

AAHM10: Degree Project in Architecture | LTH | 2026  
Author: Vardges Shahmenendyan  
Supervisor: Rúni Weihe  
Examiner: Fredrik Torisson

**THE NEGOTIATION STACK** A HYBRID CIVIC CENTER FOR PLURAL NARRATIVES

**THE NEGOTIATION STACK** DISCOURSE ASSEMBLY INTERPRETATION NARRATIVES

**THE NEGOTIATION STACK** PLURALITY PRODUCTION EXHIBITION PARTICIPATION

**NEGOTIATION STACK** PUBLICNESS ENCOUNTER EXCHANGE FRICTION REPRESENTATION



**The Negotiation Stack – A Hybrid Civic Center for Plural Narratives**

Project Report



**LUND**  
UNIVERSITY

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## **Abstract**

In this project I investigate how architecture can give form to an institution that creates the conditions for negotiation between competing narratives. It is situated at Sillhovstomten, the contested site behind the Nationalmuseum in central Stockholm. The failed Nobel Center proposal on this site revealed that it is not an empty void awaiting to be filled, but a place where different political, cultural, and social values already confront one another. Rather than resolving these frictions, I understand them as the defining condition of the contemporary democratic city and try to spatialize them through this project.

Through historical analysis, institutional critique, and architectural exploration, I propose a new civic institution centred on production, encounter, and exchange. It operates through changing residencies, maker spaces, exhibitions, and public programmes that continuously overlap in time and space aiming for the master narrative to remain permanently open to reinterpretation.

The intervention takes a step back onto the water, positions itself as a field of negotiation behind the Nationalmuseum and aims to reinterpret Sillhovstomten as an atrium in between these two institutions.

## Table of Content

<b>Project Scope</b>		<b>1.</b>
<b>Prologue</b>		<b>2.</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	Background	<b>4.</b>
	Problem and Question	6
<b>Silhovstomten:</b>	<b>Reading The Site</b>	<b>8.</b>
	Urban Context	10.
	Spatial Narratives	12.
	Spatial Conditions	16.
	The Fluid Quay	18.
	The Failure of the Nobel Center	20.
<b>Navigations:</b>	<b>Towards a Position</b>	<b>24.</b>
	Destabilizing the Narrative Apparatus	26.
	Friction as an Organizational Condition	28.
	The Library and the Tower	30.
	Fields, Fluidity, and Continuity	32.
	Framing	36.
<b>In the Process:</b>	<b>Working the Project</b>	<b>36.</b>
	In Search of a Spatial Strategy	38.
	A Tower or a Platform	40.
	Internal Organization	42.
	Institutional Framework	46.
<b>Design Proposal:</b>	<b>The Negotiation Stack</b>	<b>48.</b>
	Site Plan	52.
	Movement Diagrams	54.
	Site Section	56.
	Programme	58.
	Topographies	60.
	Plans	62.
	Building Section	68.
	Images	70.
<b>Reflections</b>		<b>78.</b>
<b>References</b>		<b>80.</b>

## Project Scope

This project should be understood primarily as an architectural and institutional speculation rather than a fully resolved implementation proposal.

While it is situated on the specific site of Sillhovstomten in Stockholm and responds directly to the history of the Nobel Center debate, I do not attempt to resolve the political, economic, legal, or administrative complexities associated with the site through this project. Instead, I use Sillhovstomten as a lens through which broader questions about democratic representation, cultural institutions, and public participation can be explored.

The proposal therefore operates on two levels. Most of the project concerns developing an abstract architectural and institutional model for negotiation between competing narratives. A smaller part of the project scope explores its situation in the specific physical conditions and its relationship to the architectural language of the area.

The project emphasis is on architecture's capacity to frame relationships, create conditions for interaction, and suggest alternative institutional possibilities. Therefore, I would like to frame the project as an architectural argument about how plurality, negotiation, and cultural production might be spatialized.

## Prologue

The 19th-century logic of Stockholm's Lindhagen Plan reads the city as a carefully composed image. It is an image that manifests the modern European city shaped by the institutions that constitute the state. Within this framework, the Nationalmuseum, completed in 1866 (Nationalmuseum, n.d.) is positioned as an icon of its time. A visual axis connects the Royal Palace (completed in 1754) (Kungahuset, n.d.) to the Nationalmuseum, which stands as a sculptural object within a park.

If this was the icon of the late 19th century, then the failed Nobel Center project proposed behind the Nationalmuseum followed the same logic as an icon of the 21st century by attempting to represent contemporary Sweden shaped by science and innovation. Its placement reveals a continuity in how the city wishes to be understood. Viewed linearly, Stockholm becomes a sequence of manifestations:

*Royal Palace (18th century monarchy) → Nationalmuseum (19th century bourgeoisie) → Nobelhuset (the new bourgeoisie).*

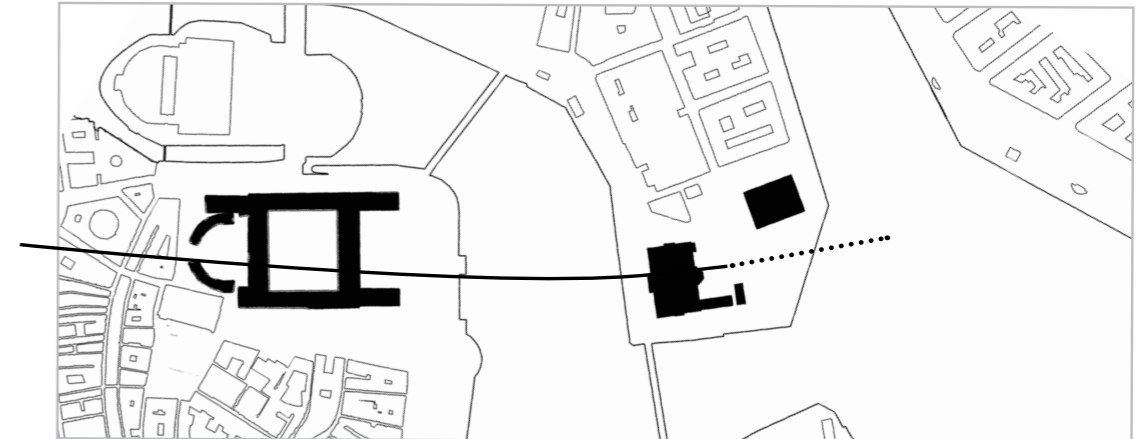
But the contemporary national representation is not so singular. The Royal Palace and the Nationalmuseum represent the singularity of the national narrative in the retrospect, but the present of a democratic nation is ambiguous and contested. The resistance against the Nobelhuset frames exactly this understanding of the present.

Cities have been, and will continue to be representations of the political, economic, and social forces that shape them. They are the spatial materializations of power struggles of their times. Therefore, the question is not whether cities are still represented through icons, but rather what conditions inform representation. The failure of the Nobel Center project shows that these conditions are far from being stable and singular.

Therefore if the contemporary city is no longer represented by a single voice, it must be understood as a field of multiple, competing narratives. Within this shift the area behind the Nationalmuseum is no longer another object in the sequence. It becomes the site where the future is negotiated. So the representation changes into:

*Royal Palace (18th-century monarchy) → Nationalmuseum (19th-century bourgeoisie) → A negotiation (the present).*

From left to right the diagram shows the Royal Palace, the Nationalmuseum and the proposed Nobel Center in central Stockholm creating an axis of national representation.



## INTRODUCTION

The tree highlighted buildings on the map are the Tullhuset and the two warehouses in Sillhovstomten behind the National Museum

The site behind the Nationalmuseum, known as Sillhovstomten contains immense value: a compilation of typologies, water, park, and history. These elements are not meaningful in isolation, their coexistence is the defining quality. It reflects the non-linear nature of the city's development. Unlike its surroundings, it is neither grandiose nor elegant. It does not represent the Stenstaden of Stockholm. Instead, it is an unfiltered collective of layers that embodies the city's development.

What emerges here is not harmony, but friction. Stockholm is often imagined exclusively through its neoclassical 19th-century image, yet Sillhovstomten introduces a different voice, one that exposes alternative stories characterized by a past different from the surrounding narrative.

If the Nationalmuseum embodies a coherent and static national narrative, then the condition behind it operates differently. **If the Nationalmuseum is the place where we have decided to store what is important, then Sillhovstomten becomes where we argue for what might be important.**

If the Nationalmuseum is *The Decided*, then Sillhovstomten becomes *The Negotiation*.

In this project I address democratic plurality through the design of a new civic institution at Sillhovstomten. It explores how architecture can create spatial conditions for negotiation between forms of cultural production through a building organised around continuity, encounter, and friction.



## Problem and Question

Sillhovstomten exposes a contradiction between contemporary democratic conditions and the traditional logic of civic representation in Stockholm. The surrounding institutions operate through coherence, while the site itself is defined by unresolved coexistence between scales, histories, and spatial conditions. The failure of the Nobel Center project on this location revealed that it is not a wasteland waiting to be filled with a coherent image. The public uprising against it exposed the contradictions and multiplicities within the narratives through which the public wants to read the city, as well as competing claims of who has access to the site. But these contradictions are not resolved or negotiated. As a result, Sillhovstomten remains an indeterminate edge behind the Nationalmuseum, awaiting definition.

*The recognition of this problem leads to question:*

- **How can Sillhovstomten be transformed from an ambiguous threshold into an active place of encounter and negotiation?**
- **How can architecture accommodate these conditions, and what institutional frameworks are needed to support diverse publics, narratives, and their continuous exchange?**



The gated area in Sillhovstomten in February 2026.

SILLHOVSTOMTEN

READING THE SITE

[1]



THE NEGOTIATION STACK - A HYBRID CIVIC CENTER FOR PLURAL NARRATIVES

## Urban Context

The site is known as Sillhovstomten, Norrmalm 3:43 and is located on the southeastern corner of Blasieholmen, situated at the tip of the peninsula surrounded by the waters of Ladugårdslandsviken and Nybroviken. It's framed by Hovslagargatan, Nybrokajen, and Museiparken. In the immediate neighbourhood sit the Hellstrandska huset (1880, 1912) and the Edelstamska Huset (1881) (Nobelhuset AB, 2013, p. 21), while the Nationalmuseum (1866) stands in immediate adjacency as a Neo-Renaissance solitaire. The broader peninsula reflects the architectural language of the late 19th and early 20th-century bourgeois city, establishing a monumental order concerned with representation.

At the heart of the site is Tullhuset, built in 1874 as a customs house for cargo and passenger traffic that operated until the 1940s (Stockholmskällan, n.d.). Near it remain two rather banal shipping warehouses dating to 1910 and the Swedish navy cookhouse (1832)(Nobelhuset AB, 2013, p.22). These structures belong to different functional and institutional contexts; they were not conceived as a unified composition, but sit there as ghosts from the city's port and trade era.

**While the surrounding monumental structures represent civic prestige, these buildings represent production.**

In recent years, the metro expansion project has further altered this condition. The presence of a service tunnel to Kungsträdgården station, left from the late 1970s between Tullhuset and Museiparken, made the site an ideal location for the new expansion. (Nya tunnelbanan, n.d.) Since late 2021, the site has been gated and enclosed to facilitate the extraction of rock masses from the new tunnels. With its buildings temporarily repurposed and public accessibility removed, the site remains in a state of suspension, waiting for its next definition.

The Tullhuset building has recently been announced as the future home of the Holocaust Museum (Publikt, 2025).



— Gated area

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 1. Customs House (1876)                | 9. Hellstrandska huset (1912) / Offices      |
| 2. Warehouses (1910)                   | 10. Gtand Hotel (1874)                       |
| 3. National Museum Annex (1961)        | 11. Bååtska palatset (1669)                  |
| 4. National Museum Annex (2018)        | 12. Strand Hotel (1912)                      |
| 5. Edelstamska huset (1866) / Hotel    | 13. Royal Palace (1754)                      |
| 6. Kokhuset (1832)                     | 14. Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities (1700) |
| 7. Bolinderska palatset (1877) / Hotel | 15. Moderna Museum (1998)                    |

## Spatial Narratives

Sillhovstomten should not be understood as an isolated fragment within Stockholm. It is a condensation of different moments, uses, spatial logics that have accumulated over time. Here, the city does not appear as a unified composition of elite and power. Monuments, simple structures, infrastructures, and public spaces coexist without forming a singular narrative about power and representation.

The memory here does not move from one coherent phase to another. It accumulates through additions, replacements, and changes in use that the site has seen over centuries. It does not privilege one moment over another and reveals history not as a sequence, but as a field of overlapping narratives, which makes it exceptional in the otherwise very formal and stable spatial framework of Stockholm.

A look at the roots of Stockholm's development shows how the city was established as a gate to Lake Mälaren, controlling the wealth and portraying a power point. This logic of power control has also influenced the spatial framework of the urban fabric, which is shaped through institutions that represent power, cultures and ideologies. Each of these seems to manifest what has been considered important over centuries, representing the most powerful and desired narratives of their times. Societies change, but the spatial framework remains the same onto which shifting cultural and ideological meanings are continuously manifested.

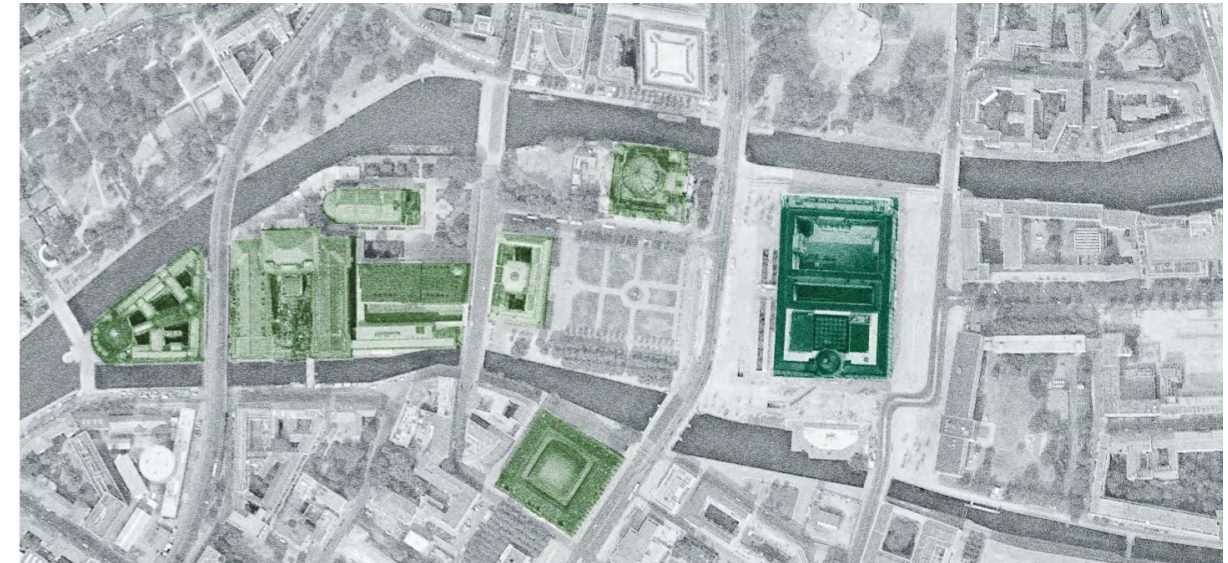
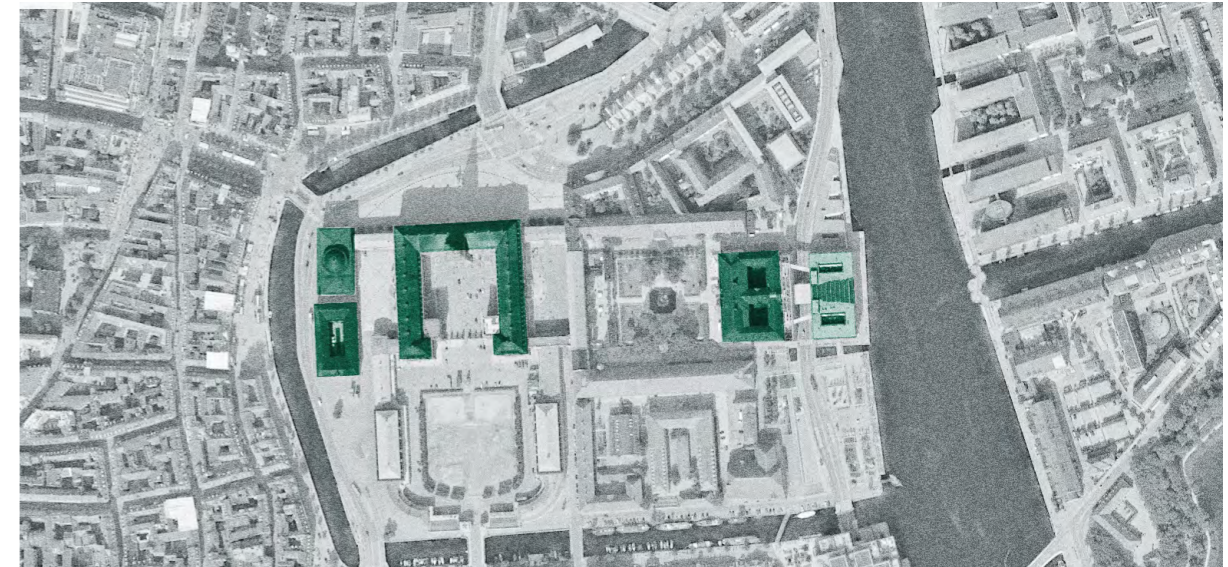
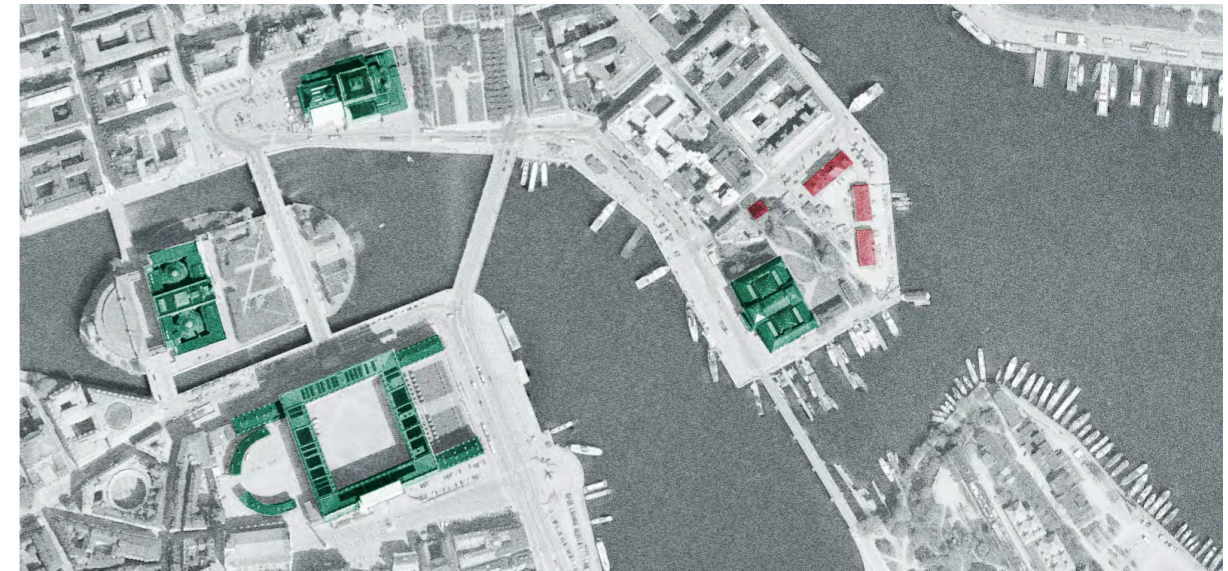


The diagram shows concentration of different important institutions in Stockholm, Copenhagen and Berlin. In Stockholm those are the Nationalmuseum, the Royal Palace, the Parliament and the Opera in green and the buildings of Sillhovstomten in red.

Looking at other cities, this logic becomes more explicit, revealing how **different institutions are used as instruments to reinforce certain histories while others are displaced.**

In Copenhagen, the historical centre brings together the parliament at Christiansborg Palace, the church, the national archive, later extended by Thorvaldsens Museum, and more recently by the Danish Jewish Museum by Daniel Libeskind. Each of these additions reflects what is regarded as important at different moments, yet they remain side by side within the same spatial framework.

In Berlin, something more abrupt appears, a rupture, a narrative being written in real time. Around Museum Island, the Berlin Cathedral, and the Humboldt Forum, the site has undergone successive erasures and reconstructions. Once the seat of the Prussian king, it was replaced by the Palace of the Republic as a manifestation of socialist rule, and later erased again to reconstruct the torn down palace as a way of saying what histories are considered important and presentable and what are not. The reconstruction of the Humboldt Forum demonstrates that cities are not neutral carriers of history, but active sites where political decisions determine which narratives are materialised and which are erased.



## Spatial Conditions

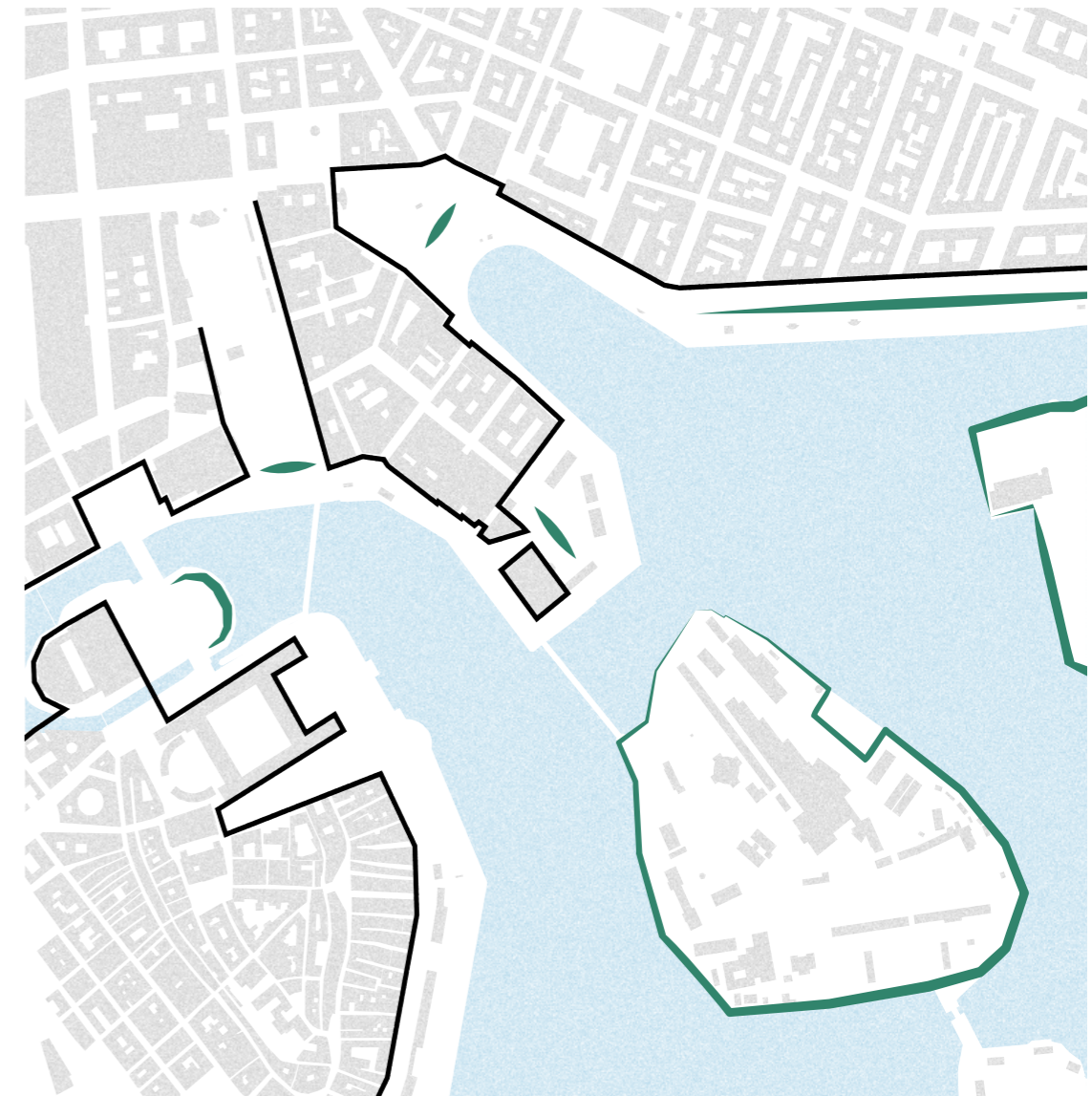
The spatial conditions of the site are characterised through contrasts in scale, importance, function and the relationship of the spaces in between.

Small-scale utilitarian buildings stand in close proximity to large-scale monumental structures. Open spaces are neither fully defined nor entirely residual. This produces a spatial condition that is difficult to categorize. The site does not behave as a coherent urban block, nor as a clearly defined public space. The edges between the monumental surroundings, the museum park and the warehouses create anything but the expected. These elements relate to one another without forming a complete whole.

Because of this, the site reads less as a defined urban object and more as an extension of the waterfront. The boundary between land and water becomes less clear, and the open space of Ladugårdslandsviken seems to extend into it. At the same time Hellstrandska huset establishes a clear edge, marking the transition between the orderly city and the more ambiguous condition of the site and water. And because of this the site functions as a threshold.

**It sits between land and water, between monument and infrastructure, between representation and use. These conditions are not resolved spatially, but held together through proximity.**

The morphology of the site therefore reflects the coexistence of different urban logics without forcing them into alignment.



The black lines define the rigid urban edge, while the green lines mark the softer transition of green spaces into the surrounding water landscape. This contrast strengthens the clarity of the urban boundary, where the city meets the water as a sharp, defined edge against the more continuous natural landscape.

## The Fluid Quay

Historic quayline expansion between 1733 and 2026  
Diagrams redrawn from historical maps of Stockholm.  
Sourced from Stockholmskällan.

The quayline defines the physical edge of the site. Looking at historic maps it becomes clear that it should not be understood as a fixed boundary. It is the result of continuous transformations. Since early 18th century the edge between land and water has been redrawn multiple times, responding to changing needs, technologies, and spatial priorities.

What appears to be a stable condition today is, in fact, only an inheritance from the late 19th century, aligned with the ambition of the times to formalize the city's image. Now the quay line is no longer seen as something to be negotiated, but as something to be maintained in its fixed position.

With the abandonment of the shipping and trading uses of the site, the vast open area between the waters of Ladugårdslandsviken and the warehouses became a sharp boundary. This shift is important because it transformed the role of the waterfront. From an active interface shaped by movement and exchange it transformed into a stable condition characterized by absence of movement and negotiation between land and water. The quay no longer adapted to changing conditions, but reinforced an image of permanence.

Understanding the quay as something characterized by a continuity of interventions, changes of use, functions and needs reveals how the site can be approached. If the edge has been a place of negotiation before, it can be questioned again.

The quay is therefore not only a boundary, but a spatial condition that can be reinterpreted.



## The Nobel Center Failure

The Nobel Center proposal approached the site as a void for a new symbolic image, neglecting the site itself. It followed the same logic that positioned the Nationalmuseum as an icon of its time, attempting to introduce a contemporary equivalent. The project failed as a result of large scale public uprising. People did not like a lot of things, there were a lot of opinions but not so much room for negotiation. The resistance was about everything: the building's aesthetics, the choice of site, distrust in the new institution, the phenomenology of the site and possibly even more. This marks how the urban context is shaped by continuously competing narratives that win or loose, or sometimes sit next to each other in the absence of negotiation. **The failure of the Nobel Center therefore does not leave a void to be filled, but a productive discourse to build on.**

In this context, almost all proposals consistently operated through a similar initial gesture: the erasure of existing buildings on the site in order to construct a "public building of international interest on one of the last available sites within Stockholm's central waterfront area." (Nobelhuset AB, 2013, p. 16). Despite differing architectural intentions, this approach echoes the destructive logic of the 1962 Stockholm City Plan (Stockholms stad, 2020), where the site was also understood as a form of void, ready to be reorganised through large infrastructural interventions and new traffic junctions. In both cases, **what was already there is framed as an absence rather than as a condition, and the site becomes a surface for projection rather than a layered urban situation.**



[2]



[3]



[4]



[5]

Proposals for the Nobel Center Competition by:

- 2, 3 - David Copperfield. Nobelhuset
- 4 - Johan Celsing Arkitektkontor. A Room and a Half
- 5 - Wingårdhs. The Nobel Snowflake.
- 6 - Lacaton & Vassal Architectes. "We believe in..."
- 7 - OMA. Beyond 1210
- 8 - SANAA / Kazuyo Sejima + Ryue Nishizawa. Nobel Sphere
- 9- Alternative option proposed by the Arkitekturupproret Sverige after competition results. Did not participate in the original competition

At the same time, one of the central tensions in the Nobel Center project lies in its claim to publicness. The project was framed as a public building, yet its primary constituency remained the Nobel Foundation and the broader Nobel community. This creates a contradiction: a highly symbolic institution occupying a strategically central site under the banner of publicness, while simultaneously reinforcing a form of access structured by prestige and selection. I wonder if in this sense, the project introduced a renewed "elite filter" onto one of the most significant public waterfront sites in the city centre, rather than expanding its openness.

The ghosts of different proposals remain inscribed on the site's imagination. Visions that attempted to materialise prestige through spheres, gold surfaces, future expansions and acts of territorial claiming. Even in their absence, these images continue to circulate and accumulate, shaping how the site is read and discussed.



[6]



[7]

OMA's proposal as seen above seems to be the only one that integrated Tullhuset into the new programme



[9]



[8]



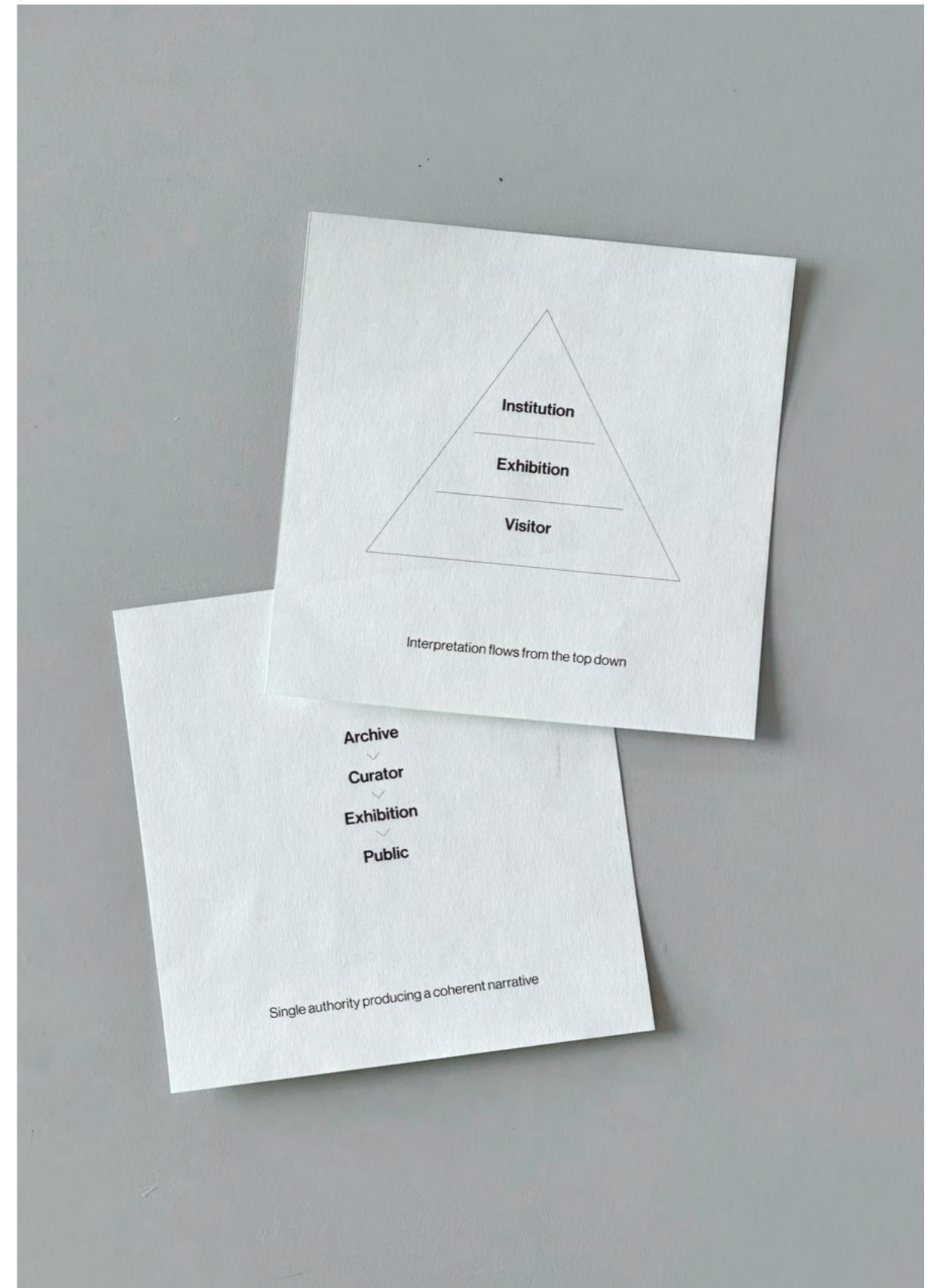
## Destabilizing the Narrative Apparatus

To contextualize the dialectic relationship between *The Decided* (the Nationalmuseum) and *The Negotiation* I looked at the institutional logic of the first, as the new institution needs to operate in direct opposition to it.

National museums typically function as "nation-narration institutes," utilizing master narratives to guarantee a sense of stable, homogeneous identity and consensus (Hegardt 2012, p. 491). It's a place to brand and promote national myths, favorize histories and filter out incompatible narratives. As Bennett (1995) notes, these institutions were historically established with agendas of power representation and the "correction" of public behaviour and taste. In this framework there is always an agenda, even plurality is often "narrativized" and pre-structured by curators before it ever reaches the public.

Bourdieu (2010, p. 226) argues that levels of 'reading' designate hierarchies of readers, therefore a possible way to destabilize those hierarchies could be to organise everyone and every opinion in the same spatial framework, as well as to collapse the distance between the producer and the interpreter. A place where contested ideas could sit side by side, and where production happens in tension and acknowledgement of one another.

This requires a transition from an institution structured 'by curators for viewers' to one organized 'by participants for co-interpreters.' And this also requires a departure from the museum typology altogether. The new institution becomes a site for production, encounter and negotiation between competing views and ideas. In spatial terms, the project departs from the curated gallery format and instead proposes fields of negotiation, spaces designed to be receptive to participation, encounter, assembly, and the productive disorder of plural narratives.

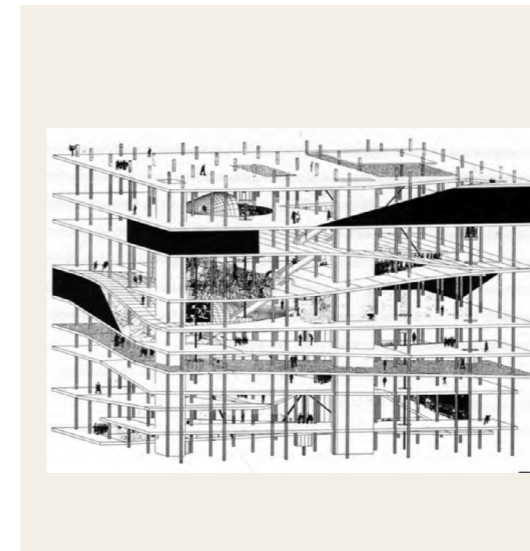


## Friction as Organizational Condition

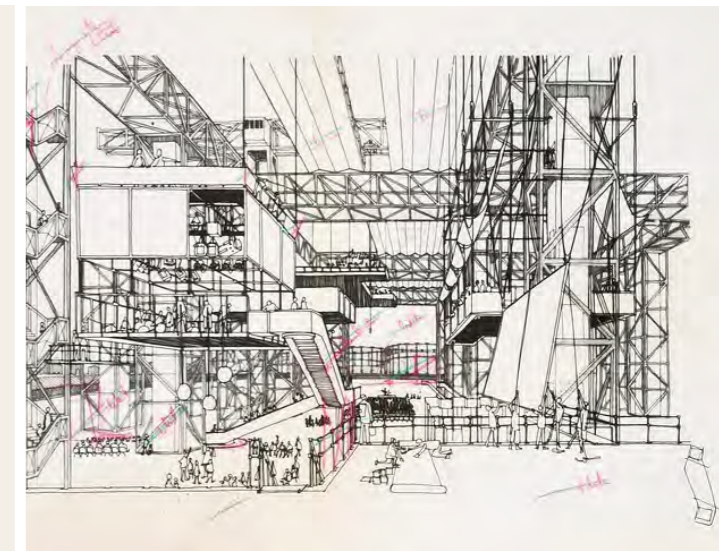
The friction produced within Sillhovstomten is the proximity of prestige with utilitarianism, of monumentalism with small-scales, of historic layers, functions, and people within these elements. I wonder if this unresolved condition could be translated into a programme and architecture? If this new institution is going to operate on the conditions of plurality, acknowledgment of differences and not force them into resolutions, then encounter and condensation become spatial logics. These are ideas that are explored in many of OMA's projects through stacked programming and dynamic coexistence.

In Kunsthal Rotterdam (1992) the building works as an assemblage of incidents and ideas (Van Gerrewy, 2019, p. 274). This is achieved through rethinking internal circulation with ramps and overlaps between spaces, people, the city and the museum. The idea of continued circulation is further explored in the unbuilt Jussieu Two Libraries project (1992). In this project the ground is no longer horizontal. It extends, folds, curves and becomes a continuous surface that guides library visitors through all of the programmatic elements of the building. Although the building extends vertically, it creates a condition that wants to be read as a continuous flat line. This continuity produces encounters that cannot be avoided. One is constantly moving across programs, across atmospheres, across different forms of occupation, free from hierarchical logics and stable representations.

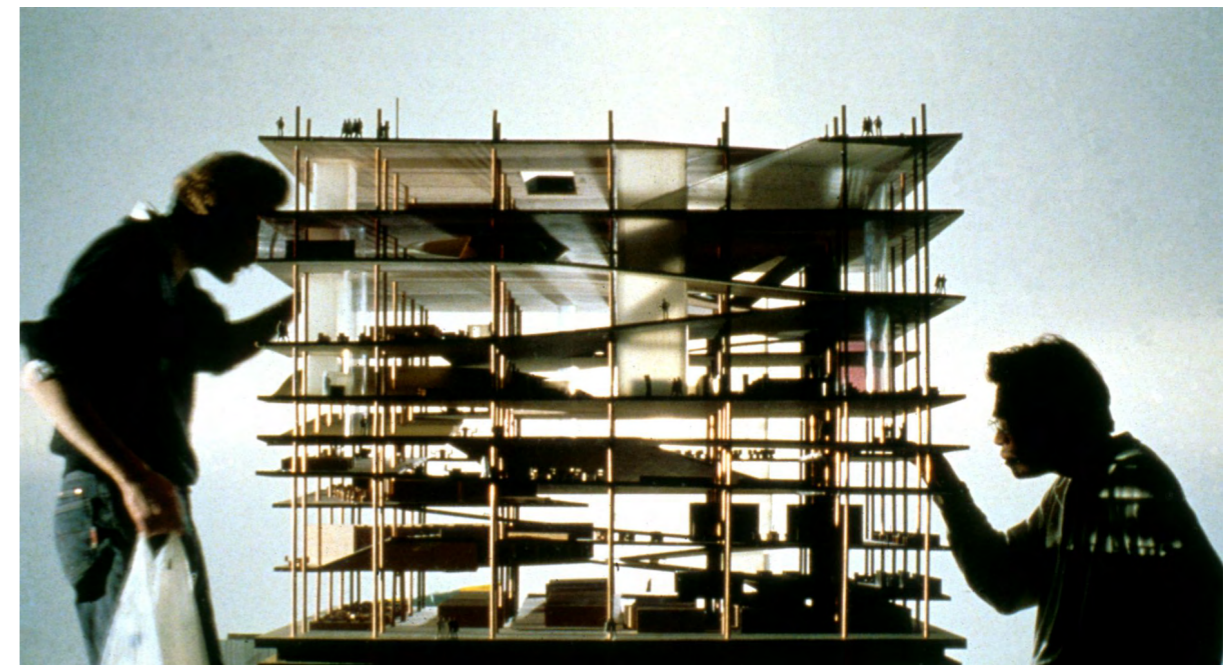
While in these projects architecture is in a static state, in the unbuilt Fun Palace project by Cedric Price, he suggests that architecture itself should not be stable and operate as a framework of change with a continuously adaptable fluid program (Mathews, 2006) Here, nothing seems to be determined and the visitor becomes the protagonist, adapting the programme and architecture to its needs and desires. The Fun Palace creates a condition where different activities are allowed to appear, configure and disappear over time. This temporality and changeability of programs define a new kind of architecture that refuses to stabilize the building into a single state. Here the coexistence of multiple uses shifts the logic from clarity to negotiation.



[10]



[11]



[12]



## Fields, Fluidity and Continuity

As seen in all previous references, continuity becomes a key spatial element when talking about friction as an organisational condition. This is because these projects refuse the orthodox logic of separation in architecture and instead rely on continuity and unobstructed movement through space. In the Jussieu Two Libraries, the floor bends and connects different levels. This shifts the understanding of the ground from a horizontal slab to a wider field.

The continuous movement through overlapping fields is further explored in the Bahrain Car Parks for Pearl Path project (2023) by Christian Kerez. Here, the slabs bend and slope, merge into each other, and create a continuous movement. Because of the programme as a parking facility, the building is liberated from any skin and presents itself simply as the continuity of the street ground. This unveils the true beauty of the bending and merging slabs, which carry a surprising lightness despite being made of heavy concrete.

Cars are treated as moving bodies within a spatial field that continuously shifts, creating not only spaces for parking, but also spaces for walking, running, and lingering. Cars are either parked or moving, the proximity between active and passive disappears. The building is in a continuous transitional stage, not defined by a fixed state, but rather by an ongoing process. This becomes the primary organiser of space, allowing different states of being to coexist. This project has informed and inspired me greatly in my search for fluidity and movement.



[16]



[17]

[18]



## Framing

The coexistence of different histories, scales, and spatial logics makes me wonder what kind of institution can give form to that multiplicity. How can it be informed by it and how can it manifest pluralities?

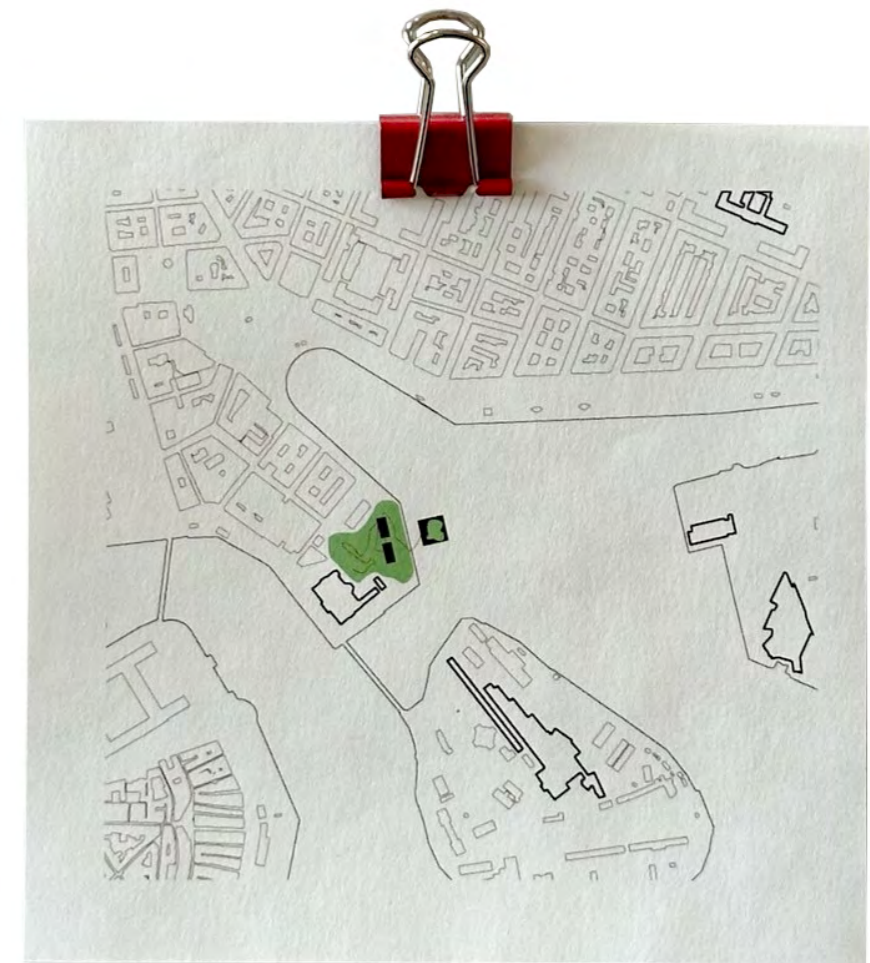
What comes clear from the failure of the Nobelhuset project is a realization that representation can no longer be about singular clarity. It is about pluralities and making diverse voices heard. If friction is the defining condition of the site, then the intervention must be an architectural manifestation of that tension. The proposal should operate through an organizational friction of spaces and activities, treating the coexistence of contradictory narratives not as a problem to be solved but as the basis for a new institutional form.

The unusual edges of the site and its collective image should be protected, maybe even accelerated through recognition and dialogue with them. The site itself should become truly open and public, bringing back movement and re-establishing a negotiation with the water.

Characterized by openness and plasticity, the proposal should treat water not as a border, but as another medium to reflect, distort, and multiply the city into simultaneous readings.

A move forward could be through stepping onto the water, a gesture to recognize the integrity of the site, to make the area a desired place to be, to give it back to people and use it as a threshold between the Nationalmuseum and the new institution. Building directly onto the water could become the move that manifests the liberation of the site, moving away from the ghosts that are haunting it.

Rather than leaving the land as a passive remnant, extending the museum park would form an oasis, sheltered by the new institution, where land, water, and architecture would be held in a continuous negotiation.

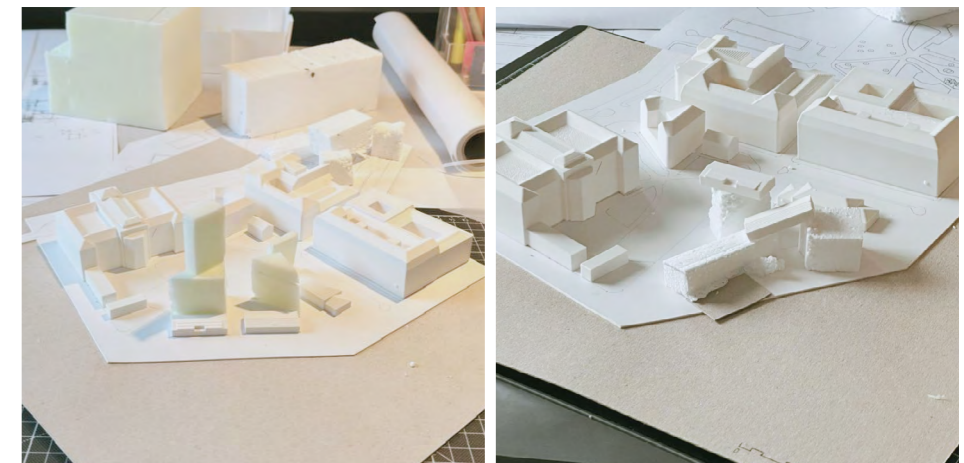
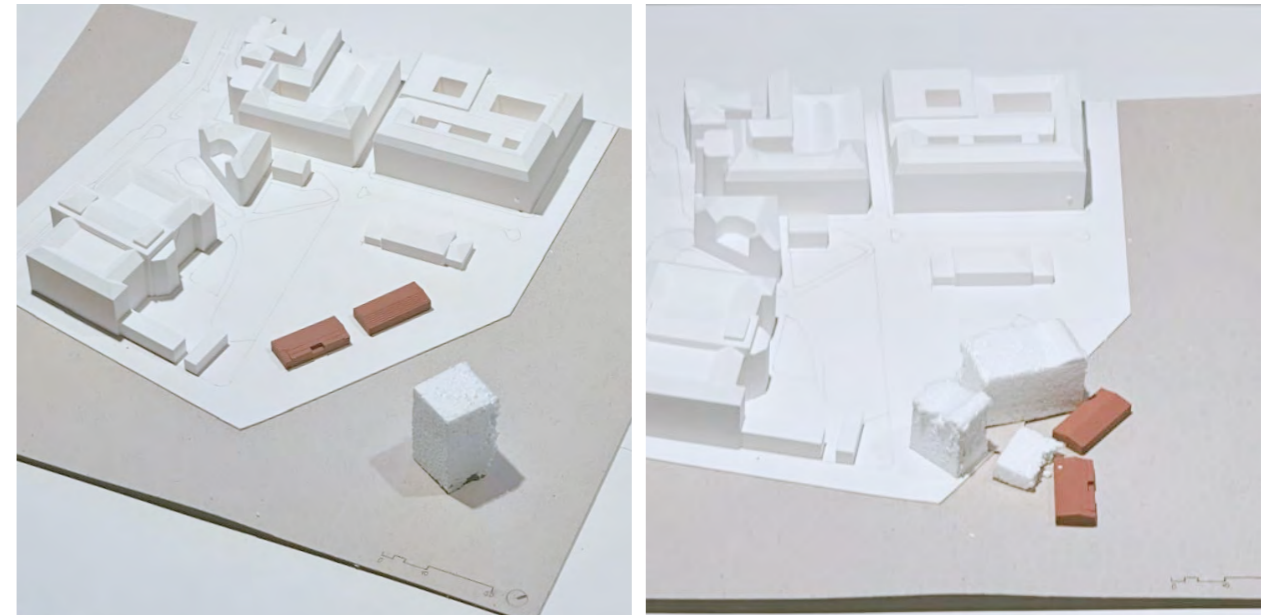




## In Search of a Spatial Strategy

Throughout the entire process, models and sketches have been my main tools for exploration. I have tried different scenarios and spatial configurations for the site. My decisions for the final project have been informed not in the isolation of theoretical frameworks, but rather in constant attempts to test and argue for those strategies.

The strategies ranged from intervening between the existing fabric, deconstructing and reconstructing a new picture, breaking the quay line and accelerating the unusual edges, to simply stepping aside from it. All of these were results of different readings and priorities of the site. Stepping aside seemed to be the most reasonable and strong position to take: it acknowledged the site most honestly, and sent the strongest signal for coexistence and negotiation.



## A Tower or a Platform?

Moving forward with the idea of stepping onto the water, I kept wondering whether this new institution should be horizontal, blending with the water, staying humble in presence, or the opposite. Should it be a tower, shielding the site, giving the public a vantage point from above to witness its thresholds and edges, feeling more institutional and signaling a stronger discourse with the Nationalmuseum?

There was something about the wavy form of the horizontal iterations that felt democratic and right. But the stronger dialogue with the Nationalmuseum and the sheltered quality of the tower also felt right. Neither could be dismissed.

This led me to ask how these qualities could be merged into one. How bent forms could be stacked vertically, and how two logics could support one another while still remaining distinct.



The combination of bending and wavy slabs opened the possibility of exploring how continuous movement can be organized, how seamless or how dramatic the transition from one surface to another could be.

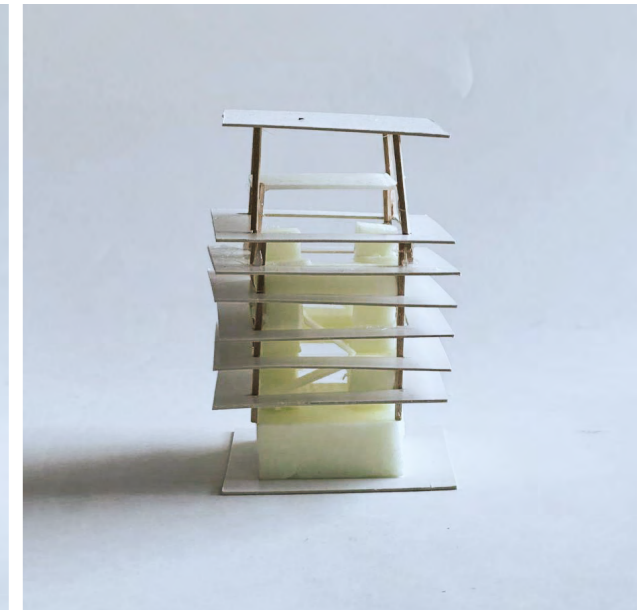
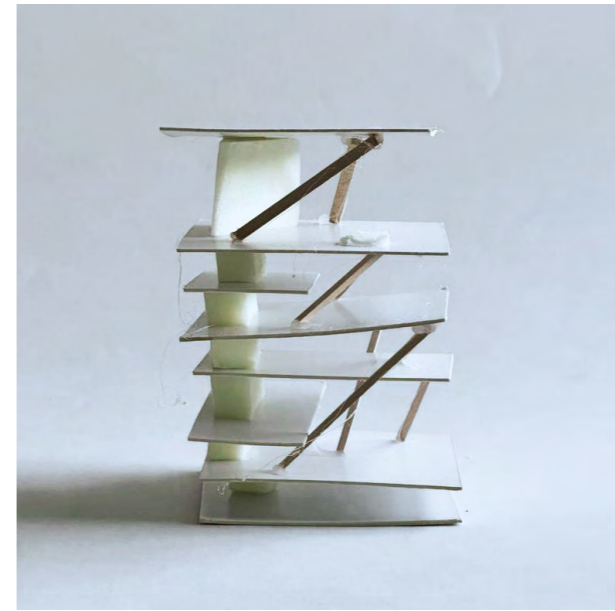
And if this becomes the threshold between the water and the new institution, how can vertical movement within the tower continue this logic of fluidity and non-rigid movement? Should it have irregular paths crossing from one side to another? Or floating horizontal slabs that resist any sense of strict vertical stacking?



## Internal Organization

A tower can have many different spatial organizations internally. I tested three options to examine how different strategies could better accommodate or dictate programme elements. One strategy would be floors stacked on top of each other through a common core, leaving more flexibility and versatility for any programmatic intent. Another was creating a core of structurally load-bearing elements that would also provide different openings and visual connections, while the space around it would become structurally independent. And finally, a third strategy where the building would be a space frame system loaded with independent entities housing different functions, and the spaces in between would become the places of movement and encounter.

While the latter two seemed spatially rich in the experience they would provide, the first option (a structural core) seemed the most logical and open to programmatic interpretation and change, particularly when combined with different types of floor slabs and platforms.



## The Institutional Framework

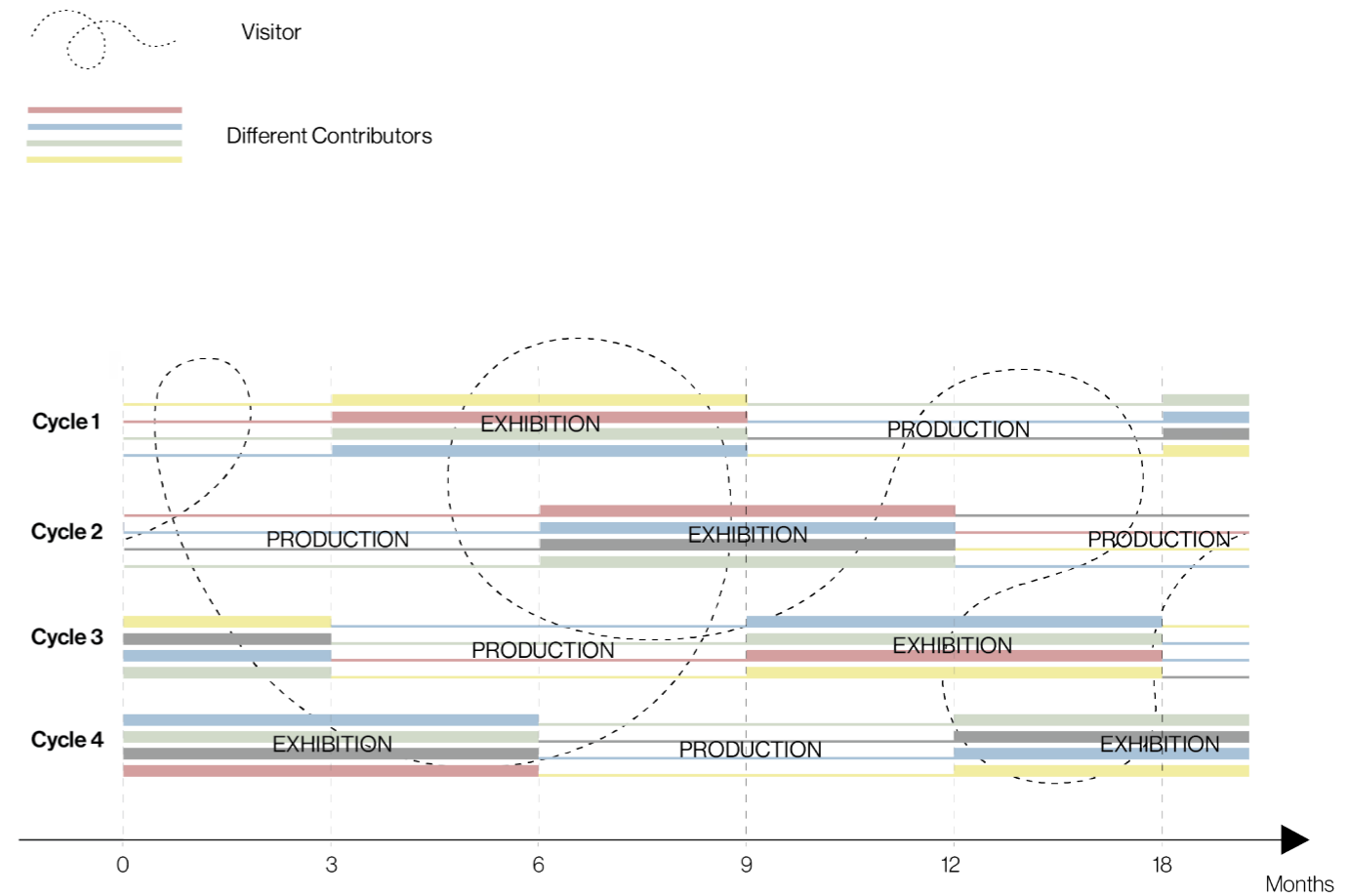
While trying out different variations for the spatial and organisational logics through models and sketches, I have also asked myself how the program of this new institution would work, how different configurations could assist, and sometimes direct to specific ways of operating. What was clear after the more theoretical work was that the institution should not be a container of fixed cultural positions, but should become a site of negotiation between competing narratives that shape different views and approaches to culture production. In contrast to the authoritative neutrality, I envisioned an institution where society moves away from being observers into being participants in shaping narratives.

This led me to consider a rotating residency model that forces diverse collaborators of artistic and socio-political voices into a prolonged coexistence. The central element of the new institution becomes its permanent state in "mid-process". This aims to center the institution from a place of display into fields of encounter and production, with display being only one of many layers of communication.

As one residency cycle concludes and its results unfold across the exhibition, a new cycle of production begins simultaneously. This creates an overlap that aims to position the institution as unresolved and undecided. Through open access days and shared social layers the distinction between the producer and the public becomes blurred. It transforms the act of culture-making and engagement into a continuous negotiation of spaces, visibility, and collective labor.

Programme Diagram

Simultaneously four production cycles unfold, each involving different contributors and finishing with an exhibition after six months period. Throughout this period, continuous encounters between the cycles keep the institution in a constant state of "mid-process."



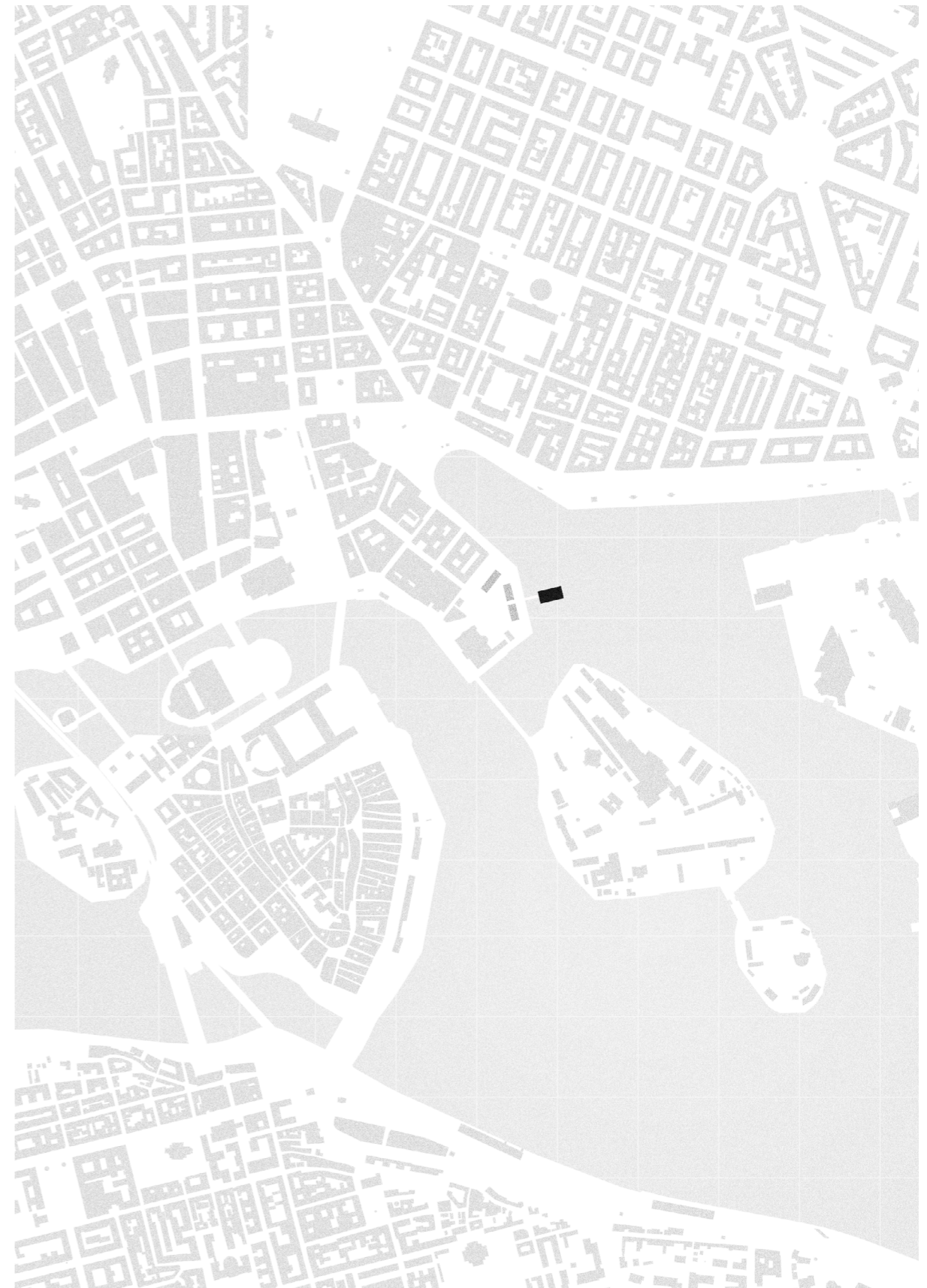


## The Negotiation Stack

The institution can be understood as a Negotiation Stack: a vertical arrangement of interconnected fields in which different forms of cultural production, discussion, making, learning, and exhibition coexist within a shared spatial framework. These elements do not relate to one another through hierarchical relationships. Different layers of public interaction and cultural production are positioned in close proximity and overlap. Workshops, studios, discourse rooms, exhibitions, and public circulation become stacked fields of encounter, continuously negotiating their relationships through visual, acoustic, and physical connections.

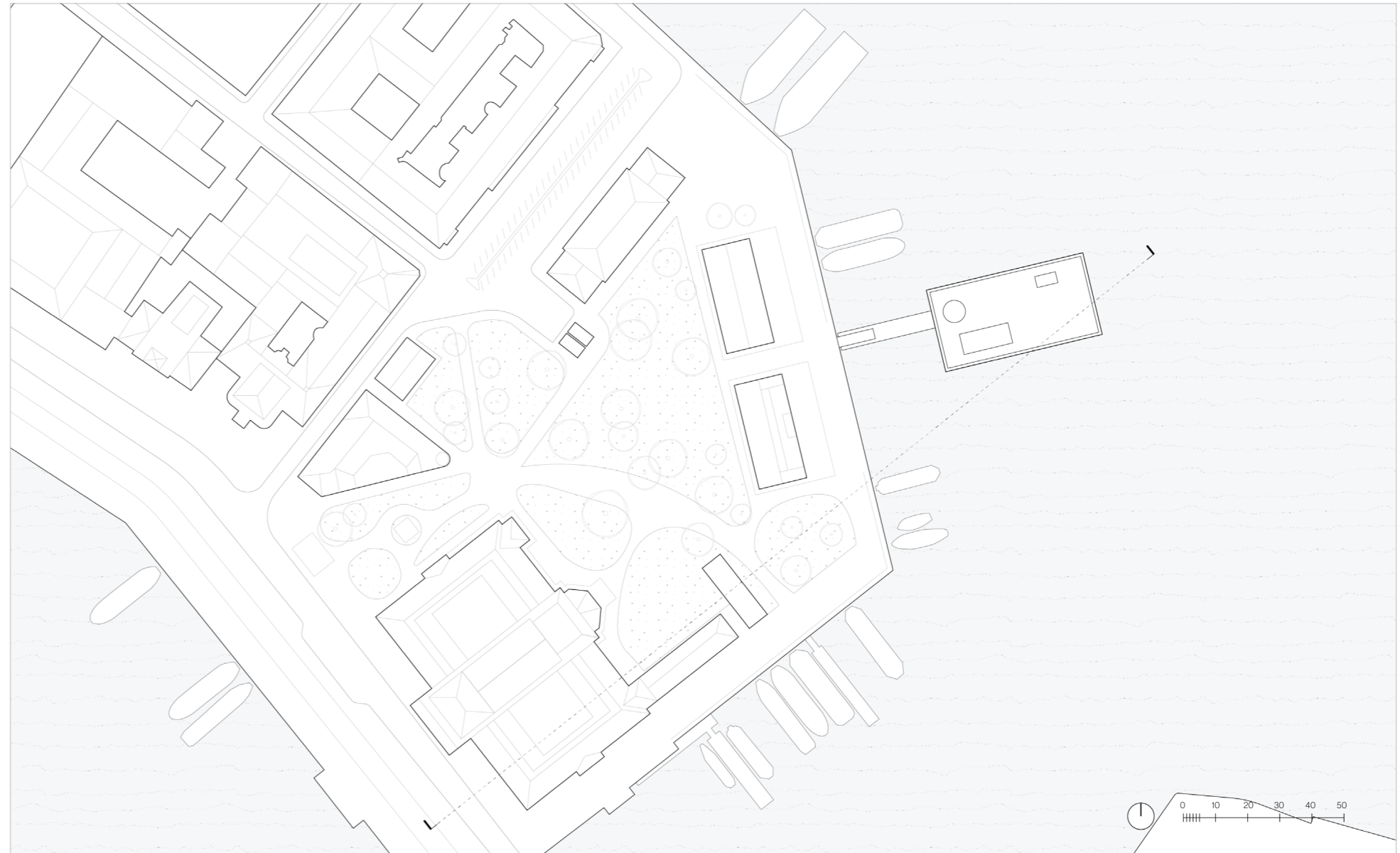
In this sense, I try to move away from the logic of a unified, authoritative composition and transform the building into **a spatial framework in which cultural meanings are continuously produced, challenged and renegotiated in real time.**

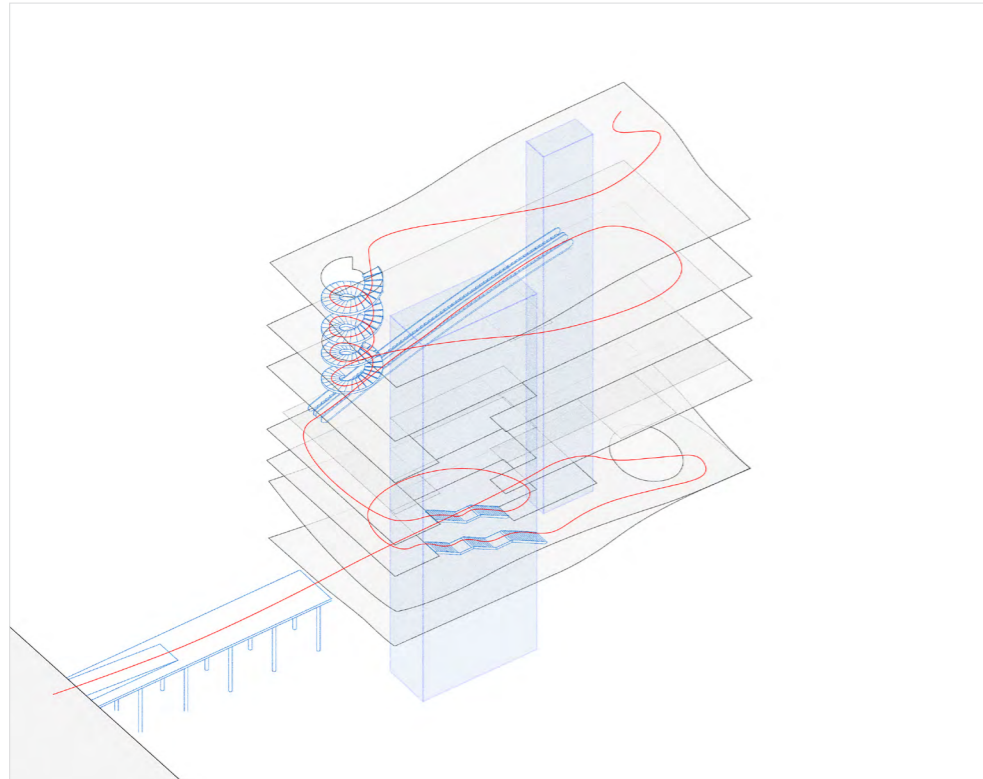
Unlike a traditional museum, it is not primarily concerned with collecting, preserving, or presenting established narratives. Unlike a public library, its central activity is not the passive storage and distribution of knowledge. Unlike Kulturhuset, it resists becoming a mere venue for cultural consumption and pre-programmed events. Unlike Cedric Price's Fun Palace, it does not seek complete indeterminacy or the continuous, literal reconfiguration of the architecture itself.



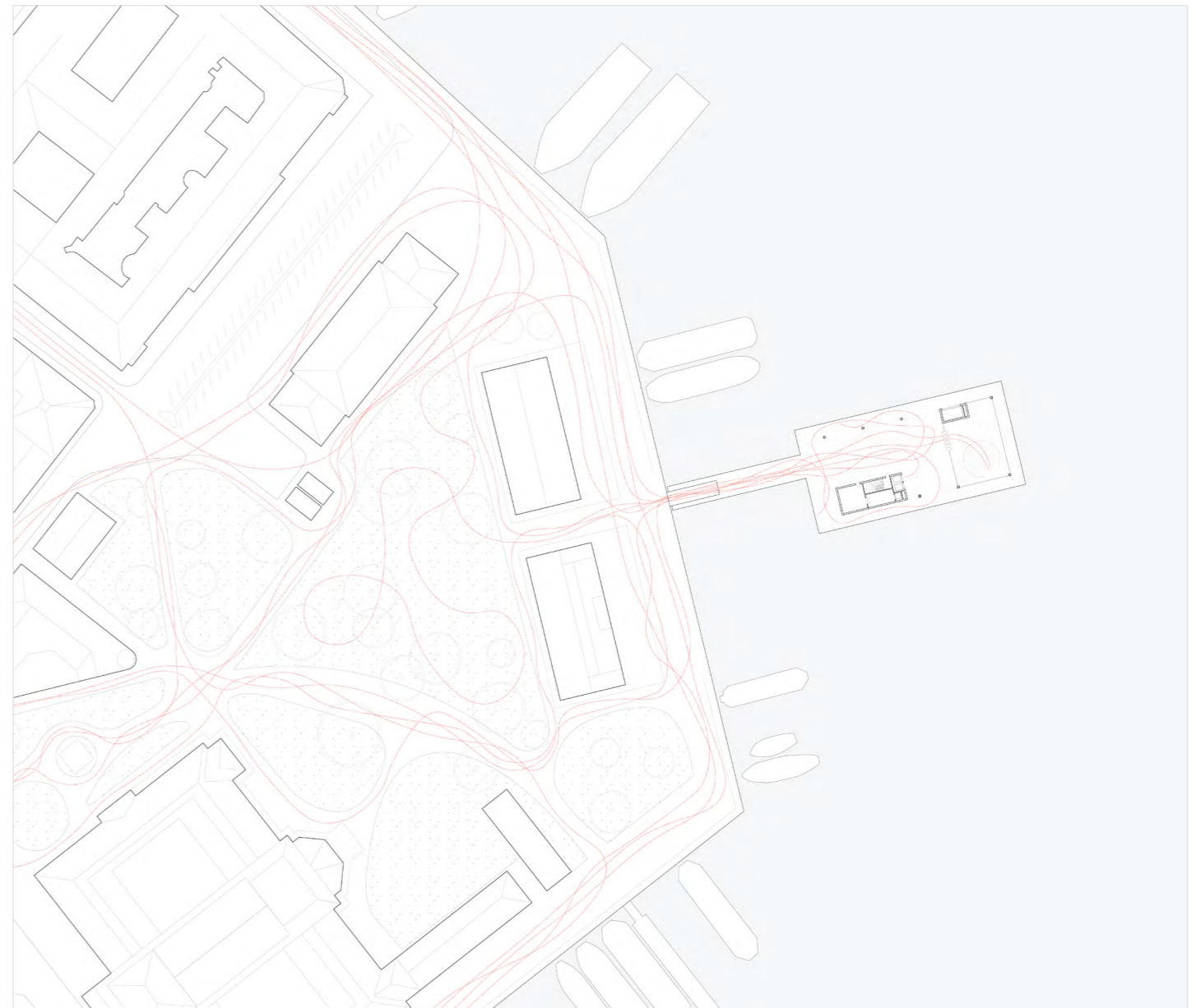
The institution emphasises the **tension between production and exhibition**. Cultural production is not concealed behind polished, finished outputs. It is intentionally made visible, while the act of exhibition becomes just one moment within a larger process of making, discussion, and reinterpretation.

The project's positioning behind the Nationalmuseum is crucial to this logic. It establishes a complementary and at the same time contrasting relationship. **If the Nationalmuseum represents the formal, stable framework of what has already been culturally validated and collected by power, the Negotiation Stack manifests the opposite.** It functions as a field within the city, where cultural meanings are never finalized, remain permanently open, contested and under construction.





Primary movement diagram for visitors within the building



Site Section



## Programme

The program of the building is stacked vertically with different points of connection and movement. Different program elements negotiate with each other through visual and acoustic connections.

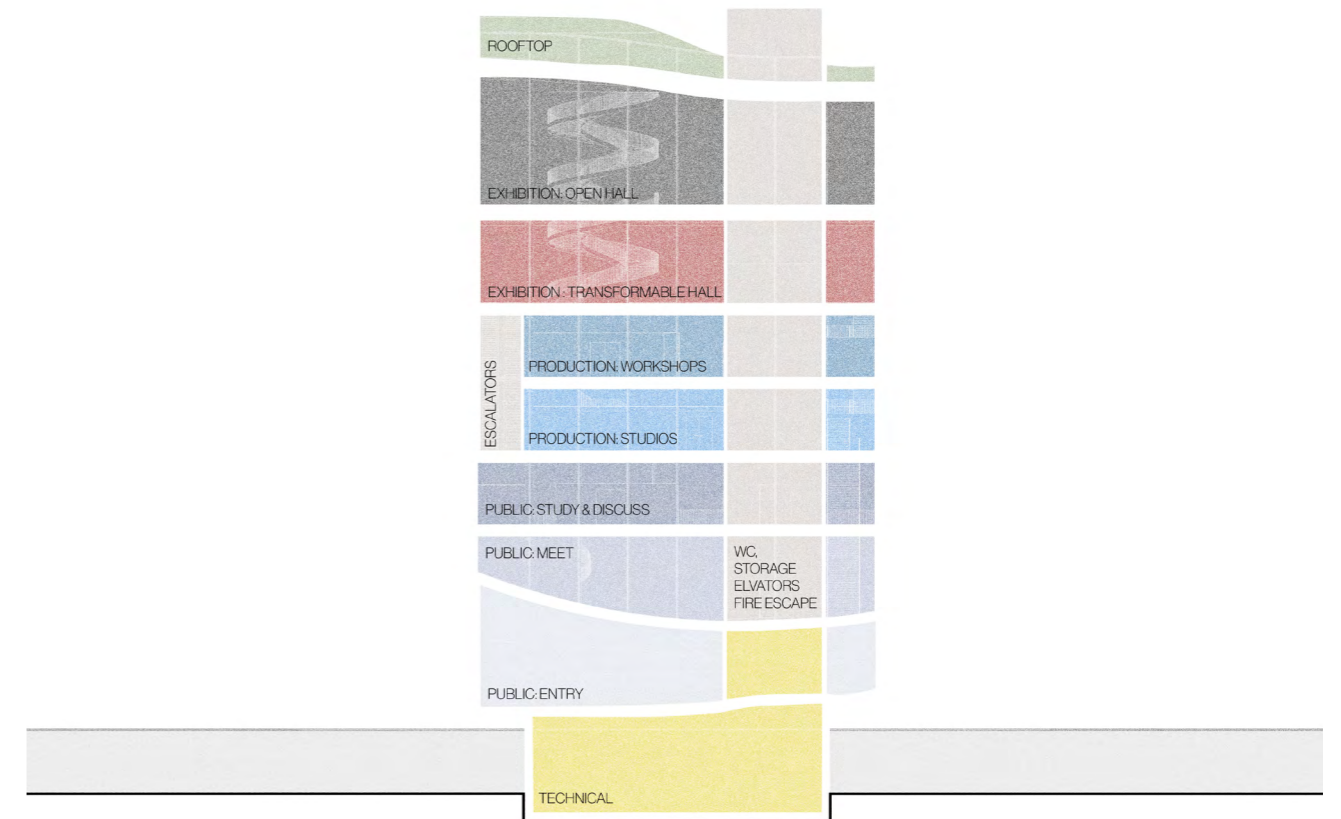
The middle of the building is the productive area, enclosed by public movement around it.

On the first level, a pier connects the building with the land. Here, the floor gently bends and folds to bring the public realm inside. This landscape continues inside the building on the second level, where it becomes a place to sit, talk, or pass through.

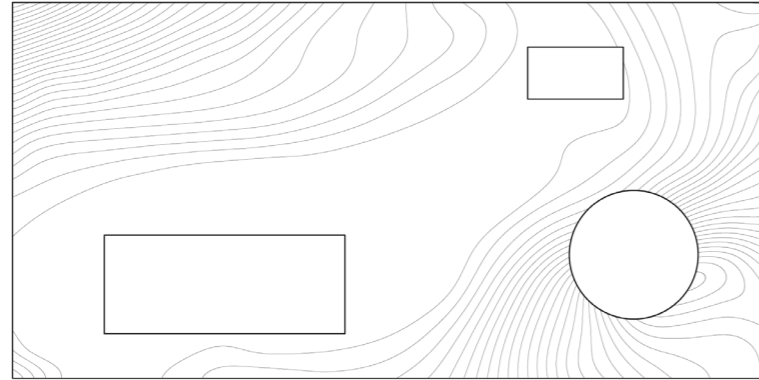
Above this, on the second floor, meeting and discussion rooms are suspended over the public. These are spaces of debate and discourse, acoustically connected to the upper productive floor.

The building's productive core is divided into two levels: one for studios and one for workshops.

Above these are two levels of display, the lower of which is visually and acoustically connected to the workshops. Access to these exhibition spaces is via a low-grade escalator that passes through the workshops to facilitate overlaps and connections. This isn't meant to force an interaction, but to acknowledge that different activities of thinking, making, and looking are all part of the same collective environment.



Topographies



First floor topography

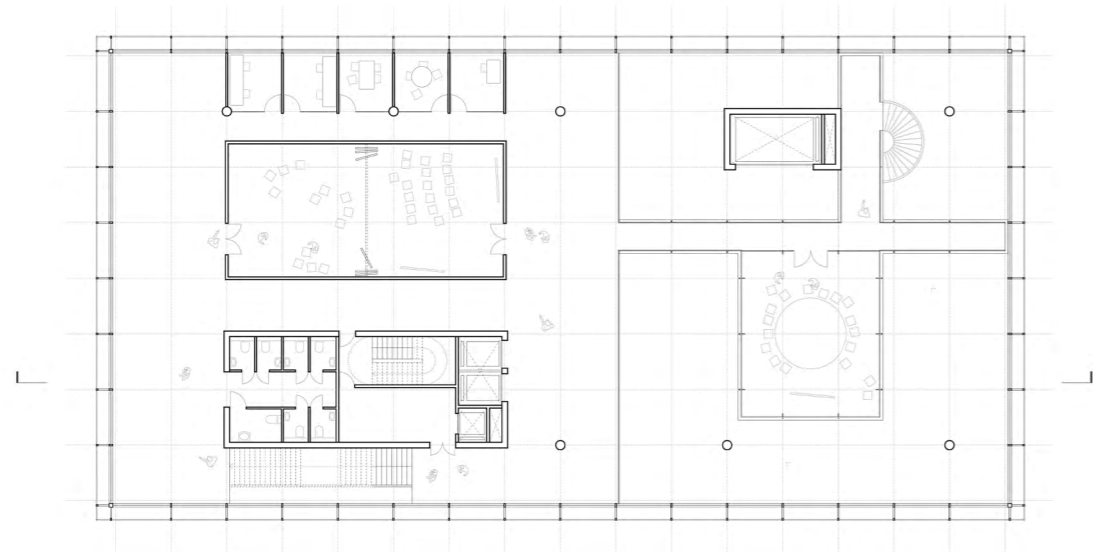


Ground floor topography



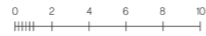
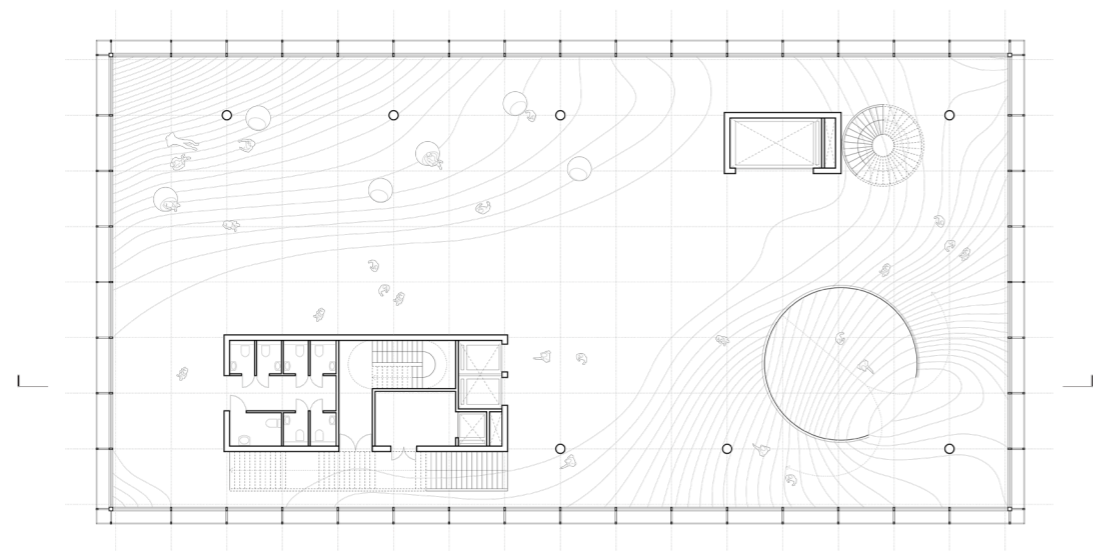
SECOND FLOOR

DISCUSS



FIRST FLOOR

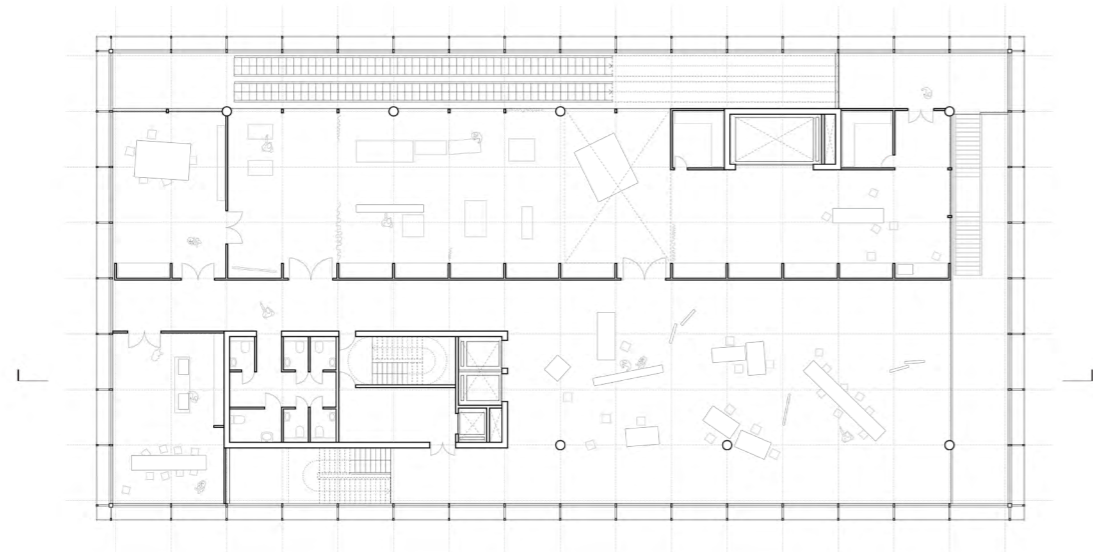
MEET



The Entrance on the ground floor

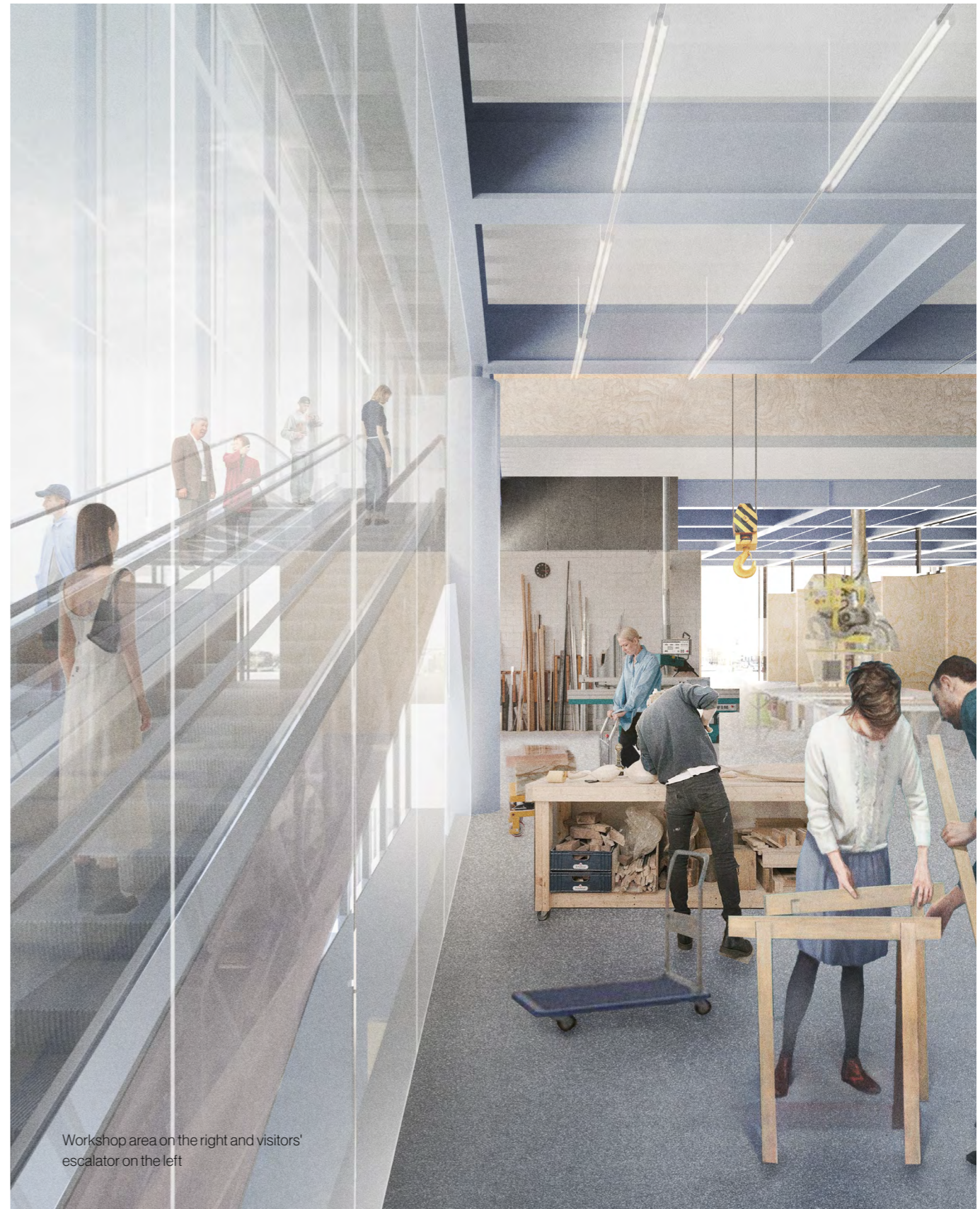
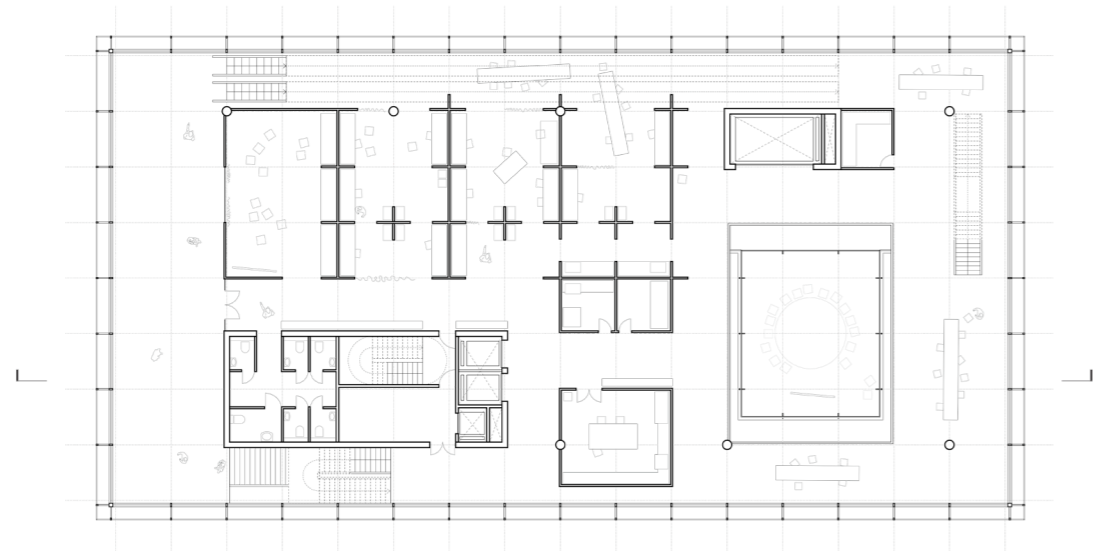
FOURTH FLOOR

PRODUCTION 2



THIRD FLOOR

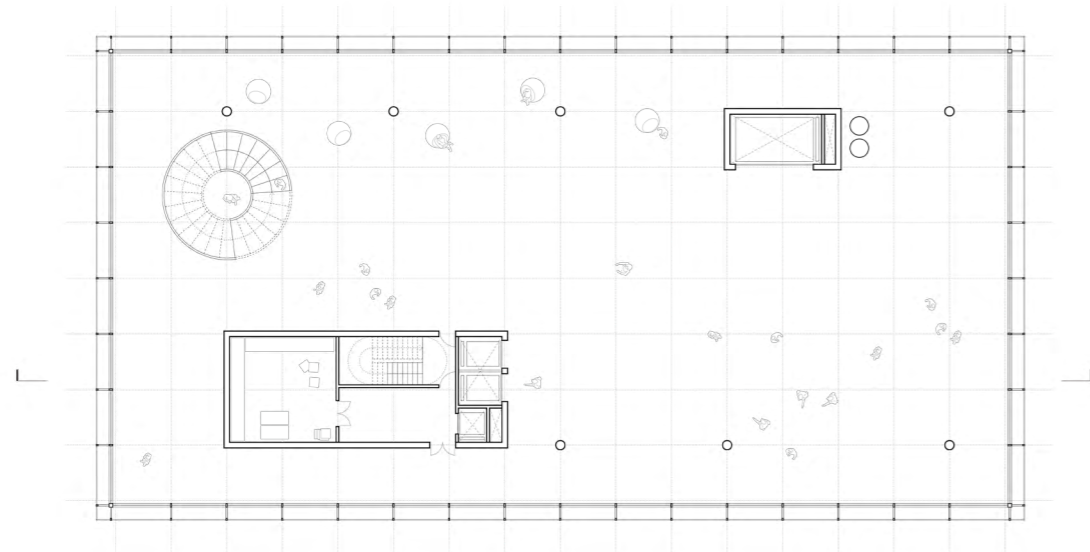
PRODUCTION 1



Workshop area on the right and visitors' escalator on the left

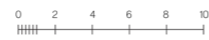
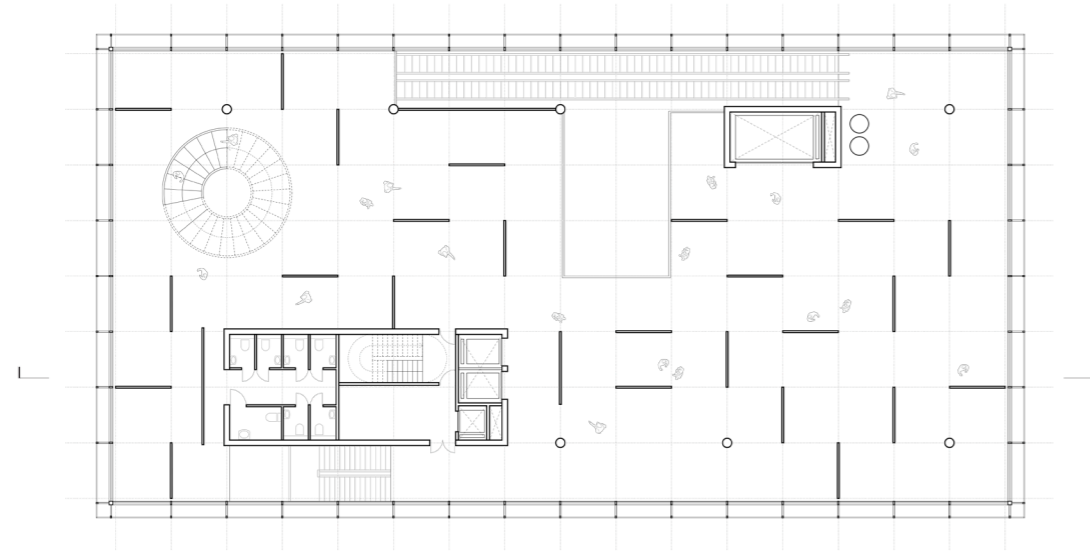
SIXTH FLOOR

EXHIBITION

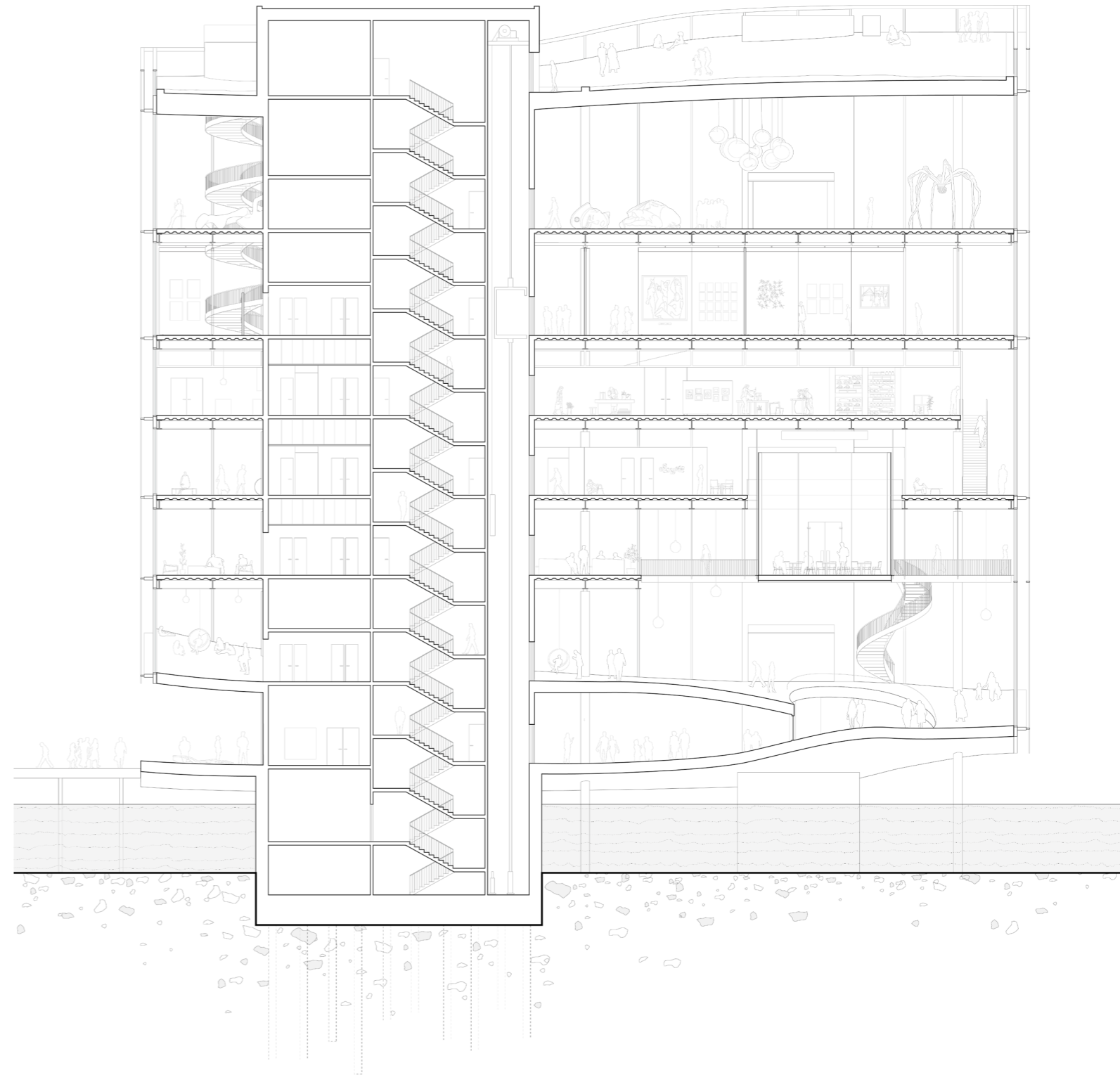
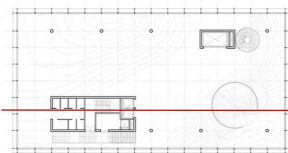
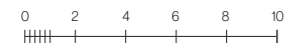


FIFTH FLOOR

EXHIBITION



Movable walls of the Exhibition Hall



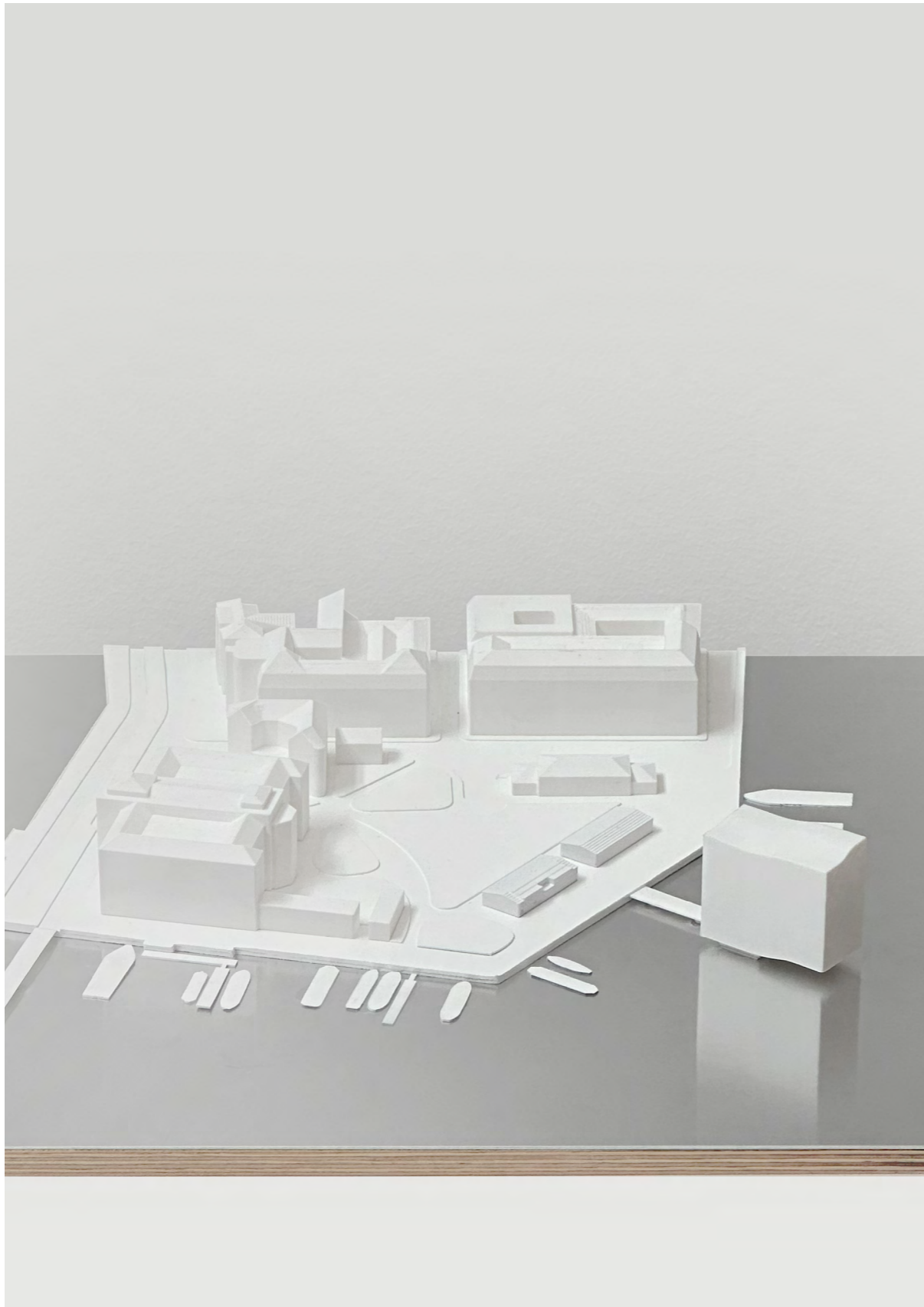
## Images

It's a cold winter afternoon in Stockholm. Norrström's frozen surface reflects the muted colours of the city. Centered between the National Museum and Hotel Lydmar, the Negotiation Stack emerges from the gloomy winter tones. The transparent facade, which softly reveals the life, structure and workings behind it, glows in the soft afternoon light.



It's a bright summer evening in Stockholm. The calm waters of Ladugårdslandsviken reflect the transparent volume of the Negotiation Stack. Light becomes a subtle expression of programme behind the transparent facade of the building, revealing different layers of the structure. Some spaces glow with a warm, gentle illumination, suggesting moments of reflection and conversation, others are more brightly drenched in light that enables activity and production. Looking at it through the heated summer evening haze, the building appears as a composition of distinct, however closely entangled areas, housing different ecosystems, whose atmospheres are mirrored on the sparkling surface of the body of water below.







## Reflections

During this project, I found it difficult to connect abstract theory with architectural form. At first, I tried to build a strong theoretical foundation through writing, but many of my early texts ended up feeling separate from the actual project and the site. As I worked, drawing, modelling, and testing spatial situations through discussions guided me more than relying solely on writing. For this reason, the "Navigations" chapter became important to me not as a set of conclusions, but as a collection of references that guided the design process and pointed toward new directions for experimentation.

The process involved a great deal of hesitation and constant changes in research questions, programs, forms, organization, and spatial strategy. At times this was frustrating, especially when ideas that initially seemed convincing had to be reconsidered. Looking back, I see that this instability was necessary for the work to develop. Many decisions only began to make sense after being tested through drawings and models. The project therefore grew less from directly translating theory into form and more from an ongoing exchange between thinking, discussing, and making.

Initially, I had no intention of engaging with broader political and institutional critique, but these became questions I could not avoid. I kept asking myself what it takes for architecture to challenge the status quo, and how it can affect public conversations. I moved back and forth between making a statement and choosing a more subtle approach. The sensitive nature of the site and its importance to Sweden made me question whether my unfamiliarity with all the nuances of the debate was a weakness or a potential strength. This made me realize that, while I may not share the same historical or political attachments to the site, my own values and intentions inevitably shaped how I approached and interpreted the site. Looking back, I can see how my reading of the site was coloured by a palette that would best support my own proposal.

Engaging with such an important site in central Stockholm also forced me to confront the hierarchies tied to institution-making. I found myself caught in the paradox of trying to program an institution that does not wish to be an institution. I wondered how to design for plurality and spontaneity without forcing those concepts into rigid spatial forms, or into artificially fluid layouts. This dilemma was further complicated by the references I looked to for guidance. Many of these well-known, celebrated projects rely on the very top-down decision-making hierarchies that my project sought to dismantle.

I also realized how much the scale and symbolic meaning of the site affected my decisions. As I often felt overwhelmed by the project's ambition, I tried taking directions that could completely shift its scale. At the same time, the monumental surroundings seem to have pushed me toward engaging with them in a similar tone. The project's ultimate scale and proportions appear to establish a certain hierarchy. Although this conflicts with the way I tried to position the institution, it may also reflect how architecture is inevitably shaped by existing power structures and unspoken cultural expectations surrounding them.

Working alone on a project focused on diversity and participation revealed another tension. Although the proposal argues for openness and plurality, most decisions were still made by me in a very top-down manner. This made me question architect's role, which can easily become authoritative and shaped by personal biases. Because of this, I gradually started to see the project less as a final answer and more as a way to test different ideas and positions that emerged throughout the process. Instead of resolving my initial questions, the project often left me disoriented by the new questions that arose with every decision. This experience reminded me of the necessity of collective thinking in architecture, as in that case, project outcomes would be reached through negotiation of perspectives rather than from an impossibly neutral position of one.

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