

DEGROWTH

While host buildings and spaces are silent, they have lots they want to tell and reveal to us. In this context we become forensic architectural pathologists analysing past uses, circulation, flow, and their existing design languages, before we start to salvage, recycle and breathe new life into them.

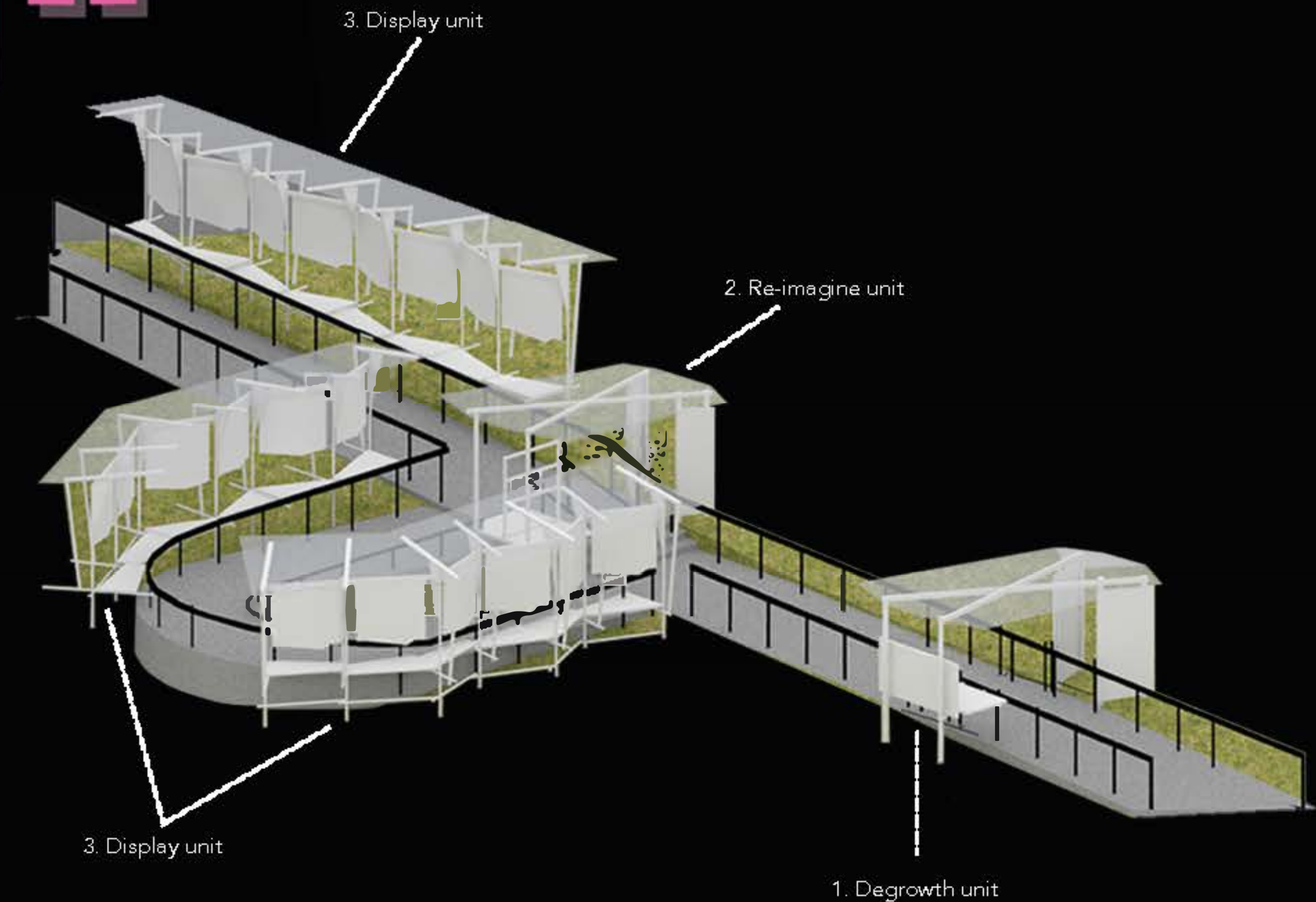
This fascinating topic has been at the heart of our design conversations and has stimulated proposal and narratives that carry deep social, environmental, and historical sensitivities influenced by the pandemic we all have continued to experience.

The field of Interior Architecture and Design is characterised by our ability to rehabilitate, reuse, and redefine host buildings and spaces, while referencing what went before. When interior designer/architects occupy and adapt an existing building or space, we work towards a degrowth agenda.

Each year the 2nd year interior design students are asked to design and construct the exhibition for the 3rd year Interior students to showcase their final major project. This years Event project shares the theme of 'Degrowth' with the 3rd year students.

Because of Covid restrictions, the exhibition was required to be staged outside in the open, creating the need to develop a roof canopy to offer some protection to the displays.

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REIMAGINE

In order to preserve the world we live in, we must begin to reclaim what we have already built. We have a vast amount of existing creations and the key to our future is not to add more but to reclaim and re-imagine what is already existing. Less is more.

The exhibition design process:

The 2nd year students were required to research individually the theme of 'Degrowth' through curating a page of analytical sketches and found images for 13 different categories, investigating what 'Degrowth' might be from the Macro down to the Micro.

The students then Created a Collage or painting that illustrated a macro 'Degrowth' masterplan with a connecting spine of 20no. micro 'Degrowth' units.

They then carried out a survey of the site and analysed the 4no. surrounding elevations. They created a comparative study of the architectural design language of each building, eg. architectural grid and building mass vs. transparency etc.

8no. teams were formed with each individuals research findings and design output pooled to create 8 no. hybrid exhibition stand design solutions. Each team built an A3 sized model of a two-level spinal structure, with 20 no. two tier and single level platforms attached. They then developed and detailed their designs, constructing 1:1 scale mock-ups of important details.

Group 1:

Focused on bringing the architectural language of the surrounding buildings together, utilising transparency, insertion and repetition.



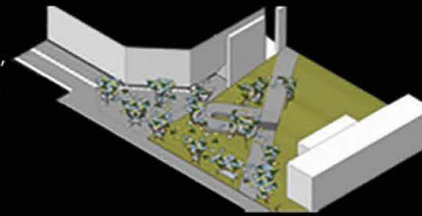
Group 2:

Chose to express degrowth through a parasitic structure, latched onto the the existing building.



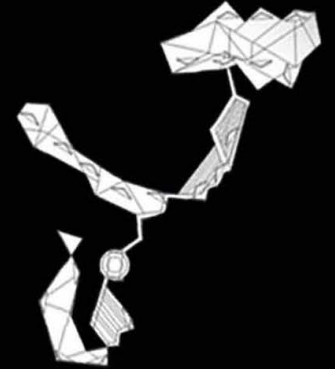
Group 3:

Worked on the idea of bringing new life to existing materials, which have outlived their original purpose.



Group 4:

Focused on finding design essence of the space by extracting tge design language from tge existing architecture.



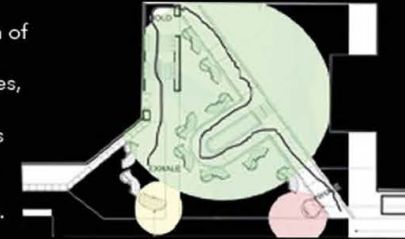
Group 5:

Created a concept where they used only existing materials and re-imagined them as the new structure.



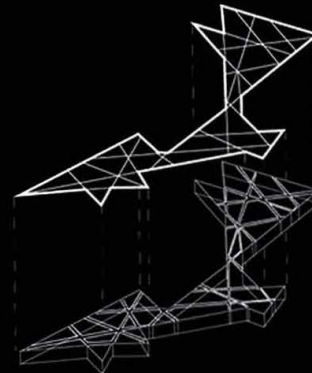
Group 6:

Explored the idea of collecting any available resources, from the university campus and transforming them with a new valuable purpose.



Group 7:

Worked on creating unique patterns and geometries derived from the surrounding architecture and translating these into structural forms.



Group 8:

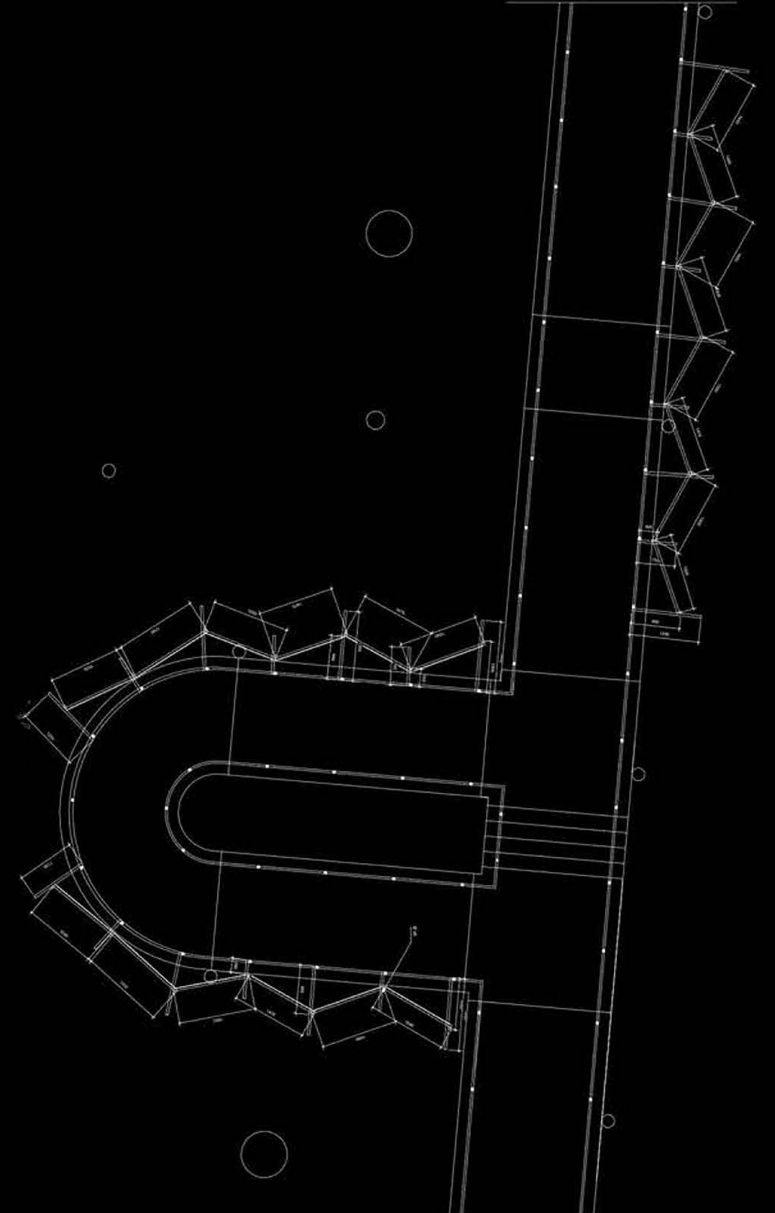
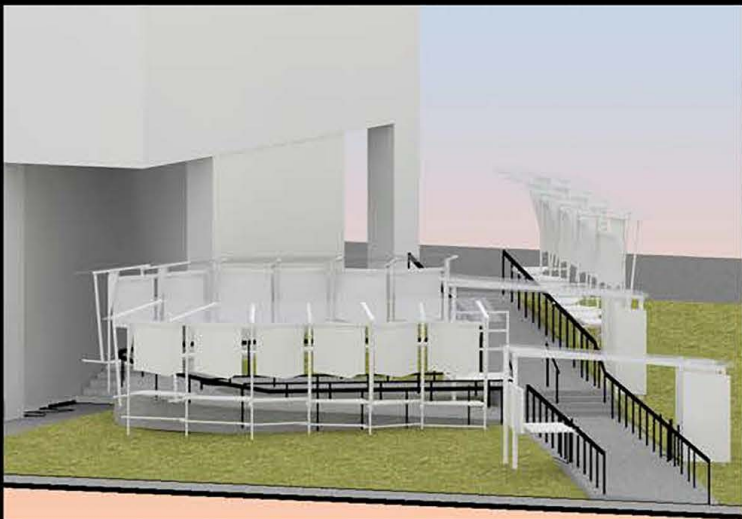
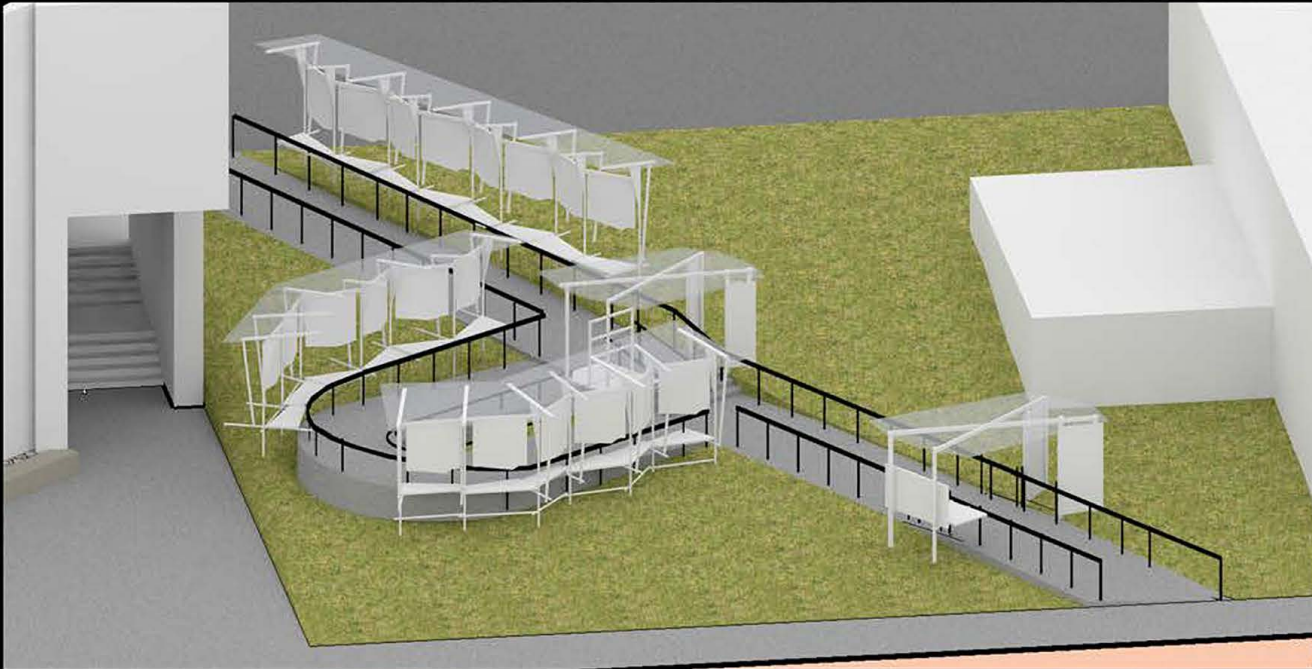
Focused on shattering and recombining the extracted design language of degrowth into a re-imagine series of shapes and forms.



Final Scheme

Each of the 8x scheme designs was presented to the 3rd years, who selected their favourite parts from each teams scheme, with the brief to the 2nd years to combine these chosen elements into one coordinating scheme.

To bring the chosen elements together, required all teams to collaborate closely and to find a working scheme that lived the theme while also presenting a coherent and buildable solution.



Construction

Structure:

The principle structural material was upcycled steel scaffold poles and clamps saved from the breakers yard to live the degrowth theme. With this decided, a master layout plan was drawn up for all other teams to work from.

The structure team had to plan around the sloping site and think about multiple variables. These included the structural stability and the linking of the 3x structures. Other important considerations were the height of the display boards to make them readable.

Roof:

The principle roofing material was to be polycarbonate sheets, saved from the previous years show and plastic D.P.C scavenged from the university's new build accomodation blocks to also deliver the degrowth theme. The roof team had to think about how to safely secure the canopy to the main frame. This was done by attaching 4x2 timbers to the scaffold frames. This created a solid wooden frame behind, where the display boards will sit. The polycarbonate sheets and plastic D.P.C sheeting was then fixed in place to make a shelter from the rain.

Display Units:

As our theme was about degrowth, we upcycled old fireproof doors found on the skip from the university re-build programme to maintain our degrowth approach. These were stripped down, where they were cut to size to fit into the display area. Allowing the A3 models to fit comfortably. Other shelves were made to from plywood to house smaller A4 models, which were placed higher up



The Final Build

The different teams were required to coordinate, collaborate and cooperate under tight timescales to deliver the final build.

As the build progressed, original plans had to be altered as some elements did not necessarily work as drawn because of the site conditions, therefore all teams had to work together to change construction accordingly.

During the building process, we all participated to help each other. Most notably, the construction of the canopy, as it was a complex jigsaw to solve and build. Another group was in charge of painting and putting up the graphic panels together to tie up the finishing details and look.



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