

Script

MSc4 Design Report

Gizmo

The Theatre of Automation in the
post-work society of Hammerfest,
Norway.

MSc4 Design Report

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Index

Prologue. Manifesto

1. Hammerfest. Free Island of Play

1.1. Identity - Historical Precedents

2. From 'Theatron' to 'Drama'

2.1. The Theatre as a Machine

2.2. Representation and the Double

2.3. The Disruption of the Narrative Agreement

2.4. Performing the Collective Life

3. The Project

3.1. Proposition

3.2. Theatrical Acts

3.3. Relevance

3.4. Spatial Concept

a. Configuration, Composition

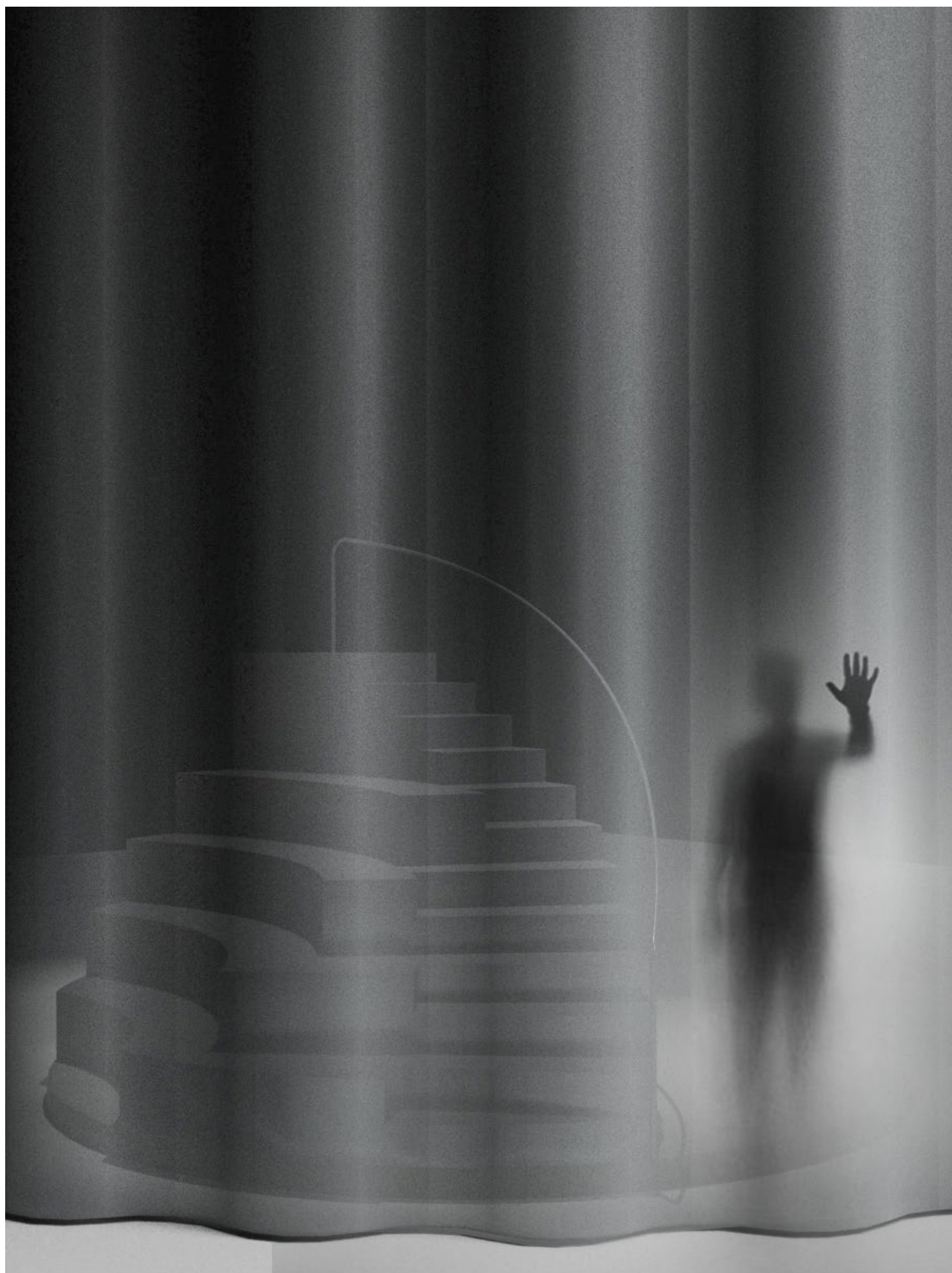
b. Performance

c. Function, Program

4. Epilogue

4.1. Limits

4.2. Results



Prologue

Manifesto

Hammerfest, 2070

Production problems no longer exist. Technological progress and the growing capacity of automated systems enable the creation of machines that can take care of any physical need, generating the conditions of our life in independent and perpetual circles. Food is autonomously produced. Objects abundantly manufactured. Even consumer goods travel freely on the island by means of an automated infrastructure that branches out on the territory and supplies new forms of inhabitation.

In a world beyond scarcity and labour, the explosive decentralisation of goods production and distribution suddenly wipes out the city, the core centre of our consumerist lives. No space left for industrial manufacturing, pull down by automatic assemblages, nor need for economic enthusiasm, as any demand of management is processed by mechanical thinking. No room for humans, as the labour of their arms is no longer needed to power the city. That city, once rising and thriving upon the projection of labour, now loses its territorial control and perishes.

So we became craftsmen, no more skilled for production, but finally fully capable of engendering our existence. Freed by the burden of labour and economic obligations, we move out of the urban jungle re-engaging with the landscape, far from the office, from the shifts of the factory, the spiritual distress of the week, far from our social constructs, the pavement on the street. And we build ourselves playing.

In a new playful condition of our lives, we set the rules of the game and, by playing, we interact with each other, actively searching for the ways such play can be shaped in different forms of interaction. Either solitary or utmost collective, play contravenes our past conditions – where work appeared to be the only way to contribute to society – and, by destroying that society, it founds a new one, bringing individuals in community due to their shared aim. Labour becomes play, and play a new kind of production, the production of cultural artefacts and thus the realisation of the new world.

I.

Hammerfest. Free Island of Play

1. Territory: Hammerfest

1.1. Identity - Historical Precedents

Along the fragmented and irregular coast of Finnmark, the Northernmost town in the world - Hammerfest - lies on the island of Kvaløya. Completely surrounded by water and far from any other human settlement, the isolation of such community is even more enhanced by the harshness of the site, where cold winters and the rocky morphology of the landscape slower the pace of any physical movement, make it hard to travel and define a greater limit of perceived separation.

Remote, disconnected and intimately alternative to the surrounding, Hammerfest assumes a different physical dimension. Despite its morphological continental character, the nature of the island of Hammerfest prefigures the formation of a rather oceanic atoll. Following Deleuze's definition of deserted islands, a continental island is indeed shaped by the erosion of the land, as the end product of a process of removal, yet still containing the old perspective of the land (1). Opposite to it, oceanic islands are born free from the sea, radically independent from the continents, fully isolated and introvert. Having to rely on anything but themselves, these islands encompass anything that might be needed, as alternative complete worlds.

The total detachment from external reality results in the loss of tangible conditions of the island that seems not to exist. Therefore, the island of Hammerfest can first be considered as a closed system of *utopia*, a non-place where externalities have no substantial effect outside. Where the issues of automation are assumed to be happening at full extent without the significant impact deriving from its initialising processes. In other words, while one of the greatest problem of automation stands in the inequality resulting from the gradual process within which can be implemented - causing, for instance, an increasing technological unemployment on certain sectors - the condition of Hammerfest, as island of utopia, as non-place, as oceanic atoll in a seamless environment, allows to consider full automation in its sudden fulfilment.

The consequent condition of idleness, where labour is not a human need anymore, envisages the island as a projected paradise, shifting from a concept of utopia to the one of *eutopia*. Contrary to the negative perspective of dystopia, the violence of automation is here taken as an opportunity to enhance the quality of life, in pursuit for a better meaning. In addition to that, the desirability of such conditions defines Hammerfest as island of *extropia*, the realisation of inner dreams; a voluntary prison towards the darker side of technological changes.

Finally, the particular socio-economic conditions of Norway allow the possibility of an experimentation. The *heterotopic* character of the site, as an alternative place, identifies in Hammerfest the possible birth and development of a new experimental society. While 'Utopia is a place where everything is good (and) dystopia is a place where everything is bad; heterotopia is where things are different — that is, a collection whose members have few or no intelligible connections with one another.' (2)

However, while Hammerfest encompass all of these conditions of island - utopia, eutopia, extropia, dystopia and heterotopia - the global nature of the changes that the Arctic Regions are undergoing, recognise the island as part of a bigger-scale archipelago, with reciprocal impacts.



1. Deleuze, G., Lapoujade, D., & Taormina, M. (2004). *Desert islands and other texts: 1953-1974*. Los Angeles, CA: Semiotext(e).

2. Mead, Walter Russell (1996). "Trains, Planes, and Automobiles: The End of the Postmodern Moment". *World Policy Journal*. 12 (4): 13–31. JSTOR 40209444.)

Image source: Engraving by Ambrosius Holbein for the 1518 edition of *Utopia* by Thomas More

Hammerfest and the coast of Finnmark

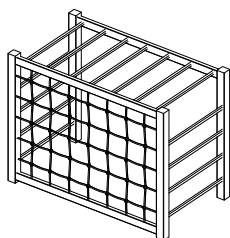
Picture by author



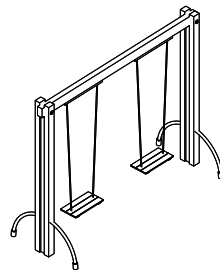
The Principles of the Island

The relation between individuals and the elements of the playground allows different possible declination in which play can occur. A play can be done in an unoccupied or solitary manner, where individuals play by themselves in the space. Or in rising degrees of interaction: parallel, when two children carry on their individual game standing one next to each other; associative, when individuals relate with each other in a game; or cooperative, when the whole group of players work jointly towards the same end.

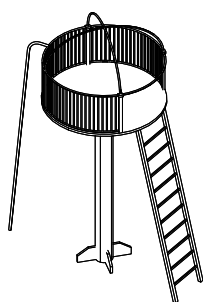
Regardless of the various manners in which it may occur, play is ultimately a matter of culture, as by playing individuals start to create networks and build up a community. As suggested by Johan Huizinga, “Play is primary to and a necessary condition for the generation of culture.”



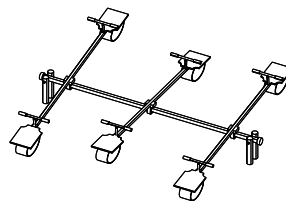
Unoccupied



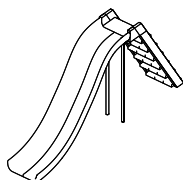
Parallel



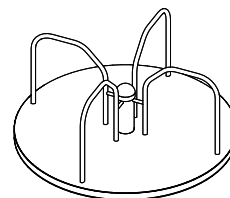
Onlooker



Associative



Solitary

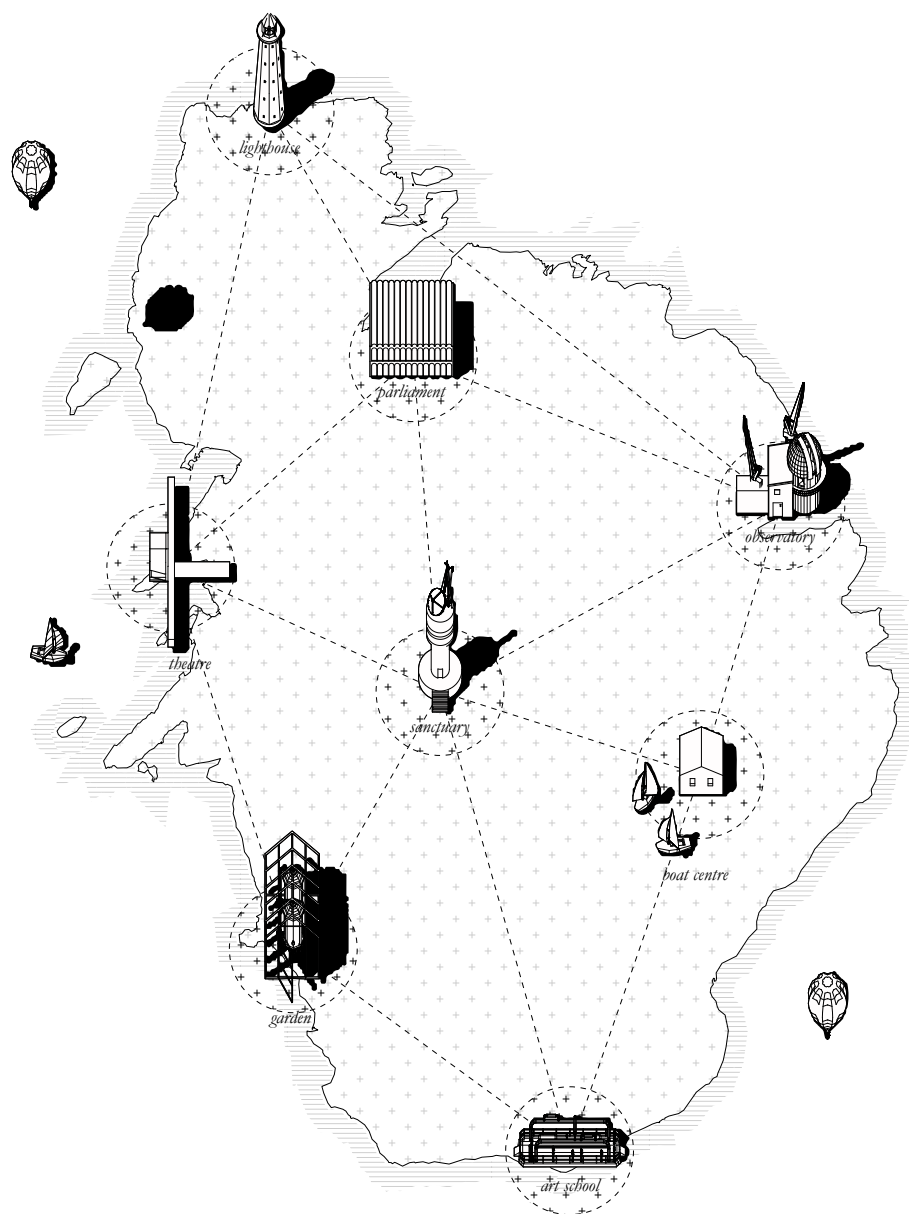


Cooperative

The Institutions of the Island

(diagram not in scale)

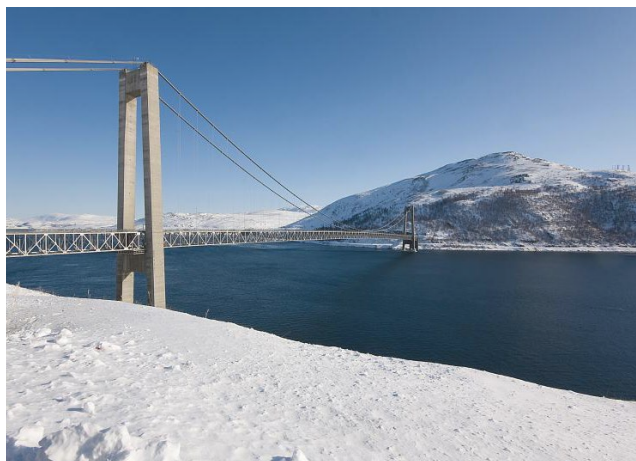
The various forms of play are then translated into the Institutions of the Island. Each of them represent an independent form of interaction, around which individuals can cluster, far from the old notion of the productive city. The free movement of people goes along with the highly automated infrastructure that connects the architectural objects and allows their performance. Each Element is a point of contact between human and machine.

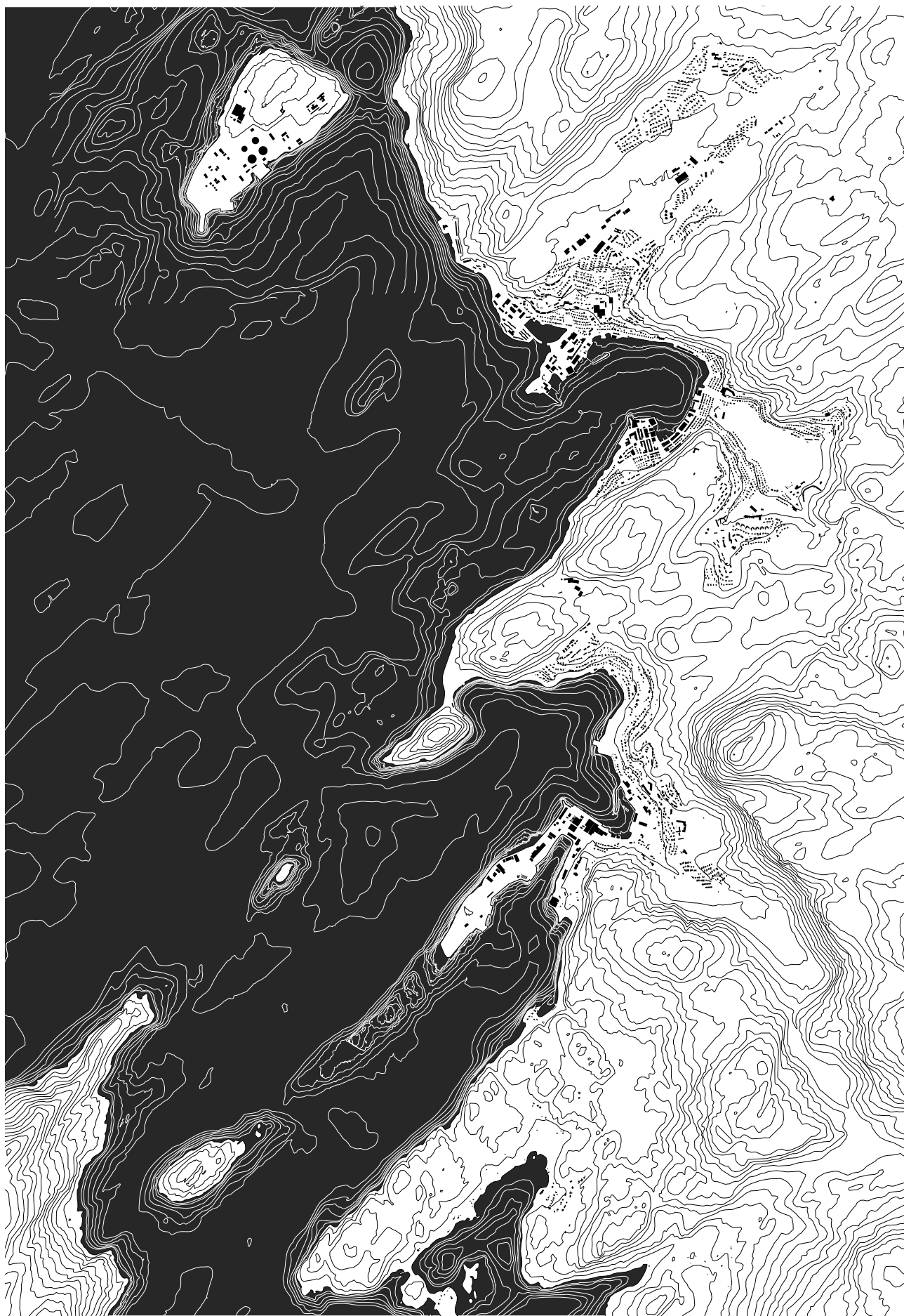


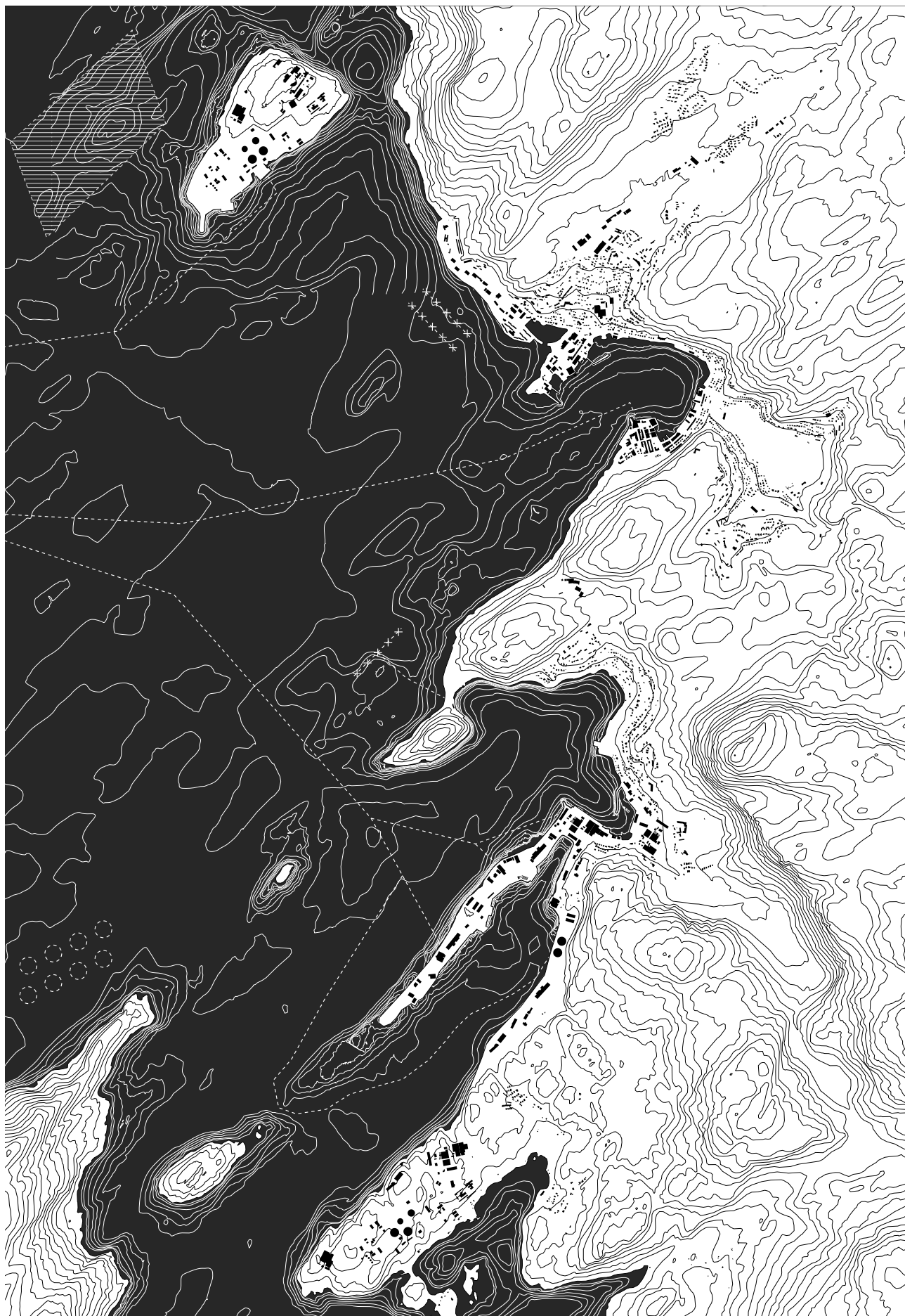
Hammerfest, Free Island of Play

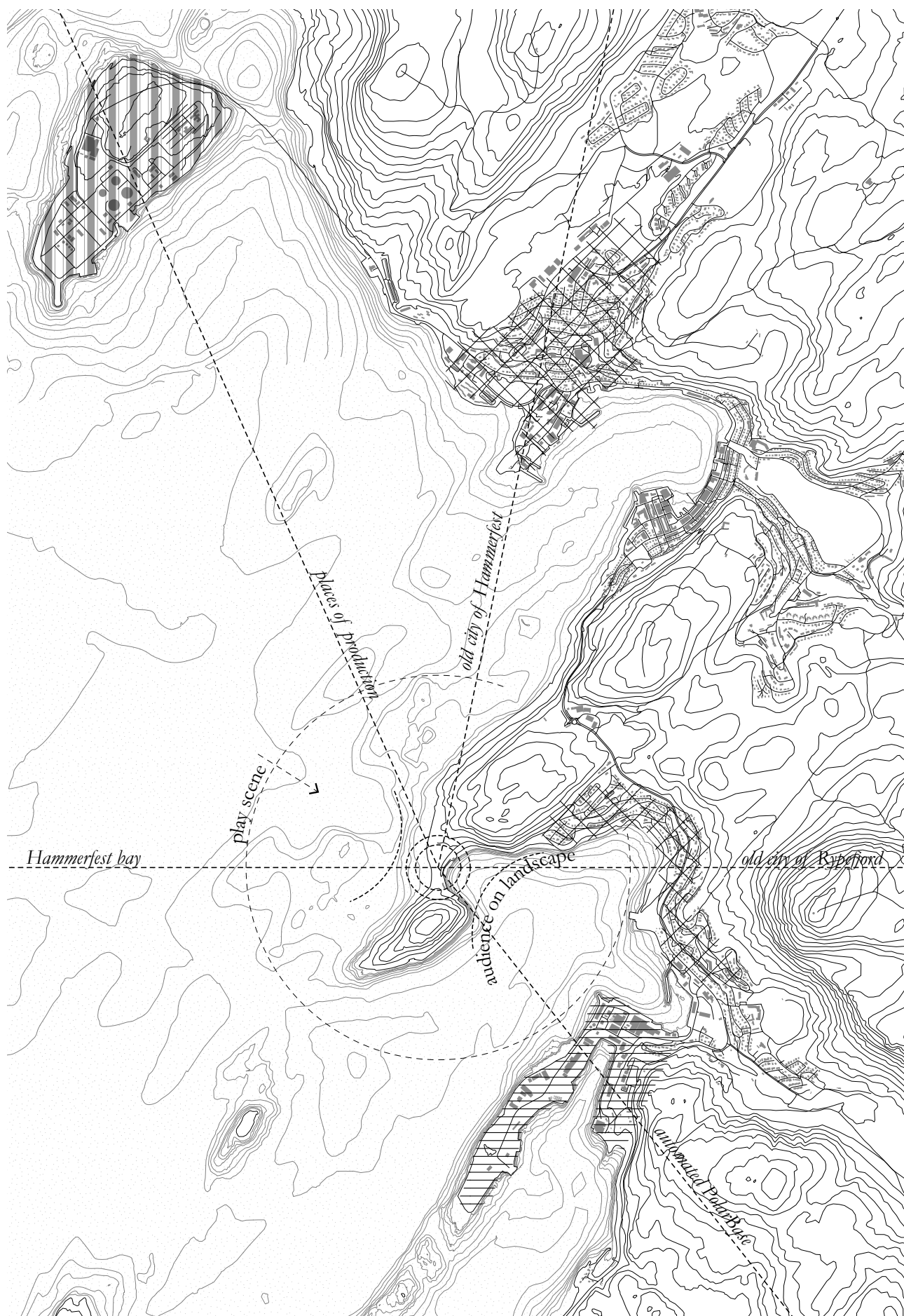
Locations

- 01 Lighthouse
- 02 Parliament
- 03 Theatre
- 04 Observatory
- 05 Sanctuary
- 06 Boat centre
- 07 Garden
- 08 Art school









II.

From *Theatron* to *Drama*

All the world's a stage,
And all the men and women merely players;
They have their exits and their entrances.

William Shakespeare
As You Like It, Act II Scene VII Lines 138-40

In the aftermaths of full automation and the demise of labour, what theatre can be possible for the post-labour society of Hammerfest?

2.1. The Theatre as a Machine

A *machine* (or mechanical device) can be described as a mechanical structure that uses power to apply forces and control movement to perform a specific function. Machines can take advantage of various forms of energy, such as the one produced by animals and people, natural forces like currents of wind and streams of water, and, more recently, by chemical, thermal, or electrical power, and their employment is meant to facilitate, or substitute, human labour by means of a system of mechanisms able to impart a certain work.

In this sense, the influence of machines in architecture have been substantial for a long time, whether by means of construction equipment, service plant or aids to composition and design. Whereas the knowledge of simple machines has always represented an essential part in the expertise of an architect – as highlighted by the Roman architect, Vitruvius – it is with the start of the Industrial Revolution that buildings start being consistently conceived and designed as machines that execute a specific task. And for its programmatic complexity, the theatre represented the quintessential machine.

However, the definition of architecture as a machinic object must comprise a more comprehensive sense than the deterministic reading given by the widespread conception of *machine à habiter* (1). In a context of changing technologies, such as the one described here of an increasing automation of production, describing architecture as a machine not only involve the performative properties that such processes and procedures entail – even though this normative mechanism has to be investigated in its spatial dimensions or conditions, physical relations and technical solutions – but it calls for a place from which to conceptualise the fundamental connection between the architectural object and the natural, cultural or social processes in which this is embedded.

2.1.1. Vitruviana Machinatio

Described by Vitruvius in the last book of the *De Architectura*, the machines are part of the essential set of knowledge for every architect (2). Together with *aedificatio* (construction), the role of the architect is to govern and adopt *machinatio*, as in the complex technique of construction and design for devices and war machines, or, in today's meaning of machination, the set of actions plotted to trick someone. In a perspective in which architecture becomes the means of a gradual Romanisation of the territory under the benevolent domain of Rome, the separation between machine and building techniques is illogical.

In a rather holistic conception of knowledge, Vitruvius' work elevates the mechanical expertise to what is highly determining the architect's know-how. Indeed, besides public and private buildings, the vast field of investigation of the architect should comprise the realisation of solar or hydraulic clocks, the design of war machineries, and the understanding of the physical phenomena that can be employed to entertain the audience. The dual nature of the architect-engineer has to be scrutinized in the extraordinary framework of public intervention and expansion proper to the Augustan Empire.

Under this light, machines become the crucial vehicle to realise the imperialistic project of the *Urbe* in its context itself and in the provinces. The decisive process of territorialisation of the newly acquired regions materialises in the construction of many public buildings and

interventions for the community: bridges, thermal baths, aqueducts and, most importantly, theatres start being the tangible symbols of an architecture that embodies an actual governmental plan.

Machines were greatly employed in Greek theatres, too. The *enkiklema*, a rotating platform on the stage, and the *mechané*, a crane used to move props and sets in and out of the scene, are structures that modify the scenic space and allow the realisation of the fictional dimension in the theatre. Among the different gimmicks, the *deus ex machina* (God from the machine), by using a crane to introduce the statue of a God in the middle of a scene, helped the solution of difficult leaps in the story thanks to a supernatural power. And likewise, masks and costumes supported the abstraction of the scene from reality, thus substantiating the myth. In Western culture, the Greek theatre avails of a scenic space conceived as hieratic and purely monumental. The Roman interpretation provides the theatre with an urban relation – and not with the connection with the landscape such as in Greece.

1. Le Corbusier, *Towards a new architecture* (New York: Dover Publications, 1986)

2. Pollio, Vitruvius, and Cesare Cesariano, *De Architectura* (London: Benjamin Blom, 1968), IX, 8, 15

2.1.2. Machine of Memory

Since ancient times, the social value of the Theatre stands in its manifesting different stories of life in front of a living audience. The collection of such stories defines the collective memory of a community. In the representation of their own common knowledge, the members of the community feel identified and part of the same conditions.

In such terms, the machine of the Theatre embodies the set of devices adapted to maintain or variate the memory. Between permanence and variation, the architecture of the Theatre functioned as the identitarian expedient for the city, every time reacting to the external changes and renovating its way of representation accordingly.

In front of the ultimate socio-economic change brought by the Second Machine Age, the typology of the Theatre asks for a revision.

Deus ex Machina

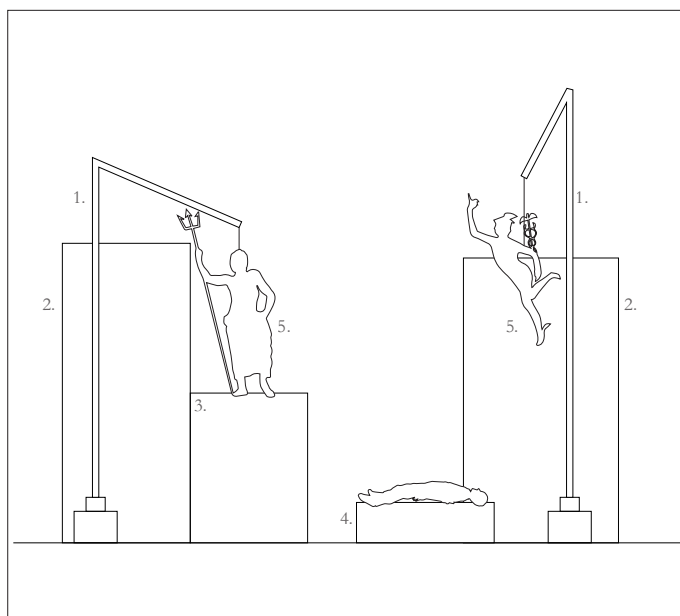
- 01 mechane
- 02 skene
- 03 paraskenion
- 04 ekkyklema
- 05 theòs

Syracuse, Greek Theatre

Vincenzo Mirisola, Giuseppe Vanzella,
Sicilia mitica Arcadia. Von Gloeden e la "Scuola"
di Taormina, Edizioni gente di fotografia,
Palermo, 2004, p. 12. Picture by Giovanni
Crupi

The Permanence of the Form

Source: Giovanni Battista Piranesi, *Teatro di
Marcello*, 1749-1750.



3. Fabrizio Ivan Apollonio, Della rappresentazione e del suo doppio, in *Architettura 32. Il Luogo della Rappresentazione* (Bologna: Cooperativa Libreria Universitaria, 2009)

4. Letizia Biondi, La teatralità classica di Aldo Rossi, in *Architettura 32. Il Luogo della Rappresentazione* (Bologna: Cooperativa Libreria Universitaria, 2009)

5. Fabrizio Ivan Apollonio, Della rappresentazione e del suo doppio.

2.2. Representation and the Space of the Double

The theme of representation, in its various forms and definitions, is a fundamental problem of Architecture. In general, 'representing' has the radical meaning of 'translating' 'bringing to present something that is missing'. So, when talking about representation in relation with the architectural objects, this act of translation assumes a double connotation. In a sense, representation can be seen as the process that performs the passage from the original idea to the specification of its formal, material and constructive qualities onto the physical space. Or, on the other hand, it can be considered as the opposite operation of abstraction from the physical, dimensional and perceptible character of an existing (or lost) object towards its transcendental conceptualisation (3).

Either way, and besides its graphical or theatrical significance, representation functions as the main tool for the realisation of our ideas into a space that follows the same structures of the physical one, thanks to a series of agreements and standards. Therefore, rather than a simple substitution, the intention of the architectural representation can be ascribed to a pursuit of *form* and *order* in the realm of the physical space.

In particular, the form of the political representation has always been firmly connected with its physical and architectural representation. The classical space for the collectivity is often related with the theatricality of the public functions, so that the realisation of these buildings follows the hierarchical section of different levels of seating, referring to space of the classical theatre we all have in mind.

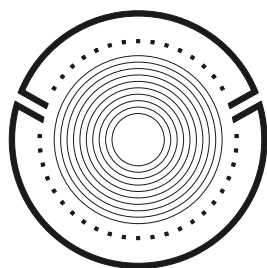
The theatrical configuration of the political space - the representation par excellence - highlights the value of the form in the making of the public space. The form becomes the means by which architecture can be inscribed into a precise system of values. A space that has value per se and allows the application of different meanings (4).

The problem of representation reaches its highest peaks when the object to be represented is the space of representation. As the connection between object and technique of representation is always tight and unbreakable - so that the means always influences the manner in which the object is created - in the case of a theatre, the material configuration of the space should reflect the performance that in it is taking place (5). In such spaces, 'the thought is produced in the mouth' and it becomes difficult to distinguish the two elements of this generation.

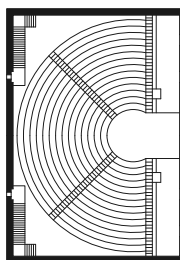
The space of the Theatre is therefore consisting of two inextricable souls: the space of the stage and the space of the representation, that only their architectural representation is able to fully combine. The presence of such a Double claims to be one of the essential character of the theatre, where Imagination can be seen only in the Real.

Spaces of representation

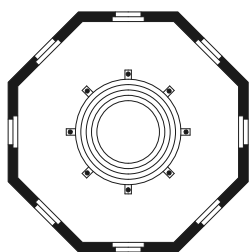
1. Poseidonia, Ekklesiasteria, 500 BC.
2. Mileto, Bouleuterion, 500 BC.
3. Rome, Baptistery of Constantine, 400 BC.
4. Rome, Curia Iulia, 100 BC.
5. Cossa, Comitium, 200 BC.
6. Ictino, Eleusi, Telesterium, 400 BC.



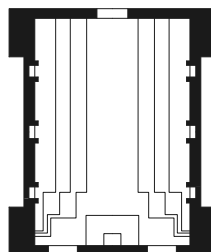
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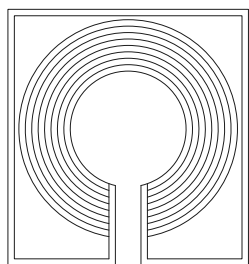
2.



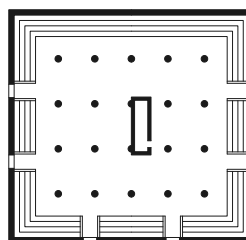
3.



4.



5.



6.

2.2.1. The Scene-Auditorium relation

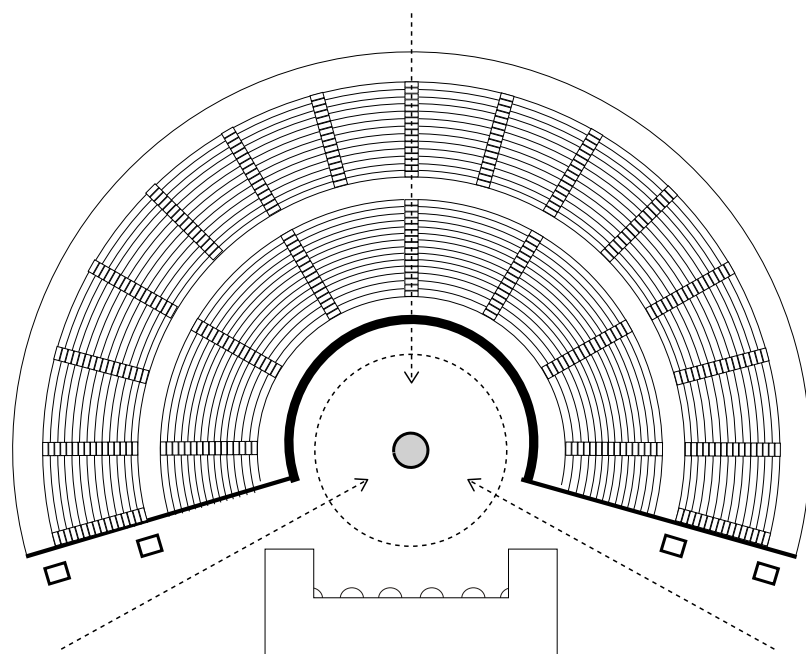
The origins of the Theatre can be traced back to the sixth century BC, when in the Greek *poleis* citizens gathered in performative celebrations for the god Dionisum. Sitting on a natural slope, the audience would face the circular shape of the stage, where actors would play their collective rituals, dancing and singing in circle. Behind them, wooden structures were adopted to suggest an oneiric setting.

From its very first realisations, the structure of the Theatre reflects the social composition and manifest the hierarchies that governed its institutions. The division of the seatings in groups, allowed the social division of the audience. At the same time, a democratic character of the building would emerge from the relation between stage and auditorium. The semi-circular shape, indeed, provides any spectator with the possibility to see and hear properly, having a clear overview of the play.

In addition to that, the social nature of the performance was given by the entrances to the stage. While the chorus was *vox populi*, entering the scene directly from the audience, the rest of the actors used side entrances. Thus, the theatre was a point of connection between the community and the ideal, spiritual world of their ideas and beliefs, embodied by the theatre.

Such value was maintained across the centuries until the beginning of the 20th century, when the Theatre still functioned as main catalyst of social hierarchies. In the Italian Renaissance theatre, the spatial configuration of the building was based on privilege and inequality, with its one-perspectival scenographic settings. The organisation of the audience was based on gender and social group.

In the 19th century, the *theatron* of theatre boxes enhanced the hierarchical divisions, while the performance becomes an occasion for social encountering. Both stage and audience were indeed lighten in the same way, with detrimental effects on the quality and importance of the plays. Only at the end of the century, the change of illumination for the theatre re-defined a fundamental separation between tangible and imaginative spaces.



The realisation of the Double - where these two natures are kept together - is a fundamental act and function of the Theatre, that in such way allows the manifestation of imaginative worlds. However, the accomplishment of such two-fold condition is mainly dependent on the physical relation between different spaces in the building; in particular, the way stage and space for the audience are brought together in relative distance, provides the circumstances in which the play can take place.

A pursuit of meaning is what the radical stances of Appia's and Craig's theatres are mostly moved by. In their theatrical realisations, the scene-audience relation is revised in look for a new language. The scene becomes the element of a unitary creation. The movement of the actor is now advocate for the creation of the scenic space over its physical conception.

In general, the values of the scenic and the theatrical space are reversed. The space of the theatre rather than having value *per se* before the performance, is generated by the play. Instead of mere dramatic illustration, the scenic space accommodates the dramatic movement of the actors. Therefore, the main purpose of the theatre is not the definition of the best arrangement of the seating, nor the perfect mimic of an illusionistic reality, but rather, the **clarification of a system of relations**, on which it is grounded.

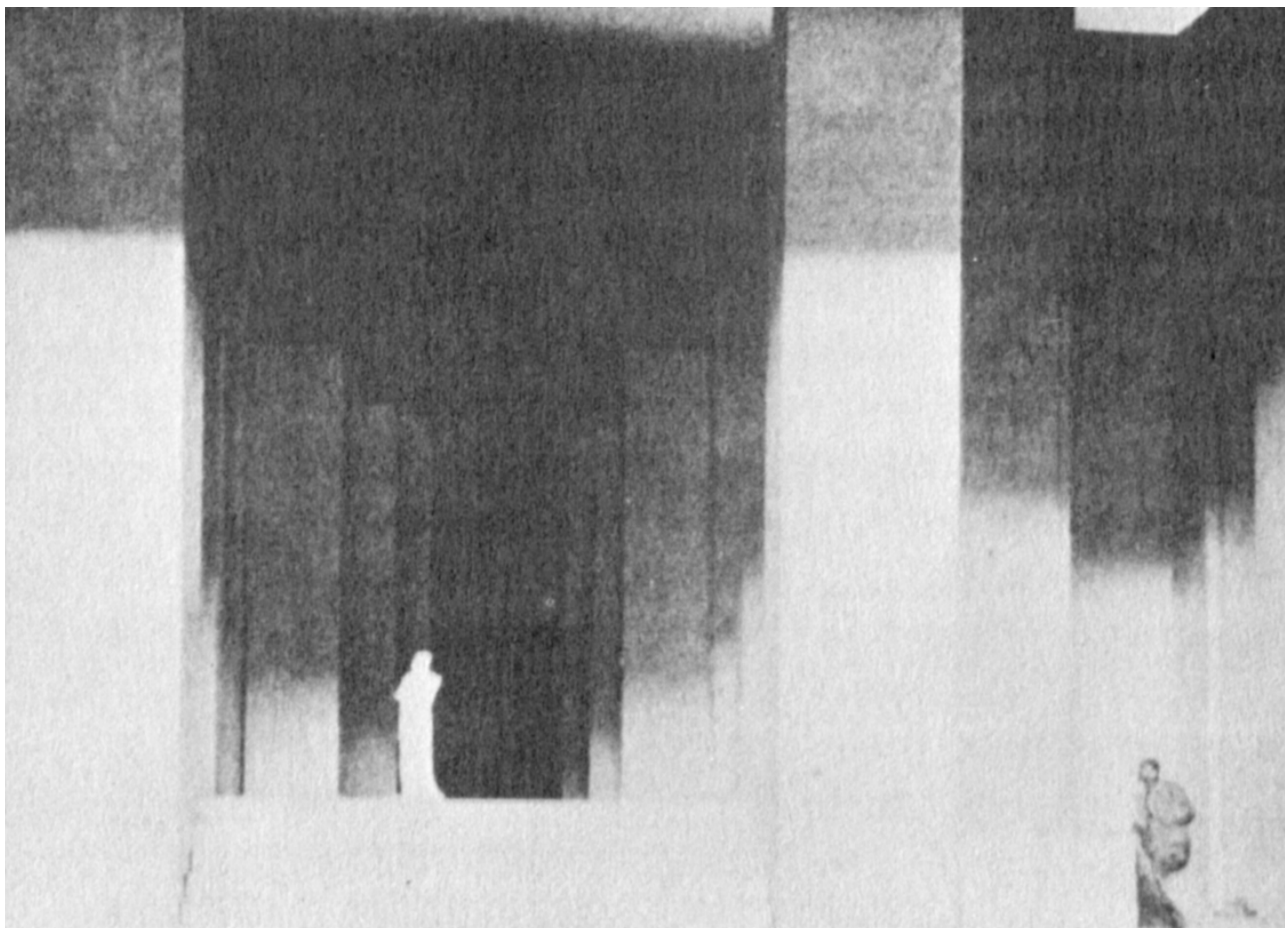
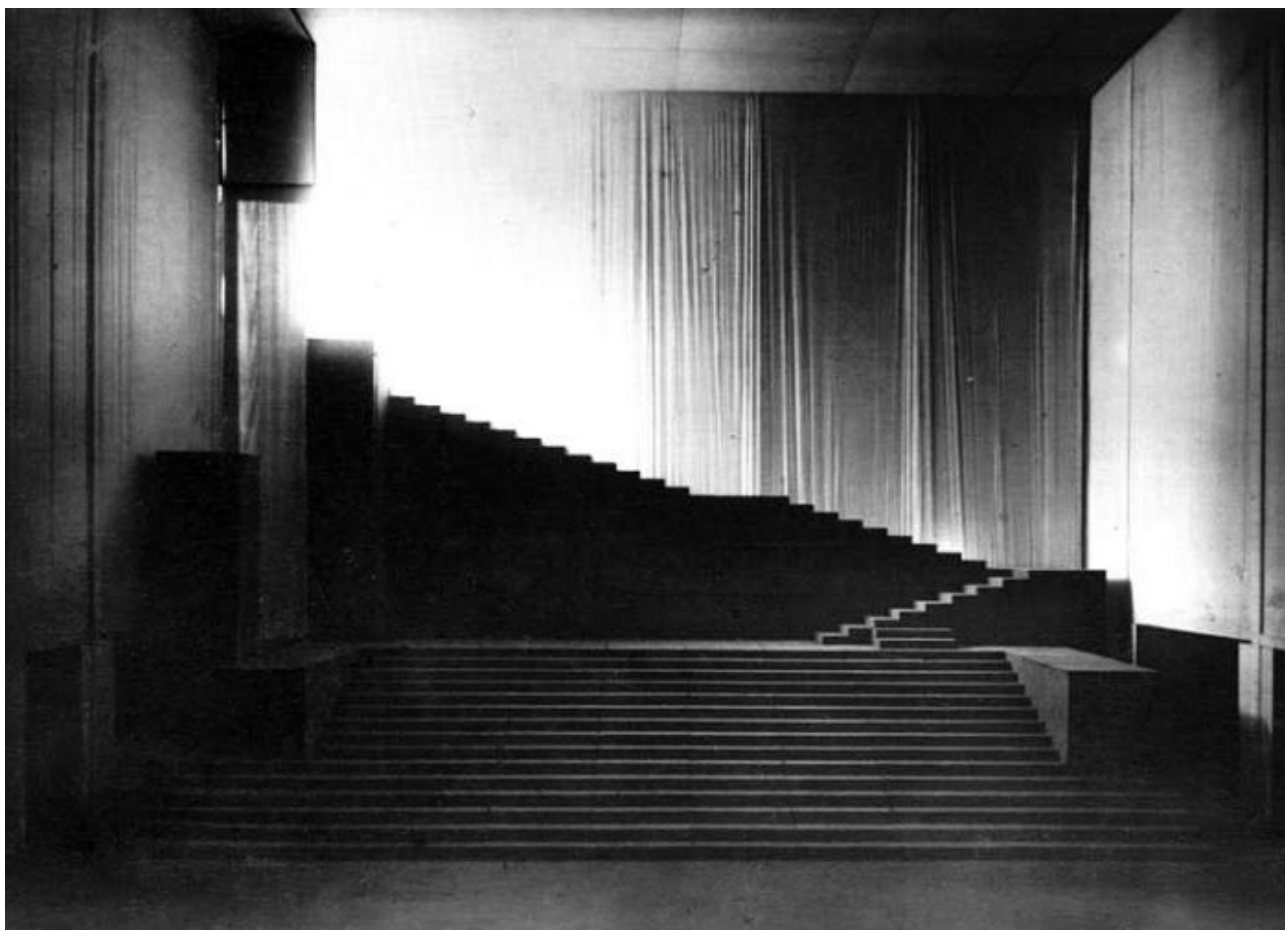
The space of the theatre is thus intended, first, as the space of movement, and, from that, as the space for the individuals by which is inhabited, who with their action can envision a possible different society, different from their current one. Space of definitive possibilities or space of desired impossibilities, the Theatre mediate the relation between humans and their changing tangible condition, making it manifest.

Orpheus, Hellerau 1913

Adolphe Appia
Source: Theatre at the UBC (University of British Columbia)

Hamlet, final scene, 1913

Edward Gordon Craig
Source: London & Toronto: J.M.Dent & Sons



2.2.2. Theatre as a journey

As temporary social event in the city, the Theatre of the World reconnects with particular contextual traditions and legacies that can be dated back to the XVI century.

A first relevant ceremony can be identified with the Marriage of the Sea in 1000, when doge Pietro II dropped a ring in the lagoon as request of protection (*benedictio maris*). Thereafter, every year the doge would establish a parade from the city to the Lido to ensure the good fortune of Venice. In the 16th century these public events were known as theatres of the world, which Rossi's project directly references.

On these occasions, the inhabitants of Venice would gather on their boats around a main floating stage in the Lagoon. The Venetian iconography wants them to be interpreted as porches or little temples, open to the outside so that they looked more like a stage, rather than an actual theatre. Vincenzo Scamozzi is, in that sense, the most important author of such realisations, giving life to the architecture of the Republic of Venice.

The theatres of the world follow a metaphor of Venice, city that floats on the sea. These plays would thus show the magnificence of the Republic, concomitant with its political representation. The World is displayed as an immense sphere floating and rolling on the water, where everybody meet. With the theatres of the world the Republic of Venice attempts to represent itself in the contemporaneity.

[...]

In the context of Venice and the Adriatic Sea where the Theatre of the World is settled, Aldo Rossi employs archetypal forms attempting to re-establish a connection with the collective memory of the site.

Back in the 18th century, floating structures, of peculiar formal simplicity and bold colours, were popular during carnivals. In this manner, these theatres performed as an identitarian ritual in which the society feels represents and represents itself to the world. Their representative function acts therefore a dispositif through which Venice places itself in the contemporaneity. And that is what the Theatre of the World attempts to achieve in its modern times.

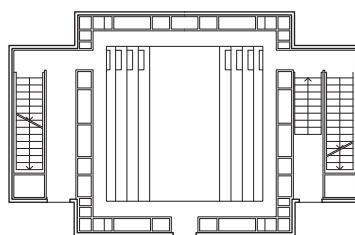
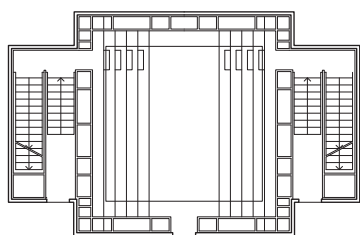
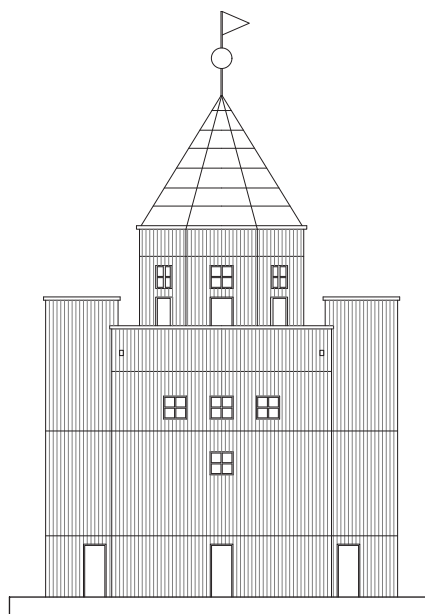
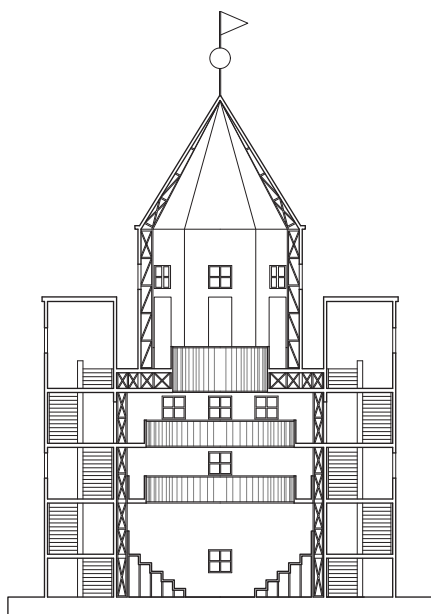
As carrier of cultural and historical value, the collective memory has to do with the way the community synthesizes its character in front of the World. In particular, in its close relation with the sea, that, even if in different manners, enables the existence of communities on land. Every year, the Republic of Venice marries the Sea in order to secure good condition for all the activities happening on the territory. Venetians are not born from the sea and so they need a ritual to ensure their coexistence.

The way communities interact with the North Sea could assume a slightly different nature. Back in the time, the Vikings dominated the Sea. However, they were born from the sea, they are meerscham (Schmitt), and thus there no need for a marriage. They arise from the Sea and in the Sea they die, as their funeral rites wanted, on a boat that symbolizes a safe passage into the afterlife.

The Theatre of the
World

(From Aspects of Water Related Design, see *Appendix*)

Source: Aldo Rossi, Venice
Biennale 1979
re-drawings by author. See ap-
pendix *Aspects of Water Related
Design, The Theatre of the World.*



2.3. The Disruption of the Narrative Agreement

As ultimate stance, the essence of the theatre lies on its manifestation as a place in which something is staged; in its being representative of a certain degree of reality. What there can be displayed fundamentally describes an infinite set of possible conditions, or possible situations, in which spectators can immerse themselves. And it has already been here illustrated how the physical disposition of the spaces allows the presence of such double.

Therefore, the essential factor of the performance is standing on a tacit compromise between actors and spectators, who make a deal and recognise the dualistic nature of such space, in which something *else* from reality is materialising. By signing this *narrative agreement*, the audience accepts to temporally suspend any logical thinking and, gradually delving into the story, takes for real the fictional situation going on in front of their attentive eyes.

For a long time, such an agreement has been strengthened by the social nature of the theatre, where the audience is participating in a sort of ritualistic process that slowly brings it to achieve an emotional connection with the characters. The configuration of the theatre itself, with a precise sequence of spaces and formalities, has been implemented to facilitate the engagement of the audience in the imaginative dimension of the stage. Moreover, what even more helped in such a passage, especially in the nineteenth century, was the social difference between actors and spectators, that created a distance in which was easier to maintain the narrative agreement, as what was depicted could be very far from the reality of a specific social group. Thanks to this, the spectators assume a cathartic role, gradually setting themselves free from the emotions that a piece of art triggers in them.

However, such narrative agreement is calling for a revision, when the parts involved are undergoing important changes. In a scenario of full automation, where, on one hand, labour stops existing in the forms we are used to and, on the other, production survives as an act of cultural co-creation, technological development indeed marks the end of any social difference. A new conception of leisure expands a condition of play to the entirety of the population, where everyone can be a possible actor of the theatre, thus resulting in the demise of the previous narrative agreement. A new condition for the theatre needs to be found.



1. Jacques Rancière, *The Emancipated Spectator* (London, Verso, 2009).

2.4. Performing the Collective Ritual

The disruption of the narrative agreement calls for a revision of the space for the theatre. As a matter of facts, the collapse of labour, as direct consequence of full automation, removes the professional dimension from the use of the theatre and authorise a situation in which everyone can enter the play as a possible actor of the performance. The absence of class distinction defines the equal circumstances in which equal humans could perform equal actions. In this altered conditions, the fundamental idea of spectatorship itself is challenged.

By taking the agency from individuals, automation is reinforcing a sense of alienation and nihilism in which the *Society of the Spectacle* can thrive. Under the incessant repetition of programmed and controlled streams of consumerist life, humans indeed lose their possibility to govern their action, while staring at the plutocratic spectacle in from of them seems the only probable prospect.

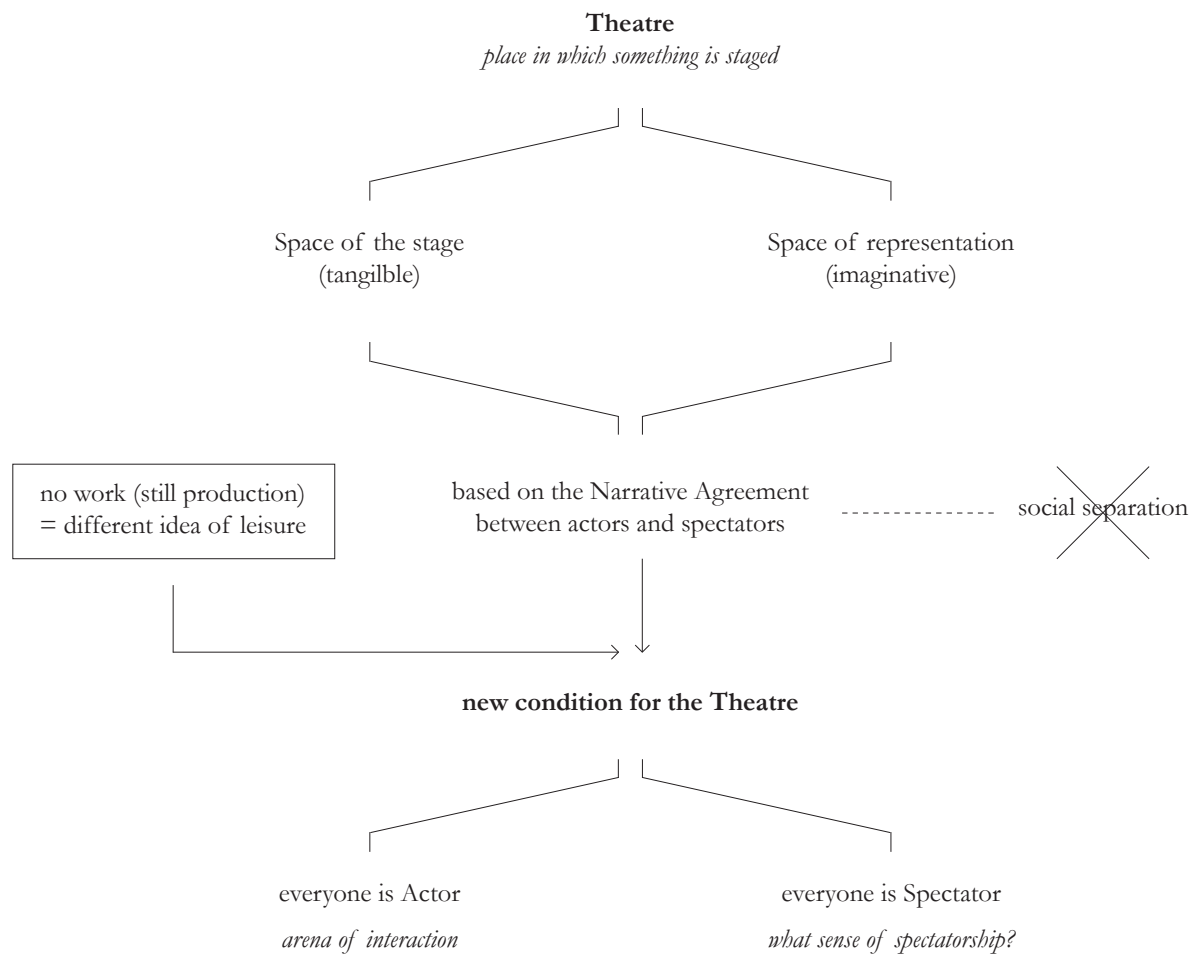
Against this cruel fate, the theatre can still have the function of giving their agency back to the individuals, as a main arena of personal interaction in which watching could assume a different meaning.

For this reason, the new society is in need of a new theatre, a theatre where the current idea of spectatorship looses its purpose and is asking for a different connotation. While until the current times, the sense of the theatre was entirely based on the optical relation implied by the word *theatron* (to watch), with the advent of the post-labour society, this relation has to give space to another relation, suggested by the word *drama* (to act).

Only by reducing the theatre to its original, yet forgotten, true essence of drama, it will be possible for individual to gain the agency of their action, lost due to the technological advancement. As a place where living bodies move in front of living bodies, spectatorships as today's passive contemplation is suppressed.

We need to bring theatre down to the level of the other arts, where a certain degree of participation allows the viewers to become active players in the performance. We need a space of storytellers, where the share of experience would make anyone listen to the story and react back with their own perspective.

The birth of a Theatre of Automation would endure the transformation of an act of leisure into an organised, recognised activity, in which it is possible to spatially communicate, create, change, and multiply the narratives.



Spectacle and Dullness

Image credit: Life, "Full frame of movie audience wearing special 3D glasses to view film Bwana Devil which was shot with new "natural vision" 3 dimensional technology:" photo by J.R. Eyerman, Paramount Theater, Hollywood, California, November 26, 1952. The picture was used as cover of the 1983 edition of Guy Debord's *The Society of the Spectacle*.



III.

The Project

3. The Project

3.1. Proposition

While technological development and the rising Second Machine Age are already firmly affecting the notion of labour and the consequent disposition of our cities and territories, the remote island of Hammerfest, in the Arctic regions of Finnmark, prefigures the conditions for a radical rebirth. The full extents of automation, resulting in a post-labour organisation of economy, envisions the return of the homo ludens and enhances play as fundamental base of the new society.

The explosive decentralisation of production and distribution suddenly wipes out the city, the core centre of our consumerist lives, and promotes the return to the landscape, where new pillars of society are established. On this island of utopian playground, individuals are now fully capable of engendering the shape of their existence, clustering around the ludic elements and interacting with each other in playful activities, while machines take care of their fundamental needs. Among the elements, the Theatre represents the highest form of play and, therefore, the most essential component of public life.

Facing the growing automated port and the perished city, the machine of the theatre is a bridge between land and sea, on the particular conditions of a site that constantly changes under the cyclical variations of the tide. In front of the spectacle of automation, that took agency away from humans, a new kind of theatricality is needed.

Since the demise of labour invests anyone with the possibility of becoming actors of the play, the sense of spectatorship itself is questioned. Far from the optical relation of the theatron (sight), that has so far embodied its cornerstone, the theatre has now to be subjected to another relation, suggested by the word drama (action), thus endowing the becoming performative of production. The Theatre of Automation is therefore a social endeavour, aiming at bringing the theatrical performance to the level of a collective form of life, where the role of the spectator merges with the one of the actor.

The floating platform of stage moves underneath the fly tower, according to the tidal movements of the sea, while four seating-podiums rotate moved by the waves, constantly reshuffling roles and parts. Any performance is indeed an ephemeral condition between the many possible stage configurations through which the landscape is unveiled, as fundamental dramaturgical act.

In other terms, the machine of the theatre takes active part in the transformation of the site, unfolding and accelerating the artificial manipulation of the territory at the hand of technology. As an act of formation, first, of physical, cultural and ultimately of political nature, the Theatre measures the pace of changes, interpolating the urgency of human artifex with the rhythm of natural systems.

When climate change and sea level rise will set the eventual limit of the Machine, interrupting its floating dance on the tides, the Theatre will come to its final act. Rich with the collective memory of the site, it will close its stage and set sail towards new destinations, bearing the paradigm of a new society, on the threshold between human, machine and nature.

3. The Project

3.2. Acts

In light of the rising enforcement of automatic control, the project evolves around three fundamental Acts, as part of the narrative competence of the Theatre. Through these three actions (or reactions) the Theatre unravels and manifests the social, physical and, ultimately, political modifications of the site.

1.

Act of Transformation

The Theatre of Automation is essentially an act of exhibited transformation; of the physical site through the machine; of the social apparatus through the human-machine relation.

Intruding in the changing landscape, it accelerates the paces of alteration, reflecting the growing processes of machine automation. On the other hand, bringing humans and machines together, it anticipates the realisation of a possible future.

2.

Act of Exploration

In front of the appropriation of agency by hand of automation, the project questions the conception of spectatorship itself. The Theatre of Automation becomes an opportunity to experiment a new type of theatricality, where spectators could become actors of the performance. In such a way, it engenders a typological research on the Architecture of the Theatre, in strong relation with the physicality of the landscape.

The ephemeral nature of the performance thus represents a pursuit for a meaningful interaction.

3.

Act of Accordance

Enduring the cyclical movements of the tide, the Theatre strive for accordance and harmony with the temporal dimension of nature. While the repetitive rhythm of automation does away with the chronological cadence of life, the stage represents the form a different timing, that embraces the uncertainty of natural processes and, in such wise, aligns human life and externalities.

3.3. Relevance

Within the context of the post-labour society, the project represents an attempt to contribute to a wider investigation on the social impacts of such changing conditions, designing a possible way to react.

First of all, the rather individualistic conception of our society considers work as the only way to contribute to the social dimension. The demise of labour could thus mean the end of a fundamental cultural basis.

Therefore, the project responds to the even more individualistic turn in the post-labour world, where, without a job, individuals have no means to form a community. The key is found in the element of play as an alternative to the role of labour. Stressing the importance of engaging in a constructive activity, the Theatre of Automation prefigures the limits within which the changed community of Hammerfest could find a different occupation and establish the foundation of a different society.

In addition to that, at a wider level, the cultural crisis originating from a new form of living, is merely a crisis of the public space, as already being witnessed in our contemporary cities.

Through the idea of the playgrounds, the project highlights the necessity of a discourse on the nature of the public space, considering its importance in the generation of sense of community. It is crucial, in my view, to think about these spaces as stages of active life, arenas of interaction where individuals found themselves in an act of co-creation rather than passive consumption.

3. The Project

3.4. Spatial Concept

a. Configuration and Composition

The spatial gestures of the project reflect the particular physical conditions of the site, a narrow neck of land in between two waterfronts strongly affected by tidal movements. The Theatre materialises this essence, on one hand, by stretching along the two landscape formations, and, on the other, by connecting the two shores. Along this two main axis, as ancestral foundation, the project develops in two main volumes. The slender element of the bar contrasts with the vertical expansion of the tower, while the long deck provides the entrance to the site, touching the water on the East side.

b. Performance

The concordance between fixed and flexible elements in the project serves as central node of its performance. The repetitive movement of tides cyclically affect the configuration of the site, calling for a way to manage this ephemerality. For this reason, the floating platform of the stage, moving underneath the shell of the tower, attempts to echo the conditions of the context, by means of physical alteration.

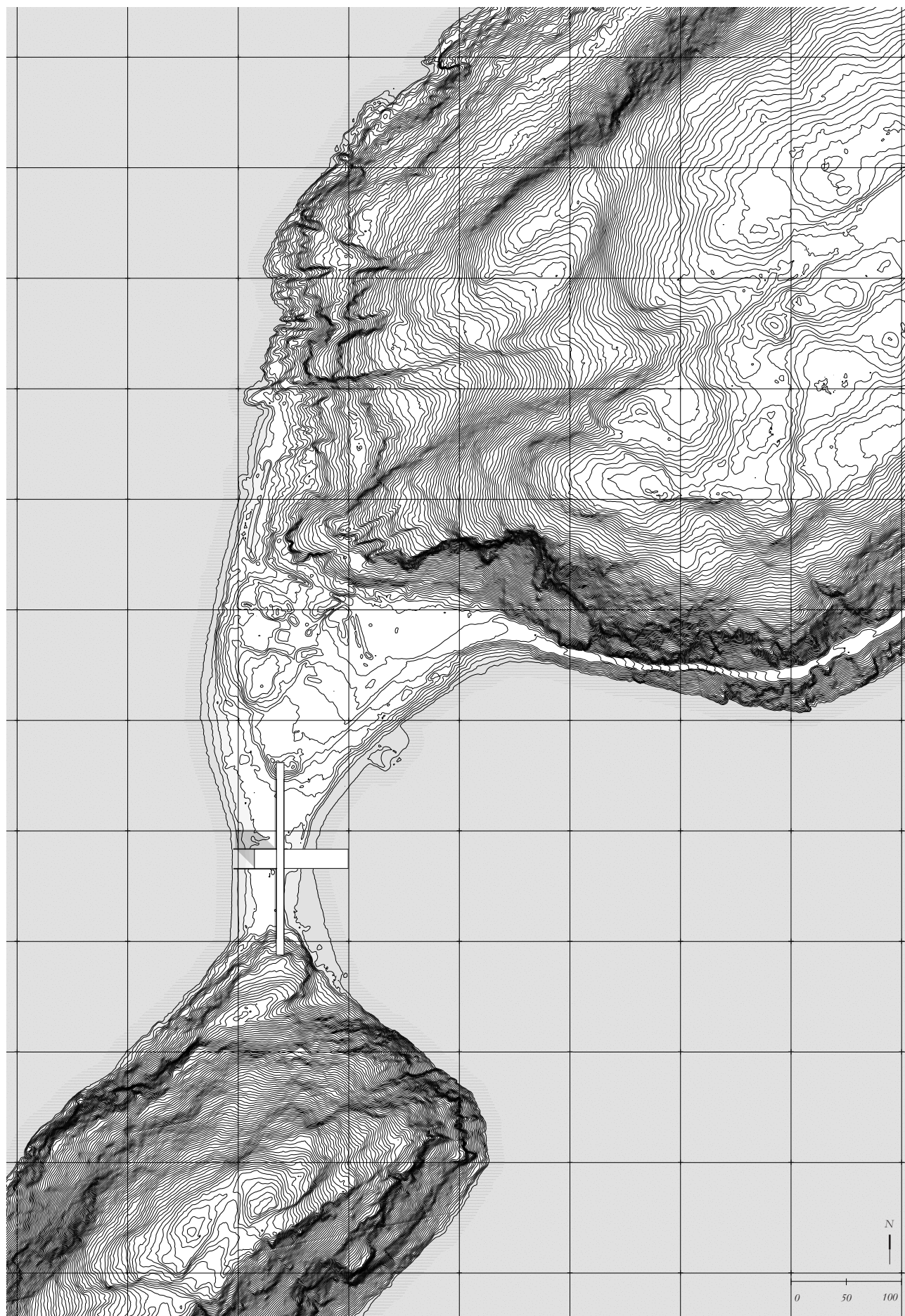
While, indeed, the bar functions as a sealed space of controlled nature, the tower opens on the landscape, where the performance is intimately taking place. Despite the harsh conditions of the Arctic climate, communal forms of life still persist in the delicate frame of the natural setting.

c. Function and Program

The typological arrangement of the traditional theatre loses its meaning when the vigorous distinction between actors and spectators does no longer have effect. The Theatre thus becomes a machine open to experimentation.

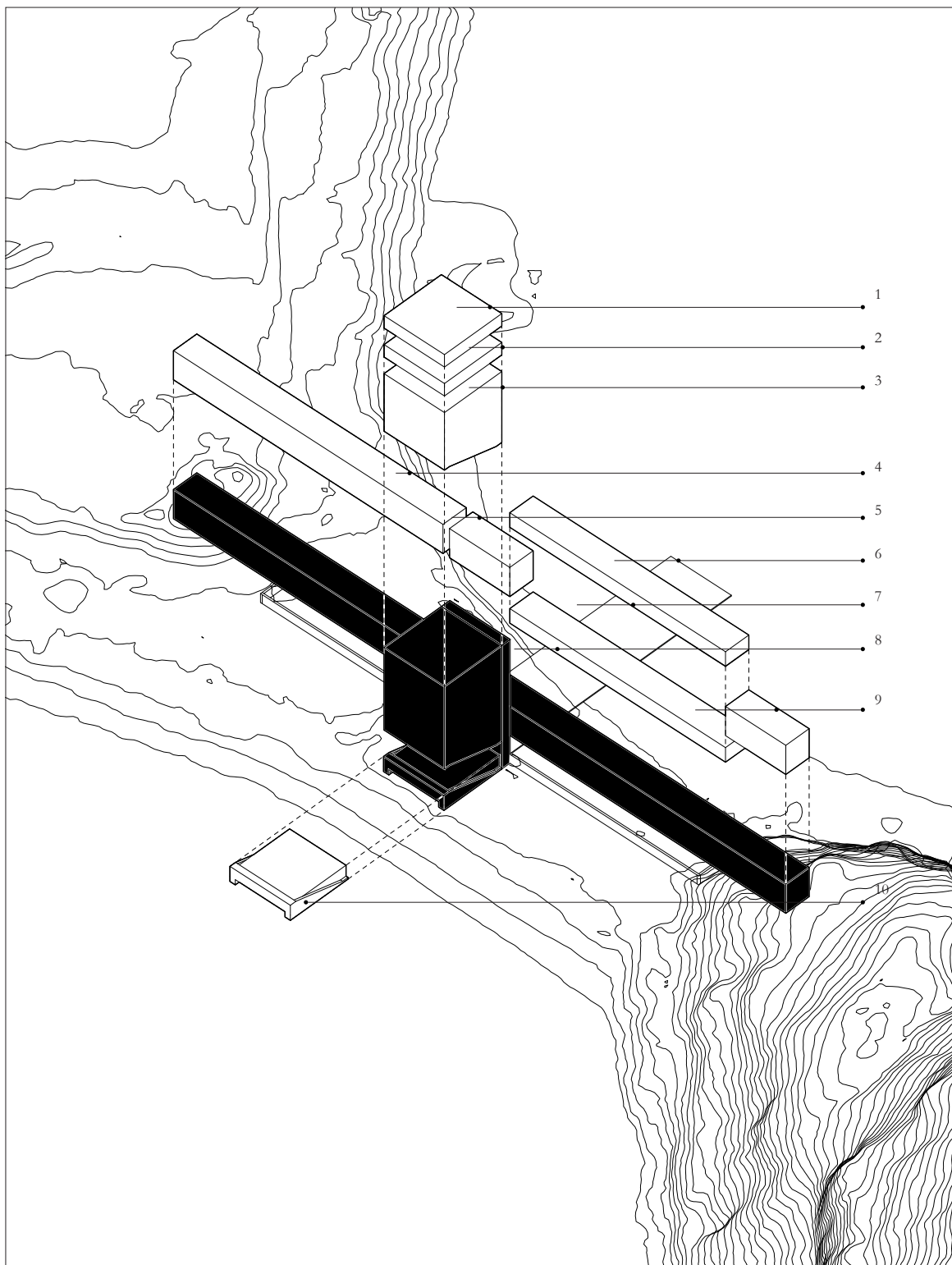
In the North wing of the bar, the cathartic process of entrance to the building reflects on the role of machines, that prepares the bodies to become part of the performance. The space for the play now consists in a floating platform and the fly tower, that contains the machinic devices for the performance. On top of the tower, players produce and manufacture the props, thus appropriating the meaning of such play. Despite the demise of labour, a different kind of production is still taking place; the production of culture.

To accommodate the long-term use of the building, the South wing of the bar hosts the spaces for the actors, from technical and rehearsal rooms, to accommodation. In this space, a new communal way of living is being actualised, where individuals work and act towards the common goal of the performance.



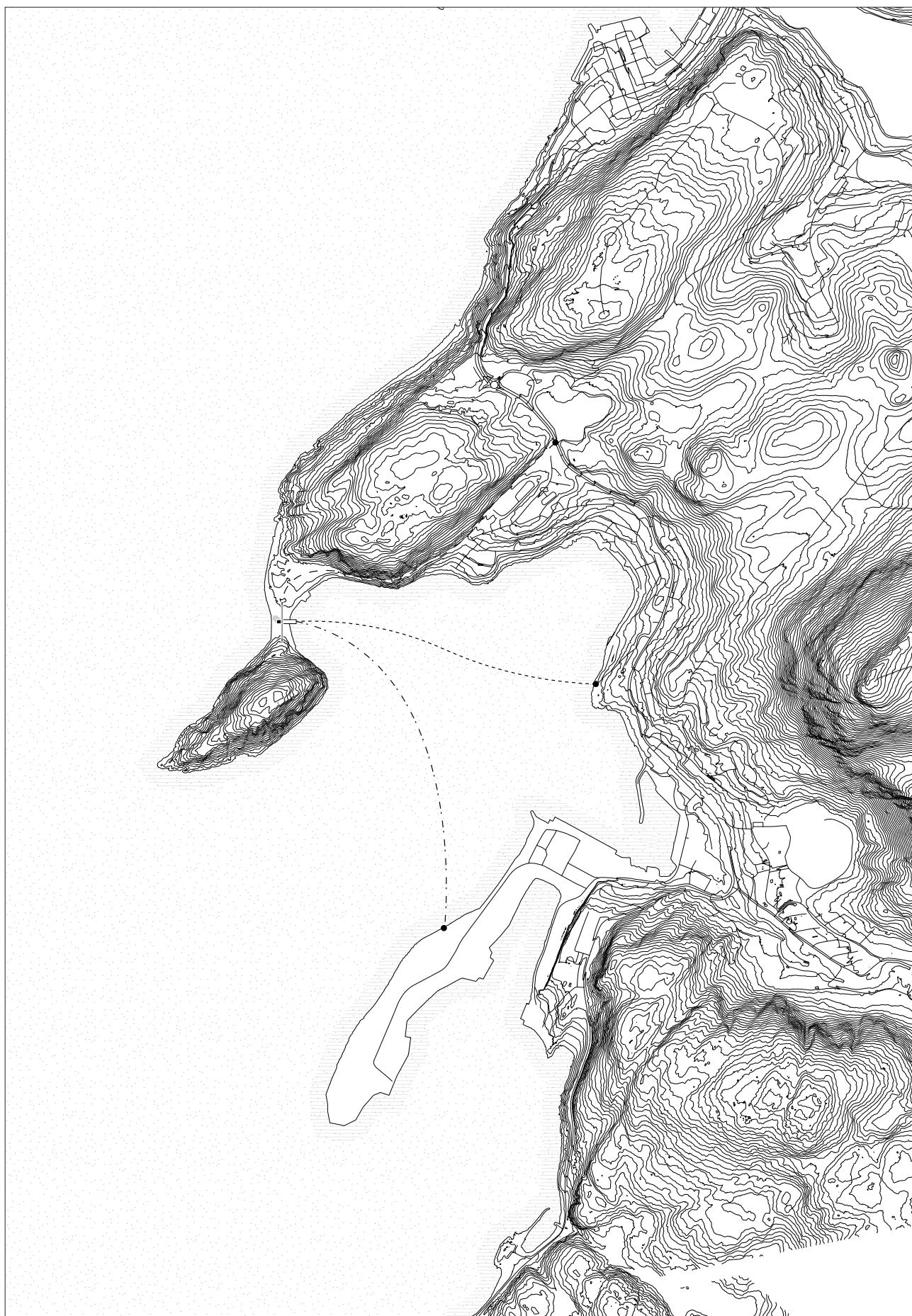
Program

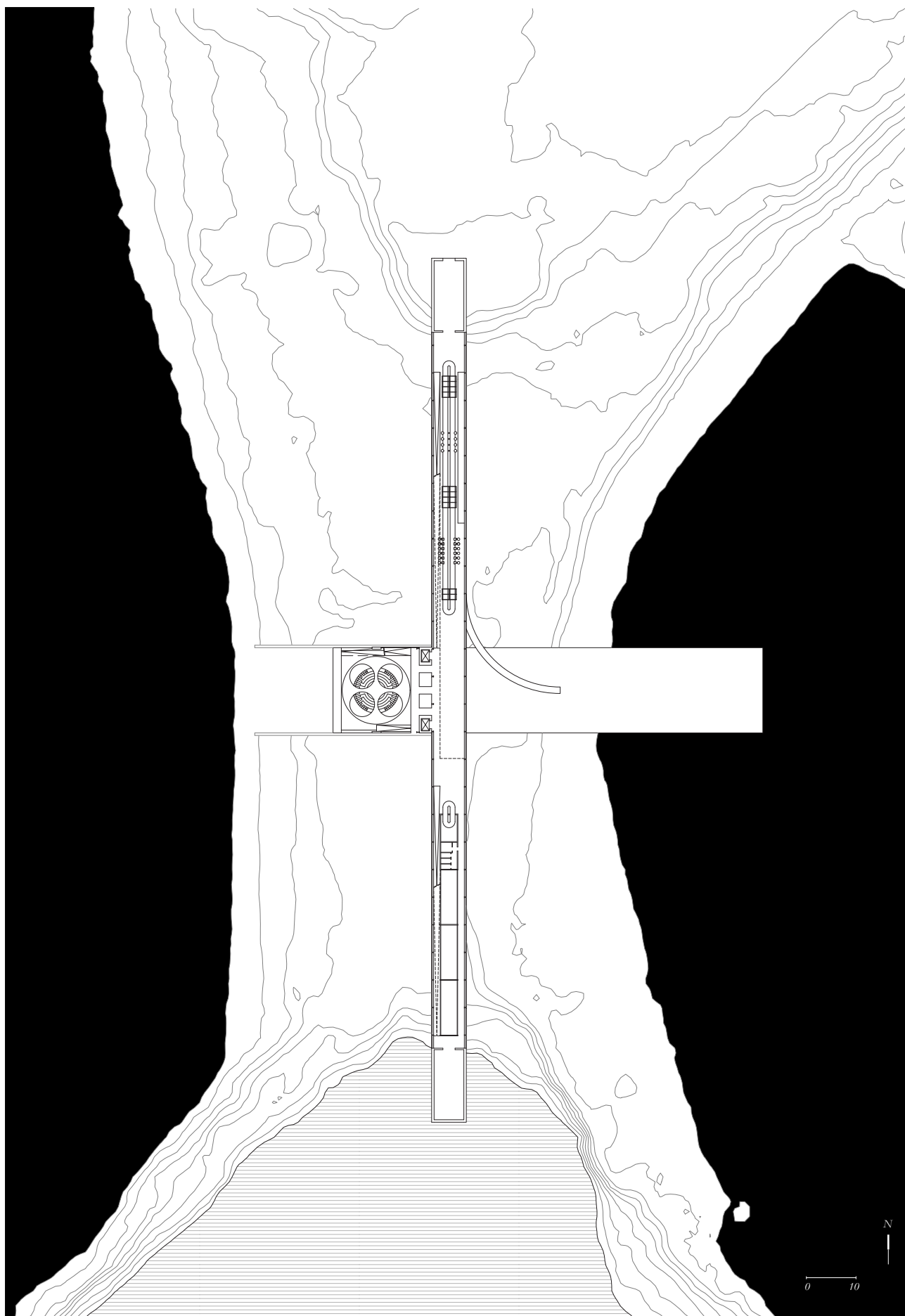
- 01 prop shop
- 02 grid
- 03 fly tower
- 04 changing / entrance
- 05 foyer
- 06 deck
- 07 accommodation
- 08 rehearsal rooms
- 09 tidal power plant
- 10 floating stage

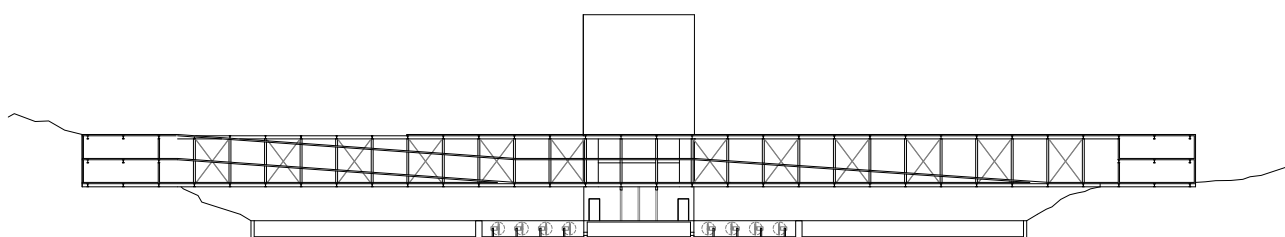
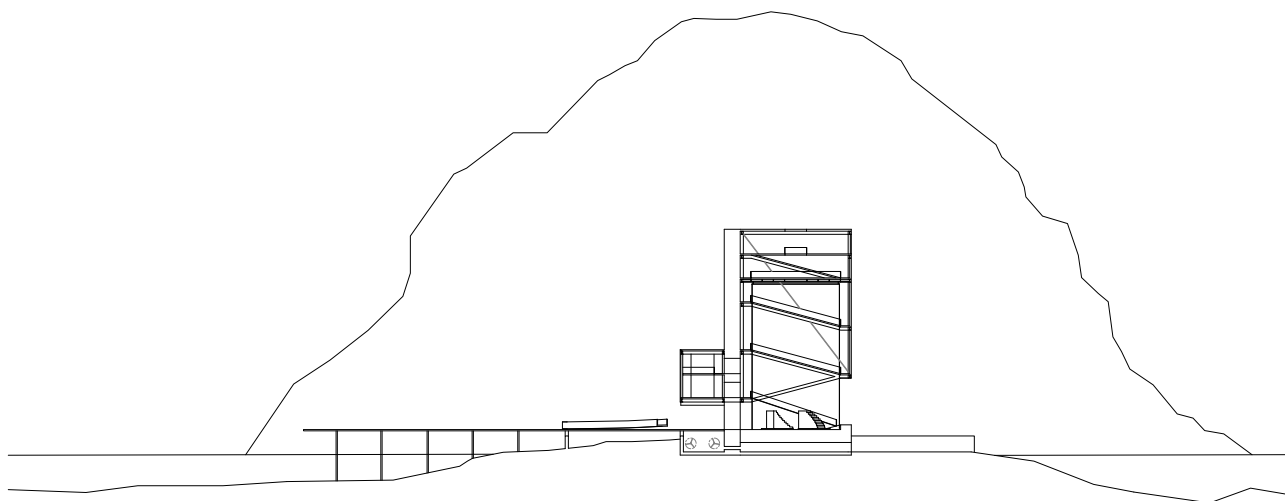


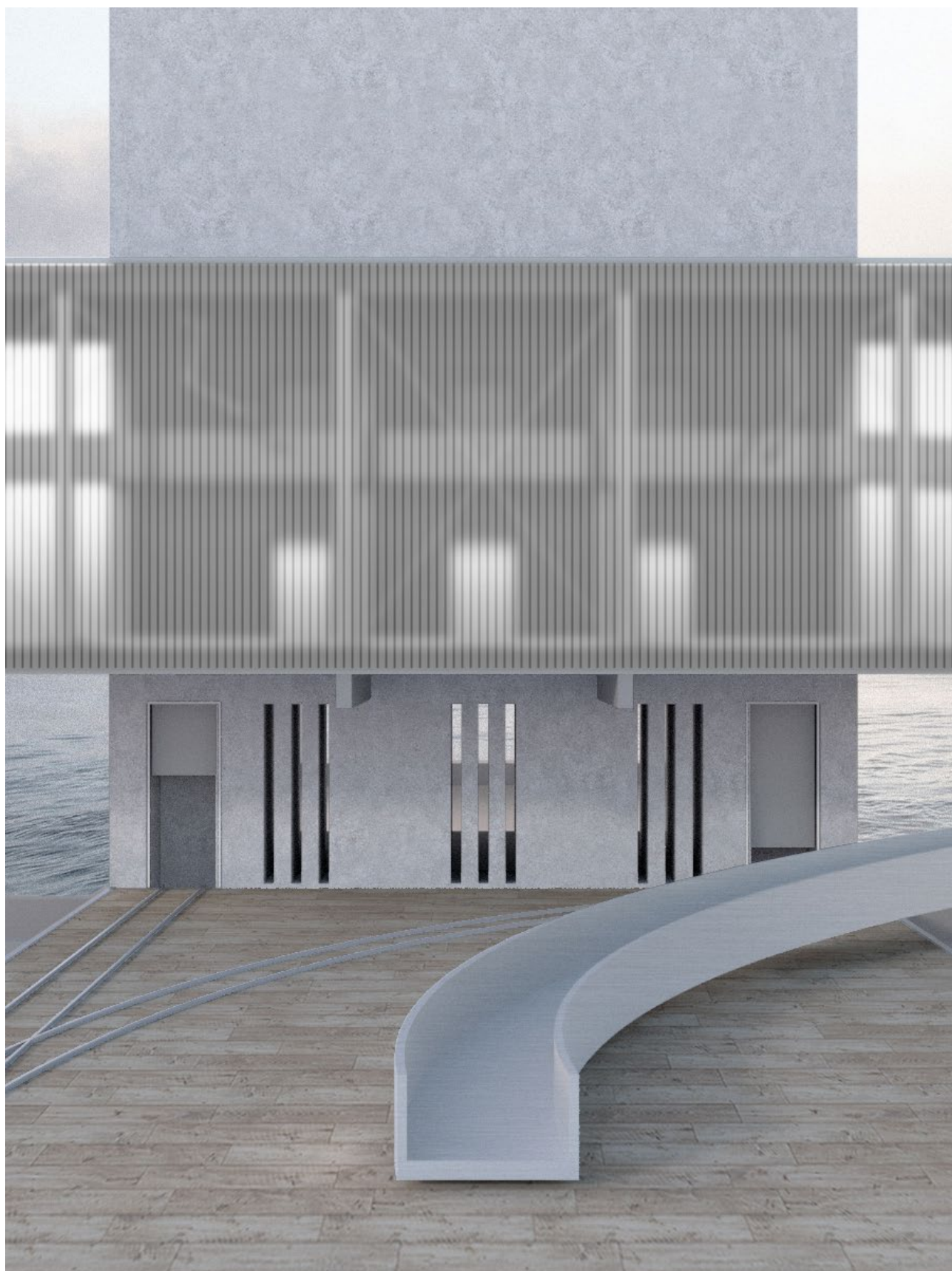
Access

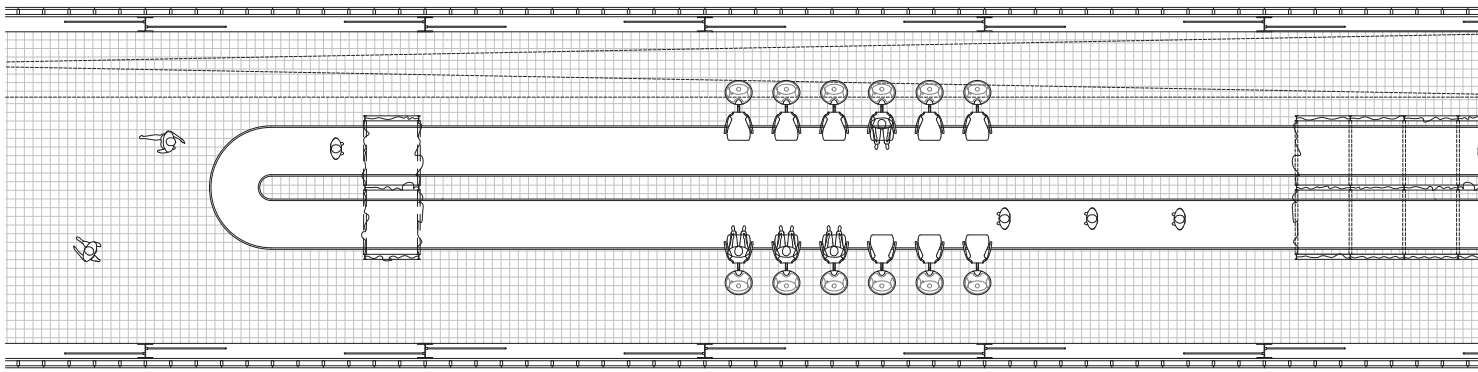
- — pedestrian path
- - - - boat connection
- · — props/material transfer



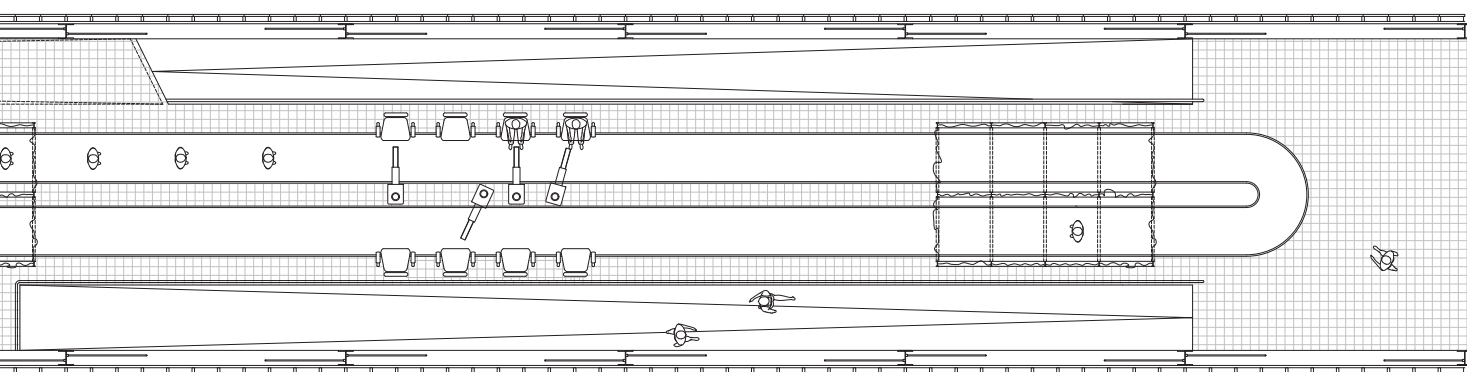




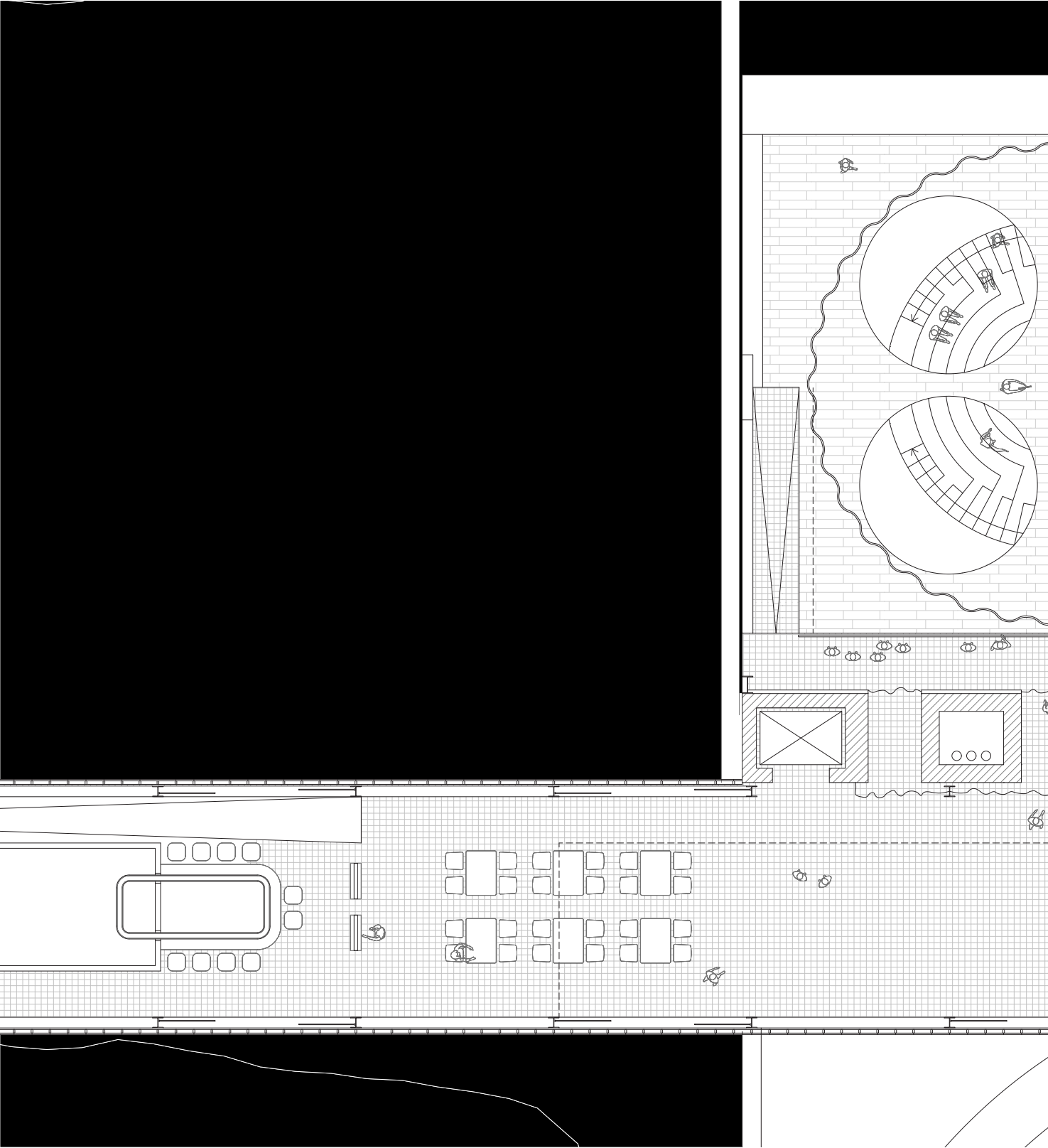


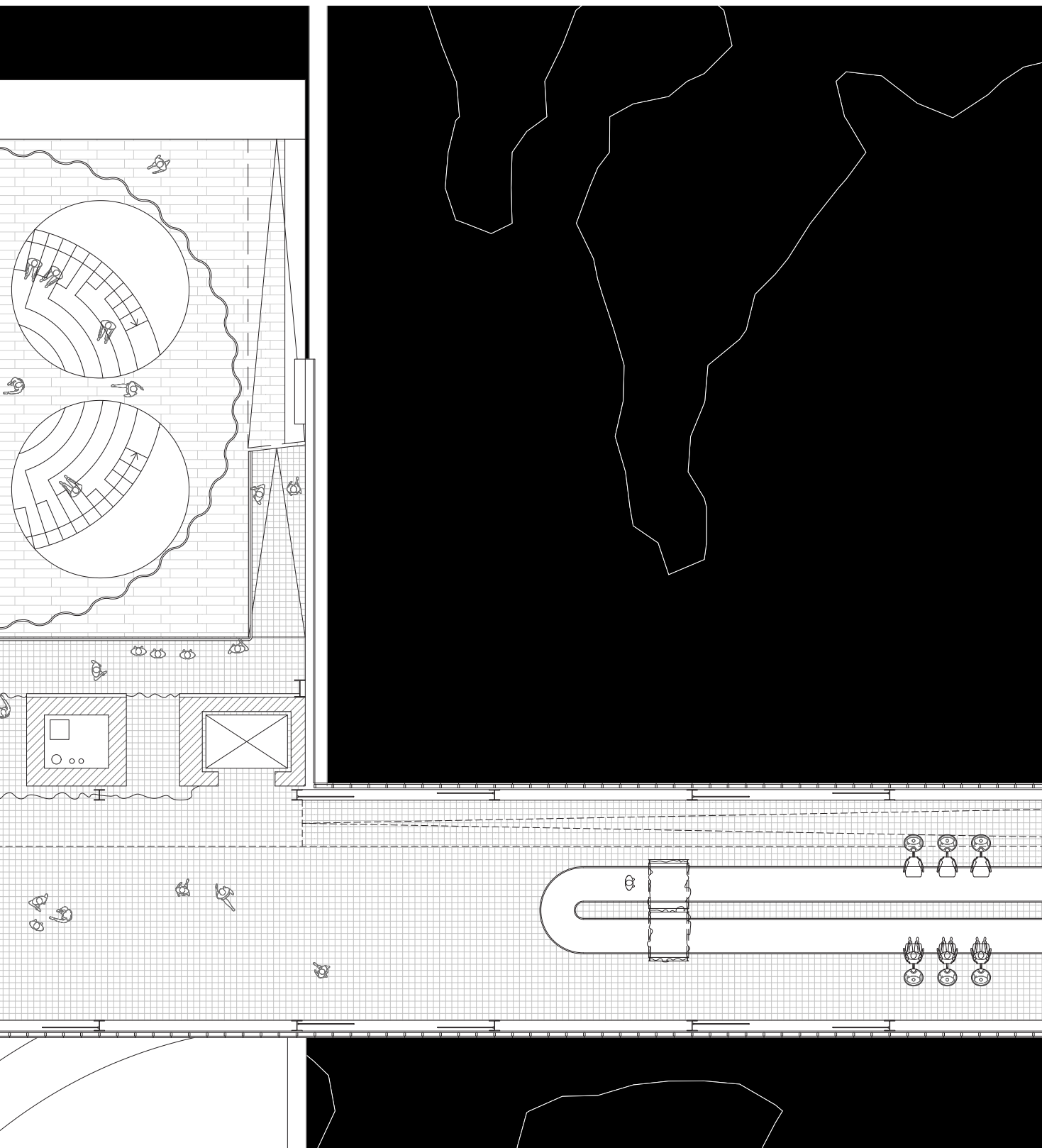


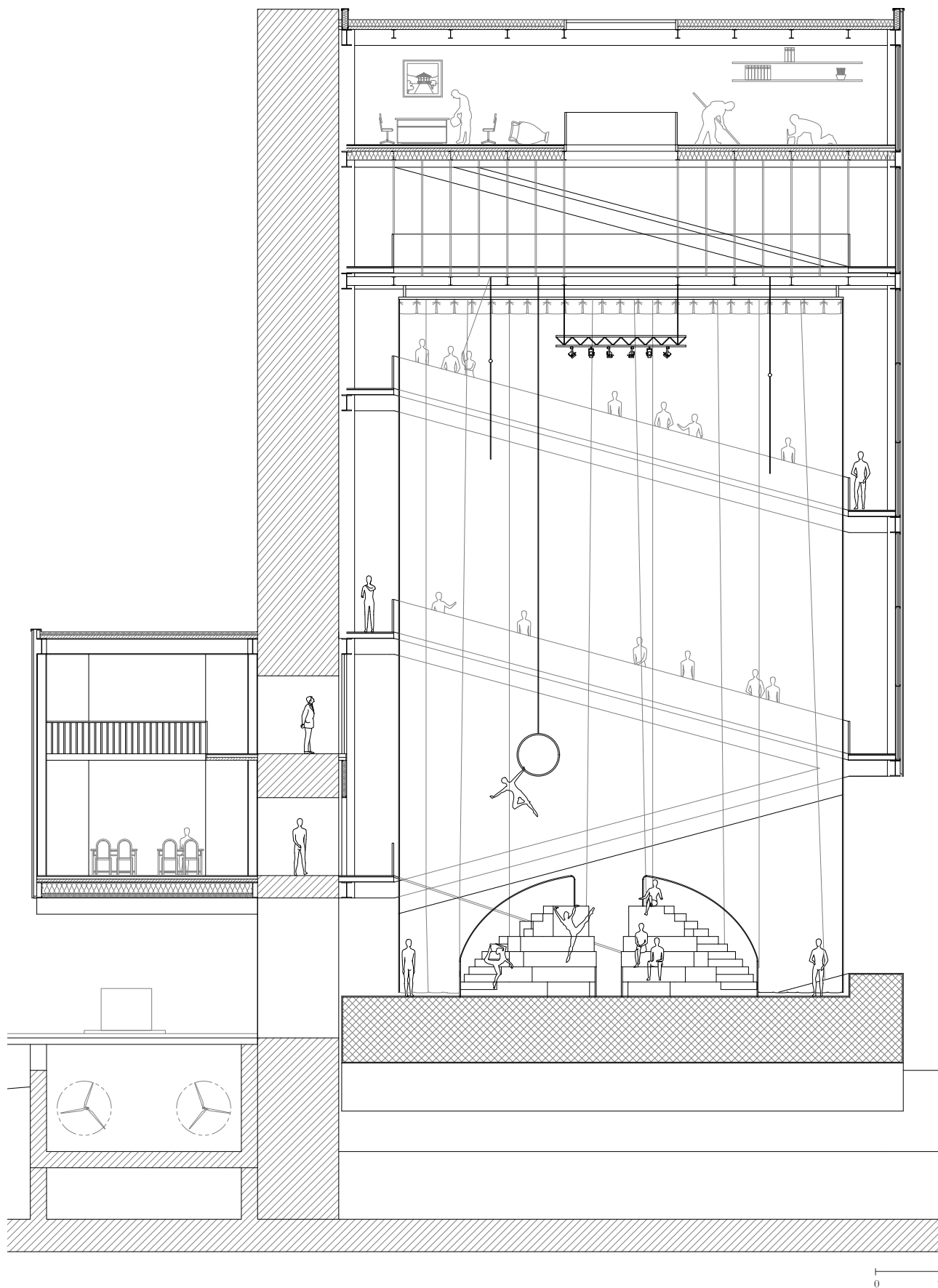
Changing Room

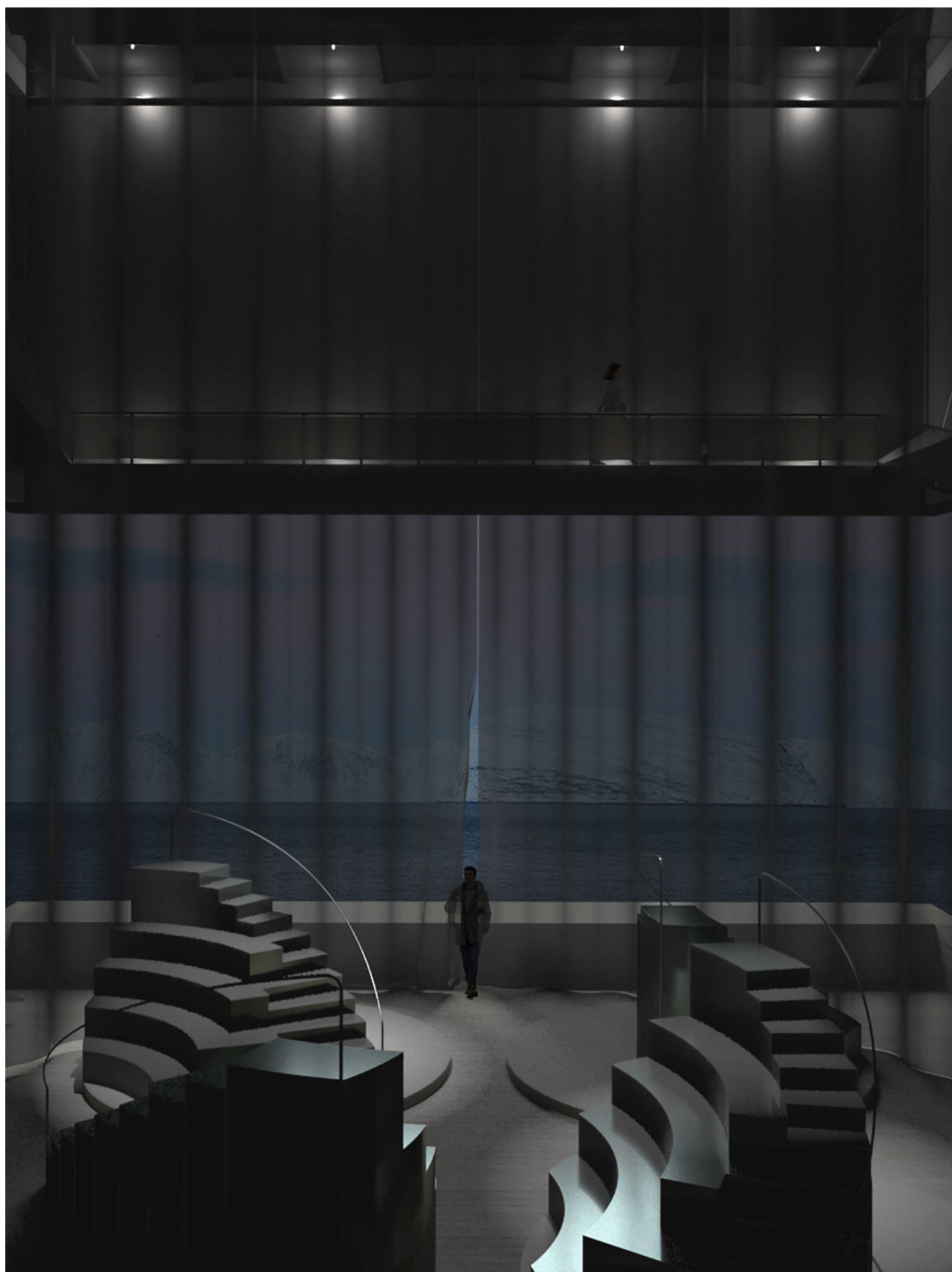


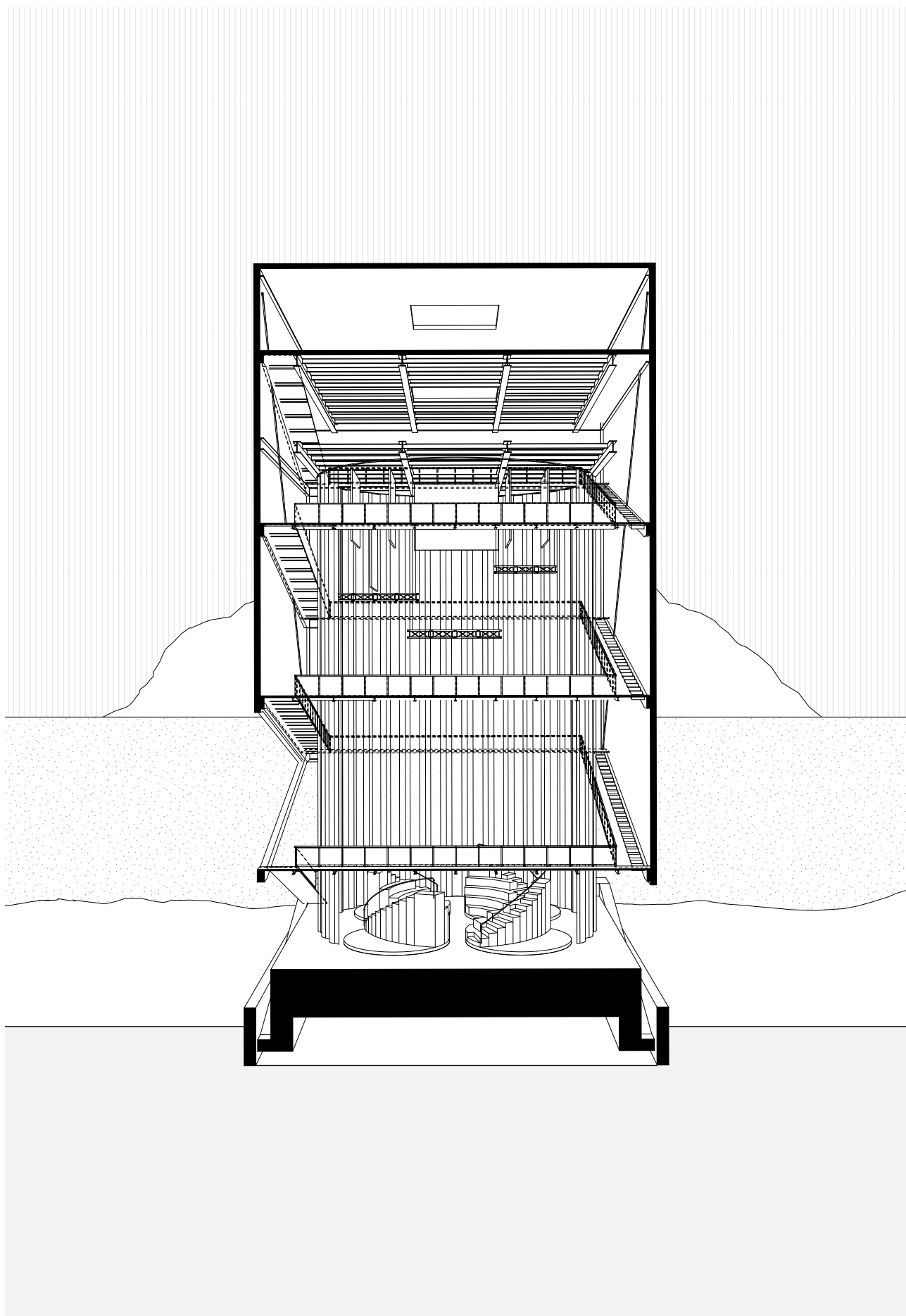




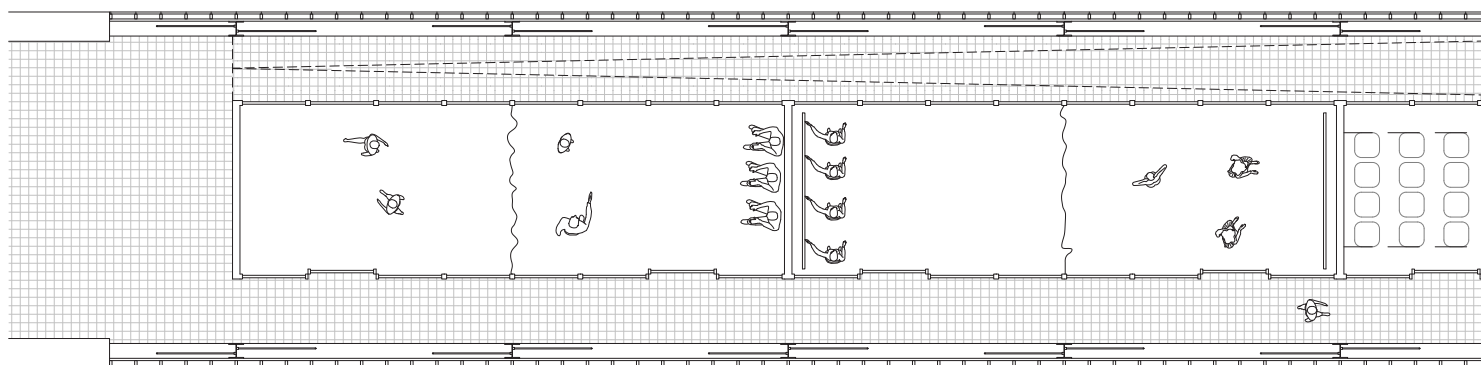


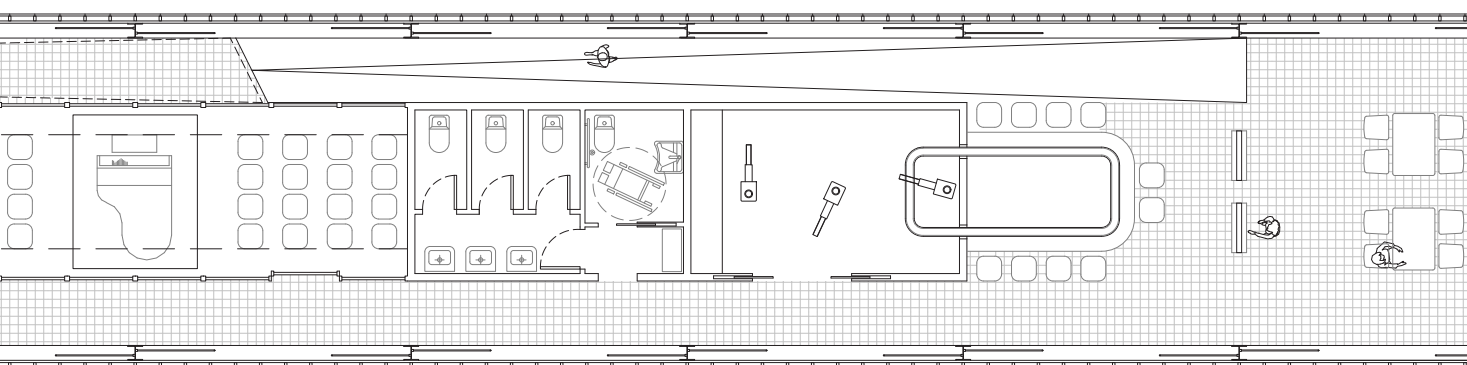




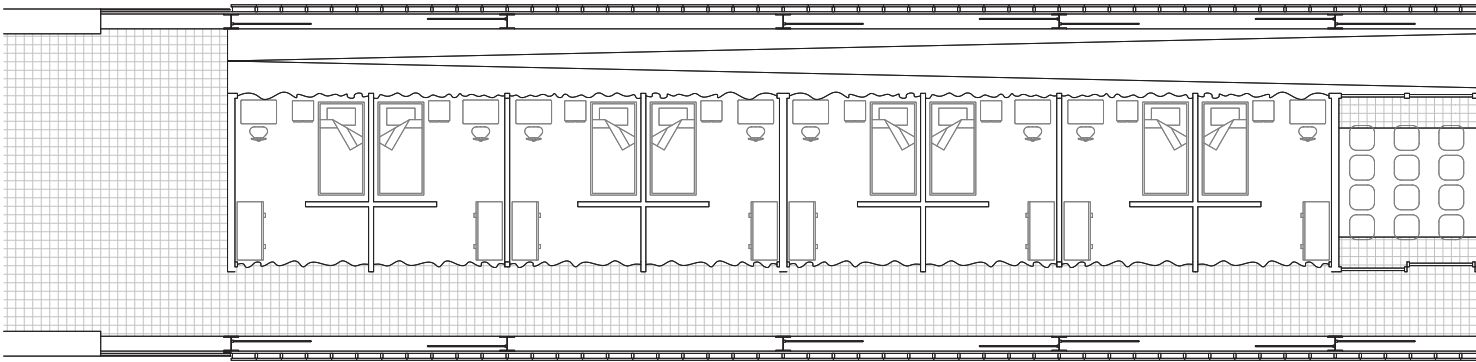


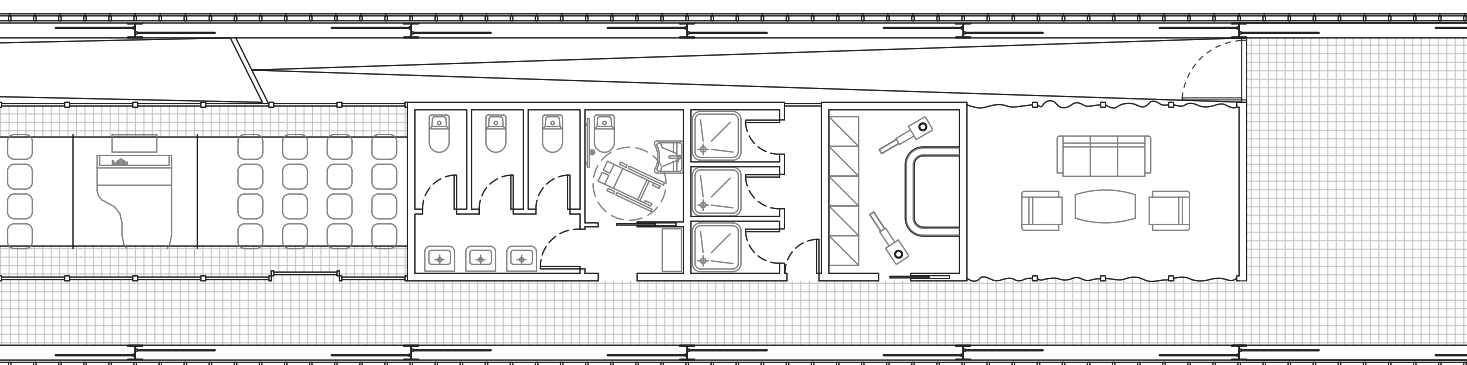












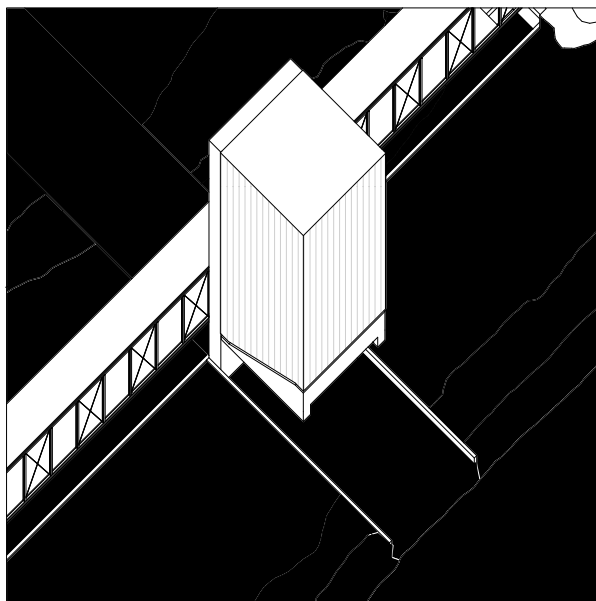
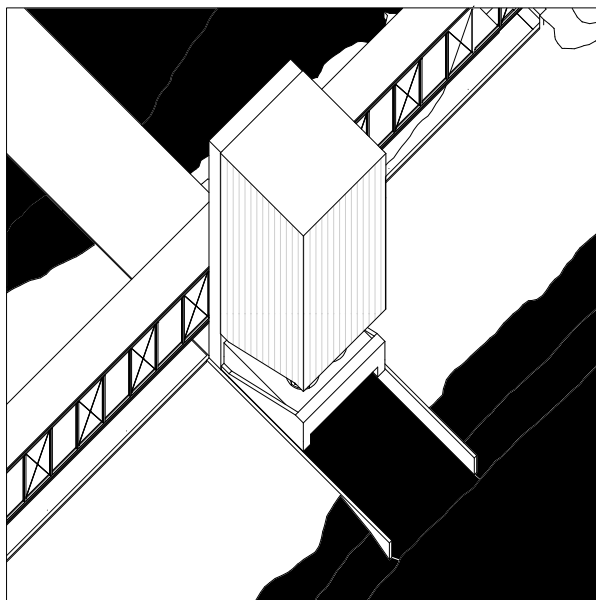
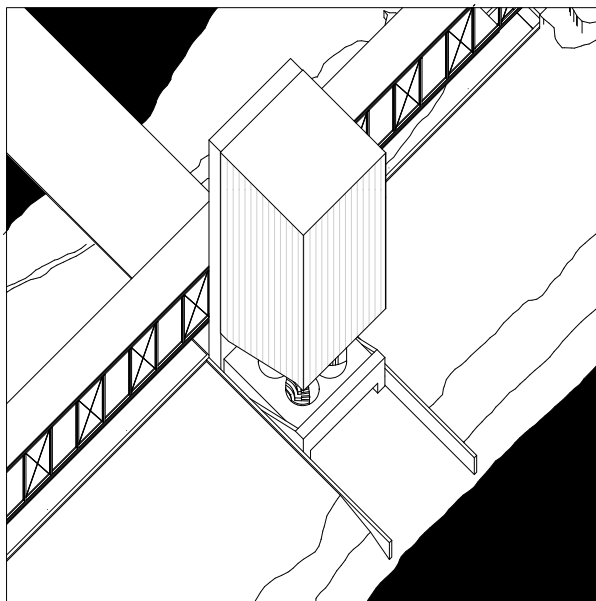


V.

Epilogue

Tidal Conditions and Limits

- 01 low tide
- 02 high tide
- 03 high tide + sea level rise



5.1. Epilogue

a. Limit

The strong interconnection between tides, water and stage makes the performance vulnerable to the issue of sea level rise. While, indeed, in normal conditions of low and high tides the floating stage freely moves underneath the fly tower - that hosts the 'machine' of the theatre -, climate change and the increased level of water would pose the limits to its functioning, closing the Theatre underneath its pressure.

b. Departure

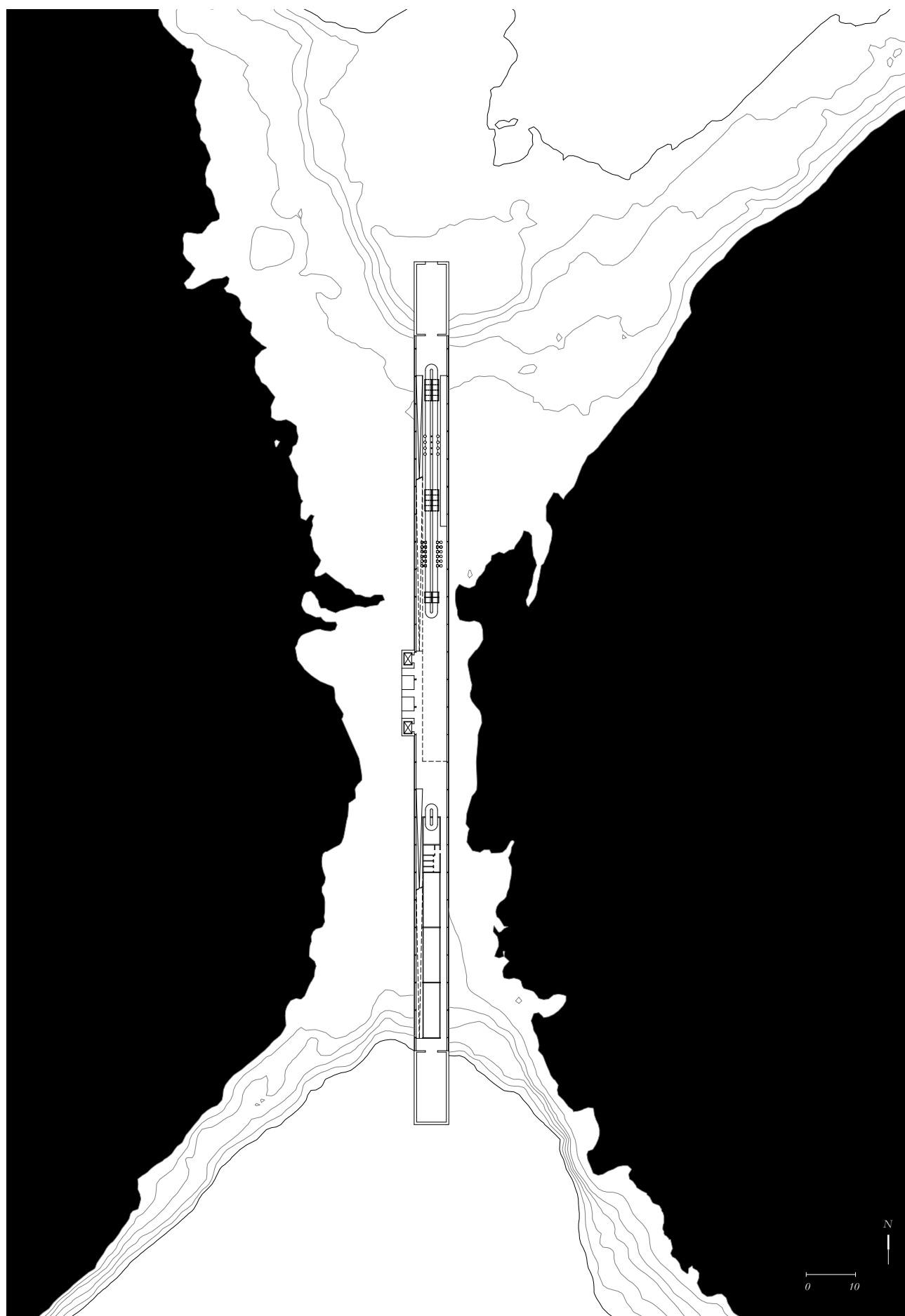
Under the changed conditions, the Theatre comes to its final act. The accelerated transformation brought by the Theatre in its first stance - enhancing processes of automation in Hammerfest and the birth of a new society - and the experimentation carried out on its typological essence had the effect of reconciling human life with the cyclic rhythms of natural processes (highlighted by the tidal movement). The new playful society of Hammerfest has found in the theatricality of its existence a new balance between nature and human artifice.

However, if Hammerfest could be seen as the first realisation of a new society due to its peculiar primary conditions, the spread of automation in the rest of the North Sea calls for similar reactions. For this reason, the floating theatre will then move towards new locations, bringing the collective memory of the new society and 'teaching' a different way of living in relation with the landscape.

c. Transformation

When the stage leaves, what is left on the site from the original Theatre approaches an ultimate phase. In different contextual condition, with the consequences of sea level rise, that has induced a transformation in the building, the infrastructural essence of the project persists. As tidal barrage, the building keeps generating energy for the community of Hammerfest, once totally depended on fossil fuels. In addition to that, the bridge connection maintains its function linking the two landscape formations.

The initial imposing relation between human and machine finally resulted in the liberation of the former by means of the latter. Having established their coexistence, the experience of the Theatre freed individual form the burdens of the capitalistic frame of society, regulating the passage towards the post-labour condition and now initiating the next phase.



5.2. Results

The development and experiment of the Theatre offer the opportunity to reflect on its result in the broad field of Architecture. Among tangible and intangible results, its social, compositional/typological and technological aspects highlight the relevance of the project.

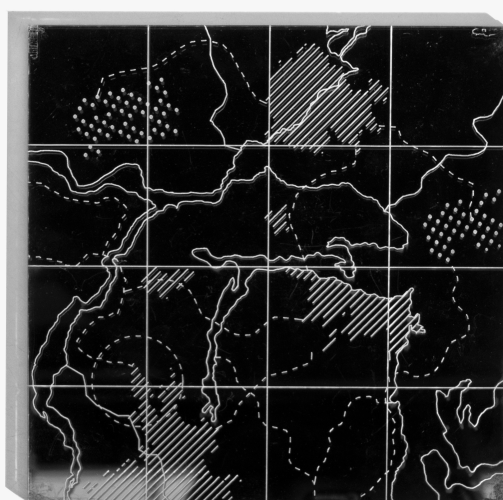
First, the project resonates on the possibility of an autonomous architecture, thanks to the reliable source of energy represented by the tides. The dialectic relation between building and tides highlights the importance of the sea as fundamental resource, both of spiritual and technological nature. While producing energy by means of turbines and water collectors, the tidal forces mechanically move the platforms of the stage, every time determining the specific conditions in which the performance is set.

The archetypal character of the building - an ultimate denotation of its theatricality - stands both in its typological research for a different theatre and in its distinctive connection with the production of energy.

In line with this, the second 'result' of the project is concerning the relation between building and surroundings; between interior and exterior. The particular climatic conditions of the Arctic lean towards an almost absolute closure from the outside. However, the spectacle of the landscape, as well as the conviction that public life happens in the open space, call for a stronger connection between envelope and exterior.

For this reason, the development of a diverse climate scheme brings together sealed, fully controlled spaces with a reflection on the manner in which the exterior can still be experienced regardless of the harsh condition - making it part of the playful participation. On the one hand, the choice of a polycarbonate façade define an atmosphere of blurred visual relations between inside and outside, at the same time showing and hiding; building becomes a theatrical act in itself. On the other hand, the recurrent element of the curtain attempts to create an interior space in an exterior condition, challenging the conventional use of space. Instead of hiding the scene from the audience, as in a traditional theatre, the curtain is here describing the intimate space of action, in its ephemeral dimension.

Finally, the attention towards stage design and costumes of the play highlights the importance of the human dimension, especially in times - like the ones we are living - where its standards are constantly asking for a revision. The architecture of the body emerges as fundamental request to be taken care of by the machinic, in the perspective of an inevitable collision between human and machine.





Qué es la vida? Un frenesí. ¿Qué es la vida? Una ficción, una sombra, una ilusión, y el mayor bien es pequeño; que toda la vida es sueño, y los sueños, sueños son.

What is life? A madness. What is life? An illusion, a shadow, a story. And the greatest good is little enough; for all life is a dream, and dreams themselves are only dreams.

-Pedro Calderón de la Barca