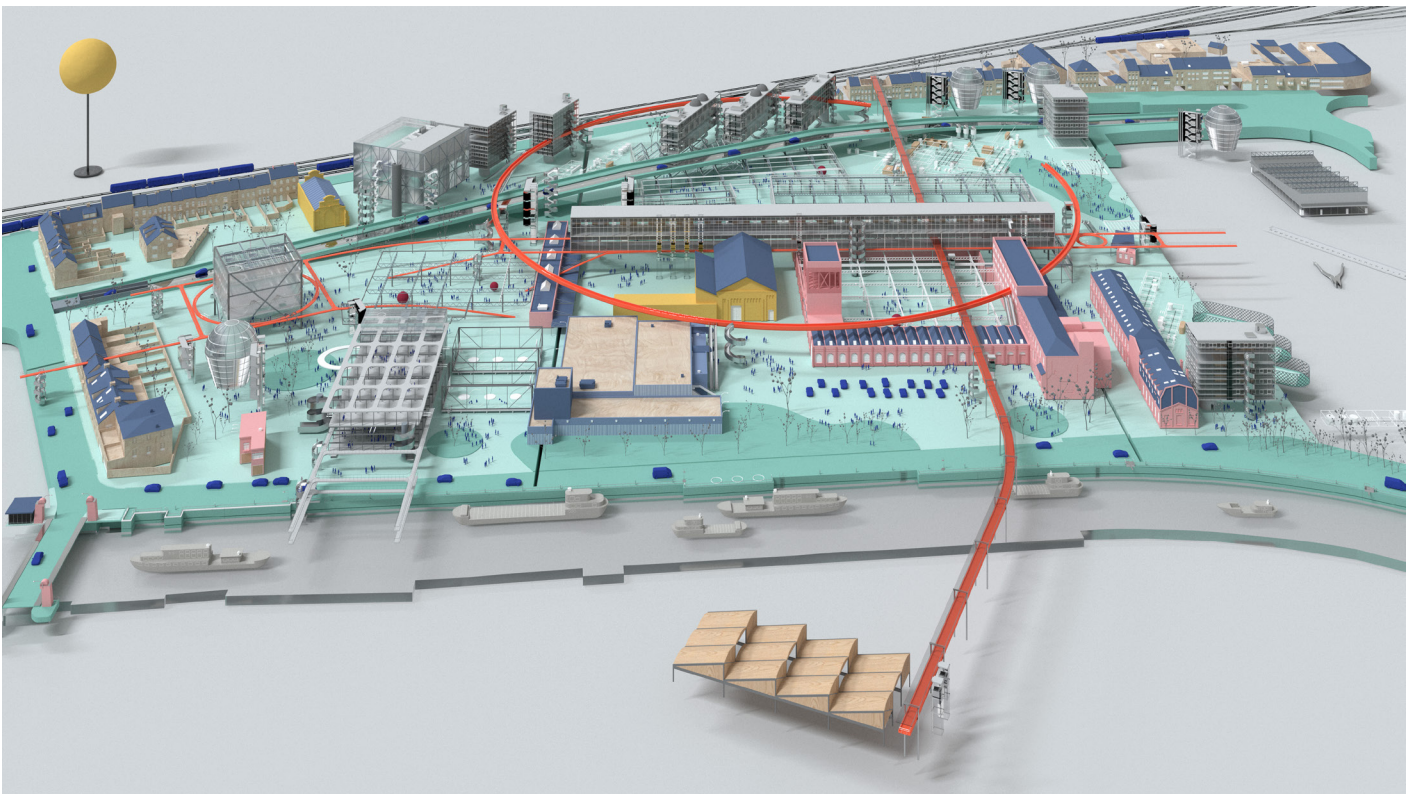


# a hard rain's a-gonna fall



## INTRODUCTION

The strict zoning of urban programs, which for decades has governed the design of the modern city, has resulted in a territorial inequality between residential towns on the periphery of bigger urban agglomerations and dense work centers at the main capitals. Generating a unilateral dependence between them and causing the shortage of large metropolitan areas due to their deficit of mixed programs.

Consequently, the public and private spheres have been held captive in watertight enclosures.

Faced with this inequality, a hybridization of Life and Work is proposed. A new metropolitan paradigm which would be not simply urban, but social, in which new models of the Life / Work duo allow the balanced coexistence of both. A mixed territorial structure that integrates new urban tools such as teleworking, co-workings and co-living to generate innovative, more heterogeneous forms of metropolitanism.

## TOWARDS LIQUID LABOR

In the contemporary city, Home and Labor are not anymore opposed realms but merged realities. They are just radicalized terms of a much more blurred reality. Work has been merged with domestic activities as well as domesticity has been released from the home in order to take place within labor spaces.

That primary division of labor space and domestic space that sustained the triumph of modernity during decades has been dismantled by the subsequent releases of the personal computer, the world wide web and the smartphone, among others. The technologies that those devices and systems involve have constructed a change in the medium by which publicness is constructed in the contemporary society.

With the new medium a new notion of publicness is designed as well as new societies. That medium has collaborated to blur the lines that distinguished work spaces from those of the daily domestic activities. While work and home have been opposite spheres in the modern life, in the contemporary city, digital technologies have generated a medium that constantly mediates between both, establishing much more complex situations and conditions where new publicness is achieved and performed.

Labor is not anymore developed uniquely within work spaces. As consequence, domesticity is not anymore solely rendered within the home, nor urbanism is exclusively developed in the streets. Both of them have escaped the restricted boundaries that Modernity gave them in order to define a whole series of in-between spaces that are shaping the economical, political and cultural spheres of our societies.

Everyday, more and more, we have to be equipped with the tools and strategies that would help us to navigate within those uncertain blurred territories.

## PROSUMPTION

Prosumption appears as an activity that hybridizes Production and Consumption, putting both concepts in crisis as antagonistic states.

At Flanders, practices such as digital manufacturing, the distribution and use of urban gardens, the production of renewable energies or raising awareness of DIY are just a few examples of activities well rooted in the culture of its citizens. Flanders region has been a pioneer worldwide in proposing and promoting this type of alternative to conventional consumption patterns.

The residual spaces of the city, the urban islands that the infrastructure discards between neighborhoods or the large obsolete and abandoned spaces, can now acquire relevant positions in an urban network connected with many other sites. In such a way that the Work not only generates products of value, but also generates places of value, societies of value.

The activation of the whole study site of De Kaaien is achieved through three main urban strategies that operate at three scales

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## 1 · Logistic's Trigger ·

### INFRASTRUCTURAL SCALE

Currently, Flanders presents an unequal distribution of its industries that, condensed in large cores distanced from the metropolitan areas, increase the tension and inequality between capital cities and province cities.

For De Kaaien we propose a gradual transition towards Industries 4.0, circularity and renewable energies. Reaching a territorial model that explodes the large industrial, logistics and energetic hubs and disperses them throughout the territory in multiple small local industries and integrated energy productions, as well as ecologically responsible.

This new model has a reduced impact on the territory and society, so it can be organically integrated into metropolitan and natural areas. Discarding the now obsolete conventional model that, due to its broad aggressive footprint, prevented the coexistence of industry and society, of energy and nature.

Faced with a centralized and hierarchical conception of the logistics infrastructure, here we are proposing a migration towards an Open Network model: decentralized and democratic. Instead of emphasizing more and more the current model, which orbits around big logistic cores, we propose a series of dispersed nodes. A constellation of small Logistic, Industrial and Transportation Hubs that, democratically distributed over the territory, help to homogenize the great infrastructural inequalities between metropolitan and peripheral areas. According to this model, center and periphery would become obsolete concepts since, like a neural network, all points are equally accessible and are perfectly connected with the others. For this, the existing Hard Infrastructures (conventional train and car owned) are implemented with new models of Smart-Mobilities and Soft Infrastructures. Consequently single family homes or collective housing are not anymore opposed realms. They are not anymore irreconcilable situations. Through two different types of formalization, the same architectural strategy allows for the creation of a new type of domesticity where independence and community are no longer incompatible, but rather coexist in the same architecture, within the two new models proposed for the sites.

## 2 · Ecological Distributor ·

### ENVIRONMENTAL SCALE

The Dender river is not a mere waterway but an active distributor of ecologies and programs

The river will no longer be a differentiated and secluded element, rather, it will integrate and hybridize with the architectures, ecologies and urbanisms of the project.

The Render river becomes an architectural artifact, a medium for the coordination of many sites, of many programs and events. Conceiving the river as an architectural element, allows to understand that Urbanism and Nature will now be built as simultaneous elements of the same ecological development strategy. Under this paradigm, Nature is no longer a savage environment from which urban settlements differ. Rather, it is multiplied into innumerable "natures", which are no longer discovered but built, which are no longer found but created, which are no longer traversed but narrated

## 3 · Programmatic Activator ·

### SOCIAL SCALE

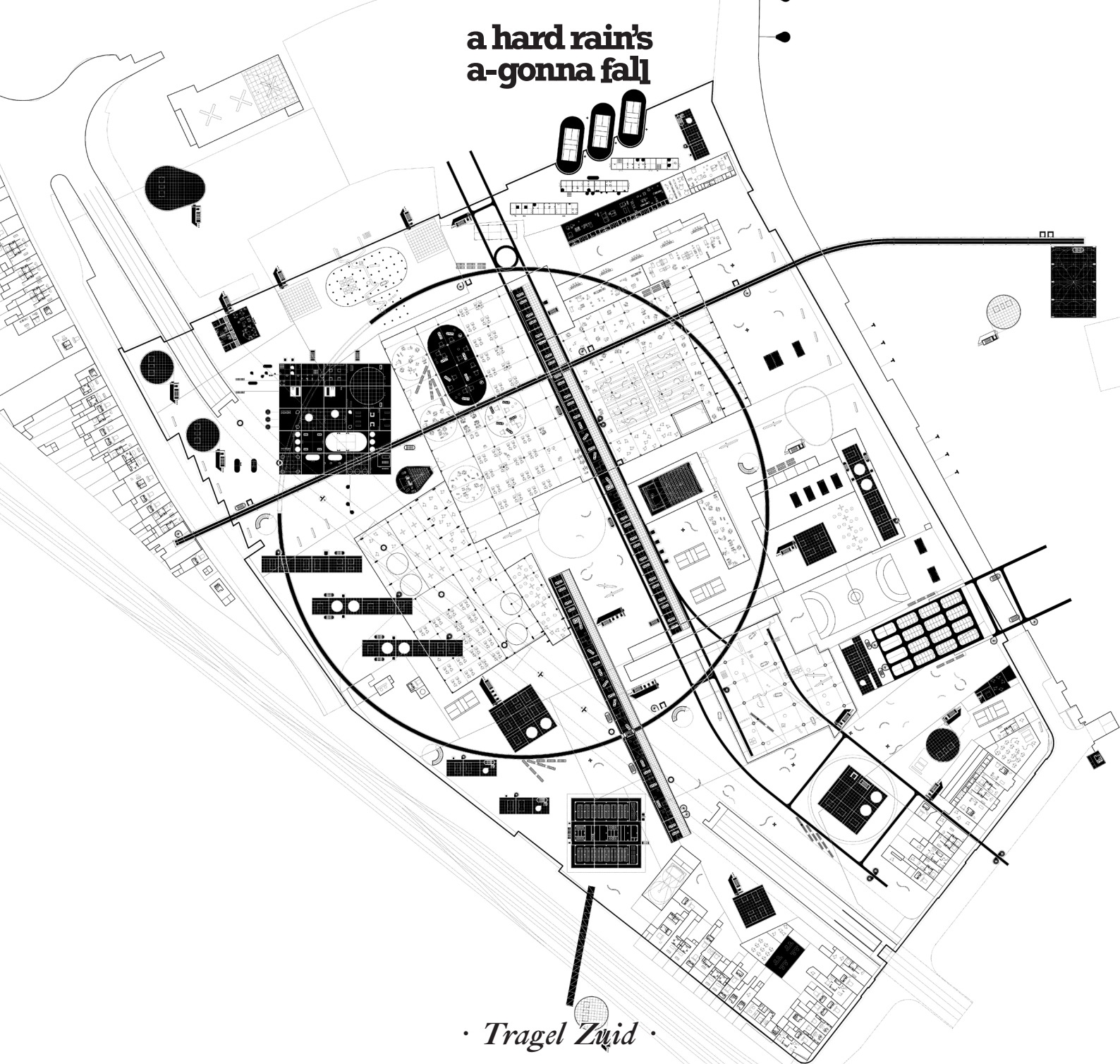
Tragel Zuid becomes a node from which other un-programmed spaces could be activated, appropriated and temporarily used for cultural production. These productive un-programmed spaces are urban islands for metropolitan opportunities to arise.

Aalst is a town full of contradictions that coexist perfectly. A metropolis in which the urban form is could be approached from the informal. Planning can be re-invented around a very particular urban condition: deliberately un-programming. The post-industrial architectures that characterize the urban fabric of Flanders have the potential to function as Urban Pockets where unexpected activities happened. Building the metropolitan diversity, heterogeneity and hybridization that characterize the region.

De Kaaien is a potential prototype for such a paradigm shift, defining a Urbanism of Convergence'



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· *Trigel Zuid* ·

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## FROM 'BUILDING' A CONTEXT TO 'CURATING' A CONTEXT

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Instead of defining a rigid masterplan for the whole site, the project embraces time as an architectural tool. Trigel Zuid is coordinated and projected over time, using fading and overlapping as urban mechanisms that will define the singularity of the project.

The proposed Masterplan for the whole Trigel Zuid area uses two urban tools:

1- On the one hand, a series of Urban and Architectural Artifacts. They are activators and catalyzers of contexts. They are devices that would trigger certain urban conditions to take place.

These artifacts are classified in three categories, depending on their function:

A- Connection Elements: such as new roads, pedestrian pathways, bridges, and bicycle tracks.

B- Activation Devices: pavilions, kiosks, cultural buildings, pop-up markets, sport facilities and urban elements.

C- Cohesion Spaces: such as plazas, esplanades and almost-domestic alleys.

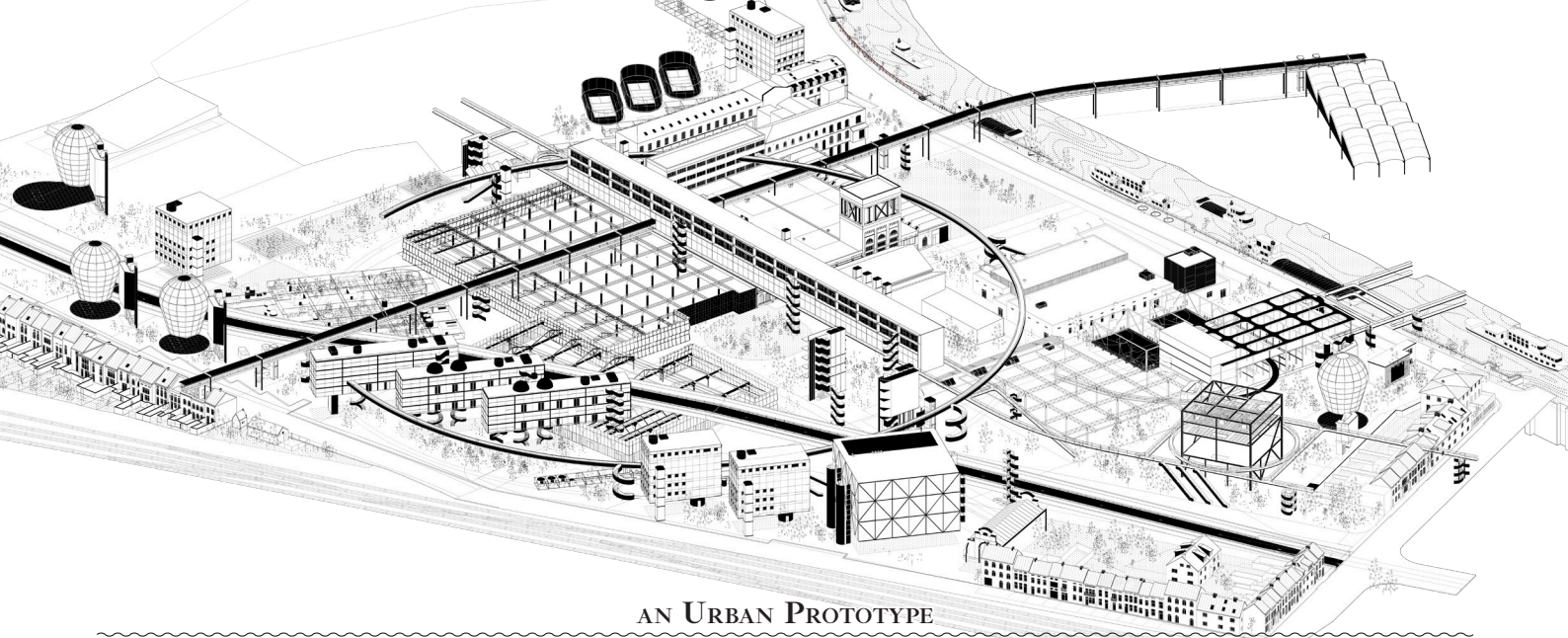
2- On the other hand, a series of 'Regeneration Strategies'. They stand as urban protocols of action over concrete zones and specific buildings. They aim to reactivate areas and to change the ethos of unused buffer zones.

A- Protocols of action over specific areas. The masterplan defines the distribution of ecologies, energies, atmospheres as well as new pavements.

B- Protocols of action over Singular Pieces. Historical and cultural singular architectural pieces would be reactivated and incorporated to the masterplan with a calendar of updated uses.

At the beginning of the whole process strategies of appropriation would be used, defining the modes of occupation by which architectures would be used by local collectives. On the long run, architectural pieces would fill up this process, assigning certain more permanent uses to specific areas.

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## AN URBAN PROTOTYPE

The project for Trigel Zuid is the first step of this bigger strategical masterplan that involves the whole De Kaaïen area at the riverbanks of the Dender. Trigel Zuid will act as a Urban Prototype for other selected sites among De Kaaïen, serving as a testing ground from where to define a urban model where the dichotomies between work vs. life, and nature vs. urbanity are no longer so rigid, but blurred into intermediate states where the city becomes an ecological active trigger in which leisure and labor overlap in time within the same spaces, contexts and atmospheres.

## ECOLOGICAL INFRASTRUCTURE

The project is not merely achieved through planning strategies and architectural designs. Instead, infrastructural design plays a significant active role. A whole network of irrigation facilities is designed and displayed over the territory of Trigel Zuid, allowing the arise, distribution and fade of ecologies, atmospheres and programs. It functions as a motherboard from which natures could rise. It techniques the ground floor, transforming the horizontal plane into a device for environmental construction, as it provides the water supply tools to build up ecological atmospheres.

## ERASING TRIGELWEG

Regarding the planed road of Trigelweg that will cut the site in two unconnected pieces, the masterplan relies on a very basic architectural gesture: raising the planned road over an elevated structure of pillars that liberate the floor-plan for green, sport, cultural and public spaces. Such an essential action, elevating the street, unfolds a new context of possibilities for urban connections underneath. The whole site becomes pedestrian and public when the border or the road is deleted by raising it up. Once such a barrier is erased, the whole area is ready for a masterplan that would organize and propose a whole series of new uses plus a reactivation and intensification of certain peripheral zones.

## CONSTRUCTION OF ENVIRONMENTS

This project uses the introduction of nature as an architectural design strategy to construct environments.

A precise study of endemic species has been done in order to use the atmospheric implications of them at an architectural scale. Their combination and alternation help to generate controlled atmospheres that define the architectures from a post-ecological paradigm.

Spaces are not anymore exclusively designed through the quantification of their means, but through the atmospheric qualification of them

Within this paradigm, humidity, temperature, atmospheric pressure quality of air or percentage of CO<sub>2</sub> are qualifiers of architecture as much as structures, partition, facilities or circulation have been in a more conventional paradigm.

## TIME LINE

Time plays a significant role in the design of the project. As the whole masterplan is curated on a timeline, using a play script in which several formal and informal interventions are counterpointed through the years. Basically the script is articulated in two main acts.

### ACT 1

#### *1a- Pop Up Architectures*

#### *1b- Protocols of Appropriation*

#### *1c- Ecological Environments*

On the first one a series of informal architectural devices will activate the site, supported by protocols of appropriation of the existing architectures and followed by the insertion of ecologies in the form of vegetation, energies and soft industries.

They serve as contextual testers for the future requirements of the site, before the construction of harder architectural infrastructures

### ACT 2

#### *2a- Architectural Structures*

#### *2b- Atmospherical contexts*

#### *2c- Permanent Uses*

On a second act, more permanent architectures will be given to the programs and uses that are proved to function during the first phase. Accordingly, the natural grown of the introduced ecologies will help to construct a series of atmospherical contexts that will help to accommodate the future uses.