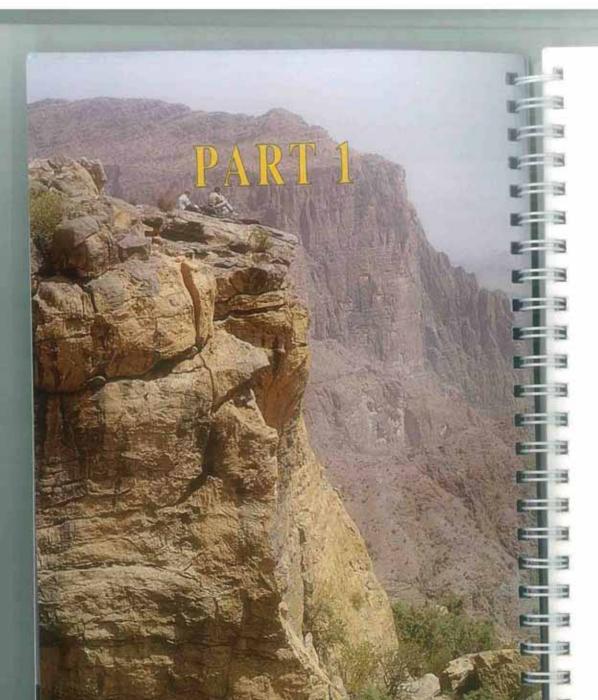


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GE OMAN

INTRODUCTION

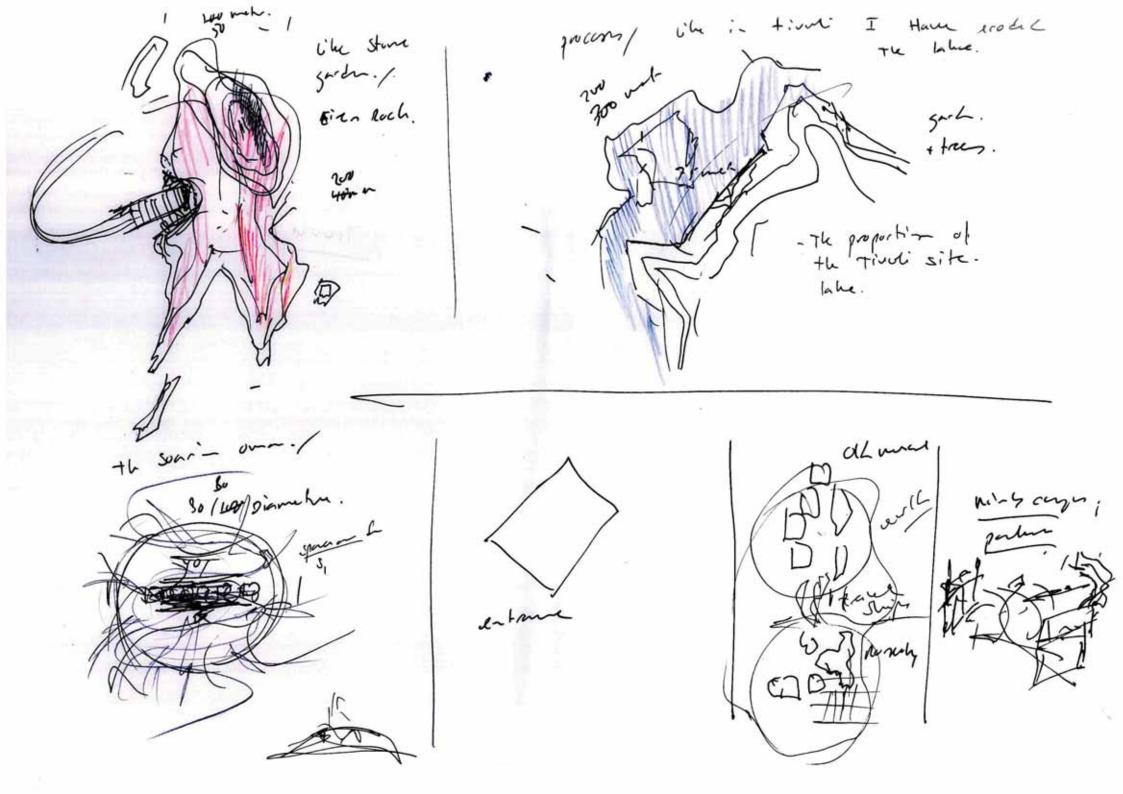
ven the most casual visitor to Oman cannot fail to be impressed by the Oman mountains. They resemble the strange landscapes seen in science fiction films. They form the beautiful backdrop to the capital area and plunge down to the sea to form the rugged coastline. The scenery in these mountains varies from rocky pinnacles typical of the Alps to the moon-like landscapes of Saih Hatat.

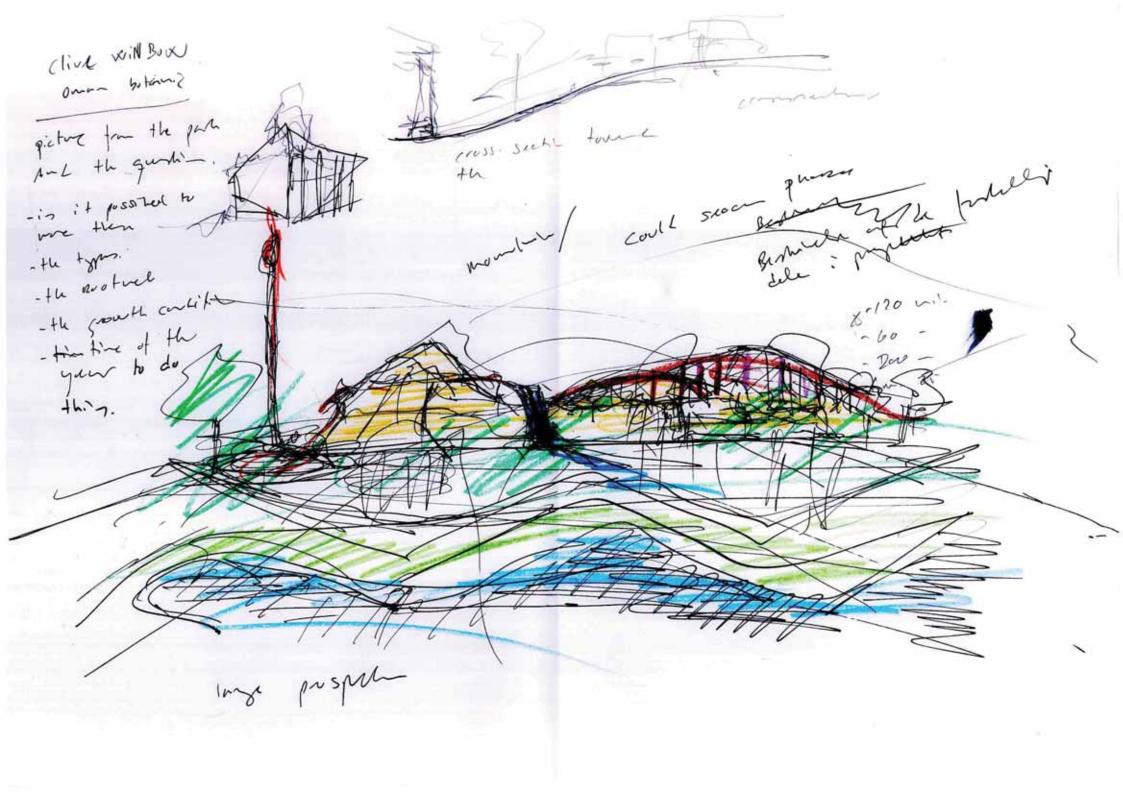
For the amateur geologist the Oman mountains offer a great opportunity to explore one of the geological wonders of the world – in a place where the rocks are exposed, not hidden beneath soil or vegetation.

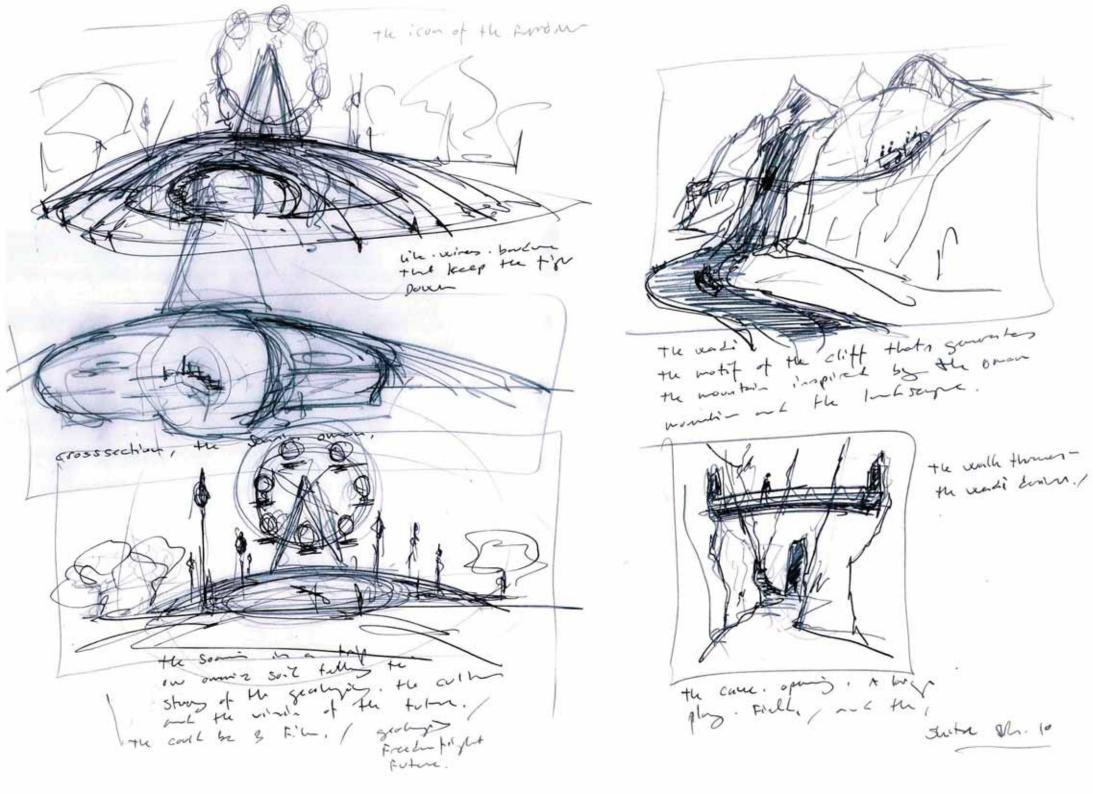
Today Oman is a desert. This has not always been the case and the climate has varied dramatically over Oman's geological history. Ancient glacial deposits have been discovered in the interior showing that at least twice, the Arabian continent lay at a latitude closer to the South Pole. At the summit of Jabal Shams (Oman's highest mountain) there are marine fossils once lived in a shallow tropical ocean. Coal also occurs, suggesting the presence of ancient forests.

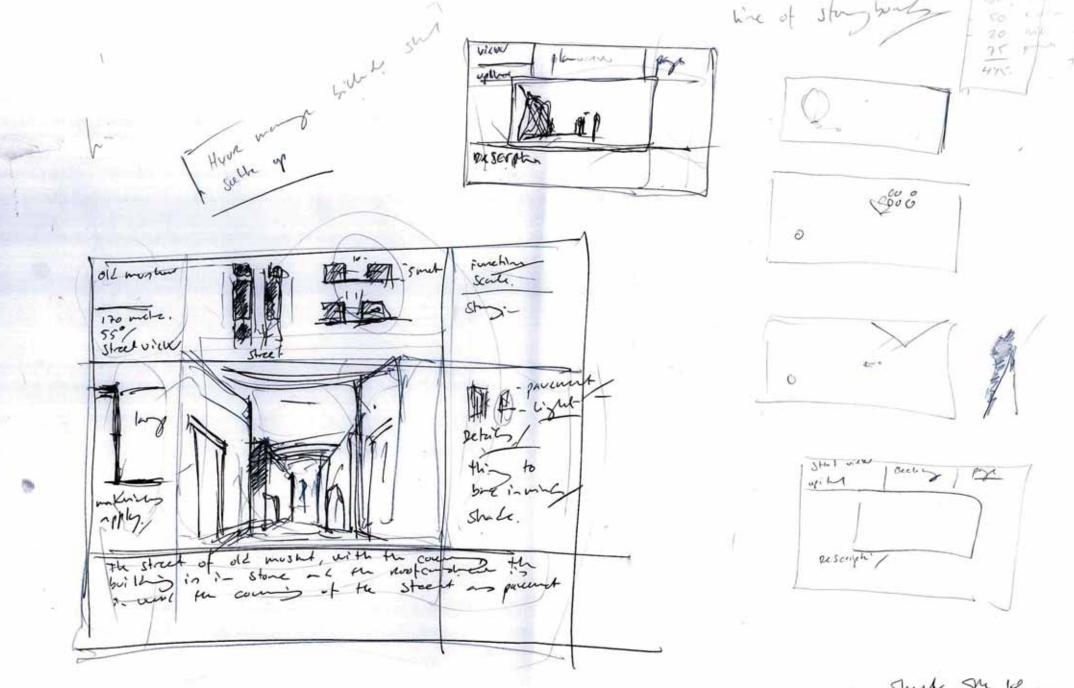
Dinosaur bones have recently been discovered close to the Nizwa road near Fanja and Al-Khod. The world's second largest cave exists in the hills behind Tiwi. A trip into the desert reveals domes of salt that have brought rocks over 600 million years old to the surface. Geodes, round cauliflower-like spheres filled with quartz crystals are found near Salalah. Their beauty is undeniable but their origins are still controversial. Gold has been discovered and lead, zinc, chromite and copper are all mined. The latter has been mined for thousands of years and the tunnels of these ancient miners are still being discovered.

Oman has much to offer the professional and amateur geologist. The discovery of oil has led to intense geological research throughout Oman. New maps have been drawn up and an international symposium attended by over 300 geologists was recently staged here. A stamp was produced to mark this occasion. Classic and textbook examples of rare geological features are found in abundance in Oman.









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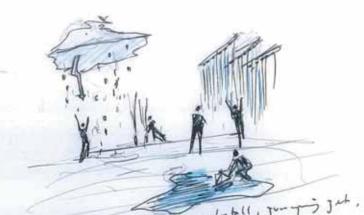








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