

#Insta-Structure

*Designing for Instagram to Protect Local Ecologies
on the Antelope Valley California Poppy Reserve*

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Abstract

In the age of increased use of social media and Instagram comes the increased urge to replicate photos seen. Many of these photos are outdoor lifestyle photos, and many of those photos are, or could be located in sensitive ecological areas. That could mean the landscape itself or the way the photo is framed by stepping off trail. In the case of the Antelope Valley California Poppy Reserve, it's both. This project also looks to the problem for the solution. By designing with Instagram in mind the narrative can be driven in a positive direction. Designing six site-specific landscape interventions is a way of keeping Instagram influencers, other visitors using the space, and local ecologies happy. These interventions enable influencers to create amazing content without having to step off trail to frame the view. One specific intervention is the "Scope", which is designed to frame a photo with a kaleidoscope border. When the Scope is mounted to a permanent footing it forces people to stand and walk where it is desirable. In other words, they stay on the trail. The Scope also provides a way for people to view the surrounding landscape and take in its beauty, not just look at it. With the completion of this project, hopefully it will spark interest in other designers to spread this concept and use it in other landscapes. #Insta-Structure.

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Scene 1

The Date





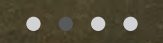
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Scene 1: Narrative Set Up

The nerves are high as Jane and Joseph drive to the Antelope Valley California Poppy Reserve. This is one of their first dates and will prove to be an influential one. Jane suggested they go because she had heard about it from one of her friends who said it was gorgeous. She loves wildflowers and hopes Joseph finds them captivating as well. Joseph is excited because he really likes Jane and wants to show interest in what she is passionate about.

As they travel down the long approach to the parking lot, they can see that this is a good year for the poppies. Their jaws drop.

#Speechless.





When they get out of the car, Jane suggests they look at the park map to decide where they want to go. Both agree on the Kitanemuk Vista point, along a half mile trail with 170 feet of elevation gain.



Walking down the trail Jane is interested in every different wildflower. They take note as to how thick the flowers are with little bare earth in sight. Jane looks over at Joseph and he is gazing out over to the vast expanse of wildflowers. She can see the wonder in his eyes. Joseph feels his hand tingle as Jane reaches to hold it. They squeeze in tandem knowing that they have found something special with each other and with this Reserve.

#SuperLush



Scene 2

Lessons For
The Kids



Jane and Joseph are now married with two children. Jane is an ecologist studying wildflowers and Joseph is a roadside pollinator biologist.

#InfluencedByTheirDate.

Their children, Elise and Cody, are five and seven. They are about to have their first visit to the Antelope Valley California Poppy Reserve, as a family.



14 10 '97



Scene 2: Narrative Set Up + Plant Needs

On the drive to the Poppy Reserve Jane explains to the children the importance of the native California poppies, *Eschscholzia californica*. She explains that besides being California's state flower, they play a role in the diversity of native California wildflowers, provide soil stabilization, and many different pollinators visit them. Jane also encourages them to look for other flowers like Lacy Phacelia (*Phacelia cryptantha*), Pygmy-Leaved Lupine (*Lupinus bicolor*), or Goldfields (*Lasthenia californica*). To help with identification, she provides some photos.

Joseph continues by adding that California poppies are visited by native bumblebees, mining bees, sweat bees, and several varieties of syrphid flies (Costner, 2017).

Finally, one important message that Jane tells her children is that she always wants to see them on the trail. Poppy roots are very delicate and even if you think you are stepping on bare soil, roots are still beneath the surface getting crushed (Stone, 2019). The children nod in agreement because they both like flowers and wouldn't want to hurt them.



March 24, 2024



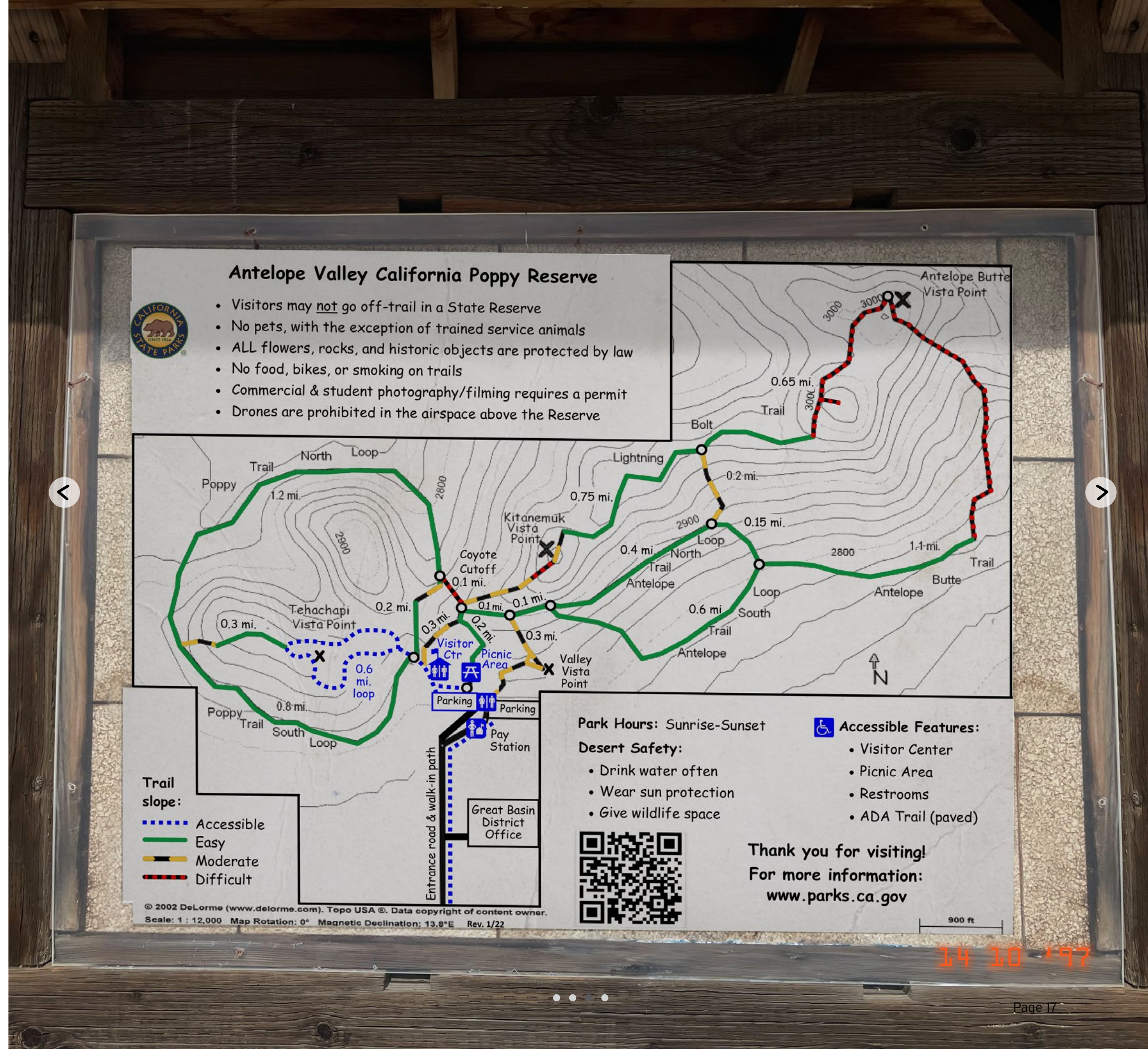
Image Source: https://www.instagram.com/p/C46rdeyPxx9/?img_index=2



The family checks out the map to see if anything has changed. John notices that not much has been updated apart from the added fencing, a new ADA paved trail, and more signs.

Before the children got too squirrely Jane notes that it's not just her enforcing the rule of staying on the trail. It is in fact the first rule listed on the map. Elise and Cody agree with their mom, then the four of them head out on the trail.

#SquirrelyKids
#JustKeepMoving



During their time at the Poppy Reserve the children experience the same excitement and awe their parents first had. They remark on all of the pretty colors and open views. All-in-all it's like Jane and Joseph just visited yesterday, but they got to see the site through the joyous lens of their children.

#ProudParents



Scene 3

But, What's
The Problem?



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Scene 3: Problem Space



Years later Elise and Cody are now teenagers. One day, Jane suggests that the whole family take a trip back to the Reserve. Both Elise and Cody groan because they are way too cool for a road trip with their parents. But when Jane places a photo album in front of them from when they were there last, floods of sensory memories come rushing back: the site of neon orange, the sound of the wind flowing across the landscape, and the smell of the sage brush.

The kids finally agree to go back to experience that place again.

#AngstyTeens

#Nostalgic



Driving down the entry road they first notice the abundance of cars. The parents are pleased to see that more people are there to appreciate the Reserve and the poppies. Elise and Cody look at each other in concern, for they have suspicions as to why more people are there.

#SuperbloomInstagramPhotos

#Overuse



After they finally find a parking spot in the overflow parking, they all solemnly get out of the car, not uttering a single word. Slowly, the parents start walking their normal trail, then Elise and Cody follow suit.



What they see is heartbreaking. Even the kids aren't prepared for this, though they have seen some of the photos that were posted on Instagram. Groups of people are walking off trail, and even where they don't see anyone directly there is evidence in the bare patches and user trails stemming from the main path. That year had good rainfall for the poppies to germinate but that didn't matter with the impact of people walking wherever they could to get a good photo.

#Devastated



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Scene 3: Problem Space



When the family got back in the car to go home, the kids explained. With the rise of social media and Instagram, trends have developed where people go out to take photos with nature that mimic other posts.

#Influencers

The parents could understand that, but what they couldn't understand was the way in which they were doing it. They don't need to walk or lay all over the flowers to get good photos of them. Feeling disappointed, they vowed to never go back, for their beautiful Reserve had been destroyed.

#WhatCanBeDone

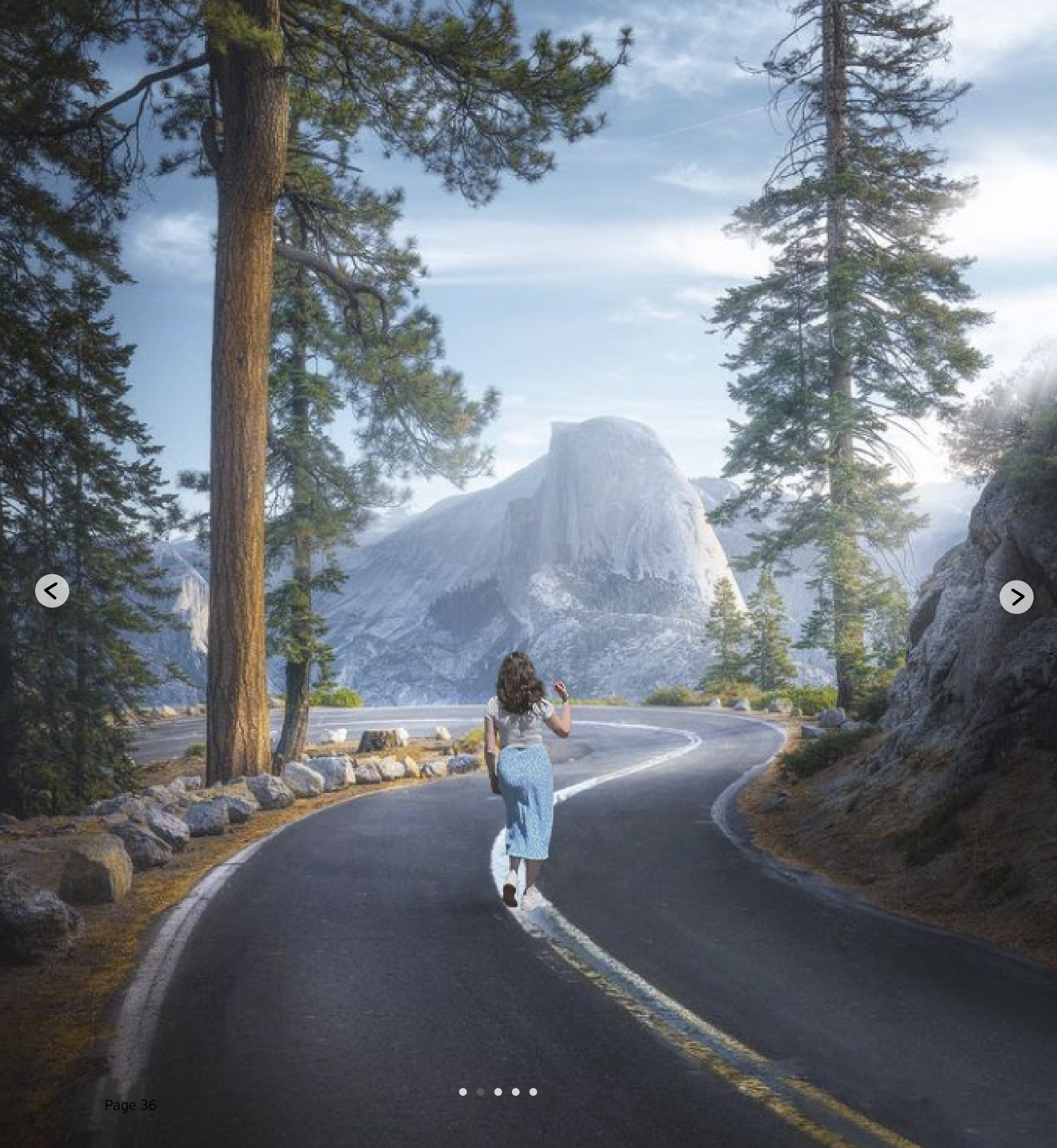


Scene 4

Influencers Just
Want To Have Fun





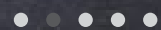


paige_emily

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Scene 4: Precedents

They stop at places like National Parks...

#Wanderlust
#ShelsNotLost





paige_emily

#Insta-Structure
Scene 4: Precedents

Local parks that are doing their best to appeal to Instagram...

#TheyTried





paige_emily

#Insta-Structure
Scene 4: Precedents

And of course, Instagram Museums, places that are designed for the gram. These are the most fun because Paige and Emily find a sense of community with strangers who are there for the same reason. And let's face it, they get some great photos.

#ColorFactory





paige_emily

#Insta-Structure
Scene 4: Precedents

When they finally arrive at the Reserve, it did not disappoint! After walking about a quarter mile, they find a good location on the trail for some photos. A few shots later they realize that if they could only get a few feet into the flowers, they could frame the view so much better. They gaze down at the poppies, look around at what other people are doing, and discern that only a few feet off trail is not too harmful.

#WhatYouDoForTheShot
#ItsNotTooHarmful



Scene 5

How Could
This Be?





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Scene 5: Intro To Designed Trail



Years pass again. Elise and Cody are both off at college, enjoying their time and making many friends. One spring, a friend of Elise's shares an Instagram post that was taken at the Reserve, but she didn't recognize what she saw. Curious about it, she calls her brother to see if he has seen or heard anything. He hadn't. The photo appears to show more poppy emergence than their last visit and a strange structure in the distance. Interested to see it in person, they make a plan to visit together during spring break. This plan includes convincing their parents to go with them. While Jane and Joseph wanted to see their children, they did not want to go to the Reserve again for fear of the further destruction they might see. Jane especially is still heartbroken from their last visit. After several persuasive calls from both Cody and Elise, Jane and Joseph agree to visit the Reserve again.



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Scene 5: Intro To Designed Trail

On the drive in, nerves are high for Jane and Joseph just like their first date, but these are not excited nerves they are apprehensive nerves. Elise and Cody are a little nervous but also hopeful for what they might see. When they get close enough to the hills on the Reserve, they notice that it's a good year for the poppies. Even from that distance they could see more poppies than the last time.

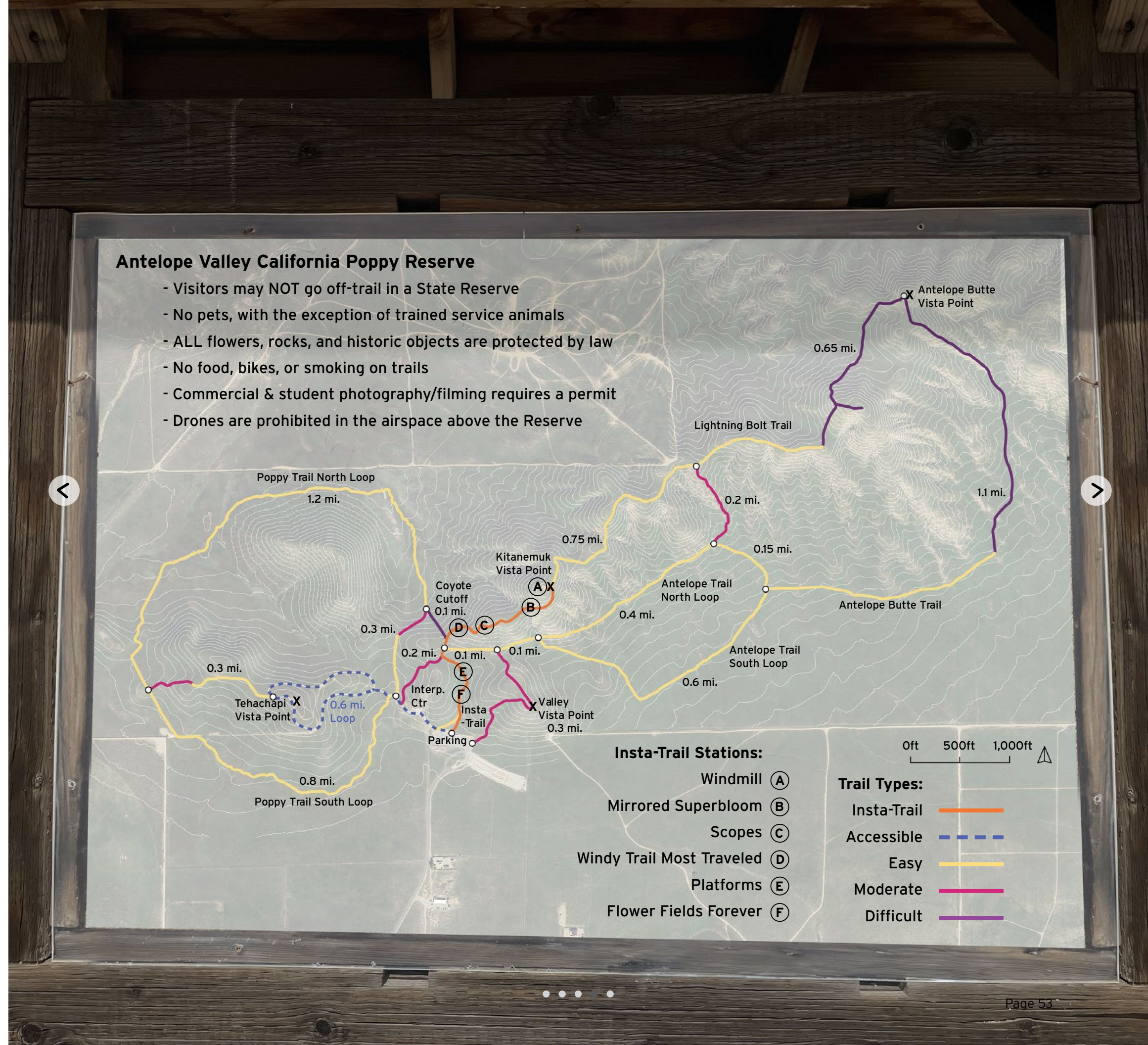
#ButWhyThough

Turning onto the entry drive, their eyes are drawn to a large structure on the hill they know to be Kitanemuk Vista Point. A lot has changed.





After parking, they walk up to the kiosk to see the updated Reserve map. Immediately, they notice a trail that has existed previously but is now re-named Insta-Trail and appears to have several stations with different names. Both Jane and Joseph don't really want to know what that's about, so they decide to travel a different familiar loop around the west side of the site.



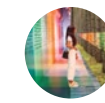
It didn't take the family long to see that there is an abundance of flowers, and very little evidence of off trail travel. Jane and Joseph look at each other in amazement and question how this could happen given the previous visit. Elise and Cody indicate that it probably has something to do with the Insta-Trail. With their curiosity piqued, the family make their way to the interpretive center to find out.



Scene 6

Insta-Trail:
The Experience





Kelsey Smith

#Insta-Structure

Scene 6: Intro To Designed Trail

At the same time Elise and Cody were persuading their parents to visit the Reserve again, Paige and Emily have been keeping tabs on the Reserve over the last few years. It made such an impression their last visit! They have seen many photos posted by people they follow. Feeling left out, it is time to visit again to experience the new developments on the Reserve.

#FOMO
#InfrastructureForInstagram
#InstaStructure
#MustSee



While the family walks to the interpretive center, Paige and Emily also arrive at the Reserve, find a parking spot, and walk directly to the Insta-Trail entrance. They know exactly what they are there for.

#WeKnowWhereWeAreGoing



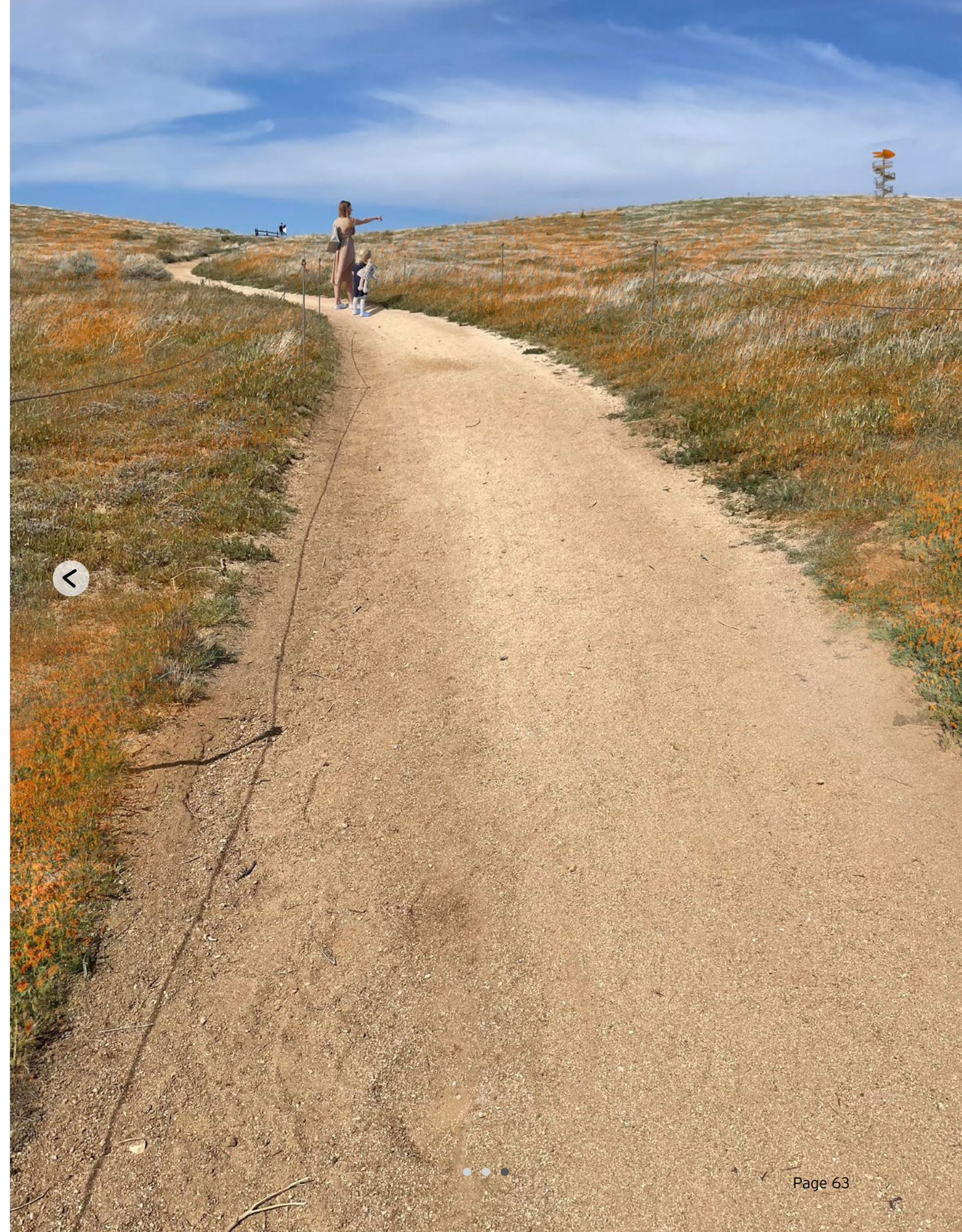
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Scene 6: Designed Trail Experience - Entrance



Paige and Emily want to experience everything this new trail has to offer and take photos at each station. As they pass through the trail entry, which is two reflective chrome poppy sculptures framing the trail, they look ahead. What they can barely see at the top of the hill is the pinnacle of the trip, the icing on the cake, the Windmill.

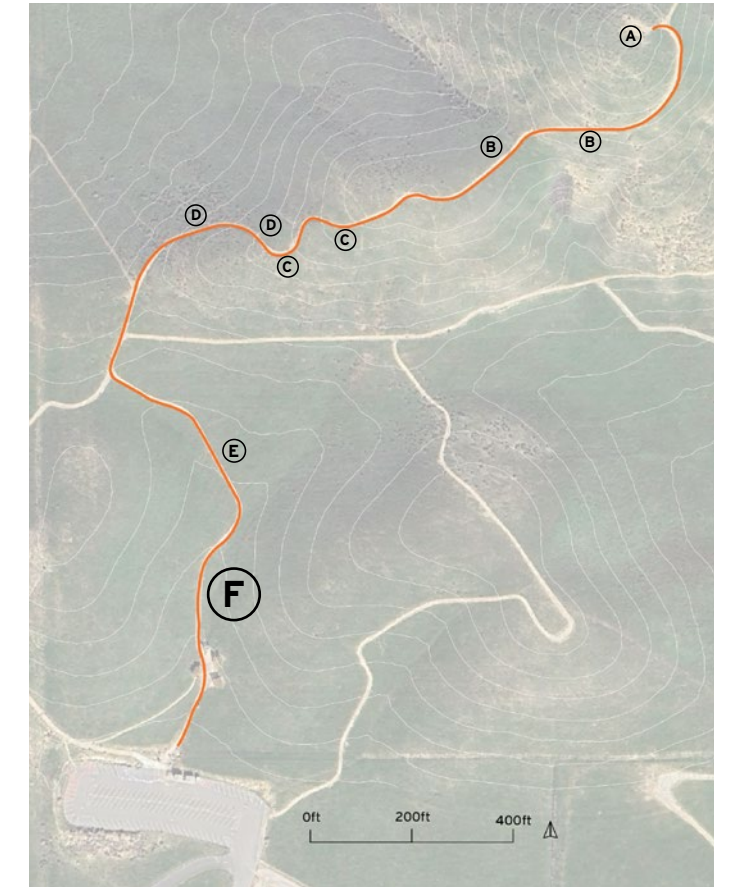
#ExperiencItAll
#WeLovelcing





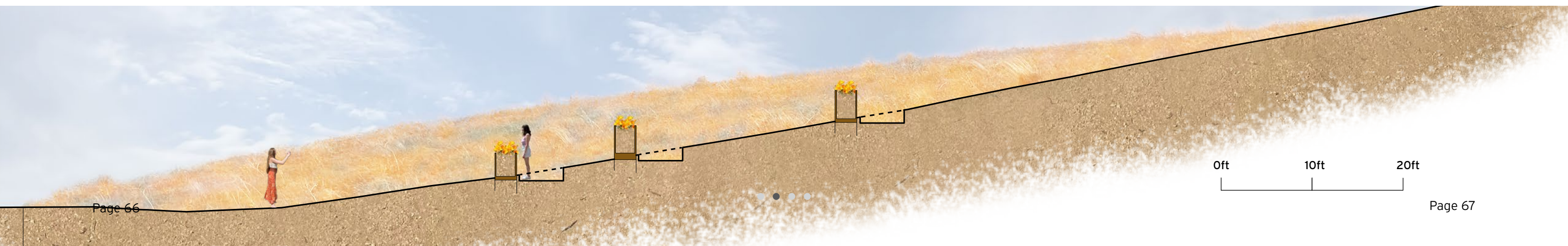
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Scene 6: Intervention
- Flower Fields Forever



But first, only about 60ft from the entrance, they arrive at an station called Flower Fields Forever.

This station features wooden raised planter beds with trails that are modestly graded for navigating between the beds to give the illusion of being immersed in the flowers. The sunken trail also gives the illusion of floating through the landscape.



Emily walks onto the smaller trails to pose when she notices a glint out of the corner of her eye. At a closer look she realizes that there are delicate metal inlays in the wood of the planter that reflect the color of the plants and takes a moment to appreciate the detail.

Before Paige starts taking photos, Emily asks Paige to make sure she includes the metal detail.





#Insta-Structure

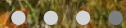
Scene 6: Designed Trail Experience

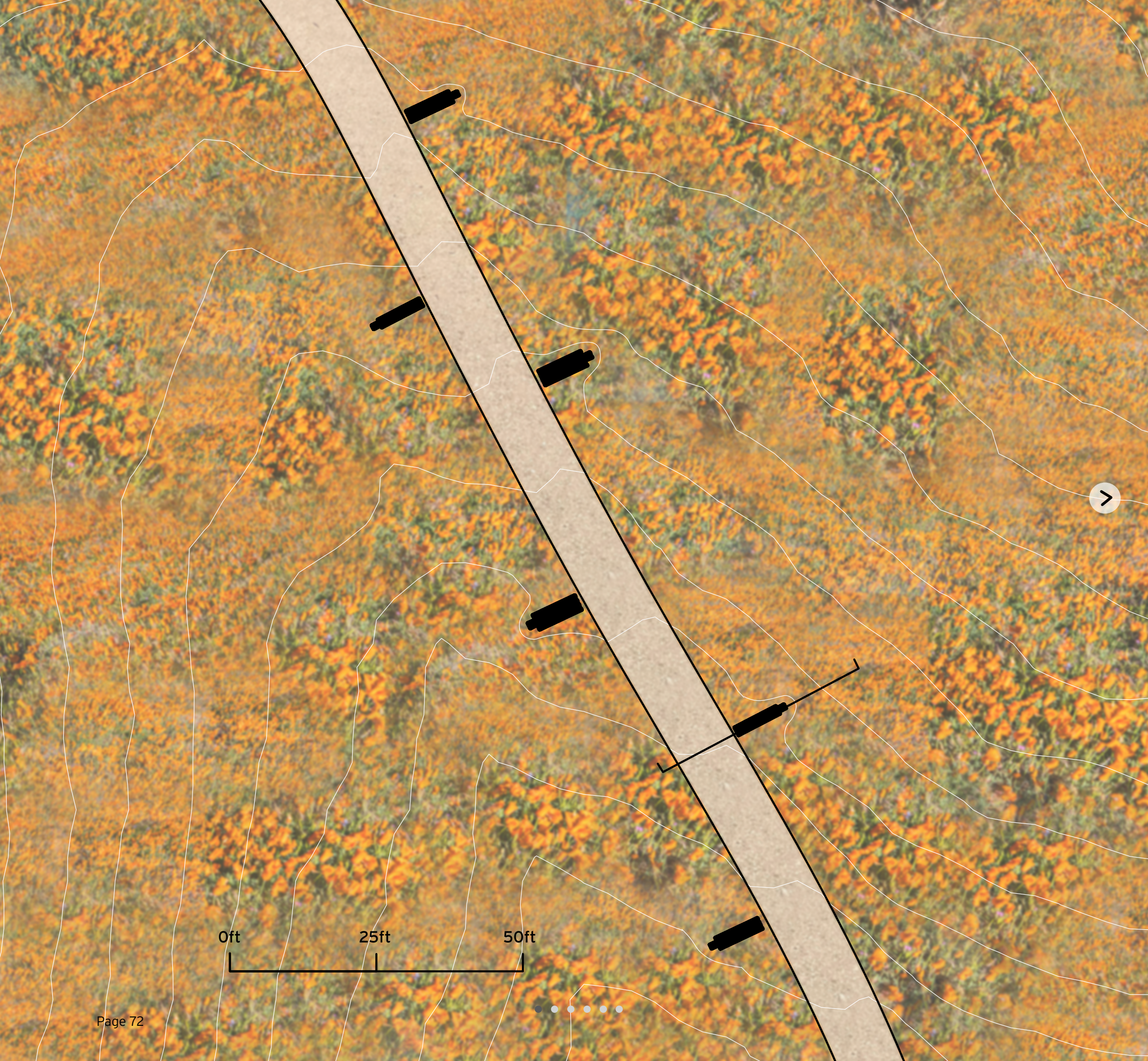
As they make their way to the next station, they notice something far off trail that is quite taller than the flowers, even taller than them, but looks very similar to a poppy flower. After a few blinks, they realize that it's like the entryway flowers, but clearly they aren't meant to get closer because of the simple metal barrier bordering the trail. That's interesting especially because it's all alone. Paige thinks it's a cheeky tease, not allowing them to get close to it.

#Rude

#Tease

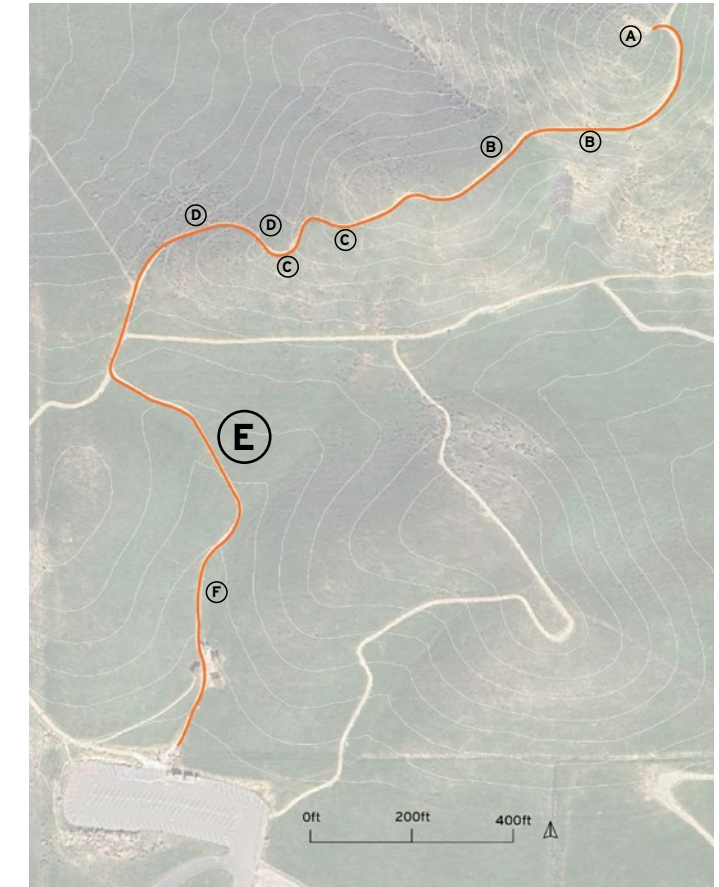
#DontCrossTheBarrier





#Insta-Structure

Scene 6: Intervention - Platforms



Further along the trail are small, elevated platforms that are nestled into the flowers. This illusion is achieved through subtle grading beneath the platforms to bring the platform to the same level as the flowers.

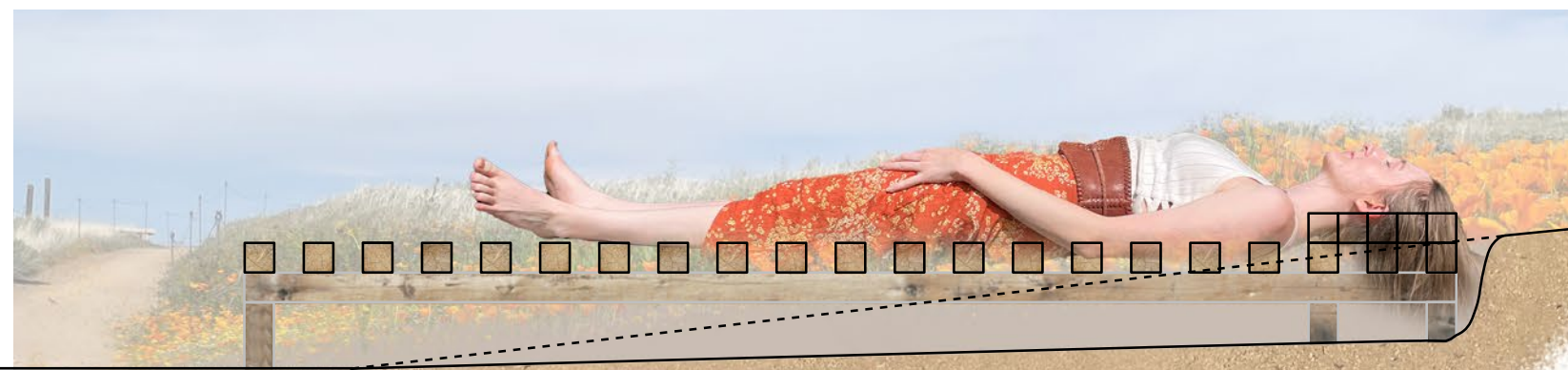
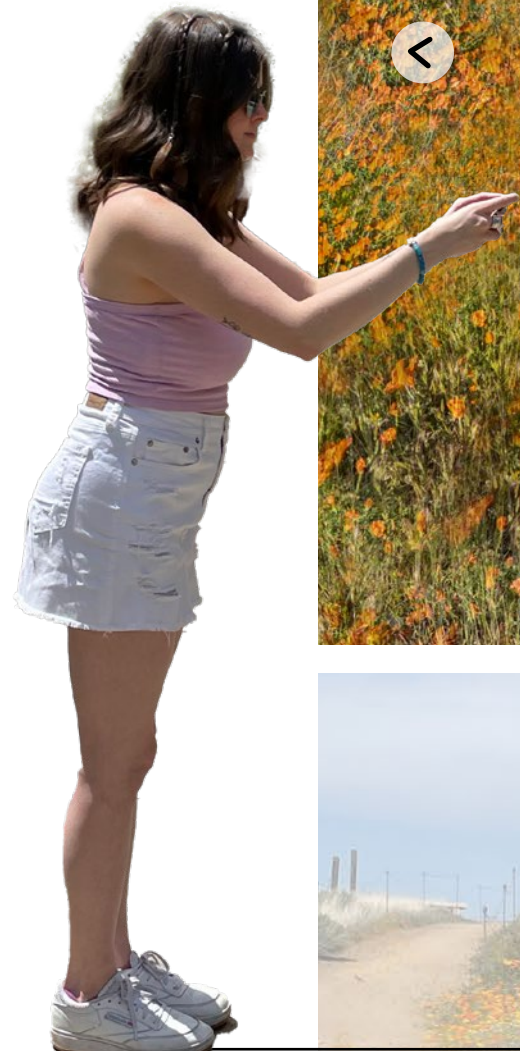
#Insta-Structure
Scene 6: Platforms



Paige notices right away that there is similar detailing in the wood as the planters, but they don't quite know what it's representing. Regardless, they think it's stunning!

This time, Paige lays down on the platform and Emily stands over her to get her photo. They both think it's incredible that the platform mostly disappears when someone lays down. It's as if the person is laying amongst the flowers.

#FloatingInFlowers



They continue up the trail and again see something glinting.
There's a theme here!





#Insta-Structure

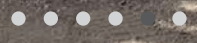
Scene 6: Designed Trail Experience



As they get closer, Emily realizes what they are seeing is a trash can that is completely reflective. In agreement, Emily and Paige comment that this is the coolest trash can they've ever seen and proceed to take a selfie in it.

#Fire AF

Just across the trail is a shade structure with a few tables and benches, but the inside is glowing orange. As they approach, they see why.





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Scene 6: Designed Trail Experience



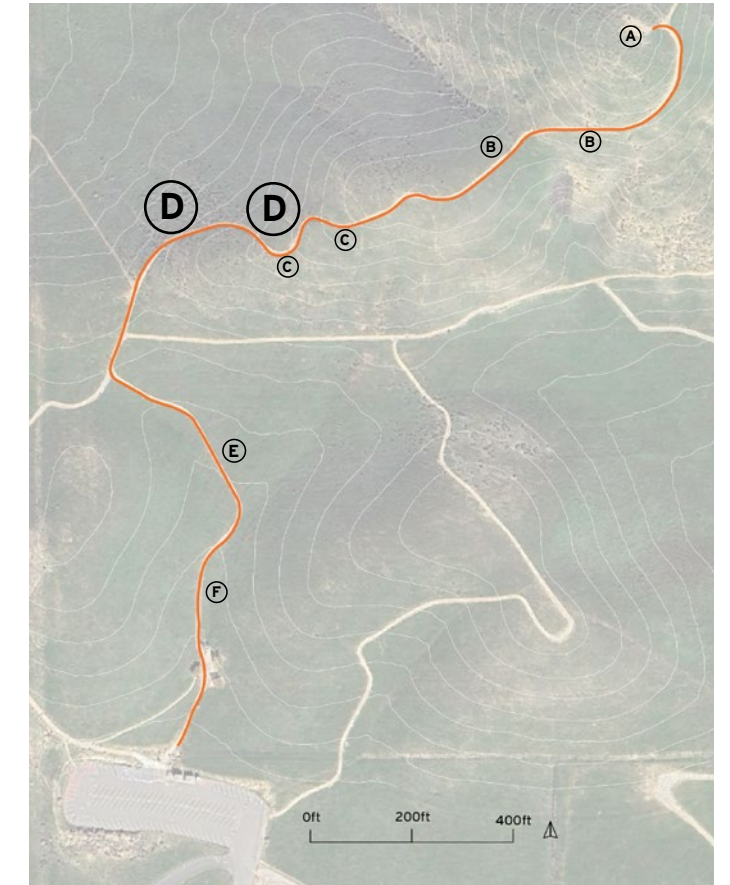
The roof is reflective with an orange poppy painted on it. But the glow isn't just coming from the painted poppy. The roof is angled so it is reflecting the orange color of the poppy bloom adjacent to the structure. Paige and Emily enter the structure, look up and take a selfie in the roof's reflection.

#SpringMood



#Insta-Structure

Scene 6: Intervention
- Windy Trail Most Traveled



100ft up the trail, they start to see movement. Threaded through delicately inlaid posts are twisted strips of fabric that capture the winds perfectly. The posts are mounted in a row on either side of the trail guiding them further along.

Paige thinks this is a perfect opportunity for Emily to walk ahead on the trail. Paige beautifully frames Emily between the posts. The photo has so much movement between the fabric and Emily's hair flowing in the wind.

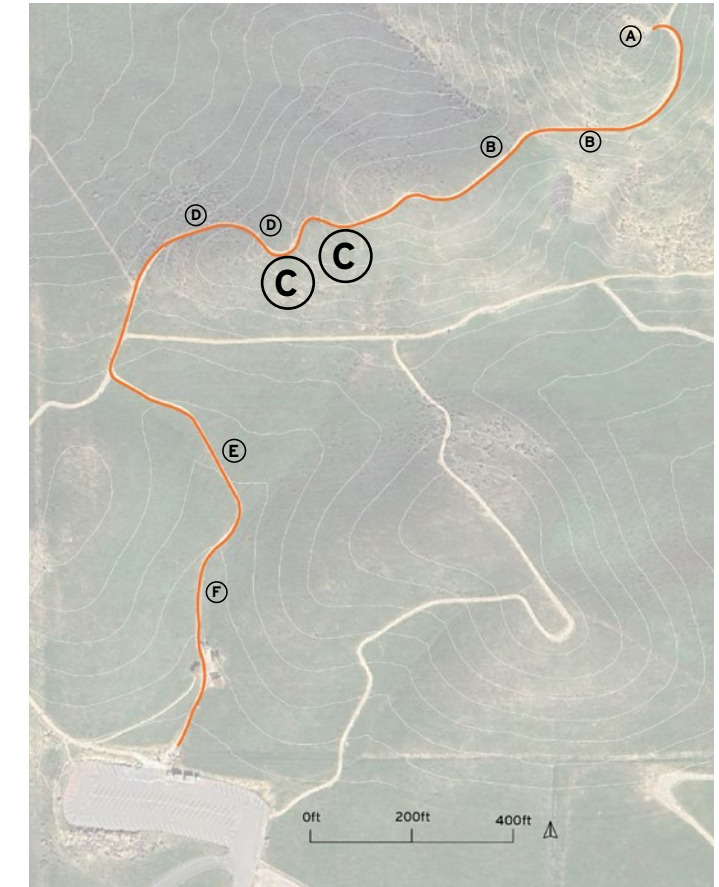
#FrameThatView
#PerspectivePlay





#Insta-Structure

Scene 6: Intervention - Scopes



Just after the fabric and posts end, there is a curve in the trail and then another row of posts and fabric. As they turn the corner, they see another person posing and quickly step back again to remove themselves from the shot. They comment on how smart the turn in the trail is. It allows two groups to take photos at the same time without interfering with each other. The difference here is, off in the distance, they see a post with a strange box mounted on the top. The group they almost interrupted is using it.

After waiting their turn, Emily approaches and sees a sign explaining how to use this interesting contraption. There is in fact a holder for a phone and a strap to ensure the camera is centered on the viewing scope. Once a phone is in place the handles on the side allow for tilting and swiveling to stage the image perfectly.



Photo Courtesy of Ignacio Lopez Busson



#Insta-Structure
Scene 6: Scopes

She sees that it gives a neat kaleidoscope frame to everything.



After playing with it for a couple minutes, she tells Paige to stand on the trail between the second set of posts. The photo turns out to be a psychedelic combo of the colored fabric and the kaleidoscope frame.

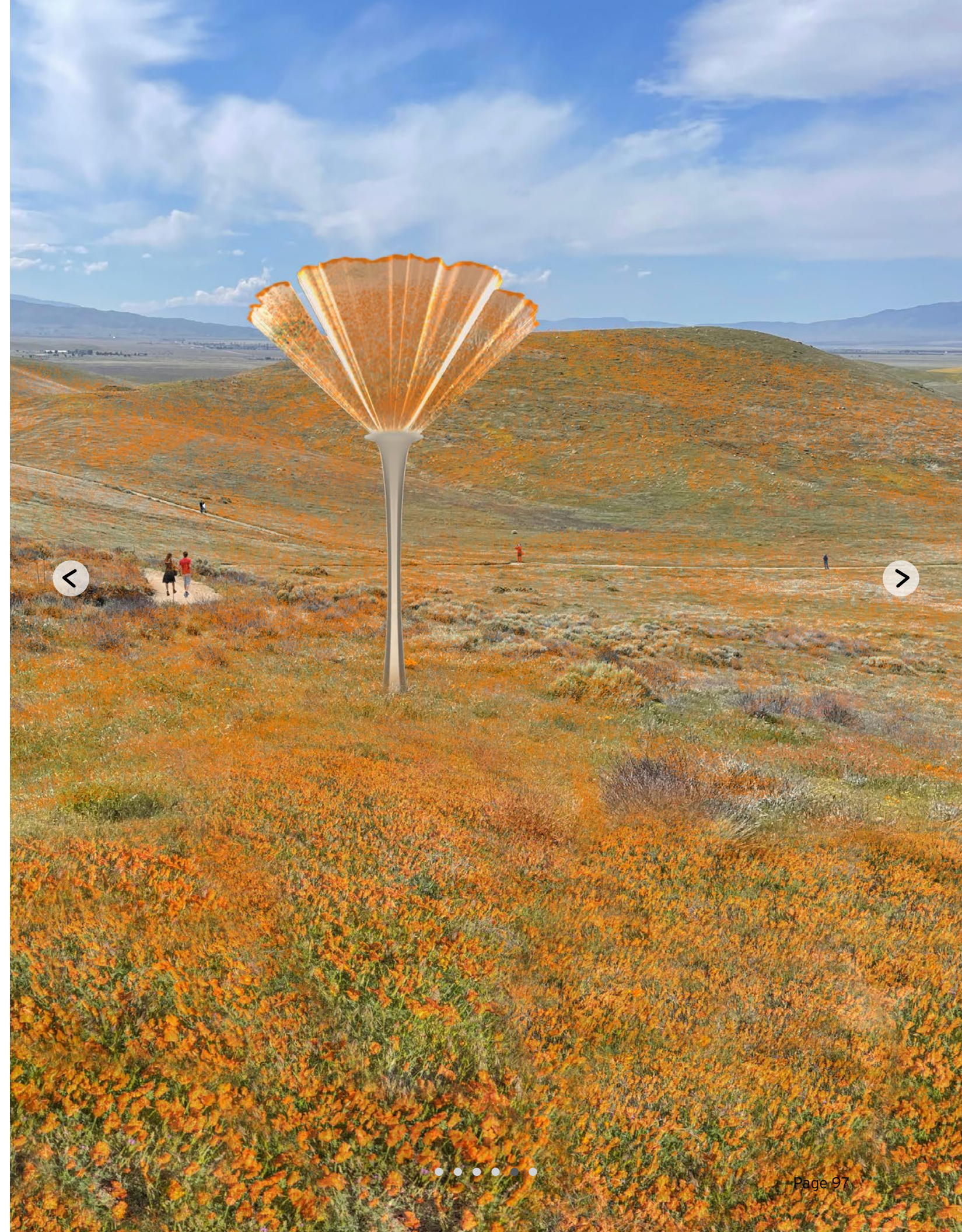


#Insta-Structure

Scene 6: Designed Trail Experience



On the other side of the trail, they see another chrome flower. Then they pass another scope. There is a moment of realization that because this is a larger landscape, the elements of interest can blend together and interact more seamlessly compared to an Instagram Museum where each room is discrete. Emily is starting to like this better.





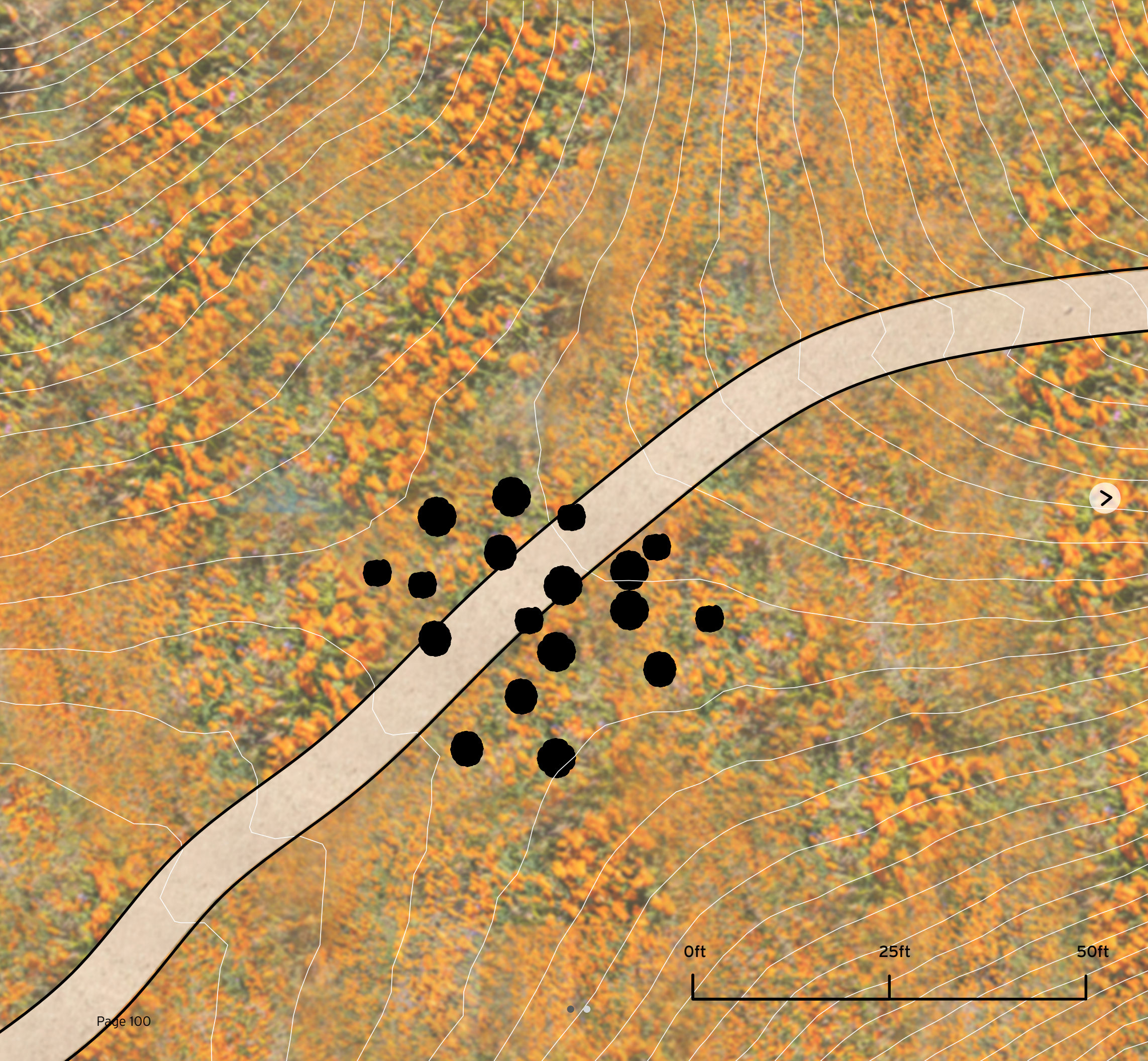
#Insta-Structure

Scene 6: Designed Trail Experience



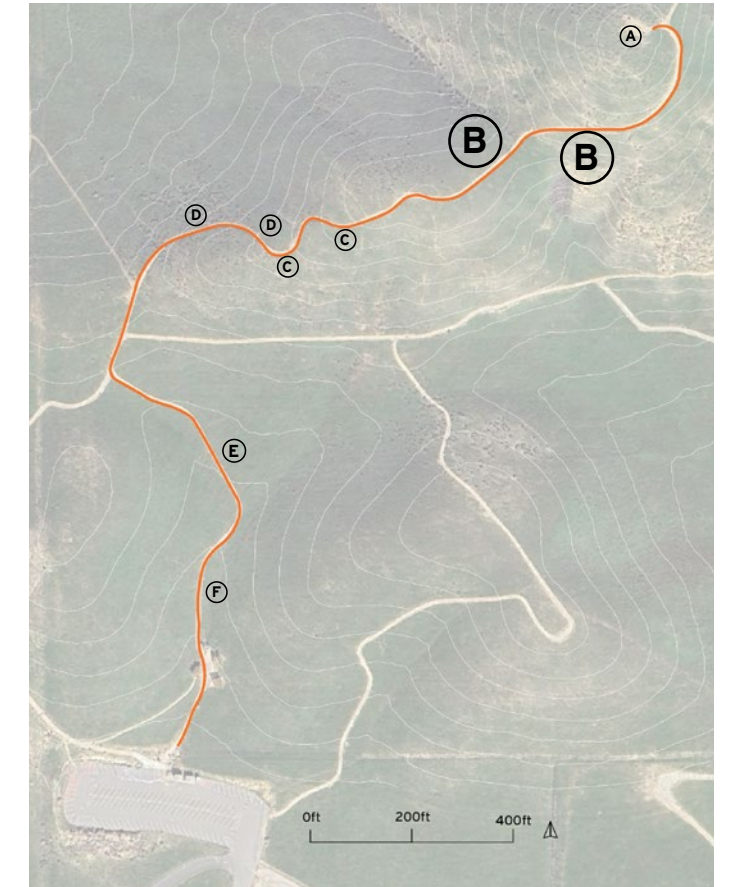
They continue another 200ft or so to a flat area in the terrain where another set of shade structures and trash cans are located. Once they pass those structures, they see the windmill much more clearly now and Paige and Emily look ahead in excitement.

#SoClose
#WhatTheyveBeenWaitingFor



#Insta-Structure

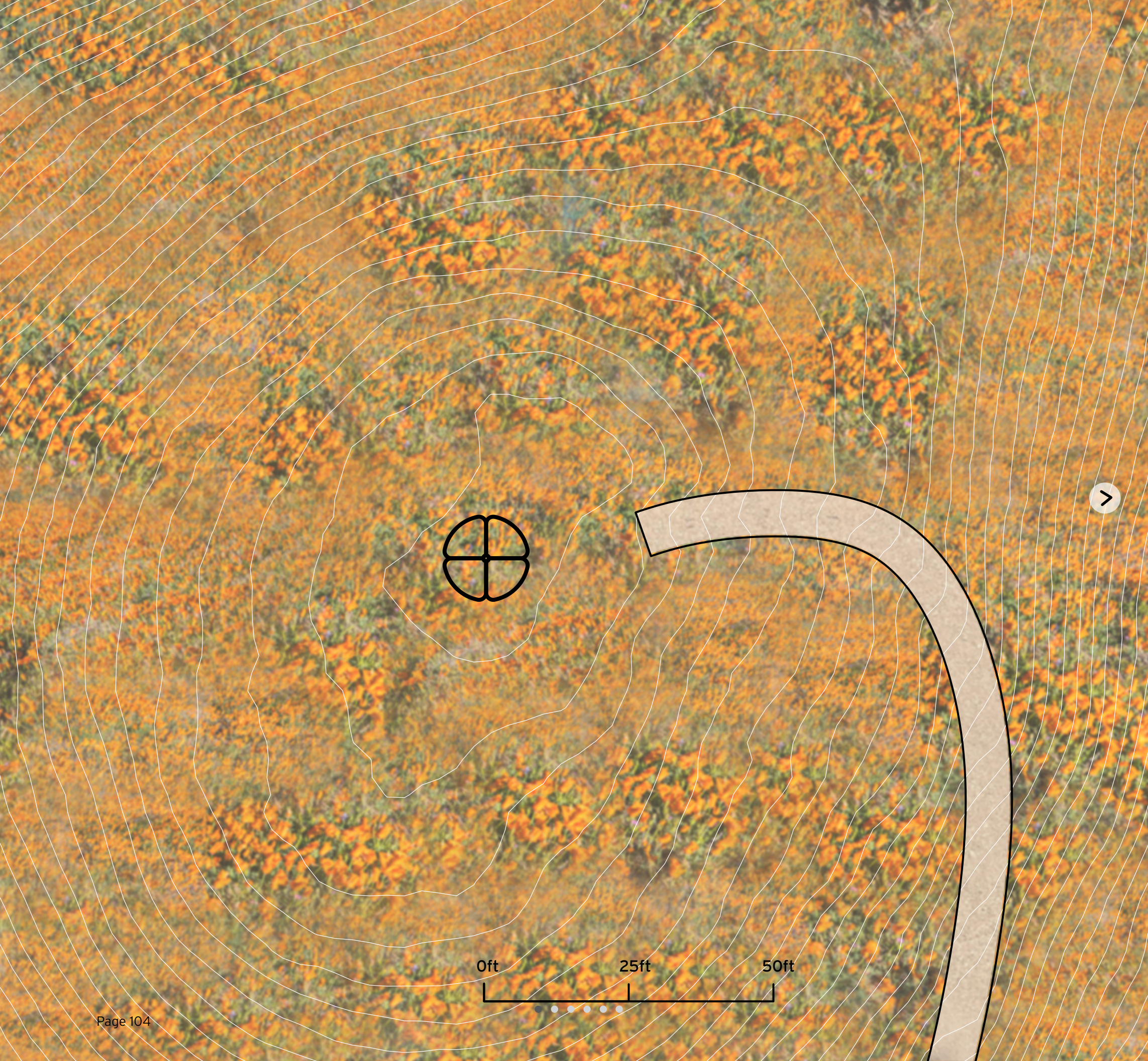
Scene 6: Intervention
- Mirrored Superbloom



As they excitedly hurry towards the Windmill, suddenly they are surrounded by the super bloom of chrome poppy sculptures.

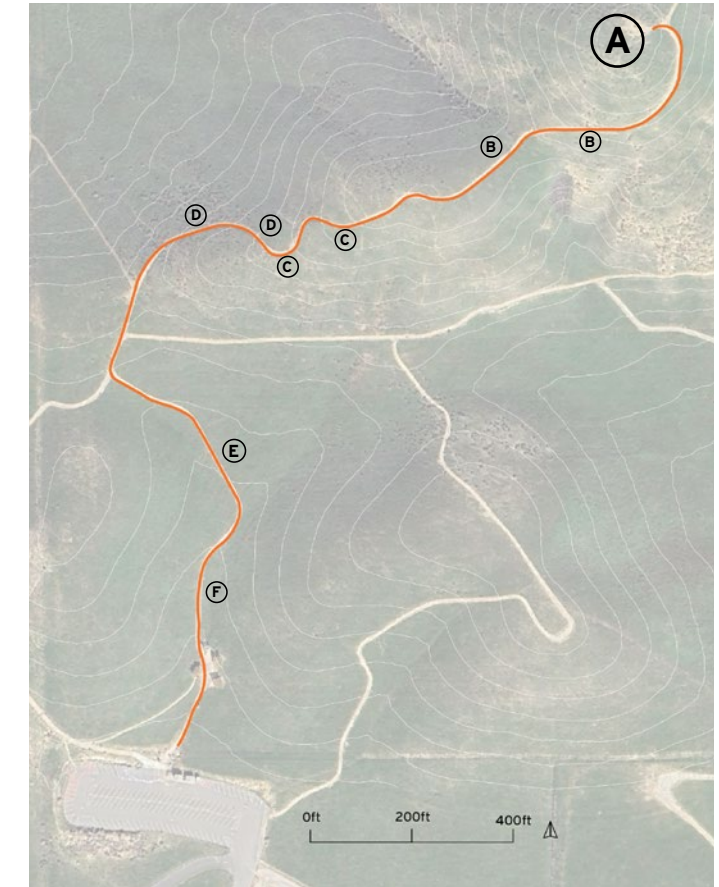
In awe, they finally understand that the other poppy sculptures off trail were hinting to this moment all along. This is photo worthy, for sure!





#Insta-Structure

Scene 6: Intervention
- Windmill



Finally, they are on their way to the Windmill!

It is everything they hoped it would be. The windmill is the most popular location on the trail given Instagram posts they have seen.

#WorthIt
#OMG

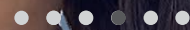




They approach the spiral staircase where each stair is shaped like a petal. As Paige and Emily walk up, every third step is larger and has similar metal detail as the previous stations. They realize that this Windmill contains a culmination of the detail from every other station. After seeing those graphics together, Paige and Emily now understand that they represent different stages of poppy growth.

Once they get to the horizontal windmill representing the final flower bloom, there is a QR code with information on the California Poppy including an explanation of the inlay details. And of course, they take a selfie with the windmill petals.

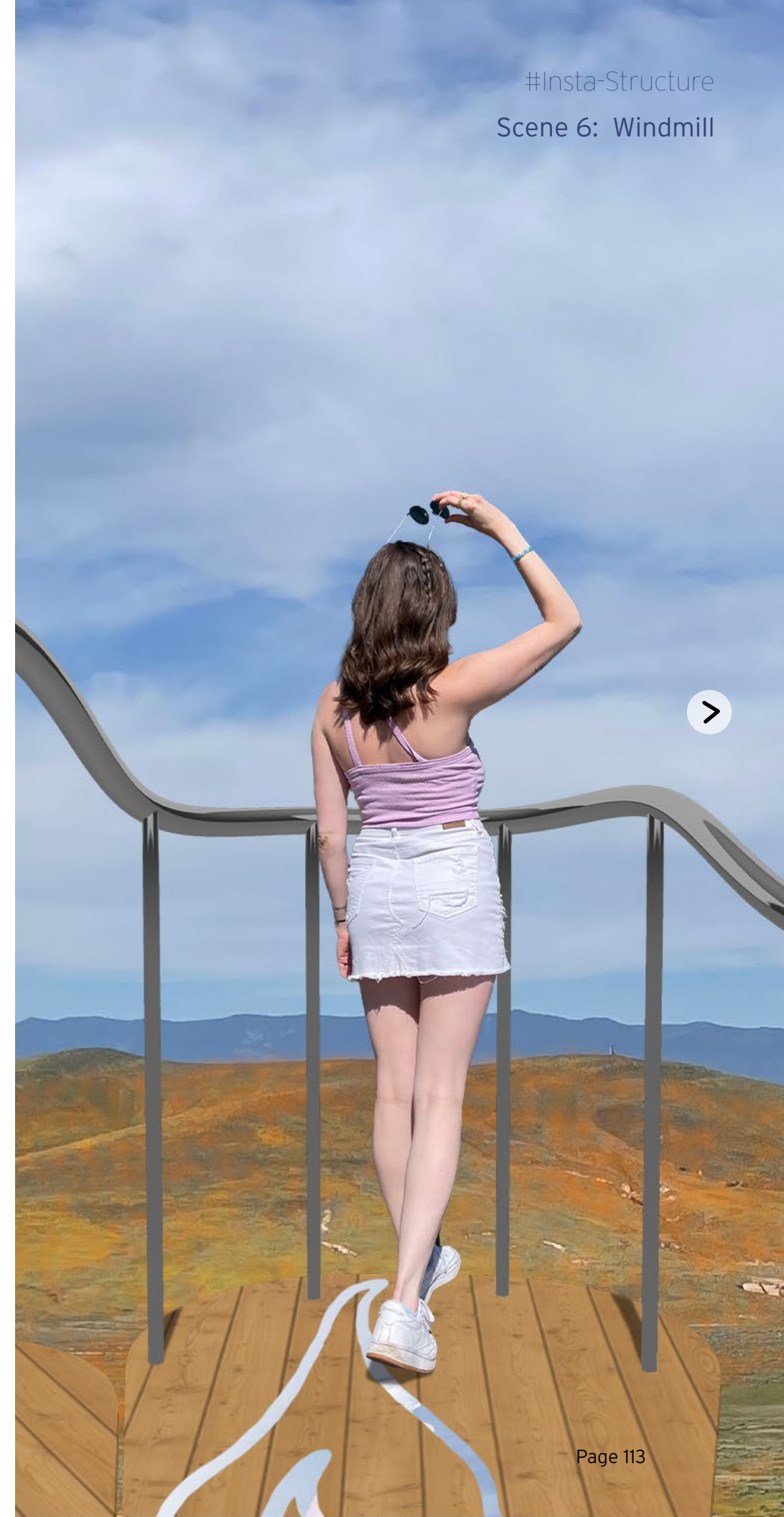
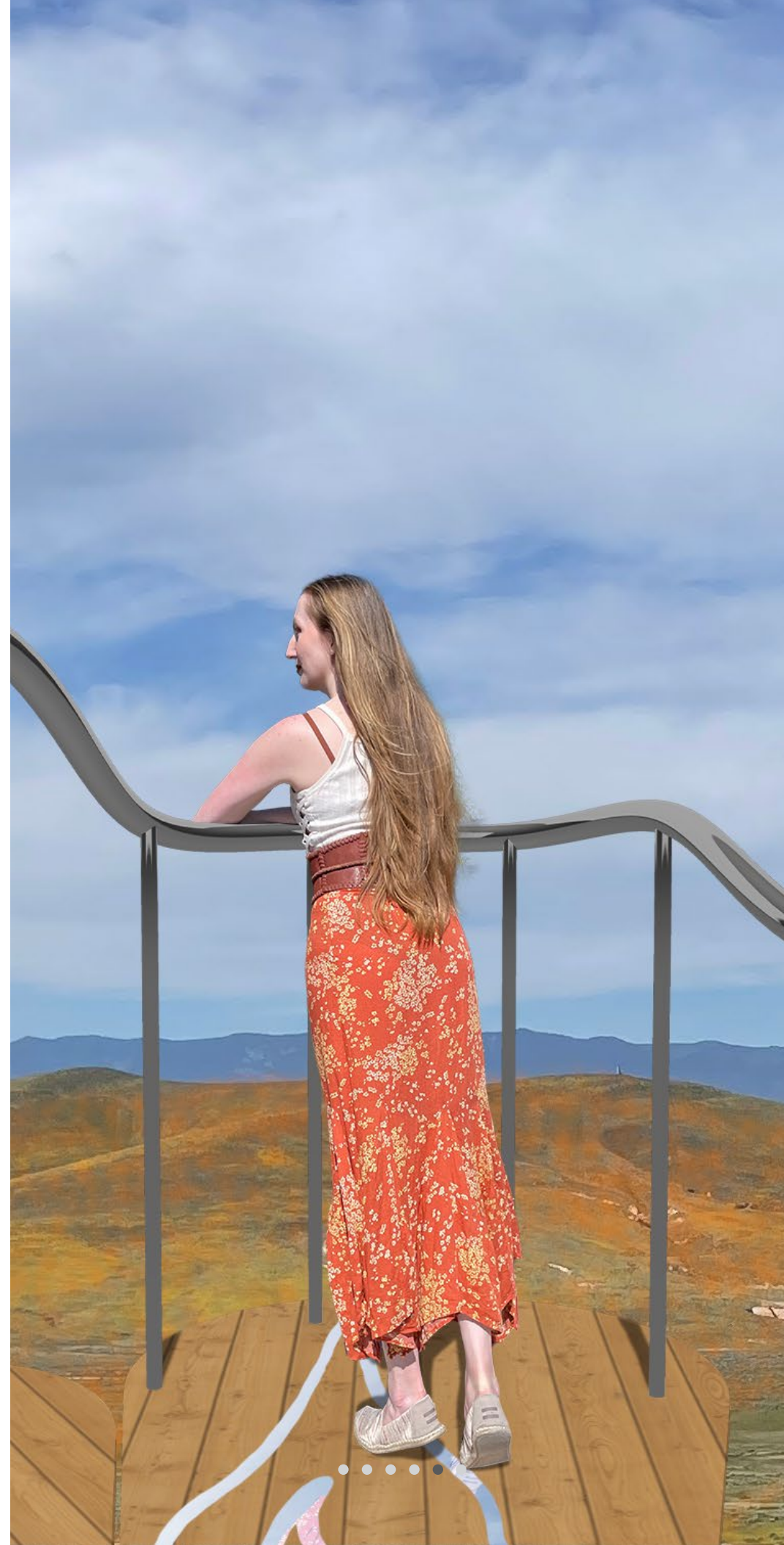
#SoMuchOrange
#ButNeverTooMuch



On their way back down the steps they find an open platform, and take turns taking photos of each other on the platform, sitting, leaning, and standing. They covered all their bases. They see other people taking photos of their feet dangling off the platform, but Paige and Emily decide against that one.

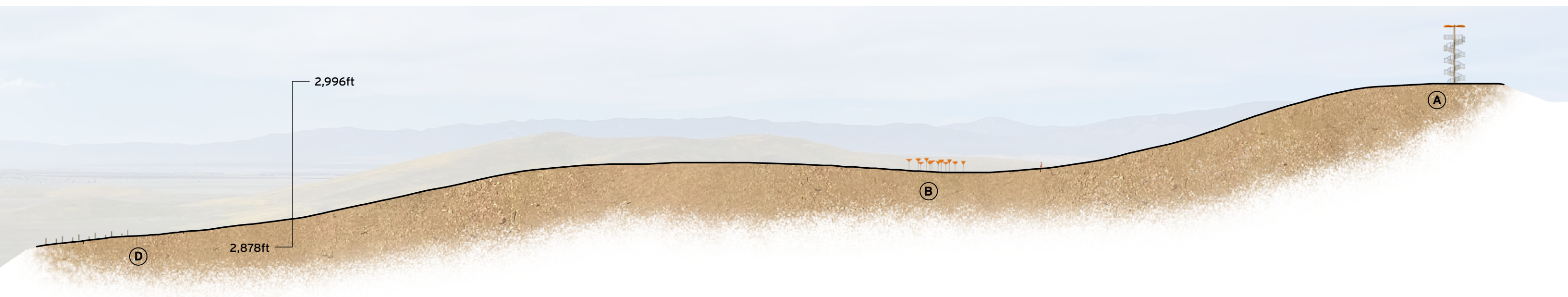
#FetishNotForThem

#Insta-Structure
Scene 6: Windmill



Before heading back down, Emily tells Paige to walk on the path a bit first. Where Emily is standing on the Windmill she can see Paige across the landscape on the trail. Emily got a nice photo of Paige with all the flowers and the distant mountains in the background.

#StunningViews



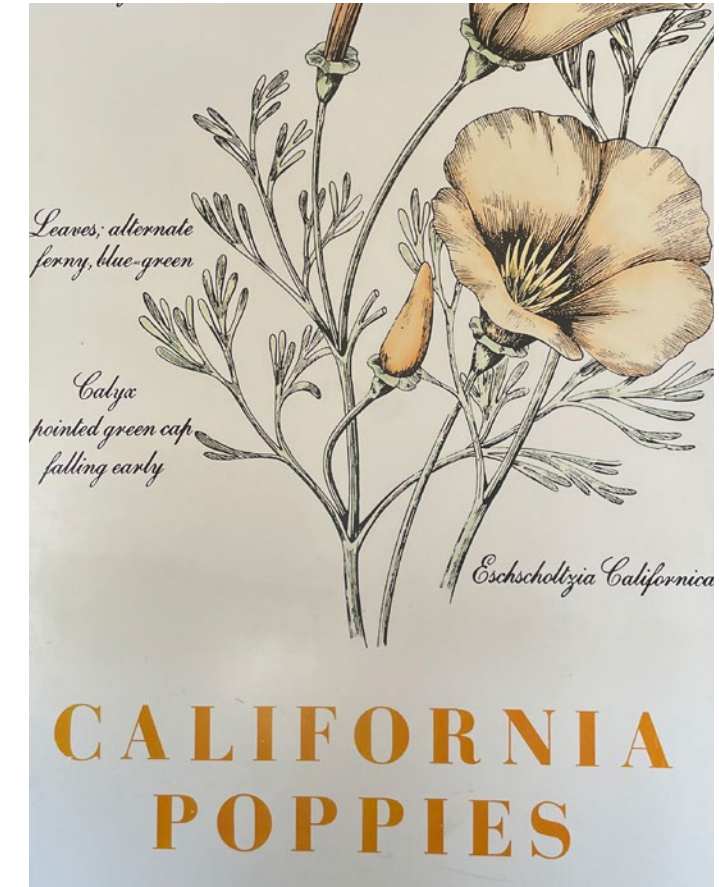
Scene 7

**Behind The
Scenes**





#Insta-Structure
Scene 7: Interpretive Center



While Paige and Emily are having fun on the Insta-Trail, the family is in the interpretive center. When they enter, Jane inquires about the reasoning and origin of the new trail. The nice park stewards at the desk said, "Why don't you ask the designer herself?"

A figure emerges from the room behind the desk and says, "Hello, my name is Katie, I heard you had some questions about the background of the trail. Well, I'm happy to tell you all about it!"



“Like you, and many others, I started to notice an increase in attendance to beautiful sensitive areas like this one, except many of these people had different reasons than you for visiting. Social media, or more specifically Instagram and Instagram influencers, have played a large role in this increase.”

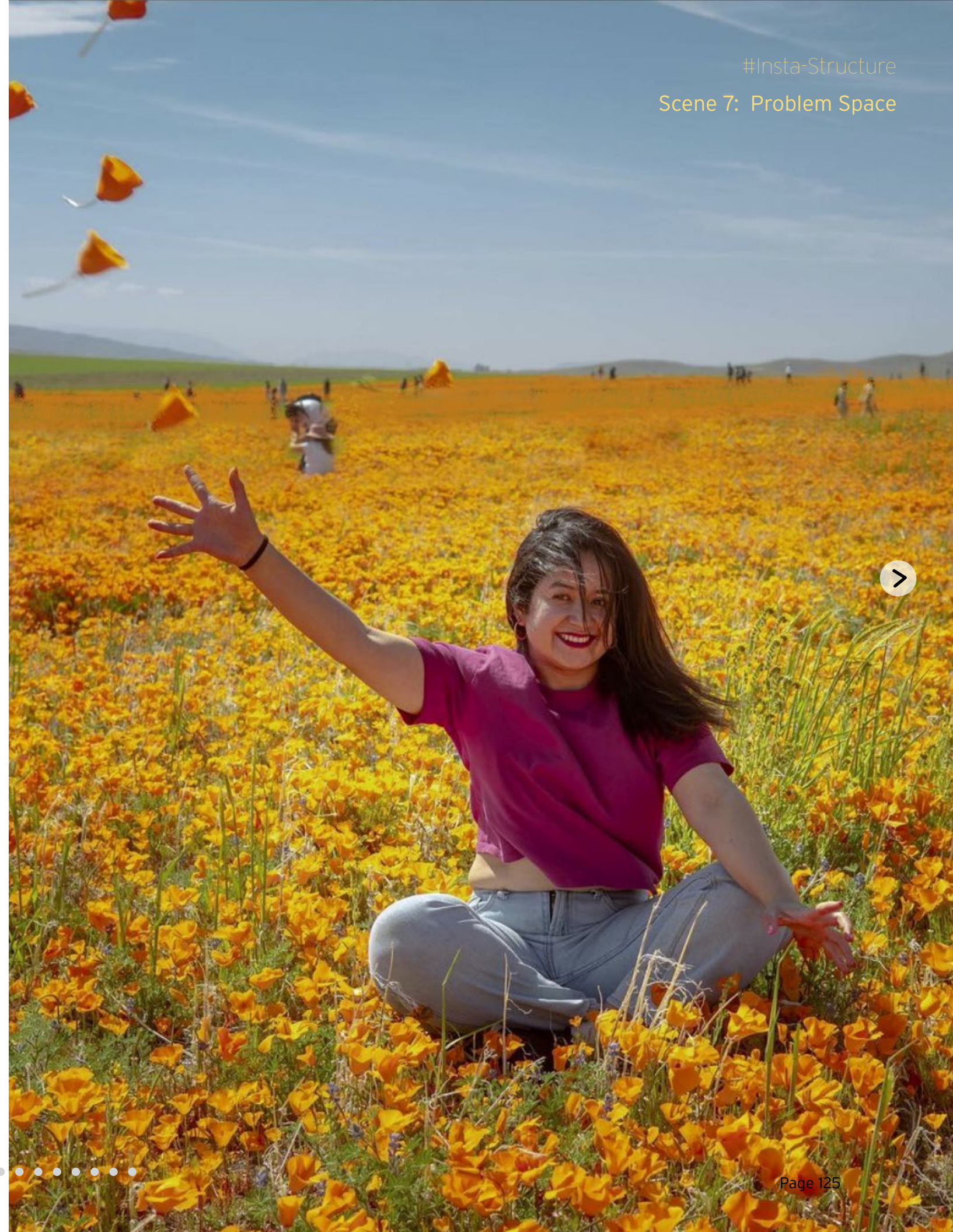
*For more information on the literature review see page 168.

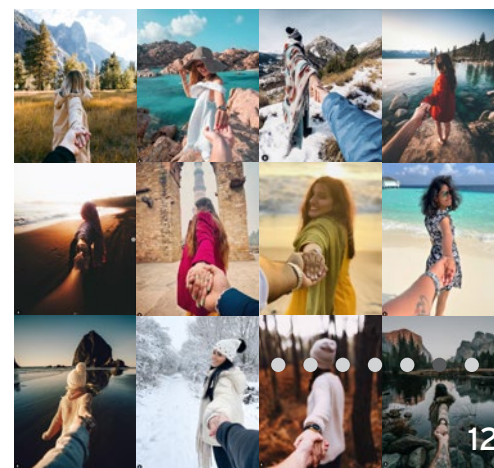
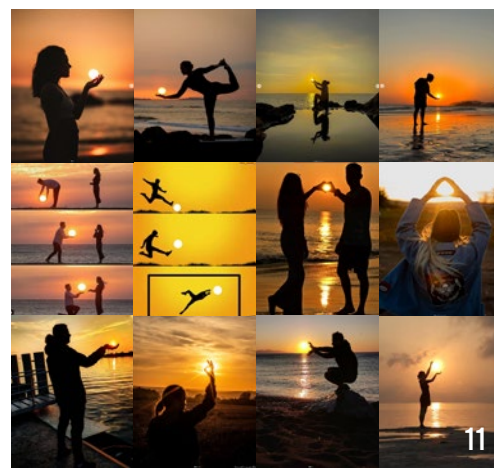
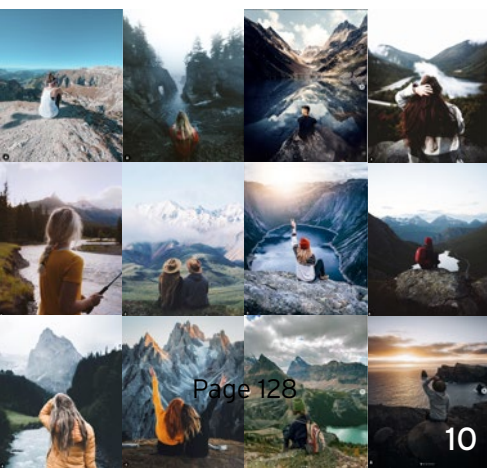
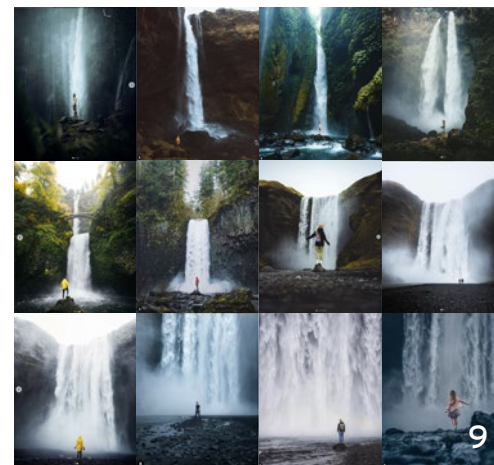
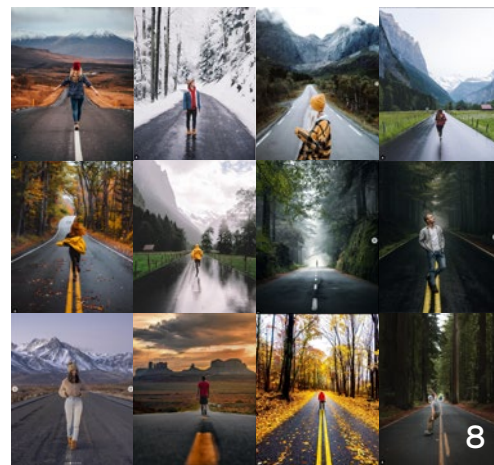
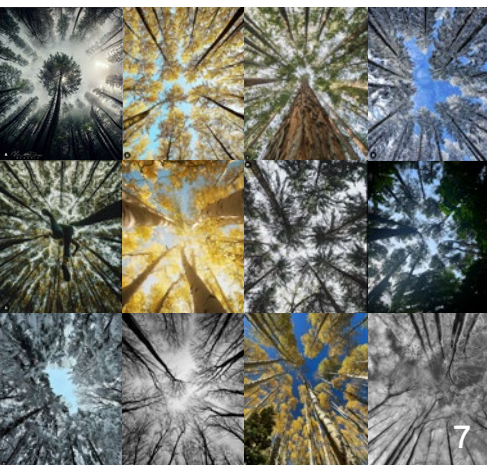
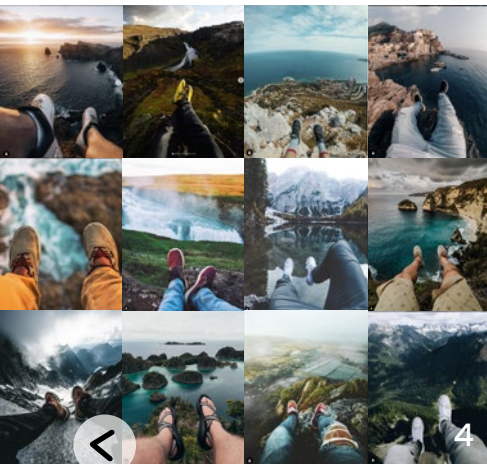
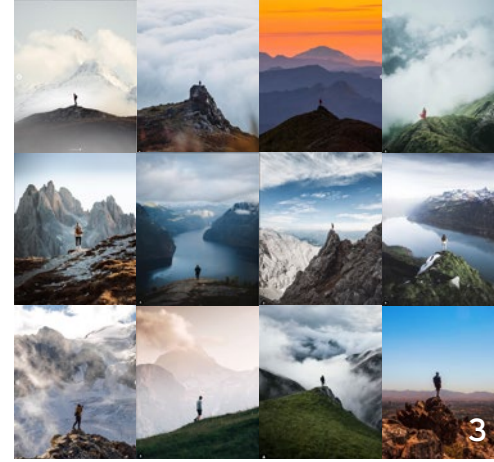
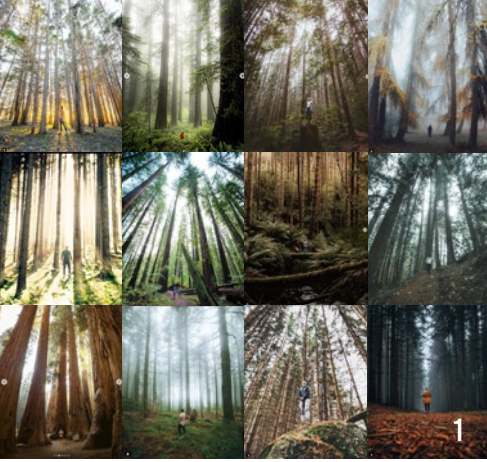




"Going outside, enjoying nature and taking photos of it is not inherently bad. In fact I encourage it, but many of them don't know what they're doing is harmful. They may visit an Instagram Museum, designed for Instagram where they can do what they want with the space, then treat the outdoors the same way."

*For more information on the problem statement see page 172.





#Insta-Structure Scene 7: Methods

APIFY 13 < Actor

Kathryn
Personal account

- Home
- Store
- Actors
- Saved tasks
- Runs
- Schedules
- Storage
- Proxy
- Settings
- Billing

Memory 0 MB / 8 GB
Free usage \$1.00 / \$5.00
Limit resets on May 23

Upgrade

Instagram Hashtag Scraper - Run

✓ Succeeded Actor succeeded with 1000 results in the dataset

RESULTS	REQUESTS	USAGE	STARTED	DURATION
1000	1k of 1k handled	\$0.636	2024-01-31 16:25	6 m 50 s

Run ID [Qc40WirYfof1xBeRk](#)

Actor [apify/instagram-hashtag-scraper](#)

Container URL <https://w2emldw01cf6.runs.apify.net>

Resurrected No

Origin WEB

Finished 2024-01-31 16:31:52

Exit code 0

Build 0.0.104 0.0 (latest) N/A

Timeout 10,000 seconds

Memory 4096 MB

What next?

[Export 1000 results](#) [Go to Actor](#) [Integrate](#) [Delete](#) [Resurrect](#)

"I first started by finding trends on Instagram. It is a highly visual platform, so finding common images that were being recreated was key. To do that, I used data scraping software to find the most common hashtags used for photos taken outside. From there, I looked at the photos associated with those hashtags to create what I call the 12 Instagram typologies."

*For more information on data scraping and typology research see page 174.





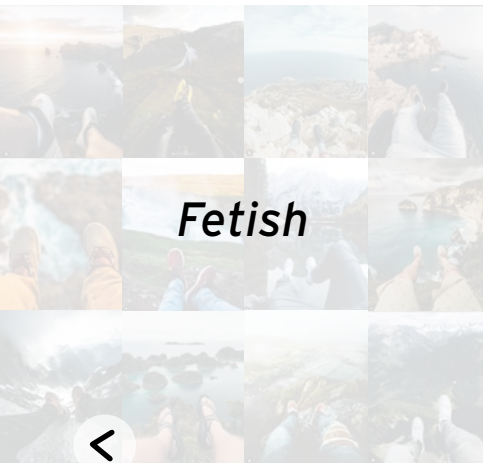
Amongst Giants



Cosmic Freckles



One in the Wilderness



Fetish



Flower Fields Forever



Natures Reflections



Look to the Canopy



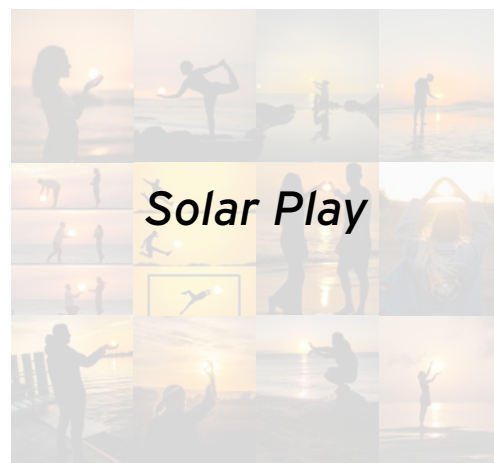
Road Most Traveled



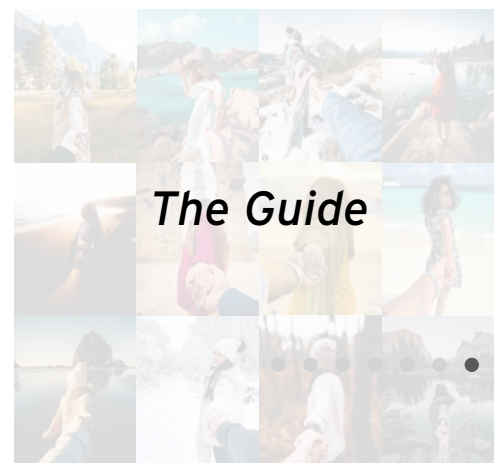
Falls



The Big View



Solar Play

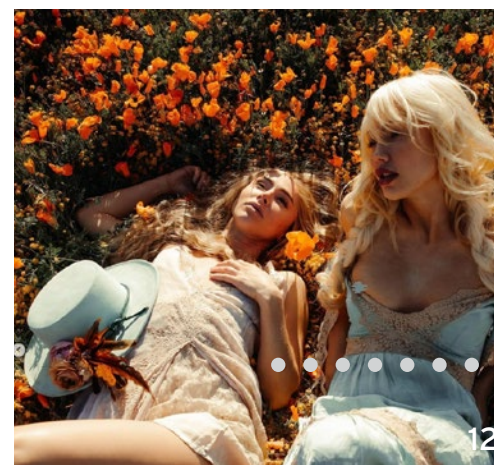
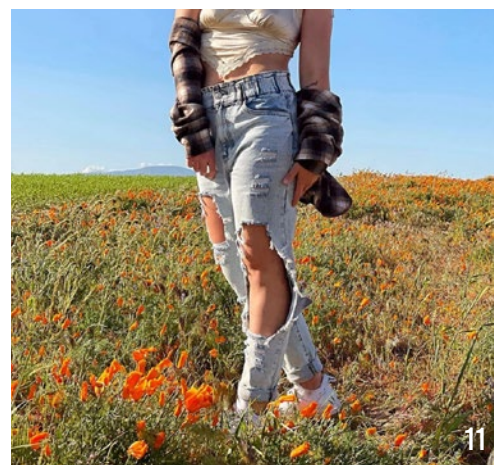
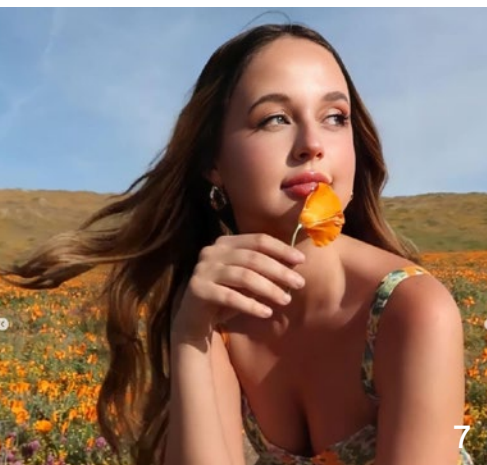
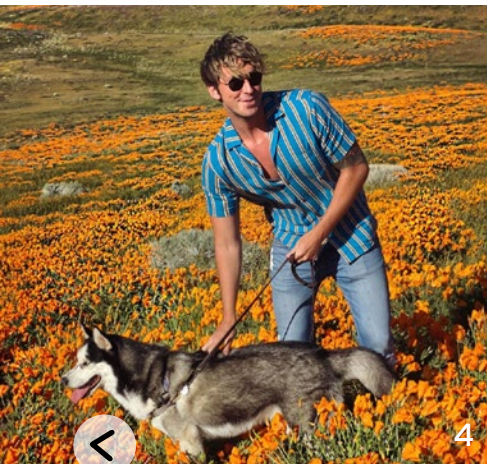


The Guide

#Insta-Structure
Scene 7: Methods

The screenshot shows the APIFY interface. On the left is a navigation menu with options like Home, Store, Actors, Saved tasks, Runs, Schedules, Storage, Proxy, Settings, and Billing. The main area displays a 'Run' for the 'Instagram Hashtag Scraper' actor, which has succeeded with 1000 results. A table below the status shows: RESULTS: 1000, REQUESTS: 1k of 1k handled, USAGE: \$0.636, STARTED: 2024-01-31 16:25, and DURATION: 6 m 50 s. Below the table are details for the run, including Run ID, Actor, Container URL, Resurrected status, Origin, Finished time, Exit code, Build version, Timeout, and Memory usage. At the bottom, there are buttons for 'Export 1000 results', 'Go to Actor', 'Integrate', 'Delete', and 'Resurrect'.

“There are many more, but I thought 12 would be sufficient. Next, finding a site to apply what I conceptually created brought me back to data scraping.”



#Insta-Structure
Scene 7: Site Selection



“Through hashtags and geolocations of the images, the Antelope Valley California Poppy Reserve is very popular.”

*For more information on data scraping and site selection research see page 176.



#Insta-Structure
Scene 7: Site Selection

Please Note: Important Information!



Stay on the official trails



Do NOT pick the wildflowers!

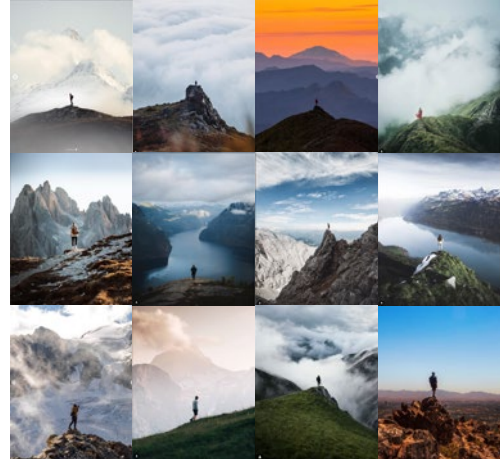
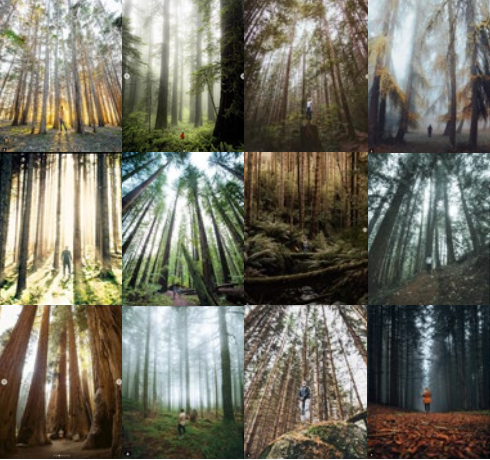


Do not bring dogs!



"Given some images posted and knowing the park rules, it needed a bit of help."





#Insta-Structure

Scene 7: Design Considerations

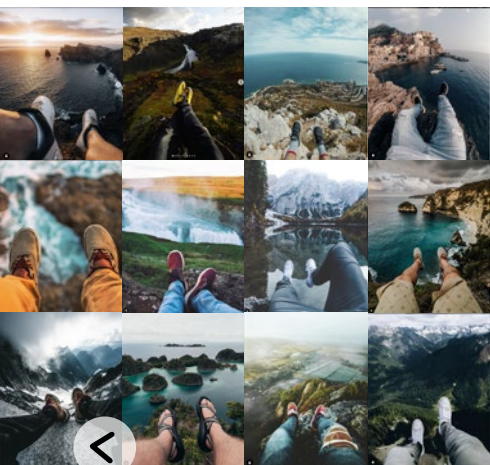
“After analyzing the typologies, looking at:

ecological concerns

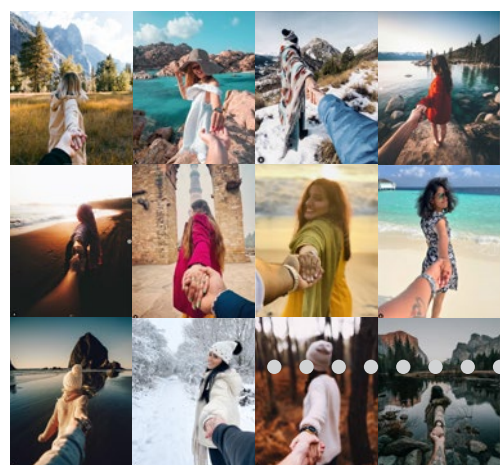
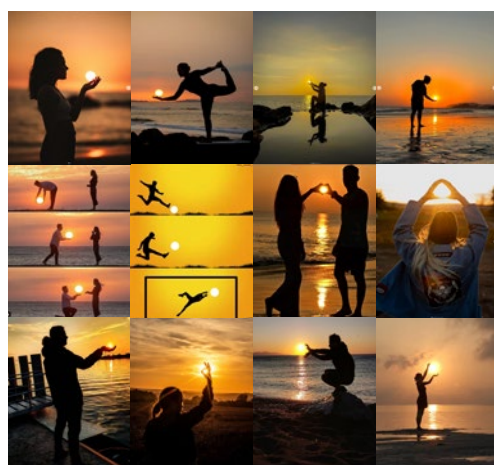
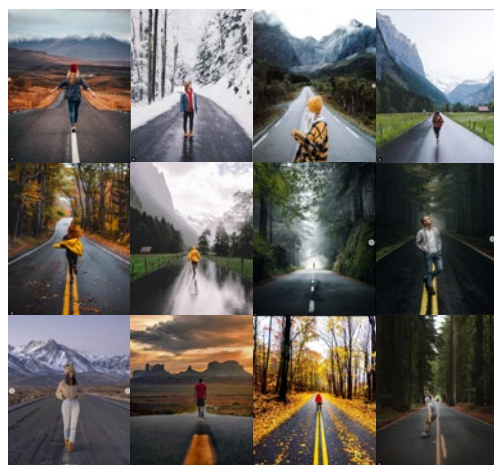
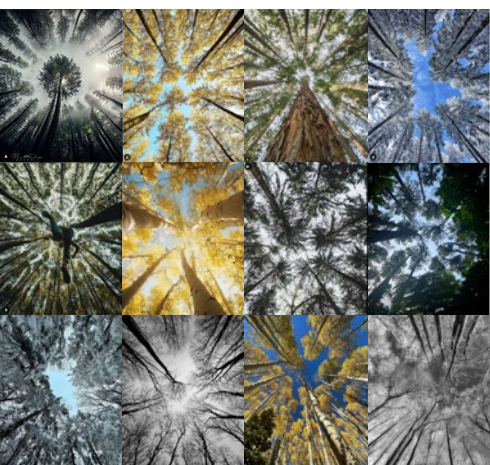
camera distance to subject

key image elements

photo composition



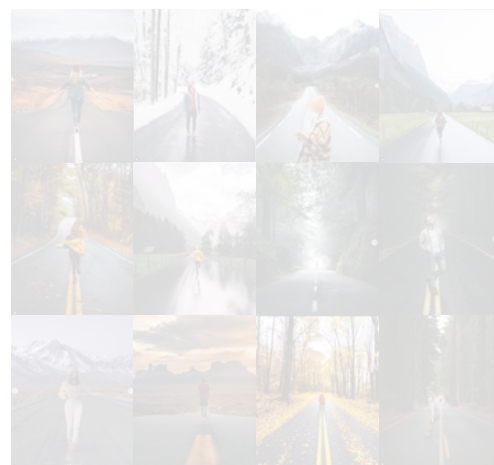
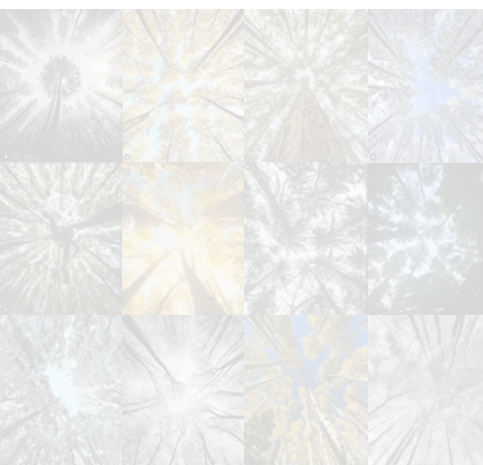
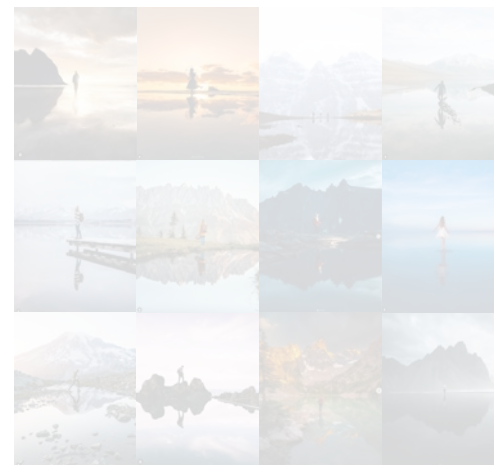
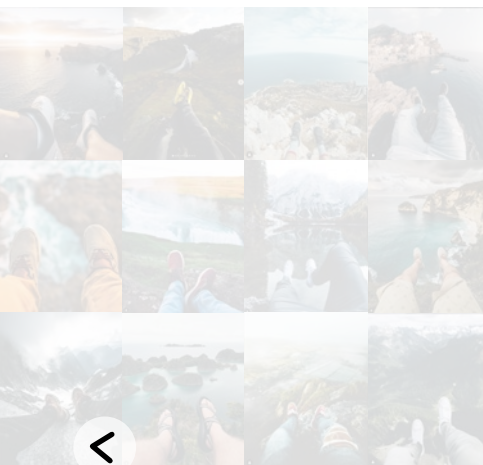
I looked at my original typologies and discerned which ones would be appropriate for the Reserve. A few but not all, include -”





#Insta-Structure

Scene 7: Design Considerations

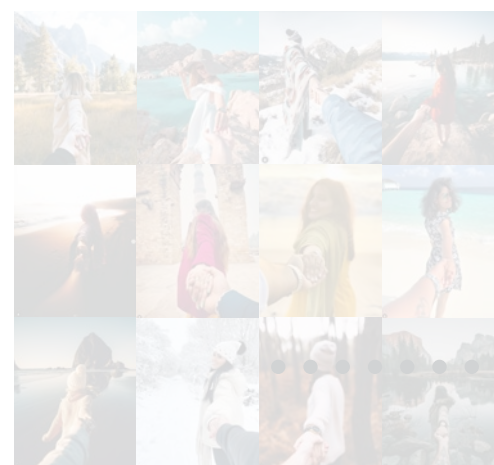
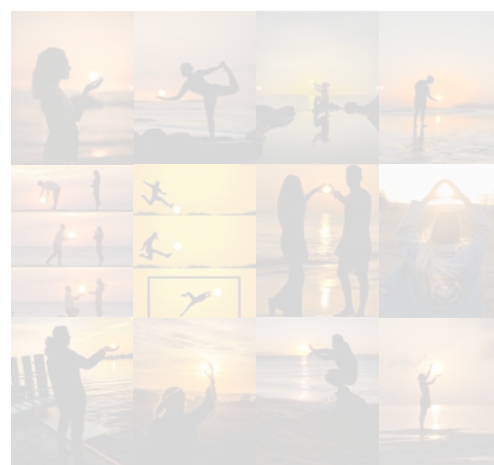
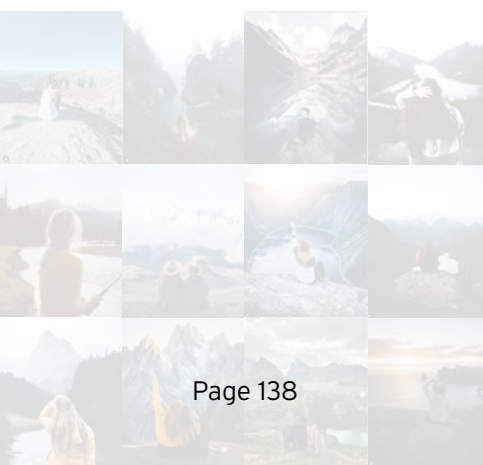


Flower Fields Forever

Distance to Camera:
Approximately 10 to 30 ft

Human Subject:
*Typically 1 - standing;
Facing towards or away from camera*

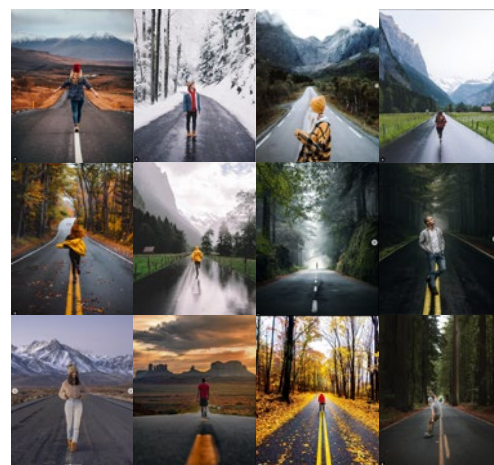
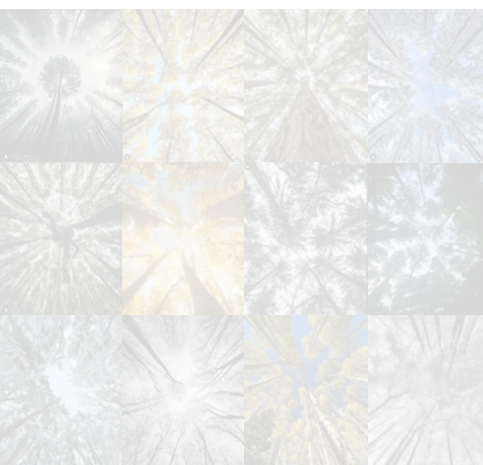
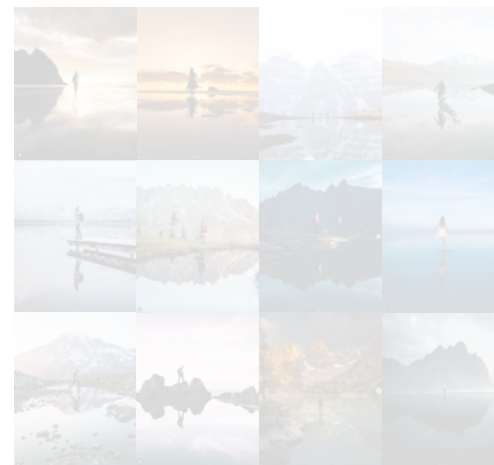
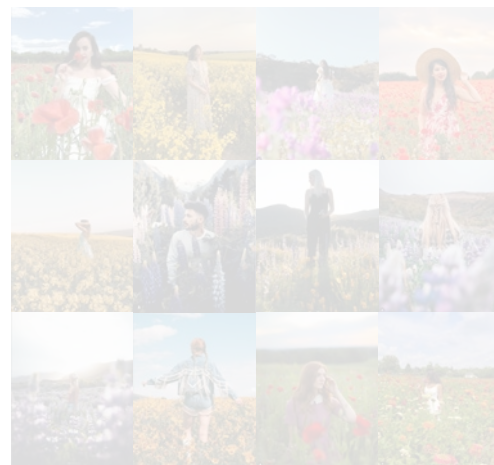
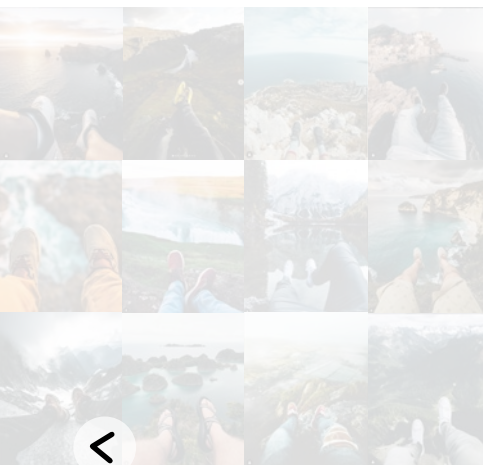
Key Attributes:
*Located in a field of flowers;
Never see human subjects feet;
Flowers typically at least waist height*





#Insta-Structure

Scene 7: Design Considerations

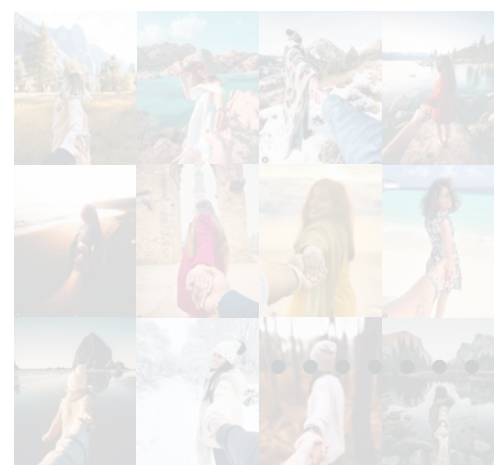
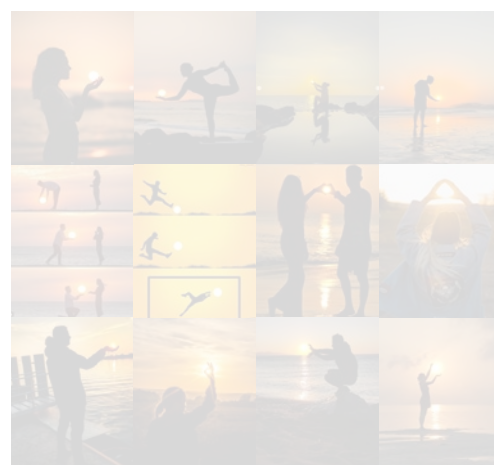
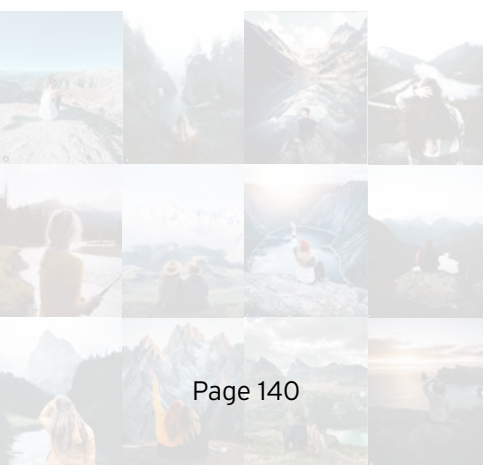


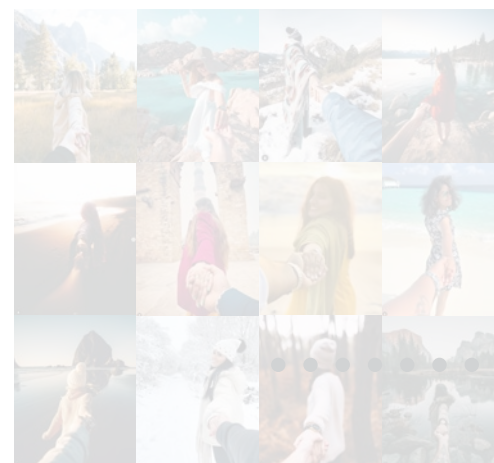
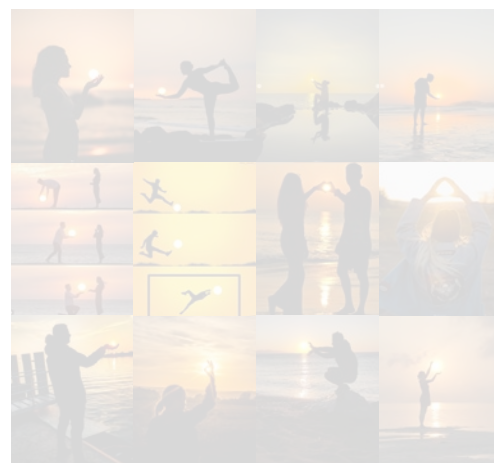
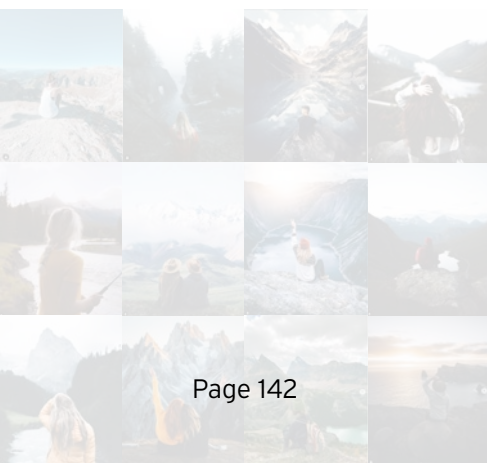
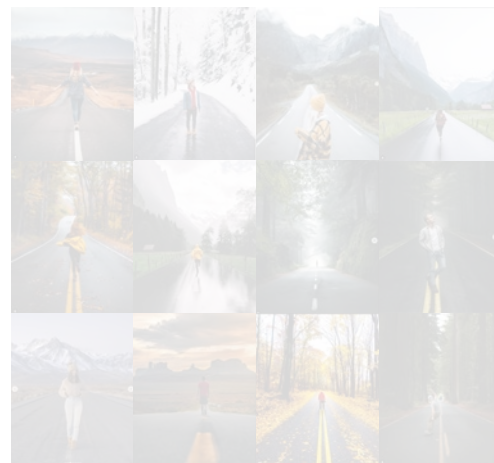
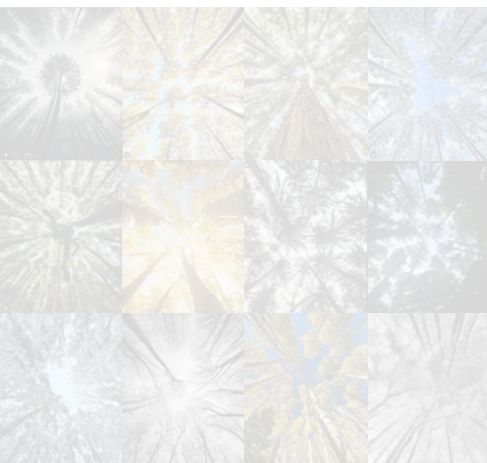
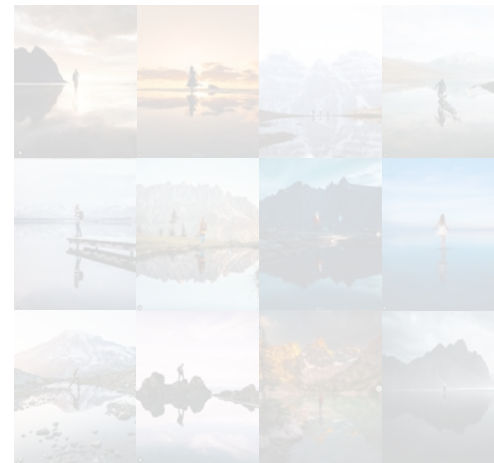
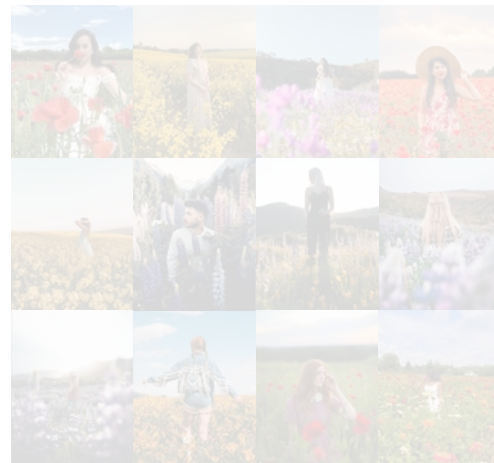
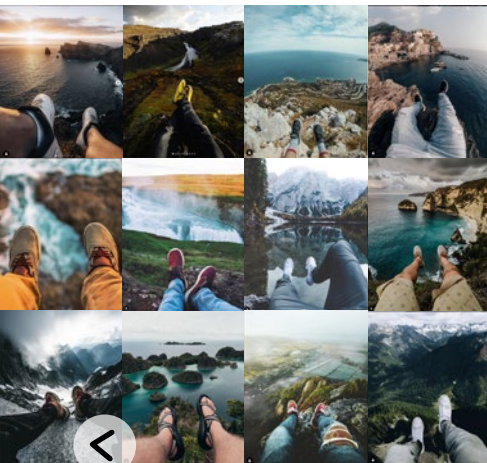
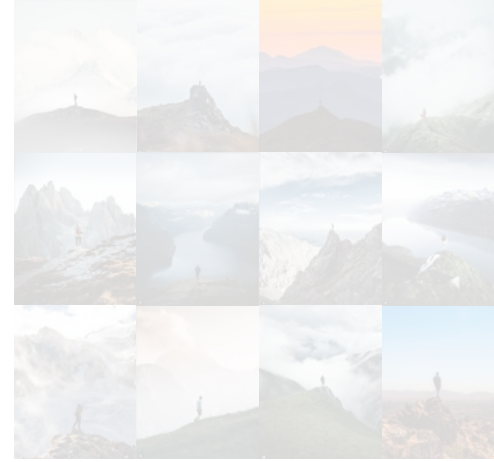
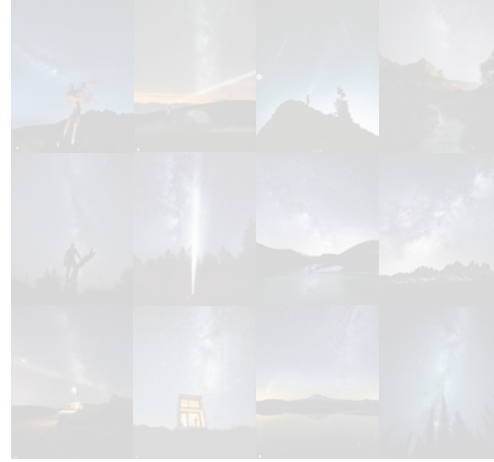
Road Most Traveled

Distance to Camera:
Approximately 20 to 30 ft

Human Subject:
Always 1 Human subject centered on the road

Key Attributes:
Scenery in the distance or Trees on both sides





#Insta-Structure

Scene 7: Design Considerations



Fetish

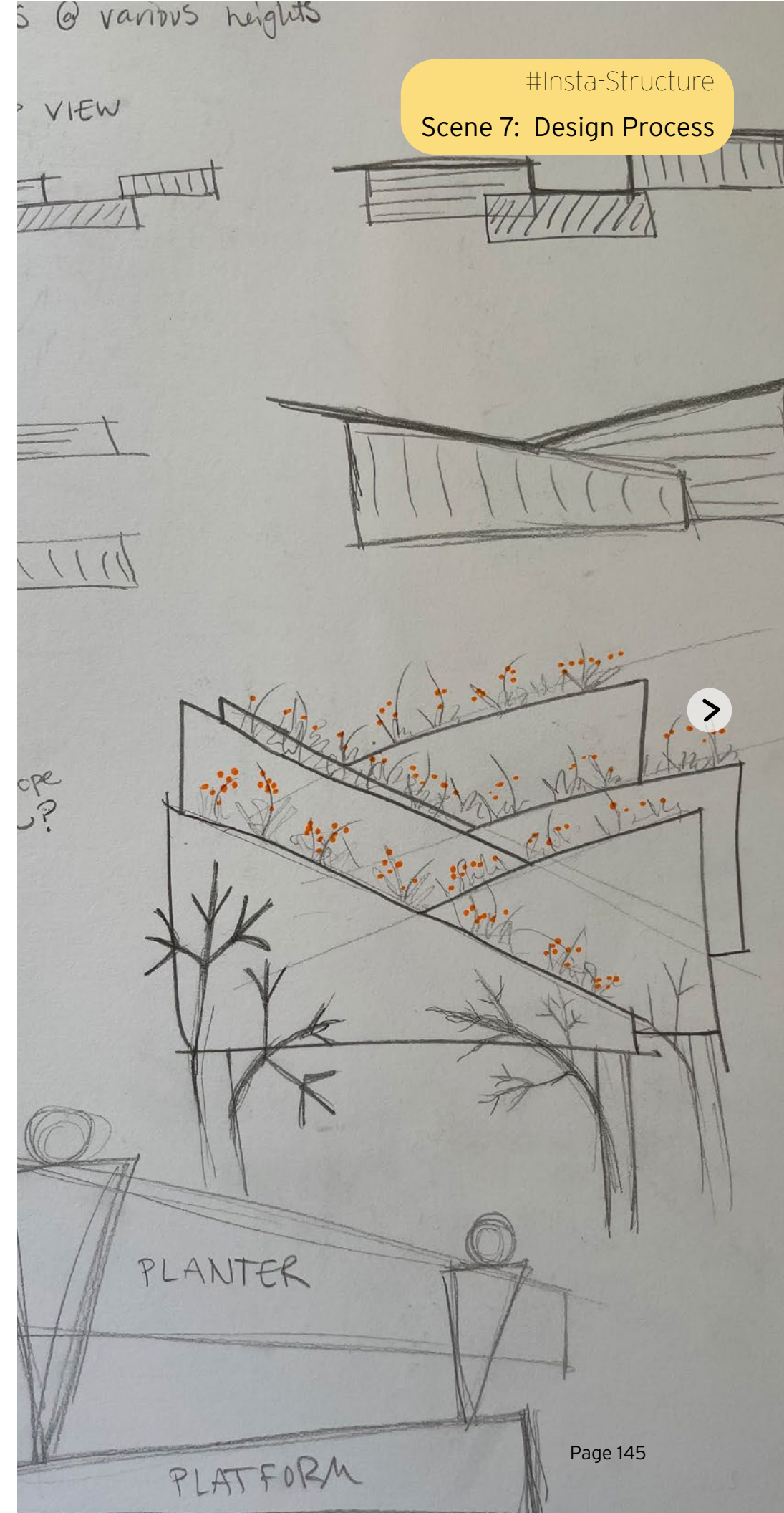
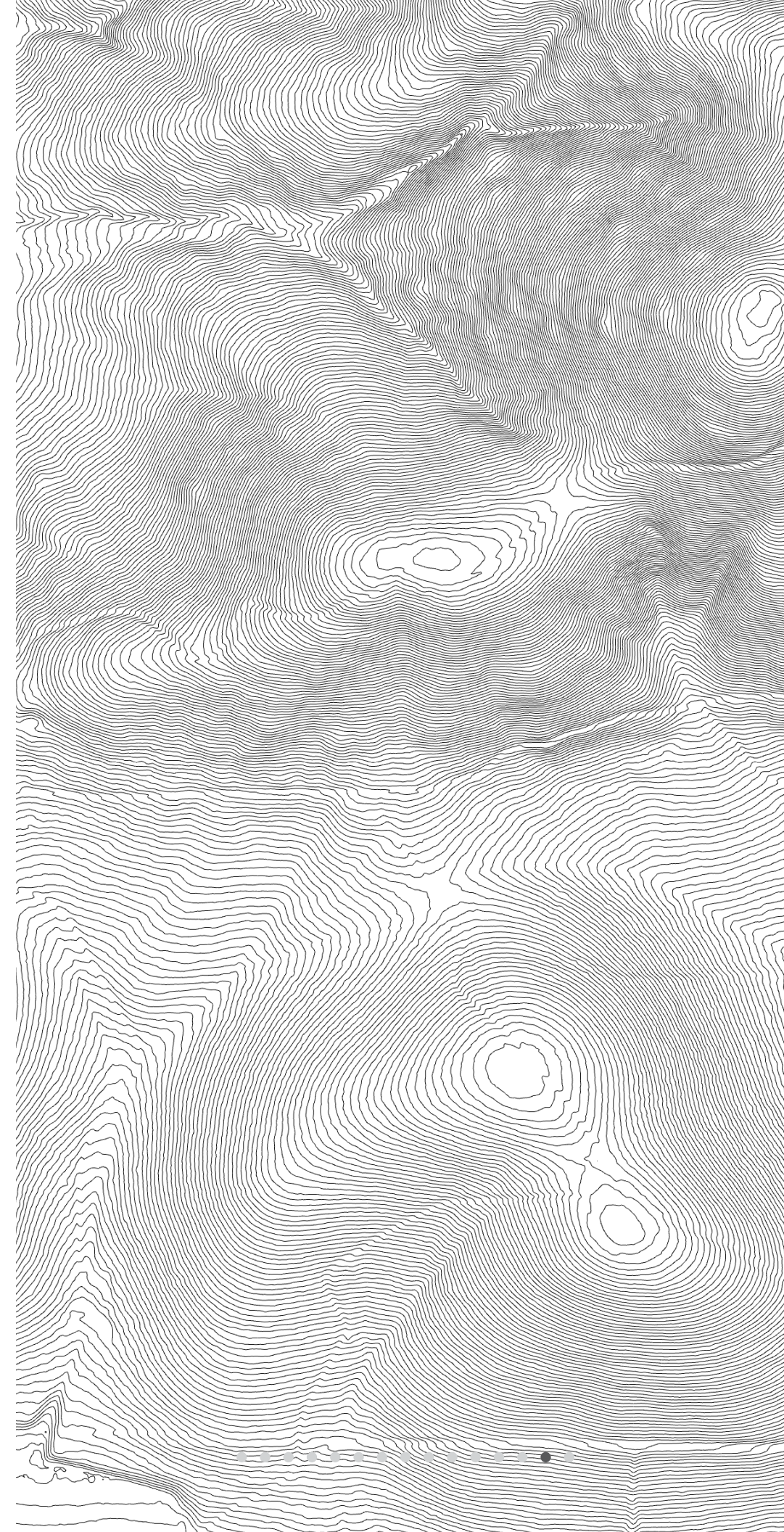
Distance to Camera:
Camera is held by owner of said feet

Human Subject:
Typically 1 - hanging feet over a ledge

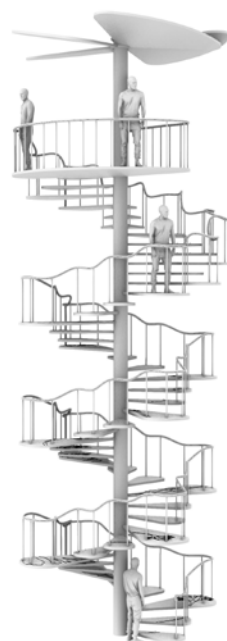
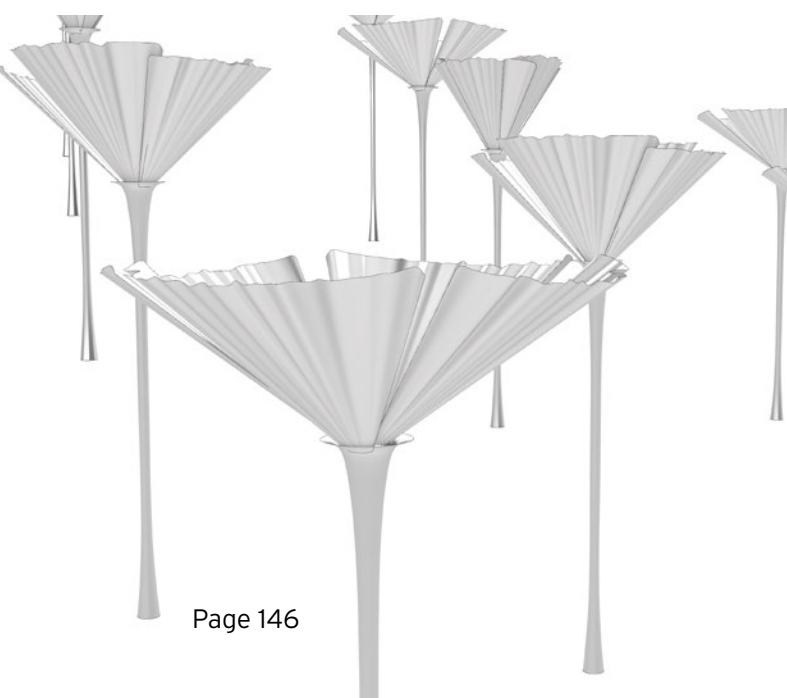
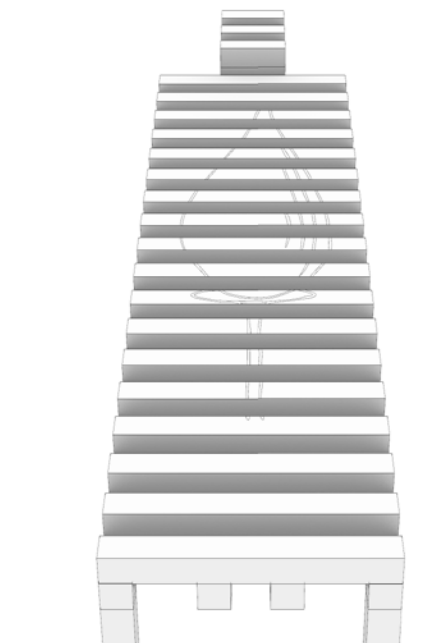
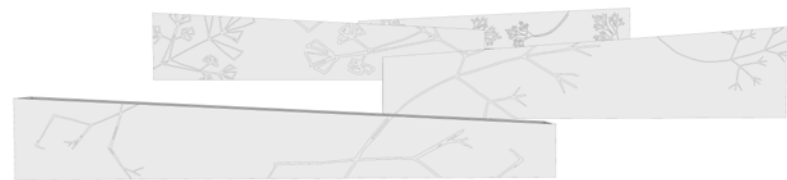
Key Attributes:
*Feet in foreground;
Big scenery in background*



"Visiting the site, remote site analysis, and of course, talking with the informative park stewards I was able to start the design process."

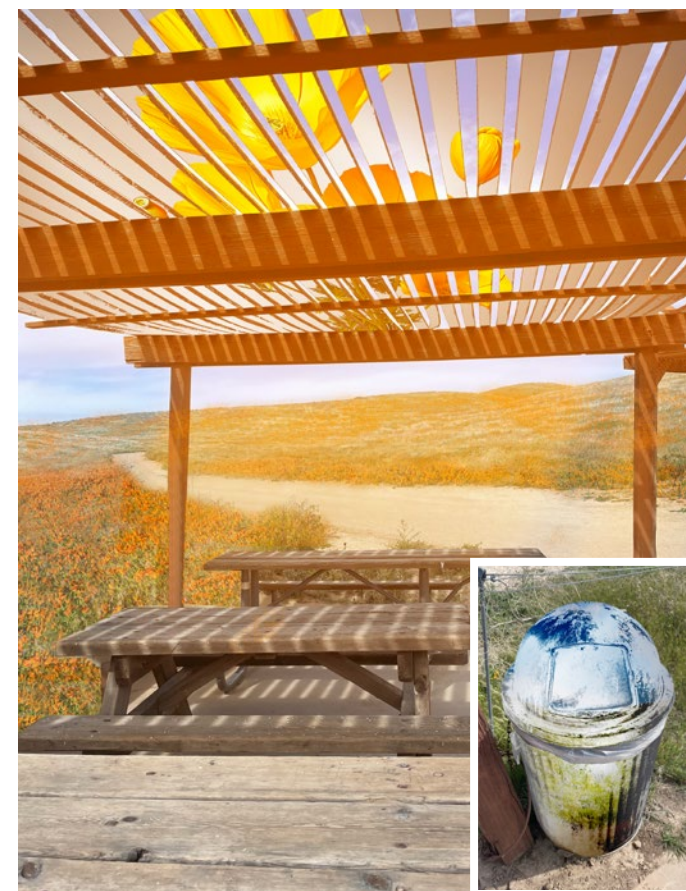


#Insta-Structure
Scene 7: Design Process



#Insta-Structure

Scene 7: Designed Interventions



"After several design iterations of each intervention, I created what you see here on site now: a trail with six new landscape interventions plus a couple retrofitted elements designed specifically for this reserve that address five of the original 12 typologies. Time will tell how successful it is."

"My hope is that this concept is adopted other places. Now unfortunately, that's all I have time for, I must run to a presentation, but thanks for stopping by!"

The family thanks her, and she returns to the back room from where she came.

Scene 8

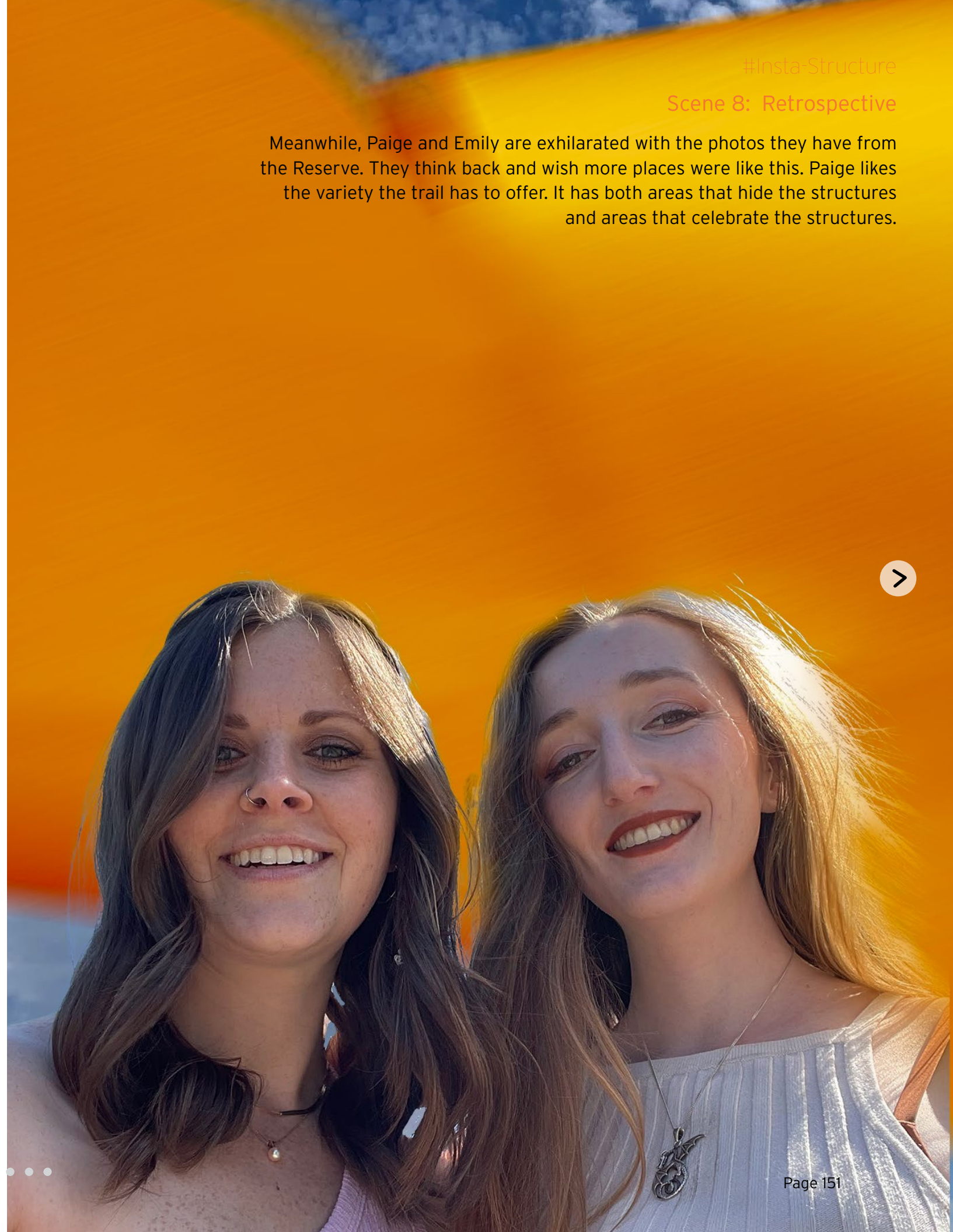
Looking Forward





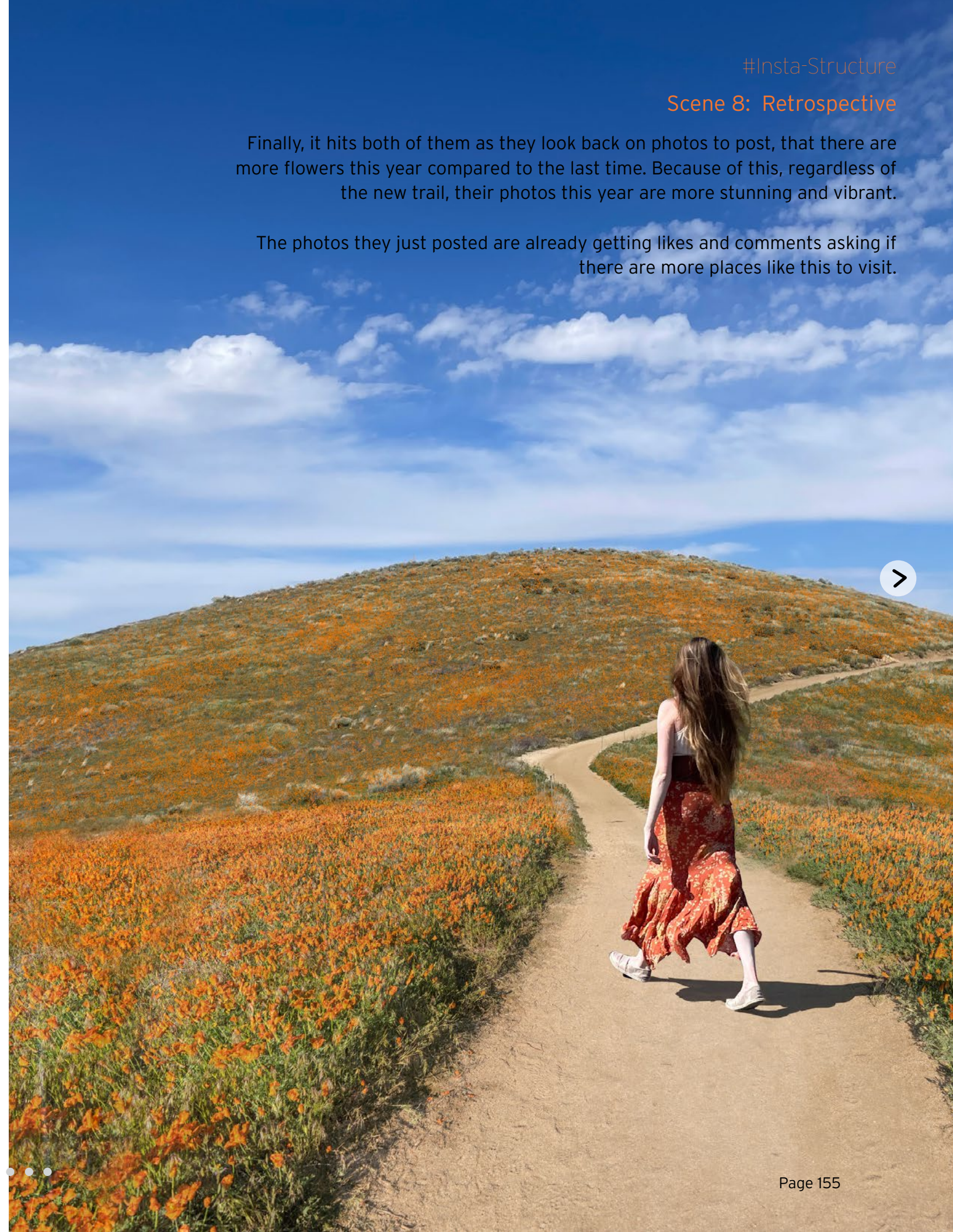
Scene 8: Retrospective

Meanwhile, Paige and Emily are exhilarated with the photos they have from the Reserve. They think back and wish more places were like this. Paige likes the variety the trail has to offer. It has both areas that hide the structures and areas that celebrate the structures.



Emily likes the reflective surfaces that provide many opportunities for unique images.





#Insta-Structure

Scene 8: Retrospective

Finally, it hits both of them as they look back on photos to post, that there are more flowers this year compared to the last time. Because of this, regardless of the new trail, their photos this year are more stunning and vibrant.

The photos they just posted are already getting likes and comments asking if there are more places like this to visit.



Scene 8: A Positive Future

Feeling satisfied and intrigued at the same time, Jane, Joseph, Elise, and Cody start to walk back to the parking lot. Jane's mind is especially active. Thoughts like, "Is this really all that needs to happen to protect sensitive ecological areas like this from overuse?" Thoughts that include how this could work other places.

She figures influencers just need the proper outlet, and these interventions can celebrate the site while simultaneously protecting it. Before reaching their vehicle, they pass near the entrance of the Insta-Trail. They all pause and look pleased as they gaze at the two entry flowers. Jane insists that they at least get a photo together as a family between the entry flowers.

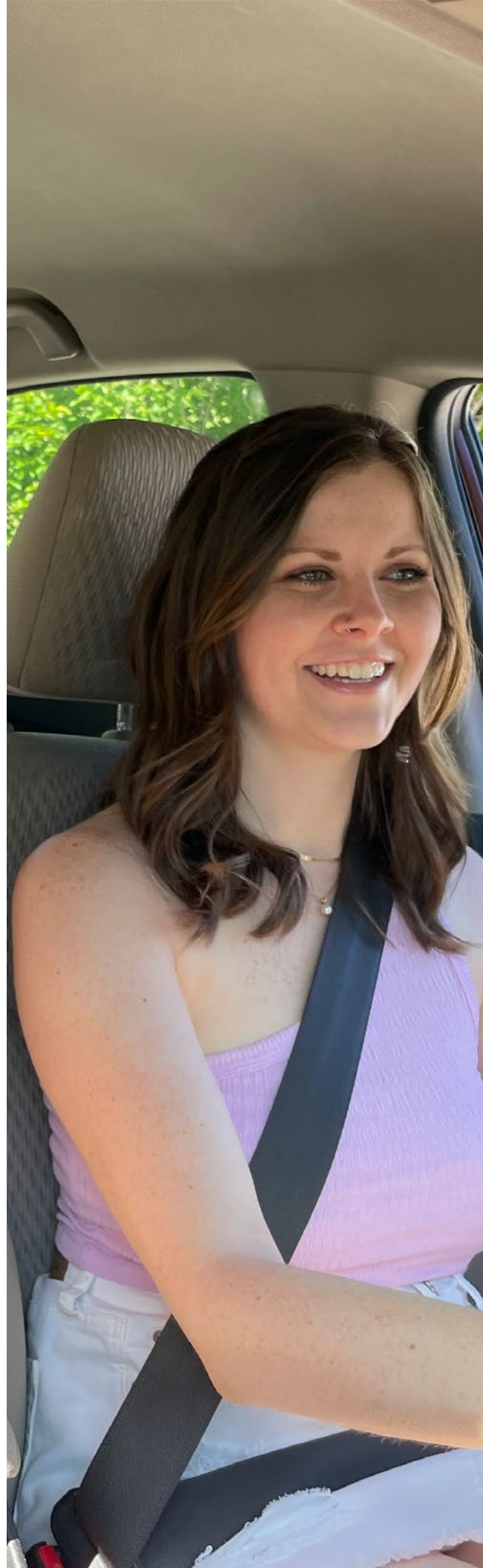
#WeNeedMoreOfThis.



Scene 8: A Positive Future

Elise asks another visitor to take their photo. As a family, they decide that is enough for this trip, and maybe they will experience the Insta-Trail next time. Off in the distance, Paige and Emily walk back to their car pleased with the experience.





#Insta-Structure

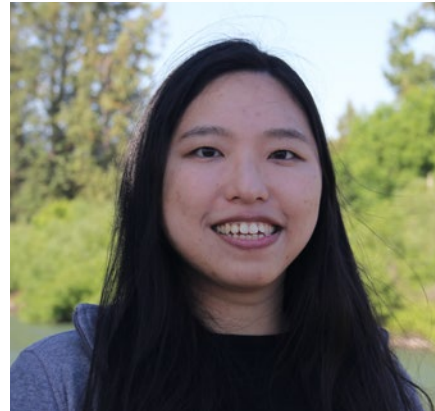
Scene 8: A Positive Future

As both parties drive home, there is a sense of contentment. A feeling that this is the beginning of something good in the world that could make a difference in many ways.

The End



Featured Talents



Phoebe Chuang
Jane



Mikayla McKone
Elise



Sarah Goldstein
Emily



Cameron Coronado
Joseph



Ted Meyer
Cody



Caitlin Jeffs
Paige

Acknowledgments

David Buckley Borden - Project Advisor

Thank you for meeting with me every week to work through the design and supporting me through this unorthodox way of presenting a master's project.

Ellee Stapleton - Project Committee Member Spring 2024

Thank you for providing the structure and guidance we all needed for this final push to finish our projects. They would not have been this good without you.

Kory Russell - Project Committee Member Winter 2024

Yekang Ko - Project Committee Member Fall 2023

Jean Yang

Thank you for introducing this topic to me during my first year here, and fanning the spark that would become this master's project. Inst-Deck would not have turned into Insta-Structure without you.

Michael Geffel

Thank you for supporting me throughout the years in the classroom and on the Land Lab. I look forward to continuing the work of the "Scope" out on the Land Lab.

Ignacio Lopez Buson

Thank you for introducing the concept of data scraping to me, showing me the website Apify, and sending me inspo on Insta.

All of UO LA Staff and Faculty

UO MLA 2024 Cohort

Thank you to the best cohort a person could ask for! I need not say more.

UO BLA 2024 Cohort

Thank you to the best Sister cohort!

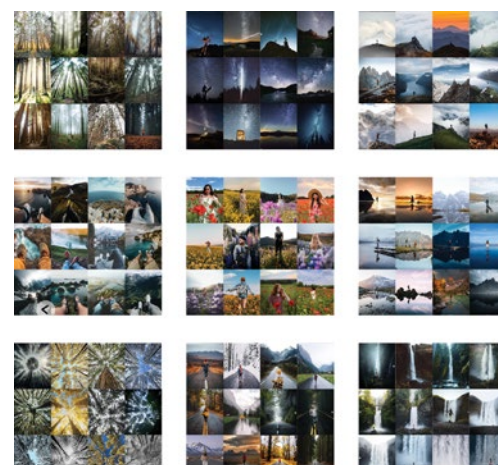
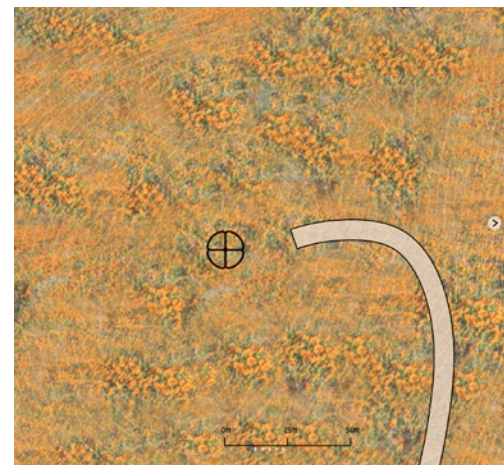
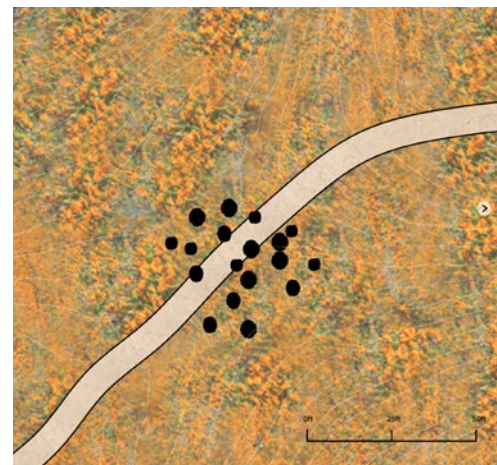
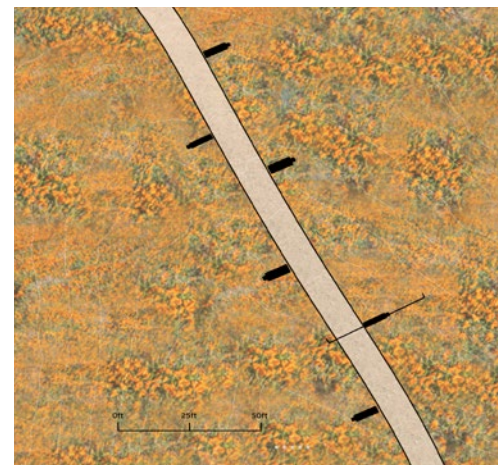
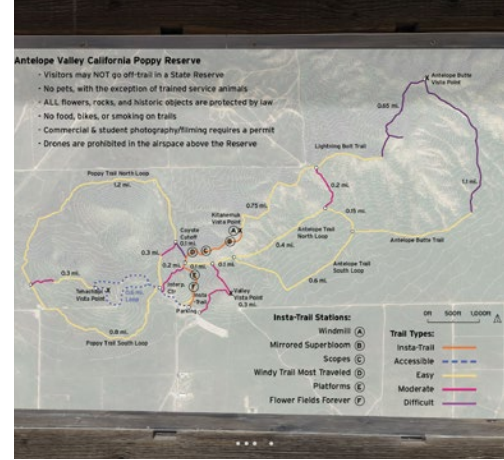
Brian and Kim Sinclair

Thank you to my parents for always supporting me in every endeavor and most of all, thank you for having me!

Tim and Lisa Meizen

Thank you for your support, interest, and housing and feeding me during my first year.

And a special thank you to my husband, **Tobiah Meizen**.
I could not have done this without you!



Literature Review

This review aims to serve as a starting point for a more comprehensive critique about how social media impacts the landscape. Since this is a new topic with the increased use of social media, there are not many books or peer-reviewed articles to be found. In this review, there is one lecture by Jean Yang, three New York Times articles, one memo from the City of Eugene, one Outside Magazine article, one webpage from the National Parks Service, one NBC News article, one paper from the Journal of Marketing Management, one paper from the International Journal of Advertising, one book, and one online article from Fstoppers. They are organized into three key concepts, psychology of social media and influencers, impacts of the social media influencers, and examples of design solutions.

What impacts have social media users had on local landscapes? How are places like National Parks designed for an influx of users? Why do social media influencers exist at all and what role do they play in this topic? How might designed solutions help protect those ecosystems while providing space for influencers?

The reasoning behind viewing literature on this topic is to find all information available to create several design solutions. This is and has been a societal phenomenon, and it is not showing signs of slowing down. The stakes are high because of the increased impacts of the climate crisis, the earth and its ecosystems don't need the threat of Instagram users as well.

1.1 Key Concept 1: Psychology of Instagram Users and Influencers

To understand this topic fully understanding why social media influencers exist is important. That is the basis of this problem. If people on social media were not being influenced by seeing other posts and wanting to do that exact thing, we wouldn't be here now. There are several reasons in the literature as to why social media influencers exist. Starting first with the medium of social media, photography. Susan Sontag predicted our camera addiction even back in 1978, "Needing to have reality confirmed and experience enhanced by photographs is an aesthetic consumerism to which everyone is now addicted" (Sontag, 1978, p. 24). As an article in the New York Times states, "The act of snapping a picture is no longer enough to confirm reality and enhance experience; only sharing can give us that validation" (Ojalvo, 2012, p. n/a). It is this validation that people on social media are seeking. There is also an element of people trying to promote themselves because that is how many people get jobs in the photography world now, and mimicry is the ultimate form of flattery (Behuniak, 2019). That article by Behuniak also states, "I believe that identical work, and the way non-art-trained masses perceive this work, has been amplified because of the easiness of social media, in particular Instagram and its

'popularity' culture. Thus, we as the masses and also as creative professionals, have potential to fall into a creative black hole, which it could be argued has already happened" (Behuniak, 2019, p. n/a). So according to these articles, people are addicted to sharing photos that are the same as other people because they think that image is cool. That image is cool, and they don't want to be left behind the pack. This is what people are seeing on social and it is constant. An argument could be made that originality is slowly being lost.

There are also reasons why certain social media influencers become more popular than others. There are a couple of papers that discuss this, one is in the Journal of Marketing Management and the other is in the International Journal of Advertising. Why would marketing and advertising have anything to do with this? Most social media influencers are trying to promote or sell and brand or product. It just happens to be in this case, our influencers are "selling" framed views, or experiences through photographs. According to one of the articles, there are four major reasons for following Instagram influencers: authenticity, consumerism, creative inspiration, and envy (Lee et al., 2022). The other article also states that, "Social media influencers are increasingly popular among audiences, who perceive them as highly authentic and trustworthy in comparison with traditional celebrities or endorsers" (Ouvrein et al., 2021, p. 1314). That gives a basic understanding as to why social media influencers exist, why people follow them, and why people want to recreate their images.

1.2 Key Concept 2: Impacts of Instagram Users

The introduction into the background information covered a lot from the first theme. Social media influencers have caused many concerns from ecological to public safety. There are even examples of emotional distress from locals in small towns where influencers are flooding. Ms. Tolbert, a local in Lake Elsinore, states, "I don't care about going to see them because I have severe allergies". She's more concerned with navigating three hours of traffic on the freeway just to get home from work. "I literally just broke down crying two days in a row," she said. "I just couldn't take it anymore" (Stone, 2019, p. n/a).

The ecological impacts are well documented. An interpreter for California State Parks says, "Poppies die quickly when they're stepped on... Even when people walk between them, it crushes the roots" (Stone, 2019, p. n/a). The same article goes on to say that poppies are no match for the influencer who gets too close. Another example of ecological impact from people flooding to locations they shouldn't is shown through visits to see the tallest redwood tree, Hyperion. Located in the Redwoods National and State Park in Northern California, the location was a secret until a geolocation was shared through social media. Now anyone can find it, and they are. According to a New York Times article, the path to get there is not an easy one, "Still, a flood of travel bloggers, tree enthusiasts and recreational climbers has managed to do so – and has damaged the surrounding undergrowth in the process. As a result, the National Park Service has closed off access to Hyperion, which, at 379.1 feet tall, is the world's tallest living tree" (Tumin,

2022, p. n/a). This same article, mentions people noticing an increase in “loving trees to death” (Tumin, 2022, p. n/a). The saying referring to loving something to death can be used in many instances and in our everyday life, most of the time it is referring to an inanimate object. For example, the child loved the blanket to death. The blanket can’t really die but in the case of the Redwood trees, they can. Another example of “loving [x] to death” comes from Outside Magazine discussing Horseshoe Bend, William Shott, superintendent of Glen Canyon National Recreation Area, elaborates on the ecological impact from increased visitors. “Shott describes the existing route as ‘kind of a mar on the landscape.’ It’s 20- to 30-feet wide, created by droves of visitors making a beeline straight over a hill to the overlook. ‘It’s like walking on an uphill sandy beach,’ Shott says” (Worby, 2022, p. n/a).

Problem Statement

People on social media are finding and sharing coordinates of beautiful locations and they are being loved to death, all for a perfect “Instagram-able” moment. People can and should be able to enjoy nature, and with a little persuasion people are capable of respecting nature while doing so, as well as respecting others. All of this is achievable in one space. First, we must look at why this is happening. A psychological and sociological evaluation will have to be analyzed to see why that is, but influencers, and narcissistic tendencies have a lot to do with it (Sheldon & Bryant, 2016). Are people really just in it for the “likes”?

Whatever the case may be, this gets people to go outside who maybe wouldn't normally be going outside. Getting outside in any capacity is positive for our thinking, reasoning, physical wellness, and our mental health (UC Davis Health, 2023). There are ways to do it that are safe for all involved. Repetition of images people see is not a new concept. Since the intersection of the founding of National Parks and the invention of the handheld camera, there is photographic evidence of repeated photos taken by F. Jay Hanes, the official photographer for Yellowstone National Park (Smithsonian American Art Museum, n.d.). This then increased the tourism industry and people would tour around the parks on stagecoaches.

There have been many examples of this happening throughout the country in National Parks, small rural towns, and private property. One example of a location facing degradation due to Instagram use is the poppy bloom in Lake Elsinore, CA where the Mayor, Steve Manos, says that problem isn't the flowers but the people that flock to the area causing traffic congestion and trampling the blooms (Stone, 2019). This article and many others bring up another problem, and that is the impact to local communities.

One small town in Vermont has elected to close off certain roads due to the influx of influencers trespassing on private property looking to get idyllic photos of fall foliage. This is causing safety, environmental, and quality of life issues for the town, the select board wrote in a memo (Tolentino, 2023). Photos and videos with hashtags make it all too easy for one person to influence a wave of people to one location and disrupt not only the ecology of a location, but the people in the surrounding area. The poppy super bloom previously mentioned, for example began with one post, a 24-year-old influencer from Los Angeles with more than 400,000 Instagram followers posted on March 1 with 60,000 likes, and within three weeks the city had to intervene because its residence couldn't do simple tasks like go to the grocery store (Stone, 2019).

This is also happening locally, here in Eugene. The city of Eugene, in 2015, had to create trail improvements because of “rapid deterioration to the summit of Spencer Butte due to high use, and the rare ecosystem found there being trampled away. Without a clear trail to the top, hikers often disperse, and the impact to the existing rare and sensitive plant community has been

significant. In addition, the confusing trail network results in several injuries each year to people who are simply lost. Many of these instances have required Lane County Search and Rescue efforts” (Spencer Butte Trail Project Begins Park Closed on Thursday, 2015, p. 1). This states concern for ecosystem health and public health.

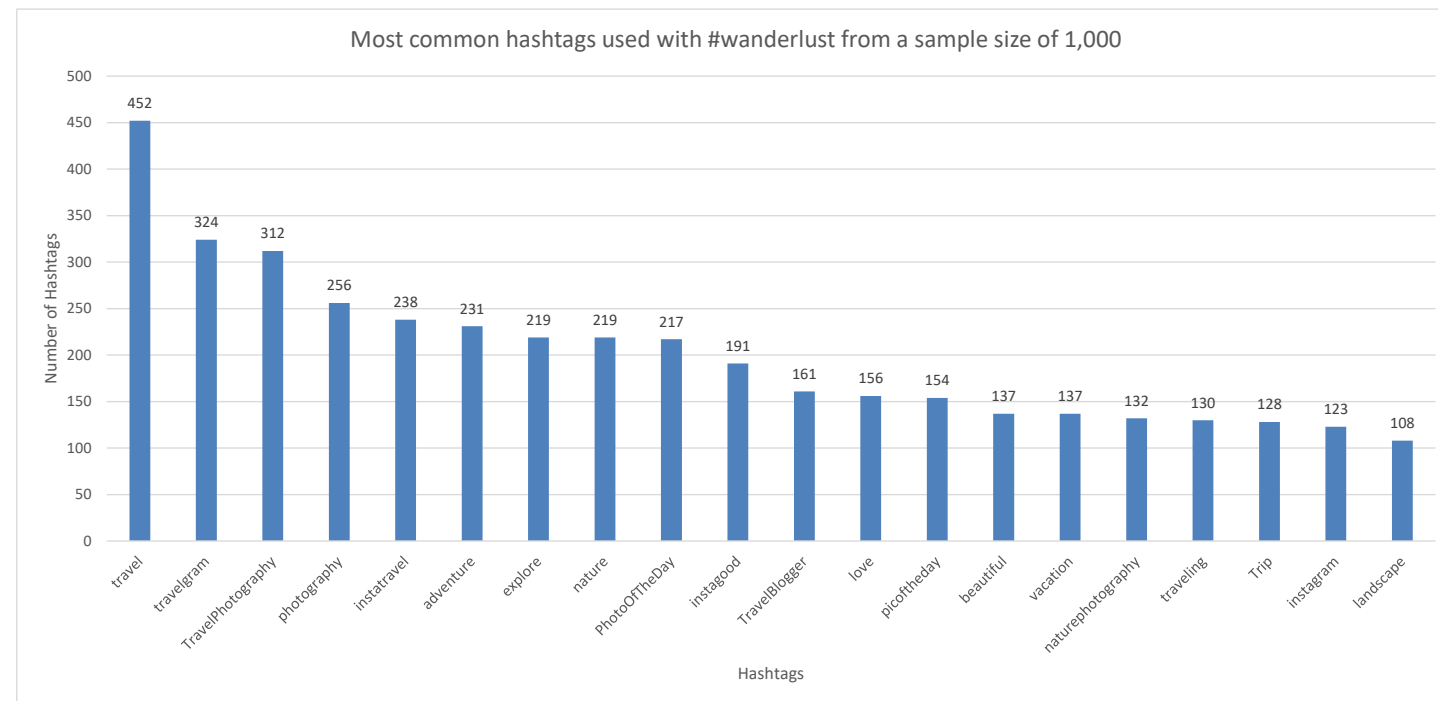
Even areas that are meant to handle larger amounts of people are seeing an impact, like National Parks. An article in *Outsider Magazine* states, “The phenomenon of Instagram and other social media driving up visitation is happening on public lands nationwide, in national parks like Grand Teton and Denali, and even in some difficult-to-reach spots like Colorado's Conundrum Hot Springs” (Worby, 2022, p. n/a).

This is not a new problem, and it's not going away any time soon. We can design for it and use the tool these visitors are using to benefit both the ecosystems and the visitors. Is there a way we can design a space that protects sensitive ecosystems, provides a location where social media users want to visit, and creates engaging educational opportunities for them to hopefully learn to appreciate the environment?

Data Scraping and Typology Research

Data scraping is when data is extracted from a website and exported as a manageable file format. In this case using a third-party tool called Apify made the most sense because it already had a specific Instagram hashtag scraper app. With each scrape a number of outputs or a time is determined given how long the command should run. For the purposes of this project, the output number 1,000 is used and it was approximately a ten minute run time. The data would then produce an excel spreadsheet with columns such as: hashtags, number of likes, location name, timestamp, url, and many more. The most important information was the hashtags, number of likes, and location name. Each Instagram post equals one row, and each post has many hashtags associated with it. Within excel those hashtags were collected and sorted to become a list of most common hashtags used with the hashtag that was scraped.

For example, the search needed to start somewhere and starting with a known common hashtag like #wanderlust was a good starting point. Here are the results from the first scrape of the project:



The chart shows that the most common hashtag used with #wanderlust is travel, and so on and so forth. Also of note, nature is tied for seventh along with explore, and photography is fourth.

So far the hashtags were helping guide my ultimate search for popular images that are being recreated and seen over and over again, also known as typologies. To do this, separating out the url's and the likes count columns then sorting them by likes count in ascending order, proved effective. There is one issue with the data that could not be accounted for and it may be a gap that can be addressed by future research. Each of the scrapes performed pulled the most recent posts associated with the hashtag used. This means that the data was not a random sampling from all posts that have used that hashtag. This also means that the likes count for each of the posts were changing dramatically only hours after the scrape was performed. It was not uncommon for the top four or five most liked posts to come from the same profile.

url	likesCount	Profile	Image
https://www.instagram.com/p/CQRmmYIMfi7/	15355	corine.jpg	
https://www.instagram.com/p/BzUYu6mHCPR/	15151	corine.jpg	
https://www.instagram.com/p/BzUY009nZrr/	14106	corine.jpg	
https://www.instagram.com/p/CQRiXoOM_am/	13420	corine.jpg	
https://www.instagram.com/p/CSAMA8enkz8/	11776	corine.jpg	
https://www.instagram.com/p/CYe8kiHvXXg/	10068	corine.jpg	
https://www.instagram.com/p/CJWcP1ilov6/	3091	zorangotovic	
https://www.instagram.com/p/CKbpbxvFrQs/	2208	zorangotovic	
https://www.instagram.com/p/CK5r1dDFlfu/	2011	zorangotovic	

In the end, fifteen hashtag scrapes were performed and the top 20 most liked posts from each were analyzed to determine trends and common characteristics. Many similar characteristics were shown, but what was more helpful from that analysis was finding influencer profiles. After scrolling through many influencer profiles, it became clear what images were being recreated. From that, the twelve typologies were born. As stated previously, there were many more typologies out there, but these were the most popular.

Data Scraping and Site Selection Research

After the first round of data collection, it was clear that photos taken with flowers are common and would be a good segway into landscape design. After discovering that #poppies was a popular hashtag, the scrape from that helped narrow the location search.

Not all posts have a location name, so that brought the number from 1,000 to 317. For the purpose of this project being able to visit the site was crucial, meaning keeping that location to Washington, Oregon, or California. That search got the number down to 31 locations in the Westcoast states and most of them in California. From there the location name needed to be more specific rather than simply a city and state. That narrowed the location down to two: Walker Canyon, Lake Elsinore, CA, and the Antelope Valley California Poppy Reserve.

After further research, the Antelope Valley California Poppy Reserve was a better fit because they are a state park and the reserve had more than double the number of hashtags associated with it than Walker Canyon.

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Image Credits and Sources

*Unless otherwise stated all images were taken, edited, and created by author.

Cover Page and Scene Background image: Adobe Stock - Standard License "Wild California Poppies at Antelope Valley California Poppy Reserve" By Neil Lockhart

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All 144 images sourced from public Instagram posts, grouped to represent each of the twelve typologies defined in this document.

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Image 2 -

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