

ABSTRACT

Title of Thesis: CINEMA PARADISO: ENHANCING URBAN
LIFE THROUGH FILM

Italia Brown, Master of Architecture, 2025

Thesis Directed By: Professor Ken Filler, Assistant Director of
Undergraduate Architecture, AIA, School of
Architecture, Planning, and Preservation

The rise of streaming services has revolutionized the film industry, shifting the primary viewing experience from movie theaters to home settings. This trend, amplified by the COVID-19 pandemic, has led to decreased occupancy rates in cinemas and diminished the communal aspects of film watching. To reverse this trend, public environments need to analyze what is keeping the occupant at home and use these findings to create spaces suitable to the occupant's needs. This thesis explores how revitalizing a dying typology can inherently improve economically struggling urban areas and restore a sense of community that is becoming increasingly lost in the new digital age. The focus will analyze how art and film can educate and provide various services to the community to encourage intercultural competence. By analyzing the eco-psychological traits between humans and the environments they occupy and exploring various case studies that prioritize the human experience, this study will demonstrate strategies to create a space that uses digital media as a tool to foster physical social interactions and connections. This thesis contributes to the broader discourse of how urban spaces can stimulate

job creation, enhance social activity, and improve media literacy, thereby reversing economic decline and reinvigorating the urban landscape.

CINEMA PARADISO: ENHANCING URBAN LIFE THROUGH FILM

by

Italia Brown

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Advisory Committee:
Professor Ken Filler, Chair
Professor Eric Jenkins
Professor Mohammed Gharipour

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Introductory Statement

In our modern society, digital resources are becoming more accessible than ever across all generations. With the introduction of streaming services and other visual media, an individual's ability to access the content they want to see has become more available and convenient to view from any and every place through any device, with the usual space being the individual's home. The popularity of streaming services has grown since the COVID-19 pandemic which amplified the desire to stay home and view visual media out of comfortability, safety, and accessibility. Although the at-home cinema experience is the most desirable scenario for most, viewing a film (or any visual media) from a home detracts from the communal experience of watching film with your peers and surrounding community while also contributing to negative behaviors, such as "indoorism", preferring to stay indoors, and encouraging social isolation. These negative behaviors can not only influence an individual's mental health in a detrimental manner, but it can also impact the economics of the urban setting the person lives in.

By partaking in activities at home, the need for a variety of commercial spaces diminishes. This leads to various unfavorable economic outcomes, for instance a decrease in job security, a lack of community engagement, and a decline in the quality of life. As the damaging conditions in relation to the visual media viewing experience continue to rise, it poses the question of how can we enhance the

contemporary film experience to foster community engagement and support public health initiatives?

This thesis aims to transform the modern solitary viewing experience of media into a communal activity in public spaces to influence the economy of an urban area. To do this, film will be used as a tool to promote social interaction, community engagement, and media literacy. With film as a tool to generate these themes, the spatial solution will be the cinema typology which has slowly diminishing occupancy rates due to the presence of streaming services. This at-risk typology (Fig.1) will be resolved through various programming elements that will enhance its engagement with the public.

Film is the choice medium as it presents itself as a moving art piece invoking emotion and relatability in ways that visual art cannot. A wide range of topics has the capability to be discussed and represented in film, including, politics, history, global and local societal issues, and cultural identity, which can provide the viewers a new perspective and connection to historical events around the world. With film as a tool to educate the masses, it can serve as an adherent to creativity and social and educational development.

This thesis will establish a foundation for research by examining the history and purpose of movie theaters, highlighting film as an art form that serves as a both

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The Alamo Drafthouse chain was acquired by Sony Pictures this week following Alamo's bankruptcy ... [+] COURTESY OF SONY PICTURES

Figure 1: Cinema as an At-Risk Typology from *The Atlantic*

cultural and educational medium. It will discuss how film can foster social connections and interactions within communities, and how the design of spaces can enhance these experiences. The paper will analyze specific environments that encourage such interactions, inherently contributing to improved mental health and creativity among its occupants. Case studies of effective community centers and institutions will illustrate the significance of these spaces in an urban setting. By investigating the intersections of art, sociology, and urban planning, this dissertation aims to demonstrate how thoughtfully designed spaces can revitalize urban areas by creating jobs, promoting social engagement, and enhancing media literacy.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

After the COVID-19 pandemic, the occupancy rates of various leisure and entertainment spaces decreased immensely. A contribution to this trend was the increase in accessibility to various products and media outlets that was introduced during the pandemic and became a resource for convenience. Although beneficial to the public in various ways, such as accomplishing errands quicker, lack of contact with hazardous environments, and the ability to work from home, the accessibility and convenience to these resources that provide our society with immediate gratification has been proven detrimental not only to our built environment but also to our mental and social health.

As individuals decide to stay home, public infrastructures are being less frequented putting a dent in our economy and decreasing the amount of structures dedicated to commercial use as everything shifts online. In a general view, these decisions made by society are impacting our community greatly as they lead to failing downtowns due to a lack of economic activity. As various commercial typologies are victim to this trend, the one that stands out the most is the cinema. Many cinemas are losing foot traffic due to the popularity and convenience of having streaming services built onto our mobile devices and screens. This gives people an incentive to stay home and not interact with the community around them.

As streaming services become more utilized the communal joy produced by going to the cinema is lost as individuals prefer to be in solitude or in the company of

a small group of friends. These actions not only affect the economy but affect society's social and mental health as we continue to stay indoors and not interact with others in our community. Film is an incredible tool to facilitate social interactions and can also be a resource that engages and inspires an audience to stay outdoors and participate in their local economy. As film incorporates various themes, societal issues, cultural and historical narratives, and can inspire the masses, this thesis argues that film can be used as an educational tool that promotes media literacy and can encourage social interactions through the shared experience of viewing film as an artistic expression.

The issues mentioned raises the question: How can we enhance the contemporary film experience to foster social engagement and support media literacy? Through this dissertation an exploration of the history and original purpose of the theater will be explained to provide context to how cinema and film evolved. The review will continue with an explanation of the digital age and its effect on society. To further expand on the digital age and how it translates into our recreational activities, the review will re-introduce leisure and recreational activities as opportunities for community engagement through participatory activities. Lastly, the review will explore spatial conditions that can induce creative and cognitive skills to promote a more interactive and social environment. By the end of this literary review, an understanding of cinema as a tool to encourage community involvement to consequentially rejuvenate an urban environment's economic activity should be defined.

History of Cinema

Film history is expansive and is commonly intertwined with cinema and cinema history. For the purpose of this thesis, film will be defined by the act of viewing a movie and the actual medium of film as an expression of art, while cinema will be defined by the spatial structure in which an individual can watch film. With this being defined, film and cinema have a dwindling relationship in our contemporary age which is heavily influenced by using digital streaming services such as Netflix, Amazon Prime, Hulu, etc. What is becoming more prevalent in this modern age of digital streaming is the production, exhibition, and distribution of various film medias through these services that ensures not only an individual's isolation but a lack of media literacy across various age groups. To fully understand how isolation and media literacy correspond to our contemporary film experience it is essential to review the history of cinema and film in terms of its purpose in society.

Cinema, arguably, has its origins in ancient Greek theatre, which can be considered as "the genesis of the cinema as a building type"¹. The Greek theatre served as a communal space for not only political announcements and meetings but also as a space to view reenactments of plays that had two genres: the tragedia or

¹ Heathcote, Edwin. "Sideshow to Art House: The Development of the Modernist Cinema." *Architectural Design* 70, no. 1 (01, 2000): 70.

comedia. This ancient typology acted as a civic and cultural center while simultaneously providing entertainment to the town's citizens. This places the purpose of theatre as a source for political, social, and cultural information, that fixes the

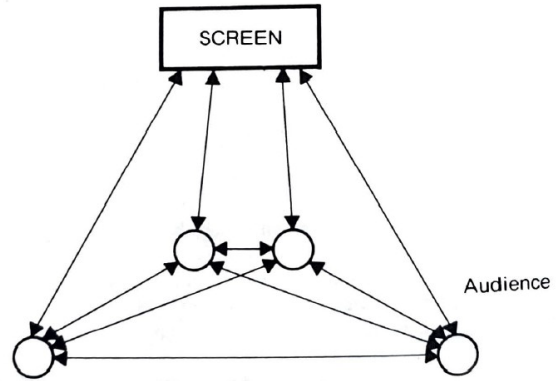


FIGURE 4.1 Movie Theater Communicative Interaction

Figure 2: Film and the Common Experience

audience's vision to a common point of view, which inherently provides a common experience and evokes similar emotions (Fig. 1²). The theatre is structural form of a democratic and representational environment.

In the mid-1890s and early 1930s, started viewing film as a medium that arouses awe and entertainment, the cinema was not a permanent structure but transportable and mobile as transparent sheets of film (at this time film were transparent photos projected on a screen) exhibited in sideshows, known as traveling tent shows at fairground fairs³. It was not until the late 1890s, when performances and stories showcased in tent shows started being exhibited in more permanent infrastructures such as the vaudeville theaters⁴. Entry into vaudeville theaters were seen as an exhibition of high social status to view high forms of entertainment, which led to the simultaneous operation of tent shows for the poorer demographics.

² Jowett, Garth, and James M Linton. *Movies as Mass Communication*. Beverly Hills, Calif: Sage Publications, 1980: 94.

³ Benshoff, Harry M. *America on Film: Representing Race, Class, Gender, and Sexuality at the Movies*. Chicester: John Wiley & Sons, Incorporated, 2009: 33.

⁴ Benshoff, *America on Film*, 35.

Although each space had different audiences the content shown was still the same, such as short travelogs, documentaries, and ‘trick’ films⁵, which displayed various lifestyles, cultures, and parts of the world. This projection of film in a space is contributed to the Lumières brothers from France, who were the first to project a moving picture on screen and introducing the theater and what will become the cinema as a social phenomenon for a diverse paying audience⁶.

As the socioeconomic disparity became a factor of the nineteenth century that reinforced social status and economic gaps, in the 1930s, the film industry immobilized various ethnic and racial groups, people of different sexualities, and continued to hinder people of lower economic statuses through its filmmaking traditions curated over time⁷. This immobilization of racial, ethnic, sexual, and economic classes were clearly exhibited in multiple film narratives⁸ due to societal views on social classes. This led to a variety of non-Hollywood films that presented and provided perspectives of different races, ethnicities, classes, and sexualities. Commonly referred to as independent films, these films that allowed for diverse representation provided greater opportunities to women, people of color, and the homosexual community outside of the film industry that had become dominated by Hollywood⁹.

To clarify, when the film industry is referred to in this thesis, it is defining the system of producing, exhibiting, and distributing film in a global society (Fig. 2¹⁰)

⁵ Benshoff, *America on Film*, 35.

⁶ Benshoff, *America on Film*, 33.

⁷ Benshoff, *America on Film*, 6.

⁸ Benshoff, *America on Film*, 6.

⁹ Benshoff, *America on Film*, 23.

¹⁰ Jowett, “Movies as Mass Communication,”: 18.

that is centered around white-centric representation. This can be observed in film history as Hollywood films were mainly made through oligopolies that hired and curated their content around white actors and their perspectives on life. Hollywood films would dominate theaters due to citizens not having access to places that show other types of films that would typically

depict representations of various viewpoints and stories that were often ignored or not explored in Hollywood movies as they were made by minorities¹¹. As Hollywood films became global, the oligopoly within the film industry became very apparent. This oligopoly was the capitalist system that inherently kept independent filmmakers and films out of the film industry and its market as the larger companies agree to work together to keep competitors weak or, alternatively, “driving them out of business”¹². These actions continued well into the twentieth century and kept foreign and independent American films from being distributed and exhibited as minorities were excluded from Hollywood studios¹³.

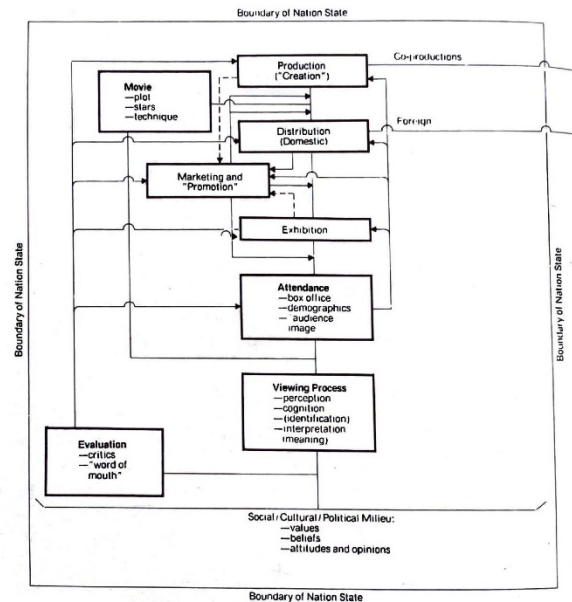


FIGURE 1.1 The Movies' By-Products and Their Relationships to Other Forms of Mass-Mediated Culture

Figure 3: Film Distribution Process

¹¹ Benshoff, America on Film, 24.

¹² Benshoff, America on Film, 32.

¹³ Benshoff, America on Film, 32.

As motion pictures became one of America's leading exports for over a hundred years, minority produced and created films were heavily affected as Hollywood film companies would distribute its films globally to maximize their profits¹⁴. By distributing their films globally, film companies were making pure profit from foreign exhibitions since they would make back their costs during their domestic (local) release of the film¹⁵. In addition to making complete profit from foreign exhibitions, film companies can offer foreign theaters their films to exhibit at a discount (which would essentially be lower than the cost of locally made films in the native country)¹⁶. Not only does this make it hard for foreigners to see representations of themselves on the screen, but it also makes it harder for them to invest in their own film industry since they invest in an American dominated film industry¹⁷.

This issue is common today as Hollywood blockbusters still dominate the global film industry with production crews and casts that are predominantly white and lack representation of the countries they are outsourcing their content to. This raises the questions: how should film accentuate diverse and minority voices in an industry dominated by white people? And how can cinema promote these voices to a global audience?

By asking these questions, a journey back to the origins of the Greek theatre is required. The Greek theatre, as stated before, was a social, communal, and civic space that focused on human proximity and interaction with others. This interaction was indirect in terms of the actors on the stage and direct in terms of sharing a common

¹⁴ Benshoff, *America on Film*, 32.

¹⁵ Benshoff, *America on Film*, 32.

¹⁶ Benshoff, *America on Film*, 32.

¹⁷ Benshoff, *America on Film*, 32.

experience with other occupants through a shared focal point. As Greek society was based on democracy and the theatre was inherently social and political, the ancient Greek theatre typology is intrinsically for the people and by the people, and as this typology has transformed throughout time the same value applies to the modern theater of the cinema.

Through film and cinema history, it is evident that it has significant cultural, political, and social themes, which have maintained its presence in our modern society of the twenty-first century. This is common for art, which is to be an expression of self and an opportunity to fabricate a narrative that should be shared with the world. Film and its identity as an art form is highly debated, even in political disciplines. But as of 1952 the Supreme Court declared film as an art form and guaranteed it protection under the First Amendment¹⁸. With this fact in mind, one can deduce that the cinema is a museum of narratives and perspectives. Hans-Georg Gadamer, a German philosopher, agrees stating: “There is no doubt that this alone does not turn the theater into a museum. Theater does not, indeed cannot ever, simply become ‘historical.’ Whenever a theater performs a piece of early historical interest, it has already ceased to discharge its proper and preeminent function: to represent presence and nothing but presence”¹⁹. Gadamer indicates that the key purpose of a museum is to be present in time or more specifically, a certain time-period. When a film depicts a narrative, a culture, or a piece of history, it is transporting to a specific

¹⁸ Benshoff, *America on Film*, 42.

¹⁹ Hans-Georg Gadamer, "The Festive Character of Theater," in *Sustainable Canons: Gadamer's Hermeneutics and Theatre*, 58 (1986), originally published in 1954: 62.

place and time seen through the eyes of the director and is using the cinema itself as the vessel to get you there, just as a museum does.

With cinema as a vessel and film as a tool to communicate different experiences, film begins to encapsulate the various senses of sight, hearing, and maybe even touch, considering the specific amenities cinemas incorporate today. This also includes how films can be translated from and to other mediums as a way to reach a wider audience (Fig. 3²⁰). Through viewing a film, an individual is not just witnessing a series of images but is indirectly digesting the information that these images are curating which can, as Heidi Ludi a prominent set designer states, “Sometimes it pleases the eye, hurts feelings, breaks taboos, fires prejudice, gets involved, influences positions, creates counter worlds, gives hope”²¹. It is a visual moving art piece that expresses the human experience through different methods of filmmaking and production that creates an audio-visual experience that one can appreciate and become fond of. With art, including film, visualizing different perspectives of the human experience, one can argue that art and film is innately human.

²⁰ Jowett, “Movies as Mass Communication,”: 21

²¹ Ludi, Heidi & Toni. *Movie Worlds: Production Design in Film*. Stuttgart, Germany: Edition Axel Menges, 2000: 12.

later on towards the end of his life was quoted describing film as, "...a cultural factor which can no longer be dispensed with in modern life...one which has become...a powerful means of entertainment which moves and influences millions of people...and which...can be linked to art...in a fascinating way..."²³.

The Digital Age

Our contemporary society is becoming more dependent on technology and is fundamentally shaped by industrial technology²⁴. In reference to film and cinema it is evident that our modern society is becoming more individualized and willing to stay in an isolated environment rather than spend time in a public setting. A catalyst of this individualistic mindset originated from the emergence of the home television, as Koeck states, "Not only did television and video transform our living spaces to home theatres, changing the moving image event from a collective to a more individual practice, but also the consumption of moving images evolved from a space-specific to a space independent act"²⁵. As technology evolves, society's views on values and lifestyles are bound to transform with it.

This evolution of values and lifestyle revolves around an individualistic view on life and the convenience of being by oneself. Pinar Ergin argues that video streaming services were born from the collapse of the public space and presented itself as a convenient option for the industrial lifestyle that are society gradually

²³ Ludi, *Movie Worlds: Production*, 52.

²⁴ Gadamer, "The Festive Character of Theater," 57.

²⁵ Koeck, Richard. *Cinescapes: Cinematic Spaces in Architecture and Cities*. New York, New York: Routledge., 2013: 2-3.

advances towards²⁶. This transition from the natural environment to the industrial environment creates a focus on enjoyment and does not completely provide an entertainment environment due to isolation and the absence of social interaction which Ergin has termed, ‘incomplete entertainment’²⁷. The decline in social interaction and public participation has been in effect since the 1960s²⁸. Public space and social interaction have become increasingly less valued due to the evolution of technology and digital media. Ergin describes this transition as, “... cinema caters to the masses, television to the family, video to the close circle and group, and video streaming services to the individual, reveals the decreasing social context in entertainment”²⁹. The social context of viewing entertainment together has been dwindling since television was introduced into society. Sharing digital media with close friends and family and not with the community supports the individualized mindset, which is typical in American society, but it is important to not only interact with others but to support public spaces and exercise social engagement as well through these intrinsically communal activities.

Ergin research suggests that video streaming services are designed for individual consumption and has become a popular method of watching films, but due to the change in setting the viewing experience is reconstructed and is enjoyment focused as an individual viewing experience is absent from a social context which further promote the “incomplete entertainment” experience³⁰. But this “incomplete

²⁶ Ergin, Pinar. “Are Video Streaming Services Offering Incomplete Entertainment?” *Media, Culture & Society* 46, no. 2 (2024): 414.

²⁷ Ergin, “Are Video Streaming,” 414.

²⁸ Ergin, “Are Video Streaming,” 415.

²⁹ Ergin, “Are Video Streaming,” 415.

³⁰ Ergin, “Are Video Streaming,” 415.

entertainment” experience is of no concern considering digital media is easily and instantly available and has the ability to be accessed in an immediate, interactive, and participatory way³¹. It is suggested that this lack of entertainment experience is not a disturbance to people’s lifestyles as 90% of consumers are “entertained” by video content on the internet especially since these videos were a part of their portfolio of streaming services that is curated based on their content needs³².

When a consumer has their content needs readily available there is a sense of instant gratification that consumes them. This gratification is since the streaming services are stimulating the consumers sense of self-identity as the AI features of the service determine media recommendations to intrigue and maintain the consumer loyalty³³. This encourages the consumer to have a stronger sense of loyalty to the service as it learns what the user likes and is willing to engage with in the service³⁴ which promotes the consumer’s emotional attachment to the service³⁵ as they continue to feel instant gratification from convenience and accessibility. The continuation of the use of streaming services constantly reinforces the gratification the consumer feels and reinforces the emotional attachment and directly influences their use of steaming services in the future as it constantly supplies them with a feeling of joy or pleasure³⁶.

³¹ Heller, Franziska. “Future Pasts within the Dynamics of the Digital Present: Digitized Films and the Clusters of Media Historiographic Experience.” In *How Film Histories*, ed Malte Hagener and Yvonne Zimmermann, 427.

³² Walsh, Philip, and Ranjita Singh. “Determinants of Millennial Behaviour towards Current and Future Use of Video Streaming Services.” *Young Consumers* 23, no. 3 (2022): 397.

³³ Walsh and Singh, “Determinants of Millennial,” 407.

³⁴ Walsh and Singh, “Determinants of Millennial,” 408.

³⁵ Walsh and Singh, “Determinants of Millennial,” 408.

³⁶ Walsh and Singh, “Determinants of Millennial,” 400.

Although streaming services can provide convenience, accessibility, and a variety of media options to choose from, there are still disadvantages to the content they provide. Kyle Buchanan and Reggie Ugwu of the New York Times published an article in August 2020 describing how the Criterion Collection, a notable film distribution service that specializes in the restoration of film, only has 4 African American directors with feature films in their collection that is comprised of more than a thousand films by over 450 directors³⁷. This is incredibly important as the Criterion Collection has many distribution resources, including physical and digital, that emphasize the cultural and historical impact of film on society and maintaining these films as film memorabilia. With more than 450 directors in their catalogue, having less than 1%³⁸ of it representing a minority group, reinforces the need for diverse voices in the film industry. By amplifying people of color in the film industry, minority groups can get the recognition they deserve and voice their stories to a broader audience.

As streaming continues to be popular in our modern society, different services have taken the opportunity to restore the social component of media viewing by providing online communication services³⁹. These services are attempting to restore social interaction by creating a common viewing experience through a video-based or instant messenger-based platform that allows the viewers to communicate with each other⁴⁰. Their attempts are justified by studies that demonstrate “the importance of sharing information, gathering information, communicating with like-minded users,

³⁷ Heller, “Future Pasts within,” 433.

³⁸ Heller, “Future Pasts within,” 433.

³⁹ Ergin, “Are Video Streaming,” 420.

⁴⁰ Ergin, “Are Video Streaming,” 420.

social motivation, a sense of belonging, and the need to belong to a group through social...viewing[s]”⁴¹. But this transition from a physical face-to-face interaction to a digital interaction reinforces society’s modern lifestyle that is centered around technology, as Ergin explains, “...the fact that the Internet, instead of promoting the restoration of the public sphere, provides an escape to another world, reduces friction, creates an environment for interaction with alternative selves, makes us long for real life, represents a further withdrawal from social life with its privatized version of the public world, and even fails to produce a real public world despite its public-oriented features”⁴². By creating digital relationships over the internet society is indirectly yearning for physical human interaction and connection which is not satisfied through digital streaming platforms.

By revisiting the origin of cinema, the Greek theater, an understanding of film as a production of an event that is “looked upon” by everyone, implies that film is a device for unification as everyone is an onlooker “of one and the same event”⁴³. Gadamer proceeds to describe film as an “immediate communal experience of what we are and how things stand with us in the vital interchange between player and onlooker”⁴⁴ which makes the experience of watching a film a genuine experience for all who occupy the space. To further explain the authentic experience of being in a cinema Ergin references other articles:

“...the experience of watching with others is quite different from the experience of personal viewing, as it is a form of collective interaction. While

⁴¹ Ergin, “Are Video Streaming,” 420.

⁴² Ergin, “Are Video Streaming,” 419.

⁴³ Gadamer, “The Festive Character of Theater,” 68.

⁴⁴ Gadamer, “The Festive Character of Theater,” 65.

the withdrawal of viewing to the private sphere separates the integrity and sociability of television..., the display of emotion and reaction that is revealed only when coming together has blunted the aspect of viewing that triggers conversation and expressing opinions on content, and has ended the interaction between the audience and the communication arising from interaction. The viewing experience, which can be watched over and over again as a ritual of individualization..., has been divided and partially facilitated and left to the preference and control of the audience, has isolated the viewing from others and turned it into an activity performed only for watching, by having to exclude the social interaction of the large audience that comes together simultaneously due to the possibilities of the technological device. In Putnam's (2000) interpretation, television's privatization of leisure time and civic activities has loosened social ties and had the psychological effect of inhibiting social participation by reducing interaction with one another and poisoning the notion of joint activity"⁴⁵.

The genuine experience of going to the cinema to watch a film is a moment of elevated human exposure. Cinemas are the "intermediate ground" or tertiary space "where the masses come together" and can share a common emotional experience⁴⁶ through a unified focal point, the film. Without human contact we are bound to have an "incomplete entertainment" experience through incomplete emotions and a lack of social motives that encourages happiness⁴⁷.

⁴⁵ Ergin, "Are Video Streaming," 417.

⁴⁶ Ergin, "Are Video Streaming," 414.

⁴⁷ Ergin, "Are Video Streaming," 420.

The Importance of Recreational Activities

Recreational activities are the support systems of our urban environments. Without recreational activities, spaces for multipurpose use and socialization are seen as not essential structures to our developing society. As stated in the last section of this chapter, the emergence of our industrialized lifestyles have caused public spaces in our urban environments to dwindle. Urban planning departments have recognized creativity-focused urban developments to be a method to facilitate coping with “the negative effects of globalization and new emerging economic structures”⁴⁸. These creative urban developments rely on various creative industries and creative individuals/groups to revitalize their downtowns in hopes of rejuvenating their developments. This means that these developments need cultural resources to promote identity and a sense of community in the area.

Cultural resources are innate to human creativity and with creative cities there is a goal “to create conditions, which people think, plan, and act creatively”⁴⁹. To do this it is important to provide spaces and environments that support informational exchanges and provides the occupants of that space to turn the information they acquired into a product, service, or innovative solution⁵⁰. By providing spaces that exercise recreational activities and most importantly creativity, the environment is indirectly promoting educational attainment through participatory activities, which

⁴⁸ Durmaz, Bahar, Tan Yigitcanlar, and Koray Velibeyoglu. "Creative Cities and the Film Industry: Antalya's Transition to a Eurasian Film Centre." *Open Urban Studies Journal* 1, (0, 2008): 2.

⁴⁹ Durmaz, Yigitcanlar, and Velibeyoglu. "Creative Cities," 2.

⁵⁰ Durmaz, Yigitcanlar, and Velibeyoglu. "Creative Cities," 2.

have the ability to transform into economic and social wealth for the individual's I the community and also the urban development⁵¹.

A space that can accommodate recreational activities and educational attainment is the cinema. After viewing a film there are often an array of emotions that the film viewer experiences, this stimulus is the cause of film images that give off impulses, influence actions and prejudices (Ludi 8). This classifies the film industry and cinema as "...a significant sector of creative industries, and an effective powerhouse of economic growth..."⁵². The film industry can increase the economic vitality of an urban development by investing in the skillsets and interests of their community which will provide job opportunities⁵³. Recent studies have shown evidence that by creating a space for the film industry to flourish it can positively affect a town's reputation by enhancing the recognition the area gets⁵⁴. This is immensely important because it facilitates building an image for the area and promotes the place through films and festivals⁵⁵.

As social spaces decline, leisure spaces are being introduced into communities as third places to mediate the loss⁵⁶. Third spaces can be defined "... as public gathering places that ultimately contribute to the strength of community"⁵⁷. Placing leisure spaces into an urban environment has a positive effect on social capital. The positive effects are in relation to health and well-being which can enhance qualities of

⁵¹ Durmaz, Yigitcanlar, and Velibeyoglu. "Creative Cities," 2.

⁵² Durmaz, Yigitcanlar, and Velibeyoglu. "Creative Cities," 4.

⁵³ Durmaz, Yigitcanlar, and Velibeyoglu. "Creative Cities," 4.

⁵⁴ Durmaz, Yigitcanlar, and Velibeyoglu. "Creative Cities," 5.

⁵⁵ Durmaz, Yigitcanlar, and Velibeyoglu. "Creative Cities," 5.

⁵⁶ Yuen, Felice, and Amanda J. Johnson. "Leisure Spaces, Community, and Third Places." *Leisure Sciences* 39, no. 3 (2016): 295.

⁵⁷ Yuen and Johnson, "Leisure Spaces, Community," 295.

life and social inclusion for individuals and the community⁵⁸. To provide an appropriate setting for these recreational and leisure activities to flourish Oldenburg's 'social dimensions of third places' has specific characteristics that ensures community engagement⁵⁹. These characteristics include enjoyment, regularity, pure sociability/social leveler, and diversity⁶⁰. Researchers argue that the most essential characteristic to these spaces are diversity when examining the third place as a foundation for community⁶¹.

Using Space to Induce Creativity and Social Cohesion

As stated in the previous section, leisure and recreational spaces are important as third spaces because they support creativity and community health, especially in terms of socialization. But when placing these spaces in urban environments there are high risks⁶². Some of these risks include "individual isolation, lack of social support, interracial conflict and increased incidence of crime and violence"⁶³. An initiative to begin mitigating these risks would be to incorporate green spaces and ensuring access to these green spaces⁶⁴. By incorporating green spaces these negative impacts could dwindle immensely or be eradicated entirely which would increase social cohesion

⁵⁸ Son, Julie, Careen Yarnal, and Deborah Kerstetter. "Engendering Social Capital through a Leisure Club for Middle-Aged and Older Women: Implications for Individual and Community Health and Well-Being." *Leisure Studies* 29, no. 1 (2010): 81.

⁵⁹ Yuen and Johnson, "Leisure Spaces, Community," 295.

⁶⁰ Yuen and Johnson, "Leisure Spaces, Community," 295.

⁶¹ Yuen and Johnson, "Leisure Spaces, Community," 295.

⁶² Keniger, Lucy E., Kevin J. Gaston, Katherine N. Irvine, and Richard A. Fuller. "What Are the Benefits of Interacting with Nature?" *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* 10, no. 3 (2013): 925.

⁶³ Lucy Keniger et al, "What Are the Benefits," 925.

⁶⁴ Lucy Keniger et al, "What Are the Benefits," 925.

within the site⁶⁵. Other benefits of including natural environments within urban contexts would be the facilitation of social interactions between adults and children, which could foster social empowerment, enhancing interracial interaction, and promoting social cohesion throughout age and ethnic groups⁶⁶.

By incorporating nature into the urban environment as a supplementary tool to the activities in the area, one can expect social cohesion as a result due to involuntary interests of others. A thousand-year-old Icelandic Eddic poem, *Hávamál*, states, “man is man’s greatest joy” which comes this stanza in the poem “...describes [the] human delight and interest in other people. Nothing is more important or more compelling”⁶⁷. It is in our human nature to want to interact with people face-to-face and by integrating ourselves physically into the natural environment, people will naturally feel compelled to connect with others.

That is why in terms of this thesis, the cinema and the natural environment will be designed to facilitate social interaction. As film feeds its viewers visual information, there is a possibility that after sharing an in-person emotional connection with another human, an individual would want to interact with them. This is based on Jan Gehl’s social philosophy that, “Throughout life we have a constant need for new information about people, about life as it unfolds and about the surrounding society. New information is gathered wherever people are and therefore very much in common city space”⁶⁸. Due to film being a “language of images”⁶⁹ it can be

⁶⁵ Lucy Keniger et al, “What Are the Benefits,” 925.

⁶⁶ Lucy Keniger et al, “What Are the Benefits,” 925.

⁶⁷ Gehl, Jan. *Cities for People*. Washington, DC: Island Press, 2010: 23.

⁶⁸ Gehl, *Cities for People*, 25.

⁶⁹ Ludi, *Movie Worlds: Production*, 20.

perceived as ambiguous and suffers from changes in global and cultural contexts. This demonstrates that the imagery exhibited in film is more emotional and uncertain similar to the human being and is not as clearly defined as other disciplines such as mathematics⁷⁰. This is why it is imperative to encourage media literacy when it comes to film and digital media because although visuals can be indirectly enjoyed, there are moments when they need to be critically analyzed to define their meaning through the contexts of the creator and their intent as “Every film tries to form its own reality and truth”⁷¹.

As nature naturally fascinates people and the cinema inspires people, studies have shown that spaces that induce awe encourage prosocial behavior⁷². As film and film history embody insights into various ethnic groups and minorities, viewers are provided visual images of how people can be understood and “experienced in our ‘real world’”. Because of this, there are multiple connections between film and reality, and discussing these connections between others will provide insights into accurately communicating film themes and their ramifications⁷³. To do this, it is encouraged to implement natural elements as they promote cognitive development

⁷⁰ Ludi, *Movie Worlds: Production*, 20.

⁷¹ Ludi, *Movie Worlds: Production*, 72.

⁷² Browning, William D., and Catherine O. Ryan. *Nature Inside: A Biophilic Design Guide*. Washington, D.C.: Island Press, 2014: 203.

⁷³ Benshoff, *America on Film*, 3.

and improve educational attainment performance which would facilitate the conversational skills and techniques used between occupants on site (Fig. 4⁷⁴).

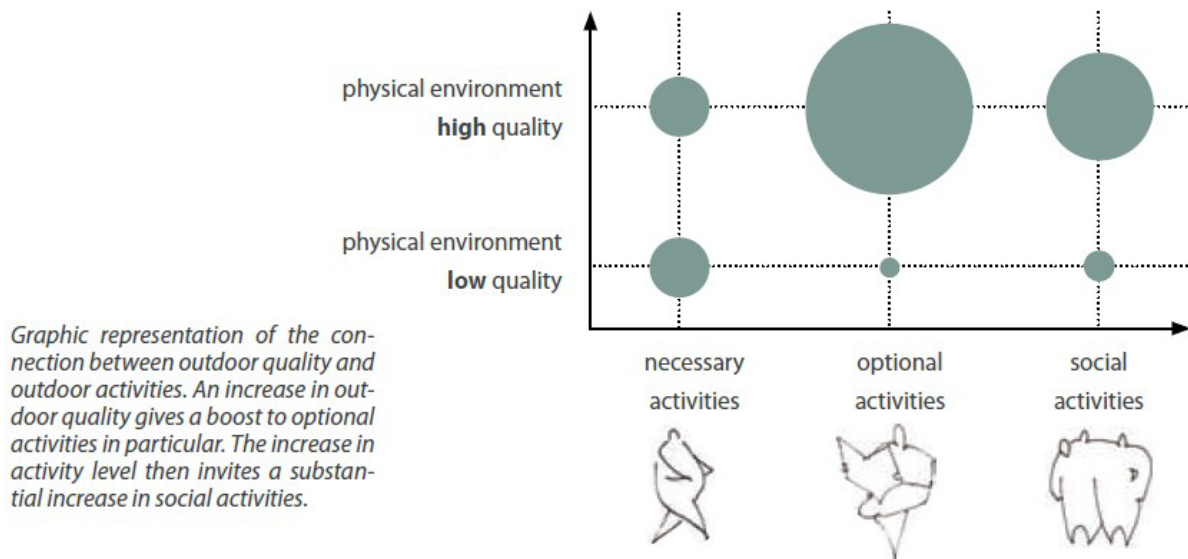


Figure 5: Chart Comparing Outdoor Quality to Social Behaviors

It is important that our society continues to construct public spaces that facilitate our mental, educational, and social growth. As social isolation becomes more prevalent in our modern society, it can be categorized as a critical social problem in the twenty-first century, even when connecting with others seem easy⁷⁵ due to our increasingly industrialized lifestyles. This lifestyle, that society bases on technology and excessive media use, although detrimental to our health's has proven crucial, by researchers, as more of an influence on our cultural values and ideologies than school, religion, and families combined⁷⁶. By viewing or hearing a perspective of an individual one has never met, the connection formed by just interacting with them can have positive effects on a person's life. As a study on acquaintance

⁷⁴ Gehl, *Cities for People*, 21.

⁷⁵ Glover, Troy D. "All the Lonely People: Social Isolation and the Promise and Pitfalls of Leisure." *Leisure Sciences* 40, no. 1–2 (2018): 25.

⁷⁶ Benshoff, *America on Film*, 13.

relationships states, “Evidence suggests that weak ties such as these—relationships involving less frequent contact, low emotional intensity, and limited intimacy—confer some important benefits...weak ties are important for diffusion of information (such as news, innovations, job openings) across a social network...By providing access to a breadth of perspectives and non-redundant information, weak ties have also been linked to greater creativity”⁷⁷.

By using nature as a reflection and restorative program point, the theater which also induces awe and “...represents a genuine creation” can inspire an individual to produce their own narrative in their own way to demonstrate an experience that they are more familiar with but is still similar to the origin. As Gadamer describes the inspiration process, “...something drawn from within ourselves takes shape before our eyes in a form that we recognize and experience as more profound presentation of our own reality”⁷⁸. This restores the cinema as a moral institution by creating a cycle of exhibiting, socializing, inspiring, and creating which can produce profound forms of a social life (Fig. 5 and 6⁷⁹).

⁷⁷ Sandstrom, G. M., and E. W. Dunn. “Social Interactions and Well-Being: The Surprising Power of Weak Ties.” *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 40, no. 7 (2014): 910.

⁷⁸ Gadamer, “The Festive Character of Theater,” 60.

⁷⁹ Jowett, “Movies as Mass Communication,” 31 & 41.

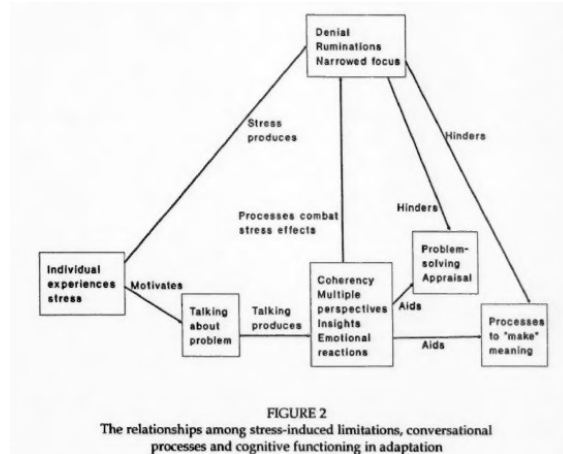


Figure 5: Media Induced Stress Effects on Cognitive Behavior

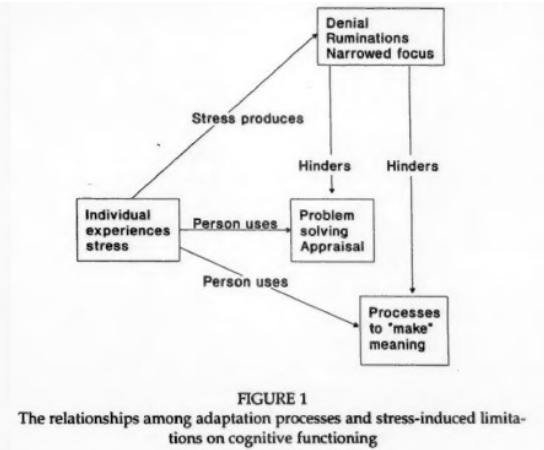


Figure 6: Stress and the Benefits of Creating

By implementing nature into a

cinema experience, the designer is allowing the brain to continue its visual stimulation through natural elements. This allows for the restorative and mediation process of watching a film in a curated environment to subside whilst being fascinated by an individual's surrounding natural environment without getting⁸⁰. As recovery from mental fatigue varies from person to person based on place and time, the natural environment can differ in size⁸¹.

Conclusion

The integration of film into an urban fabric can be a crucial asset to the longevity and success of an urban environment. By transforming the contemporary film experience from a solitary viewing experience in an individual's home into its original form as a communal experience to be enjoyed by a community, a solution to revitalizing an urban economy can be proposed. By reintroducing the cinema as a

⁸⁰ Kaplan, Rachel, and Stephen Kaplan. *The Experience of Nature: A Psychological Perspective*. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989: 184.

⁸¹ Kaplan and Kaplan, *The Experience of Nature*, 177.

sense of place, identity, and belonging, not only will local residents feel a sense of ownership and belonging towards a universal typology, but they will also desire a more impactful connection to the place that is connecting them to their community. This desire will foster more community engagement through socializing with locals, youths, and even tourists as they aspire to learn from and about each other. By offering participatory activities that involve filmmaking and media literacy, an individual can socialize and actively learn from their peers that have a common interest, which will inherently create spaces and moments that resolve a human's desire for an in-person connection. Film can boost social engagement through the various topics it visualizes and providing a space for a community to come together and be entertained but it can also act as a museum of sociopolitical and historical art pieces (whether fiction or not) that provide a narrative that an occupant can relate to and feel seen by resulting in a momentary connection with themselves and possibly others and alternatively a tool to inspire and voice their own stories.

As cultural attractions play a vital role in neighborhood rejuvenation due to their impact on society's quality of life it is imperative to utilize this typology for this thesis. As film is the resource to be studied and expounded upon, the dissertation will use the cinema typology to create a community focal point that will draw in the community. To create a sustainable establishment, the program will need to incorporate facilities that can be used at any time of the day, to ensure that the community is continuously being enriched by the activities offered onsite (Fig. 7⁸²).

⁸² Mahmoudi Farahani, Leila, and Mirjana Lozanovska. "A Framework for Exploring the Sense of Community and Social Life in Residential Environments." *ArchNet-IJAR* 8, no. 3 (2014): 233.

To create a sustainable cultural institution based on film, the dissertation will analyze a strategy of programming that embodies the cinema as a museum of social commentary and education whilst providing amenities that rejuvenate an individual's senses to actively participate in the information being fed to them through the building's narrative. By offering a spatial narrative that speaks to the community that the institution finds itself in, the community will find themselves revisiting the space often to not only view and educate themselves on film but to explore and participate economically in the surrounding area.



Figure 9: Characteristics of the neighbourhoods' commercial street (Source: Mehta, 2013).

Figure 6: Site Qualities that Support a Sense of Community

For the potential program to be impactful to the community it will be placed in it should be placed in an area that is capable of being a city center which is usually an old, small downtown. This phrase "old, small downtown" can mean a variety of things, but in the context of this paper it implies a downtown area with significant historical and cultural features that creates an identity for the town's fabric. With this identity established, the program will be able to gain the attention of a diverse

population with varying interests. These factors will inherently inform the upcoming chapters concerning program and site analysis.

Chapter 3: Methodologies

Introduction

This dissertation explores how the modern viewing experience is increasingly becoming a solitary one, highlighting the need for methodologies that analyze an individual's experiences in spatial contexts. To investigate this transformation, the methodology for this dissertation will rely on a mixed method, primarily focusing on qualitative research while integrating quantitative elements that are dominant in qualitative resources. Key methodologies will include content analysis, case studies, and surveys that capture an individual's spatial experiences and desires. These research methods are essential to the inquiry by providing a strong foundation that justifies the pursuit of the inquiry but also offer examples of existing infrastructures that effectively engage and draw in occupants in their respective sites. By utilizing these methodologies for the investigation, the dissertation will present sufficient applications and examinations of established and emerging research that reinforce the necessity of healthy communal spaces in urban environments.

Methodologies

During the preliminary analysis of the dissertation various steps were taken to understand the purpose and function of the cinema and its predecessor, the theater, in the urban environment. This required a historical analysis of both cinema and theater to justify the need to restore their original functions: facilitating the exchange and

demonstration of ideas among peers. By researching this history, the dissertation identified its main themes, which helped to establish the framework of the dissertation for further research.

Additionally, case studies were researched and analyzed to identify urban infrastructures that effectively address social and economic needs of communities. This investigation asserts what is necessary for an urban environment to thrive and how these case studies can be utilized as precedents to demonstrate examples of what the dissertation's program and resources could offer to a specific community. By categorizing the themes of each case study based on commonalities, the dissertation can better define the typologies it will explore and possibly evolve into. With a thorough analysis of case studies as precedents, the research serves as a catalyst, transforming initial findings into focused inquiries and methodologies that will affirm the conclusions drawn.

Lucas in Practice

By reviewing Ray Lucas' *Research Methods for Architecture*, the preliminary research methods evolved into essential processes for interrogating the framework upon which the dissertation is built. For the dissertation, this meant extracting the keywords that encapsulate the project through a process of mental mapping and then using these words to recognize the key themes and their supplemental categories. These themes then guided the exploration of relevant research fields, including sociology, art, and the natural environment. Literary texts provided a rich discourse for context analysis, allowing for the gathering of substantial information to justify the dissertation's themes and their relevance to the overall framework. This process

led to specific inquiries that shape the dissertation, such as: How and what do streaming services provide that keeps people indoors? What strategies can encourage people to go outdoors? And how can the responses to these inquiries facilitate the revival of an economically struggling urban area?

Further Steps

To further analyze the questions defined in the dissertation, a mixed-method approach will be employed to enhance the critical discourse analysis conducted. Qualitative methods to be used include surveys, observations, and interviews to accumulate more detailed information on individual's personal experiences with cinema and its most common viewing practices. This will allow the researcher to articulate and deepen the understanding of the cinema's role to the researcher, to a community, and to an individual in the broader societal contexts. By collecting this data, this dissertation will hopefully explore various age demographics and their views on digital media, how they view cinema and viewing habits, and their personal opinions on both cinema and streaming services in modern society. Not only will in-person interviews be conducted on site of cinemas, but social media forums will be used to capture a more diverse range of perspectives on these inquiries.

Conclusion

These methodologies are significant to the dissertation as they provide an in-depth analysis of how the program of the project should be organized and how it should function for the future occupants of the space. By focusing on qualitative research methods, the dissertation will establish a historical context that justifies the

inquiry in relation to today's society and suggests improvements based on society's relationship with the built environment and technology. The next steps would be to further refine the necessary methods and identify suitable spaces to conduct and implement them. Additionally, the research will seek and investigate the public's consensus on film as an art form and what this consensus means for cinema and its typology. This inquiry will spur conversations about whether the cinema functions as a cinematic museum and the implications of that function and role for a cinema's programming. Ultimately, this dialogue influenced by the methodologies will guide the development of the relevant responses needed to facilitate the further development of the necessary program and site criteria.

Chapter 4: Precedent/Case Studies

Introduction

A precedent analysis is essential to the dissertation as it elaborates on the themes central to the investigation within a specific context. The research focuses on community engagement, healthy and green living, nature, education, and artistic expression. The selected precedents embody these themes providing valuable insights into how spaces that incorporate these functions relate to one other and create a physical narrative for occupants to experience through a built environment. In this chapter, five precedents will be analyzed to illustrate spatial organization in relation to nature. The five precedents to be analyzed are The Glenstone Museum (2006), the Kantana Institute (2011), Parc de la Villette (1987), the 11 Street Bridge in Washington, DC, and the Contemporary Arts/Cultural Center (2013). Not all the case studies match the typology of a cinema but in some ways incorporate theaters into their program. A separate case study analysis specific to cinemas will also be included to highlight particular spatial organization techniques and programmatic elements. It was important that the precedents included in this chapter embody characteristics of nature, include some form of educational programming, such as exhibits, classrooms, studios, or lecture halls, offer aspects of visual stimulation, and facilitate a processional journey through the space.

The Glenstone Museum serves as an artistic installation in the form of a building that integrates a processional journey it's the natural environment, guiding

visitors to the pavilions that house the art exhibits. This precedent demonstrates how site organization and architectural elements can be incorporated to amplify the aesthetic design intentions. The Kantana Institute is designed to rejuvenate the students through the idea of an “inserted forest”. The design of the institute showcases how nature can be integrated into the interior with the intent of producing positive psychological effects on its occupants. Parc de la Villette, part of a larger redevelopment project in Paris, functions as a hub for various activities whilst intertwining film theory and film equipment representations throughout the park’s design. The 11 Street Bridge is a communal hub with a multidisciplinary program. It manages to promote healthy living while providing spaces and opportunities for education and artistic expression. Lastly, the Contemporary Arts/Cultural Center provides programming that encourages occupants to engage in both viewing and creating art with the intention of exchanging ideas. This precedent emphasizes how spaces can be intertwined with a focus on the occupants’ experience and artistic education.

Precedents

The following precedents demonstrate the importance of spaces that are in fluent discussion with the site it occupies and enhances cognitive stimulation. With these precedents, the dissertation aims to incorporate the qualities of these studies to amplify community engagement and the urban economy.

The Glenstone Museum

The Glenstone Museum, designed by Thomas Phifer and Partners, is located in Potomac, MD. Completed in 2006, the museum qualified for LEED Gold certification and features 11 rooms for



Figure 7

artwork installations. It is a contemporary art museum curated by Mitchell Rales and has implemented outdoor art installations since the late 2010s.

The Glenstone Museum was chosen as a precedent for its ability to seamlessly blur the line between the visual arts with the natural environment. The purpose of the building is to be “a place that seamlessly integrates art, architecture, and nature into a serene and contemplative environment”⁸³. The

design and approach to the museum’s campus incorporates a procession that aims to invoke a tranquil experience aligning the physical

representation of the museum with principles

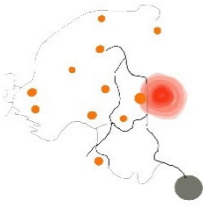
exhibited in the “slow art” movement (Figure 2). The building itself becomes a work of art and invites the occupants to experience the spaces as art pieces through a contemplative lens. The processional circulation path on site enhances the intended atmosphere for the environment showcasing the designer’s thoughtful use of materials and vegetative art pieces⁸⁴.



Figure 8: Glenstone Pavilion Aerial

⁸³ Glenstone. “Architecture.”. <https://www.glenstone.org/architecture/>.

⁸⁴ ArchDaily. “The New Glenstone: Thomas Phifer and Partners.”. <https://www.archdaily.com/902692/the-new-glenstone-thomas-phifer-and-partners>.



9 Outdoor Art Piece
Placement Diagram

Analyzing this precedent will deepen the understanding of massing and the use of light and facilitate the design process of the dissertation. The choice of materials and its stark difference to the natural environment amplifies the presence of the exhibition spaces and draws the occupants to it. Additionally, the organic procession around the site is the most important aspect of this study for the dissertation. The strategic placement of the outdoor art pieces and social spaces encourages a curated movement around the site that enhances the viewing experience of the art pieces in a way that provides positive natural stimulation. The overlapping of programmatic elements exemplifies an abstraction of how circulation and massing can physically integrate the occupants with the natural environment.

Kantana Institute



10 Kantana Institute Entry

The Kantana Institute: Film and Animation Undergraduate School, designed by Boongerm Premthada of Bangkok Project Studio, finished construction in 2011⁸⁵. The film institute is located in Kantana Movie Town, Thailand, which is a rural urban environment, and represents how film impact and enrich a small town. Site selection is a crucial aspect to design as it informs the spaces to be designed and provides cultural and historical contexts

⁸⁵ "kantana Institute, Bangkok / Project Company." ArchDaily.
<https://www.archdaily.com/230041/kantana-institute-bangkok-project-company>.

that can influence the overall design as well. As Kantana is in a rural town it is one of various environments that could be considered and studied to see how certain programs will benefit smaller populations.

The design of this space prompts innovative ways of interacting within and with spaces whilst utilizing skilled brickwork to influence and enhance the building façade design and use (figure 5). These design decisions demonstrate the significance of site analysis and its role in reflecting the the cultural context of the area. The design integrates nature and architecture to create spaces that are not only visually pleasing but harmonizes with the surrounding natural environment through its one-story design⁸⁶.



Figure 12

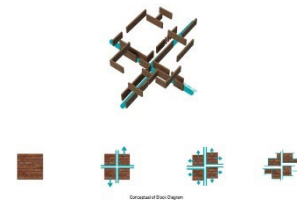
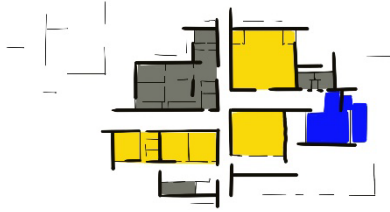


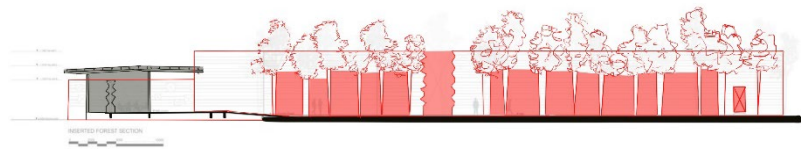
Figure 11

This program informs the dissertation by being an example of how nature can enhance creative and cognitive skills, a theme explored in the literature review. One of the aspects of the design was to provide a natural environment to promote the students' studies in filmmaking. The designers placed an “inserted forest”, which is a key element to the design that splices the massing into different quadrants (figure 6), which serves as a meditation space to help students concentrate on what they are doing, whether it is making films or moving from place to place. This feature is

⁸⁶ “ kantana Institute, Bangkok / Project Company.” ArchDaily.
<https://www.archdaily.com/230041/kantana-institute-bangkok-project-company>.



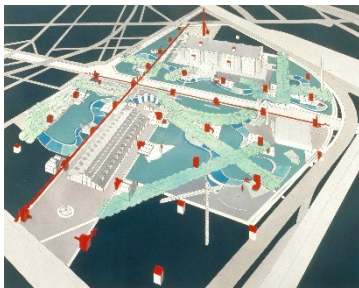
13 Kantana Programmatic Diagram



14 Framing of Spaces Using Built + Natural Elements

essential to the thesis as it explores how to integrate nature in a way that is aesthetically appealing and facilitates the surrounding cultural environment.

Parc de la Villette



15 Parc de la Villette Diagrammatic Aerial

The design of Parc de la Villette was designed by Bernard Tschumi and completed in 1987. It is now the 3rd largest park in Paris and houses the largest concentration of cultural venues in the city. It was designed as part of a larger urban redevelopment project and incorporates various elements of film theory into its design⁸⁷. The park's curvilinear layout evokes the frames of a film strip and reflects other aspects of film techniques⁸⁸. Along this curve, the visitors occupying the park can encounter 25 gardens and a diverse array of building typologies, including museums, concert halls, live performance stages, theaters, and a playground. Tschumi organized the spaces using a series of lines, points, and surfaces as an act of deconstructing the traditional views of how a park is

⁸⁷ "Parc de la Villette: The Deconstructivism of Bernard Tschumi." Dezeen. May 5, 2022.

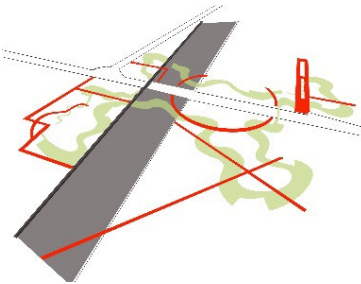
<https://www.dezeen.com/2022/05/05/parc-de-la-villette-deconstructivism-bernard-tschumi/>.

⁸⁸ Ayiran, Nezh. "The Role of Metaphors in the Formation of Architectural Identity." Unpublished manuscript, May 2012.

conventionally designed and meant to exist, while drawing inspiration from processes of film production⁸⁹.



17 Parc de Villette's Occupants
Inhabiting Space



16 Organic vs Rigid Pathways

This precedent can enlighten the dissertation in reference to processions and how they can relate to cinema in a natural way. By applying Tschumi's ideas of using cinema as a metaphor in space for spatial organization, which he describes in his book *The Manhattan Transcripts*⁹⁰, the aesthetic of the designed dissertation will be able to incorporate cinema techniques through the arrangement of different outdoor and indoor programs.

11 Street Bridge

The 11 Street Bridge is an ongoing project set to be completed in 2025. The bridge connects Wahington, DC's Capital Hill/Navy Yard area to the historically significant, Anacostia/Fairlawn neighborhoods. Designed by OMA Studio in collaboration with OLIN Studio, a



18 11 Street Bridge Aerial View

landscape architecture firm, the bridge is introduced as a new hub for congregation with spaces to be used for social, community and civic life⁹¹. The structure is

⁸⁹ Wong, Fiona. "Sequence of Experience in Parc de la Villette." Issuu.

https://issuu.com/fiona_wong/docs/wai__w__sequence_of_experience_in_p.

⁹⁰ . Tschumi Architects. "Parc de la Villette." <https://www.tschumi.com/projects/3>.

⁹¹ "11th Street Bridge Park: Our Story." Building Bridges. <https://buildingbridgesdc.org/11th-street-bridge-park/our-story/>.

intended to attract people from all over the DC, Maryland, and Virginia metropolitan area to participate in everyday life activities with each other. The design of the bridge features spaces such as an amphitheater and café, that provide “windows” or frames of the river to view it in a unique way (figure 15). Additionally, the site offers a display of various inhabitable spaces for activities that enrich the experience of river activities while educating occupants about environmental safety⁹².

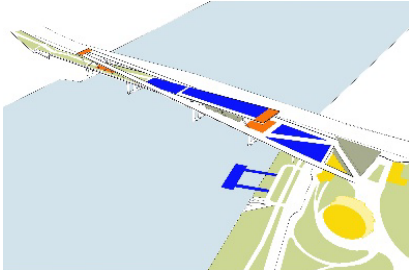
This precedent effectively utilizes its surroundings to educate its occupants, which is crucial to the dissertation in regard to film and film theory. Rather than relying solely on utilizing the existing environment as a teaching tool, the dissertation will explore how the



19 Spaces for Artistic Expression

program and function of spaces can passively and actively educate the occupants. The 11 Street Bridge can inform design strategies for creating a dynamic outdoor environment that does not have to rely on conventional organizational methods whilst fostering a robust program focused on community engagement and social interaction. The structure includes diverse spaces tailored to their various functions of different activities and is specifically designed to cater to different age demographics through the program offered. By analyzing this precedent, the dissertation can gain perspective on programming for a wide range of ages and entertainment options suitable for all.

⁹² Stoss Landscape Urbanism. “11th Street Bridge Park.”. <https://www.stoss.net/projects/planning-urbanism/11th-street-bridge-park>.



20 11 Street Bridge Programmatic Diagram

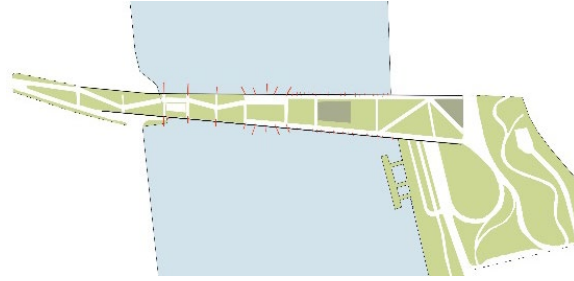
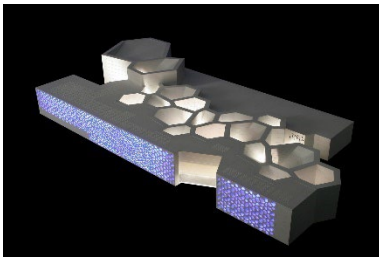
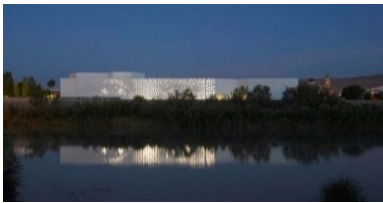


Figure 15: Views from Bridge

Contemporary Arts/Cultural Center



16 Axonometric Model



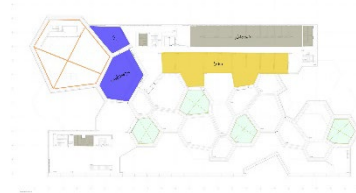
17 View of Facade from River

The Contemporary Arts/Cultural Center, designed by Nieto Sobejano Arquitectos and completed in 2013, is located in Córdoba, Spain. This building thoughtfully integrates historical and contextual elements to establish a connection to its surroundings in a meaningful way. The building incorporates religious motifs from Islam to highlight the region's Islamic heritage and traditions that are still practiced in and around the site⁹³. Despite being

as a renowned architect as Sobejano is, he effectively engaged and connected with the project on a historical and cultural level to ensure that the building would harmonize into the city's architectural identity.

⁹³ "Nieto Sobejano Arquitectos: Contemporary Arts Center, Córdoba." ArchDaily. <https://www.archdaily.com/354500/contemporary-arts-center-cordoba-nieto-sobejano-arquitectos>.

The center features exhibition halls and flexible workshop spaces that can transform functions to facilitate artistic production. It also includes an area known as the “black box”, an assembly room, designed to be suitable for theatrical productions, conferences, film screenings, and audiovisual exhibitions. As a cultural center, the program facilitates its function as a meeting place and communal area that encourages the exchange of ideas through exhibitions and gatherings. The material selection of the structure allows for a display of visual media on the building’s façade enabling pedestrians along the river to engage and interact with the building as well (figure 17)⁹⁴.



19 1st Floor Plan Program Diagram



18 Ground Floor Plan Program Diagram



20 Flexible Interior Spaces

Although this precedent is primarily focused on exhibition spaces it showcases how a flexible environment can foster artistic production and inspire collaboration. The center serves as a compelling example of how film and theater can be incorporated into the landscape in an artistic way (through the façade) drawing the attention of people in surrounding environments, which is important to obtain the curiosity of future occupants and sustain their interest in the function of the building throughout time. The examination of this study reveals how a building can be a statement piece

⁹⁴ “Nieto Sobejano Arquitectos: Contemporary Arts Center, Córdoba.” ArchDaily

that can fluctuate in functionality and educational resources while promoting artistic expression through thoughtful program organization.

Conclusion

The analyses of these case studies provide substantial evidence of the positive effects that spaces designed for community engagement and artistic expression can have. Each precedent promotes the significance of social health and the importance of the natural environment to a site, whether it is existing or intentionally designed. With the natural environment serving as a program element in each study, the overall analyses of these cases illustrate how spatial organization can be effectively woven into the built environment with significant connections and relationships to one another.

A thoughtfully designed procession through natural and built spaces can offer numerous benefits, especially if integrated with complementary indoor and outdoor areas that captures the attention of the occupants on site and encourages them to interact with others and the structures on site. The examined precedents not only advocate for community engagement and artistic expression through education but also demonstrate the effectiveness of spaces tailored to enhance the human experience, physically and mentally. Through careful analysis of organizational techniques and material choices, a comprehensive exploration of how architectural elements and structures can impact the occupant's experience can be extrapolated and implemented into the design of the thesis.

Chapter 5: Zones & the Program

In our society, the contemporary film viewing experience is predominantly in an individual's own residence. As the thesis dissertation explores the role of how a space can foster community engagement and social connection through film, the program to be designed will have community centric features and will use cinema and institutional program organizational methods to explore this. The proposed design will emphasize community-centric features, utilizing cinema and institutional programming methods to achieve this goal. Key spaces will include food service areas, multiple theaters, educational centers, and outdoor gathering spots to enhance the social and educational functions. These spaces will not only facilitate film viewing but also provide opportunities for audiences to engage with the themes presented and to educate themselves about the films and film in general. The design aims to promote connections among occupants and enhance community engagement through participatory activities. The research underlines how spaces can serve as art, stress relievers, and sources of inspiration, offering visual stimuli that cater to occupants' needs. This approach encourages social interaction, education, and entertainment.

The program aligns with the thesis by creating diverse spaces that provide various services while promoting connections to nature and connections between individuals. By establishing these spaces, the urban site can generate jobs for the local community and educate residents on various global and historical issues. This initiative fosters intercultural competence and media literacy through film, inspiring

community members to connect and express their creativity in their own unique ways.

Concept Program & Zones

To develop the program for this dissertation a series of zones were defined to align with the core principles being investigated. The naming of these zones reflects the main functions to be carried out within each area. The zones relate to the active actions that support and encourage the essential theme of the thesis, rejuvenation. By prioritizing zones that emphasize active activity, the program spaces create environments that promote in the moment interactions that contribute to the revitalization of both the community and the local economy of the chosen site.

The first zone, viewing, is centered around cinema and the visual arts, offering spaces dedicated to the appreciation and experience of film. Viewing zones consist of spaces that provide the necessary resources for film consumption, such as screening rooms, and to accommodate the diverse forms of visual media. As visual media consists of various digital mediums there is an opportunity to implement spaces that showcase a variety of these creations as well. The programmatic elements of this zone include multiple cinemas to accommodate multiple screenings, outdoor theaters or amphitheaters for open-air film viewings, and exhibition spaces to promote film theory and the artistic processes of film composition practices. These exhibitions will also highlight other digital art forms, providing a platform for both theoretical and creative exploration.

The second zone, educating, encompasses spaces that are designed as educational facilities aimed at fostering learning and creative development. These

spaces will support local education initiatives while providing spaces that enlighten the general public on film. Occupants will have the opportunity to engage with spaces that demonstrate film theory and explore various thematic elements that film can present. The zone will provide with spaces where occupants can collaborate on, refine, and develop their own film ideas and concepts so that they can ultimately put what they have learned into practice. The key programmatic spaces of this zone include classrooms for teaching the film theory and history, collaboration for group work and creative development, study rooms for individual research and reflection but can also function as collaboration, and film studios to put the generated film ideas into a work of art. An overlapping program space is the exhibition halls, which is also included in the viewing zone, that can display film history, artifacts, and visual learning materials, reinforcing the educational mission of the zone.

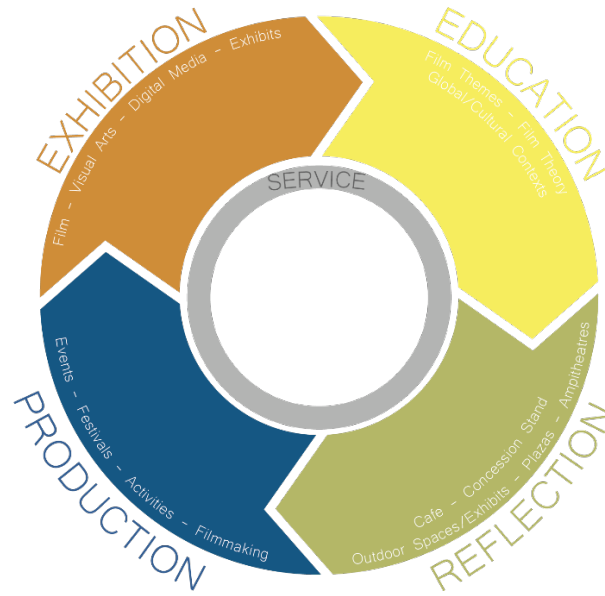
The third zone, gathering, provides spaces to foster social interaction and community engagement. This can occur through activities where individuals can connect with others through communal activities such as dining, conversing, or simply relaxing. This zone has specific spatial criteria to help generate these functions, which include the ability to transform for various activities and events. This means incorporating flexible areas that can represent themselves as dining halls or social spaces like an auditorium, ensuring that the space can adapt to the diverse needs of its occupants.

The fourth zone, servicing, provides spaces for essential amenities that support the functions of the other program zones. These spaces are implemented to facilitate the overall operation of the site function, including typical cinema-related

program elements such as a concession stand or the implementation of a café.

Additionally, the zone will include other spaces that can support the educating zone, such as incorporating storage for film equipment that can be used on site or rented, as well as staff and visitor spaces for lecturers, exhibitors, and other professionals to depart to. These support facilities will ensure that the core functions of the site can be carried out smoothly and efficiently.

The last zone, connecting (with nature), integrates natural elements into the site, offering spaces that encourage the occupants to interact with the natural environment. This zone aims to complement the more structured spaces dedicated to film and education by providing a contrasting, restorative environment. The natural spaces will provide mental, social, and most importantly visual stimulation that will contrast with the cinema space. This allows individuals to step away from the curated experience of the cinema and reconnect with the outdoors. By providing a space that juxtaposes curated viewing spaces, occupants can have a space on site that is an indirect environment dedicated to remediation and rejuvenation. These areas will promote rejuvenation by offering tranquil spaces that encourage reflection, relaxation, and physical well-being, offering a holistic approach to the site's program that balances the intensity of the other zones.



21 Graphic Representation of Zones

The five zones collectively embody the key themes presented in the thesis and demonstrate how they interconnect through their respective purposes. By defining these zones, the program for the building is structured to offer a programmatic representation of the thesis's objectives, illustrating how it can positively impact both the local economy and the community of the chosen site and demonstrates how each zone functions as a recurring loop of education, inspiration, and action.

Tabular Program

Presented below is the tabular program proposed based on the zones introduced in the previous section. The program below is based on the programs of the precedents that were analyzed through the reverse-engineering method. The graphic is a culmination of the necessary spaces that can contribute to the revitalization of a failing economy.

PROGRAM	SQFT	#	NOTES
Viewing			
Large Theater	8,900	2	Can seat up to 100-300 people
Intimate Theater	<2,000	1	Can seat up to 100-300 people
Exhibits	2,000	2	
Ampitheatre	3,600	1	
Sculpture Park	300	5	Used for Visual Arts made by local artists and occupants of the building
Outdoor Theater	10,000	1	Can spatially be a field/ replace ampitheatre
Total	38,900	12	
Educating			
Library/Media Archive	4,000	1	
Study Room	500	4	Collaboration Spaces and/or Individual Spaces
Studio	1,200	3	OPTIONS: Film Composition; Foley Studio; Editing Room
TOTAL	9,600	8	
Gathering			
Lobby	1,000	1-2	
Flexible/Multipurpose Space	3,000	1-2	
Outdoor Seating		Varies	
Crew Studios	1,200	2-3	Can be combined with studios from the education zone
TOTAL	11,600	7	
Connecting (with Nature)			
Green Space		Varies	
Exterior Seating		Varies	
Courtyard	1,200	1-2	Placed in building program
Plaza	6,500	1-2	Apart of outdoor program
Garden		Varies	Can be combined with green space program
Field/Lawn		Varies	Can be combined with green space program but has to have space for viewing and other activities
TOTAL	15,400	4	
Servicing			
Office	600	3-4	
Pantry	300	2	One for the offices and another for public food stalls
Information Desk	300	1	
Concession Stand	800	1	
Cafe	3,000	1	
TOTAL	7,100	9	
TOTAL	82,600	40	Will vary based on addition of varied programs

Reverse Engineering Summary & Documentation

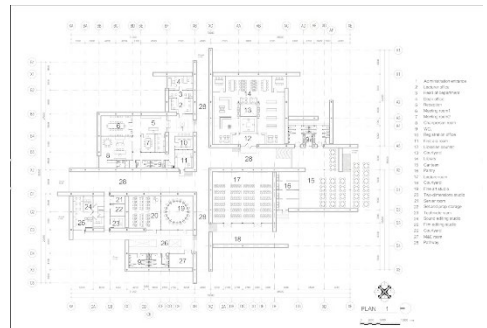
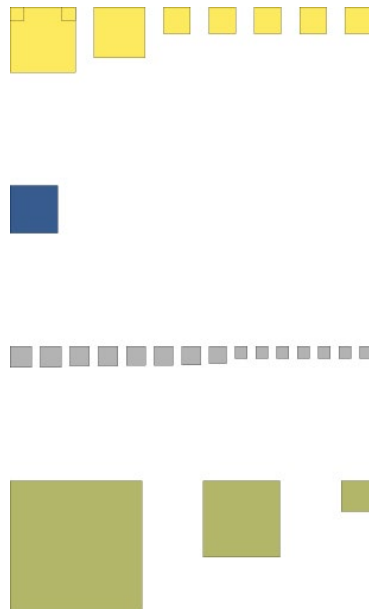
To develop the program outlined in the previous section, three architectural projects were analyzed and sequentially reverse-engineered to create a comprehensive program guide for the dissertation. The reverse-engineering process involves considering the project's multiple factors to understand the spatial relationships implemented. Key factors taken into account relate to program spaces implemented and their relation to the mission and values of the building whilst observing the overall strategies and techniques used to manage circulation and construction. These

factors helped deduce the design principles and processes utilized in each project, which were then applied to the dissertation's framework.

The three buildings selected that were reverse engineered include the Kantana Institute: Film and Animation Undergraduate School, designed by Boongerm Premthada of Bangkok Project Studio; the 11 Street Bridge, designed by OMA Studios in collaboration with OLIN Studios; and the Contemporary Arts/Cultural Center, designed by Nieto Sobejano Arquitectos. These projects were chosen as they reflect programs that incorporate spaces for participatory activities, communal gatherings, education, and green spaces, which align with the themes of this dissertation.

Kantana Institute

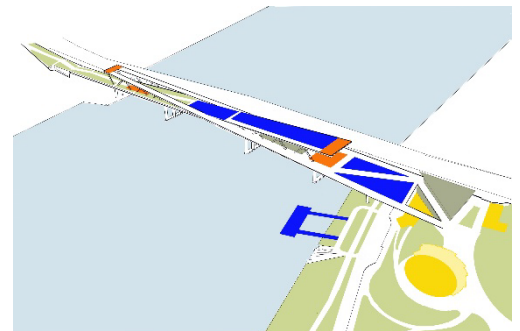
PROGRAM	SQFT	#
Educating		
Multi Media Library Zone	5,712.58	1
Study Room(s)	505.3	2
Lecture Zone	3,473.76	1
Workshop Zone	4,784.73	5
TOTAL	13,971.10	7
Gathering		
Canteen	3,030.70	1
TOTAL	3,030.70	1
Servicing		
Administration Office Zone		
Lobby	470.76	1
Conference Room	975.34	2
Reception	401.32	1
Work Carousels	1,381.86	7
Office	1,206.96	2
Pantry	1,040.49	2
Restroom	1,865.44	7
TOTAL	7,342.17	21
Connecting (with Nature)		
Inserted Forest	7,806.77	1
Exterior Seating Area	1,254.19	1
TOTAL	56,690.61	34
TOTAL	32,346.64	6



22 Kantana Institute Floor Plan

11 Street Bridge

PROGRAM	SQFT	#
Viewing		
Amphitheatre	22,238.69	2
Waterfall Terrace	6,294.42	1
Lookout Post	4,145	2
Sculpture Park	11,273.84	1
TOTAL	43,951.95	6
Educating		
Outdoor Classroom	7,411.03	1
Teaching Garden	26,976.92	1
TOTAL	34,387.95	2
Gathering		
Hammock Grove	4,814.05	1
Cafe	9,179.73	1
Playspace	20,497.94	2
Kayak/Canoe Launch	7,315.28	1
TOTAL	41,811	5
Servicing		
EEC Bridge Park Office	5,893.56	1
TOTAL	5,893.56	1
Connecting (with Nature)		
Rain Gardens	8,081.86	1
Central Plaza	8,062.44	1
Great Lawn	8,025.98	1
TOTAL	24,170.28	3
TOTAL	150,215	15



23 11 Street Bridge Programmatic Axonometric



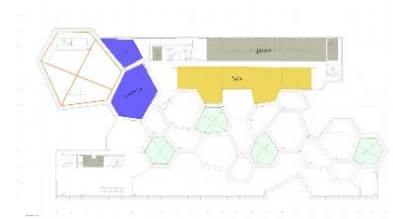
24 11 Street Bridge Programmatic Plan

Contemporary Arts/Cultural Center

PROGRAM	SQFT	#
Viewing		
Performance Theater	8,879.68	1
Gallery	14,842.06	2
Exhibit	12,387.45	3
TOTAL	36,109.19	6
Educating		
Media Library	3,015.08	1
Labs	6,956.23	9
TOTAL	9,971.31	10
Gathering		
Cafeteria	3,525.41	2
Artist Studio(s)	9,554.68	8
Multipurpose Space	1,371.76	1
TOTAL	14,451.85	11
Servicing		
Offices	5,196.04	10
Restroom(s)	2,786.32	10
TOTAL	7,982.36	20
Connecting (with Nature)		
Courtyard(s)	4,905.28	4
Exterior Plaza(s)	13,746.31	2
TOTAL	18,651.59	6
TOTAL	74,086.21	53



26 CACC Ground Floor



25 CACC 1st Floor

Precedent Justification

As previously mentioned, the reverse-engineered precedents reflect the principal elements of the dissertation, including community engagement, education, and the viewing experience. By analyzing the selected buildings—the Kantana Institute, the 11 Street Bridge, and the Contemporary Arts/Cultural Center—the dissertation aims to gain a deeper understanding of programmatic spaces that directly relate to these core themes. The goal of this analysis is to explore how the spaces of each project can work together to create experiences that benefit and engage the community. Each precedent focuses on a specific aspect that will assist in shaping the final programmatic framework of the dissertation.

The Kantana Institute was reversed-engineered to examine the programmatic elements that are typically incorporated into an educational facility to support its initiatives. The most important programmatic aspect of this study was the implementation of the natural environment at the benefit of the students that attend the school. The precedent serves as a case study of the positive impacts of nature in the built environment, reinforcing the research presented in Chapter 2 that illustrates various studies investigating how nature has beneficial effects on a human's cognitive and creative psyche. By observing the program and analyzing each programmatic element individually, as well as their interrelationships, a synthesis was developed that supports the dissertation's focus on education and film. The synthesis identifies the key spaces and their relationships, highlighting how the architects conveyed their importance and their proximity to other spaces to reinforce the educational mission. Although this program primarily contains educational and administrative program

spaces, it also exhibits the type of programs essential for a learning environment that is curated to the arts and the making of the arts.

The 11 Street Bridge was reverse-engineered due to its distinctive processional features which incorporates programs with diverse functions that interact with the landscape and accommodate visitors of various age groups. As the dissertation refines its programmatic elements, one possibility that could be incorporated into the program is a scenic, landscape journey through the site. The organization of the 11 Street Bridge was critical to this analysis as it incorporates the frames of captivating views without overcrowding the program in a way that preserves the natural views of its surrounding environment. As the bridge prioritizes the natural environment, it also includes program spaces for the visual arts, viewing, and education. The educational facilities are not confined to the traditional programs of a built environment but also extend to the outdoor environment, aligning with the dissertation's goal to blend film and film education with the natural world. By visualizing these spaces and knowing their average dimensions, they can be effectively integrated into the dissertation's program without taking up excessive space on the site.

The last precedent analyzed through the reverse-engineering method was Nieto Sobejano Arquitectos' Contemporary Arts/Cultural Center because of their dedicated program spaces for the creation of art. Unlike the Kantana Institute, which utilizes academic spaces to facilitate the production of art, Sobejano's design emphasizes the art itself by centralizing the exhibition and gallery spaces while positioning the theater and artist studios as supplementary spaces that support the

creative process. An additional but less prominent program is the media library that supports the artistic function of the center. As the dissertation develops its program, it is important to consider and understand spaces that encourage and influence the design and creative processes of an individual. The center incorporates spaces that foster artistic learning and creation through the implementation of a library and performance theater which serve to inspire the artist. By examining this program, the dissertation will gain insight on how outdoor spaces such as the courtyards and exhibition areas can be designed in relation to each other and oriented in a way that elevates the experience of both the occupant and the artist.

As each precedent provides substantial techniques and processes to design, the dissertation can curate a firm foundation as to what the viewing experience can be in our contemporary society. The precedents utilize specific themes such as participatory activities for community engagement and natural environments for rejuvenation and remediation which are a critical aspect to this dissertation. As the investigation of the thesis progresses, the program will have to adjust to site conditions and cultural needs but will still have the foundation researched from these initial precedents.

Conclusion

Through this programmatic study of zones, precedent analysis, development of a tabular program, the dissertation has accumulated substantial information on what are the necessary spaces to be implemented to promote the themes the dissertation argues. As site selection directly influences the program, it will be

imperative to select a site that will encompass both the themes of the dissertation and the culture of the site. This suggests that not all the proposed programs will be utilized but if the site permits, can be incorporated to amplify the key themes that support the narrative of this thesis.

Chapter 6: Site Selection & Analysis

Site selection is crucial to this dissertation, as the program of the proposed structure should directly influence the surrounding environment. Based on my research findings and the themes that the investigation was founded upon, the primary criterion for the site is that it should be located in an economically influential urban environment. When choosing this setting, it is also important to consider the age range and cultural contexts of the community. These factors are vital for site selection because the occupants who will use the space need programs aligned with the dissertation's core mission and values, as well as services that engage their interests and encourage repeat visits. This approach will not only enhance the local economy but also provide a sense of place for the community. Additionally, the cultural context of the site will honor the heritage of its occupants and reflect the aspirations of the local community. By doing so, there is an opportunity to influence the programming and amplify minority and underrepresented voices through film, promoting diversity and inclusion within the space.

The factors previously mentioned will provide a strong rationale for how the finalized program will be significant to the urban site and will integrate the necessary resources to promote healthy living through a unique film experience. Incorporating these elements will allow the community to become vibrant and rejuvenated while establishing a distinct identity. With the design incorporating a cinema, the existing infrastructure on site will benefit from increased foot traffic and business opportunities. A robust commercial or mixed-use environment can thrive with the addition of the cinema and its resources. The diverse community that currently exists

or is attracted to the area will gain a sense of identity and belonging as they visit the site and engage with others in the community.

Site Selection Matrix with Scoring System

The matrix used to define and to continuously redefine the selected sites is visualized below:

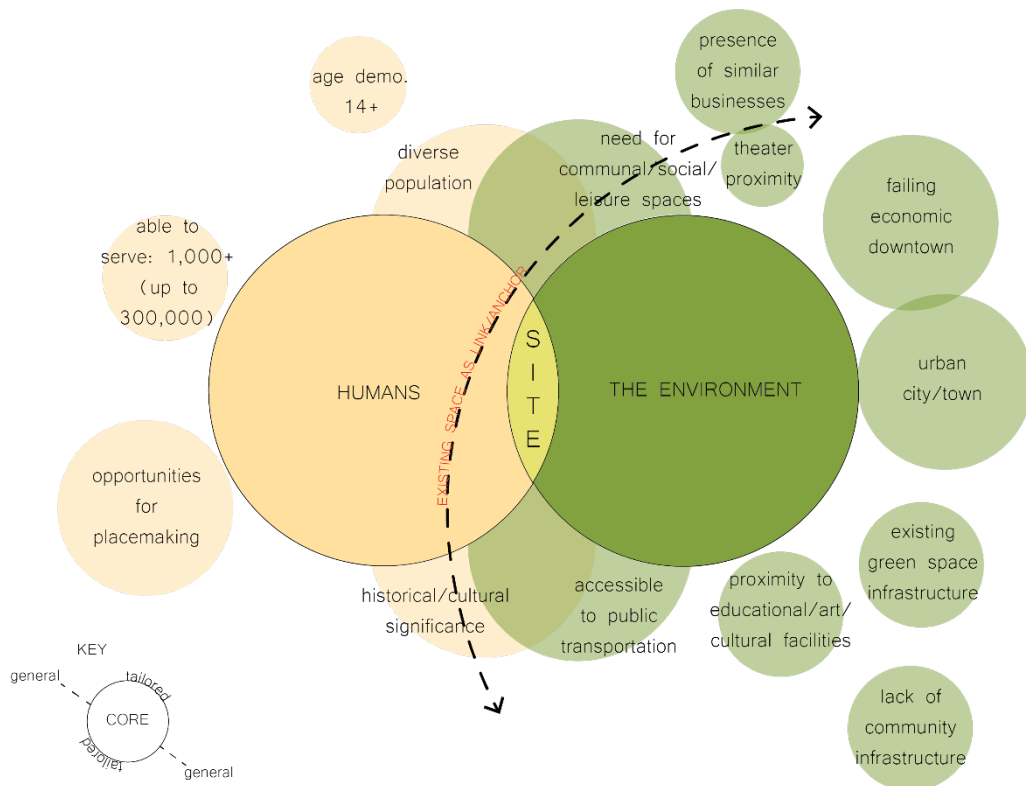


Figure 27 Site Criteria

This site criteria visualization depicts the aspects of a possible site and how favorable it could be based on how close those aspects are to the two main focuses of the dissertation: humans and the environment. These two focuses were chosen because the environment plays a key role in the revitalization of the urban fabric the proposed design finds itself in and the people that occupy that design encourage are

crucial to its longevity as they are the ones that will be utilizing it for years to come. The two main focuses have interconnected features on both ends that demonstrate the importance and connection between the site features. Without those features the dissertation would have a difficult foundation to prove its argument on urban revitalization through a specific typology. The other bubbles circulating these focuses are ideals for the site that could create more opportunities for the people that occupy the space.

After visualizing a matrix that represented the ideal elements for the site's dissertation a scoring chart was implemented to assist in a preferred site. The scoring chart (Fig. 2) was designed with a scale of 1 through 5, with 1 being inadequate, 3 being neutral, and 5 being adequate. Based on the score chart the preferred sites are both sites located in Panama City, Panama and the Southeast Los Angeles site. The score chart is provided below:

Ranked from 1 (Least Ideal) to 5 (Most Ideal) *Primary Criteria = Double Weighted							
Criteria	Option 1: Panama City, Panama	Option 2: Los Angeles, CA	Option 3: Wellington, NZ	Option 4: Rolette County, ND			
Accessibility to Public Transport*	10	8	6	2			
Historical/Cultural Significance*	10	10	8	10			
Diverse Population*	10	10	4	8			
Proximity to Communal/Social/Educational Facilities*	10	8	10	2			
Urban City/Town	5	4	5	1			
Opportunities for Placemaking	4	5	3	5			
Neighborhood Specific	Albrook (PCP)	Santa Ana Avenida (PCP)	South LA	Wellington (NZ)	Chippewa Reservation (ND)	Rolette (ND)	South Hill (ND)
Quality of Green Space	3	3	1	3	5	3	5
Theater Proximity	2	4	2	2	1	1	1
Population Size	2	2	5	3	2	3	1
Ability to Serve High Occupancies	5	4	4	2	3	4	3
Failing Economic Downtown	1	1	3	1	5	2	5
TOTAL	62	63	60	47	44	41	43
OVERALL TOTAL	62	63	60	47	44	41	43

Figure 28 Site Score Chart

Selected Sites

After analyzing and reviewing a list of potential sites, four regions were established that would best fit the intentions of the research. These regions (in no particular order) include Southeast LA; Rolette County, North Dakota; Panama City, Panama; and Wellington, New Zealand. These four regions were chosen based on the previously mentioned criterion and the opportunities they offer for placemaking.

In Southeast Los Angeles, there are four potential sites (identified in figures 12, 13, and 14) in close proximity to each other that could be used to propose a design that will facilitate the initiatives of the community. In Southeast LA, the urban planning department has a mission to emphasize the rich cultural and architectural history to showcase and empower its diverse population. This portion of Los Angeles has a primarily Latino population of 71.2% with the other 16.9% encapsulating its

African American population. As these two ethnicities comprise the population, a large amount of the population are immigrants with 42.7% of the total population being immigrants. Due to this diverse population, there are various barriers to work, such as incarceration, disability, low educational attainment, language barriers, and immigration status, making it hard for families to obtain a stable income. This is a precursor to the area's dramatic increase in gang related crime which is not contributing to the urban planning committee's mission.

To offset the issues that have arisen in Southeast LA, a public community college, Los Angeles Trade-Technical College (identified in figure 14), has strategies to improve educational outcomes, transit mobility, and engage residents and stakeholders. These strategies are outlined in their initiative known as 'Slate Z' which is, more specifically, their strategy that intersects jobs, the workforce, education, healthy communities, and

business development to tackle an urban center (Southeast LA) with one of the nation's highest poverty rates. This initiative acknowledges that low education rates are a critical gateway in addressing poverty and providing more opportunities for career advancement. Through the initiative and their secondar initiative known as 'Promise Zone Arts - South LA', the planning committee plans on building a resilient community with a dynamic local economy, living wage jobs, high achieving students, safe streets, green spaces, and accessible transportation.

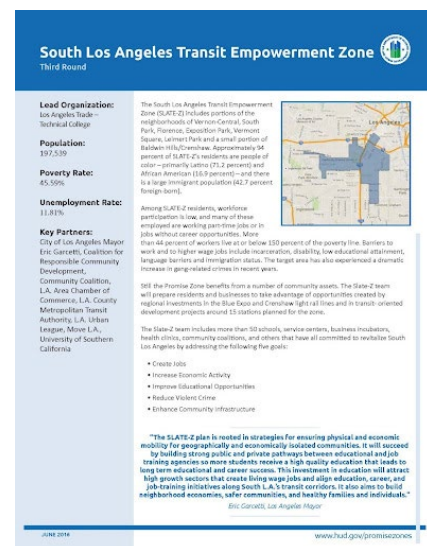


Figure 29: South LA Classification as Promise Zone

In Panama City, Panama, two potential regions that house the sites were found but only one site stood out as it looked promising to enhance the community needs based on its surrounding contexts. The sites are located throughout Panama City and include Albrook (Figure 15,16, and 17) and Santa Ana Avenida (Figure 18 and 19). These sites were chosen due to their proximity to accessible public transit, their proximity to commercial spaces, and ultimately their cultural significance. Santa Ana Avenida is right on the edge of the historic town, Casco Viejo, it predates the Panama Canal's establishment and is one of Panama's oldest towns, initially established by European settlers. The architecture in this historical district is constructed by a unique blend of 19th-20th century architectural styles, while most of the buildings have a Neo-Renaissance style, the rest demonstrate late colonial, Caribbean, Gulf Coast, French, and eclectic styles. The city still has these historical institutions with their architectural elements intact showcasing its history. Due to gentrification, the city has become a tourist destination, and the interior functions have changed into restaurants, hotels, and nightclubs, whilst maintaining its historical integrity.

An organization, known as Conservatorio, focuses on culture, commerce, and community to create an environment that reflects the neighborhood's identity and attracts people through active programming. The organization is characterized by strategies with an objective to keep the neighborhood and its properties diverse and attractive. Conservatorio hopes to maintain and improve Casco Viejo's economically vibrant, socially diverse, and culturally significant neighborhood. Their goal is made possible by engaging with investors, clients, and existing residents.

Albrook, Panama is a site that has a main bus terminal and metro line attached to its central core adjacent from the town's mall, Albrook Mall (Figure 16). This makes the site easily accessible to people who live outside the town and to tourists. There is a mix of residential and government buildings located around the site, but most importantly the University of Panama is around fifteen minutes away, making it a prime site for youth engagement. As of 2006, there are no updated urban planning initiatives for the town.

Wellington, New Zealand has three potential sites (Figure 6 and 7) that could enhance the community aspects of the region. These sites are located adjacent to schools or next to educational facilities such as an aquatic center. These sites had potential due to their proximity to educational and community facilities (Figure 8 and 9). These adjacent infrastructures can serve as a link to the cinema and provide a narrative to Wellington's education initiatives. They are set interspersed between a residential and commercial zone. As the capital of New Zealand, Wellington has a Regional Economic Development Plan that focuses on four sectors of economic development but the three that align with the dissertation's investigation are: screen and gaming, science and technology, and food, fire and tourism. These sectors outline strategies towards educational improvements that relate to science literacy and placemaking. Although this does not directly translate to the dissertation's argument, the use of technology as a tool for education can still drive the dissertation forward if these sites were chosen especially as they are close to schools and centers that focus on science. These sites are accessible through public transport although not too

frequent around the site as other areas selected. It has a minority population present with Maoris representing 15.5% while 76% are primarily European.

After analyzing the resources available in Rolette County, North Dakota (Figures, 3,4, and 5), the region is deemed unfit to propose a design for this dissertation based on the curated criterion. The main reason North Dakota was chosen as a potential candidate was due to its classification of a Promise Zone. Rolette County has a high unemployment rate between 55-69% near the Pride of Great Plains. The Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Indians (Figure 3) have a desire to boost economic activity, improve access to employment, expand on the educational opportunities offered, and integrate community and health and wellness infrastructures to the region. This area had great potential based on the needs of the community but due to the severe lack of existing commercial structures and educational facilities the site was deemed unfit as it would be like building an urban fabric from scratch. The sites proposed do not provide substantial elements presented in the site matrix which is crucial to the dissertation.

Preferred Site

As the thesis refines itself, the preferred site will serve as a case study for other sites that would like to improve their urban life which would influence their economy. This indicates that there will be one primary site focus for the dissertation to define the needed programming for selected community. The other sites will have a similar economic status to the primary site, which will facilitate an effortless transition of the proposed design to adhere to the demands of the specific site.

The preferred site was either Southeast Los Angeles or Santa Ana Avenida, Panama City, Panama. These sites are primary choices from the site analysis selections due to their adherence to the site criteria noted in figure 1, ability to be revitalized through their urban fabric, and the potential to advocate for other aspects of the film industry that are not widely known. By using either one of these site regions as case studies, the dissertation will have a secure foundation to build its argument.

In terms of the primary choices adhering to the site criteria (Fig.1), both sites have an immediate proximity to public transport and educational facilities. This is very important as it allows for a diverse range of occupants to come into the space and utilize it based on their interests. Since both sites' educational facilities are primarily schools ranging from elementary to university, this allows for a more youthful perspective to enter the social aspects of the dissertation and enables the opportunity for young locals to gain interest in the site from an early age and maintain the vision of the cinema to be designed. With the youths, local residents, and tourists

having convenient access to the site, the cinema will provide different narratives from all types of age ranges and nationalities.

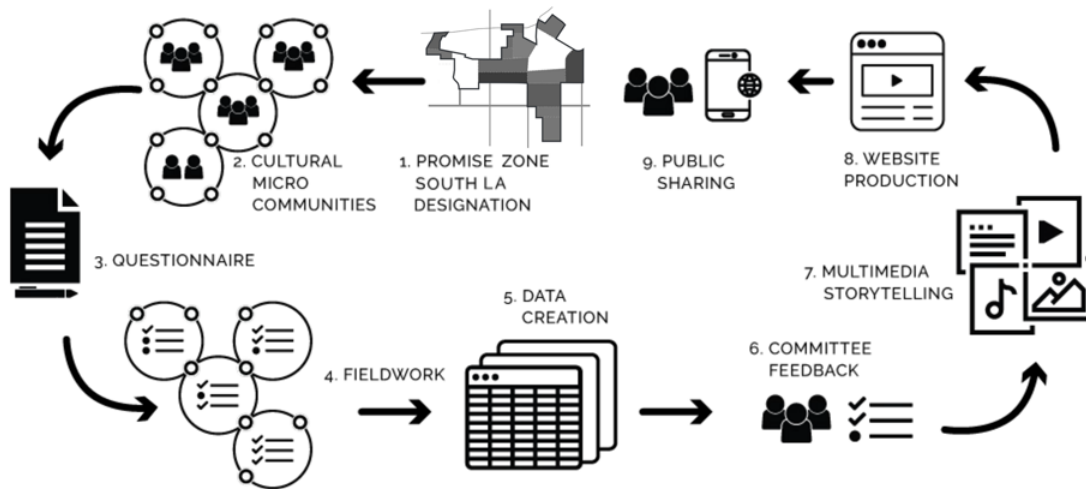


Figure 30: South LA Community Engagement Framework

One difference between both sites is that Santa Ana Avenida has a variety of museums in its proximity which is an aspect of the site that amplifies the potential foot traffic through the proposed site. As many schools and older people travel to museums to learn about history, they will find interest in the proposed site and be able to understand its significance to the area.

Both sites have astounding cultural heritages due to their diverse populations. Southeast Los Angeles has a primarily Latino population with a large portion of that population being immigrants. This allows for a rich melting pot of Hispanic cultures to be present on site. With a diverse population such as this there are many opportunities to provide this population with a space to not only acquire employment but also a space where they can share aspects of their culture and personal stories with those that are not aware. This also applies to Santa Ana Avenida, as many of the population in Panama is Afro-Latino which ancestry dating to the Caribbean islands or the West Indies. With an ethnically diverse population that resulted from the

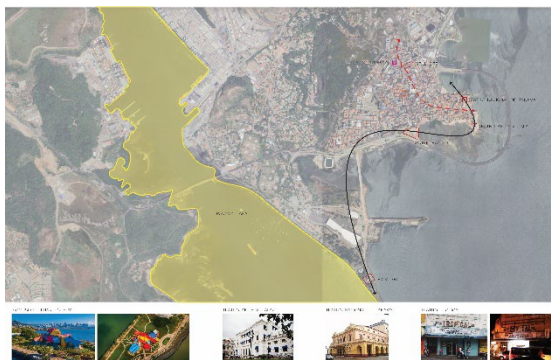
construction of the Panama Canal, there is a strong cultural and historical significance to this region, especially the town of Casco Viejo (Fig. 5). As Santa Ana Avenida is close to the Panama Canal and Casco Viejo, the site can demonstrate a vast range of Panamanian history (Fig. 6). South LA has robust public transport, minorities present, many schools, commercial and residential zones close by, and has the opportunity to link with school.

Santa Ana & El Chorrillo Architectural Characteristics



Figure 31: Ancon, Santa Ana, Panama Architecture Characteristics

As both sites are in commercial hubs of the region, they both have the ability



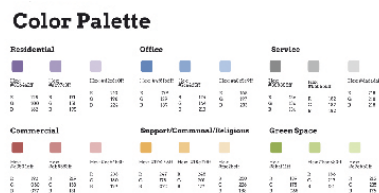
to revitalize the surrounding area that they position themselves in. Since these commercial hubs will act as anchors for the site as a means of gaining interest in stakeholders to see the potential of the area, the site will generate foot traffic

from nearby visitors. Each region proposed can be improved with accessible green spaces and infrastructure that promotes social and community engagement, as there are no other places in the regions that advocate for social inclusion that does not focus on athleticism. By revitalizing these downtown areas with the appropriate interventions, one can assume that a new breath of life will be incorporated into these communities and provide opportunities from different disciplines.

Based on the topics discussed, the opportunities that each site present exhibit promises of successful community and social engagement. As each site houses diverse populations, the site will provide a space for minorities to share their experiences and provide a narrative through creation which will globally amplify the common trend in the film industry that diminishes films by minorities due to aspects of the production of their art not being in a universal language. This will allow many opportunities for minorities to share their experiences regardless of a language barrier and even expand itself into a notable global celebration of minority produced films.

Documentation of Sites

The following are diagrams that pertain to the analysis of each of the selected sites with the key denoting the significance behind each color:



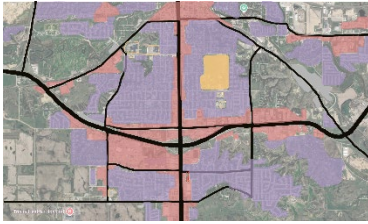


Figure 35 Rolette, North Dakota
Zones



Figure 34 South Hill, North Dakota
Zones



Figure 33 Chippewa Indian Zones



Figure 37 Wellington, New Zealand
Site Options 1



Figure 36 Wellington, New Zealand
Site Options 2



Figure 39 Wellington, NZ Site Options
1 Zones



Figure 38 Wellington, NZ Site Option
2 Zones



Figure 41 Wellington, NZ Site Options
1 Bus Stops



Figure 40 Wellington, NZ Site Options
2 Bus Stops



Figure 44 Southeast LA Site Options



Figure 43 Southeast LA Zones

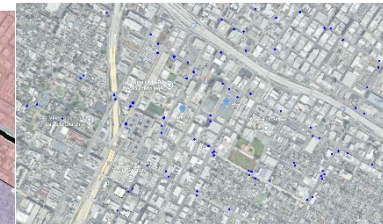


Figure 42 Southeast LA Bus Stops

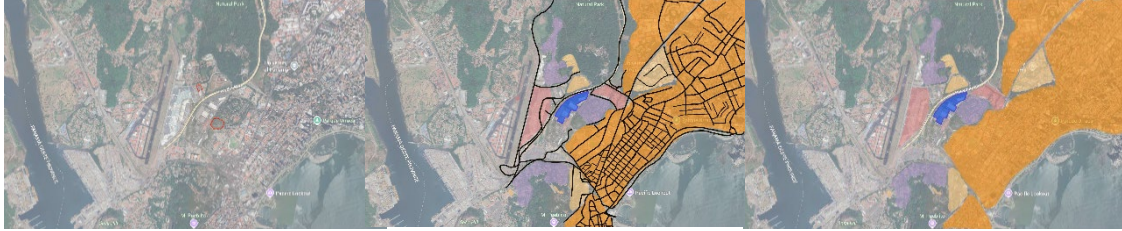


Figure 45 Albrook, Panama Sites

Figure 46 Albrook, Panama Zones

Figure 47 Albrook, Panama Zones
without Street Grid



Figure 49 Santa Ana Avenida, Panama
Location



Figure 48 Santa Ana Avenida, Panama
Zones

Selected Site

After further analysis of the two preferred sites, Santa Ana Avenida was chosen due to the strong cultural and historical nature of the site. Although South LA offered multiple elements that would support the thesis, a couple of disadvantages presented themselves. As LA is an existing hub for cinema and film, the proposed design would become lost in the various cinemas that already exist as well as increasingly complex due to the sociopolitical elements that would need to be addressed directly. This is also the case for another site close to the Pacific Ocean in the Santa Ana neighborhood (Fig. 22), as its site boundaries called upon further analysis of how to efficiently incorporate an effective program onto the site.



Figure 50: Proposed Site(s)

The proposed site is an infill site located along the Santa Ana corridor within a ten-minute walking distance from an existing film festival organization known as *Festival Internacional de Cine Panama, the IFF*. The current venues of this festival take place in various building structures, including a mall, an educational center, and a hotel (identified in Fig. 23), none of which can be classified as a cinema. This is also an issue as there are no cinema centric buildings located in Panama unless it is a theater for the performing arts. One theater known as *Teatro Tropical*, which is also a cinema located in Santa Ana Avenida, is visibly run down and most likely out of use.

By embedding the already existing theaters in Santa Ana into the IFF's venue program and incorporating the proposed design (Fig. 24), the solution will serve as a beacon for film and media arts in Panama (Fig. 6), while supporting the locals and their needs through creative expression and resources.

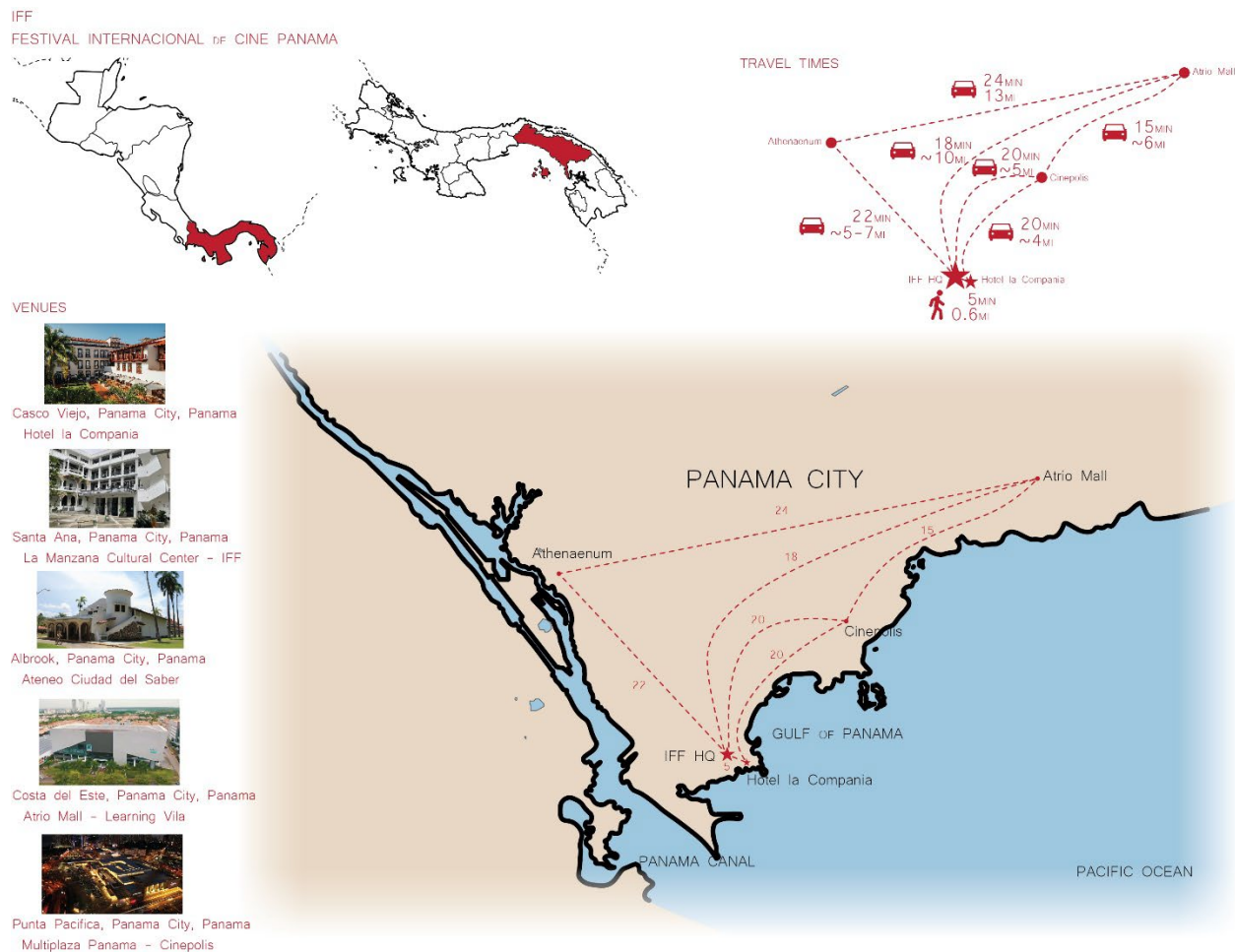


Figure 51: IFF Venues

POSSIBLE VENUE/SITE ADDITIONS : IFF
FESTIVAL INTERNACIONAL DE CINE PANAMA



Santa Ana, Panama City, Panama
Teatro Tropical



Casco Viejo, Panama City, Panama
Teatro Nacional de Panama



Casco Viejo, Panama City, Panama
Teatro Anís Villalaz

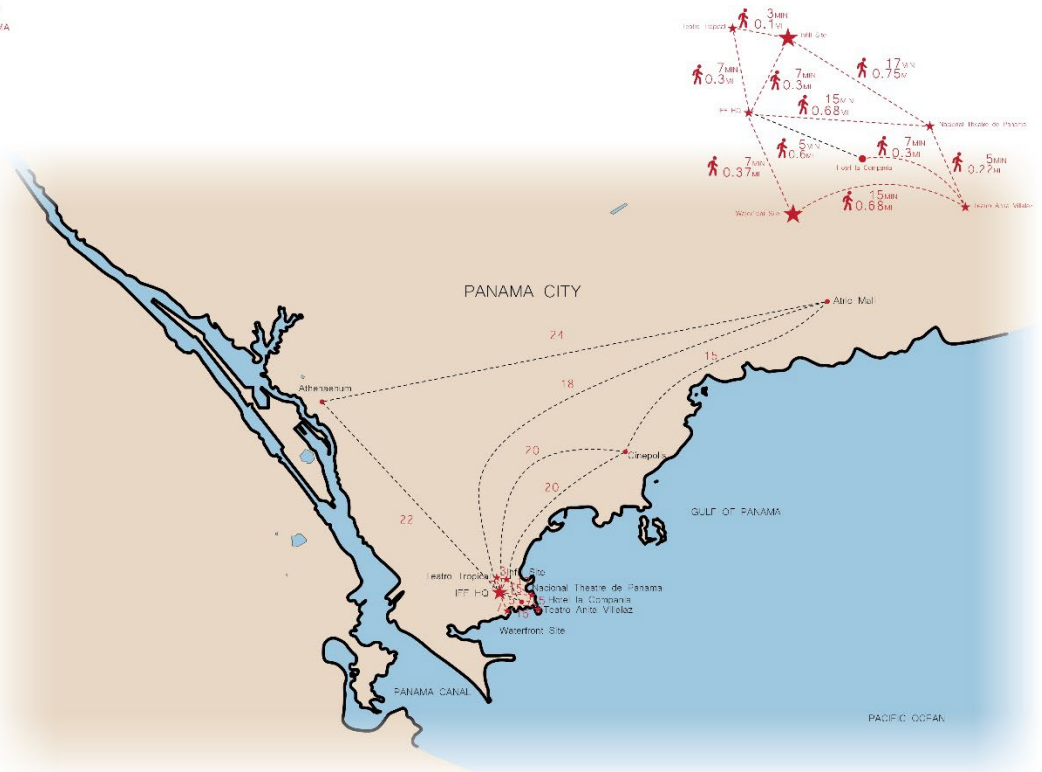


Figure 52: Proposed IFF Venue Study

Conclusion

After completing site analyses of each region in coalition with the most favorable sites to house the cinema, two regions deemed themselves appropriate as options. The most favorable site options were Southeast Los Angeles near the Los Angeles Trade-Technical College and Santa Ana Avenida near Casco Viejo, Panama City, Panama. These two sites possess a lot of potential for the objectives of this dissertation with opportunities to amplify other societal issues that have been prevalent in the film industry since its beginnings. Although these two sites have a lot of potential, the Santa Ana Avenida site was ultimately picked to demonstrate the design solution effectively. By incorporating a space to enjoy film in this region, the

thesis will be able to demonstrate the effects of a specific typology to facilitate the rejuvenation of urban life through social engagement and educational facilities.

Chapter 7: Discovery Phase – Conceptual Testing of Thesis

Introduction

This chapter outlines the conceptual testing phase of the thesis, where initial design and theory explorations were investigated to analyze how spatial strategies could support the project's central themes of social engagement and media literacy through film and the cinema. Building on the theoretical, cultural, and contextual research established in previous chapters, this phase aimed to translate abstract concepts into preliminary spatial ideas that could further inform the architectural design.

A range of conceptual drawings, diagrams, and spatial models were produced to test how different user groups might interact with the proposed environment. These studies examined key aspects such as circulation, zoning, thresholds, and the integration of communal versus individual experiences. The studies were guided by the research question: How can we enhance the contemporary film experience to foster social engagement and support media literacy? To answer this question, precedents from both traditional cinemas and cultural institutions were analyzed, focusing on how programmatic diversity and spatial configuration can enrich the user experience. These investigations were organized around the four zones identified in Chapter 4—education, production, exhibition, and reflection—each explored in terms of both form and function. This phase served as a bridge between research and

design, offering a space for critical reflection and early spatial resolution through occupant schedules that laid the framework for the architectural proposal.

Conceptual Analyses

To initiate the analysis of design schemes suitable for the site, the theoretical framework of the thesis was explored through the development of a triadic chart. This chart positions the three core principles of the thesis along its outer edges and maps the corresponding spatial functions that align not only with the thesis objectives but also with the anticipated needs and intentions of future users. The following section presents the triadic chart based on the thesis's conceptual priorities.

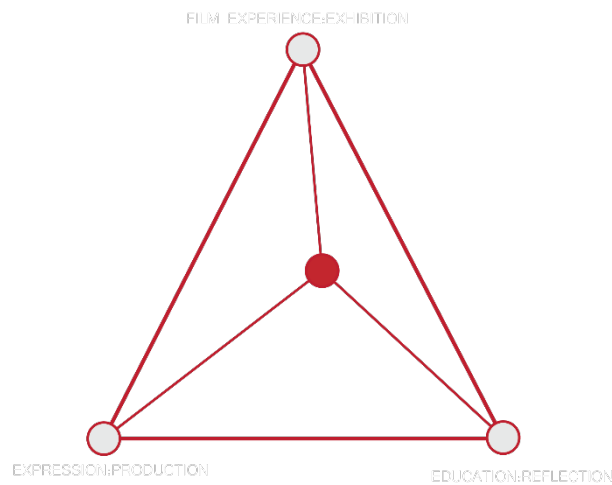


Figure 53: Triad Chart Showcasing Important Aspects of Thesis

On the triad, the three main features of the thesis are visualized: the film experience, education, and production. These three features are directly related to the zones that encapsulate the program such as, exhibition, reflection, and production, respectively.

Through this chart, one can see that the design of the thesis is proposing a program centered around exhibition and reflection, so that the occupants are extending their film experience. As an expression of thoughts and feelings through art, which in the terms of this thesis is film itself, are important to this thesis it is important to note that

this will be implemented as an optional function on site. To develop this approach to the design a more critical look into the user's use of each zone was analyzed.

Understanding how occupants might use the proposed facilities required consideration of who will be visiting the site. The anticipated user groups include members of the public, such as children, teenagers, young adults, the elderly, and families, as well as cinephiles, defined in this thesis as individuals with a deep interest in film, film theory, and criticism. Additional users include aspiring filmmakers, students, local workers, and tourists. These diverse groups were identified in response to the demographic and cultural diversity of the area as well as the general cinema user groups. The site, located near Santa Ana Avenida in Panama City, Panama, is surrounded by schools, museums, recreational centers, and sites of historical significance, making it a natural intersection point for a wide range of users and functions.

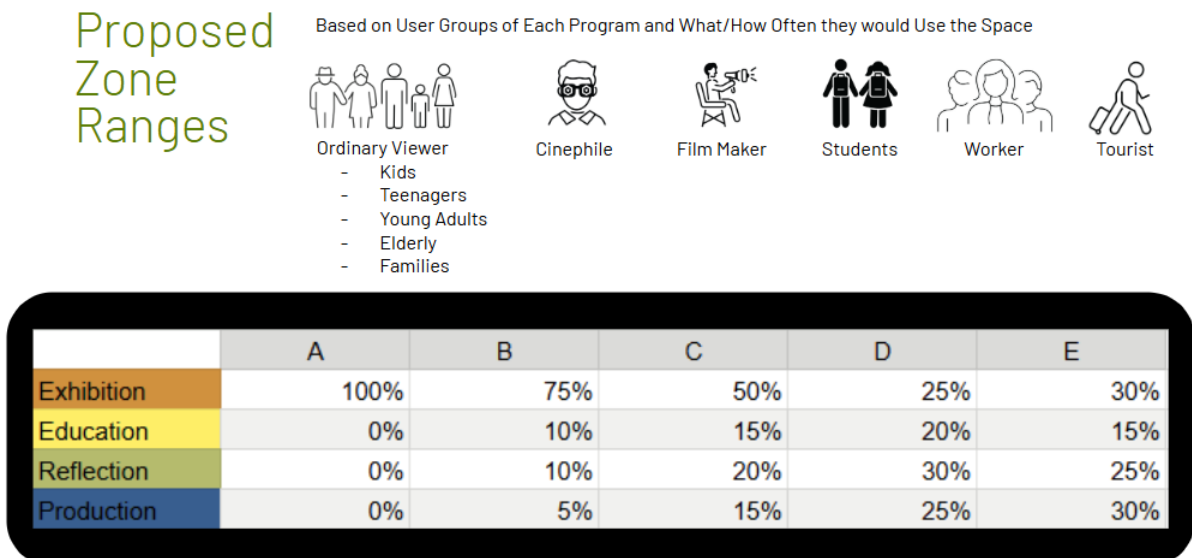


Figure 54: Proposed Zone Ranges Based on User Use

Another diagram that helped formulate various conceptual ideas towards the design was a series of temporal analyses that investigated how these aspects of cinema could be viewed through time and what the average viewing or streaming experience could look like for individuals.

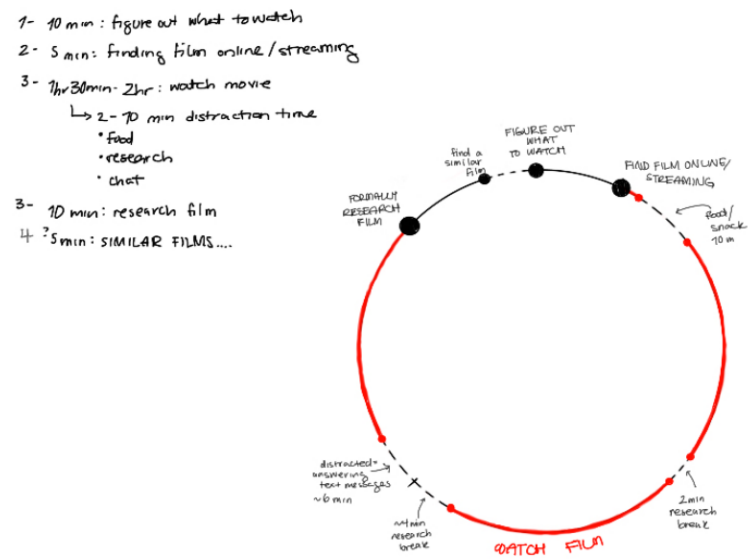


Figure 55: Typical At-Home Film Watching (Streaming) Experience

- 1 - 15-30 min walk/drive
- 2 - arrive
- 3 - 10 min food
- 4 - 20-30 min previews
- 5 - 1hr 30min-2hr movie
- 6 - 5 min to leave
- 7 - 2-5 min to readjust
- 8 - leave
- 9 - 15-30 min drive/walk home

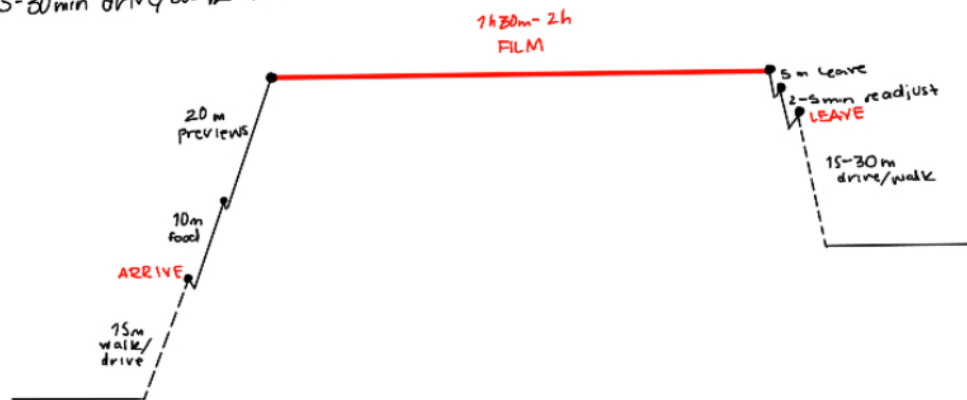


Figure 57: Typical Cinema Visit through Temporal Analysis

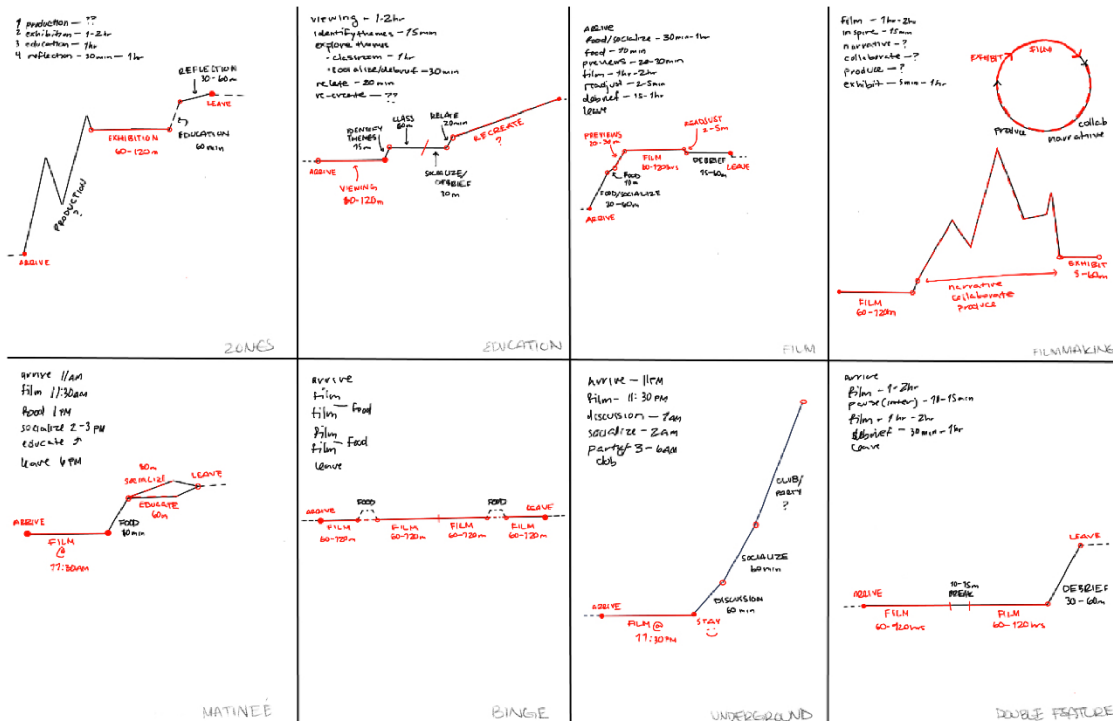


Figure 56: Temporal Analysis Based on Aspects of Cinema

This study was essential to understanding the functional demands of each programmatic element and assessing their long-term sustainability based on the anticipated user groups. By allocating greater square footage to spaces with higher projected usage, the design ensures more efficient and purposeful use of space, supporting the thesis's broader objective of urban revitalization through community-based architecture.

Following this, an investigation into cinema programming practices allowed for the exploration of innovative spatial forms and experiential sequences. A focused analysis of cinema typologies provided insight into the type of cinema most suitable for the project, ensuring alignment with the thesis's programmatic requirements. Chris van Uffelen's *Cinema Architecture* was a key reference in this analysis, offering a framework of four cinema typologies: fixed focus, spot focus, multi-focus, and customer focus. These categories are significant as they reveal diverse functions and experiential models, which guide the design toward a cinema form that supports both the thesis and user needs.

To facilitate the study of how the typology would be chosen, the plot narrative chart was utilized as an architectural visual to investigate the necessary journey the occupant would take. This includes the rising action of the site and promising typology, then reaching the climax which would be the film experience or exhibition zones. After the climax comes the falling actions of socializing and creation which

could be in terms of the occupant creating their own film or creating a social bond

with a newfound acquaintance.

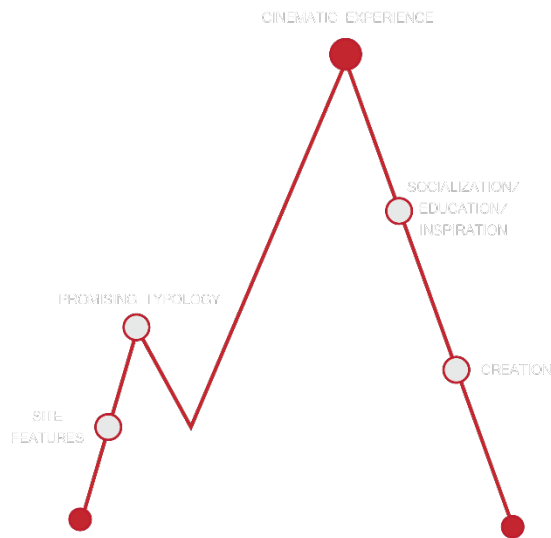


Figure 58: Story Mountain in Context of Typology and Occupant Journey through the Site

Following the conceptual study of the program, the multi-focus cinema typology was selected as the most appropriate model for the design solution. This typology supports multiple points of interaction within the cinema, allowing occupants to engage with the space in a variety of ways beyond traditional film viewing.

Its flexibility aligns closely with the thesis's intent to position the cinema not only as a location for entertainment but also as a cultural film center that fosters education and community engagement. By establishing two focal points, one centered on cinematic experiences and the other on the local community's history, the design accommodates a wide range of user groups, offering meaningful spatial experiences even without active film screenings.

Following the preliminary conceptual analyses, a series of studies were developed to explore how cinema programs could be visualized through both spatial planning and architectural form. These investigations offered a valuable yet overlooked perspective on the evolving use of cinema spaces, revealing not only how they function throughout the day but also how their uses and spatial layouts have

shifted over time. This historical lens helped inform a more flexible and contextually responsive design approach.

As showcased, there are thirteen cinema programs that have been investigated and visualized into a spatial experience. These thirteen programs are: double features, intermission, an underground cinema, a short film, a midnight viewing, a matinee, a drive-in theater, the 4D theater, a documentary, outdoor cinema, amphitheater, movie musical, and binge-watching. These programs are not only programs but different methods and period of times throughout the day of viewing and digesting media. By analyzing these different aspects of cinema, it became easier to understand the necessary elements needed to operate a cinema and what could be needed for different communities within our society. This led to an analysis of forms that could

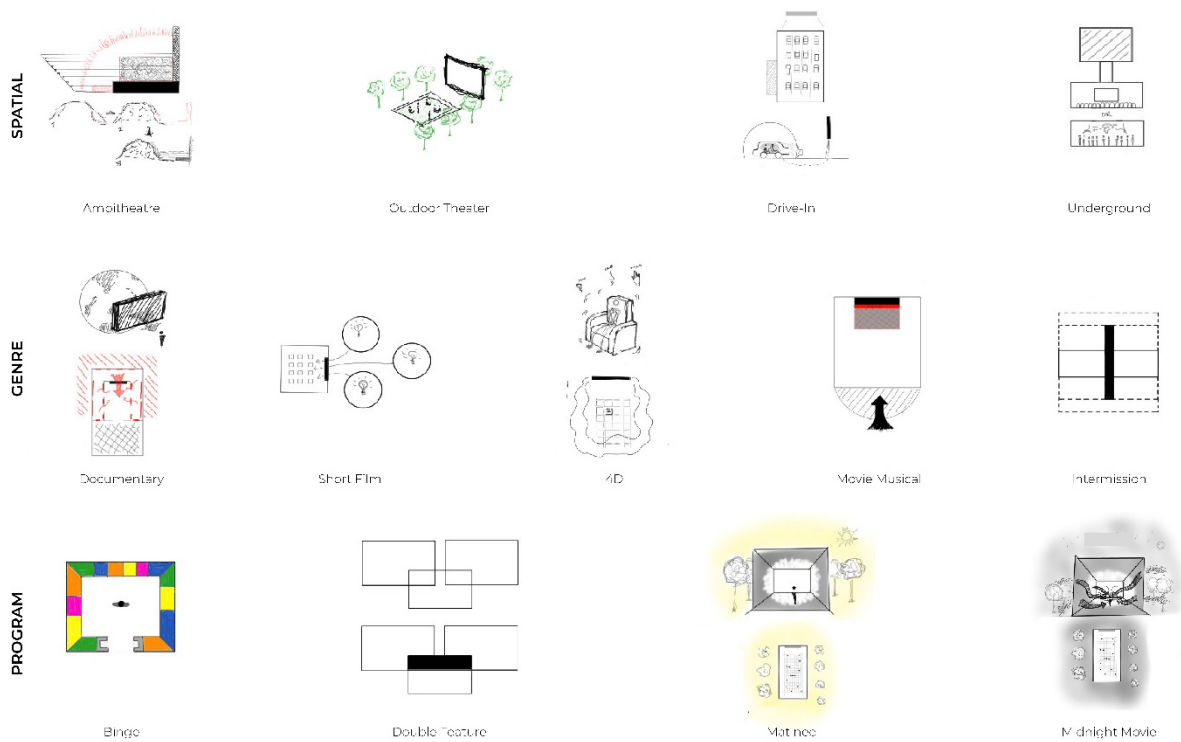


Figure 59: Aspects of Cinema that Range from Program, Time, and Film Genres

be based on the culture and history of Casco Viejo or an informal conceptual form of certain aspects of cinema.

One specific concept design that is based on the history of Panama is a design based on the Panama Canal and the cargo ships that often pass through it. Two designs were created with this historic site in mind, with one embodying the form of a ship and the other embodying the shape of a cargo ship with interspersed cargo on it (Fig. 8).

To further investigate how the program could be positioned on the proposed site, a series of precedent studies were conducted, focusing on prominent film festival venues known for their cultural and economic impact.

The selected case studies include the Toronto International Film Festival

(TIFF), the Venice Film Festival, and the Sundance Film Festival.

The Venice Film Festival, located in Venice, Italy, is housed in a single building that accommodates approximately 114,851 attendees. Its program extends beyond cinema screenings to include institutional components such as lecture halls and exhibition spaces, illustrating how a multifunctional design can serve a broad audience. The Toronto International Film Festival, situated in Toronto, Canada, supports over 250,000 attendees and features an innovative integration of residential units above the cinema complex. This vertical massing places residents directly within the heart of the city's arts district, offering a unique model for mixed-use cultural infrastructure. Meanwhile, the Sundance Film Festival operates across three different locations in Utah, utilizing a variety of building typologies to exhibit films and support diverse programming for nearly 200,000 attendees. Its decentralized model shows how dispersed programming can serve a wide geographic area while maintaining a cohesive festival identity.

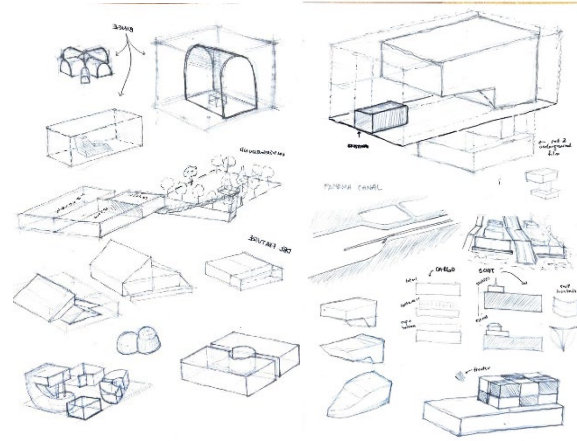


Figure 61: Conceptual Forms Based on Aspects of Cinema

Figure 60: Conceptual Forms Based on Historical Analysis of Casco Viejo's Proximity to the Panama Canal

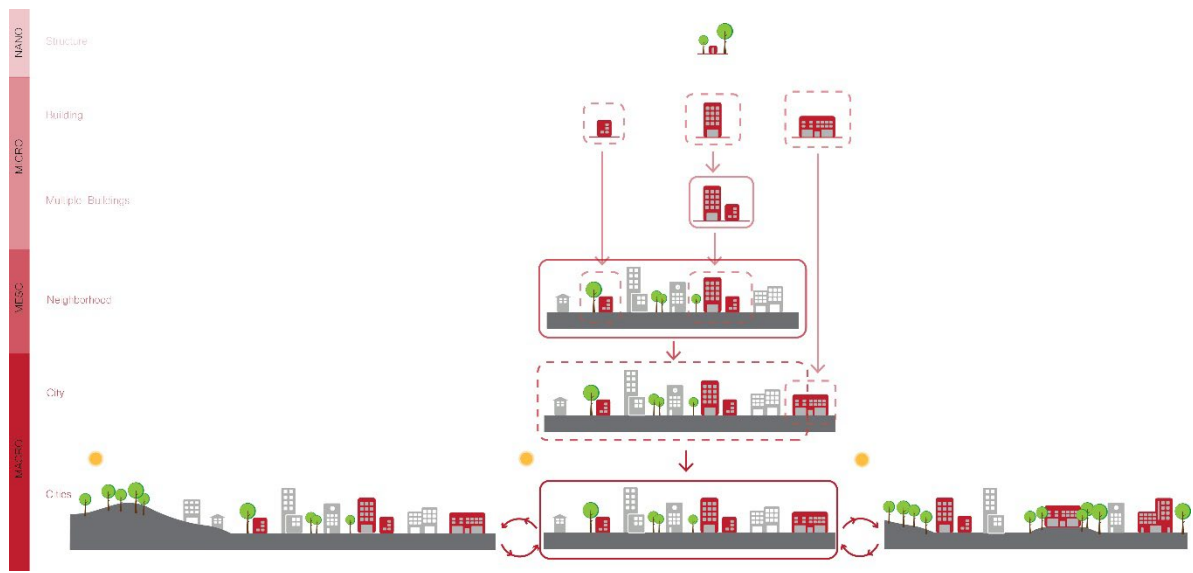


Figure 62: Range of Various Scales of How the Cinema Center Could Take Shape and Form the Region on Site

These analyses informed the ongoing site strategy by providing real-world examples of spatial organization, scale, and programmatic flexibility. As a result, the earlier conceptual diagrams were refined to consider both concentrated and distributed approaches to spatial layout, helping to determine how the proposed program might best fit within the site's limitations and opportunities.

Based on the site analysis, the proposed design could serve as a new venue for Panama's own film festival organization, *Festival Internacional de Cine Panamá*. While the organization currently hosts a multiple city-wide festival, its venues are spread across Panama City and lack pedestrian connectivity. This limits public accessibility and reduces opportunities for consistent engagement with the festival's events.

In response, the proposed design utilizes the nearby urban promenade as a processional route leading into the site, creating a more cohesive and walkable experience. By integrating existing theatres and cinemas within the vicinity, the

design promotes connectivity and supports a more fluid circulation of visitors throughout the area. Beyond serving as a supplementary cinema venue during the festival, the building also functions as a cultural beacon, offering a museum component for tourists and educational facilities for locals. These features allow the space to operate year-round as a hub for creative development, media literacy, and community engagement.

Conclusion

The thesis can take on various forms at different scales based on the specific audience it is addressing and what program elements are needed. In terms of this thesis, the festival studies presented investigate these scales and how they could be implemented, but the proposed design will showcase the importance of how multiple sectors of the community will be engaged with the design's programming. Due to the site analysis, the site of Santa Ana Avenida, Panama, seems feasible for various typologies and even suited to inhabit a film festival. By incorporating various schemes onto the site, a comprehensive understanding of what can be implemented and where will further enhance the neighborhood and revitalize the town.

Chapter 8: Thesis Design Solution

Design Solution

To address the lack of social engagement and media literacy in the current digital age, this project proposes the design of a film center and cinema. The center will integrate all the core zones previously discussed—education, exhibition, production, and reflection—each supported by a variety of service areas. This spatial configuration demonstrates how media-based education operates as a cyclical process of imitation, reflection, and practice, empowering users to actively engage with what influences and inspires them. Drawing from Van Uffelen’s *Cinema Architecture*, the design embodies multiple cinema typologies, with each program element tailored to different user groups. Beyond fostering film literacy, the center aims to create a platform for cultural exchange, inviting both locals and visitors to connect through shared experiences in the space.

These theoretical explorations directly informed the architectural design strategy. For example, spatial sequencing inspired by Tschumi is expressed through a series of interconnected zones that unfold progressively—education, production, exhibition, and reflection—guiding users through a curated experience much like the unfolding of a cinematic narrative. Framing, as explored by Friedberg, is embedded in the architecture through layered views, framed vignettes, and moments of visual pause, allowing occupants to engage with their surroundings in a cinematic way. exchange, inviting both locals and visitors to connect through shared experiences in the space.

The massing of the design is divided by an arcade that acts as an extension to the urban promenade (Fig 1). This arcade acts as a spine that connects various outdoor spaces such as the main exhibition plaza, but also aligns with the existing local typology. The design is initially divided by zone with cinemas interspersed throughout so that each screening room specifically applies to the needs of the zone (Fig 2).

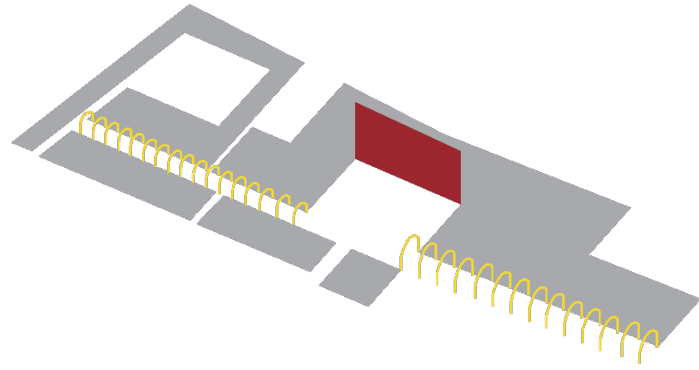


Figure 64: Diagram Showcasing Big Move - Arcade

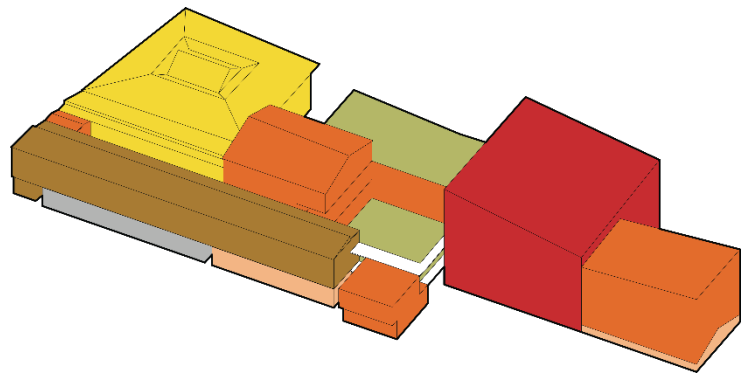


Figure 63: Diagram Showcasing Function through Massing

The zones are designated as yellow representing educational spaces (the learning hub), orange representing exhibition spaces, red signifying cinemas, bronze as the production bay, grey as service areas, green as reflection and green spaces, and apricot as local vendors and the local market.

Throughout the design process, several influential designers and theorists were analyzed to inform a comprehensive approach that not only celebrates film and cinema but also spatializes key cinematic elements—such as sequencing and framing—for the architectural experience of occupants. Bernard Tschumi's *Manuscript Transcripts* were examined to explore how spatial sequences can be

choreographed within an urban context, helping to understand how users experience architecture over time. To further investigate the concept of framing, Anne Friedberg's *The Virtual Window* served as a critical reference, particularly in understanding how windows act as spatial devices that frame and sequence views, much like scenes in film. Additionally, a study of arcades was conducted to investigate their architectural significance, historical relevance, and potential for contemporary reinterpretation. Key texts included Johann Friedrich Geist's *Arcades* and Walter Benjamin's *The Arcades Project*, both of which present arcades as urban refuges and communal gathering spaces—qualities that resonate with the project's thesis and the climate of the proposed site. These works also characterize arcades as spaces of discovery and phantasmagoria, suggesting rich sensory and symbolic potential that aligns with the film center's experiential goals.

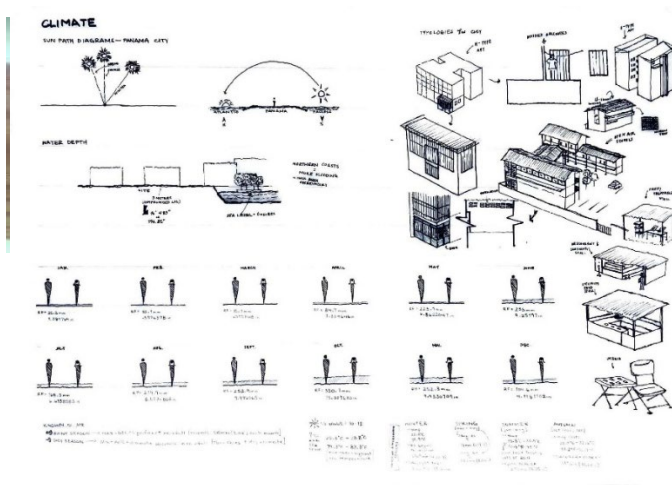


Figure 65: Site Analysis Demonstrating Building Typologies, Climate, and Rainfall

The integration of arcade typologies responds not only to historical architectural references but also to the tropical climate and social dynamics of Panama City. These covered, open-air walkways serve as shaded

communal spaces that encourage spontaneous gathering, reflection, and interaction—key components of media literacy and public engagement. This architectural language supports the thesis's goal of fostering inclusive, accessible environments where

learning and cultural exchange are embedded in the spatial experience. Spaces within the floorplans showcase various compositions that were influenced by traditional patterns and crafts made by the indigenous people (Fig 3 and 4). These also make up the multiple moments in the design that indicate reflection and social engagement,

Figure 66: Traditional
Indigenous Weaving Pattern



Figure 67: Panamanian Molle Pattern

such as the rooftop lounge on level 2 (Fig. 12). With the

incorporation of multiple outdoor spaces linked together through the arcade, occupants are enticed to explore and use the spaces to reflect on what is being shown and exhibited.

By conducting a further analysis of native vegetation in Panama (Fig 6), the space is showcasing Panama's rich history and biodiversity. The native vegetation also creates a lush and tropical environment that serves as a passive cooling device throughout the design. For example, the atrium (Fig 7) uses the vegetation throughout its vertical garden structures to not only provide shade but to ventilate the space. As occupants have the ability to experience first hand the vegetation that makes Panama's landscape so unique, immersing the occupants deeper into the culture of Panama.

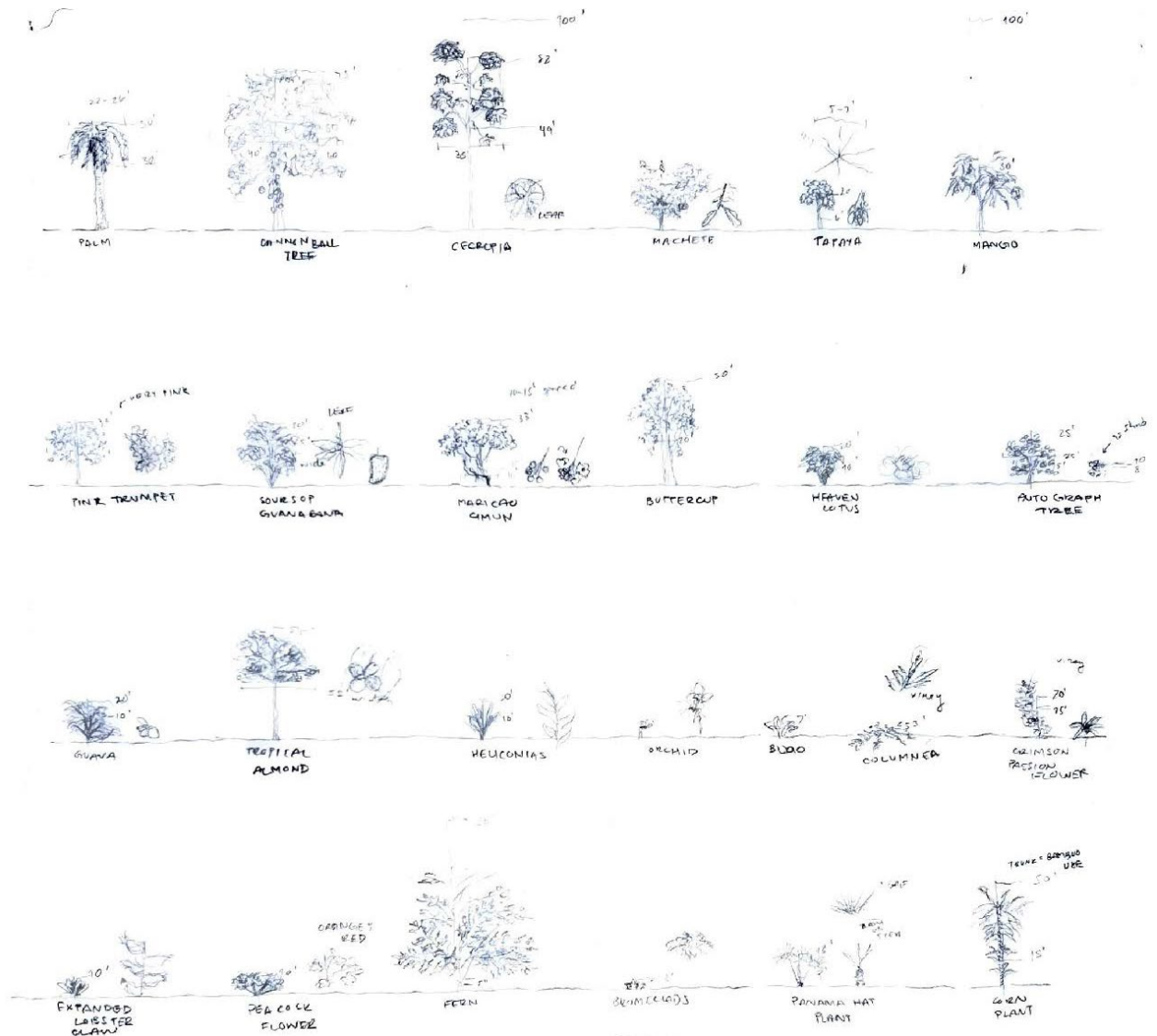


Figure 68: Native Vegetation Derived from Site Analysis



Figure 70: View of Learning Hub Atrium

The building itself operates as a cinematic experience, guiding occupants through spaces that reveal themselves progressively, akin to scenes in a film. This spatial storytelling

approach ensures that each zone not only serves a functional role but also contributes to an overarching narrative of engagement, creativity, and reflection. This can be seen in circulation spaces where occupants can see the silhouettes of others passing by (Fig 7); this feature is adding to the exhibition aspect of the building where the occupants can always view and learn from each other.

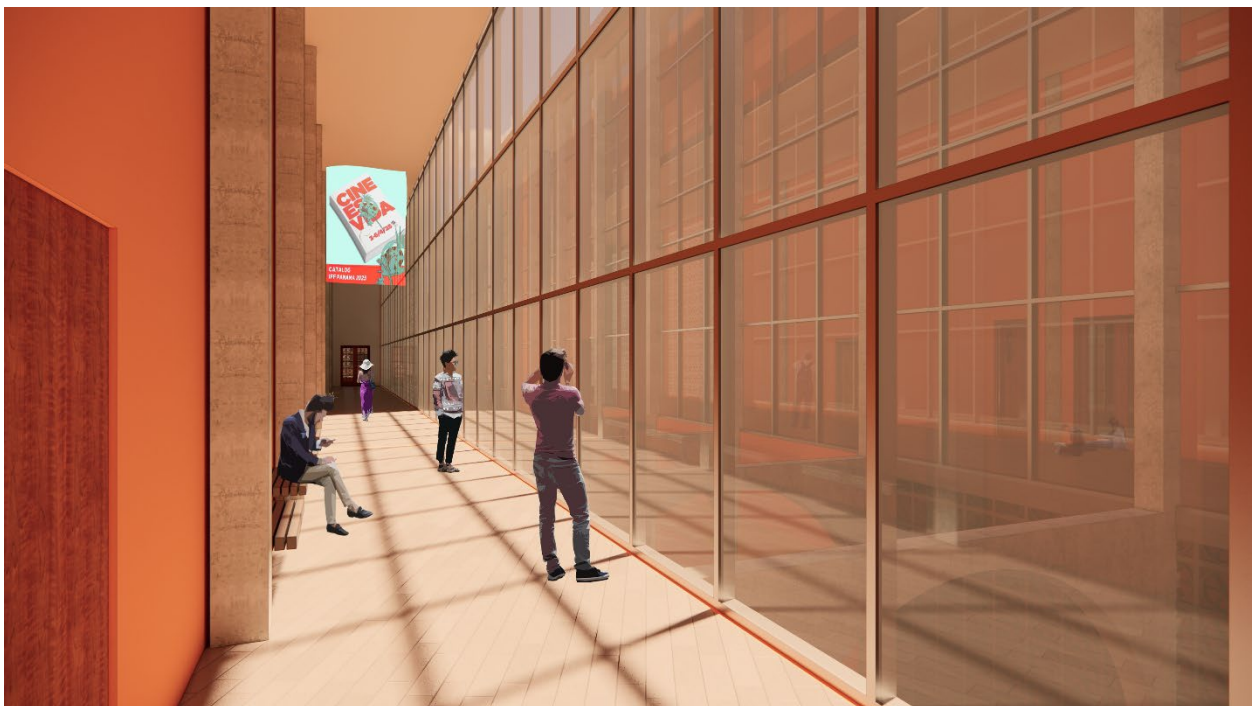


Figure 69: View from Learning Hub Hallway

The design has various elements that make it useful to the various visitors. The building is about 193,606 square feet and has multiple program spaces that introduce and expand upon film processes and screenings (Fig . 9). With an extensive program, the design solution is capable of appealing to all occupants and enhancing social engagement through its various interactive spaces.

PROGRAM	SQFT	#	NOTES
Exhibition			
Grand Cinema	10,500	1	Can seat up to 645 people
Cinema	<1000	3	Can seat up to 50-300 people - 7000sqft
Screening Room	<1000	17	Includes 'Special Exhibition Spaces', 'Short Film Theaters', and Screening Rooms
Observation Room	215	2	
Exhibits	15,000	2	
Ampitheatre	4,600	2	
Outdoor Exhibit	2460	1	Used for Visual Arts made by local artists and occupants of the building
Outdoor Theater	7,980	1	Can spatially be a field/ replace ampitheatre
Total	84,570	29	
Education			
Library/Media Archive	8,000	1	
Study Room	290+	6	Includes Large Study Room (7500sqft)
Learning Lab	270	27	
Workshop	590	13	
Panel Room	2,560	2	
Lecture Hall	1,270	4	
TOTAL	35,360	53	
Reflection			
Green Space	Varies	1	
Exterior Seating	Varies	1	
Courtyard	4,420	1	
Atrium	9,720	1	
Field/Lawn	Varies	1	
Lobby	2,520	2	
Concession Stand	450	4	Includes Lvl0 Concession Stand (850sqft)
Cafe	2,112	1	
TOTAL	23942	12	
Production			
Production Suites	1,410	4	Includes: Music and Video Editing Rooms (112sqft), Green Room, and Brainstorm Room
Studio	380	2	
Foley Studio	1,300	2	
Local Booth	38	2	
Control Room	1,096	3	Includes Lvl0 CR (816sqft)
Media Lab	1,050	2	
TOTAL	14,464	15	
Servicing			
Office	595	5	Includes: Guest Lecture Office (4000sqft)
Conference Room	836	1	
Break Room	487	1	One for the offices and another for public food stalls
Storage	870	8	Includes Lvl0 Large Storage Space (5500sqft)
Janitor's Closet	90	2	
Local Vendor+Market	300	16	Includes Local Market (8512sqft)
Information Desk	300	3	
Mechanical Room	760	1	
Electrical Room	860	1	
TOTAL	35,270	38	
TOTAL	102,606	147	Will vary based on addition of varied programs and excludes bathroom software

Figure 71: Finalized Tabular Program

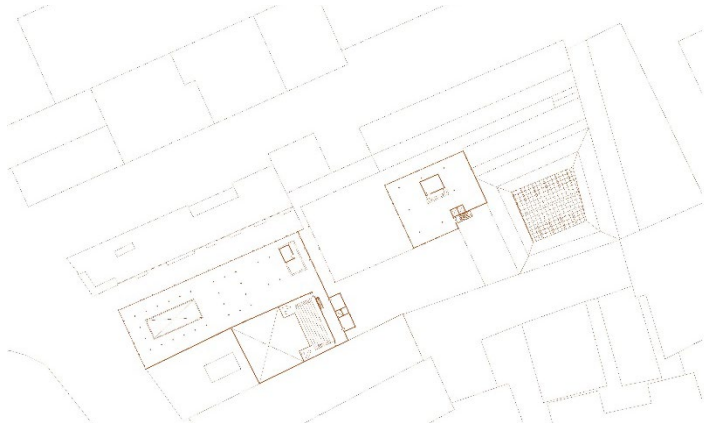


Figure 72: Level 3 Plan

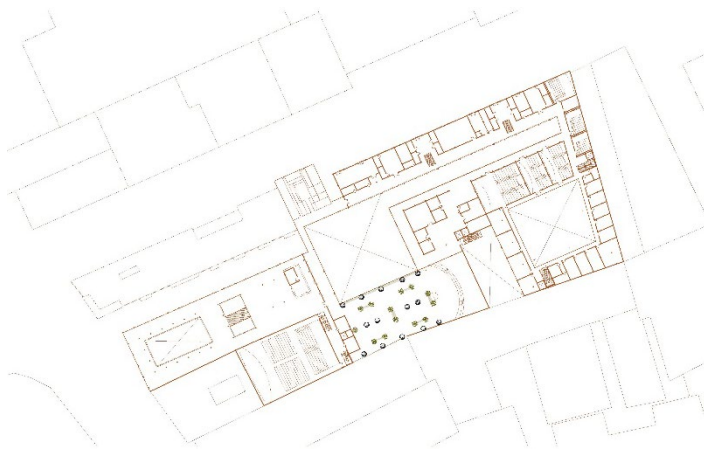


Figure 73: Level 2 Plan

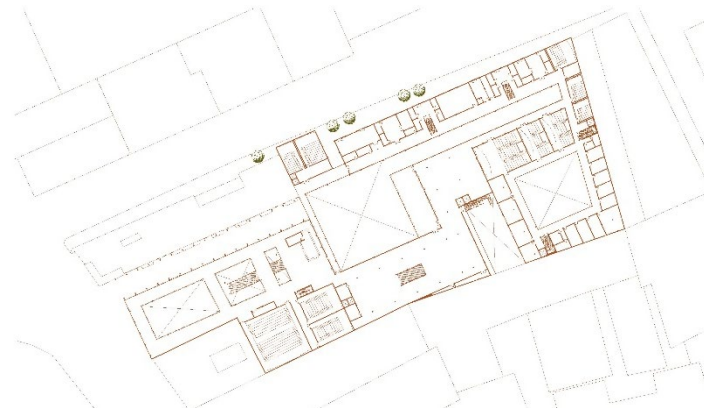


Figure 74: Level 1 Plan



Figure 75: Level 0 Plan

This film center offers a space where locals, film enthusiasts, and tourists can connect—not only through interpersonal interaction but also through facilities that empower Panamanians to visualize and express their own experiences. By opening access to people of all ages and economic backgrounds, the center supports creative expression through digital multimedia storytelling and provides opportunities to engage with the filmmaking process firsthand. With dedicated spaces for exhibition and celebration, the cinema and film center will significantly enhance the



Figure 76: View within Arcade

Festival Internacional de Cine Panamá, reinforcing its mission to amplify the Panamanian voice through film. By integrating the project into ongoing urban initiatives, the center has the potential to diversify the local film industry and

contribute economically—drawing inspiration from the proven success of the Sundance Film Festival in Utah. Ultimately, the design offers a platform for reflection, cultural exchange, and global engagement through film.

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