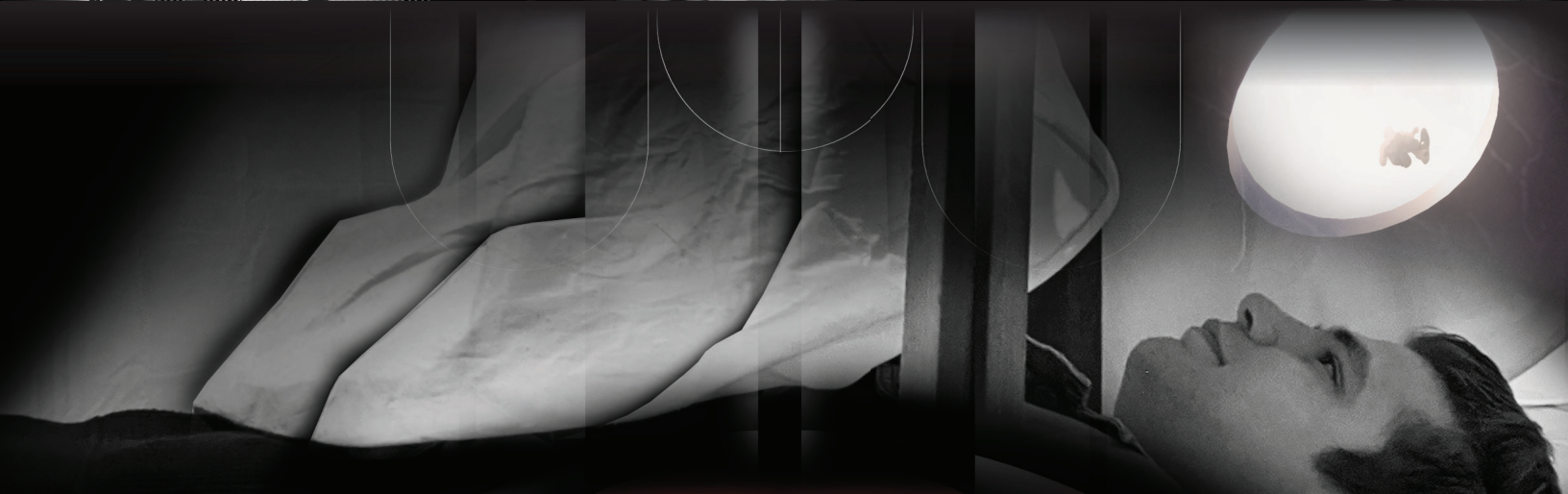




LOVE IN LAS VEGAS

AN INTRODUCTION OF SPACES OF DESIRE TO SIN CITY



LOVE IN LAS VEGAS

AN INTRODUCTION OF SPACES OF DESIRE TO SIN CITY

A DESIGN THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE
DEPARTMENT OF ARCHITECTURE AND LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE
OF NORTH DAKOTA STATE UNIVERSITY

BY

NOAH J. MEIER

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF ARCHITECTURE

PRIMARY THESIS ADVISOR

THESIS COMMITTEE CHAIR

DECEMBER 2019
FARGO, NORTH DAKOTA

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Project Title and Signature Page.....	3
List of Tables and Figures.....	7
Thesis Abstract.....	9
Narrative of the Theoretical Aspect of the Thesis.....	11
Project Typology.....	13
User/Client Description.....	15
The Site.....	17
The Project Emphasis.....	19
Goals of the Thesis Project.....	21
A Plan for Preceding	22
Theoretical Research.....	25
Architecture as Space of Desire: The Hypnerotomachia Polifili.....	27
Paris and its Folds, Paris and its Faces.....	31
Douglas Darden's "Sex Shop": An Immodest Proposal.....	35
Marcel Duchamp: Appearance Stripped Bare.....	39
Phenomenology of Perception: The Body in its Sexual Being.....	43
Duchamp's "Étant Donnés".....	47
Precedent Research.....	51
Ledoux's "Oikema".....	53
Parc de la Villette.....	59
The Petite Maison of Mademoiselle Dervieux.....	65
Ekebergparken.....	73
Project Justification.....	81
Historical, Social, and Cultural Context.....	87
Site Analysis.....	91
Performance Criteria.....	107
The Artefact.....	117
The Architecture.....	129
The Groom.....	131
The Bride.....	139
The Voyeur.....	145
The Audience.....	153
Thesis Appendix.....	163

FIGURE 01: Site Context Maps.....	16
FIGURE 02: Project Schedule.....	22
FIGURE 03: The Hypnerotomachia Polifili.....	26
FIGURE 04: The Hypnerotomachia Polifili.....	29
FIGURE 05: Paris Royal Gardens.....	30
FIGURE 06: Avenue de l’Opera.....	33
FIGURE 07: “Sex Shop”.....	34
FIGURE 08: “Sex Shop”.....	36
FIGURE 09: “Sex Shop”.....	37
FIGURE 10: “Large Glass”.....	38
FIGURE 11: Actaeon and Diana.....	41
FIGURE 12: Phenomenology of Perception.....	42
FIGURE 13: Phenomenology of Perception.....	45
FIGURE 14: Ledoux’s “Oikema”.....	49
FIGURE 15: Ledoux’s “Oikema”.....	50
FIGURE 16: Ledoux’s “Oikema”.....	53
FIGURE 17: Parc de la Villette.....	55
FIGURE 18: Parc de la Villette.....	56
FIGURE 19: Parc de la Villette.....	58
FIGURE 20: Parc de la Villette.....	59
FIGURE 21: Parc de la Villette.....	59
FIGURE 22: Petite Maison.....	61
FIGURE 23: Petite Maison.....	62
FIGURE 24: Petite Maison.....	64
FIGURE 25: Petite Maison.....	65
FIGURE 26: Petite Maison.....	66
FIGURE 27: Petite Maison.....	66
FIGURE 28: Petite Maison.....	67
FIGURE 29: Ekebergparken.....	69
FIGURE 30: Ekebergparken.....	70
FIGURE 31: Ekebergparken.....	72
FIGURE 32: Ekebergparken.....	72
FIGURE 33: Ekebergparken.....	73
FIGURE 34: Ekebergparken.....	74
FIGURE 35: Ekebergparken.....	75
FIGURE 36: Ekebergparken.....	75
FIGURE 37: Historical Photos of Las Vegas.....	82
FIGURE 38: Photo of Las Vegas Strip - 1964.....	84
FIGURE 39: Photo of Las Vegas Strip - 2018.....	85

LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURE 40: Las Vegas Strip Site Plan.....	86
FIGURE 41: Las Vegas Strip Site Plan.....	88
FIGURE 42: Bellagio Fountains.....	89
FIGURE 43: Las Vegas Strip Site Plan.....	90
FIGURE 44: Fashion Show Mall.....	91
FIGURE 45: Las Vegas Strip Site Plan.....	92
FIGURE 46: The Linq.....	93
FIGURE 47: Las Vegas Strip Site Plan.....	94
FIGURE 48: Little Church of the West.....	95
FIGURE 49: Las Vegas Strip Site Plan.....	96
FIGURE 50: Wedding Drive-thru.....	97
FIGURE 51: Las Vegas Strip Site Plan.....	98
FIGURE 52: Fremont Street.....	99
FIGURE 53: Wind Rose Diagram.....	100
FIGURE 54: Wind Rose Diagram.....	101
FIGURE 55: Temperature Analysis.....	103
FIGURE 56: Las Vegas Monorail.....	104
FIGURE 57: Circulation Analysis.....	105
FIGURE 58: Fremont Street.....	106
FIGURE 59: Photo of Las Vegas Strip - 2016.....	109
FIGURE 60: Eros and Psyche Statue.....	110
FIGURE 61: Eros and Psyche Painting.....	113
FIGURE 62: Space Allocation Table.....	114
FIGURE 63: Adjacency Matrix.....	115
FIGURE 64: Object of Desire.....	118
FIGURE 65: The Groom.....	120
FIGURE 66: The Bride.....	122
FIGURE 67: The Voyeur.....	124
FIGURE 68: The Audience.....	126
FIGURE 69: Groom Section.....	131
FIGURE 70: Bride Section.....	139
FIGURE 71: Voyeur Section.....	145
FIGURE 72: Audience Section.....	153

“Falling in love, according to Socrates, is both madness and a revelation of the world as it really is.”

-Perez-Gomez, Built Upon Love

Perhaps this is exactly what Las Vegas so desperately needs: a revelation among its inhabitants and visitors alike, a reawakening from the perpetual illusion of the Strip. It is only through understanding the city’s present identity and current function as a business that people may come to believe in what Sin City could still grow to be. Sin City blatantly advertises eroticism and desire, but many of its promises of erotic fulfillment fall flat once you pass through the elaborate facades of Las Vegas’s casinos and resorts.

Through my proposal for sequential spaces of desire (placed intermittently along the Strip) I hope to provide visitors and locals alike with a new way to view love and desire. I hope to personify the city through my architecture and provide the city with a body underneath its elaborate dress, behind the glamorous facades. By developing a narrative and journey that will take participants into previously unexplored, virgin terrain, I aspire to embody emotion through architecture and provide an experience unlike any other to be found along the Strip. By pushing the limits of architectural fiction and fantasy, I hope to make the soul (Psyche) dance, intertwined once again in a loving embrace with her beloved Eros, god of desire and love.

The city’s insistent demand for instant gratification and immediate pleasure has resulted in the creation of a business, not a community. Sin City may be the pleasure capitol of the world, but it knows *nothing* of love and meaningful encounters.

Las Vegas is a city without a love story.



Las Vegas, Nevada: a city quite unlike any other. A city of living in the moment, a city of billboards propped up in a desert, an international icon, a playground for adults. Las Vegas is a city founded on the idea of illusion, the spectacle, the show - achieved through its tacky use of allusion to other famous locations around the world, thereby deluding the city's inhabitants and visitors into thinking of this culturally-barren landscape as an addictive, "anything-goes" utopia.

Las Vegas is a transitional city, a place to be found on many people's bucket lists, but never a permanent destination. People come and go, but very few stay; it is a city of near constant motion, a city that never sleeps. "The Strip" is famous for its gaudy design, for its flashing lights, for its over-the-top décor; it's all a glamorous and captivating show, but backstage there is nothing but thin, wooden stilts holding up a meaningless and contextually irrelevant façade.

Las Vegas is an exercise in hyper-reality; Disneyland, but with strip clubs, wedding drive-thru's, and alcohol galore. Through the city's attempt to simulate our every fantasy, it strips the area and its inhabitants of any semblance of culture and of spaces of meaningful encounter. Sin City bottles pleasure and lust in a bottle and slaps a price tag on the bottom, assuring its consumers that what they are selling is the ultimate fantasy, the climax of human experience.

How might the inhabitants and visitors of Las Vegas be awoken from this perpetual dream, unfettered from the limitations inherent to hyper-reality? How might the blatant disconnect between Las Vegas' iconic image and its sense of community be bridged through architecture that begins a dialogue between Sin City's iconic image and the area's inhabitants and visitors alike? How might architecture inspire hope for the future in a city that prides itself on its ability to live only in the moment?

The Las Vegas strip continues to be one of the world's forefront examples of an adult playground, where immediate pleasures of the flesh are abounding. In such a locale though, where immediate gratification is demanded, there is no lack, no want, no desire. Without a space in-between, separating the lover from his beloved, there can be no love, no drive, no purpose.

"Eros's inability to be satisfied by worldly things points to the beyond: this lack is a vehicle for self-understanding and higher ethical aims. Lovers want something beyond an amorous embrace; while they often seek copulation with their 'other half', they don't want to be united forever. According to Hephaistos, even if we were to attain our original mythical status as spherical beings, we would probably roll back to Olympus in search of something else."

-Perez Gomez, Built Upon Love

In order to provide this "lack", I am proposing a sequence of architectural exhibits. Much like the Parc de la Villette (an urban design proposal that helped to reinvigorate a neighborhood that was previously composed of meat markets and slaughterhouses), I plan to construct a series of architectural exhibits as part of an urban design proposal for the Las Vegas Strip. These exhibits can be explored freely, but the intention is to take users on a journey, thereby revealing the "underbelly" of Sin City, helping people to see the city in a new way, as well as develop a new relationship between desire, love, and the pedestrians that walk along the Strip.

USER GROUPS

-Tourists.....	25,000 - 75,000
-Locals.....	2,000 - 5,000

**Varies depending on time of year*

**Units: estimated number of users per day*

CONSIDERATIONS

-Street.....

-Las Vegas is a city designed for the automobile, not for the pedestrian. How might my architecture on the strip interact with the street but not as a billboard or sign?

-Sidewalk.....

-How might my design seduce and entrance the average pedestrian who is traversing up and down the Las Vegas Strip?

-Casinos.....

-How might my architecture interact with the surrounding hotels and casinos in a meaningful, non-tacky way? All of the architecture on the strip alludes to other famous places around the world, so how do I design architecture for a city that lacks an identity/context of its own.



16 Figure 1 | Site Context Maps

LAS VEGAS, NV

A single, dazzling stripe in the desert continues to catch the eyes of tens of millions of people around the world every year. The Las Vegas Strip is lined with every extravagant form of entertainment one can imagine: from choreographed fountains to high-rise casino-resorts, from sidewalk bars to circus-style acts, from roller-coasters to ferris wheels, from the streets of Venice to the pyramids of Egypt. Walking the Las Vegas strip is a surreal experience as you seemingly traverse the world, seeing “everything” while simultaneously truly experiencing nothing at all.

Las Vegas is an exercise in hyper-reality; Disneyland, but with strip clubs and alcohol galore. Through the city's attempt to simulate our every fantasy, it strips the area and its inhabitants of any sense of culture and of spaces of meaningful encounter. Sin City bottles pleasure and lust in a bottle and slaps a price tag on the bottom, meanwhile telling its consumers that what they are selling is the ultimate experience, the climax of human experience. People flock to what is otherwise a barren landscape for this promise of erotic fulfillment, and yet there is no desire to be found at all. Why? Because Las Vegas prizes itself on its immediacy; there is never a lack. And without a lack, without a space in-between the lover and his beloved, there can be no lust. And without lust, there is no desire, no sense of intimacy, no eroticism, and ultimately no love.

For my design proposal, I plan to take inspiration from Plato for the organization and arrangement of my sequential spaces of desire.

“In Phaedrus... Plato describes erotic delirium as a form of divine madness, possession by a supernatural power, mystic initiation with successive stages, and the final epiphany of beauty”

-Perez-Gomez, *Built Upon Love*

1 POSSESSION/SEDUCTION

2 MYSTIC INITIATION/ENTRANCEMENT

3 EPIPHANY OF BEAUTY

“For Plato, this experience was comparable to a religious epiphany” -Perez-Gomez, *Built Upon Love*



GOALS OF THE PROPOSAL

1. Slow down the “hyper-reality”. expose the simulation
2. Design architecture, not a billboard
3. Cater to the pedestrian, not the automobile
4. Provide spaces of meaningful encounter
5. Introduce eroticism to Sin City
6. Establish a “lack”, open up a space for desire
7. Provide Las Vegas with a love story
8. Embrace the artistic/creative flare of the city
9. Develop a progression of spaces, a journey
10. Evoke moods, fabricate atmospheres
11. Embody desire through specific architectural elements

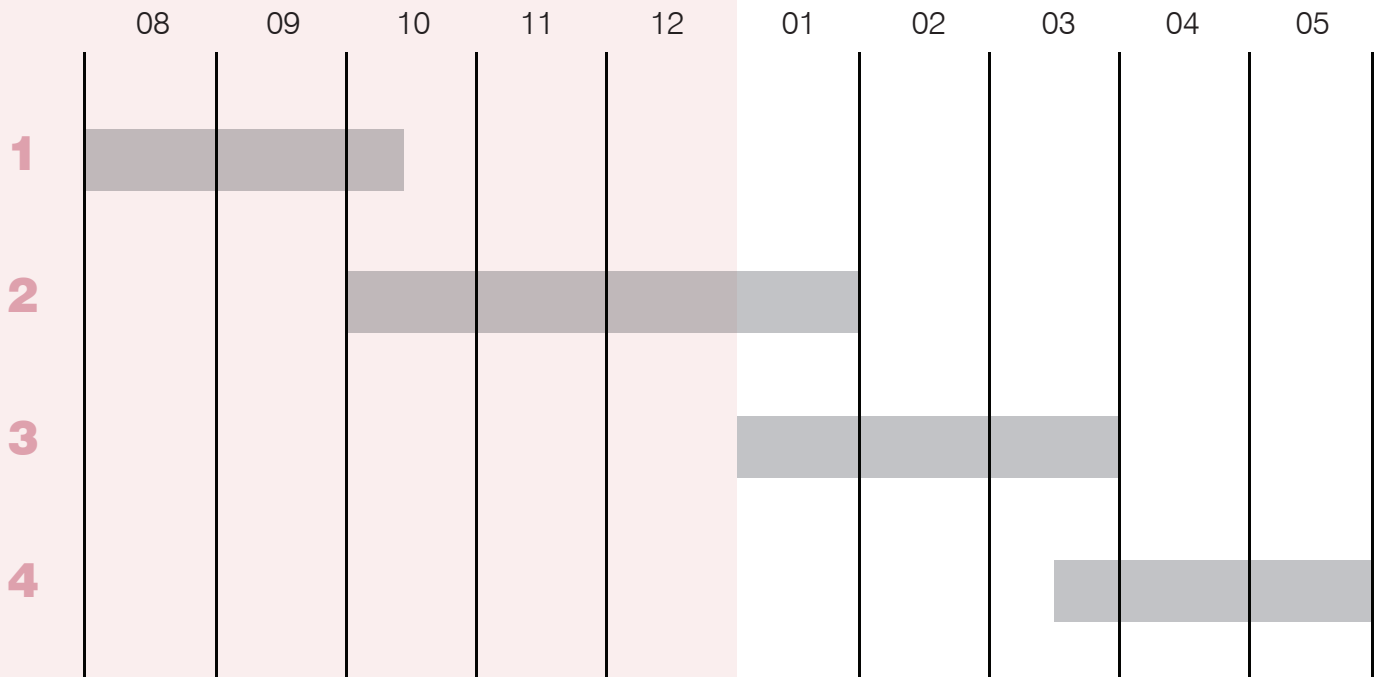


Figure 2 | Project Schedule

1 PROPOSAL

Complex Investigation
Analysis
Inventory

2 PROGRAMMING

Proposal Expansion
Project Maturation
Further Justification
Space Allocation

3 DESIGN

Space and massing
Site solutions
Environmental Factors
Materials and structure
Spatial Programming

4 PRESENTATION

Deliverables
Presentation
Portfolio update

Following the completion of my thesis proposal, I plan to further organize the research I have already conducted before diving head-first into the conceptual phase of design. Rapid, iterative design and experimentation will be key when further developing my thesis idea in order to bring it to fruition.

I plan to use a variety of computer programs to in aid my design process, including the Adobe Suite, Rhinoceros 6.0, and Revit. However, my primary design methodology has always been and continues to be through hand-sketching. Through constant sketching and critique, I hope to bring theory into reality as I begin to organize my final presentation. Documentation and organization will be critical in order to stay on top of not only my research but also my design itself, to keep everything from spiraling out of control. Through my conceptual design phase and design development I plan to continue looking at the cultural context, historical precedent, and interesting case study examples in order to ensure I am producing an original and authentic product that is both personal and impactful on a larger scale.

DOCUMENTATION OF THE DESIGN PROCESS

Medium for Design Investigation:

- Hand Sketching and Painting
- Collage-work
- Hand Modeling
- Writing architectural fiction

Software for Investigation

- Autodesk AutoCAD
- Autodesk Revit
- Rhinoceros 6.0

Software for Representation

- Adobe Suite

Before tackling the topic of designing spaces of desire and eroticism within the context of the Las Vegas Strip, it is critical to first acknowledge and study “voluptuous architecture” of the past. I researched and analyzed how architects, designers, and artists have broached the topic of love and sexuality in the past. The following texts and projects were given special consideration for my theoretical research:

- Architecture as Space of Desire: The Hypnerotomachia Polifili
-Perez Gomez

- Paris and its Folds, Paris and its Faces
-Angeliki Sioli

- Douglas Darden’s “Sex Shop”: An Immodest Proposal
-Peter Schneider

- Marcel Duchamp: Appearance Stripped Bare
-Octavio Paz

- Phenomenology of Perception - The Body in its Sexual Being
-Maurice Merleau-Ponty

- “Étant Donnés: 1. La Chute d’Eau, 2. Le Gaz d’Éclairage”
-Marcel Duchamp

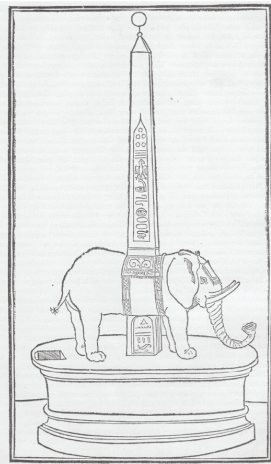
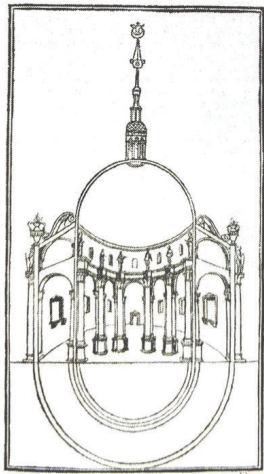


Figure 3 | The Hyperotomachia Polifili

Architecture as Space of Desire: The Hypnerotomachia Polifili

Author: Perez Gomez

The ancient Greeks intimately describe the origin of human love as we know it today, the “birth” of Eros, god of love, sex, and desire (more commonly known today as Cupid). “In the beginning, the god Eros was beautiful, but not necessarily winged.” (Gomez, *Built Upon Love*)

Eros was one of three primordial divinities, responsible for the initial separation of the other two, Ouranos (the sky) from Gaia (the earth), who nevertheless permanently copulated, united in the perpetual darkness that preceded the age of man. Primordial Eros was itself complete, androgynous. Only when Time (Kronos) erupted into the scene and castrated Ouranos, was human reality set in motion – the cycles of day and night, the yearly seasons. At this point Eros was reborn, together with Aphrodite, from the blood and semen of Ouranos as it fell into the Mediterranean. In his new incarnation, Eros (Amor or Cupid) became the god of desire, seeking to join those that he took over...Eros defines the space/time of human culture as inherently bounded, pierced by an arrow of infinite desire yet always limited, suggesting that in the recognition and embracing of this tension, humanity may also recognize its purpose.

-Architecture as the Space of Desire: The Hypnerotomachia Polifili.
In this way, it was only through separation, opening a space in-between (in this case the earth and the sky) that human love and desire as we know them today were born, that Eros was given his wings.

The Las Vegas strip continues to be one of the world's forefront examples of an adult playground, where immediate pleasures of the flesh are abounding. In such a locale though, where immediate gratification is demanded, there is no lack, no want, and no desire.

“Eros's inability to be satisfied by worldly things points to the beyond: this lack is a vehicle for self-understanding and higher ethical aims. Lovers want something beyond an amorous embrace; while they often seek copulation with their ‘other half’, they don't want to be united forever. According to Hephaistos, even if we were to attain our original mythical status as spherical beings, we would probably roll back to Olympus in search of something else.”

In the work *Hypnerotomachia*, first published in 1499, the protagonist Poliphilo is constantly searching for this “something else”, he is searching for his beloved Polia, the love of his life, his ‘center’.

Falling asleep within a dream, Poliphilo dreamt that he was alone in a threatening dark forest... as he traverses the forest’s dark and mysterious interior, he discusses in great detail the incredible architectural marvels that he comes across, all of which he encounters while in a passionate pursuit and search for Polia, his beloved. He encounters many, beautiful, enrapturing, and terrifying things along the way...

For example, he sees and analyzes a monument dedicated to propitious destiny, a circular temple of love that is the epitome of architectural perfection, and “a magnificent elephant that contains the tombs of a solar king and a lunar queen, representing sulphur and mercury, the masculine and feminine principles of alchemical work”.

One of the most critical moments in the text is when nymphs that personify the five senses lead the protagonist to a crossroads where he must make a choice: a life of contemplation, a life of political action, or a life of desire where fulfillment is never fully present nor fully absent.

The nymphs fail to convince him to choose a life of contemplation or a life of political action, and instead Poliphilo chooses a life of desire. He makes the correct choice, as his beloved is to be found behind the door, although the darkness of the scene obscures her identity from Poliphilo at the time, thereby delaying the consummation of his erotic desire.

Even later in the text, when Poliphilo identifies Polia and they come tantalizingly close to an erotic embrace, he wakes up from his dream. “The voyage of Poliphilo can be seen as the ascent of the soul in search of knowledge, and onto the unity of God, motivated by the love of beauty incarnated in the poetic images of architecture”.

“*Hypnerotomachia* helps to legitimize the possibility and desirability of actually changing the world of human affairs through constructions of the human imagination”.

“Indeed, *Hypnerotomachia* is the first narrative articulation of architectural intentions at the very inception of the modern age. It conveys the presence of erotic space, of sensuous, emotionally charged atmospheres as the primary ground of architectural meaning.”



Figure 4 | The Hypnerotomachia Polifili

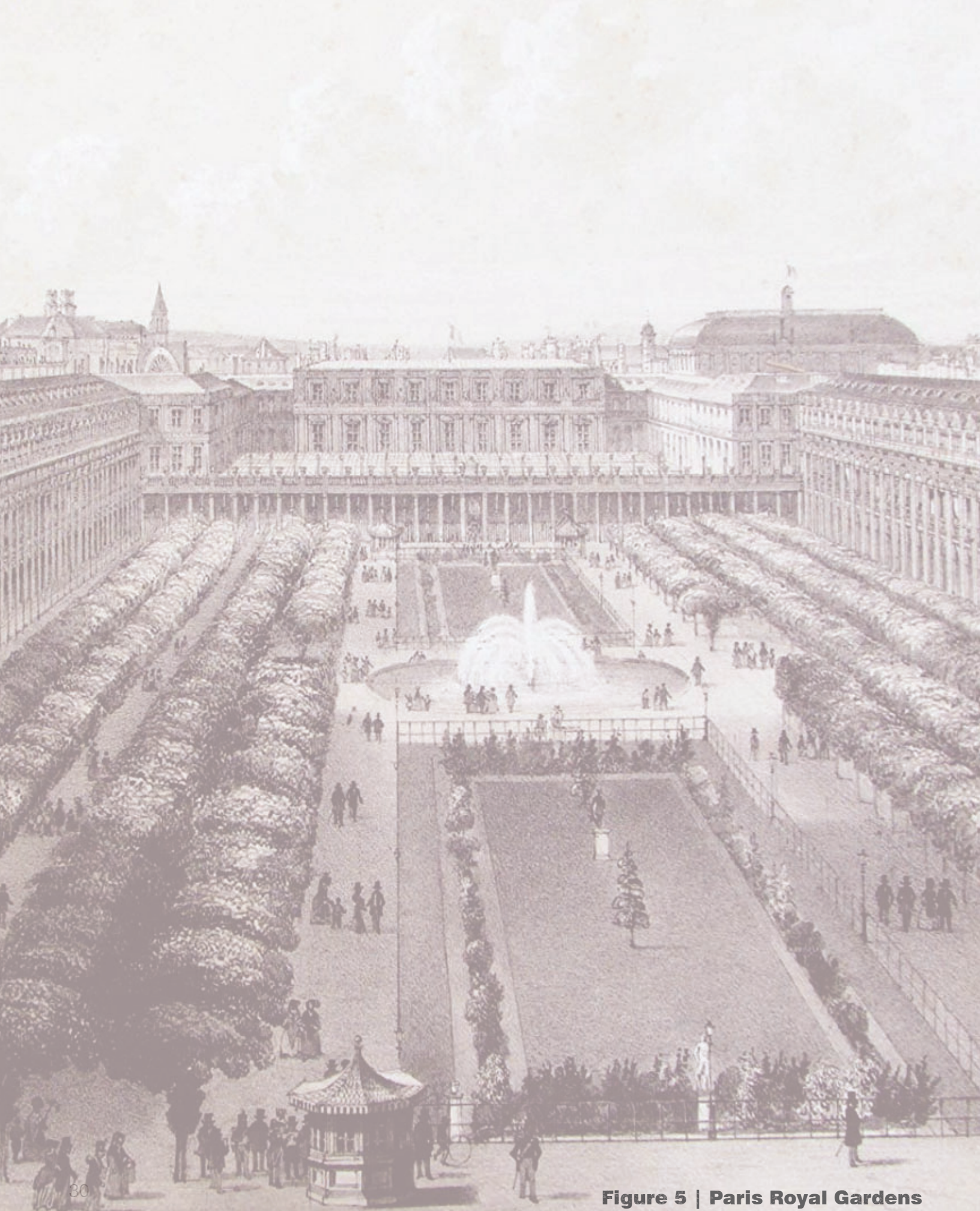


Figure 5 | Paris Royal Gardens

Paris and its Folds, Paris and its Faces

Author: Angeliki Sioli

Philippe Soupault describes through his evocative narrative the *Last Nights of Paris* how he comes to see the city of Paris in a more intimate, meaningful way only through traversing the city with his beloved Georgette, a captivatingly beautiful “lady of the night”.

The protagonist notes that as he traverses the city of Paris with the woman he loves, the city itself is transformed into something utterly new, perhaps even something more ‘real’. “Writing on Eros, the Bittersweet (1986), Anne Carson argues that ‘there is something uniquely convincing about the perceptions that occur to you when you are in love. They seem truer than other perceptions, and more truly your own, won from reality at personal cost. Your powers of imagination connive at this vision, calling up possibilities from beyond the actual”.

“The Parisian night itself acquires for Soupault the status of a woman, while his love and desire for Georgette are diffused into the city” (Sioli). In this way, the city itself is personified, adopting the identity of a beautiful, captivating woman, of a prostitute. One of the most interesting comparisons that this narrative draws is between Georgette herself and public space, or more specifically the avenue de l’Opera. This avenue was constructed at a time when functionalism was all the rage. Thus, this public space was viewed first and foremost as a circulation space, efficient and orderly. However, as Soupault traverses Paris with Georgette, he sees “the avenue as a place difficult to fully access that requires the same trial and tenderness needed in the approach of a woman.”

The text elaborates that “a kind of respect for public space is aroused in the same way that Soupault always respected Georgette despite her being a public woman: a prostitute. Public space becomes personal and intimate, despite grandiose dimensions and impressive presence... an experience bearing similarities with the bodily pleasure of an erotic encounter.”

“The quality of place emerging from the city’s public spaces, as captured in the narrative, is definitely not of an intellectual order... it rather originates in the erotic impulse itself, in Soupault’s need to quench his physical thirst.”

“Public space, as a woman, is appropriated and loved in flesh; it becomes an extension of Soupault’s own body and negates any functionalistic or prosaic use.”

Through my proposal, I hope to create a personal and intimate experience in Las Vegas, a city that is known for its extravagance, for its “grandiose dimensions and impressive presence”. I hope to personify Sin City, providing spaces of flesh and dimension underneath the glamorous facades.



Figure 6 | Avenue de l'Opera



Unclothed facade

Figure 7 | "Sex Shop"

Douglas Darden's "Sex Shop": An Immodest Proposal

Author: Peter Schneider

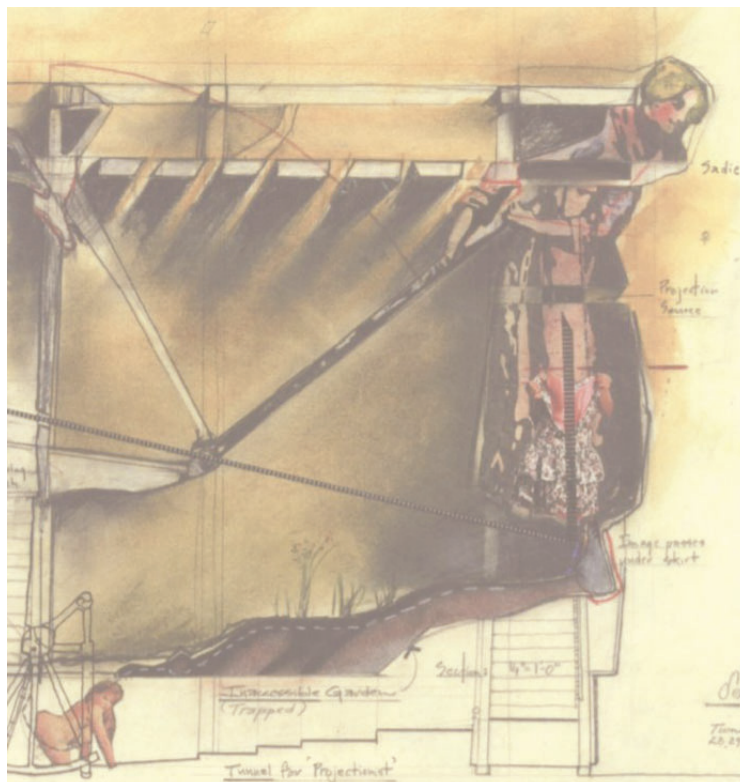
Douglas Darden was a creator of architectural fantasy in the pursuit of penetrating virgin intellectual territory, yielding new architectural insights and knowledge. Through flipping traditional architectural conventions on their head, Darden was able to push his work to a previously unexplored terrain. *Condemned Building* is a collection of ten works that "condemn the act of building"; "each project turns over a canon [an architectural trope] and looks carefully at 'architecture's underbelly'" (Schneider).

However, Darden's "Sex Shop" stands apart from the rest by the absence of the project itself. Instead, the work can only be viewed through fragments and allusive, albeit captivating, drawings. Darden deduced that the best strategy to explore, unearth, and turn over architecture's hidden depths was through the ironic and rhetorical device of 'reversal'.

To quote Peter Schneider in his analysis of "Sex Shop", "Douglas Darden's *reversa* for *Sex Shop* proposes an architecture that concretizes, while never fulfilling, desire. This architecture simultaneously arouses and frustrates our longing for shelter and place." *Sex Shop* returns us to the Garden of Eden, a paradise of man in unity with God that served as the original 'shelter' of humankind, the home of Adam and Eve. This garden was "enclosed, sheltered, hidden, buried, and inaccessible. ['Sex Shop'] traces the outlines of that original garden that is always "other" than the one we occupy. It frames our encounter with Eve, and Adam, and reminds us of that blissful state of graces before the original sin, before our pleasure turned into our pain. It asks us to recall that moment when innocence was lost: when we became aware of the existence of evil and we discovered our nakedness, our shame, our guilt, and especially our fear".

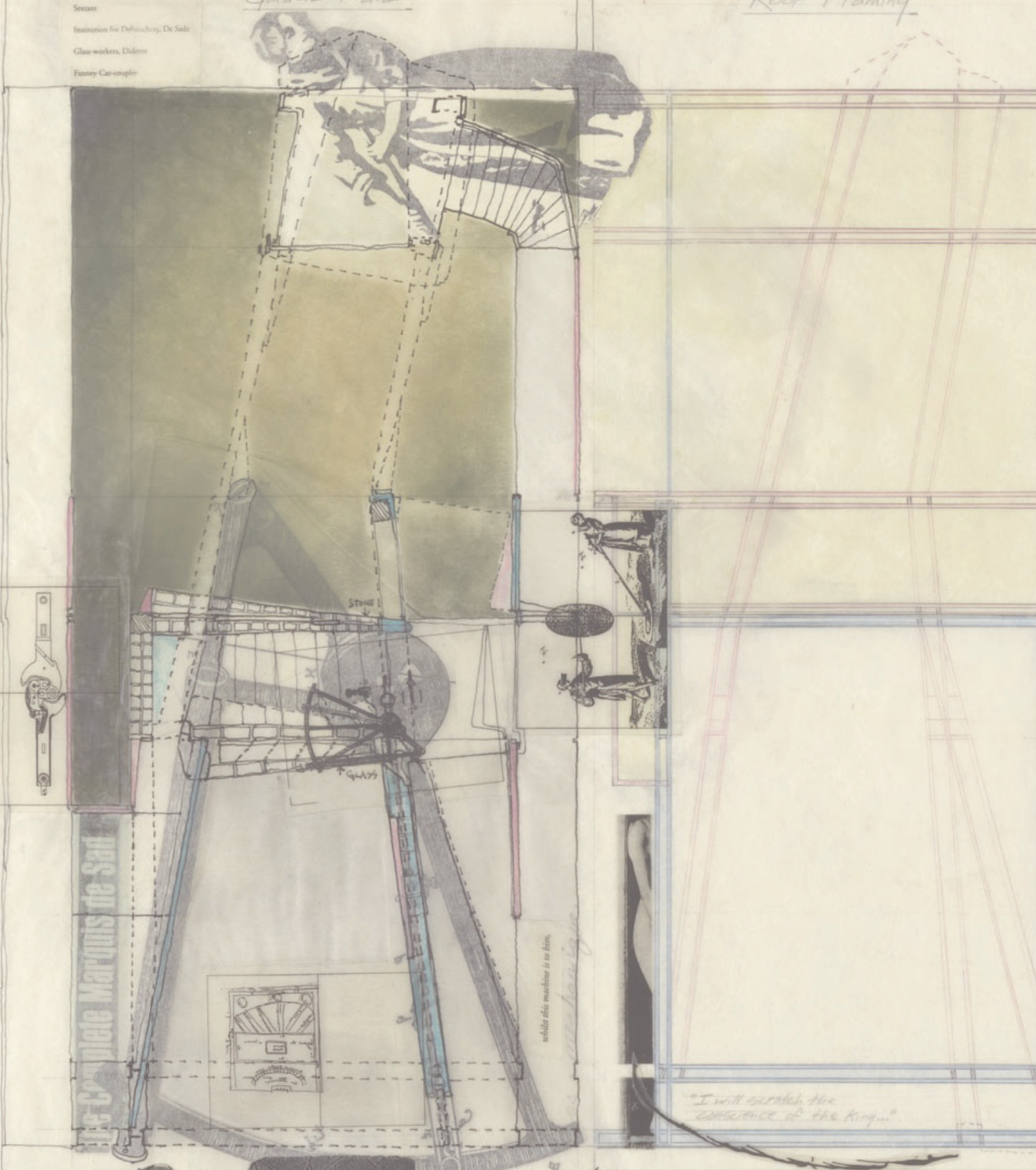
Pleasure and pain are two sides of the same coin, hopelessly interwoven in an intricate braid that defines human existence. The fall of Adam and Eve and their expulsion from the Garden of Eden was crucial to mankind's understanding of love. To remain in a state of perpetual blissful ignorance for eternity would, simply put, be an uninspired, and dreadfully boring love story, wouldn't you agree? Just as a virgin must lose their innocence in order to partake in and understand the virtue of their sexual appetite, so too did Adam and Eve have to partake in the knowledge of the tree of good and evil to comprehend the meaning of their existence. It is through pain we can know pleasure, through fear we understand belonging, through lack we comprehend fulfillment, and through shame we recognize virtue. Darden clarifies that it is that "lump of fear in our stomachs that teaches us to build shelter: to absolve and dissolve that fear, and to domesticate our fear".

Sex Shop reminds us that shelter is not necessarily the representation of the bachelors desire, but the projection of the desire of the bride, a critical theme in Marcel Duchamp's "Large Glass", otherwise known as "The Bride Stripped Bare by Her Bachelors".



Garden Plan

Roof Framing



while this machine is to him,

"I will scratch the conscience of the King!"

29'-0"

Let us now place
 the machine in the
 stone, who
 will now and
 then see it to see

Figure 9 | "Sex Shop"
 August 7, '95
 10, 14, 17, 24 & 29.



Marcel Duchamp: Appearance Stripped Bare

Author: Octavio Paz

In order to understand desire and love from the perspective of the object of desire themselves, we must look at Duchamp's "Large Glass", a work of art that remains to this day intentionally unfinished after over 8 years of passionate work. The work is composed of two large panes of glass, the top containing the bride to be, the object of desire, and the bottom representing the bachelors in waiting. Eternally divided, the bachelors will never be united with the bride, and yet the constant visual temptation ensures their desire remains perpetually present.

In his work titled Marcel Duchamp, Appearance Stripped Bare, Octavio Paz draws a parallel between the story being told through Duchamp's work and the ancient Roman myth of Diana's bath and Actaeon's downfall. The goddess of wildlife, a virgin huntress, Diana was known for her strength, hunting prowess, and elusive nature, preferring to hunt at night. One night, the goddess was caught off guard as she was taking a bath in a nearby stream. Actaeon, a mortal renowned for his own hunting ability, stumbled upon Diana by chance as he traversed the forest with his dogs in search of deer.

Both goddess and man are startled, locking eyes in this moment of tension. The huntress has become the hunted, Actaeon's lust blossoming as his eyes undress the goddess's voluptuous form. And yet, the desire is two-fold as "[the] Virgin [goddess] strips herself in the look of him who looks at her... [in this way] Diana depends on Actaeon; he is the instrument of her desire to see herself" -Marcel Duchamp, Octavio Paz

The tables turn as the Diana uses her power to transform Actaeon in this moment into a deer, ironically the initial object of the man's desire as he traversed through the forest, and so the story comes full circle. Actaeon is devoured by his hunting dogs as the goddess retreats into the shadows of the night, the erotic, sexual tension left forever unresolved.

"In both cases [of Duchamp's "Large Glass" and the story of Actaeon and Diana] we witness not the violation of the two virgins but its homologue: visual violation... Our look really does pass through the material obstacle – the door of the Assemblage, the boughs and leaves of the goddess's sanctuary – and so the transgression is as much psychic as material." -Marcel Duchamp, Octavio Paz



Figure 11 | Actaeon and Diana

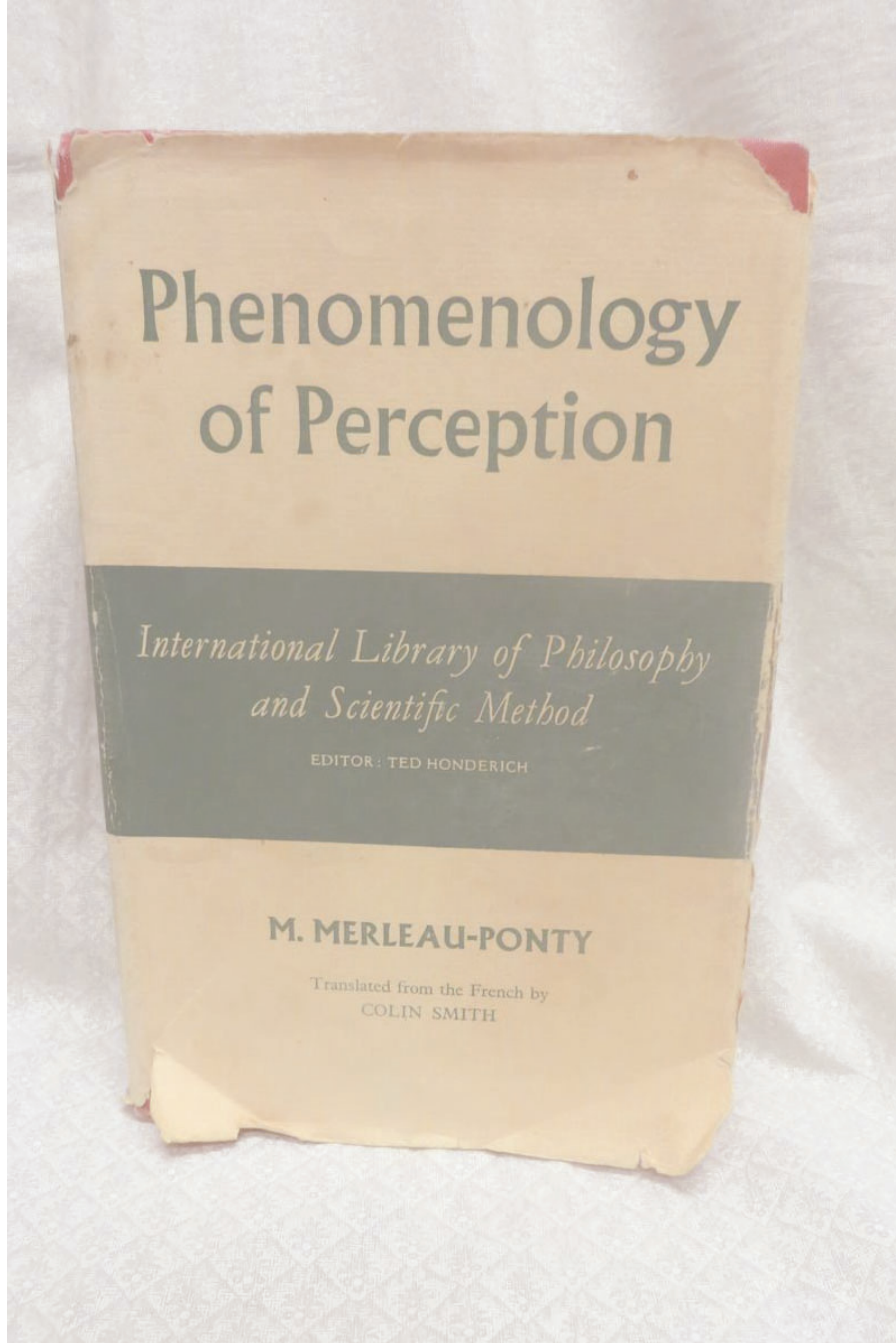


Figure 12 | Phenomenology of Perception

Phenomenology of Perception The Body in its Sexual Being

Author: Maurice Merleau-Ponty

In order to better understand the relationship between architecture and human sexuality, it is necessary to explore and understand the influence of sexuality and desire on our motivations, decisions, and actions. The esteemed 20th-century philosopher Merleau-Ponty, discusses the body in its sexual being in his work *Phenomenology of Perception*. “The sexual is not the genital, sexual life is not a mere effect of the processes having their seat in the genital organs, the libido is not an instinct... [but rather] the general power... of taking root in different settings, of establishing [oneself] through different experiences, of gaining structures of conduct. It is what causes a man to have a history” (Ponty 1945).

In his writing, Ponty posits that perhaps there is a mode of perception or a state of consciousness that is rooted in our sexuality that is distinct from purely objective and intellectual perception. He argues that “there is an erotic ‘comprehension’ not of the order of understanding, since understanding subsumes an experience, once perceived, under some idea, while desire comprehends blindly by linking body to body” (Ponty 1945). Through my artefact (and by extension my architecture), I hope to embody this blind ‘erotic comprehension’, thereby showing that desire cannot be reduced to a simple lustful gaze between prospective lovers, but is instead a fundamental component to our human experience. Love is blind... and yet somehow it has found each and every one of us, its delicate fingers prodding, coaxing, and seducing the earth’s population into doing its bidding. I say this not to imply that we are slaves to our sexual appetites; no, rather we are eager, albeit sometimes unwitting, participants.

While we may try to remain unaffected by desire, it is an ultimately futile goal. To quote Ponty, “Sexuality is neither transcended in human life nor shown up at its centre by unconscious representations. It is at all times present there like an atmosphere... From the part of the body which it especially occupies, sexuality spreads forth like an odour or like a sound” (Ponty 1945). All attempts to confine sexuality in a box, to repress its influence and impact, or even to eliminate it entirely from a specific situation or context will undoubtedly fail long-term. One can therefore conclude that the incredible permeability of sexuality in culture and society is a simple and undeniable truth. Sexuality and human existence are hopelessly interwoven, an utterly tangled mess... a labyrinth of wants and needs, of hopes and desires, that is impossible to navigate unscathed. “There is interfusion between sexuality and existence, which means that existence permeates sexuality and vice versa, so that it is impossible to determine, in a given decision or action, the proportion of sexual to other motivations, impossible to label a decision or act ‘sexual’ or ‘non-sexual’ “ (Ponty 1945).

In the work *Ein Beitrag zur Analyse der Sexualfunktion*, a doctor by the name of Steinfeld observed and analyzed the emotional and sexual behavior of a man (Schneider) that had suffered a wound of limited extent in the occipital region of his brain. Schneider’s case was unique, as while his intellect and sanity remained intact, he lost any and all sexual drive; simply put, he was a man without desire. Unfortunately for the man, it quickly became apparent that the absence of desire extended to a general lack of ambition. The man had been transported to a foreign landscape composed solely of black and white, lacking the subtle grays of ambiguity that motivate us, that inspire us to look closer, to inquire further. In this alien world, “perception [had] lost its erotic structure, both spatially and temporally. What disappeared from the patient [was] his power of projecting before himself a sexual world”. Activities and hobbies that had previously enthralled the man lost their significance, as did many of his past friendships. “The very word satisfaction [had] no longer any meaning for him, since there [was] no intention or initiative”, no real purpose. Schneider still possessed the ability to recognize and experience pain, but pleasure had become inaccessible, and in a world rife with both, that was a very difficult reality to face.



Figure 13 | Phenomenology of Perception



Duchamp’s “Étant Donnés: 1. La Chute d’Eau, 2. Le Gaz d’Éclairage”

Artist: Marcel Duchamp

“The truth is that thought does not like what is new and does its best to reduce the new to the old.” - Paul Ricoeur

To create something entirely new, something never seen before by the likes of man, is a daunting task; no, an impossible task. In his writing *The Function of Fiction in Shaping Reality*, Paul Ricoeur succinctly describes the unmalleable rigidity of conventional thought. We are all inclined to resort to a linear, reductive perspective when faced with something we are unfamiliar with, dissecting that which is alien and identifying that which is familiar. However, through language, through metaphor, and through fiction it is possible to bring together previously distant entities, shatter prior categorizations, and create something that has wholly “unique”.

“Every metaphor, in bringing together two previously distant semantic fields strikes against a prior categorization, which it shatters.” - Paul Ricoeur

In his writing, Ricoeur contests the disparity between image as fiction and image as copy, elaborating that images rendered by an artist are not less real than a perfect reproduction or likeness of a given reality. In fact, fiction enacts and engages a reader’s imagination in order to re-describe, or even augment, reality. In their work *Reading Poetry and Philosophy*, Cyril and Liliane Welch support this idea by describing a reader’s essential role in bringing a written work to life.

“[Any challenging and insightful piece of literature] calls attention to the reader’s self, it does not simply serve as a mirror of what the reader already is, but as an evocation to ‘put together’ while ‘seeing through’ the elements, the finials on each page.”
- Cyril Welch, Liliane Welch

This paradox of reading before we can even see or imagine what we are reading is partly what makes fiction so incredibly engaging. Fiction evokes and nurtures a constant re-fabrication in your mind's eye of the innumerable constituents of reality, resulting in a surrealist, almost cubist perspective that is somehow "more" than your initial interpretation.

Duchamp's infamous and mysterious final work "Étant Donnés" achieves this re-fabrication of reality through a peepshow-like diorama that can ironically only be viewed from a singular position, looking through two adjacent eye-holes in a pair of locked antique wooden doors. Only a single person is able to peer through this apparatus at any one time, which in turn makes for a very self-conscious and intimate viewing experience. In this way, the viewer becomes part of the art installation itself as they too are put on display as they leer into this intricate diorama. In the foreground stands a crumbling brick wall just beyond the door, and in the distance can be seen a bucolic landscape filled with autumn-tinged trees, rolling hills, and an actively flowing waterfall. The focus of the perspective rests on the nude body of a woman that lays sprawled on a nest of dried branches, her legs spread wide and her face and right arm just out of view. Her left hand holds a small, electric lamp that helps illuminate the disturbing yet picturesque scene.

Duchamp's work harshly juxtaposes the bucolic with the freakish in order to invigorate the viewer's imagination and provoke feelings of both disgust and intrigue. Who is the woman? Is the scene a depiction of a moment of post-coital bliss, or rather the aftermath of sexual violence and rape? Where is the woman's lover/aggressor? Is this simply another addition to art history's extensive archive of aggression against women, or is the true meaning perhaps a bit more profound, residing beneath the carefully constructed yet haphazardly pieced-together layers of the diorama?

"The illusion of space and atmosphere seen in the peephole view is remarkable, especially given the out-of-sight construction that produces it, a ramshackle exercise in bad carpentry and precarious wiring, with pieces of drapery held in place by clothespins." - Holland Cotter

His work raises a plethora of questions precisely because it is a work of a fiction, a meticulously crafted narrative that pulls the user in and haunts their thoughts for days and weeks to come. Jasper Johns, a longtime 'Duchampian', referred to "Étant Donnés" as "the strangest work of art in any museum", and this is due to the fact that Duchamp's work has no direct precedent. This diorama provokes the imagination through powerful imagery and its use of metaphor, but ultimately still relies on user interaction and engagement to re-describe, augment, and transcend reality. The primary strength of "Étant Donnés" resides in its ambiguity: ambiguity of meaning and purpose, ambiguity of depiction, ambiguity of atmosphere, ambiguity of construction (this piece was made towards the end of Duchamp's life when he had declared he had abandoned art for a life of chess and cogitation). Duchamp explicitly left his final piece of art as a frustratingly enigmatic experience, and by doing so he enraptured the world while simultaneously giving his final farewell, leaving behind a fantastic tableau of his creative genius.

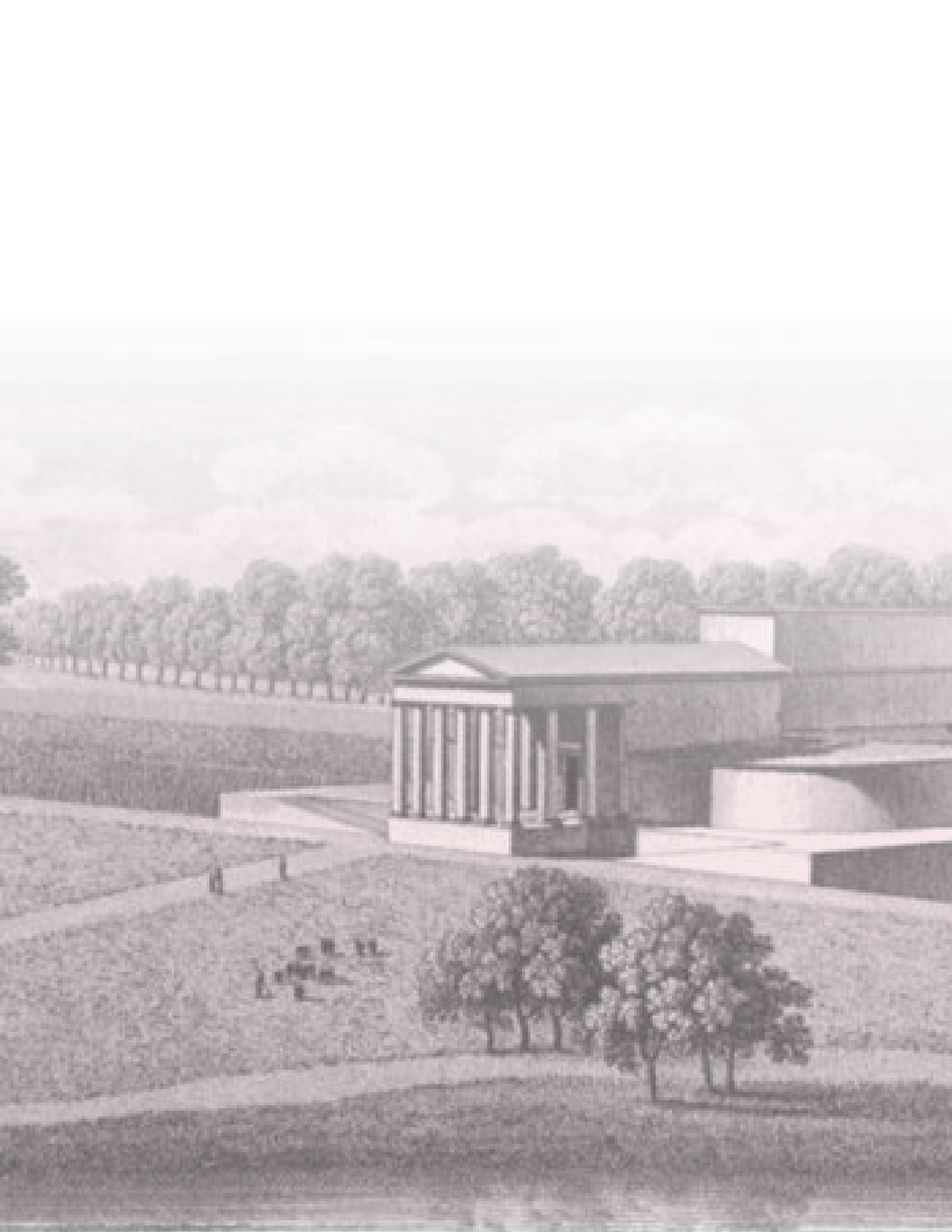
A direct parallel can be drawn between this element of ambiguity present in Duchamp's work (including other erotic pieces such as "The Bride Stripped Bare by Her Bachelors" and "Nude Descending a Staircase, No. 2") and the space of desire that is opened up through the insightful, yet entirely fictional, work of several architectural visionaries: Claude-Nicolas Ledoux, Jean Jacques Lequeu, and Douglas Darden to name a few. When crafting and articulating 'spaces of desire', it is imperative to incorporate lack... to always leave a space in between, a space for cupid's arrow to find its target, a space for sexual tension to be fueled.

When selecting the following case studies for precedent research, three major factors were given consideration:

1. Program
2. Context
3. Urban Impact

The following projects were given special consideration for precedent research:

- Ledoux's Oikema
- Parc de la Villette
- The Petite Maison of Mademoiselle Dervieux
- Ekebergparken
- Stockholm's Subway Art



LEDOUX'S OIKEMA

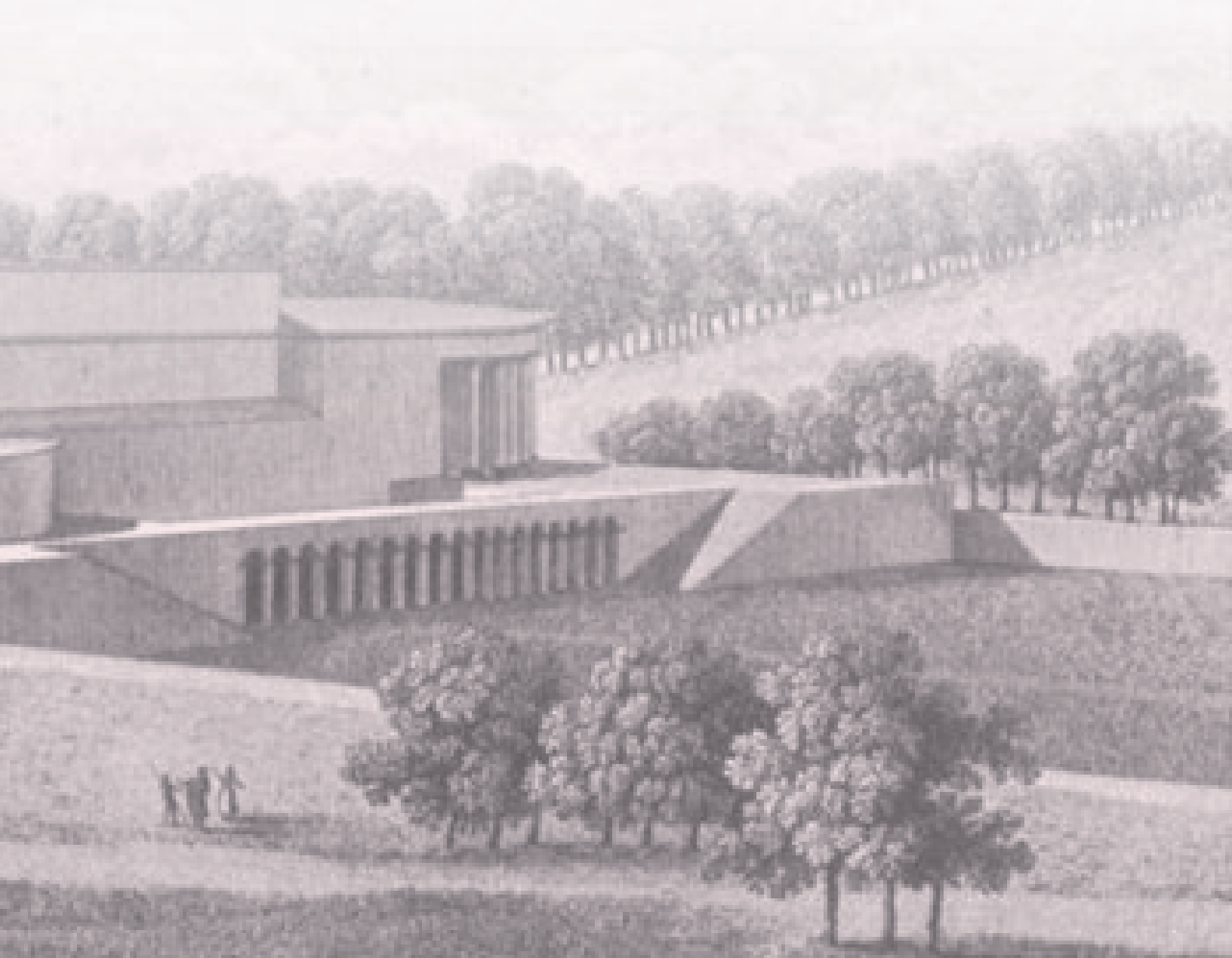


Figure 14 | Ledoux's "Oikema"

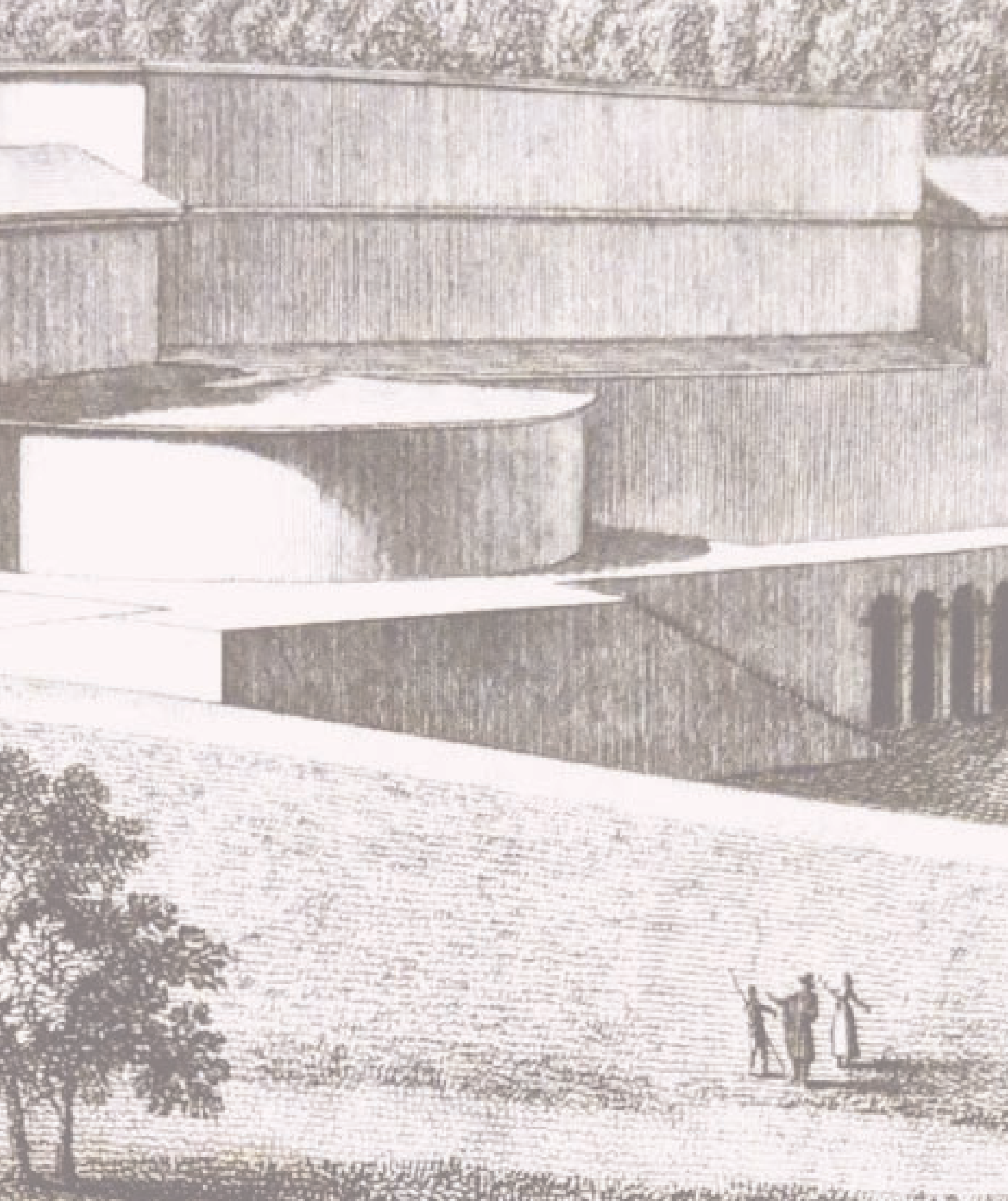


Figure 15 | Ledoux's "Oikema"

TYPOLOGY: BROTHEL

LOCALE: CHAUX, FRANCE

ARCHITECT: CLAUDE NICOLAS LEDOUX

To explore and understand the architecture of desire as a space of worship, adoration, and sexual fantasy, it is worth discussing Claude-Nicolas Ledoux's theoretical proposal of his own 'temple of love'. He proposed a "workshop of corruption" called the Oikema, which would serve as a civic brothel. This brothel is proclaimed by Ledoux as a "temple of love" where the "boiling and unfaithful youth of [the city would be] free to indulge their sexual appetites to excess and dissolution" (Holmquist). Declaring that "the feeling of the degradation of man and depravity in its nakedness would awaken sleeping virtue, [Ledoux envisioned] that patrons would emerge from the Oikema in horror and disgust to abandon vice for the true pleasures and joys of love in marriage."

Through designing an intrinsically sensual architecture, Ledoux aspired to seduce the city's youth and take them on a journey, exposing them to the moral ambiguity inherent to sexual desire, simultaneously exposing them to their depraved, animalistic nature as well as the incredible beauty to be found in lust, desire, and sexual fulfillment. One of the most critical components to the design was a single condition that the architect placed upon the patronage of the Oikema, and that was that "the names of those who frequent [the] tolerated dens [of the brothel] be indelibly inscribed on [the] walls" of the structure itself". Thus, the architect demanded that the patrons of the brothel take accountability for their lusting behavior.

A sensuous, captivating narrative serves to structure the architecture through which the user enters and traverses the Oikema's infamous phallic plan. The voluptuous forms kindle feelings of natural desire and help to sweep the user deep into its dark and mystifying interior.

"Within the Oikema, erotica desire is no longer immediate... but mysterious. In 'disdaining the light', delightful sensuous pleasures have become the 'devouring fires' of knowledge stolen from the gods".

As the user descends deeper into the brothel's interior, the erotic quality of the architecture is heightened. The physical descent is paralleled by the user's descent into depravity and domination by the appetites and senses. The moral ambiguity of the situation becomes apparent as the architecture changes.

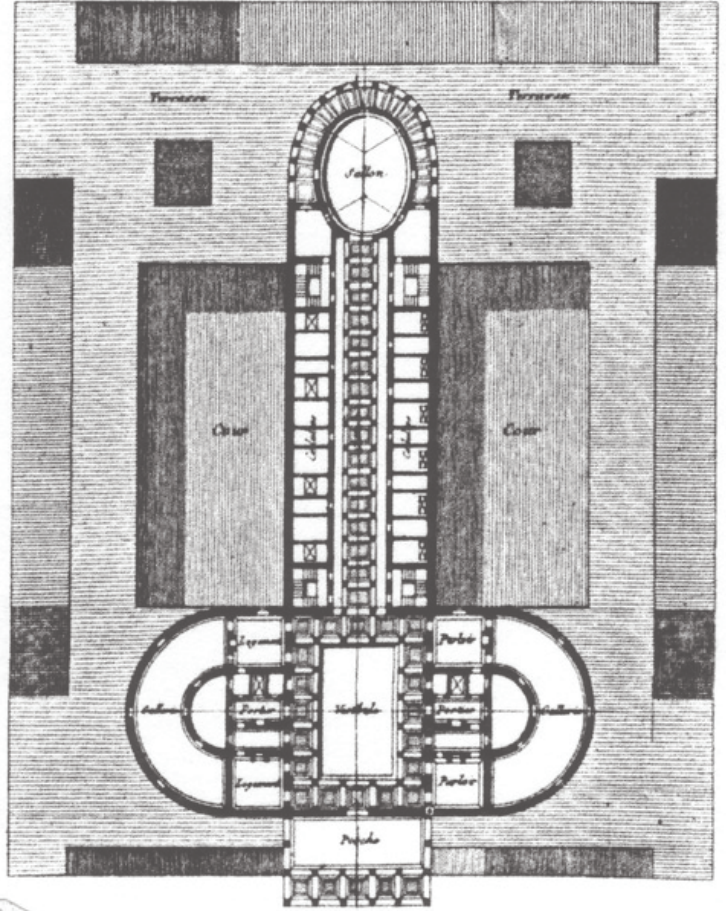
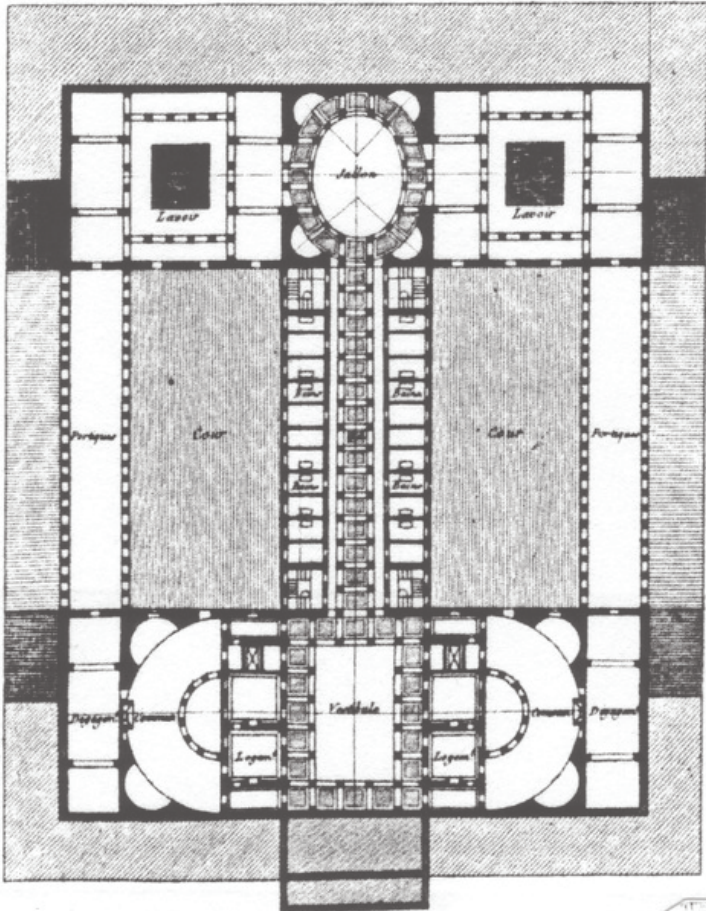
To quote the text, "instead of the gentle murmuring of leaves being caressed by a sweet wind, our senses are insidiously lulled by music played on contrived and dissembling instruments. The scents of thyme, iris, violet, and mint are replaced by artificial narcotic essences... [perhaps the user has] not been pierced by Cupid's arrows but, like the crew of Odysseus, poisoned and turned into rutting swine, experiencing our carnal abandon as the agony of our souls."

Ledoux recognized that passion and attraction are stronger than reason, so he had to rely on another passion to "revive the forces that make [virtue] move".

"Ledoux believed that the 'passionate' expression and experience of architecture could shape desire and orient it toward virtue".

"As an architectural fiction, [the Oikema] attests to the foundational role of human desire in the city and the expressive capacity of 'voluptuous' architecture to engage this desire as its effective public function".

Thus, Ledoux's temple of love serves as an important precedent study for my own proposal for the Las Vegas strip, as it is my intention that my design embody this same "expressive capacity of voluptuousness", the purpose and function of the architecture being desire. I aspire to personify Sin City and provide it with an identity, a face behind the mask, creating spaces of flesh, dimension, and substance underneath the dazzling dress, the blinking lights, and the contextually irrelevant facades.



Le Dessin Architectural de l'Œuvre

Échelle de 1 2 3 4 5 6

30 40 50 60 70

Gravé par Cognat

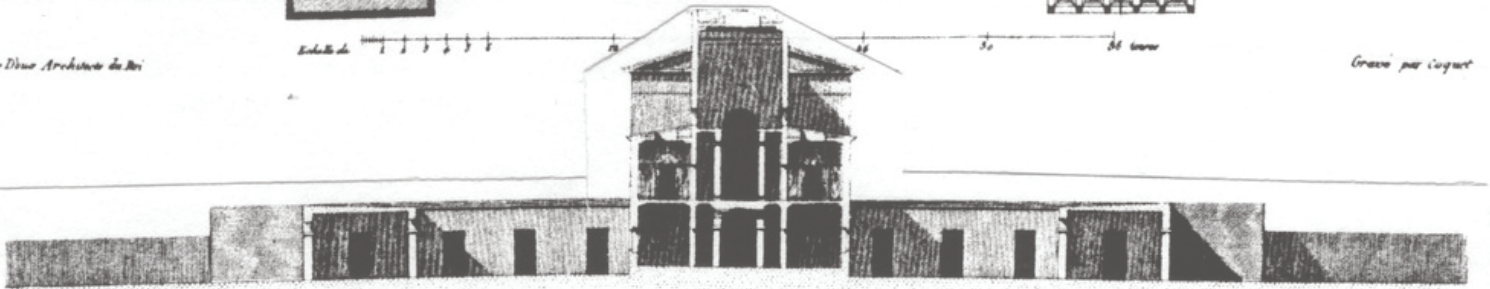
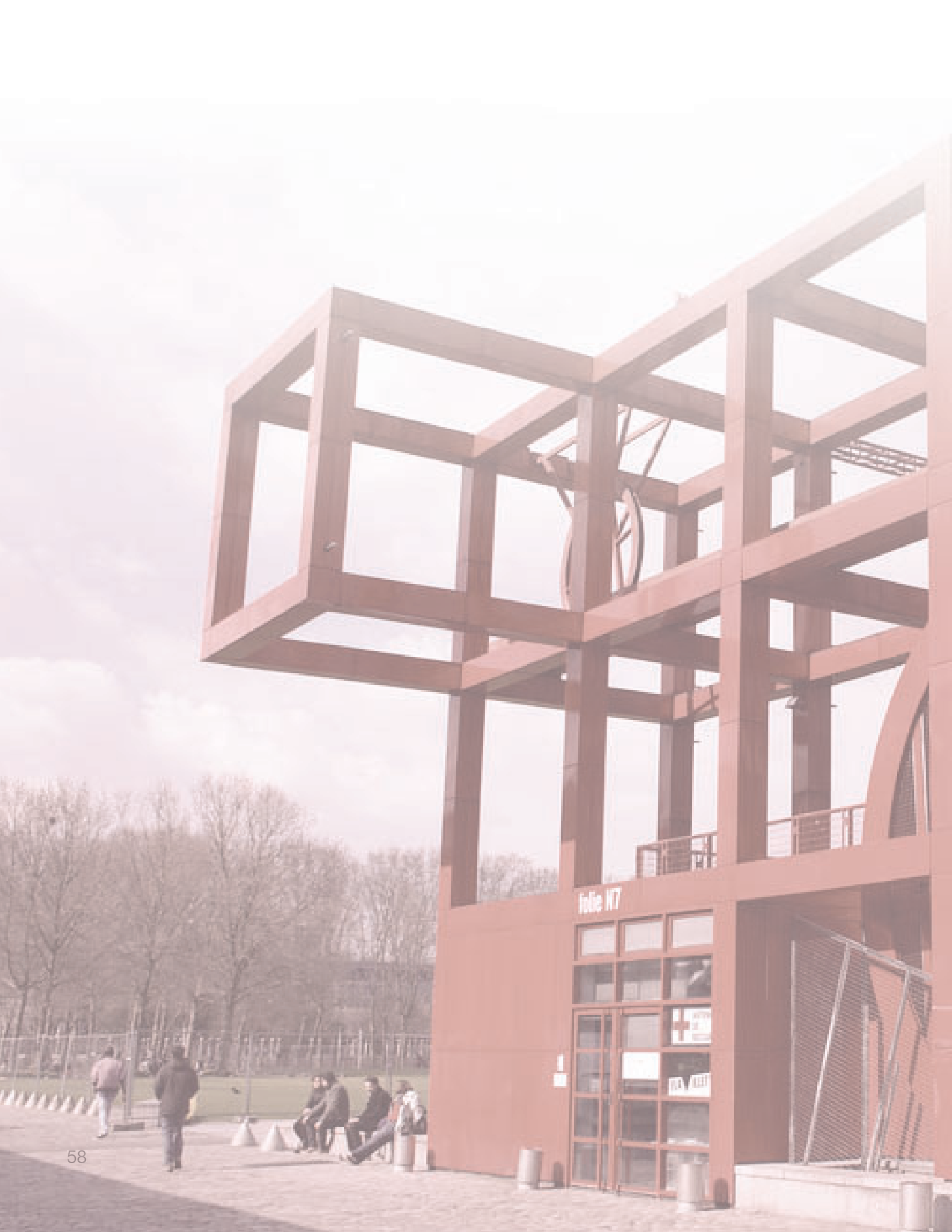


Figure 16 | Ledoux's Oikema



folie W7

PARC DE LA VILLETTE



Figure 17 | Parc de la Villette

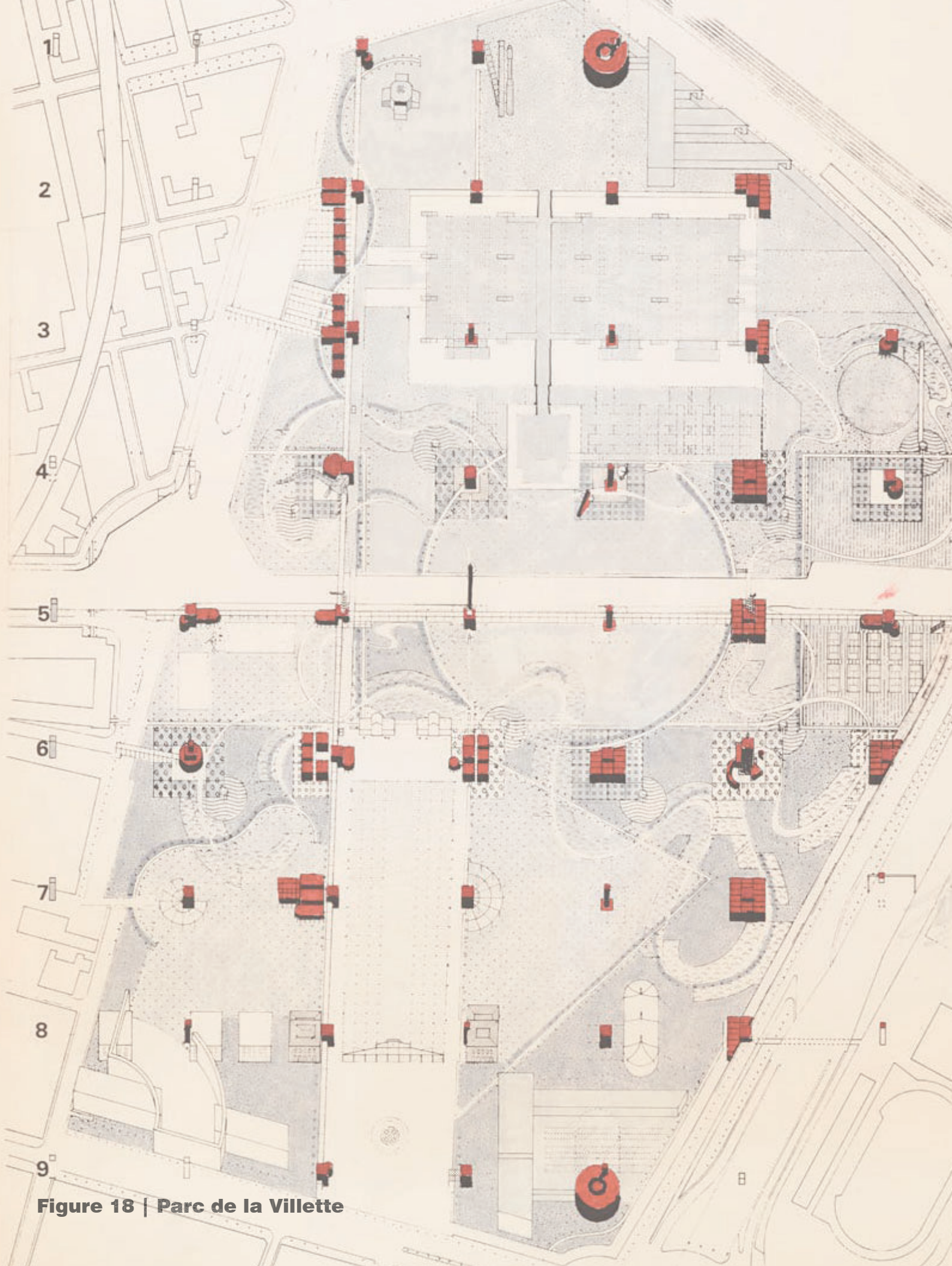


Figure 18 | Parc de la Villette

TPOLOGY: URBAN DESIGN

LOCALE: PARIS, FRANCE

ARCHITECT: BERNARD TSCHUMI ARCHITECTS

In the early 1980's, there was a call to revitalize what was at the time an abandoned piece of land that had previously been occupied by meat markets and slaughterhouses. Bernard Tschumi won this design competition from over 470 other entries from renowned architects the world over.

Through his design, Tschumi wished to create spaces that merged the artificial and natural together through the constant re-imagination, participation, and discovery of pedestrians that would make their way through the park. He envisioned not any one particular path but rather a large, open expanse of land that would encourage users to roam and explore to their heart's content.

The park was intended to be a place of activity, interaction, and community engagement, red "follies" spaced intermittently. Each of these follies is unique and can harbor a wide variety of activities, although no specific program is instituted in these individual spaces.

The large scale of these follies may appear out of place when compared to the scale of the human body; however, their grandeur helps to attract attention as well as provide a sense of displacement or disorientation. It is through disorientation that we, as users, might come to reorient ourselves and see our surroundings from a new perspective, in a new way.



folie N8

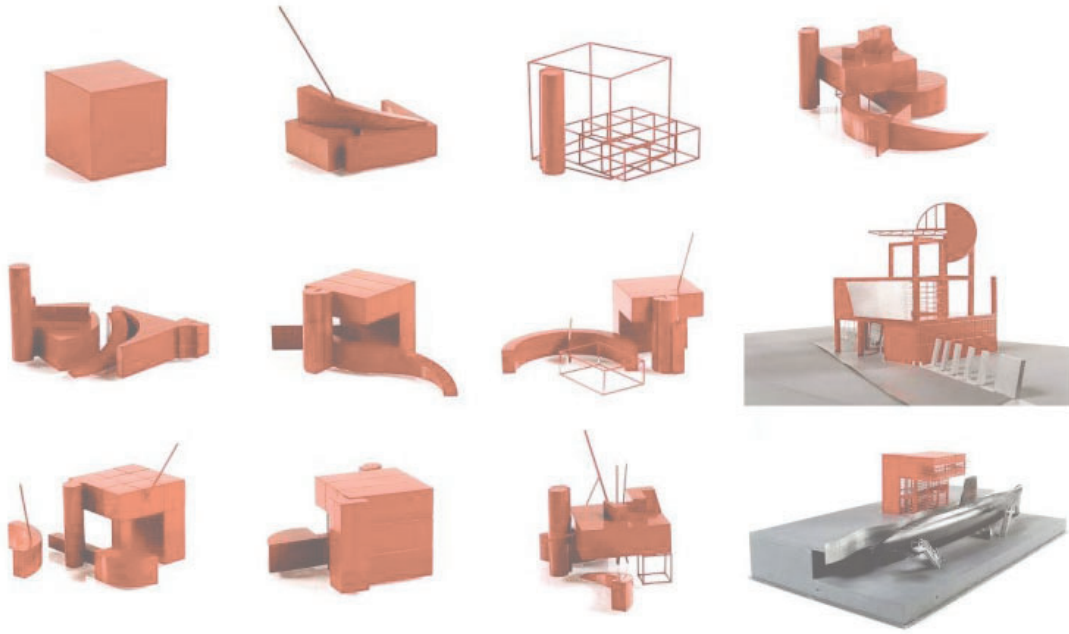


Figure 20 | Parc de la Villette Models

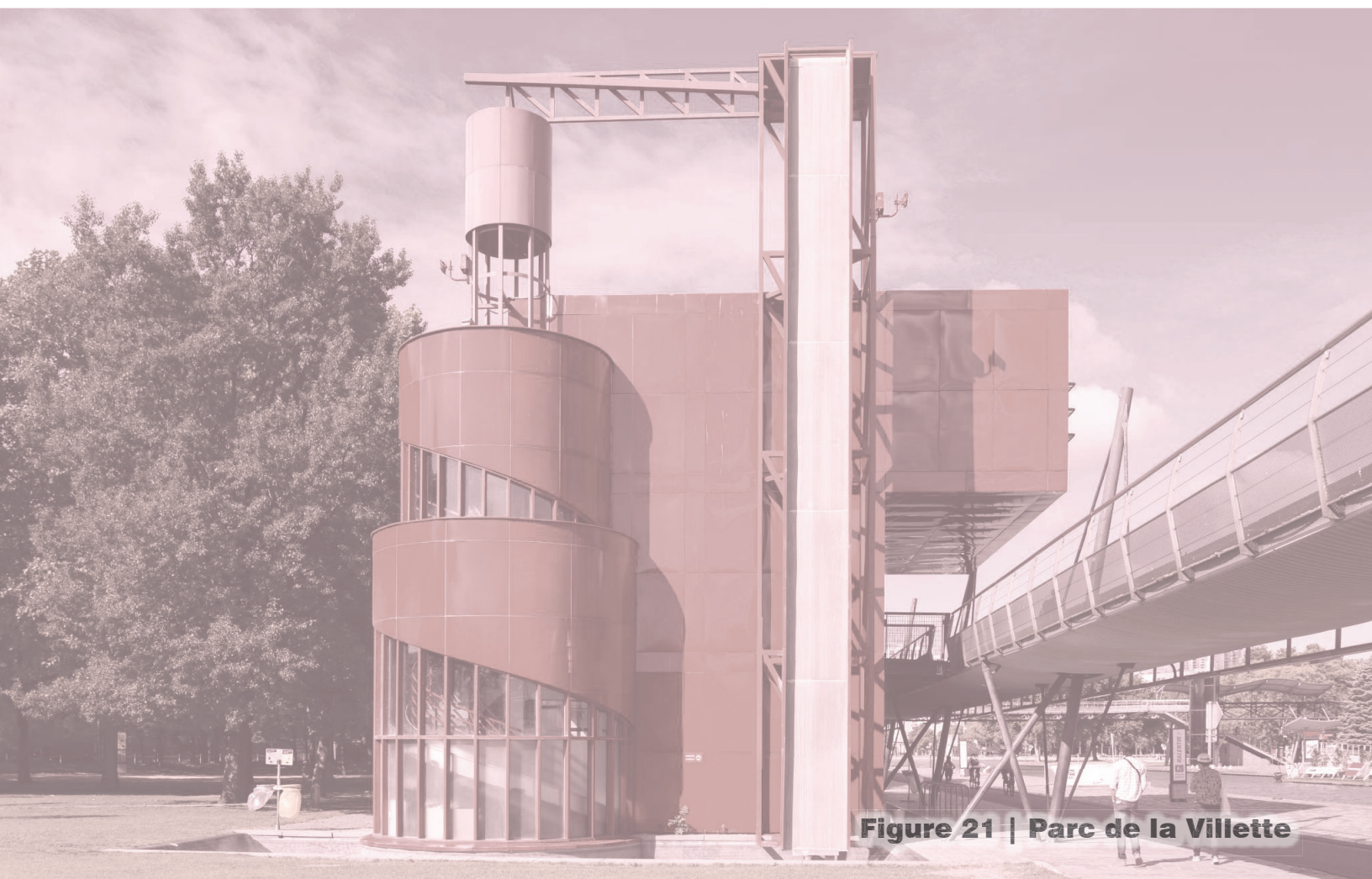
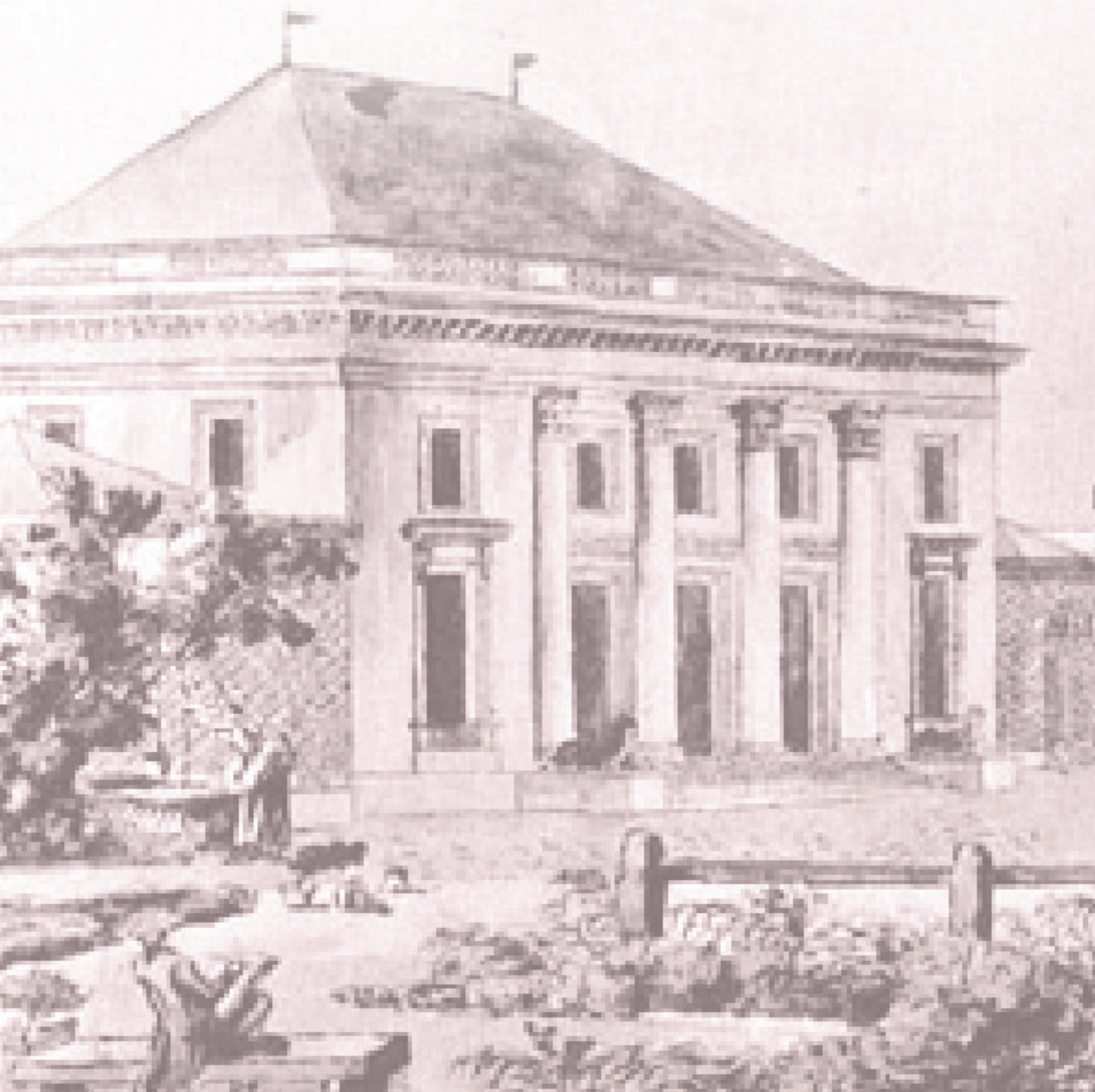


Figure 21 | Parc de la Villette



THE PETITE MAISON OF MADEMOISELLE DERVIEUX



Figure 22 | Petite Maison

Figure 23 | Petite Maison



Plan du 1er de Clément N°1



TYPOLOGY: "PETITE MAISON" & CASINO

LOCALE: PARIS, FRANCE

ARCHITECT: FRANÇOIS-JOSEPH BÉLANGER

Architecture has the power to not only define spaces in which love can develop and passions of the flesh can take place, but can also embody eroticism itself. A exemplary example of erotic architecture that directly interacts with its inhabitants is the Petite Maison of Mademoiselle Dervieux. Traditionally, petite maisons were affluent abodes in the suburban areas around Paris that were frequented by the wealthy and elite.

"At a petite maison one could meet for a discreet rendezvous or "hold orgies which people would have been scared to have in brothels, which were considered dangerous, and ashamed to hold in their own house". In short, petite maisons were spaces where the elite could enact their wildest sexual fantasies without fear of societal repercussions. However, what makes the Petite Maison of Mademoiselle Dervieux of particular interest is that she herself was a public woman and performer. She amassed a fortune over the years through a combination of Opera performances as well as private performances at royal residences. She "decided to build a showcase for herself, advertising the sexual promiscuity that was a privilege of the French Elite", she made her own 'temple of love' that served as a casino and adult playground for aristocrats. Guests from all across Paris came to gamble, to receive custom services from the lady of the house, or simply to observe.

What differentiates Mademoiselle Dervieux's casino from the casinos of the Las Vegas strip however is the enchanting spell that the architecture casts on its observers and participants. It is not enough to simply adorn the architecture with sexually-suggestive images or to engrave the love stories of ages past onto the walls and ceiling. Doing so would be to reduce the architecture itself to simply an advertisement for sexual promiscuity. Instead, this temple of love aspires to create a dialogue with those who come to worship at Dervieux's bed, blurring the distinction between observer and participant, between audience and actor, through a clever placement of mirrors. In the boudoir, or private bedroom, of Mademoiselle Dervieux, "a single chair on a Beauvais carpet [is] illuminated by an overhead lantern window. Under the domed ceiling, the empty chair [marks] the site of a privileged view that [is] shared by the guests who [wait] their turn on the four mahogany chairs... an additional voyeur on a bench under a trellis in the Italian garden outside [can] look through the window and watch the privileged guests in the boudoir, with his own image reflected in the mirror over the fireplace".



Figure 24 | Petite Maison



Figure 25 | Petite Maison



Figure 26 | Petite Maison



In this way, the architecture forces the observer to simultaneously look at their object of desire as well as a reflection of themselves, thereby compelling the voyeur to recognize the distance in between and take accountability for their lusting behavior.

This theme continues with the altar of this temple of love, the site of sexual arousal and fulfillment, the bed itself. “As the stage for the voyeur’s sexual fantasies, the boudoir provides an erotic tableau where [the guest] is simultaneously actor and spectator, both near and far from his object of desire, suspended between promise and sexual gratification.”

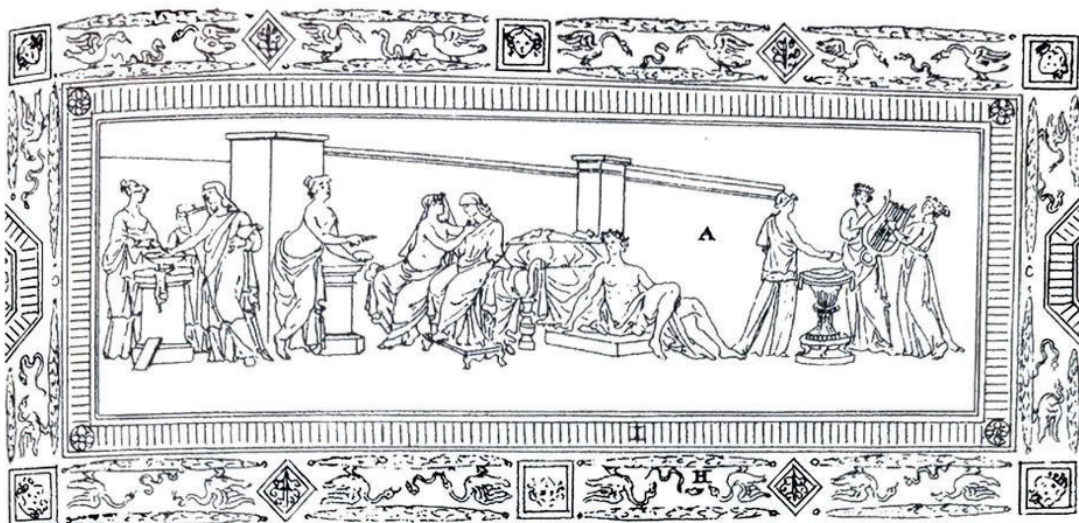


Figure 28 | Petite Maison



EKEBERGPARKEN



Figure 29 | Ekebergparken



Figure 30 | Ekebergparken

TPOLOGY: SCULPTURE PARK

LOCALE: OSLO, NORWAY

ARTISTS: VARIOUS

Ekebergparken is located on the top of one of the tallest hills overlooking the city of Oslo and the fjords. On this hilltop is a forest, hiking paths, and cleverly hidden sculptures by some of the world's most prolific and well-known artists.

A wide variety of people use this park regularly, including tourists, families, the elderly, joggers, etc. This park features very few buildings, but instead encourages visitors to explore the landscape itself. The hiking paths meander and wind through the forest on the hilltop, allowing ample space for exploration and inflection. The sculptures that can be found hidden in the forest as well as exposed in the open are welcome surprises, and help to invigorate the mind, promoting creative thinking and reasoning.

This park is an excellent example of a space for contemplation and inflection, with many of the art pieces tackling difficult topics that are oftentimes impossible or inappropriate to discuss in a conventional setting.



**DIVINITY & HUMANITY
GOD VS. SCIENCE**

Figure 31 | Ekebergparken



**THE SUBCONSCIOUS
SUPPRESSED SEXUALITY**

Figure 32 | Ekebergparken



**GENDER ROLES
SUBMISSION & DOMINATION**

Figure 33 | Ekebergparken



**THE HORROR OF WAR
HUMANITY'S FASCINATION WITH THE GROTESQUE**

Figure 34 | Ekebergparken



Figure 35 | Ekebergparken



CHANGING PERSPECTIVE

Figure 36 | Ekebergparken



The Las Vegas strip will always hold a special significance for me, as it is where I was both born and raised, Sin City is my hometown. I witnessed the hyper-reality, advertisement-ridden, and blatant promiscuity of Sin City first-hand. Despite being an incredible financial success, Las Vegas lacks a depth of culture as well as spaces of meaningful encounter. The city is quite literally an adult-amusement park that attempts to simulate our every erotic fantasy without actually providing visitors with the desire it so desperately attempts to arouse. Through my thesis project, I hope to explore the realm of architectural fantasy, designing spaces through a fictional narrative that defines a plot in a specific setting: Las Vegas. As I enter into the field of architecture in a more traditional firm setting, this is one of my last opportunities to push architecture beyond the limitations imposed by code, the client, budget, etc.

By reading and analyzing precedents in literature that draws a connection between desire, eroticism, and architecture, I hope to expand my existing knowledge base and look at architecture from a new perspective. In an increasingly functionalist world that has become dependent on efficiency and immediacy (amplified by the rapid development of technology), it is critical that we as architects take a step back and reevaluate our responsibility as designers. Architecture can embody more than structure and a collection of building systems; architecture can embody emotion and move the soul and mind through a carefully designed 'experience'. My proposal aims to create a journey through the city of Las Vegas to help visitors and locals alike to see the city in a new light, to provide a sensual, captivating body behind the glamorous dress of the city and the contextually irrelevant facades.

The Las Vegas strip is known for its lavish and extravagant presence, for its flamboyant eccentricity. It is not shy to throw money at its problems in order to generate increased public interest. For example, the Luxor casino and resort has the brightest light in the world mounted on the top of its pyramid; it is so bright that it shoots a beam of light that can be seen from space. Despite looking cool, this feature serves no real function, and is therefore an excellent example of Las Vegas' needless excessive expenditure to generate revenue and provoke the public's fascination. I am inclined to believe that the city of Las Vegas, as well as local casinos and independent donors, would be willing to help fund my proposal for the Strip. I am hoping to introduce a new way to view and experience desire and eroticism in the city, and I think my project would provide yet another incentive for people from around the world to come and visit. My proposal may be expensive to execute, but the expenditure wouldn't be excessive or needless, it would serve a very specific function; the expense would be worth it in order to provide the city with a love story.

The post-occupancy impacts of my project would hopefully include increased tourism rates, increased publicity, a reinvigorated atmosphere along the strip, as well as a transformed identity of Sin City's iconic image. To accomplish these goals would be no small feat, my proposal being a large (and I would argue critical) undertaking. As our society continues in rapid technological advancement and movement towards functionalism, prefabrication, and efficiency, it is critical to show how architecture can achieve so much more. Through my proposal for the Las Vegas strip, I hope to explore the possibilities of architecture to evoke an experience, to act as a journey. Through the lens of architectural fantasy and fiction, I hope to unfetter spatial design from its conventional limitations and explore architecture's capability of creating atmospheres, developing moods, and embodying emotions.

The human desire for sexual fulfillment and gratification is an incredibly captivating topic as there exists an inherent element of moral ambiguity. Claude Nicolas Ledoux recognized this ambiguity in his design of his "Oikema" or brothel. Through his writing, he explored the depravity of desire and our sexual appetite's domination of the senses, as well as the incredible beauty and virtue to be found in sexual fulfillment within the confines of marriage.





Las Vegas, I would argue, is currently suspended somewhere in-between these two extremes, between depravity and virtue, its position somewhat precarious as the city struggles to reconcile its identity. The city aspires to embody eroticism, and yet its dependence on consumerism and its duty to serve (first and foremost) as a business restrain Sin City from fully achieving this goal.

The facades of the iconic Las Vegas casinos and resorts entice and seduce through empty promises. As you enter into the Luxor pyramid, you expect to be transported to the distant lands of Egypt, to a time of pharaohs... but instead you are greeted by gambling machines, flashing lights, and a myriad of signs and people that demand your constant attention. This sequence and progression of spaces is undeniably an effective business strategy, Las Vegas being one of the world's forefront entertainment and tourism capitals. However, the architecture of the Strip is a hoax, an elaborate charade, a clever and deceptive illusion. Architecture has the capacity to not only seduce and captivate, but also to create a journey, to develop and tell stories, to hold its inhabitants in a relentless tension, suspended somewhere between lust and fulfillment. Las Vegas is known for its immediacy, and so through my proposal I hope to introduce a "lack", a space in-between the lover and object of desire, so that the city might come to understand and more fully embody love and desire.



Figure 37 | Historical Photos of Las Vegas

HISTORICAL, SOCIAL & CULTURAL CONTEXT

Located in the middle of the Mojave desert, Las Vegas's potential prospects in the early 1900's were slim, its future precarious. The barren, hot, desert landscape offered little in the way of natural resources, and there existed little incentive for people to move into the area. Las Vegas, as it exists today, is a direct product of the legislation passed in 1931 that legalized gambling, which turned out to be an extremely profitable business venture. Show girl theaters, strip clubs, and casinos were rapidly erected along the Strip, catering to the large influx of male workers who were constructing the nearby Boulder Dam (now known as Hoover Dam).

In addition, Las Vegas quickly became one of the wedding capitals of the world due to another law passed in 1931, which allowed couples to get a marriage license on the spot, without any requirements or wait times, no questions asked. Couple seeking to tie the knot discreetly due to familial or societal repercussions found Las Vegas to be one of their only options for erotic and emotional fulfillment.

Another unique aspect of Las Vegas's history promoted its rapid increase in tourism and nationwide popularity, and that was the denotation of nuclear bombs in the desert north of the city. Sin City was nicknamed for the "Atomic City" as people from across the country would travel here to witness the spectacular tourist attraction of mushroom clouds blooming in the distance. It was not until the residents of St. George, Utah (located downwind of the test sites) began reporting alarming rates of leukemia and thyroid cancer that this "spectacle" was forced to take place underground in order to limit the repercussions of radioactive fallout.

Thus, Las Vegas's existence is rooted in a strange combination of entertainment and love; the Strip is responsible for not only the city's identity but also for its rapid growth and development.

1964



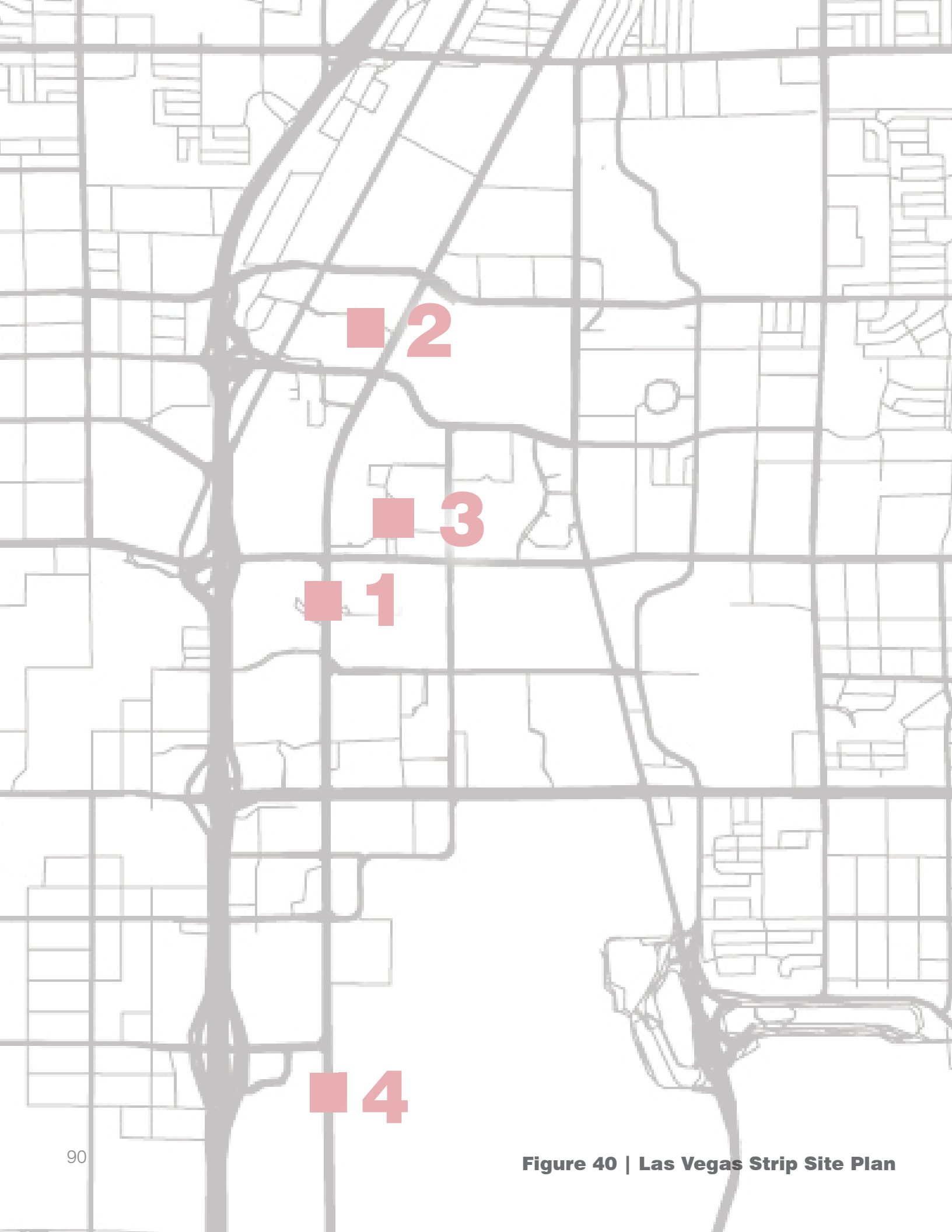
Figure 38 | Photo of Las Vegas Strip - 1964

LAST FRONTIER
RADIO MAY LUCK 280
K-LUC AM FM
9.5-10.5 PM

2018



Figure 39 | Photo of Las Vegas Strip - 2018



■ 2

■ 3

■ 1

■ 4

Figure 40 | Las Vegas Strip Site Plan

For my urban design proposal for the Las Vegas Strip, I am proposing a series of 4 sequential spaces of desire, each relating to pre-existing structures and the surrounding context.

1 THE BELLAGIO FOUNTAINS

THE GROOM

2 THE FASHION SHOW MALL

THE BRIDE

3 THE LINQ

THE VOYEUR

4 LITTLE CHURCH OF THE WEST

THE AUDIENCE

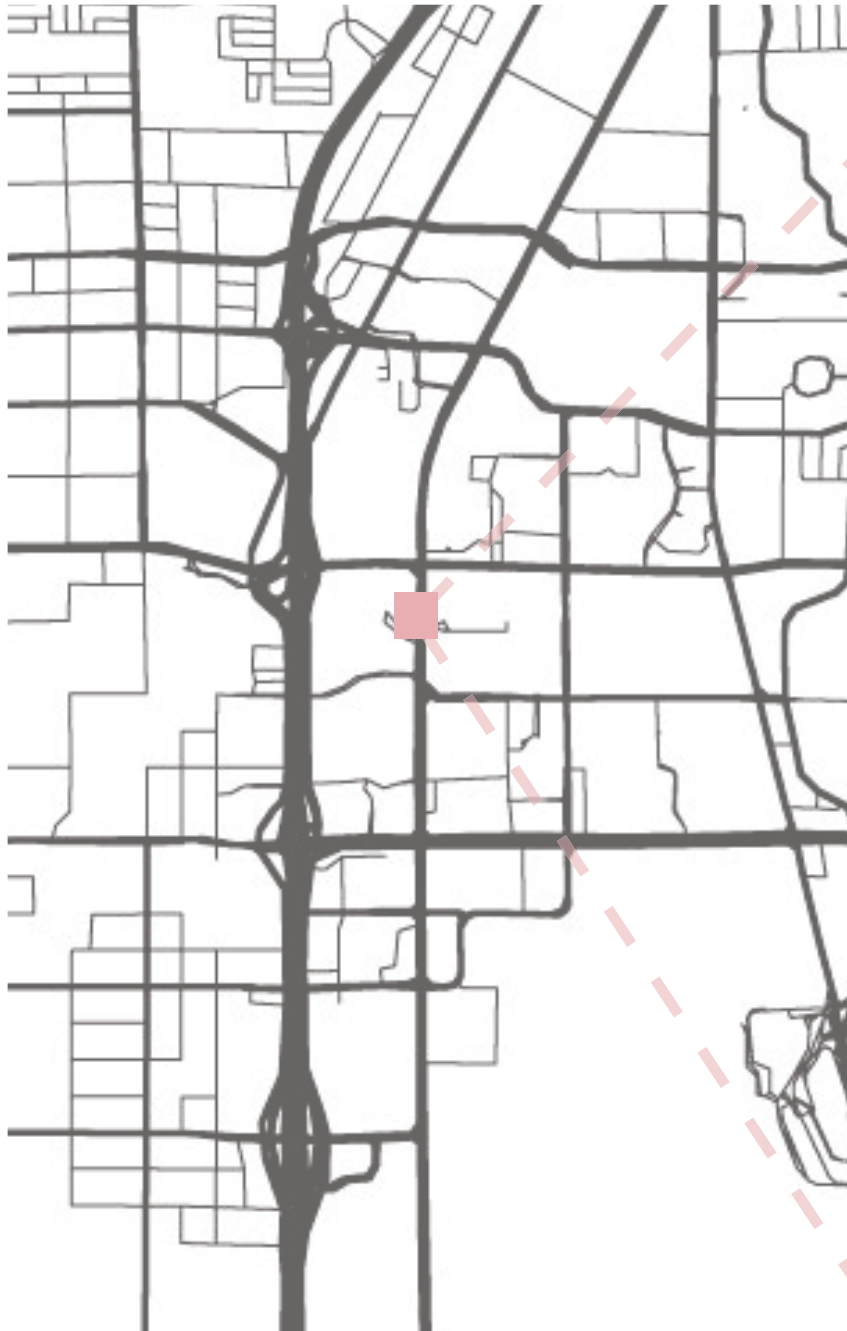


Figure 41 | Las Vegas Strip Site Plan

1 THE BELLAGIO FOUNTAINS



Figure 42 | The Bellagio Fountains

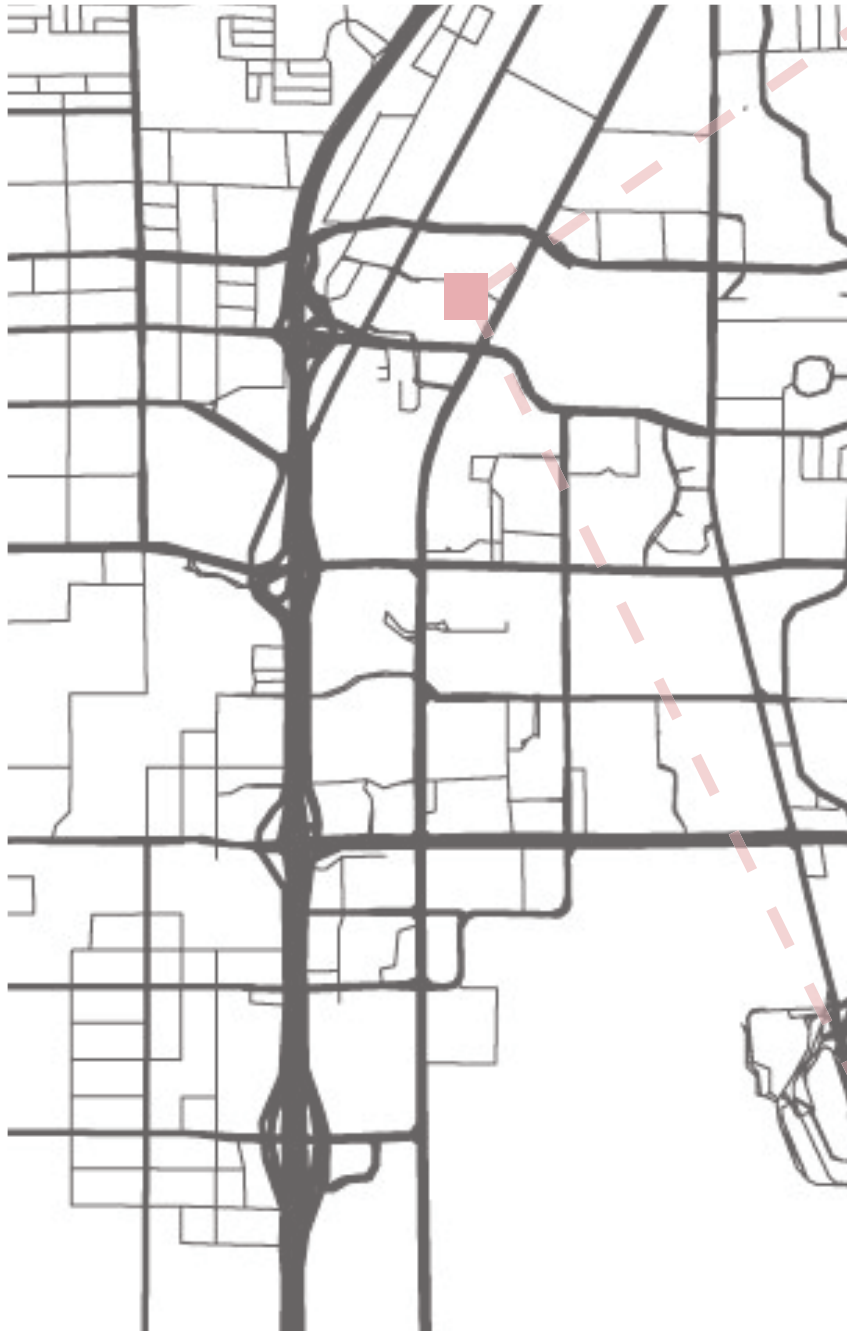


Figure 42 | Las Vegas Strip Site Plan

2 THE FASHION SHOW MALL



Figure 46 | The Fashion Show Mall

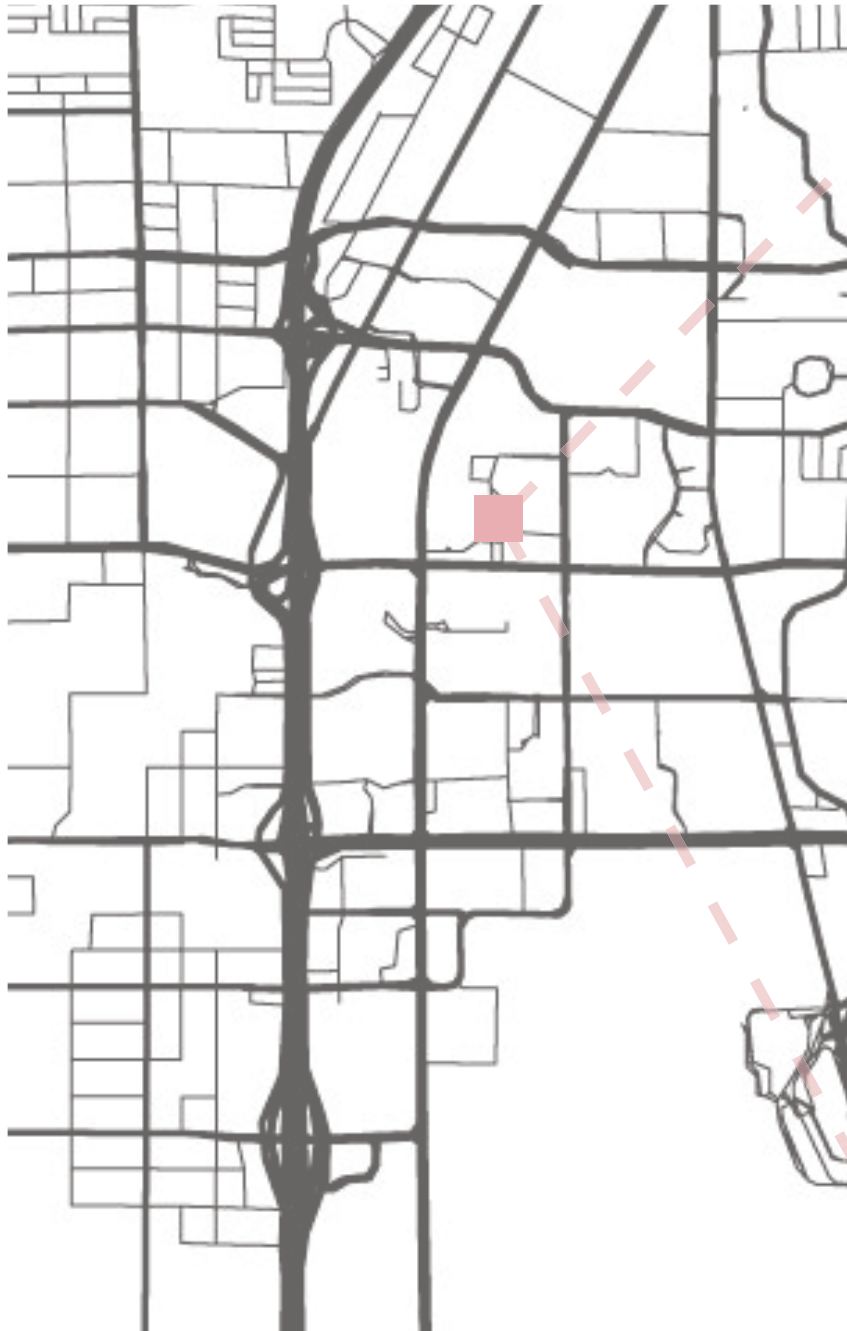


Figure 43 | Las Vegas Strip Site Plan

3 THE LINQ



Figure 48 | The Linq

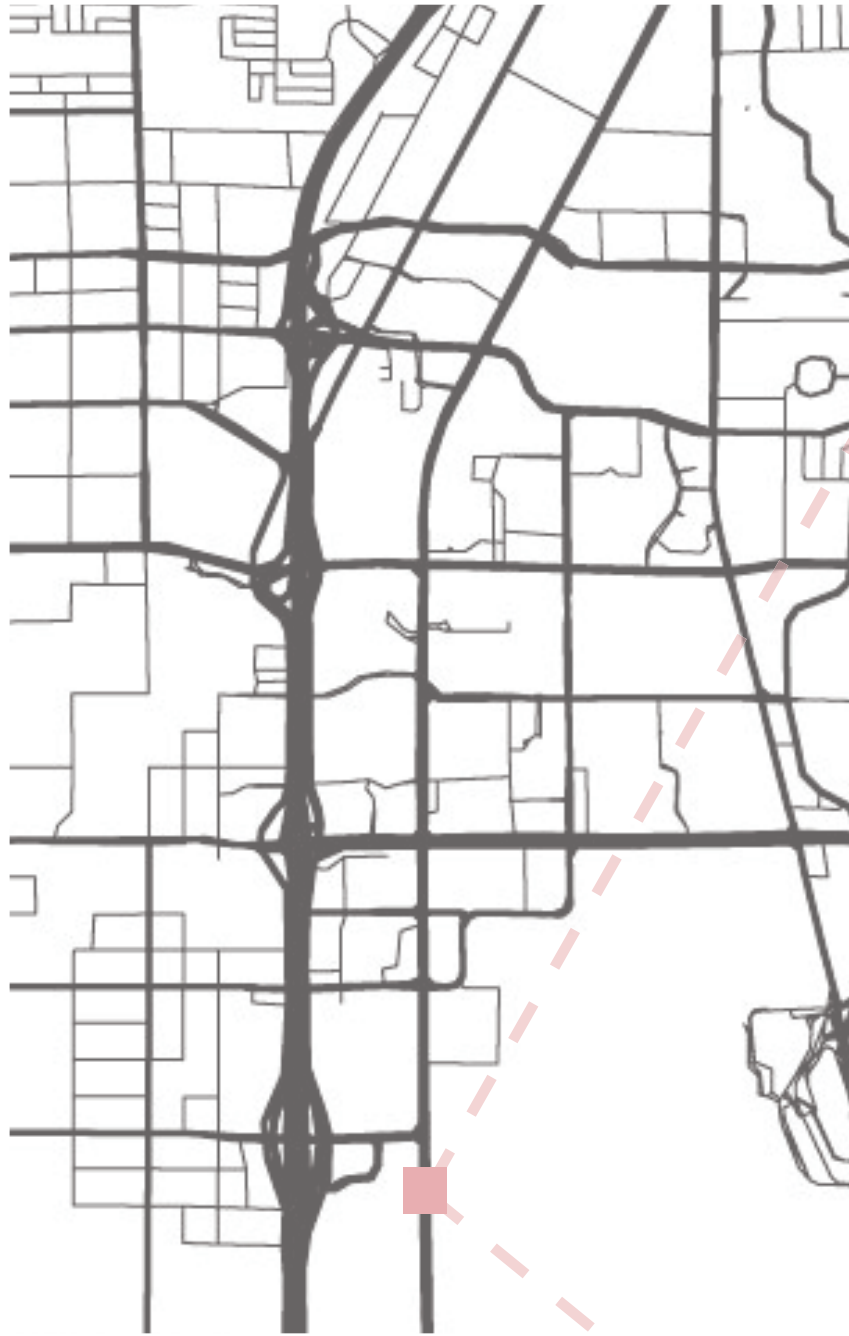


Figure 44 | Las Vegas Strip Site Plan

4 LITTLE CHURCH OF THE WEST



Figure 45 | Little Church of the West

WIND ANALYSIS

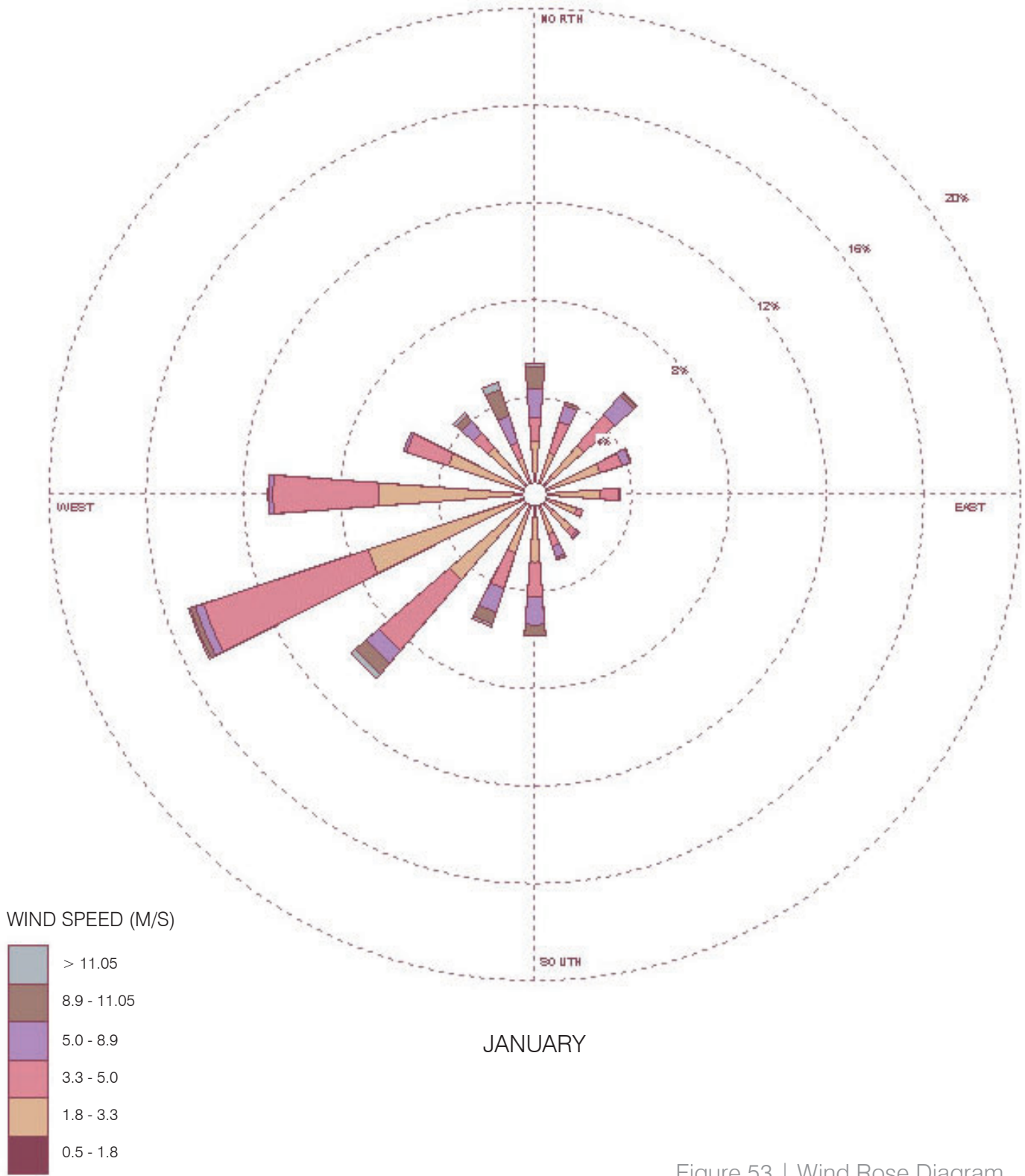
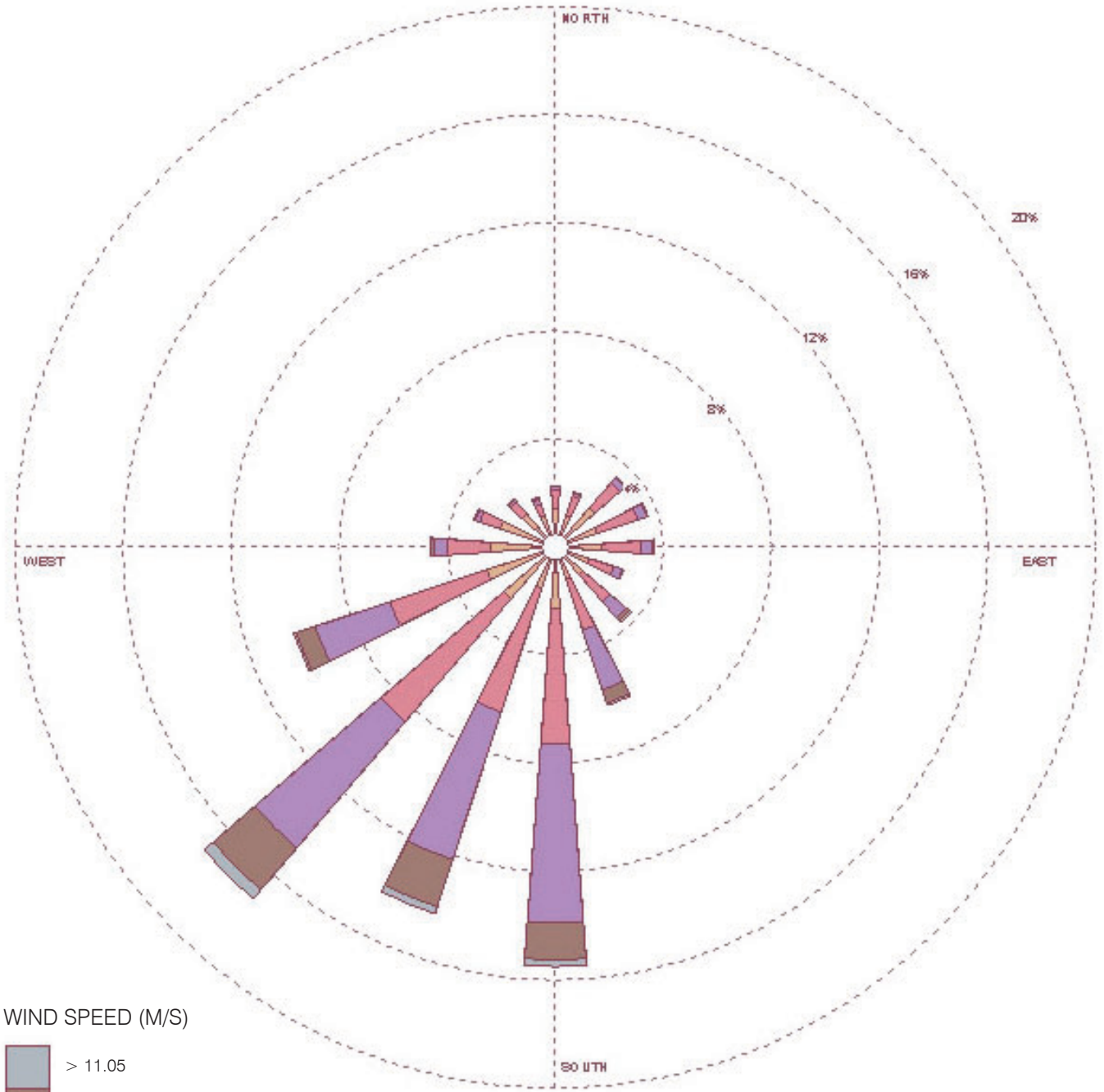


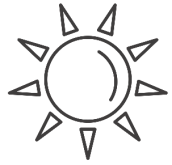
Figure 53 | Wind Rose Diagram



JULY

Figure 54 | Wind Rose Diagram

WEATHER ANALYSIS



294

AVERAGE NUMBER OF SUNNY DAYS A YEAR



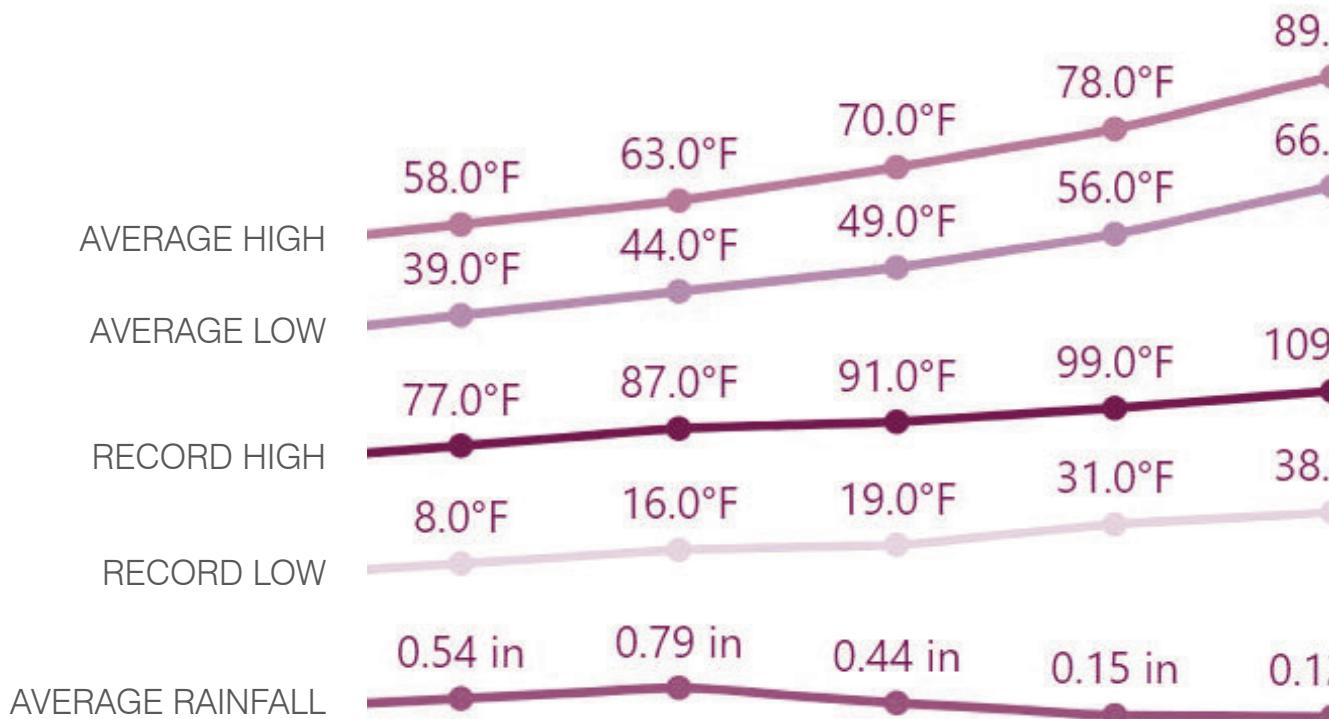
45

AVERAGE NUMBER OF CLOUDY DAYS A YEAR



26

AVERAGE NUMBER OF RAINY DAYS A YEAR



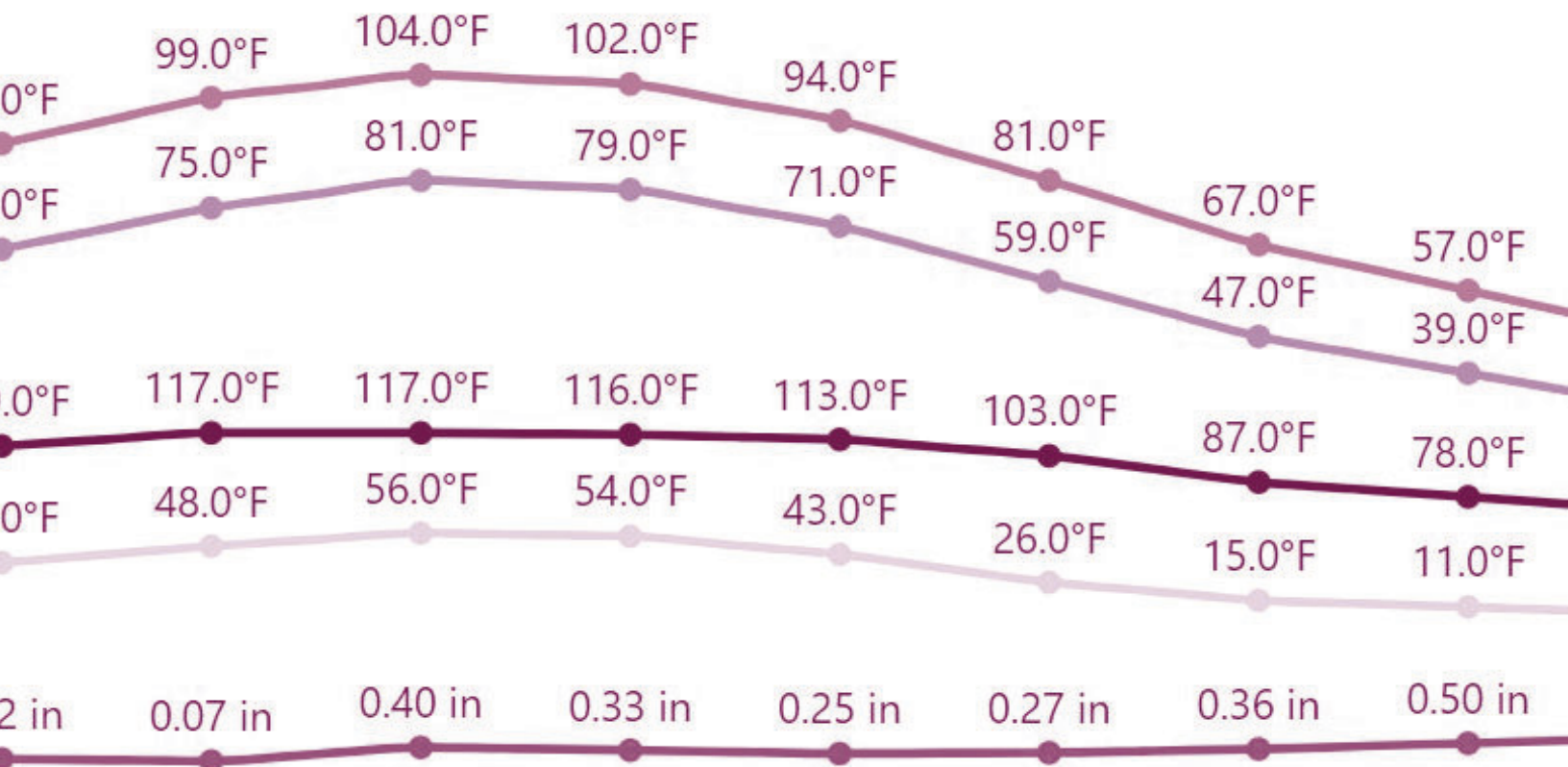
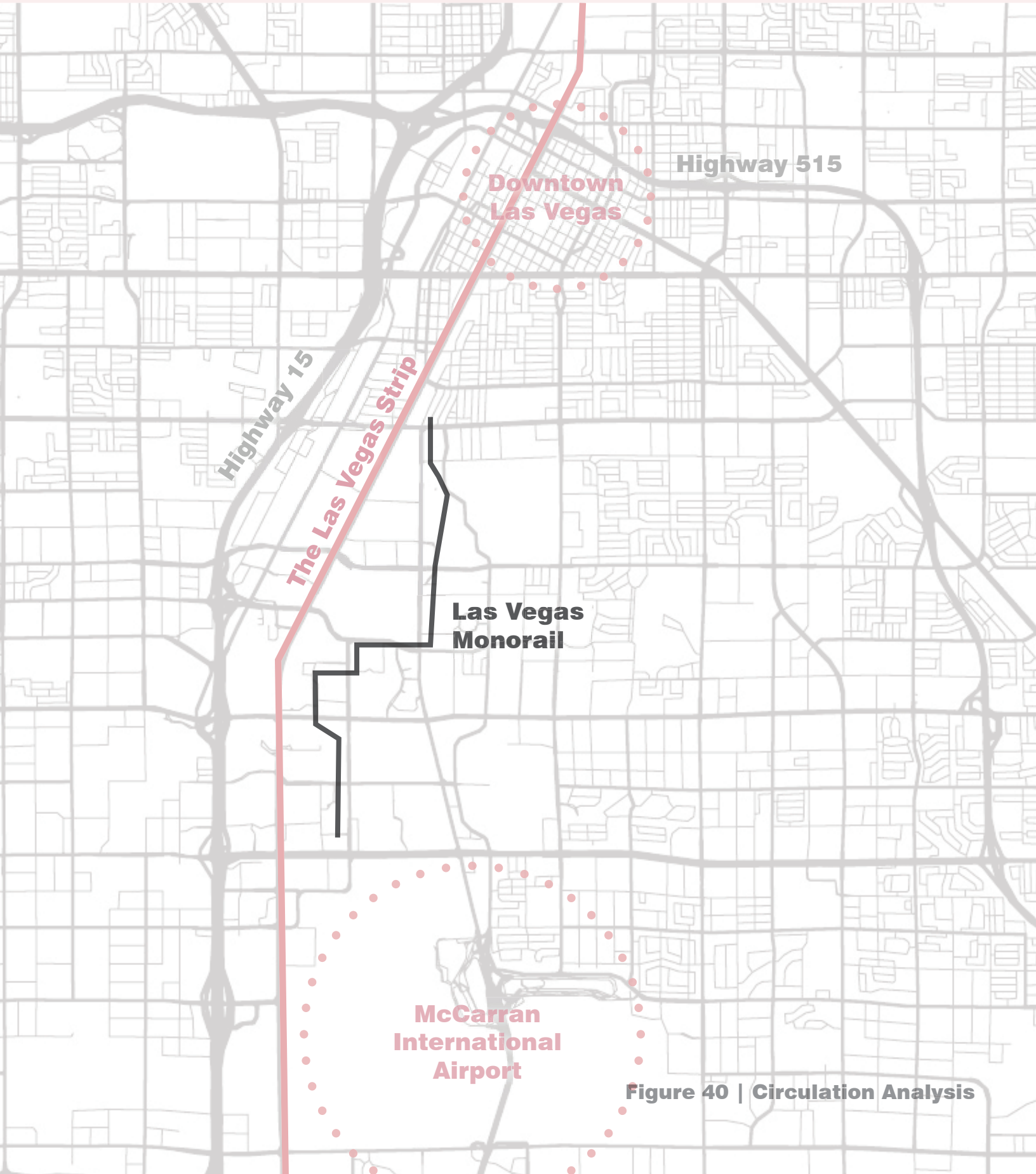


Figure 55 | Temperature Analysis



Figure 56 | Las Vegas Monorail

CIRCULATION ANALYSIS



Highway 15

The Las Vegas Strip

Downtown Las Vegas

Highway 515

Las Vegas Monorail

McCarran International Airport

Figure 40 | Circulation Analysis



Figure 58 | Fremont Street

Behavioral Performance

Pedestrians openly gawk, takes selfies, and otherwise walk around in a half-drunken stupor as they traverse up and down the Strip. Through my architecture, I hope to interrupt this pedestrian path and pull tourists out of their stupor, out of the hyper-real illusion that permeates Las Vegas, cloaking the city much like a haze. While I expect my architecture to increase foot traffic, this is unlikely to be seen on the existing streets and sidewalks. It is my design intent to take participants on unexpected trajectories, going “behind the scenes” and potentially even underneath the strip itself, underground.

Las Vegas is known as being a city that never sleeps, most businesses keeping their doors open 24/7. I likewise intend for my design to be used in all hours of the day and night. I hope to explore architecture’s traditional role in facilitating both “day-time” and “night-time” activities. For example, many activities (and by extension the facilities that house them) are associated with depraved, instinctual, almost animalistic human nature. On the other hand, activities that take place during the day are contrarily assumed to be of a more “enlightened” nature, more pure and innocent in intention. Through my design for the Las Vegas Strip, perhaps it is possible to flip some of these conventions on their head, providing an experience that is both jarring and eye-opening.

To conduct a comprehensive behavioral performance analysis, a post-occupancy analysis would be crucial. However, since this is not a possibility within the confines of a theoretical proposal, I hope instead to find data and research online that has already been compiled concerning visitors reasons for traveling to Las Vegas.

By better understanding people's intentions for coming, I will be able to better provide for their needs and wants, for their desires. Since I grew up in Sin City, I know a lot of people that have lived and worked in the area for great lengths of time, so it may be worth interviewing some people to get an insider look into what it looks like to live in the world pleasure capitol. What are locals observations, thoughts, and critiques of the Strip, and are their services or experiences that I could provide through my architecture to incentivize locals to visit the Strip more regularly.

Some activities that I would like to encourage and facilitate through my design include:

- Theater/performance
- Insightful discussion
- Exploration, both solo and in groups
- People-watching, observation
- Dance, street performances
- Food, eateries



Figure 59 | Photo of Las Vegas Strip - 2016



Figure 60 | Eros and Psyche Statue

Psychological Impact

I hope to seduce those who walk along the Las Vegas strip through my architecture, creating atmospheres filled with prolonged sexual tension and feelings of desire. I will be exploring the space of Eros (the god of Desire), and so it almost goes without saying that I will likewise be exploring the space of Psyche, the bride of Eros, the love of his life, and a representation of the human soul. Psyche was a beautiful mortal, so beautiful in fact that people from far and wide began to come and worship at her feet. The temples of Aphrodite, goddess of beauty and attraction, soon lay vacant as her worshipers had turned their attention to Psyche. Ironically, Psyche had a myriad of admirers, but her incredible beauty stood as a wall between her and potential lovers, impenetrable and unapproachable. She was, simply put, beyond the beauty of this world, her beauty placing her on a pedestal that lifted her well out of reach.

Jealous, Aphrodite demanded that Eros go and shoot Psyche with one of his arrows so that she might fall in love with some mortal man, so that her problem, Psyche, might go away. However, as he drew his bow, he too was overtaken by Psyche's seductive and lithe form and he accidentally struck himself with his own arrow of desire. Then and there, the god of desire fell in love, spending the following weeks seducing the subject of his desire in the darkness of the night. Eros depended on the night to obscure his identity as well as his own beauty, as it was told that any mortal (man or woman) who looked into Eros's eyes would fall hopelessly and madly in love. Wanting Psyche to fall in love with the man behind the beautiful front, Eros hid his identity from her. Thus, it was only through obscurity and through reveling in the darkness of the night that love was able to blossom. I believe that there is a comparison to be drawn between the story of Eros and Psyche and the story I hope to tell through my design for the Las Vegas Strip. The facades of the resorts and casinos along the Strip can be compared to the beauty of the god of desire, Eros himself.

The Strip is undeniably captivating, it is provoking, it demands your full, undivided attention. However, it is not possible to develop true desire, love, and passion in such a blatantly hyper-real, albeit attractive, setting. Eros recognized that if Psyche was to ever develop true feelings for him, she must not be distracted by his beauty, by his identity. This approach of seduction is precisely the opposite of Sin City's current approach,

Creating spaces of desire, love, and Eros may very well be one of the most relevant and effective means of providing for the human psyche. Eros and Psyche, as taught by the Greeks, go hand in hand, united for eternity by their mutual affection for each other. By providing spaces of desire, eroticism, and love along the Las Vegas strip, I will be providing tourists and locals alike with experiences that are meaningful and not simply a consumerist ploy or part of an effective business strategy.



Figure 61 | Eros and Psyche Painting

SPACE ALLOCATION

Space Allocation Table (Square Feet)

	Small	Average	Large
Circulation	50,000 (length of Las Vegas Strip is 4mi)	75,000	100,000
Public Art	2,000	5,000	10,000
Interactive Exhibits	1,500	3,000	7,500
Public Plaza	5,000	10,000	15,000
Brothel	2,500	6,000	10,000
Strip Club	2,000	4,000	8,000
Restaurant	1,000	3,500	7,000
Retail	800	1,500	3,000
Stage	500	1,000	2,000
Wedding Chapel	1,200	2,000	3,000
Observation Tower	2,000	3,500	5,000

Figure 62 | Space Allocation Table

*Note: all estimates above are approximations of areas necessary in order to accommodate upwards of 50,000 tourists that traverse the Las Vegas strip every night and night.

*As the program is further refined as I develop my design next semester, these square footage estimates will need to be revisited and updated appropriately.

ADJACENCY MATRIX

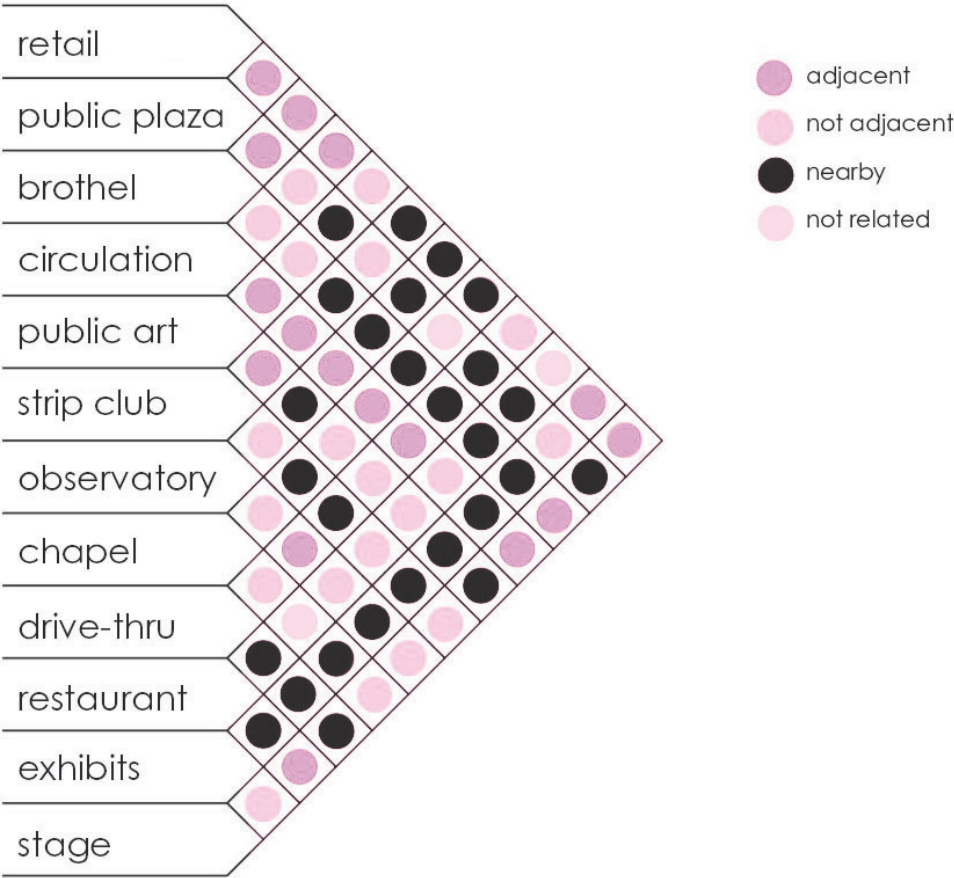


Figure 63 | Adjacency Matrix

THE ARTEFACT

ARCHITECTURAL INQUIRY THROUGH PERFORMANCE ART



Figure 64 | Object of Desire



THE OBJECT OF DESIRE

You find yourself sitting in an empty room, barren except for the monument of love that stands erected on the computer screen before you, a dazzling and intricate dress displayed atop an easel. The monument stands as a physical representation of the Las Vegas strip, glamorous, alluring... but empty. The city stands amidst the barren Mojave Desert much like a prostitute might stand along a decrepit street in a neighborhood of ill-repute. She wears her promiscuity and sexuality on her sleeve, brazen, captivating... an effective business transaction.

A soft red light can be seen from inside the dress's interior. The chest glows, a cord hangs, slipping between the city's breasts. A synthetic heat beats, a simulation, alive yet eternally dependent... dependent on technology, dependent on consumerism, dependent on the public's fascination. The dress, easel, and heart stand together as the foundation of my artefact, which is a performance art piece that we will be referencing throughout this presentation as it served as the inspiration of my architectural design proposal. What you see before you is a representation of the hyper-real illusion that is Las Vegas, a city that relies on lavish and excessive spectacle in order to retain its iconic image.



Figure 65 | The Groom

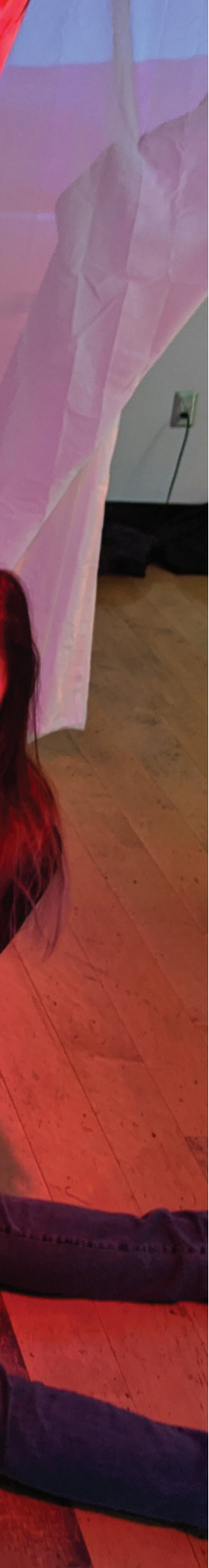


THE GROOM

The groom is the first to enter the scene, desiring to see beneath the dazzling dress of the city. In order to do so, he must first prostrate himself on the ground, getting down on his hands and knees as if in worship of the monument that stands before him. Rolling over onto his back, the groom is put into a vulnerable, very self-aware position. He shimmies his head and shoulders underneath the elaborate facades, a little awkward and cautious in this moment of initial penetration. In this way, he is able to sneak a peek from below, the body of the groom thus forming the underbelly of the artefact. Behind the adorned dress lies an empty void, dark, dimly lit, certainly not the extravagant party that the groom expected and that the exterior implied.



Figure 66 | The Bride



THE BRIDE

The desire of the groom is only intensified as the bride enters the scene, stool and pole in hand. Wedging the heavy wooden stool against her beloved's loins, the bride forces the groom to spread his legs. The bride takes her seat, tantalizingly close to her beloved as she sits atop the groom's groin. Her body faces the audience as she crouches, perched atop the groom's lap, suspended between promise and sexual gratification. The bride is on display, the main event... and yet the groom and bride cannot see each other in their entirety. It becomes apparent in this moment that this performance is not only the embodiment of the groom's desire for the bride, but (much like in Duchamp's 'Large Glass') is also the projection of the bride's desire to see herself, to be looked at, and to be admired.



Figure 67 | The Voyeur



THE VOYEUR

In order to get into his respective position, the voyeur must first approach the monument of love from behind, reaching underneath and pulling, revealing his lustful intentions, his desire for visual violation. Undergarments and delicate lingerie soon hang suspended in tension, obscuring the bride's face as well as her vision. The voyeur must straddle the groom's legs, the voyeur's crotch at about eye level with the seated bride. The voyeur stands apart, and yet is indisputably a part of the act itself as he leers through the apparatus, much like a peaking tom might slyly steal a glance through a window in the hope of seeing a couple in the midst of an erotic embrace.



Figure 68 | The Audience



THE AUDIENCE

Finally, the audience joins the show. At this time, I invited the audience to come forward and walk around the artefact, interrupting the desert projection, their shadows being cast on the white, linen bed sheets, thus blurring the distinction between actor and spectator. Everyone was instructed to line-up single file, reminiscent of the long waiting queues to be found in front of Vegas's most notable attractions, particularly the Welcome to Las Vegas sign. Each audience member had the opportunity to pluck the bride's flower, represented by the cone sprouting from the tip of the pole in front of the voyeur's face.

The audience plays the role of the tourist, walking around and exploring the iconic Vegas strip. They are the wedding guest, both watching and participating in the performance of the artefact which serves as a wedding ceremony for the city of Las Vegas. They look through their recently acquired cone-shaped apparatuses that now serve as spy glasses, helping each participant to see the artefact, and by extension Sin City, in a new way.

THE ARCHITECTURE

A SURREALIST PROPOSAL FOR THE LAS VEGAS STRIP

The groom lays beneath the Las Vegas Strip itself, between the Bellagio fountains and the Paris hotel and casino. The Eiffel Tower stands tall and proud in the background, dominating yet admirable, a reminder of the original city of love. In the foreground lies a single path on-axis with the Eiffel tower, unobtrusive yet unabiding as it splits the waters of the Bellagio fountains, splaying the seductive legs of the city herself. You, as the tourist, become acutely aware of the hidden, unbridled passion of the city as you begin your descent down this path, the waters seemingly rising as you traverse deeper into the artificial lake's interior. Suddenly, as you near the end of the path, a symphony of angelic voices and carefully orchestrated waterworks erupt, an orgasmic celebration that knows no boundaries. Your skin becomes slick with a thin sheet of perspiration, the aftermath of this terrific water display collecting on your exposed flesh.

Once you deem yourself satisfyingly moist, you descend into a dark, rugged, and mysterious tunnel that lies at the end of your path. Then... from the tight confines of the earth, you emerge 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... thereby reflecting the groin vault above, the groom's groin. 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 loud space.

You are quickly faced with a choice between 3 thresholds, 2 to places unknown and the third back to whence you came. You choose the tunnel to your right, descend a nondescript stair and emerge beneath the dance club you saw before, 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 both 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.

The structure taking inspiration from the drawings of the visionary architect Jean-Jacques Lequeux, you step into one of the vaulted breasts of the groom, and it is revealed that these spotlights are created by nipple-like, circular openings in the ceiling overhead. These openings double 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.

THE GROOM

LOCATED BENEATH THE STRIP
AT THE BELLAGIO FOUNTAINS

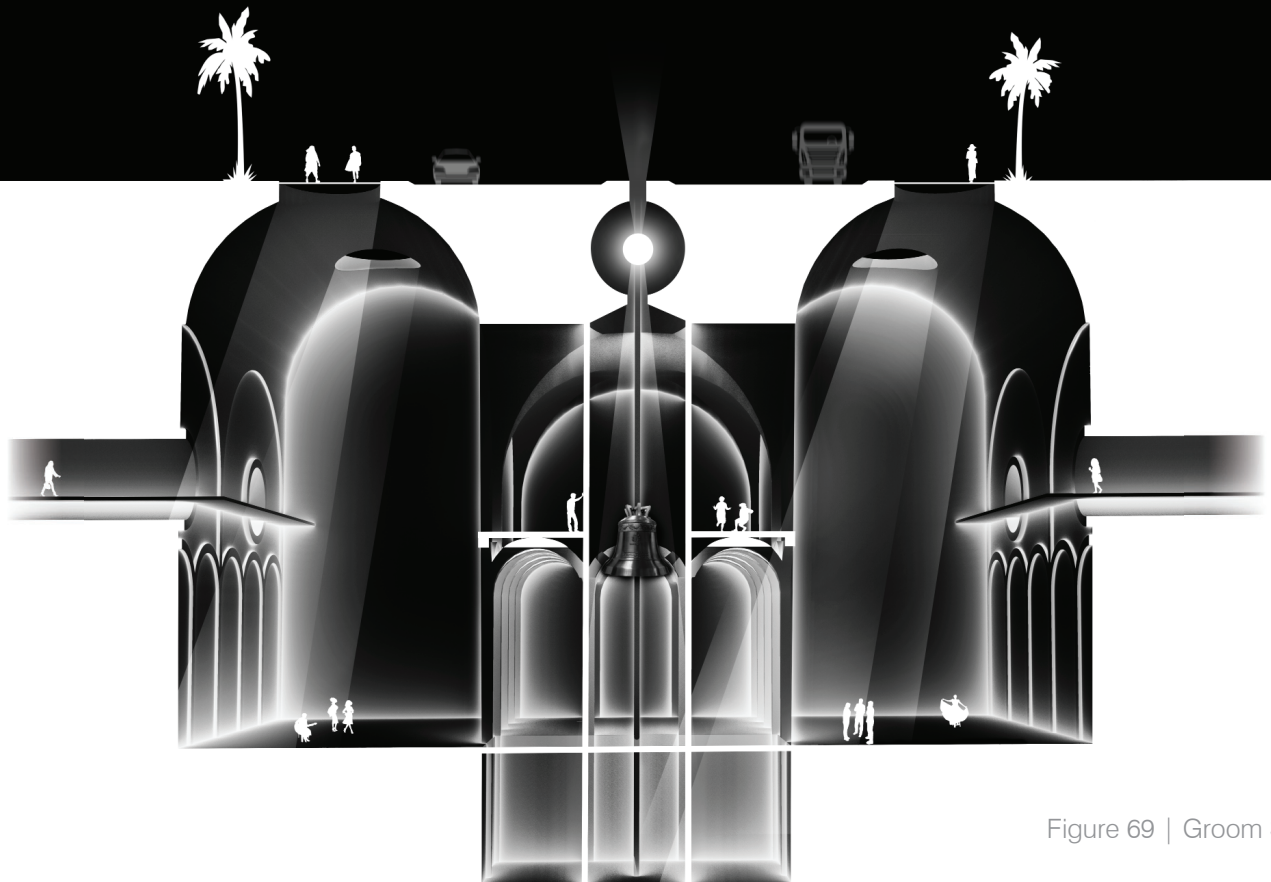
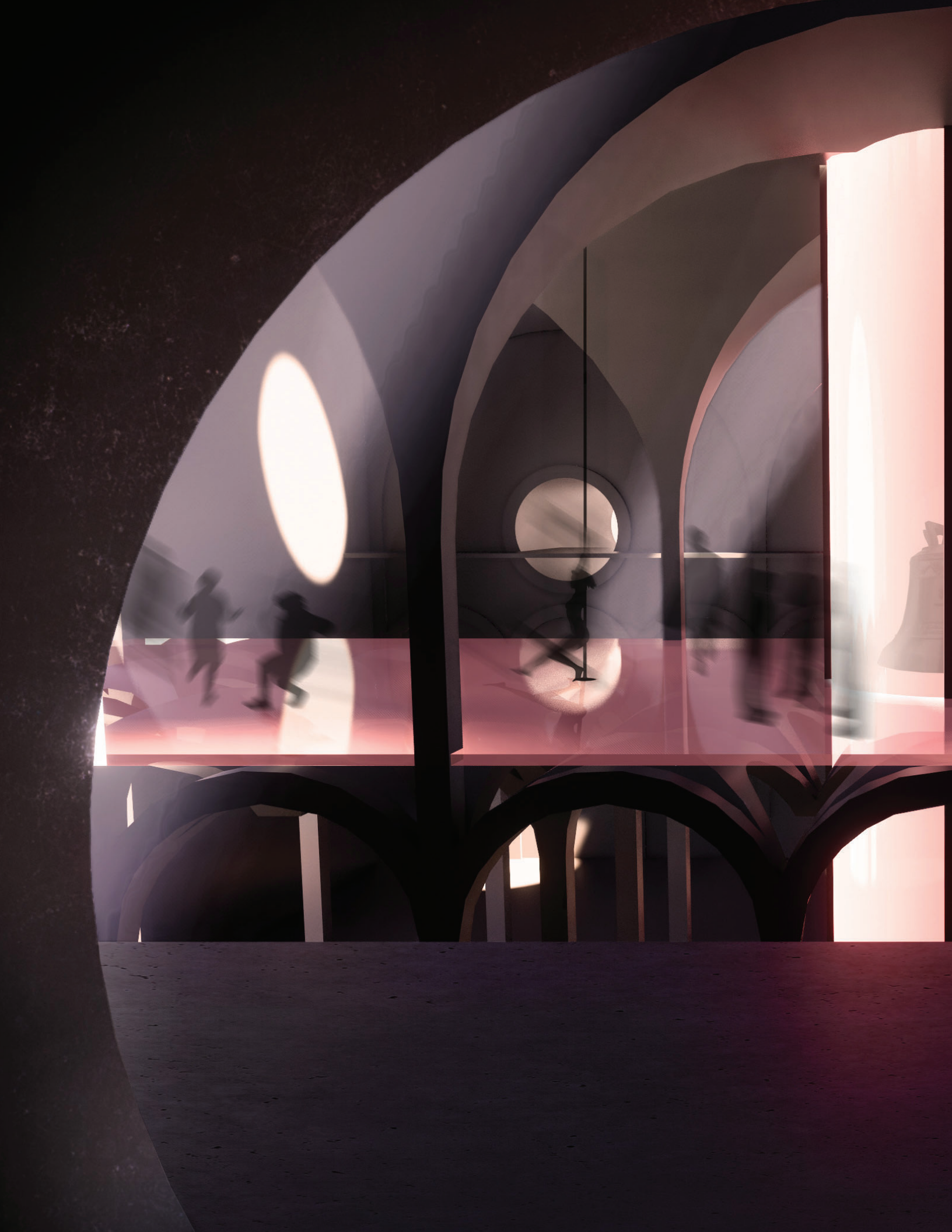


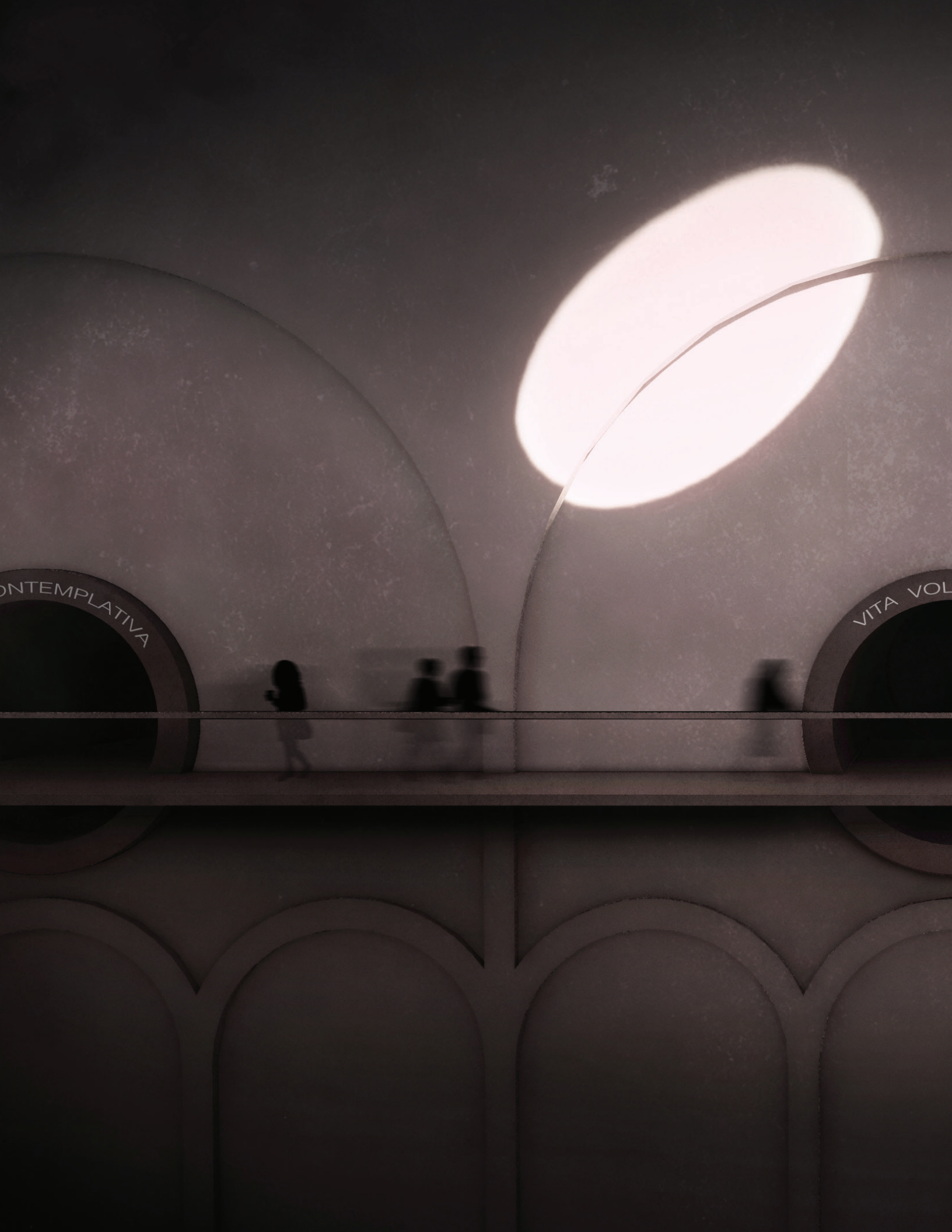
Figure 69 | Groom Section





CONTEMPLATIVA

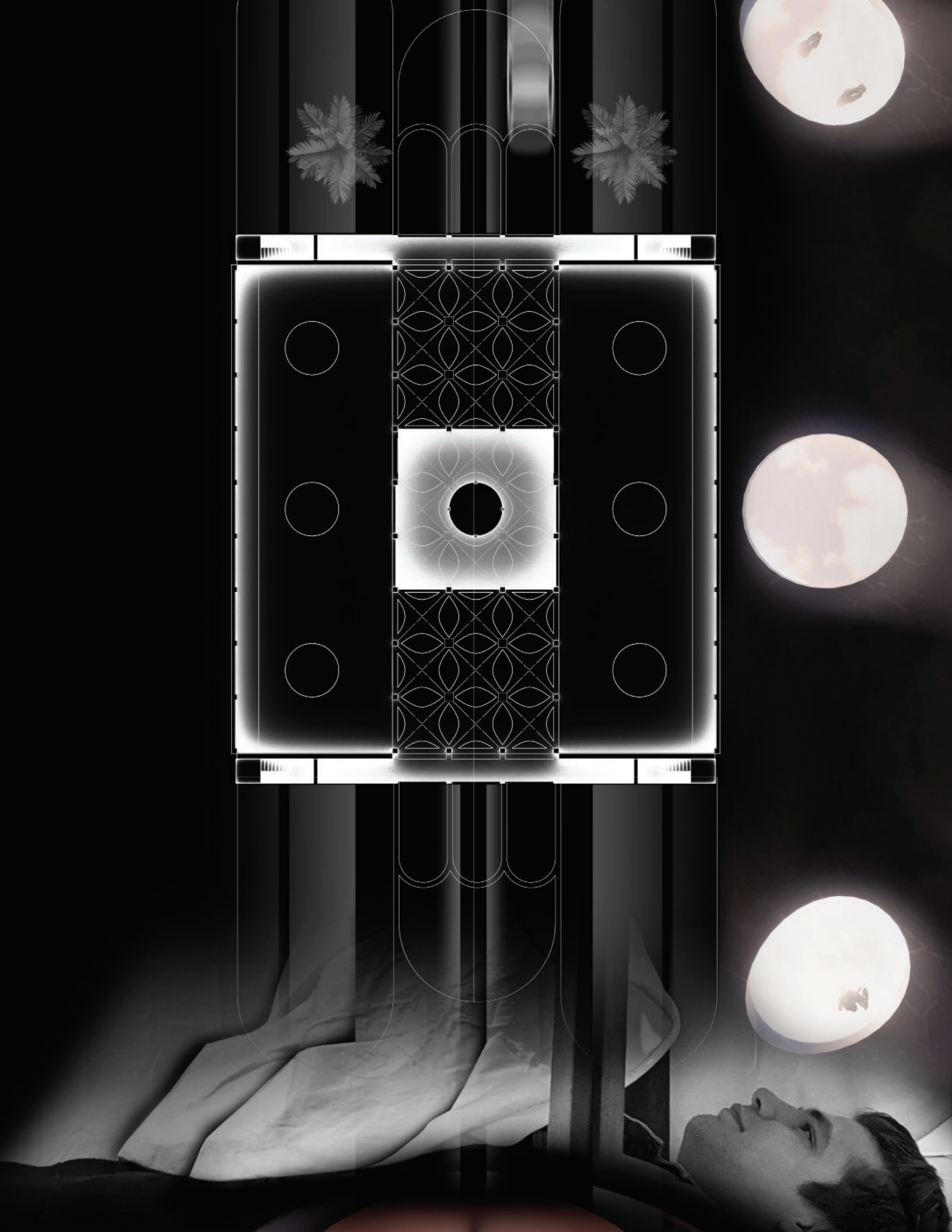
VITA VOL





UPTUARIA

VITA AC





The bride hangs suspended above the Fashion Show Mall on the northern end of the Las Vegas Strip. She is held in tension by five delicate cables from an ovular cloud, five fingers composing a hand that grasps at rings that lie at its fingertips. This bizarre 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. 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. You have taken the place of the bride as you walk down the aisle towards a bell that lies in the distance, the arched forms on either side of you sequentially tightening as your excitement escalates, the bell seemingly growing... almost within reach... but at the last moment the path diverges, your climax halted, the bell once again visually tempted but unreachable.

Below this walkway is suspended a peculiar and erotic rigid frame structure, a 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.

However, the apparatus of love that is the artefact is not complete without the participation of a third party, an outside observer, the voyeur.

THE BRIDE

LOCATED AT THE FASHION SHOW MALL

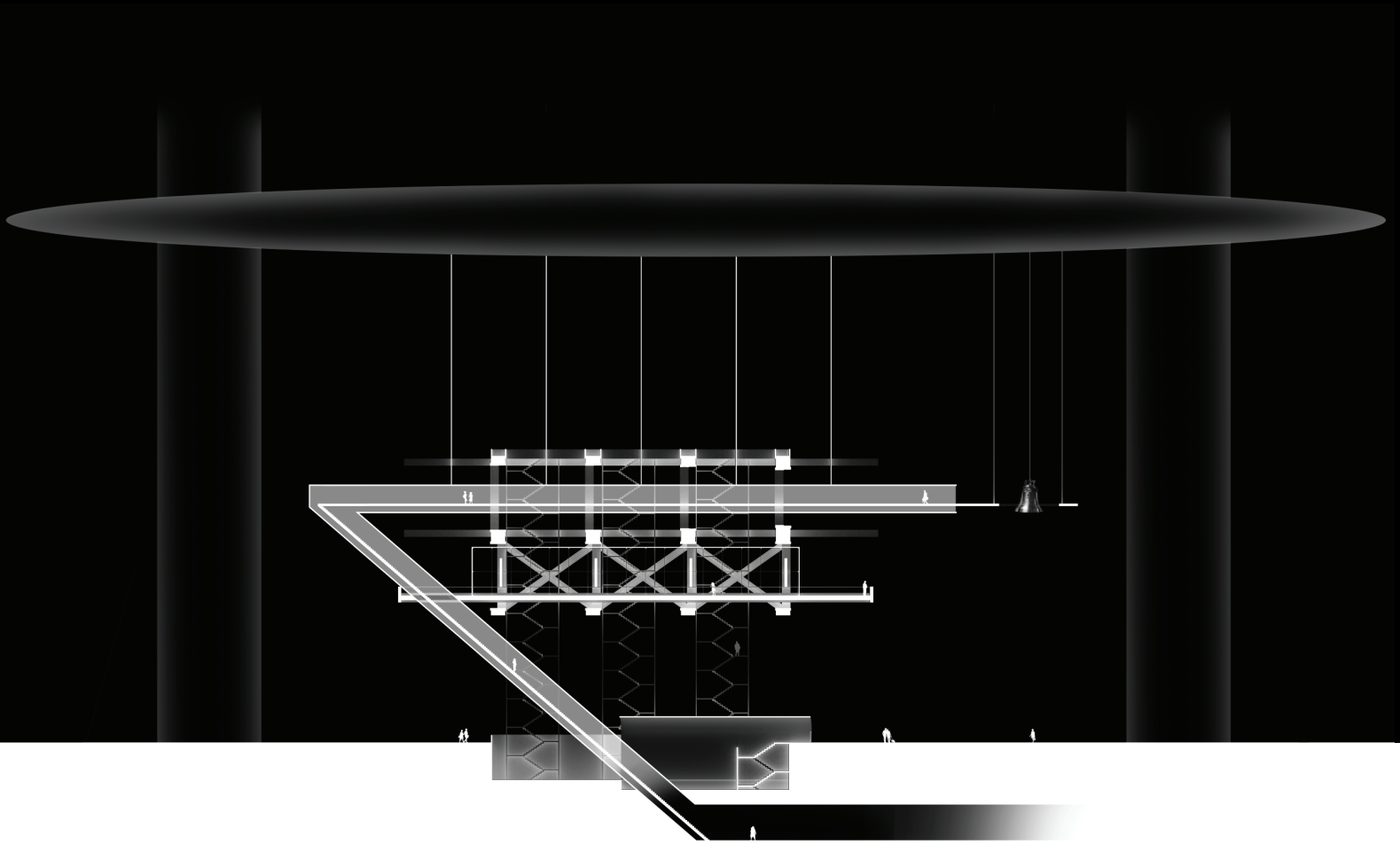
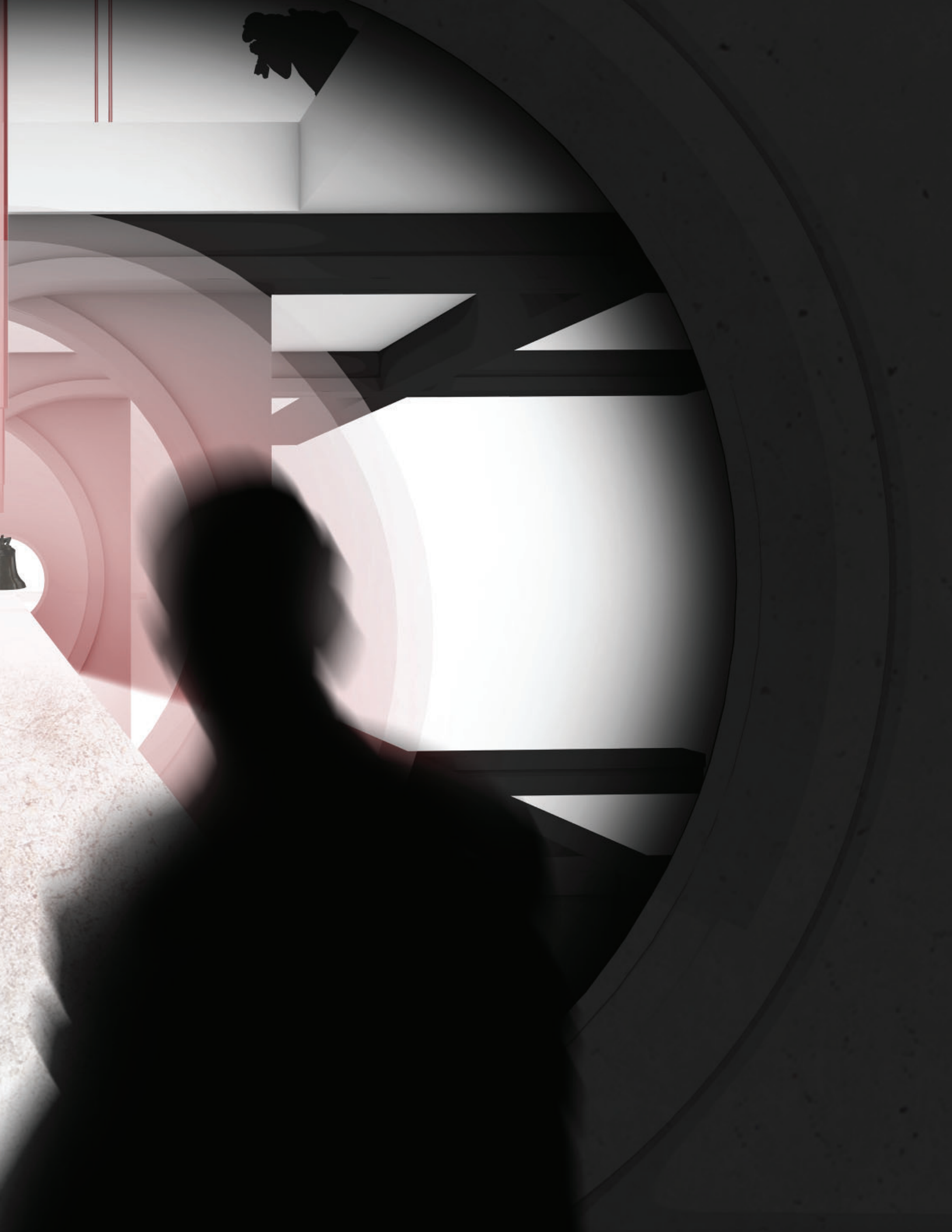


Figure 70 | Bride Section









The voyeur is located on a pedestrian street called the Linq, which branches off of the Strip. A massive ferris wheel dominates the scene, each spherical carriage gleaming like an eye of a hunting predator.

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. 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 oh 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 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 directly adjacent to the 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, the Strip 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.

THE VOYEUR

LOCATED ALONG THE "LINO" AT
THE BASE OF THE HIGH-ROLLER

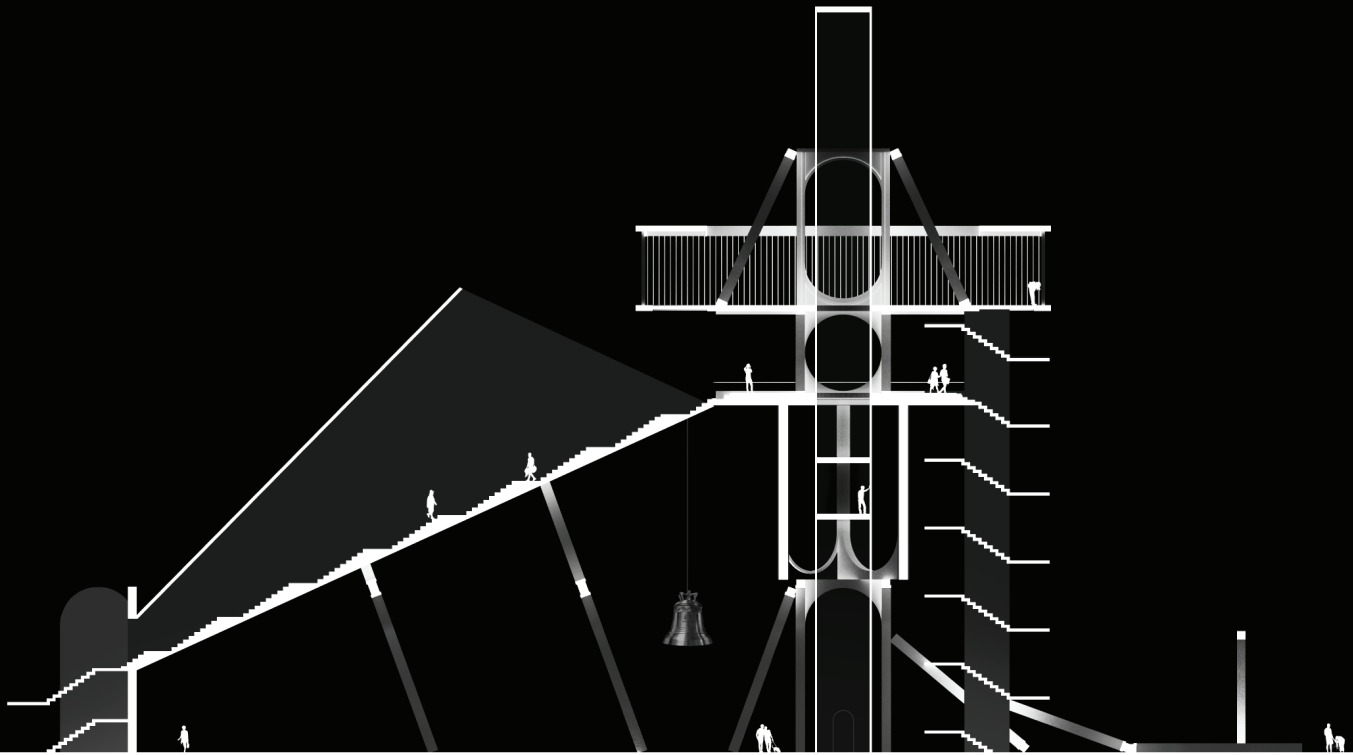
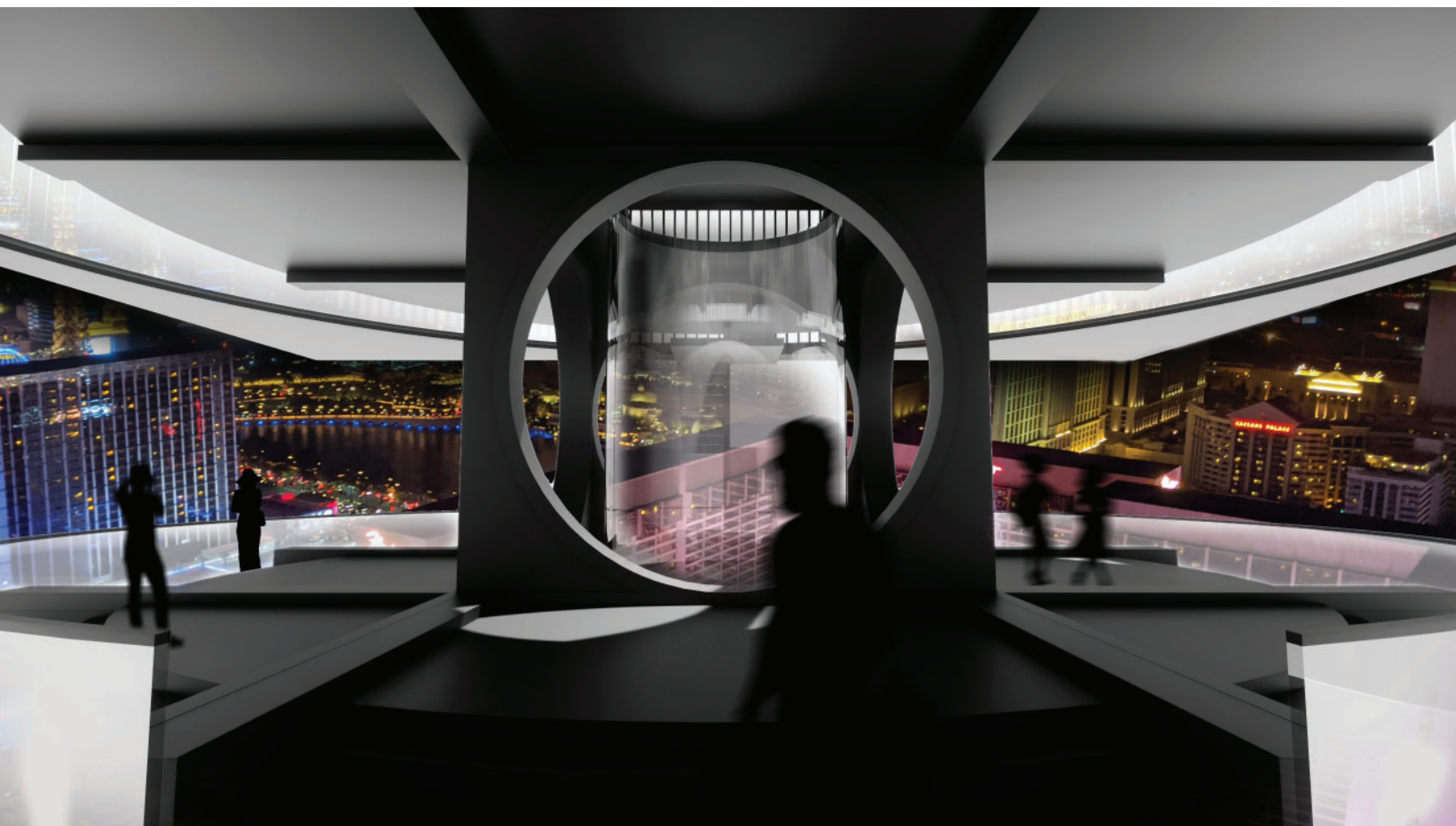
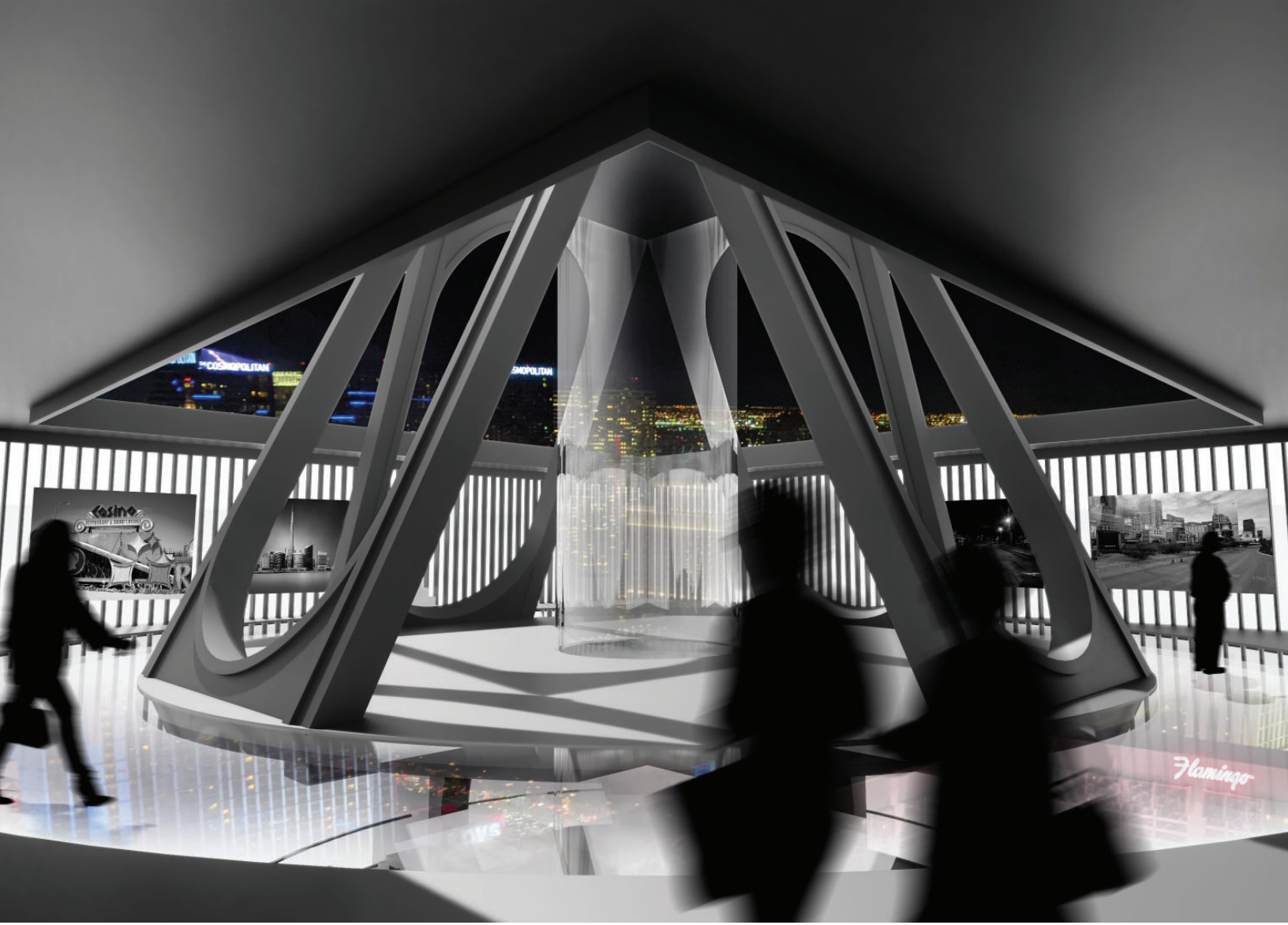


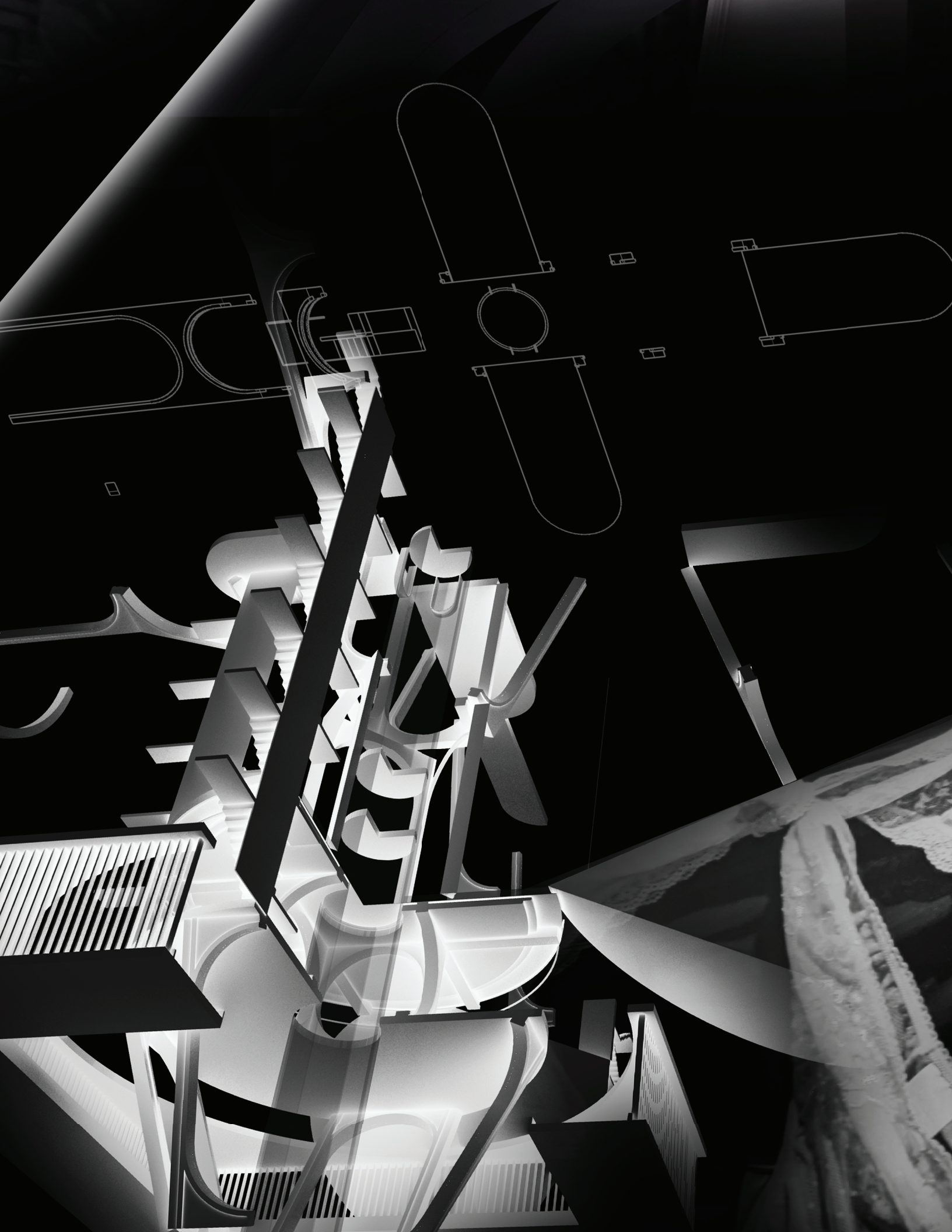
Figure 71 | Voyeur Section













The audience is located at the very beginning of the Strip on the south end, just down the street from the iconic 'Welcome to Fabulous Las Vegas, Nevada' sign. Nearby sits the Little Church of the West, the oldest existing building on the strip, and one of the city's first wedding chapels. As you approach the wedding chapel that is surrounded by nothing but dirt, asphalt, and a shifty-looking motel, you notice that directly adjacent lies what appears to be a large hole in the ground, a dome clearly visible in the distance. This hole is an inverted church, a void, a tangible representation of the lack of love and commitment on the Strip.

A singular path, the aisle, descends towards the altar of this inverted church, which in turn leads you to a procession of stairs. You delve deeper and deeper into the earth'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, ringing, 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, which 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, on 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 reductive, 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, and a testament to the untapped passion that Sin City inherently embodies.

In the hollowed sphere, this passion is at its most potent, burning hot, flames flickering around the perimeter of the sphere's interior. The sphere is suspended between earth and sky, inhabiting both and neither, reminiscent of the original space of desire that permanently separates earth from sky, Gaia from her lover Ouranos. At its center is suspended a singular platform with a circular glass floor on which you are invited to lay down, the bed below framing your body. A light flashes, a photo is taken, a snapshot in time printed and placed in your hand.

You take the flimsy piece of photo paper to the sphere's perimeter and drop it into the inferno, your image quickly devoured and consumed by the flames and turned to ash.

The ash falls... falls... falls... sliding down the concave walls... and drops onto the bed that rests beneath this space of consummation and consumption, permanently staining its previously pure white sheets. Over time, the bed and pedestal together become coated in a thick sheen of ash, moments in time permanently captured and laid to rest, a memory of your journey embodied

THE AUDIENCE

LOCATED ADJACENT TO THE
LITTLE CHURCH OF THE WEST

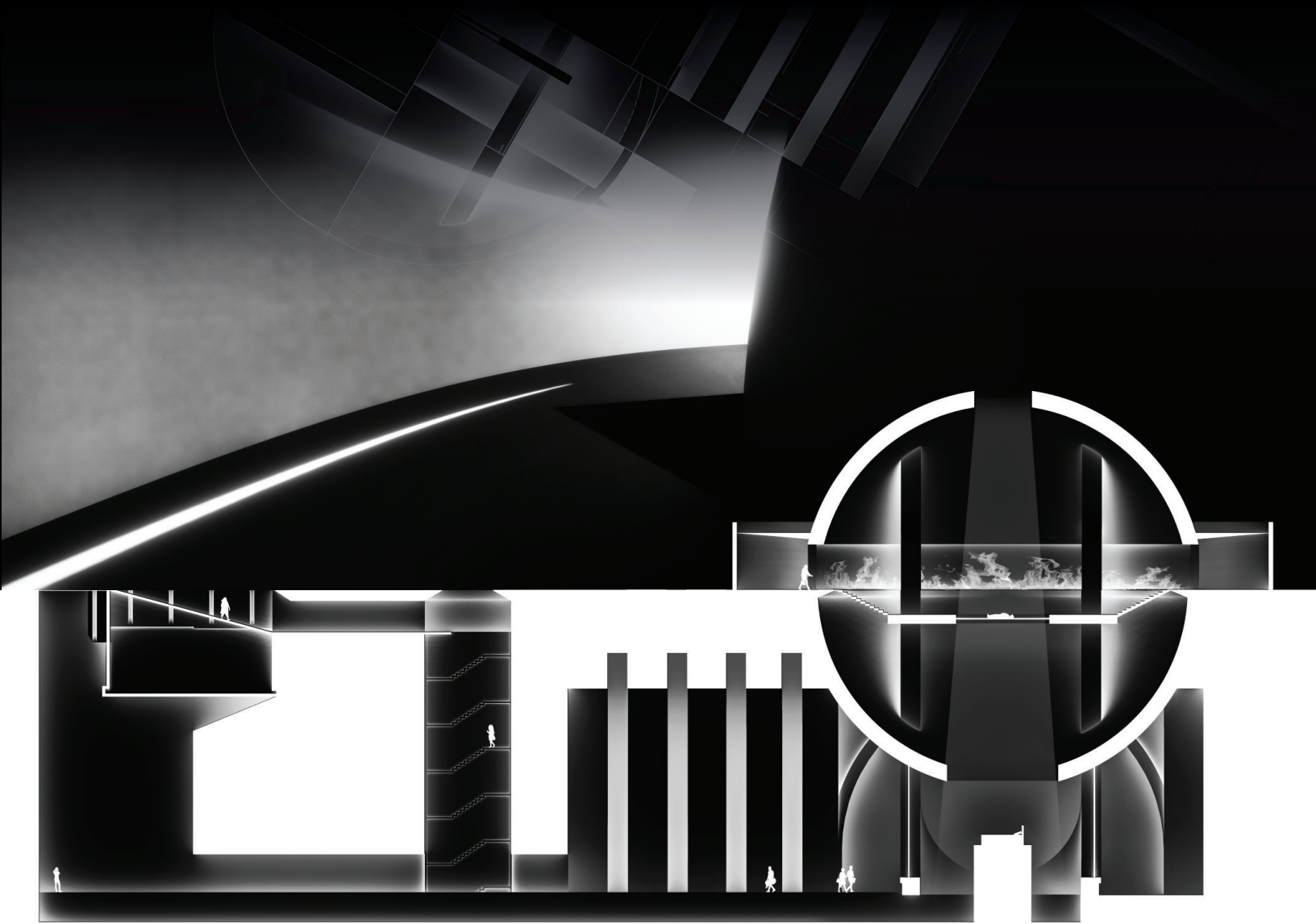
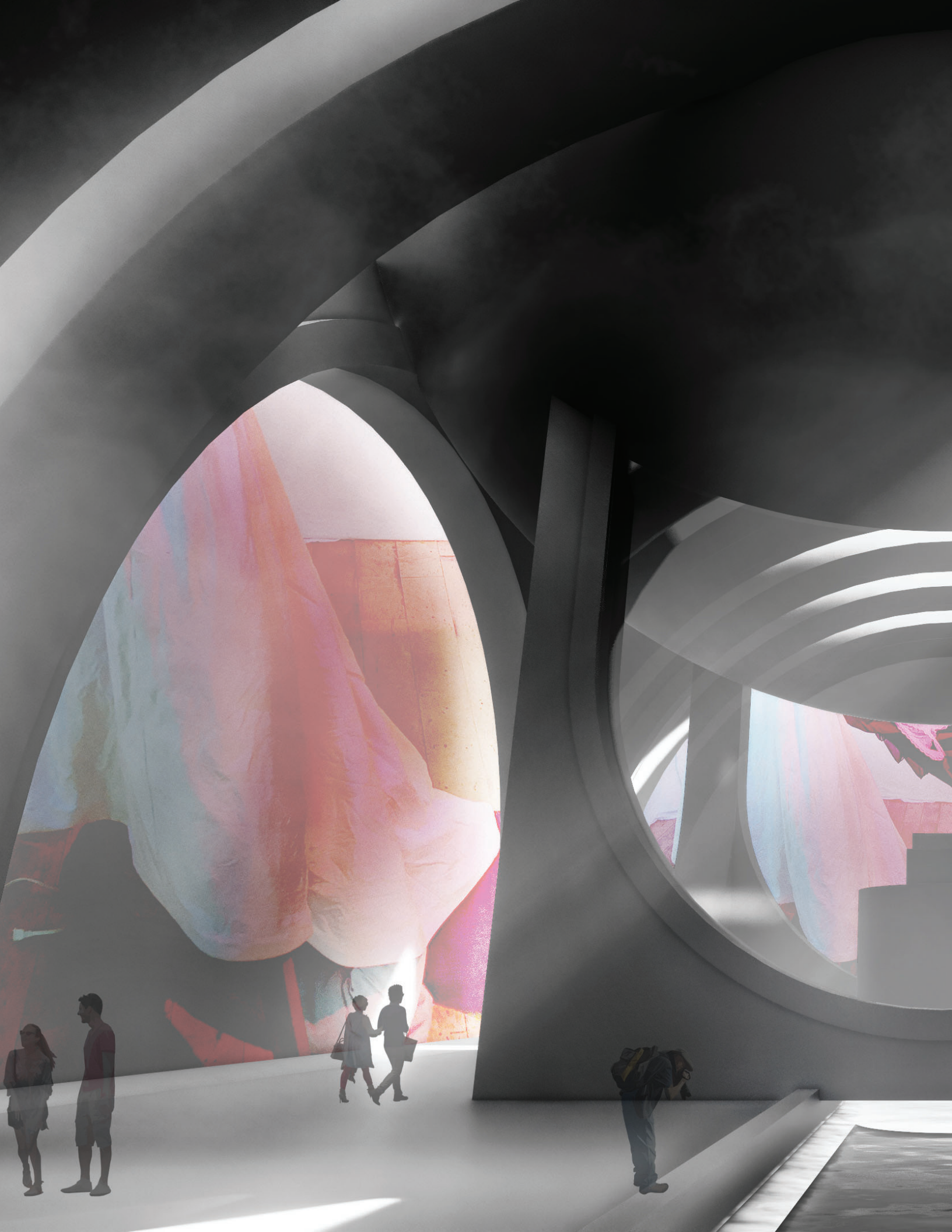
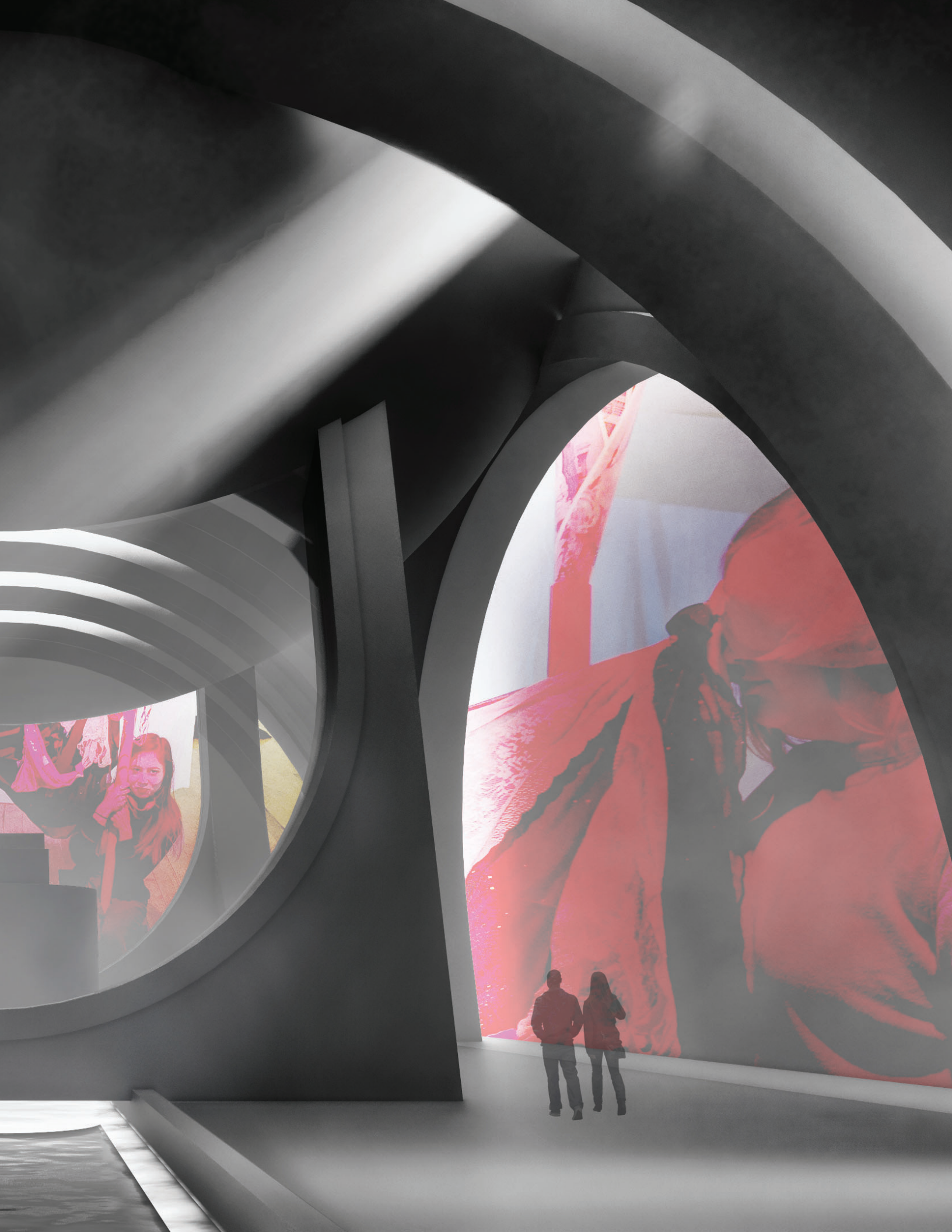
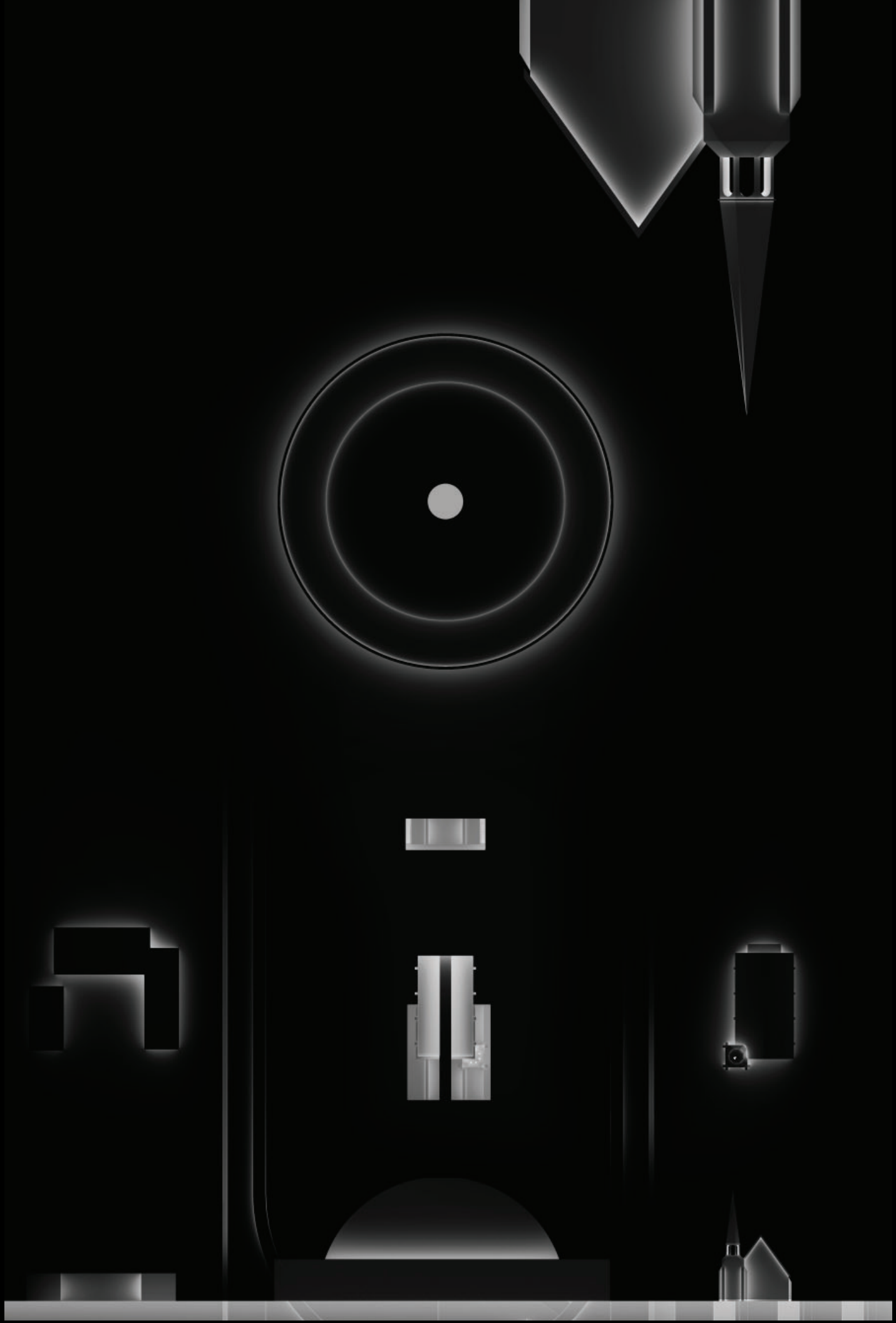
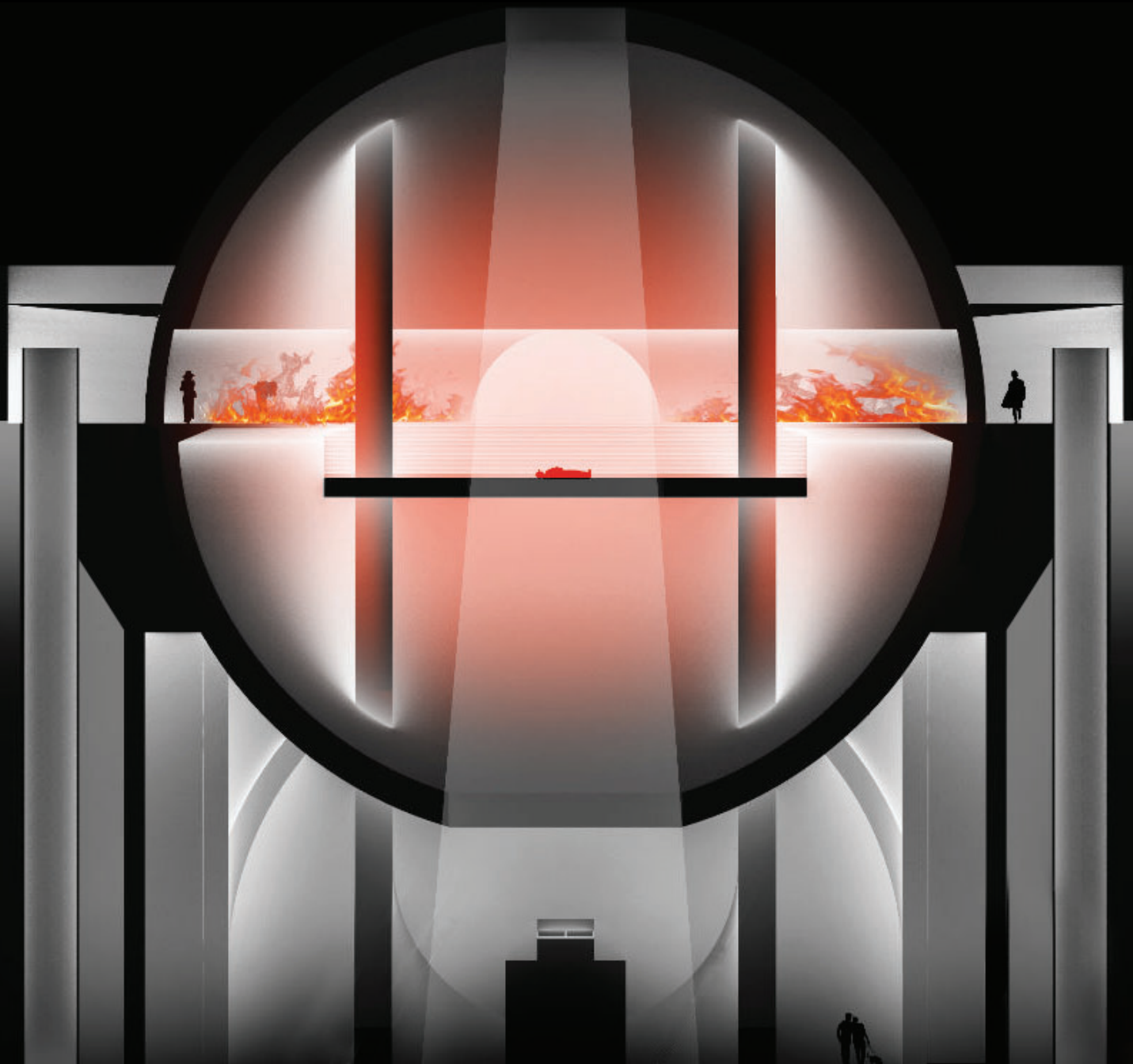


Figure 72 | Audience Section

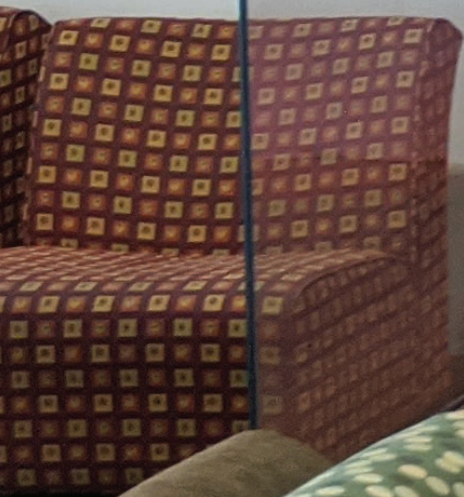








ouise Bougoise





Reference List:

- Pérez-Gómez, A. (2008). *Built upon love: Architectural longing after ethics and aesthetics*. MIT Press.
- Pérez-Gómez, A. (1994). *Polyphilo or The Dark Forest Revisited: an erotic epiphany of architecture*.
- Baudrillard, J., & Foss, P. (1983). *Simulations* (p. 1). New York: Semiotext (e).
- Venturi, R., Robert, I. V., Brown, D. S., Izenour, S., & Steven, R. V. D. S. B. (1977). *Learning from Las Vegas: the forgotten symbolism of architectural form*. MIT press.
- Gómez Alberto Pérez. (2016). *Timely meditations: selected essays on architecture*. Montreal, Canada: Rightangle International.
- Perez-Gomez, A., & Parcell, S. (1996). *Chora: intervals in the philosophy of architecture*. Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press.
- Sioli, A., & Jung, Y. (2018). *Reading architecture: literary imagination and architectural experience*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Gómez, A. P., & Perez-Gomez, A. (1983). *Architecture and the crisis of modern science*. mit Press.
- Heidegger, M. (1954). The question concerning technology. *Technology and values: Essential readings*, 99, 113.
- Merleau-Ponty, M. (2004). *The world of perception*. Routledge.
- Pallasmaa, J. (2012). *The eyes of the skin: Architecture and the senses*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Pérez-Gómez, A. (2016). *Attunement: Architectural meaning after the crisis of Modern Science*. MIT Press.
- Vesely, D. (1988). On the relevance of phenomenology. *Form; being; absence: Pratt journal of architecture*, 2, 54-60.
- Souza, E. (2011, January 9). *AD Classics: Parc de la Villette / Bernard Tschumi Architects*. Retrieved from <https://www.archdaily.com/92321/ad-classics-parc-de-la-villette-bernard-tschumi>.
- Latson, J. (2015, January 27). *Nuclear Weapon History: Fall-Out from The First Nevada Tests*. Retrieved from <https://time.com/3676511/nevada-nuclear-test/>.



Noah Meier

PERSONAL IDENTIFICATION

PREVIOUS STUDIO EXPERIENCE

2nd Year

Fall | Charlotte Greub
Spring | Milton Yergens

3rd Year

Fall | Paul Gleye
Spring | Mike Christenson

4th Year

Fall | David Crutchfield
Spring | Paul Gleye

5th Year

Fall | Steven Wischer
Spring | Steven Wischer