

HOW TO  
FORGET  
THE BORDER  
COMPLETELY

Welcome to Windsor

Fercan  
Developments Inc.

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SPANNER





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**HOW TO  
START TO  
FORGET: AN  
ATTEMPT TO  
EXPLAIN OUR-  
SELVES**





The border between Windsor and Detroit has not always been the way that one encounters it today. Years ago, the border was fluid – traffic, people, and community traveled between two cities at the edge of two countries – and there was an understanding of Windsor and Detroit as one big neighbourhood. At least this is the story we are telling ourselves.

Today, the border between Windsor and Detroit is something very different. The fallout from 9/11, the increasingly stringent passport requirements, the lack of truly usable public transit, and the faint legend of the Detroit riots all create an infinitely growing international distance between the two cities (and two communities) that in actuality are only one kilometer apart. In spite of, or perhaps because of, these aforementioned realities, we have developed a curiosity around the border.

It may just be the echoes of stories from generations before us, but it would seem that if a border once existed that provided for an experience of two cities as one large community (that is, an infrastructure somehow more permeable), then there would be the opportunity to create an experience of these two cities that embraced their proximity (geographical, economical, and social) once again.

*How to Forget the Border Completely* is a mandate that we gave ourselves in response to the cities we see in front of us.

Through research and practice, we have aimed to create the foundation upon which new border relations can be imagined and enacted in both Windsor and Detroit. We have proposed a set of tactics for forgetting the border, and in turn, a set of tactics for creative resistance against a much larger set of ideas that embed themselves in daily practice and attempt to make us forget about the things we have in common.

For the uninitiated, it is important to note that the specifics of the situation at the Windsor-Detroit border allow us to consider border issues in a much different light as compared to borders situated in other places throughout the world. Rather than an overtly militarized border zone at the US-Mexican border or an erased border in Berlin, we are situated at a border that requires a different way of thinking about the relationship between cities. We live at a border that is at once infinitely militarizing and essentially invisible.

It would seem that the lingering effects from a decade of mistrust has firmly cemented themselves into everyday life in border cities. Alongside the not-so-gentle urging of a falling US dollar and rising Canadian loonie, the economic collapse of 2008 brought on the final signs of a manufacturing economy on indefinite life support, and in turn, the movement of residents across the border has wound down significantly. That gradually slowing movement across the border is particularly important frame for this project.

To appropriately set the stage for this project would be to attempt to conjure a nostalgia for something that may not ever have existed as we have imagined it. Indeed, the story that we have told ourselves about these two cities being deeply connected is difficult to trace. Certainly, it has been easy to recollect a time that found Canadians bound for the US, seeking products otherwise unattainable, but a memory of relationships that spanned the border is more difficult to find and pin down. However, perhaps it is understanding nostalgia not as a fondness for a past, but as a hope to relive something again that can provide us with a way forward.

Informed by a curiosity for our own cross-border activities, and at times, lack thereof, we took all of the realities in front of us as a starting point for something that would be, above all else, a foundation for a new approach to where we live. The projects, proposals, renderings, texts and efforts detailed throughout this publication offer a range of tactical interruptions to the experience of living at the border. Maps, technologies, photo essays, proposals, consultations, interviews, and ongoing public projects have all become frames of reference and prototypes of tools needed to unfold the complexities of a bordered experience. In short, we wanted to work through a set of ideas that would quietly and dramatically change the dynamic between Windsor and Detroit.



Of course, discussing change necessarily creates discussion of goals, of results, of evidence to support and rationalize our work. It would seem to be incumbent upon us to attempt to support the arguments that we have set out across these pages, but, we would instead offer the following: changing the dynamic Windsor and Detroit is actually changing an experience of these two cities, or perhaps more accurately, an experience *between* these two cities. We cannot set out a checklist of social activities or a menu of cultural events that would in any real way impact the communities of Windsor and Detroit. There are, as is demonstrated on a near daily basis, exceptionally difficult and very real circumstances in both cities, specifically grounded in those cities, that necessarily drown out the urgency of the nostalgia of cross-border connection. And so, we instead offer a space for conversation around Windsor and Detroit driven by our own set of curiosities.

Through the research we have included in this publication, we hope to be able to initiate a dialogue, even briefly, around what it means to act within and resist against the border. As a political and economic tool, the border between Windsor and Detroit has become increasingly more complicated to operate and has simultaneously oversimplified the relationship between these two cities. Perhaps, now more than ever, it is time to write a new guide, a new manual for using the border, and understand that in its use, whether in daily life or occasional excursion, in its activation through critical engagement, we can indeed forget about it entirely.



Cutting up a border between Windsor and Detroit.





Remapping two cities as one.



**NARROW  
THE GAPS:  
FINDING,  
FORCING,  
INVENTING  
SYMMETRY**







Windsor and Detroit, however geographically close, are often imagined to be miles apart. However, Detroit and Windsor share a lot of similarities, probably more than either city does with any other city in their respective countries.

Both cities are automotive towns, both are highly diverse, both have Francophone roots. Both cities are regarded as rough, depressed places that need to be fixed. And yet, at least in Windsor, we are still told that the *other side* is so much more dangerous, so much worse.

With this in mind, we went to further explore the relationship between Windsor and Detroit. We went to both cities and investigated what made them different or the same. Through a series of photographic juxtapositions, the project ended up showcasing the architectural similarities between the two cities in their downtown core. Perhaps the project even found symmetry.

The idea of forced symmetry is also explored, adding and taking away monuments, buildings, city blocks, and other possibilities. Adding these markers to the other side of the border allows us to create a sense of familiarity to someone visiting, and a sense of friendship between two cities separated by a river.

Duplicating and combining streets, city blocks, or even neighbourhoods comprised of both cities really questions what makes up each city, and maybe more importantly, where one ends and the other begins.























# AN IMAGINARY CONSULTANCY FOR CANADIAN CUSTOMS





We began with an interest in trying to imagine a different dynamic than one might encounter at the border with a critical perspective on how the language around public affairs continues to be negotiated by private interests. We continually experience the border's infrastructure as a seemingly unchangeable, immovable bureaucracy of unfounded paranoia. We, of course, love to imagine that this cannot be the only way -- we love to imagine a grand change, a change that is far beyond our scope of influence -- and this, of course, is what makes this kind of imagination so productive.

So, trying to imagine how changes might move through the Canadian Border Services Agency bureaucracy led us to an imaginary consultancy -- the "Canadian Border Services Agency Consultancy." It felt only too appropriate to take on the role of consultants as a kind of pre-screened outsider, as it were.

The idea that accessing the critique of the bureaucracy solely as artists would allow for a dismissal of sorts became a deciding point to stretch our (imaginary) role beyond our usual preoccupations. And, of course, it would seem very plausible that this organization may indeed request a consultant's eye on their current operations and we took it upon ourselves to take on that role.

Crucially, we understood that taking on this role to propose

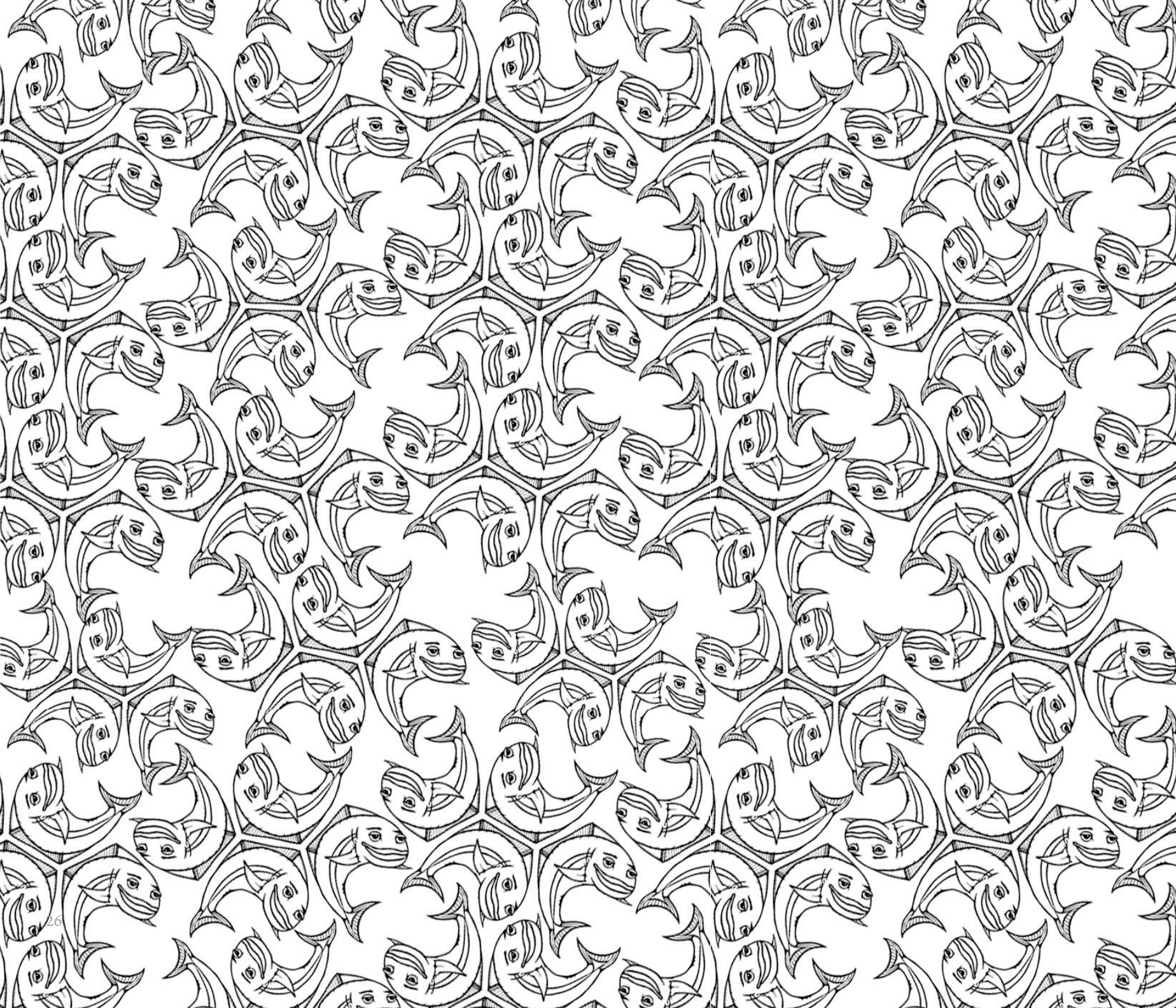
initiatives that would change the dynamic at the border -- in short, to make it a more pleasant experience -- would require a level of humour that would also mask an imagined ulterior motive.

Were the Canadian Border Services Agency to take on our proposed initiatives, it would certainly be to create a different setting from which they could more drastically enact their security measures. Changing the border into an event instead of a process of crossing into another country would require drastic changes to policies around customer service, security, and the banality of bureaucratic process. As such, we propose impossible alternatives to the infrastructure we encounter, while subtly pointing to a tactic of distraction that could be easily employed by the border.

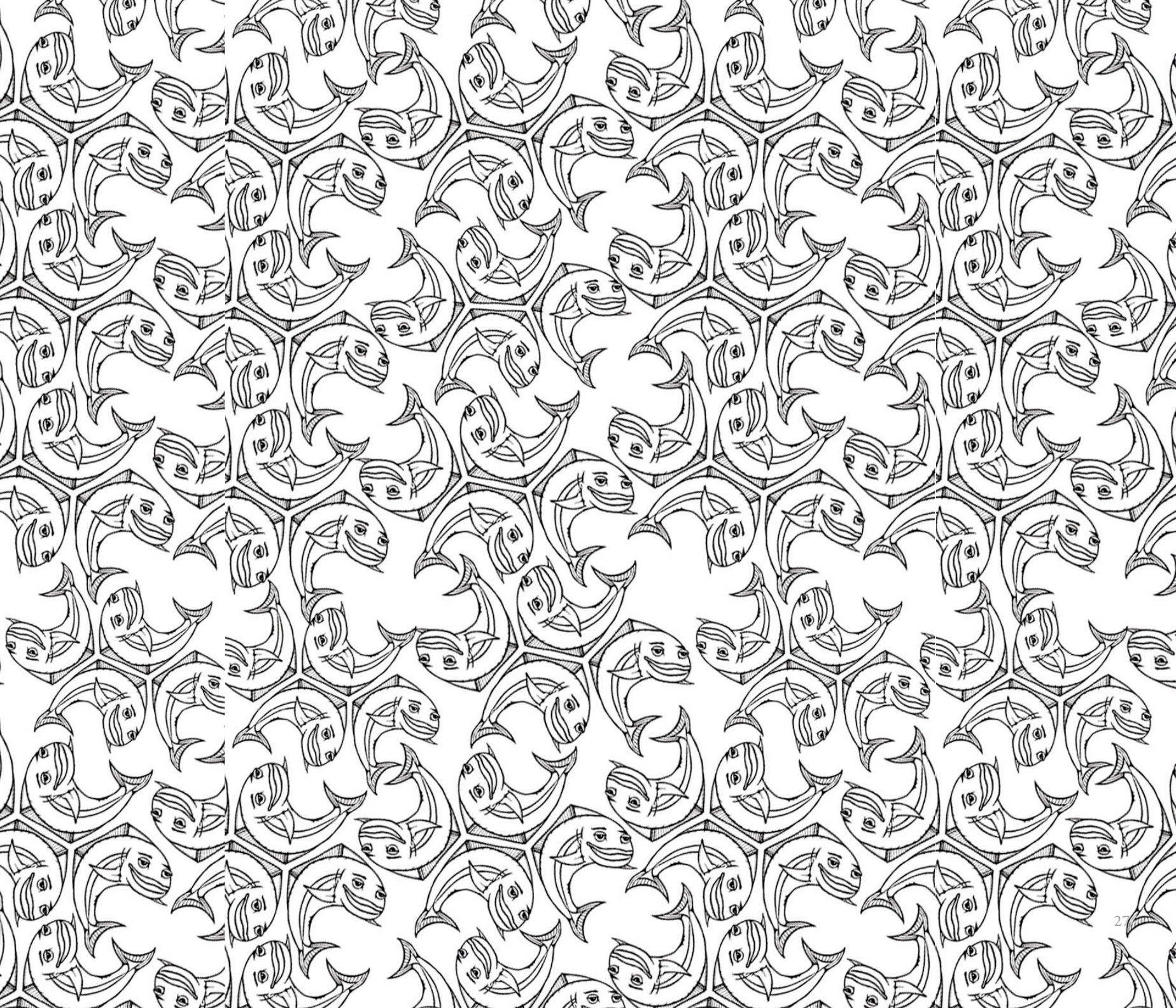
Alongside conceptual renderings of changes to the physicality of the border, we also generated an introductory presentation to be distributed to customs agents that suggests a new way of thinking about border security.

Taking on the all-too-familiar corporate speak of never ending efficiencies, up-sells, and disguised omnicontrol, the presentation opens an absurd space to unfold the values that we have embedded into a system that feels much larger than our own Canadian Government, and ultimately a system that over which we must be vigilant.

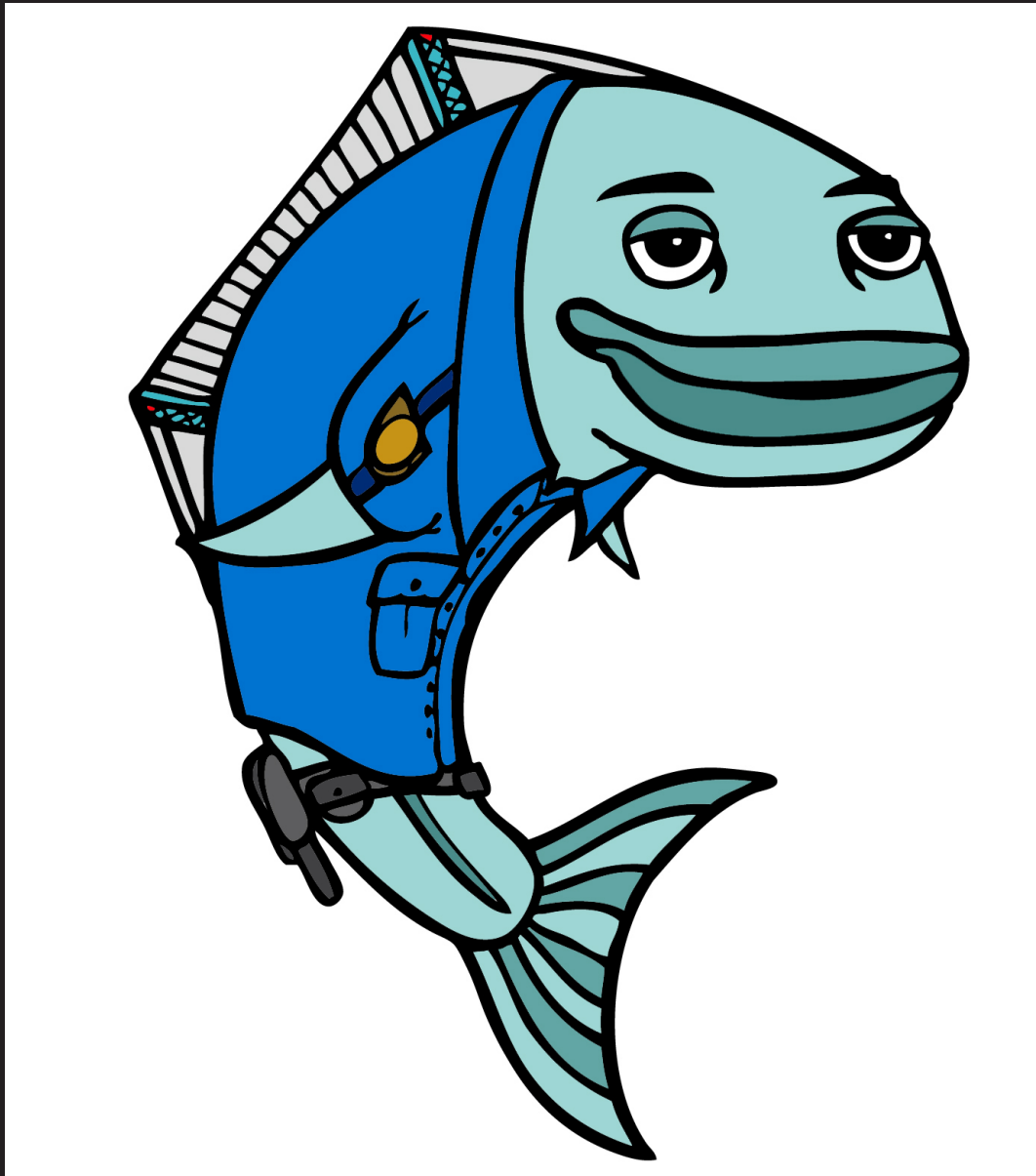




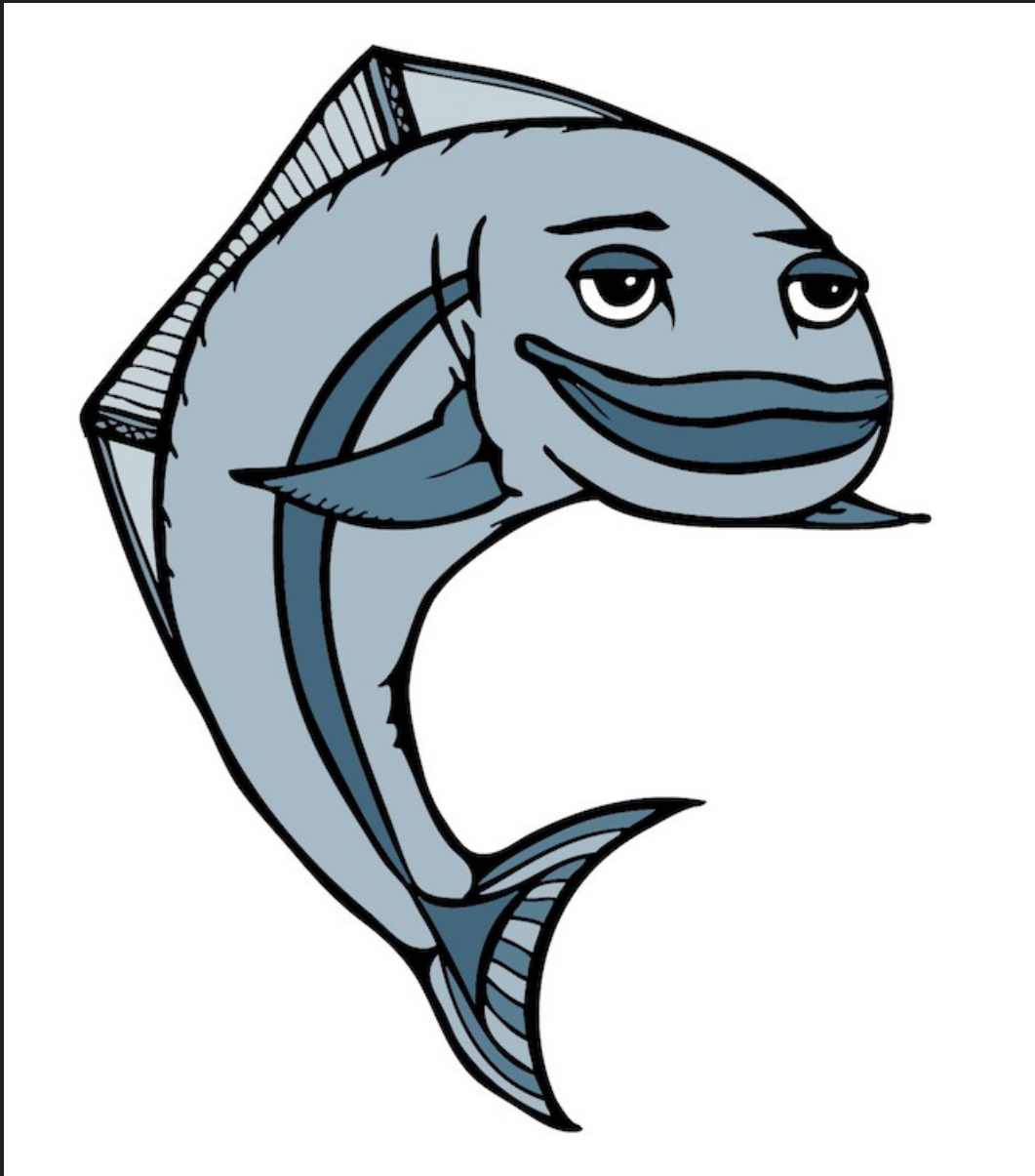








Proposal for Corporate Mascott for Canadian Border Services Agency, Fishy the Fish (in costume).



Proposal for Corporate Mascott for Canadian Border Services Agency, Fishy the Fish (plain clothed).



Imagining a gift economy at the border.



Promoting the right attitude for random searches.



A warm welcome for our American visitors, celebrating all that is Canadian at the border.





Proposed welcome murals and ever-hovering celebratory hot-air balloons.

## TIPS FOR A HEALTHY BORDER

BROUGHT TO YOU BY **BROKEN CITY LAB**

★ ★ ★ ★

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## FOR BORDER GUARDS

### KNOW WHO THE BOSS IS.

- \* You are not the boss.
- \* Without crossers, you're job would not exist!
- \* Remember the acronym C.R.E.A.M. (Crossers Rule Everything Around Me).



### BE A GOOD LISTENER.

- \* "I'm going to buy a puggle from an American breeder" is much different from "I'm going to try and smuggle some American weed, sir".
- \* Subtleties are key in this business!



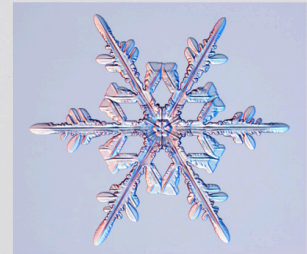
## IDENTIFY AND ANTICIPATE NEEDS.

- \* Crossers don't buy products, they buy a way into another country.
- \* Show them the way with an enthusiastic demeanour!



## MAKE CROSSERS FEEL COMFORTABLE AND VALUED.

- \* Treat them as individuals.
- \* Every crosser is as unique as a snowflake, and usually much less cold.



## APPRECIATE THE POWER OF "YES".

- \* When crossers have a request (as long as it is reasonable) tell them that you can do it.
- \* "Can you sing while searching for my information?"
- \* Sure!



## GIVE MORE THAN EXPECTED.

- \* When you return a passport, don't hesitate to add a compliment, smile, or wink.
- \* If you feel really ambitious, hop out of your booth and hug someone.





## DON'T BE AFRAID TO BE FASHIONABLE.

- \* Sure black uniforms look official and clean, but don't be afraid to throw a little colour in there.
- \* A brightly coloured shirt wouldn't be so bad, would it?



## TREAT YOURSELVES WELL.

- \* We can only speculate on what you do in that booth, but we wouldn't fault you for maintaining a Chia pet, practicing yoga, or making smoothies from your favorite fruits and vegetables, for example.



## FOR THOSE CROSSING

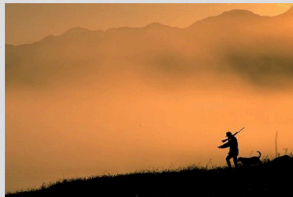
## IF YOU'VE EVER HAD A FELONY...

- \* Persons with a felony may be denied entrance into Canada unless one is willing to make a formal apology.
- \* If you have been convicted of a crime in the United States it may be considered a felony (indictable offense) in Canada.
- \* What's that in your rearview mirror? Oh, it's just your past following you.



## STICK TO YOUR GUNS.

- \* Americans in particular will need to be aware that Canada has strict gun laws.
- \* Guns used for hunting or competition may only be brought in with an animal homicide permit.



## THE JOYS OF SYNCHRONIZED DRIVING.

- \* It is generally considered bad practice to drive defensively while in line at the border.
- \* It is considerate and often enjoyable to drive in an organized line without switching lanes and/or tailgating.



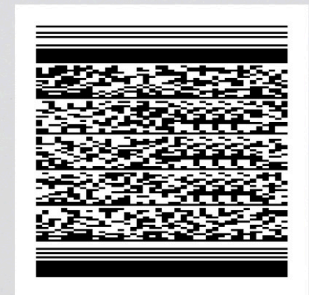
## IDENTIFICATION IS NOT AN OPTION.

- \* Identification is mandatory for travel between the United States and Canada.
- \* Children under age 16 will be able to enter with proof of citizenship (no photo ID required).
- \* Those unlucky enough to have passed the sweet 16 threshold must show photographic identification.



## WHAT ON EARTH IS AN ENHANCED DRIVER'S LICENSE?

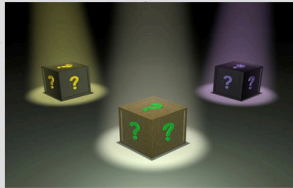
- \* Far from being fortified with essential vitamins and minerals, the enhanced driver's license has one special feature: an extra shiny barcode.





## BE PREPARED TO ANSWER QUESTIONS.

- \* Your practice quickly answering trivia questions in front of your television set may come in handy for this exciting border activity.
- \* Answer all questions with confidence!



## CHECK BORDER WAIT TIMES BEFORE CROSSING.

- \* Unless your desire is to watch yourself age in real-time on a Saturday afternoon, check your border's wait times if possible.



## BE A GOOD LISTENER.

- \* "I'm going to buy a puggle from an American breeder" is much different from "I'm going to try and smuggle some American weed, sir".
- \* Subtleties are key in this business!



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**THANK YOU FOR YOUR PATIENCE AND ATTENTION.  
HAVE A HAPPY BORDER EXPERIENCE!**

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**BROKEN CITY LAB:**

## **CANADA CUSTOMS CUSTOMER SERVICE PROPOSAL THE 10 COMMANDMENTS OF BORDER CUSTOMER SERVICE**

### **YOU SHALL KNOW WHO THE BOSS IS.**

You are not the boss.

Without crossers your job would not exist!

Remember the acronym C.R.E.A.M. (Crossers Rule Everything Around Me).

### **YOU SHALL BE A GOOD LISTENER.**

"I'm going to buy a puggle from an American breeder" is slightly different from "I'm going to try and smuggle some American weed, sir".

Subtleties are key in this business!

### **YOU SHALL IDENTIFY AND ANTICIPATE NEEDS.**

Some crossers need their illegal activities to be noticed and dealt with accordingly.

Don't forget that you have a duty to perform.

### **YOU SHALL MAKE CROSSERS FEEL COMFORTABLE AND VALUED.**

Treat crossers as individuals.

Every crosser is as unique as a snowflake, and usually a little less cold.

### **YOU SHALL APPRECIATE THE POWER OF "YES".**

When crossers have a request, try your best to comply.

"Can you sing while searching for my information?"

"Sure, as long as you will admit any past criminal activity."

### **YOU SHALL GIVE MORE THAN EXPECTED.**

When you return a passport, don't hesitate to add a compliment, smile, or wink.

If you feel really ambitious, hop out of your booth and hug someone.

### **YOU SHALL NOT BE AFRAID TO BE FASHIONABLE.**

Sure black uniforms look official, but don't be afraid to throw a little sparkle in there.

Fishy the Fish hats contain sequin scales for higher visibility.

### **YOU SHALL NOT TREAT THYSELF POORLY.**

We can only speculate on what you do in that booth, but we wouldn't fault you for maintaining a

Chia pet or making smoothies from your favorite fruits and vegetables, for example.

Happiness improves vigilance.

### **YOU SHALL REWARD HONESTY.**

Be sure to notify crossers that upon declaring illegal goods, they will receive a Fishy the Fish carp-flavoured lollipop and/or plush toy.

It is the least you can do as a diligent border guard.

### **YOU SHALL TREAT THIS AS A BUSINESS.**

Crossers don't buy products, they buy a way into another country.

Show them the way with an enthusiastic demeanor (while capitalizing on their economic value).

**Contains adaptations from: The Ten Commandments of Great Customer Service**

<http://marketing.about.com/od/relationshipmarketing/a/crmtopten.htm>









# INSTANTLY BETWEEN TWO PLACES: CROSS- BORDER PORTALS





We wanted to forget the border, so we assumed we had to explore the tactics of forgetting. Refuting, ignoring, distancing, pretending, distracting, bypassing -- all provided an out, of sorts. But, bypassing stuck.

To bypass the border, completely, would mean to create a new set of infrastructure to cross the river. It would be inappropriate to simply re-attribute the use of the existing bridge and tunnel, as there would simply be too much emotional baggage from years of crossing a border. Instead, the infrastructure would have to address the ways in which we could imagine the cities of Windsor and Detroit being connected, rather than the ways in which we experience them being separated.

So, we thought it appropriate to imagine two large, impossible things. We find that the more impossible, the more absurd an idea, the more space that can be created to talk about the things really at stake. In this instance, to forget the border is to actually encourage a way of thinking about two cities as one community. So, to imagine two large, impossible things, is to create a space to discuss many small very possible things -- short visits to a city across the river for everyday reasons. There should be no grand plans required, no well-thought-out travel routes, instead there

should only be an everyday experience, not unlike something one might encounter in their respective (currently) border(ed) city.

The basis for our two large, impossible things is not entirely invented. Proposals for crossing the river beyond the existing infrastructure have been heard before -- in particular, a cabled-sky-trolley was once investigated -- and while it seems to be an awkward relic of a time less concerned with the complexities of post-9/11 security, it actually momentarily demonstrated a way to tackle crossing the Detroit River aside from the existing border infrastructure. Skylink International's "Freedom Gondola" feels no less absurd, in our minds, than anything we might propose and does much of the same conceptual work -- specifically, creating a space to talk about what a different way of moving between two cities could do for these two cities.

Our two large, impossible things take the form of surface and subterranean interventions. On the surface, we imagine 1,000 pedestrian walkways connecting an incredible number of sites located along the river and deep into both Windsor and Detroit. Below these cities, we imagine a complex series of portals, not unlike the familiar green sewer tubes from Super Mario Bros.

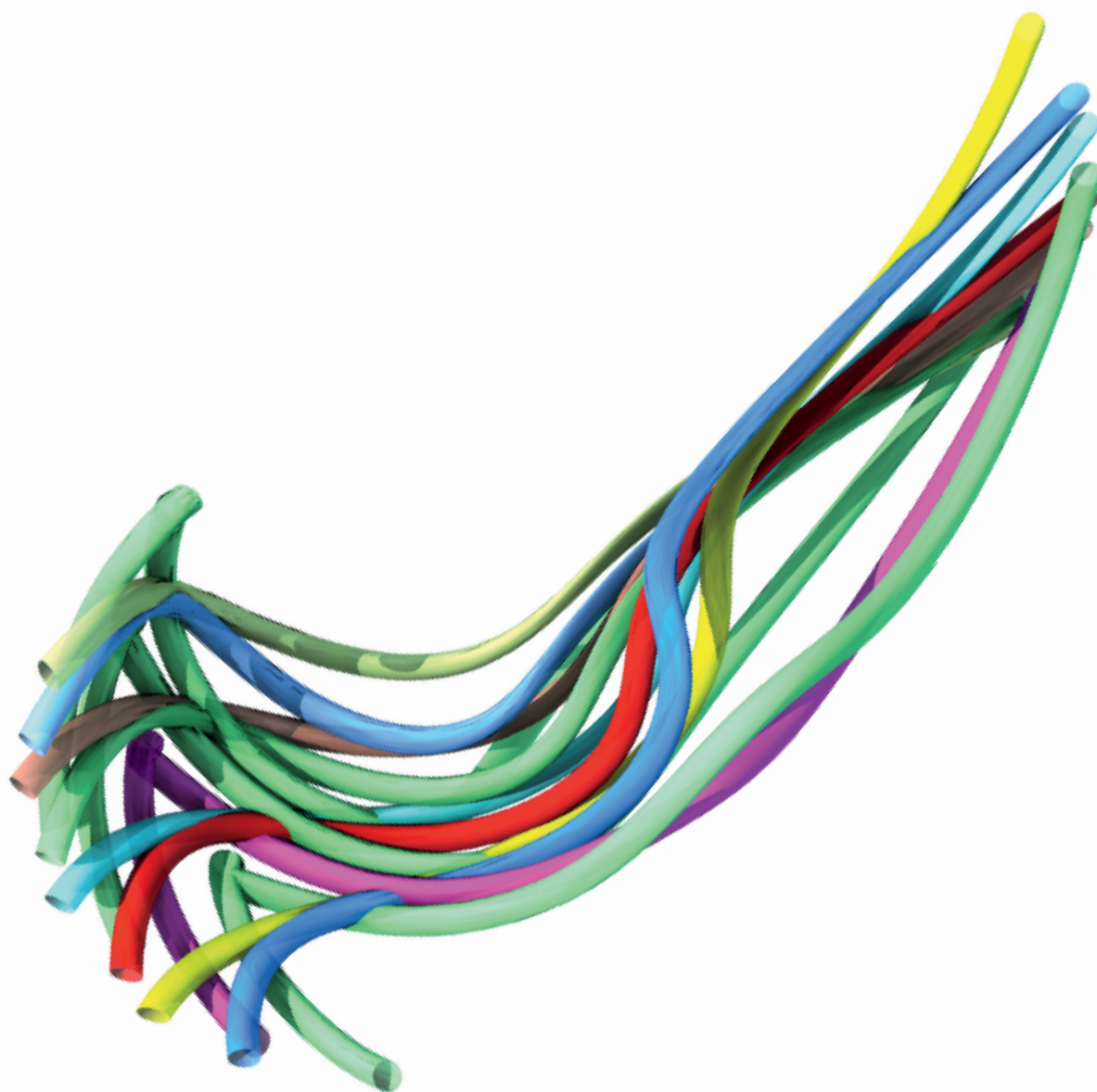
Expanded and explored through architectural renderings, maps, sketches, and iconography, the *1,000 Pedestrian Walkways* and *Windsor-Detroit Portals* offer an imaginary alternative to forget the border through the act of bypassing it entirely.

The portals take design cues from subway systems in major cities -- colour-coded for specific routes, but instead offering a near infinite choice of destinations as the portal lines rarely intersect. One travels through the portal much like riding a water slide, entering a queue to ride single file. It is not necessarily a comfortable ride, but it is efficient and more importantly, it de-maps the two cities. It becomes possible to ignore the grided city structure to instead move through curves, dips, and vertical twists deep underground where you have no choice but to forget about the form of the city above. Entering the portals deep in one neighbourhood launches you deep into another neighbourhood on the other side of the river. Windsor and Detroit share a number of similarly named streets -- one set of portals connect these areas, while another connects emotionally similar areas, while another connects historically related areas. The portals help you to forget the border by erasing your experience of crossing it at all.

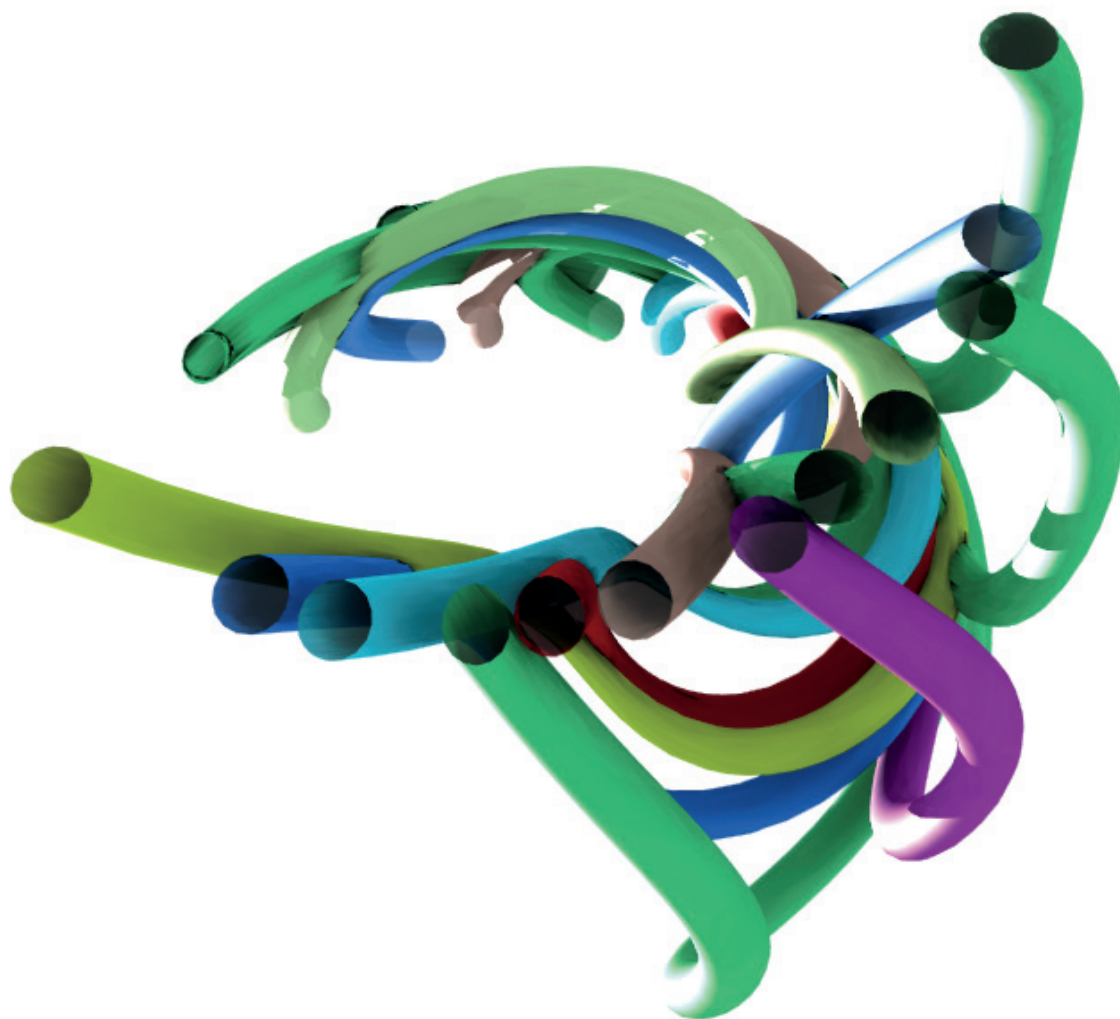
Pedestrian walkways move Windsor and Detroit residents at a much different pace. Crossing the river on foot insists on a much

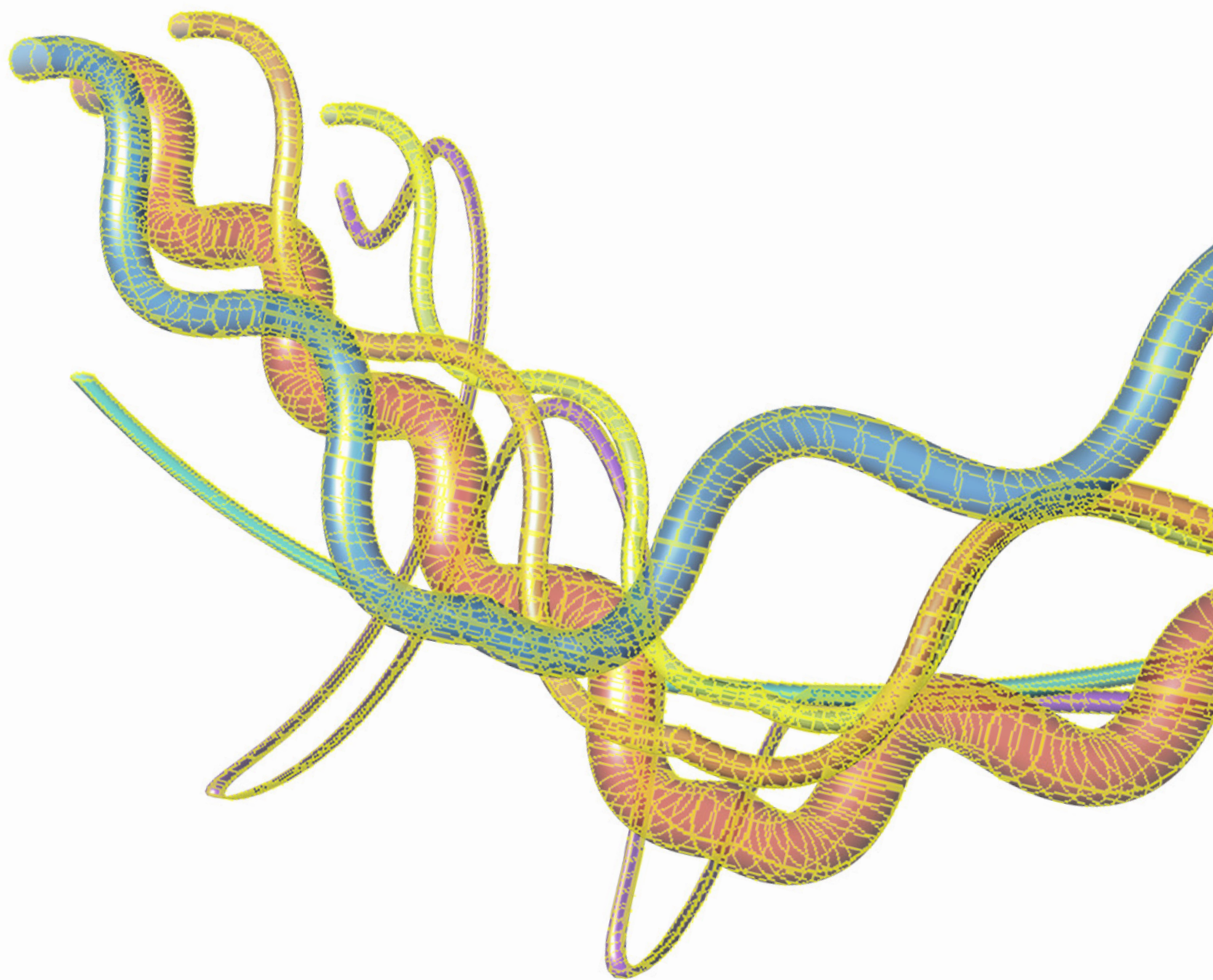
larger scale of time to cross and an experience of a much larger scale of geography. The walkways connect at numerous points along each city's waterfront, while also spanning great distances -- connecting a downtown to a fringe industrial site. Developed by iterating through the distances of the river itself, the pedestrian walkways find natural landscape anomalies to exploit and in turn create a much different rhythm of spatial experience. The geography is sliced and exploded in the creation of the walkways, but the experience thereof generates a much different sense of connection. By visualizing 1,000 connections between two cities, the walkways become an infrastructural metaphor for relationships that are yet to be created. The walkways intersect at key locations to offer opportunities for redirection and interactions with fellow walkers, generating moments of international connections precisely at the site of the (then) long-forgotten border. Built as simple wooden bridges, the walkways direct residents to The infrastructure of the border is erased and forgotten through distribution and changing the volume of infrastructure itself.

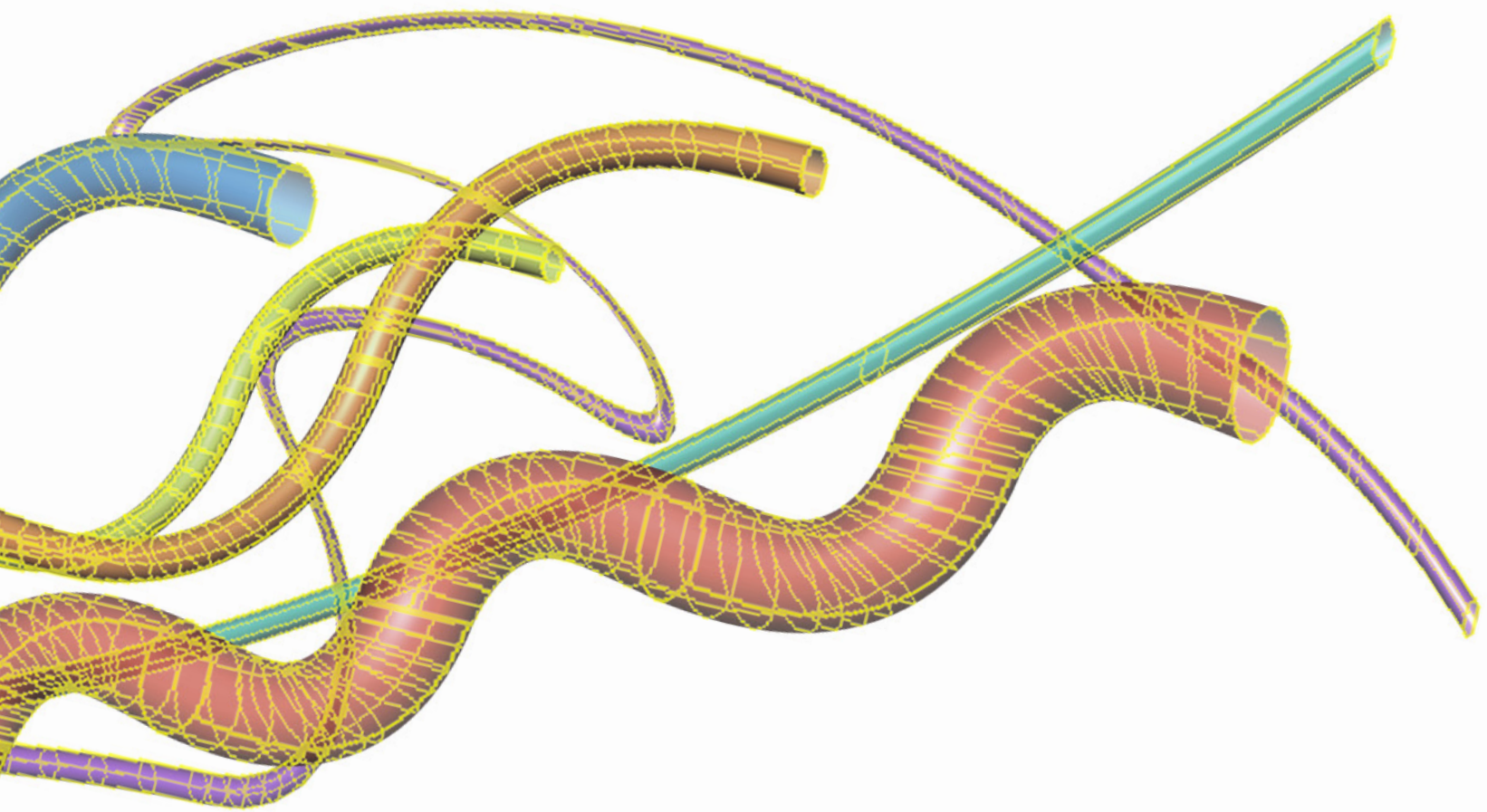
The *1,000 Pedestrian Walkways* and *Windsor-Detroit Portals* work to forget the border by ignoring the idea of a border altogether.



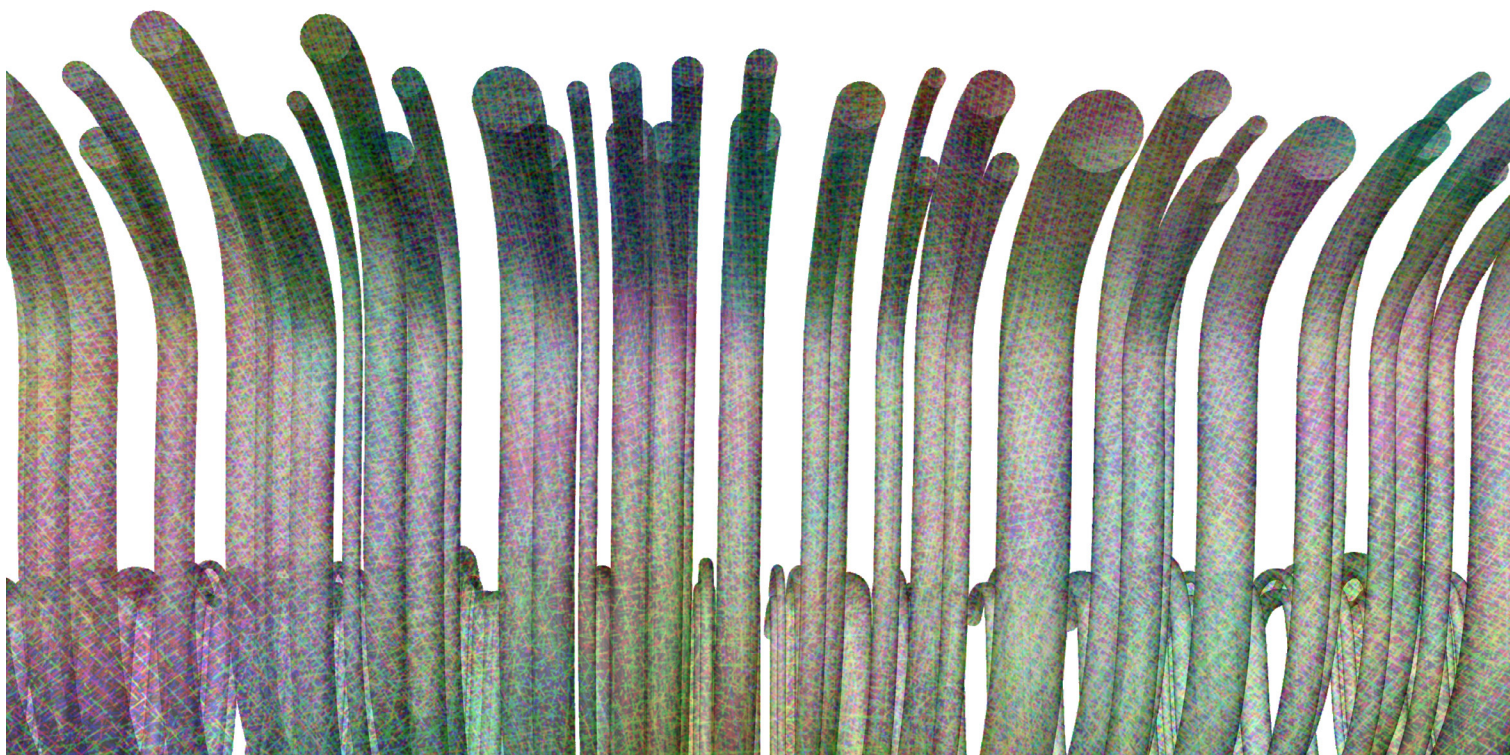




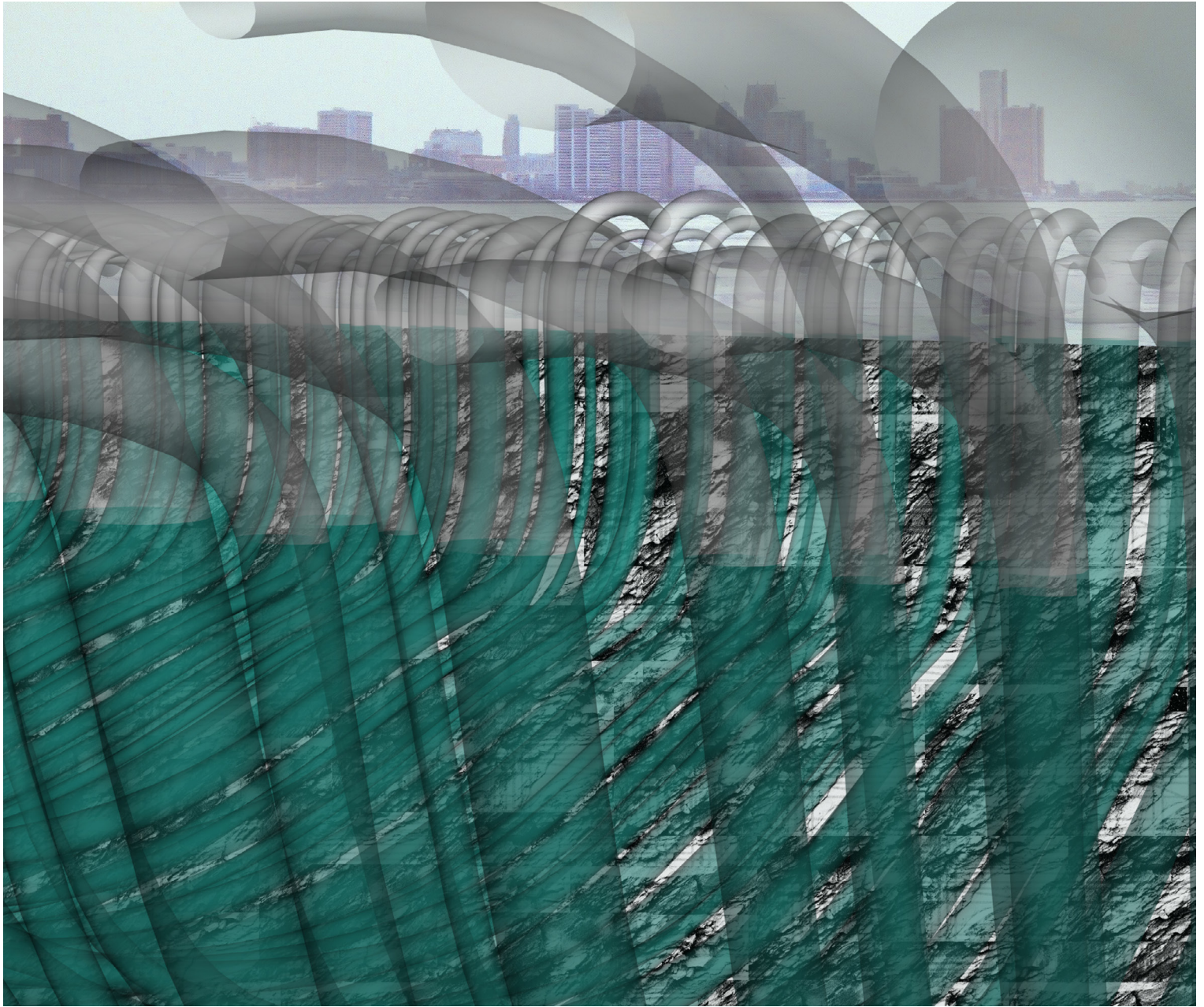




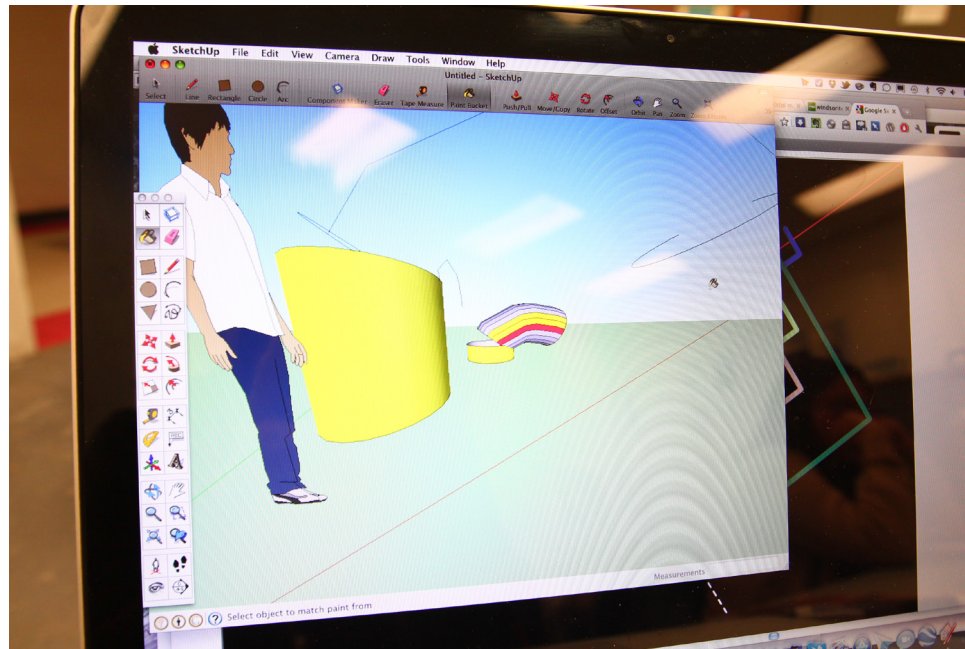






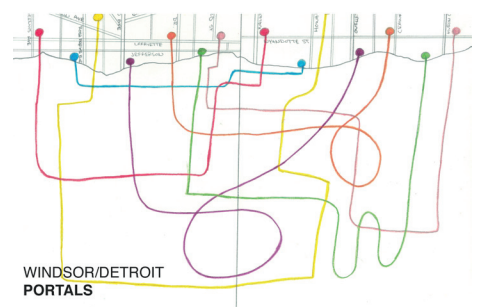
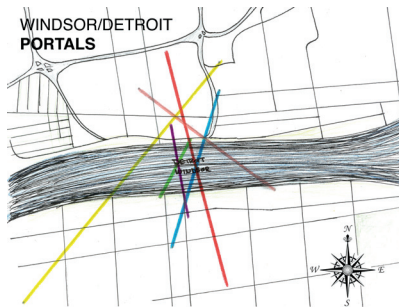
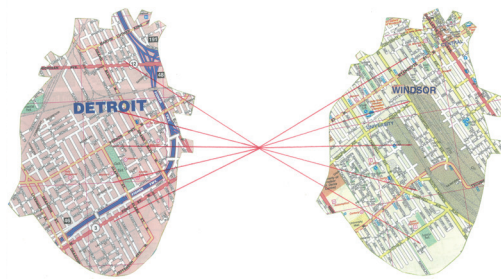
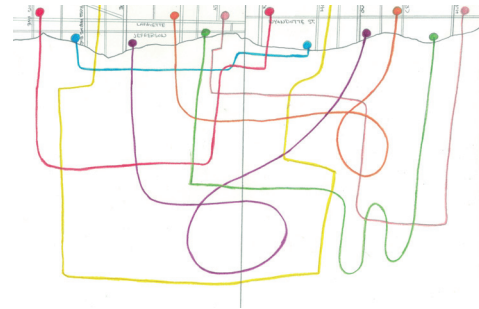
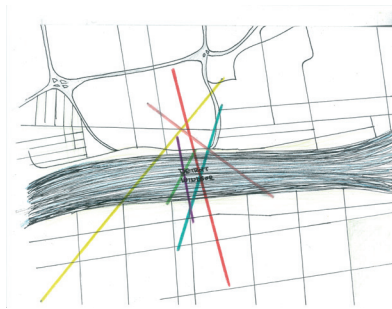
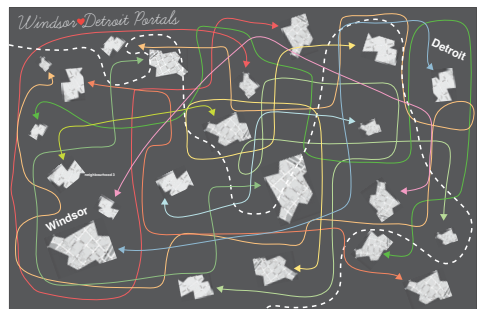
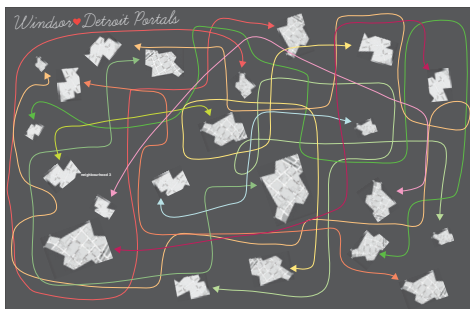
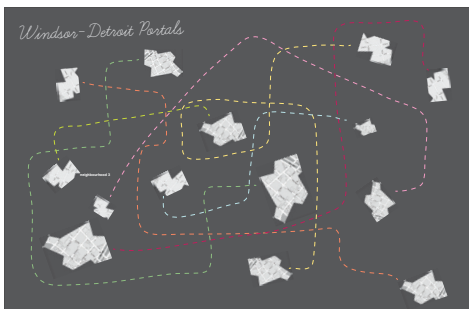
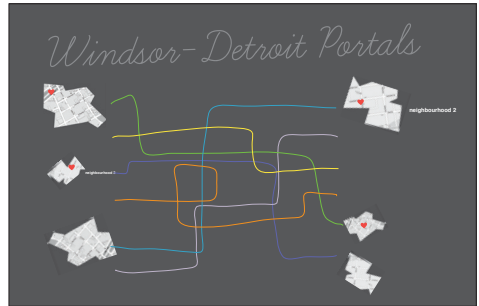
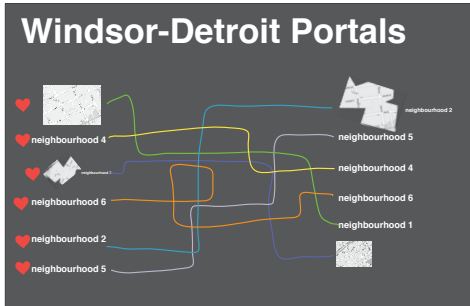


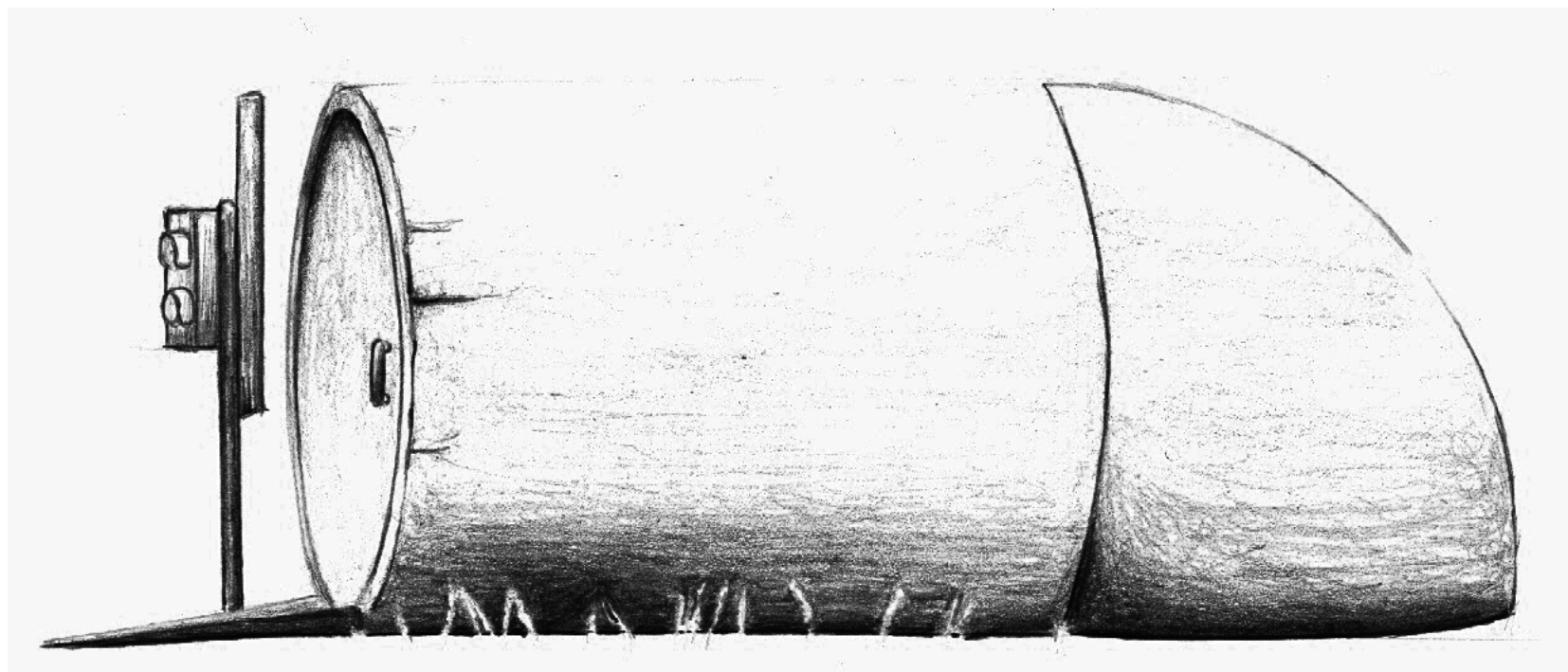


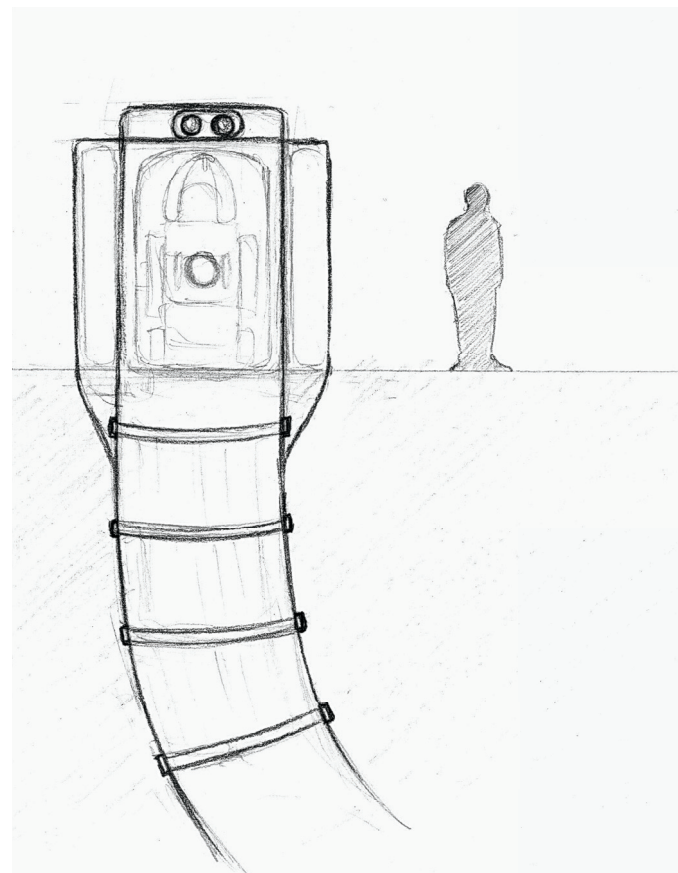
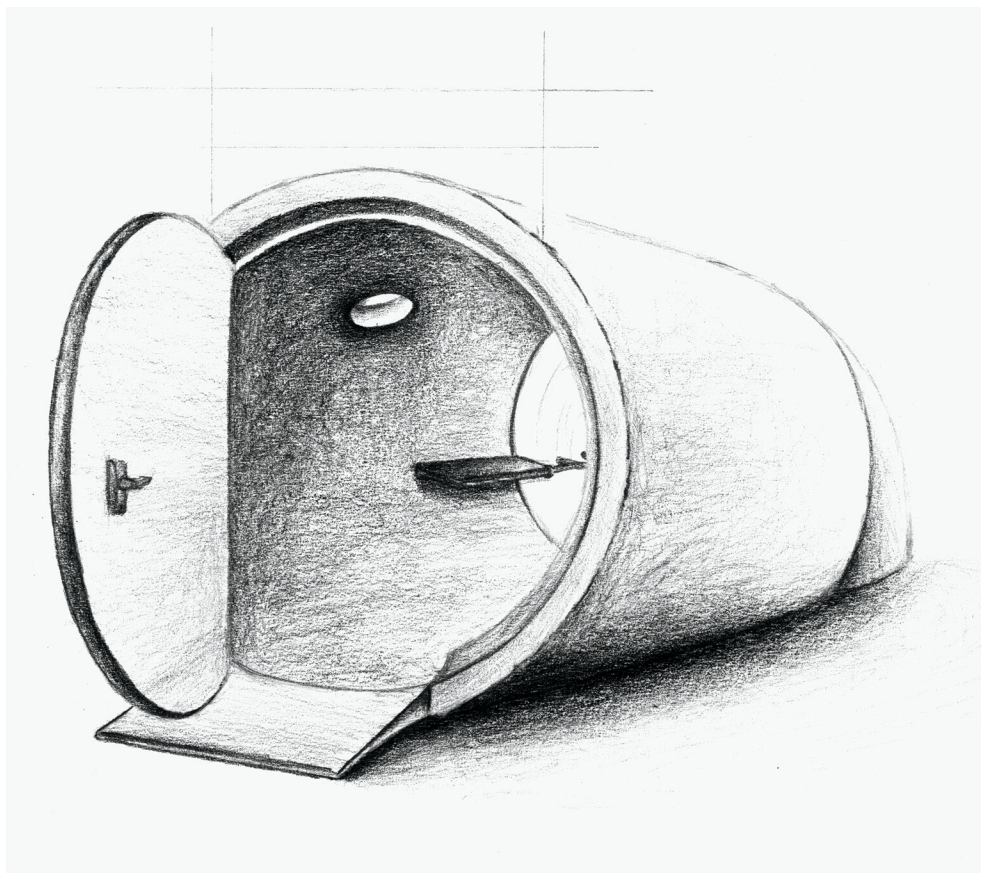




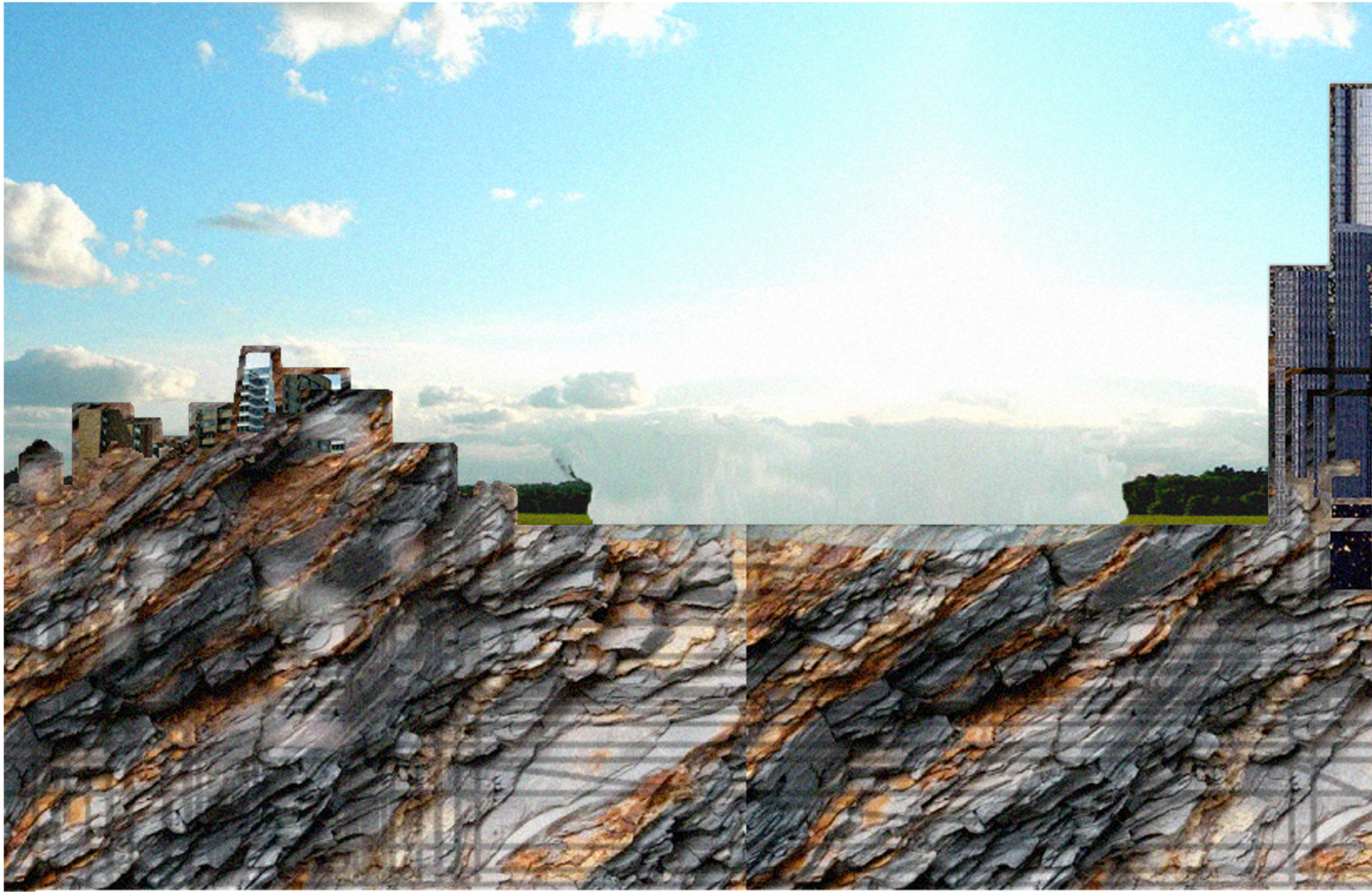
# Windsor-Detroit Portals

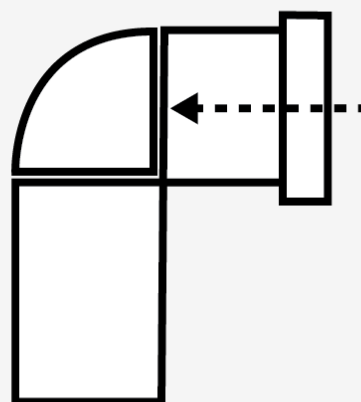
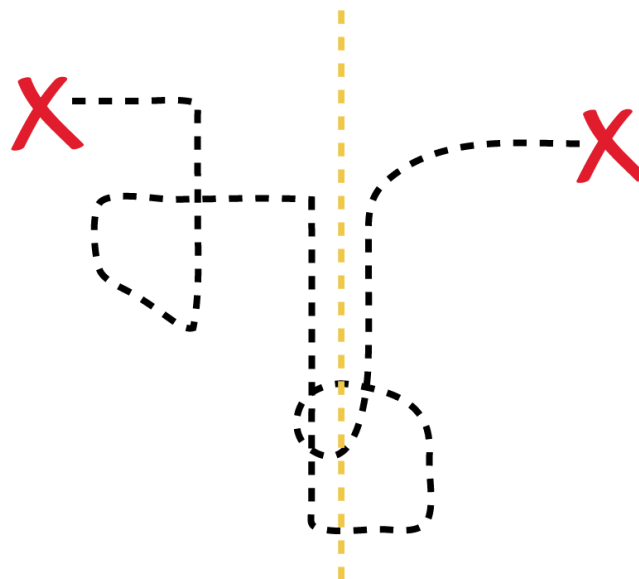
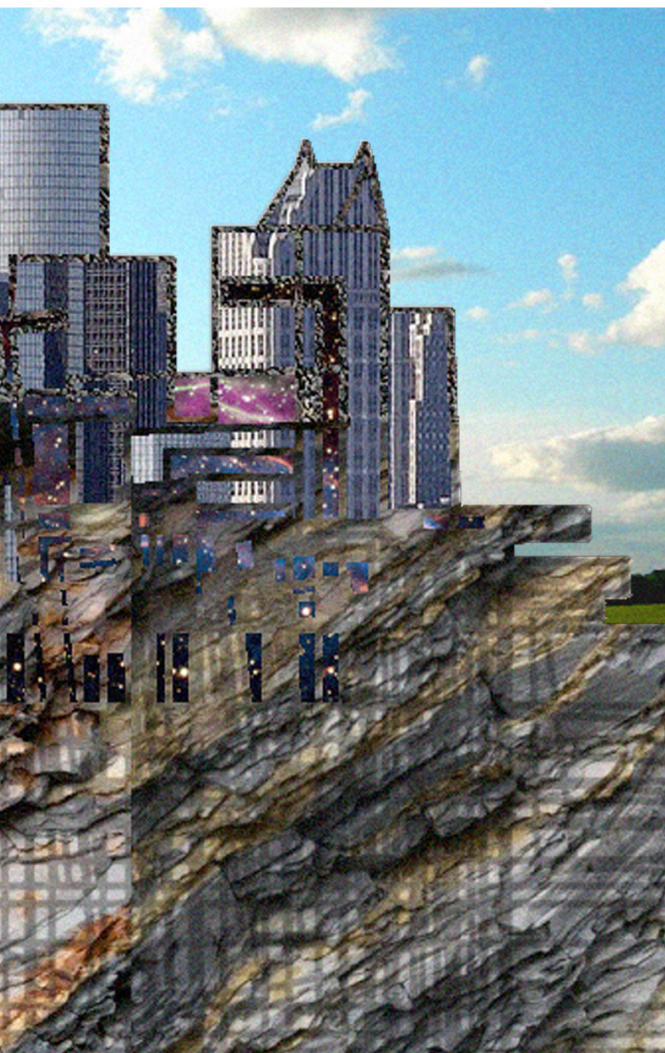






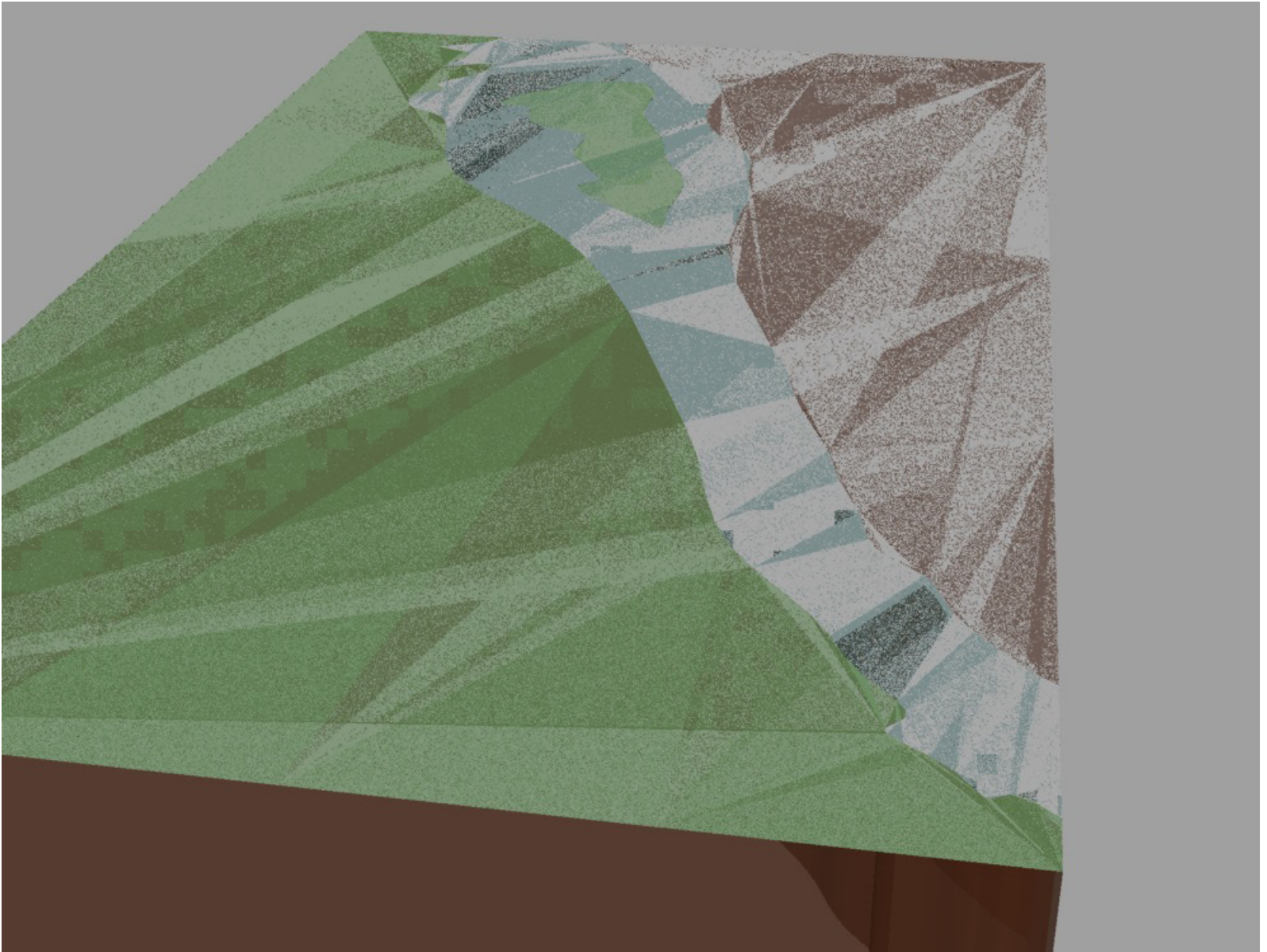






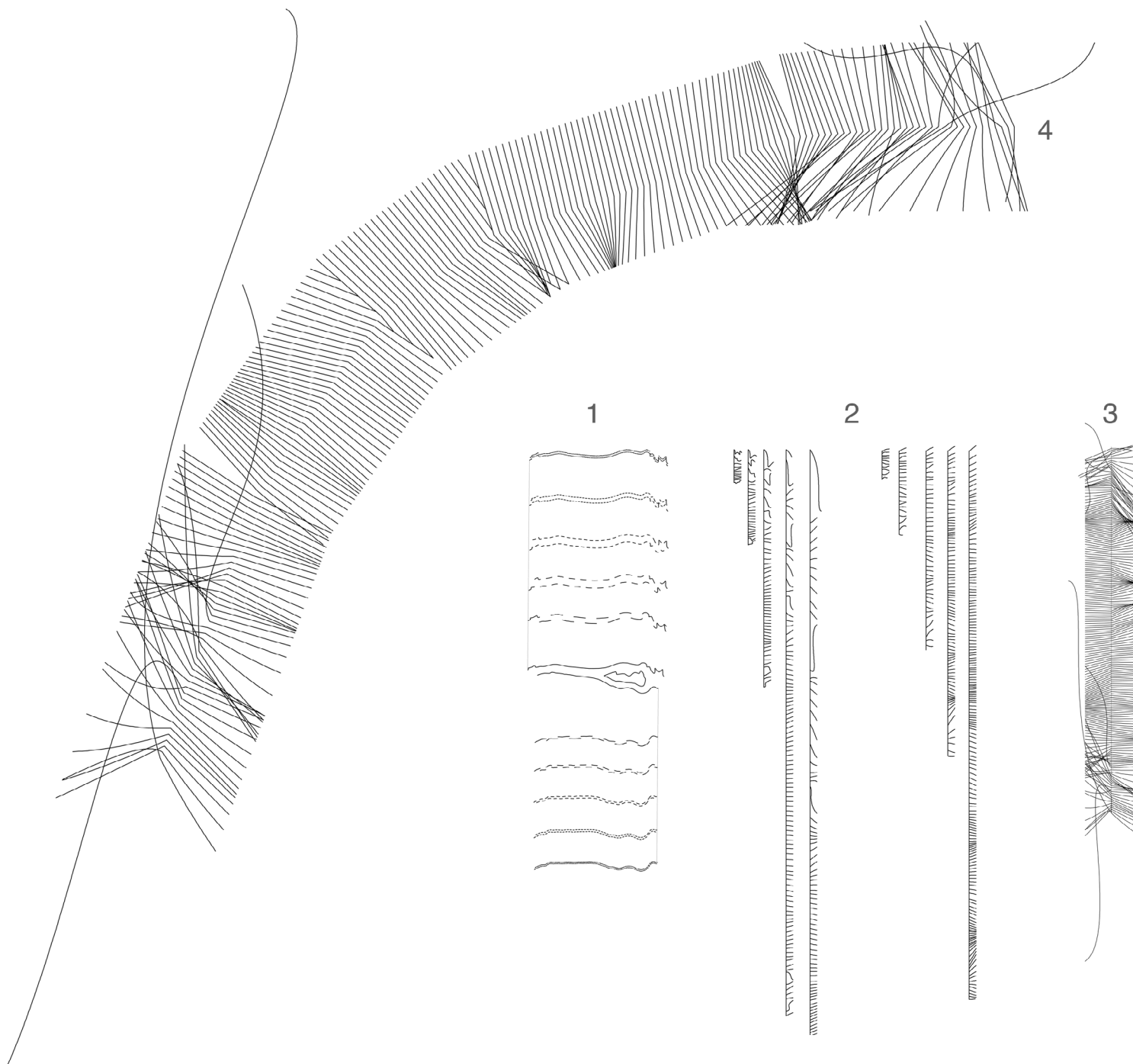
## WINDSOR/DETROIT CROSS-BORDER PORTALS

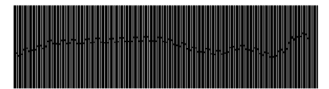
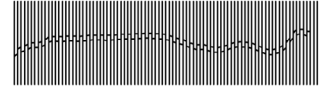
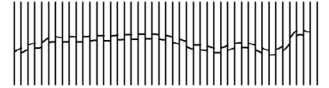
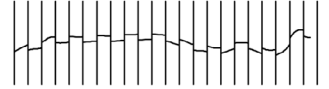
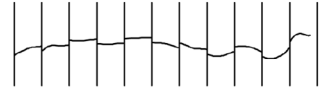
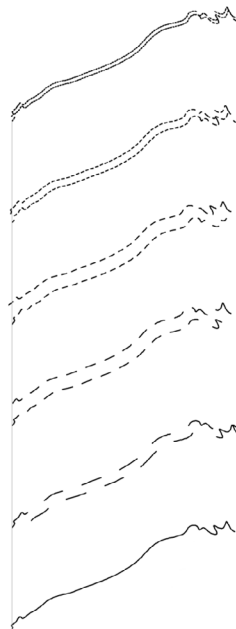
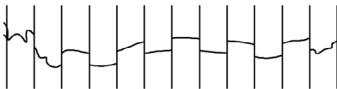
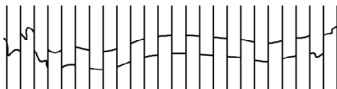
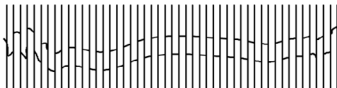
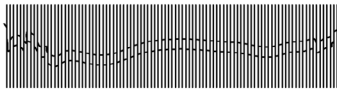
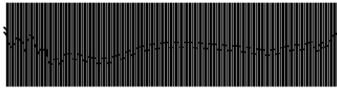
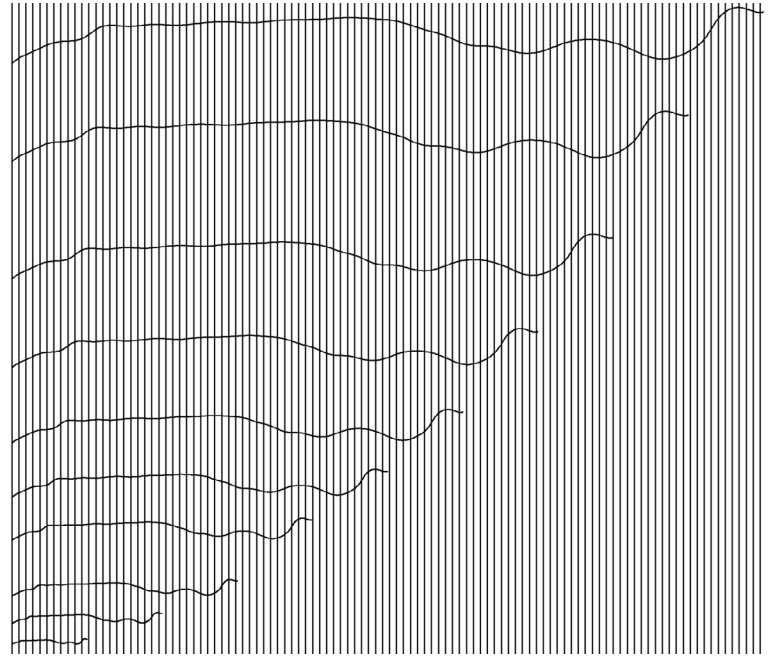








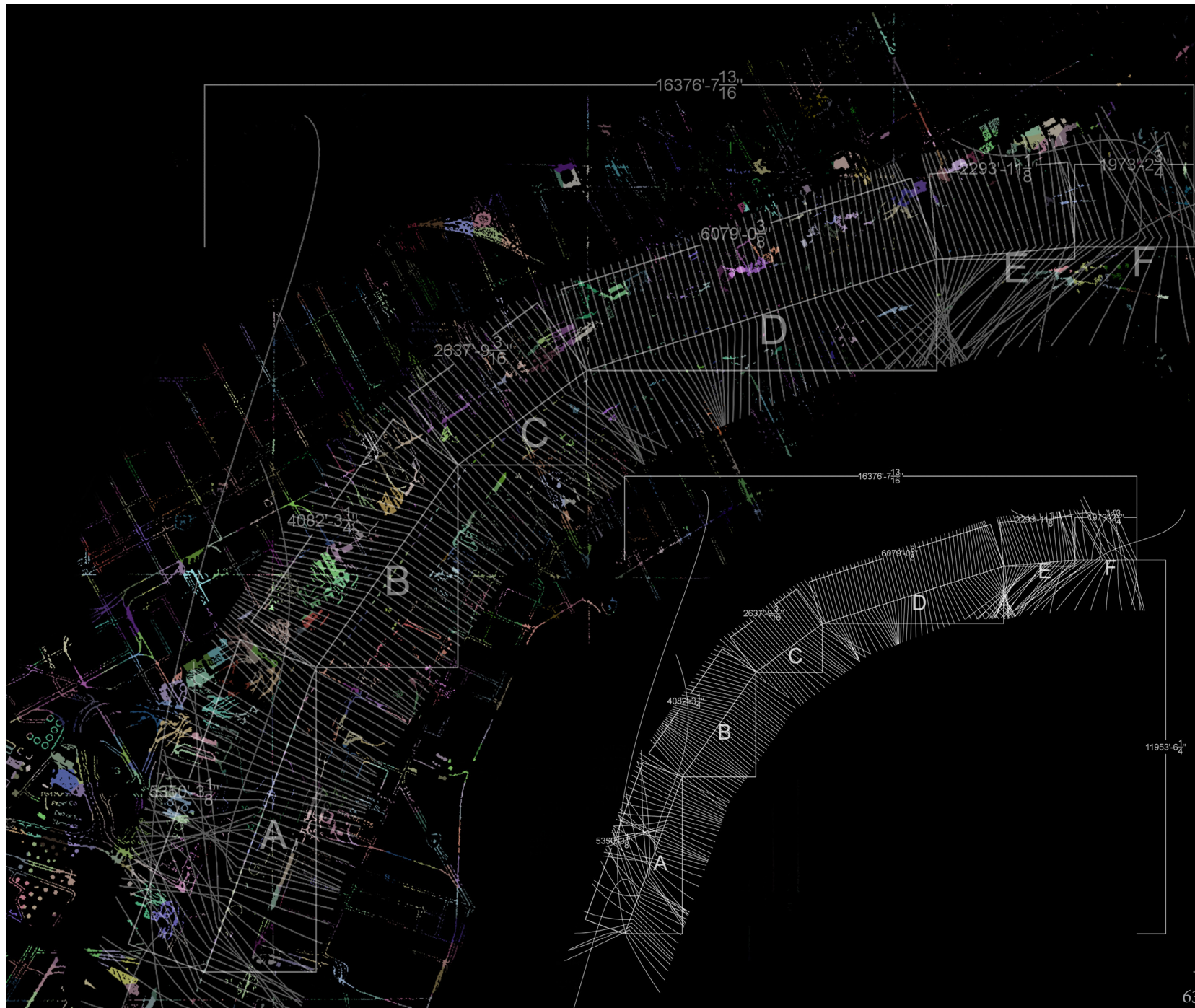






DETROIT RIVER, 1796



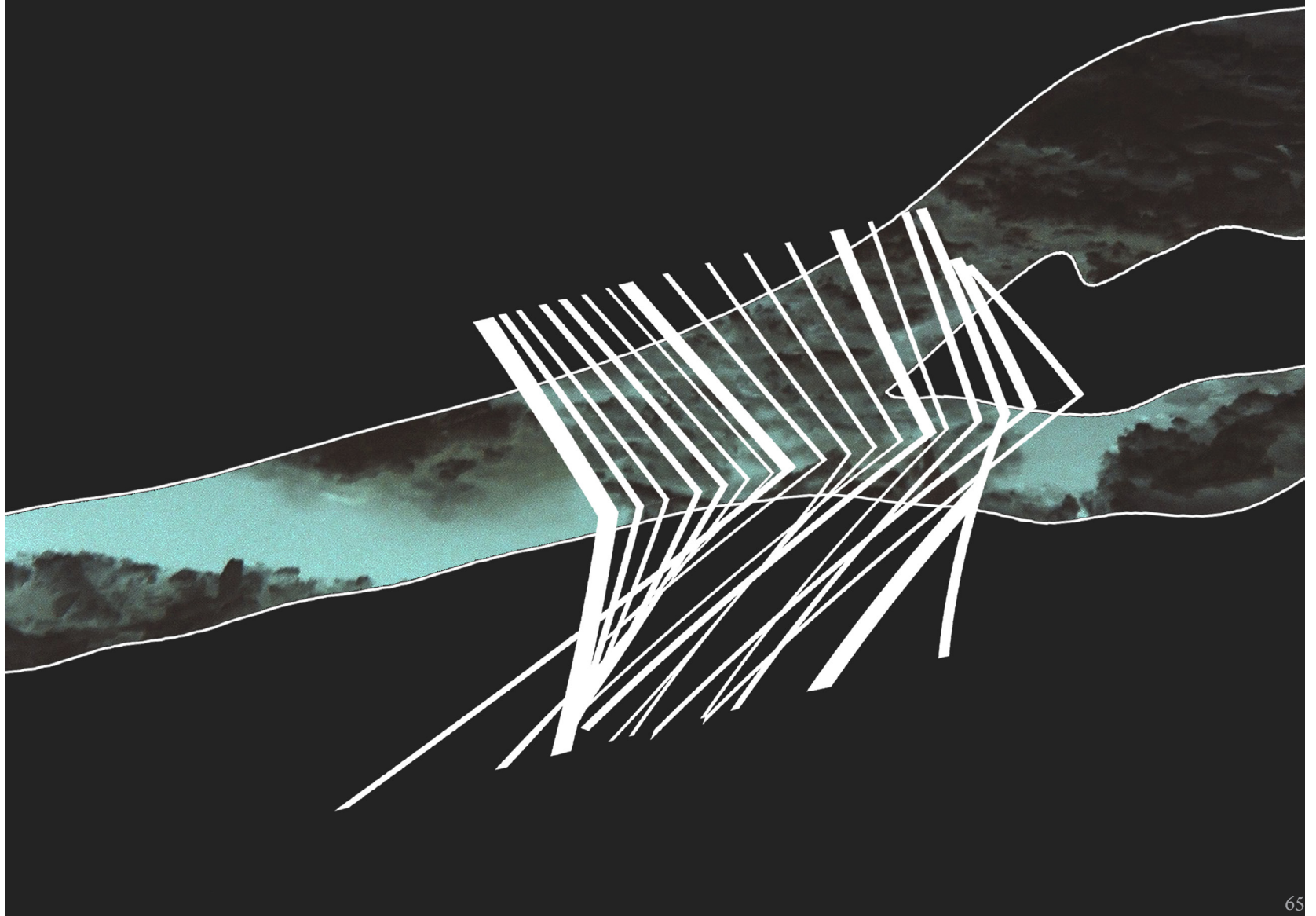








COMPONENT E  
PLAN VIEW



# INVENTIONS IN THE EVERY- DAY & MAKING FRIENDS





This provision enables CBP to collect fees on arriving vessels and to cover the costs of services furnished by CBP officers.

### **19 U.S.C. §§ 68, 69 - Erection of Buildings**

CBP may acquire land and erect buildings along the Canadian and Mexican borders, and in the U.S. Virgin Islands and Guam, to aid in the enforcement of customs and immigration laws; CBP also may erect protective gates across international highways and roads crossing the border as may be necessary to prevent unlawful entry or smuggling.

### **19 U.S.C. § 70 - Obstruction of Revenue Officers by Masters of Vessels**



Addressing the everyday (real and imagined) through imagined and real tactics, in two parts, we offer the following:

We begin with examining legislation and discover a provision noting the open-ended possibility for the US to erect a wall to aid in the enforcement of customs and immigration laws.

We imagine a series of inventions that might circumvent a wall that could be built at the Windsor-Detroit border. These inventions fit into everyday objects and activities -- a ladder that folds into a cane or a set of grappling hooks that hide in a Klean Kanteen. We intend to develop these prototypes and distribute informational pamphlets as the occasion arises, should the provision ever be acted upon.

We continue with a playful gesture around the relationship between Windsor and Detroit. Taking up the familiar aesthetic cues of elementary school yards, we propose a Best Friends Forever (BFF) heart to be located in neighbourhoods throughout the border cities. This comes out of a nostalgic place, a memory of one friend giving half of a heart to another friend on a necklace to be worn forever more. In some ways, this is what it feels like in Windsor and Detroit -- adolescent friends, perhaps, where one friend is cooler than the other and the exchange of the necklace works to solidify the position of the BFF. In Detroit terms, Windsor instead of Chicago. We intend to cast the hearts in aluminum, which will subsequently be chained to telephone poles -- a piece of flair for the city.





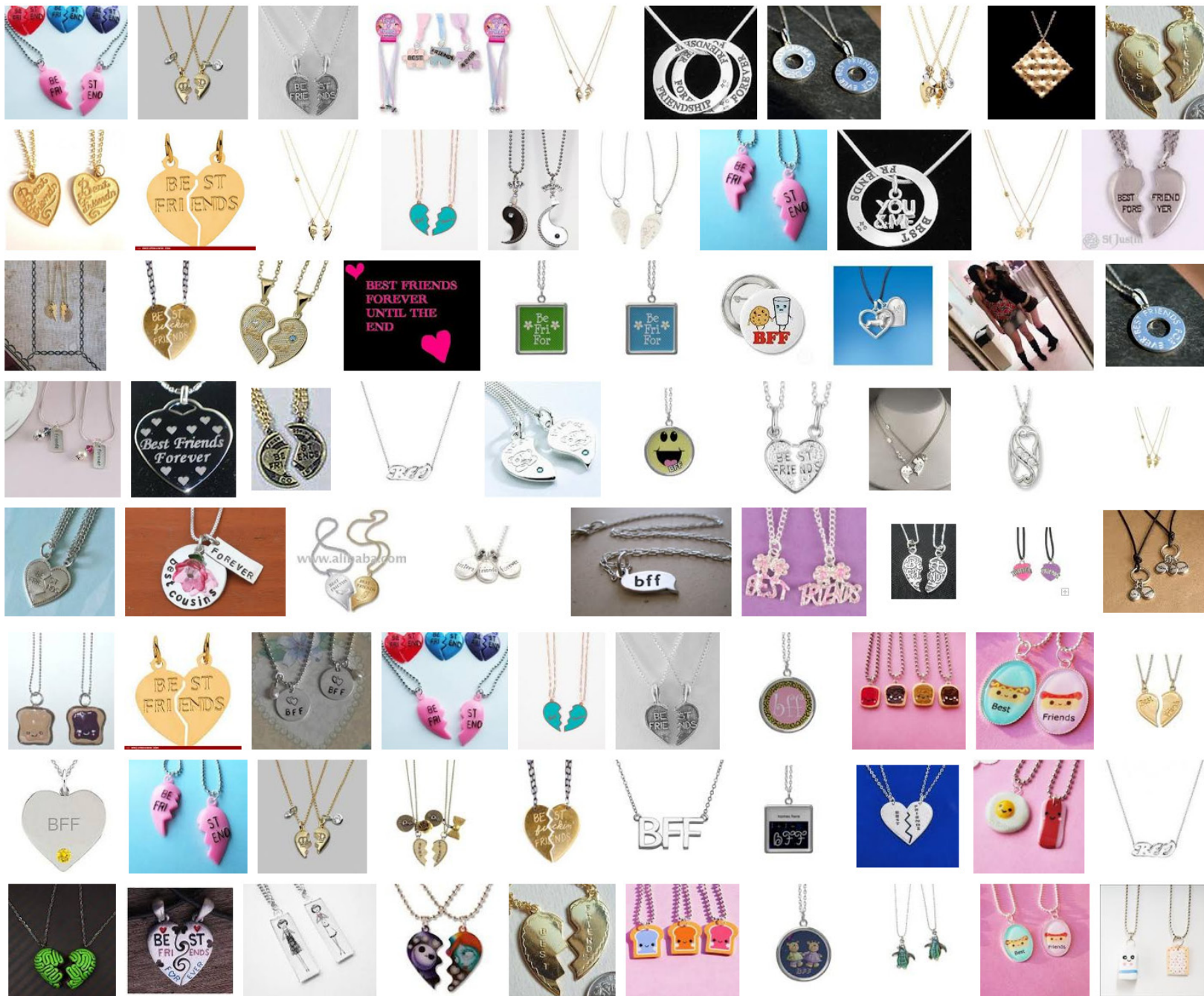


*Windsor*

*Detroit*

*Best  
Friends  
Forever*







**GETTING  
LOST IN MANY  
PLACES: IN  
NUMBERS &  
COORDINATES**









We all explore neighbourhoods, districts, and cities to find the things that truly define these regional areas as places. Neighbourhoods and the houses that reside in them become the places where we broke our arms, learned to drive, and heard that one song for the first time. Coffee shops, parks, bike trails, all become important finds, areas of adventure.

All of these places are of course mirrored in any city, but they are nuanced by the people that live there.

International neighbours Rosina Riccardo and Erin Marie McDonald created a scavenger hunt spanning both sides of the border. They each chose a variety of locations in their respective cities that they felt best captured the nuances of place. In exploring these locations, on both

sides of the border, we can begin to understand the things that go into truly shaping our experiences -- the small, intimately defined subtleties of architecture, geographies, and spatial memories we have collectively come to know.

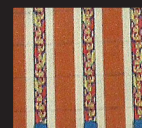
The following pages contain coordinates of the places that Riccardo and McDonald chose as areas of importance. We invite you to input these coordinates into a GPS device, and explore these areas yourself. It's a chance to kick start new adventures explore new areas. Look for a Quick Response code (QR code) in these locations, scan it and share your thoughts and experiences with others who have participated.



42°18'  
42.06"  
N 83°03'  
41.28"W



42°21'  
01.47"N  
83°03'  
37.25"W



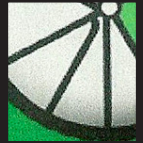


42°19'  
06.13"N  
83°00'  
32.91"W



42°24'  
46.36"N  
83°03'  
38.89"W

42°19'  
50.30"N  
83°01'  
54.70"W



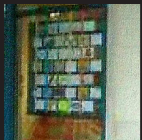
42°20'  
43.65"N  
83°02'  
23.84"W







42°19'  
59.82"N  
83°01'  
35.52"W

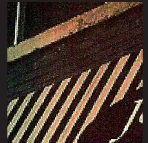


42°19'  
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83°02'  
24.66"W

42°24'  
46.36"N  
83°03'  
38.89"W



42°24'  
46.36"N  
83°03'  
38.89"W





42°18'  
44.72"  
N 83°00'  
18.98"W



42°19'  
28.60"N  
83°00'  
46.26"W











**A  
MESSAGE  
BETWEEN, BUT  
WHAT TO SAY?**





We know the border to be a physical barrier because we experience it as such. We see a city across a river and we can imagine it as a place not so unlike the place where we live. We wonder what might be said across a distance when we are uncertain of who may be receiving that message.

So, we hold up a bright sign with an incomplete message. We ground a psychic process to a physical place. We enact a quiet gesture to suggest the possibility for larger actions that interrupt a long-standing dynamic.















# LAYER CAKES, IMPOSSIBLE PLACES & SIGNS OF THE BORDER





Layering two places doesn't make them one, but maybe, just maybe, it can help us see through space, see across a border line, see one place from two.



















OSOR  
ANADA

McLeod

CAESARS  
WINDSOR

P  
TAXIS EXCEPTED  
11PM-3AM

TUNNEL BAR-B-Q

BAR-B-Q International Award Winning

NO  
LITTER





There is no way to cross the border without a form of motorized transportation.





A headline from early 2011 regarding proposed changes at the border -- later in the year, headlines describe a \$1 billion pact to bolster US/Canadian security.

# DEFINING THE DRIVE-THRU: EXPLORING CITIES BY CAR









## 1. Driving structures (drive-thru, drive-by, drive-in)

The Detroit-Windsor area was one of the world's first urban regions to be built around the automobile. These cities are marked by an array of driving structures--not simply freeways, avenues, tunnels and bridges, but also baroque overpasses, drive-thrus, parking lots and ramps.

This endless expanse of pavement and concrete was established in league with the auto industry to enable non-stop driving. But as the city sprawled it also developed new loops and routes in the suburbs thus leaving behind traces of its earlier, protean driving formations. Our driving tour of the border cities was a kind of urban archeology of driving structures, some in use, others entirely abandoned. As psychogeography is a practice based upon the

act of walking, our driving tour evolved as an unorthodox version of a *dérive* to make strange the everyday presumptions of driving culture that we ignore or take for granted when thinking about the urban fabric that connects the cities of Windsor and Detroit.

The driving tour aimed towards a fine-grained examination of driving structures as a kind of hierarchical environment that was originally designed to be passed through on the way to another place. While these patterns of traffic flow enabled mobility for some it also made a hostile environment for those on foot. But most interestingly and most hopefully, many of the places we visited were drive-thrus that have been re-purposed, thus subverting the implicit concept of a drive-thru as a place of efficiency and immediate consumption. For example, Donut Villa is no longer a drive-thru: it has for some time been a meeting place





in Mexicantown. Behind Michigan Avenue's abandoned drive-thru liquor store we encountered an impromptu block party in the parking lot. And off Jefferson Avenue, a man who parked his car only to approach the drive-thru ATM on foot.

## 2. Donuts

In Canada we tend to conflate drive-thrus with donuts as our one of our contemporary symbols of postmodern nationhood has formed through this association. We had initially planned to begin at the Tim Horton's drive-thru on Huron Church Road, but due to mechanical difficulties we had to skip our first stop. This particular location seemed like the natural habitat for the 1993 Chrysler minivan (which served as the concept vehicle for our driving tour) as drive-thrus

and minivans began to gain popularity simultaneously during the 1980s.

After passing through U.S. customs, one of our first stops was Donut Villa, about a mile west of the Ambassador Bridge. Donut Villa is a complex place: it is set up like a drive-thru as the building is centered in the middle of a large parking lot with prominent directional arrows leading from the street and around the back of the building. However at some point in Donut Villa's history, the drive-thru window closed and it now hosts its patrons in a restaurant area that can only be accessed from the sidewalk. It seemed like a very local place as the patrons looked like fixtures and the clerk behind the counter appeared confused when we entered. The donuts were stellar. We bought six different kinds with the hopes of finding the appropriate donut shape to represent an aerial view of the international suburban donut pattern of the



Detroit-Windsor area.

### 3. Detroit-Windsor border as drive-thru

The Detroit-Windsor area is the busiest crossing between the U.S. and Canada; it is also one of the few open international land borders that cannot be traversed on foot or by any means other than motorized transport. While the security conditions of the last decade have seriously slowed the traffic passing between the two countries, the border here was effectively established in the 1930s as a kind of drive-thru structure with uni-directional traffic lanes, kiosks with sliding windows and standardized interactions all to maximize efficiency. These spaces were designed to be passed through rather than as destination points in their own right and although the border infrastructure

has been significantly expanded and retrofitted to include 21st century surveillance technologies, it still has the underpinnings of a drive-thru.

The two border crossings can be seen to form a loop in the centre of the donut hole.









WHAT'S YOUR  
REASON FOR  
VISITING  
TODAY:  
STORIES AT  
THE BORDER





00:00:28 What do you do Clara? 00:00:30 I work as a museum conservator at Henry Ford Museum in Dearborn, Michigan. 00:00:35 And your current citizenship? 00:00:36 I'm a dual US/Canadian citizen. 00:00:40 So what, in your opinion, are the main issues we have in Detroit? 00:00:49 The main issue, in my opinion, is a lack of good public transportation for the citizens of Detroit. 00:01:01 Okay, here's a side question: Do you think that the lack of transportation in Detroit affects people crossing the border from Detroit into Windsor? 00:01:10 Yeah, it's true. If 25% of the population of the citizens of Detroit don't own a car, in the auto city that we are, then how can they come over to Windsor? Well, the other factor frankly is 9/11 and the clamp down at the border. Co-workers of mine used to love to come to Windsor and regularly came to restaurants on Erie street or downtown. They still fondly recall. But they have not been to Windsor in 10 years and they're constantly telling me at work "I used to go to Windsor, but I don't anymore" because it's too much of a pain to cross now. 00:02:09 How often do you cross? 00:02:10 Everyday for work. And often on weekends and evenings. 00:02:24 How do you feel when you're crossing the border? You were just saying that some of your friends haven't crossed in 10 years. Do you feel that sort of intimidation? 00:02:30 Well no. I'm a well traveled gal. I don't have anxiety. I often on a long commute home will feel a sense of relief when I get back to Canada, you know? And there's been instances where, like when the guy died on the bridge. Do you remember that? When he fell into the water? They shut down the bridge for 5 or 6 hours right at commuting time and so the traffic was backed up for miles and miles and I did have this moment like "Oh my God, what if I can't get home?". It did make me think about what would happen if there was a terrorist act on the bridge and what if I

couldn't get home? I have a sister that lives in Dearborn so it's not that big of a deal but, you always still think I would rather be in Canada. 00:03:17 You were mentioning as well since you have a Nexus pass they check you more often. Or they put you in the random search more often? 00:03:25 Well I've been told that since I have the Nexus card that I qualify for two random searches. So I could be called over for compliance, which is a random search. Or I could be called over just because. 00:00:05 So which side do you find harder to cross? 00:00:08 Well the US side is. I think that could be statistically proven. (laughs) 00:00:18 Have you noticed a differences lately? Between the two borders? 00:00:20 What do you mean by lately? 00:00:22 Well especially since you've had to have a passport. Have you seen a difference in security? 00:00:29 Sure, I mean that's true. When I was your age, we could cross the border without necessarily even having ID on our person. As a kid, I definitely needed no ID. They would ask us, "Where were you born?" and you'd say "Hotel Dieu hospital". And they could tell by the way you said it that you were a Windsorite and they didn't care. They'd know you were from Windsor. But yeah, it's dramatically changed since then. And even since I started work. I've been working over there (Detroit) for 20 years. They're just more chatty, they ask more questions, they ask questions in a different way. Yeah, they're very well trained. 00:01:38 Do you have any notable stories you want to tell us? Anything that comes to mind? 00:01:54 Okay, I'll tell you a nice story because people never tell those stories. It's kind of nice but not necessarily for me. So I got pulled over into secondary and there's about ten people waiting in line, which is time consuming. They've got to check you in, they want to look at everybody's ID. They're doing like Interpol searches on people, for all I know, right? So the guys are behind the counter taking care of people.

And in come a little family who are only speaking french, they're Quebecois. They don't speak English. And all amongst the border guards behind the counter, they're all talking to each other, "Who speaks french here? Anyone speak french here?". A lady calls out from the back of the room, "I know french, but I'm about to go on my break". And they go, "well could you take care of this family?". So I'm the tenth person back in line and I'm thinking in my head, "How do I say in french 'Moi, je parle francais. J'aimerais aider v'il vous plait. Alors que je peux aller plus vite dans la line merci beaucoup!', you know? And I'm thinking what the heck! But here's an example, you know they had no obligation to service this family in french, but they did! And they put them ahead of all the regular border commuters. 0:03:19 That's a nice border story. I like that. 00:03:23 I've got plenty of the other kind believe me. I get pulled over all the time. 00:03:30 Do you have problems bringing stuff over as well? Do you bring a lunch? 00:03:32 Well they ask. You just have to be honest obviously. Being caught in a lie is worse than not. 00:03:40 I could only imagine. What would you do to improve the crossing? If it was up to you. What would you do? 00:03:48 Umm, I would make the Nexus card actually count for what it is. They changed the rules even on the Canadian side. Apparently, you can now import goods, if you declare them. Which slows down the line for the rest of us. So it's not really a fair policy. My feeling on the Nexus is that the Americans don't like it and barely regard it. You don't have the Nexus, so you might not be aware of my resentment. But here I am supposedly in this "elite" line, moving faster, but I'm watching the other lanes, you know, go by before me on any given day. Over all, I guess it is slightly quicker, but they ask the same questions. They ask me my citizenship every day. Because you need to declare your citizenship. They

want to hear me say “I’m an American”, even though my Nexus says Canada on it. 00:04:46 That’s interesting, because, yeah they know when you cross the bridge as oppose to the tunnel, right? I’ve heard multiple stories of people being asked “Oh well why are you crossing the bridge today?” You’d expect that they’d actually know who you are if you’re crossing that frequently. 00:05:00 Well that’s exactly why they’re asking you. It’s like basically the attitude is trust no one. Seriously, just because they see your face every day, they’re still trying to figure out what you’re up to. 00:05:19 Another big thing we’re talking about in this publication is portals. Portals between Windsor and Detroit. So what do you think? If you could put portals in the city, where would you put them? Do you think it’s a good idea? 00:05:32 You’re talking about portals like architectural monuments? 00:05:34 Well it’s kind of an imaginary thing. What if it was that you didn’t have to wait in line at a border to cross. What if you could just jump into a portal and end up whenever you wanted to be in Detroit and vice-versa. What if there was no border that existed? 00:05:54 Well you know, I do live my life that way. We will still say “**Lets go to Mexican Town for dinner**”, and jump into a car and go to Mexican Town for dinner. I mean, the border, this is why when people bring up the issue of the border, I disregard it. It’s not a topic of conversation. If you’ve got a story about a difficult border crossing, I’ve got let’s say 100. I’ve been crossing every day. So it doesn’t matter to me. As many times as you have a difficult crossing, you’ll have an easy crossing in my mind. People remember the bad stories and unfortunately that’s how they live their lives. I don’t live my life that way. I’m over there, I’m doing stuff over there. If I couldn’t go to the DIA, if I couldn’t go out to dinner, if I couldn’t see my family and friends. Forget about it. Don’t make a big deal about it. Carry

proper documentation, tell the truth and look at the person in the face. That’s all they want. 00:06:59 So to you the border doesn’t actually exist? 00:07:01 I try. I mean there’s no denying I’m living on this side and working on that one but it doesn’t matter. I don’t think it should matter. It’s shocking how much it matters. 00:07:25 I think a lot about this project. The publication is called “How to Forget the Border Completely” and it’s kind of interesting that you’re already there. I think that’s kind of the point of the book. 00:07:40 Right, well I have relatives who don’t like to cross. I have other relatives who plan regular shopping trips. It’s a big deal to do their shopping over in Detroit. The political opposition, the “I’m not going to go to a country that’s at war with Iraq and Afghanistan” to me is like a little misguided. People go to China, same kind of deal. 00:08:20 If you could change customs literature, how they react to you. Like the citizenship thing, do you think you would want to make it easier to cross? 00:08:36 When I hear people talking about this, the Fortress America, or the North American continent, it’s considered as one zone, **I love the sound of that**. I don’t see why not. It truly makes us the 51st state or whatever, but it’s essential for economic reasons, I think. If Windsor doesn’t think it suffered because of the change at the border, well we have. I’ve seen it. You in your adult life have maybe seen the tail end of that. I’ve seen places like Motor Burger reinvent itself because of the lack of US clientele. It’s a different kind of clientele that is still coming over from Detroit, but there’s less of them. So, Windsor has to adapt. 00:09:30 I think in our downtown too, you get a lot of 19 year olds coming down. 00:09:38 Yeah, totally. They’re driving all the way up from Ohio on a regular basis. The coworkers I have that are your age. That’s their knowledge of Windsor: getting drunk here. It’s like thanks a lot! They say it’s a nice city and

you ask them what they did and they said they went drinking and smoked cigars. 00:10:14 It’s interesting to see the layers of economy Detroit brings over to us. 00:10:18 Yeah, well they like Windsor! They always talk about how quaint it is. A coworker of mine used to always tell me that they thought Windsor was a great place to raise children. Oh okay yeah, sure. 00:10:42 I don’t think you see them as being that different. Do you think you’re colleagues do? 00:10:44 Oh Windsor and Detroit? They’re shockingly different. Shockingly. How much driving around Detroit have you done? **Have you been to the Heidelberg Project? Maybe I should take you on a tour.** The houses are the same. This is the weird thing. The housing stock is the same, but in Detroit, they’re ghetto. On my drive home from Dearborn, I drive on city streets, near the train tracks, I pass by like 5 burnt down houses. 00:11:35 I guess the population distribution is much different in Detroit than it is in Windsor because I looked at density maps and inner city is all the people who live there, there’s like a 25% unemployment rate or something ridiculous. 00:11:54 Yeah I wouldn’t want to live there. 00:12:01 Windsor is nice in that sense. I don’t know if quaint is the right word though. So what are your favourite places in each city? 00:12:05 Oh my God. Okay. Umm...Well the DIA, the Heidelberg Project. These are the places I would take tourists or foreign visitors. The Eastern Market, the Fisher building, Green Field Village if they had a day or two. Let’s see. Belle Isle, Detroit Zoo! I wish Windsor had a zoo. I wish Windsor had a botanical garden. What do I do in Windsor? I go to restaurants. I like my garden. I mostly hang out with family and friends. Culturally, I use Detroit. Mostly just restaurants in Windsor. Eat in Thailand, Motor Burger etc etc. 00:14:20 Is there a specific neighborhood in Detroit that you think is safe? 00:14:29 I don’t feel unsafe anywhere. I figure

there's always going to be somebody around who's not against me. 00:15:35 Do you think what's happening in Detroit can be a model for other cities? The relationship between Windsor and Detroit. 00:15:45 I think the project you guys are doing is great because I feel like there should be more connection. Between artists especially. There's this huge do-it-yourself movement. Do you guys know about these make laboratories? They're building one right near my work in Dearborn and they're very excited about it. Is there one in Detroit already? There's a couple. So, people are gathering and cooperatively gathering tools and things to do and make stuff! 00:16:20 The last time I talked to Mr. Petro he was saying that because the houses are so cheap in Detroit, artists are just buying them and using them. I don't think you can see the exact same thing in Windsor. 00:16:31 You definitely can feel a critical mass going in Detroit. The people are reviving that little cork town neighborhood in front of the train station. The juxtaposition of this lively and energetic force in the shadow of this horrible monstrous billionaire cooperation. It's just a beautiful thing. It's drawing international attention as far as I can see. It's ever since the rave culture really. It's all interwoven. I meet these people. Sure their parents live in Canton, Michigan but they are committed to making a go of it in Detroit. It's a cool thing. There's a hunger, that's the thing. You know, maybe in Windsor because of our safe, nurturing environment, of the civil society that is Canada, we have less of the urgency that they're feeling there (Detroit). Why cross? You have to feel that urgency and that want to see what's going on and happening in Detroit. 00:18:20 I think the city will come back. 00:18:25 Well it's not going to go away. The buildings are there whether they're occupied or not. Whether they grow trees out of the roof or not. They're going to be there.

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JOSH: So yeah, I guess just a brief synopsis of what you do on a daily basis, or what you have been doing for the past few years. KERO: I'm a sound and video artist. I do multimedia art and graphics for various clients such as the "Butt Hole Surfers". JOSH: So just commercial work to pay the bills? KERO: Both. A lot of art and commercial clients. JOSH: Alright, so we're going to get onto more border based questions. What is your citizenship? KERO: I'm a Canadian citizen, born in Windsor. I moved over to the States in elementary school and I got a resident status over there. So it's a Green Card. JOSH: How often do you cross the border? KERO: I cross the border 3-4 times a week. JOSH: Do you usually stay in Detroit for awhile, or is it a brief thing? KERO: I stay there overnight sometimes. My parents live over there. JOSH: How do you feel when you usually cross, do you feel confused, vulnerable or scared? KERO: I feel really scared because it feels like almost military like. Like if I say something wrong I'll get handcuffed for something. It's just out of a movie almost, scary feeling. JOSH: Why do you think it's not like that on our side? KERO: I think the Canadian side is a lot more friendly and not as paranoid because they don't have anything to worry about. The Americans are always afraid since everyone hates them in the world. Seems like they're just paranoid, somebody is trying to do something to them all the time. JOSH: Have you ever had any trouble crossing the border? Recently, or in the past? KERO: Yeah, I seem to always get in trouble at the border but nothing to make me not be able to cross the border anymore. **Maybe it helps because I have a resident alien card for over there,** so for instance, I crossed the border just recently with

a film director from Germany and they pulled us in, they searched us, threw her up against the wall because she didn't understand what they were saying and they damaged some of her equipment. Just for no reason pretty much. JOSH: So they searched you guys and the vehicle too? KERO: Yeah, they searched us and put me in a holding cell for a while, while they searched her. They had to find some kind of person that could talk to her better. JOSH: Because she spoke fluent German? KERO: Yeah, she was good in German. And, yeah, they're just really rude there. Pretty much every time I cross the border there's some sort of issue but I always get to cross. **They just give me the military interrogation, screaming at me, telling me to empty out my pockets,** going through my car, having the dog in there. I don't know why. JOSH: So you still get pulled in sometimes? KERO: I get pulled in almost every time, yeah. For maybe 10 minutes – 15 minutes. They look through my car, tear it apart. They always pull the stereo out for some reason, and then they just let me go. JOSH: Doesn't that get frustrating? I mean you've been across there like I can't even count how many times. KERO: Yeah, thousands of times and they know me by name there. I don't know if my car is flagged for no reason but they definitely have a problem with me at the border. **Cause I get pulled in a lot there.** JOSH: How long was the first ordeal you were talking about, with your German friend? Was that like a few hours or? KERO: It was about an hour. JOSH: If you're on a time line that's pretty bad. KERO: There's another story where I crossed the border, this was the fifth time crossing this week and I was visiting relatives. This happened like last month. I got pulled in and they told me to give them my cell phone and they took my cell phone and started going through my pictures. They found something in there and all of a sudden 3 cops came up to me with their guns drawn.



They pulled me into the back room and they were strip searching me and they took everything off and asked "Do you know why we did this to you?" I'm like I dunno, maybe you found something in my car, I dunno. And they said "Well we went through your cell phone and found some pictures of some illegal narcotics." And I was like I don't have anything like that on there and they showed me the pictures and they were just pictures of plants that they thought were like marijuana plants and they were just plants. And I was like those are just some pictures of plants. Then they were like "Where is this located?" and I was like "this is when I was in Europe last month. And if you go through the pictures the pictures before and after it are like famous tourist attractions." They finally figured it out and were like "alright, put all your clothes back on, put everything back on, here's your stuff and go." And they let me go after the strip search from finding some plant on my phone. JOSH: That's insane. It's almost worth not even taking your phone over. KERO: Yeah, so now every time I cross the border I just turn my phone off. JOSH: What if you tell them you don't have a phone on you? Will they try to find one or? KERO: Well I guess they want you to keep the phone inside the car. Like now when you get out of the car they're like keep your phone and your wallet inside the car so they can search it I guess. KERO: What's another thing at the border? Here's a funny thing I had at the border. I crossed the border maybe 3 months ago and I was really frustrated because I was getting pulled in so many times. So I get pulled in and I look around and it was like all people from like Pakistan in there and I just was laughing and I go "It's a brown people convention in here!" And they all looked over at me and they all started laughing, except the border guys were not laughing. They just handcuffed me and put me in the room where you get

strip searched and they're like "No more smart-aleck responses!" And going off on me and I just sat in there for about an hour and they let me go. KERO: But I remember they were searching a girl that was probably three years old. A little Indian girl about this tall [hand gesture] with her parents and her parents were sitting there. They were like going through they're baby seat, they had a baby seat for the car. And they were like searching. It was pretty funny. I felt bad for that family. KERO: I think it's just racial profiling, big time. KERO: Definitely not like that on the Canadian side. JOSH: Actually that was my next question, which is pretty obvious. I was just going to say which country's border is more frustrating to cross but obviously the answer is pretty easy. KERO: Yeah, when I come to Canada people say stuff like "Oh, my sister has your picture on her facebook profile as one of her top friends, go ahead." Or something like that. Somebody said that like "oh, my little brother had your sticker on his skateboard, cool, go ahead!" or something like that. KERO: They're all like friendly there it seems like they're not worried about anything coming into the border. I seem to know everyone at the border on the Canadian side. JOSH: Well I think it's probably a small staff, isn't it? And it's probably a pretty high turn over I imagine in the states for custom officers. KERO: I've had a couple problems at the Canadian side but they were mostly mistakes. Like "oh, we didn't realize you were Canadian, go ahead." Cause I showed them my resident alien card. JOSH: Have you seen any changes in the border in your lifetime? KERO: Definitely, there was like a huge change after 9/11. That's when it all changed. JOSH: So you were crossing before then obviously. KERO: Yeah. It's like huge change from almost not even having to need I.D. to like needing all these different kinds of I.D. to cross the border. KERO: It was definitely 9/11 just changed

the whole border crossing scenario. JOSH: And it hasn't changed back either so its not like it was a brief time where things were really strange. KERO: No, no it's like permanent paranoia at the border. Waiting for the next terrorist attack if there is going to be one, which there wasn't ever one, so. JOSH: Do you have any ideas of how to improve the border at all, or make it disappear? KERO: Well I think the best thing to improve a border would be, obviously less paranoia on the staff of the border. And have it easier for you to get through. Maybe people that cross a lot or people that it says that they are from windsor or Detroit in a local border community, they are allowed to cross the border easier. People that have statistics on their computer systems saying they cross the border all the time, they can cross easier? Something like that. If you're doing arts related things, cross the border easier. Even if you're doing work at galleries, or anything related with art be able to cross the border easier. Something like that. JOSH: It seems like you should be able to build up some sort of credit, the more times... KERO: The more times you cross the border the easier it is... that's what you would think? I mean, sometimes its the case like that, like "oh he crossed 3 times this week" and then when I get pulled in they don't search my car as much. They are like "Oh we just searched this guy's car yesterday" and they are looking through it and they are like "go ahead" real quick. but it seems like they have a higher authority that's making them do that like they don't really want to do it. They are just doing it because they have to. JOSH: if there was anything that BCL could do to make it easier for you to cross the border or live in Detroit or Windsor, what would it be? KERO: Get me a Nexus card, or some kind of a.. there's gotta be an artists card or something. Something for artists to cross the border easier? I don't know. I don't know

the border. JOSH: People probably don't cross that often. KERO: Yeah, just because of stress you're going to get strip searched for no reason. KERO: Yeah, I'm hoping one day there will be no border but doubt it. Maybe it will be a little easier to cross the border with some special cards or something. KERO: heard a Nexus Card costs like a thousand dollars or something, not sure. JOSH: Seriously? KERO: Like if you have a Nexus Card you can cross the border like that. JOSH: It's mostly for people who work there, right? KERO: **You can still get them though, if you pay the money.** But that is if you have no problems at the border. JOSH: So you have to have a super clean record to get the Nexus Card. KERO: I mean I have a super clean record but it shows that I've been pulled in like a thousand times and I won't get a Nexus Card for that even though I never got in trouble for anything. KERO: Except for those paint balls guns I got in trouble for that one time. JOSH: That's pretty much all we got here. So everyone's doing a project to imagine what it would be like if the river wasn't here or the border wasn't here, or just something like that. KERO: I'd be thinking there's a lot more homeless people from Detroit hanging out in Windsor, that's for sure. I don't think Windsor would be as safe. JOSH: I guess it's almost like you don't know if you would want that in the first place, its almost necessary evil in a way, it's just a river. Just a short distance away. KERO: I mean there's positive and negative things about the border, you know. Keep the bad people out of here, vice versa. But also keeping the good people out of here.

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00:00:01 So I did my undergrad at University of Windsor, I did a double major with history of political science and my last year, I took an internship class and

I was placed with Berry Corben from the Windsor Police and I did a planning type of internship. I found out that is the direction I want to go. 00:00:22 and how did you get the job here? 00:00:25 The job was basically presented to me through Berry Corben who I did the internship with. **He said there was an opening and he thought I would be a good fit.** He told me to apply and my colleague Carleen, she applied too and it was a full time position that was broken up into two part time positions. She has a master of social work, so the two of us with our two backgrounds came together. 00:00:51 and you guys work well together? 00:00:53 Yeah, we gel pretty well actually. It's a good fit. She does the social engagement piece and I do more of the economic development more planning based things. It's a good fit. 00:01:11 How long have you had this job for? 00:01:14 I've been here since July 2010. It was challenging because you want to get things going because we are **funded by the united way and we are also funded by the grant from the East Windsor Co-Generation centre** on riverside drive, so you have this funding that runs out 2012 and there is certain time limits and it takes 6 months to get a good foundation and understanding of the neighborhood. So we are really starting to get the ball rolling, now. 00:01:51 What are the main issues here? What are you dealing with? 00:01:54 The main issue would be the perception of Drouillard Rd and that's why it is being rebranded as Ford City, bring it back to Ford City. The perception is crime, low income, nothing going on. Some of that is true. **Some of that is there.** The media helps perpetuate these myths. There was an article right when we started, in the Windsor Star written by Francis Willick who labelled the island the "Misfit Toys", which was the big headline on the front page so, that was right off the bat what we were dealing with about a month into the job. 00:02:38 That made

national news, right? 00:02:43 Yeah, it was huge! And here we are going out and doing walks of the neighborhood, introducing ourselves to everybody and they are putting that front page in our face saying, "What can you do?" and nothing will be done, basically. So those were the first things, the main issues. **There is also a high vacancy rate, like anywhere in the city but especially here.** I mean we have all of these store fronts that are connected to residential houses at the back and a lot of them are vacant just waiting for someone to get into, with a lot of absentee landlords. So that's the other big issue, as well 00:03:26 You go to school in Detroit 00:03:28 Yes 00:03:29 Do you see any parallels between Detroit and Ford City specifically? 00:03:31 Yeah i do, I think the parallels between Detroit and Windsor, first and foremost the visual aspect. You drive down Drouillard Rd and you see the vacancies. You see not a lot of activity on in the street. **Even downtown Detroit** there isn't much activity going on. There's places that are just sitting vacant that you see and you say "these are just ripe for someone to take over, there's got to be some sort of energy here because it is just waiting for it". The one difference the housing stock in Detroit is way better meaning, people who want to flip houses or people who want to make a profit have a better chance of doing it because the housing stock is so unique like and beautiful compared to Windsor. There is a unique flavor over there. 00:05:03 How often do you cross the border? 00:05:07 Atleast once a week for class but I travel alot more than that for concerts, meeting with friends from my program and for different events. 00:05:30 **Do you feel nervous or intimidated when you cross the border,** at the border specifically? 00:05:37 Not anymore. When I was younger and I was crossing the border especially with my parents car I felt intimidated because I didn't have much

experience crossing. There's that perception like when you see a cop when you are younger you get a bit tense. I had that same feeling but after I started going over for school I got an nexus card so it kinda gives you more freedom. You are already pre-screened, they know your background. Not so much anymore, I feel comfortable. **A lot of the border guards are funny and they'll talk to you.** 00:06:30 So you've never had any trouble crossing? 00:06:31 Lately? No. When I was younger, going over to concerts they'd pull me in and throw dogs in my car. I know they ask questions to make you say something and then that way they can bring you in. But, nothing recently no. 00:06:52 So would you say that the American customs are more strict than the Canadian customs? 00:06:58 Most definitely, it's night and day. When I go to the states with a nexus they are still interrogating you, still opening your trunk and bringing you in for random inspections more so than the Canadian side. **For example, coming through the Nexus lane, they won't even open up the window, they just wave you through.** The border guards at the Canadian customs are much more relaxed. It's night and day. 00:07:45 Do you have any ideas on how to improve the border crossing experience for yourself or others? 00:07:51 I don't like the idea of being able to travel over the bridge without being screened. Anything could happen, someone could bring something onto the bridge which is an extreme case but you never know. I think that kinda freaks me out a little bit the fact they aren't being checked on the way over. I would reverse that. I would like someone to check them first before they cross the bridge and then if they would like to check them again when they get into the country again. I think that would be my major safety and security change. 00:08:52 Yeah, we've thought of that too. **We think that the only possible reason for that is because the**

**bridge privately owned so they don't really care if the bridge blows up.** 00:09:04 Exactly, the only other reason I could think of is traffic. It would just bog down Huron Line and college and everywhere. If the brighton bridge is built I would love to see an area used for prescreening. 00:09:35 I'm sure they would do that. 00:09:37 It would make the most sense. 00:00:14 If portals existed as a means of evading the border and crossing quicker, where would you put them? 00:00:22 Is there a limit of a number of portals you can have? 00:00:25 No, so any where in Windsor to anywhere in Detroit. Or vice versa 00:00:30 Wow. 00:00:33 So where do you go the most often that would be useful to you? 00:00:37 In Windsor or Detroit? 00:00:38 Both. 00:00:39 Both? Well obviously the main place would be work here in Windsor. I come here a lot to my office. Downtown, it would have to be around just off of Ouellette I would say to the couple of the watering holes I go to. In Detroit, it would have to be at school. I would have to put a portal at school and a portal to some of the concert venues I go to, like on Woodward at the Magic Stick, Majestic and St. Andrews, places I actually use a lot. It would be fun to have them in different neighborhoods too to pop in to like the villages or Boston Heddisons some cool neighborhoods we can pop in there, they are just so fun to gaze at. I love just looking at architecture so, even downtown with all the art deco buildings it would be pretty cool just to pop out and you are at the Guardian Building or something and hang out. In Windsor, it would be cool to have them at the different B.I.A's. **Each B.I.A is pretty unique and I think it would be pretty cool to pop in and out.** I just went to a diner on Ottawa Street, I never go to Ottawa Street it's just too far out of my way and I just realized that there are some great little shops on Ottawa and Erie. So, it would be pretty cool to have

them all the different B.I.A's to be honest. People still have this perception that it is only for Italians like on Erie street, Little Italy and it's not true. Yeah, it would be pretty fun to pop around the B.I.A's. Then go to different areas in Detroit, different neighborhoods like Greek-town, Mexican-town, the Core, Theatre District, Midtown and New Centre it would be cool to do that. 00:02:47 So like one in every neighborhood you are saying. Kind of like a subway stop? 00:02:52 Yeah, exactly. 00:02:54 Awesome. Ok, what rule would you write in to Custom's Legal literature? So, by-laws or laws at the border. If you could write a law, what would it be? 00:03:09 That they have to have better customer service. I think that's the biggest thing. I understand why they aren't friendly, but I think that is one big thing they definitely need to work on that would make it a little more friendly people to people who say "Well, I went to the states but I had a bad experience at the border, I'm not going back because they hassled me." I think that is a shame because there are a lot of great places in Detroit and outside Royal Oak. 00:00:01 I have friends that live in Detroit, that i've met at school. They don't come to Canada, ever. I know of a couple who have gone to Toronto for a weekend with friends. They don't come to Windsor. I think one of the biggest reasons for this is because they just don't know what goes on in Windsor. **They don't have any idea what Windsor offers and for that reason they don't come over.** I think if they had a reason to come over or at least know of a reason they would cross the border. But they don't see any reason to leave Detroit.



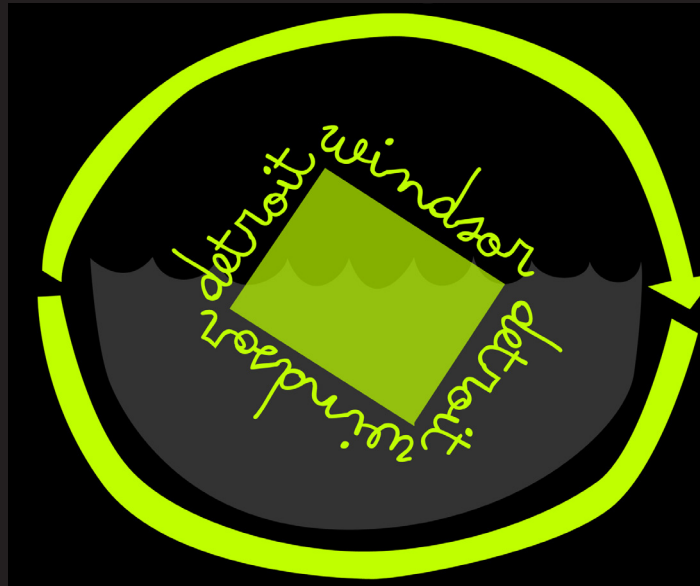




# SMALL CHANGE: MICRO- GRANTS TO CROSS A BORDER









The Windsor-Detroit Border Crossing Micro-Grant was created out of a desire to understand what people would do without a border at all. We gave the public an opportunity to apply and receive a round trip ticket across the border by bus, and the grant was awarded on a first come, first serve basis. We wanted a whole range of people to apply for the grant, people who have crossed before, people who cross once and a while, and people who have never crossed before. We ended up with a surprisingly large and diverse amount of applications. The following is a series of accounts of what those people would do if the border disappeared completely.

From our website,

“Broken City Lab is launching a new micro-grant program and we need you to apply.

As a part of our upcoming publication, *How to Forget the Border Completely*, The Windsor-Detroit Border Crossing Micro Grant gives you the opportunity to cross the Windsor-Detroit border. We’re looking for a variety of experiences gained from crossing the border, so you can cross for whatever reason you’d like. We want people to participate in activities that they would do if there wasn’t a border, and we want all types of people to apply. We want people to get involved who don’t cross often, who do cross often, or who have never crossed before.

The grant is offered on a first come, first serve basis, and comes in the form of a round-trip tunnel bus ticket.”



“The hassle and cost of crossing the border makes going to Detroit a very rare occasion, and as a result, I have never had the opportunity to casually explore the city. Every time that I have crossed the border, it has been with the intention of going to a location, and only that location. I am interested in exploring the city, and investigating the stigmas that it holds.”

*Elizabeth Xu*

“Will be flying into Detroit in October and crossing border to go to Windsor for Homework!”

*Brennan Broome and Chloe Womack*

I play Roller Derby in Detroit and cross a few times a week, a round trip ticket would help out, I wouldn't mind documenting the cross to perhaps help others who are weary of taking the bus realize what a great resource they are missing out on.

*Ash Holman*



I play for the Detroit Derby Girls, we are ranked #13 in the world in flat track roller derby. I take the tunnel bus for every practice and every game!

*Rae Wyatt*

I'm twenty years old and have lived near Detroit all of my life. However, I have never crossed the border before. I've seen Canada from across the river, but don't know much about the country beyond what I've seen from a distance. I guess I'd like to use this opportunity to explore my own backyard.

*Robert Burak*

I am working on my MA thesis, which is a creative look at Windsor's economic failings and what that means for the city's residents, and my reason for wanting to cross the border is very simple: I want to photograph Windsor from the other side, and I want to know what Detroit's residents think of our city now. I haven't crossed the border since childhood, and both cities have changed in the past 20 years. I want to look at how they've changed, starting from street-level.

*Kellie Chouinard*



Detroit, even though with the river that divides us, has had an influence on my life, and has become part of what makes up my home town. I want to cross the border with my bike, and my long standing friend, and begin to explore Detroit downtown and the culture that I have grown up with.

*Miranda Fay + Laurel Rennie*

I cross the border on an occasional basis to attend concerts in Detroit, but I want to have more reasons to cross over (one of my best friend attends Detroit Mercy, explore Michigan, visit Ann Arbor more times). I would like to fully gain my confidence in crossing the border through the Tunnel (as I found, there is less scrutiny when I cross on the Ambassador Bridge). I have been pulled over for inspections at least 4-5 times at the Tunnel Crossings, and the last experience I had in crossing at the Tunnel made me feel insecure and anxious afterwards. I hope to lose this connotation by perhaps, conversing with the American border cops as I would to a good friend.

*Walter Petrichyn*

so i can get racist comments and harassed for an hour and the get my car taken apart,  
my daily experiences...

*Kero*



My 12 yr. old son, has a 19 yr. old sister who lives in Windsor with her Mom. Since the passing of their grandfather and the relocation to New York of their grandmother last year, they have not had as many opportunities to see each other. His sister would often come to the states, but my son has never visited her in Windsor. I would love to receive the grant and change this.

*Tracy Jones*











# THE TACTICS OF ERASURE: HOW TO GO ABOUT CONTINUING TO FORGET



Why imagine something impossible? What do we gain by bending reality and ignoring the inconvenience of 21st century geopolitics? Or, perhaps more importantly, what becomes possible when we forget about all of these things?

Forgetting the border is a tactical response to the situation we encounter living in Windsor, looking at Detroit. Collectively, we long for a different relationship with a community we only casually know. We venture across a border to experience a different culture, a different city, different neighbourhoods, but it feels strange to know that the heart of Detroit is closer to us than the outskirts of Windsor. It is difficult to describe this sense of difference against a geographic reality that would seem to suggest such similarity.

Of course, geography cannot make up for the political and economic histories that have varied between the two cities, but it does create a truly engaging starting place. For all of the ways in which Windsor and Detroit stand apart, somehow we can read echoes across the communities of a time of closer ties.

Stories of frequent visits across a border always paints a picture of Canadians crossing more frequently and likely, rightfully so. Detroit was an urban masterpiece (for a moment) -- architecture, culture, and wealth was built up around the Motor City in parallel to it earning that name and so it would



seem that that impression was left on Windsor in a much different way than the inverse. However, just a decade ago, it feels easy to remember a city distanced only by a bridge or tunnel, and not by an impervious infrastructure that we now face. This hope, perhaps a wish, for a time beyond our collective memory of two cities, two communities that somehow could feel like one, offers a reason to work towards it.

Foundationally, we have tried to generate shortcuts around a set of infrastructures that seem to keep our communities apart. These shortcuts tactically react to the things that increasingly distance two cities by attempting to overreact to the absurdity of daily life at a border city. That it can take anything more than a spontaneous decision to take a 5 minute drive over a bridge or through a tunnel to begin to interact with Windsor or Detroit provides all the reason we need to have invented and imagined and exaggerated our way through this project.

It would be simple to suggest a commitment to crossing, a pact of sorts to interact with the border with some regularity, but we believe that there is a value in creating a space for discussion through exercises in the impossible to really imagine a different future for Windsor and Detroit. Simply, we must do this. Resisting the absurdity of the border requires the impossible.

Continuing to forget the border will enact itself in a daily practice of denial and active resistance. A never ending supply of new impossibilities will be essential. New proposals for larger and smaller tactical interventions that literally erase or forget the border complex will be matched with renewed commitment to cross-border practices of the everyday -- finding reasons to trek across.

Crossing into Detroit means uncovering truly novel things. The bottoming out of Detroit provided remarkable creative opportunities that simply do not exist in Windsor. So, how can we generate a sense of urgency around the communities connecting in a way that does not require the annexation of Windsor into Detroit?

We must rely on invitations. We must discover allies and feed them. We must not think that we need to provide our own sets of art museums, renowned restaurants, or vacant buildings. We must present a story about our city, or more importantly, the people in our city that allows for a reading of this place as an integral part of the fabric of everyday life. Why cross the border at all? No, why acknowledge there's a border to cross. Instead, let's pretend these cities extend over a river.

We forget by actively not acknowledging. We forget by distracting ourselves. We forget by thinking about the things beyond the customs booths. We forget by erasing the border.

It's clear that we must simply do. In conversations that come up formally upon request and at random at a social engagement, it is clear that the border occupies a strange space in our collective imagination. A badge of honour is exchanged as we share stories about the act of crossing a border and then reiterate the rumours from past generations. Perhaps simply doing is simply hosting these conversations under new occasions and understanding that the new occasions might take on any form or shape. Informed by an artistic practice and collective process, we have aimed to forget the border in doing the groundwork through a body of research that offers us an escape, an excuse, from the things that make up the border, when really, we want only to share two cities.



*How to Forget the Border Completely* was generously support by the Ontario Arts Council Artists in the Community / Workplace Program.

Broken City Lab is an artist-led interdisciplinary creative research collective and non-profit organization working to explore and unfold curiosities around locality, infrastructures, and creative practice leading towards civic change. Collectively, we are Justin A. Langlois, Danielle Sabelli, Michelle Soulliere, Joshua Babcock, Cristina Naccarato, Rosina Riccardo, Hiba Abdallah, Kevin Echlin, Karlyn Koeser, and Sara Howie.

*How to Forget the Border Completely* also featured works by Lee Rodney (“Defining the Drive-Thru: Exploring Cities by Car”) and Tom Provost (renderings of “1,000 Pedestrian Crossings” and “Windsor-Detroit Portals”).

For more information, you can visit [www.brokencitylab.org](http://www.brokencitylab.org).



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