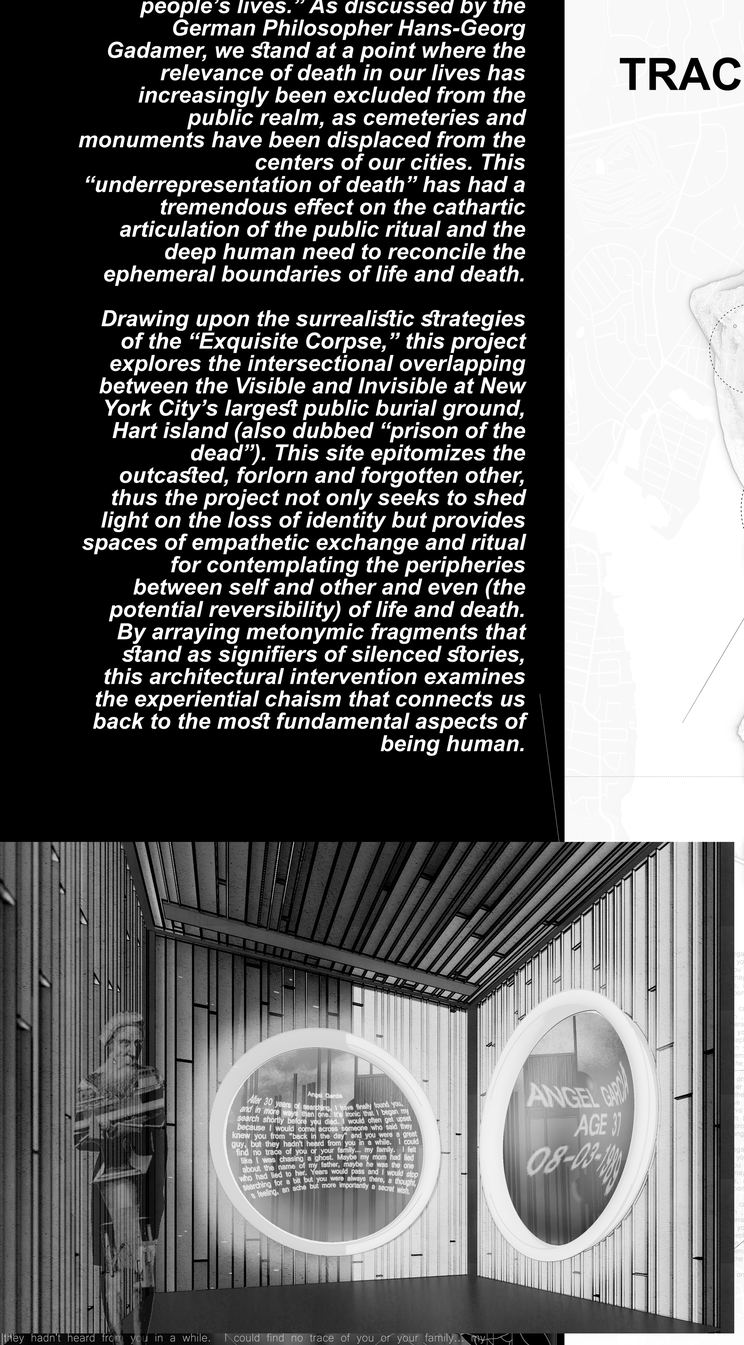
THE REVERSIBLE EDGE:

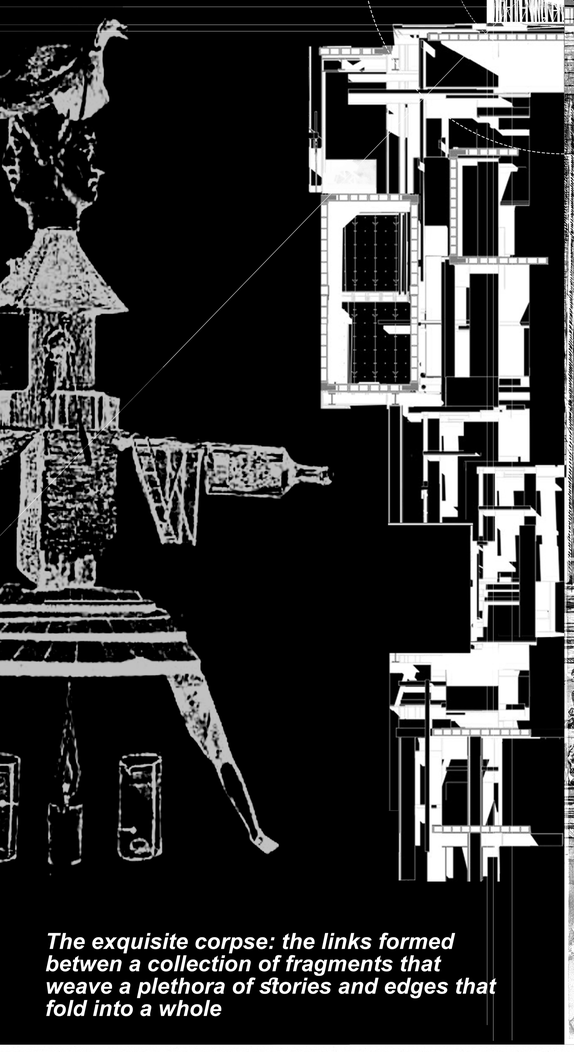
TRACES OF ALTERITY AT THE SITE OF LOSS, HART ISLAND, NEW YORK

"We cannot overlook the way in which the Industrial Revolution and its technological consequences have transformed the experience of death in people's lives." As discussed by the German Philosopher Hans-Georg Gadamer, we stand at a point where the relevance of death in our lives has increasingly been excluded from the public realm, as cemeteries and monuments have been displaced from the centers of our cities. This "underrepresentation of death" has had a tremendous effect on the cathartic articulation of the public ritual and the deep human need to reconcile the ephemeral boundaries of life and death.

Drawing upon the surrealistic strategies of the "Exquisite Corpse," this project explores the intersectional overlapping between the Visible and Invisible at New York City's largest public burial ground, Hart island (also dubbed "prison of the dead"). This site epitomizes the outcasted, forlorn and forgotten other, thus the project not only seeks to shed light on the loss of identity but provides spaces of empathetic exchange and ritual for contemplating the peripheries between self and other and even (the potential reversibility) of life and death. By arraying metonymic fragments that stand as signifiers of silenced stories, this architectural intervention examines the experiential chaism that connects us back to the most fundamental aspects of being human.



Sky burial: A native american tradition of offering their dead back to nature plays a big part in the honoring of the bodies burried in hart island. Echoing the history of the site and its eternal links to the native american heritage



The exquisite corpse: the links formed betwen a collection of fragments that weave a plethora of stories and edges that fold into a whole

Paths: weave under the ground in select areas, pushing the people to sink under the ground, to be one with the other as they cross over into the two most populous edges of the island, the burial plots of the other.

The journey begins with crossing over the edge and into the island, where the ruins stand there as a constant reminder of a silenced past. The island is forged with paths that contextualize the textural reality of the place. Paths that are Crossing through and around, the old and the new forging links and weaving the ruins of the past, the stories of the people, the history of the site and reversing the undeniable suppression occurring into the present,

Reviving the old through the fragmentation of the new presents another experiential chora where the stories line the architectural cavities, and are both particular voids in the land that bring forth the absence, yet it also creates bridges that metastasize in the understanding of the other and create a folding over between presence and absence.