



IN PASSING

A funerary site of qualitative time

Preface

This project stems from an exploration into the centrality of permanence around life and death during my Design Academy Eindhoven bachelor graduation. It begins with a fascination for Time and its relation to the material world. As life and death hold an inseparable relation to time, this fascination is articulated in the design of a funerary site. Researching architecture's relationship to time, memory and the theme of life and death. Aiming to treat Time as a material and express it as a qualitative, rather than purely measurable, presence.



Graduation project DAE, (Nooitgedagt, 2022).

Table of contents

Abstract

Part I

Part II

Part III

Conclusion

Reflection

Acknowledgements

References

Appendix

Abstract

Death is one of the few experiences shared by all human beings, yet the ways in which we spatialise, ritualise, and remember it are deeply shaped by culture, landscape, and our understanding of time. Contemporary funerary environments in the Netherlands are increasingly governed by systems of efficiency, ownership, and measurable time. Ceremonies are scheduled, graves are leased, and remembrance often becomes dependent on individual capacity and economic means. Within this framework, the temporal realities of mourning and memory risk being reduced to sequences that can be managed, regulated, and measured.

At the same time, experiences of grief, remembrance, and return rarely unfold according to clock time. They emerge through duration, repetition, movement, and moments of unexpected recollection. Following Henri Bergson's distinction between measurable time and lived duration, and drawing on Joke Hermsen's plea for a renewed sensitivity to inner time, this project approaches Time not as a quantity but as a qualitative condition through which life and death are experienced.

In Passing investigates how funerary architecture might engage with this understanding of Time. Rather than

treating remembrance as a fixed act attached to permanent monuments, the project explores remembrance through the act of walking, embedded within landscape, movement, and material. Through an examination of philosophical, literary, and architectural discourse, combined with site-specific research in the Schoorlse Duinen, the project seeks to understand how architecture can support the temporal realities of farewell, mourning, and return.

The Schoorlse Duinen provide a landscape in which transience is already materially present. Shaped by wind, water and fire, and centuries of human intervention, the site reveals an ongoing negotiation between permanence and change. Within this dynamic environment, architecture is understood as a threshold where the two processes of farewell, each unfolding in a different experience of time, converge for a moment. Landing the fleetingness and groundedness of cremation and the act of saying farewell.

Through the development of a funerary landscape, *In Passing* explores how architecture, ritual, and landscape processes can create collective frameworks for remembrance while remaining open to individual experiences of loss. intertwined.

PART I

Time as a Quality

Recognising the inherent elusiveness of time, this project uses Time, with a capital T, to distinguish it from the quantitative seconds, minutes, and hours we measure. As Henri Bergson argues, the essence of time lies in its flow and continuity. This lived time, or duration, resists quantification and stands in opposition to segmented, measurable time (Bergson, 1992).

Humanity's understanding of time began with observing astronomical rhythms. Early tools in ancient Egypt such as sundials and water clocks allowed us to measure passing moments. Mechanical clocks followed, and in 1884 time was fixed globally through the Greenwich Meridian (Hermesen, 2009). With each step, our relationship to time shifted: from sensing its unfolding to something we could track, keep, manage, and even run out of.

As the nature of time remains a debate between researchers, philosophers and our selves, this project responds to Harmsen's call in *Stil de Tijd* (2009) to broaden our sensitivity to another register of time — an inner, experiential time that enriches the measurable time that governs contemporary life. This “other time” appears throughout the research in various forms, in an attempt to define and materialise its elusive nature. Starting with its expression in the literary imagination of *Einstein's Dreams* by Alan Lightman (1993), which envisions a world where

time is not approached as a quantity but as a quality, a condition to sense rather than control. It is through this lens that the design unfolds.

“Events glide through the space of the imagination, materialised by a look, a desire. Likewise, the time between events is long or short, depending on the background of contrasting events, the intensity of illumination, the degree of light and shadow, the view of participants”

— *Einstein's Dreams* (Lightman, 1993)

Time as a quality breathes meaning into movement. It differentiates wandering from rushing, stillness from waiting and seeing from truly experiencing. It allows rhythm to exist — the melodic interplay of continuation and pause, of movement and stillness.

10 JUNE 1905

Suppose that time is not a quantity but a quality, like the luminescence of the night above the trees just when a rising moon has touched the treeline. Time exists, but it cannot be measured.

Just now, on a sunny afternoon, a woman stands in the middle of the Bahnhofplatz, waiting to meet a particular man. Some time ago, he saw her on the train to Fribourg, was entranced, and asked to take her to the Grosse Schanze gardens. From the urgency in his voice and the look in his eyes, the woman knew that he meant soon. So she waits for him, not

95

impatiently, passing the time with a book. Some time later, perhaps on the following day, he arrives, they lock arms, walk to the gardens, stroll by the groupings of tulips, roses, martagon lilies, alpine columbines, sit on a white cedar bench for an unmeasurable time. Evening comes, marked by a change in the light, a reddening of the sky. The man and woman follow a winding path of small white stones to a restaurant on a hill. Have they been together a lifetime, or only a moment? Who can say?

Through the leaded windows of the restaurant, the mother of the man spots him sitting with the woman. She wrings her hands and whines, for she wants her son at home. She sees him as a child. Has any time passed since he lived at home, played catch with his father, rubbed his mother's back before bed? The mother sees that boyish laugh, caught in candlelight through the leaded windows of the restaurant, and she is certain that no time has passed, that her son, her child, belongs with her at home. She waits outside, wringing her hands, while her son grows older quickly in the intimacy of this evening, of this woman he has met.

Across the street, on Aarberggasse, two men argue about a shipment of pharmaceuticals. The receiver is angry because

96

the pharmaceuticals, which have a short shelf life, have arrived aged and inactive. He expected them long ago and, in fact, has been waiting for them at the train station for some time, through comings and goings of the gray lady at no. 27 Spitalgasse, through many patterns of light on the Alps, through alterations of the air from warm to cool to wet. The sender, a short fat man with a mustache, is insulted. He crated the chemicals at his factory in Basle as soon as he heard the awnings open over the market. He carried the boxes to the train while the clouds were still in the same positions as when the contract was signed. What more could he do?

In a world where time cannot be measured, there are no clocks, no calendars, no definite appointments. Events are triggered by other events, not by time. A house is begun when stone and lumber arrive at the building site. The stone quarry delivers stone when the quarryman needs money. The barrister leaves home to argue a case at the Supreme Court when his daughter makes a joke about his growing bald. Education at the gymnasium in Berne is concluded when the student has passed his examinations. Trains leave the station at the Bahnhofplatz when the cars are filled with passengers.

In a world where time is a quality, events are recorded by the

97

color of the sky, the tone of the boatman's call on the Aare, the feeling of happiness or fear when a person comes into a room. The birth of a baby, the patent of an invention, the meeting of two people are not fixed points in time, held down by hours and minutes. Instead, events glide through the space of the imagination, materialized by a look, a desire. Likewise, the time between two events is long or short, depending on the background of contrasting events, the intensity of illumination, the degree of light and shadow, the view of the participants.

Some people attempt to quantify time, to parse time, to dissect time. They are turned to stone. Their bodies stand frozen on street corners, cold, hard, and heavy. In time, these statues are taken to the quarryman, who cuts them up evenly in equal sections and sells them for houses when he needs the money.

98

Architecture of Remembrance

Not only the site of mourning and return is highly governed by clock time, but also the act of saying farewell itself is structured through it. Ceremonial spaces and their rituals are choreographed along the ticking of the clock: ten minutes per speech, one second per image slide, 13:15 coffee and tea, 15:00 end. In this configuration, a space is considered alive only when a farewell takes place, and becomes “dead” in the intervals of waiting for the next ceremony. What emerges is a spatial logic of ending and non-return, rather than one that allows for the unfolding duration of time.

Although architecture has the capacity to offer precisely such a temporal openness, this potential is often left underdeveloped. As architect and scholar Juhani Pallasmaa notes, time cannot be understood as an abstract physical dimension detached from lived experience; rather, we encounter it only through its actualisations—traces, places, and events. Architecture, in this sense, becomes an existential mnemonic device: a medium through which lived time is recorded, remembered, and shared (Treib, 2009).

This inseparability between time and architecture resonates directly with the broader themes of life and death that form the core of this project. If architecture

is always already temporal, then it also participates in the way life is remembered and death is understood. Pallasmaa extends this idea by stating that memory forms the ground of identity: “we are what we remember.” Our sense of who we are—and the awareness that we are mortal—is constructed through the traces that life leaves behind (Treib, 2009).

Expanding on this relationship between temporality, existence, and design, Andrej Radman and Stavros Kousoulas argue in *Architectures of Life and Death* (2021) that we must “practice death in order to live.” In their view, architecture becomes a medium in which perception, duration, and individuation converge, enabling us to encounter mortality not as an abstract endpoint but as an immanent condition of life itself.

Yet despite these philosophical openings, architectural practice often remains limited in its temporal imagination. As architectural historian David Leatherbarrow observes in *Building Time* (2021), professional attention typically ends at completion, overlooking a building’s “post-professional life”. The ways in which it weathers, accumulates stories, and transitions alongside its users, landscape and weather conditions.

Tensions of Funerary Practices

The project is situated within the landscape of the Netherlands, a landscape shaped by centuries of human intervention that reflects the tension between transience and permanence. In parallel, approaching the design for the theme of life and death with an understanding of local practices of remembrance, provides supportive context for this project.

Dutch funerary practices are shaped by overlapping pressures in which collective needs and individual needs often conflict. Reijnders, professor of Environmental Science at the University of Amsterdam, highlights, in conversation with Anja Krabben, the ecological burdens of burial and cremation like groundwater pollution, emissions, and resource consumption. He points out to the radical changes humanity might need to accept in response as, in his words, “The human being itself is the problem. We are a walking garbage can.” (Krabben, 2004). His emphasis on environmental efficiency often clashes with cultural needs and beliefs. As Harrison argues in *The Dominion of the Dead* (2003), questions of who “owns” a corpse and who has a say in its destination can only be answered according to what one believes about the body and the self, beliefs deeply rooted in culture.

Within the dutch culture the individual space plays a big role. Whether it is

a burial grave, interring and urn in a columbarium, or placing an urn on a gravestone. This accumulation of remains poses both practical and cultural challenges. In the Netherlands, this is managed in the ‘Wet op de lijkbezorging’ by regulating grave and urn plots as property that can be ‘rented’ and later renewed. Tying financial capacity to the right of memorialisation, conflicting with the sentimental side of mourning. Jan Langeraar, expert in municipal taxes and regulations, stresses that we handle this connection between capital and burial with a lack of transparency and in a way that goes beyond its practical purpose (Radar, 2020).

The financial model reflects a broader social trend toward individualisation. In *Modes of Individualisation at Cemeteries* (2009), Vanderstraten traces how secularisation and individualisation shapes contemporary graveyards. Diverse stone forms, photographic portraits and gravestones for infants where once excluded from consecrated ground. Religious symbols recede as personal biographies of both the deceased and the bereaved. Cemeteries shift from shared devotional landscapes to mosaics of unique lives and networks.

This individualisation is a result of cultural changes, yet often clashes with emotional needs. Harrison draws on the anthropologist Ernesto De Martino, whose research into centuries-old mourning traditions in southern Italy shows that rituals place grief in the public sphere. Instead of collapsing alone, mourners shared their sorrow within a recognized cultural form. These rituals did not suppress grief but shaped it, allowing it to be carried by the community rather than borne alone (Harrison, 2003).

A similar tension emerged through personal experience. My grandmother affectionately tended the graves of her husband and son daily for forty years, keeping their memory alive through the life of plants and flowers. Yet nearby graves appeared neglected, bareness, plastic flowers and battery candles suggesting continuity without care. Were their families too far away? Overburdened? Was the act of tending beyond their needs? If remembrance depends entirely on individual capacity—time, energy, distance, money—it risks reinforcing a fear life already holds: to be forgotten.

Human beings cannot, at least not yet, prevent death. This means that the environmental, spatial, cultural, and emotional tensions that accompany it remain part of our shared condition. Yet, when the temporal dimension of places of

remembrance becomes bound to financial means and clock time, it misaligns with their inherent essence as public spaces of mourning and return—spaces not governed by measurable time, but by an inner time, a time of duration rather than sequence.

Within this shift, a collective sense of mourning gradually becomes fragmented. What emerges is the loss of a shared cultural framework for grief, replaced by individualized practices that are unevenly distributed and deeply dependent on personal capacity. This individualisation produces a form of injustice within remembrance itself: inequalities in time. As a result, the collective dimension of mourning is weakened, and remembrance increasingly reflects individual circumstances rather than a shared condition.

While the accumulation of remains continues to pose a spatial challenge, *In Passing* explores whether the tensions of remembrance, currently regulated through measurable time, can instead be shaped by the shared human experience of Time as duration.



My grandmother, no longer able to tend the grave herself, sits with us as the plants and flowers continue the work of care on her behalf, (2023).

Human and Humus



The relationship between human and humus grounds the architecture in the living, decaying, and regenerative processes of the terrain. Harrison traces the shared etymological origin of both words, revealing a continuity between the human body and the earth from which it emerges and to which it returns. Rather than understanding death as separation, this connection frames it as transformation. Life, death, memory, and matter become part of the same ongoing cycle.

Drawing on Harrison's observation that architecture "transforms geological time into human time," the project explores how funerary architecture can articulate the tension between groundedness and fleetingness that characterises both the earth and human existence. If architecture turns matter into meaning, then ruins, weathering, and decomposition return meaning to matter, reconnecting memory to the living processes of the landscape.

Problem statement and research question

Funerary sites form spatial environments in which the tensions between life, death, memory, and the passage of time become materially and experientially present.

Contemporary funerary practices are governed by systems of ownership, permanence, and measurable time, while experiences of mourning and remembrance unfold through lived duration and a qualitative understanding of Time. This discrepancy creates a spatial condition in which memorialisation becomes tied to individual responsibility and economic capacity rather than supported as a shared and temporal process.

A misalignment emerges between the temporal nature of life and death and their spatial and material expression in funerary landscapes. Undermining architecture's capacity to transform matter into meaning and to accommodate

the evolving, transient realities of memory, landscape, life, and death.

As these notions are grounded in deeply personal experiences, the project responds to these tensions by exploring the material and spatial frameworks through which remembrance unfolds, rather than proposing a specific model of mourning.

Recognising this gap between lived temporal experience and its spatial expression, the project is guided by the following research question:

How can funerary architecture embody lived, qualitative time and transience within the theme of life and death?

Arising a range of subquestions.

Establishing a position

What concepts of time are articulated in philosophical, literary, and architectural discourse?

How is time represented, structured, or overlooked in contemporary funerary architecture?

What different timescales operate within the context of death, such as farewell, mourning, and long-term remembrance?

How do these timescales relate to different architectural scales, from landscape to object?

How are individual and collective experiences negotiated across these temporal and spatial scales?

In what ways does culture manifest itself within these architectural and temporal frameworks?

What conditions and limitations shape contemporary funerary practice, including financial, legal, environmental, spatial, cultural, and emotional factors?

Towards the articulation of a design position

What concept of time forms the foundation of the project?

What architectural vocabulary emerges from this understanding of time?

Which timescale—and corresponding architectural scale—is primarily addressed?

How are collective frameworks and individual needs brought into balance within the design?

Design Assignment and Design Question

The project develops a funerary landscape in the Schoorlse Duinen that seeks a balance between communal mourning and personal expression through an exploration of time as a material and spatial design medium.

The design investigates how architecture, ritual, and natural processes can support both collective and individual forms of remembrance. Through landscape-driven transformations, it aims to establish a funerary environment in which memory is sustained through duration and shared movement rather than through fixed monuments and individual forms.

The project proposes a place where farewell, mourning, remembrance, and return unfold through time as a qualitative condition—breathing meaning into movement and allowing rhythms, continuity, and pause to coexist. Remembrance is guided by the act of walking and the shifting dynamics of the landscape itself.

It is designed for those who experience walking as part of life and death, as a condition between presence and absence. For those who visit to say farewell, those who return in remembrance, and those who pass through as part of the landscape's ongoing temporality. It addresses those who are receptive to this other experience of time, where mourning is not bound to fixed sequences, but to rhythm, movement, and duration.

The funerary landscape becomes both a place of farewell and return, embedded within a living and changing environment. It situates mourning within an in-between condition of life and death, where time is experienced as a qualitative and guiding principle of ritual rather than a measured sequence.

From this understanding, the funerary site asks a design question into how such temporal qualities might be articulated:

How can landscape-informed material practices in funerary architecture translate time as a qualitative condition into spatial experiences of memory and remembrance?

Scope and Relevance

In Passing does not seek to develop new legal, religious, ecological, or economic models for funerary practice, nor does it attempt to represent all existing traditions surrounding funerary practices. Instead, it uses the Schoorlse Duinen as a site-specific parameter, through which the question of time as a quality informs the spatial, material, and ritual dimensions of funerary architecture.

The project addresses the cultural, environmental, societal and emotional tensions surrounding funerary practices in the Netherlands. Increasing pressure on space, increasing governed by the clock time, and the contrasting with cultivated landscape, and the growing individualisation of mourning call for alternative approaches to remembrance.

At the same time, architectural discourse increasingly recognises the importance of temporality, adaptation, and post-occupancy transformation. By positioning time as an active design medium, the project contributes to ongoing discussions about architecture's relationship with memory, landscape processes, and mortality. It proposes new ways of understanding funerary environments as dynamic and collective spaces that evolve alongside the lives and memories they support.

Cemeteries are more than storage for the dead; they are cultural landscapes where memory, grief, and the passage of time intersect. As long as humans are mortal, architecture is called to give space to these experiences and guide the environmental, spatial, cultural, and emotional tensions they carry.

By positioning remembrance within a landscape shaped by ecological succession, weathering, and regeneration, the project reconnects funerary architecture to the relationship between human and humus. Going back to the earth is understood not only as an individual fate, but as a shared condition of all life on earth. Remembrance is therefore framed not as the preservation of permanence, but as participation in ongoing cycles of transformation, through which both landscapes and memories endure.

TIME

ARCHITECTURE

“One could say that, in its world-forming capacity, architecture transforms geological time into human time, which is an other way of saying it turns matter into meaning”

The Dominion of the Dead (Harrison, 2003, p.3)

LIFE AND DEATH

“Such places – be they homes, buildings, cities, or landscapes – are recesses of mortal time in which we go about inhabiting the earth historically rather than merely naturally”

The Dominion of the Dead (Harrison, 2003, p.3)

TIME AS A QUALITY

“Events glide through the space of the imagination, materialised by a look, a desire. Likewise, the time between to events is long or short, depending on the background of contrasting events, the intensity of illumination, the degree of light and shadow, the view of participants”

Einsteins Dreams (Lightman, 1993, p.95)

RESEARCH QUESTION

How can funerary architecture embody lived, qualitative time and transience within the theme of life and death?

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Funerary landscapes mediate the tension between life, death, memory, and the passage of time. These landscapes often prioritize permanence, ownership, and economic models, which can clash with cultural, emotional, and environmental needs. The misalignment between the essence of life and death and their contemporary expressions in funerary landscapes undermines architecture's ability of turning matter into meaning and the shared sense around loss.

RELEVANCE

Cemeteries are more than storage for the dead; they are cultural landscapes where memory, grief, and the passage of time intersect. As long as humans are mortal, architecture is called to give space to these experiences and guide the environmental, spatial, cultural, and emotional tensions they carry.

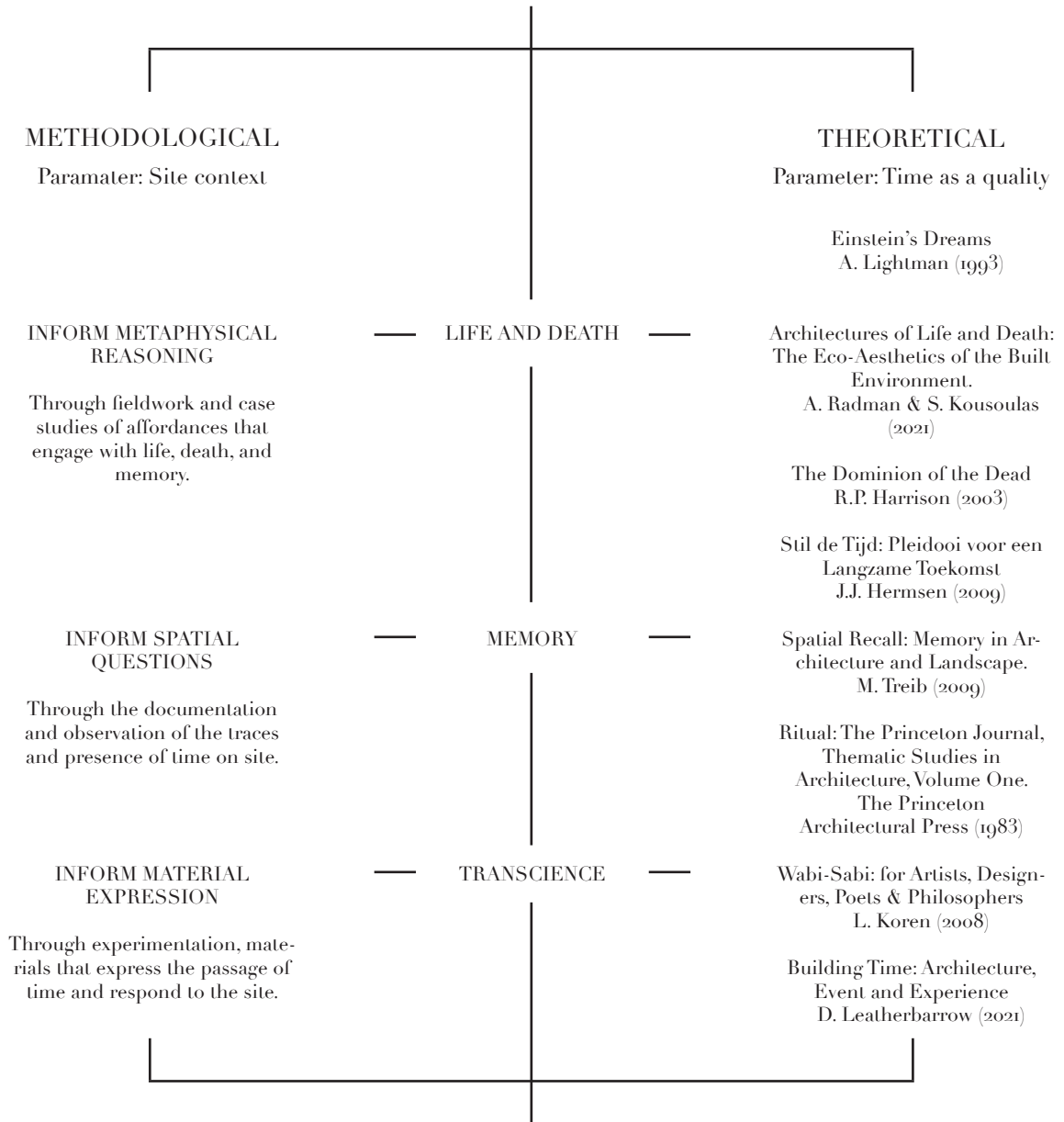
Shaping research question

Shaping Design question

DESIGN QUESTION

How can spatial, material, and landscape strategies allow a funerary site to embody fragility and impermanence to navigate the cultural, emotional, and spatial tensions of remembrance?

FRAMEWORK



DESIGN OF A FUNERARY SITE

A funerary ground for those who visit daily, rarely, or not at all; removing the burdens of ownership, maintenance, and renewal deadlines. In doing so, it introduces transience as a demarcation: one grounded in the inevitability of life and death rather than directly in space or cost. Here, Time itself becomes a design medium.

Part II

Methodology and Theoretical framework

The design question is articulated through three themes: **life and death, memory, and transience**. Each theme is informed by a focused body of literature and explored through both theoretical and methodological lenses. Underpinning the entire framework is the understanding of Time as a qualitative condition, introduced through *Einstein's Dreams* (Lightman, 1993) and developed throughout the project as an experiential and material parameter rather than a measurable quantity.

The theoretical framework establishes conceptual positions within each theme, while the methodological framework translates these insights into spatial, material, and metaphysical investigations. The site is treated as the project's parameter and active co-designer: its material conditions, rhythms, and transformations inform the architectural response and guide the design process.

Life and Death

The theme of life and death is explored through literary research that examines both architectures of death and alternative understandings of human life. Central to this framework are *Architectures of Life and Death: The Eco-Aesthetics of the Built Environment* by Andrej Radman and Stavros Kousoulas (2021), *The Dominion of the Dead* by Robert Progue Harrison (2003), and *Stil de Tijd: Pleidooi voor een Langzame Toekomst* by Joke J. Hermsen (2009).

Radman and Kousoulas challenge conventional separations between life and death by integrating philosophy, architecture, and ecology. They argue that humans must “practice death in order to live,” positioning death not as an endpoint but as an ongoing condition shaping existence. Harrison situates the dead as cohabitants of the world of the living, revealing how burial practices, memorialisation, and culture are deeply intertwined. His exploration of the etymological connection between human and humus underscores the continuity between bodies, earth, and memory. Hermsen, in turn, emphasizes the lived dimension of time, distinguishing clock time from inner time and advocating for a cultural shift toward temporal slowness.

Through fieldwork and case studies, these theoretical insights are translated into architectural reasoning. Existing funerary environments are examined through their affordances across multiple scales—landscape, architecture, furniture, and object—focusing on how they engage (or fail to engage) with lived, qualitative time. This research seeks to identify spatial and material conditions that embody, or overlook, relationships to life and death today.

Memory

Central to the theme of memory are the books of *Spatial Recall: Memory in Architecture and Landscape* edited by Marc Treib (2009) and *Ritual: The Princeton Journal, Thematic Studies in Architecture* by Julia Bourke (1983). Together, these works frame architecture as a medium through which memory is embodied, transmitted, and ritualised.

In *Spatial Recall*, essays by authors including Juhani Pallasmaa, Georges Descombes, and Susan Schwartzberg explore memory as an embodied phenomenon, rooted in bodily movement, landscape, and built form. The (built) environment is understood as both transmitter and recorder of cultural and historical traces. *Ritual* expands this understanding by examining how architecture facilitates, symbolises, and structures ritual practices, from sacred rites of passage to everyday sequences of movement and use.

Methodologically, this theme is explored through the observation and documentation of traces of time on site and case studies of architectural affordances. Patterns of impermanence, movement, repetition, and the absence of it are studied across scales—from landscape to body—to understand how memory is spatially held and present on site. These observations translate the site's contextual conditions into a spatial framework for memory and ritual.

Transience

The theme of transience is developed through *Wabi-Sabi: for Artists, Designers, Poets & Philosophers* by Leonard Koren (2008) and *Building Time: Architecture, Event, and Experience* by David Leatherbarrow (2021). Both works foreground impermanence as an inherent and valuable quality of architecture.

Koren describes Wabi-Sabi as a Japanese sensibility that finds beauty in imperfection, incompleteness, and impermanence, framing transience as a cultural and aesthetic value rather than a failure. Leatherbarrow examines architecture's temporal dimension, arguing that buildings continue to evolve long after completion. He critiques the profession's tendency to prioritise intention and finish over ageing, weathering, and use—the “post-professional life” of architecture.

These ideas are translated through material experimentation. Rather than resisting change, materials are selected and composed to respond to time, weather, and use. Site-specific forces such as wind, water, and sand are treated as a building material and active agents that shape and transform architecture over time, allowing transience to become experiential.

Site as a parameter

Emerging from the combined theoretical and methodological frameworks, the project situates itself within a landscape where transience is already materially present. With time as a qualitative parameter and the site as a co-designer, the research focuses on a landscape shaped by wind, water, and ecological transformation.

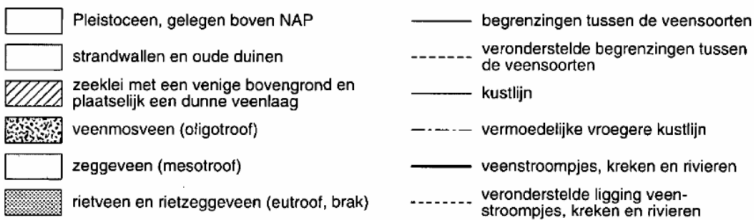
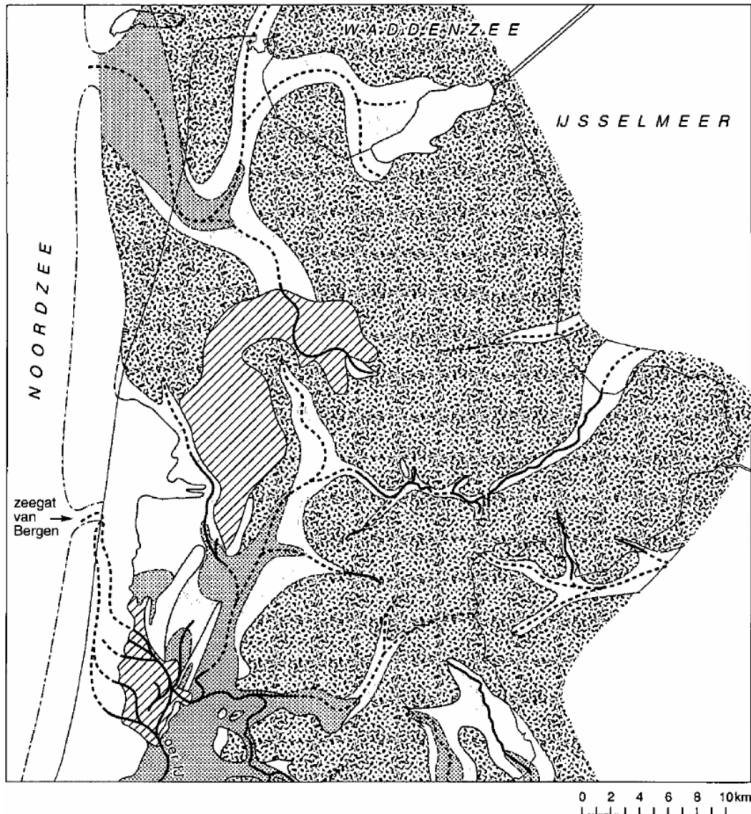


Schoorl, (QGIS, 2026).



Netherlands, (QGIS, 2026).

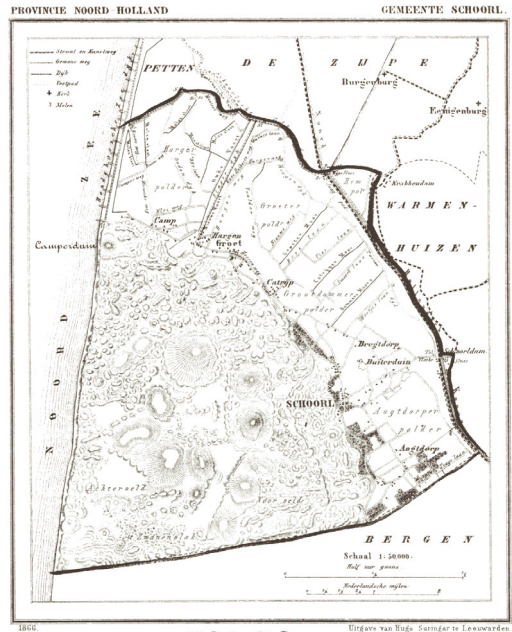
Landscape in curation



Closure of Bergen tidal inlet, (ArcheoProjecten, 2009).



Sand ridges, (Topotijdreis, 1815).



Recurves spits (Topotijdreis, 1866).

Between approximately 4500 and 3000 years ago, a beach ridge complex formed near the estuary of the Bergen tidal inlet. Following the closure of the inlet, beach ridges and recurved spits developed, which were later largely covered by low dunes that now form the Old Dunes on site. From around 750 AD onward, sand began to drift further inland, initiating the formation of the higher, present-day Young Dunes. This process of aeolian movement repeatedly buried houses and farmland, and by the end of the 19th century the area was dominated by large-scale sand drift.

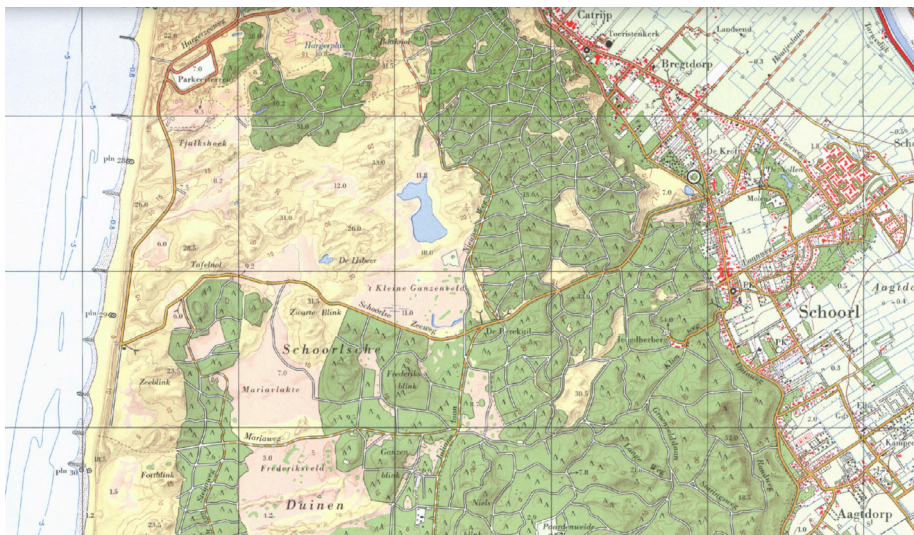
In response, the dunes were stabilized from 1863 onward through the planting of coniferous forests. These plantations were intended to fix the sand and prevent further inland drift, creating a steep dune ridge that formed a clear boundary between the natural dune system and the agricultural land and settlements of Schoorl. As a result of this afforestation, dune sand accumulated significantly, eventually shaping the highest dunes in the Netherlands, with peaks reaching 58 meters above sea level.



Planting of conifers to reduce drifting sand, (Topotijdreis, 1863).



Planting of conifers to reduce drifting sand, (Topotijdreis, 1869).



Planting of conifers to reduce drifting sand, (Topotijdreis, 1871).

The introduction of forests fundamentally transformed the dune landscape. It not only led to the disappearance of original vegetation communities, but also significantly altered the hydrological system. Groundwater levels declined, as coniferous forests evaporate considerably more water than the vegetation they replaced, causing dune valleys to dry out. This drying process was further intensified by coastal erosion and by groundwater extraction for drinking water near Bergen. At the same time, the planting of pine forests halted the natural mobility of sand, preventing the formation of new, young dune valleys.

The increasing rigidity and reduction in soil moisture of the landscape led to a reduction in ecological diversity. After a long history of human intervention, management strategies since the early 1990s have increasingly focused on restoring more natural dynamics. Within the framework of Natura 2000 restoration policies, this includes reintroducing wind dynamics by converting forested areas back into shifting dunes, and removing shrubs and trees from open habitats to counteract ecological overgrowth. Additional measures address soil acidification caused by nitrogen deposition, to which industrial activity such as that of the nearby Tata Steel plant has significantly contributed.

Current landscape management continues this process of reactivation through selective deforestation and the reintroduction of sand movement. A key

intervention took place in 1997 with the creation of the Kerf—a deliberate breach in the coastal dune ridge. This opening allows wind and water-driven processes to re-enter the system, enabling calcareous sand from the foredunes to drift inland once again. The Kerf thus marked not only a physical rupture in the dune barrier, but also a conceptual shift in how the landscape is understood and governed.

Over time, continuous efforts to fix dunes, plant forests, extract water, and protect settlements have produced a landscape that oscillates between control and natural process. While these interventions enabled habitation and safety, they also reduced ecological diversity and disrupted the inherent dynamics of the dune system. Since the 1990s, restoration strategies have sought to reintroduce movement and variability, yet this renewed dynamism also generates new tensions. In response to concerns from local residents, the Province of North Holland has called for critical assessment of the potential impact of drifting sand on the built environment of Schoorl.

The result is a landscape in which the ongoing negotiation between preservation and habitation becomes visible—between allowing natural processes to unfold and maintaining conditions for human settlement. Along the Dutch coastline, where dunes have always been in motion, the landscape is therefore neither purely natural nor purely artificial, but cultivated: continuously shaped, restrained, and periodically released again.







Landscape in Regeneration

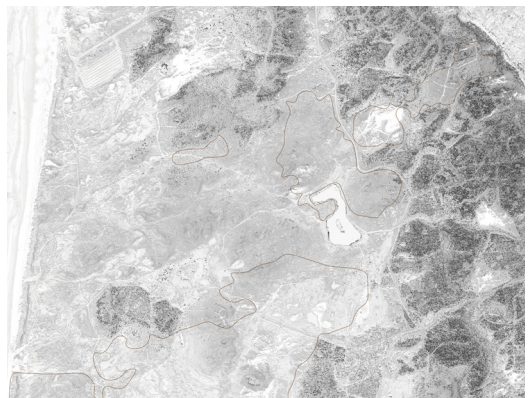


The project finds its site in the Schoorlse Duinen, located along the west coast of the Netherlands. Between 2009 and 2011, large areas of this landscape were affected by arson-induced wildfires, radically altering its vegetation and effectively resetting its ecological timeline (Van Dam & Gerrits, 2023). The Schoorlse Duinen thereby also reveal a broader cultural tension in the Netherlands between the demarcation of nature and the built environment. Long-standing efforts to stabilise dunes through afforestation stand in contrast to the inherent mobility of the dune landscape itself. Within this context, the project questions whether architecture might coexist with such dynamics rather than suppress them, accepting transience as part of its post-permanent condition.

Although the fire was a destructive event, it also aligned, although unintentionally, with ecological management goals aimed at restoring greater landscape dynamics and reintroducing open, drifting dune areas. Deciduous and coniferous forests were burned down, leaving large parts of the site temporarily bare. In the years that followed, this apparent emptiness gradually developed into diversity.

A more varied dune landscape emerged, in which dry grasslands, wet dune valleys, and heathlands returned, while wind-driven processes once again gained spatial agency. The relief of the dunes began to shift and re-form, as if the landscape had resumed a process of breathing.

This process can be understood through ecological succession, in which fire functions as a recurring force within certain ecosystems such as forests, prairies, and grasslands. These systems have evolved with fire as a generative agent of change, contributing to diversity rather than solely destruction. What appears from a human perspective as a scar on the landscape is, ecologically, an opening: a moment in which competition for resources is temporarily removed, allowing new species to establish and diversify. Creating a dynamic landscape.







Landscape in movement



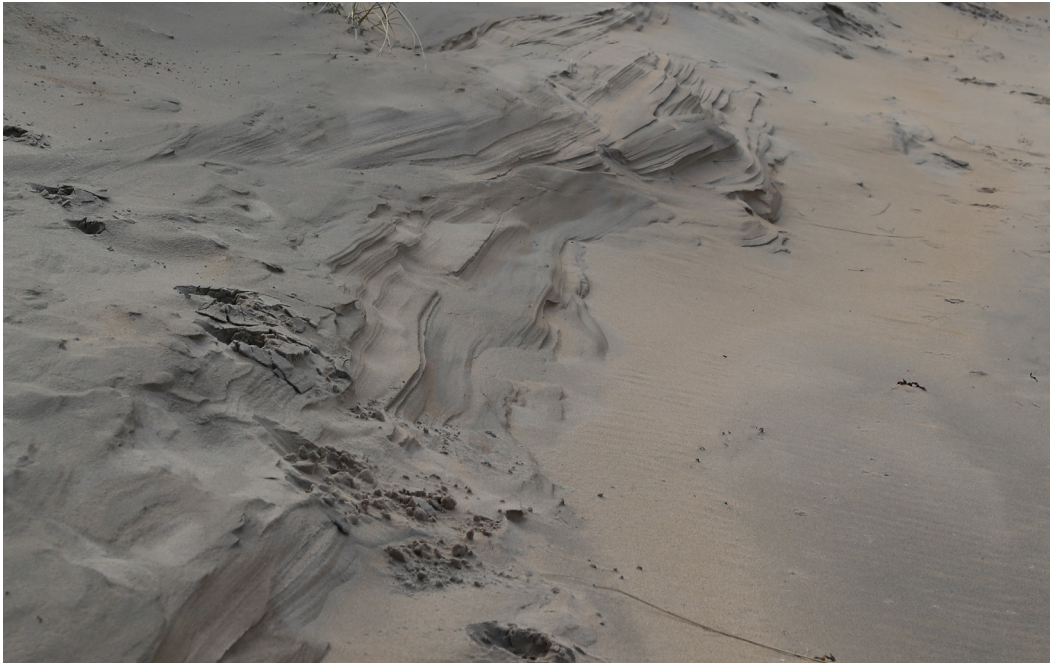
This study displays a documentation of the rhythms of movement present on site, structured around three primary forces: wind, water, and earth. Together, these elements reveal how movement is not an external condition imposed upon the landscape, but an intrinsic and continuous process through which the site is formed and transformed. Each force contributes to a layered

understanding of the landscape as dynamic, where change is constant and inherent. This reading establishes a foundational framework for the architectural decisions of the project, positioning design as a response to these material and environmental processes rather than a form of control over them.





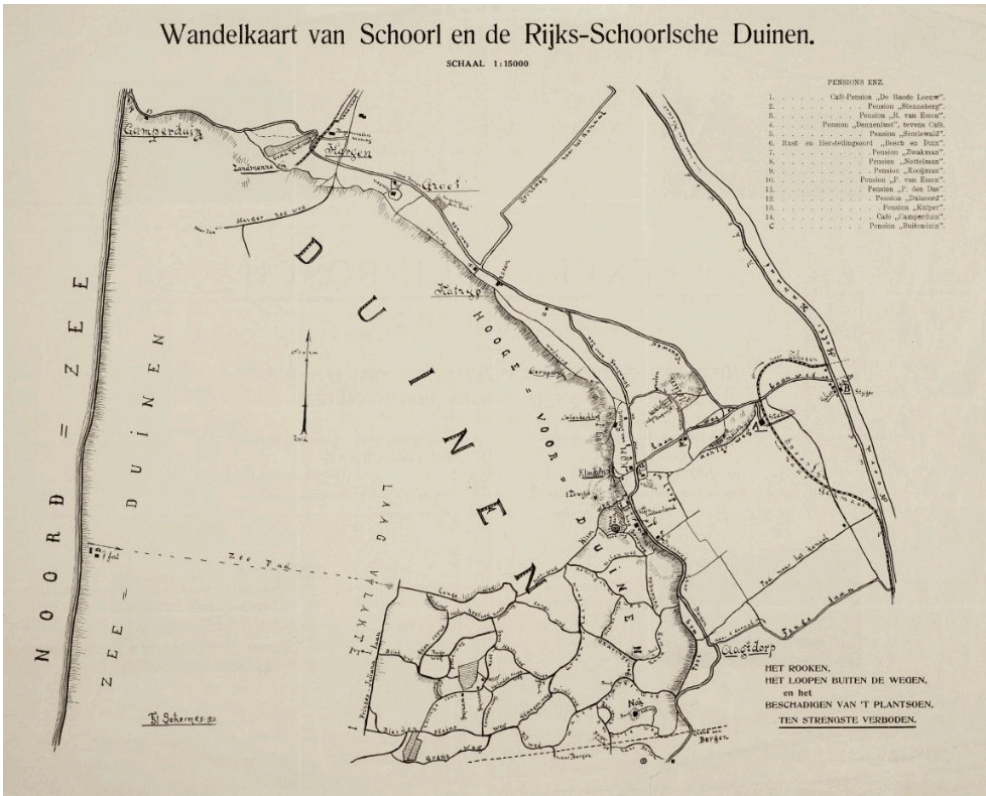












Map of walking trails, (T. Schermer, 1911)

This reading of the site also extends to human movement, where landscape rhythms are mirrored and reinterpreted through walking. Early walking trails in the area gradually expanded into an extensive network of paths, tracing and reinforcing patterns of use across the dunes. Through walking, the dynamic forces of wind,

water, and earth are not only observed but also bodily experienced, as human movement becomes entangled with the movement of the landscape itself. In this sense, walking operates as a way in which people situate themselves in motion within the site, translating environmental rhythms into lived, bodily experience.





Map of present day walking routes.





Wanderer above the Sea of Fog, (Caspar David Friedrich, 1818)

PART III

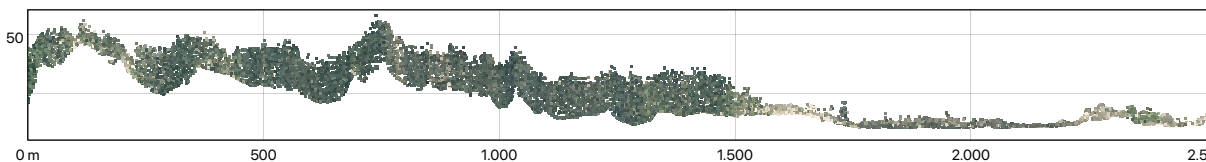
Site of Cremation

Being a curated and scarred landscape in constant movement, the site develops as a place where presence is always accompanied by disappearance, making the landscape both alive and in a constant state of passing. It becomes a stage of the relationship between humus and the human.

The shifting ground demonstrates how material remains present but continuously takes different form, dispersing and gathering over time. Like remembrance, the landscape exists in a dialogue between fleetingness and groundedness. What remains is never fixed, yet never fully lost. This tension is mirrored in cremation, where the body undergoes a

transformation physical presence into dispersed matter, ash, and memory—aligning with the landscape's own continuous transformation. As such, a cremation site is introduced within the landscape, embedding this act of transition directly into its material processes.

In *Passing* trusts the temporality already present within the landscape. Rather than imposing a separate order of remembrance, it aligns farewell with the ongoing processes of transformation already embedded within the site. The project becomes a dialogue between the fleetingness and groundedness of landscape, memory, and farewell.



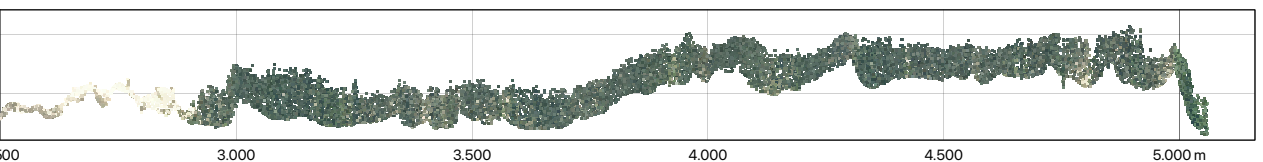
Walking as Remembrance

Stemming from the inherent quality of movement in the landscape, *In Passing* uses the act of walking to guide remembrance.

The Roetroute, an existing walking route, passes through this burned and scarred terrain and serves as the spatial and conceptual framework of the project. It traverses areas affected and shaped by fire, functioning as a guiding line through which the design is situated and understood.

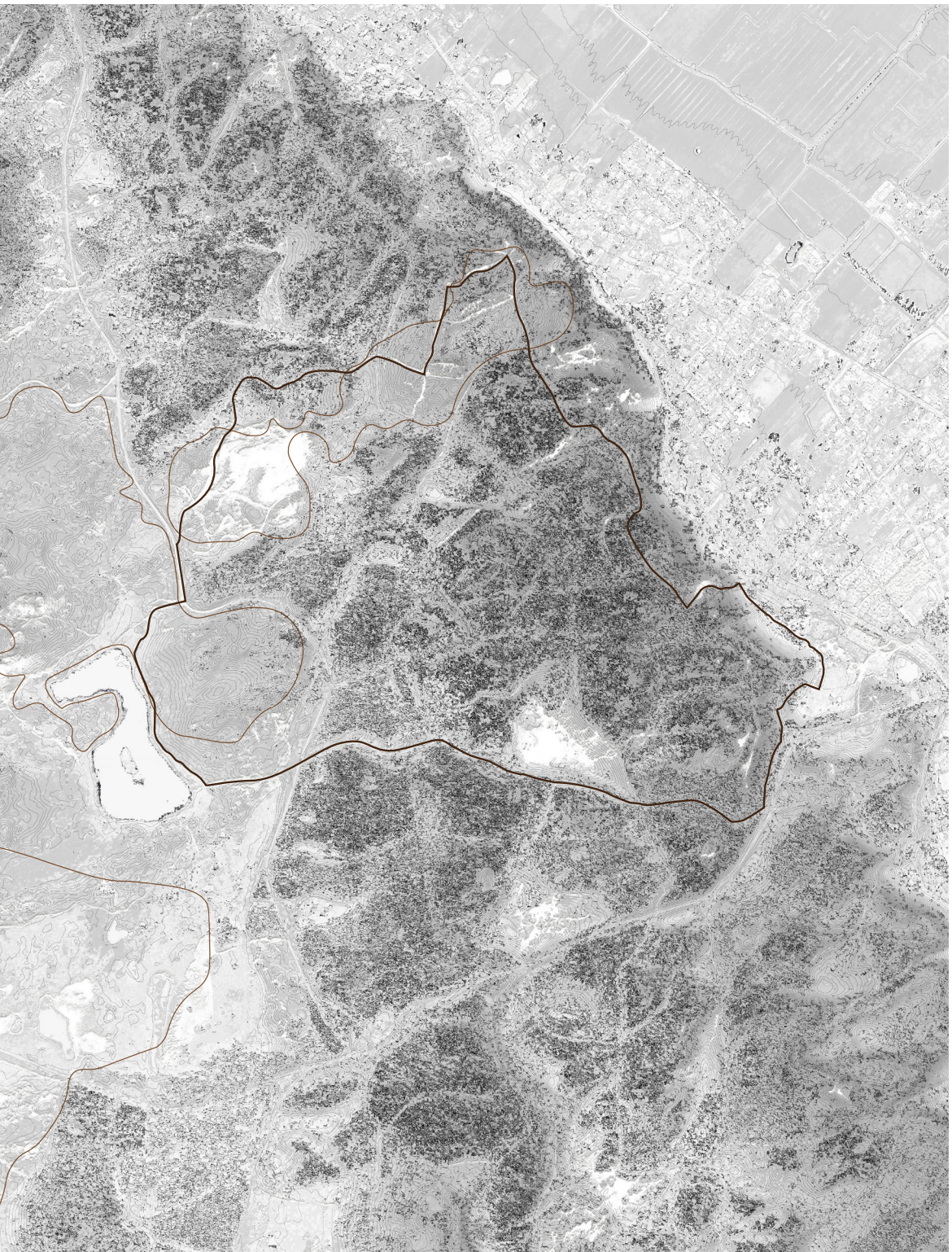
Following the Roetroute through scarred terrain, one continuously ascends and descends through the dunes. The body and the eye relate to the humus at shifting distances. Moments of enclosure within

transcending heaps of sand are followed by expansive views over water and open terrain. All experiences traverse into each other, only becoming legible through movement. With every step, the context shifts and understanding of distance dissolves, allowing clock time to recede with it.

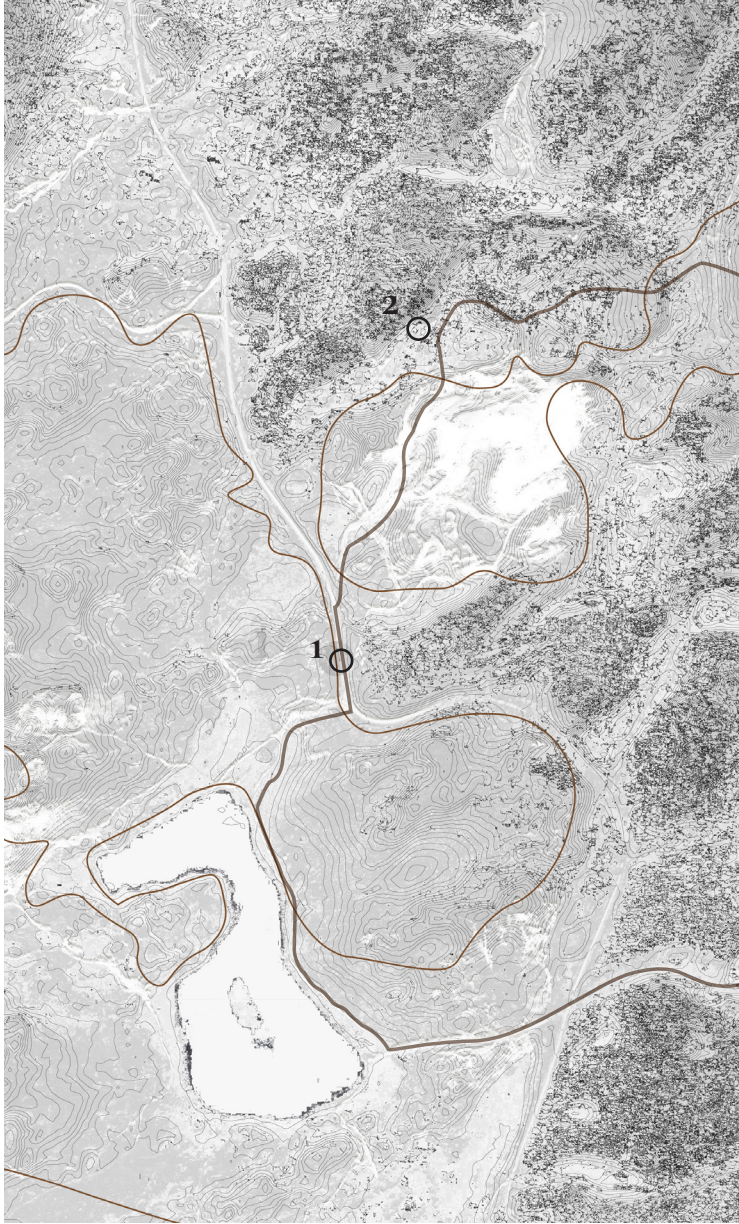




— Roetroute — Burned terrain



1:5000 (scaled down)



Moving through the landscape becomes a continuous state of transition. Entering a stage where just being in movement can become meaningful as there is no clear beginning or end, only rhythms of pause and continuation and being 'in between'. In this sense, walking becomes a way of entering a different experience of time.

This understanding relates to the notion of the threshold described by Georges Teyssot. Teyssot describes the architectural threshold as a condition between dreaming and waking, where inside and outside intertwine and transformation takes place. Within *In Passing*, the landscape itself functions as this state of dreaming and waking, while the two places of remembrance emerge as thresholds embedded within it.

Walking allows the bereaved to gradually enter a state of farewell. Through movement, one is guided into an experience of transition before arriving at the moment of farewell. The spaces of remembrance therefore do not function as destinations detached from the landscape, but as two pauses within its rhythm of walking.

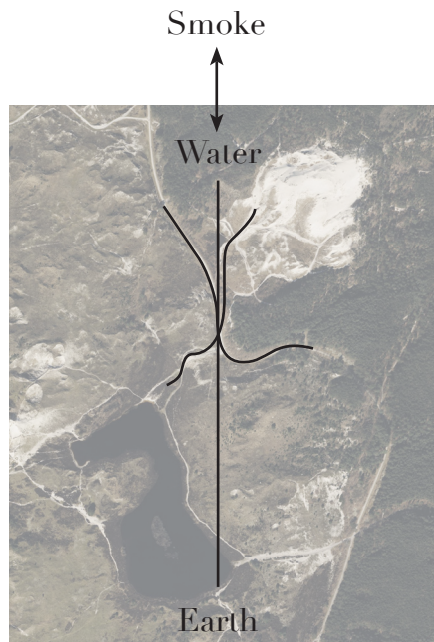


Place one

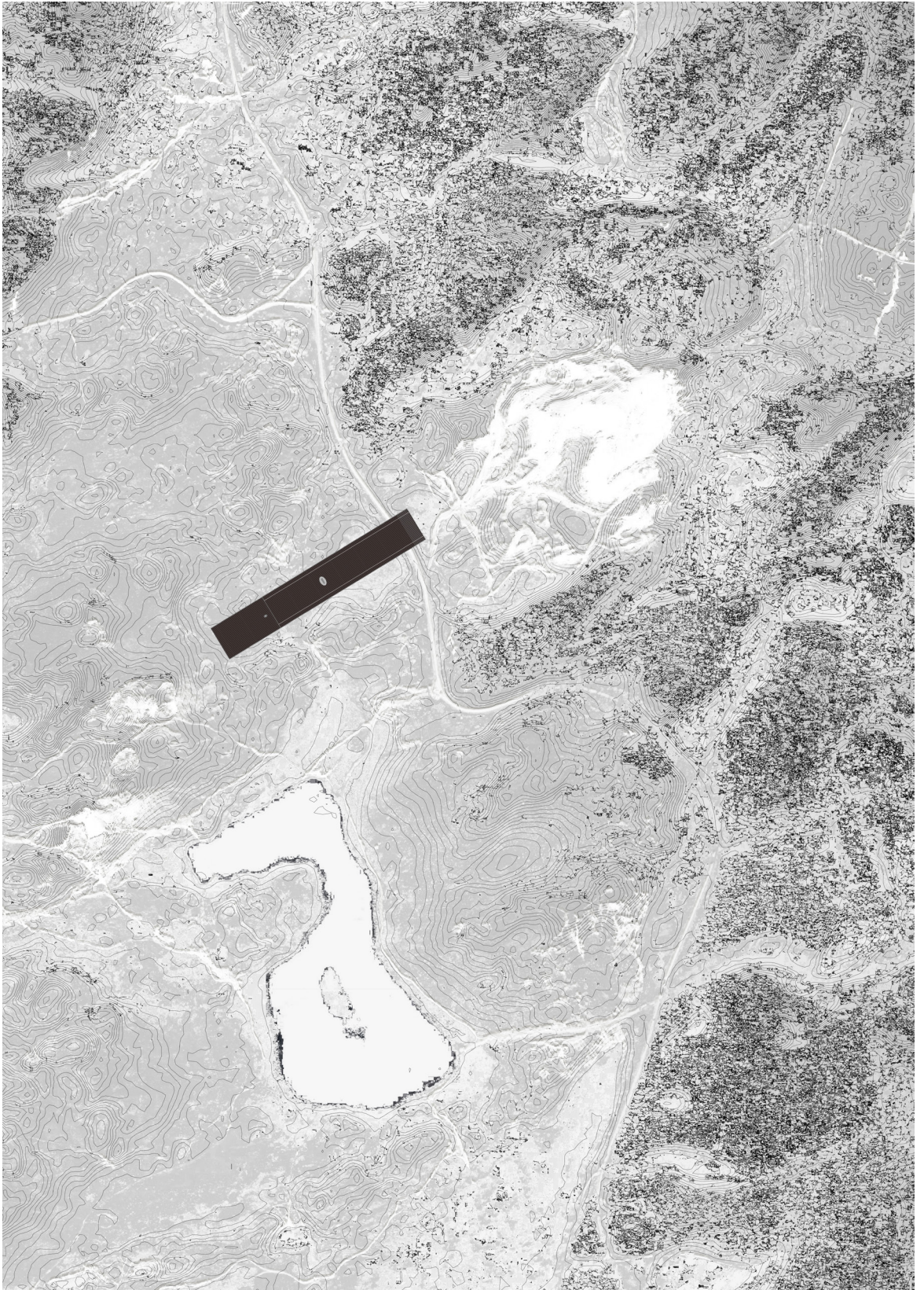


The first place of remembrance is located at a point of geological and geographical synthesis. The Nieuweweg cuts through this landscape, where walkers and cyclists pass through. On one side an open horizon of water and rising dunes enclosed by dense woodland on the other.

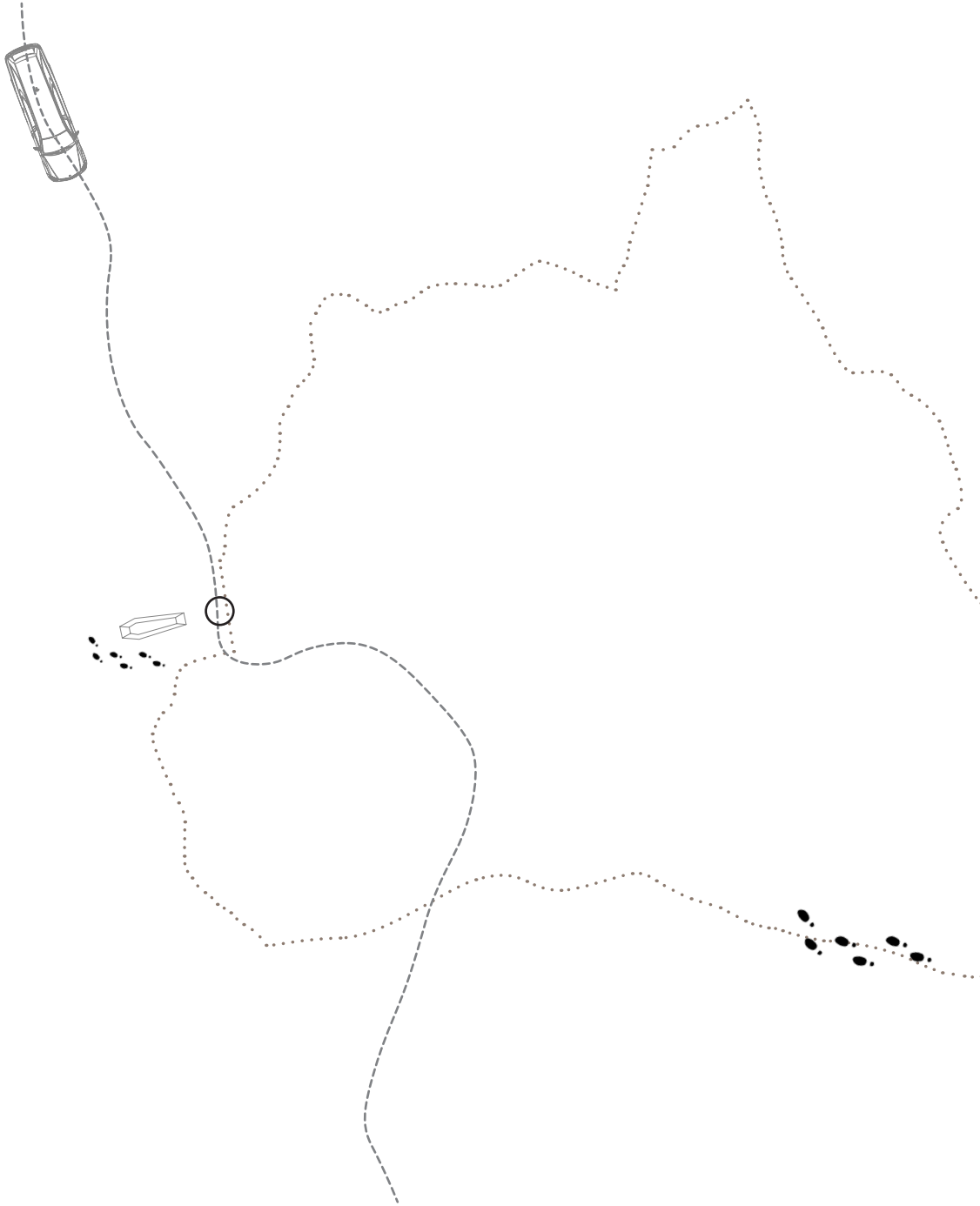


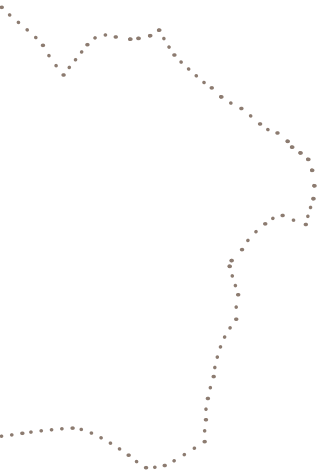


The cremation space is positioned within this synthesis, extending its geological dimension through two vertical punctures that connect groundedness and fleetingness—one through light and one through fire. Both are dimensioned in relation to the coffin and establish a dialogue between the body, the earth, and the transient processes of saying farewell.



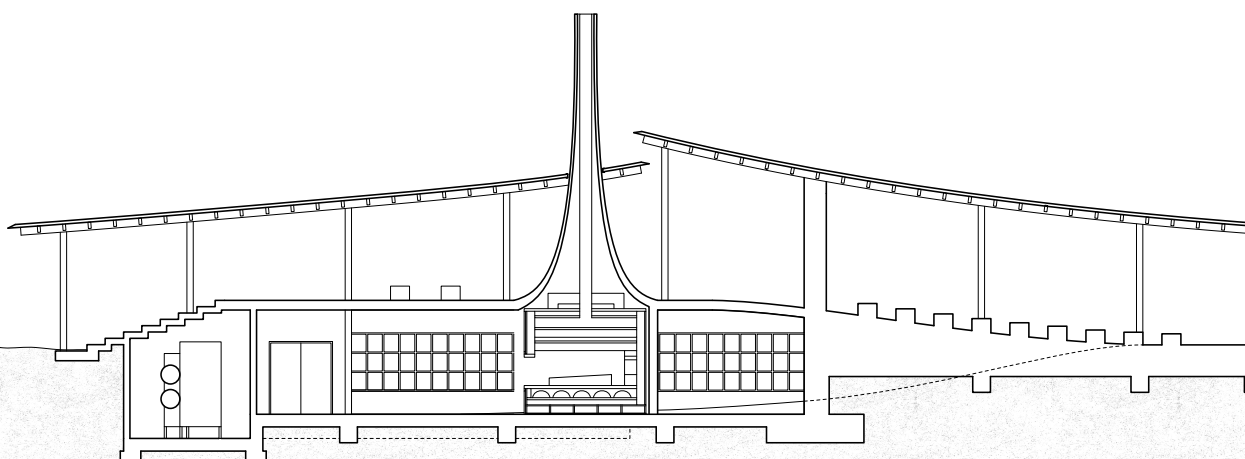
1:500 (scaled down)

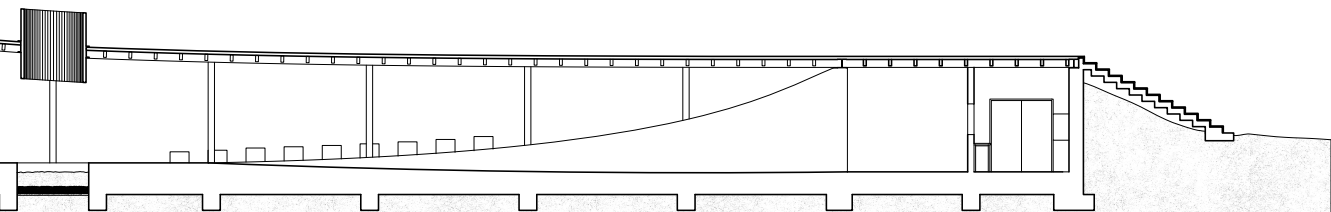




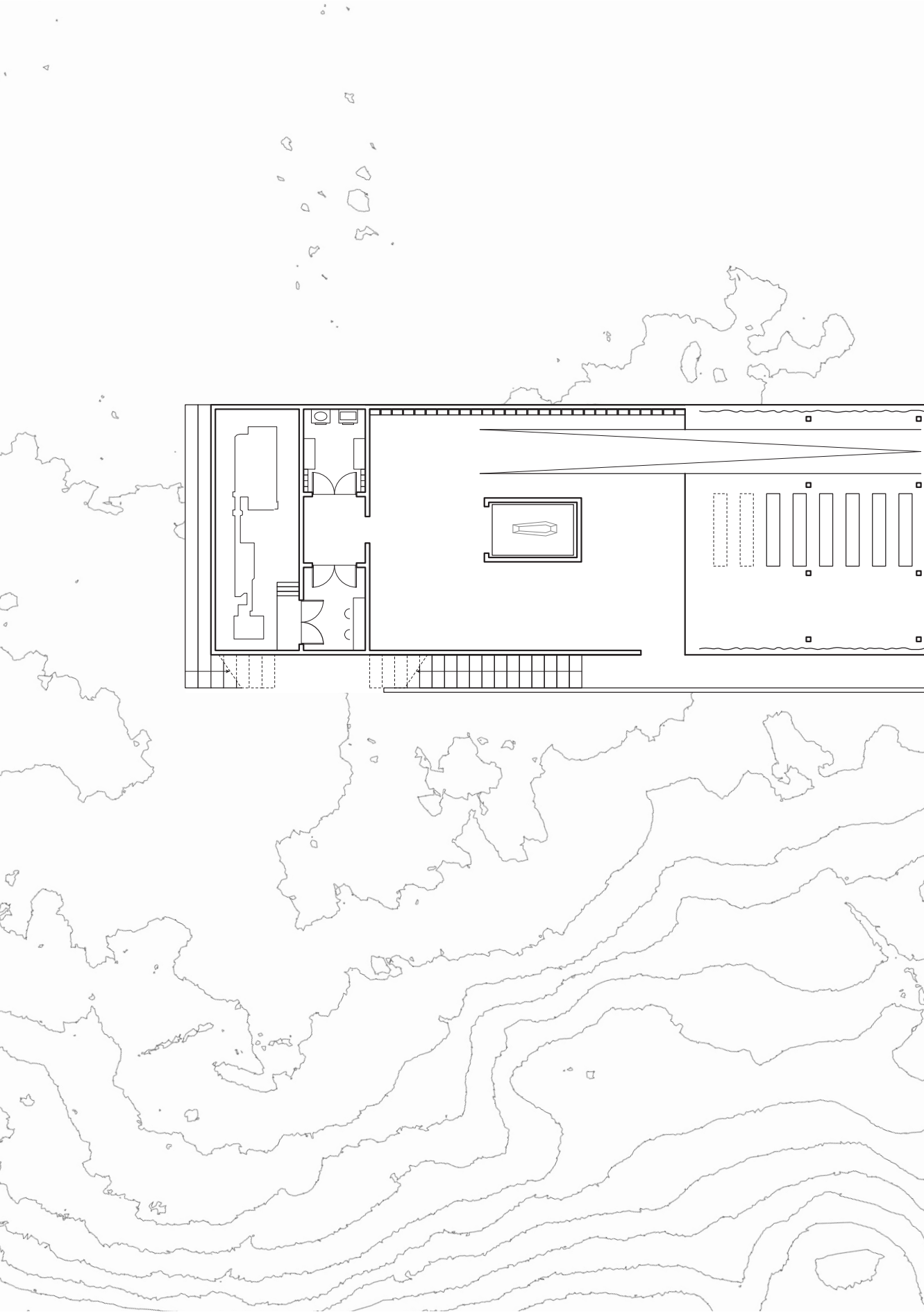
As time passes, the place begins to emerge from the landscape. Approaching the space, the Nieuweweg descends toward the entrance, marking a soft transition from landscape into a place of pause. Located at the intersection of the Nieuweweg and Roetroute, the entrance is where the route of the coffin and that of the bereaved meet. Here, remembrance through walking and the presence of physical remains come together. Two processes of farewell, each unfolding in a different experience of time, converge for a moment in this space.

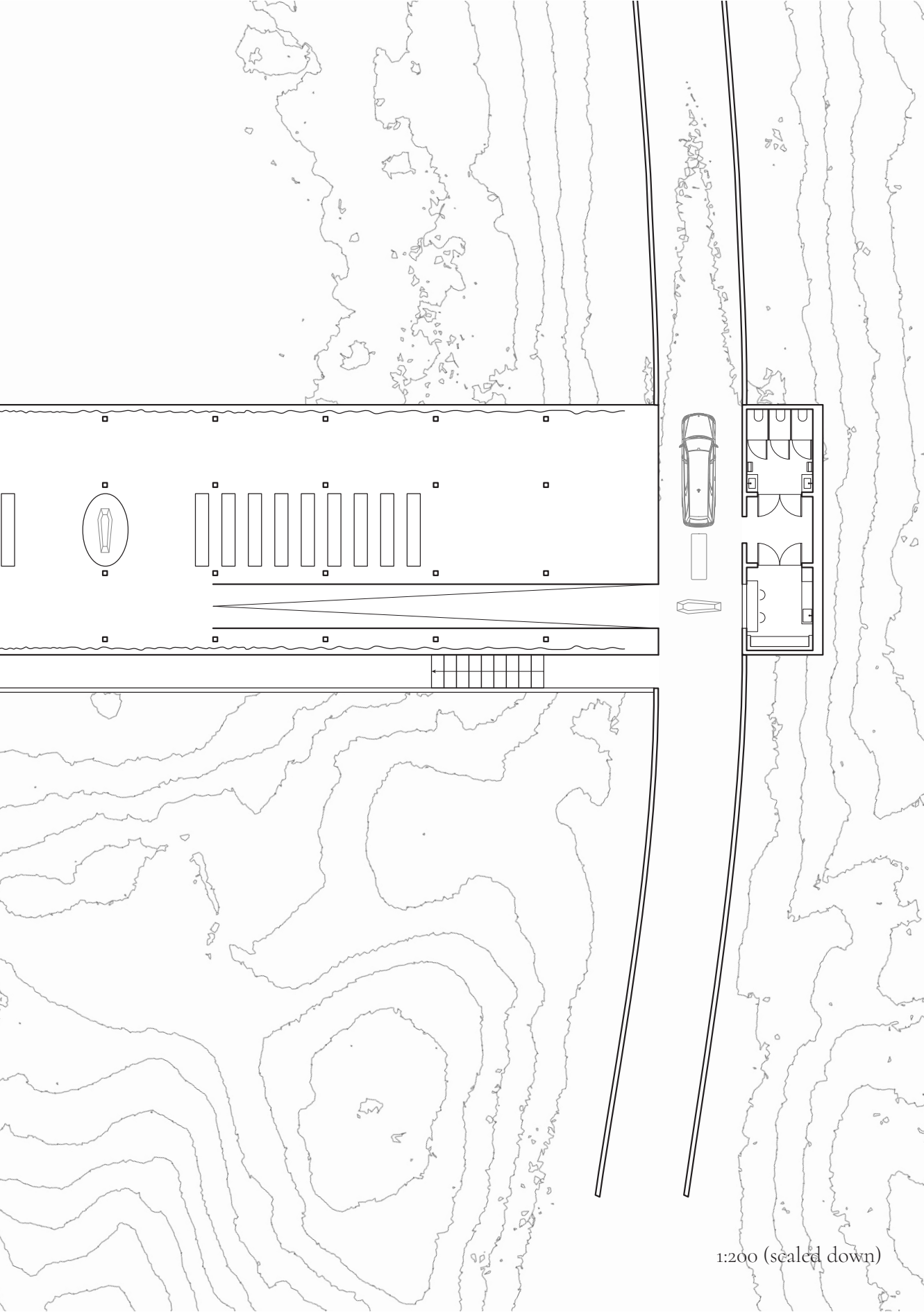
The spatial organisation continues the ascending and descending movement of the surrounding landscape. Shifts in eye level and the ambiguity between floor and ceiling create a sense of being in-between. In a wave-like spatial condition, upper and lower spaces intertwine. The roof extends this layering and remains accessible, allowing everyday walkers to encounter the place and extending the connection between remembrance and daily life.



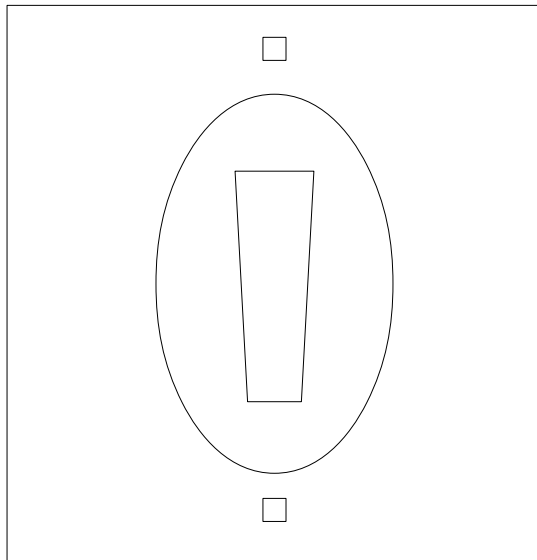
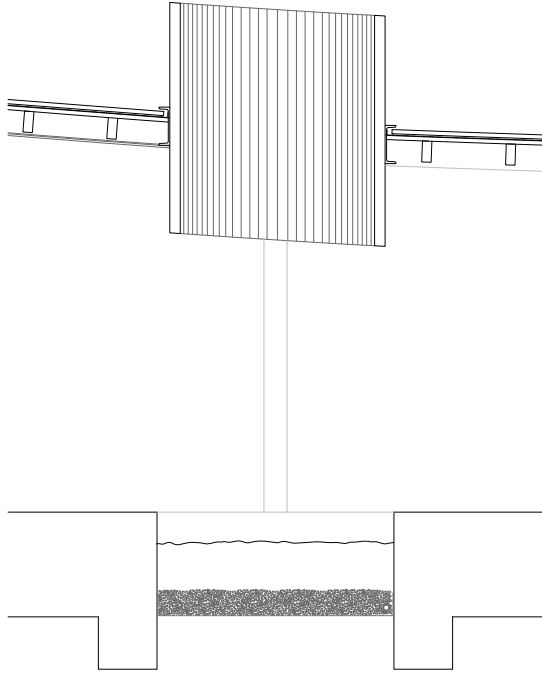


1:100 (scaled down)





1:200 (scaled down)



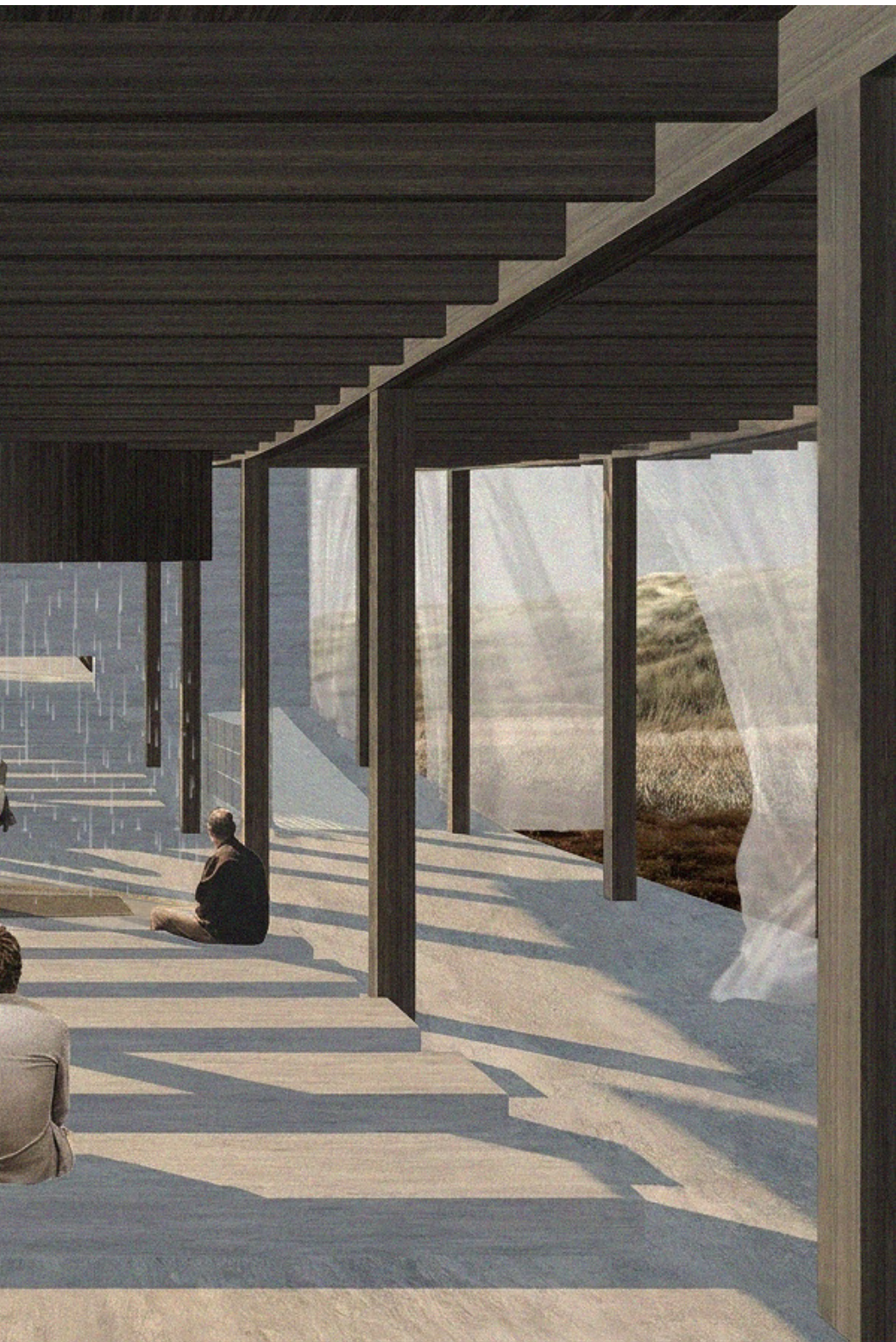


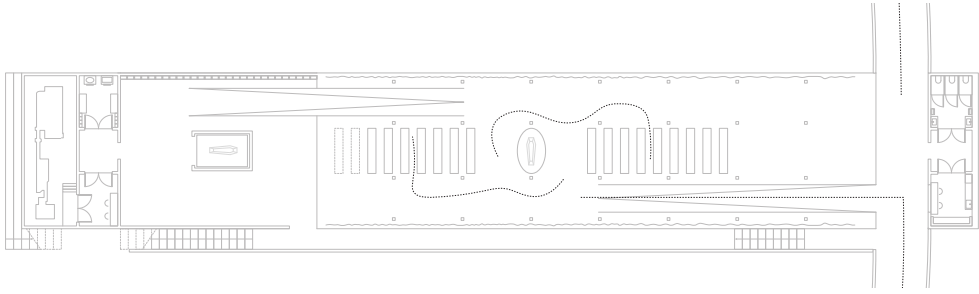
The ceremonial space is approached through a gradual incline leading towards the first puncture. Here, light, air, and rain enter through an opening in the roof and fall onto the exposed earth below. The gesture refers to the shared condition of returning to the earth, while engaging the fleetingness of this process through its mirrored space above, grounding the ceremony within the broader cycles of the landscape.











Sequence one

The space contains no prescribed sequence, schedule, or technological mediation. Seating rises from the solidity of the ground, offering a place for gathering, speech, or silence. Screens and music give way to the sound and presence of the landscape itself, opening up a condition in which temporal structure begins to loosen.

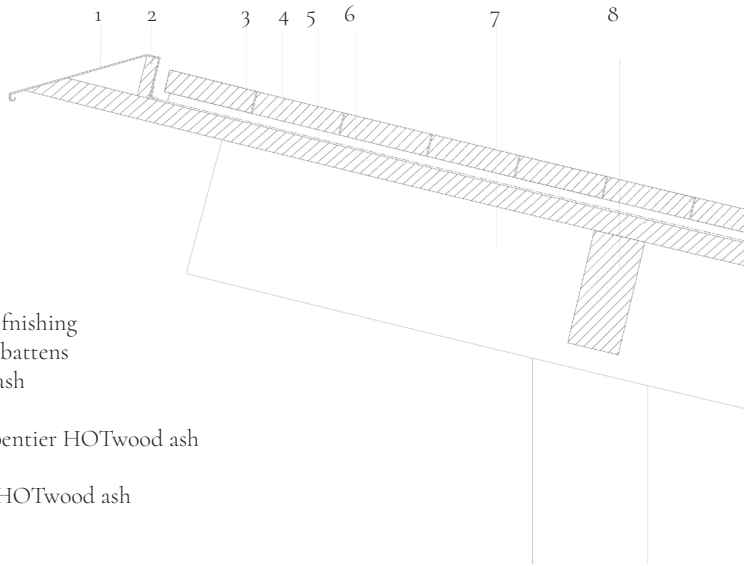
This temporal suspension opens up the notion of waiting, which philosopher and political thinker Simone Weil—cited in Hermsen’s *Stil de tijd* (2009)—describes as the moment where the “having of time”, often driven by personal intention, shifts into the “being of time”. This state is both fragile and unsettling. Yet within this suspension, waiting becomes a moment of emptying, where time is no longer measured but experienced qualitatively.

This shift is deepened by Pallasmaa’s understanding of architecture as something that does not produce emotion, but evokes and intensifies it. That memory is activated through fragmentation and incompleteness, that invite both remembrance and imagination. Completion, understood as a negotiation between past and present through memory, becomes bodily rather than purely cerebral.

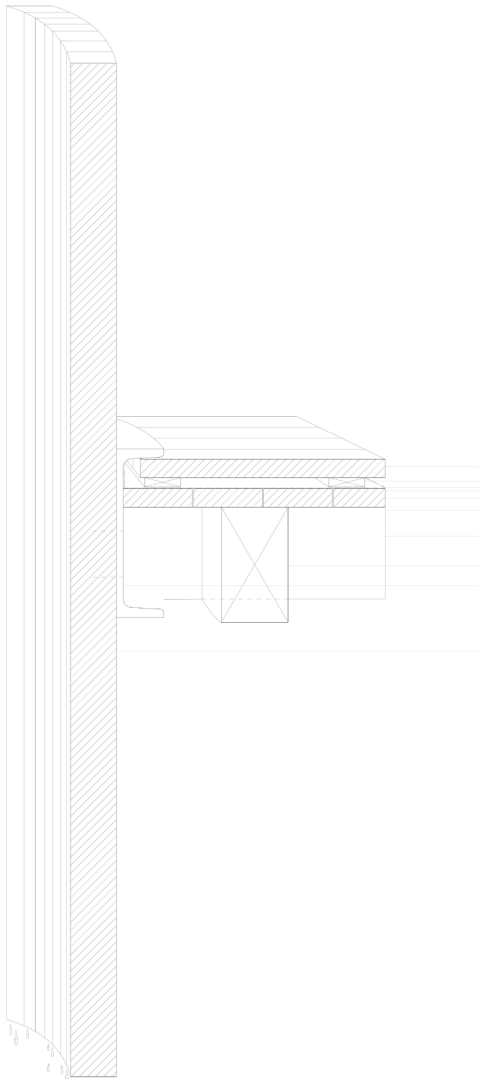
This notion of fragmentation is translated spatially into a space between the built and the unbuilt, where absence carries the same weight as material form. Without glass, doorframes, or thermal separation, openings are reduced to simple punctures in mass, allowing one space to transition into another without a clear boundary. Each surface continues into the next, resulting in a limited and consistent material language. In this way, the detail is reduced to its

essential state, where construction and perception remain closely aligned.

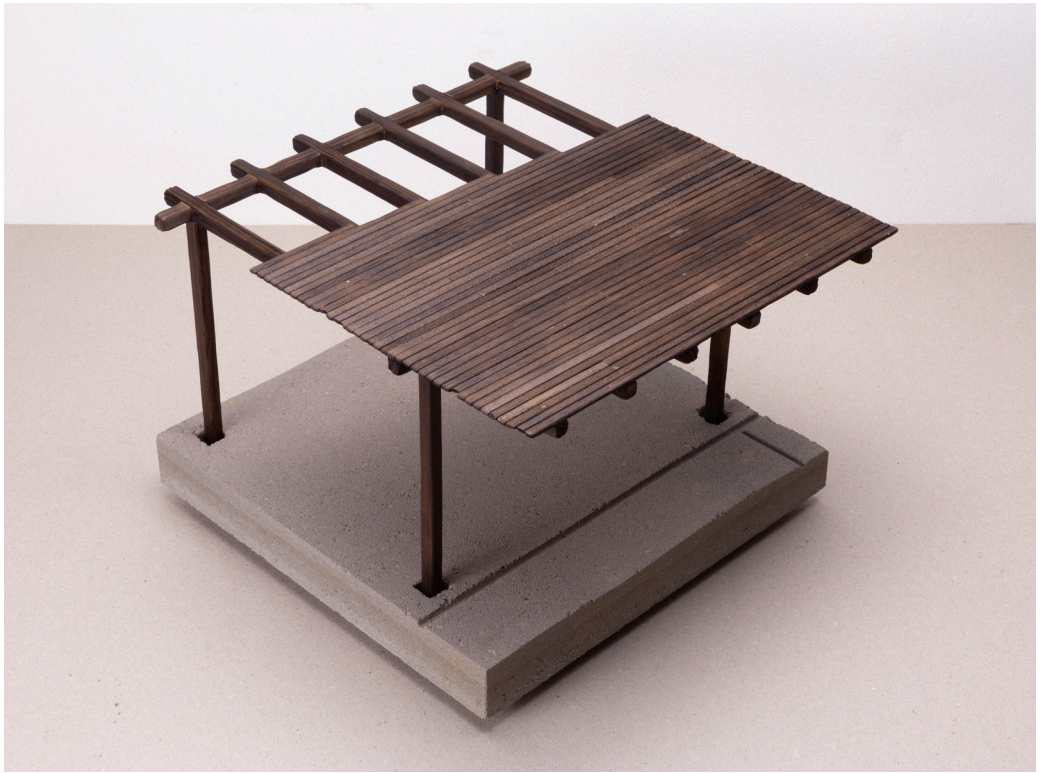
Extending this reduction to material presence, the spatial experience is defined through the tension between groundedness and fleetingness. Groundedness and solidity are expressed through rammed concrete, using excavated sand from the site—forming a direct continuity with the earth and embedding the building within the landscape from which it emerges. Fleetingness appears in the rhythm of charred timber columns, which puncture the ground plane and extend into the roof structure above. Through fire, the wood is transformed—edges soften and grains are revealed, carrying both loss and renewal within its surface.



- 1 Zinc edge trim
- 2 Solid white wood
- 3 40 mm Plato wood whitewood finishing
- 4 20 mm Plato wood whitewood battens
- 5 40 mm Carpentier HOTwood ash surface charred
- 6 200 x 150 mm curved solid Carpentier HOTwood ash surface charred
- 7 200 x 150 mm solid Carpentier HOTwood ash surface charred



- 1 40 mm Plato wood whitewood finishing
- 2 20 mm Plato wood whitewood battens
- 3 Waterproof membrane
- 4 40 mm Carpentier HOTwood ash surface charred
- 5 200 x 150 mm solid Carpentier HOTwood ash surface charred
- 6 250 x 200 mm curved solid Carpentier HOTwood ash surface charred
- 7 UNP 330 cold rolled steel.
- 8 100 x 1800 mm solid Carpentier HOTwood ash surface charred
- 9



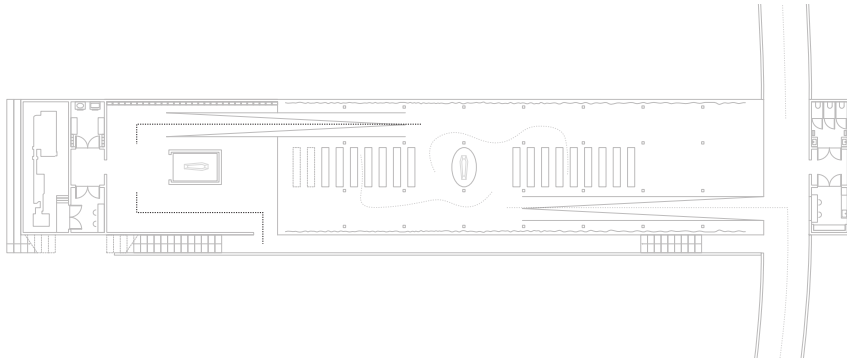




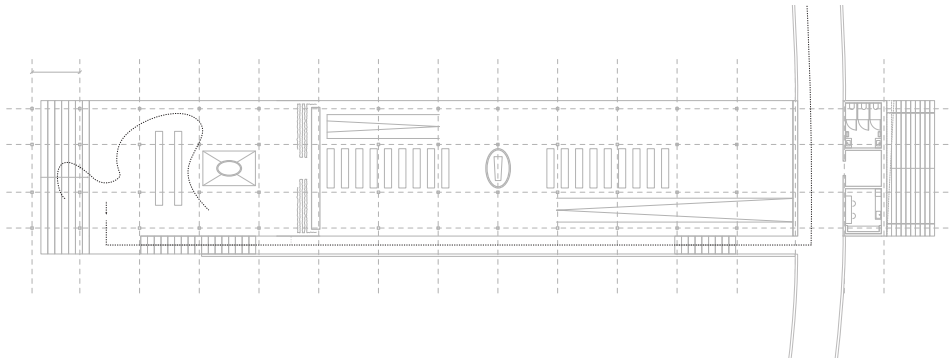
This material tension is expressed through the qualities of textile. Following the movement of wind and rain, the fabric reveals the ephemeral quality of time—a non-traceable, experiential time. Through constant movement and translucency, the textile obscures the boundary between inside and outside, articulating a state of in-between waking and dreaming. When the space opens, the textile is redirected along the short side of the space, aligning

with the oven puncture and creating a condition of pause and transition, softening the spatial threshold.

Together, these materials form an architecture that holds tension between solidity and vulnerability. In *Passing* sustains this tension as a condition of remembrance—an architecture that is simultaneously grounded and transient, where material presence becomes a carrier of memory.



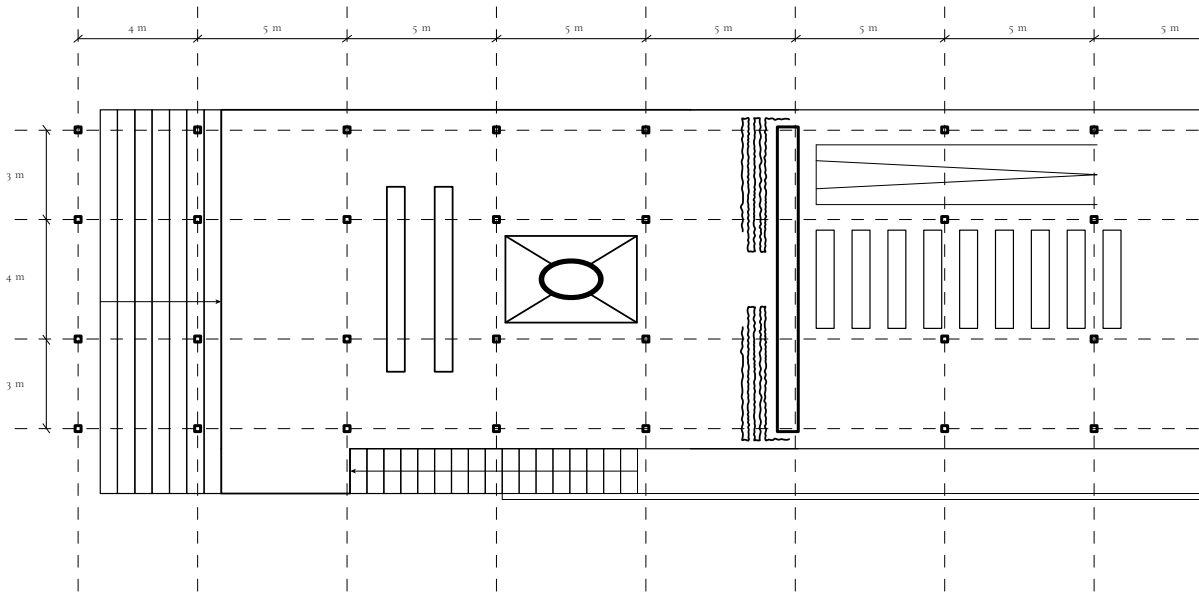
Sequence two

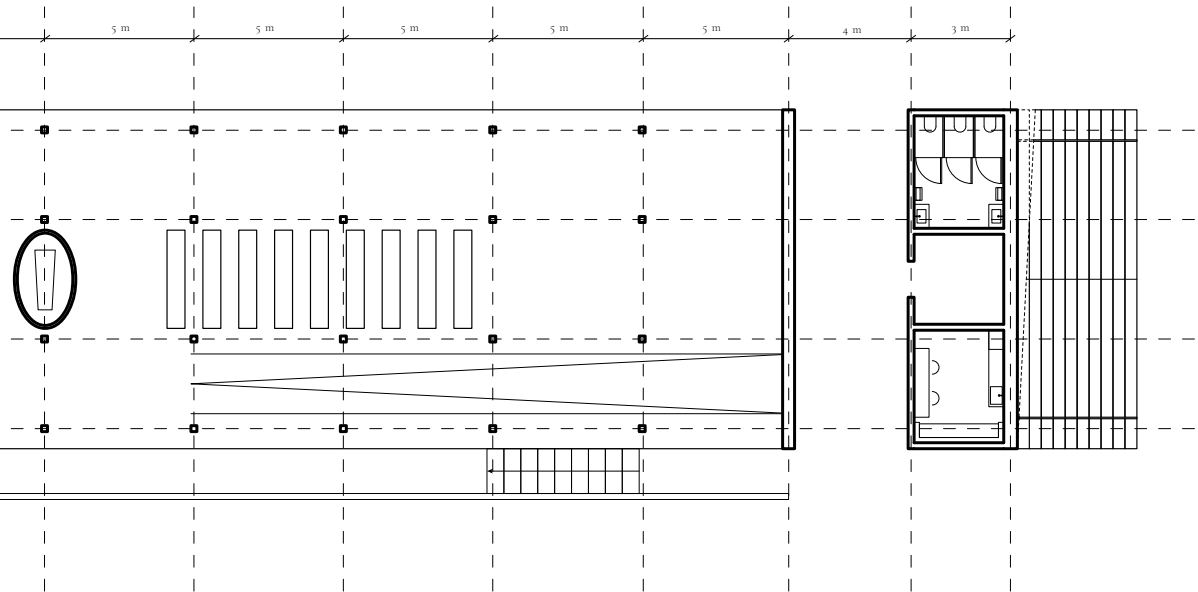


Sequence three

After a moment of stillness, the spatial sequence continues. The coffin is lifted from the earth and descends along a soft slope into the more intimate and enclosed cremation space, reflecting one's lowered position within the earth. Arriving along the cremation oven and wall of urns, the orientation turns toward the oven, with the ceremony space remaining in the background. This movement marks the moment of final farewell; the oven extends upward into the ceiling, registering its vertical puncture.

Depending on the wishes of the bereaved, one may remain to enter the coffin in the oven or continue upward. The route ascends along the oven to a platform that opens into air and landscape, forming a space of return and togetherness. Upon continuing to the Roetroute, the walk descends again along the line of ground, lowering the body toward the earth. The space of farewell is encountered once more from a different perspective, allowing memory to emerge through movement.





Place two





The route extends into a sandy rising terrain towards a dense forest. at the edge of the burned area, a second place of remembrance emerges. Defined by a line of trees and shaped by ecological succession, this site reflects the quality of resilience.

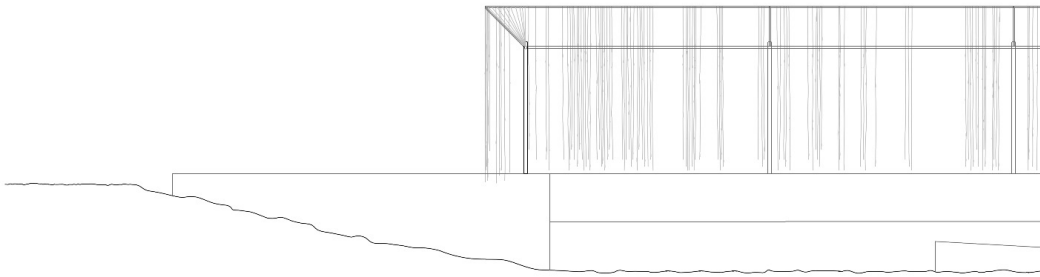
Where the first place is architecturally articulated, the second exists in a more minimal state. Retaining walls define a sunken space within the landscape, suggesting the foundations or remains of a structure rather than a completed building. The architecture exists between the built and unbuilt, reflecting the incompleteness of memory itself.

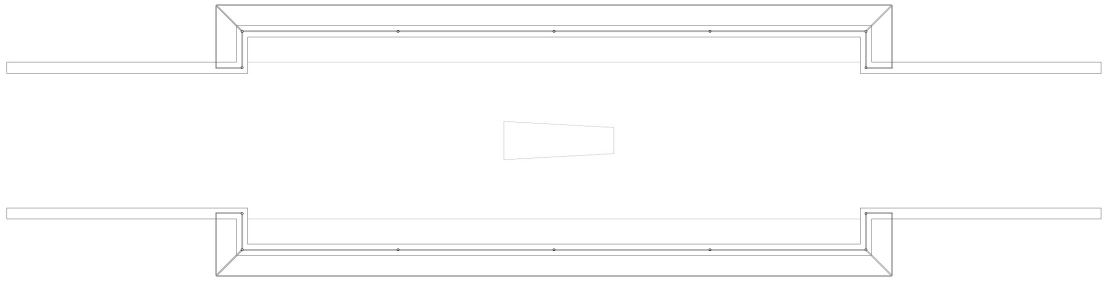
When season and weather allow, this place accommodates smaller ceremonies. Upon arrival at Place

One, the coffin is carried through the elevated landscape by the bereaved or by designated carriers to Place Two.

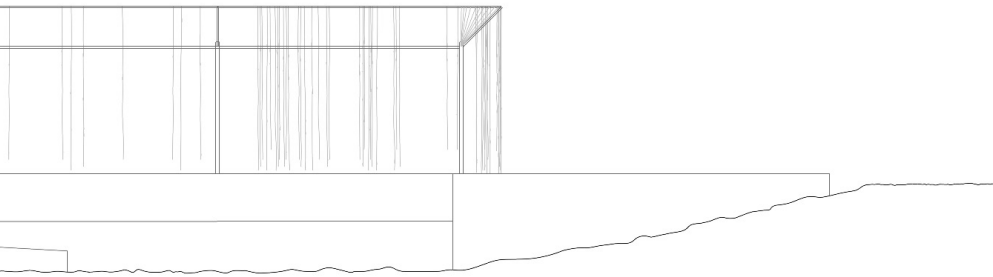
But primarily, place two functions as a place of return and leaving behind. Here, the bereaved can leave a single thread of sheep's wool attached to a delicate aluminium framework. Over time, individual threads accumulate, thickening the space through countless personal acts of remembrance.

Differences in knotting, length, and placement create individual expressions of time, as the wool gradually weathers and loosens, while simultaneously contributing to a collective memorial landscape.





1:100 (scaled down)



1:100 (scaled down)



What remains

In the Netherlands, ashes are only allowed to be collected after one month due to legal reasons. In *Passing* redefines this delay as part of the temporality of the landscape. Return to collect the ashes is not fixed by calendar time or administrative procedure, but it is aligned with seasonal and cultural rhythms. As grazing sheep are part of a seasonal rhythm to manage the landscape, the bereaved are asked to return when these sheep are sheared as part of a cultural rhythm. The wool of the sheared sheep materializes the temporality of the landscape.

At Place Two they can leave a single thread of this sheep wool attached to an aluminium framework. The threads over time accumulate, thickening the space through countless acts of remembrance. Differences in knotting, length, and placement create individual expressions of time, as the wool gradually weathers and loosens, while simultaneously contributing to a collective memorial landscape.



Conclusion

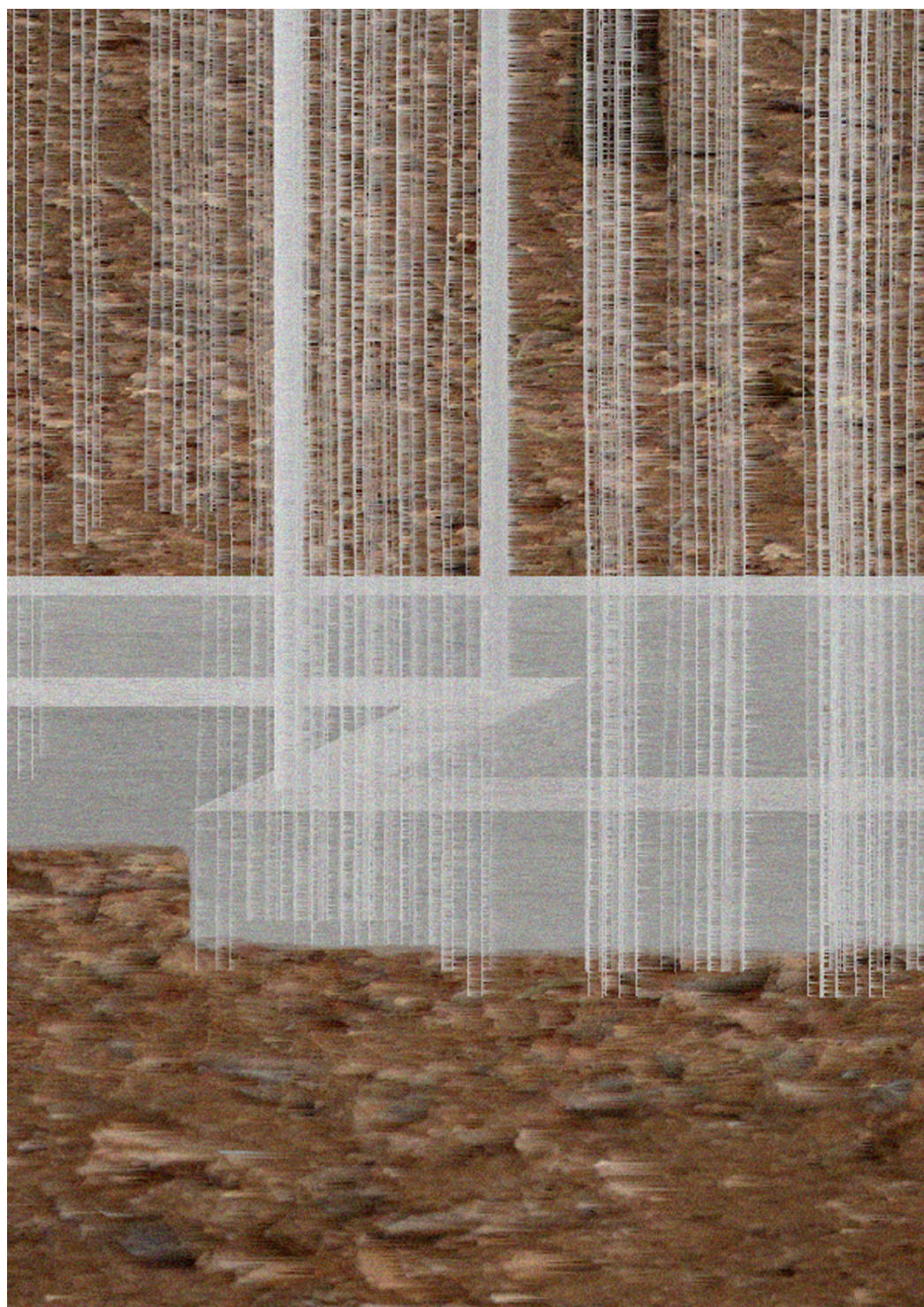
In *Passing* emerged from a tension within the temporal structures that organise contemporary funerary practices and the ways farewell, mourning, remembrance, and return are actually experienced. Rather than treating remembrance as something to be preserved within fixed monuments, the project explored how architecture might accommodate processes of change, duration, and becoming.

The Schoorlse Duinen provided a context in which these ideas could be explored spatially. Its history of fire, shifting sand, ecological succession, and ongoing human intervention exposed a landscape already negotiating permanence and impermanence. Rather than imposing a separate order of remembrance upon this terrain, the design aligns itself with its existing rhythms and transformations. Walking becomes a temporal framework through which remembrance unfolds, while the acts of farewell, return, and memorialisation are embedded within the landscape's own processes of change.

The resulting funerary landscape proposes an alternative understanding of remembrance. Memory is not preserved through permanence but sustained through

participation in ongoing cycles of transformation. Architecture becomes less a fixed monument and more a framework that supports encounters between the living, the dead, and the landscape. Through material weathering, ecological succession, bodily movement, and ritual return, remembrance remains active rather than static.

Ultimately, *In Passing* does not present conventional funerary architecture, but rethinks the space of farewell as a state of in-between. It argues that funerary architecture can engage mortality not by resisting time, but by giving form to its passage. By positioning Time as a qualitative design medium, the project reconnects architecture to the relationship between human and humus, memory and landscape, life and death. Rather than seeking to resolve the tension between measurable and lived time, it creates conditions in which remembrance can unfold through participation, return, and change. It asks what remains after loss and invites visitors to engage with the experiential qualities of time—weathering, movement, and transformation. In doing so, it situates remembrance within a landscape that, like memory itself, is never fixed and always in passing.



Reflection

As described in much literature on time, it remains difficult—perhaps impossible—to truly grasp what lies beyond time as we experience it, as we have never traversed the moment of death. As a young student, my experience of time has been more closely tied to living, becoming, and unfolding than to its absence or end.

At the same time, being a student and growing older, I have increasingly become part of a society governed by clock time, strengthening the tension between a search for inner time within clock time.

I believe this is where my fascination originates, while also forming the point with which I have struggled the most: how to define and design this inner time, while never fully being

within it, nor having the clock time required to inhabit it completely.

Ultimately, this project touches on a deeply personal and larger question of life. It does not aim to resolve that tension or offer a solution to another experience of time. Instead, it can be understood as a suggestion—a reflection on the architecture of farewell—through which a new sensitivity might emerge toward the inherence of time within the shared spatial and material conditions of both life and death.

It is a search that will continue to unfold and accompany me throughout both my professional and personal life.

Acknowledgement

To my tutor Mieke Vink for the inspiring depth of knowledge, genuine care and detailed, sensitive guidance she brings to her students, which I have been fortunate to experience throughout the years.

To my tutor Rufus van den Ban for his infectious enthusiasm and for encouraging me to recognize the many qualities of architecture and the potential within my personal way of working.

To all my friends—those who have supported me throughout my journey of life, and those who made my pre-master and master years a time I will never forget.

To my parents, who created the safest and most loving environment in which to grow as a person and aspiring architect.

And to Tom, for his unconditional support, presence, and generosity with his time.

Thank you.

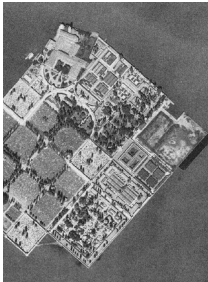
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Appendix



Veduta



Affordances of the present



Site exploration



First visualisation

Veduta

A 44×32×7 visualization of time.

This Veduta is a reflection on Time and its relation to the concepts of life and death.

A delicate white grid forms the frame of the Veduta, suggesting the supposedly given structure of time to life. But its fragility and undefined spaces reveal our equally fragile understanding of time.

At the centre, a frameless construct of thread touches the grid at only a few points. Life and death finding their moments of connection to the larger frame of Time. Life and death are visualized as a single thread, as neither can be seen apart from the other.

“Perception is not something that happens to us, it is something we do. Strange as it may seem therefore, to live one needs to practice death.”

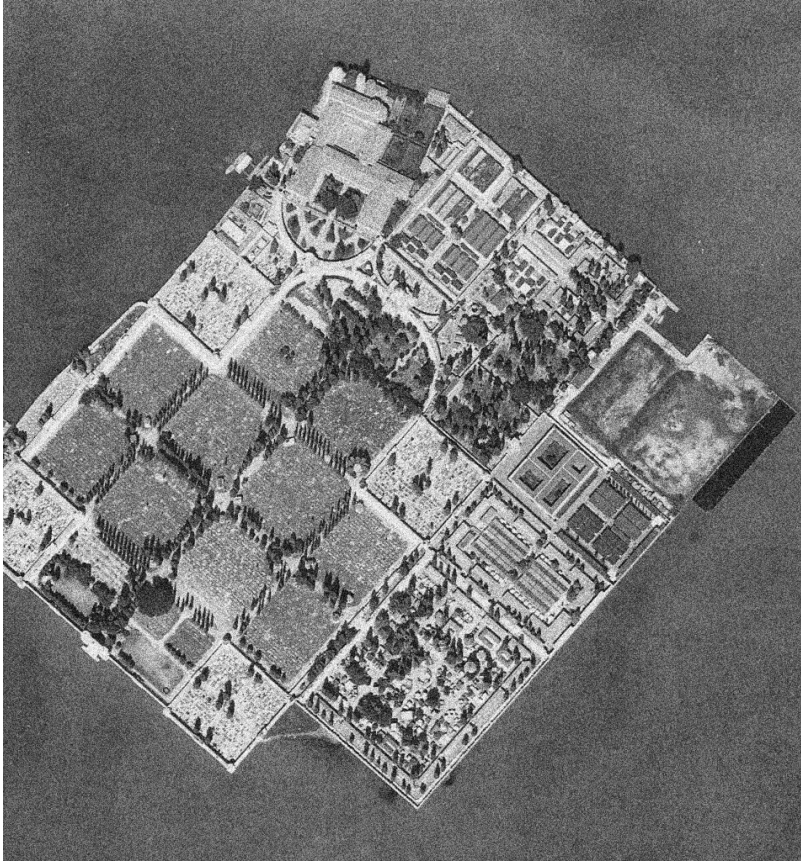
Radman & Kousoulas, *Architectures of Life and Death*, 2021.

The single thread mirrors how time can only be observed as an array of moments. Although we often imagine time as linear, something we can only move towards but only look backwards, the intersecting threads reflect the more dynamic perception of time that is needed, rather than its flat, linear experience.

With its subtle hierarchy in ratio, material, placement, and orientation, the work emphasizes the search for the composition and materialization of life, death and time, that lies at the core of this graduation project.



AFFORDANCES OF THE PRESENT



SPATIAL LIMIT OF TIME

Time's limit is set with its man made or natural spatial boundaries.

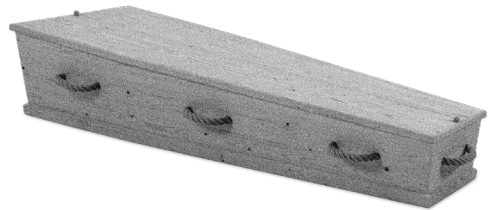
material/ingredients: land, individual spaces, natural/man made boundaries: water

Materials/ingredients



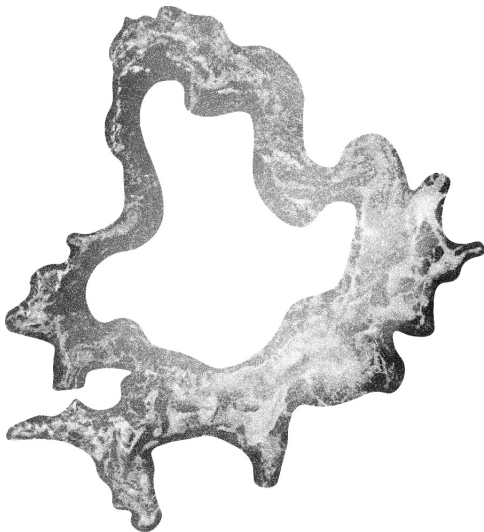
Land

The backdrop, the space to use, limit and individualize.



The coffin

Individual space underground.



Water

Natural or man-made boundaries; built structures, preserved spaces, natural conditions.



The tombstone

Individual space above ground.

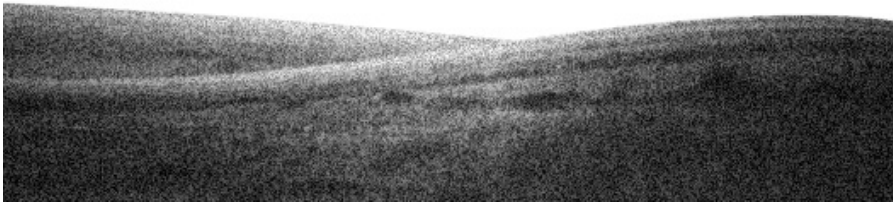


SURROUNDING CHANGE

Its backdrop. Its landscape. While the stones stay intact, its the environment shows change.

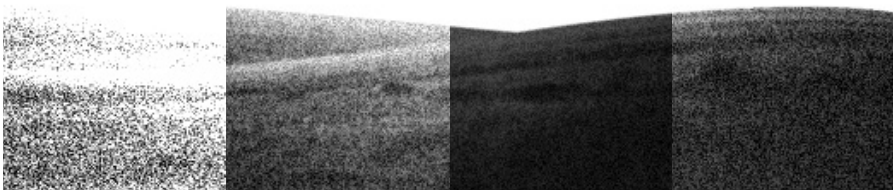
Materials/ingredients: seasons, unprotected space.

Materials/ingredients



Unprotected space

Open to the movement and duration of time, open to change.



Seasons

The earth taking its time to turn around the sun, exposed to changing densities of light.
Change makes us experience time.

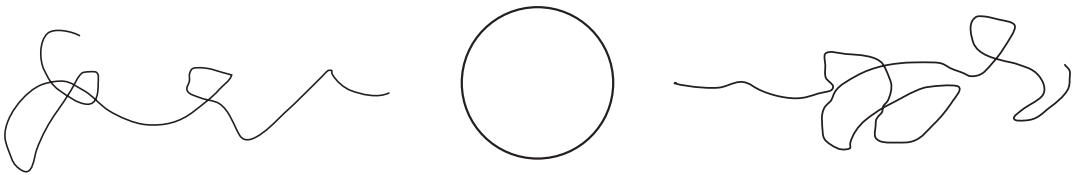


MEMORIAL BENCH

A moment of pause, connecting body to memorialisation by furniture.

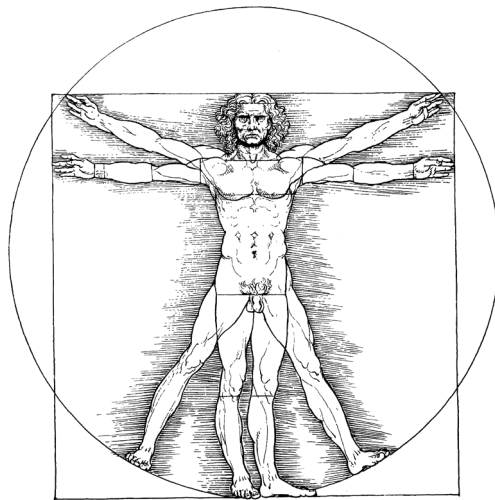
Materials/ingredients: Lack of movement, scale of the body,

Materials/ingredients



Pause

Moment of pause, stillness, without movement



Scale of the body

A spatial relation in which the body can nest its pause and stillness



DECORATION BY TIME

They are placed on a moment in time and through its withering show how much time they have been standing there. Replaced by new ones, not marking an end of commemoration. But liveliness and its consequence of weathering is preferred over the permanence of the tombstone.

The materials/ingredients/qualities of time: liveliness, withering, holder

Materials/ingredients



Liveliness

The flower, each bringing their own living symbolization, blooming and withering.

Withering

Displaying transience. The lasting of an image is a fraction in time, the withering is a consequence of time that happend.

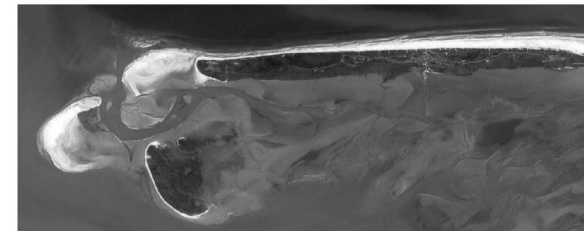


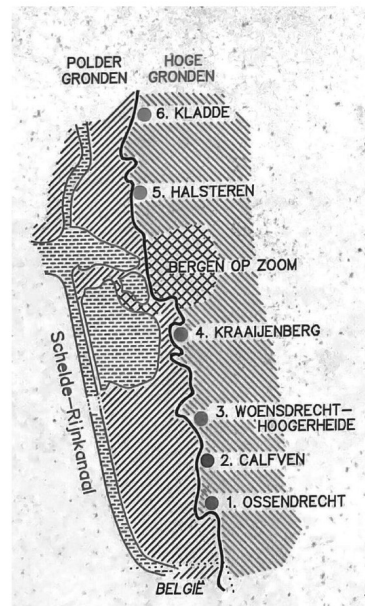
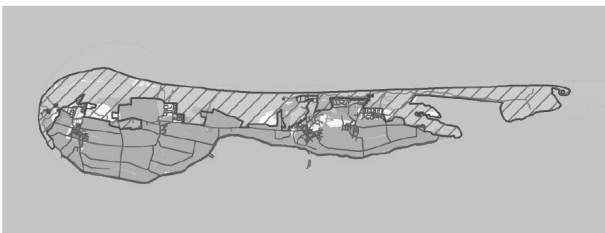
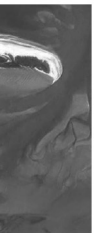
Holder

A container with water, most likely a vase. Set to its stone, seperate, extending its liveliness, postponing its withering through surrounding its stems by water.

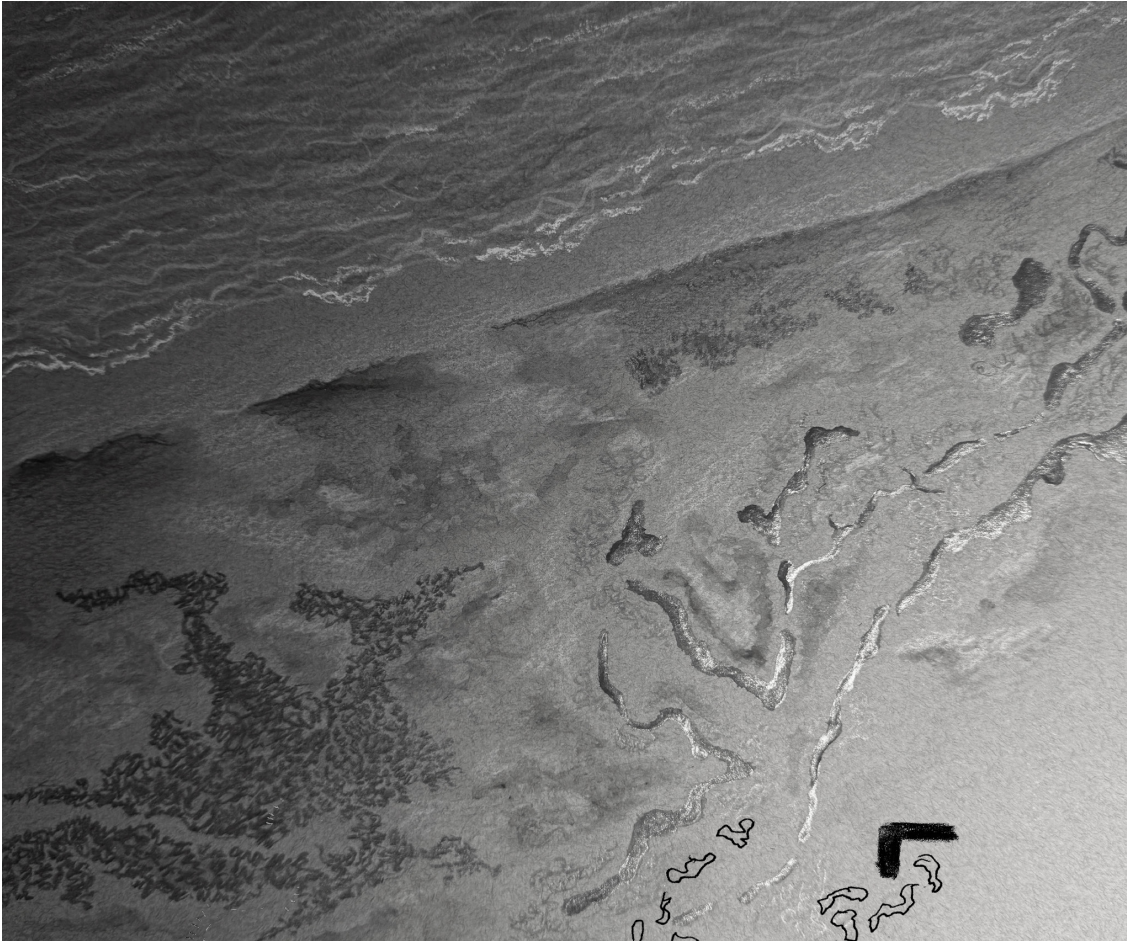
Site exploration

focused on identifying traces of time.

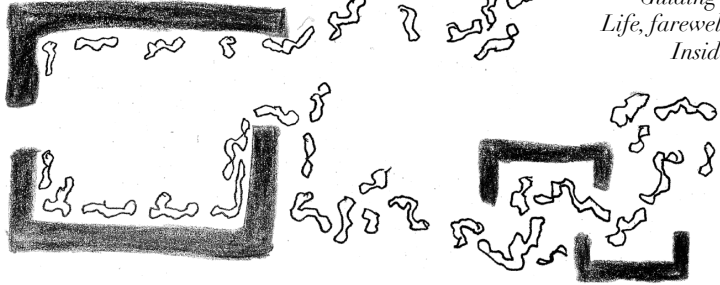




First visualisation



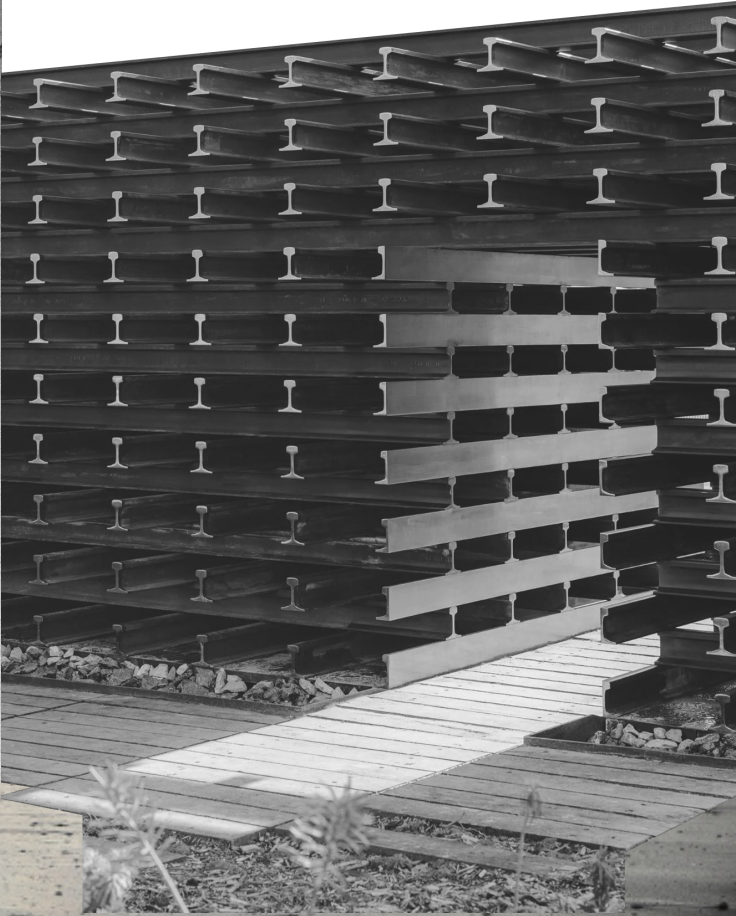
*Shaping
through memory*



*Guiding architecture
Life, farewell, memories
Inside to outside*

Where site and material are parallel

“The Rails of Memory”



*ally
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