

A Spiritual Sequence

*An Investiagtion of Spirituality in Today's Context in
Gothenburg through Architecture*

By: Ellen Simonsson

*Chalmers University of Technology
Autumn 2016*

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Master Thesis at Chalmers School of Architecture
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ABSTRACT

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Gothenburg through Architecture*

Master of Science Thesis in the Master's Programme
Architecture and Urban Design

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Sweden is one of the most secularised countries in the world. Though the line between religion and spirituality is subjective, many people still have a belief in a higher spirit that is separated from traditional religions.

Additional to the trend of secularization, other religions have grown in the Swedish society, which has turned Sweden in to a multi-religious country. As a result of secularization, individual spirituality and multi-religions, new and different needs have increased within the city which today lack a place for meetings between different beliefs and the individual spirituality.

In this thesis, function, needs and definition of spirituality are investigated through architecture. Different architectural elements and how they can affect our deeper feelings related to spirituality are explored with the aim to design a place for spirituality in Gothenburg.

The initial research is based on the main question “How can architecture create a place for spiritual needs and functions in the context of Gothenburg?”. From this research, architectural elements are investigated by design and a proposal for a place with focus on the relation between human, spirituality and space, at Näckrosdammen in the centre of Gothenburg will be designed.

Spirituality is all about connectedness. Connectedness to ourselves, others, nature, the moment and the sacredness. The link to the spiritual space is the linkage to the transcendent, which can connect us to something deeper and beyond. The architecture must try to express the non-material and the non-logical values. But what the real task for spiritual architecture, is to transport us to a new and different world.



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INTRODUCTION

Background

Since 1972 the number of members of the Swedish church have decreased, especially the last 15 years. This has turned Sweden to become one of the most secularised countries in the world. The line between religion and spirituality is although thin, as many people still have a belief in a higher spirit that is separated from traditional religions.

At the same time, other religions have emerged and grown in the Swedish society, mainly due to immigration, culture exchange and religious freedom. Thus, Sweden is today a multi-religious society with many different beliefs, but also a country where many people lack a place for spirituality.

The value and symbolism of religious buildings have therefore changed, and the perception of them today is not the same as when they were

built. People needs another place now, which is not specifically related to a certain religion, but instead built for modern spirituality and a multi-religious society. A place for cross-religious or secularised wedding ceremonies, for memorials, for finding hope and for finding peace. A place for the individual spirituality, together or by yourself.

The need is not just on an individual level, but also on a wider scale. Gothenburg is today a largely segregated city with limited possibilities for interaction between different social groups. A place like this could potentially become an intersection of those different groups, a place where people of different background and religions could get a deeper understanding of each other.

Purpose

The purpose of this master thesis is to investigate spiritual architecture, function and needs, explore different architectural elements and their effect on our deeper feeling related to spirituality. The aim is to design a space in Gothenburg created for spirituality for all.

Main question

How can architecture create a place for spiritual needs and functions in the religious context in Gothenburg?

Method

The initial research will be based on the main question of this thesis, focusing on religious context, what is spirituality, the needs of spirituality and spiritual spaces. Knowledge will be collected from literature, interviews and reference projects in order to find conceptual ideas, typology and functions for the design. The conceptual ideas will be investigated by design, where different elements will be explored in order to find the aimed spatial emotions.

PART I
Initial Research

The religious context

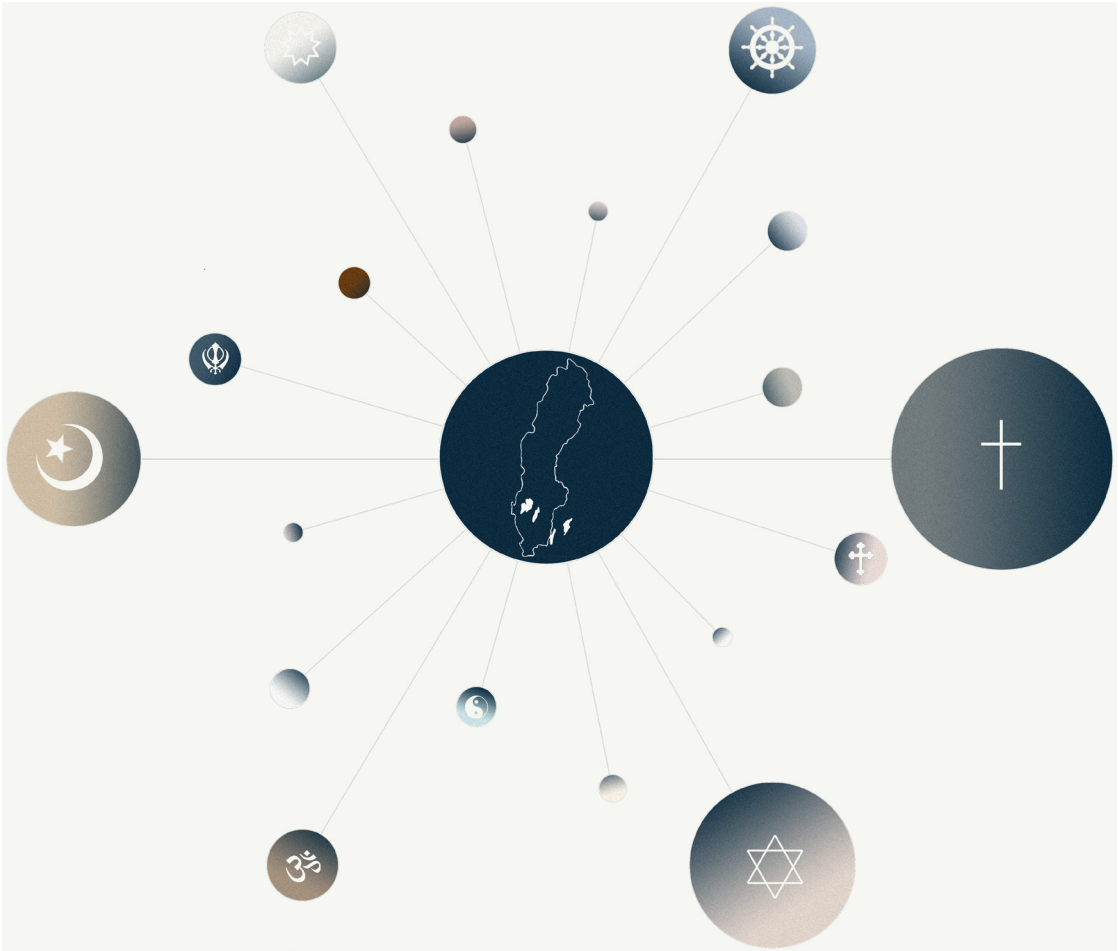
Multi-religious society

There is no statistics about religious affiliation in Sweden, and therefore it is difficult to say or know how many religious we have or how many that identify them self to a certain religion. But from studies, interviews and memberships in different religious communities, different facts can be read.

In Sweden the biggest religion is Christianity, and more specific the protestant church, the Swedish church which had 63.2% of the Swedish citizens as members in 2015 (Svenska kyrkan). In additional to the Swedish church there exists several other Christianity communities in Sweden, for example Pentecostalism and the orthodox church, and of course other religions mostly due to immigrations. A national SOM-study in 2005 implies the religious diversity in Sweden, were 72% of the interrogated claimed to be member in the Swedish church, 7% claimed that that where member in another type of Swedish church, 2% that they were Mus-

lims and 1% answered that they were belonging to another religion than Christianity or Islam (Weibull and Strid, 2011). We also know that all of the six world's religions are represented in Sweden, and also in Gothenburg.

The number of members and active religious people in the Swedish church decreases, but there is an opposite trend for other religious community that actually increases in membership. This is mainly due to the immigrations. In an article in Svenska Dagbladet it says that the importance of belonging is very high for immigrates and therefore often turning to a religion (Lind, 2016).



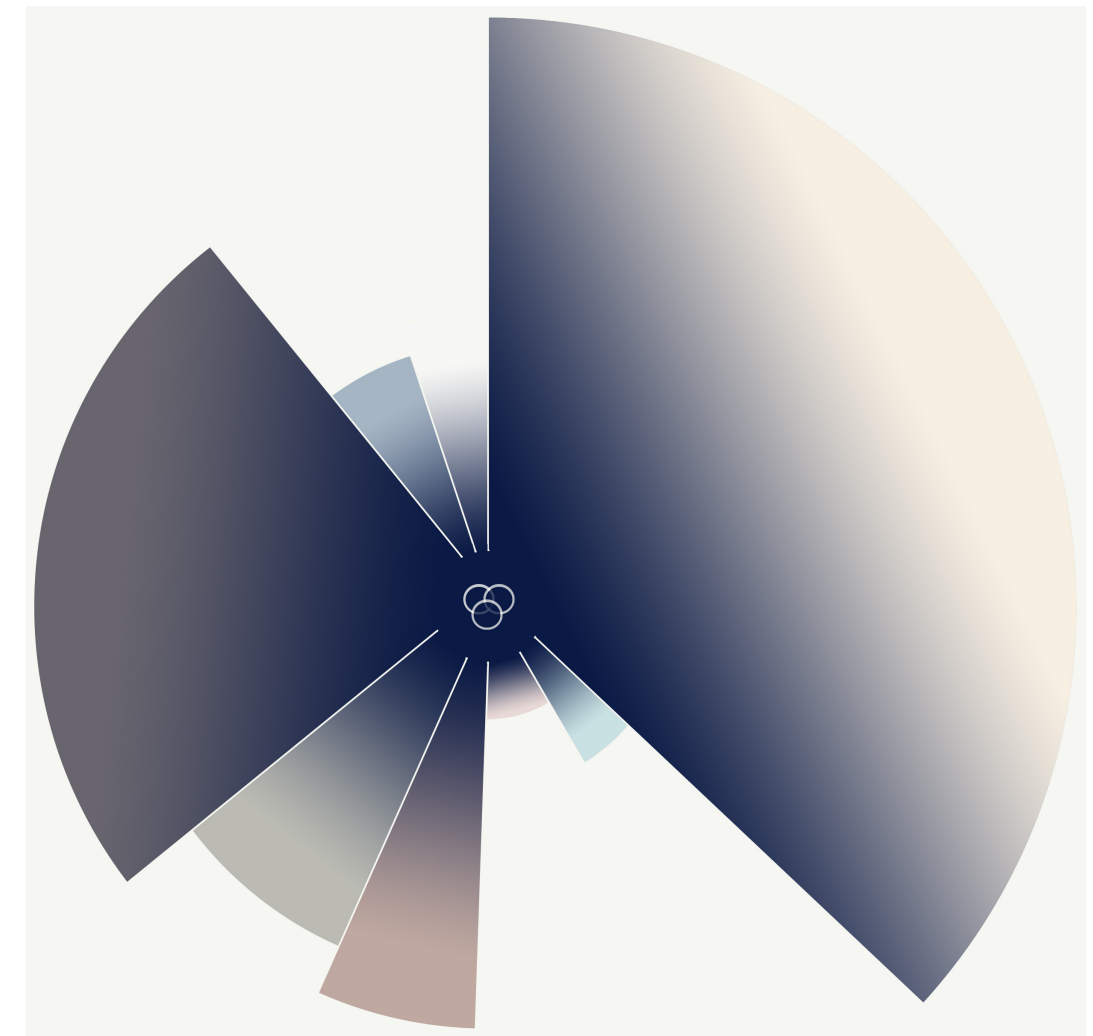
Interreligious dialog

In Sweden, many cities work active with an interreligious dialog and Gothenburg has its own centre, Interreligiöst center (interreligious centre). The work with interreligious dialog started as a reaction of the second world war and due to the Swedish church bad conscience how they treated, or not treated the holocaust. The Balkan war is another crisis that effected the cooperation between different religious in Sweden, and to show a unified position a Swedish priest, rabbi and imam went to Sarajevo to pray for peace. But also local crises have developed the work, for example “Backabranden”. Today, the centre in Gothenburg has contact with approximately 60 congregations and all big world religions are represented in the community.

The topics that are discussed during a dialog varies from academic theoretical, a dialog about the prayer where it is discussed how to find a spiritual life together, how to respect and how to pray together. Sometimes it is a unified prayer, but other times separately prayers but still together. The most important for these meetings is to respect each other and the meetings

do not necessary be hold at the centre but also in some ones’ home over a dinner. The aim for the meetings is not to find a united truth, but to see similarities and respect each other despite the fact that we believe in different things.

The interreligious centre in Gothenburg is a model for other similar communities. Even though limited resources they work active with the dialog, and try to find new tracks to develop their function. The centre is not owned by the greatest congregations, which is the standard way in other cities, but it is owned by the interreligious centre itself and is partially supported by the Gothenburg city. The fact that the city support the centre confirms that this is important and something that the city is proud of says Hanrik Flykberg, one of the founder for the interreligious centre in Gothenburg (Flykberg, 2016).



Sweden
-one of the most secular countries in the world

Sweden is a country which are quite unique regarding religion and how Swedish citizen thinks and are related to religion and believes. In a study made by The Global Index of Religiosity and Atheism in 2012 only 29% of the Swedish citizen claim to be religious which can be compared to the globally average at 59%. In another study made by Europakommissionen 2005 the same trend is shown.

The question “do you believe in God?” 23% of Swedes answered yes, which can be compared to the average of 52%. From studies over time where same questions have been asked, it is a clear trend in Sweden that the numbers of people believing in a God or religious are decreasing (Burén, 2015)
Even though decreasing numbers we can see that Christianity is still the greatest religion in

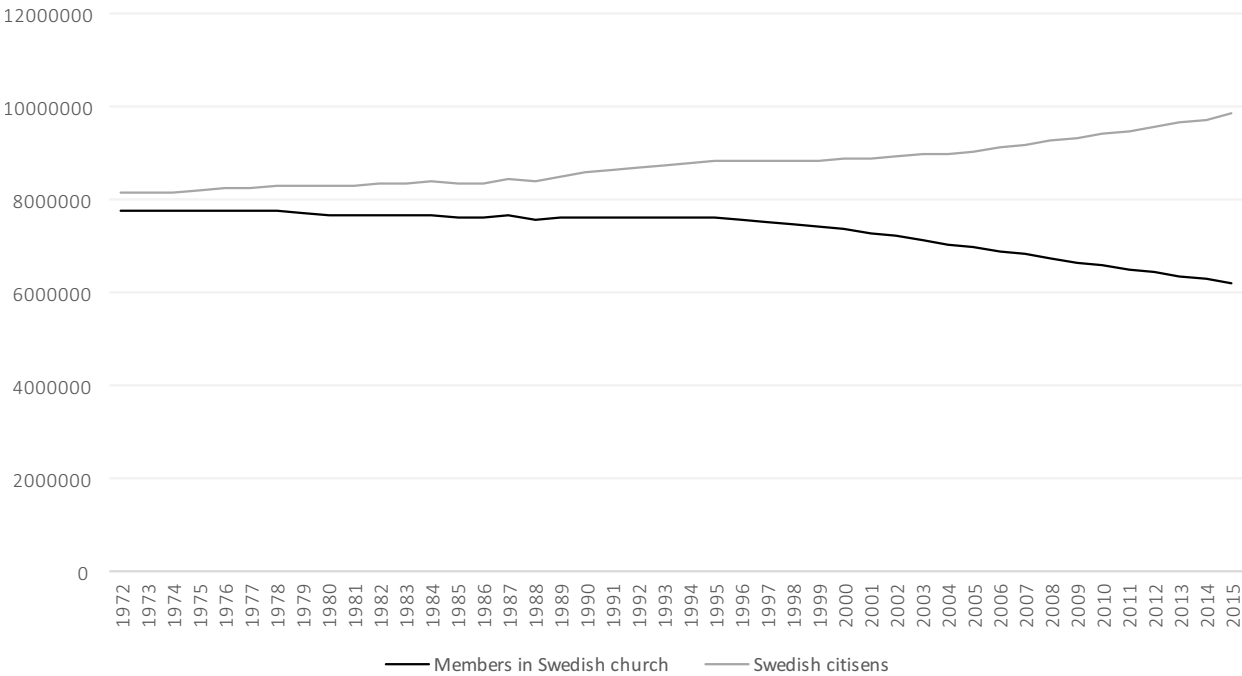


Diagram 1. Members in Swedish church. (Svenska kyrkan)

Sweden. I have therefore chosen to look further into the transformation of Swedes commitment to the Christianity and how the Swedish society is dependent and based on this religion. From both globally studies and internal statistics in religious community it is a clear fact that Sweden is one of the most secular countries in the whole world (Thurfjell, 2015). The numbers of people at the Sundays worship and the num-

bers of baptise, confirmation and marriages and funerals in the Swedish church decreases, which have been a clear fashion the last decades in Sweden (Svenska kyrkan). In following diagrams this trend can been seen.

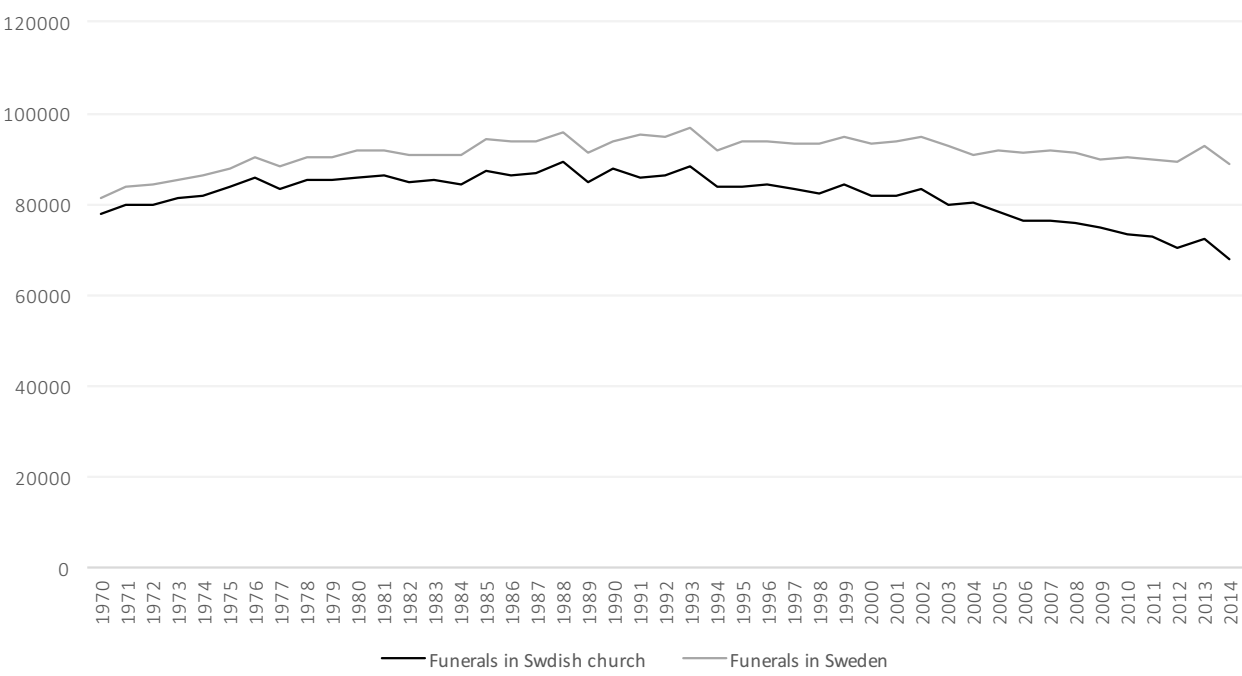


Diagram 2. Funerals in Swedish church. (Svenska kyrkan)

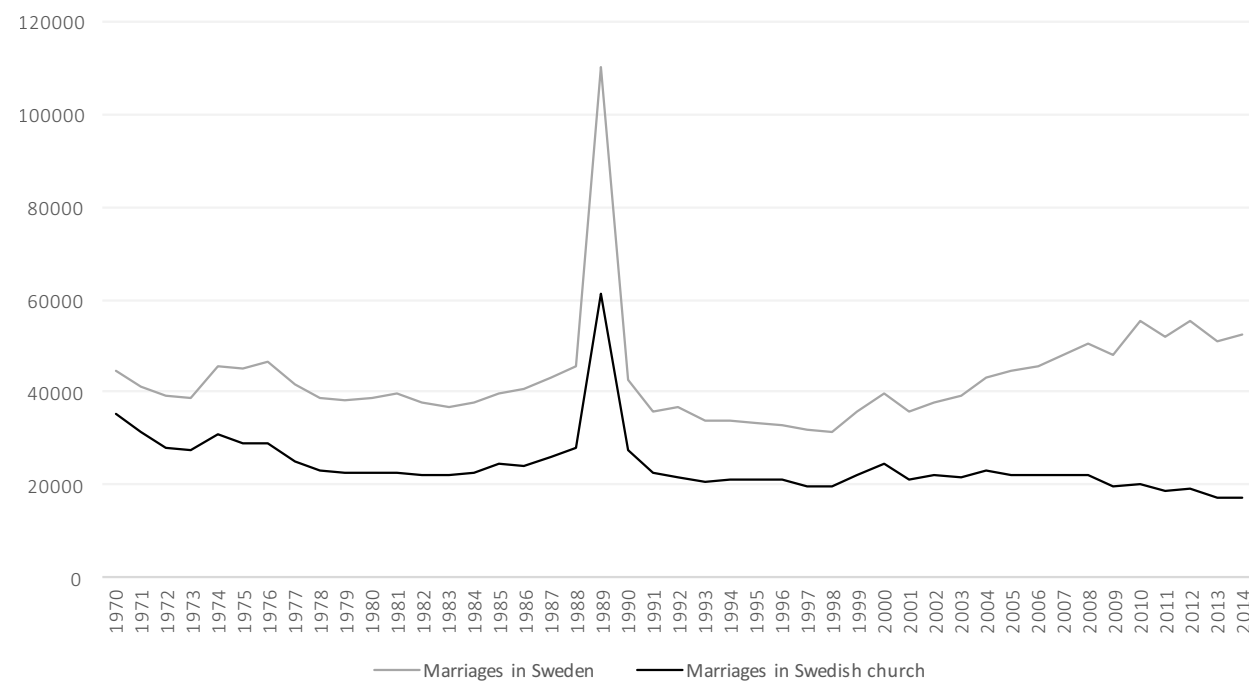


Diagram 3. Marriages in Swedish church. (Svenska kyrkan)

It is not just the individuals in Sweden that turn against the Christianity, this has also been a process for the Swedish state. For 150 years has the separation between the church and the state been an ongoing process. Starting with removing the laws of baptise, and that you were free to leave the Swedish church without exile (but, you had to still choose another religious community which were accepted by the state). In 1951 the freedom of religion was established, and in 2000 the separation was official. Since 2000 it is an active individual choice to choose if you want to be a member of the Swedish church. But still, the state and the Swedish church are connected in some aspects (Thurfjell,2015). It is a clear trend, that not just the social society take distance from the Christianity, but also our Swedish laws and the state. But we still have the traditions and the history, and the churches are a symbol of our cultural context which means a lot to the people in Sweden. We celebrate Christmas and Easter, we name our children to Christianity's name as Maria and Peter and we getting married in the church. This may not be strange, then it is a big part of our culture and historical heritage, but these celebrations have become more about family and food rather than church visit and bible reading.

You may ask why Sweden has become a secular country, and according to David Thurfjell and the book “Det Gudlösa Folket”, there is seve-

ral reasons why a secularization of a country occurs. The factors that he describes are based on globally studies where similarities regarding history, welfare, safety and culture integration can be drawn for countries with similar relation to religion. The first factor he describes is modernization, that there exists a relation between secularization and how well a country has modernized during the last century. This factor fit to almost all countries, but U.S stands out. U.S has a high modernization but still the amount of people believing in God or that thinks religion is an important factor in their life is high. An explanation for this is that U.S do not have a good welfare or security from the state. Thurfjell talks also about transformation of the society and individuals' valuations. There is an ongoing subjective turn where more people do not think that tradition and history tell us the truth, but instead our own perceptions and a receptions of traditions regarding class and gender. What also is interesting is that Swedish people has the most individualistic basic position of all people in the world (World's Survey 2010). The Swedish people thinks it is of main importance to respect the individuals and tolerance for minorities. We have a high trust to each other and have post-materials values which means we value a free work with possibilities of development more than material security. We feel free to be whomever we want, and we accept each other. This subjective turn can also be a reason why Swedes are secular.

OR?

But, it may be time to look deeper into the Swedish believes, it may be time to variegate the image of the Secular-Sweden. Even though Sweden has low percentages in studies regarding religious affiliation it is important to have in consideration how these studies have been done and how the questions have been asked. The questions can be very subjective and therefore be understood and answered to differently. The question “Do you believe in God” or “Do you think religion is important” can have various meaning for people and therefore can the result be misleading. Therefore, to understand the Swedish believes and faith, thorough interviews have been done. From these interviews the answer of religion affiliation and how Swedish people think about God have been clear at first but after a deeper dialogue the answer become rather complex, where doors open up to Christianity but also other religions, believes and spirituality (Anna af Burén). In the investigation made by David Thurfjell, the interviews show that 50 % of those that do not believe in a God believes in some kind of spirituality. So in contrary to the numbers where Sweden tends to be one of the world’s most secular country, the Swedish pe-

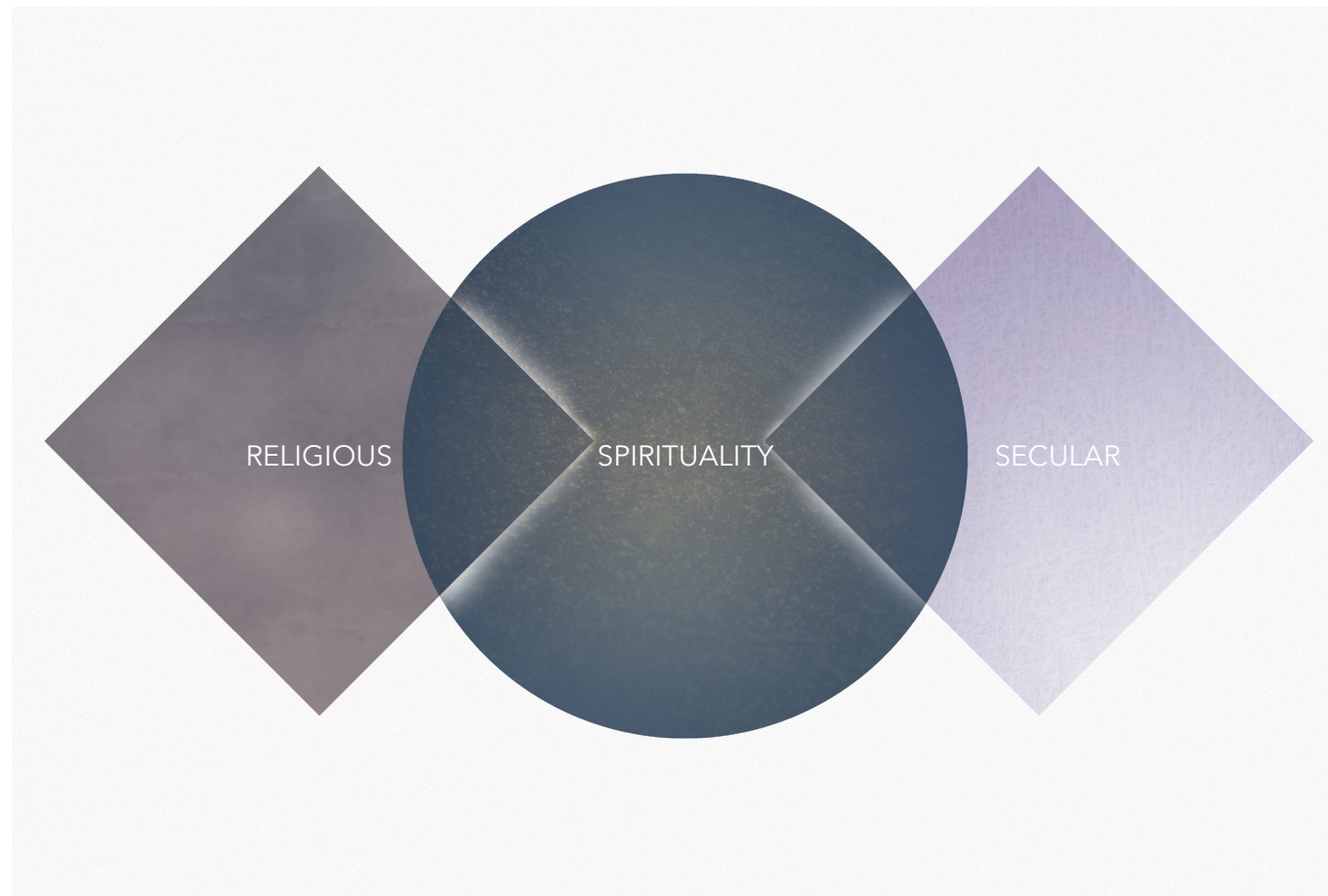
ople seems to have a quite strong believe in spirituality. The result of these studies shows that Sweden is not a secular society regarding the Swedish beliefs. It is clear that it is a decreased interest in the traditional religions, but from the discussion and answer regarding “faith” and “believe” it is shown that it is rather a transformation than disappearance. It is the relation to the traditional religious that has changed, it is not the religious thought that disappearing. The Swedish people do not discuss religion, and you do not talk about it official. People do not want to classify them self with a religion, and if someone does, it is unique and the chance is higher that you’ll be identified with your religion. People seems to turn against institutionalized religion, but they have not left a religious way of thinking of their being and beliefs. For example, it was common during the interviews that people said that “I do not believe in God, but I believe in “something”” (Thurfjell, 2016).

The main difference between the traditional religions and the modern spirituality is that instead of a holy God and solidarity, the human and the individuals are the foundation. It is a majority that have a relativistic stance

to the relationship to religion. Many thinks that various religious can be true in the same time, and other creates their own religion from different religious contexts. Over all, there are no absolute truth or absolute value. It is the individuals own truth and values that should be highlighted. The mainstream Swede considers that the absolute truth is to realize them self in their own way and to be free to define their own lives. (Important to add to this is that this do not necessary need to be tolerance for others). This type of spirituality seems to be important for many people in Sweden, the type of spirituality that can be described as Godless, human-related and individual, and the spirit within people is most associate to wellbeing, own truth and some kind of therapy.



Spirituality



Definition

The religious context in Gothenburg is broad. There exist several religions with more or less active members, there exist a will to establish relationship between religions and it exist secular people.

The Swedes are not a Christian people anymore, but a mixture of everything. A common ground, for more or less all, is a belief or a need for spirituality, regardless religious or secular. This leads to the question; what is spirituality? The word spirituality comes from Latin spiritus, in turn from spirare which means to breathe. In our history, spirituality has had a natural part in religion and has been associated with a relation to a certain God or holy spirit, but after the Second World War spirituality and religion have become more separate. This distinction has been increased with the secularism and also the “New Age” movement in the later 20’s, which has broadened the view of spirituality. The traditional definition of spirituality according to Waaijman is a process of re-formation which “aims to recover the original shape of man, the image of God” (Waaijman, 2002). The more secular meaning of spirituality is

a subjective experience, with an emphasis on deeper values in life, our self-growth and transformation which do not have to be related to any traditional religion (Wong 2008). To define spirituality is therefore difficult when it has such a subjective meaning, but Shafranske and Gorsuch (1984) defined spirituality widely as a “transcendent dimension within human experience”.

Spiritual beliefs cannot be captured by a single dimension. As discussed, spirituality is both a part of two independent dimensions – the religious and the secular/the individual. The religious spirituality is associated with traditionalism, a holy spirit or a certain God, and more moderately with a focus on a collectivism and with low openness to experience. The secular spirituality is more about a connectedness, to the moment, others, nature and our self with a high openness to experience, but can also be associated to beliefs of a magical or superstitious sort. With a risk to simplify this; we could say that religious spirituality has boundaries while the secular spirituality has a more subjective and unbounded form (Saucier, Skrzypin, 2006).

Individual needs

In a time where the world has become more complex and anonyms increases the needs of an anchoring to who we are and to our coexistence. In a time where many feel stressed the needs of an understanding of meaning and purpose have increased. In a lifetime where we go through both indescribable hurtful periods with death, illness, war and separations, but also, periods filled with happiness, love and peace. For all these emotions and moments, the emptiness and the fullness, many have a need for a spiritual experience. Spiritual needs change with time and circumstances.

New studies have also shown that spirituality is a positive factor in healthcare. In the article Supportive and Palliative Care for Adults with Cancer, 2004, reflects in the increasing emphasis on spirituality as a factor contributing to wellbeing, and therefore recommends healthcare teams to treat and evaluate spiritual issues (Speck, 2004).

For Yourself

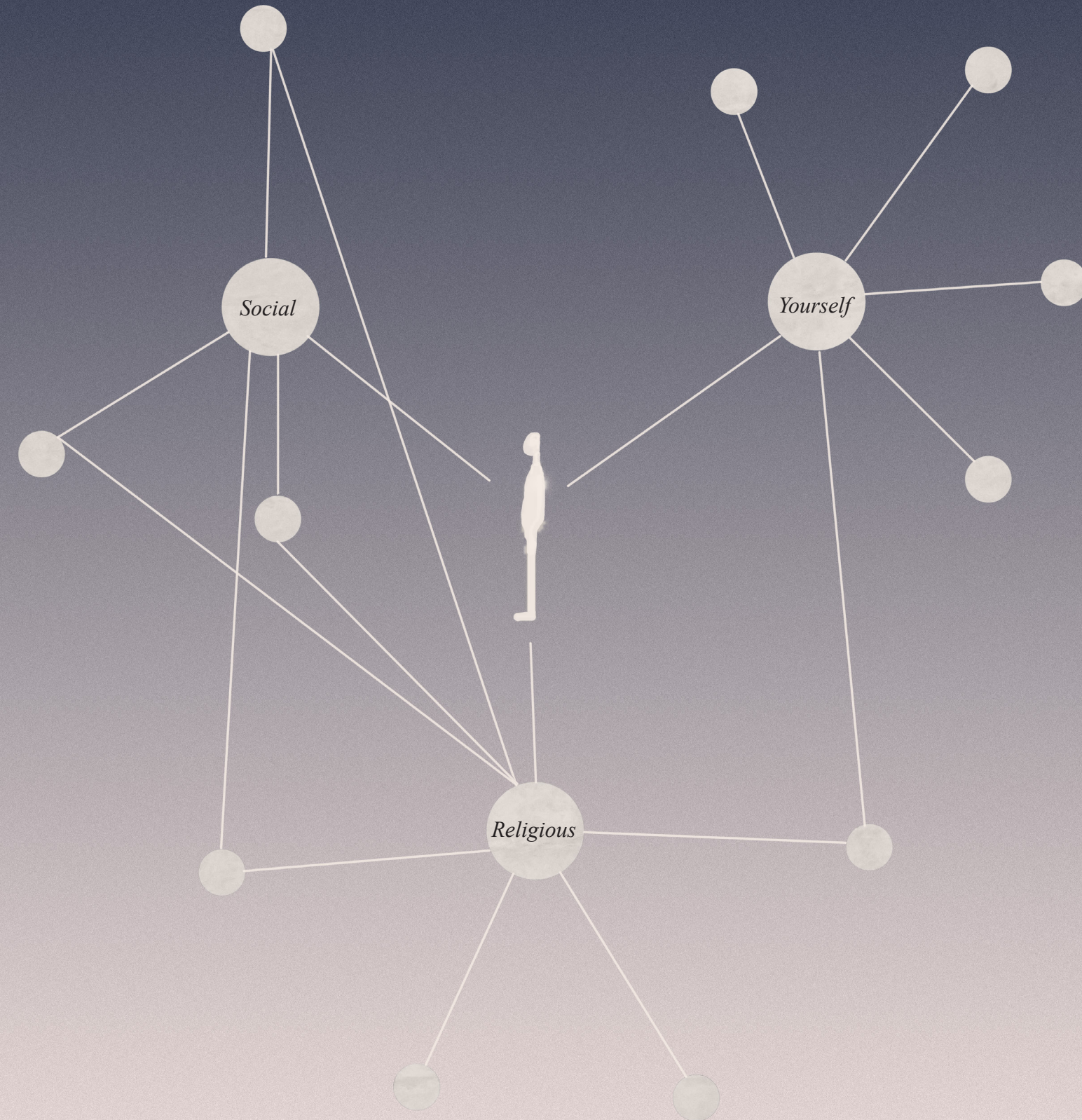
When we need a time for ourselves. A time to think, reconnect, write or light a candle for someone.

The social

For discussion about life, meeting and for ceremonies where we want to share the moment together.

The Religious

When you want to pray, meditate or sing together or alone. To connect with rituals and a certain God.



Spiritual Architecture

Elements

The trace of something else.
The place that transform us to a new, different world.

What makes a building spiritual? A questions with thousands of answers, or maybe no answer. Spirituality is a feeling untouchable, unique, “indescribable” and something from within. Spiritual or sacred architecture is often described as physical elements with qualities that impact a sense of the spirituality or sacred. These are two paradoxes, architecture which is dependent on materiality, shall express the non-material, and architecture built with with logic should give us feelings of the non-logical and the indescribable.

Searching for the answer in literature, the opinion of spiritual architecture is divided. Le Corbusier claims that physical and defined elements as proportion, harmony, plasticity and aesthetics are important in sacred buildings. He talks also about the, not so defined, boundless space and the fourth dimension; the instrument of ineffable space. Frank Lloyd Wright talks mostly about the relation and the presence of nature. It is the captured, framed, smell and feeling of nature that provides the architecture with its spirituality. With this, Tado Ando

agrees, but he talks also about the importance of light.

Other claims that spiritual architecture is more about the mystery, the history and the sense of aura the building has that makes it unique. That it is about a fifth dimension beyond height, length, width and movement. It is a dimension of inherent relation in the essence things.

In the book *Architecture, Culture, and Spirituality* architecture is described as something that enhance the spirituality. In this book the author compare how spirituality can be derived from architecture with how music are created from an instrument. It is not the architecture by itself which create that sensitive experience as spirituality, but it can be a tool for us to enhance it. But it is also claimed that with the right balance with biology, physiology, and social meaning, the architecture can diffuse itself and be an experience of being in the environment, its social and also individual context.

Which follows, that the spiritual feeling is certainly associated with the aesthetic experience of a place, and such place can actually give a richer experience. Experience of being in a place. Experience of being in the moment. From within (Barrie, 2015).





Figure 1.

Al-Irsyad Mosque

A clear focus with relation to light and nature

Architect: Urbane



Figure 2.

Notre Dame du Haut

Light and geometry

Architect: Le Corbusier



Skogskyrkogården

The effort to rethink the idea of ordinary cemetery and propose a notion of sacred landscape instead.

Architects: Gunnar Asplund and Sigurd Lewerentz.



Figure 3.

Bruder Klaus Chapel

The sensitive change of darkness and light. The careful treatment of material. The relation between building and landscape.

Architect: Peter Zumthor

Function

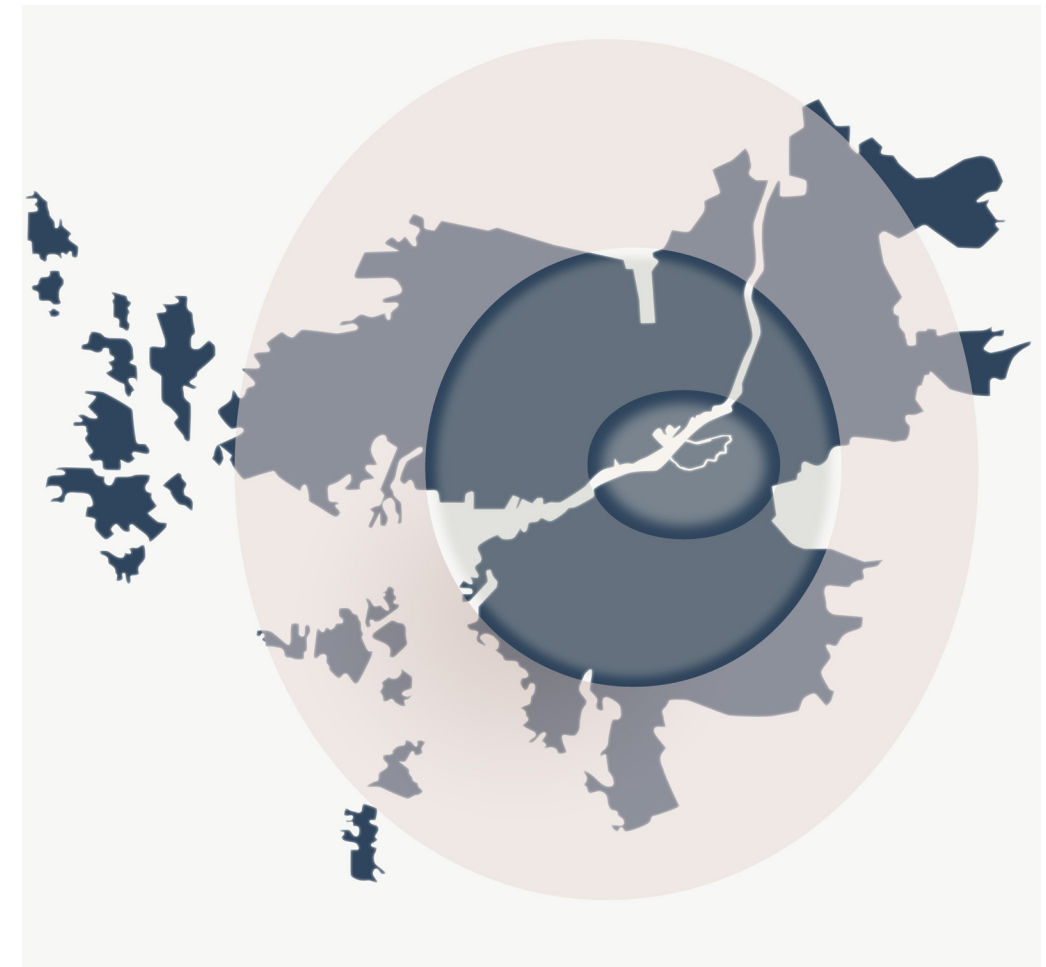
Function within the city

In history, sacred buildings have been an important symbol and function within the city, not just in Sweden but almost everywhere. The city planning has been formed by placement of sacred building as we can see for example in Rome. In Gothenburg there are several sacred buildings, both new and old, central and in the suburbs and for different religious and religious communities. These buildings have had different functions and meanings through the time, and even though not many people visit these places as much as 50 years ago they still have symbolic values and can be seen as landmarks within the city.

With new development for the city, it is important to highlight these kind of places, and also plan for new types for spiritual spaces when we know that this is a need for many people. As Mantas Gipas propose in his thesis, that “sacred

spaces possess an important role as a core or a backbone of emerging conception of cultural sustainability” (Gipas, 2016). I also want to add another factor for this; the importance of our spiritual needs. This is also something that has been thought of when developing Frihamnen, a new residential area at Hisingen (Flykberg, 2016).

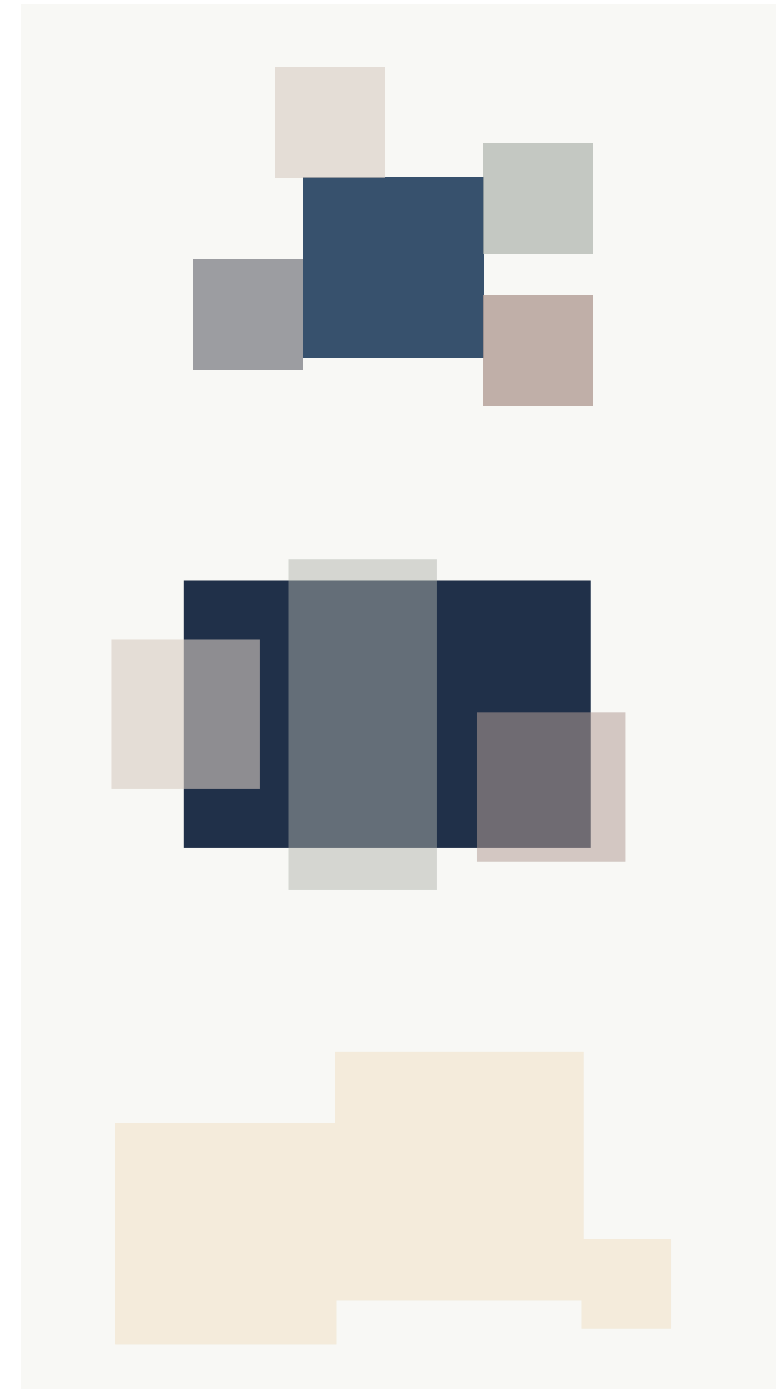
Spirituality can be expressed and have different meanings, hence the function for a spiritual place differ. First, the function of the place is dependent on the location, or the context within the city. In Gothenburg, which is a segregated city, the needs for and how to express spirituality differs, and a spiritual place is highly dependent on its surrounding. Therefore, it is important to understand the surrounding, the context and the peoples’ need for spirituality in the area.



Function within a spiritual space

The function within can differ.

The place can be associated to one religion, as a church or a mosque. But there exist also buildings which bridge several religions together. For example, a new project in Berlin, house of one, which will merge Christianity, Islam and Judaism under one roof, but in three different spaces. Another example is to have several religions under one roof but in one room with moveable equipment, to be able to change the interior dependent on occasion. A forth example is a totally neutral space, with no symbolises to any religion – to not offend or put any religion in focus. Instead open up for everyone – also for the secular people.



PART II

Site

Näckrosdammen - context

Location

In the most centre of Gothenburg behind the art museum, Näckrosdammen, or Renströmsparken which is its official name, is located. With Götaplatsen to the north, Korsvägen to east, Aschebergsgatan and Gibratargatan to the west, this site is a pause in the city, surrounded with many bigger streets, people and dense movement.



History

Näckrosdammen was built for the Anniversary exhibition in 1923 in front of Minneshallen, which was located where Humanisten is today. The exhibition cost a large amount of money, and when the city had big problems of poverty and segregation, the citizens of Gothenburg felt that there were more important things to focus on. In the same time, there was an ongoing strike in the harbour that also came to include the construction workers at the exhibition site. Strike breakers were put in, and the day before

the exhibition would open, fights and shootings arose.

The exhibition though was a great success with many visitors. Even though many of the buildings and transport system have been demolished, the exhibition started to develop the "Event-Gothenburg" which we know today, with Liseberg, Scandinavium and the cultural centre at Götaplatsen.



GhmE:6449

© 2005 Göteborgs Stadsmuseum

Figure 3. Idrottshallen 1923. (Photo:



ShmE:5149

Tillhör Göteborgs Stadsmuseum

Figure 4. Konstindustrihallen 1923. (Photo:



Why

The site was chosen mainly due to three reasons. First, the fact that it is in the centre of the city, close to big tram stops and streets, this site is accessible for all and it feels accepted to come here. Second, the history of the site. We may not think of it today, but the thought of creating a place here for everyone, which hopefully will counteract segregation and open up for new relations when it has been such sensible topic regarding these aspects when it was built, gives another dimension to the project. Third, and the most important reason, the site gives a feeling of calmness and some kind of spirituality. When you enter the park you have already been transformed into another place than the contrasts with the surrounding is very distinct. This feeling slow down the steps, and the other

world can wait for a while.

The park gives a certain feeling. A feeling which makes people go slower and even sit down for a while. Round the pond, the benches are more or less hidden by plants and creates small rooms in the park with different characters, and often you can see people using these rooms. The main plan for the visitors at this park may not be to sit on these benches, it just happens due to a temporary and spontaneous feeling which the park gives. The feeling and the function of these small rooms, created with plantings and a bench, provides a place for a spirituality which often are used by just one person. In these outdoor rooms, there is a connection with the nature and the moment and where you can get a connection to yourself.

Site Conditions



Buildings

On the site, Gothenburg University has some facilities, a library, Humanisten and the university of music and stage. Näckrosdammen also adjacent to Lorensberg and the area of patriciervillorna, built in 1920-30, in a national romanticism style with facades in dark brick which you can see from the site. When the architects designed this area, they were very much influenced by the British's

parks with curved paths and tracks, and therefore they design the area with curved streets which follows the landscape with a focus on human being and the movement in the area. The residential buildings were built for the higher class of the society and their families. Now, many of the buildings have other function and have been renovated at the inside.

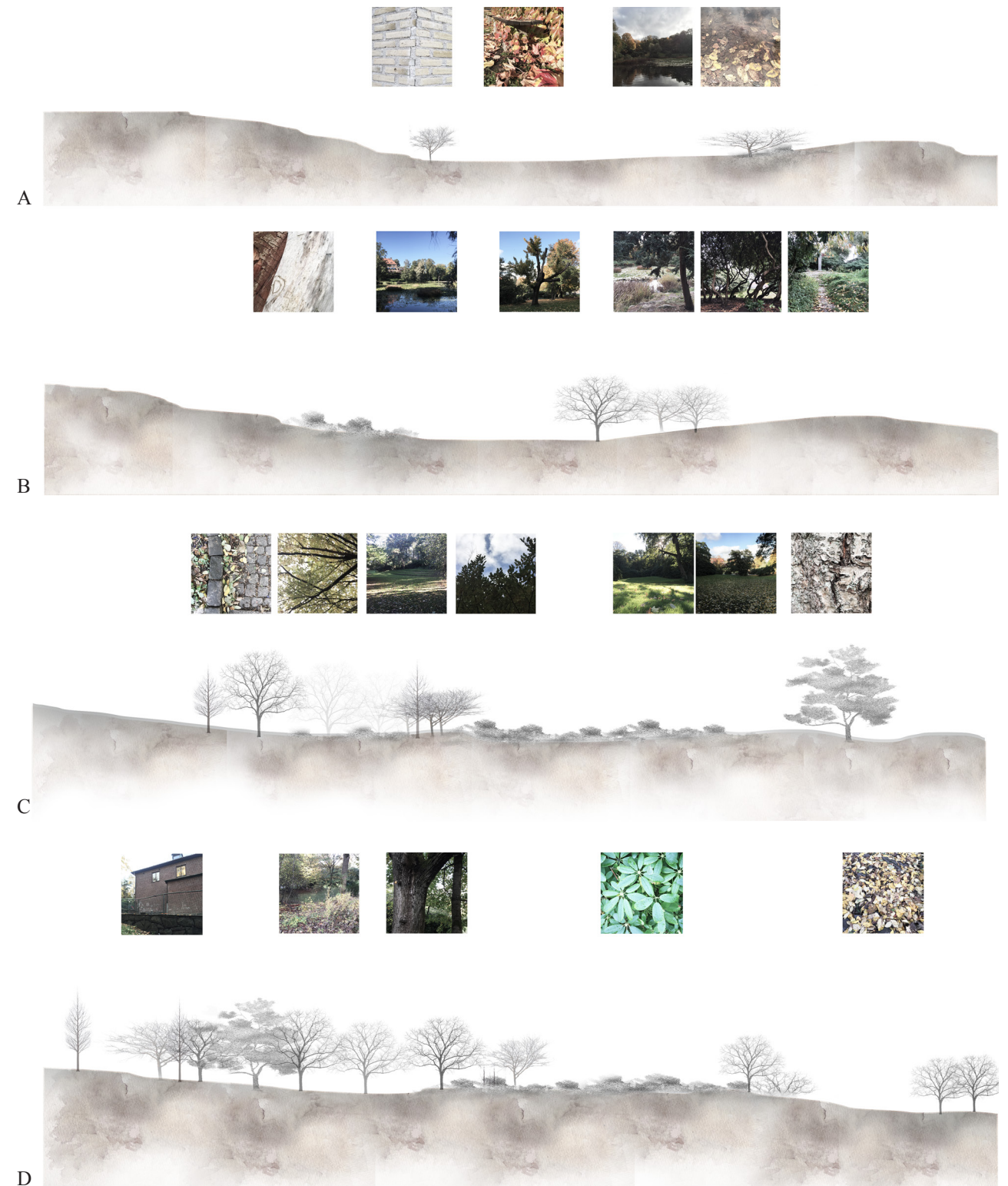
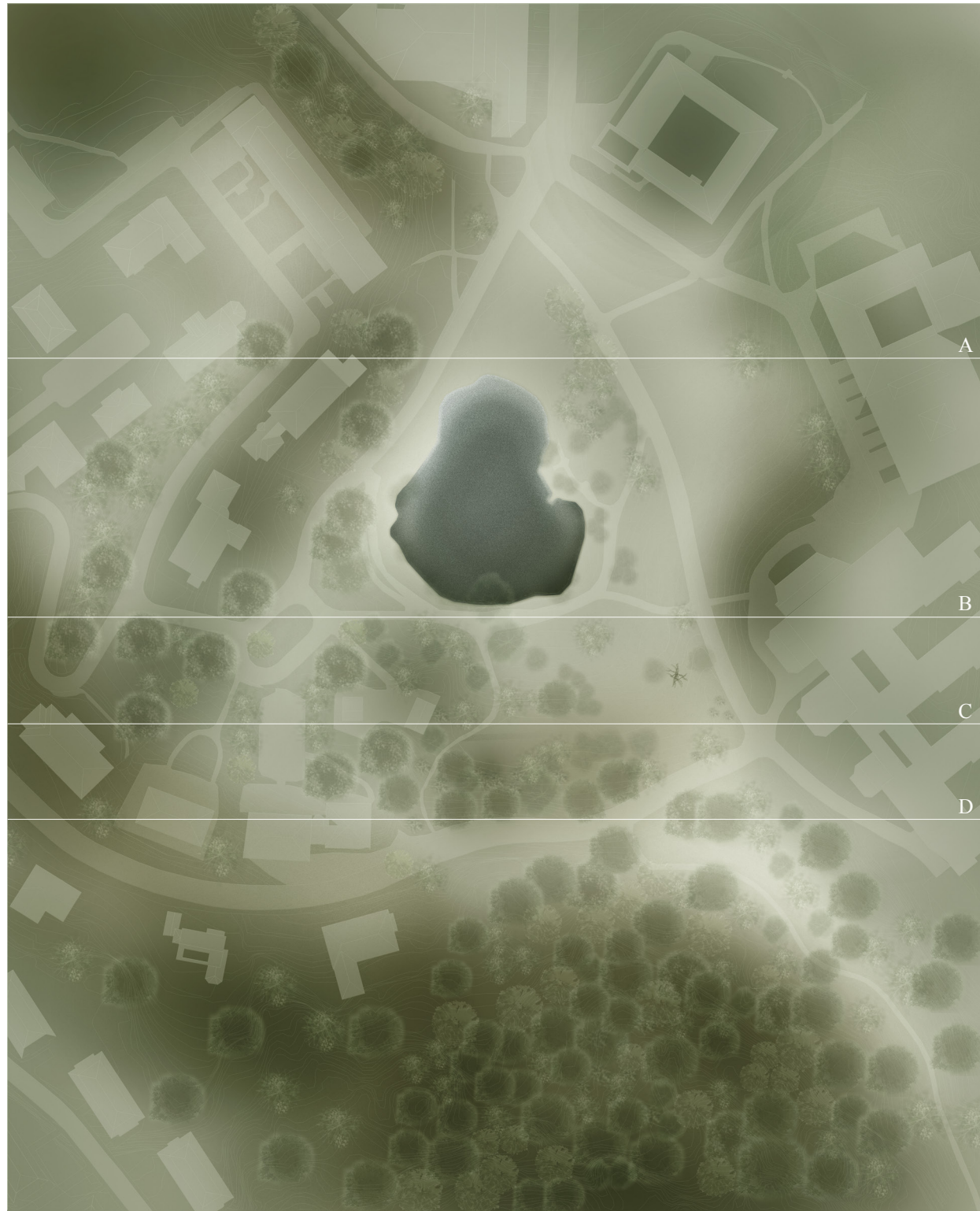


Human scale and natural detailing Water and waterlilies Worth iron detailing Rhodendeneons Old tree

Material

The planting at the site has been chosen carefully with a thought of having plants with different flower periods. There are several and wide range of species at site, but the rhododendrons and the old trees gives the site a certain character, as the pound in the middle of the site. The pond is in the centre of the park, and the water mirror is almost hidden by all waterlilies growing. Close to the pond there are curved

gravel paths and there are wood benches with worth steel detailing. The bigger paths in the park is made of asphalt. The small path going uphill is partly a stair made of both stone and wood, and the hand rails are in same material as the detailing at the benches and the streetlights.

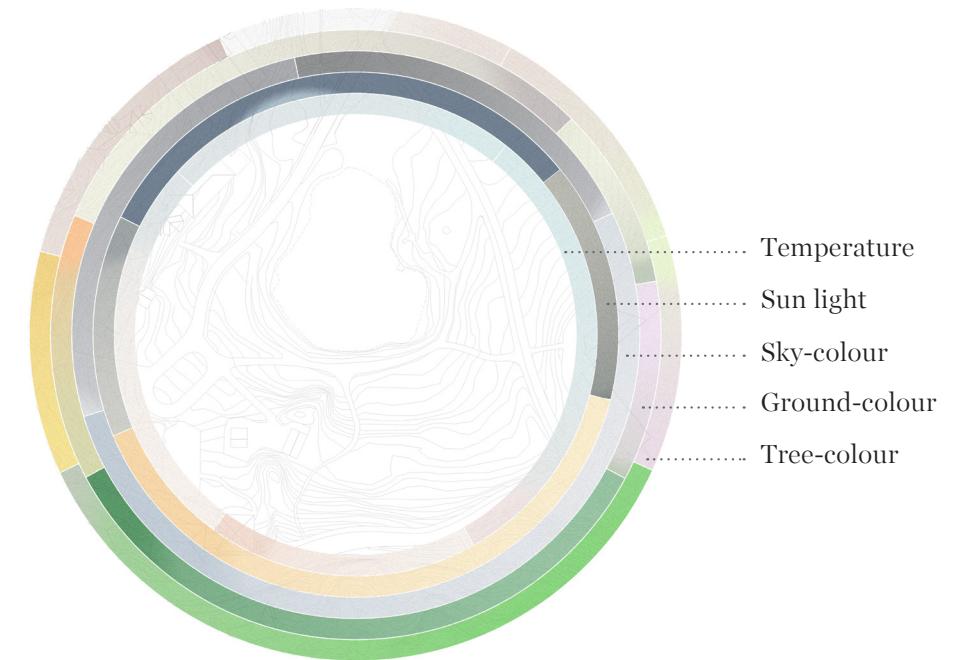


Sun light



During the year, the sun conditions varies. Due to a smaller hill, with tall and dense trees, in the southern and eastern part of the park, the sun will light at the park no, or just few hours during the winter days. This is in contrast to the summer days when the sun hits the park during the whole day.

Colours during the year



The plantings in the park have been carefully considered, both in relation to the history but also the colours during the year. Except different species of trees with variations in sizes, leaves, colours and age, the other plantings have their flowering period in different times. Starting from the early spring flower in the ground, the rhododendrons during later spring and summer, ending with the pink waterlilies in the pond.

Location

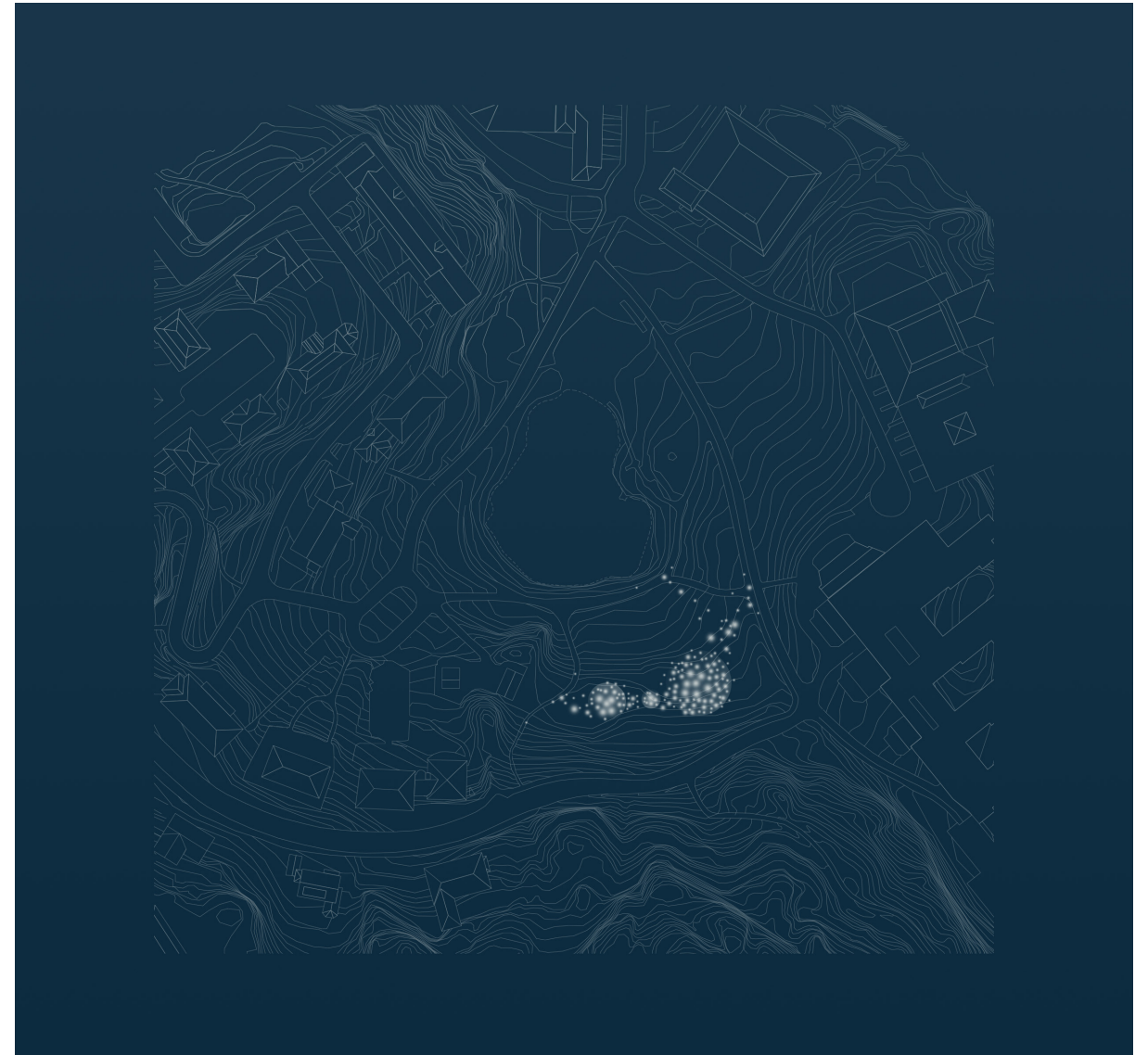
The chosen area in the park for the design is the southern part. The hill, with dense and tall trees, creates a natural boundary at one side, while on the other side the park with the pond in the centre creates an open a welcoming side. This area has two identities, one which is more open while the other part is more closed and hidden.

Views

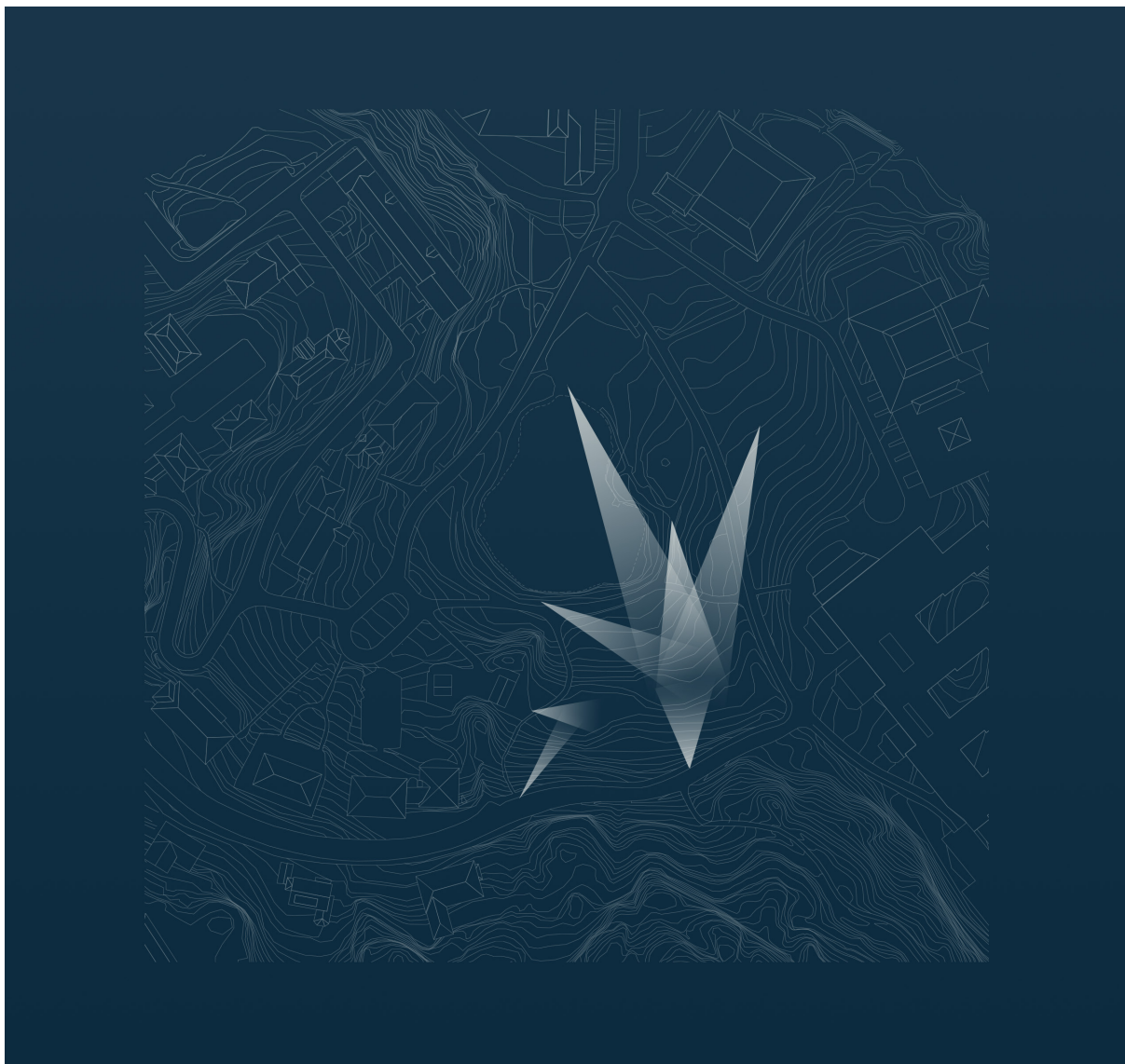
The part which are more open can be seen from almost everywhere in the park, and has a nice view over the pond and the greenery. The more closed part is hidden by trees and rhododendrons, and can't be seen from the rest of the park, but from this place it is possible to see the pond through the trees.

Movement

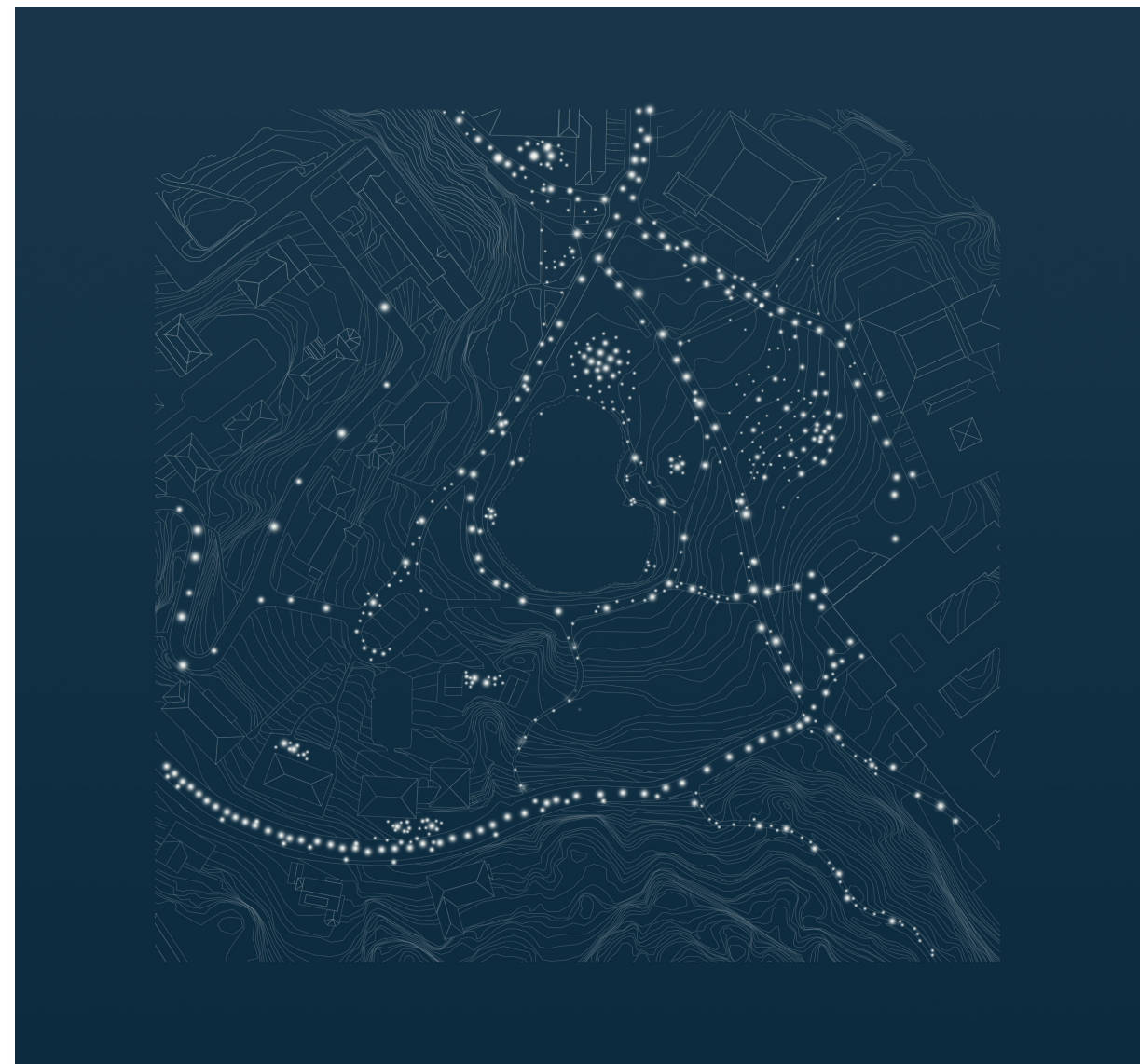
Due to the park's location in the city, many people walks and bike through this park daily, and also due to the university at the site, there is always people at this site. The movement is thought not stressed, it seems like people actually moves a little bit slower when walking in the park. In the park there is also a smaller playground, which attracts families with kids to this site.



Location



Views



Movement

PART III

Design idea

Typology

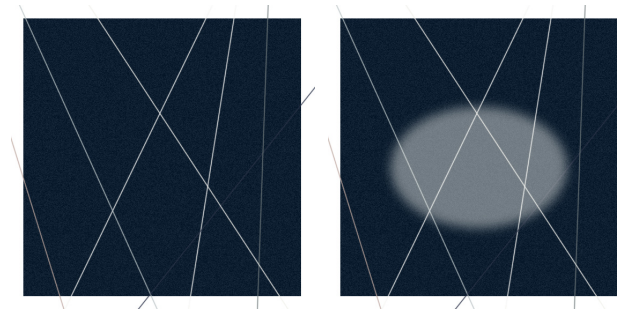
Function

The typology and the function for a spiritual place are as mentioned dependent on the location in the city. Näckrsodammen is a park in the most centre of Gothenburg, where many people walk through daily, and when it is close to bigger tram- and bus stops it is also an easily accessible place for everyone. This is a place which could be a good meeting place for people in their daily life but also for certain moments. It is also a good place for people to sit down for some minutes by them self. The benches in the park is often used, and gives an opportunity to get time for yourself, but the time with others, is lacking.

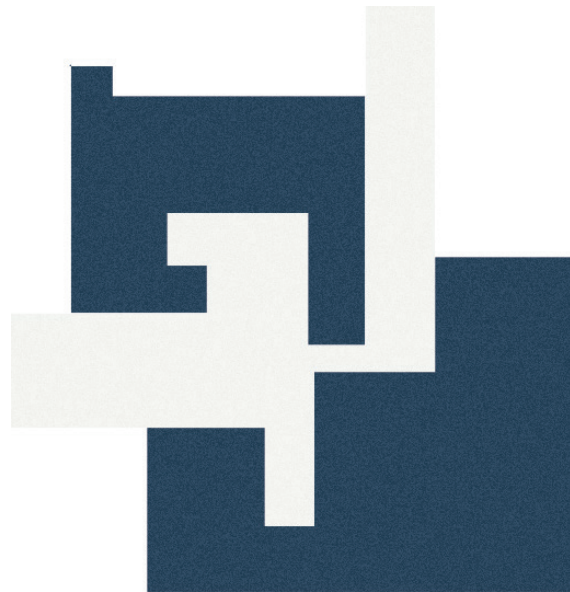
This place will be a place mainly for you but together with other. For ceremonies, meetings and for those moment for yourself. Spiritual functions as, memorials, wedding, light a candle, interreligious meetings and poetry reading. For both sad and glad moments in life.

Religious or secular spirituality?

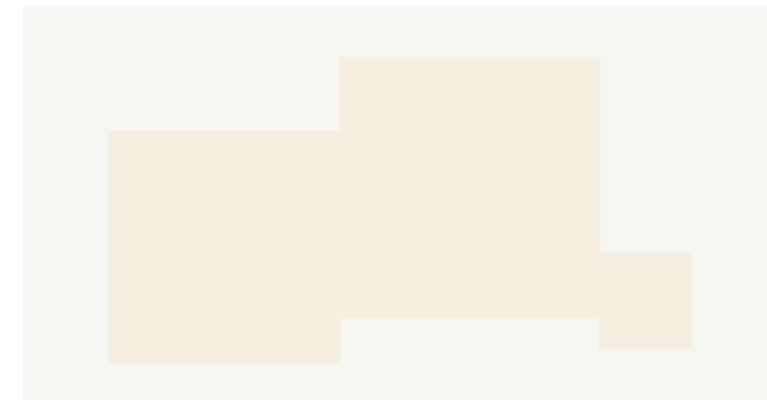
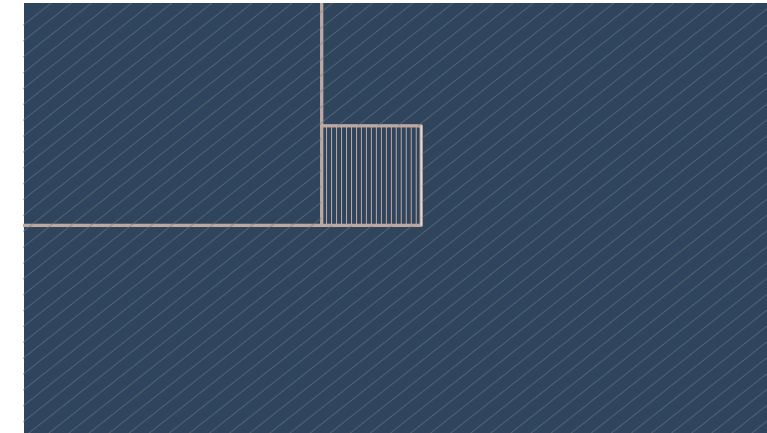
There is a difference between the religious- and the secular/individual spirituality. It is defined and it is expressed differently and therefore difficult to combine without losing important values. Therefore, the design was chosen to focus on one of these. Looking at the context, the site and the city over all, where several religious buildings exists, where a interreligious centre is active, where people with no religion do not have a defined meeting place, a site which is used in many peoples' daily life...



Create a spiritual social meeting point in a park where different people walks daily.



Difference between religious and secualr spirituality - difficult to combine without losing important values



From this analysis it was decided to continue working with a typology and a design mainly for the secular/individual spirituality, with a focus on the individual person together with others. A spiritual place in a natural space, without any symbols associated to any religions, to not offend, but instead open up for everyone in all's daily life.

Elements

For this project, four elements where chosen to treat in the search for a spatial experience of spirituality. From the reference projects and literature, light/shade, matter, nature and sound where chosen.

Light/Shade

Light is a natural element in architecture and contributes to the definition and the feeling of a space. What is unique with light compared to other elements is that it is something physical but also changeable, mobile and unstable. Light has also an underlying symbolic of hope, warmth, home, and safe. Light will affect your eyes, your mind, and your body's relation to the room in both space and time. The fact that light also has a strong symbolic value which often can be read in sacred buildings, but also in movies, stories and other type of art professions and is therefore something that we all are familiar of.

Matter

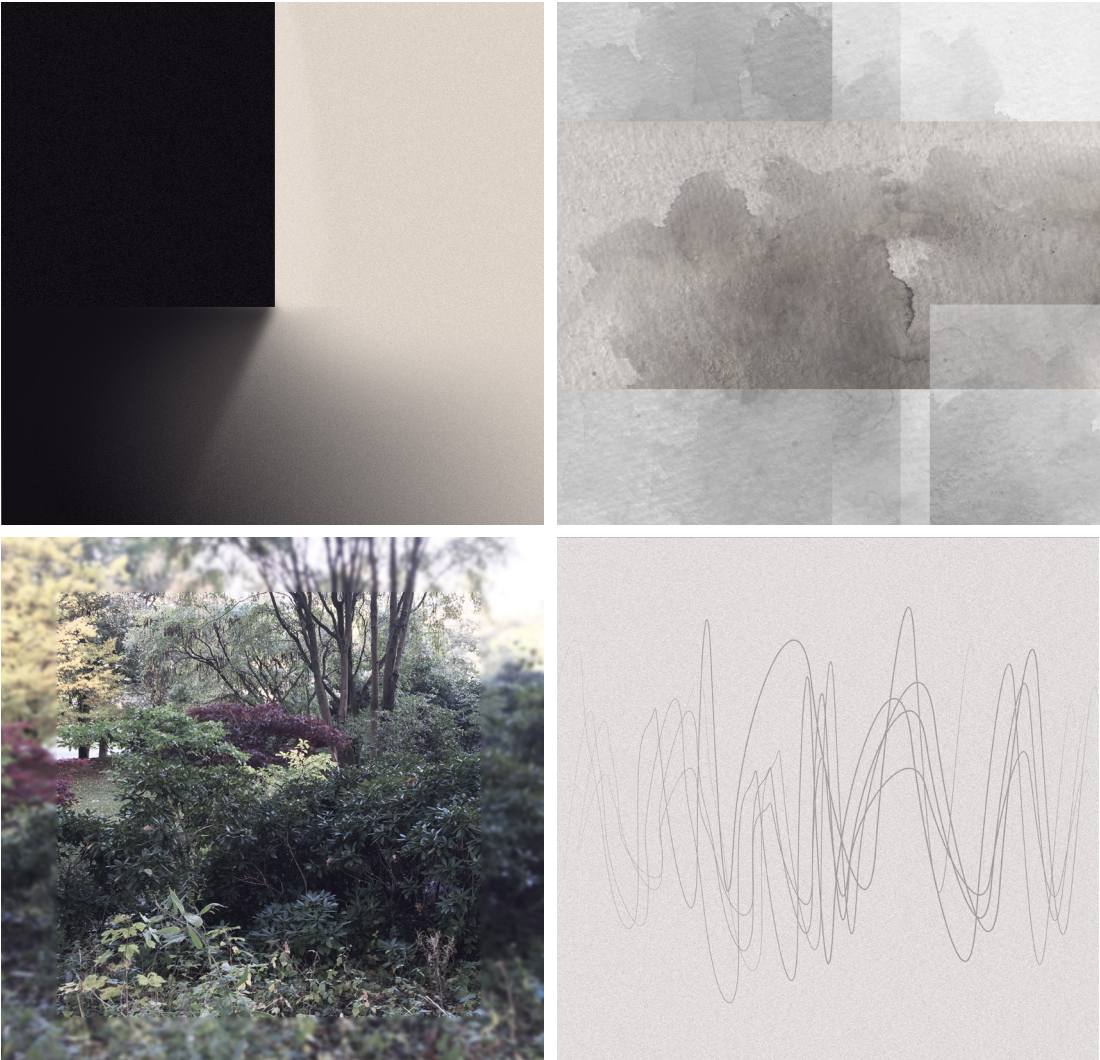
Matter has a great impact on the spatial experience. Materiality is something we feel, which has a temperature and texture which influence our senses. Materiality can also create different sound and light environment.

Nature

When Tado Ando and Frank Lloyd Wright describe what spiritual architecture is, they both talks about the relation to nature. The natural elements have a special impact on us, how we move, what we do and how we feel, and can contribute to a spiritual feeling with right treatment.

Sound

The spiritual experience is something we feel in our whole body, also with our ears. One of the main characteristic of this place is the contrast in the natural sound. The park, where you can hear the birds, is an island within a noisy environment. This contrast makes you aware. Aware of your context and yourself. The sound is therefore an important element in how we feel our self and our surrounding, and is a main factor of the search for spirituality.



Concept

Something within

Spirituality has an objective truth, but what is common is that the feeling comes from within. Within our bodies, and our mind. In order to design a space for individual spirituality I have chosen to focus on how we experience space with an emphasis to create a feeling in our body.

Focusing on four elements which both are related to spirituality and our experience of a space, and a fifth element which is also important; time, how we experience time with our body. Together, these elements will transform us in space and time and be the instrument to spirituality.

The concept for the design is in direct relation to spiritual feelings and spaces. The spiritual feeling touches your mind, your body and your senses from within.

The architecture needs to be silent to let individuals have their own ways to find spirituality, but also, it needs to have a dialog with your eyes-mind-body-and-soul to touch or trigger the spiritual feelings within.

To achieve this, the architecture needs to surpassing the expected. Have something more, or different within than you had expected. The design should have something within, which generate your experience. From within.



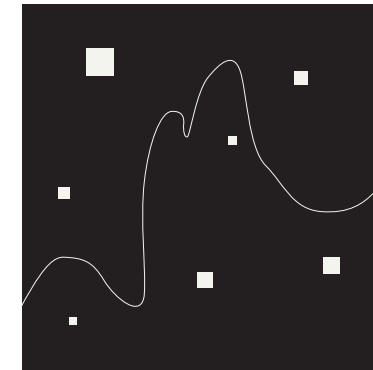
Movement

Contrast in movement

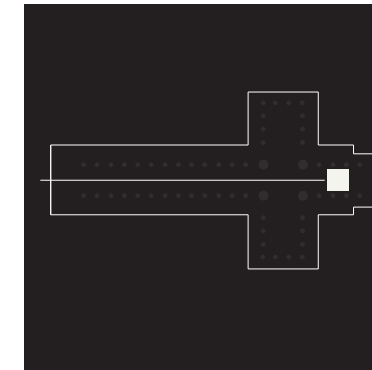
When enter the park, the movement pattern changes. Independent on how you enter the park, from the dense traffic at Korsvägen or the intense movement on the Avenue, your steps will change. Your steps will slow down. You will change your steps in relation to the calming nature. The nature you see and the nature you hear. The paths in the park are narrow with gravel as ground material and are organized such you go through the park. You may take a pause to sit down on one of the wooden benches, but then you will continue your walk. This continues movement is something that contributes to the feeling of the park. For this reason, I decided to analyse the movement, and investigate how the movement could also continue into, and maybe through my design. This, in order to relate to the surrounding nature and the natural flow.

Movement in relation with spirituality

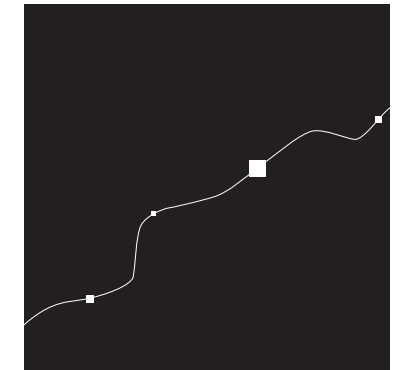
With this in mind, I thought it also would be interesting to investigate the relation between the movement and the experience of spirituality. Spirituality describes often as a human experience from within, a transformation in time and space. Spirituality is something people needs in great moments, something that needs to be processed. Therefore, I thought it would be interesting to treat this place as a sequence, which continues the movement in the park. A place you go through, sit down for a while and then continue walking. A sequence where you explore the spatial feelings in different levels of your body. Not a place where you enter and arrive from the same point, but instead where you enter at one place, and leave at another. Exactly as the feelings you have within you, which will be treated and developed through the sequence. A transformation in time and space.



Park



Church



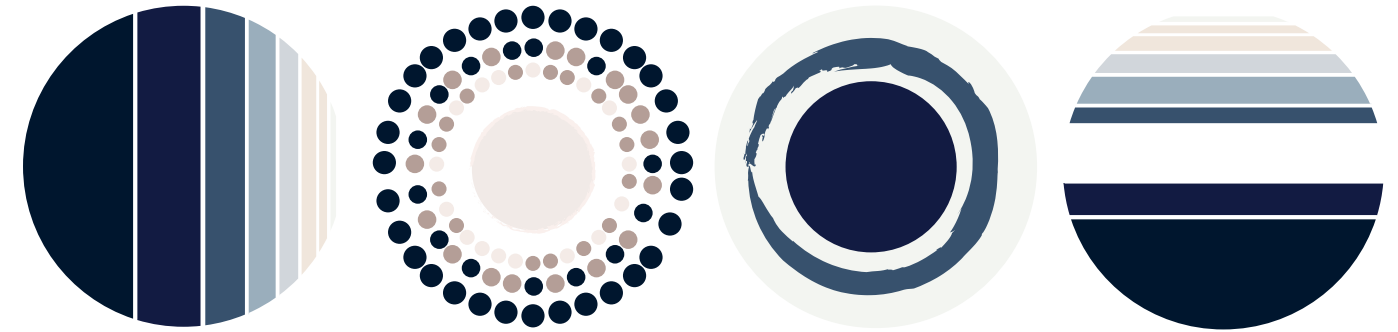
My propose

Movement and focus

How we move is often related to what we see and our focus. In many times a clear focus is an element in spiritual architecture. It can be an object, view or light, something that make us in balance. The focus in the park in comparison to a focus in a spiritual building, for example a church, has major differences, and so also the movement. What I propose for this site and this project is a movement following our focus. A continues movement which relates to the flow in the park with focus points to guide through the walk which are created with natural elements as light, sound, and nature.

4 stages

The spiritual sequence is much about how you experience the space with your mind-eyes-ears-and-body. To achieve a spiritual experience, the architecture needs to touch your whole body, and it is in my beliefs that this needs to happen successively. With different stages where different senses and your mind will be treated in different ways, you will slowly come into a spiritual mind state. You can't rush into spirituality, it happens when you feel safe, calm and that moment when you know your body within yourself and in the space.



Stage 1 - Change your steps

By changing your steps, you will also change the rhythm in your body and in this way also start to reflect of your body. Where you put your feet, how you do it, and the sound of your movement.

Stage 2 - Change light and sound

A new surroundings will cause a reflection. By changing the sound environment, you will recognize this sense more. By change what you see, you will narrow your world. This will be a first step to leave the context and the surrounding behind you.

Stage 3 - Here and now

The focus is of the moment, here and now. Where the surrounding does not exist, it is just you and the people around you which you share the moment with that is in your mind. It is here you can find the experience of spirituality.

Stage 4 - Coming back

To not rush out to the context again, it needs to be a phase where you can rethink, and take a last breath before leaving this place.

Design Method

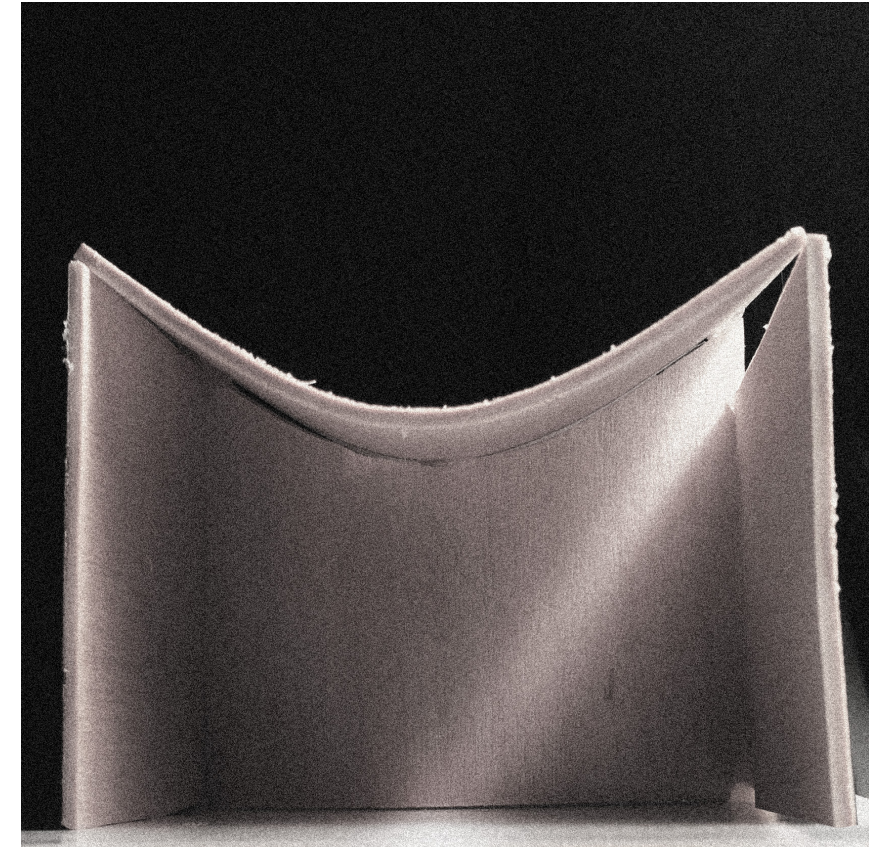
Investigation by modelling

The four elements, light/shade, matter, sound and nature, were investigated through modelling and sketches. This; with the aim to find spiritual emotions within them or in the relation between them. The work was based on Steven Holl's theory Black Swan where he talks about the importance of invention of convention to create unique spatial experience. Where the unexpected and the dynamic effect constantly engages us in an intellectual dialogue.

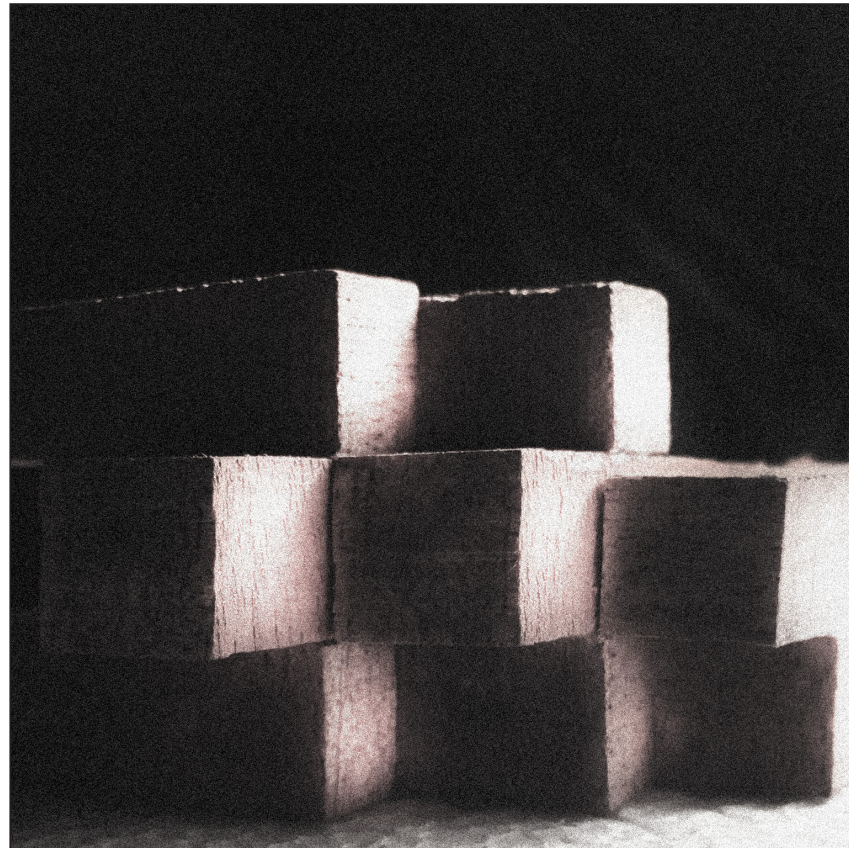




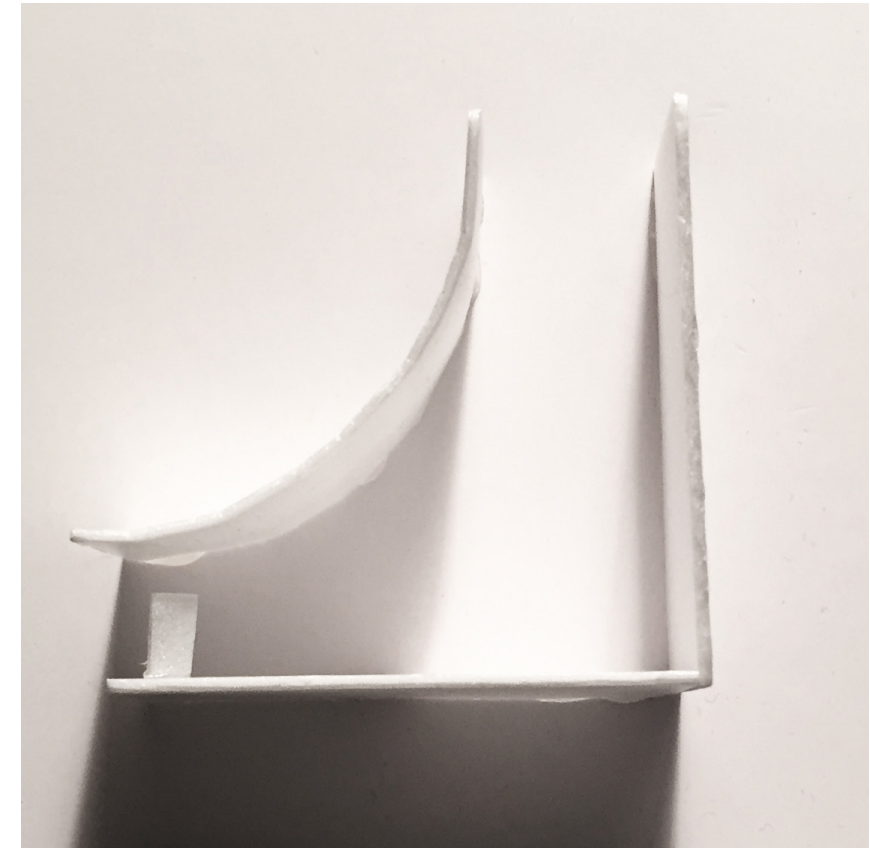
Light – In the space
Light is fragile and powerful.



Light - On the materila
“The Sun never knew how wonderful it was until it fell on the wall of a building”- Louis Kahn



Sound - Directional sound
Disturbed materil reflect sound



Sound - Changed volume
Changed volume - changed sound



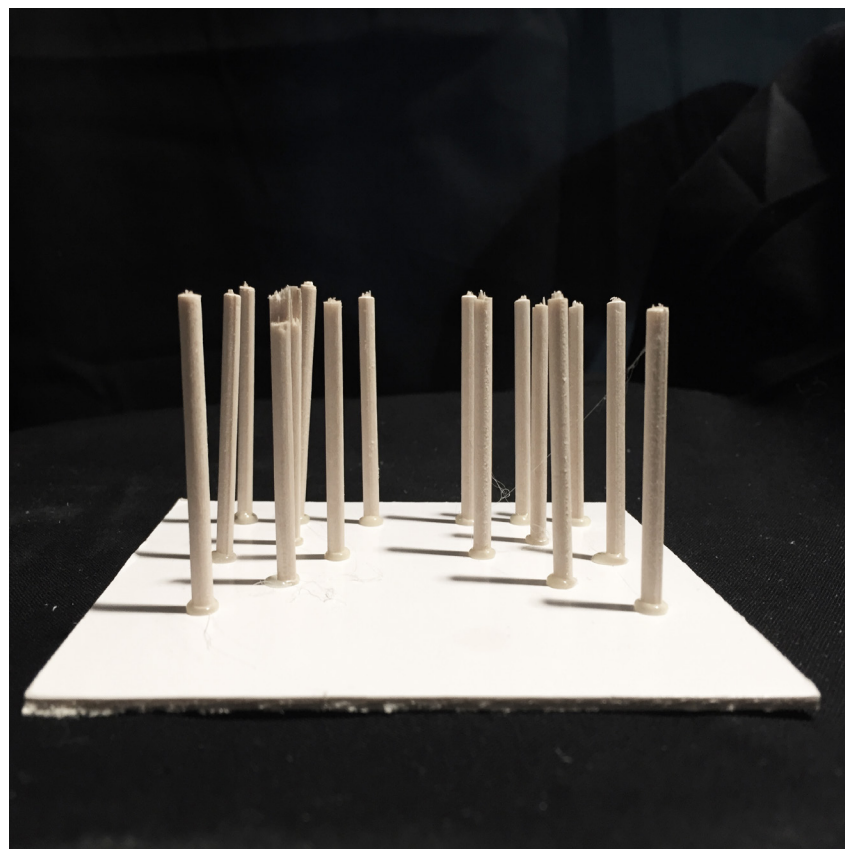
Material - New pattern

Divided material change the interpretation of the material.



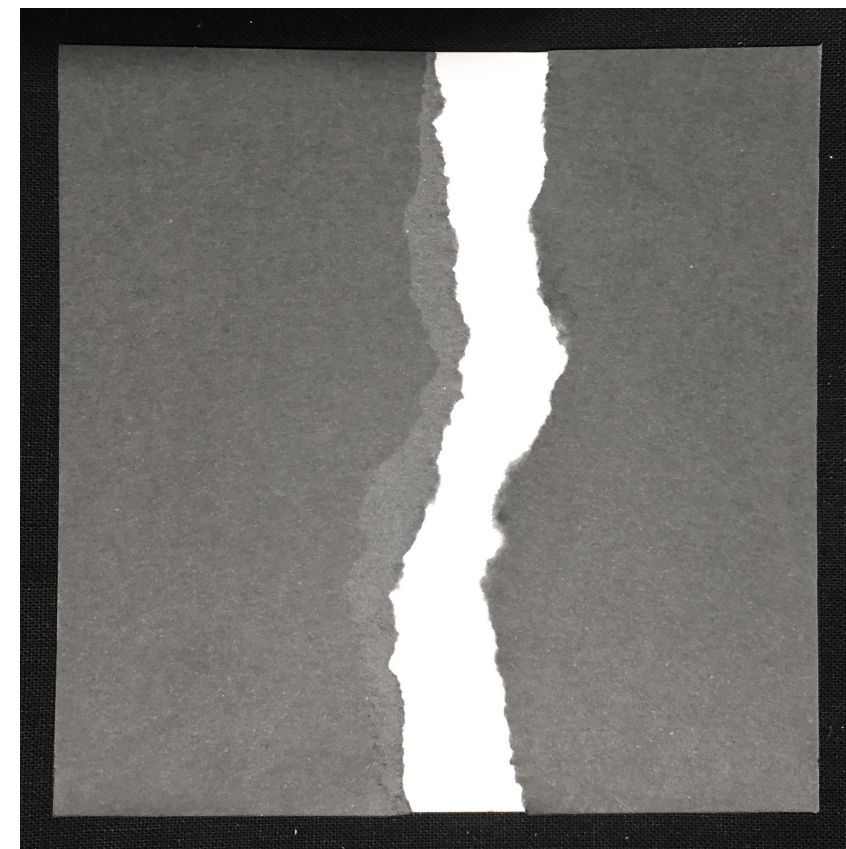
Material - A scar

Gives a feeling of something else, someone has been here before.



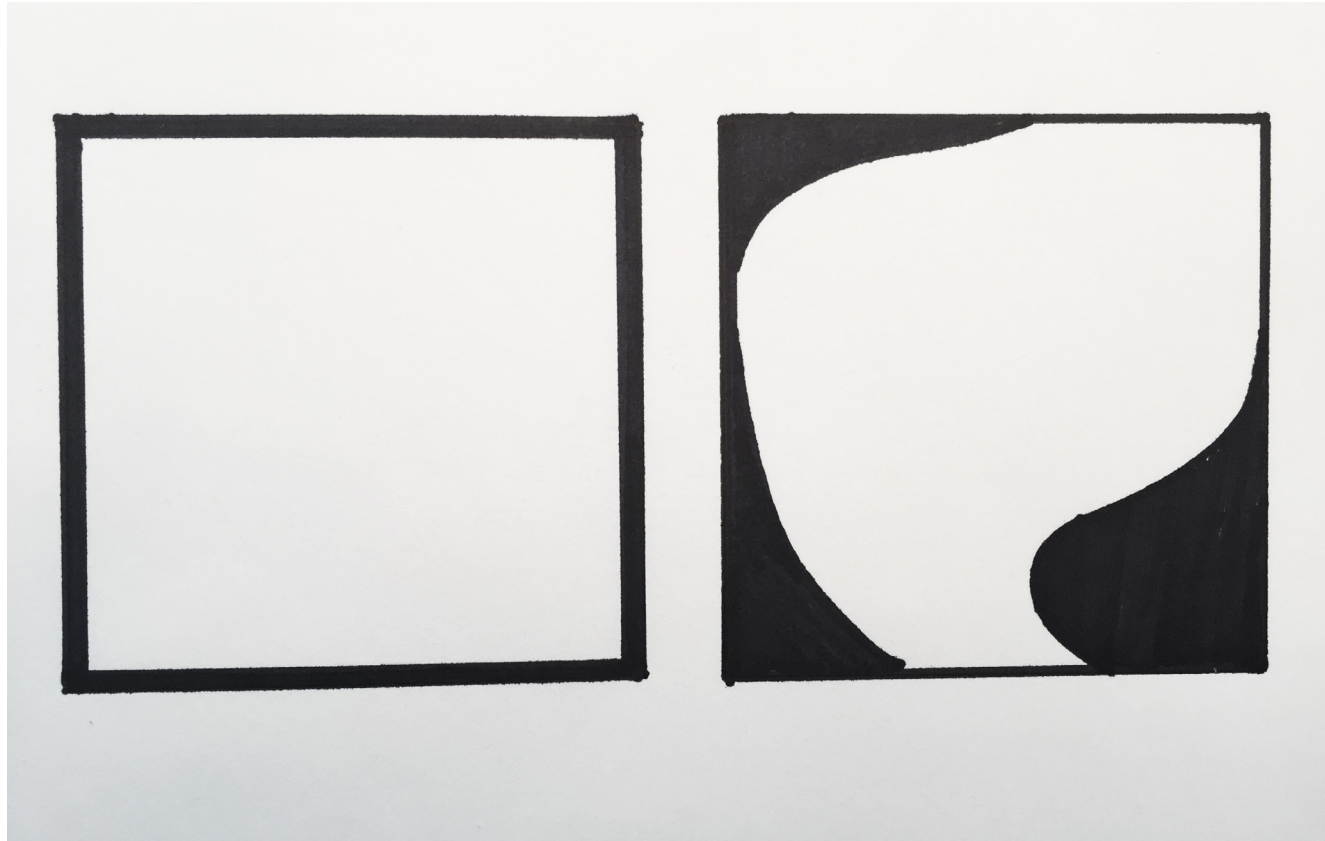
Nature - Relation

The relation, or the non-relation to the nature. How does the sequence relate to the nature?

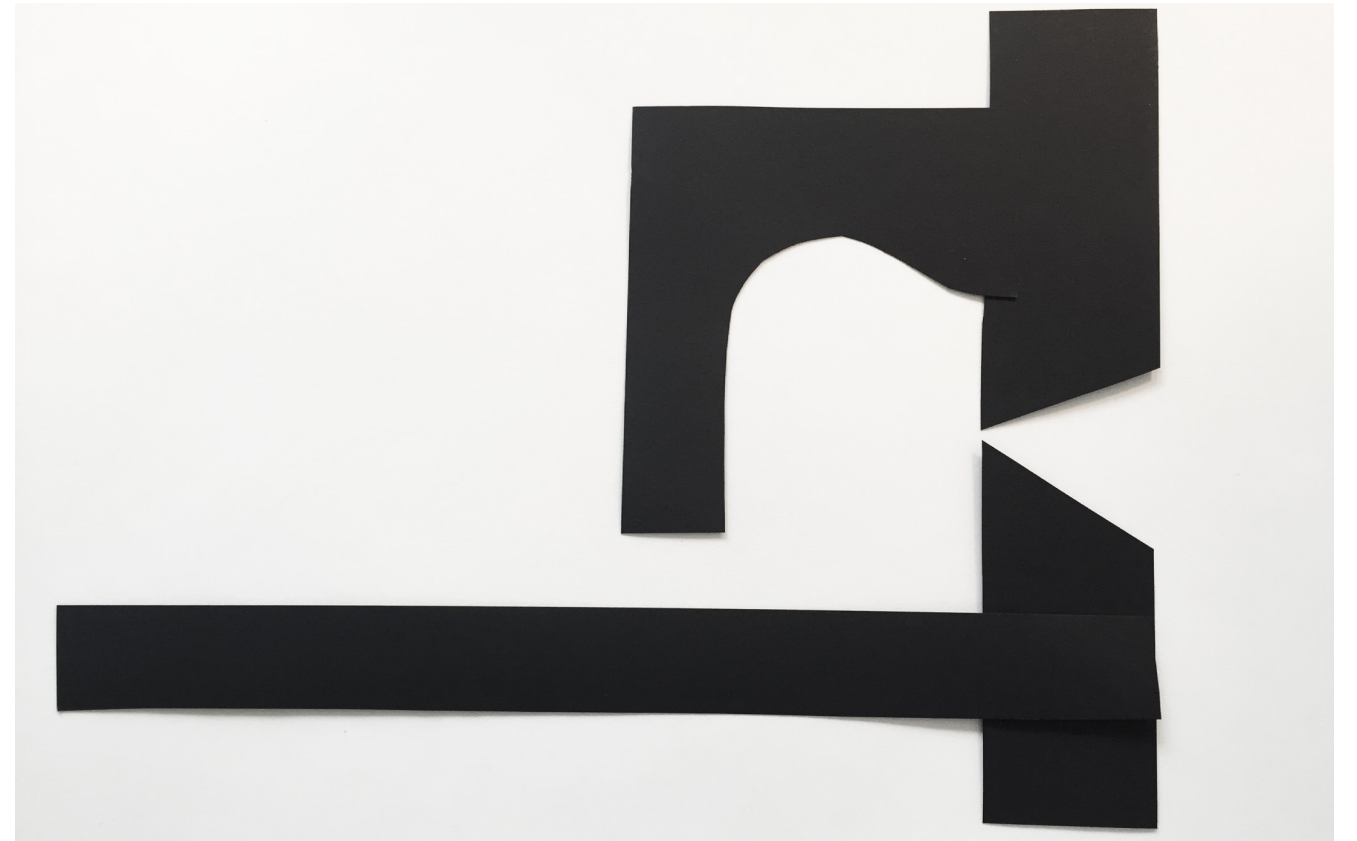


Nature - Leads you

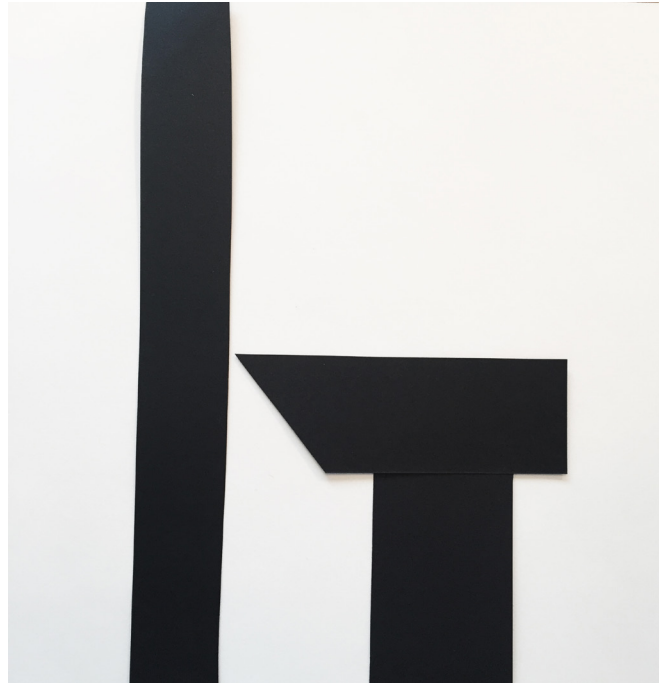
Nature opens up a new track.



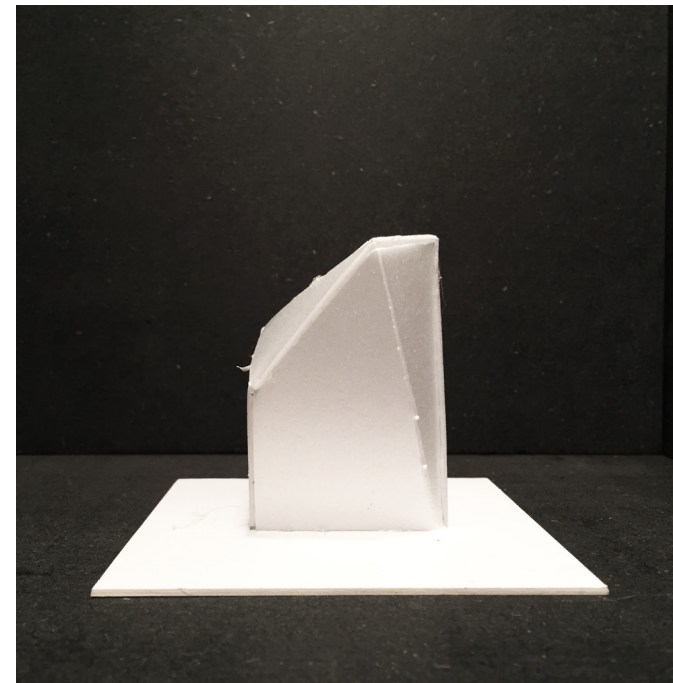
Plan - something within
Surpassing the expected



Plan - something within
Surpassing the expected



Section - something within
Surpassing the expected



Volume - A sculpture
Sharp and strong emelent

PART IV
Design Proposal

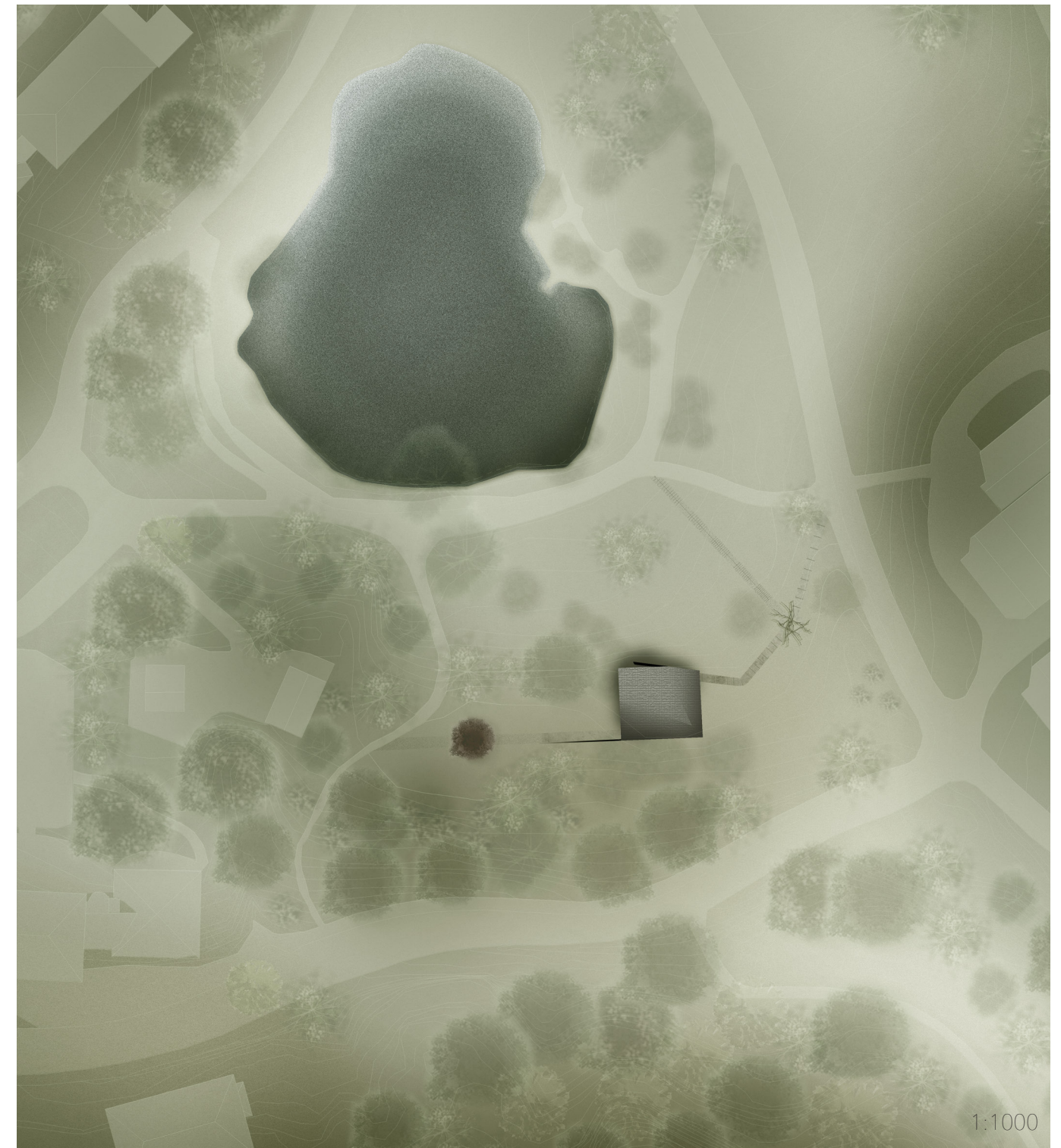
The building
– A sculpture in the park

The building – A sculpture in the park
The idea of the design for the building was to create a strong form which should work as a sculpture in the park. With clear edges and different inclinations, the experience of the building will change in different directions, and with different openings light will be spread over the surrounding from the building.



The sequence

Start and end united with the paths in the park



Plan

Change your steps

With new ground under your feet and with changing stair steps and stone plate sizes, your will start recognize your steps and your body in a different way, with your ears and with your new rhythm.

Sound and Light – a new environment.

You enter a room, where the surrounding park do not exist anymore. You do not hear the birds instead you hear water running, and you are guided by light. Here, you can wash your hands and get warm and you can get a moment for yourself before you enter the main hall where, for example, an important ceremony will take place.

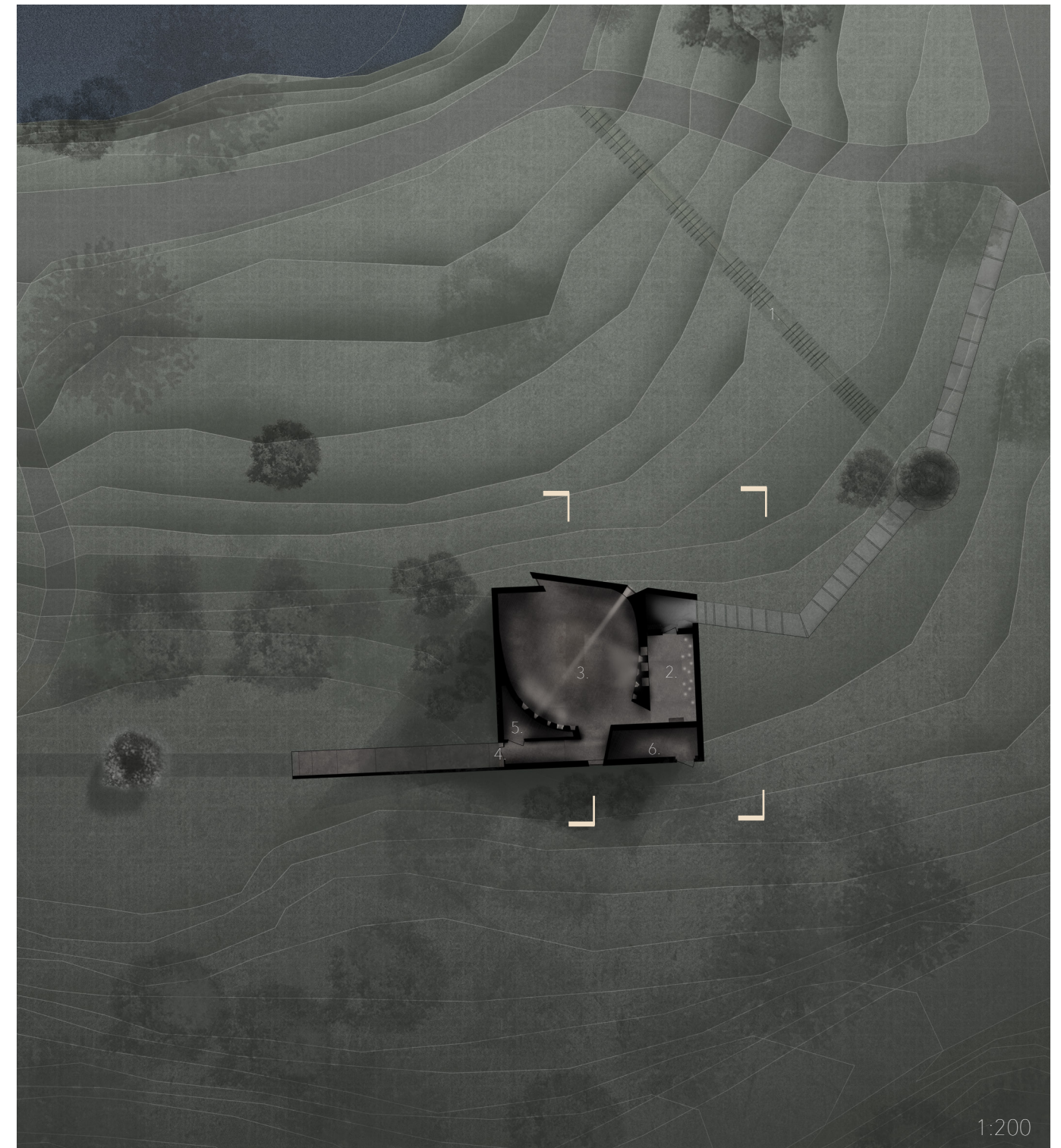
Here and now

With a totally new spatial experience, your mind is focused on the moment here and now. The connectedness to yourself, others and the moment. With rammed earth curved inner walls the volume is unique and the sound environment dull. The natural light coming in through different windows create changing light and shadows on the wall during the day and year.

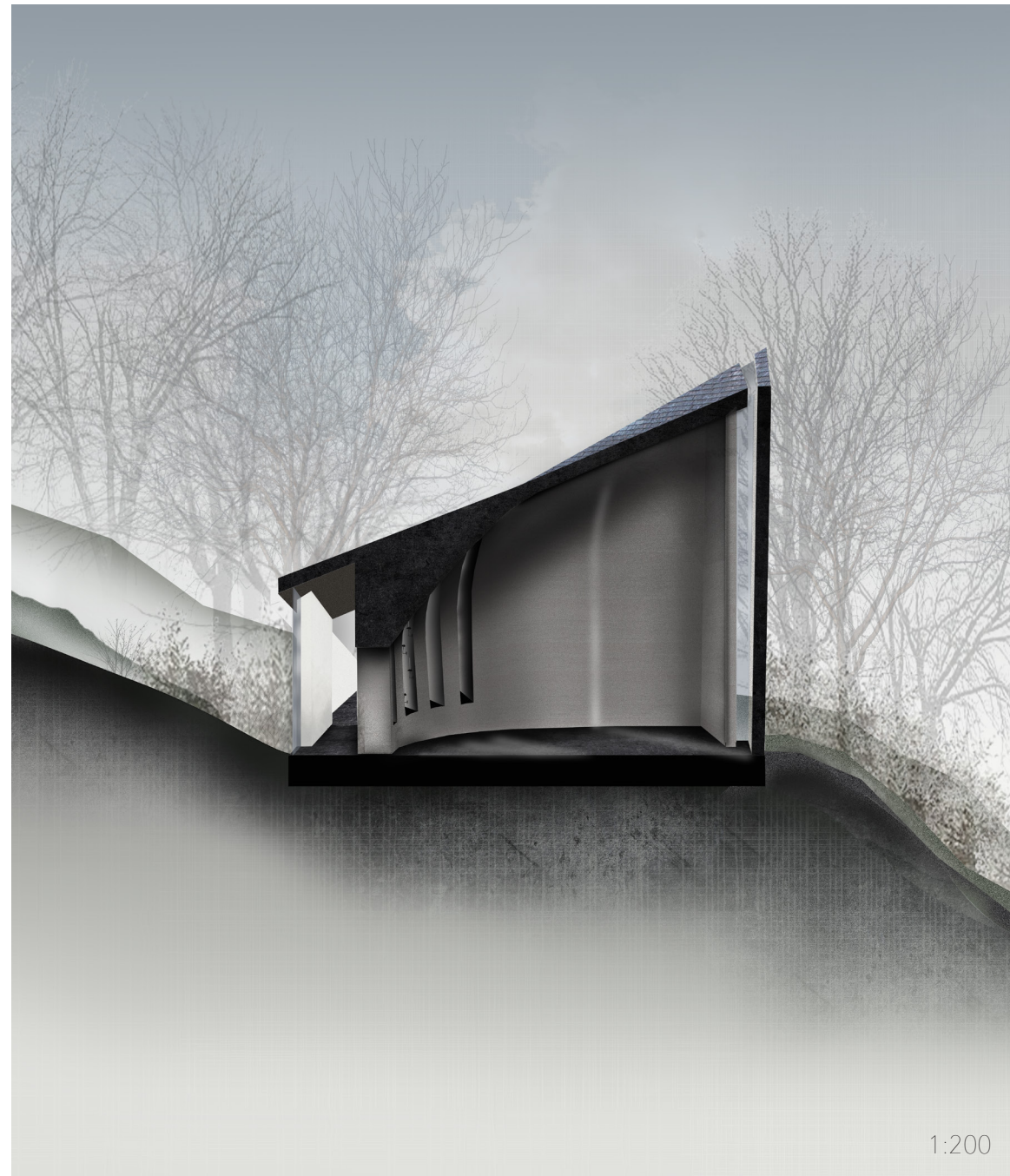
Coming back

With a straight path, indoor and outdoor, you are successively transformed to your context and the park again, but to another place where you can see the pond through the trees. You have relocated yourself in time and space but also within yourself.

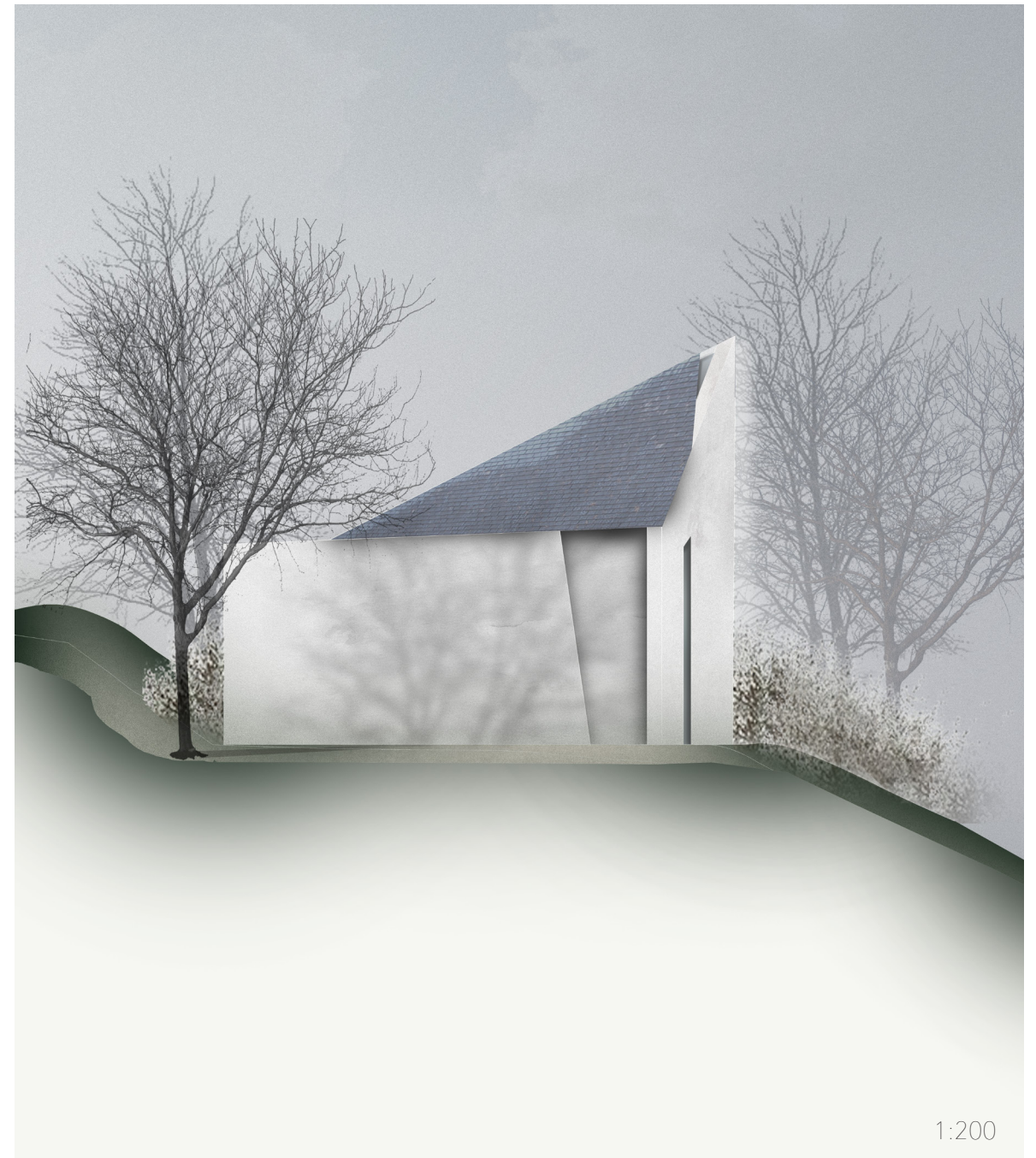
1. Change your step
2. Sound and light
3. Here and now
4. Coming back
5. Storage
6. Storage and water tank



Section



Faade

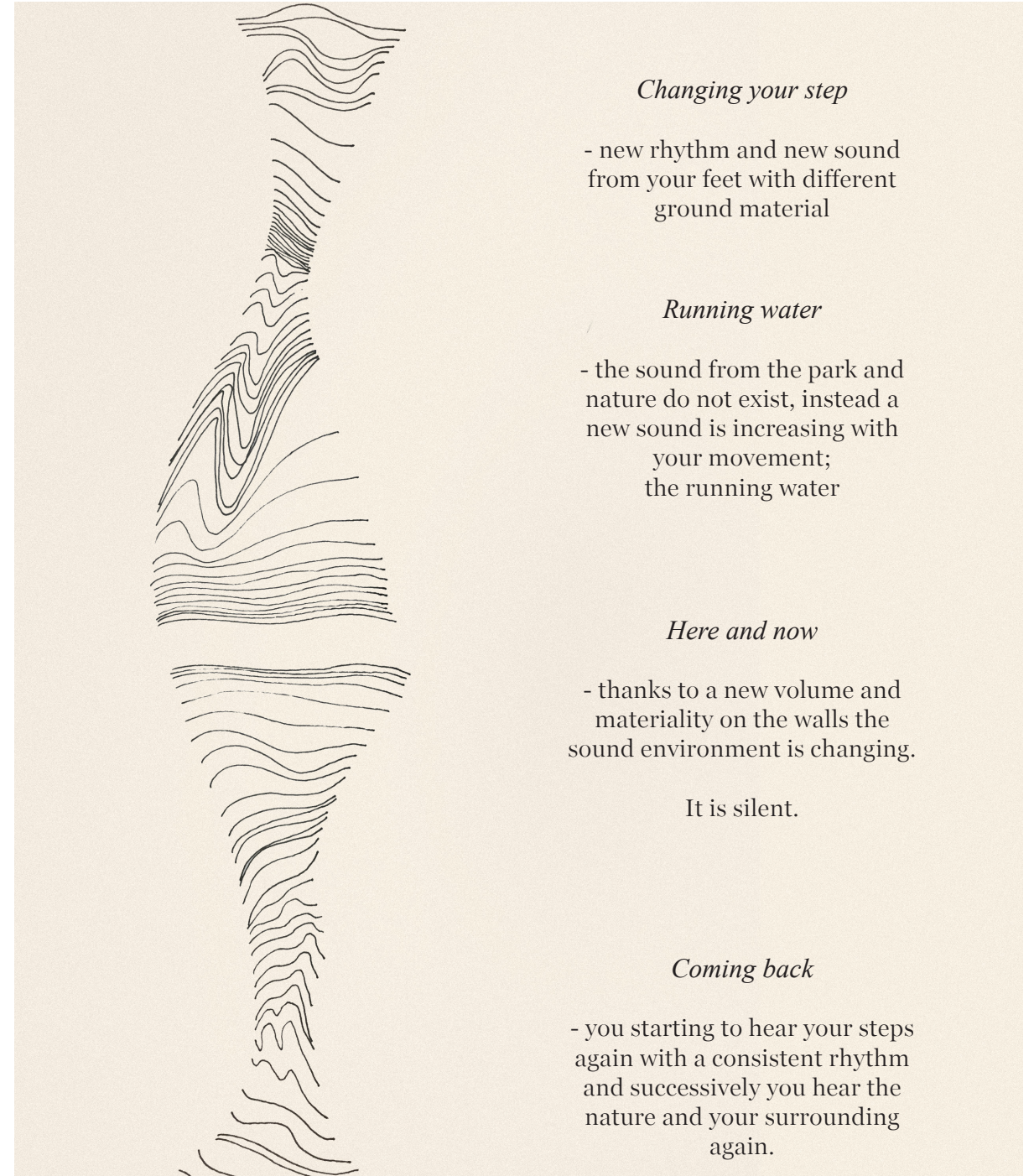


Materials



Slate roof
Concrete facade
Rammed earth inner walls
Wrought iron details
Birch chairs

Sound



Changing your step

- new rhythm and new sound
from your feet with different
ground material

Running water

- the sound from the park and
nature do not exist, instead a
new sound is increasing with
your movement;
the running water

Here and now

- thanks to a new volume and
materiality on the walls the
sound environment is changing.

It is silent.

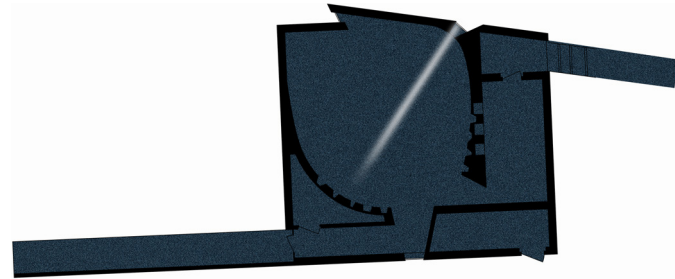
Coming back

- you starting to hear your steps
again with a consistent rhythm
and successively you hear the
nature and your surrounding
again.

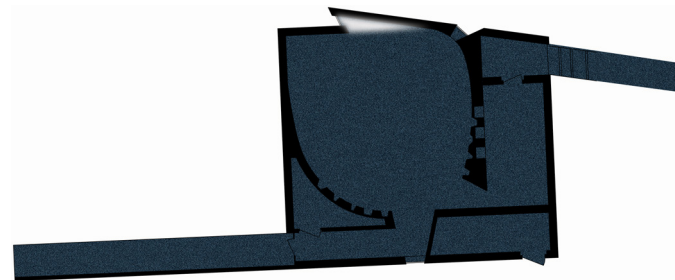
Sun light

Create unique moments

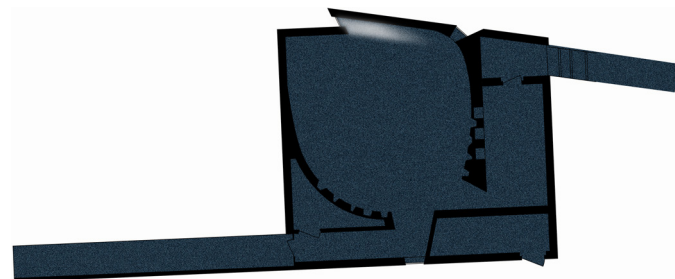
The natural light in the main room changes during the day and year. With different openings towards east south and west, and an opening in the ceiling, the light will change and also the experience of the room. Hence, the moment in the room will be unique for that certain time.



Early morning in spring, summer and early autumn



During day, light will come through the window in the ceiling

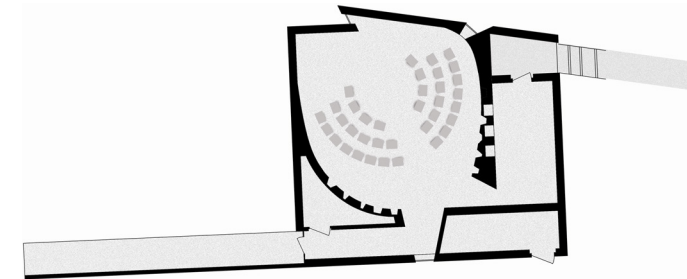


In afternoon, during spring, summer and autumn

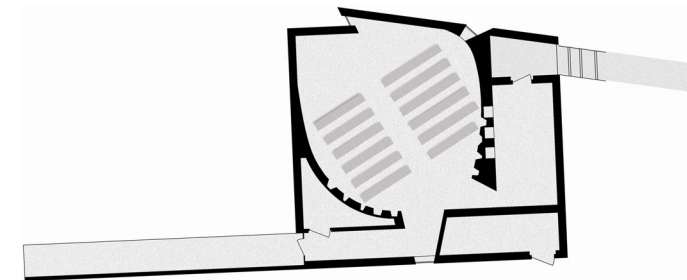
Seatings

Different occasion

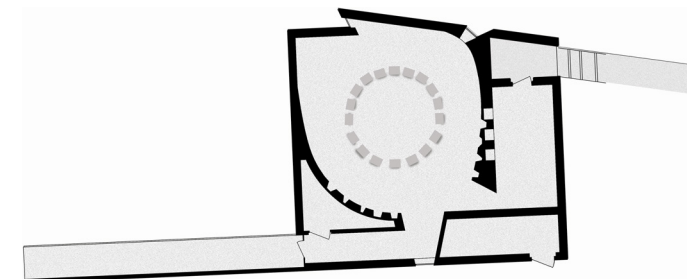
People experience the secular spirituality in different ways. In bigger or smaller groups, in silent or with sound and in different occasions. The seating's placement is organized in that way such that you can see others which you share the moment with and to feel more enclosed with each other. It is also possible to change this arrangement for bigger and smaller occasions.



*Standard seatings
38 chairs*



*For bigger events
- choir singing, poet reading...*



*For smaller events
- dialog, meetings...*

The sequence



- Change your steps -



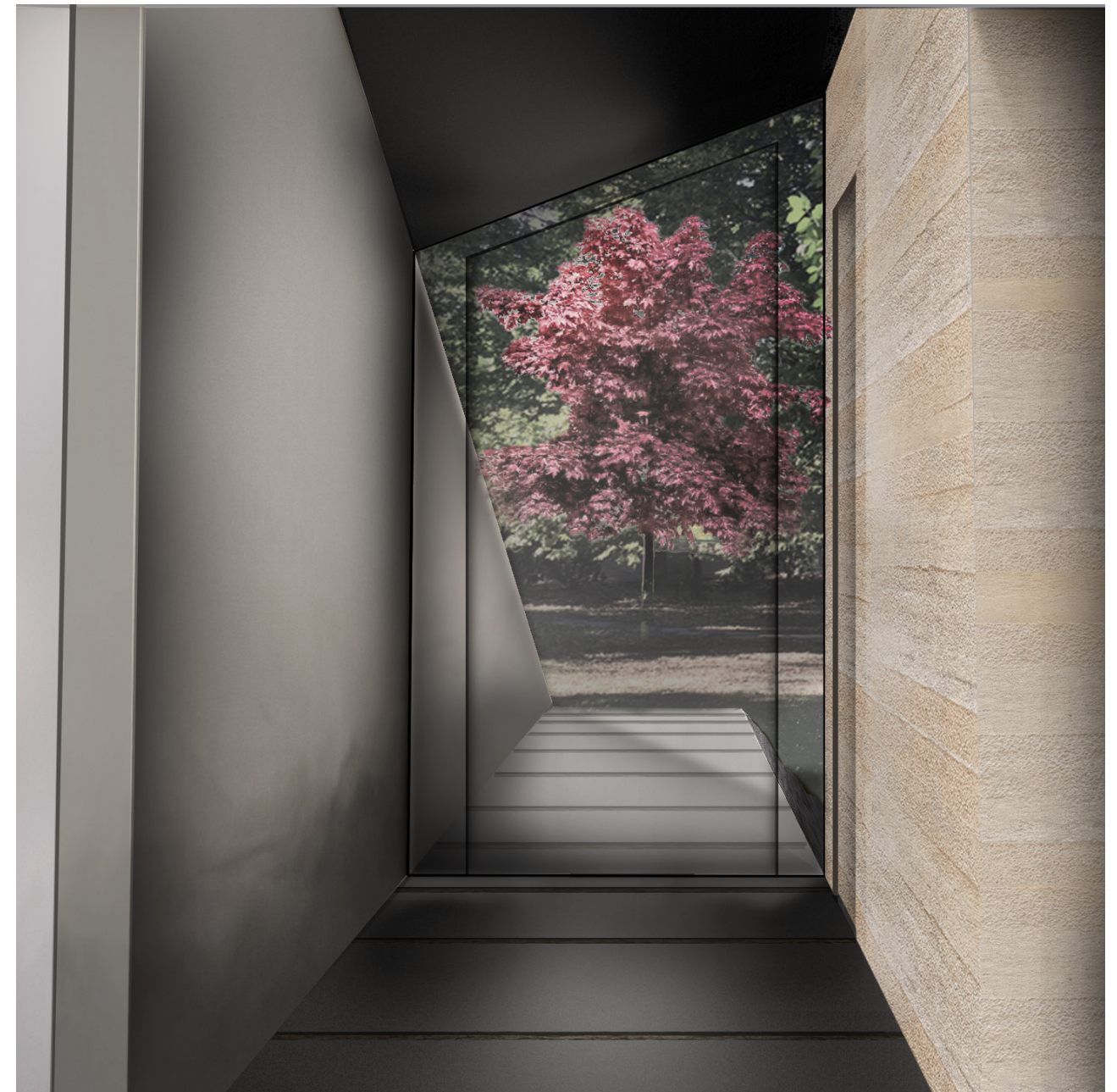
- Sound and light -



*- Here and now -
you and others*

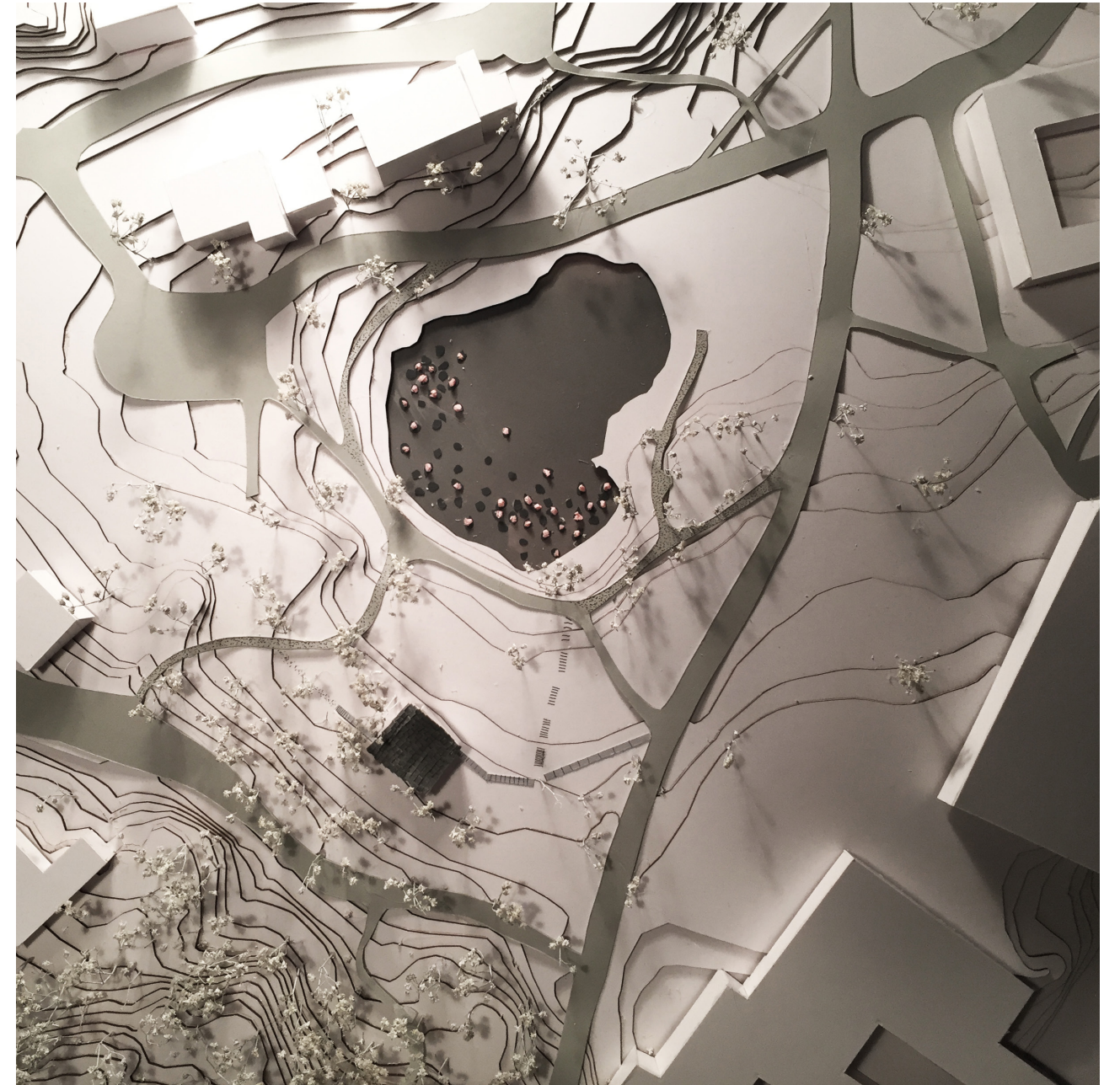


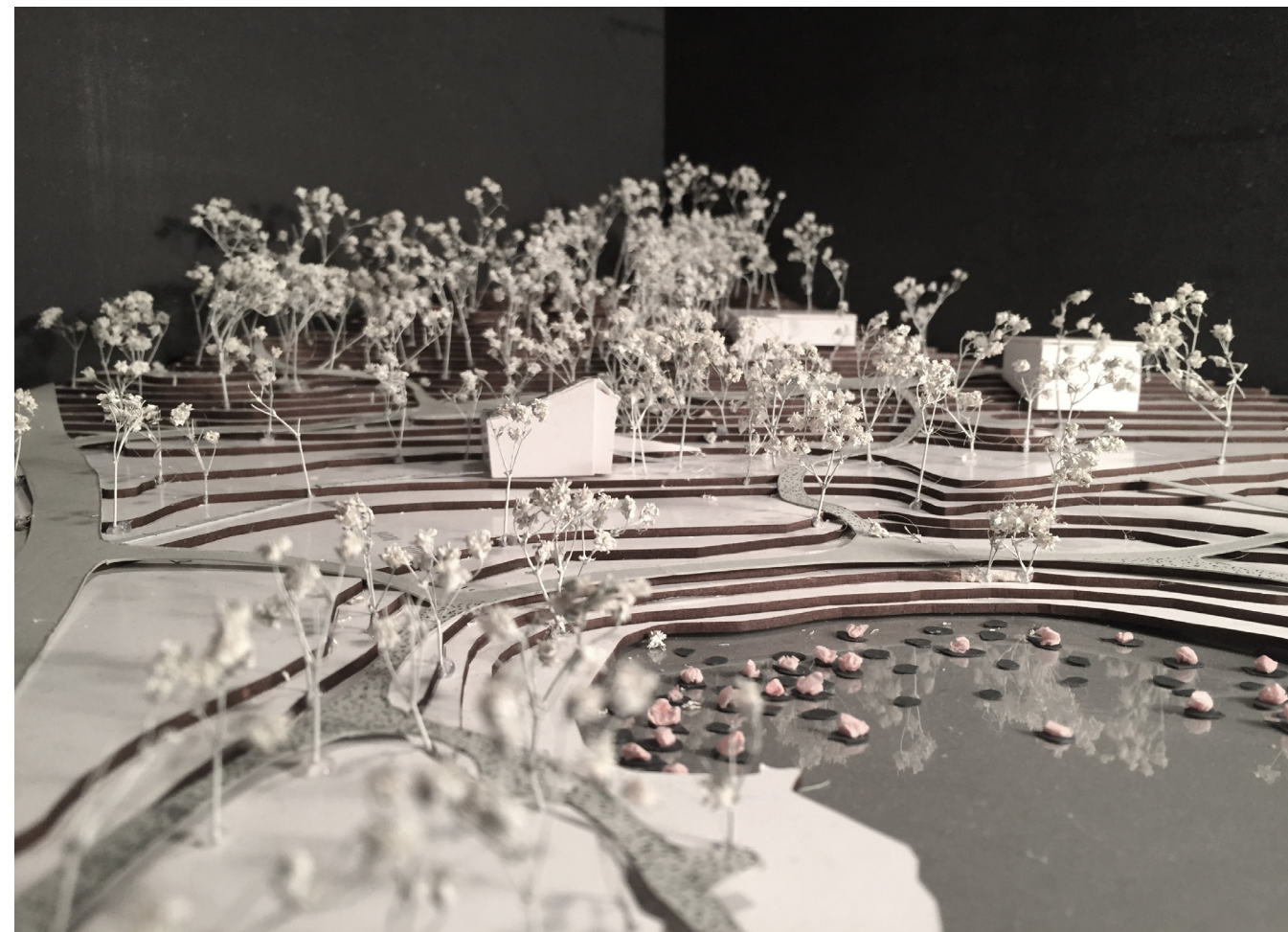
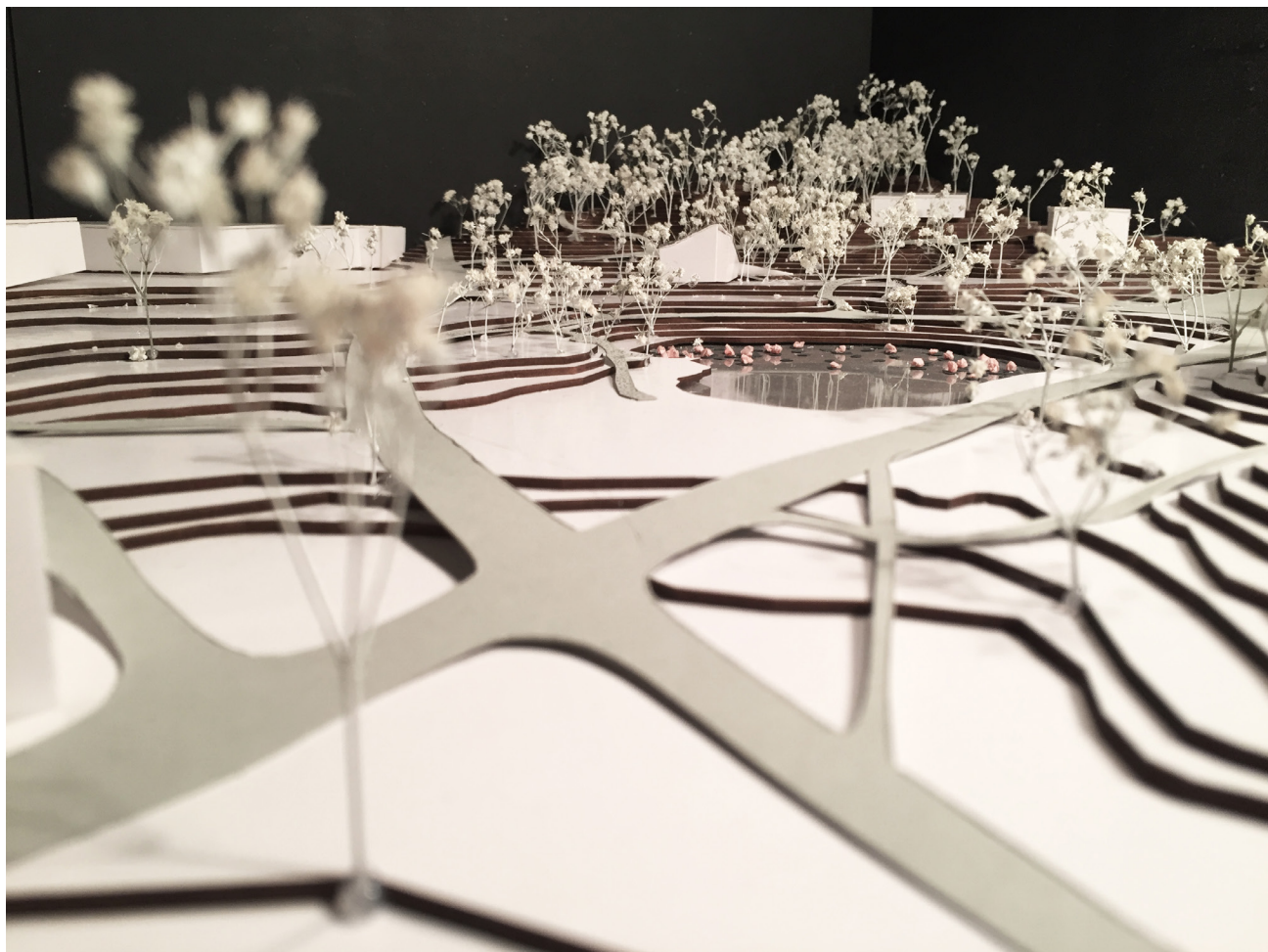
*- Here and now -
your time*

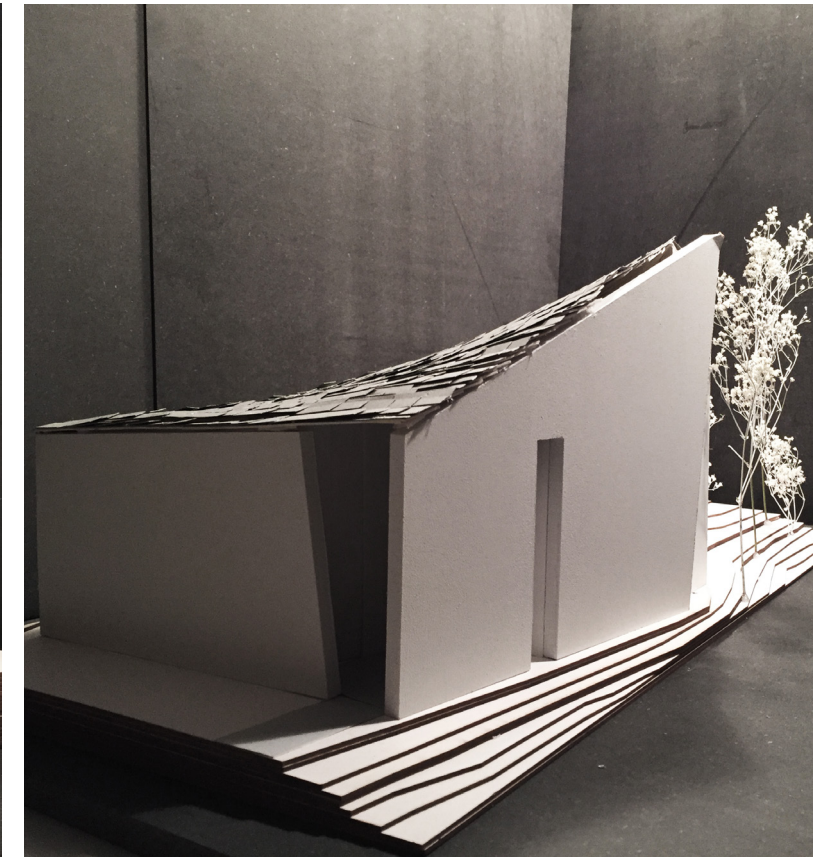
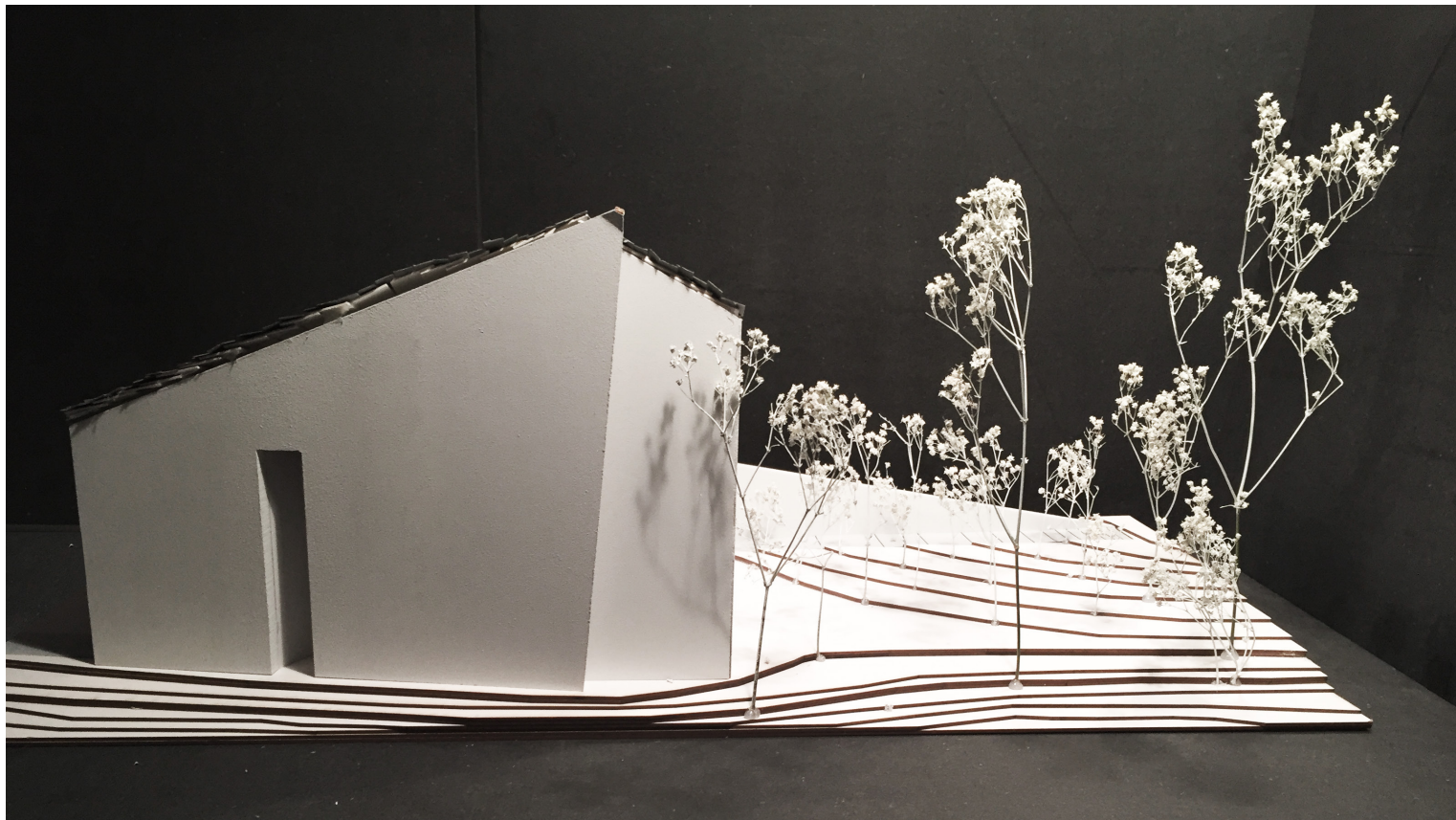


- Coming back -

*Models
1:500 and 1:50*







PART V

To end..

Reflections

Spiritual architecture's need and function

Spiritual architecture is both defined differently and the variation of it is wide. In the history it has mainly been about religious buildings or places, and still it is, but nowadays the typologies of spiritual architecture are wider. Even though the religions have lost their importance in Sweden, and in many other countries as well, the need of spirituality is still there, but in another form. Some of the projects I mainly think about is Grand Zero in New York and the landscape art at Utøya, Norway. These two projects are made for different purpose, but with one thing in common. They are both created for something that we never should forget. These two projects come out from tragic incidents, which chocked many people all over the world, and many people are still in grief over what happened. These two places act as a symbol, both for what happened, but also to regain hope to the people. An architecture which has a symbolic value which create a feeling of affinity and has a spiritual function.

Another place I think about is the Memorial to the 1956 Hungarian Revolution and War of Independence, Budapest, which symbolize the power we have together. How strong we can be, and that we can make a difference, even though

it feels impossible. This place honour those who died but also the courage and the hope, and has a spiritual atmosphere around it. These places have nothing to do with religion, but is powerful and spiritual due to its existence. These types of places are needed in a city with grief. In Gothenburg there is one for the tragic tram accident 1992 at Vasaplatsen and also one for Backabranden.

These are all projects which remember a tragic occasion, and are very individual, but needed for people to find hope and belonging. These kind of places is something that is needed. People don't go to their churches or mosque in the same manner to find hope or understanding, but instead they go to other people. These types of places are also needed for the individual or more personal emotions, for both happy and sad moments. A place where you feel closer or connected to your emotions and to others. A place where you can remember your grandmother who is buried in another city, or where you can find balance within yourself.

The secular spirituality is much about finding inner peace, a connectedness to our self and

to others, to the moment and the surrounding. To be able to control your breath. This is something we all need more or less in our daily life. Therefore, it is important to plan for these places within the city, cause among all our practical needs as housing, stories and work we also have a spiritual need. In different ways. In Gothenburg, which has problem with segregation it is important that these places are opened for all such that people actually can meet people, that it shall contribute to a calming feeling and give hope and trust. Cause what spiritual architecture actually is about comes down into three stone cores; comfort, hope and trust.

Design Proposal

The site for the design proposal was mainly chosen for its location and the feeling of the park, but also due to the history of the site. To design a peace full place for everyone, in a park built even though it symbolized a great inequity that people demonstrated against, was something that I though was important to demonstrating that Gothenburg work for a more equitable cityscape. The peace full character of the park contributes to the feeling a was looking for, but it would also be really interesting to design this kind of place in a denser site. I believe that the spiritual and calming feeling of the park is partly due to the fact of its noisy surrounding, and therefore I also believe that a spiritual place could be placed direct in a noisy and stressed surrounding. I think that the contrast gives an extra dimension of the place, as for example the new cathedral centre in Växjö, located between two denser streets with car traffic in the most centre of the city. The architect has worked with the ground levels and with that created a calm oasis. In this way the contrast work as an element that contribute to the feeling of the place.

The decision to work with a sequence was very personal. I thought a lot of how I express my spirituality and how I feel it, and reasoned that

it takes time. It needs more than a contrast. The contrast starts something, we need to recognize and read our surrounding in a different way. How we move, what we see and what we hear. This is a good start, but to reach the sensitive feeling of spirituality we need to touch our inner soul, our breath, and this happens successively. I think also this sequence suited the movement in the park, that the flow is continues, not back-and-forth. I also like the idea of moving to another place. After the ceremony or the time you spend in here you are in a different place in mind, and you should continue going forward, to going backward. You should see something else. This can of course be treated in different ways, for example Gunnar Asplunds Heliga Korsets kapell at Skogskyrkogården where he added an extra subtle detail with an adjustable façade wall. This wall opens during the end of the ceremony, letting wind and light, sun, rain or snow into the room, to symbolize how the soul getting away with the wind but also its fill the room and create a different environment, and the exit is not just a door, but an open nature.

The secular and the religious spirituality is rather different from each other. The need and the function of them are separate and expressed differently. I therefore made a decision to mainly work with the secular spirituality, to try

to fill a gap in Gothenburg but also I thought this kind of place could be more open and welcoming for everyone when it treats different religious humbler. This I still believe, but I think when having too much focus on the function and the need, the common ground of spirituality was lost. Cause, independent on religious or secular, we can meet in our feelings and emotions. In our sadness and in hope. As for the three first projects mentioned in this text, people gathers around a feeling and a need of understanding and something ineffable; the spirituality.

I think it can be possible to create a place like this, and not necessary around a certain incident, but just for the needs in our life. A place for secular and religious spirituality. But I think a place like that needs to be unadorned. Unadorned from symbolises, ceremonies and functions and just focus on people and their needs. Maybe this is a sculpture, a longer path or a building, maybe it can be everything, but one thing I know for sure is that it needs to have a great relation and understanding of the peoples' need and its surrounding.



BIG THANKS

First and foremost, I would like to thank my examiner Joaquim Tarraso and my supervisor Emilio da Cruz Brandao for constantly feedback, help and support during my whole work, from idea to final design. I will also thank Henrik Flykberg for an interesting interview for the initial research.

I am also very grateful to all in my working place and studio, for rewarding discussions, support, laughter, and a great friendship. So many thanks to you, Annie Axelsson, Filippa Andersson, Eva-Lotta Holby.

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Figures

If nothing is mentioned, the picture, illustration or dia- gram is taken or created by me, Ellen Simonsson.

Figure 1
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Figure 2.
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Figure 3.
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Figure 4.
Idrottshallen 1923 (photo). Göteborg Stadsmuseum.

Figure 5.
Industrihallen 1923 (Photo). Göteborg Stadsmuseum.

