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INSPIRATIONS BACKGROUND

As early as the 2000s, about 70% of the world's e-waste was processed in China. Guiyu handled roughly 40% of China's share, and some reports claimed that nearly half of the world's e-waste once passed through Guiyu.

EARLY RECYCLING METHODS

Manual Dismantling: Most recycling activities in Guiyu were carried out in household workshops, where residents manually dismantled old electronic devices like TVs, phones, and computers.

“Primitive Gold Extraction”: Toxic methods such as acid baths, mercury use, or open burning were employed to extract valuable metals like gold and copper, releasing harmful substances into the environment.

ENVIRONMENTAL AND HEALTH CRISIS

Heavy Metal Contamination: Soil and water in Guiyu were severely contaminated with lead, cadmium, and mercury. Studies showed that children in the area had dangerously high levels of lead in their blood.

Air and Water Pollution: Burning plastic and circuit boards released dioxins and PAHs, severely degrading air quality. Rivers and groundwater were polluted by heavy metals and acidic wastewater.

POLICY REFORMS AND CRACKDOWNS

Starting in 2013, the Chinese government cracked down on illegal and unregulated e-waste operations, shutting down family workshops and shifting toward centralized, **regulated eco-industrial parks.**

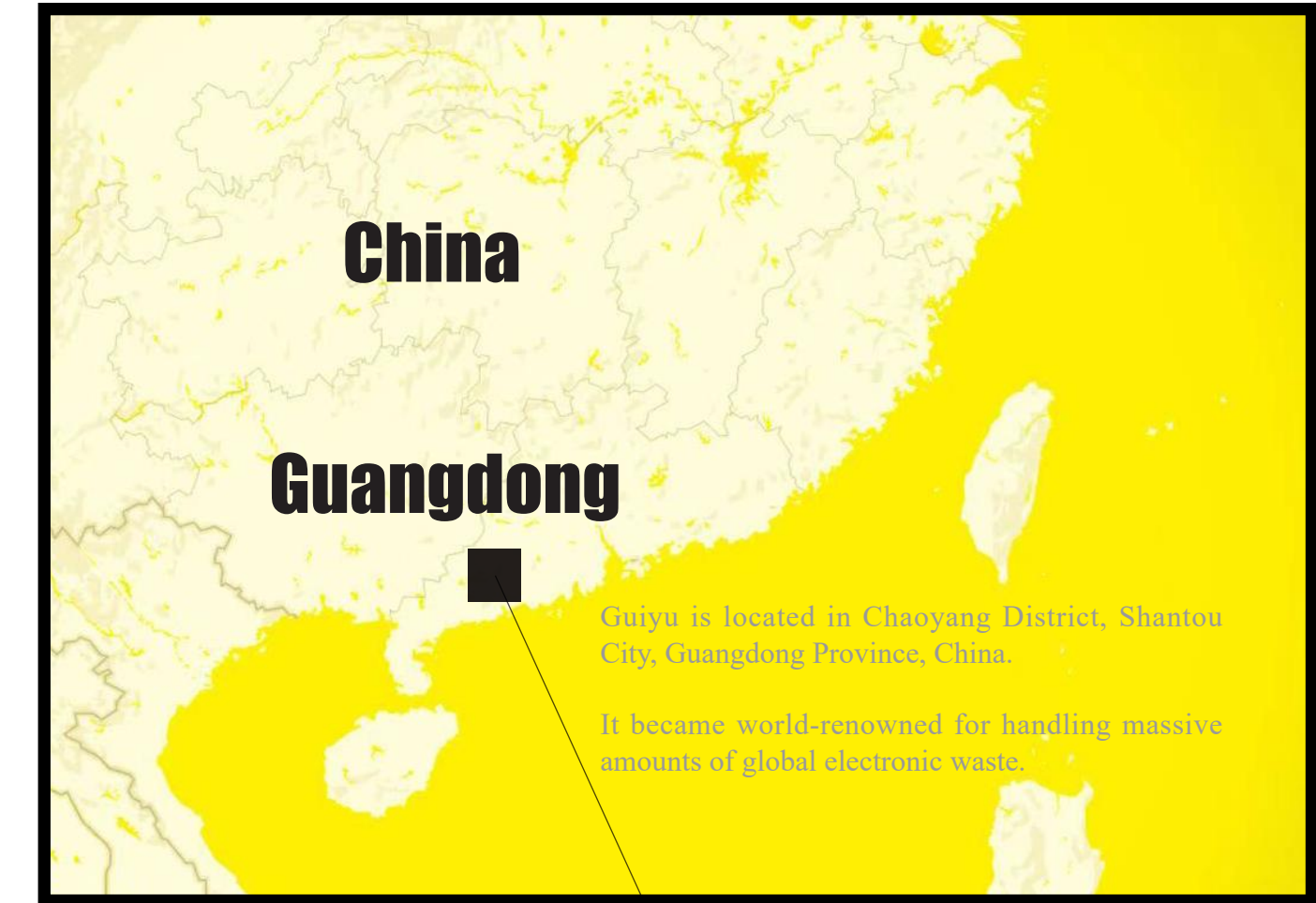
After 2020, the region developed a **modern e-waste recycling base** emphasizing both environmentally safe disposal and resource recovery.

FUTURE STORY EXPANSION

Set after 2025, the story imagines Guiyu—once cleaned up—resurrected as a secret base for underground device wiping and repackaging, fueled by a resurgent black market.

While the older generation once lived off illegal recycling, their grandchildren now resist the digital surveillance system, secretly sustaining the underground networks.

Guiyu becomes a hacker hub for creating “ghost devices”—officially marked as recycled in the system, but still circulating in the global underground tech market.

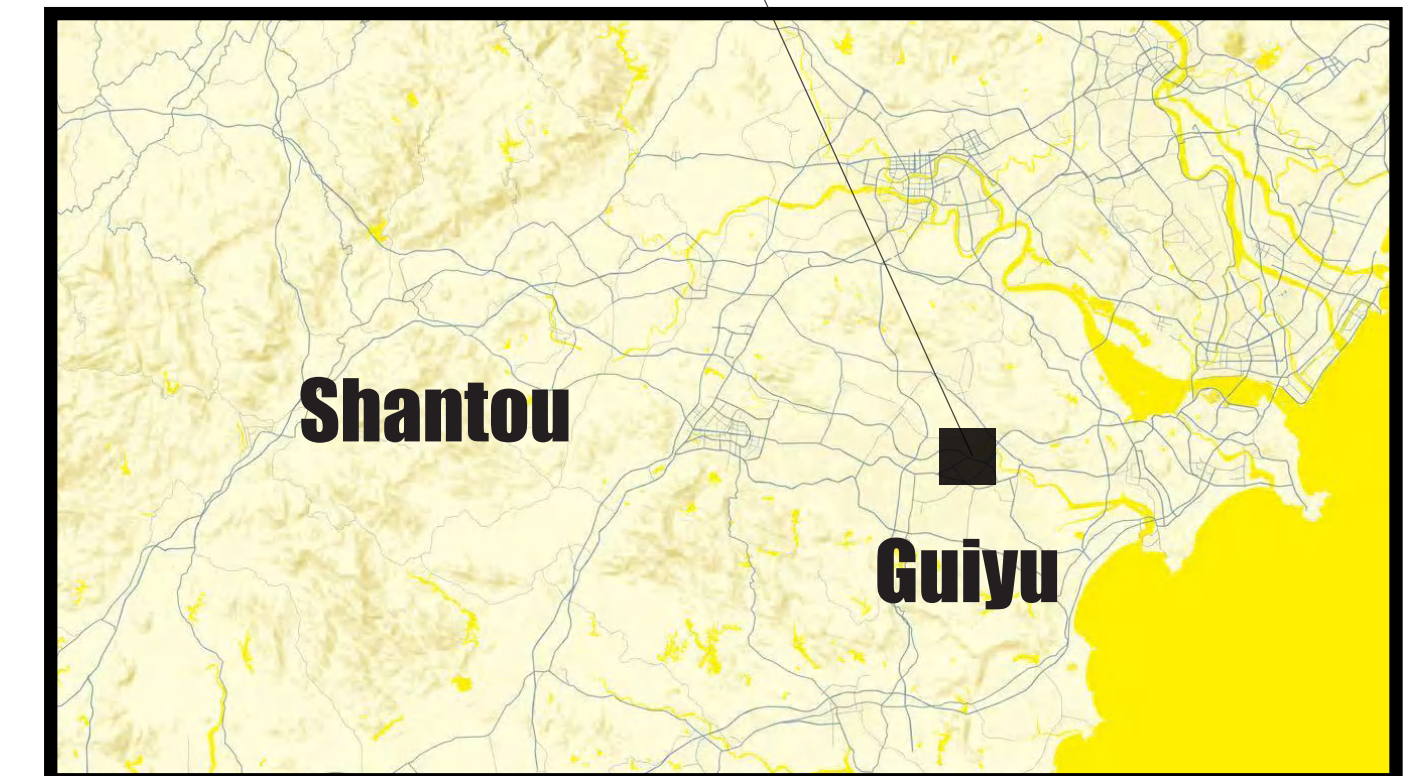


China

Guangdong

Guiyu is located in Chaoyang District, Shantou City, Guangdong Province, China.

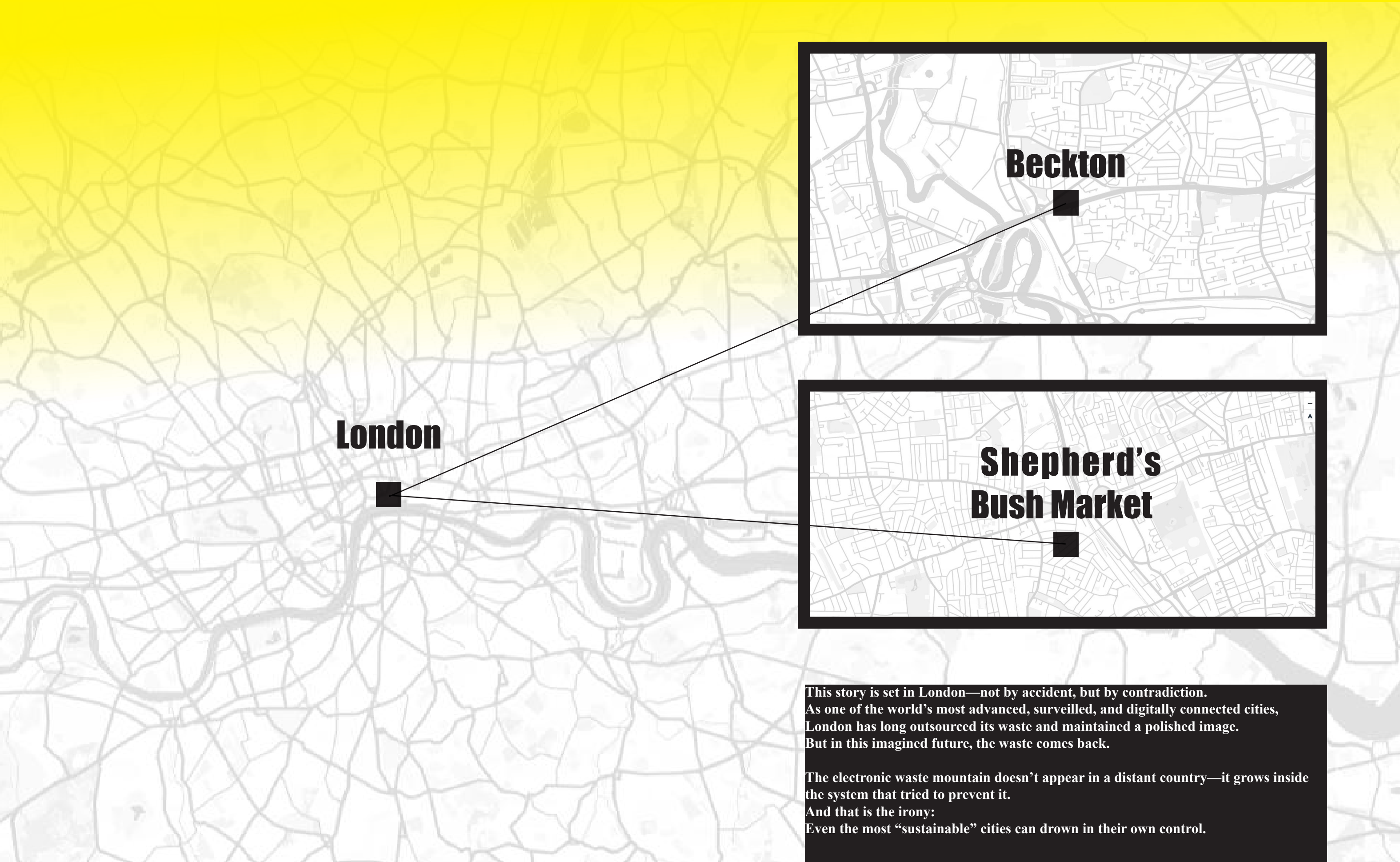
It became world-renowned for handling massive amounts of global electronic waste.



Shantou

Guiyu

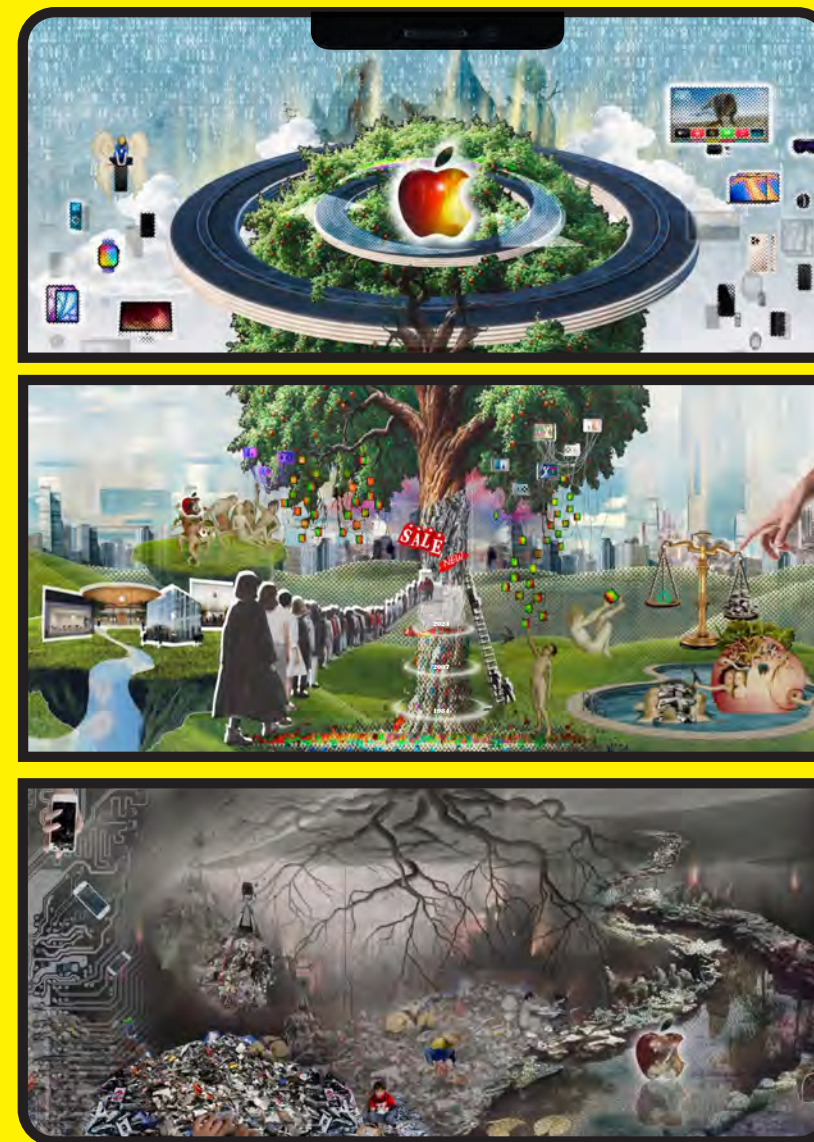
LOCATION OF THE STORY



This story is set in London—not by accident, but by contradiction. As one of the world’s most advanced, surveilled, and digitally connected cities, London has long outsourced its waste and maintained a polished image. But in this imagined future, the waste comes back.

The electronic waste mountain doesn’t appear in a distant country—it grows inside the system that tried to prevent it. And that is the irony: Even the most “sustainable” cities can drown in their own control.

INSPIRATION CONCEPT



This triptych collage was inspired by *The Garden of Earthly Delights* by Hieronymus Bosch. It reinterprets the biblical Eden as a technological cycle: from corporate paradise to consumer ritual to environmental collapse.

Top Layer: A pristine circular world built by Apple, filled with engineers, researchers, and marketing. A false heaven of progress.

Middle Layer: The everyday consumers—lined up for the next upgrade, oblivious to what lies above or below.

Bottom Layer: The truth buried beneath. A toxic landscape of e-waste, forgotten promises, and buried ethics.

This collage visualizes the hidden consequences of innovation: what starts as green and glowing ends in grey and decay.

THE REAL LAYER — HUMAN COST OF E-WASTE

In places like Guiyu, China, one of the world’s largest informal e-waste recycling sites, over 80% of children under six have elevated blood lead levels—more than twice the “safe” limit set by the CDC; the average is 15.3 µg/dL vs 9.9 µg/dL in nearby non-e-waste towns

Daily, thousands of workers—many women and children—dismantle electronics using bare hands, acid baths, and open burning. Their bodies absorb lead, cadmium, mercury, PBDEs, causing respiratory illness, skin disease, neurological damage, kidney failure, and even cancer.





UNREGISTERED

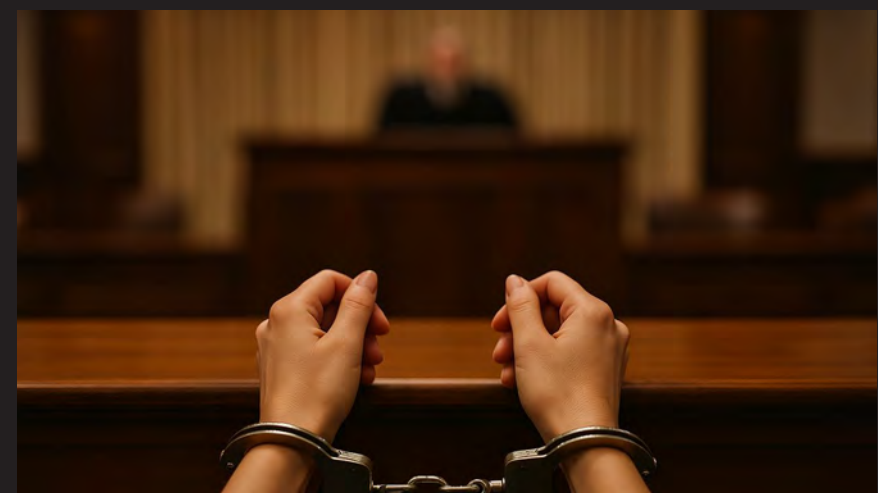
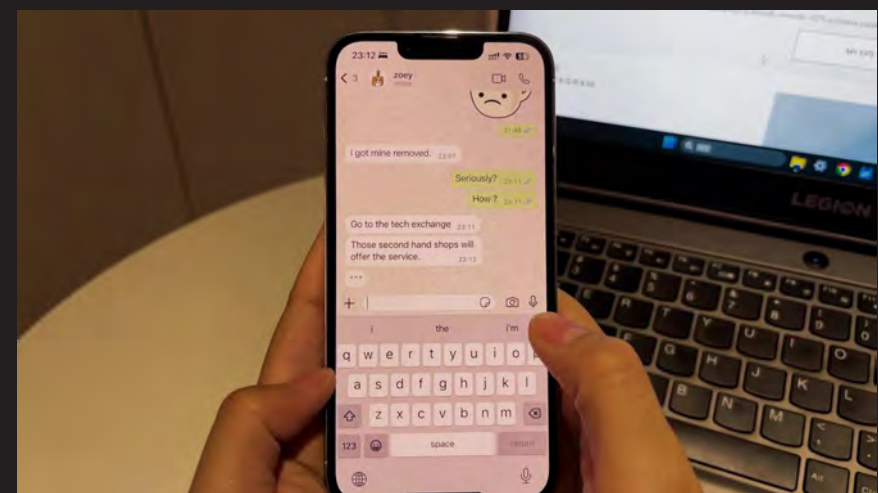
IN A FUTURE WHERE ALL ELECTRONIC DEVICES ARE TRACKED THROUGH A GLOBAL PASSPORT SYSTEM, SARA TRIES TO DISAPPEAR. BUT AS SHE SINKS INTO THE BLACK MARKET AND IS FORCED INTO LABOR, SHE DISCOVERS THAT WHAT'S CALLED "SUSTAINABILITY" IS JUST ANOTHER FORM OF CONTROL.

STORYBOARD



Sara Thompson

CHARACTER INTRODUCTION



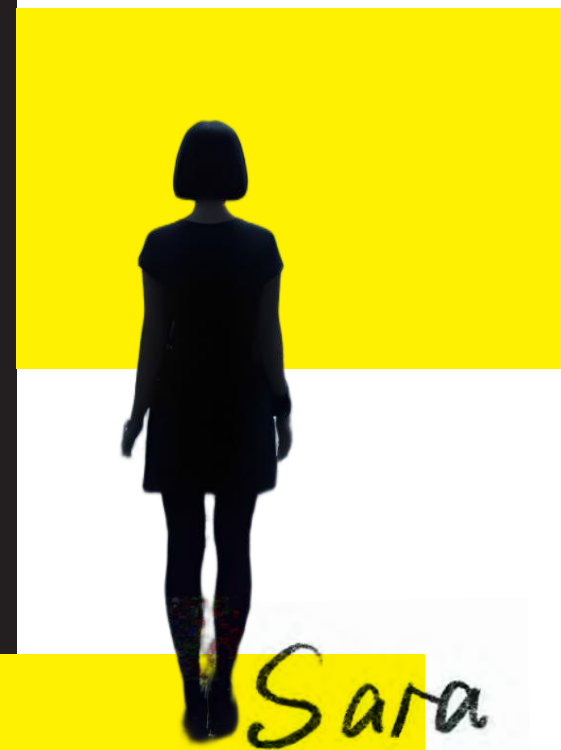
This story is told entirely from Sara Thompson's first-person perspective. The audience doesn't just follow her—they become her. Every shot is through her eyes. Every moment of fear, anger, or confusion is experienced directly.

When I designed Sara, I imagined someone who wasn't a classic hero. She's someone worn down by the system—practical, private, tired of being watched. Her resistance doesn't come from ideology, but from survival. She doesn't want to change the world. She just wants to live without being scanned, taxed, tracked.

Her world is one of quiet tension: hoodies pulled low, phones modified just enough to pass inspection, eyes that avoid cameras. She's skeptical of big solutions, but drawn—reluctantly—into the black market. When she's arrested and sentenced to labor, she doesn't resist. She watches. Records. Learns.

The audience sees the world fall apart through her eyes: black market raids, empty promises of sustainability, the cold efficiency of a factory built to extract. And as the film progresses, it becomes clear: Sara is not just a character.

She is a lens. She is us.



VIDEO STILL



CHARACTER INTRODUCTION

In the story, Toma represents the pragmatist: someone who's learned how to survive inside a broken system without caring whether it's right or wrong. He doesn't believe in causes, just margins. And while others panic about the collapse of the legal market, Toma simply adapts—because that's what he's always done.

After the 2032 policy crackdown, with law enforcement sweeping through black markets and dragging out dealers and hackers alike, Toma makes a calculated decision: step back. He "retires" from the digital black trade and chooses to keep a low profile, going back to selling cheap, legal goods. At least on the surface.

black marketeer



When designing this character, I imagined someone who blends into the chaos of the black market like a shadow—always watching, always calculating. He doesn't shout. He doesn't need to. His presence is quiet, but decisive. His coat is always a little too clean for the place he's in.

The name "Toma" was chosen for its ambiguity. It feels local but nowhere in particular. It could belong to a smuggler in Guangzhou. It's short, flexible, and untraceable—just like him.

VIDEO STILL



CHARACTER INTRODUCTION

Hacker

Hex

Character Reference Model: Yoyo

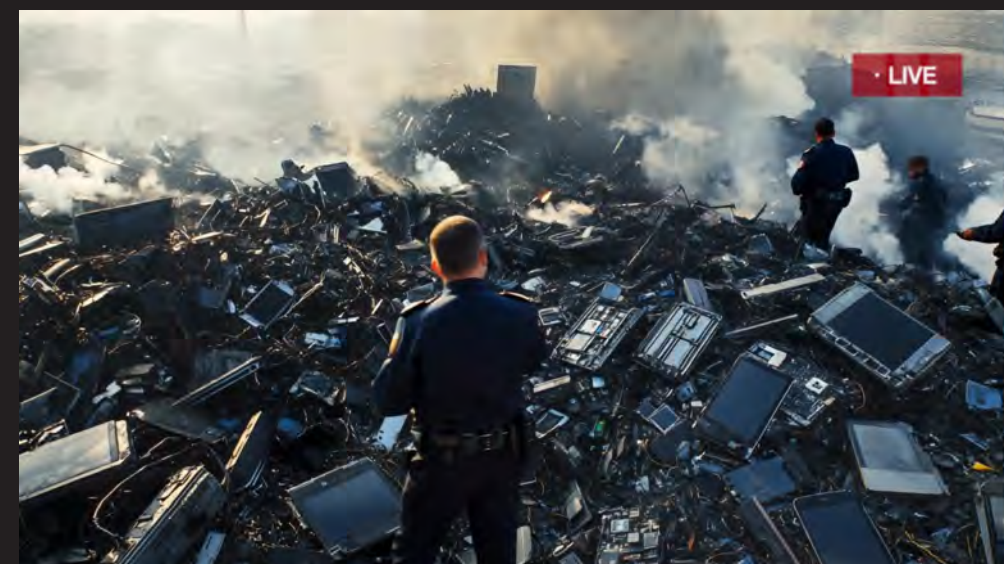


The hacker is the most mysterious presence in this short film, the first thing that came to mind when creating the character was the black trappings, the hoodie or low-profile duck-toe hat making it difficult to see their face at first glance, it's cheesy but the image does work! As a black-market hacker, Hex erases identities like casting spells—clean, invisible, irreversible.

“Hex” refers to hexadecimal code—a numeric system used in computing and hacking. It also means “a curse” or “magic spell” in folklore, suggesting his elusive and unpredictable nature.



VIDEO STILL



EPS Enforcement Unit

CHARACTER INTRODUCTION

The officers in this world aren't your typical uniformed patrolmen. They are field enforcers of the EPS Compliance Division—a special unit trained to investigate unregistered electronics, illegal repair networks, and black-market recycling. Armed with scanners linked to the central database, they sweep through back alleys, open-air markets, and even residential zones looking for devices that have fallen out of the system.

Their job isn't to understand, or even question. It's to scan, flag, and arrest.

Visually, I designed them to look like a hybrid of forensic investigators and riot police: neutral colors, clean gear, visors that reflect data, not emotion. Their scanner device looks like a thermometer, but when pointed at a phone or a laptop, it pulls up a full device history: owner, activation, repair attempts, disposal status. If the data doesn't match the EPS ledger—it's a crime.

These officers represent the state's trust in data over people. They don't chase murderers; they chase outdated devices. And in doing so, they turn what used to be personal belongings into evidence. For them, every malfunctioning phone is a potential threat, every secondhand tablet a question of loyalty.



Character Reference Model: Jessica Pei; Shawn Liiu



TIMELINE

BEFORE 2025:

The world's supply of rare earth resources (such as neodymium, lanthanum, terbium), lithium (for batteries), and cobalt (for lithium batteries) is nearing depletion, causing a surge in the cost of manufacturing new devices.

The **problem** of electronic waste is worsening, with many discarded devices being illegally dumped, polluting soil and water sources.

2025: APPLE INTRODUCES THE ELECTRONIC PASSPORT POLICY

Policy Implementation
Apple introduces EPS, where the ownership and lifecycle of each device are strictly recorded. Users can only dispose of old devices through Apple's official channels, while other recycling methods are prohibited.

Users **must pay** periodic inspection fees, and Apple's buyback prices are significantly lower than the second-hand market value, leading to dissatisfaction. Some users accept the policy, while others feel frustrated by the forced restrictions and begin seeking ways to circumvent it. The hacker community starts researching ways to crack EPS, making devices "disappear" from the system.

2026: HACKERS CRACK EPS

The first batch of "passport-free" Apple devices appears on the gray market. These devices are reprogrammed to make them untraceable by Apple's system.

Black market hackers offer "device clearing services," allowing users to continue using iOS without Apple's oversight. Hackers can forge digital passports, alter device identities, and even make a single device appear as "destroyed" in Apple's system while still being functional.

These recyclers offer higher buyback prices than Apple, extracting valuable components (such as motherboards, cameras, and storage chips) while recklessly discarding the rest.

2027: WORSENING ENVIRONMENTAL POLLUTION

Since illegal recyclers only salvage high-value parts, massive amounts of useless electronic waste are dumped illegally, exacerbating pollution. An Asian country discovers multiple electronic waste mountains, with many discarded devices still bearing tampered Apple logos.

2028: GOVERNMENT SCRUTINY

Multiple governments begin investigating the illegal e-waste trade. Apple pressures authorities to intervene, seeking to shut down these black markets.

2030: INTERNATIONAL CRACKDOWN ON THE BLACK MARKET

Multiple countries coordinate a global police operation, shutting down several major electronic waste black markets and arresting illegal hacker groups. However, due to the well-established gray supply chain, the black market continues to operate covertly.

2032: THE GLOBAL E-WASTE ACT

All electronic products must be registered with an Electronic Passport (EPS); unregistered devices are deemed illegal. Buying or selling black market devices carries a maximum penalty of 5 years in prison. Governments collaborate with Apple to introduce a state-supervised electronic product recycling system.

2033: HACKERS VS. APPLE

Apple upgrades EPS with blockchain encryption, aiming to prevent hackers from tampering with device records. Hackers develop more advanced bypass methods, leading to an ongoing cycle of technological warfare.

2035:

The hacker community introduces "Ghost Mode", allowing devices to disguise themselves as legitimate while still running unauthorized systems.

2040: GOVERNMENT TAKES FULL CONTROL OF RECYCLING

Policy Adjustments:
Governments no longer rely solely on Apple but establish a national electronic product recycling system. The Electronic Passport becomes a global standard, requiring registration for all electronic devices, regardless of brand.

The Black Market Goes Underground:
Hackers start developing devices completely detached from official systems, such as underground smartphones based on open-source hardware. These black market devices operate beyond both Apple and government control, creating an independent underground tech ecosystem.

E-waste pollution persists, but black market groups adopt more discreet disposal methods to evade detection.

2050: THE FUTURE OF ELECTRONIC WASTE

Despite stricter regulations, the black market continues to operate in highly concealed ways. A fully independent underground tech ecosystem emerges, separate from both government and corporate control.

Large-scale official recycling programs significantly reduce electronic waste from legal channels. However, black market recyclers persist in illegally processing discarded electronics, keeping e-waste dumps alive.

Some fully embrace government policies, submitting to centralized device management. Others actively participate in the underground tech scene, using black market devices to evade corporate and state surveillance.

AFTER 2050

2025 – APPLE EPS POLICY

This mock website imagines Apple's official page announcing the upgrade from Trade-In 2.0 to the Electronic Passport System (EPS).

EPS is introduced as a natural evolution of the Trade-In program, but the shift is deeper: what once rewarded users for returning old devices now requires them to do so. Beneath the glowing Apple logo and keywords like "transparency" and "sustainability", the policy embeds a new layer of compliance: device registration, lifecycle tracking, and identity binding.

APPLE INTRODUCES THE NEW EPS POLICY

From production to recycling, every device is now tracked throughout its lifecycle—for a more transparent and sustainable future.

TRADE IN 2.0

Your current device is already covered—EPS activates automatically through your Apple ID.

MY EPS

Apple Electronic Passport & Sustainable Recycling Policy (2025)

Overview

As part of our continued commitment to environmental sustainability, Apple is introducing the Electronic Passport System (EPS) to enhance product traceability and ensure a closed-loop recycling process. This initiative aims to minimize electronic waste and reduce the reliance on rare earth elements by enforcing a responsible product lifecycle approach.

Mandatory Device Registration

All Apple products must be linked to an EPS profile upon activation, ensuring comprehensive tracking and responsible disposal at the end of their lifecycle. Users will be required to associate their devices with their Apple ID under the EPS framework.

Controlled Recycling Process

At the end of their lifecycle, Apple devices must be returned to official Apple recycling centers or authorized partners. Unauthorized disposal or third-party recycling is strictly prohibited to prevent improper handling of rare materials.

Recycling Fee & Buyback Program

- E-Product Passport (EPP): A digital tool that records the full lifecycle information of products, including basic device details, environmental impact data, usage history, and recycling status.
- Eco-Points: A reward mechanism based on consumer eco-friendly behaviors, which can be used to redeem benefits, discounts, or donate to environmental projects.

Strict Resale Regulations

- E-Product Passport (EPP): A digital tool that records the full lifecycle information of products, including basic device details, environmental impact data, usage history, and recycling status.
- Eco-Points: A reward mechanism based on consumer eco-friendly behaviors, which can be used to redeem benefits, discounts, or donate to environmental projects.

For more details, visit our official website: www.apple.com/recycling-policy

Apple Electronic Passport & Sustainable Recycling Policy (2025)

The Electronic Passport System (EPS) was Apple's most ambitious environmental initiative.

Designed in 2025 to close the loop of digital waste, it promised full traceability of every device—from factory to grave.

Millions of users registered their devices. Apple launched official recycling plants, buyback schemes, and eco-point rewards.

The website framed it all as a partnership between user and planet.

But the world wasn't ready.

As the EPS database grew, so did the incentive to cheat it.

Black markets began salvaging high-value components from EPS-registered devices—hijacking Apple's infrastructure.

Rogue recyclers undercut official buyback prices, reselling parts while dumping the rest. Even some Apple factory employees started feeding the gray supply chain.

By the time EPS became global law in 2032, the system was already strained.

Surveillance expanded, penalties increased, enforcement militarized.

Apple's dream of a sustainable future had become a battlefield—not because it was flawed, but because the world found a way to break it.

2032 – GLOBAL ENFORCEMENT LAW

This official-looking mockup imagines the 2032 launch of the Global Electronic Passport System (EPS) under the Global Environmental Protection Agency (G.E.P.A.).

The website opens with polished political optimism: “A New Era of Recycling”, fronted by a charismatic spokesperson and corporate branding.

However, once logged in, the tone shifts. Users are met with compliance flags, overdue alerts, and investigation warnings. The interface mimics a digital government portal—clean but cold.



The Global E-Waste & Digital Product Responsibility Act (2032)

By 2032, what began as Apple’s voluntary sustainability initiative had evolved into international law. The Global Environmental Protection Agency (G.E.P.A.) introduced a new policy mandating that all electronic devices worldwide must be registered, tracked, and recycled through certified channels.

The policy was introduced under the banner of transparency, efficiency, and global cooperation. Every phone, tablet, and laptop now had a digital identity, tied to the user’s name and movement. Compliance status was scanned in public spaces, and non-compliance could lead to penalties, forced labor, or imprisonment.

On paper, the policy aligned with international sustainability frameworks (like the Basel Convention, ILO, SDGs). In practice, it blurred the line between ecological responsibility and surveillance enforcement.

2032 – PROPS

This prop is used to record the status, life trajectory and recycling of the user’s electronic devices, and the user is required to check for updates at regular intervals, and the government and the police have the right to view the e-passport and know the details.



The prop is used by the police to check e-passports, and unlike mobile phone scans to view specific information, the scanner detects if a passport has been altered in an unofficial way by scanning a chip.



Sara



HOW THE BLACK MARKET WORKS



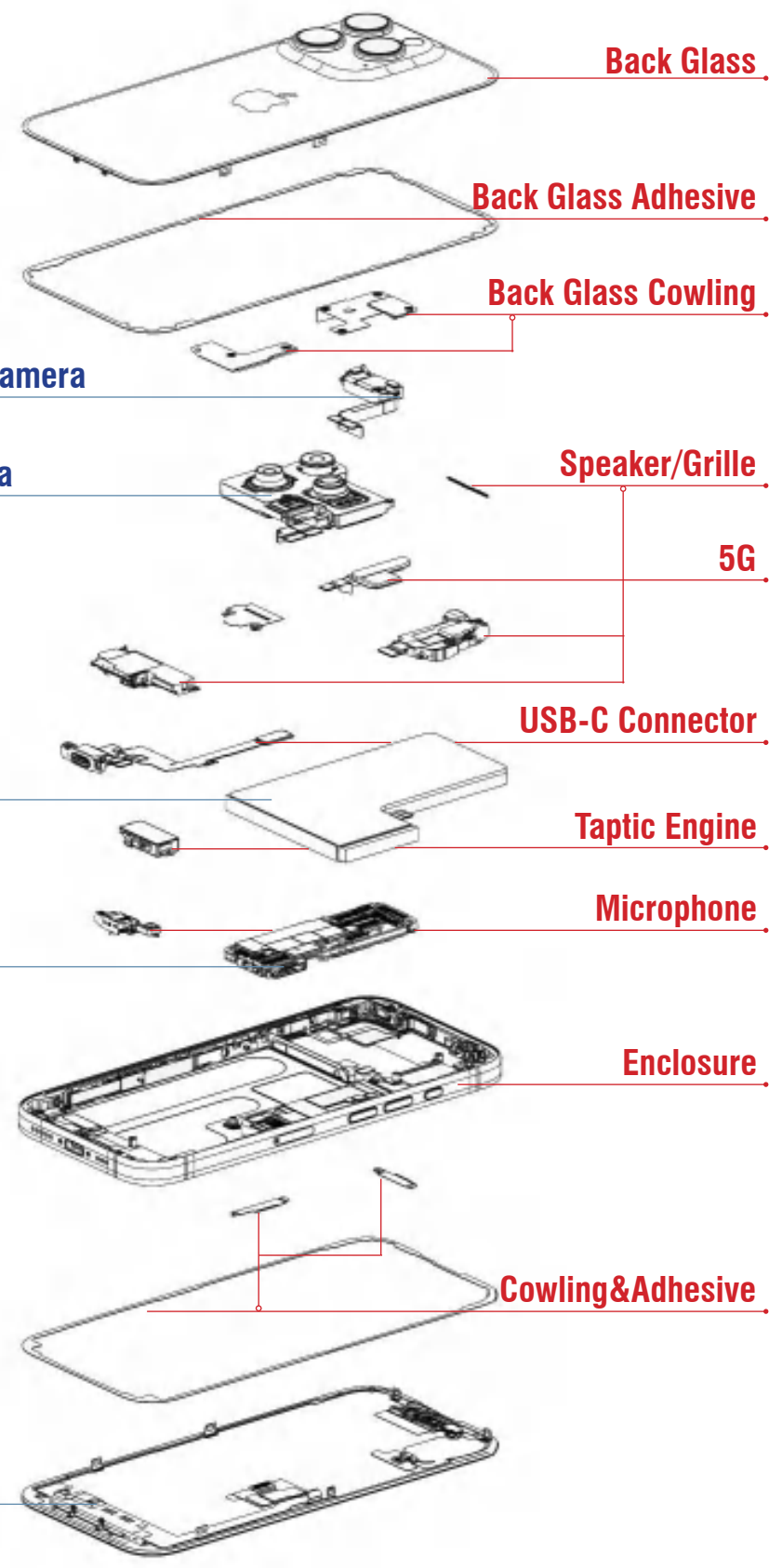
Used for Face ID, it can be diverted to black market cracking, refurbished devices with high value.

Multi-mirror modules can be removed and sold individually and are in high demand.

Containing lithium and cobalt, still has a high recycling profit, although there is a risk but some people recycling.

Core components, containing precious metals and equipment identities, must be grabbed on the black market.

If intact can be resold for refurbished machines at a high price.



Back Glass. Fragile, difficult to clean, low value and often abandoned.

Back Glass Adhesive. Disposable adhesive material, no value.

Back Glass Cowling. Plastic or metal bezels with no reuse value.

Speaker/Grille. Small market demand and difficult to dismantle.

5G. Non-independent use of modules with low recycling value.

USB-C Connector. Easily damaged and difficult to re-sell.

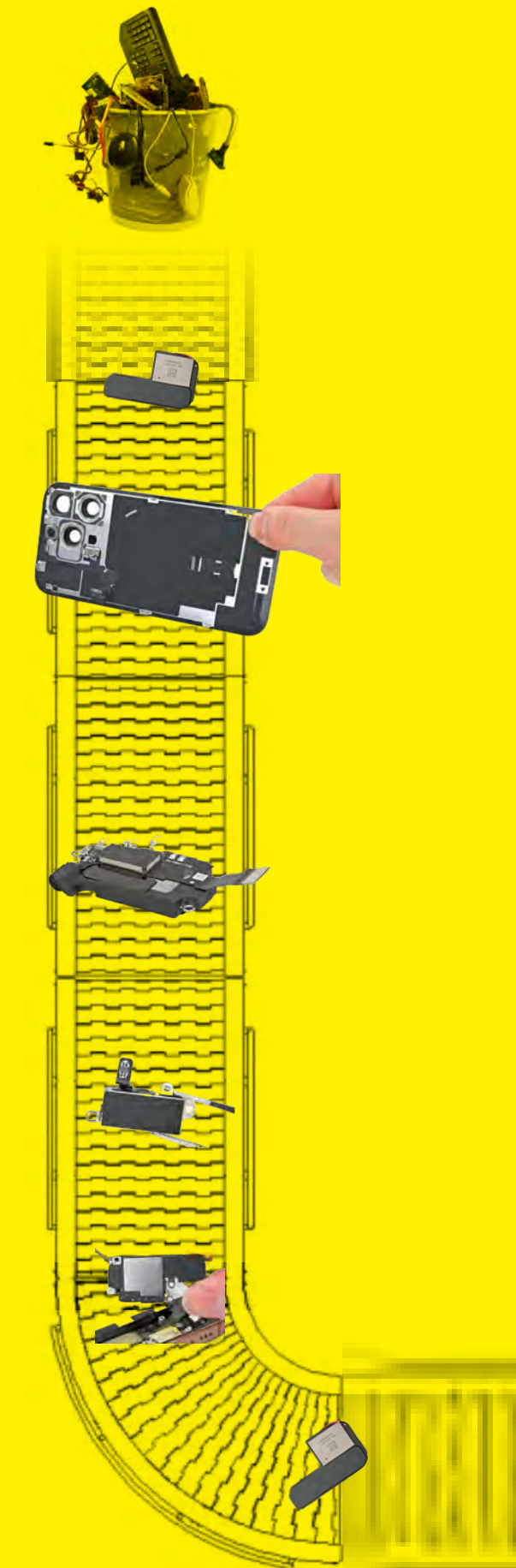
Taptic Engine. There is a small market for vibration motors.

Microphone. Small size, difficult to extract, low value.

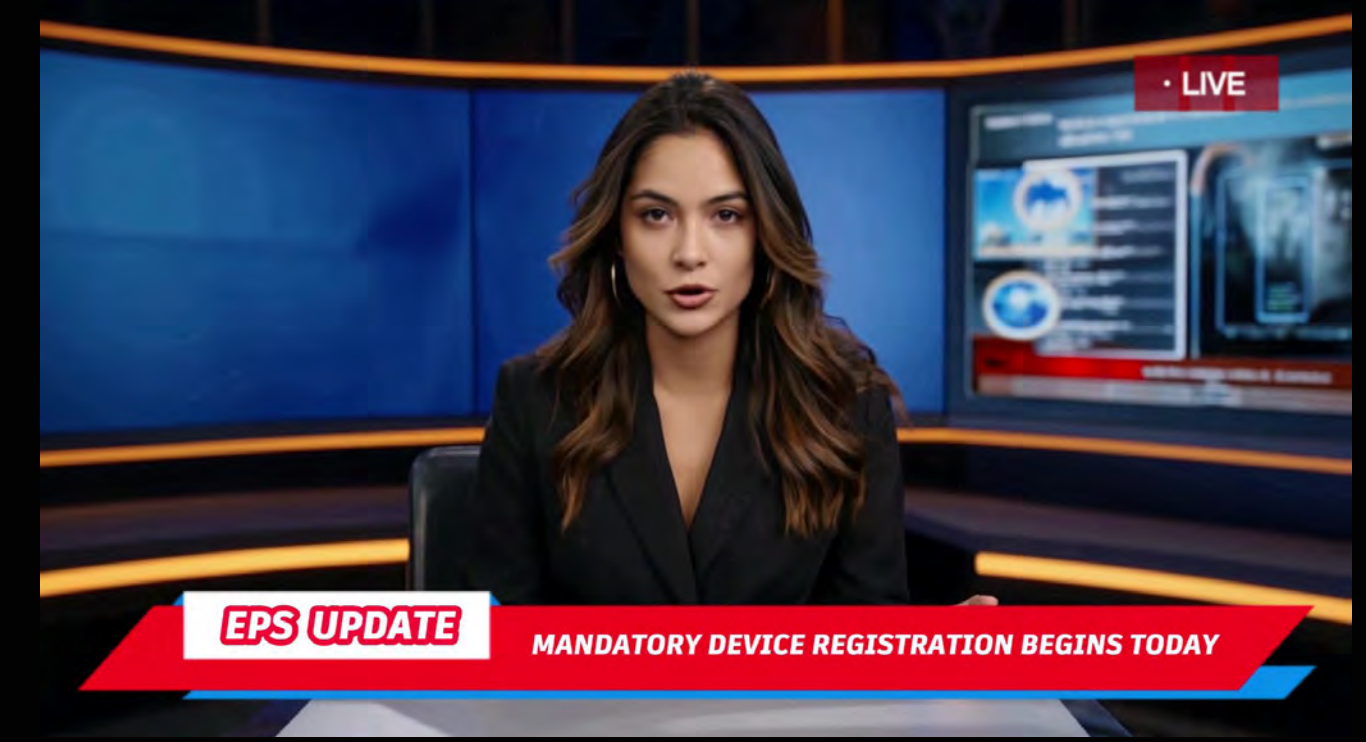
Enclosure. Metal casings are bulky but have no special value and are often simply discarded in illegal recycling.

Cowling&Adhesive. Cannot be used or reused on its own.

PARTS OFTEN DISCARDED ON THE BLACK MARKET



EPS THROUGH THE SCREEN: POLICY BROADCASTS



2025



2032

These two stills come from simulated news segments used within the video to announce policy changes related to the Electronic Passport System (EPS).

The use of live studio broadcasting frames the policy as objective, factual, and non-negotiable.

BLACK MARKET HIGH-PRICED RECYCLED PARTS

WHERE THE STORY LIVES

APPLE RECYCLING CENTER



Introduced alongside the Electronic Passport System (EPS), Apple’s certified recycling facilities are presented as flagships of environmental leadership.

Marketed under the slogan “99% Recycled. 100% Responsible,” these plants claim to recover nearly all material from discarded Apple devices—aluminum, glass, rare metals, and circuits—under a fully controlled system.

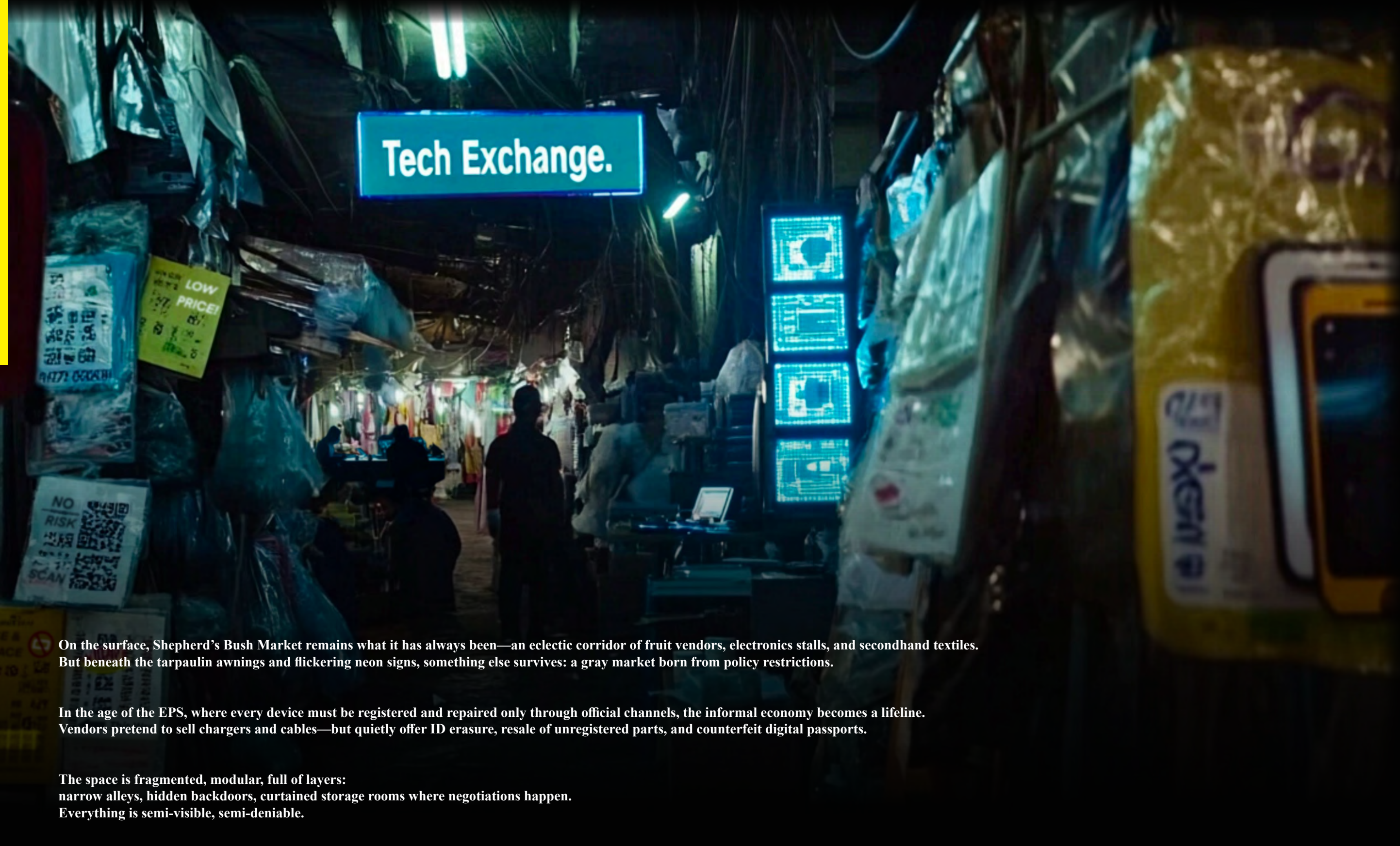
Each facility operates with strict automation and traceability, integrated into the EPS database.

Devices returned through official channels are scanned, disassembled, and logged in the Apple Materials Ledger™. Unauthorized parts or tampered devices are flagged and rejected.

The spaces are ultra-clean, minimal, and heavily surveilled. Behind the futuristic transparency lies a deeper function: to secure supply chains, reduce reliance on external mining, and reinforce Apple’s closed-loop economy—one that never loses control of its products.

BLACK MARKET

WHERE THE STORY LIVES



On the surface, Shepherd’s Bush Market remains what it has always been—an eclectic corridor of fruit vendors, electronics stalls, and secondhand textiles. But beneath the tarpaulin awnings and flickering neon signs, something else survives: a gray market born from policy restrictions.

In the age of the EPS, where every device must be registered and repaired only through official channels, the informal economy becomes a lifeline. Vendors pretend to sell chargers and cables—but quietly offer ID erasure, resale of unregistered parts, and counterfeit digital passports.

The space is fragmented, modular, full of layers: narrow alleys, hidden backdoors, curtained storage rooms where negotiations happen. Everything is semi-visible, semi-deniable.

This is not just a place—it is a response to the system, an architectural rebellion that fills the voids left by compliance.

WHERE THE STORY LIVES

BLACK MARKET

Scene



Photo



Location: Shepherd's Bush Market

THE COURTROOM

WHERE THE STORY LIVES



Inspired by broadcast studios and theatrical stages, the EPS courtroom functions as a hybrid media space—part tribunal, part performance. The defendant stands alone at the center, encircled by cameras, projection screens, and spotlights.

Dozens of overhead lenses record every reaction. Rows of screens stream real-time public access footage, reinforcing a culture of exposure over due process. The lighting is precise: the judge is cast in cold white; the defendant under unforgiving blue.



Model building

WHERE THE STORY LIVES

CHECKPOINT

This series of frames captures the moment Sara enters the government-run recycling facility for the first time.

Her entry is controlled by a biometric access panel, glowing green only after identity is confirmed.

The corridor lights shift from red to green, signaling compliance authorization.



The environment is industrial, emotionless—designed to remind the worker they’re being tracked, not welcomed.

Here, architecture functions as gatekeeping. It doesn’t just open—it evaluates, filters, and records entry.

WHERE THE STORY LIVES

BECKTON DATA-RECYCLING ZONE (BDRZ)



Visual concepts



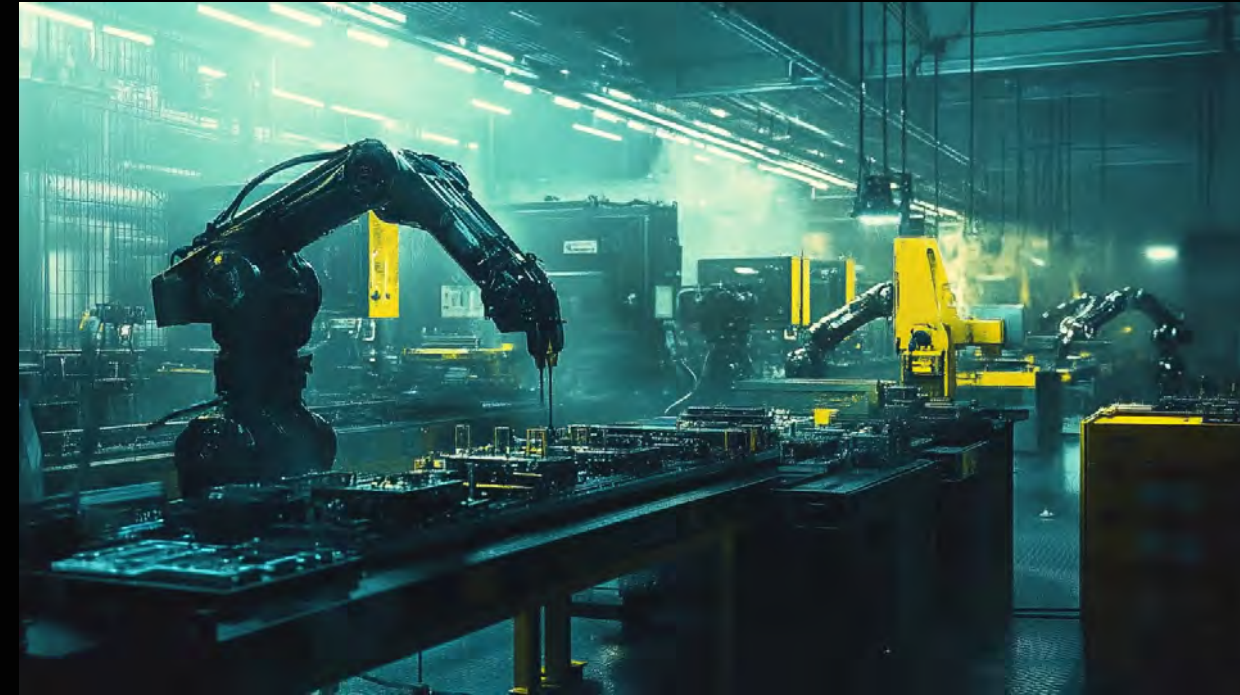
Beckton Data-Recycling Zone (BDRZ) is one of several government-run e-waste treatment plants established after the 2032 policy reform. Located in the eastern industrial perimeter of London, the site was formerly a logistics and data storage hub—now repurposed as a facility for high-volume electronics dismantling, sorting, and extraction.

Inside BDRZ, materials are no longer just processed—they’re monitored, tracked, and classified by compliance level. Surveillance is built into the architecture: from check-in corridors to conveyor belts, every workstation is under control.

The design of the space is intentionally cold, expansive, and mechanical. Workers—many of them penal laborers like Sara—sort components under robotic supervision. While the plant claims to support sustainability, its real function is twofold: to harvest resources and to discipline bodies.

BECKTON DATA-RECYCLING ZONE (BDRZ)

The workflow inside Beckton Data-Recycling Zone is divided into two parallel systems:



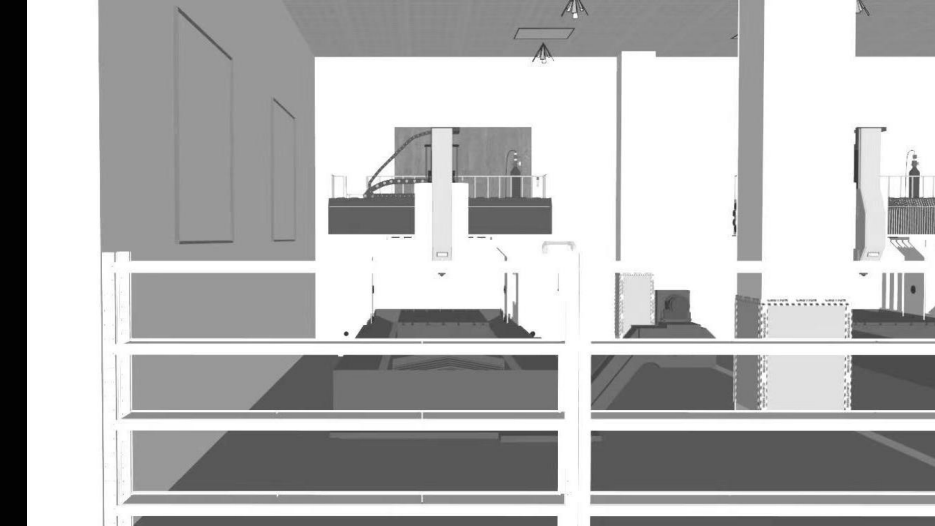
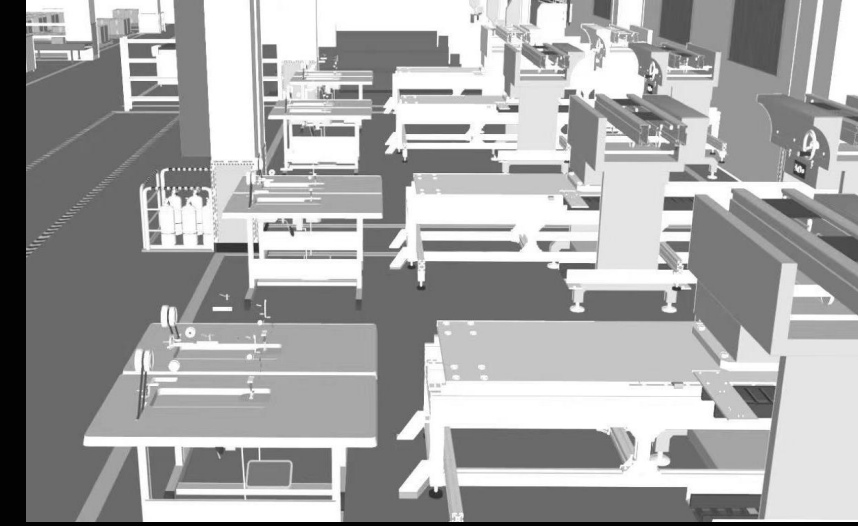
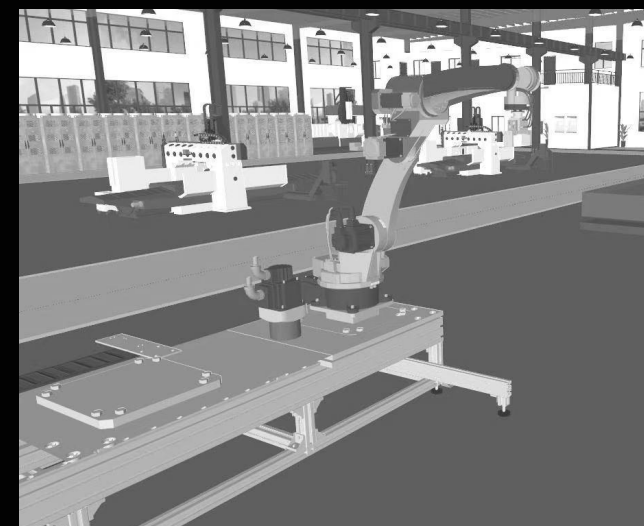
Robotic Arms – Automated Disassembly

Heavy-duty robotic arms operate along the central conveyor lines. Their task is to rapidly tear down electronic devices into base components—screen, battery, circuit board, casing—without concern for preservation.



Human Operators – Manual Sorting of Valuable Parts

After initial disassembly, the scattered components are passed to elevated human workstations. Here, workers sort through the debris to identify high-value parts: chips, memory units, rare-earth modules. What's deemed unprofitable is discarded into lower-tier bins and sent off for bulk smelting or landfill.



Model building

FINAL WORDS

This story may feel speculative, even distant. But the devices we hold, discard, and forget are real—and so is the problem behind them.

Electronic waste doesn't vanish. It moves—across borders, through policies, into bodies and back into the ground.

And most of us never see it.

When sustainability becomes surveillance, and recycling becomes regulation, where do we go from here?

A woman with long dark hair, wearing a white, long-sleeved, button-down dress with a large, irregular red bloodstain on her waist, stands in a dark, industrial-looking environment. She is leaning against a wooden structure and holding a black smartphone in her right hand. The background shows a cityscape at night, illuminated by green and blue lights. The word "END" is written in large, bold, yellow letters across the center of the image.

END

UNREGISTERED