

#025 – “Vive la Vie”



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“Vive la vie”

He wrote this, often, as soon as he had the opportunity.

He also said this, as much as he could, in euphoric and/or delicate moments.

This is not an homage to Paul Virilio!

I had the pleasure and privilege to have Paul Virilio as a teacher in a project workshop during my third year and as my thesis advisor for my architect diploma in 1989, at the “École Spéciale d’Architecture” in Paris. And for 30 years, up to his death in 2018, we stayed in contact, faithfully, and with rich exchanges. Thus, he was with me as I drew my architect designs, involved (engaged), and as I developed my pedagogy of teacher–researcher, free and rebellious.

The last «Rencontres Virilio» of April 2, “Géopolitique de l’Accident”, have been a determining factor in the creation of this artistic installation offer, an ephemeral and traveling Monument.

But instead of talking about artistic installations, let us talk about cultural “Manifestation”, a manifest like a public declaration, written in space, with a political position (public life). And let us dare also, in all humility, the title of Monument (a theme quite dear to Virilio). A negative monument – in the photographic sense of the word – the one of a revelation, of “what happens”. And “Révélationnaire» (revelationary), of what reveals (in revolution) the Accident, to which the philosopher dedicated a large part of his work and writings. In 2004, he even founded the concept of the first artistic center dedicated to the accident.

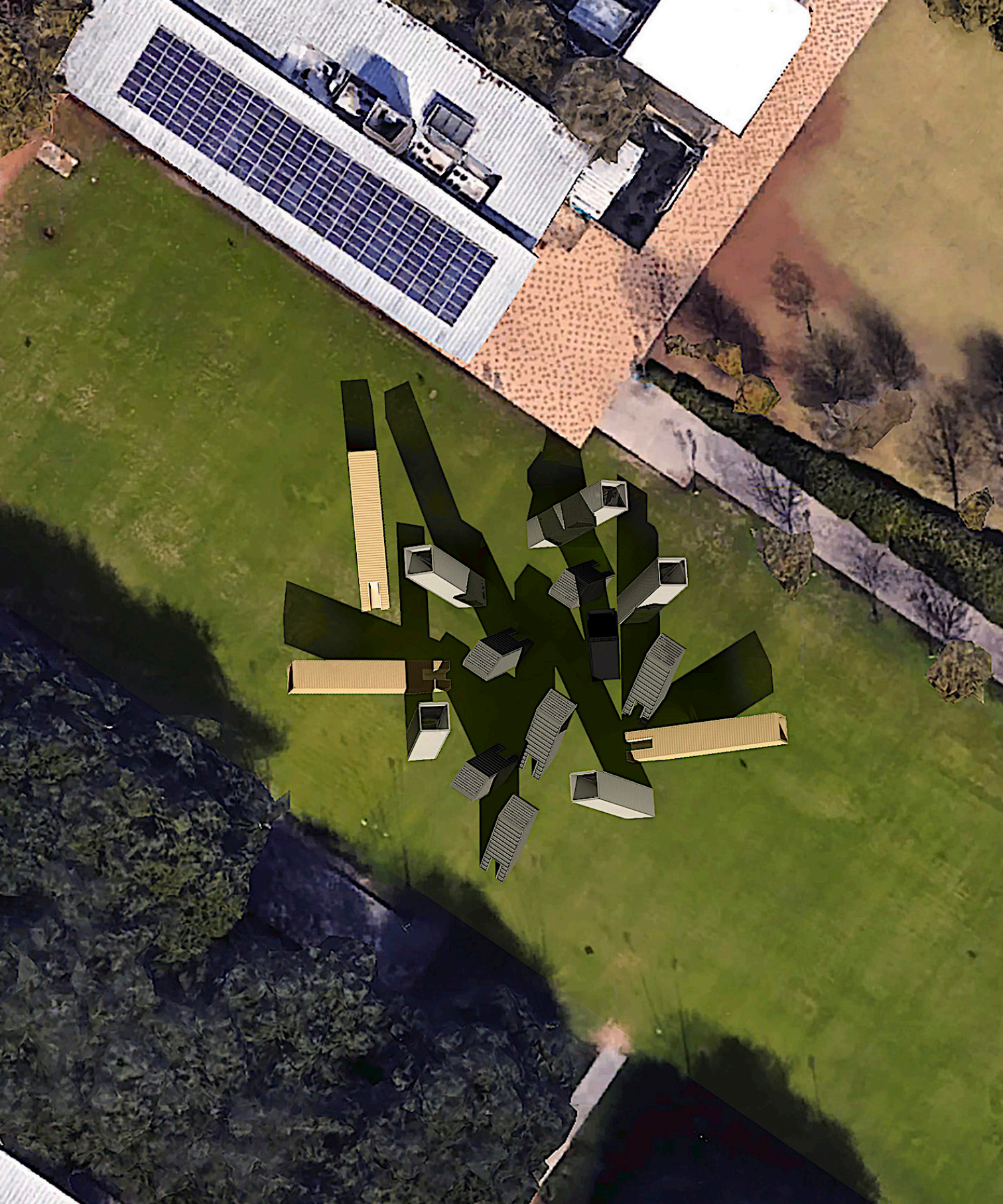
To build this revelatory Monument, let us use a symbolic brick: the container. It is so emblematic of globalization that we will address it of course in our various writings. And with even more conviction: due to the mandatory pause Covid-19 (the idea of global accident was already mentioned by Virilio at the end of the 80’s).

First step in this traveling creation: the central lawn of **Discovery Green, Downtown, Houston.**

The programming time of this “Manifestation” and its contents will have to be defined in tandem with the park’s direction and the other partners such as the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, the University of Houston, Rice University, other American universities, The American Institute of Architects, and private benefactors. Without forgetting first, the protagonists of the Musée de l’Accident in gestation and the members of the editorial committee of the annual journal Dromologie.

Afterwards, other places in the USA or even overseas (for example in La Rochelle, France, town so dear to Virilio) could be easily scheduled due to the ease of manutention and transport of these containers.





Picturing the “Manifestation”

A composition, calm and at the same time tumultuous, made of fourteen tilted containers and one vertical container, all jutting towards the sky. A little nod to the obliques of Claude Parent and Paul Virilio (Architecture Principe group), both with the exterior visual and the ergonomic design of the interior spaces and the use of their slopes by the visitors.

On the inside of these prisms: some “cabinets of curiosities”, to face this world in perpetual movement, accelerated and shaken.

Composition and scenarios of the « Manifestation »

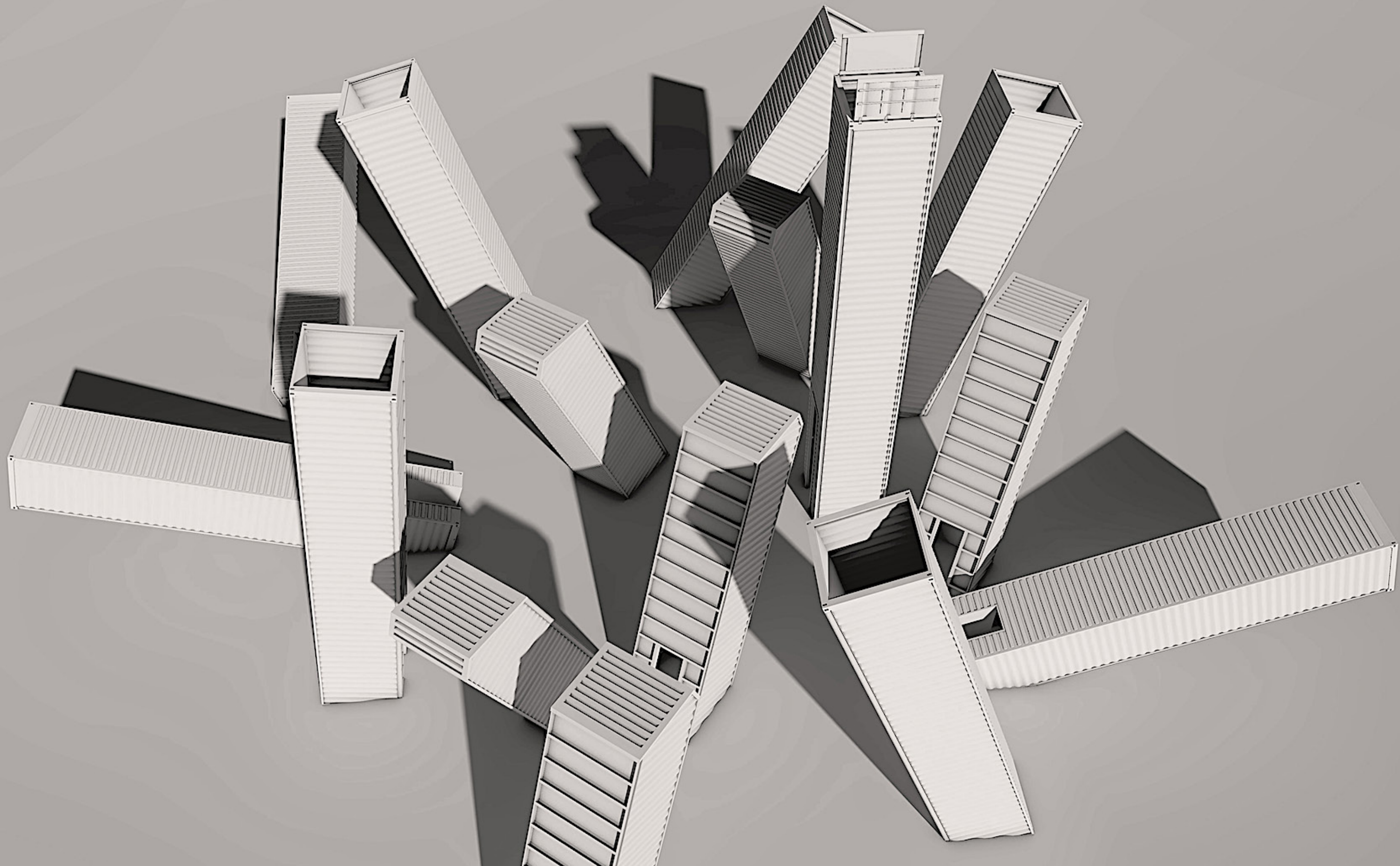
The composition of “Vive la vie” is organized around 2 lines, the one of the geographical north, and one of the parcels of lands Downtown. On the north-south and east-west lines, 9 containers are set with several viewfinders (projection tubes). And on the Downtown one, 6 containers are set. They make the MA logo stand out in 3-D.

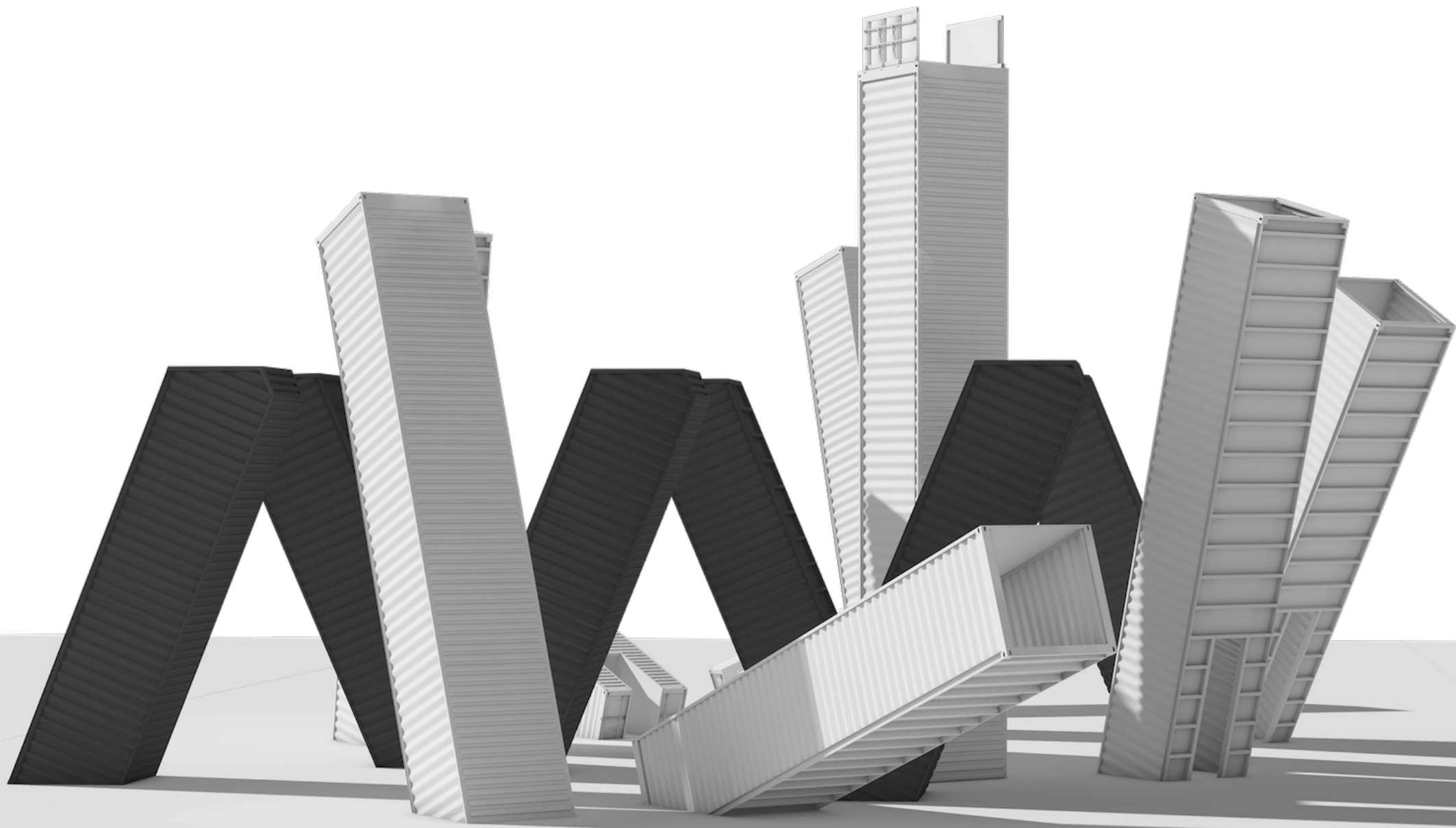
These 15 containers are divided as such:

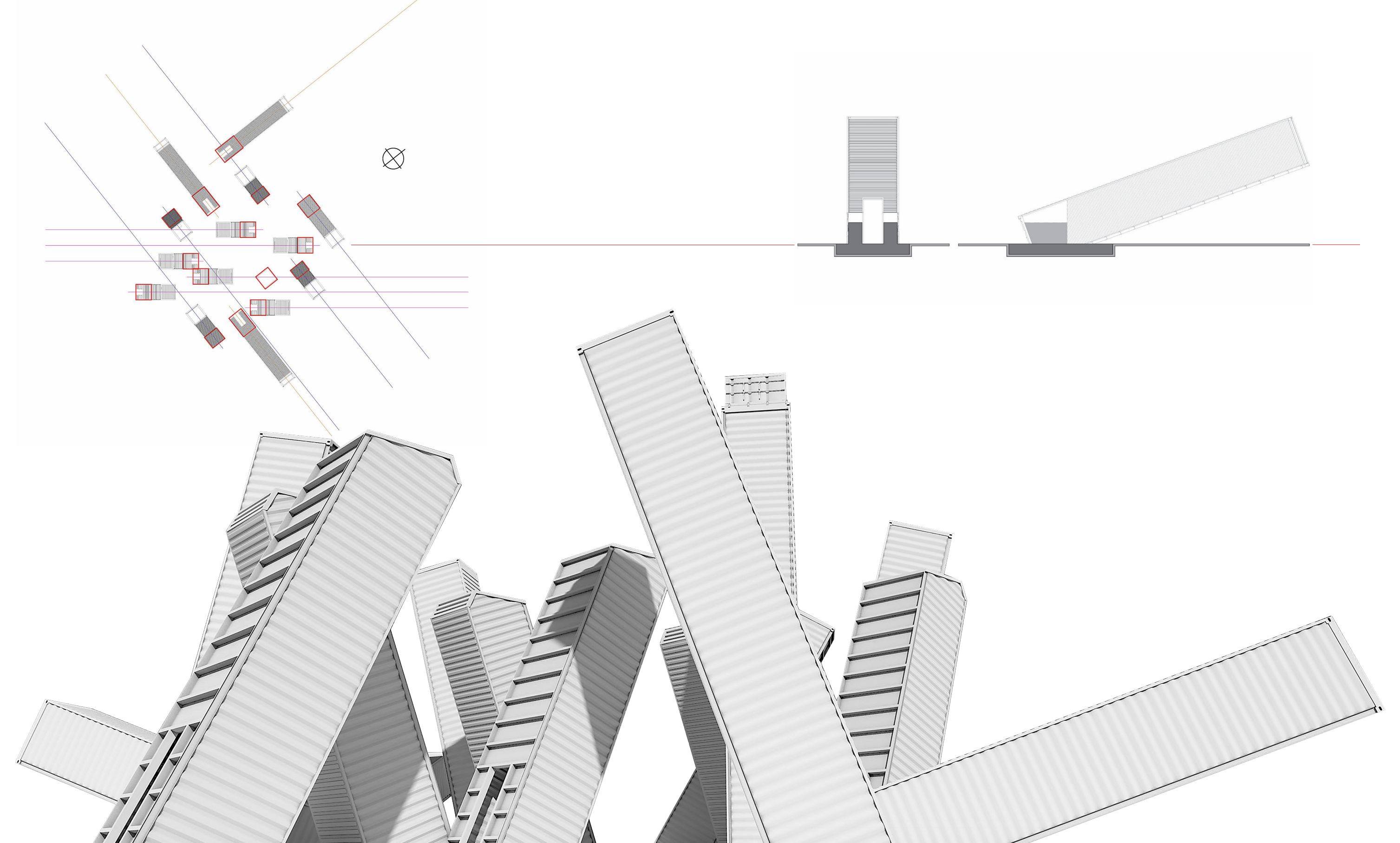
- 6 containers (anthracite), at a 68° incline, draw in space the Musée de l'Accident logo: MA or three V's upside down, initials of the three favorite words of the philosopher: Vite, Vif and Vide (fast, lively, and empty). In each couple of containers that makes a V, there will be a video production for each favorite word.
- 1 vertical container of 53' (black), empty and obscure, in total darkness, the silence meets the sensory loss. The silence is here to regain self-awareness, awareness with others, to listen to each other. This silence is disrupted at regular intervals by the loud opening and closing of the doors turned towards the sky, like a brutal return to the real world.
- 5 slanted containers with 5 different inclinations (light grey) with opened end pieces, the “Open Sky”. These 5 elements help to see nature, the changing skies (weather service live) and the cosmos.
- 3 very slanted containers (sand colored), almost horizontal and opened at the ends. These “Open Architectures” frame the culture and some parts of the surrounding buildings. The visitor can climb along the interior slopes and thus have a balcony in town.

These 15 structures are stabilized and temporarily “anchored» to the ground with concrete foundations that serve as base and counterbalance. This construction is done easily and without any damage to the ground, by just digging excavations of 2' of depth to lay down these platforms (concrete) on which their “socks sleeves” (containers) hang.

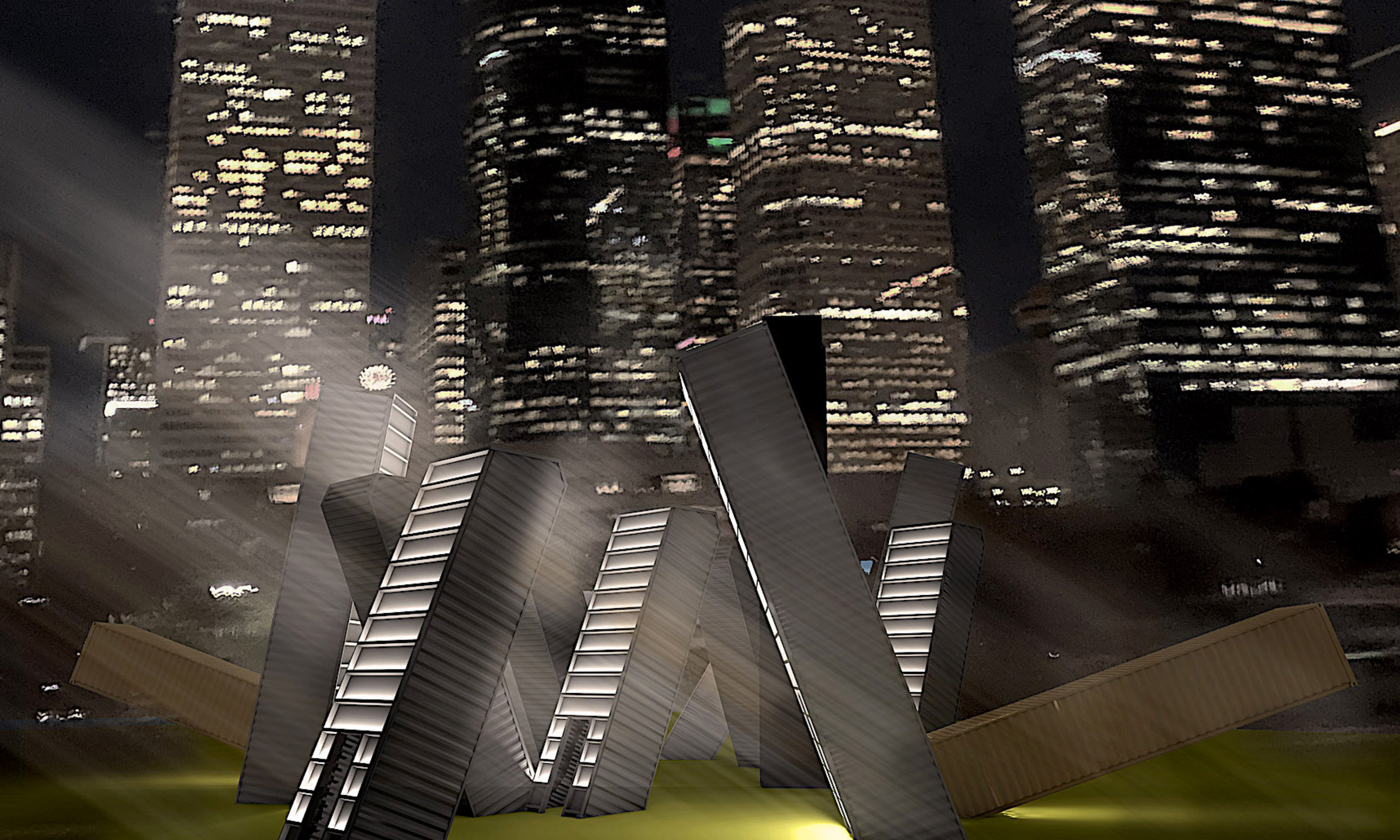
Once the installation is over, a simple reconditioning of the ground and its lawn will not leave any trace of this event.

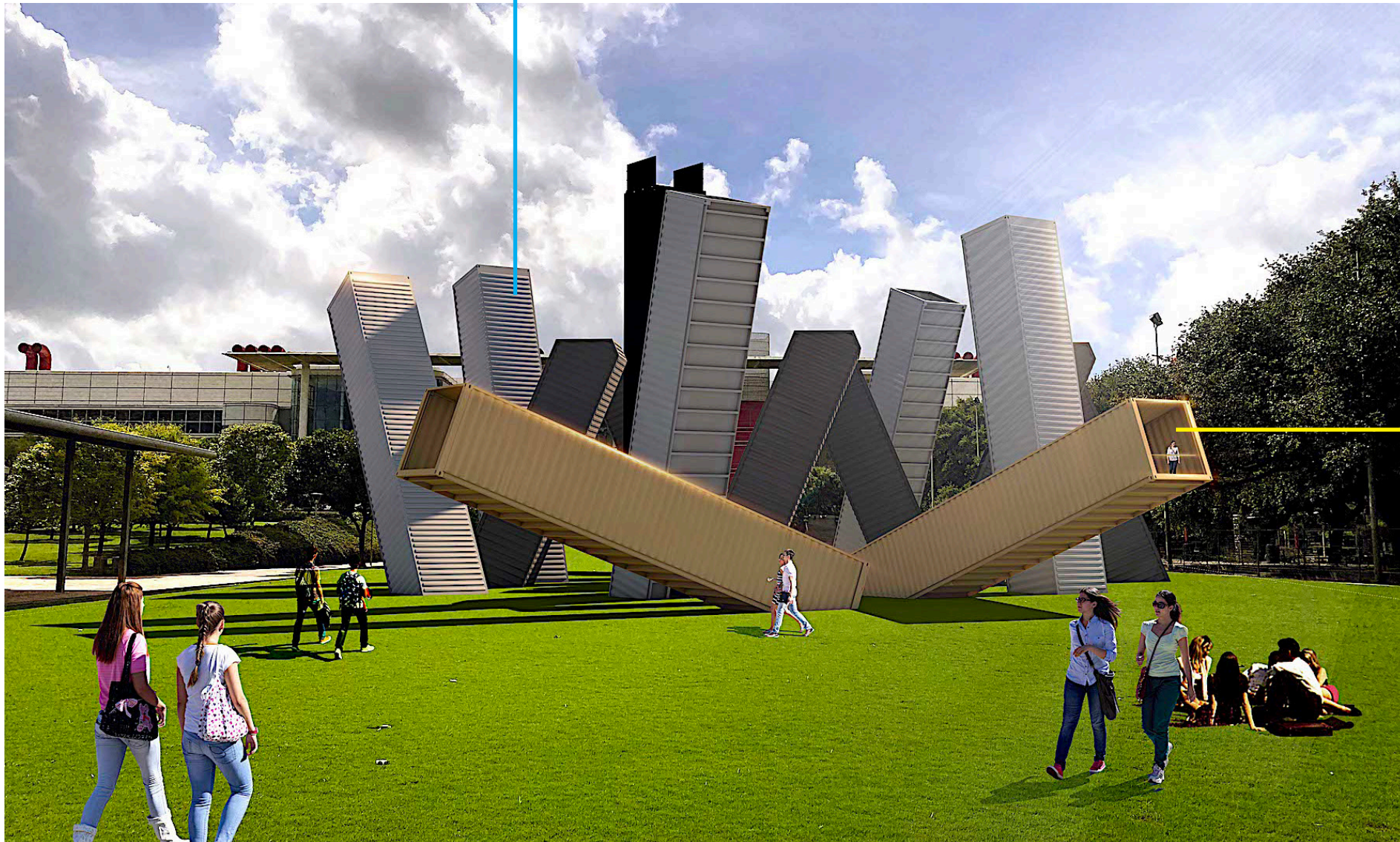


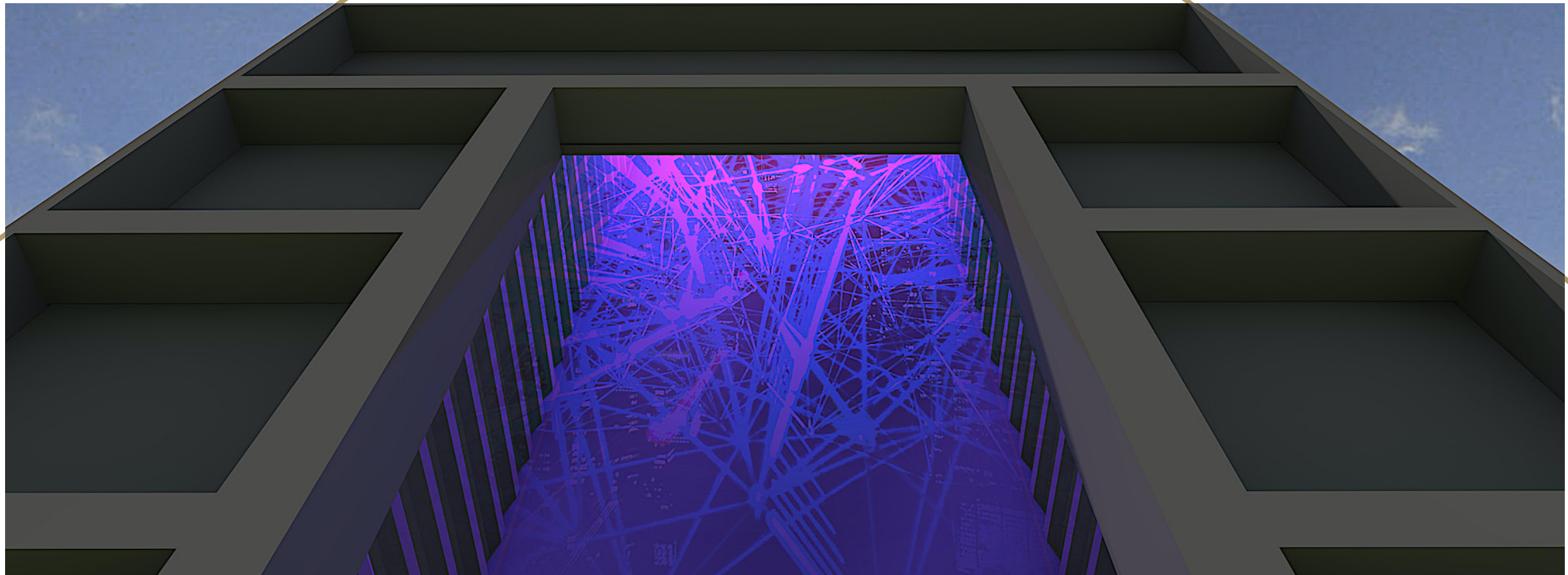




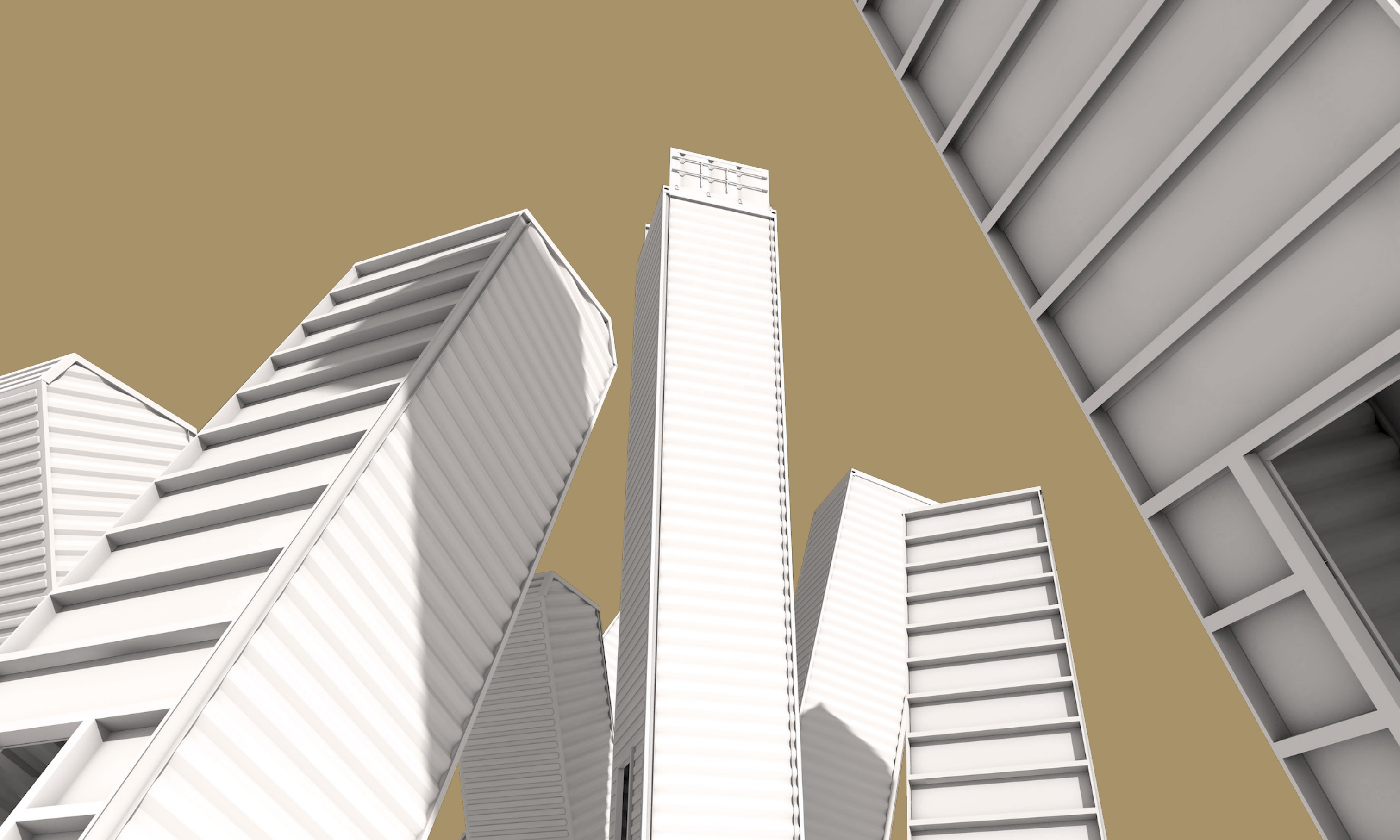








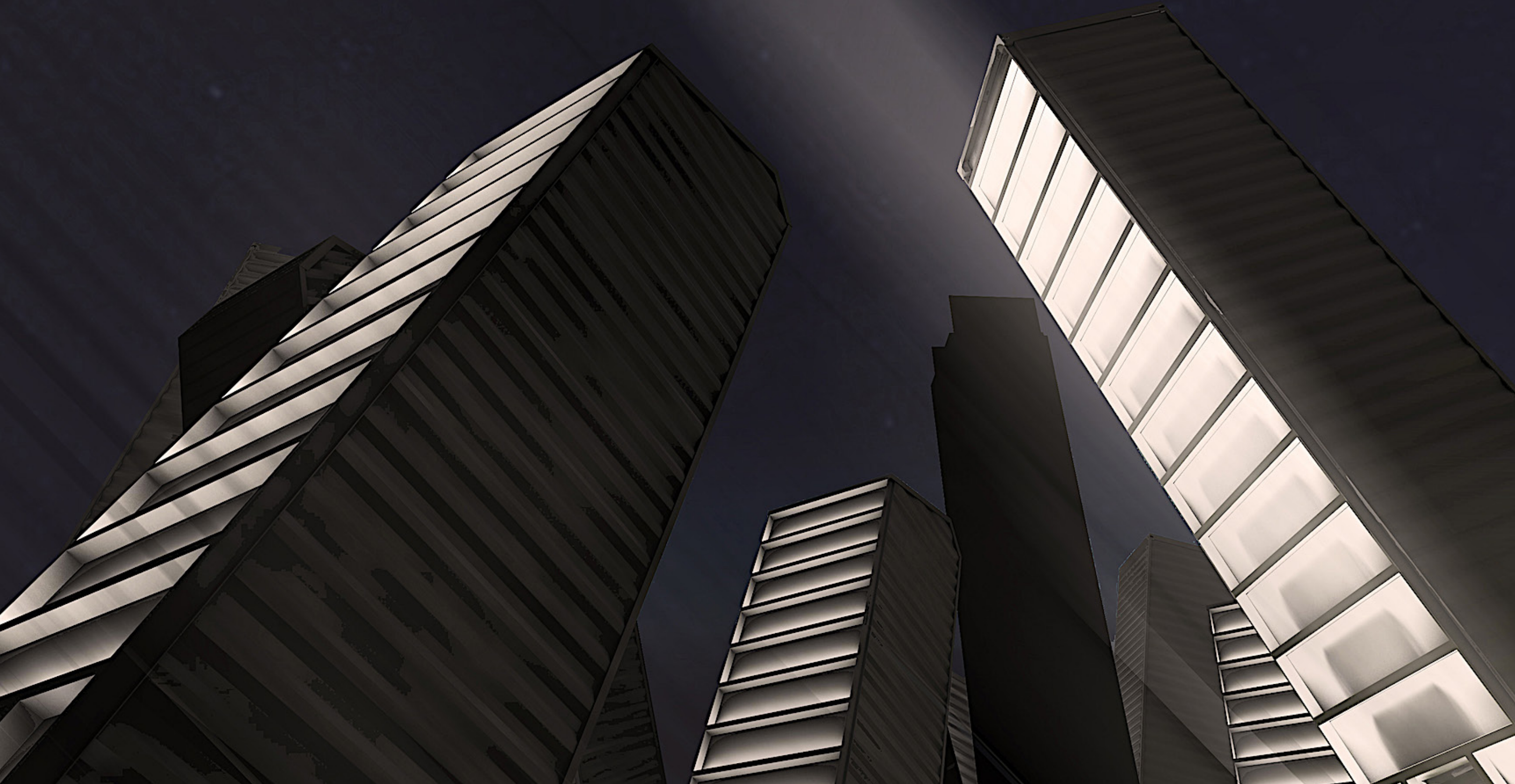




« Comment vivre vraiment “ici” si tout est maintenant ? »

How to really live « here » if everything is now?

Inscription of Paul Virilio on the quay named after him in La Rochelle, France





Appendices

Claude YACOUB

Architect DESA, France

While being an architect, university professor and researcher, Claude Yacoub has created 5 major ephemeral structures and many other temporary artistic works of art since 1989.



"Tomorrow, elsewhere"

Savane's Park, Fort-de-France, 1992

Sponsors: Regional Direction of Cultural Affairs of Martinique,
Ministry of Culture & Caisse des Dépôts et Consignations



“ I’m waiting for the end of a world “

François Arago Street, Fort-de-France, 1996

Sponsors: Regional Direction of Cultural Affairs of Martinique,
Ministry of Culture & Caisse des Dépôts et Consignations,
Martinique General Council

“ Thirty thousand souls under the heavens “

Baie de Saint-Pierre, 2002

Sponsors: Saint-Pierre City, Martinique General Council,
Office of Tourism, Martinique Regional Council,
Minister for Overseas Departments and Territories,
Regional Direction of Cultural Affairs of Martinique,
Ministry of Culture

“ With Time “

Khan Assad Pacha, Damas, 2006

Sponsors: French cultural Center,
French Embassy in Damascus & Total

“ Stars at Sea “

Sainte-Marie Islet, 1998

Sponsor: Sainte-Marie City

