We are living in a society of the ‘image saturated’ world and of sensory deprivation, where perceptive and sensory qualities are more and more being diminished by the density, the material overabundance and the haste of modern life. Most designed environments are sterile and highly ordered.

In contrast to these spaces stand the terrain vagues, spaces where the passage of time has created an order of a different kind, a fragmentary nature, where the boundaries between landscape and building have become less clear. These spaces offer environments where we can reactivate our sensory and perceptive powers and find a retreat to linger and reflect. They act as an oasis amidst the city, like a pause within the homogeneous environments that we inhabit everyday.

However, the tendency is to transform these spaces into reconstructed spaces, doing predictable designs.

Having thoroughly experienced the qualities of vague terrains in the Ruhr area in Germany, the aim of the project was to design a programme keeping the intrinsic characteristics of the terrain vague with a minimal intrusion on the landscape. In order to avoid disturbing the character of the site, the shape of the building (both interior and exterior) is directly derived from the forms of the surrounding environment, letting it blend naturally with the landscape. Hence, the building emerges from the landscape, leaving only subtle traces on the territory. The atmosphere of the abandoned industrial territory is retained by keeping the wild vegetation which colonised the terrain during many years of dereliction. The resultant cemetery and public park is a silent space, arousing our inner senses, letting body and mind immerse into total isolation, evoking an architecture were we can pause to contemplate. An architecture which is silent, but changes constantly by the effects of light and shadow, surface and material. A space surpassing the separation between inside and outside and space and time.
Masterplan highlighting the programme elements, placed in between the hills following the topography, and embedded in the ground, thus invisible on the horizon. The previous railway tracks are preserved and used as paths, as a way of retaining a memory of the past.
Long pathways encourage the visitors to slow down and promote a sense of continuity and being in another place where time seems less pressing.
Cast concrete samples experimenting with different textures. Other materials used

Section through Amphitheatre, Burial Walls and Meditation Space
Through reflection, refraction and diffusion of light, the idea of ephemerality and dematerialization of architecture is implemented in the interior of the funeral hall as allegory to the dematerialization of the bodies inside the tombs.

Sketch models experimenting with lighting effects

Projected section through Funeral Hall and Burial Wall

The rooflights of the building create subtle traces in the landscape and let light penetrate into the space. The planted walkable roof serves as public space.