



Figure 1



Figure 2

Latitude of Darkness

Rui Lim

It happened on a fleeting night, 22 June of last year. A “black” belt appeared against the canvas of bright city lights, as seen from above, cutting through a series of major cities lying along the latitude 40N45’50” (fig. 1). Not unlike the occasional, huge blackouts that occur in cities in the event of an electrical failure, however, this phenomenon was more bizarre in its strict linearity, going through specific regions of each city, and only visible by contrast to the adjacent glow of the parts that remained bright (fig. 2).

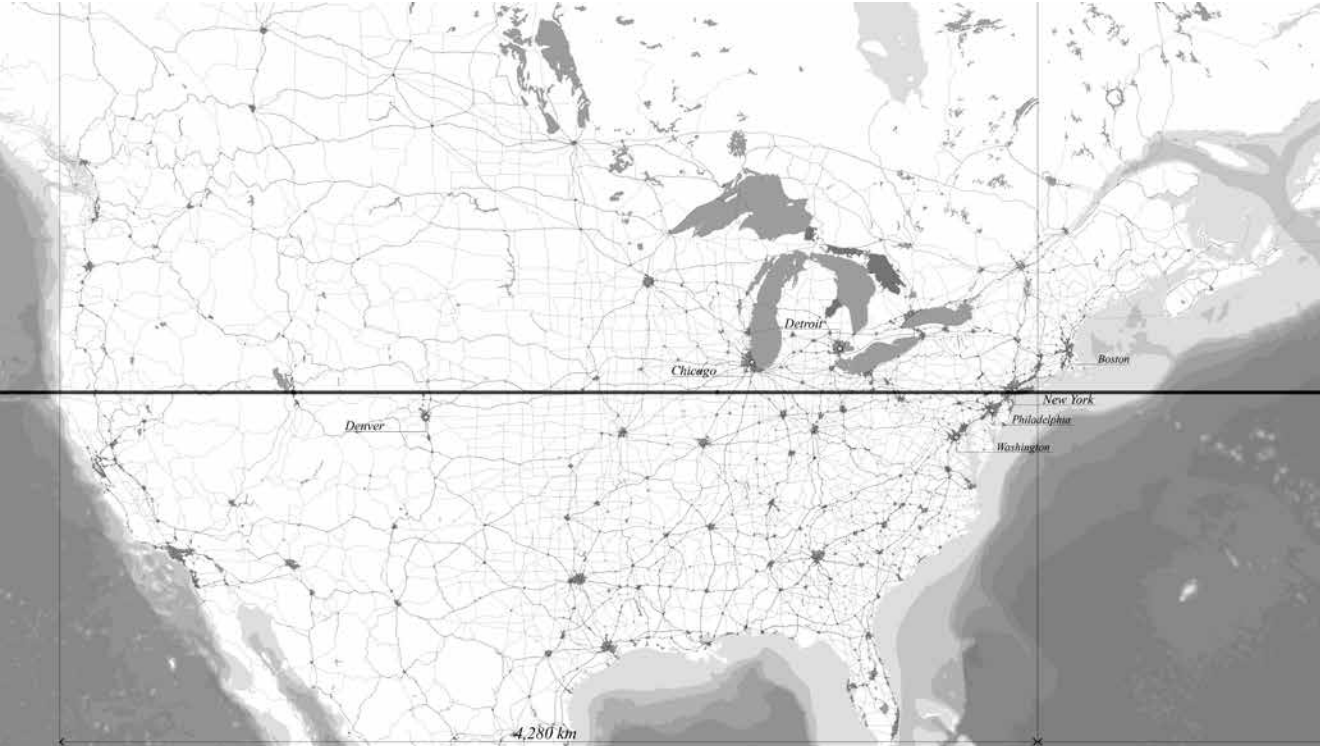
As I later found out, this was a response to the globalization of urban lighting and the perpetually increasing problem of light pollution, in which groups of inhabitants living within various modern cities saturated by artificial light decided in accord “to reclaim the darkness of the night,” as one remarked. And for just one night, for a brief nine hours, the spectacle of bright city lights was negated by a spectacle of darkness going along this latitude through New York, Madrid, Naples, Bari, Thessaloniki, Istanbul, Baku, Tashkent, Beijing, Shenyang, Aomori, and various other satellite cities and suburbs in between (fig. 3).

By means of erasure, albeit primitive and improper, through the veiling of lights with simple bits of tape, plastic bags, and canvas sheets, collectives of individuals from these cities went out to conceal as many lights as they could find polluting the night. From simply wrapping street lamps with bags or spraying them with black, soluble paint, to the draping of larger building façades with canvases, going

door to door requesting for curtains and blinds to be fully drawn, or just simply turning off the lights for just one night, little by little, the cities’ lights on this latitude were diminished to finally manifest as this strange phenomenon: a narrow band of artificial darkness going around the Earth (fig. 4).

Indeed, this was a carefully concerted plan by different individuals living in separate cities, only brought together by virtue of being in proximity to the abstract cartographic demarcation of latitude 40N45’50” (fig. 5). An operation, despite being short-lived, simply imagined as a dark line on the Earth at night, connecting seemingly detached cities in a fleeting spell of continuous darkness (fig. 6). The only evidence that this event occurred was the satellite imagery collected and photographs taken by astronauts in space that night (fig. 7). For those who did not experience this phenomenon in person, it may never have occurred, but for some it did. And for them, this was most certainly a kind of celebration of the rarity of darkness within our modern cities—a momentary manifestation of an artificial eclipse from our own human condition (fig. 8). Perhaps one might look back and think of this as an awfully naïve moment, a cry of desperation, but in another sense, it’s surely a fitting counteraction to the equally naïve globalization of urban lighting that modernity has forced upon us (fig. 9).

Latitude of Darkness



NIGHT: SHADOWS

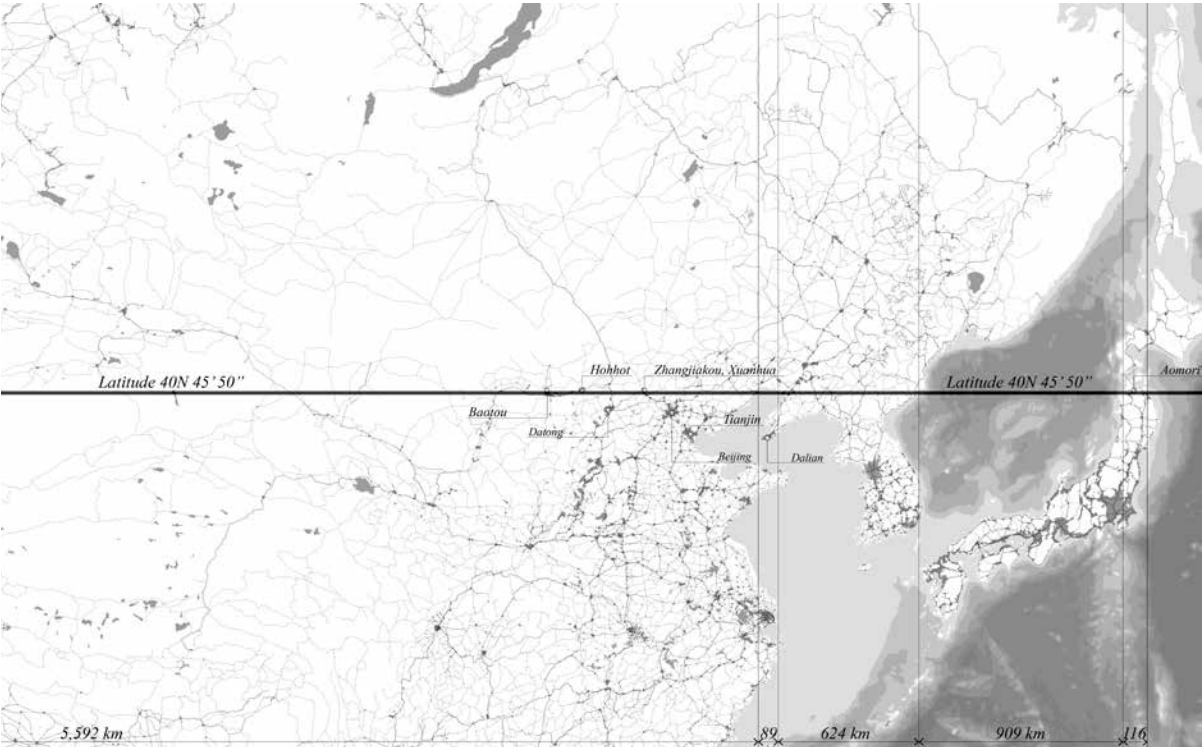
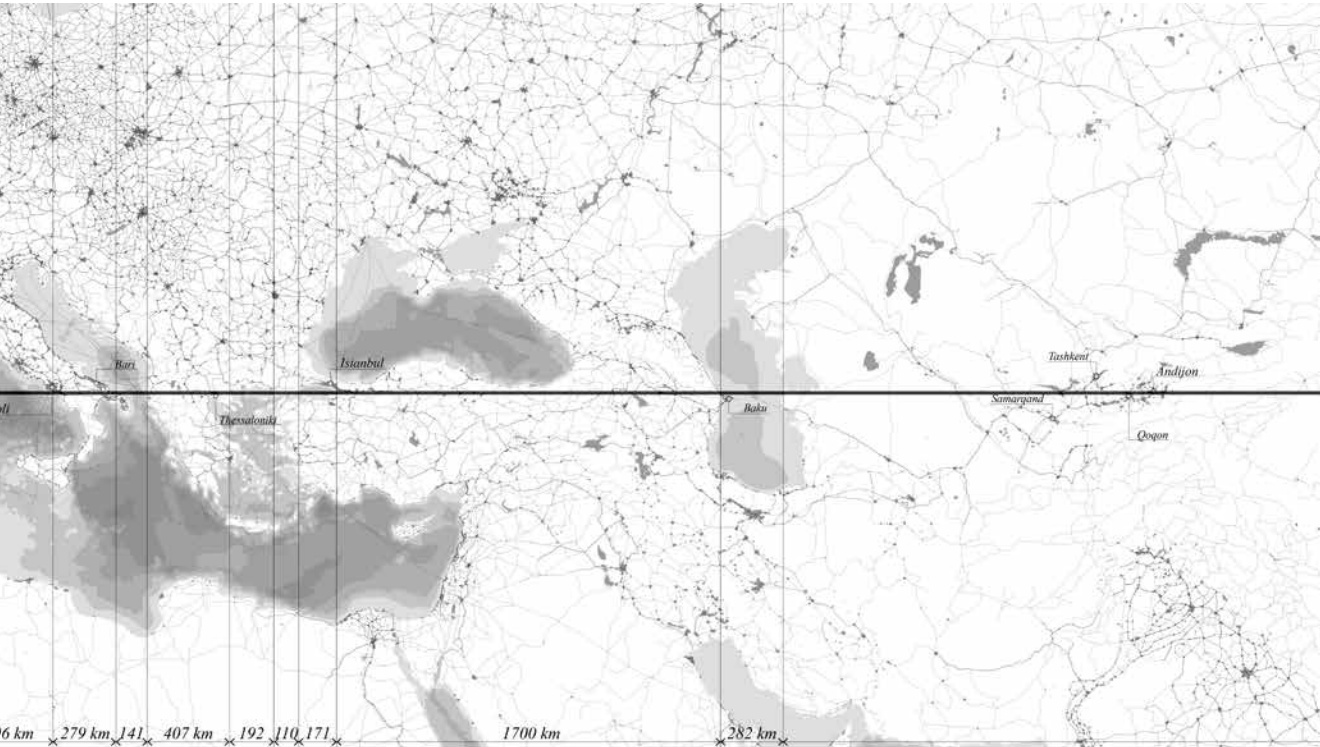
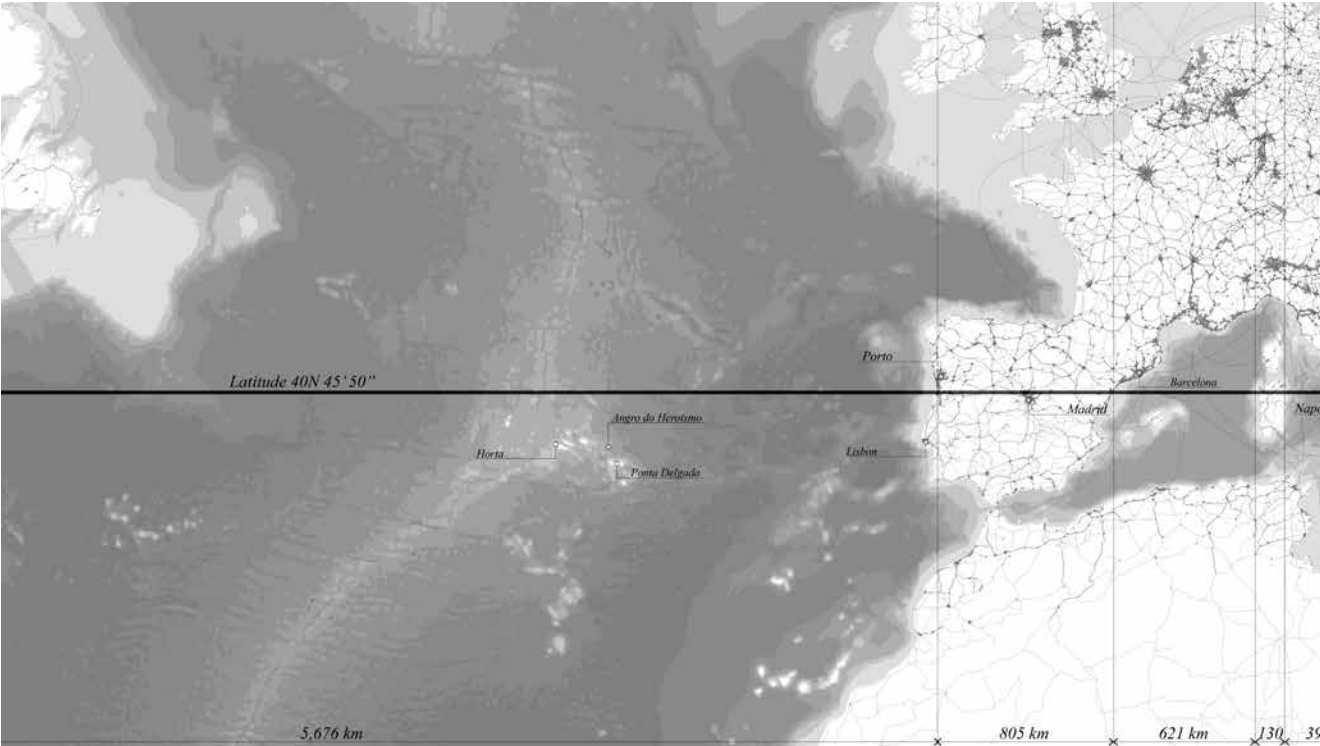
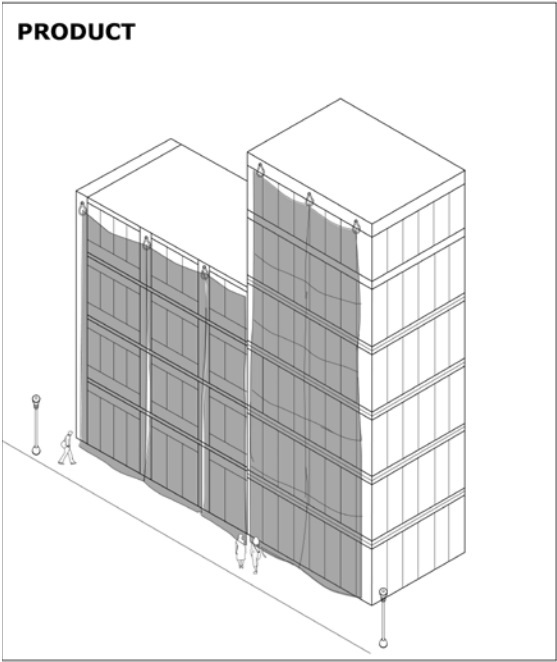


Figure 3

#001

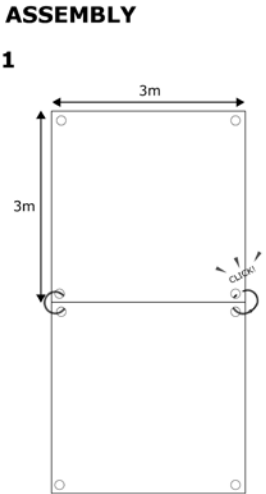
CAPE DRAPE

PRODUCT



ASSEMBLY

1



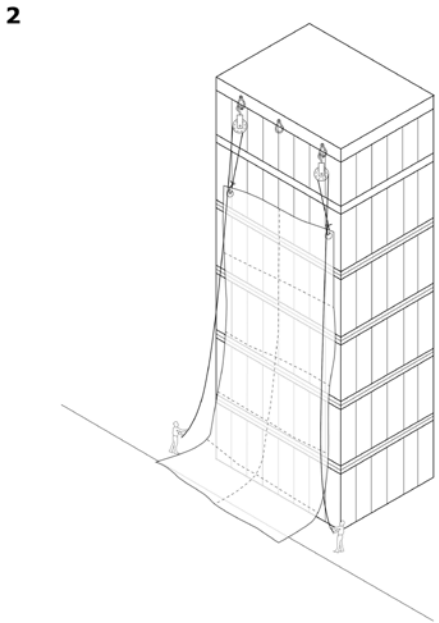
3m

3m

click

combine black tarps together to desired size by fastening the metal ring connectors

2



hook the connected tarp surface to the enclosed pulley system. use the rope enclosed to hoist the surface up and to drape nicely over the building facade.

PARTS

- black tarp 10x
- metal ring connectors 20x
- metal hooks 4x
- pulleys 2x
- ropes 2x

COMBINE AND FORM YOUR DESIRED SIZE!

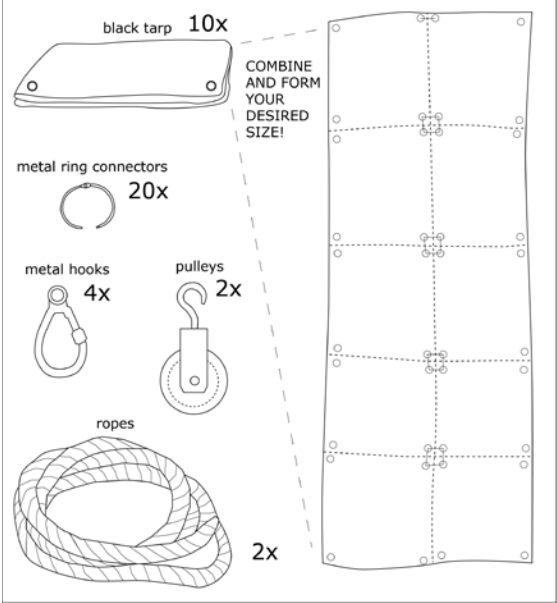



Figure 4

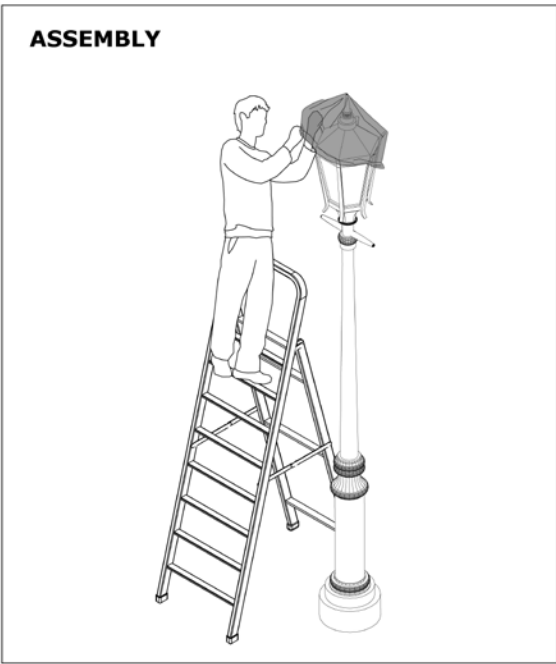
#002

STREET LAMPSHADE

PRODUCT

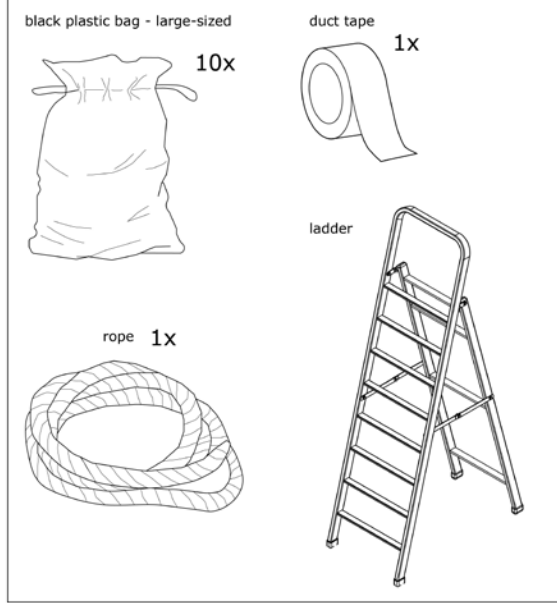


ASSEMBLY



PARTS

- black plastic bag - large-sized 10x
- duct tape 1x
- rope 1x
- ladder



#003

WINDOW WIPEOUT

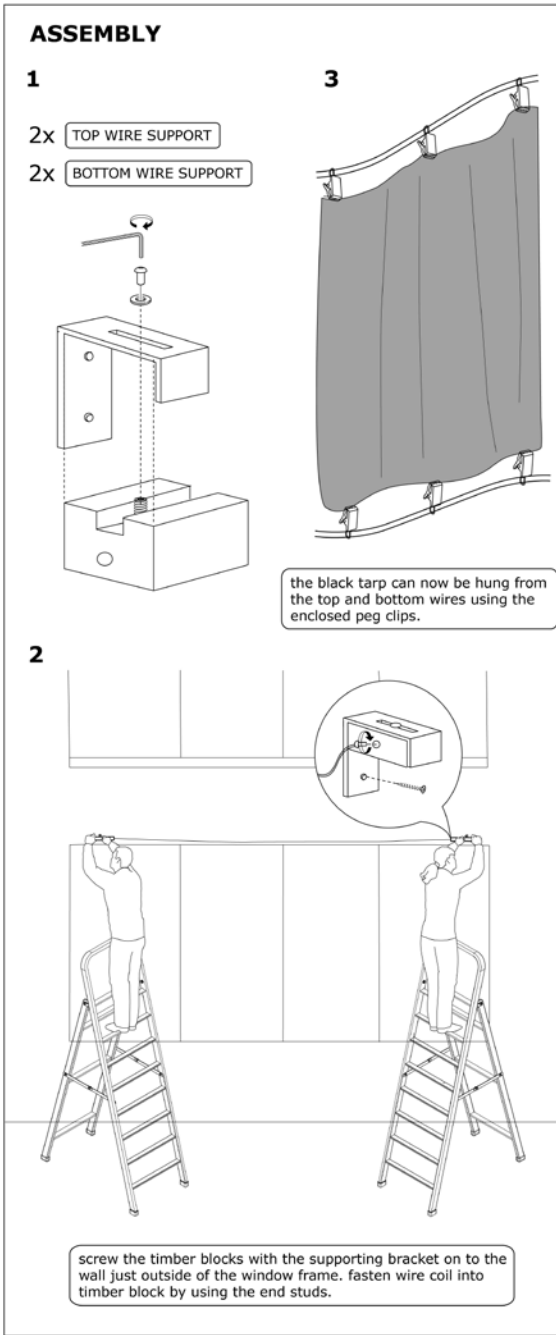
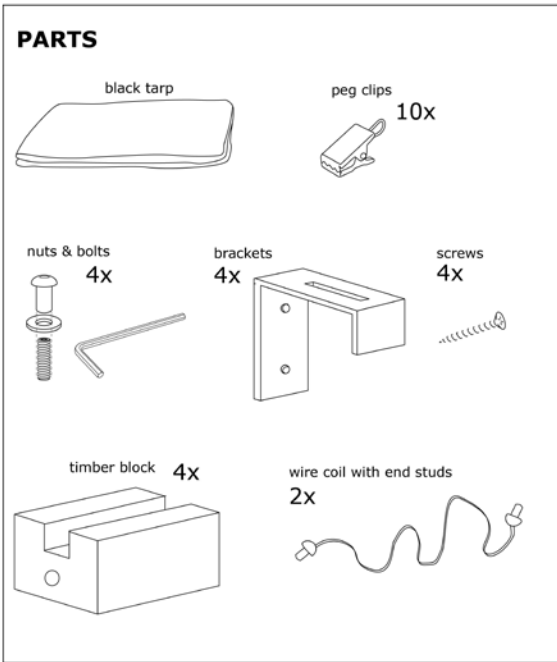
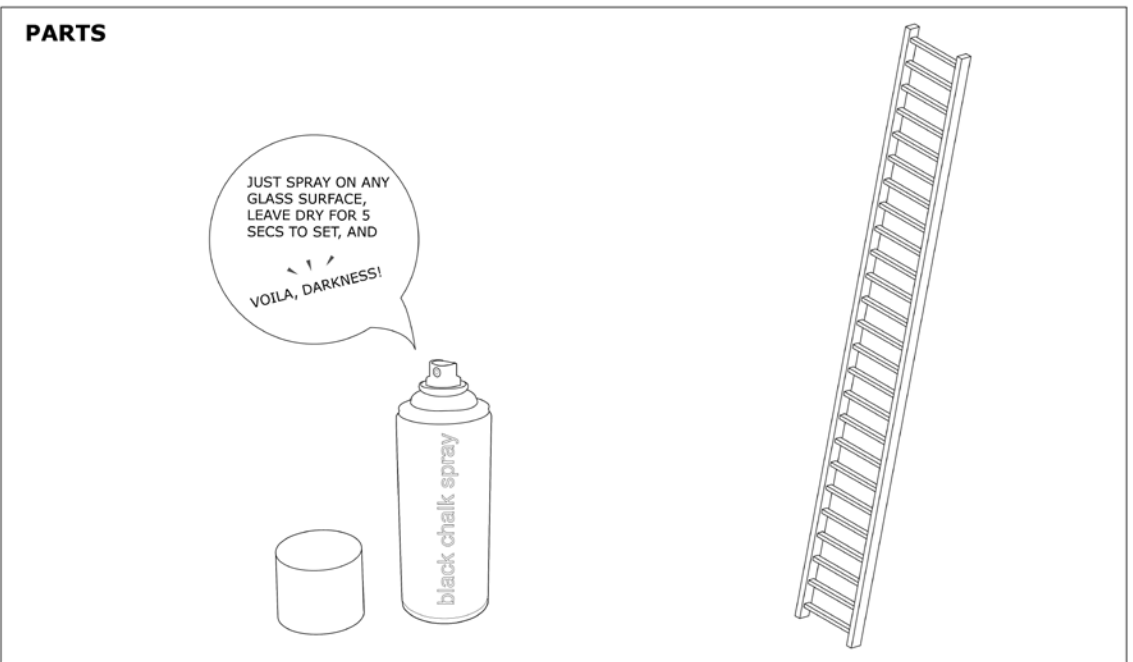
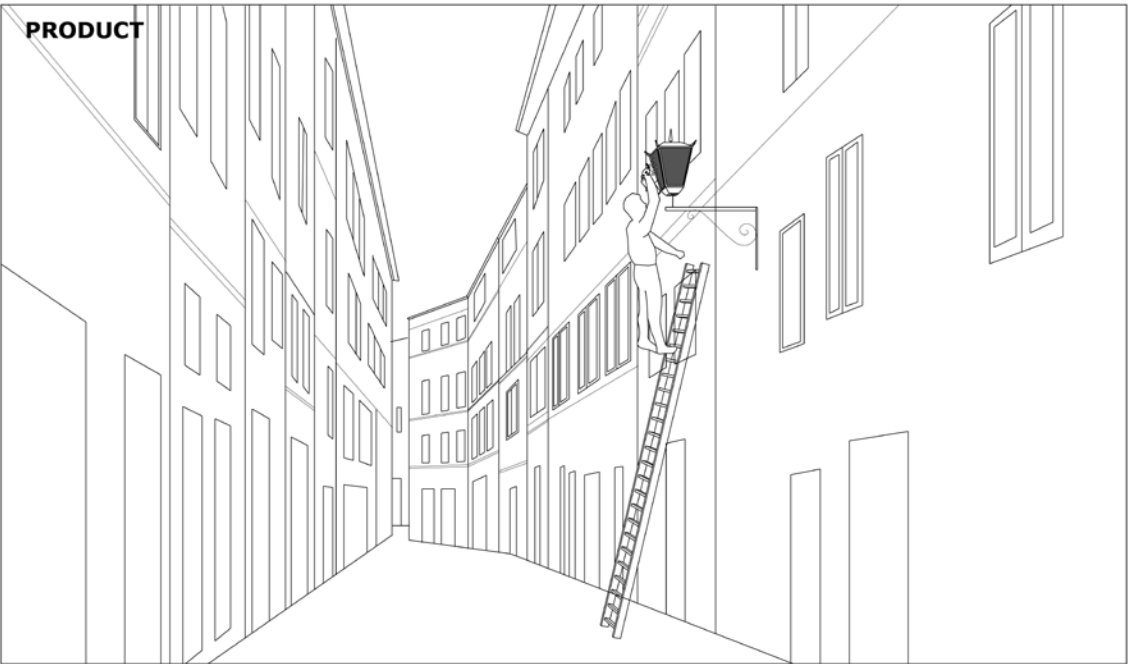


Figure 4 (continued)

#004

INSTANT SPRAY-ON SHADE



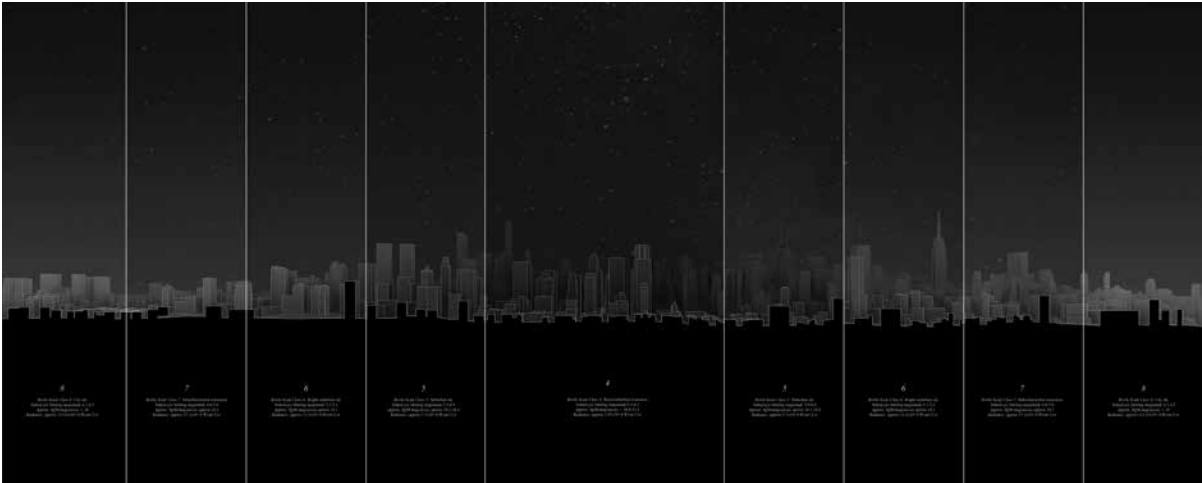


Figure 5



Figure 7

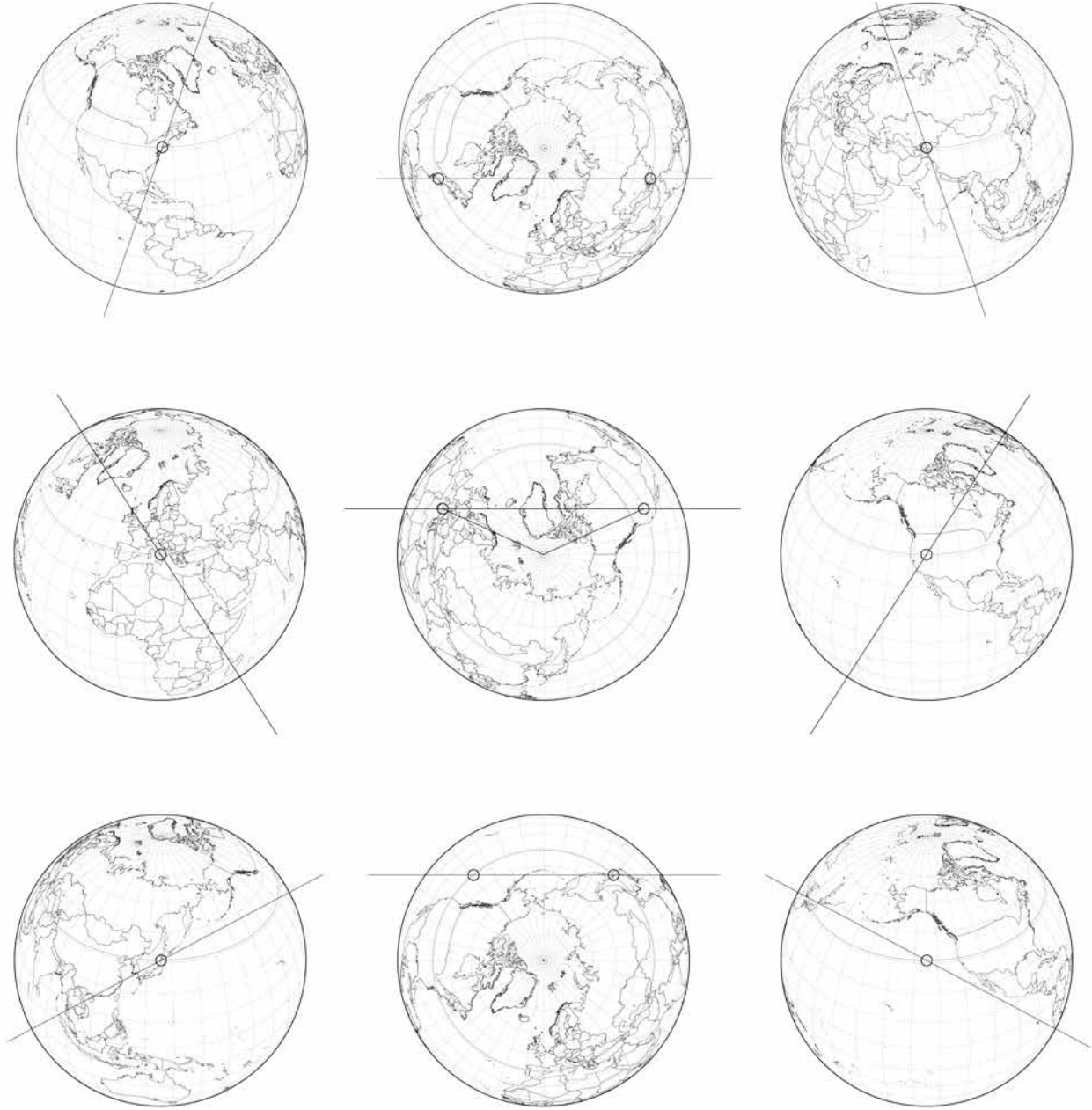


Figure 6

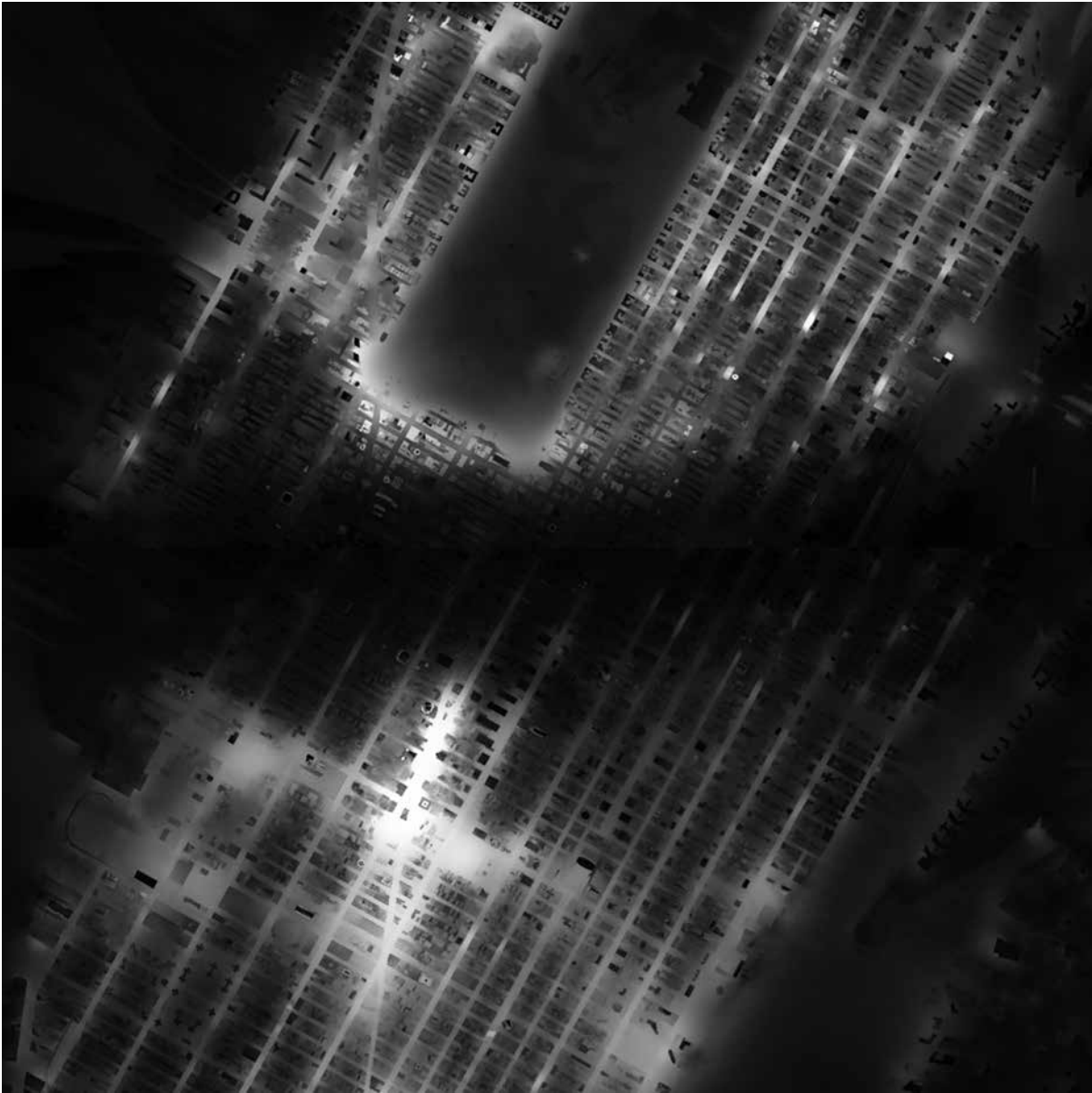


Figure 8

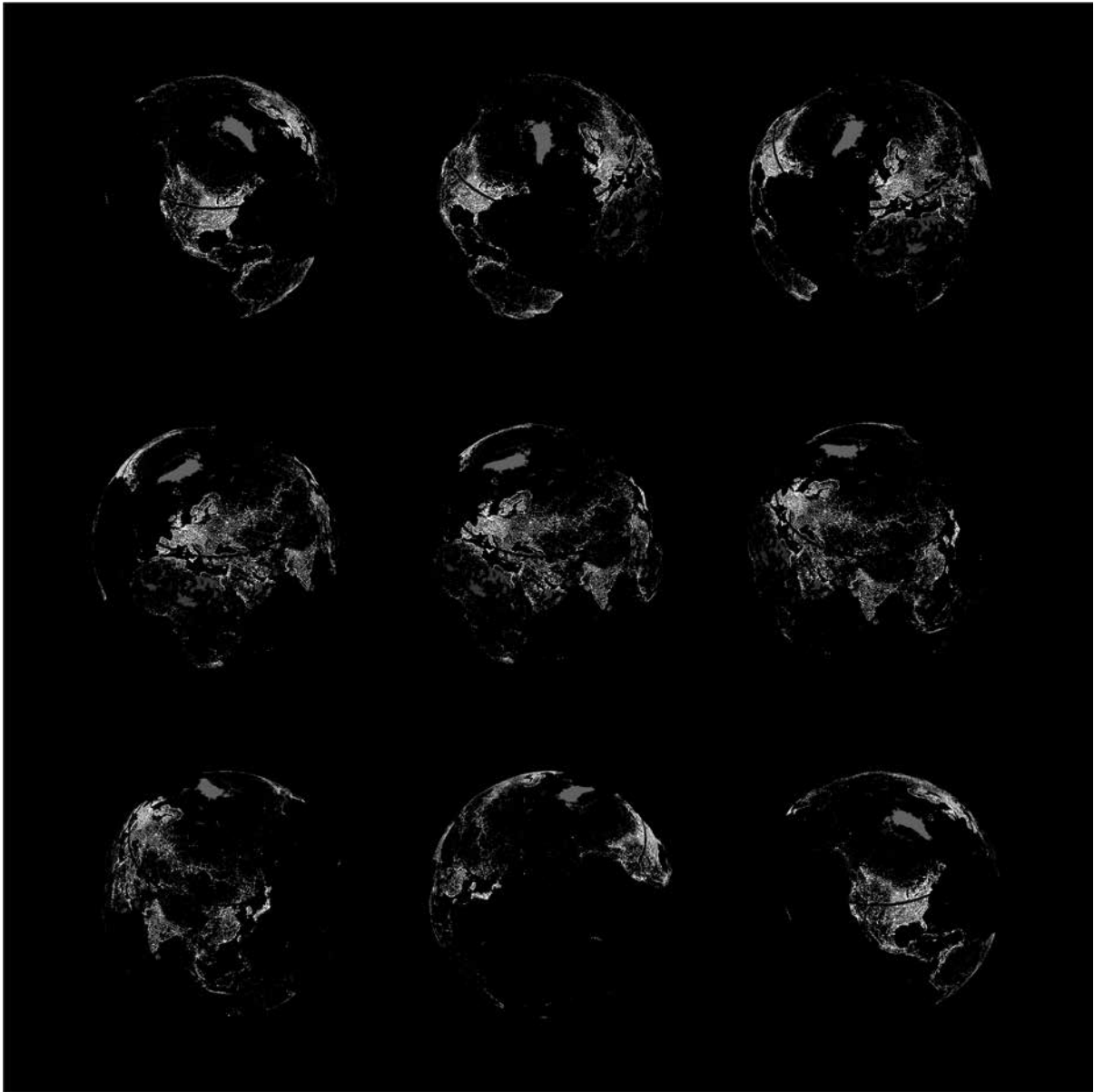


Figure 9

IMAGE CREDITS
Figure 2 Manipulated
image. Original image from:
<http://fineart.laforetvisuals.com/media/original/NYN10.jpg>
Figure 8 Original image
from NASA's archive:<http://eol.jsc.nasa.gov>

Figure 9 Image
manipulated and mapped
onto globe. Original image
from:<http://visibleearth.nasa.gov/view.php?id=55167>