

2025

Chalmers School of Architecture  
Department of Architecture & Civil Engineering

Architecture & Urban planning

Student: Tea Nygren  
Supervisor: Åsa Setterby Modéus  
Examiner: Joaquim Tarraso

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**CHALMERS**  
UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY



A big thank you to Åsa Setterby Modéus and Joaquim Tarraso for invaluable encouragement, challenging discussions, and guidance throughout the process of my master thesis.

## Abstract

This master thesis explores the role of the landscape as a secondary entity to total urbanisation. The aim of the thesis is to explore how we can reimagine supporting areas, with the ambition to foster a deeper understanding of landscapes, urbanisation and people. The thesis intends to explore how, in future societal development, we can oppose the landscape as a prime economic asset and in contrast to a current static state, reimagine supply areas as sites of progress.

Contextualised in Umeå river in northern Sweden, the thesis conducts a narrative divided in five phases; background, site, manifesto, strategies and The landscape institute. Outlined by a theoretical framework, this narrative unfolds a discourse that raises the following research questions;

How can architecture create conditions of care for nature in future societal development?

How can a physical space be designed to communicate, restore and enrich the landscape, rather than exploit it?

What follows is an investigation where prototyping serves as a mediator between the positioning of the thesis, the manifesto, and the design outcome, The Landscape Institute. The result is a project in two senses; an architectural artefact as well as a campaign.

The landscape institute becomes a method to frame a need of a site and empower further questioning of human positioning in the landscape. The thesis highlights a future where we collectively transcend our superiority to land, and where architecture becomes a tool for communication, restoration and enrichment.

## \_Student background

## **\_Education**

Bachelor in architecture  
Chalmers univeristy of technology

Masters in architecture & urban design  
Chalmers tekniska högskola

ENSA Paris-Belleville  
Exchange

## \_Experience

## Kaminsky Arkitektur Internship

Västerbotten municipality  
Floorplan investigator

AUU Göteborg  
PR manager for education committee

ARKNAT  
Architecture festival

## \_Language

Swedish (mother tounge)

English (C1-C2)

French (C1)

### Additional merits

Fransk-Svenska stiftelsen  
Scholar

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Growing up next to Sweden’s biggest hydro power plant never really evoked reflection as a kid. We swam in the river and when the warning alarm rang, everyone knew it was time to get out because soon a big wave would come and that could be dangerous.

I now understand why the big wave occasionally came and how it was caused. I learned that the river was regulated to produce electricity via a spinning turbine directed by the flow of the water. I learned that the electricity being produced is thanks to the river itself, and that all through history the river had been used to transport material and energy to urbanised areas. I also learned that by doing so, the river was damaged. Cleared from rocks and natural features, now being an artificial entity instead of a natural landscape.

I started to search about these river typologies and what they meant. They are machines; scattering in the landscape, popping up through history and creating a compilation of supporting systems feeding total urbanisation whilst damaging the river for the good of a modern living in the city. The natural landscape becomes secondary, only intended to support.

I thought to myself; yes, this is what modern living looks like. But the river is damaged! We have to care for it.

I asked myself; How do we restore it?

I started to design a new river landscape, basing on methods of restoration already in use. I quickly realised that I’m designing something out of my own profession. I’m not a biologist, and it all became abstract based on guessing. So, what can I do, departing from my own profession?

I realised that the question had to be reformulated. We already know how to restore a landscape, but the knowledge is reserved for the experts and the general view of total urbanisation where nature acts as supporting areas remains the same.

I asked myself; How can architecture create conditions of care for nature in future societal development?

Although I’m not biologists, maybe I can contribute with what can further alter the discourse on how we care for nature. Maybe I can create a space where the answers we in many cases already have can meet, exchange, and change.



\_Aim

The aim of the master thesis is to explore how we can reimagine supporting areas. With the ambition to foster a deeper understanding of landscapes, urbanisation and people. The thesis intends to explore how architecture can create conditions to care of nature, searching for a method that gives back to the landscape rather than exploiting it.

\_Research questions

- How can architecture create conditions of care for nature in future societal development?
- How can a physical space be designed to communicate, restore and enrich the landscape, rather than exploit it?

\_Delimitations

This thesis is not in contrast to the city. Nor in contrast to modernisation. It's a mapping of a current state of mind. An explanation of our view of the landscape as secondary to us. It's an attempt, a strive, a wish to reinforce humans' relationship to nature and further alter the discourse on landscape development. A belief that by enabling the possibility to change, we might just do it.

This master thesis promotes a **discussion** regarding the landscape as an economic asset, and argues that the architect can contribute with creating spaces where those discussions can take place. Thereby it does not further address **how** our view of landscape development will look in the future, or **how** we will get there.

\_Keywords

- Campaign** Promotion of a specific idea over a period of time.
- Institute** Establishment dedicated to a particular purpose, such as research or education.
- Interdisciplinary** Referring to an approach that integrates several domains of knowledge, perspectives and methods.
- Total Urbanisation** A state where urban processes shape every part of the landscape.
- Landscape** Physical areas of land, including natural and human-made features.
- Manifesto** The public declaration of the master thesis.
- Natural land/ landscapes** Nature not regulated by humans.
- Prototype** A test of a product used to search and refine ideas before the "real" change.
- Typologie** Classification of types with the same characteristics.

The method the master thesis is divided into five blocks. **Background, site, manifesto, strategies** and **The landscape institute**.

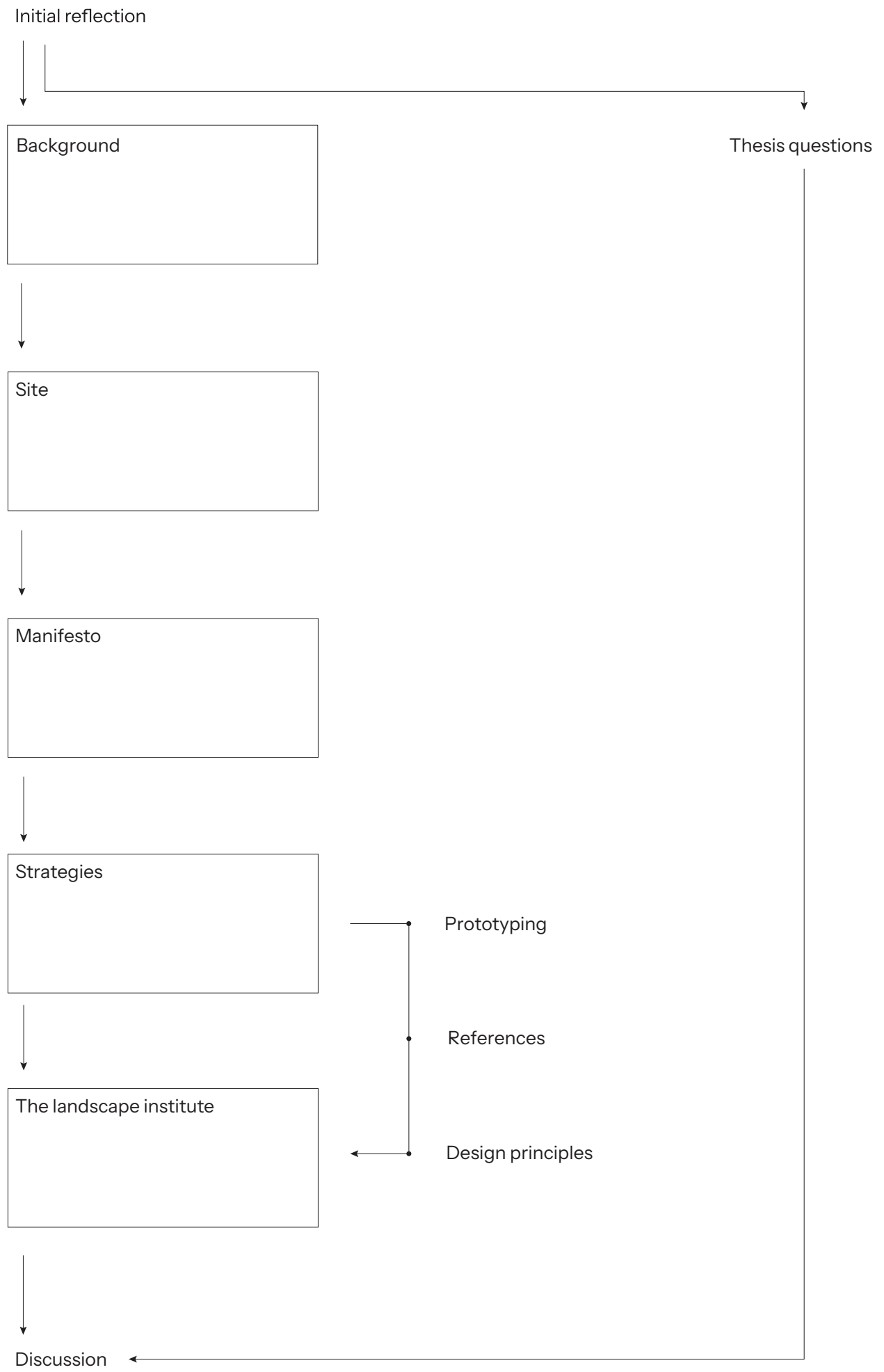
The **background** frames the general subject of the thesis. The background is based on literature studies and takes its starting point in a broad global issue.

The background is then contextualised in the second block of the thesis – the **site**. By using the method of mapping, the thesis graphically communicates the historical and present context of the site. The first and the second block acts as the foundation for the manifesto, the third block of the thesis.

The third block of the thesis is the **manifesto**. The manifesto is the positioning of the thesis. This part is a written argumentation – a reaction to a current state. A statement! The manifesto argues for a shift in perception regarding landscape development, opposing the ideal of landscapes as solely economic assets. The method of a manifesto frames a clear purpose and direction for the strategies and further the design of the thesis.

The fourth block of the thesis is the **strategies**. The strategies are a mediator between the positioning of the thesis, the manifesto, and the physical design, The landscape institute. The strategies identified become design principles to encapsulate the manifesto in a built structure. This block sees to prototyping and reference projects to frame the translation of the manifesto to a built entity.

**The landscape institute** is the spatial design of the master thesis. It's an architectural prototype that communicates the manifesto. A physical representation of a statement. The prototype tests and attempts to alter the discourse of human relationship to nature, and becomes a project in two senses; an architectural artefact as well as a campaign. The prototype is communicated through conventional architectural drawings, as well as a brochure to emphasize the communicative aspect of the project.



\_Fig. 1

Process diagram

**\_Theoretical framework**

The blocks of the master thesis are based on literature studies alongside reference projects. The chosen theory frames the background, contextualises the background to the site, the manifesto and the strategies; which results in the design of the thesis - The landscape institute. The theory is a compiled collection of literature from different domains, to understand the large multiscalar subject that the thesis speaks on. The theory frames the positioning of the thesis, and supports both the historical aspect of the narrative, as well as a speculative future. The literature presented in this chapter is a collection of the four main literature studies used in the thesis, covering the background, site, manifesto, strategies which results in The landscape institute.

**\_Beauty redeemed**

*Ellen Braae, 2015*

To frame the initial reflections of the master's thesis, Ellen Braae's Beauty Redeemed (2015) acts as a key source for understanding the evolution of landscapes both in terms of physical development as well as a point of departure for ideals and needs. Braae presents a historical time-line of landscape development, and places post-industrial entities in a broad historical and aesthetic context. The literature supports the research questions by framing the

**\_Countryside, a report**

*Rem Koolhaas, 2020*

The thesis positions itself as a response to the present condition in which landscapes are treated as a back of house to total urbanisation, primarily perceived as sites for economic exploitation. Drawing inspiration from Rem Koolhaas's Countryside, A Report (2020), the thesis recognizes the potential in reimagining supporting areas. Koolhaas's presents a collection of collaborative and interdisciplinary projects that explores and envisions the landscape as areas with more

background with both facts and philosophical discussions regarding humans' relationship to nature. Beauty Redeemed helps the thesis to contextualise a current state regarding land as an economic asset, both in brought terms as well as in the chosen site of the thesis.

potential then just to support the city. In line with Countryside, A Report (2020), the thesis takes influence from the general manifesting approach of the litterature, that envisions a future where non-urban areas operate as testbeds for an altered future, turning away from the static planning methods of today. The literature is used both in the manifesto, which acts as the positioning of the thesis, as well as the general background to frame and portray the problem picture.

**\_Theoretical framework**

**\_Ecostreams**

*EU-life, 2025*

To understand the site and its physical conditions, the thesis turns to the established environmental organisation Ecostreams, which presently uses river restorative methods in the region of the chosen site. The thesis searches for how architecture can create conditions of care for nature in future societal development. To do so, the narrative of the thesis needs to frame the contextual issue and

**\_Prototypa!**

*Göteborgs stad and SLU/Tankesmedjan Movium, 2023*

The manifesto calls for a design strategy that is explorative and opposes the static mass produced manner. To do so, the thesis turns to prototyping as a design strategie, taking inspiration from Prototypa! by Göteborgs stad and SLU Tankesmedjan Movium. This literature presents what prototyping is, why it's needed in a static contemporary time, and the main principles used when designing a new built prototypical structure. These principles become

its solutions. Turning to experts is therefor a good start. Ecostreams is a EU-Life supported organization, active in several northern regions such as Västerbotten, Västernorrland and Jämtland. The purpose of their work is to emphasize healthier environments for important water species, doing so by restoring log-driving cleared rivers. EU Life is a European Union programme that supports environmental-and climate action in Europe.

a relevant way to frame the design of the project, making the strategie a glue between the manifesto and The landscape institute.



## **\_Background**

### **\_Block 1**

This chapter introduces the concept of landscapes and landscape development in a broad historical and aesthetic context.

The concept of landscapes in its original etymological meaning did not refer to the aesthetics of nature, but rather a politico-legal territory. The comparison is often made with the latin terms provincia, regio etc – referring to a district or a geopolitical delimited area. The term describes spaces marked by boundaries – areas under the control of a particular political interest. The meaning of landscape in its early usage was therefore not the beauty of nature but a limited geographical area including ressources of interest and furthermore a will of control (Braae, 2015).

However, the concept of landscapes developed over time, and evolved in different areas of profession and worldviews. In painting for instance, the term landscape was used to describe a delimited frame of the countryside, often including vast perspectives portrating views of appealing natural land, focusing on capturing the aesthetics of nature (Braae, 2015) (See fig.2).

Over time, geopolitical interests shaped new frames of the landscape, each one dictating how society interacts and alters the land to fit a new epoch. Each historical shift has reshaped the land and contributed to the ever-evolving concept of landscapes (Corner, 1999).

Landscapes are no longer fixed geographical entities, but rather a collection of layers created over time, matching the idea that landscapes continues to change in response to societal, technological and environmental development. The landscape becomes a collection of layers for humans to categorize our history as well as understanding our present. Whether in the fields of art, architecture, geography or politics – the landscape remains a powerful reminder of how humans interact with the environment to match our desires and needs (Braae, 2015).

In a northern context, the land has for thousands of years been cultivated by the Sámi. Economy, religion and ecology were and are today prudently intertwined, making the cultivation of land carefully executed, leaving few traces behind on the natural land (Sametinget, 2024). (See fig.3).

By the late 17th century, the commission to christianize the Sámi reached its peak, with the goal of implementing its religious views and further altering the perception of the close relationship between humans and nature (Sametinget, 2024).

Over the next few centuries, human impact on the land changed, world wide, aligning with modern industrial living by introducing new typologies into the frame of the countryside to sustain today’s way of life. Both regarding the day to day standards as well as geopolitical status (Koolhaas, 2020). As Frichot et al. (2022) notes:

*“Left out of the plan, infrastructure was selectively edited out of the new urban utopia so that the new residential landscape could resemble a tranquil place for the full development of the modern individual”* (p.2)

The new modernised and highly cultivated landscape turns away from the artistic view of the vast untouched nature, and now becomes a symbol of modernity that embodies a new landscape silhouette (See fig.4):

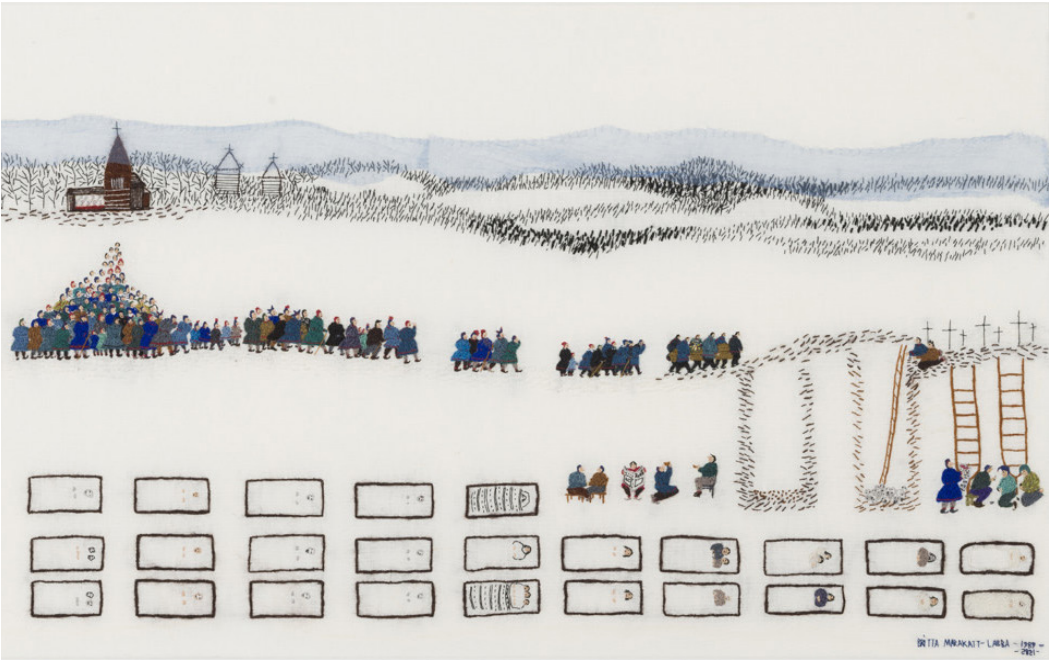
*“Infrastructure is both a symbol of permanence and a channeler of flows, a collection of built objects and a set of ideas about modernity.”*  
(Frichot et al., 2022, p.2)

Progression to current time, landscapes are now a compiled result of decisions taken over time, rationally and logically taken after the need of each era. The outcome is a collection of contemporary typologies that coexist in the present landscape, an assortment of rational fragments that overlap with each other to create systems that intersect with the modern human. A ruralised urbanity (Braae, 2015).

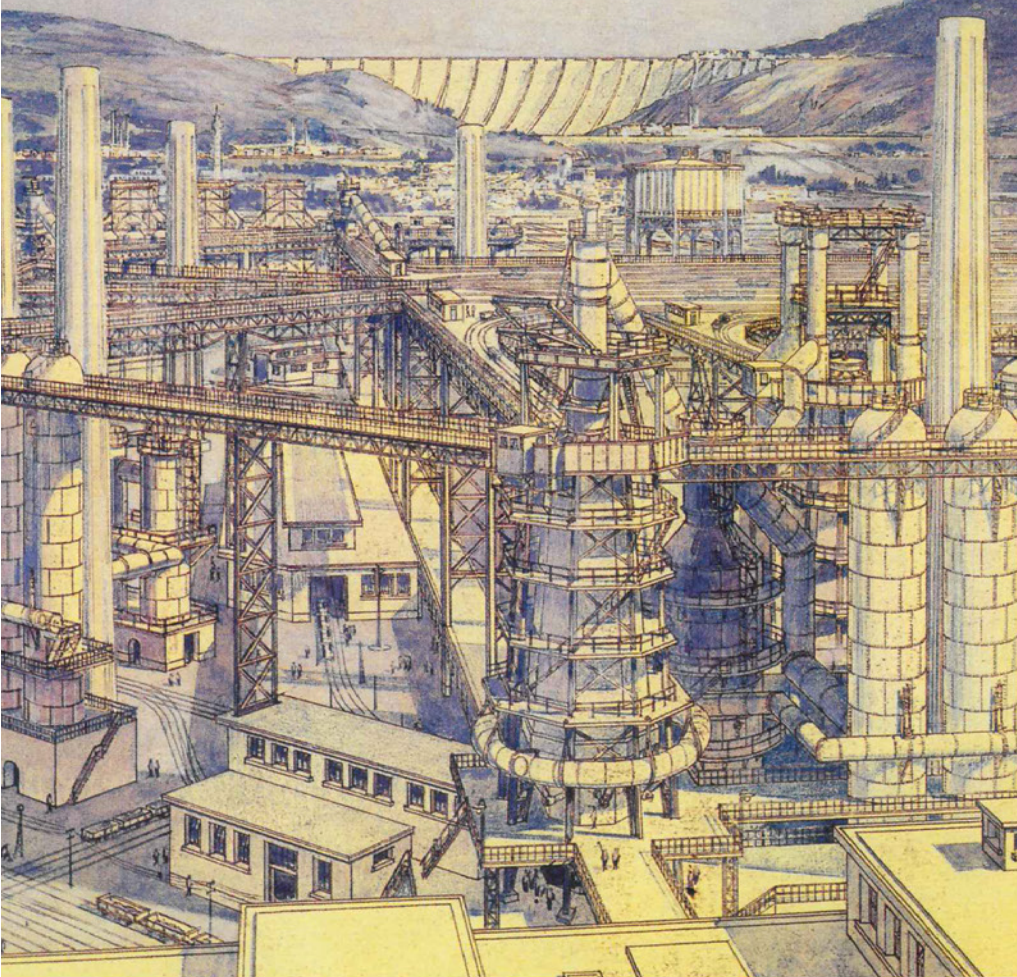




\_Fig. 2  
*Ideal Landscape with Rainbow*, painted by the austrian painter Joseph Anton Koch in 1805. As the title implies, an ideal landscape portrating views of appealing natural land, focusing on capturing the aesthetics of nature.  
Beauty Redeemed, Braae. E (p.35)



\_Fig. 3  
*Mátki II (Färden II)* by Britta Marakatt-Labba, Embroidery on cotton canvas.  
A piece in a series of artworks portraying a Sámi worldview.  
Hans Olof Utsi, 2025. With premission



\_Fig. 4  
Une cité industrielle, an architectural project never realised by Tony Garnier in 1899 in the south of france. The idea was to create a socialist city planning design from the benefits of industry and production. The idea was to locate industrial and polluting activity far away from human life, therefore in the countryside.  
Beauty Redeemed, Braae. E (p.134)

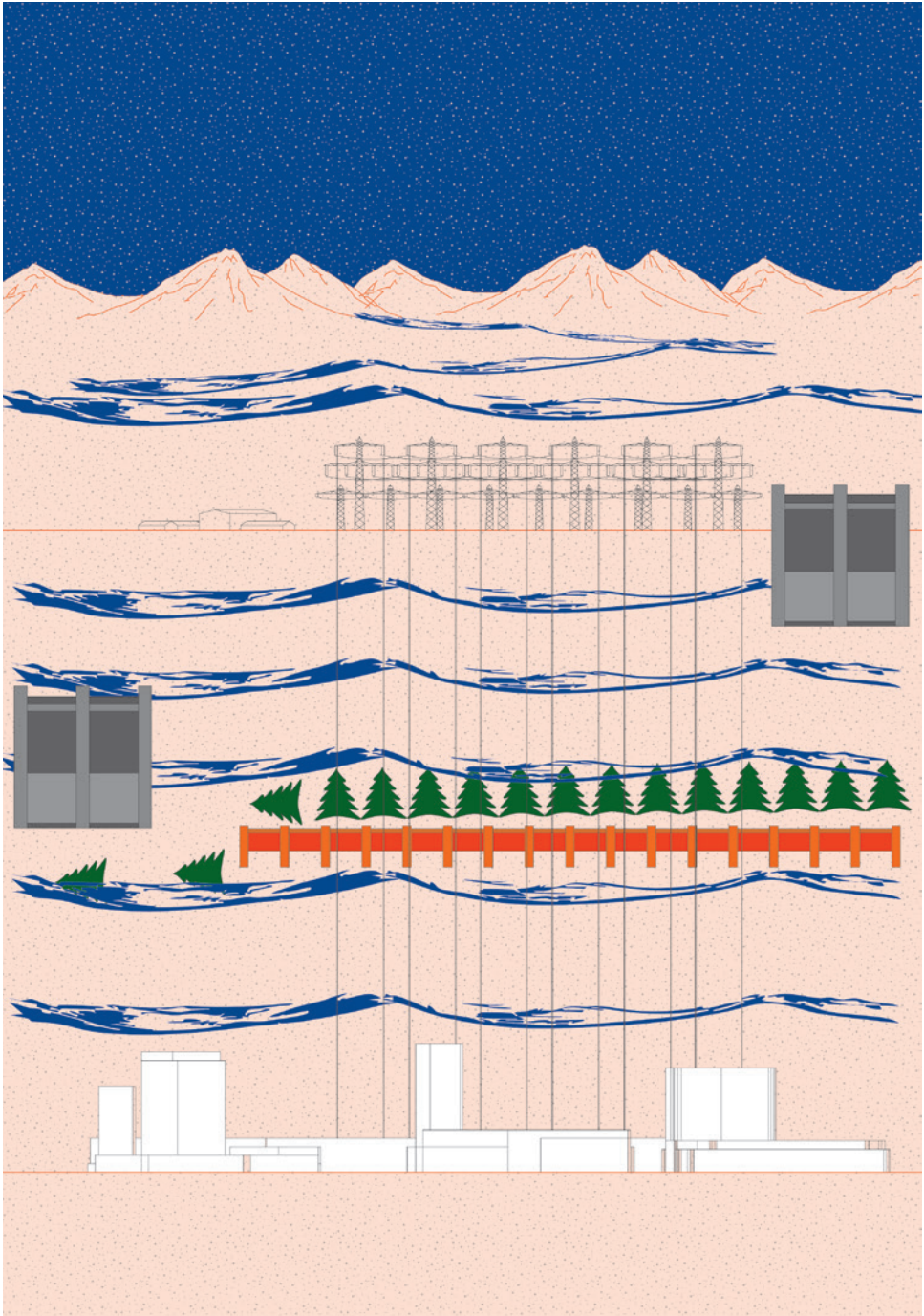


The current frame of the landscape is supplemented with various non-human production typologies, aimed at fostering complete urbanisation. The landscape turns away from the beauty of natural land, and instead becomes secondary entitites, only aimed at supporting the city (Koolhaas, 2020).

The problem picture in this new frame is the consequences it has on the land in itself:

*“Total urbanization requires that a large part of the countryside would be claimed as a back of house for urban civilization, a residual, enabling domain, where all the needs, demands, impostions of the urban can be orchestrated and implemented at will. Is it any coincidence that since our fixation on total urbanization, crucial ecosystems have, possibly, slipped past the point of no return?”*  
(Koolhaas, 2020).

The result of the current condition is that natural resources are being exploited whilst feeding our urbanised areas. The landscape has become a financial incentive for human exhilaration and even though not every land, province, district, region nor area is yet exploited linked to financial thinking; human activity has constituted a distinct geological change on natural land and further the entire planet earth, affecting planetary ecosystems and human health (Braae, 2015) (Rockström & Klum 2015).



\_Fig. 5  
Illustration of landscapes as supporting areas to the city. Non contextual.  
*Auhtor*

## **\_Site**

### **\_Block 2**

This chapter will introduce the site of the master thesis, where the background will be contextualised.

The site of the thesis is Umeå river in northern Sweden.



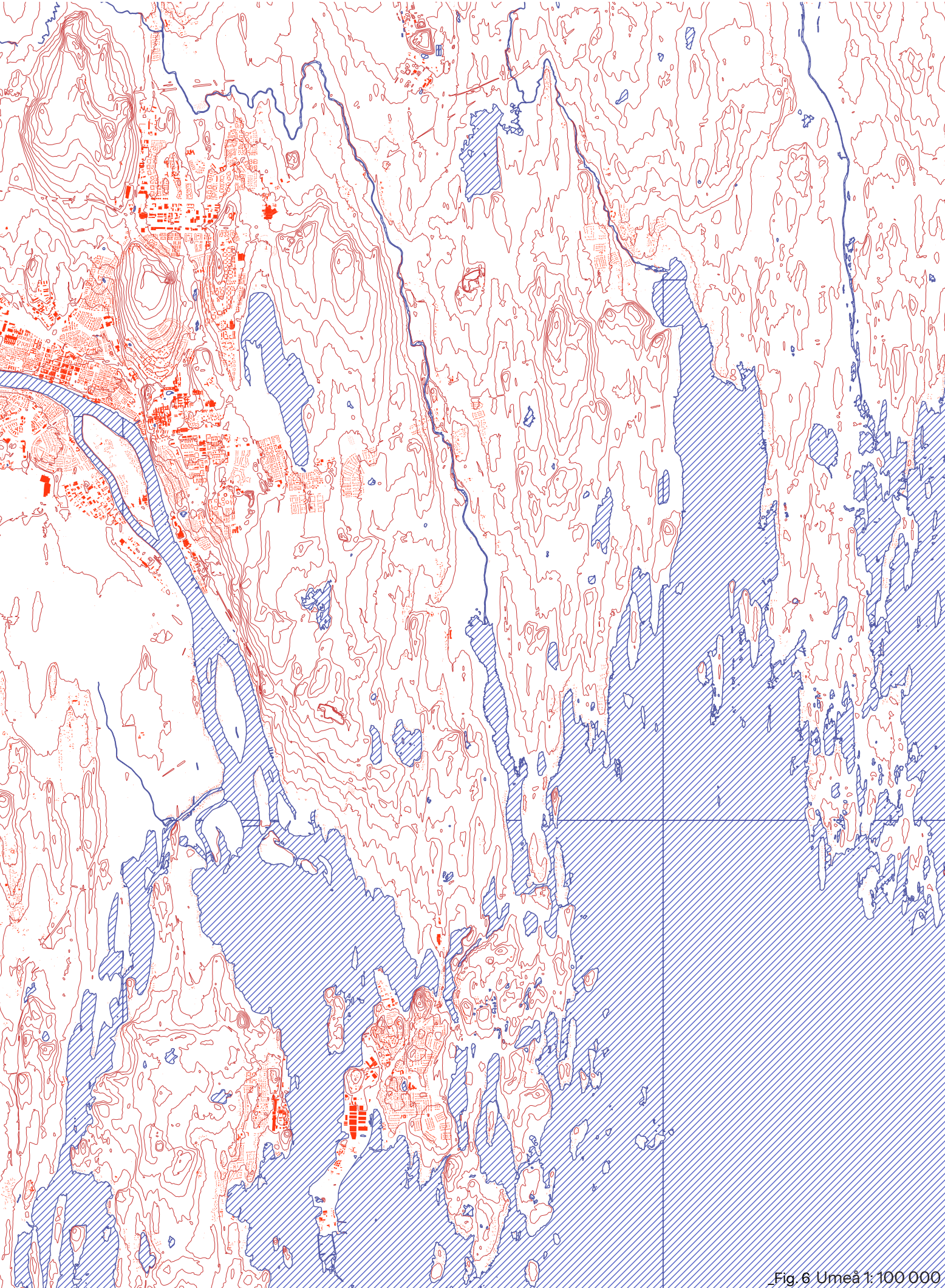


Fig. 6 Umeå 1:100 000



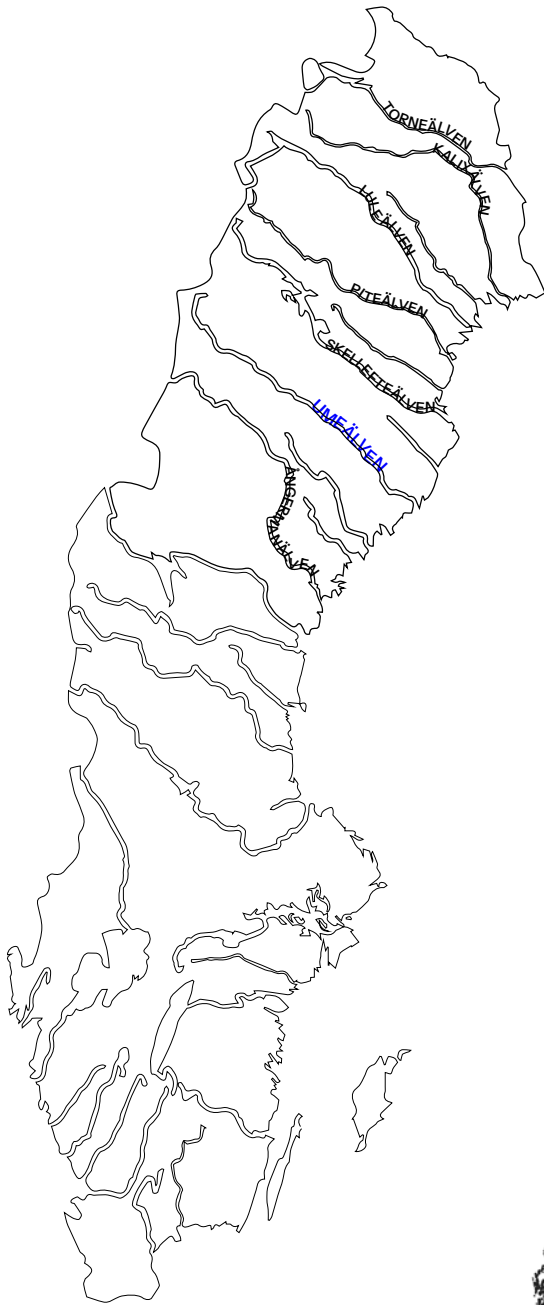
This master thesis addresses the river as a subject of investigation related to the presented background. Rivers are essential components of landscapes and a defining character of the beauty of land. They are vital natural resources and a lifeline for human settlement and progression through time (Omma Simma, S., 2021).

Rivers are fascinating entities both in a human-historical perspective, embodying traces of human philosophy on landscape development, as well as being support systems for biodiversity and habitats for species (Ecostreams, 2025).

In a northern context, the river has historically and presently played a central role for human progression, and are today controlled entities, meaning regulated by human implementations. The rivers are natural water courses, meaning they carve the landscape and create natural barriers (Omma Simma, S., 2021). Yet, these rivers do not solely serve and predetermine the local context but rather the nation as a whole (Statistiska centralbyrån [SCB], 2018).

In a Swedish context, the zoning of rural and urban areas are distinct (see fig. 8), where the exploitation of natural resources is high and the urban areas vastly concentrated, often far away from the source that supports urban living (Statistiska centralbyrån [SCB], 2018). The northern rivers are one example of this, where some are left untouched, the majority are exploited land (see fig. 9). **Among them Umeå river, the site of this master thesis.**

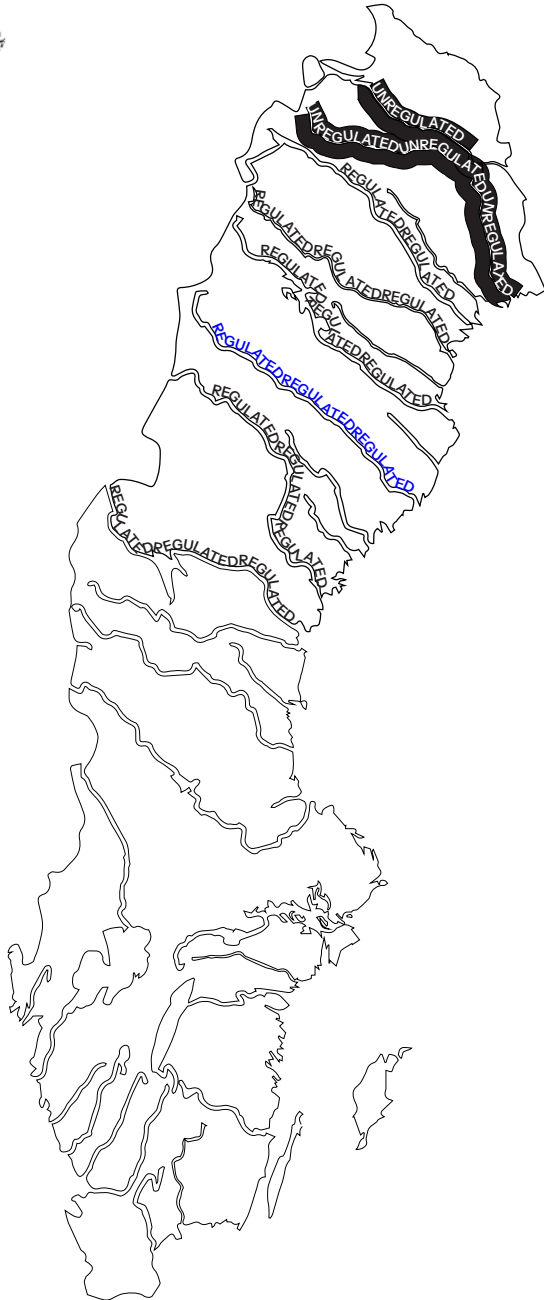
Further will be explained the history of the site, its surroundings and how the river historically and presently is used for the good of total urbanisation.



\_Fig. 7 Rivers



\_Fig. 8 Population distribution



\_Fig. 9 Regulations



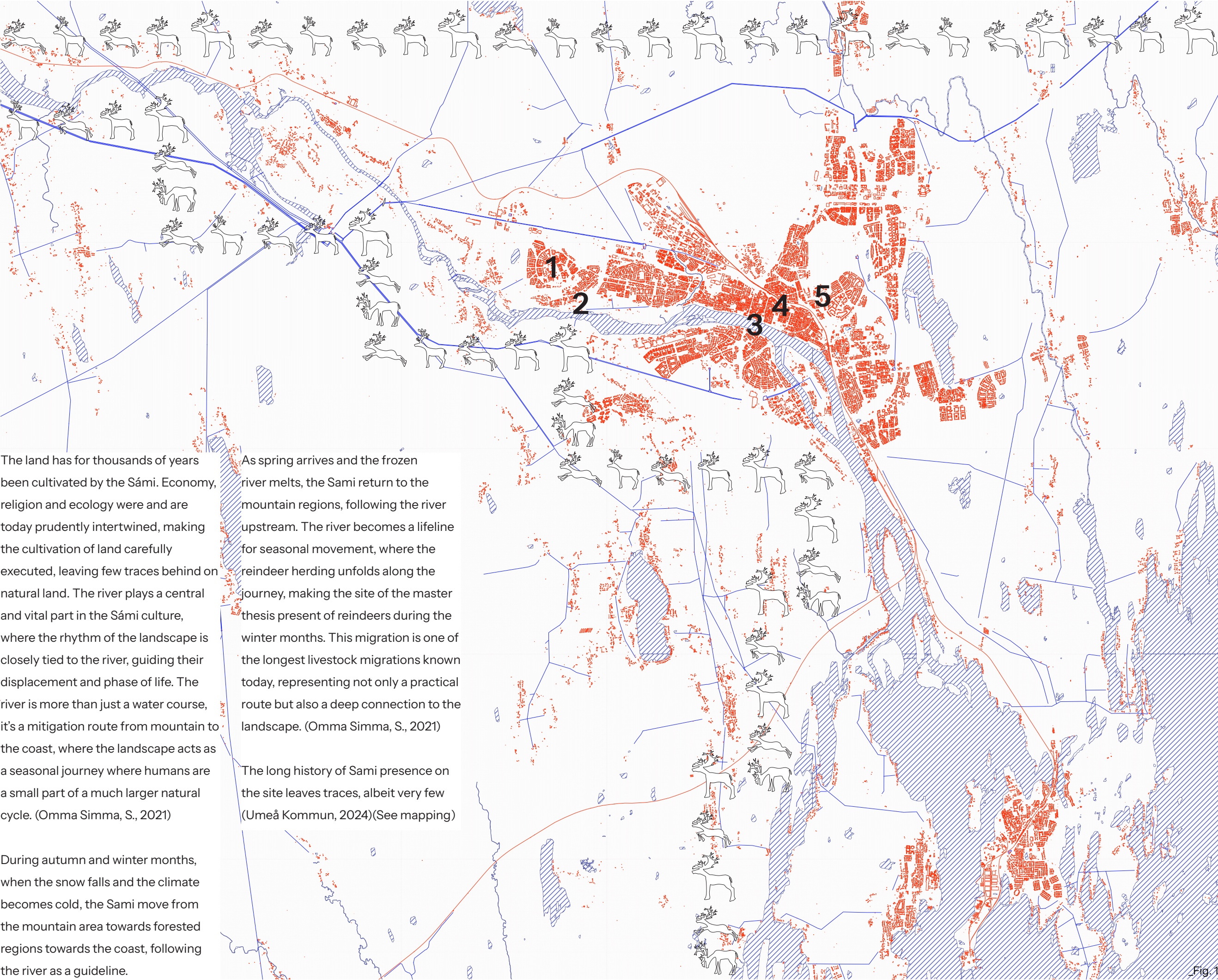


\_Fig. 10 Site photo/ Support systems



\_Fig. 11 Site photo/ Landscapes





1. In this area of Umedalen, traces of Sami habitation have been found dating back to the 1500s. The area is today used as reindeer pasture by the Rans Sami settlement.
  2. Backenkyrkan (church) is Umeå's oldest church and an important place for many reindeer herding Sami. Historically the church was designed to represent a societal hierarchy by exiling Sami to the back of the church and christians to the front.
  3. The river has historically served as a passway during wintertime for the reindeer herds to pass to the next grazing land.
  4. Far into the 20th century, the central part of the town was a winter grazing area for Rans Sami village.
  5. Umeå university is historical reindeer grazing land up until 1952.
- Compiled source: (Umeå Kommun, 2025)

The land has for thousands of years been cultivated by the Sámi. Economy, religion and ecology were and are today prudently intertwined, making the cultivation of land carefully executed, leaving few traces behind on natural land. The river plays a central and vital part in the Sámi culture, where the rhythm of the landscape is closely tied to the river, guiding their displacement and phase of life. The river is more than just a water course, it's a mitigation route from mountain to the coast, where the landscape acts as a seasonal journey where humans are a small part of a much larger natural cycle. (Omma Simma, S., 2021)

As spring arrives and the frozen river melts, the Sami return to the mountain regions, following the river upstream. The river becomes a lifeline for seasonal movement, where the reindeer herding unfolds along the journey, making the site of the master thesis present of reindeers during the winter months. This migration is one of the longest livestock migrations known today, representing not only a practical route but also a deep connection to the landscape. (Omma Simma, S., 2021)

The long history of Sami presence on the site leaves traces, albeit very few (Umeå Kommun, 2024)(See mapping)

During autumn and winter months, when the snow falls and the climate becomes cold, the Sami move from the mountain area towards forested regions towards the coast, following the river as a guideline.

\_Fig. 12 Pre-industrial mapping, Umeå 1:100 000



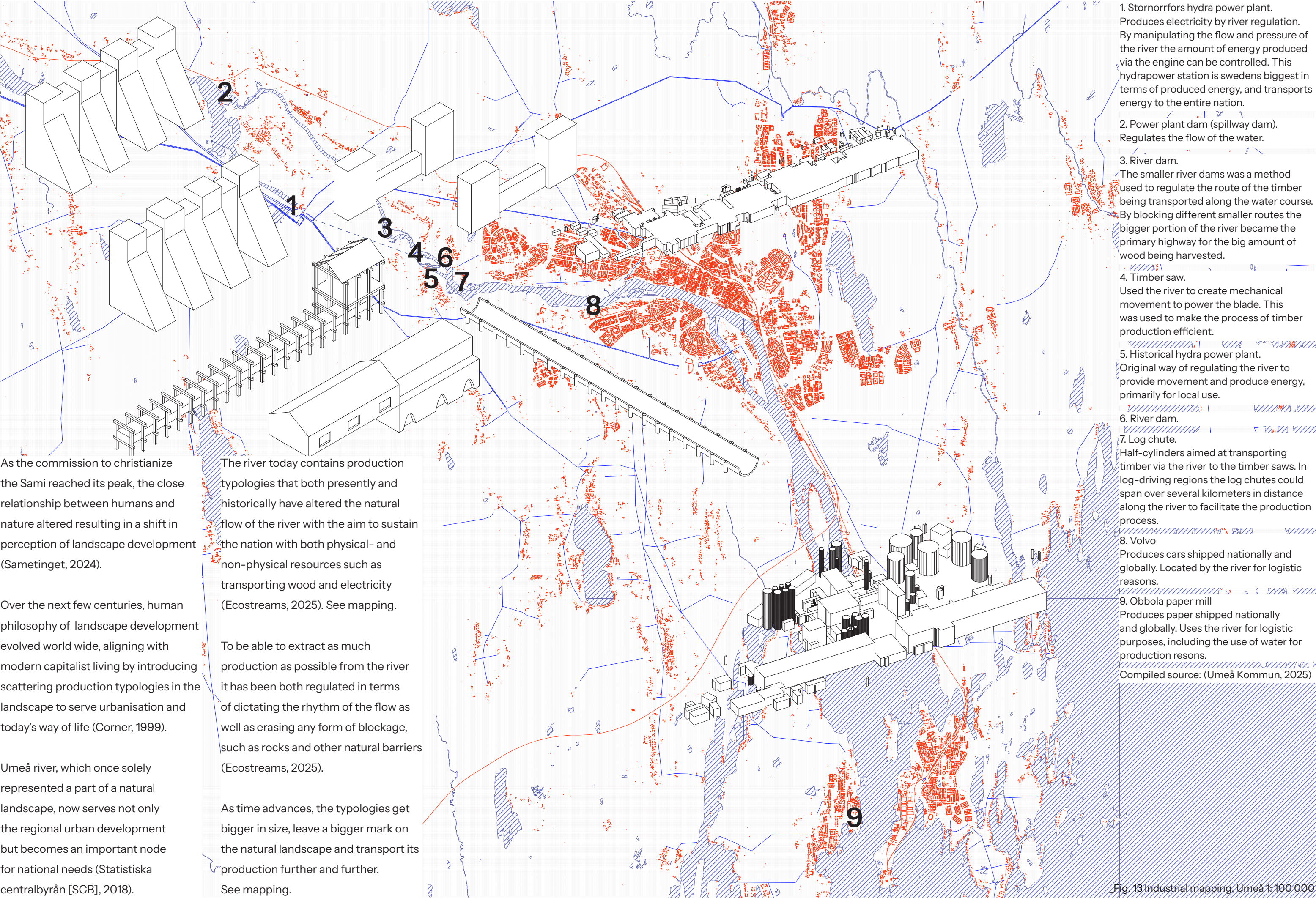


Fig. 13 Industrial mapping, Umeå 1:100 000





\_Fig. 14 Site photo/ Umeå river

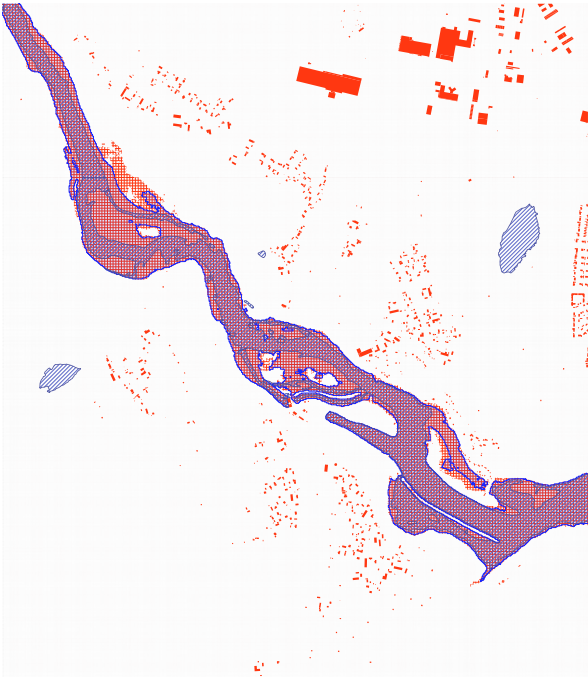
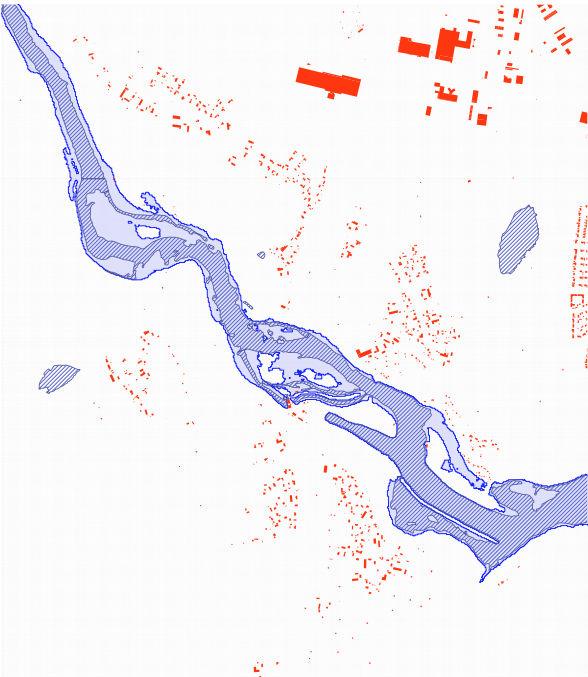
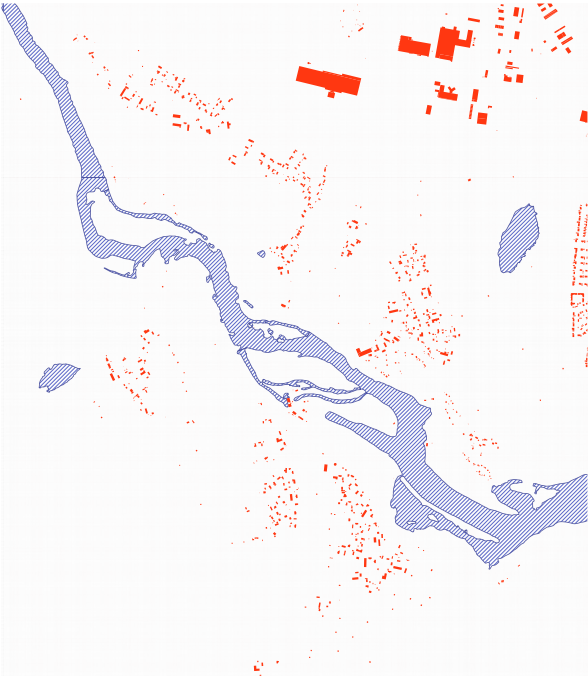


\_Fig. 15 Site photo/ Umeå river



The result of the historical human perception of landscape development is a current state where the river becomes a non-natural entity in the landscape, acting as a back of house to total national urbanisation. The outcome of our current state of mind is a regulated river whose typologies affect the natural state of the water. The implementation alters the stream of the river, making the natural land less resilient towards climate change. By historically and presently clearing the river from rocks to help the log-driving process, and by deciding the rhythm of the stream to produce electricity, the river in first hand flows faster than it normally would, serving total urbanisation but harming the river's natural resilience (Ecostreams, 2025).

The water no longer has any detours to take, losing its ability to act as a resilient node towards flooding and drought. The result of an artificial water course is a river that flows to fast, resulting in reduced habitat for local species, such as salmon and freshwater pearl mussel, that gets flushed away with the strong current that no longer contains rocks or other natural debris that serves as habitats and natural barriers for the flow of the river (Ecostreams, 2025).



\_Fig. 16-18 Flooding scenario in a selected area of the river.

\_Block 3

This chapter will introduce the manifesto of the project. The manifesto is a written argumentation that envisions a future scenario of the site, and further connects to the bigger discourse.



The landscape manifesto is a declaration for the landscape as a non-economic asset. It's the search for a shift in perception. It's a call for collective care.

*This thesis positions itself as a response to the present condition in which landscapes are treated as a back of house to total urbanisation, solely perceived as sites for economic exploitation. Drawing inspiration from Rem Koolhaas's Countryside, A Report (2020), this thesis recognizes the potential in reimagining supporting areas. In line with Countryside, A Report (2020), the thesis takes influence from the manifesting approach that envisions a future where supporting areas operate as testbeds for an altered future, turning away from the static planning emerging from industrialization.*

In a time where landscapes are primarily seen as sites for economic expansion, there is an opportunity to look beyond the phenomenon of physical exploitation. Contextualised in the site of Umeå river, the assortment of decisions made through time reveals a dominant state of mind - one that invites reflection on whether we can learn from regional history in reshaping our perception on landscape development.

The pre-industrial era captured the context of the landscape, where Sámi lived(s) within the rhythms of the land, not trying to regulate it by creating new flows and timelines. The philosophy of living with the land, and not apart from it is crucial. The human relationship to nature is one of care and respect, and in comparison to the industrial mindset, mankind is secondary to nature, involved in the care of the land we live off. However, the emergence of modern living via an industrialised society differentiated human contact with nature by implementing modern typologies as a border between ourselves and landscapes. As Frichot et al. (2022) mentions;

*“Left out of the plan, infrastructure was selectively edited out of the new urban utopia so that the new residential landscape could resemble a tranquil place for the full development of the modern individual”* (p.2)

This shift in perception; from the pre-industrial mindset of care to an understanding where landscapes act as a back of house to the city, on one hand left broken landscapes as well as disconnecting human relationship to what we

live off. The modern typologies presented via mapping supports urbanisation via industrial production and further national (and global) supply chains. This has created a state where we are detached from the land, relying on a network of distant landscapes to support our way of life. These typologies are solitary, non-human machines, scattering in the landscape for the good of somewhere else.

To shift this perception this thesis envisions a future where we transcend conventional frameworks and in a collaborative spirit restore the river to become a resilient entity within the landscape. A future scenario is one that turns away from the static planning of civilization, where the indigenous history of the site manifests as a progressive outlook on landscape development. The philosophy of living within the rhythms of the land, to nurse for nature and to emphasize the community aspect of caring for land stands as an antithesis to a fixed mass-produced future where landscapes are left broken at the expense of an urban utopia. An envisioned future is one where citizens are in immediate relationship with their environment, exposed to its conditions and further are enabled the access to contextual needs and solutions. A scenario where we transcend conventional production methods and instead in unison aim for a healthier environment for humans and species.

This manifesto is not in contrast to the city, not a contrast to modernisation. Yet it's a mapping of a current state of mind where we understand nature as secondary to us, and further landscapes as economic assets. It's an attempt, a strive, a search and a belief that a different state of perception is possible, where via collaborative methods a state of mind can change, and further the state of the river. It's hard to know exactly how our future will look, nor how we will get there. However, there is an importance in questioning human relationship to nature by reimagining its status. As Koolhaas states in Countryside, a report (2020);

*“The inevitability of Total Urbanization must be questioned, and the countryside must be rediscovered as a place to resettle, to stay alive; enthusiastic human presence must reanimate it with new imagination.”* (p.2)

\_Block 4

This chapter will introduce the design strategies. The strategies serves as a mediator between the manifesto and the design of the thesis. A how-to; make come true the manifesto.

The manifesto calls for a shift in perception, a questioning of a current ideal and a future that is different. The discourse encapsulates a general state, the big-picture problem that is further contextualised in the site of the thesis; Umeå river.

A concrete plan for river restoration in terms of technicality is one aspect of a healthier nature, but the crucial part of questioning landscapes as back of house to total urbanisation lies in the cultural and contextual aspect of the site.

To re-transform the river to a resilient entity, there is a need to collectively expose the state of the river as well as a physical solution. Taking reference from *Countryside, a report (2020)* by Rem Koolhaas, this thesis envisions a future where we transcend conventional frameworks and in a collaborative spirit works towards an alternative—and caring perception of our supporting areas, where in this case Umeå river becomes a resilient landscape entity.

To do so, the thesis turns to **prototyping** as a tool to envision, test and search for an altered future that turns away from the static planning methods and economic exploitation. To demonstrate the essence of the manifesto; that supporting areas should operate as testbeds for healthier land, the thesis turns to a method that rhymes well with the vision of the manifesto.

What is prototyping?

Prototyping is a tool to test ideas and methods before the “real” change. It turns away from the fixed mass-produced way of exploiting land, and tries via testing to meet a **need** of a site. The prototype is therefore born from the need of a place, and usually starts from an **initiative**; arised from either a site that needs development, or a need that requires a site (Göteborgs stad, SLU Tankesmedjan Movium, 2023).

It’s a expolarive tool that focuses on the process of a need, and a greater collaboration between stakeholders and users who are taking on new roles in the urban development process (Göteborgs stad, SLU Tankesmedjan Movium, 2023).

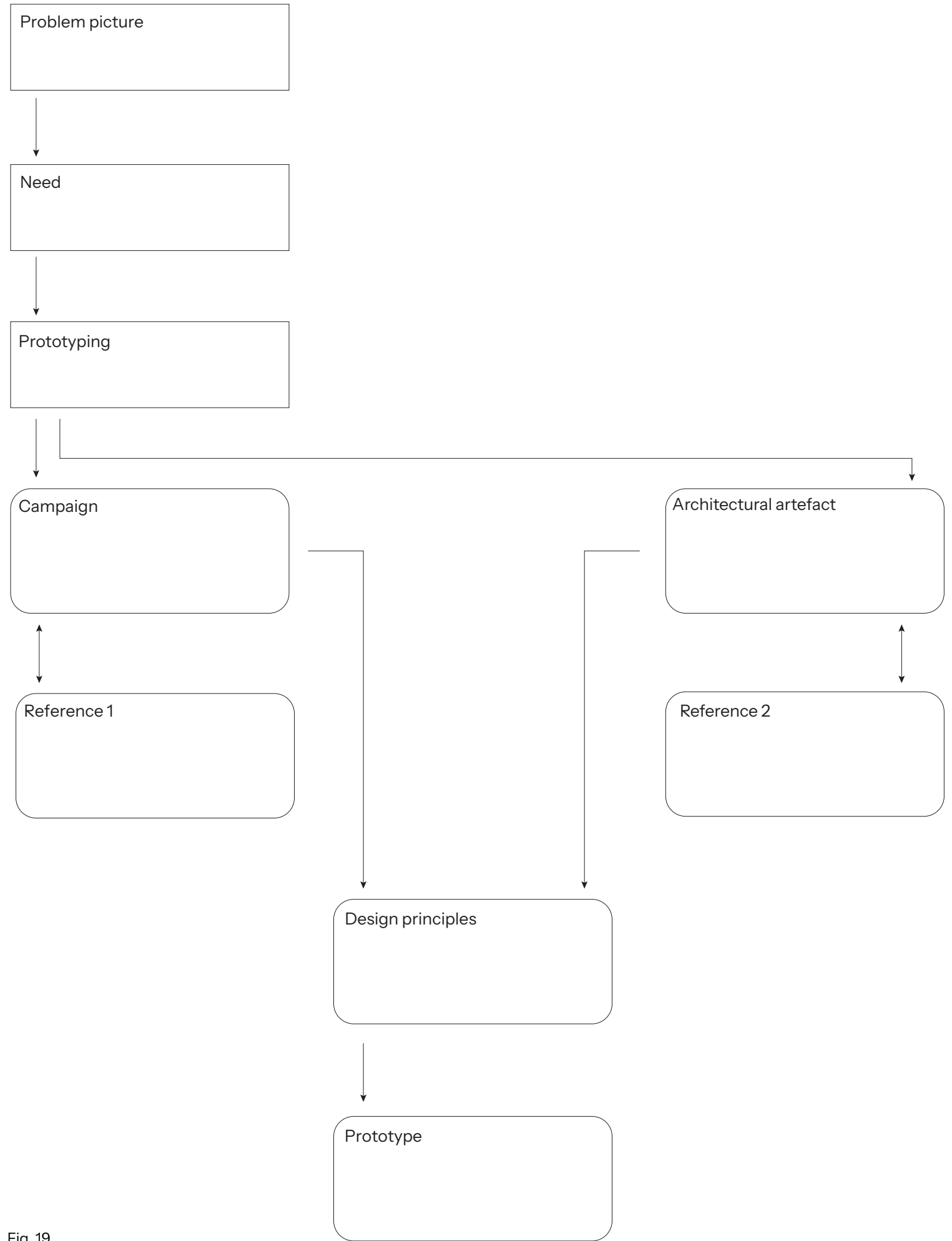
The prototyping process builds upon **three principles**; the first one being to work with temporary structures, the second one being to contextualise the prototype to the site and its needs, and the third one is to work within timeframes where the prototype has a start and a finish (Göteborgs stad, SLU Tankesmedjan Movium, 2023).

How will it be used in the thesis?

The thesis will apply the three principles that prototyping builds upon, to re-transform the river to a resilient entity and to question the status of landscapes as back of house to total urbanisation.

This primarily means that the identified need of the site, Umeå river, is to expose its state to the visitors and further enable a solution to its wellbeing. The idea is that the prototype will be a design in two aspects; meaning an **architectural artefact** as well as a **campaign**. This to capture the need of the site that is born from, as stated; an initiative; arised from either a site that needs development, or a need that requires a site.

To contextualise the prototype to the site and to dictate the timeframe of the project, the thesis will turn to contextualised references presented further on. These references will frame the design principles of the prototype.



\_Fig. 19  
Process diagram

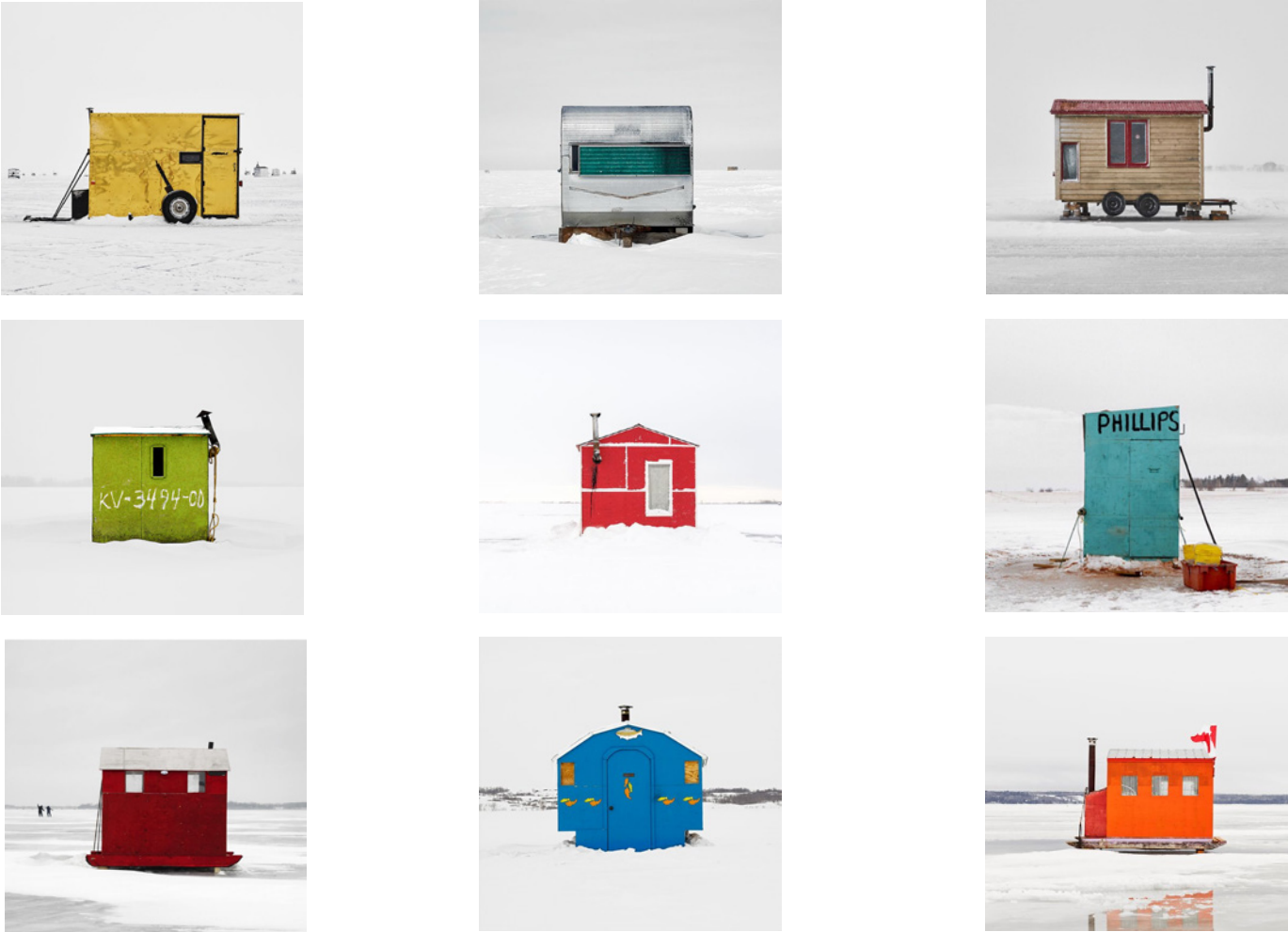




\_Fig. 20 Girjegumpi; the Sámi architecture library.  
L. Ghinitoui, 2023. With permission.

**Girjegumpi; the Sámi architecture library** by Joar Nango

Girjegumpi; the Sámi architecture library by Joar Nango is an exhibition in the form of a structure, source of knowledge and social platform that speaks on architecture by indigenous cultures. The exhibition shines a light on the importance of indigenous philosophy in today’s architectural discourse; regarding working collaboratively, adapting to the changing climate and respecting the land we live off. The Sámi architecture library is a traveling structure being exhibited all over the world - currently located in the nordic pavilion in Venice.



\_Fig. 21-29 Ice huts.  
R.Johnson, 2019. With permission.

**Ice huts**

Photo compilation by Richard Johnson

Ice huts are, in this case Canadian, communities that gather every winter around fishing. It’s small nomadic structures that gather in clusters to form social platforms around a given activity.

The thesis does not draw inspiration from the architectural expression of the exhibition. Yet, to contextualise the prototype to the region and to the river, the thesis finds relevance in drawing inspiration from the philosophy of The Sámi architecture library when it comes to imitating the nomadic- and promoting aspect of the exhibition.

It’s unique, simple and colorful structures that become small art-installations in nature. The ice huts serve as protection and in its simplicity uses few materials, often recycled and assembled by the user itself. The thesis takes inspiration from the structures when it comes to the structural mobile aspect of the huts as well as the simplicity of material use,

emphasising roughness and reuse in contrast to the static prefabricated harshness of industrialisation. The thesis draws inspiration from the architectural expression of the huts, referring to the playfulness, the simplicity in structure and the connection in culture that the site of the thesis and the huts have in common.



As stated, the prototype of the thesis will be a design in two aspects; an **architectural artefact** as well as a **campaign**.

This will communicate the need of the site that is born from, as stated; an initiative; arised from either a site that needs development, or a need that requires a site.

The prototype will become a architectural artefact where a **need** is provided a **physical space**. The need being to expose the current state of the river, how to restore it and further alter the discourse of human perception on landscape development.

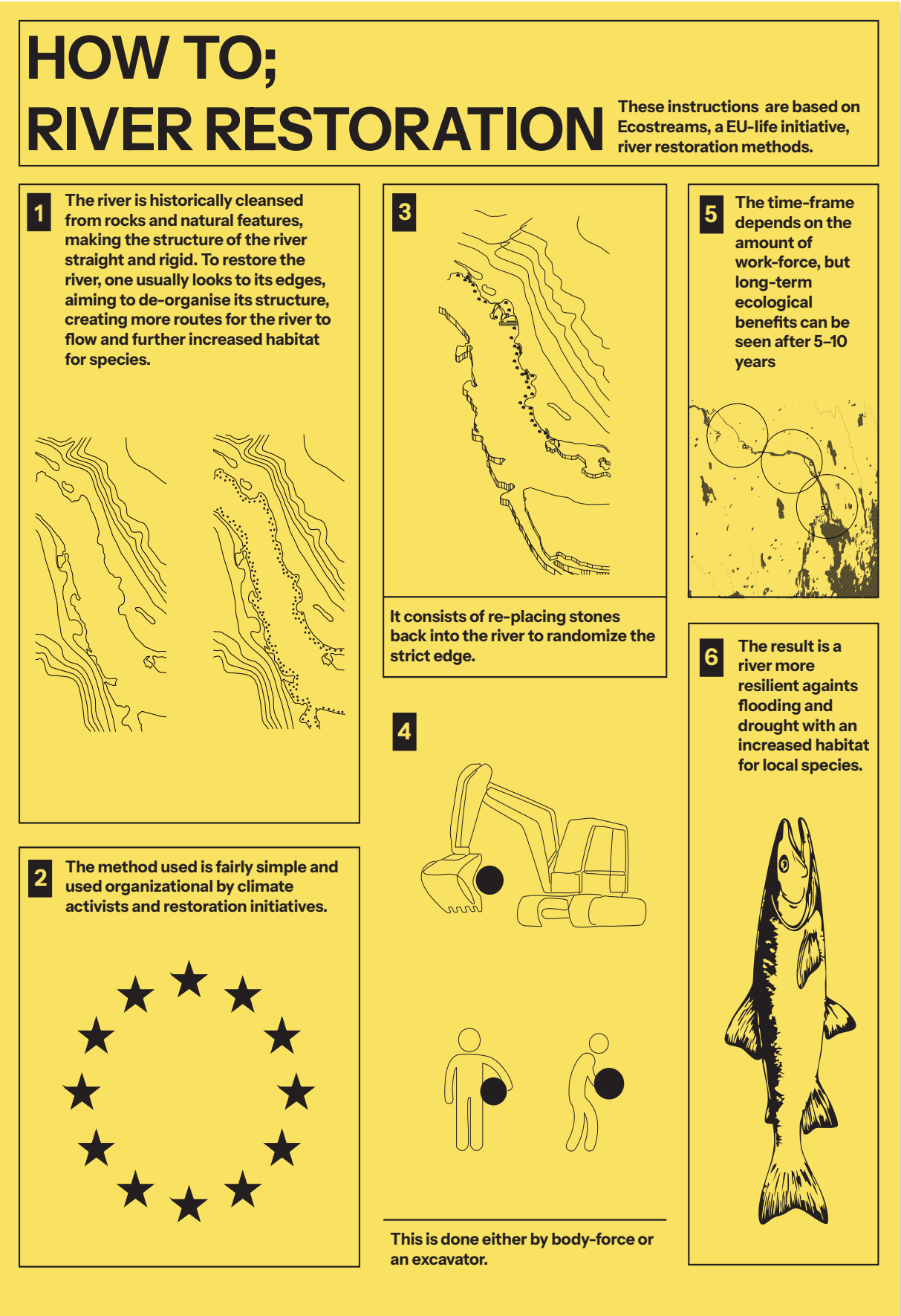
The design principles of the prototype will as mentioned draw inspiration from earlier presented references. Both regarding the architectural expression in terms of playfulness and simplicity, as well as promoting a message to its surrounding. In this way, the prototype will become a social platform, source of knowledge and a campaing all at once.

The identified need is, as specified, to expose the state of the river, how to restore it and further alter the discourse of human perception on landscape development.

As stated in the prologue; it's within other professions to execute the restorative work of the river in terms of technicality. However, this is work that needs to be exposed within the frames of the prototype, to touch upon the crucial part of the message/ campaign; questioning landscapes as back of house to total urbanisation. The restorative work creates a physical before and after of the river and its condition. It also becomes a central part of the campaign of the prototype.

The prototype becomes a central physical node, to a bigger workforce that is the initiative; to expose, find solutions and alter our mindset on landscape development.

To present to the visitor how restorative work physically is excecuted, the thesis turns to already established initiatives that restores nordic rivers. To understand the procedure (see figure 30).

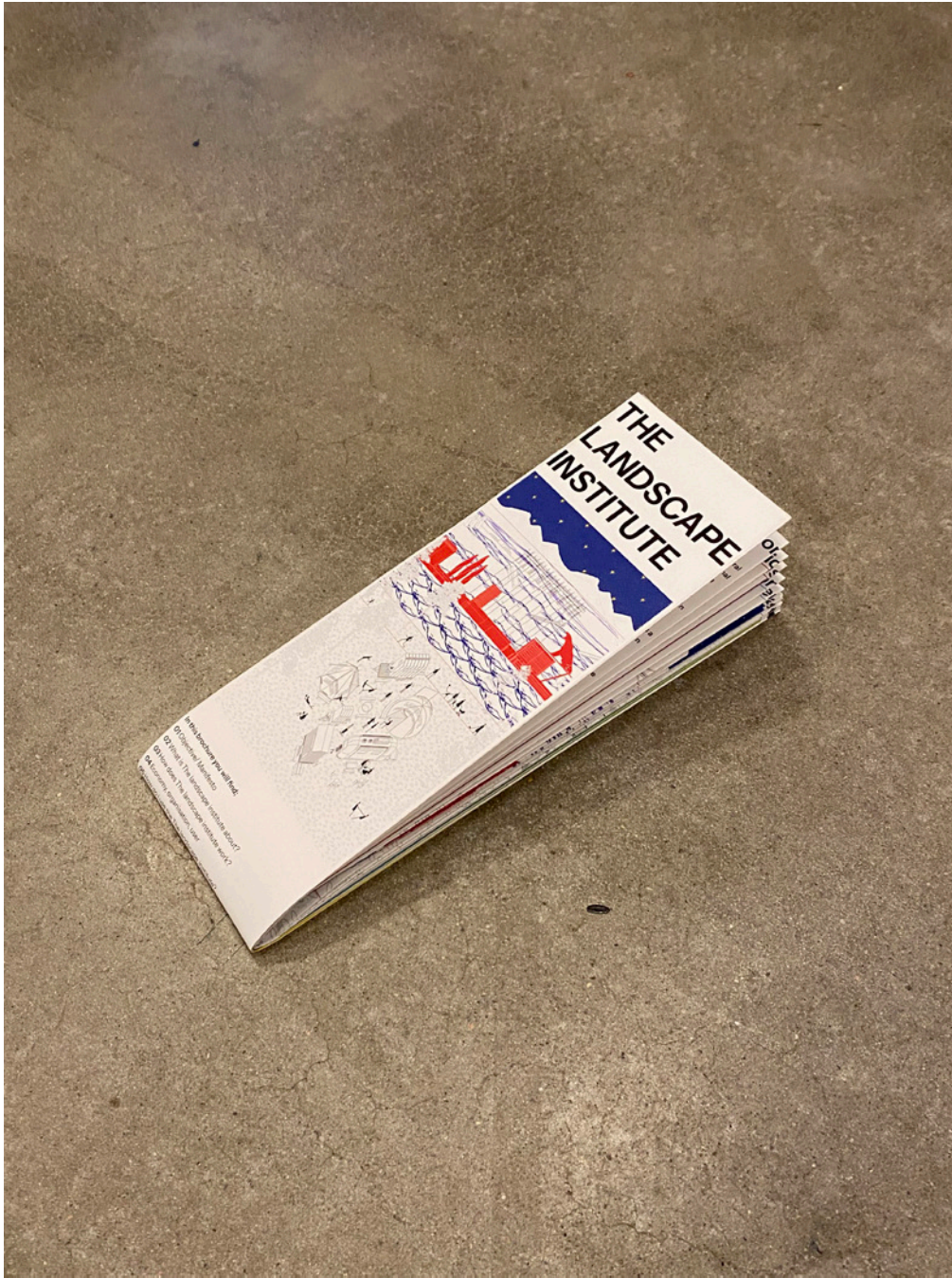


\_Fig. 30

\_Block 5

This chapter will introduce the design proposal of the master thesis. The design proposal is a prototype basing on earlier presented information.

The prototype will be presented in the form of a brochure as if you are visitor to the structure for the first time. The brochure in itself is a form of prototype.



\_Fig. 31



Welcome to...

# The landscape institute

The landscape institute is a nomadic architectural hub that wishes to serve as a vessel of exchange between citizens – a space of sharing opinions and ideas in direct contact with nature.

The landscape institute is a prototypical traveling structure, inviting you as a visitor to question, discuss, express, unwind, eat, learn, read, search, test and other verbes.

In this brochure you will find;

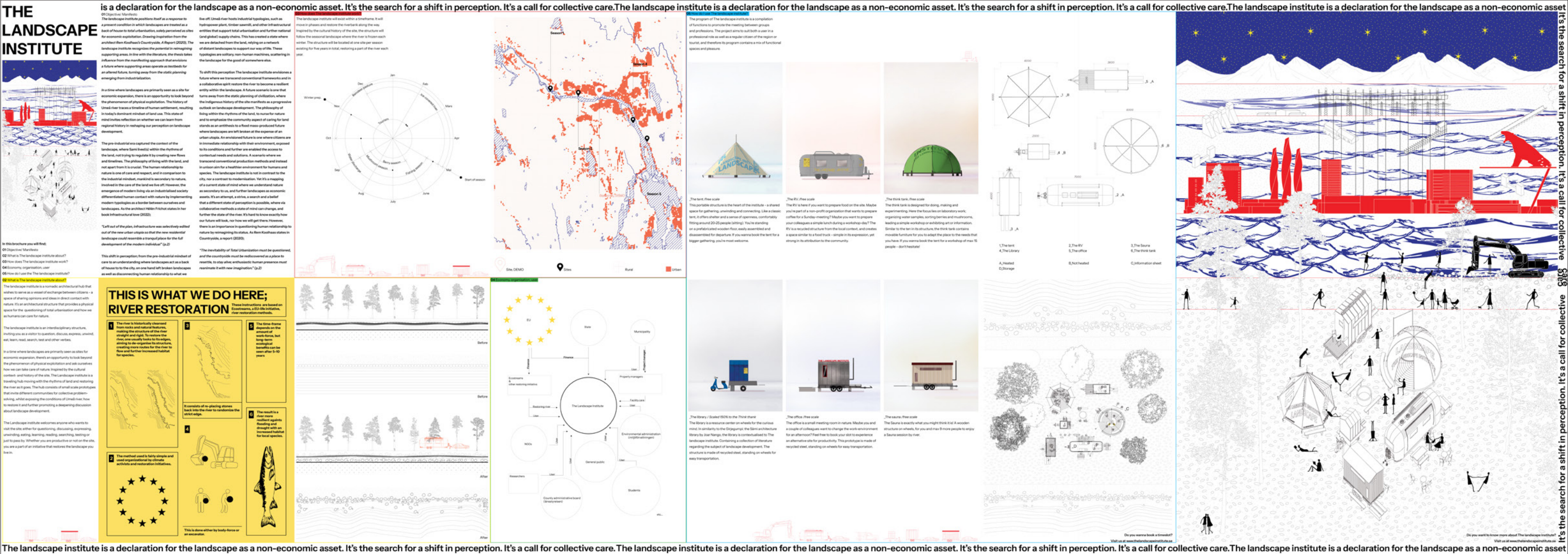
01 Objective/ Manifesto

02 What is The landscape institute about?

03 How does The landscape institute work?

04 Economy, organisation, user

05 How do I use the The landscape institute?





The landscape institute is a declaration for the landscape as a non-economic asset. It's the search for a shift in perception. It's a call for collective care.

*The landscape institute positions itself as a response to a present condition in which landscapes are treated as a back of house to total urbanisation, solely perceived as sites for economic exploitation. Drawing inspiration from the architect Rem Koolhaas's Countryside, A Report (2020), The landscape institute recognizes the potential in reimagining supporting areas. In line with the literature, the thesis takes influence from the manifesting approach that envisions a future where supporting areas operate as testbeds for an altered future, turning away from the static planning emerging from industrialization.*

In a time where landscapes are primarily seen as a site for economic expansion, there is an opportunity to look beyond the phenomenon of physical exploitation. The history of Umeå river traces a timeline of human settlement, resulting in today's dominant mindset of land use. This state of mind invites reflection on whether we can learn from regional history in reshaping our perception on landscape development.

The pre-industrial era captured the context of the landscape, where Sami lived(s) within the rhythms of the land, not trying to regulate it by creating new flows and timelines. The philosophy of living with the land, and not apart from it is crucial. The human relationship to nature is one of care and respect, and in comparison to the industrial mindset, mankind is secondary to nature, involved in the care of the land we live off. However, the emergence of modern living via an industrialised society differentiated human contact with nature by implementing modern typologies as a border between ourselves and landscapes. The architect Hélène Frichot formulates in her book Infrastructural love (2022);

*“Left out of the plan, infrastructure was selectively edited out of the new urban utopia so that the new residential landscape could resemble a tranquil place for the full development of the modern individual” (p.2)*

This shift in perception; from the pre-industrial mindset of care to an understanding where landscapes act as a back of house to to the city, on one hand left broken landscapes as well as disconnecting human relationship to what we

live off. Umeå river hosts industrial typologies, such as hydropower plant, timber sawmill, and other infrastructural entities that support total urbanisation and further national (and global) supply chains. This has created a state where we are detached from the land, relying on a network of distant landscapes to support our way of life. These typologies are solitary, non-human machines, scattering in the landscape for the good of somewhere else.

To shift this perception The landscape institute envisions a future where we transcend conventional frameworks and in a collaborative spirit restore the river landscape to become a resilient entity within the landscape. A future scenario is one that turns away from the static planning of civilization, where the indigenous history of the site manifests as a progressive outlook on landscape development. The philosophy of living within the rhythms of the land, to nurse for nature and to emphasize the community aspect of caring for land stands as an antithesis to a fixed mass-produced future where landscapes are left broken at the expense of an urban utopia. An envisioned future is one where citizens are in immediate relationship with their environment, exposed to its conditions and further are enabled the access to contextual needs and solutions. A scenario where we transcend conventional production methods and instead in unison aim for a healthier environment for humans and species. The landscape institute is not in contrast to the city, nor a contrast to modernisation. Yet it's a mapping of a current state of mind where we understand nature as secondary to us, and further landscapes as economic assets. It's an attempt, a strive, a search and a belief that a different state of perception is possible, where via collaborative methods a state of mind can change, and further the state of the river. It's hard to know exactly how our future will look, nor how we will get there. However, there is an importance in questioning human relationship to nature by reimagining its status. As Rem Koolhaas states in Countryside, a report (2020);

*“The inevitability of Total Urbanization must be questioned, and the countryside must be rediscovered as a place to resettle, to stay alive; enthusiastic human presence must reanimate it with new imagination.” (p.2)*

02 What is The landscape institute about?

The landscape institute is a nomadic architectural hub that wishes to serve as a vessel of exchange between citizens – a space of sharing opinions and ideas in direct contact with nature. It’s an architectural structure that provides a physical space for the questioning of total urbanisation and how we as humans can care for nature.

The landscape institute is an interdisciplinary structure, inviting you as a visitor to question, discuss, express, unwind, eat, learn, read, search, test and other verbes. In a time where landscapes are primarily seen as sites for economic expansion, there’s an opportunity to look beyond the phenomenon of physical exploitation and ask ourselves how we can take care of nature.

Inspired by the cultural context- and history of the site, The Landscape institute is a traveling hub moving with the rhythms of land and restoring the river as it goes. The hub consists of small scale prototypes that invite different communities for collective problem-solving, whilst exposing the conditions of Umeå river, how to restore it and further promoting a deepening discussion about landscape development.

The Landscape institute welcomes anyone who wants to visit the site; either for questioning, discussing, expressing, unwinding, eating, learning, reading, searching, testing or just to pass by. Whether you are productive or not on the site, you are a part of an initiative that restores the landscape you live in.

THIS IS WHAT WE DO HERE;  
RIVER RESTORATION

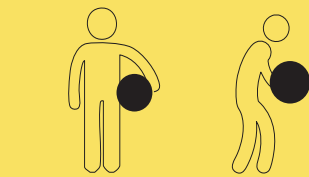
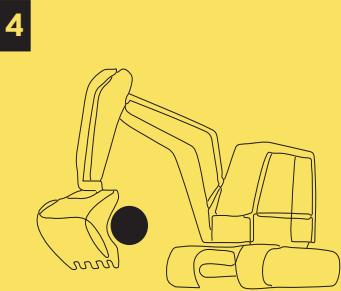
These instructions are based on Ecostreams, a EU-life initiative, river restoration methods.

1 The river is historically cleansed from rocks and natural features, making the structure of the river straight and rigid. To restore the river, one usually looks to its edges, aiming to de-organise its structure, creating more routes for the river to flow and further increased habitat for species.



5 The time-frame depends on the amount of work-force, but long-term ecological benefits can be seen after 5-10 years

It consists of re-placing stones back into the river to randomize the strict edge.



This is done either by body-force or an excavator.

2 The method used is fairly simple and used organizational by climate activists and restoration initiatives.

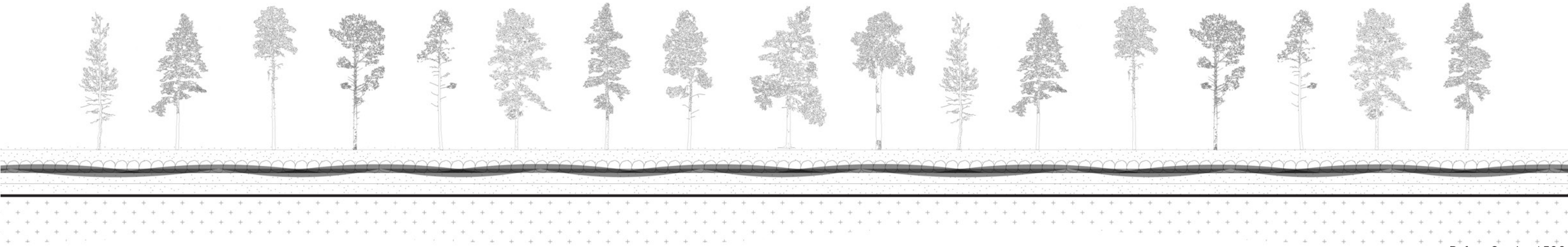


6 The result is a river more resilient againts flooding and drought with an increased habitat for local species.

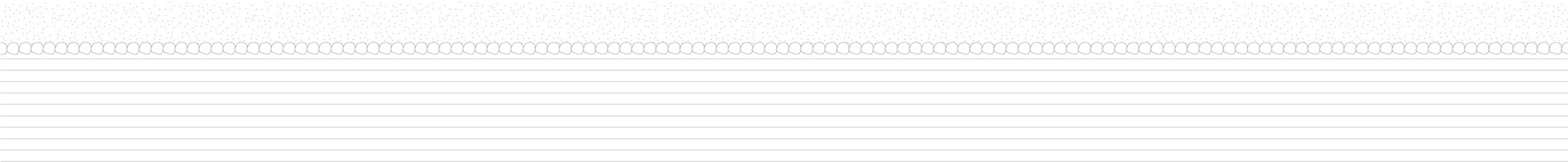


\_Fig. 33

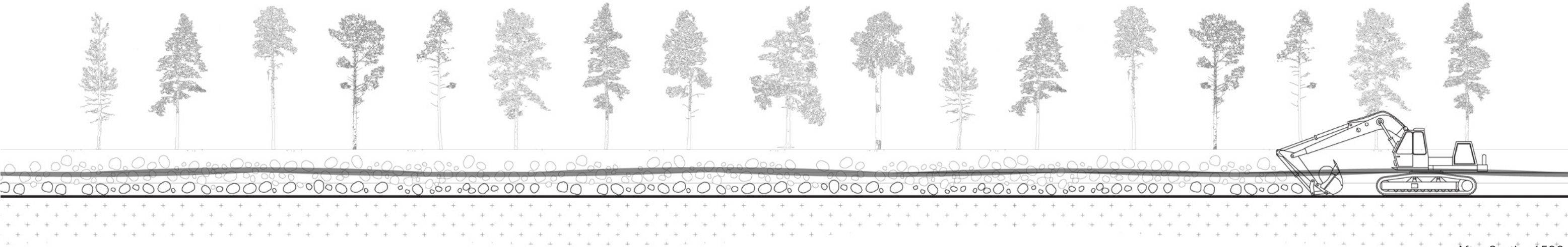




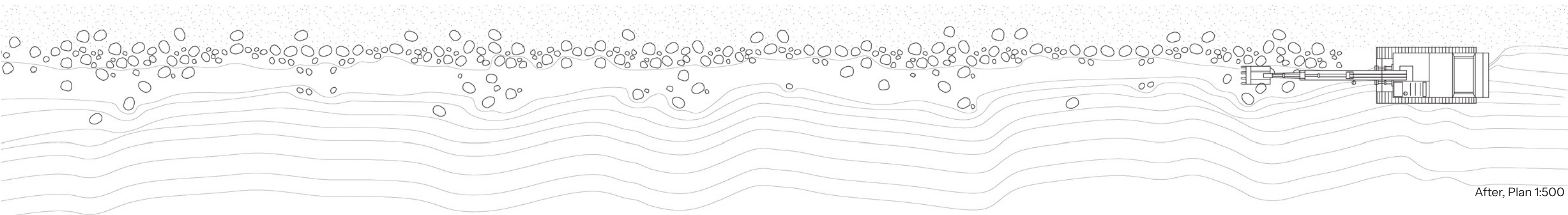
Before, Section 1:500



Before, Plan 1:500



After, Section 1:500



After, Plan 1:500

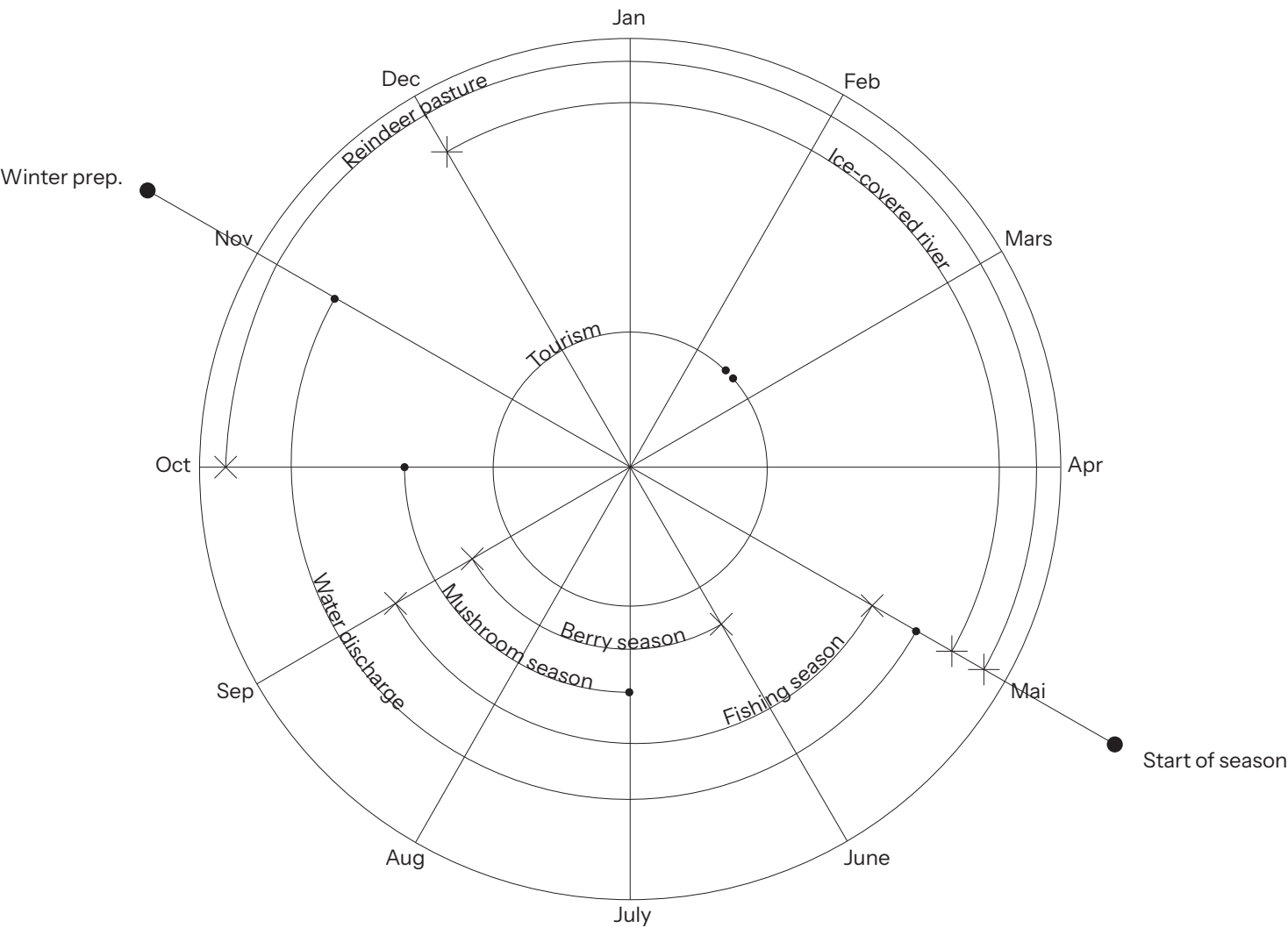


03 How does The landscape institute work?

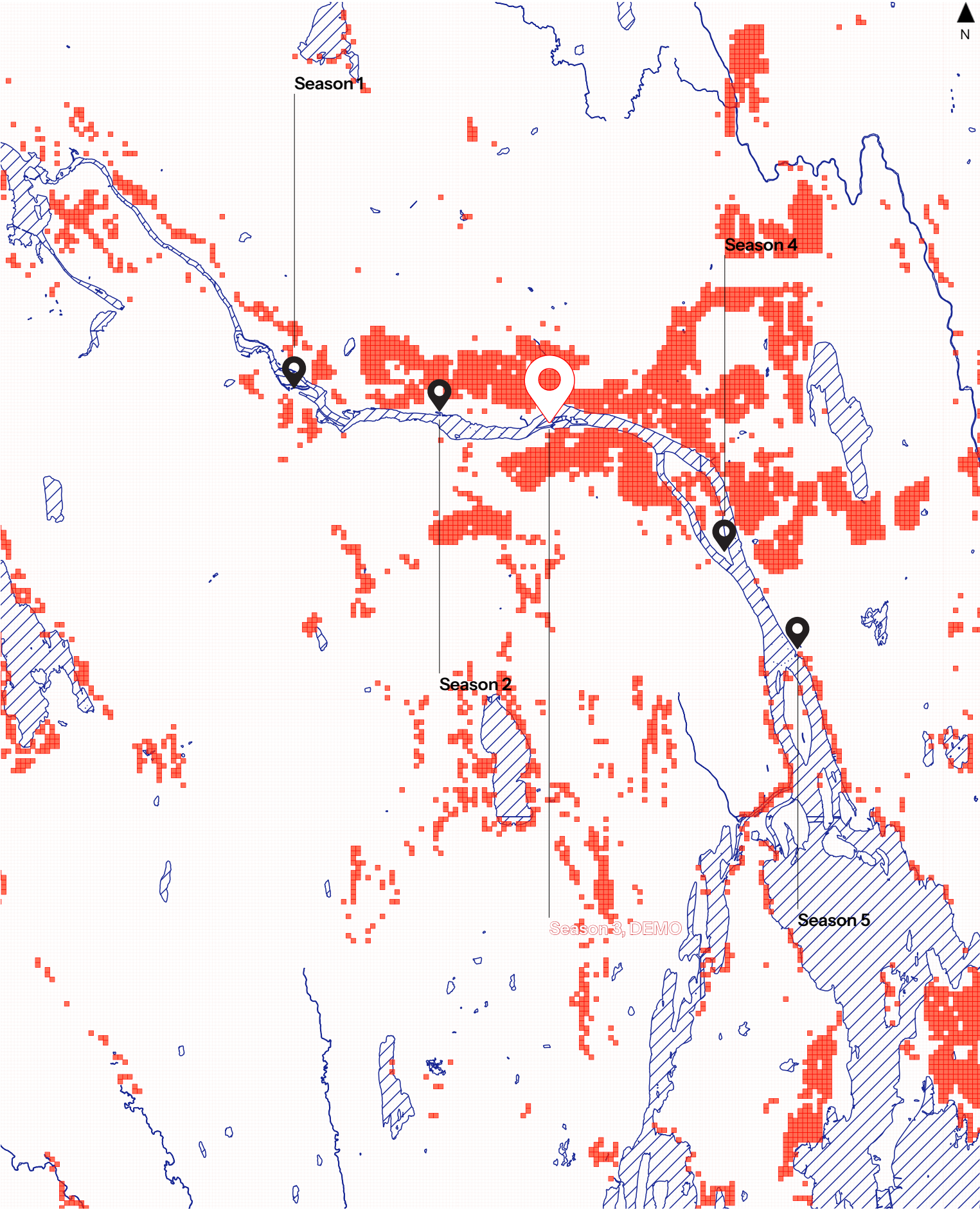
The landscape institute will exist within a timeframe. It will move in phases and restore the riverbank along the way. Inspired by the cultural history of the site, the structure will follow the seasonal landscape where the river is frozen each winter. The structure will be located at one site per season existing for five years in total, restoring a part of the river each year. This timeframe refers to the prototyping aspect of a five year temporary permit (Boverket, 2025), as well as the stated fact of the 5-10 years frame for ecological benefits of river restoration.

The location of the prototype is dictated after three principles; The location has to be close to the river. The site needs to be connected to the active riverfront walkway. The site has to provide the ability to drive The landscape institute to it.

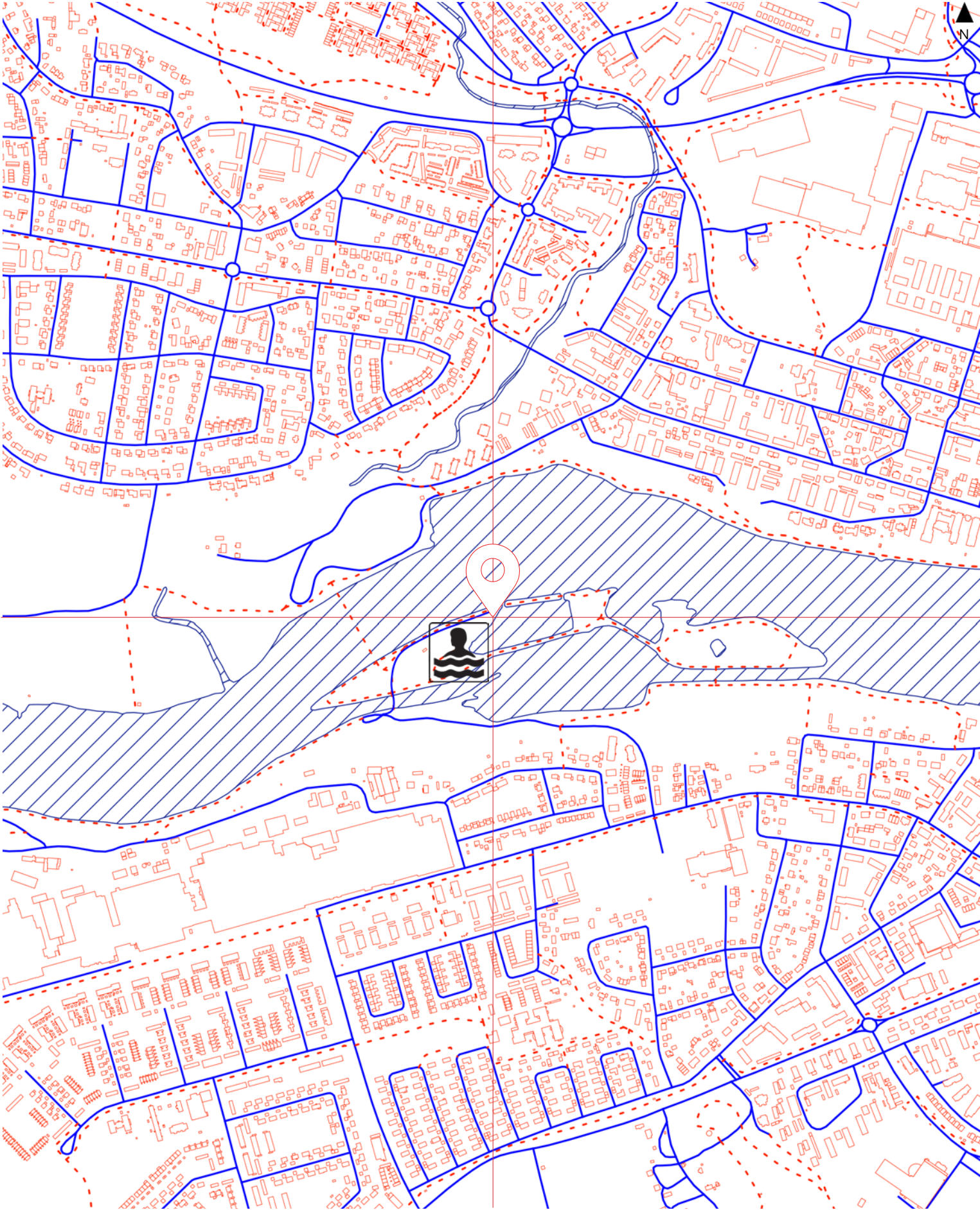
The project is disassebled/moved each mai, when the snow has melted. The project is then driven by cars and trucks to the new location where the simplicity of the prototypes makes the move possible thanks to the structure of the entities. The Landscape institute is evolving and adaptable, meaning that in wintertime when the level of snow is high, the tangible and-unheated structures can be taken away, making the project different depending on the season. The landscape institute will further be presented on one of the five sites.







\_Fig. 36



\_Fig. 37



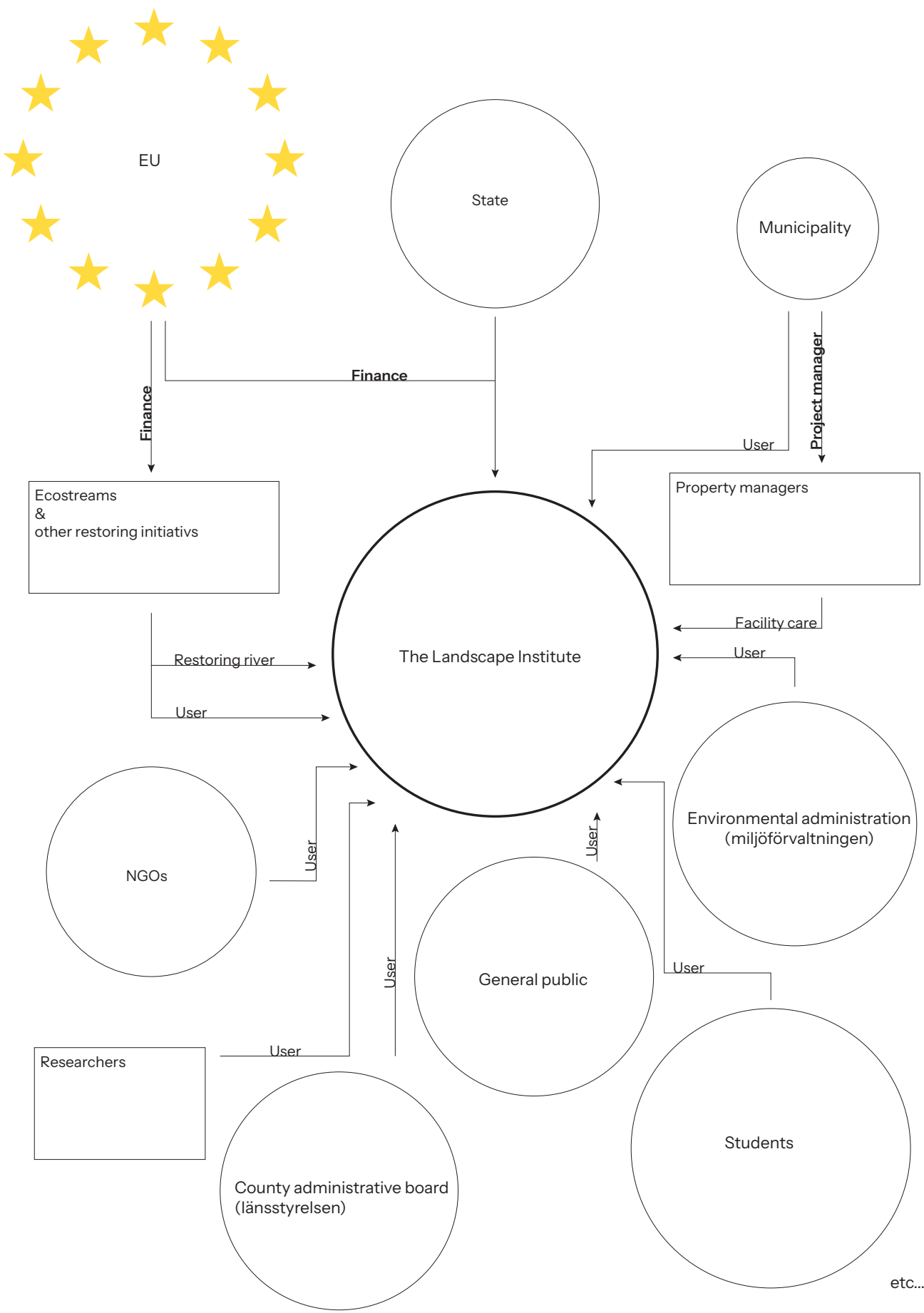
04 Economy, organisation, user

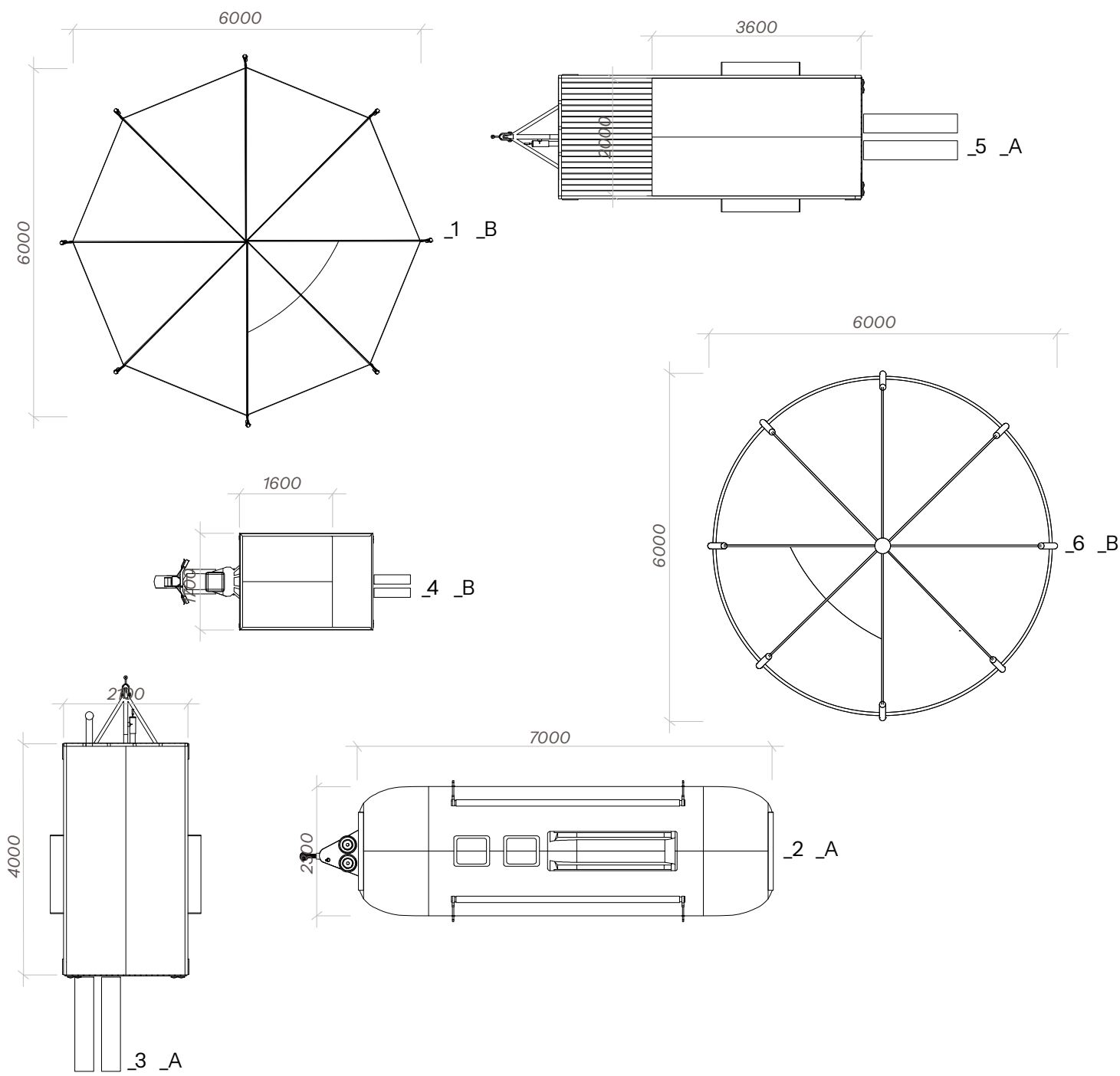
The landscape institute is a spatialisation of something more than just built entities. It's a representation for connected communities and collective problem-solving. The project encapsulates many different stakeholders and users, and draws attention to the interdisciplinary meeting. The landscape institute therefore works regenerative in two senses, both regarding the physical restoration of the river as well as promoting local and regional education and resilience.

A relevance therefore lies in the organisation of the operation. The landscape institute draws inspiration from earlier presented references, as well as organisations behind river restorative initiatives, such as Ecostreams. Among these projects some are financially supported by EU-life, a European Union's funding program whose goal is to support projects that contribute to the EU's environmental and climate objectives. The thesis argues for a similar approach in support, and argues for an organisation of the projects as presented in the figure. (See figure 38)

05 How do I use The landscape institute?

The program of The landscape institute is a compilation of functions to promote the meeting between groups and professions. The project aims to suit both a user in a professional role as well as a regular citizen of the region or tourist, and therefore its program contains a mix of functional spaces and pleasure. See program further on. (See figure 39)





1\_The tent  
4\_The Library

2\_The RV  
5\_The office

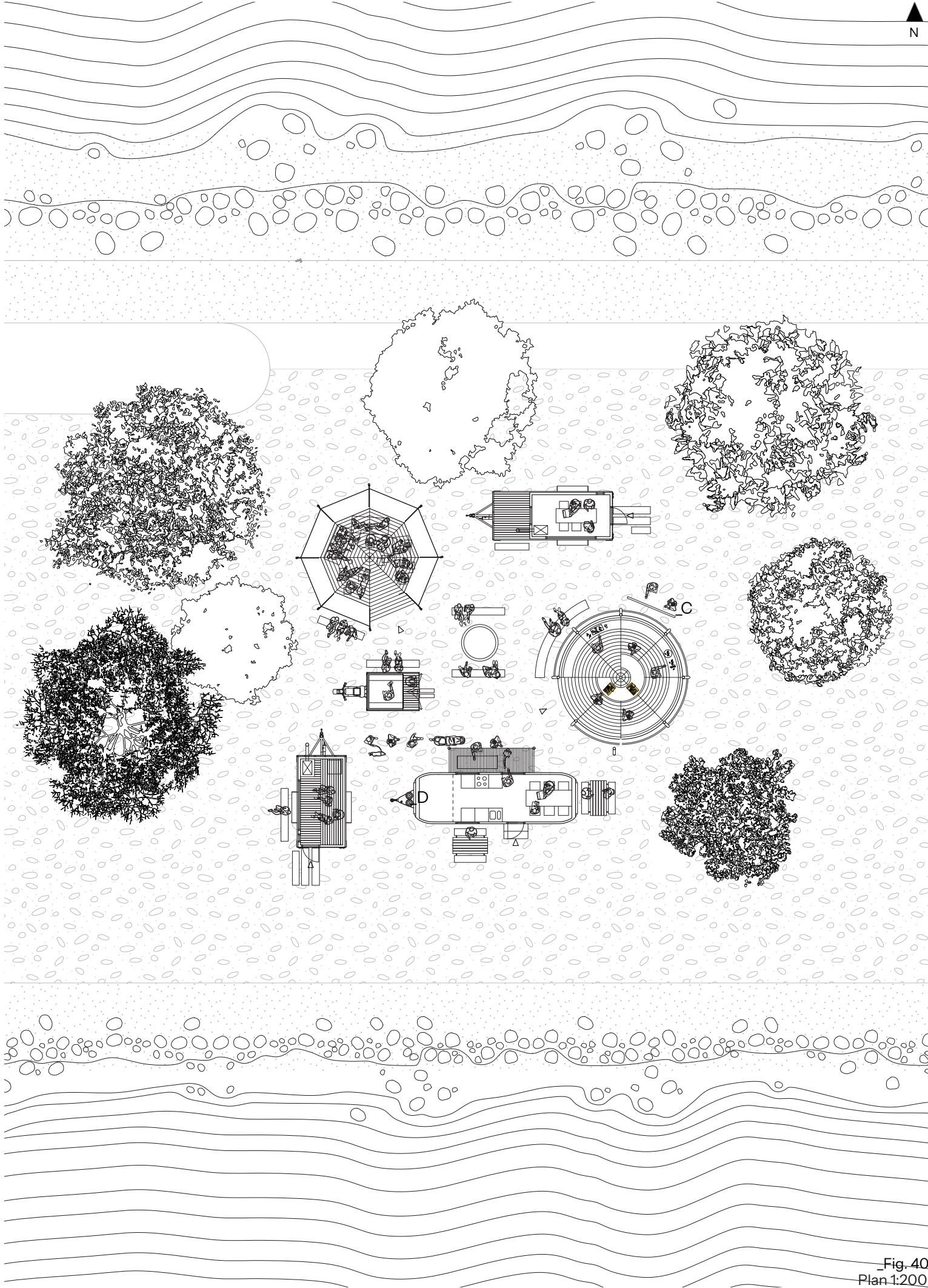
3\_The Sauna  
6\_The think tank

A\_Heated  
D\_Storage

B\_Not heated

C\_Information sheet

\_Fig. 39  
Plan 1:100



\_Fig. 40  
Plan 1:200  
62





\_The tent /free scale

\_Fig. 41

This portable structure is the heart of the institute – a shared space for gathering, unwinding and connecting. Like a classic tent, it offers shelter and a sense of openness, comfortably fitting around 20-25 people (sitting). You’re standing on a prefabricated wooden floor, easily assembled and disassembled for departure. If you wanna book the tent for a bigger gathering, you’re most welcome.



\_The RV /free scale

\_Fig. 42

The RV is here if you want to prepare food on the site. Maybe you’re part of a non-profit organization that wants to prepare coffee for a Sunday-meeting? Maybe you want to prepare your colleagues a simple lunch during a workshop-day? The RV is a recycled structure from the local context, and creates a space similar to a food truck – simple in its expression, yet strong in its attribution to the community.

The RV also contains a storage unit; some extra gear that you might need on site. Shovels, rakes, firewood and folding chairs etc.



\_The think tank /free scale

The think tank is designed for doing, making and experimenting. Here the focus lies on laboratory work; organizing water samples, sorting berries and mushrooms, leading a simple workshop or exhibiting art or information. Similar to the ten in its structure, the think tank contains movable furniture for you to adapt the place to the needs that you have. If you wanna book the tent for a workshop of max 15 people - don't hesitate!

\_Fig. 43



\_The library/ Scaled 150% to the Think thank.

The library is a resource center on wheels for the curious mind. In similarity to the Girjegumpi; the Sámi architecture library by Joar Nango, the library is contextualised to The landscape institute. Containing a collection of literature regarding the subject of landscape development. The structure is made of recycled steel, standing on wheels for easy transportation.

*Scaled 150% to the Think thank.*

\_Fig. 44





\_The office /free scale

\_Fig. 45

The office is a small meeting room in nature. Maybe you and a couple of colleagues want to change the work-environment for an afternoon? Feel free to book your slot to experience an alternative site for productivity. This prototype is made of recycled steel, standing on wheels for easy transportation.

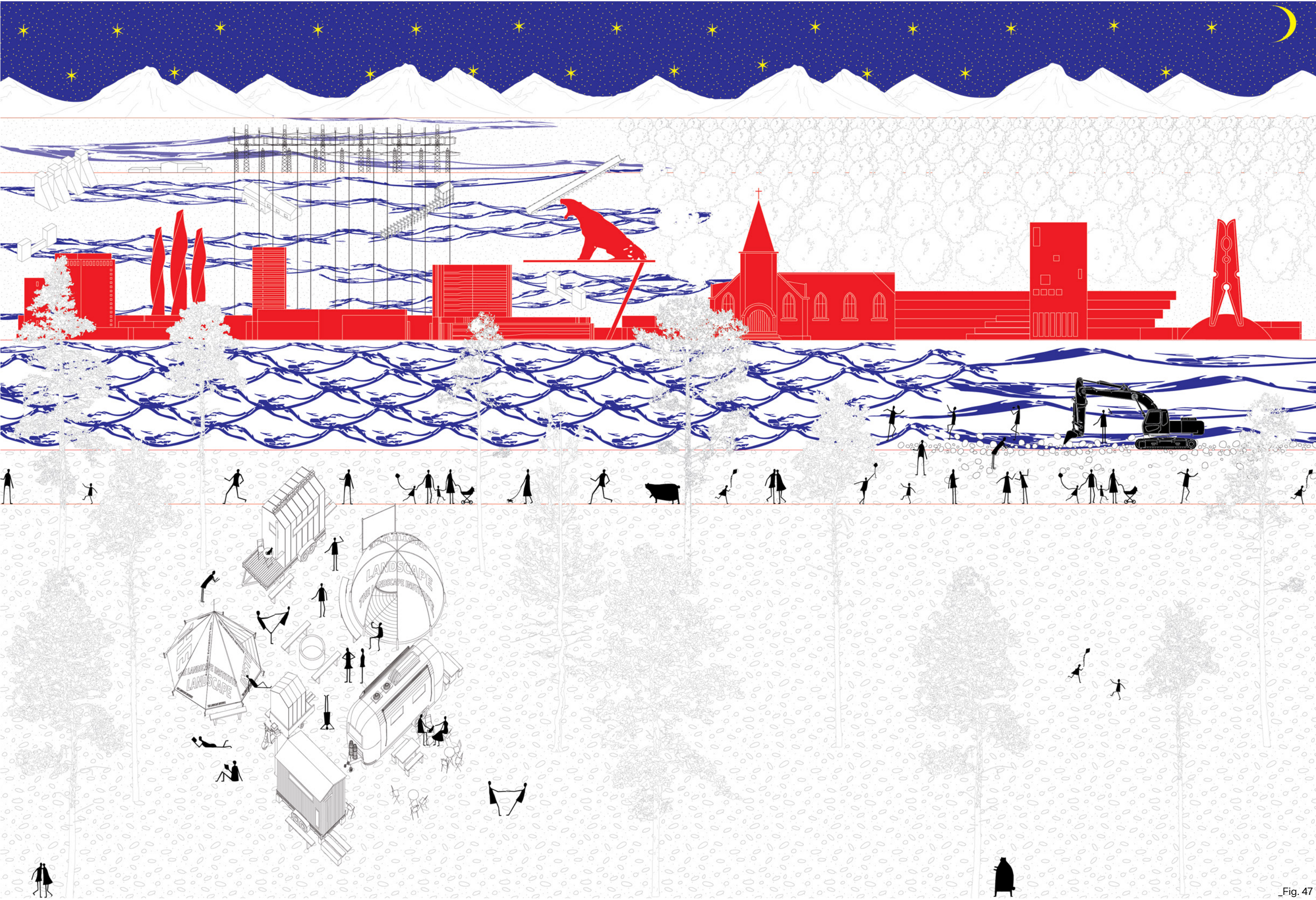


\_The sauna /free scale

\_Fig. 46

The Sauna is exactly what you might think it is! A wooden structure on wheels, for you and max 9 more people to enjoy a Sauna session by river.





\_Fig. 47

\_Fig. 48 Axonometry 1:100 70



This chapter will introduce the discussion of the project.

This thesis started from the idea of exploring the role of the landscape as a secondary entity to total urbanisation. Departing from a present condition where nature is secondary to the city. Landscapes become an economic asset for human exhilaration in urbanised areas, whilst being exploited leaving damaged ecosystems and artificial land. To investigate this matter, this thesis chose Umeå river as a subject of investigation, a natural entity in the landscape that embodies a timeline of human perspective of landscape development.

The thesis was conducted in five blocks. Background, site, manifesto, strategies and The landscape institute. The five blocks became each one a strategic tool to communicate subject, context, positioning, design principles and the final design. The theory chosen to support the thesis discusses well the positioning of the architect in an contemporary era, where our position of departure is to frame a future that is uncertain. This means that the narrative we embody when

designing is speculative, departing from a vision on how we would want the future to look like. The manifesto becomes a tool where a clear stance is possible to make, resulting in a design that focuses primarily on a philosophical standpoint, a statement to communicate, rather than a rigid set of conventional design principles. The method of prototyping speaks well with the opposing message that the manifesto embodies. Alongside the chosen reference projects, the method presents a set of tools where the framing of the final design becomes free yet departing from an established design method.

So, how can architecture create conditions of care for nature in future societal development? Departing from the prologue of the thesis and further discussed in the strategies, a concrete plan for river restoration in terms of technicality is one aspect of a healthier nature, but the crucial part of questioning landscapes as back of house to total urbanisation lies in the cultural and contextual aspect of

the site. River restoration methods are, as presented, already in use meaning it is knowledge we already have. Yet, the chains of supply from landscapes to cities remain the same. By enabling a physical place where a subject, a philosophy, a statement can be represented is a tool to reach and engage in interdisciplinary conversation and further alter a bigger discourse. Similar to the reference project Girjegumpi; the Sámi architecture library by Joar Nango, The Landscape institute becomes a physical structure where a need is provided a space. The need being to expose the state of the river, how to restore it and further discuss the future of land. As stated in the manifesto, this thesis is not in direct contrast to the city nor modernisation, meaning that the thesis in itself does not have the answer to how our geography in detail should be organised in the future. However, the thesis argues that the architect can create the conditions for these discussions by enabling physical places for reflection. This also regards the second question of the thesis;

How can a physical space be designed to communicate, restore and enrich the landscape, rather than exploit it? A crucial part of not exploiting land lies of course in its physical structure, meaning to work with temporary, non-static, non-grounded structures, including the reuse of material and planning for a simplicity in energy use etc. Something that The landscape institute takes into account by using the method of prototyping. However, a crucial part of the method itself, is what the thesis calls the campaign. This means that a prototype becomes both an architectural artefact as well a pillar of communication. The structure in its physical self does of course not give back to the land, yet the initiative embodied within it does. The landscape institute in a way becomes an interactive exhibition, where the visitor can decide to engage in it or not. The structure becomes a mediator between a problem picture and how to solve it, further enabling deepening discussions.

An unexpected result of the thesis is the storytelling of the five phases. Trying to bring together background, site, problem picture, positioning and further strategies and final design was a challenge. Approaching big, somewhat complex questions, required emphasis on the narrative. The manifesto and the final design presented as a brochure are methods of representation that were born from the need of clear and direct communication of what the thesis manages. These methods also become a prototype in my process and further a mediator between scales, where big national (and global) systems are discussed in a small scale prototype, turning to the human perspective and opposing the fixed, big, non-human typologies, serving total urbanisation.



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Fig.2  
Koch. A. (1805). Ideal Landscape with Rainbow [Painting]  
*Beauty redeemed : recycling post-industrial landscapes* (p.35). Birkhäuser.

Fig.3  
Marakatt-Labba, B. (1989). Mátki II (Färden II) [Embroidery on cotton canvas]  
*Hans Olof Utsi*, 2025

Fig.4  
Garnier, T. (1978). Une cité industrielle [Painting]  
*Beauty redeemed : recycling post-industrial landscapes* (p.134). Birkhäuser.

Fig. 6–8 Chalmers Tekniska Högskola. (2024). [Geodatabas]. *Chalmers Geo-databas*. <https://www.lib.chalmers.se/soek/databasinfo/Geodata-for-forskning-utbildning-och-kulturverksamhet/13516430>

Fig. 16–18 Chalmers Tekniska Högskola. (2024). [Geodatabas]. *Chalmers Geo-databas*. <https://www.lib.chalmers.se/soek/databasinfo/Geodata-for-forskning-utbildning-och-kulturverksamhet/13516430>

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Fig. 21-29 Johnson. R. (2019). Ice huts [Photographs] With premission.

Fig. 36–37 Chalmers Tekniska Högskola. (2024). [Geodatabas]. *Chalmers Geo-databas*. <https://www.lib.chalmers.se/soek/databasinfo/Geodata-for-forskning-utbildning-och-kulturverksamhet/13516430>