

SAN C(UL)Y TUARY

“Sanctuary for the forgotten
+ a place for the exiled”

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Art cannot emerge from nothingness; it must be nurtured, cultivated, and cared for. It requires space, an author, and time. When time, place, and event align at a precise moment, a living creation is born – unbounded by convention, untamed, radical, and true.

Through its very action, it strives to confront and critique the injustices that plague the world. It rebels against prejudice and violence, dismantling and exposing the immoral foundations of prevailing systems. And yet, there are always those who seek to domesticate it – who see only gold in its glow and attempt to exploit it for personal gain, with no regard for the hands that raised and sustained it.

They confine its movement, starve it, subject it to slow suffocation, until – at least in the eyes of its captors – it becomes ordinary and profitable. Still, art is reborn like a phoenix, growing once again in the care of those who protect it. It calls the space of its genesis home.

By preserving and honoring this home, we carve out space for raw, unapologetic expression – for art that does not ask for permission, and for artists to explore the limits of their freedom. Sarajevo, like any city in our time, must provide such a space.

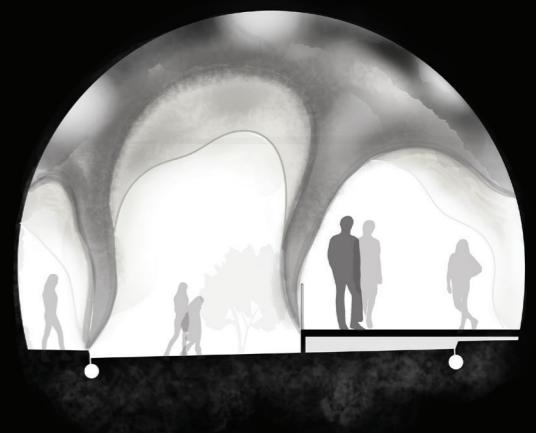
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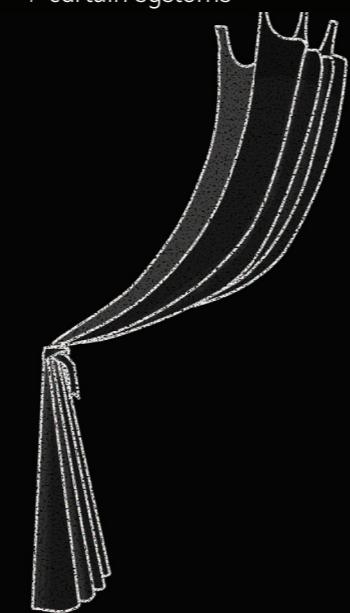
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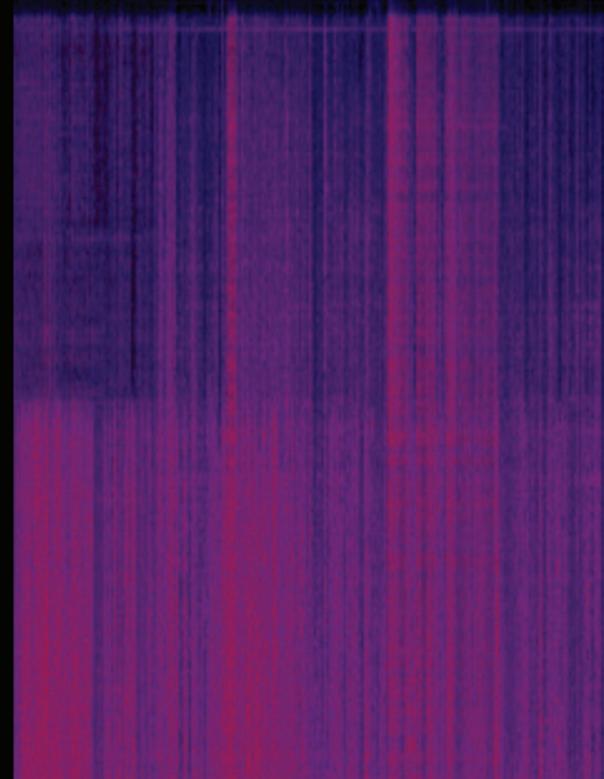
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Chapter ONE

"A sanctuary for the forgotten"

In search of a vacant space – spatially and contextually capable of accommodating artists from Sarajevo, across Bosnia and Herzegovina, and beyond, as well as a curious chain of events, including an academic studio project and an open architectural competition, led to an unexpected decision: the Ciglane Tunnel in Sarajevo.

Originally conceived during the 1970s as a vital infrastructural artery of the city, the tunnel was meant to serve as a continuation of Sarajevo's main bypass. The plan envisioned a dual-tube vehicular passage that would channel traffic beneath the urban fabric, connecting Ciglane with the area around the Clinical Center and university faculties. Only one of the two tunnel tubes was ever completed and put into use; the second remained sealed, suspended in limbo of an unfinished fragment of a larger urban vision that never fully materialized.

Today, that unused tunnel stands dormant, yet it holds an alternative legacy. Over the years, it has intermittently transformed into a spontaneous stage for the city's creative energy such as hosting concerts, art installations, workshops, and vibrant graffiti. Rather than allowing this space to remain an incidental venue for artistic expression, we asked: what if it were elevated to a permanent one? If a place already resonates with artistic awakening, why not amplify its potential? Why not reimagine it – not as an abandoned remnant of infrastructural ambition but as a cultural artery for the city?

By embracing its dormant volume and its symbolic undercurrents, the tunnel could be reborn, not for vehicular transit, but as a conduit for ideas, experimentation, and creative exchange. In doing so, it could reclaim its intended role as a pulse of Sarajevo.

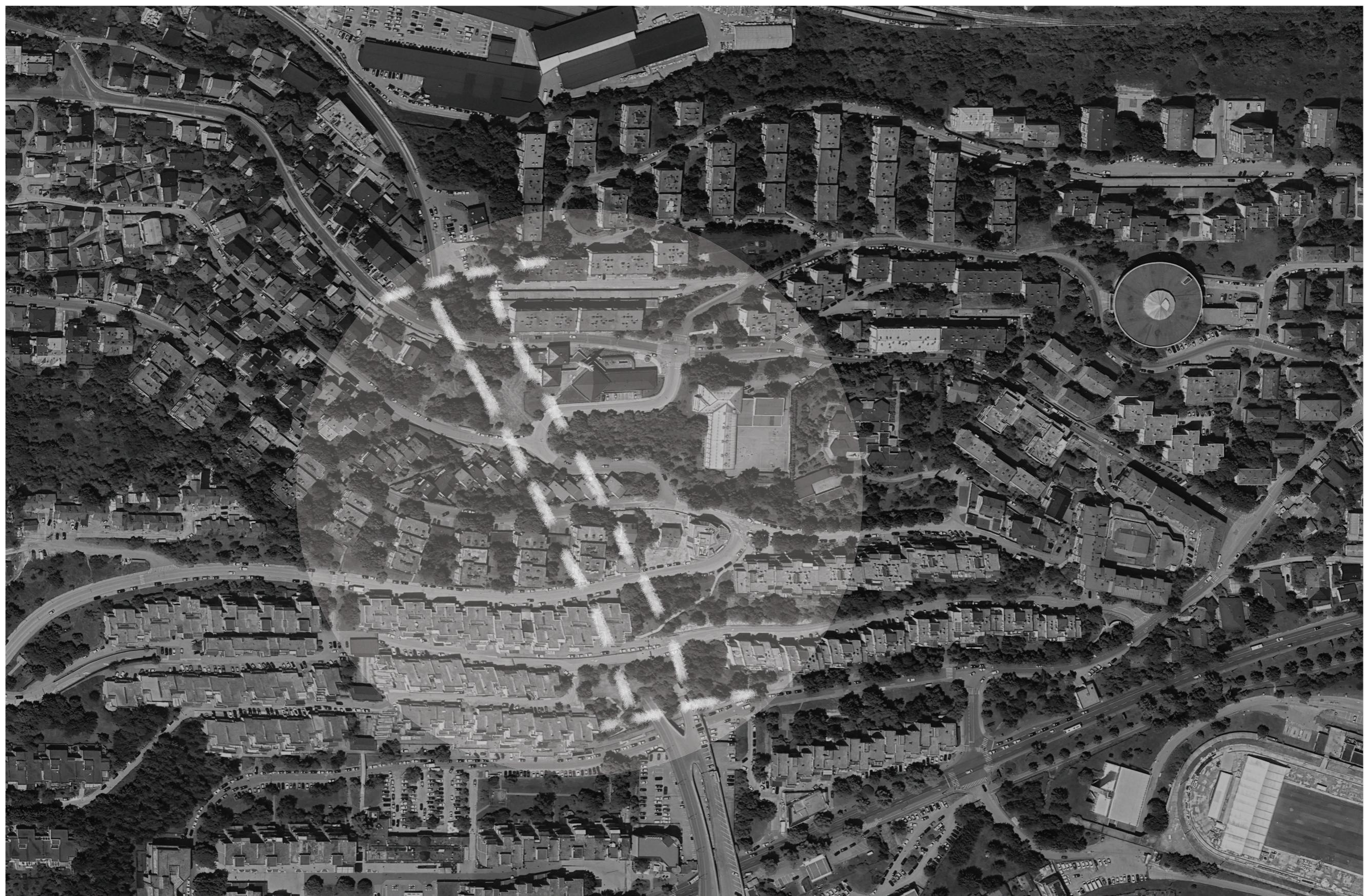


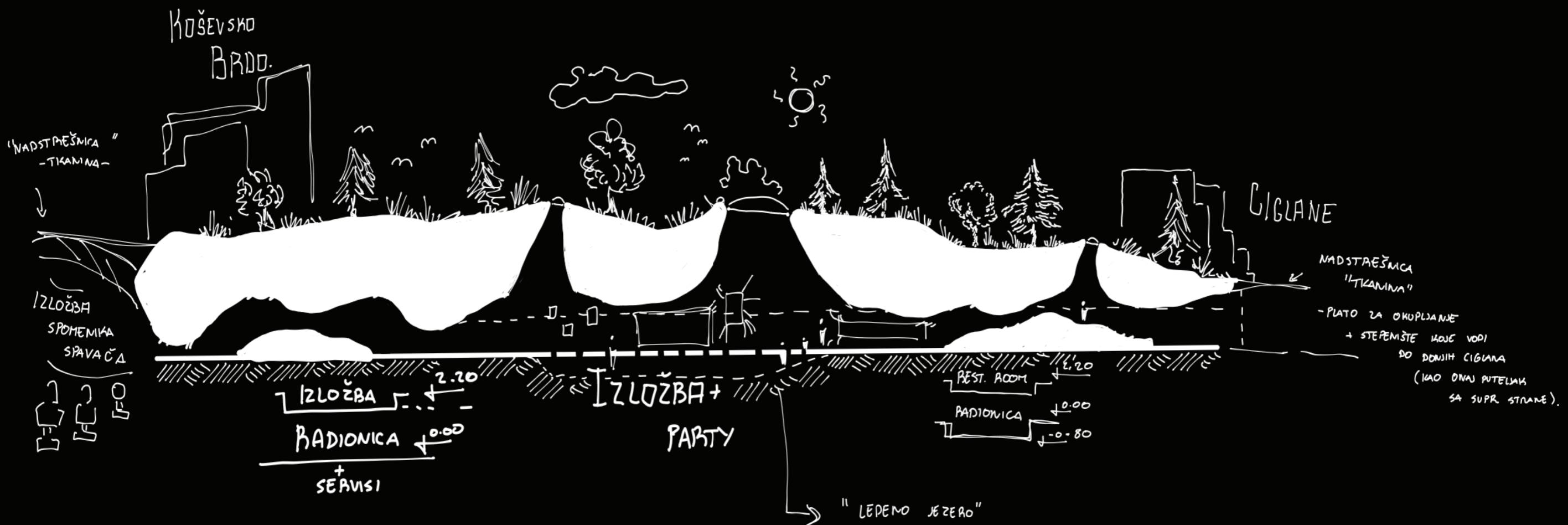
Illustration: Google maps location of
the tunnel



Illustration: Entrance of the tunnel



Illustration: Inside of the tunnel



Chapter TWO

“A place for the exiled”

The space is conceived as an inverted “Platonic cave” in which visitors enter carrying their own worldview and preconceptions—enclosed within their personal echo chamber and emerge enlightened, more open-minded, and aware.

At the entrance, they are met with a crossroads: one path leads up a ramp toward the workshops – a journey of effort, process, and the labor of artistic creation; the other remains at ground level, leading toward the café and rest areas – a place for the soul to pause, to breathe, without the burden of production.

Whichever path the visitor chooses, both ultimately converge at the main stage – a space dedicated to experiencing raw, unfiltered artistic expression. Following this encounter, the spatial narrative softens: more casual workshops and informal rest zones begin to appear, gradually transitioning toward the installation of the Forgotten Sculptures – a curated collection of neglected monuments from the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and contemporary pieces. The goal is to rehouse and reactivate these sculptures, many of which are decaying in abandoned industrial zones across the region.

Given that the tunnel can be accessed from both sides, with no fixed beginning or end, the notions of entrance and exit are intentionally left open to interpretation. Whether approaching from Ciglana or Koševsko brdo, each visitor defines their own direction, narrative, and transformation. The main stage is positioned at the spatial and conceptual center of the tunnel, illuminated by three overhead skylights carved through the hill above constructed in accordance with the principles of the Deep Underground Project.

The stage itself is clad in a mirrored surface, reflecting both movement and light, capturing not just the performance, but its ever-changing context. The entire space is enveloped in fabric, suspended from the scaffolding of ramps and gallery structures. This textile skin defines the atmosphere of the tunnel, diffusing light, softening acoustics, and allowing the architecture to recede – so that art, and those engaging with it, remain in focus.

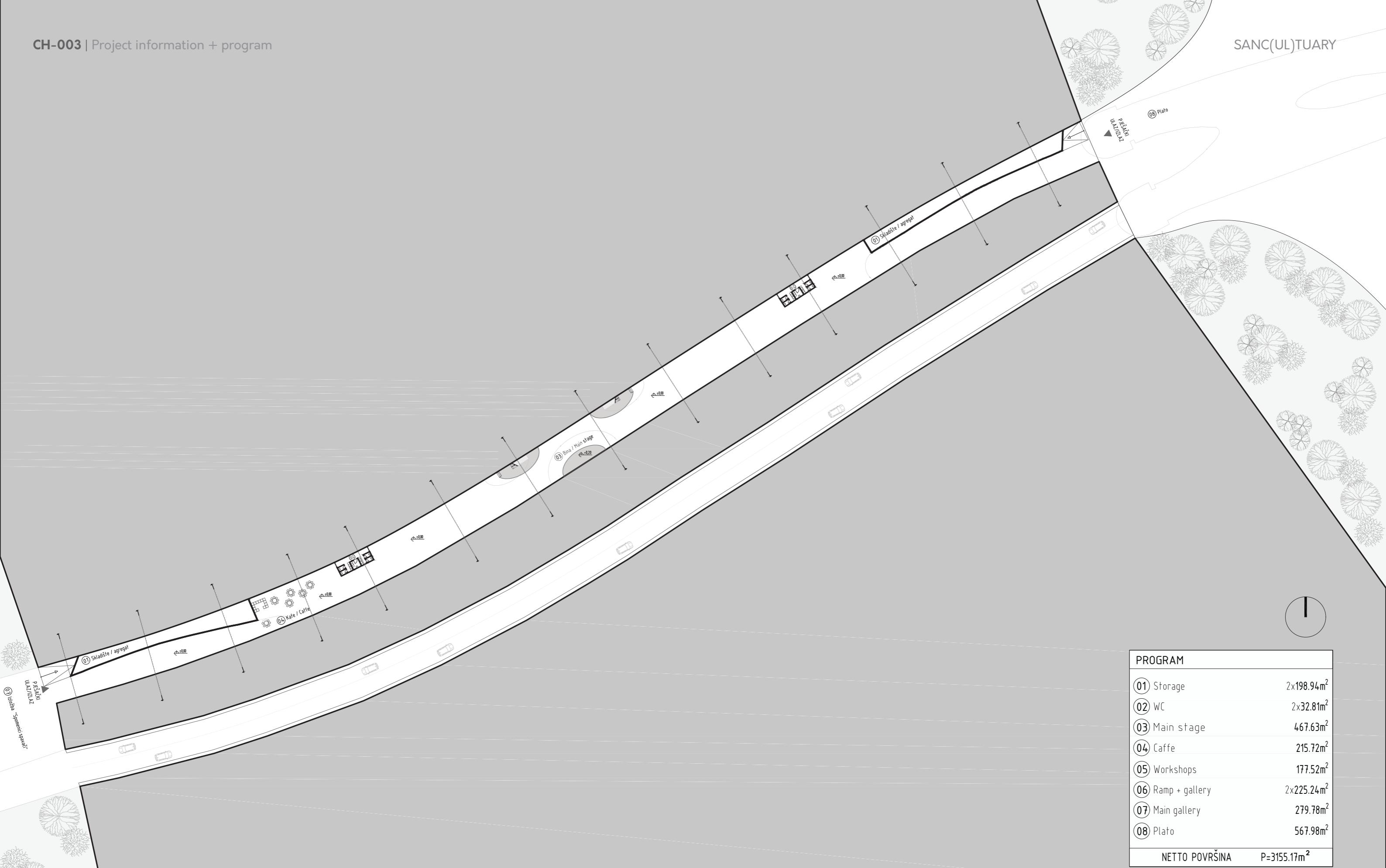


Illustration: Plan of the ground floor
1:800



Illustration: Plan of the first floor
1:800

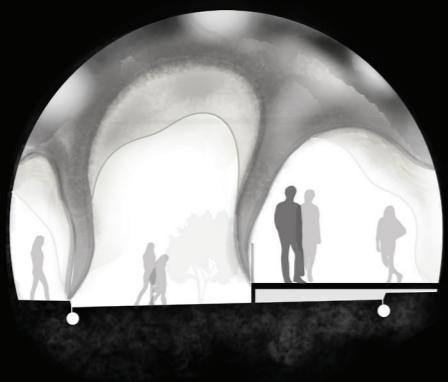


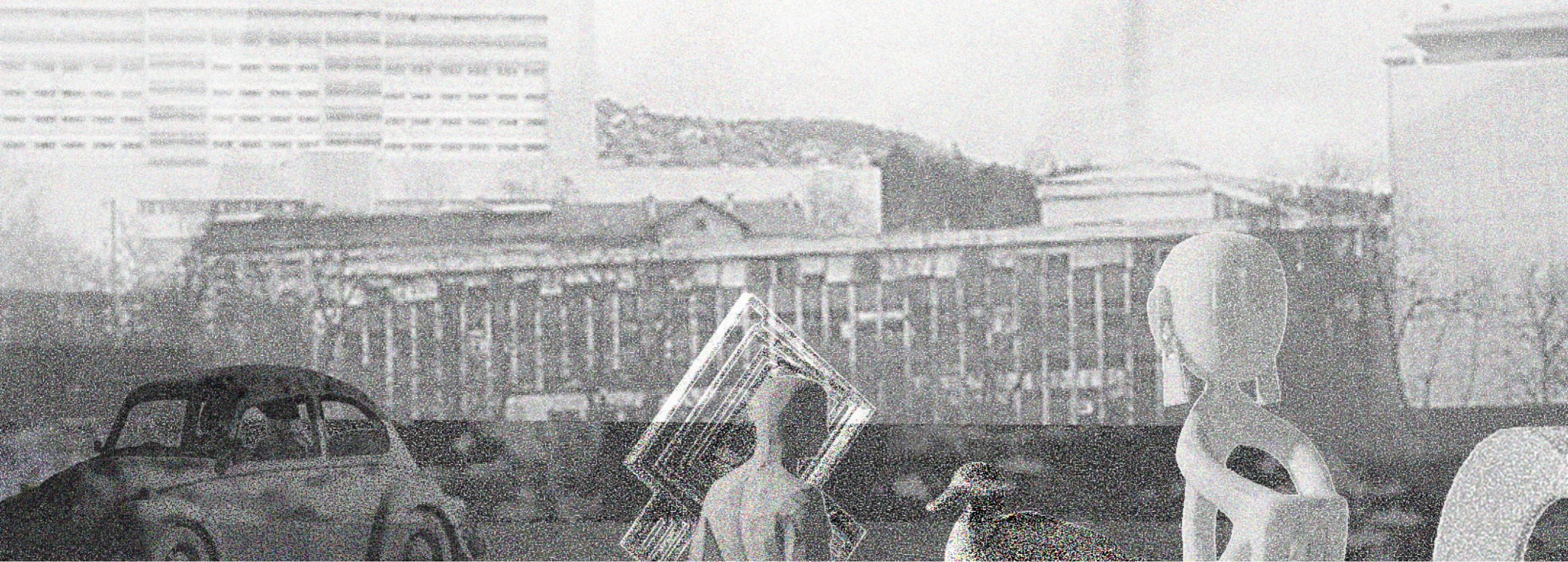
Illustration: Sections through the tunnel
1-6



Illustration: Sections through the tunnel
7-12



Illustration: Sections through the tunnel
13-14



Chapter THREE

"Primordial cave of creation"

The fabric wraps itself around the key spatial functions: from the ramp, serving a dual purpose as a circulation path and a linear exhibition space—to the workshops, café, mini-tunnel, and the main stage.

The cave, as a metaphor, marks the beginning of human consciousness and in this space, it continues its long-standing narrative. White textile walls and the gray tones of the tunnel, many of which remain unseen due to the absence of light, generate a subtle discomfort that intensifies the deeper the user ventures into the cave, until they encounter the main stage: the tunnel's hidden gem.

At this point, the full height and width of the tunnel are preserved – stripped of fabric (except for a few seating elements) and illuminated through large natural light openings carved from above. The design seeks to emulate the spatial rhythms of natural cave systems such as the Postojna Cave, alternating between narrow passages and expansive chambers.

Through the layering of various fabrics and mesh elements, the project also introduces zones for rest, inviting users to sit or lie down, to take a break from their artistic labor. These spaces are soft, quiet, and grounded – small refuges of pause within an otherwise charged environment of production and reflection.



Illustration: Collage of the main entrance hall



Illustration: Collage of the main gallery
and the ramp gallery



Illustration: Collage of the workshops on
the first floor



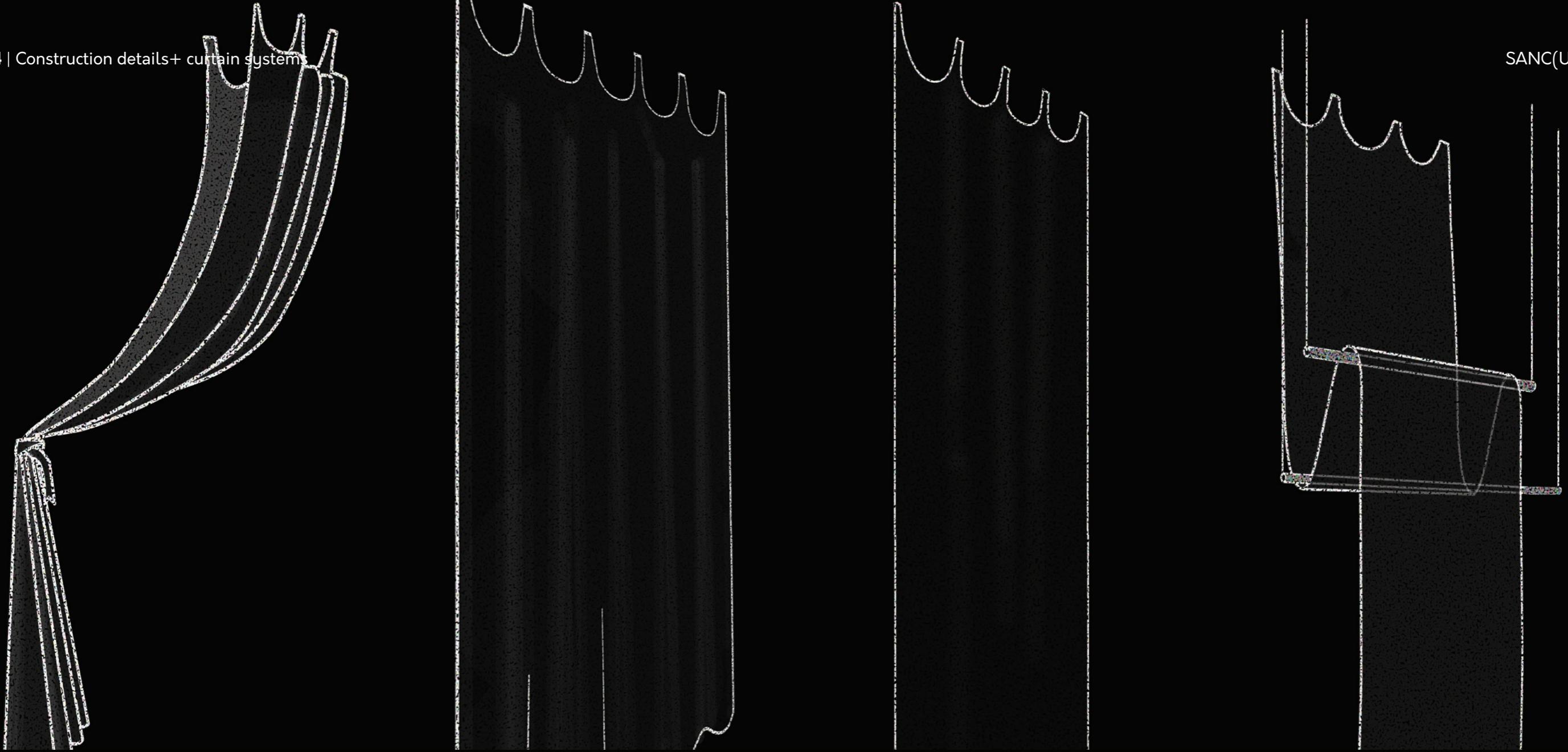
Illustration: Collage of the main stage
at the centre of the tunnel



Illustration: Collage of the
caffè zone



Illustration: Collage of the Exhibition of the forgotten in front of the tunnel



Chapter FOUR

“The white veil”

In terms of construction, our approach relies on a strategy of minimal intervention within the existing tunnel infrastructure with the exception of the central hall, which becomes the heart of the spatial narrative.

This hall, pierced by three overhead skylights, cut through the hill above, follows the logic of the Deep Underground Concept. These skylights are precisely aligned above the main stage area, which is clad in a mirrored floor finish and conceived as a symbolic lake – a reflective void capturing both light and presence.

The remaining built elements, such as the gallery structures and circulation ramps, adopt a light, scaffold-like tectonic expression, reminiscent of construction frameworks on unfinished buildings. Made from standardized, lightweight metal profiles, they are designed for rapid assembly and disassembly, encouraging adaptability and reuse. A suspended fabric canopy traces the natural, irregular curvature of the tunnel’s ceiling, evoking the character of a cave. The fabric varies in opacity: denser weaves define intimate zones, while lighter materials serve as mere visual filters, soft boundaries that guide without enclosing.

Together with tensioned nets and mobile wooden furniture, the design establishes resting areas, spaces for pause and contemplation. Light filters softly through the fabric, creating ephemeral moments of focus where artworks are displayed, on the tunnel’s surfaces, and on the fabric itself. The architectural setting, by contrast, remains deliberately subdued: a monochrome palette of whites and grays, quiet and restrained, devoid of spatial distraction.

In doing so, the architecture becomes a silent enabler, an open, evolving framework that foregrounds artistic intervention. It invites creators to take over the space on their own terms, whether for a moment or a longer residency, whether for those who merely pass through or for those who come to engage deeply with art.

The tunnel ceases to be a relic of halted infrastructure, it transforms into a living, adaptive vessel for cultural transformation, anchored in spatial sensitivity and material restraint.

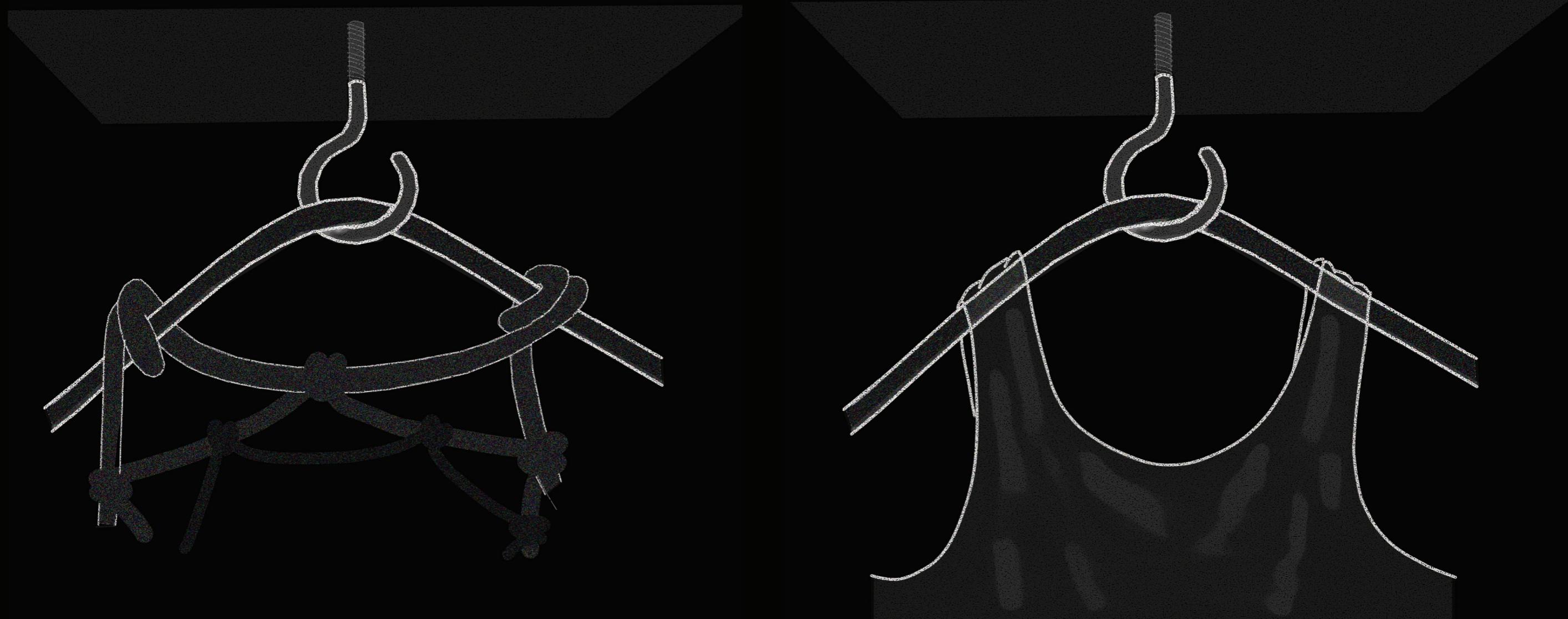


Illustration: Construction detail
of the hook for nets

Illustration: Construction detail of the hook
for textile panels

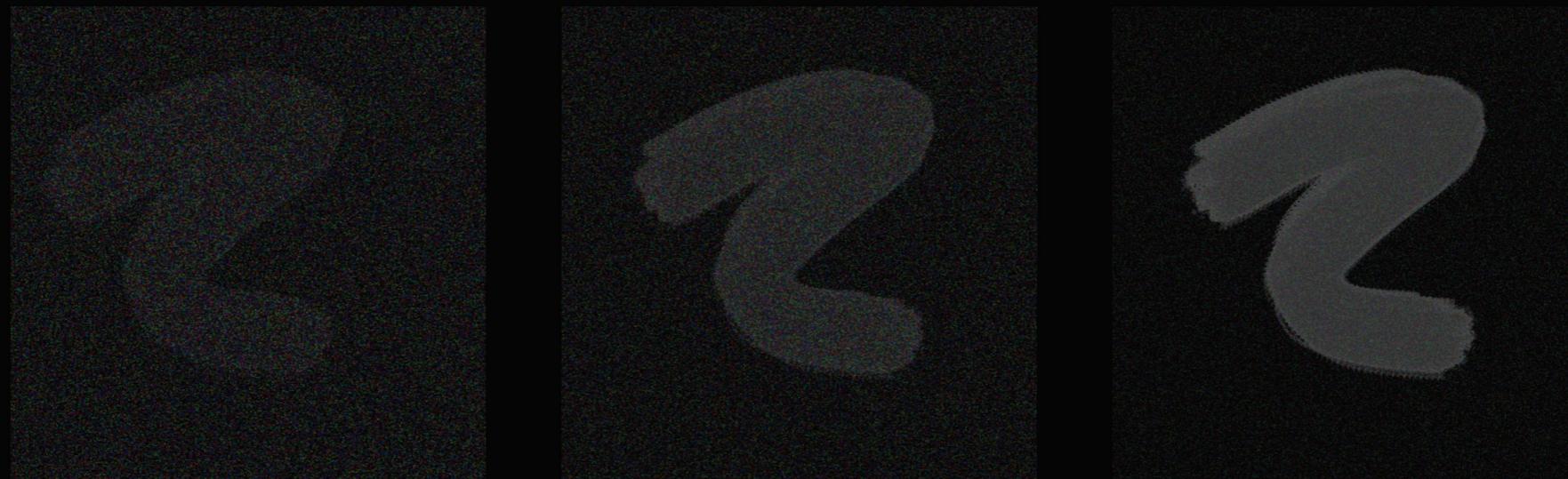
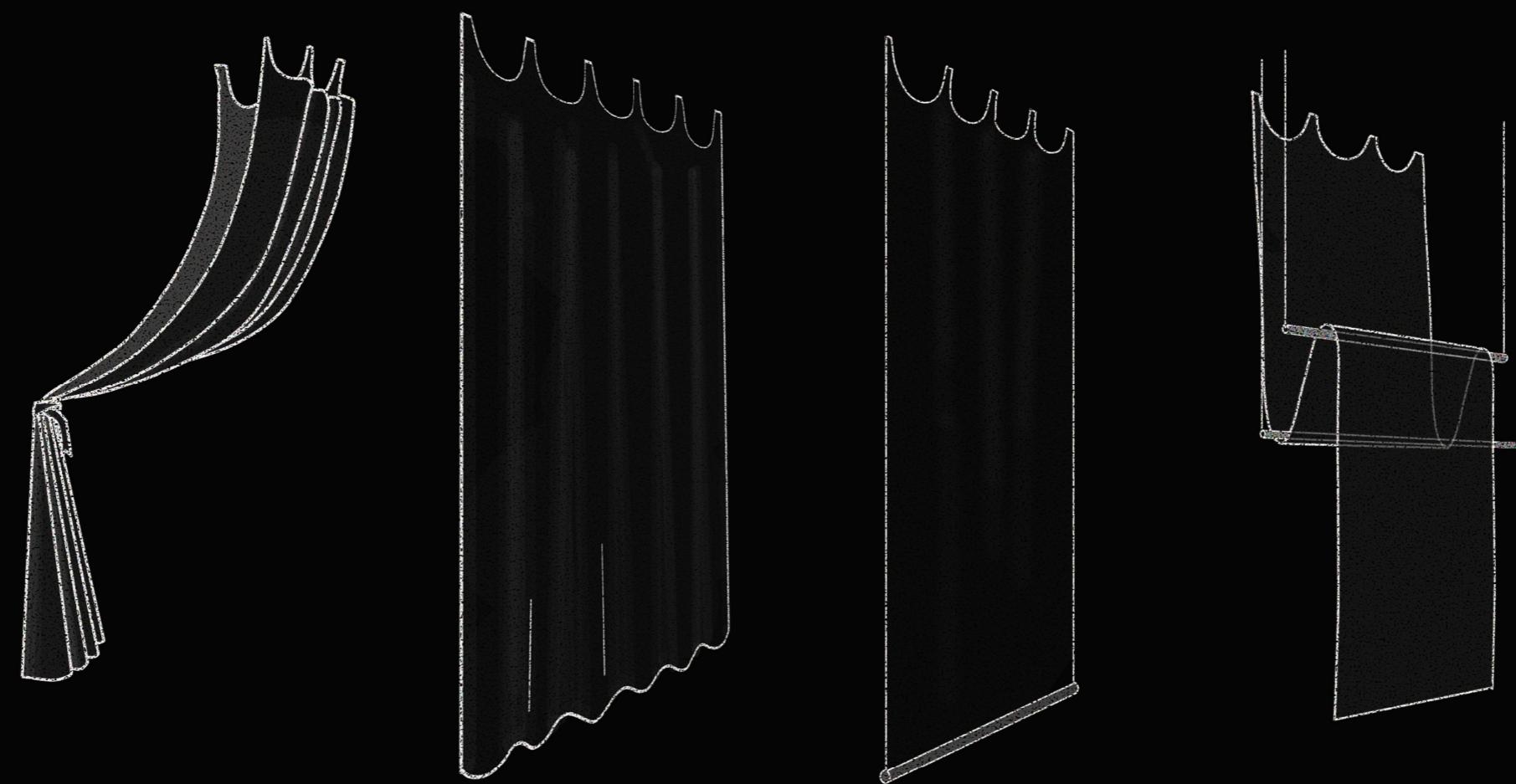


Illustration: Detail of different textiles and their transparency used for the project

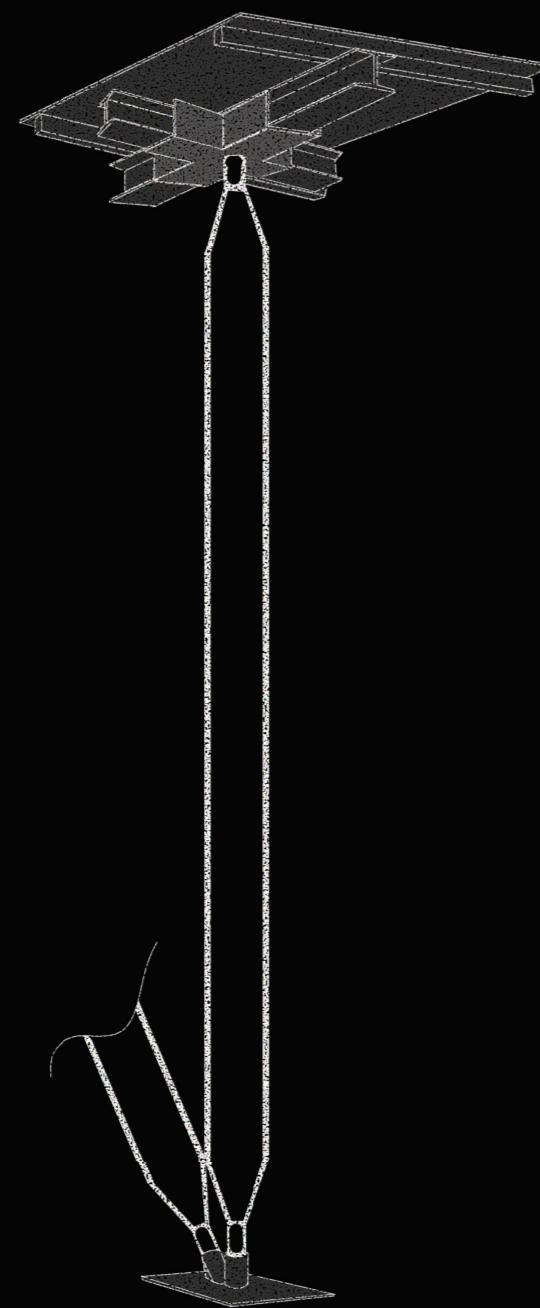


Illustration: Detail of the lightweight scaffolding used for the first floor

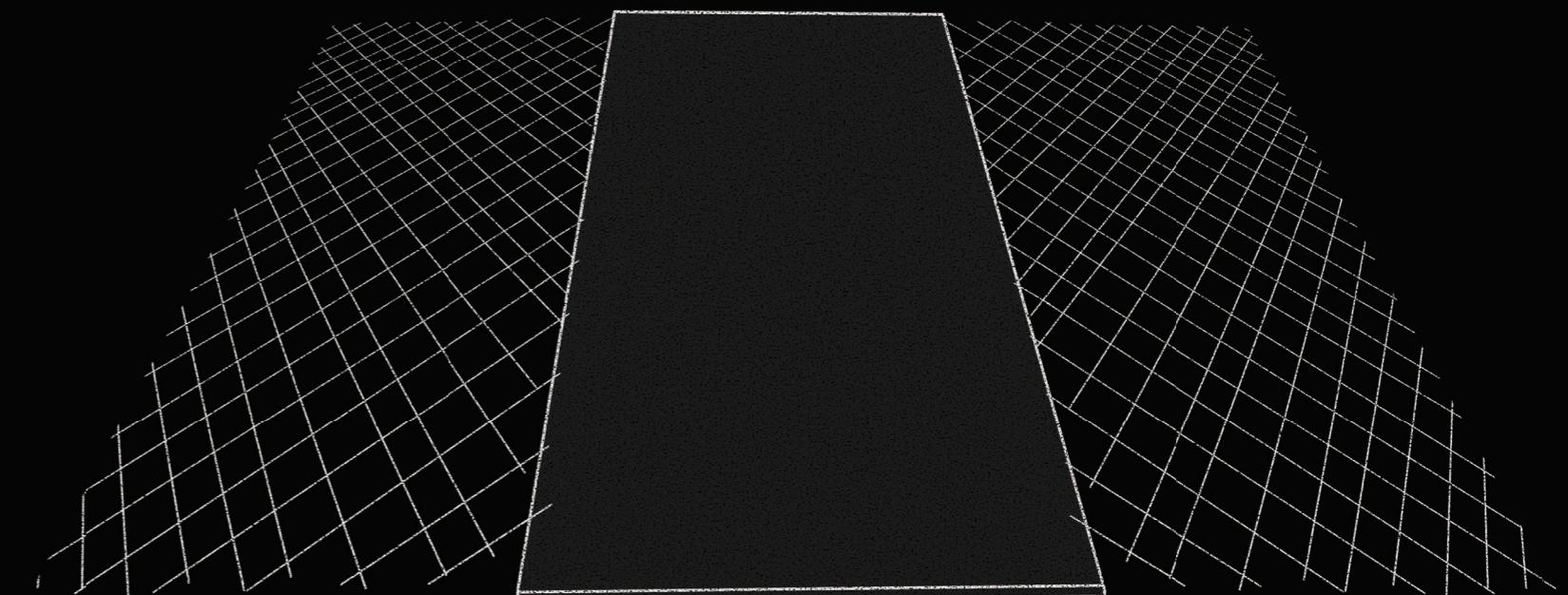


Illustration: Detail of the gallery of the first floor and netting

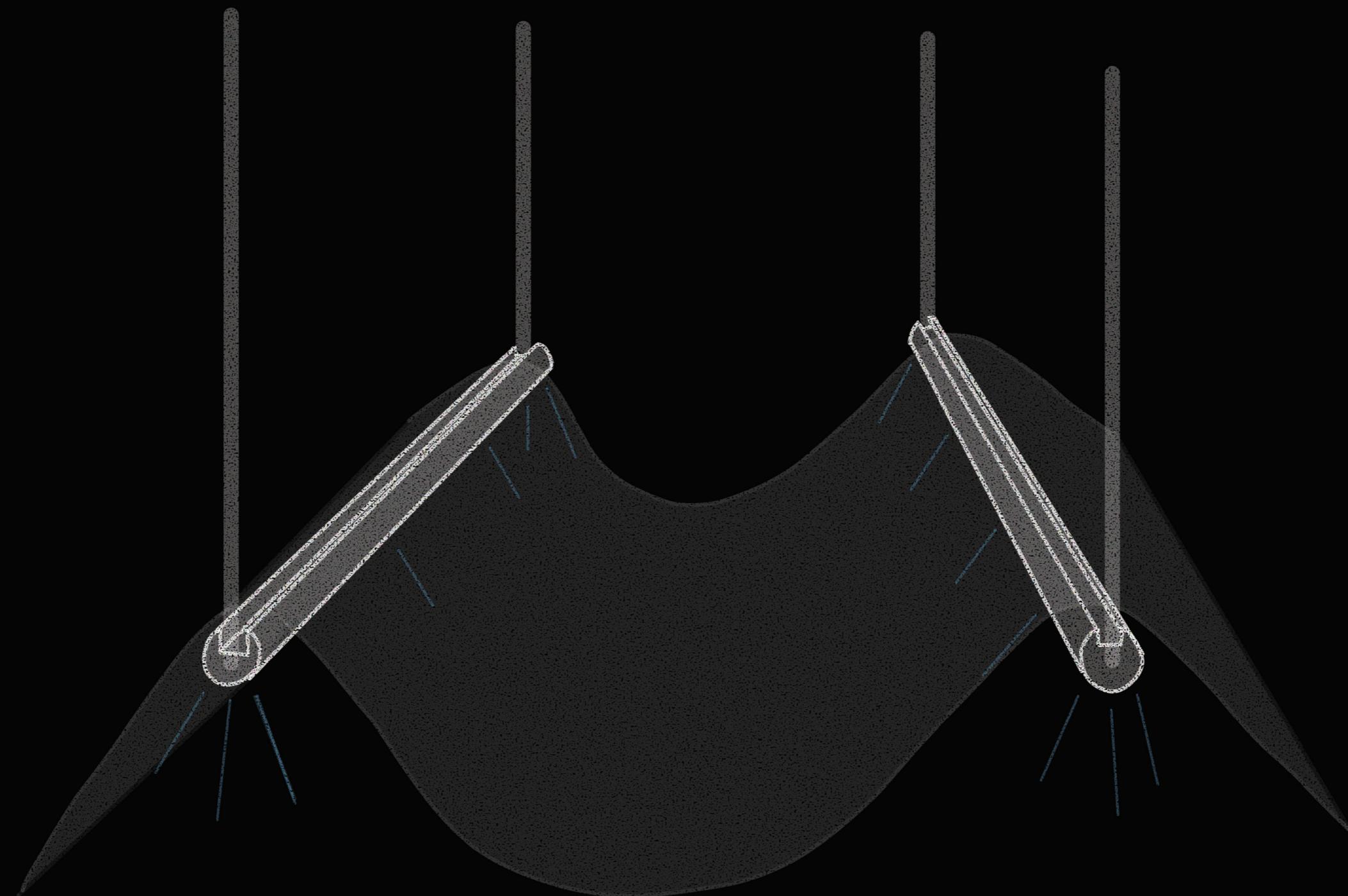
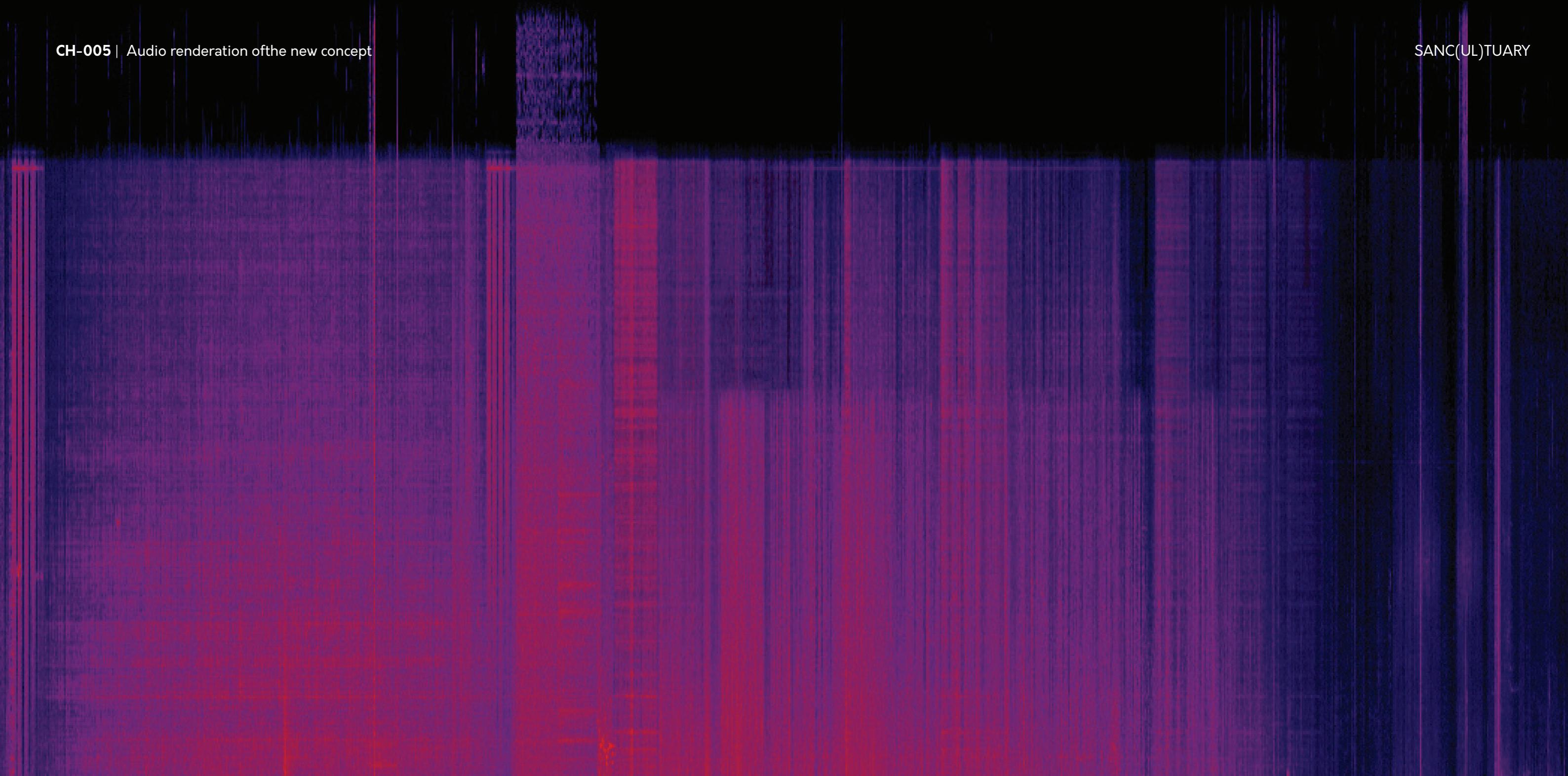


Illustration: Detail of the lighting and textile panel combination



Chapter FIVE

“Sounds at making”

Ultimately, space must be experienced through all senses, not merely through sight. This is precisely why we chose to experiment with ambient soundscapes, which may or may not become part of the new conceptual framework.

An audio composition follows a tunnel user as they glide on a skateboard through 300 meters of a fully immersive and surreal experience. At the entrance, they encounter a multitude of personae; as they move forward, they witness the unfolding of artistic creation and the exchange of ideas, canvases and light in playful dialogue, the chatter of like-minded individuals, the tension of dissent, the clash and harmony of diverse musical genres. Graffiti artists labor intensely on their works. Protests erupt in response to injustice. A punk band explodes into sound at the heart of the hall. Workshops resume. People rest on swings and soft seating islands.

And finally, at the tunnel’s exit – silence. The sounds of the forest gently emerge, accompanied by the presence of forgotten sculptures from the Yugoslav period and contemporary times. Nature and memory, noise and stillness, all converge in one spatial crescendo.

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