



# Constructing the poetic image

The crematorium as a study in existential architectural form

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*“Spend more time in graveyards.”*

*- Martin Heidegger, when asked how to live a  
more authentic life.*



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## **Glossary**

Some concepts in this thesis require a definition. The concepts defined are broad and could be interpreted in several different ways, therefore the definitions provided are not meant to be universal and final, but instead a quick overview to give the reader an understanding of how the concepts are used and their significance within this work.

**Poetic space**

*A physical or metaphysical space that has an (existential) impact on people. A space that gives an instant reverberation or emotion but also requires an intellectualizing or reason that challenges and inspires the mind.*

**Poetic image**

*An image appearing in the mind that is an immediate response to the poetic. The image can be subjective and specific to each person or have more universal qualities.*

**Elements**

*Here it is broadly defined as concrete or abstract architectural or natural objects, categories, or phenomena. It can be pillars, light, the forest, a direction et cetera.*

**Concrete World**

*This refers to planet earth where humans dwell in the known nature under the currently known laws of physics, along with common concepts and the perceivable and understandable part of cosmos.*

**Infinte Cosmos**

*Everything that lies beyond direct human comprehension. Metaphysical space. A concept without time and space, without common rules or laws.*

**Form**

*The architectural form as the way mass and void are ordered, its composition, scale, and shape. The collage feature of surfaces is disregarded as well as political, cultural, historical, and ecological aspects.*

## Abstract

This thesis is born from the belief that architecture's purpose lies beyond the rational and broad societal aspects. Architecture that separates from economy, religion, environment and redirects its focus to the poetic, made for the individual and striving to challenge world conceptions. This thesis investigates the poetic space that holds metaphysical or existential qualities, space that can extend and challenge the human mind, make us think, imagine, or dream.

Poetics can be described as the theory of literary form, in an architectural context this could transfer to the logic and rules behind how architectural form creates poetic space. This, in turn, requires an understanding of what it means to be poetic, something with a great variation of meaning. The word poetics originates from the Greek term of poiein, meaning to make, which in turn gave the term poiesis, fabrication. This term was defined by Aristotle as the act following noesis, thinking, meaning a creation that is preceded by reason, to build can, therefore, be seen as poetic creation meaning reasoning

followed by production (Turnovský, 2009). While this would indicate that all architecture is poetic, Novalis defines the poetic as the art that stirs emotion and adds that it does not only evoke moods and vision but also perhaps mental dances. Along with the view from Schopenhauer stating that the poetic is in the object, which is seen only in the imagination (Turnovský, 2009).

To conclude the definition of the poetic used in this thesis, poetic space is space that is preceded by reasoning, space crafted with an idea that can be intellectualized by the people experiencing the space. Poetic space is also required to create something new or bring-forth something existing. A metaphysical creation that could be described as an expansion of the human mind and soul, creating imagination and thoughts.

In this thesis, studies and the representation of a crematory explored how architectural form preceded by linguistic reasoning could create poetic space. Architecture derived from the mind of the architect, expressed in form and words.

## Background

The main purpose of this thesis was to develop a reasoning method to reach a poetic building, existing both in representation and in the mind of the reasoning person. A building derived from, and able to invoke, a poetic image. A building where space was the product of an idea. An architecture that speaks to the primitive and fundamental dimensions of humans, inspiring thoughts, feelings, dreams, creativity, and imagination.

Leading up to the final building proposal, the idea was to find a universal poetic idea and with the use of writing, reasoning, and formal studies, deconstruct the idea. Thru studies, related to the universal idea, a library of form, prototypes, methods, concepts, descriptions, and writing evolved.

The aim of the method and deconstruction was to internalize a building derived from the idea, making it exist within the person reasoning until it appeared as poetic images, images that could be interpreted into form. A poetic way of creating a building, where each space is understood, expressed, or defined in the same way as words or concept, and like these words form sentences the spaces form sequences and architecture.

The universal idea investigates how a building can create the contrasting feelings of being sheltered, meaning the fundamental sensation of being safe and protected, and the unsheltered sensation of wandering and searching. In order to make the result more clear the building has a high level of abstraction and is primarily meant to convey this method of creating space.

The poetic building is striving to be non-commercial, non-religious, non-historical, and instead, explore the existential and poetic in form. The typology would thus be an introspective, reflecting building where existential questions arise, such as churches, crematories, memorials, chapels, meditation spaces, or temples. To showcase how the method could be adapted to a building with a more complex program the crematory-typology was chosen.

The background for this thesis is an interest in poetic space and in investigating and exploring a method for its creation. A method that tries to separate from conventional, rational, economic, analytic ways and instead take a phenomenological, imaginative, poetic approach.

This was a study of poetic, metaphysical, existential space, space existing in the mind.

## Phenomenology and Architecture

This Thesis has its discourse within the field of phenomenology, a branch of philosophy that has a strong connection to architecture and architectural phenomenology. Phenomenology can be described as the philosophical study of experience and consciousness (Phenomenology (philosophy),2020).

The architectural counterpart strives to understand and/or translate the philosophical reflections into space and understand how it is experienced from a first-person perspective. A perspective where human factors, sensory experience, historical references, and symbolism is considered (Phenomenology (architecture), 2020). This discourse had a strong influence on the thesis, where the goal was to fundamentally understand poetic experiences and through that understanding, create space.

Phenomenology as a branch of philosophy became more defined at the beginning of the 20th century in part from the writings of Heidegger, who in his book Being and

Time (Heidegger, 1927) reflected over the semi-conscious and unconscious related to activities such as speaking or dwelling. He included architecture in the writings which inspired continued thinking in architectural phenomenology. Several other thinkers expanded on the subject, for example, Maurice Merleau-Ponty (Merleau-Ponty, 1945), Gaston Bachelard (Bachelard, 1958), Christian Norberg-Schulz (Norberg-Schulz, 1980) and Juhani Pallasmaa (Pallasmaa, 1996).

The phenomenological way of understanding can be condensed into a rejection of objective research, an interest in human behavior as a reflection of nature and the society, a preference for studying conscious experiences, opposed to traditional data, and the search for discovery. This condensed explanation allows for a quick overview of the fundamentals, while there still are many types of phenomenology. (Phenomenology (philosophy), 2020).

This thesis evolved from the broad understanding of this philosophy and as a continuation of the research upon the fundamentals and poetic qualities of dwelling, carried out by Martin Heidegger and Christian Norberg-Schulz among others.

While Norberg-Schulz and Heidegger can be seen to have a strong philosophical approach to understanding, many architects who practice architectural phenomenology, such as Peter Zumthor are more concerned about the experience of space, resisting architecture too dependent on the visual experience.

Much of the Architecture of today have this dependence on the visual. We are reducing architecture to surfaces painted upon rational and generalized buildings, a tendency that this thesis is trying to work against.

Architectural phenomenology, is also concerned with the question about genius loci, the spirit of the place. Where the discussion can be condensed to either the constant innovation or the search of an atemporal architecture. Architects who

adhere to a phenomenologic approach, often consider the genius loci and the importance of context over the innovation (Munoz, 2014). In order to create a liberated architecture, this thesis treats the building as more of a solitary object.

Within the different ways of applying phenomenology to architecture, this thesis is positioned somewhere in between philosophy and architecture with a solitary design project, trying to understand the concept of poetic space. In search of this understanding, the phenomenological method developed had an ambiguous focus where both the writing/reasoning and, the form/space, worked in symbiosis. A philosophical and formal study of phenomenology.

Finally, this thesis asks the question about whether the architect can translate phenomenological studies into form and to what degree this can be experienced and universally understood. Can a subjective formal interpretation of the poetic be experienced as poetic by others?

## Thesis Question

*“How can architectural form, derived from the subjective interpretations of an idea or concept, reach a universal poetic space, enhancing a creative, imaginative, philosophical, or existential state, and could the intensity of this state be changed by how the form is sequenced or combined?”*

*“How can writing and reasoning make space exist as a poetic image prior to design, and to what degree can a representation or concretization make the poetic image reappear?”*

## Delimitations

This thesis investigated a method that resulted in a monolithic building of primarily one single materiality, where the importance was the form and its relation with poetic space and the experience of poetic space. This meant the building was never reduced into surfaces but instead treated as mass, elements, and void. A delimitation in order to narrow down and clarify the explorations.

The final design proposal is attempting to, thru a literal and direct application, simplify and make the method comprehensible, while also applying the theoretical reasoning of the thesis.

To limit the variations of the method, one typology was chosen along with one universal idea. The deconstructed idea created six main concepts or archetypes that each were represented as six spaces in the building. The direct use of the six archetypes allowed the building to be a more abstract representation of the method.

The site of the project was subordinated to the theoretical purpose of the building. The generality of the architecture and the method of creating architecture was the goal of the thesis. In further studies, this method could have been expanded to include more focus on the relation with context, materiality or other more complex universal ideas.

EXTENDING - enlarging.

Superhuman scale  
Infinite  
hemispherical or extended sky  
Repetitive symmetry  
Continuous grid  
Exteriorized direction - upwards.  
(Abstracting nature)  
(Timeless)  
Soul projected in the void (ext=inf)-> beyond infinite cosmos  
Endless  
Non-reachable space (superhuman scale)  
**IMAGINING THE COSMOS.**  
(Resisting earth)  
Infinity in imagination.

Great pillars of stone surrounding the nature, an  
Oasis contained!

"To understand the idea of being sheltered in  
Cosmos, one must experience wandering under the  
Sky".

ORIENTING/ANCHORING - directing

Singular distinct image  
An ordered, logic, ending grid - square  
Expected space  
Axial direction  
Simple temporality  
Placed next to nature

Descending into a chaotic labyrinth.  
The cosmic space appears and  
disappears. One is constantly  
fluctuating between orientation and  
orientational doubt. The inner  
core encloses.  
Descend into the sky.  
Rise into the earthly enclosure.  
oriented in cosmos.  
Lost as the insignificant individual.

Emotion arise in the single tombstone  
Fragments of time

The hollowed space appear in  
between outside and a

LOSING/SEARCHING - deceiving

Repetitive monotony  
Labyrinthine  
Transformed or abstracted grid - slight deviation.  
Surviving space  
Not relating to nature, away from.  
(Missing pieces).

"Is it only possible to dream  
in safety?"

"REDUCING" - shrinking.

Microcosmos - forest, water, stone.  
Singular grid  
Asymmetry variation Detail  
Growth - Past (island)  
Physical reduction of air (reduction of void)  
Inverted directionality  
Non-reachable space - Microscale  
Ending time - one source of light  
(type III massive int/ext=inf)  
Concretized finite world - phantom of sky Δ  
**IMAGINING THE WORLD**  
Gathering the world in a building

Wander and getting lost,  
Realizing the presence of Cosmos,  
questioning, searching.  
Human life is absurd,  
Entering the enclosed, gathered  
space. One is oriented in the  
world. The world is in the  
Cosmos.

EXPOSING - wandering, insecure  
Unintelligible tectonics  
Fragility  
overlooked from outside, distorted or obstructed view  
Placed in nature  
Circular movement  
impermanence  
(inconsistent grid - surprise/unexpected)

Life is wandering.

Reaching inwardly  
for shelter.  
The tension of expecting  
shelter but reaching  
wandering

ENCLOSING - safe, dwelling, sheltering

Comprehensive tectonics - pressure, "cuffing, molded, hollowed  
overcoming the weight and solidness -  
overview - single aperture, panoramic view  
Relating to earth but distancing nature  
Centralized or one-directional movement  
 permanence  
logic ending grid

first part must be the venture  
into the unknown.

Crementary showing absurdity of  
human life. CHAOS!

Bound or free. The reversed house  
Vertical house. THE UNSAFE RAVINE.  
THE LEAVING PILLAR. THE DISTORTED COLUMN  
The presence of the non-present  
The single monument.  
hidden niches space beyond

From the intangible exposed wander,  
one enters the gathered space.  
The man-made surrounds the  
phantasm of the concrete world.  
An introverted space, directed to the

Forest  
water  
stone

Among trees. Next to water.  
The end of the concrete.

the central question is whether  
architecture is nature the people? or  
The feeling of opening the monument/wall  
emptiness to let the sun in!  
The concrete is about monuments  
The hole filled of gaps can be more enclosed  
Sole need to be kept down  
Relation with forest or existing in the sun.  
Space as a direction in movement (time).  
hidden entrance. Building to find the  
building.

## The crematory

This thesis consisted of two phases with the endgoal of creating a representation of a building. A building that responded to investigations of poetic space and were drawn within a set of frameworks on an urban site. The building is meant to be mostly read as a solitary object, meaning that its importance and idea is more related to architecture in itself than that of architecture in its urban context. The building created is a crematory with semi-public functions and non-commercial, non-religious and non-historic meaning. Instead the building have an existential and poetic meaning.

The crematory was chosen due to its inherent existential questions of life and death. A building manifesting the cyclical

life. The presence of death, materialized in the tombs and monuments and the rebirth in scattered ashes and rising smoke. inspires the reflections of life's meaning. A place where one needs shelter in the crushing reality of time while also being forced to wander in search of higher meaning.

Within the crematory the sequences of the cremation ritual also enables the study of spatial sequences and the contrast between the shelter and wander. Another reason for the choice of typology was the challenge posed by the coexistence of highly specific and functional program and poetic space, however the emphasis and core of this thesis was always the study of poetic form.



## Design proposal

The Crematory proposed is a product of the method constructed within this thesis. A crematory, with the intention of being written and reasoned upon prior to any design, a symbiotic relationship between written language and formal language. The goal of this method has been to create poetic and meaningful space, space that can exist in representation, in full-scale construction as well as in the mind of the reader or visitor. The crematory presented is a subjective formal interpretation of a poetic idea, a translation of a poetic image.

The building contains the cremation function and technique needed for it. However, the technical aspect was not emphasized and spaces for equipment were generalized and placed in simple logic. Spaces for existential reflection were instead prioritized with room for solitary meditation, intimate gatherings, larger ceremonies, and burial. The presence of the memorials allows for the building to have a more public function outside of cremation, as a place for remembrance or reflection as well as making the building a materialization of life and death.

*"Daydream transports the dreamer outside the immediate world to a world that bears the mark of infinity."*

*- Gaston Bachelard, Poetics of Space*



## Crematory

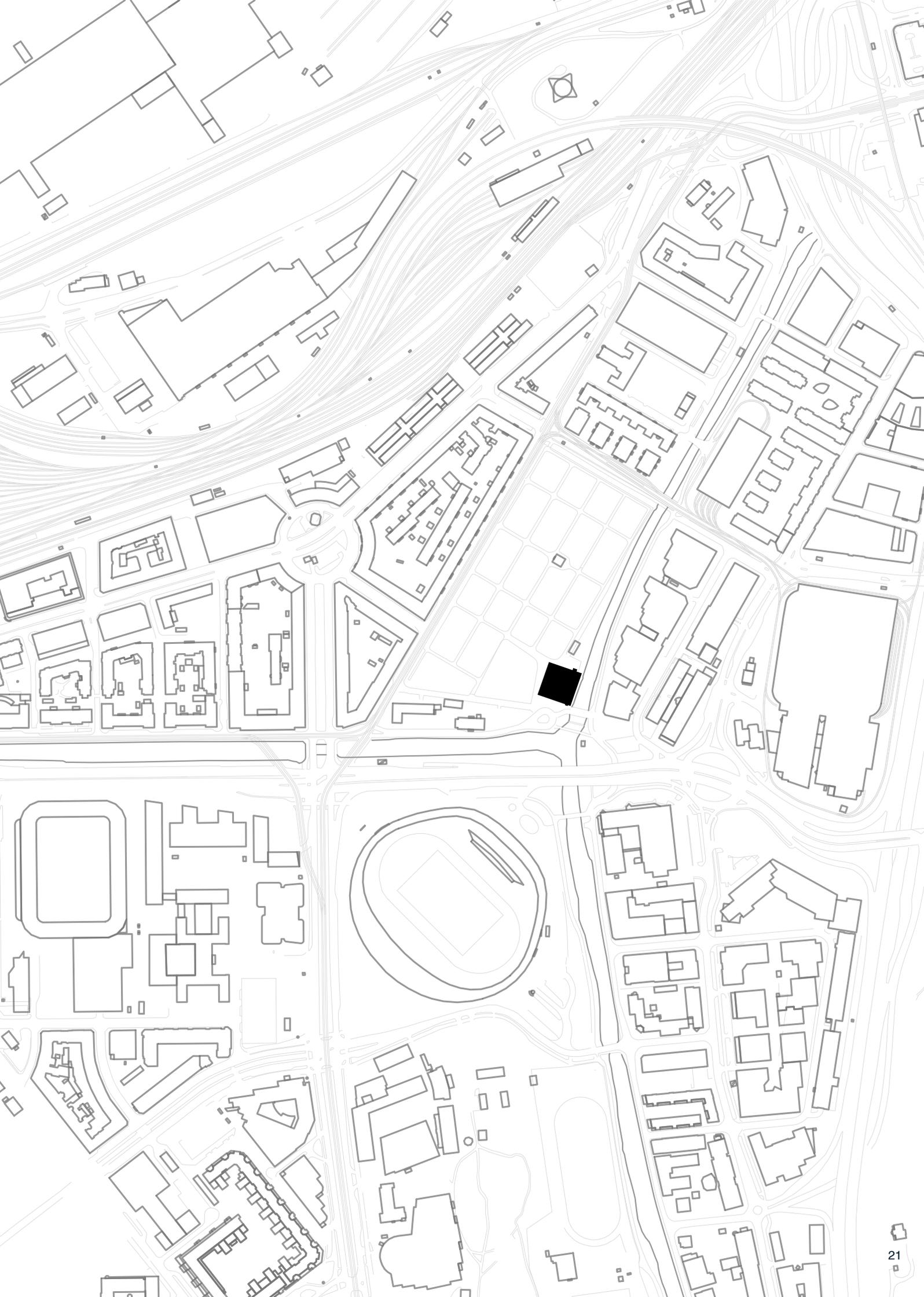
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The crematory designed is meant to be experienced with imagination, an introspective building inspiring existential reflection. Existing in the representation as well as in the poetic image created by the representation, it stands as a manifest of the duality of an inescapable end and dreams of infinity.



Plan Overview  
1:5000

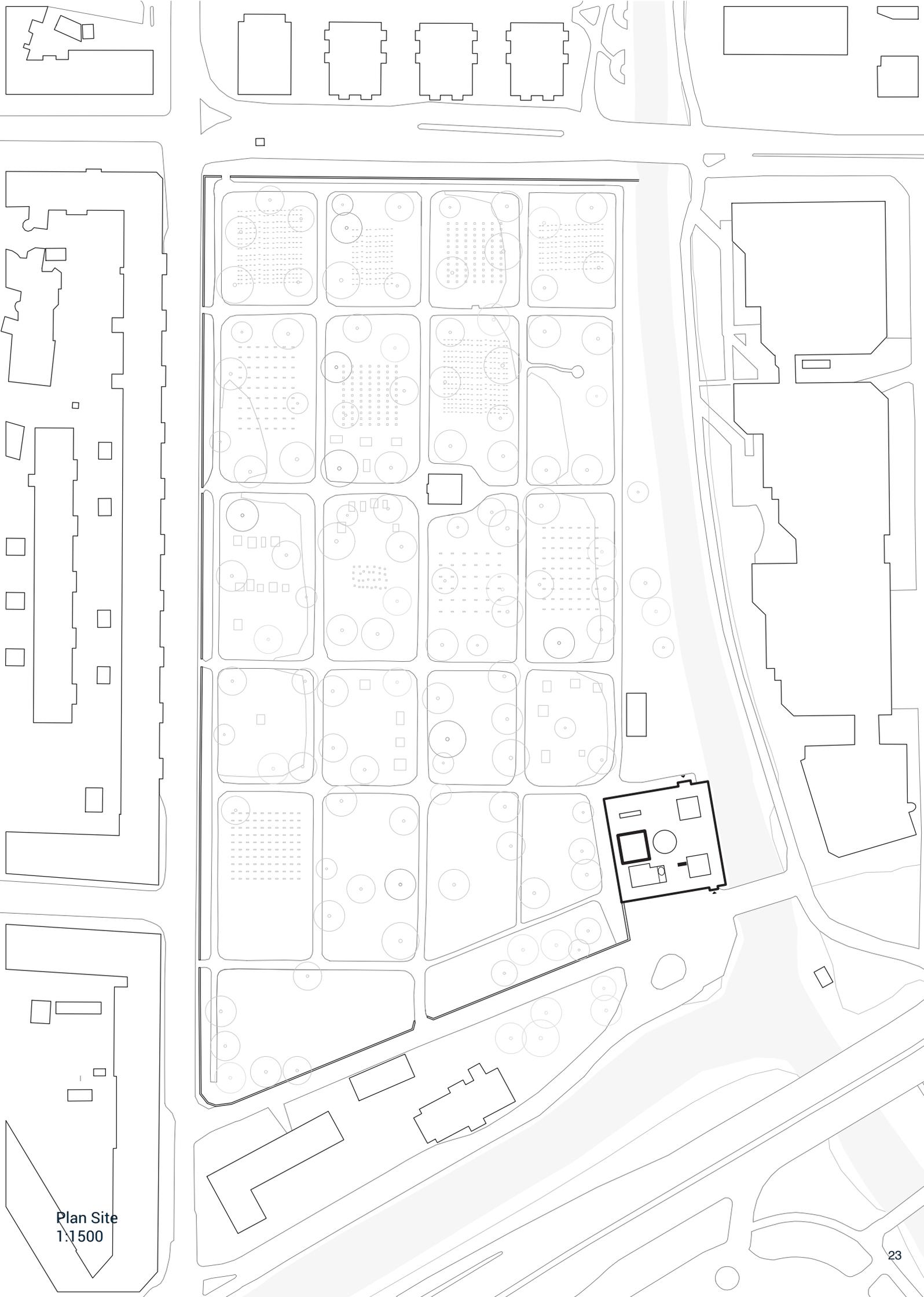


## **Stampen Cemetary**

The project is located on Stampen Cemetary in Gothenburg. The choice of placing the non-commercial building on a central urban site, close to important functions and flows, express the importance of an architecture where the main purpose is not commercial but instead existential.

The cemetery is a place with inherent poetic qualities, an oasis, enclosed by walls and the flowing water. Big trees shading the strict grid of paths surrounding the graves. Stones and monuments are gathered in clusters, enticing to be read and understood, each one becoming individual when in reach. The cemetery is a place of reflection, a sheltered wander.

The crematory is placed in the corner of the cemetery, a corner where the otherwise strong enclosure is broken. The incomplete enclosure disturbs the logic of the site and forces either an unclear entrance or an abrupt ending. The placement of the building closes the cemetery, creating a comprehensible directed entrance, restores the inner logic of the grid, and joins the boundary of the water with the walls.



Plan Site  
1:1500



## **Stampen crematory**

The outside of the building stands in strong contrast with its surroundings. Its expression is meant to convey the building as a solitary abstract object, waiting to be examined and understood, while at the same time, it exists as a concrete mass, placed on the site. The tectonics of the building alternate between the logical and illogical. From afar, pillars are standing on solid ground and, without the slightest hint of uncertainty, carry the roof.

When moving closer, however, the confidence of the pillars starts to falter! A more careful investigation reveals unsettling offsets, pillars searching an equilibrium on the edge of a slender plane and a roof, retracting from the uncertain bearing.

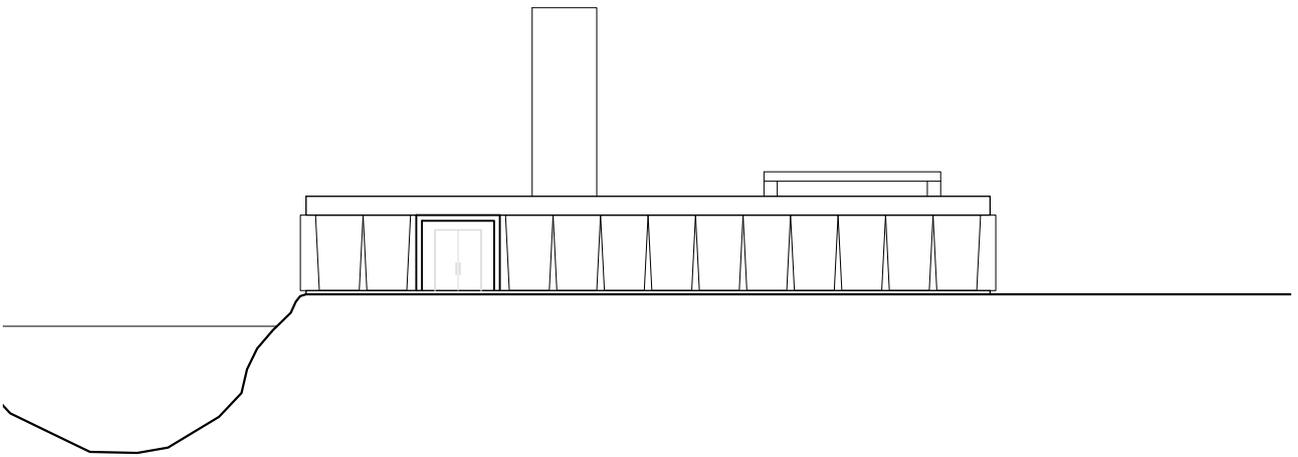
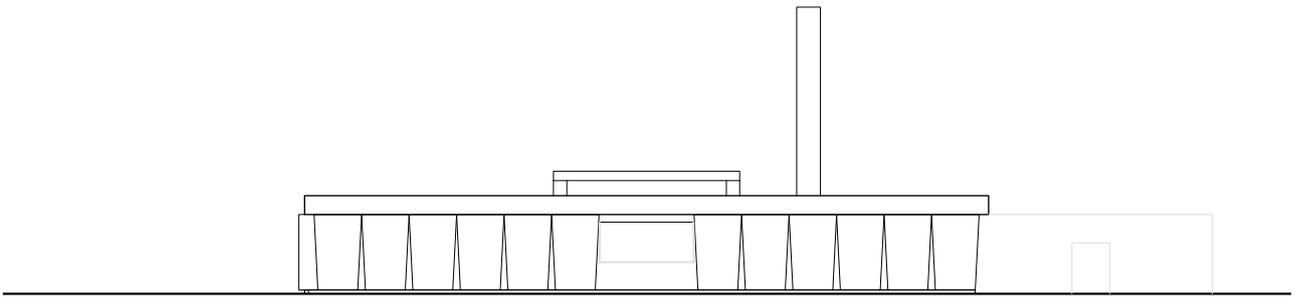
A building revealed in glimpses through narrow openings and an entire side made inaccessible by water, an exterior constantly varying between abstract object and building.



The order of the following plans, sections, and images are illustrating the poetic ritual of the cremation. A ritual where one enters the building and attends one of two scales of ceremonies. After the ceremonies, the ritual continues down into the garden, where an urn can be picked up and the visitor can prepare before attending the cremation. In the bottom level, the burning takes place and the ritual allows for a last farewell and ceremony around the coffin. After the body

has been cremated, ashes can be collected and either spread or buried in the memorials of the building, or brought to be taken care of outside of the crematory. The final step of the ritual is the climb up to the entrance level, where the enclosed room allows for a solitary farewell.

This ritual is one of several ways of experiencing the poetic idea of the building.



Facade North, West  
1:400



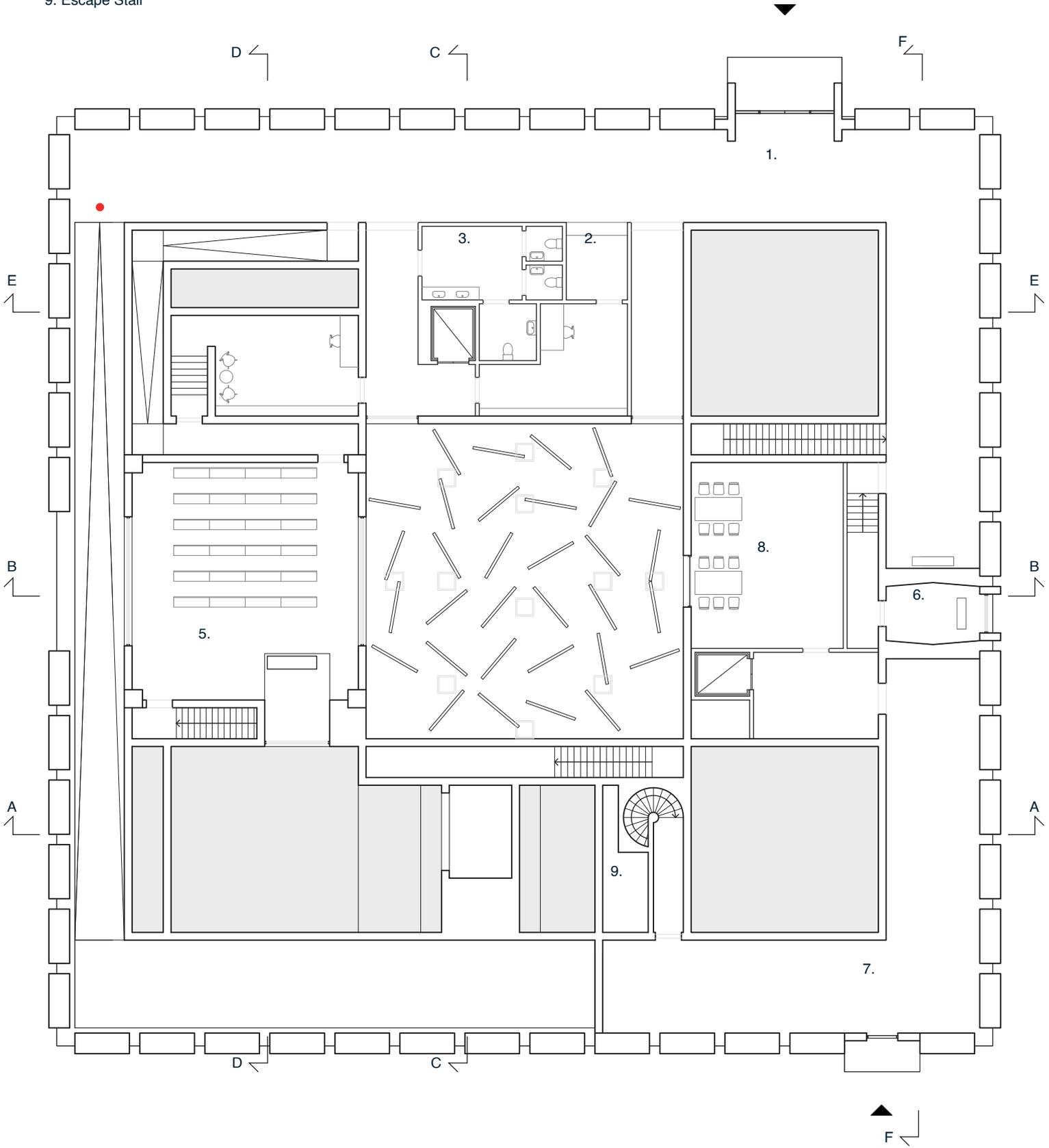


Perspective From Cemetery

*An abstract mass stretches in between the stream and the wall, enclosing the cemetery. The symmetric order of massive pillars carries a heavy roof, oriented in the landscape by a tall column breaking its silhouette.*

*When moving around the building, the singularity of each side is discovered, without completely revealing its inside. The way in lies protected in the corner, a deep niche before entering.*

- 1. Entrance
- 2. Reception
- 3. WC
- 4. Ceremony Staff
- 5. Ceremony Space
- 6. Solitary Room
- 7. Staff Entrance
- 8. Staff Space
- 9. Escape Stair



Plan Entrance  
1:200

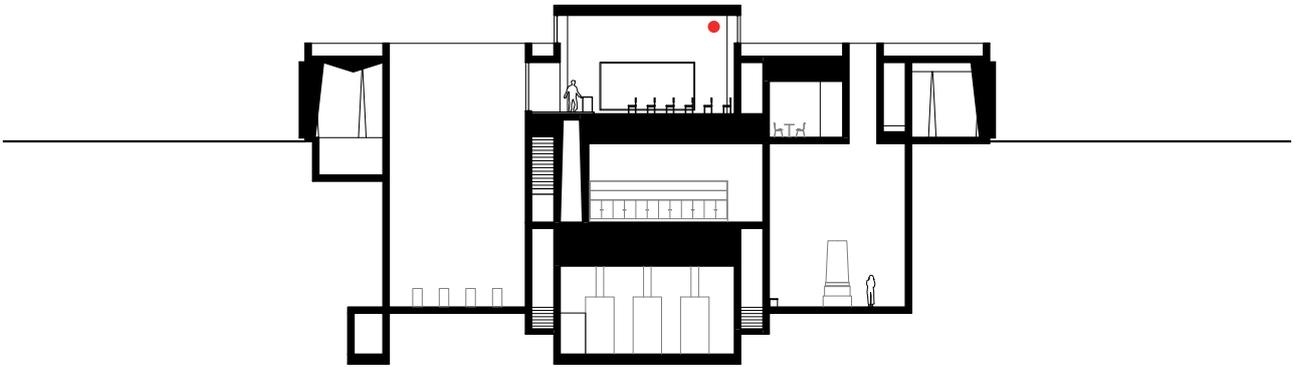
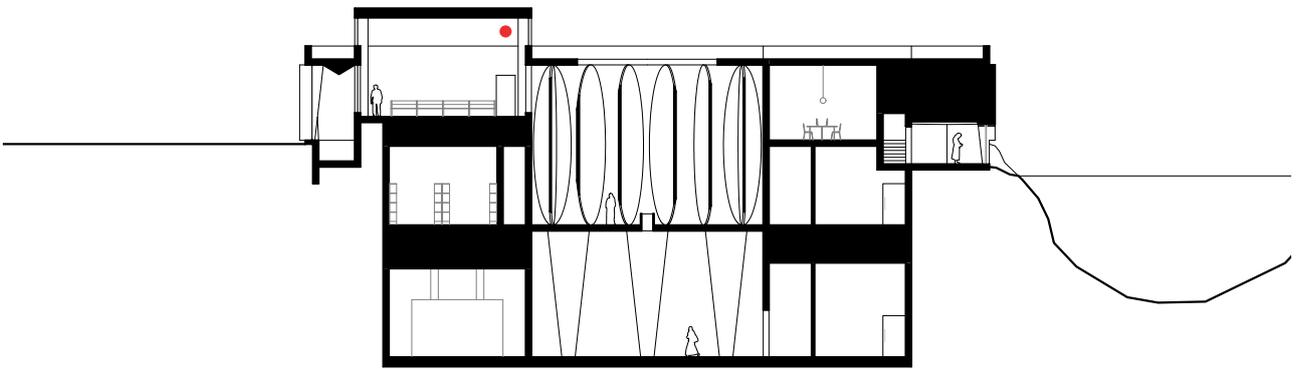




● Perspective Exposed Path

*A continuous labyrinth, descending and ascending, spiraling down to the core. Fragmented walls obstruct the vision and the leaning pillars threaten to fall. Circulating, the hidden center is revealed just to disappear, the next space is always shrouded in an incomprehensible logic of turns and corners.*

*Exposed.*



Section D-D, B-B  
1:400

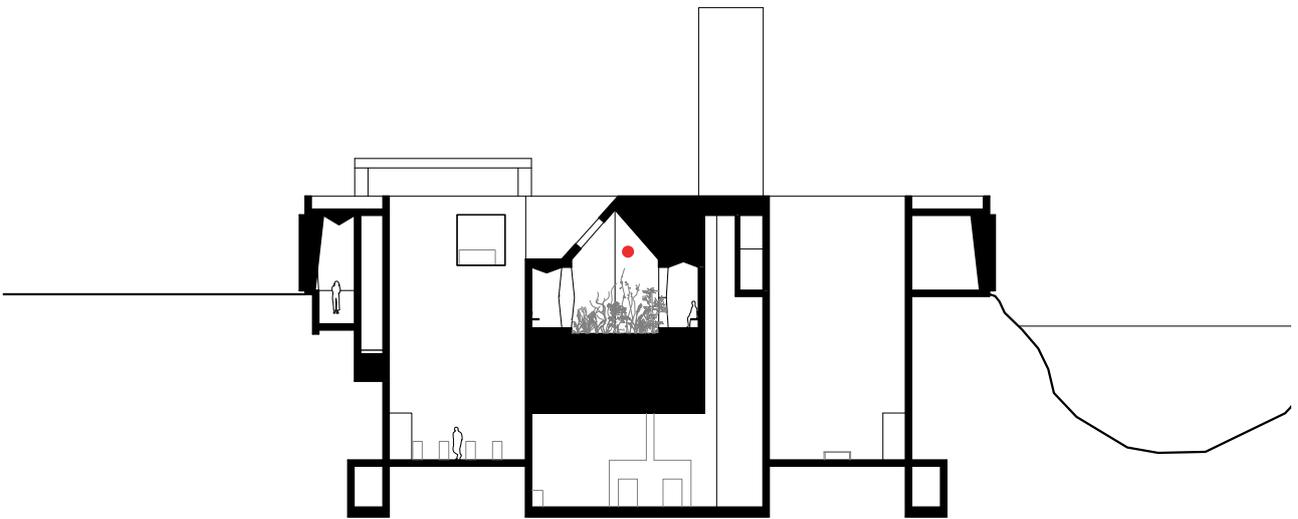
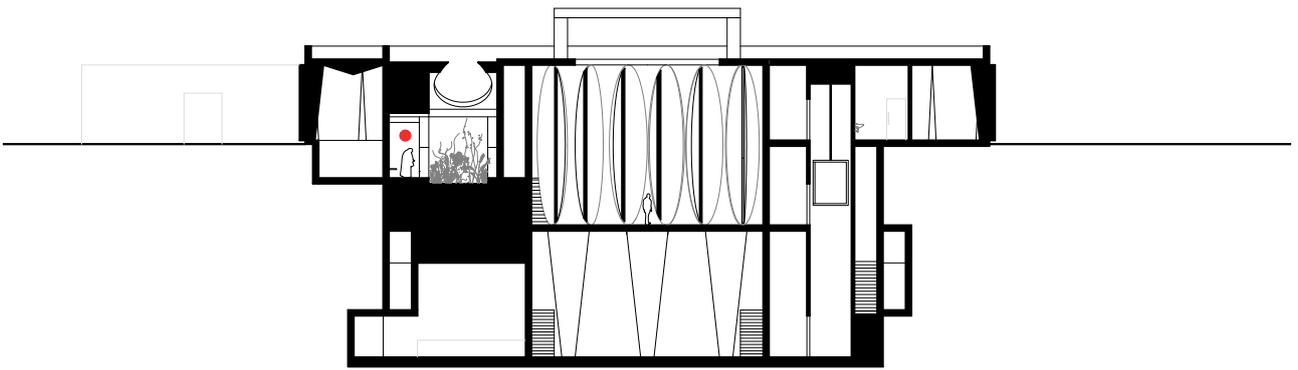




● Perspective Ceremony Room

*Ascending into space where a sudden clarity appears. A space of overview, where the separate pieces are connected and understood. A space in the concrete world.*

*Oriented.*



Section A-A, C-C  
1:400



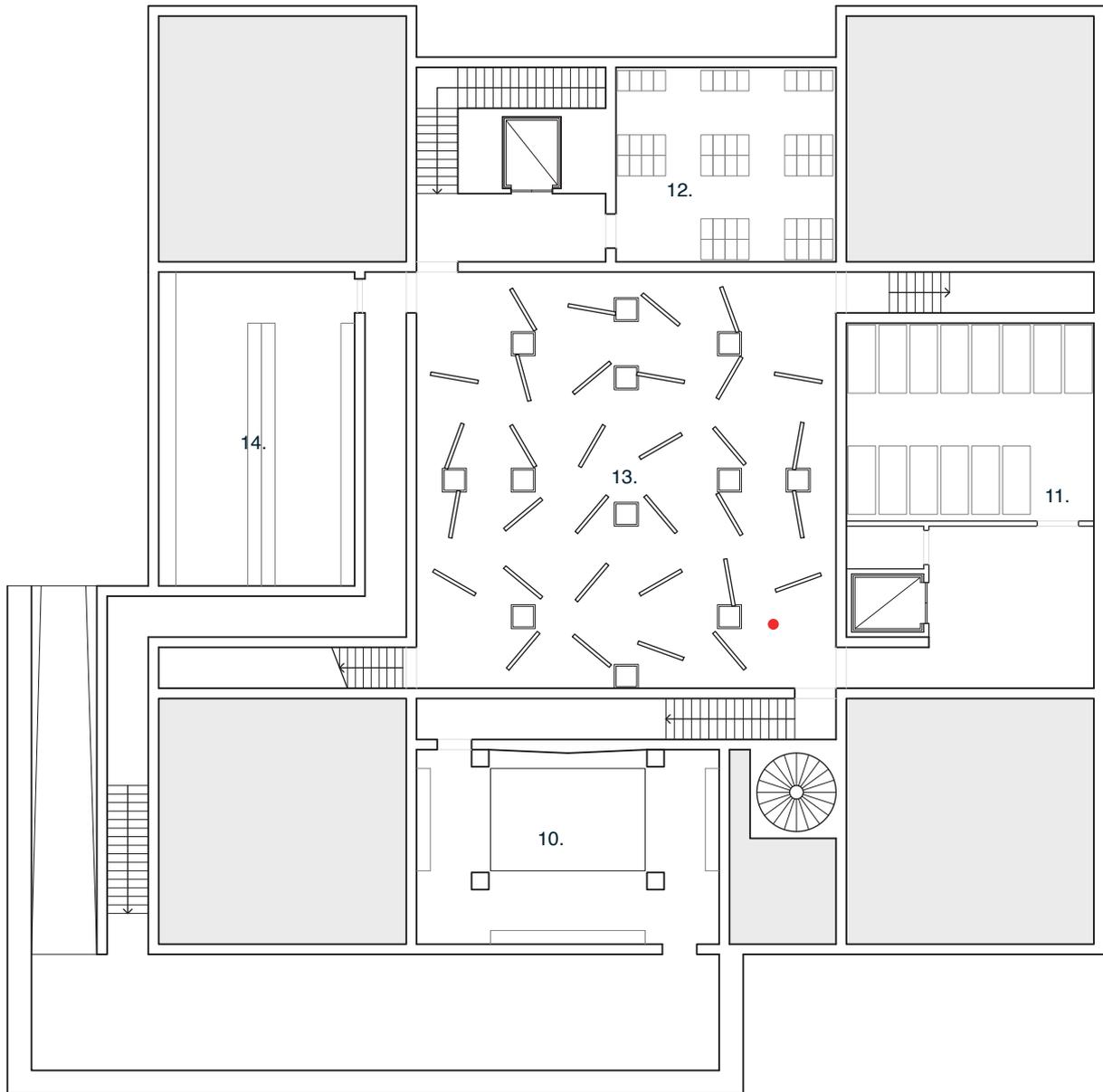


● Perspective Intimate Space

*The house around the courtyard. A microcosmos of the concrete world. The sun sits in the oculus, carved out from the phantasm of the sky. A space of equality surrounds the center, the meaning of togetherness is understood around the nature of the inversed oculus.*

*Gathered.*

- 10. Intimate Space
- 11. Body Storage
- 12. Urn Storage
- 13. Deceiving Garden
- 14. Technical Storage



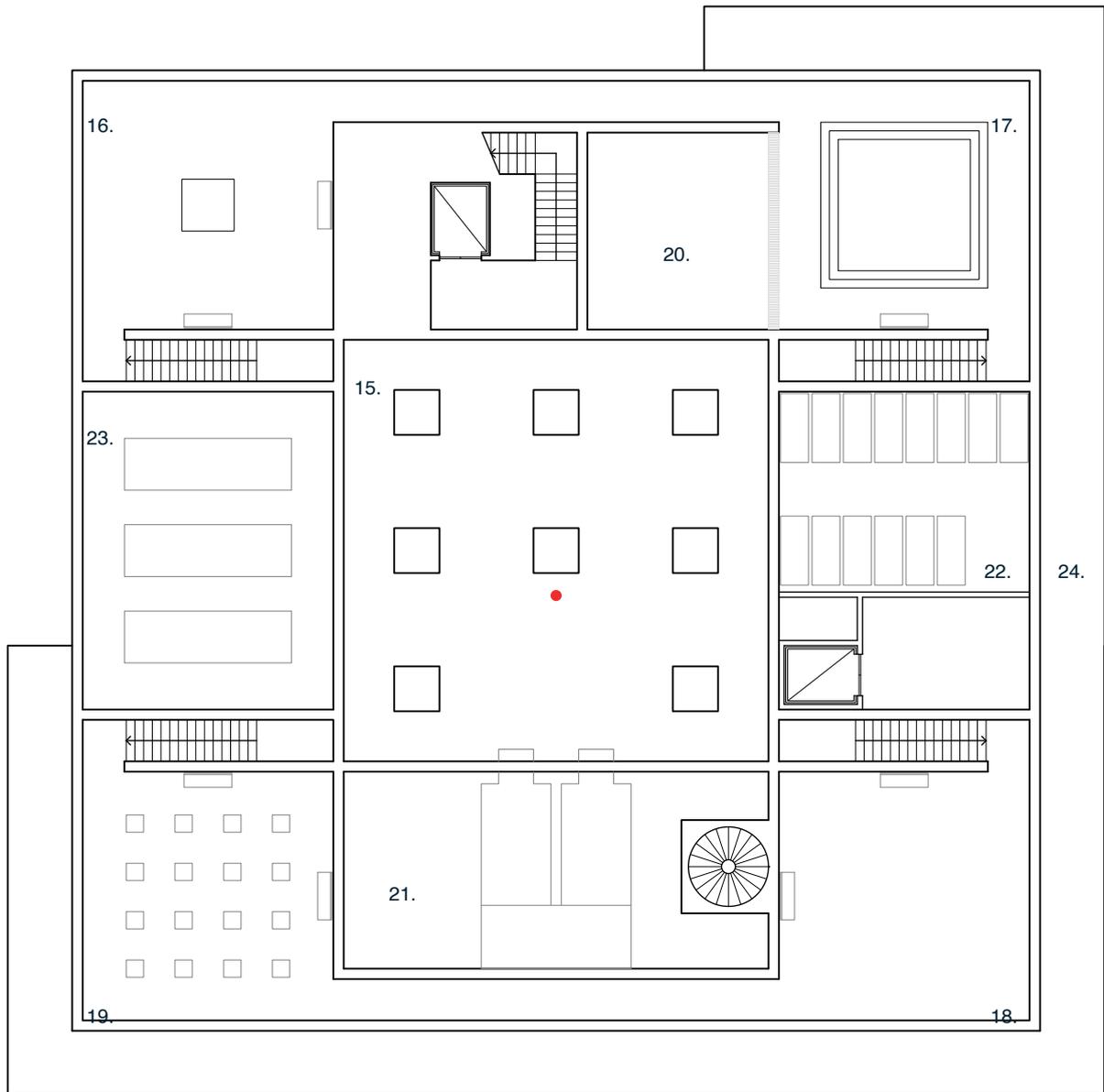


● Perspective Deceiving Garden

*A transition through the unexpected open labyrinth. Along the ordered grid, alien elements are placed, distorted, or transformed. Sometimes carrying a roof, sometimes not. In the disorientation, far from the concrete world, existential reflections arise.*

*Deceiving*

- 15. Cremation Space
- 16. Memorial Monument
- 17. Ash Burial
- 18. Memorial Void
- 19. Urn Memorial
- 20. Urn Room
- 21. Ashpreparation and ovens
- 22. Body Storage
- 23. Ventilation
- 24. Technical Passage



Plan Void space  
1:200



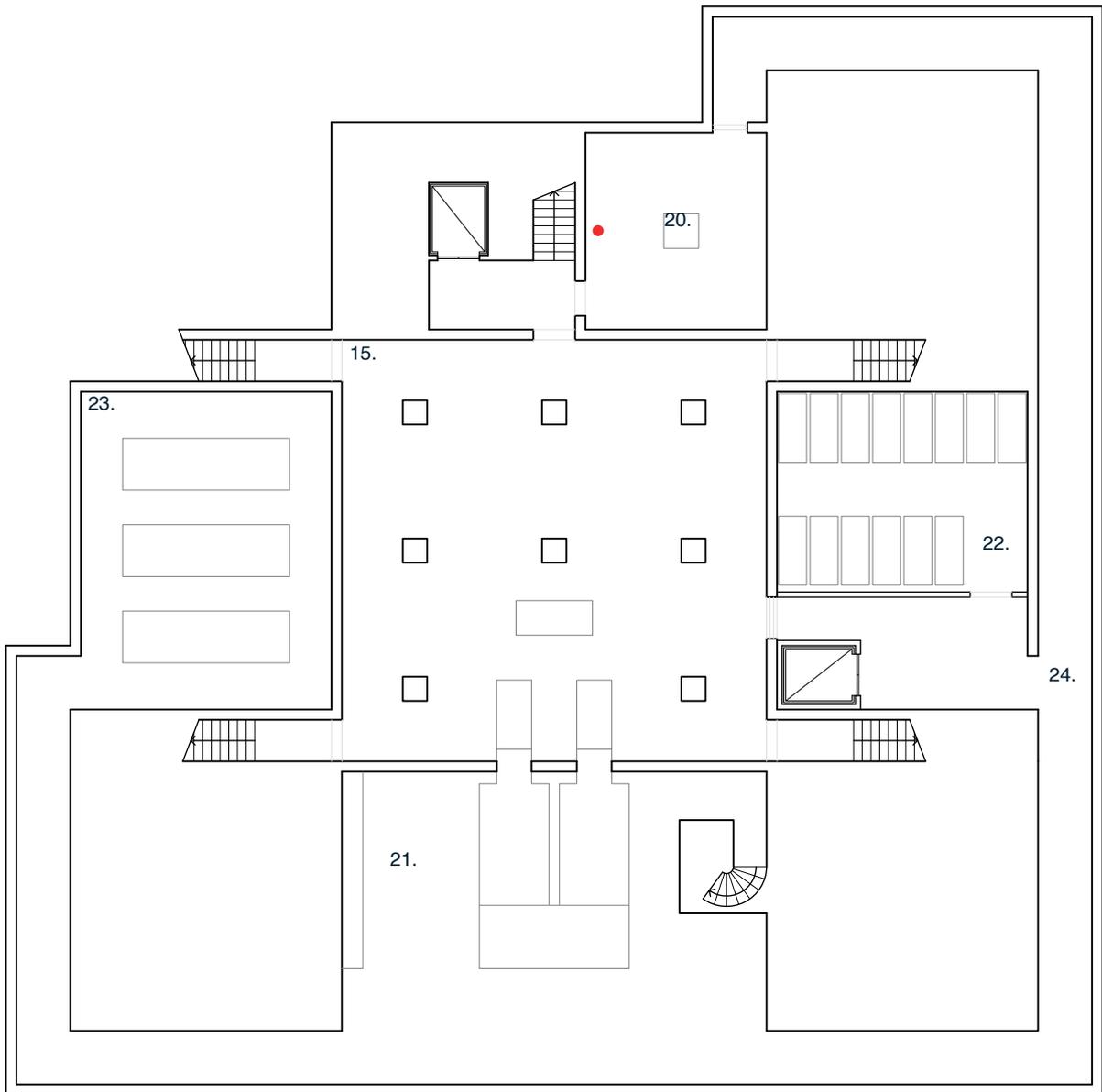


● Perspective Cremation Space

*Symmetric space of repetition and super-scale. An abundance of niches, elements, and transitions. Movement in the juxtaposition of grids.*

*Dissolved.*

- 15. Cremation Space
- 20. Urn Room
- 21. Ashpreparation and ovens
- 22. Body Storage
- 23. Ventilation
- 24. Technical Passage



Plan Cremation  
1:200

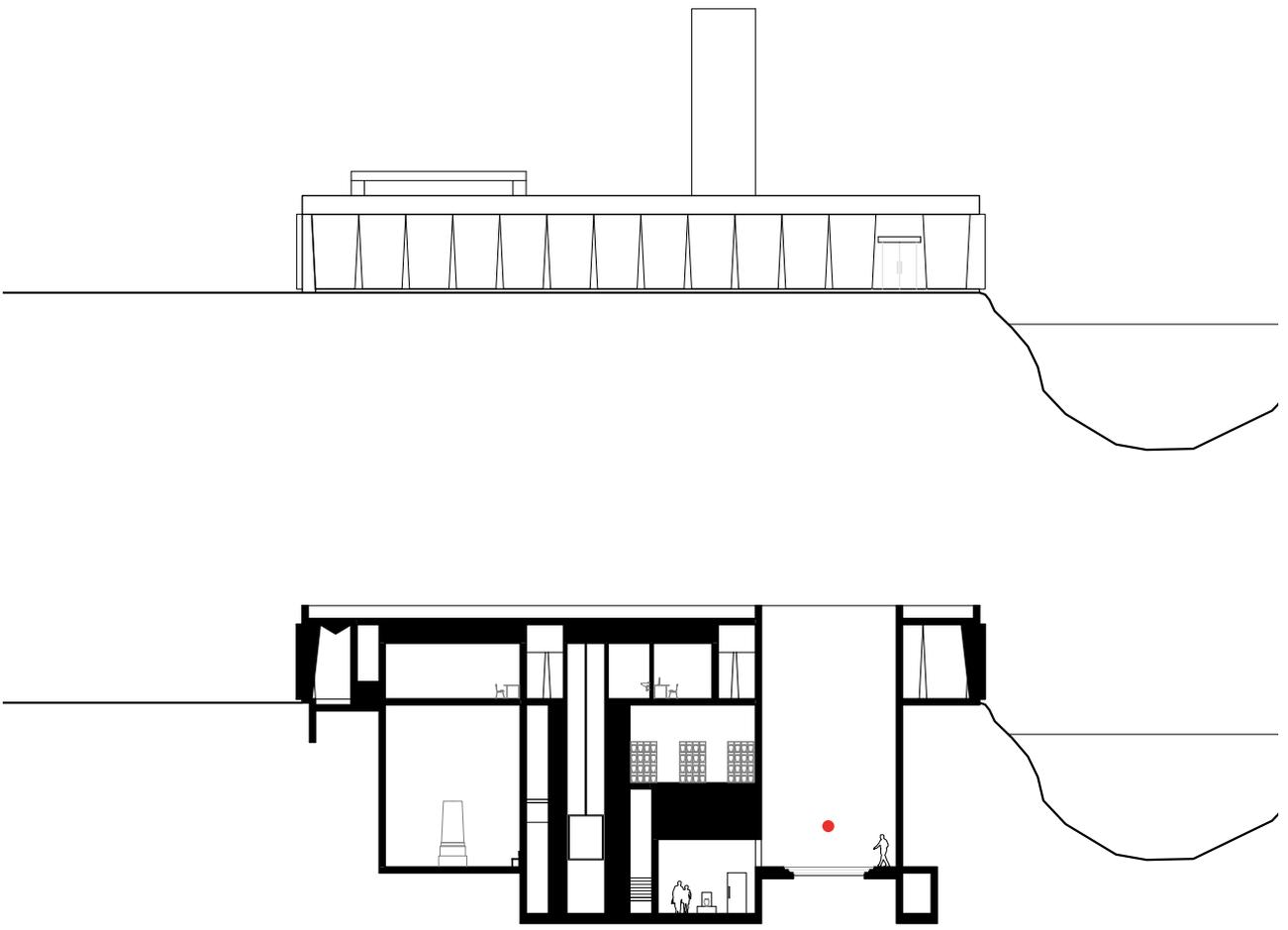




● Perspective Urn Room

*Everything can exist in the single monument.*

*Dissolved.*



Section E-E  
Facade South  
1:400

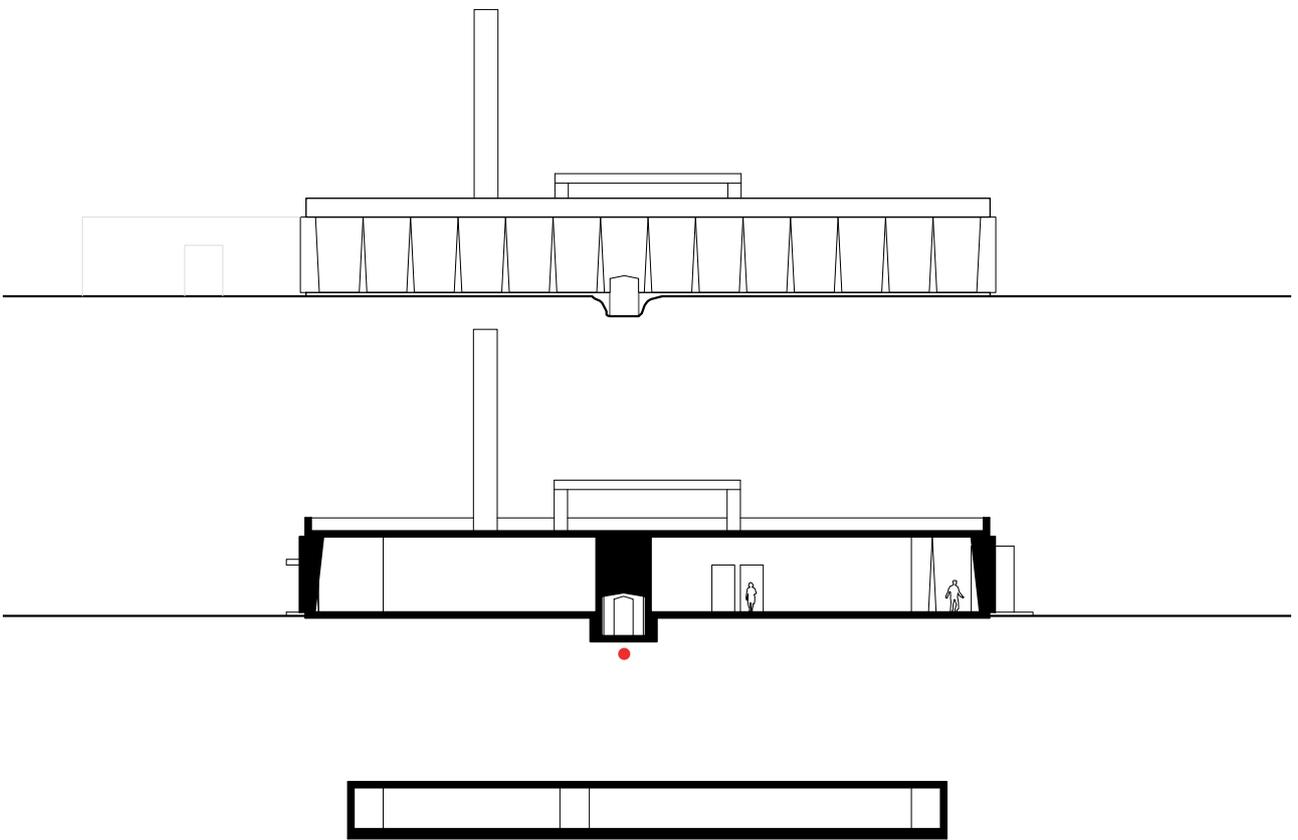




● Perspective Ash Memorial

*In the void of nothingness, thoughts are projected upon the empty walls. A pause in the continuous movement. A massive verticality where the unreachable space above guides the mind away from the concrete world.*

*Dissolved.*



Section F-F  
Facade East  
1:400





● Perspective Solitary Room

*The hidden burrow on the border of nature. A space of enclosure and calm, a lookout nested in the ground. Hollowed from within, the heaviness of the mass is felt, but opposed, by the strong walls protecting the den of solitude.*

*Enclosed.*

## Method

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The method evolved in the thesis consist of three parts with the aim of creating poetic images of space. The parts were not used in a linear way but evolved together during the process.

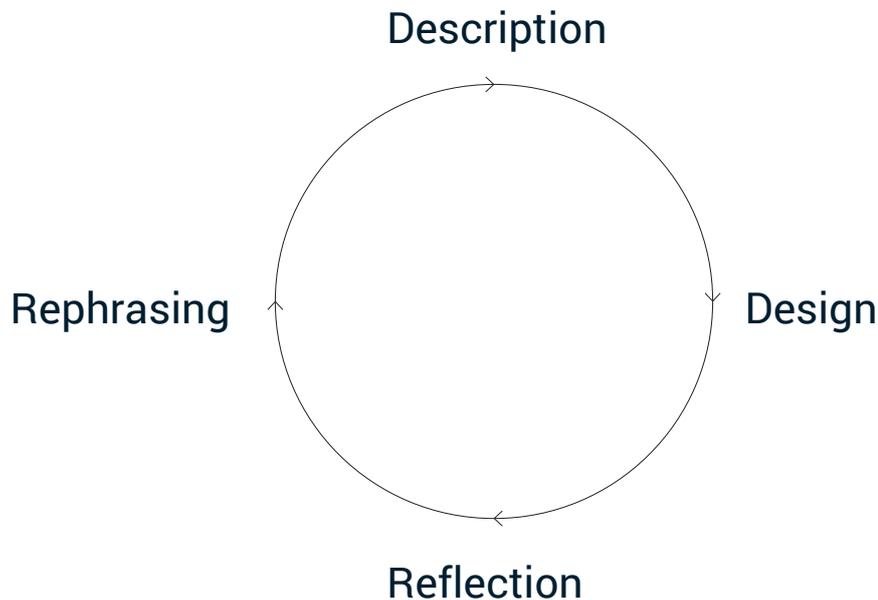
- A conception of a universal idea, directing the project.

- A deconstruction and phenomenological understanding of the idea and the concepts within the idea.

- A loop of describing, designing, reflecting, and rephrasing.

In the end, the poetic images achieved during the process were the foundation from which the project was drawn.

*Would a building conceived from poetry evoke the same poetry once designed?*



The method for creating the crematory began with the first draft of a poetic idea, this idea was then deconstructed and intuitively investigated in studies, resulting in six archetypes, descriptions and formal methods. The idea continued to be defined while the crematory was divided into three parts:

- I. Meeting the context**
- II. Logic and Movement**
- III. Spaces.**

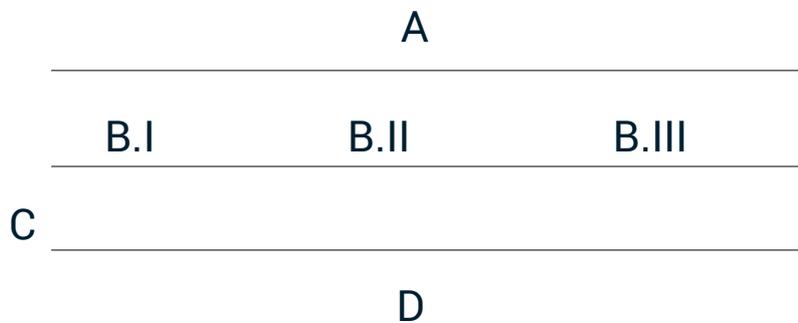
The three parts did not follow a strict order but were instead evolving simultaneously and codependent. The three parts described how the building should meet the context and relate to the site, the spatial sequences and the logic of movement, and the experience of each space.

The parts were written in different

descriptive levels to fit under the deconstructed universal idea. A first freely written description, meant to invoke a wide variety of images and possible interpretations followed by a more closed description, with instructions, diagrams, formal methods, and prototypes. In order to make the process more of a theoretic exploration, the archetypes were literally translated into six spaces and used in the building.

Along the process, description, design, reflection, and rephrasing created a loop, which further evolved the understanding of the universal idea.

From the different descriptive levels, and the three parts, the final representation was conceived as an interpretation and translation of the poetic images constructed during the process.



**A. - universal idea** *The universal existential idea of the space*

**B. - open description** *A freely written text describing the desired poetic feeling and overall spatial configuration. Either related to the entire complex, the sequences or the individual spaces. The goal of the reflections and writing is to evoke a poetic image.*

**C. - method** *Specific transformations, forms and methods, along with written instructions, encourages and helps the architect's subjective interpretations in the creation of space.*

**D. - final representation** *The building is represented through drawings, models, etc.*

*\*Diagram illustrating how each step of the method influence the final representation.*

## **A. Universal idea**

## Wander

Exposed

Deceiving

Dissolved

## Shelter

Enclosed

Oriented

Gathered

*“A building where existential questions arise in the fundamental feelings of being sheltered in the concrete and wander in the infinite. A building where the movement reveals a fundamental contradiction and where spaces are discovered, just to vanish in the moment after.”*

The universal idea was born from reflections over the purpose of architecture. A question that in a simple way could be answered with “to shelter” or “to dwell”. The idea of an enclosed, protected space. Space where one feels at home. Oriented, sitting firmly in the concrete world the shelter gathers the outside world into a comprehensible micro-cosmos.

Even if the poetry of the shelter can not be denied, the existential qualities of the shelter can not be understood without a counterpart, something to shelter from. Outside of the shelter, one is lost, wandering

aimlessly in a deceiving world. Exposed in the wilderness, the world dissolves into the unknown.

The truly existential arises in the dichotomy of the two states, to wander and to be sheltered. The idea of the project was to create a building where these contrasting feelings appeared. A building where one wanders in shelter.

The first deconstruction of the idea led to six archetypes divided into two groups.

## **B. Meeting the context**

*The form of the building is humbly meeting its surroundings. From the outside, the building appears simple and oriented, while contradicted by the complex interior space.*

*The building appears oriented and readable at first. Clearly placed at the end of the cemetery with the abstract and readable shape of the absolute square. The humble verticality of the mass stretches along the water.*

*Upon moving around it, difficulties arise. The inside is complex to understand and one searches for a way to enter. The tectonics is simple with heavy pillars holding a roof. The outside is structured repetition and relief with an inside expanding down into the earth.*

*To enter the building one must circulate the building. Movement around the building gradually reveals the logic and the structure. The entrance space lies enclosed and hidden.*

## **B. Logic and movement**

*The inside of the building has a complexity and labyrinth structure. Unexpected spaces appear and reappear. The loop of the building reaches all spaces and allows for a continuous movement.*

*Entering a chaotic labyrinth, where the infinite cosmos and concrete world disappears and reappears within the disorientation. One is pending between being orientated in the world and existential doubt. After wandering, exposed in the deceiving labyrinth, one reaches the dissolved core and the descent into infinity. The contradiction of descending into the cosmos and rising into earthly enclosure questions the existence. Emerging from the chaotic conflicting order, is the space of complete rest and reflection, just between sky and earth. The loop is complete and one is returned to the concrete world.*

## **B. Spaces**

*The six archetypes were assigned to six functions in the crematory. A path between spaces, a room for small gatherings, a larger ceremony space, an outside garden, the space where the body is burnt and a room for solitary farewell.*

**Exposed Path** *A continuous labyrinth, descending and ascending, spiraling down to the core. Fragmented walls obstruct the vision and the leaning pillars threaten to fall. Circulating, the hidden center is revealed just to disappear, the next space is always shrouded in an incomprehensible logic of turns and corners.*

**Gathered Intimacy** *The house around the courtyard. A microcosmos of the concrete world. The sun sits in the oculus, carved out from the phantasm of the sky. A space of equality surrounds the center, the meaning of togetherness is understood around the nature of the inversed oculus.*

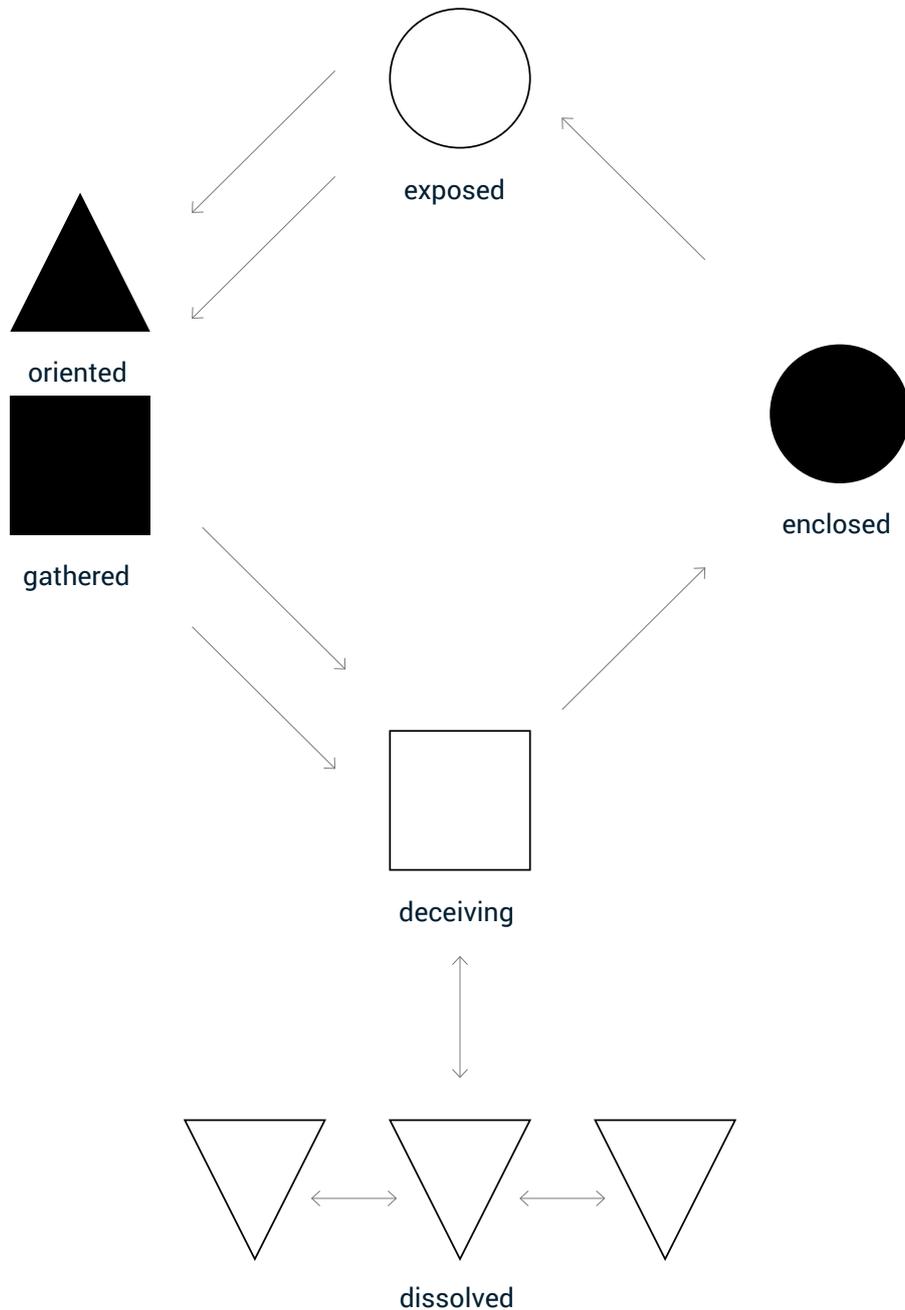
**Oriented Ceremony** *Ascending into space where a sudden clarity appears. A space of overview, where the separate pieces are connected and understood. A space in the concrete world.*

**Deceiving Garden** *A transition through the unexpected open labyrinth. Along the ordered grid, alien elements are placed, distorted, or transformed. Sometimes carrying a roof, sometimes not. In the disorientation, far from the concrete world, existential reflections arise.*

**Dissolving Cremation** *Symmetric space of repetition and super-scale. An abundance of niches, elements, and transitions. Movement in the juxtaposition of grids. Everything can exist in the single monument. In the void of nothingness, thoughts are projected upon the empty walls. A pause in the continuous movement. A massive verticality where the unreachable space above guides the mind away from the concrete world.*

**Enclosed Solitude** *The hidden burrow on the border of nature. A space of enclosure and calm, a lookout nested in the ground. Hollowed from within, the heaviness of the mass is felt but, opposed by the strong walls protecting the den of solitude.*

### **C. The ritual**



*The logic of the movement begins in the state of being exposed.*

*A fragmented ravine surrounding the crematory, a circular movement with paths branching inwards. The spaces along the way are never understood in advance, only suggested.*

*From the exposing uncertainty, the orientation is reached, a space where a sudden comprehension arise and the purpose of the building becomes clear.*

*In a parallell sequence the gathering space appear, a microcosmos of nature, reconnecting with the concrete world.*

*From the two spaces of shelter, an unknown path is descending into a space of wander. Disoriented and hidden in fog, one is forced to search the way.*

*One last descent is emerging in the fog, leading into a space where the continous wander dissolves into infinity.*

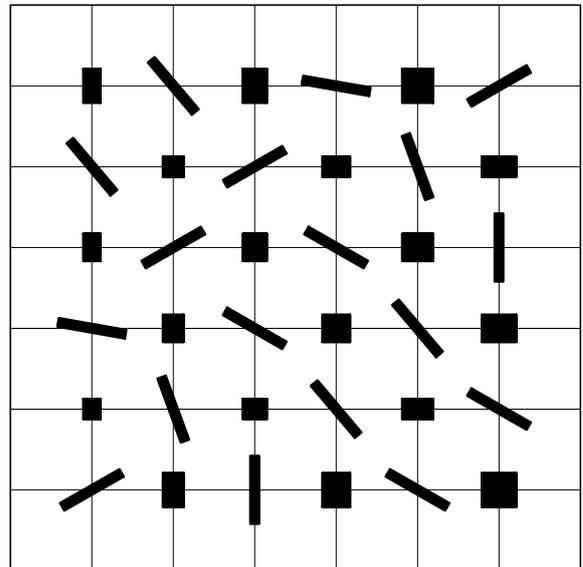
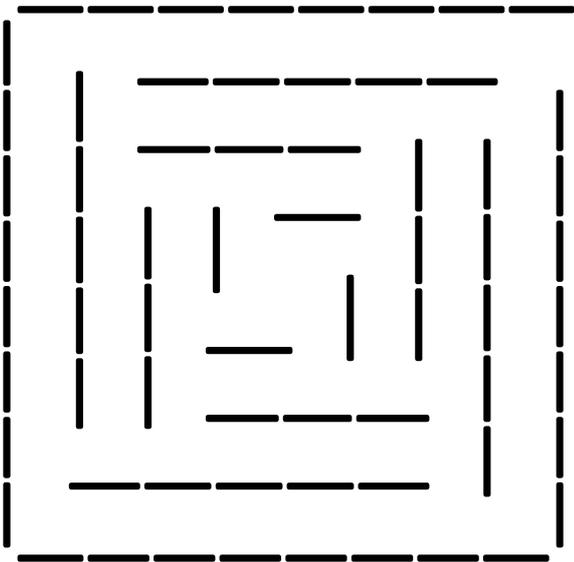
*To leave the crematory, one is gradually rising towards the ground, and before once again stepping out into the concrete world, the enclosed shelter is found. A place where the mind can reexperience the ritual and reflect in solitude.*

## **C. Methods**

*The third descriptive level created a library of methods. The methods were selected from the preceding studies and developed to fit the created proposal. The purpose was not a direct translation into the design proposal but to continue the loop of reason/description, design, reflection, rephrasing. Each method provides material and form translations that can be interpreted, adapted, changed, and used.*

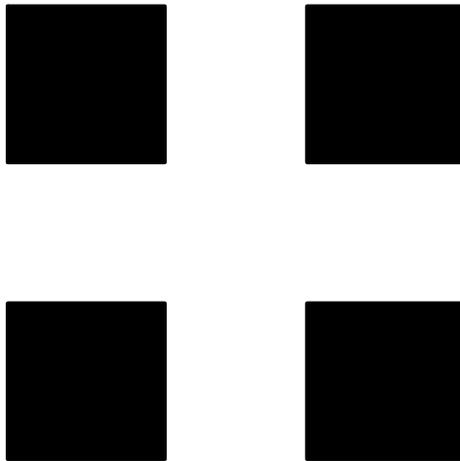


## Deceiving



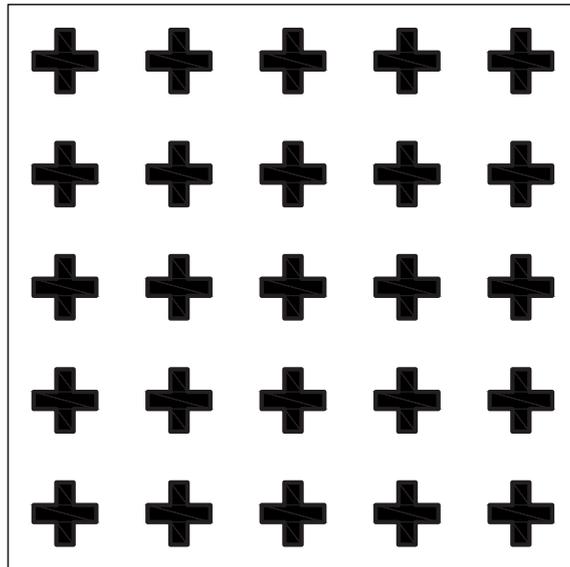
The open labyrinth. Fragmented, without corners and with a continuous loop. One is not completely certain that the center has ever been reached. The logic of multiple choices appearing. A space with no corners, only straight walls. The chaotic transformed grid. Difficult to understand the underlying order from within. Deceiving lines of sight.

## Orienting



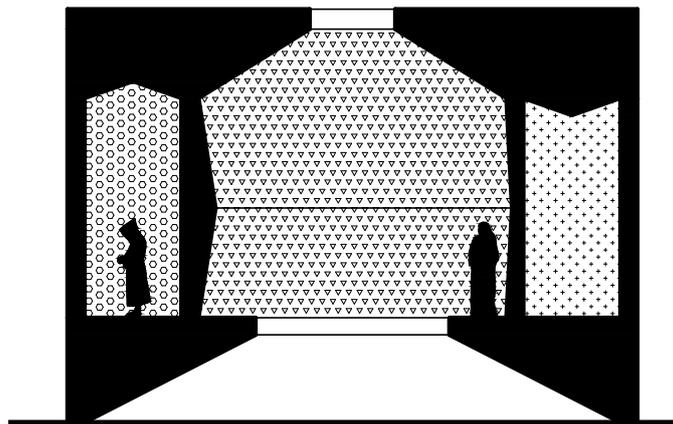
A space ordered within the axial cross. Hologed space overviewing and making the context understandable. Each direction can be differentiated in order to enhance directionality.

## Dissolving



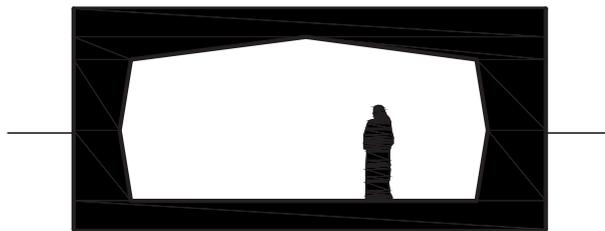
Infinity in the abundance of niches and identical elements. Infinity in the nothingness or the void. Symmetrical logic grid of super-human scale pillars. Infinite transition between spaces.

## Gathered



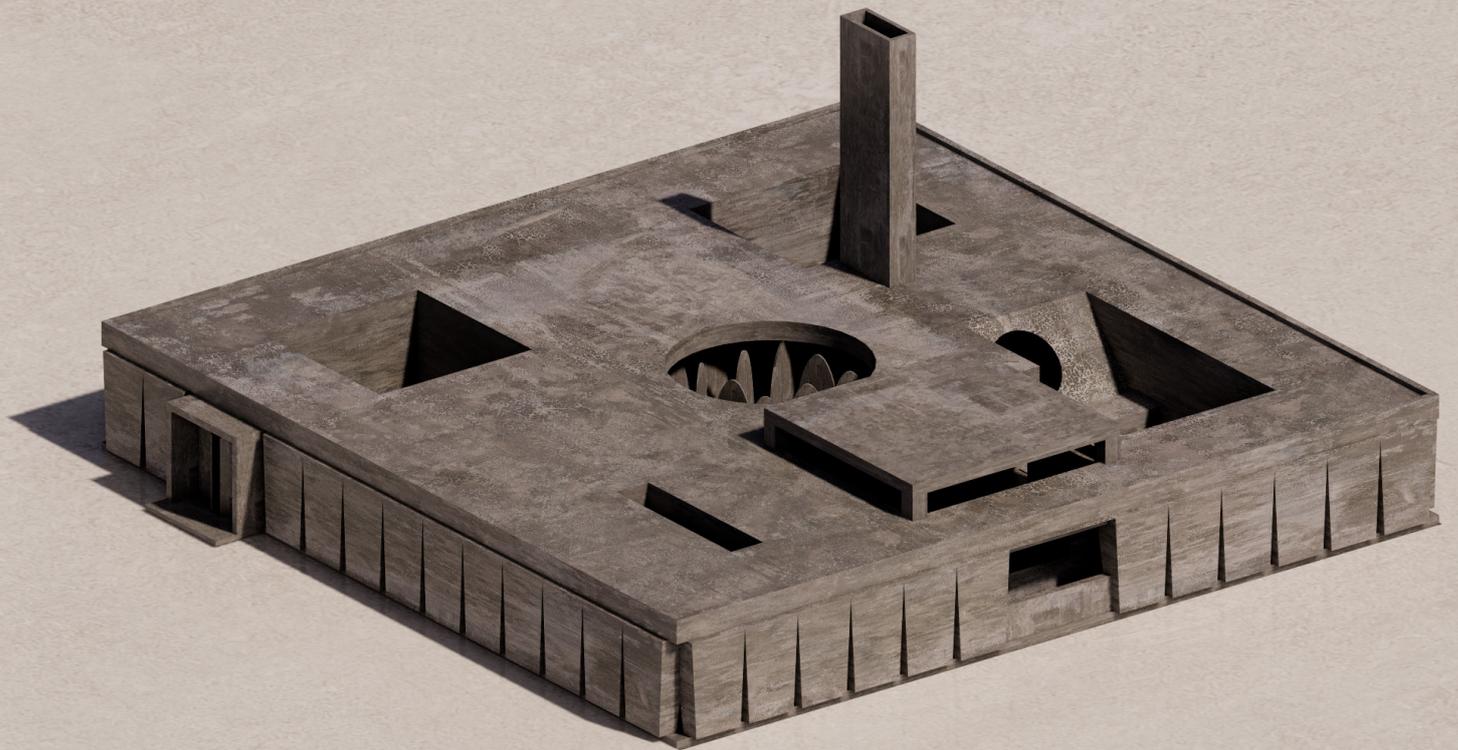
The exterior is simplified, creating a separate and independent interior. The abundance of detailing, reliefs, and asymmetry gathers the outside world and reduces the nothingness. The sky is reduced and gathered in the oculus of the triangular ceiling. The inversed oculus illustrates and gathers the chthonic dimensions. The courtyard house gathers both the human and the cosmic.

## Enclosed



One directional movement in a monolithic mass. The stability of the structure is enforced by thick walls and the space appears carved out from within by unworked heavy corners. A space retracting from nature, with a clear boundary but still a connection. It hides, nested in the ground.

## **D. Representation**



The final representation shows the human intervention upon the poetic idea. In this step, the ideal situation would be a completely uncompromising interpretation, the direct projection of an individual mind into form. A pure representation of the poetic. Free from any limits related to tradition, construction, and the constraints of the concrete world.

The building proposed in this thesis should be read as an exploration of a method, not the study of a typology. A poetic building derived from a poetic method. The representation created, is strongly colored by the subjectivity of the intervention and the limits of tools, person, context, and program. A limitation that could be read as poetic in how it shows a trace of the human hand.

## Studies

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The following pages contain condensed and selected parts of the studies conducted prior to the design proposal, along with reflection about them. The studies were meant to create a form and transformation “library”, which then could be applied to the project. The results of the study were used in the project, either as quite literal translations, formal guides or as inspiration for the interpretation of the idea.

In short, the studies presented, reflected over concepts related to the universal idea. Reflections that led to written descriptions, that were then interpreted into form. The resulting form was then explored compared to the descriptions, and the descriptions were rephrased. This cycle of description, form, reflection and rephrasing had the purpose of creating a deeper understanding of the concepts and to make the formal results stronger.

## **Study I**

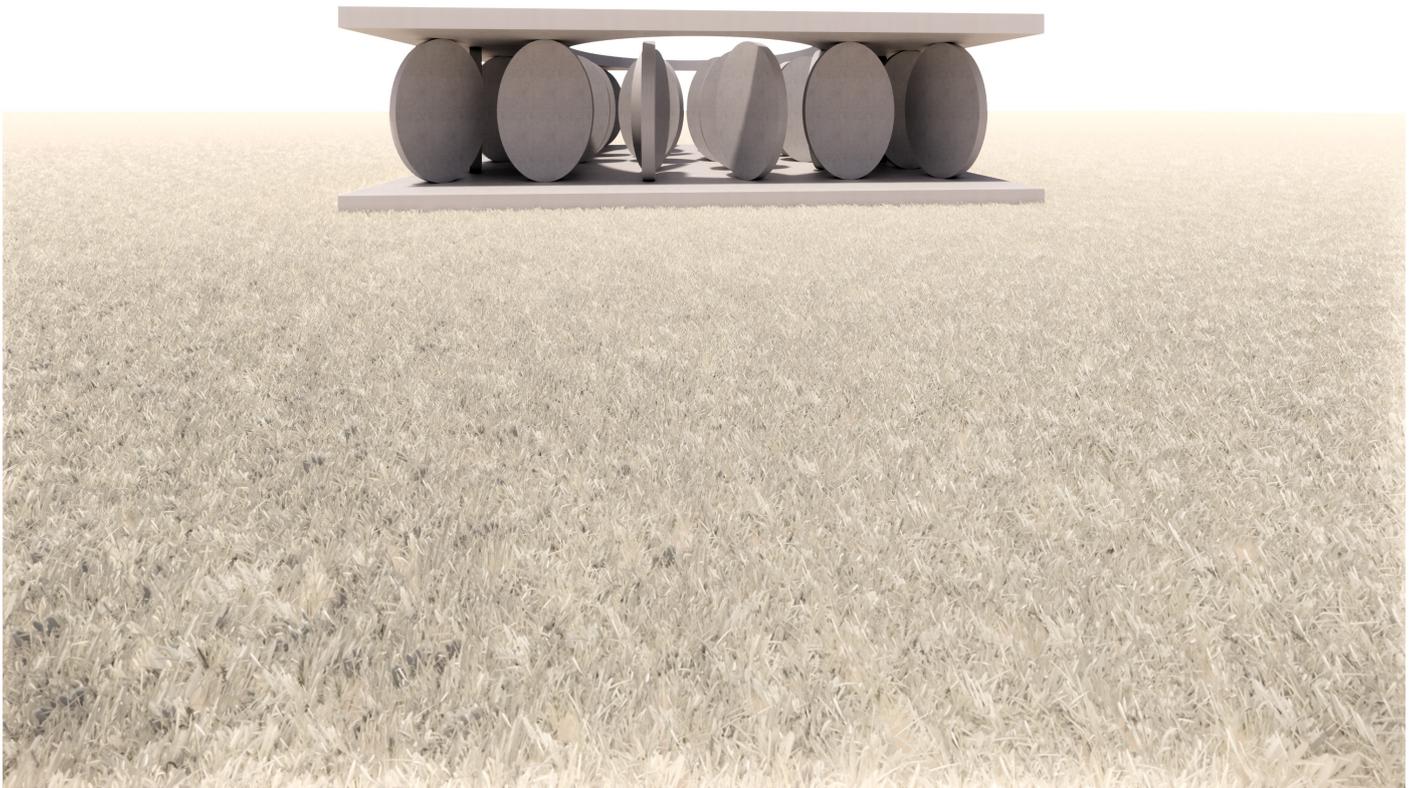
*Exploring the form of fundamental archetypes*

This study attempted to find architectural form related to general archetypes. The search began linguistically where poetic phrases and concepts were associated with an archetype. Words and phrases were then translated into descriptive architectural concepts, and reached an architectural form through intuitive interpretive 3D-modeling. Parallel with the 3D-modeling the phrases and words reformulated and condensed into descriptive text for each archetype.

The archetypes chosen for this study were based upon two opposite concepts, the general architectural purpose of sheltering and the notion of wandering. Within these two concepts six ideas were ordered in three contradicting pairs.

In order to better evaluate the forms, all were created on square planes 10x10 meters with homogenous materiality, simplified geometry, similar scale and used universal architectural elements:

**Floor, wall, roof, pillar and aperture**



# Sheltering

## Enclosing space

*The sheltered space where human dwells.*

The meaning of enclosure is closely related to, and in some ways intertwined with the house, the place where human dwell, the place where one is *at home*, embraced by walls, safely among others or alone. A notion that has been reflected upon by many. The philosopher Gaston Bachelard describes the house

as the place where life starts.

*“Life begins well, it begins enclosed, protected, all warm in the bosom of the house.”(Bachelard, 1964), while also adding that it is from here the being is cast into the world.*



*The enclosure of the primitive hut*

### Comprehensible weight

*An enclosed space where weight, structure and mass are understood. Whether it is a hollowed mass, a casted monolith or stacked solid parts the structure is evident.*

### Observing nature from within the man-made

*From within a man-made space, anchored in earth, the wild nature is overviewed, thru the hidden aperture, the aperture that hides or the aperture that leaves nothing hidden.*

### Permanence in a finite logic order

*A logic and finite order understood intuitively. The permanence is expressed in the centralized, one-directional space built around the logic of one simple ending axis. The lack of movement in one-directional space opposes the passing of time.*

# Sheltering

## Gathering space

*A space that concretizes the finite world and recreates it as a microcosmos.*

Norberg-Schulz describes architecture as gathering the genius loci of an environment, visualizing, complementing and symbolizing meanings and understanding. (Norberg-Schulz, 1980) The archetypal gathering space could therefore be

seen as the gathering of the most basic natural phenomenon. A space where stone, water and trees stand under a sun. The space of gathering inspires dreams of the world and the nature as we know it.



*Abundance of miniatures, the shape of the twig reappears and grows into the tree*

### **Microcosmos of assymetry and variation**

*Assymetrical and varying natural elements, such as water, stone, forest and sun, creates an illusion of a microcosmos where the finite and concrete world can be comprehended.*

### **Growth and Reduction of the void**

*A structure able to be understood in terms of growth and change symbolizes past and future. The reduction of voids distracts the mind from dreams of infinity.*

### **Introverted singular order placed in nature**

*A centralized order with limited elements leaves no room for a continuation. The man-made space is firmly connected and placed in nature.*

# Sheltering

## Orienting space

*A space that directs and anchors humans in the world*

Human exist in the concrete world and an orienting space solidify this concept. Norberg-Schulz discusses the existential foothold as something emerging from identification and orientation.

A space where one “*can be a certain place*” (Norberg-Schulz, 1980). The oriented space anchors the man in the world and makes it understandable, just as standing on a hill, overlooking familiar landscapes.



*Overview from the lush hill*

### Distinct images

*Singular elements create recognition and when placed in an order they create an oriented space*

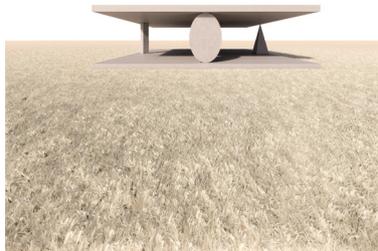
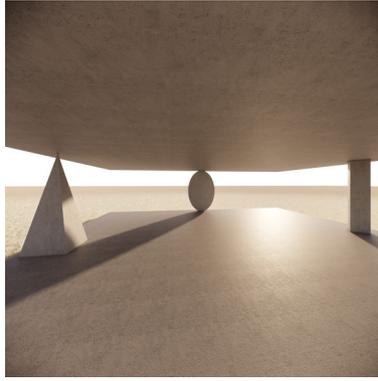
### Simple temporality and finite axial order

*A centralized directional order aligns the concrete world along its axes and the simple temporality is understood thru the natural movements of the sun*

### Next to Nature

*A space bordering nature, relating to the concrete world in an obvious way but clearly defining what is the man-made space.*

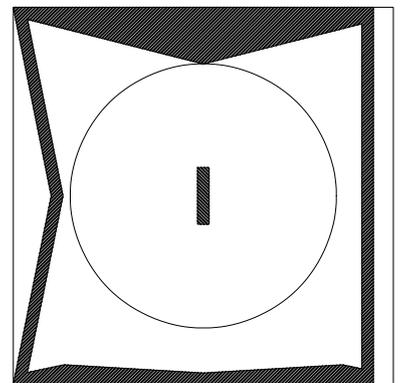
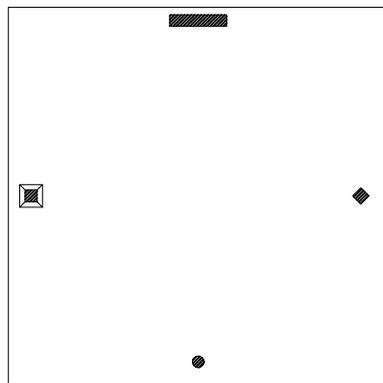
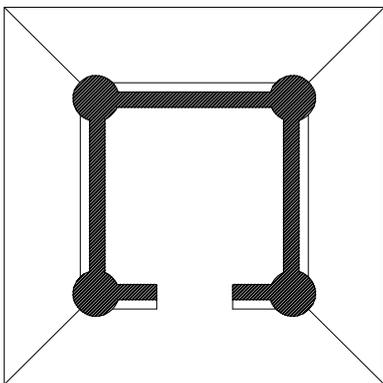
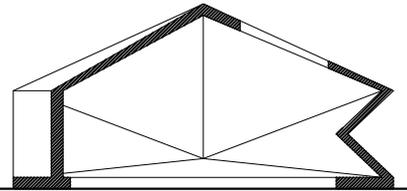
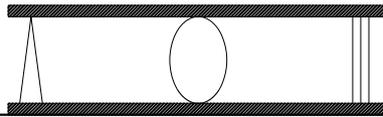
# Sheltering



*Enclosed*

*Oriented*

*Gathered*



*Plan and section 1:200*

## Wandering

### Deceiving space

*A space leaves the human searching, in a disoriented and abstract world*

The idea of a disorienting space could be read in the words of the poet Herman Hesse, *"Strange to walk in the fog! Every bush and stone is lonely, no tree can see the other, each one is alone ..."* (Hesse, 1905)

The image of wandering in fog, disoriented and lost resonates among most people. This image leaves the world in disconnected parts with man himself, bound to reconnect and recreate the world. New worlds are formed in the mind of the disoriented.



*Objects disappearing and reappearing in fog, no sense of direction*

#### **Monotonous repetition**

*Repeating identical elements creates space without fixed directions or relationships. Even the known object becomes abstracted when repeated.*

#### **Absent pieces in the labyrinthine**

*Slight deviations in the logic of an order makes space hard to read. Missing phenomenon or elements in a labyrinthine order disturbs orientation and the ability to predict. Space that either tries to separate*

#### **Away from nature**

*from nature and exist independently or distort where nature and man-made overlap.*

## Wandering

### Dissolving space

*A space that disperses the world and encourages the idea of an infinite cosmos.*

Bachelard has described the void as the raw material of possibility of being (Bachelard, 1964) This void is key to the dissolving space. In the void nothing and

everything exists. When the world is dispersed into complete darkness, everything can be imagined.



*The superhuman scale next to the sky*

#### **Symmetry and repetition**

*The continuous reoccurrence of recognizable elements and phenomenon within a symmetrical system suggest a continuity.*

#### **Nothingness in the super-human scale**

*The non-relatable macro scale removes space from the concrete world and the nothingness existing in the void outside human-scale leaves place for imagination and reveries.*

#### **Extroverted continuous grid abstracting nature**

*Understanding a continuing order creates an infinite mental space and cosmic ideas are products of an abstracted nature and a relationship with the sky.*

## Wandering

### Exposing space

*The space where one wanders, unprotected*

With the existence of the enclosing warm house, one can ask, why leave?

Norberg-Schulz answer this question with the simple idea that the purpose of human life exist outside the house, in the world and after choosing and following a path one can return to the enclosing space (Norberg-Schulz, 1985). The exposing space

can be partly understood in its dialectic relationship with the enclosed and in the words mentioned by Norberg-Schulz. The uneasy "casting into" a dangerous and abstract world, wandering without shelter while at the same time pursuing the purpose of life.



*Overviewed from above while not knowing where the road leads.*

#### Abstracted weight

*An intangible fragile, skeletal, jointed structure where weight and pressure are offset leaves no fixed comprehension and creates a disturbing structure with an exposing lack of understanding.*

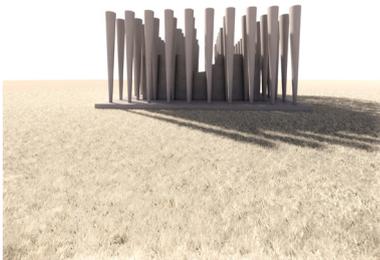
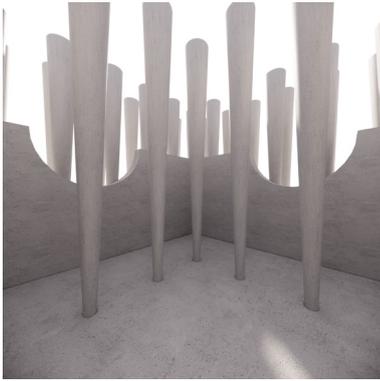
#### Observed in a cosmic nature

*Space without a place for hiding, standing in the wild nature overviewed both by the cosmic sky, the chthonic and space itself. Thru a fragmented and/or distorted view the landscape, without an end or beginning, can be observed.*

#### Distorting order in an Impermanent continuity

*The circular movement in a non-centered continuous order creates space without permanence, while demonstrating and abstracting time. Small distortions in the logic order interfere with the intuitive understanding.*

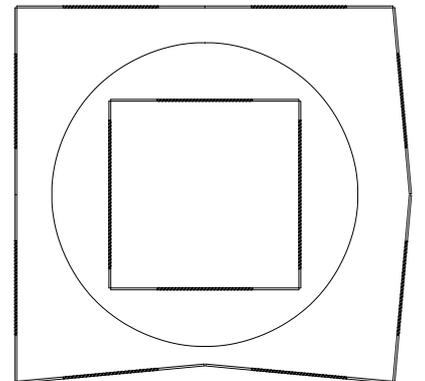
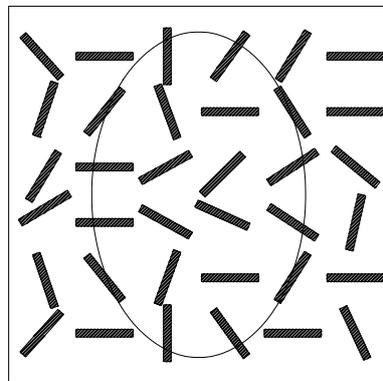
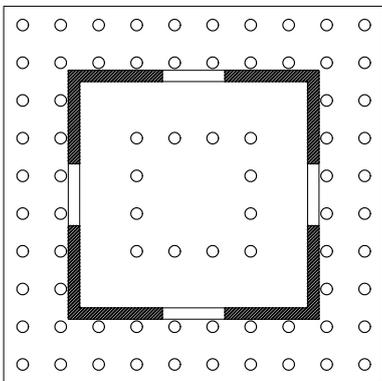
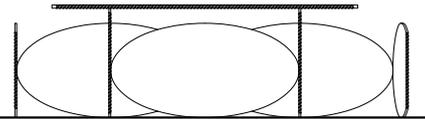
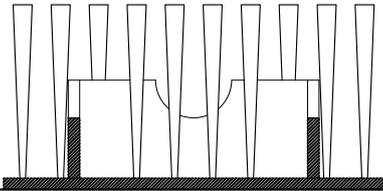
# Wandering



*Dissolved*

*Deceiving*

*Exposed*



## Conclusion study I

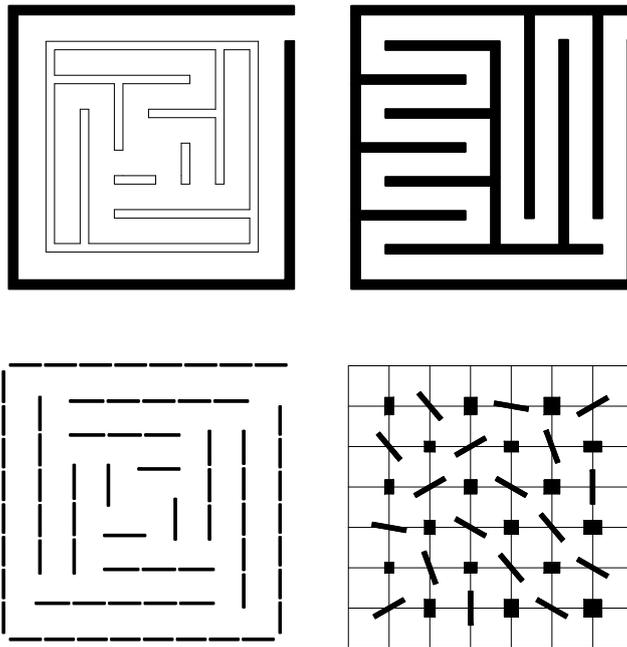
Study I provided an insight into how subjective an immediate interpretation can be. Some aspects of the spaces were successful and others did not have the generality that was strived for. In the rapid and intuitive conception of the spaces,

some contradictions could be found. The most important outcome of this study was the parallel work with text and form and how the final description was condensed into a more precise linguistic syntax, by insights from the form study.



## Study II

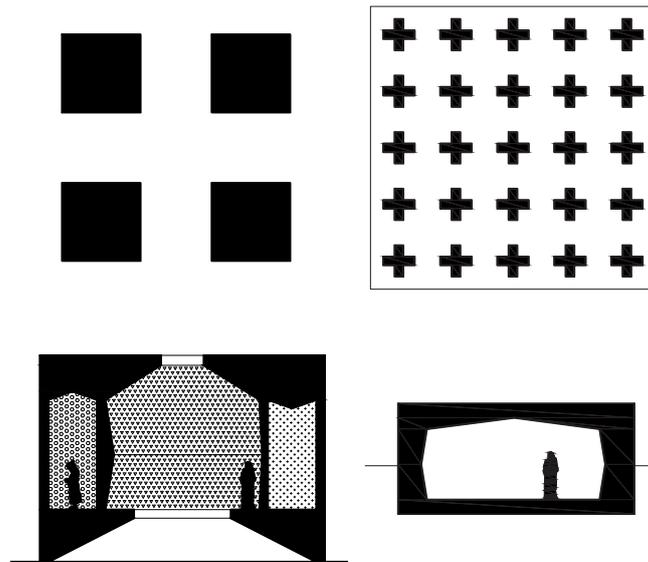
*The abstract representations of poetic order and form*



In Study II the same archetypes were studied with a more abstract representation, namely plans and sections. The condensed text reached after Study I, was used as a guideline as well as new texts that symbiotically emerged from the formal studies.

The structure of study II was similar to the first, with each space created on a 10x10 meter plane, no material and universal elements, height limits were set free. In this study included more iterations and variation along with further attention to the process leading up to each archetype.

## Conclusion study II



Study II was conducted in a more abstract way with only two-dimensional drawings. This way of working led to a result that was freer for interpretation. Instead of finding an archetype, this study attempted to find methods of organizing form. The openness of each method allowed it to be more easily

adapted to a project. Study II continued the symbiotic relationship between form and writing in a similar manner as the precedent study but used a more precise language. This study showed how the abstract descriptions of study I could be formally interpreted.

## Discussion

The design proposal created in this thesis was trying to simplify and theorize a poetic method of creating space. The result of the thesis must, therefore, be discussed both in relation to the final representation as well as the developed method.

From the start, the purpose of the thesis was clear, exploring how form relates to poetic space with the ambition of creating a poetic building, a building derived from one universal idea translated into form. The method was developed as a tool for achieving this building.

The background to the method was an attempt to separate from conventional methods and instead use written language as the main tool. This approach, where

space was written before drawn was based upon the idea of architecture, as an uncompromised product of the mind of the architect without being affected and limited by the context. An architecture that is allowed to exist in the mind prior to ever being drawn, does not become limited but can instead reach a pure existence, a poetic existence.

The discussion emerging in relation to this method is regarding how the pure existence within the mind, can be manifest as something concrete, and if the same, or similar, poetry can be achieved in the two ways of existing.

The final representation can be read in three ways; either as a solitary object where its success lies in how well it can convey a poetic experience or the universal idea behind it; in relation with the writings and method from which it is derived; or solely in the writings and method.

The three ways of reading the building represent three ways of experiencing architecture, experiences that probably would have different levels of generality.

In this thesis, the method has been applied to one idea and represented in one typology, a crematory under a finite timespan. The finished product is in a way a beginning to an architectural phenomenological understanding of an idea.

In theory, this understanding could be continued until the idea is completely understood. A complete understanding of the concepts behind a building could mean, more universal and pure poetry in architecture.

Still, the idea of pure poetry is strongly challenged by the limits of our concrete world, and the utopic result is not possible to reach. This could pose an argument for experiencing architecture together with the understanding of its idea and the underlying reasoning.

While this pure poetic architecture is something to strive for, this thesis developed a subjective method for creating poetic space, with a result that needs to be experienced by several people before its universal qualities can be properly evaluated.

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[Photograph of a primitive hut] (2020)

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[Photograph of trees on a hill] (2020)

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