



# PICTURES' PARK

Research through design: Exploring Resilience, finding ways  
to be flexible and renewable to natural phenomena

Test Site: Osumi Island in Berat, Albania



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INTRODUCTION

For this idea-competition, our team consists of prominent figures that have overlapping expertise for which they are renowned internationally. The overlap guarantees a shared vocabulary that allows or an efficient and up-tempo process. All team members are familiar with working in multinational teams and organising their work, communication and production accordingly and efficiently.

We carefully chose partners to team up with. All members have been involved professionally in former settings in one way or another. Next to the personal expertise we looked for partners that are affiliated with respectable universities and other institutions throughout the world. As such, several members of MikeViktorViktor collaborated with PRG°BR architektur through the Berlage Summer School programme and every team member is attached to the strong academic network between Ghent University and other establishments such as Columbia University. This academic and intellectual background guarantees that our team has been involved with intensive design research before and has the necessary resources to do so. Therefore, important information is close at hand or can be gathered quickly.

In this booklet, we proudly present the result of this intriguing collaboration: Pictures' Park!



MIKEVIKTORVIKTOR (BE)  
architecture and urbanism

MikeViktorViktor architects is a design studio specialized in architecture, urban planning and research. The office was established mid 2009 in Antwerp (Belgium). Their work consists of both private and public assignments while the scale varies for 20 to 20.000 square meters. The office has extensive experience in collaborative design processes. From their own strengths, its explores complementarities and professionalism. Virtually all projects are addressed by a multidisciplinary team in witch MikeViktorViktor is responsible for the design and direction.



PRG°B R ARCHITEKTUR + KLODIODA (AL)  
architecture

PRG°B R architektur formerly established in Düsseldorf/Germany, is an independent practice based in Tirana/Albania since 2005 operating within the fields of architecture, urbanism & research. It concerns itself with developing strong concepts and design decisions informed deeply by mining the context and reflecting on how contemporary life evolves. Actively involved in designing of public spaces, housing and civic buildings, PRG°B R architektur is lead by young enthusiasts and senior experienced collaborators aiming to implementing their vision in local developments and competitions.



JORGE OTERO-PAILOS (USA)  
preservation expertise, visual and installation art

Jorge Otero-Pailos is an architect, artist and theorist as a tenured Associate Professor at Columbia University (NY). He is specialised in experimental forms of preservation. His work rethinks preservation as "a powerful countercultural practice that creates alternative futures for our world heritage". He is founder and editor of the journal Future Anterior, that approaches historic preservation from a position of critical inquiry and theoretical analysis.





KRIS COREMANS (BE)  
landscape architecture

Kris Coremans is an urban, landscape and garden designer, engineer-architect and tutor at Ghent University. In 2000 he establishes ssa/xx architects together with Guy Châtel. He is affiliated with Ghent University, where he teaches Architectural Design, Design Theory and Practice, Perception and Visual Media and is connected to Labo A, the research group concentrated on Architecture.



YVES COUSSEMENT (BE)  
visual and installation artist

Yves Coussement is always between two self-named professions. Currently he is between being an Asymmetrist and a Quantum Poet. What for him is always the same thing, is for the spectator a variation of the invisible made visible. He studied engineer-architect at Ghent University and is generally considered to balance between a designer and video artist. His work was displayed in Ghent (Belgium), Melbourne (Australia), New York (U.S.A.) and Jekaterinenburg (Russia).



MAARTEN DELBEKE (BE)  
architectural history and theory

Maarten Delbeke is professor at the department of Architecture and Urban Planning of Ghent University. He obtained his doctorate in Ghent in 2001 and was the first Scott Opler fellow in Architectural History at Worcester College, Oxford. He publishes on the history and theory of art and architecture from the early modern period up to the present. He is the editor-in-chief of Architectural Histories, the online journal of the European Architectural History Network.



Fig. 01 Berat Castle



Fig. 02 Osumi River

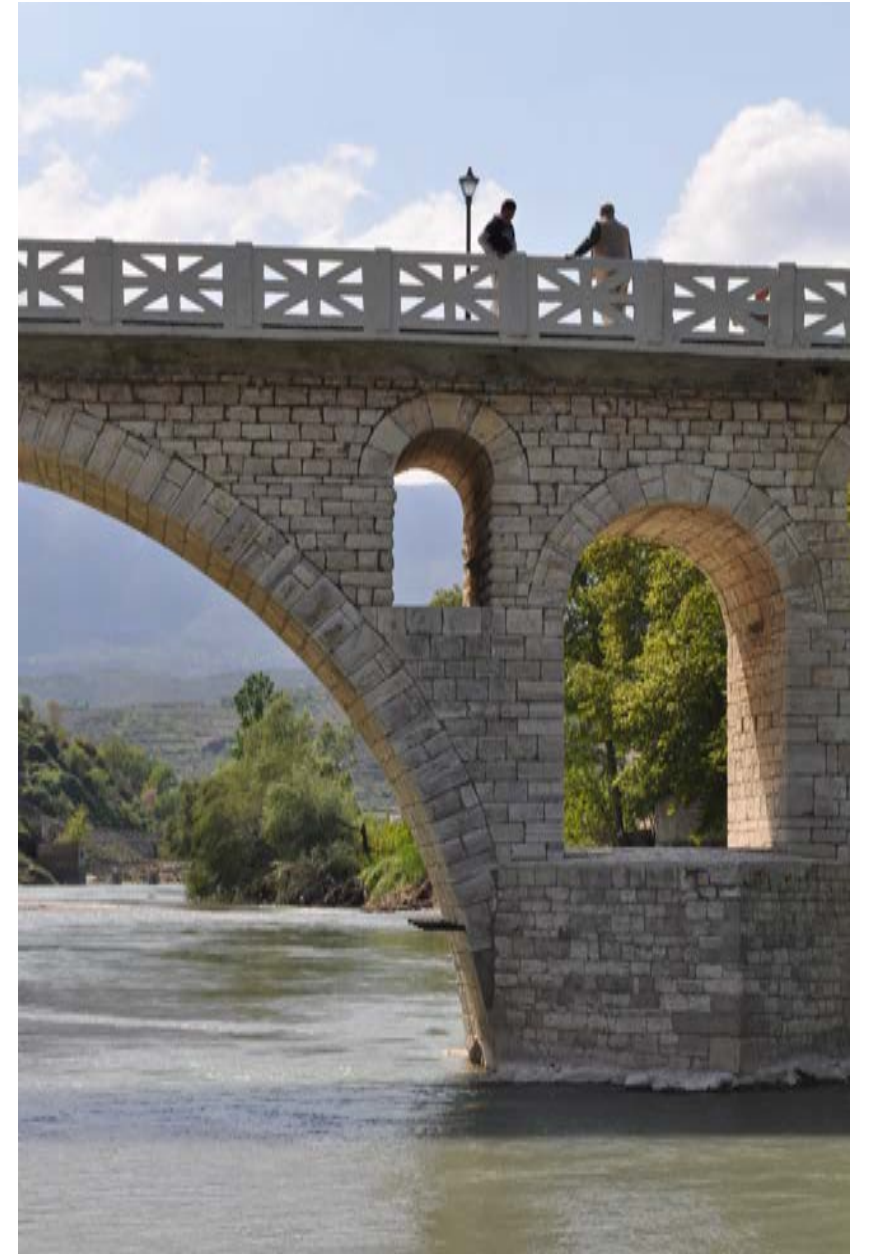


Fig. 03 Unesco Heritage Site





Fig. 04 The 'Xhiro'



Fig. 05 Onufri

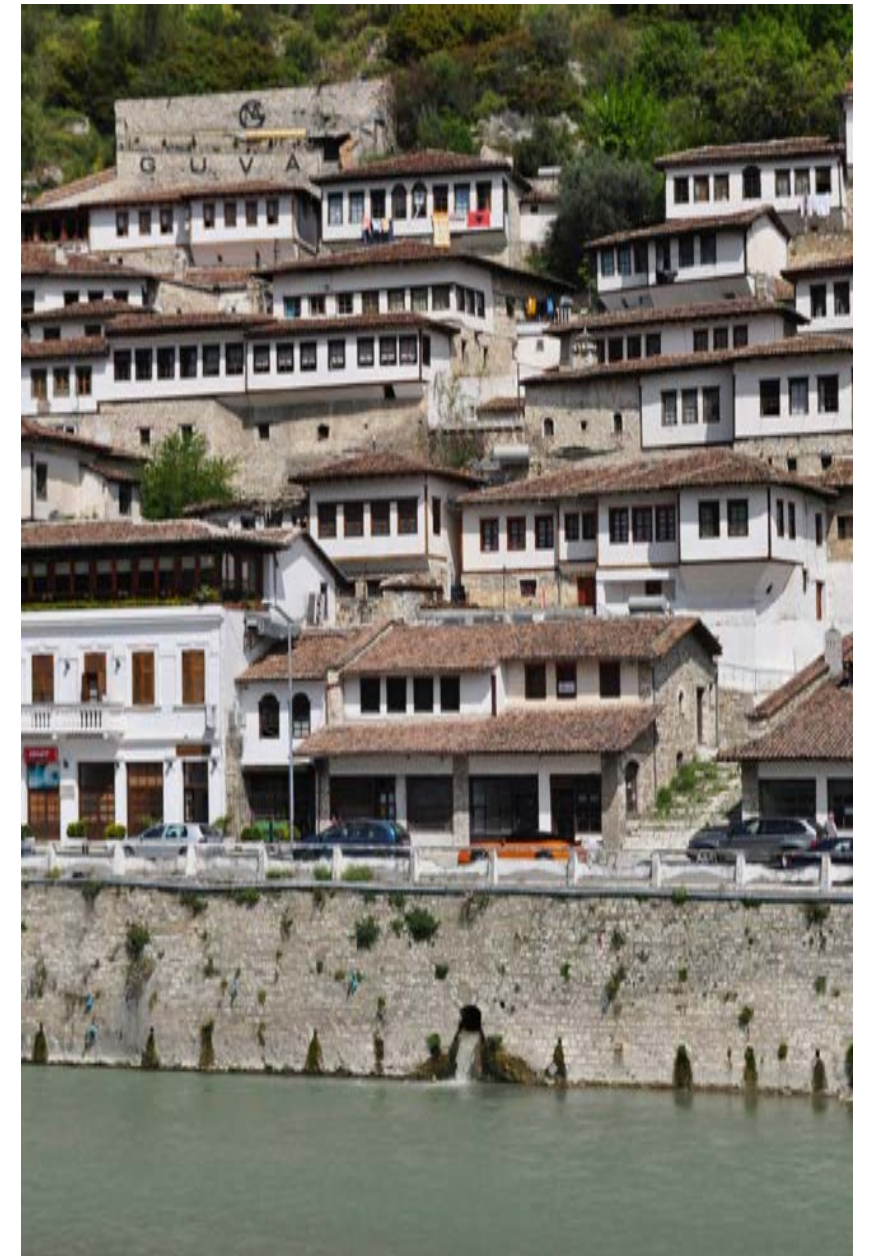


Fig. 06 The City of a Thousand Windows





Fig. 07

**MikeViktorViktor Architects + PRG°B R Architektur in collaboration with KLODIODA shpk**  
 Professor Jorge Otero-Pailos (U.S.A.) / Kris Coremans (BE) / Professor Maarten Delbeke (BE) / Yves Coussement (BE)





Fig. 08

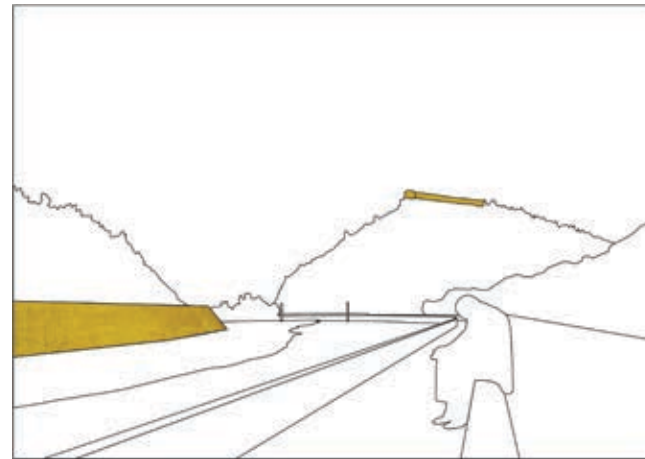


Fig. 07 Collage view from the boardwalk towards the castle.  
The boardwalk is part of the daily 'Xhiro' and becomes the stage for the city's great outdoor cultural events and concerts.

Fig. 08 Edward Lear, Painting of Berat - 1848

Fig. 09 Diagram depicting the 'mirroring' of the castle and 'Pictures' Park'.

## PICTURES' PARK

The iconic view of the historic city of Berat, created over centuries by thousands of artists and travelers, is from the river looking up at the castle. The thousand windows are oriented towards the river, and the city of windows appears at its best from the river. Osumi Island has historically served as the privileged place from which to admire this UNESCO Heritage site. Yet because it floods it was only accessible seasonally.

We propose to turn Osumi Island into a year-round park from which to admire the city and castle, following the footsteps of romantic painters and travelers. It will be an oasis of calm and beauty framing the iconic view of Berat, where residents will walk their traditional "Xhiro", children will have safe play areas away from traffic, and the city's great outdoor cultural events and concerts will be staged.

Berat is historically significant both for its architecture and for its cultural landscape. Osumi Island is an important contributing feature to this cultural landscape. It is situated at the core of the UNESCO buffer zone, and it is important to preserve Osumi Island as a natural element.



Our project protects the natural atmosphere of the island while creating the necessary infrastructure for its year-round enjoyment. We raise the ground level at the center of the island safely above the flood line, but we leave the rest of the island in its natural state, so that it continues to disappear under water during the high water months. We thus preserve this important natural cycle of emergence and submergence, which has historically defined the experience of the island and the city.

The naturally flooding edges of the island are set in counterpoint to the urban edge of the city, which is lined with an embankment that doubles up as a new sewage conduit. The top of the embankment serves as a new beautiful boardwalk. Inside the wall is the necessary engineering to upgrade Berat's sewage system, safely leading all waste water to a treatment facility downstream.

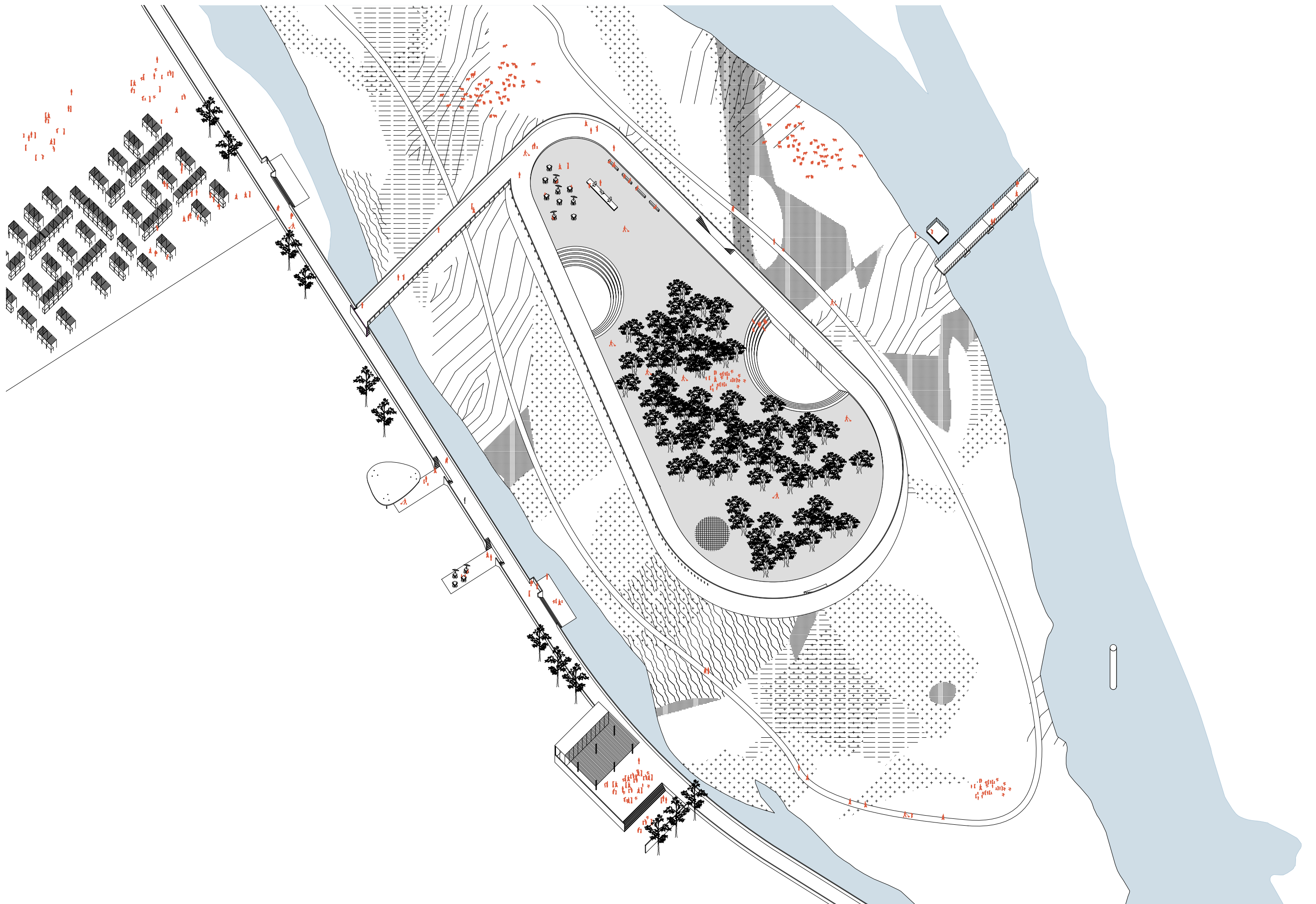


Fig. 10 Axonometric view of Pictures' Park & the boardwalk.

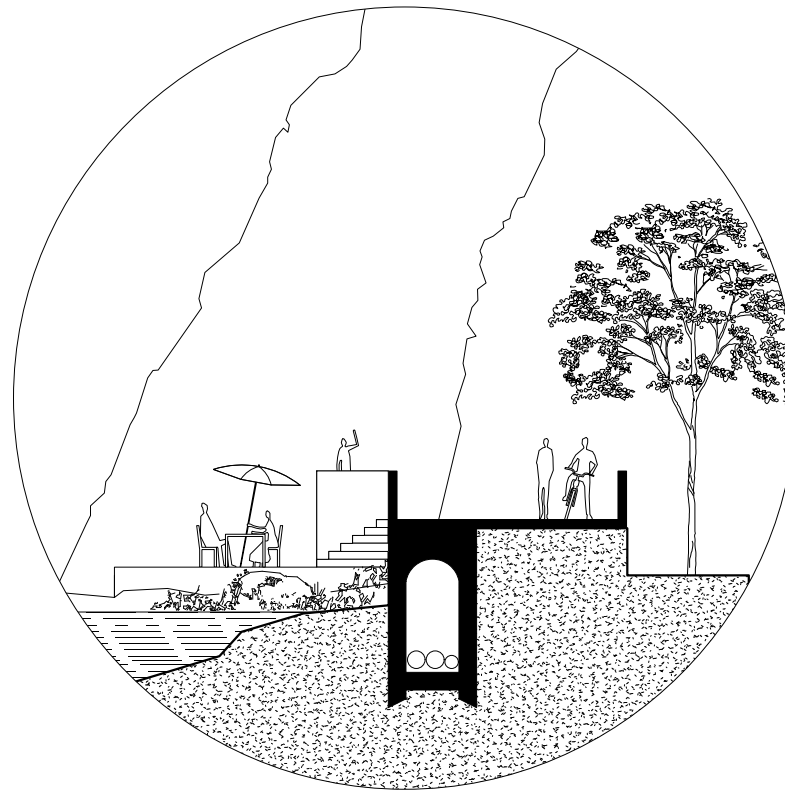


Fig. 11 Section detail AA'

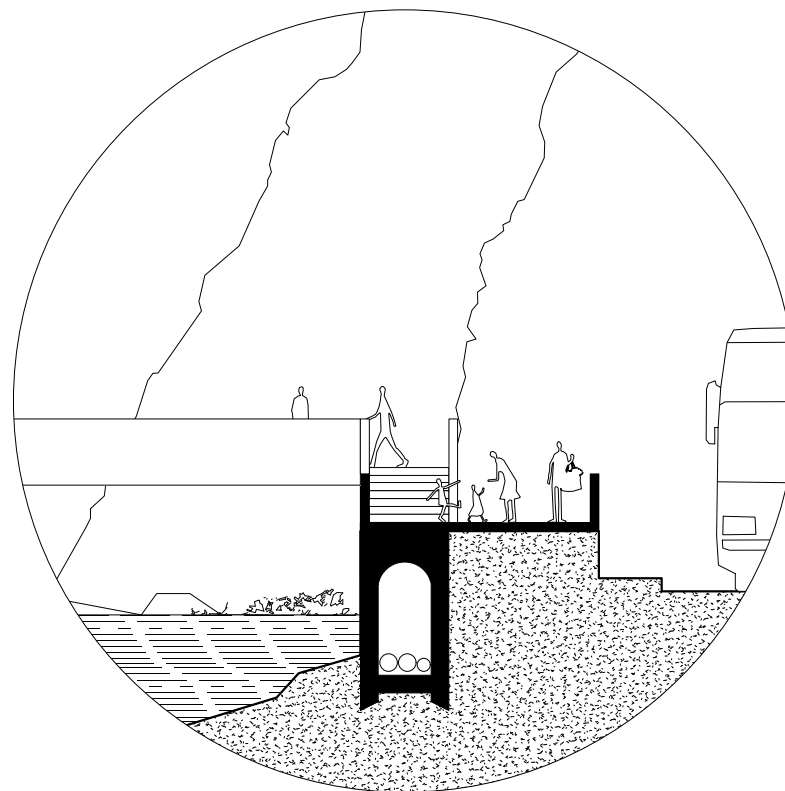


Fig. 12 Section detail BB'

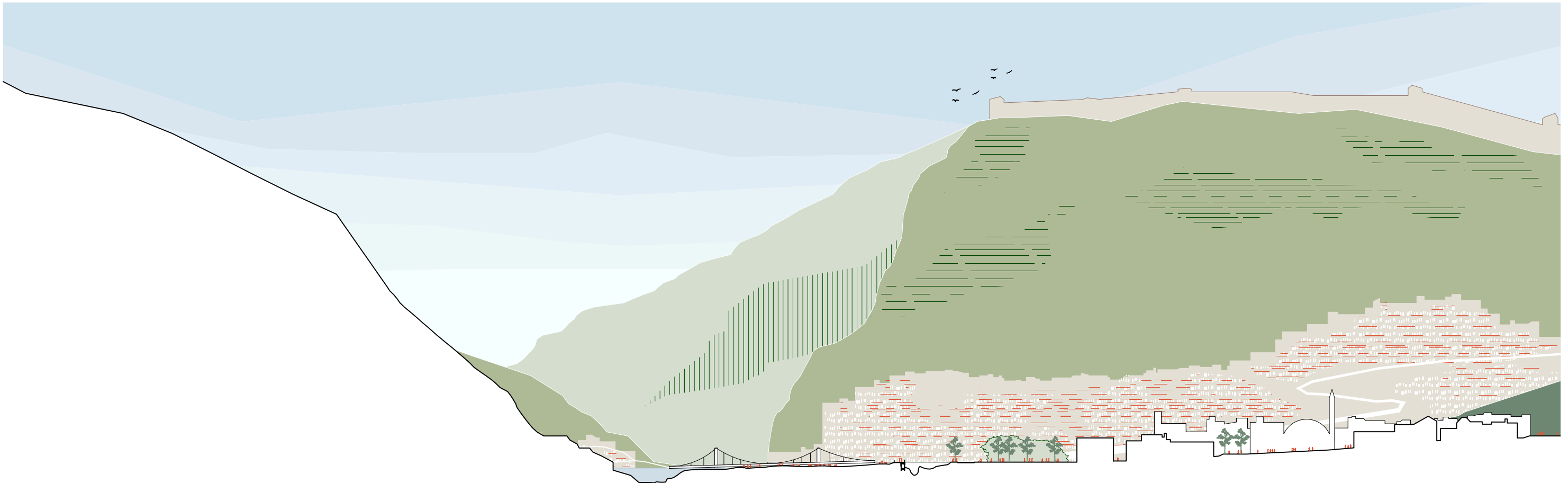


Fig. 13 Section AA'

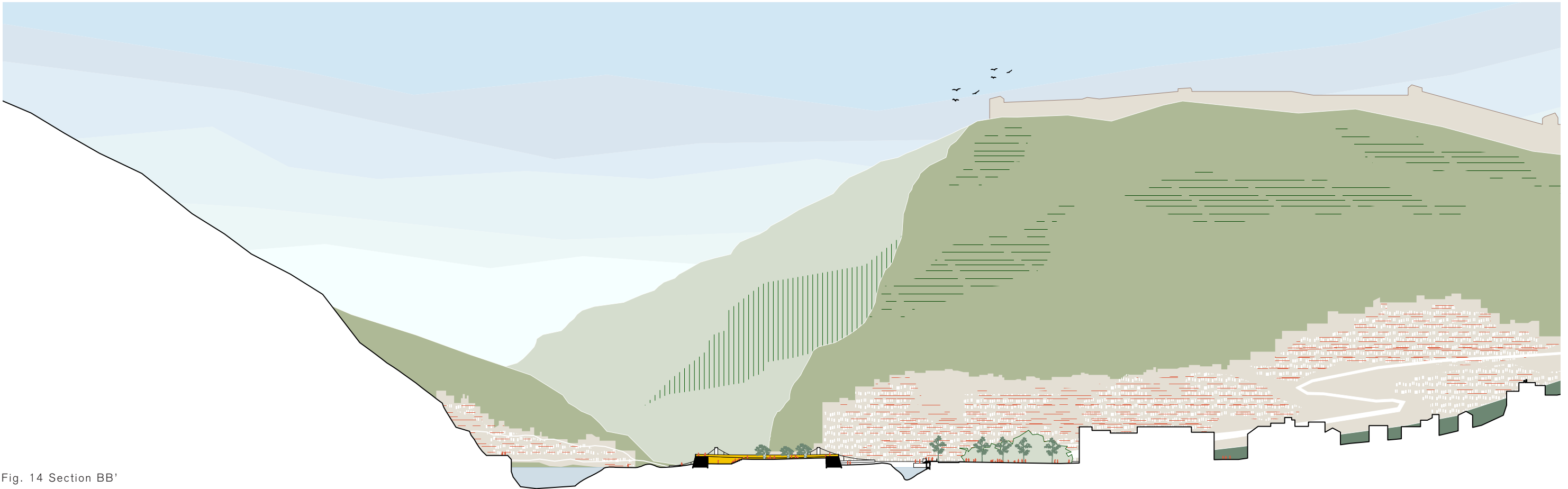


Fig. 14 Section BB'

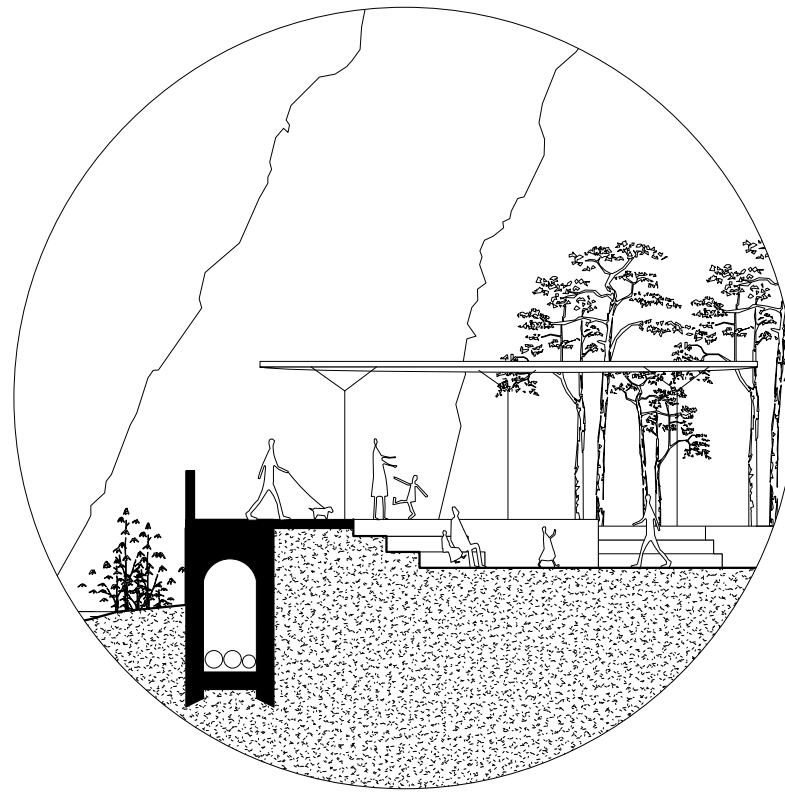


Fig. 15 Section detail CC'

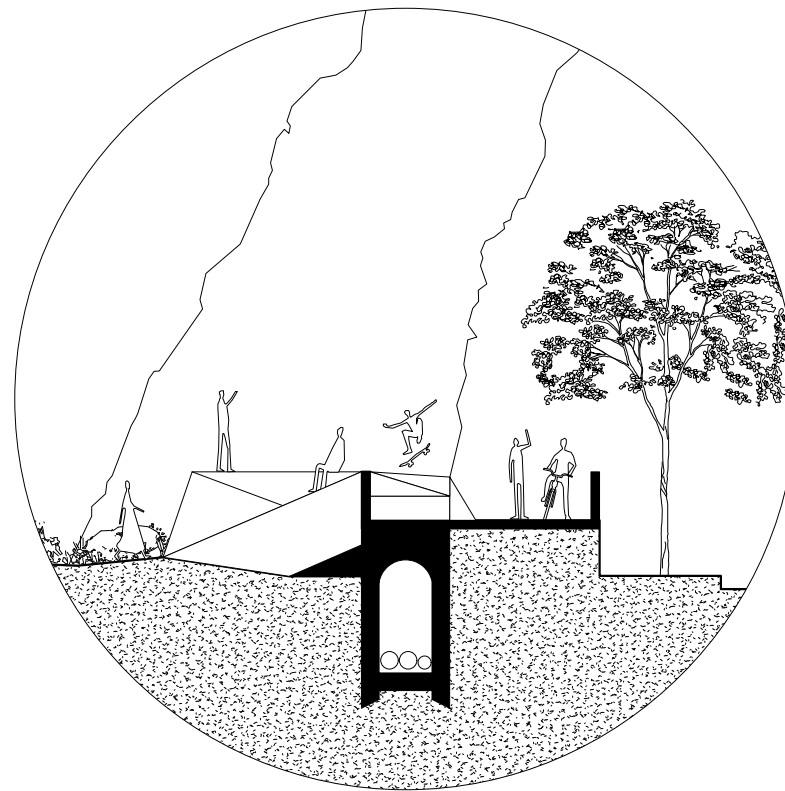


Fig. 16 Section detail DD'



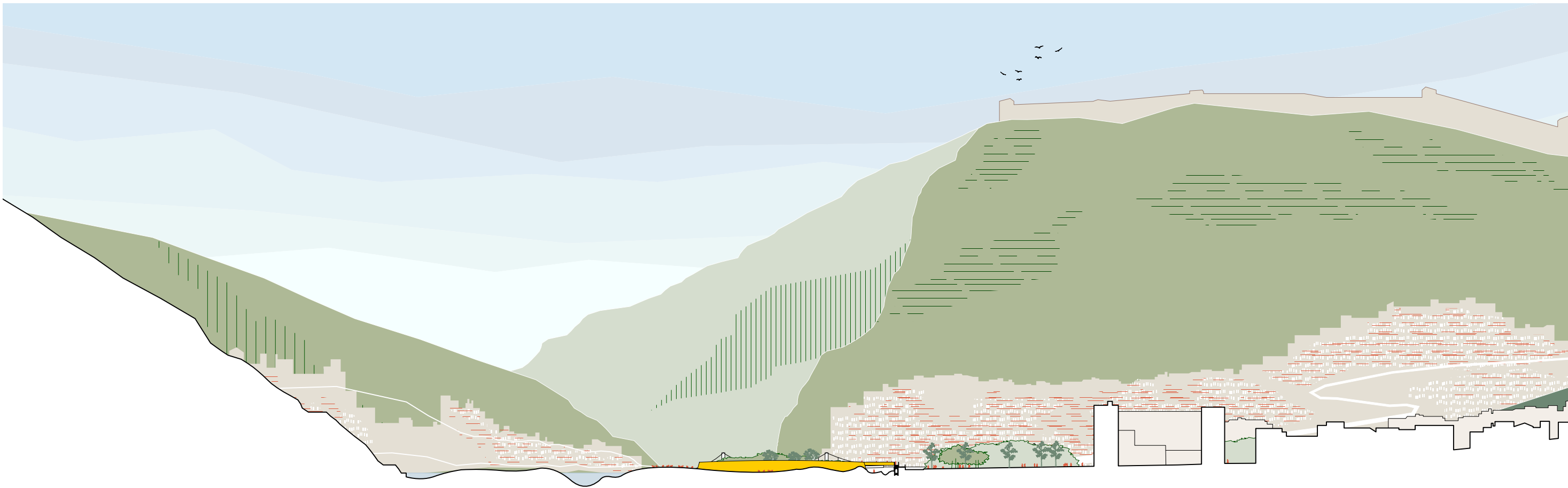


Fig. 17 Section CC'

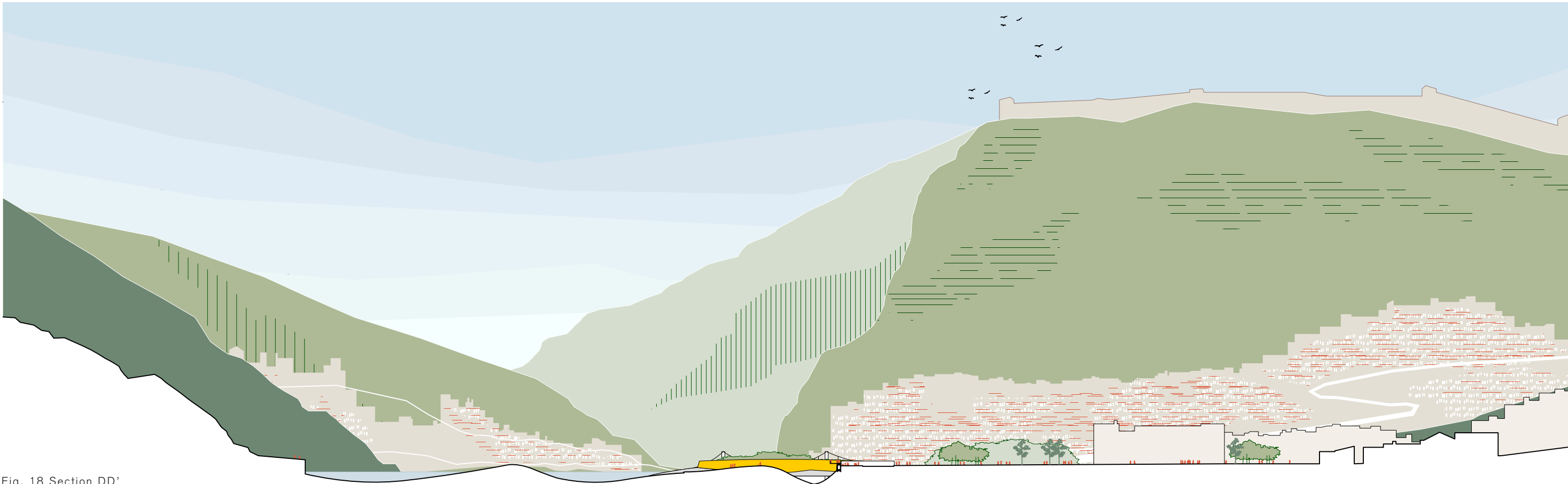


Fig. 18 Section DD'

# THE SALUTE OF THE OLIVE BRANCH TREE

The artwork is an ode to ‘every moment of the day’. The salute is a greeting that culminates once during the day and once during the night into a vibrating contact between heaven and earth.

The olive branch is a contextual translaton of a universal salute. The projects consists of an artificial, 4m high olive tree branch. The branch is obviously artificial but man-made without any artistic signature. One part is static while the other top part is dynamic.

During a full day, the tree makes a two gracious bows. At this moment the branch touches a nearby pond in the form of the Tomorr-mountain. After this touch, the branch moves back up.



Fig. 19



Fig. 20

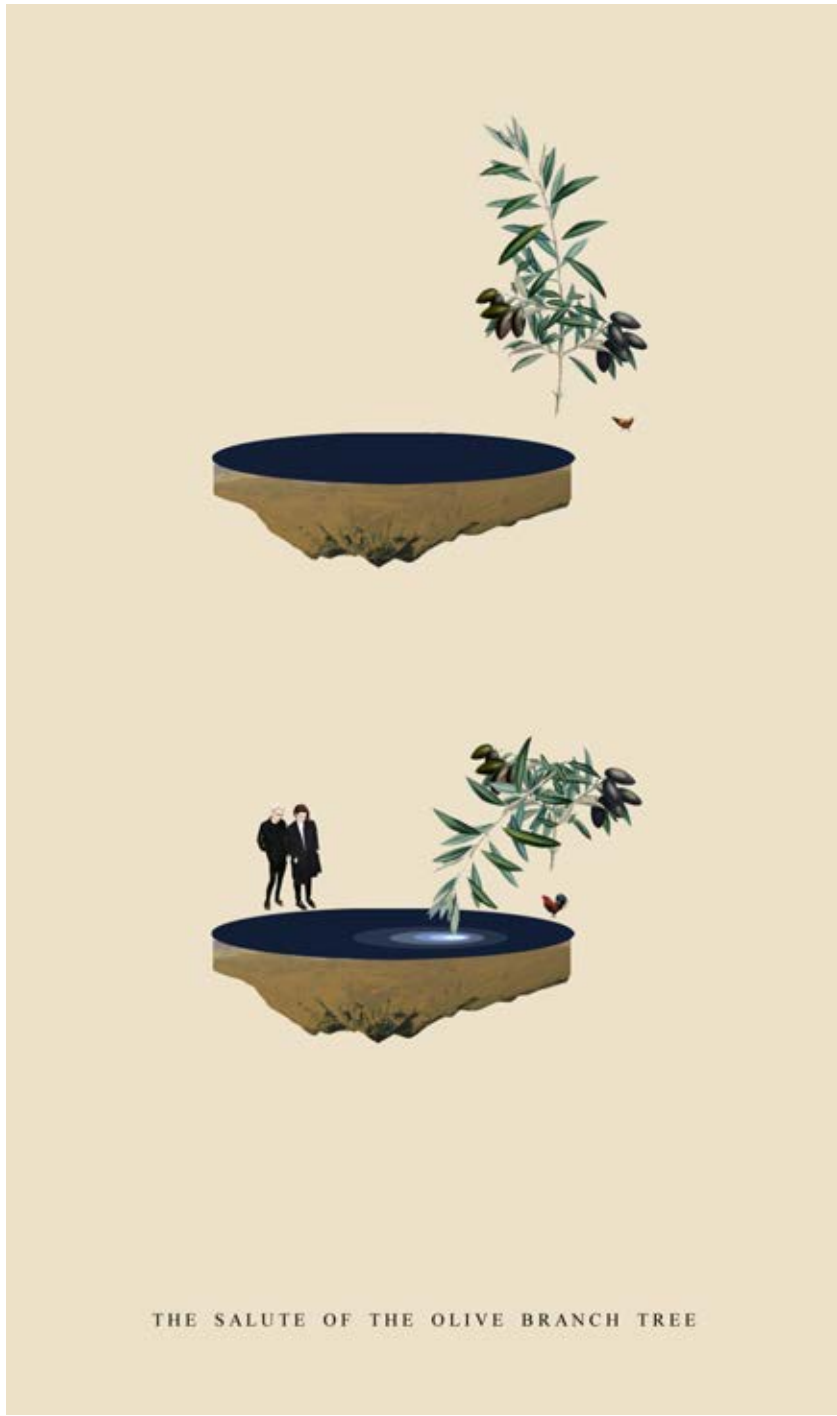


Fig. 21

- Fig. 19 The Salute of the Olive Branch Tree, artwork by Yves Coussement 2015 on the occasion of Osumi Island Competition.
- Fig. 20 The Salute of the Olive Branch Tree, artwork by Yves Coussement 2015, depicting the 24h-movement of the branch, touching the pool twice.
- Fig. 21 The Salute of the Olive Branch Tree, artwork by Yves Coussement 2015 on the occasion of Osumi Island Competition.
- Fig. 22 Collage view from the left bank, looking towards Pictures' Park. While creating the necessary infrastructure for its year-round enjoyment, the raised ground level protects the natural atmosphere of the island.





Fig. 22

MikeViktorViktor Architects + PRG°B R Architektur in collaboration with KLODODA shpk  
 Professor Jorge Otero-Pailos (U.S.A.) / Kris Coremans (BE) / Professor Maarten Delbeke (BE) / Yves Coussement (BE)





Fig. 23 Collage view from the castle; the river is at its highest level with the reduced Pictures' Park. We propose to turn Osumi Island into a year-round park from which to admire the city and castle, following the footsteps of romantic painters and travelers.





Fig. 24 Collage view from within Pictures' Park, an oasis of calm and beauty framing the iconic views of Berat.

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REFERENCES



Fig. 25



Fig. 26



Fig. 27



Fig. 28

- Fig. 25 Bus Station Canopies, Rotterdam (Netherlands).MAXWAN - 2014
- Fig. 26 Sea Organ, Zadar (Croatia). Nikola Bašić - 2005
- Fig. 27 Belvoir Amphitheatre, Perth (Australia).
- Fig. 28 Stepwell Rajasthan (India). Unknown - AD 600
- Fig. 29 Leça Swimming Pools, Leça (Portugal). Alvaro Siza - 1996
- Fig. 30 Leça Swimming Pools, Leça (Portugal). Alvaro Siza - 1996
- Fig. 31 Castelvecchio Museum in Verona (Italy). Carlo Scarpa - 1959/1973



Fig. 29



Fig. 30



Fig. 31





Fig. 32



Fig. 33

## MATERIALS



Fig. 34



Fig. 35



Fig. 36

- Fig. 32 Albanian gold coins
- Fig. 33 The Berati Olive Tree
- Fig. 34 Mulini Beach. Studio 3LHD
- Fig. 35 Yellow-washed concrete at Mulini Beach. Studio 3LHD
- Fig. 36 The blue and ochre-coloured stones of the Berati Region.





Fig. 37 Collage view of the urban edge of the city. The top of the embankment serves as a new beautiful boardwalk.



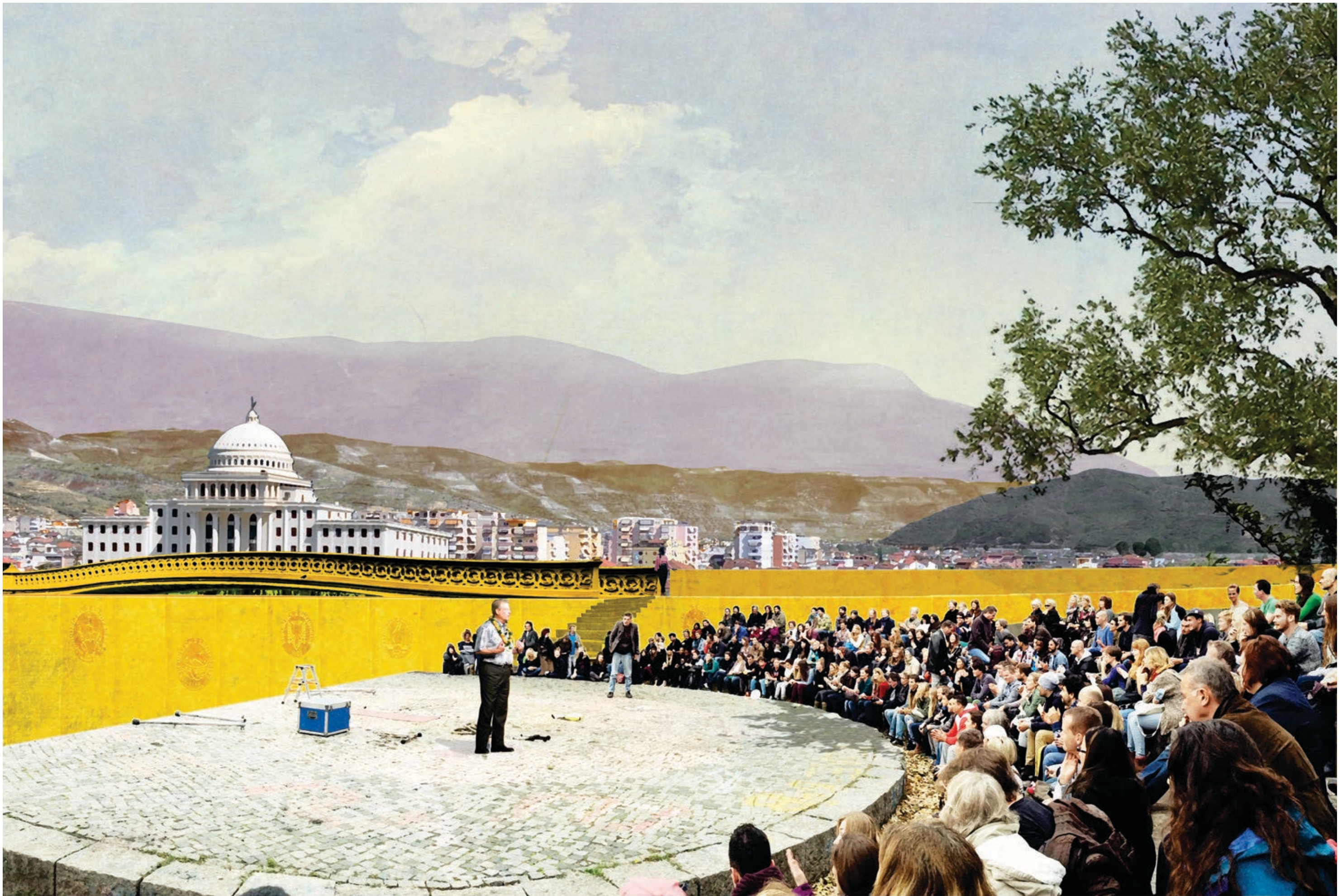


Fig. 38 Collage view of the interior of Pictures' Park, where the city's great outdoor cultural events and concerts will be staged.



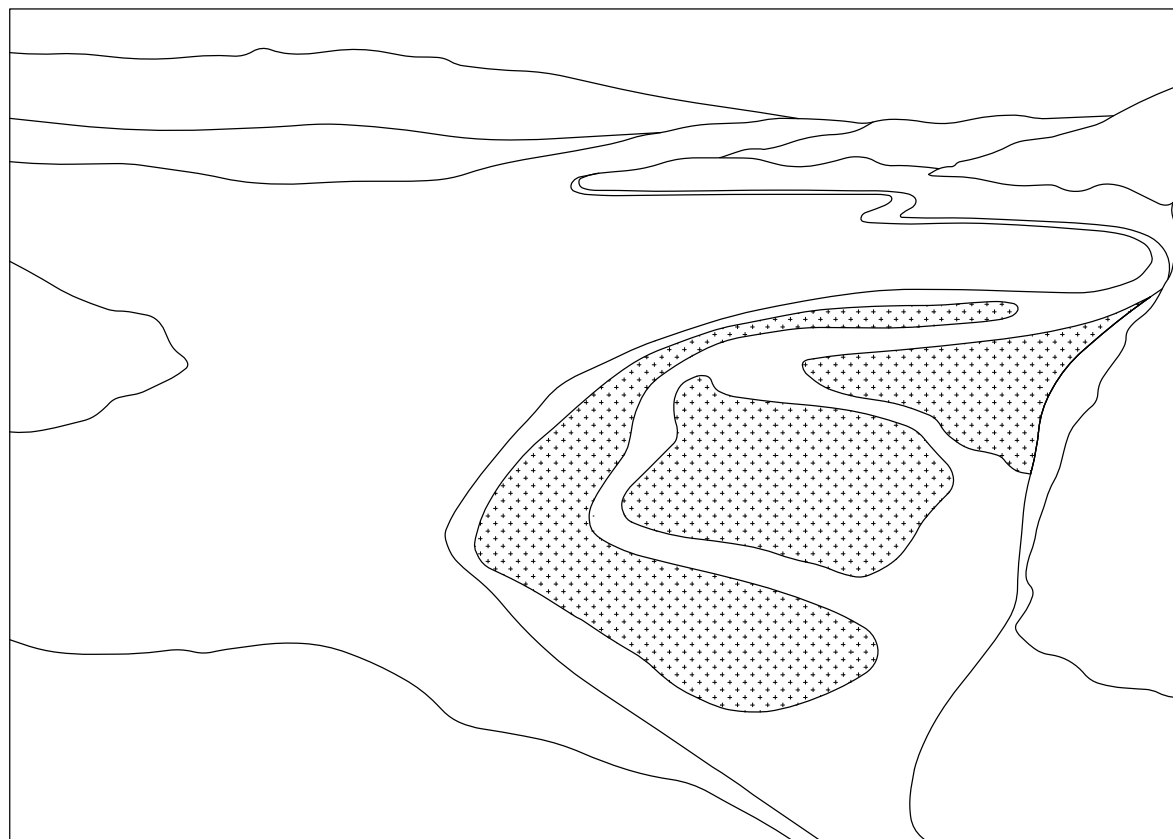


Fig. 39 Present urban structure.

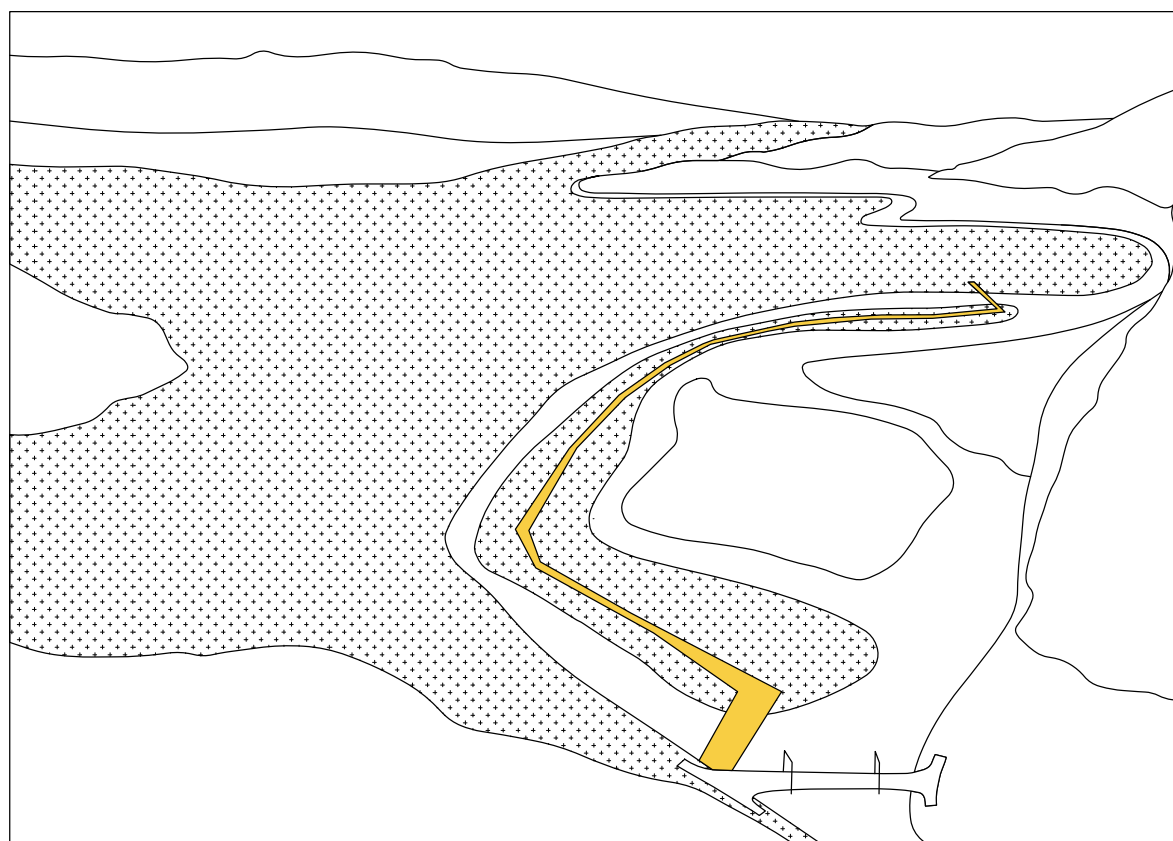


Fig. 40 Urban influence of the new proposed boardwalk.

## OSUMI RIVER

### BERAT

Situated between hilltops and mountains Berat leans against the north and south bank of the river Osumi. The river is the spine of the landscape, as she narrows at the curve around Gorica, she forms a vast and stable passage between two historical settlements. Before and beyond that point, Osumi river expands and shrinks etching multiple figures by transporting sediment. This undefined margin is taken by less resisting and frail program such as agricultural planes, parks and isolated structures. Nevertheless Berat has a clear configuration with an alternation of natural elements, agricultural and urban figures. The island is, by the lack of a vast shape, an important component of this configuration and a key element in the identity of Berat.

In order to preserve this important landmark, the future urbanization must have a strategy of focal points and precisely placed structures opposite to a complete colonization of the island. It is important that the city keeps a strong visual connection to the waterfront as well as to the island.

### FLOOD

Parallel to the north bank a segment of the island rises up from the river as it forms a natural canal. This shape can be used to control flood. By taking advantage of the sediment that is transported by the river, this ridge can be brought up to a safe level ( $\pm 59m$ ). On the start and the end of the canal two accessible locks control the water level and secure a dry passage between island and city. This 1.500m ridge thus forms a boardwalk overlooking the city within its natural theater and organizes the recreational machinery.

### FOLIES

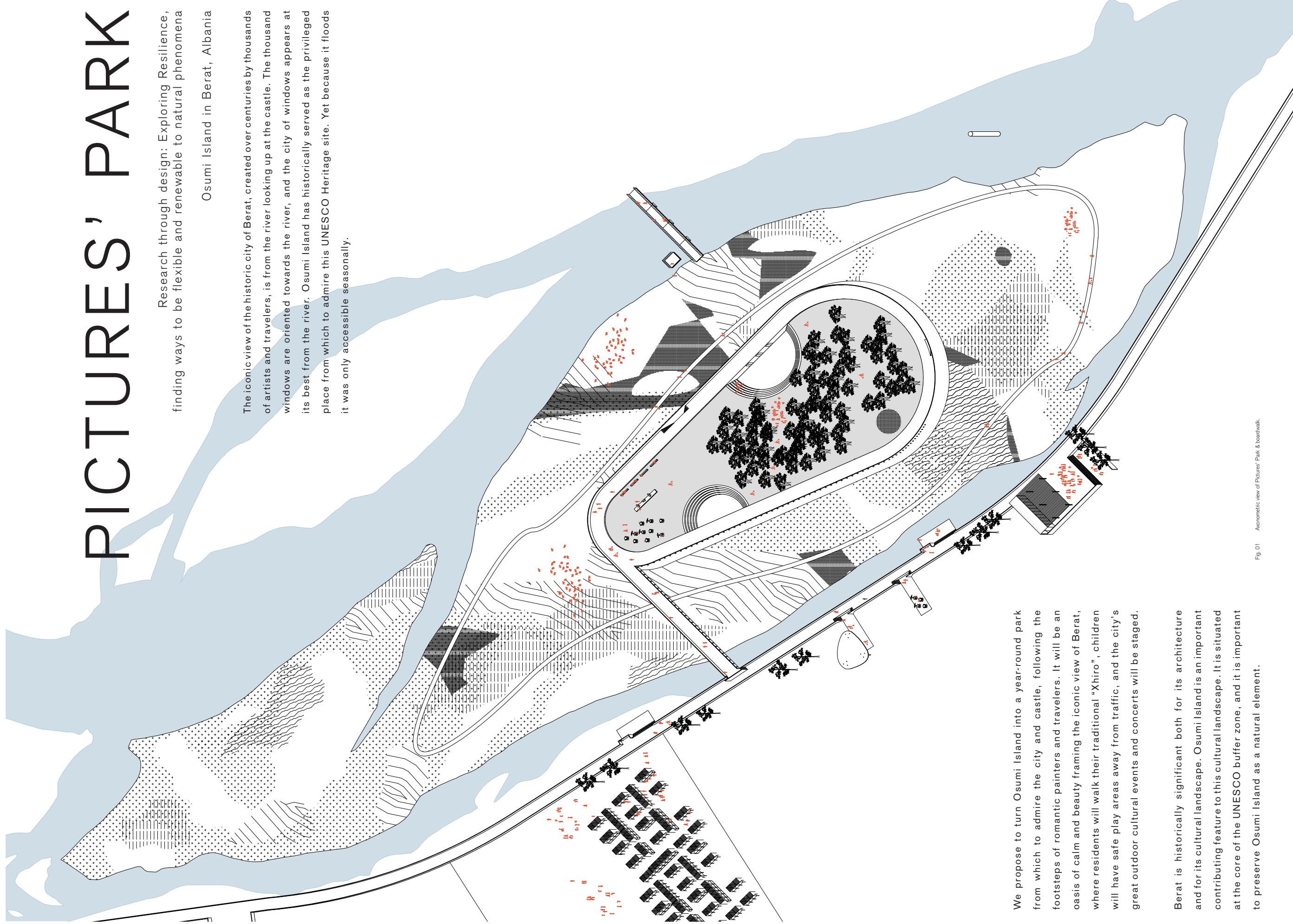
The infrastructure necessary for the equipment of the touristic industry behaves like 'folies' in the landscape. They sharpen the contrast between the cultural function and the natural conditions. A collection of 'folies' enables to insert a program, foreign to the locus. As the island itself is under permanent changes, the structures will rise as castles out of the sediment.





Fig. 41 Aerial picture / Plan of Boardwalk and Pictures' Park.





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Fig. 01 Aeronometric view of Pictures' Park & boardwalk.



Fig. 02

Our project protects the natural atmosphere of the island while creating the necessary infrastructure for its year-round enjoyment. We raise the ground level at the center of the island safely above the flood line, but we leave the rest of the island in its natural state, so that it continues to disappear under water during the high water months. We thus preserve this important natural cycle of emergence and submergence, which has historically defined the experience of the island and the city.

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Fig. 04 Diagram depicting the 'mirroring' of the castle and Pictures' Park.



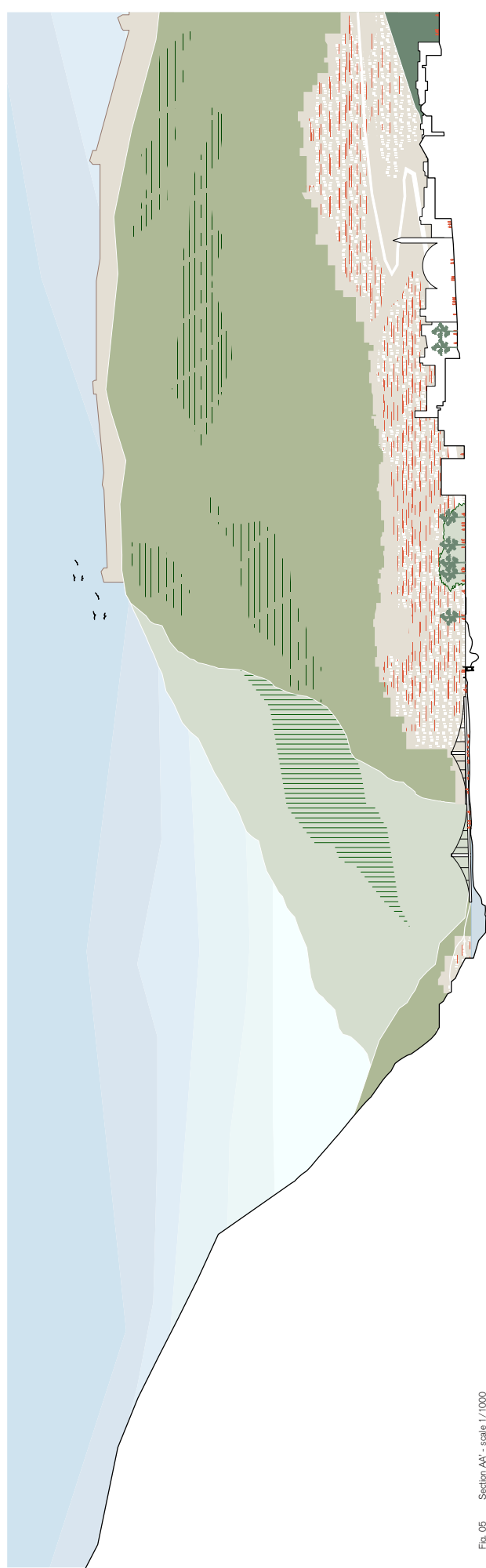


Fig. 05 Section AA' - scale 1/1000



Fig. 06 Section BB' - scale 1/1000

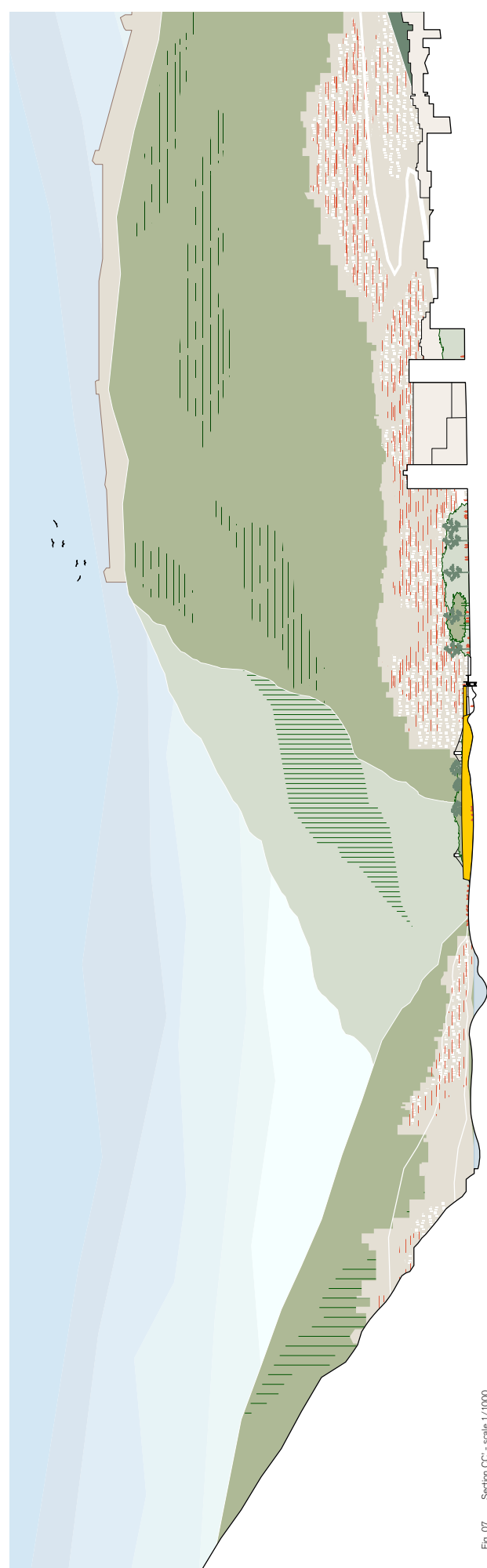


Fig. 07 Section CC' - scale 1/1000

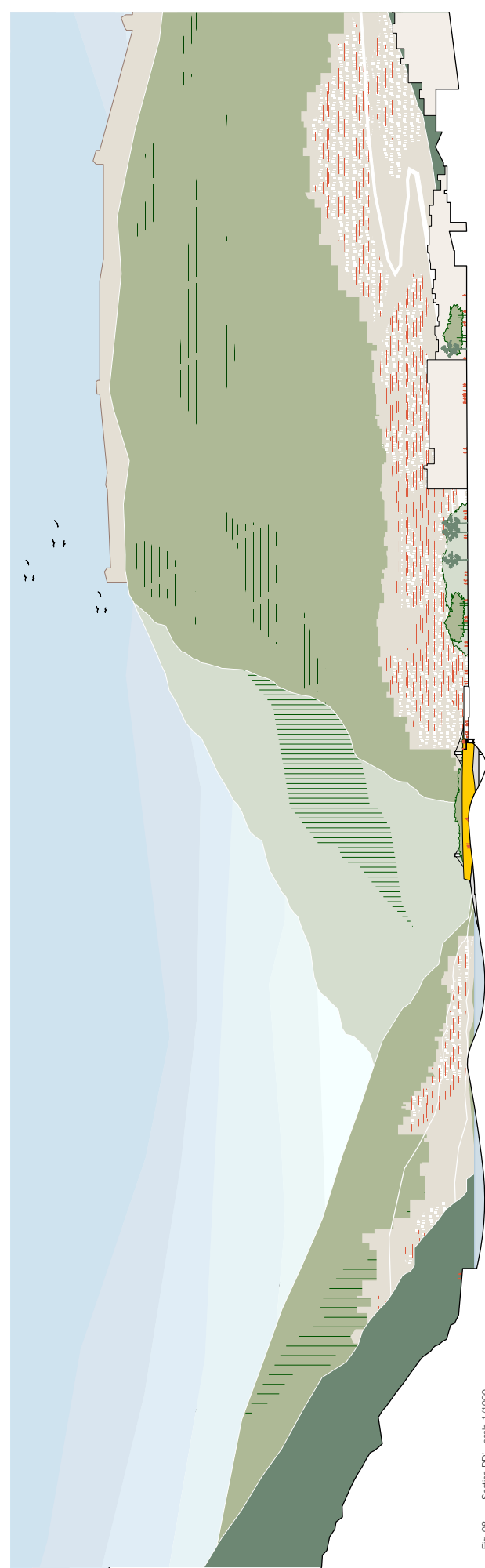


Fig. 08 Section DD' - scale 1/1000

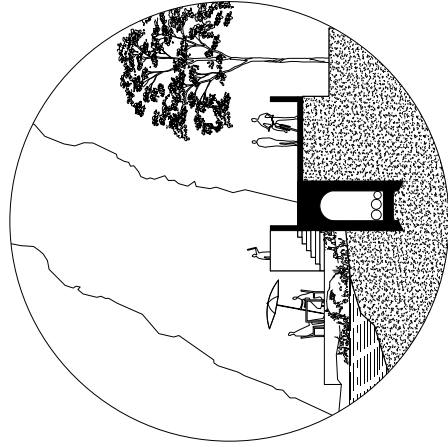


Fig. 09 Section detail AA' - scale 1/100

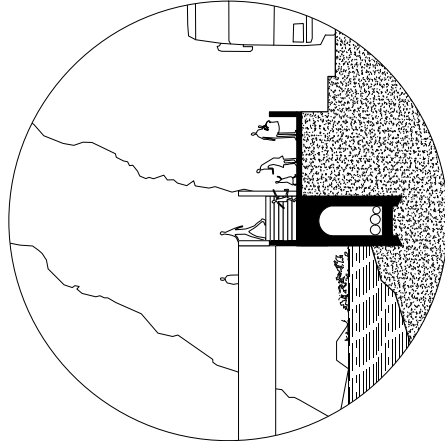


Fig. 10 Section detail BB' - scale 1/100

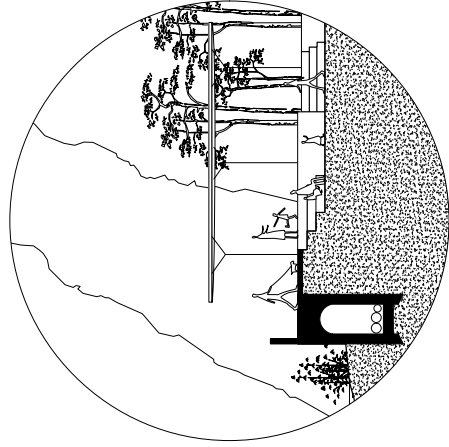


Fig. 11 Section detail CC' - scale 1/100

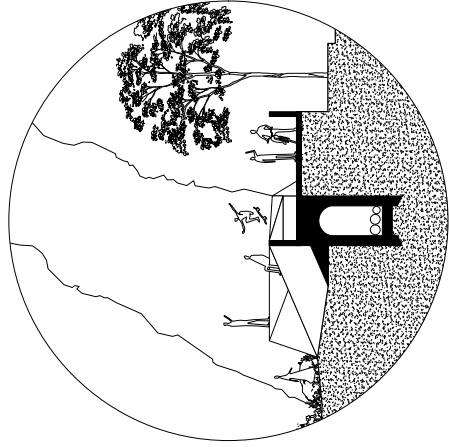


Fig. 12 Section detail DD' - scale 1/100



Fig. 13



Fig. 14

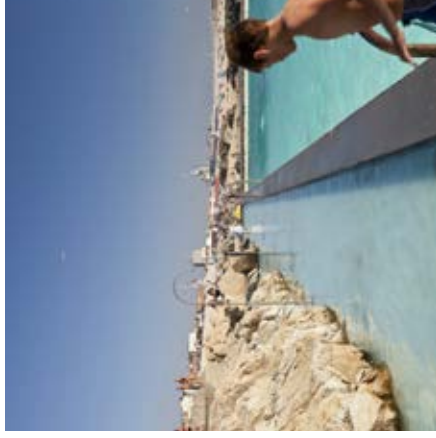


Fig. 15

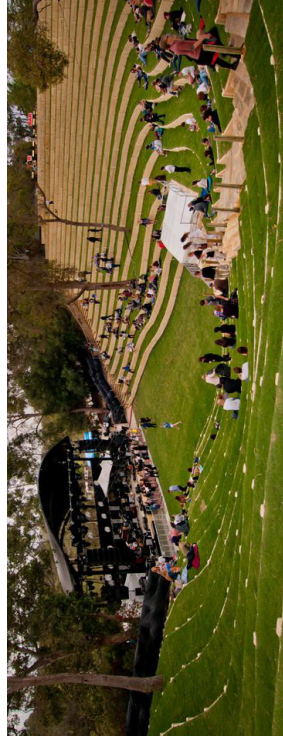


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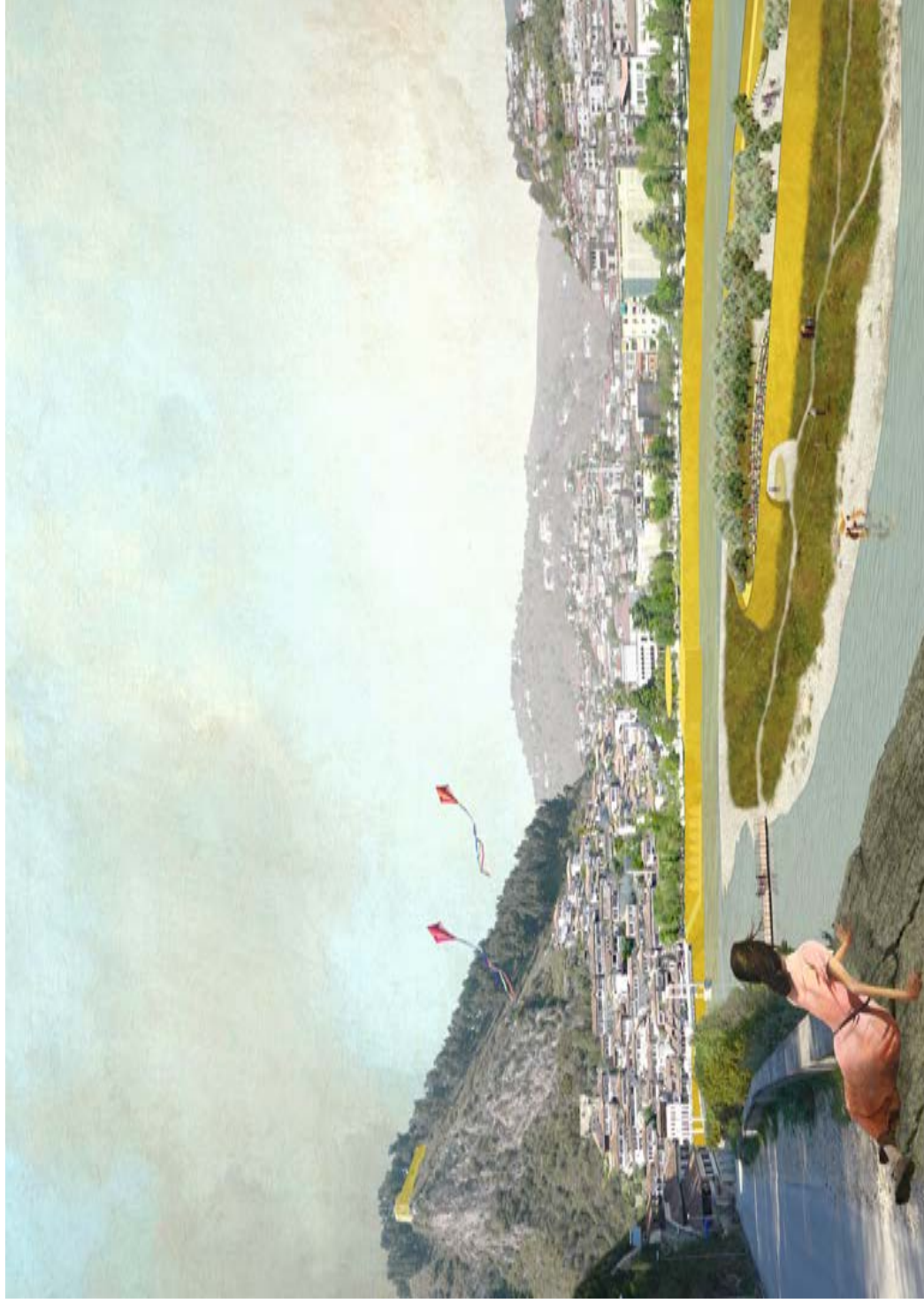


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Fig. 20 Collage view from the left bank, looking towards Pictures' Park.

While creating the necessary infrastructure for its year-round enjoyment, the raised ground level protects the natural atmosphere of the island.

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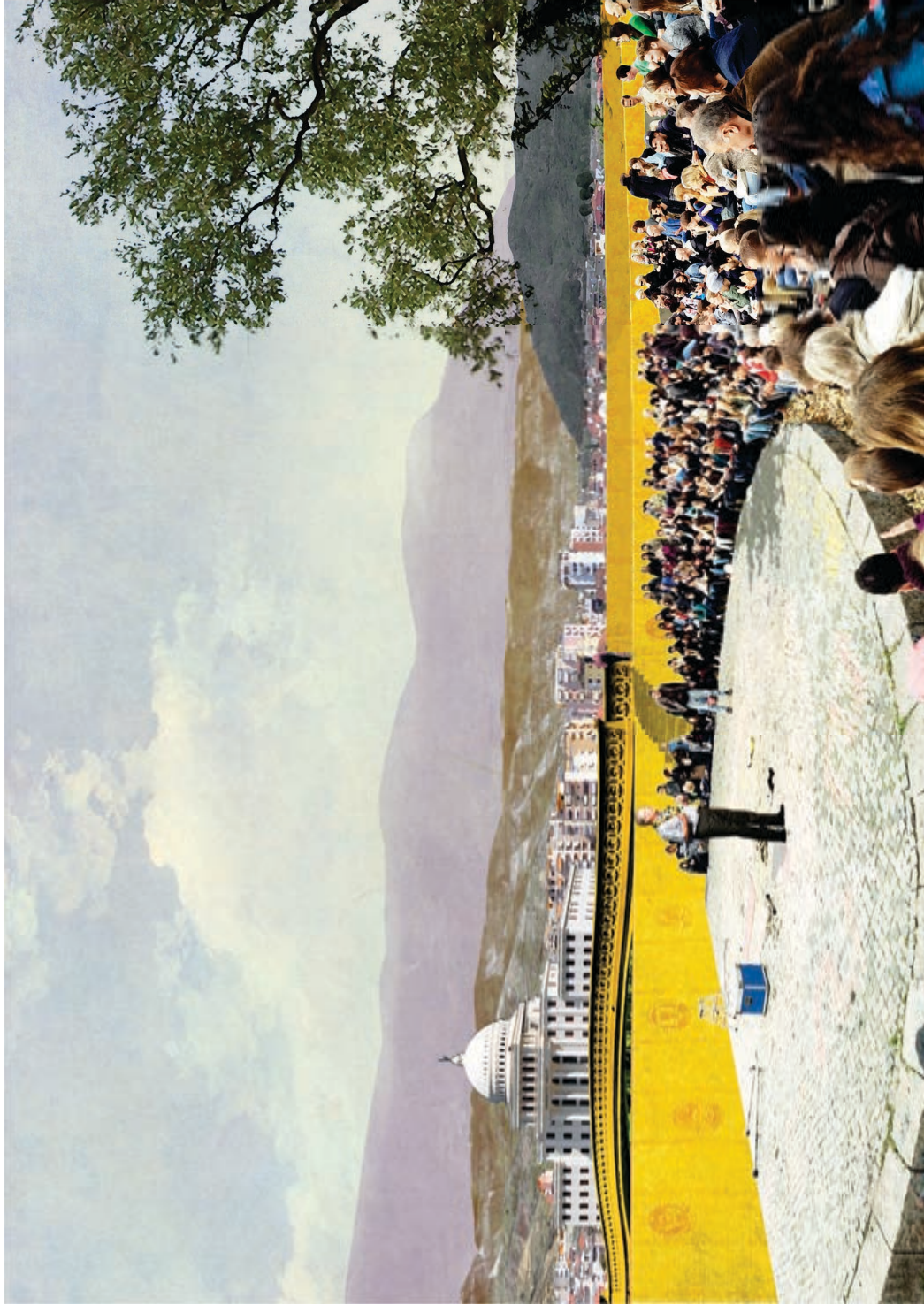


Fig. 26

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Fig. 26 Collage view of the interior of Pictures' Park, where the city's great outdoor cultural events and concerts will be staged





Fig. 26

Fig. 27

Fig. 27 Area picture / Plan of Beavolok and Pictures' Page



## COLOPHON

### **MikeViktorViktor architects Antwerpen bvba (BE)**

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Kris Coremans (BE)

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Yves Coussement (BE)