The design process is messy, a graduation project is chaos.

While there are clear themes from beginning to end, this is not always easy to understand. This goes for the reader, but just as much for the author.
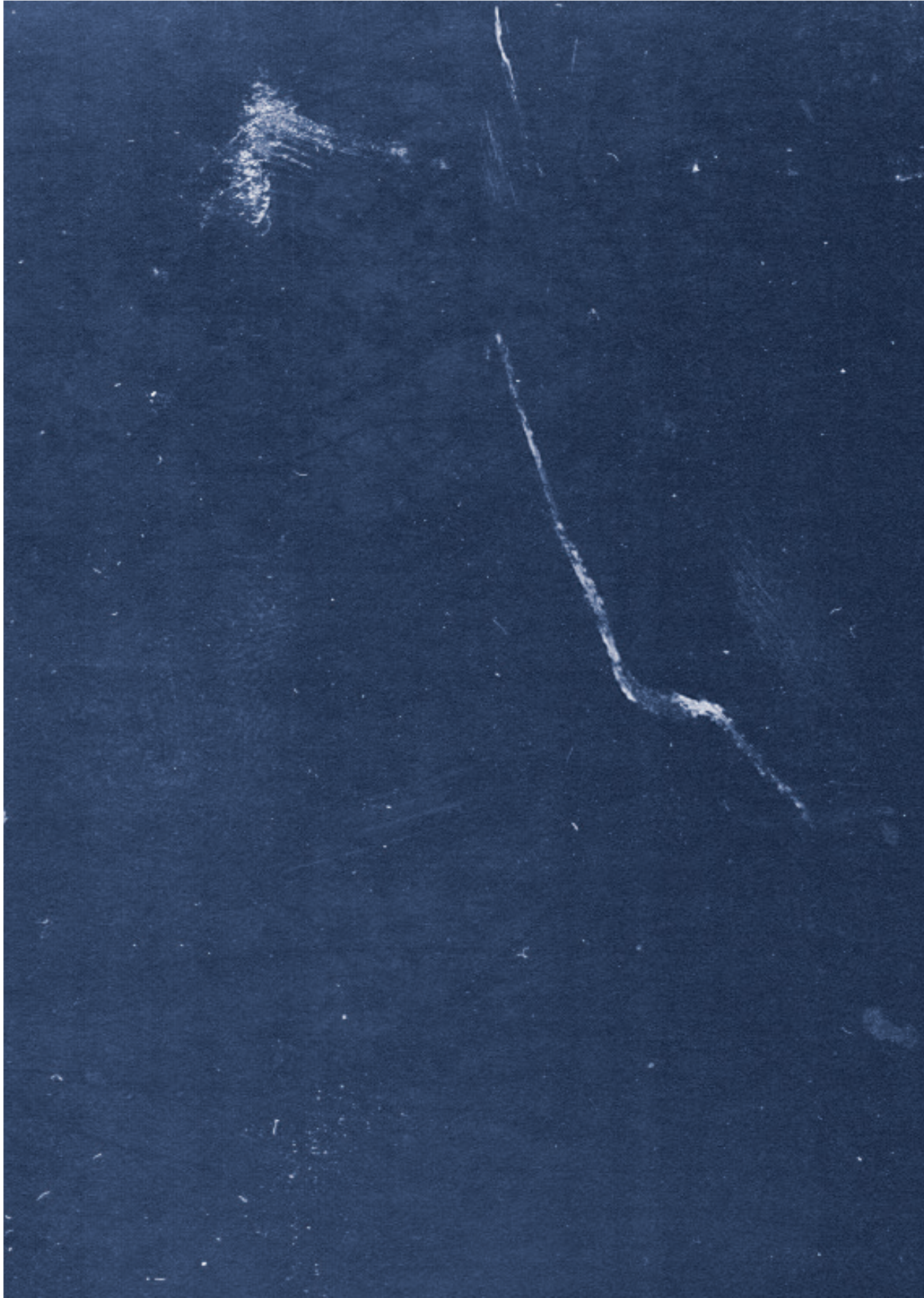
That is the reason for this booklet. To structure thoughts, for myself and for the reader.

There are many things this book is, but there are also many things it is not. It is not a coherent research. Not a direct answer to the research questions. It is definitely not the only way to approach architecture.

What it does do, is show my trajectory. And presents a slightly alternative way to see architecture. It poses questions rather than answering them. Is informative to myself. And hopes to, through the act of this exercise, be of any relevance to others as well.

While this project takes the form of a chronological book, it can be compared to the form of 'hyperlink storytelling'. A narrative structure that features multiple plotlines which may interweave, intersect or diverge.

It is recommend to follow the presented order, but it can be read in any manner.

PROLOGUE

Contents

Premise

As said before this project is not a typical research. Although many sources are used, no data is collected and no hypotheses are proven. It is an active research, an artistic research one might say, which is ongoing and really never finished.

Instead of proving arguments it is more about the practice of doing. While it starts out more analytical, which can be seen in the following pages. At a certain point the project turned more intuitive. There was a realisation that this approach would gain me more, just as the potential reader.

That is why the project is structured around three made films. All three completely different in subject, media and technology. But together in the end they might complement eachother and reveal a greater value.

The order is one: "Terrain vague", the film for P1, almost like a stop-motion. This mainly focuses on the Friche, and is a kind of site analysis. Two, :"Walk like me". A camera verité style street documentary. With a combination of fiction and reality giving a glimpse of (Brussels) urban life. And lastly a film where all media are techniques are blend, and hopefully, everything from the year comes together, in one final film presenting the design of the storyhouse "A window to the world."

Why

The experience of the stroll through the city, and architecture, is often attributed as being cinematic. This usually relates to the (e)motion through a sequence of scenes or images; a spatial montage. As claimed by the early 20th century film director Sergei Eisenstein: "Film's undoubted ancestor ... is-architecture."1. One of the most extreme examples of this is the Le Fresnoy art center designed by Bernard Tschumi. As a advocate of cinematics in architecture, this project can be seen as a culmination of his former writings and ideas. The building is a juxtaposition of old and new, and is conceived through a montage of space, movement and event. Film can be a driver for architecture, but simultaneously, architecture is a fundamental component of almost any film. In many films, architecture can act as an additional character. And as Juhani Pallasmaa2 describes: "Architecture gives the cinematic episode its ambiance, and the meanings of the event are projected on architecture". In Synecdoche New York3 the architecture of the theater décor takes on an essential role in the narrative. It reflects the emotional journey of the protagonist by evolving in form and undergoing 'character development' itself.
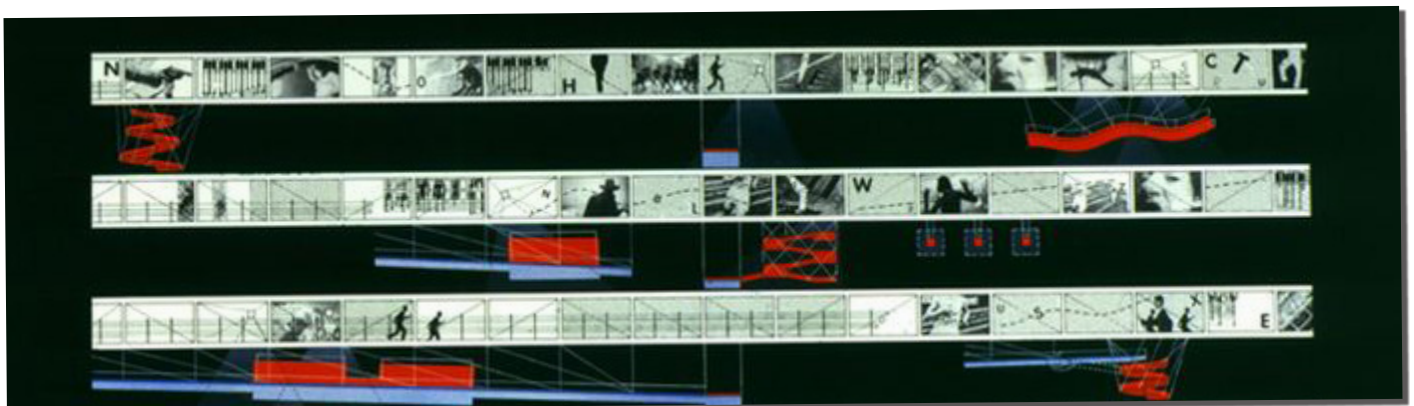
These two examples show the first distinction to be made in the discourse around film and architecture. Firstly, how film can be implemented in architecture. Secondly, architecture as an essential part of film. And lastly, what is the shared space or reality they both operate in? Next, as can already be seen in the first paragraph, there is a multiplicity of terminology surrounding these two topics. That is why in further development of this research a complete glossary will describe all the named terms in relation to this discourse.

Eisenstein names the route of the Akropolis as the first 'architectural film"

Film and architecture are the only two 'media' based in both space and time. Time presenting itself in the form of movement, duration, rhythm, the ephemeral, etc. In addition, film and architecture share similar aesthetics. Here aesthetics is not used as beauty or appreciation of art. But rather in the original Greek sense as 'Aisthetikos', perception or sensation, as a theory of all senses. Important here is the emphasis on the totality of senses and not just the visual. For Walter Benjamin, film was the first artform to be able to operate all senses. This is something that is impossible for most conventional modes of representing architecture. Although Tschumi in his Manhattan Transcripts comes closer, still a kinesthetic notion of space, emotion, tactility, etc. are missing. The experience of space, and thus architecture, is inherently subjective. Both architecture and film operate within 'lived'

"When you are in a room, a lived space, this experience is always a combination of external space and inner mental space, actuality and mental projection. Lived space is space that is inseparably integrated with the subject's concurrent life situation"

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You are always at any time in an objective and material world, but also within your own mental world. These two are always intertwined. As Italo Calvino said: "Who are we, who is each any of us, if not a combinatoria of experiences, information, books we have read, things imagined?". Pallasmaa adds to this: "In this mental space the modes of experiencing cinema and architecture become identical, which meanders without fixed boundaries."

Now that the foundation of this symbiosis has been established, knowing where it ends is just as important. For Deleuze, cinema turns you away your own thoughts9, it inhabits your consciousness. While architecture is 'merely' a container for daily life. Facilitating and constricting actions. In the end, film is artistical and architecture is functional.

Next to my architectural studies film and photography have been a growing interest of mine. In hindsight spatial montage, and later more concretely the topic of film and architecture, have been a recurring theme throughout my academic career. Many topics discussed throughout this proposal have been part of former successful and unsuccessful projects. The main obstacles were what has been briefly addressed in the last chapter. That is the multiplicity of terminology surrounding the subject. And the question: in which of the three named discourses do I find myself? For this research I will focus on the shared realm in which both film and architecture operate. And consequently what architecture can learn from film. Thus the topic of architecture within film will mostly be left aside.

In earlier projects I never really understood how to grasp this topic in its totality, without losing what might be called 'academical' significance and correctness. I am now aware that many of the topics mentioned will not be of much new interest to specialists in either fields. Nevertheless, I now know in the first place that this endeavor will be of great interest and significance for myself as an architect. But secondly, I also belief that undertaking this journey in its totality, attempting to tackle the topic in a practical, hands-on and extensive way, could be of significance to others as well. I hope to think that in the lateral assemblage of techniques, applied to a yearlong research and design, it will create a whole greater than its parts. The process could be compared to an 'artistic research'. This forms the preliminary question:

How can accumulated terminology from film theory be applied to the field of architectural research and design in a practical, extensive and lateral way?

Partially derived from the layout of the graduation track, and partially based on fundamental parts of the architectural design process, I have divided the research into a four-act structure. City, site, building and material. This narrative is told through a form that is similar to what is called 'hyperlink cinema'. This narrative structure features multiple plotlines which may interweave, intersect or diverge. Each act will have its own emphasis and theme, but together they create a whole in which some themes overlap or might be repeated. The acts are named:

1. "Terrain vague"
2. "Walk like me"
3. "The film that never was"

Just as a film, the research aims to work on many simultaneous levels. It is in the totality of its constituents that it works, and these are not meant to be seen independently. The couplings of title and theme are made so each act has its own emphasis. But, this does not exclude themes to come into play in different acts. What now follows are the four acts, in which for now briefly will be revealed what will be touched upon during the full research

Glossary

IMAGE
is not a picture. Instead is a system of relationships between its elements that are perceptible

MEMORY
the faculty of the mind where information and experiences are stored and changed by your frame of reference. They have a potentiality and are always waiting to be actualized

STORY
a connected series of events told through words, imagery, body language, performance, music or any other form of com-

NARRATIVE
how a story is told

TIME
measures space

STORYBOARD
a sequential series of rough sketches or stills showing what will happen in a scene.

SCENE
a discrete part of the continuous movement of a story

DURATION
Duration is ineffable and can only be shown indirectly through images that can never reveal a complete picture. It can only

MISE-AND-SCENE
"putting into the scene or shot." It refers to the sum total of all elements that exist within the frame.

MOVEMENT
is not translation in space, but transformation of the whole

CHARACTER
A character is the individual within a movie, played by an actor.

THEME
A theme is the inferred stance taken on the central topic or message of a story.

MOTIF
a recurring, intentionally repeated theme or element

BACKDROP
a large view or image in the background of a scene.

EMOTION
instinctive or intuitive feeling as distinguished from reasoning or knowledge

LIGHT
is a building material

TACTILITY
the capability of being felt or touched

BLOCKING
the process where will be determined where a character will stand, where the light will shine, and how the frame will be positioned.

SPACE
Measures time

SET (in traditional cine-
That where the lights and camera are pointed at

SET (for deleuze)
sets or closed systems which are defined by discernible objects of distinct parts

SURREALISM
Expressing the irrational and unconscious. Through dreams, juxtaposing different realities and …

SEQUENCE
a sequence is a series of scenes that form a distinct narrative unit

SPACE-TIME
the whole or a portion of physical reality determinable by a usually four-dimensional coordinate system

FRAME
a chunk of space. Spatially delimits a closed set of elements

SHOT
a chunk of space-time. A discrete set of elements enduring time and thus a unit of movement that expresses "transformation of the whole"

MONTAGE
chunks of space-time in relation to eachother. Also, producing one new whole from fragments

BLOCKING
chunks of space-time in relation to eachother. Also, producing one new whole from fragments

Approach

Perceived

CITY
event

SITE
memory

practical

FILMING EXISTING

(documenting the streets)
- *urban context*
- *social space & life*
- *provide commentary (through narrative)*
- *materiality*

theoretical

APPLYING CONCEPTS TO RESEARCH

- *event*
- *social space*
- *movement*
- *flaneur*
- *psychogeography*

- *(collective) memory*
- *sense of place*
- *representations of space*
- *image*
- *(architectural) themes & motifs*
- *emotion*
-

P1

P2

- *terrain vague film*

- *urban film*
- *film script*

Conceived (and also perceived)

BUILDING   MATERIAL
framing   *light*

FILMING CONCEIVED
(filming models, animating, scripting)
- *approach sequence*
- *narrating/scripting event*
- *sequence of interiors*
- *project/details in different lights*

APPLYING CONCEPTS TO DESIGN

- *framing*
- *sequence (of spaces)*
- *collage/montage*
- *character*
- *decor (tectonics)*

- *aesthetics*
- *light*
- *textures*
- *all senses*
- *kinesthetics?*
-

P3   P4   P5

m
t

- *final film*
(unknown media

Research themes

An important problem creates new questions.
An important problem is often unsolvable.
 –S. Kousoulas

While this project contains research questions I think I already know that I will not be able to answer these questions. Not so easily at least.

I did not set out to find the solution to an empirical problem. Rather this project takes the form of an 'artistic research'. In which I hope through doing to create another kind of research. It is not about questions being answered. But about forming the questions, and trying to tackle those problems. In which the act of trying is the outcome.

How can film be used to better understand architecture? This is a very general question. Which I think is of relevance and can also be tackled. Firstly, and throughout the project, I aim to search for large and small ways through which film can be of benefit to the architectural process. Be it an overall mindset or by applying specific terms or techniques. Think of movement, emotion, time, thematics, etc.

Consequently there are three more specific themes I would like to go into.

Framing, event & memory
or
Set, action and narrative

Framing or Set is about both the more physical aspect of filmmaking with regards to seeing. Looking, sequencing, excluding or hiding. How does the set or surroundings complement the action. But also about film or architecture as a vessel for displaying different viewpoints, narratives or insights.

Event or action is about seeing architecture as the podia for what may be called 'daily life. Firstly the city and site as reaction chambers facilitating encounters and interaction between inhabitants. But also architecture itself as the set for more intimate interactions.

Putting the use, or action, of architecture first. Possibly scripting personas and situations as direction for design

And lastly the aim is to give a larger voice to the mental. The personal, subconscious, irrational, emotional and also surreal. The experience of architecture is highly subjective, which is something often disregarded in traditional design.

While the most vague of all topics, arguebly one of the more important. Most of how we see architecture is associative, related to memory.

This project aims to give voice to this other subjective side of architecture.

ONE —

– SITE ANALYSIS:
"Terrain vague"

The Friche Josaphat

La Friche Josaphat is a rather unique place in Brussels, a former marshalling yard, a hidden landscape both surreal and sublime. For those who visit the site, La Friche evokes a sense of wonder. How come I never knew this place existed? What is the history of this place? Why does this site seem to exist outside of the everyday city life of Brussels?

In this chapter a part of the groupwork of the first quarter is presented. To be able to explore the origin and meaning of the extraordinary feeling evoked by La Friche, its characteristics are examined based on three main themes: Void – Vedute – Phantasmagoria. The exact definitions of these terms might not seem obvious at first, as they are layered with different meanings, both in- and outside the architectural context. In this chapter, we will state our understanding of the terms through definitions and further elaboration, while also starting to relate the terms to La Friche.

With our group we explored what makes the Friche such unique place. For us it gave room for all kinds of possible futures. That is why we named a number of "imaginations". Ways we think the Friche could transform in the future. And also "preconditions" the characteristics of the location that make it so unique.

The Friche Josaphat

An (urban) void

: a space that is unused, underused, or misused within the city, a leftover space.

The form of La Friche and its interaction with its surroundings denotes it as a void in the urban fabric. The notion of the void, its implications, and the nature of its existence is a contested topic in a variety of contemporary practices. The term urban void can be seen as a default label to designate leftover spaces resulting from processes of urban abandonment that originate from some kind of obsolescence or loss (Lopez-Pineiro, 2020). Due to the process of urban abandonment, and the voids liberation from the previous ideological framework, the void presents an opportunity for counter dominant spatialities to emerge, bringing along opportunities for the imagination and conceptualisation of an alternative public space. There is a wealth of terminology to label the urban void, where the default term carries a negative connotation. This leads to the expression of the void to be potentially misunderstood. In the context of La Friche, also due to its unique nature, it is essential to understand what the notion of the void means, and projects upon our understanding of the site, in order to inform future design choices.

Shot two years before the fall of the Berlin Wall, 'Wings of Desire' is set in Potsdamer Platz, a wasteland filled with tall grass, reminiscent of the Friche Josaphat. Within these desolate landscapes, the two figures in each image have a surreal presence.

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Imaginations: prairie and grazing land

Before the construction of the marshalling yard and the park Josaphat, the area of La Friche was used as farmland. It was most likely used for the growing of crops, but possibly as grazing land for cattle. After losing its function as a marshalling yard it returned to a grassland. While still very obviously in the city, the distinguished combination of meadow and railway for many may evoke images of a Wild West American landscape.

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A vedute

: a highly detailed, usually large-scale painting or,
print of a cityscape or some other vista
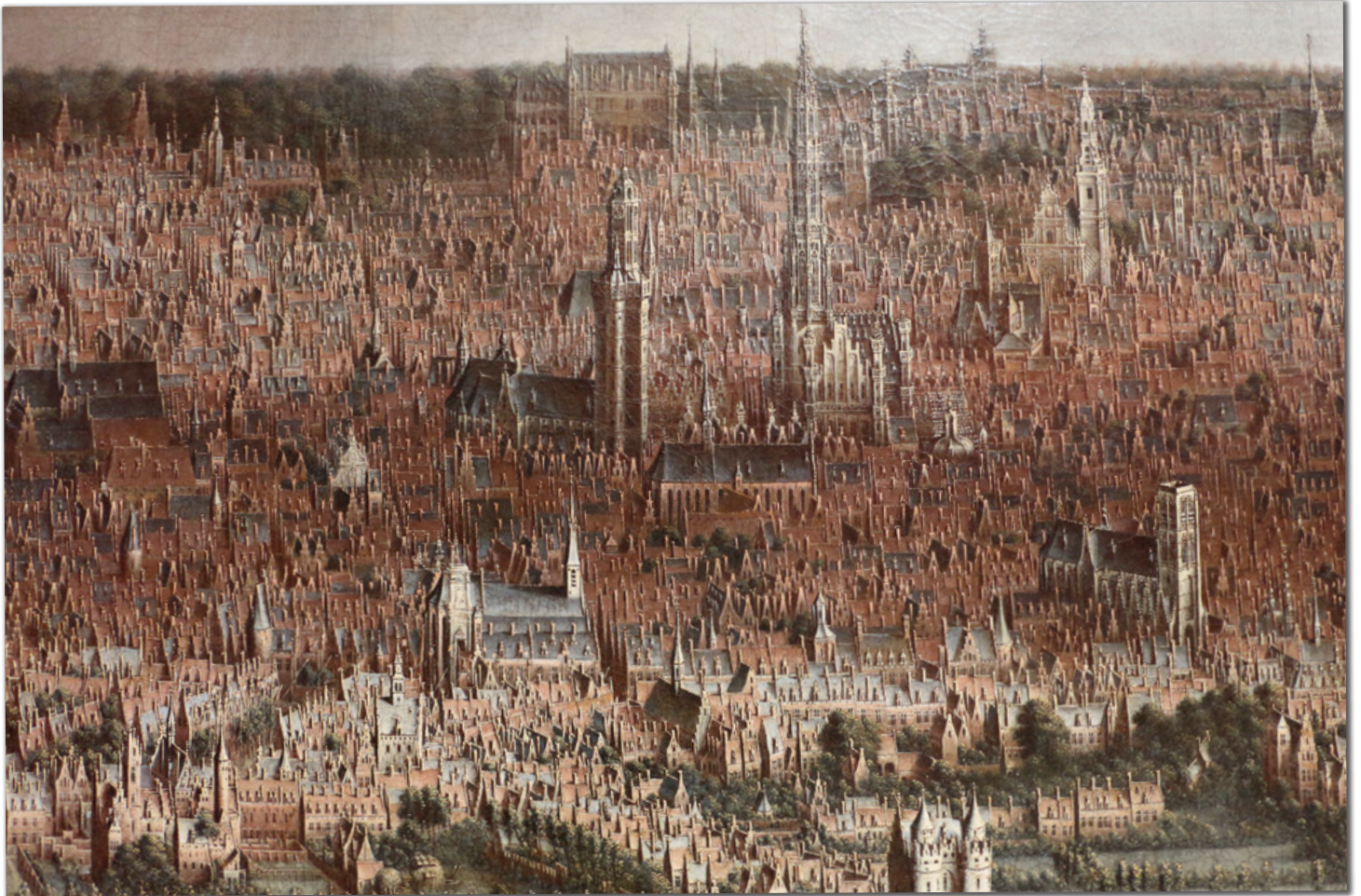
Vedute is the plural form of Veduta, italian for 'view'. It's the name attributed to highly detailed paintings that depict cityscapes and other vistas, a genre which originated in 16th century Flanders. The painters of the vedute – referred to as vedutisti – seeked to reproduce topographical accuracy; human and animal figures generally played a secondary role.

In the 17th century, rather than merely reproducing 'real' sceneries, the vedutisti started to depict more fantastical landscapes. In the Capriccio ,a sub-genre also known as vedute ideate or vedute di fantasia, various architectural elements were assembled in fictional or re-imagined settings, blending reality with fantasy.

Ultimately, throughout the 18th century, paintings of cityscapes became subject to mass production influenced by an increased number of tourists; as architects and artists visited major European cities during their Grand Tour, vedute of popular vistas like the canals of Venice were reproduced with minimal variations.

Imaginations: prairie and grazing land

"Out of the ground the Lord God caused to grow every tree that is pleasing to the sight and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil." – Genesis 2:9-14

This passage from the Old Testament talks about the Garden of Eden as a place that is already beautiful, food producing, giving life and deciding about good and evil. The judgement between good and evil is also mentioned in Joel 3:12-13:

"Let the nations be roused; let them advance into the Valley of Jehoshaphat, for there I will sit to judge all the nations on every side."

The Valley of Jehoshaphat, which is the origin of the name Josaphat, is referred to as a place where men is being judged on good and evil. This relates to the garden of Eden, which was the stage for the 'Fall of man', where man was seduced into sins and wrong choices. Although this might have been the disobedience of God, a contemporary interpretation could be the decline of 'traditional' ethics in favour of a profitable city, where the collective is disregarded, and nature is treated as an expendable resource.

A phantasmagoria

: a sequence of real or imaginary images like that
seen in a dream

The word phantasmagoria has its origins in Ancient Greek, stemming from the word phántasma, meaning ghost, agorá, meaning assembly, and lastly the suffix -ia, meaning to speak publicly. The earliest use of the word refers to a form of horror theatre that used hidden projectors and smoke to show frightening images, such as skeletons, demons and ghosts. As these types of shows became less popular over time, the term has also taken on other meanings, namely describing changing successions of fantastical or imagined imagery.

: a sequence of real or imaginary images like that
seen in a dream

Fantasmagorie de Robertson dans la Cour des Capucines en 1797.

Imaginations: terrain vague

The broadening of our understanding and opinion about La Friche was a clear turning point. The urban void has commonly been portrayed as something negative, a space which does not fit into a city's productive nature. People often believe the void to be a leftover space, and a result of poor urbanism. This has been reflected in multiple fields, where the void has been the subject of representation which carries a negative, often dystopian dimension. Although still often depicted in this manner, the way in which the urban void is named plays a big role in our idea of the voids connotation.

In 1995, architect Ignasi de Solá-Morales called for a change in attitude, where the urban void was for the first time seen as a potential in the greater urban fabric of the city, de Solá-Morales called for the urban void to be named the "Terrain Vague", which insinuates the potential of the void being in its uncertainty. The nature of the proposed project site of this years studio suits the term "Terrain Vague", hence, when discussing La Friche, and its form, "Terrain Vague" shall be used.

Still a precise understanding of the three terms relating to La Friche remained missing. In an attempt to bring together our findings we came to the three themes: Fallowland, Garden of Eden, Dead zone. These themes include many of the topics previously explored. We came to a conclusion that there are many interpretations of La Friche, many ambiguous, many paradoxical. It is true that these three themes help to give a better understanding of La Friche. On the other hand some imaginations do not let themselves be tied to a specific theme, but they can be just as true. We have to accept La Friche as an ambiguous place with not one truth, yet many. This might just be its quality.

Preconditions: histories

The 'Soul of the City' is formed by an extensive history preceding the current situation, which is exactly what gives La Friche a special character. A combination of historical events (immaterial) and remaining structures (material) have resulted in the conditions present today. To Rossi, the history of the city can be seen as its soul, or its collective memory. Memory not as of that of an individual, or a group of people, but of the city as a whole. It is the concepts of actualization and interpretation (of urban elements) that makes the idea of memory applicable to the history of the city.
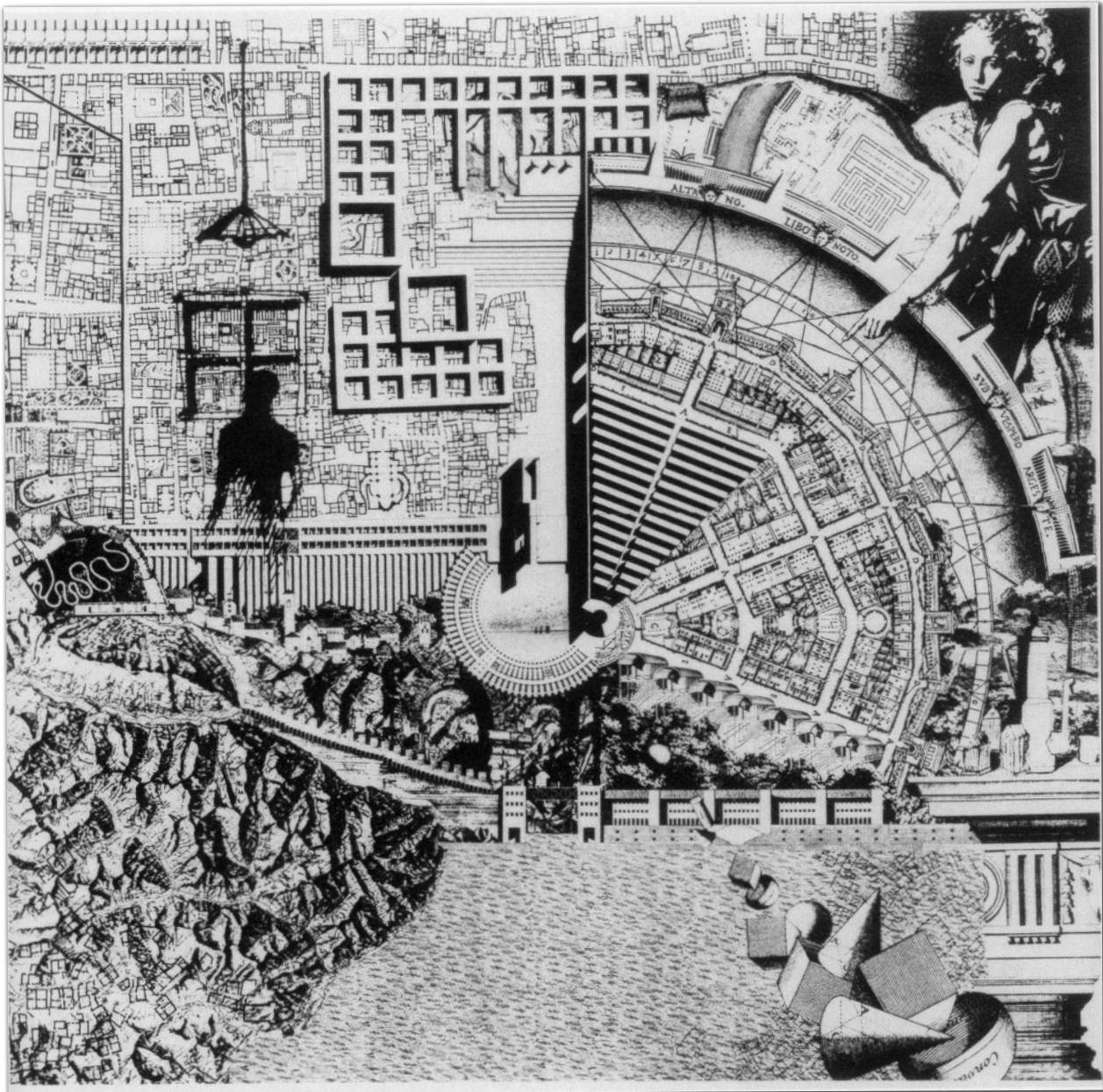
Persistences
According to Rossi, the past is perceived in the present through the theory of 'Persistences.' "One must remember that the difference between past and future […] in large measure reflects the fact that the past is partly being experienced now, and this may be the meaning to give permanences: they are a past that we are still experiencing." The persistences might show themselves in the form of built monuments, as a physical representation of the past, but might as well flow through in the form a city's basic layout and plans. At times they remain unchanged and easily recognizable and at other times they will be exhausted after which only their forms or locus remains. This might be the case for the marshalling yard preceding La Friche. If one would not know there would be hardly any sign of its past, although its characteristic shape still remains.

Continous city
While maybe at first a controversial view, according to Rossi the city is always continuous. It is simply impossible to deviate from the 'natural' evolution of the city.
A city is 'a manmade object'. It always reflects the ethics, the ways of thinking of a city at a certain moment. These moments in time then sometimes persist into the present. While society might change, the city might not do so accordingly. Sometimes the city can become unrecognisable for its inhabitants. "the city represents the progress of human reason, is a human creation par excellence, […] the city and every urban artifact are by nature collective" – Aldo Rossi, 1966. A prime example might be the concept of Brusselization. It reflects a certain 'historical' state of mind that has greatly influenced the structure of the current city

Preconditions: histories

Transformation of Urban Fabric

La Friche can be seen as a distinct entity within the city, both influencing its surroundings and being structured by its transformations. It facilitates certain changes and constricts others. It is exactly these changes that define the area. "… the city is something that persists through its transformations, and that the complex or simple transformations of functions that it gradually undergoes are moments in the reality of its structure." This notion can be further explained through the concept of 'duration' by Henri Bergson (1889). When one tries to measure a moment, it is already gone. Similarly through how the movement of the horse in 'The Horse in Motion' cannot be understood through a single photo but only in the sequence.
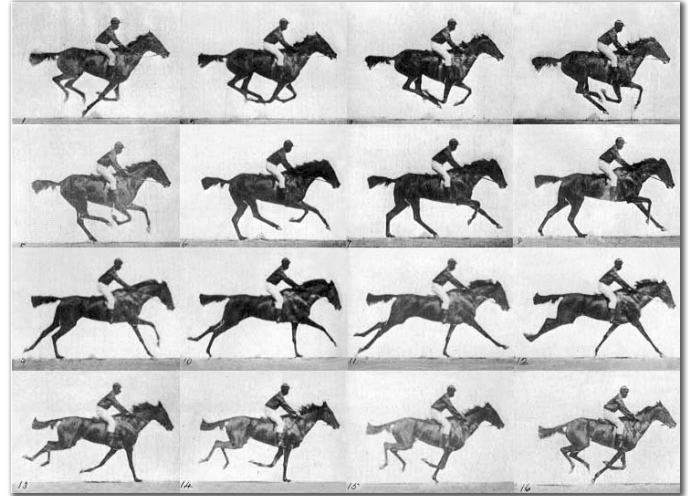
Friche Josaphat 1935   *Friche Josaphat 1944*
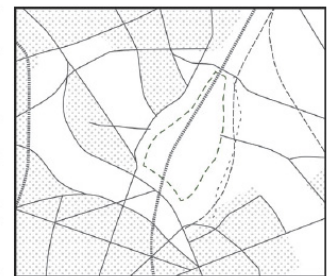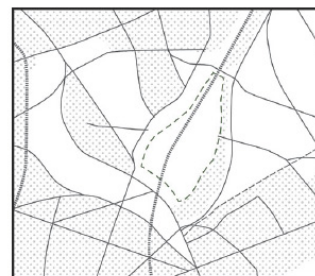
Friche Josaphat 1961   *Friche Josaphat 1971*
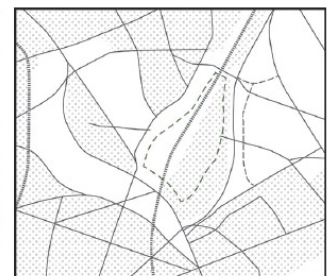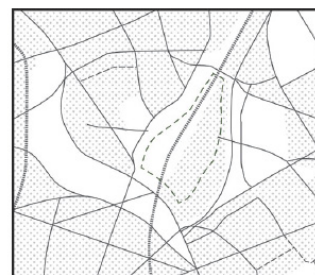
Friche Josaphat 1987   *Friche Josaphat 2004*
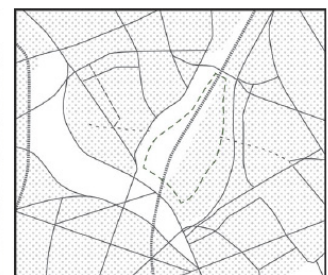
For the city its duration is shown through the persistence and disappearance of elements. Certain roads become streets, then become important avenues while others disappear over time. Neighbourhoods like Terdelt are bordered by the shape of the Friche, and later the shape directly influences newly built areas. These persistences have a formal urban character, but every different artefact also has a qualitative character.
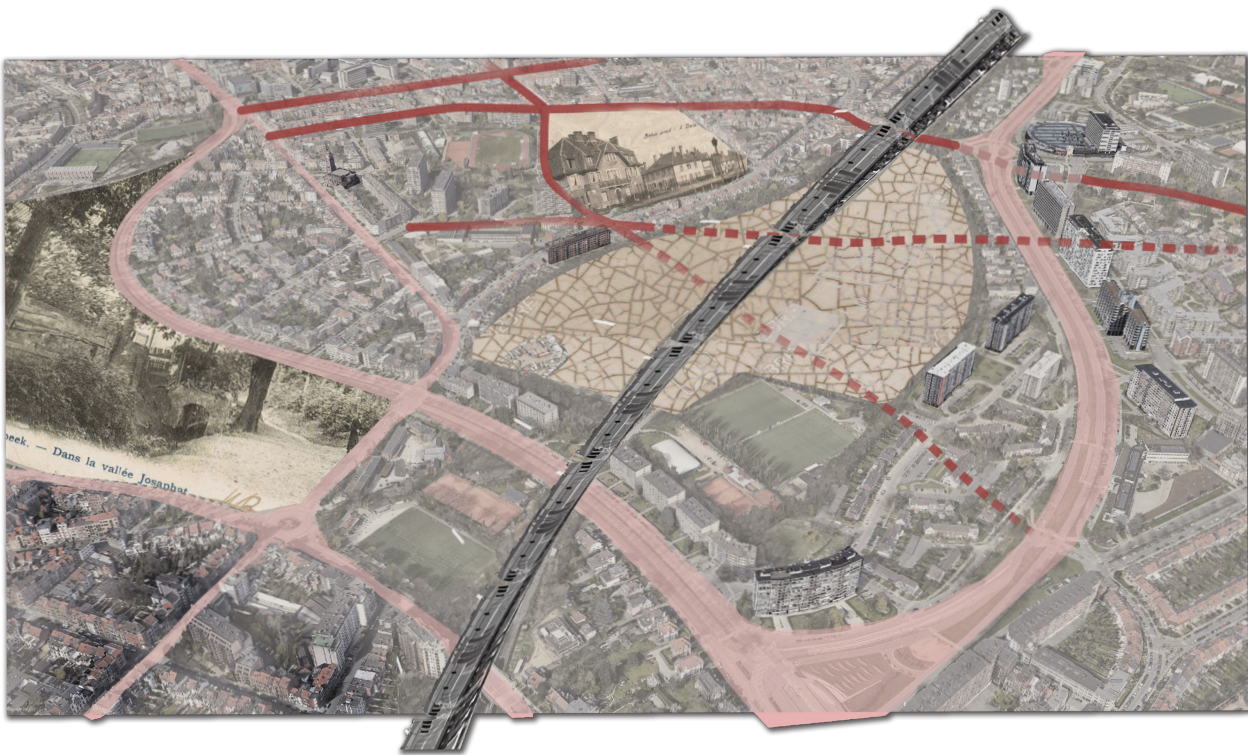
As seen in the image a pattern around La Friche has emerged. It is on many sides bordered by tall apartment buildings which benefit from the views on the site. A vital infrastructural network has grown around it. Parc Josaphat, the Josaphat neighbourhood, Terdelt and the Evere shopping area have emerged as imposing elements on its surroundings.

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Preconditions: imaginative landscape

The Friche is clearly a place beyond an overgrown marshalling yard. It has become an outstretched landscape, a panorama, a vedute. It forms an immersive sight that goes against rational thought. If it would have been way smaller, this emotional response would not have been the same, for it is also the scale that evokes a sense of awe. It is a combination of manmade objects and nature that reminds us of classical landscapes, surrealist paintings, adventures in the outdoors or iconic scenes in films.

Surreal
"I felt the great power that certain places, certain sights, exercised over me, without discovering the principle of this enchantment."
In Le Paysan de Paris (1926) Louis Aragon writes about the Parc du Buttes Chaumont. In this section of the book he tries to figure out what it is that grants these places this imaginative quality. He calls this sensation a frisson, which for him is a feeling of metaphysical nature. The objects within these landscapes become transfigured. They are neither allegorical or symbolic.

"it is only today, when the pickaxe menaces them, that they have at last become the true sanctuaries of a cult of the ephemeral, the last ghostly landscape of damnable pleasures and professions. Places that were incomprehensible yesterday, and that tomorrow will never know"

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Preconditions: imaginative landscape

There is something within these places that resembles both the past and the future. It is both a place of possibilities, while also possessing a great resemblance of the past. At this moment in time, the future of La Friche is being decided. If at some point in the future, La Friche undergoes change, the site becomes a phase in time, a moment captured between its past and its future. Some will remember it as it was, while others might never know what was there.

Both André Breton and Louis Aragon tried to give expression to the frisson felt by certain places. It relies heavily on emotion, the subconscious and the irrational. W. Benjamin (1929) writes on Breton and Aragon:

"No one before these visionaries and augurs perceived how destitution – not only social but architectonic, the poverty of interiors, enslaved and enslaving objects – can be suddenly transformed into revolutionary nihilism."
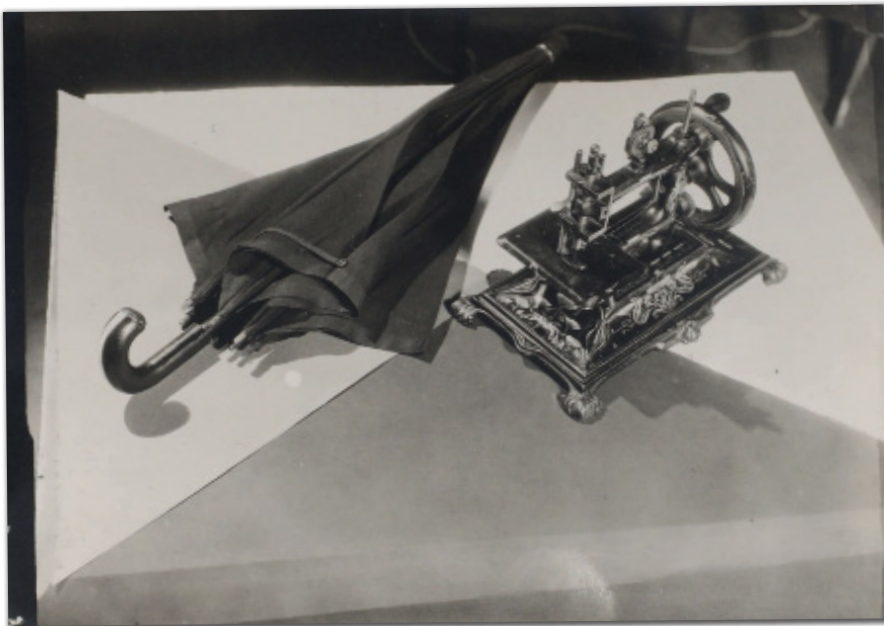
He continues about everything that we have experienced on rainy train rides and through blurred windows of new apartments:

"they bring the immense forces of 'atmosphere' concealed in these things to the point of explosion."

There is something within La Friche that transcends the banal daily reality, which consists of the same type of element Breton and Aragon described. There is a certain particularity within the assemblage of its different components. The grand landscape makes one think of sublime nature, the train tracks hint to its past industrial activity, and the circus seems somewhat alien in this setting. When one looks around, one can spot the community garden in the distance and the facades of industrial buildings enclosing La Friche along the edge. This collage of elements is surrounded by a boundary of trees, with the rooflines of residential buildings peeking out over the top here and there.

Is this mix of objects simply what constitutes towards a city? Or is it actually quite an extraordinary collage?

"The slightest sense of hyperreality in the pictures seemed to be enough to unmask their subjects, especially if one stared at them for a bit." (Keiller, 2014)

As Keiller suggests, any moment of imagination may fade away if we look at it for too long; the bubble of imaginations pops. La Friche might just return to a grass field with some banal structures. Maybe we are not able to exactly understand the imaginative quality in La Friche, for if we observe too long, the fantastical will become ordinary once more.

Friche as filmset
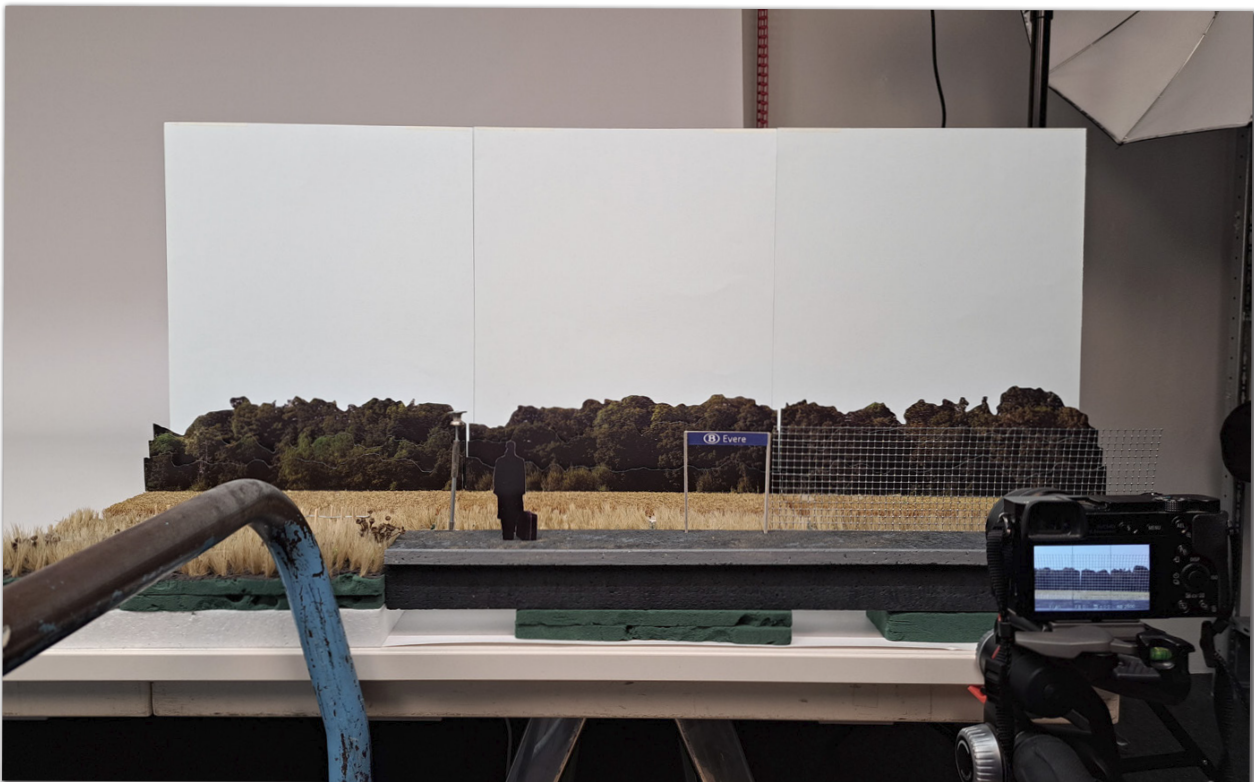
The exhibition piece presented takes the form of a short film. The film was shot using model making as a tool for creating a "movie set". The video pans through this movie set, where fantastical appearances occur upon La Friche. These fantastical appearances are informed by changes in atmosphere throughout the short film. Inspiration for these appearances stems from the sublime, surreal and imaginative qualities of La Friche.

As the camera pans through La Friche approximately halfway through the movie, a sudden change in atmosphere occurs. La Friche is then portrayed as a Garden of Eden, rescued from the potential damage inflicted by humankind. Following this scene, eutopic, positively connoted appearances come into view. These take form in scenes where La Friche as a natural bastion in the city is celebrated. Not only natural aspects accentuate a positive outlook on La Friche, but a curated set of human effect on the site appears to tell a story of how imaginations of human activity on La Friche can tell a story with a positive implication. The movie ends with a positive outlook on La Friche.

The timeline of the short movie embodies the succession of our group's perception of La Friche as a void, and how the theory we researched informed this perception.

TWO —

– URBAN PORTRAIT:
"Walk like me"

The city as a stage

Situations or events in cinema, or real life, always have the city, or architecture, as a backdrop. This mutual relationship has linked the two together ever since the first films in the late 19th century.

other references?

Most filmmakers are very conscious of this relation-ship. Often the city becomes more than a backdrop, and acts as a kind of character within the story it-self. It seems alive. A great example of this are the films that can be categorized as Italian Neorealism. Films typically concerned with the poor and work-ing class, these films were usually filmed on loca-tion using the city as its stage.
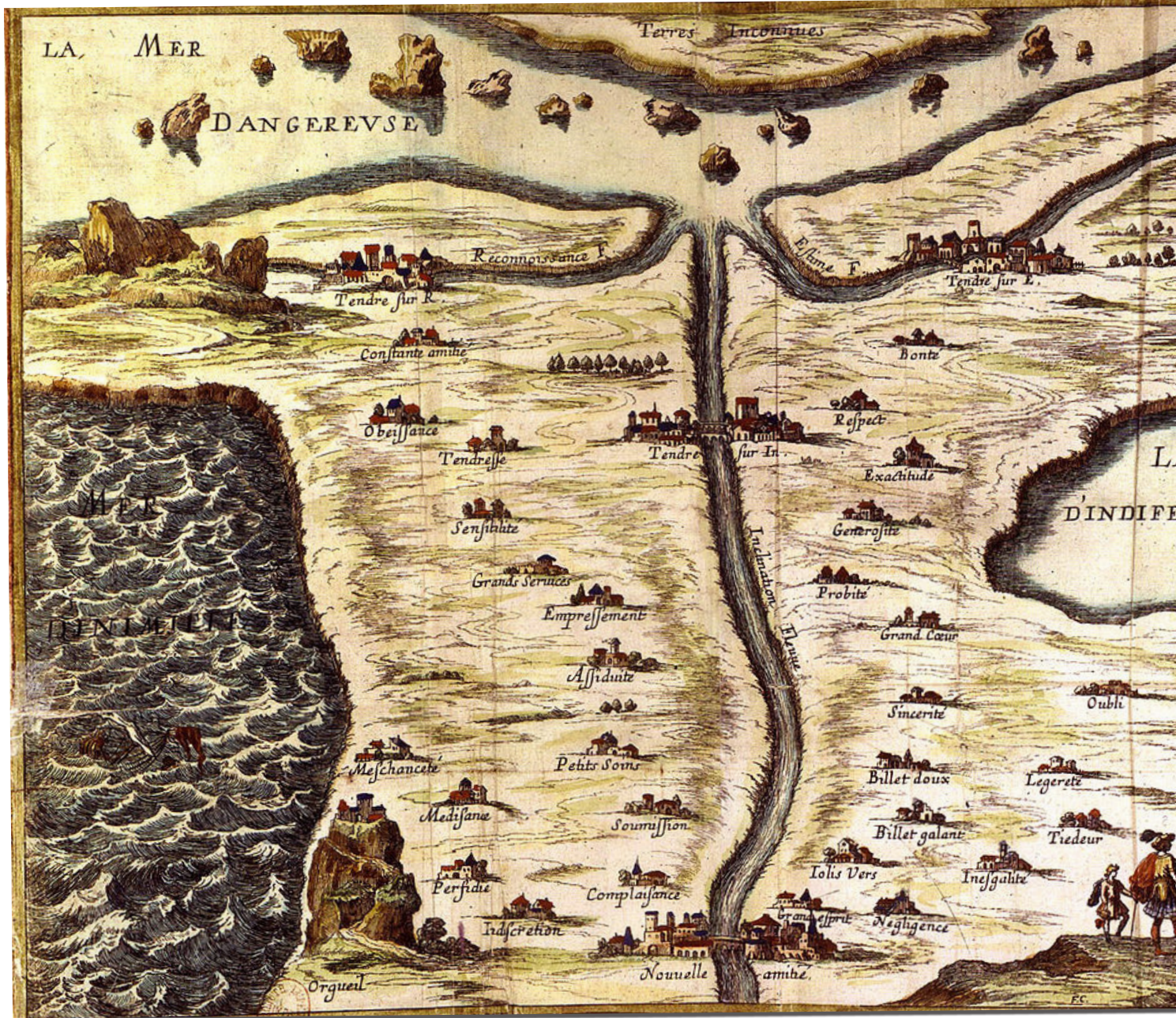
Film scholar Giuliana Bruno describes the 1654 Carte du pays de Tendre by Madeleine de Scudéry as a truly cinematic map. She calles it:

"... a narrative voyage. That is, it visualizes, in the form of a landscape, an itinerary of emotions which is, in turn, the topos of the novel. In this way, the Carte de Tendre makes a world of affects visible to us.

Psychogeography

Around the 1950s a group emerged calling themselves Situationists. Among many things, while mainly being a marxist and anti-capitalistic organization, they founded the act of psychogeography.

In essence it can be described as exploring how a geographical location makes us feel. It was an anti-reaction agains the grwoing trend of rational- and functional thinking in architecture and urban planning.

The aim often is to see the city from new angles. An exploration of how different urban or natural spaces influence individuals' mental states, perceptions and actions

The film takes the form of a kind of 'derivé'. A psychogeographical stroll through Schaerbeek. For the Letterist International saw the derivé as a rapid passage through varied ambiences. One was meant to get lost and follow the path of least resistance.

THE NAKED CITY

ILLUSTRATION DE L'HYPOTHÉSE DES PLAQUES
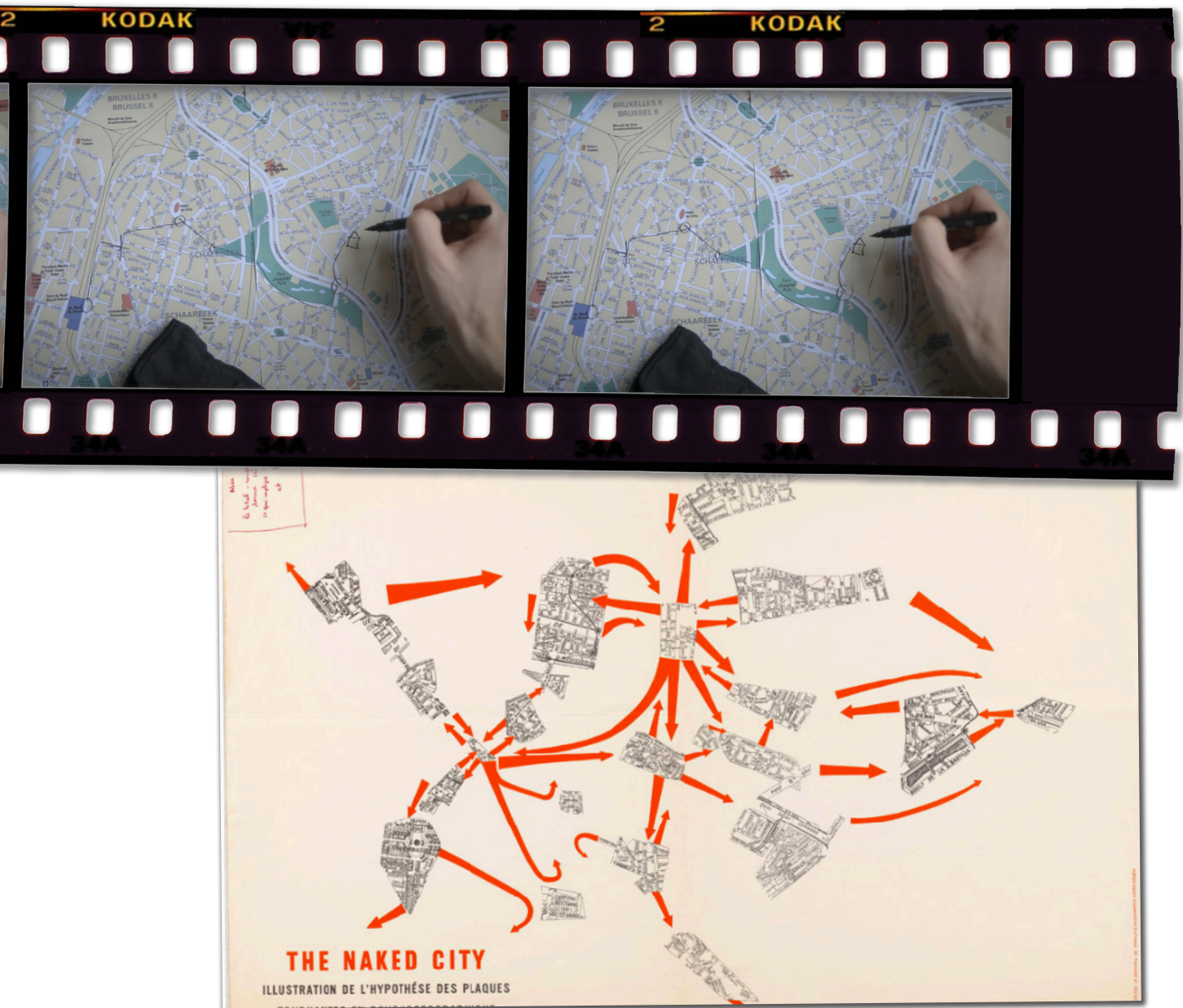
Map of wider Schaerbeek

The flaneur

During the 19th century, rapid changes swept through cities due to urbanization and industrialization. Places like Paris witnessed the emergence of new districts, such as shopping arcades, which housed a variety of shops, restaurants, and other public amenities. This vibrant mix of offerings turned the city into a destination in its own right, drawing visitors solely for the spectacle, even without intentions of actual shopping.

Baudelaire and Benjamin depicted a character embodying this spirit—the flaneur. This individual was a detached observer and leisurely wanderer, casually strolling through the streets. With a keen sense of curiosity, the flaneur observed and seamlessly blended into the bustling crowd.

At the heart of flânerie lies a subtle act of resistance against the relentless pace of modern life. By choosing to stroll leisurely through the city, the flâneur disrupts the dominant narrative of productivity and efficiency, reclaiming time and space for idle contemplation and chance encounters.

In his essay 'Walking the city', Michel de Certeau stresses the importance of walking in the city.

He writes, "The act of walking is to the urban system what the speech act is to language or to the statements uttered."

Through walking, individuals weave spatial narratives, transforming empty urban spaces into lived experiences. De Certeau likens the manner of walking to stylistic expressions, suggesting a rhetoric inherent in pedestrian movement. He illustrates this with the contrast between the local inhabitant and the tourist. The local moves with purpose, his path ingrained within the city's fabric, imprinting his own narrative onto its streets. Conversely, the tourist, often guided by the flow of events and unfamiliar with the surroundings, allows the city to inscribe itself upon him, seeking direction and experiencing the urban landscape as it unfolds.

In the film, Henri takes the form of a contemporary flaneur. He is always present in the urban life of the city. As a Norther Walker, he makes long hours on the streets. He walks round, observes, although without a clear purpose. This makes him as close one gets today to the original flaneur.

The event

Bernard Tschumi, a renowned Swiss-French architect, revolutionized architecture with his concept of "the event." His theory challenges traditional views of architecture as static, proposing instead that it is a dynamic process shaped by the activities within and around it.

At the core of Tschumi's theory is the interaction between space, movement, and action. He argues that architecture's essence lies in how these elements interplay, creating an evolving experience. Space, traditionally seen as a passive backdrop, becomes an active participant in this dynamic. Events, ranging from everyday activities to specific occurrences, breathe life into the architecture, continuously reshaping it.

The focus on events stems from a desire to move away from rigid architectural practices. He envisions architecture as a living entity, evolving with its users' actions and experiences. This perspective aligns with contemporary movements prioritizing user experience and adaptability.

Implementing his ideas involves designing flexible spaces that accommodate various activities, encouraging interaction, and considering movement through the space. Architects are urged to visualize and analyze the relationship between space and events, fostering a more dynamic and interactive built environment. The concept of "the event" ultimately redefines architecture as an evolving process shaped by human engagement.
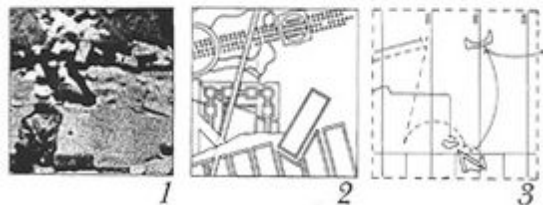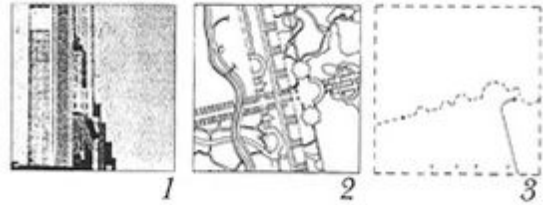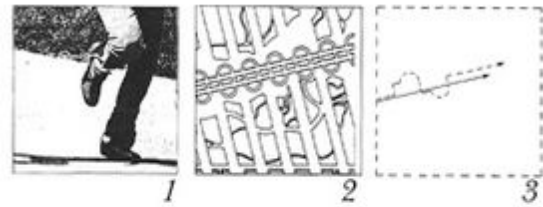
The production of space

Henri Lefebvre, a French philosopher and sociologist, introduced a ground-breaking theory in his book "The Production of Space," where he conceptualizes space as a social product. His framework divides space into three interconnected categories: perceived space, conceived space, and lived space.

Perceived Space (Spatial Practice): This is the physical and material space we encounter in our daily lives. It includes the routines, paths, and physical layouts that shape our daily interactions and movements. Perceived space is the practical and empirical aspect of space, grounded in the physical environment and the ways people use and navigate it. It reflects the material dimensions of social practices and how space is organized and experienced through routine actions.

Conceived Space (Representations of Space): This is the space of planners, architects, and technocrats—those who conceptualize and organize space. Conceived space is abstract and theoretical, comprising maps, plans, and designs. It is the mental representation of space, often guided by the ideology and knowledge of those in power. This dimension shapes how spaces are planned and controlled, reflecting societal structures and power dynamics.

Lived Space (Representational Spaces): Lived space is the most subjective and dynamic of the spatial triad. It encompasses the emotional and symbolic meanings individuals and groups attach to space. This space is where human experiences, memories, and imaginations interact, producing a rich tapestry of lived experiences. It is the space of art, culture, and everyday life, filled with personal and collective significances that go beyond mere physical and conceptual dimensions.

Lefebvre's triadic model highlights the complex interplay between physical reality, conceptual frameworks, and lived experiences, emphasizing that space is not just a backdrop for social action but an active and dynamic component of social life.

Rhythm

Another work of Henri Lefebvre, "Rhythmanalysis" explores the intricate interplay be-tween time, space, and everyday life, offering a method to understand the temporal pat-terns that shape human experience and social practices. It examines rhythms as the key to uncovering the structures of society, distinguishing between natural rhythms like day and night and social rhythms such as work schedules and transportation systems. He in-troduces the concept of polyrhythmia, highlighting the complex coexistence of multiple rhythms within urban environments, where diverse patterns intersect.

A central theme in the work is the idea of rhythm harmony and disruption. Eurhyth-mia represents a harmonious alignment of rhythms, promoting balance and well-being, while arrhythmia denotes a disruption or conflict, leading to stress and disorientation. Lefebvre emphasizes that rhythms are experienced through the body, which acts as a mediator between space and time. By observing bodily movements and routines, one can gain insights into how individuals and communities interact with their environments.

Lefebvre places significant importance on everyday life, arguing that the analysis of daily activities reveals broader social structures and power dynamics. His rhythmanalysis employs a multidisciplinary approach, incorporating sociology, philosophy, and urban studies, and calls for a keen observation of daily life to identify repetitive patterns and variations.

"Rhythmanalysis" provides valuable tools for understanding urban environments, social behavior, and the impact of modern life on individual well-being. Lefebvre's work highlights the profound influence of temporal patterns on space and society, offering a nuanced perspective on the rhythms that define human experience.

Spectacle

A seminal work by French theorist Guy Debord, critically examines modern consumer culture and its pervasive effects on social life. Published in 1967, the book presents the concept of the spectacle, which Debord defines as a social relation mediated by images. He argues that contemporary society has shifted from being based on direct human interaction to one dominated by representations and commodified experiences.

In the society of the spectacle, reality is obscured by a continuous flood of images and superficial appearances, leading to a passive consumption of these representations. This creates a distorted perception of reality, where genuine social relationships and individual experiences are replaced by a façade of images and commodities. Debord contends that this shift leads to alienation, as people become spectators of their own lives, disconnected from authentic experiences and true community.

The spectacle serves the interests of capitalism by promoting consumption and maintaining the status quo. It perpetuates a cycle where individuals are constantly driven to consume more, equating happiness and fulfillment with material possessions and mediated experiences. Debord's critique re-mains relevant in today's digital age, where social media and advertising continue to shape perceptions and reinforce the dominance of the spectacle in everyday life.

"Walk like me"

There are many ways to voice information or ideas. In this case I went for the medium of a docufiction film. Certain ideas and attitudes can be shared, whilst also giving a sense of place and mood through its images.

First there were a couple of days of shooting random scenes around the area. Simultaniously there was a lot of of reading and the creation of a kind of script. Here is where Joost, in the film playing Henri, stepped in. As an outsider he was able to give the commentary with a kind of distance.

THREE

– · BUILDING SHORTFILM:
"The film that never was"

A window to the world

Two of the main qualities of film for me are: one, to be immersed and escape our reality. And two, to encounter new emotions, cultures and stories. The project thus takes the form of a storyhouse. A place where stories are made, told and exhibited.

As the site is located on a unique location. And intersection between Schaerbeek and Evere, neighboring Terdelt, the Friche, the trainstation, the elderly home and the new neighborhood, the aim is to create a place where everyone will pass and visit. It is a way for the inhabitants to stay in touch with the rest of the city, just as the rest of the world. The stories are told through frames. These can be windows, with views to the actual world. But also frames for art. Showing films, photos and paintings.

A physical entrance to an optical departure
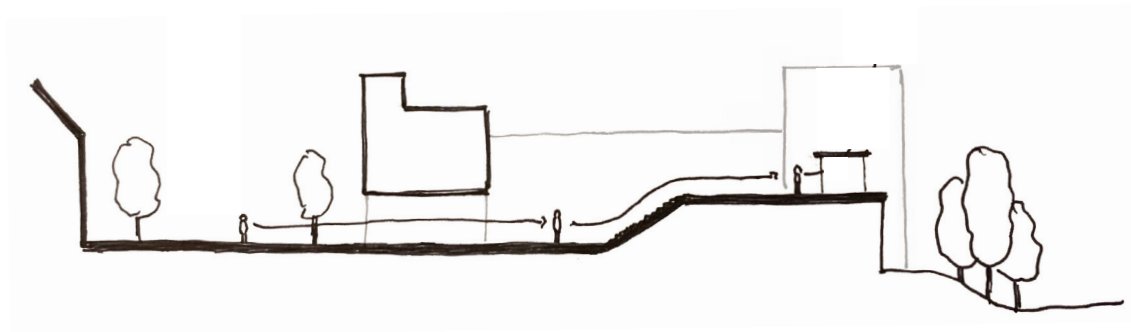
From a street,   to a court,   to a window

The project explores the route from the more urban street, to
an intimate but actively used court, to the interior and finally
a window.

A physical window

A fictional window

Set, action and narrative

SET

ACTION
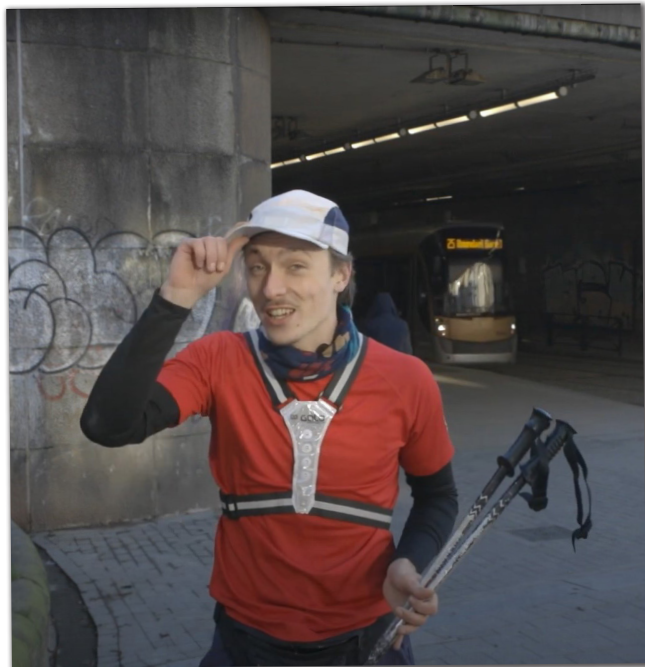
NARRATIVE

SCENE 1: INTRODUCTION

GOAL OF THE SCENE
This scene is meant as an introduction to the location, history, mood and thematics. Together with a re-introduction of our main character Henri.

Through the use of montage of images from different times and different perspectives, the aim is to convey the feeling that this is not just a random story, but this could be from or to anyone.

After the introduction of city and satelite images, our reunion with Henri gives some context to the new viewer, and together sets the tone for this small story.

MOODBOARD

SCENE 4: INTERIOR MONTAGE (1:50)

GOAL OF THE SCENE
In this last part of the film we enter the actual building. The aim here is to show that in the architectural route throughout, there is a constant alternation of art and view.

We start walking around with the alternating views until in the end the distinction becomes unclear and we are fully immersed in fictional and non-fictional stories.

FILM TECHNIQUES
Montage is used to cross-cut between the artworks and views in/along the home.

DESCRIPTION OF USED MODEL
The model should represent in the best the interior of the project. This goes for materiality, space, detailing.

MOODBOARD

SCENE 2.1: PASSAGE (1:33)

GOAL OF THE SCENE
This is the part where we travel from the street into the court. This might be exaggerated slightly by a change in time from mid-day to twilight.

FILM TECHNIQUES
When moving by the windows, maybe each of the windows has a different scene happening behind them. Montage is used to display the different events. The rhytm of windows can be shown in a different way.

DESCRIPTION OF USED MODEL
The model here is in full detail. This makes clear what the materiality that is suggested in the previous model really actually looks like.

MOODBOARD

SCENE 2: URBAN APPROACH (1:200)

GOAL OF THE SCENE
In this scene we get an experience of how a visitor will approach the building. This means seeing the building in the surrounding of the street.

While with Henri we take the route from the rue chi. Gillequet, through the film we want to show the variety of the different approaches.

FILM TECHNIQUES
We film the approach from the street, and use this as the main thread. We as cut this with the approaches, and view from both the elderly home, and the fridge. Montage is used to display the different sides and approaches of the building. Movement of the camera helps to give the impression of walking.

DESCRIPTION OF USED MODEL
We do this using the 1:200 model. While not yet in full detail, the materiality of the building in relation to its surroundings should be expressed here.

The model will be of a plaster or similar materiality, and its forms will be clearly visible from different angles.

This can be contrasting or complementary to its surroundings.

MOODBOARD

STORY OF HENRI

SCENE 3: THE COURT AS STAGE (1:100)

GOAL OF THE SCENE
Here we will enter the court. In this scene the aim is to show the materiality and openings of the facades, in relation with the activity on the square. The transition from the passage into the square is shown.

Most important here is the display of the different uses of the square. It can be used as a market, night cinema, skating, stage, etc.

FILM TECHNIQUES
Montage is used to cross-cut between the "current day", while the square is empty, and to other moments in time when the square is used in different ways.

DESCRIPTION OF USED MODEL
The model is represented with facades only. The aim is that this makes it feel a bit like a stage. In twilight, also light will penetrate through the windows, maybe like stage lights. At some parts you can see behind the facade and see the scaffolding perhaps?

**MOODBOARD**

The script, and montage

The film relies heavily on the power of film to use montage,
or editing, to reveal qualities of the architectural experience.

For Walter Benjamin with film, and the technique of edit-
ing, came the first time in history where humans were able to
break with their traditional perception of space-time. Where
this always had been linear, now was there the possibility to
re-create new perceptions.

The experience of architecture is rarely linear, and often hap-
pens on multiple levels simultaneously. This is a very complex
phenomenon and exactly the same goes for film. In a draw-
ing, these elements can never be expressed in a way that rep-
resents the actual experience.

Through montage we can recreate an experience that possibly
comes much closer to the actual subjective experience.

In the film, through the use of montage, these different quali-
ties of the building can be demonstrated. In my opinion, much
more effectively.

82
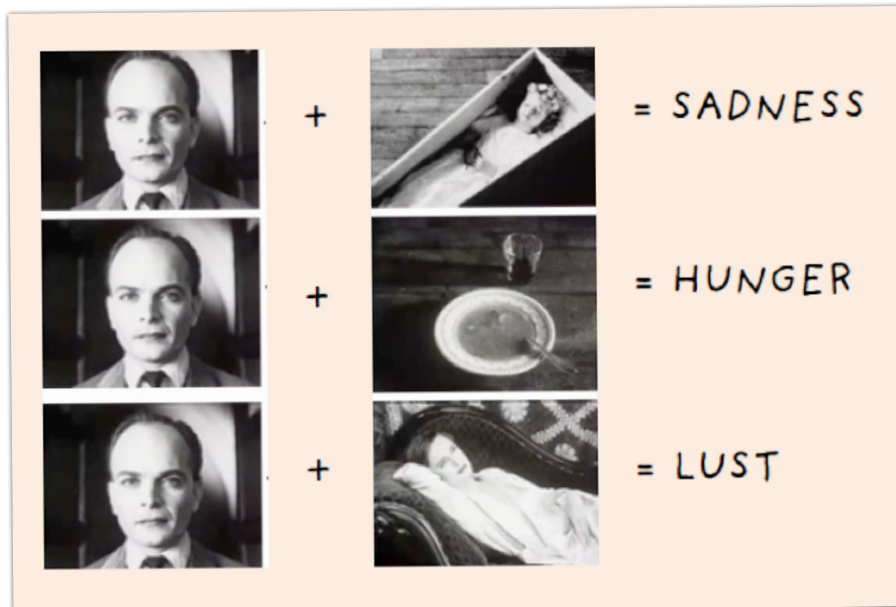
: chunks of space-time in relation to eachother
: producing one new whole from fragments

Scenes

Scene 1 :   A round of introductions
Scene 2 :   The urban montage
Scene 3 :   A changing decor
Scene 4a: A physical entrance

Intermezzo

Scene 4b :   An optical departure

1

4b

2   3

4a

Scene 1:

A round of introductions
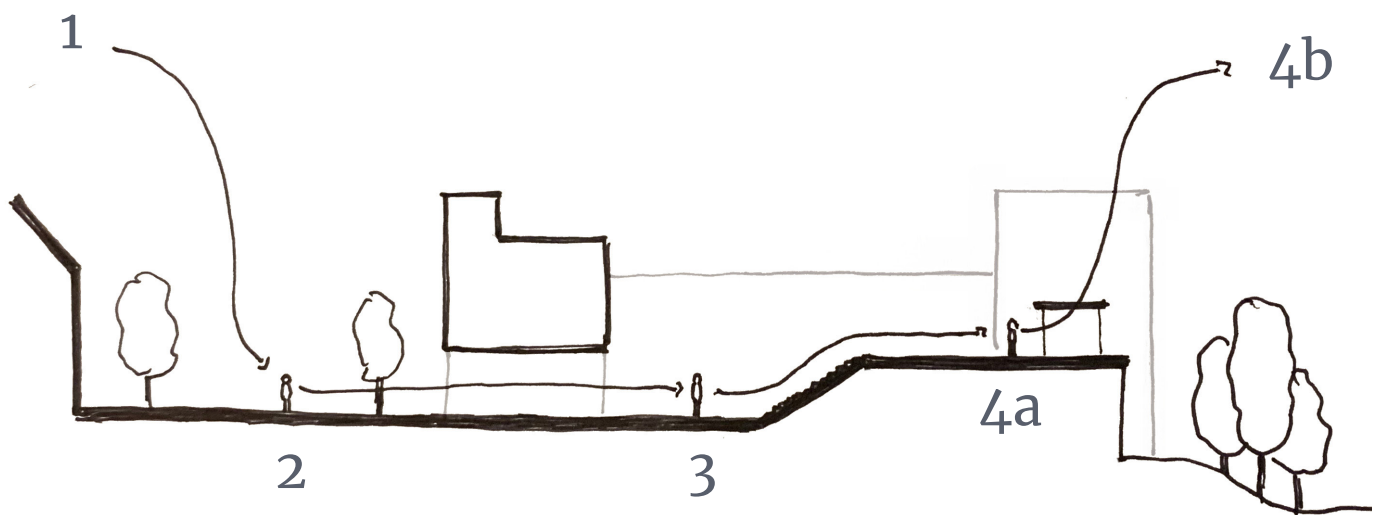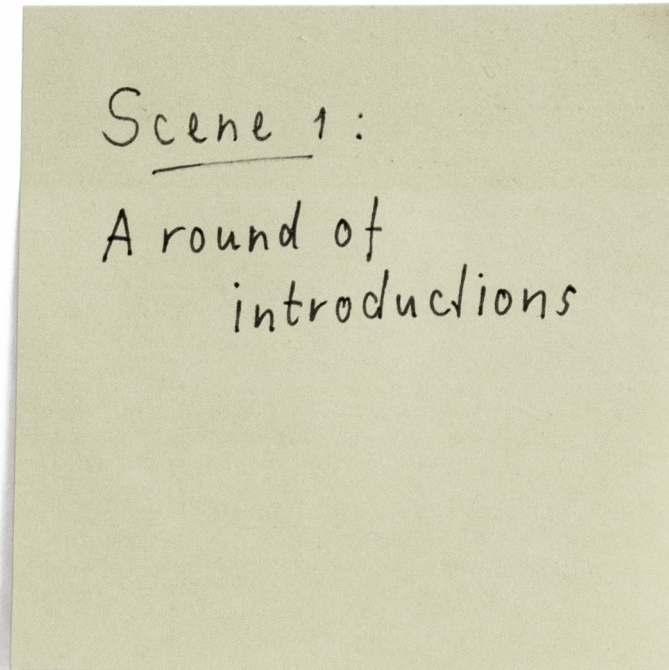
"So our film will take place in brussels. A city that is in many ways very interesting. Said to be the second most culturally diverse city in the world and one that saw a gigantic growth during the industrial revolution, fully embracing the rise of trains and motor vehicles.

This couldn't be more clear anywhere than on the Friche Josaphat. This place once was a huge marshalling yard, But together with the rise of modernization, it adapted to a new society. There was no place for trains here anymore. This area on the crossroad of Schaerbeek, Evere, and other new districts now has a new purpose."

00:00:15:16

Scene 2:
The urban montage

"In this scene we will show how one would approach the building. This could be the general approach from the street. But through the use of film we can intercut this with views from the other sides as well. There is also the Talut from the elderly home, and down from the Friche. This scene will mostly be about form and the relation to its context."

Situation

Urban section

Scene 3:

A changing decor
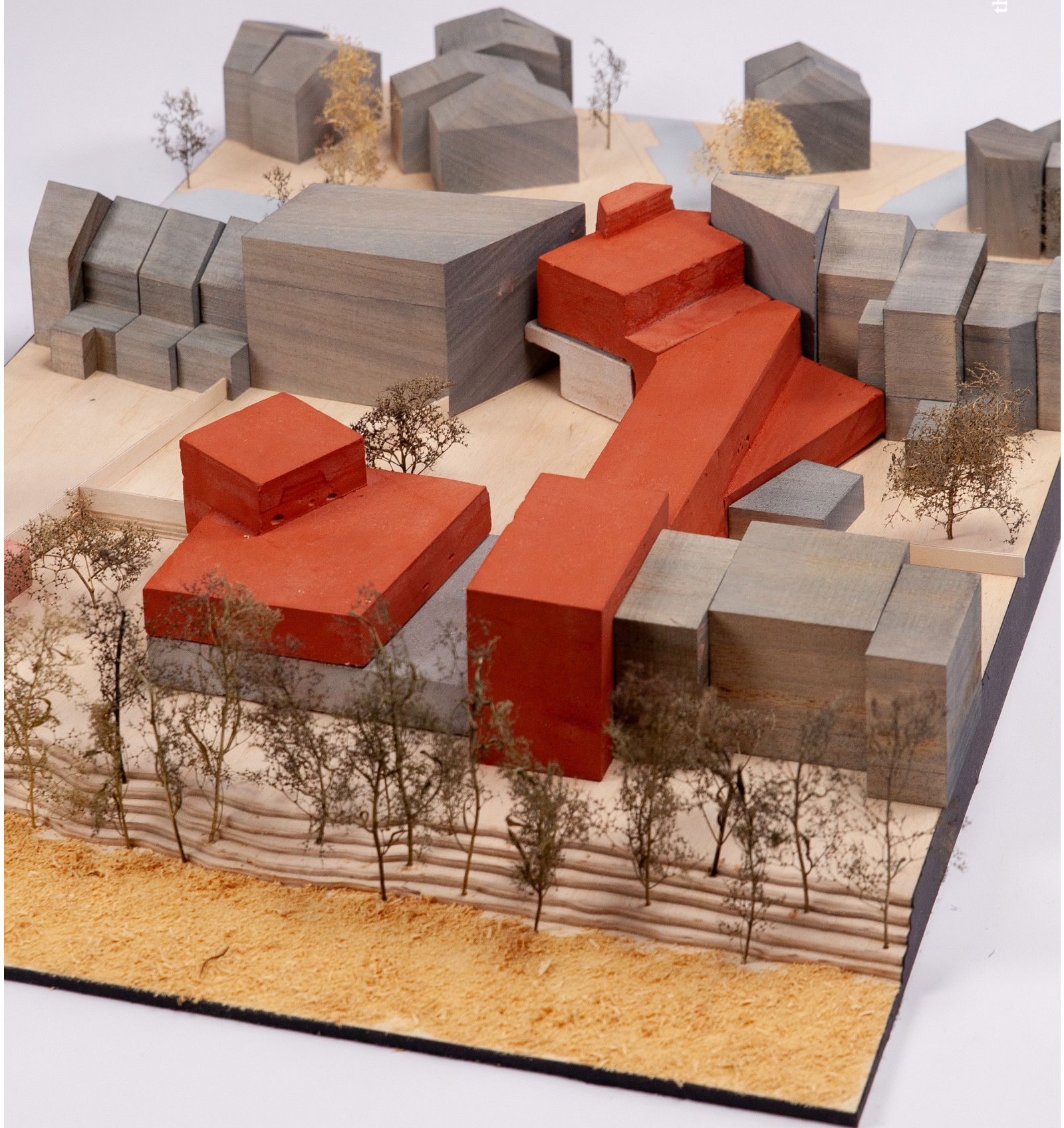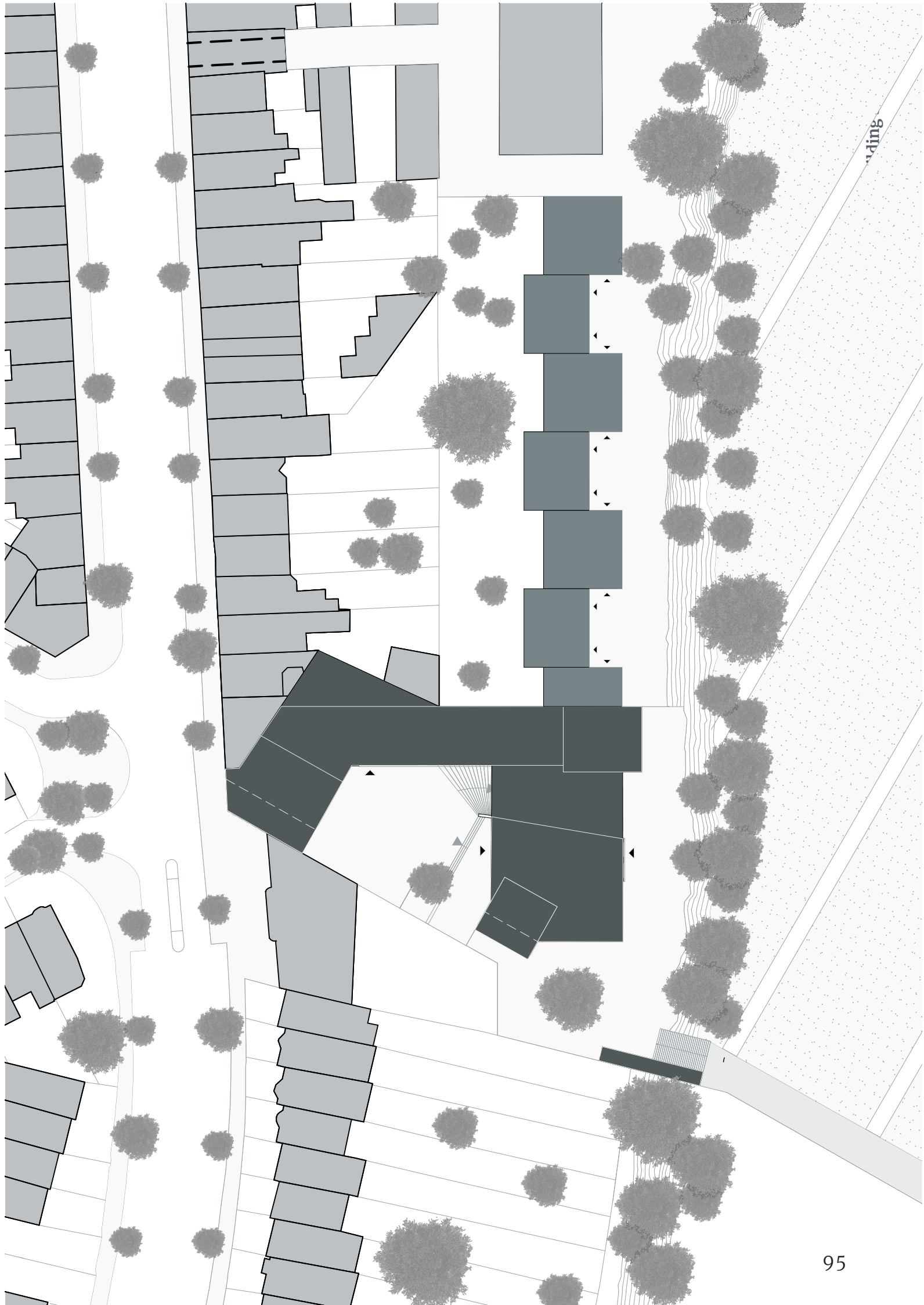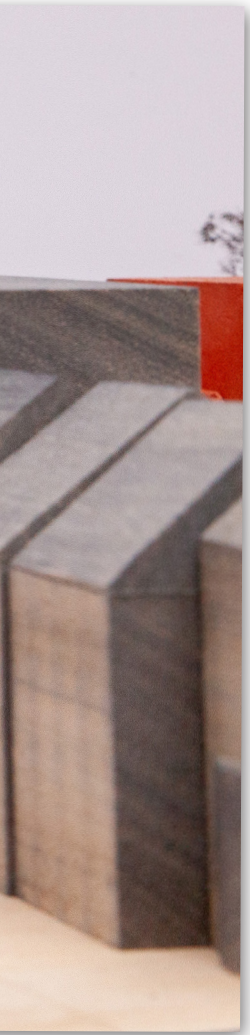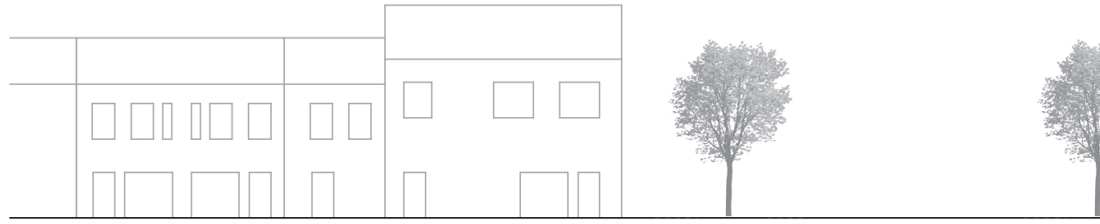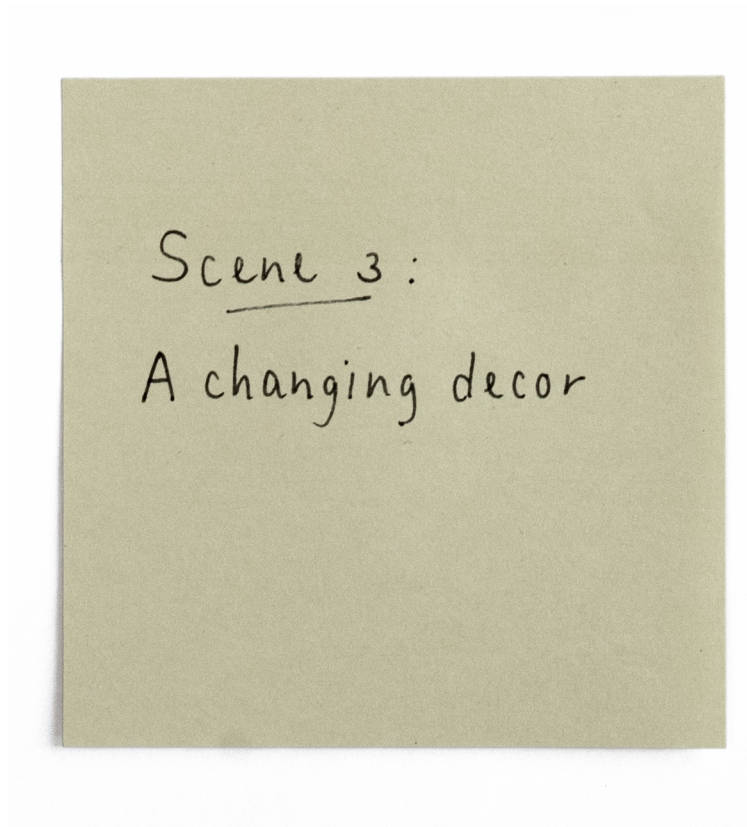
"*So here we would move from the urban scale to the building scale. We could start at the street showing how the building fits into its context. When we move closer we take the passage and enter the court. A more secluded urban space, attached to the continuous route. Here again montage is used as a way to show the rhythm of the windows. When we enter the court, maybe the time of day has changed into twilight. Our wish would be to cut these shots with night shots when the square is used as a market, a cinema or a stage. Then when we have seen the court we can move up the stairs…..*"

Different uses

Court plan

Elevations

▼ +13,500
▼ +12,000
▼ +6,900
▼ +4800
▼ +4000

▼ +12,
▼ +11,
▼ +7,
▼ +2,
▼ -1
▼ -7

▼ +10.300

▼ +3.000

▼ ±0

▼ -1.500

Scene 4a:

A physical entrance
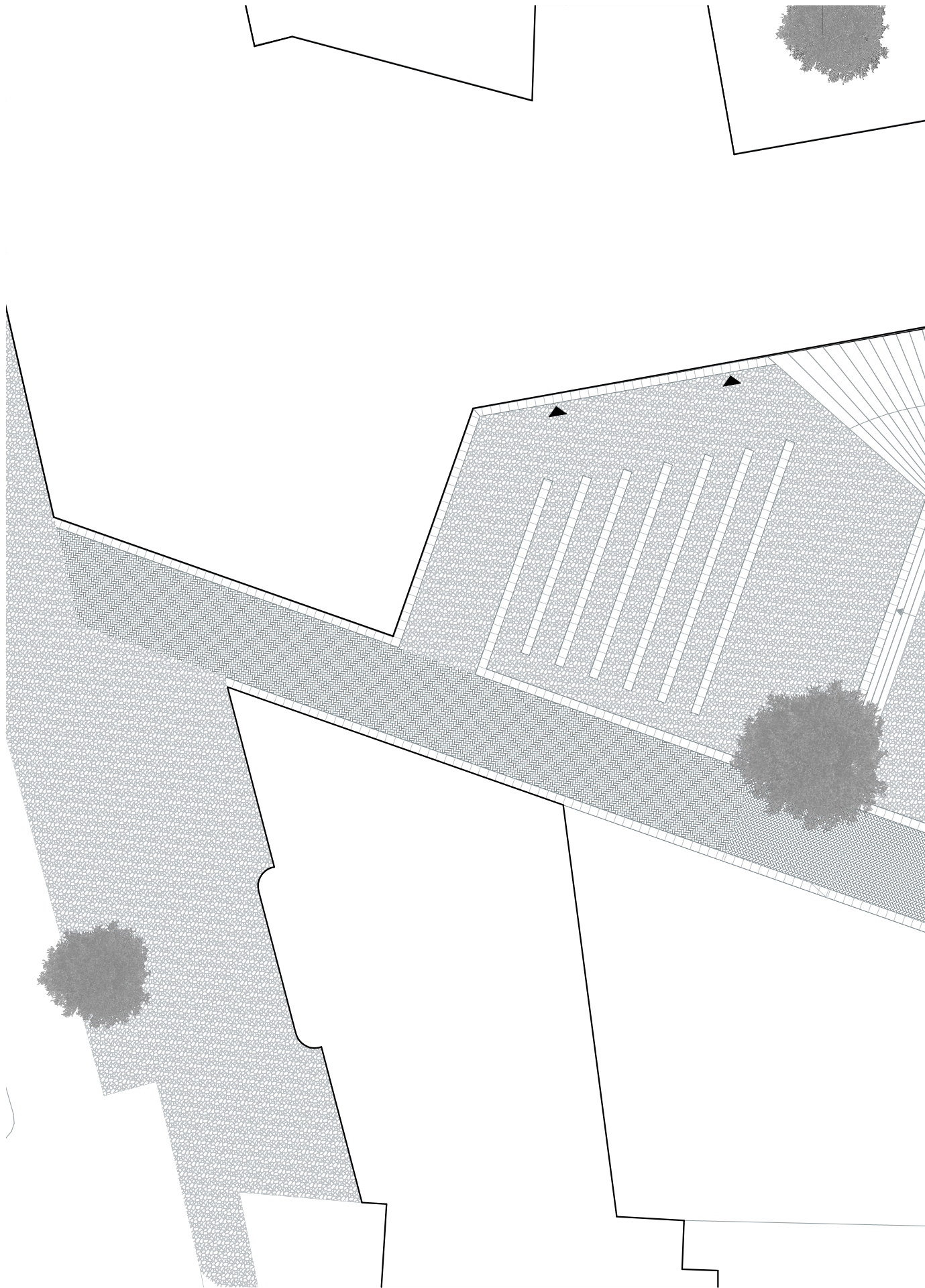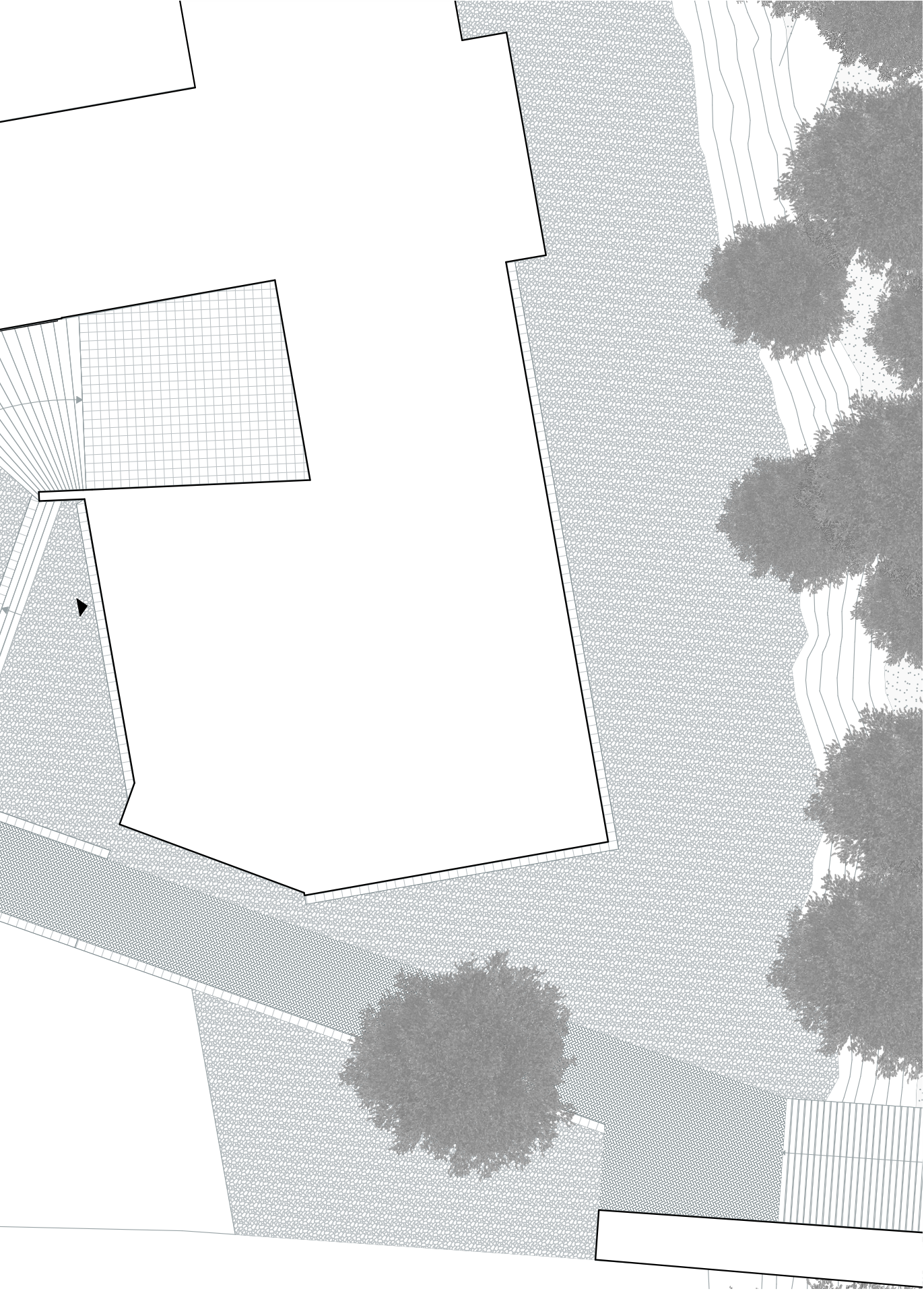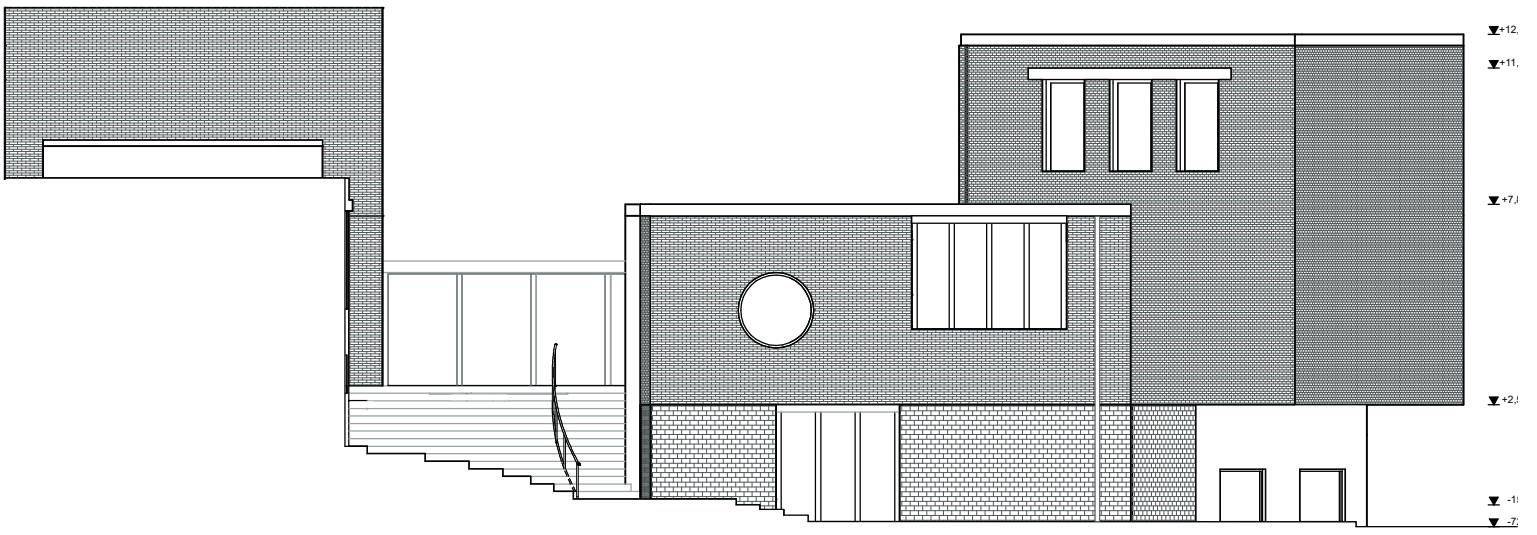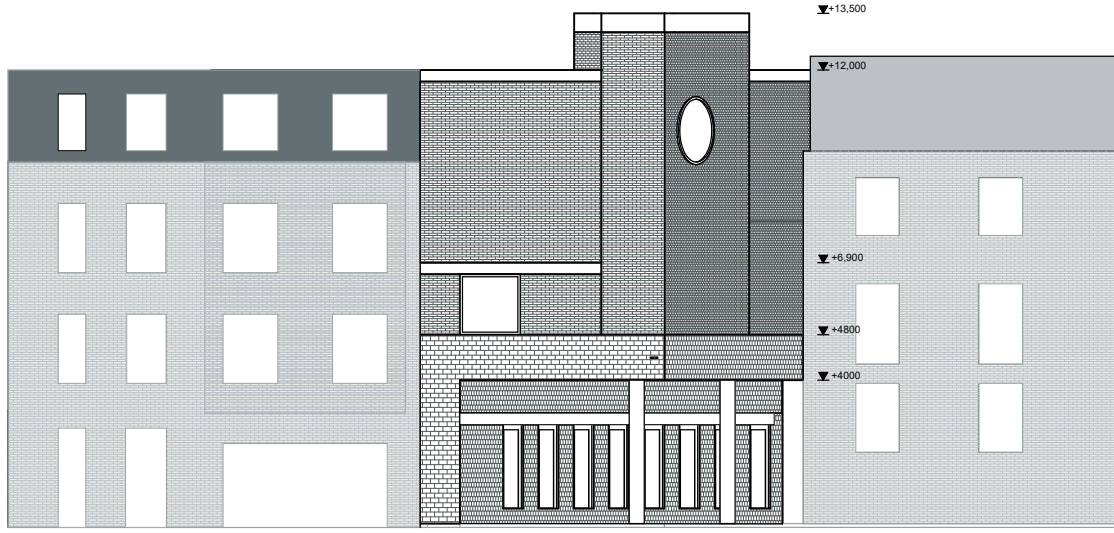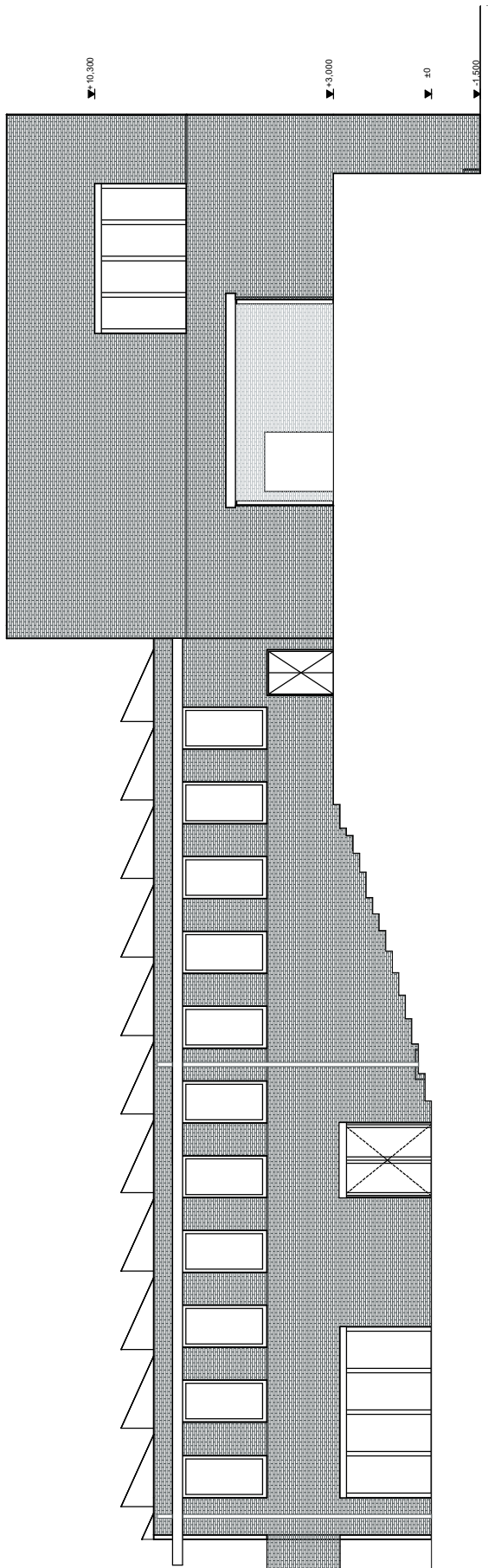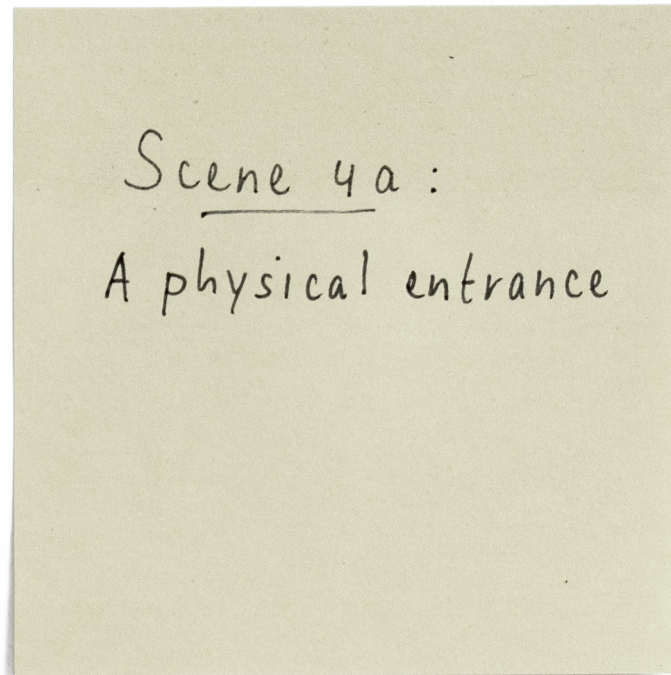
"After moving up the stairs we step unto the plateau. This is the first moment you would have a view on the Friche again, that way you can stay aware of where you are."
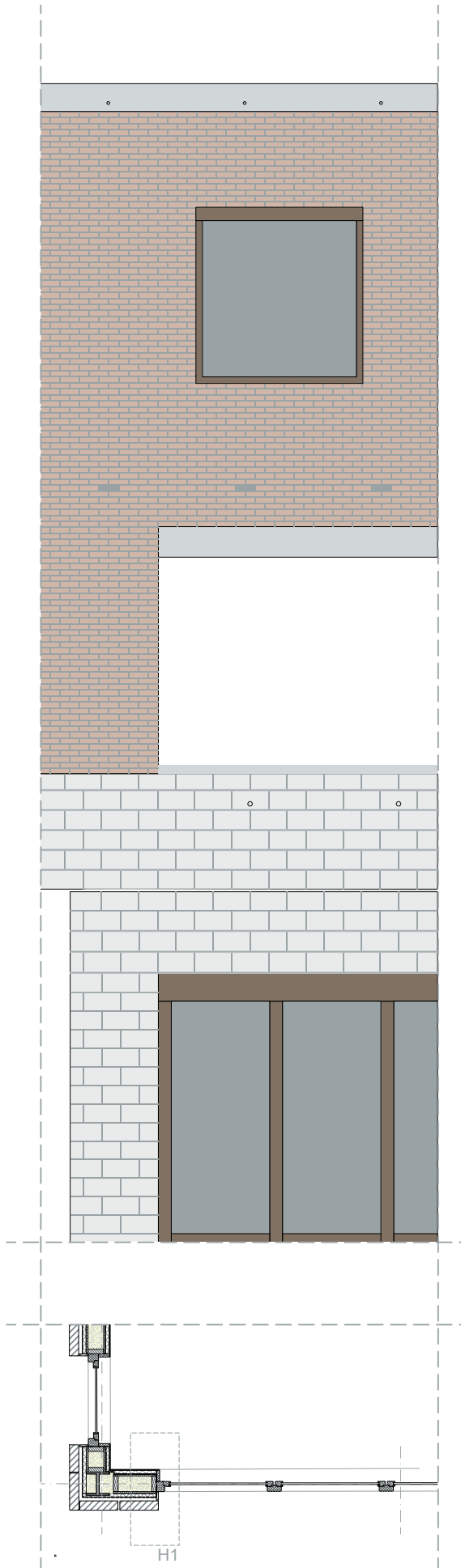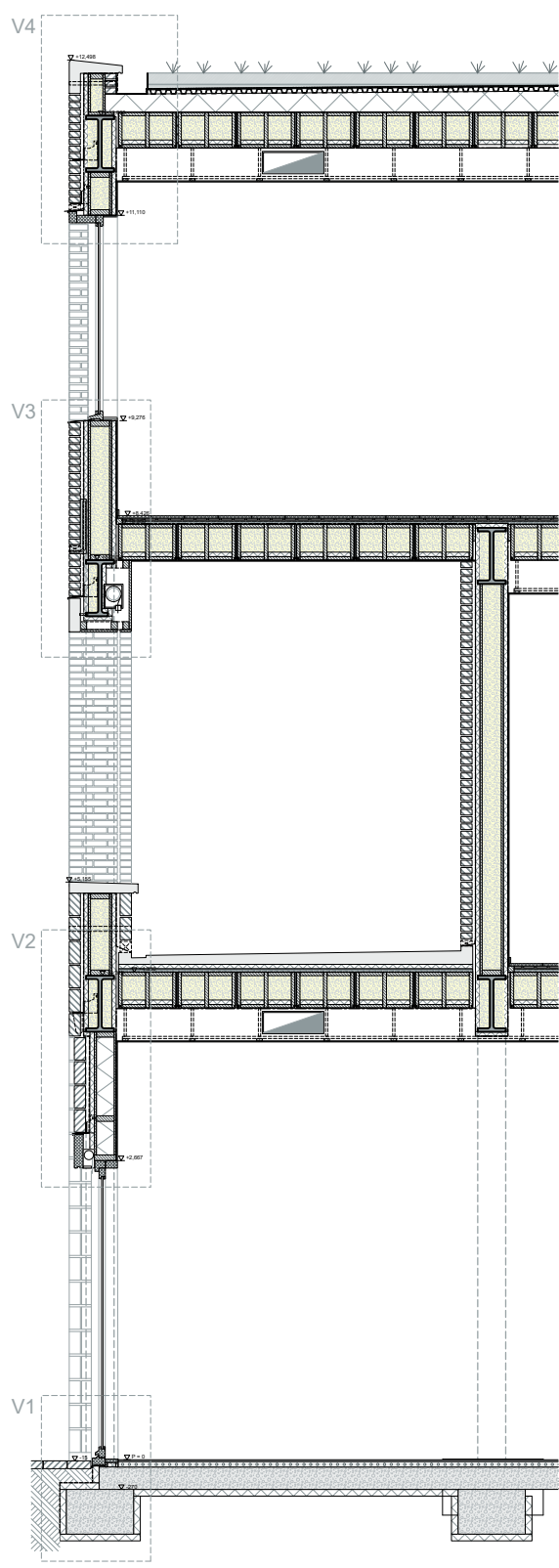
Archive

Kitchen

Storage

Technical room

Photo studio

Photo studio

Studio space

Studio space

Workshop

231 | 8,500 | 1,885 | 6,100 | 14 | 6,100

5,385   8,800   3,419   6,800

Intermezzo
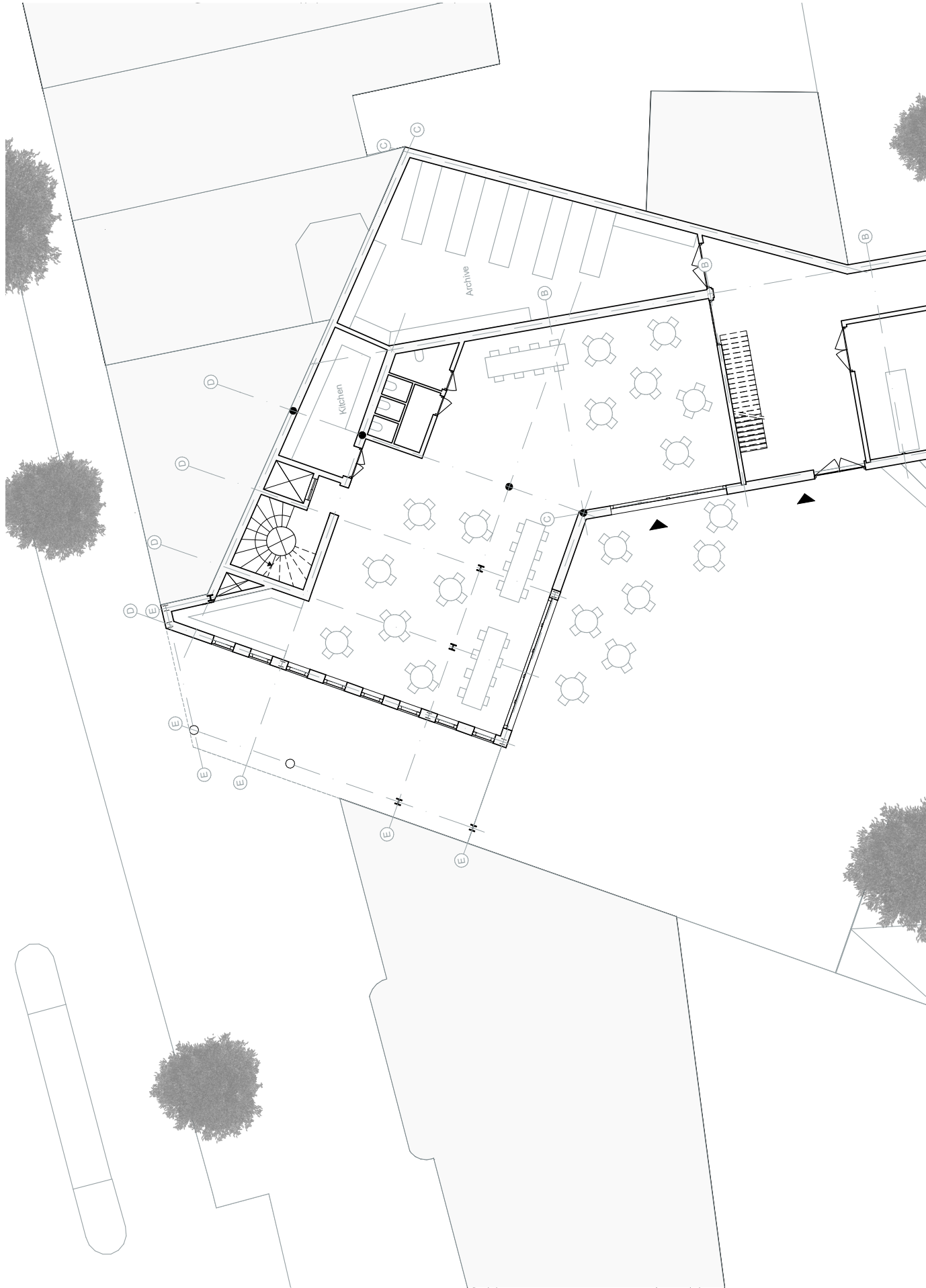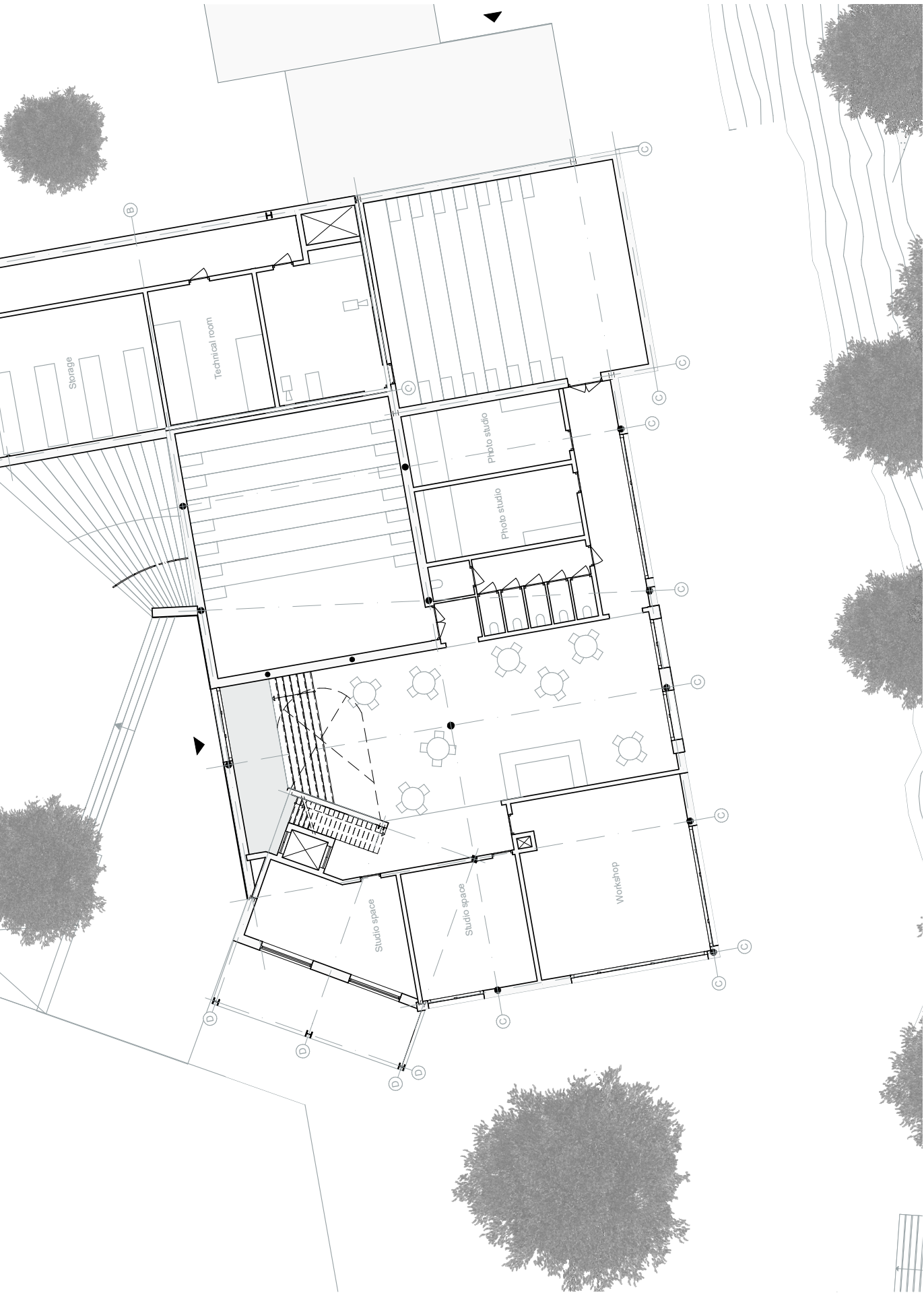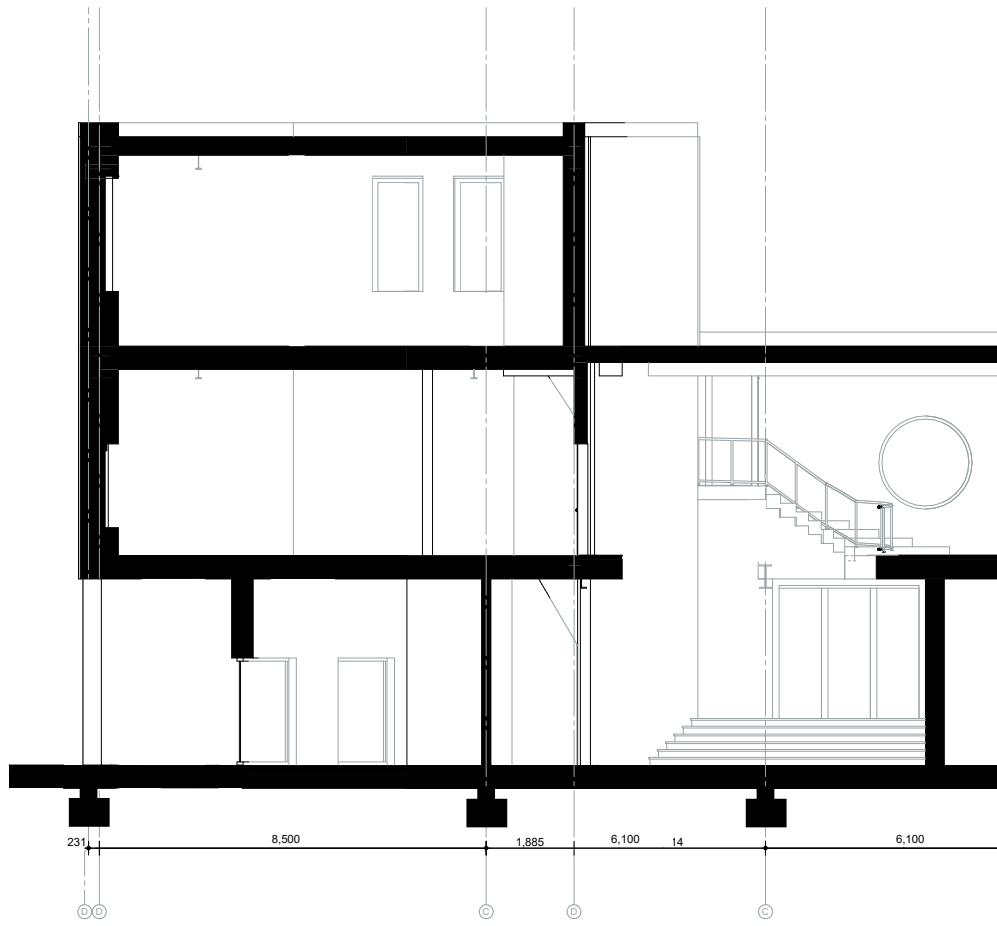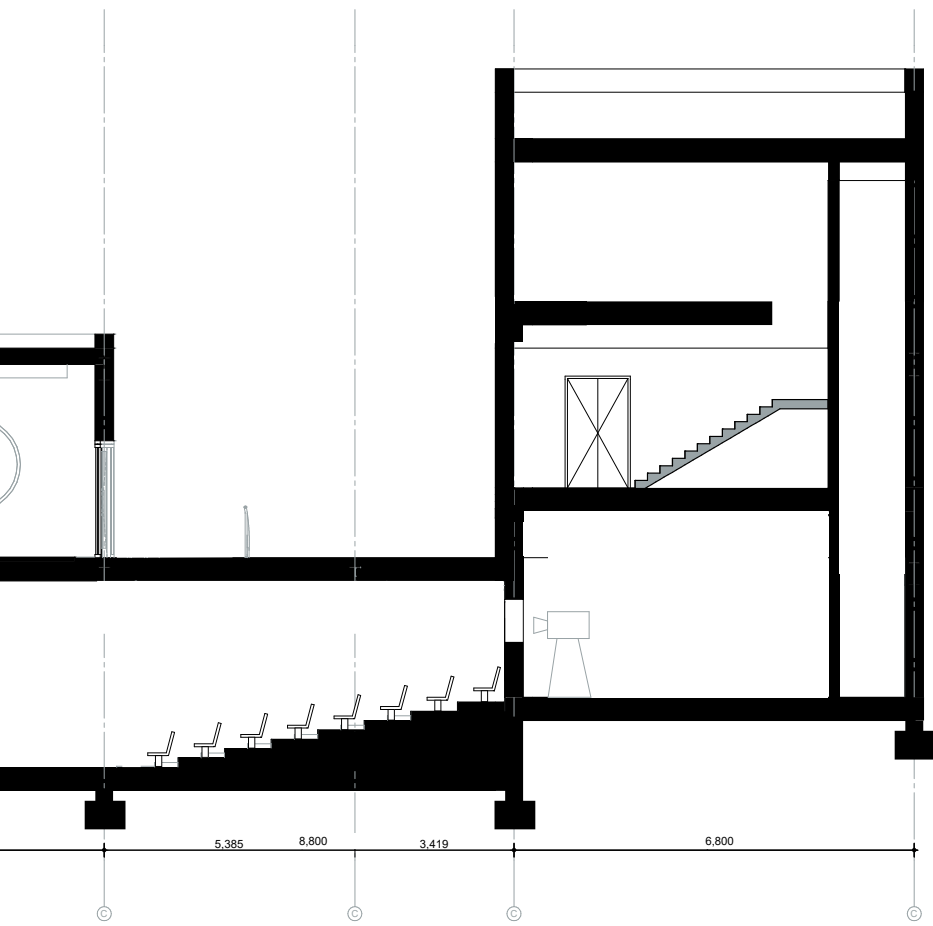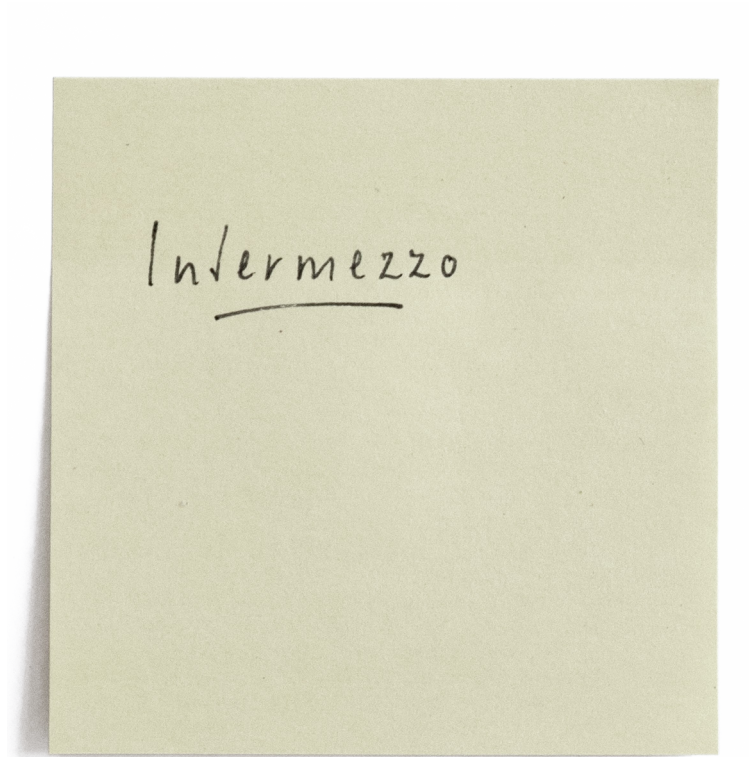
"*Maybe it is good to take a step back and take a look behind the scenes. So as I told you before this area had a very layered history. Nonetheless some existing buildings closeby did not fit the new development plans. While this is in a way quite sad, it can also give rise to new opportunity's. The event center across the tracks has to go, which makes that we can re-use its steel for our structure. Likewise, the clay and concrete bricks on the façade have a similar history. I Might not be the expert on this, but… "*
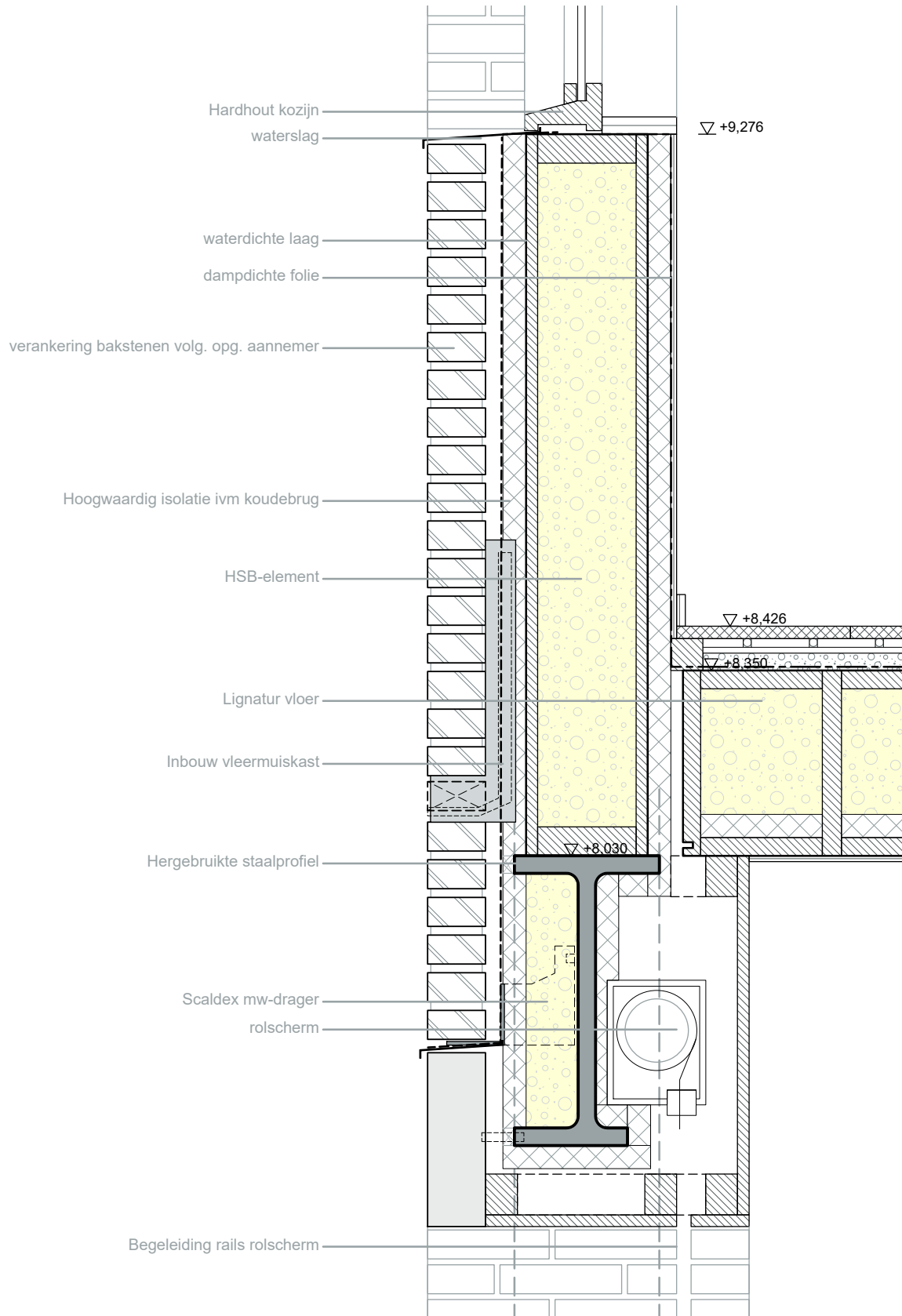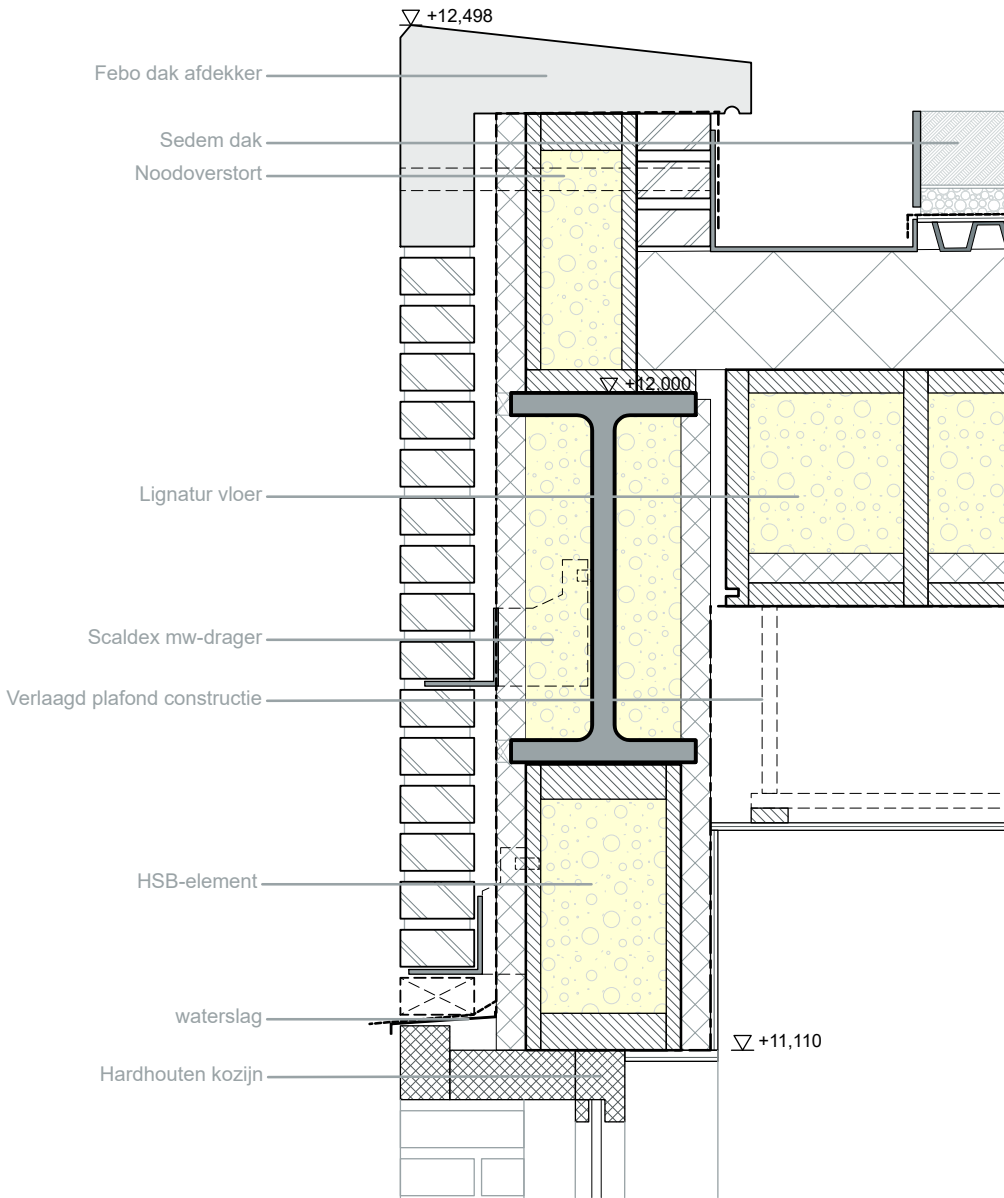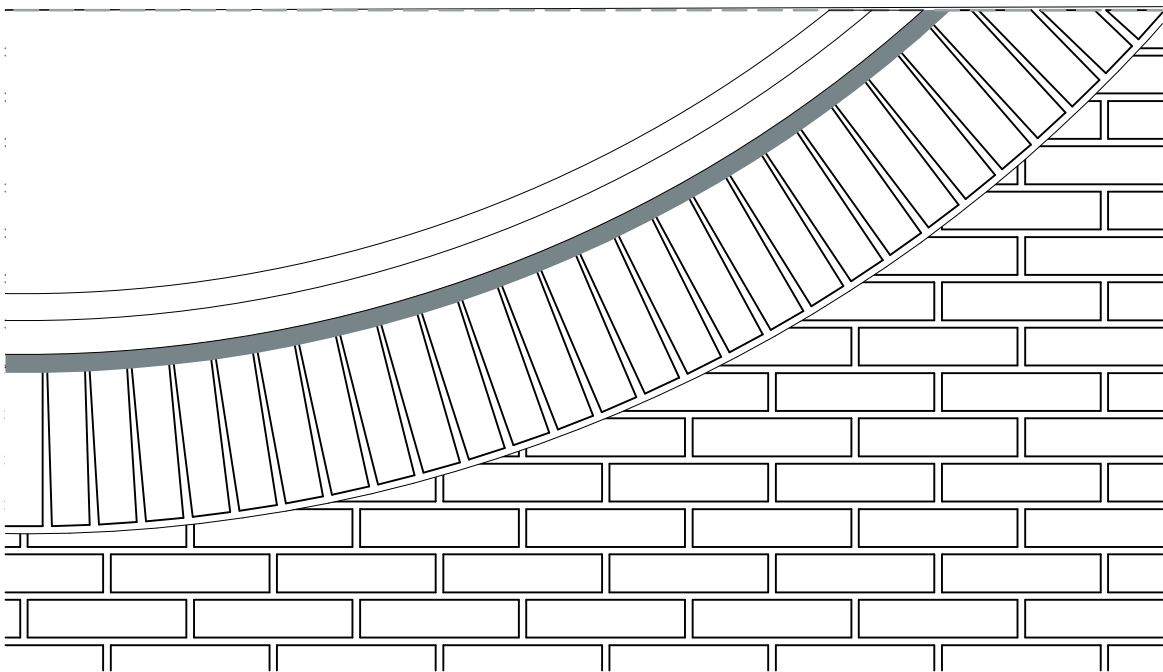
Fragment

V4

▽ +12.498

▽ +11.110

V3

▽ +8.276

▽ +6.426

▽ +5.185

V2

▽ +2.887

V1

▽ -5   ▽ P = 0

Details

dampdichte folie

HSB-element

Hardhouten kozijn

waterdichte laag

verankering betonstenen volg. opg.
aannemer

Hardhouten kozijn

Dekvloer met vloerverwarming

waterdichte laag

▽ -15

▽ P = 0

▽ -270

betonnen poer

Betonelement op afschot

Scaldex mw-drager

Hoogwaardig isolatie ivm koudebrug

HSB-element

waterdichte laag

dampdichte folie

verankering betonstenen volg. opg.
aannemer

Zonwering

Hardhouten kozijn

▽ +4,319

▽ +4,350

▽ +2,667

Detail

Hardhout kozijn

waterslag

waterdichte laag

dampdichte folie

verankering bakstenen volg. opg. aannemer

Hoogwaardig isolatie ivm koudebrug

HSB-element

Lignatur vloer

Inbouw vleermuiskast

Hergebruikte staalprofiel

Scaldex mw-drager

rolscherm

Begeleiding rails rolscherm

▽ +9,276

▽ +8,426

▽ +8,350

▽ +8,030

▽ +12,498

Febo dak afdekker

Sedem dak
Noodoverstort

▽ +12,000

Lignatur vloer

Scaldex mw-drager

Verlaagd plafond constructie

HSB-element
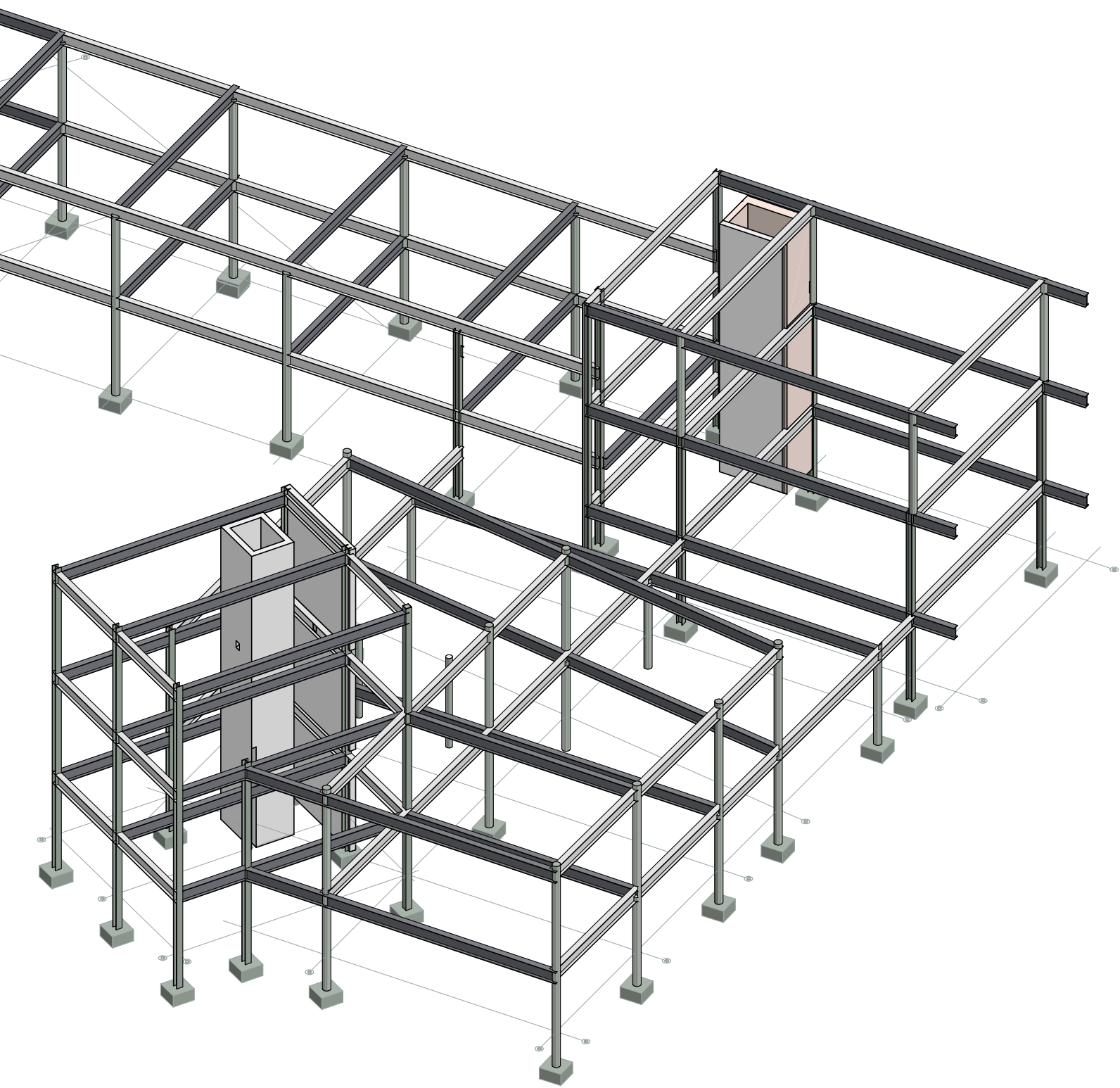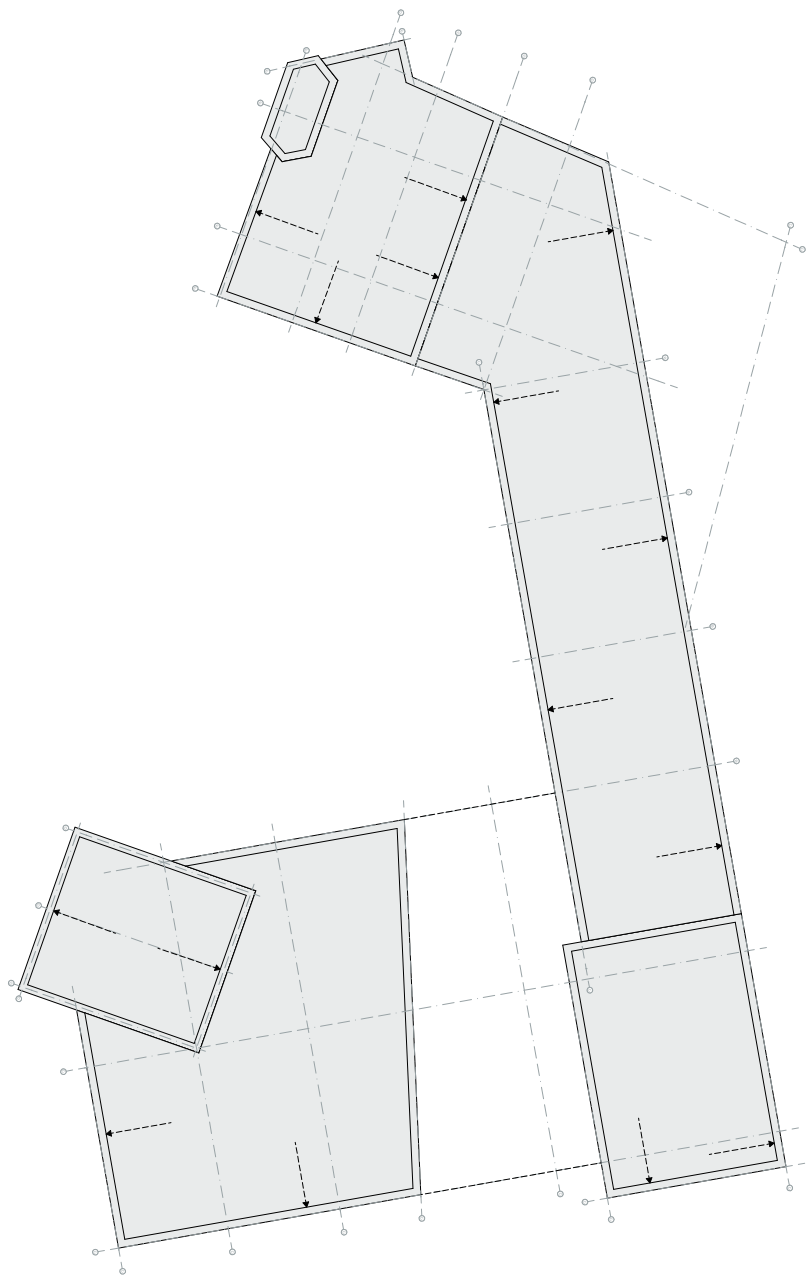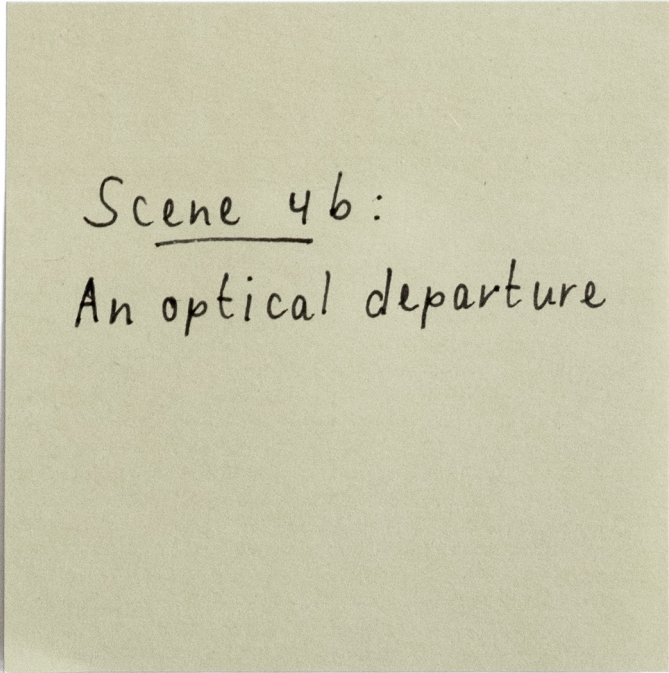
waterslag

▽ +11,110

Hardhouten kozijn

Detail

# Construction

Scene 46:
An optical departure

"Now finally we are inside the building. A semi-public entrance as a transition between inside and outside. Here we can decide to go into the exhibitions, or downstairs to the foyer of the cinema's. We can hang our coats, and either go up to the open exhibition, or we move forward. Then we can see the artworks made by people from around the neighborhood. These frames, alternate with the curated views on the surroundings.
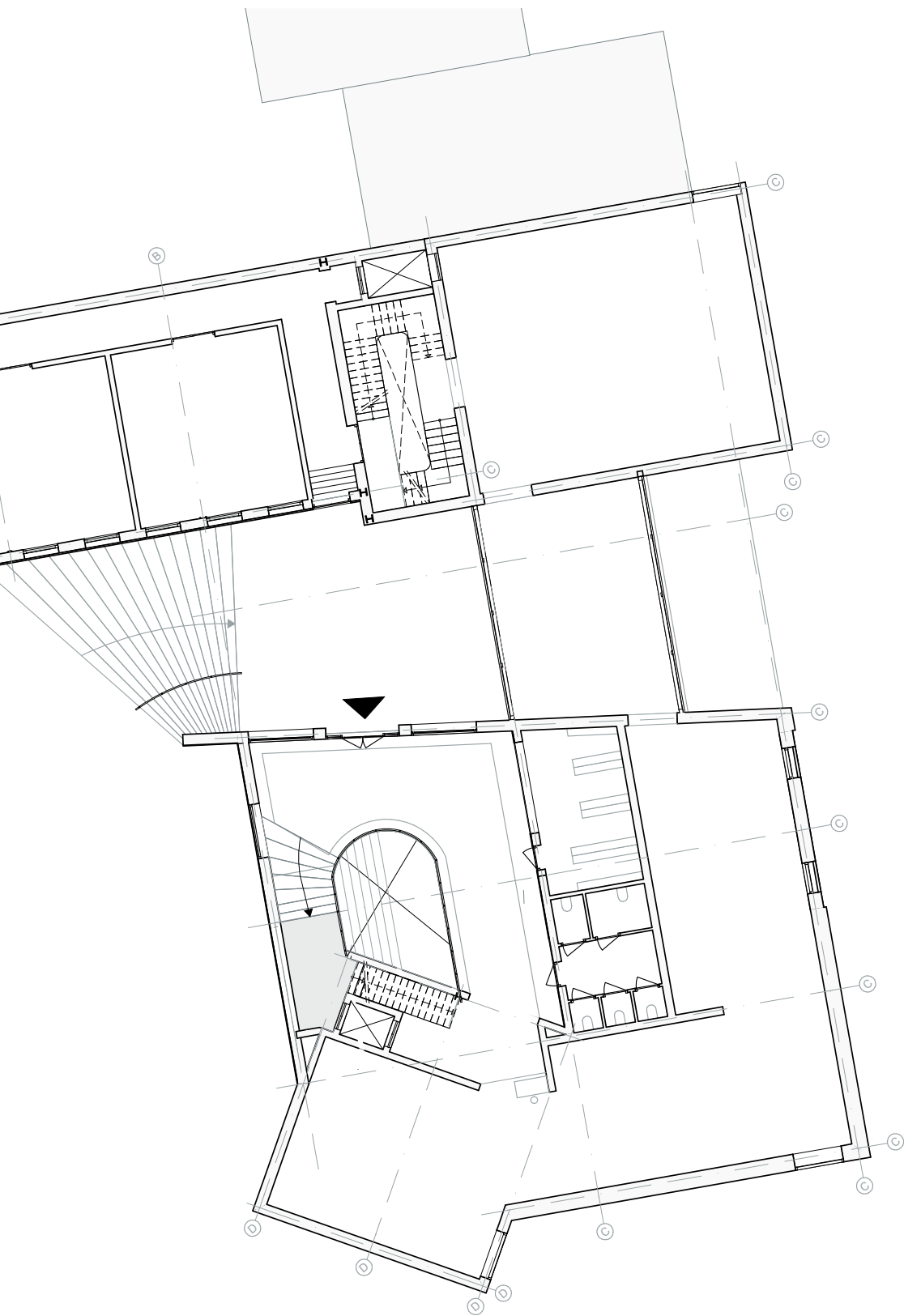
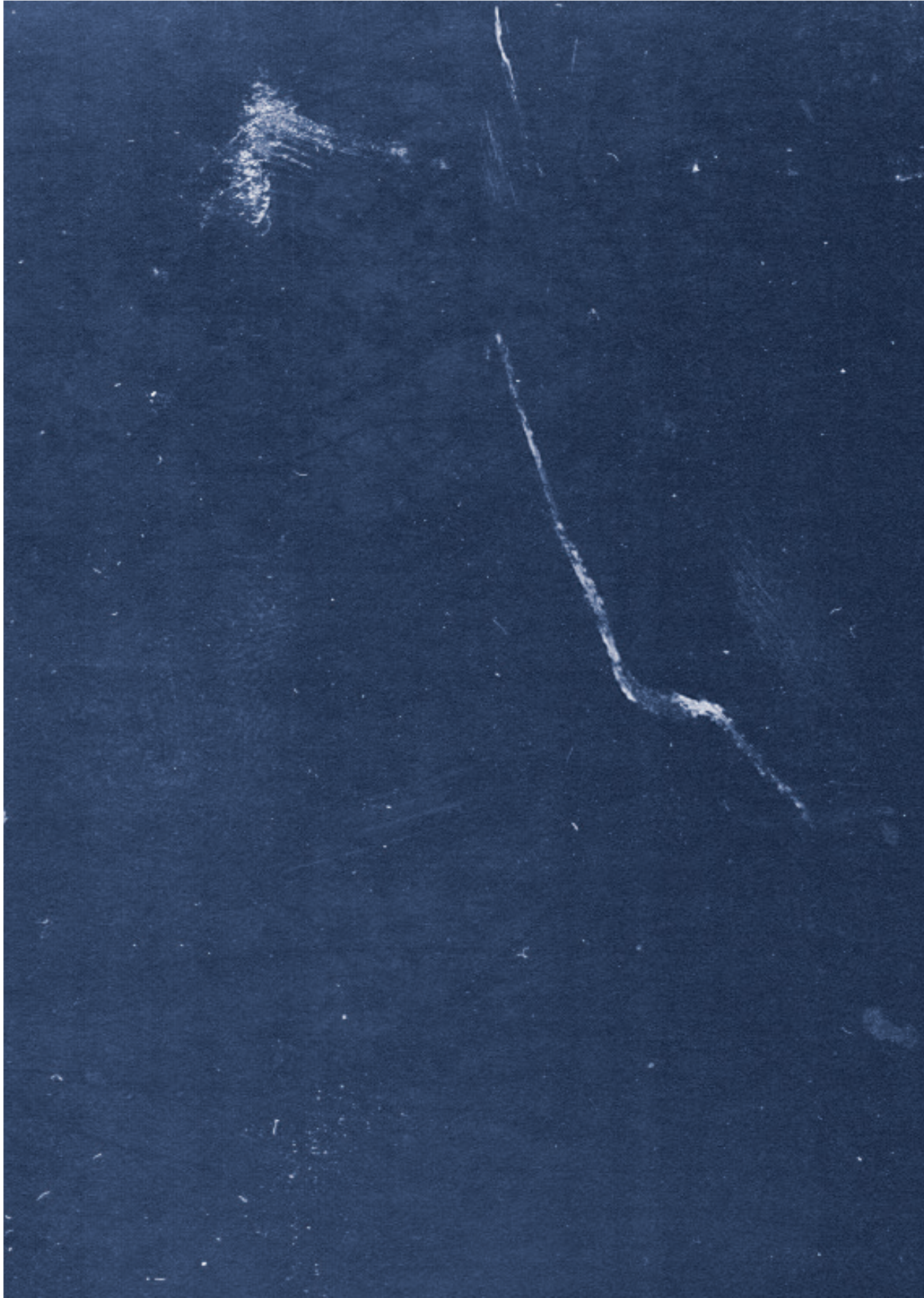A combination of fictional and physical stories. Artworks and the daily life."

Backstage

Outside stage

EPILOGUE

Reflection
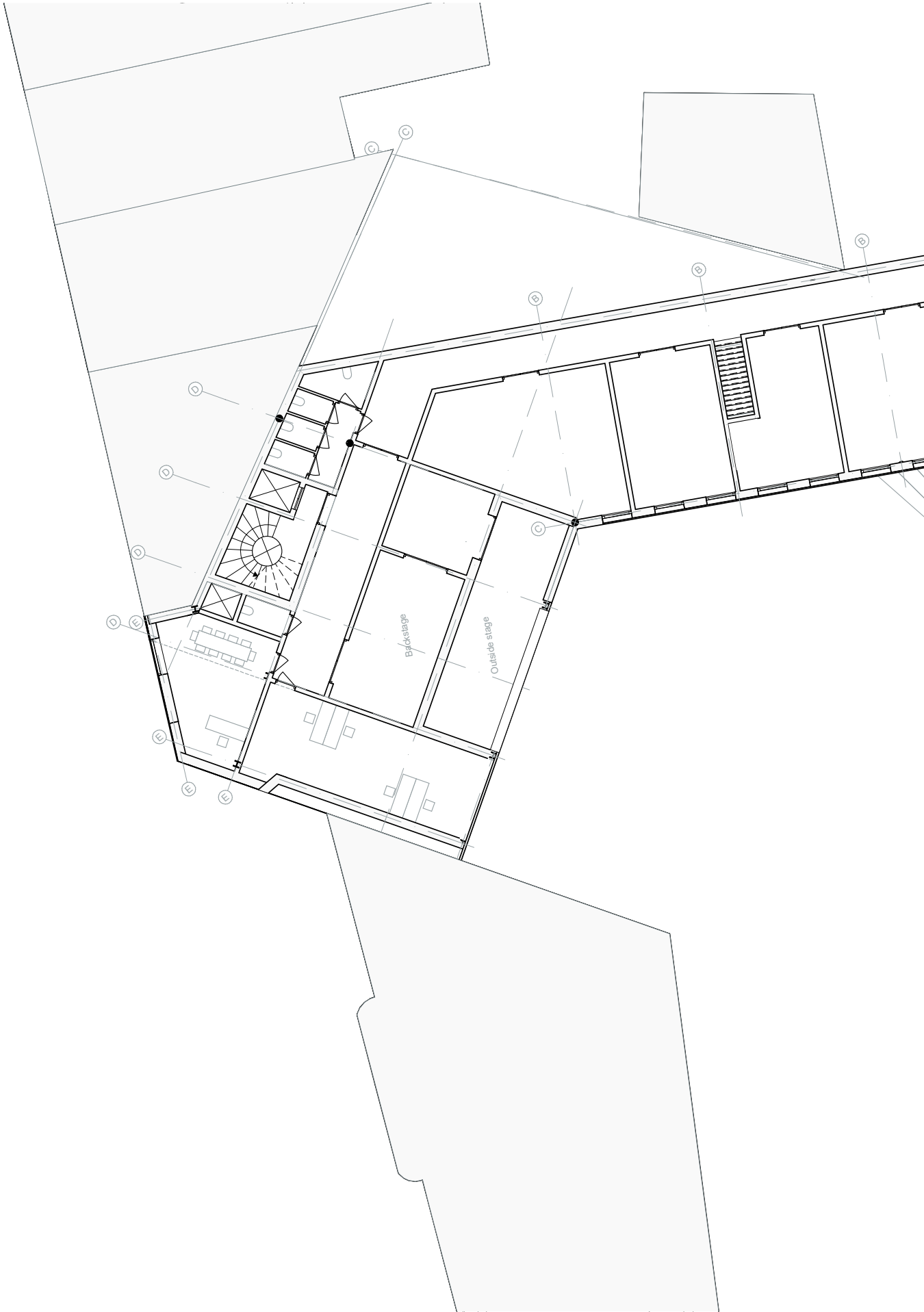
The main struggle of the topic had been the imminent existence of the shared relationship between architecture and film. Something when it is discussed with fellow students/architects but also with "non-architects" that is clear and understandable. Although the responses one then gets vary greatly. I think as both disciplines which are such a big part of our everyday lives, and so engrained with many other topics, they are both something belonging to everyone, and thus extremely personal as well.

The main search has been to find where to underscore these similarities. Is it in the design process, in visualizations, in shared thematic? That is why I think in hindsight, my process can be explained through two phases. First a more analytical start. In which I have tried to dissect both the disciplines, look for its origins, and understand its terminology. This has been quite overwhelming. Because as I tried to explain before, the way the two relate is on a very broad level. This makes it harder to define a research as it makes it not clear whether this is in the realm of: history, semiotics, design, phenomology, aesthetics, etc..

Somewhere along the line came the realization that maybe this relation is clear enough already, and does not need to be further examined or proven. More value can lay in fully embracing this kind of symbiosis, and applying that to an architectural graduation process. Using it more loosely and intuitive.

I think I can admit that I did not find any "new" ideas. While on the other hand I think that many of the approaches used can be of great importance of any architectural research or design process. This can best be described as something like, seeing beyond the lines. Where architectural representation is usually seen 2D. Often these drawings, whether used as research, or as representation of a project, can seem like objective and as a truth. And while film is definetly not the only way to transcend this paradigm. Using film, forcing oneself to see from different, not-necessarily architectural perspectives, can be of great benefit. It is a great way in a research or design, to materialize usually immaterial phenomenon that otherwise might be discarded or neglected.
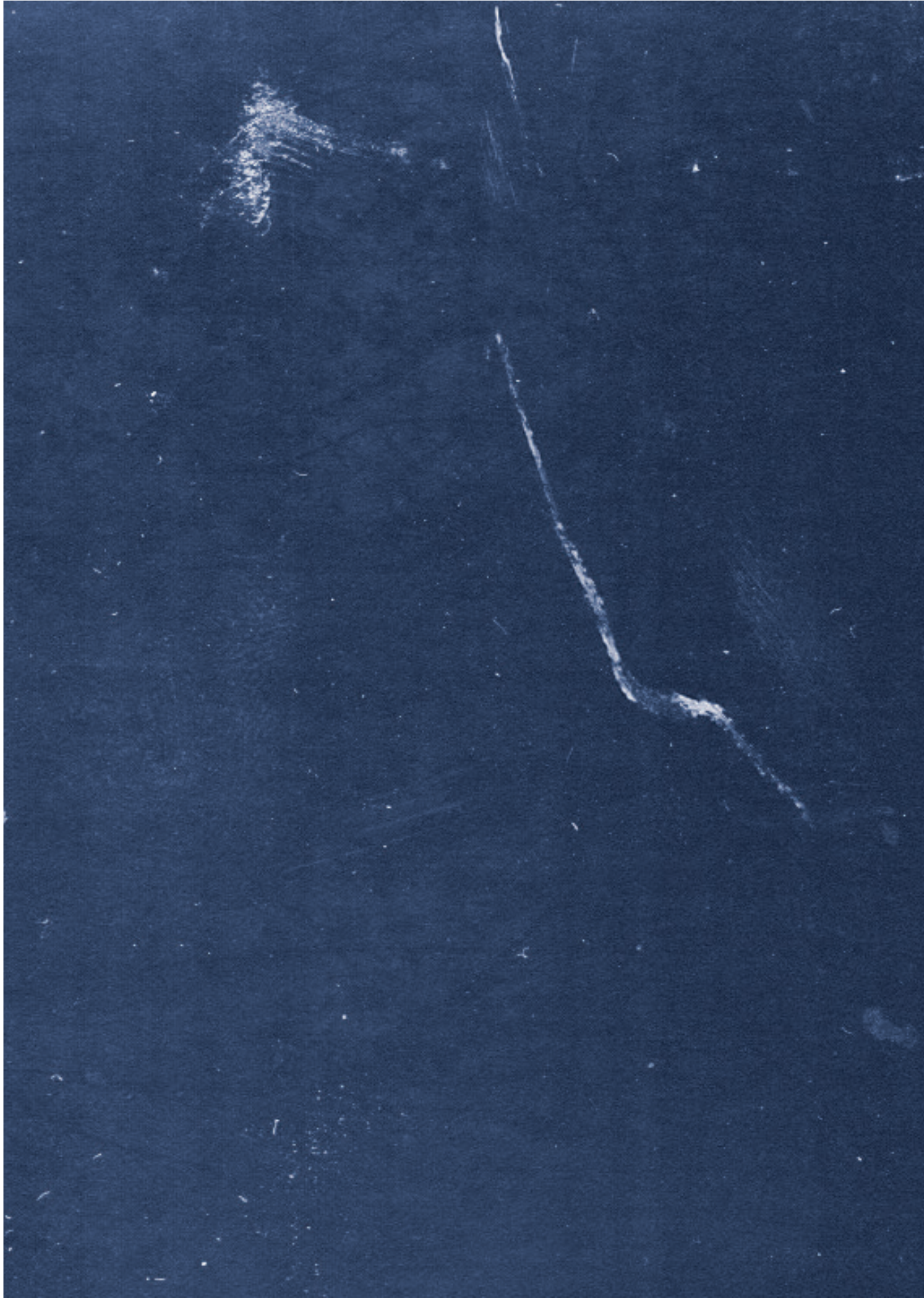
At the same time there are also more specific examples where the research had a direct impact on the design. I think these can be split in the following groups: a sequence of moments/ montaging, the event and embracing the intuitive. While not going into full detail here, these have materialized in the form of: the description of the project as "from a street, to a court, to a window.", paying attention to the multiple routes/back-grounds/moments the project can be approached and seeing this as an open ended montage, seeing the "use" of the court as one of its most important aspects and taking that as a de-sign starting point and lastly designing the building, most-ly the facades with an open mind, guarding the maybe slight mystery of what happens behind the "décor".

After the P2 I think one of the more general discussions was that how I could transfer this kind of sensibility which was shown in the P2 film, into the design project. This is some-thing that is and will be visible in the final film, will partly be visible in the P4 film, but what might has been missing slight-ly in the period in between.

While I would not say this had not been possible, I think the primary reason for this has been a lack of time, and a feeling of haste after the P2 towards the P3/P4. Where certain prod-ucts are expected. This might be a good lesson to take away for after the graduation, as I understand these pressures are even more real in architectural practice.

I although do think there is a great value in this way of work-ing. In any case, the importance of the use of models cannot be stressed enough. The experience of architecture is always an overly "aesthetic" experience in that it is always a com-bination of many different senses. When one looks through a screen, this is reduced to only one. As said before working with film can give the necessity to think about a broader range of immaterial aspects. It helps to embrace the ambiguity and complexity of our life and reality.

And it helps that the final product becomes something that is easily 'readable' for everyone, architects and its users. In the ideal way a good film proves its own worth by its existence, and is not something that has to be explained. Just as the same for good architecture.

BEHIND THE SCENES