

# IMAGE CARNIVAL

## Reviewing Image-driven Designs under Social Media

Professor Lee

Bandit

TO FA TO

SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY  
SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE  
THESIS 2021

Kaixin Huang, Siting Xing



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# CONTENTION

## Topic

The development of information technology and the vigorous rise of online mass culture have given social media unprecedented social influence. In these platforms beyond physical limits, intangible content has produced a new form of cultural production and dissemination dominated by digital networks and new technologies. We found that behind the influencer culture brought by social media, there are different psychological aspects hidden behind, which indicates a new form of production and communication. We are also interested in how the new digital environment implies new methods, attitudes, and language that influence architecture.

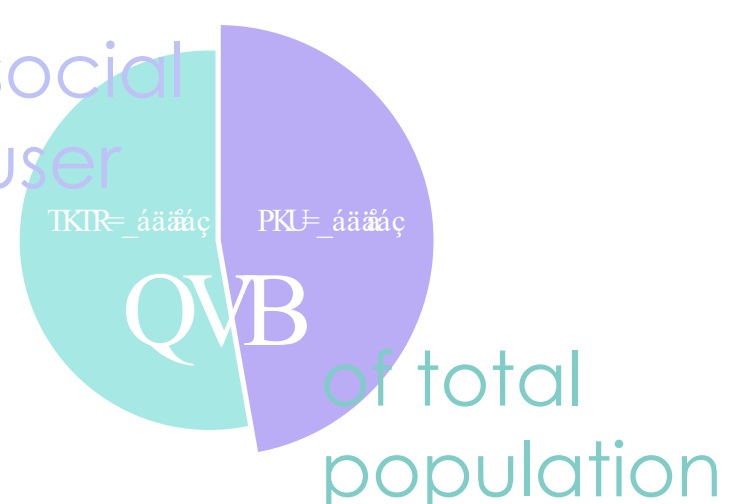
## Process

Starting from the most representative Instagram restaurants with the largest likes and followers, by decomposing the images of the “influential online architectural” space, analyzing the target population and summarizing the characteristics and changes, we study the difference of the design of dining spaces between digital make-up and real situation, and trigger discussions on this “from Instagram to Instagram” design method towards more comprehensive types of Instagrammable spaces.

## Purpose

The thesis attempts to present an inevitable trend. Architecture no longer only requires architects to design and produce professional construction documents, but how to grasp public opinion from the online society and embed it into architectural designs are also part of an architectural design. How to express architectural opinion in the image era may be one of the most significant following developments in architecture. We speculate that the future of architecture lies not only in design changes, but also in how to promote and shape awareness. Architectural design as one of the virtual commodities on social media, requires architects come back to take control of how to integrate with the image culture, and help construct a new awareness of architectural aesthetics for the public about “architecturally instagrammable” in the future.

Active social media user



2H 24M

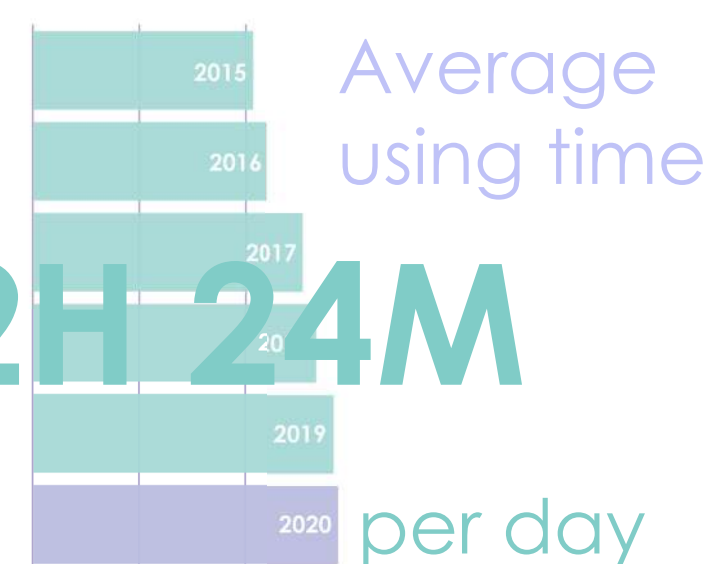


IMAGE POSTED

95 Million

PER DAY

During Covid - 19

43%

said spending more time on social media



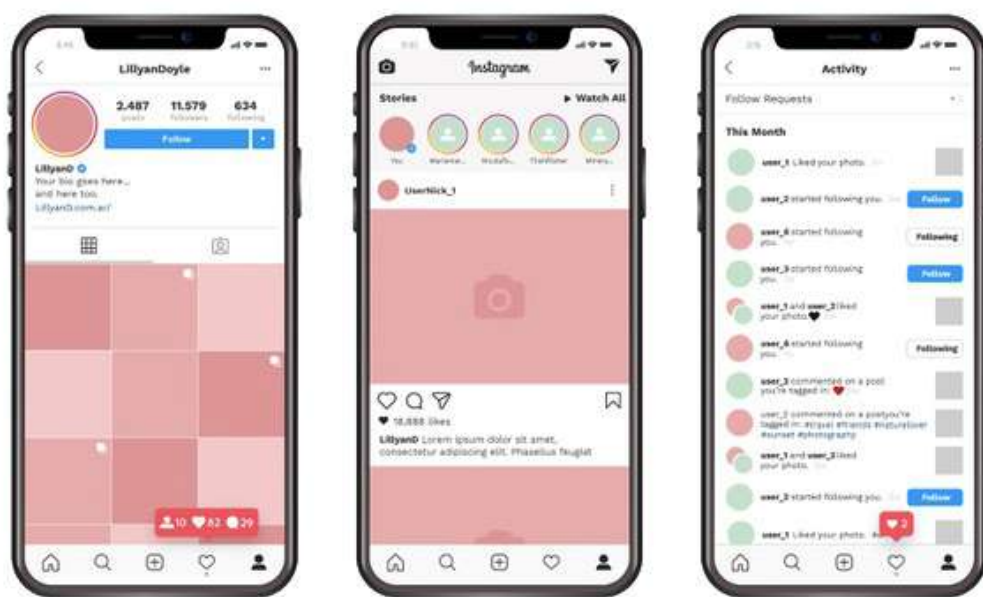
# INSTAGRAMMABLE

## Instagram

A photo and video-sharing platform started in 2010 in the US



redefined fashion, travel, food, and even art, because almost everyone wants to make themselves and things look “effortless” and “perfect”.



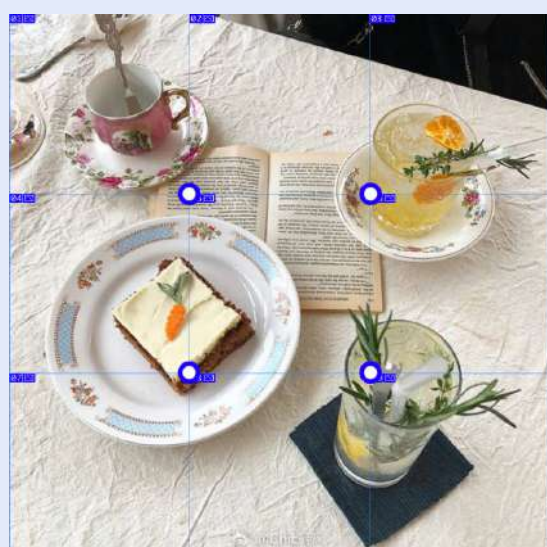
## "Ins" style (instagram aesthetics)

Self-contained photography style, color matching style, as well as the ever-changing square cut, and highly recognizable filters are all indispensable elements in the Ins style.

simplicity/restraint/natural

### Composition

“Ins” Style: triangle composition, diagonal composition, frame composition, rule of thirds composition.  
The rule of thirds composition: divide the interface according to the line of thirds, and place the subject on the 4 points in the picture (the so-called most eye-catching points).



### Camera Position

“Ins” Style: It mainly adopts three camera positions: horizontal, overhead, and tilt.

### Toning

“Ins” Style color matching features: low hue saturation, low contrast, low color temperature, low exposure.

- 1) Reduce the exposure and make the picture darker
- 2) Partially darken, suppress highlights and white
- 3) The dark part (such as black) becomes brighter and grayish



## Instagrammable

Instagrammable is often used to describe a photo that is Instagram worthy, which means: what is worth posting to Instagram, can be shared (posted) on Instagram, usually very good and tends to be popular.

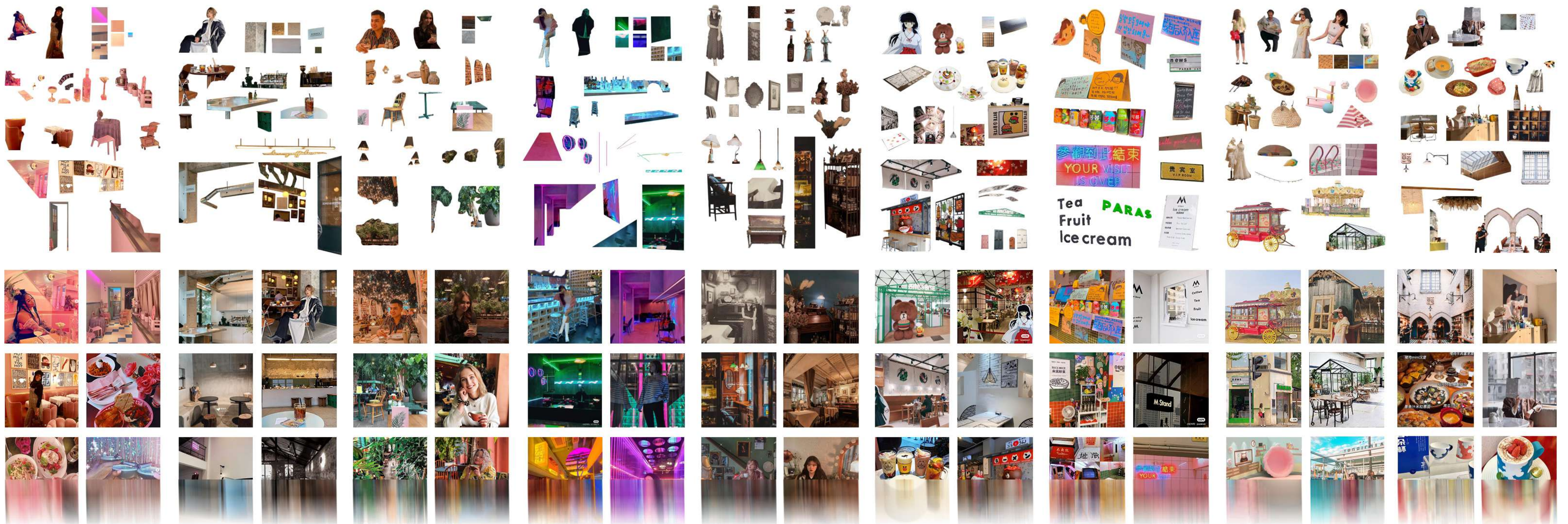
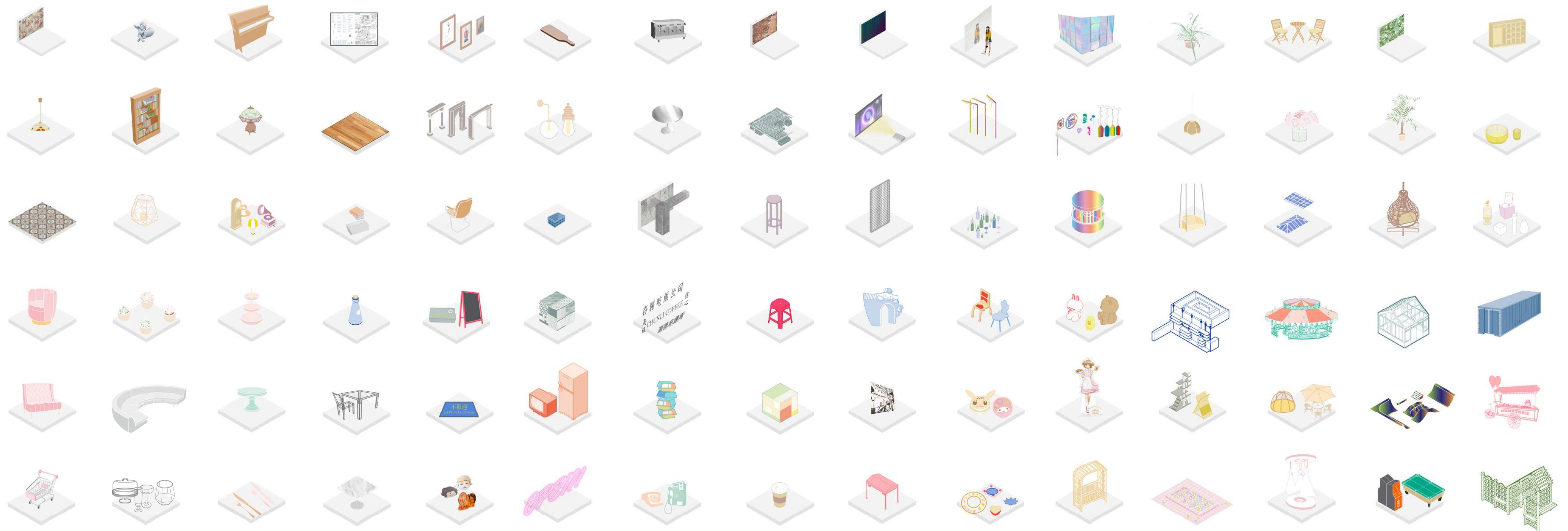
This adjective is also used as a representative vocabulary and has become a prefix for the influential groups on different social media, such as weibo, Facebook, Snapchat, Xiaohongshu, etc.

This is a new, influential standard, and it represents a sense of "being approved on social media". Instagram has risen from an application to an aesthetic style, as a product of an era of aesthetic diversity without profound historical aesthetic root. However, “Ins” style is a successful practice of popular backfeeding by normal people and its importance lies in lowering the threshold of aesthetics and narrowing the distance between exquisiteness and ordinariness.

## Instagrammable = Online Influential

Influencers are a type of KOL (Key Opinion Leader), which can have influence and decision-making power on certain behaviors of fans. The essence of influencers is to create a tonal online image with a strong communication power and influence, which is shaped by personalized online content. Their popularity is due to their certain characteristics being magnified under the influence of the Internet, which fits with the psychology of netizens' aesthetics, entertainment, stimulation, voyeurism, imagination, taste, and speculation, and they are sought after to become influencers intentionally or accidentally. Its body can be people, objects, animals, virtual objects, or even in the field of architecture. It can be space, interior design, program, narrative, etc. The attraction of online influential space to the flow of people breaks the geographic location and creates a new business logic.





Instagrammable restaurants are divided into nine categories: hot pink interior; factory-like interior; greenery decoration; cyberpunk space; exhibition hall; animation IP themes; new functions other than dining; graphic elements; others

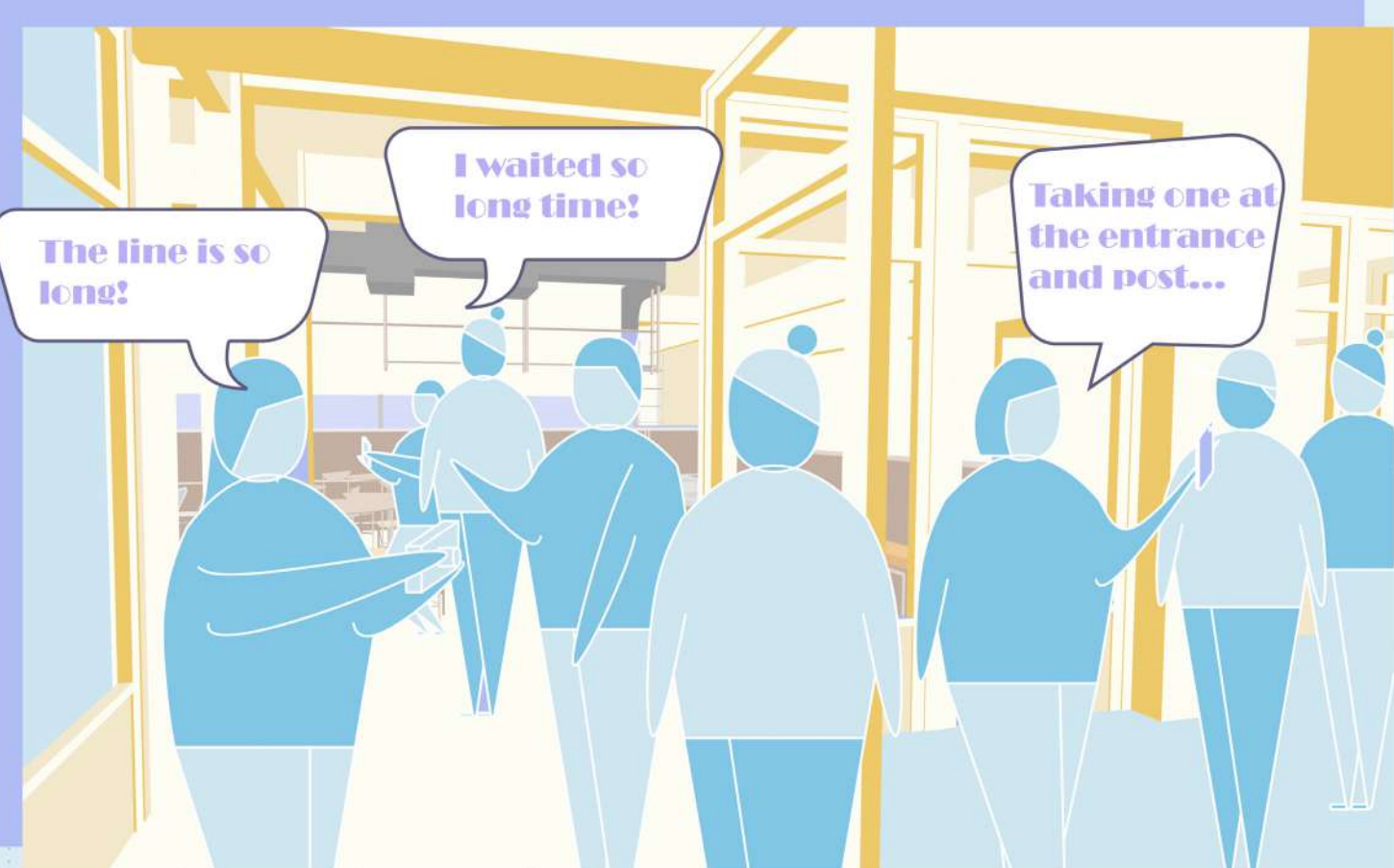


# Baker & Spice

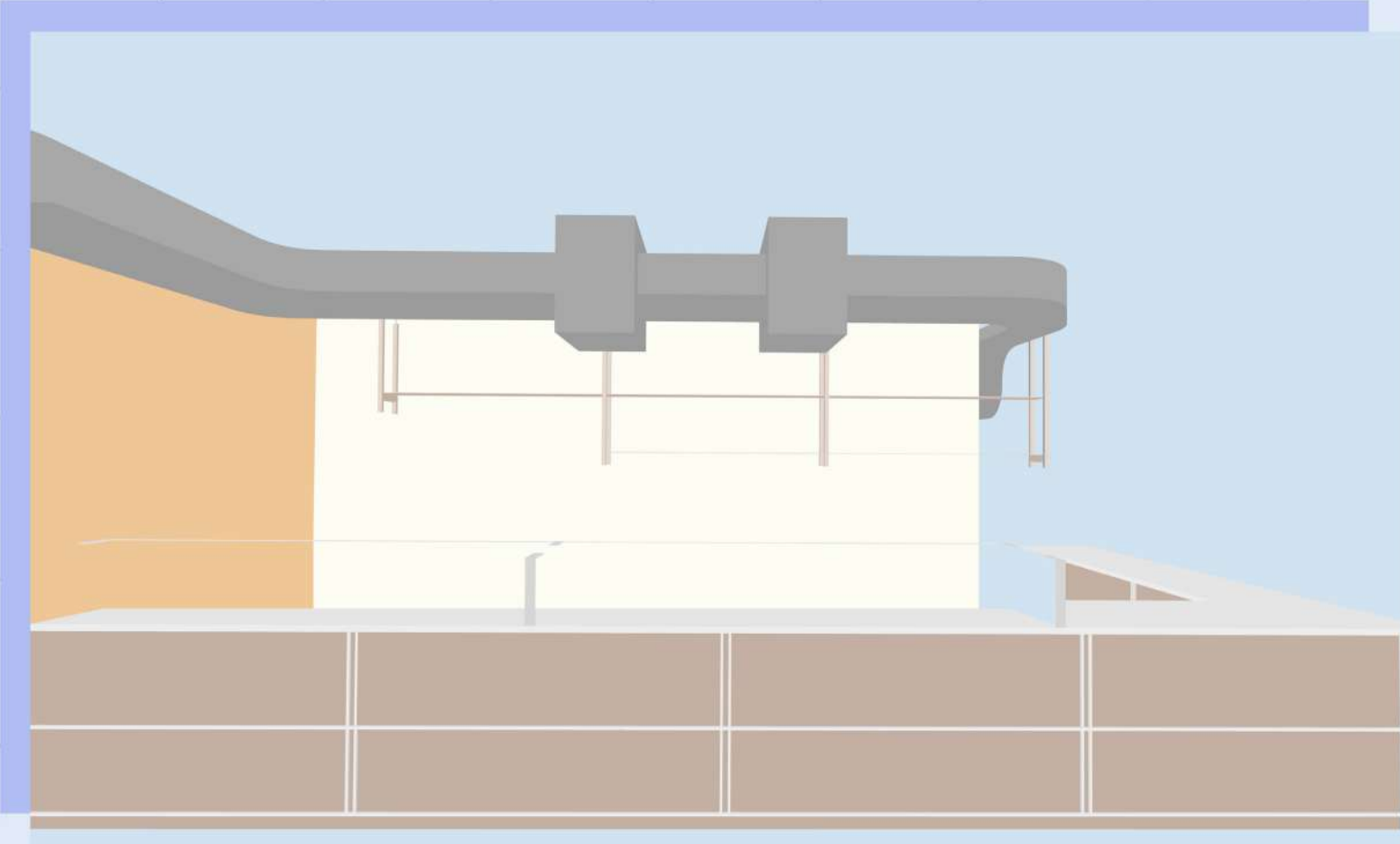
“Baker & Spice is a new store by Wages, offering Nordic food from Denmark and the best choice for a healthy, quality life. The restaurant features large floor-to-ceiling Windows and two excellent seats. Be sure to get there early, or it will be difficult to get the perfect seat in the afternoon or on a sunny weekend.”  
“The simple wooden structure is integrated into the modern design. The front desk space is open, and the bread cabinet is connected to the drink bar.”

The restaurant does not have a space for queuing. People waited on the street, and there rarely no queue.

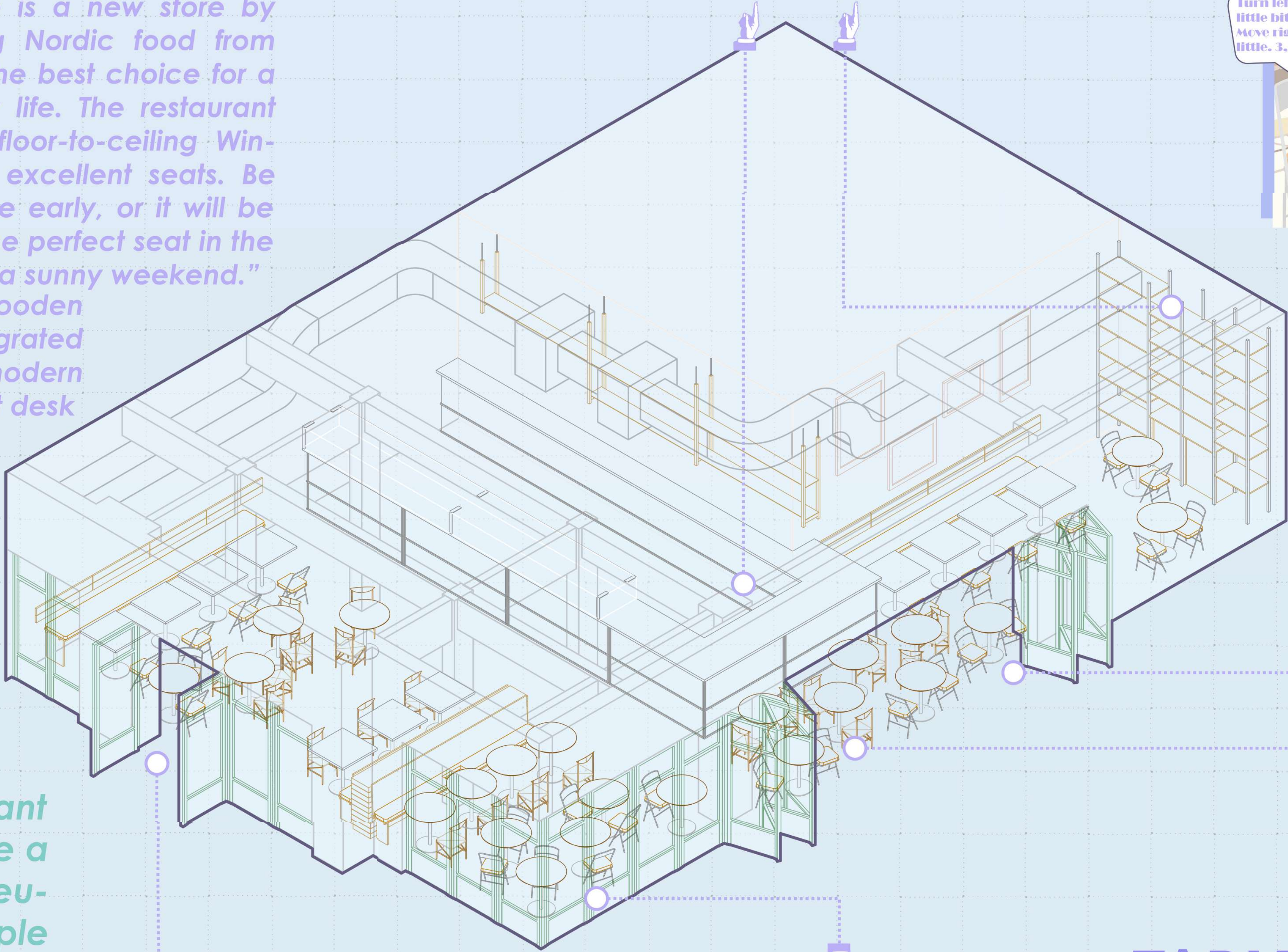
## QUEUE



The shelf and middle kitchen area provides a specific point for photographing. But also space are smaller.

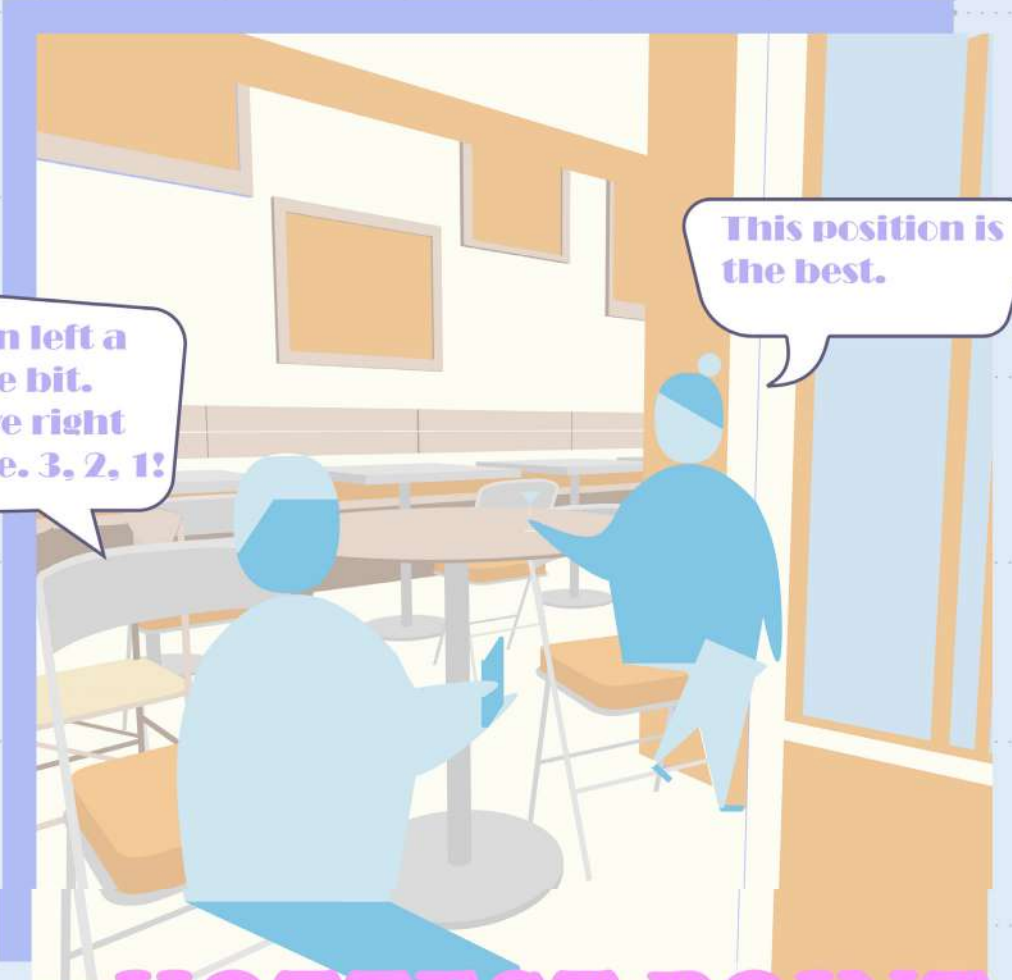


## SPECIFIC AREA



## SITUATION :

The interior style of the cafe is decorated in an industrial style with concrete texture, coffee machines, and metal tubes. And also green plants and wood texture to satisfy the “healthy lifestyle” tag.

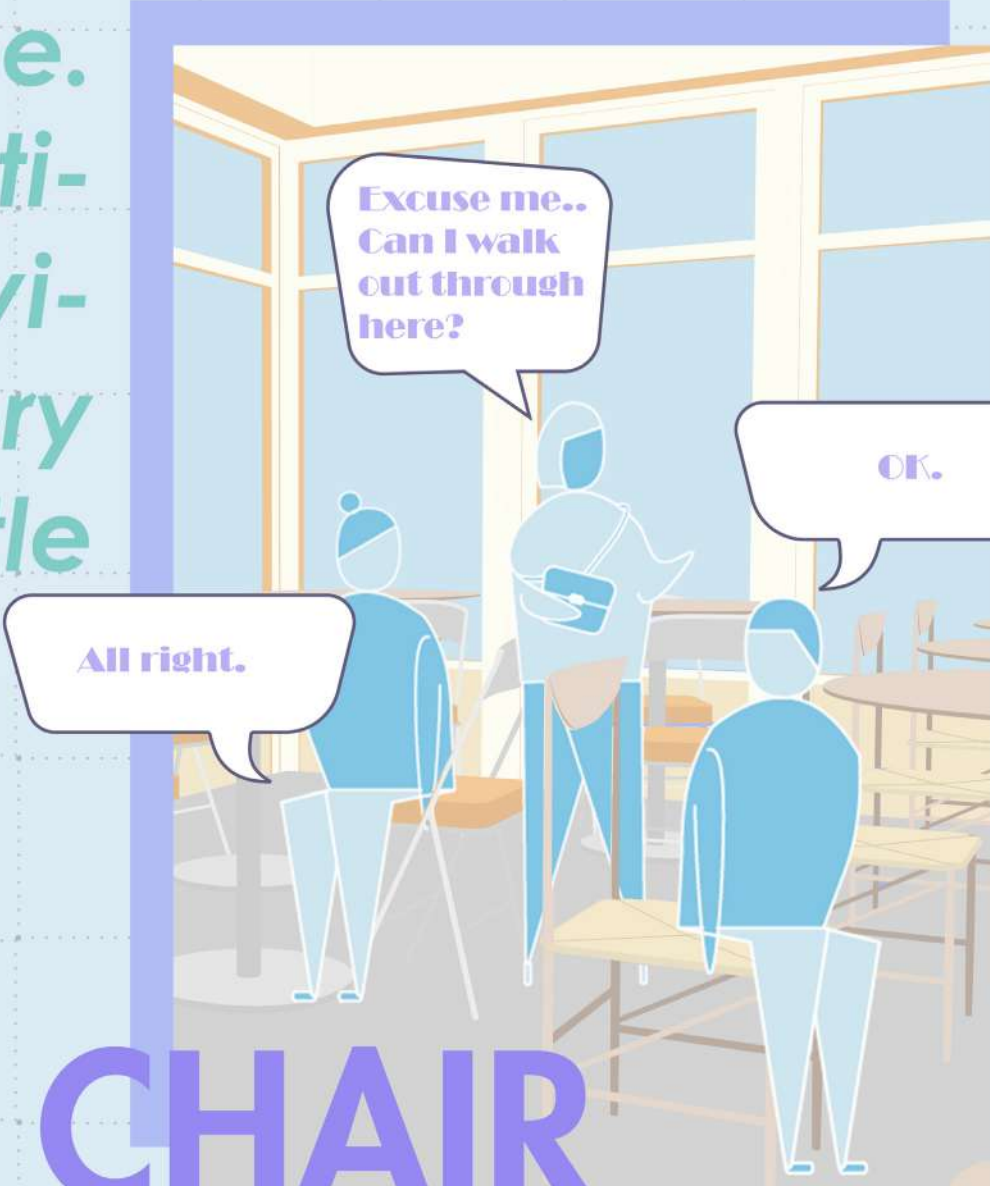


## HOTTEST POINT

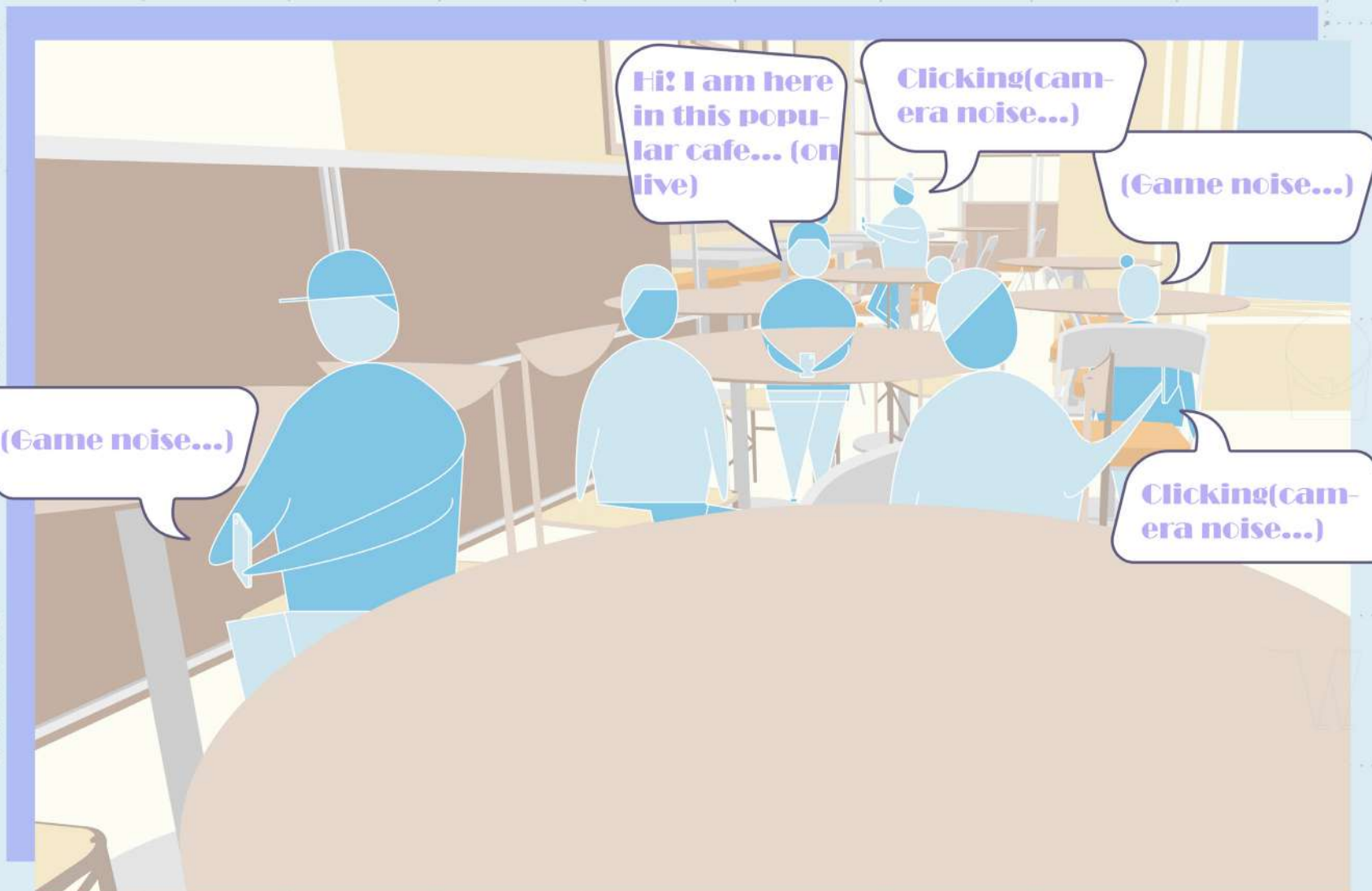
WUKANG BUILDING, OUTDOOR SPACE, CAUSAL, INDUSTRIAL

## TABLE & CHAIR

Tables are close. There is no partition. So, the environment is very noisy and little privacy.

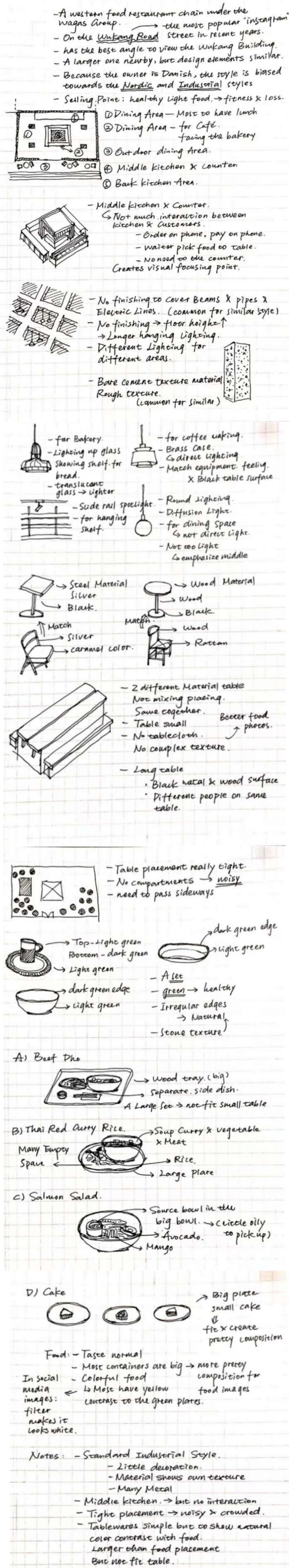


## TABLE & CHAIR

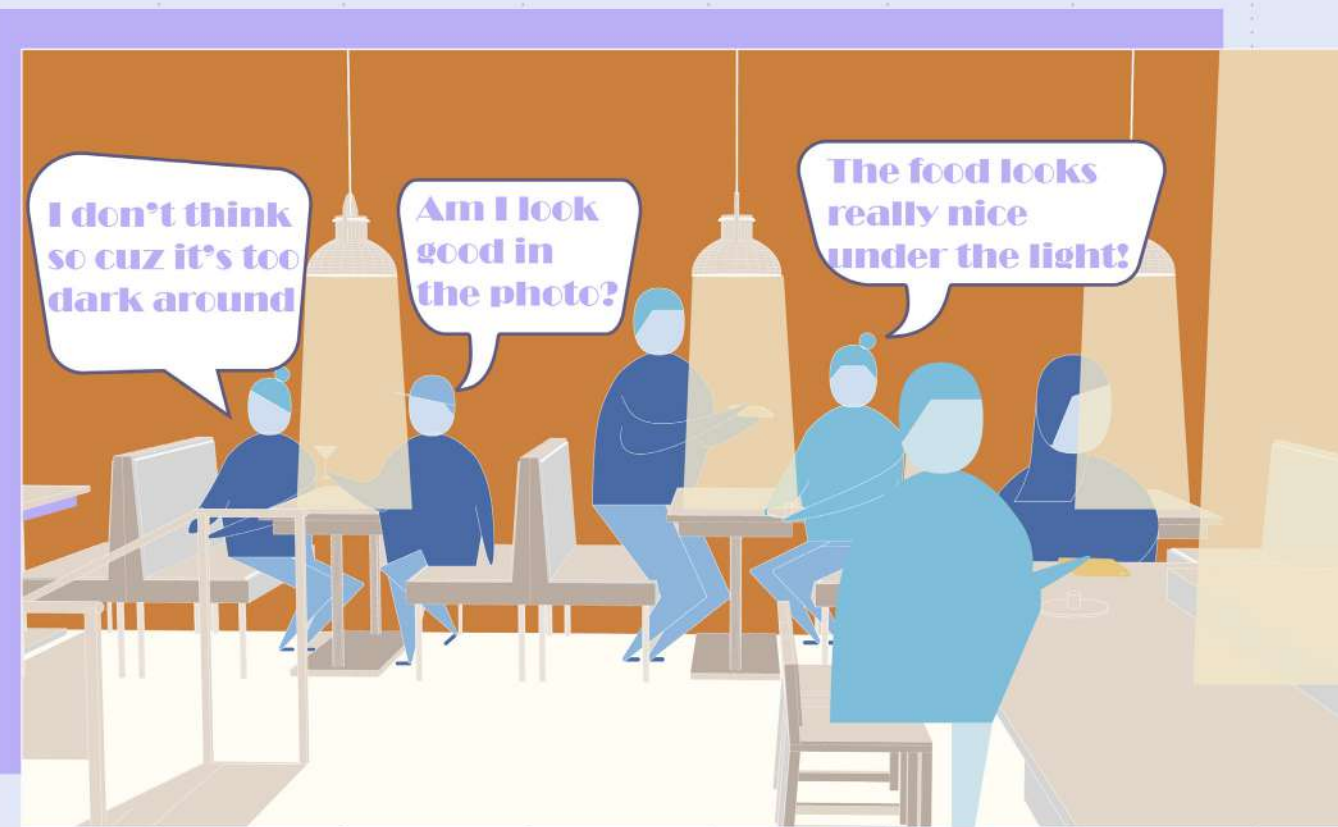




B & S is a chain of cafes under wages. The location of each branch in Shanghai has been carefully considered. Regardless of the size, the composition of the store is based on the central kitchen and spreads to the surroundings. The decoration with industrial minimalism highlights the relationship between food and diners. The restaurant uses a small two-seater and wooden long table for multiple meals, equipped with a QR code, which reduces queuing conflicts caused by ordering and payment, and accelerates the flow of consumers. Moreover, B & S uses simple, larger plates to hold food, giving people a sense of richness and variety.







The shallow light perpendicular to the desktop only makes the food look beautiful in the photos

## LIGHTING

"An artsy pottery-themed Korean restaurant opened by the same team behind popular eatery/bar Bello'co."

"They offer creative and westernized Korean grilled meat and seafood, with a decent selection of wine. Service is very attentive; staff will bow to you every time they approach. The restaurant also provides complimentary drinks before and after the meals."

# Professor Lee



## HOTTEST POINT

A SQUARE TABLE WITH EXHIBITS AT THE CENTER SURROUNDING DISPLAY WALL



## SITUATION :

There will be a showcase between every 2 to 3 tables for photos but definitely not as a nice background for portraits

EXHIBITION WALL SHOWING PHOTOS OF ART-WORKS OF THE POTTERY ARTIST PROFESSOR LEE



## SPECIFIC AREA

## QUEUING AREA



Not many people sitting in line cuz most of them choose to go shopping around



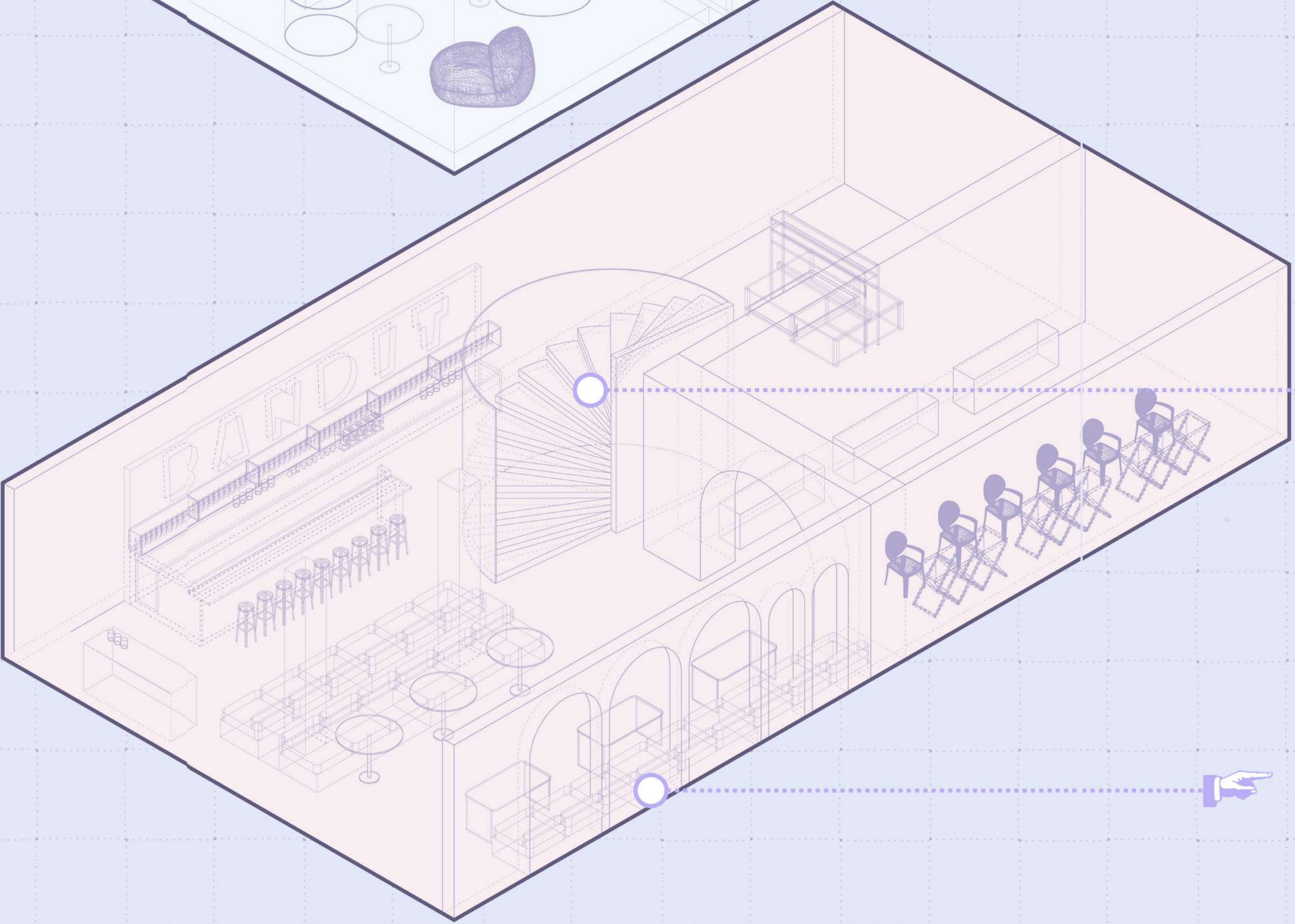
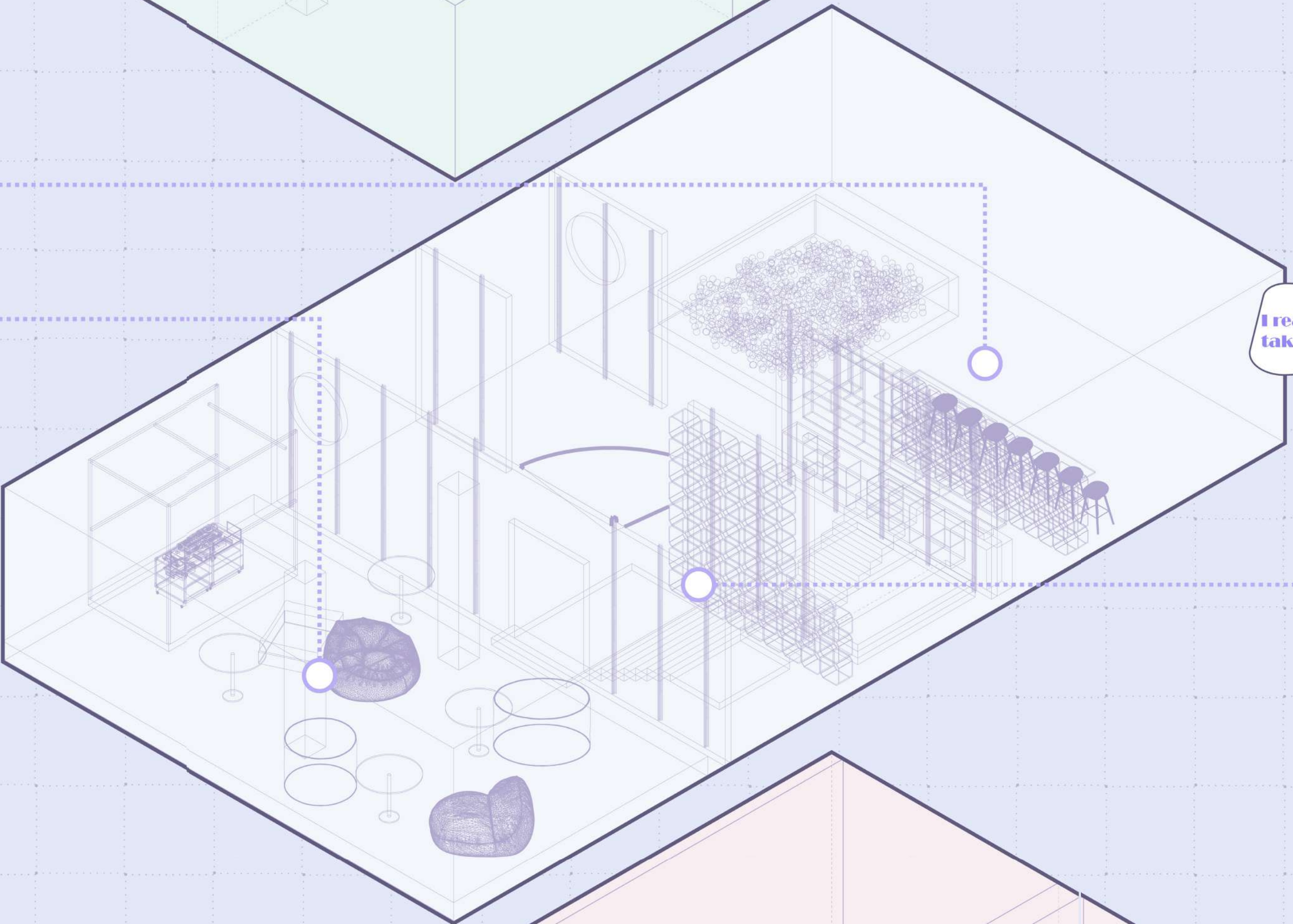
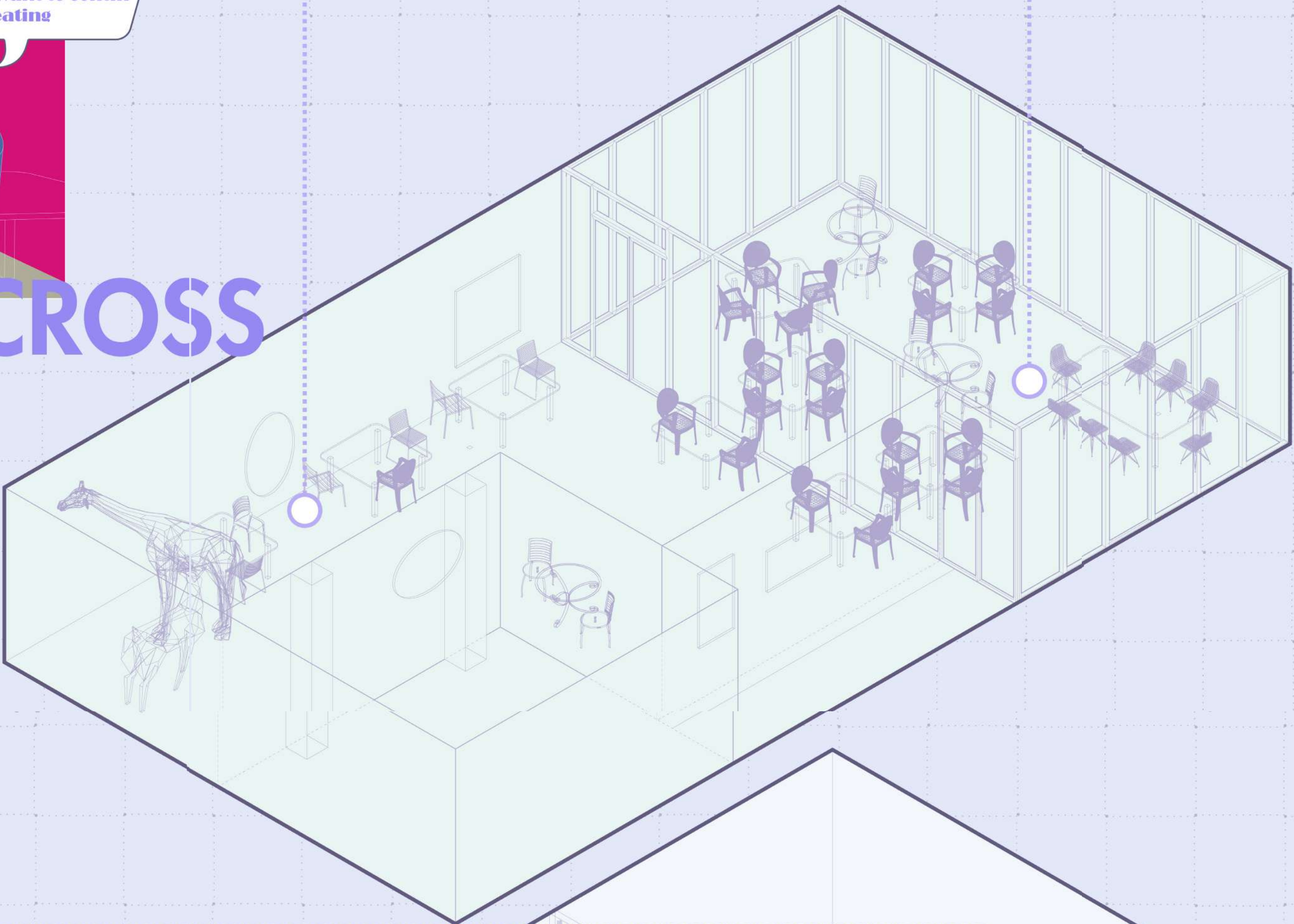






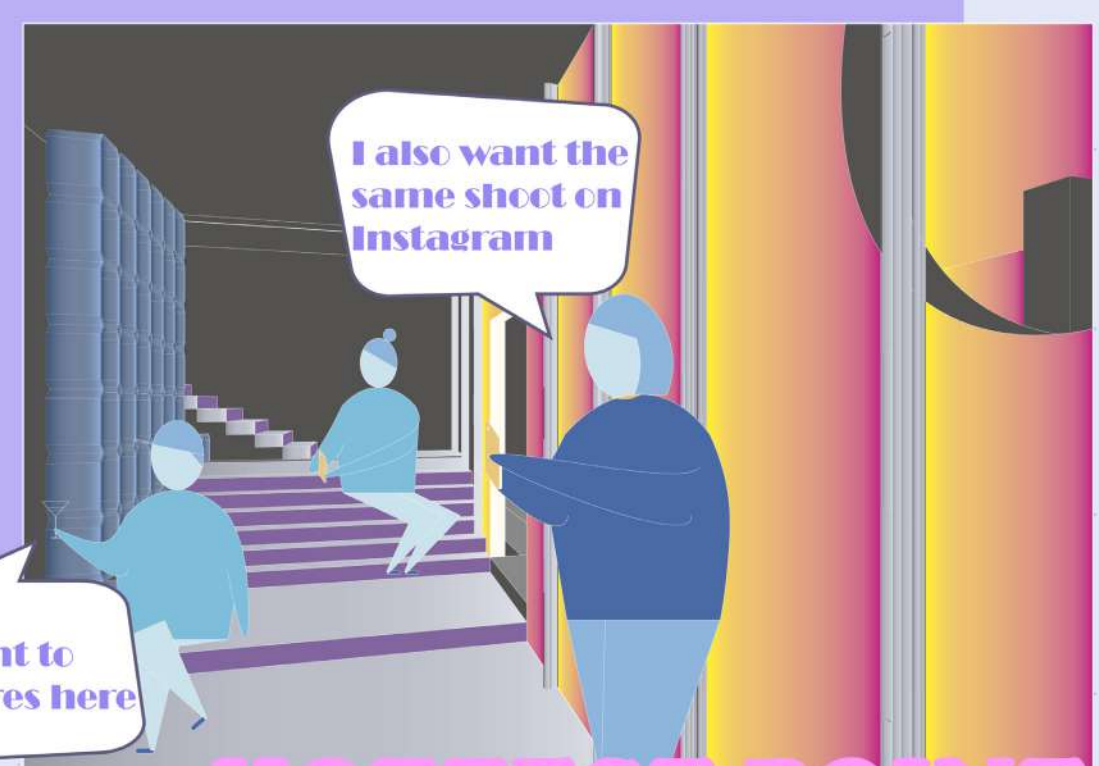
# PHOTO & EAT CROSS

Those who dine and those who take pictures will bother each other forever  
Intense light and reflection can even damage the phone camera



# LIGHTING

Intense light and reflection make dining uncomfortable



# HOTTEST POINT

STYLISH, FANCY, INDUSTRIAL

## SITUATION :

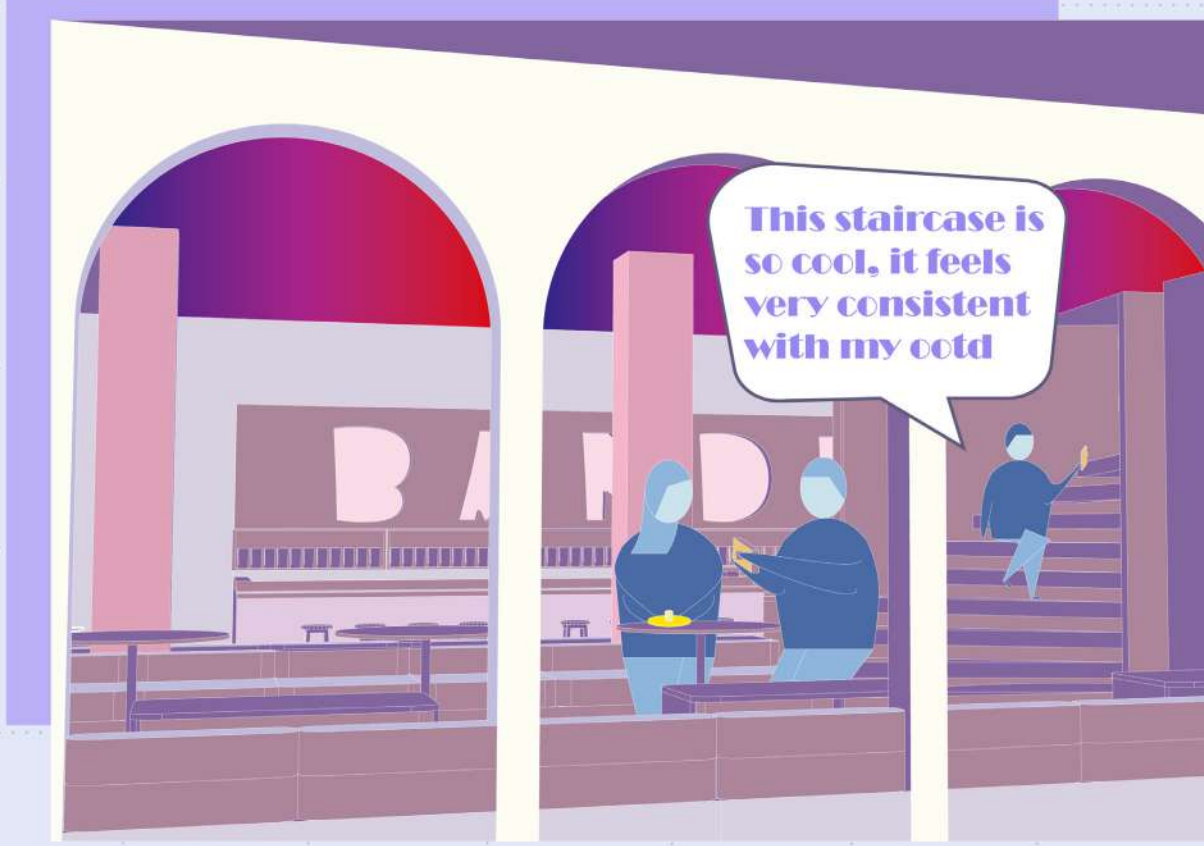
3 themes at 3 levels

The tables and chairs are sparsely placed

The tunnel-like cyberpunk stairs are very charming for posing and shooting

CANDY COLOR, NEON STYLE, OR THE OVERTURNED COLOR PALETTE

# HOTTEST POINT



# HOTTEST POINT

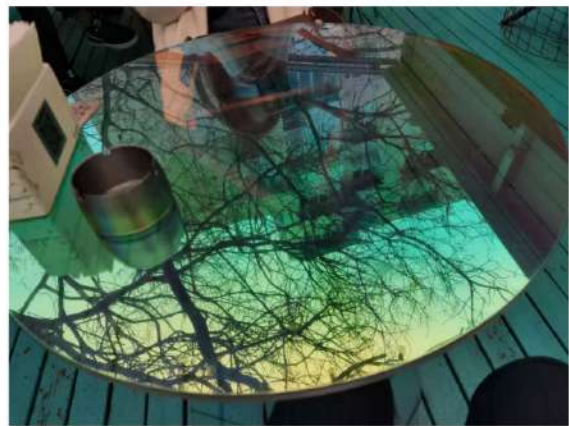
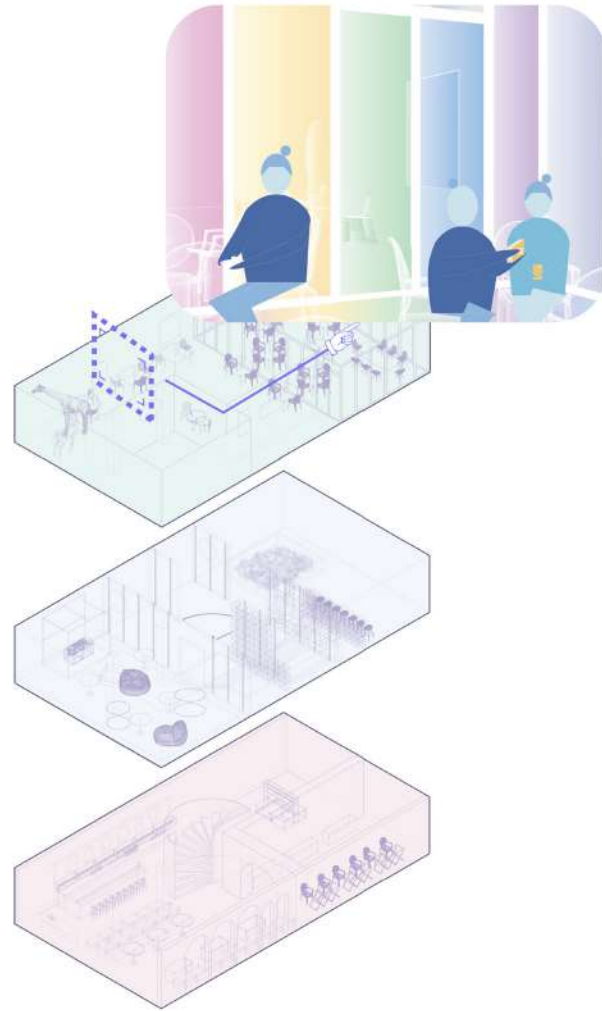
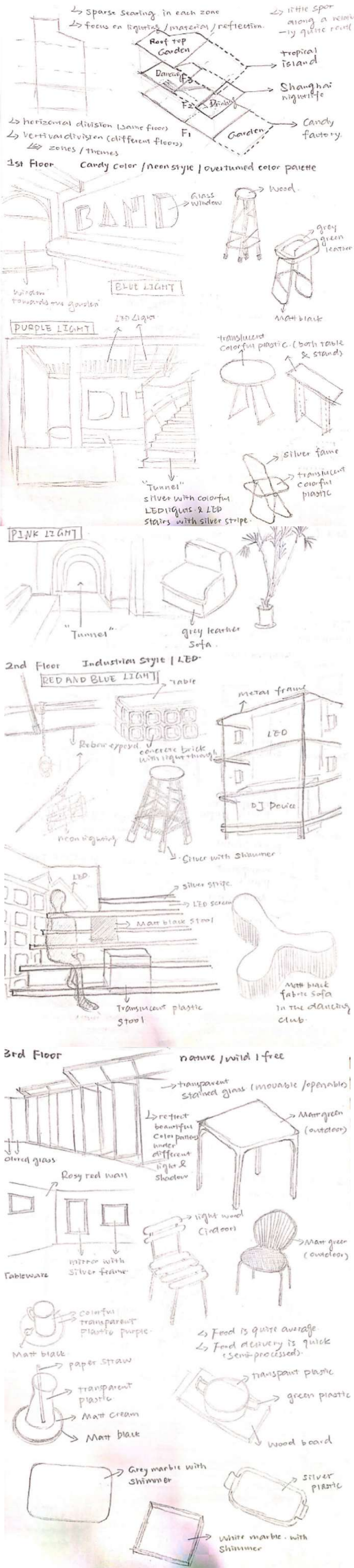
A RISING SPOT FOR SHANGHAI NIGHTLIFE

"BANDIT is a space for creative, hardworking & ambitious people pursuing their dreams despite any limits or social pressure.  
Here, a 'BANDIT' can spend whole day from having a sunny breakfast & brunch on 1st floor...  
working on laptop planning her/his dream brand/job, partying and releasing stress on 2nd floor with DJ & creative cocktails.  
You make your day with BANDIT, you can make your dream come true!"

# Bandit



BANDIT embraces a variety of interior styles and functions, and is not full of tables and chairs like other Instagrammable restaurants, but emphasizes the rarity and particularity of every element in the interior. Every moment in the pace is a good background for taking pictures, and the diversity of colors is adapted to completely different OOTD, which provides inclusiveness to different consumers. Moreover, its chain strategy is also unique, each of its branches has different themes and different dishes, even with different names. Obviously, consumers are more excited and curious about the endless choices, and can't help but go to every branch to explore. This form of diversion reduces the waiting time, and on the contrary enhances the pleasure of consumers at each time.



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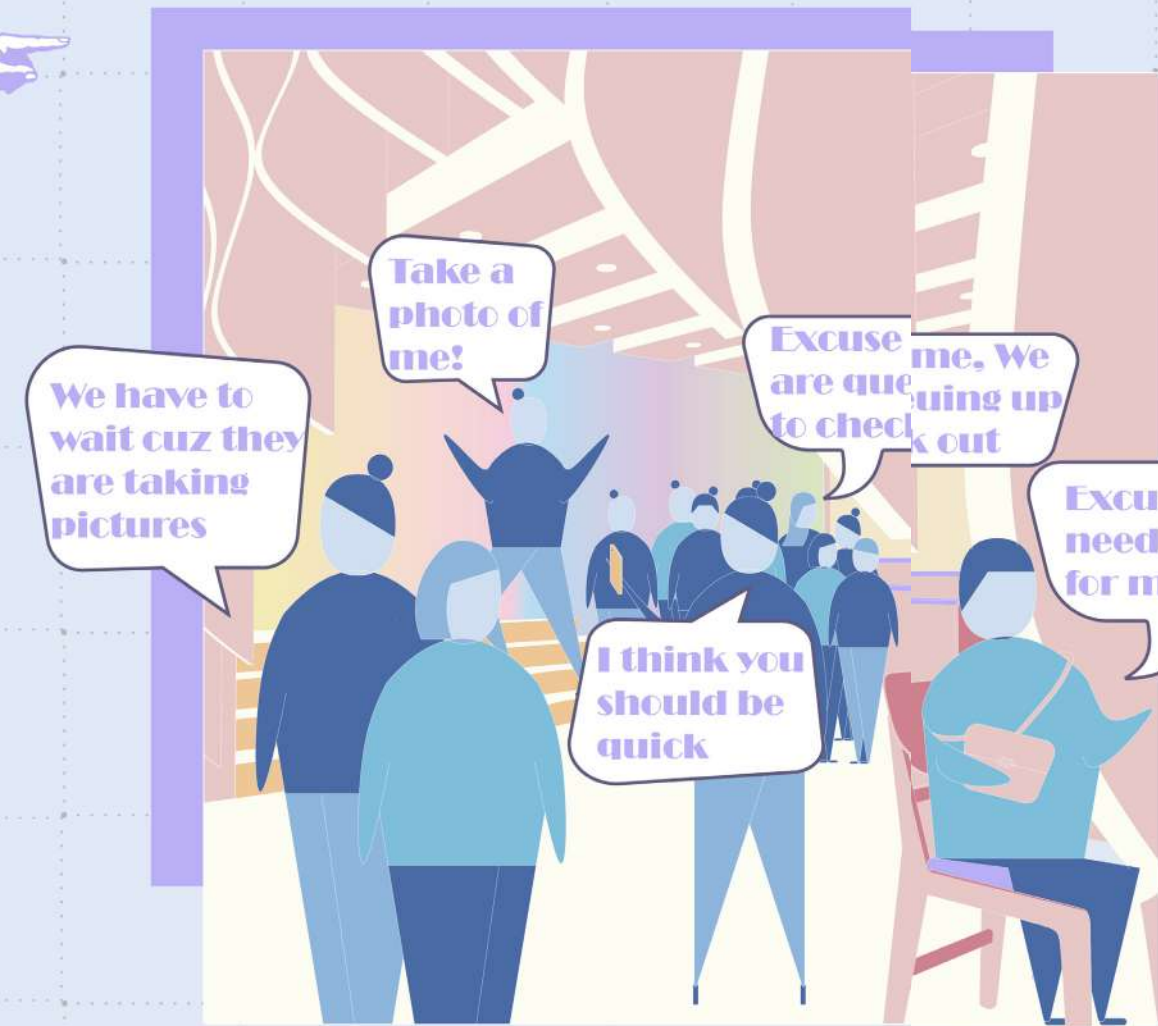
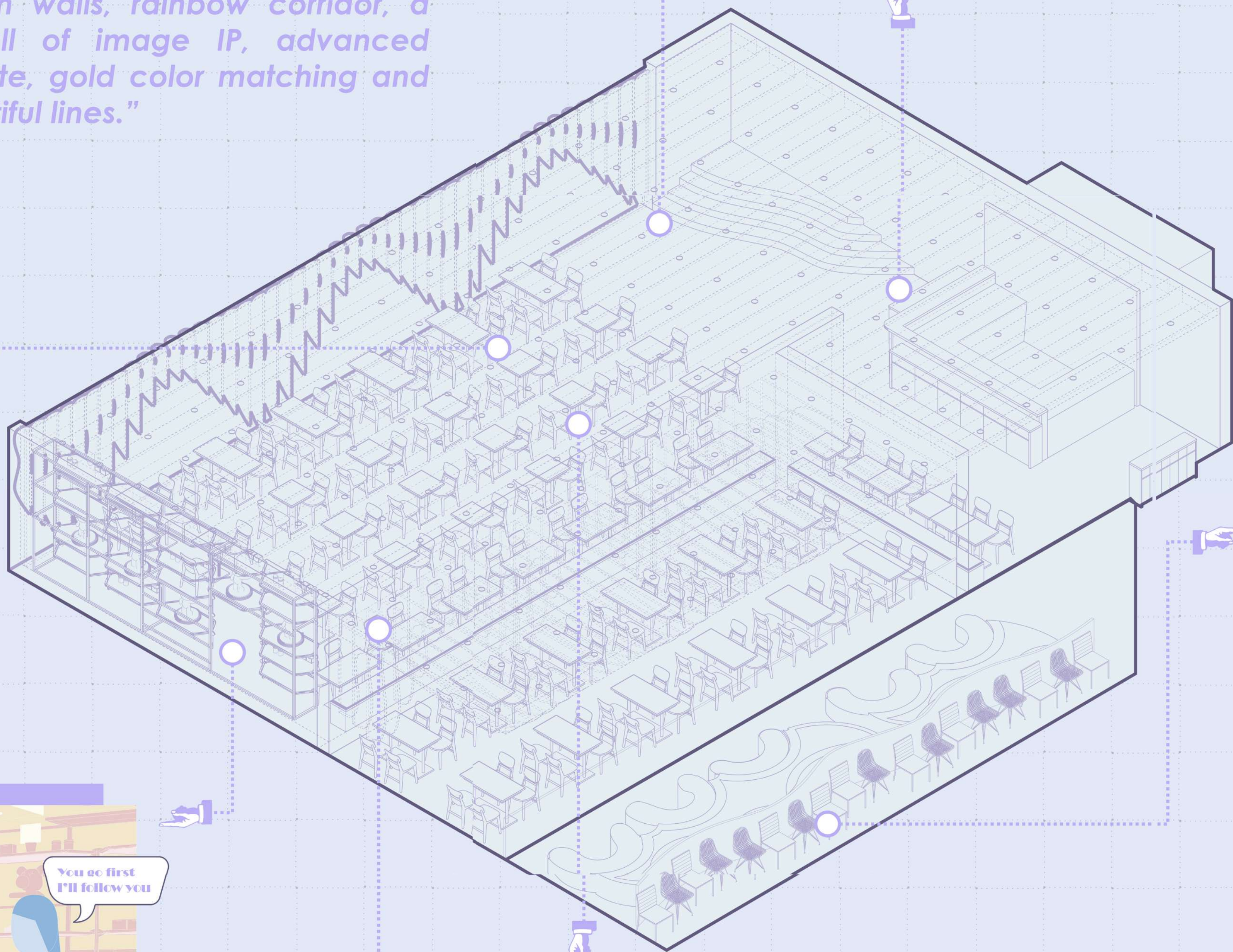


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# To. Fa. To.

“Unlike the brand's previous unified Hong Kong-style retro decoration, the style of the new To Fa To has changed greatly, making people feel like in the museum of TeamLab, and it is the favorite of trendy people. The newly upgraded restaurant adopts 800 m<sup>2</sup> art gallery-style cool style, two super-shocking LED curtain walls, rainbow corridor, a whole wall of image IP, advanced black, white, gold color matching and very beautiful lines.”



## SPECIFIC AREA A LED WALL WITH A WAVY STAIRCASE

### SITUATION :

The spare space in front of the LED wall, surrounded by tables, the open kitchen, the cashier and the entrance, is extremely congested, especially when people are taking pictures.



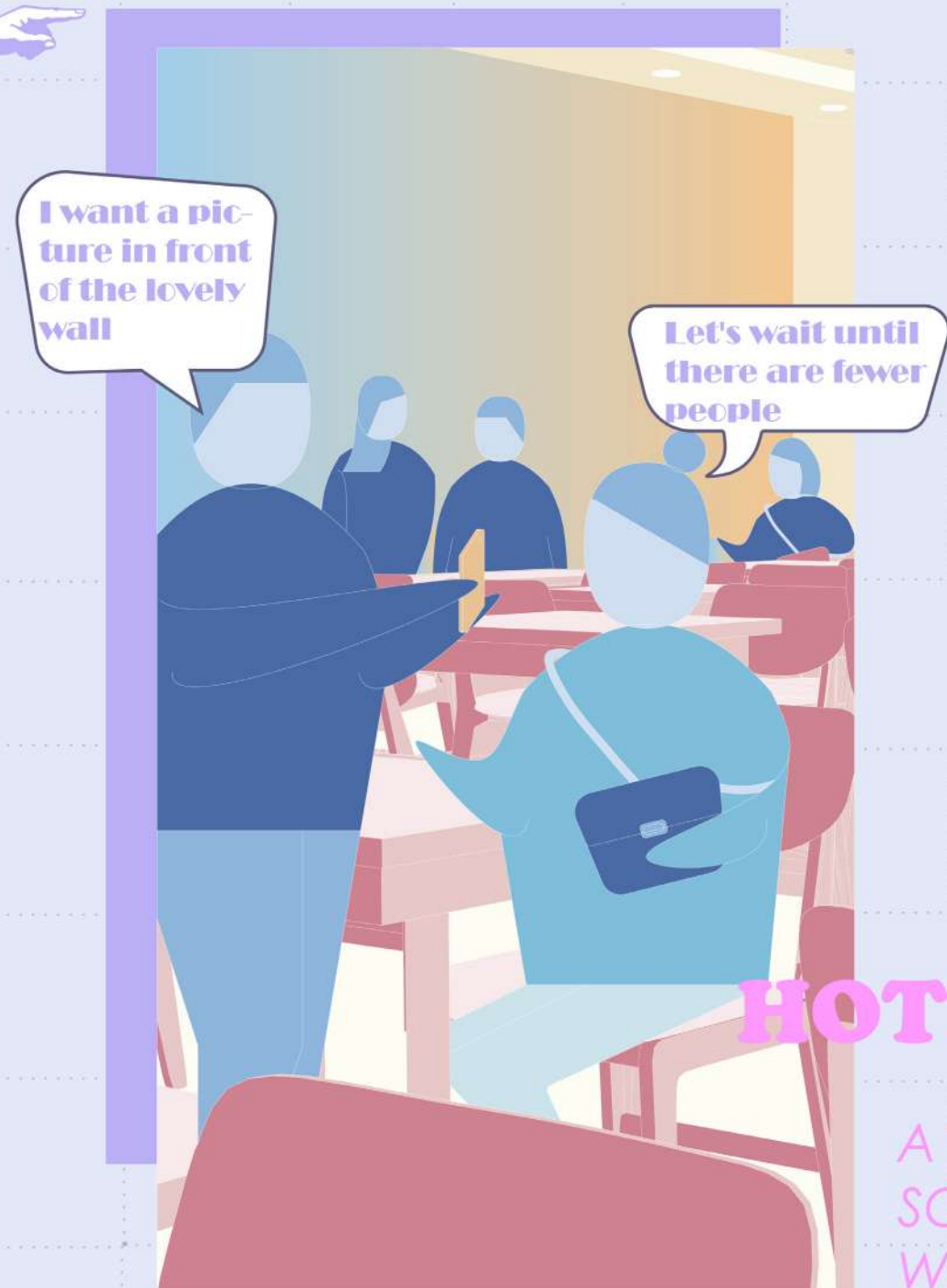
## QUEUING AREA

People always check the queuing status in the WeChat applet while waiting



Only one person can pass between the two tables

## TABLE & CHAIR



### HOTTEST POINT

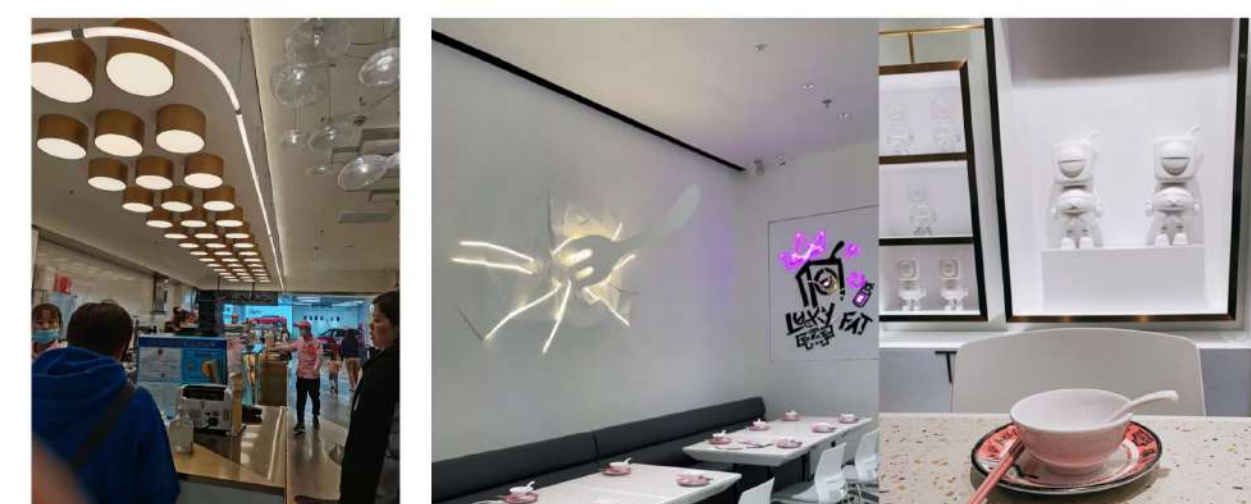
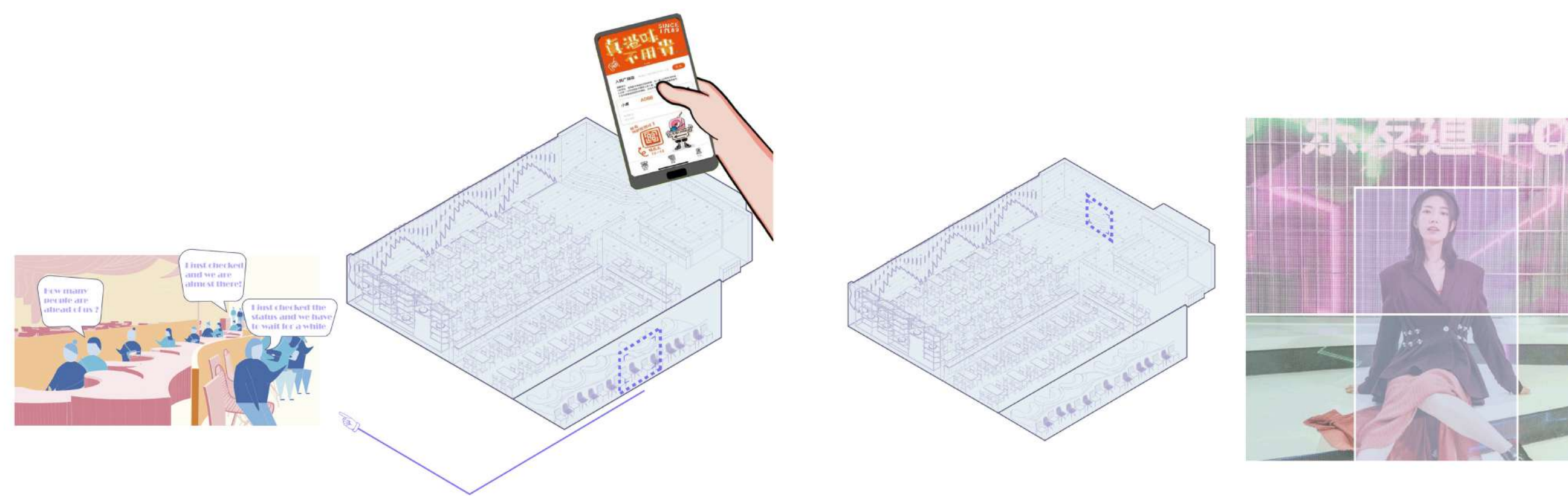
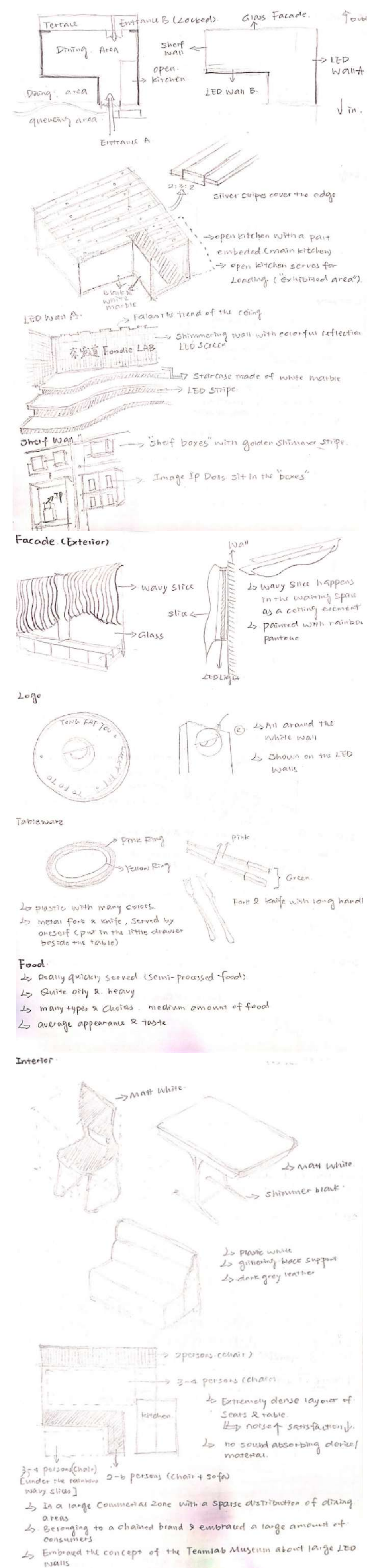
### SITUATION :

A LED WALL BEHIND THE SOFA MIMIC THE WAVY FACADE

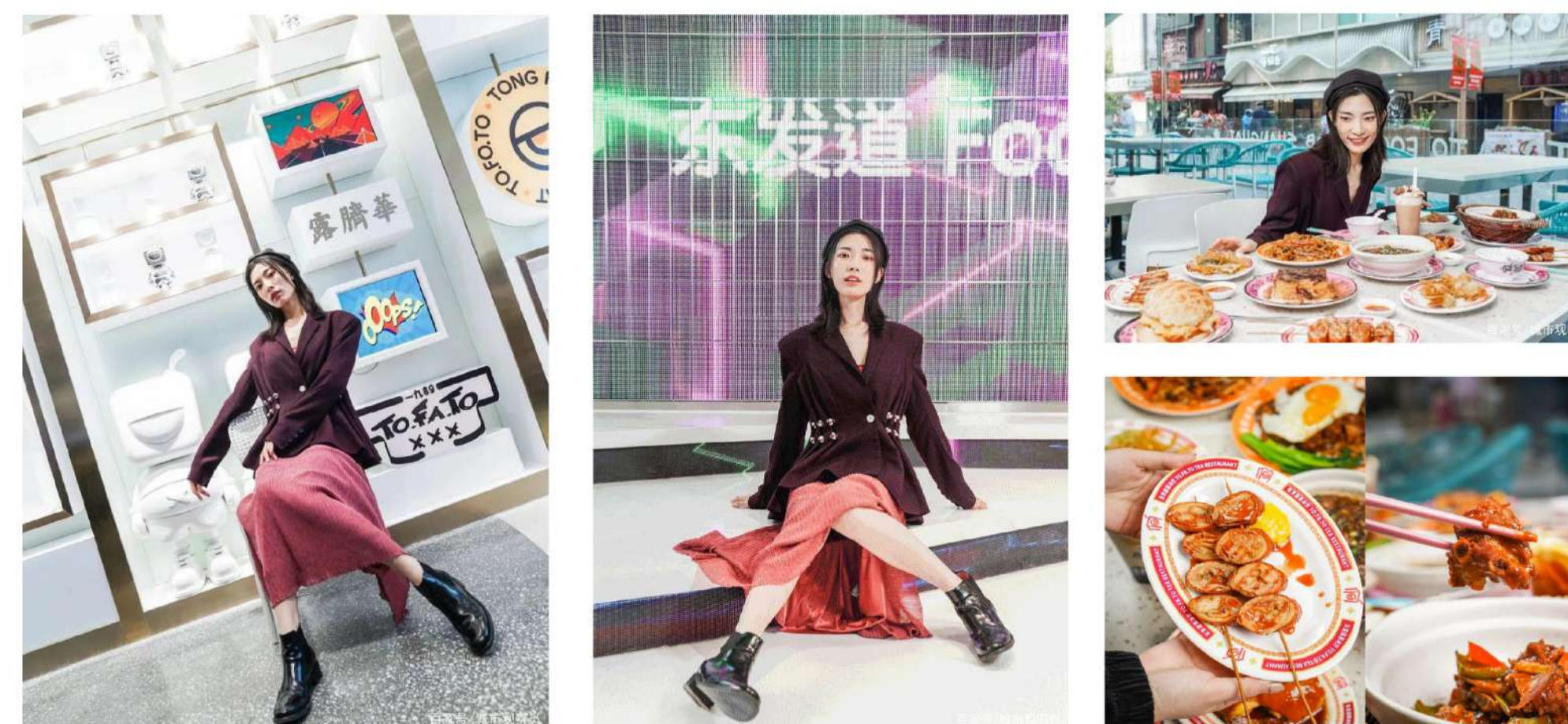
The flow of people will always become the background of your photos



TO FA TO is a very typical Hong Kong-style internet celebrity restaurant. Unlike the brand's previous unified Hong Kong-style retro decoration, the style of branch has changed drastically. The newly upgraded restaurant adopts art gallery-style, two super-shocking LED curtain walls, rainbow corridor, a whole wall of image IP, etc., advanced black, white, gold color matching for taking pictures. As the epidemic progressed smoothly, TO FA TO launched the WeChat applet for online queuing to avoid the large crowds, but the waiting time does not decrease as a result, with an average of about 1.5 to 2 hours. Due to the long waiting time and the large number of guests, the special set-up scenes are invalidated: because no matter what the angle, the shots are always full of others' heads. Perhaps for this reason, this new branch has developed 20 kinds of new dishes and new tableware as alternative gimmicks, but the food are really far from satisfactory. At the same time, the restaurant's live photos and social media photos demonstrate the hugest difference. Obviously, for marketing purposes, the merchants emptied the venue, found well-dressed models, selected filters, and attached various tags.



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# Antique Garden

“Different from the quietness and elegance of the door, the furnishings in the house seem to be a small "antique museum"! The surroundings are filled with all kinds of antique furniture, nostalgic magazines and newspapers can be seen everywhere. The space on the first floor is not wide, but it is slightly compact because of the sofas, wooden tables and chairs, translucent floor-to-ceiling windows, and warm yellow lights all reveal the petty bourgeoisie of Shanghai.”

## SITUATION :

The interior style of the cafe is decorated in a European style with dark yellow lighting, which seems to be different from the outside world for many years. The furnishings and accessories are dazzling, but the area is clearly divided, the guests do not disturb each other.

## SPECIFIC AREA



Each group of seats on the first floor has a background, and there are two sets by the window.

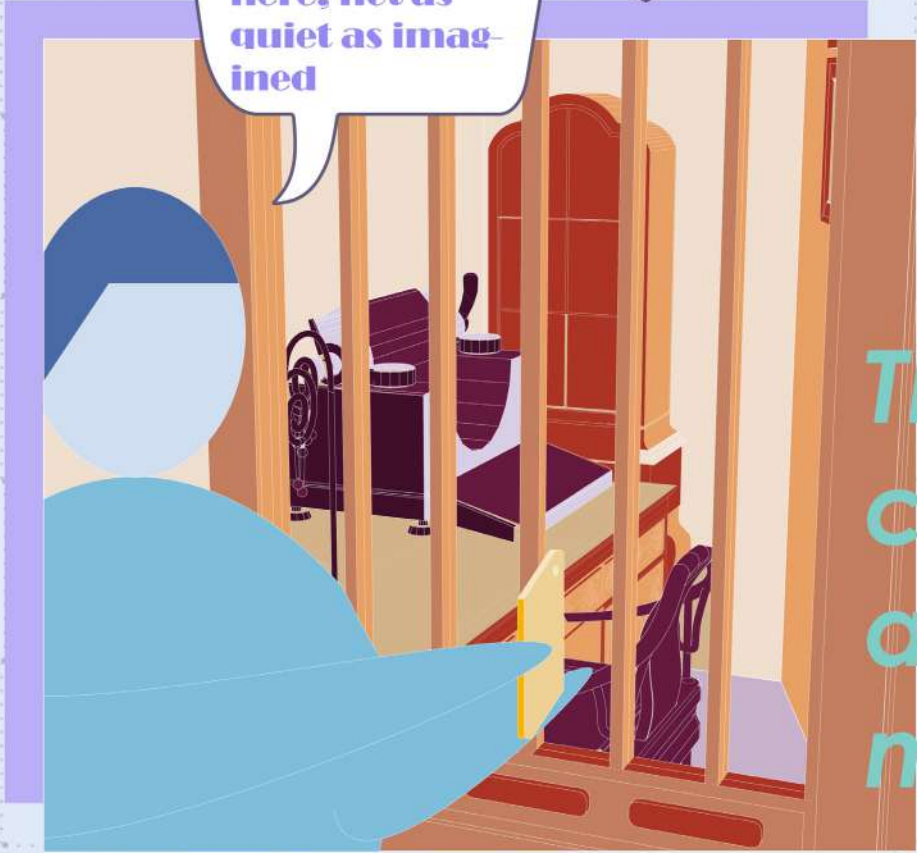


CONFLUENCE OF EASTERN AND WESTERN CULTURES  
**HOTTEST POINT**



## CONCENTERED DECORATIONS

WOODEN WINE CABINETS, DRESSING TABLES, OLD-FASHIONED TABLE LAMPS, RETRO PIANOS, PHONOGRAPHS, AND WESTERN CLOCK, ILLUSTRATION



## OTHER FUNCTION

The display in the cafe is all real antiques, and its main business is actually selling them.



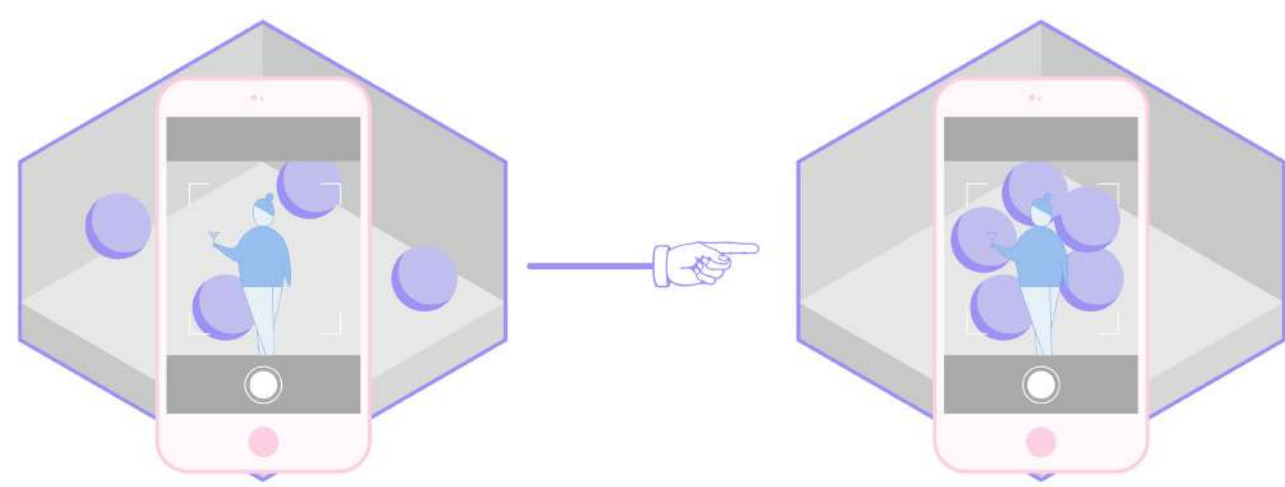
## SITUATION :

Free to touch anything  
The clerk is very cooperative to give you a place and turn on the lights for your photos

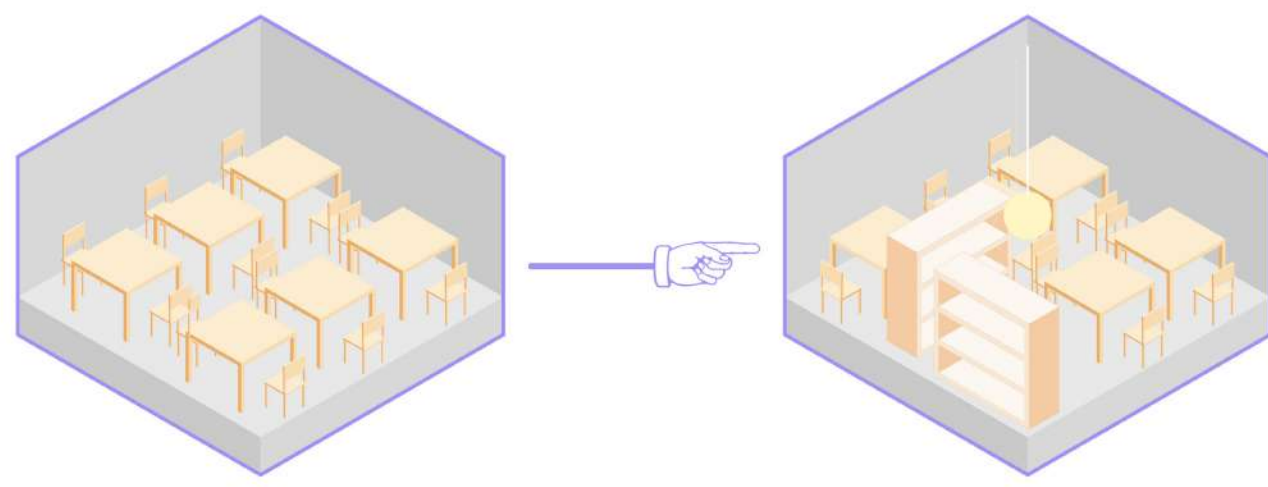




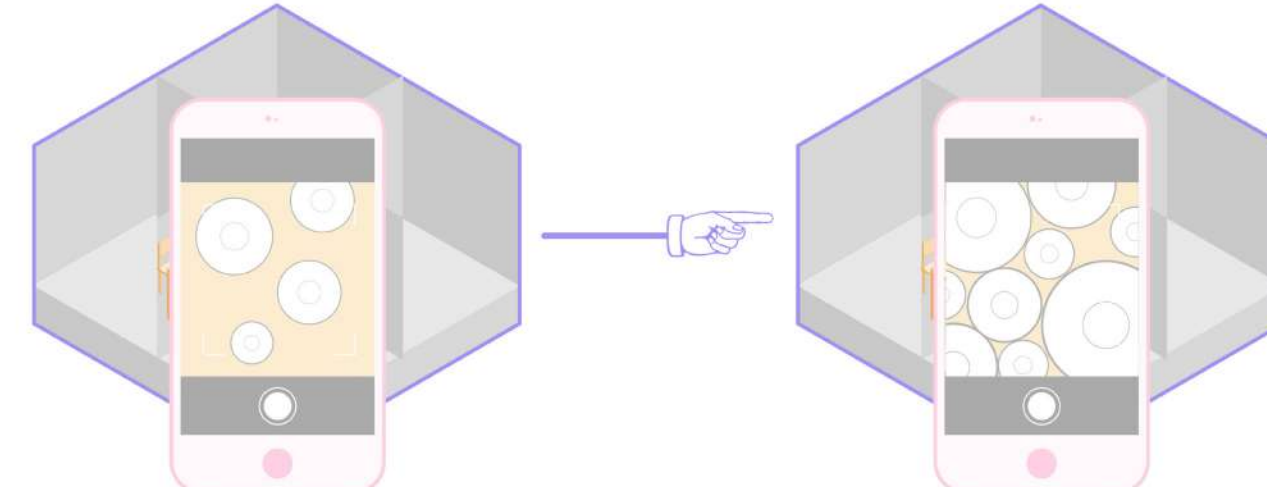




Gathering of decorations

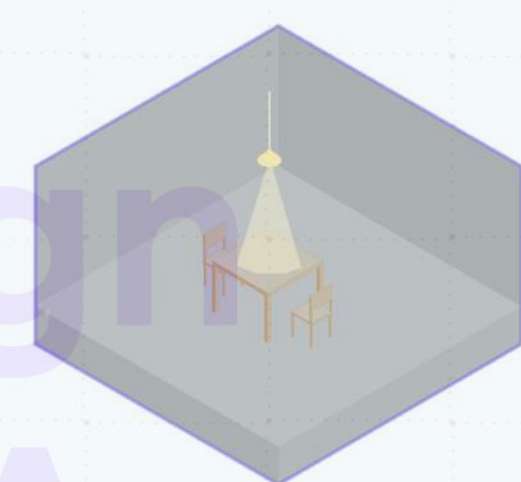


Adding space for new objects for pictures



Using large-sized tableware makes the food delicate and the picture full and splendid

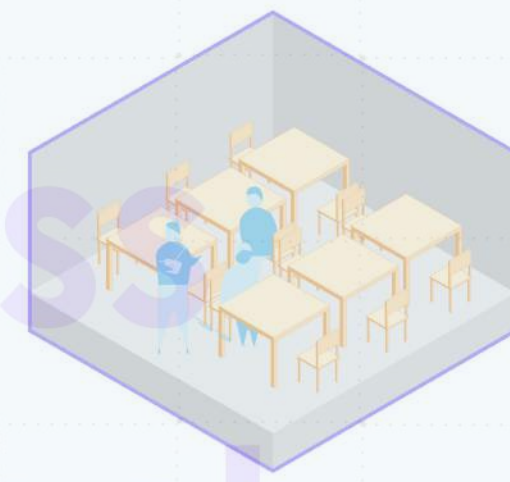
Design  
for A  
Perfect  
Photo



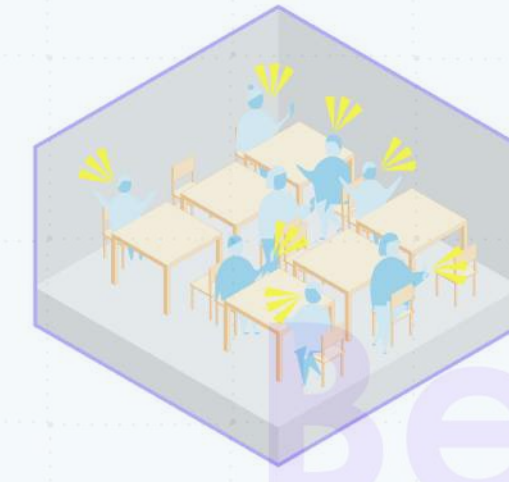
Extremely dim environment;  
Extremely colorful environment



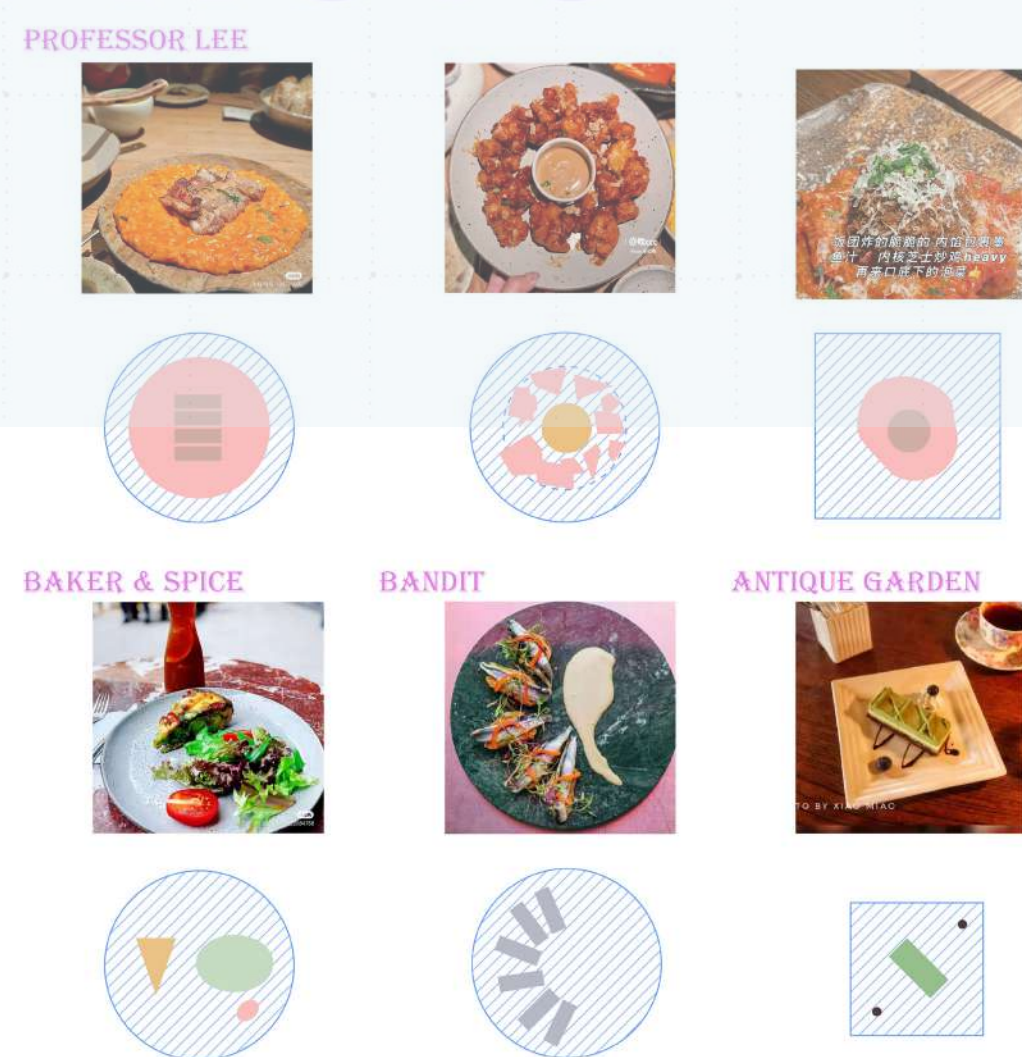
Possess  
the Most  
Basic  
Function



Reducing partitions and the  
distance between tables and  
chairs to increase flow of guests;  
Reducing privacy makes the  
space public but noisy



Be Popular  
on Social  
Media



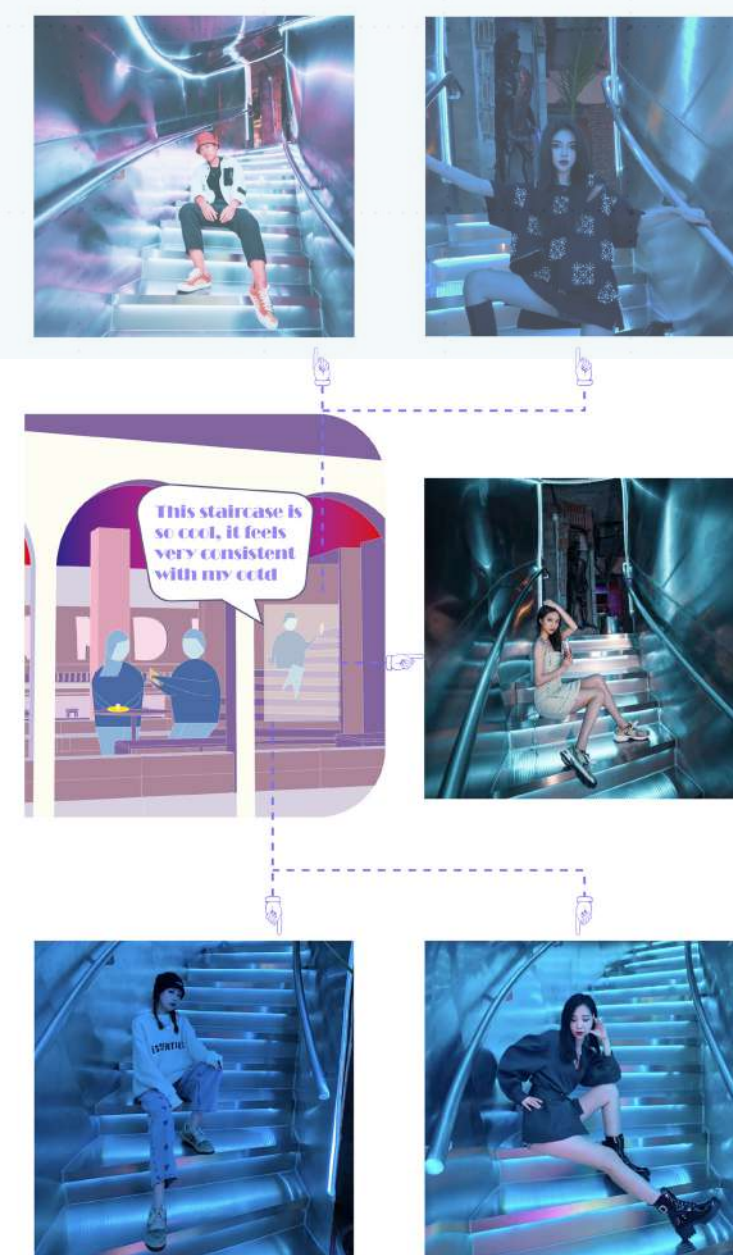
Variety of tableware and  
adaptability of food shape



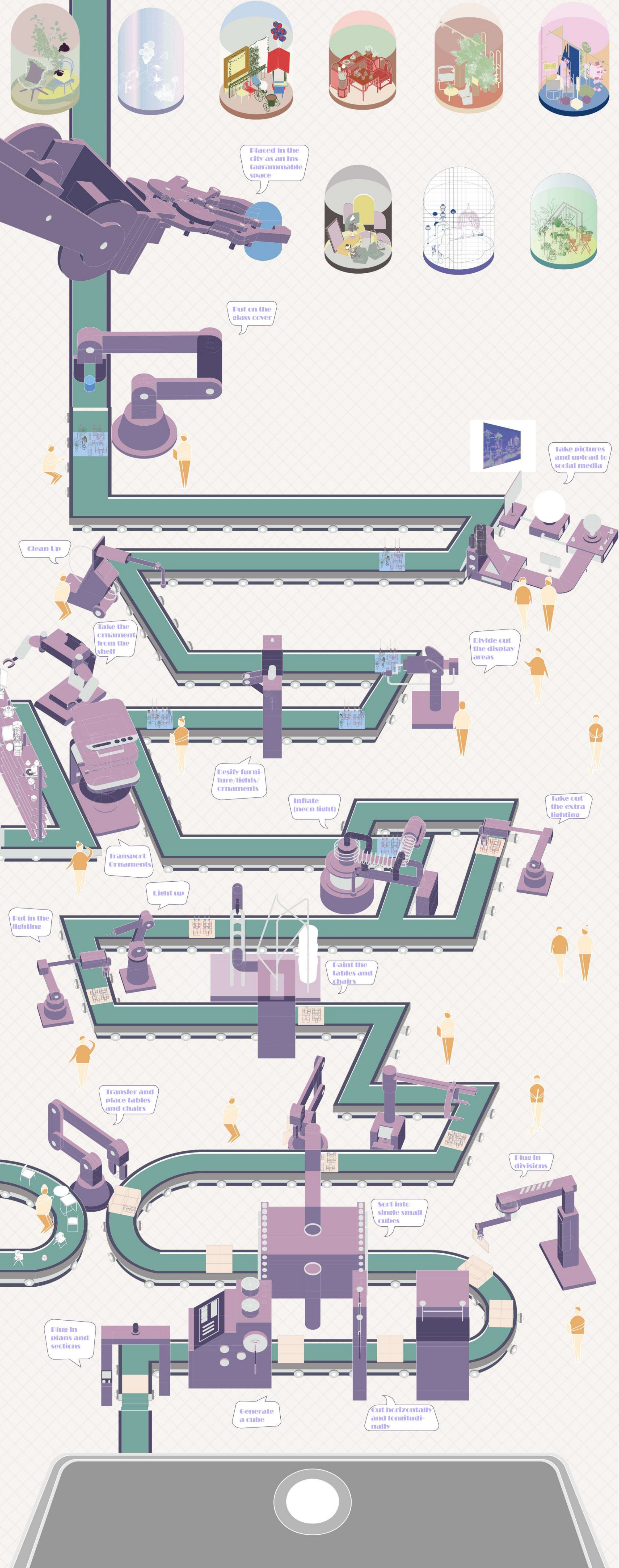
All kinds of health, vitality, funny,  
special hashtags endowed



Specific shooting scenes and  
shooting angles cause imitation  
in photos







The production of an Instagrammable space for any scope is similarly fixed as depicted in the manufacture line diagram.

- Drawings plugged in
- Become a general cube
- Divided into four sections
- Divisions generated
- Walls put into the cube
- Furniture selected from the category shelf and placed into sections
- Divisions taken out
- Bring the furniture together
- Paint the furniture
- Lighting set up
- Light-up
- Extra lighting taken out/ Inflate(neon lights)
- Ornaments selected from the category shelf and transferred
- Ornaments placed in
- Display area created
- Clean up
- Take picture, edit with filters and tags
- Upload on social media
- Glass covered added
- Welcome to the city!



Being instagrammable with popular styles and elements put a translucent glass cover on the design. Behind the well-defined photos, the space design is separated from the function and concept, neither creating a better environment in the real world, nor even really serving the photography in some cases. Therefore, based on the inevitable vigorous development of social media, what kind of presentation will we speculate about architectural space and its conceptual and theoretical development? Will “instagrammable” become the basis of the future of them?



Isolated Instagrammable spots ashes themselves, leaving the rest of the city alive for architects to protect and innovate

OR



Isolated Instagrammable spots ahes the rest of the city, potentially encourages them to go through the manufacture line to become activated again



# CONCLUSION

In our thesis, we believe that image sharing social media platforms will predominantly bring different developments in architectural configuration and propagation mode. However, in the past, printing media, wire transmission and official websites were largely utilized by architects and architectural critics in specific sections to explain architectural thinking through architectural drawings and articles.

However, the emergence of social media has left the comprehension method stacked by directional information dispersed to audiences who are used to easily swiping their phones.

Postman, in "Amusing Ourselves to Death", expressed that "media as epistemology." Text information, it is generally directional, dimensional and logical. Internet information is flat: the audience becomes less interested in abstract thinking or careful reasoning unconsciously while indulged in the social media world.

The purpose of information production is no longer to explain itself, and the internal structure is weakened and disappeared by the external demand of "good shot".

In this case, "traditional" architectural thought believes that images serve for design; while in social media time: designs and images largely, mutually influence each other, and at times even conflict with each other, creating an embarrassing existence, especially in instagrammable space. The basic requirements of space design indicate preferential treatment of photos and the design concept must be clearly placed on a surface visible to the masses.

However, we think this also represents a new architectural trend. Architecture no longer only requires architects to design and produce professional construction documents, but how to grasp public opinion from the online society and embed it into architectural designs are also part of an architectural design. How to express architectural opinion in the image era may be one of the most significant following developments in architecture.

We speculate that the future of architecture lies not only in design changes, but also in how to promote and shape awareness. Architectural design as one of the virtual commodities on social media, requires architects come back to take control of how to integrate with the image culture, and help construct a new awareness of architectural aesthetics for the public about "architecturally instagrammable" in the future.

At the same time, we also leave this question to everyone: what is an "architecturally instagrammable" in your mind?