

A RESIDENCE FOR THINKERS

Master thesis by
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1. Site, questions, architectural response

During the 4th year when studying the 'library', summarized in the video (<http://vimeo.com/93854866>), I interpreted the concept of library as working spaces. I thought of a building with the greatest variety of working spaces where people could find the space most suited to their needs.

To achieve this objective, the building had to be a mass that enveloped people safeguarding them from the nuisance of the city. Once the internal material removed, the resulting void creates spaces with different qualities. Working with the materiality of the path and of the light provides a great variety of spaces and ambiances, giving the worker the possibility to choose the most convenient one.

However, the project suffered from the absence of order that could direct space. Therefore, I decided to develop the concept of the working space, this time starting from a precise articulated programme.

I started with the definition of an ideal programme and then I looked for the institution that could better be associated to it. Europe's cultural context seeking today to define a strong identity appeared as the entity capable to host such a programme. Several European regions could host this programme, which will be declined according to the characteristics of the different regions. Lastly, I have chosen a specific region, notably Marseille, where I developed the architectural example of such programme.

I - THE START - OF A SENSITIVE PROGRAMME

1. What is a sensitive programme?

Firstly, what is the definition of programme? Programme is a boring word – rigidity, it is disconnected from the real life.

Going beyond standards, my aim was to dig into the essence of the institution that I was going to create, its willingness to exist (Louis Khan's terminology), i.e. the introduction of the sensitive factor.

« Nous avons alors élargi le problème et trouvé quelques solutions merveilleuses. Et croyez-moi, c'était extrêmement gratifiant de réaliser que les solutions ne venaient pas d'un programme mort imposé avec un nombre donné de mètres carrés » Louis Kahn

« We have so expanded the problem and found some wonderful solutions. And believe me, it was extremely gratifying to realize that the solutions do not come from a dead program imposed with a given number of square meters »¹

2. Which sensitive programme?

Again, my departure point was not the basis of a conventional programme, but an intuition.

The intuition of a space of harmony where thinkers of diverse horizons - multi cultural, multi-disciplinary - could retreat and devote their time to research, to share and to recharge one's energy - *mens sana in corpore sanum*, relieved of any material exigency.

This place was named of Residence.



¹ LOUIS I. KAHN, *silence and light*, édition du Linteau 1996

II - THE RESIDENCE – HISTORIC ANALYSIS

1. The Colbert mission and its heritage

The name: “Residence” reminded me of other historic examples, such as Villa Medici in Rome.

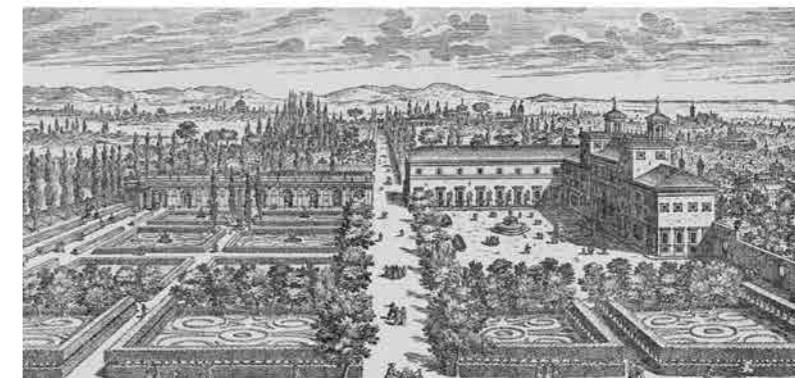
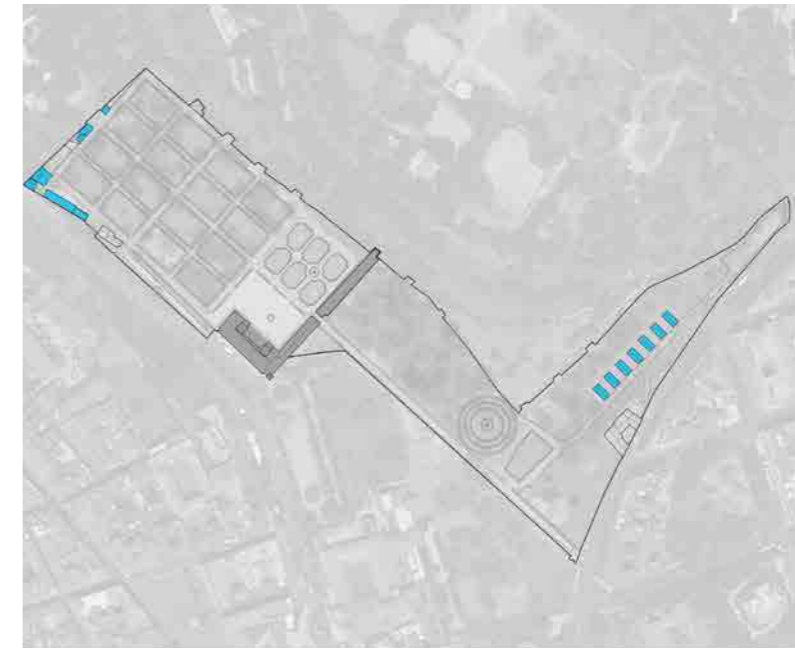
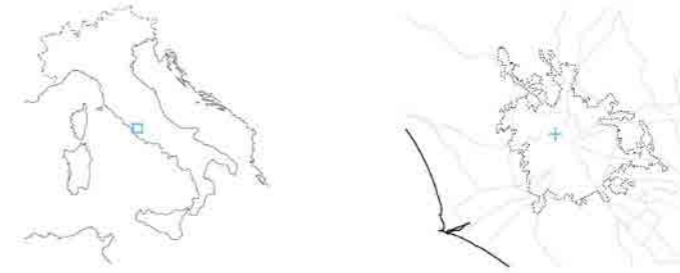
Originally, Colbert’s mission – established in the 18th century by a minister of Louis XIV - obeyed to the same ideals of a place for contemplation, retreat and self-perfecting, in a city with an impressive cultural heritage. Therefore, a French Academy post was created in Rome which, following the fire of its original location was moved to Villa Medici in 1803.

Repeatedly during the course of history, the mandate of the Colbert Mission Academy will be reinterpreted giving birth to Casa Velázquez in Madrid (1920) and Villa Kujoyama in Japan (1992).

2. Analysis of the three Villas

Villa Medici was constructed in the 16th century on the site of the ancient garden of Lucullus, which already indicates the important place occupied by flora right from its conception. The Medici family acquired it to house their art collection. Ever since 1803, Villa Medici hosts the French Academy in Rome that had to abandon its ancient emplacement at the Colbert mission because of fire.

Through time, Villa Medici has undergone a number of modifications, namely the enlargement of its garden by 7 ha. as well as the creation of accommodation for boarding guests, far-off the principal building, thus making the garden play a transition role between public and individual spaces.



Villa Medici, Rome, Italy

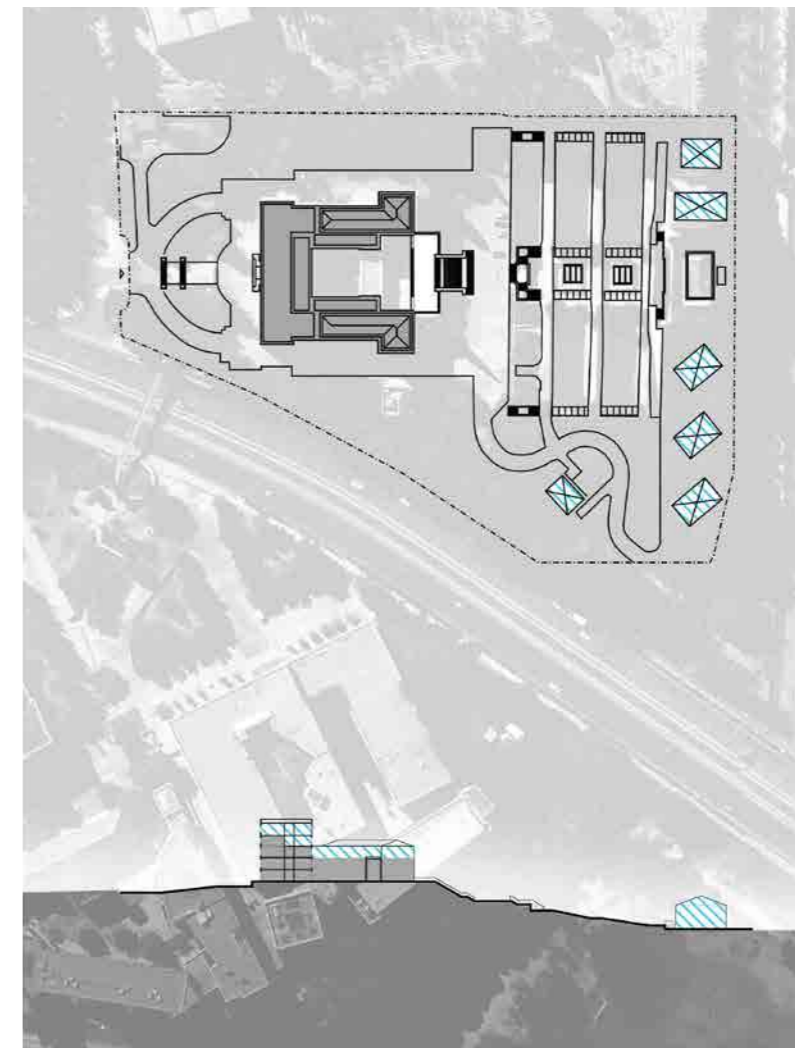


II - THE RESIDENCE - HISTORIC ANALYSIS

Casa Velázquez, Madrid, Spain

In 1916, Charles-Marie Widor, Perpetual Secretary of the Academy of Fine Arts, expressed the wish that also in Madrid facilities could be offered to artists to complete their educational formation as was the case at Villa Medici in Rome.

Following bilateral agreements between the two countries, the then King of Spain granted to France a building lot of 20 000 sqm, placed in the middle of the future university campus, and Casa Velázquez was built. Casa Velázquez' principal building, with its patio in the middle, takes the form of a U and overlooks large gardens that frame an environment that painter Velázquez would have loved to portray. Like in Villa Medici, the garden hosts autonomous and isolated cells-ateliers whereas the principal building hosts the community spaces.



Casa Velázquez, Madrid, Spain

II - THE RESIDENCE – HISTORIC ANALYSIS

Villa Kujoyama Japan

It was once again the wish to offer artists a place of excellence based on the model of Villa Medici that inspired the construction of Villa Kujoyama in Japan in 1992. Architect Kato divided the public and the individual spaces not on plan but in section taking advantage of the unevenness of the ground.

A big staircase leads to the first level that houses all community spaces (meeting rooms, ateliers, etc.). The top level hosts the duplex units, immersed in nature, in a patio pattern.

Architect Kato explained that in the construction of Villa Kujoyama he was influenced by Le Corbusier's Convent La Tourette. The building has been criticized because of its extremely tiny dimensions and the absence of a real connection with the city.

Conclusion on the analysis of the three villas

In spite of their location in urban areas, the three villas are situated in relatively isolated spots. And this is the main paradox found: isolation-connection. It is interesting to note that, historically, Villa Medici was in the borders of Rome and that little by little, as the city grew bigger, it ended up in a prominent place in the centre of Rome.

The three examples above reveal the importance of an interface with the outside world that is both an element of connection and representation for the city as well as a protective limit for the residents' privacy. To be observed, therefore, a public-private axis going from the interface with exterior world to the residents' habitation.

I also remark the same paradox of isolation and connection when looking at the location in altitude of the villas, which establishes a public-private axis from the bottom to the top.



Villa Kujoyama, Japan

II - THE RESIDENCE – HISTORIC ANALYSIS

3. Community question

Beyond the simple programmatic reference, the notion of residence poses also the question of the community, of the exchange and of the social utopia. This aspect made me look for historic examples, from the ideal city of Claude-Nicolas Ledoux to the habitation unit of Le Corbusier and the Familistère of Guise.

These utopias were destined to a model of self-sufficiency where community life was organized around facilities to allow inhabitants' socialization.

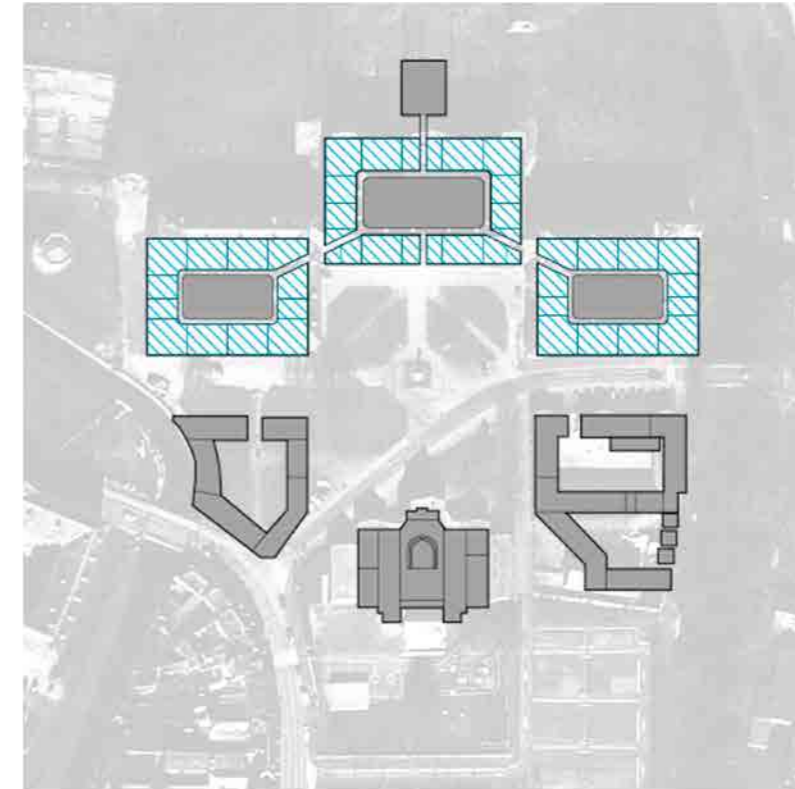
Contrary to these examples, our residence will be placed in a city and will benefit from the facilities that the city can provide. It will also create a place for retreat with facilities that will boost community life.

The Familistère Guise

The Familistère Guise was built in the 19th century by industrialist Godin who developed and built a heater factory in Guise in 1846. He constructed accommodation for his workforce in a paternalistic housing scheme, in the vicinities of the factory, following the phalange model developed by Philosopher Charles Fourier.

This housing scheme became the symbol of real social utopia. A social palace grouping some 500 apartments including all modern comfort – hygienist theory – as well as a number of complementary facilities such as theatre, swimming pool, laundry, school, library, flower garden, supply store. All of which responding to men varied aspirations involving care of the body, care of the spirit and leisure activities.

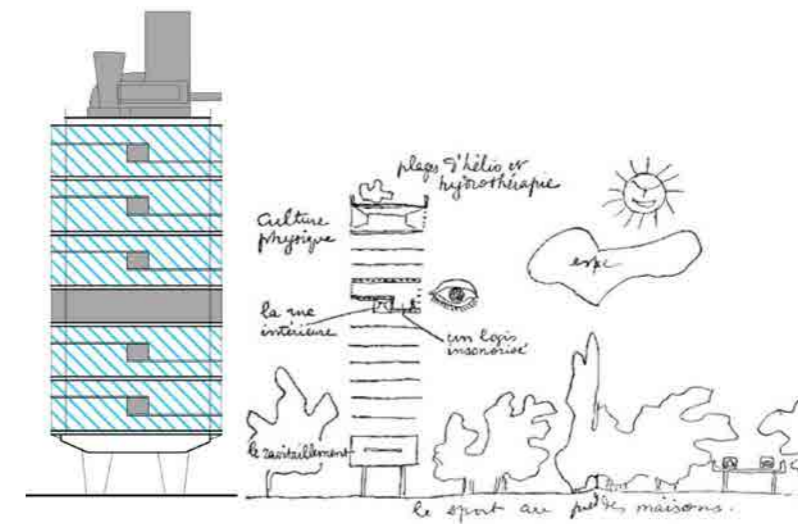
However, the quest for self-sufficiency and the lack of sociability with the external world was source of criticism. In a world characterized by exchange and interaction it eventually ended up with the desertion of the place.



The Familistère Guise

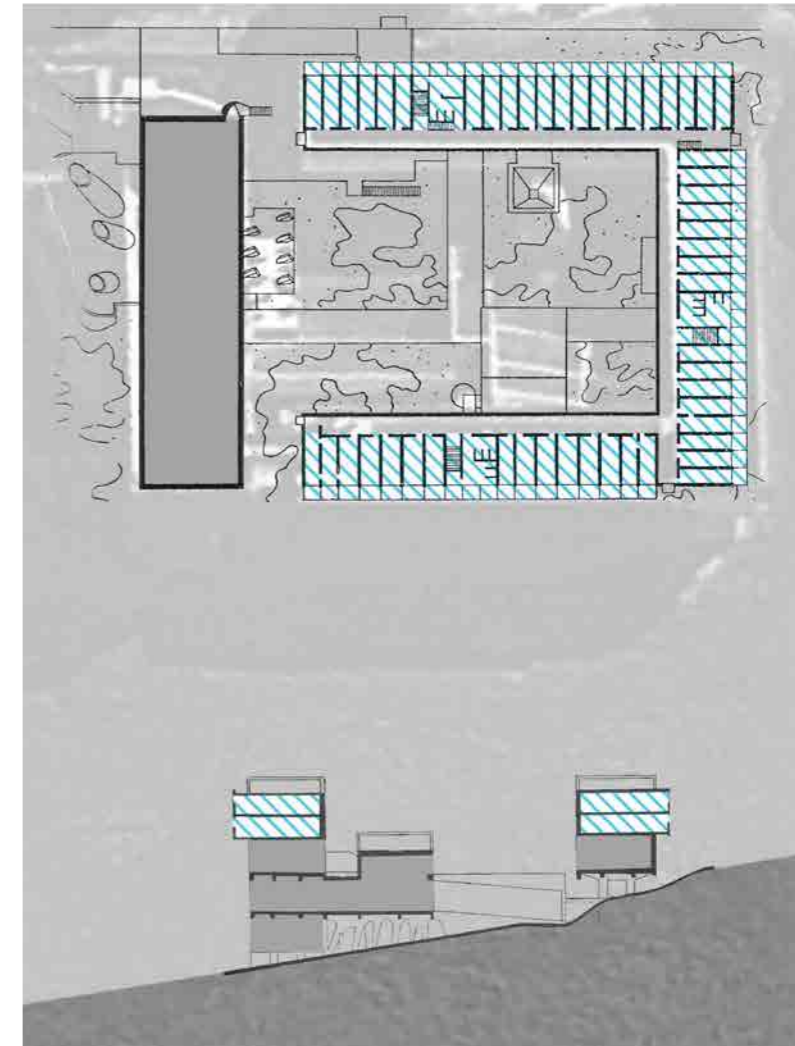
The Radiant City

The Radiant City, developed by Le Corbusier almost a century later, pursues the same ideal of community life developed by Fourier, with the difference that inhabitants were free to come and go because they were inhabitants and not paid workers of the housing scheme, as in the example above. Individual cells and community facilities spread over 17 levels. A grid elevated on pilotis hosted the different programmes. More than 330 apartments were developed, serviced by interior streets. Here, the notion of cell is very important. Half way up, an interior street on two levels hosted the different shopping facilities and a hotel. Lastly, the roof deck accommodated the overall community programmes, including a nursery school, a belvedere, a gymnasium, sport facilities, etc. All types of facilities existed, depending on the different projects, and this is one of the merits of the Radiant City.



Convent La Tourette

Convent de La Tourette, also built by Le Corbusier, is a remarkable example of religious community life. It was built between 1956 and 1960 as a response to the Dominicans' desire to build a new convent near Lyon in the Commune of Evreux. It is described as a "structure serving a community devoted to meditation and thought". Like in the Radiant City, we find a section of the different spaces. The building, which rose on pilotis, plays with the slopes of the ground splitting on levels: one that groups the different community programmes, one hosting the intellectual programmes and finally, the last two levels that accommodate the cells. The constraint faced was the Dominicans' desire for economy and frugality; however, in the framework of an expansion of the Residence programme, an integration of body and intellectual spaces could be envisaged.



III - THE RESIDENCE – PROGRAMME DEFINITION AND SENSIBLE OWNERSHIP

On the basis of this critical analysis, I was in a position to complete the programme until now impalpable of the residence.

1. Live, research, recharge one's energy , share – concretization of notions

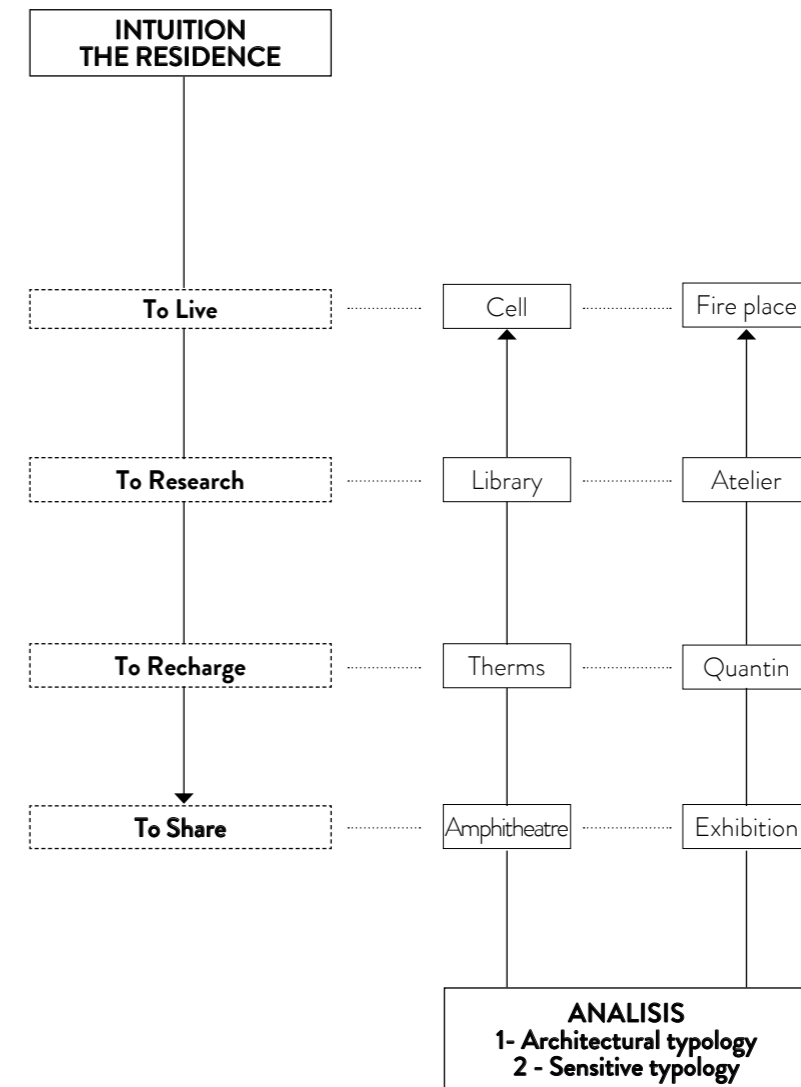
The resident cell, expression of the solitude; around a unifying fireplace; the library and its introspective reading room, surrounded by ateliers and working rooms; the thermal baths and their correlation with the body; the exhibition space and the amphitheatre, places of expression and sharing.
I have materialized in the first part of the table these essential notions with defined architectural typology examples.

The accuracy of the architectural typologies clarifies the composition of the programme; it provides also the background for a more subjective definition.

2. Sensitive qualities of atmosphere

In the first place, it is the collection of my personal impressions, evoked by each element of the programme, from Baudelaire's poem to Rothko's painting.

In order to complete my approach I decided to make an inventory of the architectural sensations particular to each typology. I based myself on Peter Zumthor's definition of the nine points of analysis, which compose the atmosphere of an architectural space that he presented at the 2003 Conference on Atmosphere. Namely: : The Body of Architecture; Material Compatibility; The Sound of a Space; The temperature of a Space; Surrounding Objects; Composure and Seduction; Tension between Interior and Exterior; Levels of Intimacy and The Light on Things. The points above are developed inside the booklet.

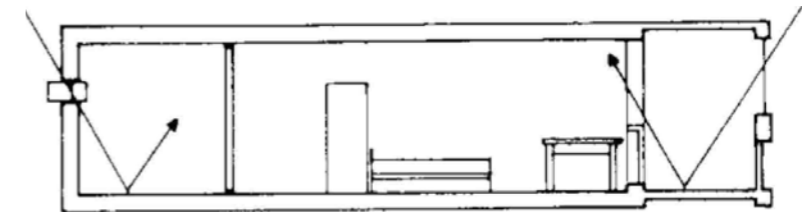
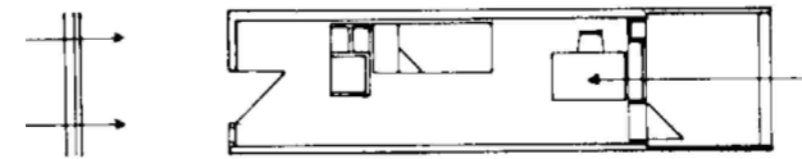
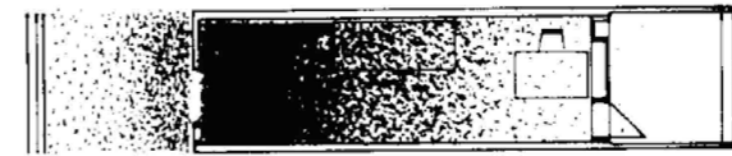


TO LIVE
The cell

Programme typology



Le Corbusier | Couvent la tourette
minimum habitat



Le Corbusier | Couvent la tourette
Sketch

TO LIVE
The cell

Sensitive approach

The body of the building shelters us, protects , making us feel comfortable and safety.

Here, the material is warm and reassuring – question of hospitality and comfort.

The cell isolates us from exterior world's nuisances; the relationship is visual, not acoustic.

The temperature is pleasant, guarantee of an organized environment. We look for freshness in summer and warmth in a winter night...

Furniture is simple, intimate. The architectonic is humble, permitting the inhabitant a potential occupation.

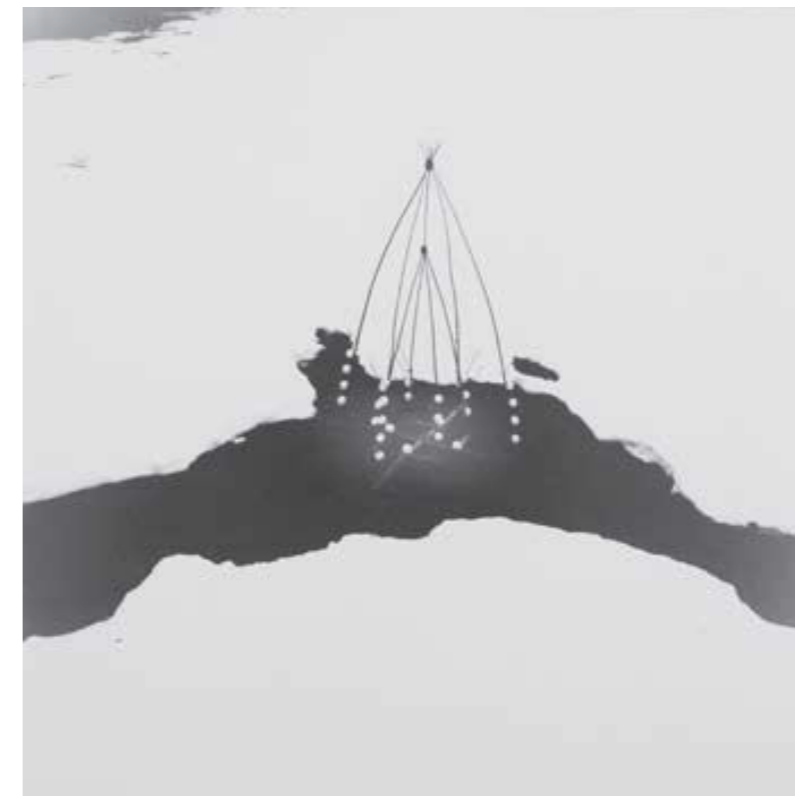
Moving around the core of the cell marks a path from public to private.

The cell expresses deep inwardness and dominance of the exterior world myth of the hut and notion of shelter.

Likewise, the unit is the last rampart of privacy.

Lastly, light is soft; diffuse or direct, it is part of the familiarity of the environment.

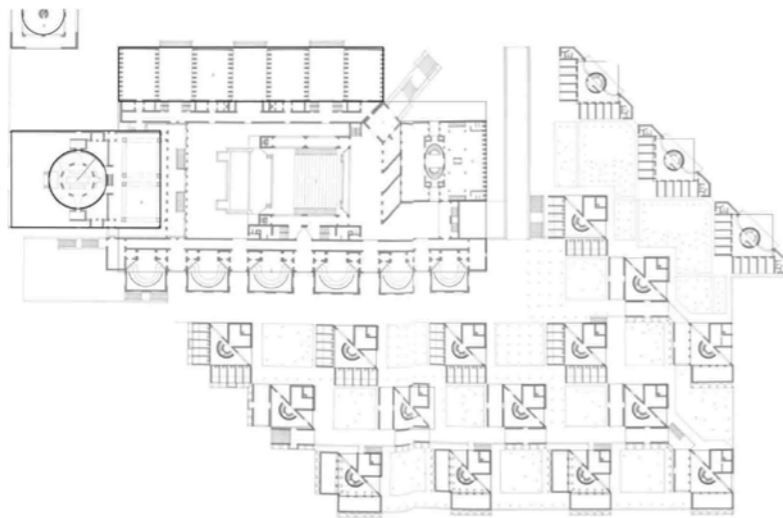
*The Cell | own sensitive interpretation
following the 9 points of Zumthor*



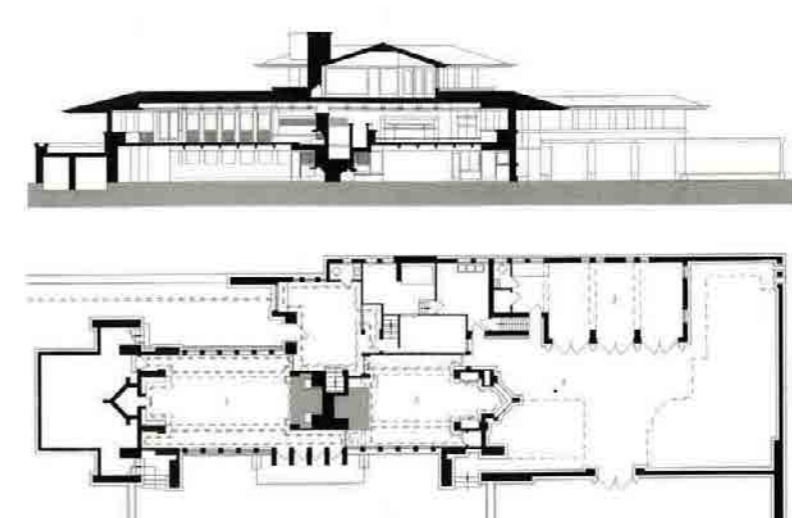
*Nils Undo | paysage
«Myth of the hut and its link with nature»*

TO LIVE
Fireplace

Programme typology



Louis Kahn | Indian Institute of Management Ahmedabad
student place



Frank L. Wright | Robie house
fire place

TO LIVE Fireplace

Sensitive approach

Its massive structure shelters and protects us from the outside world despite an opening over the rest of the building.

The material is dense and heavy.
Its anchoring and warmth are reassuring and invite to get comfortable.

The fireplace keeps us away from outside world stress.
There is freedom to talk loudly or softly and in the moments of silence we can yet perceive the cracking flames.

Temperature is pleasant and well distributed.

We move to the fireplace to warm up in a winter evening as we seek on the other hand a fresh place in the shadow in a hot summer day - thermal inertia, air circulation.

Furniture plays a particular role and defines the character of the room.
Generously, it invites us to relax and establishes a dialogue with the body of the building.

If throughout the building there are different moments of breaks, the fireplace occupies a preponderant place.

Here, time gets slow and numb, and the space invites to quietness and contemplation, encouraging at the same time exchange and sharing.

The fireplace appears as a hub, a place of temporary halt, a parenthesis in time. Yet, its close relationship both with the outside and the rest of the building reminds us that beyond that room life goes on.

It is a public space, while giving way to dreaming and private exchanges nearby the fireplace notion of confidence.

Light is soft, conveying hospitality.
At night, fire substitutes sunlight, immersing the room into a more concealed ambiance.

*The fireplace | own sensitive interpretation
following the 9 points of Zumthor*



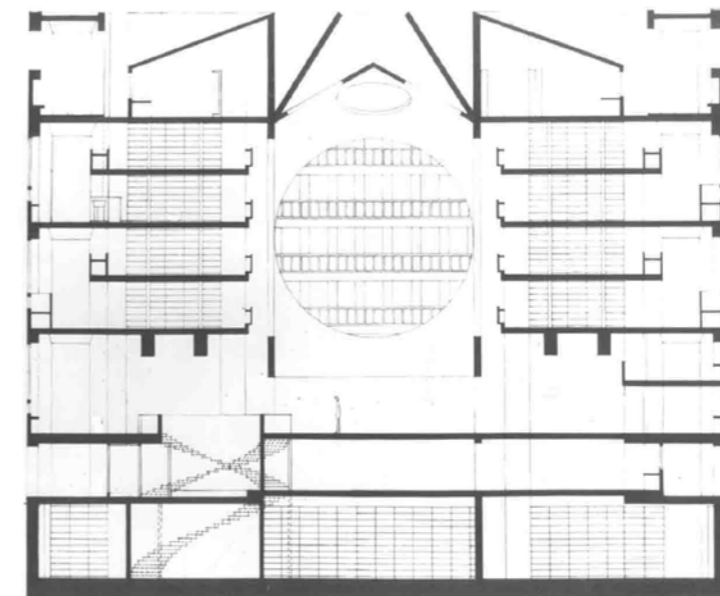
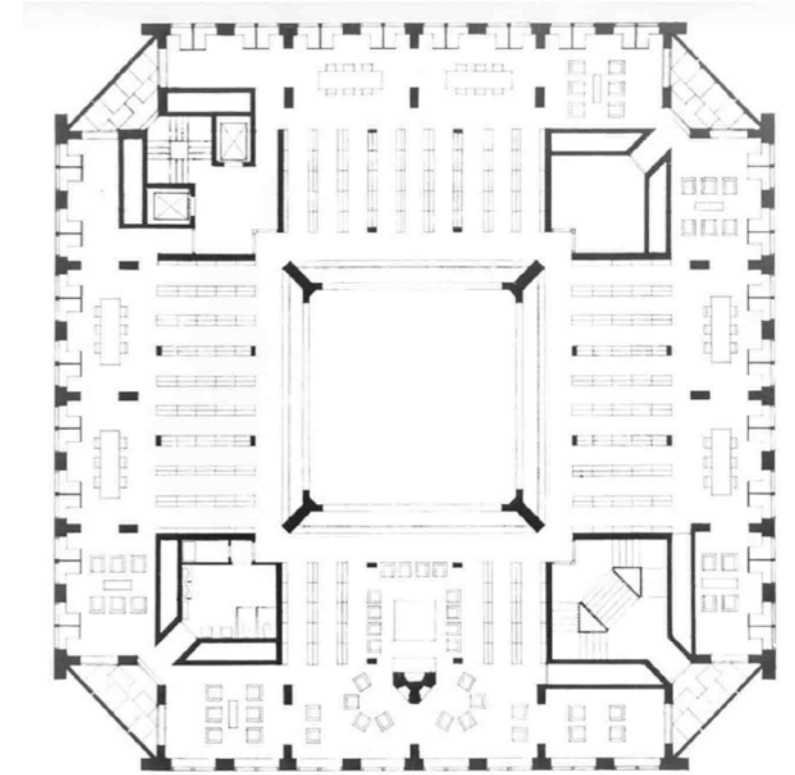
Villa Malaparte | «Holistique» frame

TO RESEARCH
The library

Programme typology



Louis Kahn | Library Exeter



TO RESEARCH

The library

Sensitive approach

The massive structure expresses heaviness and is meaningfully rooted in time – perpetuation and preservation of knowledge. Yet, it is discreet and fades away in front of the knowledge preserved that it wraps up and shelters.

Materiality is heavy, solid, but also simple and discreet; it does not predominate over content.

The library disconnects us from the outside world and stimulates an imposing silence that nobody would dare to infringe; only whispers – the respect of knowledge.

Temperature, homogenous and under control, expresses stability.

From the freshness of a storage place we proceed towards the cosy reading place that a sunray promptly heats.

Furniture is simple.

We walk around. Rigorous shelves store the books; far away, appears the alcove where a soft table light invites to prolong the reading. Protected from the outside world, the library inspires inwardness.

Yet, inside the discussion space, a number of openings frame these geographic elements and instil the idea of expanded natural time.

The library is a public space, paradoxically at the dimension of introspective and personal reading.

Thus, we find separate spaces conferring a sentiment of privacy and peacefulness.

Light is soft, again expressing steadiness and the idea of timeless knowledge. It diffuses delicately around the space without distracting the reading.



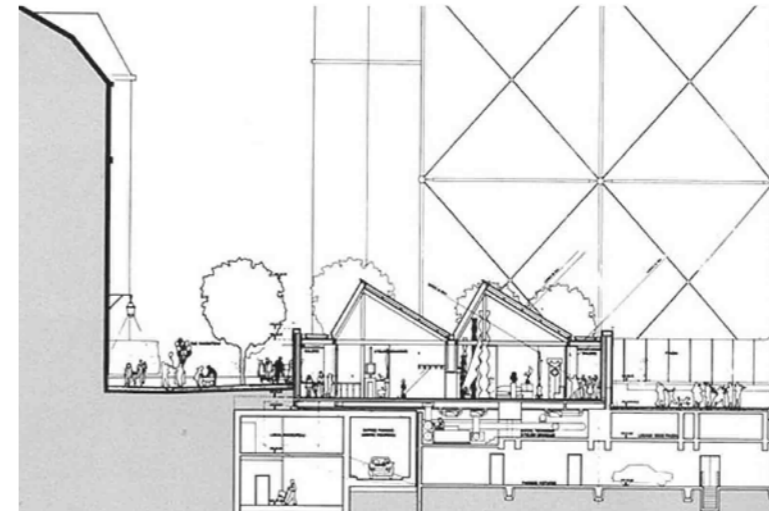
TO RESEARCH



Programme typology



Renzo Piano | Atelier Brancusi
«working space»



Renzo Piano | Atelier Brancusi
«working space»

TO RESEARCH Ateliers

Sensitive approach

Here, in contrast, the body of the building is lighter, freer. Constantly discreet, the structure fades away and does not obstruct the principal creative activity.

In this quest for discretion, the material is simple; it tends towards an ideal of neutrality. The working space isolates from the outdoor excitement.

Silently, it accords to space a character of concentration, of peacefulness – no sounds, the most trivial noise is absorbed.

Temperature, homogenous and a little controlled, expresses reliability. It does not upset the creation.

Furniture, simple, is coherent with the space.

It exists exclusively for its function and together with dimensions and light defines the room usage – board, support and meeting table.

The spatial unit working space is stable, in order to spend time. On the other hand, the distribution positions in space and time the different working spaces and their diversities, linking the far side ateliers and the meeting spaces directly to the main building.

The multiplicity of interior/exterior dialogues materializes according to the functions, from the isolated ateliers open over the garden to the meeting spaces in direct relation to the library.

We find different degrees of privacy and a variety of spaces, from solitude to get together.

Light is soft and again it expresses consistency. It comes preferably from the north; it does not project shadows and leaves us freedom to modulate it.



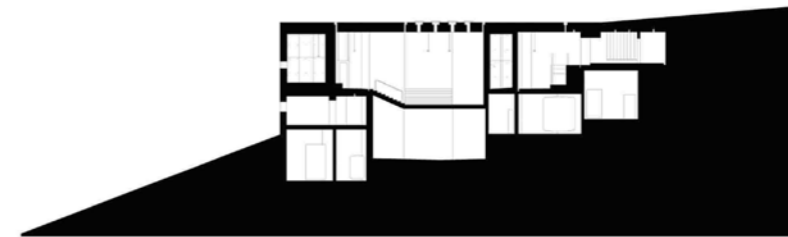
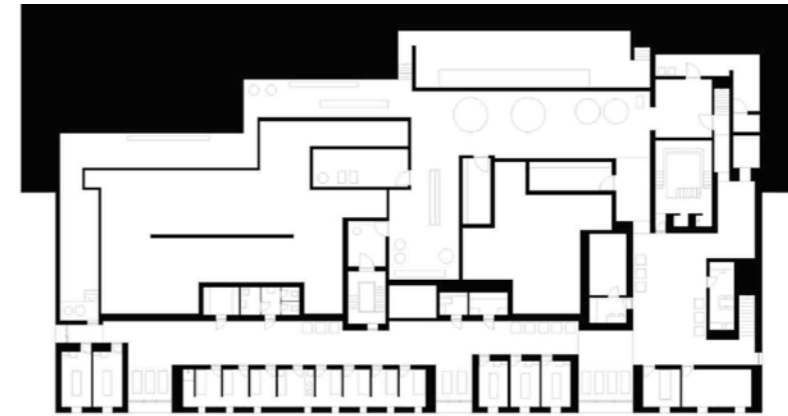
It presents itself as an open space, without “roof or walls”¹

Courbet | *My Atelier*, 1855

¹ NOEL BARBE,
Courbet's atelier A statement on the painter's work CTHS Editions

RECHARGE OF ENERGY
Thermal baths

Programme typology



RECHARGE OF ENERGY
Thermal baths



Sensitive approach

The mass of the building shows heaviness and a deep anchoring to the geologic ground.

The structure itself by its own thickness expresses the notion of mass.

The material becomes heavy, mineral, and in its relationship with water we can sense the importance given to natural elements.

Water is the principal architectural device and its implementation passes also through the demonstration of these different acoustic qualities – roar of waterfall.

Again, thermal baths are extremely heterogeneous spaces where we can find a variety of spaces and thermal qualities. Despite this heterogeneity, the architectonic space is total. This dimension occurs through anchored furniture, carved in the mass. The architectural walk has a major role in the organization of the thermal baths.

It translates into the implementation of a thermal path, mineral and natural.

In the same way, the series of spaces results in a variety of internal / external dialogues.

The thermal baths offer a variety of spaces, from the most public to the most private. It is therefore a progression between community and contemplation spaces in a quest for self-recharge of energy.

Again, the dialogue with light is specific to the different ambiances.

Where are the institutions of the good life?

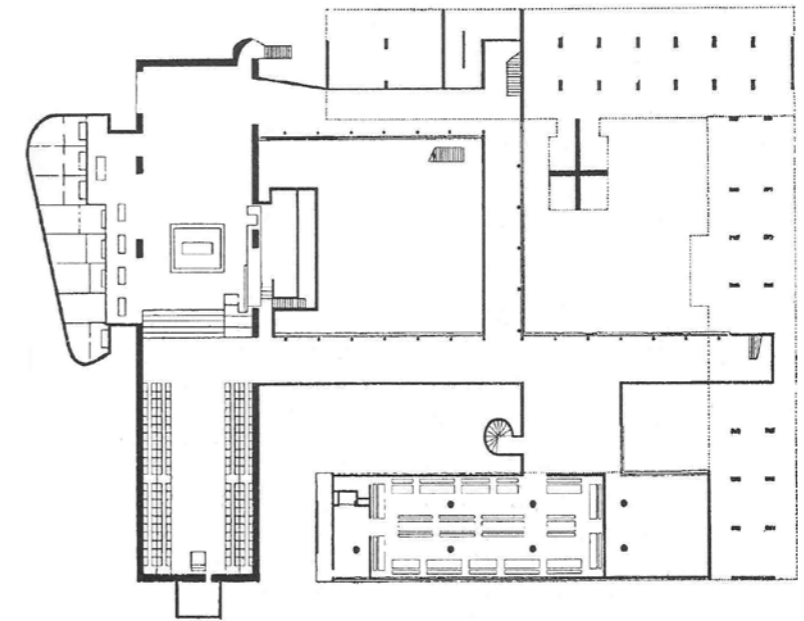
Where are the adult clubs, youth clubs and others that a city needs? A city like this could easily house four Baths of Caracalla, places where one can swim, exercise, learn to care for, and does not believe that health is just about the hospital. These institutions do not exist. We can offer; we can show the world the magnificence of our present freedom.

RECHARGE OF ENERGY
Refectory

Programme typology



Le Corbusier | Refectory photo
Couvent de la Tourette



Le Corbusier | Plan
Couvent de la Tourette

RECHARGE OF ENERGY
Refectory

Sensitive approach

The structure is generous, on account of the deeply collective role of the refectory.

The body of the building rolls away letting the void predominate, stability.

This notion of stability is boosted by the harmony of materials, which unites the body of the building and its furniture.

The space is high, words get lost and it is possible to talk freely and comfortably – no resonance.

Temperature adapts to exterior temporality in order to provide the ideal conditions to the mealtime.

Furniture plays here a particular role. It defines the room ambiance, risking taking over the body of the building.

It is a place where one can sit, where to remain stable. The preceding path implements this spatial generosity.

The refectory opens outwards that it admires or conquers at the discretion of seasons.

It is a communal space characterized by its meeting function; yet it does not impede a more reserved exchange.

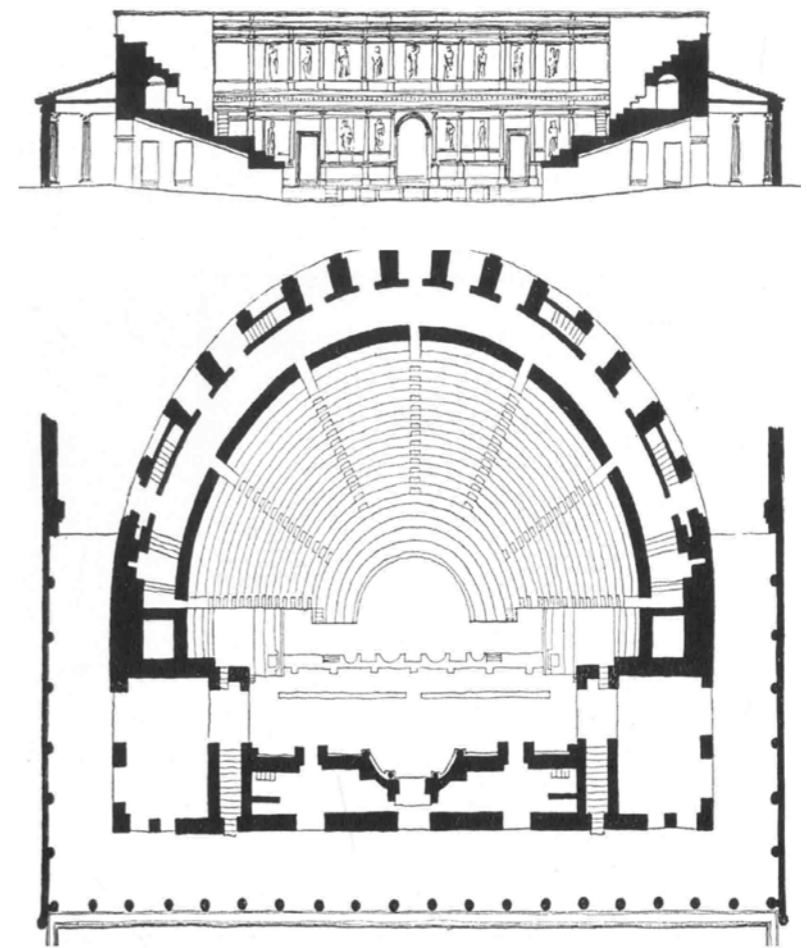
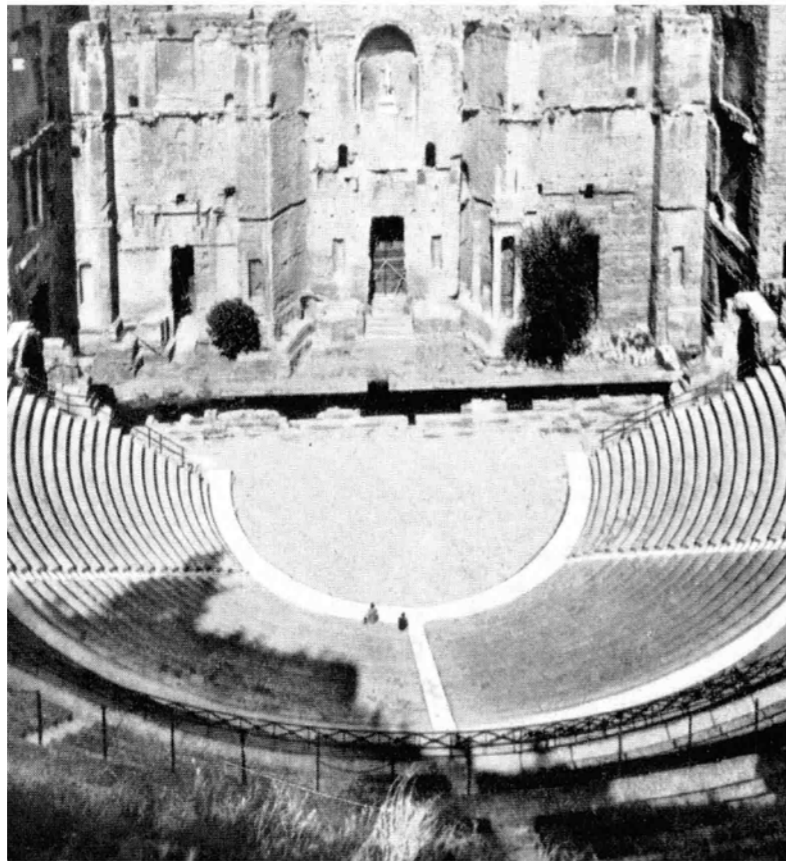
Its light, more adaptable, expresses temporality and is modulated according to seasons.



Federico Fellini |
Scene from the film «Roma»

TO SHARE
Amphitheatre

Programme typology



TO SHARE
Amphitheatre

Sensitive approach

The bench element materializes the space and becomes the predominant component of the body of the building.

Harmony of materials occurs as a dialogue and unity with the different spaces of the interface pole – simplicity, humility.

Acoustics here is essential; there is a search for acoustic quality and the enhancement of the speaker's location.

Temperature, homogeneous and controlled, expresses stability. It does not disturb the lecture and the upper part is not hotter than the lower one – good air circulation.

Furniture is simple, integrated – question of space unity.

It is a place where to sit, where to stand immobile, where to listen. Only the orator's performance is shown, visible from different angles.

There is ambivalence between the denial of the exterior that needs a projection and the possible opening of a theatre scene.

The amphitheatre is a shared space, characterized by its meeting function.

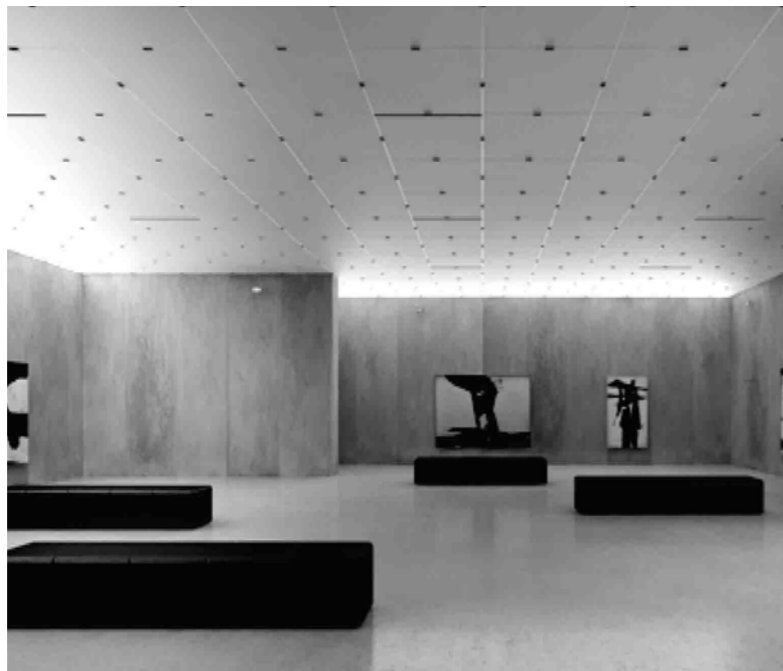
The contribution of light is controlled and modulated from total darkness to complete external light.



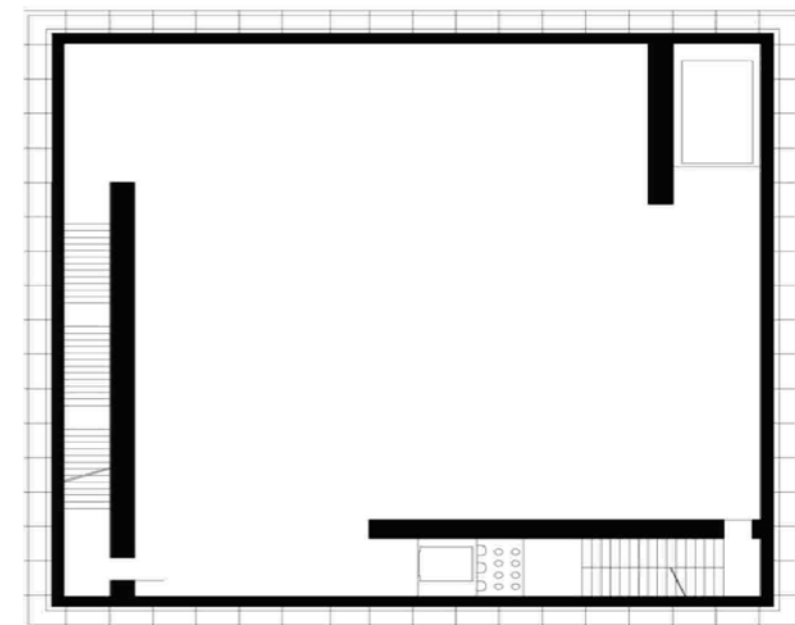
In Africa, the palaver tree is a traditional place of gathering, under which shadow discuss society life, village problems and policy.

TO SHARE
Amphitheatre

Programme typology



Peter Zumthor | Kunsthaus museum,
Bregenz, Austria



Peter Zumthor | Kunsthaus museum plan,
Bregenz, Austria

TO SHARE
Amphitheatre

Sensitive approach

The structure is discreet, it withdraws elegantly to improve, enrich the work displayed.

The harmony of materials is created through a dialogue with the unity of the different spaces of the interface pole – simplicity, modesty.

The show room sets up a contemplative silence that no one would dare to disturb, there is concentration.

Temperature is homogeneous and controlled.

Furniture is simple and discreet, it does not define space, but rather it submits to it, changing according to the exhibitions.

The circulation path towards the showroom can be shown. However, the show room is characterized by the freedom accorded to the exhibitor as to its circulation

We can find a dialogue between interior and exterior.
An outside exhibition space is possible – link to the landscape.

The show room is a shared space characterized by the notion of exhibition.
Yet, it does not go against personal and introspective contemplation.

Finally, light becomes soft and once more expresses consistency, but again the artist can play and modulate it.



*Ludwig Mies Van der Rohe |
Collage*

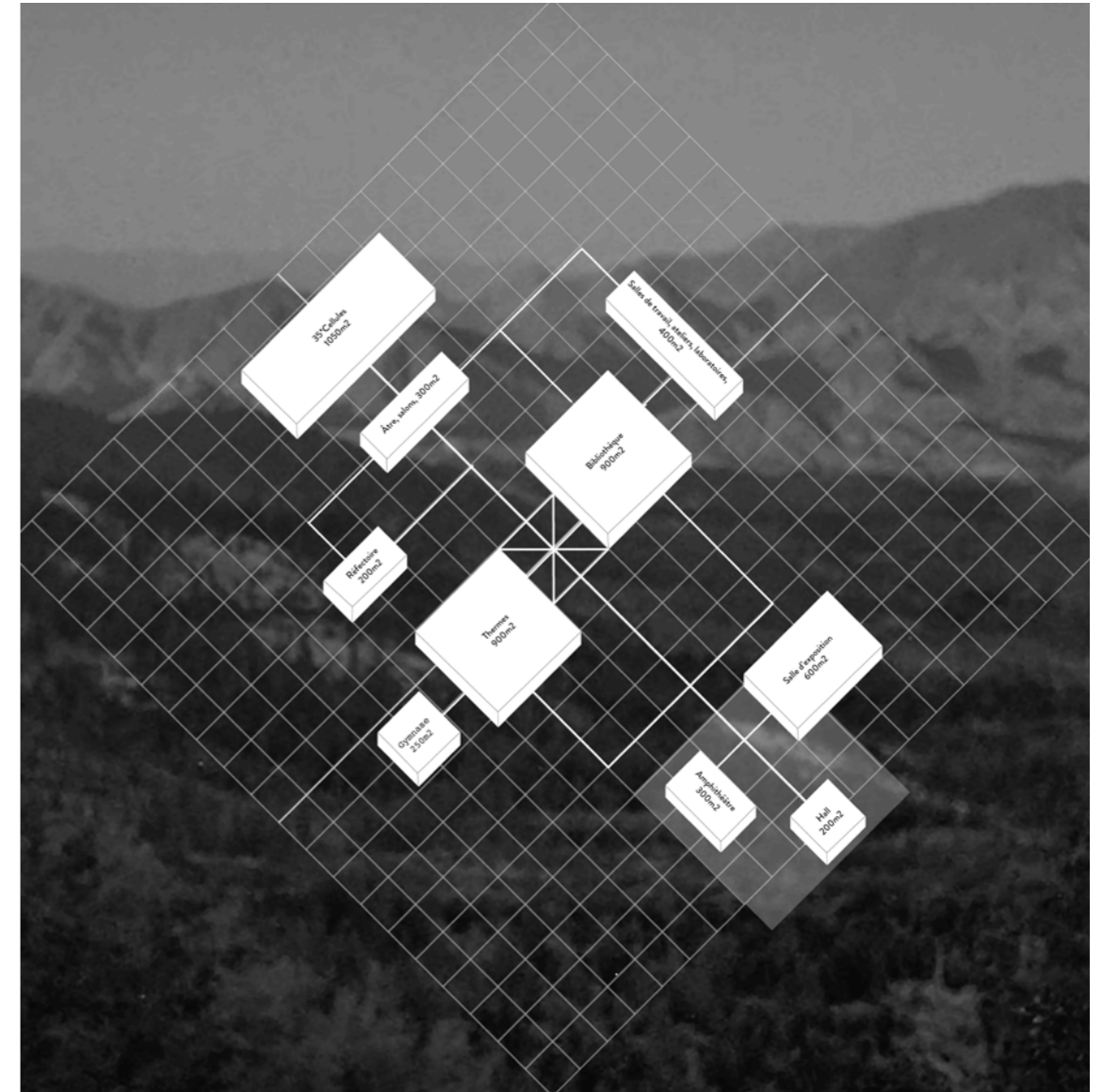
IV - A RESIDENCE – THE PROGRAMME

The different stages followed so far, from the analysis of historic references to the presentation of sensible notions, allowed me a well-considered and pragmatic development of the programme.

After having defined the number of residents estimated at 35: 17 artists, 17 scientists and 1 director, I was able to quantify the different spaces and specify their inter-relation, without neglecting the fundamental role played by the landscape.

1. Qualities expected

As I developed the programme I became conscious that the search of the site posed several important problematic. For example, the paradox between place of isolation and cultural vivacity, the need of outstanding geographic features (relative to water, nature, topography plus aura of the site (Walter Benjamin), alongside considerations of a subjective nature of our own sensibility like the manifestation of the four seasons that comfort our sense of passing time.



THE PROGRAMME

LIVE	1350 sqm	
35 cells of 30 sqm		1050
	1 room of 12 sqm 1 dressing room of 2 sqm 1 shower room/WC of 6 sqm 1 living room/office of 10 sqm External space	
Lounges		100
1 Main Fireplace Room		200
RESEARCH, STUDY	1300 sqm	
1 Library		900
	1 reception hall, entrance, facilities 1 storage room 1 audio-visual room	
20 working spaces		400
	2 large ateliers of 50 sqm with own point of water supply 3 ateliers of 30 sqm connected to a point of water 5 little ateliers of 20 sqm connected to the library 10 offices of 10 sqm connected to the library	

RECHARGE, RESTORE ONESELF (in relation to the body)	1350 sqm
1 Thermal bath	900
	1 reception hall, entrance, facilities 2 locker rooms, showers, WC Cold bath(s) Hot bath(s) Room temperature bath(s) Outside bath Steaming room (sauna, hammam...)
1 Gymnasium	250
1 Refectory/restaurant	200
	1 dining room of 100 sqm 1 kitchen of 50 sqm 1 storage room of 50 sqm
SHARE, open to the outside world	1100 sqm
1 Reception hall	200
	Entrance hall, facilities Administration
1 Amphitheatre	300
1 Exhibition space	600
	1 Storage room of 200 sqm 1 exhibition room of 400 sqm 50 sqm of which dedicated to audio-visual room

V - THE EUROPEAN SCENARIO - defining the cultur

Europe is at present in search of a shared cultural policy to shelter the feeling of a European identity. A European culture, as opposed to a single reductive culture that puts forward the diverse traits of a complex geographic legacy, is the prevailing aspiration.

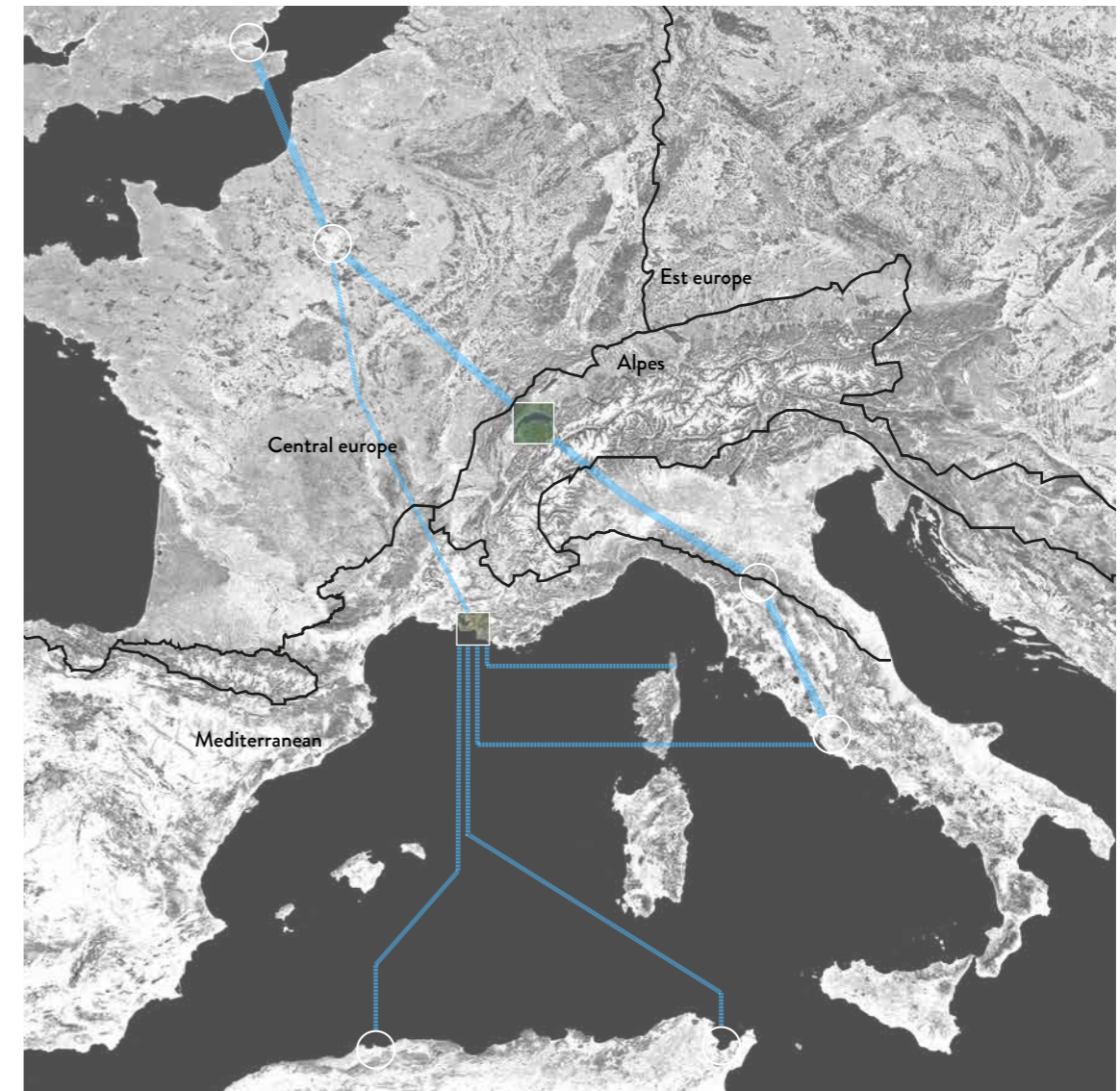
It is within this logic that our Residence finds its place. Along the development process, I thought that the idea of a cultural sponsorship programme for Europe could be one way of facilitating the concretisation of such a shared cultural policy. A sponsorship programme that would avoid all material constraints (food, lodging, etc.) for a given period of time for a selected number of thinkers from all disciplines who would then only have to exchange, share and entirely concentrate on their research.

However, the subject of the location clashes with Europe's multi-centrality... How to take into account the different cultures that enrich the continent without surrendering to an arbitrary organization? Mirroring Europe, the Residence naturally expresses itself in the same multi-centrality.

Similarly, to a single oversized programme I preferred a multiple response associating several reduced - scale residences, federated by a communication exchange system and seminars with a view to organizing a collective exhibition in the European capital of culture, pledge of the European influence.

Some ten sites have therefore been retained, not because they belong to an administrative area, but because they represent a European socio-cultural region that participates in the enrichment of the continent.

When developing the location of the programme, I hesitated between Lausanne and Marseille. Both were located within important and dynamic circulation axes. In the end, Marseille was retained because of the interesting questions raised by its hard climate and the attracting topography.



VI - THE SITE

Marseille Region

Most ancient city of France founded around 600 before Christ by Greek sailors from Phocaea, Marseille shines over the Mediterranean Sea. It is today the largest Mediterranean port and the fourth most important in the world.

The development of the city is representative of the duality that exists between the bottom and the top. Originally, down harbour areas were the most popular and cosmopolitan and the upper areas were those of the bourgeoisie and the church.

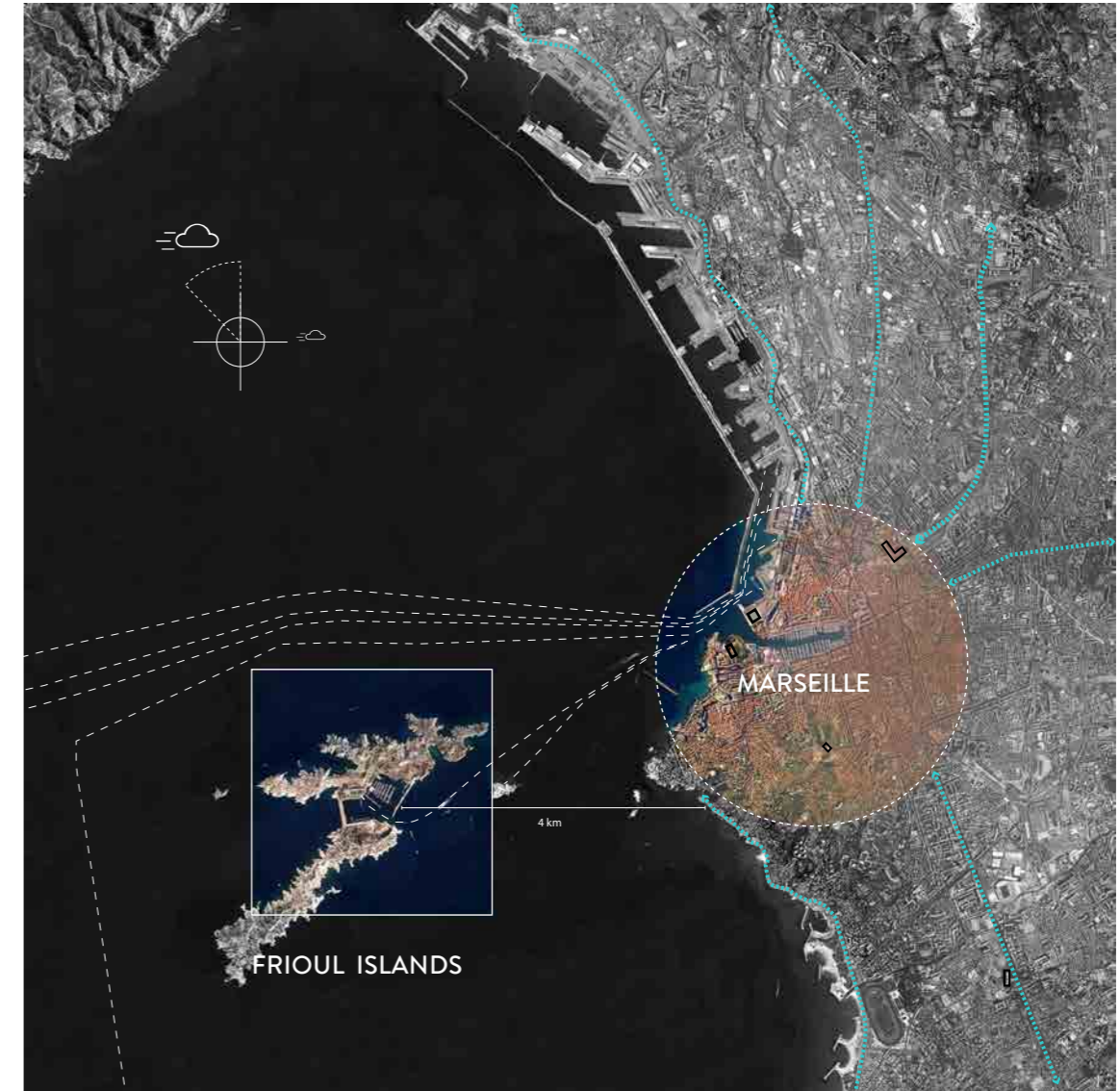
Projects like the reconstruction of the old port by F. Pouillions, the Euro-Mediterranean project, the MuCEM or the roof by Foster, have converted slums into outstanding cultural areas.

In addition to its important cultural role, Marseille is also the city that hosts the Aix-Marseille University, the regional academic pole for the Centre-South of France.

As a result, Marseille is a dynamic city experiencing a true cultural conversion. Often called the 'door of the world', as the entry and exit point of the immigrant population, it has developed a dense and compact urban fabric as can be seen in the old port area. And yet, in front of the density and congestion of the old port there is the Frioul archipelago, four islands, with only 100 inhabitants occupying approximately 200 ha.

Considering Marseille's expansion and its cultural conversion, the proximity of the Frioul archipelago (4 km only) becomes an attractive location for the development of a cultural programme that seeks isolation while remaining connected to Marseille's dynamism.

In addition to defining an intact and isolated space for the development of the Residence programme, Frioul islands pose the following questions: how can architecture occupy a natural landscape and respect it? And how, in a future urban development, could the Residence programme participate in the preservation and respect of such landscape.



CULTURE AND INFLUENCE



Marseilles' railway station St. Charles built as a cul-de-sac by Engineer Gustave Desplaces.



Nôtre-Dame-de-la-Gare, often named 'the Good Mother'.



Radiant City. Built between 1947 and 1952 by Architect Le Corbusier in St. Anne's 8th neighbourhood of Marseille.



Museum for European and Mediterranean Civilizations (MuCEM). Inaugurated on 7 June 2013 on the occasion of the Year for Europe's Capital of Culture.

THE SEA

Variation in the perception of the horizon: from the calm of the horizon to the vertical strength of the sea.



THE WIND

The rapid change of winds in the Mediterranean Sea offers a dynamic background.



VII - THE SITE

Frioul Island

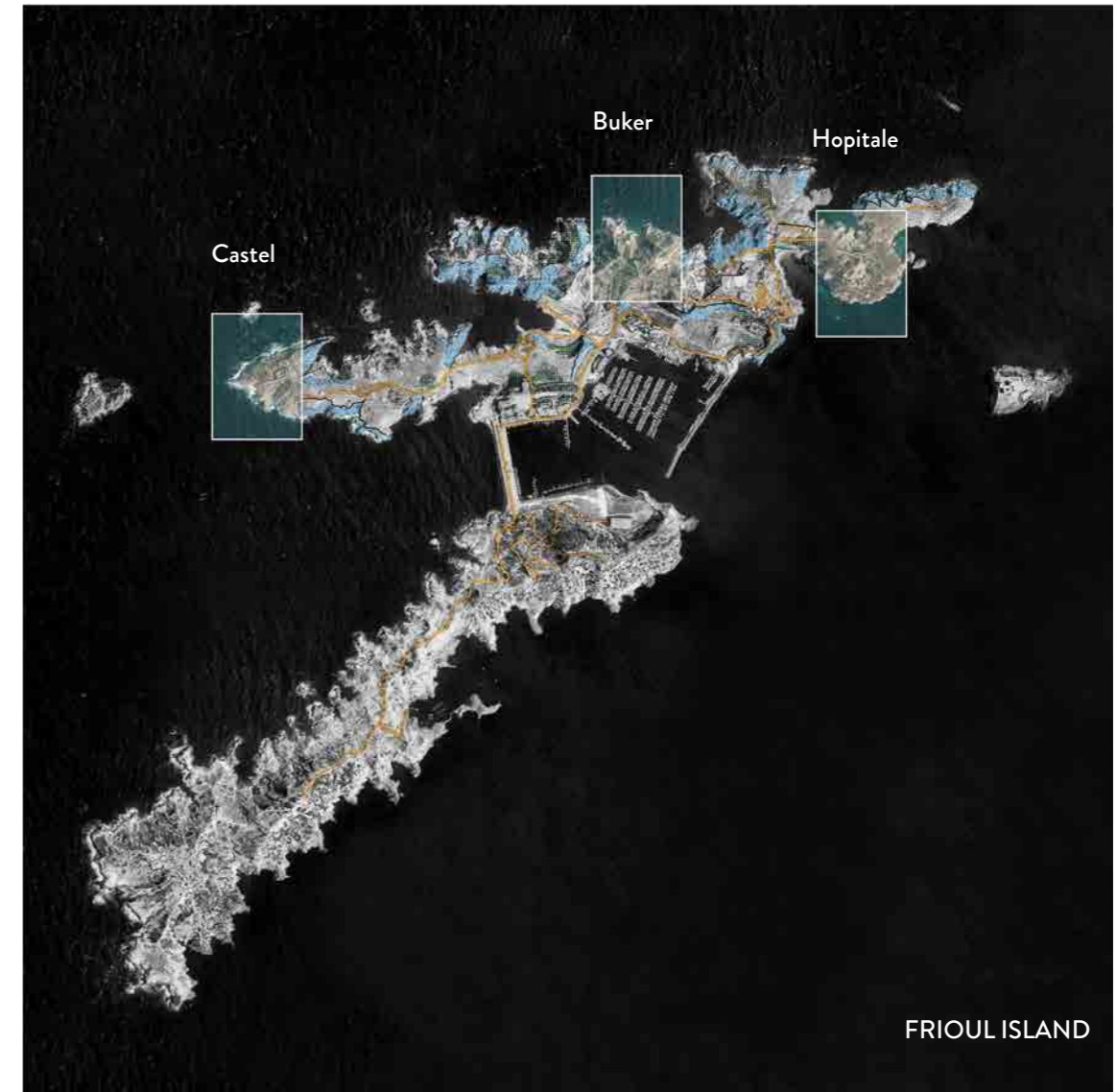
These Islands, because of their strategic position, have for long time constituted the advanced ramparts of the port of Marseille: each elevation had a military fort, there were batteries, trenches posts of observation scattered throughout the archipelago, built since the times of Henry IV to the German Bunker of the 2nd World War.

Today, the only aggression comes from the natural elements. In fact, weather conditions are particularly extreme and the wind and sea salts anesthetize the majority of the living environments. On the flanks of the most exposed cliffs have developed very resistant species that like salt (halophile); while on the flanks of the most protected cliffs more advanced ecosystems have arisen. In the strip below, six distinct natural ecosystems can be observed (photo of the natural environment).

A natural path connecting the different points of interest emerges through a landscape with harsh climate and extreme topography.

From this analysis, it is understandable that the project will have to establish a good dialogue with such complex topography in order to allow a path that will highlight the different components of the harsh climate so characteristic of the islands.

The programme dislocates and clashes with the landscape in different ways revealing the external reliefs and creating contact zones with different characteristics.



THE DIFFERENT ECOSYSTEMS OF THE FRIOUL ISLANDS



Coastal rocks

Nearest to the sea, the coastal rocks – subject to sprays – are covered by the so-called saltbushes (halophile plants) many of which are protected like the ‘saladelle de Provence’.



Scrubland

Behind the coastal rocks, grey-grass scrubland is also subject to sprays but less consistently. It is composed of haloresistant plants.



Compact rocks

On the most compact rocks, the phryganes astragalus are also made of haloresistant species, four out of which are characteristic and protected, namely: ‘astragalus de Marseille’, ‘plantain à feuilles en alène’, ‘passerines hirsute’ and ‘tartonraira’.



Lawns

Lawns in Brachypodium branching are often found in a mosaic fashion together with the coastal scrublands. Even if poor in terms of flora diversity due to extreme climate conditions, the conservation of this habitat is considered priority at the European level.



Leopard skin

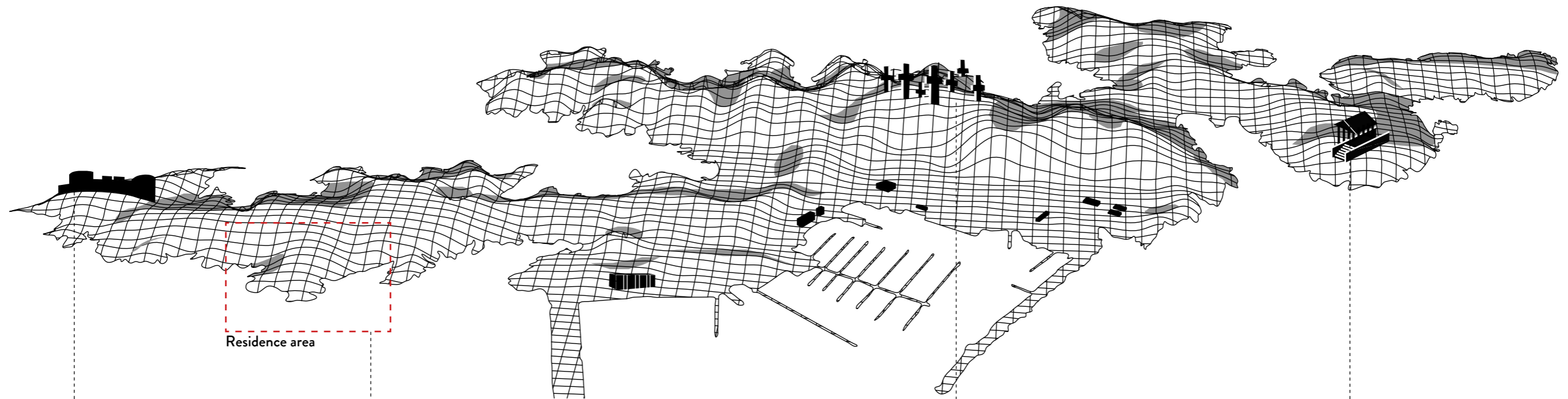
Protected from the Mistral wind, lentic and rosemary bushes, sometimes decades-old, form a leopard-skin type of vegetation. Behind a rocky protuberance, the rare Frioul pinewoods are characterized by the shape of the trees tortured by the winds.



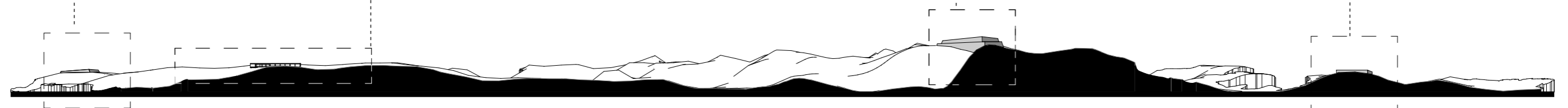
Cliffs

Finally the cliffs, protected from sprays and facing north, capture the humidity in the air. Also found are fruticose lichens (Rocella Phycopsis) and inside deep cracks and caves, the hart’s tongue, a fern nationally protected.

COMPLEXE TOPOGRAPHIE



THE HISTORIC POINT OF INTEREST / SILHOUETTE SECTION



VII - PROJECT DESIGN

Location and concept



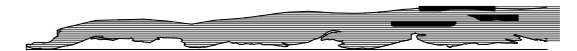
The road on this part of the island connects the village to Fort Briguintin. Between these two ends there is an unoccupied node; this will be the location where the Residence will be developed.



Three different blocks will be developed going downwards. The first, the interface block, will be near the road connecting the village to Fort Briguintin. The second longitudinal block will be the living pole. And the third will be the knowledge pole.

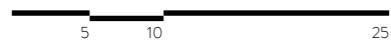
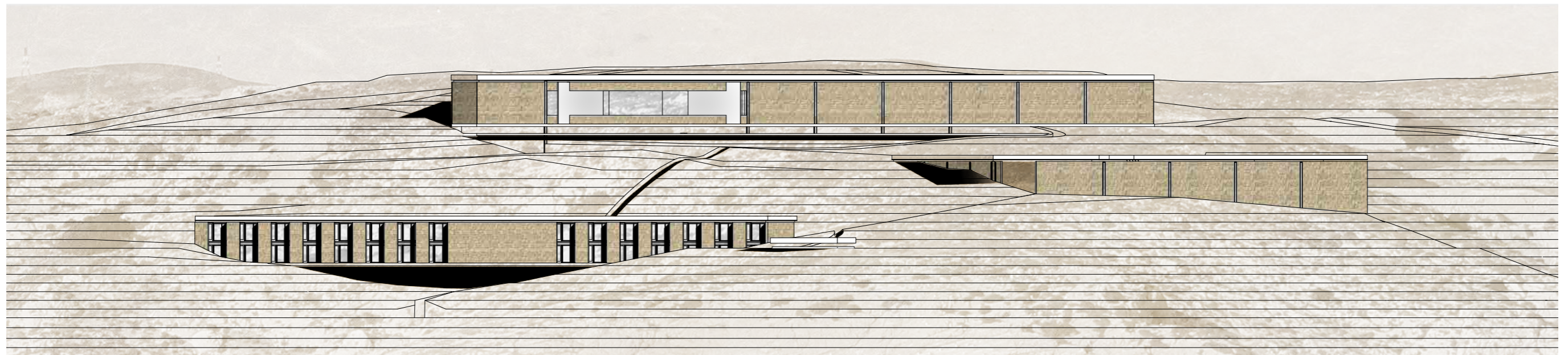


The materiality chosen is that inherent to the island, limestone. It will be a concrete frame of 8x6.



Volumes will be implanted respecting the horizontality of the site. The distance from one another will reveal the topography, by a turn of shadows, and the shock caused by their incrustation in the site.

ELEVATION



VII - PROJECT DESIGN

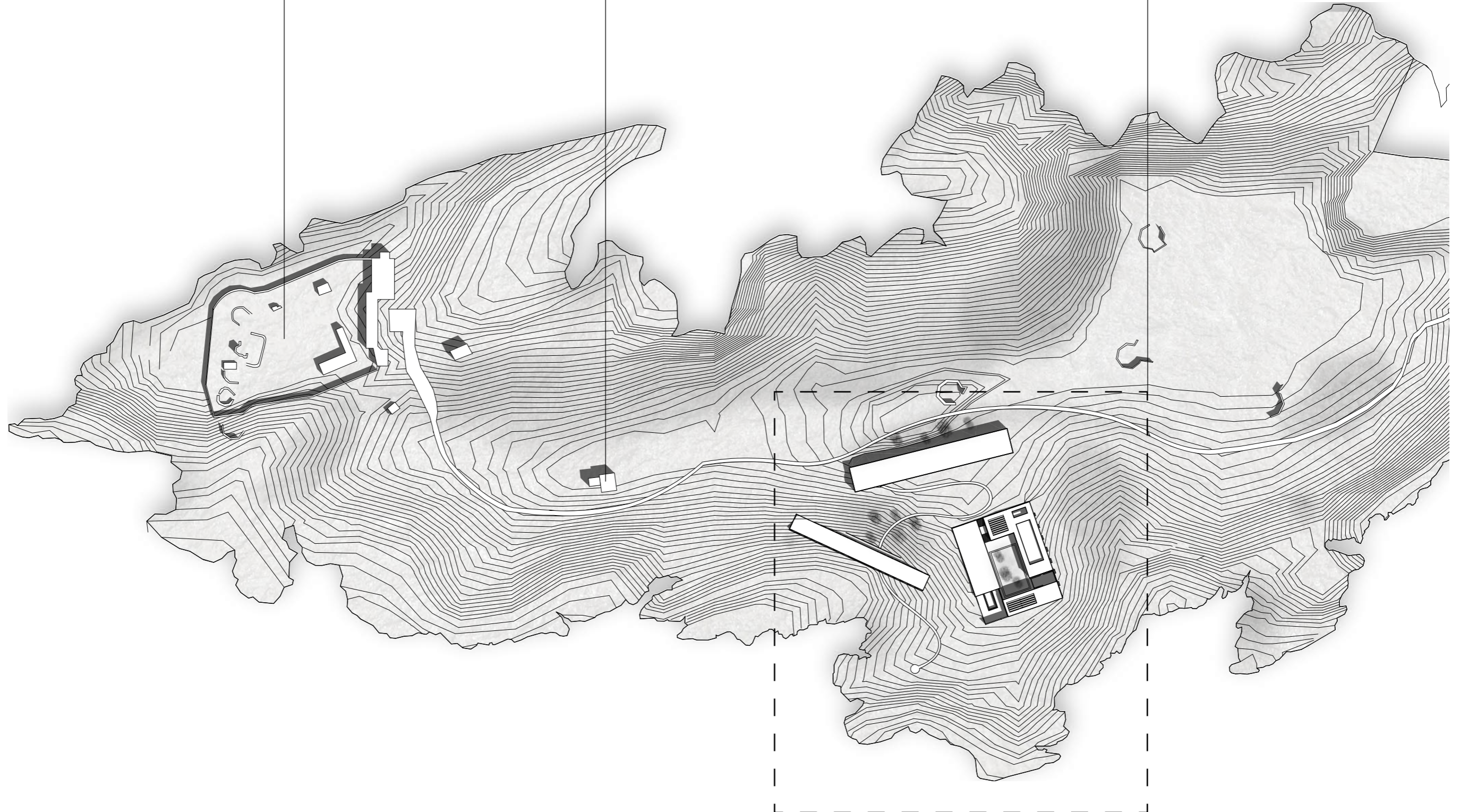
Master plan 1/2000



FORT
BRIGUENTIN

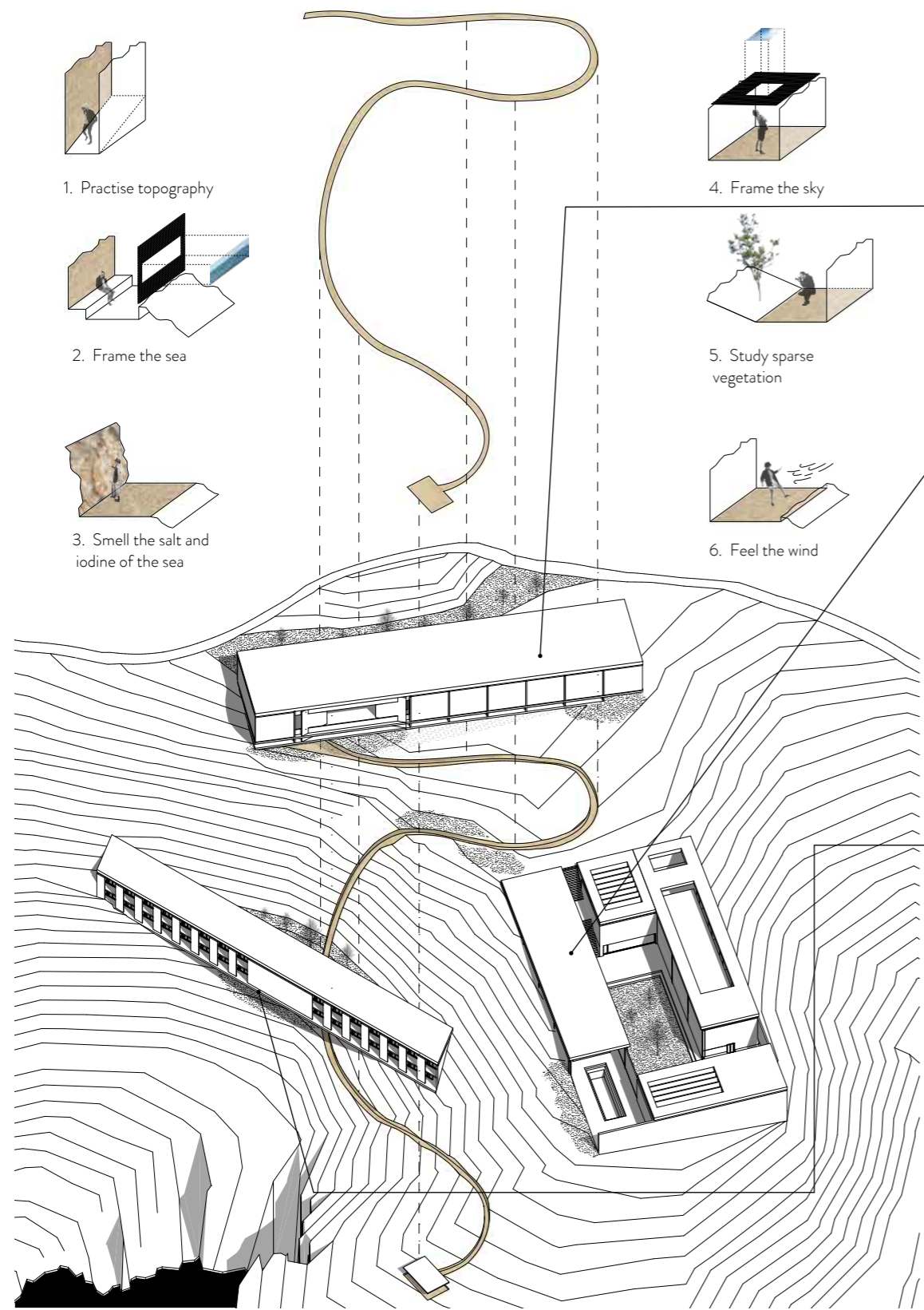
GERMAN
BUNKER

PROJECT
AREA

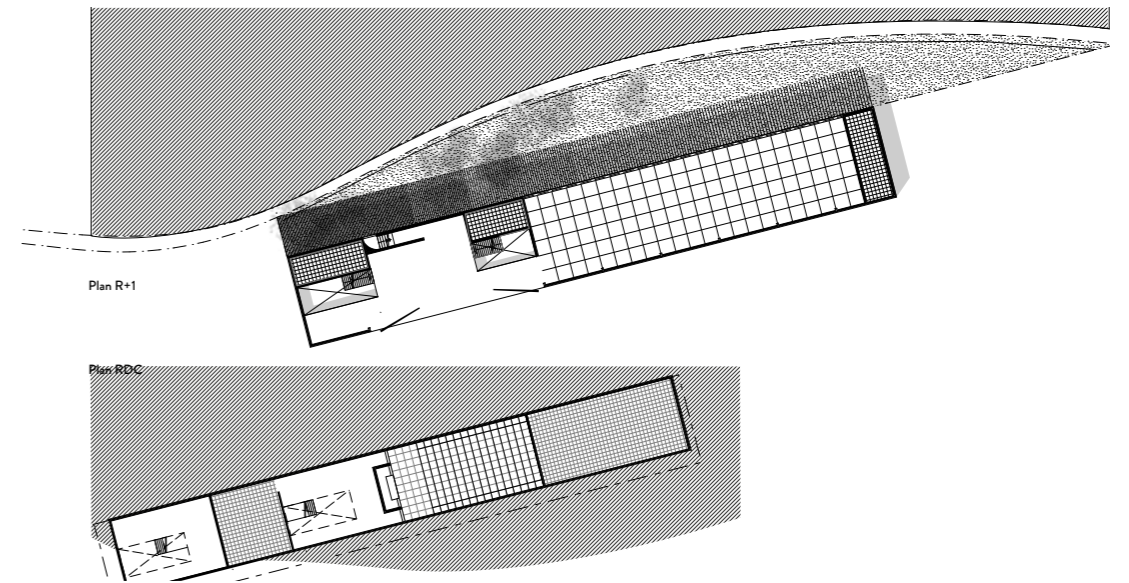


VII - PROJECT DESIGN

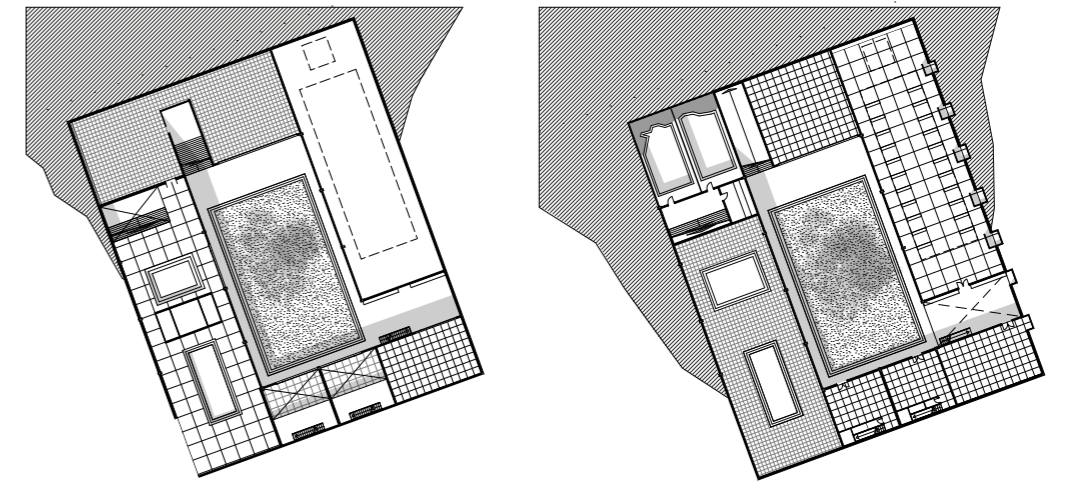
Creation of a green space nearby the buildings and topography 'in-betweens'.
 Creation of a natural path among the architectural elements that outline the landscape.



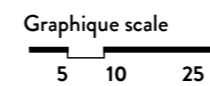
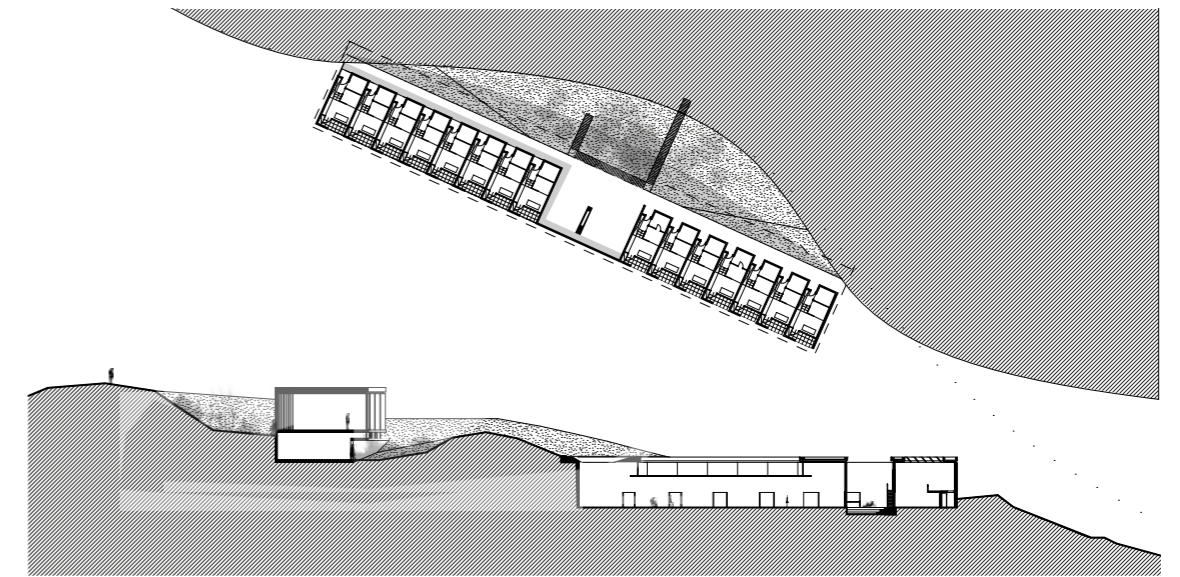
Plan of the interface pole



Pole knowledge and body

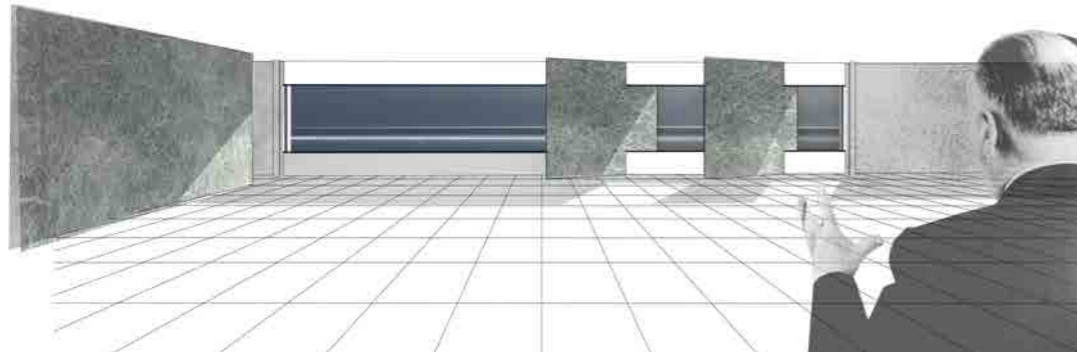


Plan of the lodging pole



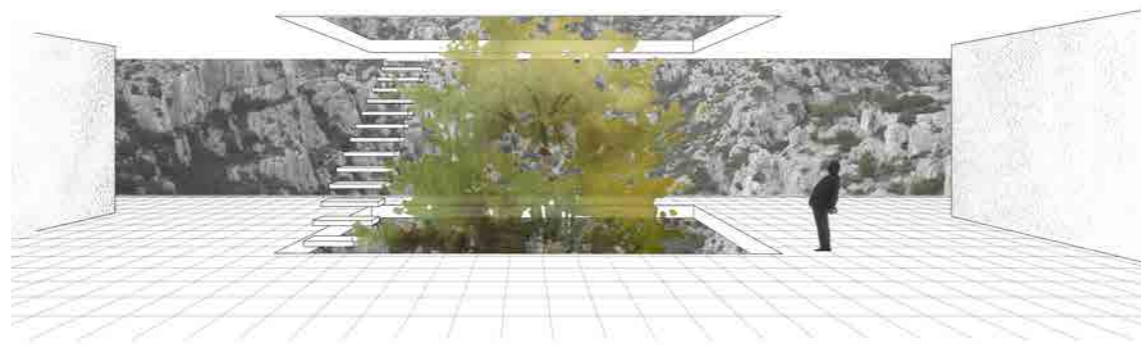
VII - PROJECT DESIGN

Perception of the atmosphere in the principal spaces of the Residence



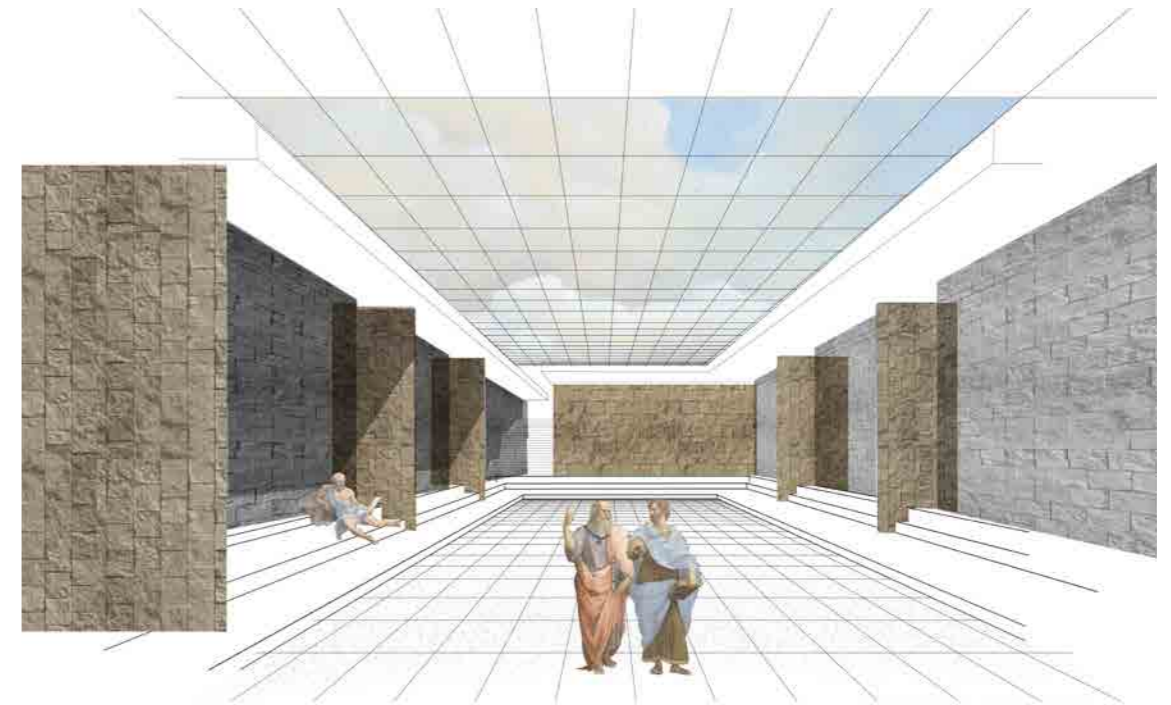
Architecture defines the external spaces

The framing designs the sea's horizontality. The sequence accompanies the path.



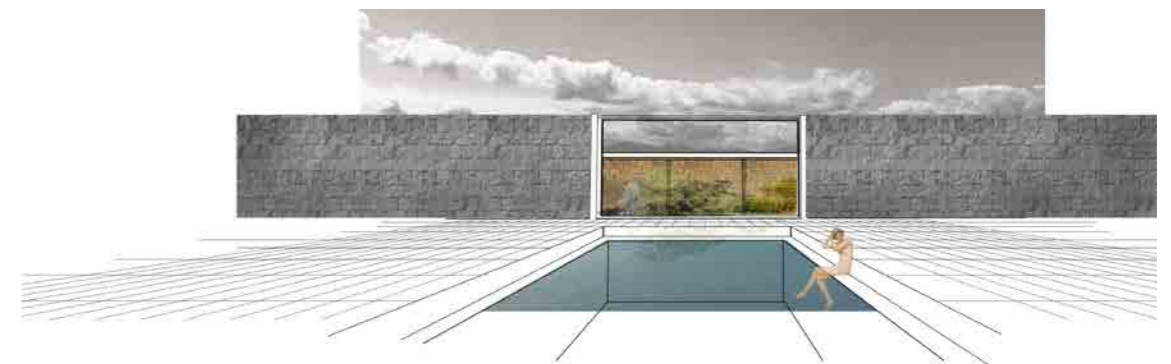
Topography defines the intermediate spaces of ownership

Here, the cells cloister provide a completely different frame than that of the sea, offering a moment of shadow and freshness



The patio, an outdoor surface that reveals a sense of inwardness

The patio in the body and spirit pole generates a sense of inwardness like in a cloister
Atmosphere is rough and frugal



The inside framing that expands towards the outside

Here, the inside thermal space expands towards various external areas without evincing people in the lower level

Conclusion

The idea of my ideal programme is vested in the response to a European identity, which is still to be defined. Not a unique identity but the sum of regional ones.

In my programme, Architecture inscribes itself in the landscape, respecting it and working with it. It works together with topography to magnify it and with natural elements – wind, sun, sea and sea salt – not only to find protection but also to promote awareness. These are the criteria of the proposed architecture that tries to respect the spirit of the site (*genius loci*).

Yet, this same architecture that changes depending on the site, responds to a larger and unique context, the European context. Architecture should therefore create spaces of the same quality, independent of the region, in order to allow thinkers of all disciplines to exchange and interact. These spaces are called 'spaces in between'. In between architecture and topography, we find the natural path, the patio, and the fireplace; these spaces are without a specific function, they will find their role in the desire of residents.

If in this case architecture answers to landscape and to a precise culture, it all the same preserves a common component among residents by means of the undefined or 'useless' spaces (George Perec, «Espèces d'Espaces») that allow exchange and interaction.

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