

Metamorphosis of Care

Transitioning to a Holistic Future

Matter Space Structure

Thesis Booklet

2021

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*Thank You
for supporting me along this journey.*

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To the characters of our civilisation;

*those who have left,
those who have yet to come,
and those who find themselves born
in the middle of the story.*



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Preface

We are thrown into the age of secularism in which technology is at an incredibly powerful position as it has exacerbated human weaknesses such as addiction, polarisation, and alienation. Technology has become the primary tool that has destabilised and has eroded the fabric of society, as it has gained more control over us than we have over it, and above all, we have lost control over who we are, what we believe in, and where we come from.

The increased hyper-connection in the virtual world has led to an increased disconnection of our human bodies and our natural environment in the physical realm.

It seems like we are living in 'society's dream' where our souls are not the driving force of our bodily vehicle; a world where our bodies, minds and the animate world are being kept separate.

Abstract

Metamorphosis of Care is a master thesis that aims to use visual representations inspired by Swedish folklore and Norse mythology as communication tools to connect notions of nature, culture, and care in Sweden. The representations serve as the foundation for spatial sequences that provide society with tangible and intangible ways of reconnecting to the Swedish forest. Thus, traditional attitudes of care, both in terms of human and environmental health, are reanimated.

Throughout history, our understanding of health has always been profoundly tied to the natural world, and shaped by wider cultural practices. However, today's dominant westernised healthcare system overly emphasises on synthetic medication which has supplanted the intuitive connection and knowledge of our bodies and minds that was once grounded in a deep understanding of our natural environment.

Care for the natural world is crucial now more than ever, as the Swedish forest industry is masking destructive practices under the guise of sustainability. These practices stem from the same narrow worldview that is apparent in the dominant healthcare model. The thesis counters these harmful attitudes through a research by design methodology, as a way to re-establish the connection to society's shared stories and lost interaction with the animate landscape.

The methodology included speculative spatial representations such as maquettes and visual abstractions capturing and conveying the intangible concepts derived from this research. Narratives from Swedish folklore and Norse mythology were used as a tool to awaken tacit associations between human health and the natural world.

These methods culminated in speculative spatial design materialised as ritual structures wrapped around specific tree species. The structures aim to raise awareness of the value of trees and transmit their individual qualities. Undergoing the ritual will shift our view of trees as mere objects, and instead help us appreciate them as living entities like our ancestors did.

By proposing ritual structures in the urban fabric where culture and nature meet again, *Metamorphosis of Care* adopts a holistic approach as a critique of contemporary practices in the healthcare and forest industry, helping to redefine the notion of care in a world which looks through the lens of functionality.

Keywords

Health

a person's mental and physical condition

Holistic (medicine)

characterised by the treatment of the whole person, taking into account mental and social factors, rather than just the symptoms of a disease

Nature

all the animals, plants, and other things in the world that are not made by people, and all the events and processes that are not caused by people.

Narrative

a spoken or written account of connected events; a story

Folklore

traditional customs, tales, sayings, dances, or art forms preserved among a people

Mythology

an allegorical narrative, from the Greek word *mythos*: story-of-the-people and *logos*: word or speech

Animate

spirited and brought to life

'Society's Dream'

the collective dream which includes all of society's rules, its beliefs, its laws, its religions, its different cultures and ways to be

Personal Motivation

My background and ideas both in life itself and in my work have always included numerous external influences as opposed to focussing on one. For as long as I can remember, I have seen the world and the society we live in as different cultures, backgrounds and human programming.

However, being fully aware that we are all interconnected and exist as one entity is the core of what drives me in life and respectively in my projects.

I was raised in a strong cultural environment, not having one family member that has stayed and lived in one specific country. This notion of not being tied to one region, but rather feeling connected to a much broader community, has shaped my profound interest in the cultural identities of humanity and towards the bigger image, which is what brings us all together.

In my master thesis, it is important to stay true to my integrity, raise the issues within our society today, and question the mundane instead of letting our own mistakes fray the fabric of civilisation.

Purpose and Questions

Stage of Concerns

The purpose of the thesis is to question the mundane in our modern civilisation in regards to our human and natural environment, by investigating deeper beyond the surface of contemporary society's perception of its own daily patterns. The thesis is used as a stage for concerns and speculations within the Swedish context and our human bodies. It is about bringing to light the reality that is being concealed by big organisational powers influencing our social structures.

The thesis uses architectural tools to explore how a form of critique can be translated into speculative spatial configurations. Through observing, connecting, and constructing parts of the discourse, the thesis is creating a method for holistic design which can be applied to our conceptions of life and attitudes.

Questions arising within the thesis aim are:

How can narratives in architecture be used as a tool to discuss the forestry and healthcare industries?

How can stories of shared beliefs within a culture be used as spatial experiences in architecture?

How can spatial design be a form of critique?

Delimitations

Thesis Boundaries

The thesis is addressing the Westernised healthcare model and Sweden's forest industry which are both complex and wide discourses that consists of many layers and subfields.

Therefore the wider discourse of healthcare will not focus on the Westernised approach to care, nor will it examine different remedies. It will rather focus on the connection between nature along with the mind, body and soul. Eco-therapy and herbalism are approaches used on a conceptual level, which are subtly integrated into the speculative spatial configurations of the thesis proposal.

The focused discourse of Sweden's forestry model will not investigate other approaches of sustainable forestry practices, nor will it look into other sustainable methods that can be used for materials in the built environment. Instead, the thesis questions the industry's claims of being sustainable and states the contradictions found within Sweden's close relationship with nature. The investigation mediates between what was once shared in ancient Swedish culture's beliefs in relation to their close connection with the animate world, and the disconnection of how today's culture has disregarded their ancestral landscapes.

The overall focus is to use both discourses to transmit the exploration of the thesis through a spatial speculative design which leads to a narrated journey. The purpose of such speculation is to shift our current perception on the forest and trees in specific.

Method

Process

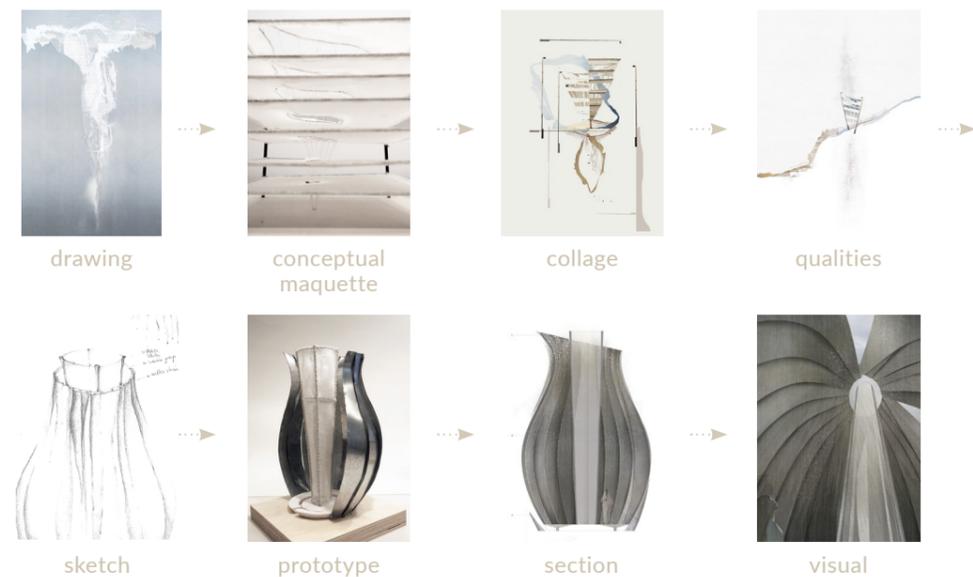
The thesis is following a process I have used during my previous project in which I translate complex thoughts by making images with carefully selected meanings behind them. I first start with the research in a form of text and mindmap and then categorise the findings into titles or priorities. After that I can visualise them into small sketches which I then take into Photoshop. I work with symbolisms and colours that link the research with its specific mood or meaning.

After making images that are used as a ground base of the thesis, I translate them into conceptual three dimensional maquettes. By iterating the work into three dimensional planes I can incorporate materiality that is most suitable to what I am attempting to communicate.

The next step of the process consists of photography and collages along with new qualities I take further in the continuation of my investigations.

I then envision the chosen qualities which are manifested in words into form finding drawings which leads to concrete concepts for the design proposal.

After establishing several important aspects that shape the outcome of the scheme, I go back into analogue tools such as sketching and prototyping. Lastly I make detailed drawings and create visuals which contain atmospheric spatial qualities.



Storytelling

Our built environment is submerged in stories that govern our world. Such stories are constantly evolving through physical forms, in which they influence our cultures, beliefs, and our perception of reality. The thesis is exploring architecture by challenging the stories we build around ourselves. When challenging the stories of our physical environment by making new realities visible through questioning our thoughts, physical forms in our contemporary society are being critiqued, and can suggest new directions forward.

Since architecture is immersed in the stories of our everyday lives, the power of narratives is used as the main method in the thesis which transmits the storyteller's experiences into my work. Thus I am using narratives as a tool to explore complex issues that I'm raising within our society, acting like a stage for concerns and new ideas. The use of narratives takes the users of my architectural proposal on a journey which navigates them physically as well as emotionally, similar to the Woodland Cemetery in Stockholm in which the architecture is steering the experience.

To activate the storytelling as a method, I use drawings as a device to narrate and communicate the story. They are moreover used as operational tools to think, discover and construct my research into spatial dimensions.

References such as the Woodland Cemetery and the Salk Institute have additionally been used as strategies to understand the storytelling within the spatial architectural structures. Such subtle qualities of an architectural navigation and a poetic language articulated within an architectural project is vital to be able to gain a physical as well as an emotional experience.

References

Architectural Navigation

The Woodland Cemetery was created between 1917 - 1920 by Gunnar Asplund and Sigurd Lewerentz, located south of central Stockholm.

The design has had a profound influence throughout the world as it was a new way of thinking about how a cemetery could be. Instead of working with beautiful parks and thombs from that time, the two architects created a cemetery that was based on the landscape of the site.

Hence for my master thesis, the Woodland cemetery is an interesting design to look at since I'm interested in the transformation of how a 20th century cemetery has become a new typology as a unique cemetery of our times.

Besides it being a new typology, the Woodland Cemetery has a strong narrative in which the architecture has created the narrative for the visitors of the site. The design itself is based on the visitors' experience. As if the architecture is steering the visitors feelings and navigating them physically as well as emotionally. The architecture here is in full control, in a place where emotions are in constant chaos.

Each step of the way in the design has moreover been very well thought after in order to resonate with the emotional state of the griever. (New thinking - Skogskyrkogården, 2015)

Keywords: new thinking, transformation, new typology, narrative, experience, emotional, well thought



Figures 1, 2. Almehag, M., 2015. Lewerentz's Stairs, Seven Springs Way.
Figure 3: Hallmann, S., 2015. Interior of Chapel of resurrection.

Merging Science with Spiritualism

The Salk Institute by Louis Kahn was completed in 1965 in California. The institute was founded by Jonas Salk, and served as a scientific research facility which houses a collaborative environment where researchers investigate the basic principles of life and contemplate the broader connections of their discoveries for the future of humanity.

The combination of two opposites; the research laboratories and study towers in contrast with a thin channel of water that intersects the contemplative plaza, have been an interesting aspect of Kahn's design.

Combining both aspects is of great importance to achieve in my master thesis, since both the working and learning environments should coexist with the more contemplative spaces. Thus my design, like the Salk Institute, could inspire creativity among its users of the typology, as well as it would express a profound sense of spirituality and tranquility.

The way Kahn has achieved in unifying the sky, sea and science in this institute, is an aspect I would like to take further within my project, by merging a poetic language which consists of the typology's function, nature and its environment. As well as using symbolic elements into my project such as Khan accomplished with the "River of Life", in which water represents a continuous flow of discoveries which pours into the vast body of knowledge (the ocean). The sun moreover sets along the water axis twice a year, during the spring and autumn equinoxes. (About Salk Architecture - Salk Institute for Biological Studies, n.d.)

Keywords: institute, collaborative, science, contemplate, inspire, spirituality, poetic, symbolic



Figures 4, 5, 6. Salk Institute.

Act One

The Swedish Context

Sweden has a long connection with nature, as the country itself is covered by vast forests and bodies of water. Stories and beliefs have been passed down from generation to generation since the beginning of the Old Norse and folklore tales.

Nature holds a great importance to the Swedish culture since it is a place for everyday experiences and offers a place for contemplation. It provides the feeling of being immersed in another world as it enables the senses of transcendence and spirituality in connection to our mother earth. (Thurfjell, Rubow, Rimmel and Ohlsson, 2019)

Unfortunately, in modern times, we have distanced ourselves from nature as we have been using the forest for society's greediness. The forest has become a place of exploitation but is also celebrated as the site of 'sustainable' practices by the forest industry.

This contradiction, better known as an industry myth, and society's general shift away from caring for the Swedish forests is used as the groundwork of my investigation from the stories in the Swedish context.



Discourse

Westernised Healthcare Model

The wider discourse of the thesis is set within our Westernised healthcare model which primarily focuses on symptomatic treatment rather than to heal and prevent the cause of the illness.

In Western medicine there are extensive amounts of various types of medications and surgical procedures which address symptoms, however there are very little that address and prevent the fundamental causes of the imbalances that lead to any disease or illness. (Villoldo, 2015) Individuals are drawn into trusting the path of the Westernised healthcare system as their only option which operates tightly with the trillion-dollar pharmaceutical industry. Throughout the world there is a general increase in traditional and complementary medicine, however in the Westernised countries and in Sweden, it is lagging significantly behind the global averages. Sweden doesn't have a national level policy, national programme, national office, expert committee or a national research institute for traditional and complementary medicine. (World Health Organisation, 2019)

It has therefore become a normality in our contemporary society to consume chemical drugs from the pharmaceutical industry. Believing that being cured, will only work with the use of unnatural processes. Instead, it leaves us dependent on an artificial system which doesn't fit everyone's needs and leaves us disconnected from the understanding of our own human bodies.

Swedish Forest Industry

The same disconnection is found within the woodlands of Sweden. When removing trees for our human needs, we take away the non-human agents that have been living there; the physical such as the animals, but also the mystical, known as the forest spirits. (Kuusela, 2020)

In order to help the environment in times of a world environmental crisis, wood has become a prominent replacement product as an attempt in being sustainable. When using wood such as in building materials and paper, we think of doing no harm and doing good to mother nature. However, we forget about the woodlands from which the trees have been cut off. We forget about the deep wilderness of the woodlands in which species have been living inside them, as well as the spirits that have been existing in our ancestry's shared beliefs and narratives since the Viking Age.

Using timber in this sense, leads to a misconception of our well doing and the illusion of taking care of nature. We then plant new trees in the hope of rebuilding the forest, but this takes away the wilderness and the natural state of the forest, and transforms it into an artificial woodland.

The thesis discourse is linking the misconception of doing something good towards the natural conditions of life, with Western society's choice of treatment to cure people from any illness or disease, and the Swedish forest industry model which is keeping up with the consumerist demands of modern civilisation.

Background

Covered in Green

Forests are vital for our survival, as we depend on the air we breathe and the wood that we use, as well as it provides habitats for biodiversity and all living species. Forests are the second world's largest storehouse of carbon dioxide after oceans. The storing of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere occurs through photosynthesis, which converts water, solar radiation and carbon dioxide into carbohydrates. This transforms into wood, which contributes to the growth of trees. (World Wide Fund, 2020)

Sweden's land is covered by 70% forest, which consists primarily of coniferous trees and in the far south deciduous trees are the ones dominating. In less than 100 years the Swedish forest has doubled in size, as a result of the felling rate being lower than the growth rate. This huge expansion of the forest is due to the cultivation and managing of all forests in Sweden. The only few remaining untouched or natural forests are found in the northern part of the country and haven't been affected by agriculture. Sweden's land is covered by 23 million hectares of productive forest from which only 8 to 10% is set for conservation and the rest is managed for wood production. (Swedish Wood, 2019)

The Existing Myth

Sweden is the third largest exporter of sawn timber in the world. The country is positioned as the second largest producer of sawn softwood, and the largest exporter in Europe. Throughout the last decade, using wood such as building material or everything from packaging to make-up, clothing, medicine and fuel, has granted a huge success due to the advancement of new technologies and the era in which we live today in times of climate change. Wood has become the number one resource of substitution, since we have been taught that wood is a sustainable product. However, when it's being used in a society that over consumes in mass quantity, the consequences of using wood for substitution ends up in turning natural forests into products for consumption or fuel. (More of Everything: The Swedish Forestry Model, 2021)

The Swedish forest industry has turned natural forests into an agricultural state of monoculture tree plantations. This results in a new model structure as ancient forests are disappearing, and young trees have replaced them. The new trees are being replaced through the act of clear-cutting and felling in which all trees are of the same species. The forestry model today has become a danger to the environment, as it threatens biodiversity and the extinction of species in Sweden. This information has been masked from the world by the industry as they are promoting their forestry model as a success story and an example to other countries. To extend this narrative, they spend millions on persuading the public through public relations strategies such as advertising and lobbying campaigns.

Thinking that a forest is a vast collection of trees, is perceived by many people today. The forest is much more than that, it contains all species living above and below the ground, such as plants, huge fungal networks and animals, all interconnected. (More of Everything: The Swedish Forestry Model, 2021)

Unfortunately, a country that has for centuries been living in close connection with nature in which their beliefs such as mythology and folklore predominantly takes place, has become a country based on an existing myth faced by today's harsh reality.

Humanities Concern

Forestry practices in Sweden have caused a biodiversity crisis, as more than 90% of forest land is covered in productive forest. The industrial forest landscape has led to species extinction and vulnerability throughout the country. The Swedish Forestry Model is according to the industry and the fooled eyes of the world, seen as the most sustainable way to cultivate forests. The forestry model is using clearcutting as their standard method as well as soil scarification, systematic use of chemicals, and plantation of nonnative species. This model has evolved in an ever growing monoculture, which is depleting the biodiversity and ecosystem from which humanity and the world depends on. (Swedish Society for Nature Conservation, 2011)

In the developed world of today, our western industrial society has managed to completely detach itself from its relation to any particular landscape or ecosystem from which our culture's relation to the earthly biosphere once used to be balanced. Today, vast amounts of non regenerating forests are disappearing by the minute, as simultaneously hundreds of our species or 'forest residents' are becoming extinct each month as a result of our civilisation's greed. (Abram, 2017)

The increased infectious diseases such as epidemics, and illnesses such as severe immunity dysfunctions, cancers, psychological distress, depression and suicides are consequences to the way our civilisation violently treats nature. The destruction of the forest is a trigger for global public health, as forests act as shields to keep humans safe from any diseases. (Quinney, 2020)

By balancing our relation towards the ecology of the planet, our psychological and physical distress can be healed. This statement of faith discussed by the author of *The Spell of the Sensuous*, has become more comprehensive after understanding our thorough dependency on all other organisms from which we have evolved with. Our culture is enchanted by countless human-made technologies that easily makes us forget about our physical existence as well as our sensations and sensibilities. Our senses are being gradually shut off from the animate earth, in which we were familiar with their interactions of textures, sounds and forms. Carrying on with our lifestyles will simultaneously turn into the extinction of the animate world, which will consequently take away our own senses of their integrity and our own minds of their coherence. (Abram, 2017)

The Forest Spirit

The forest was in times before mobile devices or GPS tracking existed, a dangerous place. The sudden shift in the weather or taking a wrong path could lead to misdirection as it would make a person lose one's way. The chances of getting lost or confronting a predator was relatively high.

The forest spirit is an anthropomorphic character in Swedish folklore known to have led people off track in the deep forest. The forest spirit is a female forest creature called Skogsrå. She was able to change the environment and create deceptions so that people would end up lost in her environment. The Skogsrå was the ruler of the forest realm, she had power over all living things from the forest such as the animals, as well as the people who entered her domain.

The Skogsrå was recognised as a dangerous seductress to men who entered or worked in the woods. If she was annoyed or angered, she had the power to threaten them. However, if the men treated her with respect, she could reward and help them in the forest. She was characterised as a beautiful young woman with long hair and a tail, but when she turned around she had a hollow back which resembles a rotten tree trunk.

The supernatural beings are old beliefs that date as far back as nature itself. The forest spirit lives in the otherworldly forest and represents wild nature, as opposed to the cultural order that we know in today's modern society. Folk narratives are tied within a culture's shared beliefs, narratives and symbols. Such stories can be seen as cultural perceptions which act as lenses when interpreting and perceiving the world through different personal experiences. (Kuusela, 2020)



Figure 7. A Skogsrå holding her tail meets a man cutting wood in the forest. By Per Holm. From Svenska Folksågner, Herman Hofberg 1882.

Act Two

The Three Ideologies

The storytelling of the thesis begins here. After establishing the discourse about the destructive practice of the Swedish forest industry and our Westernised healthcare model, I began to translate the intangible concepts into visual representations through the method of drawings. The purpose of the visual representations are to synthesise the different parts of the discourse and to reconfigure them into categories which act as key ideologies of the thesis.

Dissecting and rearranging the different elements of the discourse onto a mindmap, has enabled me to find a disconnection between our current culture of health and nature, embodied by the Swedish forest. To be able to find the lost connection between those two, I have looked into the Swedish ancestry's shared beliefs which are rooted in mythology and folk tales. Such tales are a combination of nature and spirit whereby nature is the physical aspect of the stories and spirit is the mystical. When brought together they become holistic through the body which is the mediator between the physical and the mystical.

In the modern world, the physical manifests as the 'artificial', while the mystical is perceived as 'supernatural'. This renders the holistic as the 'natural', a bridge between the 'artificial' and the 'supernatural'. Those three categories formed the ideology of the thesis. The aim of the thesis has been established based on these three ideologies. It is to protect the forest and our health, to commemorate our culture and biodiversity and to connect the physical and the mystical to a holistic state. The following illustrations of the ideologies should be read together with the accompanying words. The words act as a portal to the perspective that the reader is invited to engage with.



Keywords

Mythology

an allegorical narrative, from the Greek word *mythos*: story-of-the-people and *logos*: word or speech

Folklore

traditional customs, tales, sayings, dances, or art forms preserved among a people

Artificial

the use of many systems and devices so that you are always connected to social networks and other sources of information

Natural

existing in or derived from nature; not made or caused by humankind

Supernatural

can be seen as nonphysical realm above nature

Protection

to keep away from harm or danger

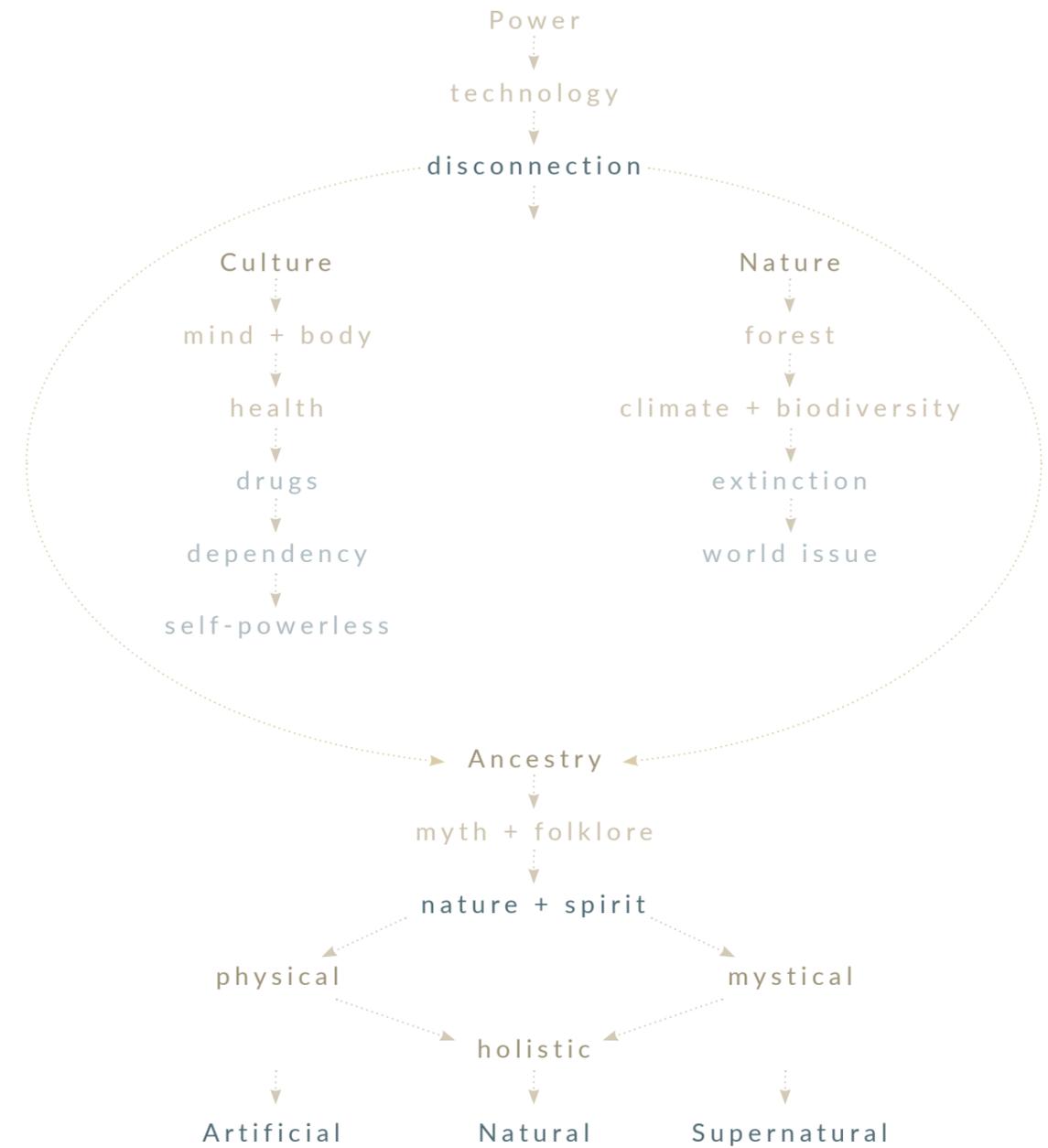
Connection

a situation in which conditions combine or meet together

Commemoration

a ceremony or service in memory of a person or event that is remembered

Finding the Connection



The Artificial Forest

The Industry Myth:

A Success Story



A Lost Story

The Culture Myth:

The Ancient Woodlands





Protection
Artificial

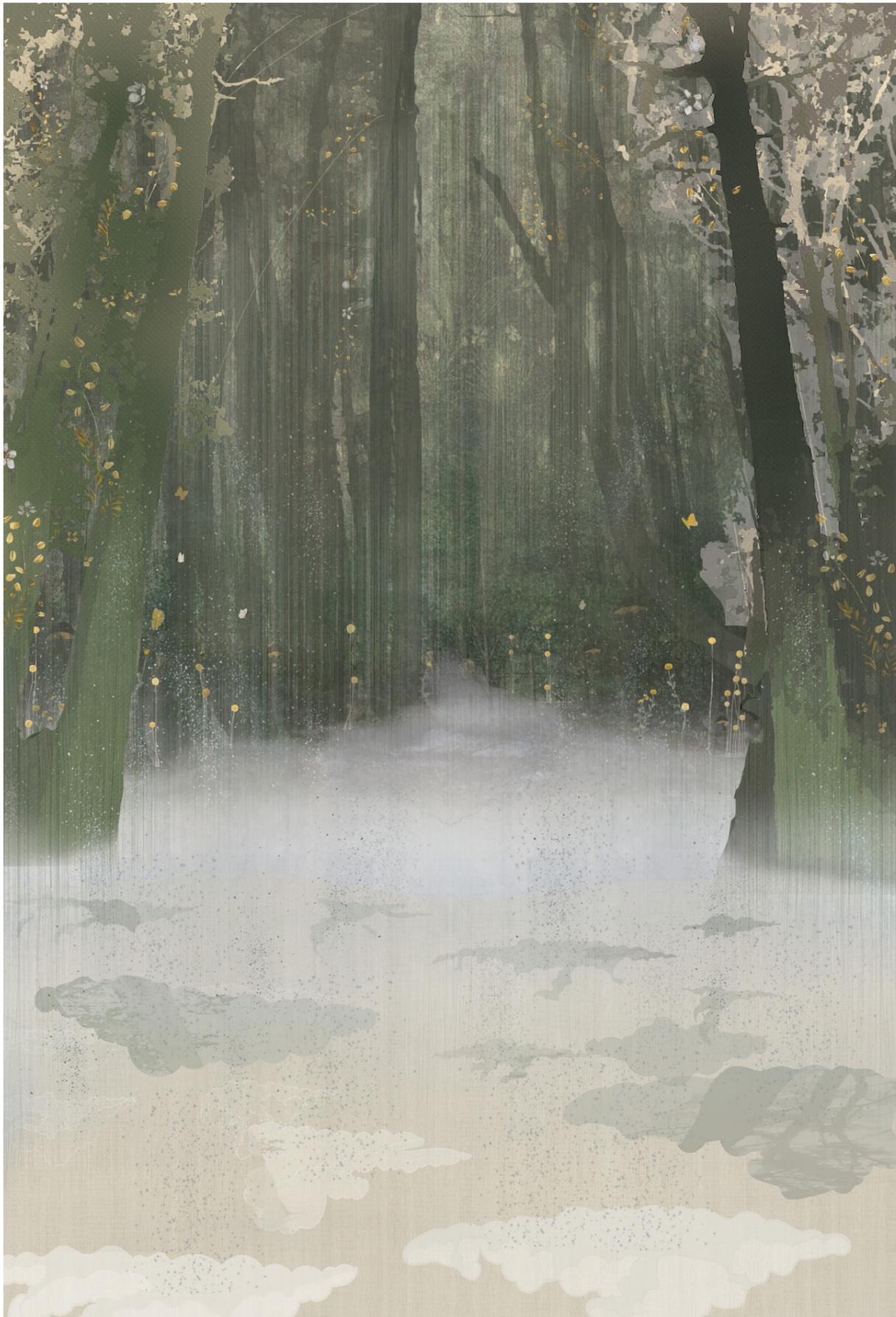
Protection
Physical • Tangible
Breaking
Gone
Repairing
Saved
Order



Connection

Natural

Connection
Meeting point
Circular
Merging
Acceptance
Holistic



Commemoration
Supernatural

Commemoration

Mystical • Intangible

Spirits

Wind

Seasons

Movement

Energy

Act Three

The Forest Map

In this act I investigated the Swedish forest landscapes and their situations in regards to where they are located and who inhabits them on a physical and mystical dimension. After establishing the three ideologies, I grounded the investigation in the physical terrain of Sweden.

I first looked at the entire Swedish map by linking the connections from folklore creatures, geographical fields, and the forest industry. Creating the map served as a tool to understand the known and the unknown about the Swedish forest industry. When attempting to map out the old remaining Swedish forests, I was inspired by a term used in old cartography called Terra Incognita, which means to map out unexplored regions. It felt as if I was trying to identify something that was unimaginable to grasp.



The Secrets of Nature

Supernatural Beings

Various creatures inhabit the natural landscapes in Swedish folktales. Most of them are to be found in the deep forest or are hidden in water. John Bauer was a Swedish artist and illustrator known for folklore paintings. His favourite theme was Swedish nature and was most known for his illustrations in the Swedish folklore and tales annual called *Bland Tomtar och Troll*, *Among Gnomes and Trolls*. The visual representations were inspired by his paintings and the deep connections he portrayed in his illustrations from the mystical Swedish landscapes. The use of Swedish creatures were used as a tool to connect to ancient beliefs of Swedish ancestry, in which today they hold a familiarity to the younger generations as they still exist as tales.



Figure 8. Princess Tuvstarr gazing down into the dark waters of the forest tarn. (Ännu sitter Tuvstarr kvar och ser ner i vattnet). By John Bauer, 1913. From Malmö Art Museum.



Skogsrå

| a dangerous seductress to men who entered or worked in the woods, with long hair and a tail. However when she turned around she had a hollow back which resembles a rotten tree trunk.



Tuvstarr

| an innocent naked princess that was enchanted by the forest and lost her heart.



Näcken

| a dangerous fresh water spirit that lures his victims into the water. He belongs to the troll family.



Ängsälvor

| a group of elves in the mist, dancing in the meadow.



Trolls

| big and ugly, often slow with a lack in intellectual capacity.



Strömkarlen

| a beautiful long haired naked man and a talented violinist living in flowing fresh water. He belongs to the elves family.



Draugen

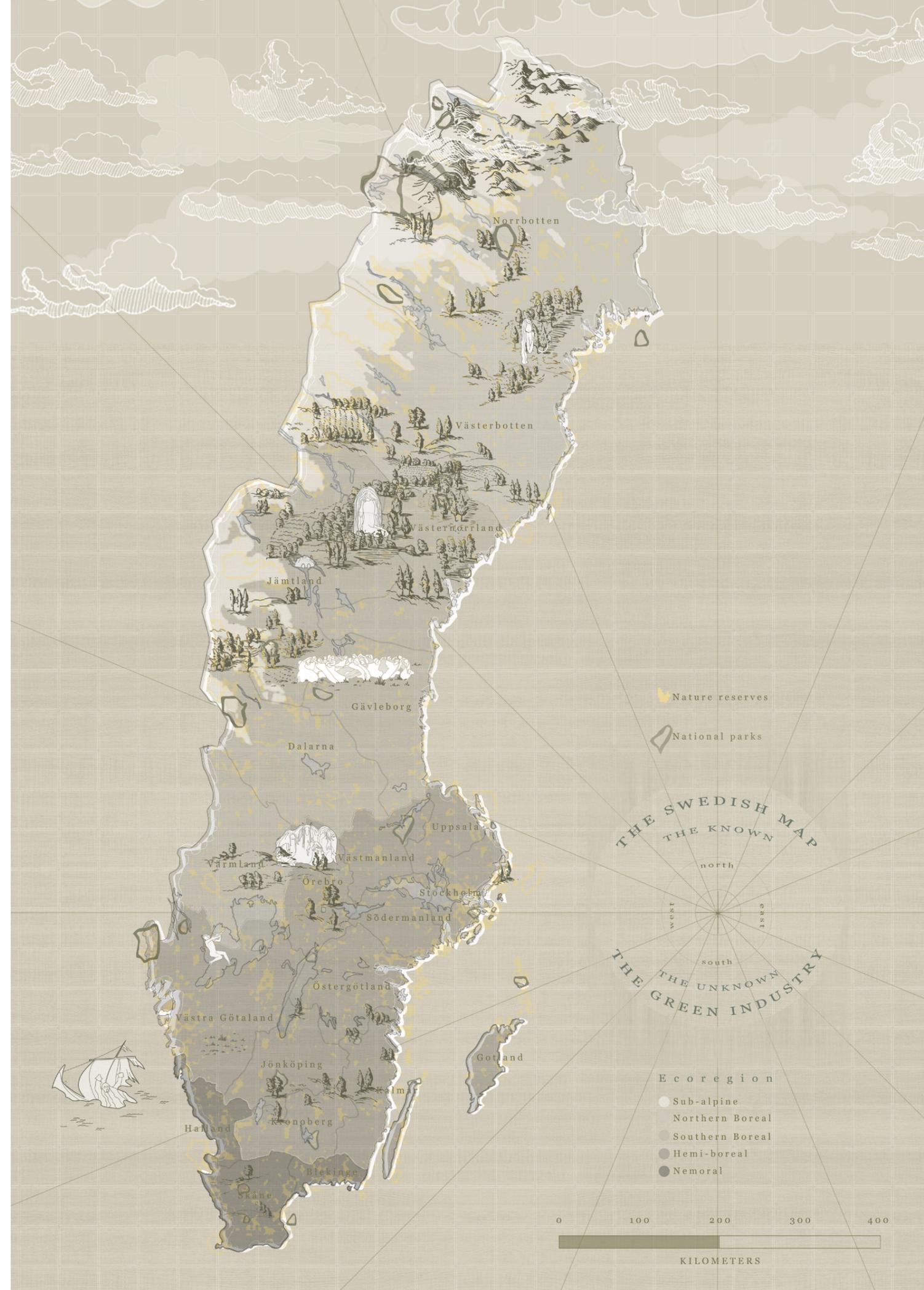
| a huge monster covered in seaweed, often sitting in a rowing boat in the sea. His victims are mainly sailors.

Mapping the Unknown

Before choosing a site, I was looking into the entire Swedish country to understand its different regions, most current vegetations and where the last untouched forests would remain. I furthermore wanted to map out the different folklore tales I have explored, and position them in their natural environments throughout the country.

Mapping the research onto Sweden's geographical map has led me to a term called Terra Incognita, which was used in cartography to map unexplored regions that have not been documented. Terra Incognita literally means 'Unknown Lands', from which I felt a connection with the research I had made about the mystery of the Swedish forest.

I have created this map which depicts the known such as the ecoregions, nature reserves and national parks, as well as the unknown such as the 7 Swedish folktales.



Act Four

The Site

In this act I zoomed in from the entire map of Sweden to a focused terrain in the urban fabric of Gothenburg which became my site for the exploration of the spatial interventions of the thesis. These interventions are connected to the ideologies and their aim is to protect, connect, and commemorate our culture, nature, health and biodiversity. The purpose of the spatial sequences is to bring conscious awareness of our precious Swedish forest, with a remembrance of our past connection with nature. To shift our perspective of how we perceive the woodlands as merely objects to use for our own greed, and to recognise the forest as living entities just like we humans are.

The chosen site is located in the forest, on the border of a nature reserve surrounded by the urban landscapes of Gothenburg. The site is used as a starting point to create a dialogue for the implementation of the spatial sequences. It is seen as an abstract landscape whereby the elements that belong within the perimeters of the chosen area are exposed and are brought to light. It was not my intention to create site specific spatial sequences but to investigate a typology of space that can be applied to other unprotected areas of swedish forests. The reason I chose a site just beyond the border of a nature reserve was to prevent it from being claimed by the forest industry. In addition, the site is located close to the Botanical Garden and Sahlgrenska Hospital. This location allows the spatial sequences to be understood as an extension of society's practices of care -both in terms of nature and health.



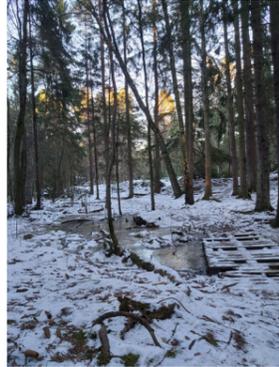
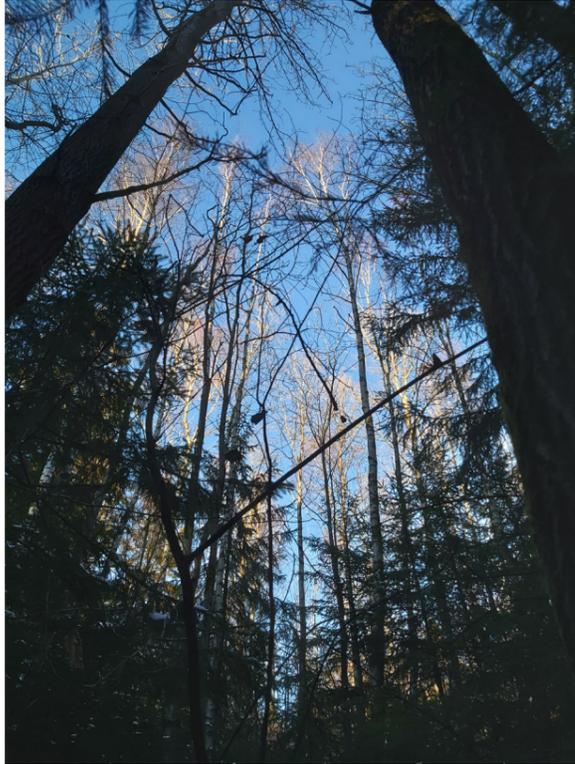
Urban and Nature

The Site

The chosen site is located in the city of Gothenburg, situated on the south of Änggårdsbergen nature reserve. Änggårdsbergen is connected to the Botanical Garden and Sahlgrenska Hospital which are both positioned on the north side of the reserve. The terrain has a varied landscape with valleys, ridges, walking paths, and lakes. The vegetation of the reserve consists of an interchange of coniferous and deciduous forest, wetlands, and heathland which are typical for West Swedish landscapes. The nature reserve stretches out south to the city with a perimeter of 320 hectares.

Choosing a place connected to a protected nature reserve, which isn't protected and could be going through future clearcutting was a valuable condition to my project. Therefore by claiming this spot, it will prevent the forest industry from making use of it for artificial plantations.





The Landscape



Act Five

Form Finding

The form finding for the proposed spatial configurations begins here, with the site as a point of departure.

The process of form finding has essentially been a type of meditation communicated through architectural tools with the purpose of framing relations between the ideologies and connecting them within a spatial organisation. I shifted from two dimensional visual representations to a three dimensional perspective through a conceptual maquette. The model embodies principles of numerology found in nature and symbolism found in Norse mythology as a potential method of spatially bridging the disconnection between culture and nature. Photographing the maquette allowed me to sieve out core qualities, which I then captured in a series of two dimensional collages.

These iterative acts were transformative both in terms of the material they were expressed through and in terms of how they shifted my understanding of the discourse, allowing me to meditate and reflect on holistic design, life and attitudes with each step.

This phase of my investigation culminated in six qualities which guided the subsequent formulation of spatial functions and also acted as a tool to activate the reader's imagination, inviting them to engage with the illustrations beyond a superficial level.

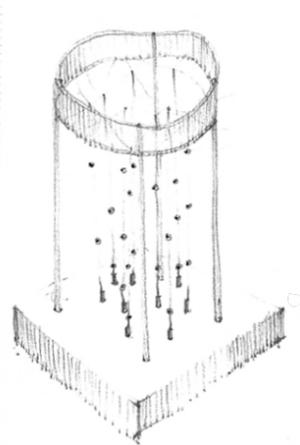


Design Development

Conceptual Maquette

The conceptual model represents a combination of the three ideologies: protection, connection and commemoration. Shifting the perspective from two dimensional illustrations to a three dimensional maquette, has helped me gain more depth and understanding from my investigation on how the ideologies relate to each other. The maquette can be viewed from three different angles in which I have iterated the elements that were profound to the ideologies. Combining them into one spatial concept was essential since they are all interconnected, as one doesn't operate without another.

The top view of the model is connecting all elements together: the crown which protects the entire area, and the memory of what has disappeared in the forest. The four stems on the outer part of the maquette are protecting and commemorating the inside that is gone, such as the trees that have been clearcutted, the biodiversity that has vanished and the forest spirits that no longer reside in the forest. The four stems which hold the structure are a symbol of the four directions from which humans and the world navigate with as well as the four seasons in which all living entities transform within. The nine stems which are placed in the inner area of the maquette represent the nine worlds of Yggdrasil, an immense sacred tree in Norse cosmology.



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Growth | Layers

Qualities

Growth
Expanding from the earth

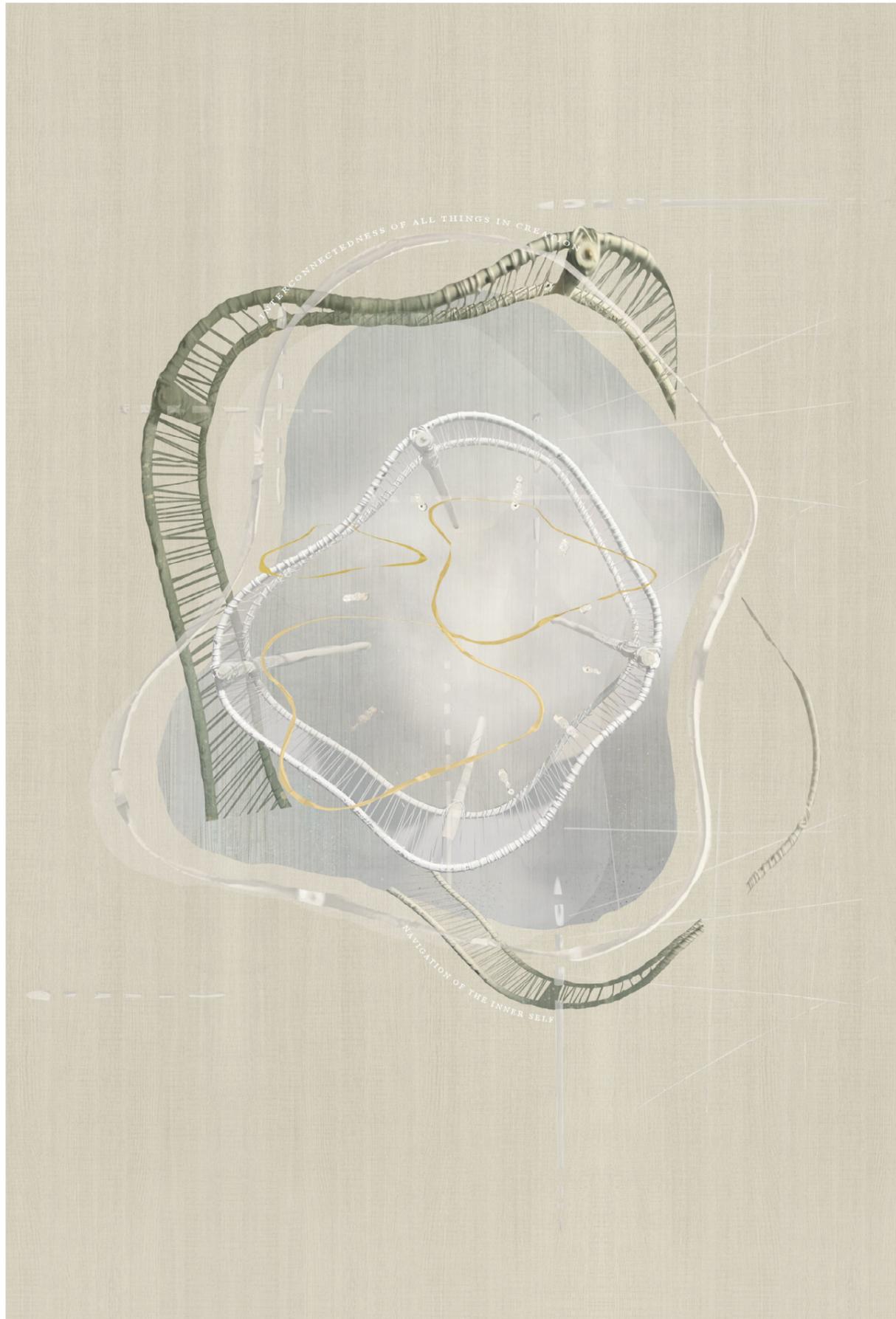
Verticality

Rooted

Layers

Different marks in the body and nature

Complexity of creation



Unity | Journey
Qualities

Unity
At one with all creation
Linkage
Joining
Journey
Physical storytelling
Phases of life
Navigation of inner self



Perception | Movement

Qualities

Perception

Understanding the body, cells and consciousness

Visibility

Glimpses

Movement

Passing on the stories

Knowledge development

Transcendance

Six Qualities

This illustration is a combination of the previous collages and their six qualities: Growth and Layers, Journey and Unity, Perception and Movement. Combining all the qualities in one representation was vital to understand their hierarchy and their connections to one another. The collage is exploring the vertical connection between the ground and the sky. It is embodied by multiple layers and can be viewed as a spatial projection from different angles such as a plan, section, and elevation.

The six qualities were chosen based on the ideologies of the thesis. All qualities are incorporated as different elements for the proposal of the spatial sequences in terms of architectural qualities and for the programme's functions.

Journey and unity are tying the full experience of the users, it's about creating an inner feeling and connectedness of the inner self and the natural surrounding. Growth and layers, perception and movement are about design qualities of the architectural spatial navigation embedded in a physical as well as in an intangible dimension.



Act Six

Spatial Design

The design process has transitioned from engaging with the wider problem of destructive practices in Swedish forests which will eventually threaten our own existence, to identifying and spatially framing relations between key concepts found within the discourse. These spatial relations led to a speculative spatial design centred around one tree from each of the three most commonly found tree species in Sweden; Birch, Pine, and Spruce. The spatial design is based on physical, functional and spiritual characteristics of the chosen trees which are found on the site.

The spatial sequences are served as ritual structures wrapped around specific tree species, which aims to raise awareness of how precious trees are and to teach about their individual qualities. Undergoing the ritual will make us look at trees with an alternative perspective - one held by our ancestors for centuries. We would stop looking at trees as merely objects which we can use for our own greediness, and instead appreciate and recognise them as living entities.



The Forest is the Story,
and the
Trees are the Characters.



Interconnectedness

All forms of vegetation found in nature such as trees, have their own specific colour, shape and individual qualities just like we humans do. The subtle energies in nature are in constant symbiosis with us, with our unique qualities, whether we are aware of it or not. People and trees have many similarities that can be seen on a physical as well as on a spiritual level, as we are all interconnected.

On a physical level, people and trees constitute mostly water, as trees are made up of more than 50% water and the human body approximately 60%.

We are interdependent on one another as we breathe in oxygen and breathe out carbon dioxide, trees take in carbon dioxide and release oxygen.

We both stand upright with a crown at the top and limbs stemming from a central trunk. We both live in communities and have cooperative relationships with one another.

On a spiritual level, trees have always been an important sacred part of many religious and ancient cultures which can be found in mythologies. The world tree motif has been present throughout cultures in the world such as the tree of life and in Norse mythology known as Yggdrasil. The world tree motif symbolises a sacred tree which connects the top with the heavens, the trunk with the terrestrial world and the roots with the underworld.



Process Overview



Embodied Rituals

The six spatial qualities deriving from the ideologies have been transformed into three embodied functions which are based on the three parts of a tree: Roots, Trunk, and Canopy. The embodied functions act as bodily rituals made within the journey of the structures. They are inspired by Forest Bathing, a form of ecotherapy which was coined in Japan as a remedy to reconnect with and protect the forest in times where people suffer from burnouts in hyper-connected and stressful environments. Another inspiration was drawn from ancient traditional medicine, made in herbalism by infusing herbs into a carrier oil.

growth, layers> Roots> barefoot

Growth and layers are elements found in the ground, they are merging together in the soil and are therefore found in the roots of a tree. The bodily experience is about being rooted in the ground, feeling the senses of our feet into the soil from which everything above will grow from.

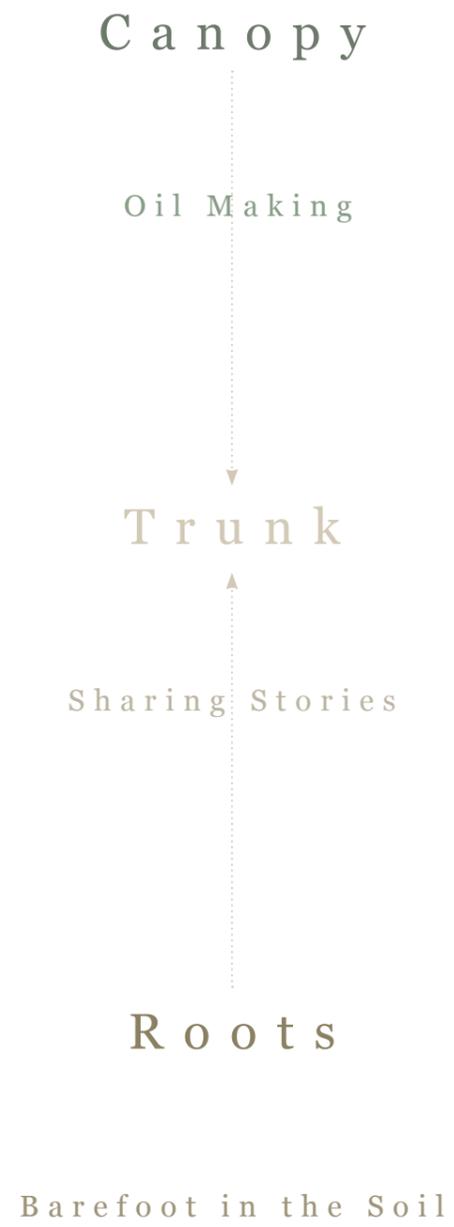
unity, journey> Trunk> sharing stories

Unity and journey are connecting the beneath and the above. They act as a medium to unite the parts of the tree and people. The bodily experience of those qualities are based on reconnecting people together, an opportunity to share experiences of the forest and thoughts in a uniting setting. The trunk serves as an anchor, from which every person and thoughts are spinning around.

perception, movement> Canopy> oil making

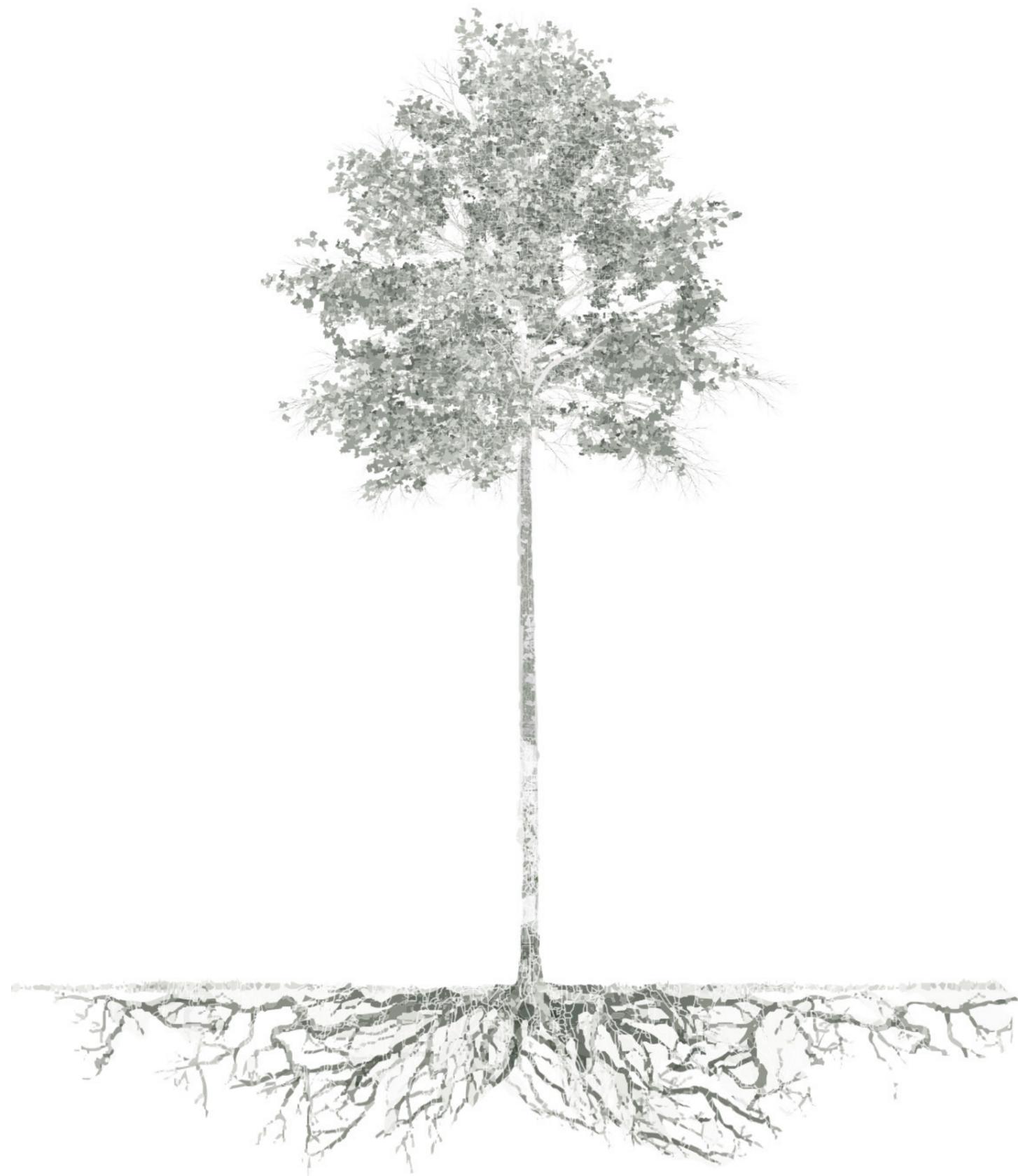
Perception and movement are flowing qualities responding to the environment. They are found above and interact with light and shadow. The bodily experience of those fluid qualities are accentuating the intangible entities which are not always visible. The act of making infused oils out of the branches of the tree is extending the vibrant presence of their energies into our bodies.

The Rituals





A vision of the ritual structure wrapping around the tree, looking at their functions and positioning.



Birch

Growth and Rebirth

The Characters

The Character of Birch

The three bodily rituals are a general framework for relating to trees, however to truly appreciate Swedish forest like our ancestors did, we have to understand the individual character of each species.

Each tree has their unique qualities that we can learn from, and through these rituals we extend the energetical compounds of the individual tree.

The Birch tree symbolises Growth and Rebirth. This unique species grows where nothing else can. They are a sign of new beginnings as it is one of the first tree species that grows on bare lands or after forest fires have occurred. They hold the portal between life and the afterlife and are seen as pioneer trees.

The Birch species are fast growing trees and are lovers of light. Their branches extend outwards and their roots are shallow and fan out under the soil's surface.

The Journey

The overall bodily movement of the ritual structure is inspired by transportation systems of trees. Water and minerals are absorbed in the roots and transport upwards in the trunk until they reach the branches and leaves at the canopy. Photosynthesis and carbon dioxide transforms the water and minerals into sugars, which is transported downwards and released back into the soil. This vital system serves for the growth of trees.

The ritual starts as an individual journey at the roots of the trunk by taking the shoes and socks off and embedding the feet in the soil. Following the direction of the roots which are extended outwards of the trunk's perimeter, guided by inward looking stairs which transform into ladders are leading to a connecting circular platform.

The trunk of the tree is the anchor in the centre of the platform where stories are collectively being shared. The glass jars carrying infused oils from the tree are gathered around this space as a unifying storage chamber.

Individual stairs are extending from the storage chamber into the sky, following the outwards movement of branches of the Birch's character. Steps are elongated by bigger platforms at points where the branches are not reaching. Soaking the branches into the glass jars occurs at the top of the structure. After having extended the tree's energetical compounds, the bodily journey is transported downwards and back into the soil.

The overall shape of the ritual structure is accentuating the Birch tree's physical characteristics by embracing its outwards growing roots and branches. The shape symbolises an endless cycle of rebirth, life and afterlife by providing no end nor a beginning at the bottom and top of the structure.





Spruce

Longevity and Fertility

The Character of Spruce

The Spruce tree symbolises Longevity and Fertility. They are associated with the winter solstice and represent light in the middle of darkness. During the pagan celebration of the winter solstice, the spruce tree was brought to their homes to celebrate light and life from the return of the sun for when the harsh winter season would come to an end. The Spruce species are strong and thrive in cold conditions.

This species belongs to the coniferous family known for its noticeable needle-like leafed character. The Spruce tree is recognisable for having spikey, four sided single needles spaced out on each branch. The crown of the Spruce is arranged in a pyramidal shape, and its hanging cones are soft and flexible.

The root systems are shallow and don't reach far into the soil, however they are capable of lasting for tremendously long years.

The Journey

The transportation system of trees is further applied to the Spruce structure's overall bodily movement.

The ritual starts as an individual journey at the roots of the trunk by taking the shoes and socks off and embedding the feet in the soil. Following the direction of the roots which shallowly extends outwards of the trunk's perimeter, is guided by inward looking stairs which quickly transform into ladders to embrace the tall vertical stem of the Spruce. The ladder eventually leads to a connecting circular platform.

The trunk of the tree is the anchor in the centre of the platform where stories are collectively being shared. The glass jars carrying infused oils from the tree are moreover gathered around this space as a unifying storage chamber.

Individual stairs are extending from the storage chamber into the sky, following the pyramid shape of the Spruce's branches. Steps are elongated by bigger platforms at areas where the soaking of the branches in the glass jars occurs. After having extended the tree's energetical compounds, the bodily journey is transported downwards following the pyramid characteristic of the species, which then flows back into the soil.

The overall shape of the ritual structure is accentuating the Spruce's physical characteristics by embracing its outwards growing roots and triangular arranged branches. The shape symbolises the longevity of the characteristic whereby the bottom of the structure gradually rises upwards in a diagonal direction towards the infinite sky.





The Character of Pine

The Pine tree symbolises Strength and Resilience. This strong species fights for its survival wherever it is placed. Due to the highly adaptable nature of the species character, Pine trees can withstand strong winds and harsh weather conditions from colder to warmer temperatures.

This species belongs to the coniferous family known for its noticeable needle-like leafed character. The Pine tree is recognisable for having spirally arranged needles growing in clusters on the branch. Their needles are soft and tend to be the longest of the coniferous trees species. The overall expression of the branches of the Pine trees are less dense since they have fewer branches and tend to grow near the top of the tree. Its hanging cones are the hardest of the coniferous species, and are characterised by thick scales. The Pine has a taproot system which extends down into the soil to provide a strong stability for the tree.

The Journey

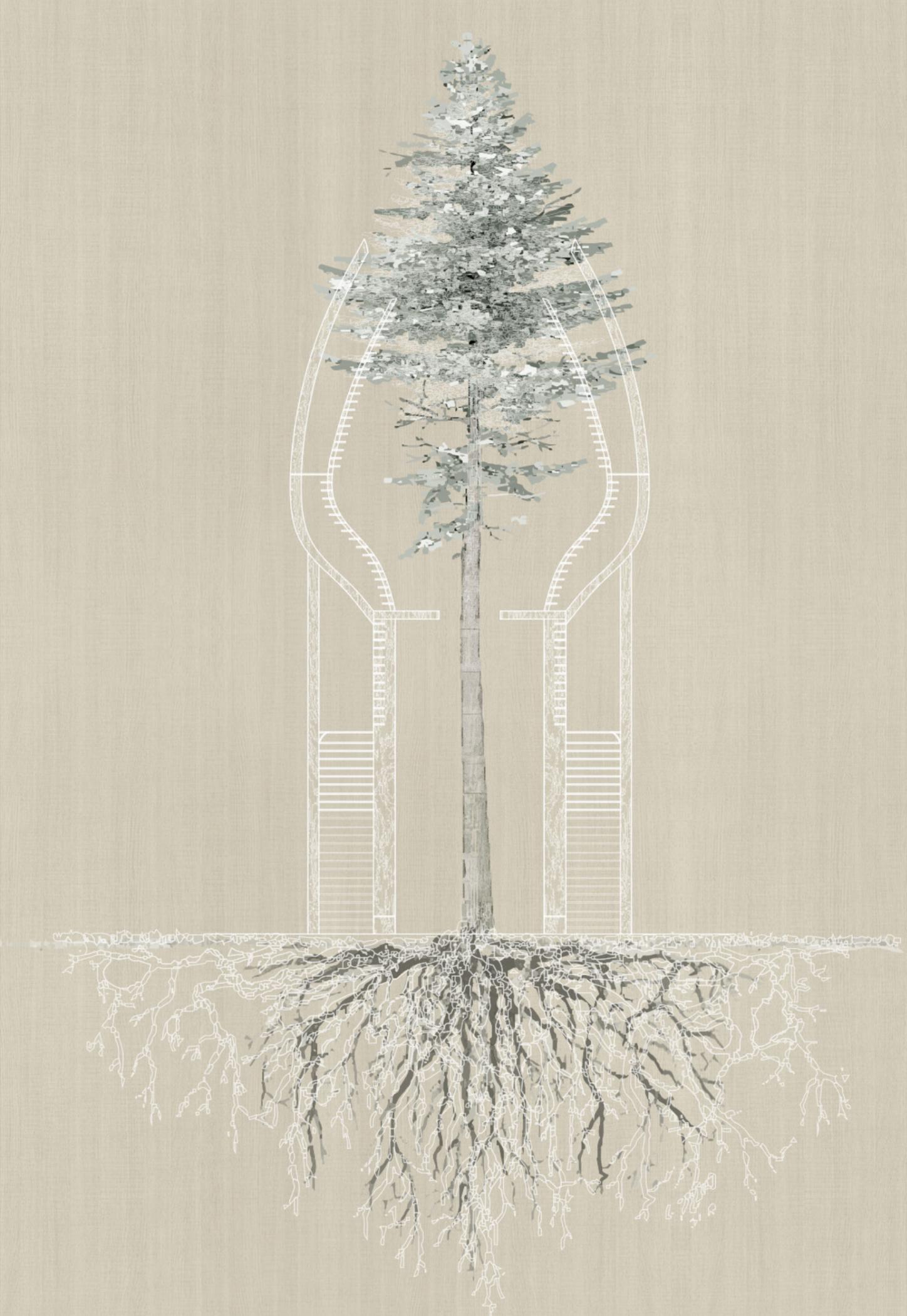
The transportation system of trees is further applied to the Pine structure's overall bodily movement.

The ritual starts as an individual journey at the roots of the trunk by taking the shoes and socks off and embedding the feet in the soil. Accentuating the vertical direction of the Pine's roots, the upright bodily movement to the structure is formed in a vertical manner by ladders reaching the connecting circular platform.

The trunk of the tree is the anchor in the centre of the platform where stories are collectively being shared. The glass jars carrying infused oils from the tree are moreover gathered around this space as a unifying storage chamber.

Individual stairs are extending from the storage chamber into the sky, following the uneven and scattered branches of the Pine's shape. Steps are elongated by bigger platforms at areas where the soaking of the branches in the glass jars occurs. After having extended the tree's energetical compounds, the bodily journey is transported downwards following the asymmetrical characteristic of the species, which then flows back into the soil.

The overall shape of the ritual structure is accentuating the Pine's physical characteristics by embracing its vertical growing roots and crown. The shape symbolises strength of the species character, whereby the bottom of the structure sturdily rises upwards towards the infinite sky.



The First Encounter

The following visual representations are an invitation to the spatial sequences arranged as a narrated journey through the ritual structures.

When crossing the artificial border of the urban tapestry into the magical woodlands, you will encounter a sudden change in the surrounding.

From a distance, you will see a glimpse of the growing structure that resides together with the neighbouring trees.

When approaching the depth of the forest, you will arrive at the ritual structures where people and trees are connecting with each other.

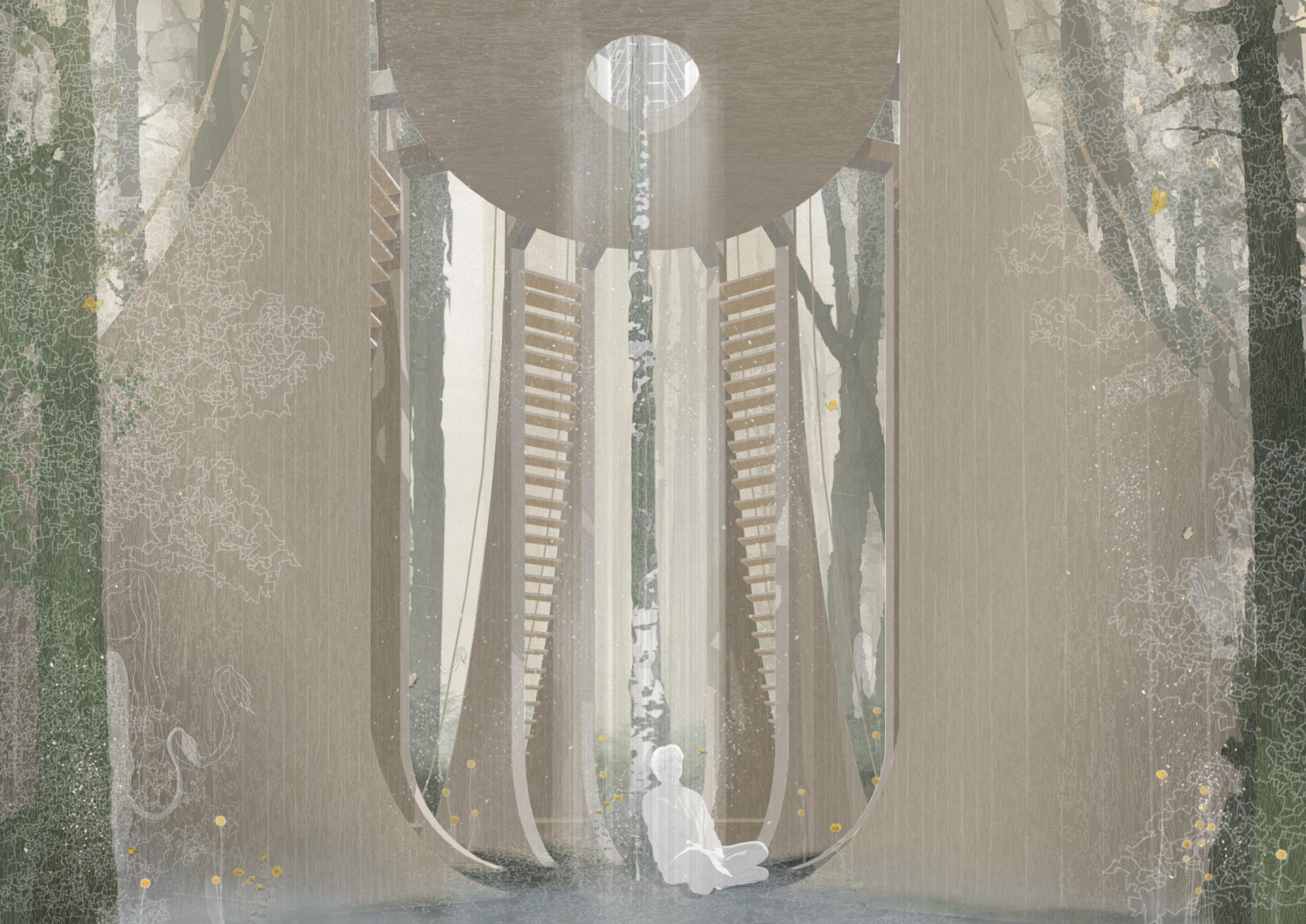
At the roots of the structure you will take your shoes and socks off, feeling the soles of your feet embedded in the soil. Feeling the grounded relation of the tree and its roots.

Once you have reached the stairs towards the circular platform, you will arrive at the storage chamber where stories and thoughts are shared around the tree's trunk.

After walking up along the tree's branches, you will arrive at the canopy of the tree where you will soak the branches into the glass jars to extend the tree's energetical compounds.

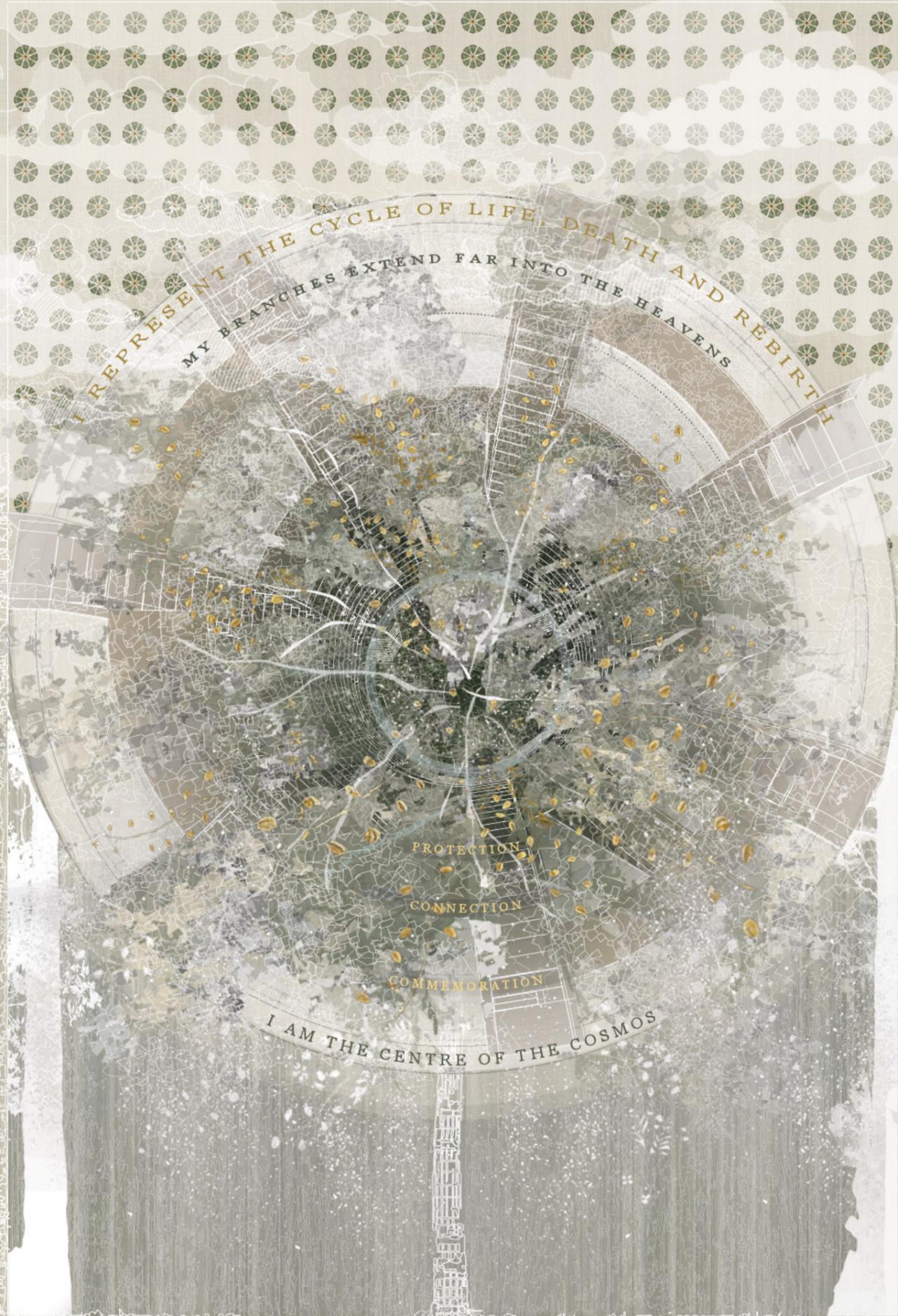












The Tangible Forest

Wide Spreading Branches

Into the Heavens

Death • Life • Rebirth

Into the Earth

Deep Extending Roots

The Intangible Forest

Summary

The Discussion

Metamorphosis of Care, is a thesis which stems from a despair of today's state of the forest, by longing for appreciating what grows and derives from nature, without taking it for granted. The thesis aim is to raise awareness of the destructive practice of the Swedish forest industry, by using architecture as a tool to celebrate trees.

The structures have resulted in temple-like features around individual trees, and are rooted in spiritual additions along with forest bathing rituals. Undergoing the rituals which are set around specific tree species, highlights their individual characters. I decided to create structures for individual species, even though trees in the forest can be seen as part of one entity, as they are all interconnected. The reasoning for creating such a design was to engage with the forest as not just a collection of vast trees, but to highlight the individuality of each of them. I thus created structures that are specifically designed for each species, whereby the design is responding to their characters, and their different qualities. The main groundwork of the thesis has derived from my personal motivation, in which I relate to the world and our existence as being at one with all creation. The same belief has been articulated in the choice of design for the individual trees, which are part of a unifying landscape.

The choice of materiality for the structures had to be well rooted in the discourse of the thesis. The use of wood was not my first option since I initially believed that it would go against my discourse about our society's misuse of timber. I therefore considered other materials such as metals, and fabric. However, such materials don't belong in the forest, and wood can be left for decay or can later be reused in various ways. I have furthermore used wood for a meaningful purpose as a medium to enhance our learning, and our understanding of the forest, which in turn brings our society closer to nature. The wooden structures can be seen as a celebration of what nature has to offer to our existence.

I moreover decided to stay within the realm of the mystical and spiritual, and not to investigate the tectonics of timber as a building material. The message of the thesis is tied within a self reflected ground, whereby the individual's spirituality is of greater relevance than the understanding of how such structures should be built. The overall journey has transitioned from creating a temple for the individual to enter, to creating an inner temple out of the individual.

Throughout the thesis I have taken my own path in further developing my background, drawings and overall language. I have experimented with visual representations by combining structures within architecture and emotions within a mystical dimension. I have evoked the reader's emotions through the representations which communicated the narrative about the destructive practices within our care towards the Swedish forest, and our own bodies. Framing the entire thesis as a narrative, from representations to the verbal presentations, resulted in an effective framework to have a discussion and raise awareness about the current problem of the forests in Sweden.

The method of the thesis can be seen as an argument for post processing, whereby the illustrations are not a product of any software, drawing, render, or model. The illustrations are a composition of various mediums which don't follow the conventional distinctions between drawings, models and renders. I therefore have created a particular visual language that communicates the thesis and adds to the overall discourse of representations within architecture.

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Appendix



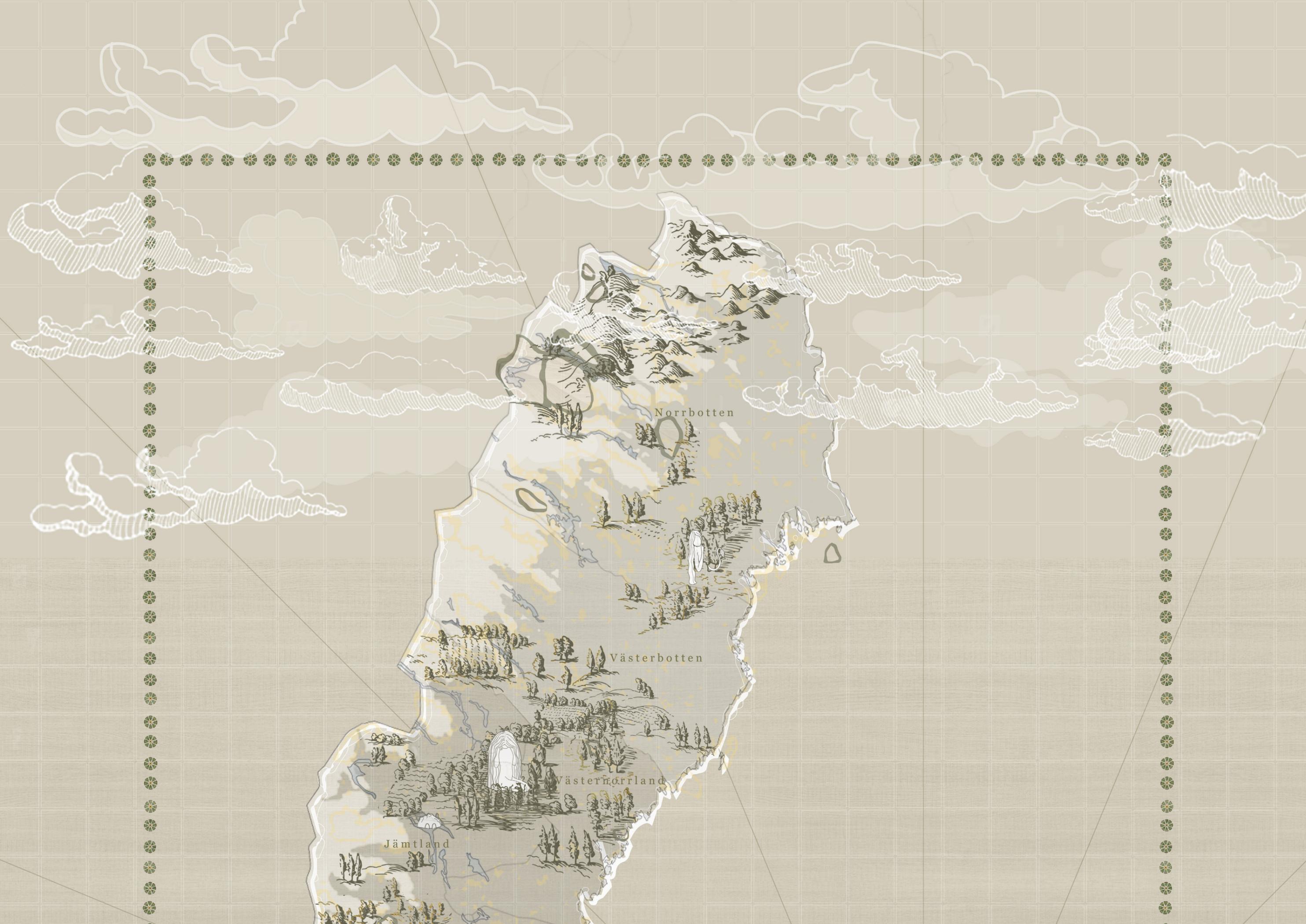
THE ARTIFICIAL FOREST
THE INDUSTRY MYTH: A SUCCESS STORY
ONLY YOUNG FORESTS STORE CARBON. WE HAVE THE MAGIC WAND: WOOD. OUR FOREST MODEL IS GOOD FOR THE ENVIRONMENT.



ENVIRONMENT

THE CULTURE MYTH : A LOST STORY
THE ANCIENT WOODLANDS





Norrbotten

Västerbotten

Västernorrland

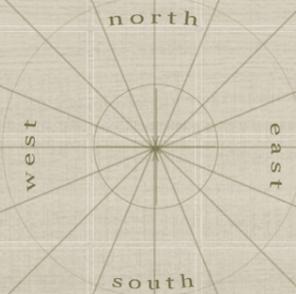
Jämtland



 Nature reserves

 National parks

THE SWEDISH MAP
THE KNOWN

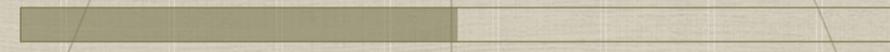


THE UNKNOWN
THE GREEN INDUSTRY

Ecoregion

-  Sub-alpine
-  Northern Boreal
-  Southern Boreal
-  Hemi-boreal
-  Nemoral

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KILOMETERS



Conceptual Model

Artificial

Protection of the forest is not about protecting the ground from which the stems are embedded in, however it is about protecting the top of the trees. It's about elevating the importance at the top, like an umbrella that covers what is found beneath. The threads which are giving shape to the crown are interconnected and give a sense of strength and structure which can be found within all living organisms in the natural world.

The network of threads beneath the crown act like roots beneath the earth. It is the invisible realm of all functioning and living entities.



Protection

Artificial

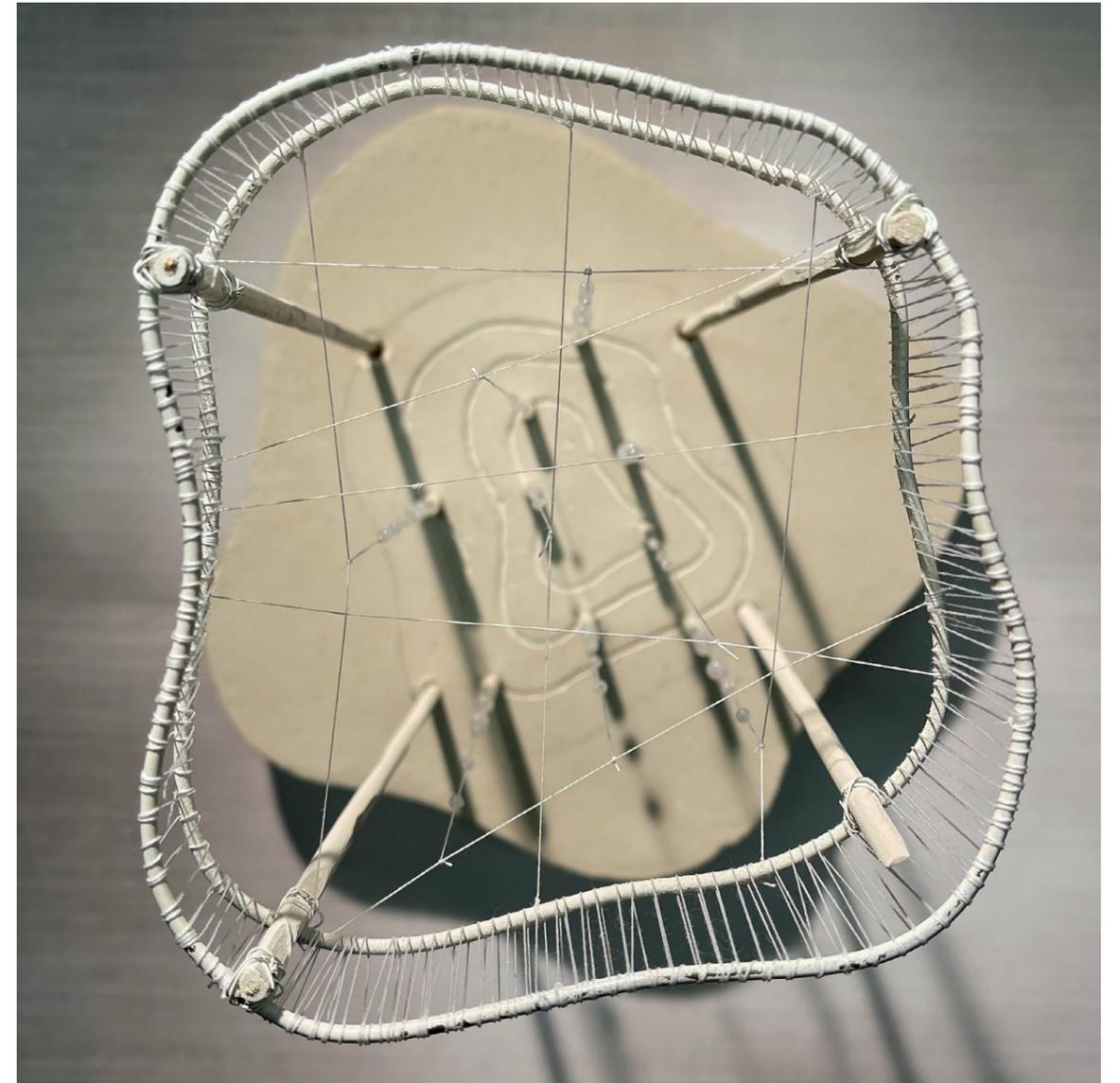


Conceptual Model

Natural

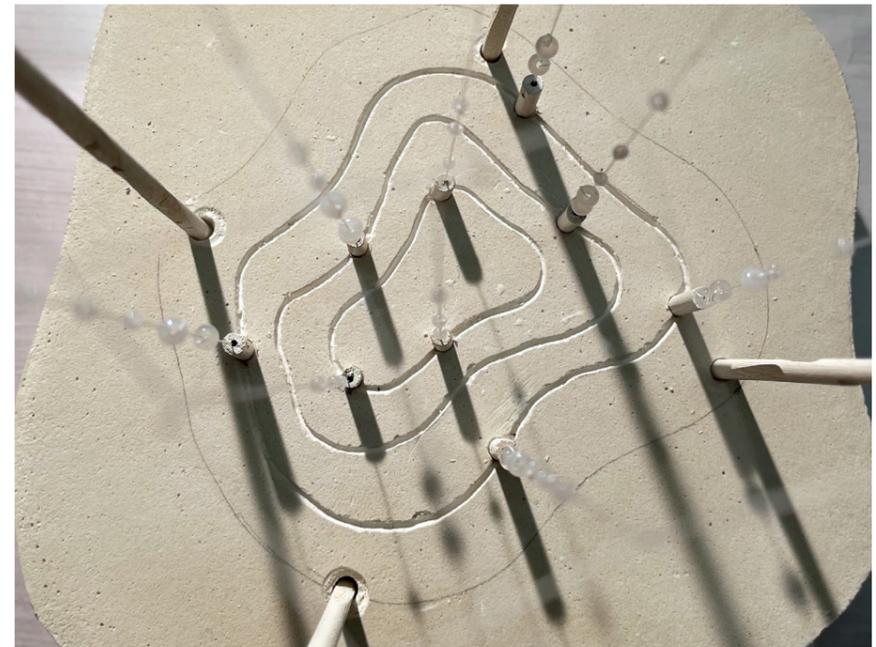
The top view of the model is connecting all elements together: the crown which protects the entire area, and the memory of what has been gone. The four stems which hold the structure are a symbol of the four directions from which humans and the world navigate with as well as the four seasons in which all living things transform with. The nine stems which are found within the area represent the nine worlds of Yggdrasil, an immense sacred tree in Norse cosmology.

The four stems are protecting the outer parts and are commemorating the inside that is gone.



Connection

Natural

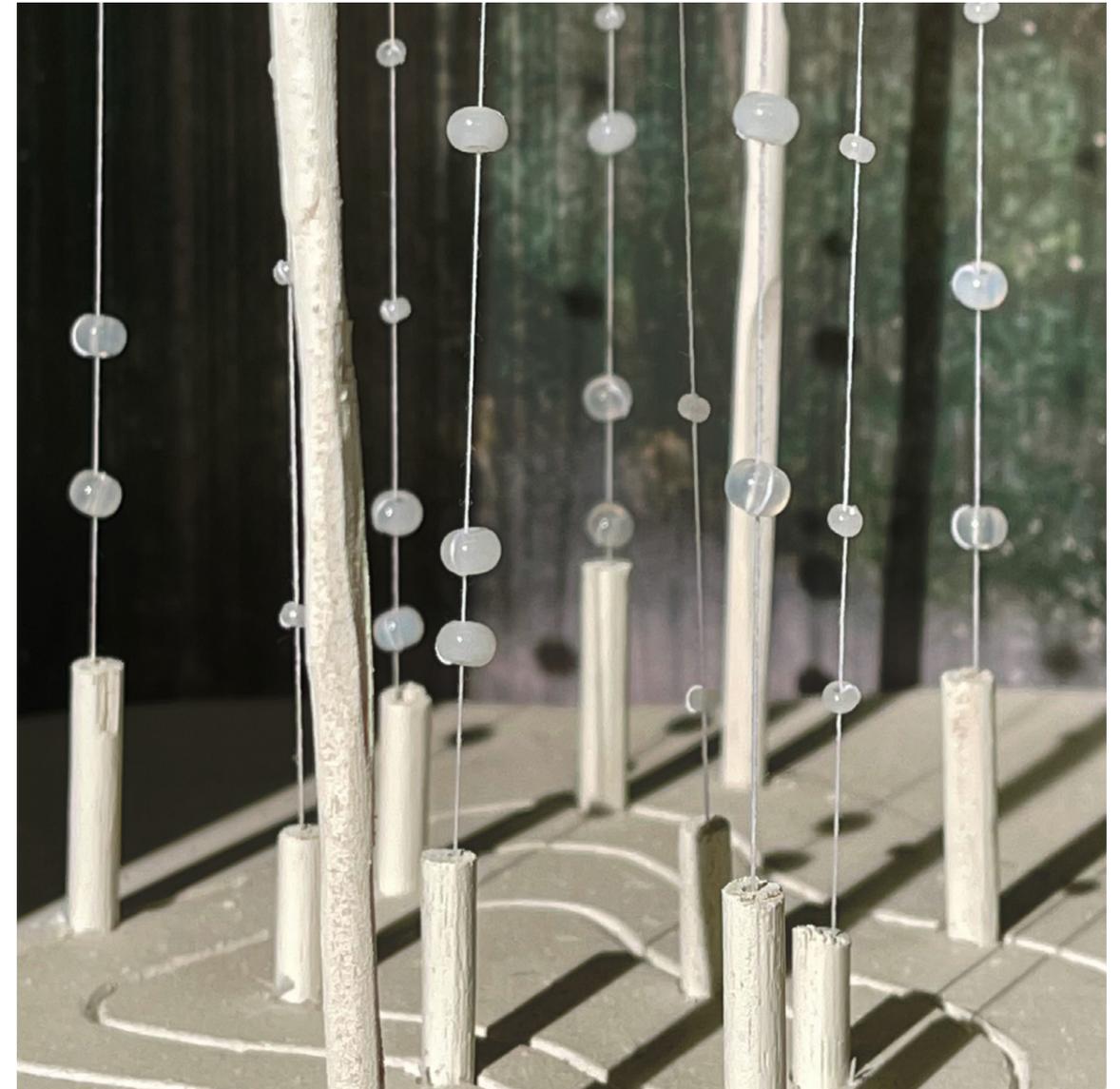


Conceptual Model

Supernatural

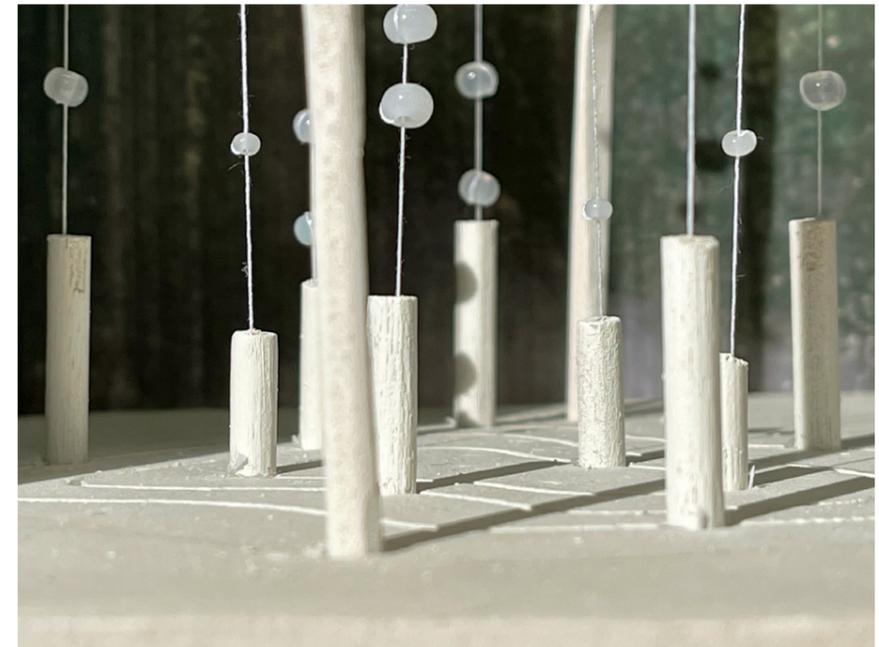
The remembrance of what has been gone such as the memory of the tree, the species inhabiting them and the forest spirits are represented by a thread suspended with beads. The bigger the beads above the stems, the stronger the memory and the remembrance of where it came from.

The forest residents such as insects, plants and other species are not the most apparent when looking at a forest landscape. They are therefore represented by tiny individual elements which only remains when it is connected to a bigger network.

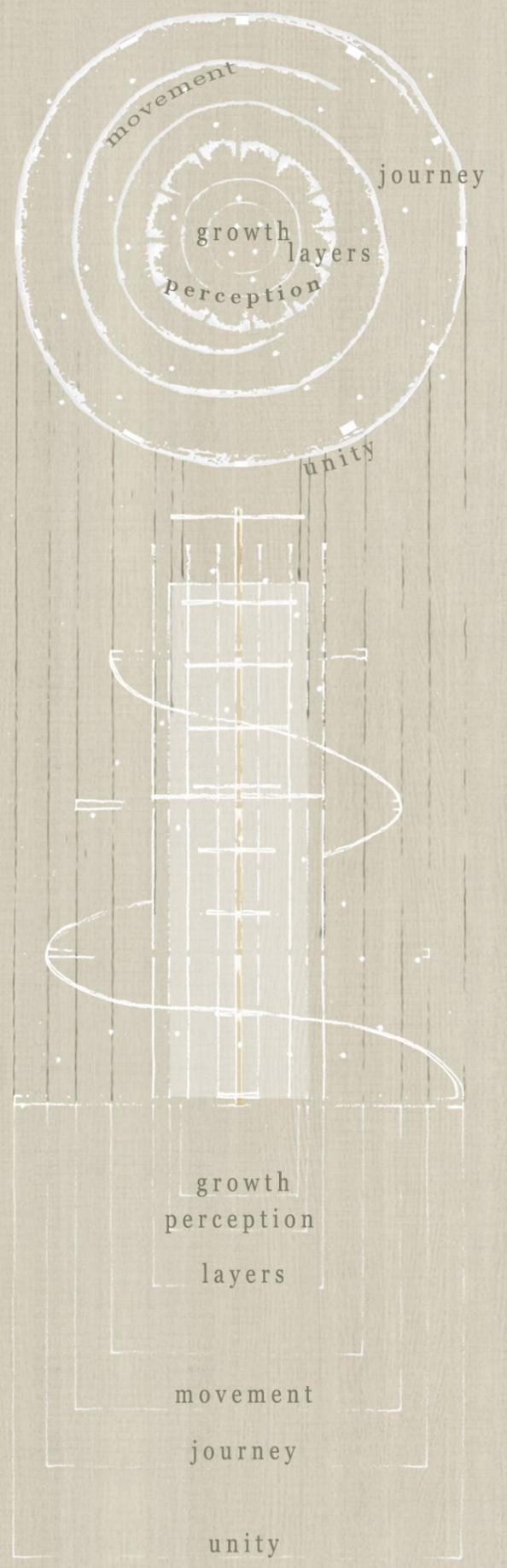


Commemoration

Supernatural



A series of spatial sequences which act as a narrated journey for the users of the scheme



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Nordic Architecture
Heritage and Transformation
Matter Space Structure 3



