

A PATH TO RECONNECTION

USING ARCHITECTURE TO RESTORE THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HUMANKIND AND THE NATURAL WORLD

Humans and the natural world once shared a profound connection through the reciprocal nature of their relationship. This relationship, in return for opening oneself up to the natural world, offered a fuller sensory perception of it. Due to the continuous changes in the technology and customs of society, critical theorists, such as David Abram, believe that humans have disconnected from each other, animals, and nature which has effected our understanding of our relationships with each of these groups. In the contemporary climate, this change has led to the apprehension of the "other" or those who are deemed as different or undesirable. The avoidance of the "other" has led to the mistreatment and ignorance of groups, such as the elderly and stray animals, who have been cast out from society.

Inspiration drawn from cultural precedents, including Daniel Libeskind's Jewish Museum and the Enchanted Pathways of the native Kogi people, has supported this project's reimagining of animal shelter design. This thesis aims to illuminate the issues of "otherness" and disconnection through the weaving of building programs and architectural tectonics as well as the integration of spaces that promote positive exchanges between all kinds of people, animals, and the natural world.

This project is an amalgamation of an animal shelter, veterinary clinic, memory care facility, and museum that is located in between the museum and park districts of Houston, Texas, which has over 1 million stray animals. The site aims to weave the surrounding nature of the parks and the zoo with the culture and history of the nearby museums, as well as connect the new shelter with the existing memory care facility. This association is achieved by using materials and pathways that consider hodological space and invite the user to interact with the natural world. The reflective materials and the chosen pathways provide an individual experience and an opportunity to reflect on one's relationship with nature which prepares the users to connect with the animals and people in the shelter without bias.

"Thus, for the Kogi, the path itself is the usual destination, and the village at the end of the path is a deviation from it."

-Ricardo L. Castro

"Breathing involves a continual oscillation between exhaling and inhaling, offering ourselves to the world at one moment and drawing the world into ourselves at the next."

-David Abram

"along with the other animals, the stones, the trees, and the clouds, we ourselves are characters within a huge story that is visibly unfolding all around us, participants within the vast imagination, or dreaming, or the world."

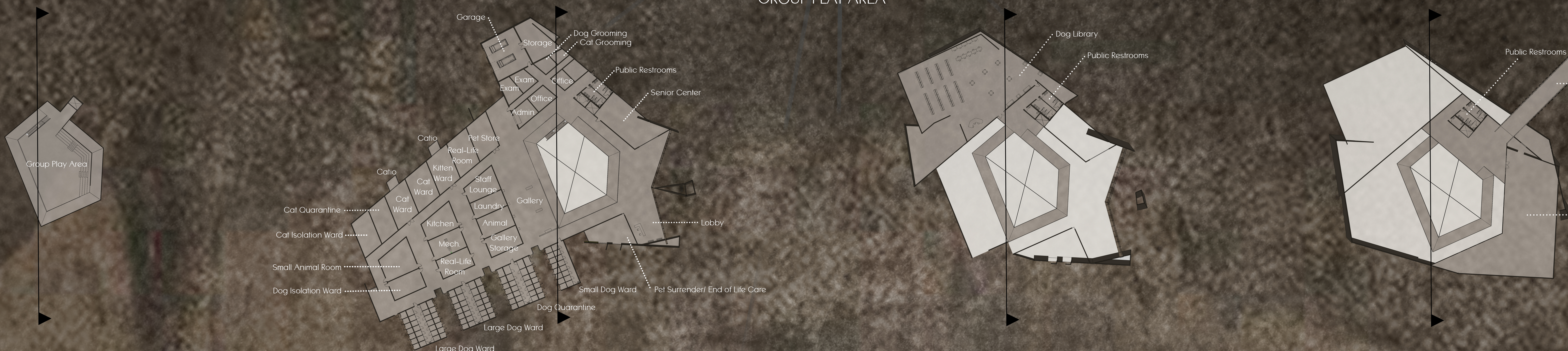
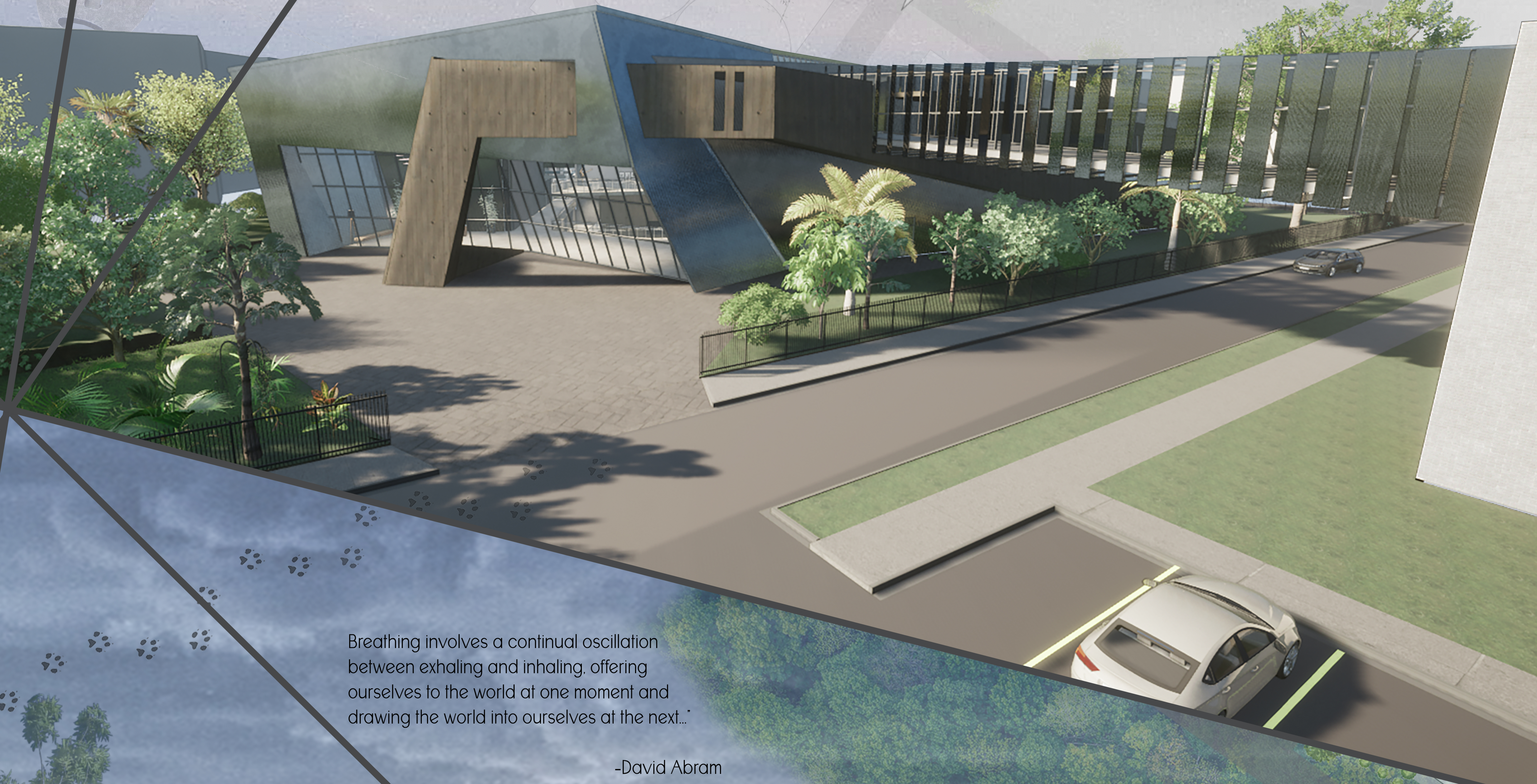
-David Abram

"We are human only in contact and conviviality, with what is not human."

-David Abram



HODOLOGICAL SPACE
Hodos (Greek) - Way
Refers to the space of possible movement through preferred pathways which are characterized by desired traits, such as shortest distance or maximum experience.



RECESSED CORE PLAN

FIRST FLOOR PLAN

SECOND FLOOR PLAN

THIRD FLOOR PLAN

