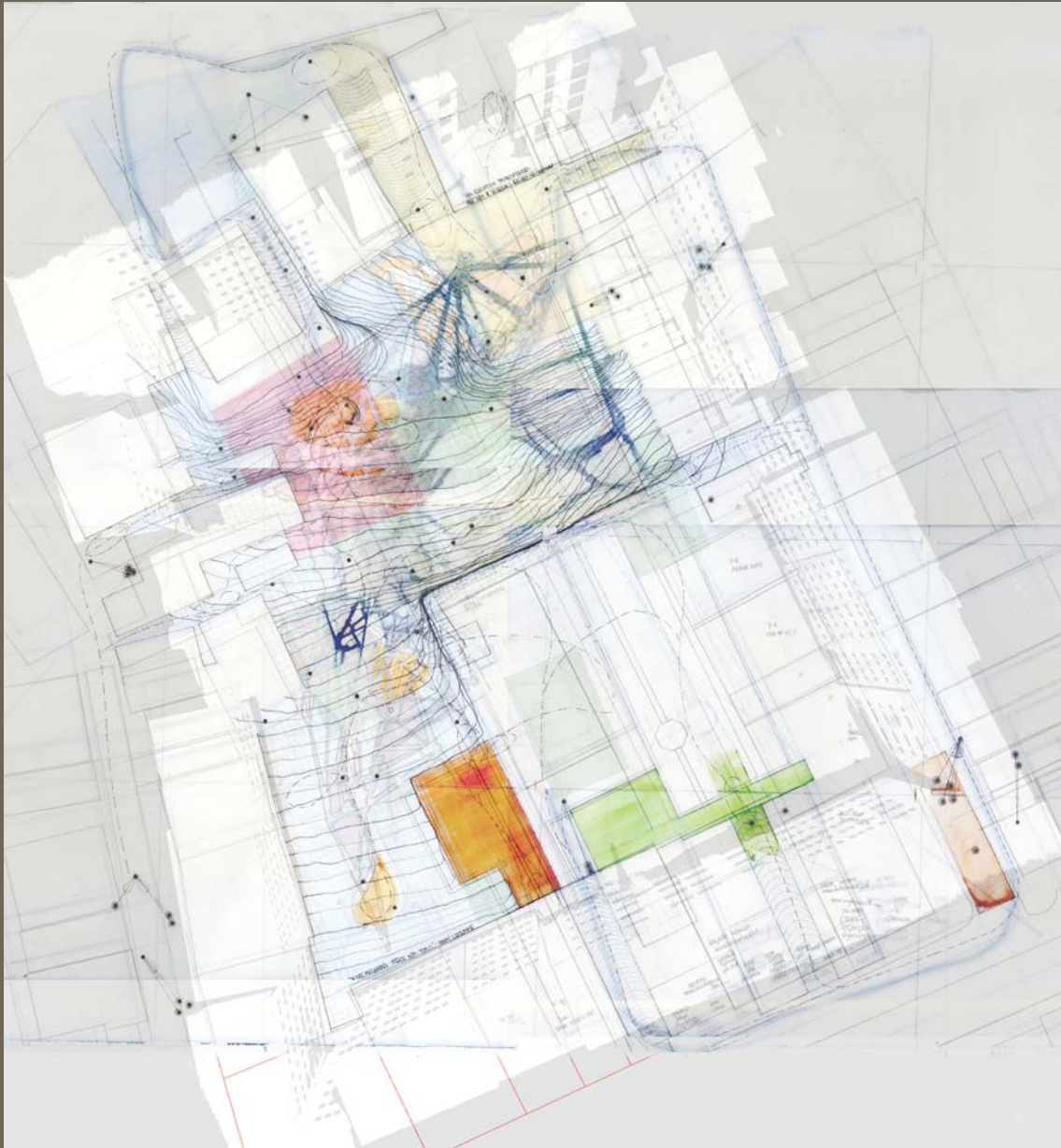


My thesis revolves around the exploration of urban thresholds at a variety of scales. I am proposing an assemblage of parasitic thresholds that respond to a "terrain vague". Ortaköy (a small community in Istanbul) captured my attention with its rich, diverse cultural practices along the city sidewalks. This public realm produces brief relationships between strangers and daily acquaintances. However, these connections unexpectedly fade as the sidewalks veer off the prescriptive pathways towards private territories. Within these exclusive areas, the thresholds start to dissolve into undefined spatial conditions. The terrain vague focused on is a seemingly abandoned courtyard with a variety of topographies. There are towering residential buildings, whose rear windows peer into the rectangular site, delineating the defined boundary edges of the courtyard. How can these uninviting spaces be formally re-appropriated to address this issue of public and private segregation? What potential catalysts in the community are able to transform this dormant landscape? I intend to extend the thresholds of the community into a space that has lost its life, mending damaged connections to the city (plugging a piece of the community back into the main system) in a rhizomic manner where cultural practices develop from main nodal thresholds.

The framework of my research process deals with a strategy of layering, isolating, analyzing, rearranging, and reconstructing material (influenced by Bruno Latour's method of social reassembly and Actor Network Theory). As each piece falls onto the next, a different reading of the environment is made between space and objects. These actions will be dislocated, articulated, delegated, and translated. Following, the "terrain vague" will start to transform with simple tectonic gestures that are grafted onto the existing courtyard edifices. As a result, the cultural practices of the outside community will be regenerated, regrown, and nurtured throughout this incubating, rhizomic landscape. There will be a dialog of actions and responses back and forth between the making of architecture and social responsibility. The courtyard is a place where culture genuinely has consequence.



Layered plan of thresholds and events



Permeating thresholds



Rooftop view of courtyard



Constant reconstruction of a rhizomic threshold

“Stations and paths together form a system. Points and lines, beings and relations. What is interesting might be the construction of the system, the number and disposition of stations and paths.” *

Rhizomic Thresholds

James Rubio
Primary Advisor: Patrick Harrop

* Serres, Michael. The Parasite. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press (1982), p. 10.