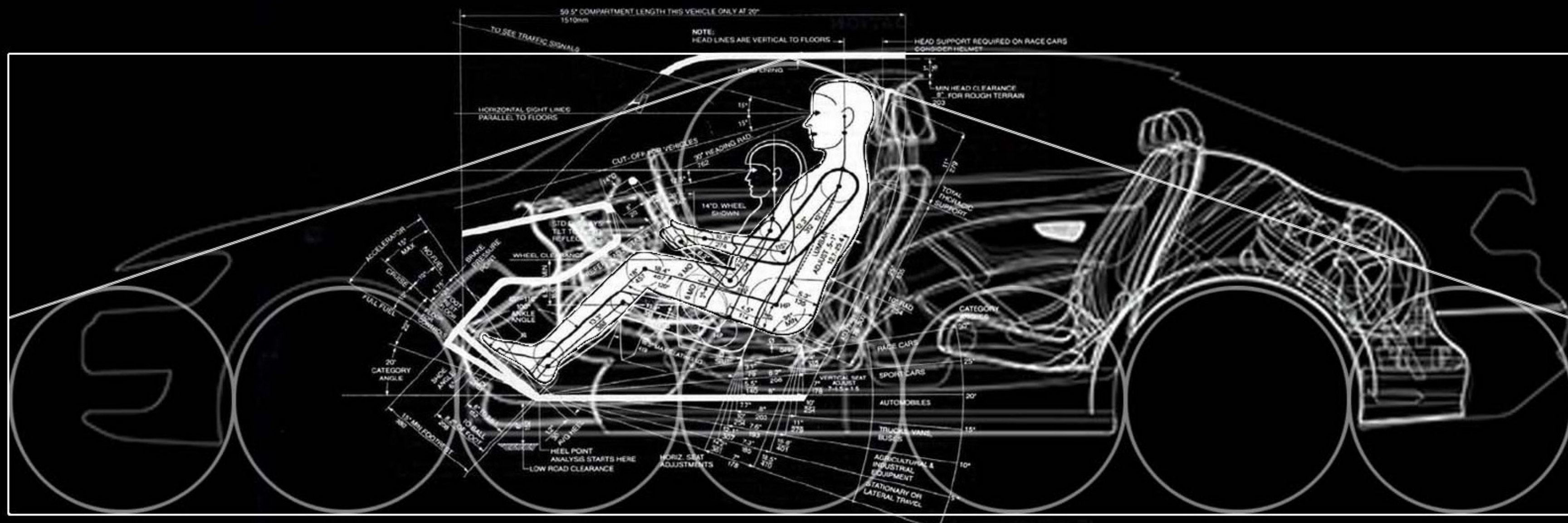


HOMO MOBILIS

The North American evolution of Homo Urbanus



Architectural Association - Diploma 16

Tutors: Ila Beka, Louise Lemoine, Gili Merin

By: Nikola Miloradovic

What is Homo Urbanus?

A location-defined animal.

Homo Urbanus, the captive animal found within the artificial environments of the world, is the focus of this unit. Diploma 16 asks us to look at the city and its habitants through fresh eyes, and adopt a sensitive approach to observing the people around us and what it means to live today. In an attempt to look at our surroundings from a new perspective, we study the species of Homo Urbanus like an ethnographer, recording hidden patterns, tendencies, activities and the everyday experience of the Homo Urbanus. This act reveals that Homo Urbanus is a location-defined animal. Very much responding to its environment and conditions which it is born in, Homo Urbanus usually knows no other reality. Collectively, it acts and reacts to its surroundings, partaking in a grand symphony of the social life of the city. It is then our job to capture this subtle layer of cultural-specificity that exists within this location, as a lasting document highlighting the lived experiences of here and today. Doing so also teaches us a new understanding of the city inhabitant, precisely the user of future spaces and buildings. If we are to become successful architects, designing spaces that are enjoyable, usable, and experienced by many people, we must first understand those people and the environment that we are designing within. For us, Homo Urbanus is a lesson in the true clients of our work, the everyday people. Homo Urbanus is shaped by its environment, it responds to its context and continues civic patterns that have been cemented for hundreds of years before it. Similarly, as students and future-architects, we are shaped by Homo Urbanus, not as a singular entity, but a collective species, dreaming of future spaces fit for enriching social experiences.



Two men are practicing boxing in the Bentway public space found under the Gardiner Expressway. The Homo Urbanus adapts to its environment to facilitate its daily activities, no matter the conditions.



A woman enjoys a smoke in a lake-side public park near the Gardiner Expressway. Homo Urbanus can be found everywhere in the city, especially sunny days and in rare, open spaces dedicated to it.

The Discovery of **Homo Mobilis**

The North-American sub-species of Homo Urbanus.

This project, studying Homo Urbanus in Toronto, Canada, developed over the three terms of the year, and has concluded with the discovery of a local sub-species of Homo Urbanus, to be named Homo Mobilis, or the Mobile Man. After careful observation and consideration of both sides of the automobile topic, that being subjected to its infrastructure and from within the space of the car itself, I came to the realization that a new evolution of Homo Urbanus exists here.

The project starts with a case study in Term 1, the first film titled *Highway Grounds*. At first, looking for this subtle layer of the everyday lived experience, I decided to spend generous time under a major highway found in the core of the city and see how this priority given to the automobile creates spaces completely out of scale to the human body. Walking this space and subjecting myself to its unforgivable brutality, while meeting pandhandlers using this space as their only means for living and working, I could better understand how this dead space creates a scar in the city. To understand how we got here, I first track the history of Toronto, as a parallel stream to that of the invention of the automobile, to highlight how the city's spaces developed alongside the use of the automobile. Then, after spending countless hours under the highway, I put together a document of the space, both as a record of this space if it were to be demolished in the future, and as a loose narrative of its effect on city habitants and the complete lack of usable public space within the centre of the city.

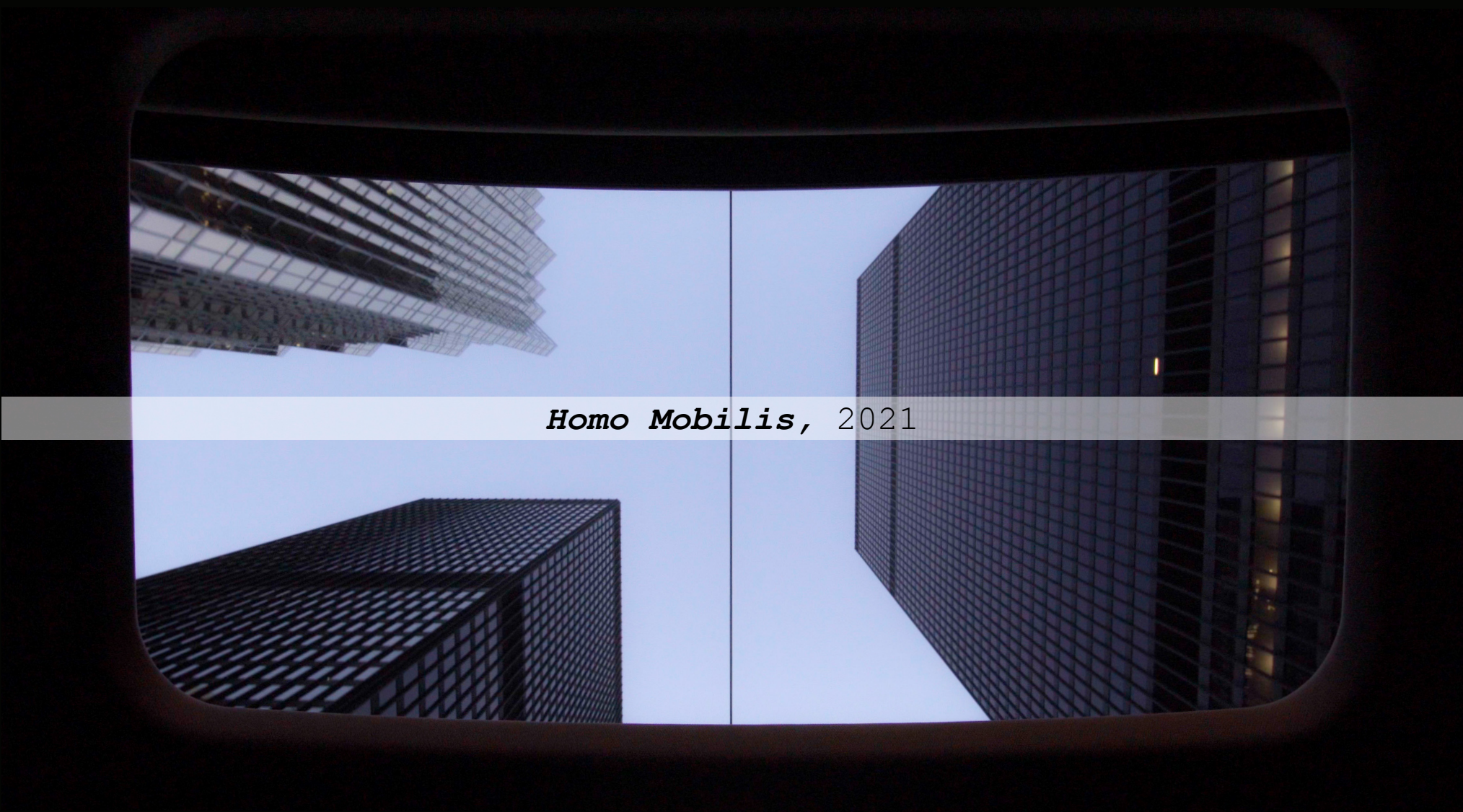
Following Term 1, I felt it necessary to then consider the other side of the

same topic. If this infrastructure can exist and expose such a failure of 20th century city planning, there must be a reason for it. In the same manner, I engage in a participatory act and live the experience of a city inhabitant, but now from within the car. The second and final film, produced over Term 2 and 3, is a first-person account of the strange reality that the city has adopted during the winter pandemic months. This reality is one of full adoption of automobile urbanism. I document the conveniences and activities afforded to the car-users, while the pedestrians slowly become forgotten in the city. I observe the disintegrating social realm of the city, with automobiles acting as mitigating spacesuits, filtering all contact and encounters of the outside world. This part of the project is where the discovery of Homo Mobilis happens. It is the documenting of our current condition of car-dependency within this proto-typical North American city.

The film is structured as a day in the life of Homo Mobilis. It is narrated through a contemplative style of script which evokes the thoughts of this anonymous driver living this privileged life of the Homo Mobilis. It is not fiction, however the realities of today seem to suggest a near-future dystopian city. The final work is this film which aims to capture the experience of today, a snippet of Homo Urbanus reacting and adapting to the conditions of this artificial environment that it finds itself within.



Highway Grounds, 2020



Homo Mobilis, 2021

Automobile Urbanism

The landscape of the automobile navigated daily by Homo Mobilis.

The setting of this project is Toronto Canada. As a typical North American city, Toronto is built around the efficiency of the car, from surrounding highways, elevated downtown freeways, massive parking plazas and sprawling suburbs. Driving is necessity of life here, where many who do not have the luxury of living centrally rely on their automobile to reach all amenities that the city offers. Receiving your driver's license at the age of 16 is a rite of passage, the first step into adulthood and independence. Without a license, you rely on others to transport your body around the city for activities, errands, and social gatherings. As Jean Baudrillard writes

in his book *America*, ""You lose your rights one by one, first your job, then your car. And when your driver's license goes, so does your identity." This is the condition of an average North American. Identity and self-esteem are connected with the automobile. But what does this pattern do to the fabric of the city? The photographs here are my first attempt at understanding this landscape of the automobile and how it has shaped Toronto. We see spaces completely hostile to the human body, while efficiently appropriate for the automobile.



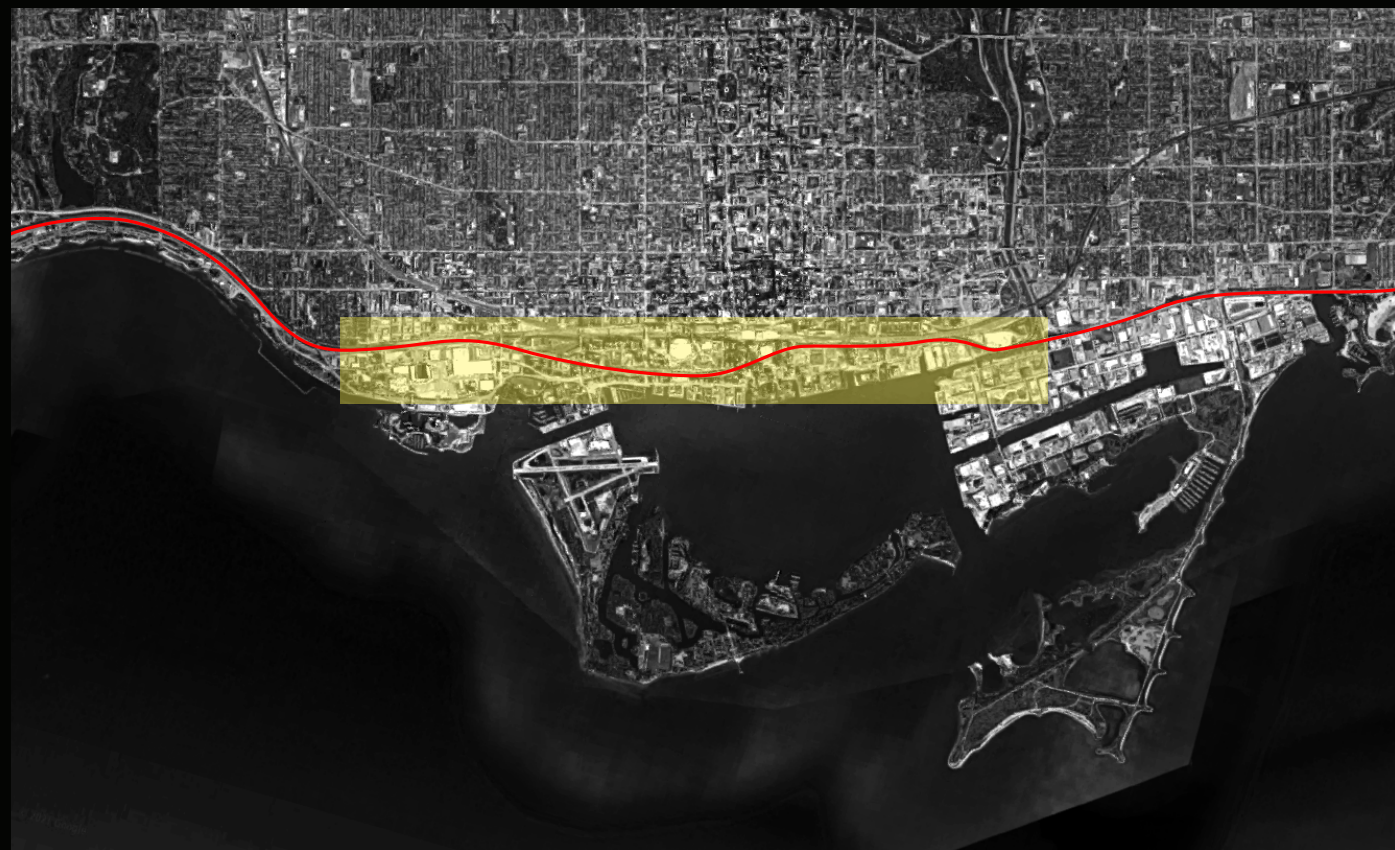
History of the Gardiner Expressway

Although not as well-known as Detroit, Toronto also has a history of automobile production. Early Ford factories and assembly plants sprinkled the province of Ontario, dating back to 1910.

In the mid 20th century, with the popularity of the locally-assembled Ford Model T, the streets of Toronto could no longer support the congestion.



As a result, top-level city planners championed a new East-West highway on the Southern edge of the city, with a portion of elevated highway called the Gardiner Expressway.



Initially constructed on top of the industrial port-lands of lakeside Toronto...



...it has since been surrounded by the growth of the downtown city, and today presents a monolithic monstrosity contrary to all values of human-scaled public design.



Highway Grounds, 2021

In Term 1, I chose to study the social and environmental impact of this floating highway, as a case study best exemplifying this condition of car-dominated city planning. I took on an experiment to purposefully walk this brutal space. Trekking the 10-kilometre strip, spending countless hours navigating the unwalkable space emphasized the inequality experienced by pedestrians here, a strip that cars can easily travel in about 7 minutes. I gained a 1:1 experience of the alienating conditions created by this priority given to the vehicle. The disproportionate scale of such infrastructure, the leftover spaces avoided by city residents, and a general dismissal of this space as unsafe and undesirable all pointed to the failure of early city planning to provide adequate public space within the core of the city.

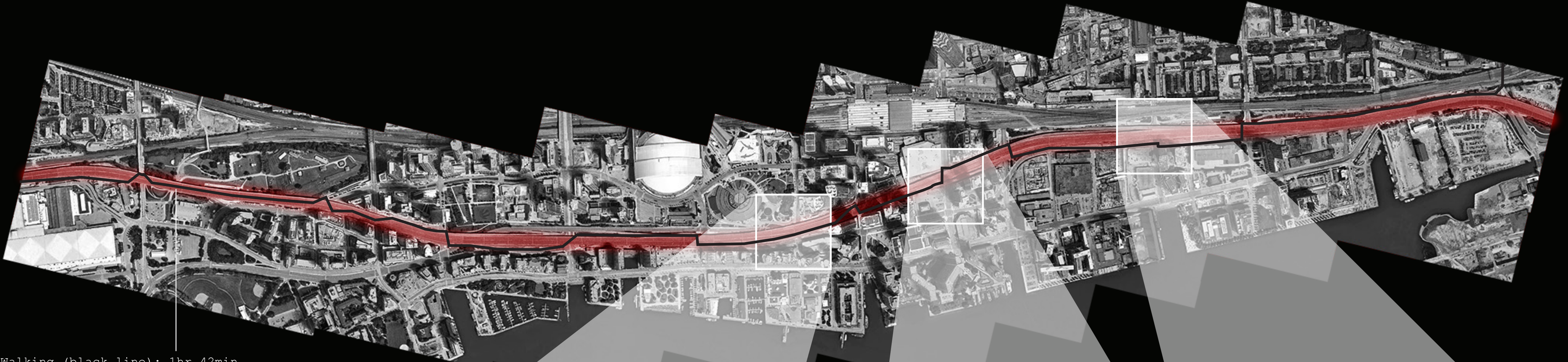
I was also able to meet and discuss with a few panhandlers who use this space as their only means for living and working. Using the traffic lights as opportunities, they walk the off-ramps of the highway asking for spare change. The deserted grounds also allow for them to pitch their tents and have some sense of safety where otherwise they are constantly facing evictions of out public parks in the city.

The film produced at the end of Term 1 is a collection of observations and discussions aiming to record the reality of this space, both the negative impact on the city and its spaces for pedestrians, as well as the positive outcomes that sees a new space created for vagrants. It does not take a position on the topic, but rather only aims to document the space for the future.



Film still from *Highway Grounds*; a construction worker walks past concrete piers supporting the Gardiner Expressway above.

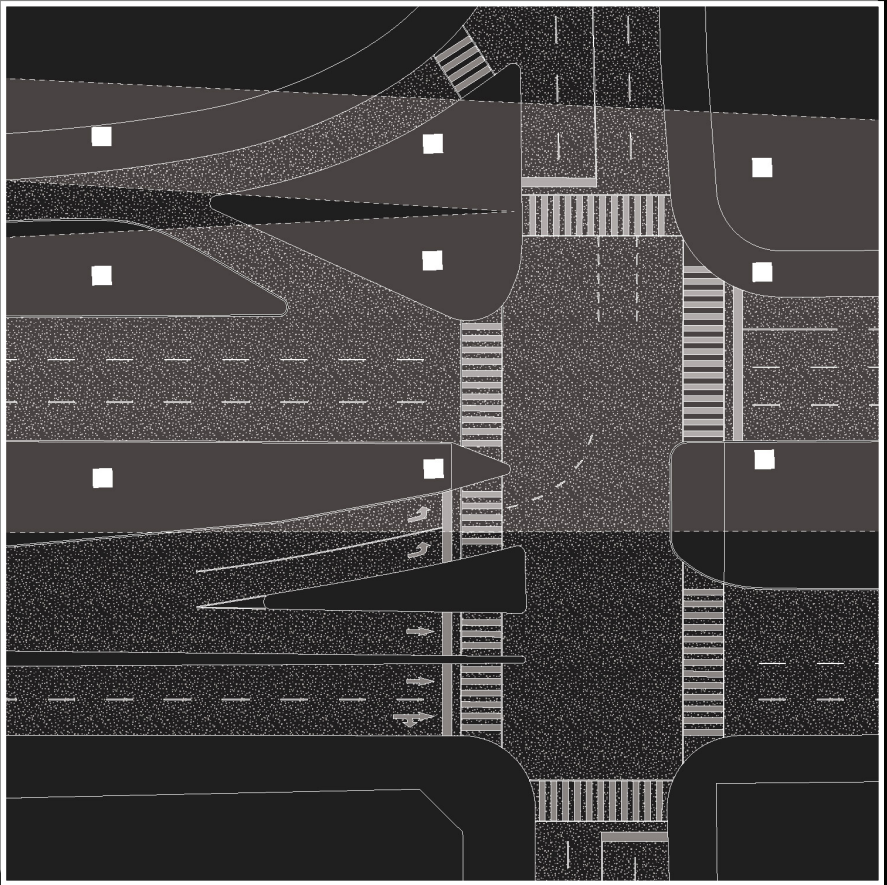
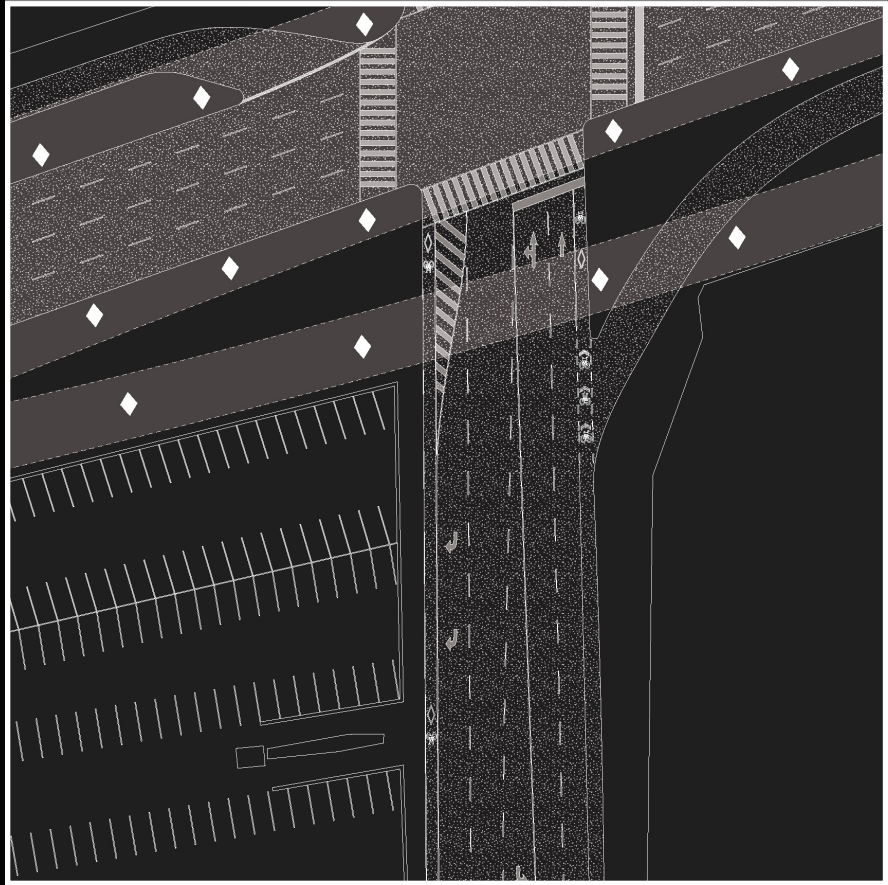
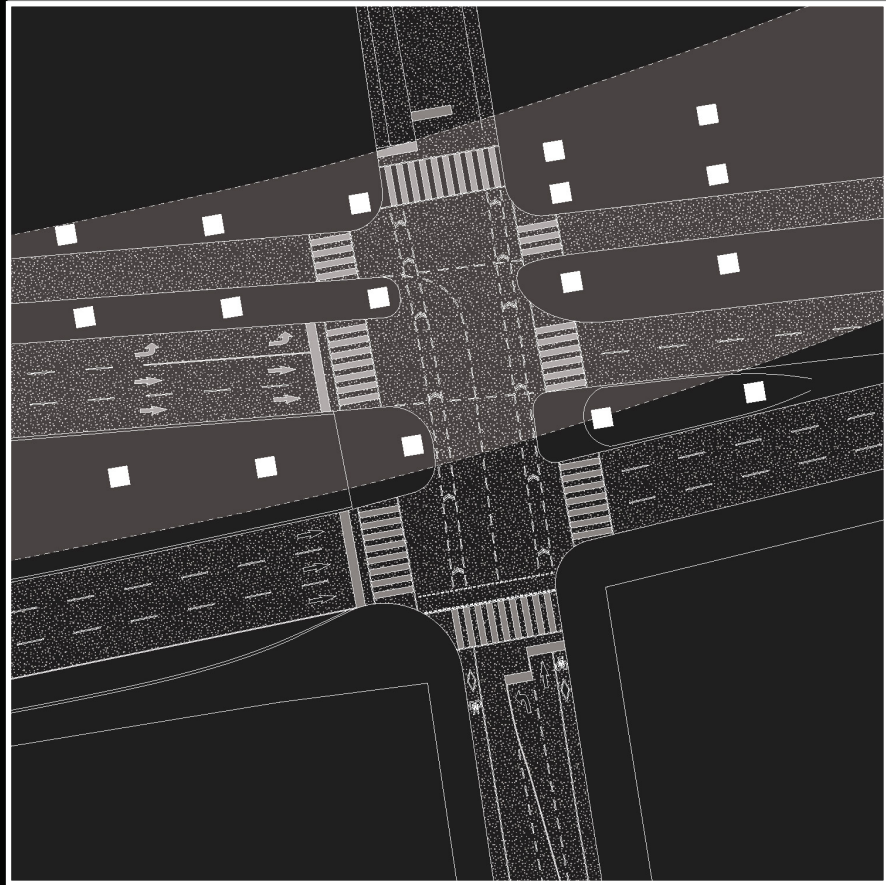
The Landscape of *Highway Grounds*



Walking (black line): 1hr 42min
Driving (red line): 3min
(Times recorded for 5km stretch of Gardiner)

This is the landscape of the Gardiner Expressway. A strip of concrete infrastructure cutting through the downtown core of Toronto. Three concrete piers measuring two-by-two metres every ten metres are required to support this eight lane high-speed highway. Beneath, another road follows the shadow of the highway, accepting off-ramps where traffic descends into the city. This is the space that I walked and observed for a couple months, speaking to panhandlers and filming the conditions brought upon the pedestrians.

Trekking the 10-kilometre strip, spending countless hours navigating the unwalkable space emphasized the inequality experienced by pedestrians here, a strip that cars can easily travel in about 7 minutes.



The Characters of Highway Grounds



Ben

- comes from Quebec
- 40-something years old
- been here for 5 years
- used to be here everyday, has a place to sleep indoors, not here as often
- been in the streets since 13 years old
- ran away from home
- stayed in group home for a bit
- problems as kids
- had family in his 20's
- son of 22, in Quebec
- sees his kids once in a while



Adam

- trying to make \$100 for new tent to sleep in
- from Poland
- sometimes makes \$30-\$40 per hour
- came with girlfriend to Canada, but she left him
- sleeps in wet tent now
- sometimes gets issues from police
- worried to be sent back to Poland
- people know him, since he comes every day for a month
- people who know him give him money
- used drugs before, now no more, he's on medication
- 2 months on the street



Kenny

- works in the parking lot booth
- worked 3 years here
- doesn't mind the small booth
- is fine with his job, doesn't want to comment on boss
- work is slow
- from Toronto, originally from Africa
- happy in Canada, peaceful here



Danel

- can make \$40 in an hour, depends on the day
- born in Toronto
- Macedonian background
- knows all the panhandlers here
- cops know him, ticket him once or twice to get to know him, then they dont bother him anymore
- doesn't compete with other panhandlers under highway
- once got \$100 bill
- needs to make a little noise to get money
- staying in a hostel now
- hostel can be dangerous, others stealing your stuff
- 9am leaves hostel everyday to work under highway

Highway Grounds, film Stills





I don't know,



the light over there



Every second car, third car,

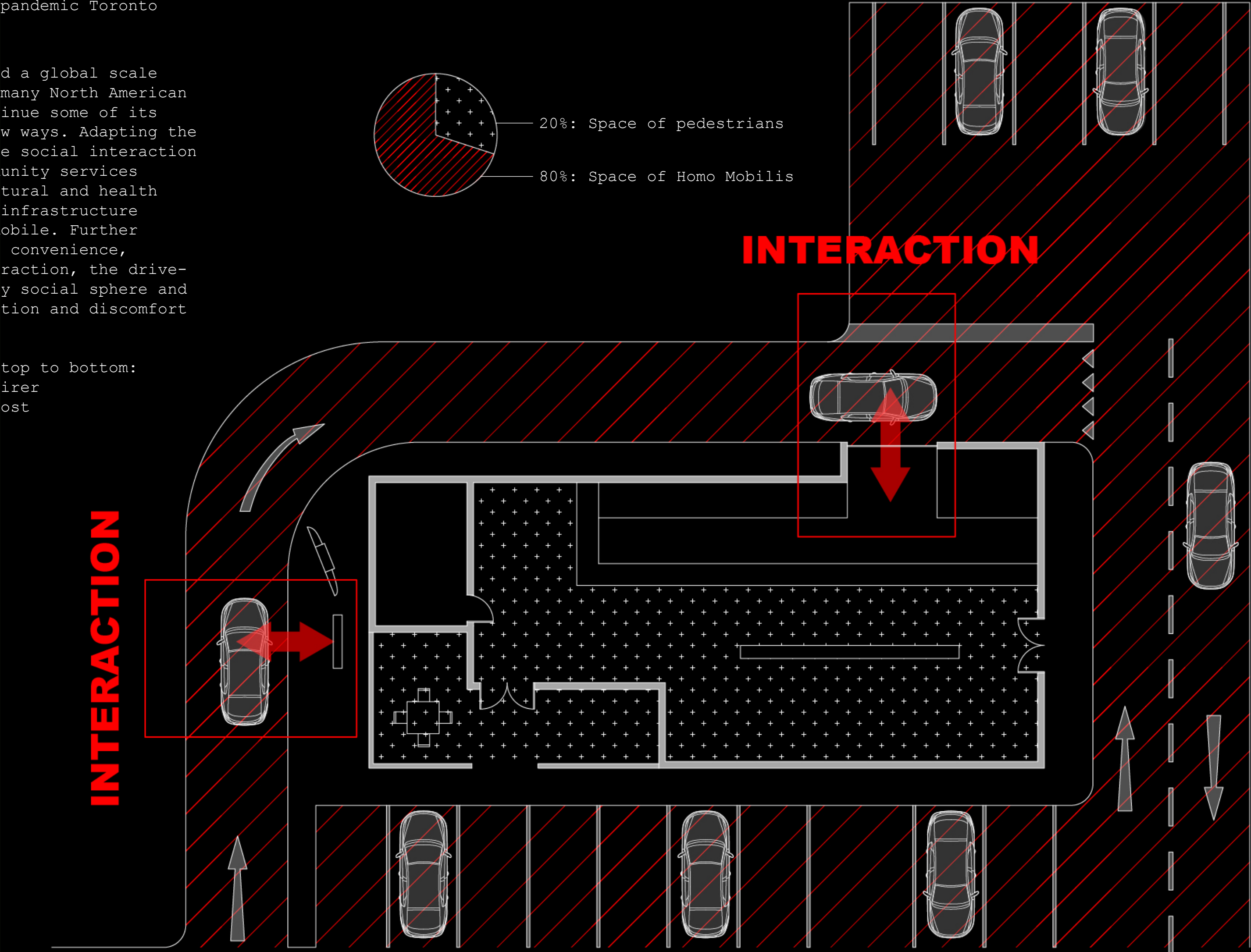


The **Protected** Everyday Pandemic Life

The space of the car in pandemic Toronto

When the pandemic reached a global scale and shutdown the world, many North American cities responded to continue some of its necessary services in new ways. Adapting the drive-through model where social interaction is minimized, other community services including religious, cultural and health practices shifted their infrastructure to accommodate the automobile. Further continuing this trend of convenience, safety, and limited interaction, the drive-through negates a healthy social sphere and instead encourages isolation and discomfort of strangers.

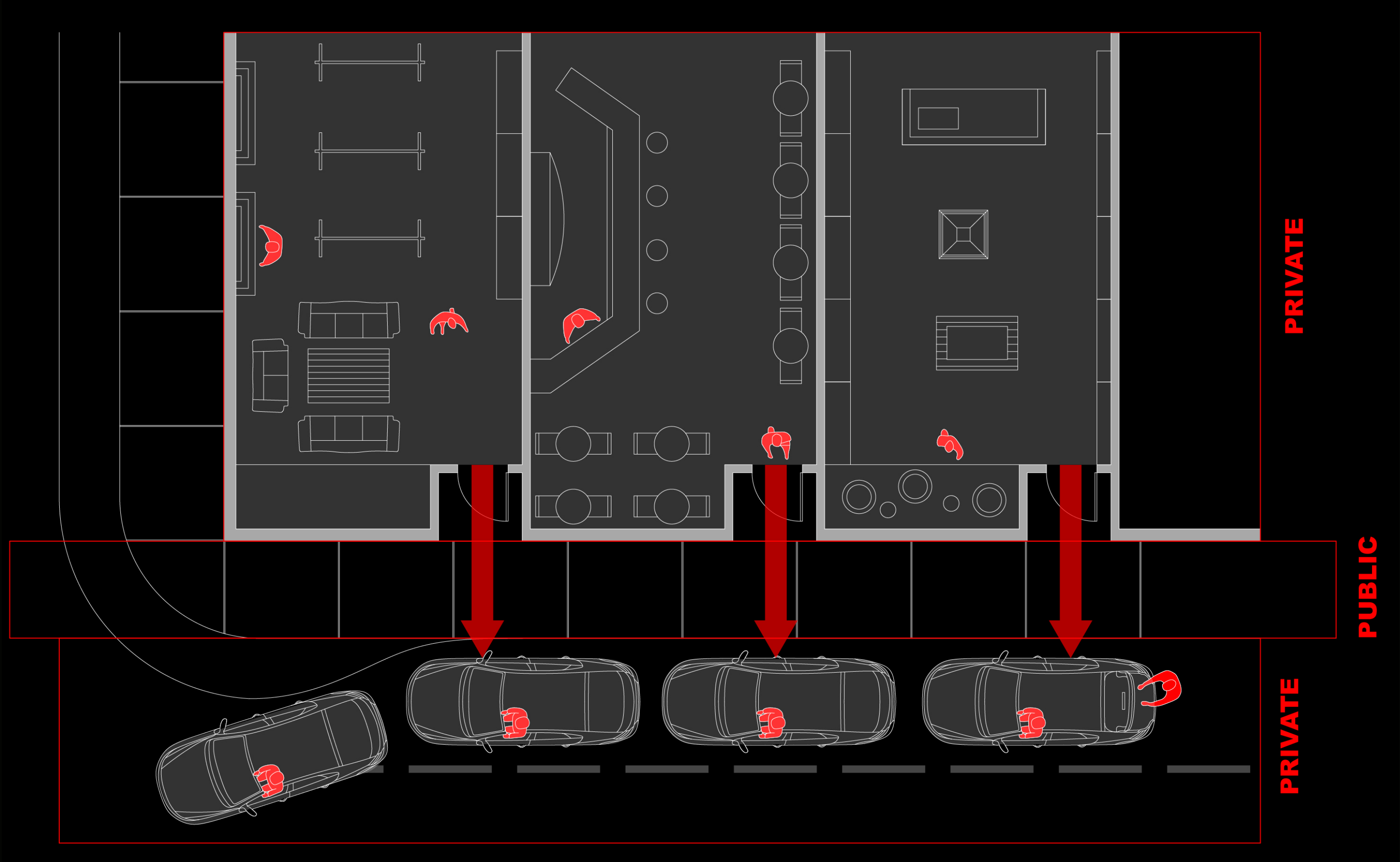
Credits for images from top to bottom:
1) The Philadelphia Inquirer
2) South China Morning Post
3) The Associated Press
4) Nikola Miloradovic



A new type of consumerism emerges, "Curbside Pickup", the necessary adaptation of small stores and big box outlets to continue the capitalist machine during the pandemic. The public space of former Homo Urbanus is redefined; streets no longer offer storefronts for browsing while walking but instead feature dedicated lanes for picking up products delivered directly to the trunk of your vehicle.

Interaction is again minimized, where barcodes can be scanned through the window of the car without the need for opening it. Employees are instructed to place items in the trunk of the car so as not to endanger themselves or the operator. While this is a temporary measure due to the pandemic, it can easily be seen how this efficient and pragmatic practice could continue in the near future.

All images on the right are personal photographs taken in front of Canadian Tire, a big box outlet store in Toronto. They show the space of Curbside Pickup, along with employees attending to Homo Mobilis, and the lineups of machines. The space is not made for such large metal capsules, with each single operator taking up the space of about ten human beings.

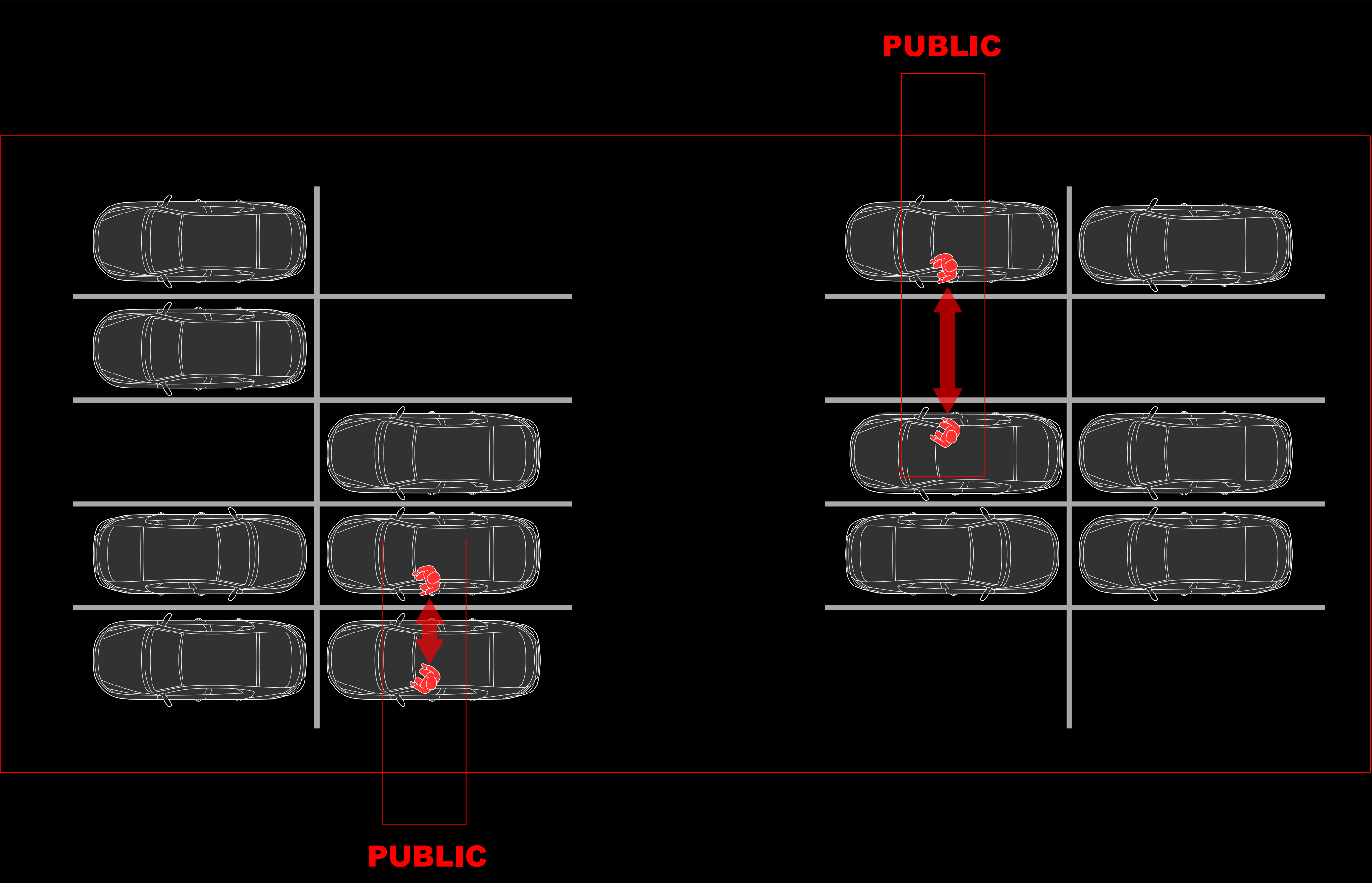
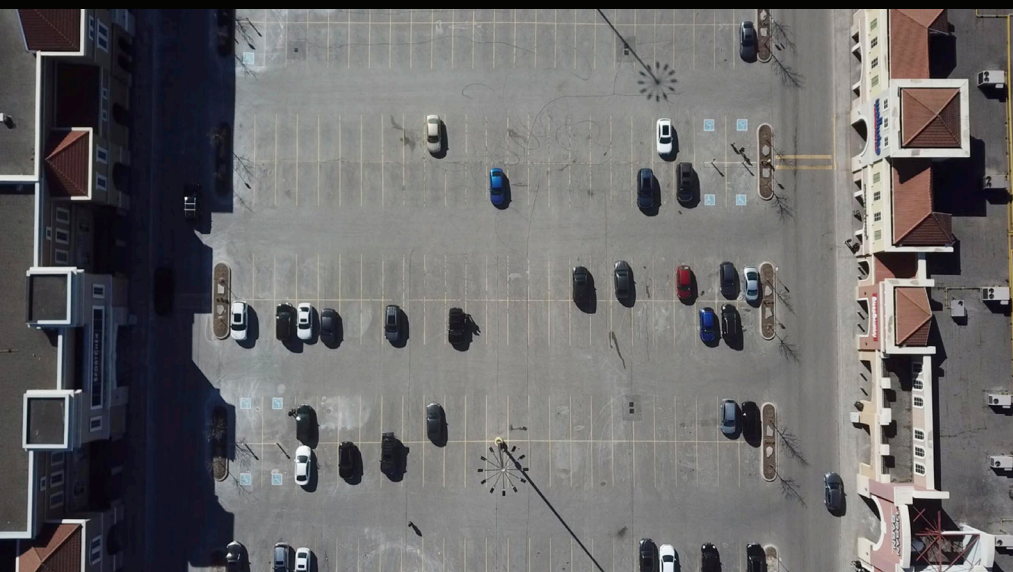


During the pandemic, social interaction was severely limited, so people found new ways of socializing. The parking lot, the closest and slowest experience of another human is where interaction can happen, yet again through the mitigating filter of the automobile. While parked and waiting for delivery or eating within the car, Homo Mobilis can converse with one another, without the direct commitment of a more

intimate conversation that would take place in a public space. At any given moment, the operator can ignite the engine and drive away, eliminating and unwanted encounters with others.

All images on the right are personal photographs taken in various parking lots in Toronto. When pandemic restrictions were loosened, people could be seen socializing

near their cars, each one closest to their own machine. The piazza of North America is the parking lot, the largest gathering space found in the city. When restrictions were back, people would converse sitting within their car, window to window. This act is a natural outcome of the lack of seating in these spaces, so your own personal seating space is the next best option.



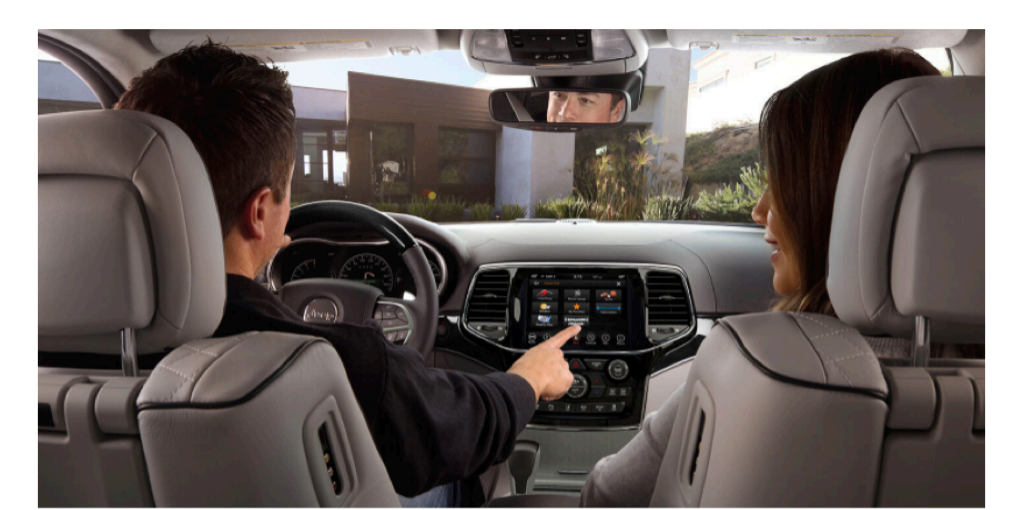
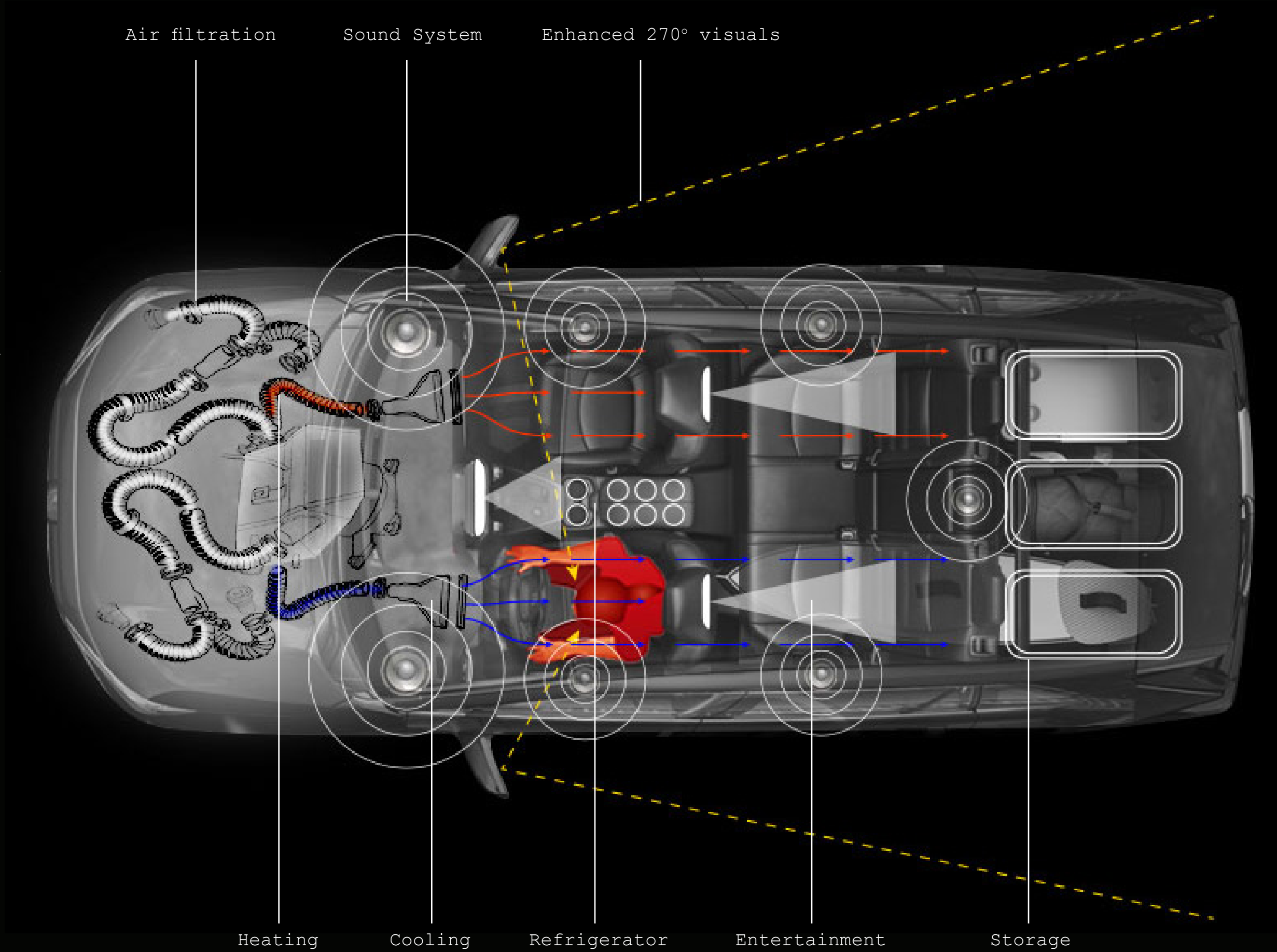
The Car as Personal Architecture

The automobile has become our own personal architecture. It performs as an extension of our private living space, where all amenities are afforded to the operator. Heating, cooling, air filters, entertainment, sound system, and even fridges can be found inside, guaranteeing a seamless experience of the exterior world, as comfortable as your own home.

Not only is it an extension of the home, but also an extension of our bodies as well. With enhanced visual perception and sensors feeding information from all corners of the car, our body now extends past the extent of our flesh to the metal body of the car. Homo Mobilis takes up on average fifteen times more space than Homo Urbanus due to this expanded body.

On the right we can see the developing technology that is entering the car. The top image shows a new feautre of cars equipped with "UConnect" where shopping can be done from within the car, eliminating any interaction with others in the store entirely. The middle image shows a man walking into a Mercedes concept driverless car where a small room on wheels is driven around the city, redefining how we think of space and architecture in the near future. The bottom image shows the potential for these digital consoles to become gaming platforms when the car will take over all driving responsibilities.

Credits for images from top to bottom:
1) driveuconnect.com
2) ThomasGeigerCar
3) Tesla / Tesmanian



SHOP FROM YOUR PARKING SPOT



References on Homo Urbanus in North America

Introducing the culture, the car, the everyday.

Literature

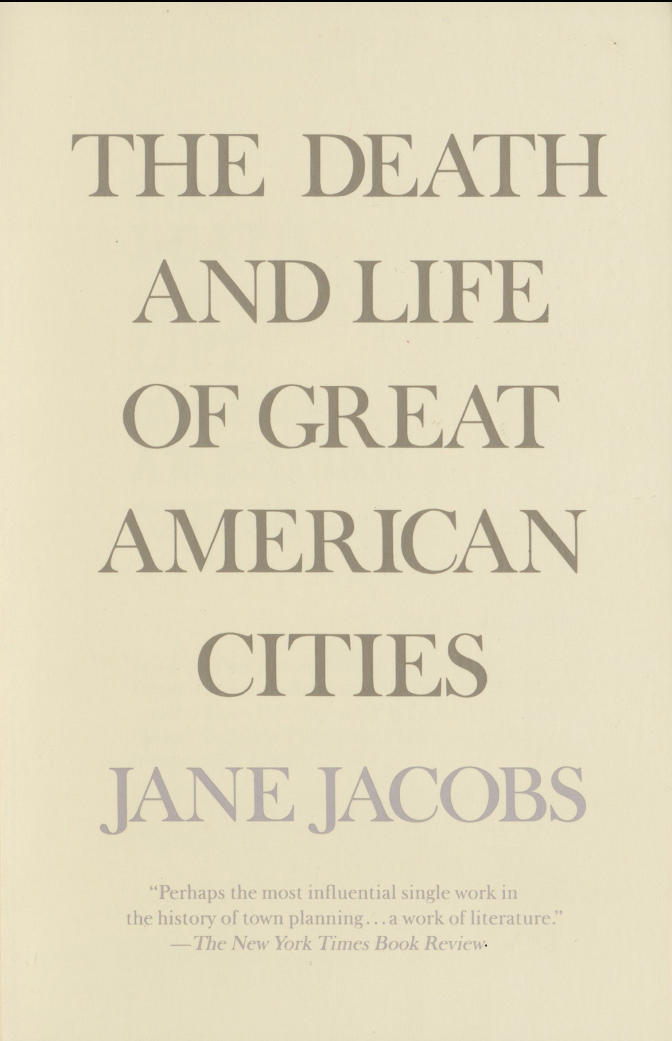
Since Homo Urbanus is a location-defined animal, then what are the necessary cultural conditions required in understanding Homo Urbanus in North America? There is the possibility becoming engrossed in a trove of possible references to consider, so one simple method is to look outside and pick one obvious condition. In any North American city, the automobile is a common necessity of life. So to begin, literary references are first studied to understand the role of the car in this culture. Jane Jacobs writes against the intellectual arrogance usually accompanying urban planning and observes what really makes neighborhoods, the everyday uses and joys of spaces in the city, usually developed through community spaces and untouched islands of flexible space. Here, she tells us of the issues with automobile infrastructure dividing communities and city spaces.

Her remark that people are “probably better off in cars than on foot” speaks to exactly the condition of interest here in North American cities. With systems ingrained in the fabric of the city promoting automobile transport, people have resorted to using the car for all daily errands and experiences within the city. This vacuum created by such infrastructure is the focus of the first film from Term 1, *Highway Grounds*, to be discussed below.

There is also the size of North America that should be considered when looking at this topic. In terms of its modern history, North America is very much a young continent, with cities being

“To think of city traffic problems in oversimplified terms of pedestrians versus cars, and to fix on the segregation of each as a principal goal, is to go at the problem from the wrong end. Consideration for pedestrians in cities is inseparable from consideration for the city diversity, vitality and concentration of use. In the absence of city diversity, people in large settlements are probably better off in cars than on foot. Unmanageable city vacuums are by no means preferable to unmanageable city traffic.”

-Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, pages 348-349

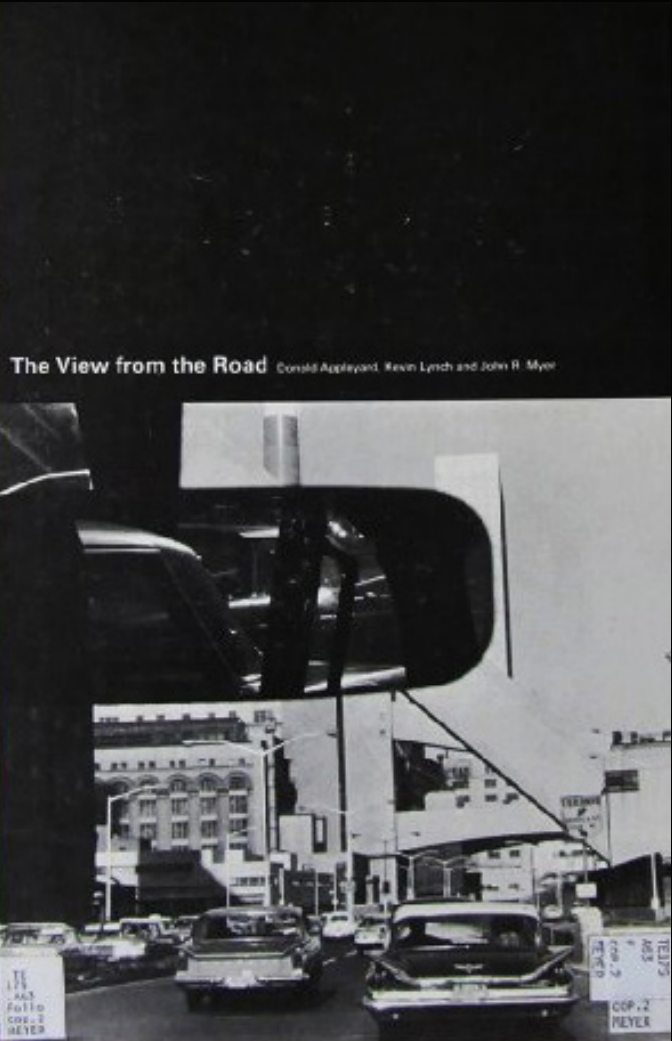


Jane Jacobs (1961)

developed only in the last couple hundred years. With engineers experimenting with new building technologies on a relatively blank slate, the size and proportion of the built environment explodes compared to European counterparts. The car is then understood as a mitigating machine, a tool used to return some sense of proportion to the tiny human body. The MIT research paper from 1964 titled “The View from the Road” by Appleyard, Lynch, and Myer explores this topic with precise clarity.

“One of the most important visual sensations is the relation of scale between a large environment and the observer, a feeling of adequacy when confronted with a vast space. The automobile with its speed and personal control begins to reduce the disparity in scale between man and the city, allowing man again to feel powerful and big enough to relate to his environment. The design of the vehicle as an extension of man, therefore, becomes a critical factor in his experience.”

-Donald Appleyard, Kevin Lynch, John Myer, *The View from the Road*, page 23



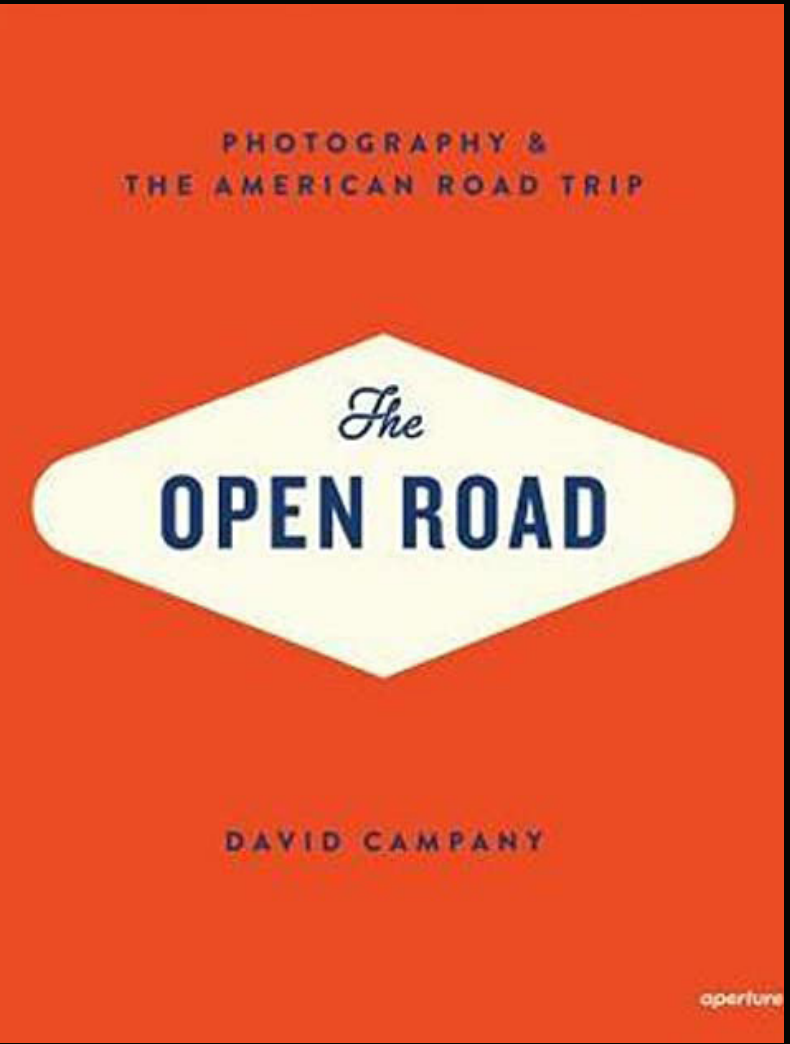
Appleyard, Lynch, Myer (1964)

The role of photography and videography in capturing the present cultural condition is also important to consider. If our work is aiming to document the lived experience of the present, focusing on people throughout the city and searching for a common truth that underlies all of Homo Urbanus here, then a method of unbiased documenting is necessary. The act of the road trip has commonly accompanied the photographic odyssey of many artists. The fast movement acts as a scanning of the vast space to gather as much of the life as is possible. David Campany's collection of essays titled *The Open Road* is a survey of 20th and 21st century photographers telling the story of America through the road trip. This excerpt from his introduction speaks to the role of the photographer as a cultural archivist, retaining the subtle nuances of the everyday which can only be appreciated after the time has passed and the culture has transformed.

With this perspective, it can be understood how the automobile, a seemingly mundane tool of the everyday North American, can actually stand as a direct influence on the fabric of the city and the social realm of its inhabitants. Commonly overlooked at taken for granted, the automobile has a strong effect on the Homo Urbanus and its experience of the city. Other literary references also explore this topic further.

"Along with Walker Evans and Eugene Atget before her, Abbott understood that **what is most familiar to modern life is often what is most fleeting**, and its significance may only become apparent once it has disappeared. In this regard **one of the highest callings for a photographer, and one of the toughest challenges, is to document the present for sake of the future**. It requires acute attention to the things around you that others are taking for granted."

-David Campany, *The Open Road*, page 23



David Campany (2014)

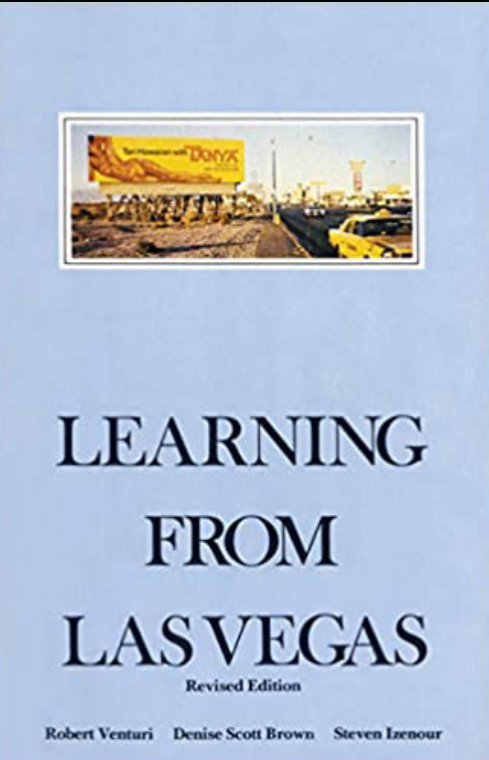
Other influential texts read and referenced throughout the year are the following:

Learning from Las Vegas (1972) by Robert Venturi, Denise Scott Brown, Steven and Izenour: as a general underpinning and controversial first call for the study of "common" people versus arrogant intellectualism.

On Photography (1977) by Susan Sontag, as an introduction to the role of photography and its importance throughout history and in the modern day, along with concepts about the meaning behind photography, its truthfulness, and its rendering of all events as equal.

Concrete Island (1974) by J.G. Ballard, as a fictional exploration of a dead space created by automotive infrastructure, where an Architect is stranded and survives with two other vagrants and muses on the existence of such a derelict space.

The following spread has two important books that also directly impacted the two films produced this year. The quotes collected express the ideas explored in the projects much better than any summary could afford.



America - Jean Baudrillard (1986)

“Traveller’s tales from the land of hyperreality.”

Jean Baudrillard’s 1986 account of his trip through America provides critically accurate depictions of American car culture, booming in the 80’s. It’s relevant for the work today because it shows the underpinning of a culture built upon efficiency, pragmatism, smoothness, and modernity. This reference was a key turning point in the project, understanding the larger patterns at play within North American culuture.



“You lose your rights one by one, first your job, then your car. And when your driver’s license goes, so does your identity.” (122)

“As soon a you set foot in America, you feel the presence of an entire continent – space there is the very form of thought.” (16)

The freedom of bodily movement which this possession of space gives them easily compensates for the blandness of their features and character... moving around is his natural occupation... Freedom here has no static or negative definition. Its definition is spatial and mobile.” (102)

“The point is not to write the sociology or psychology of the car, the point is to drive. That way you learn more about this society than all academia could ever tell you... All this creates a new experience of space, and, at the same time, a new experience of the whole social system.” (57)

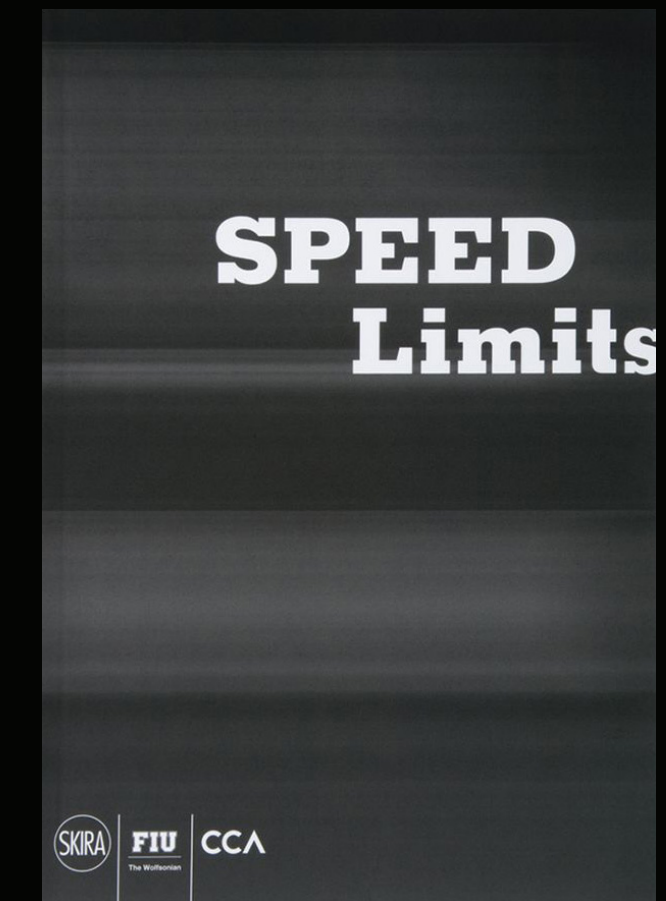
“If you get out of your car in this centrifugal metropolis, you immediately become a delinquent; as soon as you start walking, you are a threat to public order, like a dog wandering in the road.” (60)

“In Europe, the street only lives in sudden surges, in historic moments of revolution and barricades. At other times people move along briskly, no one really hangs around (no one wanders any more). It is the same with European cars. No one actually lives in them; there isn’t enough space. The cities, too, do not have enough space, or rather that space is deemed public and bears all the marks of the public arena, which forbids you to cross it or wander it as though it were a desert or some indifferent area. The American street has not, perhaps, known these historic moments, but it is always turbulent, lively, kinetic, and cinematic, like the country itself, where the specifically historical and political stage counts for little, but where change, whether spurred by technology, racial differences, or the media, assumes virulent forms: its violence is the very violence of the way of life.” (18)

Speed Limits - CCA (2009)

“The pivotal role played by speed in modern life.”

This collection of essays from the Canadian Centre for Architecture provides modern voices and opinions on the role of speed in modern culture. Marking the centenary of the Italian Futurist Movement, it looks at how speed, in all aspects of modern life, has developed and changed how we think, act, live, and communicate. As a reference, it simultaneously touches on the topic of the automobile and our city, as well as its effect on our culture.



“In the West, the word speed, which originates not from a concept of measurement, but rather from success, prosperity and advancement, has evolved so as to equate accelerated movement with progress, yielding efficiency, productivity and the optimal use of available time.” (21)

“Initially a privileged realm of adventure and for the expression of individual freedom; later the supporting infrastructure for various utopias of urban and/or national development, highway systems have come to embody the dreams and nightmares of a civilization built upon extreme mobility.” (33)

“Indeed, today traffic has become little more than an irritant—a fact of everyday life that we accept with a shrug and a sigh as we navigate our way through it, our ears turned to those radio ‘sigalerts’ that tell us which freeways to avoid and which tunnel is blocked by an overturned vehicle.” (92)

"I am kino-eye... My path leads to the creation of a fresh perception of the world.
I decipher in a new way a world unknown to you."

-Dziga Vertov, *Man with a Movie Camera*

Film

Cinematic references also play an important role in understanding Homo Urbanus, and the different methods of documenting. Three films will be introduced here that played a significant role in this project, with one of them, *Sans Soleil*, highlighted in the following spread.

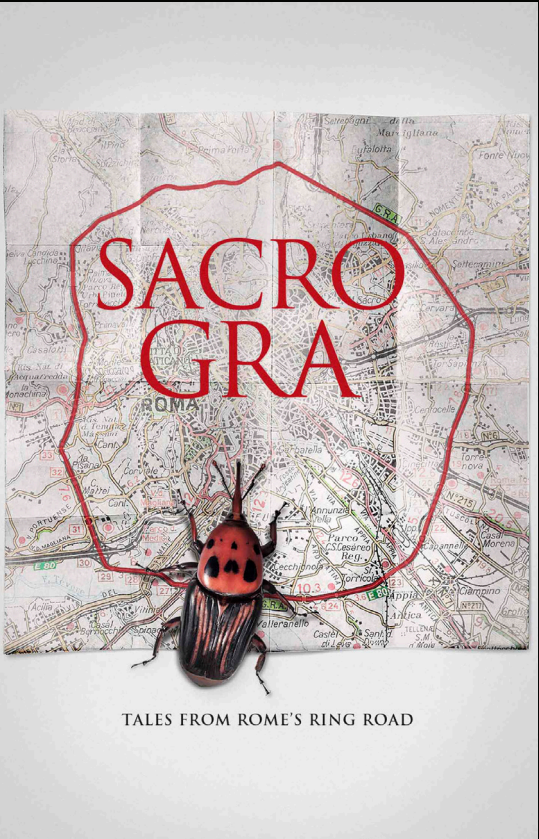
For my first film in Term 1 titled *Highway Grounds*, the documentary film *Sacro GRA* by Gianfranco Rosi was a reference both in topic and method. The film follows a collection of characters all working or living near the GRA highway surrounding Rome, and takes a very intimate portrait of those characters, their livelihoods, their thoughts and realities. Adopting the fly-on-the-wall technique, Rosi managed to get very close to his subjects and portray very personal stories. I took a similar approach in my first film, walking the grounds of the Gardiner Expressway and interacting with the people I found there.

My second and final film, *Homo Mobilis*, amongst other works, was influenced by Dziga Vertov's *Man with a Movie Camera* and Chris Marker's *Sans Soleil*. Vertov's film falls under the City Symphony style of early documentary films, painting a picture of a day in the life of a Russian city. Its experimental techniques were unseen at the time, and one of the reasons it's considered one of the greatest films of all time. It's a self-reflexive film, a film about films, but also a record of the everyday events of the city. Learning from this film, I was able to take the mundane activity of driving and experiment with available shots and techniques from within the car that would also evoke the experience of the everyday North American

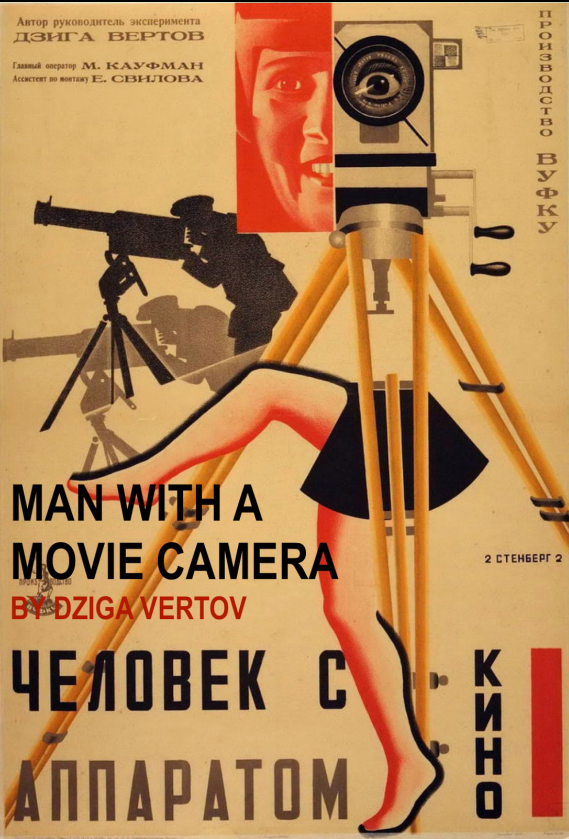
driver. The act of driving too is very cinematic, where windows frame different scenes all around you, and the car acts as a dolly, creating a continuously moving shot of the city as you drive.

Chris Marker's prolific essay-film *Sans Soleil* is an important reference and guiding style for my film. In this documentary film-collage, Marker writes a narration for an anonymous narrator to read letters of philosophical and conceptual musings while combining his own footage and archival footage as an all-encompassing film on human nature. The script itself could be read with great interest, but the footage creates a whole new type of visual essay where the meaning of images changes depending on the narration. In this sense, the film strongly influences my second film, *Homo Mobilis*, where the narration is crucial for the understanding of the images. Where otherwise boring images of driving sequences would not suffice to tell the story, the narration is written and revised over multiple months to precisely evoke this condition of Homo Urbanus in a North American city, without being too rational, descriptive, or authoritative. This gives freedom to the sequence of images, where general chunks of topics are grouped together, but individual scenes do not need to follow any temporal or spatial route to make sense. This gives freedom in the film to explore topics of the lived condition here without being constrained in understanding a space entirely within the film.

A few stills and quotes from *Sans Soleil* can be found on the following spread.



Gianfranco Rosi (2013)



Dziga Vertov (1929)



Chris Marker (1983)

Sans Soleil - Chris Marker (1983)

"The first image he told me about was of three children on a road in Iceland, in 1965. He said that for him it was the image of happiness and also that he had tried several times to link it to other images, but it never worked. He wrote me: one day I'll have to put it all alone at the beginning of a film with a long piece of black leader; if they don't see happiness in the picture, at least they'll see the black."



"My personal problem is more specific: how to film the ladies of Bissau? Apparently, the magical function of the eye was working against me there. It was in the marketplaces of Bissau and Cape Verde that I could stare at them again with equality: I see her, she saw me, she knows that I see her, she drops me her glance, but just at an angle where it is still possible to act as though it was not addressed to me, and at the end the real glance, straightforward, that lasted a twenty-fourth of a second, the length of a film frame."



"He wrote: I'm just back from Hokkaido, the Northern Island. Rich and hurried Japanese take the plane, others take the ferry: waiting, immobility, snatches of sleep. Curiously all of that makes me think of a past or future war: night trains, air raids, fallout shelters, small fragments of war enshrined in everyday life. He liked the fragility of those moments suspended in time. Those memories whose only function had been to leave behind nothing but memories. He wrote: I've been round the world several times and now only banality still interests me. On this trip I've tracked it with the relentlessness of a bounty hunter. At dawn we'll be in Tokyo."



Homo Mobilis the film

They say that loneliness is the ultimate poverty. Is this true when it is self-imposed? Or is that what we call solitude?



In this dangerous world of the near-future, I do not know any reality other than isolation. I am never exposed to the exterior elements and all those invisible viruses.



I remain within my enclosure for the entirety of my public experience.



I live in a bubble, a floating island navigating an archipelago of shipwrecks. I live protected, in full control of my immediate environment.



In the name of security and convenience, my engagement with the world is reduced to a shielded exchange.



My capsule is vacuum-sealed until I release the hatch, and only then may foreign matter be deposited.



My relationship to the public world is strictly formal. In and out.



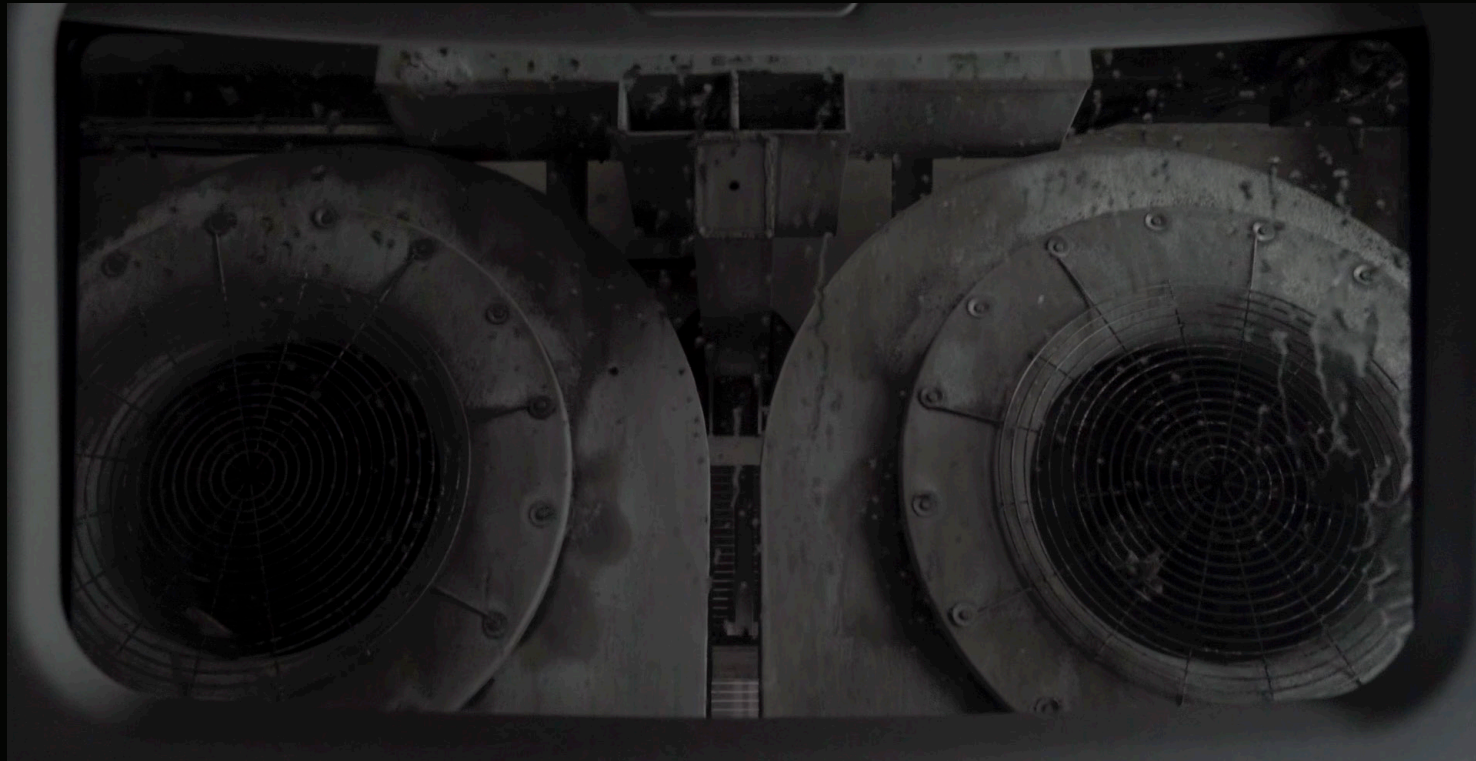
The smoother the interaction, the better. And even more so where it can be performed at the furthest distance from my body.



My auto-body and earthly-body have blended into one. Maintenance is reciprocal, and equally necessary.



Where one fails, the other will fail too. I require both for my daily existence, in equal proportion. To ensure survival, knowledge of the machine is an obligation.



And to ensure societal acceptance, cleanliness is a must. Sterility, safety, and social-distance - the new cornerstones of our society.



Today's world is not like yesterday. There is us, and them. Me, versus the other. Those less fortunate, forced to inhabit the exterior world, must protect their fragile bodies to ensure survival.



I have chosen privileged, self-imposed isolation. I distance myself from the land-dwellers, and only choose to communicate with foreign vessels.



I am a captive animal, a prisoner of the road, locked in my glass and steel home.



My experience of the city is a constant contradiction. I am outside, while contained in this interior.



I adorn it like a castle, yet I am confined in a cage.



I am in public, but enclosed in privacy. I move together with others, yet feel completely alone.



In her dying plea, the city cries out for love, care, and attention. But they are pointless cries, because her streets are already empty.



Collectively, we pray to the deities of the machine. We devote our rituals to speed, power and efficiency.



And idolize our machines proving the inseparable nature of our bodies.



Architecture responds to the inflated space which in turn responds to my confined body. I have evolved; or rather, evolution has been imposed on me through this gradual transformation.



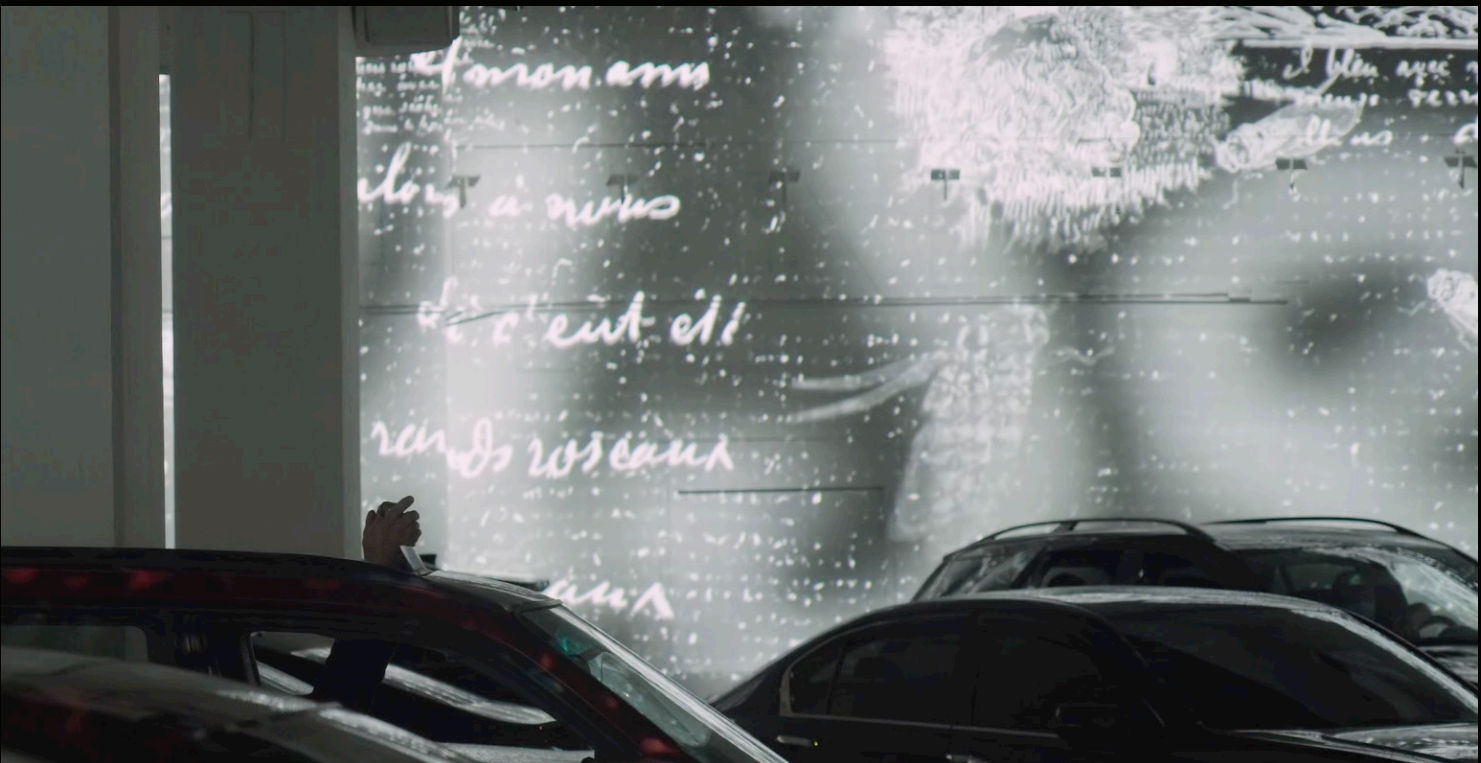
The more I offer my body and my gaze, the further my world slips into the reality of tomorrow.



Art is reduced to entertainment, and entertainment is reduced to a textureless plane, a paved tarmac where my tired soul is laid out and presented with moving images.



All that's left is a city of floating islands. I have my island.



You have yours. It's better if they do not touch.



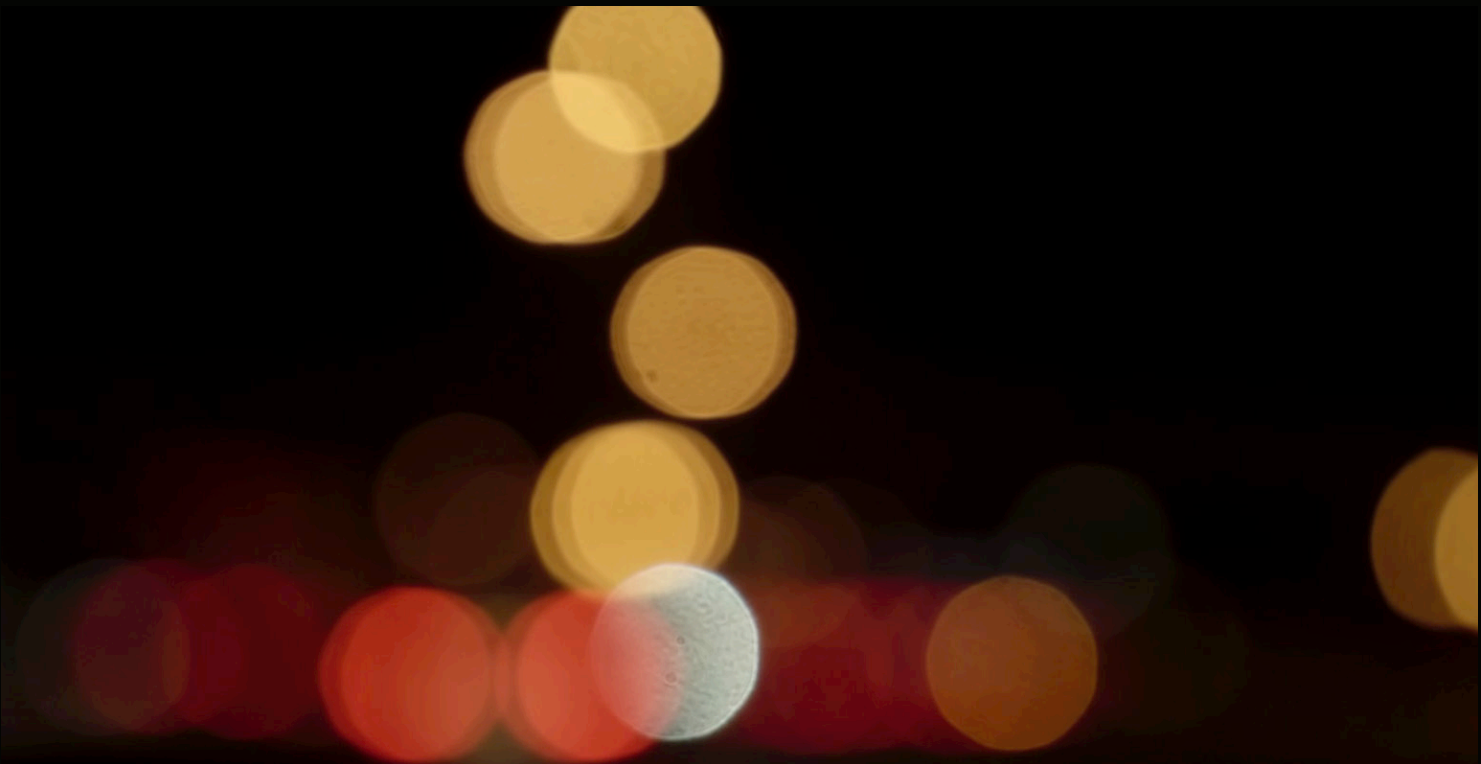
As the ocean grows between our islands, we start to lose sight of each other.



I recline into the darkness of eternity, the loneliness of immortality, the forever senseless stream of tomorrow.



A singular experience lifted - on a leather throne one hundred kilometres per hour - above the rest.



A sea of concrete washes its waves over my ancient, earthly body until I, too, melt into a strip of paint on the pavement.