

HUMAN GEOGRAPHY

Story By Elizabeth Yochim

We are not separate. We are the soil underfoot. We are the birds that fly above, we come from the waters and there we shall return, we are the trees, rooted while reaching for the heavens.

— Elizabeth Yochim

I was born and raised in the Great Lakes region of North America. This land is indigenous to the Anishinaabe people, who included the Ojibwe, Odawa, Potawatomi, Saukteaux, Oji-Cree, and Algonquin peoples.

The five Great Lakes between Canada and the United States contain almost one-fifth of the world's freshwater and over 95% of North America's freshwater. Over 14,000 years ago, as glaciers retreated, they carved basins into the land and filled them with meltwater.

My earliest memory is laying my belly on the hot sand on the berm crest of the beach at Lake Michigan, just above the high tide line. Dressed in a polyester bathing suit with a collaged-fabric turtle, I felt the heat of the sun on my upper arms; I heard the sounds of the sea gulls flying overhead and the lake's waves lapping against the beach. The smell of muck defined the scent of the freshwater.

Human Geography explores how place—the landscape of the natural and built environment—is a formative, persistent and influential narrative. It is about how place makes us feel; about how it shapes our identity, the stories we tell about ourselves and the places we come from.

Human Geography investigates the human body as a place, a landscape like the surface of the earth, whose physical and biological attributes create a narrative with its own boundaries, tributaries, membranes, walls and partitions. A place where shells are akin to the shape and density of our bones and rocks are like organs. Where the earth and the body are the story and the storyteller, interchangeably.

Human Geography is the exploration of the primary places and how they shape our identity and the internal landscape of our emotional and psychological experience.

My own human geography contains this early memory of being at Lake Michigan. It was a time of simple pleasures and togetherness before a time of upheaval and uncertainty. I watched tad poles turn into frogs; practiced the art of skipping of stones and swam out from shore in search of sand bars.

This early and visceral sense of the natural world has led me as an adult to search for a connection to the environment. I have experienced the land in many of the places where I have lived—in Michigan, Italy, Japan and eventually California where I have chosen to live. Travel is how I have come to see things and how I have come to know a place; it is through the feel of it that broadens my sensibility and sensitivity to land.

Though movement and imagination, I explored the evolutionary journey of crawling out of the waters to stand, walk, and run. I have explored the possibility of what it might be to have wings and our connection to the birds and the avian kingdom. Through these explorations, and the larger context of my human geography I traveled to the land of my great, great grandfather in Southern Germany. These journeys have helped me to understand who I am and how I am continually guided by my most primary memories along Lake Michigan, how I seek connection and belonging to the other than human beings within our natural world and how this connection reflects who I am becoming.

I find that my life sometimes turns toward and sometimes turns away from this relationship with nature. That I am healing from the belief that I am separate, that nature is something out there. There is no separation. I am nature. We are nature. We are the soil underfoot. We are the birds that fly above, we come from the waters and there we shall return, we are the trees, rooted in the ground while reaching for the heavens.

Human Geography is a multi-media installation that shares my investigation into a sense of place and in particular the region where I grew up in Southwest Michigan. The installation encompasses film, sound recordings, and an archive of objects. I hope that the installation will provoke a sense of wonder and curiosity amongst visitors about their own personal sense of human geography, how it has shaped them and affected their lives. I want to learn their stories. I want to share these stories. I intend to do this through a series of public performances, participatory workshops, and the screening of my film, *Angelbird*.

— Elizabeth Yochim

Elizabeth Yochim's project is a reflection on how to intersect and connect interpersonal territories accurately towards finding a path of creativity. Elizabeth documents her engagement with a variety of disciplines and tools, and her complex aesthetic is achieved through investigating the relationship between body and mind.

Elizabeth creates a "liturgical" place that represents her work and that is defined over time and also changes over the course of this investigation.

Human Geography wants to be a container that engages all our senses, interacts with them and, through them, new thoughts and feelings come to form and unravel in a continuous motion. It is the experience of memory as it ebbs and flows, interacting as sound and form collide.

Her work acts as a kind of container that determines the intensity and capacity with which the viewer is able to share their own life experiences. The intensity with which Elizabeth reveals her own experience relates to the permeability of the viewer to feel into their own.

One is no longer tied to visual perception alone, but also is engaged through tactile and acoustic perception. The entire sense of one's own being is involved.

Intertwining of different stories and expressions with a single eye of interest: knowledge.

Elizabeth's work sets forth to unify elements of her personal research with an exterior and interior Geography: the place as an emotional engine and the work of art as a space of the soul.

Anna Dusi
Curator

EXHIBITION - DESIGN CONCEPT By Architect ROBERTO BERTOLI

HUMAN GEOGRAPHY

The main concepts

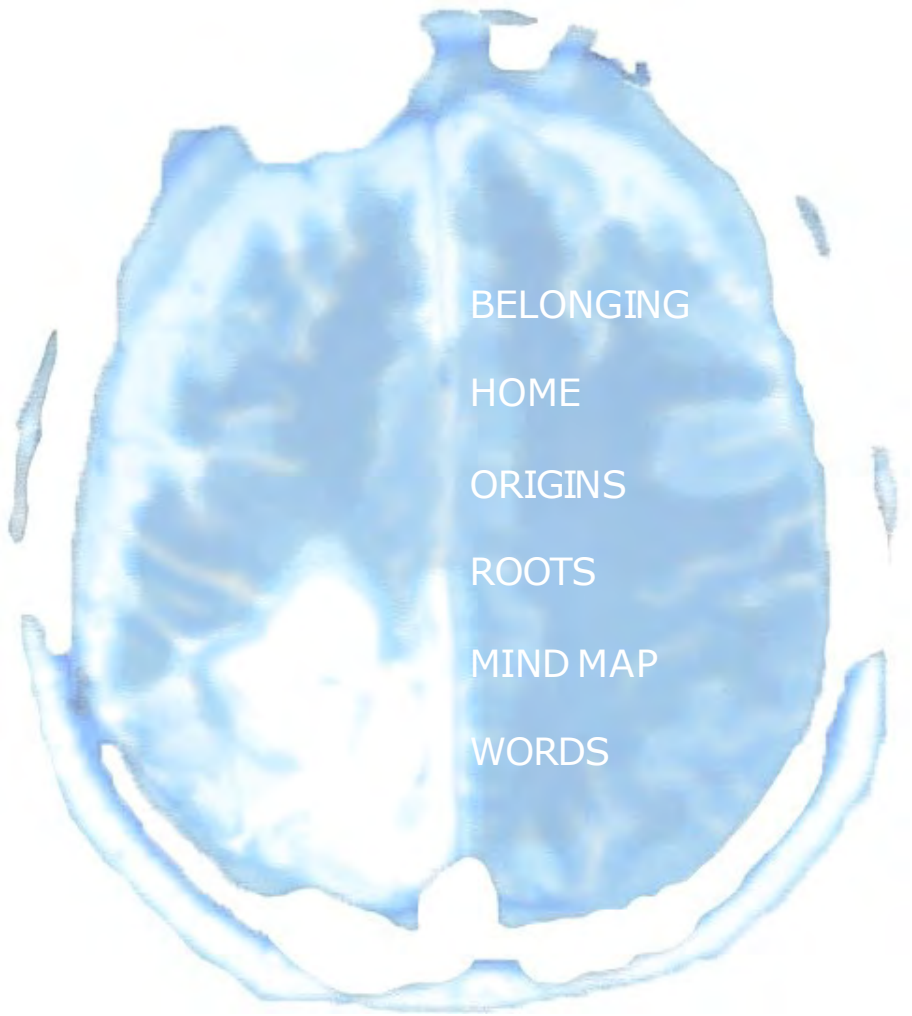
- _circular process of experiencing human geography
- _exhibition that involves experiencing space-fluid experience
- _the artist's continuous narrative leads us through the senses to a knowledge of her own geography
- _condition of change in the visitor who after perceiving the information will be different
- _exchange between visitor and artist

Exhibition design considerations

- _immersive experience | through different components: education, performance, film
- (Archive, video projection, audio transmission, accessories for a tactile experience)

Concept input

CONTAINER SPACE META SPACE TECHNOLOGY ENVIROMENT FUTURE 1961	MIES PLAN FOR AMUSEUM IN A SMALL COZY REPLICABLE LABIRINTH	MIRROR WALL CODE FOR FUTURE GENERATION PRIMAL SPACE	TIME EXPERIENCE PERFORMANCE FLUID INTENSITY PERMEABILITY INTERACTION
--	--	---	--



Purpose

create a repeatable space that at the same time allows the visitor to have an inclusive experience.

LAKE MICHIGAN - CHROMATIC PALETTE



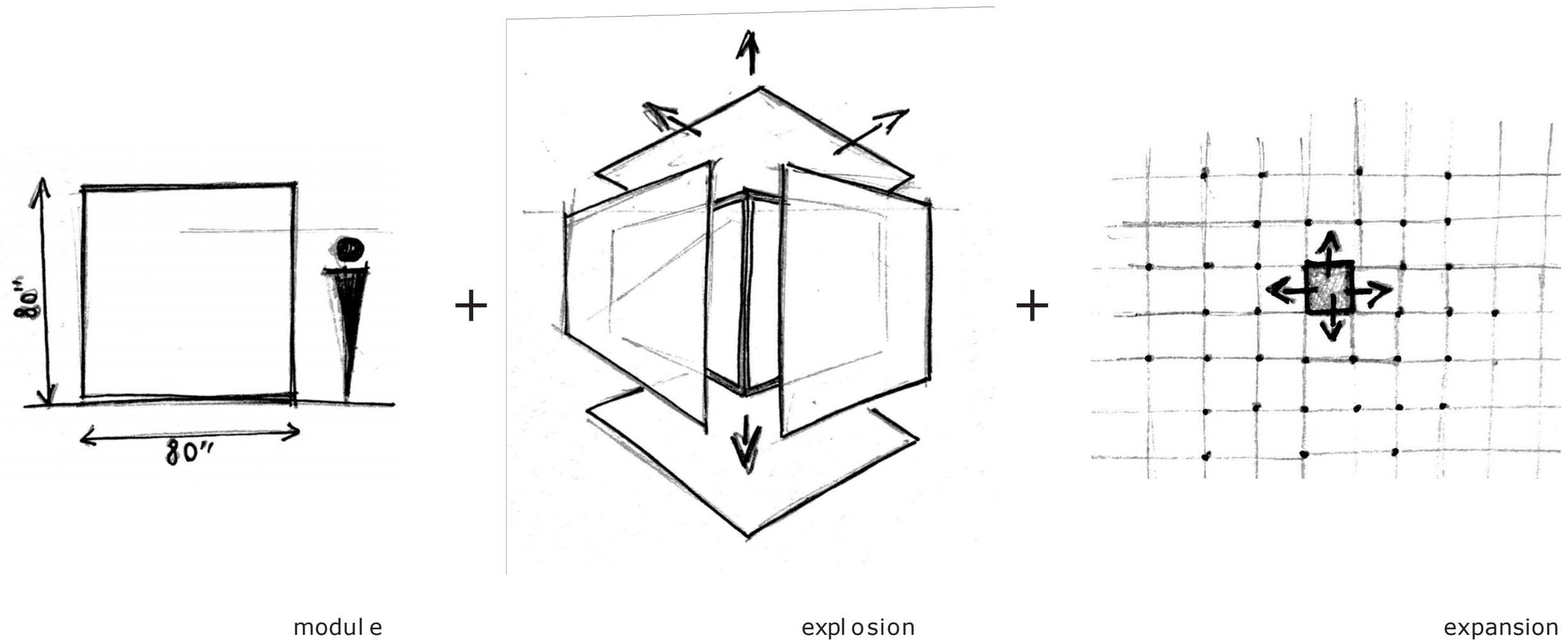
FROM THE CONCEPT TO THE DESIGN

The generating concept is based on the construction of an 80" x 80" x 80" base module.

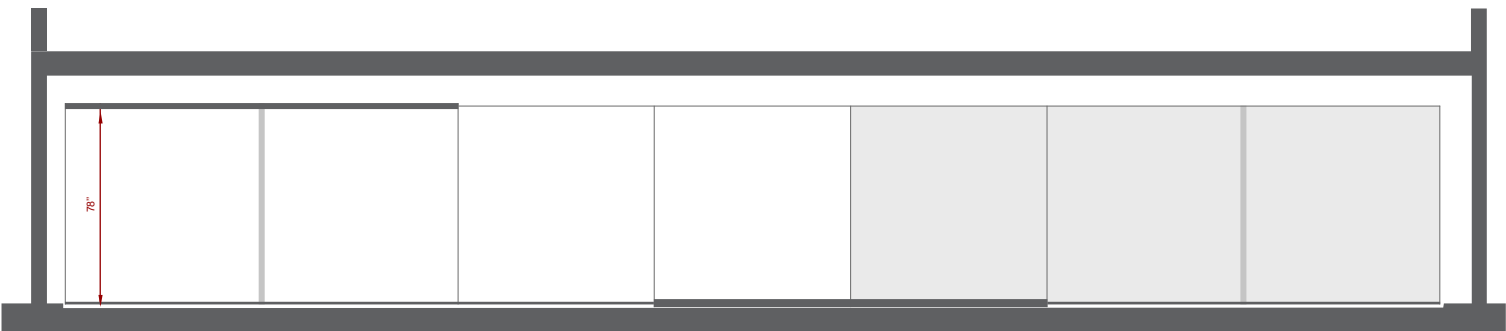
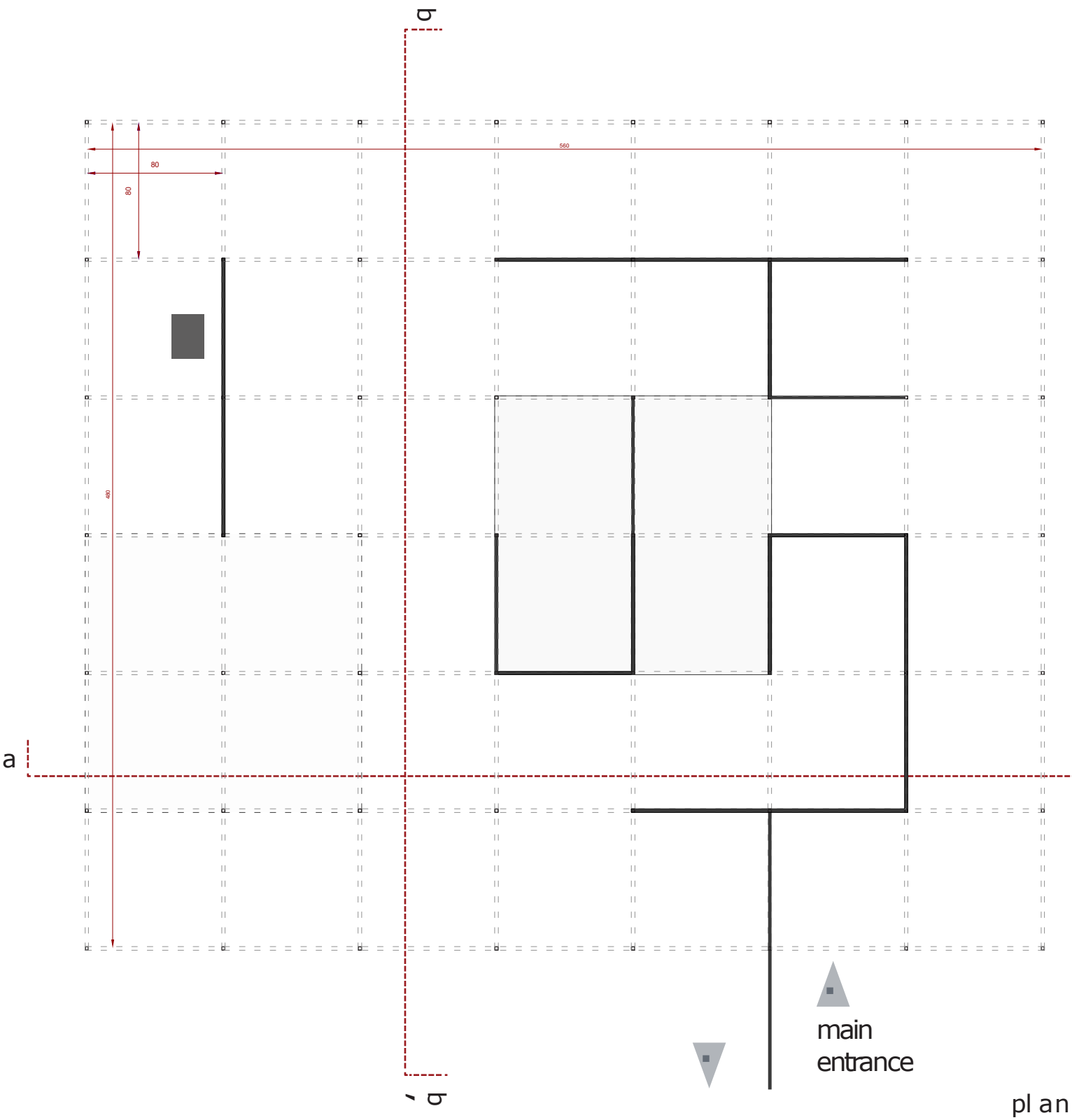
The cube formed from it separates to occupy the space through its surfaces and a grid made up of pillars and beams is obtained. The multimedia projection panels in chipboard are free to be moved around the space as the composer pleases.

The configuration is therefore not just one, but many, as many may be the experiences that are made of the same space that changes according to the visitor who approaches it.

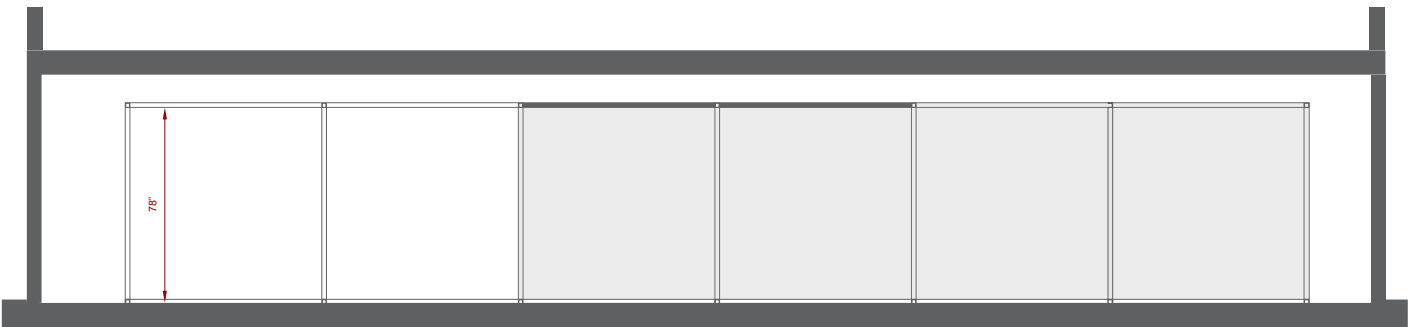
The simple base module can therefore be repeated endless times.



ORGANIZATION OF THE EXPOSITION

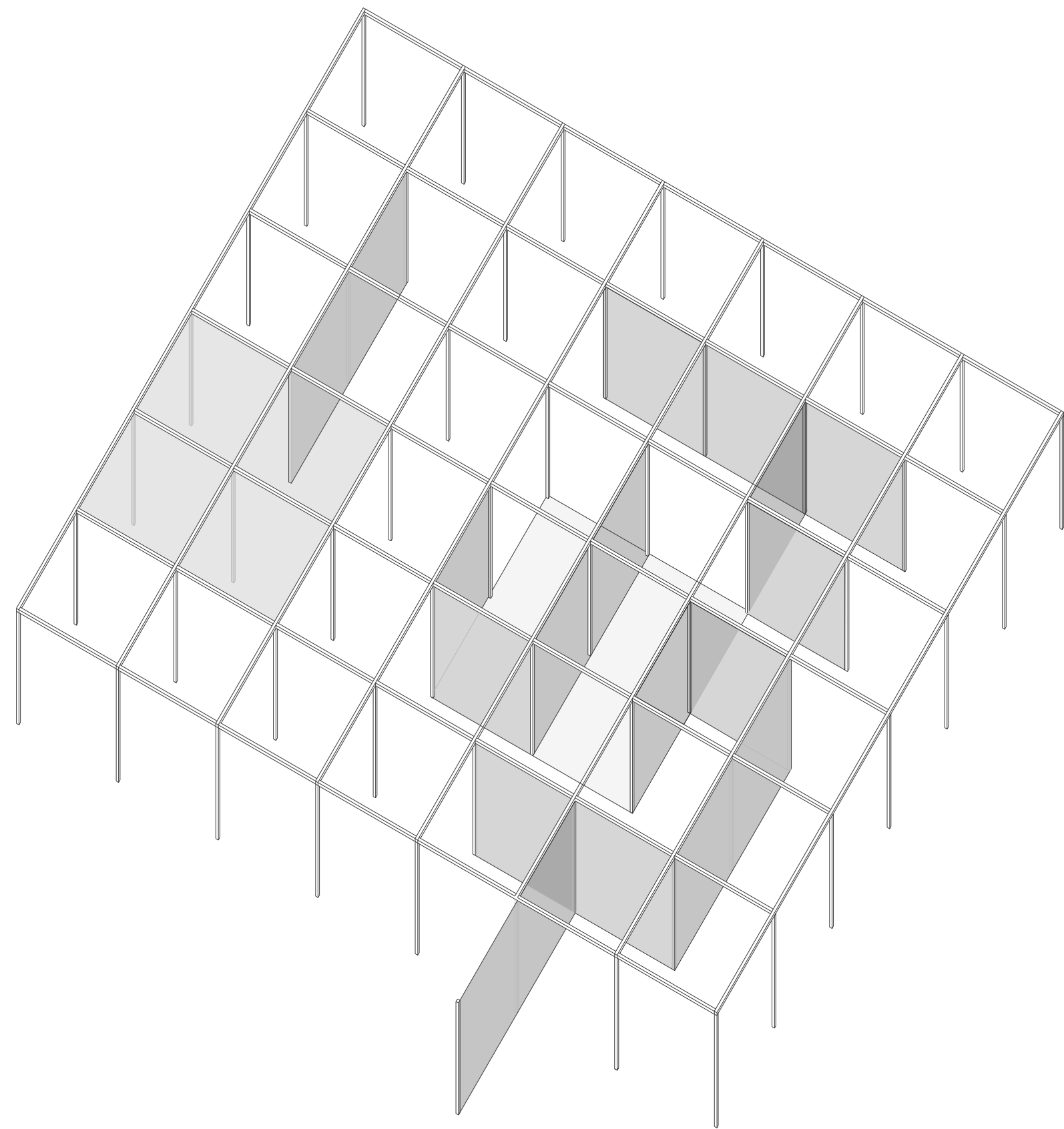


section a-a'

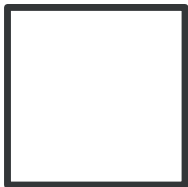


section b-b'

AXONOMETRY AND MATERIALITY



Material quantity



48 | Steel Pillars 2" x 2"

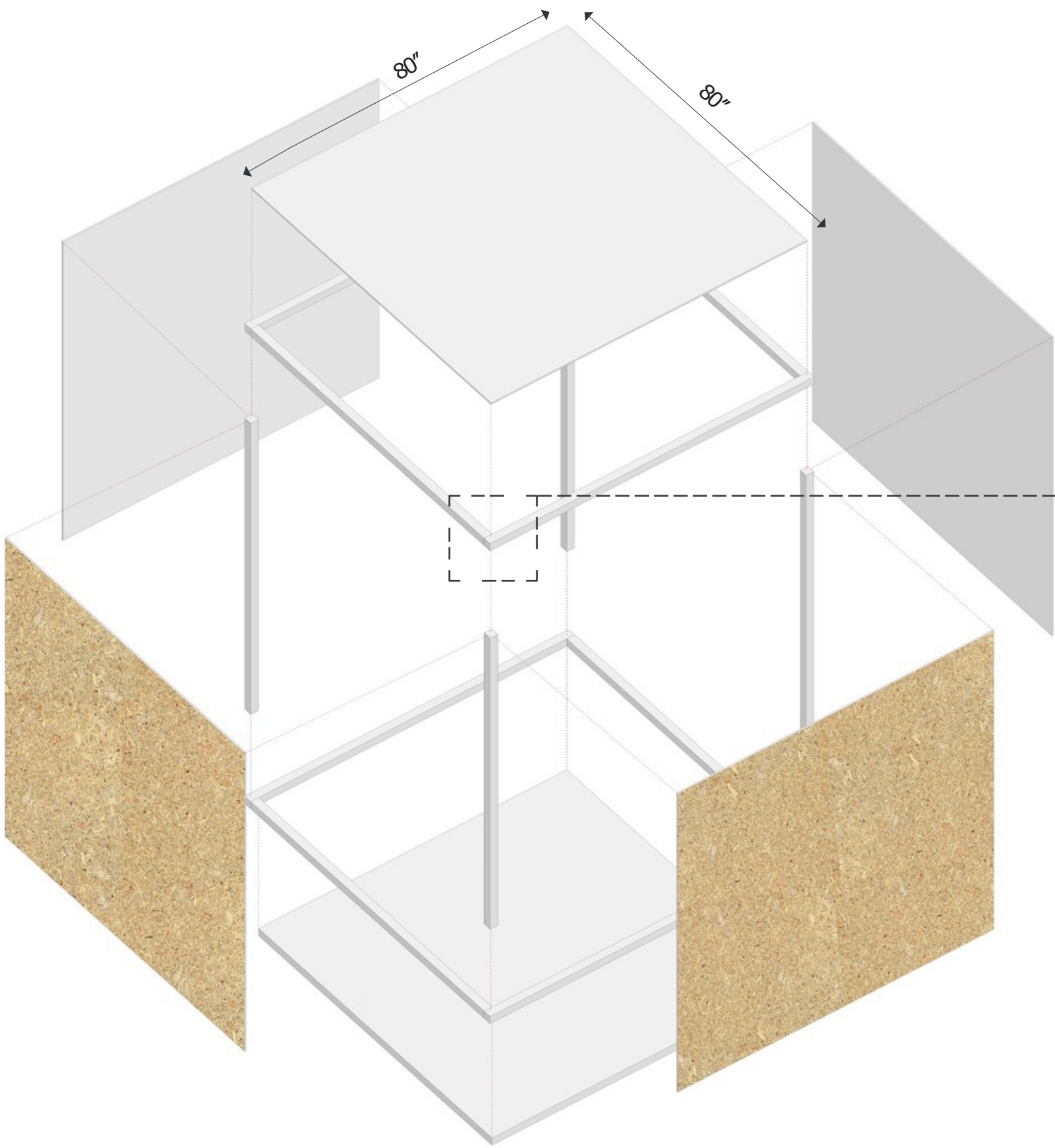
42 | Steel Beams 2" x 2" x 80"

7 | Steel Beams 2" x 2" x 480"

The structure is composed by 6 panels, the panels that constitute the projection walls will be made of textile material in order to facilitate the assembly and disassembly of the exhibition, as for the top and bottom plates iron plates will be used in order to create suggestions through lighting devices.

The room will be dark and the steel structure will be illuminated, creating a play of light bouncing off the pillars and beams. in the area dedicated to the top there will be auditory devices to enjoy an immersive experience of the environment.

THE BASE MODULE - SLIDING STRUCTURE

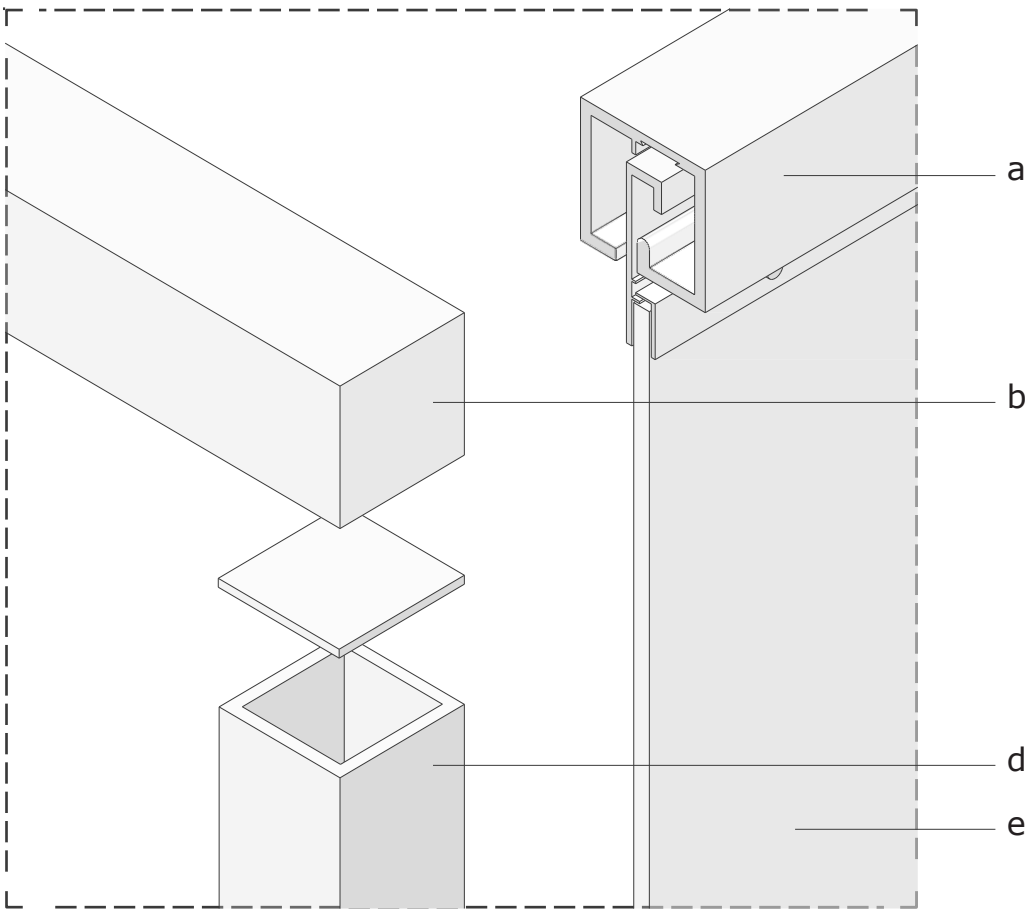


exploded module

The base module is made up of a few simple parts, so that we can guarantee its repetition and thus the adaptability of the exhibition to the most various spaces.

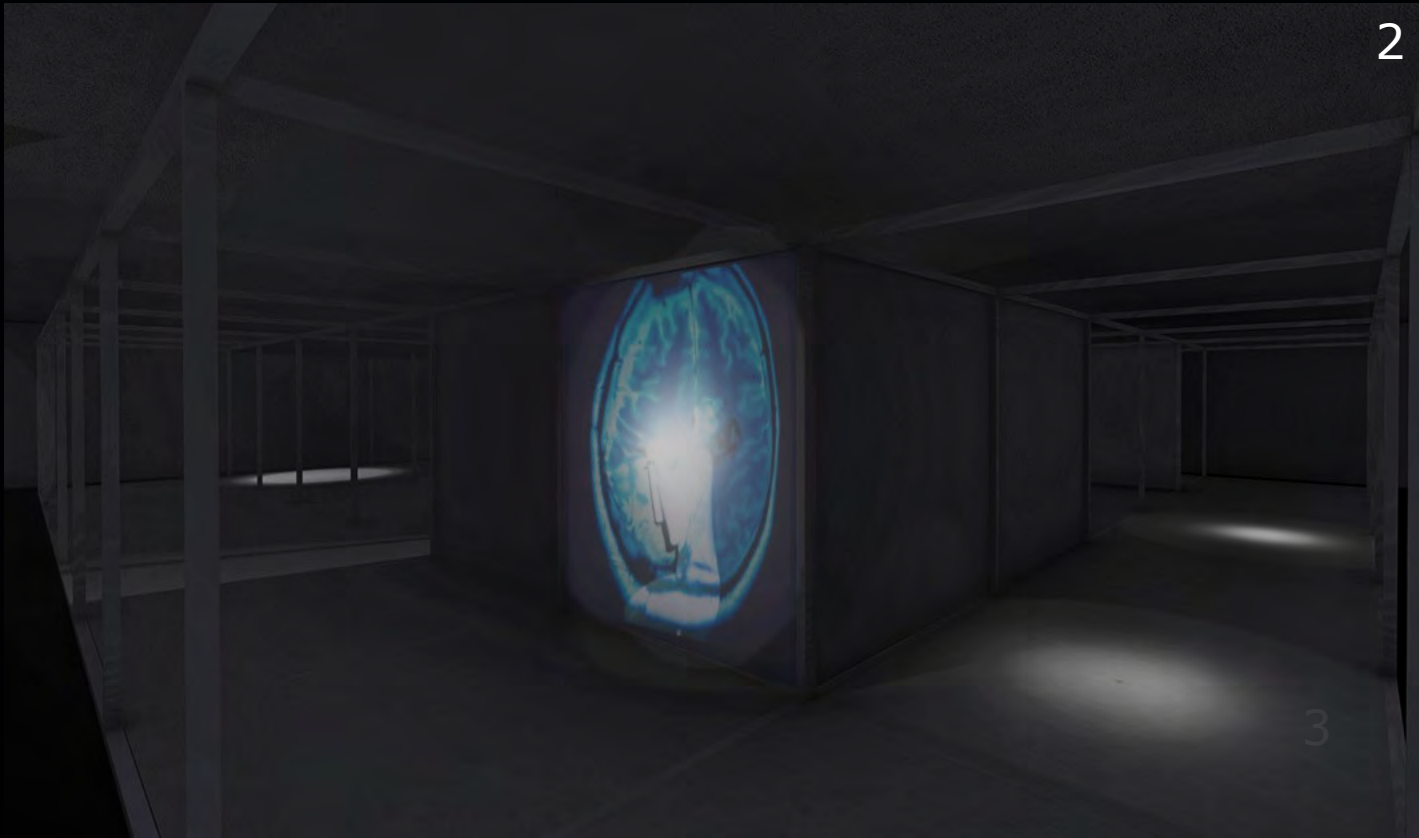
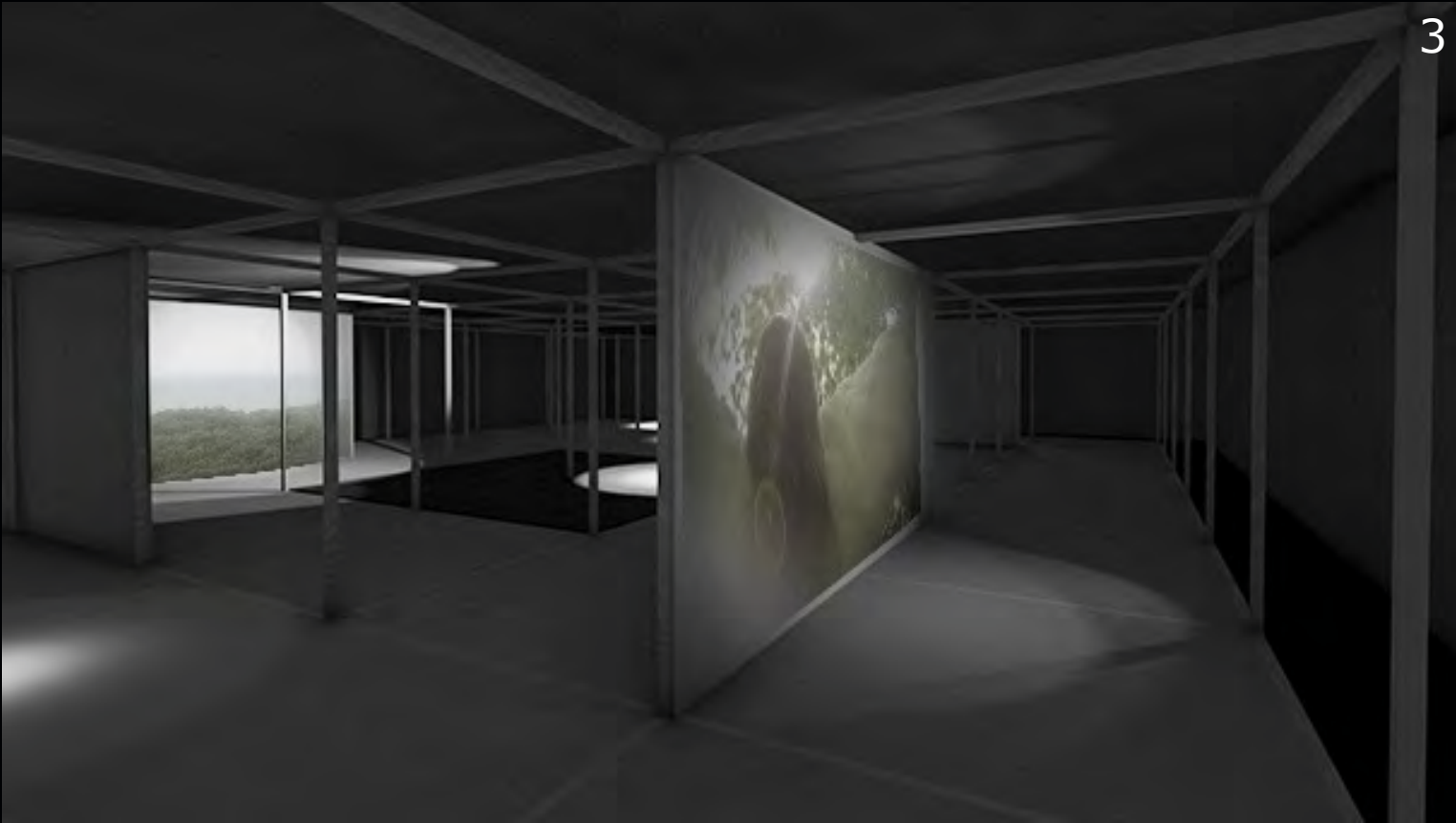
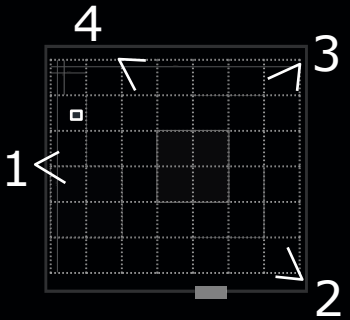
Members constituting the single module

- | | |
|---------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 4 Sliding Pannels | a. Rail guide for the sliding system |
| 4 Columns | b. Module junction beam 2" x 2" x 84" |
| 4 Top Beams | c. Upright 2" x 2" |
| 4 Bottom Beams | d. Chipboard 80" x 80" x 0.3" |
| Top Pannels | |
| Bottom Pannel | |



sliding detile

SETTINGS





Example 1: Multi-projection in



Example 2: Multi-projection installation



Example 3: Multi-projection installation

Associated Public Programing

Educational / Workshop Component:

A workshop designed to bring participants into an ongoing exploration of the relationship between physical geography and personal narrative and identity. Through a process that combines photography, writing, and movement, participants will engage in a cyclical process: participants will share stories about their connection to their physical geography and through examination and reflection, they will make new connections which will in turn generate new stories. Integral to this process is the importance of sharing and witnessing these stories together. Shared in community, these stories will create new pathways of empathy and understanding for self and other.

Performance Component:

Live, participatory performances will bring to life the multi-media components of the exhibition. Elizabeth Yochim engages the audience through movement, song and improvisational storytelling to inject an experiential dimension into the exhibition.

Film Screening Component:

The exhibition is accompanied by a special evening screening the narrative short *Angelbird*. Q & A to follow the screening with Elizabeth Yochim.

ELIZABETH YOCHIM

Elizabeth Yochim is a dancer, public performance artist, teacher, filmmaker, and arts professional. She creates, directs, and produces performances and workshops internationally.

Elizabeth combines her training in classical ballet, somatic therapy, eco-psychology and Italian Renaissance art history. She founded Participlay to offer her art + play design theory approach to museums and galleries to create the experience of art through non-verbal docent tours. She also presented a TEDx talk, *The Power of Play*, at the University of Southern California in Los Angeles.

Drawn to creating new community rituals in and around the cycles of life, death and rebirth, Elizabeth received certification as a death midwife which involved training in sitting with the dying, and to guide and hold space for family members and friends to memorialize the dead in their own intimate and personal ways.

Her performances explore themes of connection—to ourselves, each other, and the environment through the body. They are designed to rekindle memories of how people gathered for centuries to share their lives through telling stories, singing songs, and dancing. The works are participatory and invite people to contribute their own gestures, stories, and memories; thereby blending the line between performer and audience.

Elizabeth began creating street performances in 2004, and in 2013 she mounted her signature project, *Angelbird*. Dressed as an all-white winged creature she has performed as Angelbird all over the world, across ten continents from the Royal Mile of the Edinburgh Festival Fringe to the edge of Rome's Vatican City, and from Berlin and Paris, to the red rock country of Southern Utah just to name a few. She has written, performed, and produced the art films *Angelbird* and *Essence*.

For the past decade, Elizabeth has performed, taught, and designed in-person and virtual experiences internationally with the Nomadic School of Wonder for individuals, creative agencies, and corporate companies such as Google.

Elizabeth was raised in Kalamazoo, Michigan and received her degree in art history from the University of Michigan. She studied arts abroad and speaks Italian fluently. With background as an art world professional and former gallery director, she founded Yochim Arts, a fine art appraisal and art advisory firm based in Los Angeles.

ANNA DUSI
Curator

About my Curatorial practice: I believe that a work is born from the artist's mind, from the observer and from the very way in which it is observed, therefore it is important to carefully approach how to exhibit it. Over the years I have learned how an exhibition is always a combination of intellectual work and love of detail, and how important it is to continue learning to look at things in different ways. In my curatorial practice I love working with artists in the embryonic phase of the project. I like to understand their creative process by following them closely, consistently, getting my hands dirty, and living the everyday idea with them. In recent years, I have had the pleasure of investigating and deepening in both an artist's and an institutional archives. I find it essential for the artist to assume the responsibility of approaching the theme of memory and remembrance in the artistic practice to collect and preserve, but above all to show and tell.

Anna Dusi was born in Milan, Italy, and has been involved in the curatorial process since 1998. In 2007 she served as the Deputy Curator of the Building Bridges Art Exchange in Los Angeles, California, an art organization dedicated to cultivating an understanding among cultures worldwide through international art exhibitions, artist exchanges and residency programs. As Deputy Curator, she curated numerous international exhibitions in the USA, Europe and Mexico. In 2015, she became an Independent Curator and Art Advisor working with established and emerging artists, creating curatorial collaborations with Galleries, Art Organizations and Museums between the USA and Europe.

As an Artist herself, she started to create art during her teens and began to paint uncharacteristic "Human beings" and "objects" with an informal technique. In the late 1990's she moved to New York where she reached a greater artistic awareness of her surrounding environment. Since then, she hasn't stopped searching and experimenting new forms of life in her works. In 2002 she settled in Los Angeles, California, more aware and confident about her curiosity and desire to pursue her career as a Curator.

Anna Dusi currently lives and works in Los Angeles.

ROBERTO BERTOLI
Architect

My work explores all areas of Architecture, Engineering and Communication, thanks to my belief in the importance of contamination between the various disciplines for the development of each project. The beginning of each project is a deep research and interpretation of the cornerstones of every intervention: the place, the user and the theme of the project; Equally, project work is confronted by the constant changing of needs and resources in a tight dialogue with sedimentary values in contexts.

Since 2016, I opened a **Project Room** has in my studio for temporary and site-specific works. Through a selection of both contemporary and emerging artists, both national and international, from the 1960s to the present, the studio becomes a place of experimentation and contamination between art and architecture, with particular attention to those artistic researches that have design vision, constructive tension and research methodology: from extending the work to the environment, to the choice of new compositional materials and the conceptual reduction of artwork to space project, to the reuse of the great models of historical avant-gardes.

"Conceptual artists are mystics rather than rationalists. They leap to conclusions that logic cannot reach" (Sol LeWitt Sentences)

In the first of his sentences, Sol LeWitt, founder of American Minimalism and in my research among the main reference authors, emphasized that subtle and sometimes invisible red thread that unites the rigorous planning with the experience of the transcendent, understood as the ability to go beyond order and rigor of the calculation through the progressive reduction to the essential of the form. The return to the origin. The geometric absolute. From these premises develops my way of understanding and working with space, and with architecture. The starting point analyzes the fundamentals of western thought translated into Euclidean plane geometry and precisely into the rectangle, which is the analytical basis and the planning momentum of the various architectural works.

The rectangle as a base, field, even work sheet, blank page, essential root and plant matrix of a possible volume. The rectangle becomes a parallelepiped, in volumes that are decomposed, divided, assembled, associated on each other. A conceptual and architectural walk that starts from a basic theme, and declines in variations.

A strong, pure, exact gesture that responds to practical and functional needs: the volumetric cuts and decompositions follow the flows and paths of the user inside the building. If the theory visualizes and develops an architectural project, the experience connotes it and breaks it down: the form does not follow the function, nor the function solely determines the form. Architecture is a strong and peremptory gesture that is charged with violence and the need of man, in his giving and receiving, every day, to the space identity and knowledge.

In this double instance, my design and construction is founded: aware of sinking the thought in that place of investigation originally European and afferent to the most radical historical avant-gardes, from Neoplasticism to the Bauhaus, welcoming them in dialectics with the American thought or with minimalist poetics and of hard edge.

"Space is a doubt: I have constantly to mark it, to designate it. It's never mine, never given to me, I have to conquer it"
(Georges Perec, Species of Space)

CONTACT

ELIZABETH YOCHIM
ey@yochimarts.com
www.elizabethyochim.com
T: +1.310.801.2165

ROBERTO BERTOLI ARCHITETTO
Viale Italia 9/d
25126 Brescia
P.IVA 03206600987
+39 030 295911
www.robertobertoli.com
info@robertobertoli.com