PEOPLE
BUILDING
AIRPORT
DISTRICT
CITY
BEYOND

DIMA FARAJ

ARCHITECT

ARCHITECTURE · AVIATION
URBAN DESIGN · RESEARCH

DESIGNING BEYOND BOUNDARIES

ORGANISED BY SCALE AND THOUGHT,
NOT CHRONOLOGY.

DESIGNING BEYOND BOUNDARIES

DIMA FARAJ

ARCHITECTURE · AVIATION · URBAN DESIGN · RESEARCH

SELECTED WORK

2016 – 2026

WE DESIGN FOR PEOPLE WE MAY NEVER MEET.



PEOPLE

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BUILDING

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Beyond 24

ORGANISED BY SCALE AND THOUGHT, NOT CHRONOLOGY.

SELECTED WORK · 2016 – 2026

DIMA FARAJ

ARCHITECT

B.ARCH · AMERICAN UNIVERSITY IN DUBAI · 2016

Architecture, aviation, urban design and research are not four careers here. They are one enquiry, pursued at different scales: how people move through the environments built for them, and who decides.

The scale changes. The question does not.

ARCHITECTURE · AVIATION · URBAN DESIGN · RESEARCH

DUBAI, UNITED ARAB EMIRATES





ONE ARCHITECTURE — TO SHAPE SPACE

AL MADHEEF

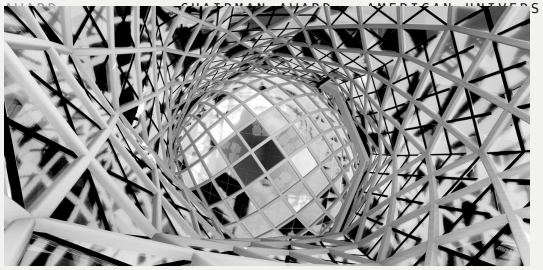
AIRPORT HOSPITALITY AND ARRIVAL BUILDING

A project about gathering. Al Madheef takes the majlis — the room where a community receives, deliberates and waits — and asks what it becomes at civic scale. The answer is largely a matter of ceiling: light admitted, filtered and held, so that the space is defined less by its walls than by what happens above the people standing in it.

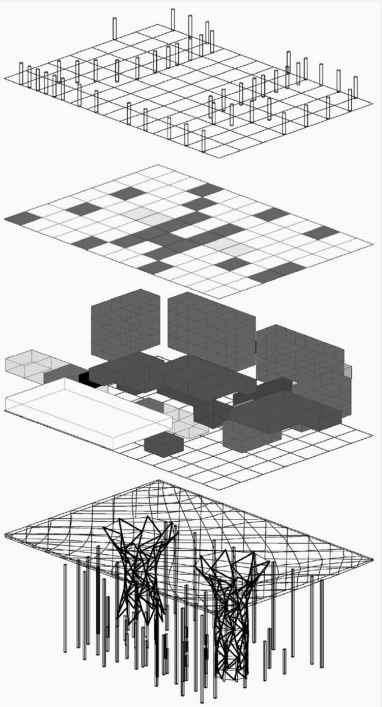
It sets the terms for everything that follows: the concern is not the object, but the experience of the person inside it. The graduation project was already an airport building.

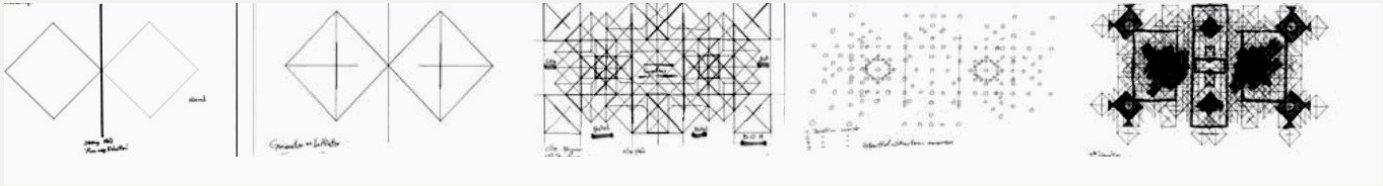
SOLE AUTHORSHIP

STATUS	GRADUATION PROJECT, AUD
YEAR	2016
LOCATION	DUBAI WORLD CENTRAL, DUBAI SOUTH
[illegible]	[illegible] · AMERICAN UNIVERSITY IN DUBAI · 2016



THE CEILING IS THE ROOM.



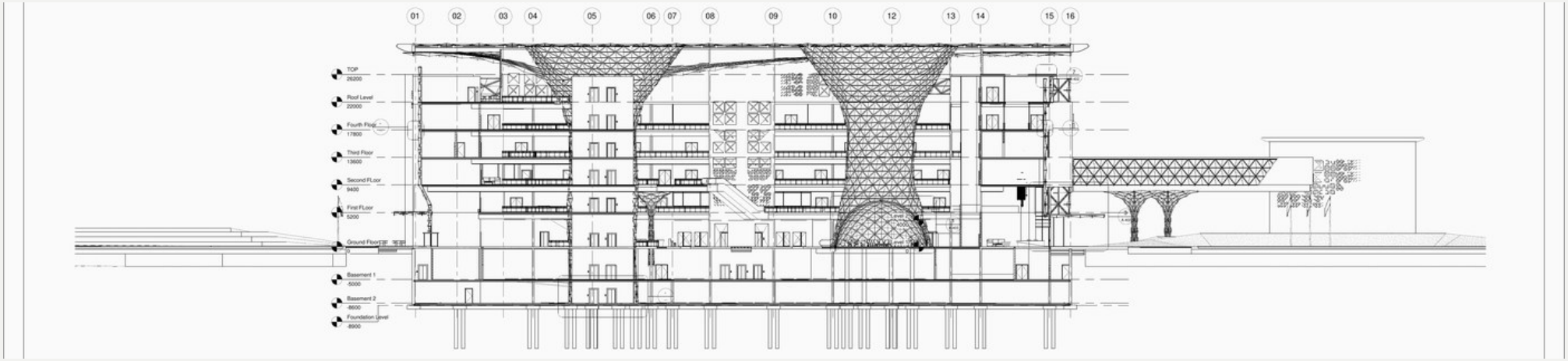


GENERATOR → ITERATION.

MOVEMENT BECAME GEOMETRY.

One generator, scaled and repeated across five states — from the structural trees that carry the roof down to the facade, which becomes a graded shading system rather than a wall with shading attached.

GENERATOR	FRACTAL, FIVE STATES
CONSEQUENCE	SHADE PRODUCED BY STRUCTURE



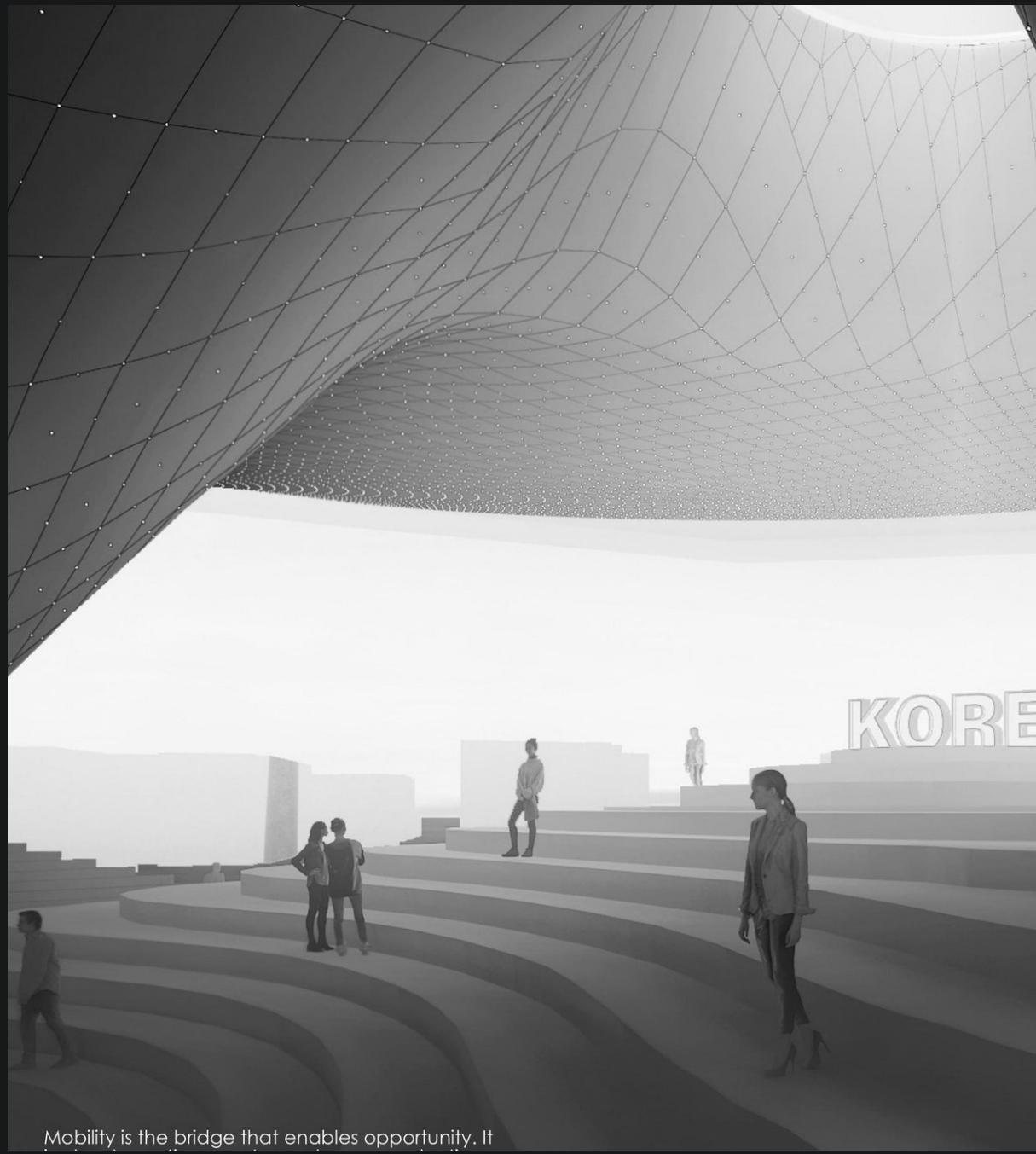
SPACE — SECTION B-B · 1:200.

THE HYPERLEDGER

REPUBLIC OF KOREA PAVILION · EXPO 2020 DUBAI

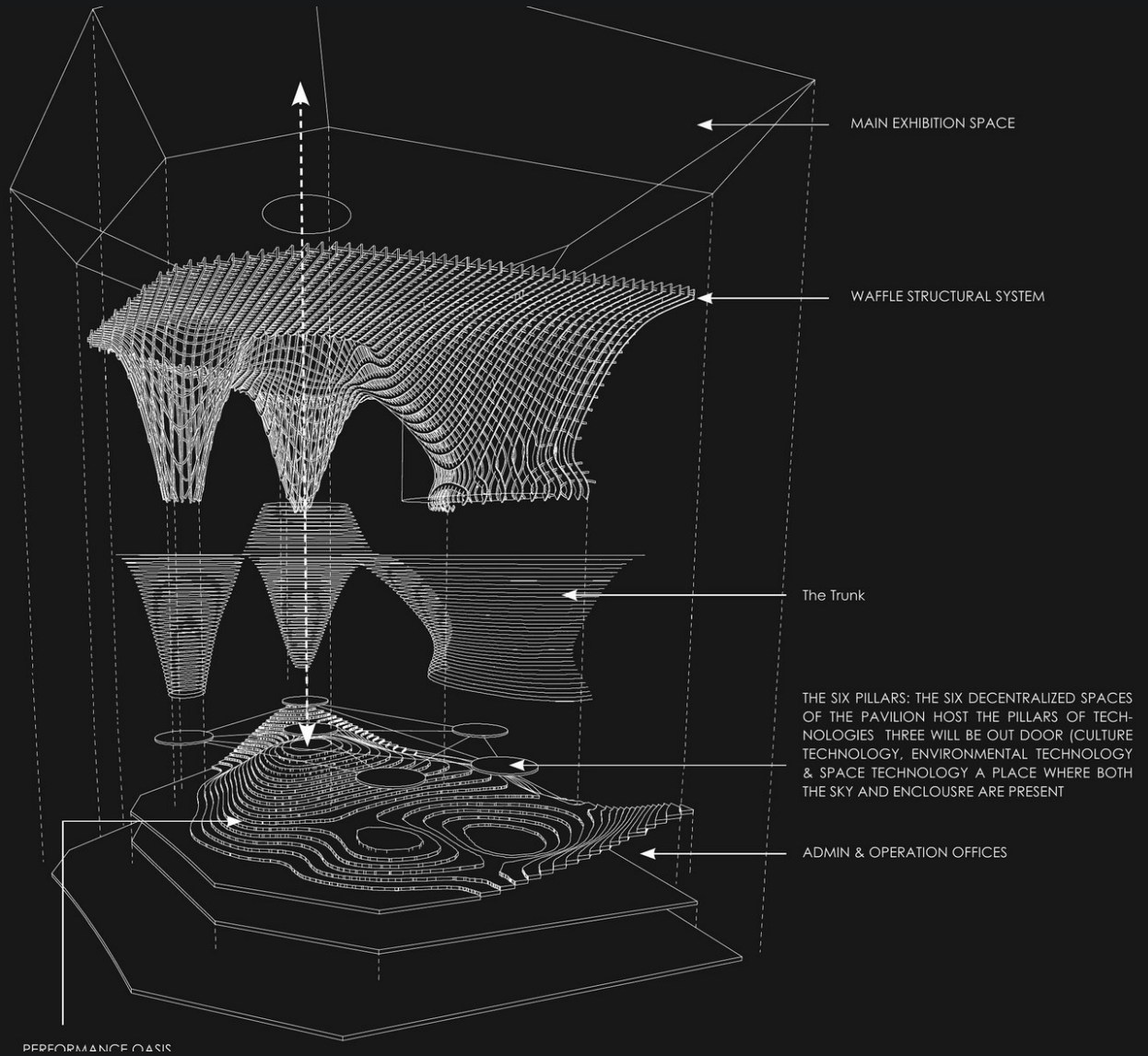
A pavilion organised like a network rather than a building. The brief was Korea's vision of mobility; the answer was the distributed ledger — centralised, then decentralised, then distributed, drawn first as urban cells and then built as rooms.

STATUS	COMPETITION ENTRY
LOCATION	MOBILITY DISTRICT, EXPO 2020 DUBAI
STUDIO	VERFORM



Mobility is the bridge that enables opportunity. It

FIG. 09 — STRUCTURE



CENTRALISED → DECENTRALISED → DISTRIBUTED

Six decentralised spaces carry the six pillars of Korean technology, three left open to the sky, gathered around a Performance Oasis shaded by intersected trunks rising into a waffle structure.



FLUX-SCAPE

THE UAE / A CROSSROADS IN TRANSITION

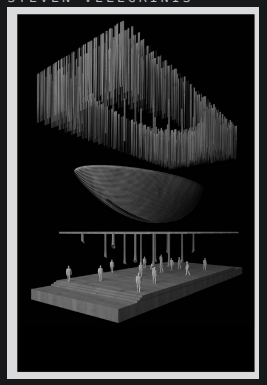
A pavilion proposed not as an exhibition but as a performance: a nation shown in a state of constant change rather than fixed in a moment. Seven columns printed from the soil of seven emirates, built and rebuilt; a suspended volume carrying the stories of the people who made the country.

ARCHITECTS

DIMA FARAJ
ISLAM EL MASHTOOLY
MOUAZ ABOUZAID
STEVEN VELEGRINIS

CATEGORY PROFESSIONAL WORK
VENUE UAE NATIONAL PAVILION
LA BIENNALE DI VENEZIA

DESIGN YEAR 2018 · PROPOSED FOR
LA BIENNALE DI VENEZIA 2020



SHELL · POD · SEVEN PILLARS.

SELECTED ARCHITECTURE · DELIVERY

QANAWAT HQ

CORPORATE HEADQUARTERS



ORIS CLINIC

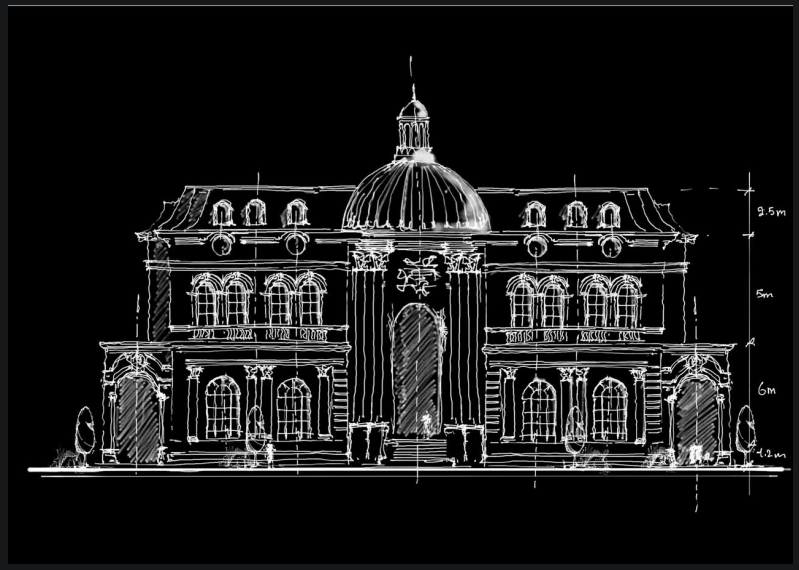
HEALTHCARE

STATUS BUILT

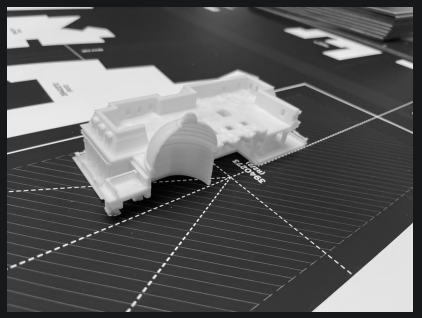
PROPOSALS BECOME BUILDINGS.

Two completed works in two typologies — a headquarters and a clinic. Everything else in this chapter argues how the work is made; this spread records that it gets finished.

SELECTED ARCHITECTURE · CRAFT AND CULTURE



CHÂTEAU DE LA COUR — HAND ELEVATION



THE SAME DRAWING, PRINTED.



BARJEEL ART MUSEUM

Two registers the studio also works in: the drawn and the cultural. A classical residential composition set out by hand and then printed as a physical model, and a museum competition organised by three axes through the old city — heritage, culture and knowledge, ambition.

BARJEEL ART MUSEUM

CATEGORY	PROFESSIONAL WORK · YEAR 2019
ARCHITECTS	DIMA FARAJ · MOUAZ ABOUZAID
AWARD	TAMAYOUZ AWARD 2019 — SHORT-LISTED

DUBAI 2021 · PRIVATE RESIDENCE · VERFORM DESIGN STUDIO



AIRPORT DEVELOPMENT

DUBAI INTERNATIONAL · AL MAKTOUM INTERNATIONAL

I DID NOT MOVE FROM ARCHITECTURE INTO AVIATION. I FOUND THAT AIRPORTS ARE ARCHITECTURE AT THE SCALE OF A CITY.

An airport is the largest instrument a society builds for handling people it does not know. Everything in it is a decision about how a stranger will move: where they are slowed, where they are released, what they can see from where they stand, how long they will wait and whether they know it.

Working inside Dubai's airport programme meant designing where architecture is inseparable from security, logistics and regulation. It is an unusually strict education.

ROLE	ARCHITECT
UNIT	DEVELOPMENT, MASTER PLANNING & ENGINEERING
PERIOD	2016 – 2017 · PLACEMENTS 2013 · 2014
EMPLOYMENT	DUBAI AVIATION ENGINEERING PROJECTS

SCOPE

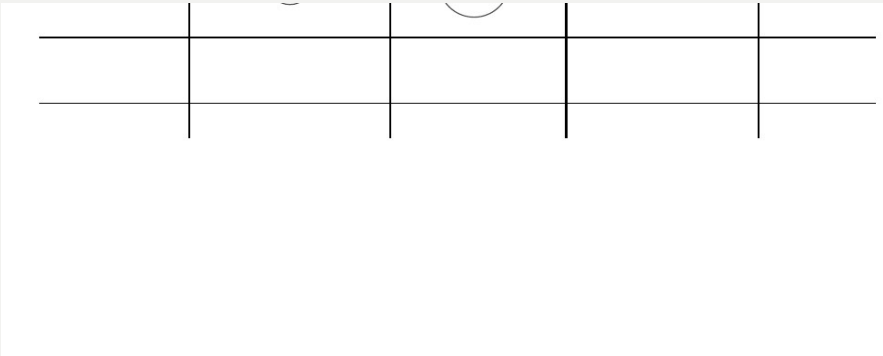
Concourse modification

Passenger terminal building extension

Passenger processing environments

Building information modelling coordination

ABSTRACT MOVEMENT DIAGRAM — ORIGINAL.



ARRIVE PROCESS WAIT BOARD

BANDS	FLOW — WIDTH IS VOLUME
CIRCLES	DWELL TIME — RADIUS IS MINUTES HELD
VERTICALS	THRESHOLD — A DECISION MADE FOR A STRANGER

PROJECT-SPECIFIC DETAIL FROM THIS PERIOD IS SUBJECT TO CONFIDENTIALITY AND IS DESCRIBED IN GENERAL TERMS. NO PROJECT DOCUMENTATION, DRAWINGS OR CONTEXT PHOTOGRAPHY ARE REPRODUCED.

FLOW
WAYFINDING
DWELL TIME
THRESHOLD

→ MOBILITY

→ LEGIBILITY

→ PUBLIC REALM

→ CONNECTIVITY

FOUR WORDS LEARNED IN TERMINALS.

EVERYTHING AFTER THIS PAGE ARGUES THEY BELONG IN CITIES.

URBAN INTELLIGENCE · TRANSLATION

THE TERMINAL IS A CITY REHEARSED AT SMALL SCALE.

AIRPORT	CITY
FLOW	MOBILITY
WAYFINDING	LEGIBILITY
DWELL TIME	PUBLIC REALM
THRESHOLD	CONNECTIVITY

ONE VOCABULARY · TWO SCALES

The four words learned in terminals are not airport words. They are urban ones, tested under the strictest conditions architecture offers: a building where a stranger must find their way in minutes, under regulation, without asking.

What follows applies them at two radii. Baghdad organises fifteen neighbourhoods, a green core and a water network into a district. X-Space takes a kilometre of highway and returns it to people as public ground.

URBAN THINKING → MASTER PLANNING → URBAN REGENERATION



BAGHDAD

INTERNATIONAL GOLF CLUB & RESORT

The framework begins with an anatomy. If Baghdad is the body, the resort is the heart; the course and its canals are the artery. It is not decoration — the diagram determines where water runs, where the green core sits, and how fifteen neighbourhoods are held around it.

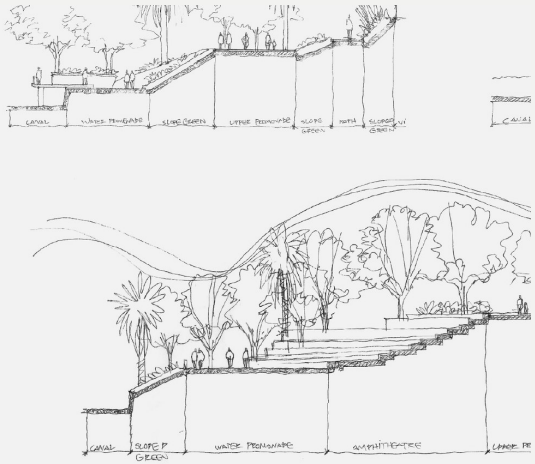
A city of peace re-imagined: a resort that is also a district, equal parts sanctuary and city majlis.

URBAN PLANNING · VERFORM TEAM

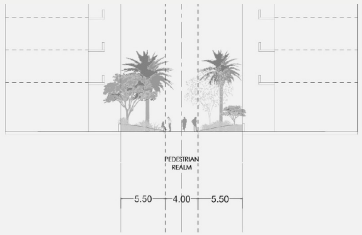
YEAR	2022
CLIENT	EAGLE HILLS
WITH	DESIGN & MORE INTERNATIONAL · EGGINK · LOBB + PARTNERS

The city is not a larger building. It is a larger set of relationships.

MASTER PLANNING · FRAMEWORK



WATER AND LANDSCAPE — LONGITUDINAL SECTION.





CLIMATE RESPONSE — STREET SECTION.

MASTERPLANNING INTELLIGENCE.

The framework begins with an anatomy. If Baghdad is the body, the resort is the heart; the course and its canals are the artery. The diagram determines where water runs, where the green core sits, and how the neighbourhoods are held around it.

NEIGHBOURHOOD STRUCTURE	FIFTEEN, HELD AROUND A CENTRAL GREEN HEART
GREEN CORE	THE HEART KEPT OPEN, NOT BUILT OVER
WATER NETWORK	CANALS AS ARTERY — THE PLAN FOLLOWS THE WATER
LANDSCAPE & CLIMATE	SHADE STRATEGY SET BEFORE BUILT FORM
WALKABILITY	ALLEYS AND PEDESTRIAN ROUTES AS PRIMARY NETWORK
CONNECTIVITY	A RESORT THAT IS ALSO A DISTRICT

STAGE PRECONCEPT MASTERPLAN FRAMEWORK · CLIENT EAGLE HILLS · YEAR 2022

QUANTITATIVE FIGURES OMITTED RATHER THAN ESTIMATED.

X-SPACE

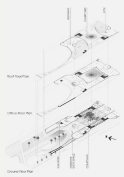
URBAN FABRIC REGENERATION

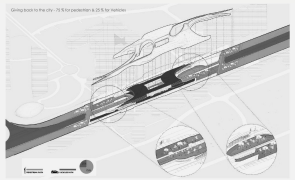
Sheikh Zayed Road is the spine of Dubai and, for the length of the city, its wall. It carries the country north to south and divides it east to west.

X-Space takes one kilometre of it and turns it over. The road is carried in tunnel. Above it lies continuous public ground — gardens, watercourses and paths — and above that an upper zone of offices, retail, food and fitness. The scheme links two Metro stations and, at its extremities, the Burj Khalifa and the Museum of the Future.

CO-AUTHORED WITH MOUAZ ABOUZAID · VERFORM

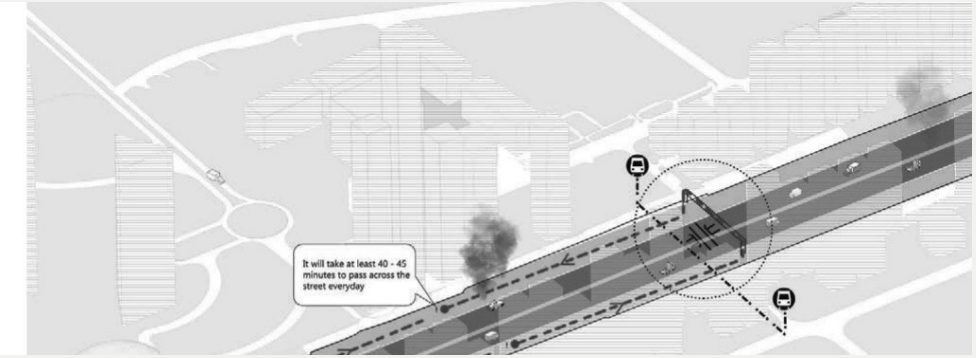
STATUS	UNBUILT · YEAR 2019
LOCATION	SHEIKH ZAYED ROAD, DUBAI
CLIENT	ROADS AND TRANSPORT AUTHORITY · AREA 60,000 SQ M





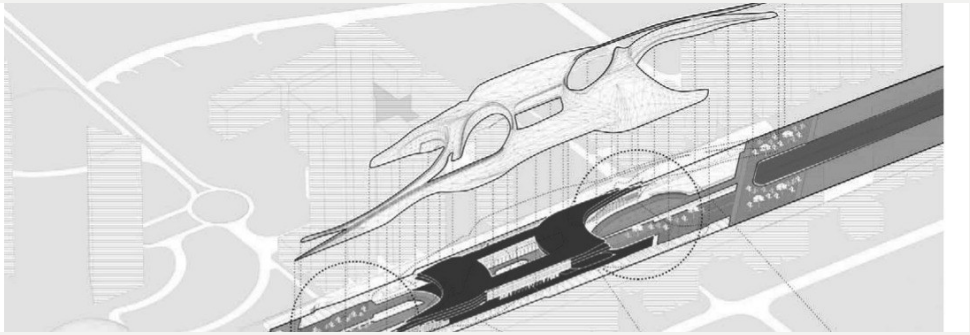
THE ROAD MOVES BELOW.
SPACE REALLOCATED TO PEOPLE.

URBAN REGENERATION · REALLOCATION OF ROAD SPACE



BEFORE — EXISTING SECTION.

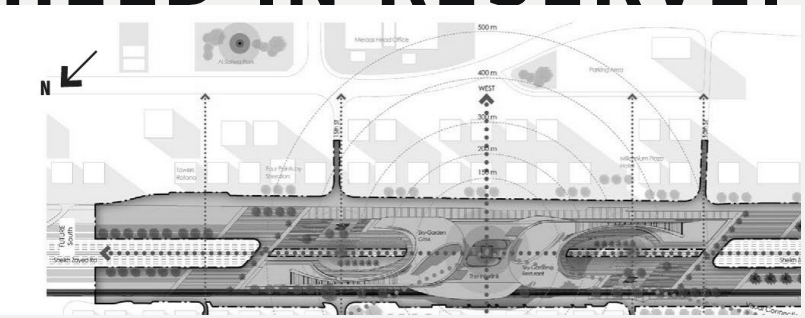
VEHICLES 90 · PEOPLE 10



AFTER — PROPOSED SECTION.

VEHICLES 25 · PEOPLE 75

ROAD SPACE IS PUBLIC SPACE HELD IN RESERVE.



The intervention is not a building placed beside a highway. It is a redistribution: the road carried in tunnel, the surface returned as continuous public ground, and an upper level of workplace, retail and fitness above it.

Pedestrian priority, cycle routes, two Metro stations linked end to end, and sightlines held to the Burj Khalifa at one extremity and the Museum of the Future at the other.

CONNECTIVITY	TWO METRO STATIONS LINKED
PUBLIC REALM	ONE KILOMETRE, WALKABLE END TO END
MOBILITY	CYCLE PATHS · MASS TRANSIT · LIGHT VEHICLES
LANDSCAPE	GARDENS AND WATERCOURSES ON THE RECOVERED GROUND

CO-AUTHORED WITH MOUAZ ABOUZAID · VERFORM

THE ROOF BECOMES AN ACCESSIBLE STAGE.

At ground the corridor is no longer a route between places but a place in itself — gardens, watercourses, workspace and retail along a kilometre that people can walk end to end.

The form derives from the movement of dunes across paved roads: sand crossing the highway as if the desert were making a point about who the ground belongs to.



REACTION OF NATURE.

SAND CROSSING A THRESHOLD AND FILLING A ROOM.

2023 EMIRATES WOMEN AWARD — ENTREPRENEUR AWARD WINNER
DUBAI QUALITY GROUP

2019 **WAFX AWARDS — OVERALL WINNER, AND WINNER, SMART CITIES CATEGORY**
WORLD ARCHITECTURE FESTIVAL, AMSTERDAM · X-SPACE

2019 TAMAYOUZ AWARD — SHORT-LISTED
BARJEEL ART MUSEUM

2016 CHAIRMAN AWARD · AMERICAN UNIVERSITY IN DUBAI
AL MADHEEF

2020 UAE ASTRONAUT PROGRAMME — SHORTLISTED, ROUND TWO

2026 ALHASBAH AWARD FOR INSPIRING WOMEN · HONOUREE

SELECTED MEDIA

CNN STYLE · ARCHDAILY · AD MIDDLE EAST
ARCHITECTS DATAFILE · DRIVEN MAGAZINE
DUBAI TV · MBC · KHALEEJ TIMES

LECTURE / PANEL THEMES

AIRPORTS AS CITIES · AVIATION + ARCHITECTURE · SMART CITIES & URBAN REGENERATION · DESIGNING FOR MOVEMENT · AIRPORT → SPACEPORT · WOMEN IN DESIGN & AVIATION · INTERDISCIPLINARY PRACTICE

MEMBERSHIPS

ASSOCIATE AIA
AIAA

ACADEMIC & PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

ARCHITECTURE · AVIATION · CITIES · RESEARCH

Selected participation in academic conversations, industry panels and public forums exploring architecture, aviation, urban systems and future cities.

AMERICAN UNIVERSITY IN DUBAI
C-SUITE CONNECT · ALUMNI LEADERS IN ACTION · PANEL

AUD SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE, ART & DESIGN
GRID WEBINAR SERIES · A CONVERSATION WITH AN EMIRATI ENTREPRENEUR

AWE · U.S. MISSION UAE
DIALOGUE · ARCHITECTURE, ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND INTERDISCIPLINARY PRACTICE

Open to academic collaboration, guest lectures, design juries and interdisciplinary panels.



WORLD ARCHITECTURE FESTIVAL, AMSTERDAM
WAFX 2019 · X-SPACE · WITH MOUAZ ABOUZAID

RESEARCH



AL MAKTOUM INTERNATIONAL · DUBAI WORLD CENTRAL

THE SUBJECT OF THE RESEARCH IS ALSO THE SUBJECT OF THE ARCHITECTURE.

THE SAME QUESTION, ASKED MORE SLOWLY.

An airport is a system before it is a building: safety regulation, ground movement, passenger processing and the distances between people and machines. The research studies those systems directly, at the scale the architecture already works in.

THE MASTER'S ASKED WHAT AN AIRPORT COULD BECOME.
THE PHD ASKS WHAT AVIATION ITSELF MUST BECOME NEXT.

RESEARCH · AIRPORT SYSTEMS · INNOVATION · SUSTAINABILITY · STRATEGY · LEADERSHIP

AVIATION AS A FIELD OF RESEARCH

MSC AVIATION SAFETY · WITH MERIT

EMIRATES AVIATION UNIVERSITY / COVENTRY UNIVERSITY · 2021–2022

The Master's marked a shift from designing airport environments to questioning the systems behind them. My research examined the suitability of Al Maktoum International Airport as a potential spaceport — testing how existing aviation infrastructure, safety systems and operations might support a new generation of movement.

PHD IN AVIATION MANAGEMENT

EMIRATES AVIATION UNIVERSITY · 2026–PRESENT

The doctoral studies expand that enquiry from infrastructure to the wider systems shaping aviation: operations, strategy, technology, innovation, sustainability, leadership and decision-making.

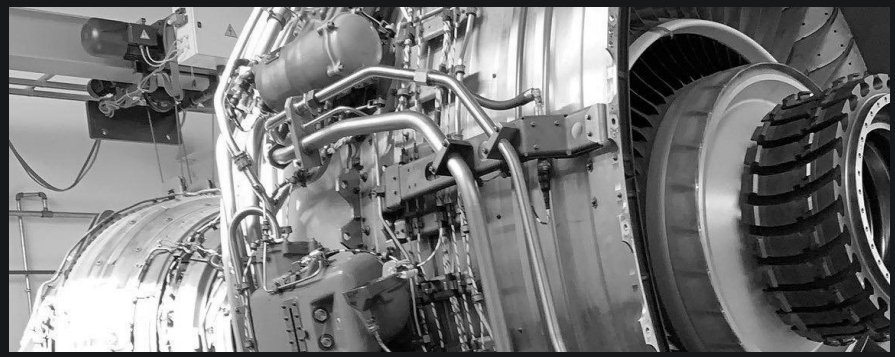
SPACEPORT

AL MAKTOUM INTERNATIONAL, EVALUATED AS A SPACEPORT

The last building on the ground is also the first building of what follows. The dissertation asks what changes when the vehicle leaves the atmosphere: safety regulation, ground handling, and the distance held between a person and the machine that carries them.

It is the same threshold problem, moved outward. Everything before this page treats the ground as given. Everything after it does not.

EVERY ONE OF THESE IS A THRESHOLD.
ARCHITECTURE HAS LONG DESIGNED THE FIRST FOUR.
IT IS ONLY BEGINNING TO DESIGN BEYOND THEM.



ENGINE LABORATORY · AVIATION SYSTEMS RESEARCH

THE GROUND IS NOT THE LIMIT OF THE SITE

The research is not a second career running alongside the first. It is the same question asked more slowly: what governs the movement of people through the environments we build for them, and who decides.

Three lines run forward. The airport as a civic form rather than transport equipment — the largest public room most people will ever stand in, and one almost never discussed as architecture. Mobility as urban structure. And what architecture becomes when the ground, the atmosphere and gravity are design variables rather than given conditions.

DIMA FARAJ

ARCHITECT

ARCHITECTURE · AVIATION · URBAN DESIGN · RESEARCH

THE SCALE CHANGES. THE QUESTION CONTINUES.

PROJECTS · RESEARCH · ACADEMIC COLLABORATION · LECTURES · PANELS

DUBAI, UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

DIMA.FARAJ@HOTMAIL.COM

X-SPACE CO-AUTHORED WITH MOUAZ ABOUZAID. SELECTED ARCHITECTURE IS VERFORM PRACTICE WORK; NO INDIVIDUAL AUTHORSHIP IS CLAIMED. WORK UNDERTAKEN AT DUBAI AVIATION ENGINEERING PROJECTS IS DESCRIBED IN GENERAL TERMS UNDER CONFIDENTIALITY.