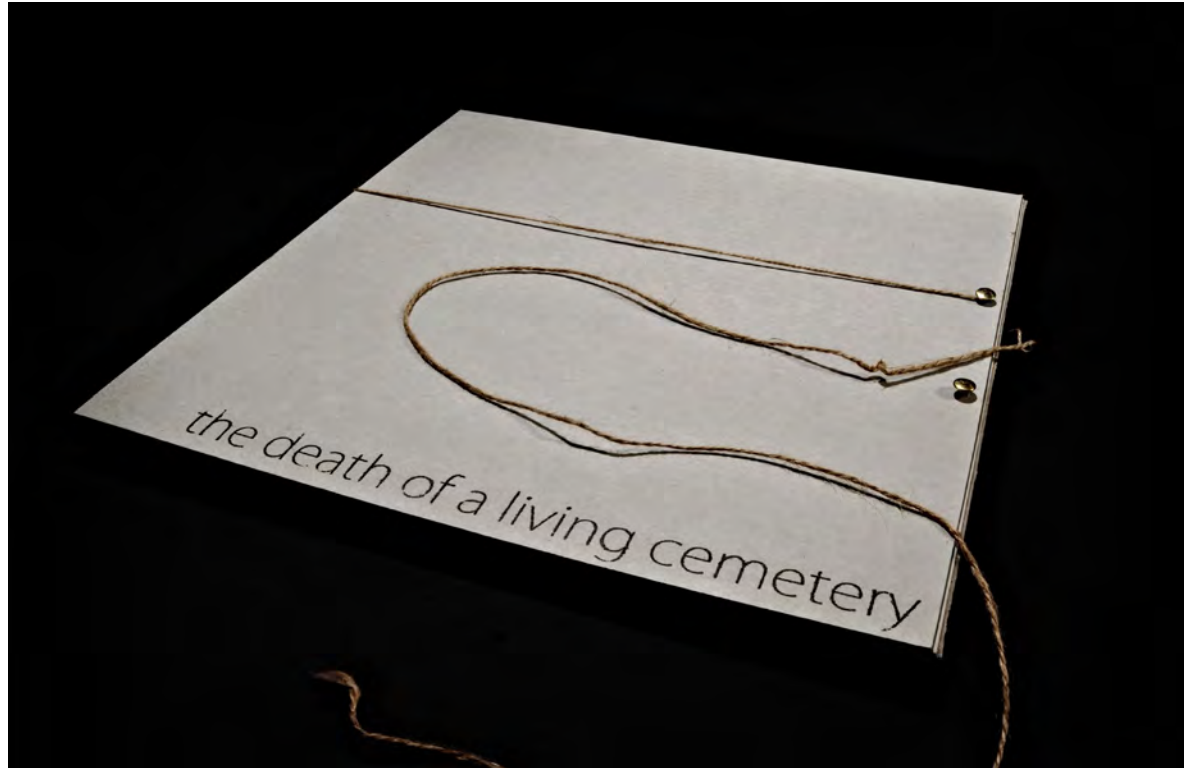


**A DYING
CEMETERY**

**ZACH
CROCKER**



The questions of what is a cemetery, what is a cemetery no longer filled with dead, and what makes something sacred begin to overlap and meld together. Perhaps there is something inherent within all three that allow them to be thought of as one. The proposal for this project is not three separate programs to be put on a site in lower Manhattan at Ground Zero, but instead to think of them as one building represented over time. The intentions of the project then become to recreate a past and project a future using what is given from the site now and thereby tell the story of one character and its changing faces. To begin with, perhaps a cemetery dies itself. Perhaps upon its death and the destruction of something other it can become a cenotaph. And through the history and ritual of this place, it can become sacred to some. Through time these programs develop and just as much as a building material, time become a way for them to be built. All architectural projects are designed for some kind of future, but within an academic environment that notion can be stretched further, opening up the possibilities that come with it.

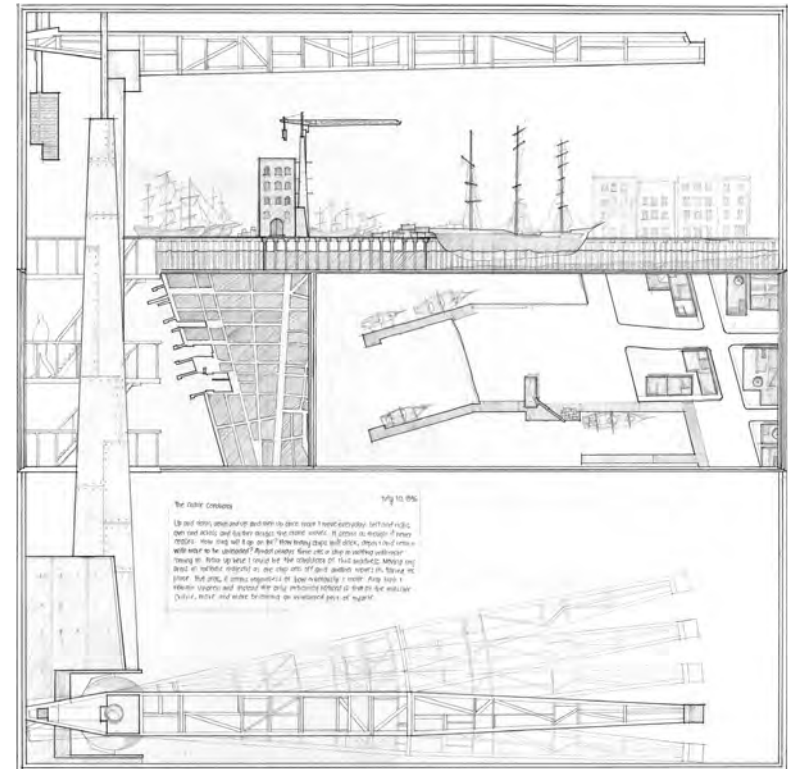


COVER AND FIRST TITLE OF BOOK

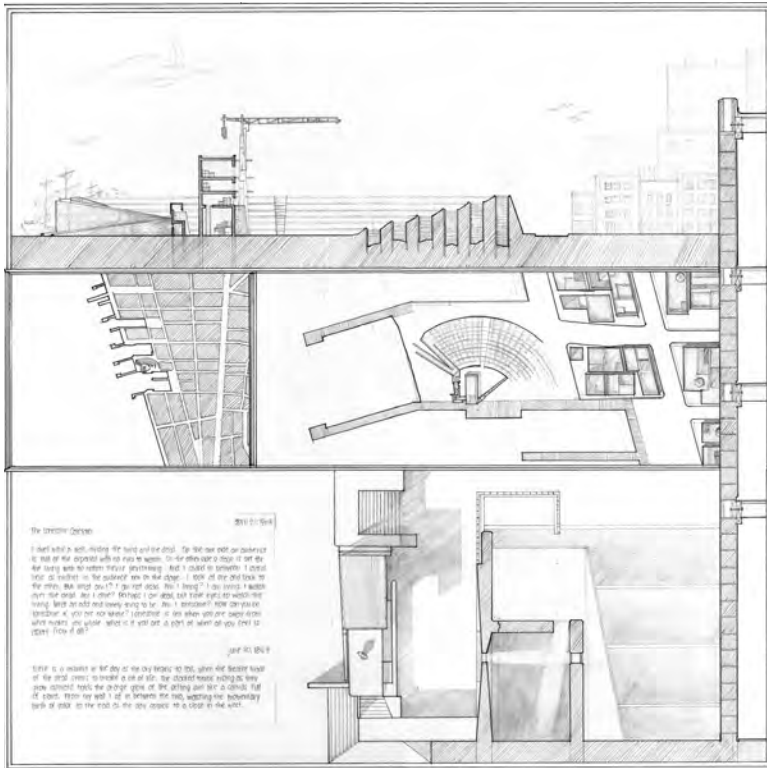


Flat, empty, and untouched, an undeveloped plot of land sits just north of the Gordon and Hearn Harbor on the west side of Manhattan. Like many harbors, it was a place for imported goods to be delivered. The massive crane operated constantly and monotonously, moving between ship and dock and back again, temporarily storing the goods before they moved again into the city. As the immigrant population boomed around the 1850s, the harbor became a docking station for newly arrived foreigners looking for a better life. The port station became a customs check in, processing the immigrant influx, issuing them citizen cards, and then sending them along to make it on their own. When the Civil War broke out in 1861, soldiers were shipped south from this and other neighboring harbors and piers. At the same time many

of those who departed these piers, came back departed, never returning to whatever life they left behind. One quarter of the soldiers in the Civil War were foreign born. Of those, one fifteenth died; many having no one to pronounce their bodies. The harbor became a spectacle as more and more of the dead were shipped back. The bodies began to line the docks and the harbor became temporary storage for the dead.



DRAWING 01



DRAWING 02

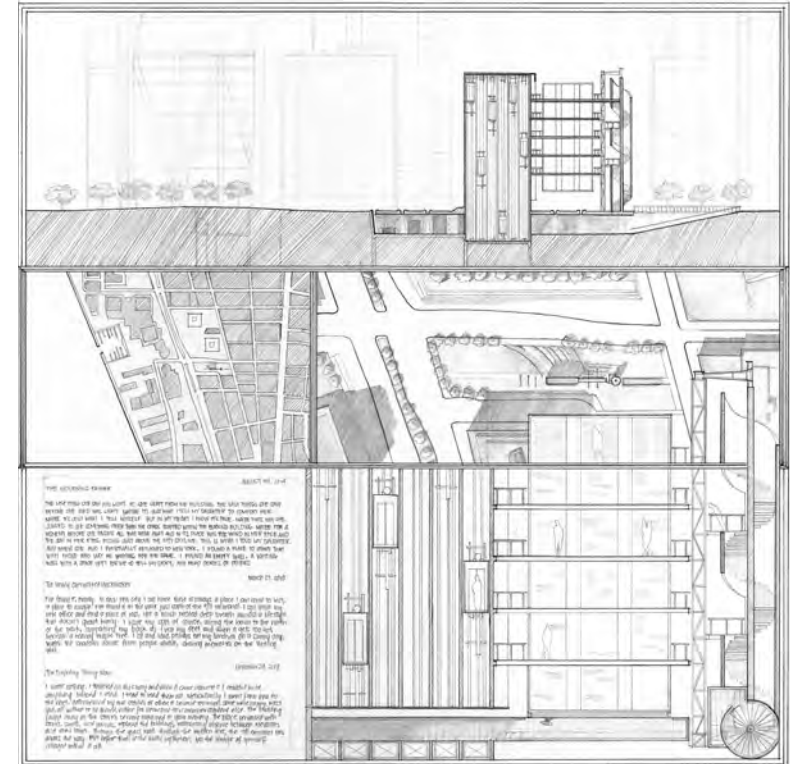


As more and more were shipped back, the bodies began to line the docks and the harbor became temporary storage for the dead. For some, however, no one came looking to lay claim. And so this untouched plot of land sitting just north of the harbor became a cemetery for those not claimed –for those who had died for a country not their own. Slowly the land developed as more and more took up residency. A wall was put up on the western edge of the site, marking the start of the cemetery. The caretaker dwelled within the wall, always being present, but never being a part of the whole. The port station now recorded the arriving dead as well as recent immigrants and the shipping crane now delivered caskets to their resting place as the war dragged on. The crane became the star actor performing in a theatre of the dead. When the

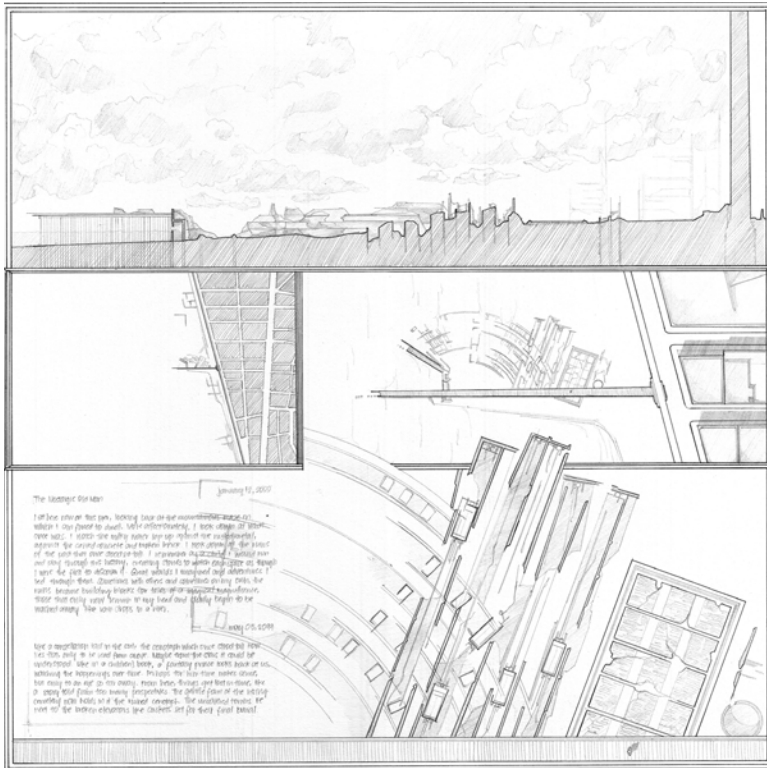
war ended in 1865 the cemetery was left unfinished, simply dissipating as it drew back towards the harbor in its crescent form. Time passed and while the land developed along the edge of Manhattan the harbor was filled in. The bodies of those not claimed were gradually moved outside the city leaving the cemetery to decay in empty silence amidst an immensely expanding skyline. The city became more and more dense and lower Manhattan became one of the financial centers of the world. But the ever-growing skyline was forever changed with the destruction of the World Trade Center complex in 2001.

With the destruction of the World Trade Center complex in 2001, a massive void was left in the heart of lower Manhattan. In 2011 the memorial to the Americans who died that day was completed. In reaction against the memorial a cenotaph was designed in 2013 to remember non-Americans who died that day. It was the only building placed on the now empty piece of land sitting south of the WTC and north of the filled-in harbor. The cenotaph, rising up from the ground as though it were puncturing the soil from below, completed the unfinished cemetery lying buried beneath. There was one point of access through a silo-like staircase and the only other was from a pathway taking you below ground to meet the sound of silence lying in the empty tombs. Once back above ground, the cenotaph offered a place to remember.

A wall made of glass was made bare to be filled in with the stories of those willing to share but not given a chance to do so. The remaining portion of the site was a public park for recreation. Acting as a bridge from the financial heart of the city to the residential units at the river's edge, the park became a common ground for the two to share. Although time passed and the cenotaph remained as a place to remember, some things were increasingly forgotten and neglected. The poor became poorer as more and more immigrants came and the continued ignoring of environmental issues brought about the slow but increasing erosion of the city's edge.



DRAWING 03



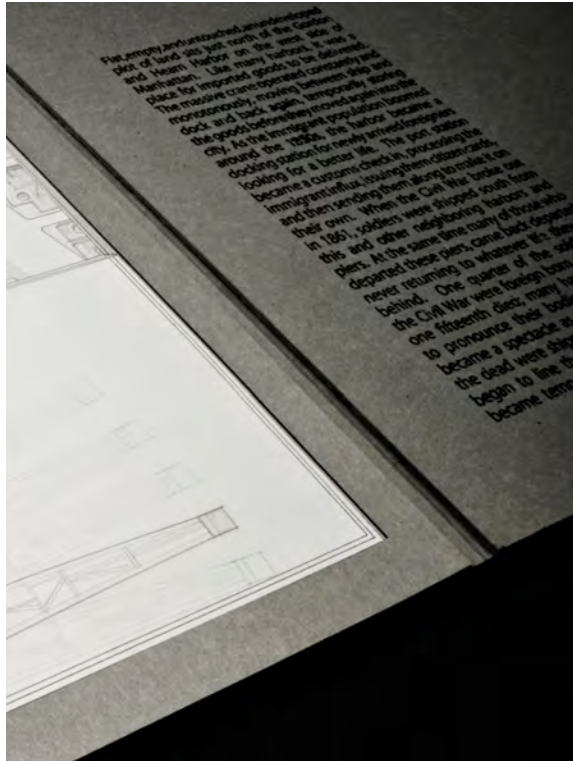
DRAWING 04



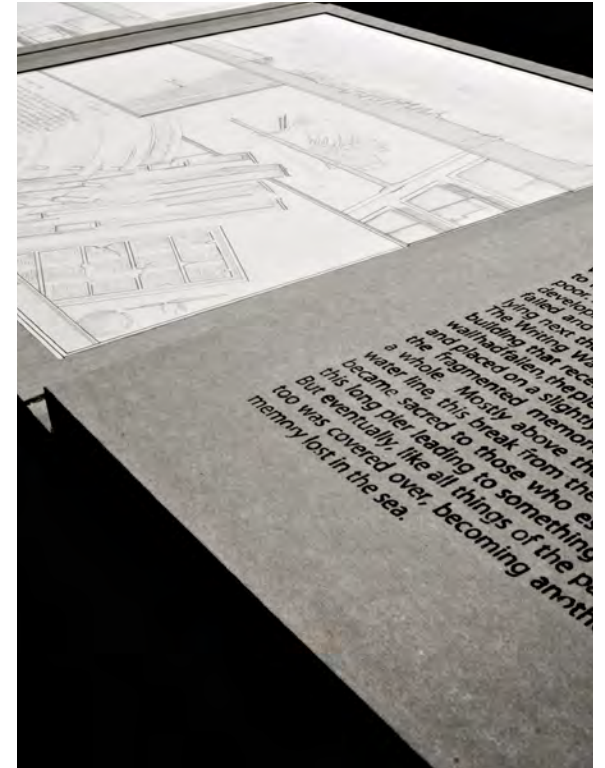
The continual neglect of environmental issues brought about the slow but increasing erosion of the city's edge. Taking decades, shorelines around the world began to gradually recede including those of the greater New York City area. The land expansion that lower Manhattan endured over the years caused increased issues, and by 2093 it was that land that crumbled, falling away faster than any other. Levy systems were put in to protect the city but the first attempts failed. More and more of the city fell away, stripping down what was built. That, paired with the financial crisis beginning in 2009 and subsequent bankruptcy of major companies in the financial district, forced those living in residential units built along the water to move further inland, occupying the now abandoned business towers of lower Manhattan.

Immigrants living in Manhattan also took up residency in these towers, and what once was one of the wealthiest places to live became a mix of the rich and the poor. Along with much of the surrounding development, the cenotaph eventually failed and collapsed, its empty elevators lying next the now exposed, open graves. The Writing Wall was the only part of the building that received any care. After the wall had fallen, the pieces were reassembled and placed on a slightly elevated platform; the fragmented memories now read as a whole. Mostly above the encroaching water line, this break from the walled city became sacred to those who escaped to this long pier leading to something other. But eventually, like all things of the past it too was covered over, becoming another memory lost in the sea.

In order to discuss the story of a cemetery over time the representation became rather important. The five drawings are framed within an unfolding book. As it is opened the drawing sits the left and on the right hand page there is 'historical' text providing a form of narrative to the images. Consequently the text and images become integral to each other. The images need the text, without them their meaning becomes lost. Conversely the text stands stagnant without the drawing to bring to life the descriptions. As the book unfolds the story is told going backwards in time, thereby bringing ambivalence to the notion of what is the beginning and what is the end as well as forcing an understanding of the building's and site's history to bring further meaning to the individual drawing and text. Upon opening the book entirely a new title is presented at the end while the first title and supporting text as gone away entirely. However if the book is turned over, the text is now given in a typical chronological order with what was the initial title, now at the end. The time taken to read the book and its unfolding process become integral to the project. The book is no longer a representation of an other, but is the other, the project.

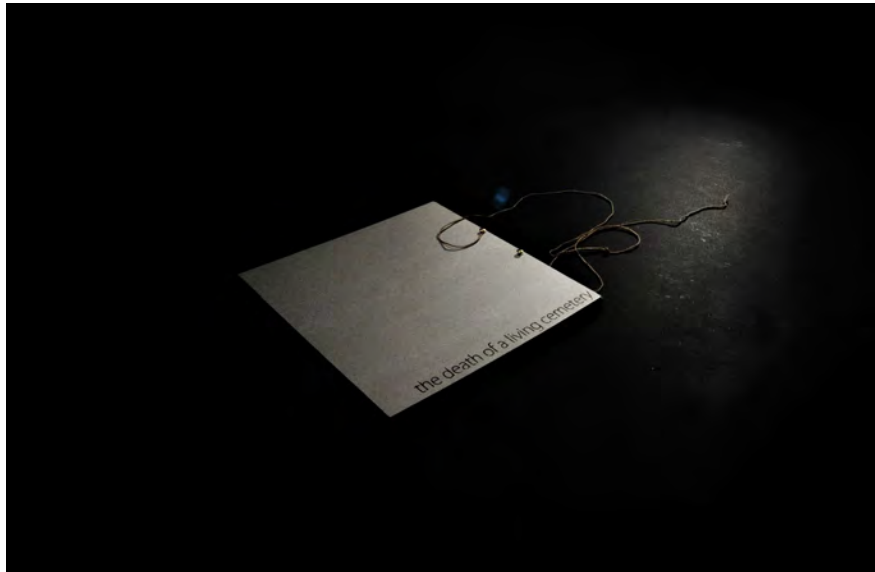


DRAWING AND TEXT DETAIL



DRAWING AND TEXT DETAIL

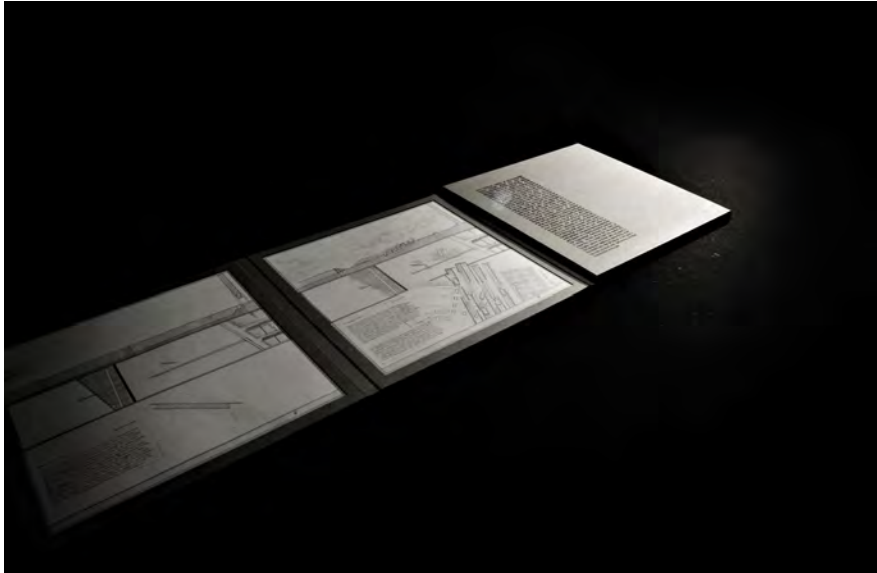




COVER



DRAWING AND TEXT WITH ONE

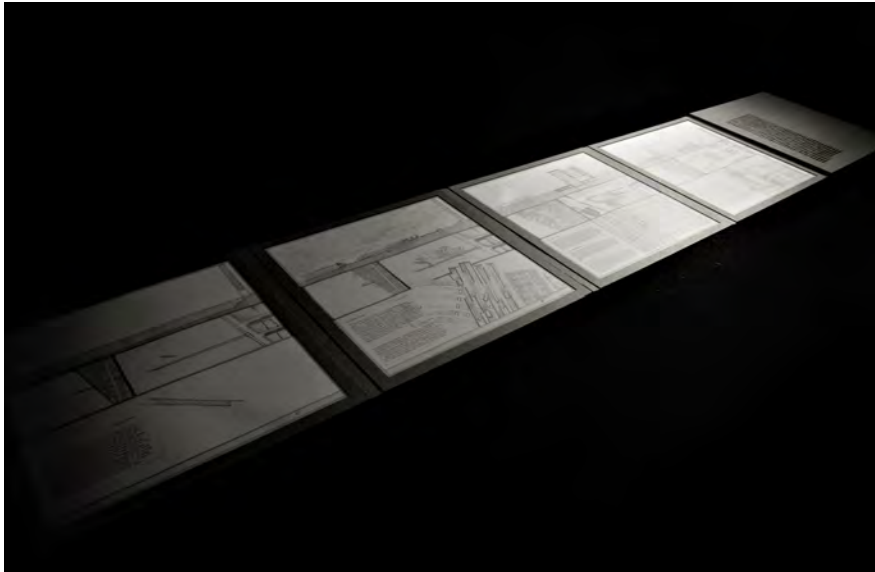


DRAWING AND TEXT WITH TWO

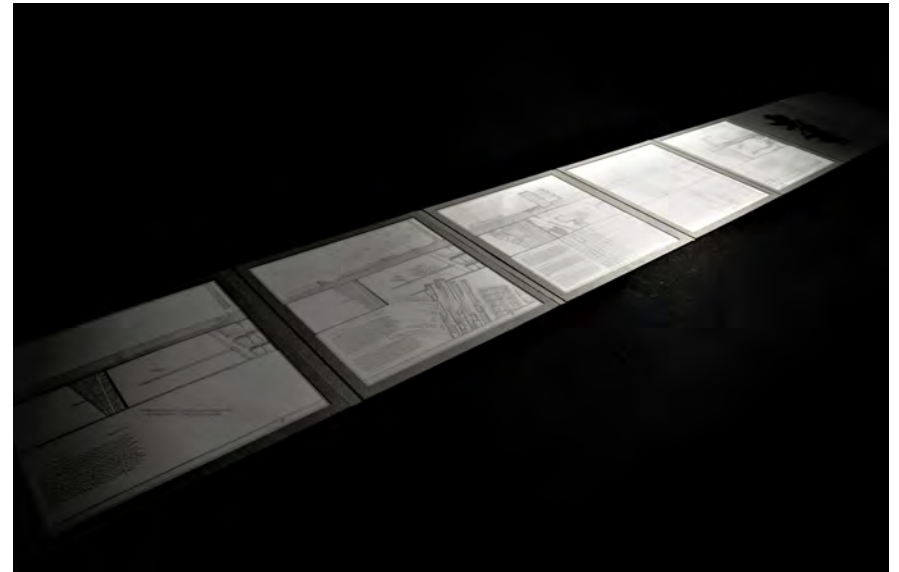


DRAWING AND TEXT WITH THREE





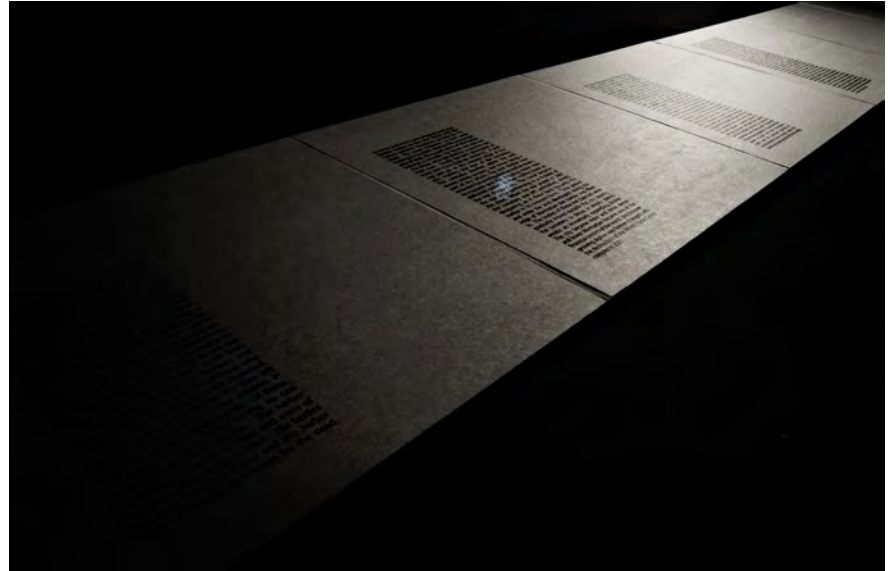
DRAWING AND TEXT WITH FOUR



DRAWING AND TEXT WITH FIVE



END TITLE AND COLLAGE



TEXT IN CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER ON BACK



A LIVING CEMETERY

ZACH
CROCKER

