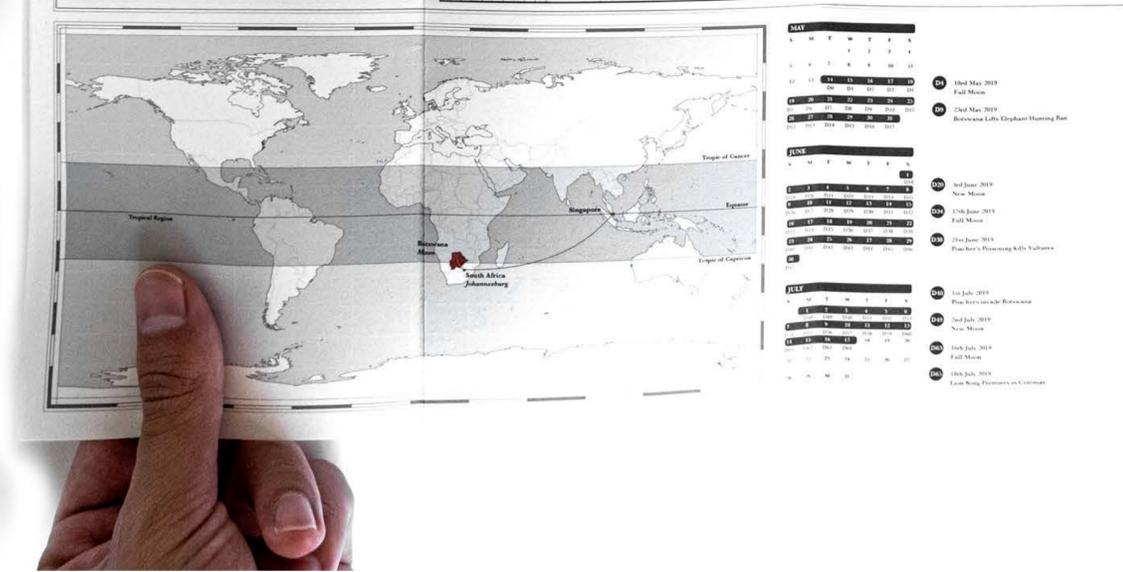
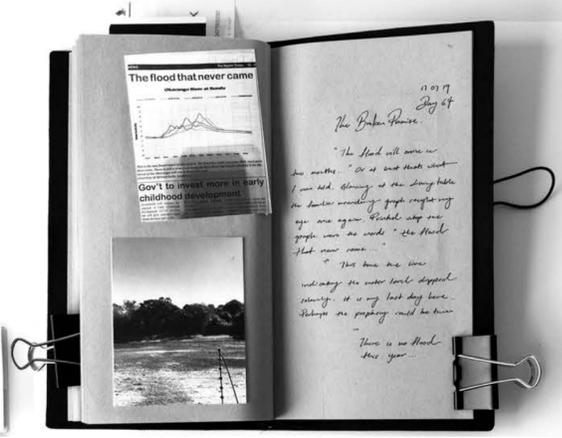
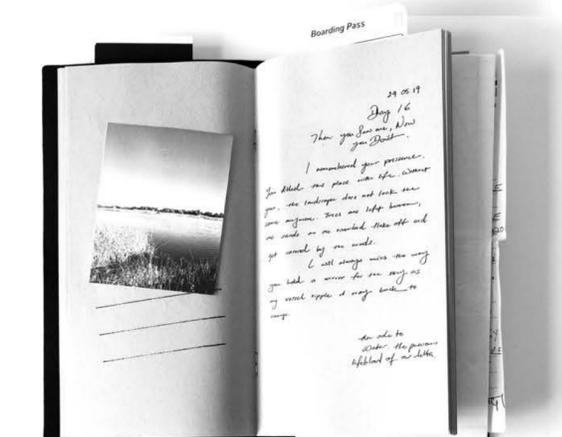
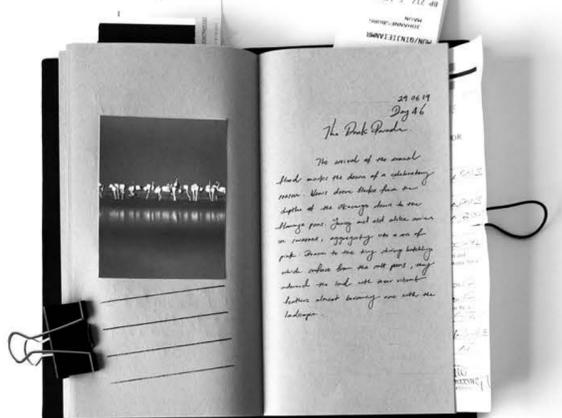


1 The Fabled Landscape

In memory of the magical land



The thesis drew its original inspiration from my two months spent in Botswana, where I was fascinated in how water, nature and myths were intertwined with local culture. Diving into my diary entries, I retraced my various experiences during time spent in the suburban town of Maun.

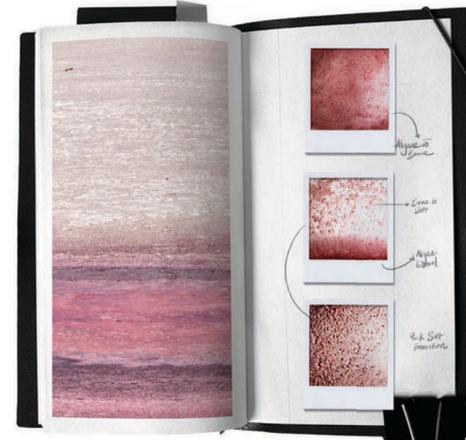
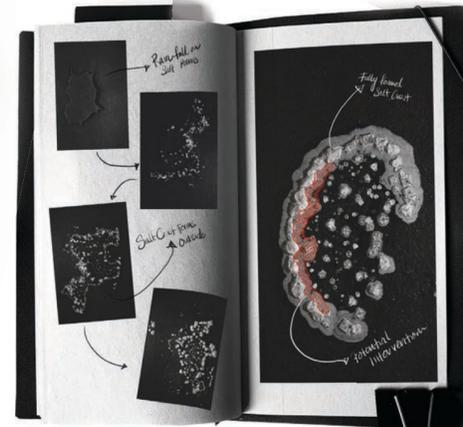
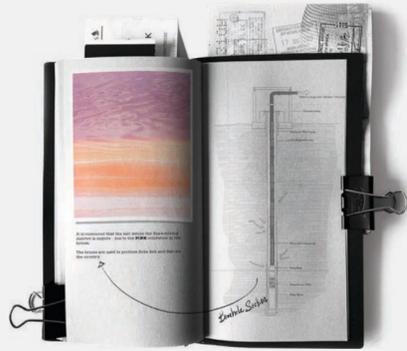
My travel diary began to evolve into a tool for myth-making and storytelling. Through careful recounting of thoughts, stories and experiences, these entries began to reshape the city from my perspective, albeit a traveler's brief sojourn.

As the bushman and early explorers traversed the vast salt plains, they would weave tales around the landscape and its natural phenomena. These tales, folklore and legends – passed down for generations – engender a great appreciation and care for nature. They inculcated the virtues of kindness, love, courage and harmony.

Thereafter, pans, rivers, animals, sky, earth, and later architecture, became bound to legends woven into the Batswana fabric, embedding stories and rituals that live in the memories and imaginations of both natives and visitors. The thesis takes interest in Architecture as a tool for myth-making. Myth here not only enchants but also becomes a critical revelatory instrument nurturing independence and pride.

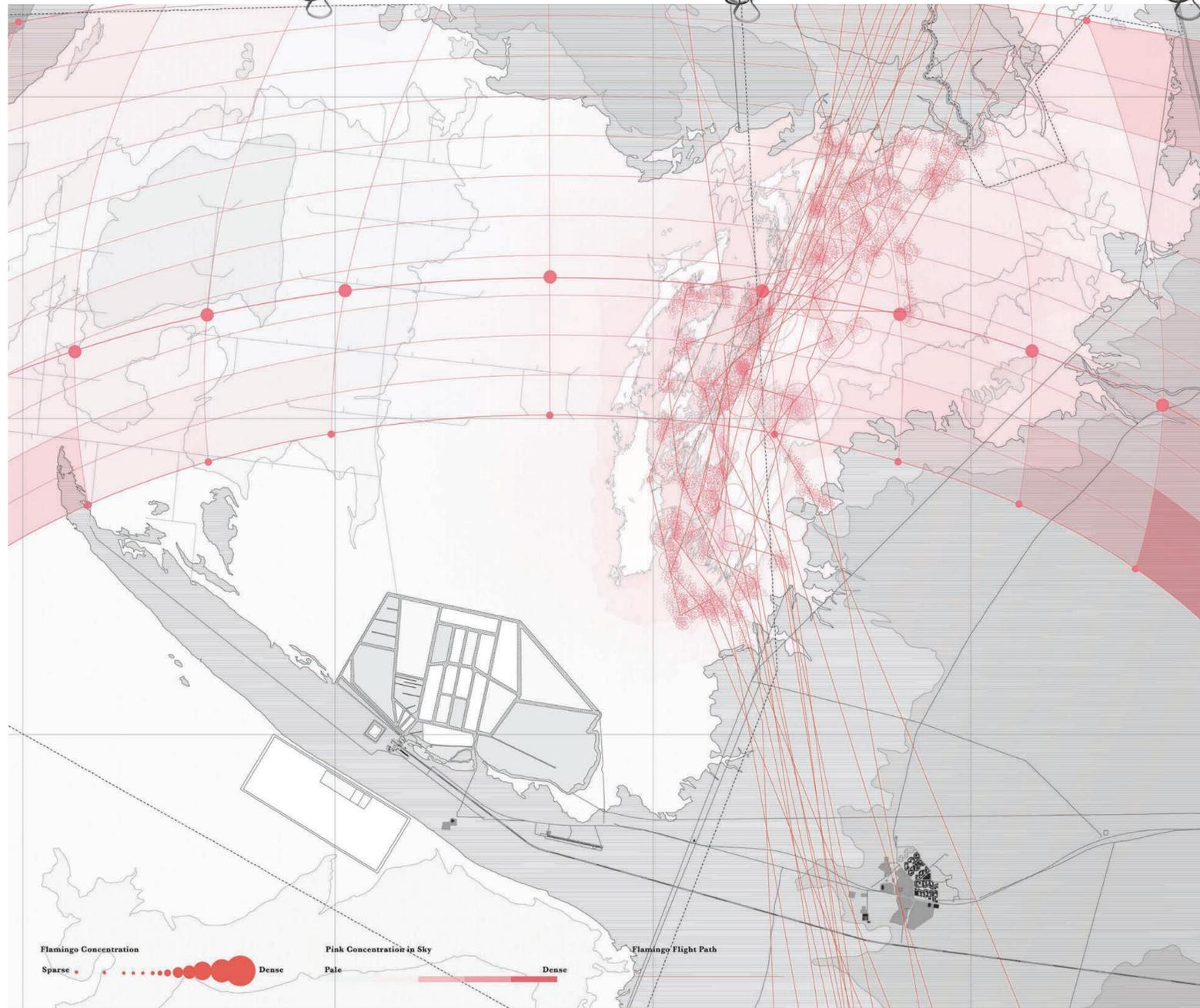
2 The Colored Myth

A Study in Pink



"It was rumoured that in 1993, the American Natural Soda Ash Corporation fabricated a rumour that soda ash produced by Botswana Ash (Botash) in the Sowa mining district was impure due to the pink colouration of its salt brines." Subsequent predatory pricing tactics and soda ash dumping in the Republic of South Africa further threatened the soda ash market. These factors negatively impacted the economy of Botswana and the ecology of the Sua salt pans. Following the decline of the Botswana salt market, Botswana ash was forced to intensively mine to increase its yield and sustain its workers' livelihood.

The thesis is built around a speculative ecological landscape which celebrates the denigrated shade of pink. It is created in an environment of salt, sorghum, algae and flamingoes – ecological agents which now sustain the pink archipelago within which this proposal emerges. The Ethereal City revives native Batswana myths, fables and folklores in its practices. It capitalises on the shades of pink in the seasonal variations of dry and wet so that these natural and ecological constructs become embedded into an architectural narrative and experience. The pink city regards tourism not just as an alternative source of revenue but projects a global image about colour in the larger context of Africa.



Experimental Model

This model is made to understand the process of decanting the colored algae from brine solution to form pink crusted salt layer.

3 Seasons of Pink

The tales of Pink



With each season, the ethereal city emerges in a different shade of pink.

The proposed infrastructure – the Pink Suns, the Rainmakers, and the Pink Springs – draw upon the mix of traditional myths and contemporary science to cultivate pink in the brines, sky, and salt plains. Accompanied by the singing of the Botswana choir, the Pink Suns – the foci of algae farms – harness energy as the choir celebrates a coloured identity in song. Incredibly, algae growth is scientifically proven to be enhanced by singing. Planted in the sorghum fields, the totem-like Rainmakers, each with a rainwater reservoir, sustain the crops. In return, the sorghum stems adorn the rainmaker to filter rain collected for the next season. With the coming of rain, the Batswana locals recreate the Pink Spring of salt springs and salt huts, with help from their Rain God. Visitors to the Sua salt pans, experience this ephemeral and fragile landscape in the transient architecture of the salt huts, which will gradually dissolve into the earth and are cyclically reconstructed.

Framed against the backdrop of flamingoes – whose feathers are coloured pink when they feed on the brines of the algae – the city bursts to life each season in a different shade, accompanied by specific seasonal events, atmospheres, textures and architectures. Antithetical to the overdetermined effects of mass industrialisation, this thesis imagines an architecture, a landscape and a future that returns to reinterpret culture and landscape, as both constructed and organic.



Season of Rain



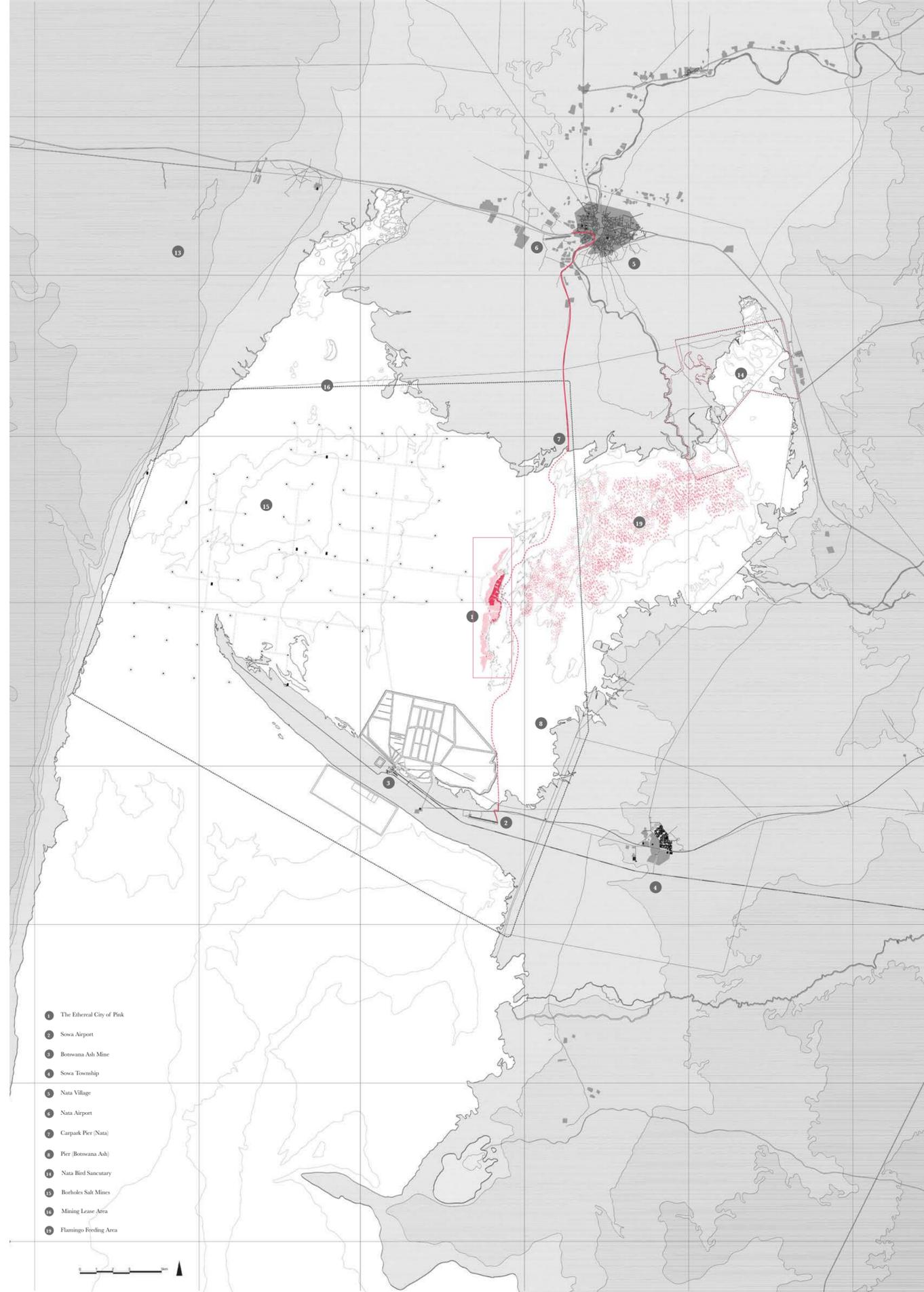
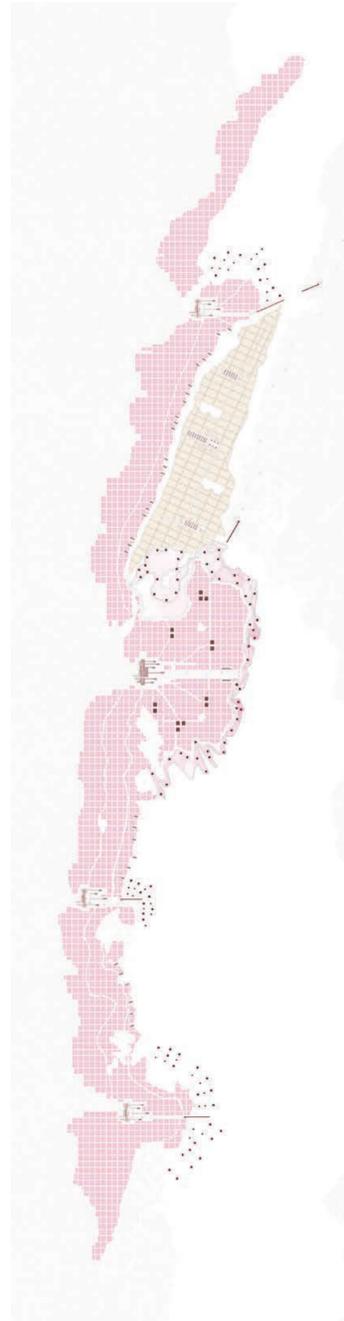
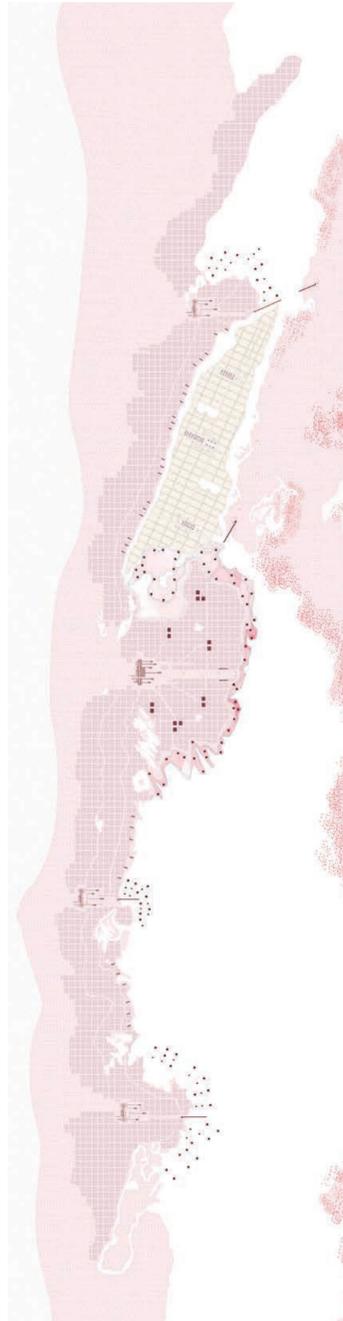
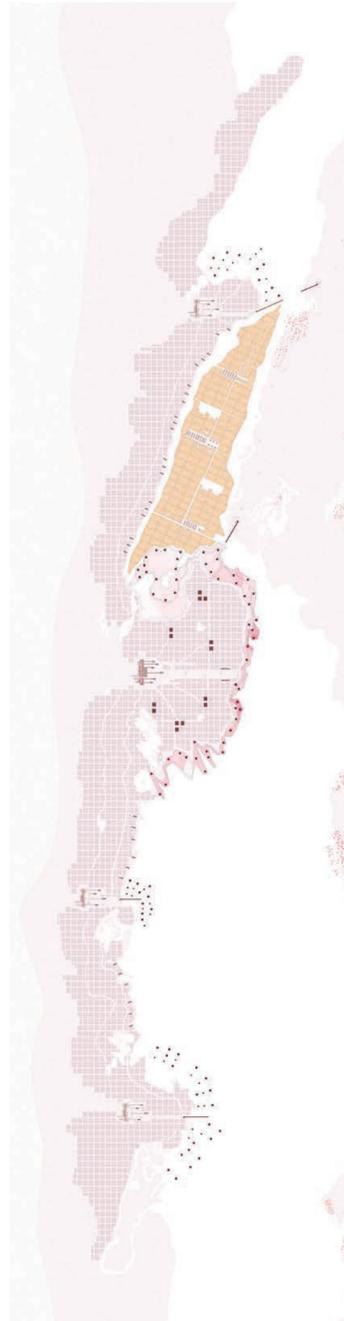
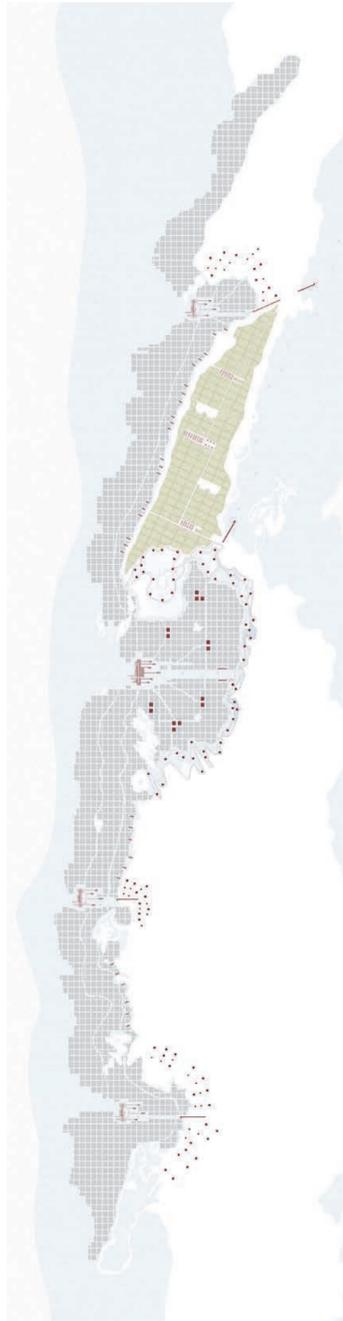
Season of Harvest



Winter Season



Summer Season



- 1 The Ethereal City of Pink
- 2 Sowa Airport
- 3 Botswana Ash Mine
- 4 Sowa Township
- 5 Nata Village
- 6 Nata Airport
- 7 Carpark Pier (Nata)
- 8 Pier (Botswana Ash)
- 9 Nata Bird Sanctuary
- 10 Borholes Salt Mines
- 11 Mining Lease Area
- 12 Flamingos Feeding Area

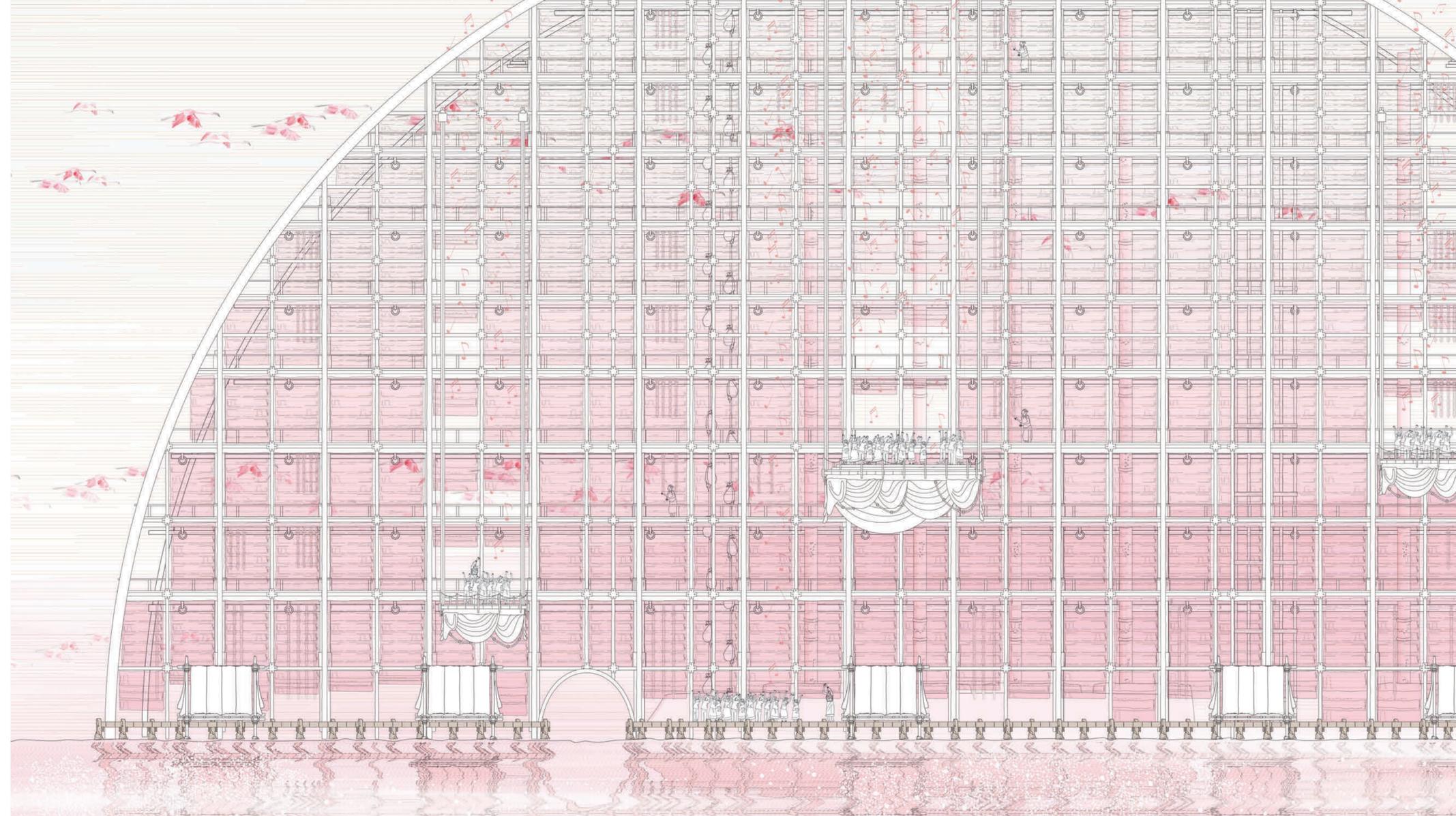
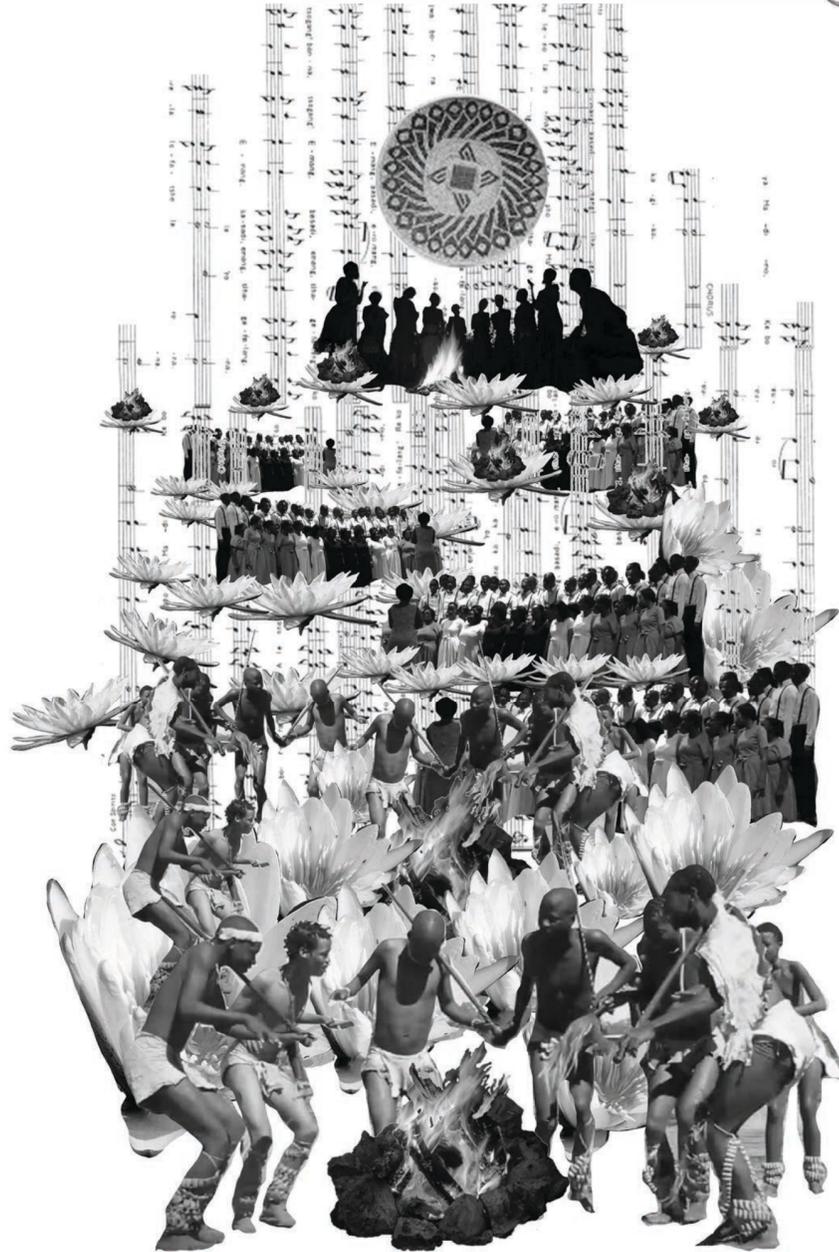
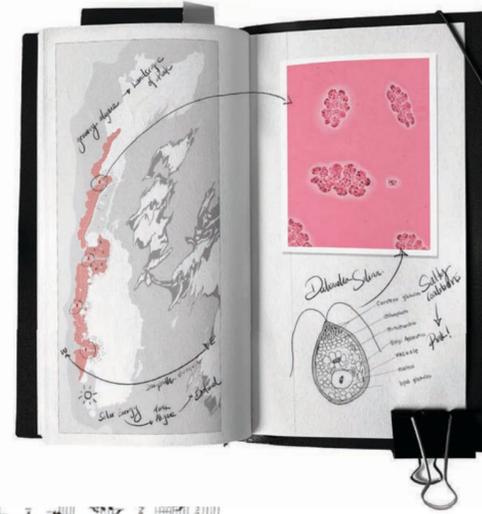


4 The Pink Sun

Algae Photo-bioreactor

The Pink Sun is inspired by the legend of the mythical deity - Nyambi of old Hambukushu tribe in the north western region of Botswana. The myth tells a story of the creation of people from molten earth. It says that people were required by Nyambi to pass through a fire for purification after creation. Dark skinned people are said to have passed slowly through the fire; while light skinned people passed through fast. This myth celebrates purity and colored identity.

The architecture mirrors the form of a half sun above the horizon. The half sun awaits the floodwaters to arrive to complete its circular form. It functions as a photo-bioreactor and a concert stage to catalyse the pink algae growth.



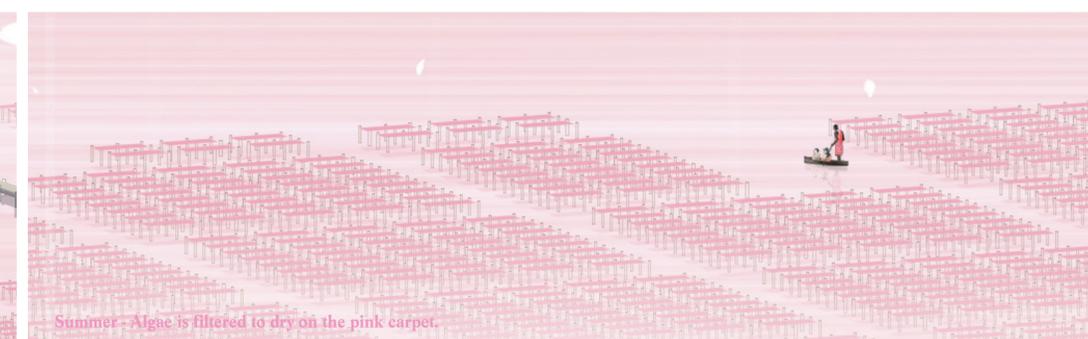
Rain - The Pink Carpet returns to a slate of white.



Storm - The saline waters begin to precipitate pink. Bimingos flock in for their meal.



Winter - Songs by the children choir support algae growth



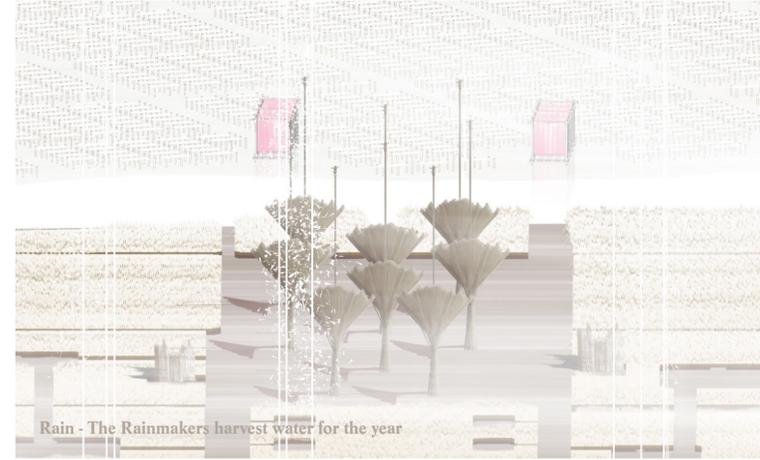
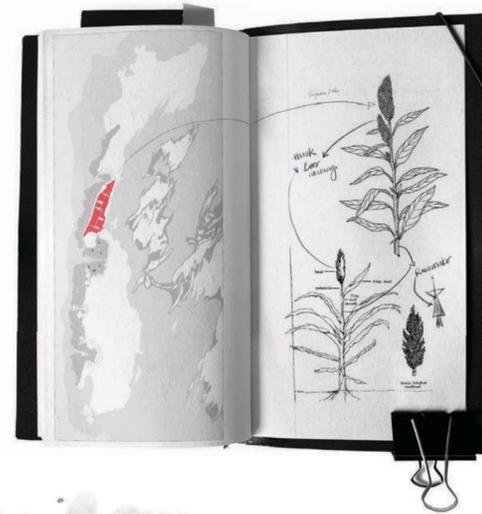
Summer - Algae is filtered to dry on the pink carpet.

5 The Rainmaker

Cloud Seeding Contraption

The Rainmaker is inspired by the story of the deity Mwali and the rainmaker, where the latter is seen to have the power to connect with the deity and call upon the rains. During the driest and hottest season, the tribesman would bring their harvest, cattle and trade to the rainmaker in exchange for rain. Hope escalates as they dance, pounding their feet to the beat of the Djembe. As the dance reaches fever pitch, it is believed that the rains will arrive. The myth cultivates hope and harmony as people pull their resources together, and the heavens open.

The Rainmaker in this project functions as a ground cloud seeding device to which the locals dance around, to seed for clouds and call upon the rain-laden pink sky.



Rain - The Rainmakers harvest water for the year



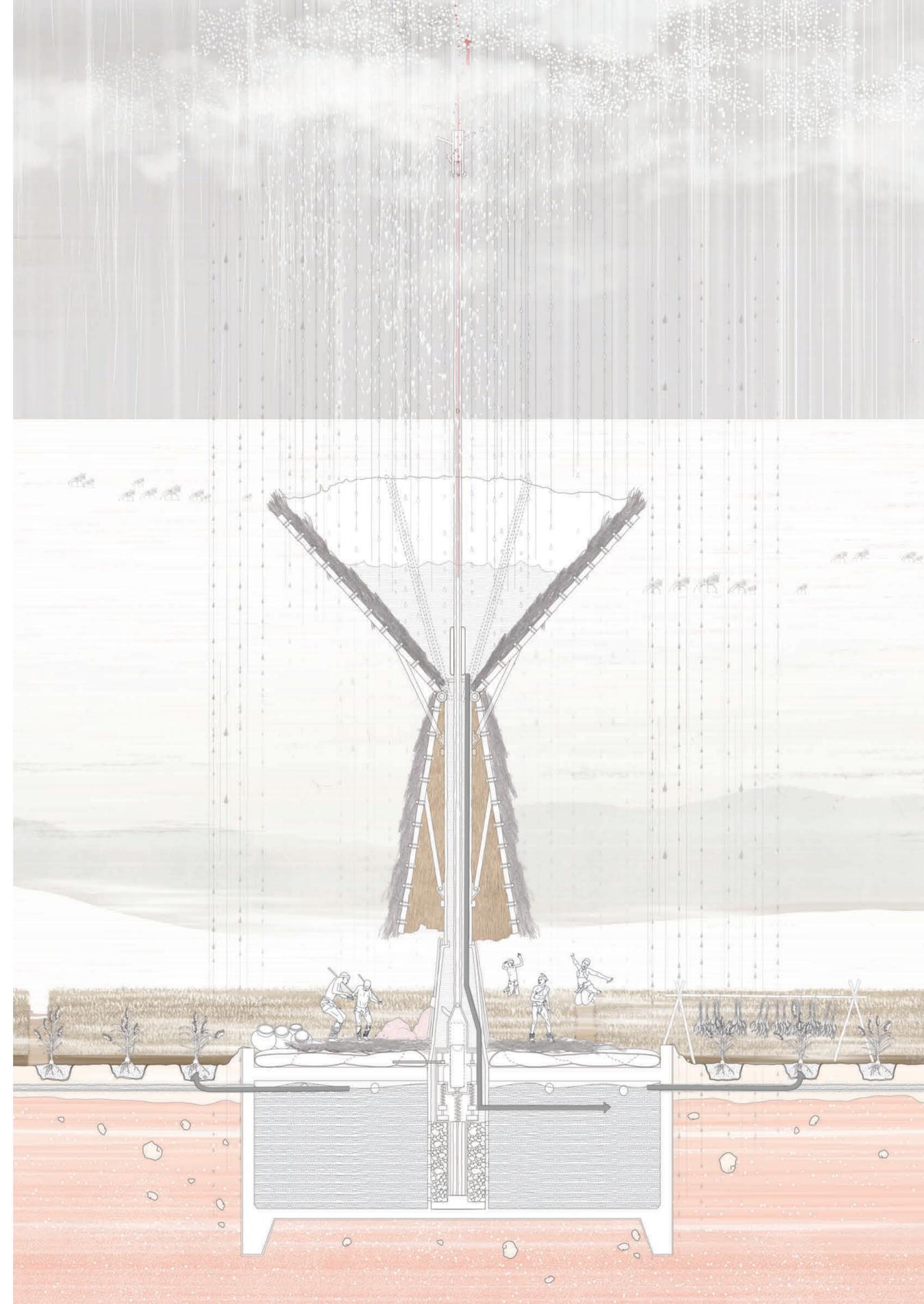
Harvest - The Rainmaker is patched using the harvested stems.



End Winter - The locals plant sorghum for the next season.



Summer - The locals dance for the rain once again.

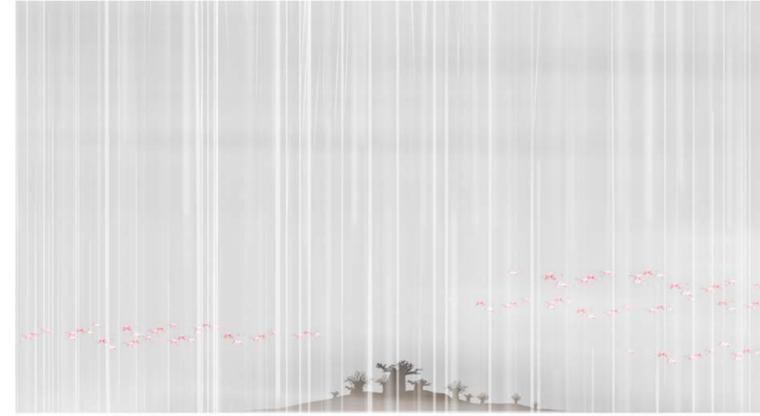
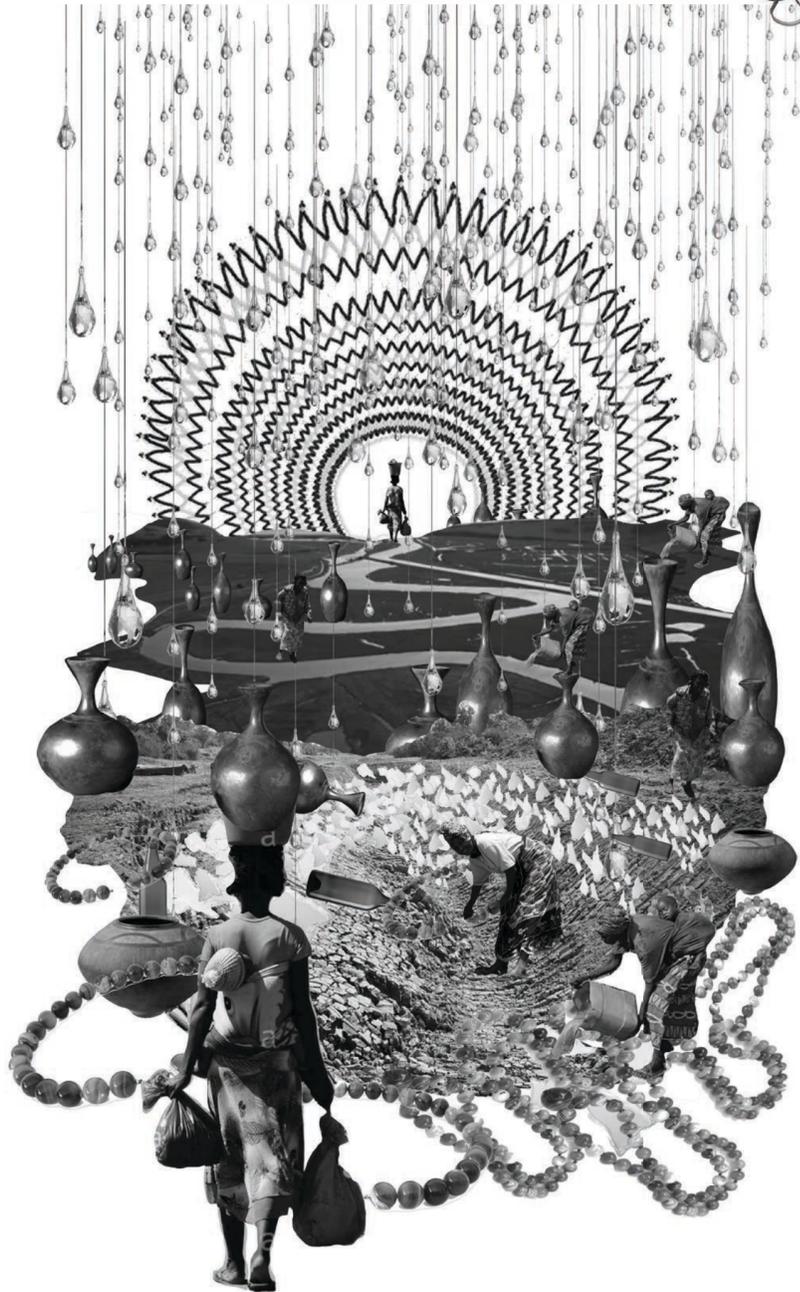
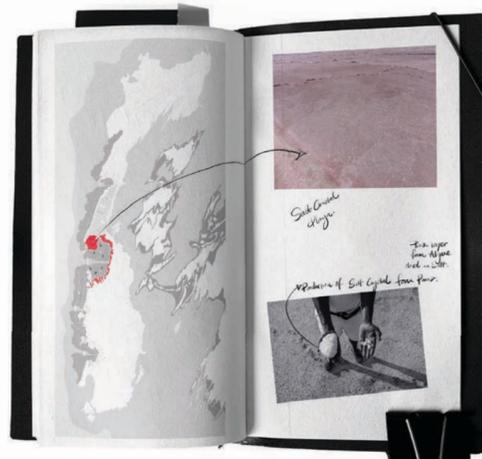


6 The Pink Spring

Salt Lodgings

The Pink Spring follows the folklore of Sekelana and the River Goddess, where the river goddess is believed to bless the land with the annual flood. For that to occur, the women who wove beautiful beads sacrificed these beads to the river goddess. One day the river goddess, offered Sekelana all the jewellery she desired. However, Sekelana refused and only took what she needed. Thereafter, the village was rewarded abundant water supply. The myth speaks of the merits of kindness and service, over greed.

The Pink Spring employs local material to construct accommodations. It requires the building and rebuilding of salt as rain dissolves the water away. It functions as tourist chalets and a salt bath to heal weary travelers.



Rain - Torrents of rain fall upon the salt island washing the salt back to the land



Harvest - Salt is used to rebuild the damaged huts



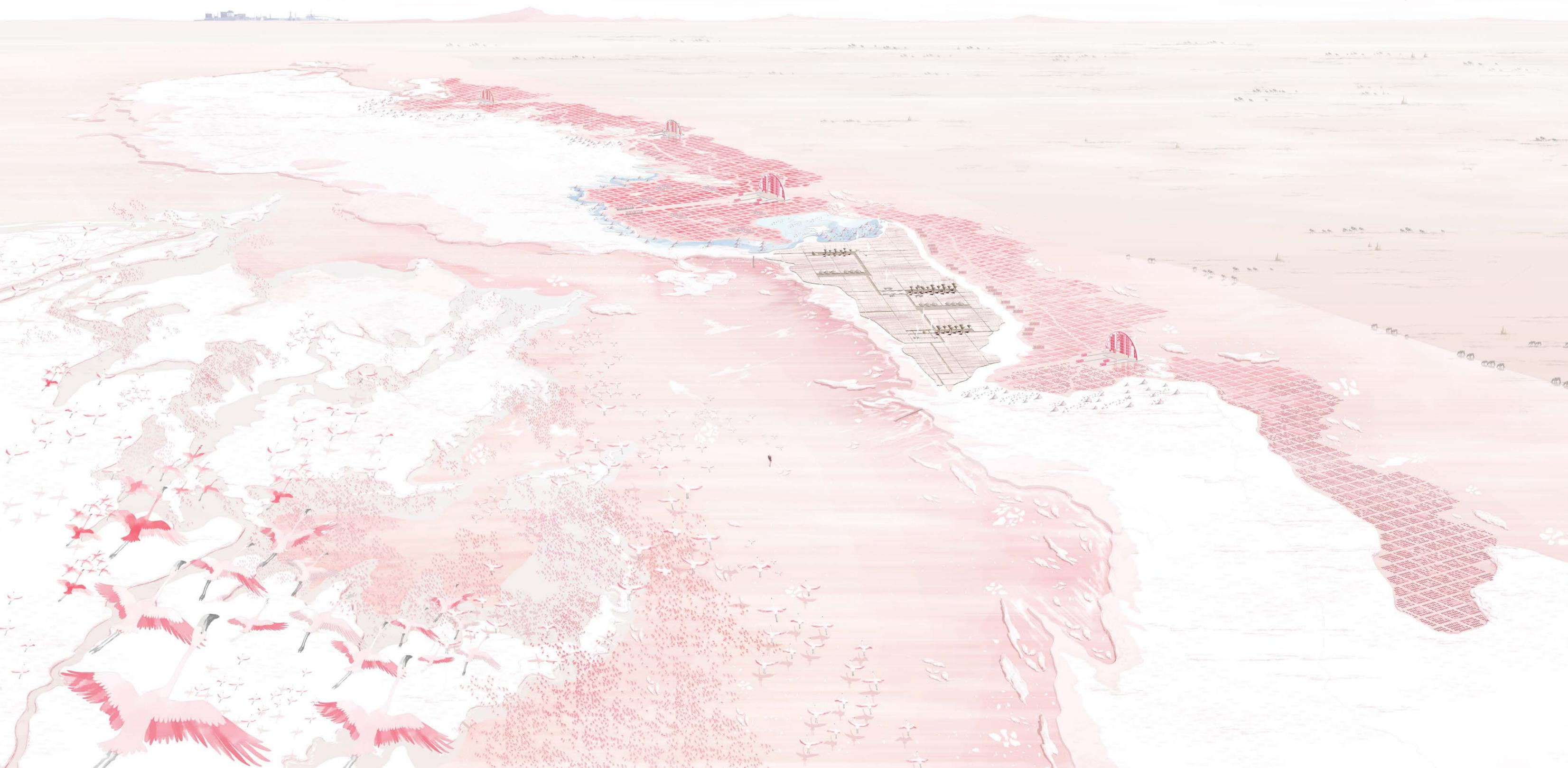
Winter - The Pink Spring is ready for tourists to stay in.



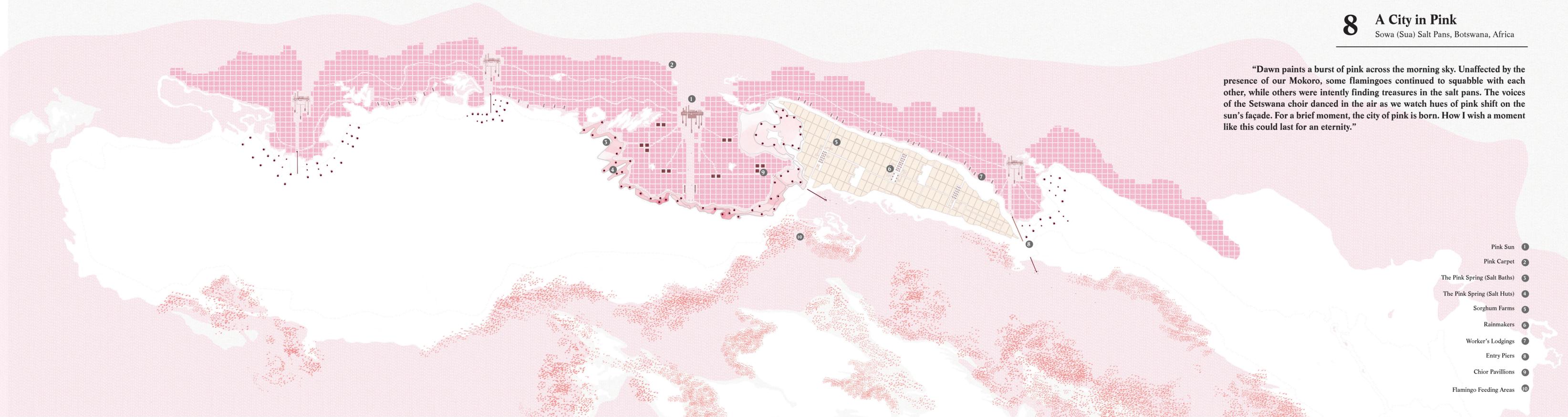
Summer - The locals farm and collect the salt precipitates for the next season.



“It was rumoured that the city of pink had to be rebuilt each year, as rain recharges the landscape with life. Over the campfire, Oteng (*the pink guide*) shared his knowledge about the different seasons in the City of Pink. From then on, the mysteries of the city haunted my own imagination.”

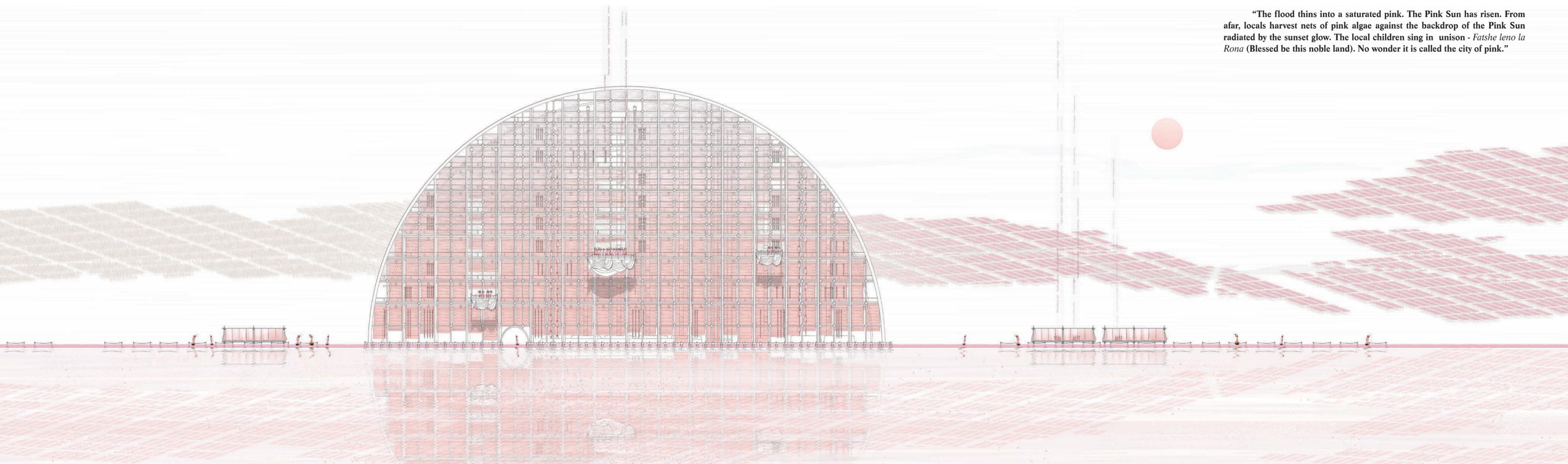


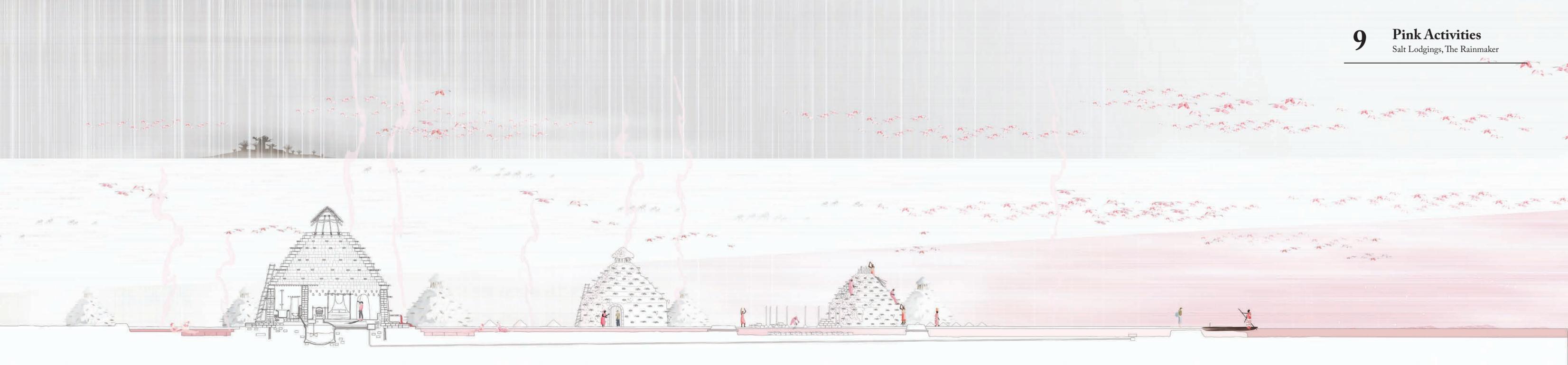
“Dawn paints a burst of pink across the morning sky. Unaffected by the presence of our Mokoro, some flamingoes continued to squabble with each other, while others were intently finding treasures in the salt pans. The voices of the Setswana choir danced in the air as we watch hues of pink shift on the sun’s façade. For a brief moment, the city of pink is born. How I wish a moment like this could last for an eternity.”



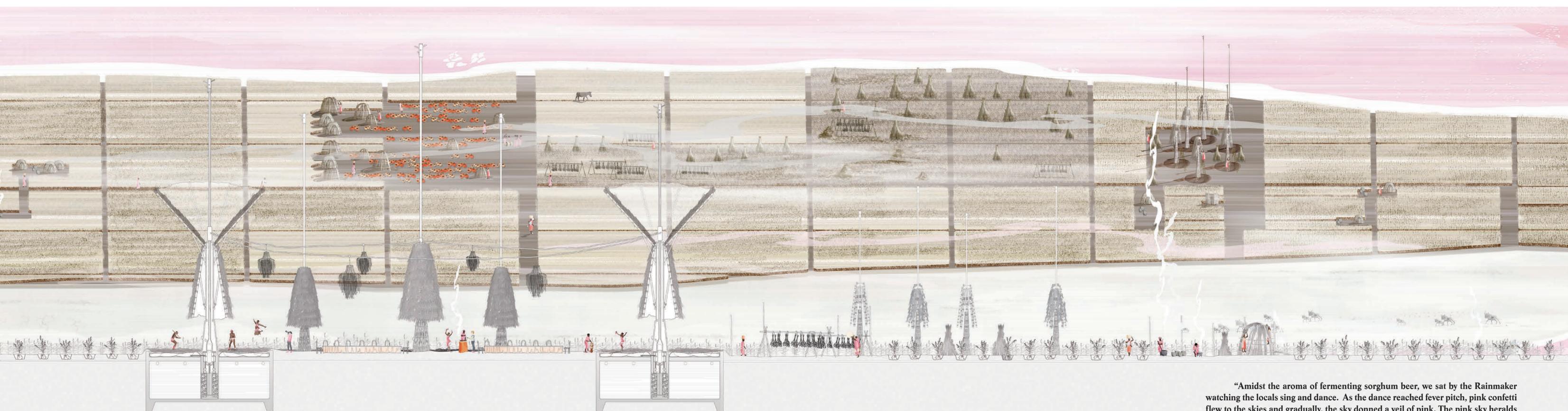
- 1 Pink Sun
- 2 Pink Carpet
- 3 The Pink Spring (Salt Baths)
- 4 The Pink Spring (Salt Huts)
- 5 Sorghum Farms
- 6 Rainmakers
- 7 Worker's Lodgings
- 8 Entry Piers
- 9 Choir Pavillions
- 10 Flamingo Feeding Areas

“The flood thins into a saturated pink. The Pink Sun has risen. From afar, locals harvest nets of pink algae against the backdrop of the Pink Sun radiated by the sunset glow. The local children sing in unison - *Fatshe leno la Rona* (Blessed be this noble land). No wonder it is called the city of pink.”





“At the salt springs, the locals tenderly care for the salt huts. Each year, rain returns salt to the earth and the huts are adorned with a new coat of pink. Here, beauty lies in a natural cycle of repair and revitalization.”



“Amidst the aroma of fermenting sorghum beer, we sat by the Rainmaker watching the locals sing and dance. As the dance reached fever pitch, pink confetti flew to the skies and gradually, the sky donned a veil of pink. The pink sky heralds the coming of rain - Pula!”

“Having stayed for four seasons of pink, I have seen the full circle of life. Man’s respect for nature brings out the beauty in her resources. Rain, flamingoes, brine, algae, sky and salt work in unison to make the seasons of pink. I wish for rain to come again, and for this Ethereal City to rise once more.”

