

# The Architecture of Power

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## THESIS STATEMENT

Power is everywhere. It is a part of everyday life and there will always be someone in control for one reason or another. It does not matter whether or not it is considered good or bad, power happens regardless of the society or social setting in which one is placed.

At its core, power is the ability to control something or someone. In architecture, power is displayed through a variety of means such as symbolism, monumentality, choice of materials, the composition, as well as the meaning that the design is trying to portray.





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**DON'T  
BELIEVE THE  
LIBERAL  
MEDIA**

THE TRUTH ABOUT 2012

THE TRUTH ABOUT THE FUTURE



## Introduction

The question that is often asked is why power was the chosen topic out of a nearly infinite number of choices and possibilities. The answer is simple; power is everywhere. It is a part of everyday life and there will always be someone in control for one reason or another regardless of the society or social setting in which one is placed. In schools it is the principal, in prisons it is the warden, in countries it is the president or a supreme leader that stands above all else.

This isn't to say there aren't more personal reasons for the selection of power. When someone grows up at the bottom and they/ their family are subjugated by way of certain laws or limitations in a society, it is easy to desire power. This desire for power can become a driving force for change and it is through power that change can occur. While this does sound selfish, it is something worth investigating in the field of architecture. How do we design power? How do we design without power? These questions are the driving force for the research and will continue to be thought about as this thesis progresses and evolves.

The beginning of this thesis was an exploration of what power was and what it meant to have power. There have been many people who have tried to give it a definition such as philosophers, sociologists, as well as people that are enamored by power itself. In this research, there has been consistence with how others define power. There are only slight variations, but the core still remains. Power is the ability to control something or someone.

## **Foucault and Power**

In the book *Discipline and Punish* by philosopher Michael Foucault, power is a central part of his book as well as many of his other works. He defines power as a relationship between people in which one affects the actions of another. This is different than something like force or violence since those actions affect the body physically whereas power makes someone do something that they wouldn't do otherwise. Power restricts and alters the will of people. He goes on to specify that power is present in all human relationships and within society as a whole even if all power relations are unstable and malleable.

The next portion of Michael Foucault's focuses on the Jeremy Bentham's panopticon. The panopticon is designed with a central space surrounded by individual rooms or cells depending on the use. Foucault considered it to be a machine that produces the effects of power regardless of the use. It doesn't matter if it is an office, a school or even a prison because each individual in one of the cells is at the mercy of the observer and is permanently exposed to them. Just by the act of looking, the observer is in control.

## Glenn and Power

Another individual covered in my research is Molly Glenn and her thesis *Architecture Demonstrates Power*. Molly Glenn's definition of power traces back to the ancient times of the Egyptians and their structures such as the pyramids as well as tombs during this time and what they represented. Tombs to her are a way of permanence. Not just in an architectural sense, but in the way that the pharaohs are not dead and simply live on in the afterlife. The tombs represent that. It is a way of trumping the forces of time a death which gives an almost divine symbolism. The truth

the leaders manipulate the vocabulary of a culture in such a way that tries to manipulate someone or convey something to that someone.

To the individual, power is linked to the control over others as well as the status they hold. This is also portrayed in the architecture these people in power tend to create. Glenn claims there is a relationship between the leader and the building they cause to be built, the control over the construction, and the leadership exhibited by that control. She then goes on to explain that a leader's power does not come simply from a crown or throne, but instead the architecture of that leader. She uses labor as a means to show this. The homes of common folk generally take less time and labor than that of the leader's palace. The quality is also much better overall in a palace than that of a house.

The palace itself is monumental architecture. Of course with my research already is that monumentality is relative by scale and context. The point Glenn argues is that it always stands out from the ordinary buildings since they are built with the intent of making an impression. To Glenn,

a monument can be a memorial, a building that people use daily, a large structure like a pyramid, or even small like a decorated chapel, but it always makes an impression to the people who see it.

Next, she explains how people's labors cause the demonstration of a leader's power. It is the ability to mobilize and organize the labor needed meaning that the leader can call upon the entire community to participate in the building of monuments. Along with that organization/planning to glorify both leader and group along with the leader's own personal vision and drive, monuments become constructed. It is something greater than what the individual can create. Monuments show the ability to bring together works efforts, a skill that only the leader has.

The spectacle is another aspect of the architecture of power according to Glenn. This spectacle is a very powerful part of the architecture of power because it overawes people. It provides a singular and unforgettable emotional charge, linked forever in the viewer's mind with that particular site. The monument's ability to influence people and to have an effect



on them makes that building powerful. Monumental architecture embodies the leader's ability to control and affect his followers. It both shows the group his actual power and demonstrates his worthiness and capacity to possess that power. Architecture is a sign pointing to a leader's power.

She goes on to explain that the meaning/symbolism of a building is sometimes overlooked, but the intention of the architect's ideas and their goals for reality are still there. She uses the World Trade Center as an example of this. When the terrorists attacked, the building was seen as more than just a simple office building. The attackers found it to be a symbol of American Capitalism and financial hegemony. To add on to this modern dialogue, it is important to see the bigger picture in all of this. The Sears Tower topped the World Trade Center by 86 feet which was Chicago's way of asserting itself of New York as a dominant city in the US as well as the World. Glenn states that Skyscrapers are seen as a symbol of strength and economic prosperity which she uses the example of the Rockefeller Center's construction during the great depression as a way of instilling hope through the vision of an ideal city in New York. The opposite

of this is shown when the White House is shown during a crisis. The media televises the White House not because they're waiting for the president to emerge and make a speech, but instead it represents the office itself as a seat of political power.

The next segment is the more architectural side of Glenn's work. Which involves axial, non-axial, and central building orientations. As well and their effects on the power of a building. For an axial arrangement, she claims that axiality leads to the symbol of power. The aisle down the middle of a church is a path leading to a space of authority where one worships a god who somehow holds one's eternal future in their divine hands. The Roman basilica leads the supplicant directly to the ruler of the world. The Egyptian temple directs one to the embodiment of divine power and order. All of these buildings lead the user to the source of authority. Axiality represents authoritarian power. It is at the end of that axis which shows what the users of the building value and what has the most power over them.

For non-axial, she mentions that this composition allows for a user to experience a space in a more intimate manner. At the same time, it allows for a user to explore a space as opposed to being directly lead to something of power. The Ziggurat at Ur is a good example of this due to how people never meet God head-on and how they had free reign to travel anywhere inside the temple which is what made the experience more intimate and personal with worshipers. The ziggurat also used three main entries to gather people for a public worship/ procession. This non-axial alignment gives equality to the users.

This investigation of the non-axial is also applied to the cities and their respective planning. Glenn states:

“While Europeans were asserting the aesthetic superiority of crooked streets, Americans were converting many unplanned cities to gridiron plans with regular city blocks. Europeans objected to the gridiron plan because there is “no grand hierarchy of places in a grid.”

They felt that this lack of hierarchy indicated of a lack of sophistication within American

culture. This movement in America towards the gridiron plan was based on how our country emphasizes equality and freedom. By converting the streets to an orthogonal grid, lots were regularized to a standard size and shape, and bends in the road that emphasize buildings were eliminated, so that every building has an equal opportunity to attract the traveler, an equal opportunity to be accessed from the road. Americans value the gridiron plan based on the equality it embodies.

Glenn furthers this city investigation by explaining the use of pathways. One way that a path can be used is that they give access to buildings and have the opportunity to relate them to each other which creates direction and a way to orient people within the built environment. The next use of a path is their ability to lead to goals; and much like axially oriented buildings, they lead to seats of authority. Finally, gridiron blocks depict equality. By looking at actual architecture, we see that axial buildings, paths to goals, and perimeters are consistently associated with authority. The goals to which they lead are seats from which authority dominates. Non-axial buildings, like gridiron plans and paths that lead away from centers and

bypass goals, emphasize equality and freedom of choice. By understanding the variety of plans and compositions, we can understand that axial architecture is related to authoritarian regimes while non-axial architecture to more egalitarian regimes.

Glenn's concludes by explaining that architecture can represent the way a culture understands the world and that leaders use monumental architecture as a means to represent their rule and to demonstrate their power over the people that they rule and in doing so, they embody their rule in the plans of buildings as well as cities. These plans are visual means to display their power. Some use axial plans to direct people to a goal representing the ruler's power. Other groups choose non-axial plans to demonstrate the equality and freedom of community members. The relationship of the ruler to the people and where their power originates can be determined by looking at the physical symbols it produced in their architecture.

## Collaging Power

The next step from the prior research was to find a way to visually represent the findings and relevant information. This was achieved through collaging various images to attempt to find something that would visually show power. The focus was originally on monuments and their relation to power but had shifted throughout the various iterations. They were meant to be provocative since the goal of monuments is to make an impression. The first series had been a tool to show monuments in relation to their context both within a city as well as nature. The lesson it taught was that in order to perceive monuments in a powerful way, it is all about the context in which it is placed.



The next series was aimed at society and its leaders. The first image in the set was using various cathedrals which represented the religious side of power where a god is at the seat of control over their worshipers. Overlaying that are the various advertisements of popular companies with the likeness that you would see in Times Square.

This was a play on New York City's use of advertisement on their architecture since advertising can be seen as a way to gain the reputation for a product or a name. In addition, it can be seen as a way of showing the power of a company or corporation by making the product out to be something that the masses cannot live without and "controlling" them into buying into what is being sold.



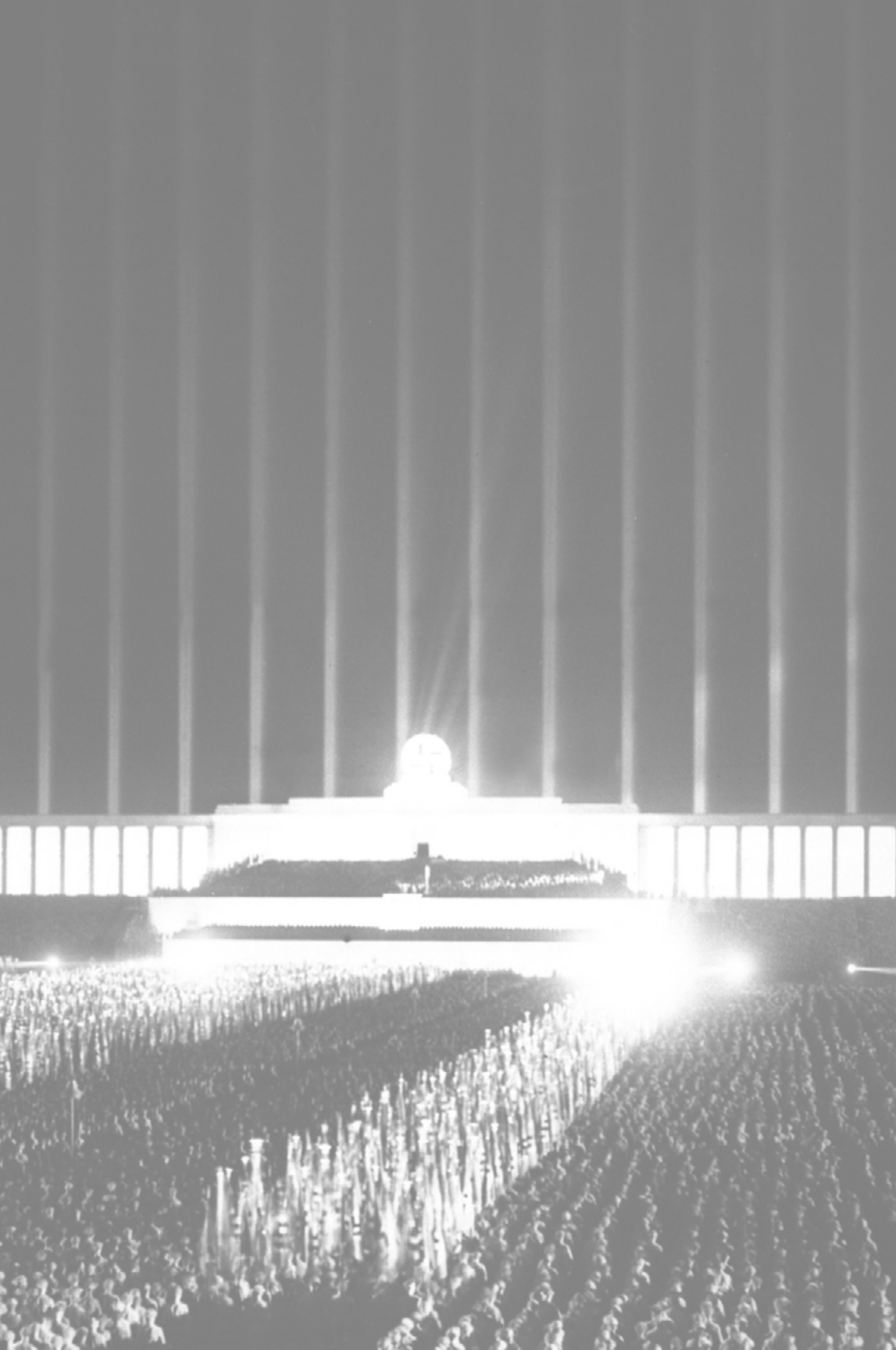
This was continued into the last image of the series which was an expansion of the previous image which was aimed at society and its leaders. This image represents the relationship between leader and follower as well as the central axis which leads to the large shadow in the background which represents the leader who controls the masses and the architecture they reside in. It not only achieves the provocativeness of the prior series, but it displays and communicates the power of the leader within the image in such a way that it feels like a propaganda for the leader.











# **[2] ARCHITECTURAL PROPAGANDA**

The next step was researching architecture that was provocative and with it was the discovery of architectural propaganda. Architectural propaganda communicates an idea through architecture with the purpose of influencing others attitudes, opinions and feelings about a specific topic. While this is a relatively new term being discussed, its roots go back the ancient times of the Romans as well a further back to the times of the Egyptians.

## **Augustinian Propaganda**

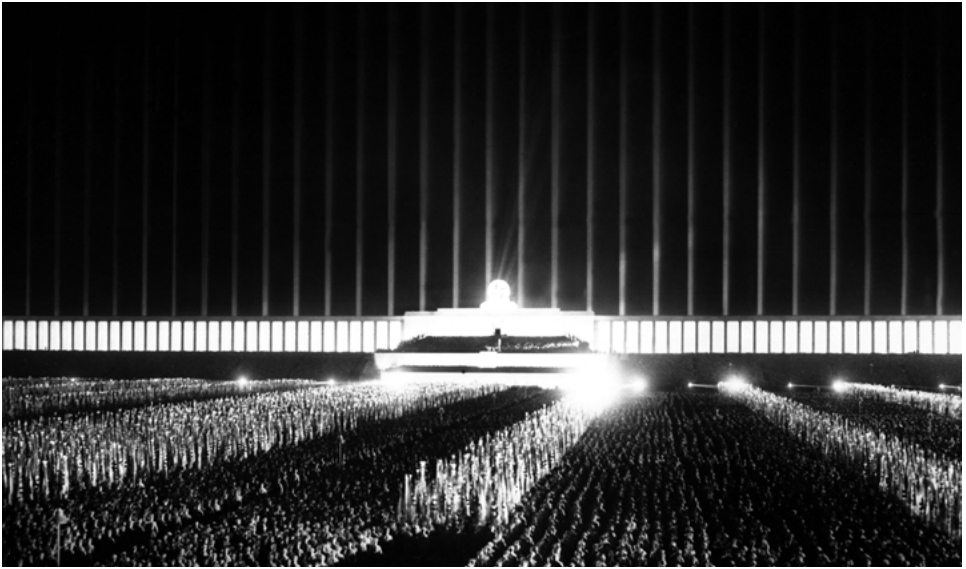
Perhaps the most notable examples from ancient times are thanks to the cleverness of Augustus, the successor to Julius Caesar, and his forum. The Forum of Augustus including the Temple of Mars Ultor was built to honor Mars and the victory in the Battle of Philippi in 42 BCE. It was commissioned by Augustus, though he was called Octavian up until this time. In order to construct the temple, he used the will of his father, the glorious Julius Caesar, as propaganda towards the city to gain favor. The goal of Augustinian Propaganda is twofold; in

the earlier days it was to establish power and order, the later days was to establish stability and peace.

Augustus's rise to power in Rome wasn't based solely on gaining public favor, but through getting his name around so that everyone knew him one way or another. He did this by way of coins. Roman currency was used by nearly everyone and with images depicting Augustus, it made him the face of Rome. There were a variety of coins minted for Augustus including equestrian coins depicting his prowess on horseback along with other coins depicting him as a hero based off of current events.

The other side of Augustus's propaganda was his emphasis on his lineage in the founding of Rome. He traced his lineage back from Caesar to Aeneas to Romulus and Remus, the sons of Mars, to attempt to depict himself not only as a worthy leader but as a divine figure. In the Forum of Augustus, this was shown in statues he used. There were the historical figures listed above, but to further cement this heritage, he used the

14 Alban Kings which gave the public a clear family tree in terms of birthright. In addition to his prestigious lineage, his forum showed many heroes and he was among them like he belonged there. I had made the comparison that it is like walking into the mansion of an evil mastermind where all the paintings and statues are of said mastermind showing just how glorious they are.



## Spectacle of Nazi Propaganda

1. Cathedral of Light,  
Nuremberg, Germany

Taking much of their inspiration from the Romans, the Nazis and their respective architecture was used as a propaganda. The goal of Nazi architecture was not only to make the individual feel small amongst it but also to overawe people as a means to get support for the Nazi party. The most notable example of this was in Nuremberg during the 1936 rallies located on the zeppelin field and by using high-powered searchlights that were pointed straight into the air in order to create the "Cathedral of Light". The other portion of their architecture was that of ruin value which meant that long after the Nazis had passed, they would have an eternal mark on the world through architecture that would beautifully decay over a long period of time.



2. Grand People's  
Study House,  
Pyongyang, North  
Korea

## Propaganda of North Korea

The next example of propaganda is the culmination of many years of control. One might even argue that it is absolute control. Due to North Korea's strict control and isolation, the architecture needs only to do the bare minimum by capturing a simple concept in order to convince the masses that they are living in a country of wealth, power, and progression. The citizens have no way to compare their architecture to the rest of the world which means that they are controlled into believing that there is only one way to practice architecture.

## Embassy as Propaganda

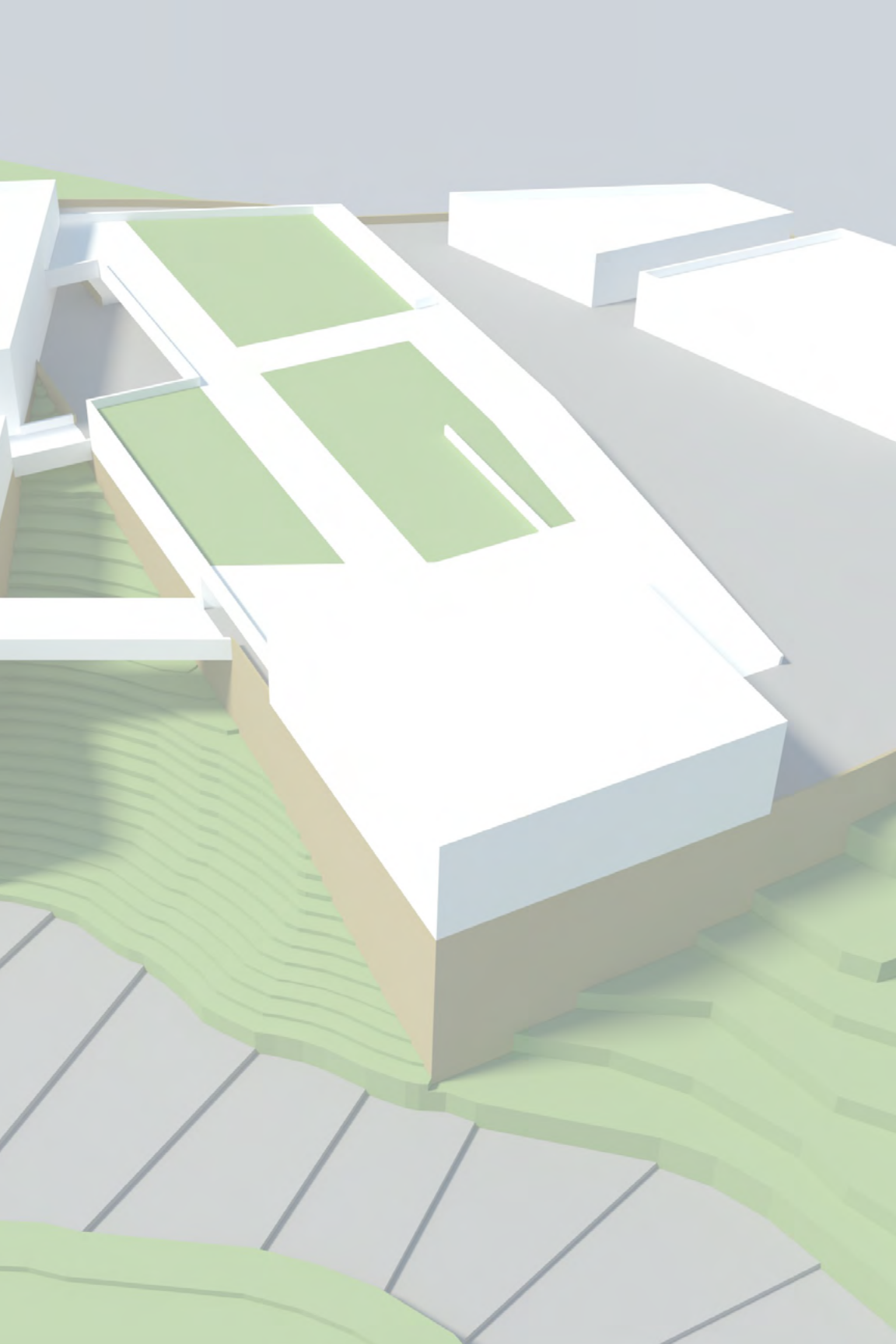
Since the goal of architectural propaganda is to communicate ideas to shift peoples' feelings about a specific topic using architecture, what would happen if the propaganda became international? Many countries around the world want to show other countries that their country is significant and important for a variety of reasons. Embassies are an excellent opportunity to communicate the ideas of another country on foreign soil when there is a site to design them. Many embassies are placed in buildings that have already been constructed prior, but there are several embassies that have been designed by architects over the years such as the old US Embassy by Eero Saarinen which was designed for London to perceive the United States in a specific way much like the new US Embassy by KieranTimberlake.

Saarinen's embassy is composed of interlocking windows that form the structure as well as the cut stone. There is also a large public square in front of the building. After September 11, 2001, the building became more fortified due to fear of attack and has since been surrounded by armed guards.

It is assumed that with Saarinen's design, he focused on the diversity of the nation. This possibly is why he chose the interlocking window forms. Another main aspect that follows this building is the large golden eagle perched upon the building's facade which depicts the idea that citizens in the United States are all united under the nation.

The embassy designed by KieranTimberlake is a large cube-like building composed of crystalline forms along the facade and focuses on energy management as well as daylighting and views. The entry into the embassy is a spiral. Spirals pathways are used not only to view the building from a variety of angles, but to become more intimate with the space before you enter. The crystalline facade is efficient and has a slight resemblance to the interlocking window spaces of Saarinen. The building is mostly comprised of glass which gives the impression of a transparency and openness in the US and the US/British relationship. What leaves the biggest impression comes in its pure and cubic form. It symbolizes a solidarity and permanence, but it shares an interesting dichotomy within its transparent facade.





### **Characteristics of Powerful Architecture**

Many of the examples researched during the progression of this thesis have a tendency to share various characteristics with one another. Going back to the previous work allowed for a comprehensive list of the characteristics of powerful architecture. While these are not set in stone, the intention is to use them as a tool for designing for power.

The first and most notable is that of the Axis. The axis is a means of directing. It can lead us physically as well as visually to something of value. It links itself not only in the architecture but also the rest of the built environment such as the landscaping as well and city plans. The axis is seen in Egyptian architecture such as the Temple of Horus at Edfu or on larger scales such as the city plan of Paris, France where it extends from the Arc de Triomphe to the Louvre.

The second characteristic is that of permanence. Permanence can be seen as something's ability to last in the built environment. Many ancient ruins are great examples of this. Many ancient structures were built to honor the gods and since some have lasted this long, it is a way of immortalizing a god through its physical history. This occurs in places like Athens where the Parthenon still stands (although it has been through some repairs over the last few centuries) as a way of immortalizing the goddess Athena who is the patron of Athens.

The third characteristic of power is repetition. Repetition can be a singular detail that is repeated throughout a design in order to not only unify but to make something more memorable for the user. If a specific shape or pattern are shown in a project and it has been repeated, it is more memorable due to it consistently occurring within the space.

The fourth characteristic, while it began primarily due to the building limitations of the time, people have a tendency design using simple geometry today. It helps to reinforce permanence, but they are not synonymous with one another. Simple geometry shows our mark on the natural environment between the dichotomy of organic and inorganic forms.

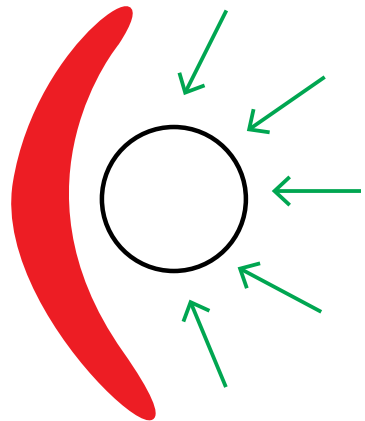
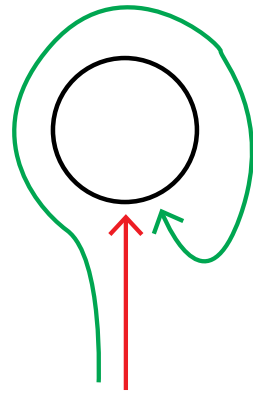
## **The Temple of Athena**

To Further the ideas and design using these characteristics, sketching and modeling were implemented. After brief deliberation amongst peers, the idea of designing for a god was decided. It was not going to be just any god, but an ancient god which has been only discussed through their mythology. The god that was chosen was the Greek goddess Athena. The next question that is often asked is about the choice of Athena as opposed to more prevalent god such as Zeus or even a god from another religion. Athena is a goddess who represents more modern ideals as opposed to many of the ancient gods before her. She represents wisdom and the knowledge it takes to become wise

as well as representing war in a mindful and strategic way, unlike Ares's violent war. She is revered by Athens as its protector and gifted the citizens the first olive tree which has since become a symbol of peace.

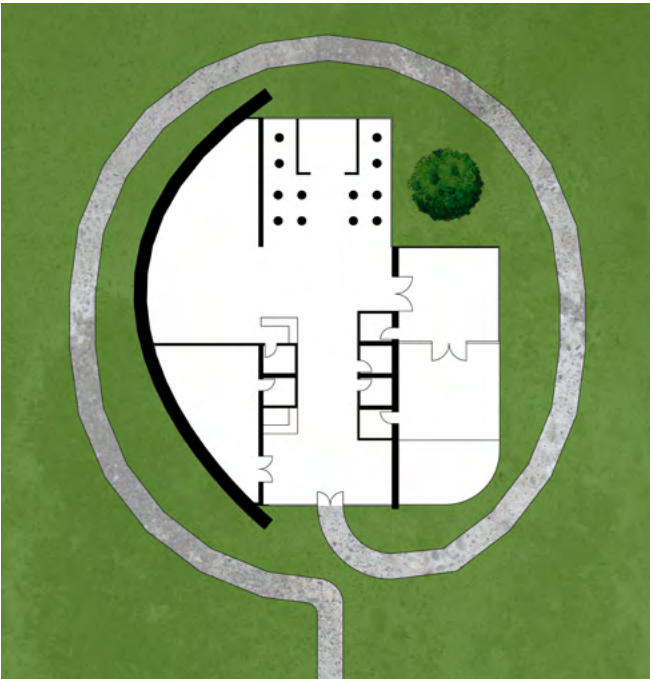
The program of this design was a temple featuring various amenities and design choices based on symbols which represent Athena. The temple is aligned on the main axis which was also aligned with the path which had wrapped around the temple like a snake. This was done as a means to understand wisdom how it comes from pursuing knowledge as opposed to simply obtaining it. In the form was a large impenetrable wall which represented the aegis Athena wields in battle and in defense of Athens. Formally it protects the library and part of the worship space where Athena rests.

The temple's amenities were based on the various stories that occur in the mythology that Athena is part of. The first was an area to teach and learn the craft of tapestry based on the story of Arachne;





the tapestry weaver who competed with Athena in a tapestry contest. For Arachne's hubris in making a controversial piece about the gods, Athena transformed her into a spider so that she may weave forever. The next amenity was the metal-working space where people would teach and learn metal work which was based on the story of Hephaestus, the god of the forge, and his lust towards Athena. This was met with less than stellar response since most of these interventions felt artificial and were not designed well and could be



## The School of Athena

It was with this feedback that the next stage of design would be able to come to fruition. The first step, since the temple did not have was a site or any form topography to indicate some form of context, was to find a site. The site that was chosen was theoretical because it allowed for absolute control and manipulation. To add to this control was the material used. The model was sculpted from plasticine, which is a putty-like clay that doesn't dry, which allows for the manipulation of the site at any given time. This theoretical site took the form of a mound with a winding path leading to the top which flattened into a plateau and shortly thereafter had large pieces cut away and merged in other places in order to form a dynamic landscape.

Throughout the progression of the temple design, there was a need for the reevaluation of the program that would work for more than just worshipers of Athena since they are all but extinct. The reevaluation has transformed what was once a temple into something that is more appropriate for the modern way of attaining wisdom which is through education. By using a school, it



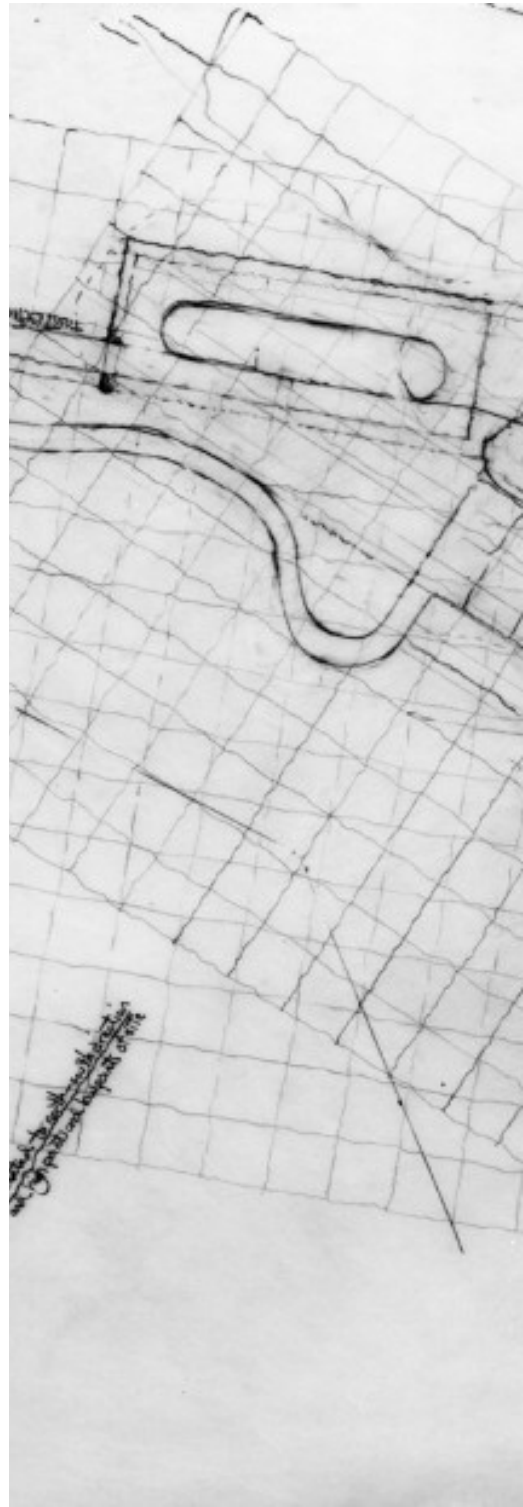
allows for the goal that was originally intended for the temple which was the pursuit of knowledge and wisdom. In tandem with sketching and modeling, the investigation of case studies acted as a tool to further inform the overall design.

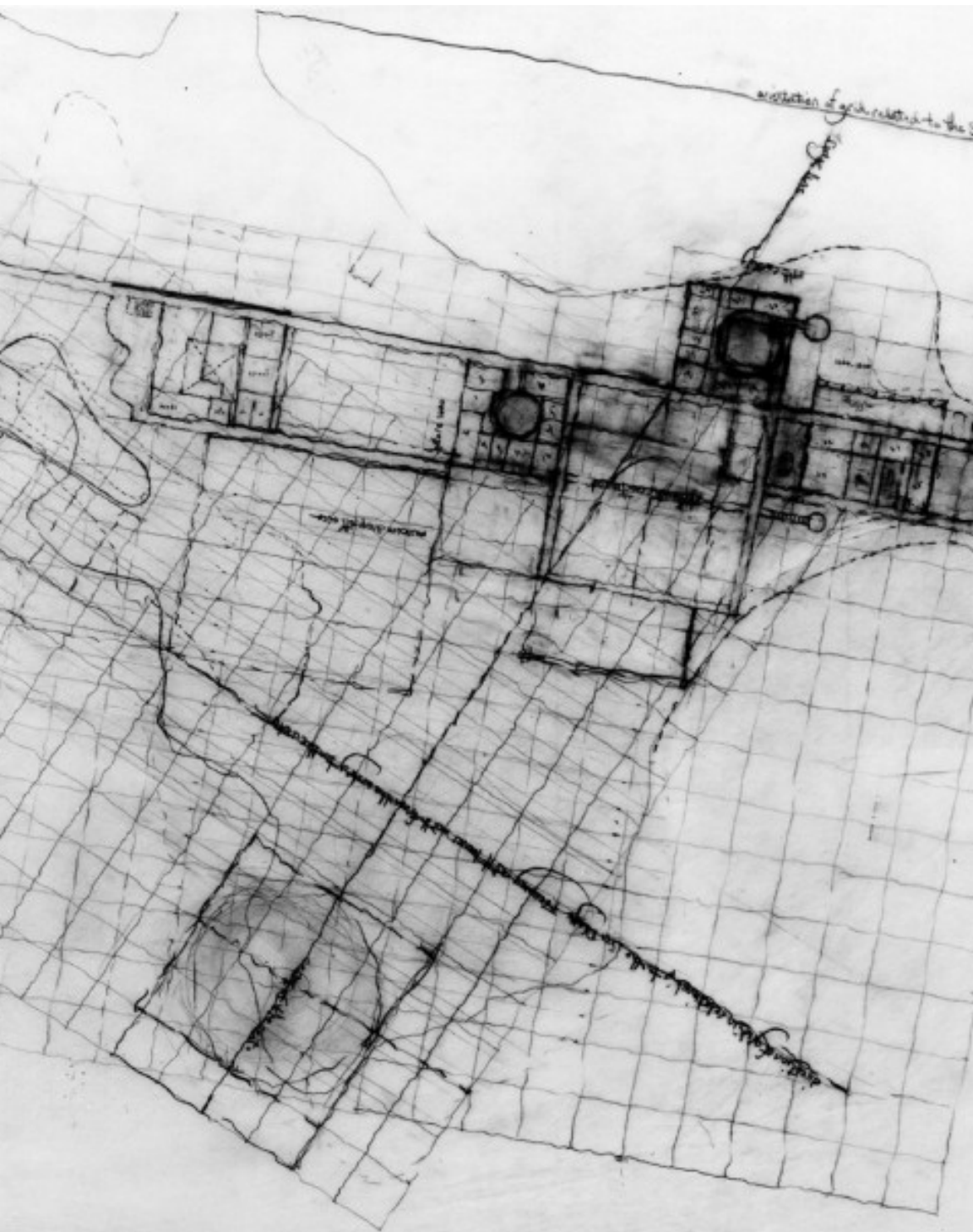
The Getty Institute by Richard Meier is an example of a large-scale educational design. Richard Meier had designed his campus through several various means. The first was due to his inspiration by Italian gardens and hill towns since the landscape of Los Angeles fits the European ideas of permanence, specificity, and history while making an impact of the overall landscape which creates a dichotomy between both landscape and the thickly built form. This is while retaining the American ideas of openness, flexibility, and innovation which gives way to forms that are mostly open or use glass to create an opening. By combining these ideas, Richard Meier's design creates harmony within the design and it is achieved by balancing the two dichotomies while still creating an impact on the landscape that is both strong and intentional.



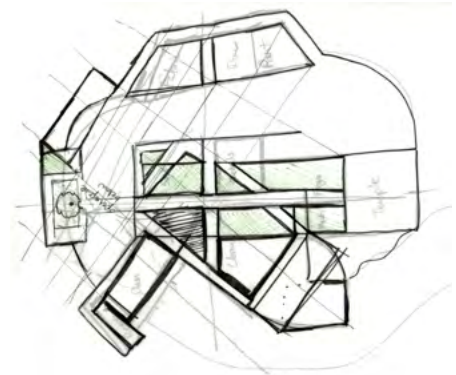
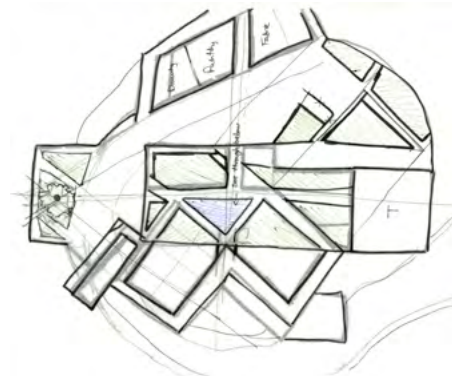
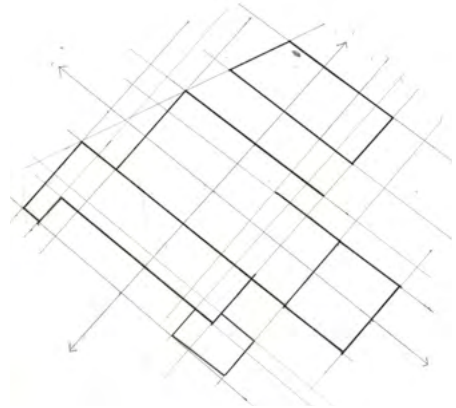
Richard Meier's next steps had used two underlining grids of different size in order create strong visual lines throughout the campus. Along with the dichotomy above, this became the inspiration to create ley lines that would help to reinforce the overall layout as well as the design within the School of Athena. The difference between the two was that the grids that were used in the Getty Institute were two Cartesian grids of different size while the grids in the School of Athena were three grids that were focused along a different axis in order to create a visual connection that would eventually converge when the three axes are to connect. This convergence would hold something valuable and commonplace between the other axes.

3. Getty Center Sketch with Competing Grids, Richard Meier

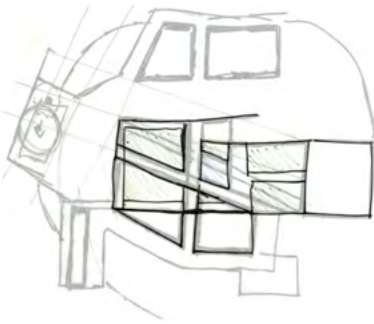




As the School of Athena design had progressed, the relationship between spaces became meticulously placed; each with their own reasoning and intention. The point of convergence where each axis intersects as stated prior, became the resting place for the olive tree; the symbol of peace. This holds meaning since each axis will converge here and unite follows the idea of peace. Along with that, the olive tree in regards to Athena is the reason Athens had recieved its name. The fountain near the tree represents how Poseidon had lost the contest to gift the city by giving the city something they did not need which was sea water.



The meaning of the School of Athena should retain a balance of the obvious and subtle. It becomes obvious to those who would learn in the school since they are exposed to the narratives in which they experience while in attendance. In a way, it is as though the individual were to receive Athena's gift of wisdom by pursuing and gaining the knowledge to succeed. At the same



time, there should be steps within the design that allow for the obvious to become obvious to every user. This idea should connect itself back to architectural propaganda in such a way that the message from the designer to the user is communicated clearly as well as explicitly.

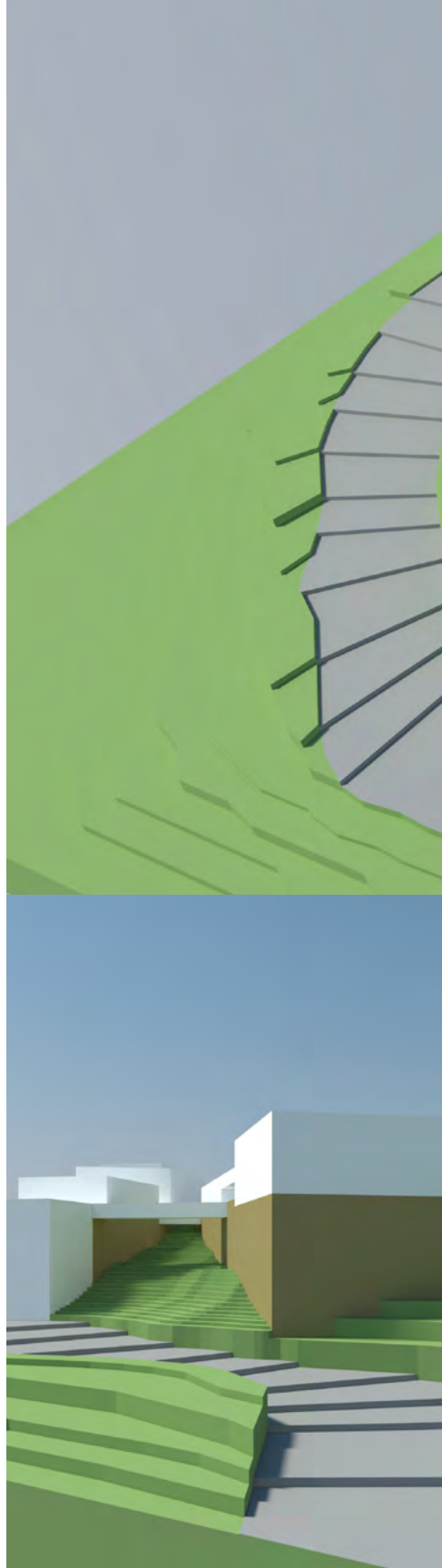


In order to become more subtle, certain details such as the plan layout should indicate the certain details and design choices that relate to the overall design for the school. The only other way to see these subtleties is through understanding the relationship between each space with another space. For example, the forge, while in tandem with the metalshop, acts as a built in heating mechanism for the entire school.

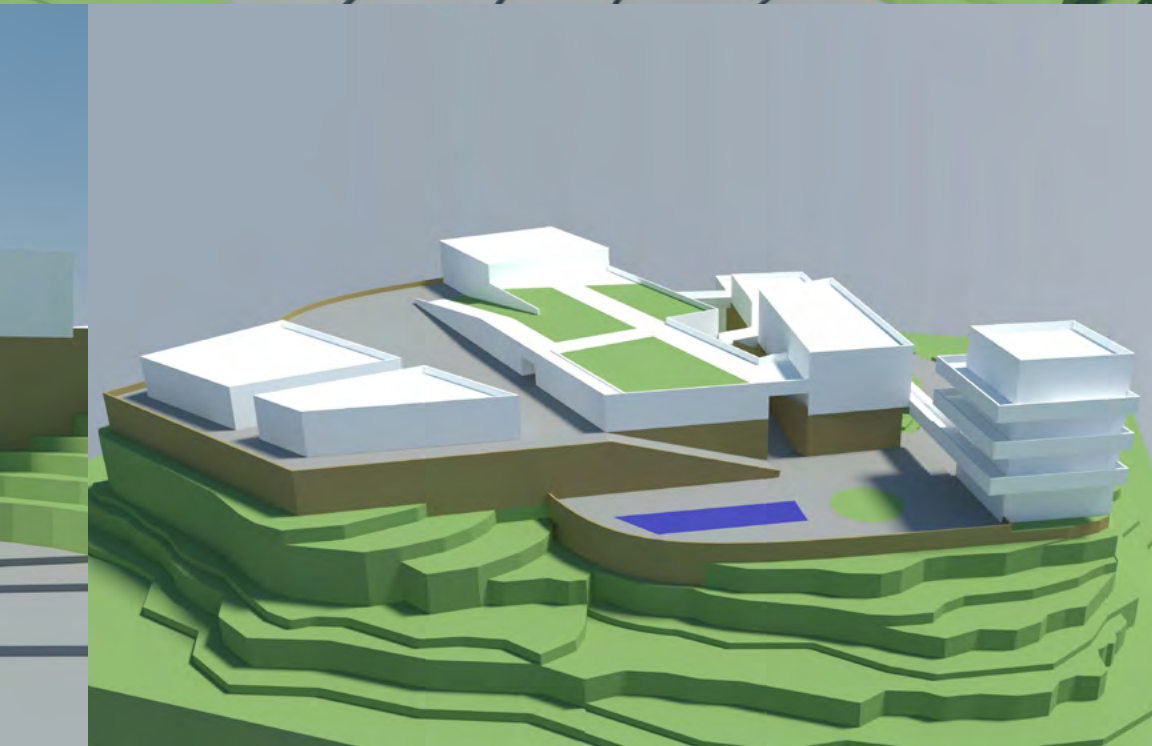
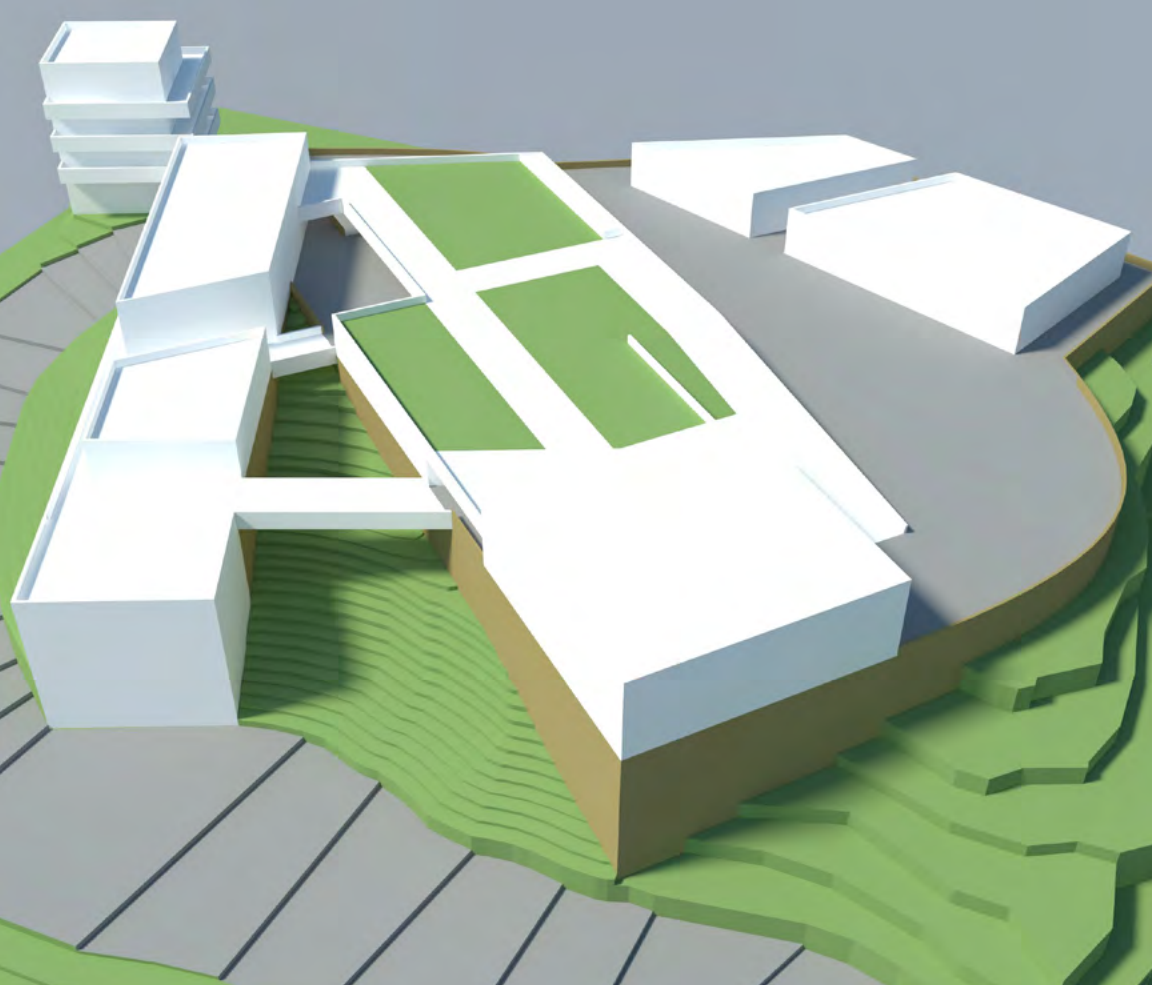


Another instance is the temple itself. It is perched at its highest point and compositionally, it is the most visual dominating of all the buildings even though it is not the largest. The temple stands at the front on the approach to the site and is located on the main axis of the school.

The School of Athena in this current state is in massing and there is a plethora of untapped potential and has the possibility to continue evolving as the thesis becomes more refined. As more research occurs as well as case studies are to be worked on, a better understanding of power in architecture will unfold. The current characteristics of power are classical in nature and are subject to change as research for power in architecture approaches a less classical. There is much potential for exploration and research such as the various forms of civilizations and governments as well as their specific architecture and how it could evolve. Another possible path could be investigating movements in history and their architectural responses. This could include investigating architecture based around a specific meaning or concept or even being able to understand how concept is understood architecturally.









E. ISTANBUL LONDON BRÜSSEL

Achse des Exils - Axis of Exile

STÄNDIGE SCHNITTANSICHT  
1:50 000

# [4]

## THE POWER OF MEANING

### Shifting the Focus of Power

After the School of Athena design, this thesis began to shift into a study of various architectural concepts and styles in order to understand the meaning or concept behind an architect's design. This is because the research prior to this moment ended up using the narratives and stories of history as a counterbalance to the design itself. While this usage of narrative was not a bad idea by any means, it became a crutch to the point where the design itself could not demonstrate power even with the design steps relating to this more classical power within architecture.

Architecture is powerful through its meaning or message which is displayed as a design aesthetic or an architectonic movement in the design. An architect has the power to influence other by crafting this meaning or message by using architecture as a medium to communicate to users their design intent or even their own personal ideas. Of course, ideas and concepts and their perceptions vary from person to person and can be used in a variety of ways and mediums. Such things include illustrating concepts such as efficiency, functionality, improvement of the quality of life, to engage people, create communities, to be used as a politically charged propaganda, or to even bring out a specific emotion. Architecture is a world of meaning and the number of meanings it can encompass are endless. In the next section, there are various studies that have been explored and began to create the foundation for the final part of this thesis.





## Toledo Glass Museum - SANAA

### 4. Toledo Glass Museum Exterior, Toledo, Ohio

The Design for the Toledo Glass Museum is one that celebrates the art of glass. The reason SANAA's emphasis on glass is due to the history of the city that the design located in. Toledo, Ohio is a city known for its history of glassmaking and manufacturing. Each aspect of the design utilizes glass in a very specific way.

The first approach is glass as continuous transparency which is displayed through the exterior form which consists of large panes of glass that seamlessly wrap around the facade which leave the exterior with no visible corners. The interior mimics this by

removing all semblance of corners from the plan (for the exception of private spaces) which allows for the users to view through the entirety of the building. This is also the reason that the mechanical and electrical systems are located above and below the glass walls.

The second use of glass is through the process it takes to make glass. In this case, it is the glassblowing furnaces that serve as a method of heating the space year-round while also serving its primary function to make glass blown art which is utilized by the various classes it provides for its students as well as the general public.

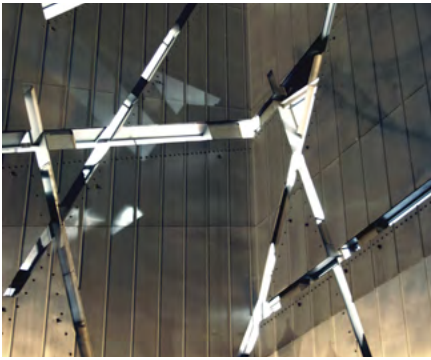
Overall, this design focuses and celebrates a material and is geared towards the functional and aesthetical aspects of glass in architecture, and while it is a building rich in the understandings of glass, its meaning can be difficult to understand if the user doesn't understand the importance of glass in both a contextual, as well as in an architectonic sense.



## **The Holocaust Museum - Daniel Libeskind**

5. The Holocaust Museum,  
Berlin, Germany (Aerial View)

The Holocaust Museum, designed by Daniel Libeskind, is a piece of architecture that is layered with a variety of meanings. In order to understand the meaning behind his architecture, one must begin to understand the intricacies and design steps that Libeskind takes to make such an iconic building. Of course, using subject matter such as the holocaust can be an arduous process that requires treading carefully with the design so that the user can experience the



6. The Holocaust Museum,  
Berlin, Germany (Facade  
Voids)

space in such a way that they too can understand the holocaust on an emotional level even if that level is simply an emulation. Is it insensitive to emulate something that leaves scars the world of Judaism? To put it simply, that answer is left to the user as they perceive the space.

When designing this museum, Libeskind was especially conscious of history as it relates to the holocaust during the events of the World War II as well as its identity and importance in the world today. This concept is depicted in several ways; the void and the axis. Libeskind uses the void in order to shape specific spaces that could never hold an exhibit which he attributes to the erasure of Jewish history.



7. The Holocaust Museum,  
Berlin, Germany (Aerial View)

The other use of the void is a means to cut through the composition and ultimately forming an axis throughout the “zigzag” building. Formally, this zigzag is more symbolic that meets the eye. For the rationale for the zigzag, one needs to look no further than the religious symbol of



Judaism itself; the Star of David. The form is an abstraction much like the physical unfolding of the Star of David which is segmented by the various voids.

In terms of axis, Libeskind uses a number of axes in order further depict the history of the Holocaust; more specifically, the various paths chosen by those who experienced the Holocaust directly. This is done in 3 ways since there are 3 axes to choose from while exploring the space:

The first axis, the axis of continuity, is the longest axis and it displays a variety of the fragments of Jewish history that were found, compiled, and archived during the years. This series of spaces, unlike many of the other spaces located in the museum, functions the most like an actual museum despite being disjointed from the other sections of the museum as well as acting as an interactive timeline for the users.



8. The Holocaust Museum, Berlin, Germany (Axis)



9. The Holocaust Museum, Berlin, Germany (Continuity)



10. The Holocaust Museum, Berlin, Germany (Garden of Exile)

The second axis, the axis of exile, represents the troves of people who had to escape from their homelands due to the takeover of Nazi Germany and had to emigrate elsewhere. At the end of this axis rests the Garden of Exile, an outdoor standalone structure made of pillars with a plant-covered canopy above it. The garden itself is meant to be confusing and surreal as though the user was traveling to a new and unfamiliar land.



11. The Holocaust Museum, Berlin, Germany (Holocaust Structure)

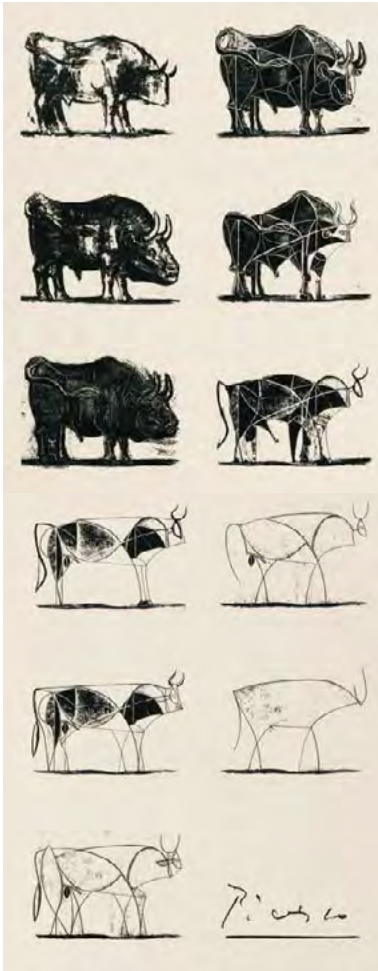
The third and final axis, the axis of holocaust, is a large standalone structure standing 66 feet in height containing nothing but a dark and empty interior for the exception of a sliver of light that penetrates through the top of the space. It can be understood that the intention of this space is to represent the dark time of the Holocaust and the light being a manifestation of hope during such dire times.

Another notable piece of the museum is one of the exhibits that takes place along one of corridors located on the ground level of the museum. The official name for this exhibit is Shalekhet (Fallen Leaves) and was created by Israeli artist Menashe Kadishman. In this space that honors the victims of war, Kadishman created over 10,000 faces cut from heavy iron plates and cascaded them along the floor of the corridor. This creates a unique experience as the user walks through the space. Not only does the user feel unbalanced from the ever shifting ground, but they hear the eerie sound of the iron faces hitting against one another. It is considered to be the most notable experience in the museum and stimulates the senses.



12. The Holocaust Museum, Berlin, Germany (Iron Faces)

The Holocaust Museum begins to generate many questions about space and how it can be used to influence the user. In this particular case, it can be seen that it is not only a historical awareness that is inherent in the space, but also the



13. "The Bull", Pablo Picasso,  
Lithograph, 1945.

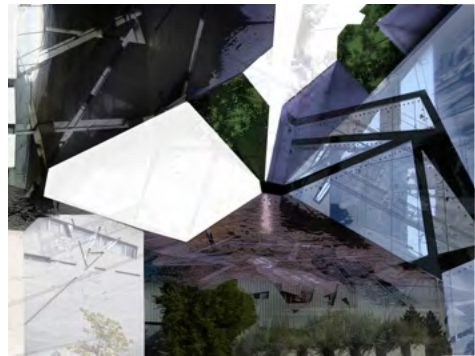
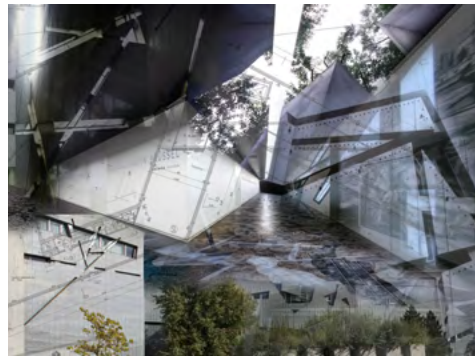
emotional aspect that Libeskind intends to evoke so that the user experiences the space on a deeper level. As opposed to simply learning about an event like the holocaust, people can understand it through the emotion that a space can generate.

## Collaging Meaning

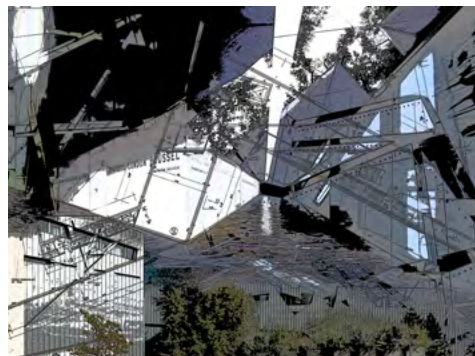
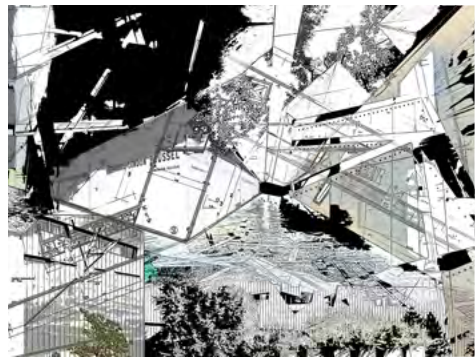
To continue the research of understanding the meaning of a space, several studies were conducted. Collage, a medium that occurred in the earlier stages of this thesis, became to study the Holocaust Museum on a deeper level than simply researching the building and its architect. The intention of this collage series was to not only to create abstractions of the built environment, but piece apart the architecture down to its smallest possible unit; the concept itself. It is much like breaking down something to the atomic level in order to test and eventually understanding at its core. Pablo Picasso does this in his work called "The Bull" which is series of drawings that attempt to break

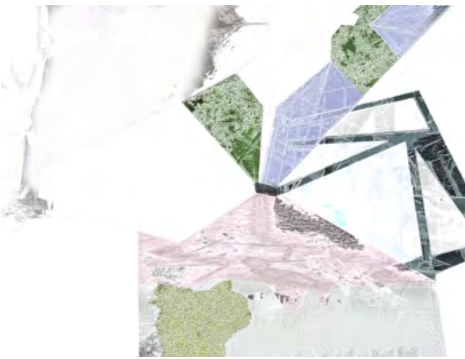
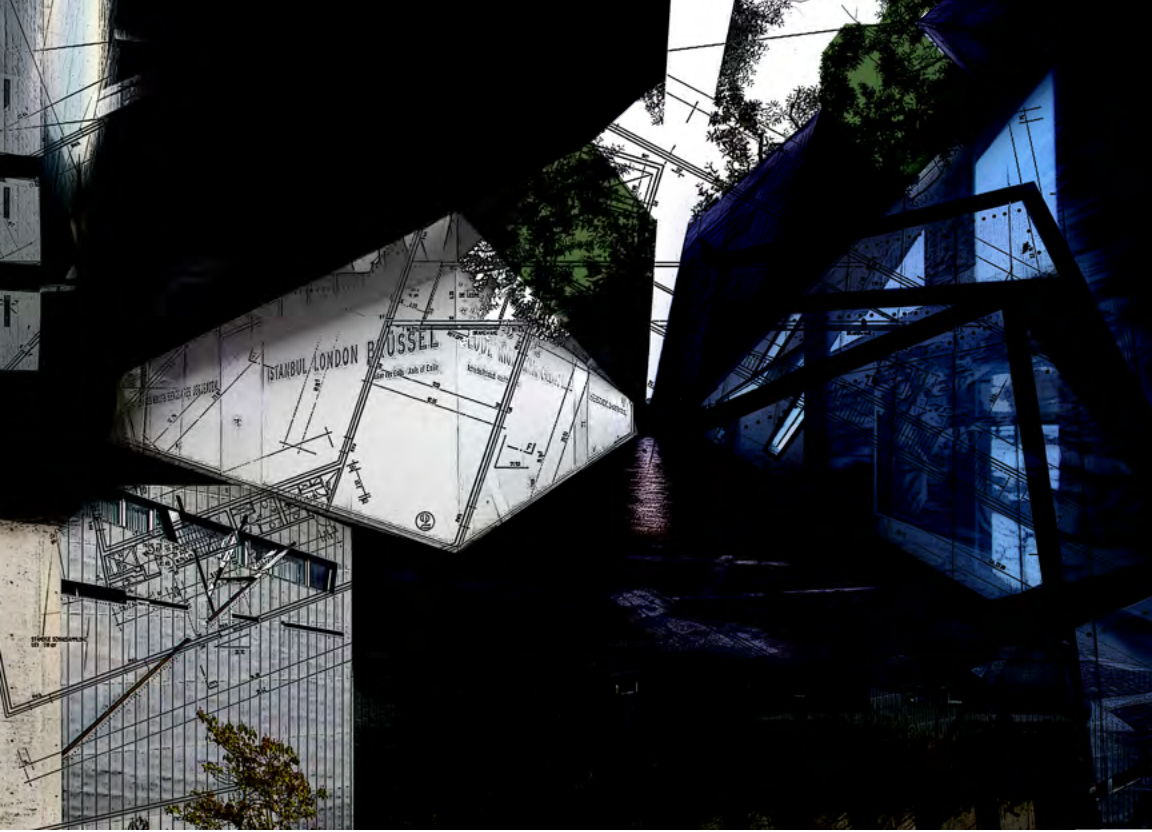


down a bull into its simplest elements while still being able to capture the essence of it. By breaking down the Holocaust Museum to in another media such as a collage, it could extract the core concept or even reveal new meanings that were not inherent through a simple description or a glance at an image. Ultimately, this can be seen as a method of visually deconstructing a subject which is ironic since the subject itself is considered a piece of deconstructivist architecture.



The first collage in the series (see top image) was a blending of the media and acted as the base image for the future manipulation of the collage itself. This image could be considered neutral due to its mostly monochromatic composition and lack of contrast. There is nothing that can be extracted outside of being an amalgamation of the various architectonic elements that are contained within the images used.





The most successful example (see image above) retains elements from its former collage, but it is easier to understand and interpret the composition as it relates to Libeskind's intent for the Holocaust Museum. While the composition clearly shows the elements of void and axis, a design step that Libeskind heavily focused on, the element that was extracted from this can be seen from the contrast of dark and light elements in the collage. The dichotomy of light and dark was

an architectonic element used throughout Libeskind's design, but it is best used at the end of the Axis of Holocaust within the large standalone structure. As mentioned previously, this large room features a sliver of light which it represents hope within a dark event such as the holocaust. For Libeskind light acts as symbol which can easily be viewed by the user and can ultimately influence the overall experience of a space.

In the end, this collage has deconstructed the museum down to its simplest architectonic unit which was interpreted to be the dichotomy of light and dark. To put it simply, it is similar to using reverse engineering in order to understand the concept of a work. Through deconstructing architecture, one can begin understand how a meaning or a concept can be translated into a visual or architectonic element. It is from these elements that architects and designers can build an understanding of human experience within a space and can potentially

design in order to influence the experience that users have within a space. That being said, it is important to keep in mind that regardless of the design intent that is put forth, every user will have their own unique experience and response to the built environment.



# [5]

## AN ARCHITECTURE OF POWER

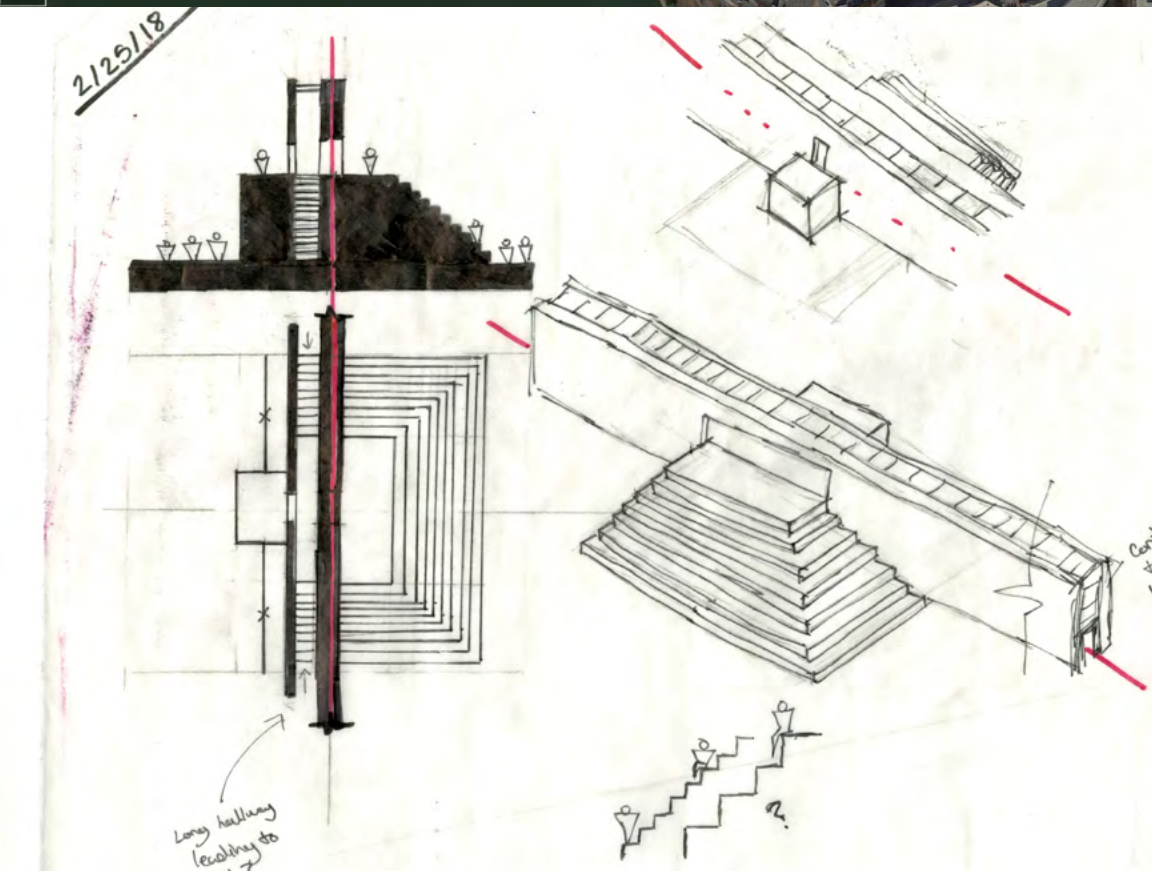
### An Intervention of Power

After deconstructing the meaning of Libeskind's Holocaust Museum, it was time to test this research and bring it into something that would be practical such as designing a space in a way that the architectonic elements would influence the user's experience within a space. Since this ultimately related to power, it felt proper to use a place such as an institution as a starting point of the design. These ideas were quickly diffused due to having to design the various amenities that museums or school would contain which would ultimately take away from the focus of designing these spaces relating to power. Instead, the building would decidedly have no named program and would ultimately act as an interactive space much like a monument.

The next action would be to choose a site and while there were many options, the final chose became located in Washington DC. The rationale behind this decision was simple; it is a location that holds the seat of power in our country. The power that is being focused on here is in the realm of a sociopolitical power. This opened up many opportunities to understand how a concept such as power can influence a space when it is geared towards a specific aspect of power. Physically, the site is within view of the Washington monument and the center of the site was aligned with the monument itself which ultimately became the focus of an axial relationship within the context as well as the design; a reoccurring element in many of the studies and designs up until now. Upon further research of the sociopolitical forms of power, it was decided that the focus should be twofold with the usage of the dichotomies of this sociopolitical power; Liberation and Subjugation.

By using these two dichotomies, it allowed for a variety of design ideas, one of which is retained by the use of the main axis that cuts through the site. The main axis, while being an organizing factor of design, it is also a physical separation from liberation and subjugation while retaining its own purpose in the space. This space has the intention of remaining as a neutral zone between each side where users can cross at will in order to switch from side to side to represent how the power of governments can shift



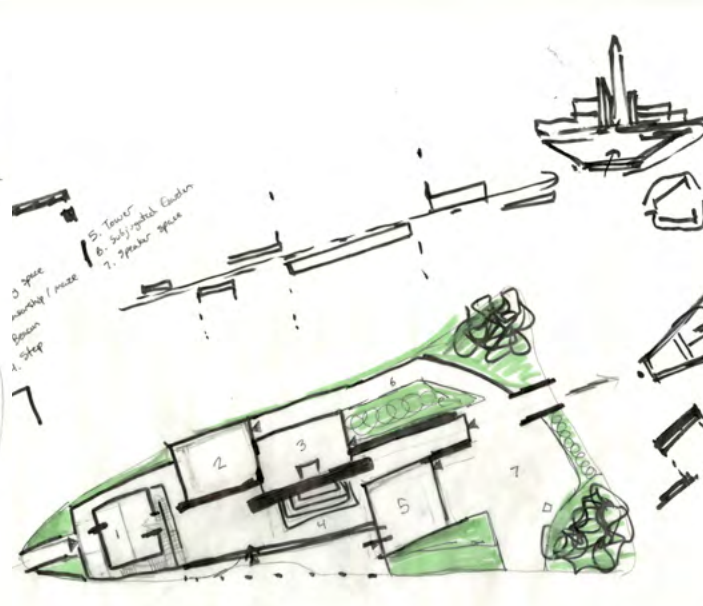
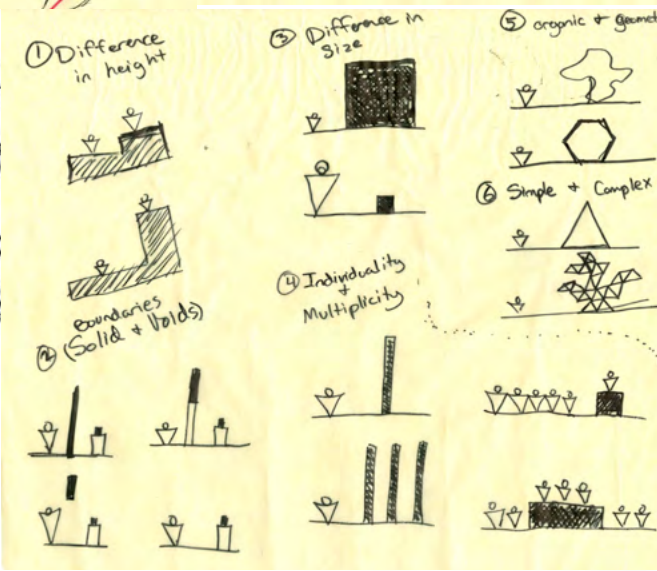
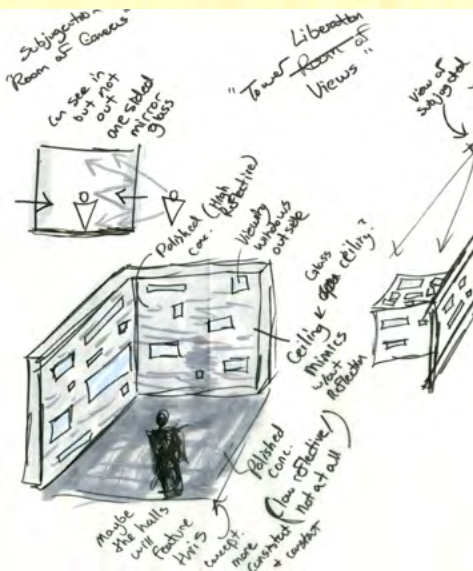
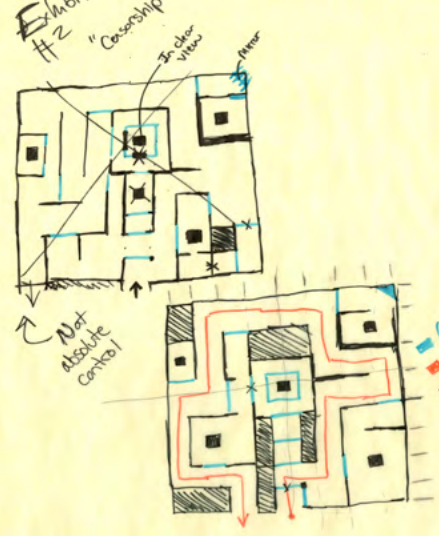
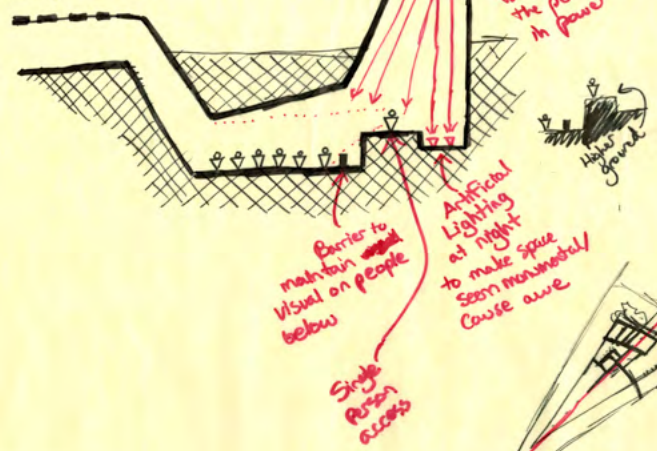




from ideologies that seem to favor one side over the other. The dichotomy is not only a conceptual contrast, but it is important to translate that architectonically. One of the initial ideas was to create the spaces of liberation with an openness, transparency, and light where the user can get a sense of freedom and unity within the space. In contrast to liberation, subjugation would feature elements that would be more enclosed (even the exterior spaces), made from heavy and solid materials, as well as being designed in a way that would make the user feel truly aware of the space that they are in. This isn't to say that subjugation is something to stay away from, but it is just as important as liberation and one isn't without the other.

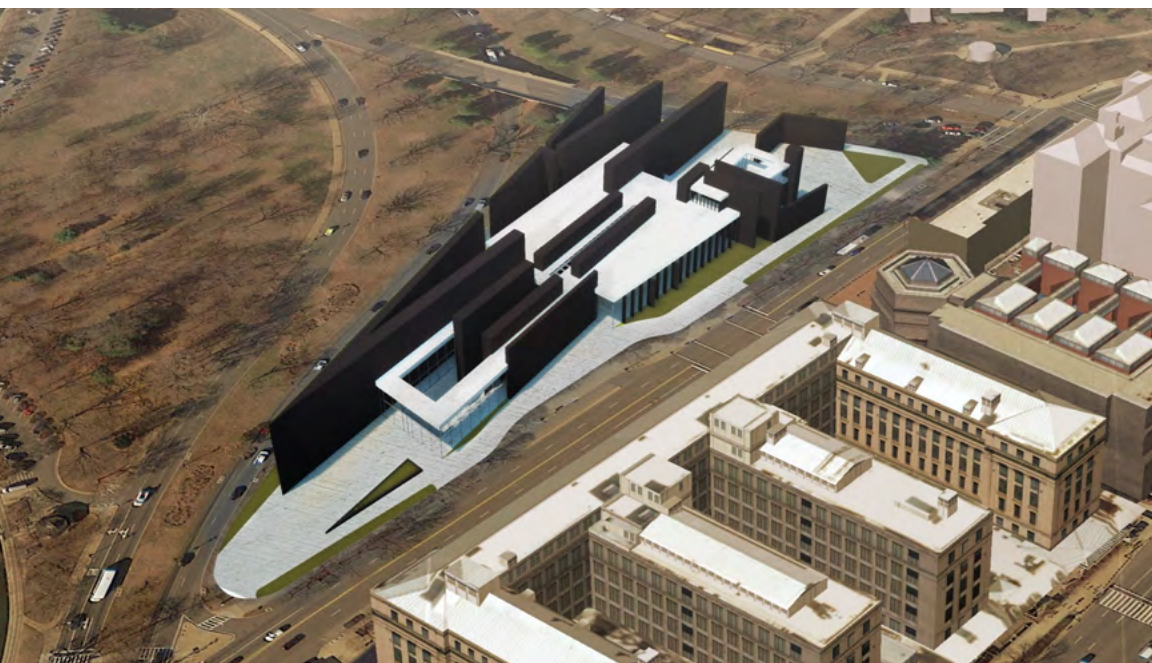
As the process continued, these spaces were formed and each had their own unique concepts as it relates to sociopolitical power. For liberation, these spaces considered of spaces where others could have the opportunity to step up above others as well as step down in addition to spaces that frame specific views and experiences. Again, the contrast into subjugation would attempt to make all users feel an awareness or even a discomfort within a space. Some of these ideas included spaces where one feels like they're being watched much like an abstraction of panopticism, or even spaces where information is seen from afar, but never accessible like a physical censorship of an object.

# Exhibit 1



The final product of this design intervention contained a variety of spaces each with their own way of displaying sociopolitical power from both Liberation and Subjugation. In conjunction with this, the design intent for these spaces is that each space uses their own specific architectonic elements in order to influence the users and make them aware of the power within these spaces in which they occupy.

The next section explains each of the spaces in more detail and how they relate to both the design elements as well as their roles in the sociopolitical power that attempts to be defined through the architecture itself. That being said, there is a small disclaimer that these descriptions of the spaces can be interpreted in a variety of ways depending on the user since everyone has their own interpretation of an experience.

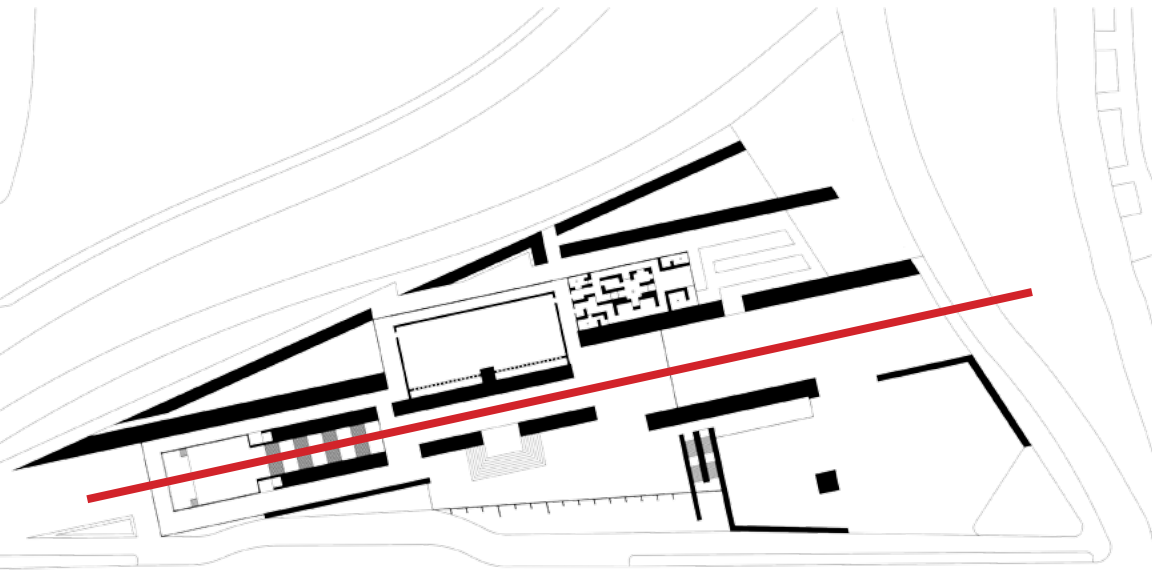


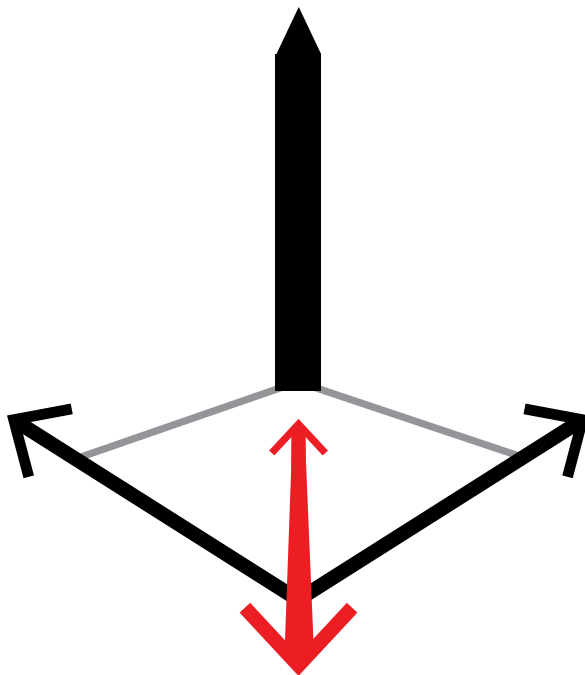




## The Axis

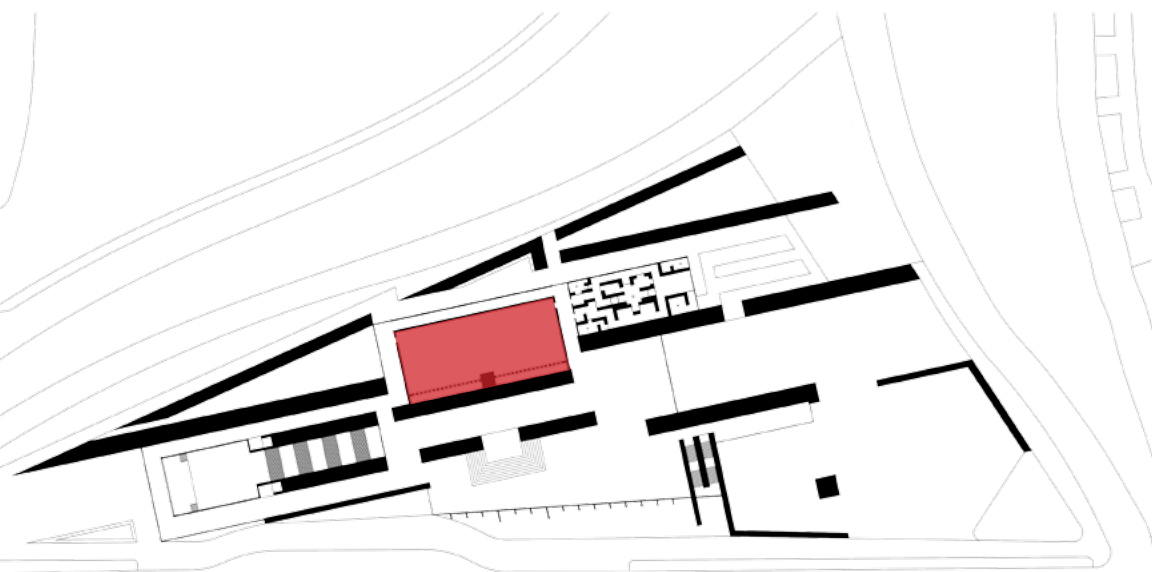
The Axis is the main organizing factor of the building in terms of spatial composition. The Axis acts as a separation between the spaces of spaces of subjugation and liberation. It begins at the southern end of the site and visually leads itself to the Washington Monument.

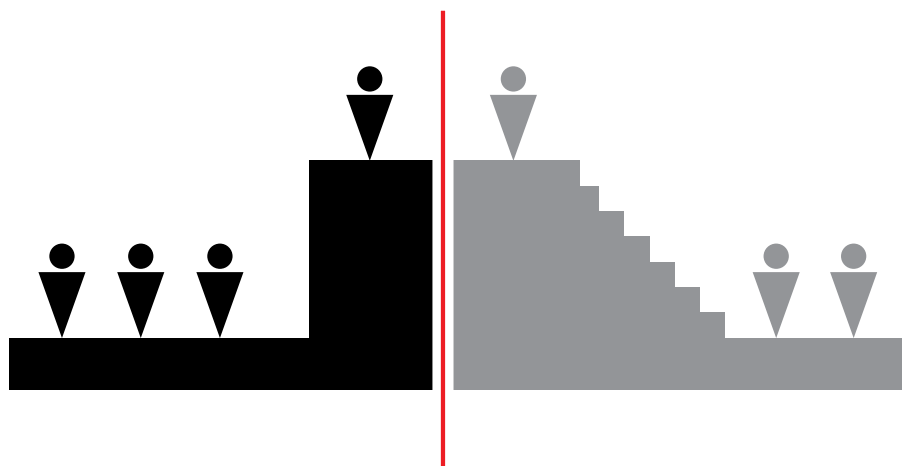
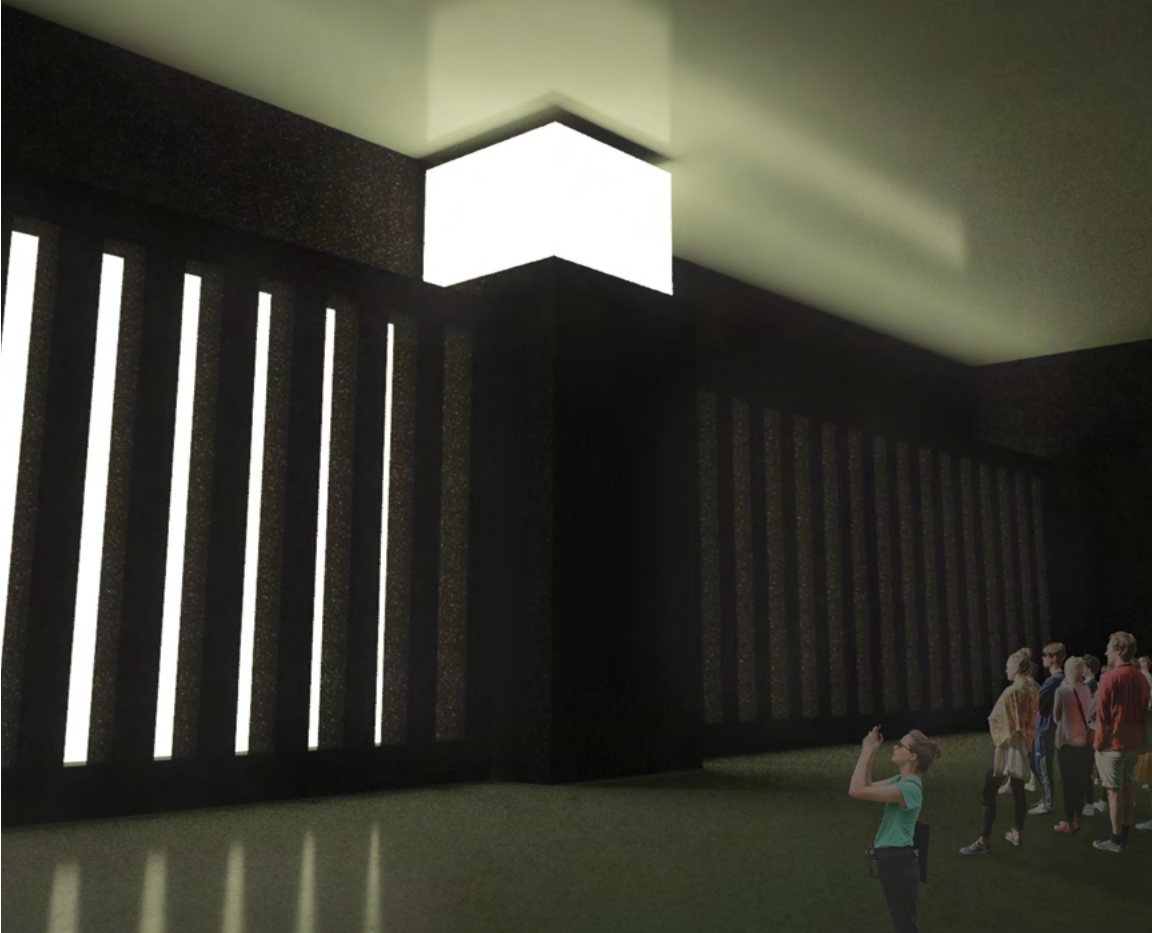




## The Beacon

The Beacon Space represents the subjugation side of power. Within the space rests a balcony with no means of entry for the user. Atop this balcony is a light which draws the focus of the user to a single area in using the contrast of the dark and heavy material around it.

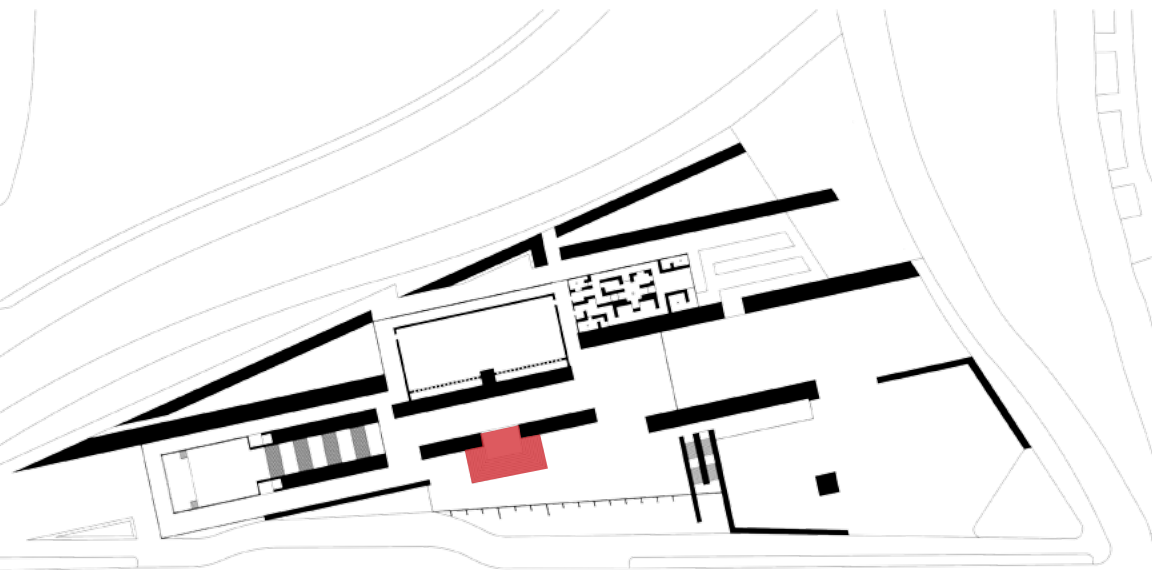


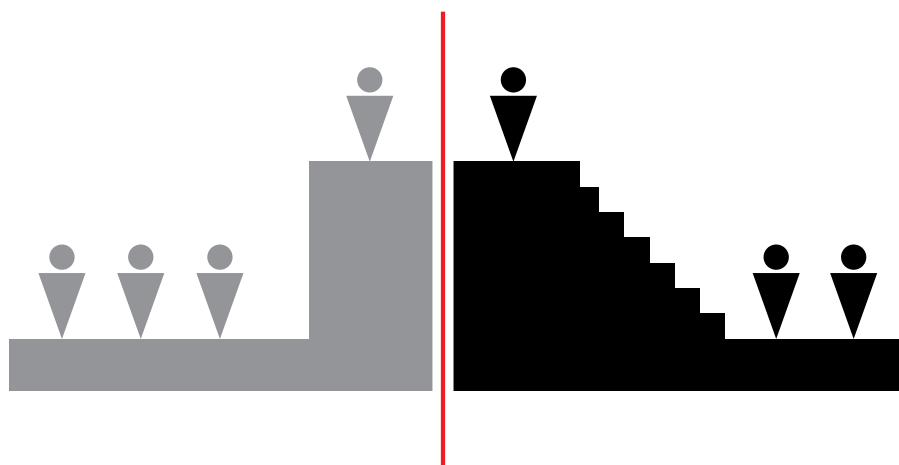




## The Stair

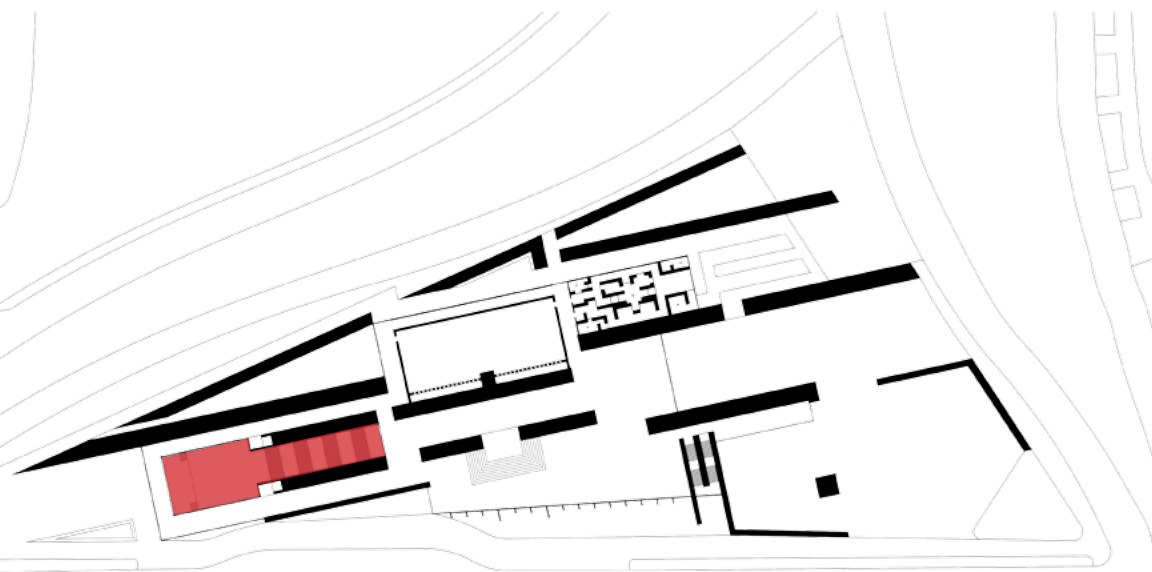
The Stair Space represents the liberation side to power. In contrast to the Beacon, there is a stage that can be accessed via the stairs leading to it. This grants the opportunity for anyone to be on the stage. The space is enclosed with glass with a view to the street where the public can easily look in as well as access the space.

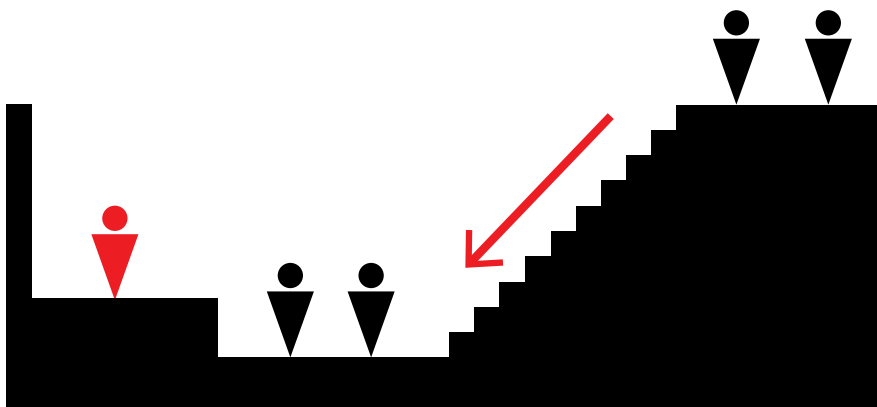




## The Rally

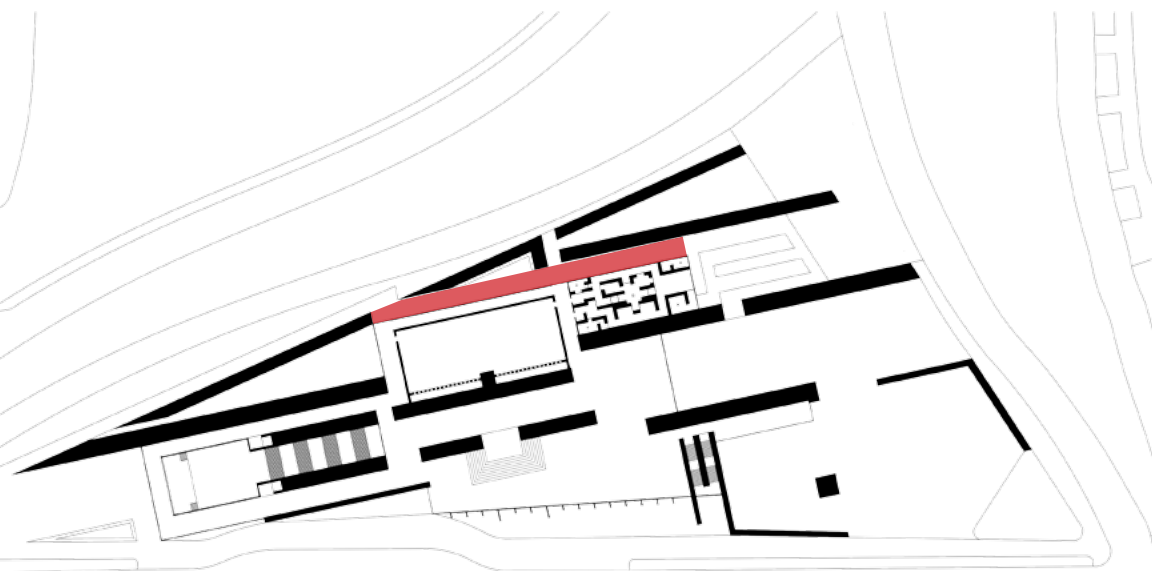
The intention of the Rally Space is to attract users into the monumental space below. It rests directly on the axis between the sides of subjugation and liberation since both concepts can encompass the rallying of people within a large space.

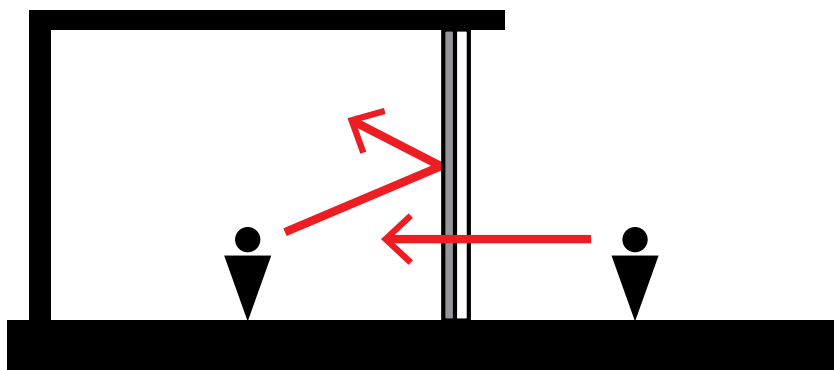




## The Hall of Cameras

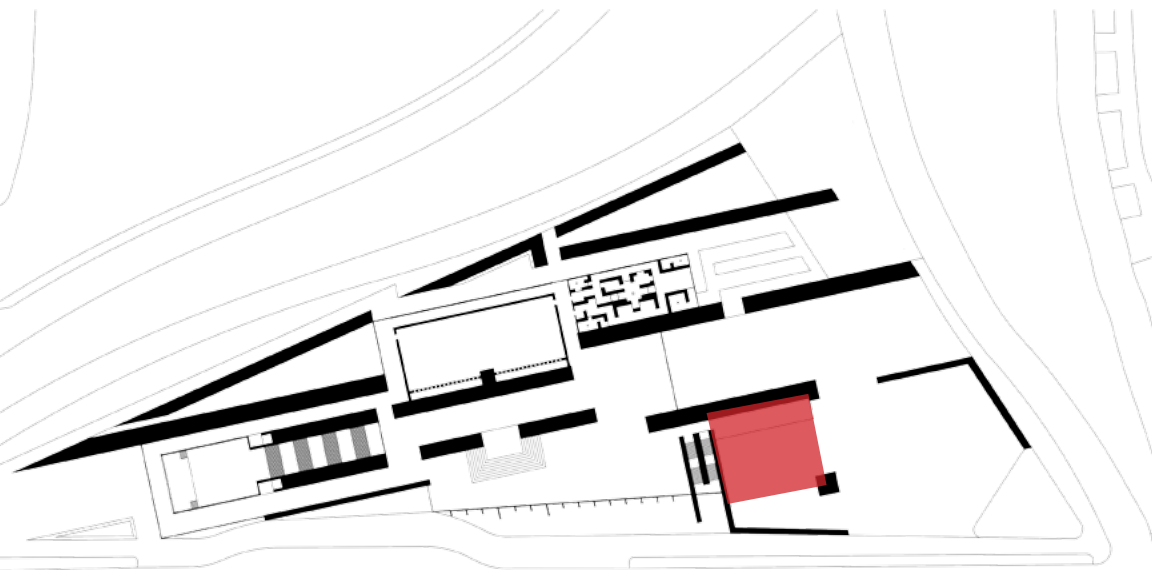
The Hall of Cameras is a space designed on the side of subjugation. The intention is to allow the users to see inside of the building, but the users inside are unable to view the people outside and have no indication that people on the outside are looking in. This is due to a film being placed on the windows that emulate a one-sided window.



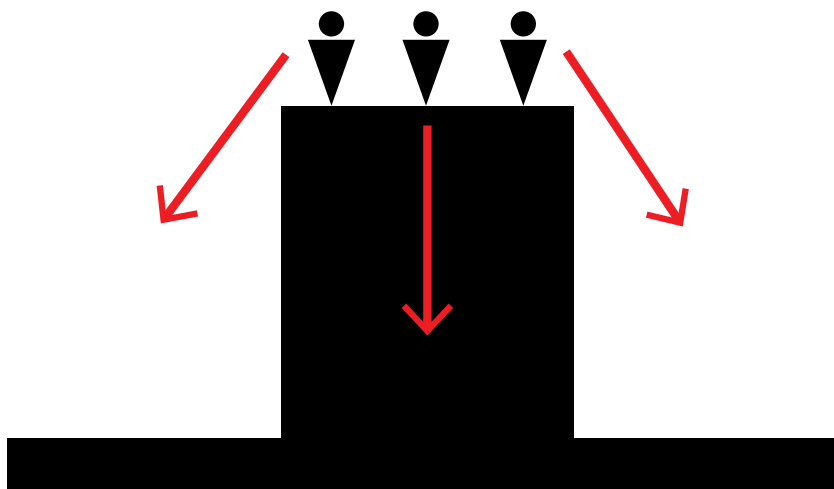


# The Viewing Area

The Viewing Space is located on the side of liberation. Located on the second level, it allows the users to view the various spaces and people below as well as the city around them.

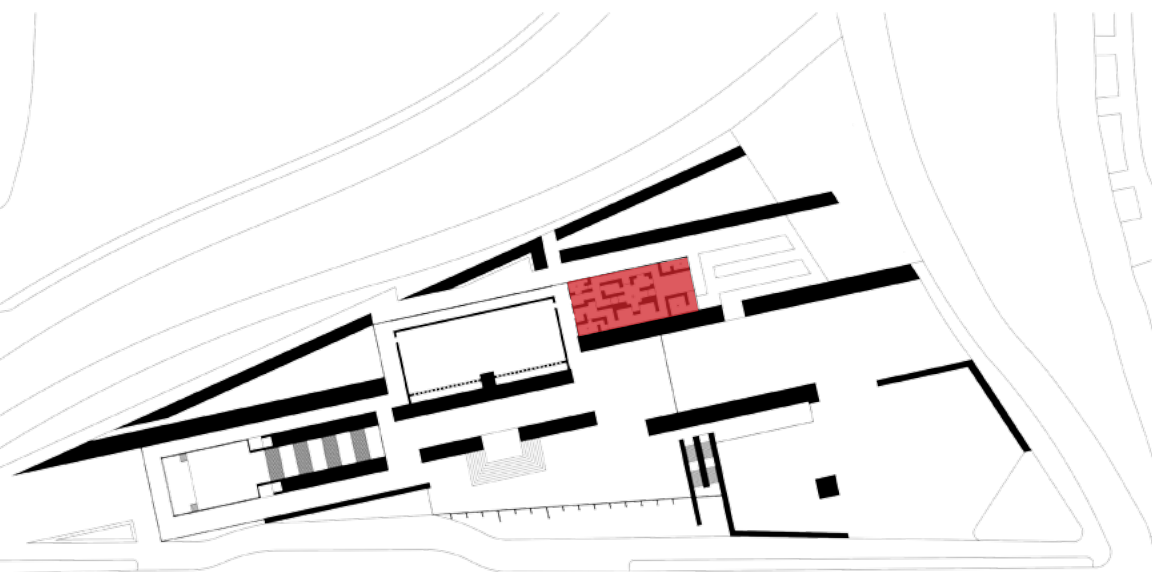


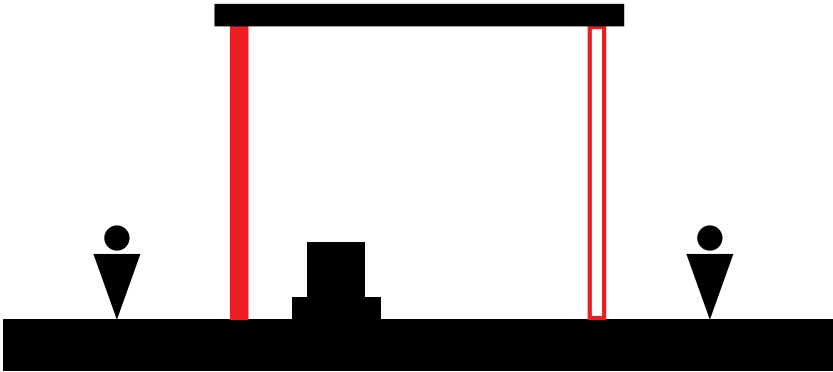
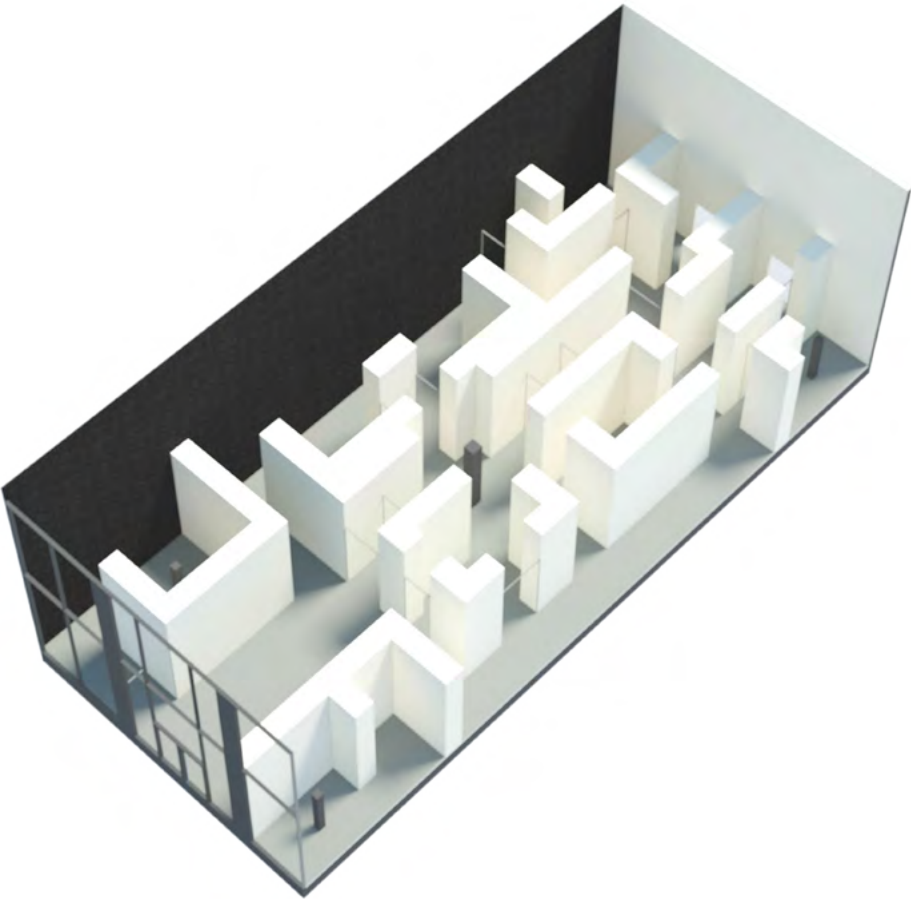




## The Censored Space

The Censored Space is located on the side of subjugation. The intention of this space is to make users aware of censorship and the lack of access that comes with it. It is designed much like a labyrinth but there are glass walls blocking off access to the spaces where information is placed so the user can only view it from afar.





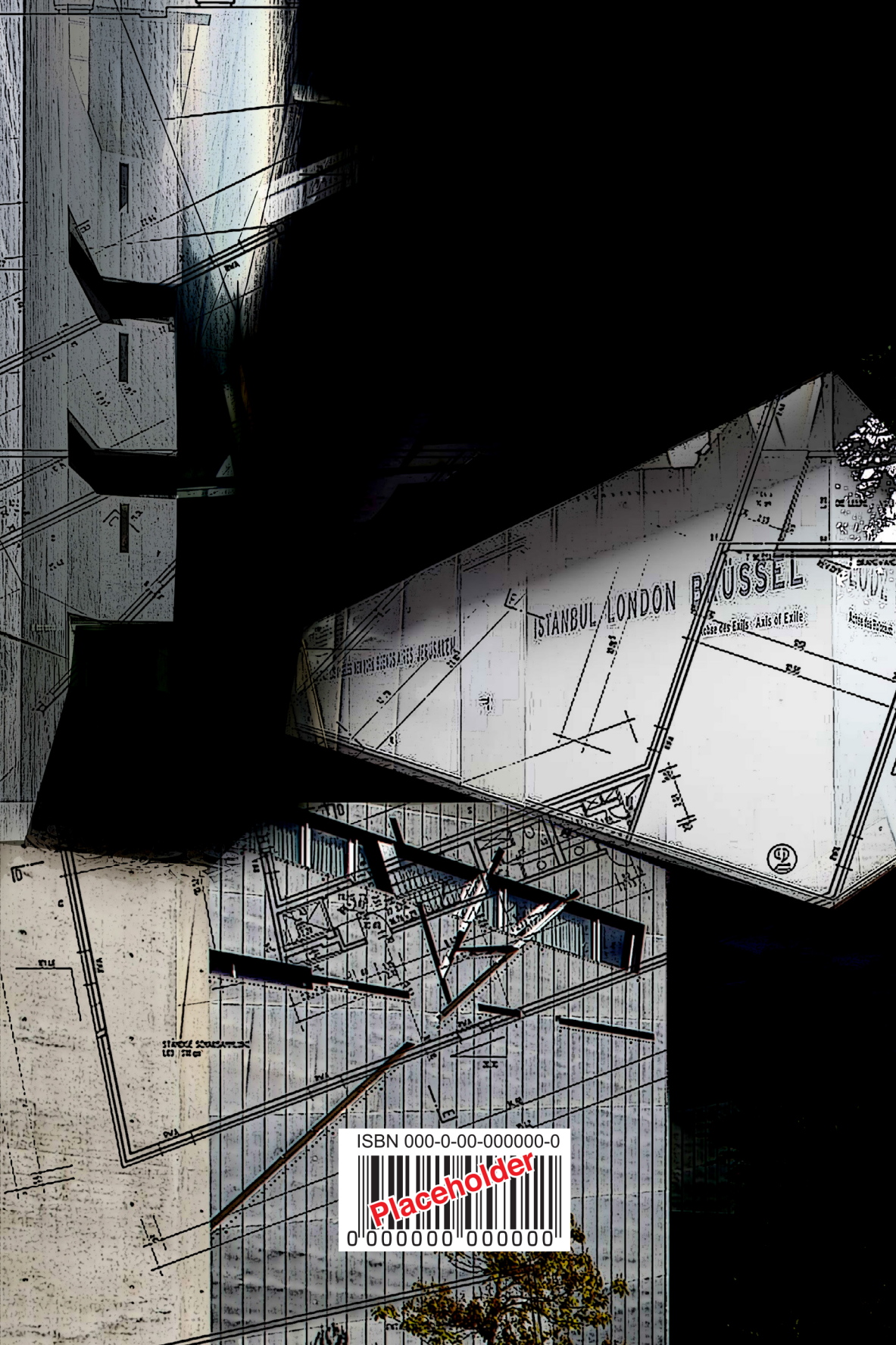
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## Image Sources

1. Cathedral of Light - German Federal Archive
2. Grand People's Study House - Alex Davidson
3. Getty Center Sketch with Competing Grids - Richard Meier & Partners Architects LLP
4. Toledo Glass Pavillion - Trevor Patt
5. Holocaust Museum - Jewish Museum Berlin
6. Holocaust Museum - Jewish Museum Berlin
7. Holocaust Museum - Jewish Museum Berlin
8. Holocaust Museum - Jewish Museum Berlin
9. Holocaust Museum - Jewish Museum Berlin
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12. Holocaust Museum - Jewish Museum Berlin
13. "The Bull" by Picasso - Artyfactory.com





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