

The Journey to the Other Side

Investigation into the Myth of Persephone

by

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I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis. This is a true copy of the thesis, including any required final revisions as accepted by my examiners.

I understand that my thesis may be made electronically available to the public.

ABSTRACT

This thesis is an exploration of chthonian architecture, which offers qualities that guide its visitor to the gate of the unconscious mind, which has always been the starting point of the holy trip of self-discovery. This journey's map is taken from Carl Gustav Jung's and his contemporaries' theories of analytic psychology. Jung introduces myths as a powerful means to get in contact with the unconscious—specifically, the myth of Persephone. The Persephone myth is an extended explanation of a journey of metamorphosis that includes three phases: separation, stay/contemplation, and return. In order to analyze some ways in which these three steps have been translated into architecture, and how a space or structure can both symbolically and, potentially, literally take visitors on a journey of change and self-discovery like Persephone's, the research is followed by an investigation of some architectural precedents, including grotto, Sheikh Lotfollah Mosque, the Jewish Museum, the Bruder Klaus Chapel, the Danteum, and some other architectural transitions.

The thesis finishes with a proposed architectural design synthesis that contains three parts, each representing a phase of transformation. The selected site of the architecture is the Huron Natural Area in Kitchener. So, by coming to the site—a natural setting—the visitor has already engaged in the first phase, separation, by removing himself or herself from everyday life and getting closer to his or her own nature. The design offers an abrupt descent underground via a spiral ramp that is a symbol of violation, a painful fall to the dark realm of Hades and a naïve hope for a saviour. At the second phase, the visitor experiences the underground architecture. In the language of myths, the underworld represents the unconscious, and entering the underground is like entering the human psyche. The last phase of the journey of metamorphosis, return, is represented by the visitor's ascent back to the surface, and re-immersion in the everyday life of the city.

Going through all steps of the architecture offers the visitor an opportunity to experience thoughts and feelings that may cause transformation. The atmosphere of this architecture is very different from that of everyday buildings we step into. This architecture invites its visitors to meet a deeper layer of their self.

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A myth is like an ecosystem. It is more than the sum of its parts, and no single event stands without the relatedness of all other parts of the story. It exists on all levels at once, material, spiritual, ecological, personal, and physical. The myth, when spoken or enacted, has meaning and potency only in the present. It takes shape according to who is telling it, when it is being told, who is hearing it, and the environment or season in which the performance takes place. No matter how carefully it is studied, analyzed, and understood, the very nature of myth undoes any fixed meaning or analysis. The myth is alive—more close to truth than fact—and must be approached like wilderness, on its own terms, to be experienced fully.

Laura Simms
Storyteller, *The Long Journey Home*



Fig 0.1 (top) Swan Lake, Nina struggling

Fig 0.2 (bottom) Swan Lake, Nina becoming the black swan

Erica: What happened to my sweet girl?
Nina: She is gone!

FOREWORD

In the movie *Black Swan*, Darren Aronofsky depicts the character of Nina as a very innocent, fragile, naïve girl. Nina wants to play the lead role in *Swan Lake*. The play's director thinks that she is perfect to play the delicate white swan, but not to play the other, more sensual side of the role, the black swan. The director tells her that she should awaken this passionate, less controlled part of herself. Nina does so and is able to successfully play the role of the black swan, but her journey of discovery of this other, darker side of herself is so emotionally traumatic that she loses her mind.

The journey of self-discovery is usually harsh and difficult, and it does not always end well. But if it does, it is rewarding. However, in the myth of Persephone, the young Persephone does not desire the new experience, journey, or marriage. She has a strong bond with her mother and is unwilling to be apart from her. This could be the reason her uncle plans for her abduction after seeing her in the garden of paradise and coming to the conclusion that she could be a perfect wife for him, with her father's consent. Her uncle cannot think of any way to convince her or Demeter (her mother) that she should marry him and travel to the underworld and acquire new experience. In life we, too, sometimes find ourselves enduring harsh experiences—experiences which we did not choose and which could cause us depression but ultimately make us stronger people. Persephone's story indicates that a journey to the underworld can be transformative and, if one survives it, catalyze a personal metamorphosis.

I went through a long and dark depression for two years. I was helpless and alone, until I read about Jung, the underworld, the collective unconscious, and archetypes. I got very excited and read many myths. When I read the story of Persephone,

suddenly everything clicked in my mind. That experience keeps coming back to me because it introduced me to a whole new realm: dark, deep, transformative. I would like to go back there, alone or with other people. I could recognize when people were exploring or trapped there, and as an architect, I could envision, design, and build that space. It is a recurring cycle. There are times that I like to run in the grass, fill my lungs with fresh air, be pampered by cool wind, pick flowers, and cry in vivacious delight. And then that time suddenly ends, and I crawl to my dark room alone, light some candles, and am reluctant to meet anyone.

The Persephone myth expresses a number of themes about life depending on the context in which it is read. It can be read as a collective or personal experience; the forced fall of Persephone is like a deep depression any person may experience or relate to, followed by the reward of metamorphosis. On another level, this myth can be seen as portraying the conflict between men and women in patriarchal societies, and the contrasting of male and female power. Or, aside from gender relations, it is a marriage of death and life.

I was born and grew up in the Middle East, yet I felt this Western myth very deeply. I can see how universal and unlimited myths are. They are alive and exist in our collective unconscious and can be made manifest in our architecture.

Content:

In contrast to the 20th-century tradition of working laterally and being concerned about social democracy, freedom, and clarity, this thesis posits that there is a vertical axis in contemporary architecture that is profoundly satisfying and which really focuses on placement, on our place in the world. It offers a kind of individual passage, as in the central concentration of the myth of Persephone.

The three parts of this thesis focus on:

- Persephone and her journey to the underworld;
- Precedents; and
- Design synthesis.

Architecture can be very powerful in creating a certain atmosphere and taking the visitor on a journey that provides the

opportunity to reflect and to meet a deeper level of self. In order to fully understand this journey, I studied the myth of Persephone. This myth is deeply involved with the underworld and the transition from one state to another.

Persephone's journey to the underworld is a story of transformation. It starts with her abduction by Hades to the realm of death. She stays there for a whole year, suffering from anger and depression, and this experience changes her. She returns to the world as a queen of the underworld and initiates a mystery with her mother to teach people the value of the cycle of life, death, and rebirth.

Part one examines the myth and some literary and psychology references to explore the myth deeper and find how it can contribute to architecture. Bachelard's text gives a physical body to conscious and unconscious states. He uses the house as a metaphor to describe these states and the experience of moving between them, their differences, and also the fear of mankind to experience the unconscious state. Carl Jung uses the images of a cellar and an attic to show how people avoid the invitation to separate from their sensible state and to experience the fear of the cellar. These symbolic uses of the parts of a house emphasize the different qualities of these architectural spaces. An attic is a constructed space above the ground which is full of light during the day, whereas a cellar is a perpetually dark room that is dug inside the body of the earth. The transition from one to the other could include stairs, doors, or other rooms. The transition can be sudden or gradual.

Joseph Campbell talks about a mythical and psychological journey which he calls the "Hero's Journey." The stages of this journey are very similar to the myth of Persephone in that both describe a transformation. By looking at the Persephone myth and at Campbell's "Hero's Journey," I conclude that this process of transformation has three phases: separation, stay/explore, and return.

Part two uses these three phases of transformation to analyze some architectural precedents. The structures examined involve the same qualities as the myth in that they are meant to take people to another level of consciousness or spirituality; these are buildings which first separate people from their

everyday life, then give them the opportunity to contemplate and/or explore. And then, obviously, there is always a way to return to everyday life again.

I describe how the architectural topos of “grotto” is a notable example of a threshold that helps the visitor separate from his or her surrounding space and enter the realm of Hades. Then I study three cases that have the same spatial qualities and give the visitor the same spatial experience. The first is Sheikh Lotfollah Mosque by Muhammad Reza Ibn Ustad Hosein Banna Isfahani; the second is the Jewish Museum by Daniel Libeskind; and the third is Bruder Klaus Field Chapel by Peter Zumthor. I also include the Danteum by Terragni, because I needed to study an architectural structure that has been designed based on a story/literature. The Danteum’s interior spaces also helped me improve the exploring and transition parts of my design. The last part of my precedent study is named “transition,” in which I discuss some examples of architecture that offer gradual transitions. These examples are important in terms of examining how the visitor transitions from one of the three phases to the next.

Part three is an architectural design synthesis. This part starts with introducing the site on which my design synthesis is placed. I chose a natural park area for my design because I believe that stepping inside nature is the first step of separation and helps a person to get closer to his or her own nature. I chose a park in Kitchener, but it could be any park around the world. I believe the experience of transformation is universal and that no matter where my site or design is placed, visitors can penetrate the dark and heavy body of the earth underground and experience entering another level of consciousness.

The design has qualities of chthonian architecture, which demonstrates how a proper surrounding environment can lead to a journey of self-discovery. The majority of the architecture is placed underground. It is composed mainly of three parts, which correspond to the aforementioned three phases of transformation: separation, stay/explore, and return. After descending underground, the visitor suddenly encounters darkness. By reducing the light in the space, I lead the visitor’s awareness to his or her intuition. The only light available is

a penetrating beam that gives only an impression of what is right in front of the visitor, so he or she may need to make use of imagination to complete the view.

I mainly used stone or gabion wall for walls because stone is from the earth and gives some feeling of the heavy soil surrounding the visitor behind these stone walls. Other materials used are wood and corten steel and they are intended to give the space a natural, wild feeling. Any concrete material that is used in the structure or barrier walls is also covered by stone. The visitor can wander around and explore any or all of four halls. Each is a representation of Hades' realm and highlights one of the four classic elements that make up the most basic nature of the universe: earth, water, fire, and air. For the visitor, lingering in and exploring the dark and dreamy underground space drags out some buried thoughts and emotions from a deeper layer of the unconscious, thoughts and emotions that, if the visitor notices and listens to them, may start the process of transformation. The final place is the "Birthing Chamber," which is where the gradual "return" and engendering starts.



Fig 0.3 (top) Branka Kurz series

Fig 0.4 (bottom) Branka Kurz series

INTRODUCTION

There are situations in life that leave you utterly speechless.
There are situations in life that break you, crush you.
There are situations in life that fill you with rage, and in which
you find no justice.
There are situations in life...

This thesis is a story of such a situation. Well, it is actually that
of what happens after such situations. It is about what hap-
pens when you leave everything and everyone behind. When
you find nothing to comfort you anymore and instead descend
into the depth of despair. When your inner Persephone has
been dishonoured, defiled, abducted, and raped.

This sorrowful time is when you seek transformation and em-
bark on a journey of self-discovery (of course, for one whose
feet are set firmly on the path towards perfection there seems
little necessity for change!). You either leave your secure heav-
en voluntarily or, like Persephone, who is abducted and sucked
into the underworld by Hades, you are forced out of it. This is
the beginning of the journey, a journey that—if you survive—
metamorphoses you, teaches you about your inner powers,
and introduces you to your true self. Architecture can help
this journey, because, as Gaston Bachelard argues, “the chief
benefit of the house [is that] the house shelters daydreaming,
the house protects the dreamer, the house allows one to dream
in peace [...]. The house is one of the greatest powers of inte-
gration for the thoughts, memories and dreams of mankind.¹”
Quoting Mark Johnson, Juhani Pallasmaa states that “there is
no cognition without emotion, even though we are often un-
aware of the emotional aspects of our thinking.²” Pallasmaa
argues that “situations are the locus of emotions, not minds or
brains.³” Architecture can have an important role in the jour-

1 Bachelard, Gaston, and M. Jolas. 1994. *The poetics of space*. Boston: Beacon Press, p 6

2 Pallasmaa, Juhani. 2015 “Space, place and atmosphere. Emotion and peripheral perception in architectural experience”, <http://riviste.unimi.it/index.php/Lebenswelt/article/download/4202/4292>

3 *ibid*



Fig 0.5 Branka Kurz series

I can hear little clicks inside my dream.
Night drips its silver tap
down the back.
At 4 a.m. I wake. Thinking

of the man who
left in September
His name was Law.

My face in the bathroom mirror
has white streaks down it.
I rinse the face and return to bed.
Tomorrow I am going to visit my mother.

Anne Carson, *The Glass Essay*

ney of self-discovery by creating a special atmosphere that provokes emotions and imagination.

Before the journey starts, you need to leave your modern, busy, and crowded everyday life. You need to get close to your nature, to meet your pure and basic essential self. Within a city, a natural park is the best choice of setting for this process, a place without modern human artifacts. I chose the Natural Huron Area in Kitchener as the site for my design, but the setting could be any park or any place in the world full of superb natural scenery that leaves you speechless.



Fig 0.6 Huron Natural Area Map

These amazing scenes help to empty your mind of thoughts of your hectic life.



Fig 0.7 Huron Natural Area Views

You follow the existing path inside the park until a designed space appears in front of you.

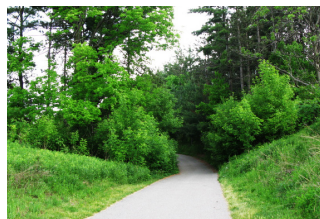


Fig 0.8 Huron Natural Area Path

In the centre of the space is a pond, and there are seats and stairs as well as a smaller path, which leads you to an ivy-covered, corten steel pavilion wall that hides what is behind it. The whole design is both inviting and uninviting: all stairs lead you into the pavilion, but the entrance itself does not seem very welcoming.

Anger travels through me, pushes aside everything else in my heart,
pouring up the vents.

Every night wake to this anger,

the soaked bed,

the hot pain box slamming me each way I move.

I want justice. Slam

I want an explanation. Slam.

I want to curse the false friend who said I love you forever. Slam

I reach up and switch on the bedside lamp. Night springs

out the window and is gone over the moor.

I lie listening to the light vibrate in my ears

and thinking about curses.

Anne Carson, *The Glass Essay*

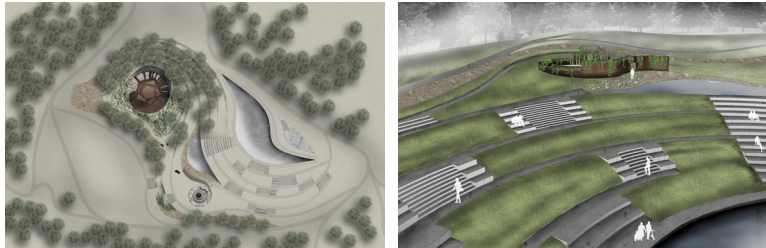


Fig 0.9 Huron Natural Area Designed Landscape

It looks like a very mysterious place. You decide to go for it and follow the stairs through the entranceway. Behind the wall, there is a spiral ramp that leads underground

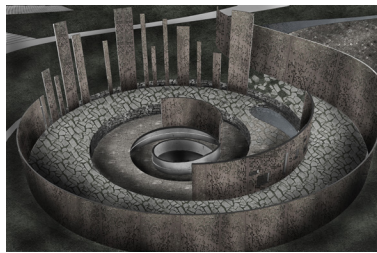


Fig 0.10 The Descent

It is dark down the ramp; you cannot see what is down there. As you follow the ramp, it sucks you down. Before you know it, you are underground and there is no light, only pure darkness. This is just like violence: abrupt and quick. This is the abduction of Persephone. This is Campbell's mythological hero entering the realm of the dark. This is where you need to go, descending deep into the dark instead of crawling beneath your safe, warm blanket. This is the first phase: separation. As I will examine in part two, this feeling of separation is achieved in other architecture in different ways: It is a staircase descending underground in the Jewish Museum. It is a dim and dark corridor in Sheikh Lotfollah Mosque and in the Bruder Klaus Chapel. The descent is the vertical axis that leads you to a profound and satisfying experience. Although you move horizontally to explore the space, the main journey starts when you descend vertically and suddenly start to experience a whole new realm.

The second phase starts when you find yourself down the spiral, where daylight is so far away. This is the realm of Hades. It is like entering the psyche. It is the beginning of relating to your unconscious. You lost the light, and now it is just darkness in front of you. The chthonian underground space is dim and everything is vague and unclear. The only material



Fig 0.11 Branka Kurz series

SURGEONS must be very careful
When they take the knife!
Underneath their fine incisions
Stirs the culprit,—Life!

Emily Dickinson

used in this space is stone. Stone is a natural material, and its heaviness emphasizes the heavy mass of the soil that is surrounding you. As Pallasmaa states, “Deep thought takes place in a transformed reality, a condition in which the existential priorities and alarms are momentarily forgotten. The object of the creative act is not only identified and observed by the eye and touch, it is introjected (the psychoanalytic notion for internalization of an object through the interior of the mouth at the earliest phases of infancy), and identified with one’s own body and existential condition.”⁴ He argues that for deep thinking, we need a safe and protected place like “in the cradle of the house.”⁵ This is why there are four halls in the underground space. This is the phase of “silence, stay, and explore.” Although perhaps you felt hopeless when you found yourself in the underground darkness, by wandering around, you will see that this new chthonian realm has aspects which are very different from what you experience on the surface of the earth. This is a whole new realm with its own features. According to James Hillman, the brotherhood of Zeus and Hades means that their worlds are the same—one world seen or felt from different perspectives. Exploring the new world in the underground space of the architecture, and entering each hall, you find skylights to the realm of Zeus. Through the windows in the four halls, you can still see the world above ground, but from a completely different perspective. By “different perspective,” I have two intended meanings: (1) Through the windows, the visitor can literally see out into the daylight realm of Zeus from a different perspective (angle), and (2) In this place, the visitor gets a different perspective on the realm of Zeus because elements from that realm are represented here but in different ways (e.g., walking on the earth above versus the oppressiveness of the earth below).

Each hall is named after one of the basic elements of nature: earth, water, fire, and air. You can find all of them in the realm of Zeus above: you can walk on the ground of the forest; you can sit by the pond in the park; sometimes you can set a fire to feel warm or barbecue; and you can breathe and feel the wind caressing your face from time to time. However, the ways you experience those elements inside the realm of Hades are completely different. Hades’ world is contained inside a huge

⁴ Pallasmaa, Juhani. “In praise of vagueness”, *Center: Architecture & Design in America*; 2013, Issue 17, p254

⁵ *Ibid*, p254



Fig 0.12 Branka Kurz series

What was this earth-born memory I would hold?
Almost I have forgotton. Lord, I see
Behind the golden Loneliness of the wood,
A stir of wandering birds, and in the brake
A small brown faun who follows me and weeps.

the complete poems of Marhorie Pickthall

and heavy mass of soil. If you close your eyes, you can feel even more intensely the pressure of the soil around you. The dim light of the space has already obscured the details of the space and taken you to a state of imagination and dreaming, but Pallasmaa argues that when people are in a highly emotional state, like listening to moving music or embracing a loved one, they tend to close their eyes. He believes that “the dynamic compositional totality can only be appreciated by means of suppressing detail.”⁶

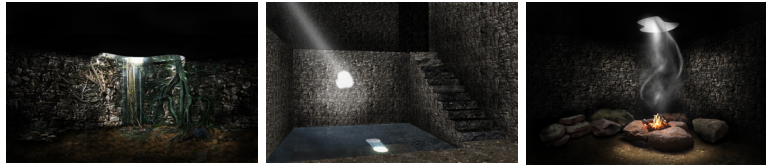


Fig 0.13 The Hall of Earth Fig 0.14 The Hall of Water Fig 0.15 The Hall of Fire
 The other examples of architecture I study in this thesis have the same intention of relating to the unconscious and letting their visitor spend some time in the second phase of transformation, “stay/explore.” For instance, the dome space of Sheikh Lotfollah Mosque, with its dim light and windows which let controlled beams of light enter, provides an exquisite space for the visitor to stay and enjoy. The same thing happens in the Bruder Klaus Chapel interior space. The Jewish museum, however, uses another strategy which is closer to that of mine. It has two underground spaces to be explored: the Holocaust Tower and the Garden of Exile. Like my four halls, these two places are underground and are there just to be explored and experienced.

The last hall is the hall of air. It is like a profound well, and you are at the bottom of it. You feel so distant from the light and life above ground, it seems impossible to reach. This is where the hope of return seems completely lost, and of course this is always where you can find the way to return if you take just one more step and reach the Birthing Chamber.



Fig 0.16 The Hall of Air



Fig 0.17 The Birthing Chamber

⁶ ibid, p254



Fig 0.18 Branka Kurz series

I saw a high hill and on it a form shaped against hard air

It could have been just a pole with some old cloth attached,
but as I came closer
I saw a human body

trying to stand against wind so terrible that the flesh was
blowing off the bones.
And there was no pain.
The wind

was cleansing the bone.
They stood forth silver and necessary.
It was not my body, not a woman's body, it was the body of
us all.
It walked out of the light.

Anne Carson, *The Glass Essay*

In the Birthing Chamber, the complex process of rebirth starts. The space is created by pentagons rotated around a central axis, which gives you the experience of embracing and celebrating the journey you had. Beams of light are penetrating inside the chamber, heralding the return to life and light. Outside of the Birthing Chamber, there is a staircase that goes around the body of the chamber and takes you back to the world, to the surface of the earth. The return and rebirth again happen in the vertical axis. As you step up, you leave the darkness of the underground behind. You can see the light of day penetrating through the gabion wall and making a half-lit space. As you go further, little by little the building volume around you opens as you engender to the life again. Leaving the cylindrical volume of the architecture, you find yourself in a grove of columns and surrounded by trees. Like the return of Persephone, this return and transition, too, is very gradual. Little by little you unfold the layers until you emerge and find yourself again in the park, near the stairs and path, and you can see the pond. You can also see where you descended. You are in the same place again, but you had an experience that makes you look at it differently. You may walk around a little bit and look around again, or sit for a while until you feel that you are ready to leave the park, to go back to life in the city again.



Fig 0.19 The Exit Stairs

The spatial journey has been narrated engaging the full duration of the journey, from immersion in social space prior to the trauma through until immersion back within social space. Each phase showed the relationship between the personal story, the myth, and the design synthesis. The goals of the architectural design synthesis are both to provide a space for the transformational journey of self-discovery that comes from enduring and conquering an emotionally difficult time, and to provide the visitor with an experience that is itself potentially transformational.

**PERSEPHONE
AND HER JOURNEY
TO THE UNDERWORLD**



Fig 1.1 The Metamorphosis

The dread and resistance which every natural human being experiences when it comes to delving too deeply into himself is, at bottom, the fear of the journey to Hades.

C.G. Jung, Psychology and Alchemy



Fig 1.2 Ana Mendieta, Untitled (Silueta series, Mexico)

The Myth

In order to apply the qualities of the Persephone myth in architecture, we need to fully understand it. Kathie Carlson, in her essay “Gestative Transformation,” discusses the different meanings of the myth of Persephone. She states that the goddess Kore-Persephone carries two different aspects of being: one is life (her mother’s daughter) and the other is death (her husband’s wife)—or, in Carlson’s own words, Kore-Persephone is “Life’s daughter and Death’s bride.”¹ This dual face of Persephone signifies her power to connect the two worlds. The myth is her metamorphosis from an innocent, naïve girl to the powerful queen of the underworld. She is abducted by Hades, the god of the underworld, and sucked into his kingdom. She is condemned to this prison, where she is horribly abused. When she is on the threshold of redemption, she eats pomegranate seeds, whether “out of desperation or via trickery,”² which consummates her marriage with Hades. This is the transitional point at which Kore becomes Persephone and her inner powers awaken. She is no longer the victim of Hades’ kingdom but its queen and ruler. “Hades’ death power is made fertile through Persephone; she gestates its trauma.”³

The salient point of the myth is Persephone’s journey to the underworld. It is through this journey that she metamorphoses. We need to examine the notion of invisibility and hiding in relation to Hades, just as Persephone did. We should go very deep to explore this relationship because many truths in life are invisible and hidden from our vision. All powers and wisdom that Persephone is awarded are the gifts of her journey to the realm of Hades. Hades is the god of depth and invisibility. He is invisible. This could imply that Hades is an invisible connection between events in life. The underworld is the kingdom of Hades. The myth tells us that there is no time in the underworld. Nothing changes there. Neither does anything progress, nor decay. As time has nothing to do with the underworld, we cannot consider it an “after” life. It is a psychological realm.⁴

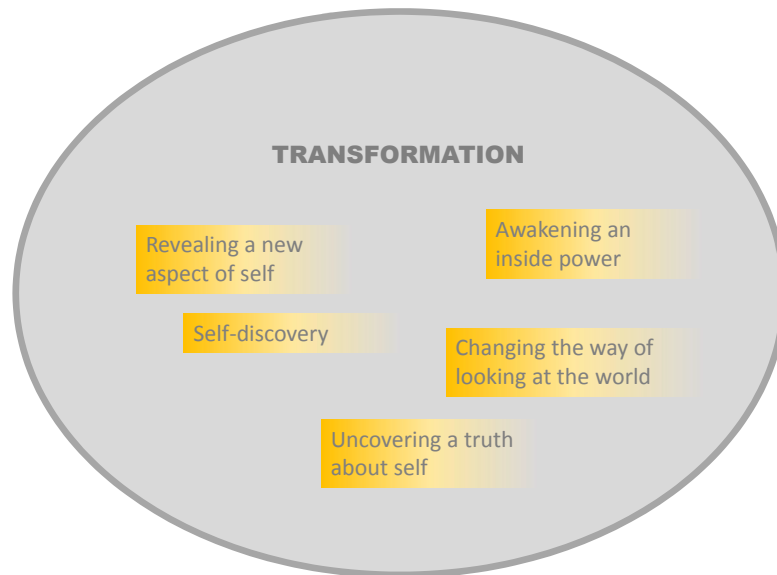
1 Carlson, Kathie. 1979. *Life’s Daughter/death’s Bride: Inner Transformations through the Goddess Demeter/Persephone*. Boston: Shambhala.

2 *Ibid*, p85

3 *Ibid*, p 86

4 Hillman, James. 1979. *The dream and the underworld*. New York: Harper & Row, p. 27

What is transformation?



How does a person transform? (The three phases of transformation)

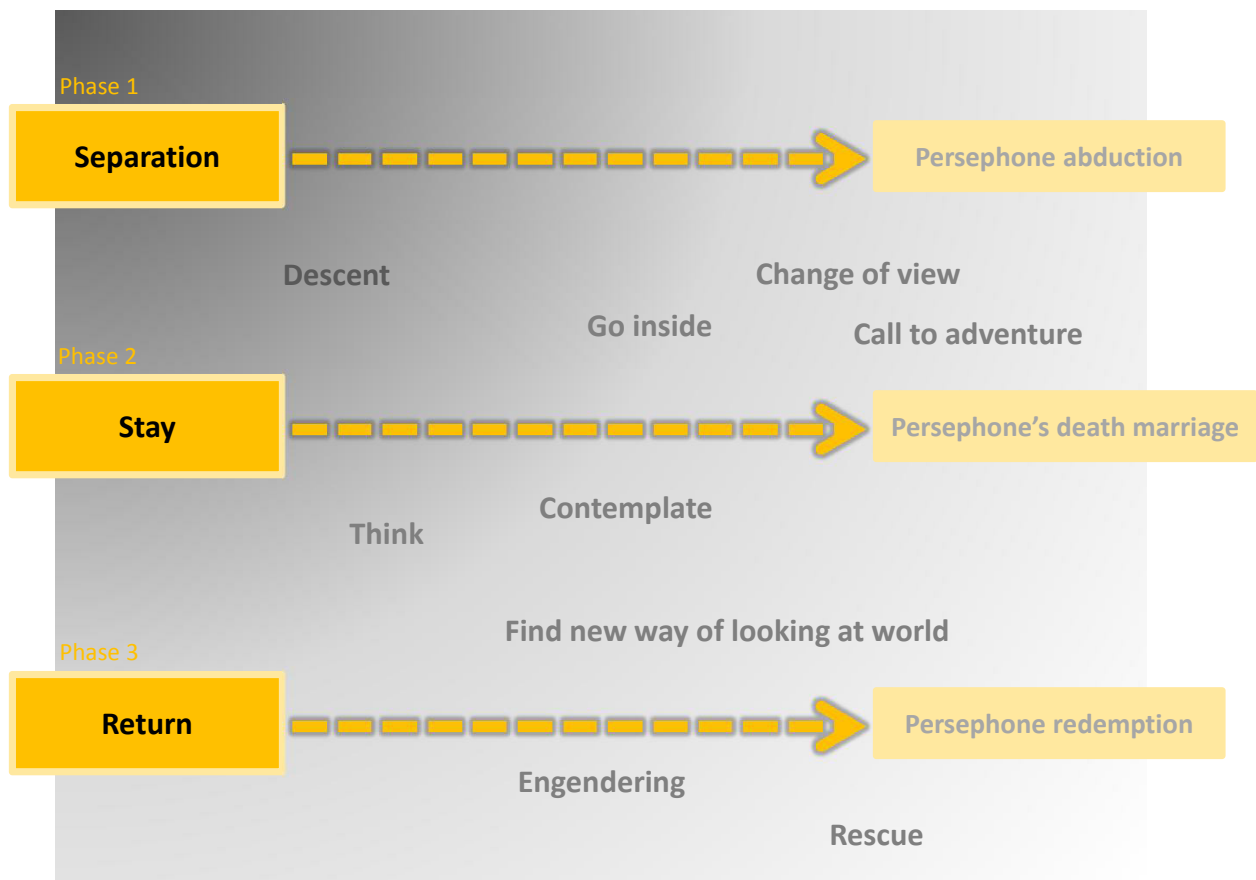


Fig 1.3 Diagram of Transformation Phases

Hades is a brother of Zeus. This brotherhood can mean that these two gods' worlds are the same, but are seen or felt or studied from different perspectives. Just one universe exists. One brother sees it from his sunlit view atop Mount Olympus, while the other brother sees it from the darkness below the earth. Hades' realm is as involved with life as his brother's. It is just below it, and what it offers to life are its depths and its psyche. Hades is the final cause and purpose. His realm is conceived as the end of every soul, and also every soul process. Hence, every event that is relatively psychic contains an aspect of Hades. Anything (events, soul, experience, etc.) that wants to reach a deeper psychic level moves from visible to invisible and leads to Hades.⁵

Universe as a house

Gaston Bachelard, in his book *The Poetics of Space*, says that our house "is our first universe, a real cosmos in every sense of the word."⁶ If we, as Bachelard suggests, imagine a house as a universe, or the whole world as a house, we can think of an underground cellar as the realm of Hades and the rooms above the ground as the realm of Zeus. Bachelard argues that looking at the universe as a house emphasizes that it is a vertical structure. This verticality shows the polarization of the attic and the cellar as two completely different perspectives.

On one hand, there is the roof, which provides shelter from rain and snow. The concept is understandable, and if we dream about it, the dream is rational. The dreamer constructs all levels above the ground and goes up and up, and "when we dream of the heights we are in the rational zone of intellectualized projects."⁷ On the other hand, there is the cellar, which is the dark spot of the house and has subterranean forces. There is no construction, just digging deeper and deeper. There is no limit for excavating the ground. The entire earth is behind the walls of the cellar. "When we dream there, we are in harmony with the irrationality of the depth."⁸

⁵ *Ibid*, p 30

⁶ Bachelard, Gaston, and M. Jolas. 1994. *The poetics of space*. Boston: Beacon Press, p. 4

⁷ *Ibid*, p18

⁸ *Ibid*, p18

Carl Jung uses the contrasting images of the attic and the cellar to illustrate the human fear of the darkness underground. "Here the conscious acts like a man who, hearing a suspicious noise in the cellar, hurries to the attic and, finding no burglars there decides, consequently, that the noise was pure imagination. In reality, this prudent man did not dare venture into the cellar."⁹ Using this image from Jung, Bachelard concludes that there are two kinds of phenomenological fear: one kind in the attic, and the other in the cellar. The careful and sensible man that Jung describes does not want to face the cellar (the unconscious); instead, he looks for a reason not to go down into the cellar. The noise is like a kind of invitation for the sensible man to "separate" from his logical life in the light, and go "stay" and "explore" in the dreadful darkness of the cellar. In the attic, the light of the day can obliterate the fear of darkness at night, whereas the darkness reigns in the cellar both day and night. Even lighting a candle does not just help to decrease the fear, because it also increases the darkness by making long, dancing shadows. It is true that nowadays, in our civilized time, we use electricity to create light in every space of our house, but it is not possible to civilize the unconscious.¹⁰

Despite this extreme fear of the underworld, Persephone has to encounter it. Persephone's relationship with the earth is deeply conflicted. On one hand, it is consuming her and crushing her. It is her tomb, and she wants to escape this horror. On the other hand, Persephone's story is a redemption myth which does not merely say that Apollo's world of light is the answer and the Hades' world of concrete earth is a hell which we must escape. Persephone is a transitional figure; soil and fertility and the earth are embodied in her own flesh, embodied in her own capacity to give life. This view turns the entire myth around—the earth becomes the soul, the womb, the birthing chamber. The earth is body, flesh, and the light takes the form of a penetrating force.

Persephone as Hero

Persephone's transformative journey is very much like what Joseph Campbell describes as the "Hero's Journey." He believes that there is just one story in the world, a "monomyth," and

⁹ *Ibid.*, p19

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p19

all other stories are different versions of that story.

In his book *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, he narrates the story:

The mythological hero, setting forth from his common day hut or castle, is lured, carried away, or else voluntarily proceeds, to the threshold of adventure. There he encounters a shadow presence that guards the passage. The hero may defeat or conciliate this power and go alive into the kingdom of the dark (brother-battle, dragon-battle; offering, charm), or be slain by the opponent and descend in death (dismemberment, crucifixion)...¹¹

This part describes where the hero “separates” from his normal life and starts his journey. He finds himself alone in the pure darkness of the realm of Hades.

...Beyond the threshold, then, the hero journeys through a world of unfamiliar yet strangely intimate forces, some of which severely threaten him (tests), some of which give magical aid (helpers). When he arrives at the nadir of the mythological round, he undergoes a supreme ordeal and gains his reward. The triumph may be represented as the hero’s sexual union with the goddess-mother of the world (sacred marriage), his recognition by the father-creator (father atonement), his own divinization (apotheosis), or again—if the powers have remained unfriendly to him—his theft of the boon he came to gain (bride-theft, fire-theft); intrinsically it is an expansion of consciousness and therewith of being (illumination, transfiguration, freedom)...¹²

He “stays” in this realm for a while and experiences many of its features: battle, test, reward. All these stages help him to get close to his deepest foundation and real powers.

...The final work is that of the return. If the powers have blessed the hero, he now sets forth under their protection (emissary); if not, he flees and is pursued (transformation flight, obstacle flight). At the return threshold the transcendental powers must remain behind; the hero re-emerges from the kingdom of dread (return, resurrection). The boon that he brings restores the world (elixir).¹³

...And the final return!

According to Campbell, we can split this journey to three phas-

¹¹ Campbell, Joseph. 1972. *The hero with a thousand faces*. 2d ed. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, p. 246

¹² *Ibid*, p246

¹³ *Ibid*, p246

The Hero's Journey Cycle Joseph Campbell

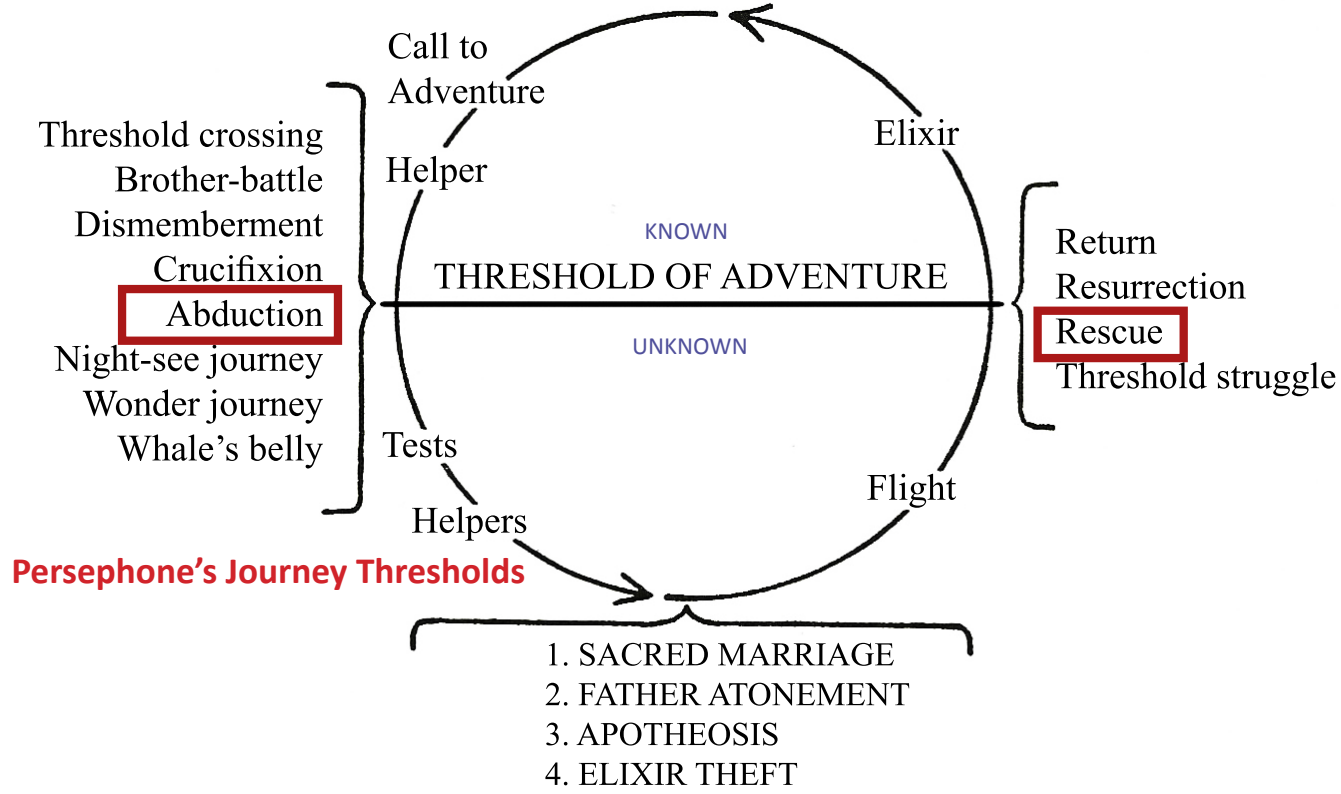


Fig 1.4 The Hero's Journey Cycle by Joseph Campbell

es: separation, stay, and return. This is a journey from attic to cellar and back again. If man dares to leave his comfort zone of the attic and goes to discover the darkness of the cellar, he may return as a metamorphosed person. Persephone's journey includes all three phases. Her abduction by her uncle is the first phase. Unfortunately for her, this separation is not voluntary. Then, she stays for a whole year in Hades, where she finally accepts pomegranate seeds and becomes the queen of the underworld before her return to the world above ground. The myth doesn't tell us much about her experience in the underworld. We just know she is there, and it seems that sometimes just being there inside the earth and darkness is enough to make people encounter another layer of themselves. Eventually, she is released and returns. However, just as in Campbell's diagram, Persephone's return is not forever. She starts a cyclic life of going down and returning up. Her transitional figure is therefore the ideal example of a hero who constantly faces the darkness of her unconscious.

I believe one of the architect's important roles is to give us the opportunity to meet with a deeper image of ourselves, to go inside ourselves and think about who we are universally—a kind of experience that can possibly change our view of the world and of ourselves. The question is whether we can have architecture that corresponds to this myth and gives the visitor the opportunity of transformation? There is much research on the function of architecture, but this thesis is about the power of architecture: how can architecture affect us? Applying the three phases of transformation can help us to go further with this concept. How can architecture contribute to each phase of transformation? Part two looks at some architectural cases. The first of these precedents is a topos of architecture, a grotto. Then I examine four architectural buildings: Sheikh Lotfollah Mosque, the Jewish Museum, Bruder Klaus Chapel, and the Dantéum. I believe these buildings have similar qualities and are buildings worthy of closer study. Finally, because Persephone is a transitional figure, I look at the "transitional spaces" of the Dominus Winery, Katsura Imperial Villa, and the Alhambra.

PRECEDENTS

In this chapter I am going to study architectural structures that have been built to have a similar “transformational” impression on their visitors as that which I intend my design to achieve. These precedents have inspired me directly or indirectly throughout the process of my design. I start with an architectural topos called “grotto,” which is a great example of the kind of space that captures the myth of Persephone. It is a transitional place where ground and underground really meet. Studying this topos is really important for this thesis, as my first and last phases happen in this threshold. Then three architectural examples are studied and analyzed: Sheikh Lotfollah Mosque, the Jewish museum, and the Bruder Klaus Chapel. These three structures try to connect with the unconscious part of their visitor and to affect him or her profoundly. They all have the first two phases of transformation: separation and stay. However, only the Jewish Museum has a different return; the other two use the same path to separate from the world as to return to it. Then, I study the Danteum. This architecture was important and inspiring to me for two reasons: First, it is an architectural design based on a story, which is exactly the same thing that I am doing. Second, the Danteum’s exploration spaces and its transitions were really interesting to me and they affected my process of designing my underground space and its transitions. Transitions are very important in my thesis and architectural research as the myth and my design are both about transitions and movement from one state to another. So, in this section I also study how spatial transitions occur in different ways in different buildings.

Grotto

And after having remained at the entry some time, two contrary emotions arose in me, fear and desire – fear of the threatening dark grotto, desire to see whether there were any marvelous thing within it.

Leonardo da Vinci, Codex Arundel

A grotto is a good example of an architectural translation of the Persephone myth. A grotto is fundamentally a place of transition from the earth of a paradise on the surface to the dark origins which are inside the body of the earth. It is an architectural topos and can be found in landscapes and gardens, especially in Renaissance architecture. Grotto can be found in many different contexts and has variable forms and functions: “sacred and profane, idyllic and bucolic, mythological and oracular, theatrical and ornamental.”¹ It can be an inspiring place to spend lonely time or take some rest in springtime, or even a sacred place of nymphs.²

The word “grotto” comes from Latin word “crypta,” which means a hidden subterranean way, a passage, a cavern, or a pit. Crypta also relates to the word “cryptoporticus,” which is an underground portico. The cryptoporticus in Hadrian’s villa provides underground passage to avoid hot weather. Another example is in the Chateau d’Anet; the cryptoporticus is under the building and provides both support to the foundation and access to the garden.³

A grotto is an artificial cavern that creates a microcosm. It goes beyond nature by controlling it. It “is a place for delight and meditation, for rest and recreation, for restoration and renewal of the senses, for private and public pleasure, for feasting and fooleries. Like the garden, the grotto may be an escape from the world of reality, from the rules and artifice and constriction of society.” The citation of Leonardo da Vinci at the

1 Miller, Naomi. 1982. Heavenly caves: reflections on the garden grotto. New York: G. Braziller, p. 7

2 *Ibid*, p 7

3 *Ibid*, p 8

beginning of this part articulates the ambiguous feelings associated with a grotto—feelings of curiosity and fear which you want to discover but at the same time avoid because you are not sure what you will face.⁴

Another important use of a grotto is as a site for rituals and mysteries. Eleusinian mysteries belong to Demeter. The site is in Eleusis, above the Sacred Way, with a view of both mountain and sea. The cave was in front of the sacred place where people entered. There were two deep chambers and between them a stairway, which is probably where, in the springtime, Persephone returns to the world from underground. The ritual is to celebrate the cycle of life, death, and rebirth. The grotto represents the threshold of two worlds.



Fig 2.1 Eleusis, Cave of Persephone

⁴ *ibid*, p 11



Fig 2.2 Hadrian's Villa



Fig 2.3 Chateau of Anet

Sheikh Lotfollah Mosque

Muhammad Reza Ibn Ustad Hosein Banna Isfahani, Isfahan, Iran, 1615

Sheikh Lotfollah Mosque is one of the most inspiring places in Iran. It was built during the reign of the Safavid dynasty, which stretched from 1602–19. There was a need for a private praying space for women of the shah's haram. Therefore, the mosque was designed by Muhammad Reza Ibn Ustad Hosein Banna Isfahani.

The mosque is located in Naghshe Jahan square, the main square of the city. The entrance narthex of it is just beside the small stores of the traditional bazaar. Going through the entrance, you find yourself inside a dark, narrow passageway that is totally contrasted with the big, open space of the square. The passageway bends three times to hide the end. The passageway separates the visitor from the light and life of the day. The darkness usually engages people with the mysterious quality of the place, and they want to go further and find what happens next. The first two bends of the passageway augment this mysteriousness. The visitor, thinking about what is ahead, is separated from the busy life of the square.

After the last bend, the visitor sees the heavenly lit dome space. The oppression of the narrow passageway amplifies the effect of the size of the hall. Astounded by the open space, the visitor gazes at the gleams of light coming inside from the windows' holes and feels invited to stay in this amazing place.

Unfortunately, the mosque does not have another, different way of returning to the world. The visitor simply goes back out to the square through the same passageway.

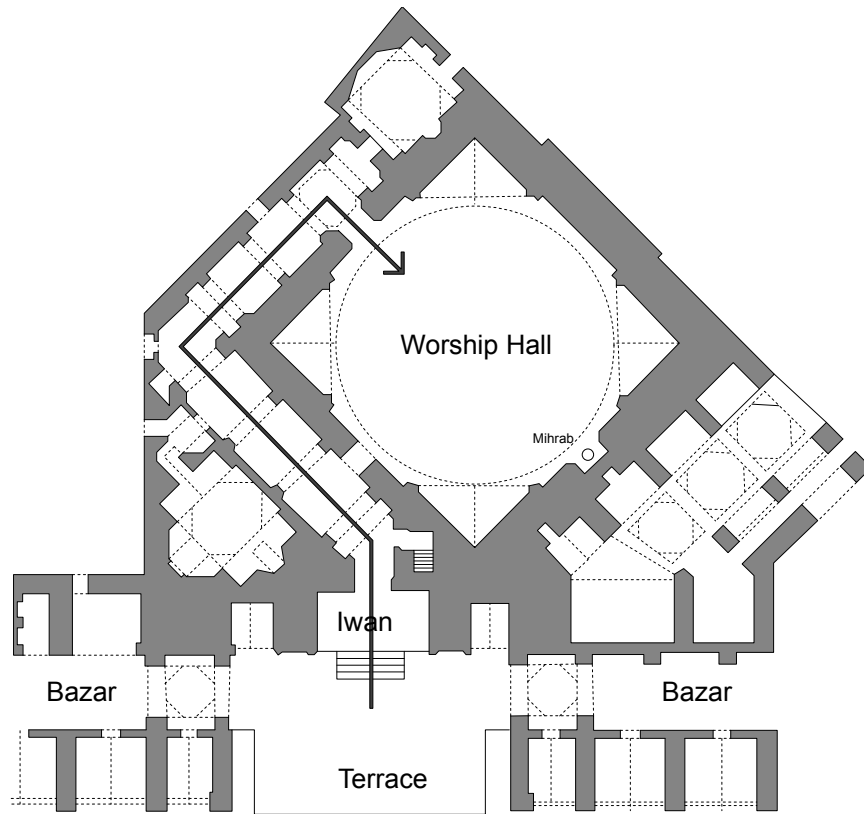


Fig 2.4 Sheikh Lotfollah Plan

A dark hallway gives the opportunity to separate from the big and open square space.



Fig 2.5 Sheikh Lotfollah, View from Bazaar Square

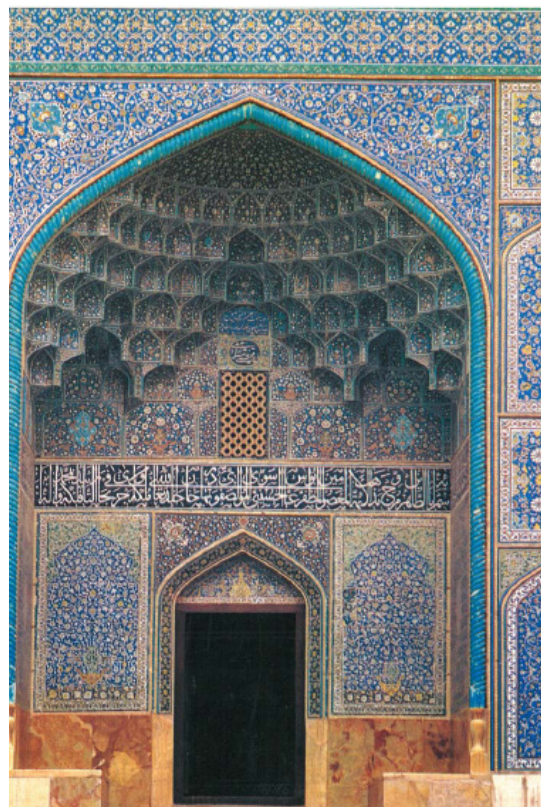


Fig 2.6 Sheikh Lotfollah Entrance

Separation:

The darkness of the hallway compared to open and well-lit space of square makes the visitor ready to enter the dome space.

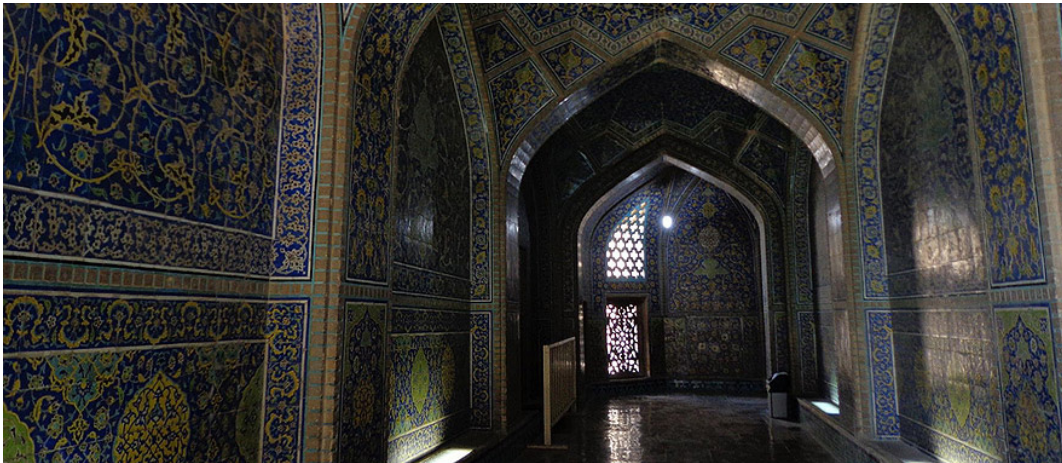


Fig 2.7 Sheikh Lotfollah Entrance Passageway

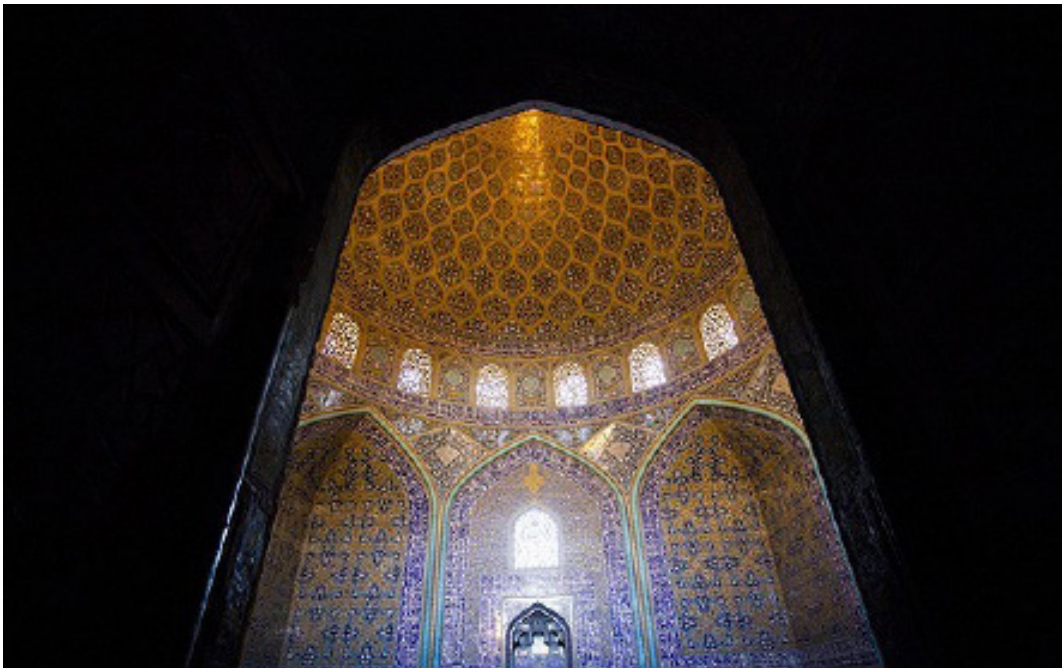


Fig 2.8 Sheikh Lotfollah, View to Dome



Fig 2.9 Sheikh Lotfollah, Dome View

Stay:

The dome space has controlled light penetration. This is the Worship Hall, a place to stay and contemplate.

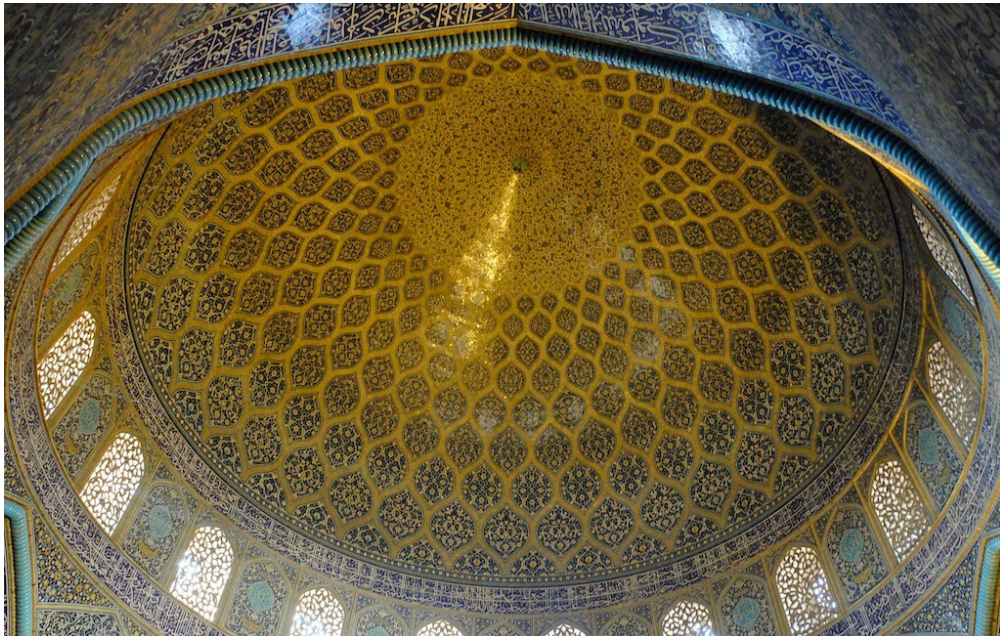


Fig 2.10 Sheikh Lotfollah, Dome View

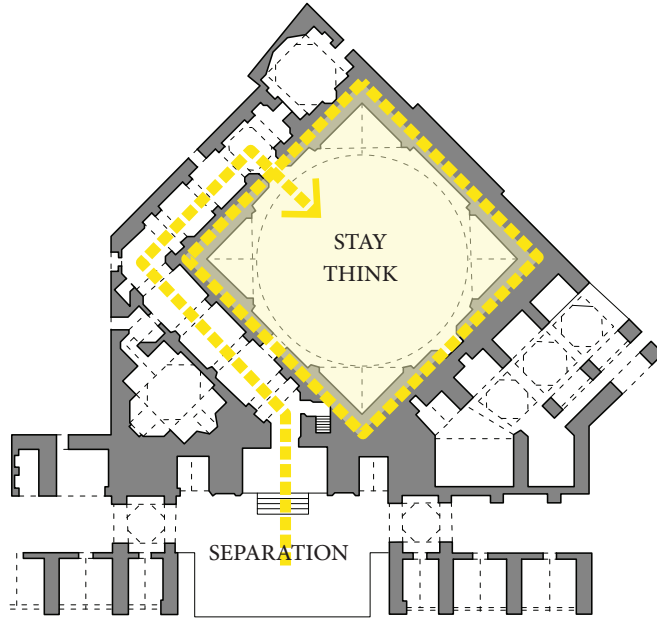


Fig 2.11 Sheikh Lotfollah Diagram, Separation and Stay/Think

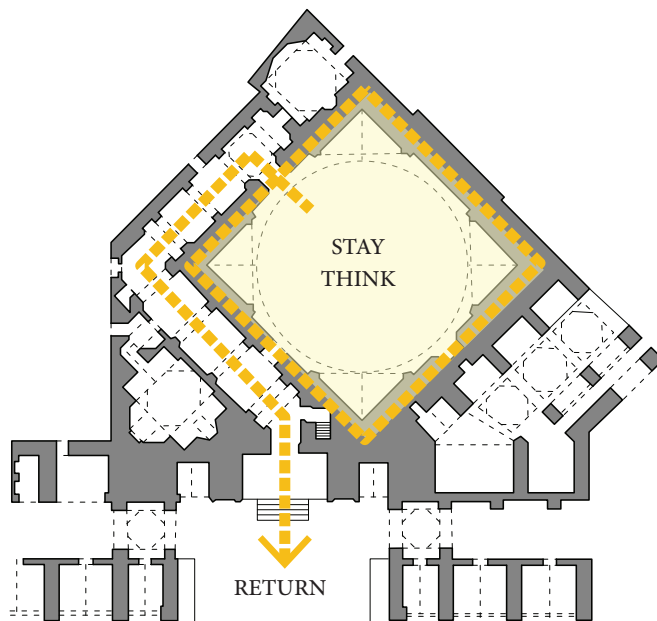


Fig 2.12 Sheikh Lotfollah Diagram, Stay/Think and Return

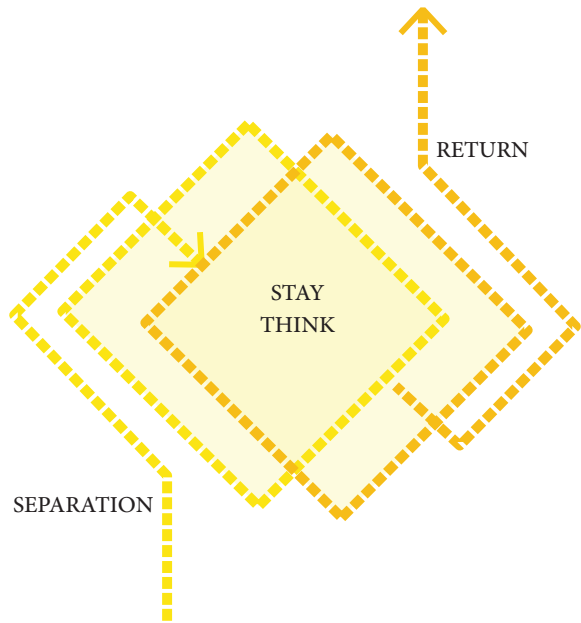


Fig 2.13 Diagram of three phases (mathing fig 2.11 and 2.12 by rotating them)

The Jewish Museum

Daniel Libeskind, Berlin

The Jewish Museum was built in Berlin between 1993 and 1998 by the architect Daniel Libeskind.

The idea of the design was inspired by a book by Walter Benjamin called *Einbahnstrasse*, meaning “one-way street,” and by *Moses and Aaron*, an opera by Arnold Schoenberg. Schoenberg began his opera in 1928, but left it incomplete and immigrated to the United States. Libeskind wanted his building to be a continuation of this musical work and called it “Between the Lines.”

The Jewish Museum is about the history of the Jews in Germany and not about personal growth. However, Libeskind’s design works pretty much the same way in that the building invites the visitor on a journey of the three phases of transformation. Libeskind tries to access the visitor’s unconscious before he tells the story of the Jewish people. That is why the museum entrance—inside a baroque building—opens to a staircase that goes underground. The visitor goes very deep, to the foundation of the old baroque building. This mythical descent to the underground changes the consciousness of the visitor, and the depth of the place helps him or her to enter a deeper layer of consciousness. It may also represent the fact that the tragic history of the Jewish people is buried beneath the world of everyday life in Berlin, and one needs to dig deep to discover it.

The underground level consists of three corridors. These corridors make a centre island, which makes it impossible to see all three at the same time. You can see just two of them at a time. Libeskind calls them “axes.” These three axes show three major experiences of German Jewish people: “continuity, exile, and death.” So here, you are on a journey to experience what the Jewish people have gone through.

The first axis is called the Axis of Holocaust. It leads to the Tower of Holocaust. The tower is a blank concrete wall with a slit of light in the ceiling. The tower is located outside of the museum building and is connected to the museum only by the

underground corridor. The corridor is a dead end. Your only choice is to return.

The second axis is called the Axis of Exile. It ends in an open space called the Garden of Exile. The garden includes trees that have been planted on top of 49 concrete pillars. The corner of the floor has been tipped down to make a double slope of ten degrees to create an unbalanced feeling for the visitor. Although the garden is out in the open air, it is surrounded by tall walls and the freedom is just an illusion. This axis is, just as the last one, a dead end with no other option other than to return inside the building.

The third axis, which is the longest one, consists only of a staircase to return to light and life. This is the Axis of Continuity. The long staircase goes from the basement to the third floor. After staying underground and experiencing the representations of the hardships the Jews endured, the visitor should make the last effort to reach the light and return to everyday life. The length of the staircase may hint at the hardship of this path for those who survived.



Fig 2.14 The Jewish Museum Bird View

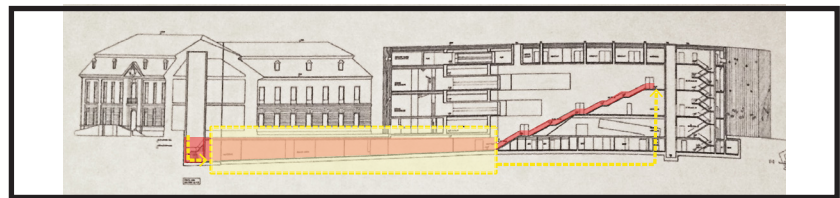
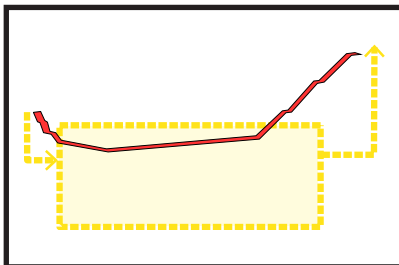
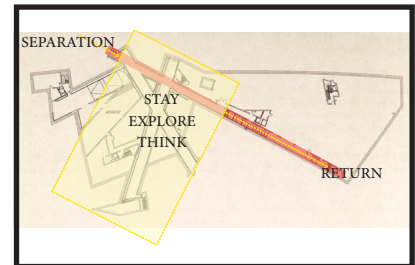
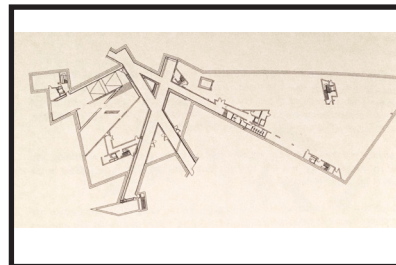
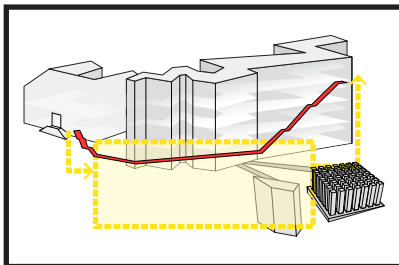
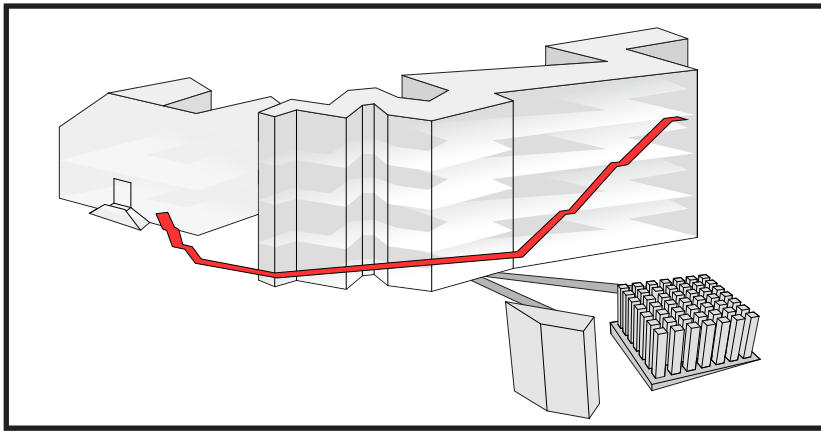


Fig 2.15 (top) The Jewish Museum Diagram

Fig 2.16 (bottom right) The Jewish Museum Descending down to the underground

Fig 2.17 (bottom left) The Jewish Museum Returning to light and life

Fig 2.18 (opposite) The Holocaust Tower

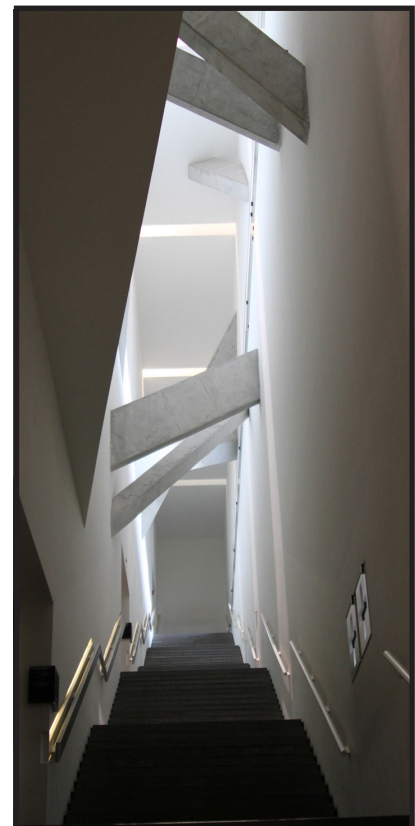
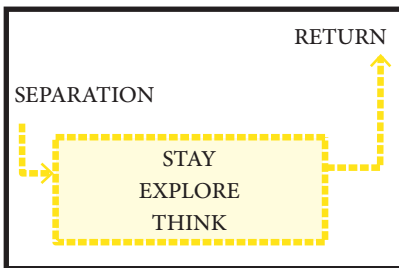






Fig 2.19 The Jewish Museum, outside view



Fig 2.20 The Jewish Museum, corridor view

Bruder Klaus Field Chapel

Peter Zumthor

Bruder Klaus Field Chapel is a sacred place too. However, what it depicts is neither an experience as universal as that of the mosque, nor an event as big as the Holocaust. Its symbolism resonates in a particular part of the world, in a small community of people who are very familiar with an ardent believer who left his family and went out to discover his god in 1400, and whose memory persists. A farmer wanted a chapel built in memory of this believer. Zumthor was given a commission to build the chapel. Zumthor's mother was also a great enthusiast, so it was a personal project for him as well. The chapel is located on the farmer's private land (not public land), but it is open to farmers, and is made available to the public. ¹

This chapel attracts visitors from around the world because of its great architecture and unique atmosphere. The visitor enters via a small, narrow passage. This passage is necessary to change the surrounding scale of the visitor's mind and separate him or her from previous surroundings. The visitor then enters the single room of the chapel. This shelter, which is inside a huge concrete mass and is lit by a narrow glow of light shining from the sky through the ceiling, gives the feeling of spiritual loneliness. Low light from the ceiling helps the visitors to get inside themselves and contemplate while they stay in the space.

Bruder Klaus Field Chapel, like Sheikh Lotfollah Mosque, does not have a specific passageway for exiting the building and returning to the world, and the visitor simply leaves the chapel by the same way he or she entered it.

¹ Strobel, Sebastian (2013) *The Residue of Flight*, Master thesis, University of Waterloo



Fig 2.21 Bruder Klaus Field Chapel



Fig 2.22 Bruder Klaus Field Chapel interior



Fig 2.23 Bruder Klaus Field Chapel interior

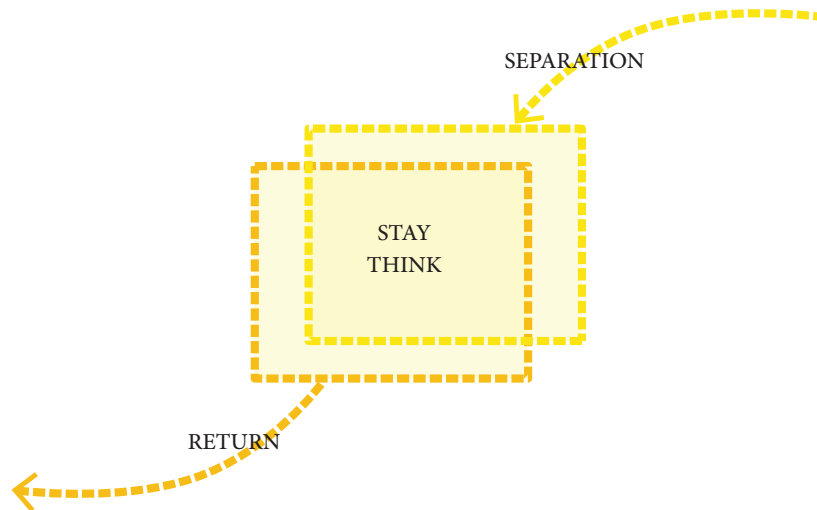
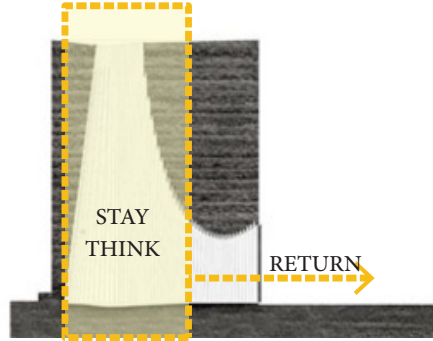
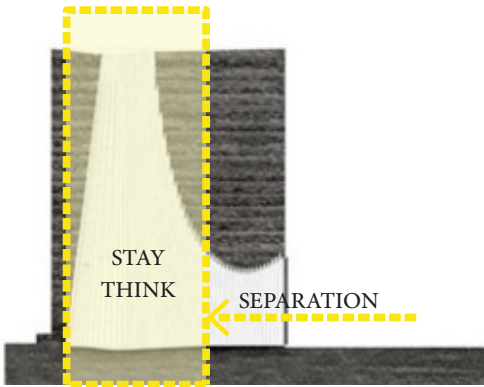
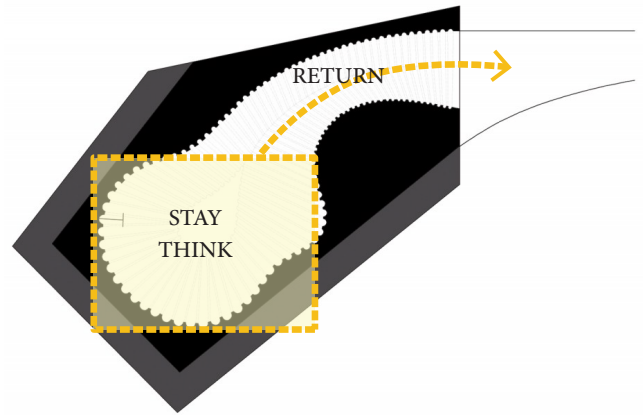
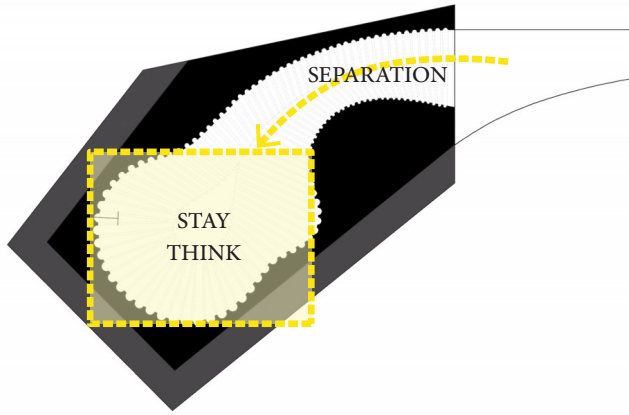


Fig 2.24 Bruder Klaus Field Chapel diagram

The Danteum

The Danteum is a modern building that was designed based on literature. It is Dante descending to the underworld in his *Divine Comedy*, as developed by an architect. It is symbolic and architectonic. It is an explicit journey which parallels movement.

Giorgio Ciucci, in the introduction of Thomas Schumacher's book *The Danteum*, writes:

The encounter between metaphysical objects appears to be interrupted and suspended in this building outside time. Our astonishment ceases. We have gone from the physical reality of an historical dimension to the metaphysical dimension of a space without context. The harmony that 'will force the beholder to stop and observe, excited and touched'—the architecture capable of communicating myths—happens only in the absence of place, utopia.¹

Terragni's interior spaces in the Danteum are voids. The paradise, for example, is a grove-like space where we might imagine exploring and walking through arrays of columns. The use of columns can also inspire transition as we emerge or depart from a space.

¹ *The Danteum*, p 11

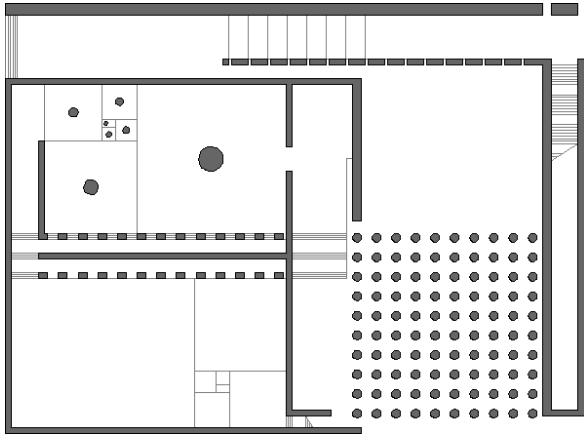


Fig 2.25 Danteum ground floor

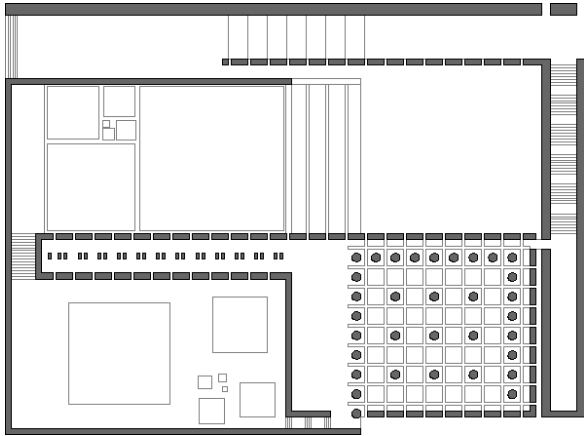


Fig 2.26 Danteum second floor

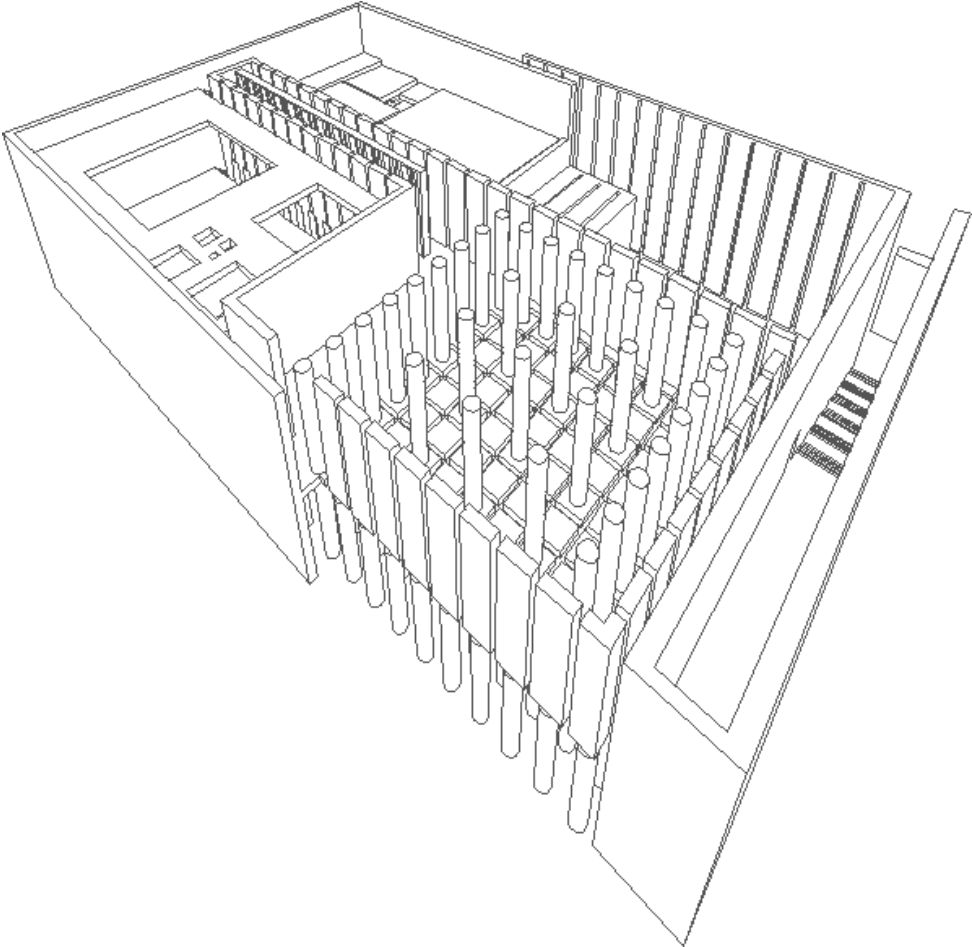


Fig 2.27 Danteum 3D Model

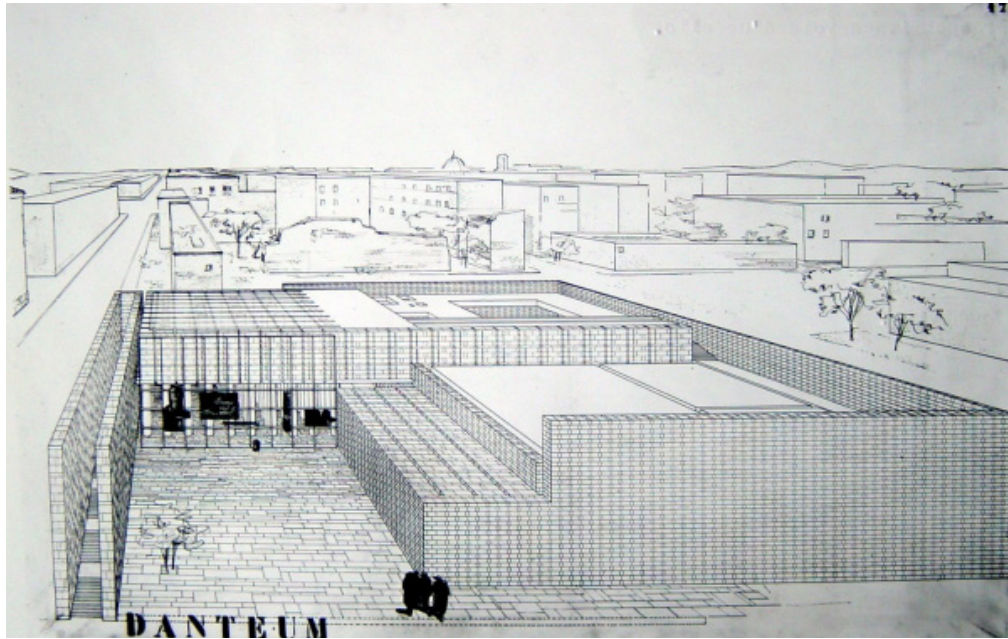


Fig 2.28 Danteum, Court detail. Dante's life before his "allegorical trip."

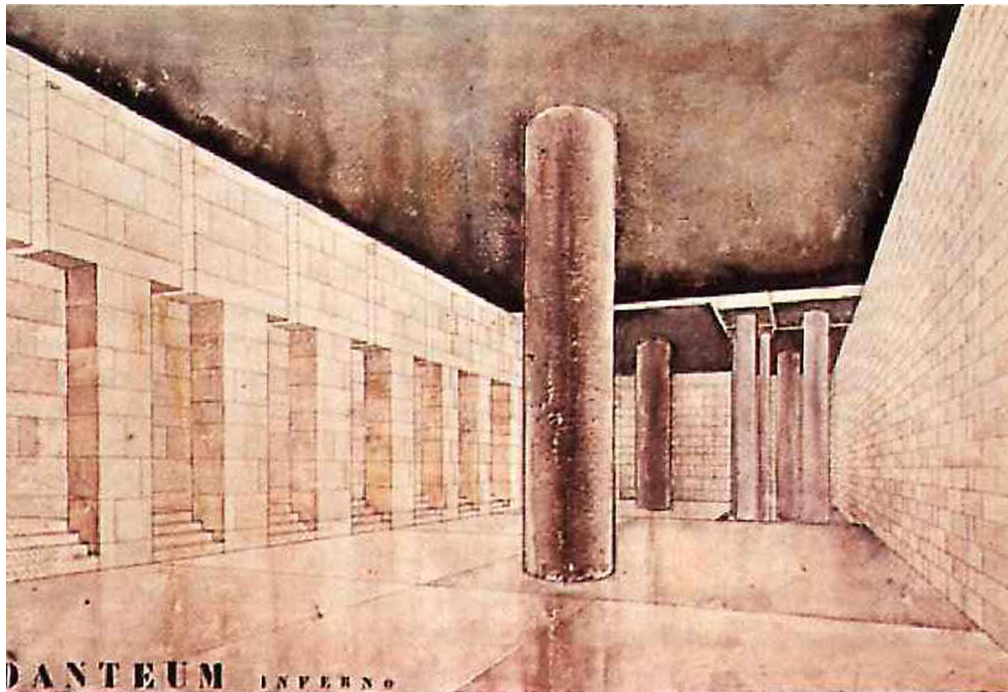


Fig 2.29 Danteum. Room of the Inferno

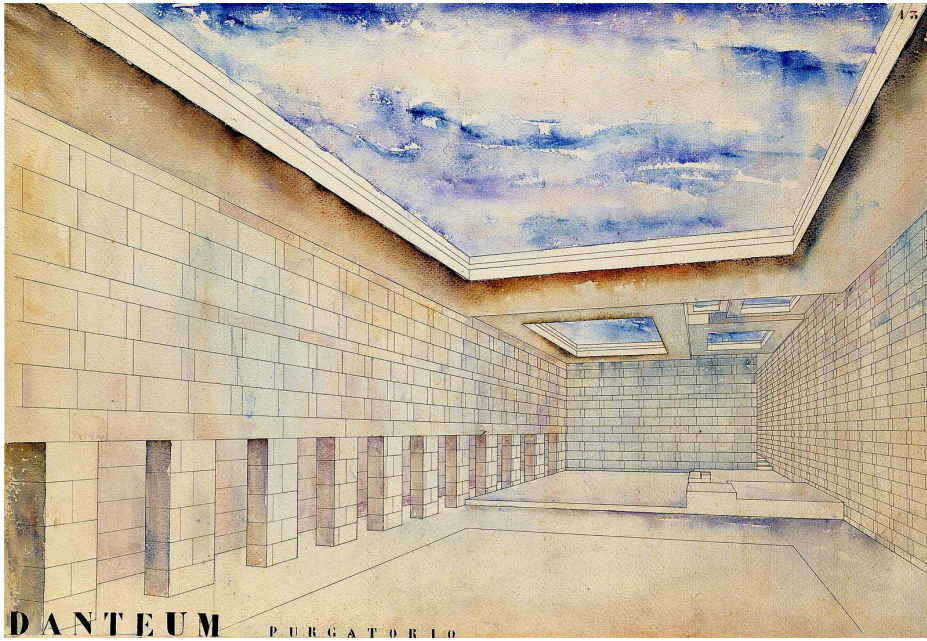


Fig 2.30 Danteum. Room of the Purgatory

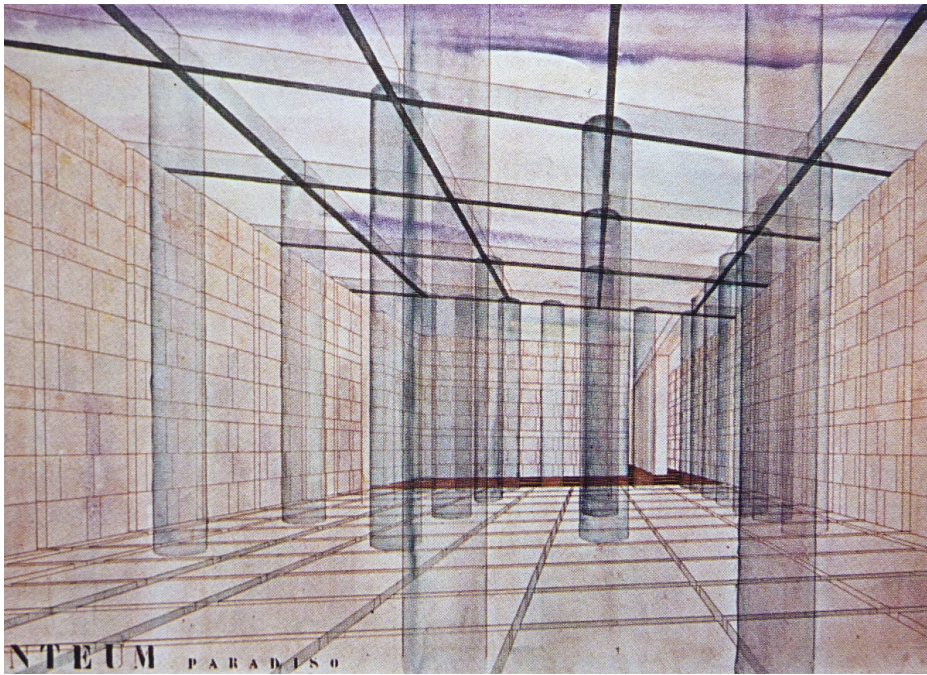


Fig 2.31 Danteum. Room of paradise

Transition

The architecture of the Persephone myth is full of transitions. The architecture is always going from one state to another, and how these transitions happen is very important. Some transitions should be abrupt and disjunctive, whereas others need to be highly extended and gradual. In the myth, Persephone leaves the paradise garden of earth very suddenly. For her, it is a violent departure. The earth opens and before she knows it, she is sucked inside the earth. But her return is very different. Hermes, the messenger god, comes to take her back. He gives her and Hades messages from the sky and the earth. Before she leaves, Hades talks to her. He proposes to her by three pomegranate seeds. He offers her power over all creatures if she is willing to stay or to return. We do not know exactly if she swallows the pomegranate seeds out of hunger, despair, force, or even voluntarily. But she eats them, and she metamorphoses. Then she leaves the underworld to return to the surface of the earth where her mother, Demeter, is waiting for her. This is the smooth, highly extended and gradual transition. This is where many layers of the space unfold one by one and the visitor cannot say specifically when he or she left the previous space and when he or she entered the next space.

Below, I look at the concept of transition in three different architectural examples. Each example uses different architectural elements for the transitional effect, and each affects the visitor in a different way.

Dominus Winery

Dominus Winery has a minimalist plan configuration. However, it has exquisite visual qualities relating to its hovering gabion walls and synthetic mass that are very inspiring to me.

The choice of a gabion wall in the Dominus Winery was based on ecological and economic reasons. A self-supporting gabion wall was produced by available stone in the environment of the site and acts as a thermal system to cool down the space in the heat of the day. Aside from these reasons, the gabion wall provides a superb view inside the building. When the light of day penetrates through the holes between the stones, it creates a beautiful interior view—not fully lit, but not completely dark either. I think this feature can be used in transitional spaces where the designer wants the visitor to gradually leave a dark space and emerge into the light.

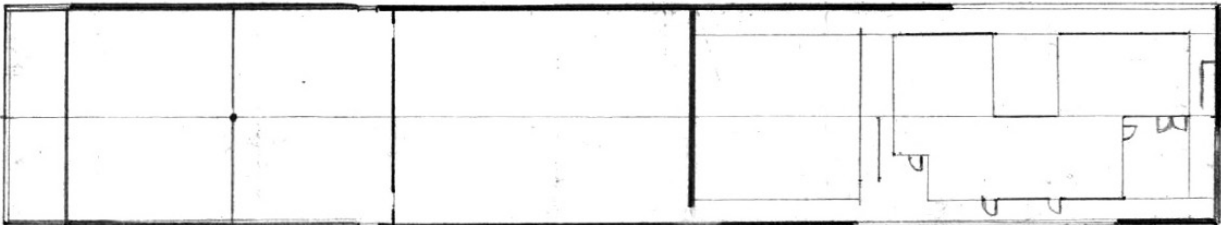


Fig 2.32 Dominus Winery Entrance



Fig 2.33 Dominus Winery gabion wall

Second Floor Plan



First Floor Plan

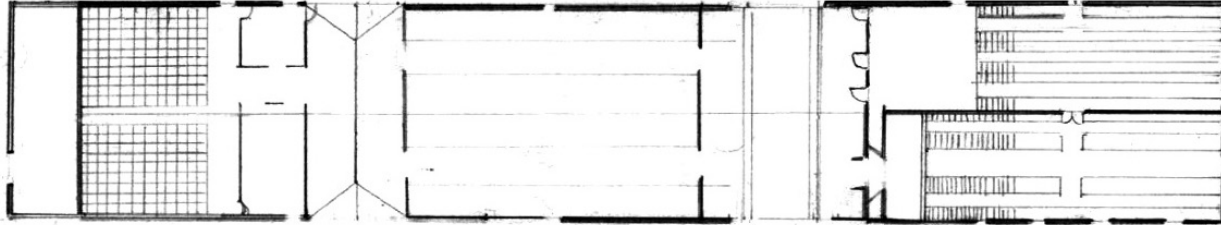


Fig 2.34 Dominus Winery plans

Katsura Imperial Villa

The architecture of the Katsura villa captures the essence of Japanese architecture. What is most interesting is its use of screen walls to define its spaces. These screen walls are used to create separate rooms by closing them, or a big spacious room by opening and joining them. Although the use of sliding walls seems simple, but it is a clever way to create different spaces which can be used separately or they can be merge to create a bigger space.

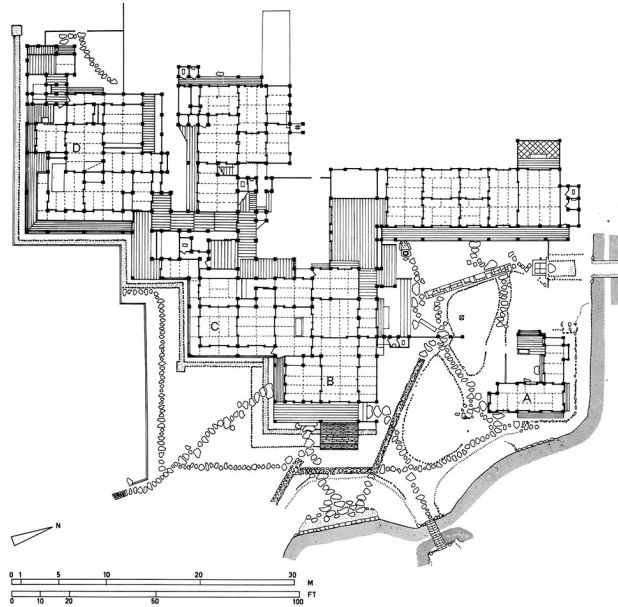


Fig 2.35 Katsura Imperial Villa plan

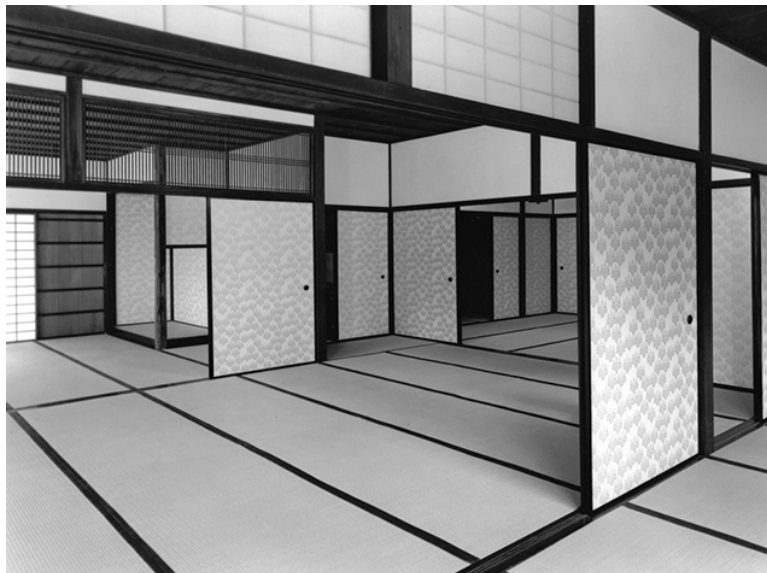


Fig 2.36 Katsura Imperial Villa slides view

The Alhambra

The Alhambra is a great work of architecture that has many different spaces. Here, I especially want to point to its court and entry, which have noticeable yet gradual transitional spaces. Having numerous column in front of the entrance/exit of the court create a semi-closed space where you cannot say if you are completely in exterior space or in the interior space. This kind of entrance with ceiling resting on top of numbers of columns is a great way to make a gradual transition between two different kind of space.



Fig 2.37 Alhambra's court entrance

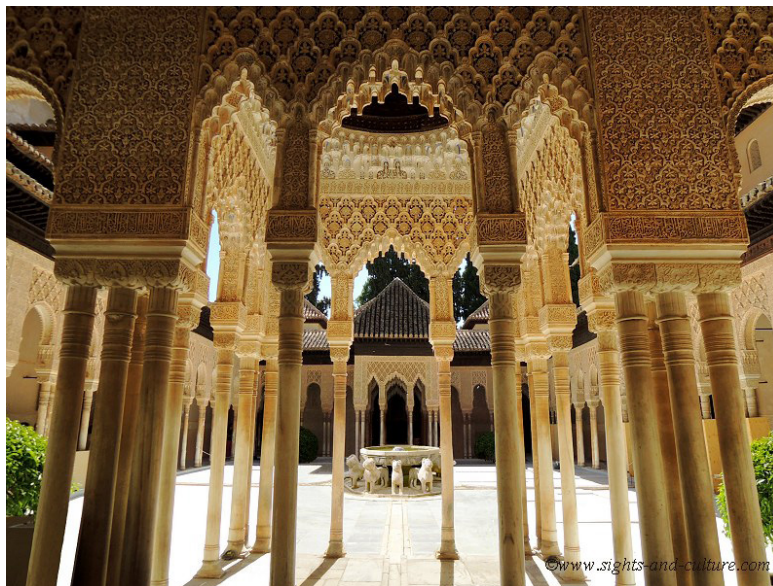


Fig 2.38 Alhambra's court entrance

In this chapter I studied examples of architecture that helped to inspire my design. Analyzing architecture reveals how architects contribute to the different phases of transformation. Studying grotto and transitions in other buildings presents different ways of achieving a transition from one space to another. Using my knowledge of existing architecture, I proceed to the next chapter, which is the design synthesis of the myth of Persephone.

**THE DESIGN
SYNTHESIS**

CONCEPT

The concept of this design synthesis is based on Persephone's path through the three phases of the transformation journey: separation, stay/explore, and return. The first phase starts with Persephone's abduction—her separation from the realm of Zeus and descent to the realm of Hades. The second phase is her year of staying in and exploring the underworld, which represents the unconscious. The thoughts and experiences she has during this time lead to the awakening of an inner power after she swallows the pomegranate seeds—and to the last phase, her return to the world.

The site of the design is a natural area. Entering nature is the first step of separation because it separates the visitor from the city and everyday life. Then, the visitor is further separated from the world when he or she suddenly descends underground by a spiral ramp. Walking through a dark space, the visitor encounters four halls. Each hall has a special feature and gives the visitor a special experience. The halls also provide beautifully framed views of the world above ground from a different perspective. These halls are the opportunity to experience the realm of Hades. The underground hallway ends in The Birthing Chamber. This is the place where engendering starts and the journey ends. With the hope of experiencing deep thoughts that may lead to transformation, the visitor is reborn and returns to the world.

SEPARATION

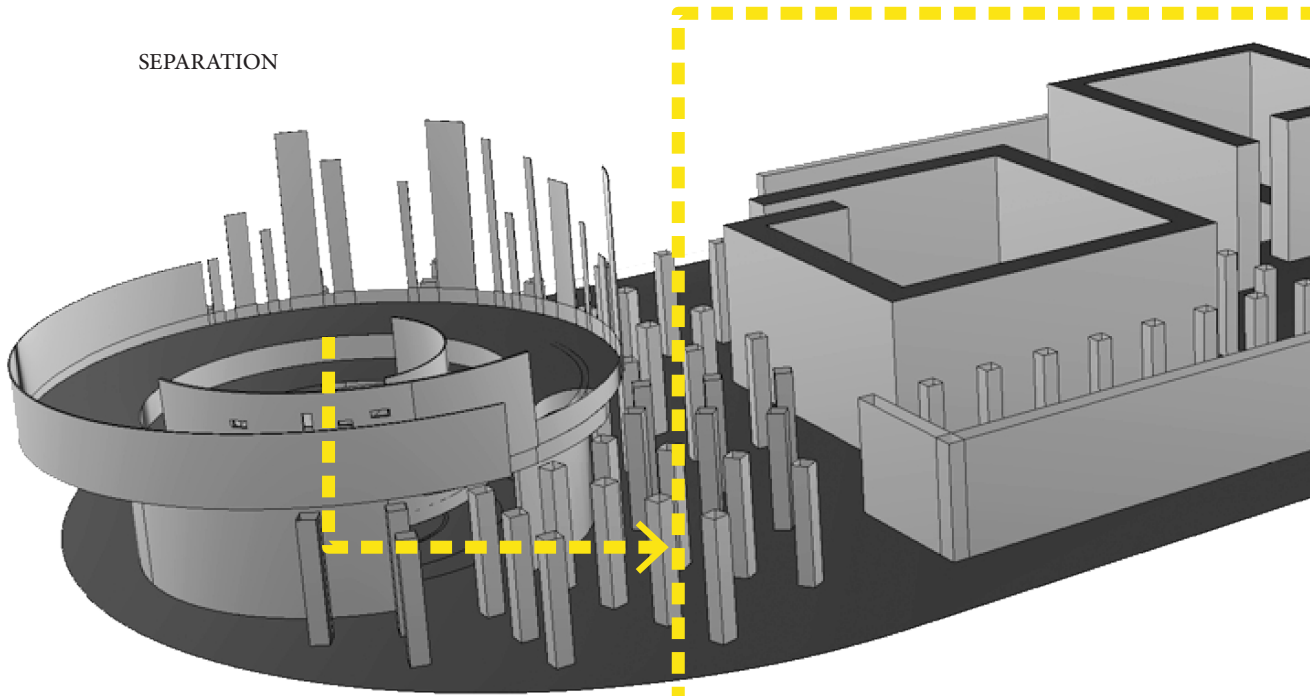


Fig 3.1 Exploded view

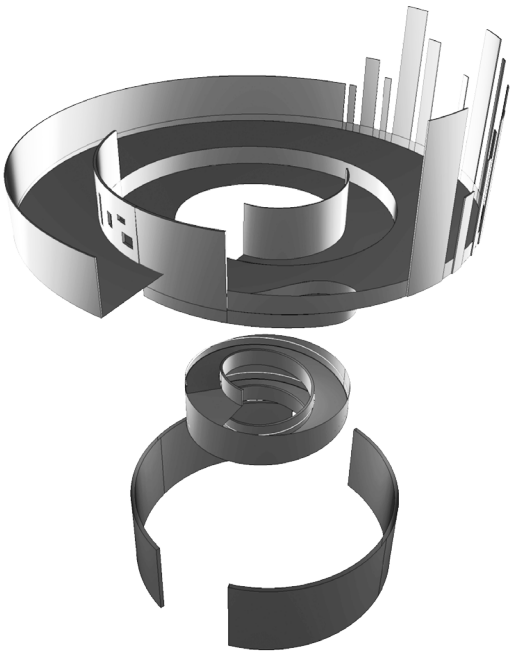
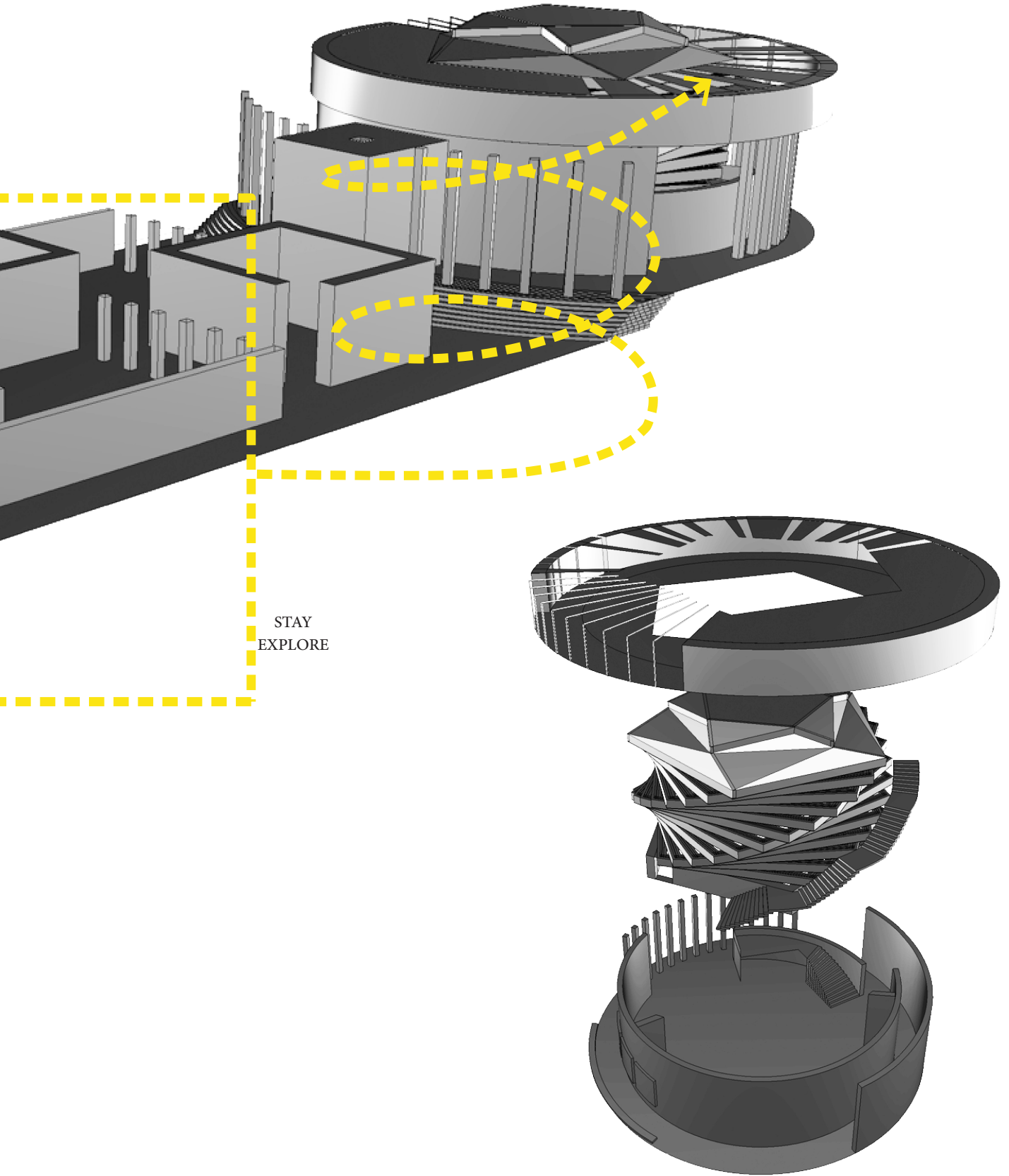


Fig 3.2 DESCENT exploded view

RETURN



STAY
EXPLORE

Fig 3.3 RETURN exploded view

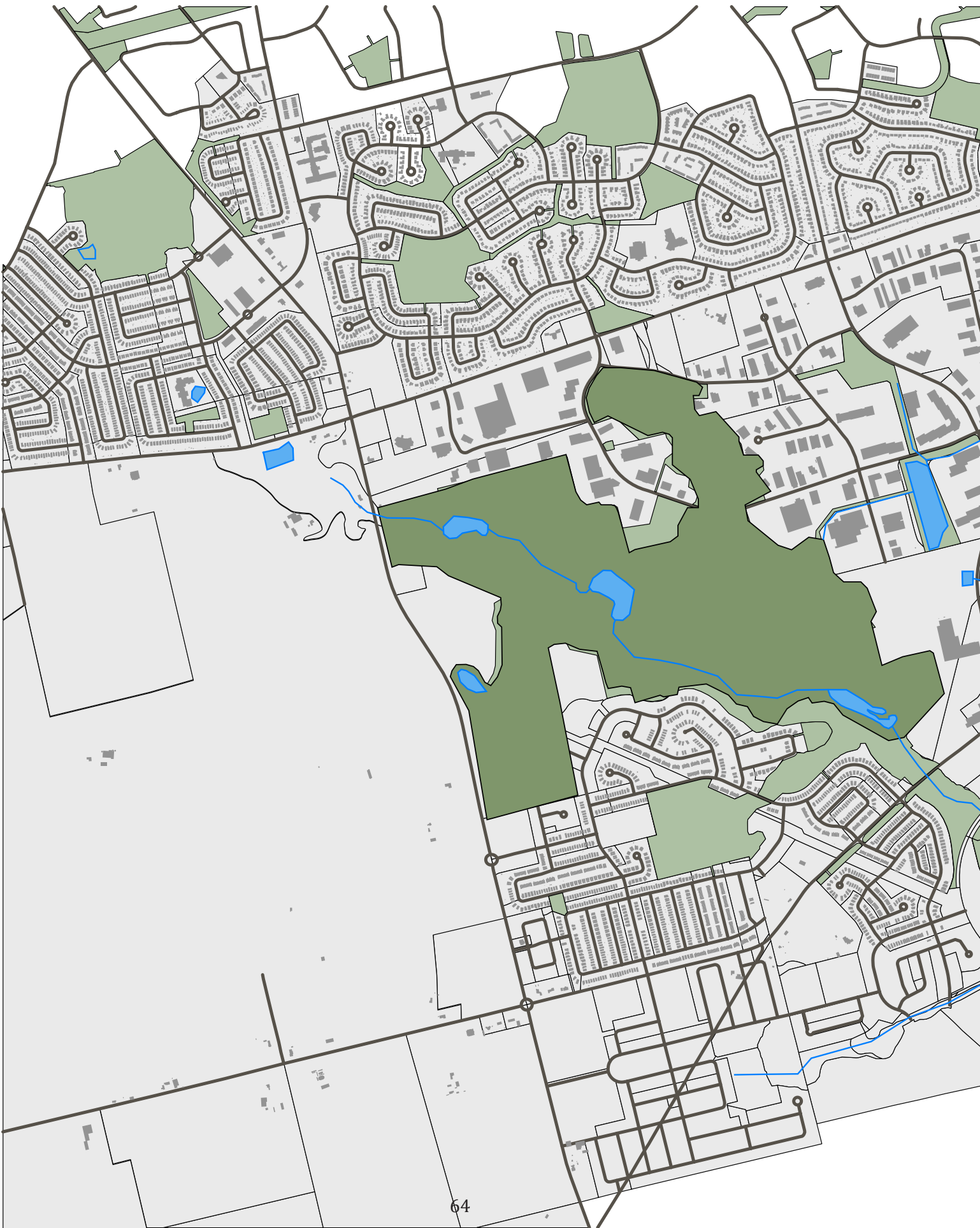




Fig 3.4 Natural Huron Area in city

I chose the Natural Huron Area in Kitchener as the site for my design, but the setting could be any park or any place in the world full of superb natural scenery that leaves you speechless.

- Natural Huron Area
- Zoning
- Parks
- Buildings
- Lakes
- Roads
- Rivers



Fig 3.5 Natural Huron Area access



Fig 3.6 Natural Huron Area, Fischer Hallman road access





Fig 3.7 Natural Huron Area, main access



Fig 3.8 Natural Huron Area, entrance sign



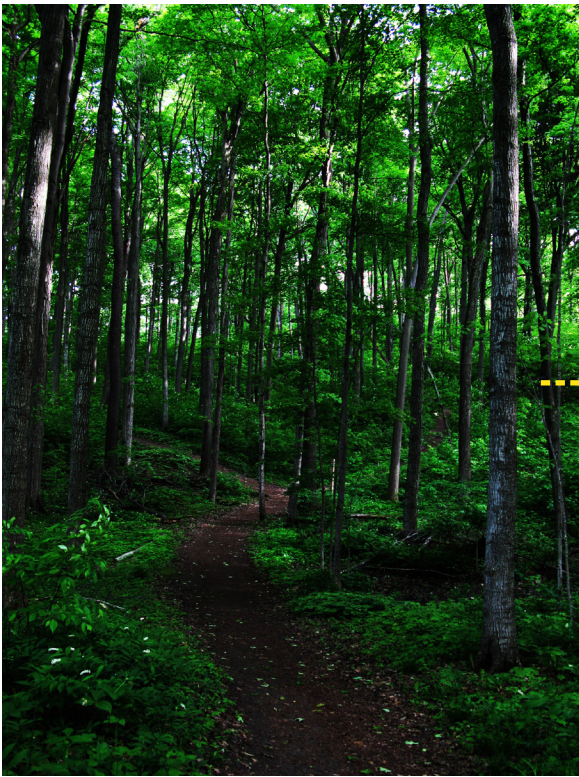


Fig 3.9 Natural Huron Area, view 1



Fig 3.10 Natural Huron Area, view 2



Fig 3.11 Natural Huron Area map

- Natural Huron Area
- Lakes
- Roads
- Rivers
- Trails

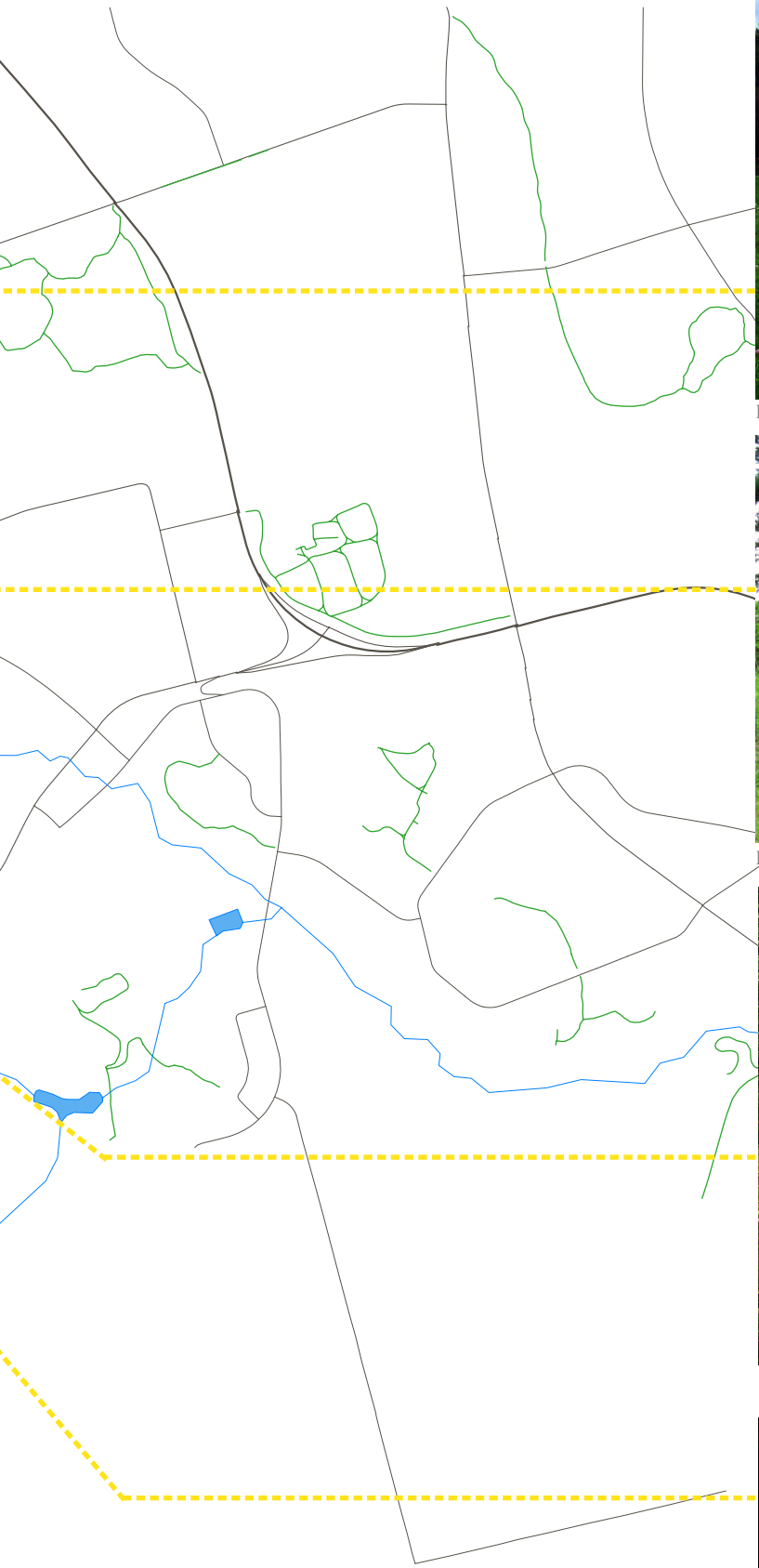


Fig 3.12 Natural Huron Area, view 3

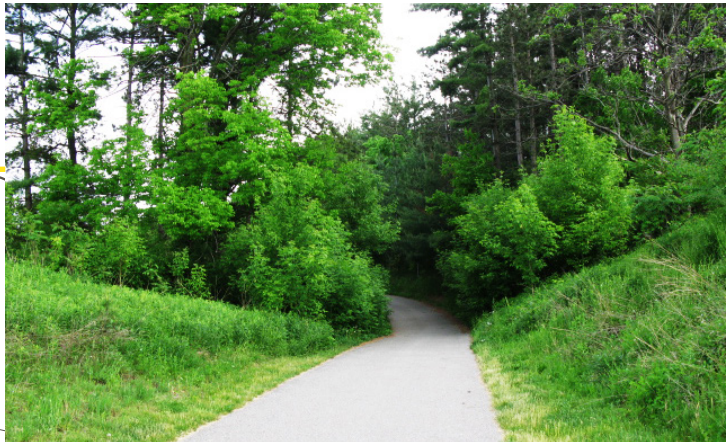


Fig 3.13 Natural Huron Area, view 4



Fig 3.14 Natural Huron Area, view 5

Fig 3.15 Natural Huron Area, view 6



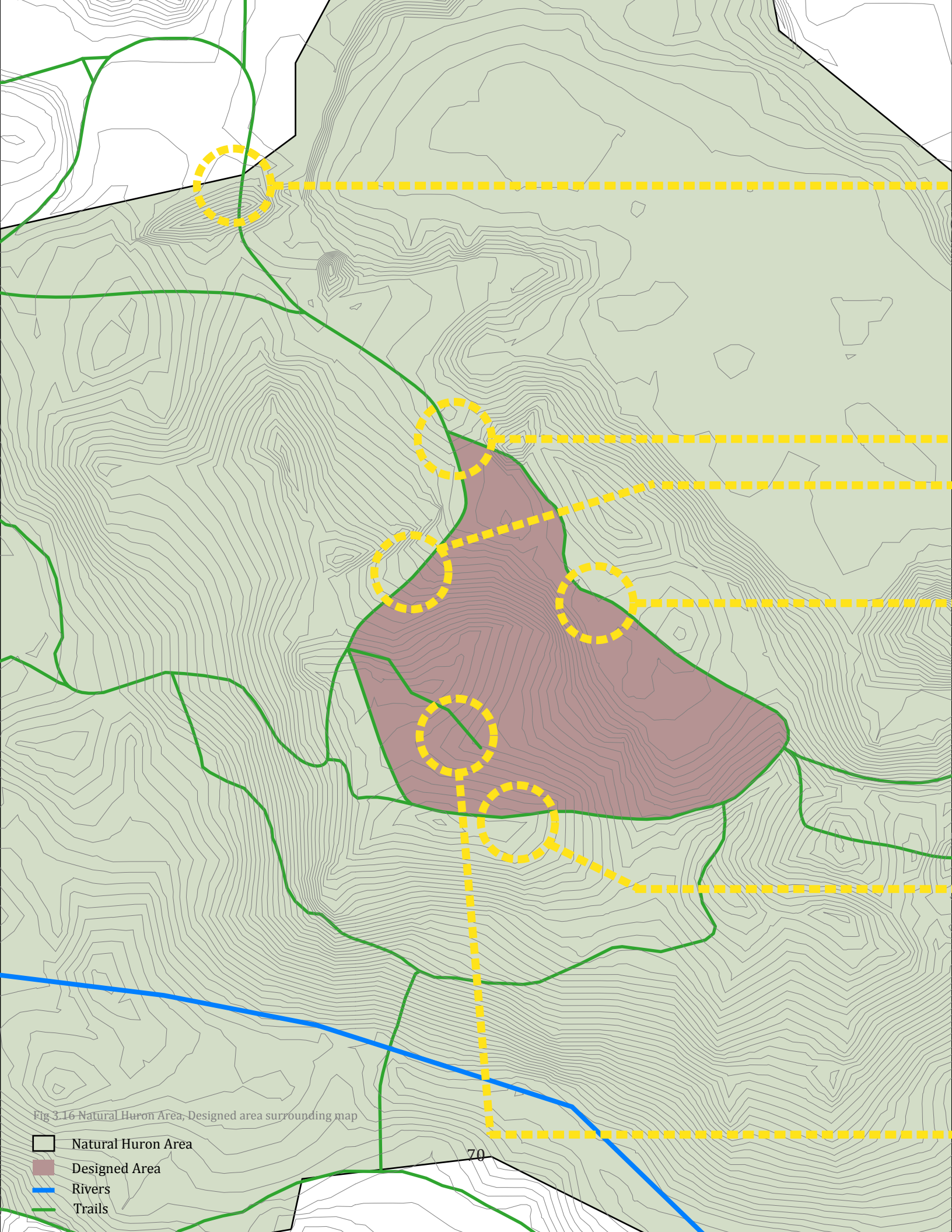






Fig 3.16 Natural Huron Area, Designed area surrounding map

-  Natural Huron Area
-  Designed Area
-  Rivers
-  Trails

70



Fig 3.17 Natural Huron Area, view 7



Fig 3.18 Natural Huron Area, view 8



Fig 3.19 Natural Huron Area, view 9



Fig 3.20 Natural Huron Area, view 10



Fig 3.21 Natural Huron Area, view 11

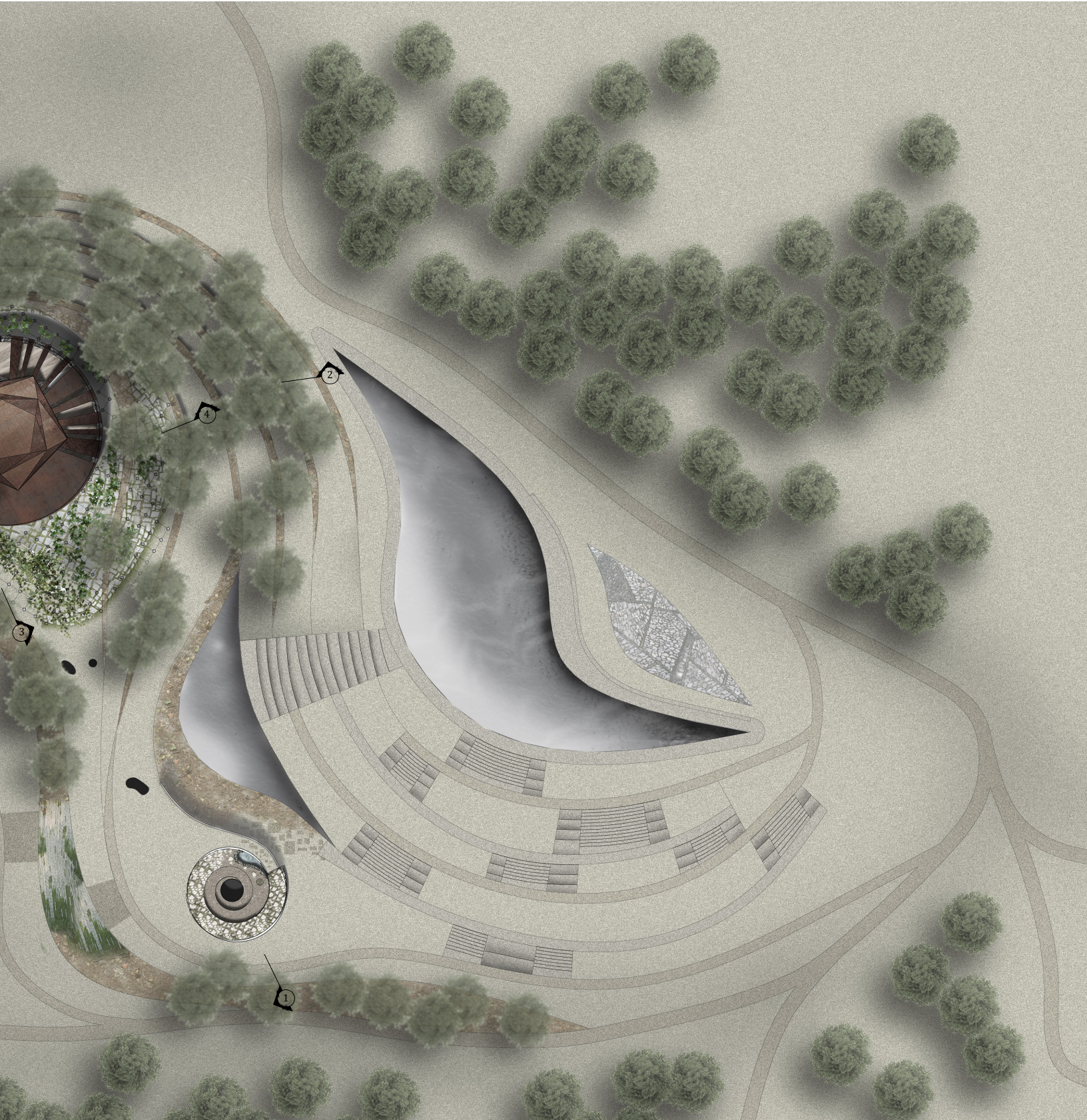


Fig 3.22 Natural Huron Area, view 12

Fig 3.23 Designed Landscape plan

You follow the existing path inside the park until a designed space appears in front of you. In the centre of the space is a pond, and there are seats and stairs as well as a smaller path, which leads you to an ivy-covered, corten steel pavilion wall that hides what is behind it.





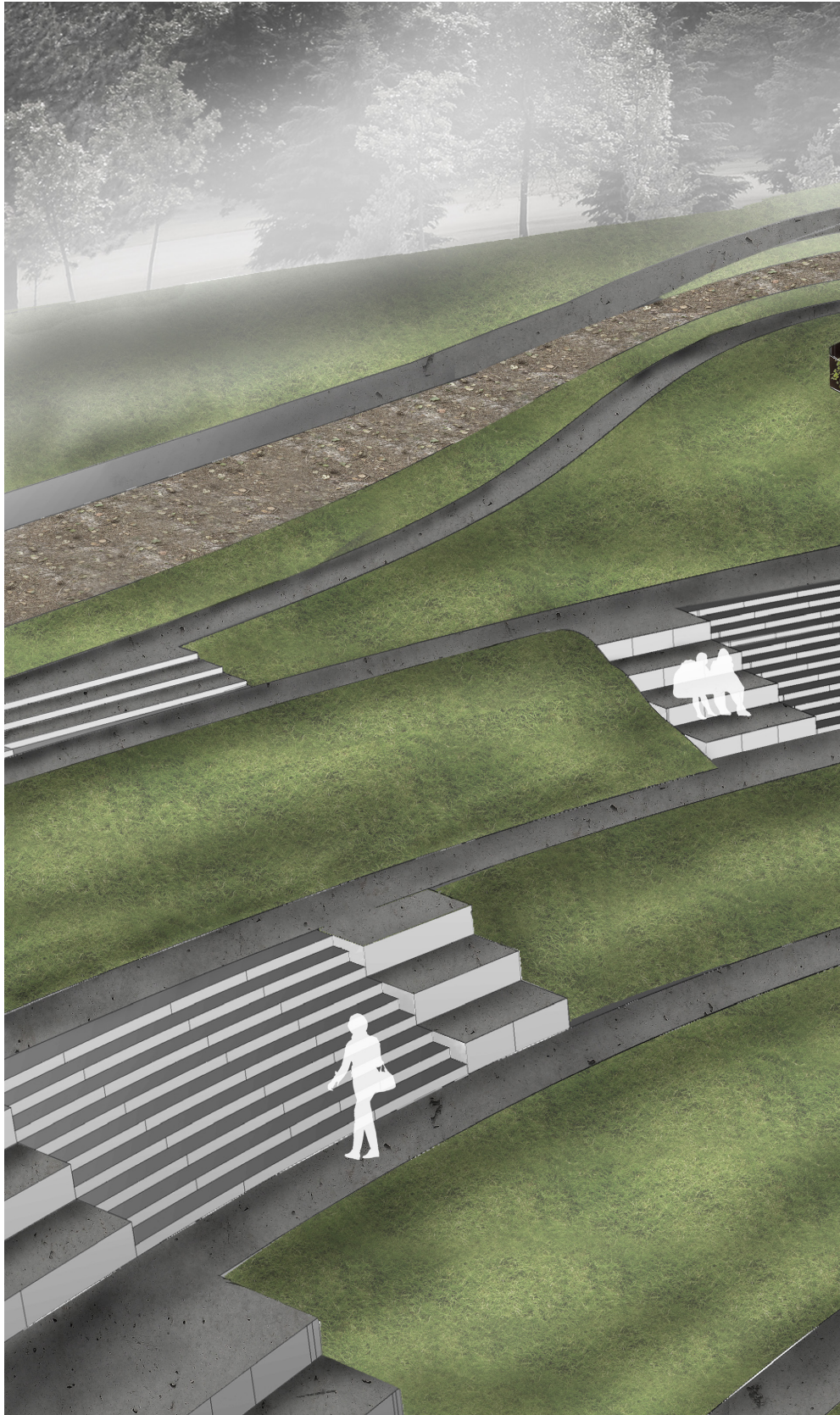
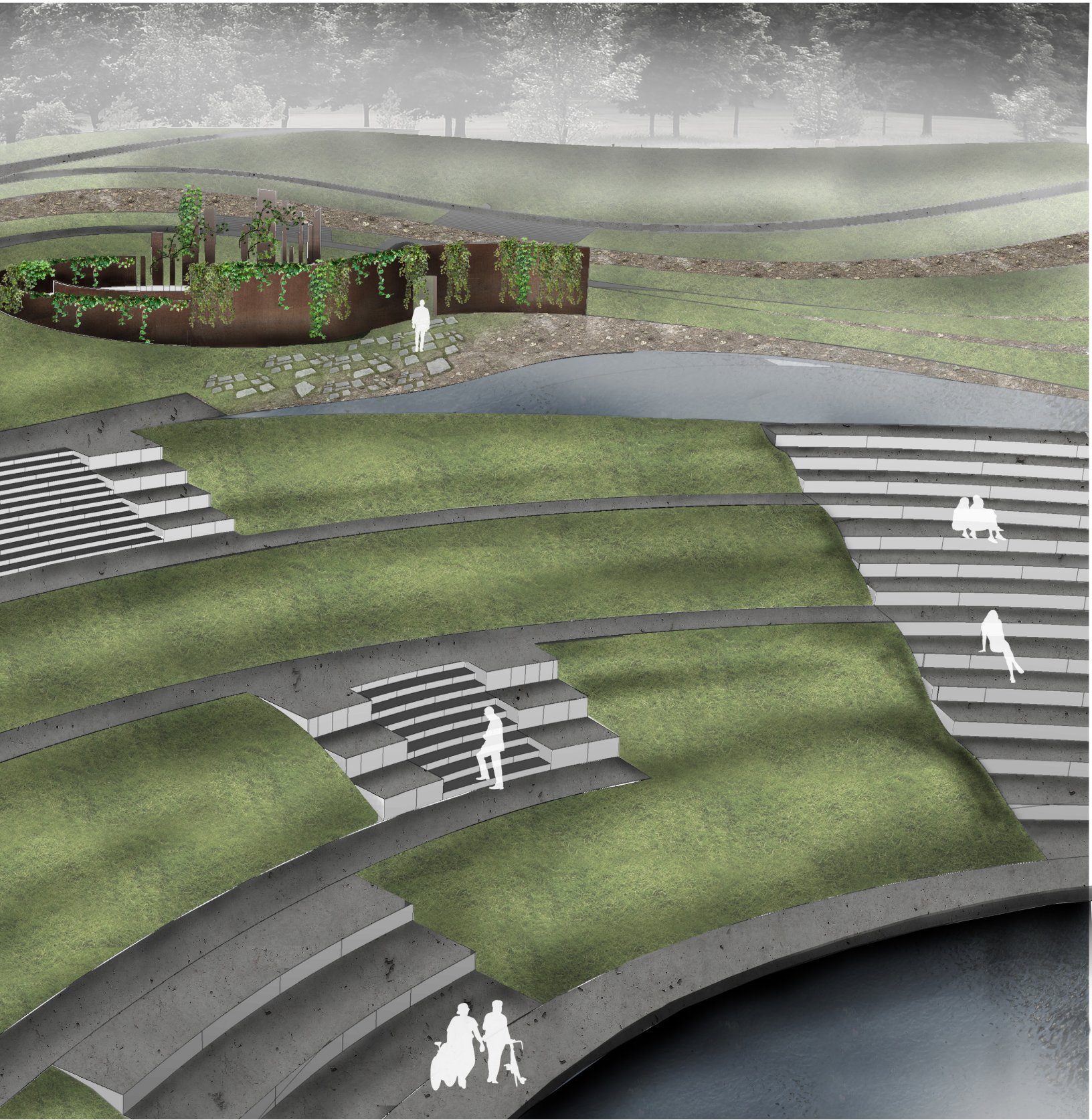


Fig 3.24 Perspective, landscape view to entrance

The whole design is both inviting you and not inviting you: all stairs lead you into the pavilion, but the entrance itself does not seem very inviting. It looks like a very mysterious place.



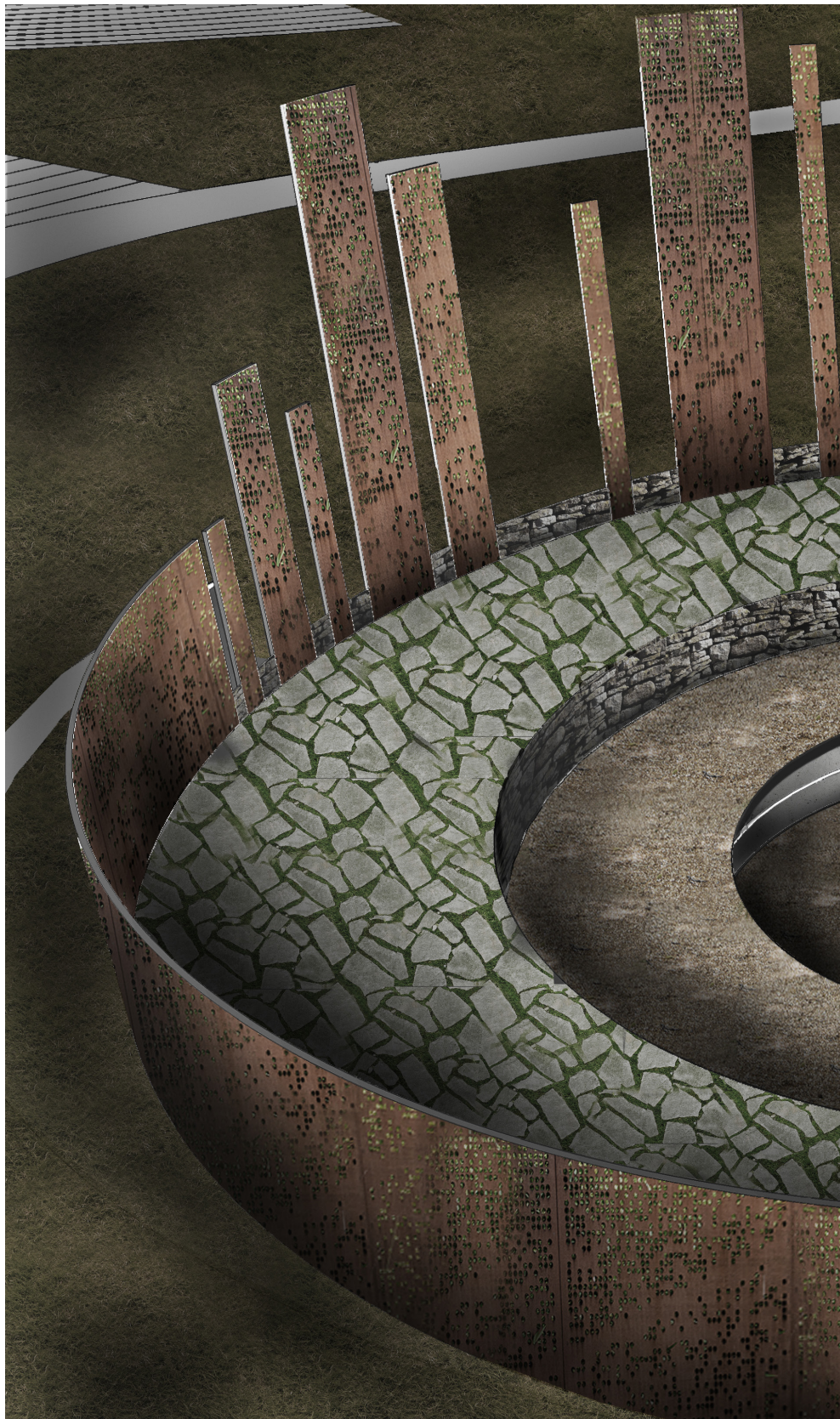


Fig 3.25 Perspective, the descent ramp

Behind the wall, there is a spiral ramp that leads underground. It is dark down the ramp; you cannot see what is down there. As you follow the ramp, it sucks you down. Before you know it, you are underground and there is no light, only pure darkness. This is just like violence: abrupt and quick. This is the abduction of Persephone.

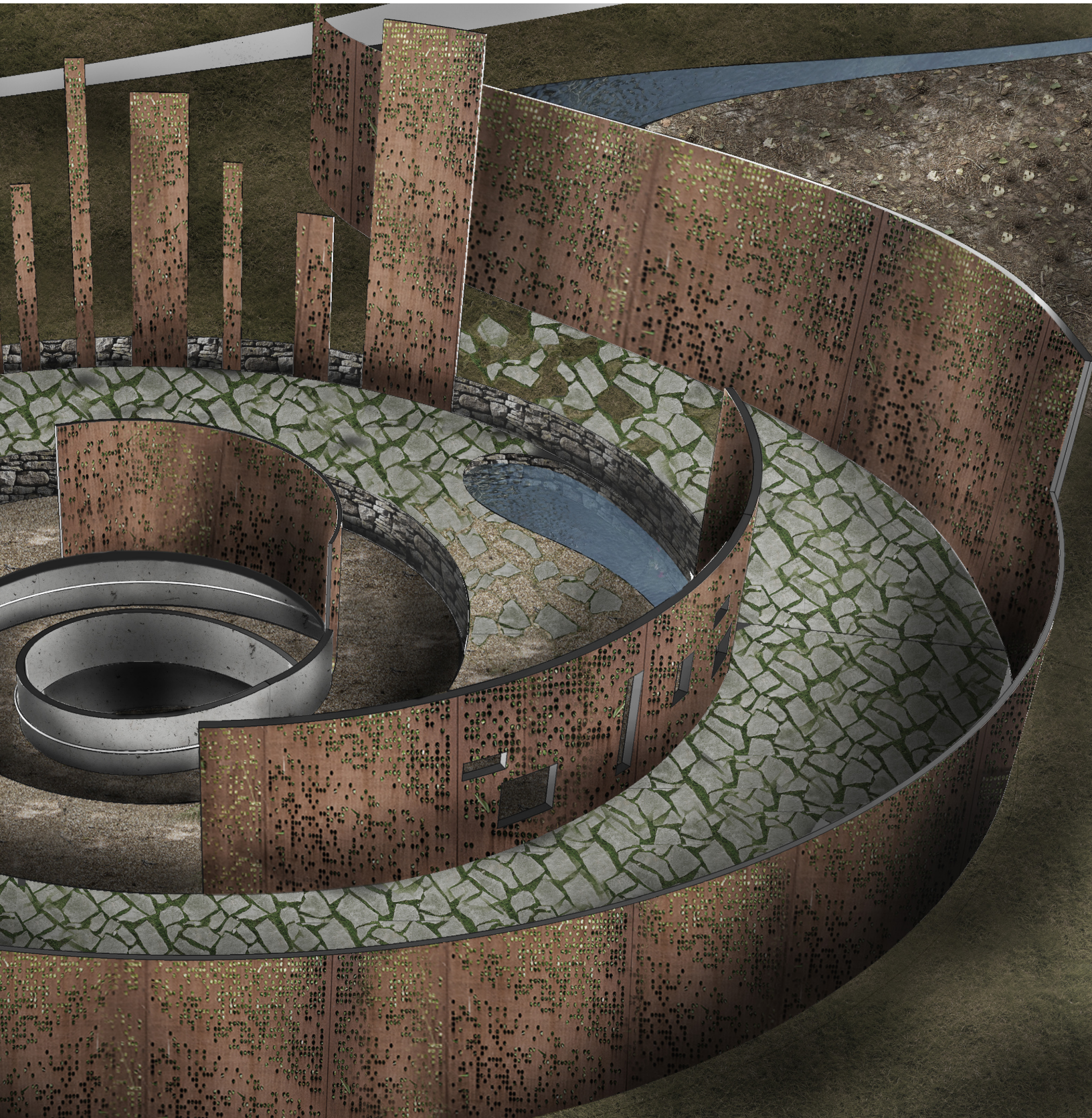
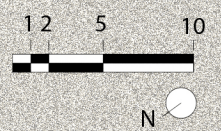
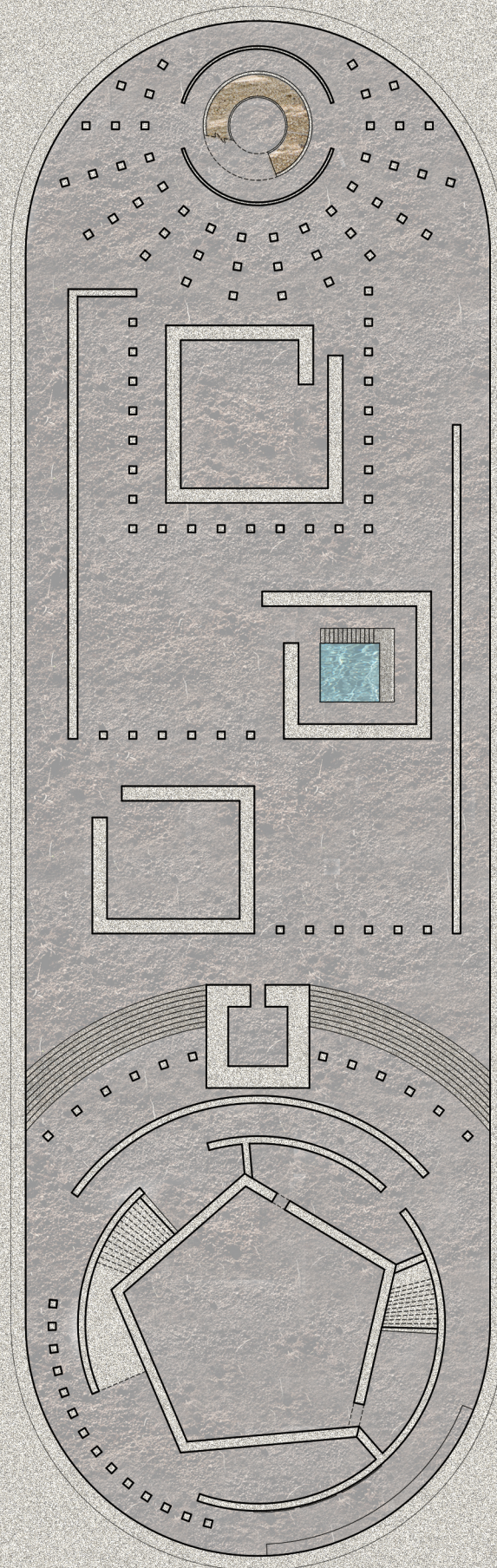


Fig 3.26 Underground plan (opposite)

The second phase starts when you find yourself down the spiral, where daylight is so far away. This is the realm of Hades. This is the phase of "think, stay, and explore." There are four halls in this space. Each hall is named after one of the basic elements of nature: earth, water, fire, and air.



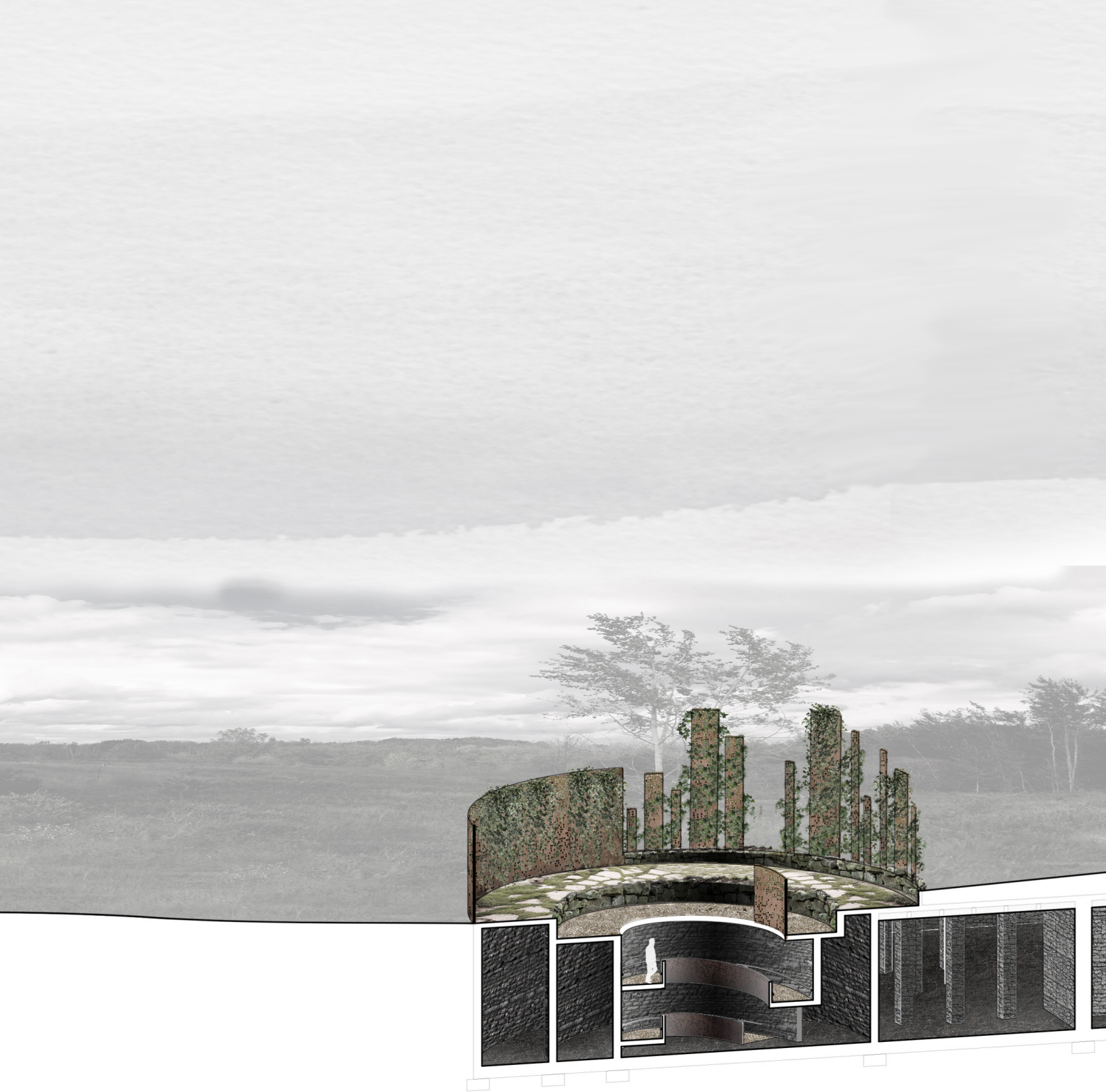
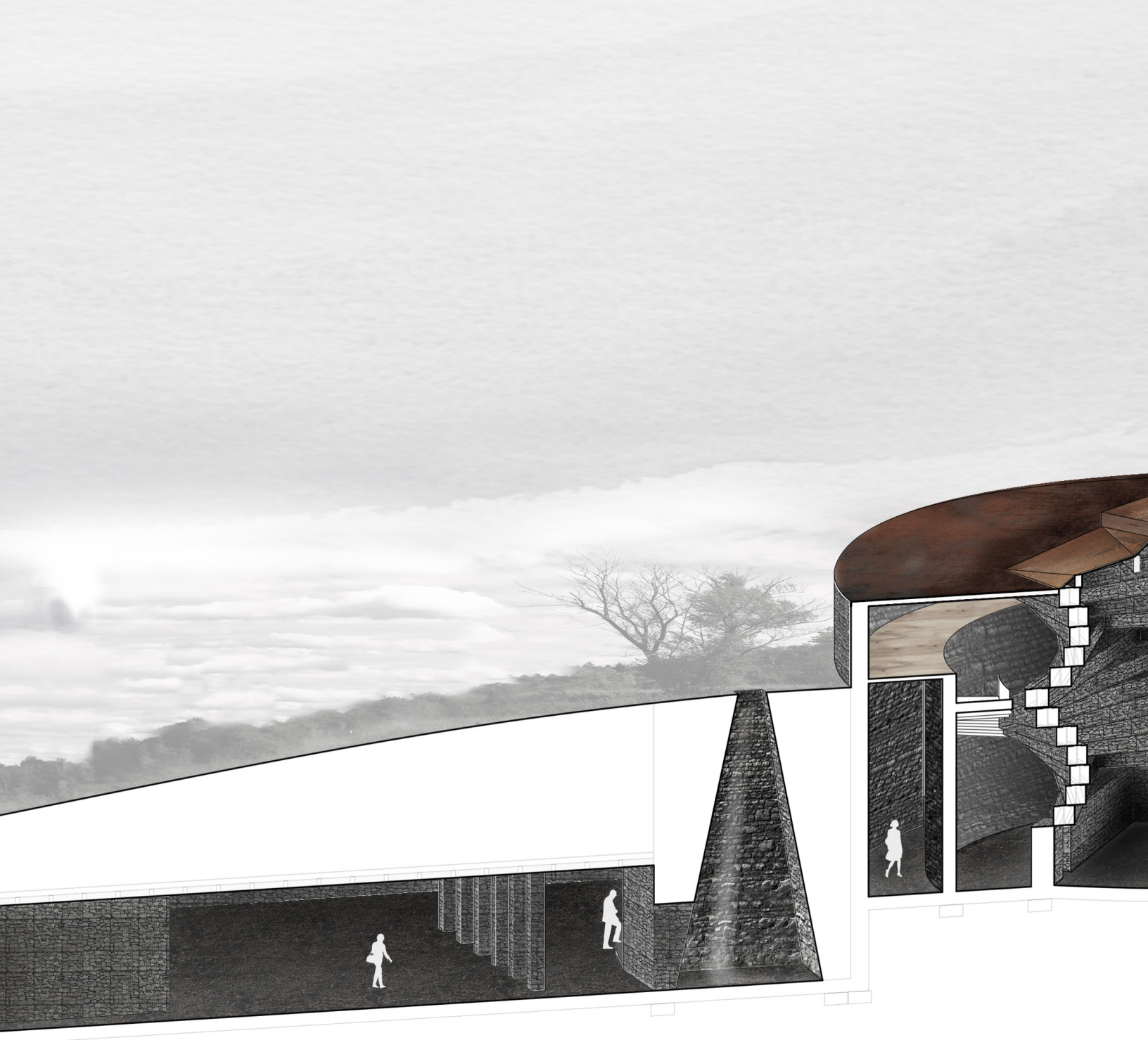
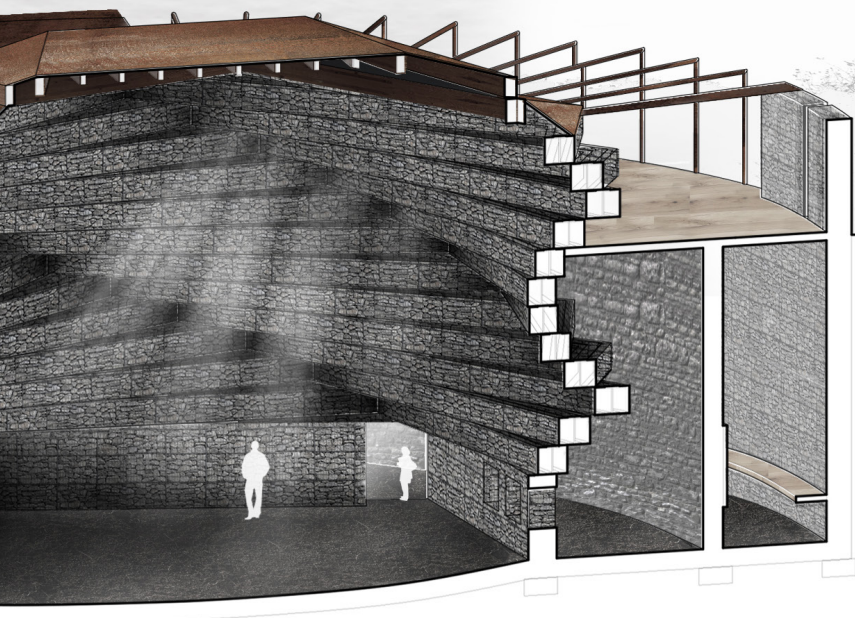


Fig 3.27 ISO section projection 1







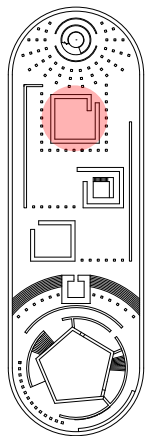


Fig 3.28 The Hall of Earth





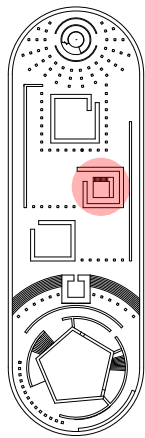
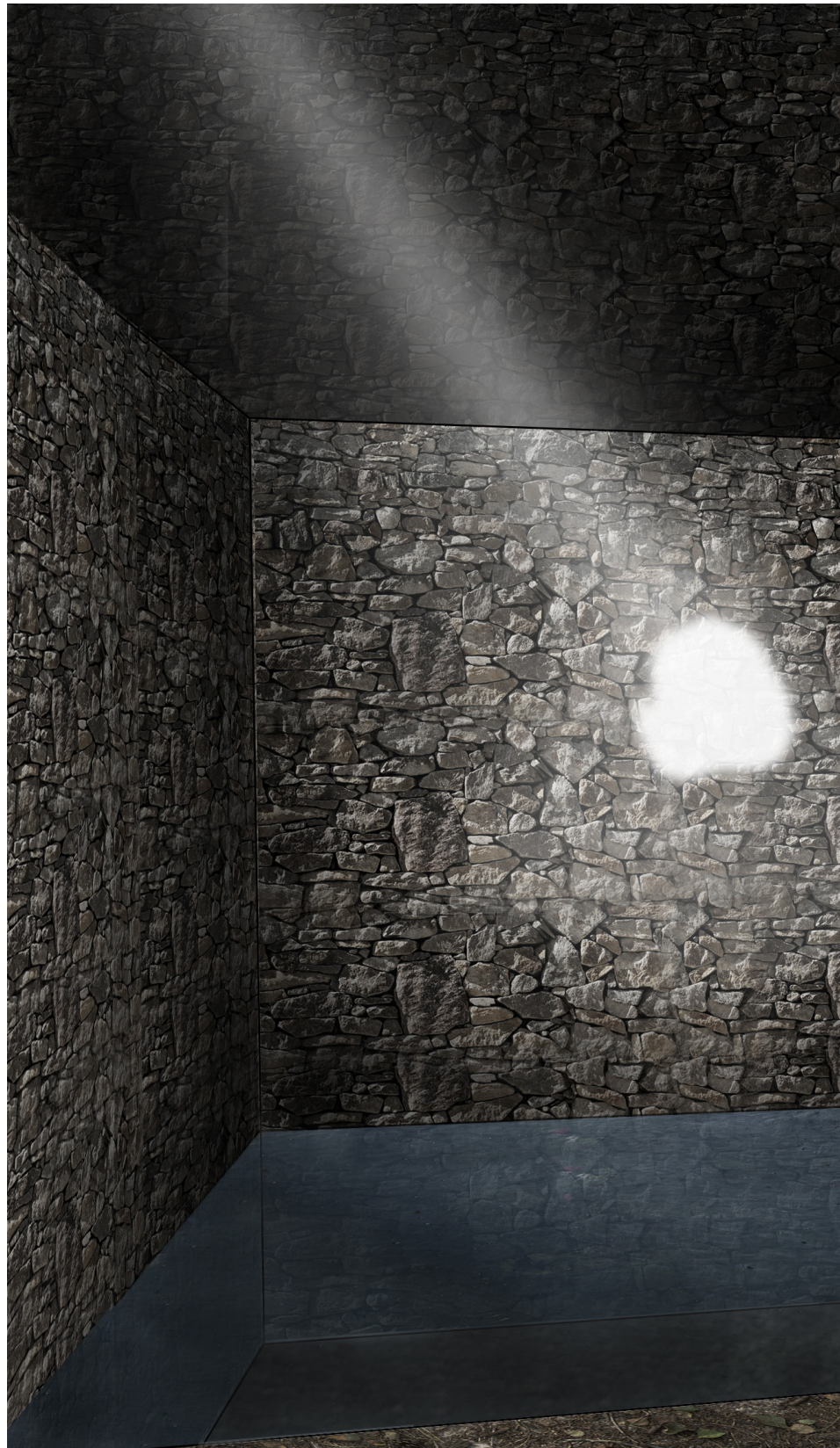
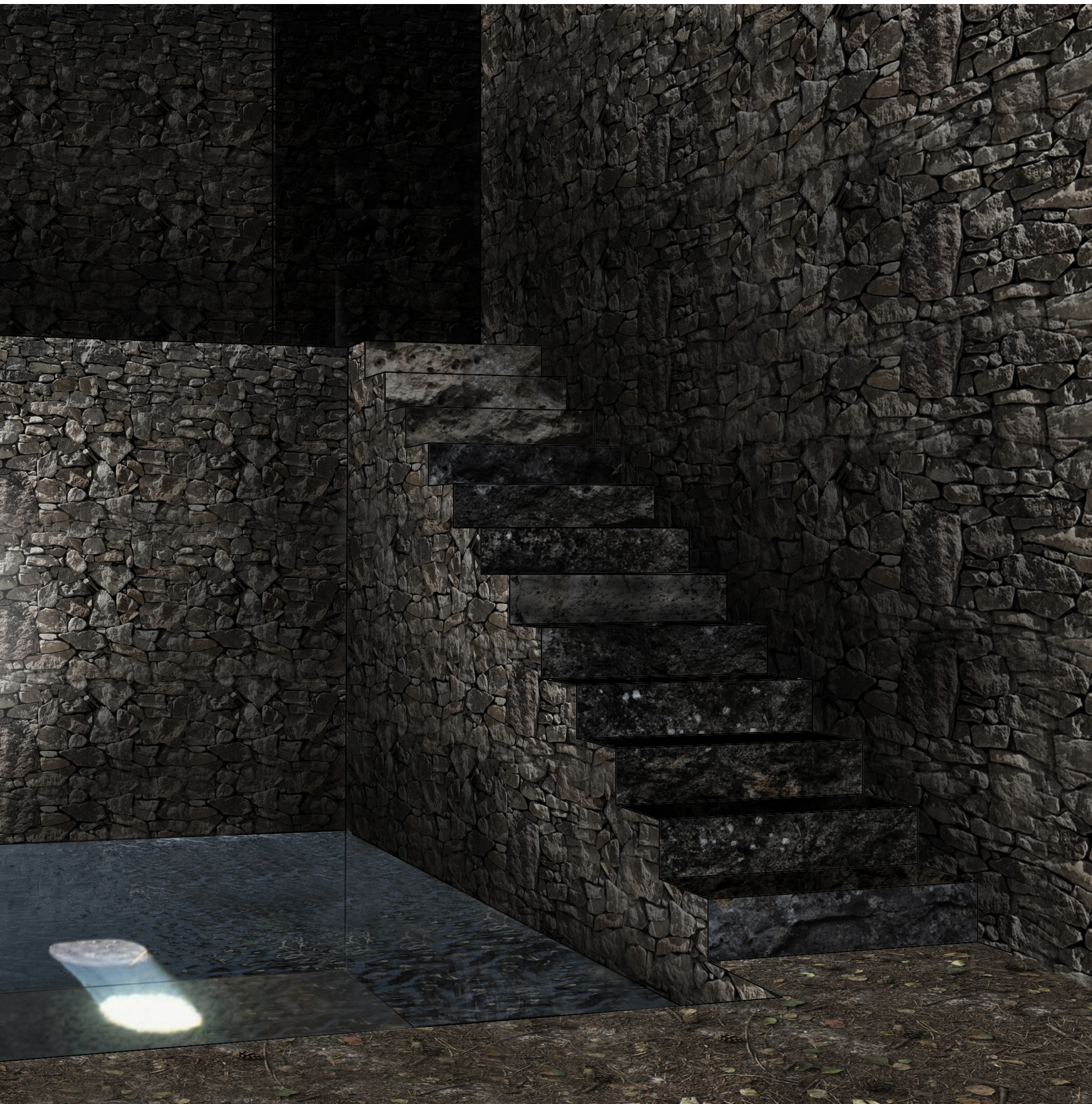


Fig 3.29 The Hall of Water





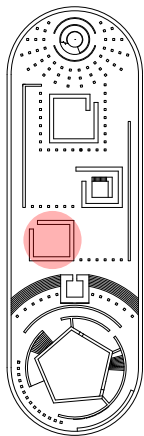


Fig 3.30 The Hall of Fire





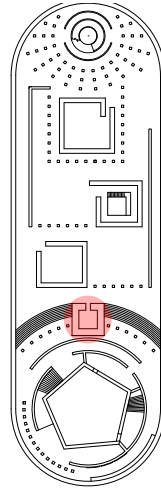


Fig 3.31 Orvieto well

Fig 3.32 The Hall of Air (opposite)

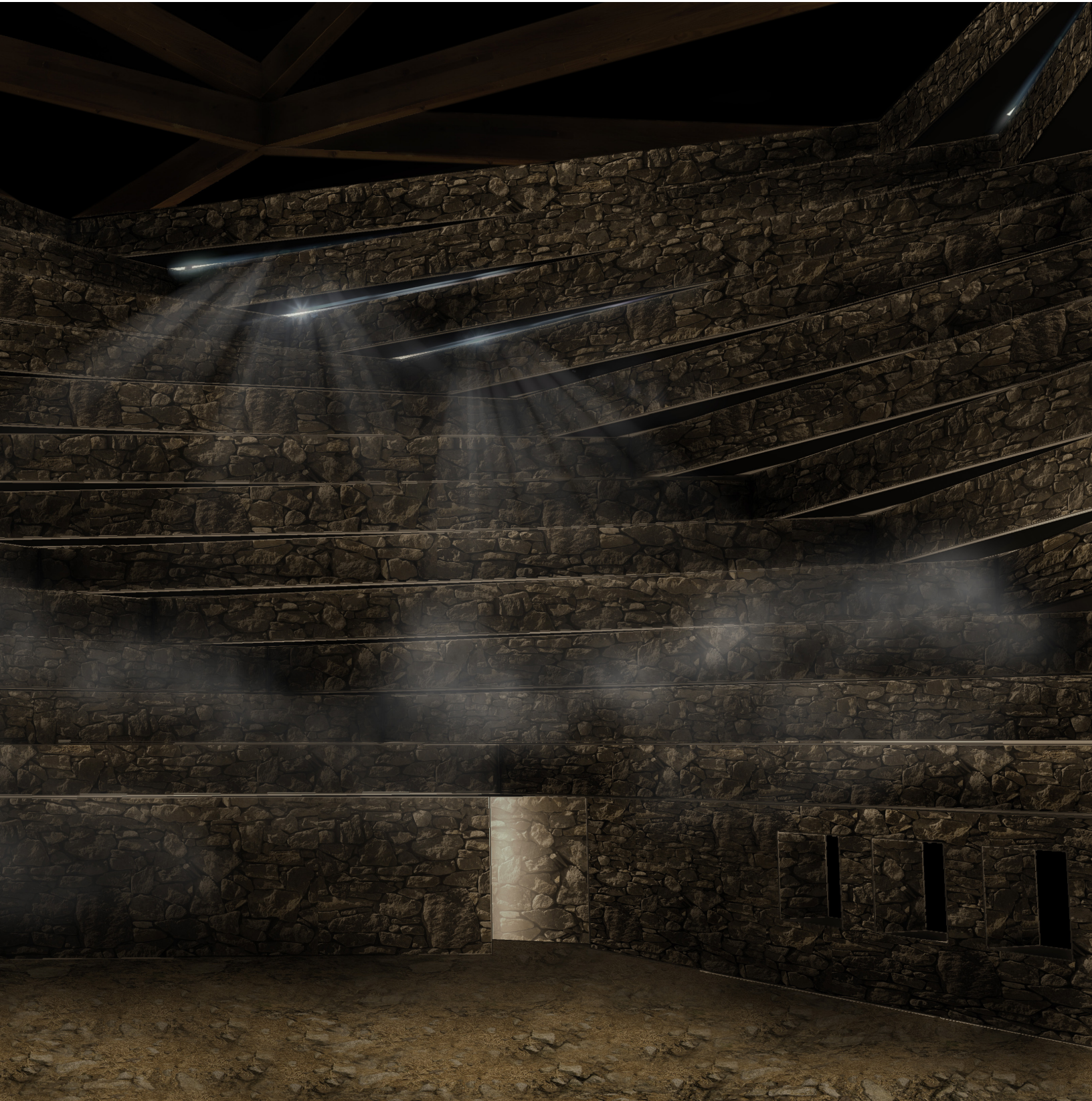
The last hall is the hall of air. It is like a profound well, and you are at the bottom of it. You feel so distant from the light and life above ground, it seems impossible to reach. This is where the hope of return seems completely lost, and of course this is always where you can find the way to return if you take just one more step and reach the Birthing Chamber.

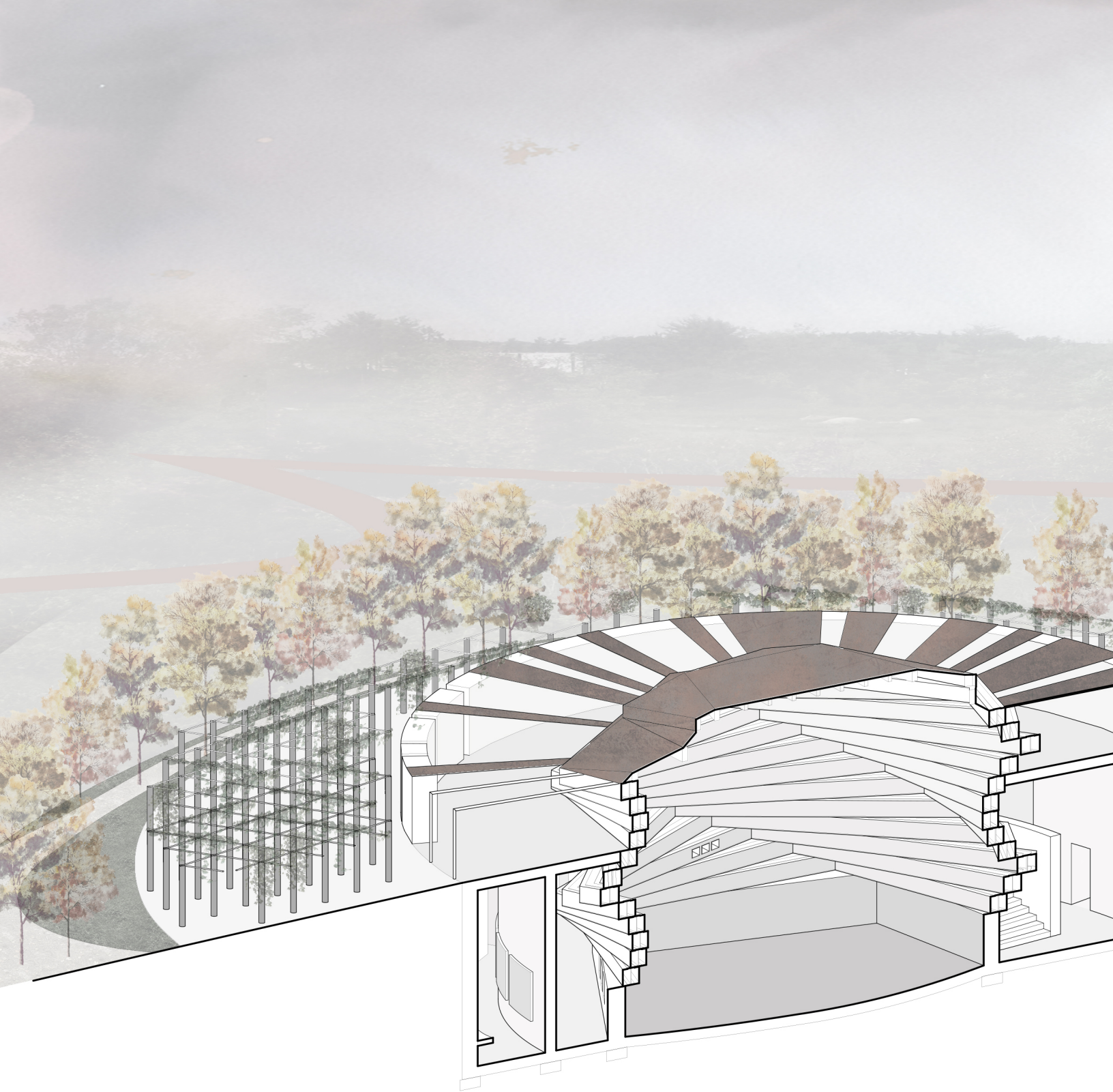


Fig 3.33 Perspective, The Birthing Chamber

In the Birthing Chamber, the complex process of rebirth starts. The space is created by pentagons rotated around a central axis which gives you the experience to embrace and celebrate the journey you had. Beams of light are penetrating inside the chamber herald the return to life and light.







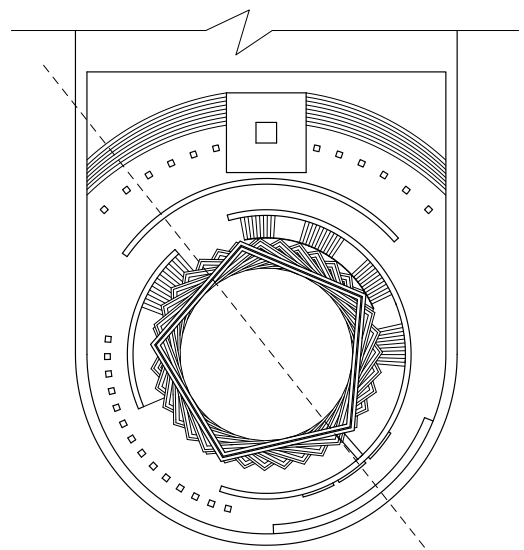
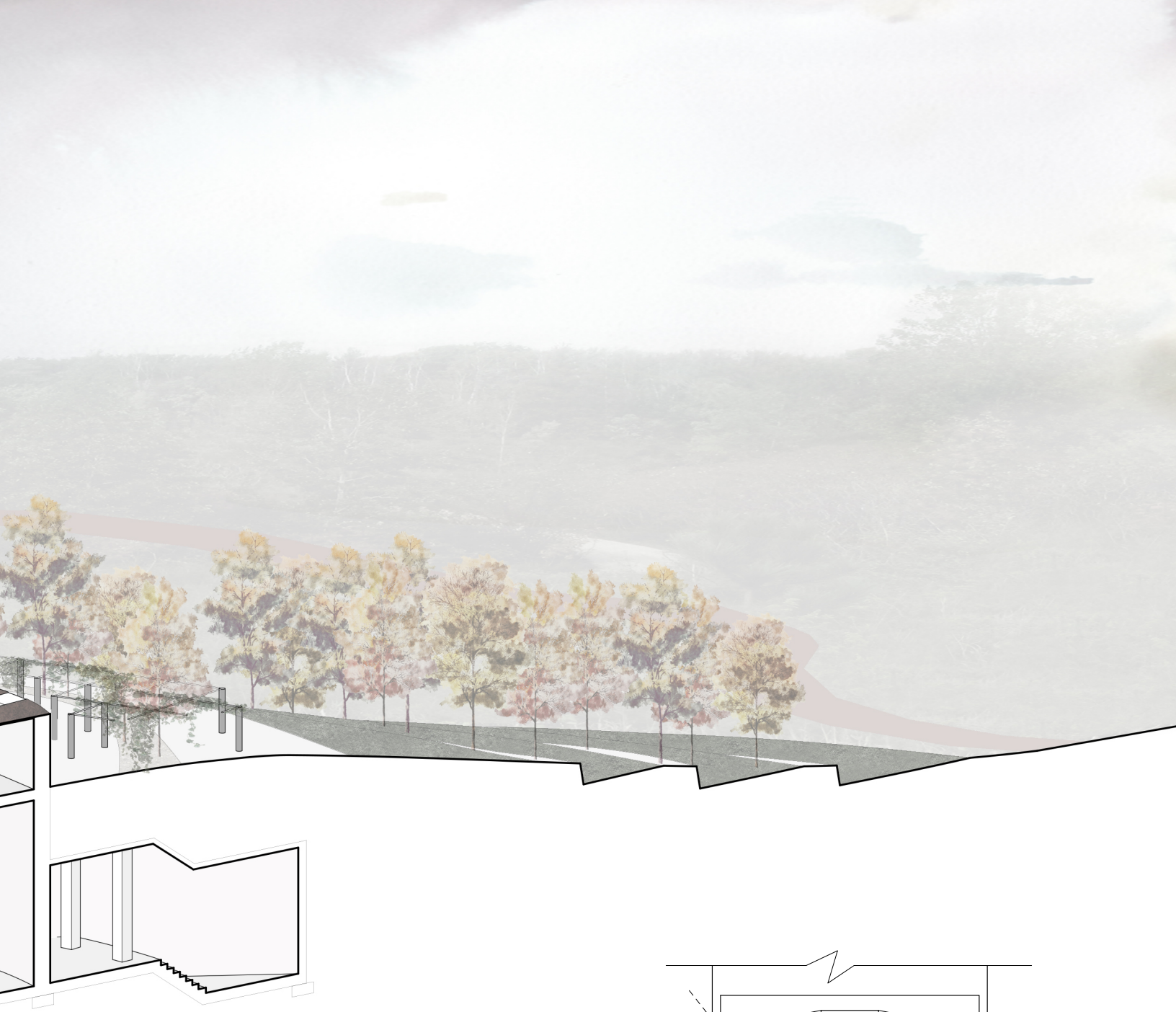


Fig 3.34 ISO section projection 2

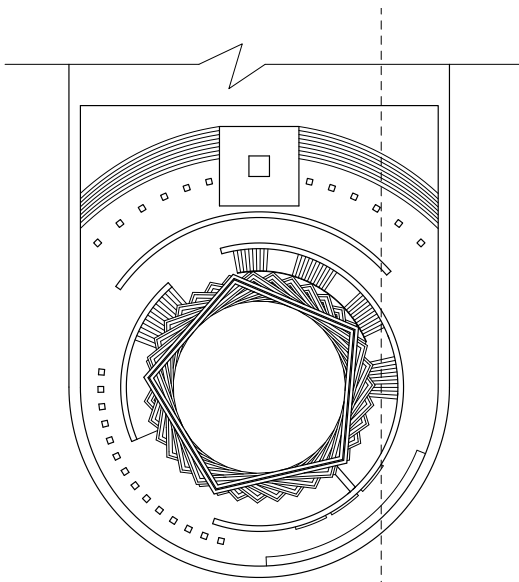
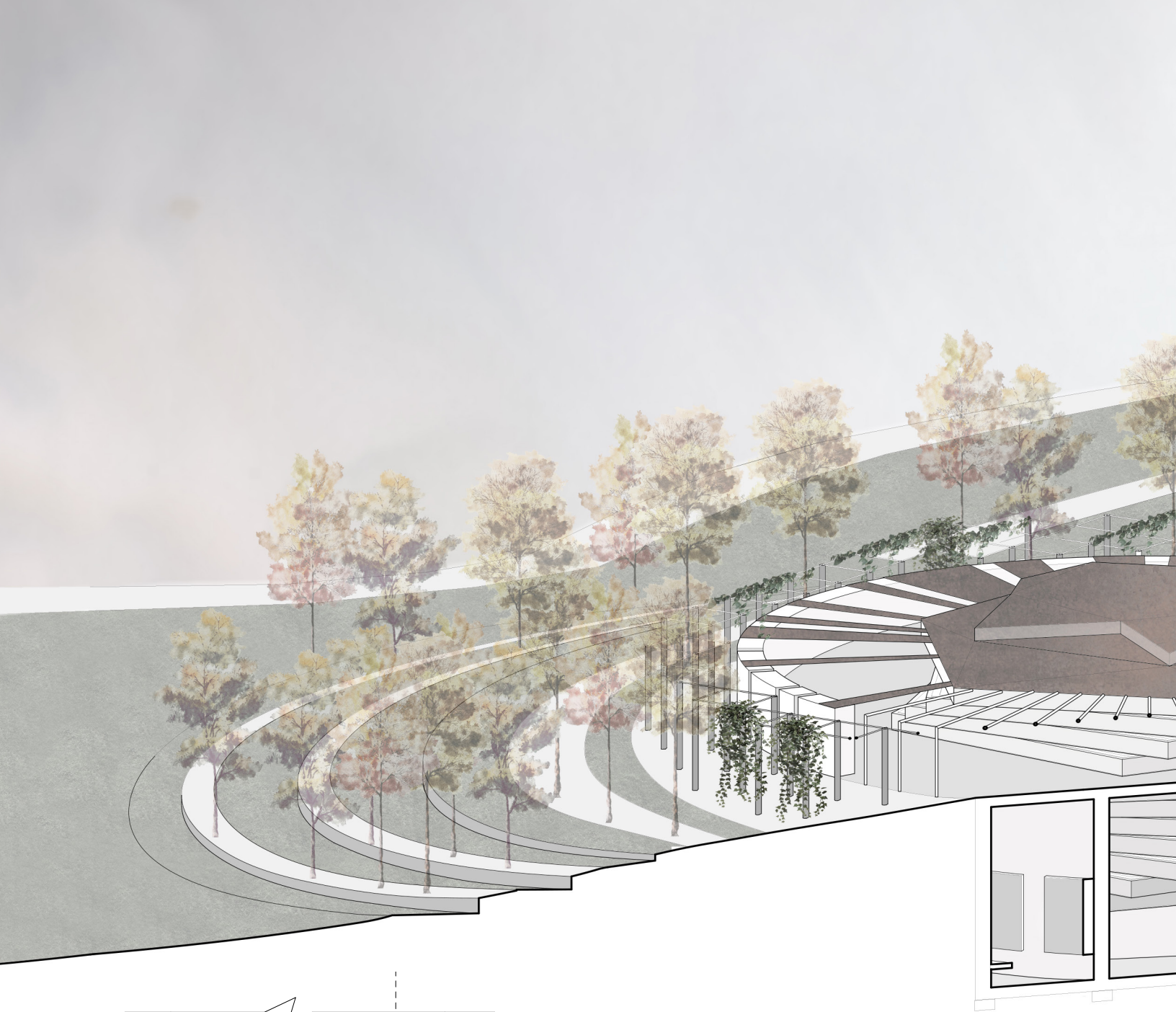
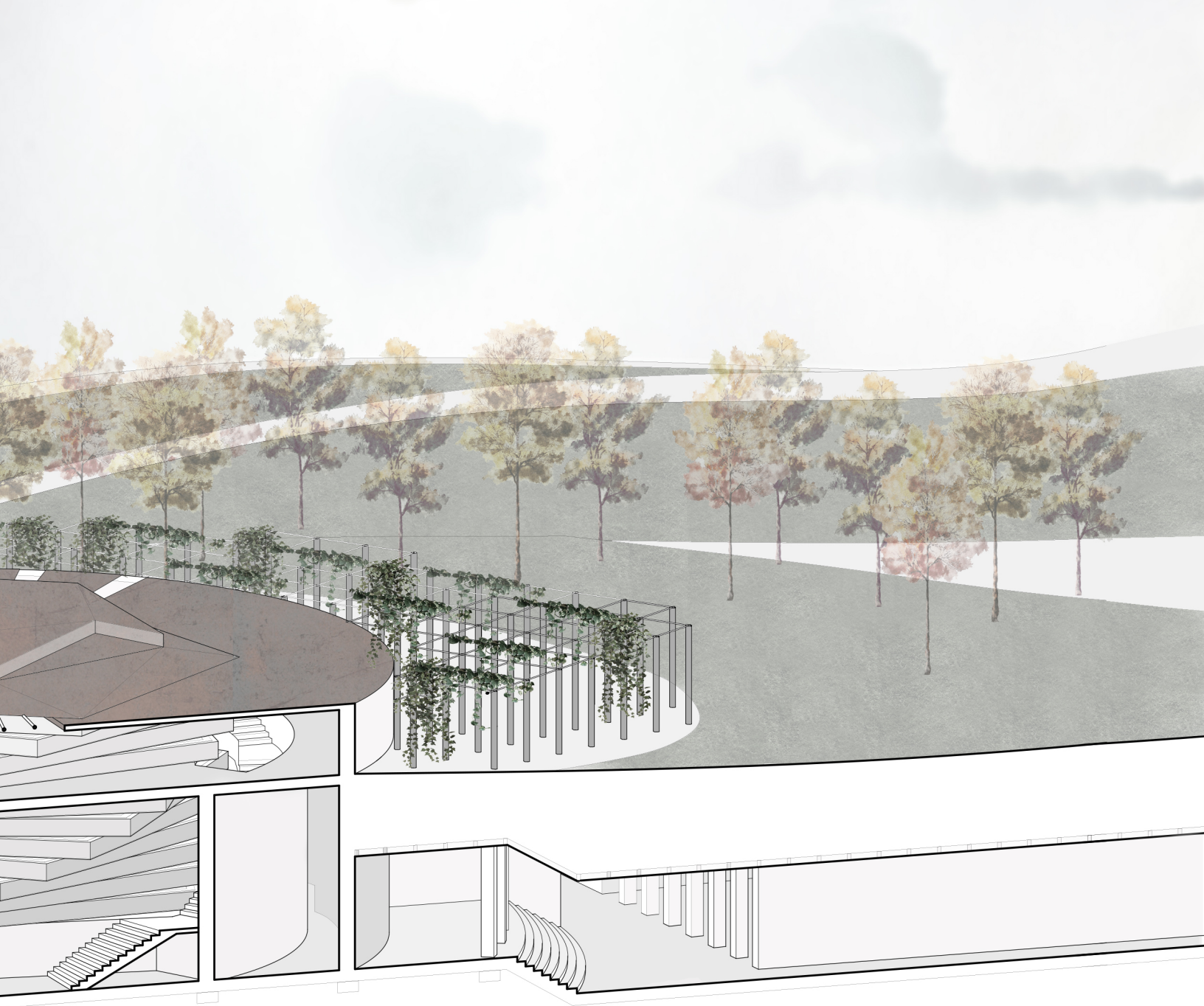
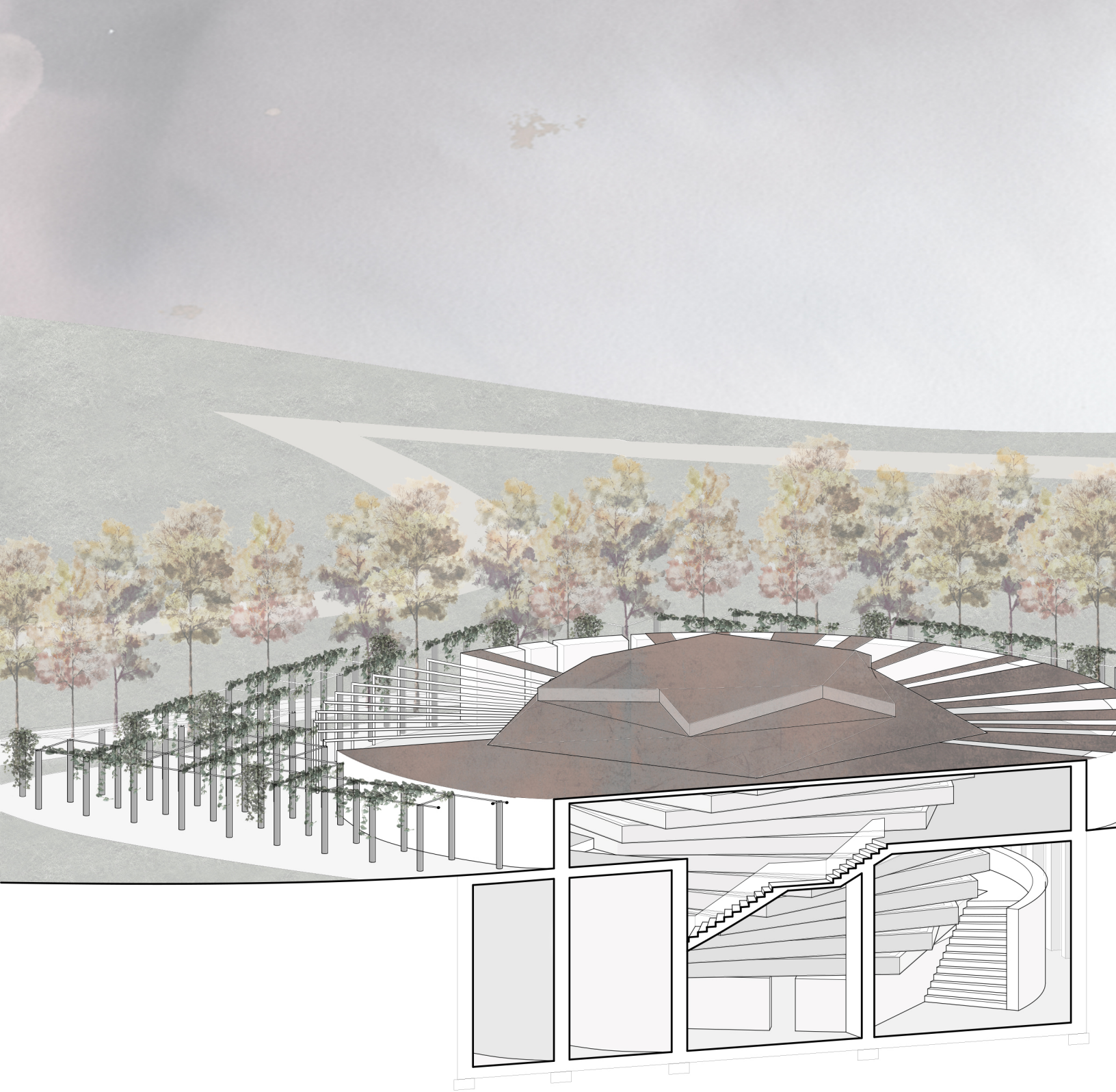


Fig 3.35 ISO section projection 3





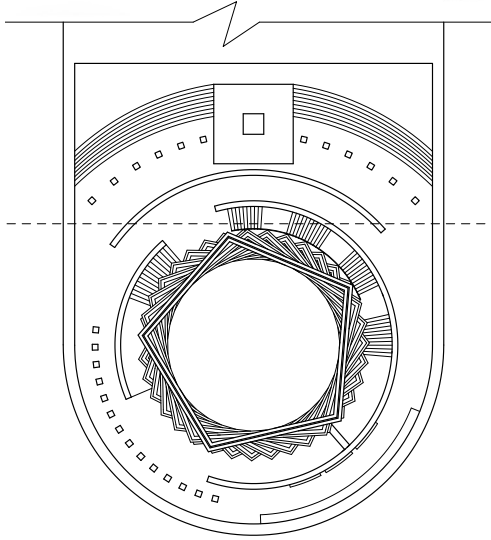
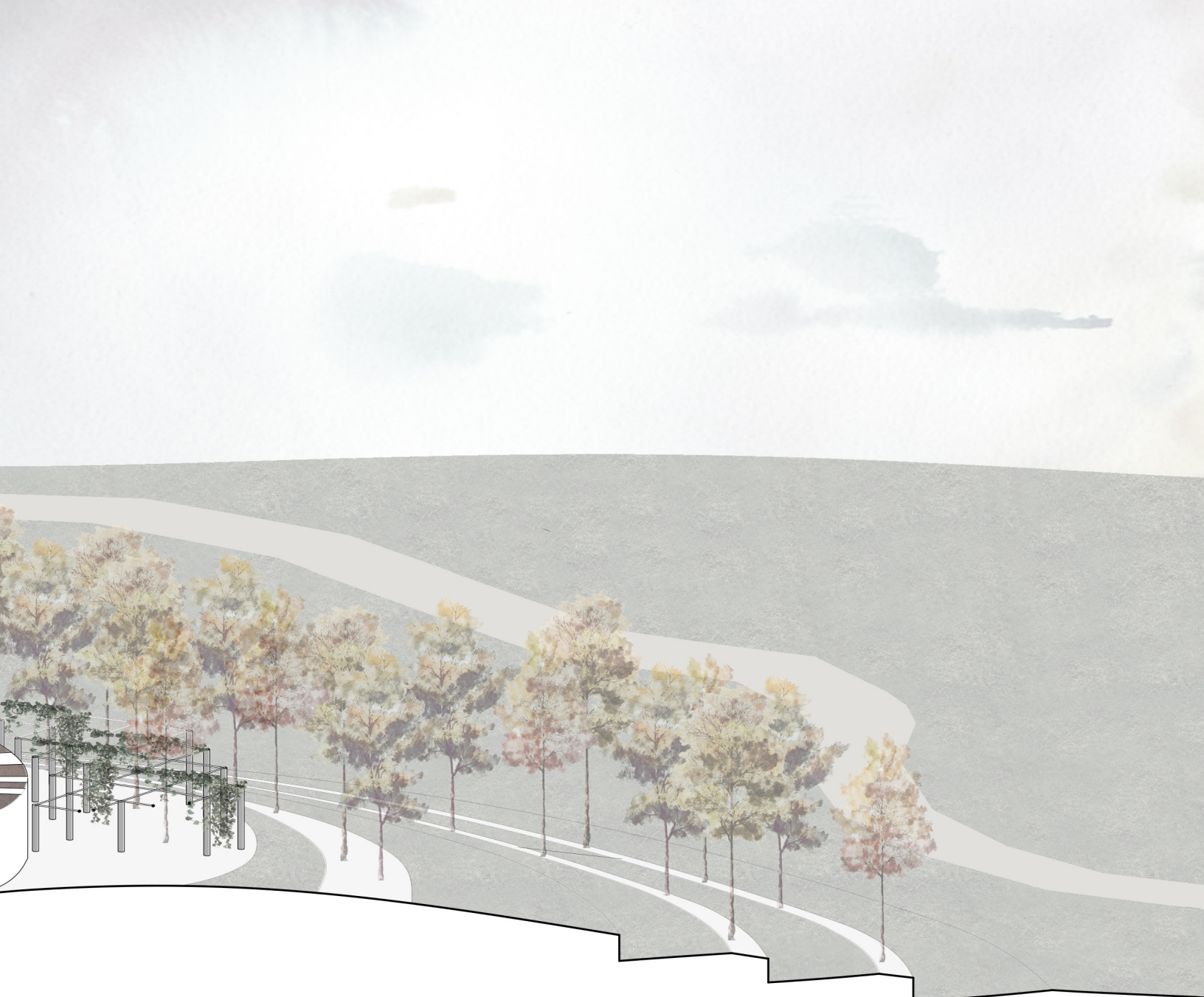


Fig 3.36 ISO section projection 4

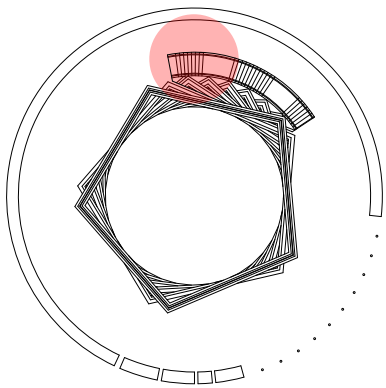
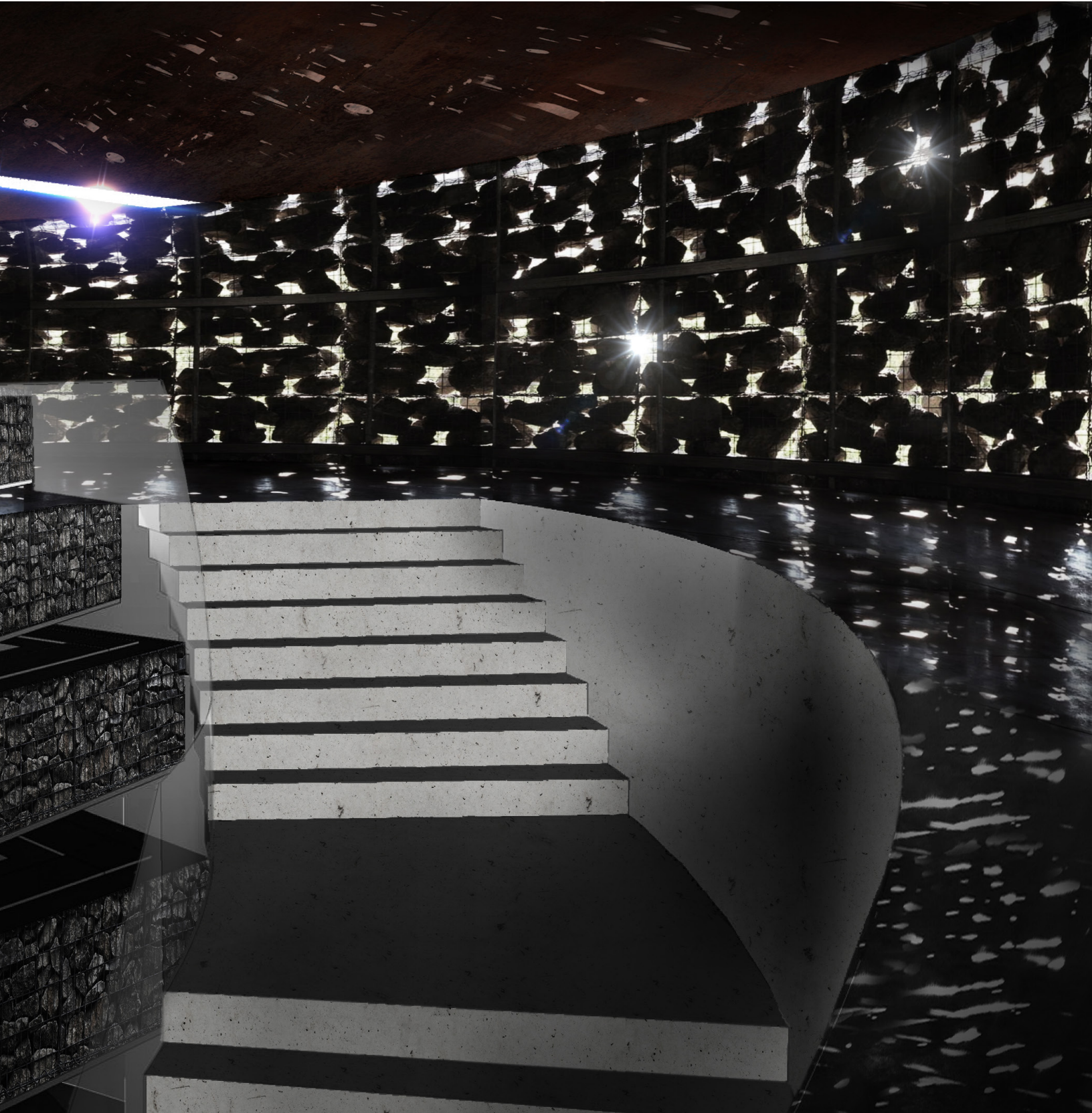


Fig 3.37 Perspective, Staircase toward exit

Outside of the Birthing Chamber, there is a staircase that goes around the body of the chamber and takes you back to the world, to the surface of the earth. You can see the light penetrating through the gabion wall and making a half-lit space. As you go further, little by little the volume around you opens as you engender to the life again.





CONCLUSION

This thesis sought to explore how affective architecture can change people's level of consciousness and help them enter their unconscious state to fulfill the journey of self-discovery. Using the myth of Persephone, and the theories of Bachelard, Jung, and Joseph Campbell, I concluded that a transformative process includes three phases: separation, stay, and return. Abducted from the earth, naïve and innocent Persephone is removed from her home, her mother, and the light, and forced to live in the realm of Hades (separation). She experiences this realm for a year (stay), and then re-emerges to the earth's surface as a metamorphosed queen of the underworld (return). Joseph Campbell's hero's journey follows the same pattern. Studying different architectural precedents, I noted how architects apply these concepts to their architecture.

Architecturally speaking, the first phase—separation—usually happens in a long staircase and/or corridor that has extremely different qualities from the space experienced before it in terms of light, proportions, and material: a dark and dim space, narrow with a low height, and composed of materials that give the feeling of heaviness and pressure. It is like penetrating inside a body or mass. Most of the time, this separation-inducing space appears as a descent to the earth and underground. Going to a depth beneath the earth is like entering the human psyche. It changes the consciousness level and separates the person's mind from daily life.

Separated from everyday life, the empty mind is ready to hear what the unconscious whispers in the ear. The person is open to inspiration or even to remembering bad events of the past. He or she should stay there long enough to experience those feelings. This stay could happen during a journey of walking in a designed path, or in a big hall with different features, or in an exceptionally exquisite place which holds the visitor inside itself like a womb and invites him or her to linger there and

forget about time. This kind of space usually uses very limited ceiling light that penetrates inside and makes a blurry and dream-like space. The visitor may just stand in this place to contemplate, or wander around and explore.

Then it is time to return to the world. The return should not be sudden and quick. It should be gradual enough to give the person time to adapt to the light and sounds of busy life above ground. Long stairs are usually used for this purpose, and controlled light that pours inside step by step.

Architectural spaces that are meant to affect the feelings and emotions of the visitor usually have the first two phases. But some of them did not create a different passageway for exiting. I believe that having a separate space by which to return to the world is important because descent and ascent do not happen in same way; like in the myth, the mood and speed of the descent and subsequent ascent are very different.

These three stages of architecture can create a space for a journey that can be the embodiment of the myth of Persephone, an atmosphere for us to think about who we are universally, and, hopefully, an opportunity to return, like Persephone, as a metamorphosed person.

The proposed architecture of this thesis is more of an imaginary architecture that has been inspired by relating the Persephone myth to my personal history. But because Persephone is a myth and myths come from our collective unconscious, this architecture can be understood and felt by anyone who has had a chance to journey to the realm of Hades. This is why I neither discussed the structure or the cost of building such a building, nor assigned any functionality to its space. However, I think that there should be further research on how can we have such spaces and architecture that will work economically too.

I strongly believe that we need to have architecture that deepens the human understanding of self and connect us to our nature in the real world, places for people to embrace their need to reflect and feel—places where people can walk, experience, and listen to their inner voice.

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