## WEAVING LIFE, LOSS, AND HEALING WITHIN ARCHITECTURAL SPACE

Mental Healthcare needs to be further included in our environment. For this thesis, I aimed to weave together architecture and Mental Health to demonstrate how a design can be for more that just the pragmatic sides of healthcare, specifically for depression having to do with loss. Loss is something that everyone deals with at some point in their lives. Through this we can use those principles to further to connect to the deeper connections that need to be fostered within a healthcare facility.

Depression in the United States afflicts over 16 million adults, and 350 million more around the world, making it the leading cause of disability. Following the critique of German philosopher Hans-Georg Gadamer, the lack of the representation of death has contributed to our misalignment with the subject. This adds to the current dilemma that our society faces today that I have tried to solve with the architecture that you see represented before you. The atmospheres that we need to heal within should touch the mind and the body. They need to evoke a presence that allows the participants to understand grief, loss, and depression.

The Atlanta Mental Health Research Institute can be found in the heart of one of the oldest neighborhoods of the city: Old Fourth Ward. I chose Atlanta, Georgia to be the site of the project because it had one of the worst cases of widespread mental illness within its population in the United States. More importantly however, Atlanta was the perfect site because it also has the least amount of access to Mental Healthcare as well. The combination of these two factors make this site absolutely suited to house an architecture that wants to bring about a greater change in the system in which mental health is treated.

How this project differs from other Research Institutes is that it will weave together the overarching themes of a traditional research institute alongside a memorial for loss. The space will allow the clinical areas to work at their maximum capacity, but it will imbue a deeper contextual understanding the specialized areas often lose. Doing so will connect the mind and the body, further allowing our emotions to connect back to our brains.

A View from underneath the long winding path that connects the waters to the earth.

Emphasizing the fact that what was once in the ground has been lifted to the sky.

This garden will be what the patients of the facility will get to reverberate with as they are staying at the facility.

People from all around the community will be invited to participate in the curation of the plants. From planting the trees to lend an anonymous support for the patients, to visiting the space to give comraderie to those who suffer from the feelings of being alone. This view emphasizes the lightness of the structures that hold the heavy burdens of the patients residing above.