



# ORPHEREAL



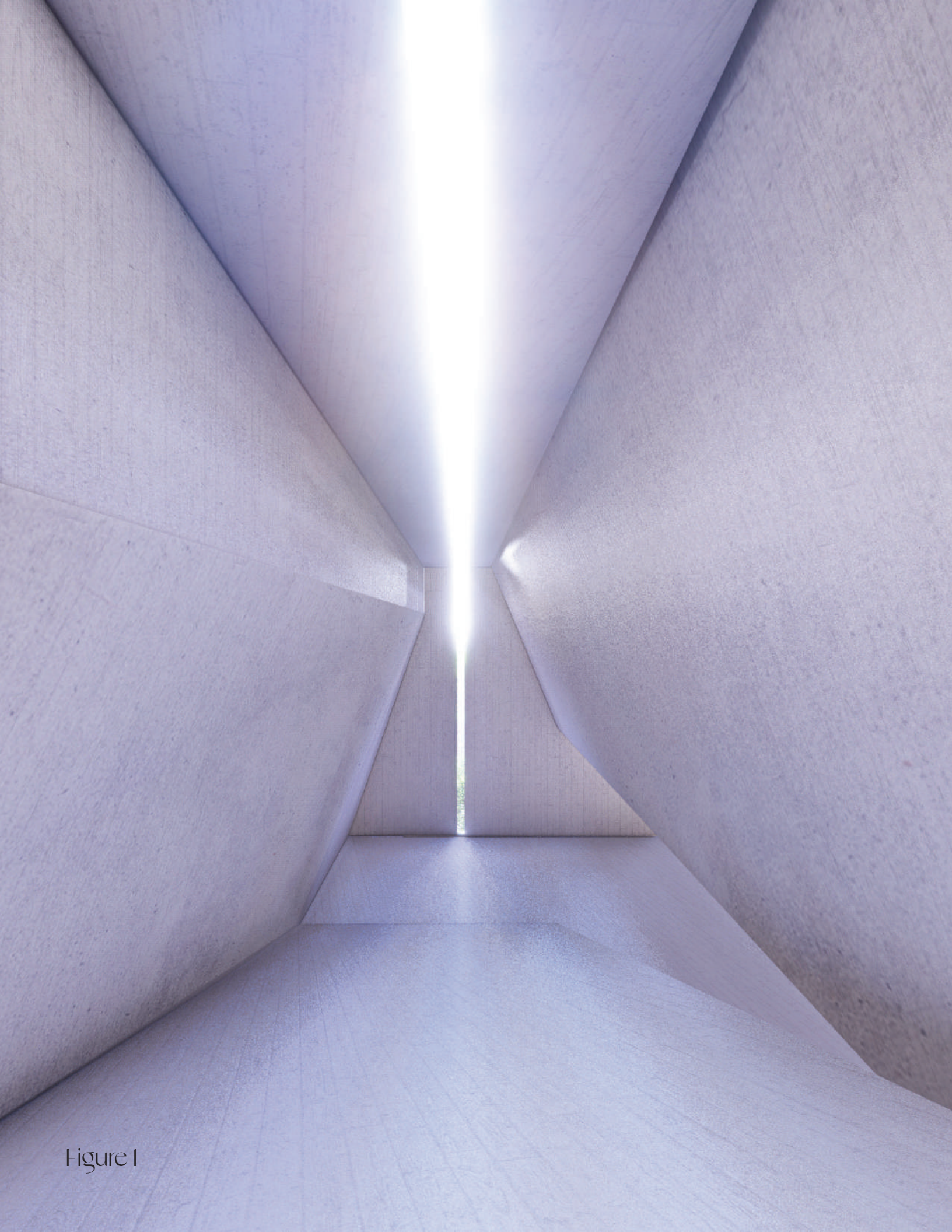


Figure 1

# ORPHEREAL

Orphic Journey to Healing: A Therapeutic Design for  
the Anxious and Depressed

A Design Thesis submitted to the Department of Architecture  
and Landscape Architecture of North Dakota State University

By  
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In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of  
Masters of Architecture

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# Abstract

Mental health has been rising for years, although since the pandemic that swept the world in 2020, it only seems to have been getting worse. When we hear somebody has broken their leg, has been diagnosed with a cancer or a terminal illness, why do we feel empathy towards the person? We feel called to deliver get well cards, and post about their misfortune and rally others to do the same; in the simplest terms, we support them on the path to heal. Mental health should be no different. The 2 most common mental illness diagnoses in America are depression and anxiety. Everyday people around us are a part of this sector, but the difference is it's an invisible wound.

Why is it that when help is sought out for mental health, the atmosphere that is intended for healing does the opposite?

Orphereal (coming from its root origin, Orphic and Ethereal) explores how atmospheres help shape our moods and attune us both mentally and physically. Inspired by ancient and modern influences that speak to a cathartic transformation of mood; my architecture attempts to curate a specific ritualist pathway of healing. Inspired by studies such as Le Corbusier's theory that states as humans our bodies are governed by the diurnal (sign of the) 24 hour day, users are immersed in essential experiences like sleeping, eating, bathing and therapy all guided by the sacred relationship of shadow and light.

Title: Orphereal

Program: Clinic/Healing/Wellness

Site: Portland, OR



## Narrative

Close your eyes. All of a sudden you feel a hard, jagged pain in your right upper part of your chest. It goes away after a couple minutes, but persists for the next couple hours. Days go by, as you try to convince yourself it must be heartburn, or something simple of that nature. However, this is a pain that takes over your ability to continue what you are doing, and makes you acutely aware of the fact that you feel an unnatural amount of pain. You now think to seek help and get answers for why this is happening. Without thinking, what does this space of wellness look like? Open your eyes. The space that I envision is as I stated earlier, monotoned colored hallways, blank waiting rooms, everything being so sterile that nobody dares touch only what they are instructed to. Why is it, that in a place meant to not only be a place of healing and promote wellbeing, does the opposite? So much so that to the point individuals fear and avoid yearly checkups or appointments. The irony is that still today, clinics are (in the general sense) designed very similarly. Each project has their new “modern, state-of-the-art” twist to it, but I have yet to see one that makes the patient truly comfortable within its program.

# Program

When talking about my thesis, instead of using the terminology “typology”, I will instead use program. This is due to the fact that the term “program” talks about the experience that is intended for architecture; versus the term “typology” gravitates towards more a more generalized design.

Orphereal accounts for the whole-human experience, designed carefully to curate to those in need of healing. Spaces within the program will radiate against modern health facilities to combat what shows to be more conducive in the process of healing from anxiety and depression.

The program is designed with four pillars in mind; health, wellness, living, and spiritual.







# PRECEDENT STUDIES

# *Winter Park Center for Health & Wellbeing*

WINTER PARK, FLORIDA



Figure 2

# WINTER PARK CENTER FOR HEALTH AND WELLBEING

DUDA PAINE ARCHITECTS

Location: Winter Park, Florida

Size: 78,000 sq. ft.

## ABOUT:

This facility is the first of its kind in the region to focus on preventative care. Winter park health foundation aligned with the Florida Hospital to open this Integrative center for fitness, mental, health and wellness. To merge these, Duda Paine architects approached this with a more holistic approach. Utilizing natural materials and custom art throughout all the spaces was something Duda Paine set initially to do. Another focus through the program of the structure was to not just design a space for the nurses and doctors, but to acknowledge other important aspects to wellness such as nutrition training and dance lessons. The architecture of this space draws inspiration from the healing aspects of nature. Garden spaces, walking trails, with walls in varying heights to reflect postures of sitting, standing. Duda Paine incorporating a light-filled central commons connects all the spaces and invites space to socialize and host events in the space, with a walking track that circles the upper level of the commons.

## URBAN IMPACT:

Completed in February of 2019, Duda Paine targeted LEED silver, and won an honorable mention in the Architects Newspaper Best of Design awards in 2020. As for the community, they are beyond energized that this has been brought into the community. Testimonies from different community members have shown that they are excited to offer so much care, specialties, and healthy resources under one roof. Living a healthy lifestyle is important and this center for health and well being has given the community a chance for resources that others lack out of central Florida.

## PROGRAM ELEMENTS:

- 2 pools cardio and weight training equipment space
- Cardio and weight training equipment space
- Indoor walking track
- BeWell bar + kitchen
- Outpatient lab and retail pharmacy
- Sports medicine and rehabilitation
- Massage and acupuncture services
- Practices included are family medicine, diabetes, endocrinology, and gastroenterology

## CASE TAKEAWAYS:

Within this project, they demonstrated key components and characteristics that I am aiming for as well. Due to the fact that the program was different than my thesis, the basis of what they were designing for the client remains the same as my goal; a facility where it not only focuses on care, but the wellness and healthy lifestyle encouragement. I believe the holistic approach will be a factor that I take into my own design. The Winter Park Center for Health and Wellbeing has become a catalyst in it's area to set a way for the community to have access to not only the care they need, but



Figure 3





Figure 4



Figure 5



# *Naman Retreat Pure Spa*

DA NANG, VIETNAM



Figure 6

# NAMAN RETREAT PURE SPA

MIA DESIGN STUDIO

Location: Da Nang, Vietnam

Size: 17,222 sq. ft.

## *ABOUT:*

This project brings an oasis of tranquility to Da Nang. It is comprised of fifteen treatment rooms, with lush, open-air gardens, deep soaked bathtubs, and daybeds. The spa also features spaces such as a health club and gym, meditation and yoga sessions held at the open lounge bar. MIA Design Studio aimed to touch on all aspects of the senses in this experience; yet also keeping in mind the concept of “green design”.

## *URBAN IMPACT:*

Within the design, MIA Design Studio implemented the use of natural ventilation through staggered louvers and local plants to disguise and shade the gaps in-between, dueling as a shading device for the outside spaces. These plants play with light and shadow, carefully added and seamlessly become part of the screens.





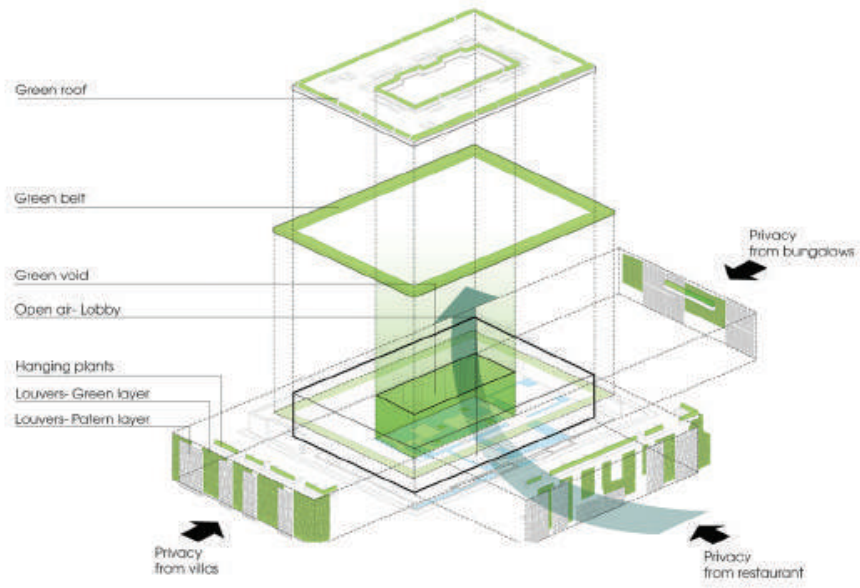


Figure 8

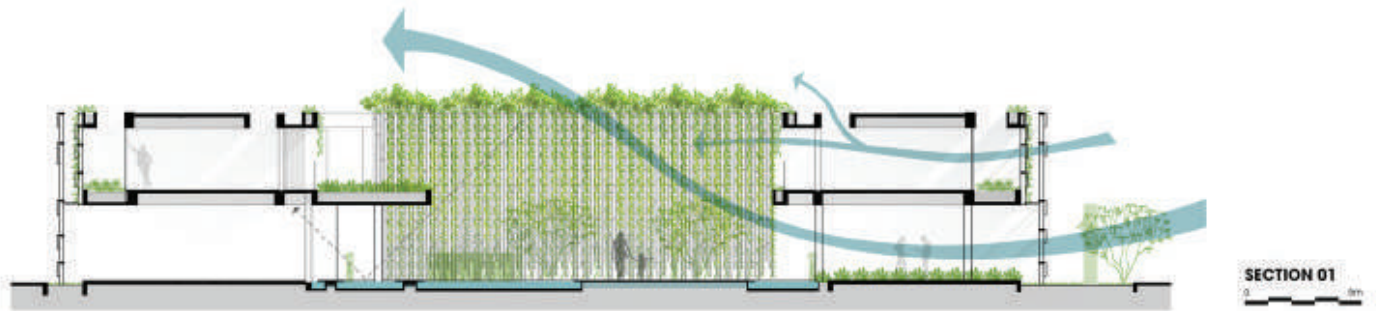


Figure 9

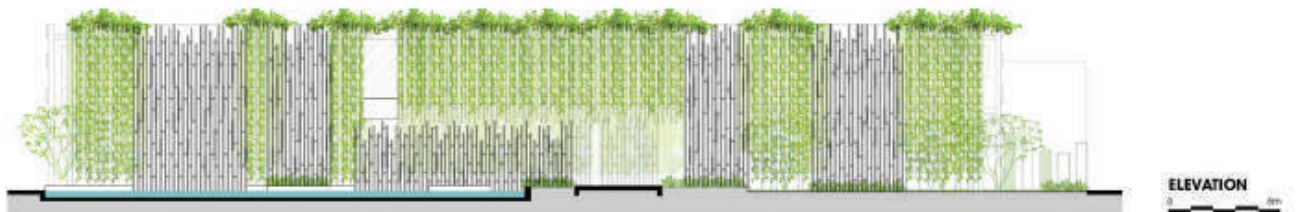


Figure 10



Figure I1



Figure I2



# Coco House

VIETNAM



Figure 13

# COCO HOUSE

## DUY LE ARCHITECTS

Location: Vietnam

Size: 1,528 sq. ft.

### *ABOUT:*

Breathtaking is, in the simplest terms, how I would describe this design. It is inspired by the Pixar film “Coco” released in 2016, which focuses on the connection between generations, and family members, despite being in different worlds. Per to the inspiration, the architect wished to create a new sense of space, with the accent of art and glassy materials throughout the space. The result is a duplicating illusion that brings a spacious element to the house that could otherwise feel crowded, due to it only being slightly over 1,500 square feet. Small intricate details are implemented in the design such as half designed accents, that when looked at in the mirror, reveal the full pattern (this is demonstrated in the details of the window arches on the 2nd floor). This is done to also amplify the space for a narrow townhouse, while bringing to life the vision created by the architect.

### *URBAN IMPACT:*

The architect has strategically placed numerous aspects into the design that celebrate green design, not just implemented without purpose. Integrating a fish pond and garden into the living space not only provides a scenic element, but also adjusts the micro climate for the living space. The design also utilizes 4 more gardens into the house that not only align with the hobbies of the client, but act as noise suppressors and dust prevention. Marble pebbles are also placed across the glass roof in solution for light regulation; it carries the light reflection across the space creating a subtle luminous effect.





Figure 14



Figure 16



Figure 15



Figure 17





Figure 18



Figure 19

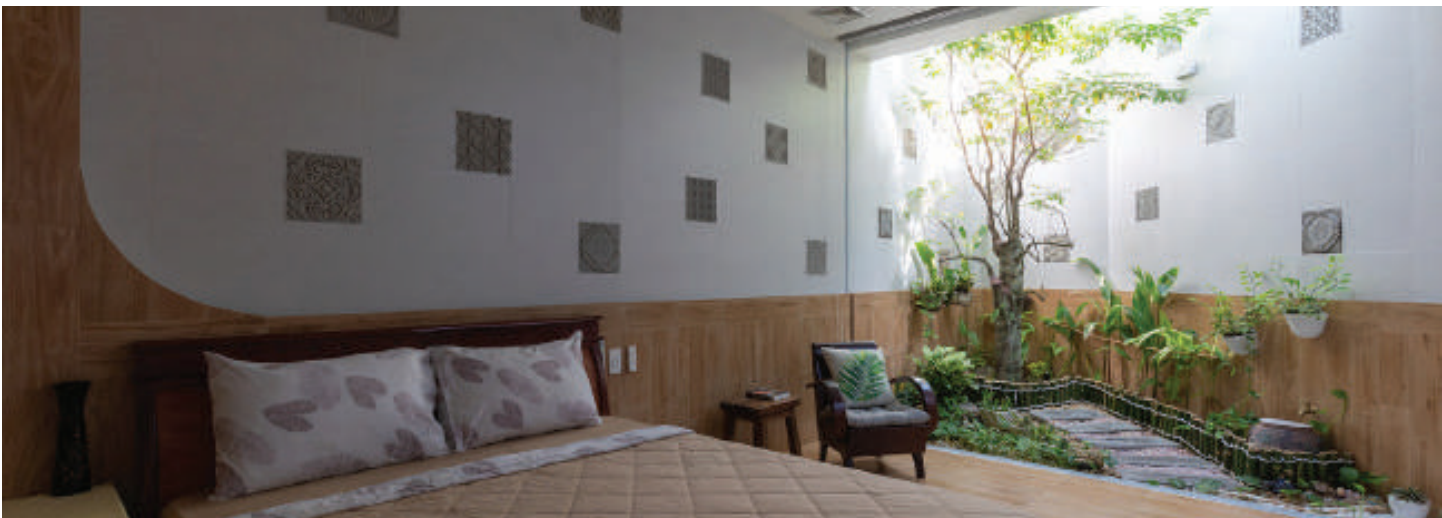


Figure 20



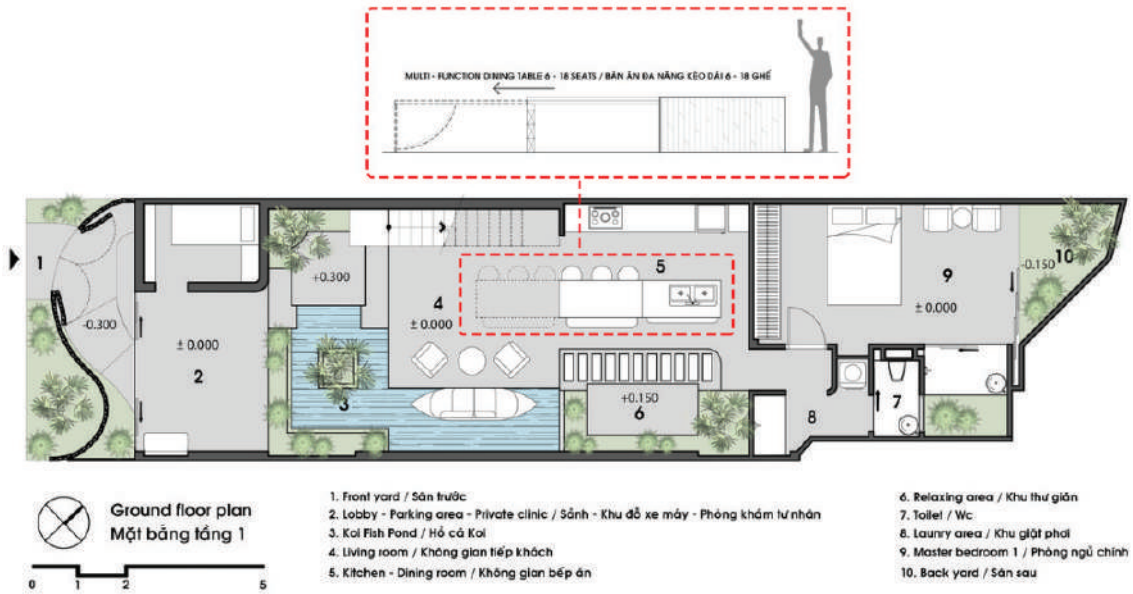


Figure 21

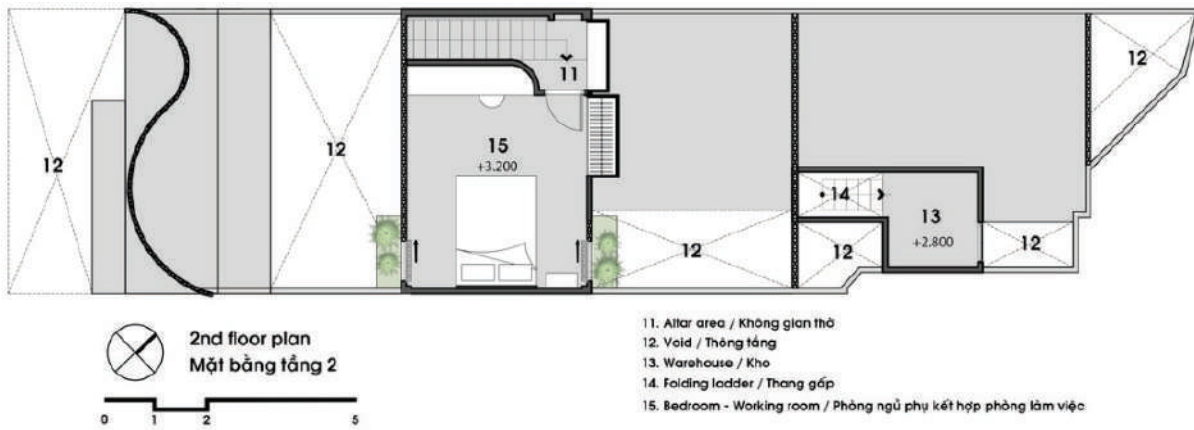


Figure 22

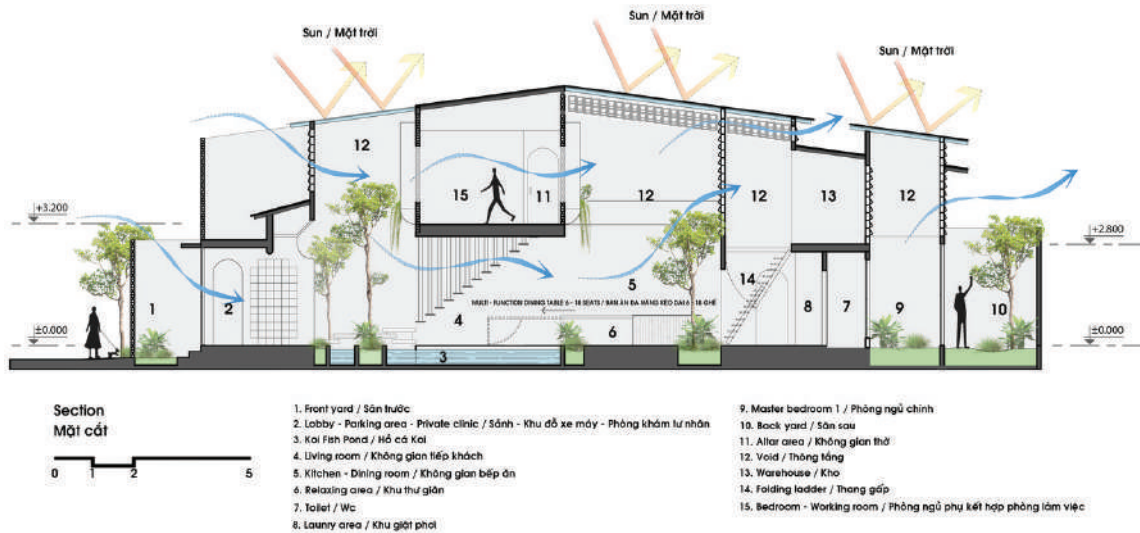


Figure 23



## Precedent Studies Conclusion

I have picked the following 3 case studies very strategically. Due to the nature of my thesis proposal, it encompasses 3 aspects that I aim to harmonize in design; being the living, wellness, and health. I am eliminating using the term “clinic” for the designated areas in my program, and replacing it with the term “health”; that is a more accurate representation of my design. Within all the precedent studies, there is an apparent use of greenery and nature within the design. I aim to harmonize this in a meaningful way that’s helpful to the healing atmosphere on the site that it’s placed.



# Project Justification

Mental health has always been a topic to me as I've gotten older that I resonated with. I personally have struggled with anxiety, and I know what it is like to have it affect your everyday life and relationships with others. I believe that everybody deserves happiness, and at the core of who we are as humans we have a desire to help others. Architecture has the power to create a space for an experience to happen. This project presents less of an intimidating factor to the community that struggles with anxiety and depression, but to welcome and join a community.



# Project Emphasis

## *Culturally*

The development of a safe space for a community to form, and heal. Creating a program that enhances the understanding of the affected communities, and to bring to conversation anxiety and depression. In order to heal; it must be addressed.

## *Ecologically*

To develop a program that in a innovative uses the local resources, and reduces emissions on site. Passive energy tactics and sustainable solutions are key to the life of the program.

## *Socially*

To bring to life a program that enhances and encourages positive interaction between users of the space, and to form a supportive community around topics of anxiety and depression. This can be achieved by implementing specific program designs and strategies to encourage this type of environment for human connection.

# Major Project Elements

## Health

Spaces such as consult rooms are placed within the Health structure in the program. Designated for meeting with your specialized therapist, this space focuses on the health aspect of the program that mental health facilities generalize in design.

## Living

Depending on the user of the program, living quarters will be implemented to serve as a respite for those needing a longer stay at Orphereal for their healing journey.

## Wellness

Physical well-being factors into mental health heavily. Being able to move your body through spaces such as a gym, chilled pools, saunas, and a walking track take this pillar into importance. Yet a library and a cafe also bring the aspect of knowledge and nourishment to the body as well.

## Spiritual

*Meditation, prayer, reflection. These are all components that are celebrated in the spiritual program. Connecting the body to the mind is an ancient healing strategy and is carefully curated in this experience.*





## User Description

The program will aim to aid those who suffer from anxiety and depression, located just outside the downtown Portland area. My goal is to create a supportive and understanding community within the program that opens the floor to the conversation of anxiety and depression, which is the opposite of what society currently does. It is within the atmosphere that will serve as a space to begin healing, in a transformative and holistic way. A resident, or user of the space should feel positively about coming to the site and beginning their journey to wellbeing because of the program.

## Site Information

The city of Portland in Oregon ranks highest in the country currently for numbers in anxiety and depression, as well as mental health as a whole. Portland is home to some of the most beautiful landscapes on the west coast. Between places such as Mount Hood National Park and Cannon Beach, I wonder if it's not so much the landscape that makes the difference but what occupies the landscape. My specific site is just ten minutes out of Portland, to which my program will replace the current Washington Park Archery Range.



## *Additional Site Information*

Address: SW Kingston Dr  
Portland, OR 97221

Location: Portland, OR

Site Typology: Urban

Climate: Oceanic with Mediterranean influences

Size: 42 acres

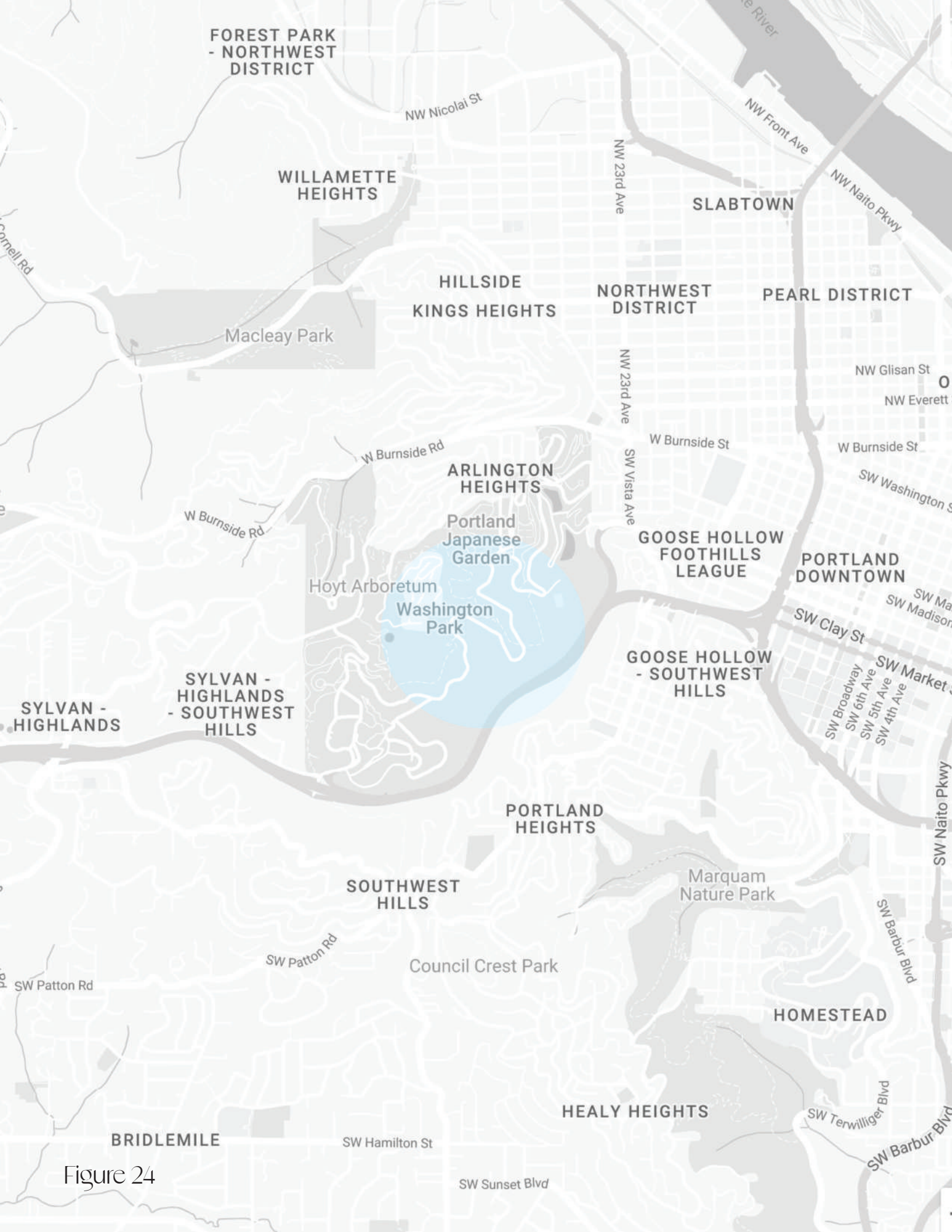


Figure 24



Figure 25





## Thesis Goals

Throughout my undergraduate education, I found myself often infatuated with wellness projects. Mental health is also a strong passion of mine, so when it came to my thesis; it only made sense to harmonize the two.

Within the field of architecture, I found my love for design by the spaces that were designed to move us, transform us, and contribute to our lives in a specific way. I believe many underestimate the power of architecture, although my goal throughout my thesis program is aimed at harnessing this potential, and applying in a moving way for the intended crowd on the site.

Additionally, I hope to not only deliver a successful design thesis in solution to the problem at hand, but to educate others how important it is that the atmosphere we surround ourselves with has a much bigger impact on our mental health than we realize. I will be emphasizing the health, wellness, spiritual, and living aspects into the design; and using different design techniques and styles convey why my solution is more conducive to aiding anxious and depressed individuals.



# Plan for Proceeding

## *Research Direction*

Research will consist of various readings, articles, and essays from various literature that pertains to the history of my thesis. In order to develop a successful program, the following pages demonstrate a tentative schedule with a list of deadlines; as well as the research that will shape the transcendental atmosphere.

## *Design Methodology*

This program will be designed in adherence to the research, and broken up into the following sub-phases:

1. Schematic Design
2. Design Development
3. Drawings and Renderings
4. Presentation

The sub-phases will act as a guideline to not only adhere and aid to the given deadlines, but to successfully produce a thesis program.

## *Documentation of the Design Process*

To best represent my thesis program, a project book, presentation boards, renderings, and a final presentation and script will be developed. The project book will contain a thesis proposal will provide a detailed process of each phase of the process. A set of design boards will help to display the project during the final presentation and script. The graphics will display the interior atmosphere as well as the exterior for the entry and exit on the site.



# RESEARCH

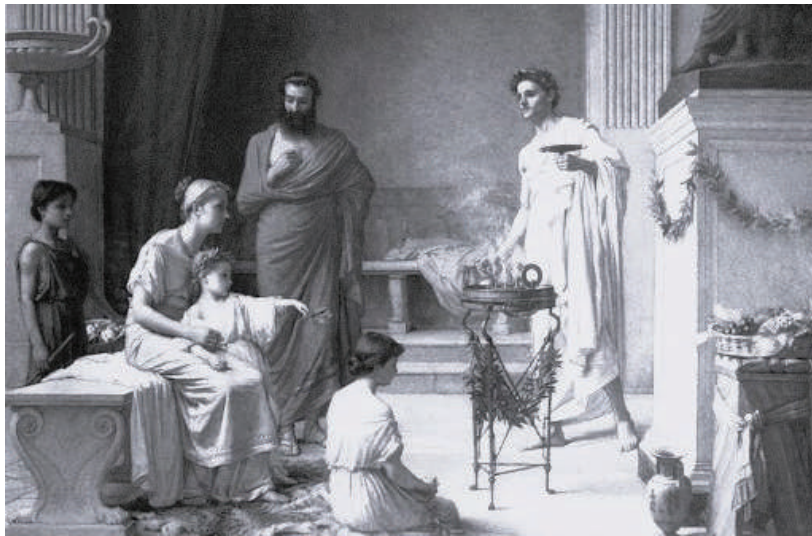


## Prologue

Matthew Radcliffe's research into the fundamental experience of mood shows how there's a link between depression and anxiety and the loss of significance of the external world. Recent neuroscience shows how the internal and external world co-emerge in consciousness. Therefore, this project examines how architectural environments become a key part of therapeutic healing for the anxious and clinically depressed; unlike sterile, modern clinics and hospitals that do not account for the whole-human experience.

The essence of the art of healing is its ability to produce is its ability to reproduce and reestablish something. Art has the capacity to produce desired effects, making itself an independent entity. Independent, not as a matter of healing, but rather affecting something, and then producing it. This brings me to my thesis question, How can atmosphere transform a clinical setting for the anxious and depressed?

Figure 26



*In Ancient Greece, depicting the medicine man.*

Hans-Georg Gadamer, a German philosopher, brings to the conversation in his book *The Enigma of Health*, that the productive relationship and unity between theory and praxis has been relinquished due to modern science, however that it used to exist in medical practice and our everyday lives. He goes on to say that back in the day there was a medicine man or a wise woman in the village that connected individuals with the health they sought for, while later on there became known the paternal role of a family doctor. There was a time where the form of local praxis did not subject the anxious patient to white coats and wearisome waiting rooms. Unfortunately, we live in the era of institutions and mass society. Science as a whole has transformed into an all encompassing institution.

Figure 27



*A modern medical institution's consultation room.*



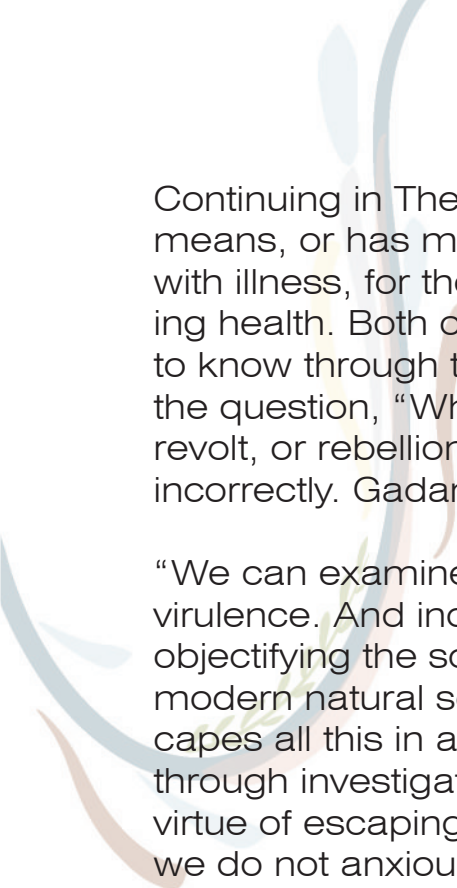
We must come to the realization that there is not going back. What there is left to do is to bridge the divide between the theoretician who knows general rule, and the person in practice who wishes to deal with those in need of care. In addition, develop a well-thought out program where such can be conducted, with intense consideration to the atmosphere for healing.

Gadamer almost unknowingly brings architecture to conversation of health as he states, “Physicians cannot stand back and admire their work in the same way artists, artisans, or fabricators can; in a way that they can retain anything from the product as their own.”. Take a depressed patient for example. They go to see a doctor, describing their struggles and symptoms. After this, said doctor gives coping strategies, with a diagnosis, followed by medication to help the process. The patient goes home, and in the following weeks tries all that’s suggested, including the medication. Unfortunately the fact of the matter being medication can be a trial and error, to which this situation it only enhances the feeling of depression they had suffered before, requiring yet another trip to the clinic, and hope for another prescription; because we are taught to think if we can’t accomplish it ourselves, a substance sure will. This is not to discount the many that have had success with medication as a form of healing, but taking into account that this is an unfortunate situation that has the possibility to happen.

Figure 28



*A patient with his specialized doctor receiving a prescription as a solution.*



Continuing in *The Enigma of Health*, Gadamer explores what health means, or has meant. Medical science has not only been concerned with illness, for the simple concept that illness cannot exist without knowing health. Both of them belong to what the doctor must know, or hope to know through the means of modern science. Although confronted with the question, “What is health?”; We can understand what illness is. It’s the revolt, or rebellion which takes place when something begins to function incorrectly. Gadamer phrases this as the following,

“We can examine an illness closely and evaluate its particular degree of virulence. And indeed we can do so with all different means provided by objectifying the scientific method which we have acquired through the modern natural sciences. But health is something which somehow escapes all this in a unique way. Health is not something that is revealed through investigation but rather something that manifests itself precisely by virtue of escaping our attention. We are not permanently aware of health, we do not anxiously carry it with us as we do an illness. It is not something which invites or demands permanent attention. Rather it belongs to that miraculous capacity we have to forget ourselves.”

The end of this passage brings into conversation my personal favorite aspect of health. The dynamic between body and soul. We are confident to say what the body is; however nobody knows what the soul is. The relationship between the two is depicted as the body being life, while the soul is what gives life or animates. Objectifying one without the other is near absurdity. A passage from George Hegel is added to this reading, “The wounds of the spirit heal without leaving scars.”. Expanding on this idea, is it not the miracle of nature that it too knows how to heal without leaving scars? The doctor only plays the part of somebody who helps what nature itself can bring about.

For those in medical practice, some might find themselves in a situation where it requires them to apply what they have learned in a different manner. When science provides doctors with the general laws, and principles, they must still find the right thing to do in each particular case. This is an unpredictable and unknowable situation to find a route in advance. In the world of depression or anxiety, cookie-cutter solutions that are told by the “book” don’t always work for every individual. The most common being going to meet with a standard specialized doctor who takes your symptoms and prescribes one of the many medications available on the market today, as well as some “at home” remedies.

May I go so far to say that people I have known personally, have been prescribed medication that in no way should be given to them, or taken at the dosage they are instructed. This has led to reselling of these drugs and potential overdoses or highs to the people they weren't intended to in the first place. Yet again, I am only describing to you one wrongful scenario I have seen play out in the topic of depressed and anxious individuals.

Figure 29



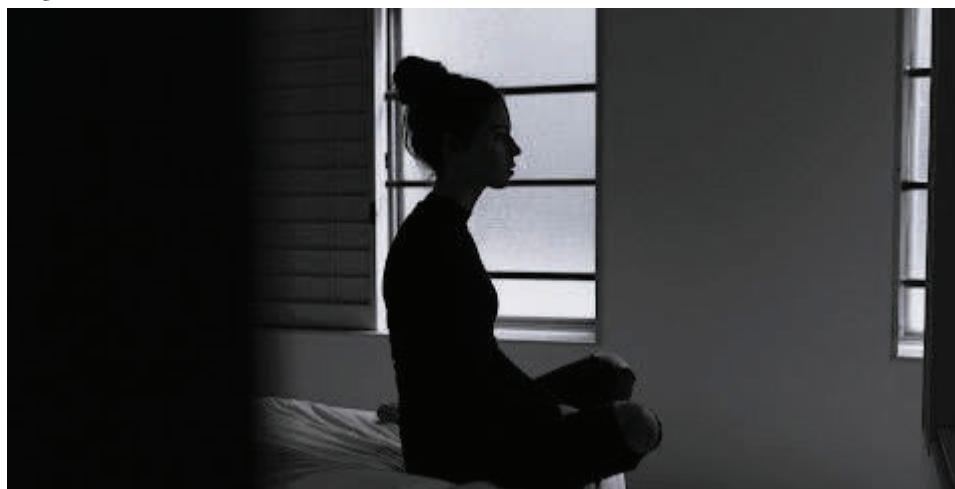
*A man reflecting on a lakeside front.*

In Matthew Radcliffe's essay *Why Mood Matters*, within Martin Heidegger's book *Being and Time*, he makes the claim that moods constitute how we find ourselves in the world. He goes on to mention that moods contribute to us having a sense of belonging in the world; and while our moods may never be constant, we are always in some type of mood. The term *stimmung*, coined by Martin Heidegger, a German philosopher, as a key notion in his existential ontology as he articulates this in his novel *Sein und Zeit*, meaning *Being and Time*. He explains that the idea of *stimmung* refers to wholes, or more precisely, the unification of wholes. It means to be attuned to being-in-the-world as a whole, as in mood and atmosphere. Heidegger discusses that it is fundamentally flawed to discuss *stimmung* in terms of psychology. It cannot be conceived in terms of a mental state, and they do not occur in the mind. In a general sense, they are not a subject, and not in an object. *Stimmung* attunes a relationship as a whole. In other words, it serves to shape our relationships with others and with things. It's a person's building block and an event that exercises power over them to which they react. *Stimmung* is associated with other terms such as mood and atmospheres; being that it is this that goes power to an image to evoke atmosphere or mood.

Our mood encompasses our own world that our minds live in, separate from the physical world. Seeming to say that when we find ourselves in the world, is when we consciously know we are in it rather than looking into it. Without mood, we would have no knowledge of a difference of feeling. By the same comparison, if I stubbed my toe, I am now acutely aware that I have toes and that I feel pain within them. Comparatively, because there is a feeling of sadness or hopelessness, we are made aware of what it had felt like to once be happy. Without feeling sadness or other moods alike, we would have no reference for what it feels like to be happy, and our moods would lose meaning. They're given meaning by the difference between them. Radcliffe goes on to say that we are capable of understanding moods without currently experiencing them. I understand what it's felt like to have an anxiety attack, even though I am not currently experiencing it as of now; but I can empathize and comprehend with those who have.

Radcliffe touches the topic of depression through the next paragraph. He states that almost every account of severe depression includes references to changes in mood or feeling that are inextricably bound up with alterations in the significance of things. He explains that people that struggle with depression report that all practical significance vanishes and in addition to that, a sense for emotional connectedness with others. A quote follows from Hamlet that is, "I have of late - but wherefore I know not - lost all my mirth, forgone all custom of exercises' ". Translating this Radcliffe states that he is not referencing a mood or emotion within the world, but rather he is reporting that the possibility of gaining happiness from anything and of engaging in a purposeful activity are gone from his world. I think this is a profound way to go about understanding and connecting with depression. The feeling of hopelessness, and to experience everything around rendering as insignificant. Later in the reading he brings this feeling to light again. The facts being that there are different forms of depression, as depression coincidentally is intimately concerned with anxiety just as much.

Figure 30



*A woman staring off into the distance as time stands still.*



The core of depression and what is feared by most, so much so to be phobic of, is that depression is a foretaste of death. When it is experienced you are taken to a land of nothingness. Reality loses its substance, a barren wasteland, that is transparent, and unbelievable. I believe that the stigma with depression remains in this claim. These people are perceived as walking ghosts, with shells of souls left to feel what they can. We are shown sadness (be it extreme to mild) to appreciate how wonderful it feels to be happy, or at equilibrium again. However, Radcliffe debunks this theory while stating that depression is seen as atemporal. He says that when you are depressed, you cannot remember a time when you felt better, at least not clearly; thus you cannot imagine a future time where you can feel better. He follows this by saying that even being upset, profoundly upset for that matter, is a temporal experience, when depression is atemporal. This claim is precisely what separates anxiety from depression.

As I talk about depression, I'm taking it at all of its angles. It made no sense to only seek to design for one form of depression, while all forms have similarity, but severity is the difference. Radcliffe brings into conversation the topic of severe depression and how to understand this apart from general depression. He states that in severe depression, the possibility of anything appearing as practically significant is gone, as is the possibility of certain kinds of interpersonal connectedness. Severe depression has retained the power to take for granted the sense of belonging to a world, where the meaning of everyday experiences and people as emotionally and practical beings in our lives also disappear. This feeling is compared to losing your balance or footing. To lose your balance, forget how to walk, so you end up flat on your face without a game plan or knowledge to make the next move. You feel at loss with possibilities but are very acutely aware of the fact that something has been lost, even if you can't translate what that is.

The aspect of depression that I find most profound is the ability to render things as no longer significant. Nothing matters. Not only this, but you have the inability to render things as ever having significance. In my mind I thought instantly of a black hole. No color, sound, life, etc.. To me, this is a place where time stands still, nothing is of importance because everyday blends to the next, and you feel numb. Radcliffe mentions as he is continuing the discussion of depression, this very same idea. He testifies the following, "what time is it? A little after ten in the morning. I try to remember what ten in the morning means, how it feels, but I cannot. Time means nothing to me anymore.". The reading goes on to state that clock time becomes meaningless because of the loss of practical significance. Temporality seems nonexistent or frozen. This loss of significance becomes a tool that constrains the kinds of temporal experience.

Instead of experiencing time, depression determines how time is experienced. Groundbreaking; this fascinated me to the concept of how as humans we joke that time moved too fast, how many hours we wish there were more to a day, however depression takes this by the reins and transforms it in such a dark way.

Figure 31



*Insignificant time depicted on a clock.*

Instead of experiencing time, depression determines how time is experienced. Groundbreaking; this fascinated me to the concept of how as humans we joke that time moved too fast, how many hours we wish there were more to a day, however depression takes this by the reins and transforms it in such a dark way.

Le Corbusier's work, discussed in *Le Corbusier in Detail* by Flora Samuel, touches on the reference to Orphism; meaning the journey of darkness to light, or in the words of Greek religion, it offers innate purification of the soul from innate evil. I connect this to the phenomenon during depression where you can't remember what the light feels like, as you go through the motions in the dark that you have been transcended to. Flora Samuel tells that Le Corbusier referred his inspiration to the masonic sympathies; that to his belief the medieval master builders were party to a secret knowledge.

Samuel describes that in Gnostic faiths such as Manichaeism, which was the focus upon the relationship of the body and soul; while the cosmos focused on the relationship between night and day. This is believed to be a source of inspiration for Corbusier as well as writers, one of them notably named Guillaume Apollinaire. An excerpt from *Le Corbusier in Detail* goes as follows,

“...Guillaume Apollinaire who, in the words of Virginia Spate, used ancient metaphors of light ‘revived by 19th century poets to express the primordial unity of all matter and the aspiration of the soul to be reunited with light, the divine source of all being’. Apollinaire believed that the visionary poet had the ability to transcend time and gain contact with the past that lay deep within his subconscious. Only in this way could he become whole.”

The story of Orpheus, from darkness to light, for Apollinaire was a metaphor for the poet’s journey for inner wholesomeness, an idea that was based on evidence that Le Corbusier shared. The opposition of dark to light was important to Corbusier for the reason that he was able to take his materials, and instill them with new juxtapositions, rhythm, and textured playfulness.

Figure 32



*Orpheus leading Eurydice out of the land of the dead.*

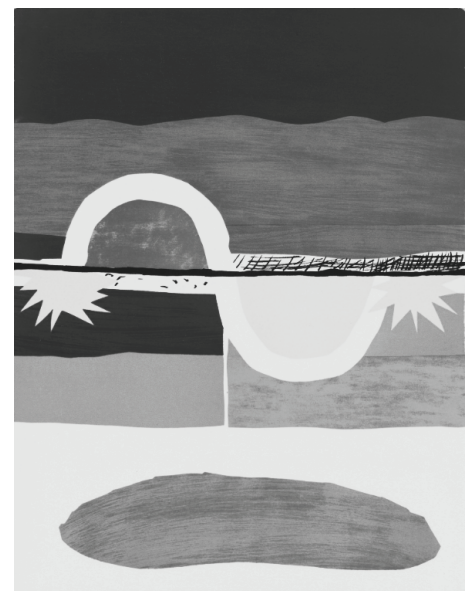
The concept of primordial unity is intriguing for the fact that it requires release of the ego to be part of a bigger whole; a cathartic transformation that is connected to the myth of Orpheus. In the sense of our ego, we are fragmented; and because we are, we suffer and cannot understand each other phenomenally. My translation of this with depression in particular, is that if we were to lose ourselves to be one with a bigger whole...would significance be regained? Ego death in particular. Healing would emerge as our own expression of the cosmos, and in this process, our depression and anxiety relationships are transformed. Architecturally, you experience the darkness, to then be brought to the light as part of a whole again, versus alone and insignificant.

Le Corbusier's *Poème de l'angle droit* is a project that was done over the course of seven years (1947-1953) when Corbusier produced a succession of lithographs that can be translated as his artistic representation of the world, while simultaneously being a self portrait. When the topic of a right angle is called to attention, it introduces the earth symbol, cardinal symbols may and the man as the pro creator. This passage directly references the "right angle", as a symbol of life, living, and "uprightness". His stanza about this goes as follows,

"Upright on the terrestrial plateau of things perceptible to you  
contract with nature a pact of solidarity: it is the right angle  
Upright in front of the sea vertical, there you are on your legs."

The profound connection I want to draw with this passage is the connection the right angle has to the mental and physical elements in our lives that establish order. Dealing with the topic of those who are depressed or anxious, this angle is thrown from proportion. They spiral out of control, to the point where they have lost their footing on the earth and they can't view every new day the same as we do. The right angle gives order to our tangible and intangible universes. It's all encompassing. Le Corbusier's last reading in the poem reads just this, "With carbon we have traced the right angle. The sign. It is the answer and the guide. The fact. An answer. A choice. It is simple and naked, yet knowable. The savants will talk of relativity and rig our. But conscience makes it a sign. It is the answer and the guide. The fact. My answer. My choice."

Figure 33



An illustration by Le Corbusier depicting the sign of the 24 hour day.



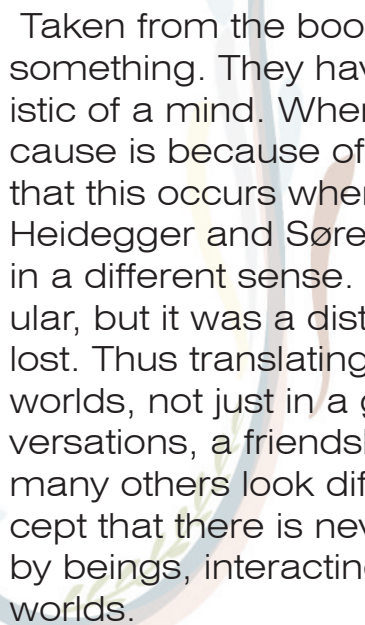
Within the reading, *Mood and Meaning in Architecture*, Alberto Perez Gomez supports this a claim stated by Radcliffe on behalf of moods, that they might be more phenomenologically fundamental than time, for the reason that mood is not a consequence of temporal experience, but is organized by the possibility of any temporal experience. Gomez goes on to say, “The mind and world are simply not separate and independent of each other; the mind is an embodied dynamic system in the world rather than merely a neutral network in the head.”. Uncontrollably, our moods shift as the atmosphere around us does. I want to clarify while on the topic of moods, that depression is not the same as the mood, sadness. According to the article, *Moods in Clinical Depression Are More Unstable than Severe Normal Sadness* from *Frontiers in Psychiatry*, it states that depression is mainly caused by exposure to stress and the ups and downs of life. Continuing on, of depression were plainly a version of extreme sadness, then in theory patients would have more control over symptoms, and it would be less stigmatizing. Everybody experiences sadness, not all experience depression. Thus the conversation around depression is stigmatized and almost phobic; and because of this people who struggle with depression rarely seek treatment because of the stigmatization. High Watch Recovery Center coins reasons why treatment is not sought out. These being the stigma, they don’t think they need it, conditions around them make it hard, there are practical issues, and they are scared of treatment. These are just a few reasons why I find myself passionate about this topic as a thesis.

Like my approach to understanding depression, I will mirror it when coming to its “fraternal” twin, anxiety. Based on Radcliffe’s’ essay, anxiety affects mood when it is triggered by outside factors. In other words, if we existed in a utopian atmosphere, dare I say that anxiety would struggle to exist; disregarding the argument of what a utopian atmosphere would be of course. Psychiatrist Gerritt Glas takes a number of different forms of anxiety, and says that though anxiety comes in forms, they are all connected back to Heideggerian anxiety. Heidegger makes the claim that anxiety is compared to a brief episode rather than an ongoing state, but does agree that its structure is very similar to depression. My counterclaim to this would be, do we dwell in a state of dormant anxiety, that is triggered on occasion?

Figure 34



A woman experiencing vertigo from anxiety.



Taken from the book, *Embodied Mind*, all mental states are about or of something. They have reference toward an object, and this is the characteristic of a mind. When taking anxiety into conversation, one might argue the cause is because of something, as in singular. The most popular opinion is that this occurs when an individual is fearful or stressed about something; but Heidegger and Søren Kierkegaard understood the phenomenon of anxiety in a different sense. To them, anxiety wasn't focused on one thing in particular, but it was a disturbance of our worlds where all meaning is suddenly lost. Thus translating to how we really make sense of our lives. We inhabit worlds, not just in a geographical sense. The worlds of our interactions, conversations, a friendship, love affair, or a film. Although each of these amongst many others look different for all of us, our lives share the fundamental concept that there is never a time where we don't find ourselves surrounded by beings, interacting with them in a deeply meaningful way, mixed into our worlds.

Anxiety brings to stage the disruption of these worlds. They don't break down as if we're going into a crisis, instead they fade away, like lyrics in a sad love song. Nothing has been physically destroyed either inside or outside of us; though why does it seem that all of a sudden significance has been taken away, and everything has faded as a whole? Kierkegaard says in *The Concept of Anxiety* "it is nothing and nowhere" when asked about anxiety's object of cause. Different from cases where we feel strongly fearful, angry, or nervous because of a presence of something, or in the absence of something, like losing a job, or significant other. In anxiety's case, nothing is taken away from these entities or the worlds in which they are in. But the entities are removed from us, while simultaneously we remove them and ourselves. The reading *The Power of Anxiety* by Maria Balaska describes this phenomenon as follows,

"When these moments occur, it is not only one single world that breaks down, not even some of them, but the entire structure of our worlds that we normally inhabit withdraws from us. The fact that the totality of my worlds fades away can give this experience the quality of vertigo, a sense that our worlds are tumbling and that we ourselves are also tumbling with them, unable to hold onto them."

The claim that anxiety is associated with feeling dizzy would ring true in this theory. Perhaps because nothing was the cause of it, we are able to shake it off, and talk ourselves out of it like nothing had happened. An illusion or trance.

Anxiety, dare I say, holds us accountable for how we are attuned to living. Attuned, coming from the parent term, attunement, which Heidegger defines as how we orient ourselves in the world. A conscious practice to the opening of the mind and emotion to an awareness of the source of all creative thought and feeling. Anxiety brings to question our attunement to the world; and the faint, or prolonged moments of anxiousness call for us to make sense of our life; done by the realization that there is a world for us in the first place. These calls are done so in an elusive nature, maybe even sounding like a faint murmur at times. When our attunement has been thrown, we react differently than if we were more attuned, this affects relationships, decision making, lifestyle choices, etc. The fact that things are able to matter to us in any given way is tribute and grounded in one's attunement.

Figure 35



*Two people experiencing an interaction.*

A neurologist by the name of Sigmund Freud, in his career developed a series of rooms that he conducted his studies in as well as his psychoanalysis healing. Setting the precedence as this may be a controversial topic, if they really contributed to healing, or it was something that warranted caution from the general public, Natalia Subotinic's essay titled Interpretation of Rooms - Sigmund Freud, his collection, the rooms and his patients dives into the analysis of the environment he created and if it contributed to his intentions. She goes on to describe the consulting room, translating that it was a space that functioned as a confessional of dreams, where through transference and interpretation, Freud analyzed the lives of who his patients were. She continues to focus on the space surrounding the patient, such as "god of love" statues, fragments of Freud's personal autobiography of life, as well as father figure possessions, whether it be through paintings, statues or pictures. None of which reference a traditional god, but a father in a psychoanalytic sense, such as a portrait of Dr. Charcot, who Freud studied in Paris.

All cabinets in the space had mirrored back, contrary to his personal study that was not this way. Natalia goes on to a passage that covers the reflections of the rooms from his patients and colleagues. A patient by the name of Hilda Doolittle (referred to as HD in his notes) was one of the most prolific reporters of his rooms. According to her, the collections in the consulting room stood as metaphors. As she “traveled” with the professor during the psychoanalytic sessions into realms of memory, visions, and dreams, were as real as they could get. HD states in the essay that Freud’s rooms provided an atmosphere for her sessions that were full of living content.

From the visuals provided as well as the entirety of the text by Natalia, it became clear that Freud was much less a designer of the atmosphere he surrounded his patients with, but more so the decorator. Judging from his floor plan sketches included, he views each space from a top down perspective. This reminds me of Peter Zumthor (whom I will discuss later) who mentions that a pillar of his design success is contributed to the objects that fill a space, just as much as the lighting, materiality and few others. Freud worked as a tag team with the atmosphere he created and his knowledge about the mind throughout his career. The environment he created contributed to his psychoanalytic healing, but the architecture itself was a generic boxular space, containing nothing more than 4 walls and a ceiling. My question posed is, did the program itself aid positively for the purpose of the space, or was it how the atmosphere was filled that contributed to Freud’s main purpose?

Figure 36

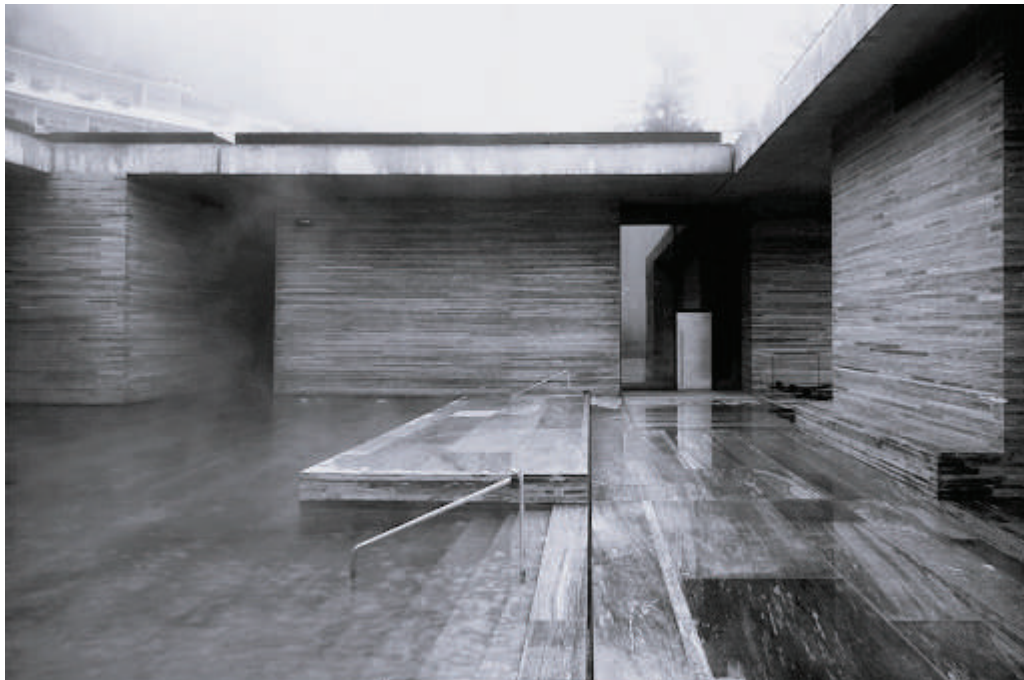


Natalia's illustration depicting Freud's consulting room.



The architect Peter Zumthor, has focused heavily in his career about the atmosphere he creates in his designs. Within his book *Atmospheres*, he explains his take with this. The question at stake becomes the following, what really constitutes an architectural atmosphere? Zumthor says, “It’s this singular density and mood, the feeling of presence, well-being, harmony, beauty... under whose spell I experience what I otherwise would not experience in this way.” He goes on to say that within seconds of entering a space, we have a feeling about it; subconscious or conscious. He compares this to hearing Brahms viola sonata, to when the viola comes in, our attention is grabbed. The emotional response from music is powerful, and Zumthor claims that architecture is no different. In a later paragraph he goes on to describe a scene, where he is walking through a village; including the people he sees, the smells, the temperature, etc. Zumthor asks, what moved him most about this scene while he was there? He points out that the forms and his mood created the sensation, and connects this to how he takes on architecture. The statement that “people react with objects” is the main precedent that he finds when dealing with designing; although instead of the term “deal with”, he calls it his passion.

Figure 37



*Peter Zumthor's Therme Vals.*

Throughout Atmospheres, he gives credit to nine categories that he creates an atmosphere in one of his designs. They are the following: the body of architecture (the material presence of things), material compatibility (his grand secret), the sound of space (“interiors are like large instruments”), the temperature of a space, surrounding objects (furniture and such), between composure and seduction (how we move through a space), tension between interior and exterior (threshold crossings, the shape of a door), levels of intimacy (proximity and distance), the light on things (the appearance of things in a space).

He describes that in these factors is where he finds himself in a transcendent level of architecture where there is now an environment, architecture as surroundings. Zumthor explains that it's in the concept of an environment where we not only (knowingly or unknowingly) create our own and others create their memories. Perhaps it's in these memories that one might revisit years later to feel and travel back to that moment again. He goes on to say that in his life, there have been many buildings that have touched him, moved him, or given him a sense of relief or comfort; while after goes on to say that it increases the pleasure of his work, imagining that somebody might remember or travel back to it after 25 years. Perhaps it was the place of a proposal, or a first kiss. He values the quality in his work the most, the fact that the architecture will still be mentioned in 25, 35, or 50 years later. The first transcendent level in his work is the attempt to conceive architecture as a human environment.

His quote that finishes off his novel goes as follows, “I love architecture; I love surrounding buildings, and I suppose I love it when other people love them too. I have to admit: it would make me very happy to have made things which other people love.”.



# ARTEFACT



# ARTEFACT

Noun: artefact

1. An object made by a human being, typically an item of cultural or historical interest

(Mid 17th century: from the latin *arte* 'by or using art')

*via Oxford Languages*

## Atmospheric Transformation of the Subconscious

To describe it simply, I constructed a pinhole camera, a camera obscura, with 8 lenses. The product of the pinhole camera is a series of images produced with various dark and light contrasting images. The images in their raw form are produced inverted and backwards. To produce these images required a series of tedious tasks. The paper that is used to capture these images is labeled as silver gelatin paper. Through only a dark room, can it be worked with without being tarnished, even by the exposure of a cellphone light can ruin an entire reem of paper. It was through cropping, and tediously using double sided tape, inside the light tight pinhole camera that i constructed, that I adhered them to all sides of the camera, pierced pin-head diameter holes through the corresponding sides of paper, covered those sides with black electrical tape, and carried carefully the camera to the site of exposure, and it was left to capture a series of images within the time span of 1 minute to 3 minutes, depending on the intensity of light throughout the day.

After, I closed the shutters on each side of the camera, went into the dark room, and developed, stopped, and fixed the images through a series of chemical baths. Then were rinsed for 30 minutes and set to dry, then hot pressed. Once hot pressed, I scanned the images on the laser jet scan bed, uploaded them onto photo-shop as a collage of images, side by side, and have inverted them , so that we see it how our eyes would, the lights are the shadows, and the shadows are translated to light.

The shape of the camera depicts 4 faces. Two looking at each other, and 2 looking away. This is meant to communicate the concept of the patient and the therapist/provider conversing back and forth and what goes on in the space between them, the inverse perspectives if you will. It also relates to Orpheus's journey as stated earlier, the journey from darkness to light. The space between where the images are produced related to Freud's rooms, for what might look like a normal "room" or box, what goes on atmospherically gives it meaning. The images being produced in greyscale reminisce with me the feeling of insignificance. Loss of color, saturation, and maybe dare i say a "ghostly" feeling. To name yet another connection, the Poem of the Right angle talks about the "uprightness" with the world, as I connected that those who suffer from anxiety or depression, have this thrown out of proportion. These images produced varying angles and different points of perception than a typical image taken from a phone or camera. My artifact represents the relationship between the outside world and the inside world, including the relevance of the 24 hour day that we experience. The "lenses" on the camera represent the lenses that we see our life through; the "eyes" to our souls, the eyes to our unconscious minds. A surreal and abstract concept in and of itself.

What I find most profound, is that the images produced inside this camera are unpredictable. The light in the space that I had captured, had never been seen like that before. I ran multiple series of tests and runs. Different times of day, different positions in it's environment, and though sometimes I would try to see if i could get a duplicate of some images, it never worked. I think that it's in this mystery is where the beauty is found. Put simply, these images produced are a metaphor for the unconscious mind. The journey of anxiety and depression is never the same for each who struggle, we each are our own star in the galaxy, we matter, and so do our stories. Our journey, be it from darkness to light, look different to each, and should architecturally be treated in the same thoughtful, and unique way.

# THE PINHOLE CAMERA



Figure 38



Figure 39

# THE CAMERA OBSCURA



Figure 40





# DESIGN



# PROCESS SKETCHES

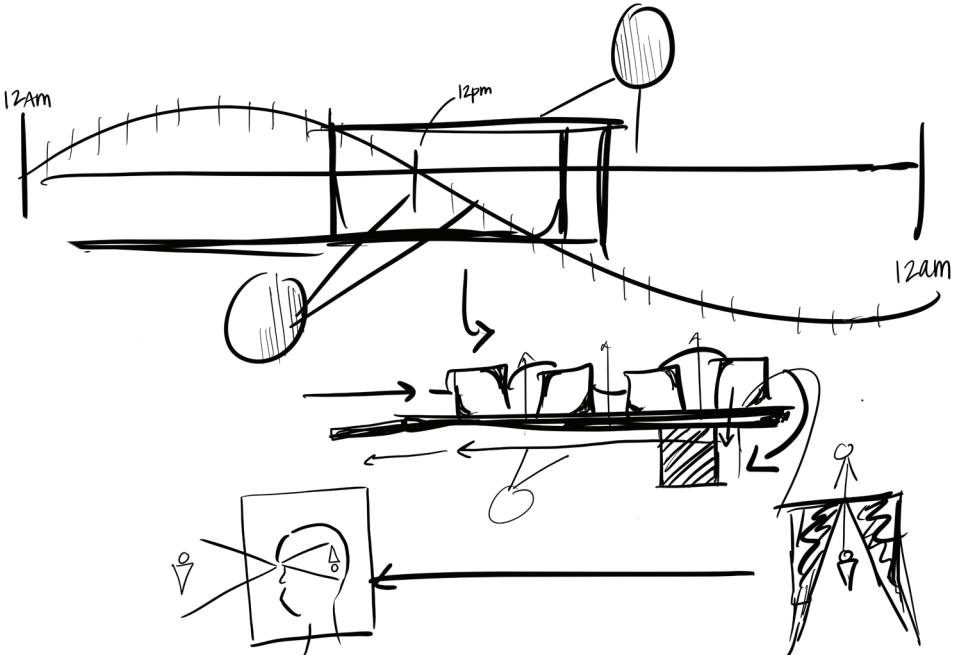
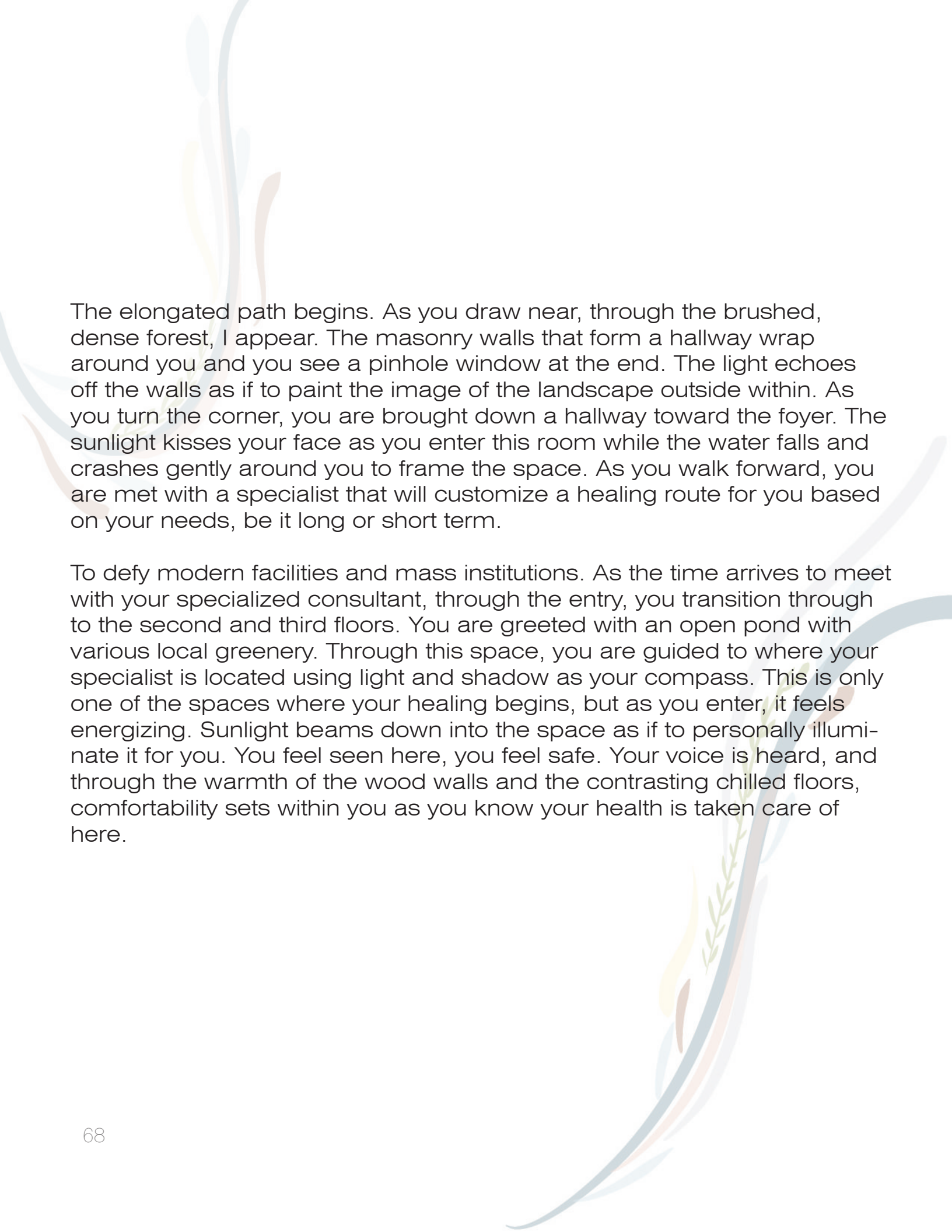


Figure 4I

Nestled into the hillside and curated to heal, Orphereal takes inspiration from the sign of the 24 hour day as a wall, the backbone of the experience stands between the inside and the outside world of the program. The design reflects an abstract sundial, using each hour of the day to its advantage.

# HEALTH NARRATIVE





The elongated path begins. As you draw near, through the brushed, dense forest, I appear. The masonry walls that form a hallway wrap around you and you see a pinhole window at the end. The light echoes off the walls as if to paint the image of the landscape outside within. As you turn the corner, you are brought down a hallway toward the foyer. The sunlight kisses your face as you enter this room while the water falls and crashes gently around you to frame the space. As you walk forward, you are met with a specialist that will customize a healing route for you based on your needs, be it long or short term.

To defy modern facilities and mass institutions. As the time arrives to meet with your specialized consultant, through the entry, you transition through to the second and third floors. You are greeted with an open pond with various local greenery. Through this space, you are guided to where your specialist is located using light and shadow as your compass. This is only one of the spaces where your healing begins, but as you enter, it feels energizing. Sunlight beams down into the space as if to personally illuminate it for you. You feel seen here, you feel safe. Your voice is heard, and through the warmth of the wood walls and the contrasting chilled floors, comfortability sets within you as you know your health is taken care of here.

# HEALTH VISUALS



Figure 42



Figure 43

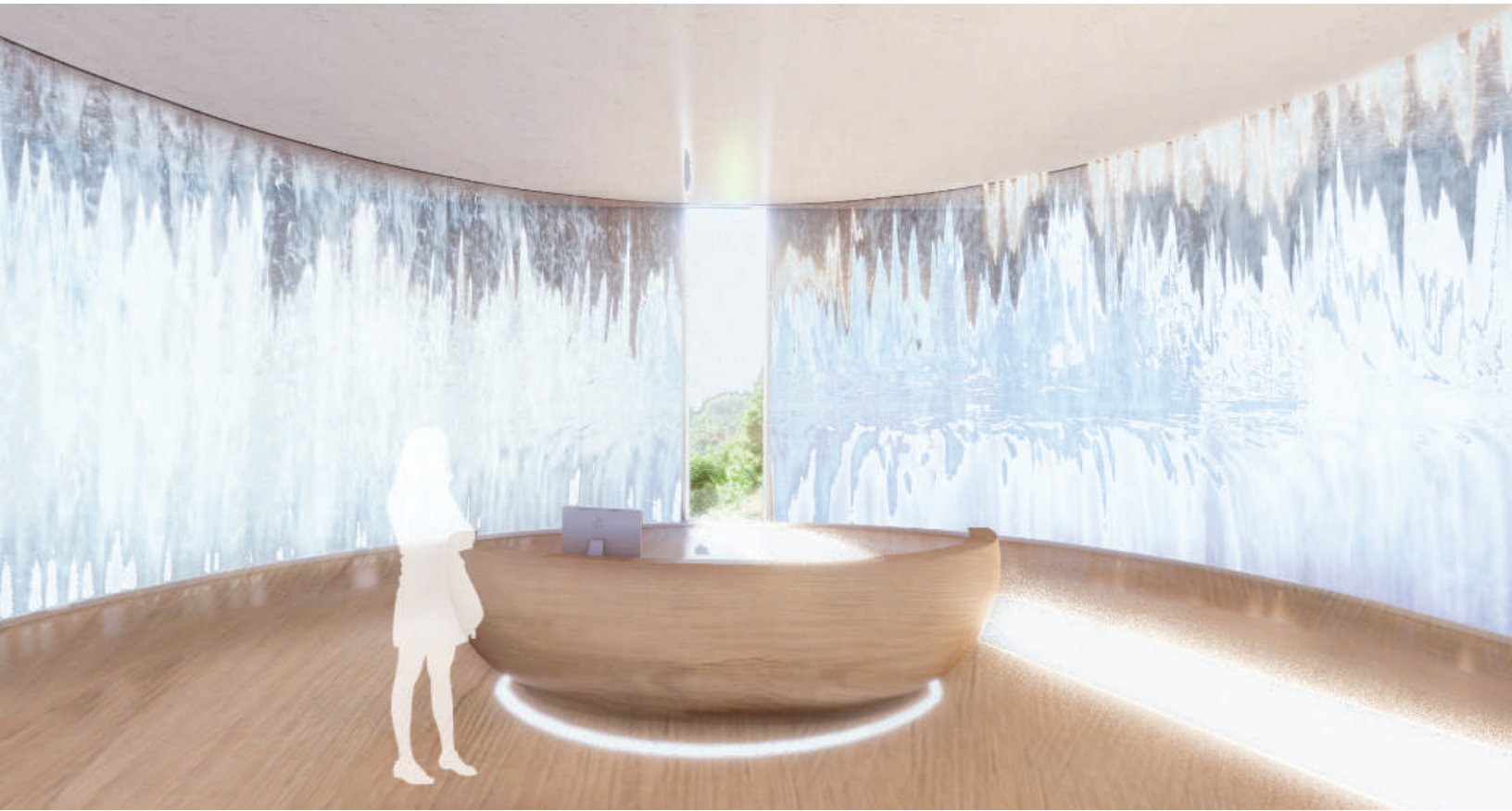


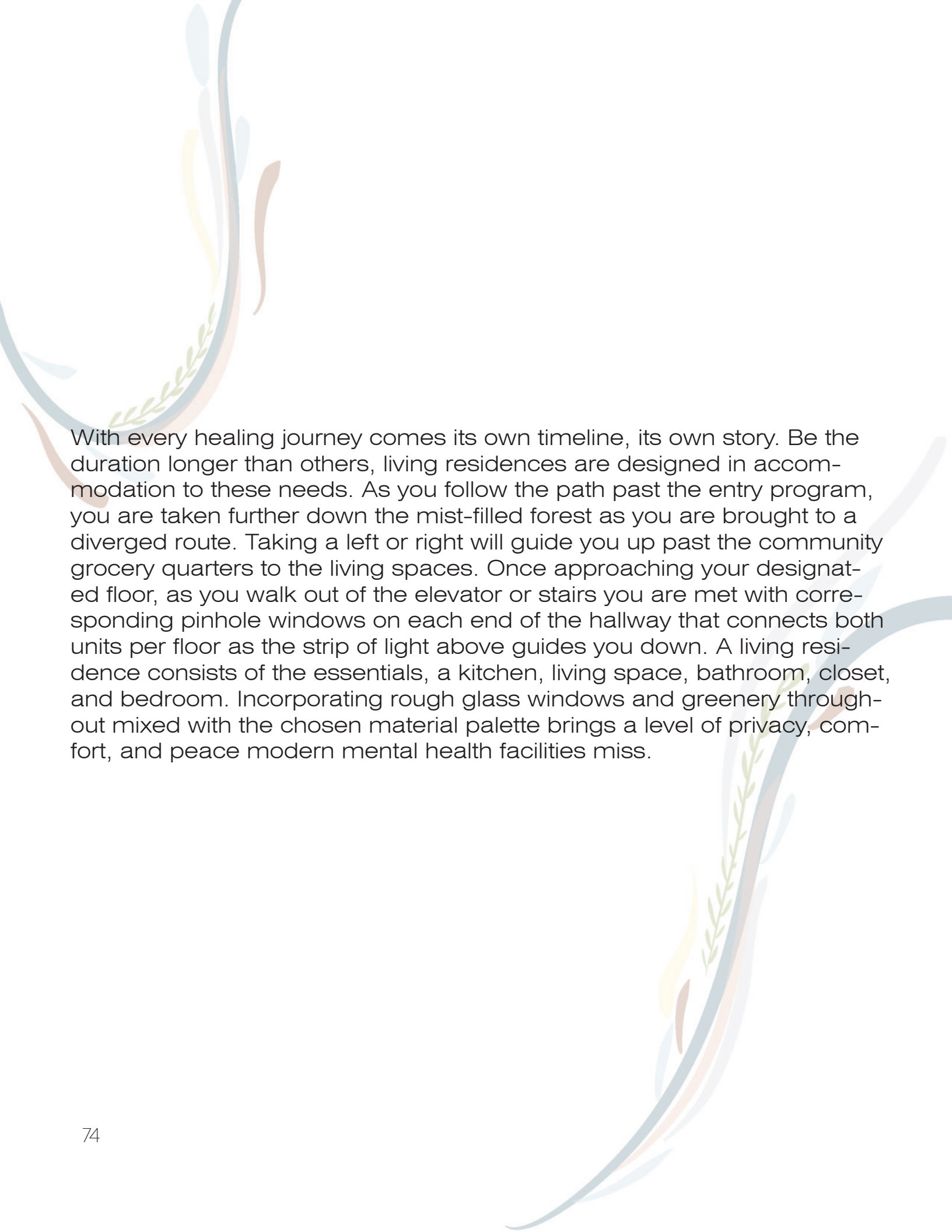
Figure 44





Figure 45

# LIVING NARRATIVE



With every healing journey comes its own timeline, its own story. Be the duration longer than others, living residences are designed in accommodation to these needs. As you follow the path past the entry program, you are taken further down the mist-filled forest as you are brought to a diverged route. Taking a left or right will guide you up past the community grocery quarters to the living spaces. Once approaching your designated floor, as you walk out of the elevator or stairs you are met with corresponding pinhole windows on each end of the hallway that connects both units per floor as the strip of light above guides you down. A living residence consists of the essentials, a kitchen, living space, bathroom, closet, and bedroom. Incorporating rough glass windows and greenery throughout mixed with the chosen material palette brings a level of privacy, comfort, and peace modern mental health facilities miss.

# LIVING VISUALS



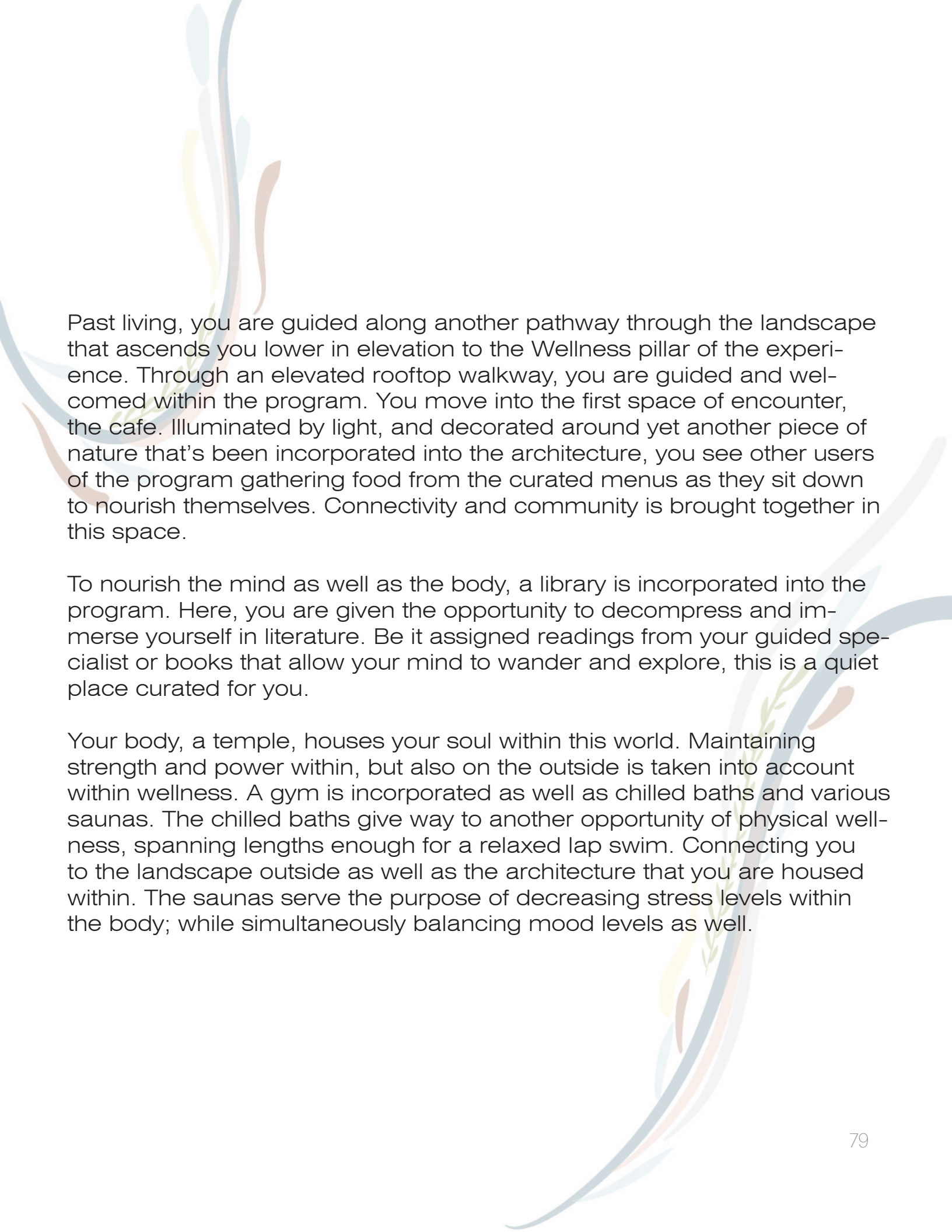


Figure 46



Figure 47

# WELLNESS NARRATIVE



Past living, you are guided along another pathway through the landscape that ascends you lower in elevation to the Wellness pillar of the experience. Through an elevated rooftop walkway, you are guided and welcomed within the program. You move into the first space of encounter, the cafe. Illuminated by light, and decorated around yet another piece of nature that's been incorporated into the architecture, you see other users of the program gathering food from the curated menus as they sit down to nourish themselves. Connectivity and community is brought together in this space.

To nourish the mind as well as the body, a library is incorporated into the program. Here, you are given the opportunity to decompress and immerse yourself in literature. Be it assigned readings from your guided specialist or books that allow your mind to wander and explore, this is a quiet place curated for you.

Your body, a temple, houses your soul within this world. Maintaining strength and power within, but also on the outside is taken into account within wellness. A gym is incorporated as well as chilled baths and various saunas. The chilled baths give way to another opportunity of physical wellness, spanning lengths enough for a relaxed lap swim. Connecting you to the landscape outside as well as the architecture that you are housed within. The saunas serve the purpose of decreasing stress levels within the body; while simultaneously balancing mood levels as well.

# WELLNESS VISUALS






Figure 48



Figure 49



# SPIRITUAL NARRATIVE



To heal your mind, and recharge your soul. Leading you past the Wellness down a pathway that hugs the dividing wall, you are brought to the last piece in the experience. Continuing straight on the plane will lead you out of Orphereal to the other side of the wall. However, if you choose to ascend down you will be met with a striking light divide during the point of entry as if it's inviting you in as you walk the path of the ramp downwards. You turn left. On this floor, a yoga studio/flex space for group classes is accessible, and the choice to yet again ascend down into the core of the program, the reflection break. This reflection break spans 2 floors, with a collection pool at the base which can also be viewed from the thermal baths. It first spans through the space of prayer. Ambient light and shadow drifts into this space, as the masonry floor and walls wrap around you. This space is quiet, and reflective in thought, and individual faith. I want to highlight the fact that not all users in this space will have a spiritual relationship with per say a god, but it is also a space meant for those who wish to place earnest hopes or wishes or a solemn request to a transcendent realm or supernatural power.

The base of the reflection break is within the meditation space just below prayer. Circular openings invite light into this space, as it reverberates off the walls seemingly filling every corner. With the subtle falling of the water that lands within the glass-bottomed base, your body feels itself enter a relaxed state. While the body registers atmospheric components as threatening or non-threatening within a matter of seconds, natural sounds as such within a space connect the body back to mother nature, while relaxing and grounding its attunement to the space.

The thermal baths sit at the lowest point within the spiritual experience. In addition to the ancient benefits of bathing, guided by light and shadow, compression and decompression, you guide yourself through a series of highly sensuous and restorative spaces. As Peter Zumthor explains while on the topic of therme vals, "Moving around this space means making discoveries. You are walking through the woods. Everyone is looking for a path of their own.". This concept remains true within the entirety of the experience within Orphereal.

# SPIRITUAL VISUALS



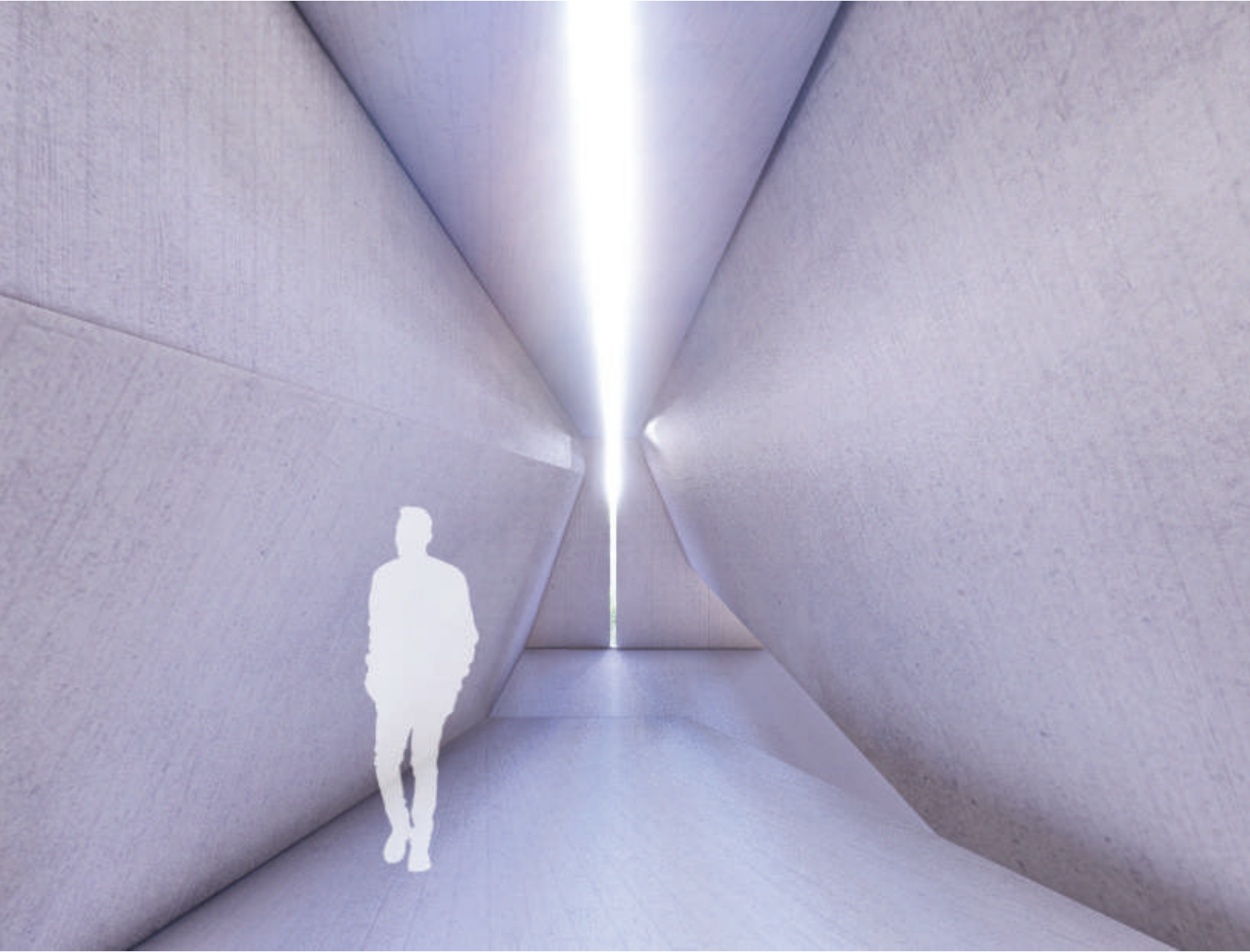


Figure 51

Figure 52

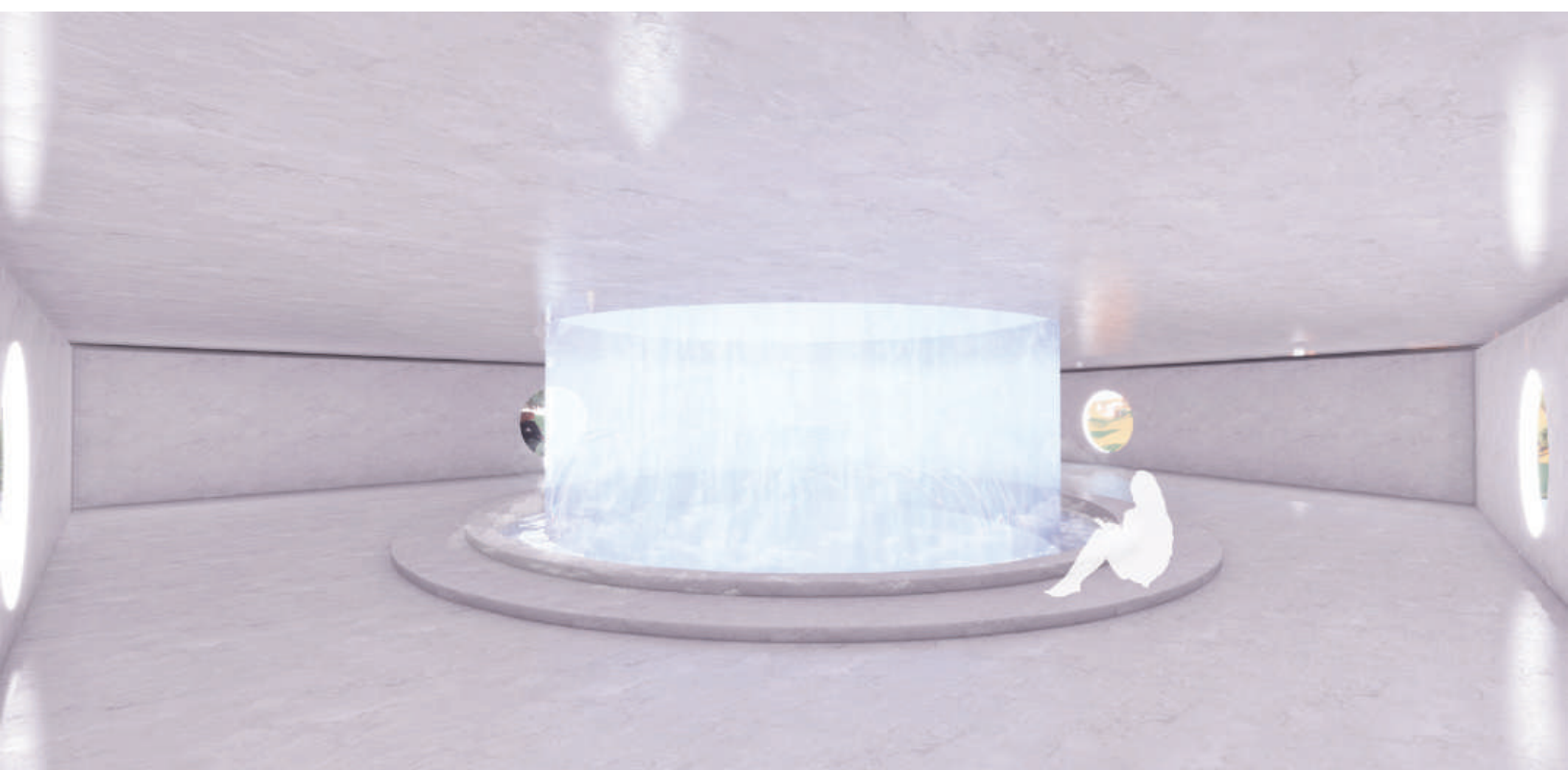
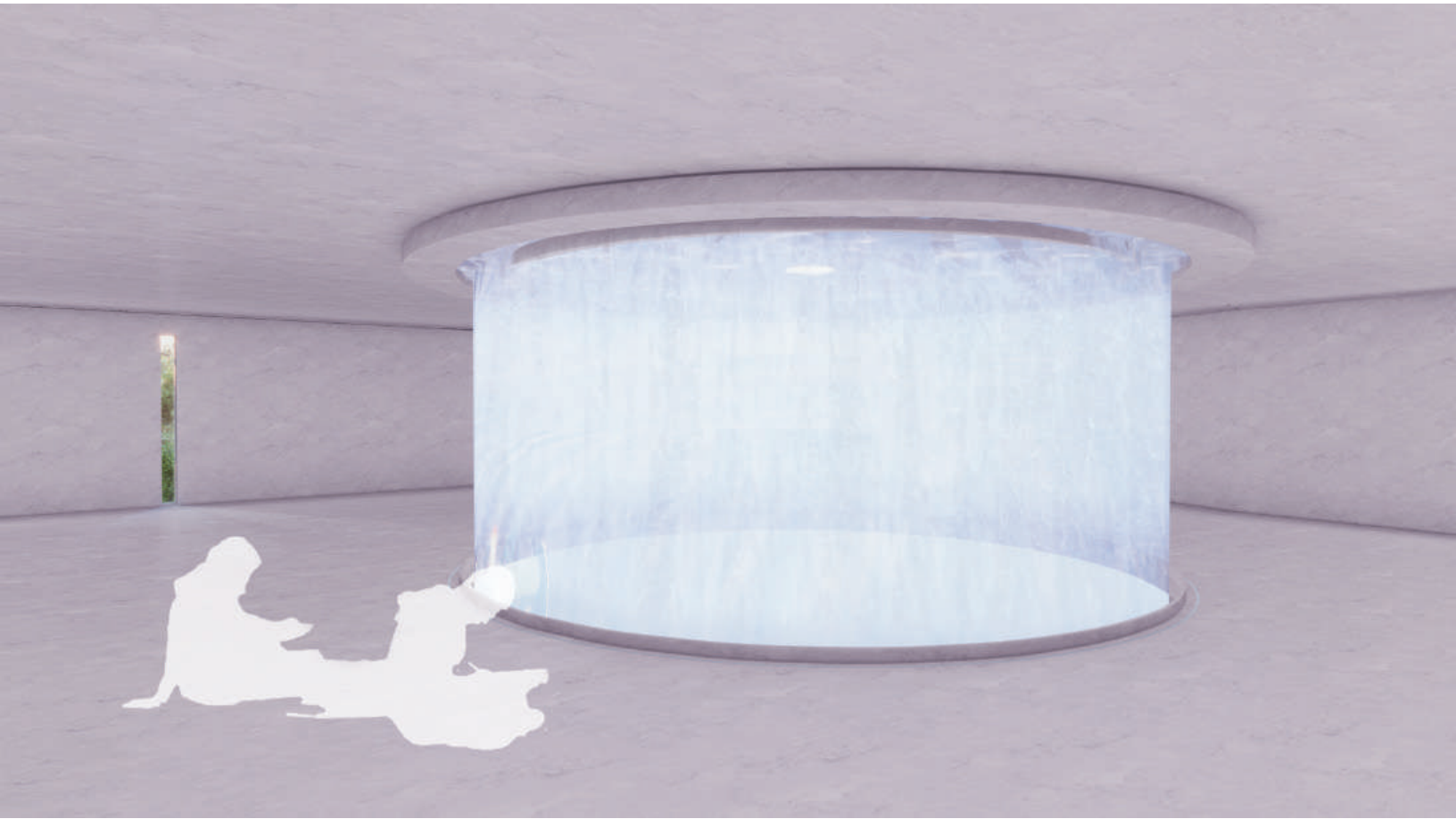



Figure 53



Figure 54





Through a transformative series of programs, all within one side of the dividing wall, the time has come to bid farewell to a place that you consciously are aware that a changed dimension of yourself had entered, to begin with. You see it. As you approach the illuminated divide you are acutely aware that you exist in this world differently than when you arrived. Significance has been regained and you are now connected to the earth and your soul once more. As you plant your seed of regeneration, you realize, with a great sense of hope, that you are not alone, and that others before you have made this journey. Mother Earth wraps her arms around you as the sun touches your skin and the breeze blows through the trees and fills your lungs. For the first time in the experience, you take an ascending path up past the other side of the wall to the pickup point.

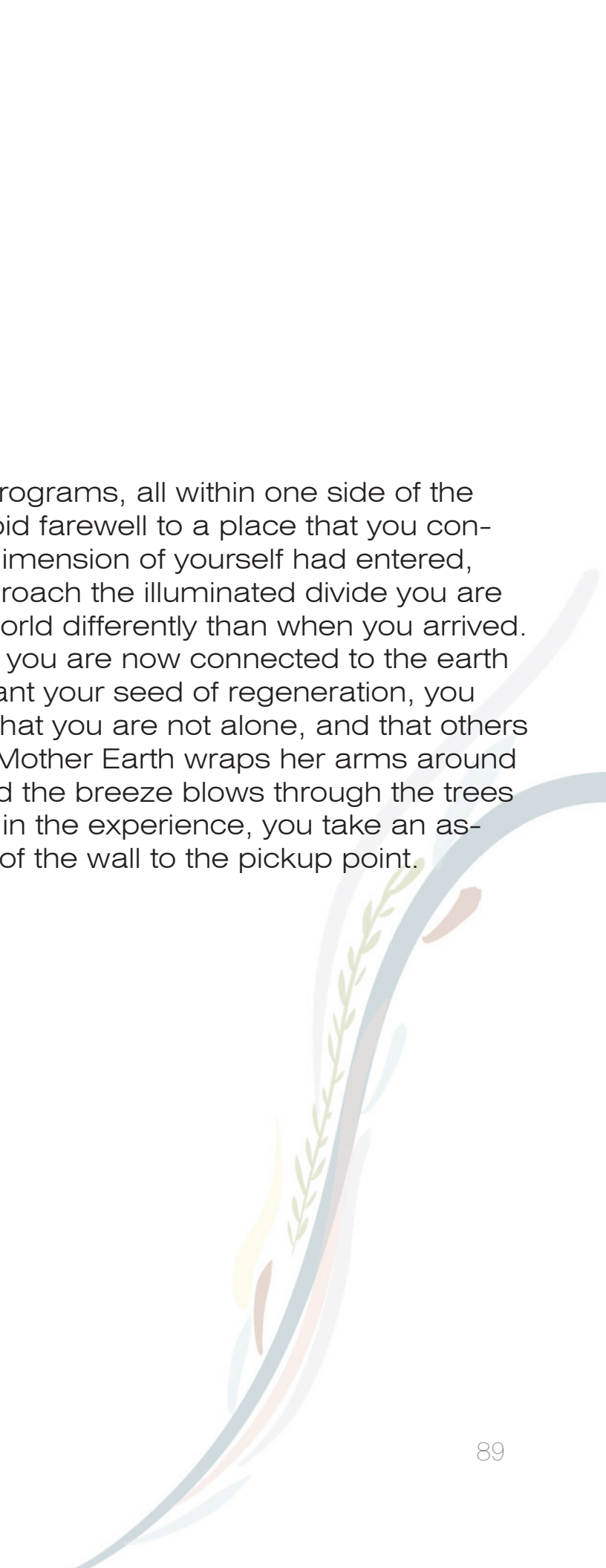




Figure 55



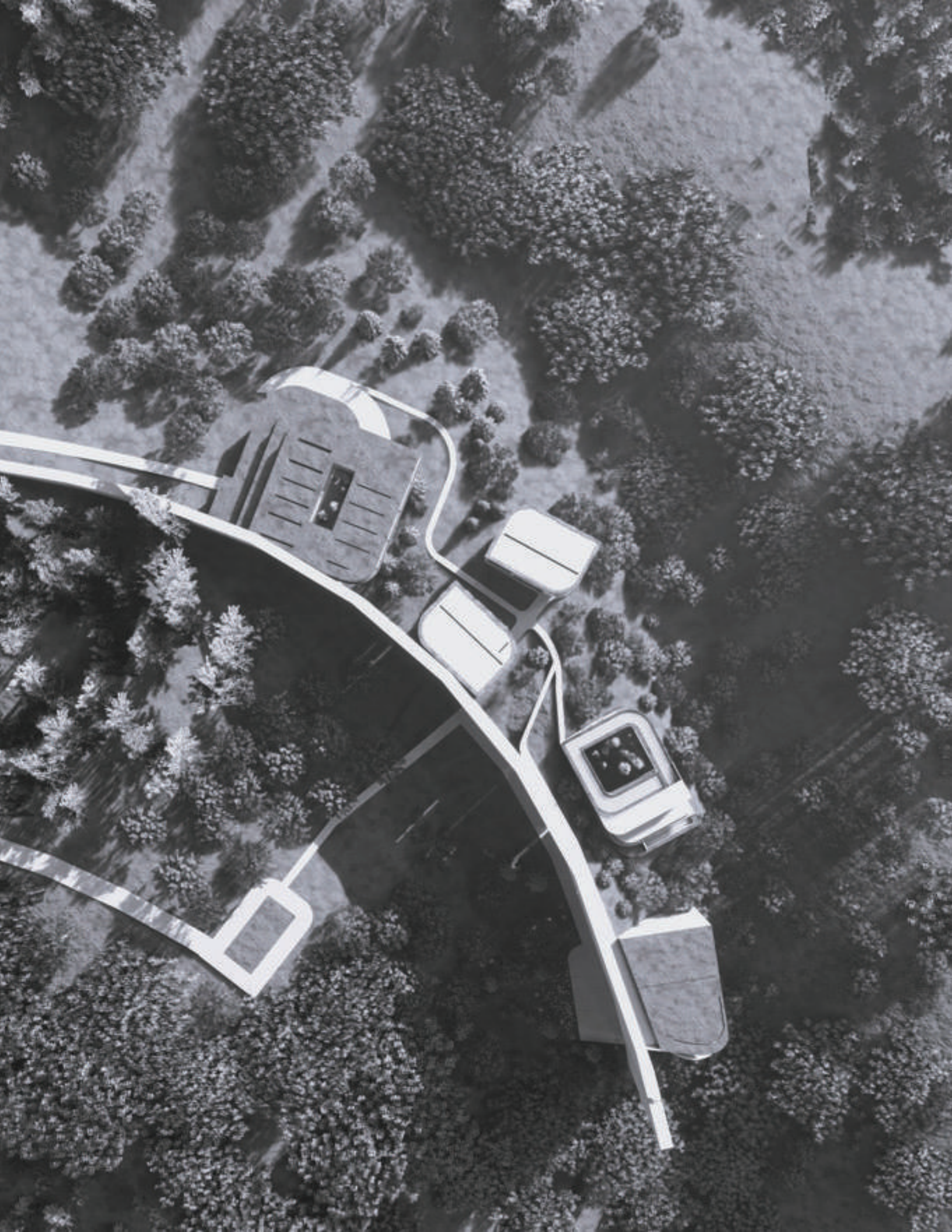
The healing power of light, shadow, and nature is unfathomable. It is a power by which our ancestors lived, yet we pay little attention to that power today. It is our remedy for our mind, body, and soul. It can connect and heal every atom in our body if we allow it.















# ORPHEREAL

Orphic Journey to Healing: A Therapeutic Design for the Anxious and Depressed



Matthew Radcliffe's research into the fundamental experience of mood shows how there's a link between depression and loss of significance of the external world. Recent neuroscience shows how the internal and external world co-emerge in consciousness. Therefore, this project examines how architectural environments become a key part of therapeutic healing for the anxious and clinically depressed; unlike sterile, modern clinics and hospitals that do not account for the whole-human experience.

## SIGN OF THE 24 HOUR DAY



This design explores how atmospheres help shape our moods and attune us both mentally and physically. Inspired by ancient and modern influences that speak to a cathartic transformation of mood; this architecture attempts to curate a specific ritualistic pathway of healing by immersing the user in essential experiences like sleeping, eating, bathing and therapy all guided by the sacred relationship of shadow and light.



architect



# APPENDIX/REFERENCE LIST

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# Previous Studio Experience

## *2nd year:*

Fall / Milton Yergens

Villaggio Viridescnte / Home for an Famous Artist / Fargo, ND

Sculled Water's Tempo / Boathouse / Minneapolis, MN

Spring / Cindy Urness

Artisan Abode / Home for a local Artist / Cripple Creek, CO

Wisent Respite / Retirement Community / Fargo, ND

## *3rd year:*

Fall / Bakr Ahmed

Cape Escape Resort + Spa / ¼ of Master-plan for Japan Olympics

Resort / Cape Futtsu, Japan

[N.] Dakota Institute of Design / School of Design for NDSU / Fargo, ND

Spring / Niloufar Alenjery

Viata Intre / Wellness Retreat / Swiss Alps

Allegories; A Path of Endurance / A/LA Collaborative Project / Fargo, ND

## *4th year:*

Fall / Amar Hussein

7Seas / High Rise / Miami, FL

Spring / Amar Hussein

Zen Vista / Marvin Windows Competition / Lake Commorant, MN

Bal Laguna / Master-plan Project / Bal Harbour, FL

*Personal Identification*

Sydney Suzanne Weigel

HOMETOWN : ALEXANDRIA, MN





## Acknowledgments

I consider myself blessed that I was not only able to study something that I love so much in this world, but to do my thesis on a topic that resonates to my core. Designing architecture that is meant to be a healing factor in recovery is not an easy task; but with the help of my thesis advisor Dr. Stephen Wischer, I was able to travel through transcendental realms of research to get to my final design and what it aims to combat.

I would like to thank my family and friends for always encouraging me towards my passion and being my biggest cheerleaders as I spent my time in the architecture program at North Dakota State University.

As I move into the next chapter of my career, I hope to be able to contribute to designs that have an impact on the way we exist in the world, mentally; I believe architecture is powerful enough to do so.

"Beauty perishes in life, but is immortal in art" - Leonardo da Vinci