LOVE IN LAS VEGAS

AN INTRODUCTION OF SPACES OF DESIRE TO SIN CITY

Among the billboards, propped-up facades, and hyper-real casinos of the Las Vegas Strip, my proposal inter-weaves spaces of desire and begins a fervent quest for love... an enigmatic journey and a surrealist fantasy that draws influence from architectural visionaries such Jean-Jacques Lequeu, Douglas Darden, and Claude-Nicolas Ledoux. Through a change in perspective, by lifting the intricate, dazzling dress of the city and peeking at Las Vegas from behind, I hope to evoke unbridled desire and passion.

I am proposing a series of erotic spaces of flesh, dimension, and desire be erected along the Las Vegas Strip, consisting of 4 primary characters: the bride, the voyeur, the groom, and lastly the audience.

Herein begins Las Vegas's love story.

The bride hangs suspended above the Fashion Show Mall, held in tension by five delicate cables hanging from an ovular cloud, five fingers composing a hand that grasps at rings that lie at its fingertips. This bizarre, alien apparatus is wrapped around a glass tube and walkway much like the bride's fingers wrap around and clutch the pole in front of her in the artefact. This protrusion emerges from the subterranean Fashion Show Mall and is put proudly on display, the bride's focal point, the wedding aisle.

As you enter and traverse this glass tube, you are made acutely aware of your transparent and exposed position, a moment of absolute visual violation, a moment reminiscent of Duchamp's "The Bride Stripped Bare by Her Bachelors". You have taken the place of the bride as you walk down the aisle towards a bed that lies in the distance, the arched forms on either side of you sequentially tightening as your excitement grows, the bed almost within reach ... but at the last moment the path diverges, your climax halted. The bell once again visually tempted but ultimately inaccessible.

Below this walkway is suspended a peculiar rigid frame structure, an erotic series of X's denoting three separate but connected all-you-can-eat buffets. The wedding banquet has commenced, the table set, the bride's gluttonous desire to be seen, to see herself, and to be devoured translated into spaces of consumption.

B — A SPACE OF GLUTTONOUS EXHIBITIONISM & CONSUMPTION

BRIDE

A massive ferris wheel dominates the scene, each spherical carriage gleaming like an eye of a hunting predator. The eyes slowly orbit in a never-ending cycle, a celestial circle, serene yet haunting, a miniature solar system. The perverted glare of this 30-eyed, monstrous contraption pierces the night, each eye seemingly blinking in tandem as the lights that decorate its outermost edges shift in color.

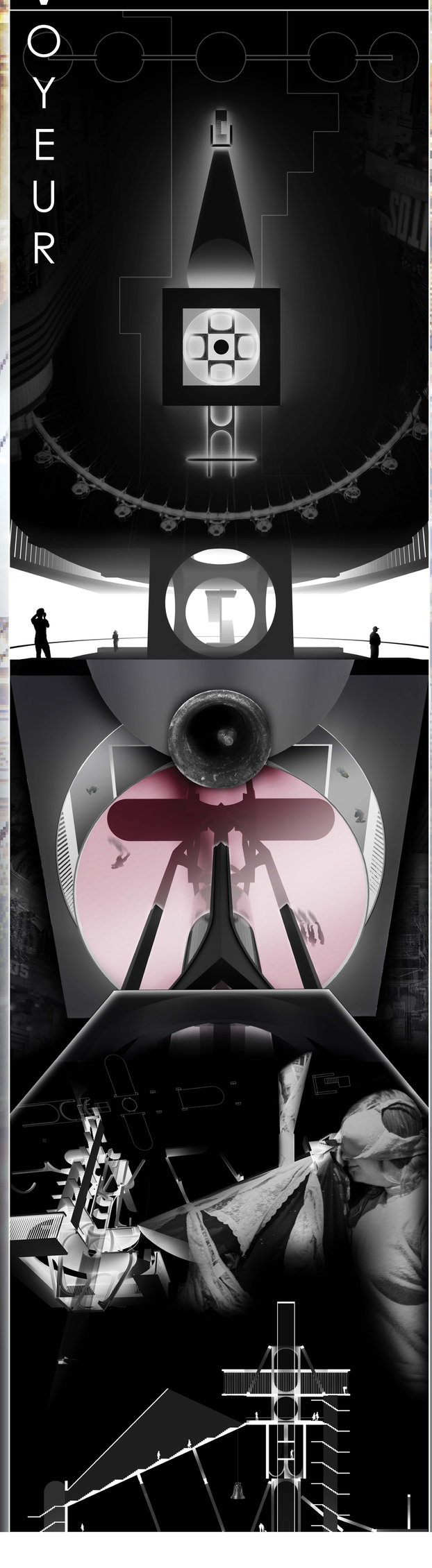
The voyeur, in the form of a watchtower, stands proudly in the foreground, legs spread, head held high as he peeks over the surrounding context at the Las Vegas strip. The courtyard beneath is an influencer's dream, the arched forms and playful geometry creating a plethora of "Instagrammable" moments. As you walk underneath the spread legs of the voyeur, you are treated with a captivating view of his undercarriage, a bell gently hanging, swinging ah so slightly... to and fro... and to again.

Just beyond the bell lies a mirror, reflecting the courtyard below. And around its perimeter is held a glass walkway. In this way, a top-down view is juxtaposed directly against a bottom-up view, a disorienting and revealing perspective that both beguiles and repulses as you see the shining scalp of a balding older gentleman juxtaposed against a revealing mini-skirt of a particularly attractive woman that stands above the glass platform.

The looming eye of Ouranos himself peers down from above as you ascend the elevator to the overlook above. Couples take repulsively cute photos of each other with the Strip as a backdrop for their next Instagram post. Meanwhile, directly above exists a space that takes a more critical approach to the voyeuristic gaze. This curated photography exhibit features a rotating selection of work from local professionals, providing an alternative, and hopefully more comprehensive, way to see and understand the city that lies below.

V — A SPACE OF PERVERTED PEEPING & PHOTOGRAPHY

VOYEUR



Culminating your descent into the earth, you emerge from the dimly lit tunnel onto a catwalk overlooking a vaulted, two-story atrium. The scene in front of you is boisterous, active, heated,... a passionate dance club. Strippers tempt and tease incessantly atop a back-lit glass floor, slick with the spilled drinks of the space's clientele... reflecting the grain vault above, the groom's grain. The central light well stands erect as a representation of the groom's relentless desire, the dark silhouette of a bell suspended in the shaft's interior, inaccessible and silent in an otherwise crowded and loud space.

You are quickly faced with a choice between three thresholds, two to places unknown and the third back to whence you started. You choose the tunnel to your right, descend a nondescript stair and emerge beneath the dance club's raw bellows, the back-lit floor now a ceiling that highlights the vaulted, almost floral forms that speak of an unprecedented innocence and purity ... an innocence that the groom simultaneously wishes to preserve and conquer.

Spotlights draw your eyes to the sides of the room where professional performers and dancers enact their craft to the fascination of their spectators. These theatrical performances evoke feelings of longing and natural desire to witness and experience a more poetic form of dance than what we have come to expect from the Vegas Strip, especially when juxtaposed against the strip club above.

You step into one of the vaulted breasts of the groom, and it is revealed that these spotlights are created by nipple-like skylights, these circular openings doubling as glass walkways on the sidewalks on either side of the Las Vegas Strip. As people step across the glass, their shadows are cast across the vaulted forms of the groom's interior, and thus the groom's desire to see beneath the dress of the artefact has been manifested.

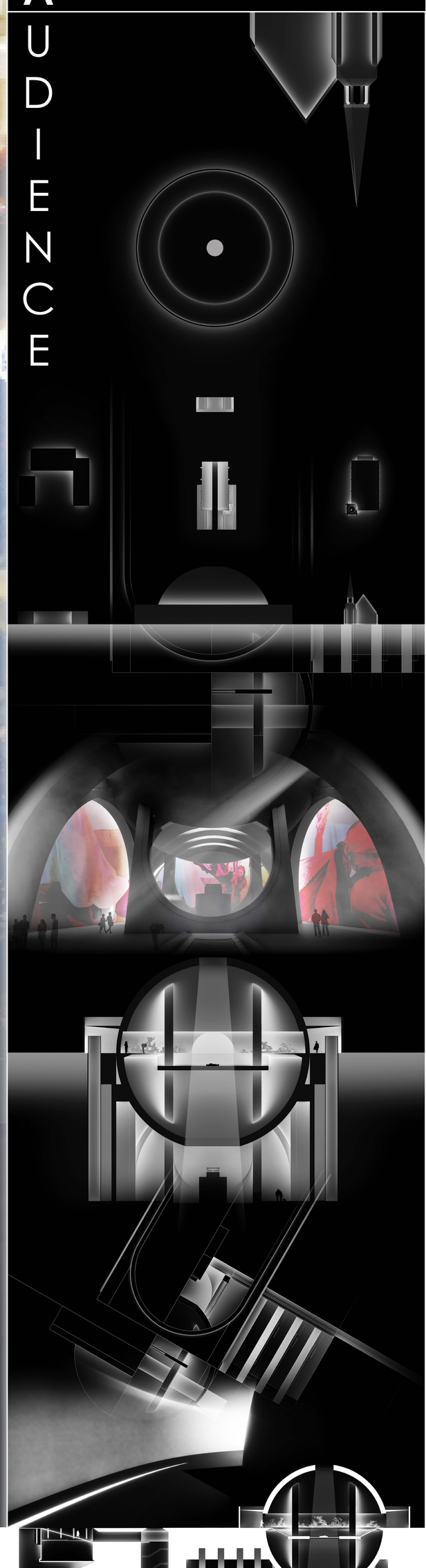
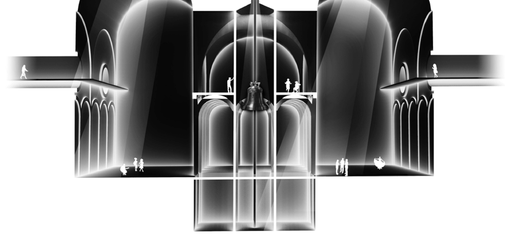
G — A SPACE OF FERVID UNDRESSING & GYRATION

GROOM

A singular path, the aisle, descends towards the altar of an inverted church that rests abandoned in the midst of the Mojave Desert, the "Welcome to Fabulous Las Vegas Nevada" sign just down the street blinking in tandem with the flashes of tourist's cameras as they queue up to have their photo taken. You walk down the aisle and enter into the earth once again. Beyond the threshold of the altar you descend a procession of stairs, delving deeper and deeper into the Gaia's womb, the air becoming increasingly moist, the atmosphere thick and weighted.

Upon entering into the altar, you are greeted by an incessant albeit pleasing ringing, a ringing of bells, a ringing that was noticeably absent at each of the other sites. A wedding ceremony has started. The vaulted ceiling and repeating arched geometry once again recall churches of old and love stories long past, but this perspectival view quickly becomes perverted. The altar revealed to be a bedchamber, a boudoir. A heavy, concrete belly bulges above, swollen and bloated, perpetually pregnant above the space of consummation and erotic fulfillment, the bed itself that lies on a raised pedestal. This bed is encased in a glass enclosure, a visual temptation that lays permanently out of reach. Surrounding this enclosure, lie three arched indentations, an each of which is projected live-time video footage of the three other sites, bringing together that which is far into an incredibly intimate and revealing space that explores and reveals the Groom's relentless desire to undress and conquer the Bride's gluttonous desire to be seen and devoured, and the Voyeur's inductive, omnipresent and perverted gaze. Thus, the audience serves as a temple of love, a culmination of the architecture spread over the length of the Las Vegas Strip, a climax to this erotic journey, a testament to the untapped passion that Sin City inherently embodies.

In the hollowed sphere, this passion is at its most potent, burning hot around the perimeter of the sphere's perimeter. The sphere is suspended between earth and sky, inhabiting both and neither, reminiscent of the original space of desire, the space of Eros, that permanently separates earth from sky, Gaia from her lover Ouranos.

A — A SPACE OF CLIMATIC HARMONY AND PASSION

AUDIENCE