UNCOMMON
GROUND
SURVIVE TO REVIVE

In 2121,
if you wanted to visit the Empire State Building, you'd have to go scuba diving.
But in a post-apocalyptic world ravaged by plagues and natural disasters...
WILL WORK FOR O2
...nobody has time for that.
People are just too busy.
Trying to survive.

Among them, Invigilator Strake moves uneasily...
...between the protected confines of the Chrysalis Cluster...

...THE NEAR
ANARCHY OF OLDTOWN...
...AND THE SEETHING
INTRIGUES THAT LINK
THEM BOTH.

Initially an advocate of the Cluster ethos...
...will Strake's views change?
He may see that strict obedience to the Cluster's precepts...
I THE PUBLIC GOOD IS THE HIGHEST GOOD
II THE WHOLE IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN ANY SINGLE ENTITY
III SCARCITY OF RESOURC
...might sacrifice too many on the altar of principle.

But first things first...

...from his eyrie in the Outpost in OldTown...

...he has a murder to solve.

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Alan Fawcett and Shadi Mallak

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A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE WORLD

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A Brief History of the World

Of course, it all began with the multi-nationals (MNs). Having come to rival national governments in power, they foresee the possible consequences of their predatory economic practices and total disregard for the environment, and in the early 2050s, start construction of Clusters of protected domes, where key personnel and knowledge can be safeguarded. These Clusters are built near cities on the great TGV underground train line constructed in the 2030s.

But the MN heyday doesn't last long.
The environmental chickens come home to roost with a vengeance. Ozone depletion has been going on for too long and viral infections begin mutating, creating pandemic after pandemic.

Especially dangerous are viruses that tamper with the human genome that escape from MN labs during their experimentation in biological warfare.

In 2070, the succession of plagues wipes out 25% of the North American population in a year.

> **"In 2077 the last fugitive Trump and Du Pont heirs are seized and declared to the sun in the now verdant tropical oasis of the Central African Republic"**

When people realize the MNs are responsible, the first of the Cluster Insurrections takes place, put down savagely by the MNs and the governments that back them, including the antiquated UN. Reformist forces within the UN and federal governments form the General Authority (GA). The GA issues the Global Declaration that outlaws MNs and authorizes the seizure of their assets. The rudiments of the Cartel systems are put in place.

For efficiency's sake, each Cartel is assigned a specific task, for example, the Health Cartel.

The Cartels take over the Cluster domes, and do their best, but it's too little, too late. Crop blight becomes more common and famine begins to rear its ugly head even in the industrialized world. Both polar caps are melting at an unprecedented rate, with coastal water levels rising.

2030
TGV underground train built

2050
First Cluster domes contructed

2070
Cluster Insurrections

Luxembourg-sized icebergs breaking off are no longer uncommon. Wild weather becomes a constant.

These are the Terrible Times. People flock to the Clusters for protection. Huge tent cities spring up around the Clusters in the OldTowns, overseen by the GA Disaster Mitigation Committee.

But resources are strained to the limits because the clusters (and cities around the world) can barely feed themselves. Very few are admitted to the Clusters.

The straw that breaks the camel's back comes in the form of a megatsunami, a 300-foot wall of water that hits the Eastern seaboard.

The entire Atlantic seaboard is under a hundred feet of water and anything near the Great Lakes or nearby is toast. Boston, New York, Baltimore, Washington, Miami, New Orleans and the rest of the Gulf Coast to all intents and purposes cease to exist in a little less than 15 minutes.

Similar disasters occur in coastal Europe. In the U.S. alone, 100 million people die with the first onslaught of the waves. And tens of millions more in the aftermath.

"Survive to Revive"

But the domed Clusters still have the knowledge base to survive if they have the discipline.

In the early decades of the 22nd century, privation eases in the Clusters. Tofu is available in the quantities needed to nourish everyone. Anxiety over mere survival is over, and Cluster residents are actually living in somewhat parsimonious comfort.

At the end of the second decade, their foodstuffs begin to be grown in greenhouses in the domes, including livestock in very limited quantities.

The best stuff goes to top Cartellans first, but some begins to trickle down to even the lowest levels. Not only is fish seen once a week on tables, but amazingly, occasionally, twice a week. And rumors are rife that greens are on the way.

We are now in 2121.

And in OldTown, things are entirely different.

2080

Megatsunami

2110

Tofu nourishes Clusters

2121

Lucan Strake appointed OldTown Invigilator

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STRAKE'S WORLD

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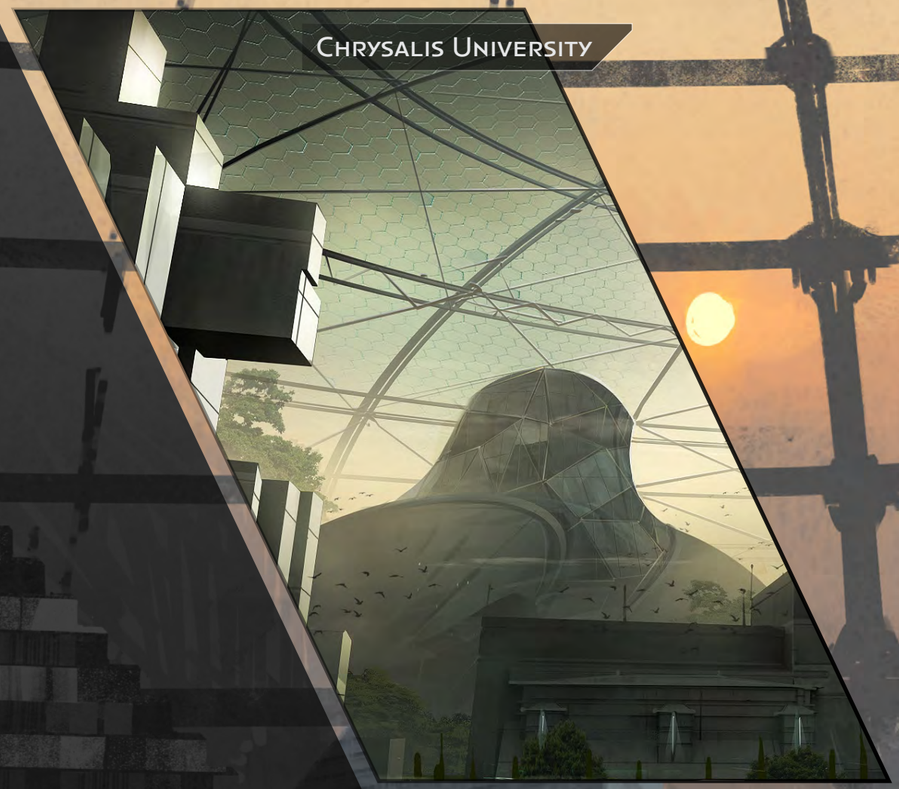
Chrysalis Cluster

Home to 1 million people living in ziggurats in 8 different domes.

Tofu nourished and now fish once a week; rumours of greens coming soon.

DNA screening for exit and entry to Domes and OldTown -- get infected and you don't get back in.



12 Cartels

- Food Cartel
- Oxygen Cartel
- Water Cartel
- Health Cartel
- Manufacturing Cartel
- Transportation Cartel
- Energy Cartel
- Provisioning Cartel
- Recovery Cartel
- Regeneration Cartel
- Entertainment Cartel
- The Protectorate

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OldTown

Home to 500 thousand people living in the scavenged husk of a large city.

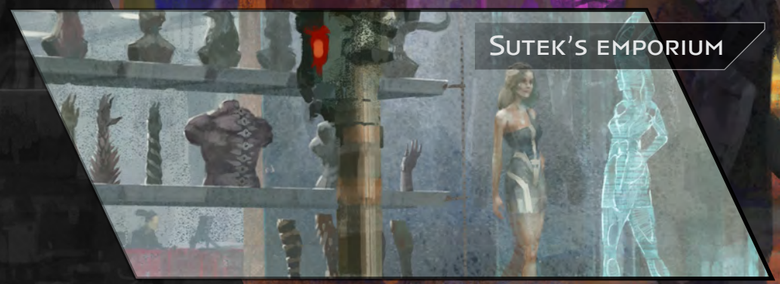
Life can be good for a select few; tough for the rest.

Playground for Cartellans (Cluster residents) who have the credits to go there.

Landmarks

The Strip -- OldTown playground
Feray's and CMax -- saloons / entertainment spots / restaurants / brothels for the elite of Cartel and OldTown
Sutek's -- a special place
Zuman -- lower-life haunt catering to hard-core fans of gilling (body modification)
The Free Clinics -- staffed by volunteer medical staff from the Cluster and OldTown personnel
The Tofu Farms
True Source Water Temple

Feray's ballroom


Sutek's emporium

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The Protectorate

Their own dome and
3 branches.

Home to Lucan Strake,
Invigilator of the Cluster Outpost
in Old Town.

Effectors

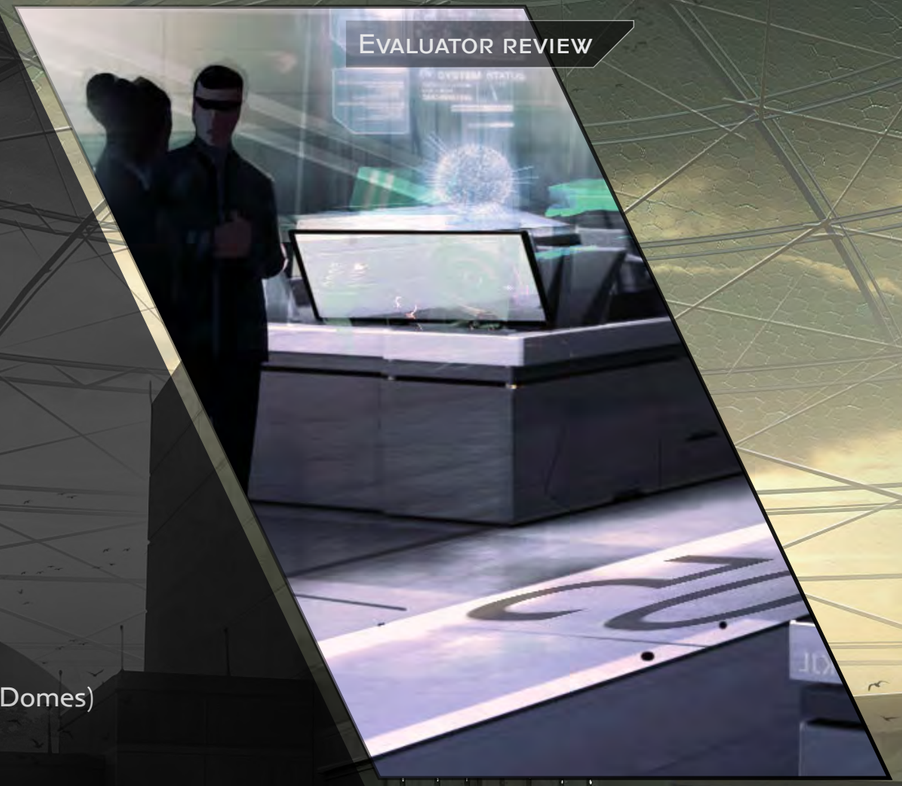
Regulators (police)
Facilitators (detectives)
Invigilators (a special breed)
The Watch (patrol security outside the Domes)

Evaluators

Evaluate projects, personnel and Cartels for efficiency
Control credit allotment and credit network

Mediators

Arbitrators (judges)
Advocates (lawyers, either prosecutors or defense)



Evaluator review

The Watch checkpoint

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LUCAN STRAKE

Invigilator, also known as "The Vig"
of the Chrysalis Cluster Protectorate
in the Cluster Outpost in OldTown

MARAT

Mercenary; provenance unknown;
currently ostensibly working
for Milo Gonchar, owner
of CMax in OldTown
and rival of Louche Feray

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DELF GONCHAR

Son of Milo Gonchar;
heir not-so-apparent with delusions
of thug grandeur

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LOCATION CONCEPT ART

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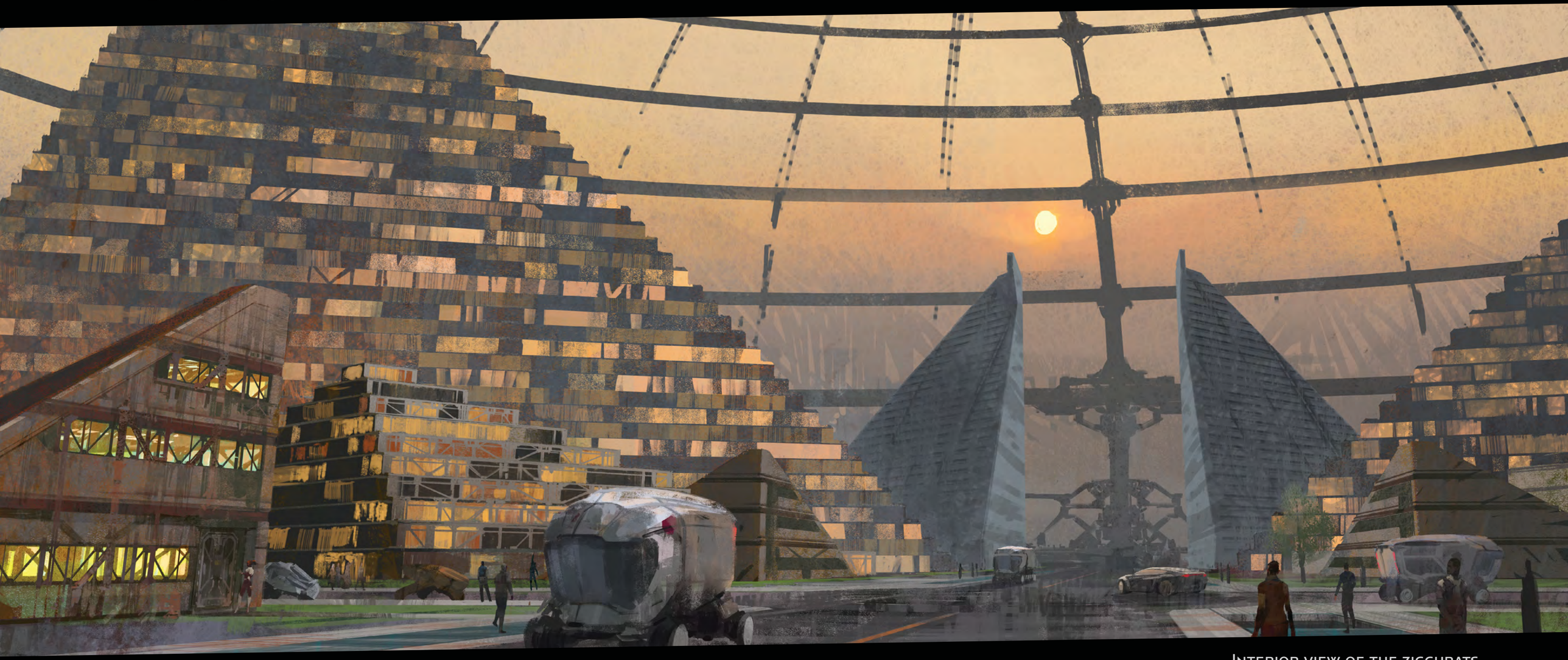
Looking from OldTown, over the strip,
up to the domes of the Chrysalis Cluster



Interior view of the ziggurats
of the Health Cartel dome

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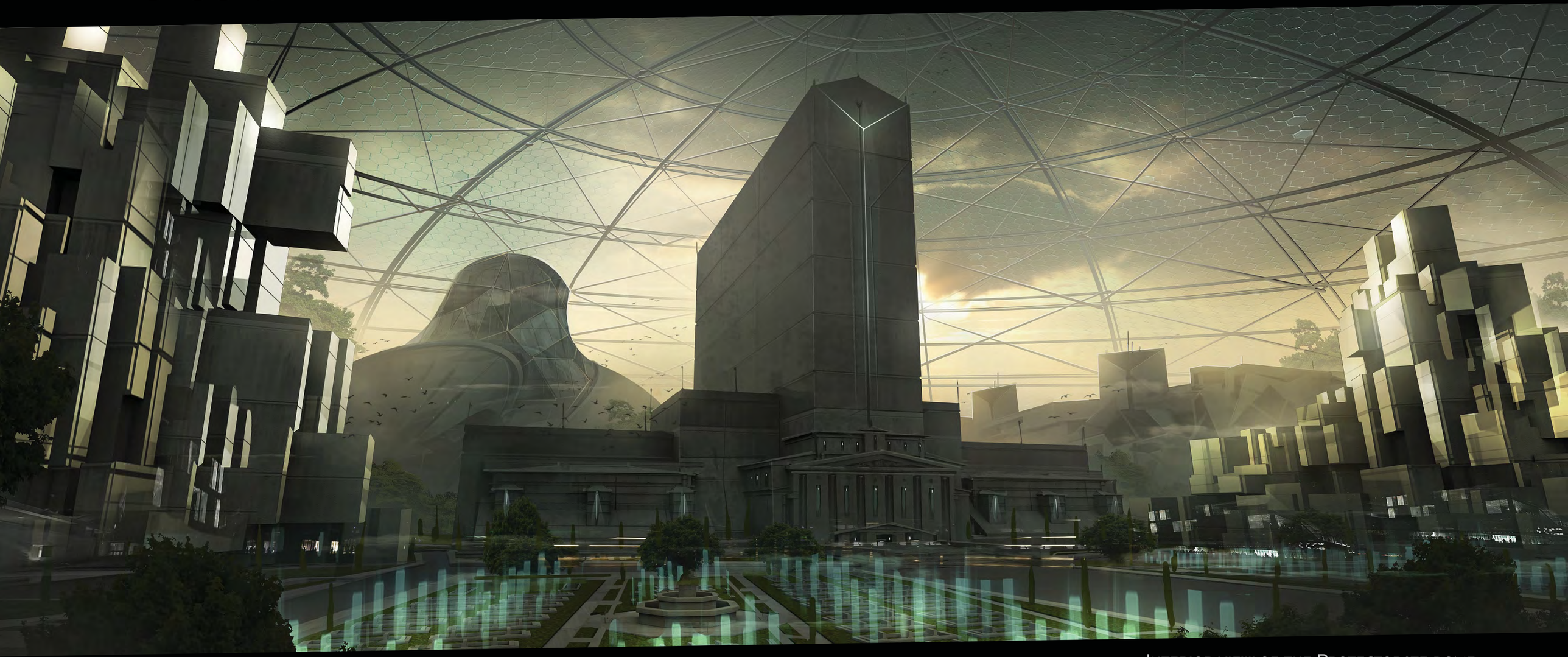
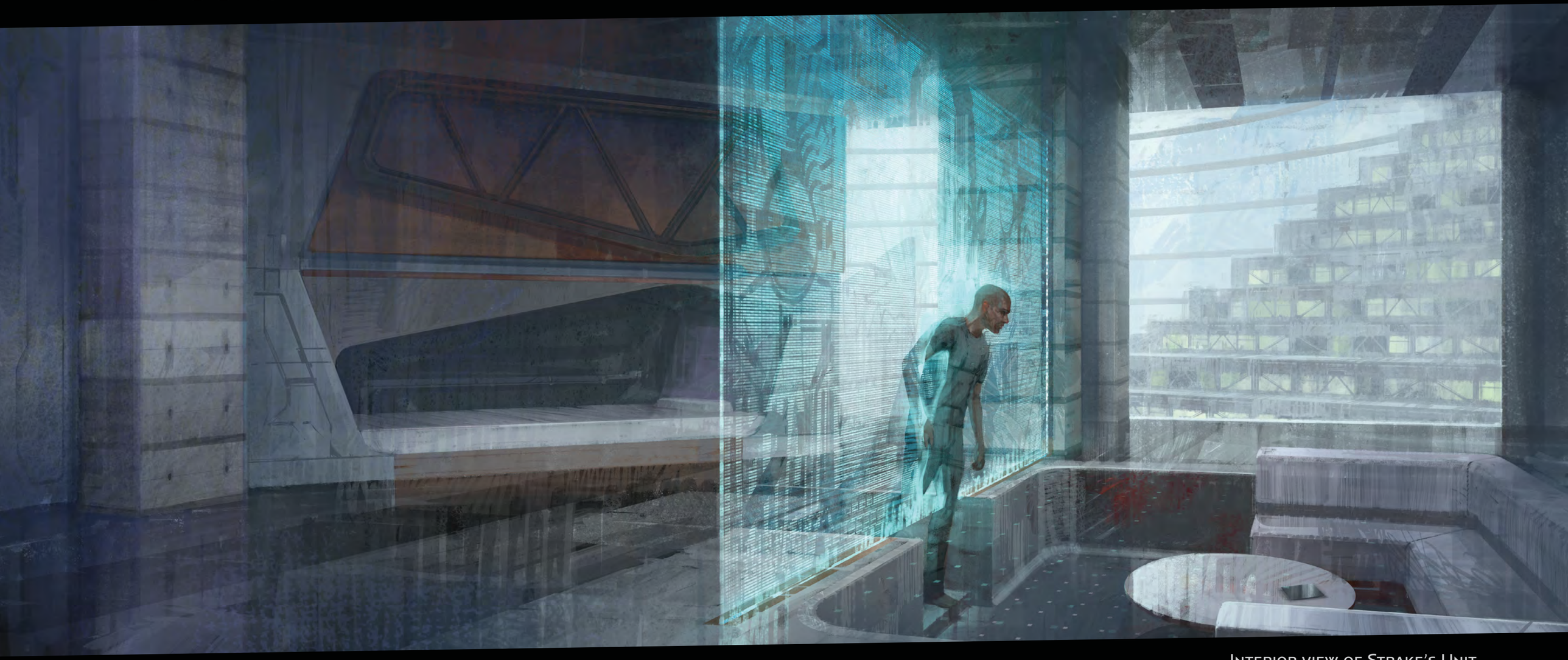
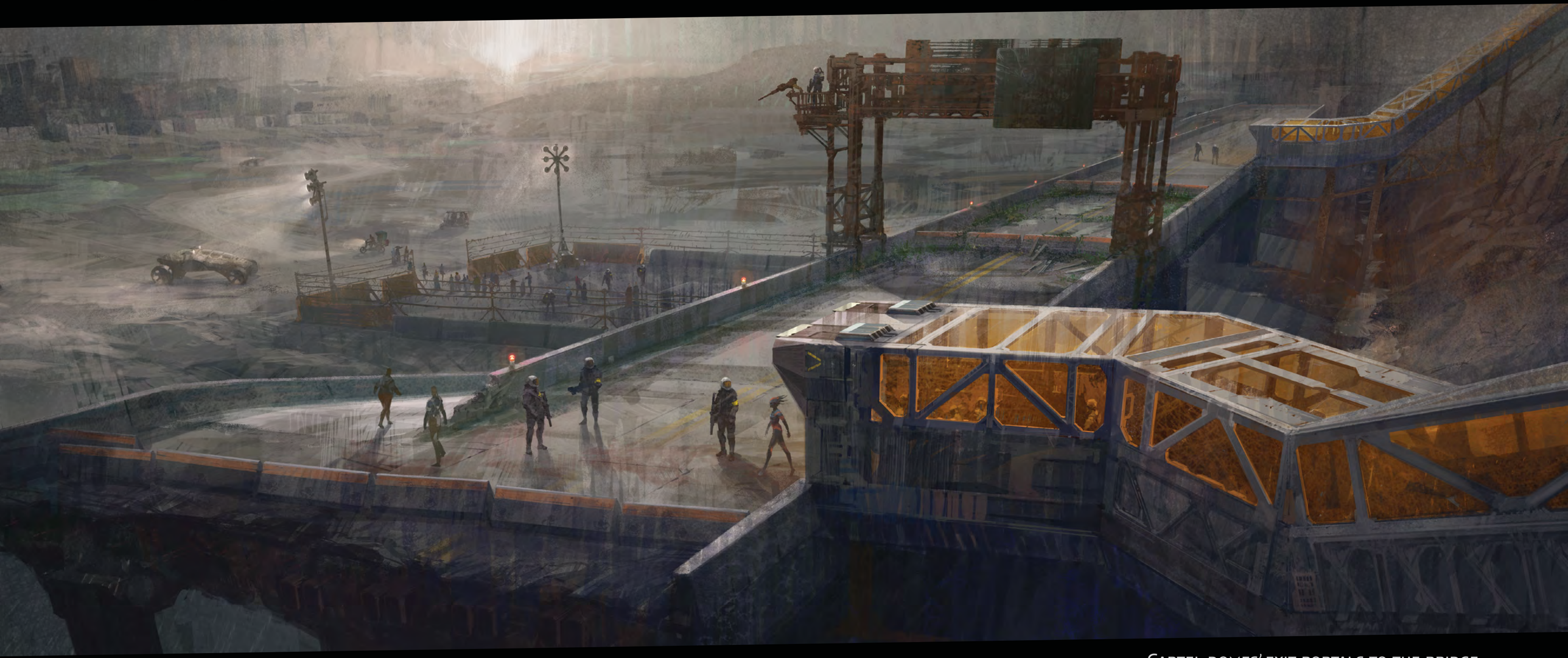


Interior view of the Protectorate dome,
showing the Protectorate HQ and the Walk of Martyrs

Interior view of Strake's unit
in the Protectorate dome



Interior view of Strake's Unit,
showing the data wall



Cartel domes' exit portals to the bridge
on the way to OldTown

Chrysalis Cluster's Protectorate outpost
in OldTown

Interior view of Protectorate outpost
with Strake gazing out at OldTown from his war room

Night scene of the OldTown strip

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Interior view of Zuman, Delf Gonchar's hangout
and home to "wildebeest" culture in OldTown

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Exterior view of Sutek's emporium and lab

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Sutek's second floor outer office

Sutek's second floor lab