

The Circle of Life

The role of Architecture in the Embodiment of Grief



Stemfeld (1951). *Statue with offerings left by prisoners.*

Considering the underrepresentation of death in modern cities, this thesis examines the role of architecture in the experience of the bereaved by opening a space for active remembrance; an effort to continue the life of one being inside the other through a continued presence of memory.



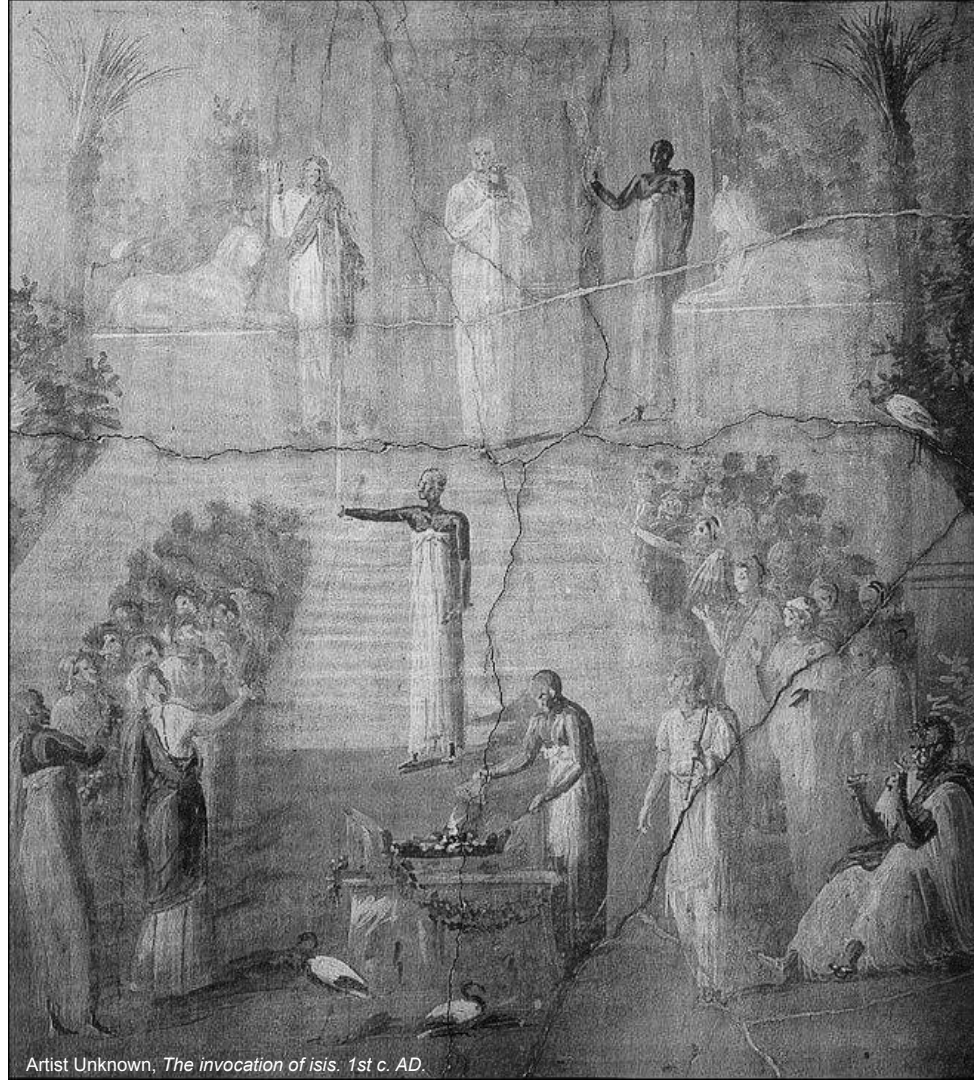
“There is perhaps no other experience in human life which so clearly marks the limits placed on that modern control of nature acquired through science and technology. It is precisely these enormous technological advancements with their goal of artificial preservation of life, which reveal the absolute limit of what we can achieve. The prolongation of life finally becomes a prolongation of death and a fading away of the experience of the self”

- Hans Georg Gadamer, *The Enigma of Health*

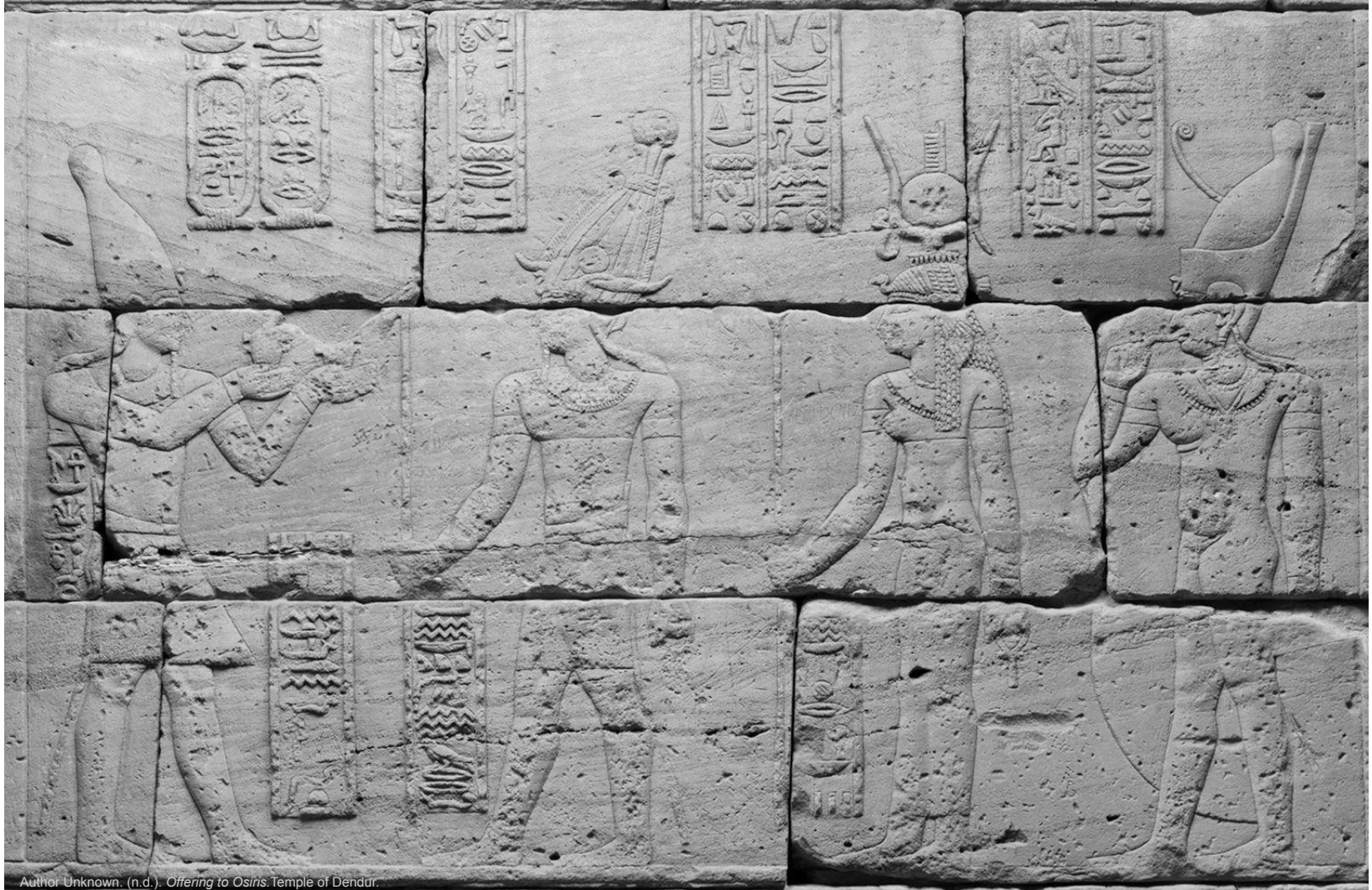


Baptiste Greuze, J. (1767). Votive offering to cupid.

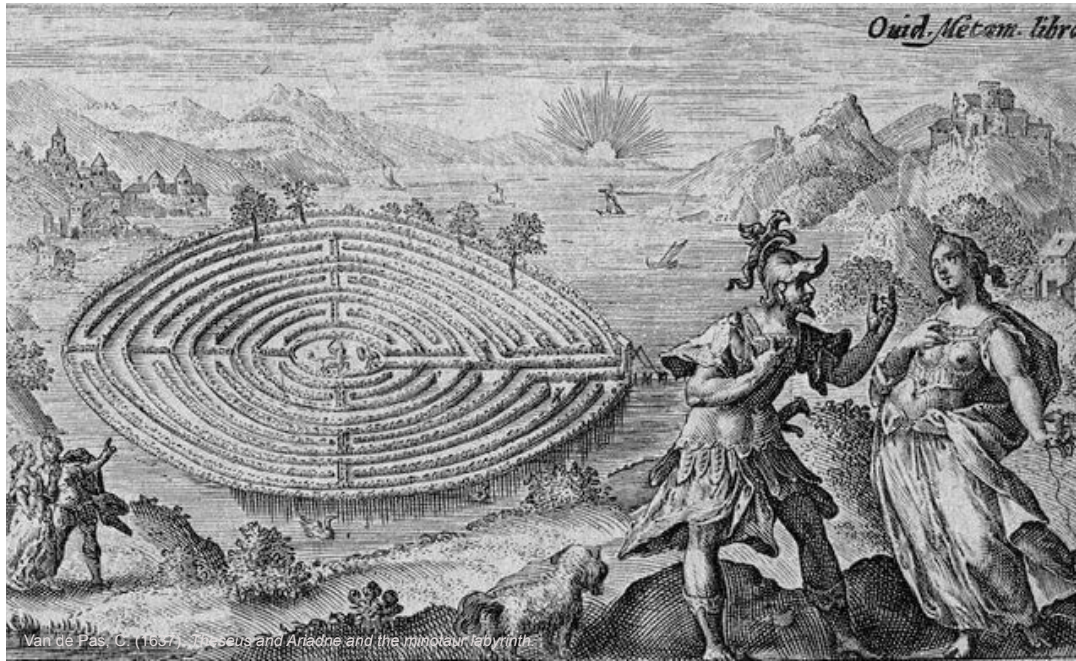
"One need only recall how earlier rites and cultic regulations granted death a ceremonial place in the life of society and how those who were left behind were helped through such rituals to continue their lives and be re-incorporated into the community"
-Hans Georg Gadamer



Artist Unknown, *The invocation of Isis*. 1st c. AD.

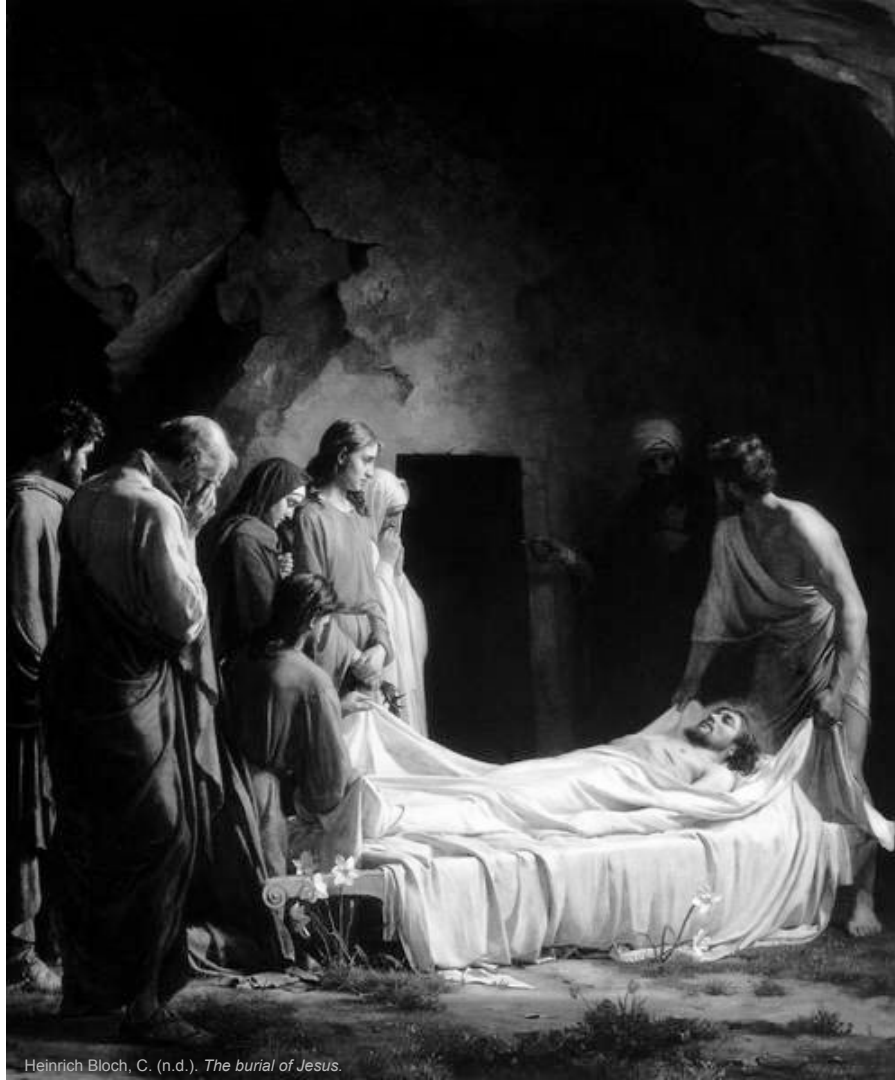


Author Unknown. (n.d.). *Offering to Osiris*. Temple of Dendur.



"Whatever is capable of affecting the mind, feeling, or will has thereby established its undoubted reality"... Therefore, " Just as there are no sharp distinctions among dreams, hallucinations, and ordinary vision, there was no sharp separation between the living and the dead. The survival of the dead and their continued relationship with man were assumed as a matter of course, for the dead were involved in the indubitable reality of man's own anguish, expectation, or resentment. "


-Henri Frankfort



Heinrich Bloch, C. (n.d.). *The burial of Jesus*.



Nall, S. (n.d.). *Two old hands.*



“ [There is] some overlapping ‘element’ between us serving as a medium of exchange”

- Maurice Merleau Ponty, *The Visible and the Invisible*



Ashleigh, C. (2011). *Evolution of phantom limb*.



Author Unknown. (n.d.) *Keriah mourner.*

*" We could not feel this way at all-
so hopelessly dispossessed or
deprived, of a side of ourselves, of
our own flesh and blood, unless we
are [as Merleau Ponty supposed]
existentially bound to significant
others in the sensitive depths, the
fabric, of our own embodied being"*

-Maurice Merleau-Ponty

The Artefact

Reigniting Hart Island







STYNET, 11 January, 2021. [video] A place so disturbing you cannot visit it. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OealfY4aCys&t=73s>



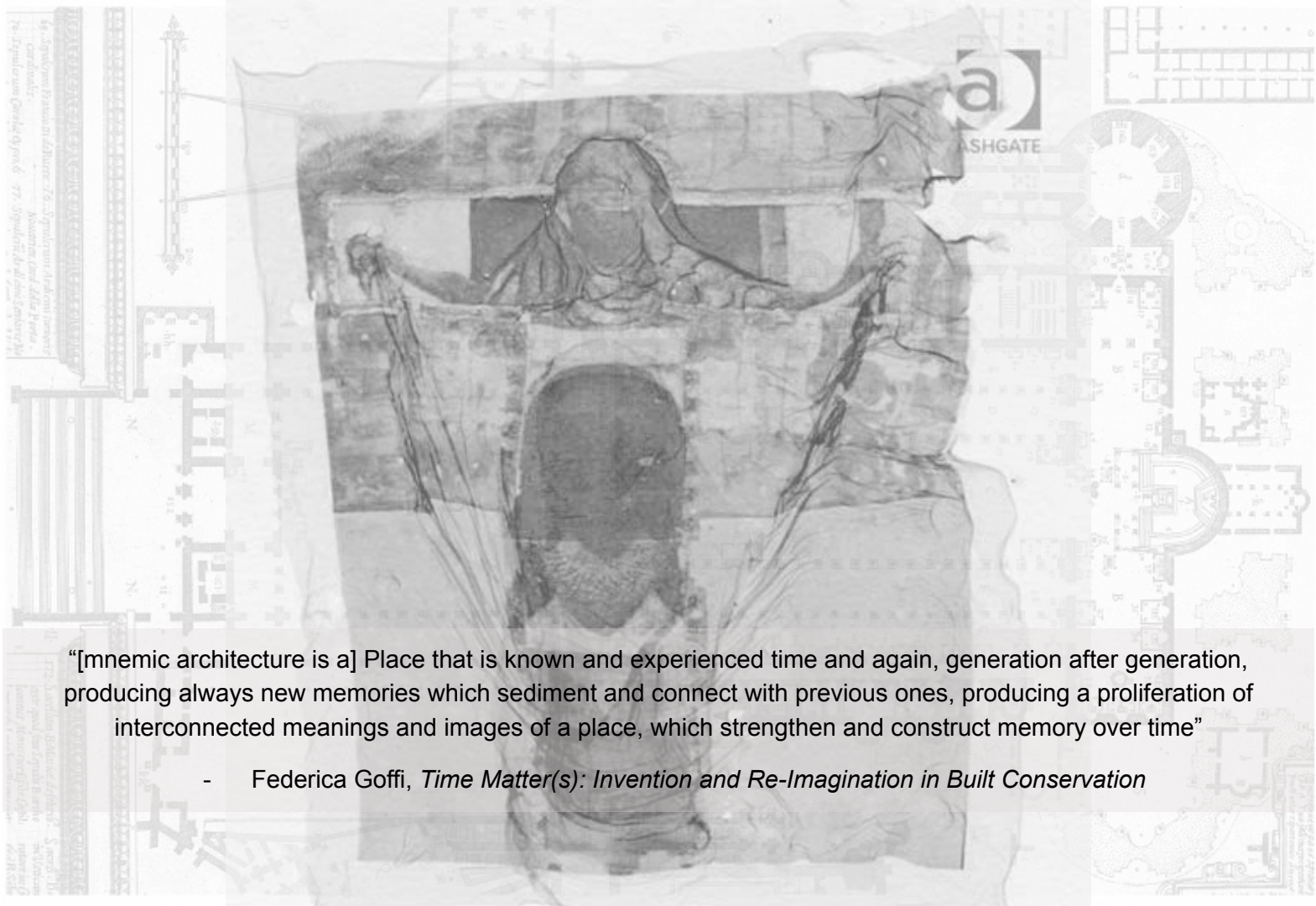
Sternfeld, J. (1991), via *Hart Island Project*



Sternfeld, J. (1991). *Vicki Pavla*, whose baby was buried on Hart Island, on a specially arranged visit.

The Design

Resurrecting Hart Island



“[mnemonic architecture is a] Place that is known and experienced time and again, generation after generation, producing always new memories which sediment and connect with previous ones, producing a proliferation of interconnected meanings and images of a place, which strengthen and construct memory over time”

- Federica Goffi, *Time Matter(s): Invention and Re-Imagination in Built Conservation*



Getty Images. (n.d.). *The legacy of 9/11.*



Van Heemskerck, M. (1532). *Pillar of the crossings of new St. Peter's and remnants of the northern wing of St. Peter's.*





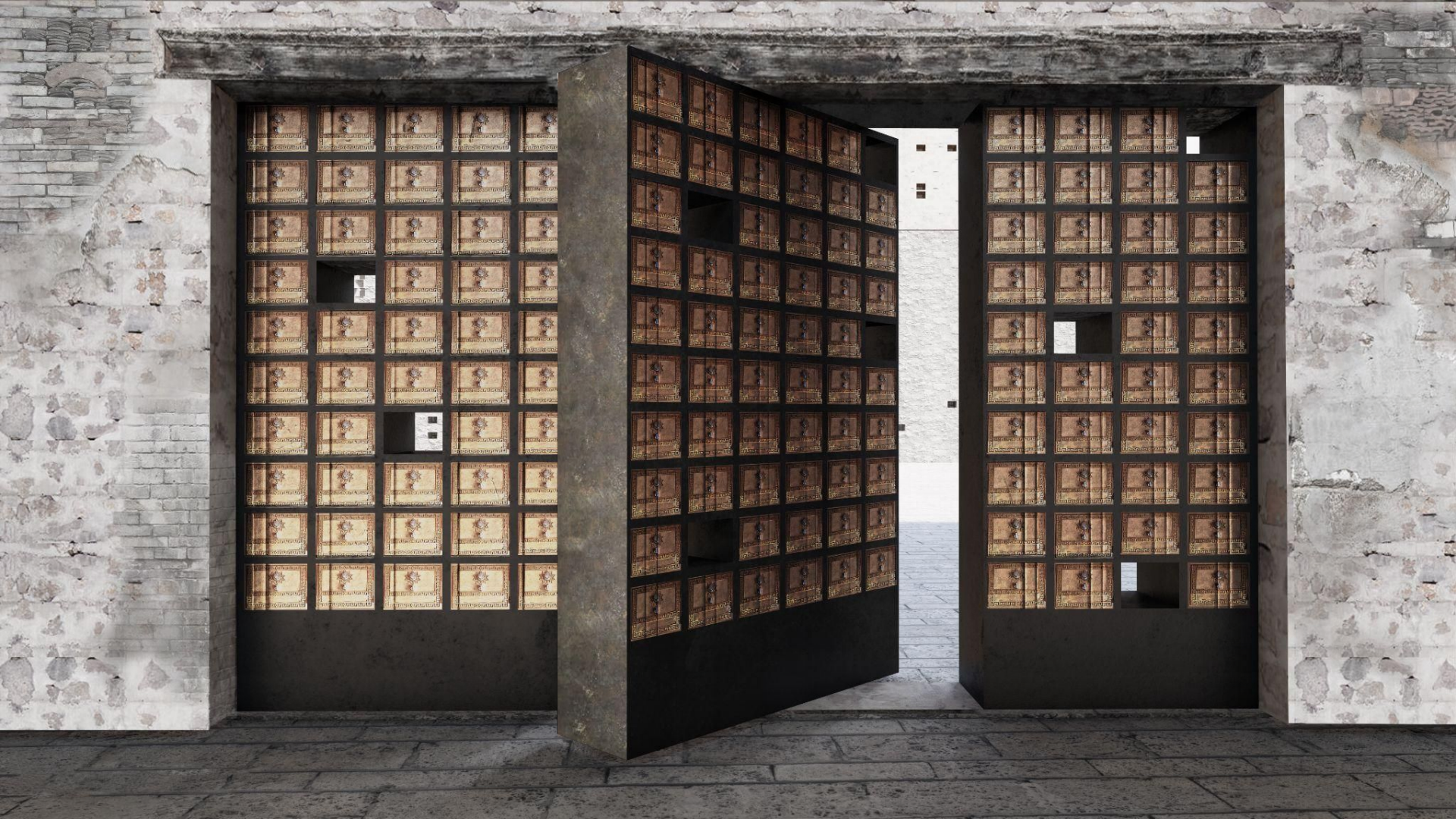














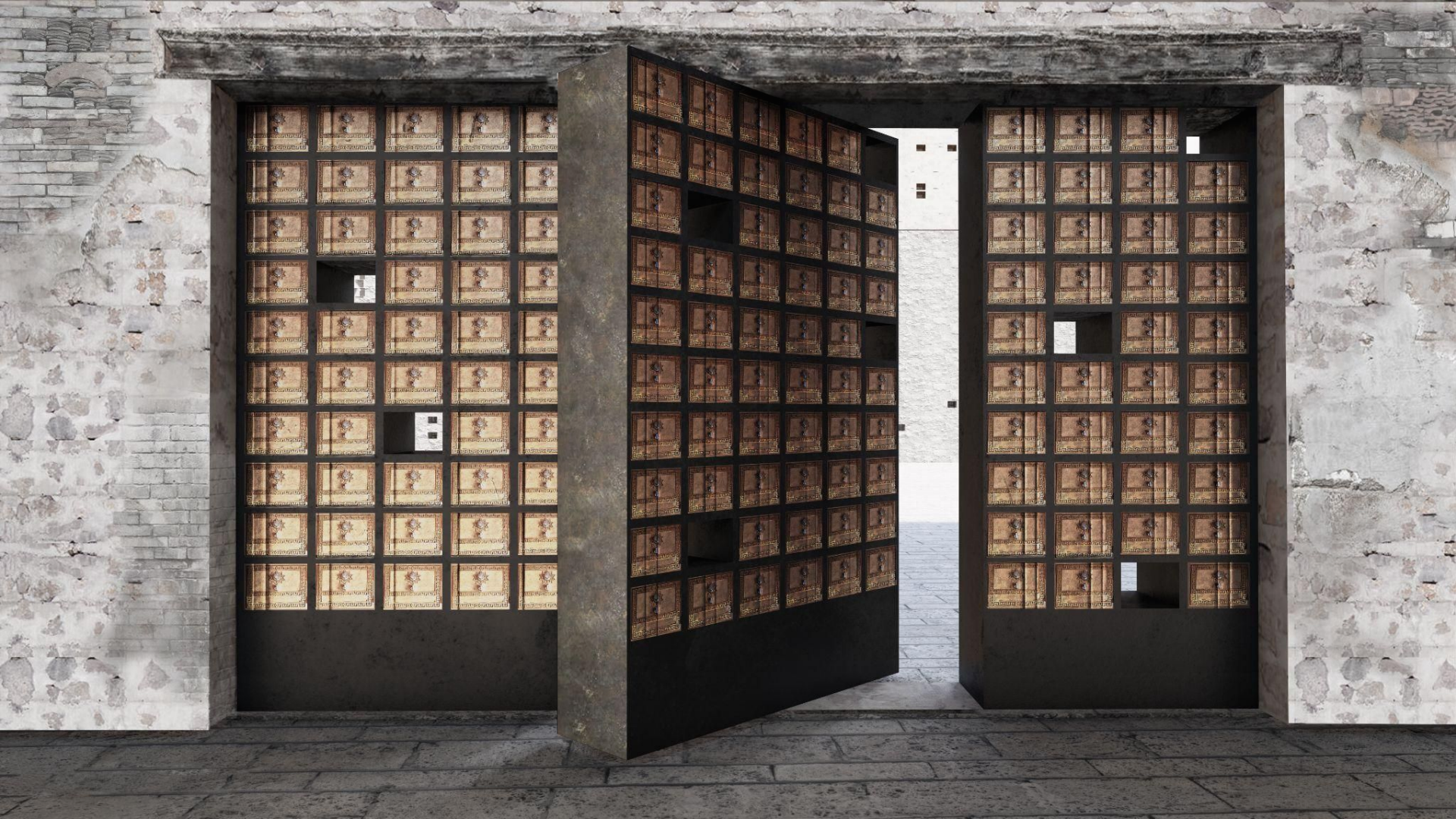


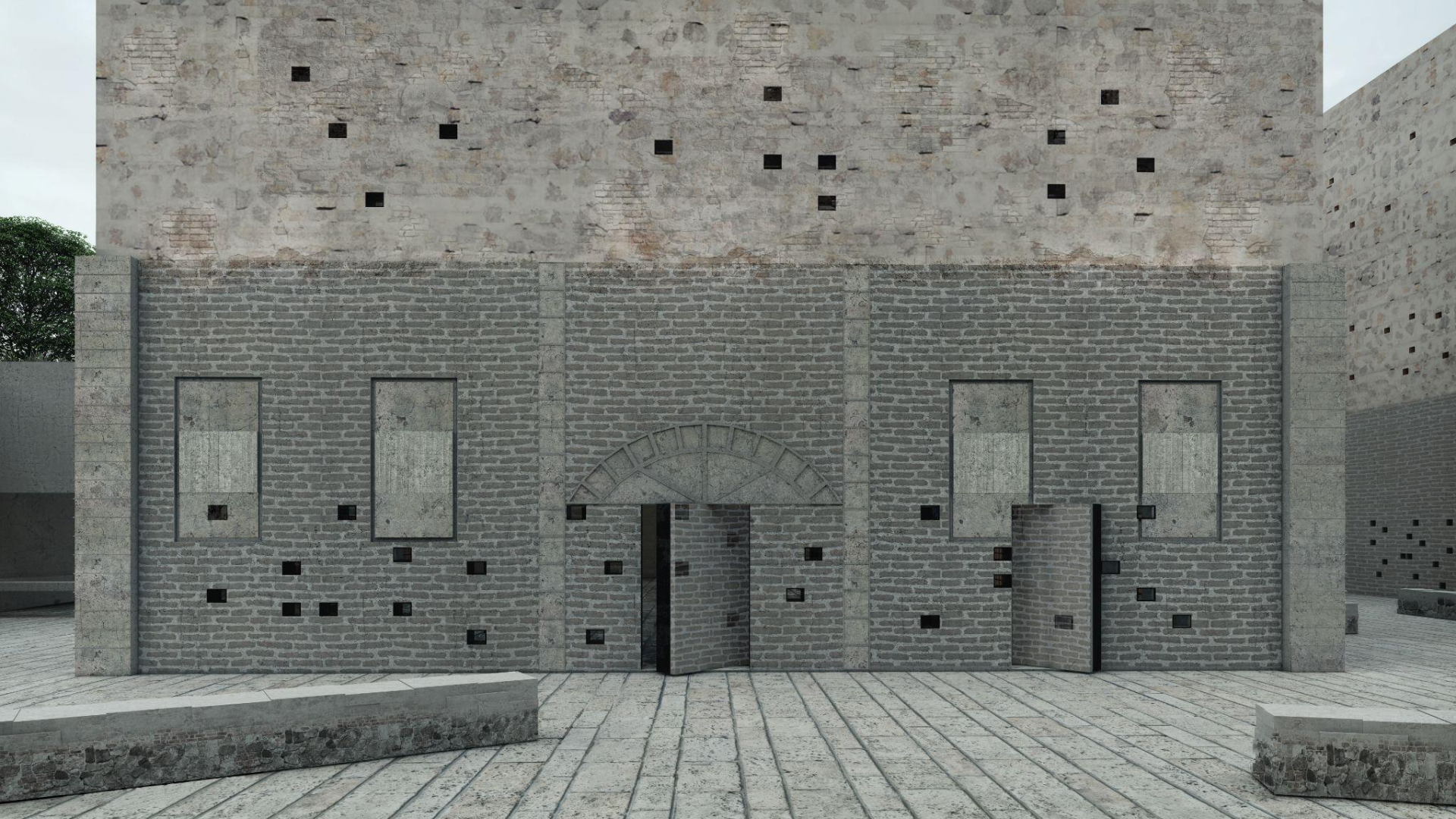












My life is not this steeply sloping hour
Through which you see me hasten on.
I am a tree standing before my background
I am but one of my many mouths
The one that closes before all of them.

I am the rest between two notes
That Harmonize only reluctantly:
For death wants to become the loudest tone –

But in the dark interval they reconcile
Tremblingly, and get along.
 And the beauty of the song goes on.

RILKE, *The Book of Hours* (1905)