

MOMENTS OF COLLAPSE

A design exploration of humans fragile relationship to nature and time

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Master Thesis 2021

Moments of Collapse



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Master Thesis 2021

Matter Space Structure
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To burn it like cedar

I request another dream

I need a forest fire

I'm saved by nature

But it always forgets what I need

I hope you'll stop me before I build a wall around me

We need a forest fire

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ABSTRACT

By looking at the aftermath of a forest fire it is clearly visible how a natural phenomenon can fully transform and destroy both nature and human construction. In many ways it completely opposes our idea of nature as peaceful and passive. The forest fire becomes a symbol for humans' fragility, and how this phenomenon is increasing as the result of our civilisations' vain dreams of immortality.

This thesis takes its point of departure in the many problems of today evoking strong feelings of being a part of a living world that breaks down; *feelings of collapse*. The world is acting unfamiliar, where nature becomes a threat that is impossible to control.

As an exploration about natural collapses through the material of clay, this thesis is an attempt to discuss the fragile relationship between humans and nature, and how this can be mediated through architecture. This approach to design finds its inspiration in the phenomenological discourse, where the study of phenomena is used to generate architecture that provides spatial experiences. The duality of clays as a material with the possibility to mediate a deeper reflection on time, made the material especially relevant to investigate.

The thesis contains a design proposal based on an imaginary context, situated in the aftermath of a burnt landscape. In this unstable and transforming landscape, a set of architectural structures is placed to keep the nature in control; an eternal manifestation demonstrating moments of collapse. Through an illustrated series of spaces, the proposal seeks to discuss the contrast between *being in nature* and *being an observer of nature*. The nature is represented as an odd, ever changing object while stable architectural elements become something familiar to hold onto. Between the two, just the tension.

The purpose is to first and foremost act as a *thinking space* to mediate an experience where all the senses are interacting, meant to evoke feelings and thoughts of existence. The design proposal allows nature to manifest itself and be a part of the architectural form and representation. Using this approach, the outcome of this thesis is considered to be an example of how architecture and design methodology can question human relationship to nature and time.



Transitions / 2016 / Helene Schmitz

“The feeling of collapse, that we have lost control over the world and the situation”

INTRODUCTION

Feeling of Collapse

SITUATION

Feeling of Collapse

Turnings of fire is a photograph by Helene Schmitz (2016), capturing the aftermath of the fire in Västmanland 2014, when Sweden was hit by one of the worst forest fires in history (Länsstyrelsen Västmanlands län, 2015). The fire raged mercilessly and irreplaceable natural values were destroyed. It becomes clear how this natural phenomenon completely opposes our idea of nature as peaceful and passive when it fully transforms and destroys both nature and human constructions (Schmitz, 2018). The forest fire becomes a symbol for humans' fragility, and how this phenomenon along with others are increasing as the result of humans' vain dreams of immortality.

Natural Collapses

These natural phenomena are a given part of nature. Everything we see around us is a result of the past, where moments of collapse have shaped what we now see and call the world. The collapses can be seen as something necessary that generates possibilities. The forest fire acts as an example of this, where the aftermath of the burnt, dead landscape is full of possibilities for new growth; a blank page to start over. At first, everything is black and lifeless. Animals, birds and plants have disappeared, and the silence is obvious. But after the silence, life returns. The fire has changed the soil where the ash provides increased access to nutrients. This gives the opportunity for several different kinds of plants and insects that need fire-damaged trees and newly burned forest for their long-term survival, to come back and recreate a new forest (Länsstyrelsen Västmanlands län, 2015).

Nature itself doesn't care about collapses. From a bigger, cosmic point of view, all the things that are

happening in the world today are just another collapse in time. It is for us, the human beings, those increasing natural phenomena, caused by us, become a problem and a threat; a collapse that needs to be avoided. The collapse has the possibility to destroy the things we have learnt to know in this world; our connection to the world, found in the relations we have built to living creatures and spaces. Without those connections we are lost. It is for us, the living of today, the world is changing to become something unfamiliar and a threat that makes us understand how small and fragile we and the built world are in comparison to the strong and violent nature.

Re-Connect

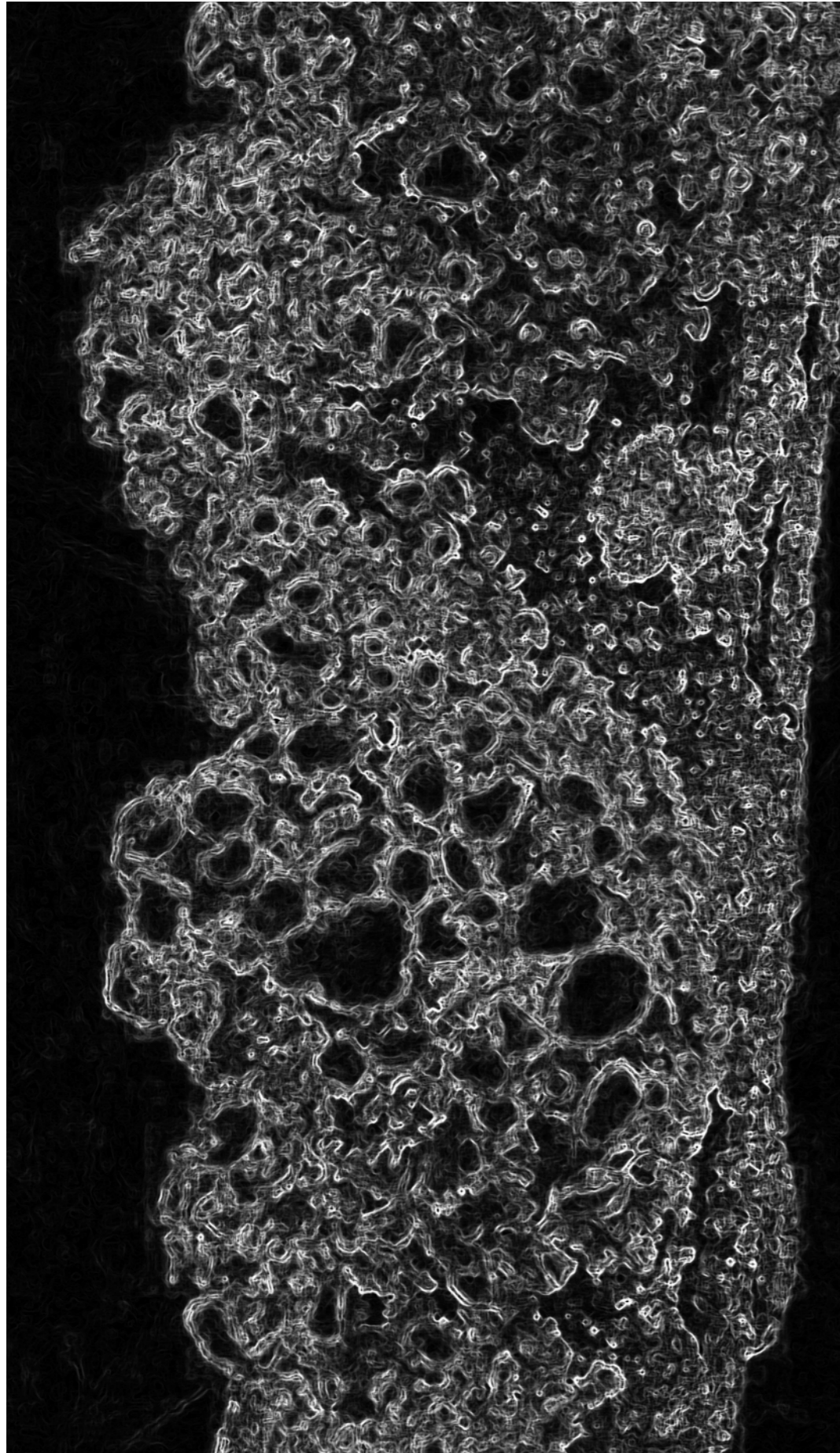
The civilization of today seems to be blinded by the future. Most of the things we today take for granted, was luxury a generation ago. The relationship we have to production and work, sustainability and consumption, and the way societies are held together economically and socially in a global and digitalized world, has created a situation of dehumanization or unreality (Jonstad, 2012). We tend to forget that all the things we see around us are generated from the past, and have often been here longer than our imagination can reach.

"The past receives us, yet it is the future that catches our eye" (Norrman, 2018). With those words in mind this thesis is searching for how architecture can highlight the fragile relationship between humans and nature, and how a reflection of the past can give us connection and stability in the otherwise overwhelming situation of the world.

RESEARCH QUESTION

How can architecture speak about collapse in order to question humans' fragile relationship to nature and time?





Strange nature 1 / Illustration

THESIS DESCRIPTION

PURPOSE

The main objective of this thesis is to discuss humans fragile relationship to nature and time through an investigation of natural collapses. The proposal is searching for architecture that interacts with the landscape to give the opportunity to observe and interact. Through a set of architectural structures, placed in an imaginary context the experience of natural collapses may be enhanced, as an attempt to create architecture that mediates an experience that evokes and provokes thoughts and feelings.

The created spaces wants to discuss the contrast between *being in nature* and *being an observer of nature*, a question of human relationship to nature and time.

DELIMITATIONS

The aim of this project is not to create a space to inform about natural collapses (caused by global warming), rather this project wants to be a self-informative space to increased perceptual experience.

In order to create a space with the sole purpose of exploring collapse this thesis has chosen to not work with a specific site or program. The duality of clay as a material, with the elusive everchanging form and the burnt everlasting form, made the material especially relevant for this thesis. To make the project as clear as possible other materials have not been investigated.

READING INSTRUCTIONS

The thesis is divided into four parts. The introduction part introduces the reader to the situation, *the feeling of collapse*, and what the thesis wants to discuss. The second part is the theoretical work, *thinking of collapse*, where the existential values of clay is discussed and how the experience of the material can be mediated through art and architecture to give others an existential experience. In the third part, the theory is translated into a project strategy, *directing the collapse*. The last part is the design proposal, *moments of collapse*, which represent the an imaginary story of a space, to discusses the relevant topics. Further reading of the investigations are to find in the appendix, *exploring the collapse*, where the conducted investigations of collapse are presented and how they has been used as tools in the design process.

VOCABULARY

Nature

- in this thesis nature refers to all the features, forces, and processes that happen or exist independently of humans.

Natural Collapses

- a word to combine all formation processes in nature that happens all the time.

Phenomenon

- anything that exists and can be experienced by senses (seen, felt tasted etc.)

Phenomenology

- the study of phenomena and how we experience them

Weathering

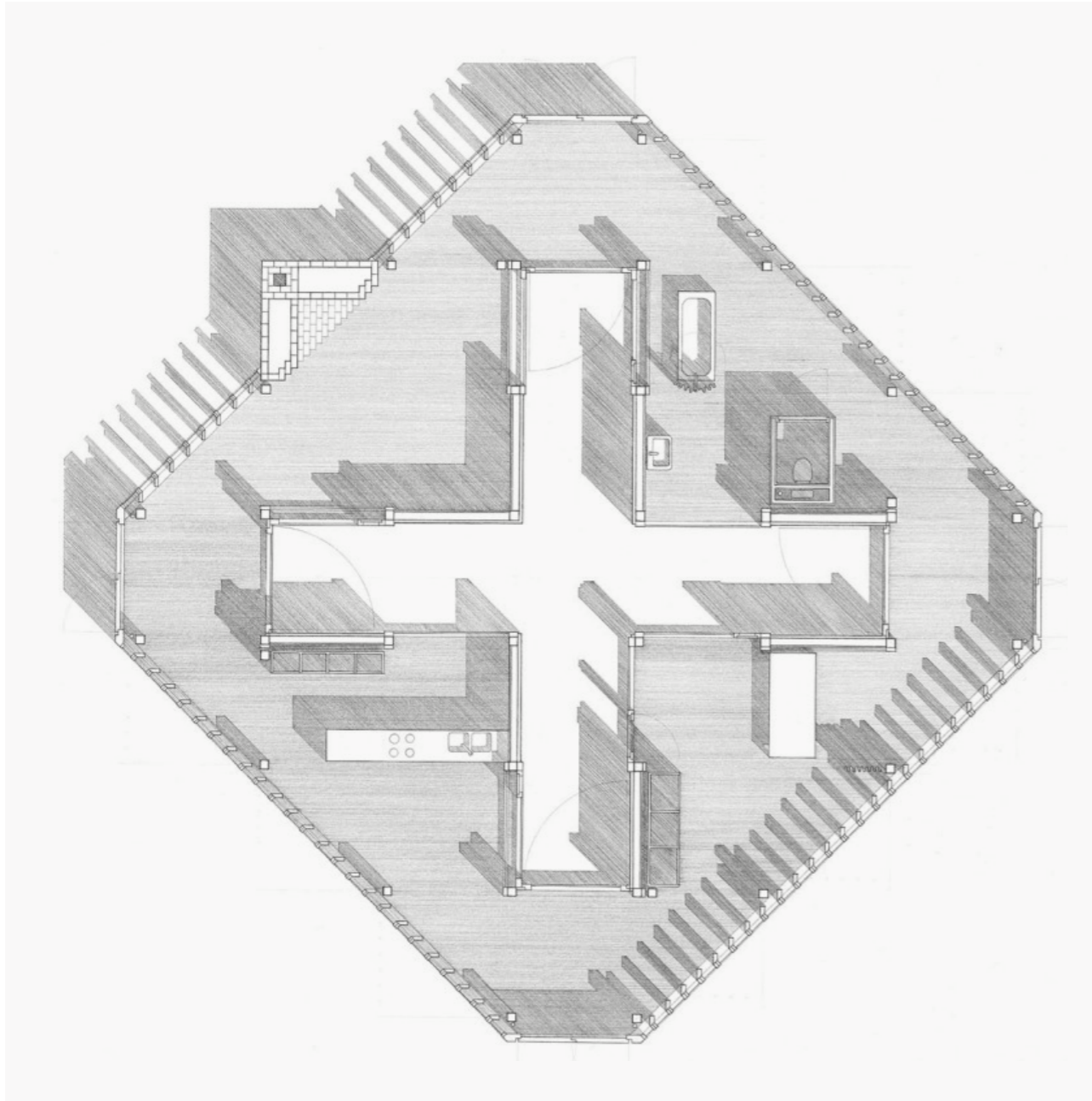
- the various mechanical and chemical processes that cause exposed material to decompose or to change the colour or form over a period of time because of the action of weather (sun, wind, rain etc.)

Existence

- the ability of an entity to interact with physical or mental reality. In philosophy, it refers to being.

Things

- in this thesis it refers to everything we know in this world



House for a Young Woman - Virginia series / Beate Hølmebakk / 1995-2000

Architecture can be a medium to explore and physically represent fictional states of mind. In a series of houses, Hølmebakk uses her imagination to explore how architecture can reflect the life of female characters from literature.

METHOD & TOOLS

Imaginary Context

The design proposal doesn't have a specific program or site. Instead everything is based on an imaginary context situated in the aftermath of a burnt landscape. The intention to use this speculative exploration to push the boundaries of architecture as a medium for exploring fictional states of mind.

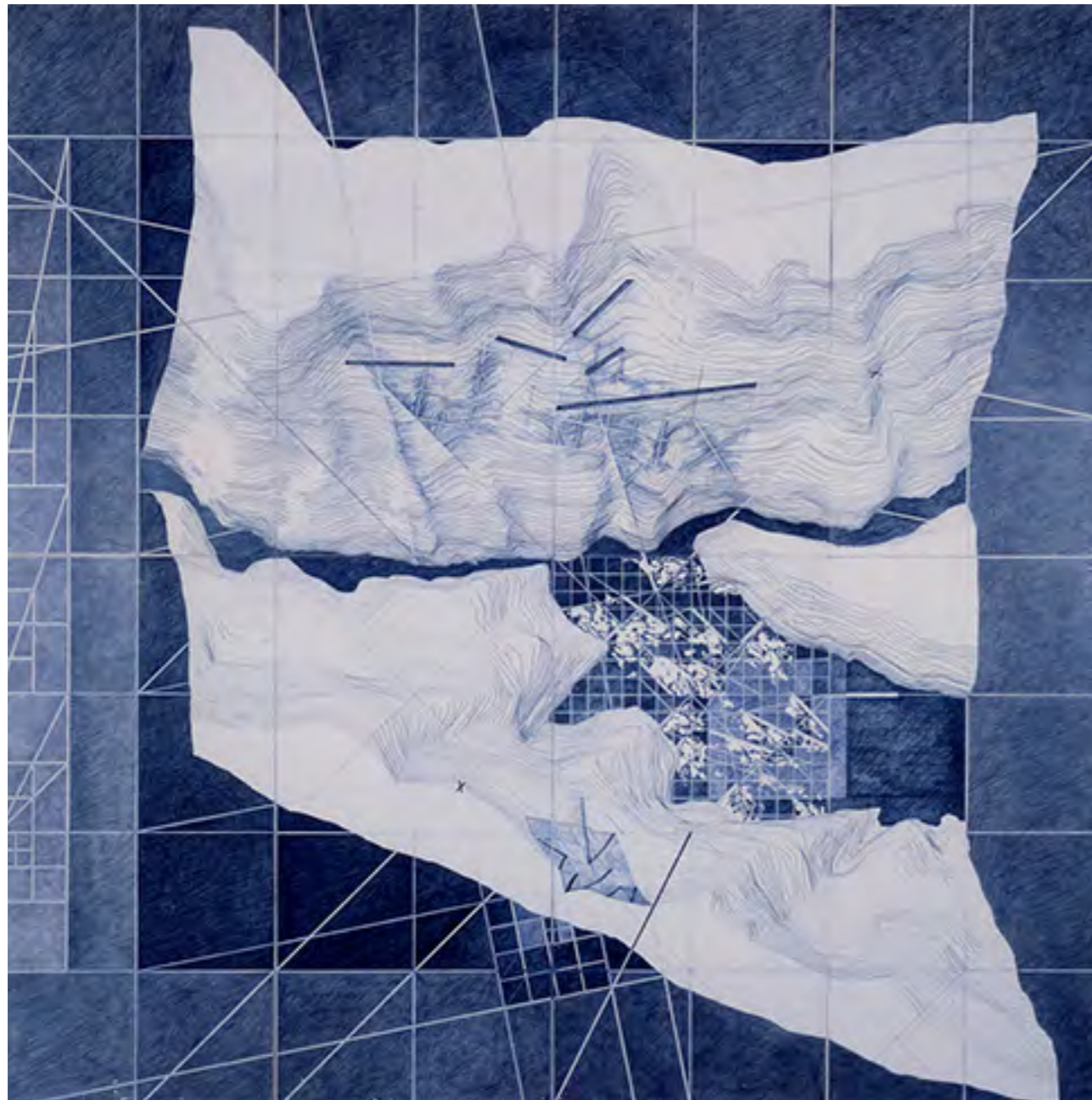
This idea to establish a ground on an idea or theme is inspired from the work of Beate Hølmebakk. A significant part of her practice is deeply considered but never intended to be built. Hølmebakk means that these projects are an important part of their practice, both the exercise itself and what they represent, but most importantly the fact that they have to do with empathy of some sort by trying to understand life from different points of views (Harvard GSD, 2019).

In *Virginia series* (1995–2000), a series of houses were conceived around the lives of female characters from

literature; an exercise to imagine how the lives of these people are and how architecture can reflect that life. What are they dreaming of? How can that be turned into space? (Ray, 2019).

What is interesting is the level of details in these projects. Even though the projects never will be realized, everything is made ready to be built. The way Hølmebakk talks about the female characters has almost turned them into real clients that can be understood through their houses. This depth of imagination is inspiring, where the sense of real and fiction disappears.

Imagination can be seen as a tool to understand the world from different points of views. This thesis takes on the same approach, searching for tools to build up a narrative on the theme moments of collapse, and how that can be turned into an architectural space.



Jardin Élémentaires / Michel Desvigne / 1988

This theoretical experiment is exploring how natural processes of erosion and sedimentation by water will create a changing pattern, as an illustration of the landscape as shapes of time.

METHOD & TOOLS

Natural Collapses

Shapes of Time

To visualize the concept of moments of collapse, the thesis looks into natural processes of erosion and sedimentation. These phenomena are used to generate an imaginary landscape that is constantly changing.

The landscape architect Michel Desvigne describes the landscape as *shapes of time*. What is perhaps most striking in Desvigne's work is his fascination with the unfinished. He considers landscape architecture as a living artform that is more about cultivation, process, and change over time (Gilles, 2009). For example, the theoretical work *Jardin Élémentaires* (Desvigne, 1988), is an exploration of the physical dialog that exists on multiple levels between natural phenomena and construction. Desvigne imagined the transformation of a site through natural processes of erosion and sedimentation, that will create a changing pattern of streams and sedimentary islands in a valley.

Never-Ending Process

By viewing the concept of weathering as a continuation of the building process rather than as a force, the “final” state of the construction is necessarily indefinite. In the book *On weathering* (Mostafavi, M., Leatherbarrow, D. 1993), the authors question if weathering is only a subtraction to architecture or if it also can add to an enhanced experience.

This thesis takes on the same approach where the design investigations are looking for how to adapt formation processes in nature into the design method. To show, similarly to the beliefs of Desvigne, that any landscape—no matter how manicured and mature—is ever really finished.



Riverbed / Olafur Eliasson / 2014

In this art installation, architecture is used to focus the attention on nature. By encouraging the visitor to interact with the landscape, the visitor is both *at* the exhibit and *on* it.

METHOD & TOOLS

Elements of Architecture

Framing the Landscape

Nature is everywhere, but not always reflected on. In the art installation *Riverbed*, Olafur Eliasson (2014) is using the architecture to focus the attention on nature. At the exhibition architecture is surrounding a landscape, turning it into an object to view and explore. By encouraging the visitor to interact with the landscape, the visitor is both *at* the exhibit and *on* it. The bodily experience of a phenomena makes us connect emotionally and think in new patterns since it gives us the opportunity to understand something with our different senses such as touch, sound, smell, not just through vision and mind (Pallasmaa, 2012).

This approach to use architecture to see nature from a different point of view, is being explored in this thesis. Through a series of created spaces, the architectural elements investigate the difference of being *surrounded by architecture* or being *surrounded by nature*.

Time Reference

The architectural elements are also used as a time reference to see and understand how time is changing and shaping the landscape. Some elements create time references by their constant persisting. The element's permanence of always being there gives the feeling of a site anchored in its history and on its site. It's like they're frozen in time - immortalized.

Imprint in the landscape

Time has left a mark

Other elements are constantly transforming, affected by the surroundings; nothing last forever.

Water flows, wind blows

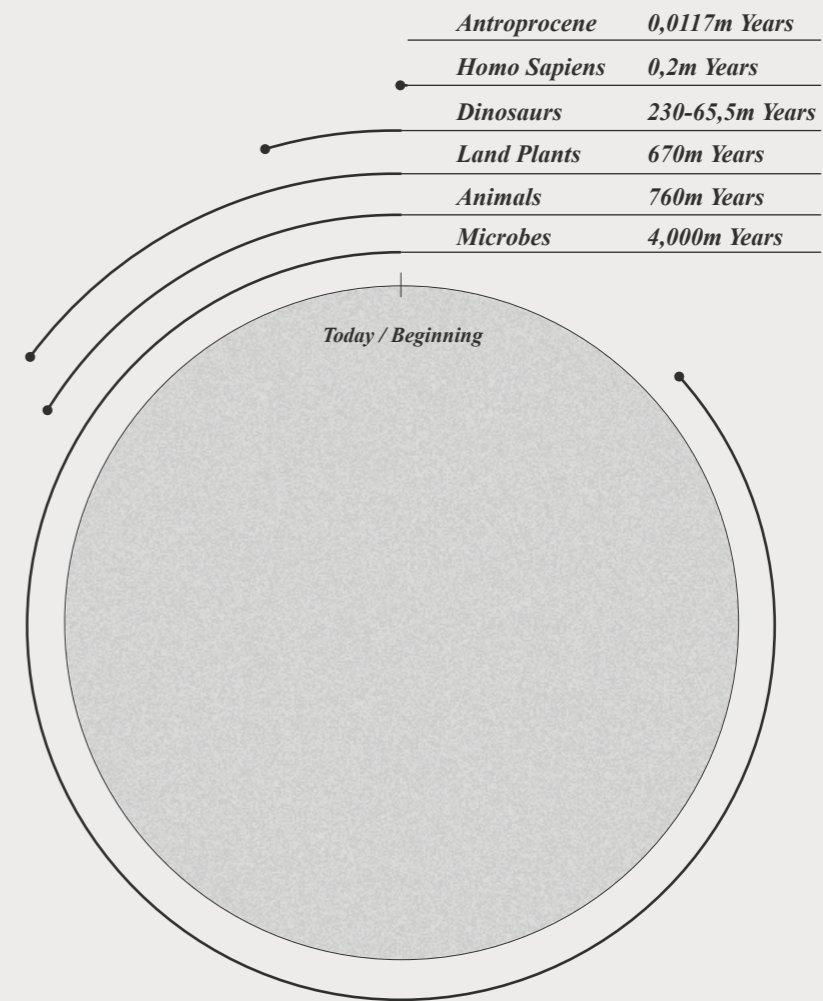
Time is shaping and changing

Placed in the imaginary context of the burnt landscape, the elements act as imprints that interact with the landscape; an eternal manifestation in the ever changing context.

THEORY

Thinking of Collapse

Time



Time Perspective / Diagram

If the history of the earth were condensed into a 12-hour period, Homo Sapiens would appear in the last two seconds. The Anthropocene, when human activity started to have a significant impact on the planet's climate and ecosystems, would begin around one-tenth of a second ago.



Känslan av att leran ligger fast / 2018 / Pernilla Norrman

MATERIALS EXISTENTIAL VALUES

Reflection on Clay

“Clay is geology. Finest particles of volcanic mineral that was following with the water of melting ice from the glacial period. Until everything went quiet. Since then unchanged. At the same place.” - Norrman, 2018

Collapsed actions from the past

The landscape is constantly changing by natural forces. Some of them build up the landscape, while others are collapsing actions breaking down the landscape. Horizons form, minerals and rocks weather, nutrients leach and plant communities change. Time perspectives of the world are difficult to comprehend, but all the things we see around us and call the world are generated from natural collapses in the past.

In Sweden, the deepest clays were formed between 150-200 million years ago, but most of the clay was formed during and after the last glacial period 15-20,000 years ago. The large amounts of melting water created flowing ice rivers that eroded the old soils, consisting of volcanic particles from before the glacial period. Dissolved in the streams of water, finest particles were transported far from their origin to sink to the bottom as mud beds. Due to the land uplift, many of the former sea and lake bottoms have since then been drained and formed stable land areas. That has allowed the fine-grained particles to age at the same place until present day (Sveriges geologiska undersökning [SGU], 2020). Yes, clay is geology, but it is more than just a sticky, dirty mass. It is a piece of prehistoric time under our feet that never gets too old.

A material full of potential

All this time (collapsed actions from the past) has generated a material full of potential. Clay minerals have been important to life, and many theories of abiogenesis involve

them. The unique character of clay is given by the structure of the fine-grained particles with a diameter of less than 0.002 mm. They can absorb large amounts of water, but conversely, they make the material impermeable to water when saturated. The clay bears layers of information from the past and how time has dealt with a place. Depending on location, clay can consist of other minerals, such as eroded aluminum and iron oxide. There are therefore clays in varying colors, more or less plastic, more or less water-absorbing; different qualities that give the clay at a specific location its own identity (Norrman, 2018). Dried, the clay shrinks and becomes hard and fragile. When dissolved in water it goes back to its formable plasticity; a material to be used over and over again.

From dried to burnt clay

Clay has been used by human civilizations at all times for different purposes; for housing, consumer goods and tools, but also for medical purposes. Indigenous clay and mud architectures in various parts of the world seem to be born of the muscular and haptic work with the material. Initially, the clay was used unburned, either as stamped clay to form walls, or as shaped stones dried in the sun. Through firing, the clay stone gained new durable characteristics that made it resistant to degradation for over thousands of years (Staubach, 2013). The clay stops being clay and becomes ceramics, a state where the clay minerals have melted together to a strong mass. The simple principle to form raw clay into building blocks, that then through the process of fire made them eternalised, has made clay a significant material in the construction of cities and can now be found everywhere as traces from the past; supporting arches of cathedrals and protecting roofs and facades of homes.



Pile of the Past / Blue Clay

*Finest particles from the past
Stretched and twisted beyond recognition*

*The stable, solid ground
Cold and soft*

*An ever changing mass
Cracked and fragile*

*Processes changing and shaping
Time perspectives so vast*



The Frozen Familiar / Cup, Högånäs Keramik

*Frozen matter from the past
Eternalised in the shape of the familiar*

*From the unknown underground
To the touch of the hand and lips*

*A piece of history in your hand
We tend to forget*

*Time goes on
The object remains*



European Field / 1993 / Antony Gormley

MATERIALS EXISTENTIAL VALUES

Imprinted Moments

The reflection on clay gives both a time perspective of the material itself but also a reflection on the built spaces around us. Architecture has the ability to convey time and belonging through its constant being. As an anchor in time that reminds us of the past and gives us connection to the world. Through the built space we have the possibility to touch and feel the ones' that went before us; those who with their physical work created the spaces and things we still can experience (Norrman 2018). When we reflect, the tremendous work and time that is behind the things we see in the world can be seen; moments forever imprinted.

The series of artwork installations titled *Field* by Antony Gormley (1989-2003) is an example of how clay

can connect us in time. The fields consists of sculptures of clay figures, made not only by himself but in collaboration with communities around the world, to speak about our collective future and our responsibility for it. The clay becomes the medium to get in touch with the earth and the memories of those that went before us, as much as with the unborn, the ones that are about to come after us (Arts Council Collection, 2020). Thousands of clay figures are placed together, completely occupying the space in which they are exhibited. As a frozen civilization in time, they look back at its viewers as being responsible for the world that we're in.



Tomba Brion / 1979 / Carlo Scarpa

Architecture has the possibility to give bodily experiences. This space appears as a series of connected but random architectural objects to be discovered, as an invitation to explore.

MATERIALS EXISTENTIAL VALUES

Mediating Architecture

Experience of The World

The world is always already in the grip of its own having-been (the already collapsed moments). It is what it is only because of what has already happened. This means, in a strict sense, that we do not find the world, but only our already being-in the world (Dodd, 2017). All the moments we have behind us (experience / history), is the reason of how we know the world that we find ourselves in. Architecture has the possibility to be in reality but generate an experience that makes us dream and imagine beyond reality (Dodd, 2017). Beate Holmeback describes it: “*At its best, I think architecture is a state of mind. There’s something about the experience of space that has been with us since we were small—a basic understanding that has to do with our personal story.*” (Ray, 2019).

Interaction between the senses

We experience the world by *being in it* and not only by *looking at it*. A walk through the forest is invigorating and healing due to the constant interaction between all the senses. When the eye collaborates with the body and the other senses, we’re not just viewers of the world, we experience the world through our bodies. The sense of reality is strengthened and articulated by this constant interaction. This is how we tend to remember places, partly because it’s unique, but also because it has affected our bodies and generated enough associations to be remembered in our personal worlds. Architecture has the possibility to be like the forest, if the space is providing the ground for perception and the horizon of experiencing and understanding the world (Pallasmaa, 2012).

The bodily experience of the physical building can be exemplified with the work of Peter Zumthor. In his book *Atmospheres* (2006), Zumthor states that quality in architecture is when a building manages to move him. Architecture is a spatial art, but is also a temporal art. It is therefore important to induce a sense of freedom of movement that evokes the curiosity to explore a space.

The Poetic Details

Juhani Pallasmaa argues that “*the task of architecture is to poeticise human existence*” (2012). As architects, we

should always try to achieve the dimension of a poetic meaning even in the smallest scales and parts and pieces in the building. This is what could be called the poetic details, which resides in the relationship of textures and of construction, in the nature of colour, light, reflection, surface, and in the way materials are juxtaposed. This is a kind of vocabulary, in the same way that words are for the writer (Hall, 2005). The work of Carlo Scarpa is commonly known for the poetic details, described as architecture that has to be experienced at site to truly know it. In Tomba Brion, the space appears as a series of connected but random architectural objects to be discovered, as an invitation to experience and explore (Fitch, 2019). Only by actually being there, the qualities can be seen, felt and touched and it is in that way, to use the words of Hall, the poetics of the details can be understood.

Architecture and its limits

Humans are limited both spatially and temporally. Limits remain essential for our spiritual well being: there is no freedom without limits. The experience of the world could be seen as a labyrinth; hard to understand, unexpected, trapped in the grip of dimensions at the same time the feeling of limitlessness (Dodd, 2017). Architecture creates limits in a good way. The built spaces makes us feel home by their constant being in the world. As described in *The Tears of the Things* (Schwegner, 2005), we know the world through the objects we know. Those things have created a sense of being home in the world, both physically and mentally.

The collapse has the possibility to destroy the things we have learnt to know in this world; our connection to the world, found in the relations we have built to living creatures and spaces. Without those connections we are lost. And this is when we find ourselves being anxious: in anxiety one feels uncanny, the feeling of *not being at home* (Schwegner, 2005).

The world that we learnt to know seems to be changing in a more rapid phase and is drained away in its familiar aspects. What is left is a new and vulnerable sense of being in a world that we don’t know. That evokes feelings of loss, feelings of anxiety; feelings of collapse.

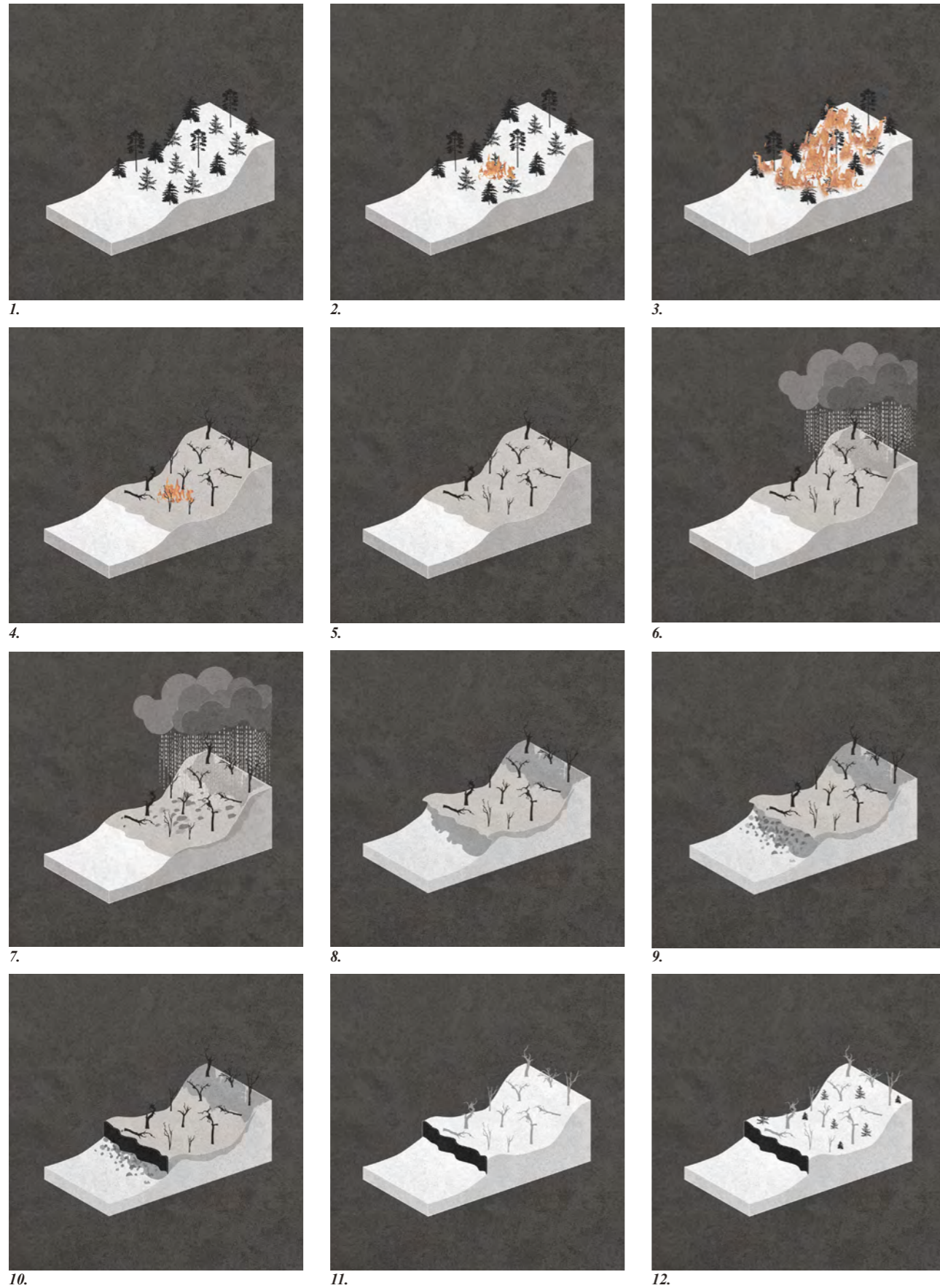
PROJECT TRANSLATION

Directing the Collapse



Aftermath findings / November 2020 / Hällseskogsbrännan, Västmanland, Sweden

The difference between the states of the raw and burnt clay has defined the work and been translated into the project. The raw clay represents the ever changing landscape, while the burnt represents the architectural imprints.



10.
Sequence of Collapse / Series of Illustrations

PROJECT TRANSLATION

Imaginary Context

The imaginary context is based on a sequence of collapse. The sequence starts in the aftermath of a forest fire; a burnt landscape with poor soil conditions, easily resulting in a landslide. In this scenario the architectural element of a wall is placed to prevent further collapses. Acting as a time reference, the wall is capturing moments of collapse.

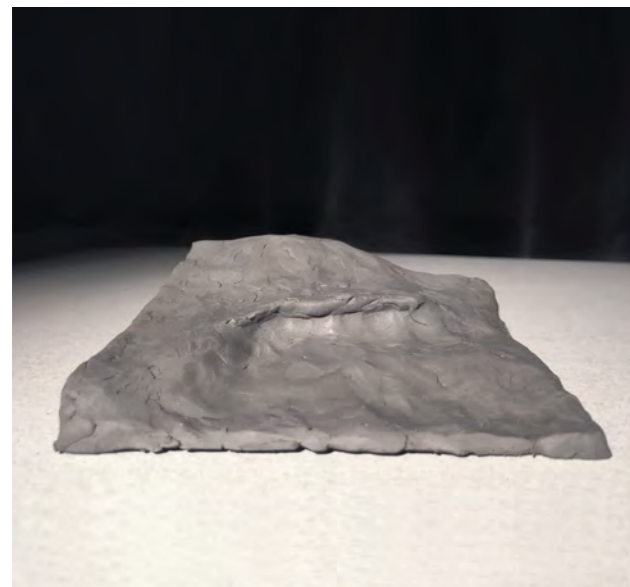
1. The imaginary context is a landscape with a forest on a hill. A warm summer has caused dry conditions.
2. In the dry forest the natural phenomenon of a forest fire is occurring.
3. The fire rages out of control...
4. ...leaving a burnt landscape behind.
5. The aftermath of the hard and dry surface of rocks and clay, reduces water absorption.
6. When the rain is falling on the hard surfaces the soil has no ability to hold water, increasing the risk of flooding and mudslides.
7. Top layers of mud and ash is washed downhill
8. A boulder embodied in soil is created
9. The risk of soaked soil to break free is high.
10. A wall is built to prevent further collapses
11. The wall is controlling the landscape, keeping a safe condition.
12. The aftermath has become a new beginning



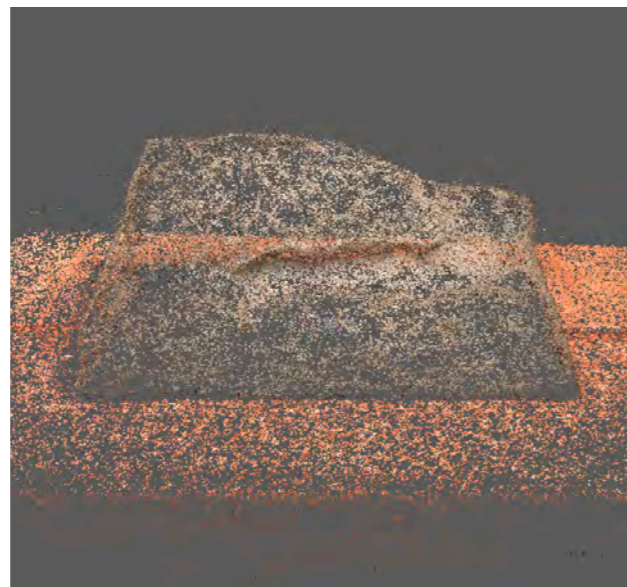
1.



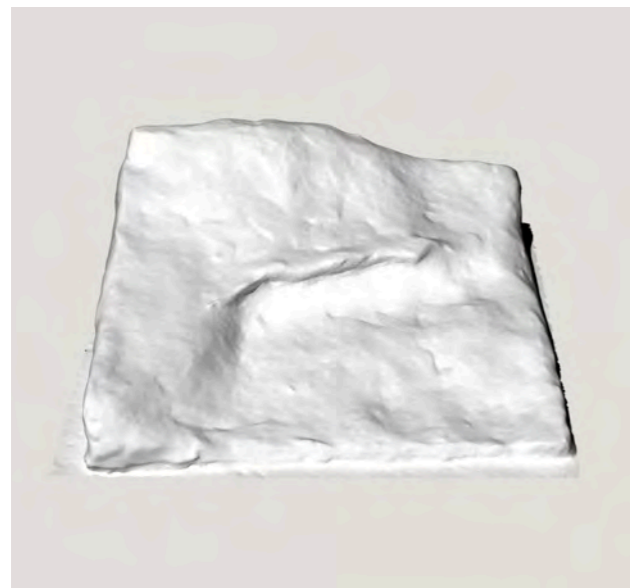
2.



3.



4.



5.



6.

PROJECT TRANSLATION
Digital Translation

Based on the story of the imaginary context, the landscape was created through a series of model explorations in clay. One landscape was chosen, selected to be the site for a design implementation.

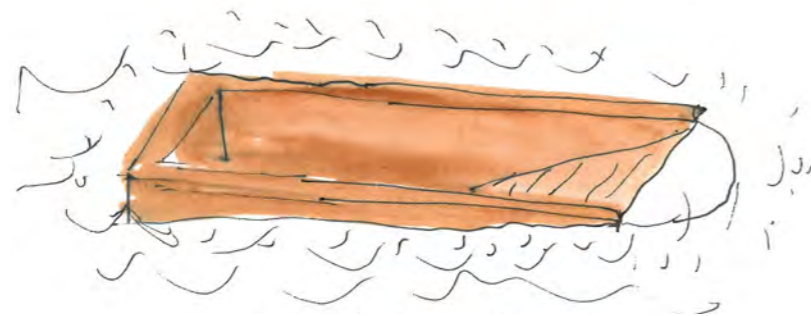
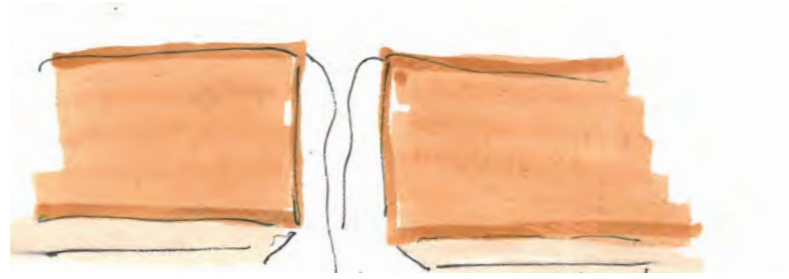
1. Landscape explorations in clay
2. One of many small landscapes was selected
3. The selected landscape in a bigger, more detailed scale
4. Point cloud. The physical model was photographed, and turned into a digital model with photogrammetry.
5. The digital landscape. The sense of scale disappearance.
6. The digital model was sliced. A topography was generated with a specific scale. A site for further investigations.



The Final Landscape / Physical Model



The Landscape & the Wall / Physical Model



Surrounded by / Concept Sketches

PROJECT TRANSLATION

Elements of Architecture

THE WALL SEPARATES AND CONNECTS

THE STAIR ASCENDS AND DESCENDS

THE POND REFLECTS AND ABSORBS

Selected Elements

Based on the chosen elements of the wall, the stair and the pond, the space is exploring how those simple elements can create spaces that defines the states of either being *architecture surrounded by nature* or *nature being surrounded by architecture*.

The space is also exploring the difference between Seen / Unseen, Accessible / Non-accessible, Open / Trapped, Eternal / Everchanging. The play with sights seeks to evoke the curiosity to explore the space: seeing other spaces you can't reach from the place you are in to evoke the curiosity in finding the way to that space, finding the stair to the next level, or finding the right corner to turn around to get into the room. The elements creates the design proposal with the purpose to act as a series of connected spaces to be discovered.

The Wall

With the possibility to be the stable eternal element in contrast to the ever changing landscape, the wall can prevent the landscape from collapsing. This will give the architecture the possibility to control the landscape, both by preventing it from collapsing (*maintain the landscape*) in some places, but also highlighting the collapse (*let the landscape change through erosion*) in others.

The wall also gives spatial qualities to generate a sense of curiosity both visually and physically; the curiosity of seeing how the wall is ending by changing direction, not knowing what will be around the corner (imagination). And then having the possibility to physically walk around the corner and find out (experience).

The Stair

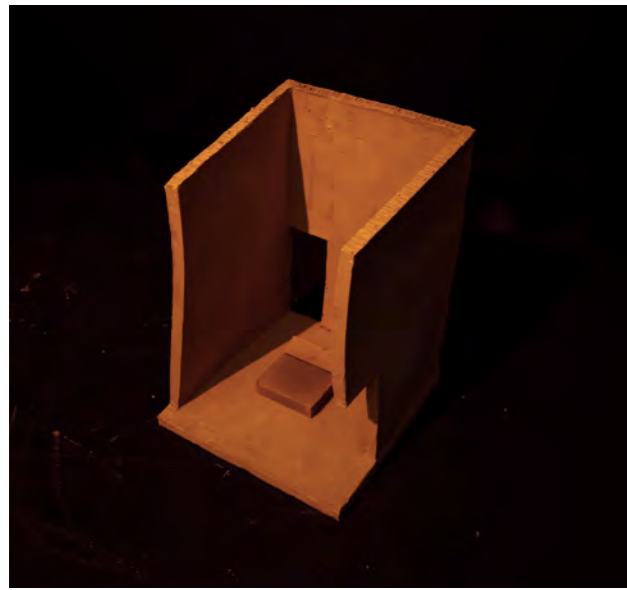
As a connection on a vertical level, the stair will in this space be the function to link the architecture to nature; *a physical movement between architecture and nature*.

The stair also has the same possibility to generate a sense of curiosity both visually and physically; the curiosity of seeing a stair leading to another level without knowing what will be upstairs (imagination) and then having the possibility to physically walk up and find out (experience).

The Pond

This limited space filled with water has the possibility to reflect and absorb the present of the surroundings. It can both be a blank mirror reflecting other movements or act as the movement itself through waves or flowing water. The pond has the ability to be both playful and calm and stands in contrast to the stability and stillness of the things seen in the space that either does not change at all or changes slowly over a long period of time (architectural elements, stones, trees etc.).

The pond also has the same possibility to generate a sense of curiosity and calmness both visually and physically; the curiosity and calmness of seeing the movement of the clouds in the reflection of the water (imagination) and then having the possibility to physically touch the water, instantly turning the calm surface into movement that erases the reflection of the clouds (experience).



1.



2.



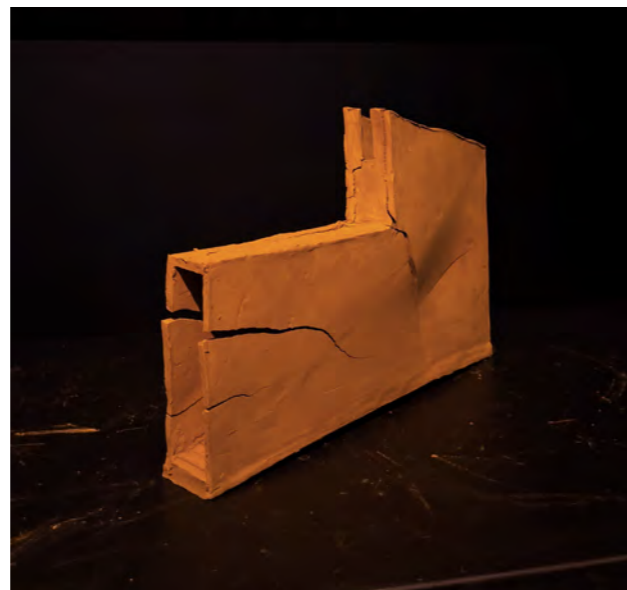
3.



4.



5.



6.

The Room Series / Physical models in clay

PROJECT TRANSLATION

Spaces to Discover

Selected Elements

Through explorations of the architectural elements, different room configurations were created and made into physical models in clay.

The rooms are placed separately but are still connected. The intention with the design proposal is to create a space that appears as a series of connected spaces to be discovered.

The architecture explores the possibility to Play with sights and walk paths. See other spaces you can't reach from the place you are in evokes the curiosity in finding the way to that space. Finding the stair to the next level, or finding the right corner to turn around to get into the room.

DESIGN PROPOSAL

Moments of Collapse

DESIGN PROPOSAL

Moments of Collapse



The Aftermath / New Beginning / Model

In the middle of somewhere, a forest fire has raged out of control, and left nothing but an empty, unstable landscape behind. Everything is black and lifeless and the silence is obvious. But after the silence, life starts to return. The aftermath has become the new beginning.



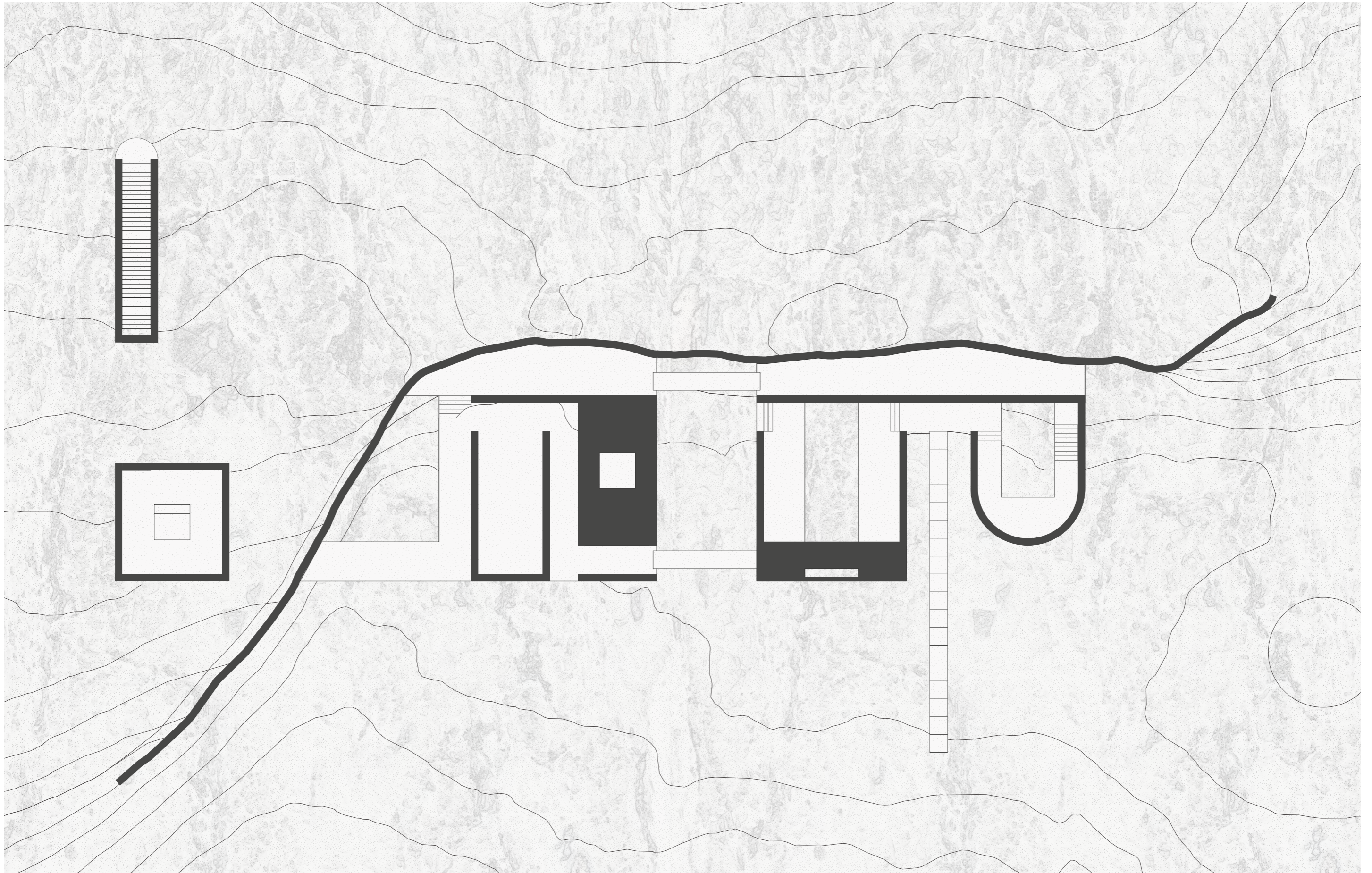
The Wall / Model

The fragile landscape is changing and shaping at a rapid pace. The wall is built to stabilize and prevent the landscape from further collapses. This element creates a tension between the pushed back landscape and the safe space in front.

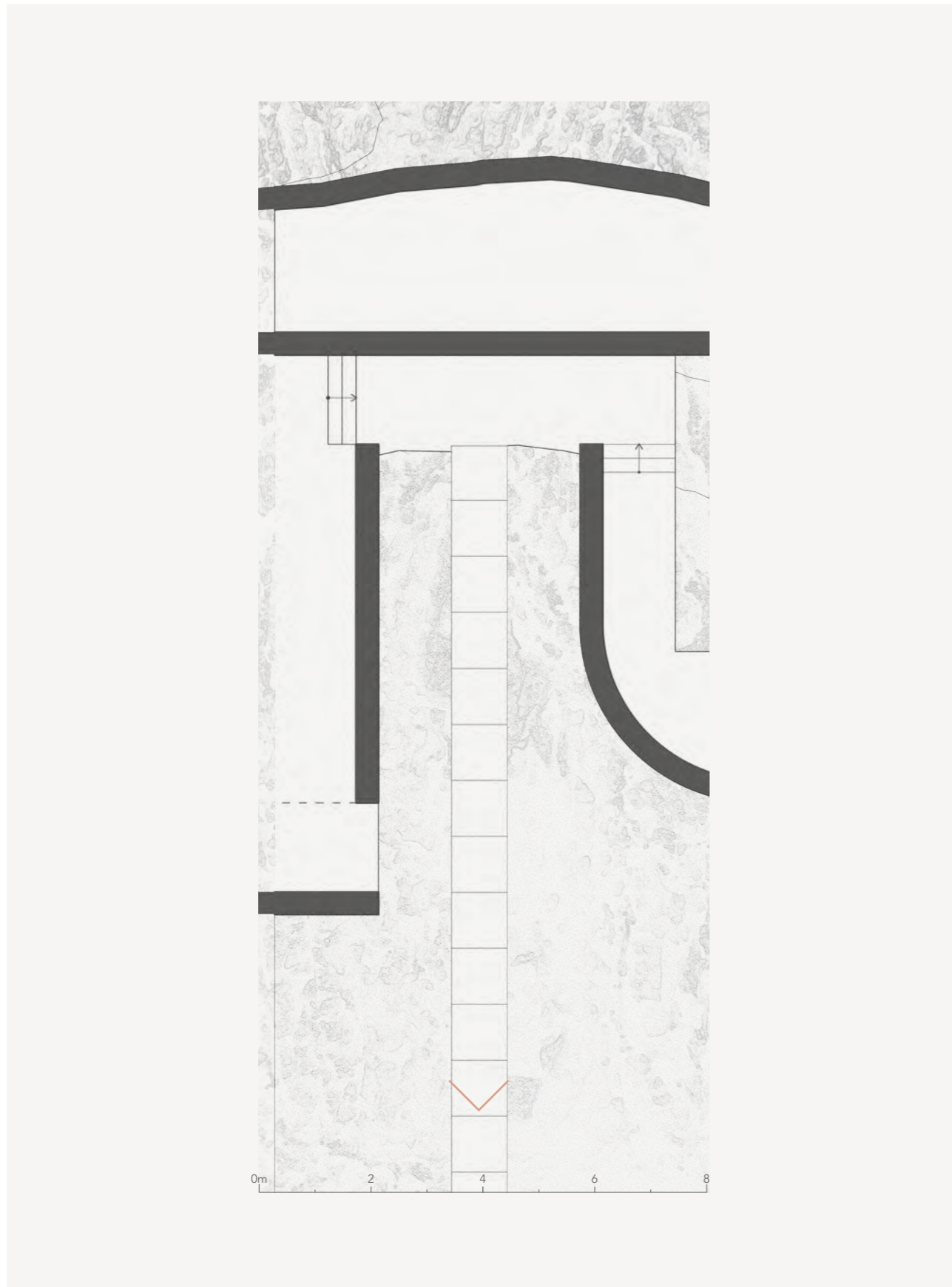


The Spaces / Model

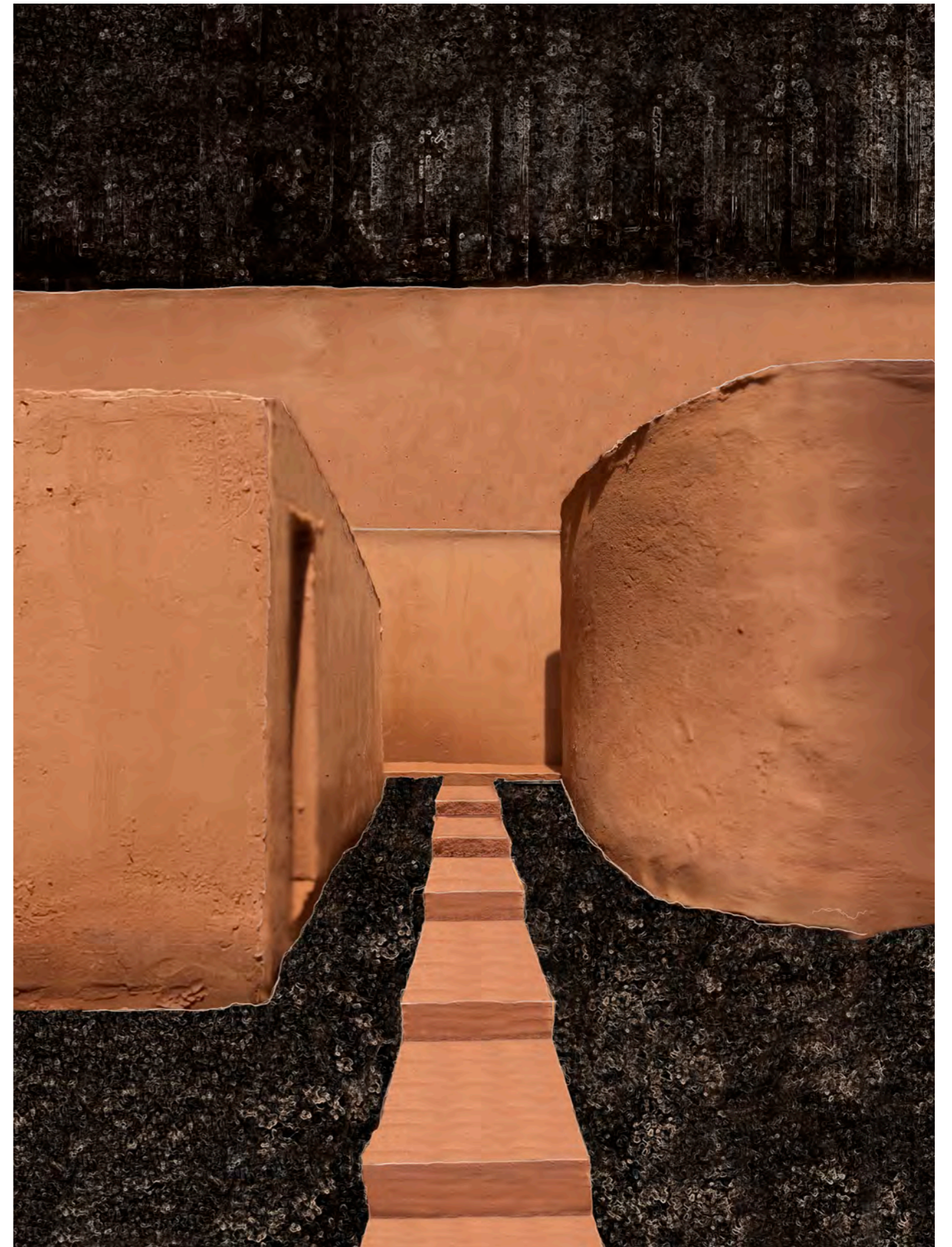
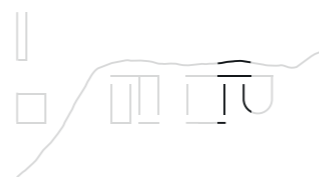
Now, in protection of the preventing wall, a series of spaces has the possibility to be safe. The rooms are placed separately but are still connected. The wall in the background acts as a reminder of the tension between the powerful landscape and the fragile human construction.



Series of Spaces / Plan



Stepping into the space / Plan



Stepping into the space / Illustration

In the middle of nowhere a long stair is to be found. Surrounded by nature, it creates a path to follow in the otherwise organic landscape. Leading up to the structure, as an invitation to explore.



Framed Nature / Plan

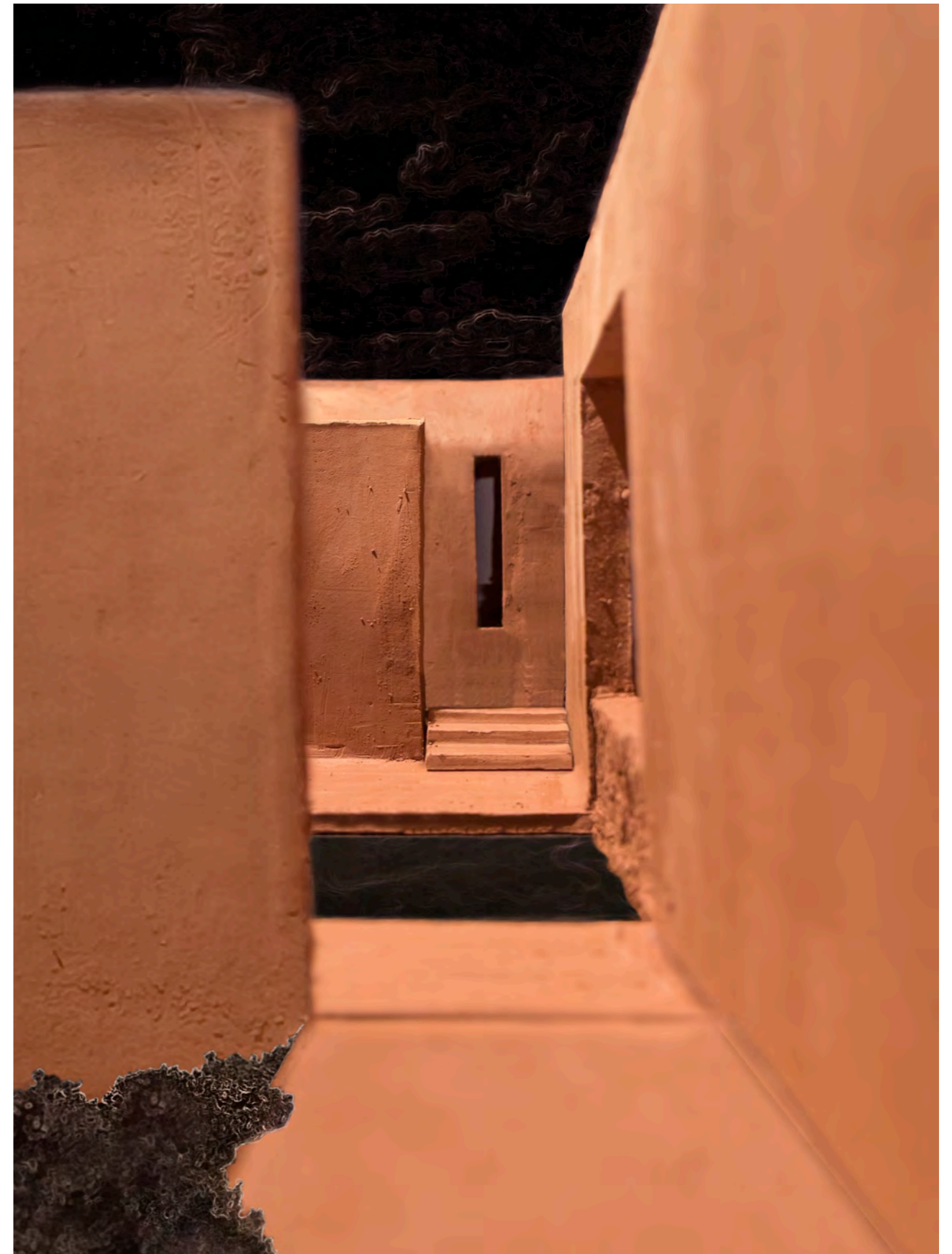


Framed Nature / Illustration

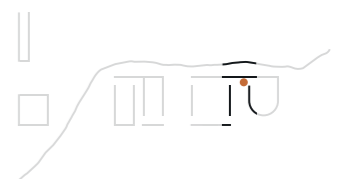
A curved wall is surrounding a rectangle of framed nature. The framed nature is trapped, turning it into an object to view instead of being in.

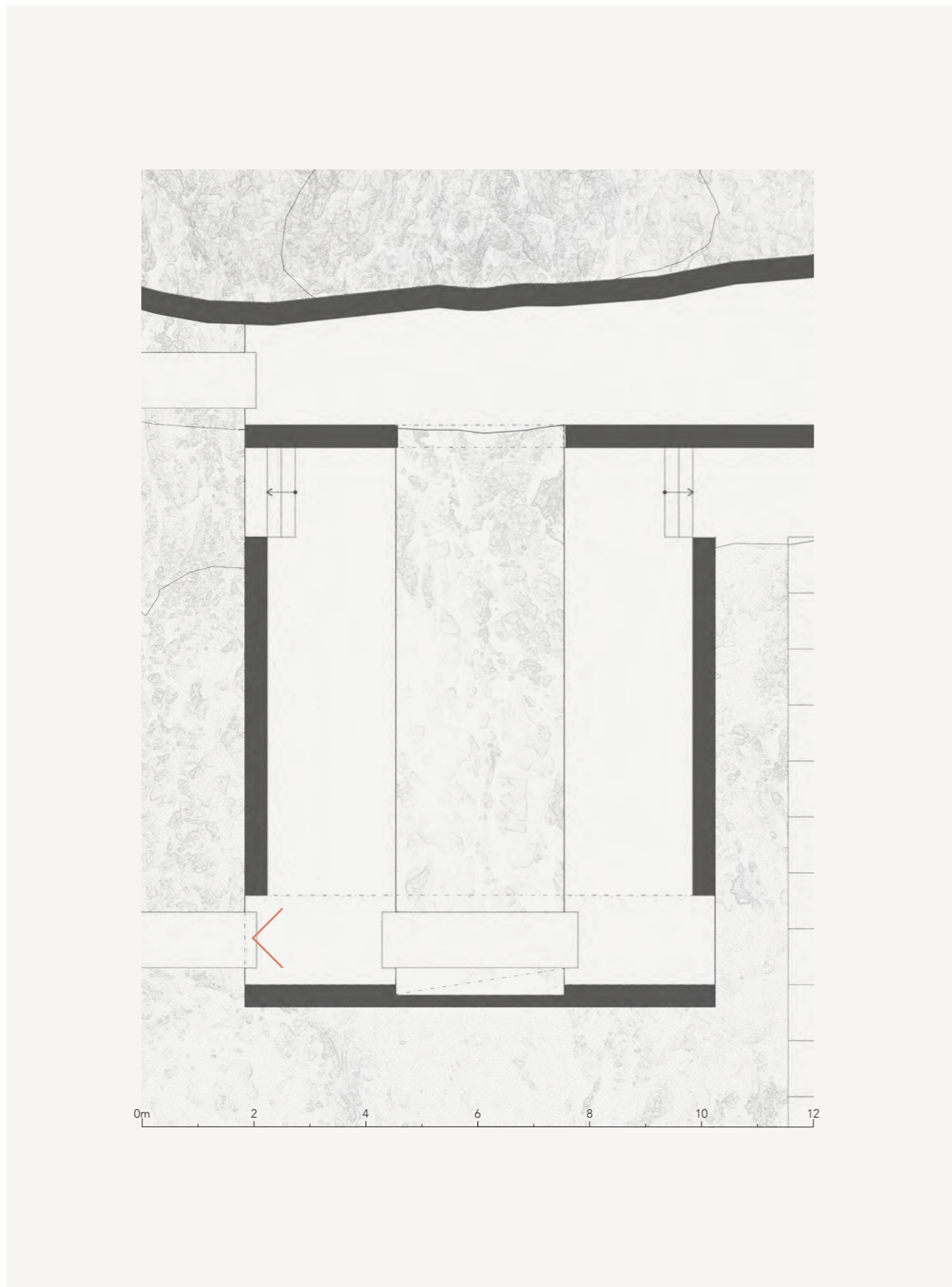


Framed Nature / Illustration



Framed Nature / Illustration





Reflecting Water / Plan

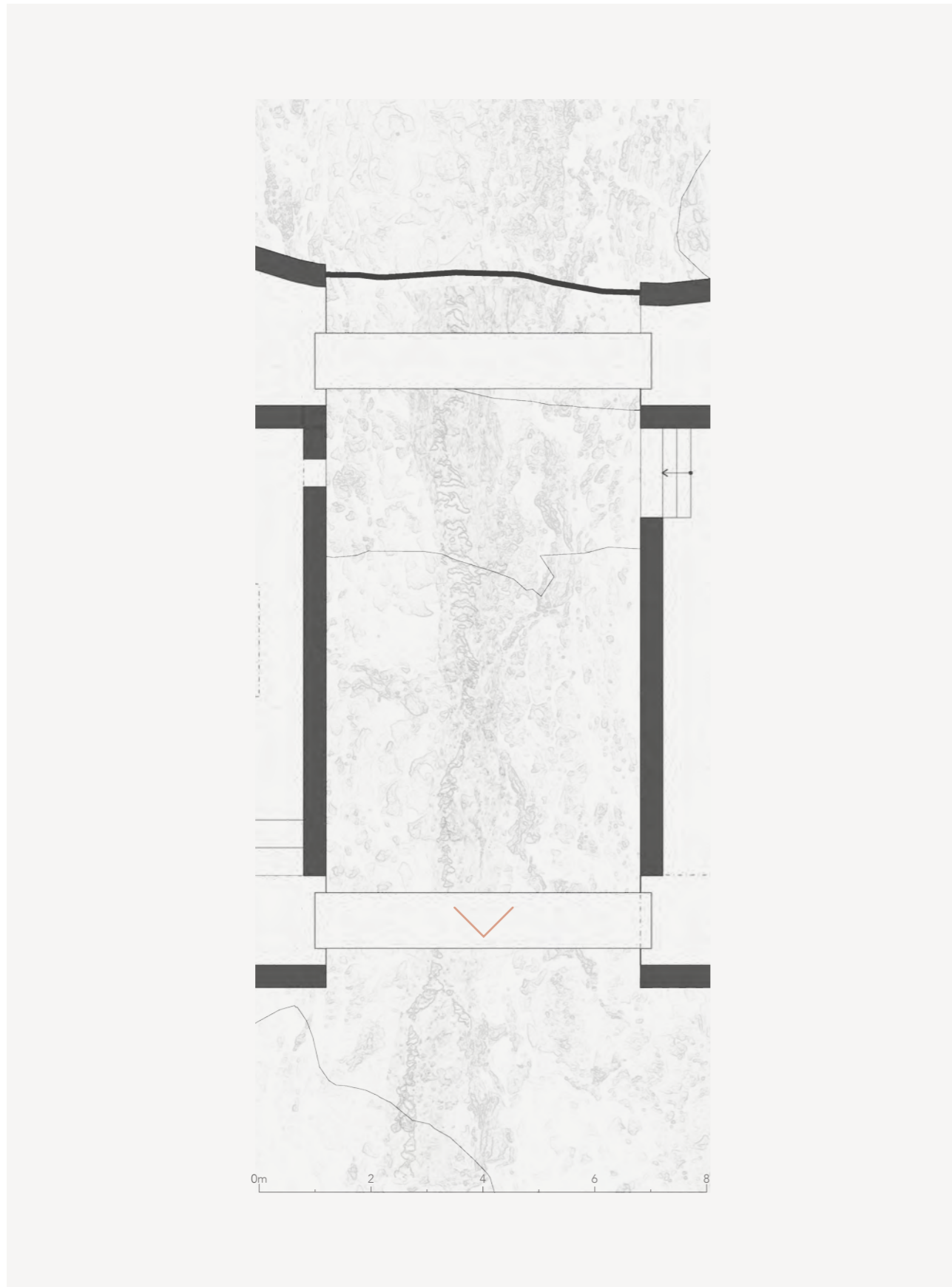


Reflecting Water / Illustration

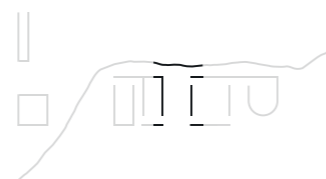
The limited space filled with water reflects and absorbs the present of the surroundings. A blank mirror showing the clouds, a wavy surface taking the shape of the wind.





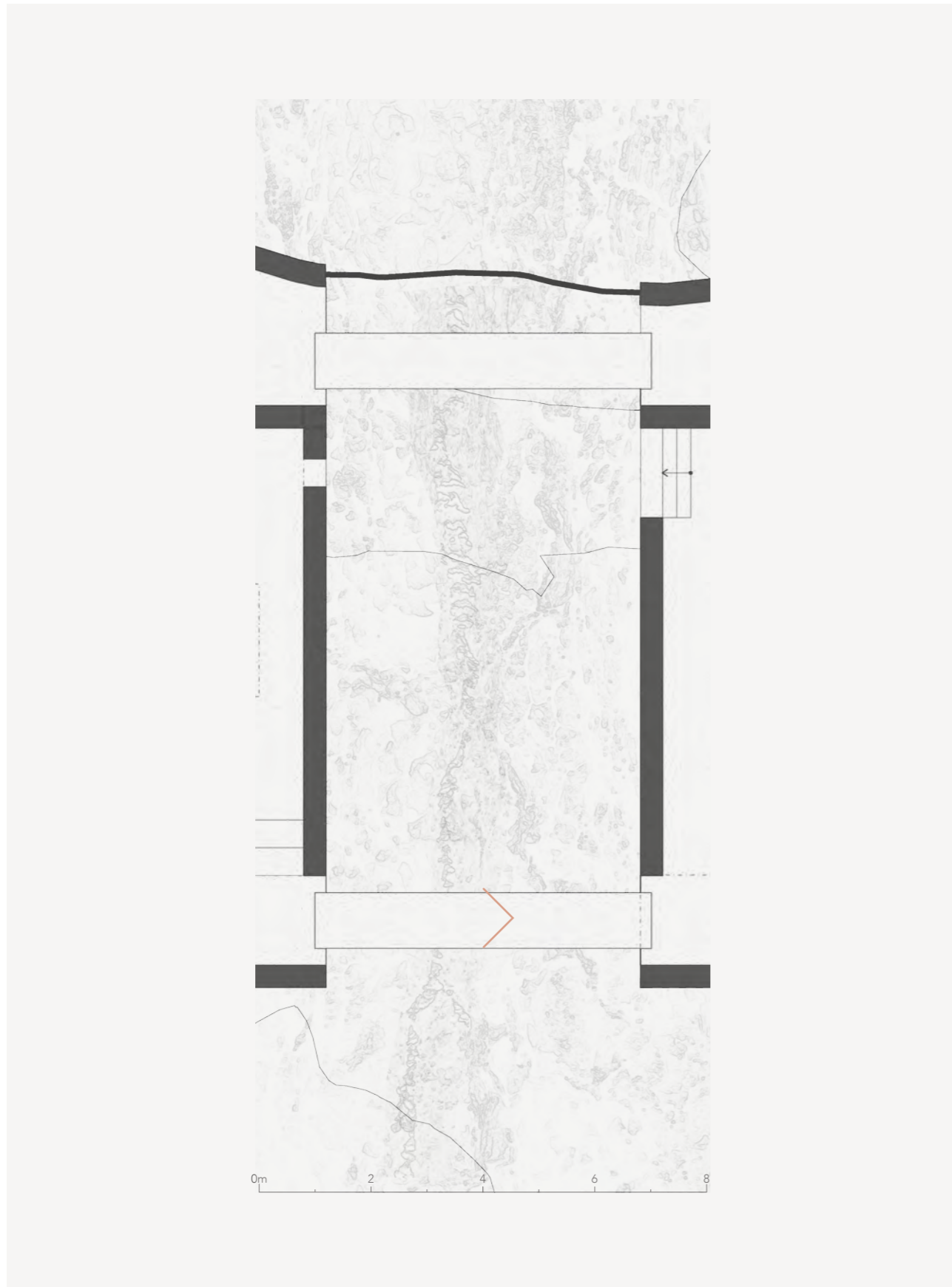


Controlling Walls / Plan

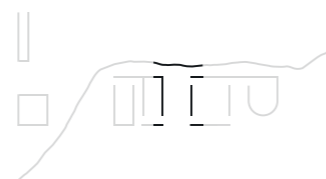


Controlling Walls / Illustration

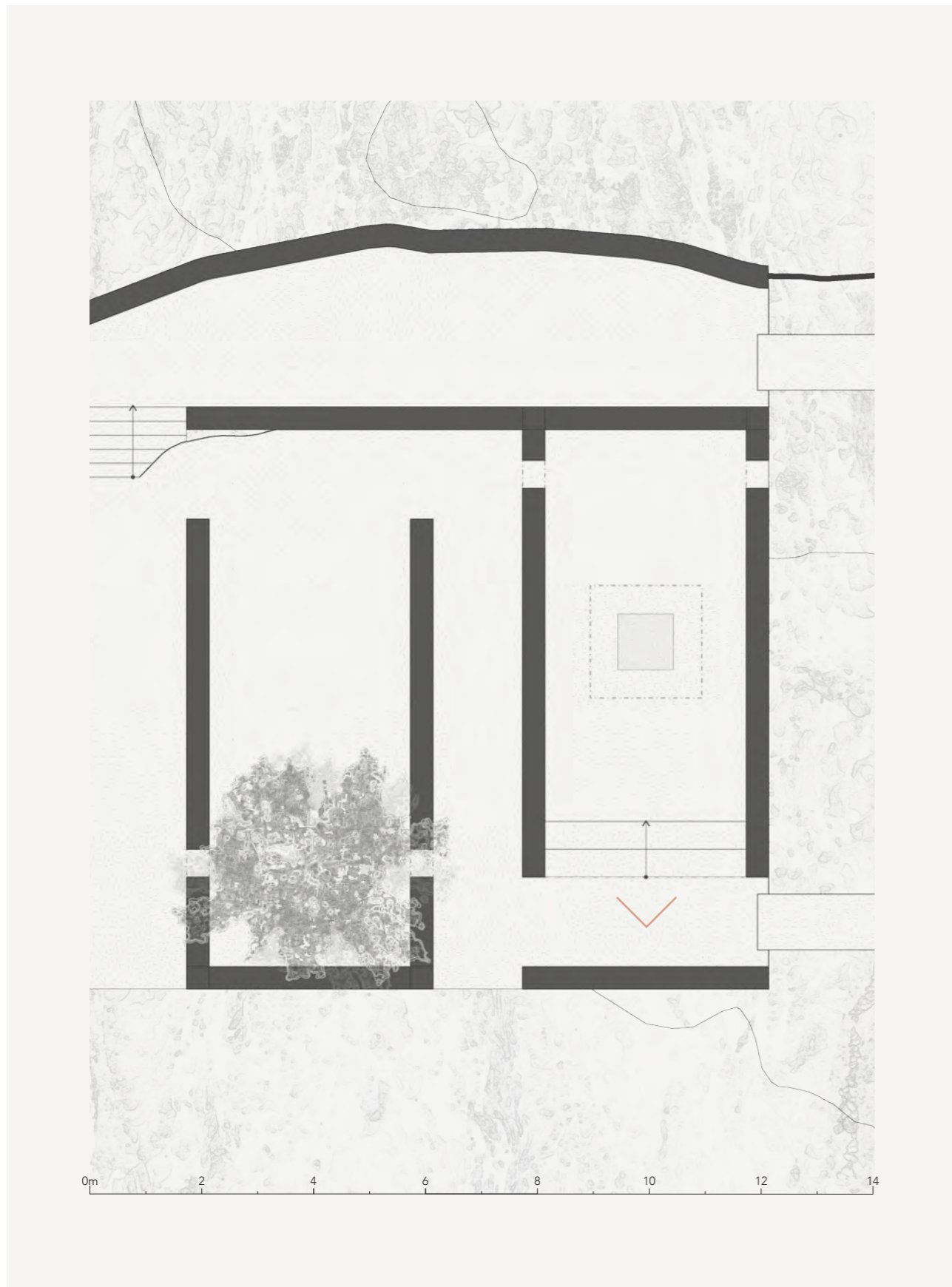
From the pond-room a bridge is leading over to the next room. From the bridge the sight of the preventing wall is in sight. The way the wall is controlling the landscape becomes visible. Where the wall is absent the landscape is free. Water flows, shaping and changing.



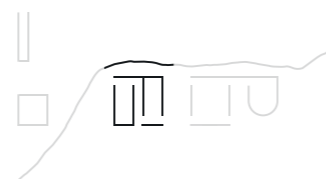
Controlling Walls / Plan



Controlling Walls / Illustration



Deforming Cube / Plan

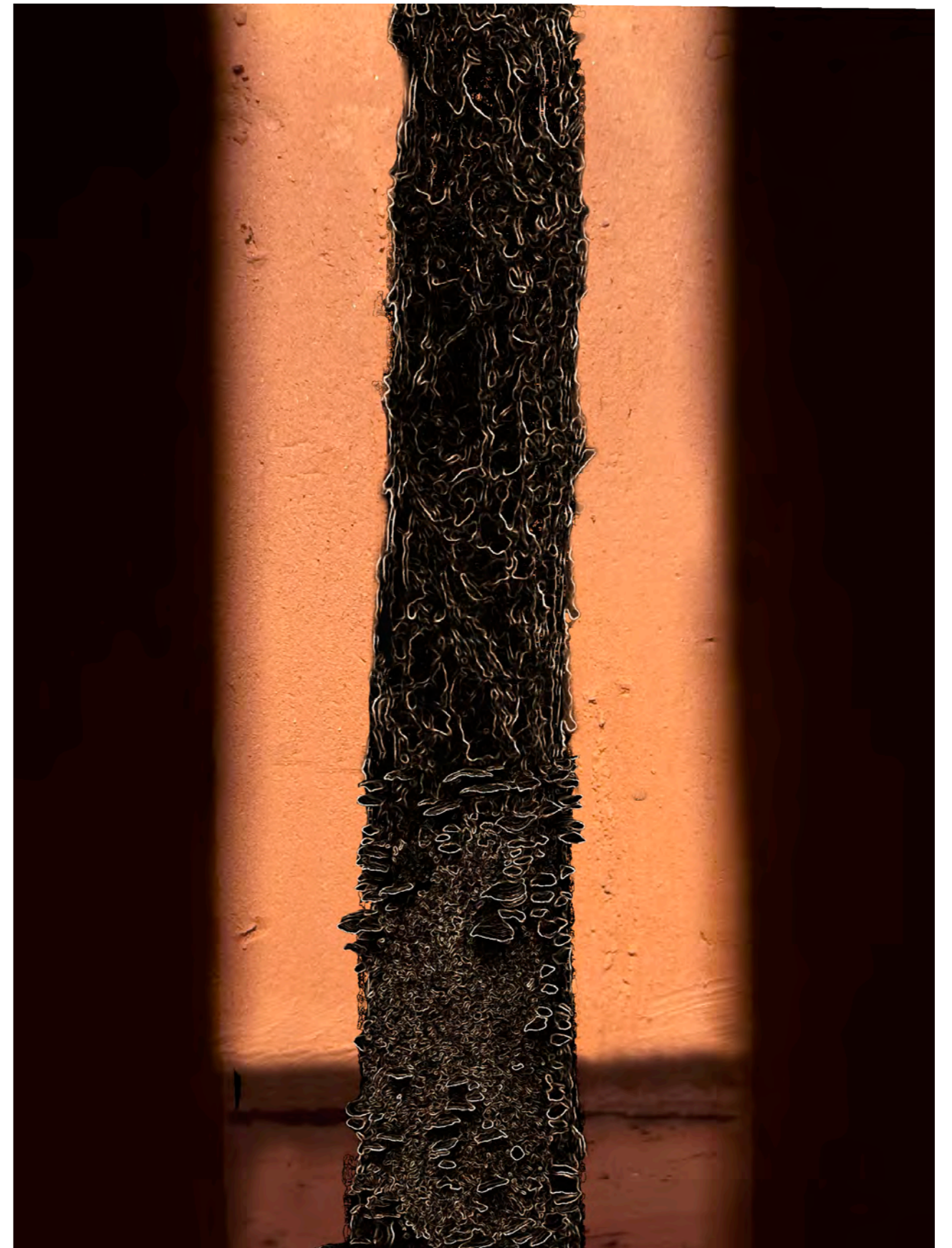
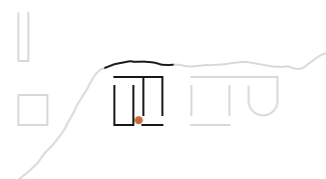


Deforming Cube / Illustration

In the darkness, light from above is projected on the walls. A cube of raw clay is slowly decreasing until nothing is left but an empty space.

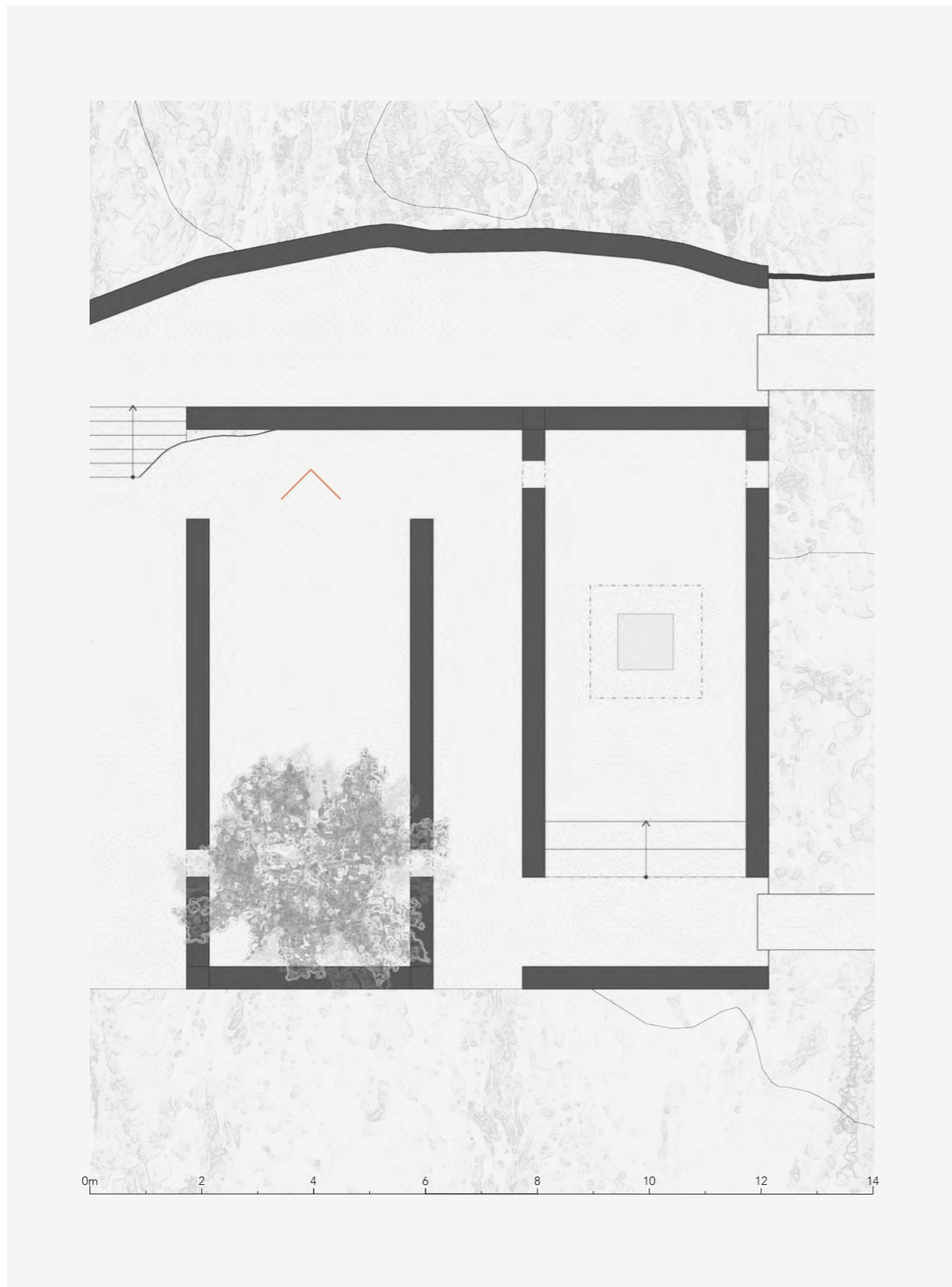


Deforming Cube / Plan

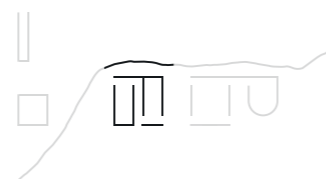


Growing Tree / Illustration

Next to the decreasing cube, a glimpse of a tree trunk shows up. It grows bigger and bigger, acting as a living creature trapped in its room.

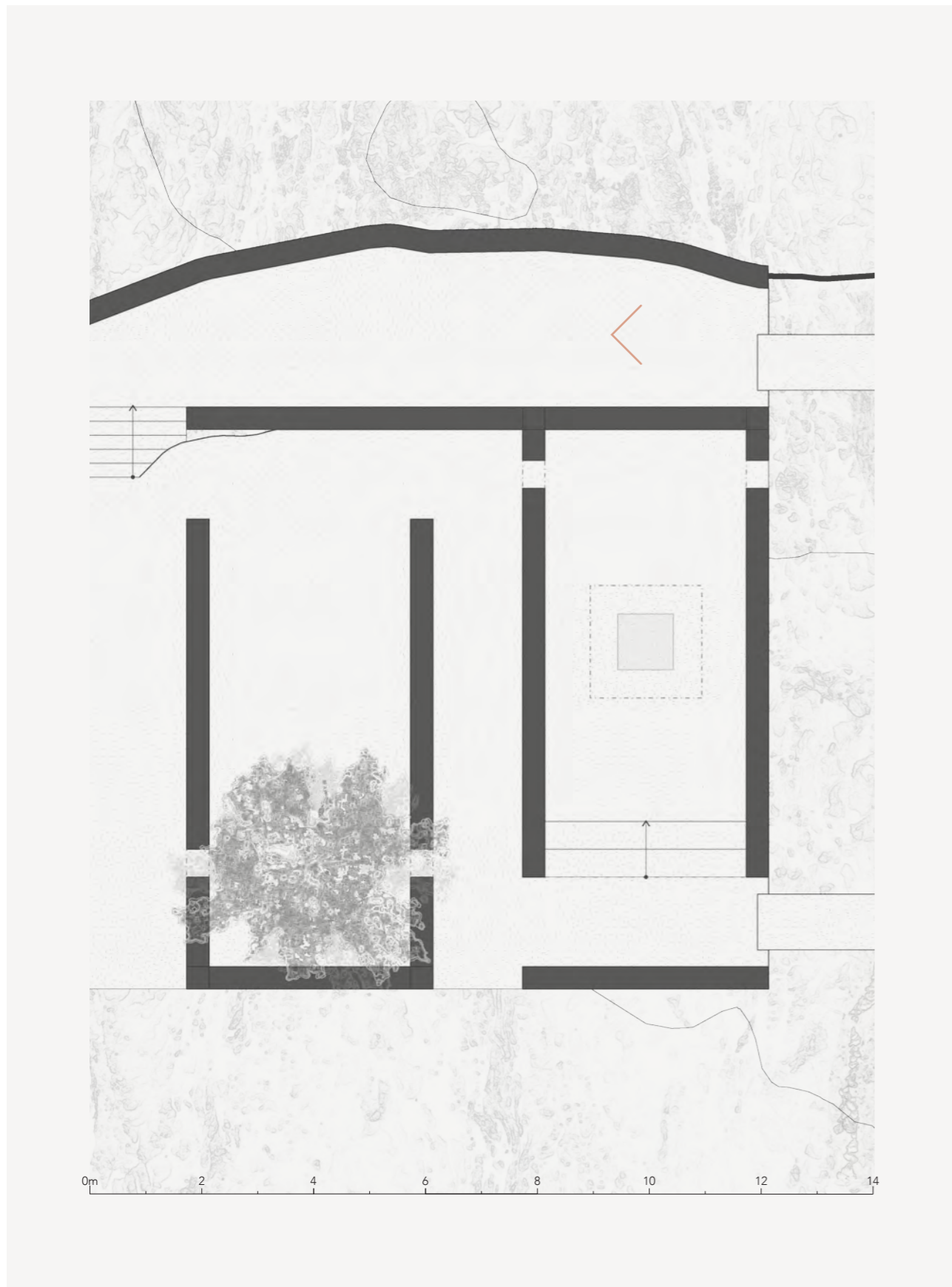


Growing Tree / Plan

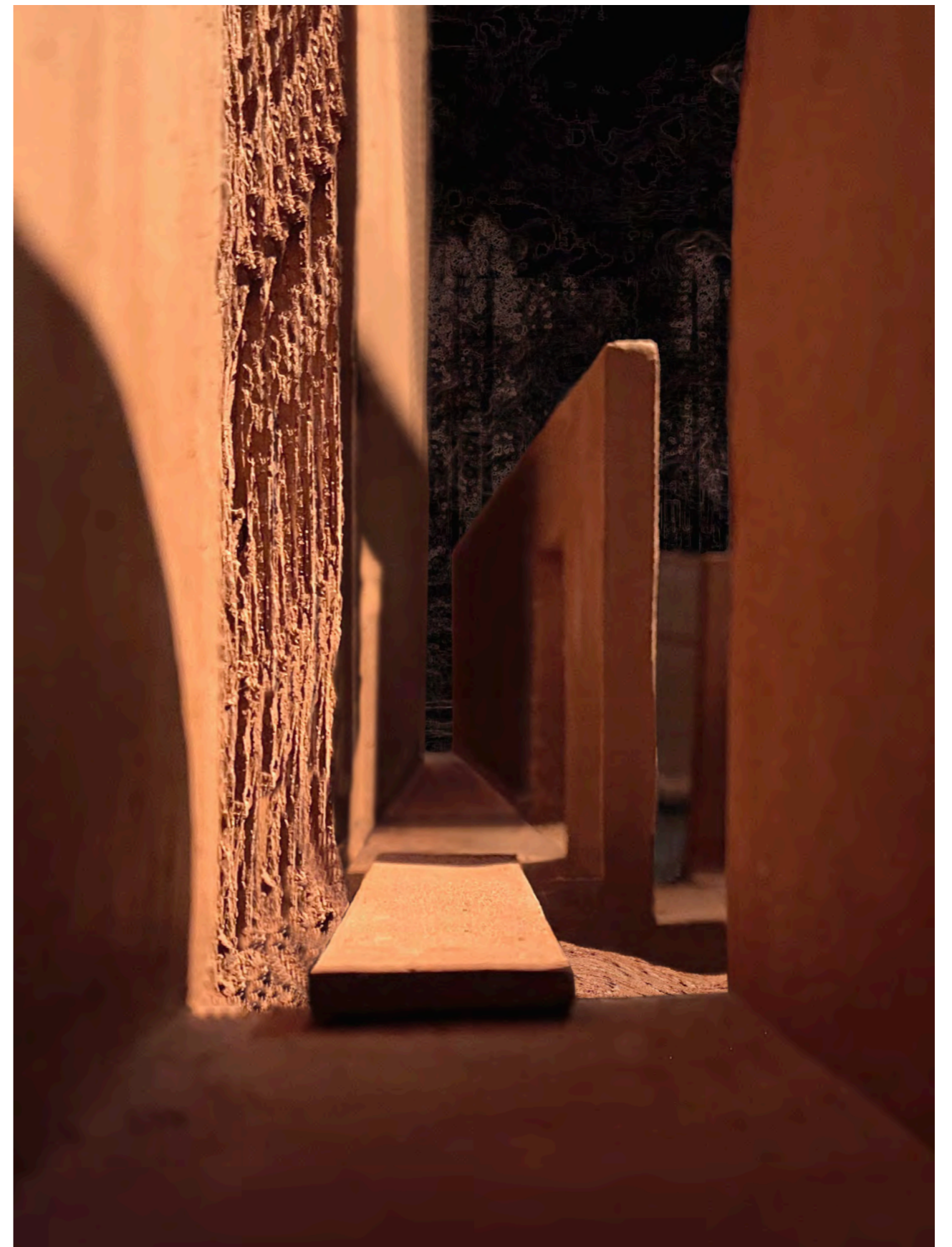
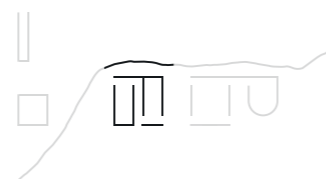


Growing Tree / Illustration

The trapped tree is growing bigger and bigger, slowly getting out of the space, leaving nothing but the tree trunk and a shade behind.



In-Between / Plan

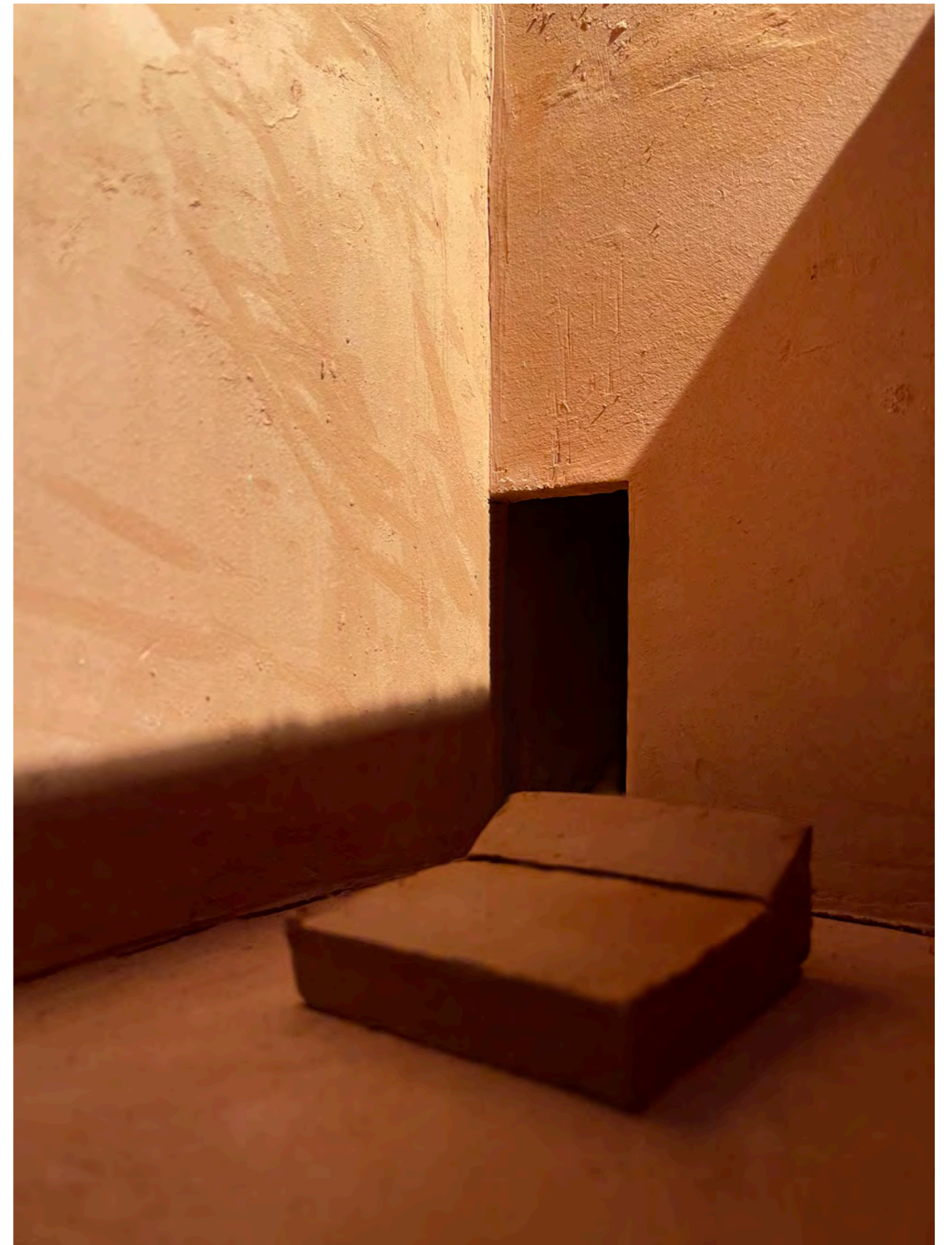


In-Between / Illustration

When in-between the room and the high wall the scale difference becomes obvious. It is clear how small we are in comparison to the strong and powerful nature. This tension between the pushed back landscape and the spaces in front describes the fragile relationship between humans and nature.



Surrounded / Plan



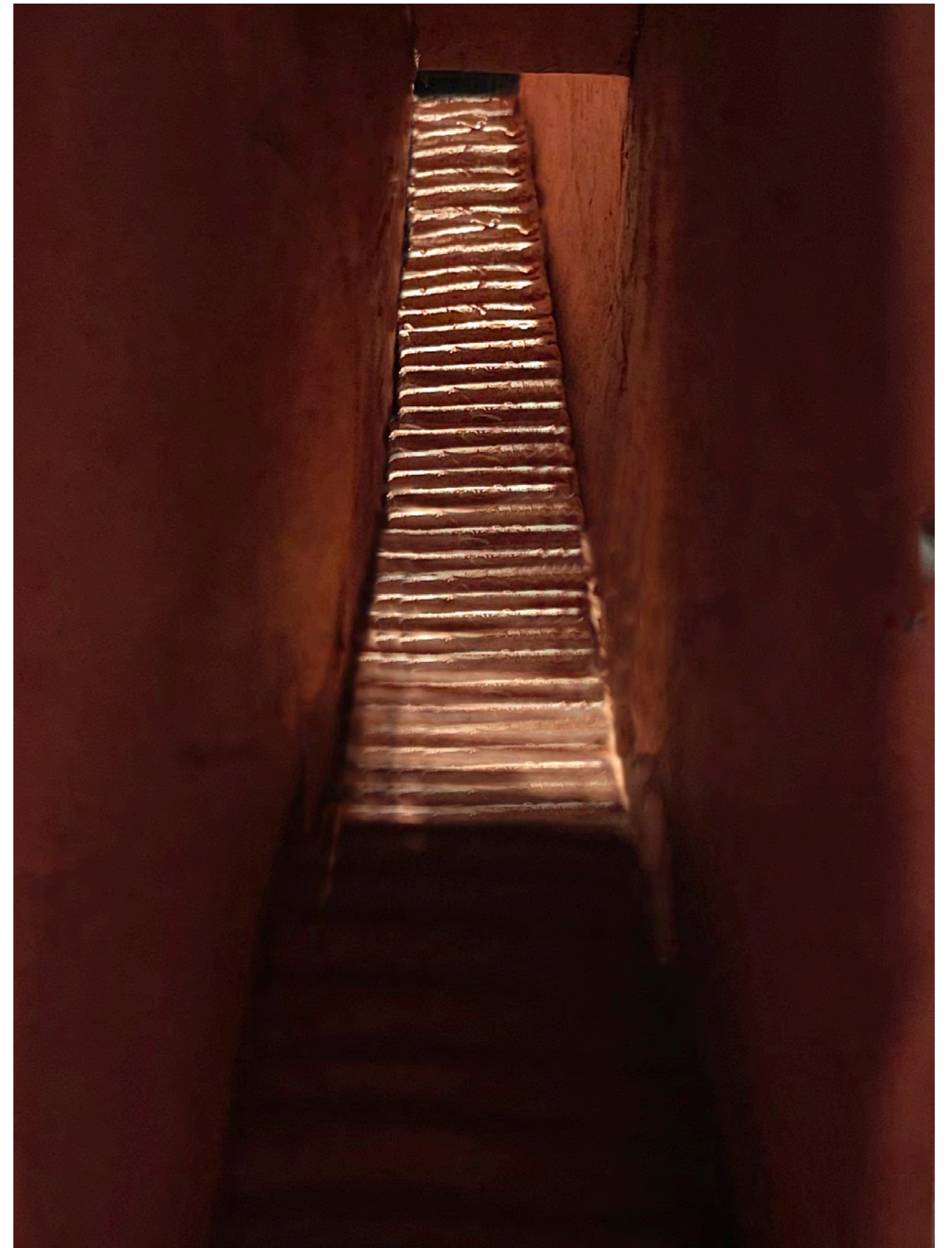
Surrounded / Illustration

Placed in the mountain, this room is surrounded by nature. With no other signs of nature, the sky becomes evident. Spatially limited, dreams beyond the walls.



View: *Surrounded*

Placed in the mountain, this room is surrounded by nature. With no other signs of nature, the sky becomes evident. Spatially limited, dreams beyond the walls.



View: *Surrounded*

In the corner of the room a stair is leading into the darkness. A glimpse of light on the other end evokes the curiosity to find out where it's leading.



Space / Stepping out in/of the nature



In the middle of nowhere the long stair is ending. From being spatially limited between the walls, the nature is now opening up with its limitlessness. Surrounded by nature, the stair defines a given path to follow in the otherwise free landscape.



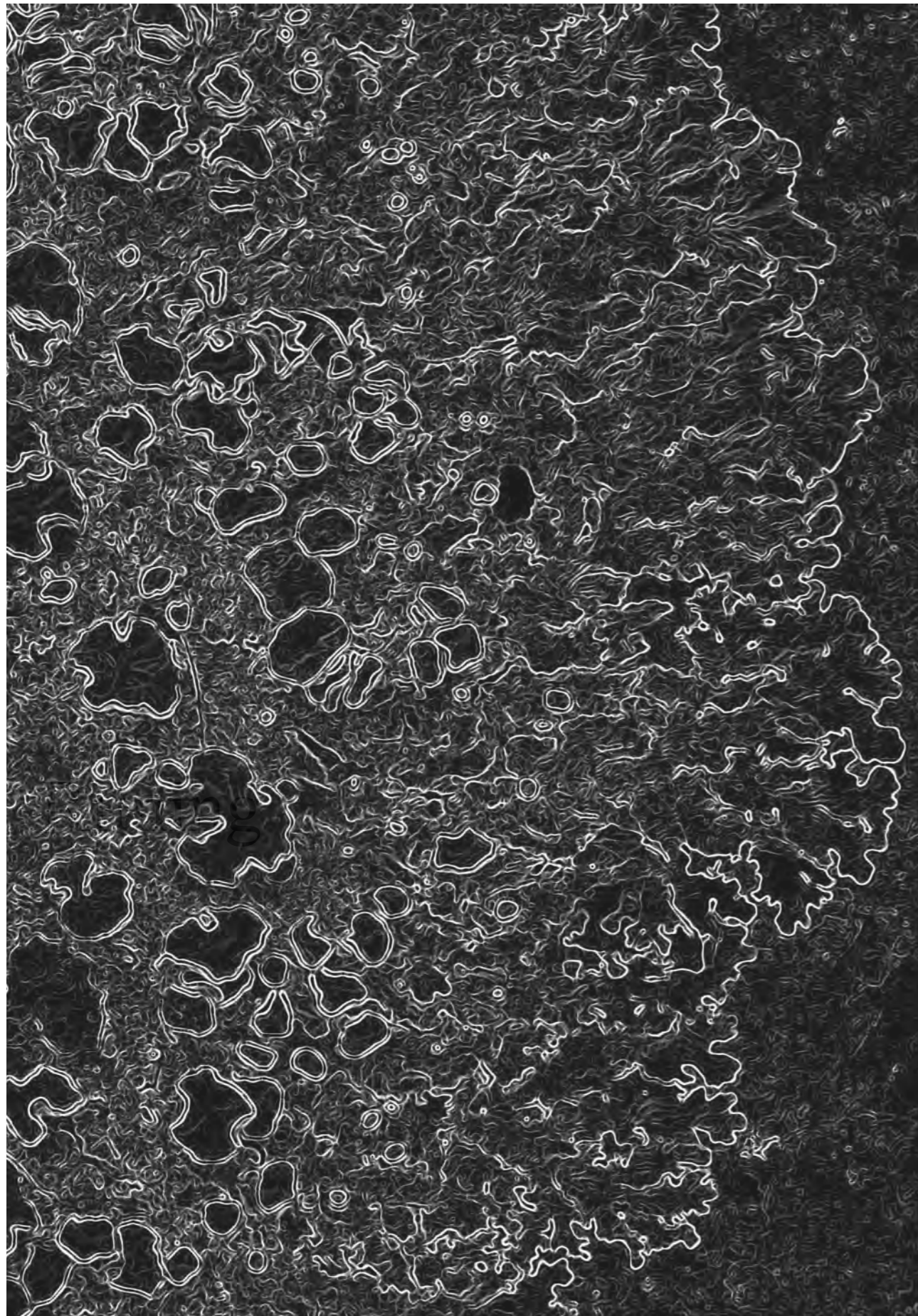
Imprinted Elements

In the middle of somewhere, a space is to be found in the forest. Acting as imprinted elements, they become something familiar to hold onto in the everchanging landscape. A safe space to come back to over and over again, to see the shapes of time.

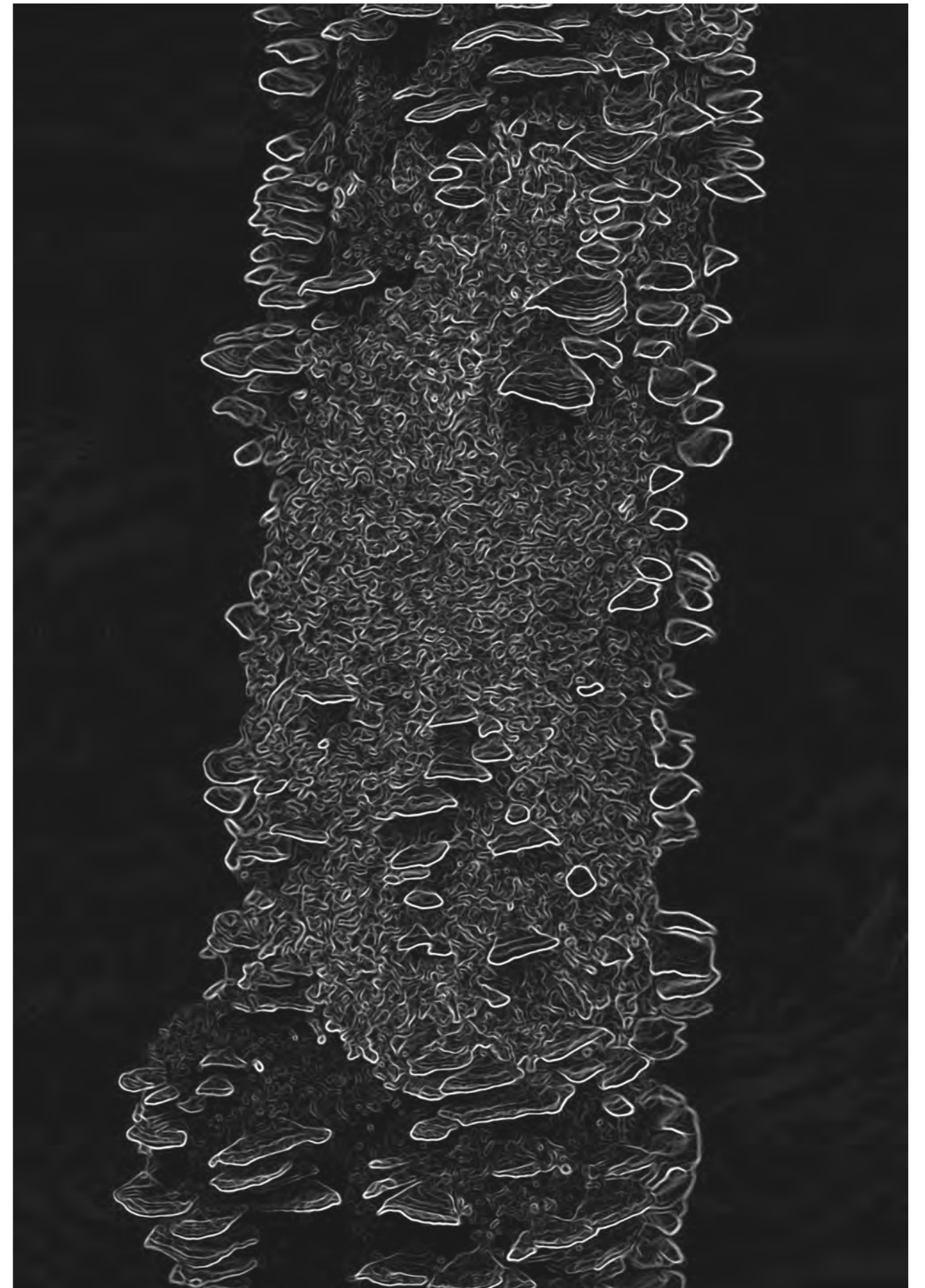


The End / New Beginning

Eventually, at some point in time a forest fire will rage out of control again. This time something is left behind in the aftermath; the imprinted elements. In the black and lifeless landscape they act as traces from the past.



Unfamiliar 2 / Illustration



Unfamiliar 3 / Illustration

DISCUSSION / CONCLUSION

With the point of departure in the feeling of being a part of a world that is collapsing, this thesis has resulted in several personal insights regarding existential thoughts. The main insight lies in the more profound understanding of how materials can tell about time. We all know that everything we have around us is generated from nature, but to actually reflect on what it means is another thing. A deeper reflection of where the materials actually come from and how they are a part of the past, has given me a different perspective of my part in the world. Architecture and spaces with a materialized past is larger than the individual - most often they exist when we step into the world and generally remain when we leave it. Having the ability to reflect on places history and realise that we are involved in creating its future, can be the foundation to feel that we belong. The greatest knowledge has been the experience of working physically with clay, and how this physical work with materials is an experience that strongly connect you in time. Both because you tend to be in the moment when working with your hands, but also as Pernilla Norrman describes it, you become a part of a historical culture, learning from past generations, bringing knowledge to the future. Before this thesis I had no real experience of working with clay. Today, my experience is still limited, but my understanding of the material has changed the way I see the things I have around me.

Working with a material with my hands, has resulted in a design proposal that in my opinion is in a close relation to nature and time. The thesis is not arguing that working with your hands is the only way to create purpose, rather it can be achieved through an understanding of materials and where they actually come from. Driven by consumption and economics, this seems to be something that our civilization has forgotten. In a sense, evolution has created an absence from human existence - a kind of dehumanization or unreality. The way nature is shown in this thesis might give a dystopic or apocalyptic picture of the world and what it is becoming. This is not the purpose, it is rather a representation of how humans' distant relation to nature has turned it into something unfamiliar; a weird

object that invades our inhabited spaces. Furthermore, the design methodology itself is something that I aim to continue to develop and explore. The phenomenological approach where the study of phenomena and how we experience them can be a way to generate architecture that is mediating an experience. The words of Juhani Pallasmaa: *the task of architecture is to poeticise human existence* (2012) might sound a bit pretentious, but for me it is about seeing and learning from the small things in life, which could be seen as the opposite.

The design proposal is in many ways nothing new or special. It is simple architecture elements placed in nature. This can be found anywhere in the world. When doubting my ideas during the process, the words of the ceramicist Kenneth Williamsson has been a calm reminder; that in a world where everyone thinks they need to be original and special, we should talk more about the importance of imitating others. We are all part of the same heritage and tradition, where imitation is important, imitation is good (itapp and film, 2017).

In the beginning of the process, the program of a crematorium was discussed. The decision was taken to focus on the architectural spaces and the exploration of those, a part of a program. With these tools, skills, methodology and overall approach, the design implementation itself could be further developed and explored. A natural next step would be to apply a building program, for instance a crematorium.

I believe the conclusion of this project would be a call for awareness of how we should value the things we have around us. By saying *things*, this refers to everything in this world. To be aware that *things* don't last forever and that you are a part of this world for a short amount of time, can be the foundation to feel connected. Everything is a result from moments of collapse.

INDEX

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Unless otherwise stated, the illustrations and photographs belong to the author.

APPENDIX

Exploring the Collapse



The design explorations are looking for how to adapt formation processes in nature into the design method. Many of the models is an investigation to understand how an imaginary landscape can be constructed.

EXPLORATION: *Deformation of Clay*



"Perfect form" / Physical model



"Collaspe" / Physical model

EXPLORATION: *Melting Process of Ice*



Moment 1



Moment 2



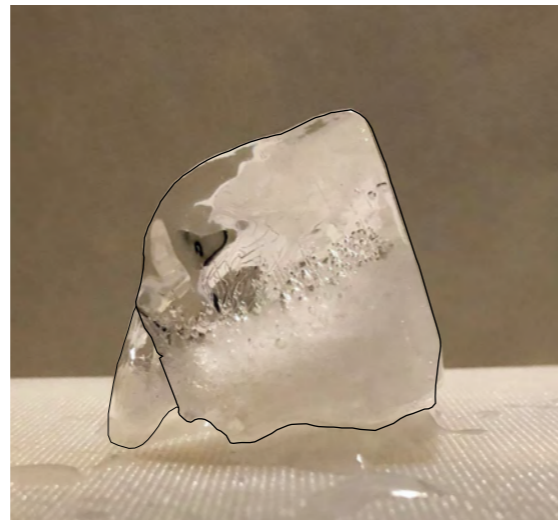
Moment 3



Moment 4

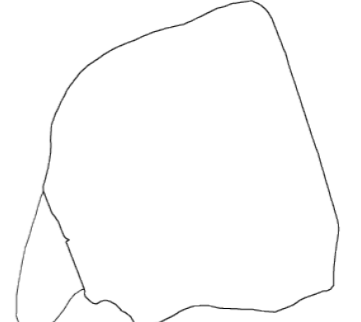
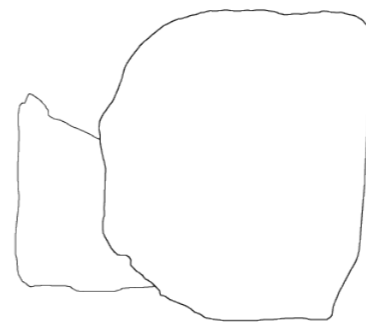
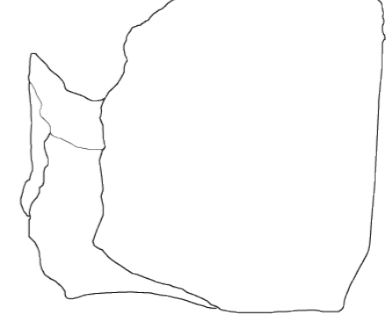
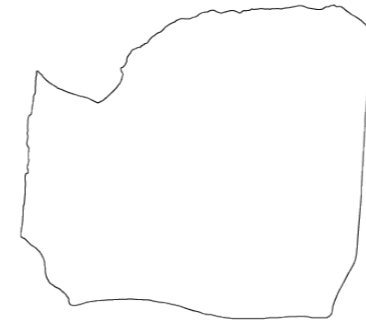
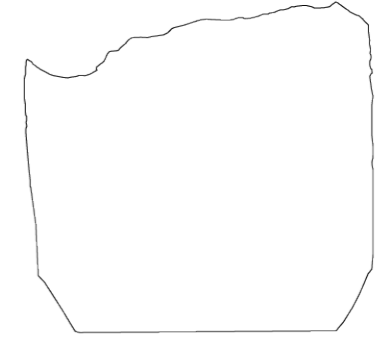
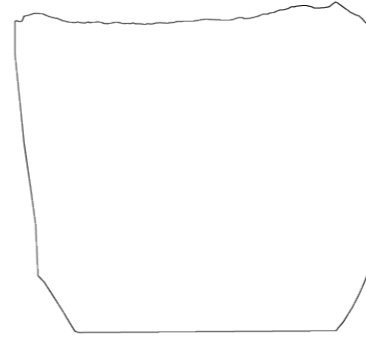


Moment 5



Moment 6

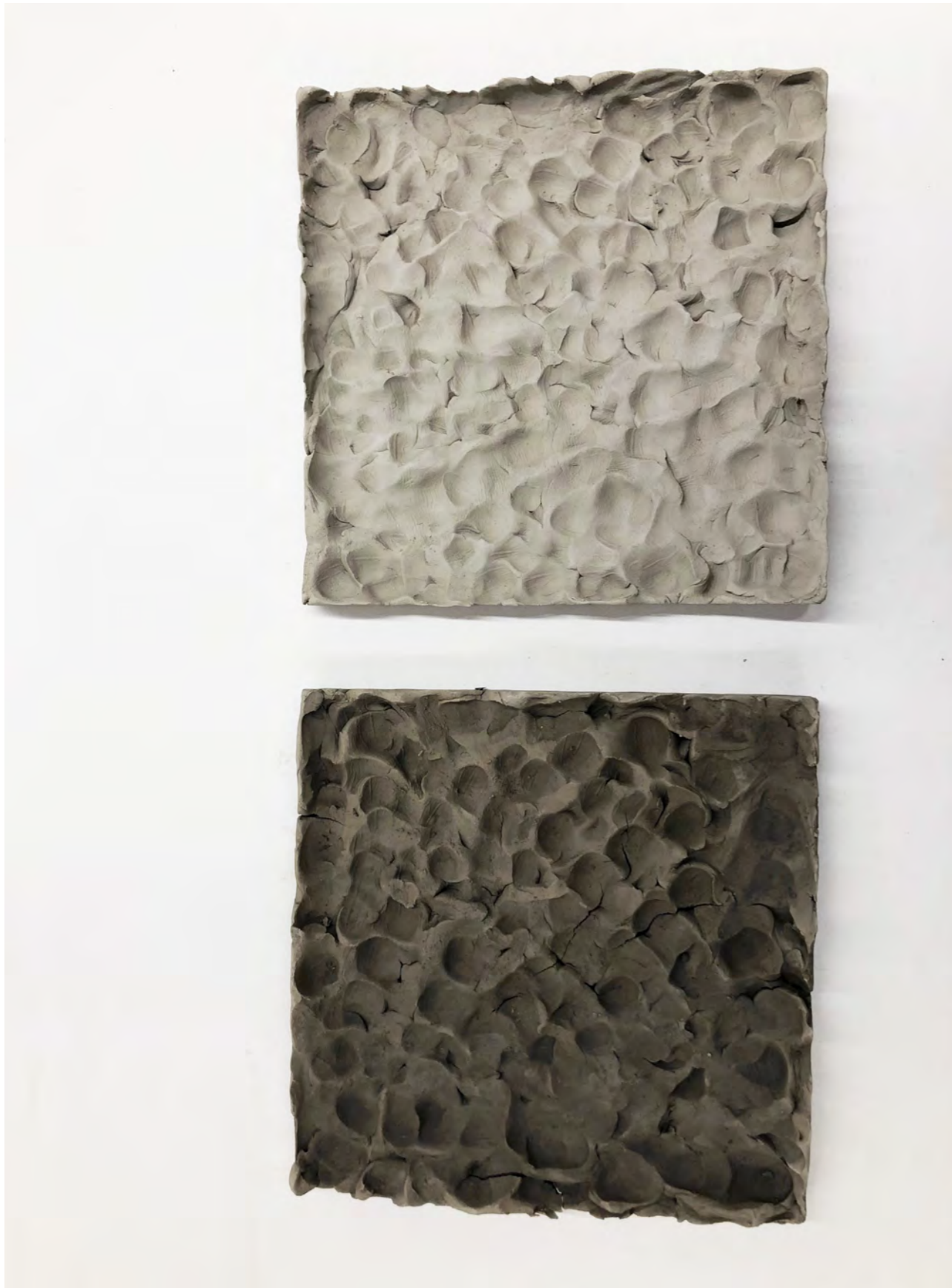
Capturing the Moment / Ice Exploration



In the beginning of the process, ice was used in several explorations to explore the idea of a landscape that erodes slowly and changes over a long period of time. In this example hot water dripped slowly at one of the corner, slowly melting the cube in a way that could be seen as a water flow that runs from the top of a mountain. A carved crack appeared in the icecube that got bigger and bigger.

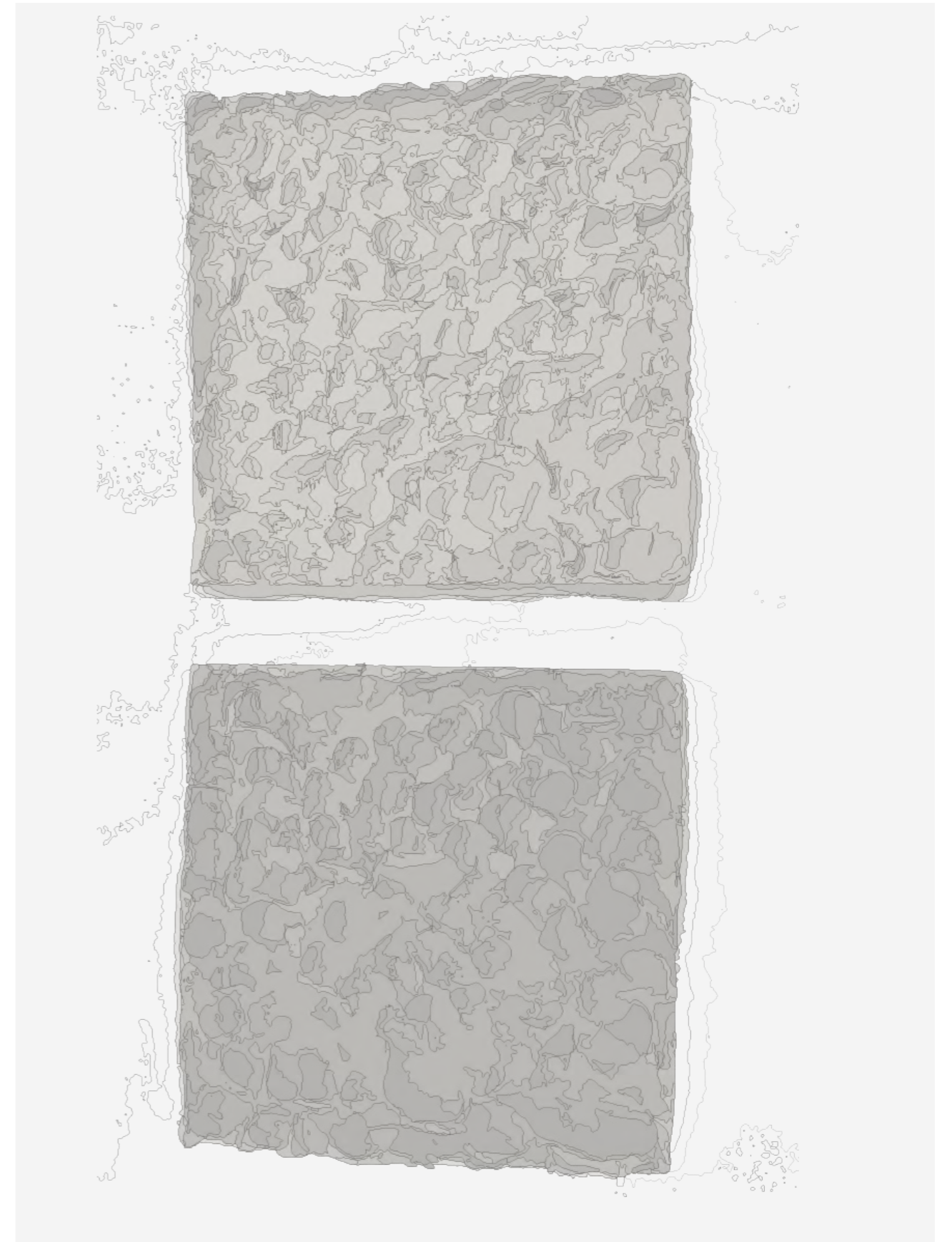
The photos of the melting process were then translated into line drawings where the erosion of the cubes clearly could be seen; a concept that captures moments of collaps.

EXPLORATION: *Wet / Dry*



Clay Transformation / Physical Models

These models explore how clay transforms between the wet and dry state. Cracks appear, clay minerals float away, slowly decreasing the model.



Graphique Translation / Illustration

Translated into a graphic line drawing, the sense of scale disappears. The model could be read as an ever-changing landscape.

EXPLORATION: *Wet / Dry*



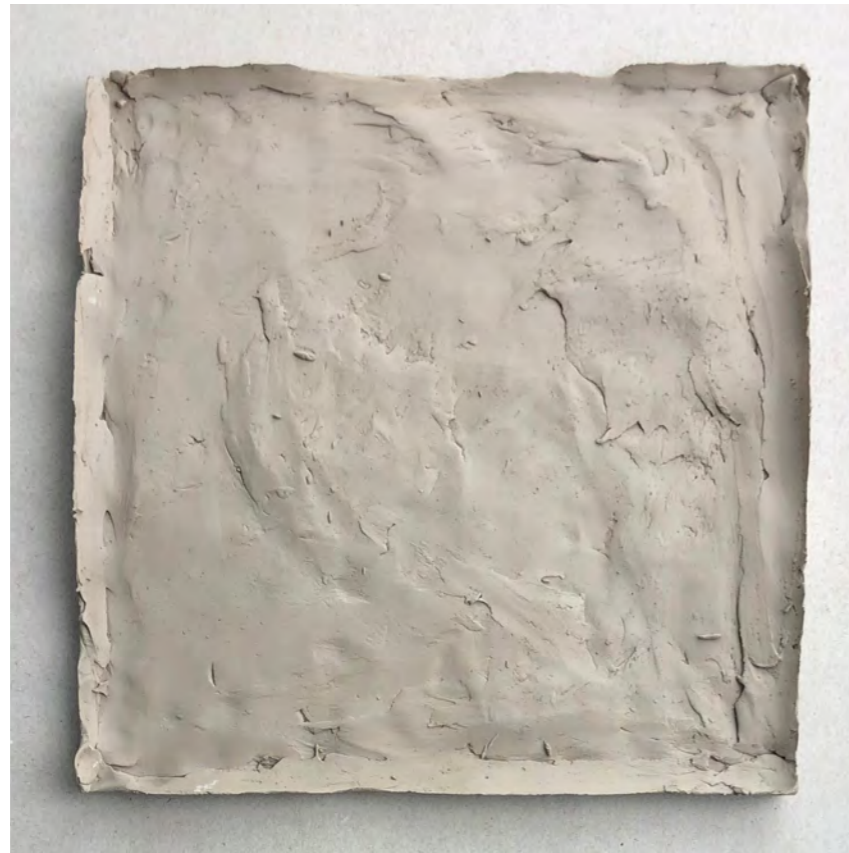
EXPLORATION: *Wet / Dry*



EXPLORATION: *Wet / Dry*



EXPLORATION: *Wet / Dry*



EXPLORATION: *Mini Landscapes*



Concept / Physical Model

These are some investigations exploring the meeting between the landscape and architecture. How the landscape can be pushed back by the architecture and how the architecture can be surrounded by the landscape.



The topography of the landscape was explored through clay. One out of many small landscapes was chosen and made into a bigger, more detailed version. With the tool of photogrammetry, the model was then turned into a digital version for more detailed investigations.

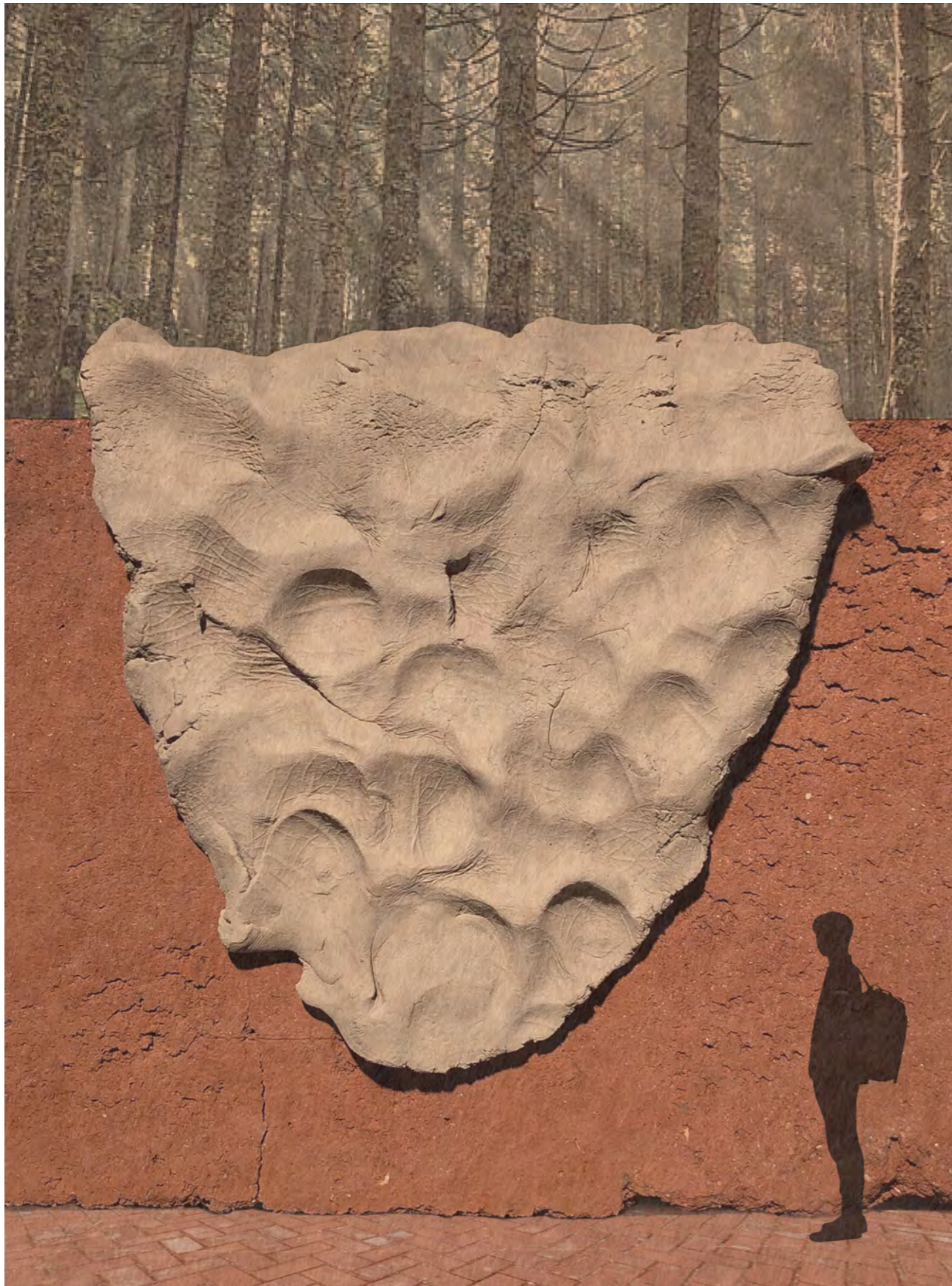
EXPLORATION: *Hanging Clay*



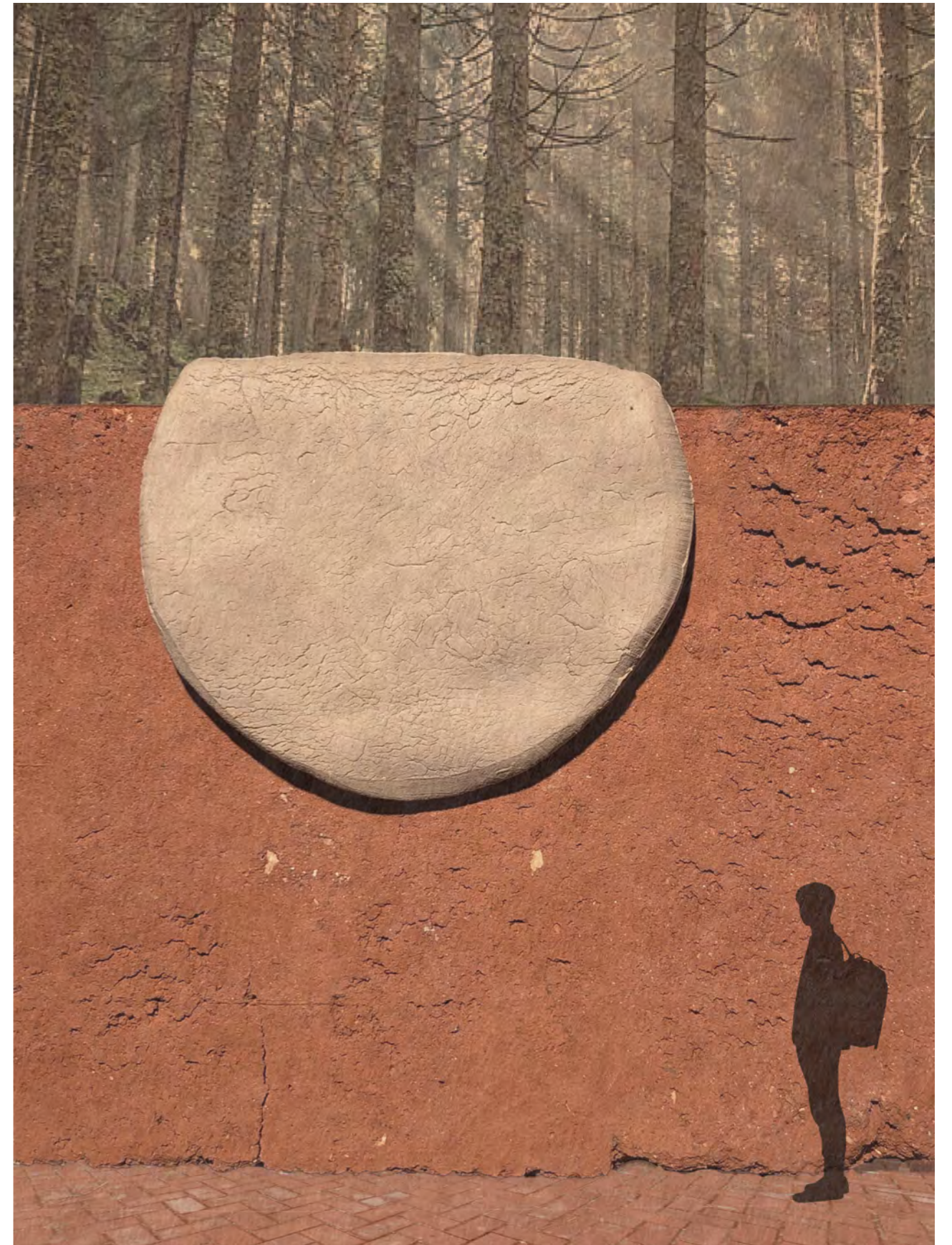
Concept / Physical Model

These models explore the concept of letting raw clay be a part of the architecture. Time will slowly erode the hanging, raw clay until nothing is left.

EXPLORATION: *Hanging Clay*

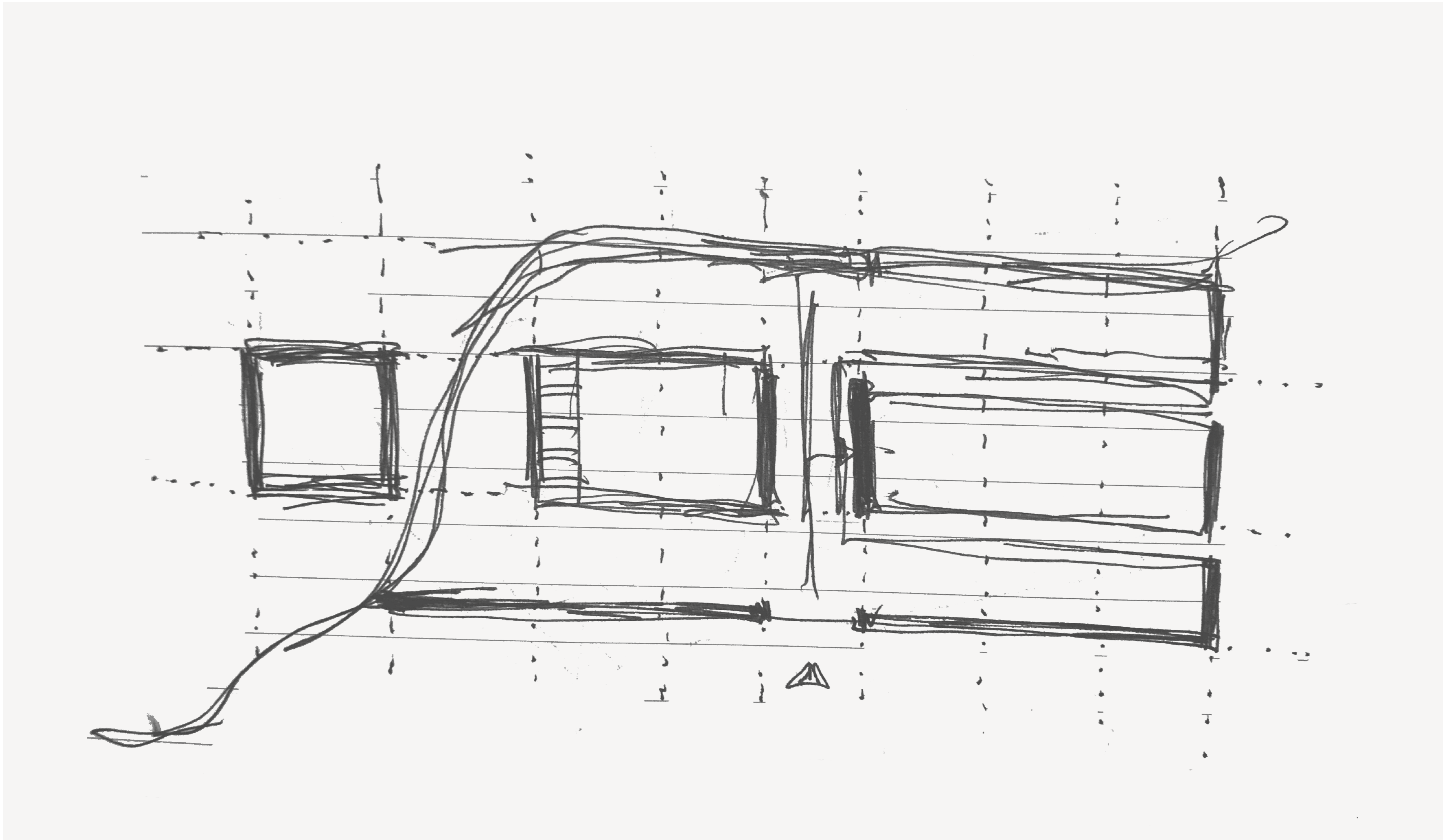


Concept / Sketch illustration



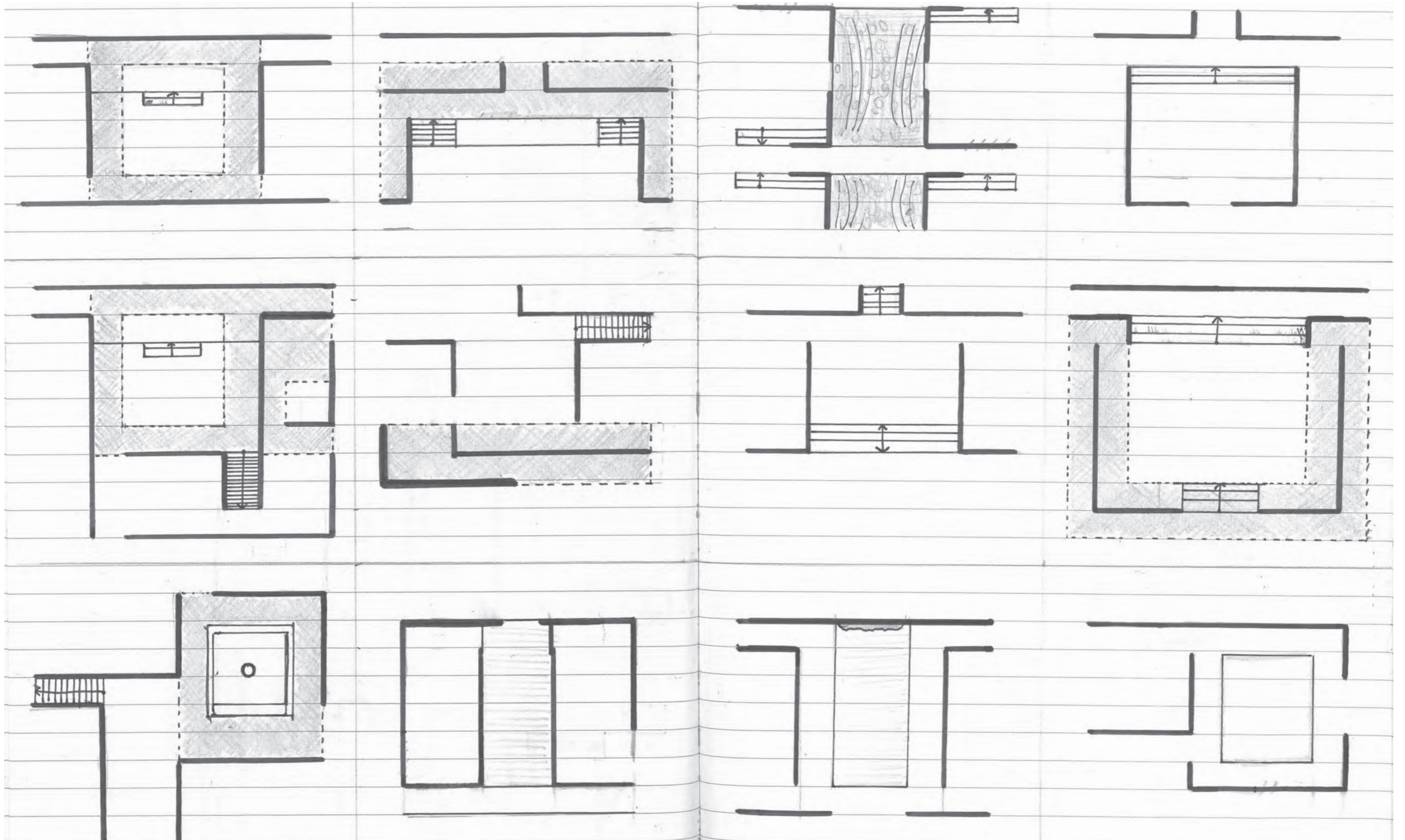
Concept / Sketch illustration

EXPLORATION: *Room Principles*



THE WALL SEPARATES AND CONNECTS **THE STAIR** ASCENDS AND DESCENDS **THE POND** REFLECTS AND ABSORBS

EXPLORATION: *Room Principles*



EXPLORATION: *Room Principles*



Room Principles / sketch model



Room Principles / sketch model

EXPLORATION: *Final Models*



Surrounded Room / Physical Model



Surrounded Stair / Physical Model

EXPLORATION: *Final Models*



Reflecting Water / Physical Model



Controlling Walls / Physical Model

EXPLORATION: *Final Models*



Framed Nature / Physical Model



The Decreasing & the Growing / Physical Model

