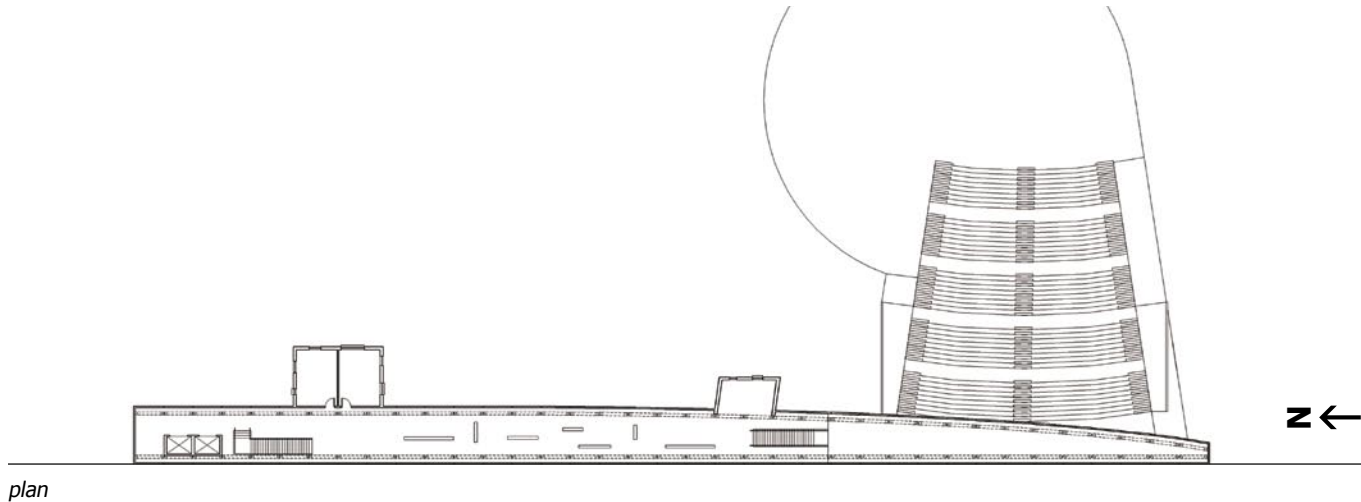


## ETHNIC STUDIES CENTER

Columbia University  
New York, NY



plan

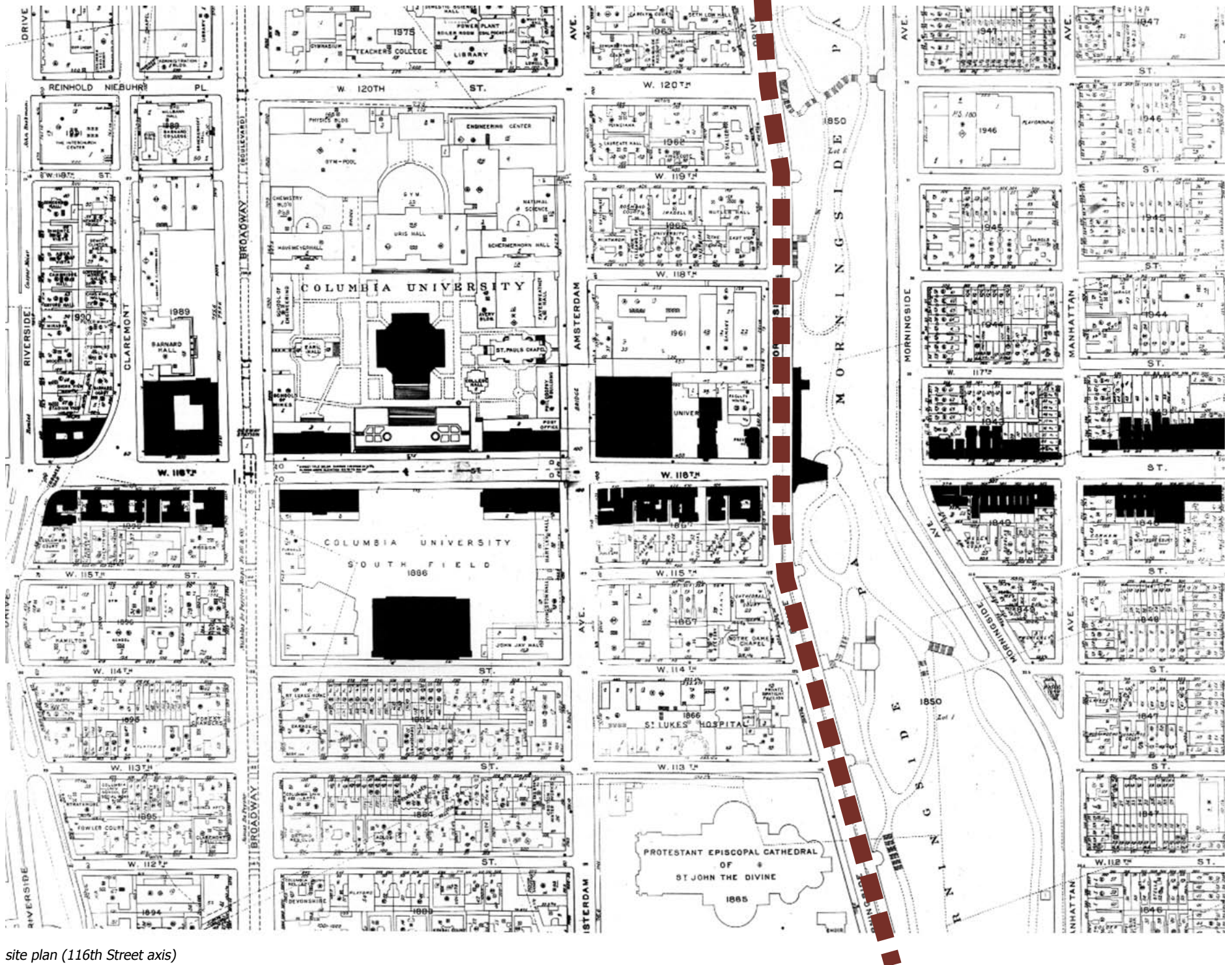


computer model / photo collage (view from Morningside Heights into Harlem)

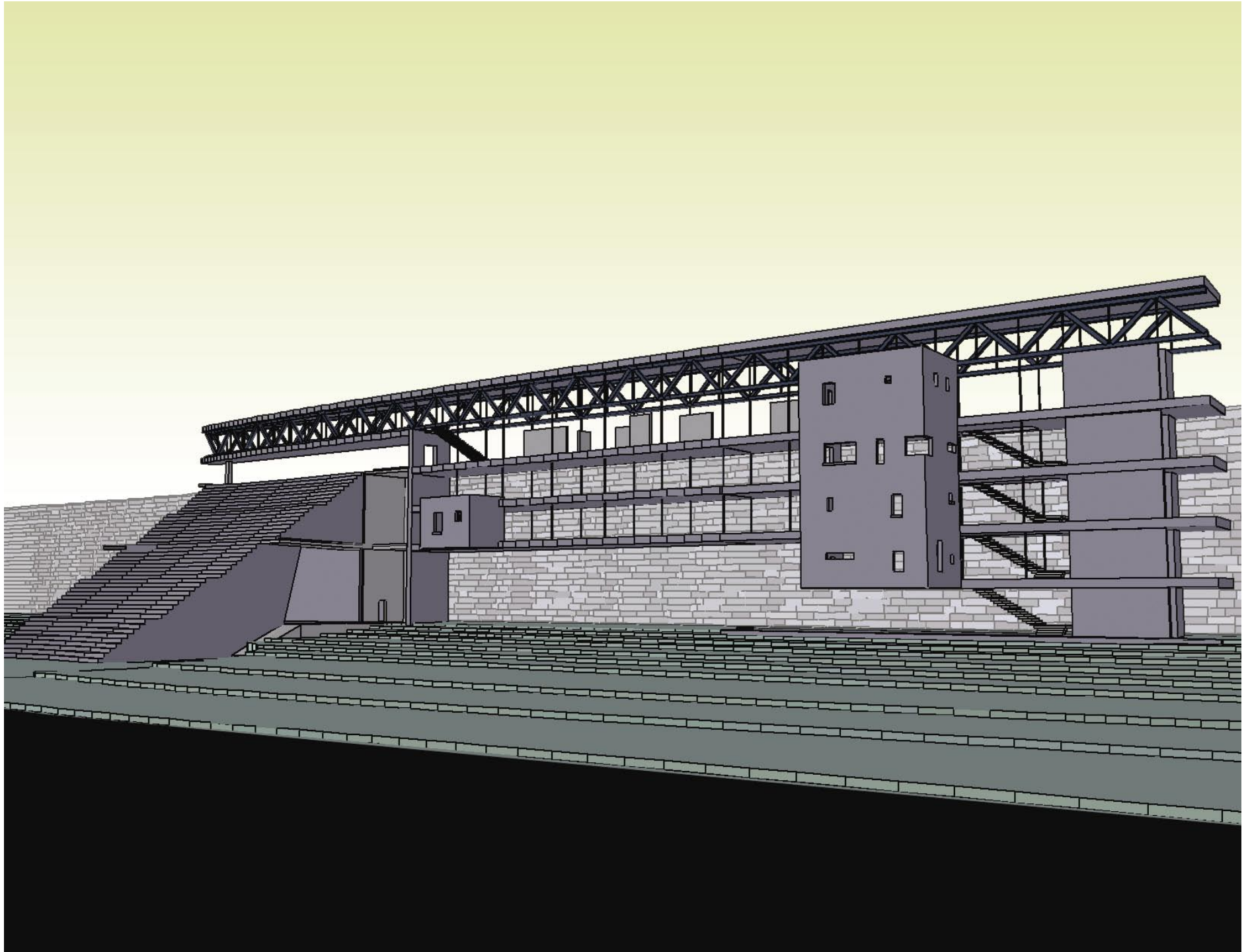
The genesis of this project was a response to the student protest of 1996 at Columbia University for the establishment of a recognized ethnic studies department within the university. The studio focused on the design for a center to house the new department to be located within the university campus at the highly visible intersection of College Walk (116th Street) and the topographical boundary between the Morningside Heights campus and the community of Harlem. This barrier is an east-facing fifty-foot precipice fronting Morningside Park and overlooking Harlem beyond. The project's intent was the mediation of the disparate influences of both communities and the creation of a new possibility for negotiation, communication, and interaction.

A monumental stair, serving as an amphitheater for outdoor performances of ethnic music and theater, also acts as a connecting device, modulating the ground levels of the two communities and allowing unimpeded exploration. The remainder of the program, including a gallery for ethnic art, a library for cultural studies, classrooms, and support services, is housed in a thin sliver of space that recalls the existing boundary but renders it transparent and transformed through the use of structural glazing. Metaphorically acting as a lens through its slight curvature, this space activates the cliff face, focuses the presence of Harlem at the boundary of campus, and allows the community to be reexamined and viewed through the presence of ethnic art displayed in the gallery. The program is lifted from the ground and hung from structural trusses to minimize its intrusion into the park landscape.

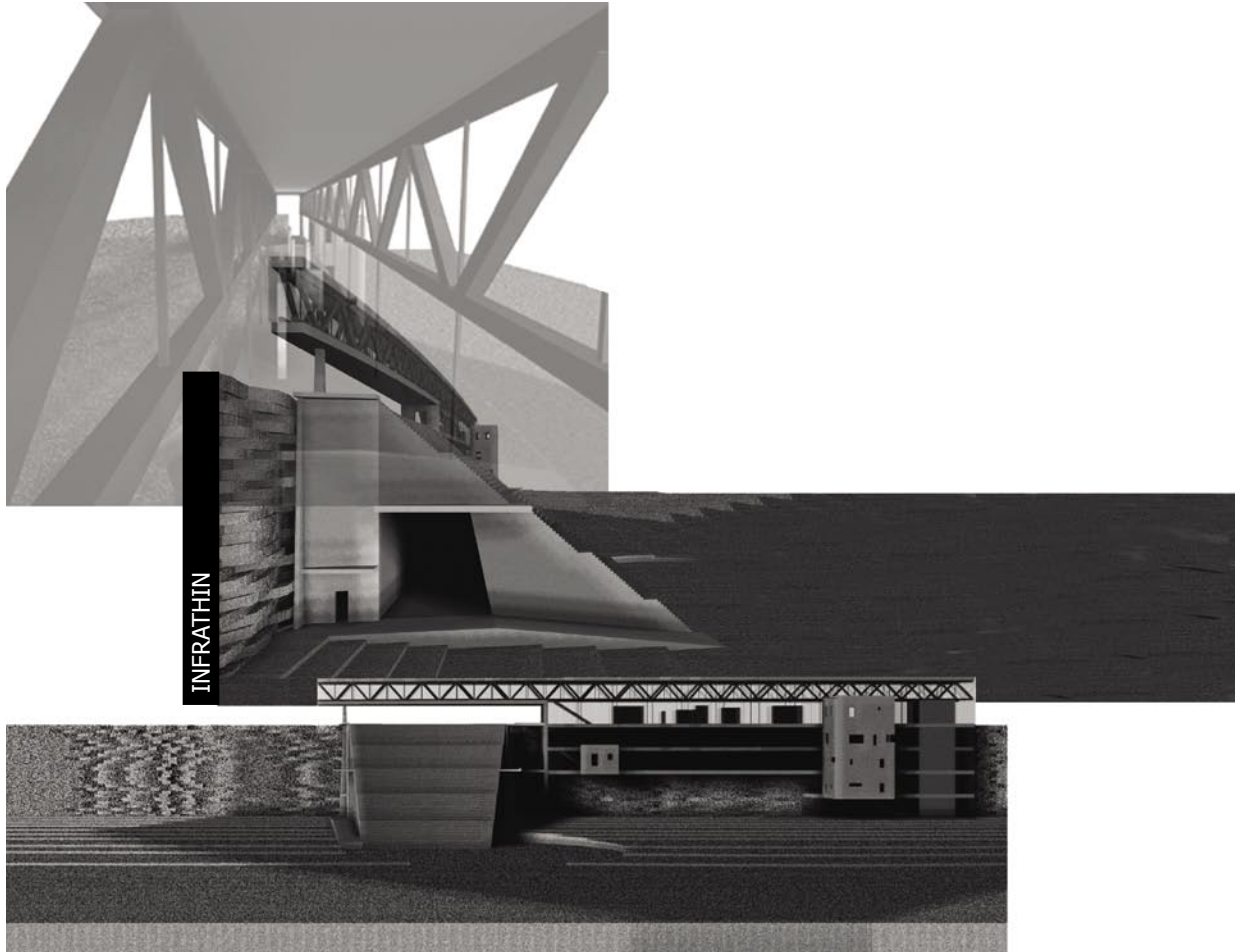
December 1996  
Victoria Meyers, professor  
Greg Pasquarelli, assistant professor  
Columbia University



[4] site plan (116th Street axis)



[6] computer model view from Morningside Park (Form-Z)



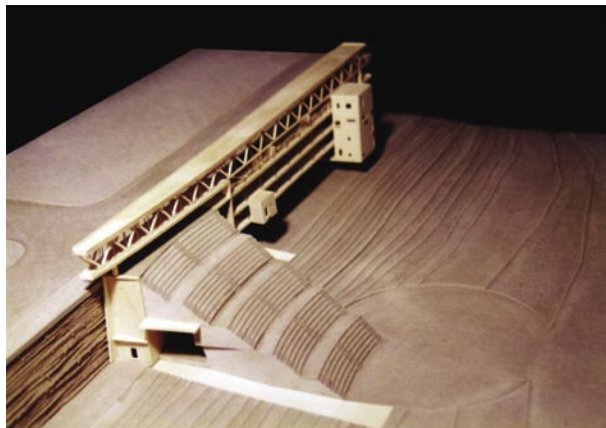
computer model composite view (Form-Z)



photo collage of Morningside Heights/Columbia



photo collage of Harlem



physical model (basswood, chipboard)

