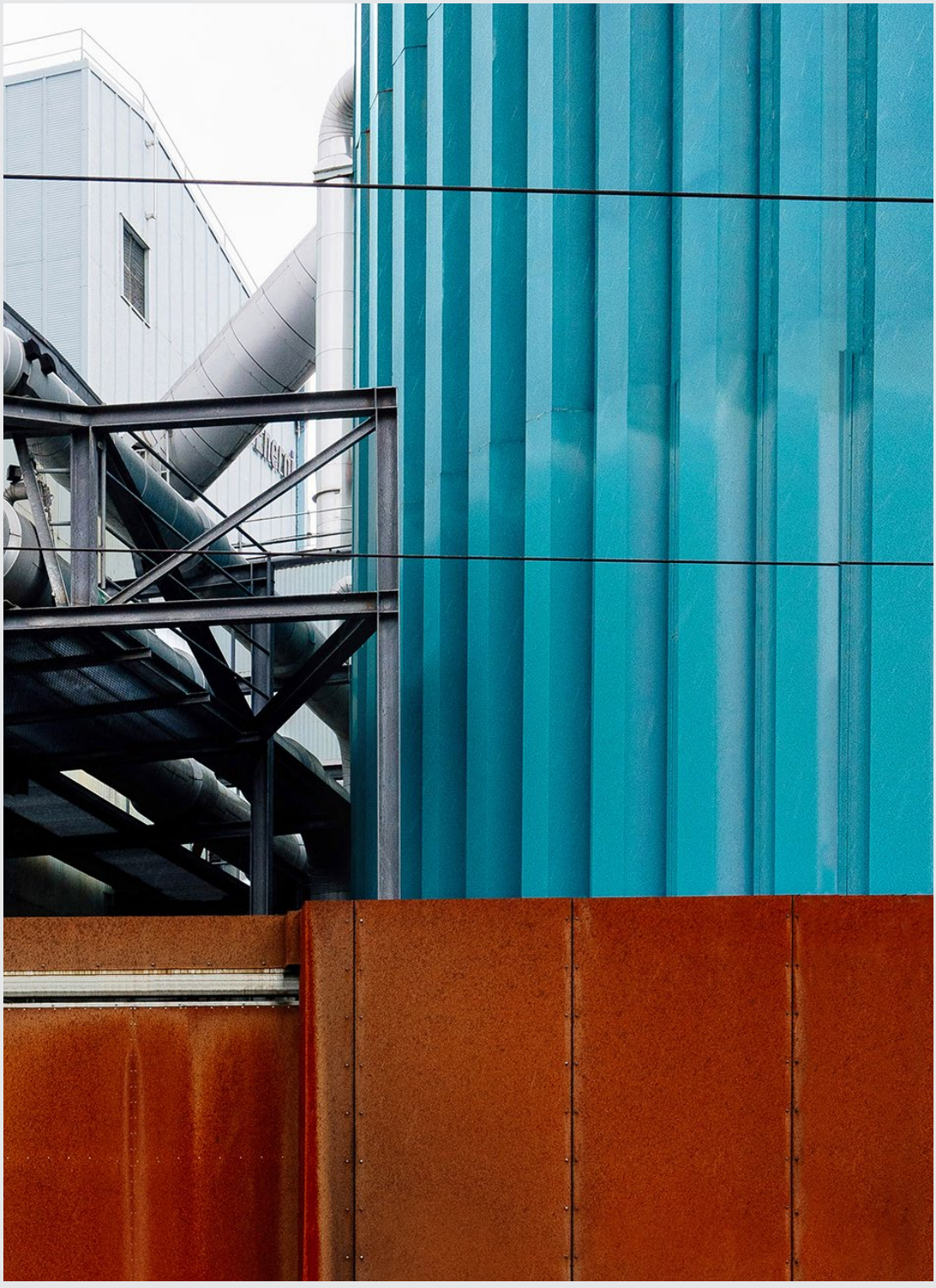


NEW FRAME OF MIND

An investigation of graphic tools for the architectural design process

NEW FRAME OF MIND

Graphic design, photography and architecture have a lot in common and create synergies when they overlap within the same process. The digital world we live in today gives us the feeling of that we can, with some creativity and curiosity, create everyting we want. According to me photography and graphic design are a big part of architecture and these art forms speak their own languages and live in a supporting symbiosis with each other. They have their own strengths and qualities and work as a toolbox where each tool has its great important part in the design process and the communication.

In this thesis I'm looking forward to explore further how to mix these art forms and methods in a design project. As designers we need to craft a story and think about how our presentations have the power to reveal the core of the project. To make representation of intangible ideas that help drive the narrative behind an argument is for me a powerful tool within architecture.

Thesis question

How can we use the techniques and methods of photography and graphic design as active design tools in architecture?

According to me photography, graphic design and architecture live in a supporting symbiosis with each other and overlap more often than we think. These art forms speak their own languages and have their own strengths and qualities. I see it as a toolbox where each tool has its important part and strengths that enriches and drives the project forward throughout the whole process. In this thesis, I want to show examples of how we can use techniques and methods of photography and graphic design as active design tools in architecture.

In this thesis I'll discuss and demonstrate some good examples of how we use photography and images as an active tool in architecture today. In the book *Seamless: Digital collage and dirty realism in contemporary architecture*, Jesús Vassallo shows good examples of collaborations between photographers and architects. He talks about the beauty and the strengths of working parallel in the same project, but through different media, methods and tools. Using different methods and techniques makes you approach and explore the concept or the idea from different angles and points of view.

I'll also discuss some critical views of how we use representation today, and how modern software gives us endless possibilities, for better or worse, to create realistic visuals of what has not yet been built. These amazing possibilities come with its challenges. Our industry needs to evaluate the reason why and how certain images are created and how they are actually used. A realistic visualization can, on the one hand, reflect your vision for the viewer, but can at the same time create confusion and mistrust if it is beautified by manipulation and interpreted as a photograph. As architects, we have a responsibility to be aware of the recipient, what we communicate through images and that we can create trust through good visual rhetoric.

I believe that by interpreting architecture through various graphic methods and techniques, you get unpredictable ideas and solutions in a way that you can not control or predict. One method could for example be to make a graphical interpretation created by asking yourself questions such as - What do I feel? What does it actually look like? What does my subconscious pick out as important objects? How do the colors affect how I perceive it? Through photographic methods I'm constantly trying to find new ways to look at and communicate architecture. Since it's three-dimensional, architecture has endless different angles to discover and new ways to experience geometries. The goal is to bring out personal interpretations in new ways that people usually do not see.

Based on these methods and techniques, I'll use what I found as tools in the design process of a speculative building on a specific site. I'll collect the graphic material and work with it as tools parallel throughout the design process. I strive for the result to be a translation. A translation of a form language and graphic interpretations, which vary from 2D to 3D and vice versa.

PURPOSE AND AIM

→ Investigating several methods and techniques will increase my knowledge in representation. Being able to apply clear and effective visual communication to the rhetoric in the project is for me a strong and important tool in architecture.

→ Show how graphic methods can be used as tools in the architectural design process.

→ Show practical examples of successful collaborations between disciplines such as photographers and architects, as well as graphic designers and architects. Also describe how I work as a graphic designer and photographer in an architecture office for the past three years. Compare methods and processes, and evaluate benefits and challenges created within the collaboration.

→ Developing my own methods and tools for the architectural process in my thesis I think will help me in future projects as well. It's a useful exercise to develop tools yourself that can also create unique ideas and solutions in both design and concept.

→ As I have experience of working with photography, both commercially in the studio and as an architectural photographer, I want to take the opportunity to challenge photography as a method and medium. I usually use the photograph in the final stages of the project when it's completed. Now I'll take it a step further by experimenting and exploring new methods when I use photography as a tool in earlier process development.

→ Hopefully I can inspire and convince others to work more graphically in their role as architects by demonstrating useful methods and results.

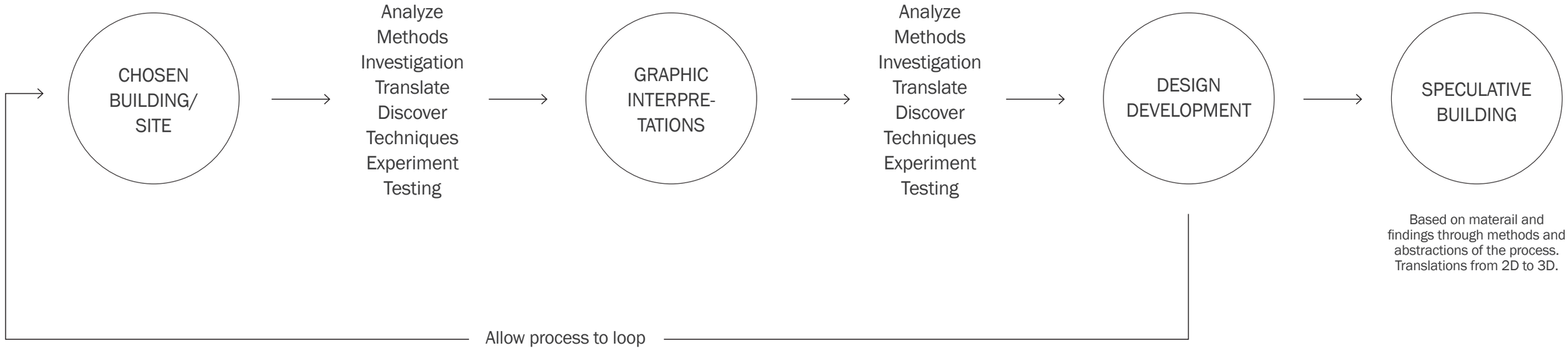
"The ultimate goal of photography is to explore different ways to perceive things."

Francisco Marin, architect and photographer

"Architects do not make buildings, they make drawings."

Robin Evans, architect, teacher and historian

PROCESS


CHOSEN BUILDING/ SITE
Analyze
Methods
Investigation
Translate
Discover
Techniques
Experiment
Testing
GRAPHIC INTERPRE-TATIONS
Analyze
Methods
Investigation
Translate
Discover
Techniques
Experiment
Testing
DESIGN DEVELOPMENT
SPECULATIVE BUILDING
Based on materail and findings through methods and abstractions of the process. Translations from 2D to 3D.
Allow process to loop

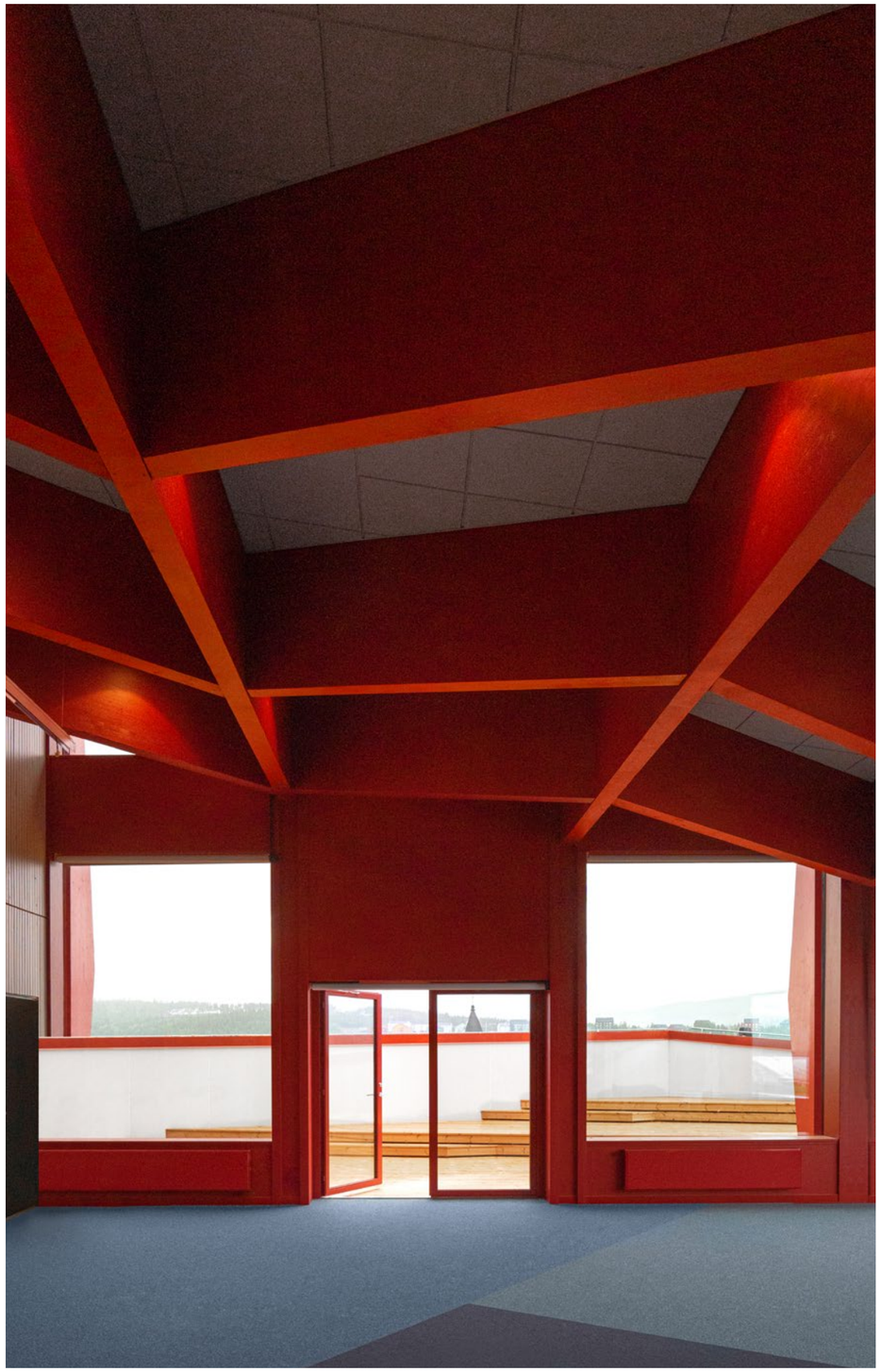
EXAMPLES OF USED METHODS AND TECHNIQUES

Photography (page 11–13, 32–37)
Visually describe what you see - the elements, shapes, colors and materials. Contextualize your photographs in a narrative way with all the elements and how you interpret the object. Sometimes it is easier to describe what you want to say in a picture than in text. By choosing what you have in the image, as a selection or a crop, you can easy clarify the message and what you want to highlight in the discourse or narrative. It is important not only to see photography as a documentation technique but also a visual arts discipline.

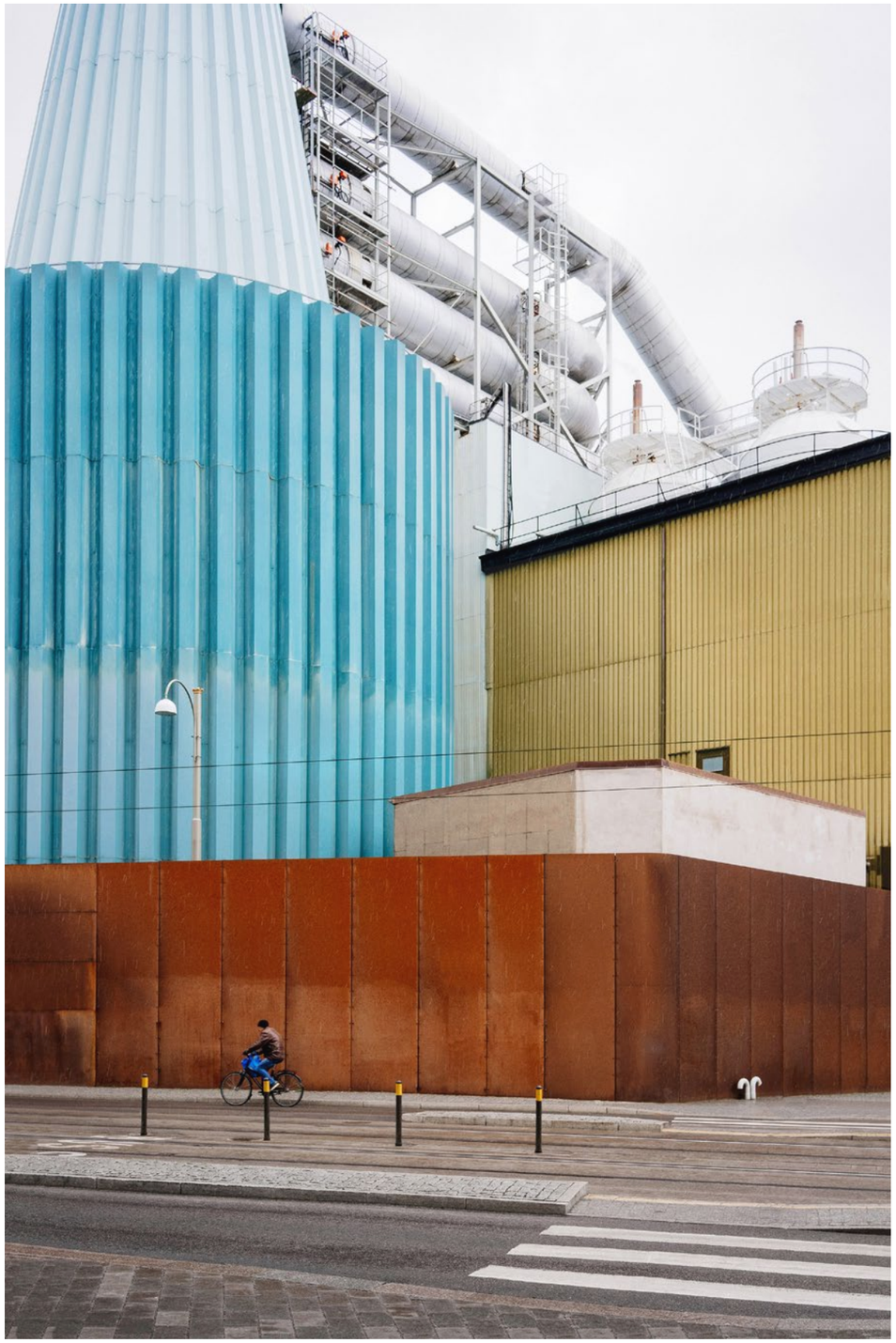
Colour analysis (page 15, 26–27, 30–31, 38–41)
Using color as a tool is an effective way to create an atmosphere and influence how we perceive what we see. I use color methods where I collect a complete color collection of a place that I can use further in the process in different ways. For example, use a specific color palette when making a graphic interpretation of it, as in an illustration, collage or graphic pattern. The color can also give you associations that can spin the interpretations into the design process. The color palette itself can say a lot about the place.

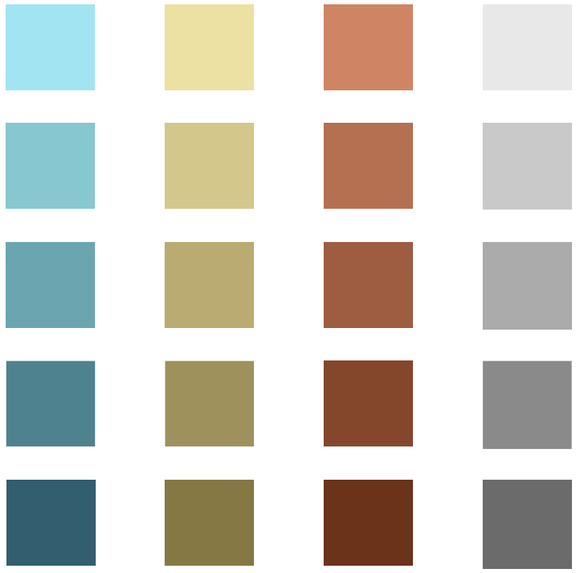
Collage (page 16–17, 20–25, 28–31)
I use different types of collage techniques, both in 2D and 3D. The techniques will be based on both photographs, but also digital compositions in 3D programs. Collage is a playful way to explore the building. By breaking up the building into components, you can play with proportions and scales. I also show examples of how to create graphic collages, which are created through a translation from 3D to 2D.

3D modelling (page 20–25, 28)
Through 3D programs, you can do a volume study in 3D, and at the same time explore both shapes and textures. Here you can also experiment by switching and translating the form and image language between 2D to 3D.



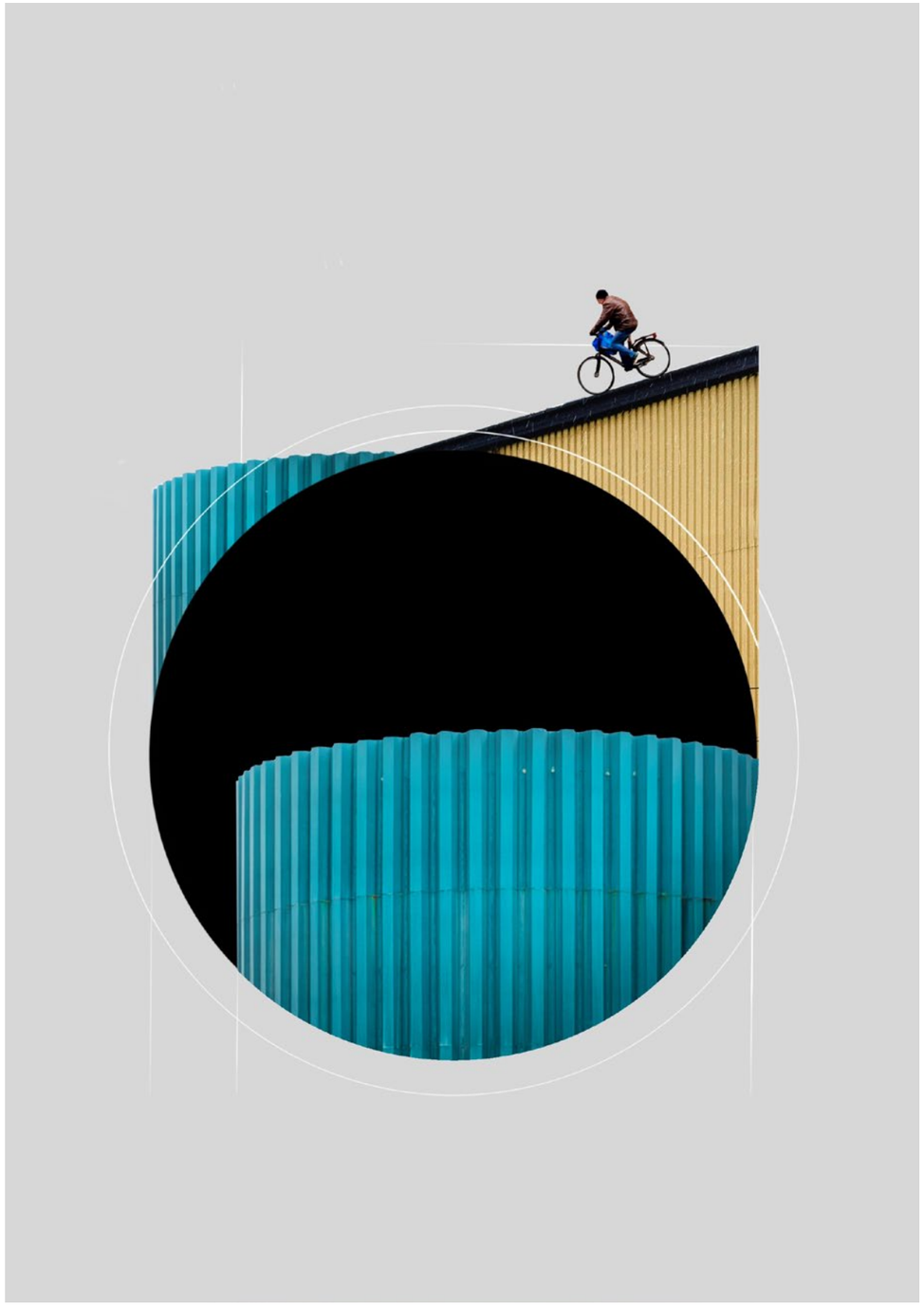
Kunskapshuset in Gällivare, by Liljewall Architects

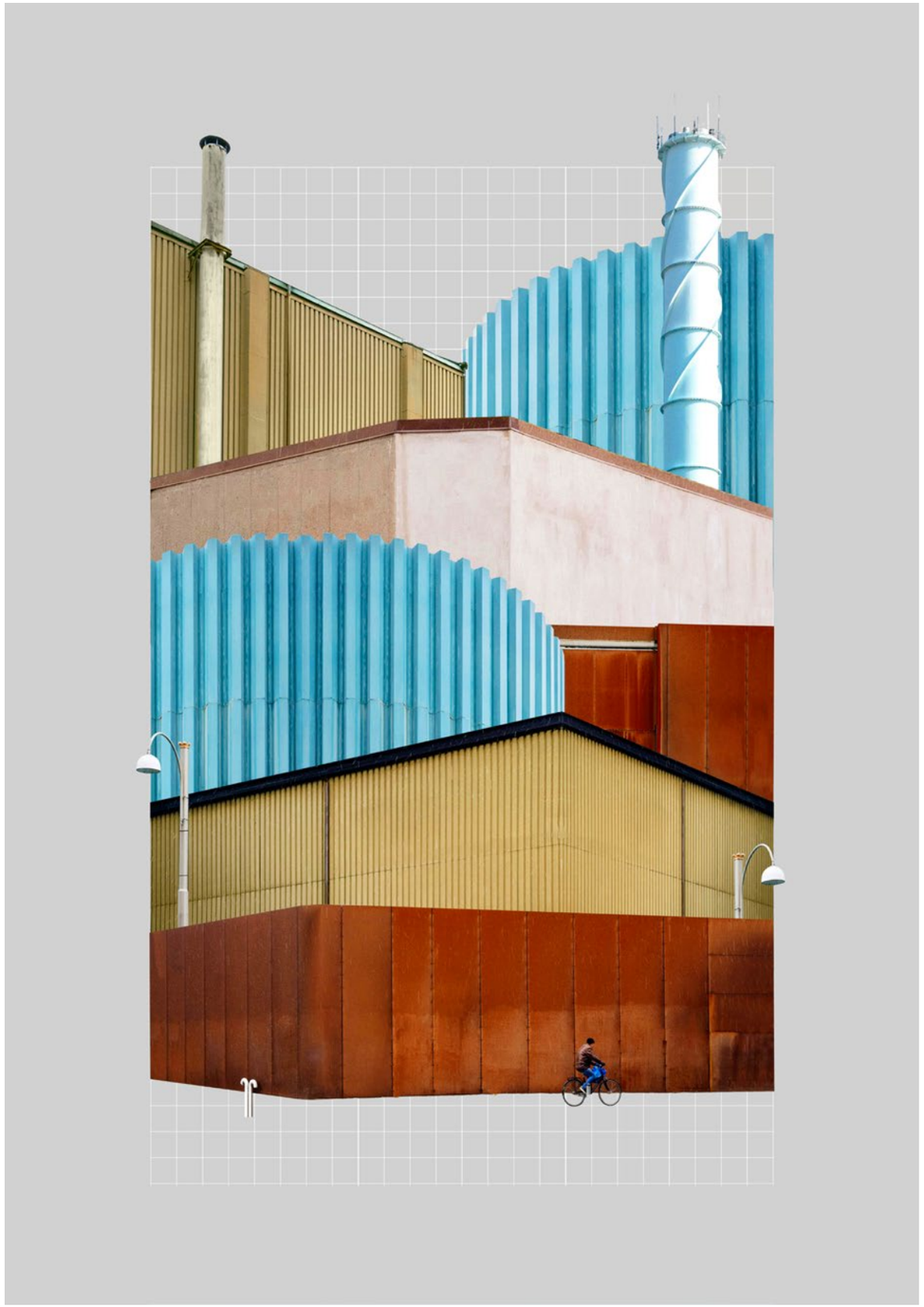




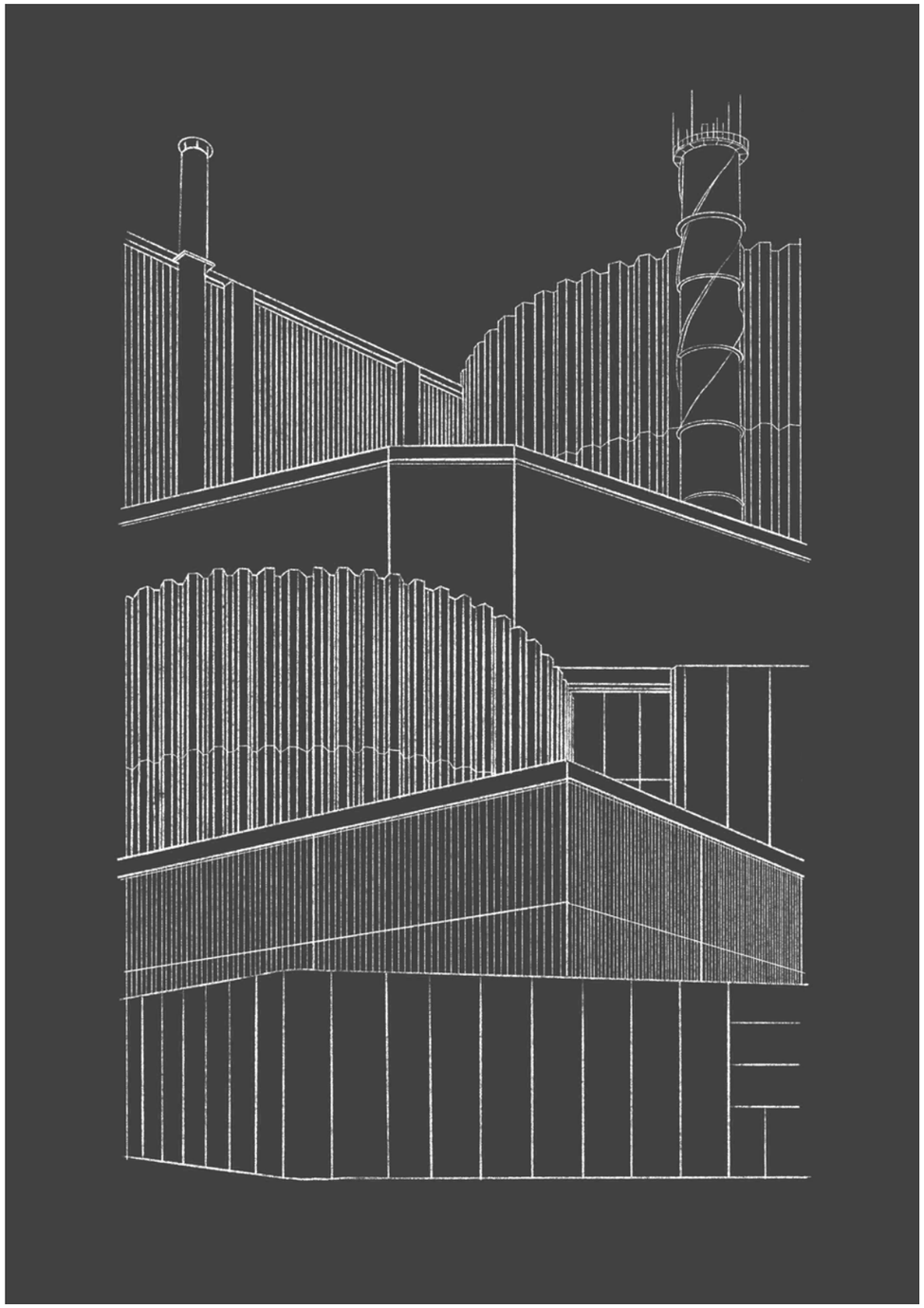
COLOURS OF ROSENLUNDSVERKET

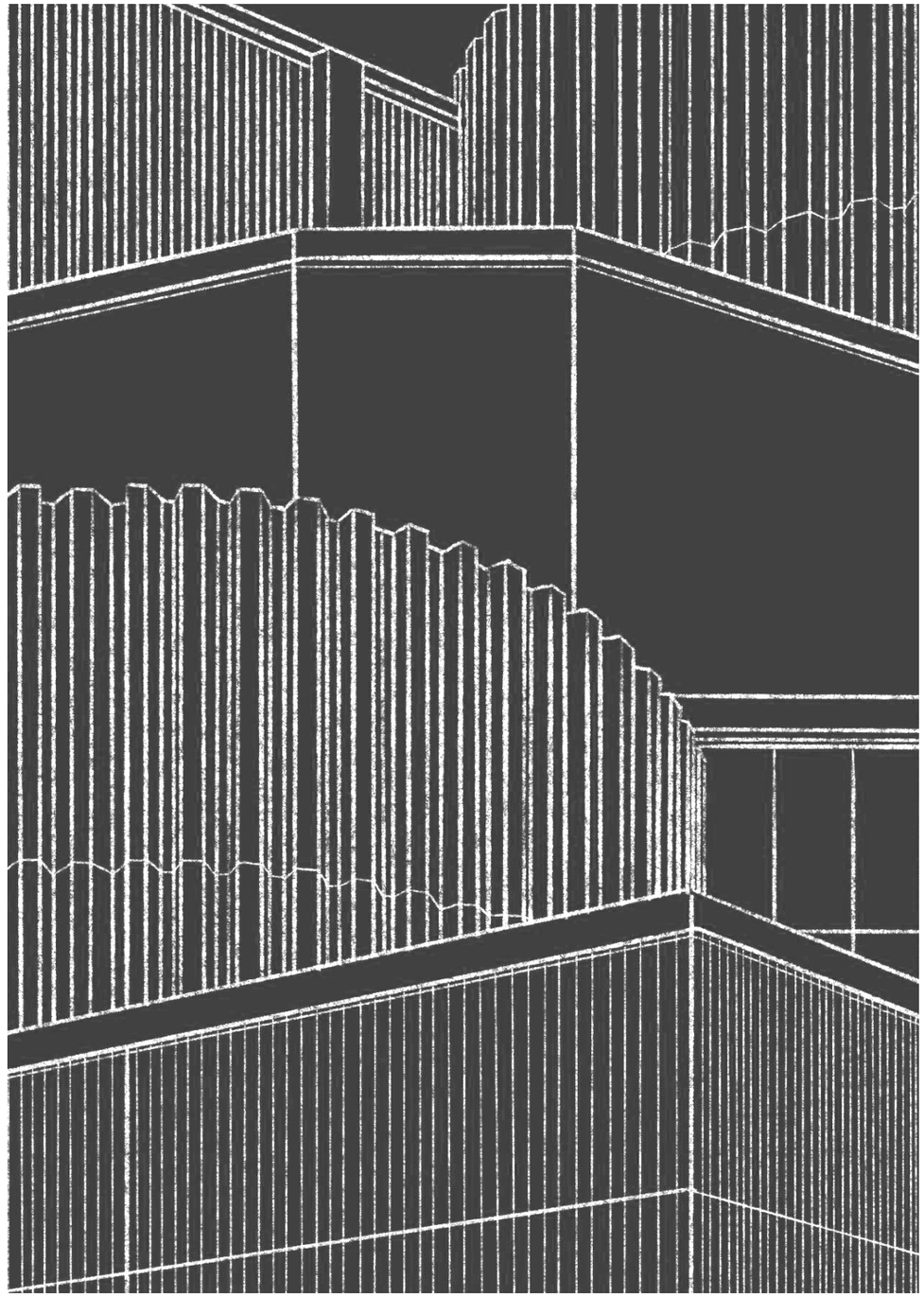
ROSENLUNDSVERKET
Photo collage

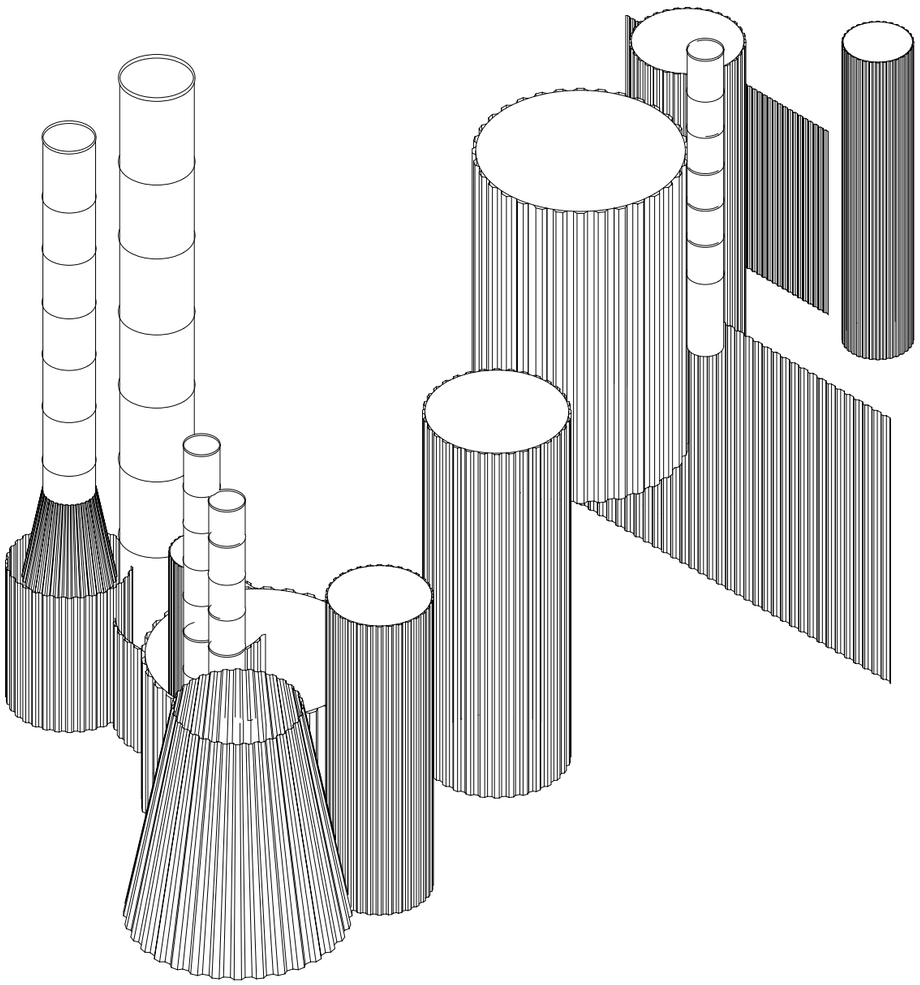




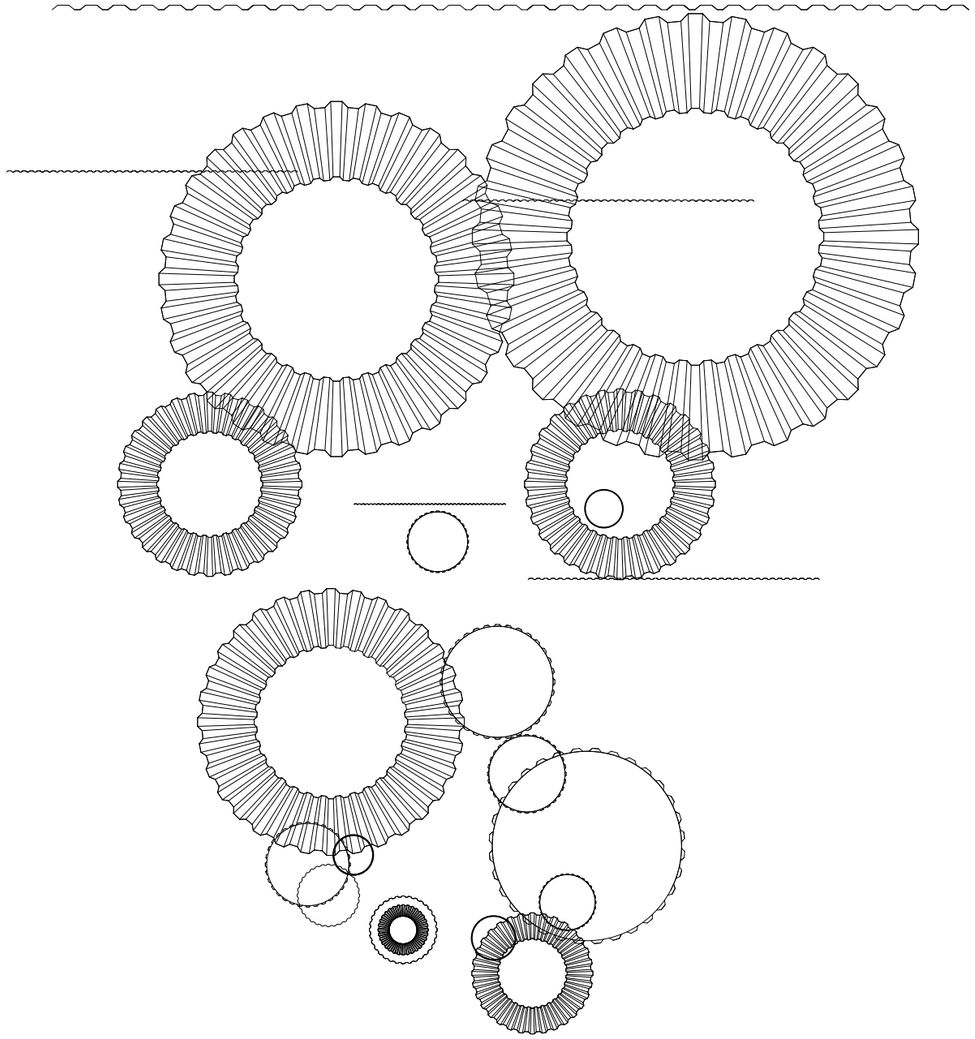
ROSENLUNDSVERKET
Lines and rythm





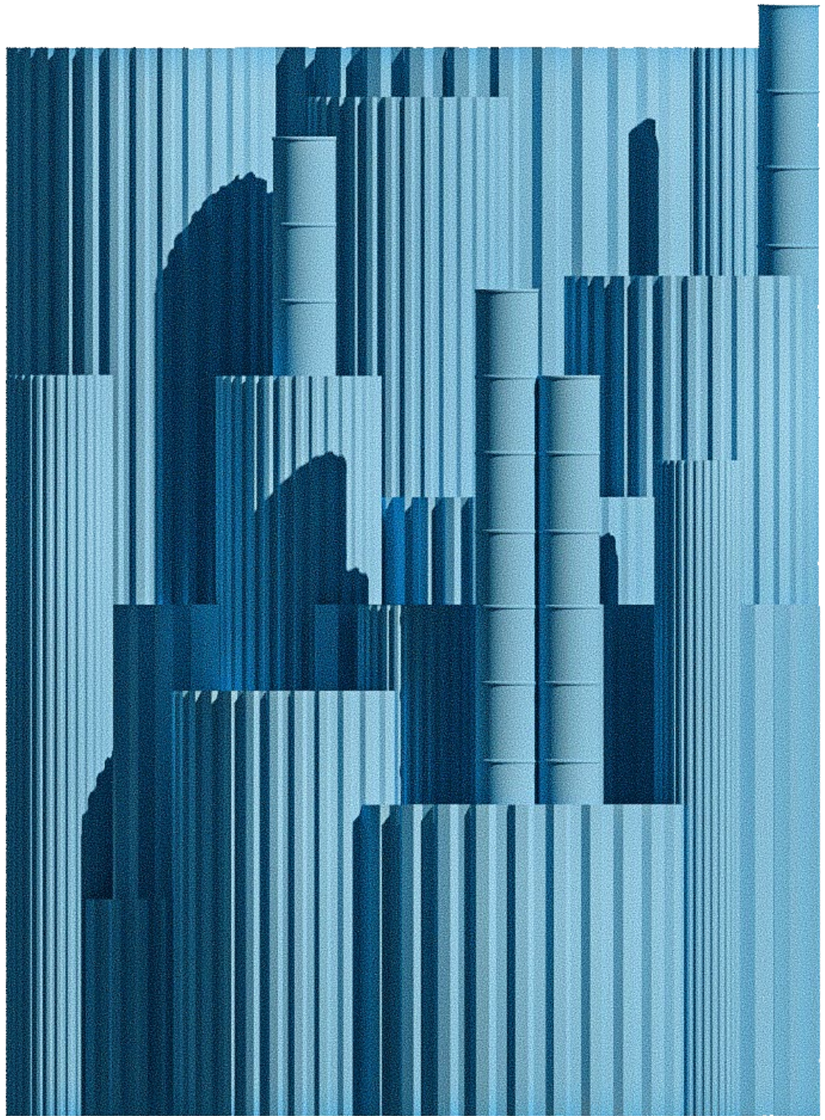


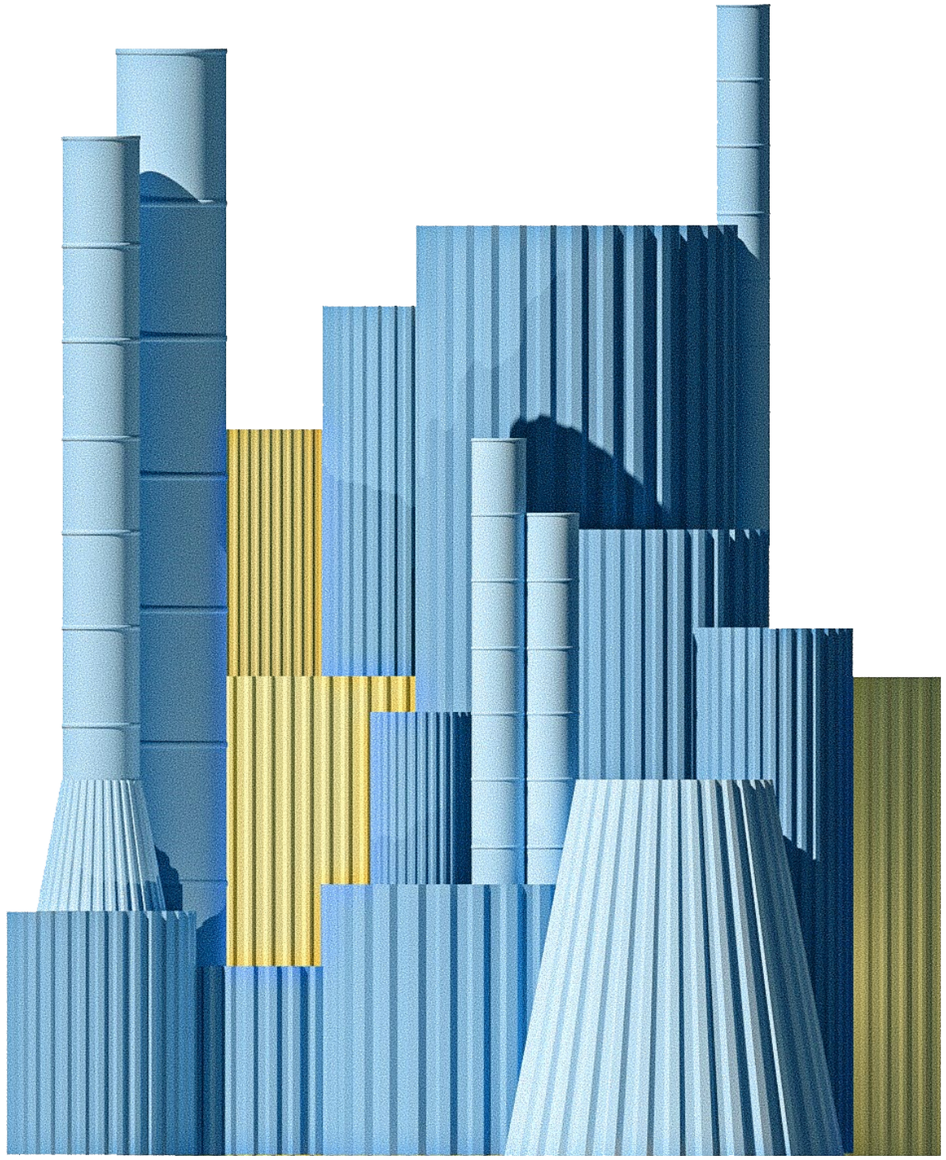
VOLUME SETUP

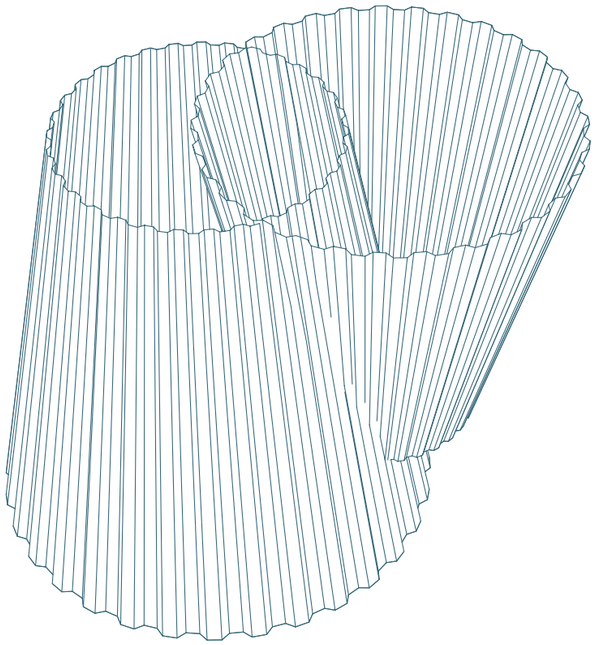


VOLUME SETUP TOP VIEW

GRAPHIC METHODS
3D collage, volume study

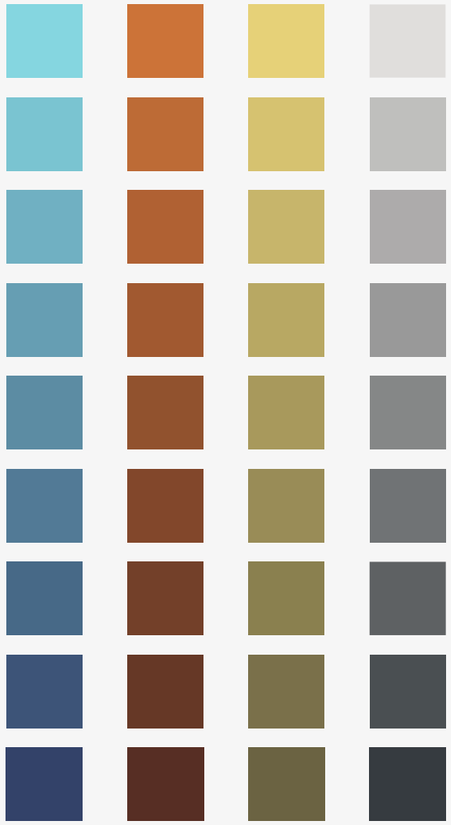




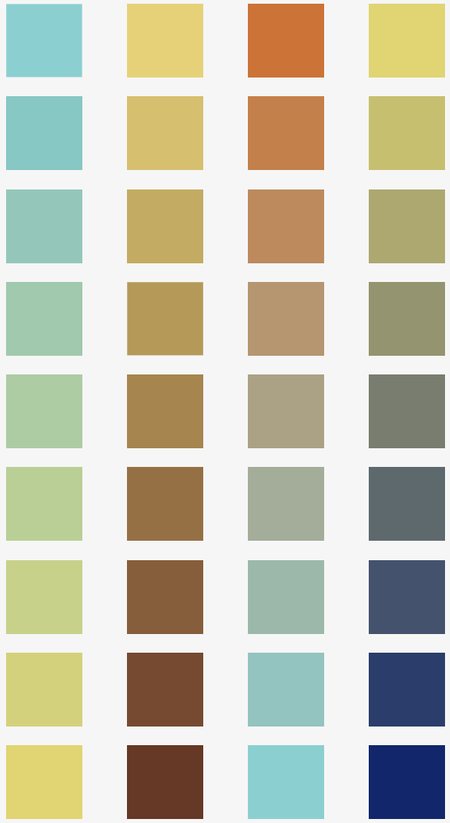


OVERLAPPING VOLUMES OF ROSENLUNDSVERKET

ROSENLUNDSVERKET
Collections of colors / colour transitions

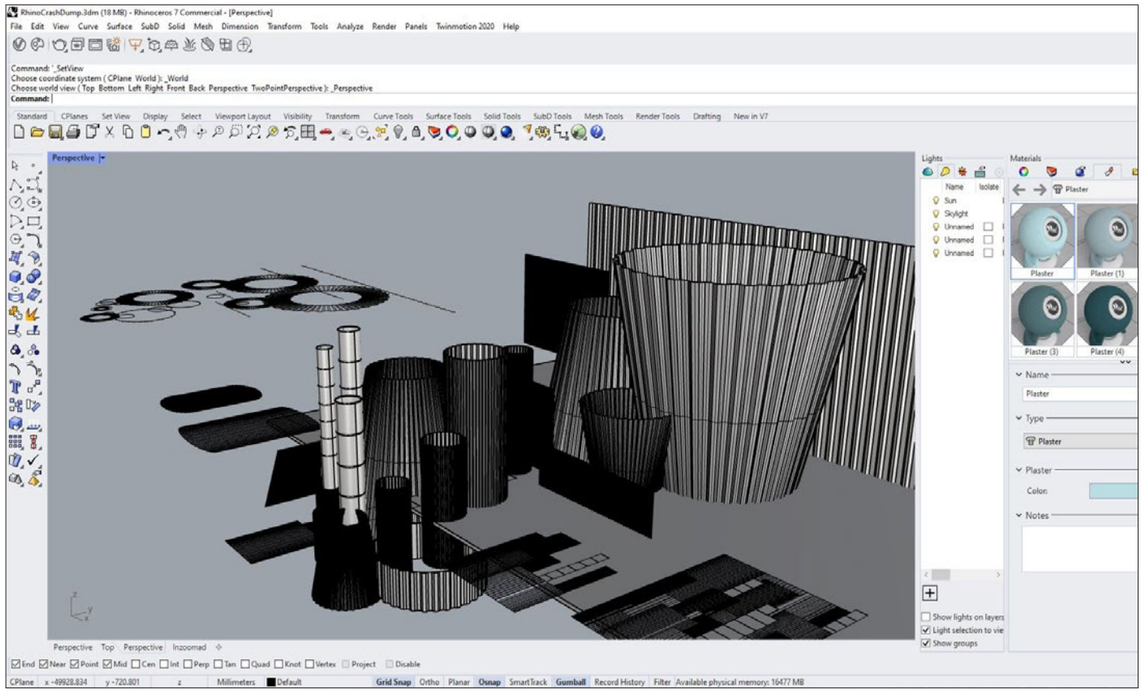


ORIGINAL COLOUR PALETTE

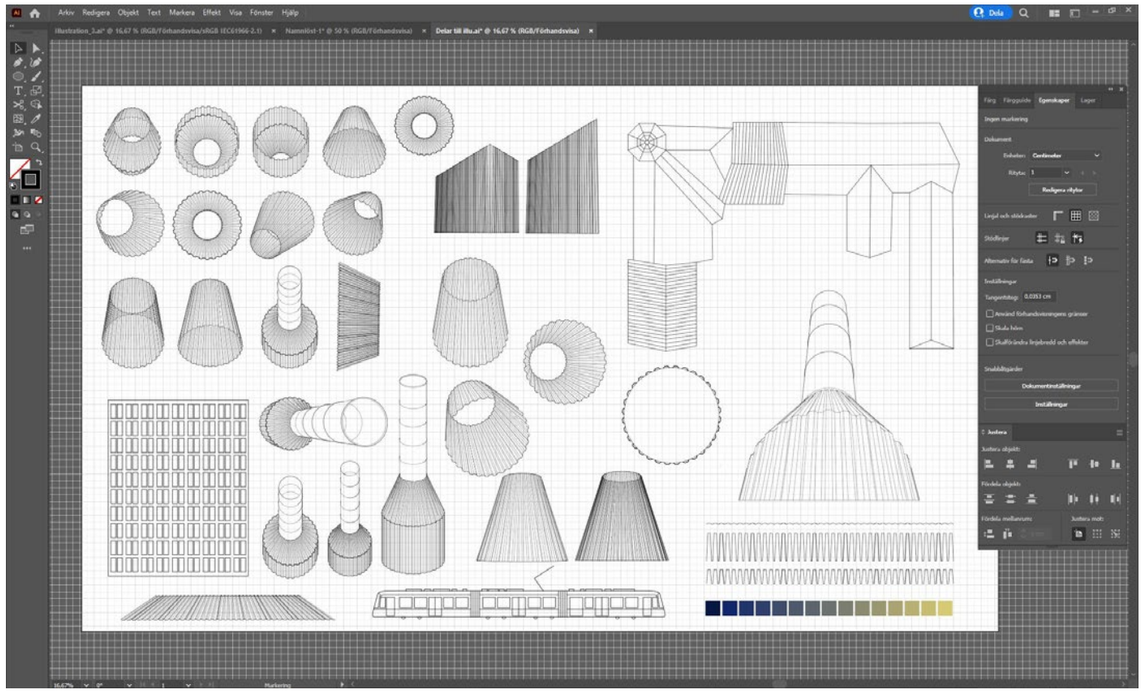


UNPREDICTABLE TRANSITIONS OF COLOR PALETTES

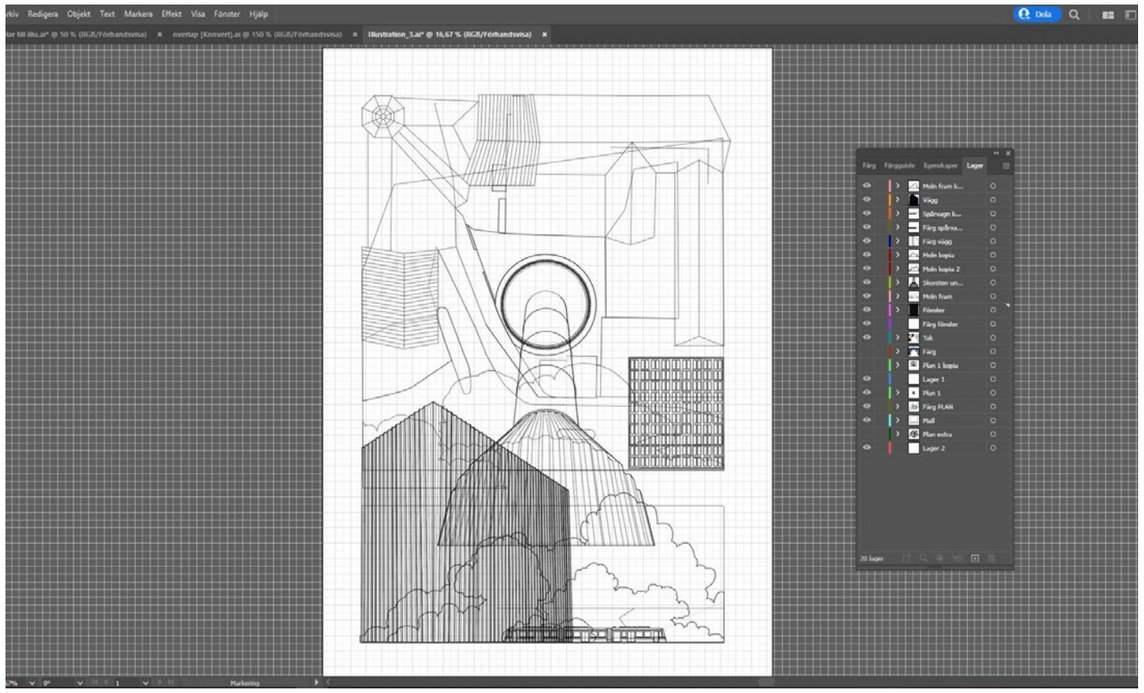
GRAPHIC METHODS
Graphic collage process, 3D volumes and details (Rhino to Illustrator)



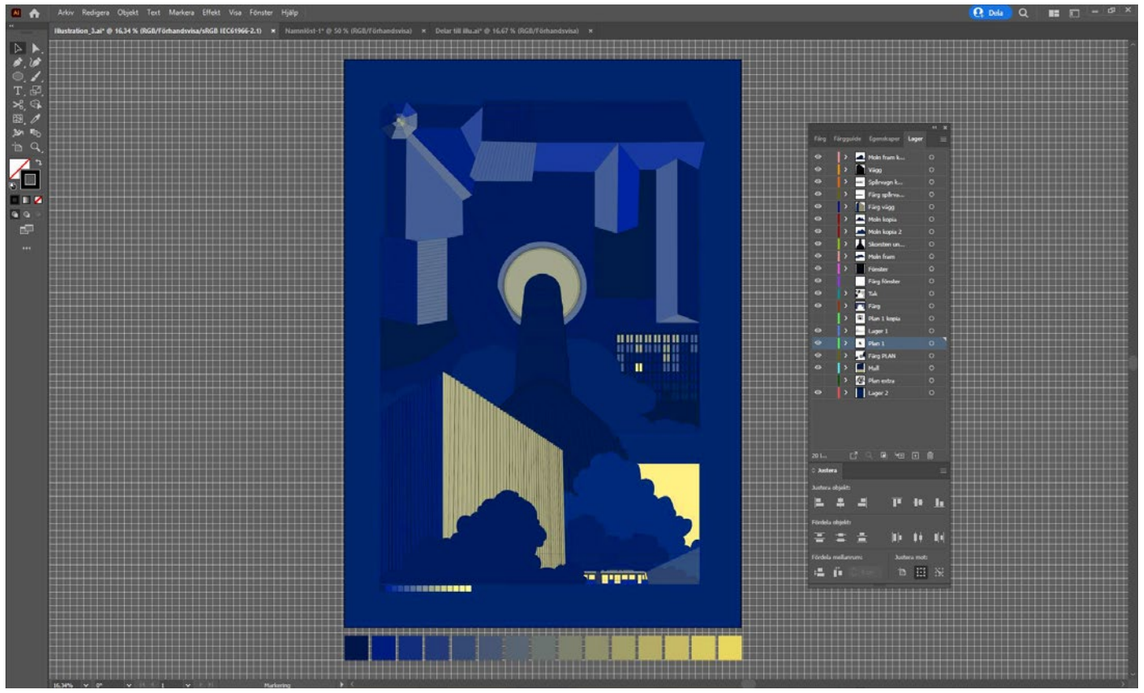
1. 3D volume and component buildup in Rhino



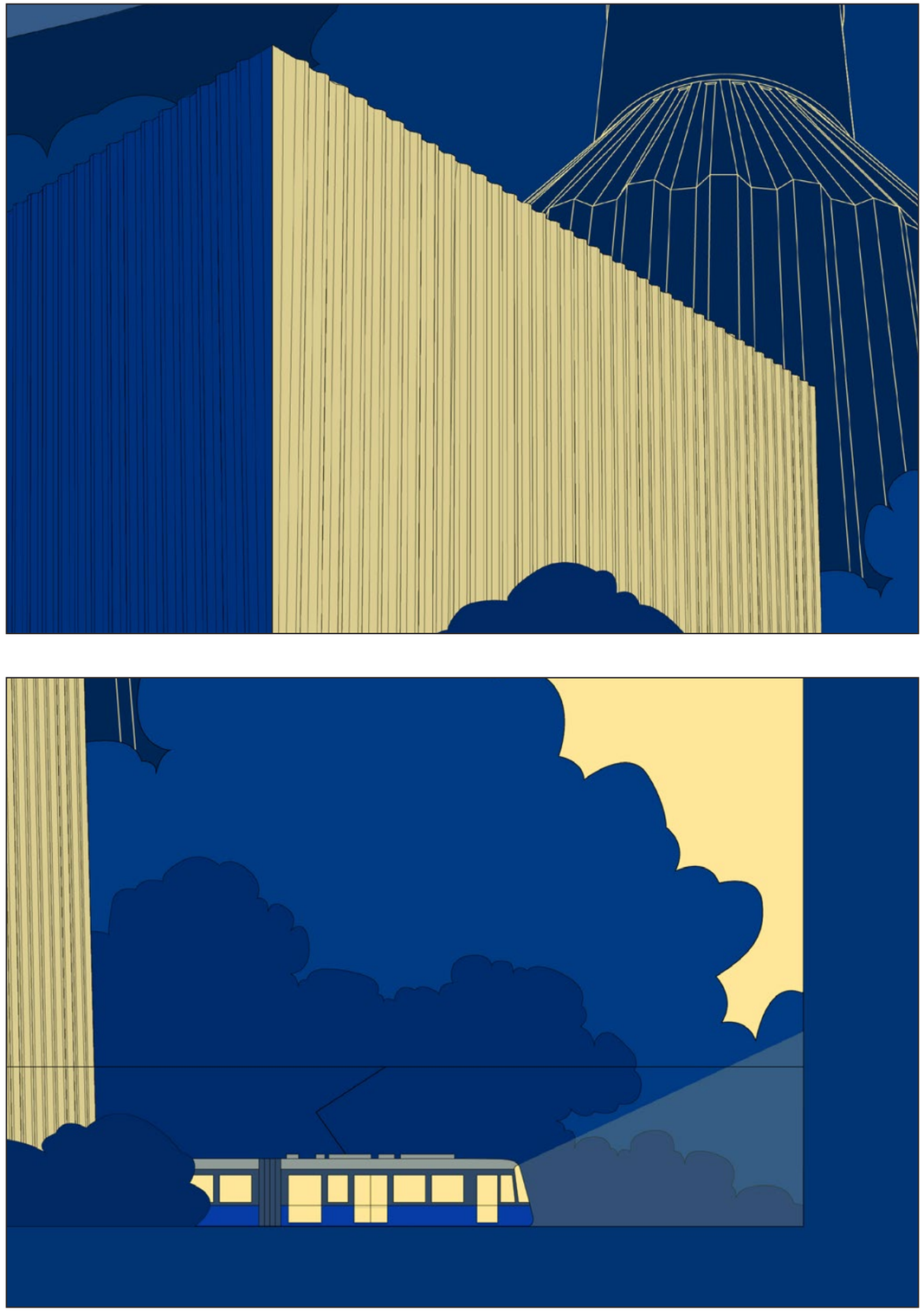
2. 2D export of volumes from Rhino into Adobe Illustrator



3. Object composition



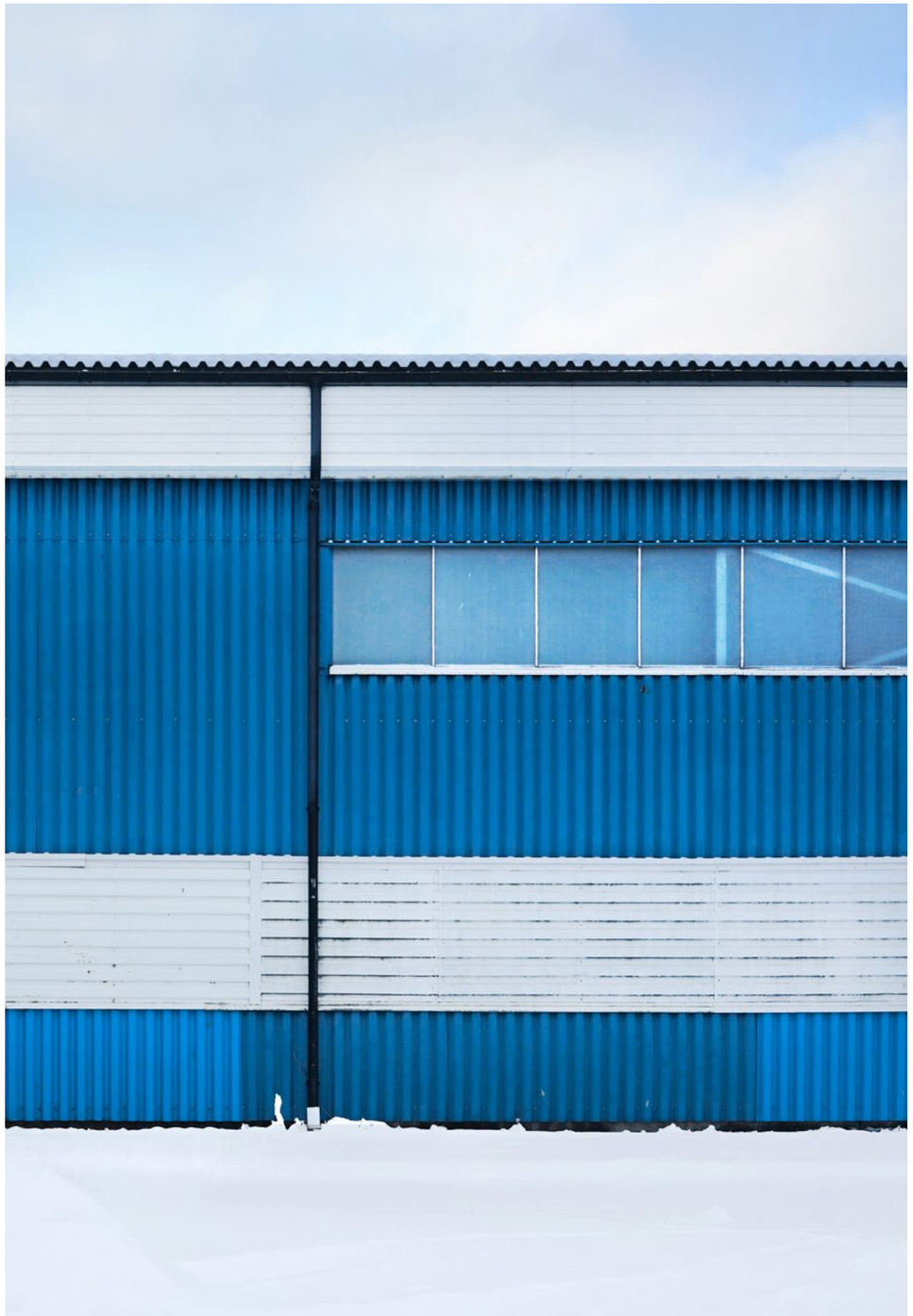
4. Color scheme from selected color palette



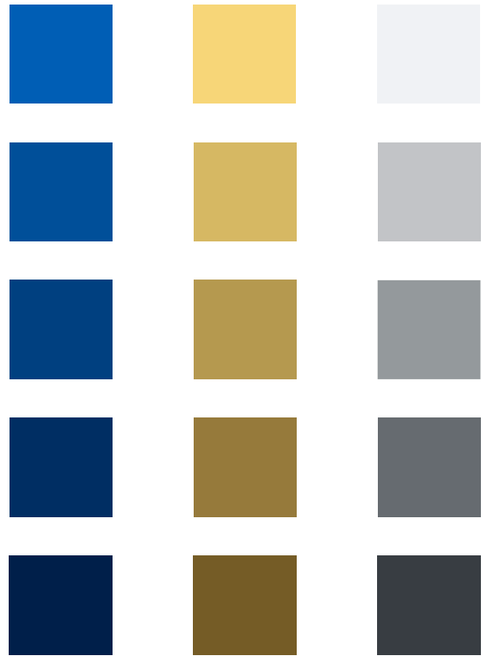
MT SITE PROPOSAL, RINGÖN
Photo analysis

MT SITE PROPOSAL, RINGÖN
Photo analysis

MT SITE PROPOSAL, RINGÖN
Photo analysis

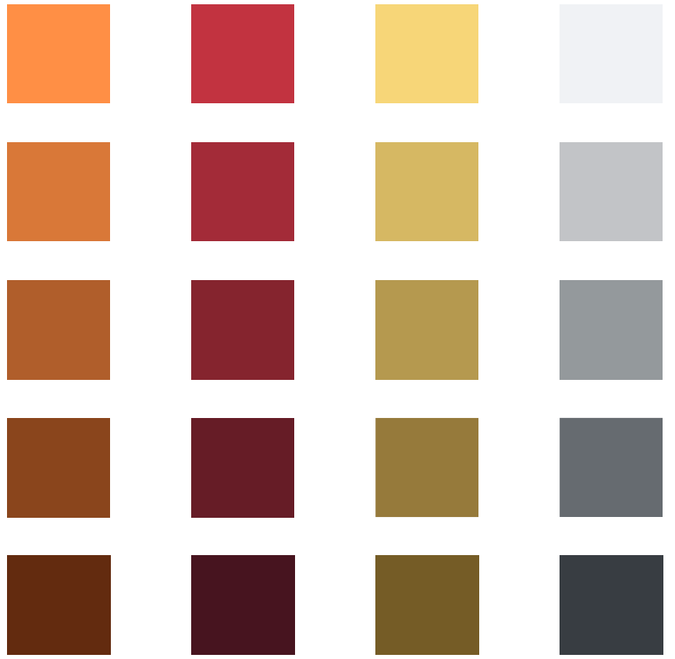


MT SITE PROPOSAL, RINGÖN
Colour analysis



COLOURS OF RINGÖN

MT SITE PROPOSAL, RINGÖN
Colour analysis



COLOURS OF RINGÖN

ANALYSIS MOODBOARD
Start of a method collection of Ringön

METAL BLUE
#005eb5

R - 0
G - 94
B - 181

C - 91
M - 67
Y - 0
K - 0

METAL YELLOW
#005eb5

R - 247
G - 214
B - 120

C - 3
M - 14
Y - 64
K - 0

METAL ORANGE
#ff8f45

R - 255
G - 143
B - 69

C - 0
M - 54
Y - 79
K - 0

METAL RED
#c23340

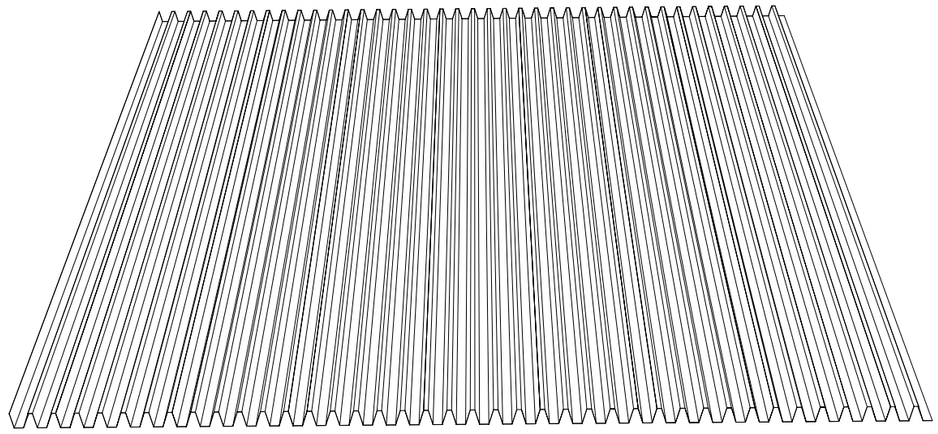
R - 194
G - 51
B - 64

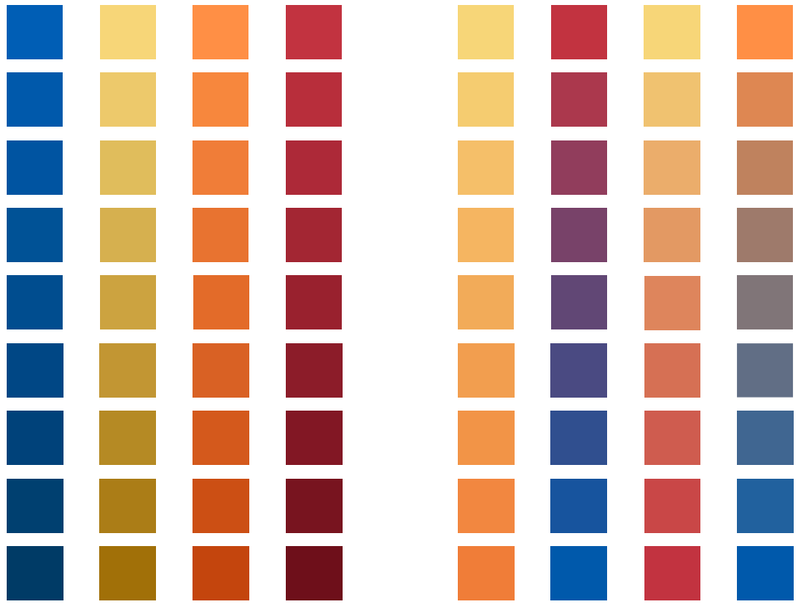
C - 17
M - 94
Y - 76
K - 6

GBG SKY/SNOW
#ecf0f2

R - 236
G - 240
B - 242

C - 6
M - 2
Y - 3
K - 0





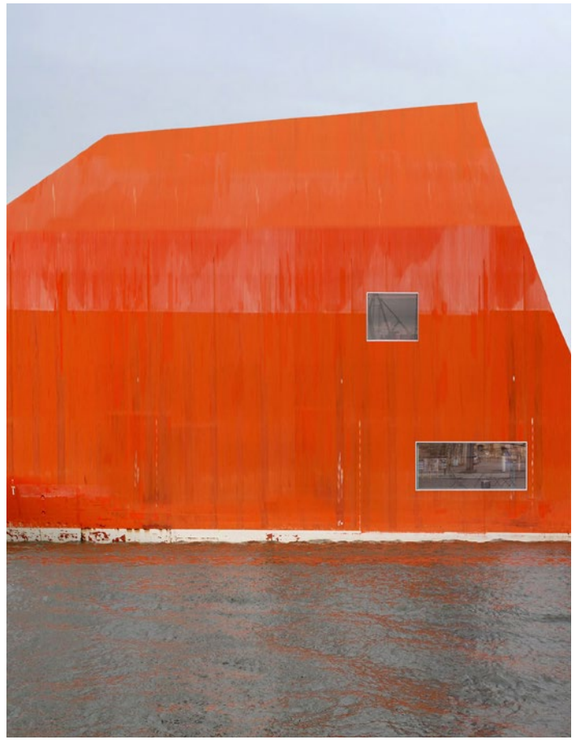
Philipp Schaerer

Visual artist and architect

Philipp Schaerer is a visual artist and architect. He's been teaching at various Swiss universities and has also been working at the office of Herzog & de Meuron. His way of portray, communicate and interpret architecture inspires me as his art is free-thinking, graphic and multidisciplinary. He stays on a level between the imaginary and reality where his art still can be read as real photographs that reflect reality.

In the serie *Bildbauten* Schraerer creates imaginary buildings through photo collages, by using building components and realistic textures. The fact that these images constantly make you oscillate between realism and fiction just makes them extra difficult to let go of.

Page 45
Images by Philipp Schaerer, from the Bildbauten series (2007–2009)



Filip Dujardin

Archturephotographer and visual artist

Filip Dujardin started to work as an independent photographer and artist, playing with the imaginary of architecture and design. By rearranged fragments of buildings in a new context his images switches between the ordinary that we know and imaginary compositions of structures. At first, Dujardin's compositions seem almost real, due to the materials, the shadows and the high level of detail. But by ignoring the laws of physics, he makes you doubt and you suddenly end up in his imaginary strange world where nothing is what it seems. Dujardin's work really reminds you that only creativity sets the limits.

He's photo collection shows various buildings in Belgium that he later on use digital techniques on to create a new imaginary image. To make his creations look extra realistic, he also applies 3D programs in the process of creating shadows and perspectives in his composition that together form a correct image of the building composition.

Page 47
Images by Filip Dujardin from the Fiction series

REFLECTION

→ To be able to start testing methods, a building had to be selected. I focused primarily on the methods, which made it difficult to find or choose a building because I had no criteria for that choice. In the end, I decided to choose a building more randomly without too much thingking, because it's more about the methods than the actual choice of building in this case.

→ I'm pleased with the fact that this autumn's explorations have made me more eager for this spring's thesis.

→ It does not feel like I have had time to explore of what can be done methodically in the graphic techniques, but I have definitely got a good start in the exploration.

→ Having an experimental process without a clear end has been difficult and exciting, as it is all about experimenting and testing things without knowing what you will get out of it or what it will be. I like the idea of having an unpredictable process where you do not have full control, as it can create unpredictable insights that you would most likely not find otherwise. It feels like a good exercise to unleash your creativity.

→ I have also understood the importance of research and the usefulness of good references. During the first few weeks, I felt that much of the time was spent reading, and that much of what I read did not feel relevant. I think that research requires its practice, and that you need to search for references and good texts to get better at it.

Methods I want to continue exploring next spring:

Physic models
Continue the translation between 2D and 3D through physical models. Explore how you can communicate 3D interpretations in mdoels in different materials and scales.

3D methods
Continue to make volume studies in 3D-programs and learn how to use the softwere better.

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Stan Allen's "Thinking in Models"
Robin Evans "Translations from Drawing to Building"
Stan Allen's "Constructing with Lines"

Philipp Schaerer
Visual artist and architect

Filip Dujardin
Archturephotographer and visual artist

Marlene Bach
Visual artist

Francisco Marin
Architect and photographer

Isabel Brison
Visual artist

Barbara Stauffacher
Landscape architect and graphic designer
"Supergraphics":
https://searanch.ced.berkeley.edu/files/original/f81c5b9eb453605f71be06059e648a5308768514.pdf

https://issuu.com/tagarwal/docs/tanya_agarwal_designer_accordian_se

Charles Moore
Architect