A LABYRINTH

(AS A) DENSIFICATION OF PERCEPTIONS

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Material Turn Studio

CHALMERS

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From boredom to anxiety, monotony to ennui – where is the surprise? How to disconnect?
Queuing, waiting, running, watching: everything needs to be fast, big, clear and efficient. What about the moment? - An overwhelming need for action leading to a weak soup of sensations. This is everything and nothing at the same time.

It is not easy to get lost anymore.

The labyrinth is a project, a multi-faced platform for experiences. This becomes a chance to escape from a context, but more importantly, from reality.
It offers the opportunity to get lost and questions the relation with our surroundings.
It aims to create and provoke physical interactions, to produce a variety of space with specific conditions. A dynamic conversation between hosts, architecture and environment is developed: a symbiosis emphasizing on the benefits coming from trans-programming elements.

The labyrinth is mainly curating an experience, producing effects. Users, in a state of wonderment, will discover or determine what they want the space to become thanks to their own ability to label activities and functions
.
The master thesis will go through our collective memory, it will introduce fiction and narration.
The project relies on precise description as an objective tool. Thus, it generates tangible media, projective narrative and interpretations.

The structure condenses confusion, entertains an immersive alternative journey where the unexpected is legitimized. It is mainly about playing with contradictory feelings, inducing emotions and exploring mystery.

The result is a labyrinth, injected in the city: a conflicting environment as a new territory for experiences.

ABSTRACT

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STUDENT BACKGROUND

PURPOSE

When contradictory feelings become another way to experiment, it leads to an opportunity to grasp and explore fantasy, mystery.

To study anachronous forms, an architectural element often disregarded by contemporary discipline, leads to explore and re-interpret typologies. This introduce a chance to challenge the formal language, playing with principles, attributes such as hierarchy, figuration, (im)permanence, thickness but also unexpectedness and the unforeseen.

How does a labyrinth (not/) align with the current ideology of architecture, the way we experience the space, the way we move – what we (want to) show, what we (want to) see.

It is a mysterious structure that deals with enigmas, myths, strangeness and paradoxical sensations. The labyrinth is something shared in everyone's culture, it is part of a collective memory - we relate to it in some way. Even before stepping into such a structure, we have expectations, we imagine it and fantasise about the unexpected encounter we might face, we invent a representation.

QUESTIONS

The notions of perceptions and sensations are addressed, encapsulated in this platform.

The labyrinth is seen as an invitation to get lost – an endless exploration, a detour - called la «Dérive» by the Situationists (G.Debord).

How to materialize (and provoke) sensations, deal with atmospheric perceptions, enhance physical interactions?

How to play with notions such as mystery and ambiguity?

By offering the opportunity to escape from a context, it gives a whole alternative to everyday-life, another territory, free of connotation and preconceptions.

Furthermore, the labyrinth is used as a physical manifestation of fiction intruding reality.

The last question explored is related to symbols and symbolism, which means playing with an icon, a figure. Especially because labyrinths are so deeply rooted in our culture (interestingly quite often in a negative way) and triggering specific memories and souvenirs (anxiety, fantasy, mystery...).

fig.1_ The Labyrinth in its site, model, 1:250

INTRODUCTION

AIM

The idea is to provide an alternative journey, an erratic place, a machine/apparatus encapsulating a polymorphous confusion that can be broken down into different events. If offers a variety of states, where you will find the opportunity to let yourself get lost.

REFERENCES

The thesis relies on multiple external influences (both formally and conceptually).
It is a notion that appears often in common culture:
In history & mythology (Egypt, Greece - Knossos, Medieval and cathedrals, churches like Chârtres, gardens...)
In a variety of media (literature, movies, pictures or paintings, games, ...). It deals with how people are perceiving space nowadays - how everyone is relating to labyrinths in some way.
Situationists such as Guy Debord (an alternative to everyday-life) and New Novel authors such as Alain Robbe-Grillet (a literal and objective description of fiction) will be explored. The project also relates to a phenomenological approach of architecture, a come back to physical interactions and their impact.

DELIMITATIONS

Two main ideas are developed. The labyrinth as:
_a densification of perceptions (pure and literal sensations, an al-chemical-biological experience)
_a mysterious platform hosting a variety of conditions and supporting fiction.

INTERESTS

The notion itself of a labyrinth can be controversial and deals with unpredictable features. It is an in-between state based on sensations and cultivating an inherent strangeness. Some of us will see a labyrinth as the representation of a nightmare while others will think of it as loophole - a hiding and safe place.
The narrative aspect is such an exciting and suggestive domain, where every single element can be part of bigger picture - a chapter in a story - an alter-reality.
Focusing on the experience created by a space is also addressing phenomenology, where isolated parameters have to do with a certain type of experience.

fig.2_ The Labyrinth in its site, model, 1:250

INTRODUCTION

METHOD

As a starting point, we will gather and build upon knowledge from all type of media. This database creates an archive of images, references, ideas, concept.

Then, the typology of labyrinths is explored, identifying their specificities parameters. This means to extract and isolate generative characteristics.
The strategy to the overall design the labyrinth relies on two main features, two inputs.
The first one, coming from these references from history studied earlier.
The second one makes use of the fiction and narrative as productive tools.
The next step involves sort of a «logical machine». An apparatus which transcripts a sentence into a design based on the main geometrical characteristics of references.
The juxtaposition and intersection of the different parts generate sequences, and the labyrinth actually becomes a maze.

The labyrinth is then confronted, and reacting to a context, to Gothenburg city centre.
The platform (with a great variety of spaces) needs to be inhabited. So, we inject conditions, create and condenses climates and atmospheres. Then, the space turns into a productive apparatus where processes are overlapping.

Within this structure, the next step is to change scale, address specificities: deal with experience and perceptions.
Formally, these two spaces are described using three media so that the reader has different tools to interpret the project.
The idea is to aim at a schizophrenic result - with a multi-layered identity where informations are superimposed and collide.
The three elements are: a narrative, an axon (a conventional architectural representation) com- bined to a precise description of the hosted conditions and an image (a visual interpretation).

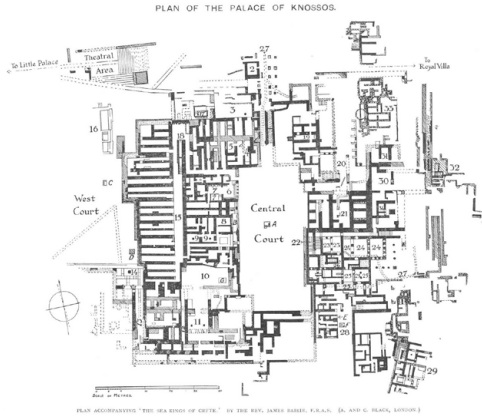*fig.3_ The Labyrinth in its site, model, 1:250*

INTRODUCTION
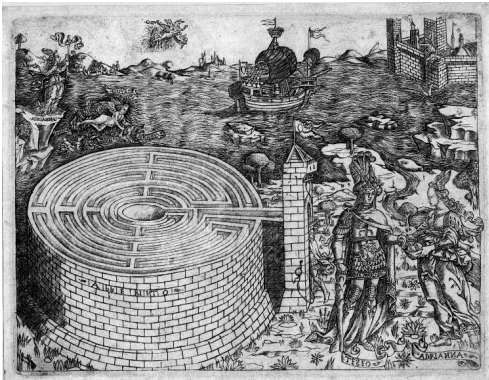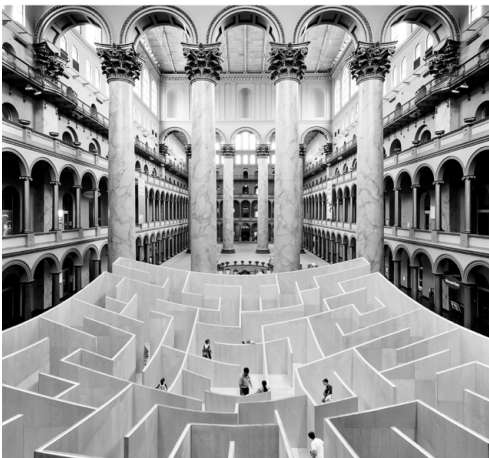
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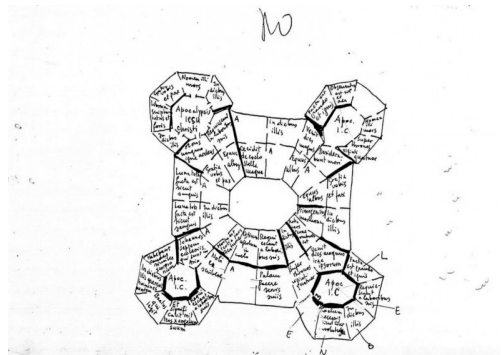fig.6_ Maze, BIG, 2014. (Picture from BIG)

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IMAGES/ LIBRARY #1
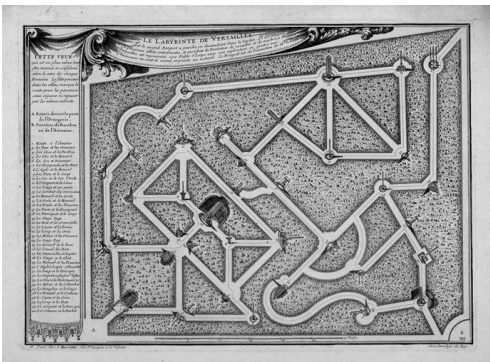
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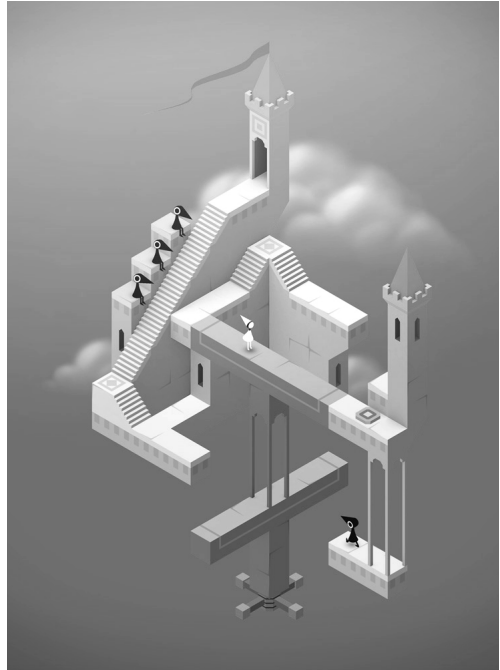fig.13_ Labyrinth in the Versailles garden, A. Le Nôtre, 1670

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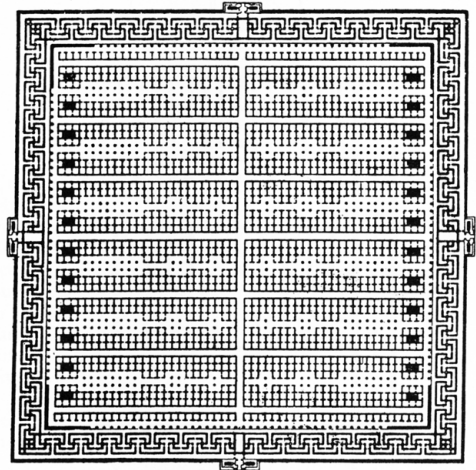
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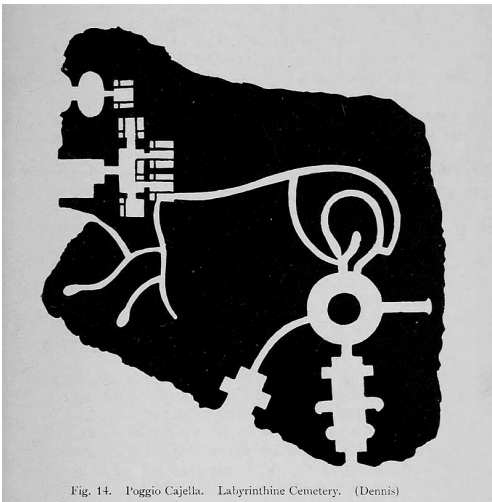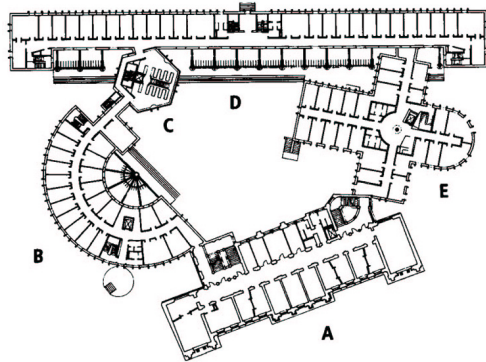Fig. 14. Poggio Cajella. Labyrinthine Cemetery. (Dennis)

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fig.25

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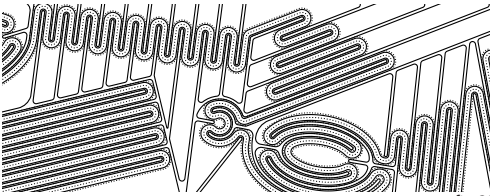(small size).

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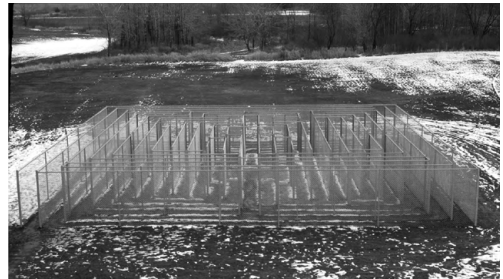
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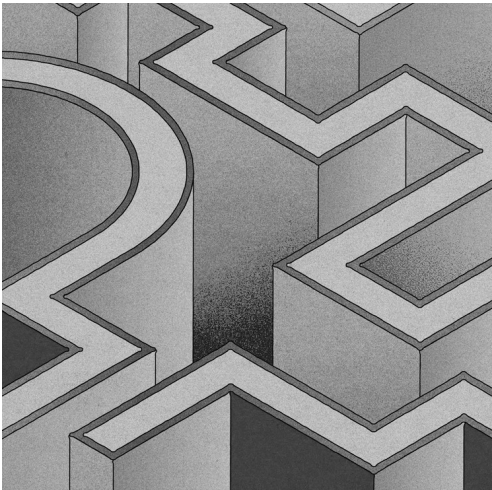
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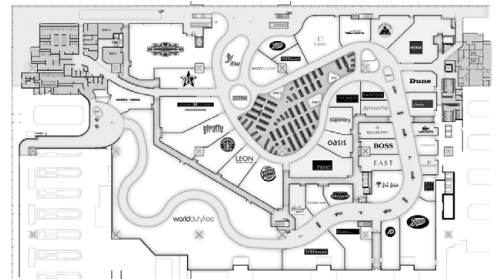
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fig.36

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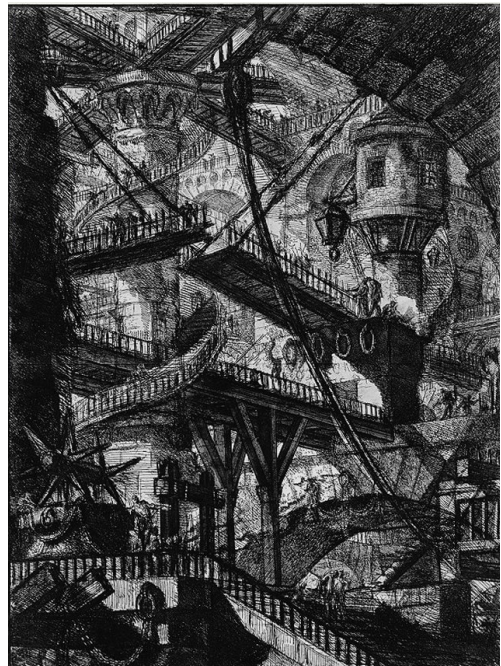
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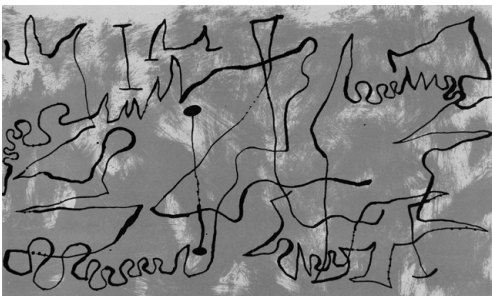
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IMAGES/ LIBRARY #6

From a purely formal and physical point of view, labyrinths are used as a tool to join, link two different forms, geometries or entities. It helps connecting two elements, providing continuity. It is an interface, a transition (eg. intestines for instance). It is located at the intersection, in-between two situations or states.

Historically, the word labyrinth comes from the Greek «Labrys» which - a double-headed axe. This motif is associated to the palace of Knossos in Crete, place known for hosti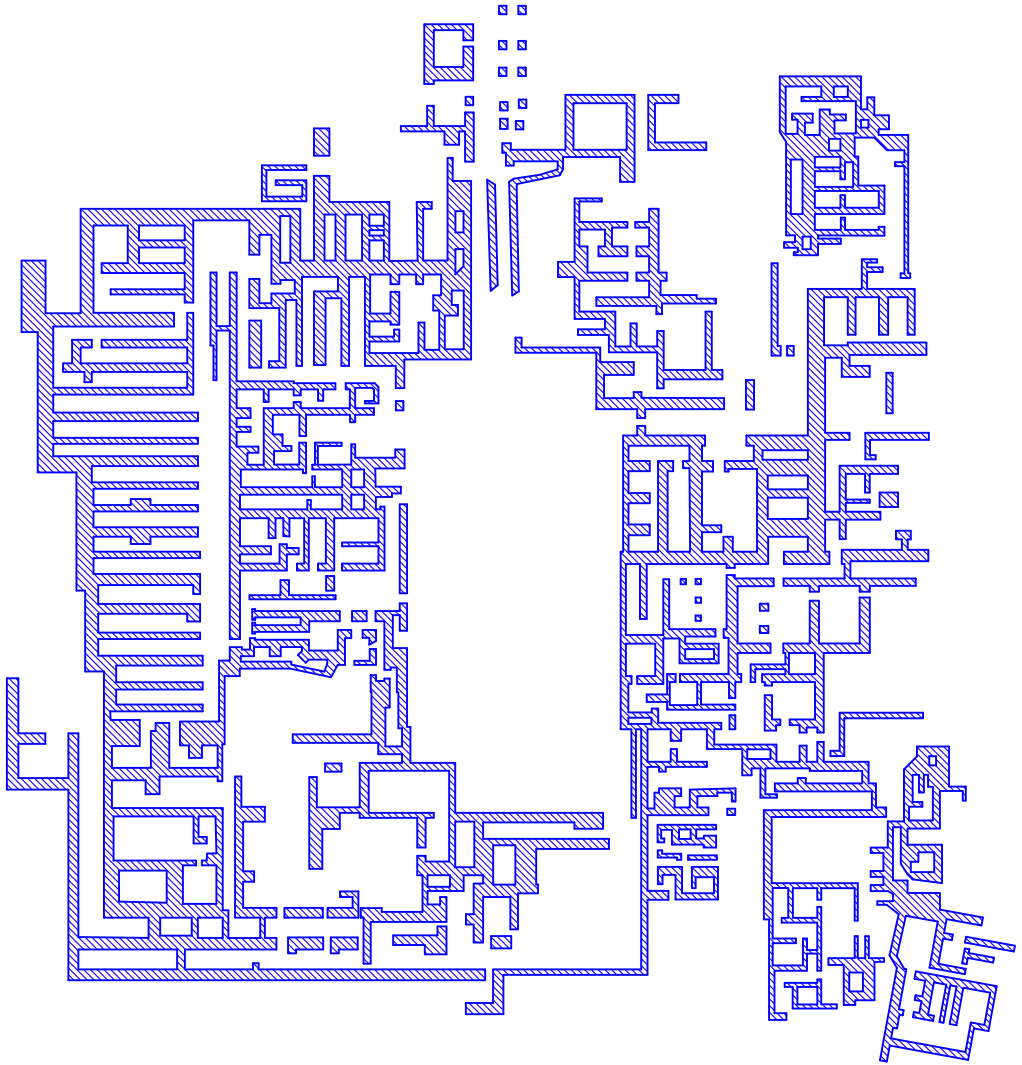ng the myth of Minotaur. The architect Daedalus built such a complicated structure imprisoning the Minotaur that nobody was meant to find his way out . It turned out that Theseus thanks to Ariadne's help has contradicted its inviolability.

Nonetheless, a previous occurrence of labyrinths is located in Egypt. A massive tomb with twelve courts and three thousands chambers is organized on two levels. This succession of rooms, and innumerable paths makes it almost impossible to navigate through the structure without a guide.

In ancient Greek and Roman history, a labyrinth defines a building entirely or partly subterranean, containing a number of chambers, intricate passageways and blind alleys that rendered egress difficult.

Labyrinth and his strong graphic identity became a pattern embedded in culture that we can find on pavements and mosaics. Through its monocursal route it may primitively symbolize the essence of life: from birth to death, following the path of life.

Medieval labyrinths appeared as pavements in cathedrals and churches. The path, symbol of pilgrimage leads to the centre and its supposedly salvation. During European Renaissance it occurred in formal gardens, mainly as entertainment. It consists of a rigorous system of alleys and parallel hedges, a natural ersatz. An artificial landscape where lovers could find themselves hidden for prying eyes, a territory of temptation, desire and mystery.

In the XXth century until today, labyrinth mainly became a form of recreation that we can find in amusement parks, introducing a commercial aspect to entertainment.

Last but not least, there is a difference between the two terms maze and labyrinth. While a labyrinth is monocursal, which means that only one path leads to the destination, a maze on the other hand is multicursal, it is a network of interconnected routes. This means that you might never find your way out; it is a real confrontation with the unknown.

fig.43_ Plan - Palace Knossos, 1900BC

**BACK TO BASICS
FACTS / PURPOSE**

«That was all she dreamed about... Escape»
Paris, Texas.
Wim Wenders, 1984

As a reaction to our overwhelming need for safety, the labyrinth is a place to escape, a provocative environment that needs to be experienced; a mirage. There is a chance to get away from the increasingly predictable and monotonous experience of everyday-life.

«All that once was directly lived has become mere representation.»
Guy Debord, La société du spectacle, 1967

The dissolution of the body and physical interactions seems to become an universal disease. Boredom is another symptom and the cure might be the spectacle. Unfortunately, the spectacle only provides an illusion, a representation of reality. The dichotomy between the dreamed life and the (real) life is getting critical.
What about our true desires and fantasies?
Are they still belonging to us or are they a product of society?
The space created is free of connotations, free to be interpreted, free to answer a wish, a necessity or a desire.

«Les murs d'enceinte, du labyrinthe s'entrouvrent vers l'infini.»
Valse de mélodie,
Serge Gainsbourg, 1971

Within the fantasy, everything becomes possible. A territory for unforeseen enabling (emotional) disorientation, a living fantasy implemented in the city. The imagination will do the rest, the fiction slightly starting to invade and ideally merge with reality.

«Nature becomes the last luxury where we can still get lost.»
Gaston Rébuffat (Alpinist), 1947

As a result of our alienation for rationality, everything tends to become an artifice, a man-made product. This is the Anthropocene. The culture of gardens (nature's domestication) is a symbol of domination over the environment. [Interestingly, nature and forests were often seen as dangerous places populated by thieves, witches and ghosts.]
The development of a dynamic interactions between users, architecture and the environment (a symbiosis) can lead to a holistic approach. These intersections would produce benefits while challenging our paranoia for dangerous and uncontrolled features.

«The success of the story […] lies in its ability to be interpreted and understood , so that it might take on a personal level for the reader.»
Poétique de l'espace, Gaston Bachelard, 1982

Thanks to a variety of media, the project embraces a schizophrenic result - a multi-layered identity. In this disorder, the idea is to engage the reader to perceive, triggering memories and imagination.
The narrative leads to interpretations.

«The only important 'character' is the spectator. In his mind unfolds the whole story which is precisely imagined by him.»
Alain Robbe-Grillet,
in the essay «French Letters: Theories of the New Novel», 1967

The spectator, the user, the host needs to put together a puzzle. It is mainly about imagination and the (paradoxically mental) experience. The precise description is a fundamental tool. It creates specificity and guarantee the spectator to objectively understand the content. By deconstructing, and isolating elements of the language, the narrative becomes pure and literal sensations.
Thus, the host has all the necessary informations to interpret the scenario, the project.

«La ville, l'Etat devront désormais ménager un certain nombre de lieux vacants, dans le seul but de petites actions vicieuses, libertines, proprement luxueuses dans les pertes de temps qu'elles occasionneront aux citoyens.»
Règlement, in Vice,
Hervé Guibert, 1991

A new platform is created in order to trap leisure and pleasure.
The body - awaiting for fiction - will respond to situations (and their inherent precision). The project focuses on a conversation between body, culture and place. It is enabling interactions, adapting to the evolving society - a home for everything.

BACKGROUND /
INVENTORY & CONTEXT
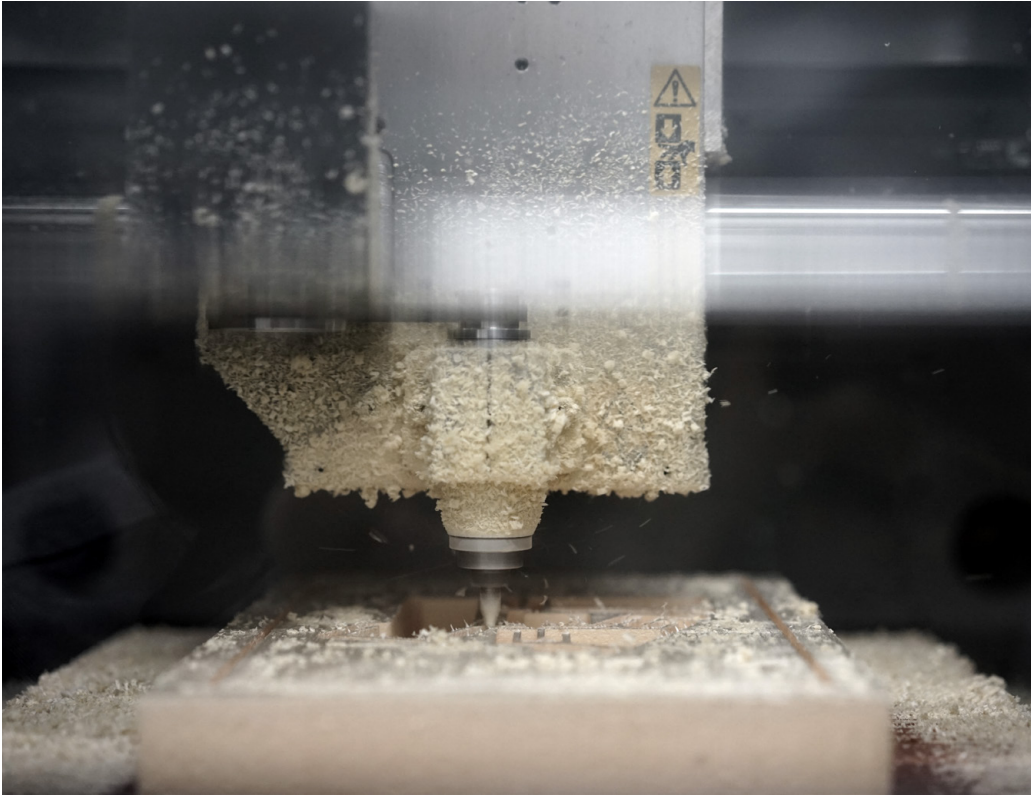
fig.44_ The process - CNC milling / Foam

**REFERENCES
+ PROCESS**

Cemetery in the hill Poggio Cajella (subterranean/hidden cemetery)

Sepulchral purpose
Ritual - no visitors
Protect valuable tombs from intruders (grave robbers, profaners) / defencee-protective strategy
Not being able to discover the way out if not accompanied by someone who knows the place

Succession of rooms (tombs)
Network of corridors, rooms, dead-ends
Variety of forms, a rhizome - no hierarchy in the journey

Succession of elements without an overall planning

Excavations
Passages extending in several directions into the heart of the hill
Stone, mass structure

_Opportunity in the excavation process (void and mass) and the inability to grasp the cemetery in its entirety
A «poché» logic

fig.45_ Model, foam, CNC mill
Cemetery Poggio Cajella, Italy, 500 B.C.

REFERENCE #1
CEMETERY OF POGGIO CAJELLA

Cnossian labyrinth as a pattern regulated by geometrical principles

Geometrical figure - rational
Repetitive
Generated by the repetition and tangency of circles to generate the geometry

Unicursal path from the outside to the centre - point of «release» - and then using the same way to get out

Circular walk - repetition of the same centralized path
Same movement - length gradually reducing

_Opportunity in the thickness / poché coming from the geometry - result - unintended, unpurposed and not used - profitable lost space

fig.46_ Model, foam, CNC mill
Cnossian Labyrinth pattern

REFERENCE #2
CNOSSIAN LABYRINTH

A temporary walking house

Located in a largely vacant and
unplanned site
Everything is temporary and a result of
the activities hosted on site

Existing path, intersect and link the
elements of the vacant site
Path created by the circulation of
pedestrians - walking trajectories

Overturning the antinomy between house
and street - house becomes the path
A continuous space - activities / elements
adapting / displayed along the geometry

Formal research preceding the
functionality
Content will adapt to the gesture

_Opportunity: design ruled by the plan (as
a sacred geometry) with elements
Form performs as architecture
Journey creating situations enabling
different activities

fig.47_ Model, foam, CNC mill
project: «Trail House», Anne Holtrop, 2009

REFERENCE #3
«TRAIL HOUSE»

Pavement in the Chârtres Cathedral
(France)

Ritual
Devotional mediation
Symbol of the long and tortuous path
followed by pilgrims - a way to reach
absolution
Walking altogether along the same path -
pilgrim

Circular
Geometrical and regulated
Constructed with a repetition of circles -
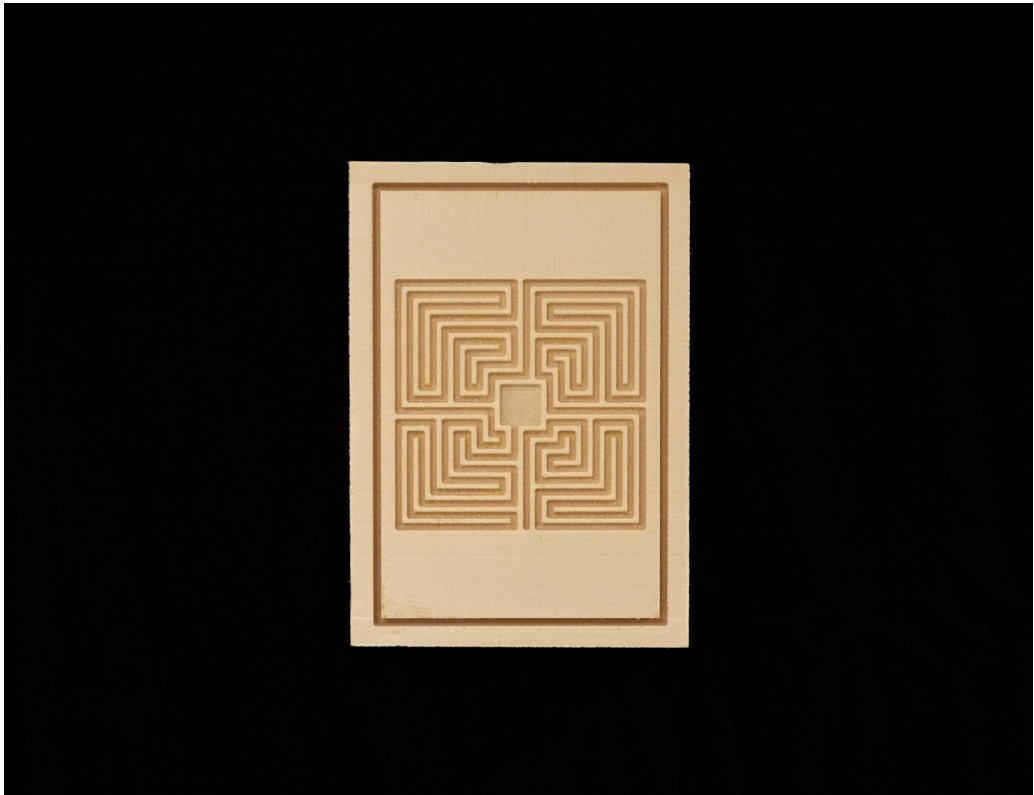defining order - homogenous aspect
Stone flooring pavement

Unicursal path from the outside to the
centre and its niches - point of «release»
(reaching absolution) - and same way to
get out

_Opportunity in the geometrical
perception - niches and repetition
Smooth angles (seamless path) -
continuous

fig.48_ Model, foam, CNC mill

**REFERENCE #4
CHÂRTRES CATHEDRAL**

Roman labyrinth as a pattern regulated by geometric principles

Popular pattern used during the throughout the Roman Empire as mosaic flooring

Meander-type
Figure - symbol
Regularity and repetition -
Orthogonal grid
Composition and clarity (4 units - 4 axis of symmetry)
90 degrees - changing directions - only short straight paths - rhythm
Unicursal path from outside to the centre

- point of «release» - same way to get out

Centralized room/space
Initiatic feature

_Opportunity created by automating the process of the model (constraints): inability to get sharp corners
The result is a smooth geometry (seamless path)

fig.49_ Model, foam, CNC mill
Roman Labyrinth pattern

REFERENCE #5
ROMAN LABYRINTH

The Overlook maze, an entertaining structure in a (fictional) prestigious Hotel

Escape the context / getting lost in the maze
Desire to locate the centre - «treasure», release

Hedge and alley - orthogonal system
Thick opaque hedges - vegetation
Central garden with benches
Invitation to have a pause
Multicursal path
From outside to the centre - several path to reach the centre / get out
Uncertainty to reach the centre

Choice, memory
Learning by trying (experience)
Decision-making process / reason
Establish a strategy requiring tests

_Opportunity in the chance / choice - multiplicity of experiences
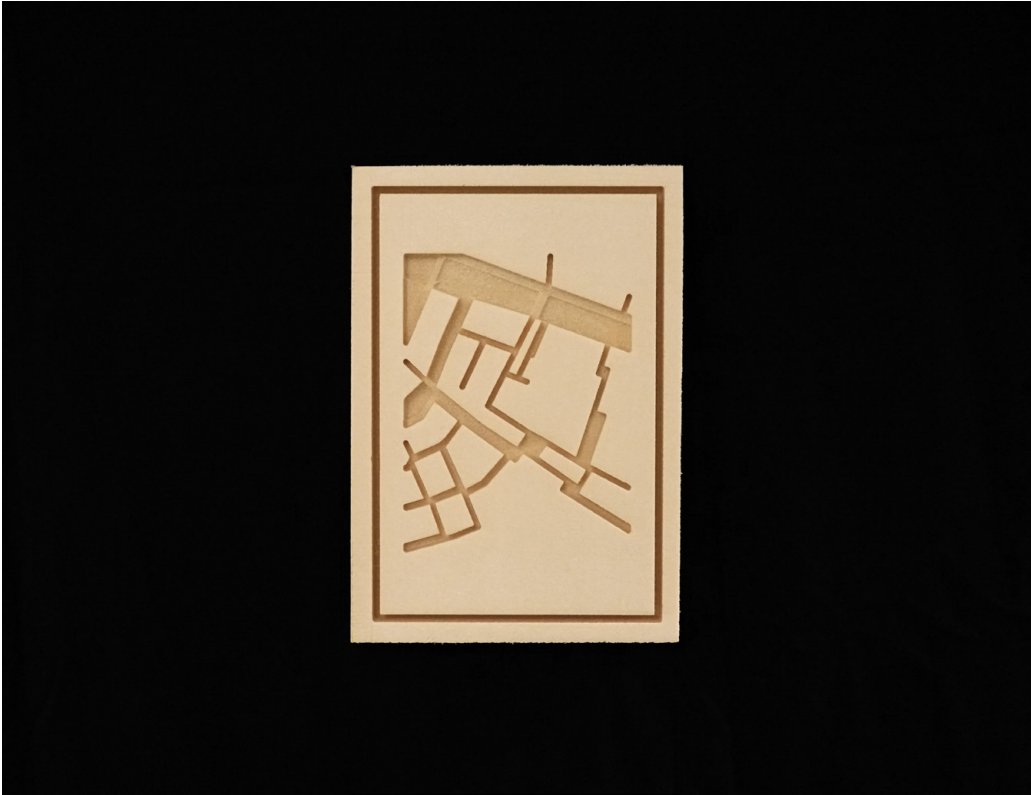Several ways to reach the centre
Delight coming from the gradual understanding of the labyrinth - solving a physical problem
Understand the logic of the labyrinth thanks to the experience

fig.50_ Model, foam, CNC mill
The Shining, S. Kubrick, Warner Bros, 1980

REFERENCE #6
THE OVERLOOK MAZE - «THE SHINING»

Thick and irregular medieval urban fabric of Venice

Originally built as a refuge, an escape from the mainland - in the Venetian Lagoon to be protected from invaders (Barbarians)
Result of the dynamic development of the city on small islands - no overall urban plan
Geography of the land would offer better protection against invaders

Intertwined networks -
streets / canals - dense and rich urban fabric

Shortcuts - dead ends - detours
Irregularity and uncertainty
Richness of experience
Moving between two points

Multiplicity of itinerary to get from one place to another, opportunity / chance to encounter the unforeseen - «Forgotten» squares, hidden spaces - researching the authentic

_Opportunity in the richness of itinerary offered
Multiplicity of path between two points - alternative journey, and multiple experiences

A house lost in the vegetation
A house without a façade

Blur limits between inside/outside
Escape from a context - «mis-location»
- alienating the common ideology of a
«home»

A labyrinthine plastic mesh controlling/
protecting from the vegetation
A clearing in the core of an over-densified
forest/vegetation - being surrounded,
inside a structure
Excursion from the center (the main
building) to the outside (the «wild»
nature) - rhizome situation - development
in different directions, no hierarchy
A path opening and narrowing to create
spaces - variety of conditions depending
on the dimensions

_Opportunity: Introducing contradictory
features
controlled/uncontrolled +
safety/nature
Play with two different geometries/
logics: the man-made design of the mesh
as a protection from the unpredictable
development and densification of the
vegetation

fig.52_ Model, foam, CNC mill
project: «Spidernethewood», R&Sie(n), 2007

REFERENCE #8
«SPIDERNETHEWOOD»
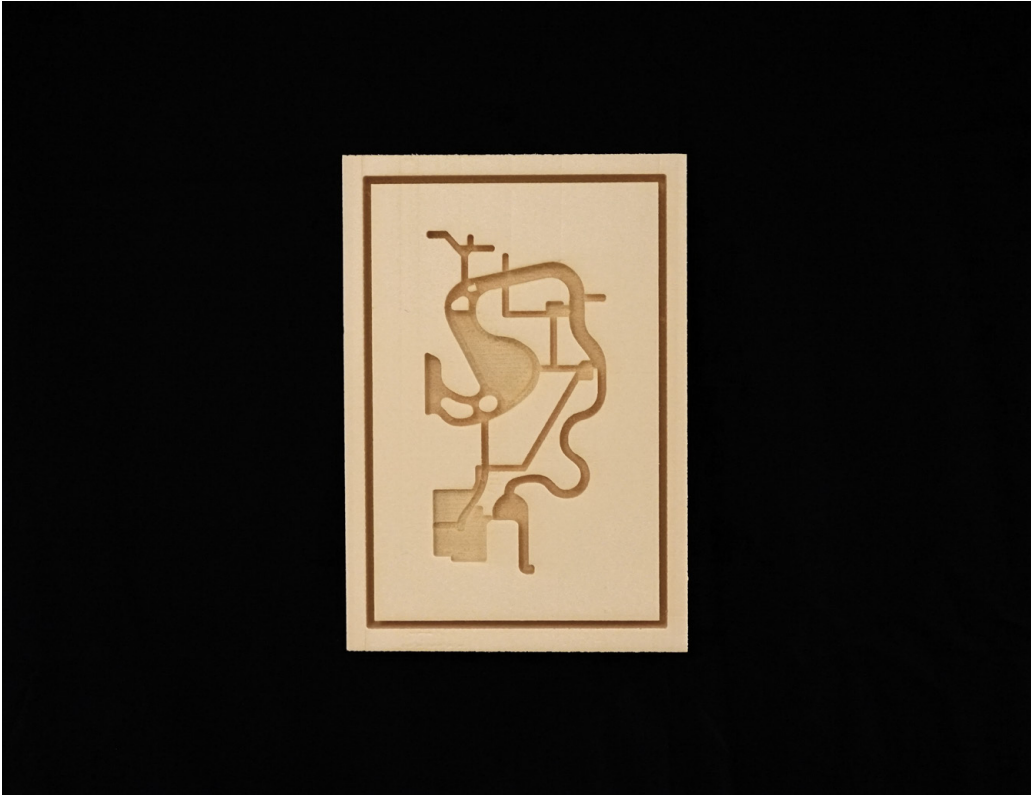
A shopping maze implemented in in Stansted Airport

Answering to the lack of people buying from the airport (due to the hypnotic view towards the planes)

A structure controlling flows and views From the security check to the boarding gate (going through the shopping «duty free» labyrinth)
Commercial activities hosted along the path - another purpose - forget the main functional idea: a journey between two points
Providing enclosure - enhancing the shops density
Central waiting zone, isolated from the outside, surrounded by shops

Two networks of flows: public (undulating along the shops) and private (functional and orthogonal)

_Opportunity: in the efficiency of the use of space (from a capitalistic/profitability point of view)
Forgetting the real destination - deviating from the intended journey - ability to disrupt, distract

fig.53_ Model, foam, CNC mill
London Stansted Airport (Foster+Partners, 1981-91) add-on shopping maze

REFERENCE #9
SHOPPING MAZE - STANSTED AIRPORT

fig.54

fig.56

fig.55

fig.57

Formal-based research
Composing with elements
Pattern as a tool to fit a surface

Geometric exploration
Intersections of recognizable forms
Creation of an overall complex structure

Intricate path - geometric tangencies and «lost» thickness

A topographical labyrinth (fig.55) - introducing a «third» dimension of experience
A labyrinth as a landscape
Imperfecting the geometry (fig.56) by

implementing a degree of uncertainty
Confront the unknown and unpredictable in a literal way

_

First iterations (fig.57) - narratives confronting the geometry
A variety of conditions

fig.54_ Model, foam, CNC mill
Composing with Geometry
fig.55_ Model, foam, CNC mill
Topographic Geometry

fig.56_ Model, foam, CNC mill
Imperfecting the Geometry
fig.57_ Model, foam, CNC mill
Labyrinth Iteration #1.3

EXPERIMENTATIONS #1
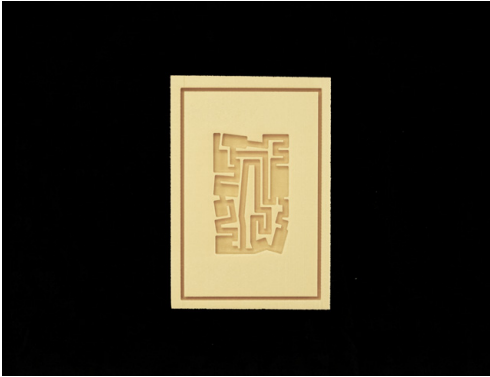
fig.58
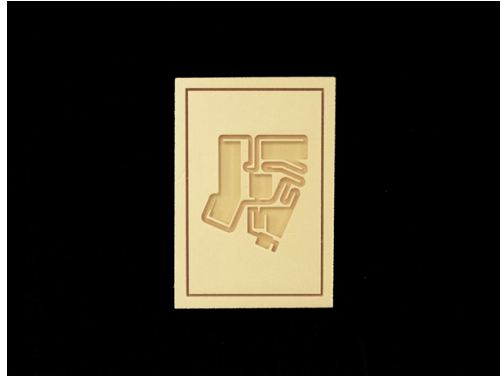
fig.60

fig.59

fig.61

Other iterations (fig.58+60) - narratives
confronting the geometry
A variety of conditions

–

The Rabbit Hole strategies (fig.59+61)
Iterations

fig.58_ Model, foam, CNC mill
Labyrinth Iteration #2.1
fig.59_ Model, foam, CNC mill + 3Dprint
The Rabbit Hole, Iteration #1.2

fig.60_ Model, foam, CNC mill
Labyrinth Iteration #1.1
fig.61_ Model, foam, CNC mill + 3Dprint
The Rabbit Hole, Iteration #1.2

EXPERIMENTATIONS #2
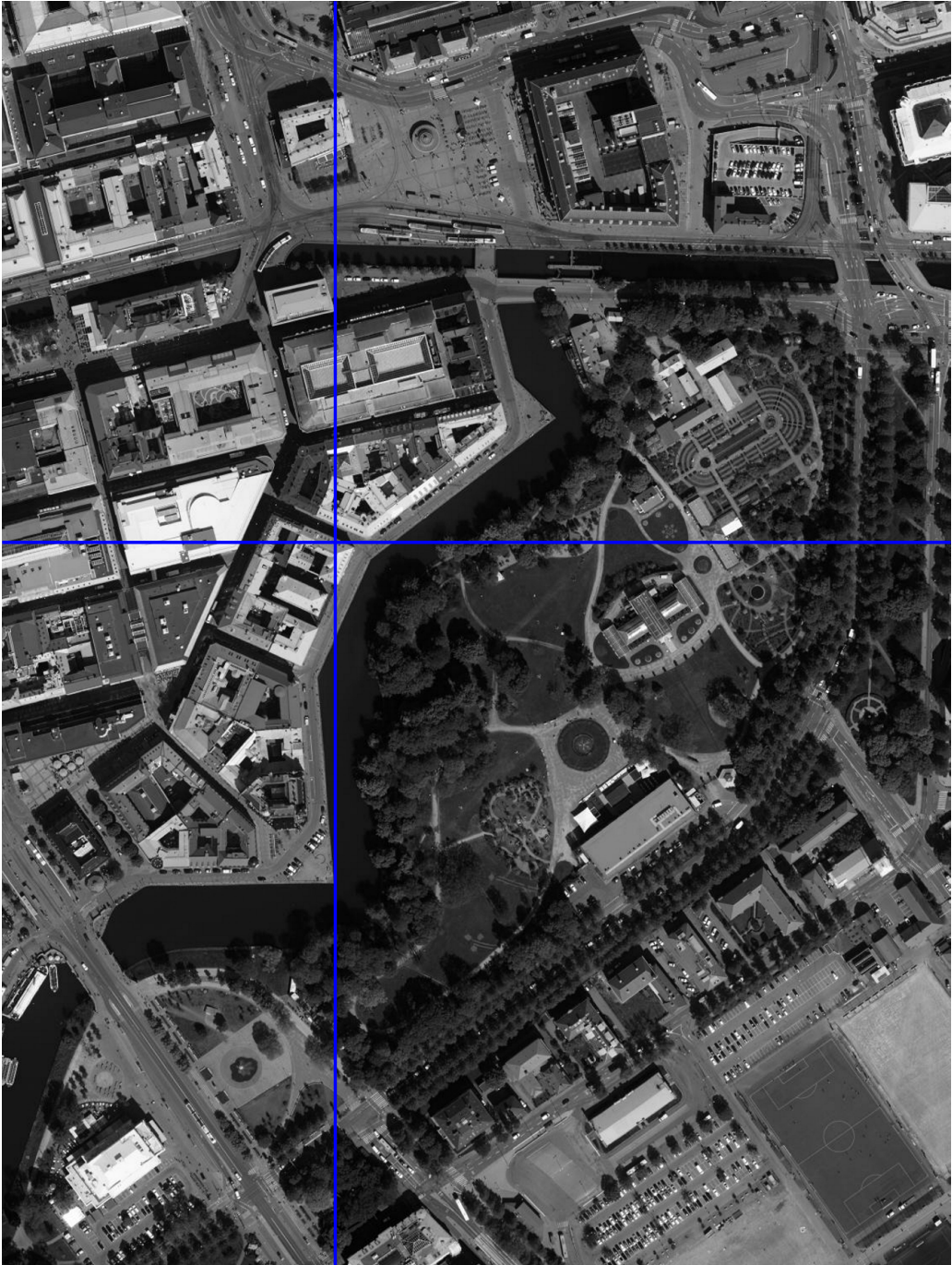
This labyrinth is seen as an opportunity to get away. An escape from the increasingly predictable and monotonous experience of everyday-life.
It is implemented right in Göteborg city centre, close to shops, the central station, the main avenue.

Context / Göteborg
Entrance in the building located on 17 Stora Nygatan and Lilla Drottningattan
Labyrinth invading Trädgårdsföreningen

It targets a discrete place in the city centre.
From outside, the entrance (also being the exit) is only a door. (cf. fig.64)
It makes use of a semi-basement typology.
Controlling the interactions with the surroundings enhance its impact and surprise.

The strategy is to emphasise the existence of two different worlds, an outside - the city and the context - an inside - the labyrinth, a platform for fiction. The Rabbit Hole (referring to Alice in Wonderland) is the transition between these two worlds.

The labyrinth is an anonymous invasion, an immersion in a new territory.

It creates an ambiguous and mysterious relationship with the context.

You'll be able to see some hints of the labyrinth that creates tension or enigma.

You enter the labyrinth opening a door - the rabbit hole - you go (most likely without noticing) under the canal (the former moat) and end up into the park. Some elements are leaving an impacts in the park (formally pipes, emergency exit, chimneys but also cuts - gardens/ new spaces within Trädgårdsföreningen).

fig.62_ Site Orthophoto, Göteborg
From lantmateriet.se

**SITE
CONTEXT**

fig.63_ Picture, from the Park - Trädgårdsföreningen, Göteborg
fig.64_ Picture from Lilla Drottningattan, Göteborg

SITE
CONTEXT
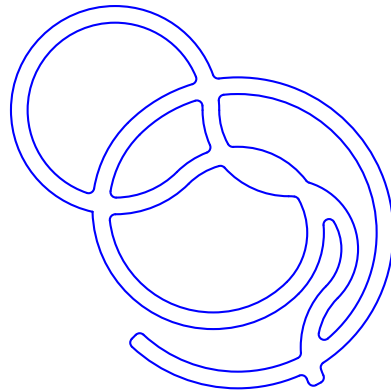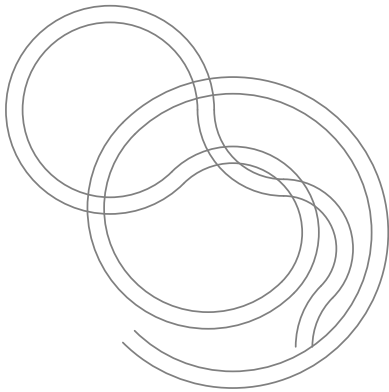
Reference: Cnossian labyrinth

Pair - turning to the right

Rules
Words - number of turns
Letters - length (angle) 360°/8
Vocals - radius
        1 > 5m
        2 > 7.5m
        3 > 10m

A	CAR	IS	PASSING	BY,	WE	LOOK	AROUND.	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	words
1	3	2	7	2	2	4	6	letters
1	1	1	2	1	1	2	3	vocals
N	N	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	pair

**DESIGN PART #1
GENERATE UNCERTAINTY**
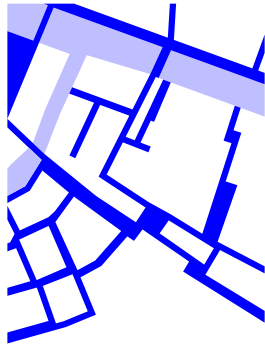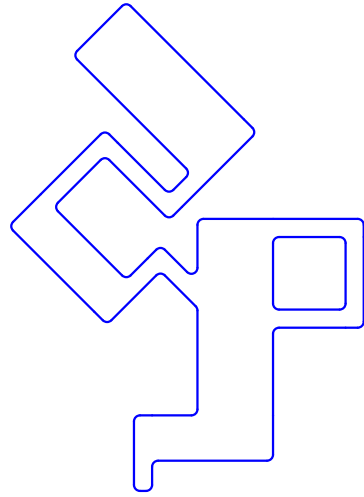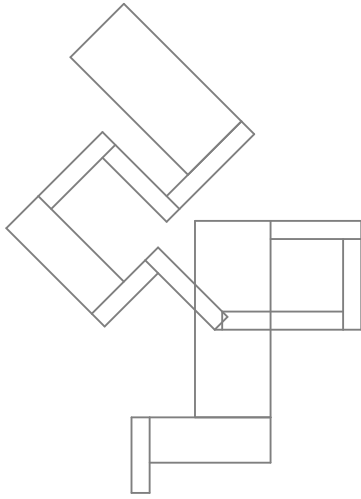
Reference: Venice urban fabric

Rules

Words - number of turns

Letters - length
- 1 > 5m
- 2 > 6m
- 3 > 7m
- 4 > 8m
- 5 > 9m
- 6 > 10m
- 7 > 11m
- 8 > 12m
- 9 > 13m

Vocals - width
- 1 > 1.2m
- 2 > 3m
- 3 > 5m

Coma: rotation 45°

I	FEEL	RAINDROPS	ON	MY	SKIN,	AS	I	LOOK	UP	AT	THE	CEILING.	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	words
1	4	9	2	2	4	2	1	4	2	2	3	7	letters
1	2	3	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	3	vocals
N	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	N	N	pair

DESIGN PART #2
GENERATE UNCERTAINTY
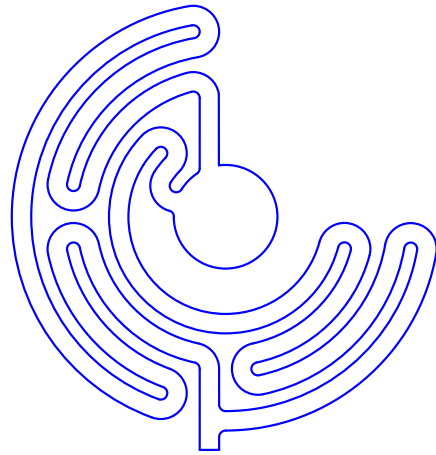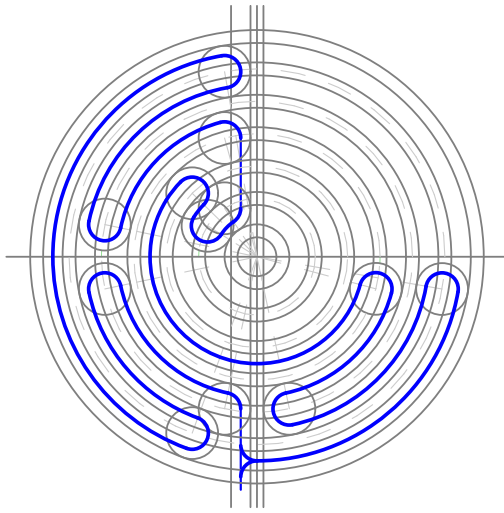
Reference: Chartres
Cathedral

Rules
Words - number of
turns
4-letters-word -
changing quarter

THE	PIPE	FORKS,	I	HAVE	TO	RUN	TO	CATCH	UP	WITH	THE	PLASTIC	BAG.	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	words
3	4	5	1	4	2	3	2	5	2	4	3	7	3	letters
1	2	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	vocals
	Y			Y						Y				4 letters

DESIGN PART #3
GENERATE UNCERTAINTY
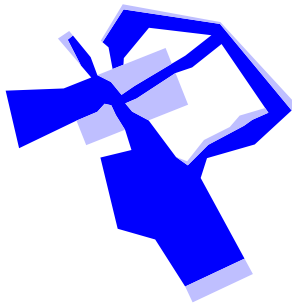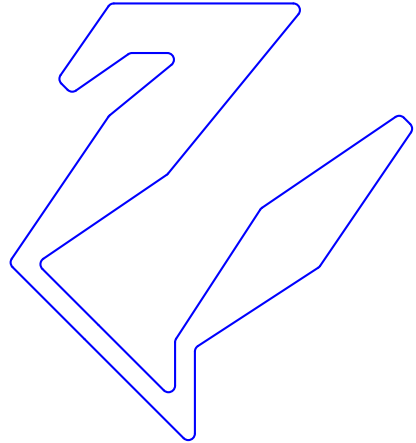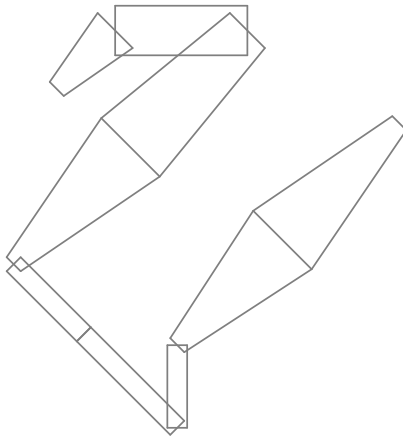
Reference:
Spidernethewood

Rules
Words - number of elements
Letters - angle of the next element 360°/8
Vocals - width
    1 > 1.2m
    2 > 3m
    3 > 5m

Consonants - length
    0 > 5m
    1 > 6m
    2 > 7m
    3 > 8m
    4 > 9m
    5 > 10m

A	MISTY	AIRFLOW	ENVELOPS	MY	LEGS,	I	START	SWEATING.	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	words
1	5	7	8	2	4	1	5	8	letters
1	2	2	3	1	1	1	1	3	vocals
0	3	5	5	1	3	0	4	5	consonants

DESIGN PART #4
GENERATE UNCERTAINTY
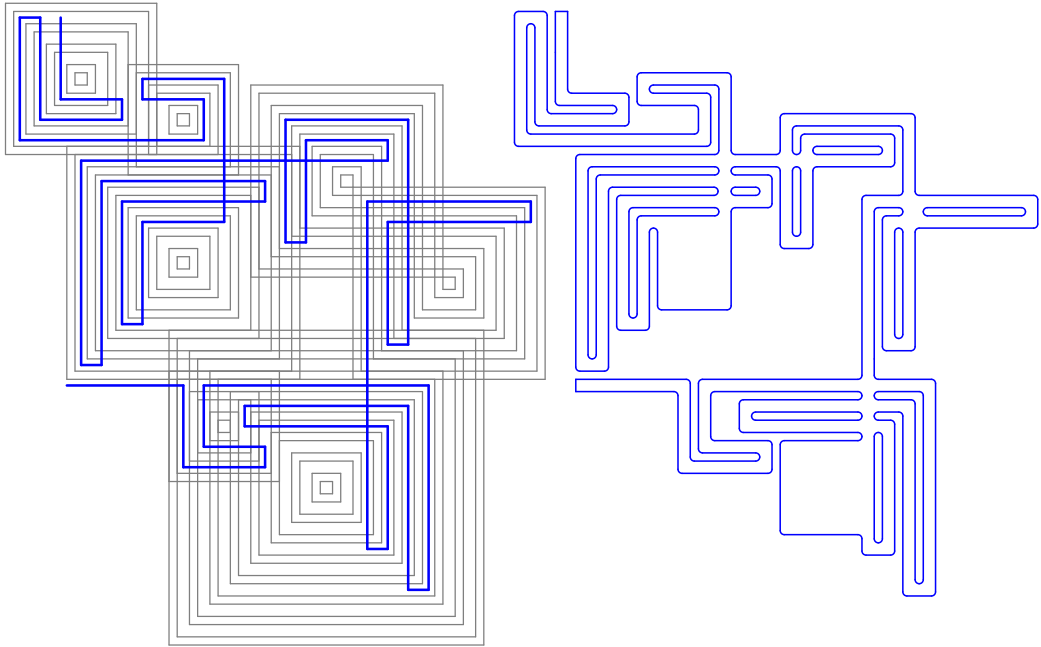
Reference: Roman labyrinth

Rules
Words - new square unit
Letters - number of turns
Pair - first turn clockwise
Letter «C» - unit has a center
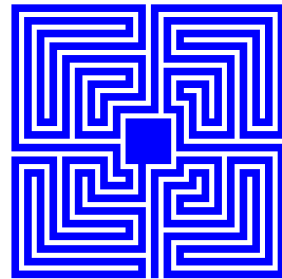
THE	SECOND	ROOM	LOOKS	EXACTLY	THE	SAME.	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	words
3	6	4	5	7	3	4	letters
N	Y	Y	N	N	N	Y	pair
	Y			Y			[C]

DESIGN PART #5
GENERATE UNCERTAINTY
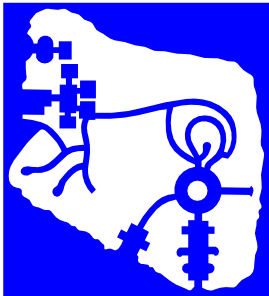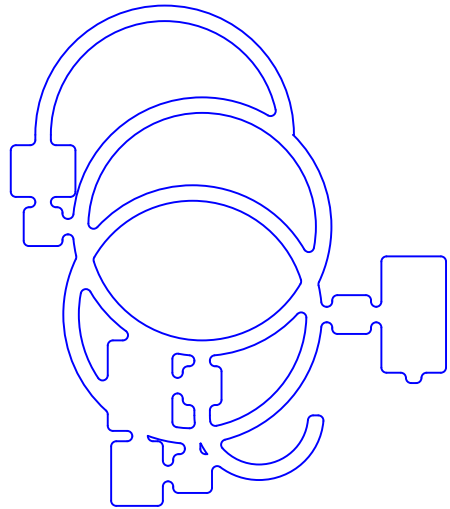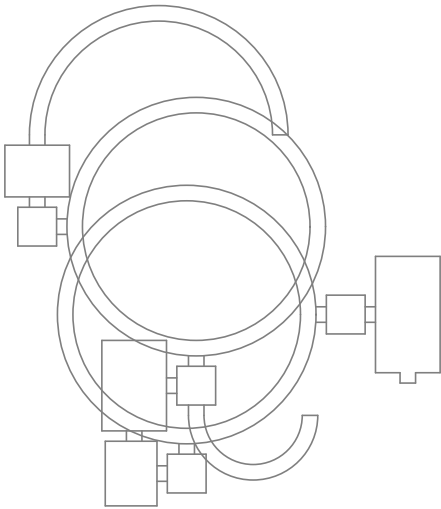
Reference: Poggio
Cajella cimetery

Rules
Words - number of elements
Pair - corridor
Vocals - radius
  1 > 5m
  2 > 7.5m
  3 > 10m
Letters - angle (360°/8)

Unpair - room
Letters - dimensions
  3 > 3x3m
  4 > 3x4m
  5 > 3x5m
  6 > 4x6m
  7 > 5x7m
  8 > 5x8m
  9 > 5x9m

First comma - forking
Second comma - dead-end

MUSHROOMS	ARE	COVERING	THE	WALLS,	FILLING	THE	GAPS,	INVADING	THE	WHOLE	AREA.	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	words
9	3	8	3	5	7	3	4	8	3	5	4	letters
3	2	3	1	1	2	1	1	3	1	2	3	vocals
N	N	Y	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	N	N	Y	pair

**DESIGN PART #6
GENERATE UNCERTAINTY**
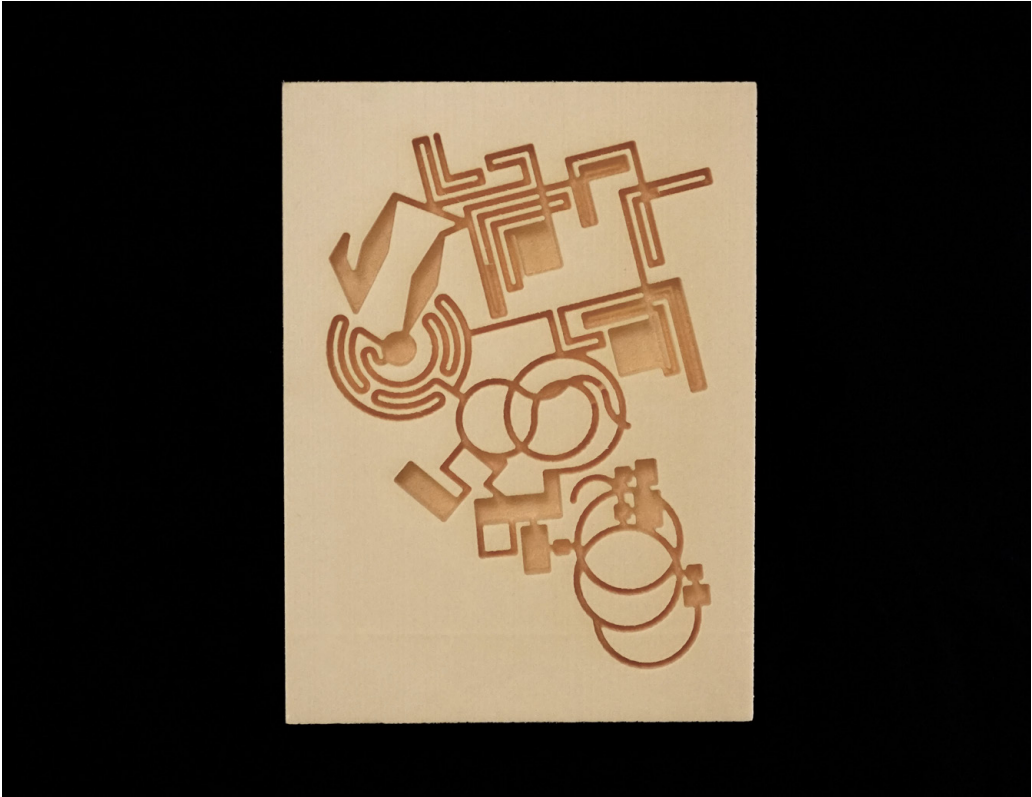
Geometrical references
+ Grammatical narratives

«Logical machines» / transcript a
sentence into a design

The strategy developed to generate the
labyrinth relies on two main features.
The first one is history, references and
their main formal features (geometrical
characteristics).
The second one is the narrative
(grammatical dissection).

A sentence is transcripted into a
design based on the main geometrical
characteristics of references.

The design is a transcription from the
narrative through the main formal
geometrical characteristics of references.

A misty airflow envelops my legs, I start sweating.

The second room looks exactly the same.

The pipe forks, I have to run to catch up with the plastic bag.

A car is passing by, we look around.

I feel raindrops on my skin as I look up at the ceiling.

Mushrooms are covering the walls, fillings the gaps, invading the whole area.
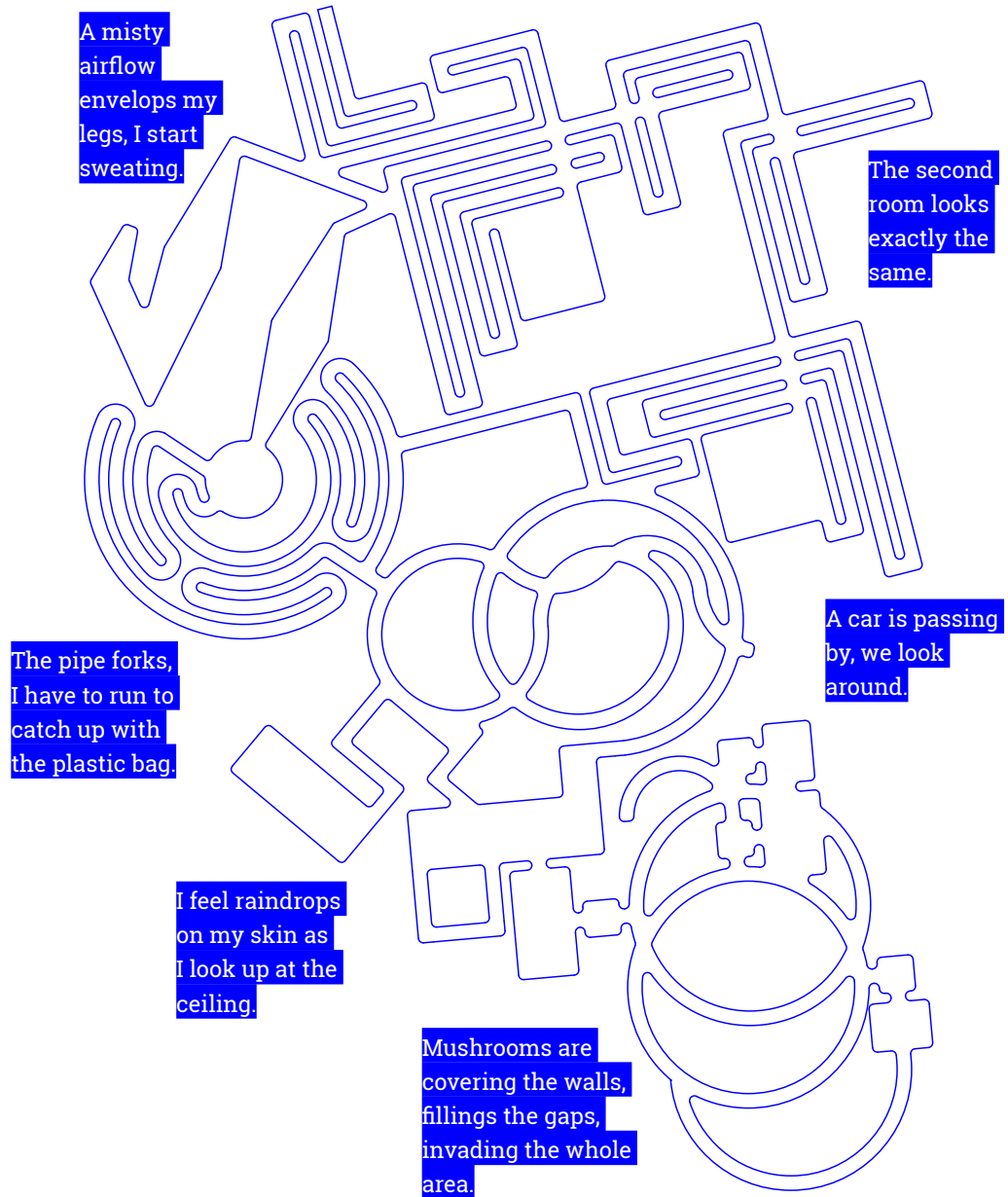
fig.65_Model, foam, CNC mill - Overall geometry - juxtaposition
fig.66_Overall geometry + generative narrative - juxtaposition

COMPILATION - INTERSECTIONS GENERATE UNCERTAINTY

Main elements:

Cave - store/produce - inhabitate
(light)
Forest (smell, humidity)

Mushrooms - product - materiality
(humidity, air moisture, scent,
temperature)

Dining experience (taste, scent, sound,
interactions)

fig.67_ Conceptual collage
Mushroom farm++ (producing/consuming)

INTENTIONS #1
ATMOSPHERE & INTERPRETATION
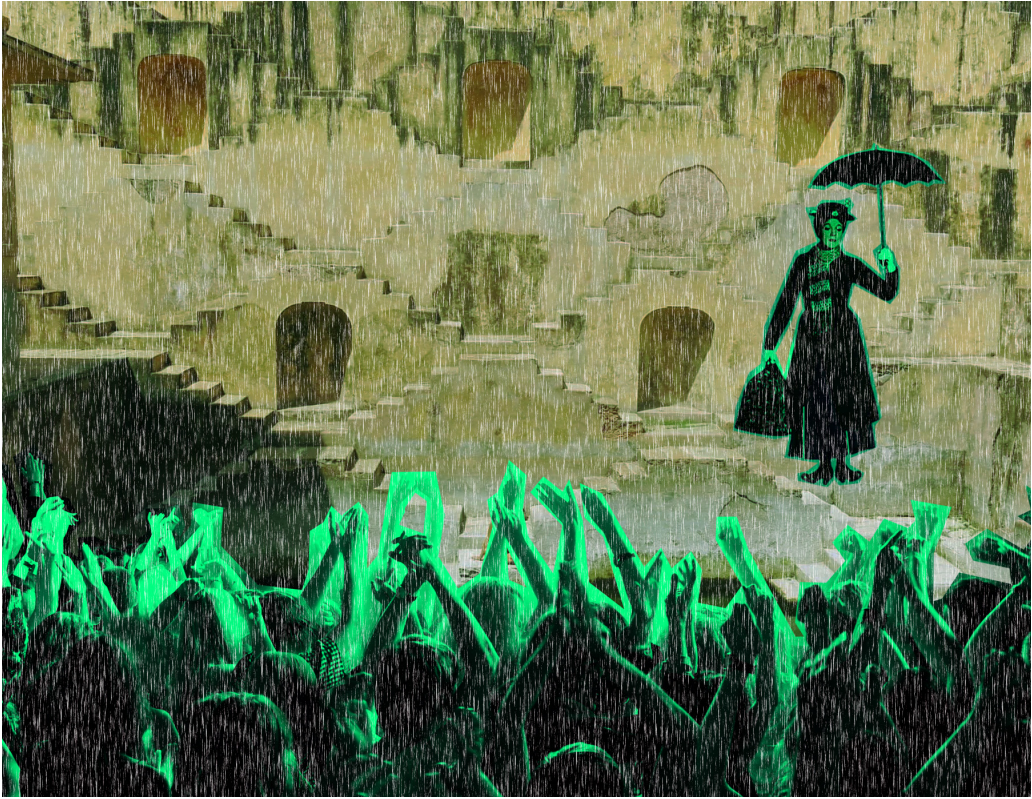
Main elements:

Indian stepwell (gather water) - geometry and function (light, formal texture)

Algae (+rain) - decaying/evolving product (colour, scent, air quality - photosynthesis)

Mary Poppins - activities > a clubaddict Dancing, moving
(temperature, sound, vibrations)

fig.68_ Conceptual collage
Algae farm++ (producing/theclub-dancing)

INTENTIONS #2
ATMOSPHERE & INTERPRETATION
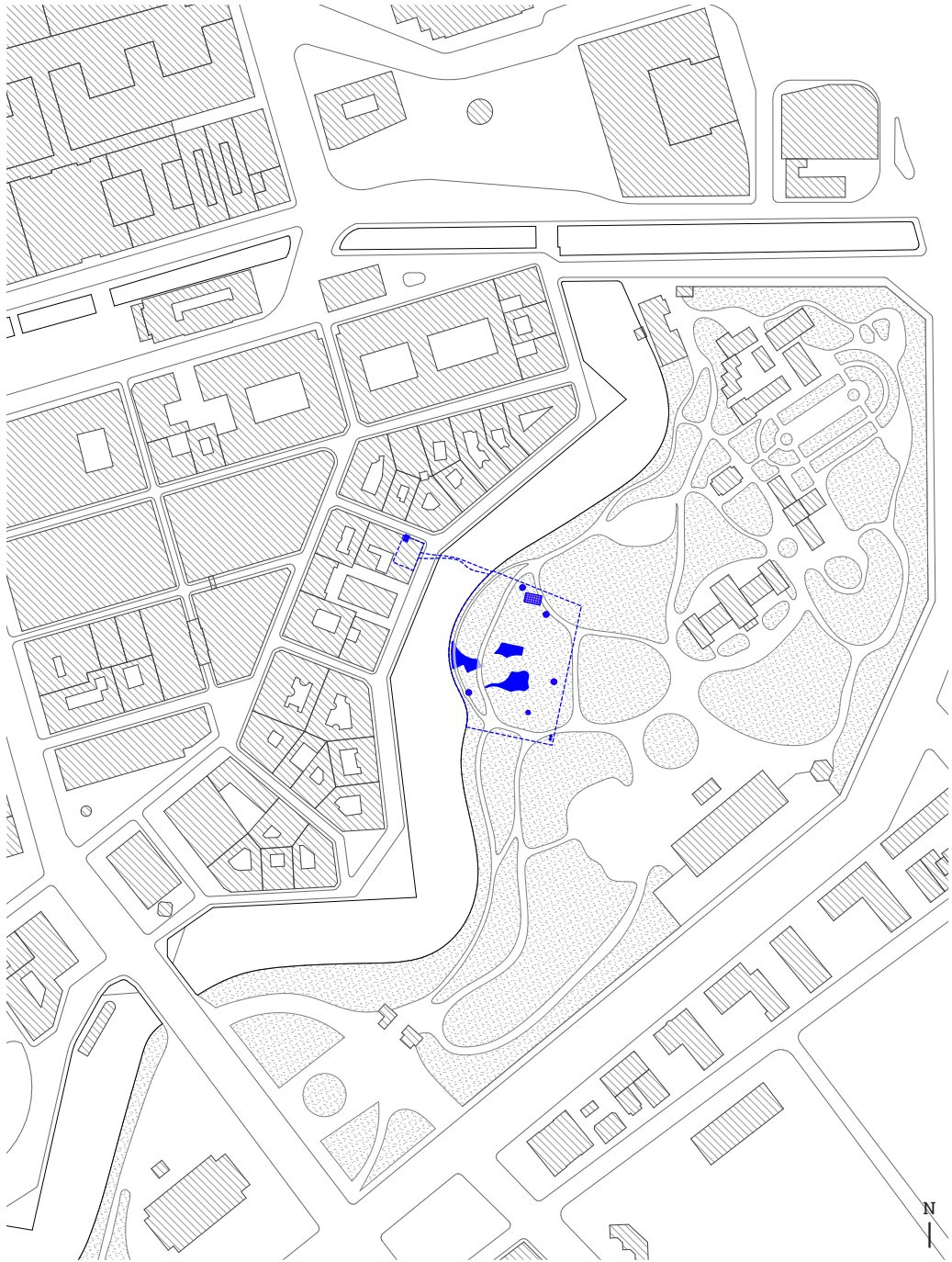
fig.69_Site plan, 1:2000
Trädgårdsföreningen, Göteborg, Sweden

THE LABYRINTH
INJECTED IN THE CITY
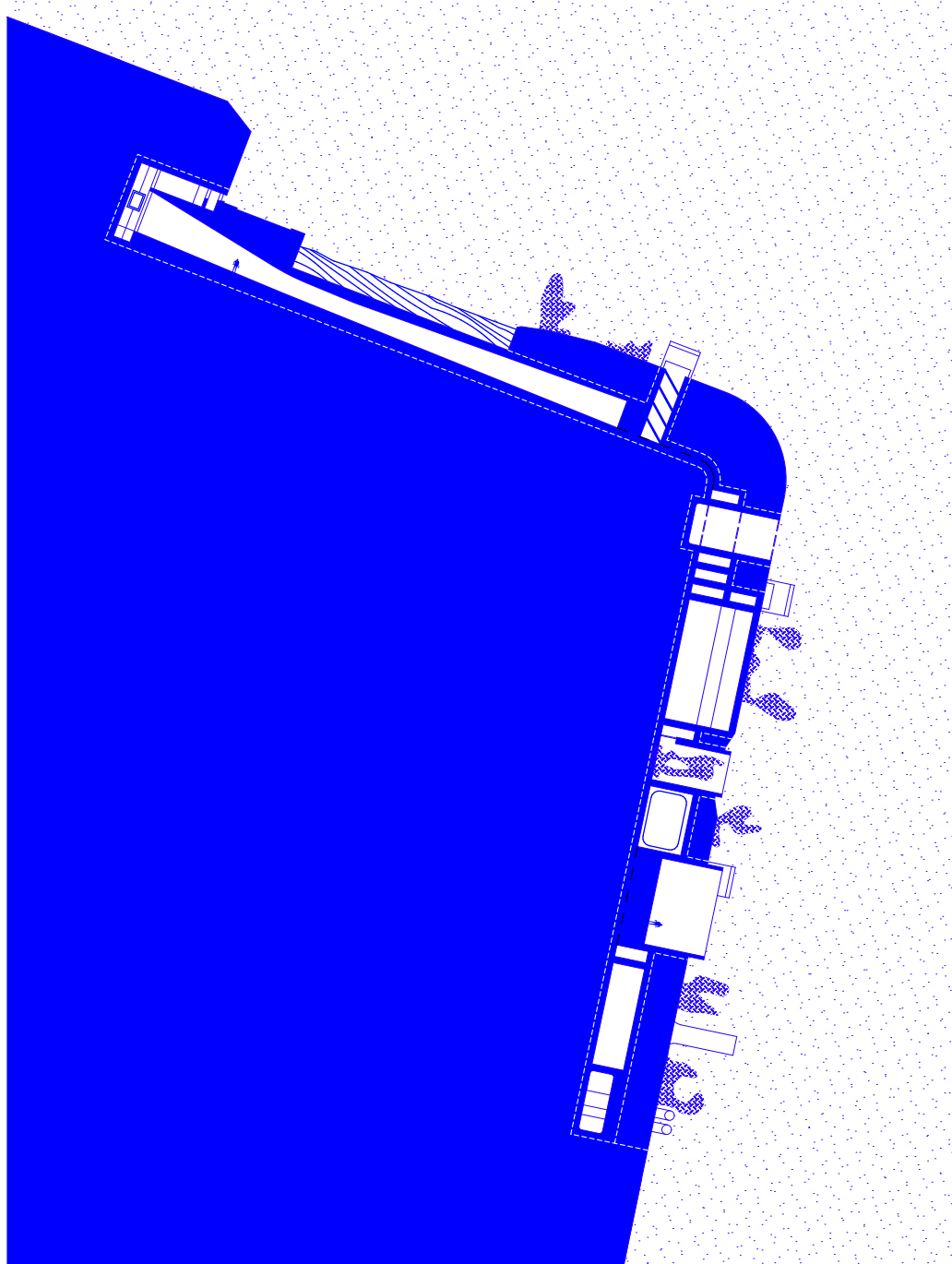
**THE LABYRINTH / S
A LIVING A PLATFORM**
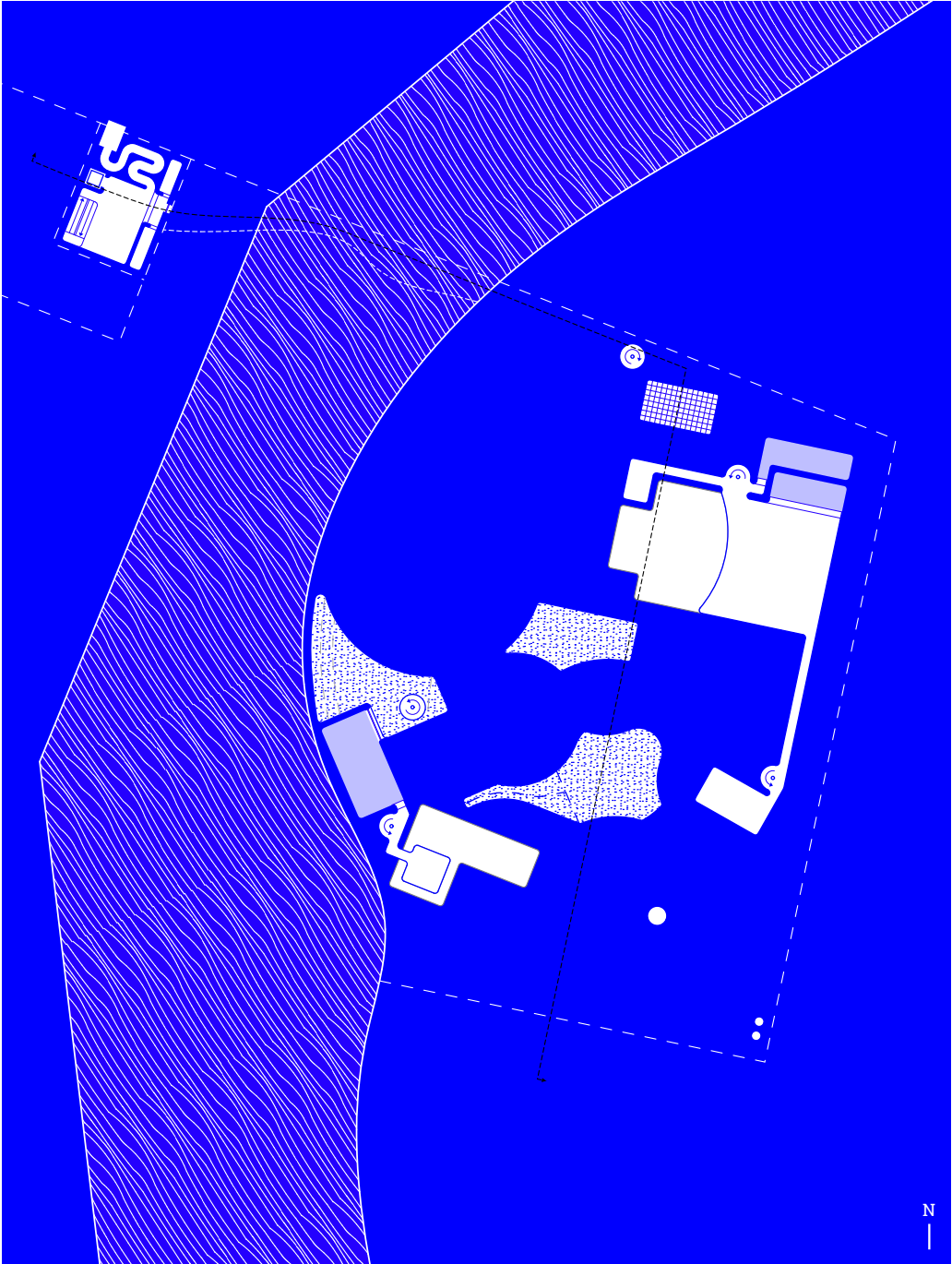
fig.71_ Plan -1_ 1:500
Entrance - semi-basement typology, and upper floor of the labyrinth

THE LABYRINTH / -1
A LIVING A PLATFORM
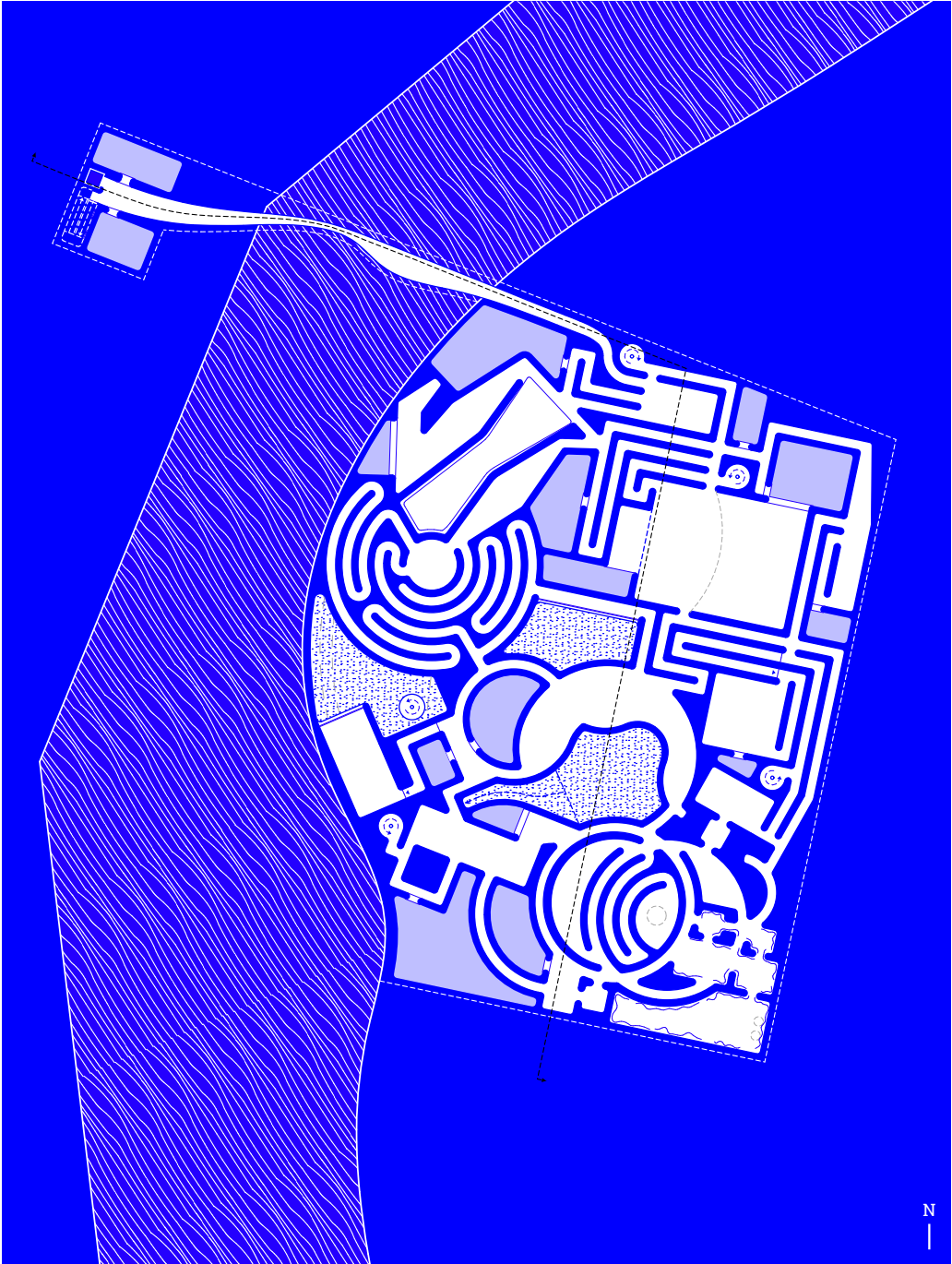
fig.72_ Plan -2_ 1:500
Main floor - From Lilla Drottninggatan, under the moat and into the park

THE LABYRINTH / -2
A LIVING A PLATFORM

The overall experience could be described as a polymorphous confusion that can be broken down into different events. Intentional elusions or gaps within the narrative become an opportunity for the reader to interpret, creating his own story.
You'll go through a variety of states with their own specific conditions and atmospheres.
You'll definitely encounter the unforeseen, be surprised, and hopefully let yourself get lost.

_A multi-faced experience.

Mrs. Blue is a (fictional) character. During her journey inside the labyrinth, she experienced a variety of conditions. The structure condenses climates and atmospheres. The overall and polymorphous confusion is broken down into different events.

We are downstairs.
Behind us the door
closes in a metallic
noise.

the rabbit hole

The passage is so
narrow that I have to
let a couple go through
before moving on.

friction

I'm scared of heights.
I can't determine the
depth under my feet or
even above me.

vertigo

deterritorialized

I feel the wind and a
car passes by. We are
somehow still in the
street.

I make my mind quickly,
I'm heading towards the
music. Colours turn into
a greenish hue.

indecision

I'm right in the middle
of them (mostly
strangers), tapping my
foot to the same rhythm.

collectiveness

wonderment

I didn't know that Mary
Poppins liked to dance.
By the way, she's always
carrying her umbrella.

discernment

I stop by the window,
looking at the luxuriant
garden. I forgot that
there was an outside.

control

I'm completing my
daily dose of caffeine.
It's warm, strong, dark,
exactly as I enjoy it.

déjà-vu

The corridor twists
again, it looks exactly
the same. It turns to the
right. Same, again!

confusion

The floor merges with
the ceiling. Does that
mean that this could be
the wall? I don't get it.

opportunity

This platform
encapsulates an infinity
of identities. And here,
it seems quite normal.

confidence

I'm standing in the
corner looking around
me, surrounded by an
ambient mumbling.

no return

I already walked quite a
lot. The exit must be so
far away. Wait, what is
that smell?

displacement

I smell it, the humidity.
I remember walking in
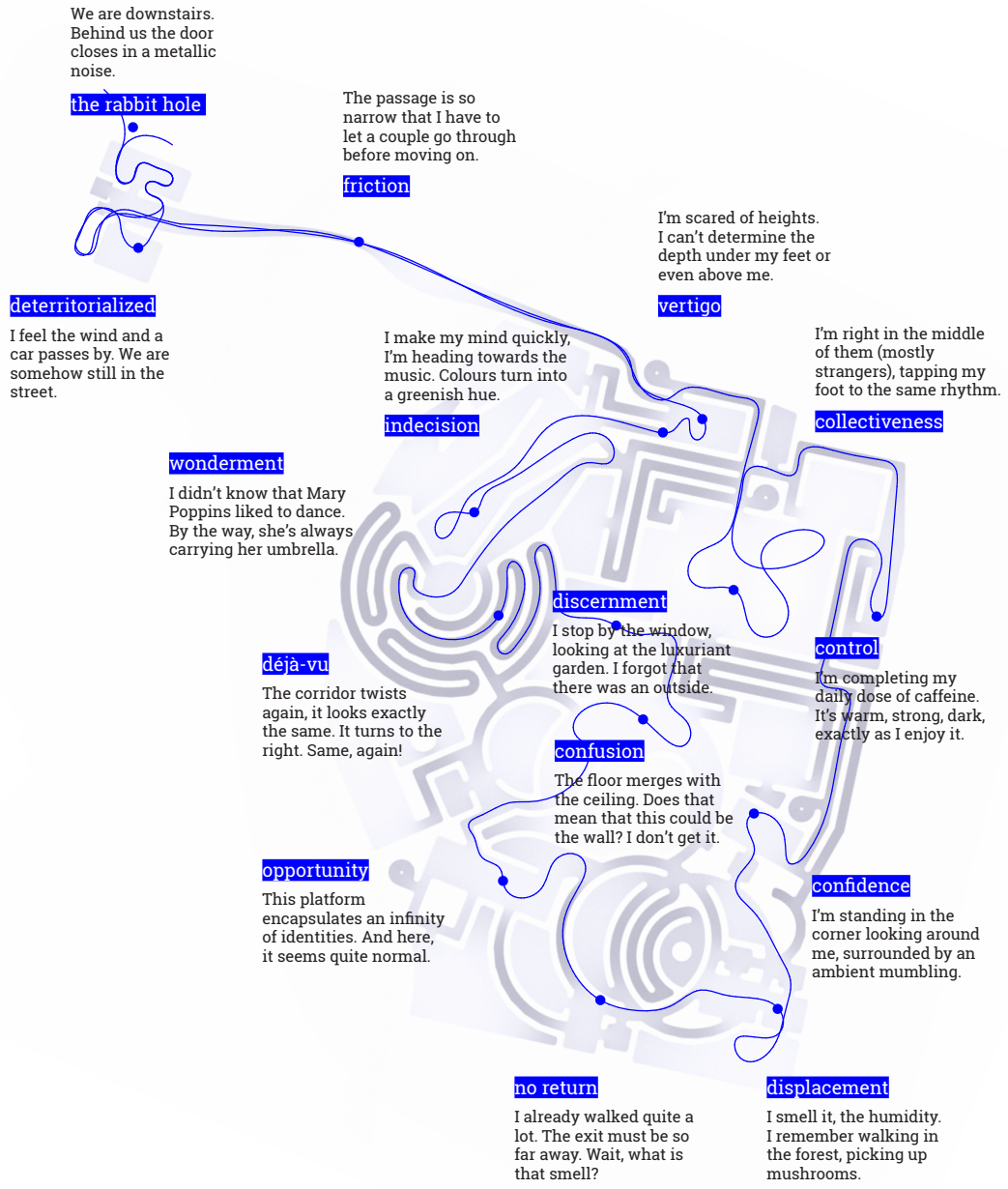the forest, picking up
mushrooms.

fig.73_ Diagram - Overall Experience

**OVERALL EXPERIENCE /
THE JOURNEY OF MRS. BLUE**

The space is turned into a productive apparatus where processes are intersecting and overlapping. The visitor inherently becomes part of this environment. He found himself surrounded by mushrooms, algae, fishes, water and other products or resources. He might not realize at first, but the labyrinth is actually a living organism with its own logic. The elements interact and benefit from each other. The space hosts more than an experience - it is alive, evolving and changing over time.

_A symbiosis.

The structure enables (physical) interactions between elements, chemically and biologically reacting to each other.
Fluids, air, nutrients become part of the language in this conversation.

city
Inject a fictional object
into the context
A place to escape / open
an anonymous door

fishes
food
nutrients
waste

algae
nutrients
photosynthesis
(carbon fixation,
dioxygen release)
nitrogen

humans
consumer/producer
activities
expiration
heat - transpiration
vibrations
waste

the canal
water extracted from
the former moat
purification of the
natural resource
pollution / dirtyness

garden
food - vegetables
and herbs
photosynthesis

laboratory
chemical processes
bacteria
spawns

storage
aging process -
enhancing flavors
notion of time scale

mushrooms
food
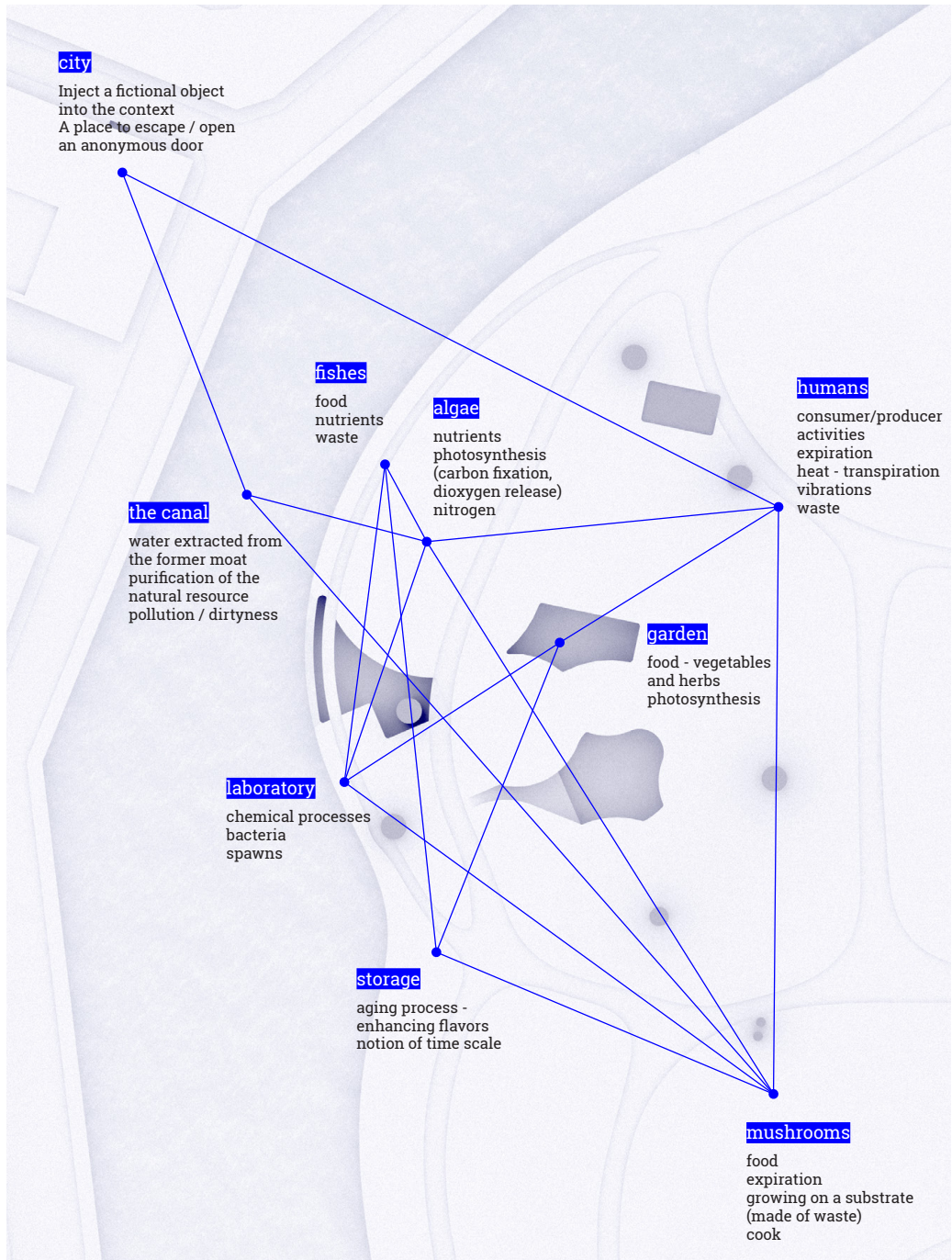expiration
growing on a substrate
(made of waste)
cook

fig.74_ Diagram - Overall Logic

**OVERALL LOGIC /
A PRODUCTIVE MACHINE**

Honestly, you have to come! It's going to be interesting

Well, let's give it a try. Where are we meeting?

Cool!

In 20min, in front of the central station?

Fine with me, see you in a bit

Notion of wonderment

CHAPTER.1

I step onto a metal grid. I'm looking under my feet, trying to determine the depth but these spotlights directed straight up to my face make it impossible.
The exact same features are mirrored. The ceiling is the perfect symmetrical copy of the floor. And me, here I am, located in the middle, in-between: in a void.

I'm actually scared of heights; hence I quickly decide to move further. There are three different paths, three choices, three chances. I choose to walk toward the music, it's mainly low frequencies - the kind you usually feel vibrating in the rib cage. The colors slightly turn into a greenish hue, the temperature and the humidity is rising.

«I knew I should have taken my umbrella!» says Alex.
«What are you talking about?»

Three steps later I find answer to my question. Alex glances at me with a smile.
We move forward, I feel thin raindrops on my skin as I looak up at the ceiling. I close my eyes for a second, take a deep breath and appreciate the scent of fresh air.

[...]

Green strangers are dancing around us. The floor is made of plexiglas panels. The space is homogeneously bathed with light due to the reflection of suspended neons above the water. There is not any shadow casted on the seamless surface; you will not find any straight corner.

I'm staring at the water when someone touches my shoulder.

«You're still wondering what is happening here I assume?» she asks close to my hear so that I can hear her despite the music.
«Well, you're actually inside an algae farm, dancing under the rain!» she adds.

That explains why everything is green.
I look at the floor another time and notice all these tiny green particles floating in the water. I see a network of pipes disappearing into the textured wall.
There is water is dripping, leaving dark strains and creating this irregular pattern. In some places, the liquid is stagnating in some kind of groves and algae are decaying.
I touch the tilted surface - just to make sure. Algae cover the tip of my fingers.
I realize that we are inside a living organism, enveloped within its structure, becoming part of it, exposed to its (fragile) development.

We decide to keep exploring the labyrinth.
We walk few meters, a drop of water is running down my neck. The rain stops, the sound fades away.

It might have been only half an hour since we're here and I believe that I'm already lost.

Based on a (true) story.
The events depicted took place in the Labyrinth in 2017.
The narrator embarks us on his journey.

A STORY / NARRATIVE
CH.1 ALGAE.FARM.CLUB

1.light

homogeneous indirect
neon - no shadows

2.humidity

100% - rain
pipes and nozzle system

3.temperature

23-27°C - regulated with
the water' temperature

4.activities

algae culture
human activity

5.materials

coated walls and water
pool - plexiglas flooring

6.textures

algae developing on the
walls and in the pool

7.air

warm airflow renewal -
photosynthesis
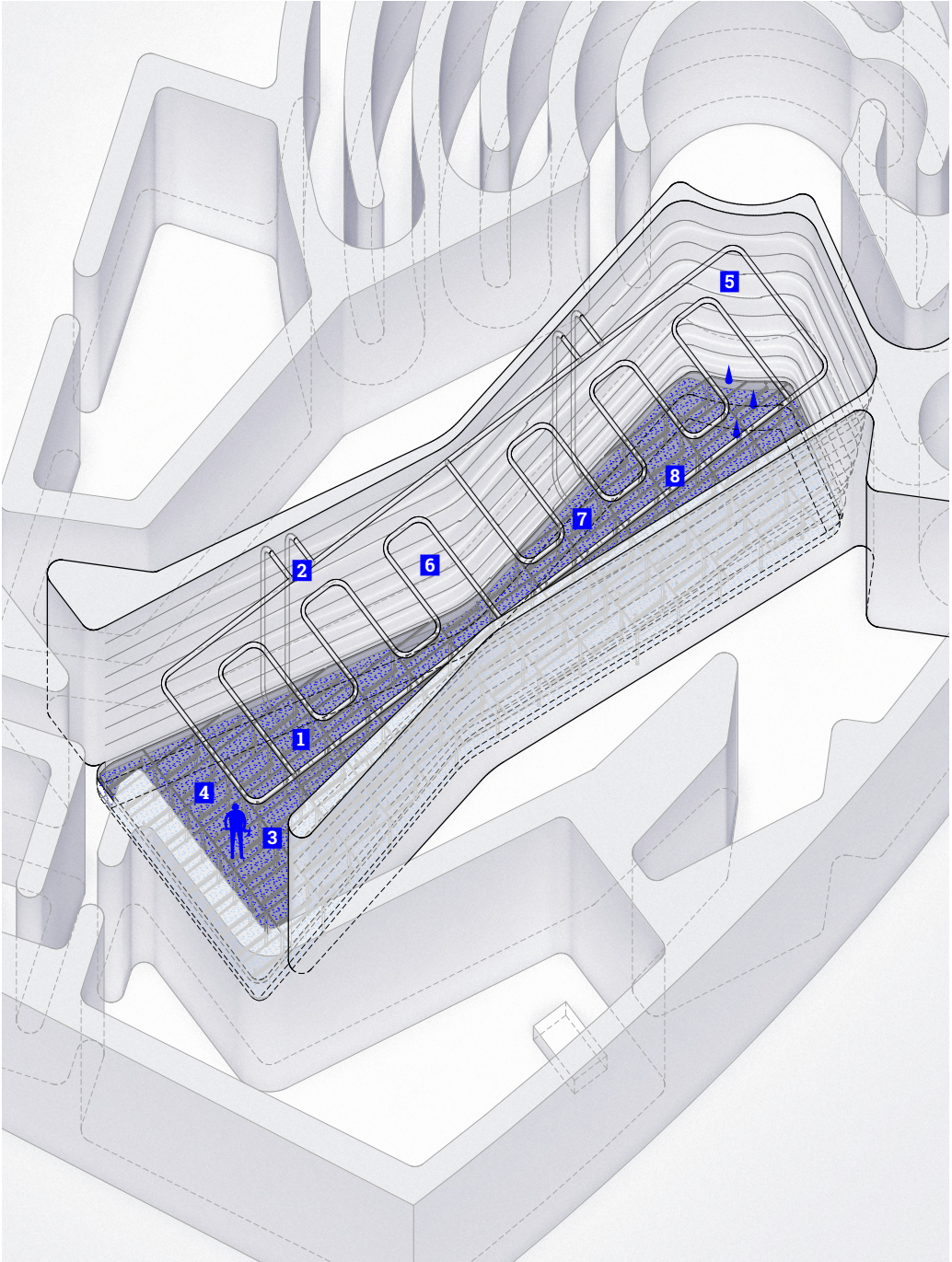
8.scent

bitter scent - due to the
hosted activities

fig.75_ Axon + conditions - detailed space #1

INSIDE THE LABYRINTH
CH.1 ALGAE.FARM.CLUB

«I knew I should have taken my umbrella!»

I look at the floor another time and notice all these tiny green particles floating in the water. I see a network of pipes disappearing into the textured wall.
There is water is dripping, leaving dark strains and creating this irregular pattern.

I touch the tilted surface - just to make sure. Algae cover the tip of my fingers.

CHAPTER.1

fig.76_ Image, a visual interpretation
Featuring Julie Andrews as Mary Poppins

INSIDE THE LABYRINTH
CH.1 ALGAE.FARM.CLUB

Hi! Do you have any plans for <u>tomorrow evening</u>?

Not really, why?

Do you want to have diner together?

Sounds like a plan!

Where?

You'll see! Let's meet next to your place

So here we are. Here and now, wandering in the labyrinth, looking for the restaurant.
We already went through different spaces and climates. It was dark, then noisy, cold and warm again... We were always in a temporary state, moving between atmospheres.

«I think we already tried this way» says Alex.
«You might be right» I recognize the following turning point. Next, we'll find the corridor along this luxuriant garden. A long window on our right opens onto a dense vegetation where bright red tomatoes are growing next to some basil. I realize at this point that there is still a world outside.

[...]

«Did you make a reservation?» I inquire.
«They don't take any» she smiles.
«Really? How comes?» I ask.
«Well, there is a risk that we won't find the place. And who knows, maybe it won't even be there anymore».

The path is twisting again; we look at each other and smile. We found it! I perfectly recognize this smell.
I remember the forest behind my grandparents' house.
It is right after the rain, when it is still humid, we are wandering between the trees, my grandmother running after us, her big wicker basket in the hand.
«Remember not to pick up the white ones with red dots!» she says.

The scent gets stronger as we keep going. It is also becoming colder. The space opens up in front of us. There are tables suspended from the ceiling. It is dark except one or two vertical spotlight above each table, enlightening what happens to be displayed on top of it.

The walls get my attention. These are curtains hanging from an undulating rail, creating alcoves, passages and niches.
I get closer and notice that it is more likely bags made of fabric and filled with some kind of substrate. Mushrooms are growing on the surface, colonising and invading the part of the area. It is more humid around here. You can hear sound of the ventilation in the background.

A bit further on the right, we find the kitchen, the scent switches from fresh and earthy to fried mushrooms. The cook holds a huge pan in his right hand.
We decide to sit at table near by.

The frustration coming from our inability to find the restaurant is now becoming a reward. We gradually get to know and understand how to move through the maze. Although, finding the exit might not be that easy.
The waiter is walking in our direction.
[...]

I believe we all get lost at some point.

Based on a (true) story.
The events depicted took place in the Labyrinth in 2017.
The narrator embarks us on his journey.

A STORY / NARRATIVE
CH.2 DOUBLE.MUSHROOM.DINER

1.light
low vertical spotlights
above the tables

2.humidity
80% - monitored by the
ventilation

3.temperature
thermoregulation
19-20°C

4.activities
produce/prepare/cook/
eat mushrooms

5.materials
hanging fabric bags
filled with substrate

6.textures
mushrooms developing
on the bags' surface

7.air
scent from the kitchen
and the fungiculture

8.scent
air moisture - monitored
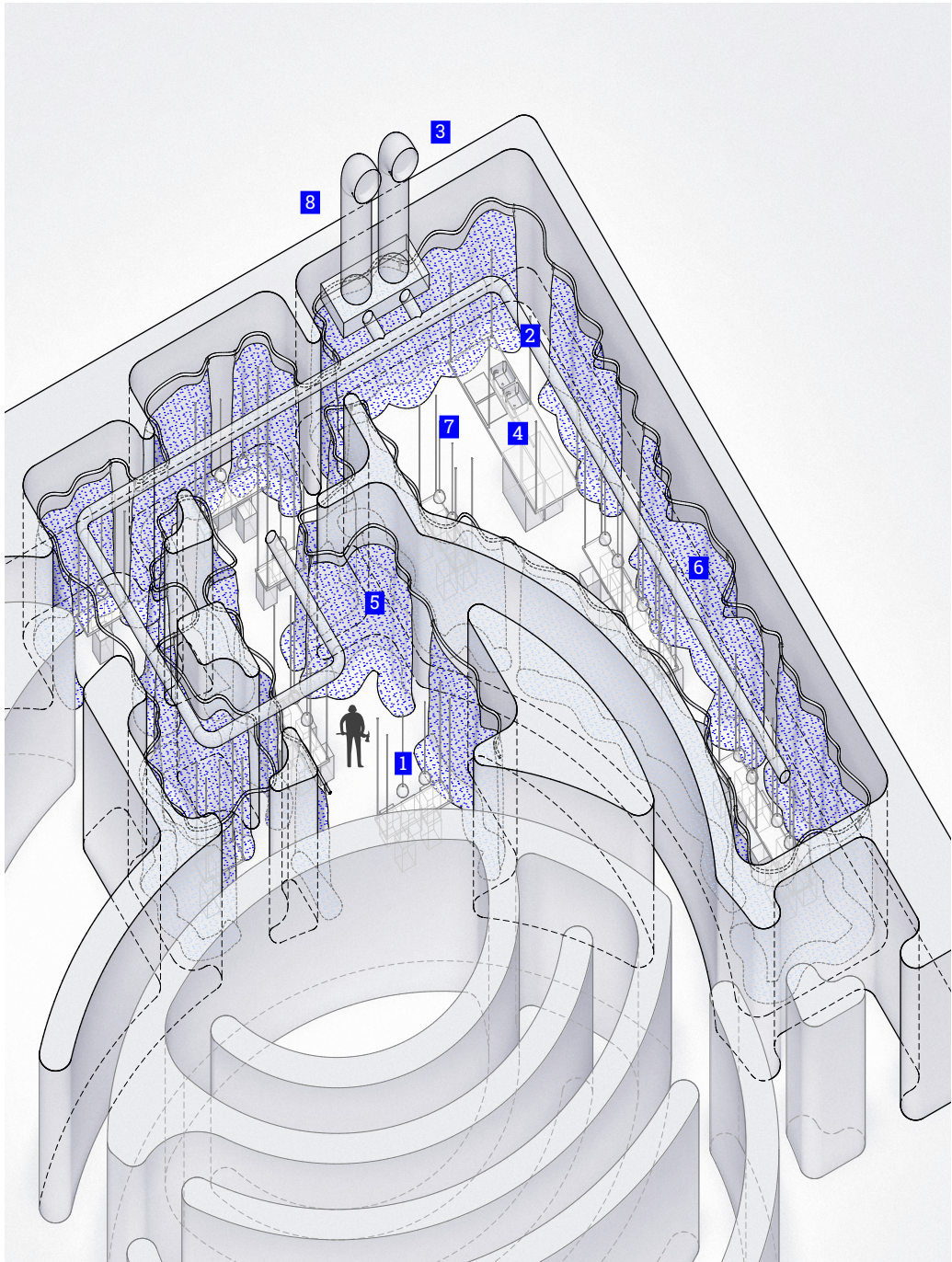by the ventilation

CHAPTER.2

fig.77_ Axon + conditions - detailed space #2

INSIDE THE LABYRINTH
CH.2 DOUBLE.MUSHROOM.DINER

«-Did you make a reservation?
-They don't take any.
-Really? How comes?
-Well, there is a risk that we won't find the place. And who knows, maybe it won't even be there anymore.»

Few meters further, we look at each other and smile. We found it!
I remember this smell, walking in the forest, my grandmothers running after us.
«Remember not to pick the white ones with red dots!»

CHAPTER.2

fig.78_ Image, a visual interpretation
Featuring Alice

INSIDE THE LABYRINTH
CH.2 DOUBLE.MUSHROOM.DINER

«I think it's the next street» says Paul.
We arrive in front of this brick building next to the canal.
«Are you sure that's the place?» I ask.
«Yes» he answers pointing out the entryway.

There is a surveillance camera, protective guards on the opaque windows, seven steps and we are downstairs, in front of the door.
We are bathed in the light, a bright green neon is above our heads.

A new world [the labyrinth].
Everything starts behind this door.

ON SITE /
THE RABBIT HOLE

We usually walk through the park to get to the cinema.

By the way, we are still unclear about the movie. Even though...
«I'd rather see the last Ken Loach, I heard it's a really good one.» she says.
«I'm also ok with that!»
«Wait, do you smell it?» she adds.

We stop. I didn't know there was a restaurant in the middle of the park - under our feet. Two aluminium pipes are diffusing scent of fried mushrooms. We actually never noticed until today.

fig.79_ Image, a visual interpretation
The hint (what's happening underneath?)

ON SITE /
CONTEXTUAL IMPACT
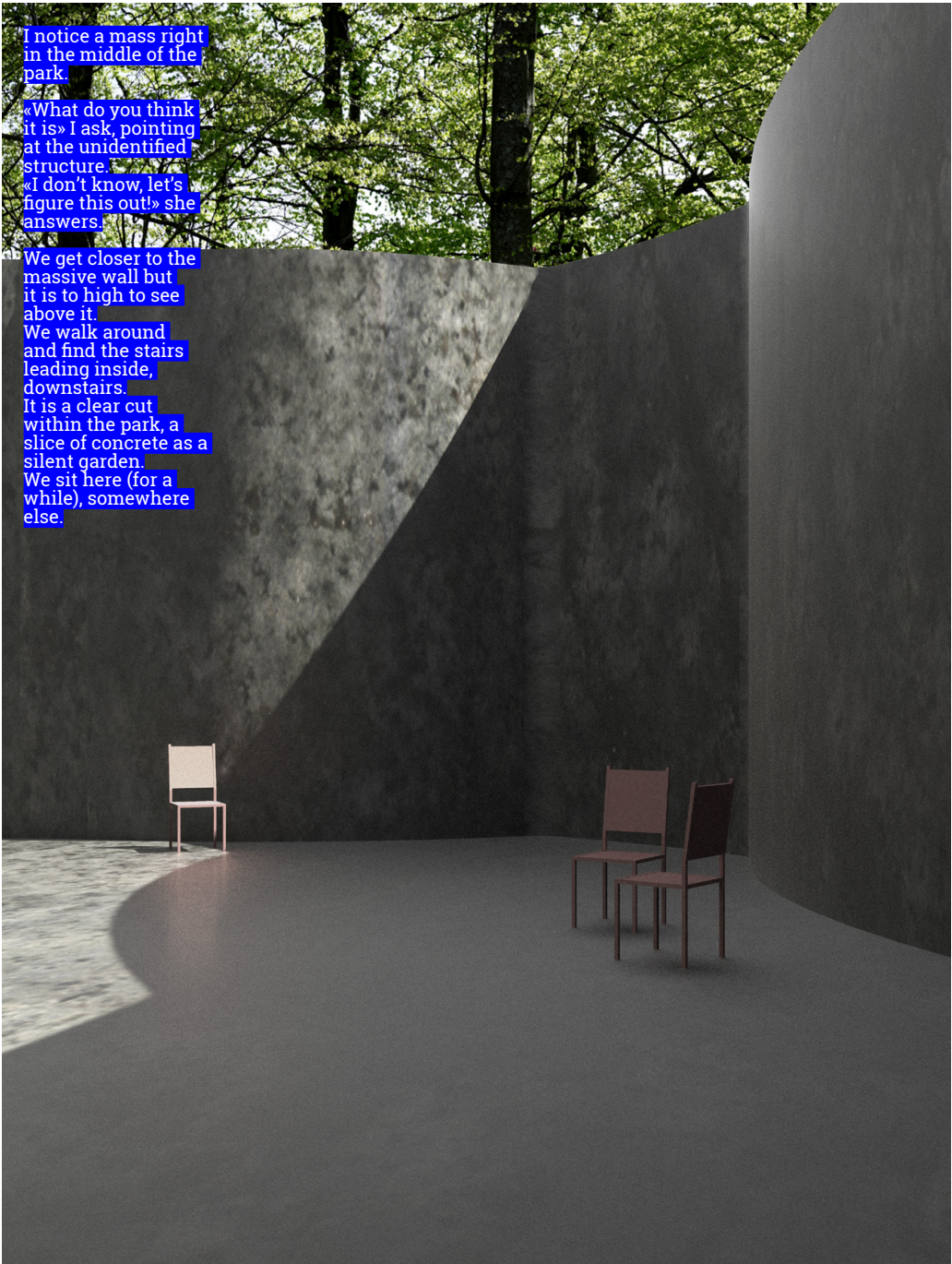
I notice a mass right
in the middle of the
park.

«What do you think
it is» I ask, pointing
at the unidentified
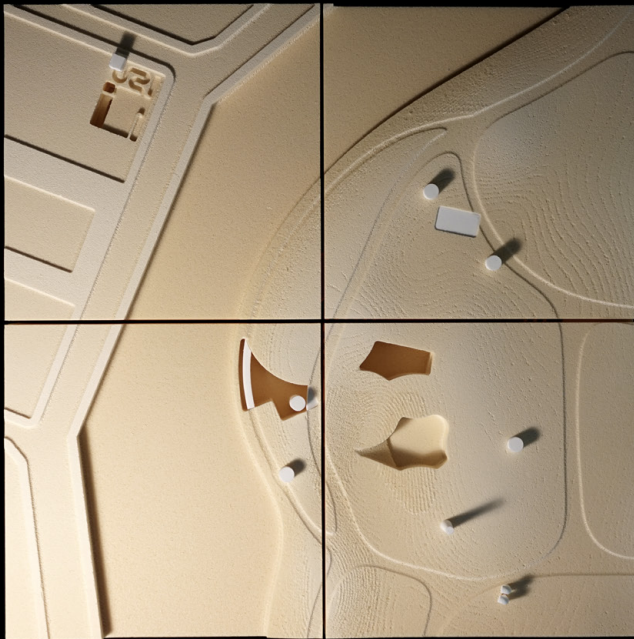structure.
«I don't know, let's
figure this out!» she
answers.

We get closer to the
massive wall but
it is to high to see
above it.
We walk around
and find the stairs
leading inside,
downstairs.
It is a clear cut
within the park, a
slice of concrete as a
silent garden.
We sit here (for a
while), somewhere
else.

fig.80_ Image, a visual interpretation
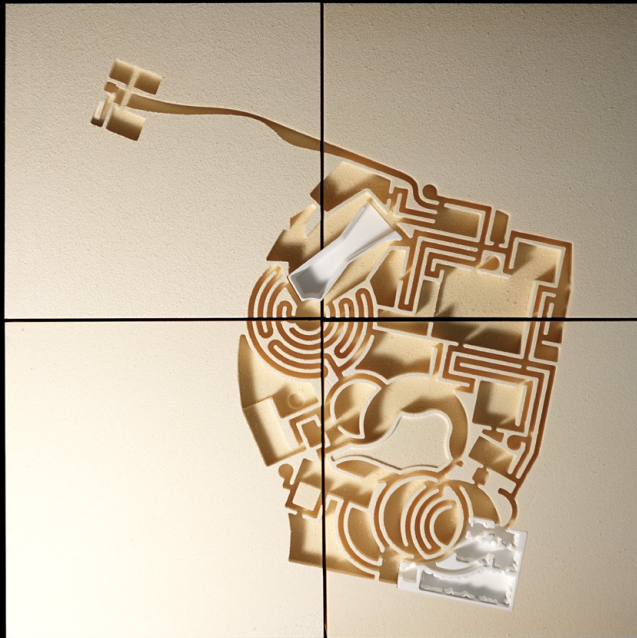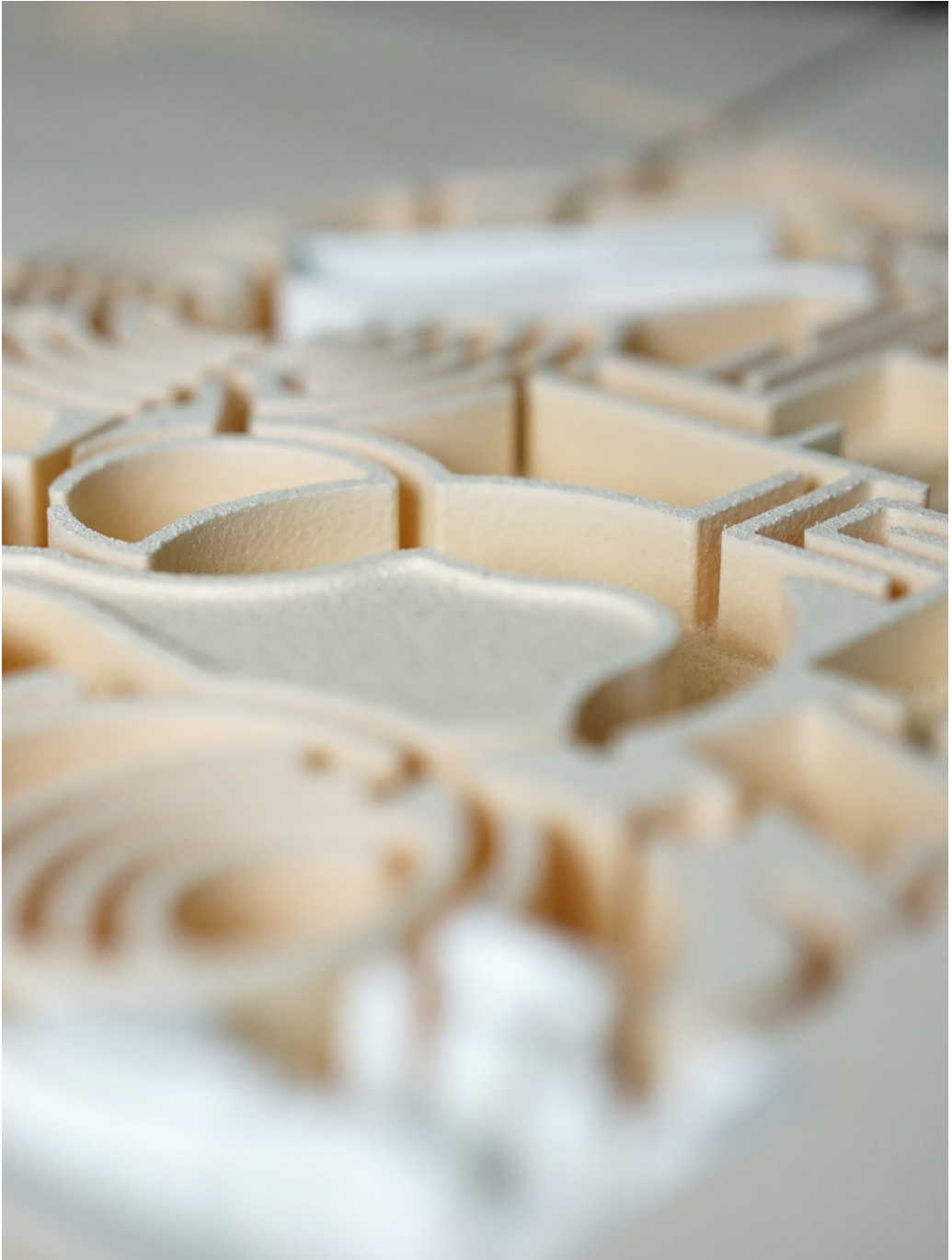*The concrete garden / A slice in the park*

ON SITE /
WITHIN THE PARK

ON SITE /
WITHIN THE PARK

In conclusion, this labyrinth is a platform creating an illusion. An opportunity to temporary leave or be detached from reality and enter a fiction.

It interprets atmospheric parameters with alter-conditions so that the experience is different, enhanced, intense, strange, disorientating. It addresses and densifies perceptions. The entertainment merges with a narrative and a purpose.

The structure condenses confusion, entertains an immersive alternative journey where the unexpected is legitimized. It provokes physical interactions - the visitor is chemically, biologically involved in a structure intensifying his perceptions.

It is adapting and evolving to the society because the structure is in perpetual evolution, ever-changing, always renewing itself. The activities taking part inside the labyrinth are modifying its appearance.
The project stimulates a dynamic conversation between body, culture, place and environment.

——

This thesis (theoretically and conceptually) targets some topics that I feel relevant to address in architecture.
First of all, the notion of form and permanence, the labyrinth is an anachronous figure in history but nonetheless disregarded by the contemporary practice. The design is based on a geometrical composition, with elements intersecting and creating uncanny spatial discoveries. It deals with mass, void and thickness. Thus, the project provides the necessary complexity in order to get lost. It then introduces the relation between a plan (and other formal architecture documents) to experience.

Secondly, the architecture can be used as an escape from what we are faced in our contemporary context - that we get used to - an everyday routine in the digital era. The labyrinth introduces friction and physicality.

The thesis makes use of fiction as a generative tool. It also benefits from a variety of media in order to encapsulate a multi-faced aspect. This project is represented through narratives, formal architecture documents (such as axons), literal descriptions and images or visual interpretations so that it can take on a personal level; he has the necessary tools to interpret the thesis.

Finally, the design questions the relationships between user and its close environment. How are we reacting and interacting with a context; in this case: taking part in an eco-system. (Eco-system referring to the labyrinth as a living organism.)

**CONCLUSION
REFLECTIONS**

«La poésie est dans la forme des villes. Nous allons donc en construire de bouleversantes. La beauté nouvelle sera de situation, c'est-à-dire provisoire et vécue.»
Guy Debord, in La Carte d'après Nature, numéro spécial, janvier 1954

«Et par la longue succession des couloirs, des escaliers étroits, et encore des couloirs, obliquant à angles droits, et se recoupant, où elle risqué fort de se perdre avant d'avoir atteint la rue.»
Dans le labyrinthe.
Alain Robbe Grillet. 1959

«That was all she dreamed about... Escape»
Paris, Texas.
Wim Wenders, 1984

«I thought of a labyrinth of a labyrinths, of one sinous spreading labyrinth that would encompass the past and the future and in some way would involve the stars.»
The Garden of Forking Paths.
J.L Borges. 1941

«La ville, l'Etat devront désormais ménager un certain nombre de lieux vacants, dans le seul but de petites actions vicieuses, libertines, proprement luxueuses dans les pertes de temps qu'elles occasionneront aux citoyens.»
Règlement, in Vice.
Hervé Guibert, 1991

«Nature becomes the last luxury where we can still get lost.»
Gaston Rébuffat

«Les murs d'enceinte, du labyrinthe s'entrouvrent vers l'infini.»
Valse de mélodie, Serge Gainsbourg, 1971

«The success of the story for that reason lies in its ability to be interpreted and understood , so that it might take on a personal level for the reader.»
Poétique de l'espace, Gaston Bachelard, 1982

«At every turn, there is a little twist. Guests feel that they've discovered something.»
«For ever-how-long you're there, you really don't know what's gonna happen.»
Chef's Table, S02E1: Grant Achatz.
David Gelb, 2016

«The only important 'character' is the spectator. In his mind unfolds the whole story which is precisely imagined by him.»
Alain Robbe-Grillet, in the essay French Letters: Theories of the New Novel, 1967

«All that once was directly lived has become mere representation.»
Guy Debord, La société du spectacle.
Paris: Buchet/Chastel, 1967

«Do you ever feel like stepped out of the map, into the unknown?»
Fargo, S03E5.
Dearbhla Walsh. 2017

«Perception of reality became reality.»
Fargo, S03E6.
Dearbhla Walsh, 2017

«We're always behind this metal and glass. I think we miss that touch so much, that we crash into each other, just so we can feel something.»
Crash.
Paul Haggis. 2004

«Clubs are so intimately involved with the staging and directing of humans body interacting – sight, sound, smell, intimacy, inclusion and exclusion.»
Club Ruins.
Martti Kalliala in Flash Art Magazine. 2006

«The cinema said André Bazin substitutes for our gaze a world more in harmony with our desires.»
Le Mépris, Jean-Luc Godard. 1963

«I'm not dreaming. I ain't the brain to make this up.»
Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them. David Yates. 2016

«A disturbing unreality – a further realism more than a deliberate fiction.»
Gérard Genette about Robbe-Grillet.

«Neo, sooner or later you'll understand that there is a difference between knowing the path and walking the path.»
The Matrix.
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fig.18_ Cemetery of Poggio Cajella, 500 BC (drawing: Dennis, 1922)
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CREDITS/

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LIST OF FIGURES

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A LABYRINTH
(AS A)
DENSIFICATION OF PERCEPTIONS