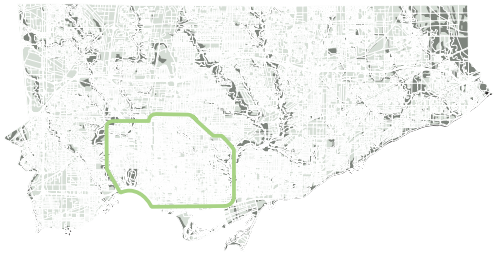
2. Highway Boundary



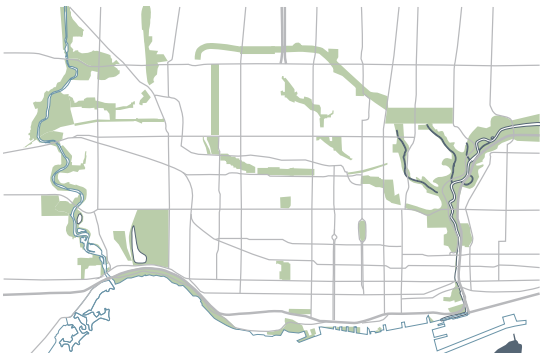
3. City Grid and Core



4. Ravines



5. Loop Location



6. Loop Closeup

BOUNDARIES

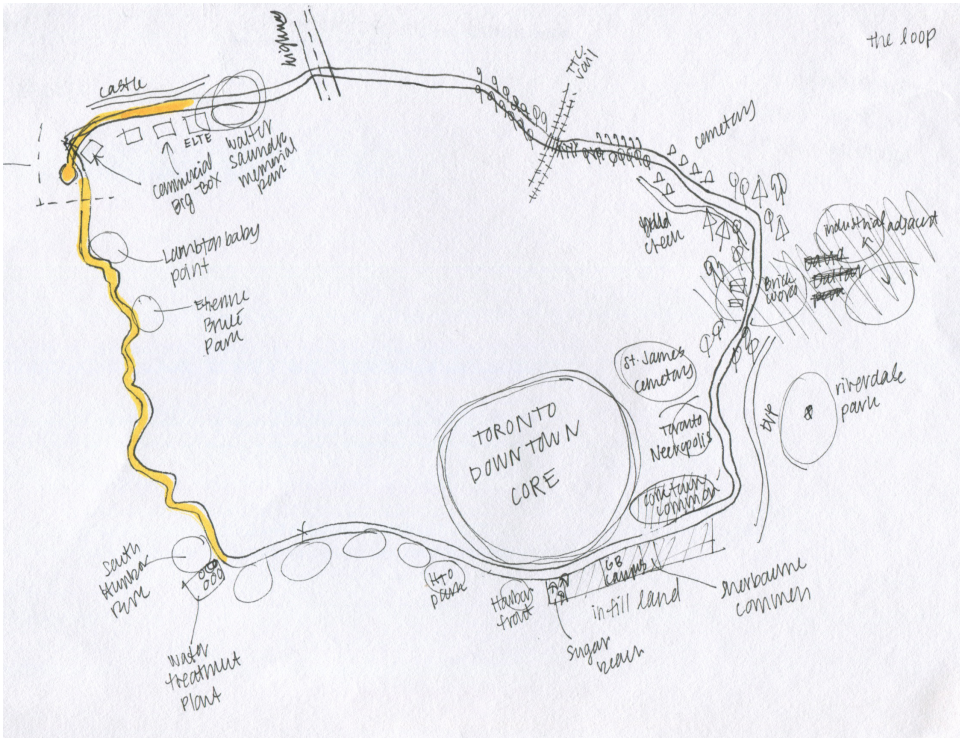
The loop as a boundary

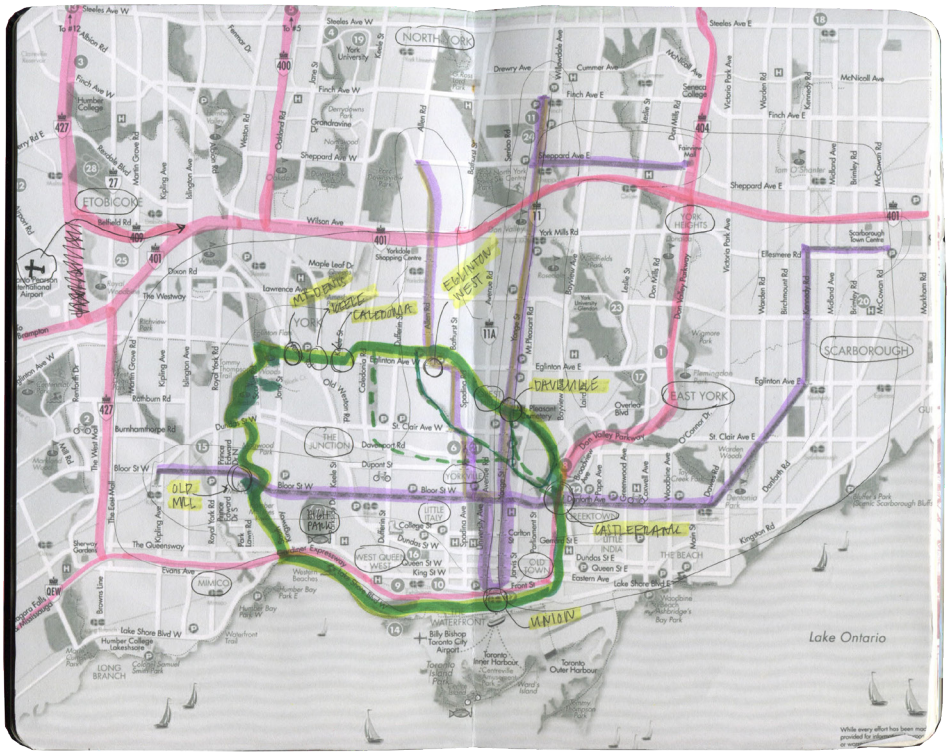
The city exists as a set of visible and invisible barriers separating and defining space. The first boundary is the city limits, creating a recognizable shape and identity for the city. The second is the major highway boundary, creating a wall around the inner city that separates and defines the inner city and peripheries. The ravines create boundaries in the city by virtue of voids, which require bridges to connect.

At first I attempted to trace the inactive Belt Line Railway around the city. I soon found that there were several parts that were still active. Only the north section was left as a true ghost railway. While mapping this section, I realized the proximity of the Ravines to the boundaries, and their ability to make the loop continuous. The two main rivers that caress the city of Toronto, the Don and the Humber effectively create a large island around the inner city. Both have been incredibly life giving as well as destructive. After constructing the loop, I set out to travel and document the space. I have traveled the loop several times, by foot, bike, kayak and car.

The Loop Park is a combination of these existing city boundaries. It is defined by the Don River to the East, Humber to the West, Lake Ontario to the South and Belt Line Railway to the North.

Figure 13: Boundary Diagram


the loop
highway
castle
ELITE
commercial big box
waterfront sauvage memorial park
cemetery
lambton baby point
Etienne Brulé Park
TORONTO DOWNTOWN CORE
St. James cemetary
Toronto Necropolis
riverdale park
industrial adjacent
bridge
south Humber River
dog
Hydro plant
Harbour front
68 acres
in-fill land
sugar beach
waterfront treatment plant


NORTH YORK
ETOBICOKE
YORK
EAST YORK
SCARBOROUGH
DAVISVILLE
THE JUNCTION
LITTLE ITALY
LITTLE PORTUGAL
CHINATOWN
KENSINGTON MARKET
QUEEN WEST
FINANCIAL DISTRICT
WATERFRONT
OLD MILL
MIMICO
LONG BRANCH
Lake Ontario

MAPPING

The connection of different parts of the loop came from an experiential understanding of them, an understanding from which I created the first mind map. Years after Debord walked aimlessly around the city, forming cognitive maps of passage, I found myself drawing similar diagrams of my own experiences. This process — translating experiential information and combining it with geographical data and recognizable forms — became the first major frustration. James Corner says "maps look nothing like their subject, not only because of their vantage point, but also because they present all parts at once, with an immediacy unavailable to the grounded individual. But more than this, the function of maps is not to depict but to enable, to precipitate a set of effects in time."[3] This is how I began to map the passage through space, in order to keep the viewer grounded and also express the full complexity of the terrain.

I explored a method that cut maps into smaller pieces and described them — including short stories that had occurred in different places. These were all cognitive maps — thinking about spaces, reflecting on the everyday actions that takes place in them. In Psycological Maps of Paris, Stanley Milgram and Denise Jodelet found that participants, who were asked to make their own hand-drawn maps of Paris, drew maps mainly surrounding their everyday life experiences, as well as major landmarks.[4] As I spoke to people about the ravines and parks that constituted the loop, the conversations revolved around childhood recollections, growing up in Toronto, perhaps going for a run, an afternoon stroll, walking the dog. In my search for the everyday in these ravines, I found these spaces very much outside of people's idea of productive Toronto, described only in descriptions of leisure or secondary activities. I did however find a few examples of overlap with the city, the first being the trail's relationship to the subway passing over the Bloor street viaduct. There, I saw a message painted in chalk on the asphalt pavement: "Devon I love you," aimed at the passing subway train's view to the north. These few overlaps were pressure points on the loop, suggesting the opportunity for future relationships between park and city.

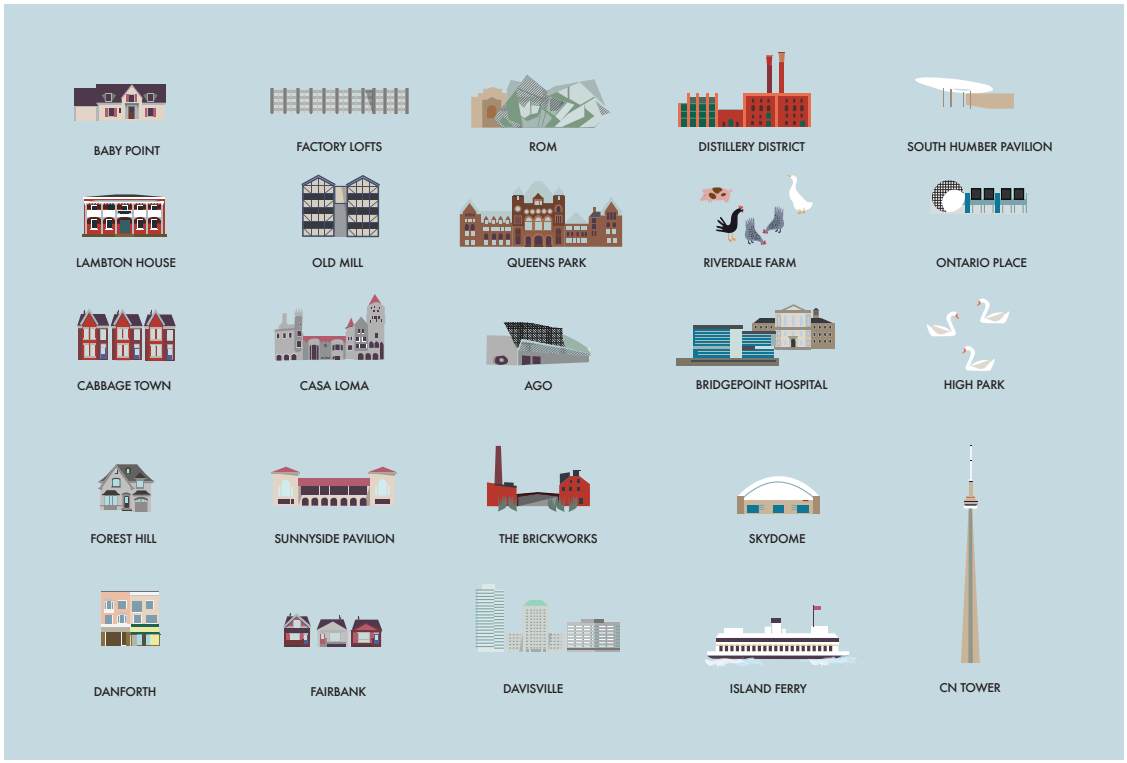
Kevin Lynch's Image of the city, suggests how to design cities from the perspectives of the people who live in them. Lynch focuses on the elements of the environment that allowed people to navigate the city. He outlines five key characteristics for the urban environment: paths, nodes, landmarks, edges and districts.[5] From this logic, I created a series of illustrated maps. Their goal was to orientate people to the site using outside landmarks, allowing this unique perspective on the city to seem

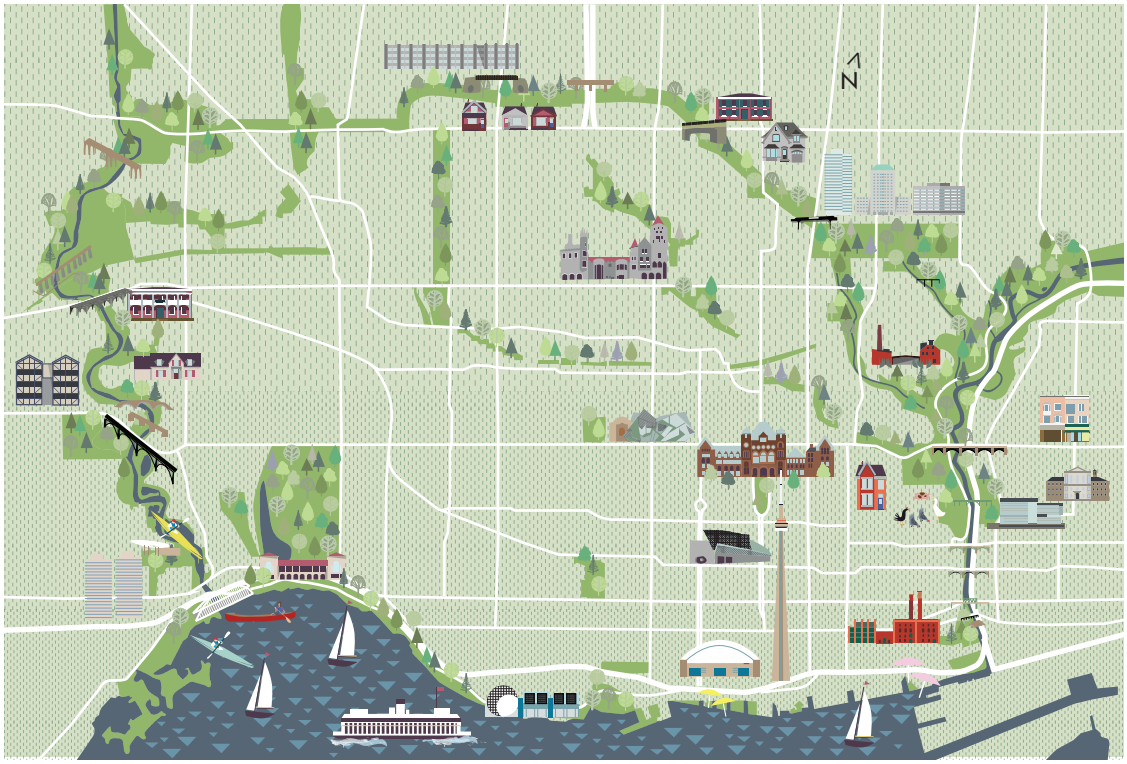
[3] Dodge, Martin, Rob Kitchin, and C. R. Perkins. *The Map Reader: Theories of Mapping Practice and Cartographic Representation*. Chichester, West Sussex, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011. P.93

[4] Milgram, Stanley. The Individual in the Social World. 1977. P. 93

[5] Lynch, Kevin. The Image of the City. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1960.

Figure 14: Site Mind Map
Figure 15: Infrastructure Overlap


BABY POINT
FACTORY LOFTS
ROM
DISTILLERY DISTRICT
SOUTH HUMBER PAVILION
LAMBTON HOUSE
OLD MILL
QUEENS PARK
RIVERDALE FARM
ONTARIO PLACE
CABBAGE TOWN
CASA LOMA
AGO
BRIDGEPOINT HOSPITAL
HIGH PARK
FOREST HILL
SUNNYSIDE PAVILION
THE BRICKWORKS
SKYDOME
CN TOWER
DANFORTH
FAIRBANK
DAVISVILLE
ISLAND FERRY


N

MAPPING

familiar. However, few landmarks are visible from the actual site. The project became an exploration of thresholds and between the park and the city.

I explain the loop as a found park, one that was experienced, imagined, and then represented. It is already in existence; this is just another perspective on it.

More than anything else, this was a project of mapping; drawing the loop and overlaying it on the city was simply putting some imagination into an existing entity. The true design came from another layer, one that saw the environment as a complex series of interactions. The first interaction is that of the city and industry. The reasons why these spaces are empty is part of our cultural story and should be told. James Corner: "…what already exists is more than just the physical attributes of terrain (topography, rivers, roads, buildings) but includes also the various hidden forces that underlie the workings of a given place. These include natural processes, such as wind and sun; historic events and local stories; economic and legislative conditions; even political interests, regulatory mechanisms and programmatic structures."[6]

Through this book, I combine maps, writing, images, and photomontages in a sequence, reflecting my experience of the space at specific moments.

In this way, I see the entire book as a comprehensive map of the terrain.

[6] Dodge, Martin, Rob Kitchin, and C. R. Perkins. *The Map Reader: Theories of Mapping Practice and Cartographic Representation*. Chichester, West Sussex, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011. P.90

Figure 16: Landmarks
Figure 17: Illustrated Map

WALKING

Walking has long been a method of study for everyday urban life. Baudelaire's flaneur is perhaps the most famous, observer of street-life in the modern city: "Observer, Philosopher, Flaneur —Call him what you will; but whatever words you use in trying to define this kind of artist, you will certainly be led to bestow upon him some adjective which you could not apply to the painter of eternal, or at least more lasting things, of heroic or religious subjects. Sometimes he is a poet; more often he comes closer to the novelist or the moralist, he is the painter of the passing moment and of all the suggestions of eternity that it contains."[7] From this we derive the observation, creating an image of the passing moment.

Guy Debord, a social theorist and member of the Situationists, introduced another way of navigating the city. His concept of derives or drifts challenge conventional readings by taking unplanned walks through the city based on the misreading of maps, moods, feelings or psychological cues. This way of navigating — psychogeography — was meant to reinterpret the city in creative ways, and expose the experience of the everyday. "Derives involve playful-constructive behavior and awareness of psychogeographical effects, and are thus quite different from the classic notions of journey or stroll. In a derive one or more persons during a certain period drop their relations, their work and leisure activities, and all their other usual motives for movement and action, and let themselves be drawn by the attractions of the terrain and the encounters they find there."[8] Debord's drift was a way of exploring space and recording the experience. Giving in to the walk, and the attraction of the mysterious terrain, forced me to return to these spaces over and over again.

In his essay Walking Thoreau says, "Some of my townsmen, it is true, can remember and have described to me some walks which they took ten years ago, in which they were so blessed as to lose themselves for half an hour in the woods, but I know very well that they have confined themselves to the highway ever since, whatever pretentions they may make to belong to this select class. No doubt they were elevated for a moment as by the reminiscence of a previous state of existence, when even they were foresters and outlaws."[9] Perhaps Thoreau's inspired walks have been the most interesting. Fresh projections present themselves when you venture off the defined paths in the terrain.

I have spent a great deal of time drifting outside the city. I find my walking is a meeting of many ideas. The chosen terrain is located in between Thoreaus description of nature and Baudelaire's city streets. Most of the terrain has a defined path that connects to the city in places. This boundary of asphalt or pounded earth acts as an intermediate step between city and nature. The experience of drift within these spaces was more akin

[7] Baudelaire, Charles, and Jonathan Mayne. *The Painter of Modern Life, and Other Essays*. London: Phaidon, 1964. P.4-5

[8] Knabb, Ken. *Situationist International Anthology*. Berkeley, CA: Bureau of Public Secrets, 1981.P. 62

[9] Emerson, Ralph Waldo, and Henry David Thoreau. *Nature Walking*. Beacon Press, 1994. P. 75

Figure 18: Walking in fall leaves
Figure 19: Walking in high grass

to Debord's practice, although by drifting off the path we enter Thoreau's territory. The everyday life that occurs in this space was observed and recorded in the spirit of the flaneur. What began as an observation of the city became an experiment in representation, and finally, with a bit of courage, wandering off the defined path to discover new potentials of the in-between.

The resultant photo essay must be introduced with Baudelaire's Letter to Arsene Houssay at the beginning of Paris Spleen:

My dear friend, I send you a little work of which no one can say, without doing it an injustice, that it has neither head nor tail, since, on the contrary, everything in it is both head and tail, alternately and reciprocally. I beg you to consider how admirably convenient this combination is for all of us, for you, for me, and for the reader. We can cut wherever we please, I my dreaming, you your manuscript, the reader his reading; for I do not keep the reader's restive mind hanging in suspense on the threads of an interminable and superfluous plot. Take away one vertebra and the two ends of this tortuous fantasy come together again without pan. Chop it into numerous pieces and you will see that each one can get along alone. In the hope that there is enough life in some of these segments to please and to amuse you, I take the liberty of dedicating the whole serpent to you.[10]

In describing the passage through the terrain, I have tried to break it up into moments, arranged geographically. I am the only witness to their existence, and so question my own perception and my own memory of the place. I hope to describe, above all else, the feeling of the place. In Slouching towards Bethlehem Joan Didion states: "Instead I tell what some would call lies. 'That's simply not true,' the members of my family frequently tell me when they come up against my memory of a shared event. 'The party was not for you, the spider was not a black widow, it wasn't that way at all.' Very likely they are right, for not only have I always had trouble distinguishing what happened and what merely MIGHT have happened, but I remain unconvinced that the distinction, for my purposes, matters."[11] Many observations have been made based on a feeling. I am thus admitting that my experience of these places are my own, and influenced by my past.

[10] Baudelaire, Charles, and Keith Waldrop. *Paris Spleen: Little Poems in Prose.* Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2009. P. ix

[11] Didion, Joan. *Slouching towards Bethlehem.* New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1968. p.135

Figure 20: Sparse Leaves Humber River
Figure 21: Don River Shore

tout est
possible

PHOTOGRAPHY

Photography became a natural extension of walking the site. I needed a way to record, to document where I had been, and remember the sequence of spaces.

Images act as a reminder of what we have experienced. However, they are not simply a record, they are also an act of imagination. Ignasi de Sola-Morales Rubio describes how, "We see only images, static framed prints. Yet by way of the photographic image we receive signals, physical impulses that steer in a particular direction the construction of an imaginary that we establish as that of a specific place or city… and the memories that we accumulate through direct experience, through narratives, or through the simple accumulation of new signals produce our imagination of the city."[12] Photographs collect our thoughts on a certain place. They hold memories. Photographs are mediators, framing what we see and reflecting what we think about what we see. When we imagine a city, several images appear, with memories attached to them. Framing, composition, and detail have influenced our perception of architecture, our surroundings, and the environment. Morales says, "even our direct experience of the built object cannot escape the mediation of photography… our gaze has been constructed and our imagination shaped by photography. Of course we also have literature, painting, video and film, but the imprint of the photographic […] continues to be primordial for our visual experience of the city."[13] Photography of cities often has been iconic and focused on large recognizable buildings. An emphasis was put on the recognizable skyline of a city and its key players. Other images come from people's direct interaction with the city, including certain cafes, restaurants and public spaces. Older modes of portrayal of architecture and landscape, ones meant to be circulated, were carefully chosen and curated. James Corner remarks, "A major factor in the prominence of Architecture and Landscape photography in the first decades of the craft was the urge of both the practitioners and the public to celebrate the monuments and scenery they saw as the most indicative of the natural identity… In Britain, the photographer initially chose his subjects, whereas in France the government commissioned the most proven practitioners to record not only the monumental patrimony, but also the structures and settings of the railroad network. British travel literature was involved primarily with scenery."[14] The portrayal of these spaces can give us insight into cultural value of the natural surroundings and its relationship to city identity.

[12] de Sola-Morales Rubio, Ignasi. Essay: *Terrain Vague*. Originally published in Davidson, Cynthia C. *Anyplace*. New York, NY: Anyone, 1995. P. 119

[13] de Sola-Morales Rubio, Ignasi. Essay: *Terrain Vague*. Originally published in Davidson, Cynthia C. *Anyplace*. New York, NY: Anyone, 1995. P. 119

[14] Waldheim, Charles, and Andrea Hansen. *Composite Landscapes: Photomontage and Landscape Architecture*. P. 39

Figure 22: Tout est possible
Figure 23: Wall of trees

SURVEYING

x

SURVEYING

The perambulations pass through six existing terrains in Toronto including; Eglinton Avenue West, Belt Line Railpath, Moore Ravine, Don Valley, Waterfront and the Humber Valley.

EGLINTON

A 5 km portion of Eglinton Avenue — from Caledonia Road to Scarlett Road — lies between the York Beltline Trail and the Humber River, running through some of the lowest income neighborhoods in Toronto, including Mount Denis and Amesbury. The streetscape is a colorful combination of ethnic restaurants, barbershops, hair salons, garages and massage parlors, and includes the terminus of the Crosstown Eglinton LRT, currently under construction. Parks and green spaces — Keelsedale Park Eglinton Flats and Scarlett Woods Golf Course — flank parts of this stretch of Eglinton. Metrolinx August 2013 *Mt Dennis Mobility Hub Study* recommends a greenway — an arcade of trees and a multi-use pedestrian and bike trail — along the north side of Eglinton between the Humber Valley and Black Creek. An extension of this proposal, east five blocks along Eglinton to Croham Road, effectively links the Humber River to the Beltline trail.

Figure 24: Under the Eglinton Bridge
Hidden un-official trails lead down to the river edge under the Eglinton Avenue Bridge.

Figure 25: Humber River From Eglinton Ave
Driving accross Eglinton, the Humber River is camoflaged by overgrown foliage and several lanes of traffic in either direction.

Figure 26: Eglinton Ave and Scarlett Road
The treeline camoflauges the Humber Valley. The trail is empty except for the occassional cyclist commuting into the city.

Figure 27: Eglinton Avnenue West
Eglinton Avenue West features four lanes of traffic, with a concrete median between them.

Figure 28: Eglinton Retail
Eglinton Avenue West runs through some of the lowest income neighborhoods in Toronto. The street scape is a colorful combination of ethnic restaurants, barber shops, hair salons and massage parlours.

BELT LINE

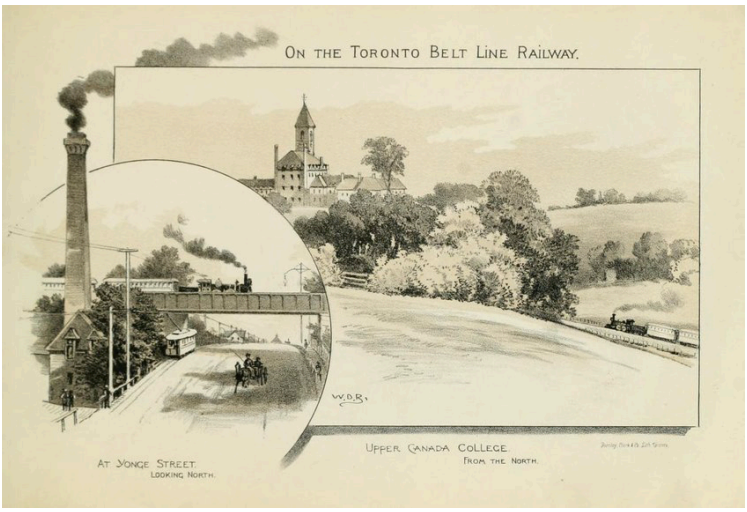
In the 1890s, a loop railway around the city went bankrupt in its first two years, but the remnants of the route are forever marked on the urban fabric of Toronto. The ghost railway runs across the top of the city as a linear park, connecting the Don River to the Humber. The Linear Park runs through several residential neighborhoods behind their backyards. It is seen as a running path, or pedestrian route. The void train form that runs through the space forms the identity of the park. It is the absence that allows the ghost railway to survive.

I began with the Toronto Belt Line Railway, because I liked the idea of starting with something that no longer exists. The Beltline was one of the only examples of a strategy of its kind being applied to Toronto. Even in the modern context, a project of this size, economic commitment and continuity, would be considered ambitious. This rail line is unique because of its ring, the only time this concept has been applied to the city of Toronto.

Developers conceived Toronto's Beltline Railway during a land boom in the 1880s. It was part of a larger, and quite ambitious plan to build several suburbs and connect them by a steam railway that would circle the existing city. Large areas of land north and west of the city were parceled and planned by developers as new residential neighborhoods, including Fairbank Village, Forest Hill, and others, all north of Eglinton. These areas were the Highlands of Toronto and boasted rolling hills, and picturesque rural landscapes.

The development company, formed in 1889, was called Toronto Belt Land Corporation, emphasizing the primary goal — developing the surrounding land into housing. The company was formed of prominent Toronto businessmen who owned large parcels land north and west of the city. The rail line was proposed as a commuter service, allowing residents of the sub-urban developments to reach all of the amenities of the growing city. Time and money were invested in propaganda and adver-tising for these communities. "During the real-estate booms of the 1880s, land had been subdivided as far north as York Mills,

Figure 29: Forest Hill Winter



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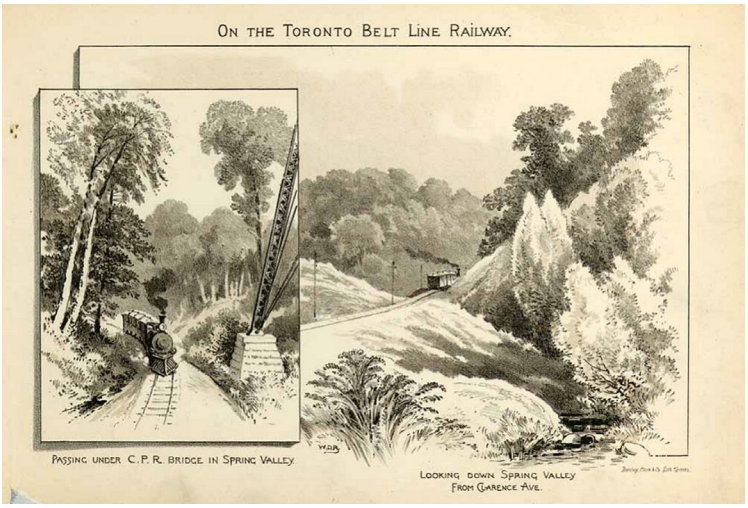

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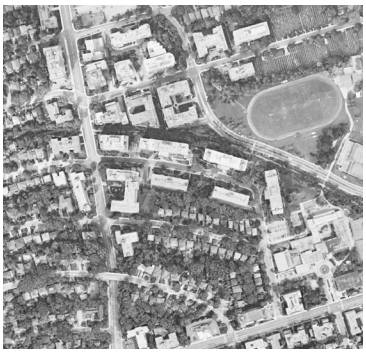

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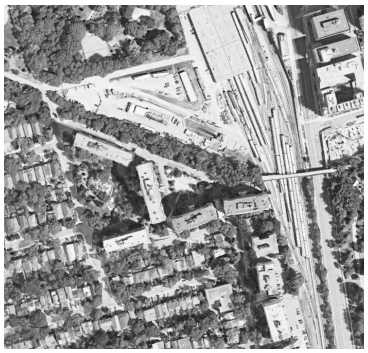

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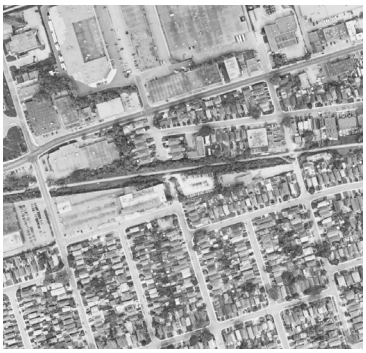

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[15] Dendy, William. *Lost Toronto: Images of the city's past* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1993) p. 222

[16] Boles, Derek. *Toronto Railway Historical Association*. Toronto Railway Historical Association. Web. 15 Dec. 2014. <http://www.trha.ca/beltline.html>.
[17] Filey, Mike. *Toronto Sketches the Way We Were*. Toronto [Ont.: Dundurn, 1992. Print.

Figure 30: Upper Canada College from North
Figure 31: Looking down Spring Valley from Clarence Avenue

Figure 34: End of York Beltline Croham Road and Eglinton
Figure 35: Forest Hill Memorial Arena and Belt Line
Figure 36: Yonge Street Bridge Belt Line
Figure 37: Former Coats and Patton Building

partly as speculation, but also to accommodate rapid population growth."[15] These communities were geared towards cheap properties for working-class people who worked in the factories downtown.

The Belt Line began service on July 30, 1892, running six trains a day.[16] Despite setbacks — disappointing property sales, and loss of the initial investment — things still looked good for a commuter train in the suburbs. Initial ridership was strong; and the service was popular, at least during the first few months of operation. Unfortunately the novelty wore off, and with an economic collapse in 1893, the Belt Line, after a mere 27 months —842 days— ended service on November 19, 1894.[17] It was bad timing for a commuter rail in the city. The need for transportation was there, as was the population and promise for growth. But the cost of the line may not have been properly calibrated for the workers it was designed to accommodate. At the same time, the Toronto Street Railway had seen great improvements and "connected with the radial lines, was faster, and provided more direct routes to downtown, siphoned off

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[18] Dendy, William. *Lost Toronto: Images of the city's past* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1993) p. 222

much of the commuting traffic from established suburbs along north Yonge."[18] Not only did the Belt Line face an economic and real estate downturn, but it also faced innovations in electric rails and increasingly efficient transit systems in the downtown.

Despite a slight hiccup in development, the suburbs laid out in the plans by the Belt Line Rail Company did proceed. "In the decades after the Belt Line ended operations, economic conditions in Toronto improved and the subdivisions through which the Belt Line traveled became some of Toronto's most desirable neighborhoods, including Swansea, Moore Park, Deer Park and Forest Hill."[19] Most of these neighborhoods continue to be extremely desirable today, although they are no longer considered suburbs.

[19] Boles, Derek. Toronto Railway Historical Association. Web. 15 Dec. 2014. <http://www.trha.ca/beltline.html>.

Parts of the Belt Line were purchased by the city in 1990, and became the Kay Gardner Belt Line Park, named after a city councilor who lobbied for its existence.[20] The Trail runs from the Allen Expressway, just north of Eglinton Avenue, down to Mount Pleasant Avenue. This part of the trail has markers, as well as lighting in some areas. It is well kept up, and heavily populated. The Rail line has an interesting interaction with residential neighborhoods — it borders onto several back yard lot lines. This is an issue of contention for many homeowners, whose "opposition dates back to the 1970s when many property owners attempted to purchase the railway corridor and cut off public access to the trail."[21] Today, the Beltline is populated on weekends and weekday mornings by joggers, dog walkers, and commuters.

[20] Beltline Railway. Web. 19 Dec. 2014. <http://www.lostrivers.ca/points/Beltline.htm>

This existing pedestrian zone is a way of re-using infrastructure to create more public spaces that connect and add character to our city. The remnants of the Belt Line railway can be seen as an interesting diversification of the urban fabric of Toronto. They also act as a marker, showing the boundaries in an ever-expanding city.

[21] *Improve the Beltline Trail*. Web. 19 Dec. 2014. <http://cycleto.ca/beltline>.

Figure 32: Spring Valley on the Belt Line Railway
Figure 33: Birds Eye View of the Toronto Belt Line Railway

Figure 38: Belt Line Winter Trees

Figure 39: Belt Line Summer trees
View of leafy arches in summer. Photograph taken on the east side of Allen Road where the Beltline runs behind the school yard of West Preparatory Jr. Public School.

Figure 40: Dufferin Bridge
I pass very few people on this part of the trail. It is completely exposed to sun and heat. There are markers and plaques where the train stations used to exist, with a few benches scattered at inconsequential locations.

Figure 41: York Beltline
A family speaking a foreign language collects what appear to be raspberry bush leaves in plastic bags. A few old men sit on the benches without evident purpose. I stare unintentionally, wondering what they are doing there. They stare back, probably wondering the same thing.

Figure 42: York Beltline Marker
The trail begins in a run down area of old warehouses. There has been some effort made to mark the railway with a pattern on the ground, as well as small shaded plaques where the stations existed. This part of the trail is paved smoothly, but almost always empty and

Figure 43: 1001 Roselawn
Converted Coats and Patton Art Deco Factory built 1932 turned Condo building.

Figure 44: Plant growth on Hydro Structures

Figure 45: Evening Skyline

Figure 46: Allen Expressway
There is a wall along either side of the Allen expressway acting as a barrier from the quiet residential neighborhoods that are on either side. It divides the adjacent neighborhoods and makes them feel like two different worlds.

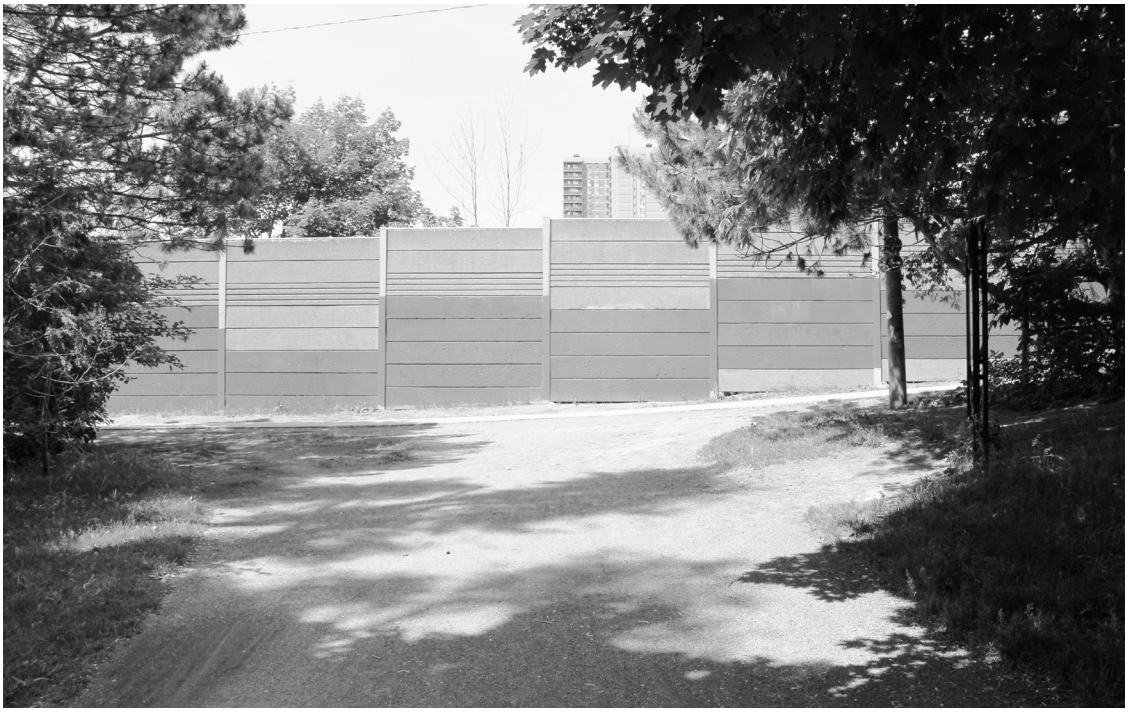


Figure 47: Allen Expressway Road
The east side houses the northern part of Forest hill, with large houses and quiet empty streets. The west side is a less expensive neighborhood offering high rise apartments, and bungalows. The streets seem empty and lawns less tended.

Figure 48: Under Eglinton Avenue Bridge

Figure 49: Eglinton Underpass
This bridge is one of the few times the city rises up and covers the trail. The stairway and the proximity to Eglinton makes this a very important access point as well as a potential public space.

Figure 50: Kay Gardner Belt Linev Park

Figure 51: Bridge over Yonge Street
View West to Brentwood Towers.

Figure 52: View South down Yonge Street
There is a woman on the train, I see her move by only for a moment. She isn't smiling. She has a large bag on her lap and is dressed in a large gray sweater. She looks like she might precariously fall at any moment, yet she manages to hold herself together.

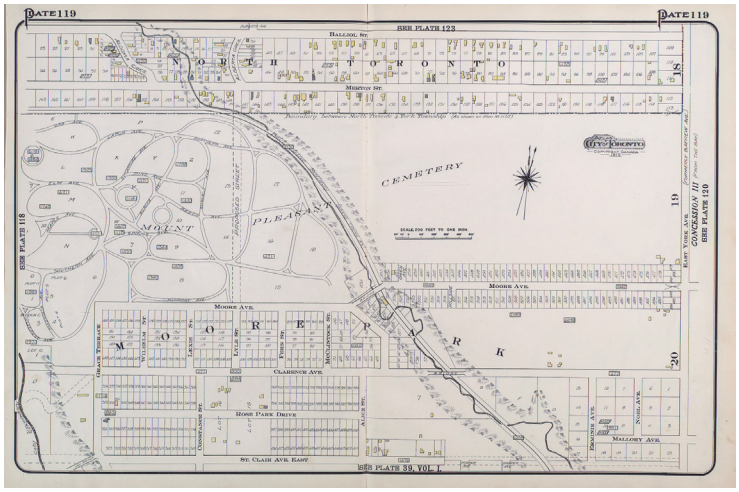
Figure 53: View of Railyards
The lights of the city, cars and trains passing by. The utter chaos of the surroundings gives this place a sense of calm. You are close enough to see the faces of the people in the trains, but they never look up, or acknowledge your presence. It is the theatre of the city.

Figure 54: Oriole Crescent
The trail is disrupted several times as it runs parallel to Chaplin. This crossing at Oriole Crescent is quieter, but pedestrians are still forced to fend for themselves, dodging traffic.

Figure 55: Behind the TTC yards:
The adjacent street, Chaplin Crescent, was forced to run at an angle by the Belt Line, and thus acts as a hypotenuse of Eglinton and Yonge. As you walk along this portion of the trail, the houses on either side have either attached themselves to the trail with gates and ramps for bicycles and strollers, or barricaded themselves with high fences and security cameras. Either way, you

Figure 56: Mount Pleasant Cemetery

Figure 57: Spring Buds in the Cemetery



MOORE RAVINE

The sun creates exaggerated patterns along the ground that change throughout the day. The dappled light creates a ground plane that mirrors and distorts the canopy above. With the light above the dark walls of the ravine, a lush summer canopy gives the illusion of being underwater in a sea of green leaves.

Figure 58: (right) Moore Ravine Floor
Figure 59: (top) Mount Pleasant Cemetery historic map
Figure 60: (bottom) Current view Mount Pleasant Cemetery

A deep ravine following Mud Creek runs from Moore Avenue, just east of Mount Pleasant Avenue all the way to the Brickworks in the Don Valley. The Moore Ravine once extended much further north. The beltline tracks rose steadily along the old ravine northwest to Merton Street. Moore Ravine was filled in, with excavated earth from the construction of the Yonge subway line. Now it features a large man made drop from Moore Avenue to a subterranean, leaf-canopied walk beside a small creek. The large homes in Moore Park and Bennington Heights overlook the steep edges of the ravine, and sometimes feature platforms that extend into it.

Figure 61: Forest Texture

Figure 62: Canopy Texture

Figure 63: Ravine Wall Texture
The steep incline of the ravine seems impossible to fathom. When families populate the place you enjoy the beauty and feel safe, but when it is empty the silence and fear swallows you whole. It just feels foreign to be so alone in a natural environment in such a busy city.

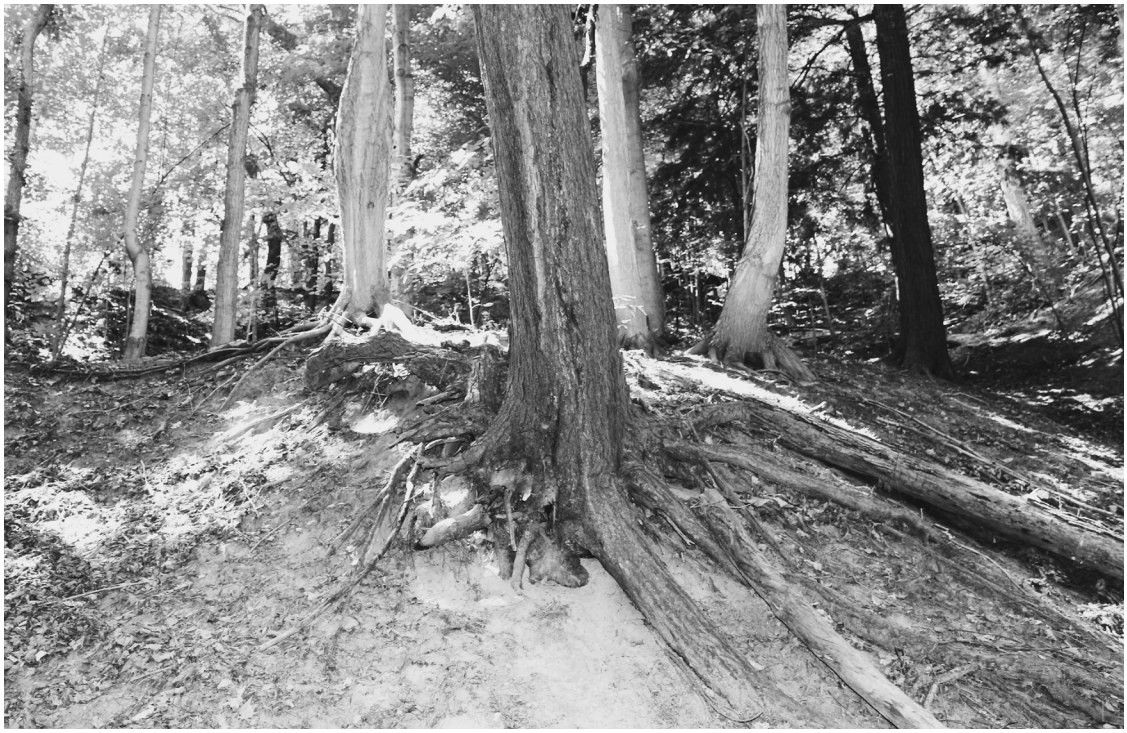


Figure 64: Tree Roots
The tree canopy is full and
encompassing throughout this ravine.
Only small residential structures
penetrate the sides of the ravine,
hanging precariously off the steep edges.

Figure 65: Mud Creek

Figure 66: Moore Ravine runners path

Figure 67: Moore Ravine Rail Bridge
The Moore Rail Bridge is far enough into the ravine that it seems to blend into the surrounding trees. It is easy to pass it by accident as you move through the ravine. The scale is unreadable, and the neutral color blends in with the surroundings. It's almost as if your mind just ignores its existence.

The Moore Rail bridge blends in during the summer, its stands out in the winter, against the white snow and the dark tree trunks. It gives scale to the surrounding ravine, and if you dare to look up to the top of this concrete structure, you feel utterly small. Rebar shows like a broken bone in the bridges disrepair.

Figure 68: Governors Bridge

Figure 69: Brickworks Bridge Winter

Figure 70: Brickworks winter

Figure 71: Winter Tree skyline

Figure 72: Winter Tree Detail

DON VALLEY

The current bike and pedestrian trail along the Don, has largely been left to naturalize itself, apart from some environmental interventions in the flats under the Bloor Street Viaduct, Chester Springs Marsh, and an extensive network of marsh and retention ponds at Don Valley Brickworks. Between Pottery Road and Riverdale Park there are no connections from the city to the trail. In fact, the trail is a kind of urban isthmus, bordered by railway fences on the west and the Don River and the Don Valley Parkway on the east. The part of the trail that incorporates into the loop can be described as having three main characteristics. The top part, south of Pottery Road and Bayview is the most wild and ravine-like. The middle part of the valley is characterized by its connection to Riverdale Park. The trail connects to the Riverdale Pedestrian Bridge, which connects Riverdale Park East and West, two huge amphitheater-like spaces on either side of the Don River. These slopes reach out of the Don back up to the city on highlands above. The southern portion of the Don was channelized in stages and houses many industrial monuments. This part of the trail has little room for self-seeded greenery. It passes under the very industrial bridges and on and off ramps associated with the DVP connecting to the Gardiner Expressway.

The Don Valley has many layers of memory within it. It began, for the purpose of European settlement in Toronto, as the life-giving conduit for the city. In the early years the Don Valley was picturesque, cottage country. It was the site of recreation, skating, and skiing in the winter, swimming in the summer. It was initially home to mills supplying paper, flour, wool and wood. Later came railways, and more industry such as distilleries, tanneries and brickworks.[22] Years of industry stripped the land of its former pastoral appearance, and polluted the River. With its high content of oil and other contaminants, the river was even known to catch on fire.[23] The valley was also known as a collection place for undesirables and mysterious behavior. "In late 1859, John Sheridan Hogan, a highly respected citizen of Toronto, set out to cross the Don in order to visit a friend. Hogan vanished, never to be seen again until a decomposing body wearing his clothes was found 16 months later by duck hunters"[24] The city turned its back on the Don, seeing it as undesirable wasteland. The DVP and Bayview extension converted much of the valley to pavement for cars. A straightening of the bottom of the River to improve industrial use erased its natural state forever.

Seeing the destruction first hand, Charles Sauriol championed conservation efforts in the early 1950's. A "Bring Back the Don" movement arose out of protests lead by Pollution Probe in the 70's. The environmental group, Pollution Probe, staged a large funeral for it in the 60s.[25] There are many improvements plans underway to improve the Don. The Brickworks has an

22 Daubs, Katie. "When the Don Valley Was Cottage Country." The Star, September 4, 2016. Accessed November 4, 2016. https://www.thestar.com/news/insight/2016/09/04/when-the-don-valley-was-cottage-country.html.
23, 24 MacGregor, Roy. "Bringing Toronto's Don River Back from the Dead." The Globe and Mail, August 12, 2016. Accessed August 12, 2016. http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/toronto/brining-the-torontos-don-river-back-from-the-dead/article31393048/.
25 Ford, Ray. "Death and Rebirth on the Don River." Canadian Geographic, June 1, 2011. Accessed November 20, 2016. https://www.canadiangeographic.ca/article/death-and-rebirth-don-river.

Figure 73: Bellville Tressle
The Belleville Rail Bridge is completely functional, and currently inactive. Its height above this part of the valley is slightly daunting for any kind of pedestrian use.

Figure 74: Bayview Extension Bridge

Figure 75: Bloor Street Viaduct
The other day I was biking home, and I saw a message painted on the asphalt bike lane that said "Devon I love you" Aimed at the passing subway train riders.

I remember as a child getting so excited to travel East on the Bloor Line. I loved the shock of emerging out of a dark subway tunnel, suddenly — faced with the entirety of the Don Valley beneath our feet. It was as thrilling as riding a roller coaster. The second dramatic moment is as you emerge from a forest of ravine to a monumental structure. Something about the scale of this bridge makes you suddenly more aware that you are under the sky.

exemplary storm water management system, naturalized marshes and pedestrian paths. Corktown Commons incorporates a flood dyke and an artificial marsh at the base of the Don. The water quality still suffers, as storm sewers for the surrounding neighborhoods drain directly into the Don. In times of heavy rain the combined storm and sewer system discharges raw sewage into the river. Industrial contaminates continue to leach into the Don.

Figure 76: Riverdale Park Bridge
When you cross the bridge as a pedestrian you are struck with several very different conditions. The first is the low buzz of Bayview Avenue with light traffic. The second passes over the rail tracks, trail, and the quiet Don River, straightened into a linear channel at this point, and finally the Don Valley Parkway. The sound of passing over a freeway is encompassing, and you move as quickly as possible across.

Figure 77: Bayview Ave and Rail corridor

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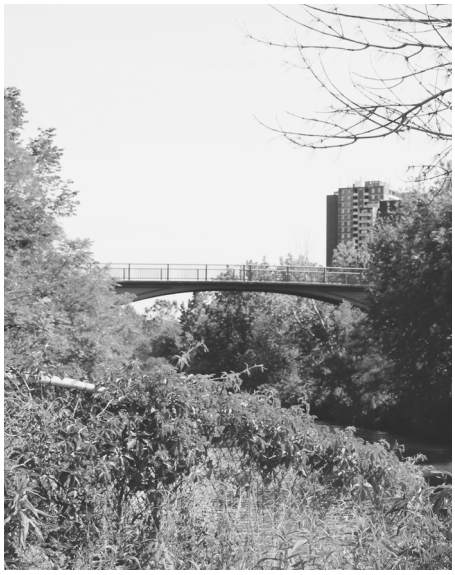

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Figure 78-89: Bridges

1 Culvert Underpass
2 Rickety Plank Bridge
3 Riverdale Pedestrian Bridge
4 Gerrard Street Bridge
5 Dundas Street Bridge
6 Queen Street Bridge

7 Easter Ave
8 Former King Street Bridge
9 Underpass to Corktown Commons
10 Rail Bridge
11 Gardiner Ramp
12 Gardiner Expressway

As you pass through layers of trees, and changing sunlight patterns that seem both monotonous and unique, you are forced to use the bridges, culverts and concrete structures as markers of space and distance.

Figure 90: View from Riverdale Park

Figure 91: Riverdale Park ascending

Figure 92: Don Landing

Figure 93: Former Unilever Factory

Figure 94: Don Landing Fall

Figure 95: Water Damage

Figure 96: Don River under ramps

Figure 97: Lakeshore Off ramp

Figure 98: Gardiner Underside

Figure 99: Lakeshore Detour

WATERFRONT

The waterfront has been at the forefront of city planning in Toronto for many years. There is a master plan of residential developments, reserving space for public parks and recreational activities.

The development has focussed on several sites of public space, and made an effort to develop them first. This initiative, and previous projects, has created a series of parks, including Sugar Beach, HTO Park, Harbourfront Centre, the Music Garden and Ireland Park. A continuous, dedicated bike lane links many of these parks, and a pedestrian trail that runs beside LRT and car lanes. Farther west, the Martin Goodman Park connects these new parks to exiting spaces in the far west such as the Humber Bay Bridge, Sunnyside Pavilion and Marilyn Bell Park. Most of these spaces have been popular year round.

Toronto began as a small settlement where the Don River meets Lake Ontario. Initially, everyone lived by the water. It wasn't until the late 1800s, Toronto started to establish itself as an industrial force, as well as city of opportunity. "Toronto grew from a small town of 14,250 people to an industrial city of... more than 50,000 by the time of confederation in 1867."[26] The increase in industry came from the flourishing trade market and the port, making the city a strong marketing centre.[27]

The city grew, and annexed smaller villages just outside the original city. 1880 saw annexations of Riverdale, Rosedale, the Annex, Sunnyside and Parkdale.[28] The industries that made Toronto a profitable and expanding city also made the downtown unappealing and dirty. "There was emerging from the factories and the offices a ballooning middle class, an element of Toronto's social landscape that preferred not to (and could afford not to) reside in the city's core."[29]

The extremities of the city core became desirable, accelerating the development and settlement of the suburbs. The ravines and moraine were seen to be desirable living areas for early Toronto inhabitants, and continue to be today. It wasn't until recently that there has been a movement back to the waterfront. The ease of a lifestyle — where you work and live in the same sector — is very appealing.

[26] Levine, Allan. Toronto Biography of a City. New York: D & M, 2014. Print. pg. 69

[27] Russell, C.H. 1996. Tightening the belt: a history of the Toronto Belt Line Railway. Box 207158, Folio 1. City of Toronto Archives (pg.8)

[28] Beltline Railway. Beltline Railway. Web. 19 Dec. 2014. <http://www.lostrivers.ca/points/Beltline.htm>

[29] Russell, C.H. 1996. Tightening the belt: a history of the Toronto Belt Line Railway. Box 207158, Folio 1. City of Toronto Archives (pg.9)

Figure 100: Sugar Beach Winter

Figure 101: Pier 27 Condominium Tower

Figure 102: The Power Plant

Figure 103: Canada Malting Co.

Figure 104: Maltling Silos Detail

Figure 105: Palais Royale

Figure 106: Boulevard Club
Several private clubs block pedestrians from access to the waterfront, forcing the trail to continue by the road, past their expansive parking lots. The trail does not return to the waterfront until it has passed the Boulevard Club, the Toronto Sailing and Canoe Club and the Argonaut Rowing Club.

Figure 107: Marilyn Bell Park

Figure 108: Lake Ontario

Figure 109: Cornation Park
Next Page

Figure 110: Sunnyside Arches
A relic of another time, when inhabitants of the city flocked to beach as a popular swimming and recreation spot. Now, with the Gardiner separating the city, and continuous bad water quality, it is mostly abandoned.

Figure 111: Sunnyside Pavilion

HUMBER RIVER

The far west side of the loop is farthest from the downtown core, and the least connected to the rest of the city. Today it marks the separation from the city of Toronto and Etobicoke. The continuous park on either side of the Humber River features pastoral lawns and an arboretum. Two paved walkways, for pedestrians and cyclists, weave through the park, at times meeting each other. The neighborhoods that flank the Humber River are filled with embedded residential gems. It is a hybrid of cottage and urban life with several marinas.

The Humber River was spared by the heavy development of the Don, and has less of a relationship to the history of the Town of York. However its history and importance pre-dates the settlement of York. When Europeans first came to Toronto in 1678, they recorded a small village called Teiaiagon on the shores of the Humber River, and present day Baby Point.[30] This was part of an important route that followed the Humber all the way to Georgian Bay, allowing access to the rest of Northern Ontario. This portage was called *The Toronto Carrying Place*.[31] A historical account of Samuel de Champlain describes sending a young boy of eighteen, Etienne Brule, to live among the Huron in the village of Teiaiagon to learn their language and explore Canada. Brule lived in Canada from 1611-33 among a few native tribes, including the Huron and Seneca. In the end he was caught in a political struggle between the Huron, Seneca, English and French. Disowned by his own backhanded deal making, he tried to return to the Huron, who, killed and ate him.[32] Baby Point is a registered archaeological site. The ravine beside the raised neighborhood is home to an indigenous peoples sacred burial mound. The age of Thunderbird Mound is unknown, and it is marked with a small plaque.

The top of the Humber Valley section of the loop is located just south of Raymore Park, where fourteen houses were washed off their foundations and pushed down the Humber River during Hurricane Hazel.[33] Hurricane Hazel is one of the few devastating natural disasters Toronto has ever experienced. It's surprise arrival, unprecedented power, and destructive effects make it forever part of Toronto's history and memory. It arrived in an ordinary evening in October 1954. Both the River's flooded, cutting Toronto off in both the East and West, rendering the space between the Don and the Humber an island of sorts. In one instance, a woman handed her 4-month-old baby to a fireman to carry to safety, returning for her other children. When the fireman returned the entire house had been swept away with the family inside.[34]

[30] Merringer, Ian. "History runs deep in Toronto's Humber River", The Globe and Mail, Jul. 22, 2022, accessed October 30, 2016, <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/toronto/history-runs-dee[-in-humber-river/article588348>

[31] Turner, Glenn. The Toronto Carrying Place: Rediscovering Toronto's Most Ancient Trail. Toronto, Ontario: Dundurn, 2015.

[32] Kidd, Kenneth. "Étienne Brûlé, Groundbreaking Explorer and Wandering Scoundrel." The Star, March 7, 2015. Accessed October 30, 2016. <https://www.thestar.com/news/insight/2015/03/07/tienne-brl-groundbreaking-explorer-and-wandering-scoundrel.html.>

[33, 34] Hauch, Valerie. "A Baby Saved, a Mother Swept Away; Remembering Hurricane Hazel." The Star, October 15, 2015. Accessed October 30, 2016. <https://www.thestar.com/yourtoronto/once-upon-a-city-archives/2015/10/15/a-baby-saved-a-mother-swept-away-remembering-hurricane-hazel.html.>

Figure 112: Humber Bay Bridge

Figure 113: Oculous Skylight
This single pavilion in South Humber River Park seems out of this world. Perhaps meant to act as public washrooms at one point, it is now locked, graffiti-ed and left to decay.

Figure 114: Pavilion in South Humber Park
The only people I met along this portion of the trail were two older men on scooters who seemed as though they rode motorcycles in an earlier life. Out of place, and foreign, this place felt leftover and forgotten. To reach the street level, you climb a steep paved hill, which we made halfway up before walking our bicycles the remaining slope.

Figure 115: Humber Marshes

Figure 116: Humber Walkway

Figure 117: Old Mill

Figure 118: Pastoral Etienne Brule Park

Figure 119: Humber River Edge

Figure 120: Reflections

Figure 121: Magwood Park Ravine

Figure 122: Fall Colours

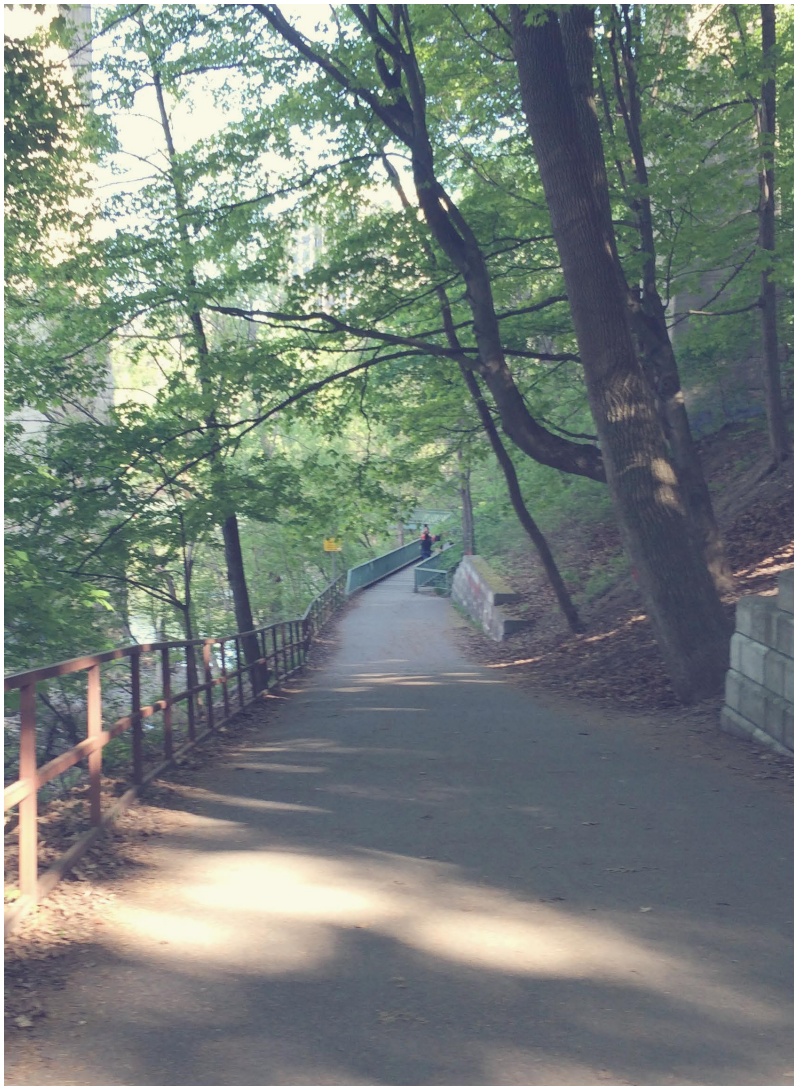

Figure 123: Pedestrian Bridge to Lambton Woods
Lambton Park runs into Lambton Woods, placing the visitor in a space filled with tall, mature trees. The sun is dappled from the tall thick canopy and the space is quiet.

Figure 124: Rail Bridge above Dundas

Next Page
Figure 125: Lambton Woods

Figure 126: Structures in the woods

Figure 127: Humber River View

PHOTOMONTAGE

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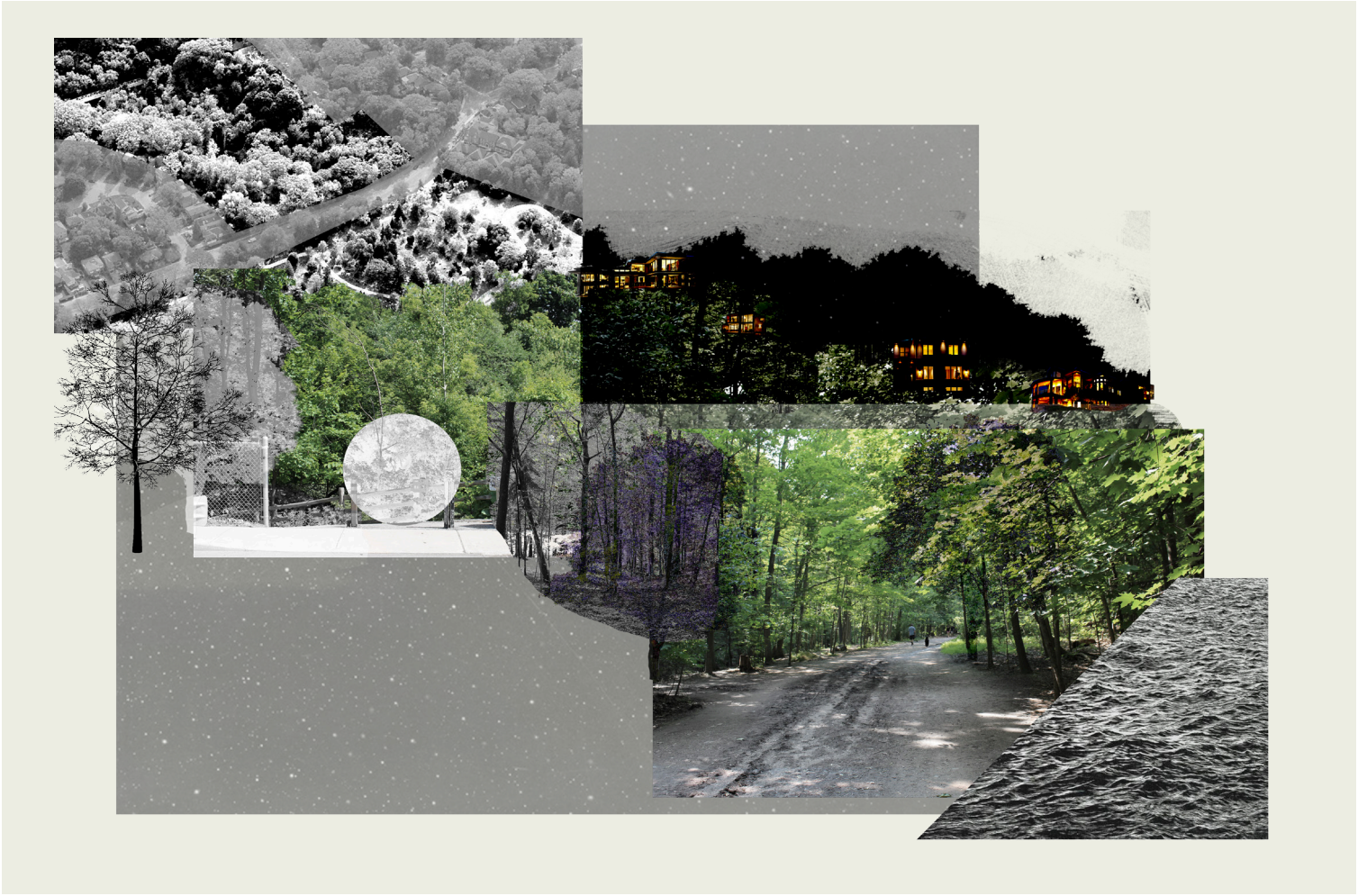

Figure 128: Moore Ravine Entrance
A wall of trees flanking Moore Avenue marks the exit from the surrounding urban fabric. It quickly descends down a rabbit-hole like series of dark and quick loops at a steep angle until reaching the subterranean level.

PHOTOMONTAGE

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PHOTOMONTAGE

Photomontage is a reaction to the photographs I publish here. I wanted to expose more about the space, texture, scale and plan than is available from a photograph. In the final part of the thesis, photomontage projects new-imagined realities onto existing spaces. Their rawness is a way of exploring what was, and what might be, on each site, exists already a collage of forces at play — past actions, present processes, memories, consequences.

Photomontage has been used in many different art forms — photography, literature and cinema — and in art practices, including Dadaism, and Surrealism. It has a raw quality — provisional, unexpected — effective in triggering projections in imagined space. Photomontage can convey new possibilities, new relationships. "[M]ontage creates complex mental images that are such as much cognitive, perceptual, verbal, acoustic or tactile as they are visual; the are eidetic and participate in the shaping of new realities."[35] It is able to create narratives, readings that call up our imagination.

Paul Citroen's Metropolis photomontages capture the experience of walking in a city; he is able to convey the overwhelming experience of streets and spaces, voids and passages. Man Ray's work — specifically for Breton's Nadja — show that it is possible to carry a narrative, and at the same remain surreal. Hannah Hoch's photomontage's are particularly disturbing, and at the same time incredibly successful; they remain in my memory as nightmares. John Stezaker's mask series invert convention: they convey his landscapes as if through your own eyes, combining faces with postcards inverts the viewer and viewed. We project our ideas onto landscapes; Stezaker makes that reality graphic. Yves Brunier creates colorful, layered collages by hand creating the temporality and movement prevalent in the natural environment, but not so easily communicated. He focuses on color blocks and texture; viewers project their own ideas onto the compositions. SuperStudio takes a different approach to montage. The work places infinite flat plains that stretch to the horizon. The scale of their work is landscape-like, aerial and includes artificial landscapes. David Hockney's photomontages are more intimate in scale, assembling large pictures out of small ones. Hockney expands the subject and shatters the unity of a single shot. These montages feel strangely more real than a single image shot would be. Jesse Draxler combines moody landscapes with simple architectonic elements. He explains: "working to create a mood, rather than make statement."[36] Beth Hoeckel combines colors and textures to make layered terrains, "…a provocative hint to intimate mysteries, much as a vague recollection from the subconscious stirs feelings of nostalgia."[37] Each of these artists shows the power of photomontage to enlarge perception.

[35] Waldheim, Charles, and Andrea Hansen. Composite Landscapes: Photomontage and Landscape Architecture. P. 9

[36, 37] Krysa, Danielle. Collage: Contemporary Artists Hunt and Gather, Cut and Paste, Mash up and Transform.p. 73

Figure 129: Heath Street
The Heath Street bridge connects two coveted ravine adjacent neighbourhoods. The modern steel structure replaced a historical bridge. The entrance is hidden behind a long pathway and thick foliage.

Figure 130: Moore Rail Bridge
The Moore Rail Bridge is far enough into the ravine that it seems to blend into the surrounding trees. It is easy to pass it by accident as you move through the ravine. The scale is unreadable, and the neutral color blends in with the surroundings. It's almost as if your mind just ignores its existence.

I found, in the rawness, in the strange juxtapositions in montage, a way of exploring what was, and what might be, on each site. Each site is already a collage of forces at play — past actions, present processes, memories and consequences. Photo-montage captures such layers, and creating new ways of seeing.

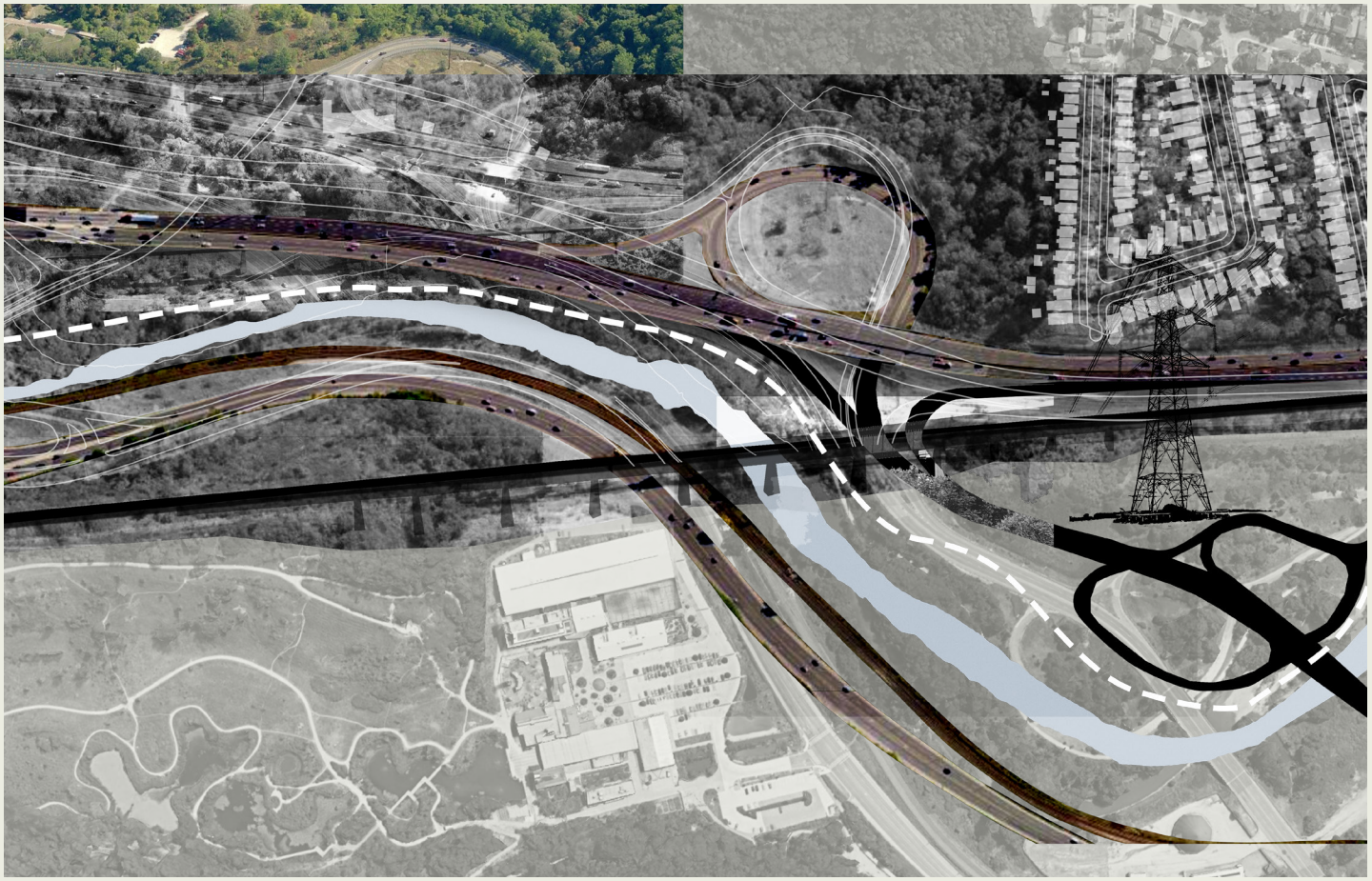

Figure 131: Don Valley Brickworks
The Belleville Rail Bridge runs across the valley just above the Don Valley Brickworks. It is completely functional, and currently inactive. Its height above this part of the valley is slightly daunting for any kind of pedestrian use.

Figure 132: Bayview Extention
The Bayview Extension connects the DVP to Bayview Avenue. It sweeps accross the valley with a quiet grace. The traffic across it and below it function in complete unawareness of each other.

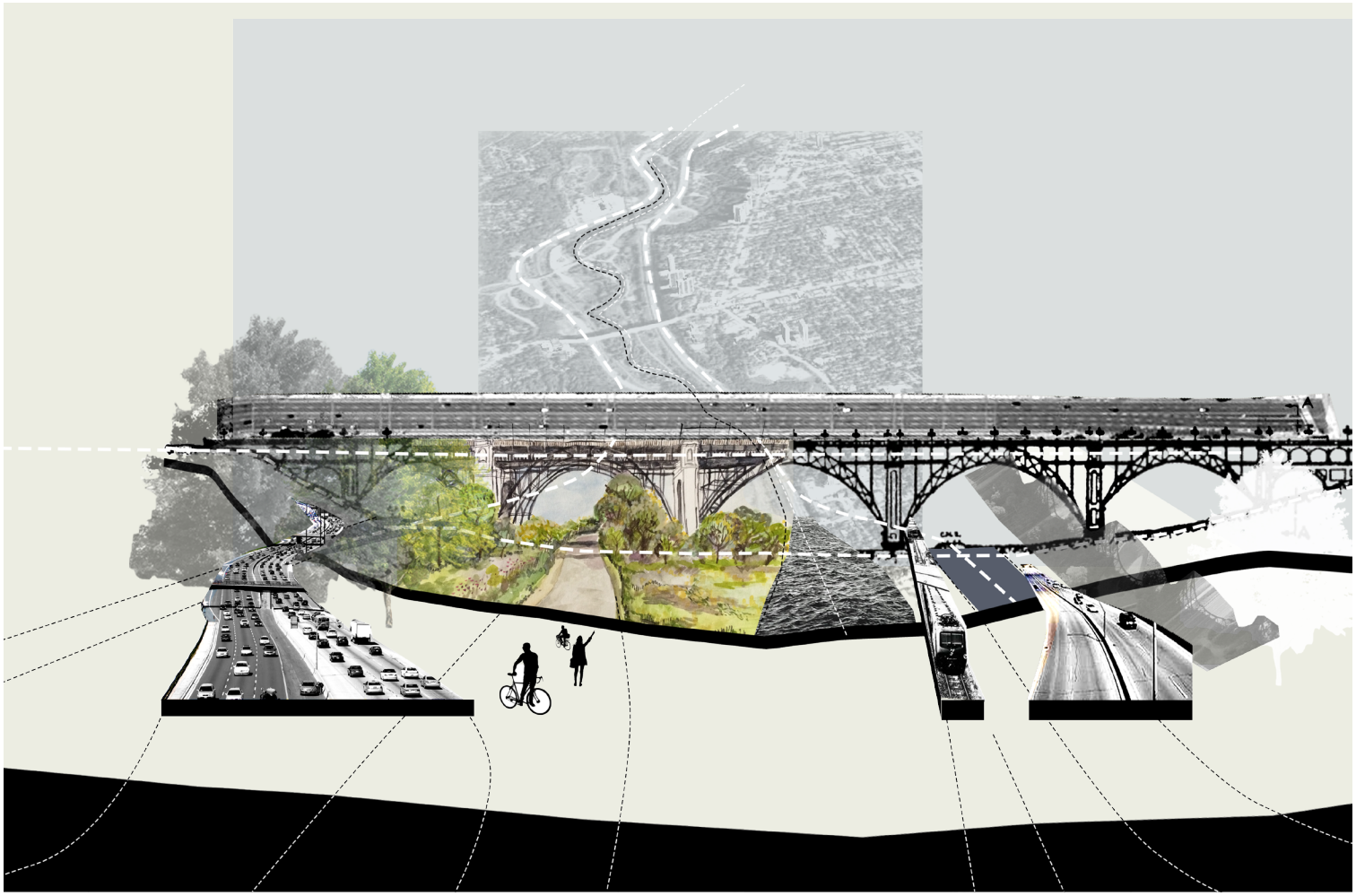

Figure 133: Bloor Street Viaduct
I remember as a child getting so excited if we traveled East on the Bloor Line. I loved the shock of emerging out of a dark subway tunnel, suddenly – faced with the entirety of the Don Valley beneath our feet. The height would get anyone, but to me it was as thrilling as riding a roller coaster.

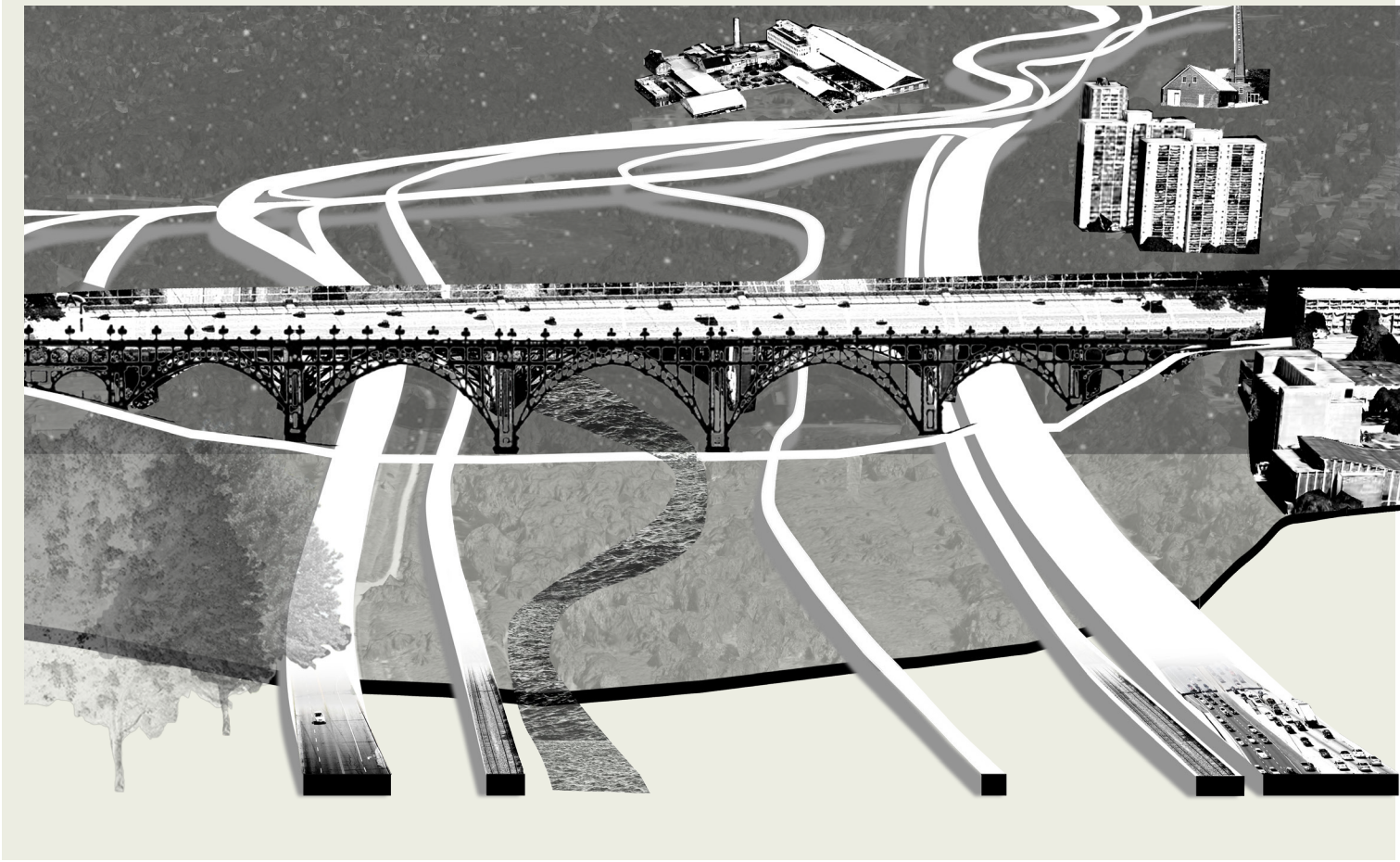

Figure 134: Don Valley Below Bloor
Arriving at the Viaduct from the bike path below. You emerge from a forest of ravine to a monumental structure. Something about the scale of this bridge makes you suddenly more aware that you are under the sky.

Figure 135: Riverdale Park
Riverdale Park features two large cleared ampitheatre shaped parks along either side of the valley. The two spaces are connected by a pedestrian bridge which crosses the DVP, Don River, Don valley trail, rail tracks and Bayview Avenue.

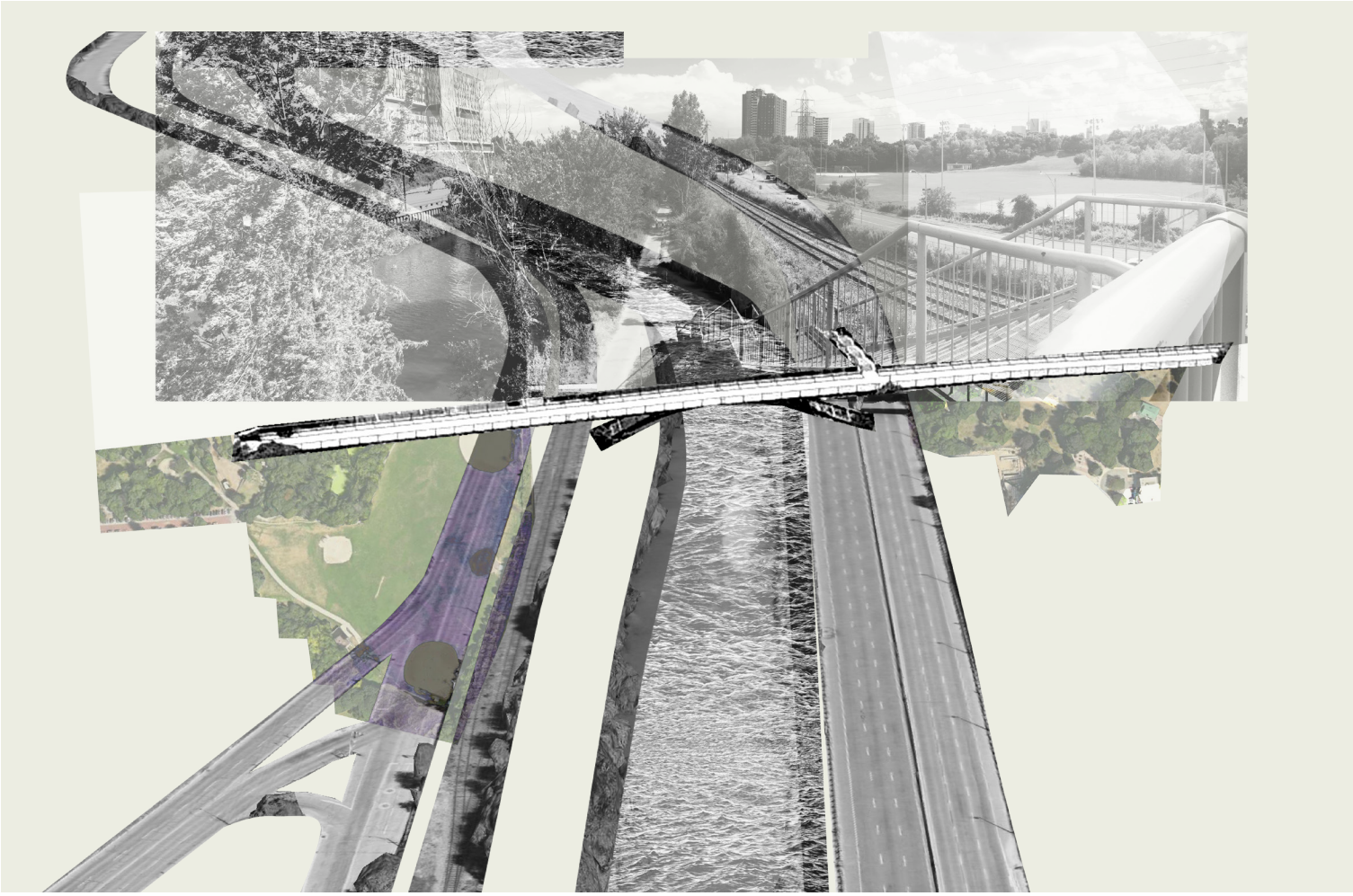

Figure 136: Riverdale Pedestrian Bridge
When you cross the bridge as a pedestrian you are struck with several very different conditions. The first is the low buzz of Bayview Avenue with light traffic. The second passes over the rail tracks, trail, and the quiet Don River, straightened into a linear channel at this point, and finally the Don Valley Parkway. The sound of passing over a freeway is encompassing, and you move as quickly as possible across.

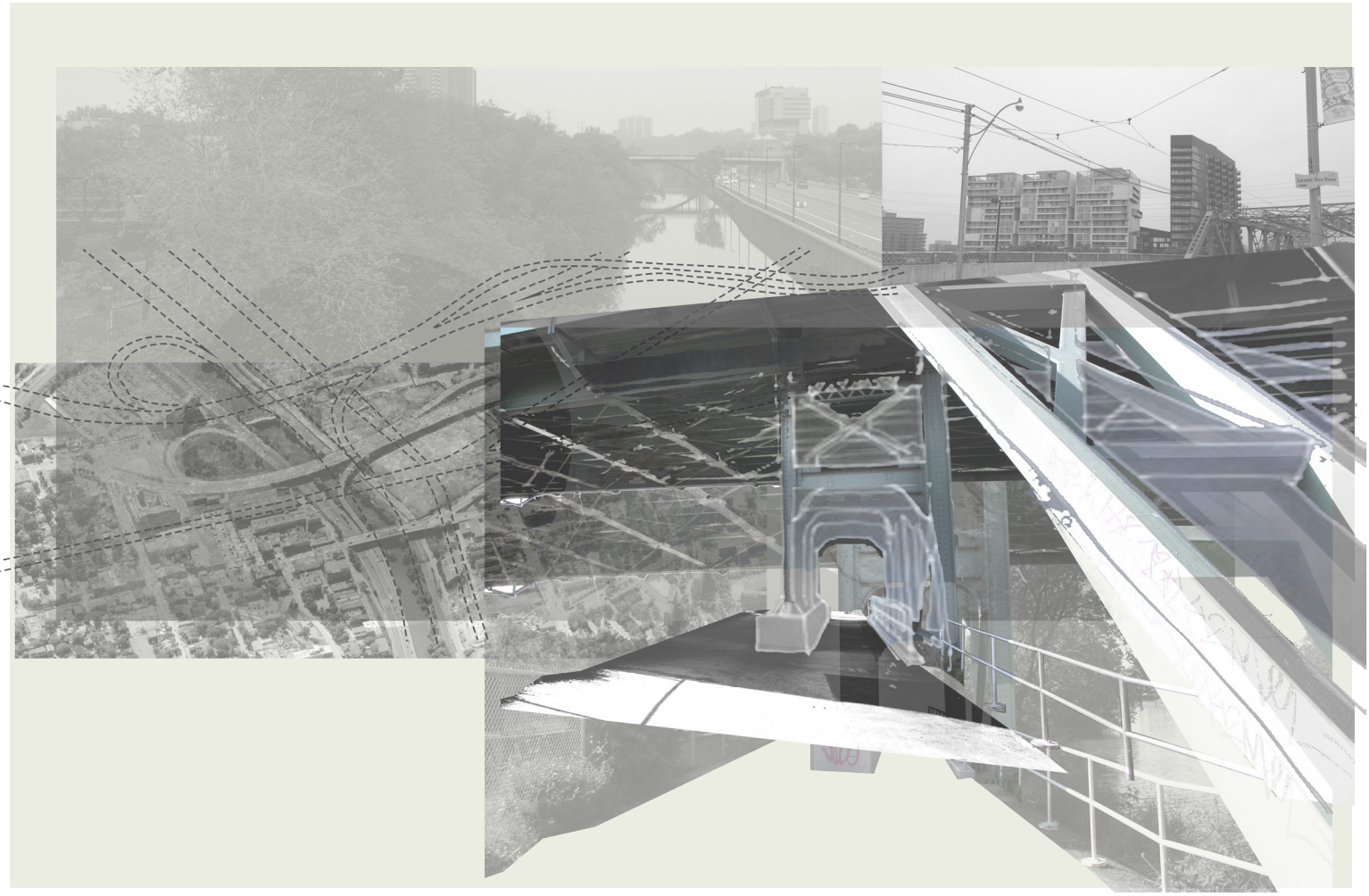

Figure 137: Queen Street Bridge
The Queen Street bridge features small column piers and proportional truss structure that make comfortable space.

Figure 138: Old King Street Bridge
A bridge to nowhere. Previously connecting Eastern Avenue on the East to West side of the city, since the creation of the Don Valley Parkway this tiny segment was cut off from the west side of the city, and becomes an island of sorts, allowing visitors who climb around the chain link fence to stand above the river.

Figure 139: Eastern Avenue Bridge and Railway
Eastern Avenue represents the change of atmosphere on the bike path. From a trail that meanders under several low bridges and pedestrian access to a futuristic slew of swooping on and off ramps for the Don Valley Parkway and Gardiner expressway. The scale of the Eastern Avenue bridge is a six lane mega structure. It is tall enough to not be dark underneath, yet massive enough to feel a desire to move quickly through it. The rail lines run adjacent to the trail here and are only separated by an overgrown chainlink fence.

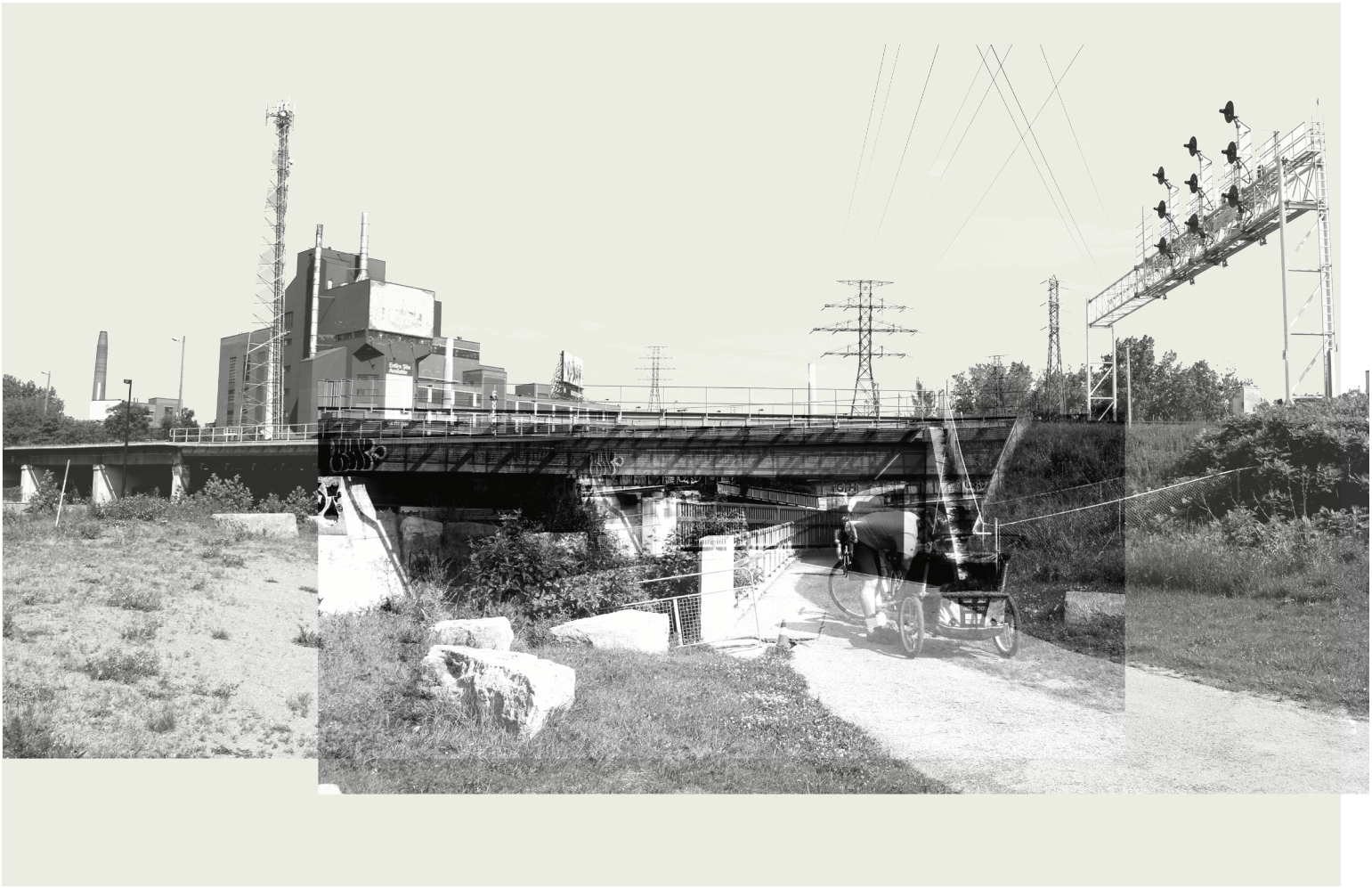

Figure 140: Rail Bridge
The rail bridge crossing the Don dips down with a rail between the pathway and the water. Connecting corktown commons to the industrial landscape under the Gardiner. This is an interesting site as it is the only place where it connects both to the city and the River. The ground slopes down towards the river edge unencumbered by plants.

Figure 141: Gardiner and DVP connecting ramps
Here the trail enters the modern world, with no transition between industrial mega-structure and quiet cycling trail.

Figure 142: Lamp Post
I have no idea why there is one lamp post alone at this site, or how it is attached to the rest of the city grid, but it seems perfectly in place between a tree and the pillars of the rising highway. It is also in a residential style, with small details on it. I have never been down there late enough at night to see if it turns on. I suspect that it does.

NATURE

[38, 39] Thoreau, Henry David, and J. Lyndon Shanley. *Walden*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1971. p. 41

In Edmunde Burke's *A philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful,* Burke finds pleasure in the contemplation of natural and man-made works need not be restricted to the enjoyment of beauty (as in the classical goals of smoothness, order, calm etc.) but could encompass responses to the sublime, which engendered awe and even terror, as experienced in encounters with immensity, the uncontrollable, wide, danger etc.[38] Burke's contemporary (and successor), the painter William Gilpin, conceived of "The Picturesque," forming a third category by which to consider the natural and man-made landscape, a landscape more evocative than the bland and smooth "beautiful" and less overwhelming than "the sublime".[39] Burke's argument presupposes that nature can and should be organized for our pleasure, eliciting a broad range of responses in us.

Walking and photographing the terrain reveals a manipulated landscape, uncurated but nonetheless evocative. This landscape is a disorientating mix of natural and man-made. I often admired the steep incline from Moore Street into the Ravine. Its descent, although paved, feels sudden and mysterious, like Alice falling down the rabbit hole. It seems to be the gateway into another world. But this is a completely man made experience. The ravine that follows Mud Creek used to continue north, into the Cemetery, forcing Moore Avenue to cross with a bridge. The entire North Side of the Ravine was filled in with remediated soil from the trench dug for the Subway in the 1950s. This change erased the slow incline that allowed that the Beltline trains to navigate the terrain. And the Beltline trail now runs along a slightly elevated path, with swales on either side of it. This artificial topography was created by the excavation and construction of the Beltline storm sewer, which runs beneath it. Self-seeded planting hides these constructed landscapes. Plant succession makes it difficult now to untangle what is natural and what is man-made.

The natural is a guide to what had value, and what was invasive, dangerous to the environment. I found the term "naturalized" much more accommodating. This romantic notion of the "naturalized space" is not without its own problems. Invasive species, certain weeds, can take over and destroy existing environments. For example the north side of the Moore Ravine has recently been thinned by the Emerald Ash Borer insect. This invasive insect attacks and kills species of ash trees; the infection, forced the city to remove all dead and dying ash trees, wiping out nearly half of the trees in this area. If humans are responsible for bringing these insects to this area, is it still a natural act? If human intervention can save the remaining

Figure 143: Old Beltline North Toronto 1910. City of Toronto Archives, Fonds 1244, ft1244_it1109c
Figure 144: City of Toronto Archives, Series 393 ft548_s0393_it20128
Fiture 145: Victor, James. *G.T.R. Belt Line, Right-of-way, at Moore Ave*. June 15, 1954. Toronto Reference Library, Toronto.

forest, are we disrupting naturalization? We have so changed the landscape that nothing is fully natural at this time. Although I see the beauty of naturalization in decay and in the creation of environments, I believe human intervention can shape, natural elements to curate spaces.

Postindustrial landscapes are a rich field for investigation. A close reading of each site reveals layers of forces at work. Ecological processes are one layer of what is at play. Oudolf's work inspires an approach that is a careful recombination of elements to create new fictions.

There is an increasing emphasis in modern landscape design on the restoration of a natural ecology. Piet Oudolf, who practices a naturalistic approach to gardening, holds a more modern design philosophy. He puts a priority to the seasonal life cycle of a plant over decorative considerations like flower or color. Focusing primarily on perennial plant varieties, creating year round gardens. This blends plants in a manner that occurs in natural landscapes, a shift from a painter's perspective to one informed by ecology. His gardens are a manipulation of natural elements, a recomposing of patterns found in nature, using natural elements to create microcosm of ecology. They are a beautiful fiction.

PROJECTIONS

x

PROJECTIONS

The ravines of Toronto are a unique physical feature to Toronto, but we have studied such space — *terrain vague* —for some time. Ignasi de Sola-Morales Rubio writes:

The photographic images of terrain vague are territorial indications of strangeness itself, and the aesthetic and ethical problems that they pose embrace the problematics of contemporary social life. What is to be done with these enormous voids, with their imprecise limits and vague definition? Art's reaction as before with "nature"(Which is also the presence of the other for the urban citizen), is to preserve these alternative, strange spaces, strangers to the productive efficiency of the city. If in ecology we find the struggle to preserve the unpolluted spaces of a nature mythicized as the unattainable mother, contemporary art seems to fight for the preservation of these other spaces in the interior of the city. Filmmakers, sculptors of instantaneous performances and photographers seek refuge in the margins of the city precisely when the city offers them an abusive identity, a crushing homogeneity, a freedom under control. The enthusiasm for these vacant spaces- expectant, imprecise, fluctuation- transposed to the urban key reflects our strangeness in front of the world, in front of our city, before ourselves.[40]

It is difficult to approach these spaces as an architect. "Architecture's destiny has always been colonization, the imposing of limits, order, and form. The introduction into strange space of the elements of identity necessary to make it recognizable, identical, universal. In essence, architecture acts as an instrument of organization, of rationalization, and of productive efficiency capable of transforming the uncivilized into the cultivated, the fallow into the productive, the void into the built."[41]

I had to suppress the urge to fix the spaces, clean them up, connect them, smooth them out. Instead, I have amplified the threshold between the city and these terrains, each a delicate approach to the space, hinting at history and significance, working with the themes of cultural memory, social dialogue and geographic history to create a framework of spaces that tell the story of the city.

40, 41 de Sola-Morales Rubio, Ignasi. Essay: *Terrain Vague*. Originally published in Davidson, Cynthia C. *Anyplace*. New York, NY: Anyone, 1995. P. 122

Next Page
Figure 146: Site Plan Projection locations

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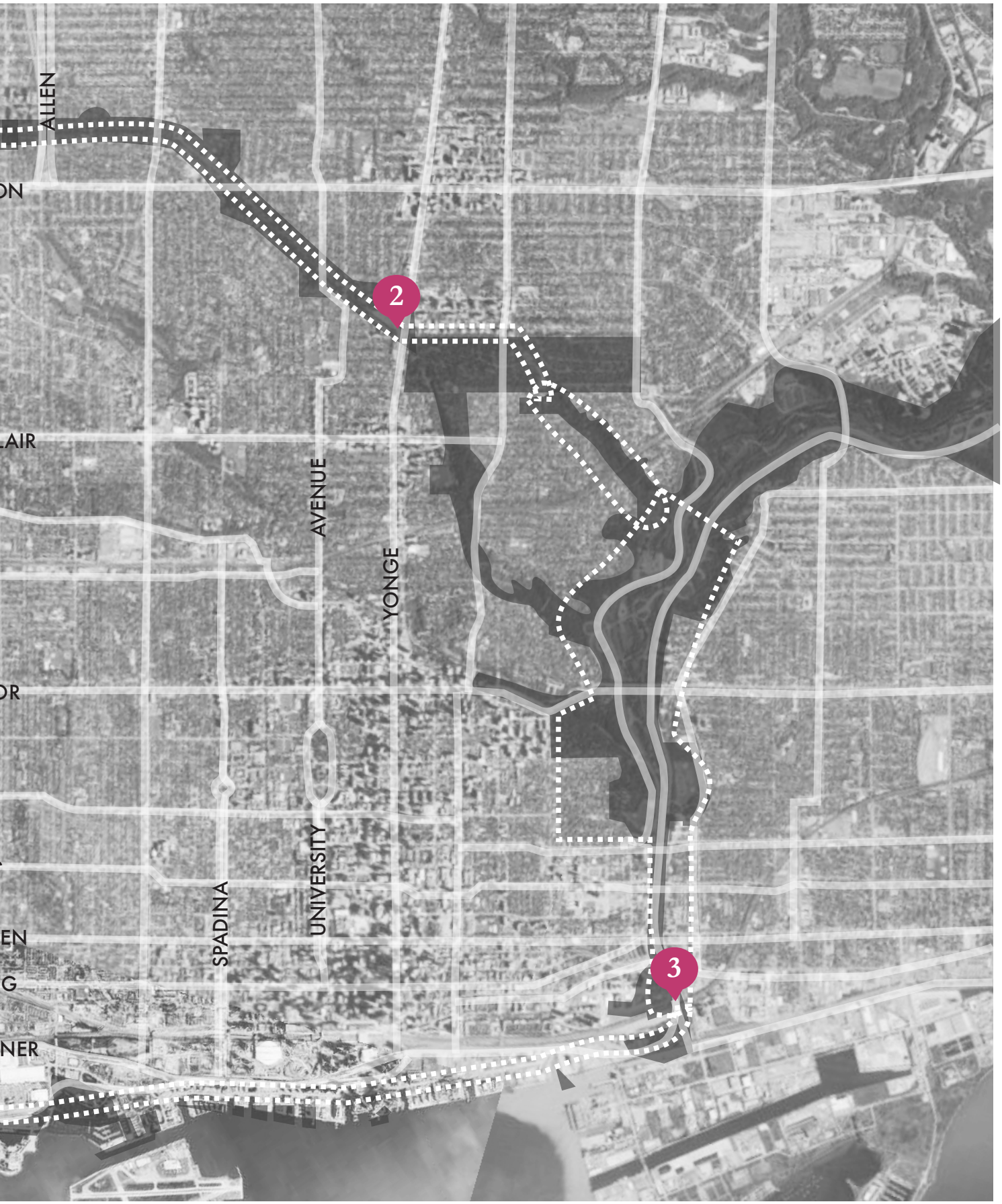
ALLEN
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ROSELAWN AVENUE
WALTER SAUNDERS
MEMORIAL PARK
HOPEWELL AVENUE

BELT LINE CANOPY
GARDEN

A loop railway around the city, built in the 1890s, went bankrupt in its first two years, but the remnants of the route mark the urban fabric of Toronto. The ghost railway runs across the top of the city as a linear park, connecting the Don River to the Humber. A running path, or a pedestrian route, the void train through the space forms the identity of the park. It is the absence of something that allows the ghost railway to survive.

Railway Park is in a space adjacent several factories, cleared of forest but left undeveloped away from the surrounding residential neighborhood. Light steel structures painted white make modern ghostly forms of trees, an artificial canopy. The back row forms a colonnade shows a clear arch canopy from the rail path, reintroducing the ghost railway, embedding its story in the space, defining the rail corridor, which would otherwise blend into the city in certain spaces, clearly defined. The remaining structures, scattered, create larger and smaller spaces between them.

Overgrown by wisteria, the canopy makes plant forms in smooth shapes. Covered by canvas, the canopy creates a more formal outdoor event space for markets, parties or even weddings. The delicate forms make a modern interpretation of the art deco backdrop.

Figure 147: Site Plan Belt Line Canopy Garden

Figure 148: Belt Line Canopy Garden Elevation Perspective
The trail runs through the last row of structures.

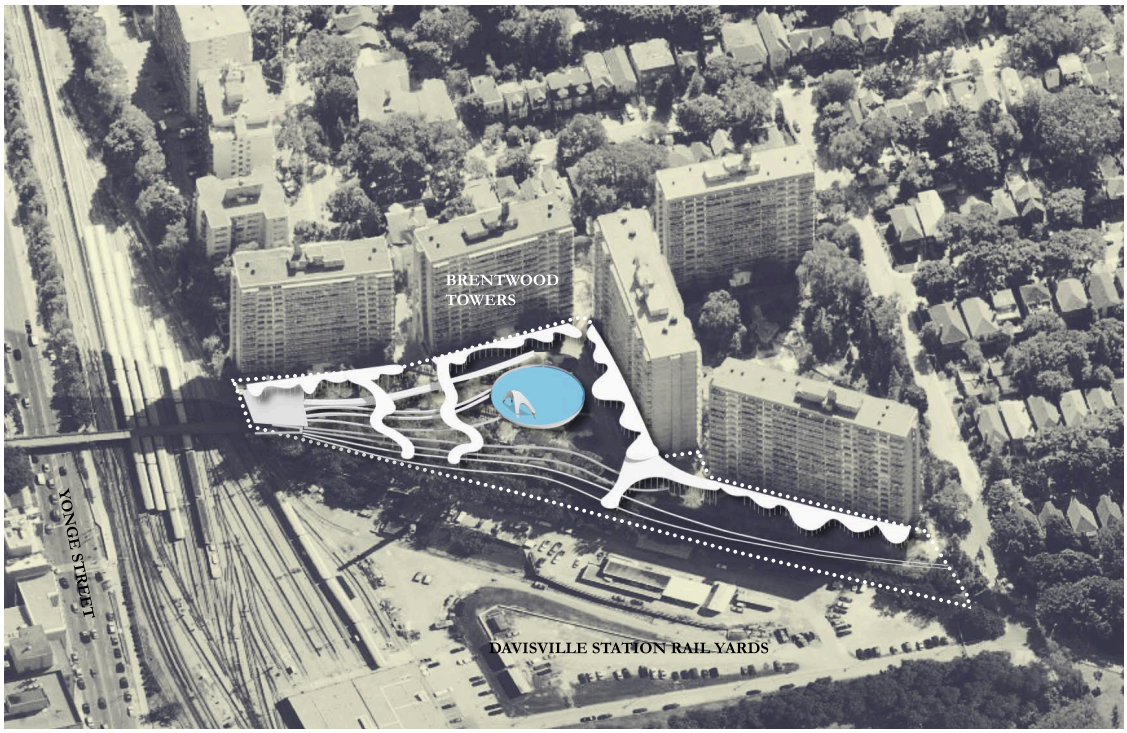
Figure 149: Facotry Backdrop
The canopy shapes mimic the space taken up by trees and break the park up into smaller spaces within the field.

Figure 150: View from Belt Line
When standing on the trail, a clear path is visible through the field of canopies, continuing the experience of the Belt Line trail.

Figure 151: Wisteria Arches
Similar to the existing vines growing on the hydro towers in the side, Wisteria is grown on the steel structures creating a ghost train tunnel of planting.

Figure 152: Event Space
Covering the structures in canvas create a unique outdoor venue.

Figure 153: Flea Market


BRENTWOOD
TOWERS
YONGE STREET
DAVISVILLE STATION RAIL YARDS

BRENTWOOD RAIL
PLAZA

Brentwood Towers is one of the first examples of the modernist tower-in-the-park typology in Toronto. Designed by Harry Kohl and built in the early 1960s, it presents an optimistic vision for the city. The apartments are spacious, well-lit units with parquet flooring. The expansive gardens give Brentwood Towers a feeling of optimism. The original plans featured several layers of fountains, landscaped pathways, and raised viewing platforms. A row of mature trees blocked this inner paradise from the world. The plaza featured two of these large gardens, one at the front of the building, and one at the back that ends with a large fence at the Beltline Park. The front garden has been left to naturalize and decay.

The sparsely-spaced High Rise is a common condition in Toronto. One of the first things you notice as you drive into the city from the airport are the large apartment buildings — foreign objects, dropped into an otherwise empty landscape, on the edges of ravines, far from the city centre surrounded by empty space.

High-rise residential planning in Toronto can be organized into two major periods of development. The first was the post-war growth of the city in the '60s and '70s. These developments left the city with high rise towers surrounded by large empty spaces, conceived of as semi-private parks. The condo developments in the downtown, starting in the early 2010s are basically large glass structures. Neither the original apartment developments, nor the new condominium plans have responded well to ground condition or context within the city. The modernist concept for Toronto introduced ubiquitous towers floating above sprawling green parks just outside the downtown core. The development of highways made commuting simple and living adjacent to the ravine fashionable. The idea of living in the then-industrial city wasn't popular, and the tower in the park introduced a compromise between dense urbanity and a desire for rural life.

But Modernist Toronto simply never happened. In the post-industrial era, there was a movement back to the downtown. Density, as well as a lack of improvement in Toronto's public transit system, made commuting from outside of the city increasingly time consuming. There was a strong opposition to the development of highways in city centers, and the preservation of pre-war era housing which had a nostalgic popularity. In Collage City, Colin Rowe writes that, "even though the weight of the [modernist city] persists, it is a city which has shrunk to very little — to the impoverished banalities of public housing which stand around like the undernourished

Figure 154: Site Plan Belt Brentwood Rail Plaza

symbols of a new world which refused to be born."[42] This is the reality for most of North America, as modernist ideas were rejected after several unsuccessful projects. High density, low cost housing with large open spaces resulted in increasingly unsafe and undesirable living conditions. The tower in the park created large areas of abandoned, unregulated space that felt desolate and unsafe. The towers in the suburbs became nascent relics of the unborn modernist Toronto.

Brentwood Towers was engulfed, now located conceptually in Toronto's mid-town area. It is a nice building, well kept up and still a desirable area thanks to proximity to the subway, stores, and parks. The unfortunate part of this project is the design for the semi-private park. The gardens do not act as walkways; they are separated from the buildings by long driveways, which also act as pedestrian access to the buildings. The gardens are landscaped, with seating available, but they are basically large urban voids that have been filled with green. They lack either functional features or program. They are as public as the sidewalk, yet private enough to not attract unwanted attention. Brentwood Towers lingers between the pedestrian realm and the private one, with no regulation; even if it is to be considered private, the variety of occupants of the building would always make it seem public. It becomes interstitial space, meant perhaps for pedestrians who rarely use it, and in reality serving mainly as space for dog defecation. The connection to the urban realm, and surveillance from the imposing towers makes this space seem highly exposed during the day, yet completely clandestine and questionable during the evening. It is both exposed and yet unreadable at the same time. There are enough eyes on it, but they are not close enough to decipher what they see.

Residential development in Toronto is far from the multi purpose, island-like blocks of Koolhaus' Delirious New York. Instead developments seem to vary between being large picturesque parks and simply land leftover by development, both unrelated to the ground floor level. In his essay, Imagining Nothingness, Rem Koolhaus describes: "that emptiness in the metropolis is not empty, that each void can be used for programs whose insertion into the existing texture is a procrustean effort leading to mutilation of both activity and texture."[42] The final phase of development of the city, when density allows, will be the development of the ground level. The cities ability to function on a pedestrian level, as well as continuously, in time and space relies on this.

When the design of the plaza was completed, the Beltline Railway was still somewhat active. It ran freight cars to industrial buildings along the line until the 1970s when it stopped

[42] Rowe, Colin, and Fred Koetter. Collage city. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1978. p.4

[42] Koolhaas, Rem, and Bruce Mau. S M L XL: OMA.. S.l.: s.n., 1993. p.202

Figure 155: Garden at Brentwood Towers when opened
Brentwood Towers in the Park. Toronto. In Toronto Modern: Documenting Modern Architecture in Toronto, Canada. March 4, 2011. Accessed November 4, 2014. <https://robertmoffatt115.wordpress.com/2011/03/04/brentwood-towers-in-the-park/.>

completely.[43] The current design still reflects the unfavorable state of the railway, with a large fence and garbage disposal and parking along that wall. This design attempts to correct this disconnect. The Brentwood Plaza would reach the Beltline by sloping down towards the walkway to make it level all along. In an attempt to refine the edge between built environment and park, colonnades have been added to the first floor of the buildings. Commercial and retail is suggested to add interaction in the space. The plaza itself currently has signs informing users no skateboarding, wading or entering the pools is allowed. I would like to correct that by reinventing the fountains as more interactive waterparks, and skating rinks in the winter. This function reintroduced a function into the space, and internalizes the plaza, bringing people off of the beltline. The existing wall of trees remains, separating the spaces and maintaining the shape of the Beltline, while the spaces between the trees act as doorways into a continuous space. The landscaping consists of several levels of plantings from trees to grasses to introduce several scales between building and lawn, and make the space more welcoming.

43 Boles, Derek. "Toronto Railway Historical Association." Toronto Railway Historical Association. Accessed October 30, 2016. <http://www.trha.ca/beltline.html>.

Figure 156: Brentwood Towers Naturlization of concrete
Figure 157: Brentwood Towers fountains

Figure 158: View of Cafe
View from covered walkway towards the cafe.

Figure 159: View down covered walkway to Beltline

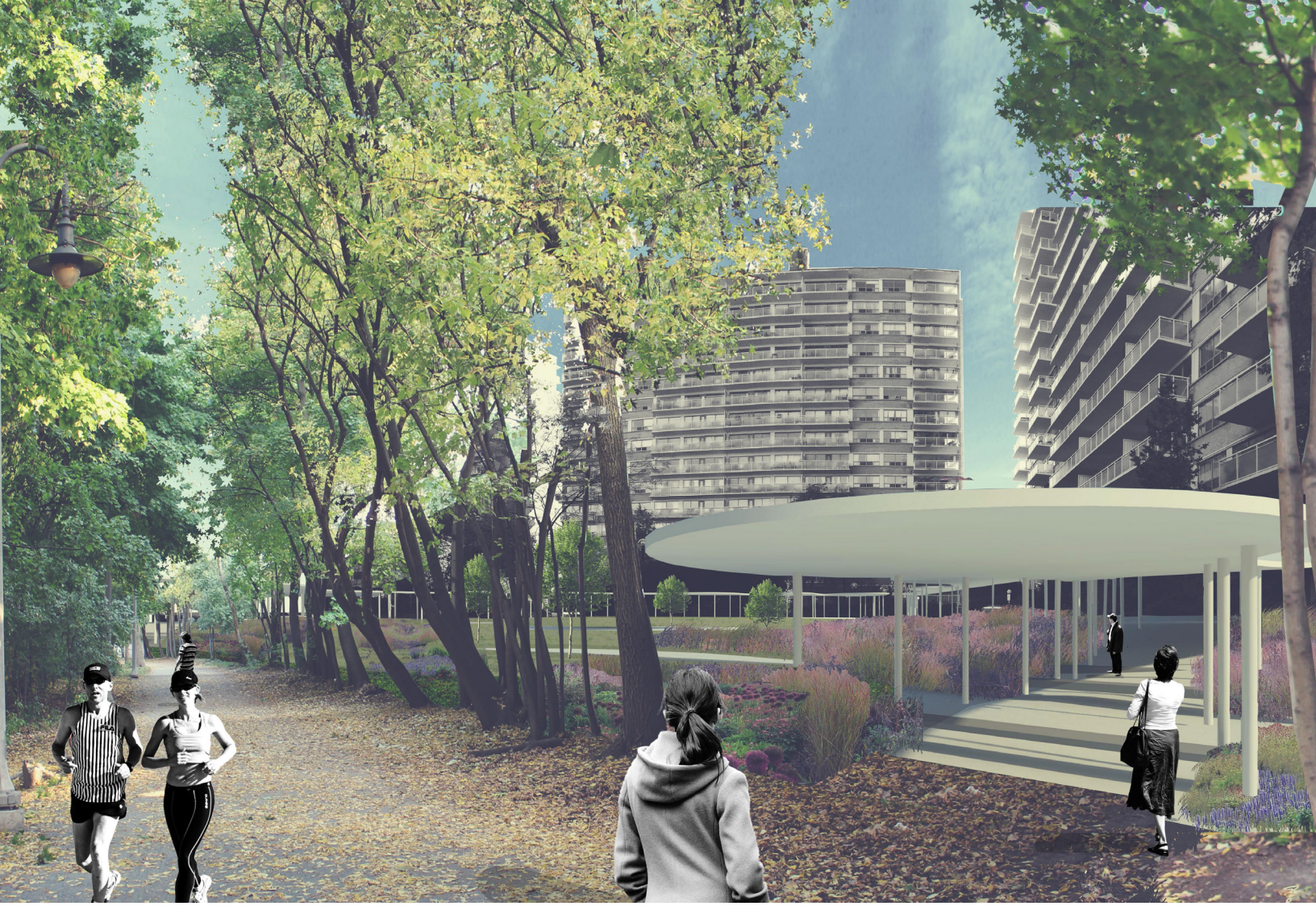


Figure 160: Walkway connection to Belt Line

Figure 161: View from building Collonade

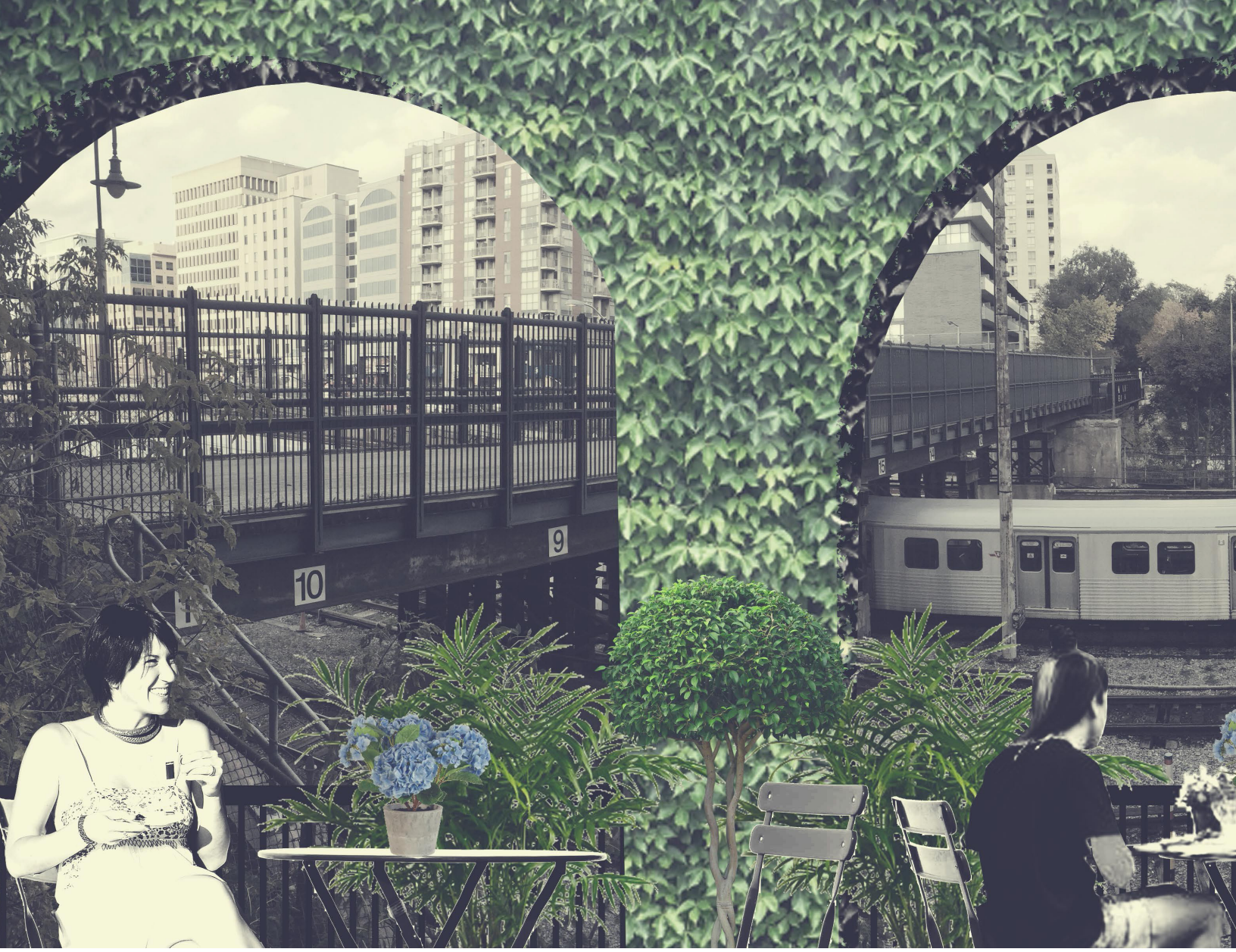

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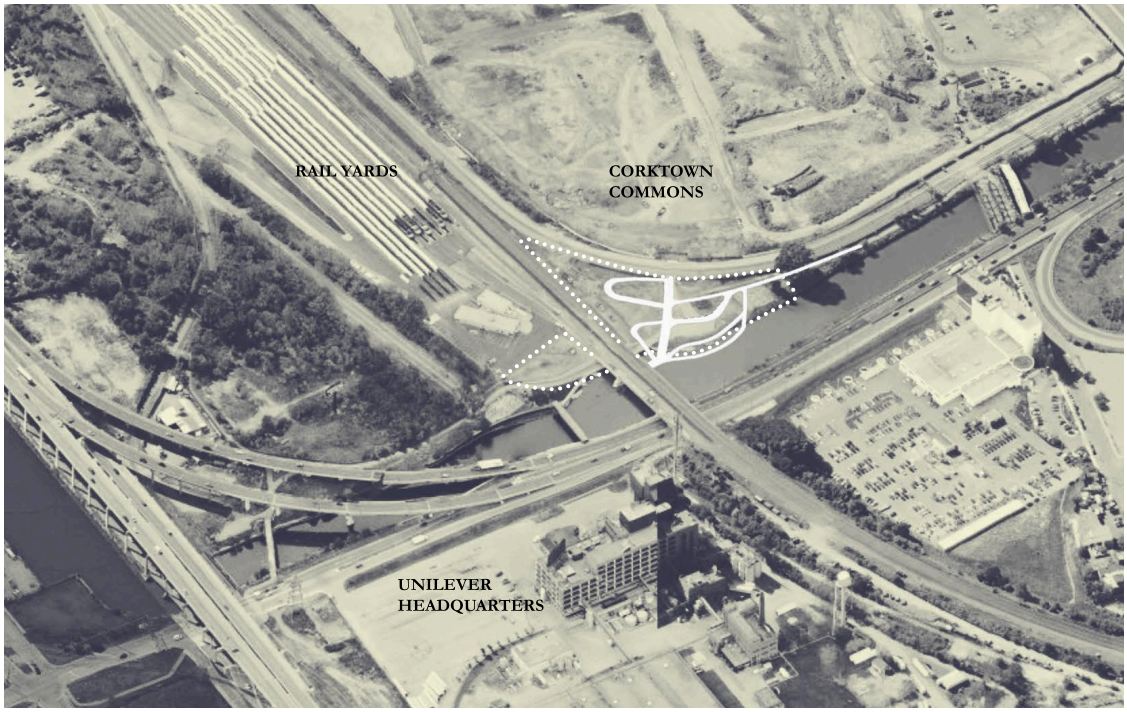
Figure 162: View of adjacent Rail Yards from Cafe


RAIL YARDS
CORKTOWN
COMMONS
UNILEVER
HEADQUARTERS

DON LANDING
PARK

Don Landing is a triangular piece of land created when the railway curves towards the lakeshore at the bottom of the Don River. There is an underpass below the railway that connects this piece of land to Corktown Commons, the Distillery District and downtown core. It is an opening up of the Lower Don Valley trail and features a flat area with rocks on a plateau over the Don River. The river is hidden from view because of its depth in the landscape and the several layers of foliage growing on the river's edge.

This site is located in the most industrial part of the site. The Don has been straightened into a canal, and the on and off ramps that connect to the DVP and the Gardiner frame the spaces. After reading the accounts of Charles Sauriol, it is hard to see the former natural Don on this man-made site. I felt as though the scars of industry were best seen as is, allowing the Don River to exist as a response to all of the forces that created it.

The projected design aims to reconnect the city to the Don River via a series of terraced walkways that reach across the landscape. Each walkway had a unique view of the Don River and interacts with the raising water levels in a different way. They are made of steel grates and roped railings that allow parts of it to become flooded if water levels should rise. The separate tiers of the walk allow it to still function if parts of it are flooded. The bottom tier is the most intimately close to the River, floating along the top of the water. The second tier is in the middle of the River Bank and within the naturalized edge. The top tier rises slightly above the existing plateau, offering a view up and down the river as well as to the lower tiers. The existing plantings are kept in a naturalized state, and the raised walkway floats above the ground, treading lightly on the existing space.

Figure 163: Site Plan Don Landing Park

Figure 164: Second Tier Walkway

Figure 165: Water Walkway

Figure 166: View From other side of the River

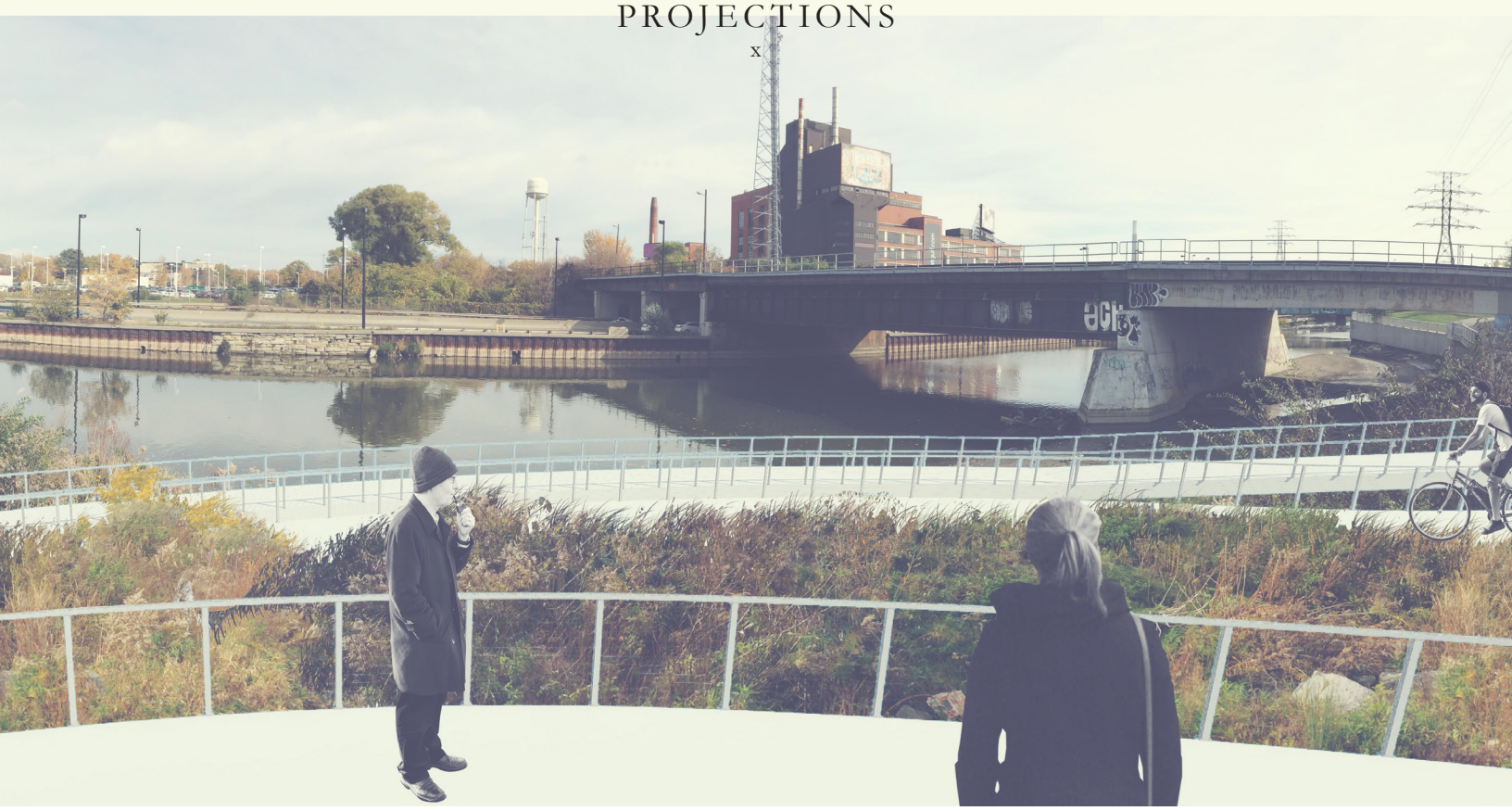
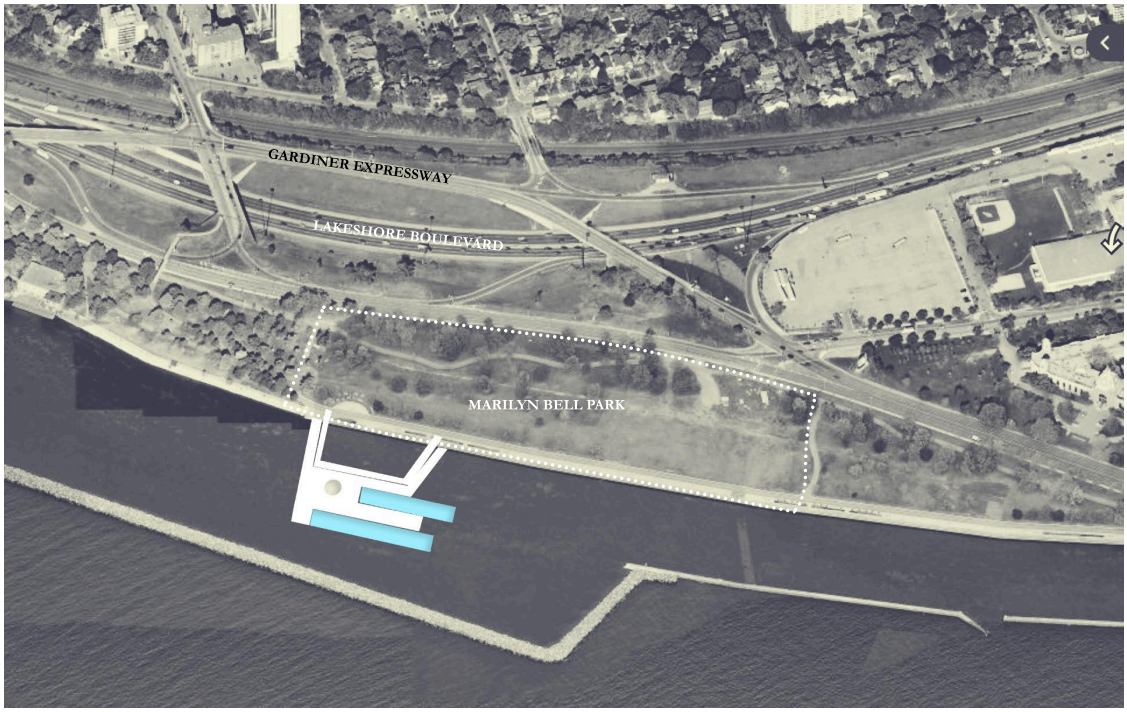


Figure 167: View from top of River Bank

Figure 168: View From top of River Bank looking towards the city.


GARDINER EXPRESSWAY
LAKESHORE BOULEVARD
MARILYN BELL PARK

LAKEVIEW POOL
in Marilyn Bell Park

There was once a sense of recreation, leisure, event and pride with the Toronto Waterfront. People would flock to it on weekends. There was an amusement park, a bandstand and many celebrations. There was a sense of occasion, and celebration of the Waterfront. Today, with increased water pollution, as well as a disconnect from city to waterfront due to rail and expressway, we have turned our backs on the Waterfront. Even the Sunnyside pool, designed to be a lakeside swimming experience has a naturalized edge and a fence completely disconnecting it from the river. I hope to reconnect the city to this experience, as well as recreate the experience of Marilyn Bell's swim —looking out at the expansive lake and jumping in.

The site is marked by an optimistic event in Toronto's history. September 1954, Marilyn Bell became the first person to swim across Lake Ontario. She began her swim on the American Side of the lake and finished near Sunnyside Pavilion. We remember the story of Marilyn Bell because she was someone who prevailed when others did not. She had perseverance, and heart and she succeeded when no one was expecting her too. She endured 4m high waves, bad conditions, and being attacked by eels to become the first person to swim across Lake Ontario. The design consists of two wave shaped arches that protrude into the lake. The first runs upon its surface and, after a long pier like deck, approaches two linear pools, which protrude into the lake with infinity edges. There is also a small sand dune to recreate an experience of the beach. The second curve attaches to the boardwalk, and runs above the pool to give passers-by the experience of being voyeurs of the pool, to enjoy the spectacle, and an elevated view of the lake.

Figure 169: Site Plan Lakeview Pool

Figure 170: Entrance to pool deck
One dock acts as an entrance to the floating pools, the second is a raised walkway that allows pedestrians to have a view of the pools and lake.

Figure 171: Vintage Postcard Sunnyside Beach Toronto, Ontario
Figure 172: Vintage Postcard Sunnyside Beach, Canada

Figure 173: View From Pool Deck

Figure 174: Edge of Pool blends into Lake

Figure 175: Pool Deck and different areas

SCARLETT ROAD
EGLINTON AVENUE
HUMBER RIVER

HUMBER RIVER
WALK

There is no view of the Humber River, unless you stop along the Eglinton Bridge. A wall of sycamores, maple groves, and other naturalized growth obstructs the view. If you venture past this clear perimeter, you will find several paths that navigate the terrain up and down the shore, to the edge of the plateau. Several places offer a steep drop-off directly beside the path. This part of the park formalizes these man-made paths, amplifying the experience peering off the edge into the Humber. Instead of removing the naturalized riverbed, it zigzags in and out of the edges of the sumac and maple groves. It mediates the edge here, inviting the park to enjoy the river. After years distancing ourselves from the destructive forces of the river, perhaps this is an opportunity to appreciate it for both its beauty and its sublime nature.

As I traveled the site I noticed several articles dumped into the River Bank. This reminded me of the articles that washed ashore during Hurricane Hazel. I littered the site with pieces of concrete casts in the shapes of traditional couches and chairs from the 50s. These stand like ghosts from the history of the site.

Figure 176: Site Plan Humber River Walk

Figure 177: Walk at the edge of the River

Figure 178: Walk through tall grass

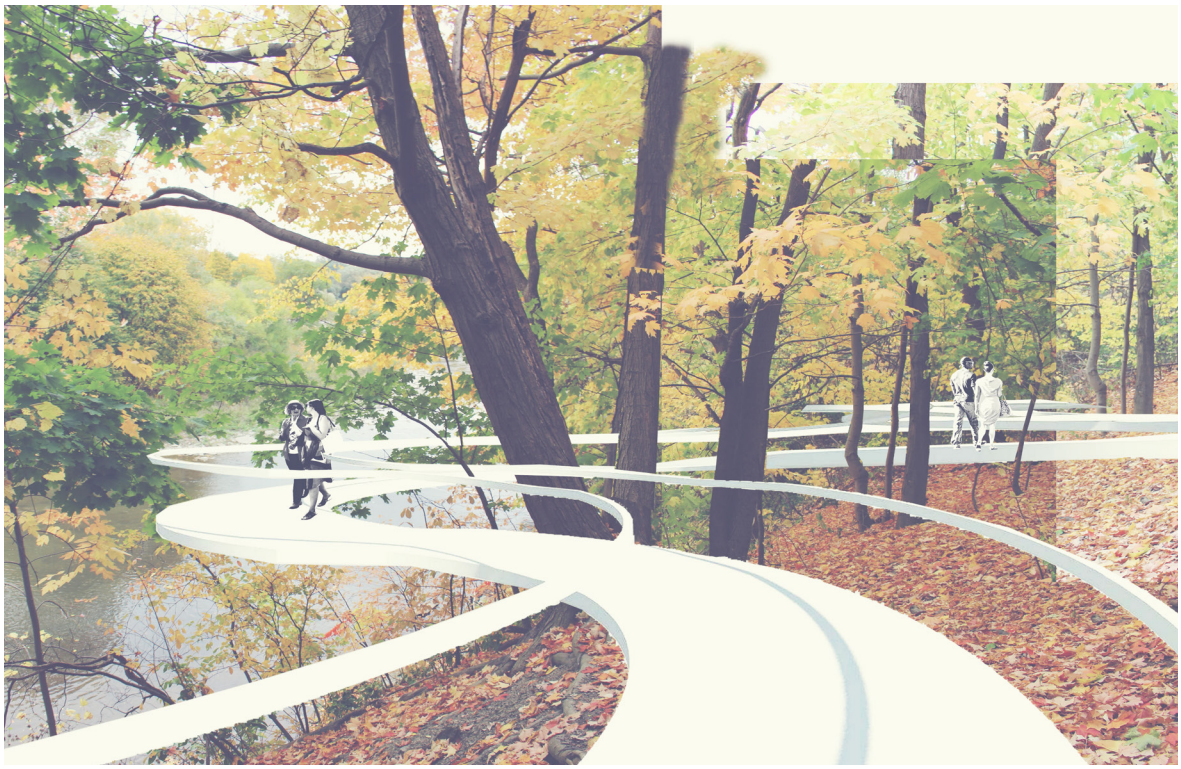


Figure 179: Maple Grove lookout

Figure 180: View from the River

Figure 181: Sumach Grove

CONCLUSION

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CONCLUSION

I began with an interest in defining public space. I became interested in the concept of collective consciousness forming the foundation for understanding public space as shared experience. Space is shaped by the history of the place, the stories we tell each other, by our collective memory and our personal experience. I began looking at the city as a ground plane, the subtraction from built space, and as a sprawling urban surface, defined by physical boundaries, by social constructs, and by the legal constructs for where we can and cannot go. This surface included spaces as small as parking lots and parks, as mundane as streetscapes and intersections, and as complex as abandoned infrastructure, natural elements, and subterranean spaces. I focused on the Beltline Railway. This was in part due to its proximity to my house, and in part due to my nostalgia exploring it while I was growing up. I wanted to follow the Beltline in a loop around inner city and explore its potential as a public space. I soon realized that most of the Beltline is still active rail lands, and only a small portion has been transformed into a trail. I decided to trace my own route around the city to connect six distinct terrains. This project pushed the limits of my comfort in the city, it showed me new places I have returned to again and again, and it introduced me to a Toronto that I didn't know existed.

I found myself frustrated in my attempts to describe the terrain I found. I tried many modes of perception. Each was mediation, an attempt to connect with the space I was exploring. Each was a construction itself, always distancing for the truth of the space. I imagined an anti-city, places of little productive activity, places of rest, repose, and escape, and connection — imaginary spaces to weave these terrains back into the city. I sought to honor these gaps, reframe them as hybrid spaces, connecting spaces, places to slow down and experience terrain anew. This is an idealistic view at how to enjoy and maintain these spaces.

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