

Spatial Dialogue

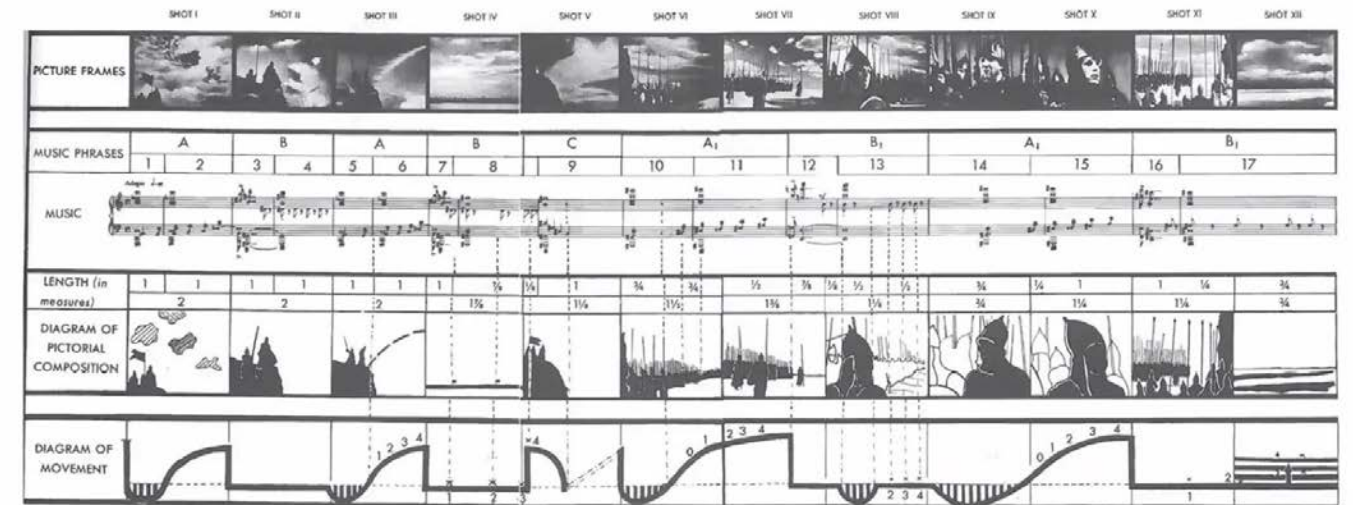
Narrative as an Architectural Generator

Kalani Mah & Zain Edeen Elwakil

Spatial Dialogue

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Spatial Dialogue aims to exemplify how narrative can be a program for architectural and spatial sequencing. Storytelling is universal because it is relatable. One person's journey can give insight and help another which is an integral part of creating and forming social interaction. Artistic mediums become the vehicles by which these stories are communicated. Through a variety of different art forms, artists find their creative identities, and express their voice to their audience. This thesis seeks to show that the transposition of narrative from poetic and musical works is a viable design process that can yield new spatial conditions and typologies. However, unlike drawing, notation goes beyond the threshold of visual representation of arts and is based on a shared assemblage of interpretation. The use of a notational system allows the interpretation of the works to be mapped to specific design elements that will be used to create the atmospheric emotional conditions present in the works themselves. The narrative, or emotional core of the piece becomes the generative root of architectural form. It investigates the relationship between architecture and narrative, challenging the traditional process of architectural design and arguing that the relationship between architecture and narrative art can lend itself to the development of new spatial experiences and formal typologies.

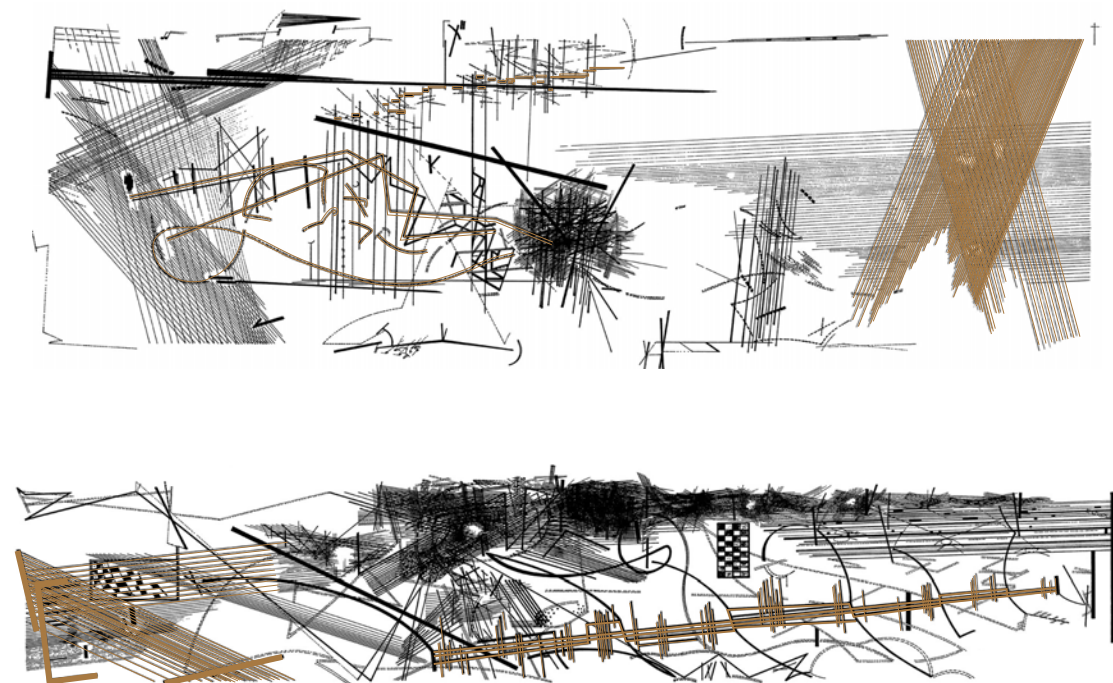


Sergei Eisenstein. *Alexander Nevsky Diagrams*, 1947.

Background

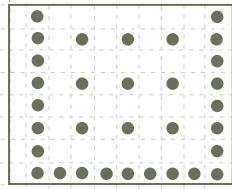
Filmmaker Sergei Eistentien evaluates the process and method of creating an image, a scene, and the sequential scenes in film and how they all exist as something not fixed, but rather unfold before the senses of the audience. His analysis includes the development of a notational system that allows a visual expression of an interpretation of the work.

Architecturally speaking, Daniel Libeskin's Chamber Works are a collection of drawings that attempt to represent the graphic relationship between music and architectural thinking - a notational expression of space.

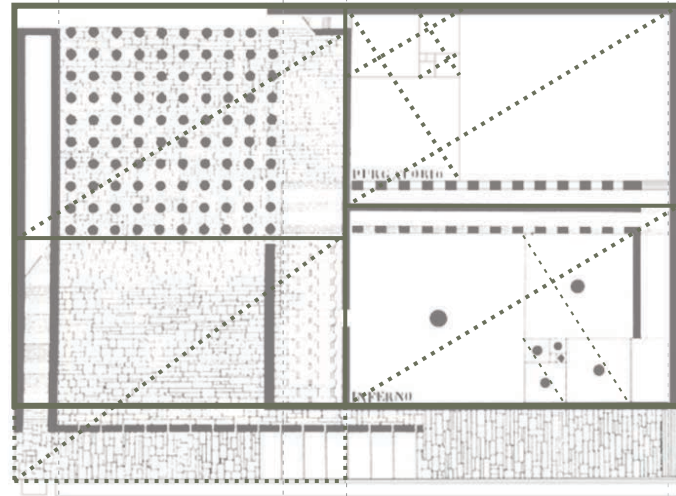
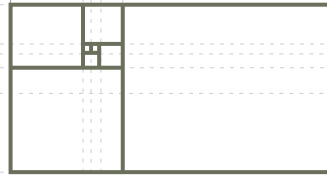


Daniel Libeskind, *Chamber Works*, 1983

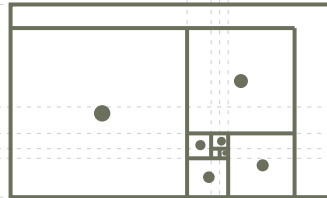
04 Paradise - 33 glass columns for light and an ethereal feel, representing pure souls



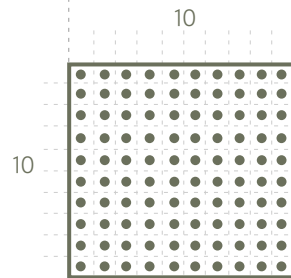
03 Purgatory - Divided by the golden ratio, again with 7 square divisions



02 Inferno - Follows the golden ratio with 7 recursive divisions, 7 symbolically standing for completeness



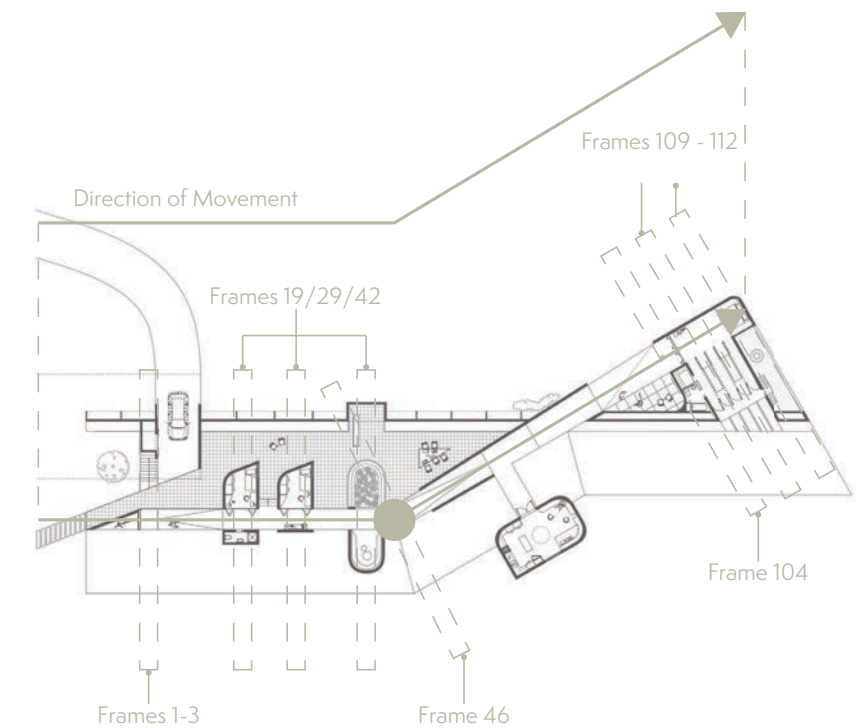
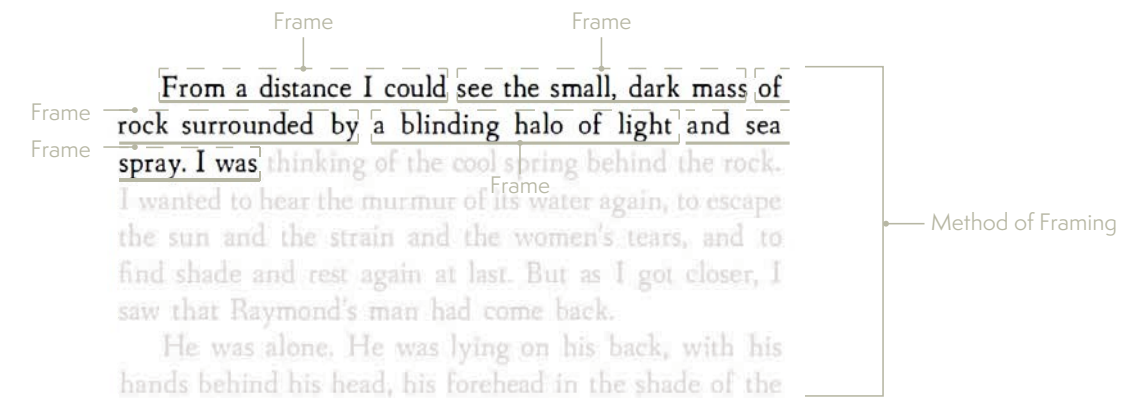
01 Courtyard - columns constructed on a perfect 10 x 10 grid for 100 cantos in the Divine Comedy



Giuseppe Terragni, *Danteum*, 1938

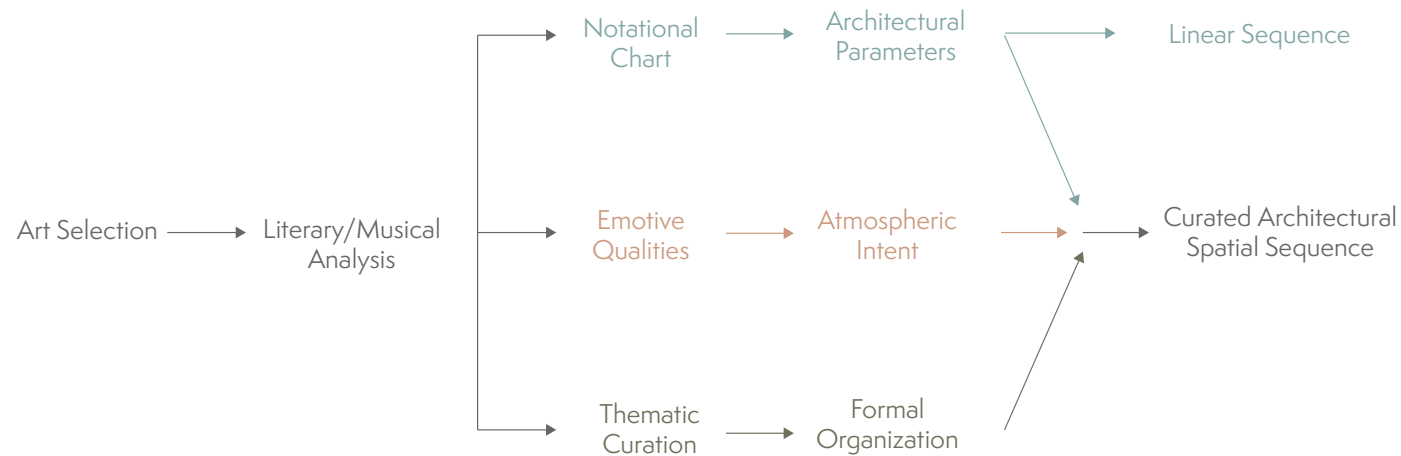
Precedents

Architectural works that also evaluate the relationship between literary narrative and space include Terragni's *Danteum*, and Matthew Celmer's *Narrative Homes*. The *Danteum* is a recollection of the poetic journey, the *Divine Comedy*, in which the architectural features such as the columns have poetic meanings that are represented through not only scale but material. Matthew Celmer's *Narrative Homes* is an ongoing research project that delves into the relationship between novels and architecture, specifically in regards to storytelling and narrative sequencing within a domestic setting.



- Frames 1-3 — — — - Start of movement, mentions the Bungalow, designated the apartment loft in plan.
- Frames 19/29/42 — — — — Foreshadowing of the location at which the murder is committed, designates bedroom locations, highlighting views of where the murder will be committed.
- Frame 46 — — — — Main character sees the victim for the first time, designates a shift in plan orientation and movement through the whole scheme.
- Frame 104 — — — — Moment of murder, designates location of the master bedroom
- Frames 109 - 112 — — — — More shots fired (5), designated by the 5 doors leading out of the master bedroom.

Matthew Celmer, *Narrative Homes*, 2018



The Method

In order to begin our design inquiry, a methodology was introduced to allow our design to develop through a variety of influencing metrics. The selection of the pieces is followed by a literary and musical analysis that help us define spatial boundaries within each piece. From this analysis we produce a series of notational charts, that define architectural parameters in very strict and objective ways.

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Emotional qualities and thematic curation are subjective design decisions that get re-introduced into the scheme to define atmospheric intent, and formal organization. Without including these subjective aspects of our own artistic interpretation, the sequence becomes quite linear and generic, so to achieve a curated architectural spatial sequence, all three metrics must be accounted for.

Line - *The physical line of a poem or piece of music that is written as intended by the original artist*

"Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?"

Scale of Importance - *The emotional importance of the line in relation to the narrative journey as a whole*

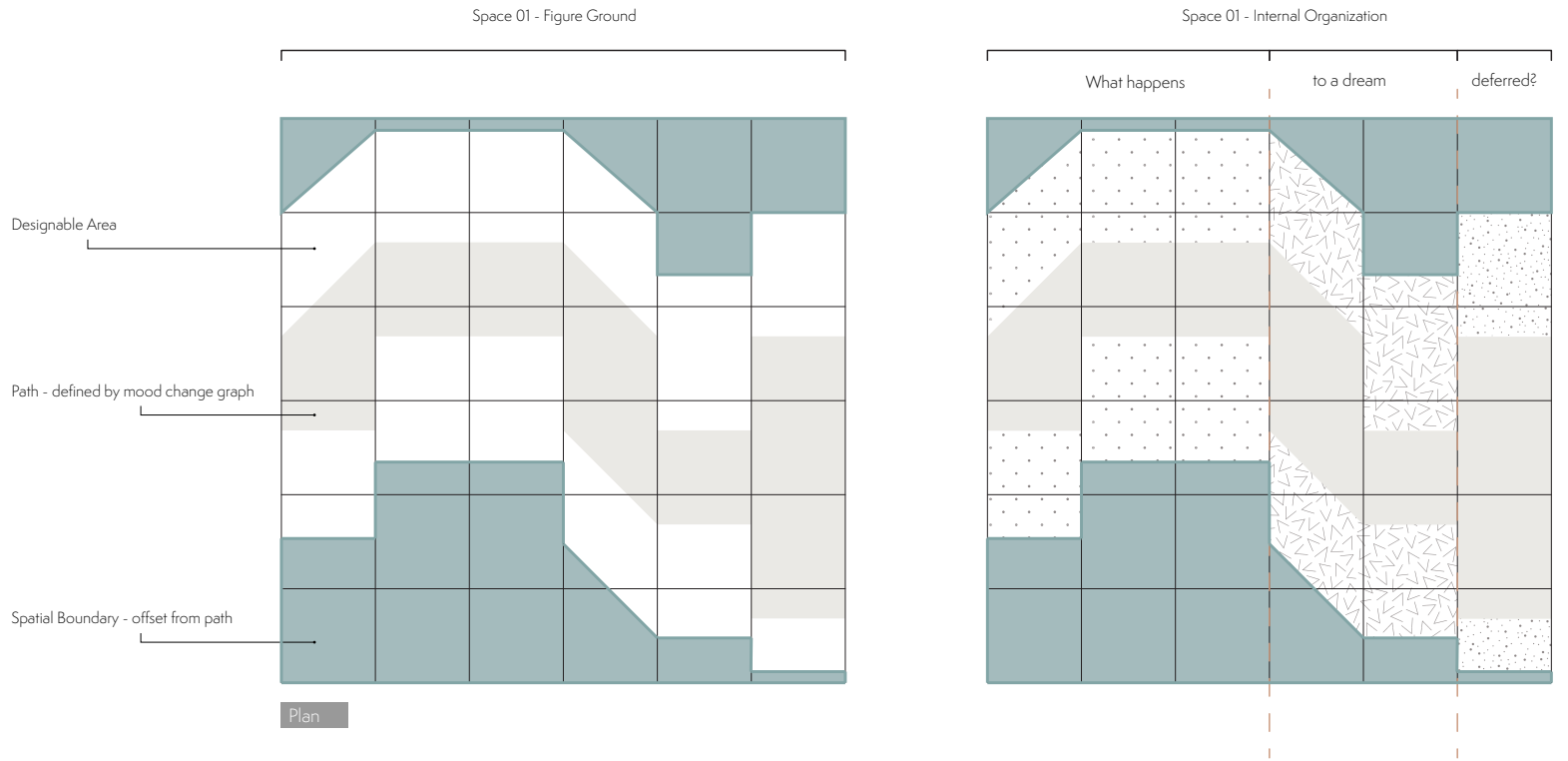
Length / Melodic Sentence - *The numerical value of words in a line, the beats in a measure*

8 10 C1 C2

Mood - *The change in mood throughout the narrative of the piece; the fluctuation of emotion*

Rhythmic Form / Melodic Form - *The amount of syllables in a line; the cycle of notes in the melody*

Movement - *The emotional progression of the piece through movement, and the implied movement in relation to what is heard*

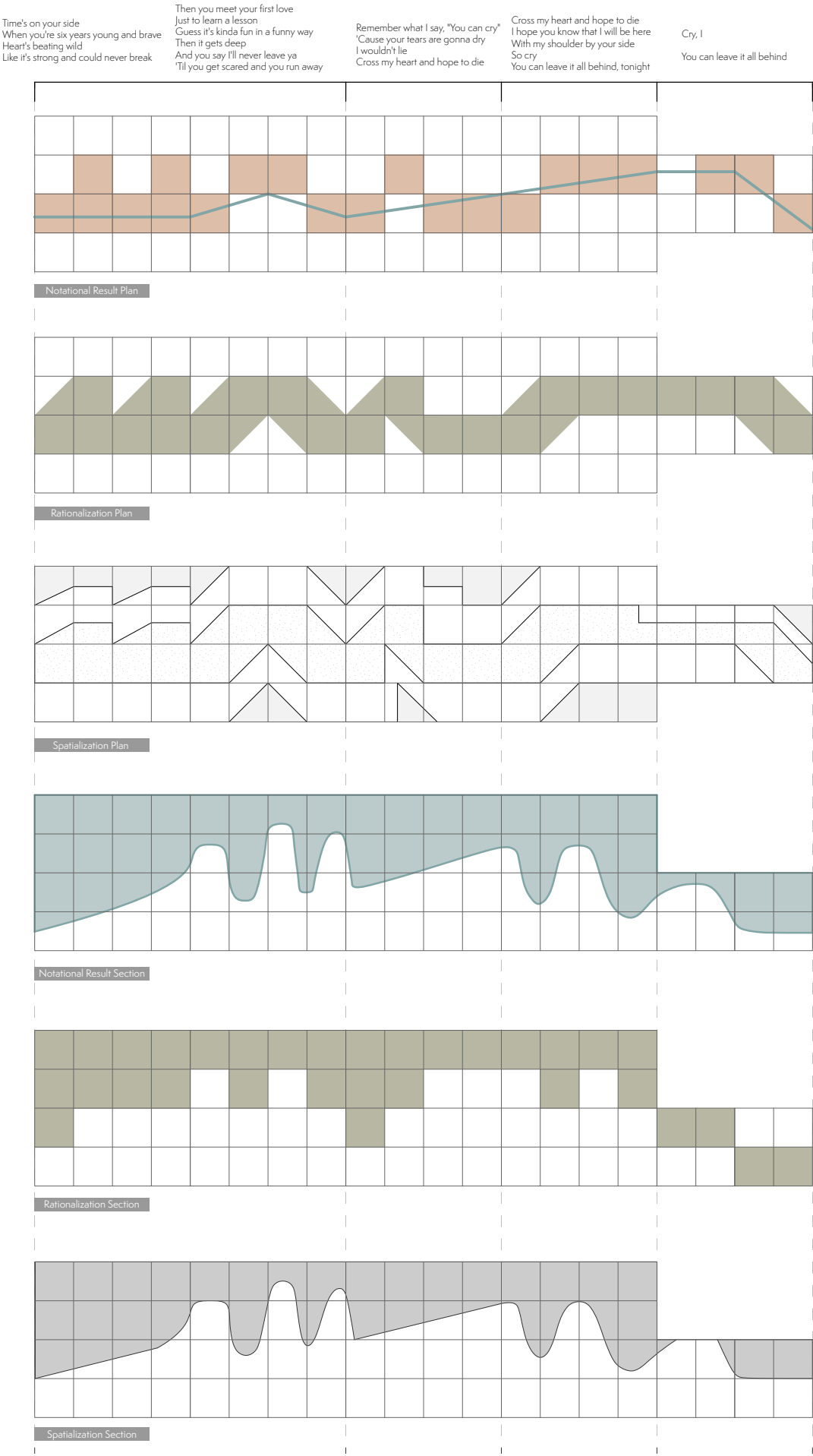
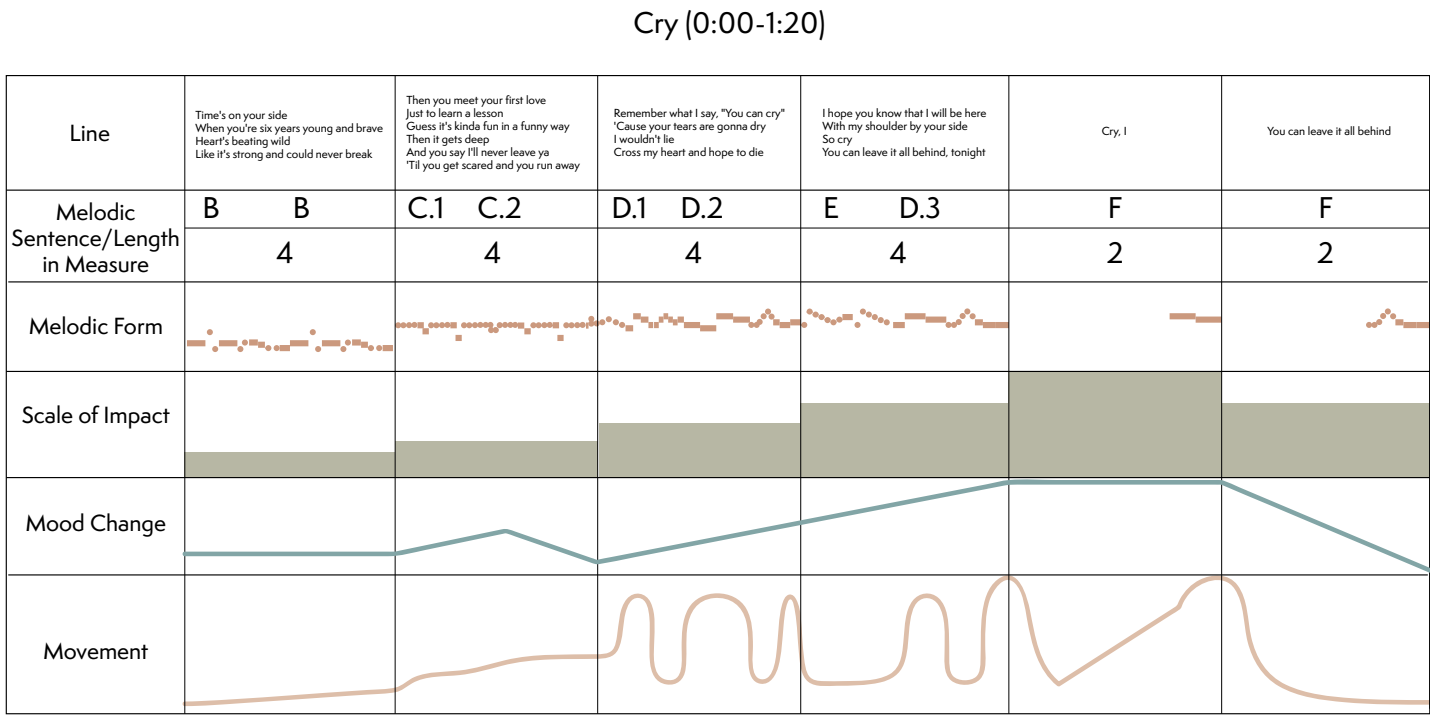


Cry - A Musical Study

In designing the sequence for “Cry”, an electronic musical piece - movement becomes increasingly drastic as the climax of the song approaches. We focused on how the sounds create an emotional journey and transition leading up to that moment.

The scheme shown here reflects architectural parameters defined by the notational chart, as well as atmospheric treatments to each of the spaces based on our subjective interpretation of the analysis.

The notational chart was transposed into architectural diagrams, which allowed us to establish a grid system, and a way to organize the plan. The same was done for the sectional quality of the sequence by extracting the forms from the movement metric on the chart.



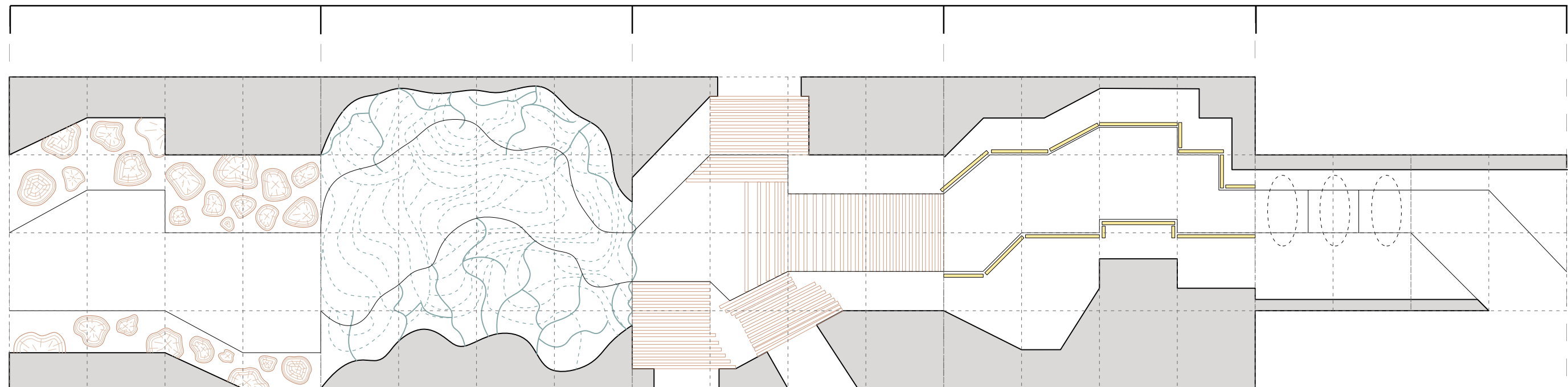
Time's on your side
When you're six years young and brave
Heart's beating wild
Like it's strong and could never break

Then you meet your first love
Just to learn a lesson
Guess it's kinda fun in a funny way
Then it gets deep
And you say I'll never leave ya
'Til you get scared and you run away

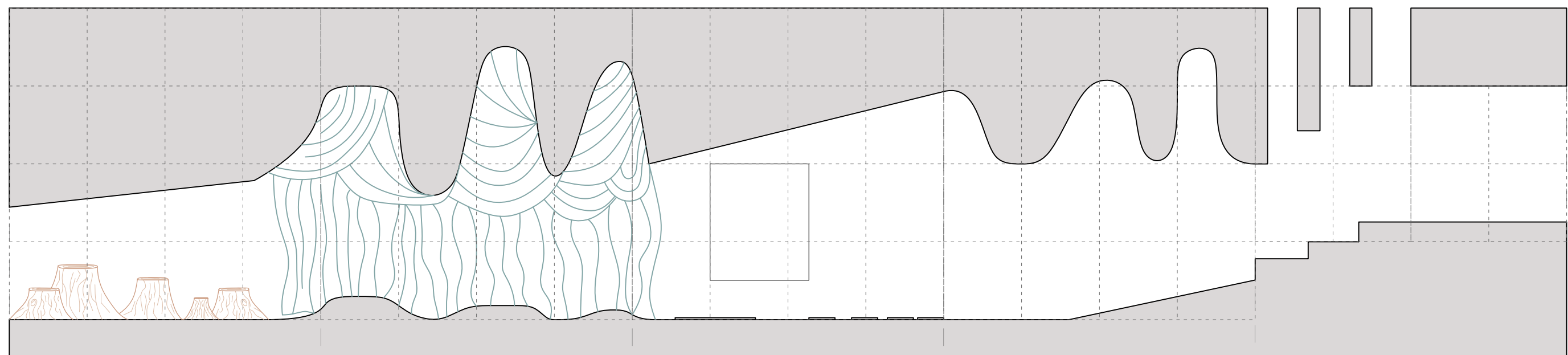
Remember what I say, "You can cry"
'Cause your tears are gonna dry
I wouldn't lie
Cross my heart and hope to die

Cross my heart and hope to die
I hope you know that I will be here
With my shoulder by your side
So cry
You can leave it all behind, tonight

Cry, I
You can leave it all behind



Plan



Section

Harlem								
Line	What happens to a dream deferred?	Does it dry up	like a raisin in the sun?	Or fester like a sore—	And then run?	Does it stink like rotten meat?	Or crust and sugar over—	like a syrupy sweet?
Length (in words)	6	4	6	5	3	6	5	4
Rhythmic Form	● ■ ● ● ● ■	● ● ● ●	● ● ■ ● ● ●	● ■ ● ● ●	● ● ●	● ● ● ● ■ ●	● ● ● ■ ●	● ● ■ ●
Scale of Importance								
Mood Change								
Movement								

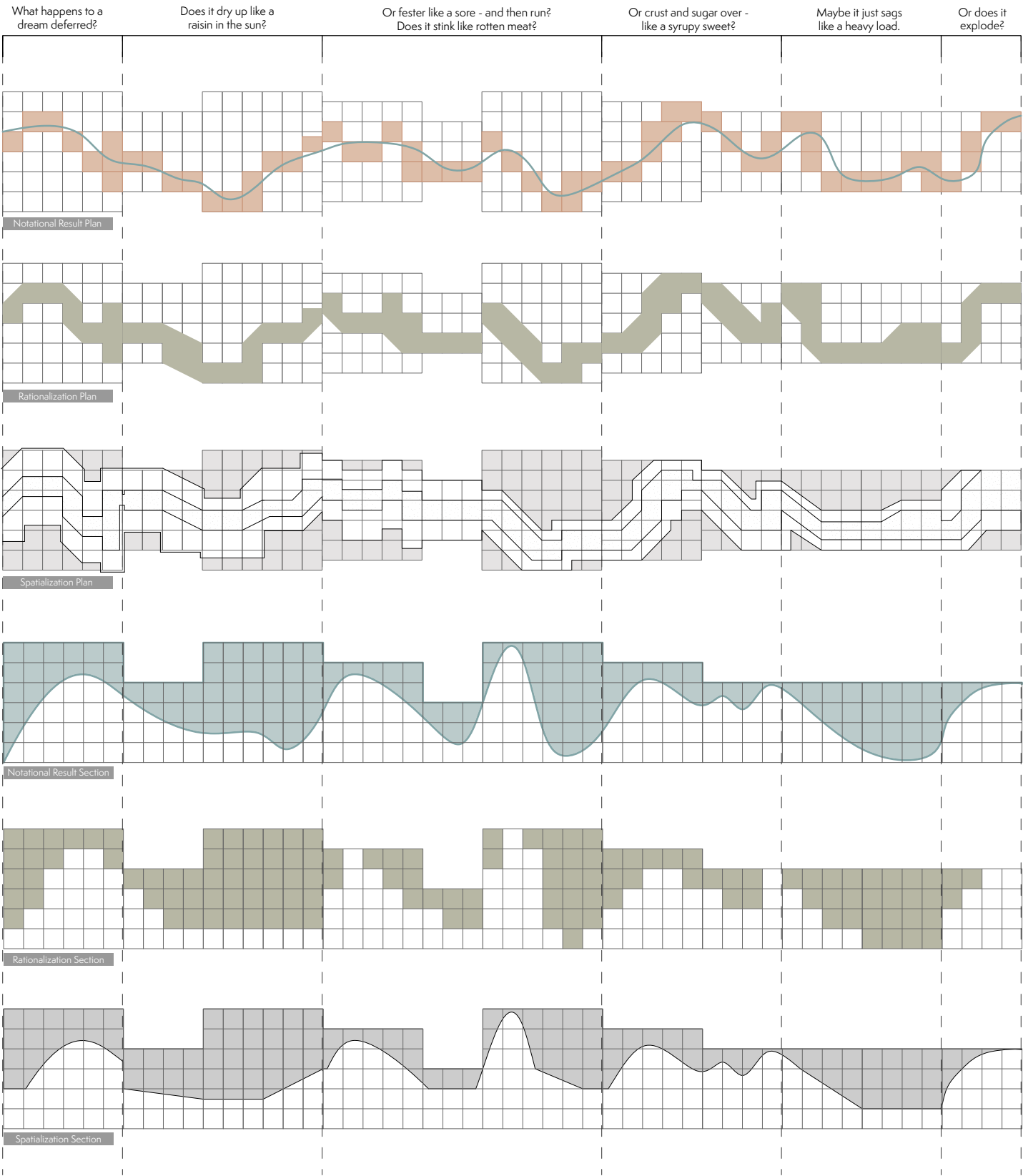
Line	Maybe it just sags	like a heavy load.	-	Or does it explode?	-	-	-	-
Length (in words)	4	4	-	4	-	-	-	-
Rhythmic Form	■ ● ● ●	● ● ■ ●	-	● ● ● ■	-	-	-	-
Scale of Importance			-		-	-	-	-
Mood Change			-		-	-	-	-
Movement			-		-	-	-	-

Harlem - A Poetic Study

We used the same process to evaluate Harlem by Langston Hughes, who was a prominent poet during the Harlem Renaissance. The piece constantly questions what happens when a dream, that dream being racial equality in America, is neglected

Our initial design follows this linear path, with each space altered based on the emotion driven from each of the lines. The notation chart dictates the organization of the plan and the same method is then applied to the section where the movement provides the sectional quality to the space.

Through the creation of atmospheric collages, really focusing on the subjective qualities of the experience, we found that each space was too separated from one another, and lacked a commonality in terms of spatial continuity and narrative. Certain representational features became a bit too literal, choices of materials directly dictated from the words of the poem rather than the feeling that they evoke.



What happens to a dream
deferred?

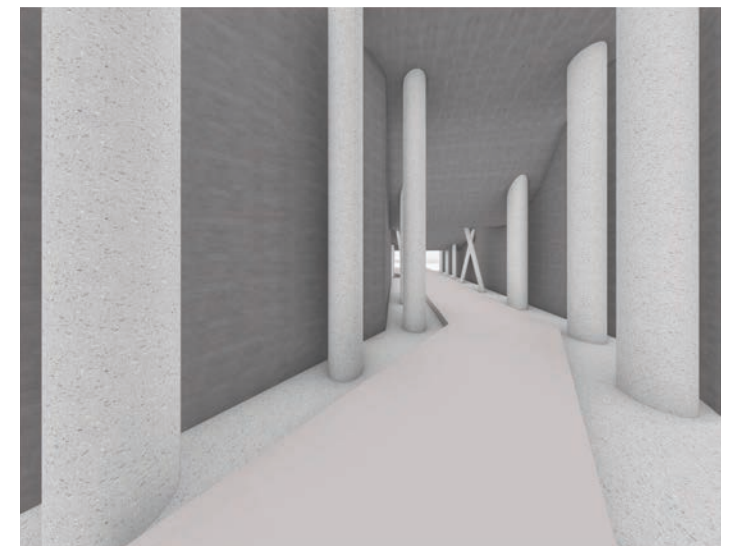
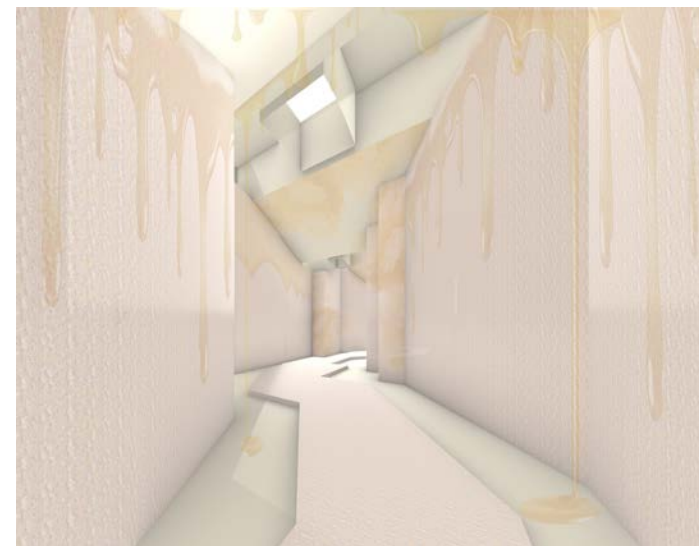
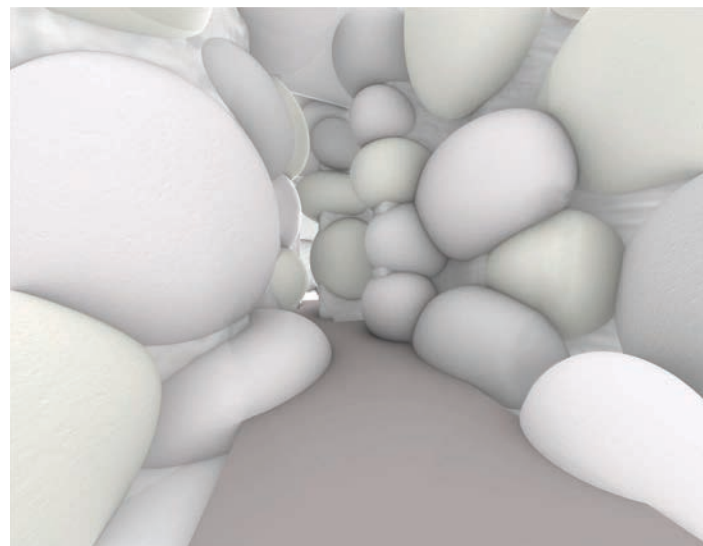
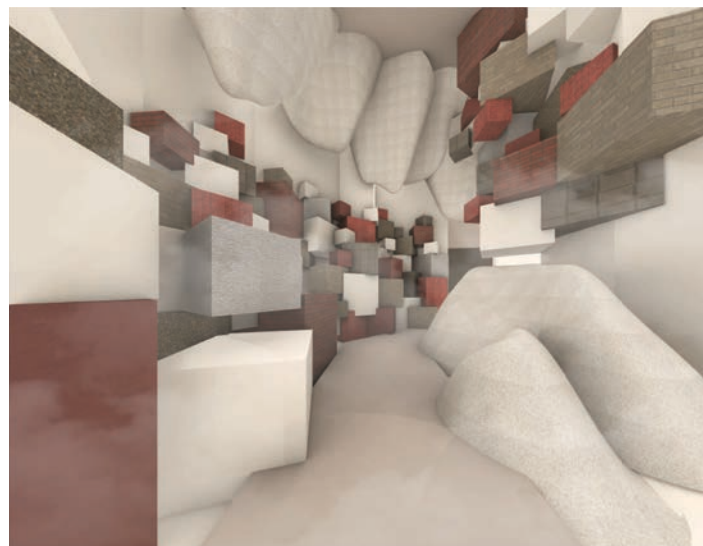
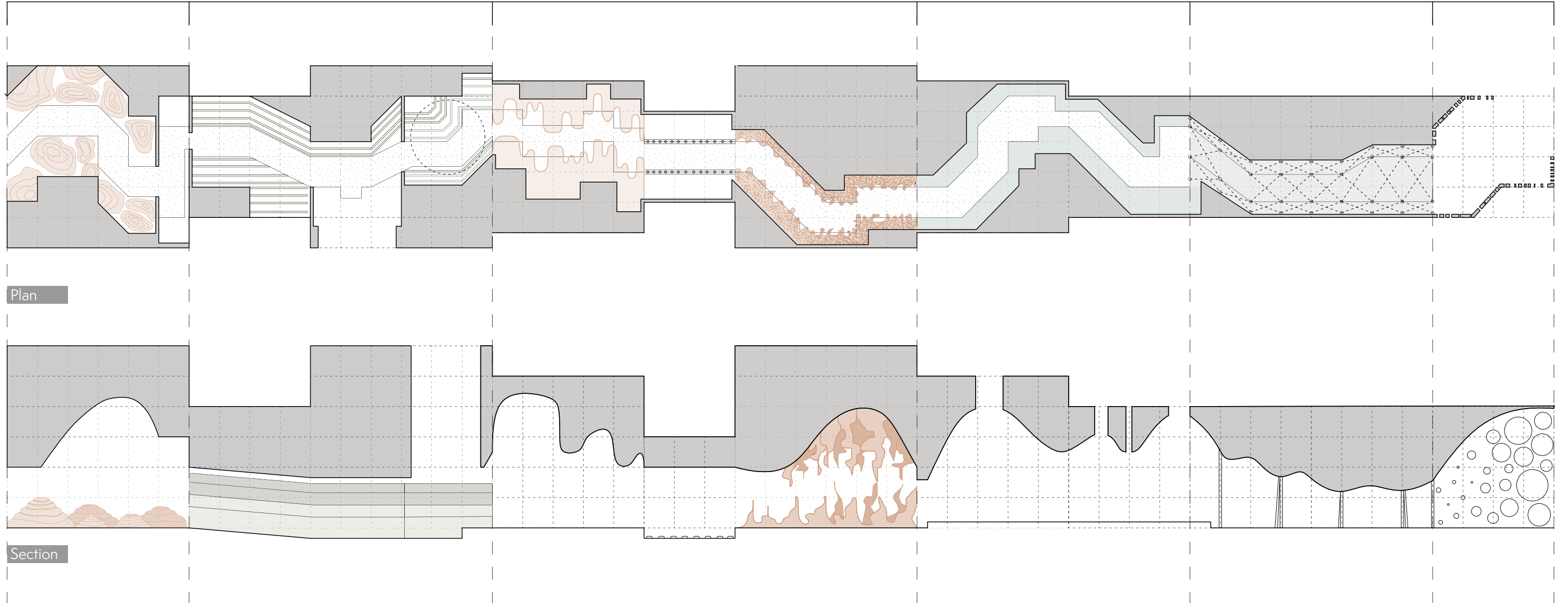
Does it dry up
like a raisin in the sun?

Or fester like a sore—
And then run?
Does it stink like rotten meat?

Or crust and sugar over—
like a syrupy sweet?

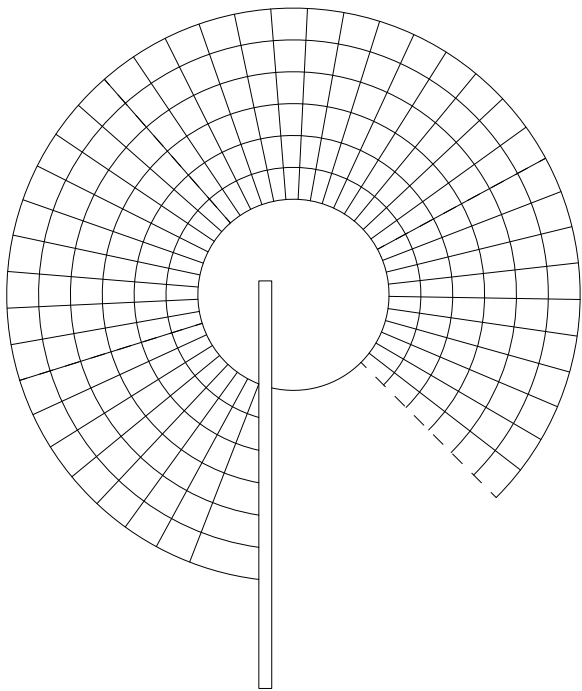
Maybe it just sags
like a heavy load.

Or does it explode?

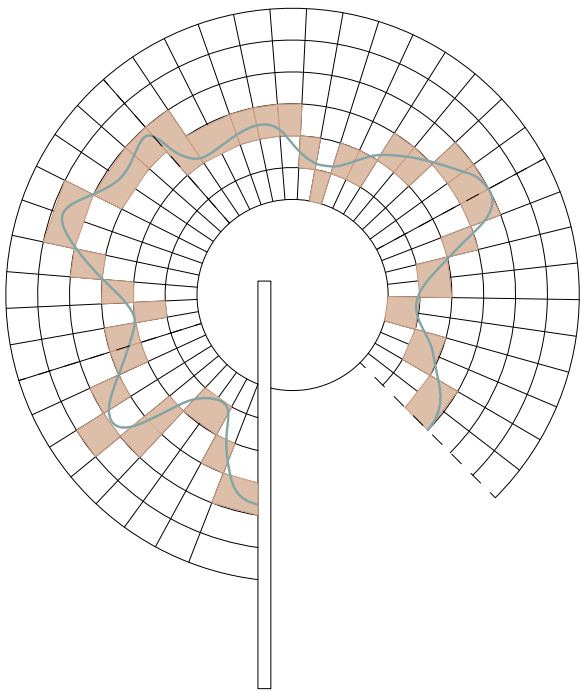


We decided then to take into account the way in which all lines of the poem relate to this singular theme, and how each of the questions that gets asked in the poem revolve around the preliminary question being posed.

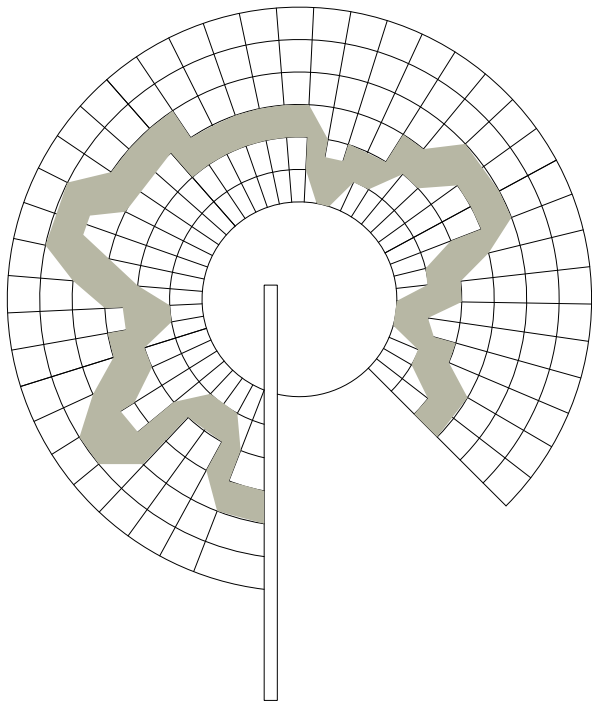
The move to a circular plan allowed us to structure the architectural spaces in a way that reflects that connection, allowing a central space to act as the thematic constant, while the surrounding spaces each build on a particular relationship to that theme.



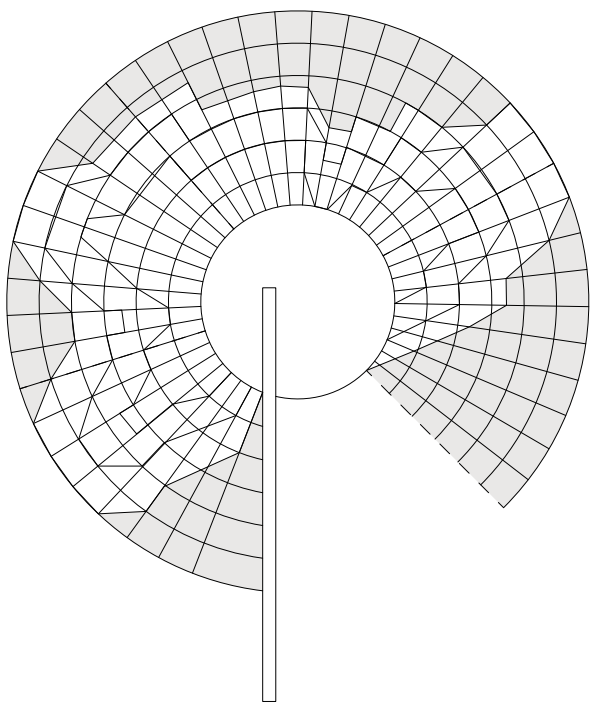
Radial Grid Plan



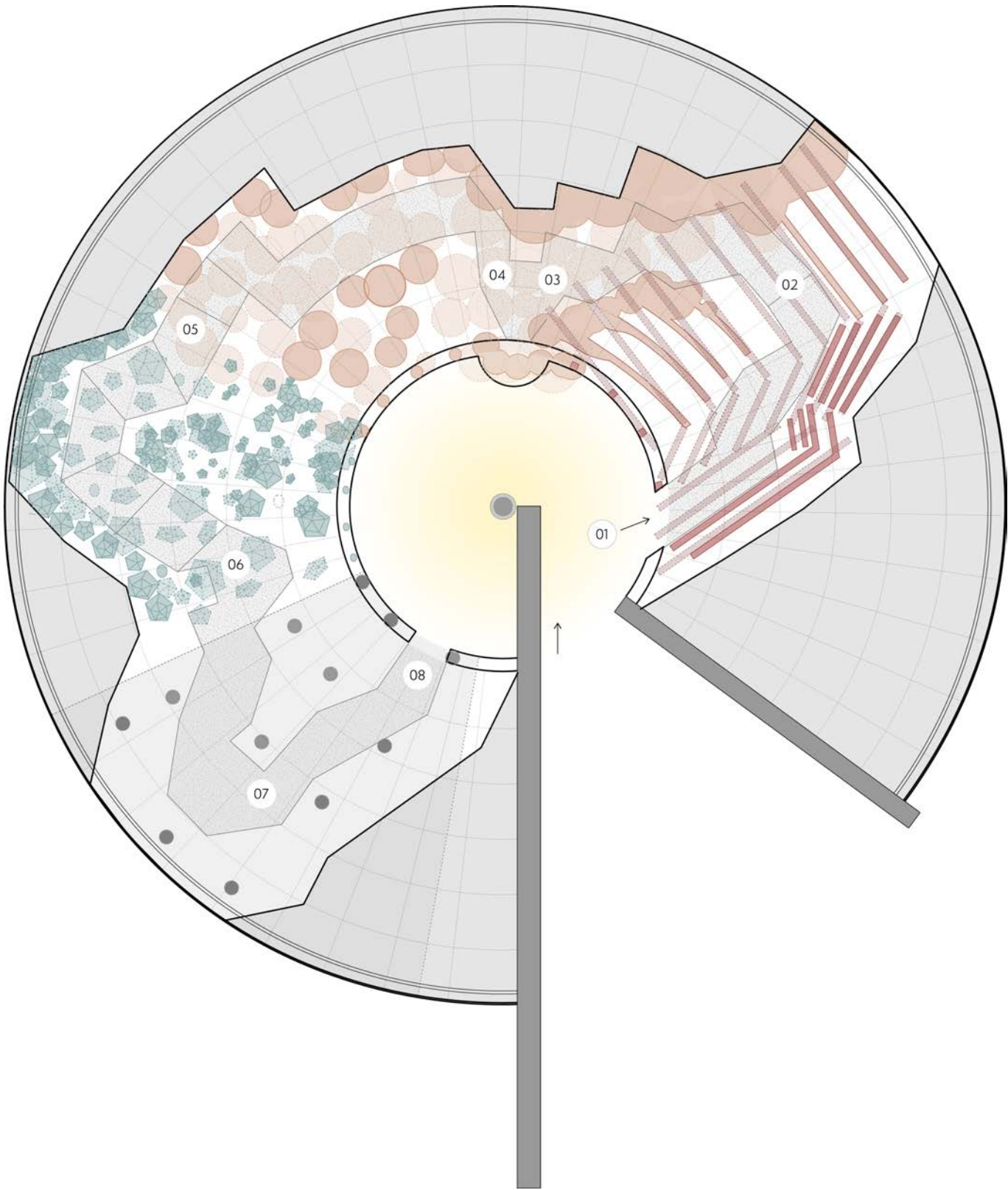
Notational Result Plan

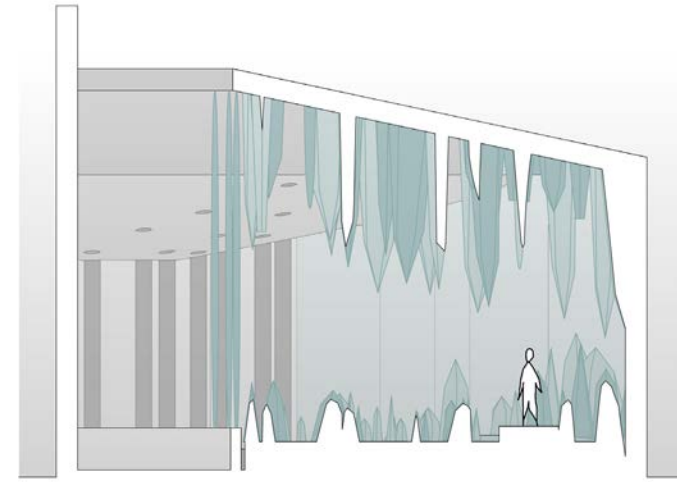
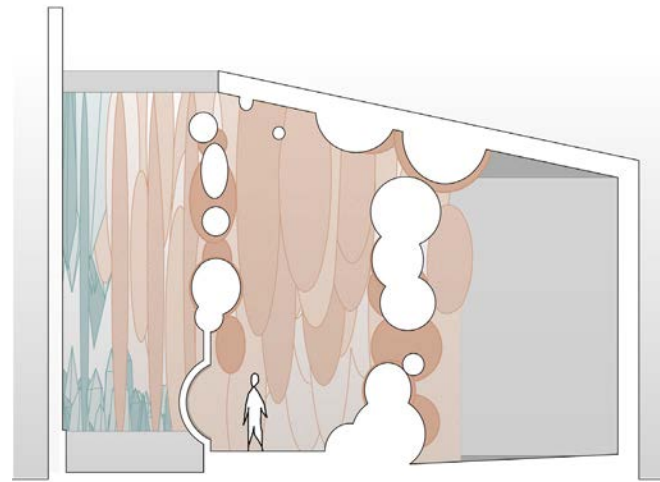
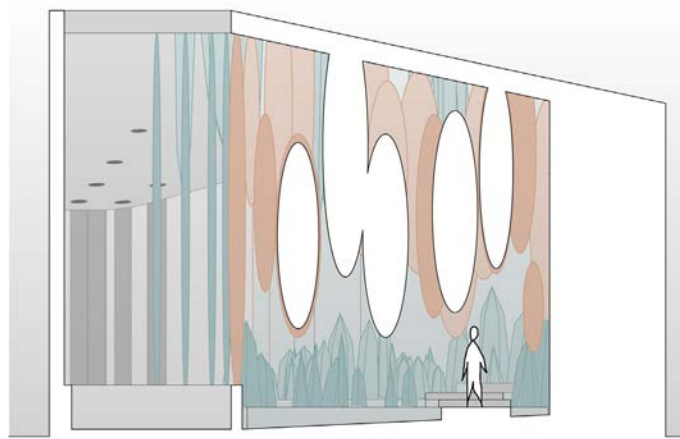
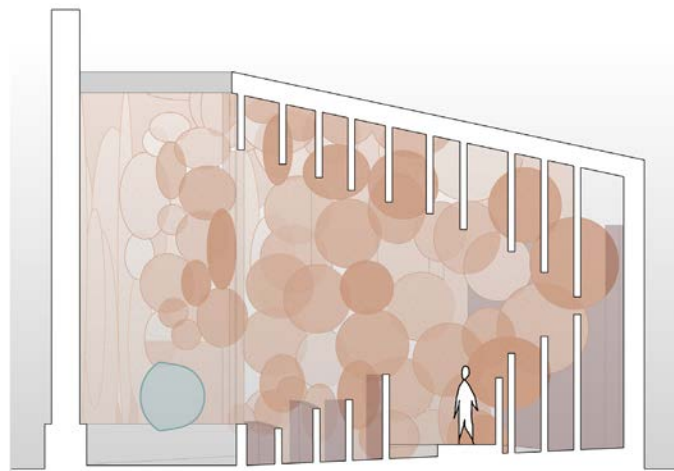


Rationalized Plan



Spatialization Plan







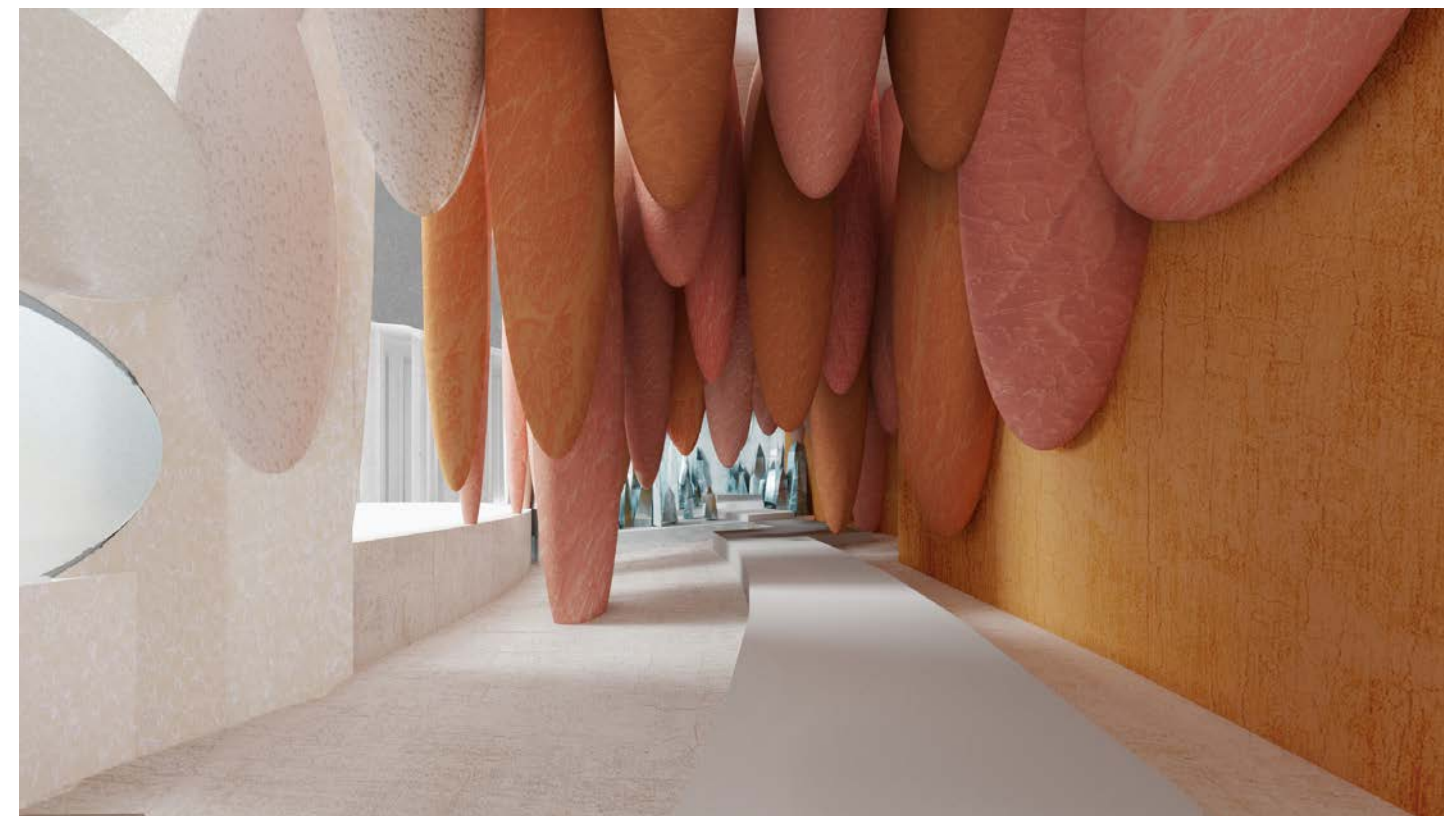
What happens to a dream deferred?



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Does it dry up like a raisin in the sun?



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Maybe it just sags



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Or does it explode?