TECHNISCHE UNIVERSITÄT WIEN

DIPLOMARBEIT

CLOSER
A Hybrid Stage/Auditorium-Theater

ausgeführt zum Zwecke der Erlangung des akademischen Grades
einer Diplom-Ingenieurin
unter der Leitung von

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Institut für Architektur und Entwerfen Abteilung Gebäudelehre

eingereicht an der

Fakultät für Architektur und Raumplanung

von

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Wien, am 27.02.2015

To my wonderful family -
my mother / whose loving support made everything possible
my father /who although not being with us anymore,
remains the biggest inspiration for what i do
my brother /without whom none of all these years of
architecture would have been such a pleasure

CONTENT

INTRODUCTION

'The stage is not a box with a curtain as lid. It is an elastic space (...) When the stage finally stops being a picture, the action can become an organism…' Friedrich Kiesler

Closer

By opening this book you are entering into an experiment, a dream - an unusual theater, characterized by variable stages, changable seats and different perspectives. A theatre where the relations between stage and auditorium are reshuffled and you move freely between architecture, scenography, spectators and actors. Take a walk around and discover new diverse environments. Experience a changing series of vistas ... Sit down comfortably and prepare to observe actors differently, to follow them, to touch them.

To prepare for this play, you have to read some stories first, to follow some events, to know some facts ... to get a greater picture and see where it all began. Human beings are actors by nature, they learn by imitation and play and a great part of their social intelligence derives from their ability to perform different roles in a variety of situations. Therefore it seems quite obvious that as soon as culture emerges, some individuals specialize in the art of performance. With the advent of urban civilization, the spaces dedicated for acting are transformed into architecture and from there on remain a central part of the history of building.

BEFORE YOU ENTER

I

CHAPTER

Classical Antiquity

'Theater, it is said, is like a mirror on life. Theater architecture is its frame in which performances live. In the mirror can be seen reflected the many changes of image and identity that have occured in the presentation of drama: the strolling player, the great open amphitheatre, the intimacy of the court, the converted bus and the renovated music hall. ' [1]

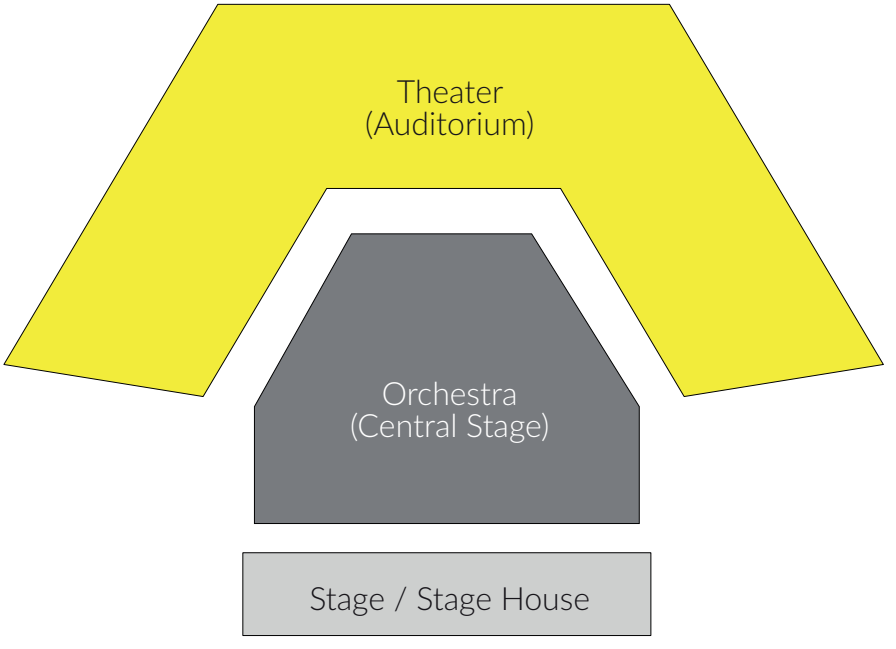
The origin of the western theater lies in ancient Greece. It was the time when architecture and the arts thrived as never before. Ideals of beauty, order, symmetry and moderation, which mirror the entire Hellenic culture, were developed into a dramatic art to be watched by ever growing masses. Both tragedy and comedy were performed in the presence of the city's people, allegiant to their heroes and gods. They formed a huge theatrical space, a complex organisation of chorus, music, masks and heroes. In the very moment of the theatrical performance - the drama, the tragedy, the comedy - everyday concerns were transformed into collective joy and catharsis.These remained the central reasons that still fill up the theaters until today, enriched by the search for emotional and intellectual challenge, by the hope for entertainment or provocation, as well as education and inspiration.

Greek drama developed from the Dionysian rites and religion. Sky, landscape and architecture had to be modeled to serve as the scene for the mythological stories of the Gods. Authors like Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides and Aristophanes developed a culture of playwriting that continues until today. Action was timeless and placeless, but localized by a simple scenery. In the context of religion and rite, actors did not represent normal humans, but played mythological roles. Therefore they used the assistance of equipment like special shoes to increase their height, acoustic contraptions to amplify the sound of their voices and had their acting be accompanied by music.

At the beginning, Greek theaters were traditionally built on a hillside, the natural topography offering the simplest solution for the sight-line/seating problem. As towns grew into important cities, the desire to site the theatre in central locations became a communal interest. The necessary topography was not always to be found and therefore the use of bermed earthwork or a timber fabrication on a leveled area became possible solutions to that problem.

[1] Sharp, Dennis; Sharp Words: Selected Essays of Dennis Sharp, Belgium: Cassochrom, 2012, p.29
Fig. 01

Greek Archaic / Ikria /



auditorium : stage
2 : 1

Orchestra (Central Stage)

Besides providing good audibility and visibility, a very important architectural element of the early Greek theaters was an altar to Dionysus, as its origins were rooted in religious rituals. This holy table was in turn surrounded by the orchestra - a large circle within which most of the play was performed.

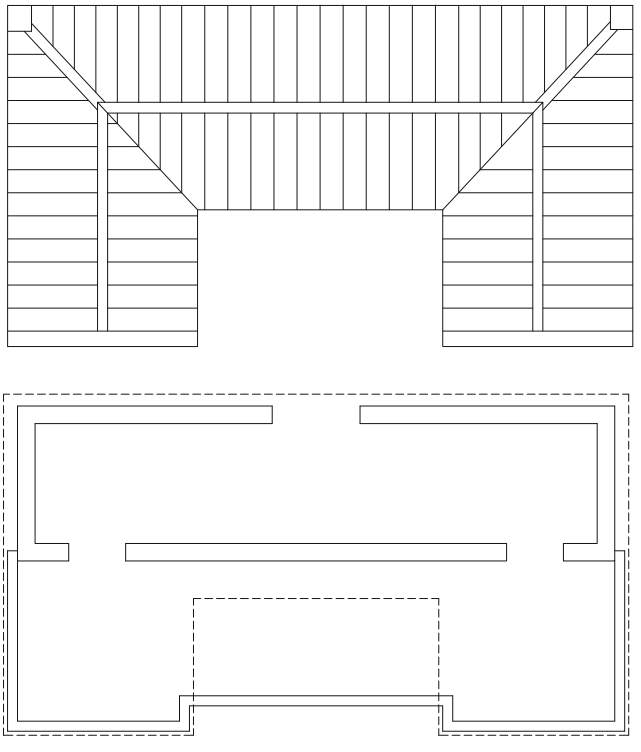
Theater (Auditorium)

The modern word 'theater' derives from the word ´theatron´ meaning 'seeing place'. To equip this place with seating for the audience derives from the obvious: the human body is more comfortable and the mind is more receptive for extended periods of time. The seating in ancient Greek theater was designed for thousands of spectators.

Stage / Stage House

The ´Skene´ (scene building) had at least three doors, which later became typical in Greek and Roman times. A central door was leading into the palace of the protagonist. The two entryways on either side (between the skene and the auditorium), through which the Chorus enters and exits, were called ´Parodos´. In the beginning the Skene was a temporary construction, a timber scaffolding, containing changing rooms for the actors. Later side wings (´Paraskenia´) and a forestage (´Proskenion´) were added.

The top of the forestage served as the place on which the actors performed. It was also there that different stage machines were used to produce special effects. The three major devices for this were called ´Eccyclema´, ´Periaktos´ and ´Mechane´. Eccyclema was a low



Skene at Dionysos
Theater in Athen

platform on wheels that could be rolled out through the central doorway to reveal scenes that had taken place within the Skene. Periaktos was a prism-shaped unit with different scenes or decorations painted on its three

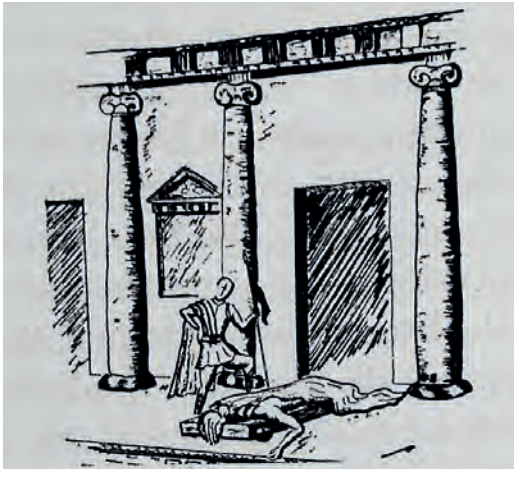
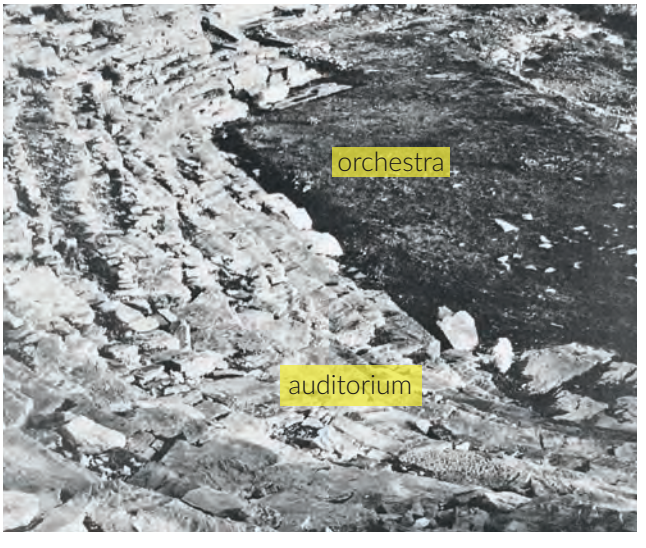


Fig 02 Eccyclema
Fig 03 Periaktos
Fig 04 Mechane

ca. 525 B.C. Archaic Greek Theater at Thorikos

Seating steps are both rough-cut and random-sized, natural stones laid up. The access steps have the same frequency as the seating steps.



ca. 500 B.C. Archaic Greek Theater at Argos

3/5 of the seats nearest the stage were replaced to accommodate a later small Roman odeum. The access steps of the remaining 2/5 of the seats from the original theater - unlike Thorikos, have twice the vertical frequency of the seating steps

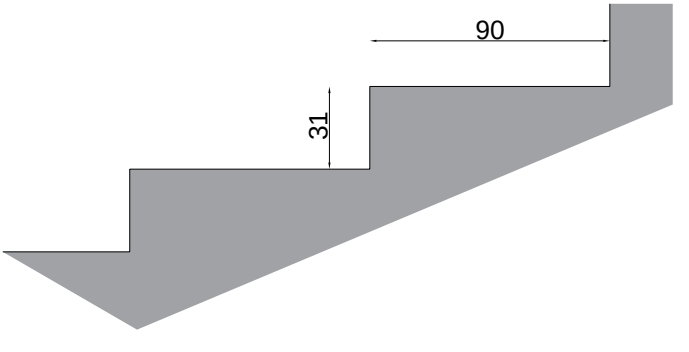
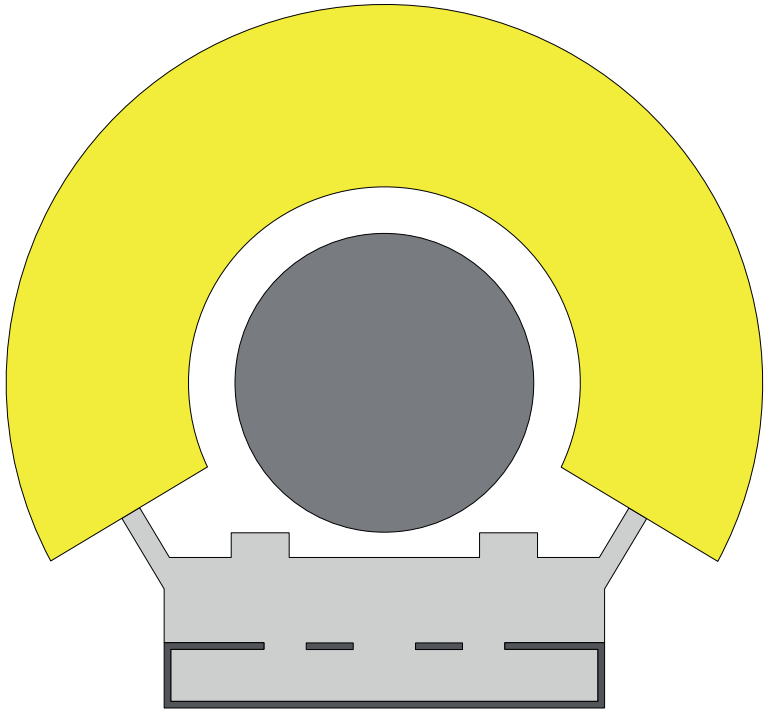


Fig 05 Archaic Greek Theater at Thorikos
Fig 06 Archaic Greek Theater at Argos

Greco - Hellinistic



auditorium: stage
3 : 1

The seating plan, unlike Greek-Archaic examples, envelops approximately 2/3 of the orchestra.

A clearly visible hierarchy existed in the seating arrangements, the front rows were occupied by the authorities and other distinguished personages, like the benefactors of the city. The original chairs, sculpted from marble, which the highest authorities (preordain) used, are still preserved and situated in a privileged position in the fornt row with their names carved on them.

ca. 350 B.C.

The seat bank structure in the theater of Priene has each element laid up separately in nonmonolithic shape, whereby the riser with set-back relief articulation and seating tread is achieved by separate fabrications.

ca. 330 B.C. Theatre in Epidaurus, 14 000 people

This theater was regarded as the finest of all Greek examples, the purest in form and best-preserved. The Romans did not modify the auditorium or stage as they did with other Greco-Hellinistic theaters. It shows considerable refinement in seat bank detail: smooth surface, relief cut into the riser face to allow retraction of the feet and also for more comfort; vertical placement of aisle steps in relation to seating steps (still 2:1 ratio)

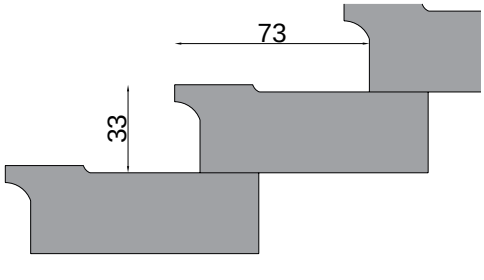
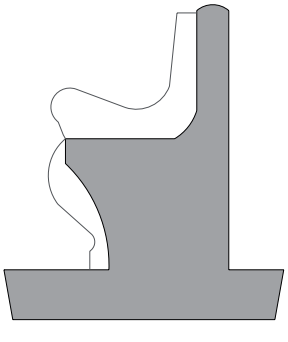
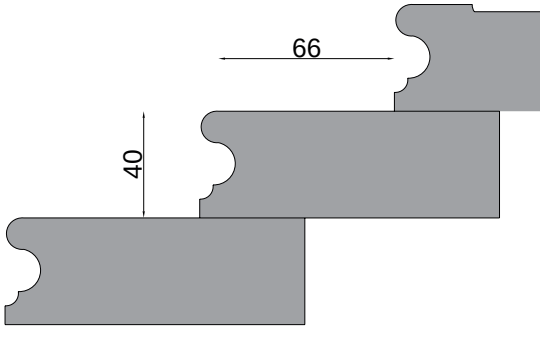


Fig 07
Fig 08
Fig 09
Fig 10

Each section of seating (tread and riser) is a monolithic sculptured block. The building material is white marble laid up and finished smooth.

seat depth 50 cm
seat height 48 cm





Similar to Miletus, except that the radial communication aisles at the usual double frequency to seating are carved out of the same block and not of two equalsized blocks. The material is grainy marble laid up and finished smooth.

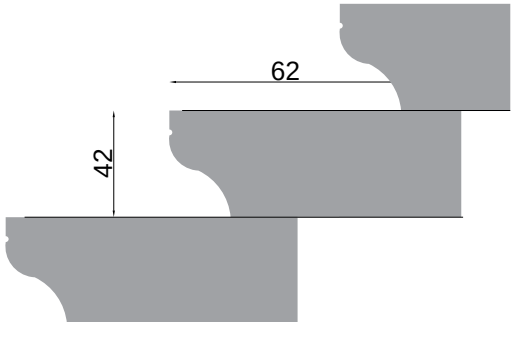
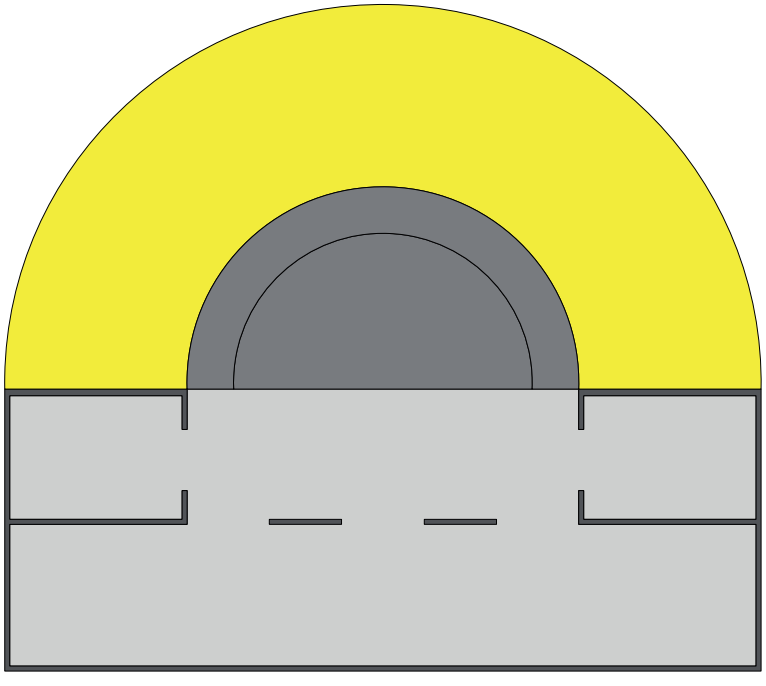


Fig 11

Roman



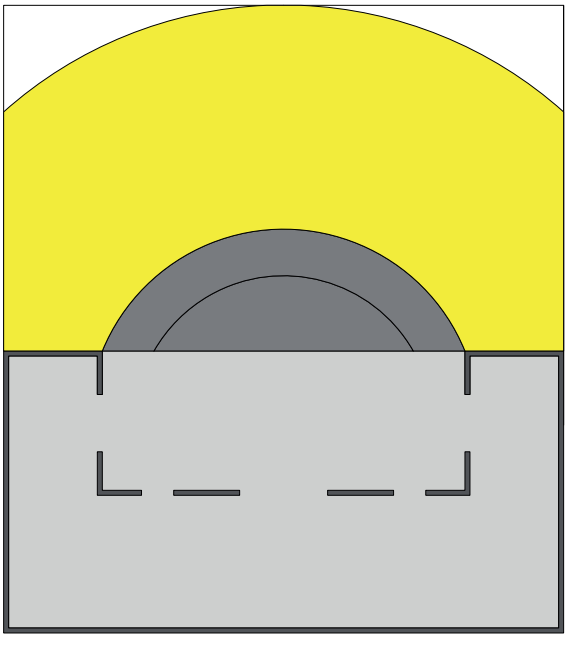
auditorium: stage
0.7 : 1

The high times of Roman civilisation arrived after the development of the ancient Greek culture. Much of the architectural influence on the Romans came from the Greeks, which invites a series of comparisons and contrasts:

Unlike the Greek auditorium which stood on a hill, the Roman auditorium was constructed on level ground. The stagehouse and the auditorium were on the same height, forming a single architectural unit (unlike in its Greek counterpart, where they were separate structures). An auditorium typically seated 10.000-15.000 people, which was less than most Greek theaters. This was a consequence of the lower social and artistic status of the Roman theater in contrast to its vital importance in Greece. Roman theaters are semi-circular in shape, reducing the opening of its arc with the intention of providing a better view of the actors. Their seat banks are steeper and closer to the stage, thus changing the vertical sight line.

Curtains were first introduced in the Roman theater and the Roman stage had a roof, which protected the scenery from the weather and improved the acoustics. The plays became materialistic and associated with the audience, thus tending towards a total work instead of separated parts. Mime, pantomime and nondramatic spectacle was the usual theatrical fare. None of the great Roman playwrights wrote for 'typical' theaters: Plautus and Terence wrote their comedies for a temporary wooden type of theatre, about which almost nothing is known. The tragedies of Lucius Annaeus Seneca were written to be read or declaimed in political circles.

Greco - Roman Odeum



auditorium: stage
0.8 : 1

ca. 330 B.C. Roman Theater at Asclepion

Similar to Epidaurus seating, except that the rolled edge of the seat is treated as a molding overhang, separated from the riser (easier to be transported); aisle to seating steps is still the same 2:1 ratio

Fig 12

Fig 13 Roman Odeum at Aphrodisias

Fig 15 Theater of Dionysus at Athens

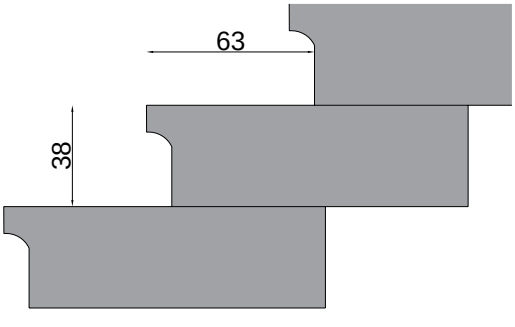
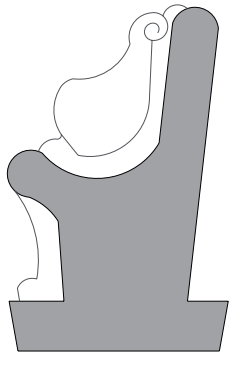


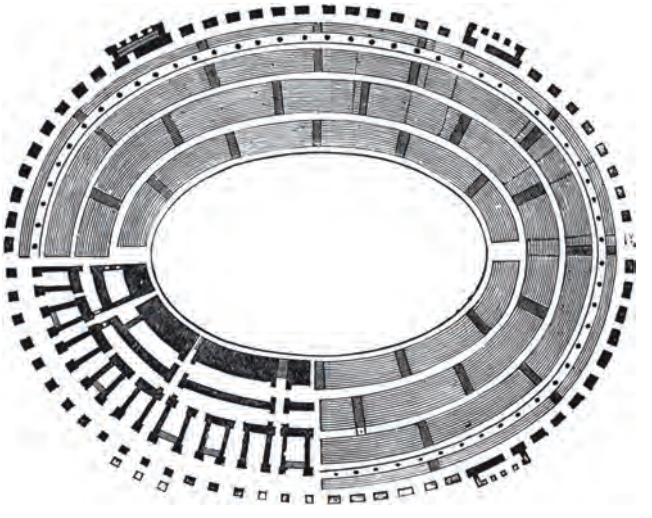
Fig 14 Roman theater at Aspendus



seat depth 46 cm
seat height 36 cm

Fig 16 Roman theater at Caesaera- modern restavration

The Colloseum or Flavian amphitheater in Rome could hold up to 50.000 spectators, although it suffered serious fire damage throughout its wooden stands in the 3rd century. It had a very sophisticated way of distributing the public. Each area, with regard to relevance and visibility, was destined for different parts of the public. The podium was reserved for senators, magistrates and priests, and it was where the comfortable seating was located. There were a specified series of bobes and the seats were ordered in numbered rows, as they are nowadays.



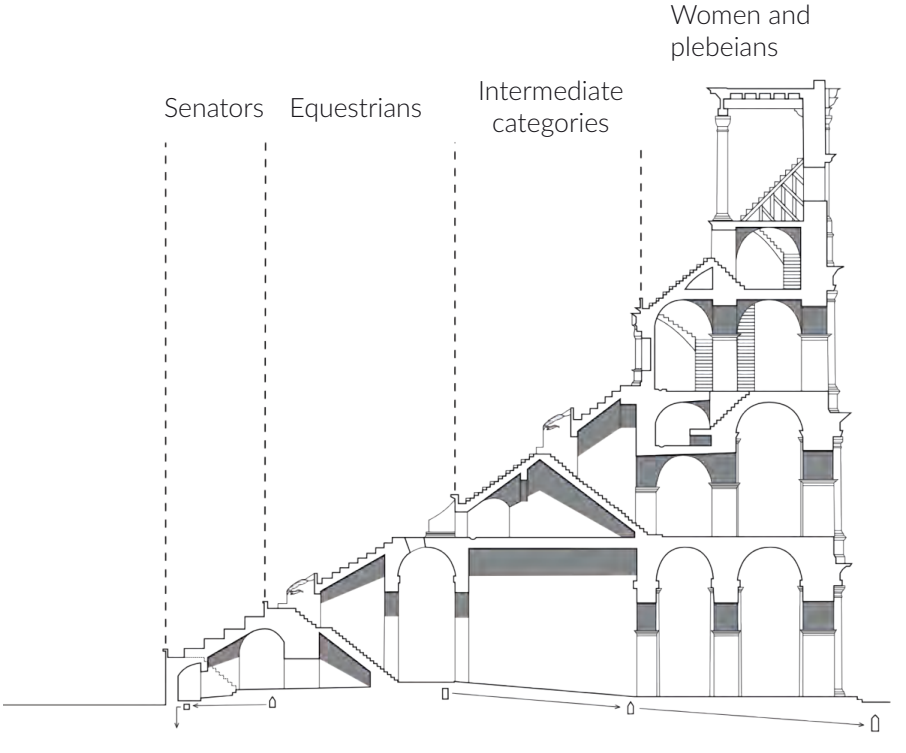


Fig 17
Fig 18

Masks

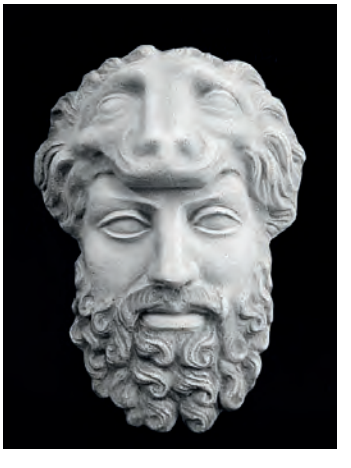


Fig 19 A greek terracotta mask of Dyonisius/ Roman: Bacchus From Delos,II cent.B.C.
Fig 20 A Greek bronze mask od Herakles late classical period, ca. 4th cent.B.C.
Fig 21 Ancient Greek Theatrical mask of legendary hero Hercules
Fig 22 Ancient Greek theatrical mask of god Zeus

Found Spaces

Middle Ages

Audience shifts rather than the scenery

The Roman Empire declined and vanished through the 4th and 5th centuries A.D. The Christian church believed that everything that did not belong to God belonged to the Devil and respectively all non-Christian gods and religions were satanic. Works of Greek and Roman literature were
burnt, Olympic Games were banned, the thousandyear-old Platonic Academy was closed and theaters were shut down. The stage was characterized as a Devil's instrument to corrupt mens´ souls and acting was considered sinful.

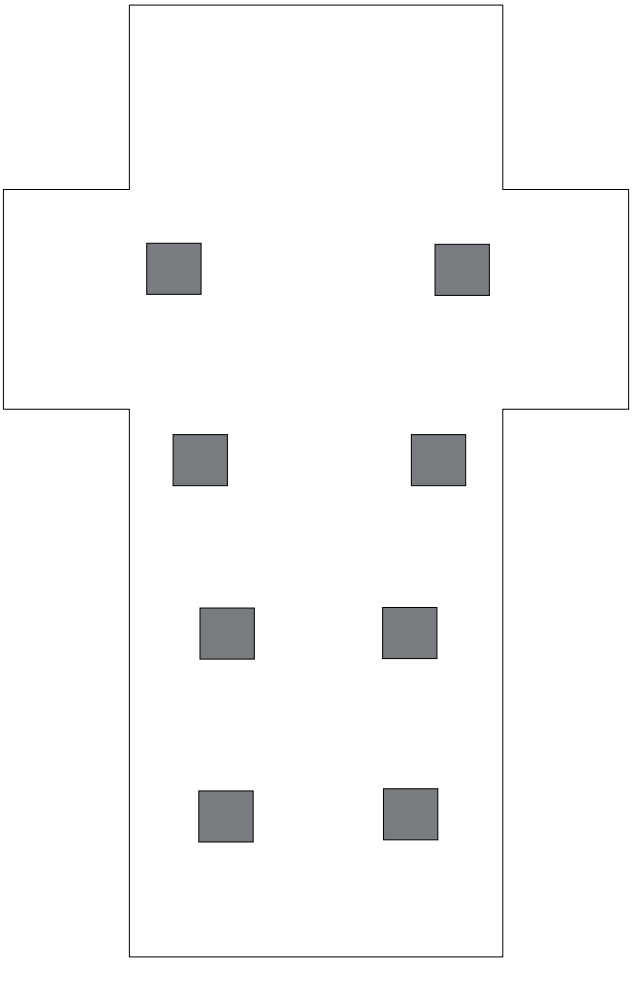
People were forced to convert their religion. The churches were faced with explaining the complex mythology of a new religion to a population that was in its majority illiterate. They began to use dramatized episodes to visualize what would later be able to be read in the Bible. These productions also celebrated annual religious events.

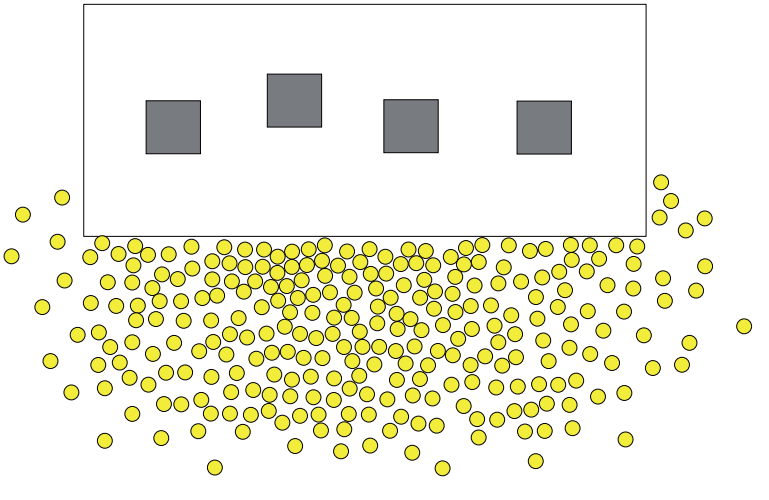
Fig 23

Simultaneous Stage

A sequence of booths or stations was constructed, each station depicting a given scene. The audience than moved from one to another. The plays began to interfere with the liturgy and

around 1200 they were performed outside as well as inside the churches. In the Middle Ages drama had developed as far as it could within the restricted confines of church services. Regardless of the type of stage, the basic approach to production was the same everywhere. The script was always taken from the Bible or some other religious source and every production involved three planes of being - Heaven, Earth and Hell - which all were represented scenically.



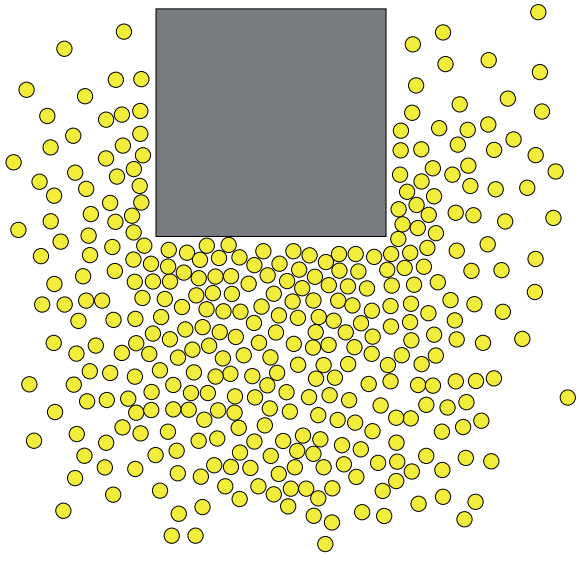


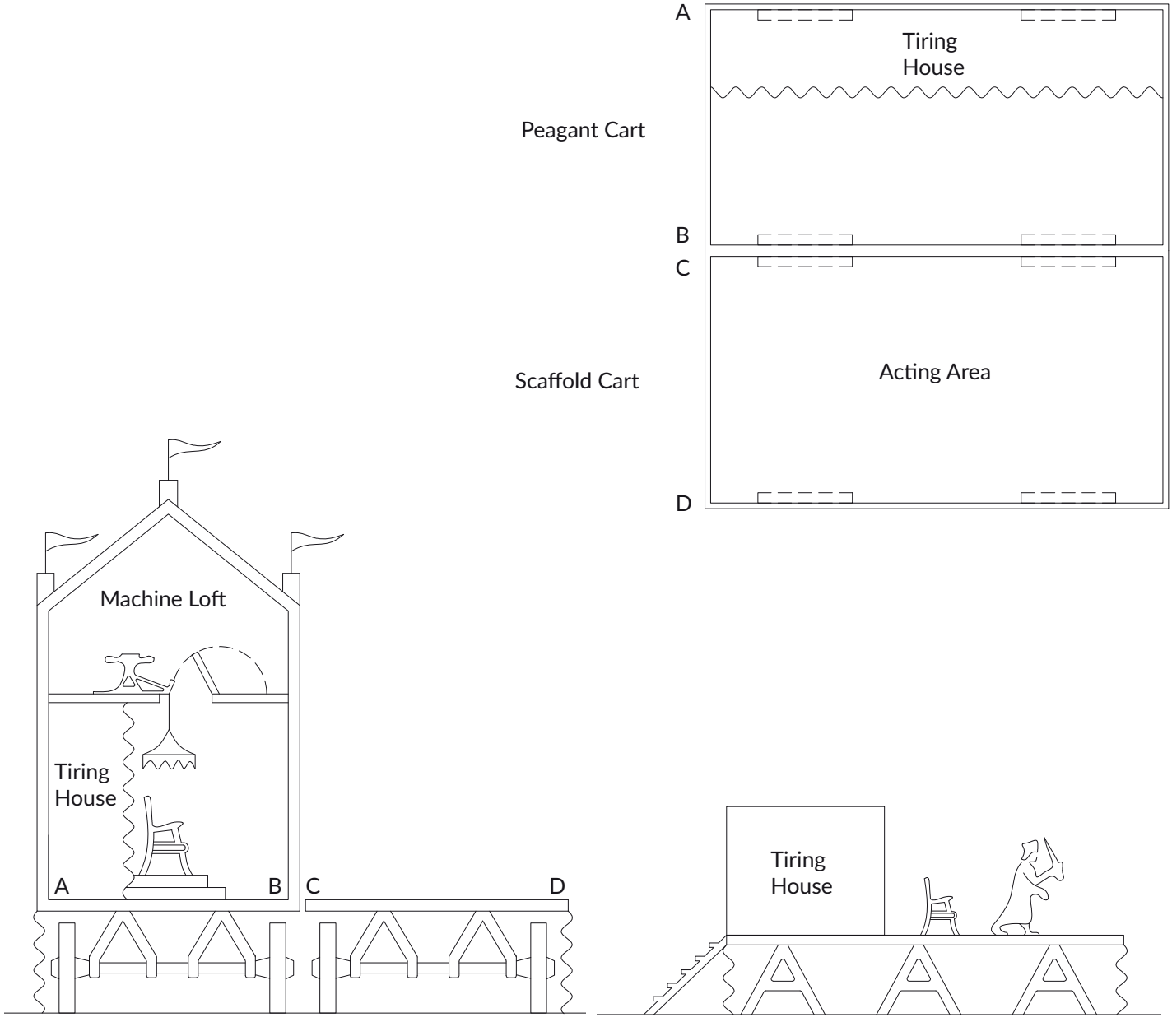
Temporary platform stage of strolling players

Small nomadic bands travelled around Europe throughout this period and performed wherever they could find an audience. The stage was a raised platform with a curtain as background where actors could hide from the sight of the spectators. The audience usually stood in front or on three sides of this platform. When this type was moving into the courtyards, its stage was set up at one side of the yard in a manner that allowed most of the spectators to watch the performance from the surrounding windows and balconies.

To achieve some special effects, a considerable amount of stage machinery was invented. Much of it was operated from beneath the stage. There were numerous trap doors that permitted the appearance and disappearance of persons and objects. For the scenes which required 'flying', pulleys and ropes were attached to adjoining buildings. The overhead machinery was sometimes hidden by cloths painted to represent clouds or the sky.

However, it was not the main goal of the medieval stage to produce convincing special effects. All of the places needed for the play were present simultaneously, thus further preventing the illusion of a real place.



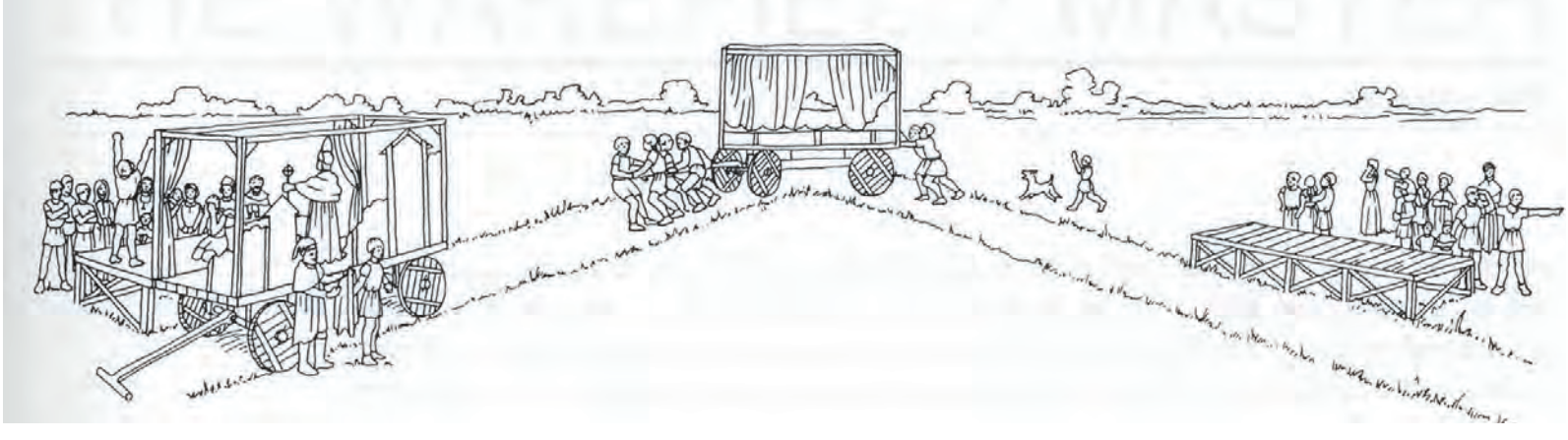


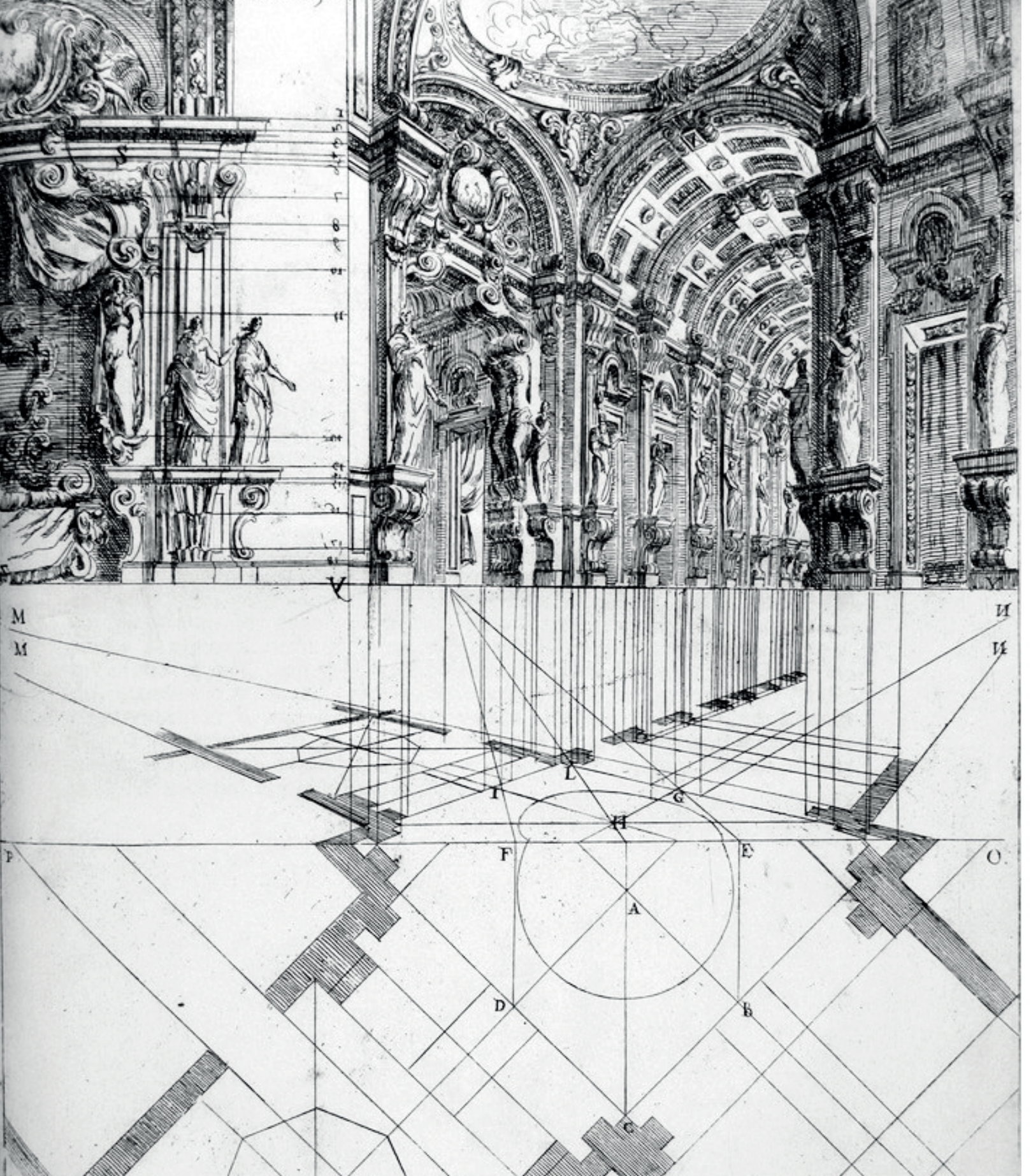
Peagant Cart Scaffold Cart Fairground booth stage in elevation

Wagon Stages

Wagon Stages were used in England and Germany. Each stage or station was completely prepared before the performance began, put on wheels and moved from one audience to another throughout the city. These wagon stages had a two-storey construction: The lower level was used as a dressing room and the upper as a stage. On the appointed day people gathered in the city squares, and the wagons appeared one after another, each performed its play and moved on to the waiting crowd on the next square.

Fig 24

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'Men can do all things if they will.' [2]

Renaissance

Development of Perspective
Invention of the Proscenium Stage and Movable Scenery

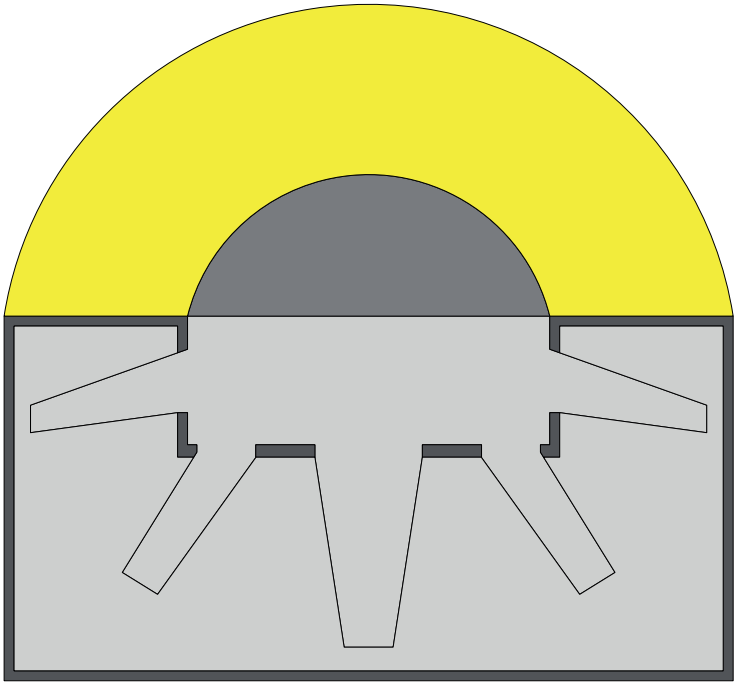
With the development of perspective and rediscovery of the ancient knowledge in the arts and architecture, the proscenium stage and movable sceneries became the focus of theater-design.

Along with a renewed interest in classical drama a new theatrical format was invented: the commedia dell'arte. Playwrights took advantage of the developments in spatial perception and wrote scenarios that were based on the possibilities of a perspective scenery. Technical innovations in the field of stage machinery and special effects gave all artists involved in theatrical production powers they had not previously possessed. Especially scenic design really assumed a place on its own. Some of the Renaissance painters, including the great Raphael himself, were among the first to design sceneries using the new possibilities.

The typical seating used in most permanent as well as temporary theaters in late Renaissance and early Baroque included and extended the traditional models to a greater variety and flexibility. The seats were fabricated in free-standing banks not related to a primary building structure for support or bracing. Additional seating was possible with portable chairs or standing room, the center position was reserved for the ruling sovereign and his entourage.

[2] Leon Battista Alberti
http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/quotes/l/leonbattis377137.html Leon Alberti
Fig 25 Giovanni Bibiena

Theatro Olimpico

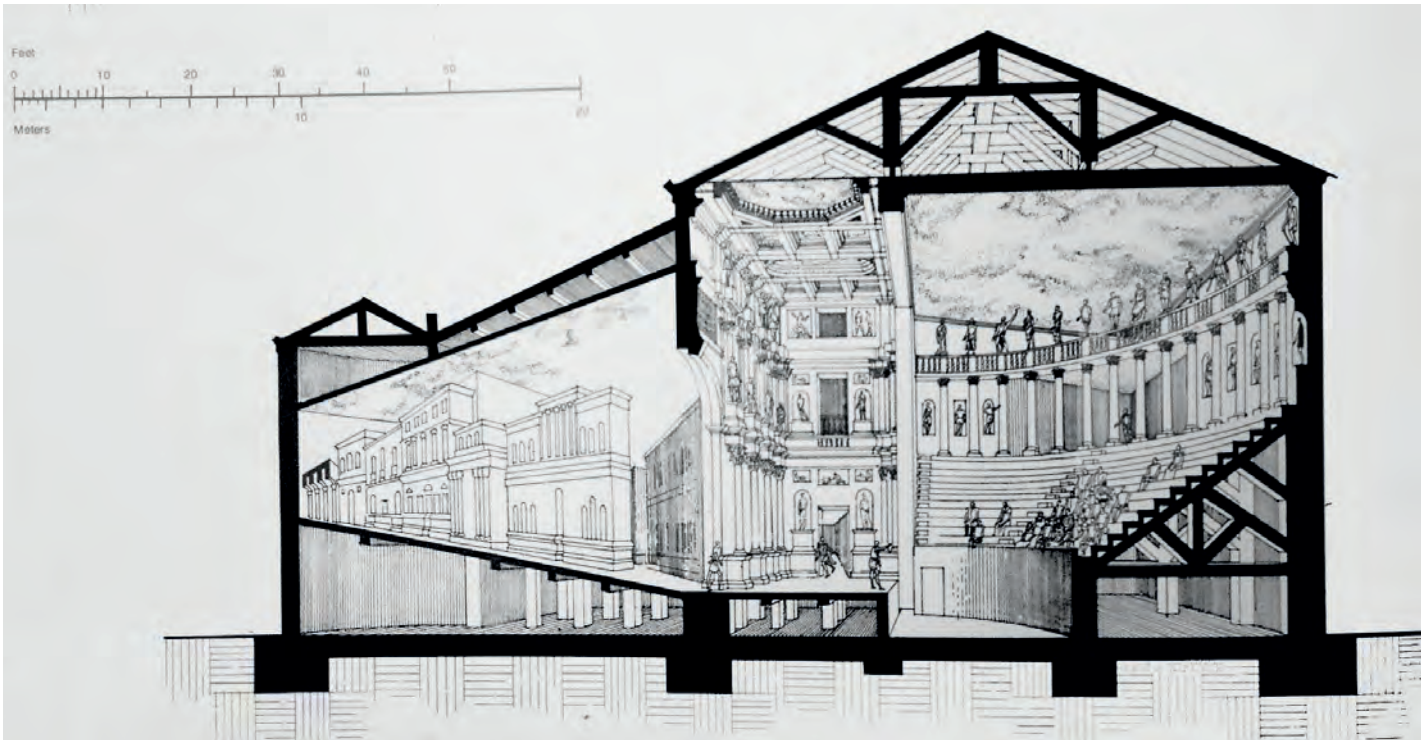


auditorium: stage
0.5 : 1

The first free-standing, covered theater since antiquity. Derived from the model Vitruvius described in his 'Ten books of Architecture', it is designed as a timber construction within a solid rectangular building. The 13 steps of seating provide space for 1.000 spectators. The illusion of seating in an outdoor space is amplified by the use of five painted streets, which were entirely fixed and did not provide space to perform in.

In general the earliest pictorial backgrounds for the stage show a visual illusion of the longest possible street, as in some famous designs by Serlio. (fig on the next pg). This type of sceneries were called classic, in contrast to the more romantic style that followed, for they tend to be intellectual and mechanically accurate rather than emotional or inspirational.

Fig 26 Theater Olimpico Section


Feet
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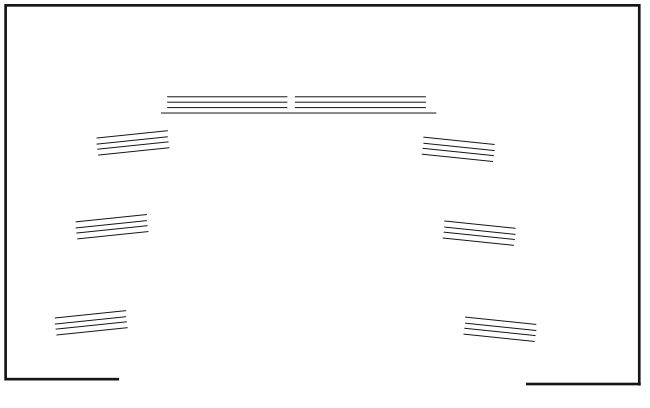
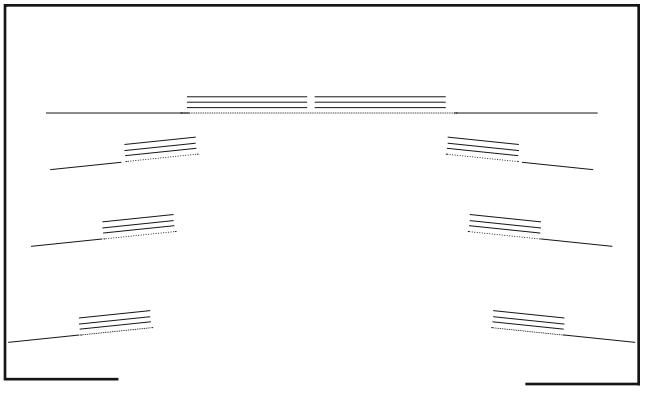
In general the earliest pictorial backgrounds for the stage show a visual illusion of the longest possible street, as in some famous designs by Serlio. (Fig 27) on the next pg). This type of sceneries were called classic, in contrast to the more romantic style that followed, for they tend to be intellectual and mechanically accurate rather than emotional or inspirational.

A specific passion for scenic spectacle developed early in 17th-century England. The man responsible for most of this scenic embellishment was Indigo Jones (1573-1652). He was well travelled and used his knowledge to introduce the Italian scenic perspectives as well as the proscenium arch, the contemporary continental architectural models and shifting scenery to the English theater. Most of Jones´s work has an imaginative and elaborate touch that is entirely individual. Perhaps his greatest innovation was the development of a system of changing scenes by sliding flats in grooves. This system remained standard in most theaters for almost three centuries.

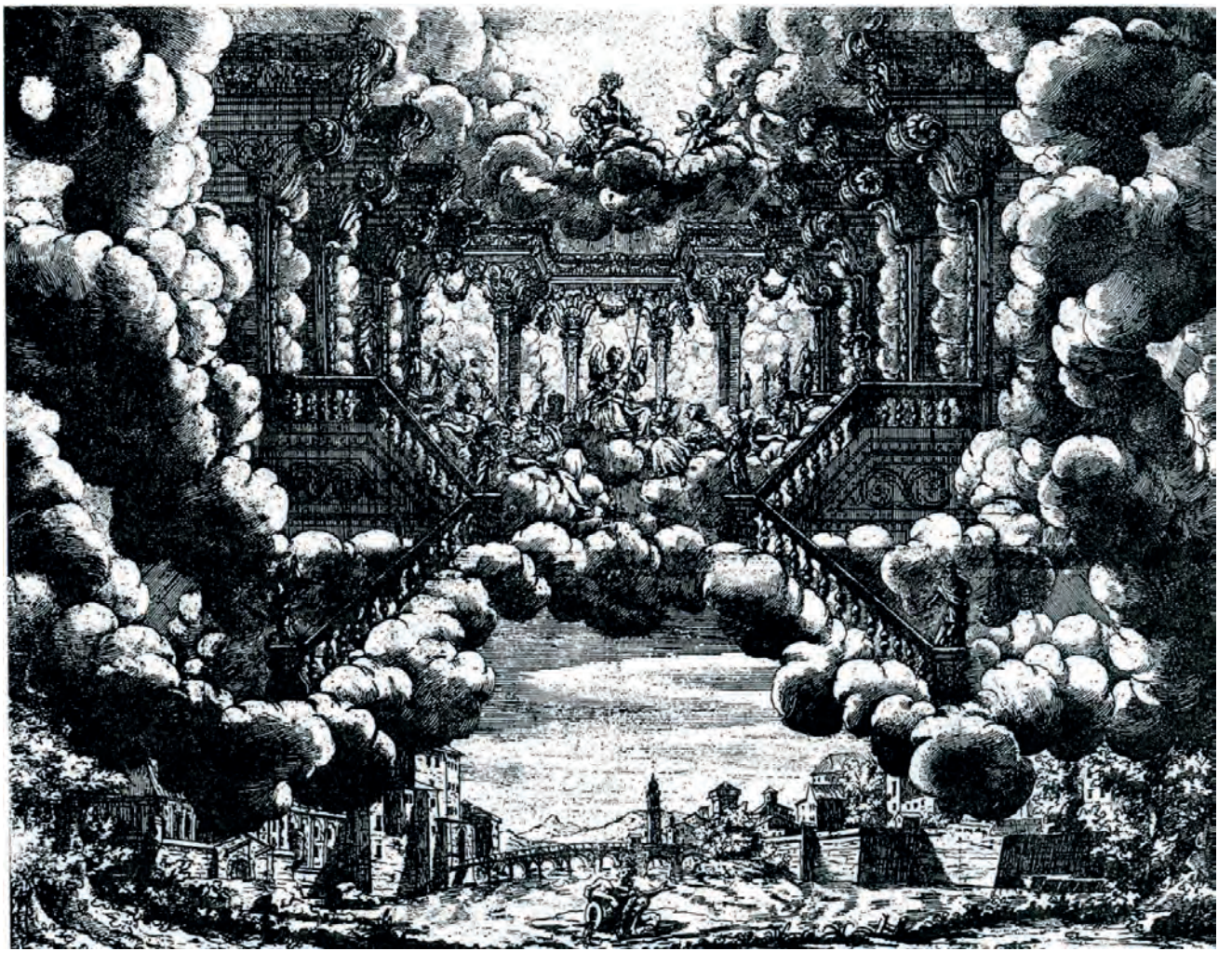
Fig 27

Fig 28

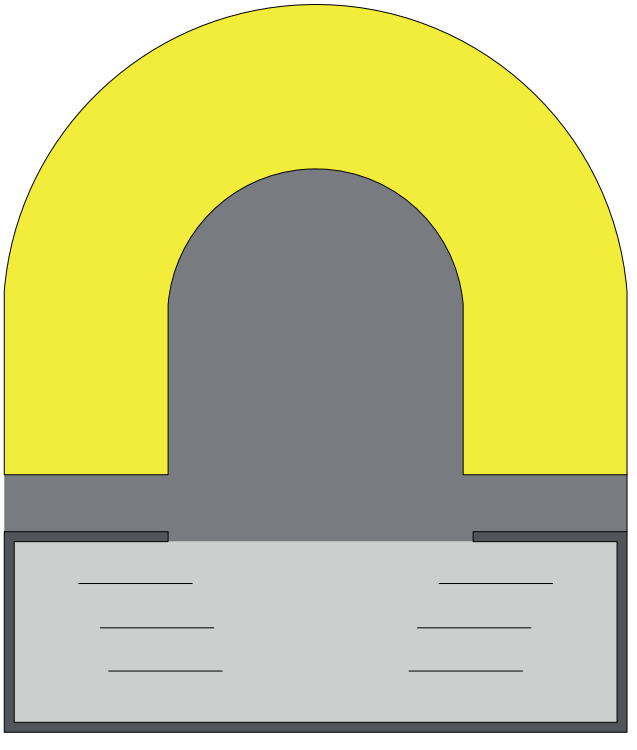




Since the Renaissance, Italian scenic designers carried the art of scenery to extravagant heights. And while such a scenery may be regarded as oldfashioned today, we must pay tribute to the skills shown by Italian scenic artists. A recurring name is Bibiena - a family that stretches through four generations and created some of the most overwhelming visual effects the theatrical and operatic world have seen.



Proscenium Stage



auditorium: stage
1 : 1

1618 Giovanni Battista Aleotti

The unique contribution of Renaissance Italy to theater architecture was the Teatro Farnese at Parma, the first theater known to have been constructed with a proscenium arch. It moved the stage behind a formal proscenium, equipped it with pictorial scenery that could be shifted and separated the audience area from the playing area by means of a front curtain. This and the use of artificial lighting and scenic effects contributed to convert the performances into a more refined illusion.

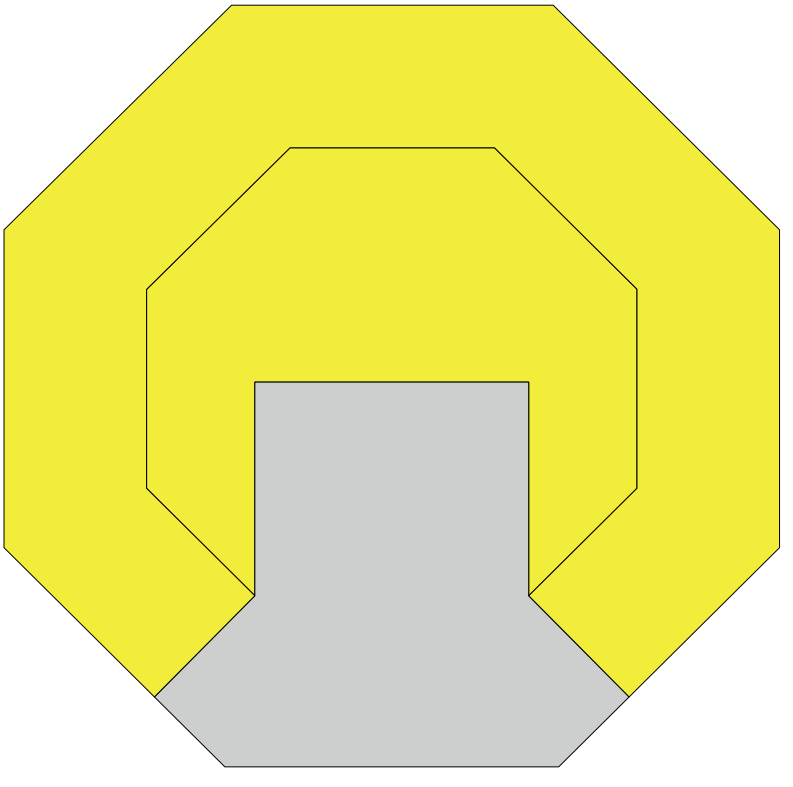
Teatro Sabbioneta

The smaller static prototype of the Proscenium stage is the Teatro Sabbioneta. This theater set the standard in auditorium design for a few decades by breaking up U-shape into four, five or six segments and stacking them one over the other.

Fig 29

Fig 30

Theater of Shakespeare

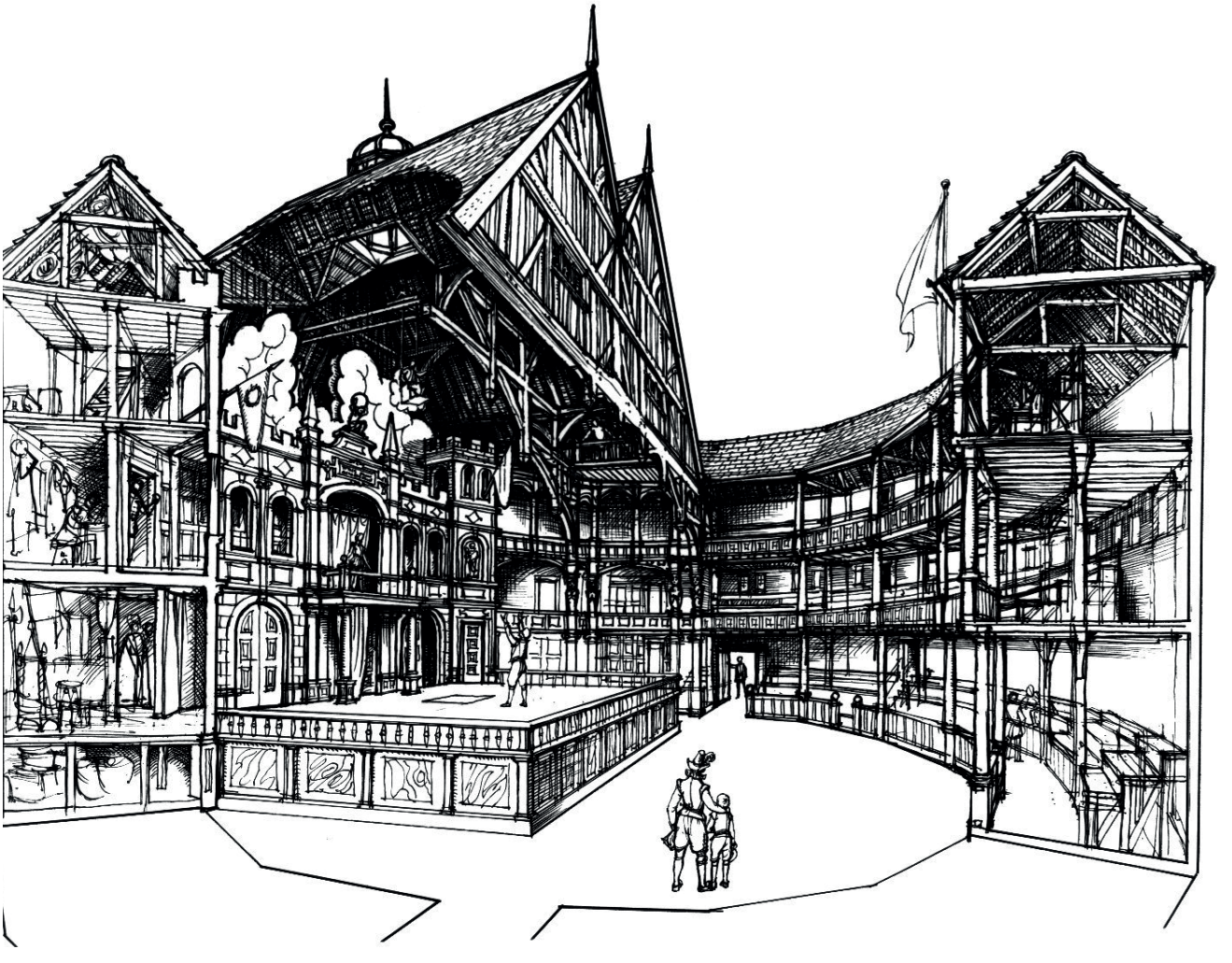


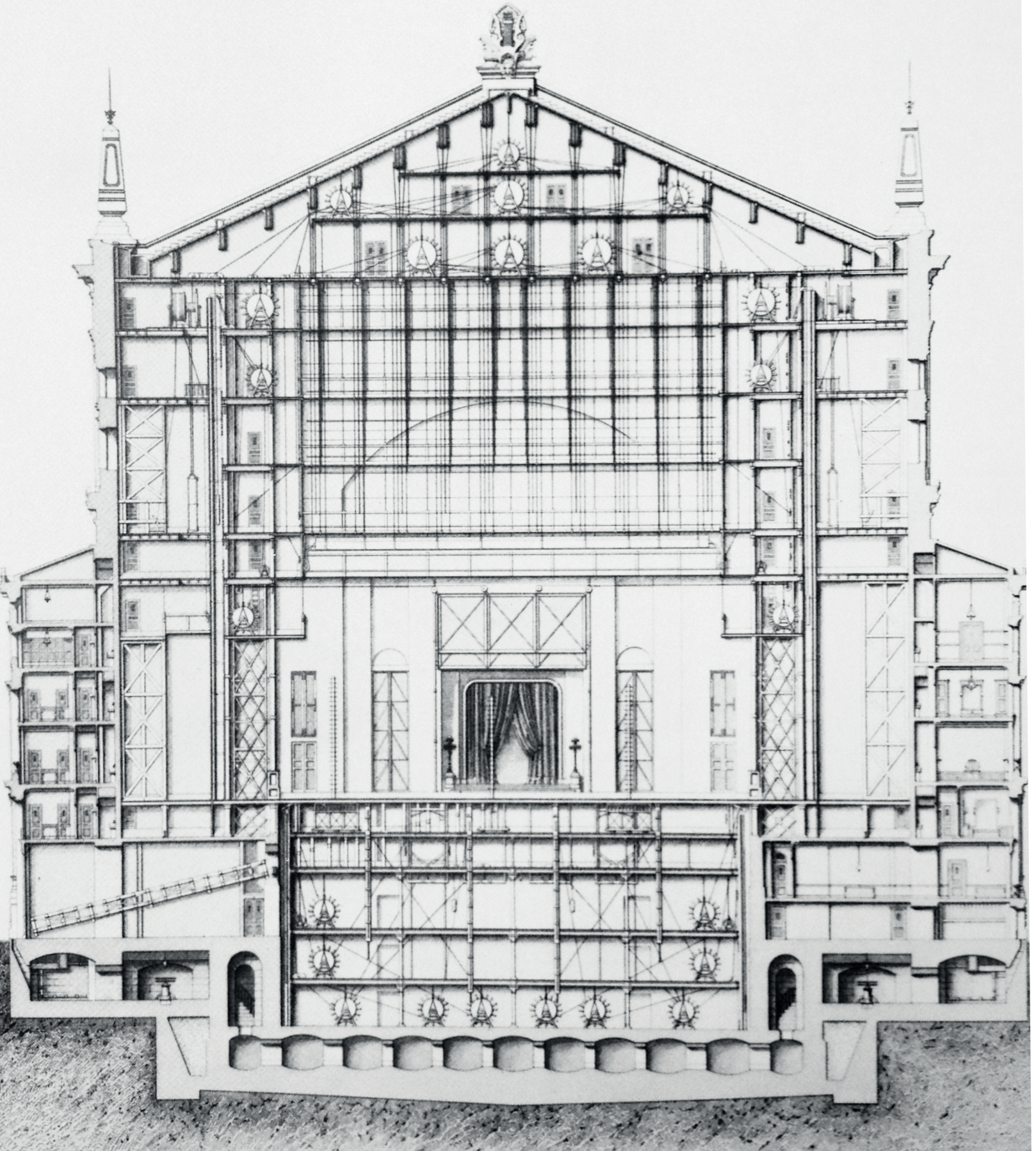
auditorium : stage
3 : 1

1599 Globe Theater / 3000 spectators

In Shakespeare's day, the Globe Theatre (1599-1613), which has been reconstructed on the South Bank since 1997, stood outside the walls of London. The Globe was a popular theatre - it was of an open, daylit type, with boxes and balconies. It apparently developed from the English public houses´ courtyards, where actors performed regularly. From every point in the auditorium existed a closed contact between the viewers and the players. If the spectators paid a little extra they could sit on comfortable cushions at the front part of the galleries. This Elizabethan stage was one of the most functional and efficient ever devised. When a power struggle between Charles I and parliament led to civil war, this situation was used as an excuse for closing all English theaters in 1642.

Fig 31





Baroque - and Classical Era

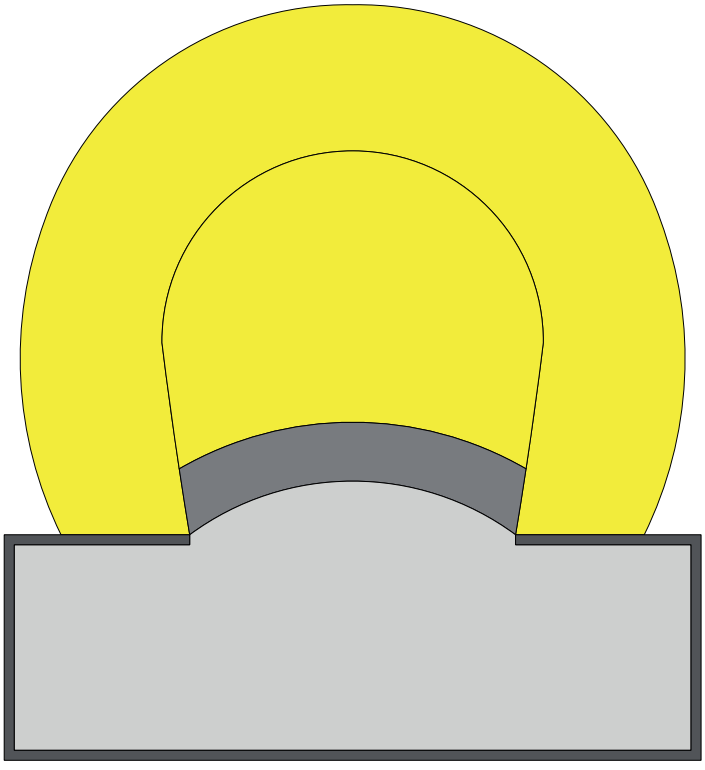
Introduction of Metal Frame Construction and Electric Light
Return to Classical Principles

In the Baroque period from 1650 onward, stage technology became a very important feature in theater architecture. Stages became increasingly mechanized, which lead to an increasing demand for backstage space. The theater-design itself focused on the decoration and the general spatial organisation of the house. Whereas at the beginning of the Baroque the audience area was often rectangular, but also of different types of U-forms, variations of elliptical shapes were developed during the 17th century. At the same time theaters specialized either for spoken drama or for musical performances, which posed different acoustic requirements. The number of galleries reached a maximum of seven, which, especially in the upper levels, would be divided into boxes.

The Neoclassic period created ideal forms for acoustics and visibility, driven by the Enlightenment and Rationalism movements. Aristocracy and increasingly the growing bourgeoisie supported theaters which thus became public symbols of culture and art. Behind the stage entrance an enormous space devoted to dressing rooms, stage machinery, curtains and scenery stores developed, that doubled the size of the building. The main entrance became more sophisticated and grew into large reception foyers and imperial staircases. The seats in the auditorium became comfotable with velvet upholstering.

Fig 32

HORSESHOE- SHAPED AUDITORIUM

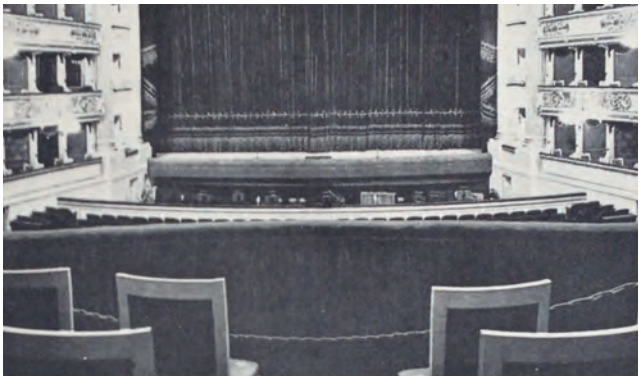


Mode of Dress / Seating Capacity

The seatbanks can hold today 20 to 40 % more persons than they could when they were designed- 'men wore swords, partial ceremonial armor, voluminous capes.. women wore velvet and satin brocade, jewel- encrusted gowns with full skirts.'

Types of seating

Baroque theater provided seating for two types: the private theaters and the public ones. Main influences were Italian and French- Italian followed the tight compartmented, box system with private anterooms while French used the open box and gallery- still based on social position.



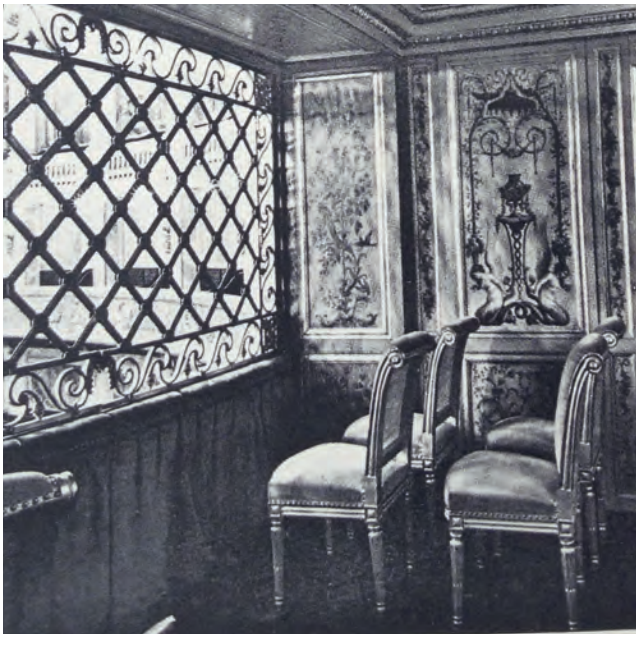
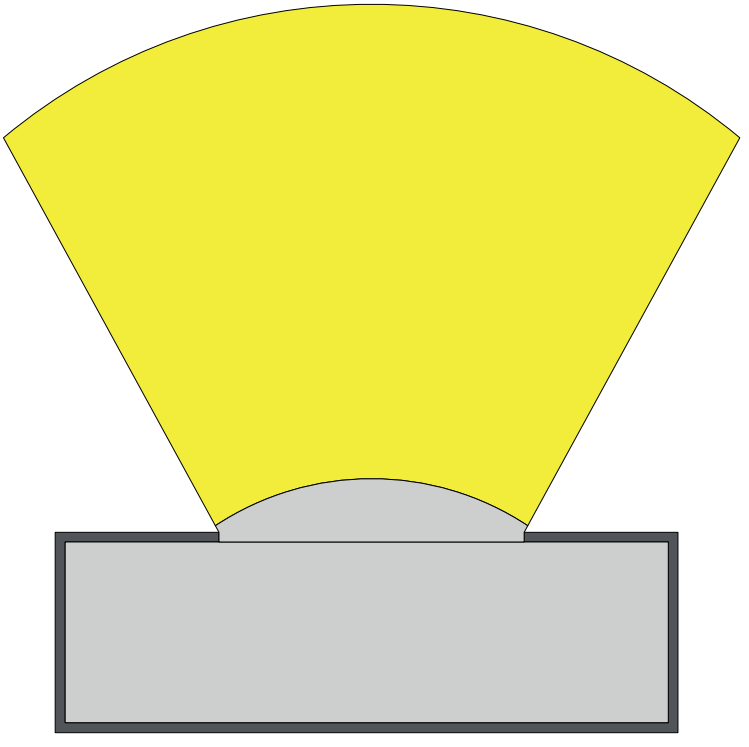


Fig 33 Teatro alla Scala, MilanRoyal box seating
Fig 34 Teatro alla Scala, MilanRoyal balcony box

Fig 35 Opera de Versailles balcony seating
Fig 36 Opera de Versailles private box

FAN- SHAPED AUDITORIUM

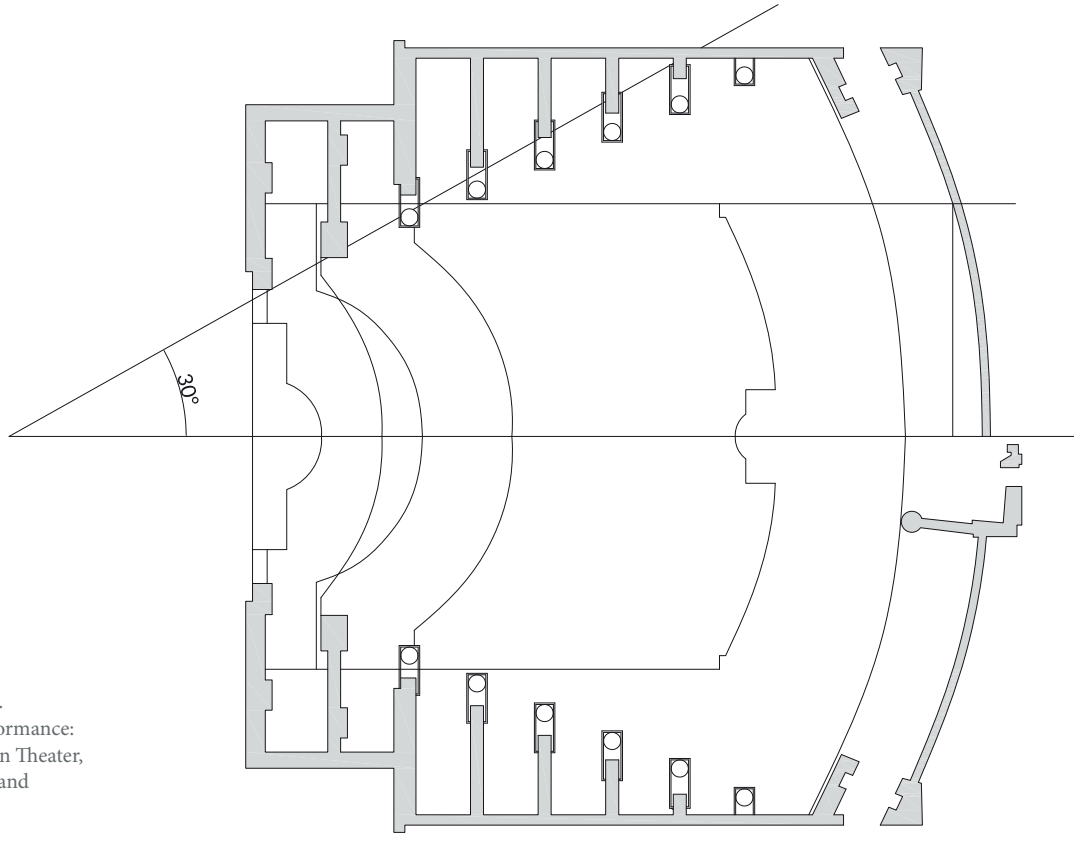


1872- 1875 Bayreuth Festspielhaus

'Artistic Man can only fully content himself by uniting every branch of art into the common Artwork.' [3]

The outstanding avantgarde theater of the nineteenth century was the Bayreuth Festspielhaus. It was the result of a collaboration between Richard Wagner, the famous composer, dramatist, director, Otto Brückwald, architect, and Carl Brandt, a stage technician. Their project was strongly influenced by the architect Gottfried Semper, although he had no hand in designing the Festspielhaus. He was interested in introducing innovations to Baroque architecture, inspired by the antique models and the theories of Jean Nicolas-Louis Durand. Together with Richard Wagner he planned a festival theater in Munich, based on the Odeon with its shell-shaped auditorium.

The Festspielhaus is a reassertion of the classical auditorium-, design-, seating- and geometrical principles, applied to a modern roofed theater building. It rationally approaches the problems of auditorium sight-lines and acoustics connected to the proscenium stage, which had never been solved by the baroque designers. First, the visual distraction caused by the orchestra pit had to be eliminated. Therefore the musicians are placed a whole level below the stage. It was Wagner's intention that the orchestra should be heard, but not seen. What made the design furthermore truly revolutionary, was that for the first time rational limits were placed on the side angles of view by eliminating all seating positions outside lateral and vertical viewing angles of approximately 30 degrees. This automatically did away with all side seats of the stacked ring-balconied opera house auditorium.



[3] Richard Wagner, 1849, 9.
Dixon, Steve; Digital Performance: A History of New Media in Theater, Dance, Performance Art, and Installation, pg.41

Revolt Against Painted Scenery

Towards the end of the 19th century, after almost 300 years of its existence, painted sceneries became more and more obsolete. This was due to different factors such as the growing tendency to build a scenery rather than to paint it, and that painting itself moved towards realism and later towards abstraction and cubism. Further the use of cameras and the new electric footlights and borderlights tended to highlight the false perspectives, painted shadows and incongruous proportions that resulted when an actor moving too far upstage loomed higher than the painted mountains. As a response, two groups formed: the realists, who sought to remedy unconvincing painted scenery by making it 'real' and the antirealists, who sought to remedy the same unconvincing scenery by making it frankly theatrical, an art in and of itself rather than an imitation of nature.

The Realists and Naturalists

Ithe 1850's Tom Robertson and the Bancrofts began using 'box settings' (settings with ceiling, back wall, and side walls) instead of the usual painted wings and drops. This led to the use of practical doors, practical windows, and such items as threedimensional fireplaces. Actors often began rehearsing in naturally furnished surroundings, not knowing which wall would eventually be removed, allowing the audience to peer in on their private lives. But such extreme efforts only served to focus attention on the inherent limitations of realism and naturalism, as any attempt remained merely an approximation of reality.

The Antirealists: Adolphe Appia and Gordon Craig

The antirealists were against both the old painted scenery and the attempts to fake reality. While antirealistic theories in general have been sound and stimulating, their realization has been impractical. A notable exception is Adolphe Appia (1862-1928). He was a Swiss architect, stage designer and theorist of stage lighting and décor. Appia´s concepts and realized works transformed the practice of stage design and had a great influence on the development of the performing arts. His settings were designed to harmonize with and assist the actor who played in them. Performances were framed by an overall atmosphere rather than specific pieces of scenery. To this end he emphasized steps, levels, columns, and the rhythm of lines. Furthermore he stressed the importance of stage illumination, as good lighting could fuse the actor and his environment into an organic whole.

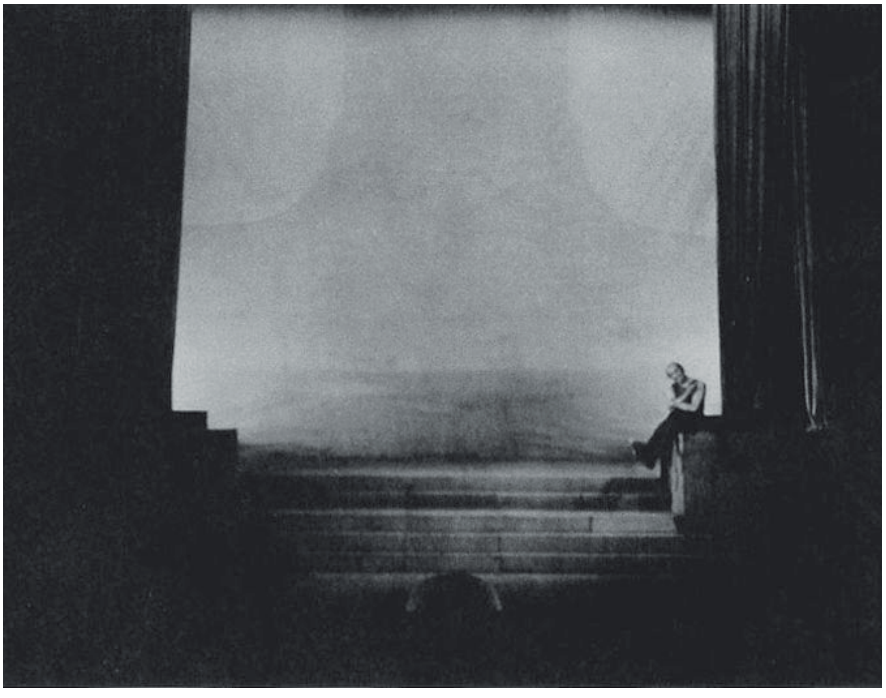
´Inclusion of the Actor as a scenic element creates a completely new focus with resonance in modernism.´[4]

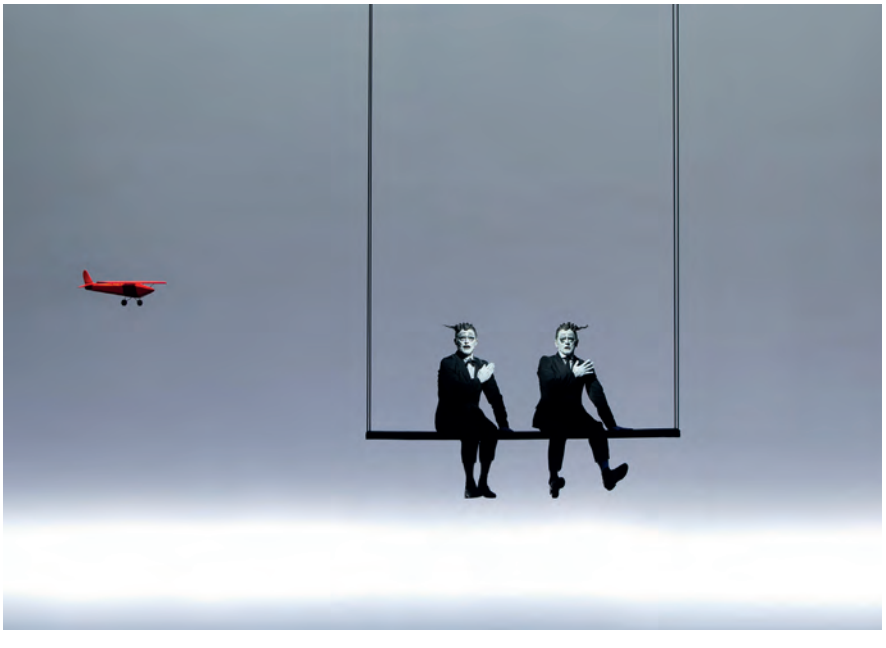
Appia therefore developed a new approach to theatrical lighting, which he considered inseparable from the actors and the space:

´Light has an almost miraculous flexibility ... it can create shadow, make them living, and spread the harmony of their vibrations in space just as music does.´

He literally set the stage for the experimental theatre of the second half of the 20th century and anticipated many spectacular atmospheric installations such as the artistic work of James Turrell or the stage designs of Robert Wilson.

4 link
5 'Adolphe Appia: Text on Theatre, London 1993, p114-15
Fig.37
Fig.38

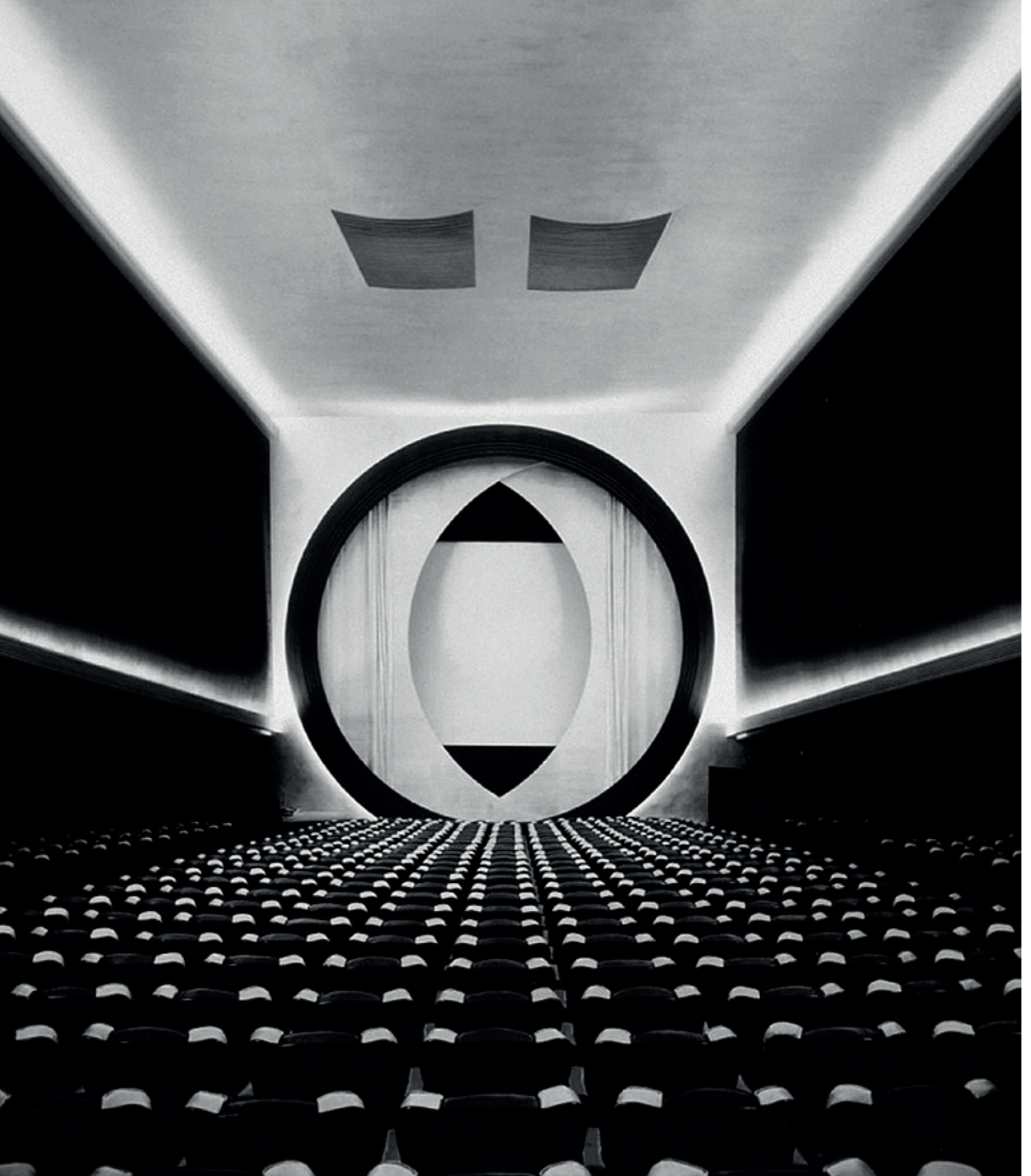




'Theater is another sort of world to architecture.' [6]

[6] Edward Gordon Craig, Sharp, Dennis; Sharp Words: Selected Essays of Dennis Sharp, p.31
Fig 39
Fig.40

Similar theories of stage design to those of Appia were held by Gordon Craig. His influence on other designers and on 20th century theater in general has been enormous. He was called as a producer in many stage productions as well as an adviser on a number of new theaters. Craig proposed replacing the human being on the stage with inanimate figures or puppets, the so called ´Übermarionette´. His argument was agianst the 'actor' but not against the human performer. For this reason he rejected the conventional approach to acting and challenged the acting profession by calling such control an 'impossible state of perfection'.



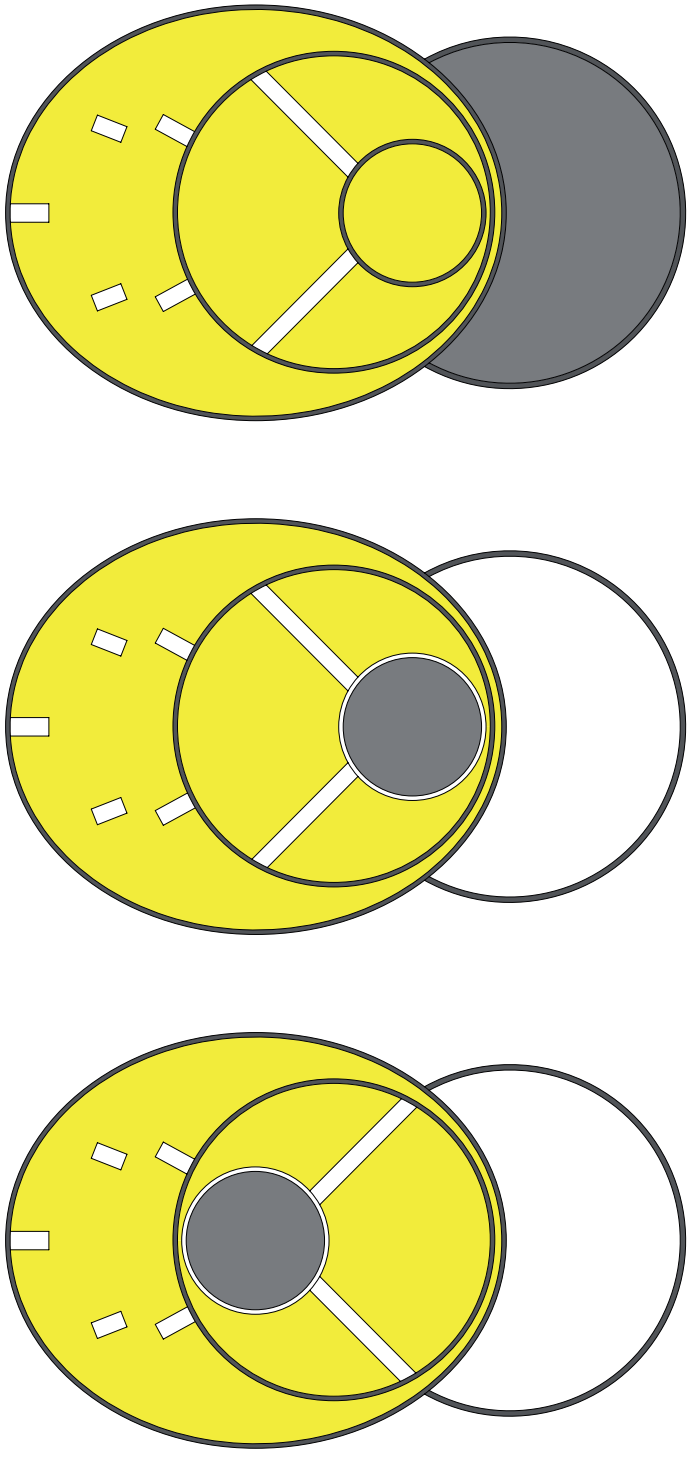
'The work of art is valuable only in so far as it is vibrated by the reflexes of the future.' Andre Breton

Glory of the Machine

20TH CENTURY

The 20th century in theater sought the transformation of the stage through the spectacular mechanics of the machine. This development was nourished by the rapid development of technology, which lead to new modes of perception through the distribution of photography and film. Life in general became a complex totality and the relationship of space and time was redefined. The increasing importance of movement and multi-perspectival perception put pressure on the traditional theater performance in front of an auditorium.

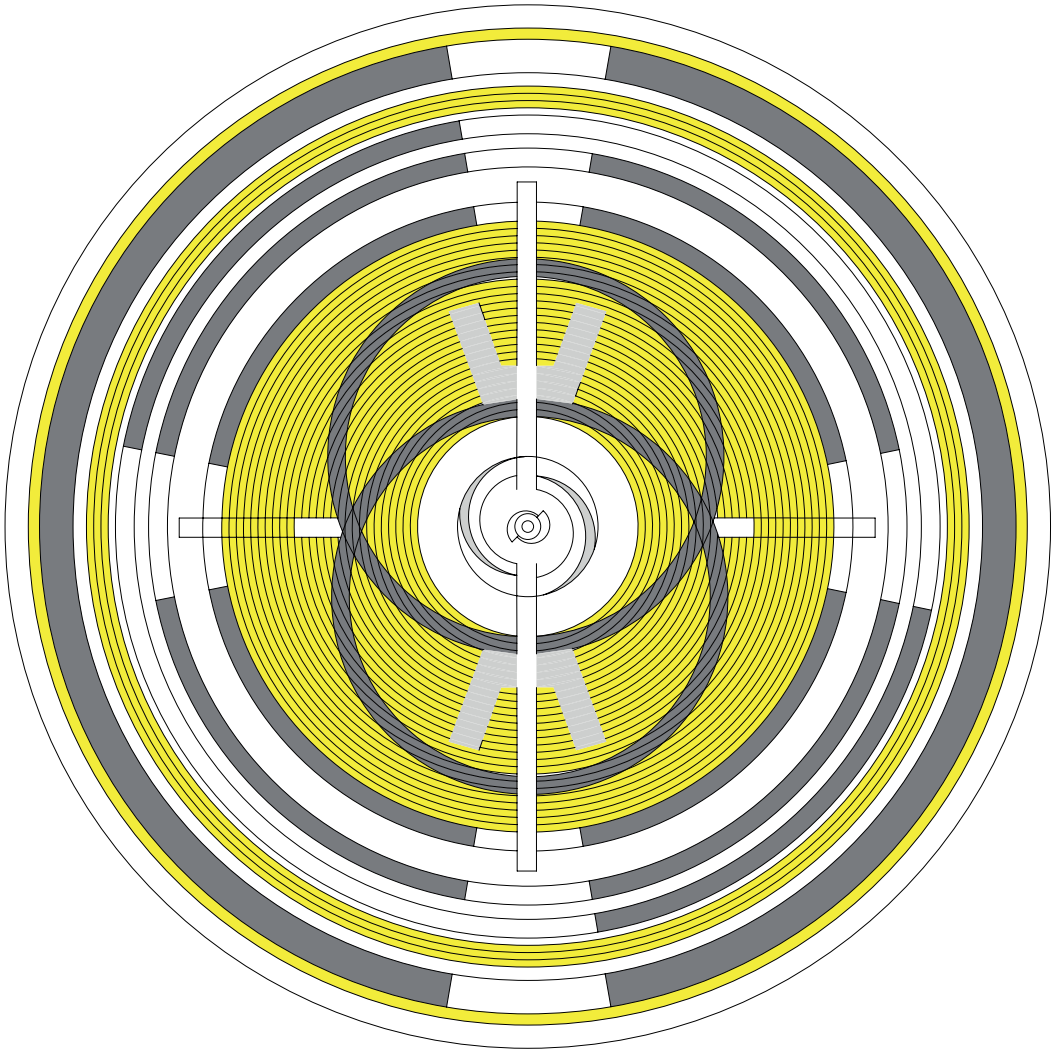
Fig 41



1927 The Idea of the ´Total Theater´

One of the most celebrated theaters of the 20th century is Walter Gropius´s ´Totaltheater´ for the stage director Erwin Piscator (1927). Spectacle, space and performance were meant to come together in a radically new design based on mechanical ideas of rotation. Groupius´s aim ***'was to create an instrument endowed with such a flexibility that its artistic direction might, thanks to a few simple but ingenious machanisms, transform the stage in order to get all the necessary or desirable changes: forestage, circular stage or stage in depth.'*** [7] Changes of this kind were possible even during a performance, so that theatergoers could be drawn directly into the scenic events, as Piscator envisaged. Around the audience, Groupius installed transparent surfaces for light and film projections.

[7] Sharp, Dennis; Sharp Words: Selected Essays of Dennis Sharp, p.34

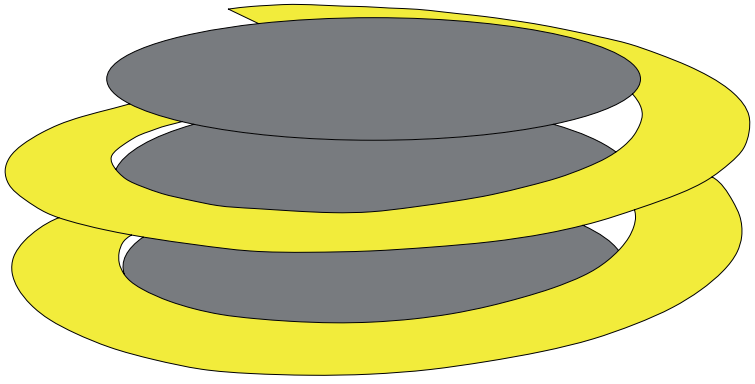


Friedrich Kiesler

'The spatial stage in the theatre of our times hovers in space. From now on, it uses the ground only as a means of support for its open form of construction. The auditorium circles in a series of looping, electro-motoring movements about the spherical stage core.' [8]

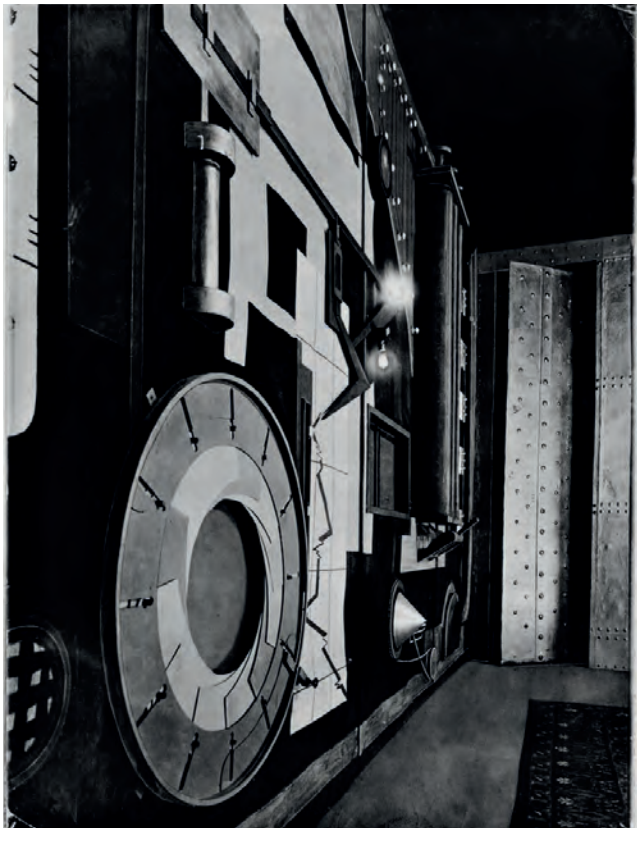
In 1922 Friedrich Kiesler realised the ´Spatial Stage´ for three weeks during the ´First International Exhibition of Theater Technology´ in Vienna. His idea was that the audience was moving around vertical stages, whose different levels were connected by a ramp and an elevator in the center.

This first prototype was followed by his proposal for the ´Endless Theater´, that consisted of various sporting, parking, and theater facilities for a maximum of 100.000 visitors. The entire construction is enclosed within double skins of steel and fuse milk-glass. The stage has the form of an endless spiral. The various levels are connected by lifts with platforms. Seating areas, stage and lift platforms are suspended above and next to each other throughout the space. The building consists of an elastic structural system, comprising a series of cables and platforms based on the principles of bridge construction. The drama can expand and develop freely in space.



8 DETAIL, Review of Architecture and Construction Details, Volume 3, p.249

Experimenting with Adolphe Appia's ideas on lights, Gordon Craig's notion of the Übermarionette and his own conceptions of space, line and plane, the German artist Oskar Schlemmer took narrative, spatial, and choreographic abstraction to new heights during the 1920s at the Bauhaus in Weimar. He designed robotic costumes for the futurist dance ´The Triadic Ballet´ (1922) and enclosed a female performer's head and hands in science-fiction-style silver spheres for ´Metal Dance´ (1929).



One of the most extraordinary and high-tech multimedia productions of the 1920s, was Friedrich Kiesler´s stage design for the Berlin production of Karel Capek's ´R.U.R.´ in 1922. Using kinetic elements, including moving side screens and an eight-foot iris that opened and closed to blind the audience with spotlights, Kiesler believed that 'from beginning to end, the entire play was in motion... It was a theatrical concept to create tension in space.' The monumental stage backdrop was an impressive and elaborate mix of visual elements, drawing on graphic design, cubism, constructivism, and the geometric abstract paintings of Kandinsky.

Fig 42
Fig.43
Fig.44

1926 Andor Weininger

Project for a spherical theater, 4.500 spectators

'As dar as the spherical theatre is concerned, I say that the circus was a main influence.' [9]

In 1922 Friedrich Kiesler realised the ´Spatial Stage´ for three weeks during the ´First International Exhibition of Theater Technology´ in Vienna. His idea was that the audience was moving around vertical stages, whose different levels were connected by a ramp and an elevator in the center.

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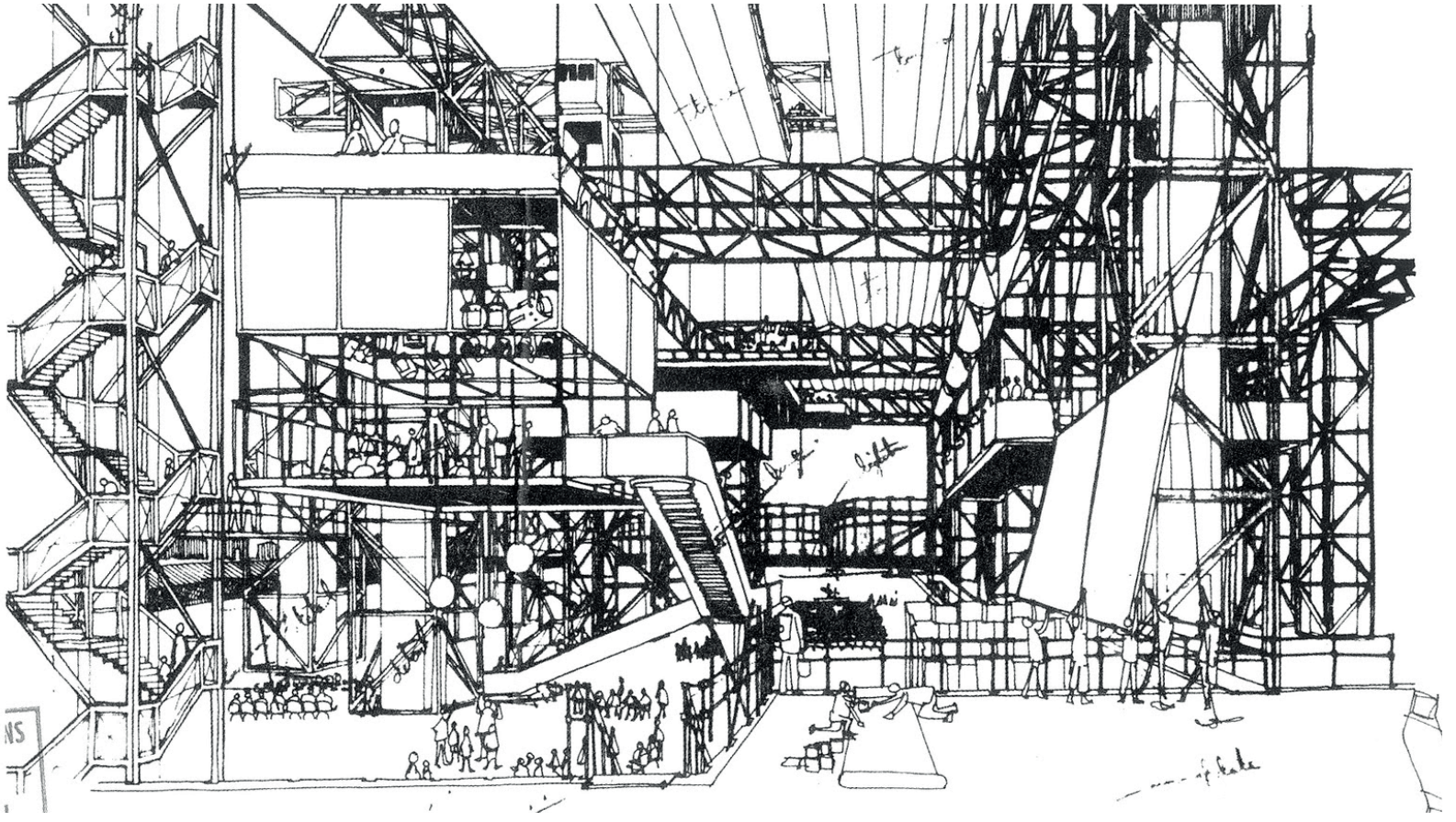
[9] DETAIL, Review of Architecture and Construction Details, Volume 3, p.249



1962 Fun Palace

Project for a spherical theater, 4.500 spectators

'It was well into the detailed design of the project that, at an alcohol-inspired brain-storming session off Times Square in 1962, we decided on the name Fun Palace for our short-life conglomerate of disparate, free-choice, free-time, voluntary activities, planned as a public launching-pad rather than a Mecca for East London.' [10]

´Joan Littlewood always said: *'ask the kids' – fun palaces will do just that.´* [11]

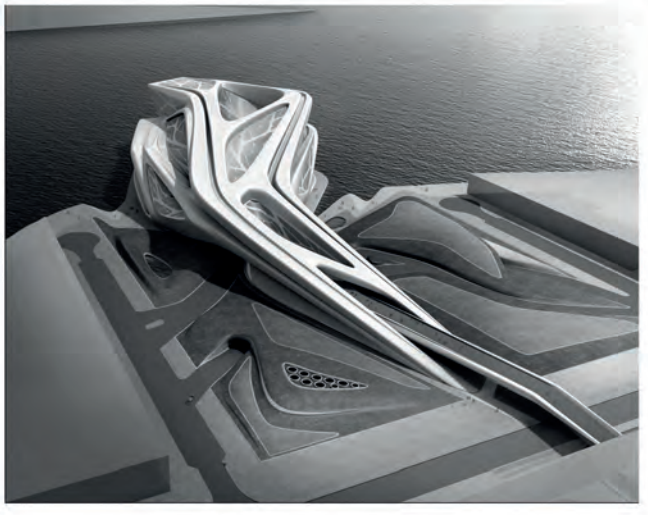
With the ´Fun Palace´ project by Cedric Price from 1962, the machine-age of the theater culminated. Initiated and commissioned by avantgarde-theater director and producer Joan Littlewood, its architecture was reduced to a combination of structure and technology. Cedric Price designed a transformable machine with the greatest possible degree of freedom for its program. Inspired by the 18th century idea of the pleasure ground for strolling, amusement and conversations, the spectators were turned into active participants, that selected or created their own programme:
´CHOOSE what you want to do - or watch someone else doing it. Learn how to handle tools, paint, babies, machinery, or just listen to your favourite tune. Dance, talk or be lifted up to where you can see how other people make things work. Sit out over space with a drink and tune in to what´s happening elsewhere in the city. Try starting a riot or beginning a painting - or just lie back and stare at the sky.´ [12]
The potential of the "Fun Palace" was derived from an extensive use of media and a multitude of possible spatial variations, which were the result of Price´s analysis of theater configurations, based on capacity (audiences of 10 to 1.000), angle of the auditorium (6° to 35°), distance to stage, maximum number of seats per row, width and depth of seat banks etc. Never built, the Fun Palace remains one of the most influential projects in contemporary architecture.

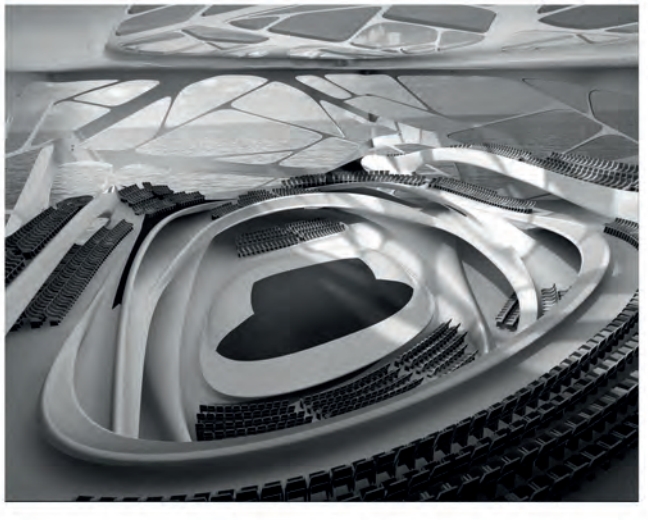
[10] Cedric Price, from Talks at the AA, AA Files 19 (Spring 1990), p. 32
[11] http://www.theguardian.com/culture-professionals-network/culture-professionals-blog/2014/jan/06/fun-palaces-joan-littlewood-culture
[12] Re:CP by Cedric Price, Hans Ulrich Obrist (ed), Birkhäuser, Basel, Boston, Berlin, 2003, p30 Fig.45

Contemporary

The rapid development of the computer as a design tool as well as an universal medium for the production and control of images and sound has had a huge impact on the architectural form of theaters. Following the general inclination of postmodernity towards the symbolic value of objects, digitalization has been used primarily to create new shapes and geometries for the overall volume, whereas the spatial organization has remained rather traditional, compared to the modern visions of the Totaltheater and the Fun Palace. With the use of parametric software, architects generate more and more complex forms to create iconic landmarks in a global context. On the other end of the spectrum architecture appropriates abandoned and dysfunctional structures in cities to reinvent the typical theater. But both developments hardly ever challenge the very core of the standards of the stage/auditorium configuration as it has developed over the centuries. In spite of their geometrical complexity, the following examples are a showcase of contemporary theaters with rather traditionally organised interiors that fail to make a difference in a broader context.

Fig 46





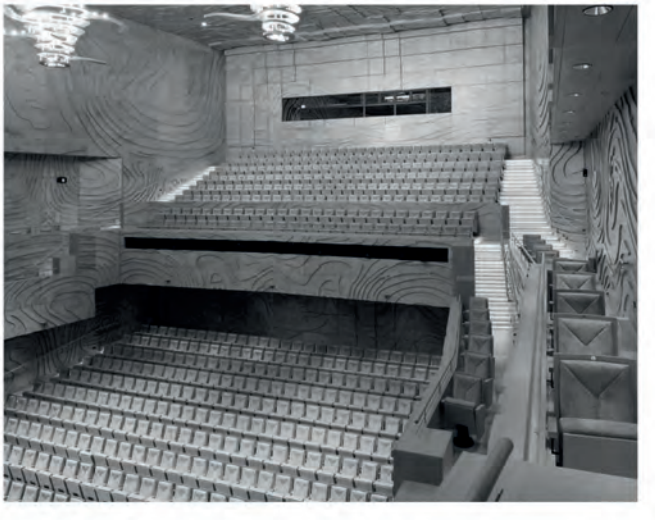
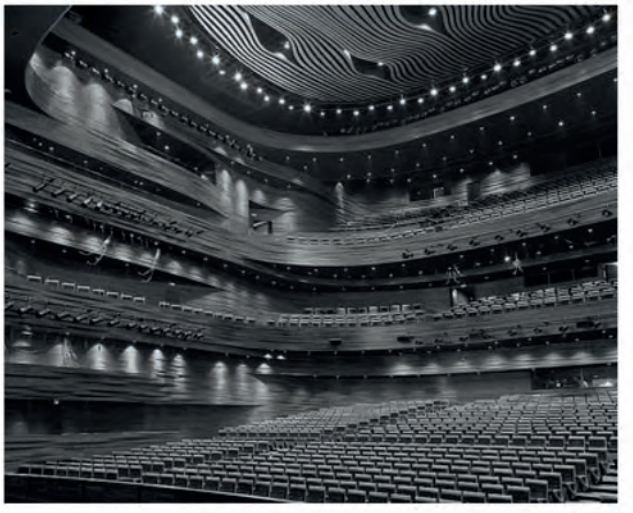


Fig 47 Zaha Hadid, Performing Arts Centre,Abu Dhabi, exterior
Fig 48 Zaha Hadid, Performing Arts Centre,Abu Dhabi, interior
Fig 49 Melbourne Theatre Company (MTC) Theatre, exterior
Fig 50 Melbourne Theatre Company (MTC) Theatre, interior



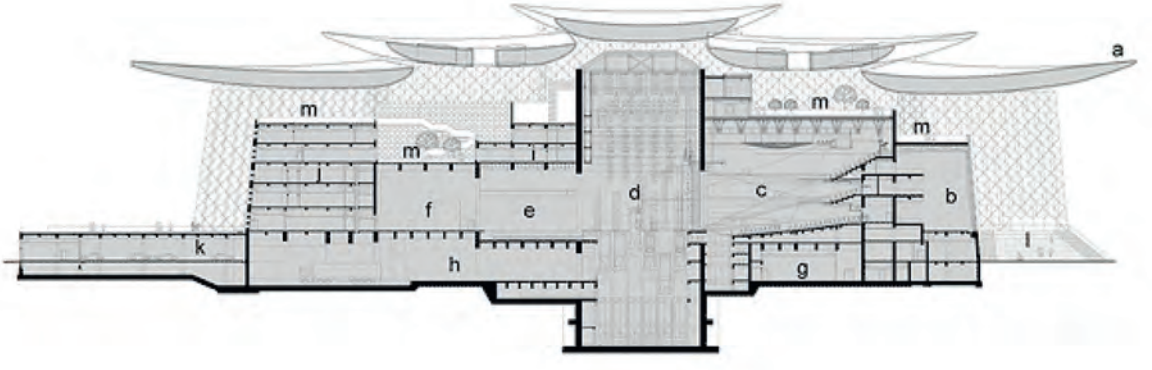


Fig 51 Wuxi Grand Theatre, exterior
Fig 52 Wuxi Grand Theatre, interior
Fig 53 Wuxi Grand Theatre, section

OMA / AMO

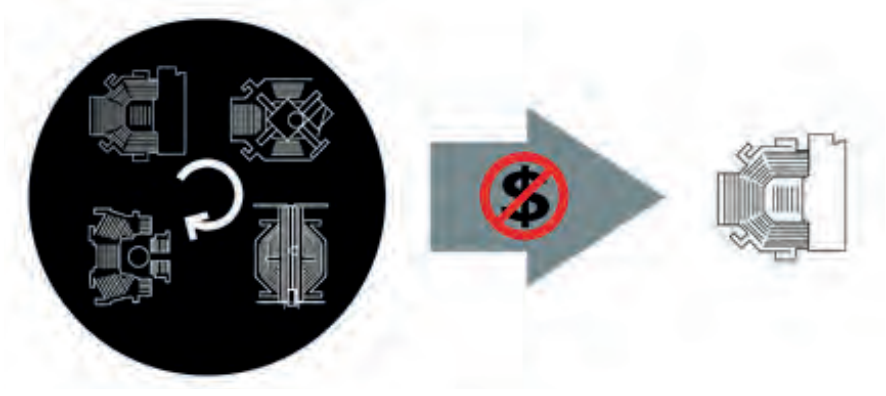
Contrary to the approach of new formalism as described above, Rem Koolhaas and OMA (Office for Metropolitan Architecture) have a long history of research into the architectural conditions of theaters. The result is a series of innovative performing spaces, from the Netherlands Dance Theatre (1987) to the Wyly Theater in Dallas (see below, 2009) and the Taipei Performing Arts Centre (2010). The latter consists of three adaptable theatres plugged into a central cube.

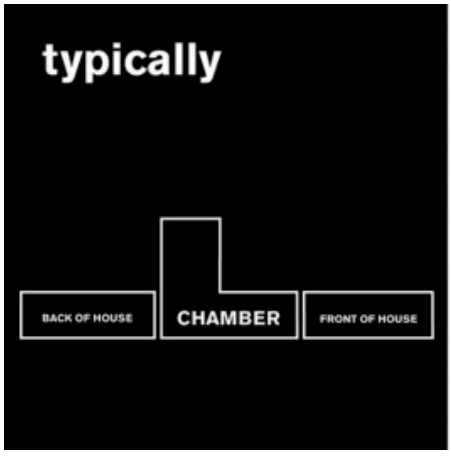
The knowledge for these projects comes partly from the unit within OMA dedicated to non-architectural projects and research, called AMO. Their analysis of the Greek theater scenography was used in OMA's design for the stage set at the Greek Theatre in Syracus. This features three temporary architectural devices that reinterpret the spaces of the theatre, which dates from the 5th century BC. 'The first intervention, the Ring, is a suspended walkway that completes the semi-circle of the terraced seating, encompassing the stage and the backstage, and giving actors an alternative way of entering the scene. The Machine is a fully adaptable backdrop for the plays: a sloping circular platform, seven metres high, mirroring the amphitheatre. The backdrop can rotate, symbolizing the passage of 13 centuries during Prometheus's torture; split down the middle, it can also be opened, allowing the entrance of the actors, and symbolizing dramatic events like Prometheus being swallowed in the bowels of the earth. The Raft, a circular stage for the actors and dancers, reimagines the orchestra space as a modern thymele, the altar that in ancient times was dedicated to Dionysian rites.'

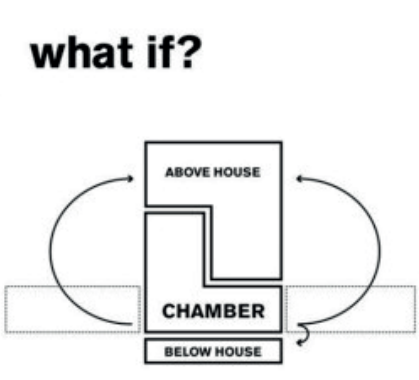
Fig 54
Fig 55
Fig 56

One of the exceptions in recent architecture that rethinks the theater program itself is the Wyly Theater in Dallas by OMA, recognized as one of the United States´s few innovative theater companies located outside the triumvirate of New York, Chicago, and Seattle. Its new building repositions traditional front-of-house and back-of-house functions into the vertical organisation of below-house and above-house. On the one hand this liberates the perimeter of the theater's chamber. Exposed on all sides, it can directly engage with the city around it. No longer shielded by transitional and technical zones like lobbies, ticket counters, and backstage facilities, fantasy and reality can mix when and where desired. The building is turned into a large fly tower, a ´superfly´ or ´theater machine´ that eliminates the traditional distinction between stage and auditorium. The remaining environment for the plays can be cut, drilled, painted, welded, sawed, nailed, glued, and stitched at limited cost. The new building engenders flexibility without requiring additional spending; its capital costs are relocated from architecture to infrastructure for transformation.[13]

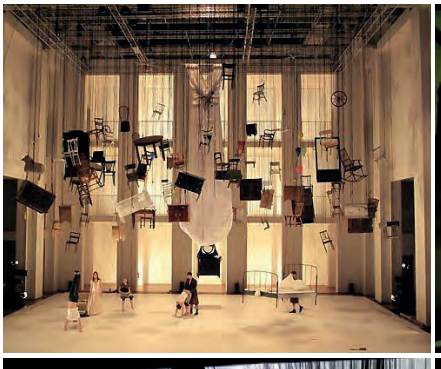
[13] See: http://www.archdaily.com/12521/wyly-theatre/
Fig 57
Fig 58
Fig 59

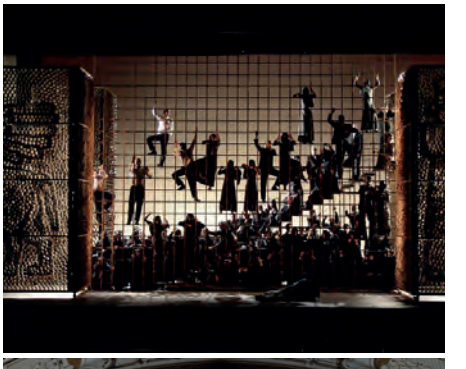


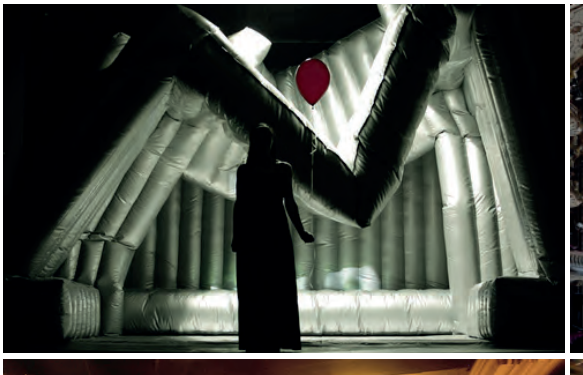
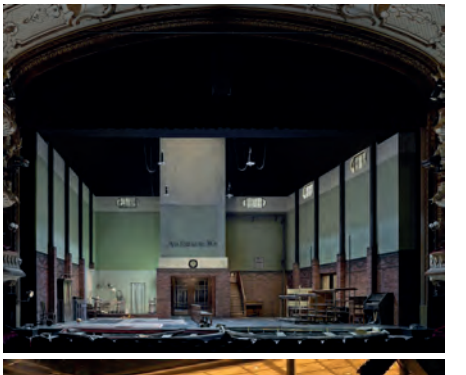

typically
BACK OF HOUSE
CHAMBER
FRONT OF HOUSE


what if?
ABOVE HOUSE
CHAMBER
BELOW HOUSE









Conclusion

With very few exceptions, the setting in theaters around the world has hardly changed: the spectators are facing a stage and sit silently watching the performances in front of them. As the abbreviated history of theater and stage design above has shown, recent architecture has, with a few exceptions, even fallen back behind the concepts of the modern revolutionaries from the beginning of the 20th century. What happens on the stage is magical or irritating, while the audience remains in the dark. It is depending on the fantasy of the director and the stage designer, to create a never-seen space and a lasting impression on the spectator. But what the audience rarely experiences is being on the stage, being literally part of the play in its physical dimensions. Not in an experiment outside the theater, not in a one-time performance, but continually. The question is how long this notion of nostalgia can be kept in the presence of virtual worlds and individualized smartphone-entertainment without losing audiences and interest in theater ... And as the theater remains the most important place for a life interaction between actors and spectators, wouldn´t it be time to turn its architecture into a platform which allows its users to interact with each other and with the architecture itself?

Fig 60

WELCOME

II

CHAPTER

Is the space important for the connection between actors and public ?

'The space has an absolute influence... the way the audience look at the stage, perceive, hear and feel.'
Vesela Babinova, actress

'In my opinion the most important (not only for a theater play) is the space and how it is occupied by the people.
Dessislava Kovacheva, architect (interior designer)

'Space does not just influence the connection between actors and public. It is a fundamental question for a stage designer in his search of a visual image for a play.'
Stiva, stage designer

'...I wish I could be in the middle and everything would happen around me. I believe that contact with the audience is really important. I like when actors pass the spectators when they go on stage. In this way everyone becomes a part of the performance.'
Milena Matchirska, general manager

Which theater left an impression on you?

'The Burgtheater in Vienna during Schlingensief´s "Area 7". Everyone could walk around everywhere, no division between stage, auditorium, backstage, foyer. No forced sitting through a specified period, free disposal about time and space for the spectators ... The contrast between a space i knew so well in its traditional, restricted use and its opening to my own exploration: an almost archaeological perspective.'
Harald Trapp, architect

'It was a solo performance, but what I liked most was the place. It was not in a theater but in a club. People were sitting on bar chairs, having a drink, enjoying the nice atmosphere. The actor was using everything in the place for the play and he was somehow part of the space.'
Dessislava Kovacheva, architect (interior designer)

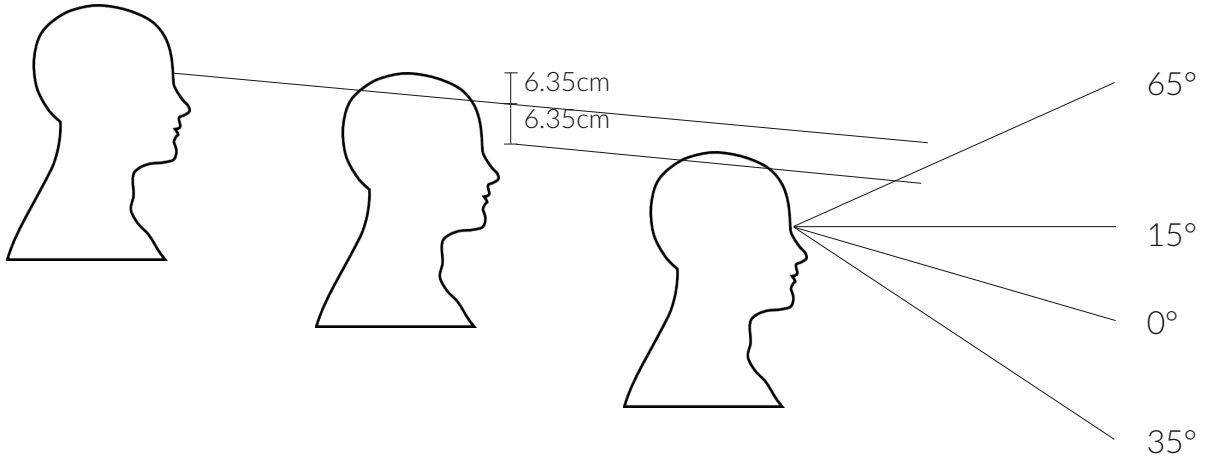
'The Fridge- a simple room - not a theatre building, but a performance'
Svetla Ganeva, gallerist

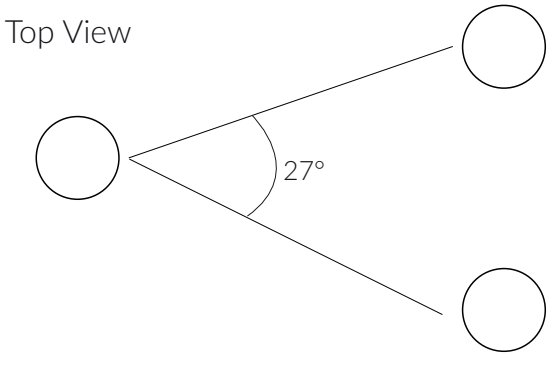
'It was in an old and deserted Viennese palais. The auditorium was allowed to move around freely and explore the different rooms. In those rooms played different pieces and one could choose which piece to watch when I liked the exploring of the building, the unknown rooms and the untypical theatre-structure.'
Nin Prantner, designer

Sightlines

Although a mutiplicity of parameters define the impression of a theatrical performance on its spectators, the visual sense is dominating. Therefore the history of theater-architecture is to a great degree based on the complex arrangements of seating in the best possible visual relation to the stage. Decisive is the distance in space and desirable the shortest possible connection between spectator and actor, because the play of the actors´ features is fundamental for the expression of emotions. As theaters at the same time are supposed to provide access for as many spectators as possible to what is happening on stage, architecture is in a dilemma. Seating and circulation consume space, which on a horizontal plane directly equals in an increasing distances with increasing audiences. Therefore the geometry of the auditorium around a stage is ideally circular, posing problems for the performance, as acting usually has a clear orientation. Raising the auditorium vertically improves the ratio between seats with good visibility and the amount of space needed.

As a result of these physical and perceptual limitations, theater-architecture has produced a limited set of types which usually meant a compromise. Generally, actors and spectators prefer the closest possible confrontation with each other, as this intensifies the sensation of the performance. A possible solution of this problem could be the integration of stage and auditorium, which demands a mobile, flexible system.

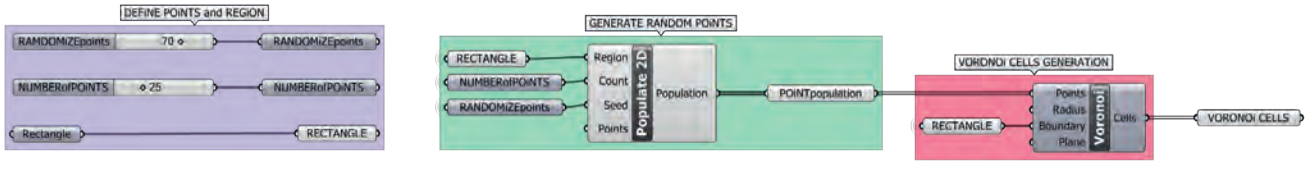

6.35cm
6.35cm
65°
15°
0°
35°


Top View
27°

VORONOI

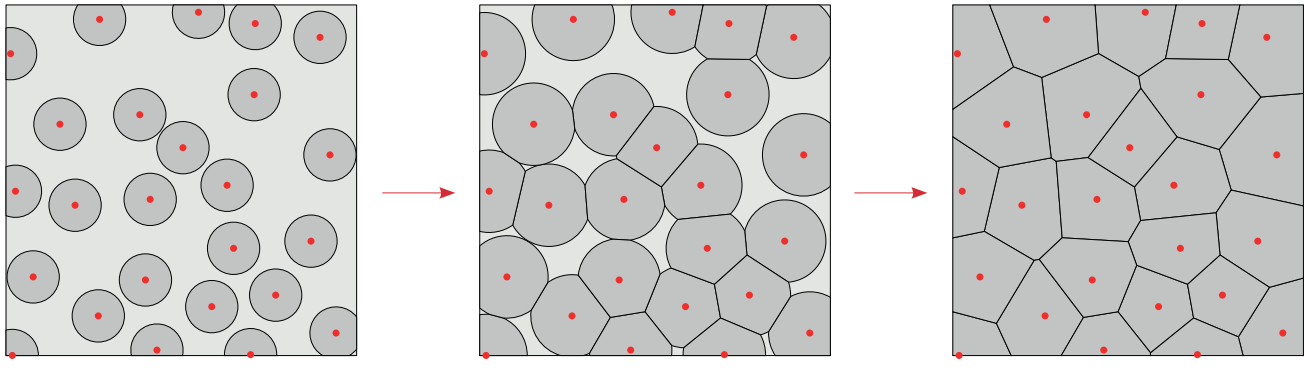
The Voronoi Diagram is named after the Russian mathematician Georgy Voronoy. It consists of a boundary of Voronoi cells, which are generated on a plane using a number of points. They "*divide the plane according to the nearest-neighbor rule: Each point is associated with the region of the plane closest to it*"[1] . When changing the position of the points on the plane the generated Voronoi cells also change and generate a new set of geometry.

To simplify the use of Voronoi diagrams in architecture the developers of the Grasshopper-software added a plugin for Rhino. For the stage-layout, the Voronoi cells were created in a two-dimensional geometry.The graphics



below show a part of the script in Grasshopper. The program allows to increase the radius of the Voronoi cells to a point where no empty spaces between them are left.
The generation of the cells is based on intersection.

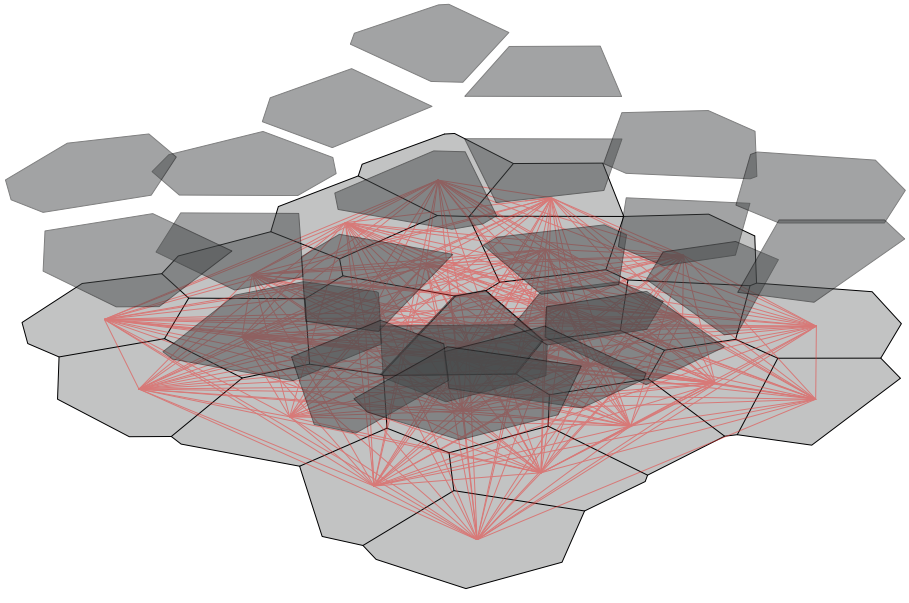
"Each point on an edge is equidistant from exactly two sites, and each vertex is equidistant from at least three. As a consequence, the regions are edge to edge and vertex to vertex, that is to say, they form a polygonal partition of the plane. This partition is called the Voronoi diagram."[2]



Script

The main parameter for the script to define the fitness of its outcome is visibility. Based on the maximum distance whithin which the face expression of actors is still recognizable for spectators, the overall area for a combined stage/auditorium is a rectangle with a size of 25m x 25m. To define the number of Voronoi cells to be created, this rectangle had to be loaded into Grasshopper´s Populate 2D Module. If this Voronoi tool is to be used to partition a limited area, it needs a boundary - in our case the rectangle which defines the size of the stage/auditorium - and a collection of points. The theater is planned for a capacity of around 400 visitors. To guarantee a maximum of flexibility and visibility, it was to be divided in units that could seat 20 spectators each. To be add enough space for the actors, the program was set to create 25 points. After this point cloud (population) was defined, these points were used to generate the Voronoi diagram.

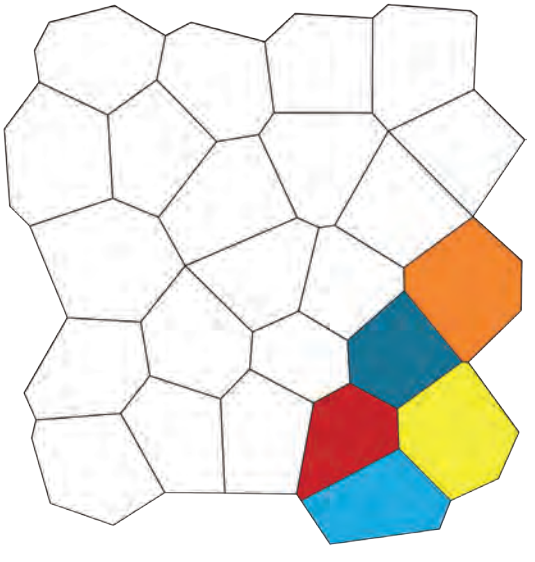
The output is a Voronoi diagram consisting of convex polygons which are used for further computation, this time using the y-axis. First the script computes all distances between the polygon centers and delivers a list of lengths for each cell in relation to all others. Then a various number of cells could be selected to define the space for the stage. Based on this information, the script calculated the height to which the remaining cells, i.e. the platforms of the auditorium, should rise so that the audience would have a clear view of the stage.



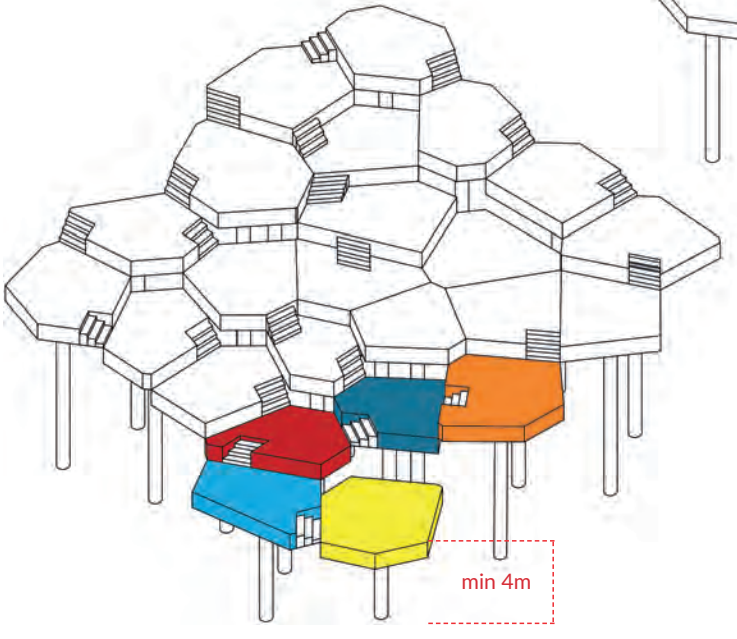
[1] ACM Computing Surveys (CSUR) Aurenhammer, Franz, Sept. 1991, Vol.23(3), p.345, 346
Title: Voronoi Diagrams—A Survey of a Fundamental Geometric Data Structure
2 ACM Computing Surveys (CSUR) Aurenhammer, Franz, Sept. 1991, Vol.23(3), p.347
Title: Voronoi Diagrams—A Survey of a Fundamental Geometric Data Structure

Choose Your Stage

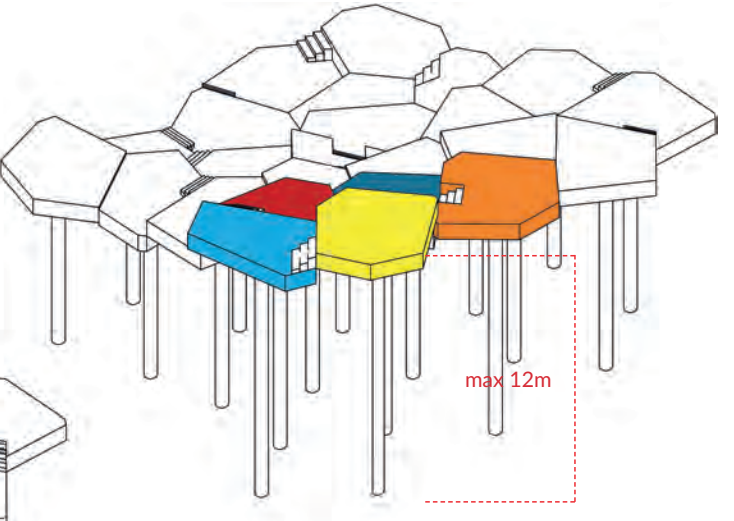
Director and stage designer can choose which platforms to use as a stage ... The script allows numerous variations. Here are three random examples where Option 3 is chosen to be illustrated by a simulation later in the book.



Option 1

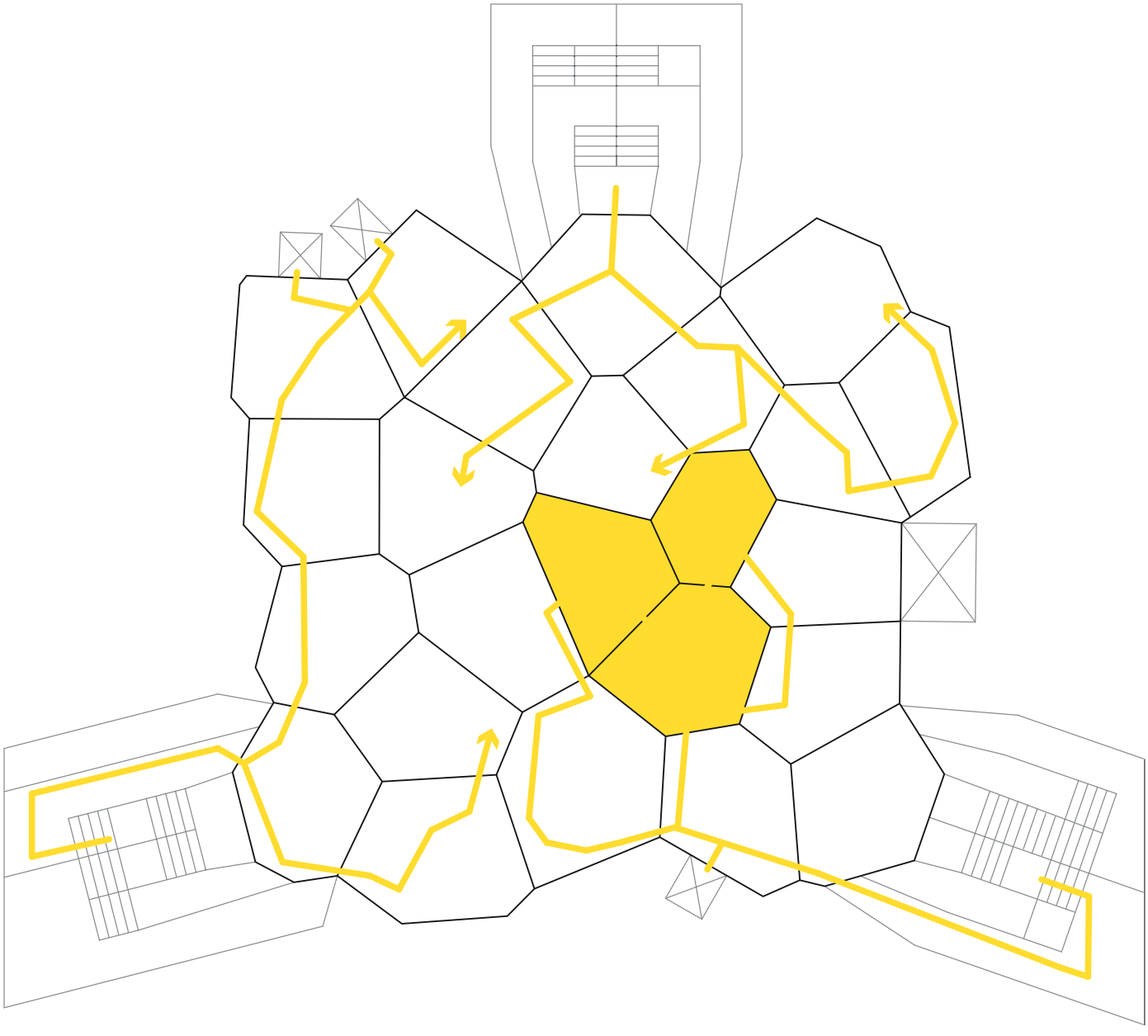


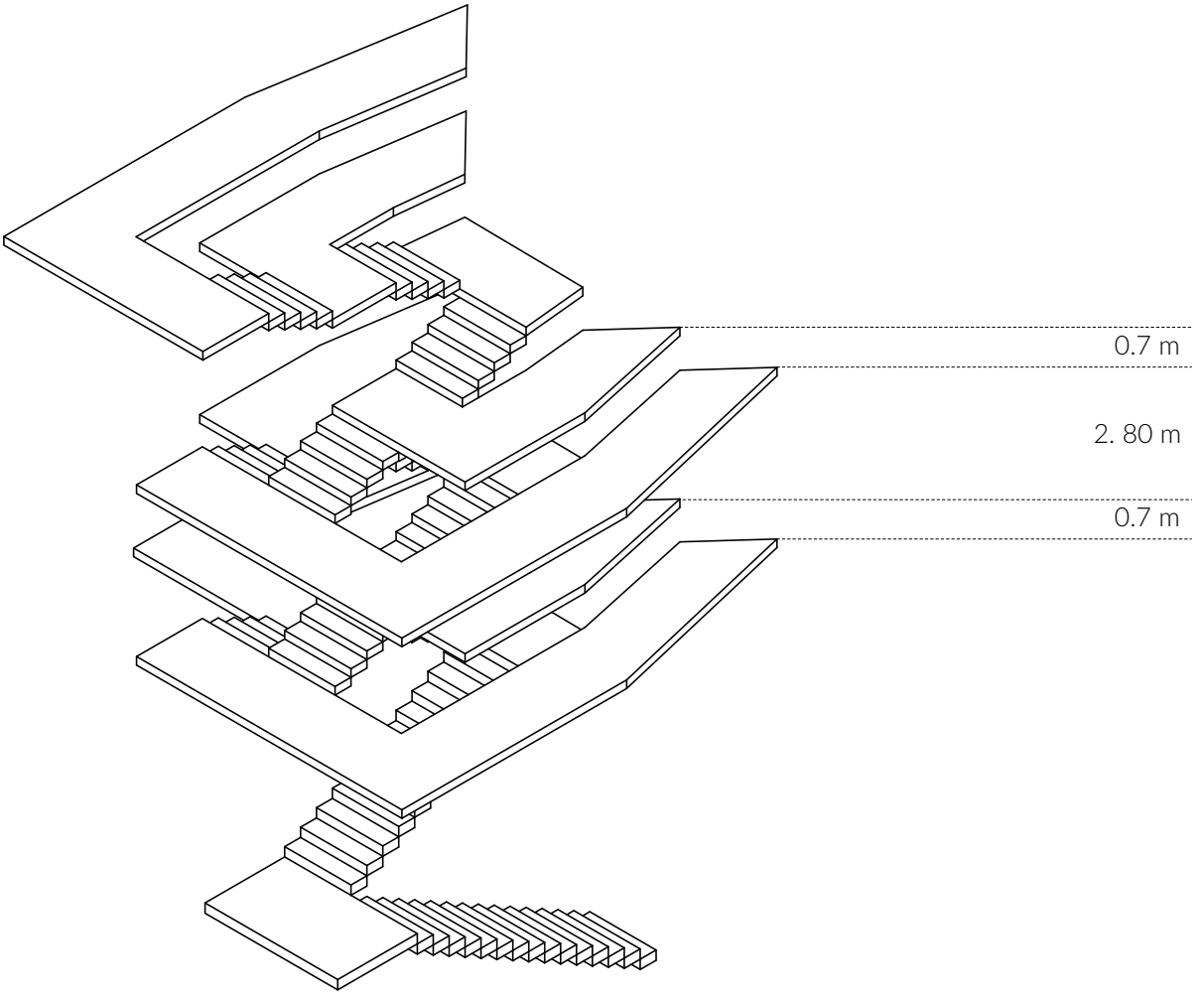
Option 2

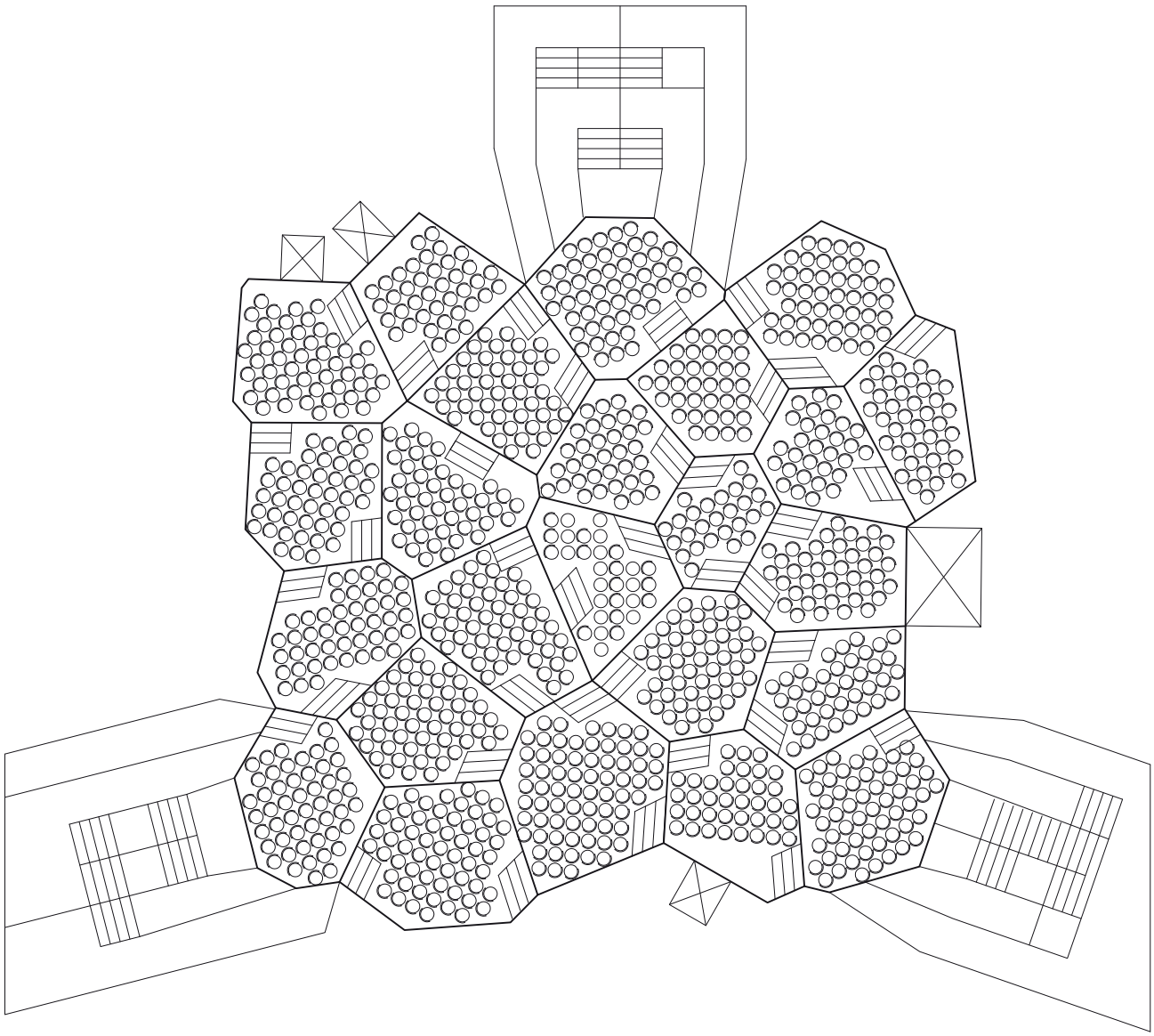


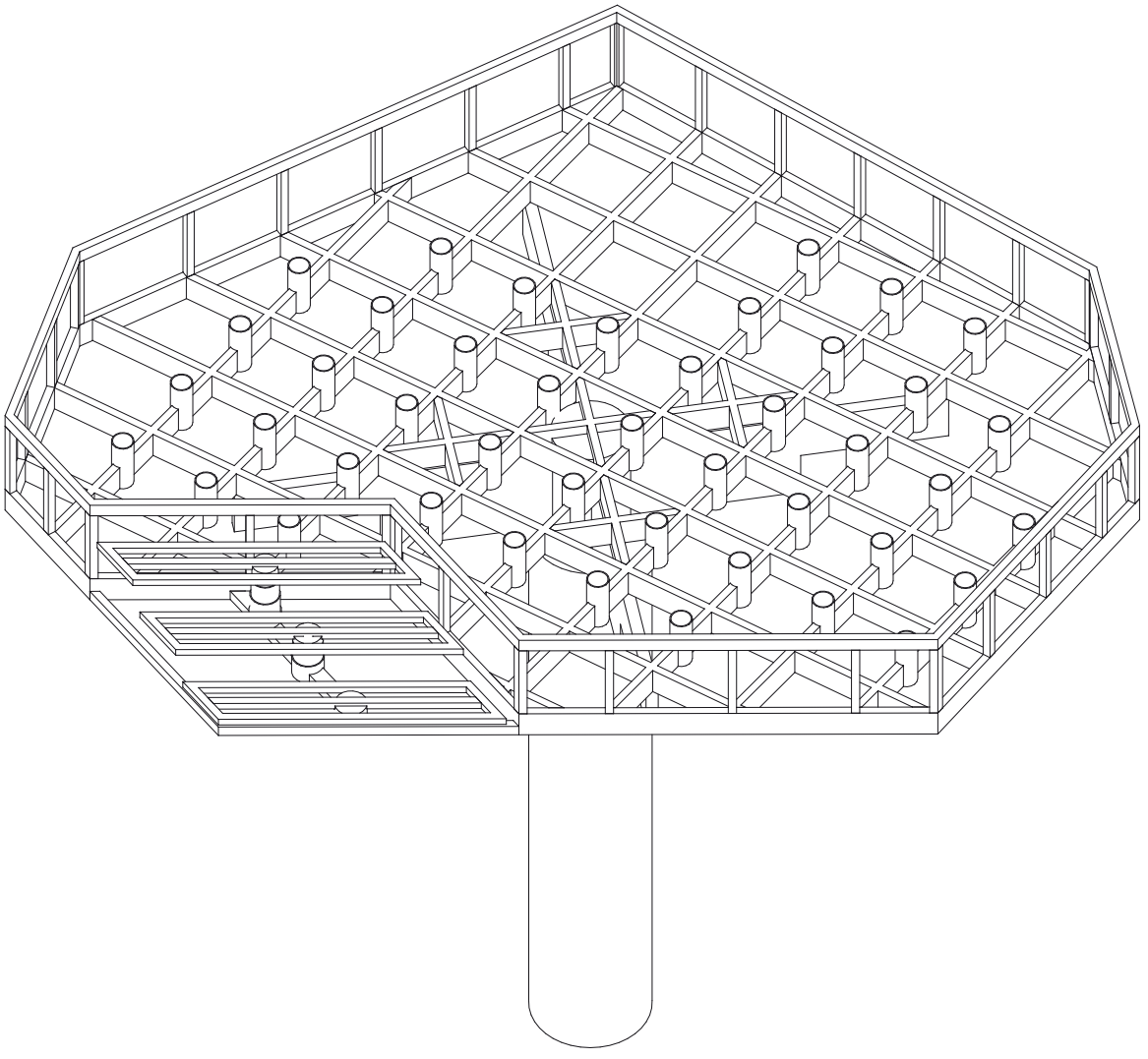
Circulation

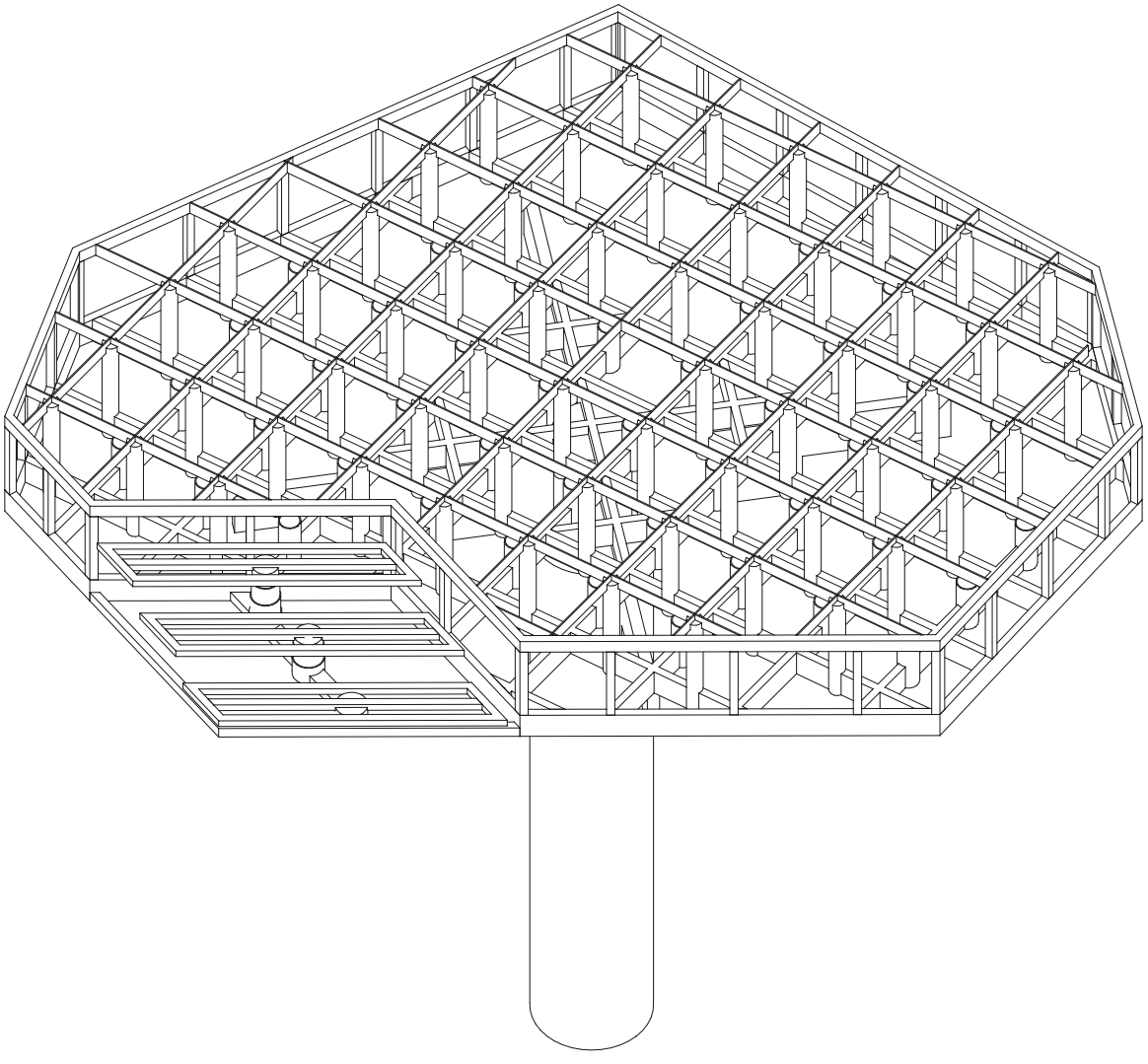
After stages are chosen and platforms are in the right positions, vertical circulation becomes another possibility for actors to play- stages expand and enable an interaction between public and actors.

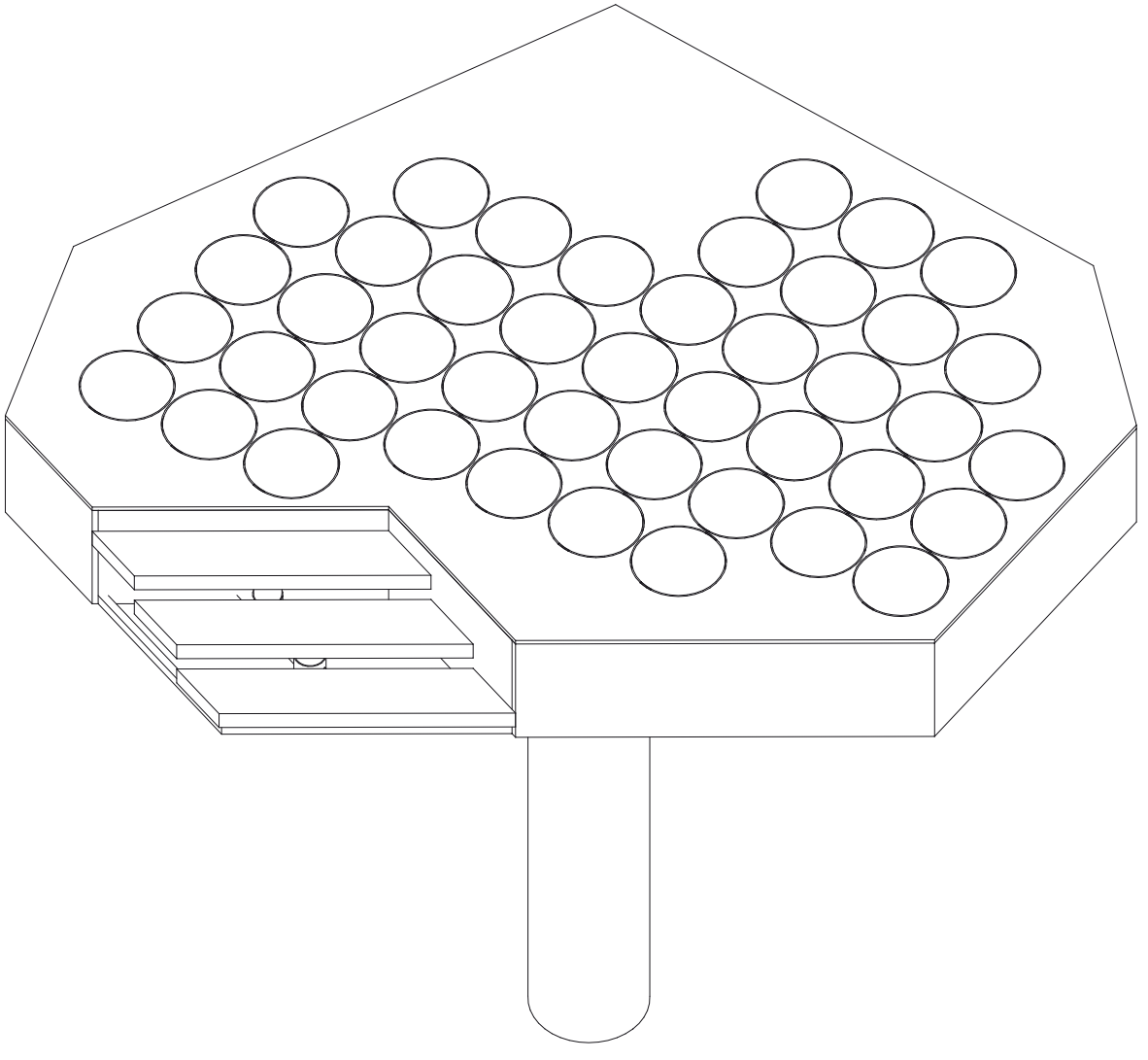


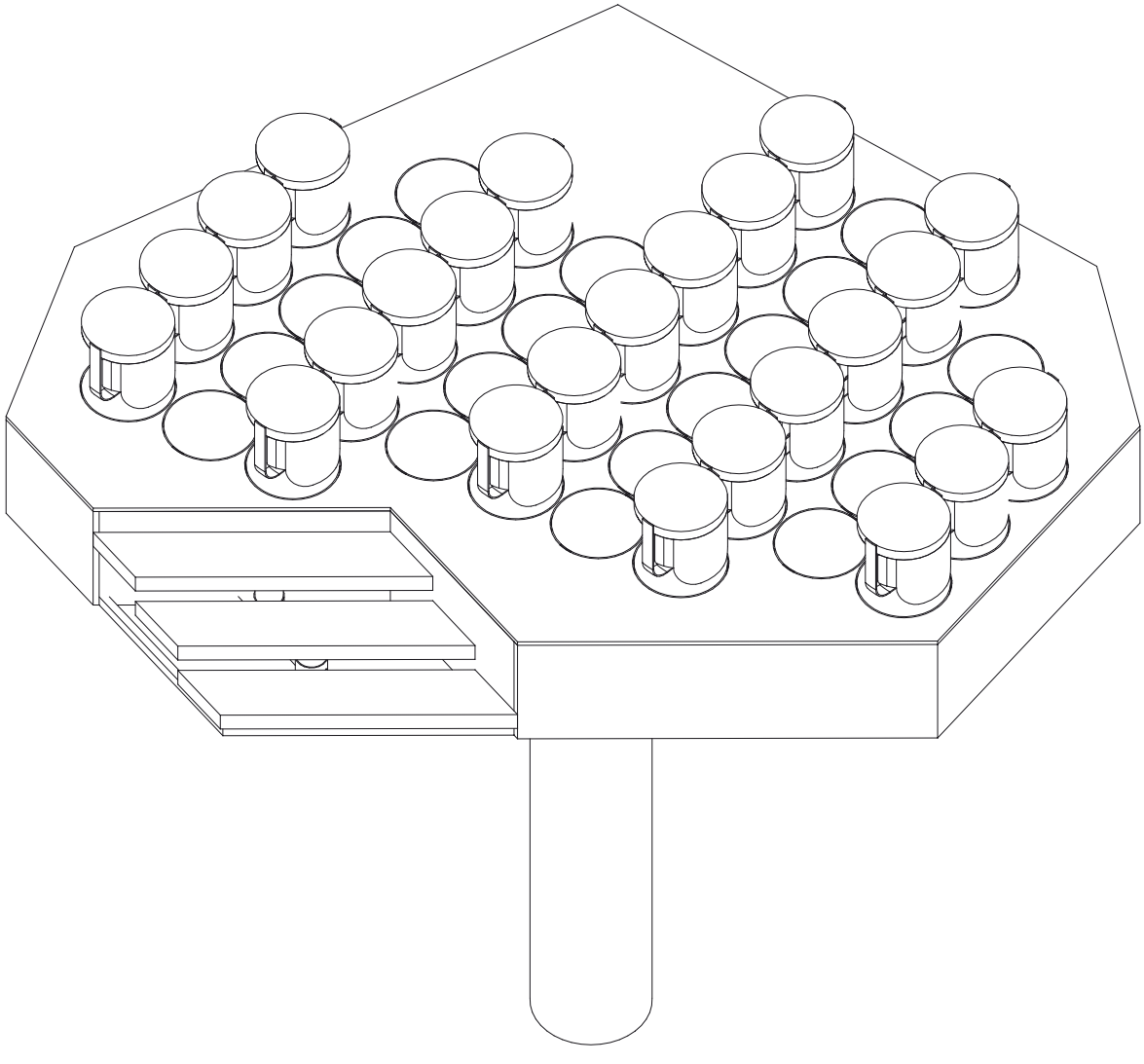

0.7 m
2. 80 m
0.7 m

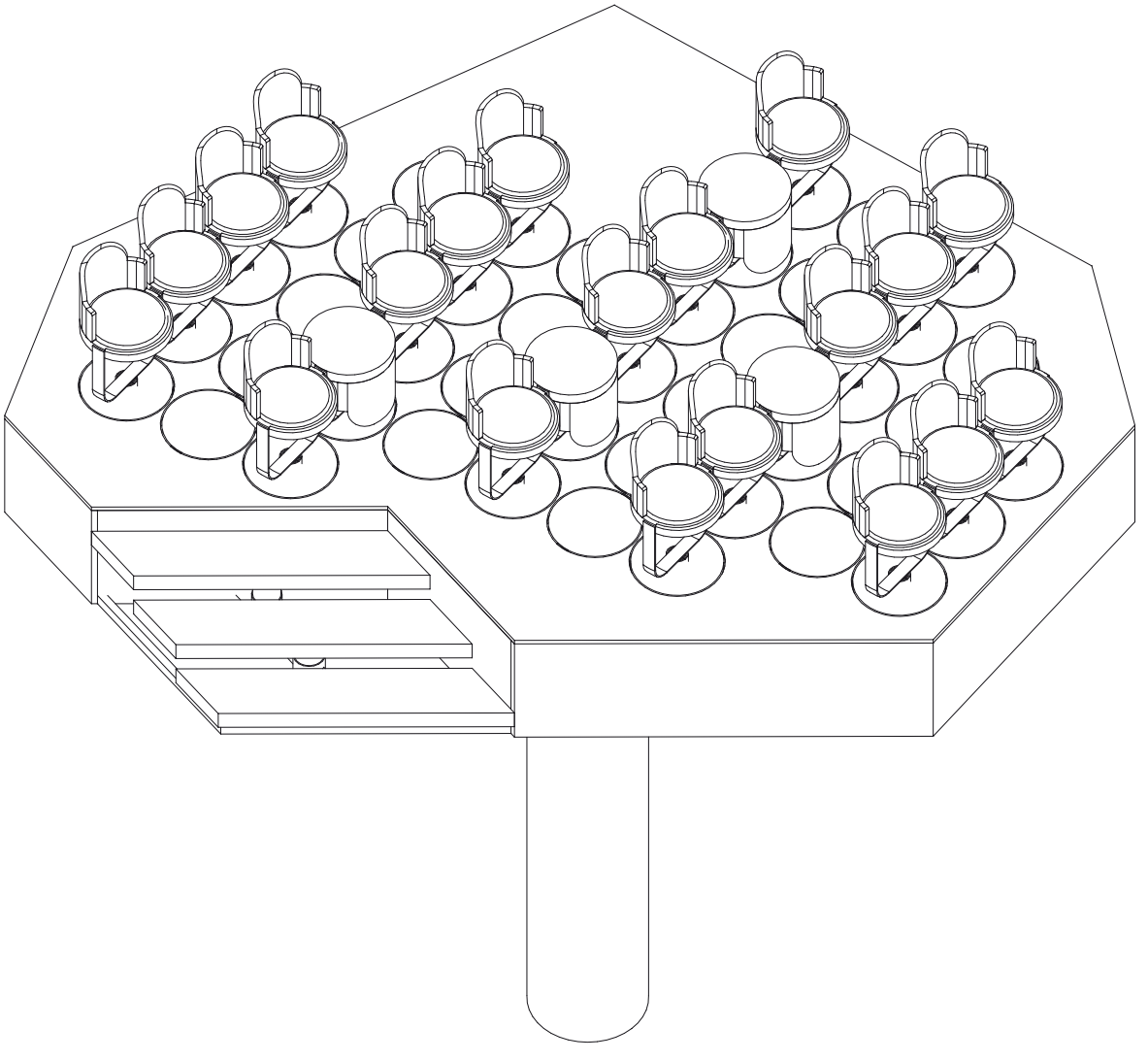


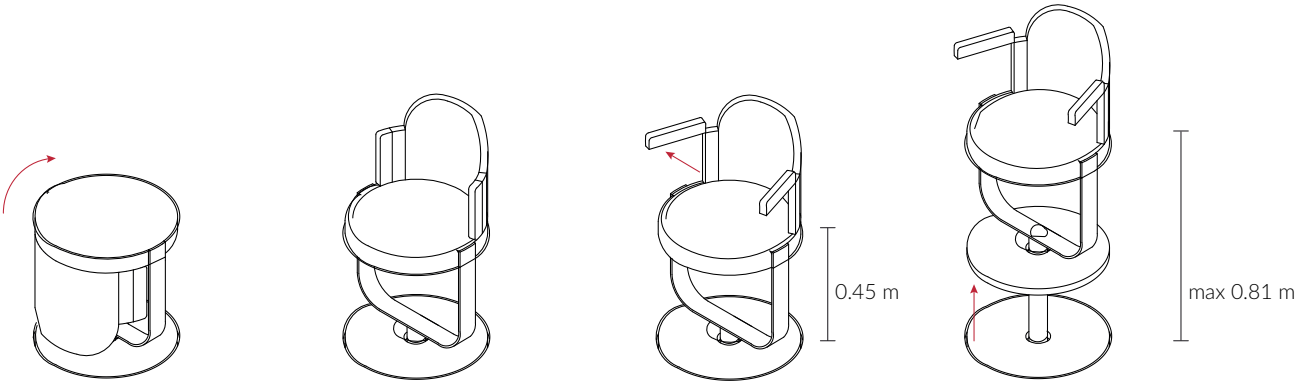


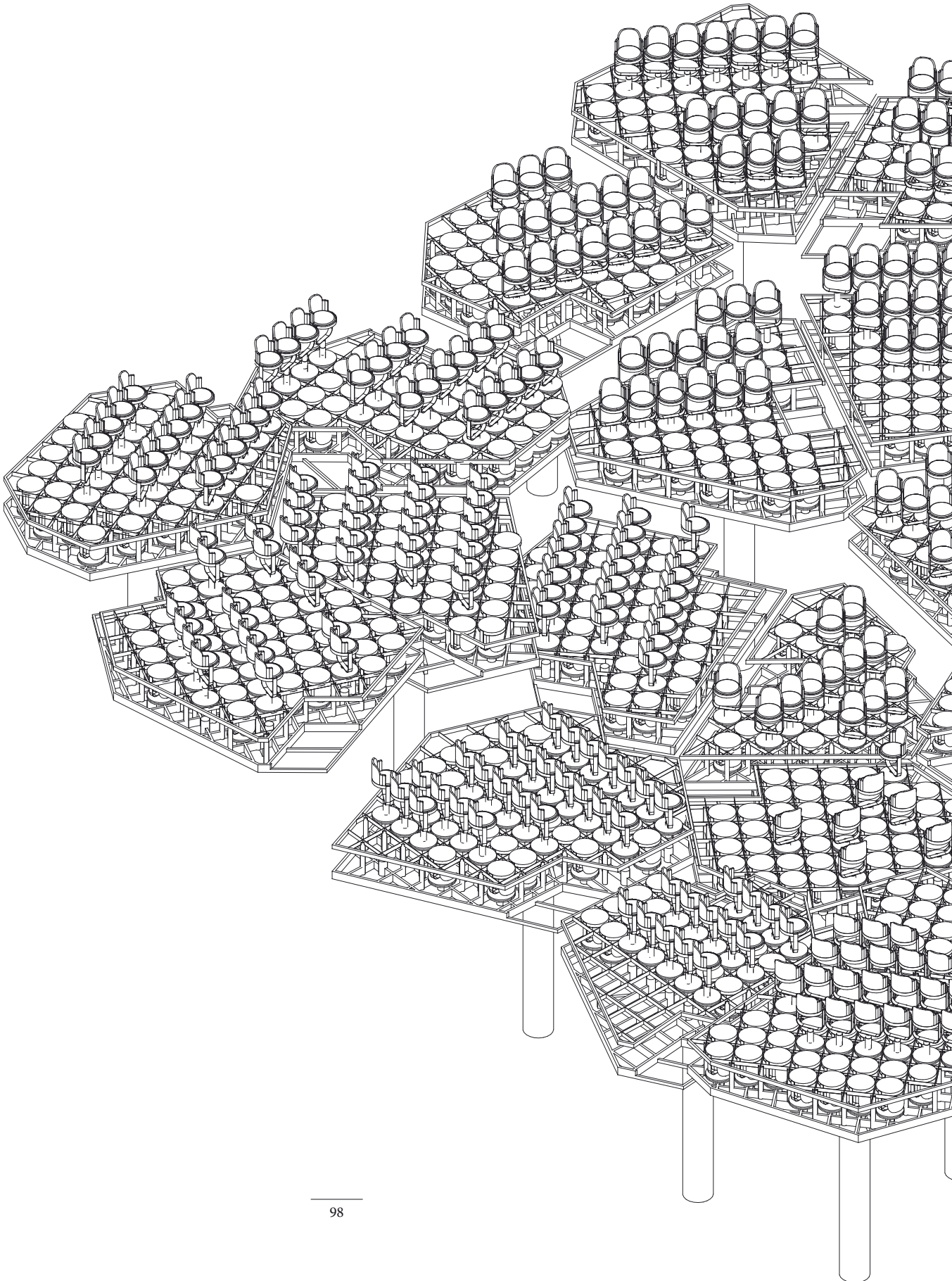


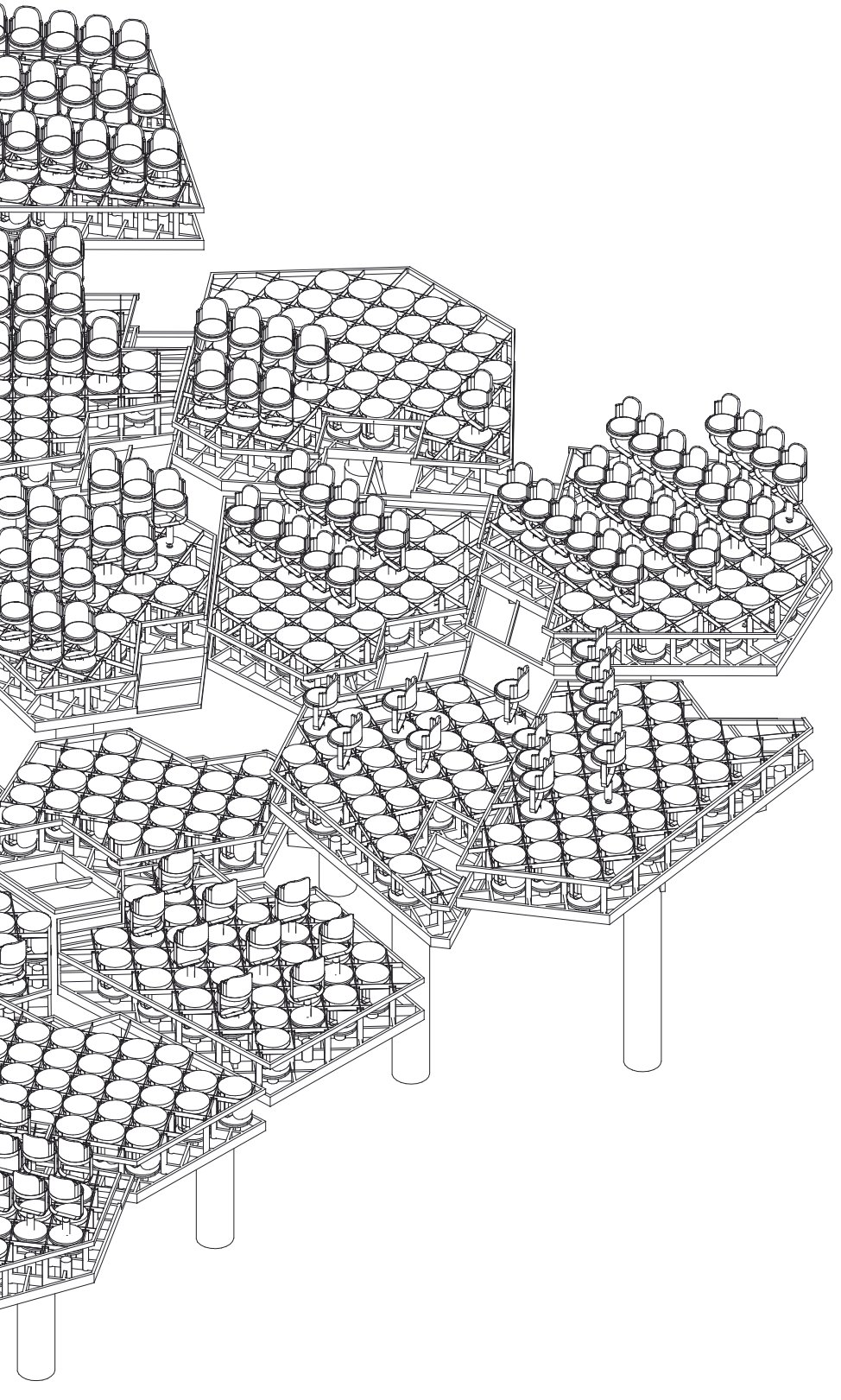


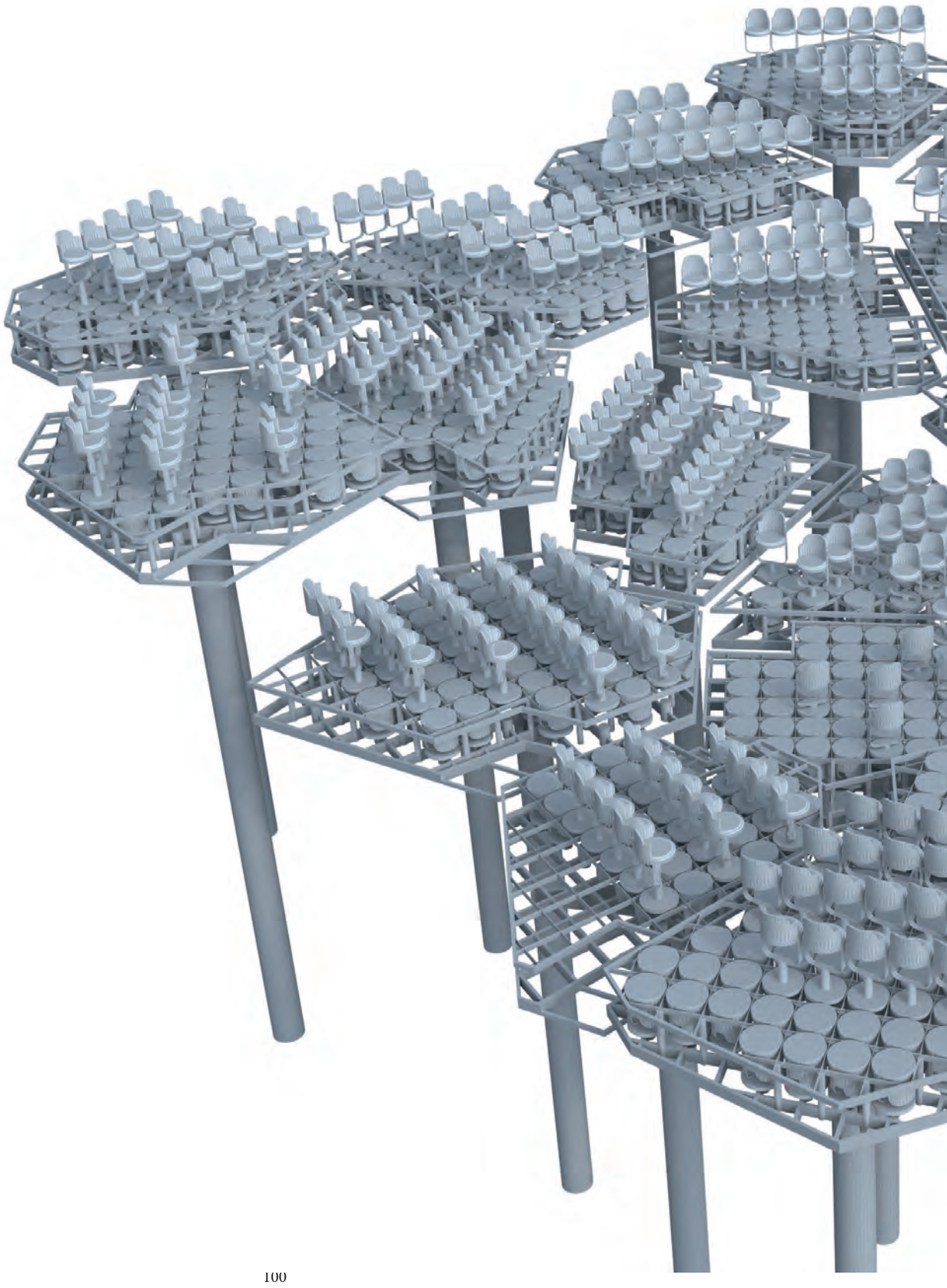


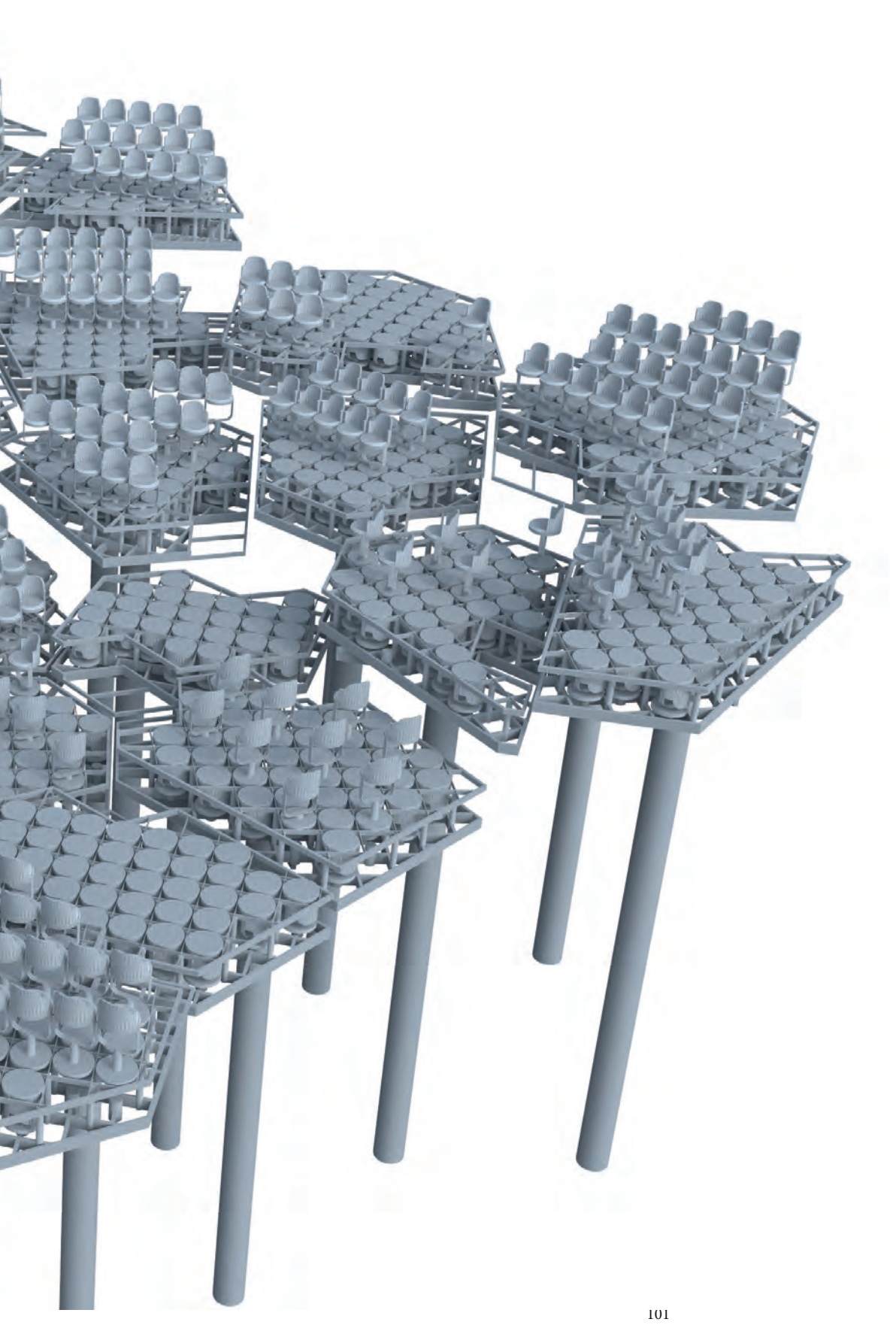


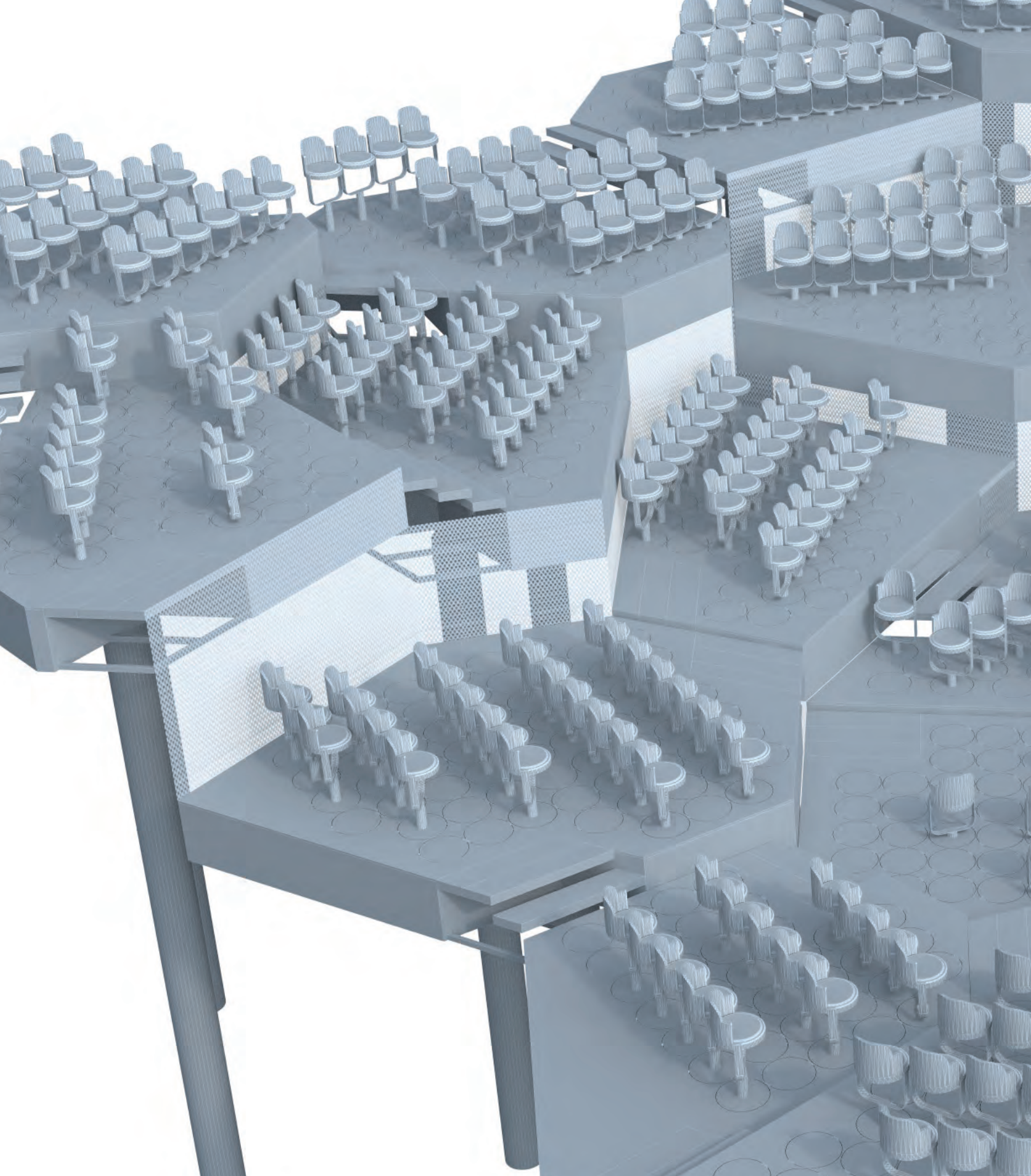

0.45 m
max 0.81 m

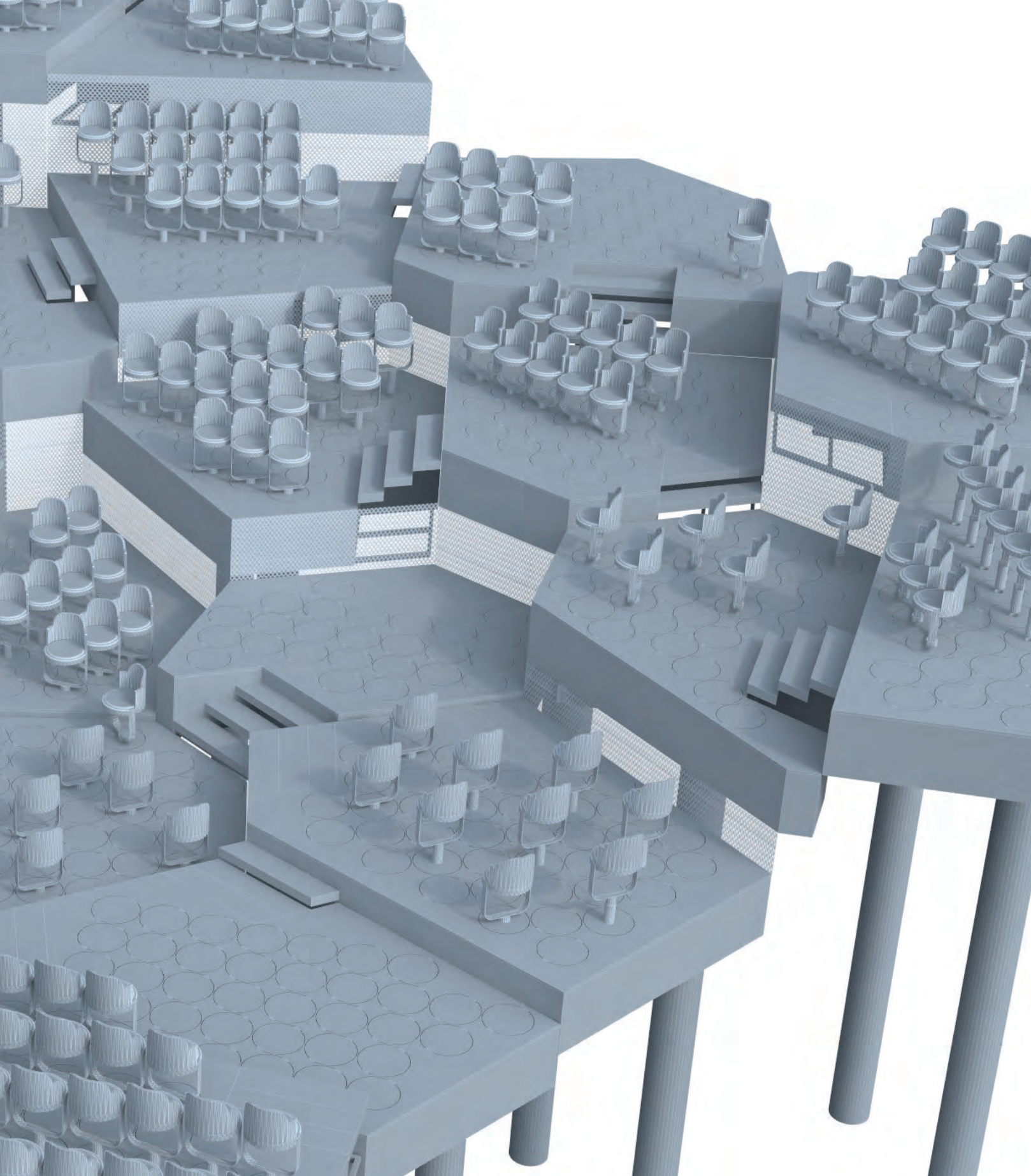


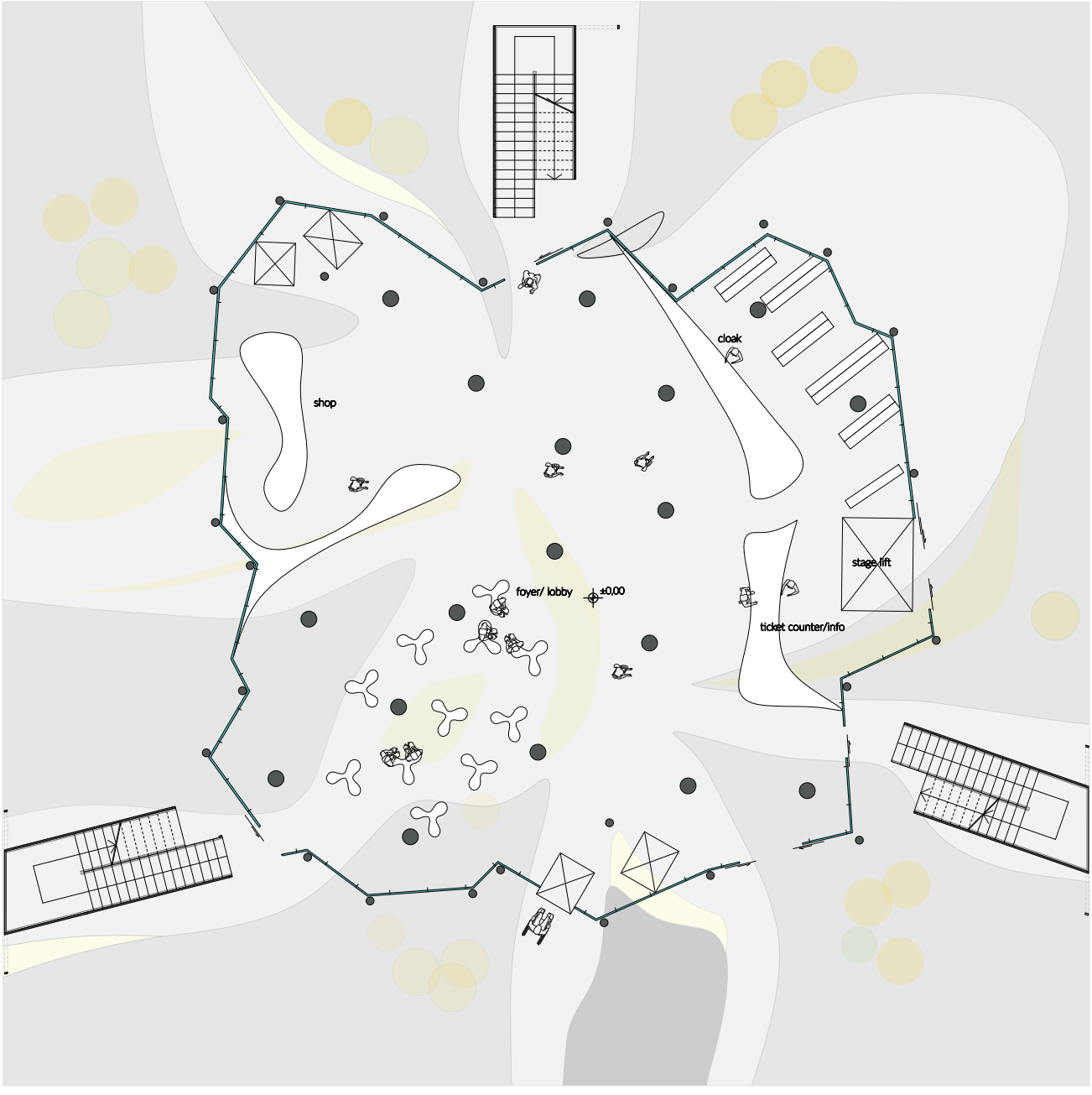






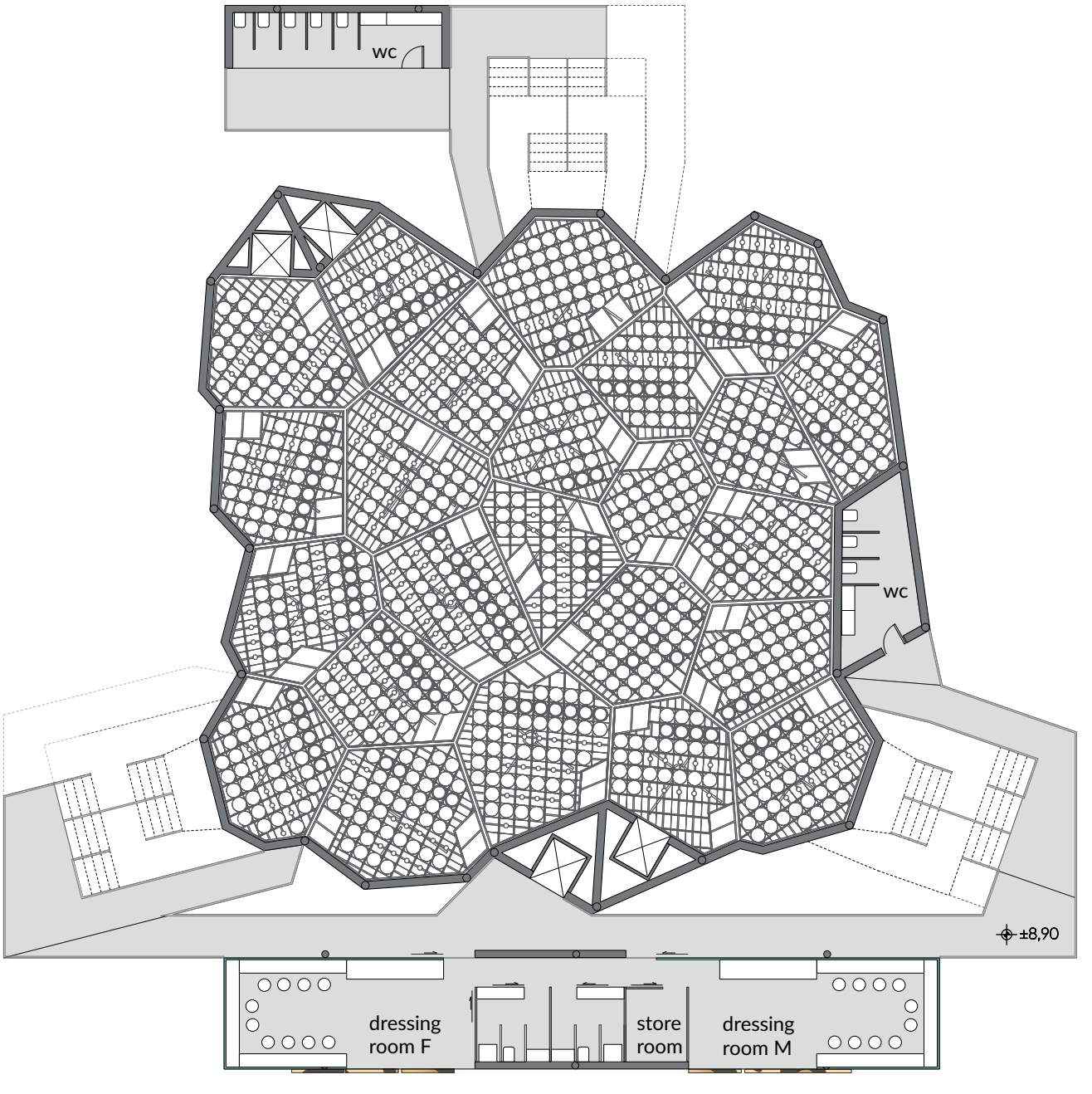






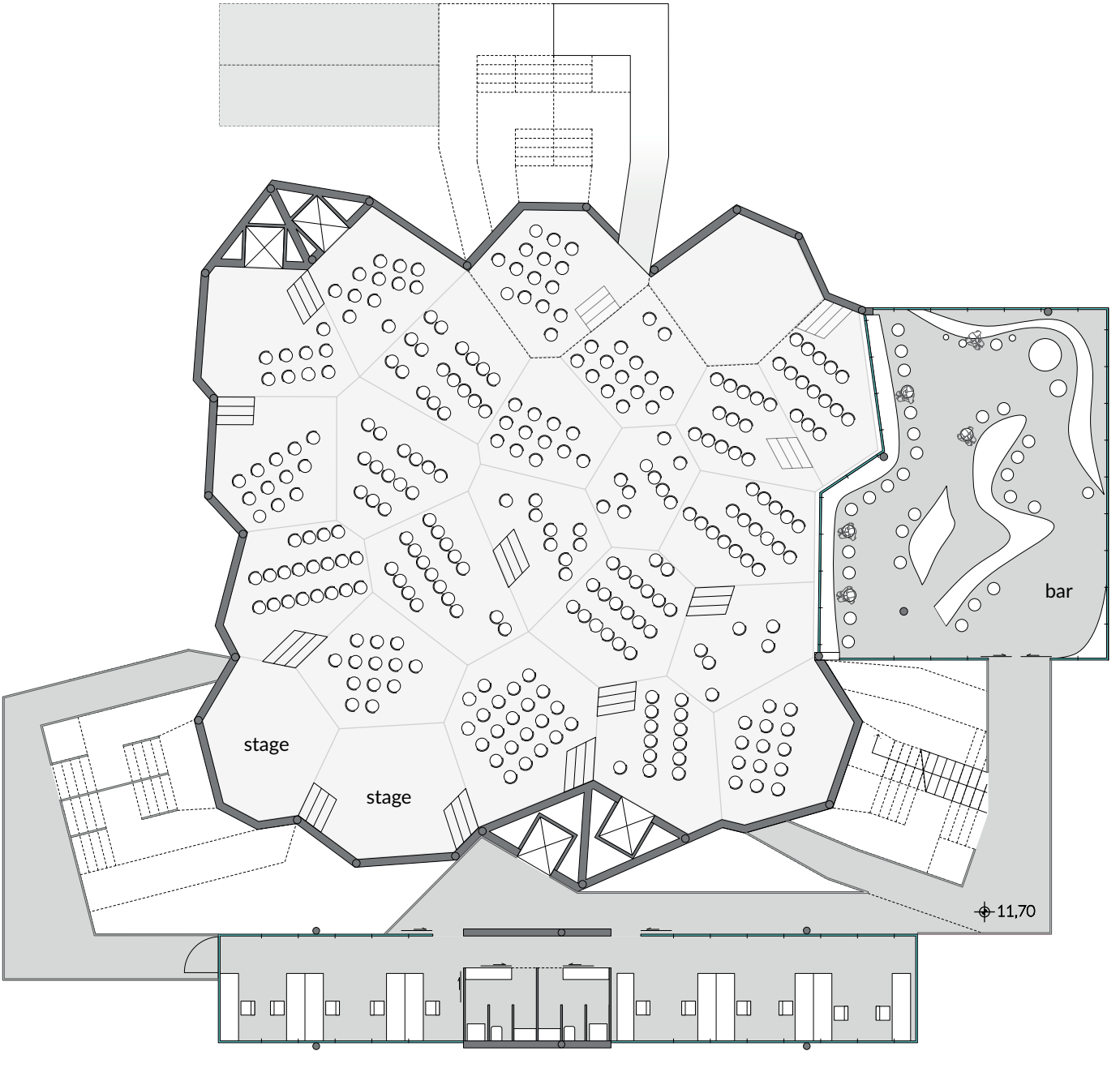
Ground Floor M 1: 200

Foyer/ Lounge/Info/ Tickets/ Shop



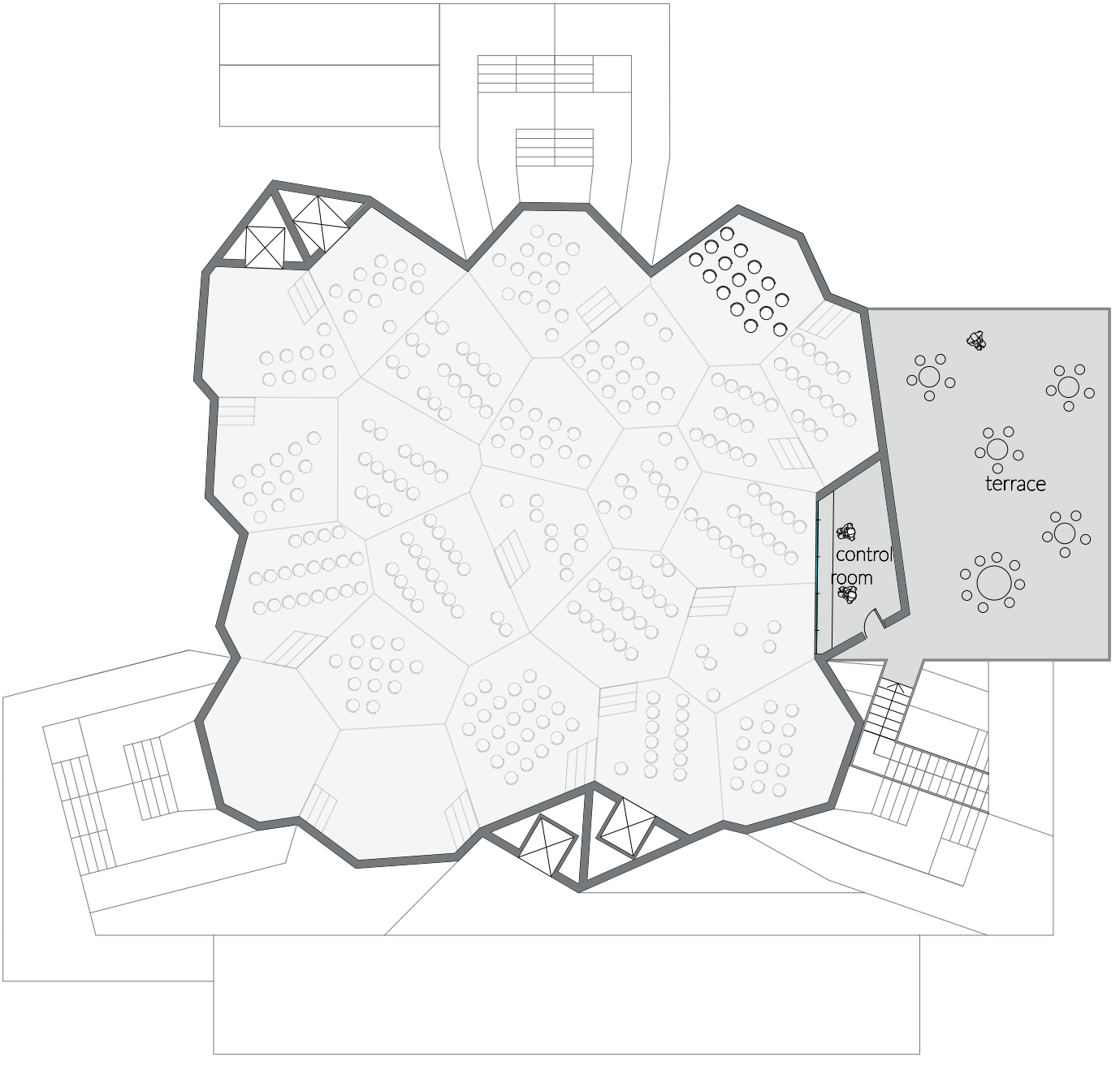
Level 8.90 M 1: 200

Dressing rooms M+ F/ WC



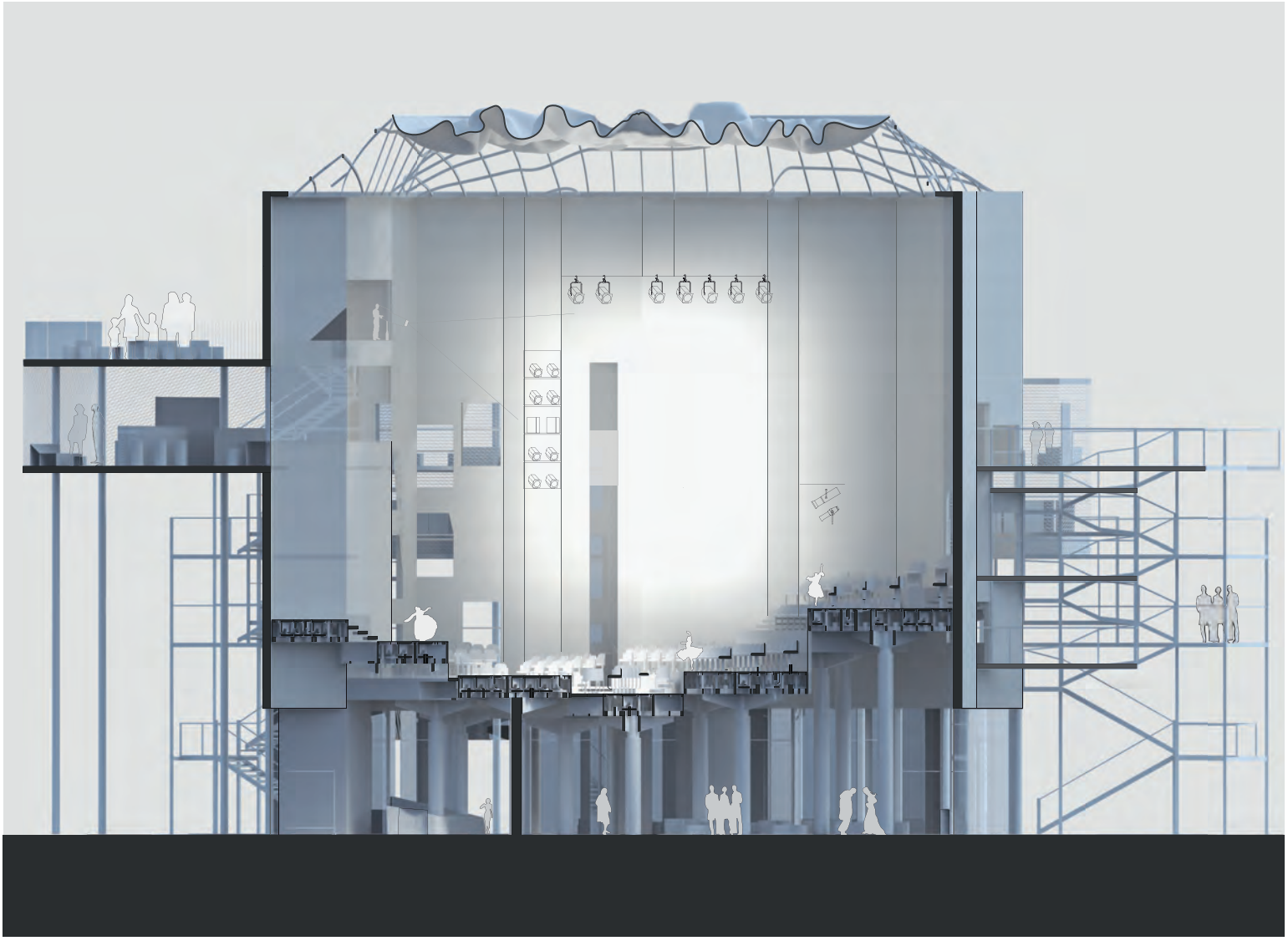
Level 11.70 M 1: 200

Offices/ Meeting rooms/ Bar

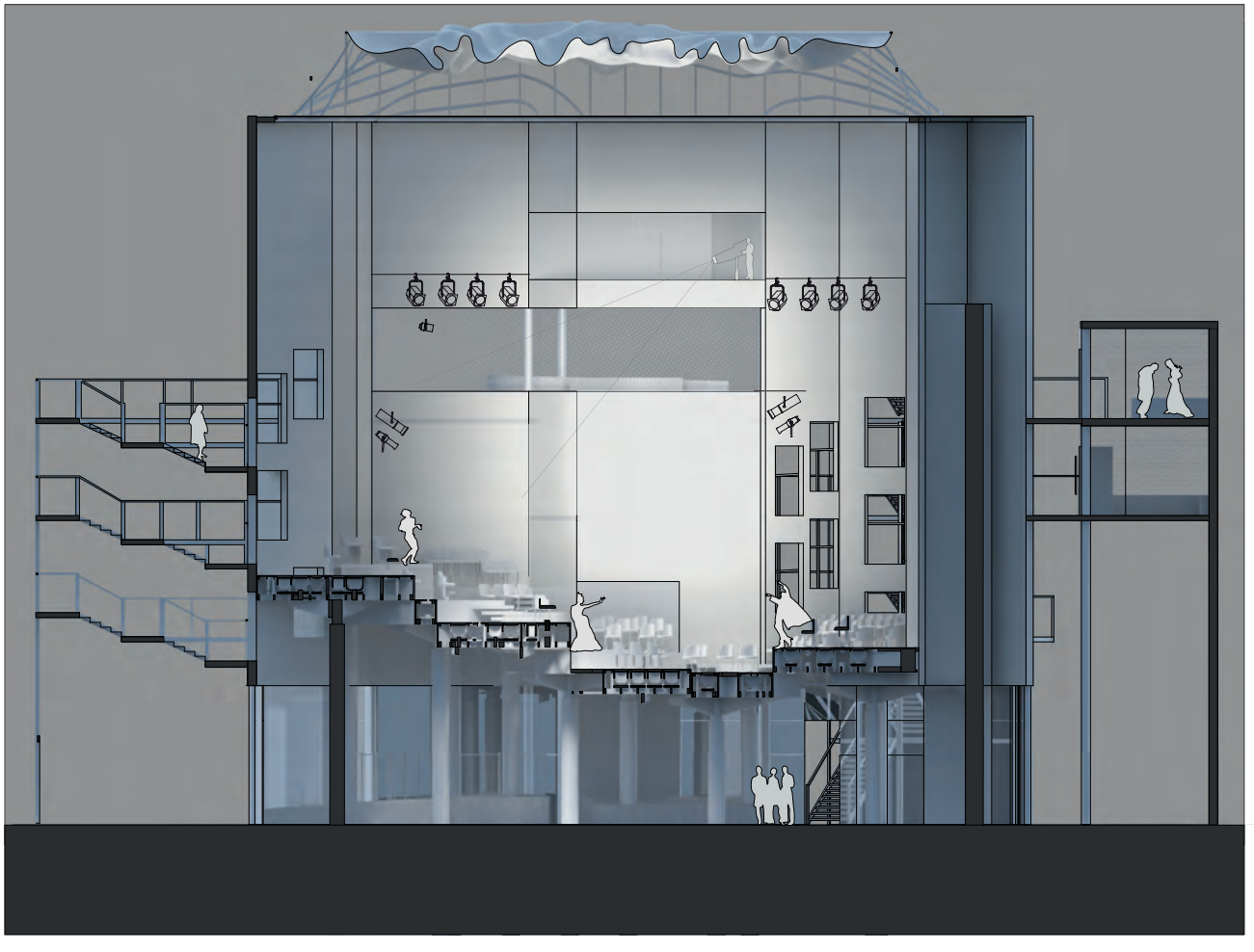


Level 15.10 M 1: 200

Terrace/ Control Room



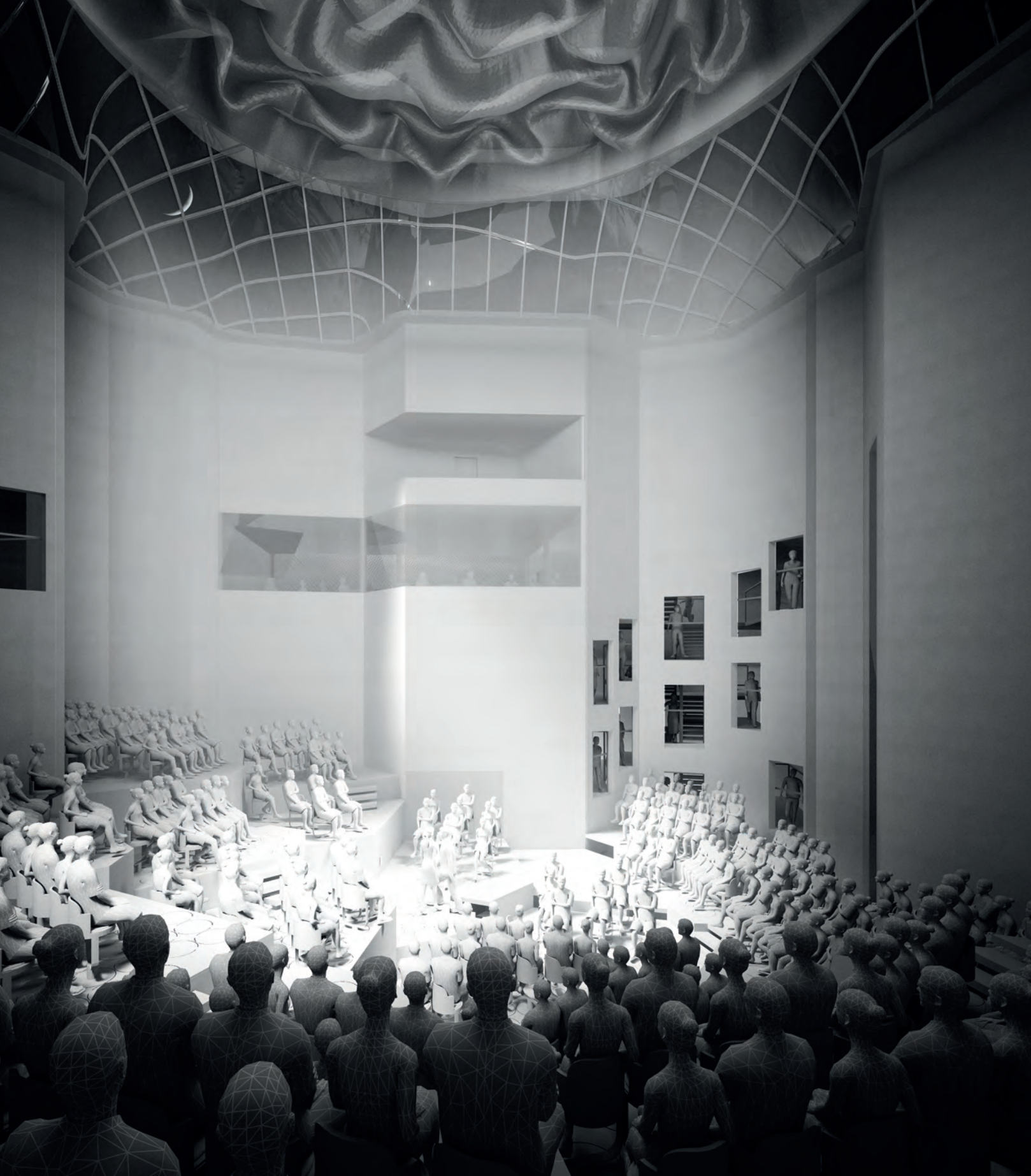
SECTION AA M 1: 200



SECTION BB M 1: 200

RETRACTABLE ROOF OPEN

RETRACTABLE ROOF CLOSING



MSND

III

CHAPTER

'I know of one acid test in the theatre. It is literally an acid test. When a performance is over what remains? Fun can be forgotten, but powerful emotion also disappears and good arguments lose their thread. When emotion and argument are harnessed to a wish from the audience to see more clearly into itself- then something in the mind burns. The event scorches on to the memory an outline, a taste, a trace, a smell- a picture. It is the play's central image that remains, its silhouette will be its meaning, this shape will be the essence of what it has to say. When years later I think of a striking theatrical experience, I find a kernel engraved on my memory: two tramps under a tree, an old woman dragging a cart, a sergeant dancing, three people on a sofa in hell- or occasionally a trace deeper than any imagery. I haven't a hope of remembering the meanings precisely, but from the kernel I can reconstruct a set of meanings. Then a purpose will have been served…'
Peter Brook, Empty Space

What was a lasting impression from a theater production?

'Kleist Herrmannschlacht, Claus Peymann: battle scene: actors leave the stage, quiet and empty. Suddenly hundreds of metal-spears fall, piercing the wooden stage: brutally stopped, vibrating… utter surprise, only a swoosh in the silence before the bang. Everything had changed.'
Harald Trapp, architect

The most impressive image I have seen was
when a vampire flew over the public and landed on the stage.´
Dessislava Kovacheva, architect (interior designer)

'Flying Mary Poppins in the Viennese production at Ronacher Theatre. The seconds while I was watching the smiling actress flying over the stage and above the spectators' heads made me feel I am flying up there with her.'
Nikoleta Angelova, accountant

'The piece was called "Metamorphosen". I don't remember the story, only the scene. Each piece of the scene and actor moved constantly but very, very slowly. Though nothing seemed to happen, the images changed dramatically. It was like a heavy, unexplainable, yet beautiful dream.'
Nin Prantner, designer

Plot

A ***Midsummer Night's Dream*** is one of the most popular comedies by Shakespeare and is widely performed across the world. The set is in ancient Athens and does not actually unfold on a midsummer night as the title suggests. The action is set over four days leading up to the first of May. May Day was a traditional wedding date, which made it suitable for the marriage festivities closing this play. In the opening act, the strong law of Athens prevents young lovers from marrying. In the central three acts, the lovers and their surrounding roles are changed by magical events in woods near Athens. In the last act, the action returns to Athens, where the weddings of the lovers can finally be celebrated.

Performance History

1661

Following the reopening of the English theaters, shut down by Parliament in 1642, A Midsummer Night's Dream was performed not as a drama but as a musical spectacle. The reception by audiences was positive: *'ridiculous play ... good dances ... handsome women.'*[1]

1692

The performance of the semi-operatic version 'The Fairy-Queen' (music by Henry Purcell), ending in a chorus of Chinamen and a dance by six monkeys, left *'the Court and town wonderfully satisfied'*[2]. It contributed to the play's reputation for inspiring leading composers.

1755

Another musical version of the play, 'The Fairies', by David Garrick (music by John Smith) dismissed all characters except the lovers and the fairies. Less than 600 lines of the original play remained, but 28 songs were added instead: '*The spirit was evaporated, the genious was fled; but the specatacle was fine: it was this that saved the play*.'[3]

1867

Fig 01

In the 19th century A Midsummer Night's Dream was restored as a play to the stage. Even so, spectacle was much in favour. The setting and action seemed to be designed for spectacular productions and soon the poetic language was shadowed by magic, humour, music and special effects. Ellen Terry appeared as Puck at the age of eight, making her first entrance *'through a trap-door seated on a mushroom.'*[4]

1914

Granville Barker's production was a key change in stage style - it achieved a balance between magical effect and simplicity which became a role-model for most major stage productions since.

Fig 02

Fig 03

1935

Fig 04

After having staged the play several times since 1903, famous stage director Max Reinhardt produced one of the first filmed versions and incorporated several long dance sequences.

Fig 05

1969

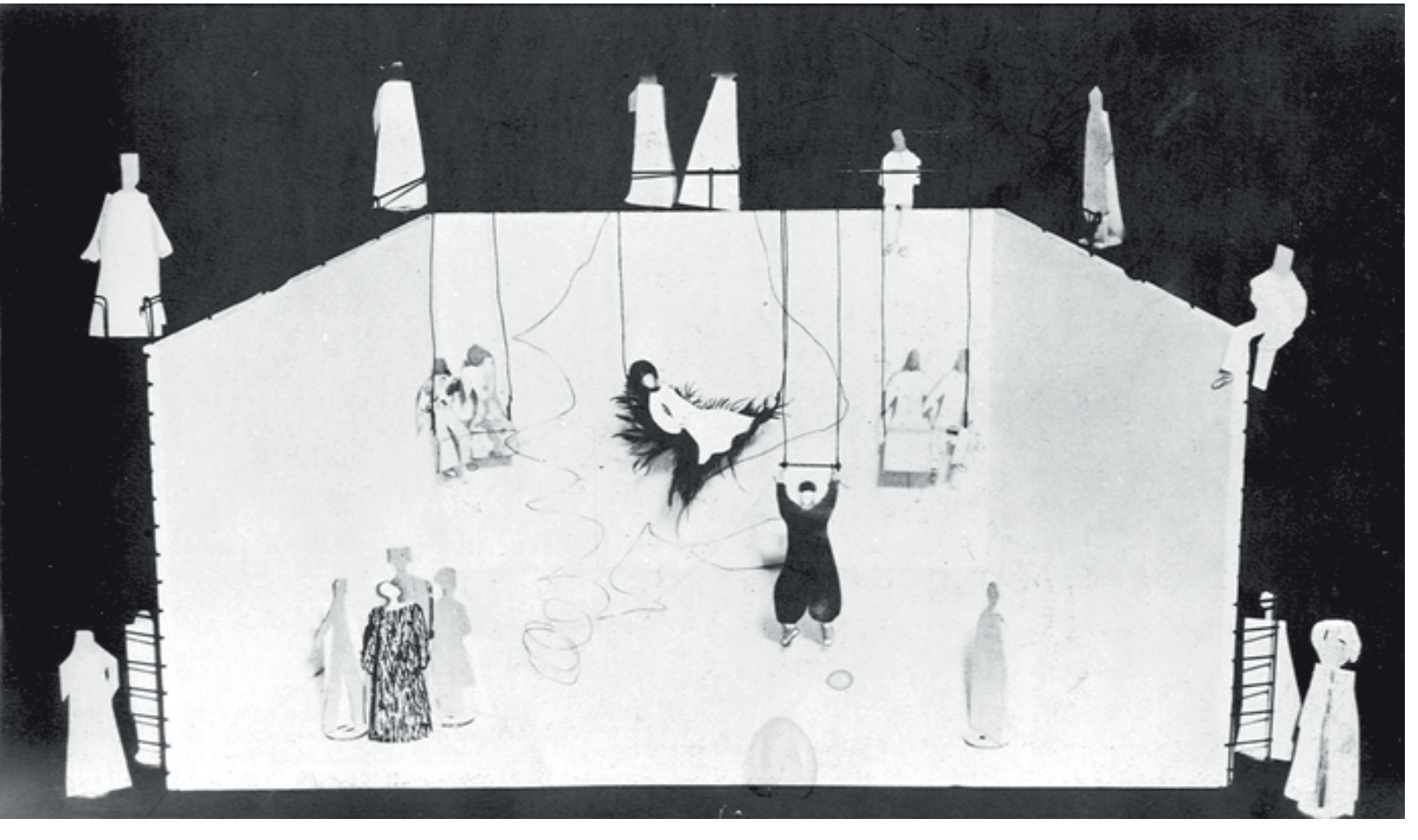
Peter Hall's film, derived from a Royal Shapespeare Company production and emphasised actors and poetry, without putting too much focus on illustrating the words.

Fig 06

1970

The production directed by Peter Brook was approached with deliberate radicalism. The set consisted of a simple, but brilliantly-lit white box which replaced the traditional Dream set design of pretty forest and classical Athenian court. The actors wore bright silks and performed circus skills such as plate-spinning and trapeze-swinging. Sally Jacobs, the stage designer of the production, commented that this was the play that she at least wanted to design at the beginning.

'Because I too had this overlay of fairies and all those cliche images from productions I'd seen. I couldn't see the play at all. I didn't know it was such an interesting play. But Peter had seen something in it. He had a very clear notion of why he wanted to do it. The way he presented it to me made me want to really read the play, to find out what it was all about. In reading it, I discover what a beautiful, marvelous play it is! So, naturally, I got very interested.' [5]



'Brook's production became one of the 20th century's most influential productions of Shakespeare, as it rejected many traditional ideas about the staging of classical drama. 'There's just about nothing you can use that won't suggest some form of architecture. That doesn't remind you of something. Only that little box worked, in terms of space, a contained white space...' [6]

[1]Sally Jacobs, Designing the Dream
Fig 07 -09

2006

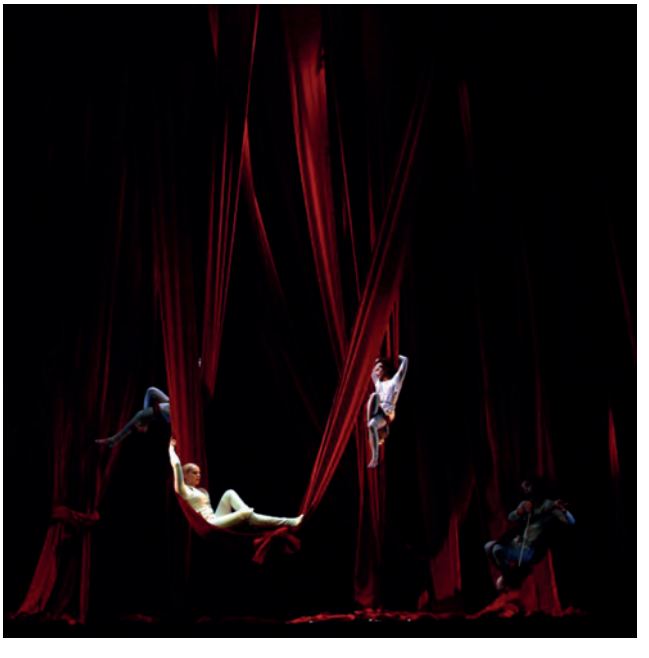
An international collaboration organised by the British Council incorporated an Indian and Sri Lankan cast and crew with a multilingual text, thus reflecting the colonial and postcolonial transfer of culture. The result was, as the Daily Telegraph put it:

´The most magical, fantastical Dream that will be remembered for decades.´[7]

2008

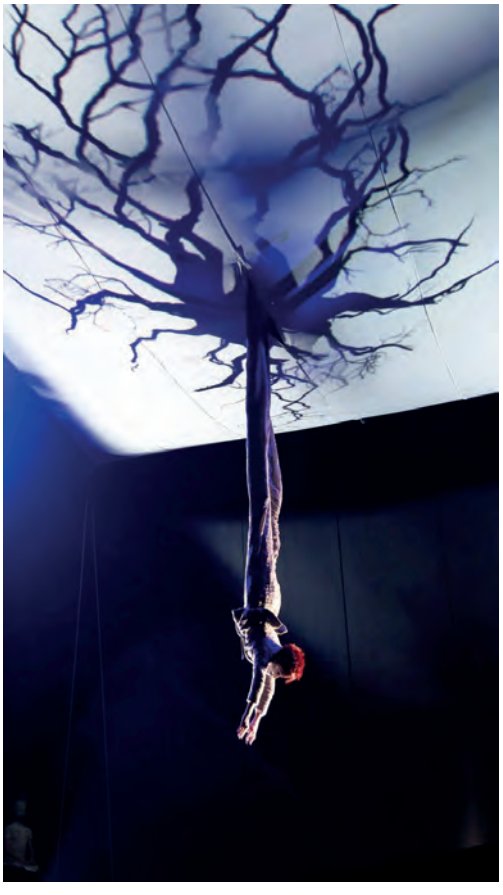
The design-group Numen / For Use reduced for its production in Zagreb the scenery to long textile curtains, thus providing a completely new interpretation of this historical element of theater design.

'Reality is what happens in broad daylight, in front of the closed theatrical curtain which separates facts from illusions; in the ordinary world of the audience. This is the domain of the City. As the story develops, the lights are diminished, a mechanism holding the curtain-stripes in front position slides back and the fabric of the fourth wall softly dissolves into an enchanted night forest. The audience is now lurking behind the portal and into the black box, into the oneiric darkness of the woods, where magic reigns and strange things come to pass. This moment of transition from the real world into the imaginary, from facts to fantasy, is what really sets off the entire concept. The dissolution of the theatre curtain means that the portal is now open, that these two worlds are now mixing and that magic is released into the everyday.'[8]



2014
Julie Taymor

'Of all Shakespeare's plays, A Midsummer Night's Dream is the most phantasmagorical, with fairies, spells, and hallucinatory lovers. His flights of fancy are well matched to the talents of Julie Taymor, who turns out a production that's visually breathtaking, funny, sexy, and darkly poetic.' [9]



[1]Dunton-Downer, Leslie & Riding, Alan; Essential Shakespeare Handbook

[2-6] Loney, Glenn (ed); Peter Brook's Production of William Shakespeare's A Midsummer Night's Dream for the Royal Shakespeare Company
[7]Daily Telegraph, 07.03.2006, pg.15
[8]http://www.numen.eu/scenography/a-midsummer-nights-dream/
[9] http://www.tiff.net/festivals/thefestival/programmes/mavericks/a-midsummer-nights-dream

Fig 10
Fig 11
Fig 12
Fig 13

What is 'A Midsummer Night's Dream' about?

Magic!
Svetla Ganeva, galerist

´Love and marriage as a fairy tale.´
Harald Trapp, architect

´When I first saw it, I was very young, and for me this play will be always kind of blurry, there will be something about the emotion of it, its aesthetic.´
Joana Lazarova, design editor

'The images were very kind of naive, like a fairy tale...'
Iva Ivanova, stage design student

´Barely. I remember many painted scenes, sparkling stars, colorful, gleams, magic, beautiful costumes and happy jumping actors. I was strongly impressed by the colors.´
Valentina Dragoshinska, Human resources in the Supreme Court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William Shakespeare

ND

Concept

"That the world may or may not be without purpose, but is not totally without some kind of magic." [10]

The play you are going to watch over the next section is a short part of A Midsummer Night's Dream. Inspired by Peter Brook´s production from 1970, the stage design steps back and allows the spectators themselves to directly confront the actors. But going one step further and connecting to the hopes of the machine-age, stage and auditorium would become one.

As the history of its performances shows over hundreds of years, A Midsummer Night's Dream has numerous interpretations and contemporary variations. My choice for this play was driven by the idea of the dream. It just fitted so well to my dream about a theater where actors could move through the audience instead through the forest and where the spectators become fairies, instead of passively watching them on a stage. This would be magical! And magic is difficult to create in a way never done before, especially for a play which has been performed over more than 400 years.

To make understandable what my architectural project tries to achieve, there had to be a simulation of the new relationship between actor and spectator. A fully animated threedimensional film would have been too far away from reality and beyond my capacities. Therefore I decided to combine my digital architectural model with filmed sequences of a part of A Midsummer Night's Dream, performed by real actors in real space. This lead to the question which part of the play to choose, because only a few minutes could be shot due to financial and time constraints. The decision was motivated by Loie Fuller´s work. Fuller was an American dancer from the early twentieth century who made organic forms such as butterflies, flowers and flames, alive by manipulating an immense skirt of translucent silk. Her beautiful dances inspired my idea of representing the flower in A Midsummer Night's Dream through an actor instead of an object. It was clear that today´s interpretation had to be more abstract and more modern, but the magic and the beauty had to be preserved. Thus scene ... was chosen. The dance is almost static and the minimal movements express the act of enchanting the humans.

[10]Magic in the Moonlight, Woody Allen
Fig 14 Loie Fuller



Costumes

'For the production of "A Midsummer Night's Dream", the challenge was to create costumes that communicated the idea of a waking reverie where fact and fiction overlap. The concept was to create a modern look for the characters by trying to find each one of them in the contemporary society. Trying to recognize them in the streets of our city where the world can be both familiar and fantastical, a surprising world where mortals and fairies cohabit, a world of dreaming and delight where everyone can choose which role to play.

The costume design needed to take into consideration the element of time – two weeks to create five costumes. Four of the costumes are completely invented and one was created by modifying new and vintage clothing into modern garments. It took a lot of running around the local theaters for some fittings with the actors but in the end it has been a total pleasure to work with all these talented people and to be a part of this great project. I hope you will enjoy the show! '

Valq Stoynova- Costume Design

Fig XX Reference

OBERON is a rockabilly. The term 'rockabilly' comes from the words 'rock' and 'hillbilly'. The style was first made popular by legendary artists such as Elvis Presley and Jerry Lee Lewis. Today's rockabilly aesthetic borrows much of these signature pieces, celebrating the vintage aspects of the style. However, there is an edgier undertone in the contemporary rockabillies who adapt elements of punk rock and indie looks, such as full sleeve tattoos. It's all about a cool, carefree attitude that only a true rockabilly would be able to pull off authentically.

THE FLOWER is a symbol of magic, beauty, true love and hope. It had been so difficult to decide which is the color of magic ... I'd finally realized that it is neither white nor black - it is a sparkling shade of grey. The costume of the dancing flower is also inspired by the city but it's not a creature, it's a spirit.

Helena is the lovesick young woman who also has the most time to philosophize on the nature of love and maybe that is why she is dressed in a romantic style costume. The main fabric is chiffon and silk that drape graciously on her body.

PUCK is a modern Bohemian.The skinny guy who would throw a smart jacket over an oversized shirt, skinny trousers and a pair of battered Chelsea boots as he quickly ruffles his hair whilst listening to Laura Marling or Dylan. Finally, perhaps one of the most iconic pieces within a bohemian inspired look would be a scarf or neckerchief.

HELENA is the lovesick young woman who also has the most time to philosophize on the nature of love and maybe that is why she is dressed in a romantic style costume. The main fabric is chiffon and silk that drape graciously on her body.

The inspiration for DEMETRIUS`s costume comes from a smart-casual sportswear. The contemporary fashion's idea of sportswear is less about what is actually appropriate for a workout and more focused on sport-influenced cuts, silhouettes and fabrics, as well as an overall minimalist, rigorous and clean aesthetic.

What makes a good actor?

'A good actor is an actor who's sincere on stage. Who is true, who really believes that he is "that" personage. He has to act like him, to think like him, to love, to hate, to cry and laugh like he would, in any given situation, from the moment he put a foot on the stage to the very end of the act.'
Adriana Dimova, acting student

'All good actors, are such because of their uniqueness that no one else has. Beside that there is hard work, discipline, persistence, will and a sparkle in the eyes. The truth is hiding there probably'
Vesela Babinova, actress

'He must be honest and sincere in every word coming out of his mouth, he must be real in every move. I have to feel something when I watch him.'
Aleksander Aleksiev, actor

'Maybe belief, naivety, character and discipline.'
Daria Simeonova, actress

What is the difference between theater and film?

'Your gestures have to be bigger, your body has to "draw" what you are feeling and thinking. And the most important thing : theatre is ephemeral. It's not like movies, once you play in it, it's recorded forever. Theatre is different every single time. You have the same role but you're different every time, and that is difficult but beautiful. Every time is like the first time.'
Adriana Dimova, acting student

'Every time in theatre you have the chance to experiment, to play the role better the next night for example, while in cinema there are no changes after recording'
Vesela Babinova, actress

'The approach is different, in film everything needs to be less ... almost documentary.'
Aleksandar Aleksiev, actor

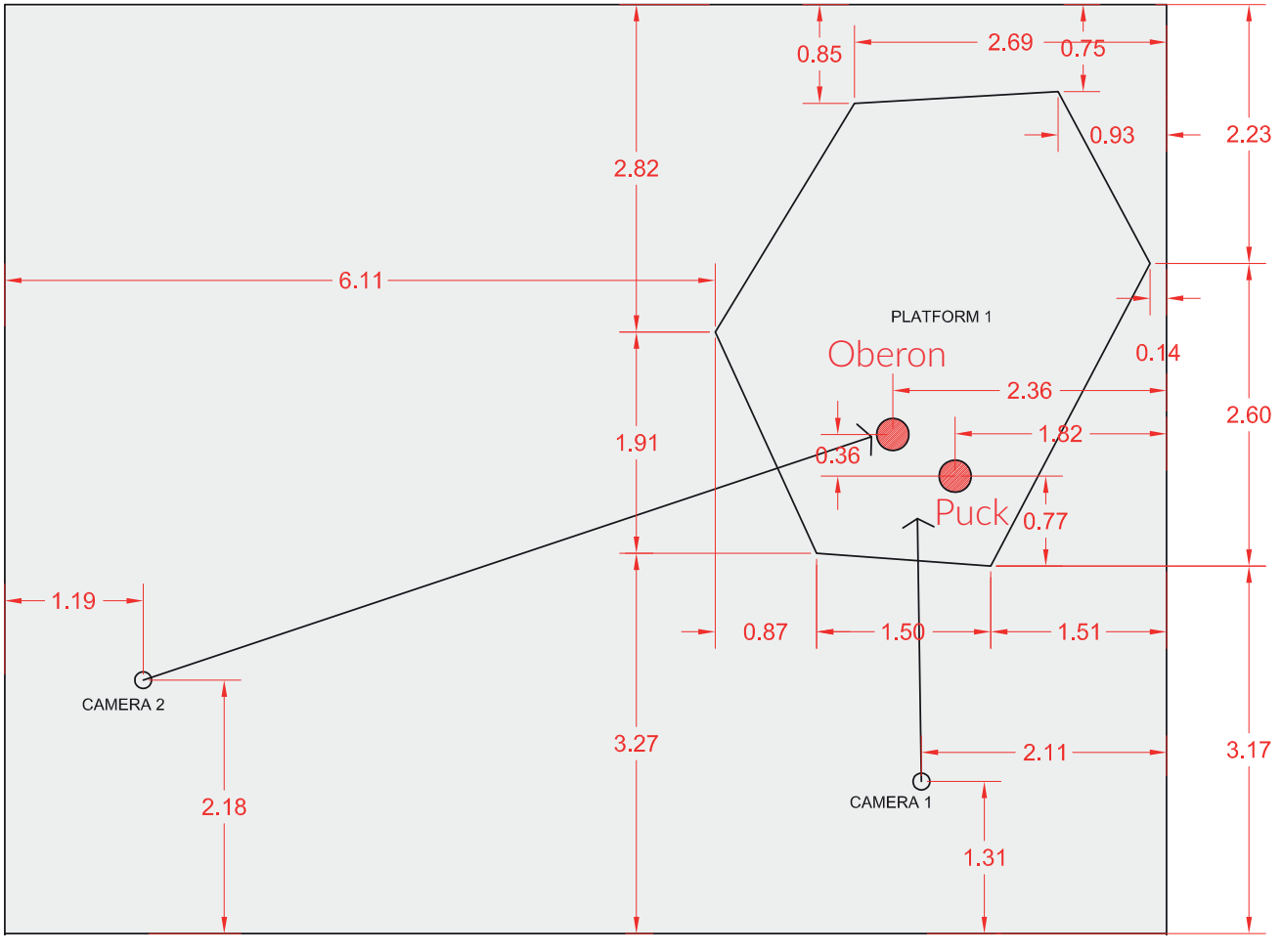
'Everything is happening here and now, there is no second shot.'
Daria Simeonova, actress

Filming

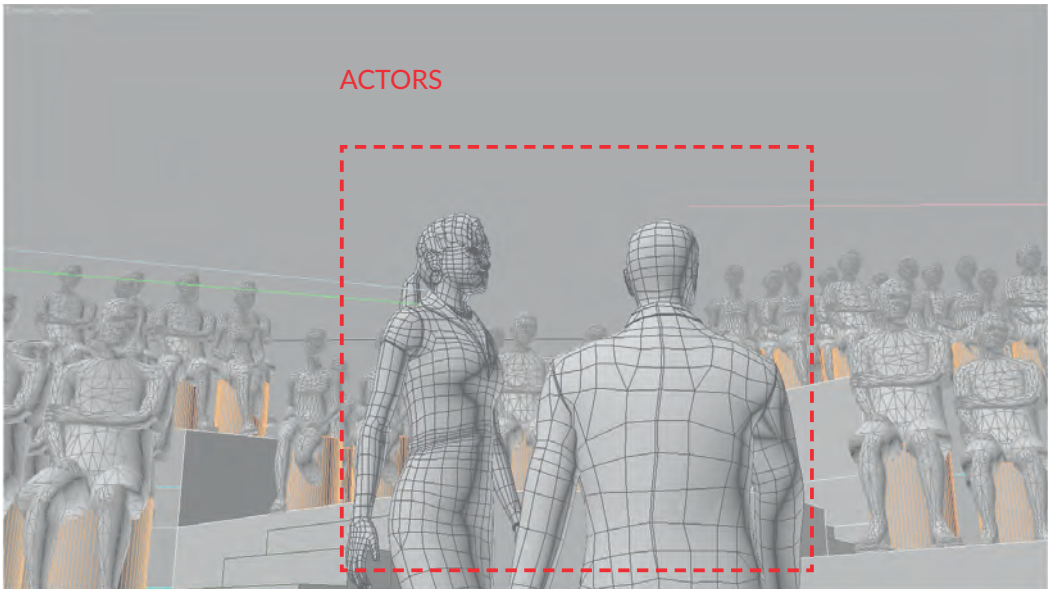
On a cold winter day we shot a few scenes from the play at studio Orfei, in Sofia. Green screen, five actors, two cameramen, one sound engineer, one light technician and a lot of preparations before that. Twelve hours for just a few improvised minutes, because we could rehearse only once before the shooting. The following pages document the process. On top are screenshots, taken from the point of view of the cameras in the virtual model in the different scenes. In the lower part of the pages the real action unfolds ...

Picture	Content	Stage Design	People	Important
1. SCENE /Act II, Scene 1/	**OBERON** Fetch me this herb; and be thou here again Ere the leviathan can swim a league. **PUCK** I'll put a girdle round about the earth In forty minutes. Exit **OBERON** Having once this juice, I'll watch Titania when she is asleep, And drop the liquor of it in her eyes. The next thing then she waking looks upon, Be it on lion, bear, or wolf, or bull, On meddling monkey, or on busy ape, She shall pursue it with the soul of love: And ere I take this charm from off her sight, As I can take it with another herb, I'll make her render up her page to me. But who comes here? I am invisible; And I will overhear their conference.	in the wood static- Oberon is sitting	Oberon Puck	projecting video (while Oberon is talking)

Filming



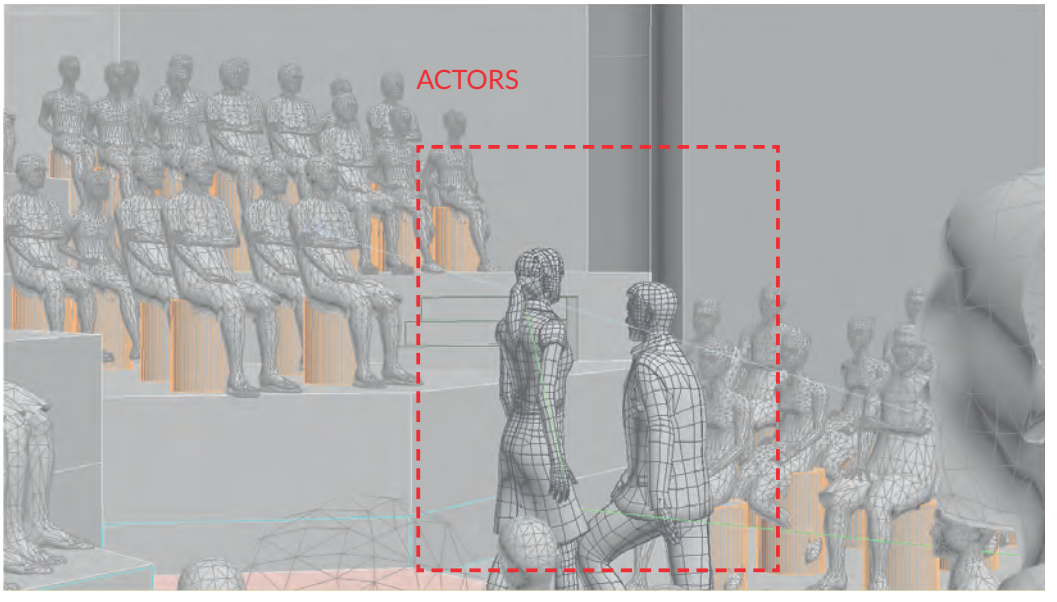
All camera heights are measured form platform 1



S1 _ Camera 1 Camera Hight = 0.68 m Camera Lense - 24 mm

H = 1.65 m, L = 4.2 m Camera Lense - 35 mm

H - camera height, L - lenght b/n camera and actors

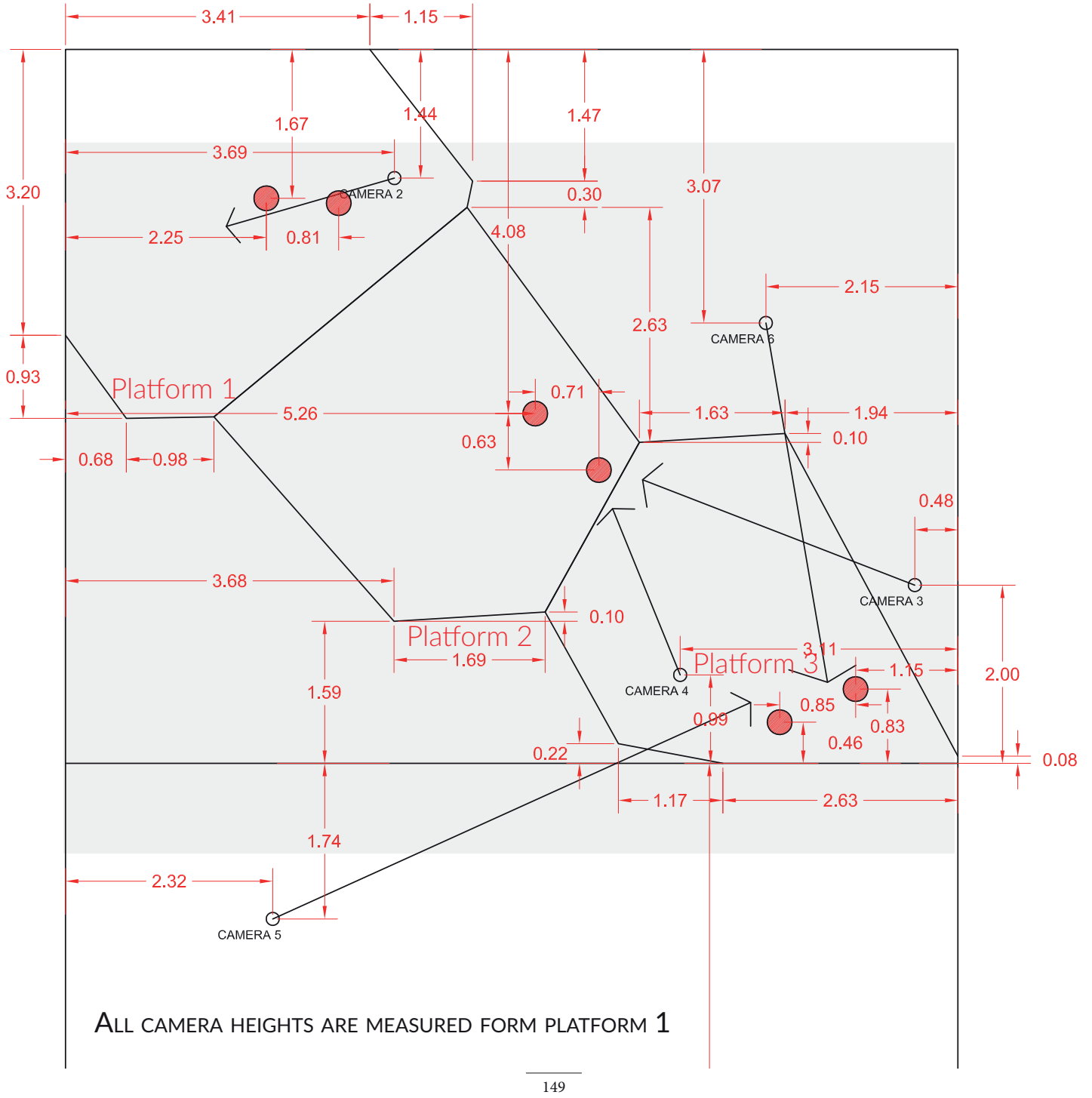


S1 _ Camera 2 Camera Hight = 1.65 m Camera Lense - 35 mm

H = 1.60 m, L = 5.0 m Camera Lense - 24 mm

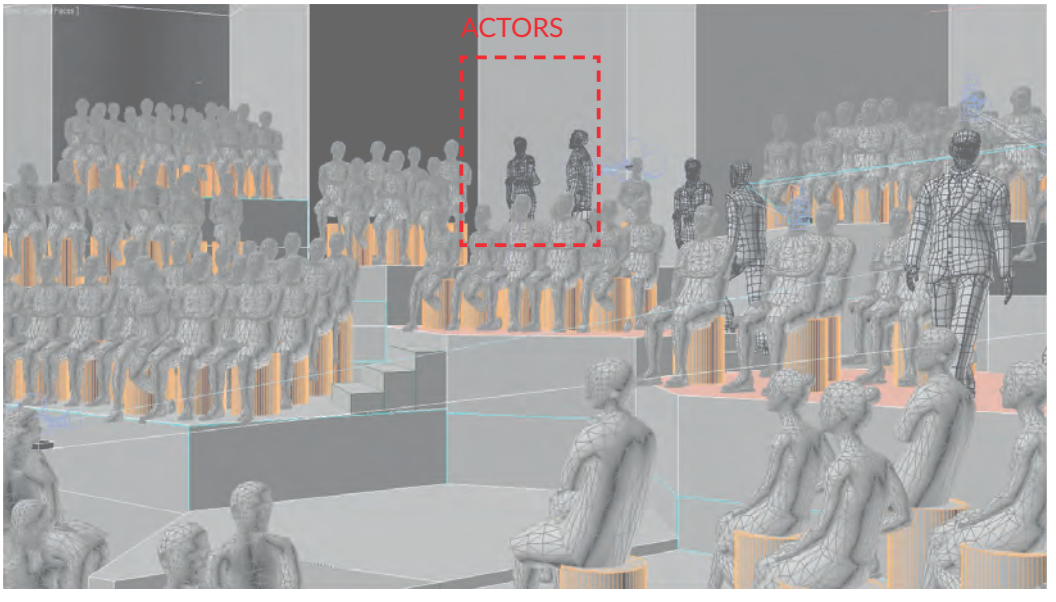
Picture	Content	Stage Design	People	Important
2. SCENE /Act II, Scene 2/	DEMETRIUS, HELENA, following him **DEMETRIUS** I love thee not, therefore pursue me not. Where is Lysander and fair Hermia? The one I'll slay, the other slayeth me. Thou told'st me they were stolen unto this wood; And here am I, and wode within this wood, Because I cannot meet my Hermia. Hence, get thee gone, and follow me no more. **HELENA** You draw me, you hard-hearted adamant; But yet you draw not iron, for my heart Is true as steel: leave you your power to draw, And I shall have no power to follow you. **DEMETRIUS** Do I entice you? do I speak you fair? Or, rather, do I not in plainest truth Tell you, I do not, nor I cannot love you? **HELENA** And even for that do I love you the more. I am your spaniel; and, Demetrius, The more you beat me, I will fawn on you: Use me but as your spaniel, spurn me, strike me, Neglect me, lose me; only give me leave, Unworthy as I am, to follow you. .... **DEMETRIUS** Tempt not too much the hatred of my spirit; For I am sick when I do look on thee. **HELENA** And I am sick when I look not on you. **DEMETRIUS** You do impeach your modesty too much, To leave the city and commit yourself Into the hands of one that loves you not; To trust the opportunity of night And the ill counsel of a desert place With the rich worth of your virginity. **HELENA** Your virtue is my privilege: for that It is not night when I do see your face, Therefore I think I am not in the night;	in the wood: They walk along three platforms, enter from Exit 1	Demetrius Helena Oberon (hidden)	walking around the audience

Filming



All camera heights are measured form platform 1

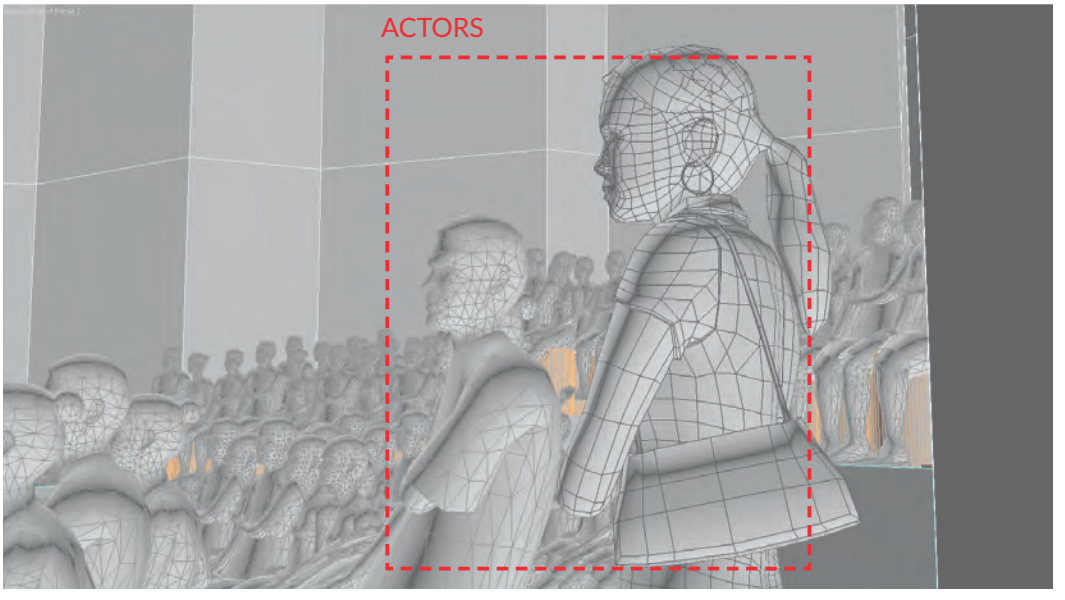
Platform 1



S2 _ Camera 1 Camera Hight = - 0.36 m Camera Lense - 24 mm

H = 0.00 m, L = 8 m Camera Lense - 55 mm

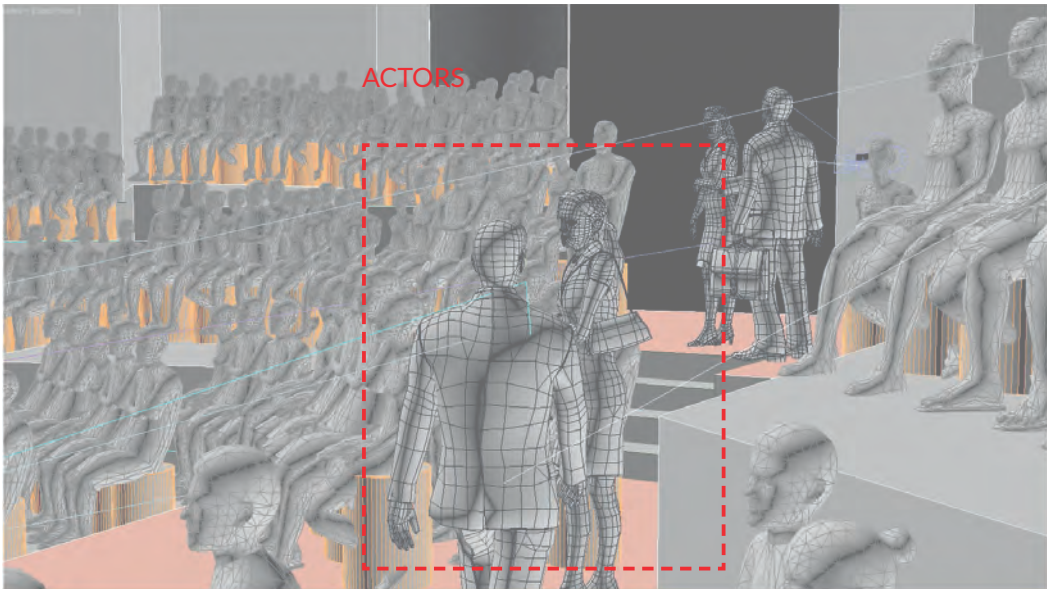
H - camera height, L - lenght b/n camera and actors



S2 _ Camera 2 Camera Hight = 1.25 m Camera Lense - 24 mm

H = 1.30 m, L = 1.6 m Camera Lense - 20 mm

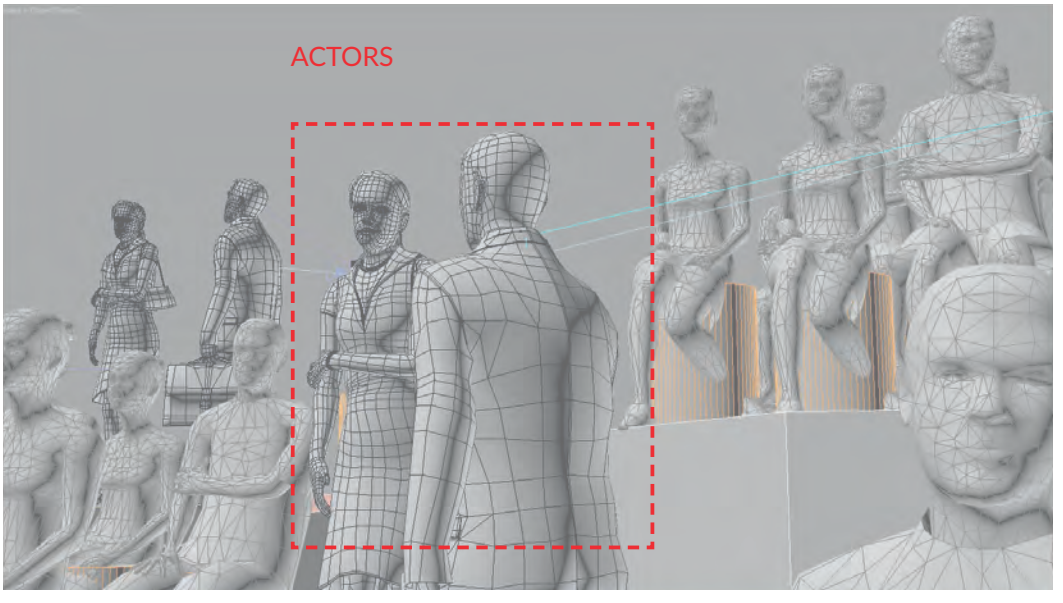
Platform 2



S2 _ Camera 3 Camera Hight = 1.63 m Camera Lense - 24 mm

H = 1.50 m, L = 4 m Camera Lense - 18 mm

H - camera height, L - lenght b/n camera and actors

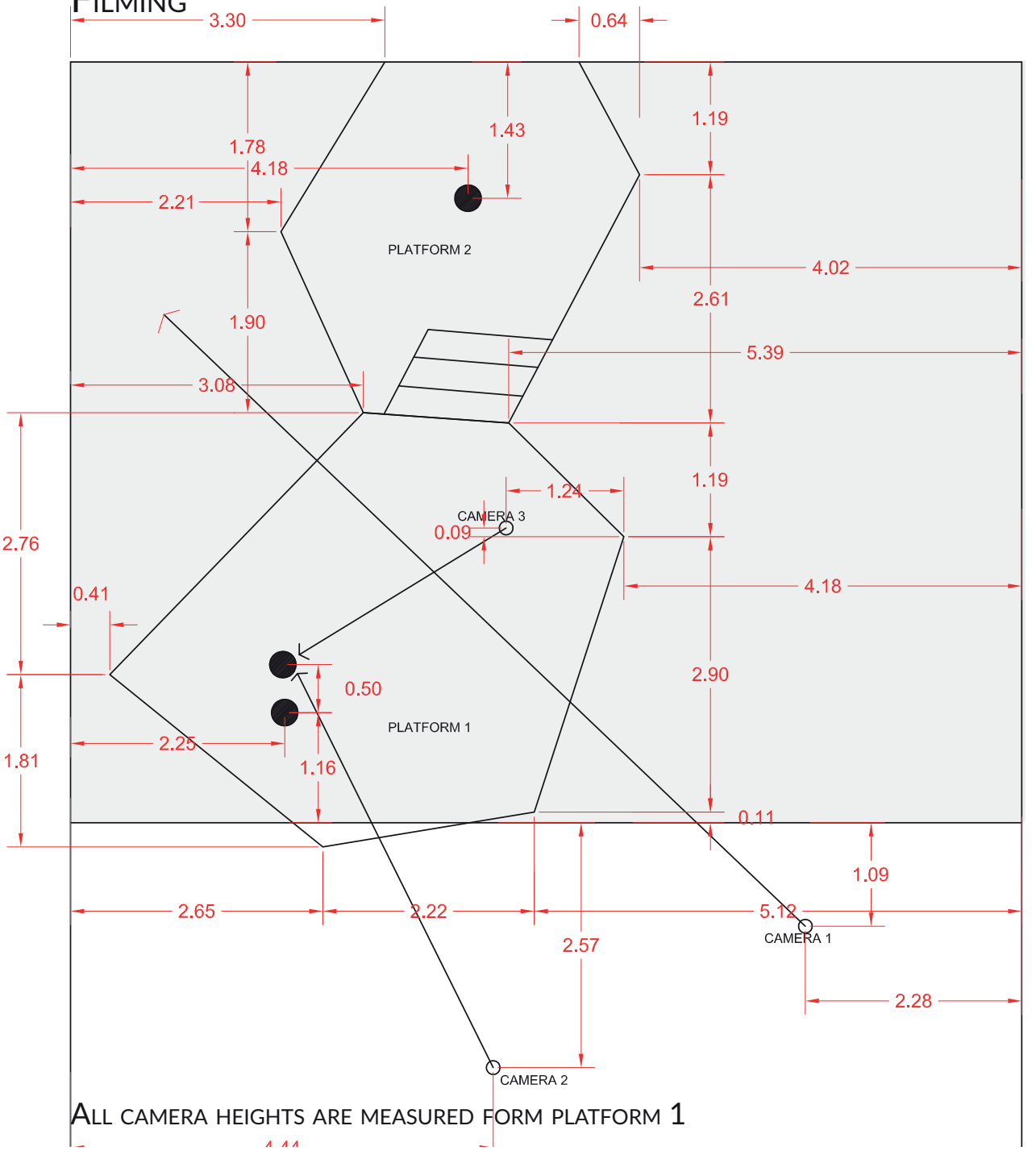


S2 _ Camera 4 Camera Hight = 0.91 m Camera Lense - 24 mm

H = 3 m, L = 1.6 m Camera Lense - 20 mm *** other viewport!!

Picture	Content	Stage Design	People	Important
3. SCENE /Act II, Scene 2/	**OBERON** Fare thee well, nymph: ere he do leave this grove, Thou shalt fly him and he shall seek thy love. Re-enter **PUCK** Hast thou the flower there? Welcome, wanderer. **PUCK** Ay, there it is.	in the wood: They walk along three platforms, enter from Exit 1	the flower Puck Oberon	dance

Filming



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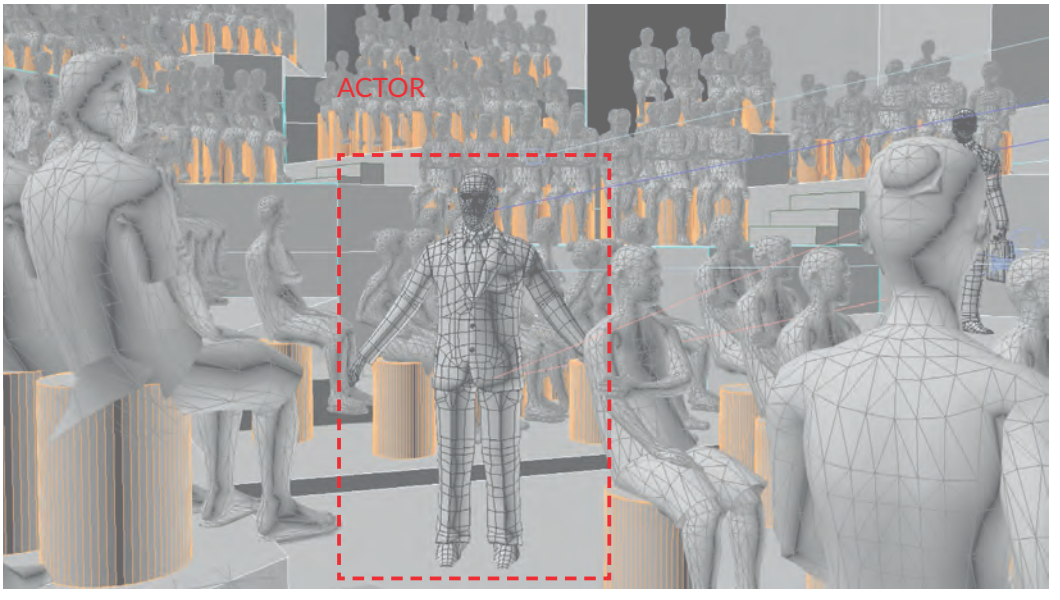
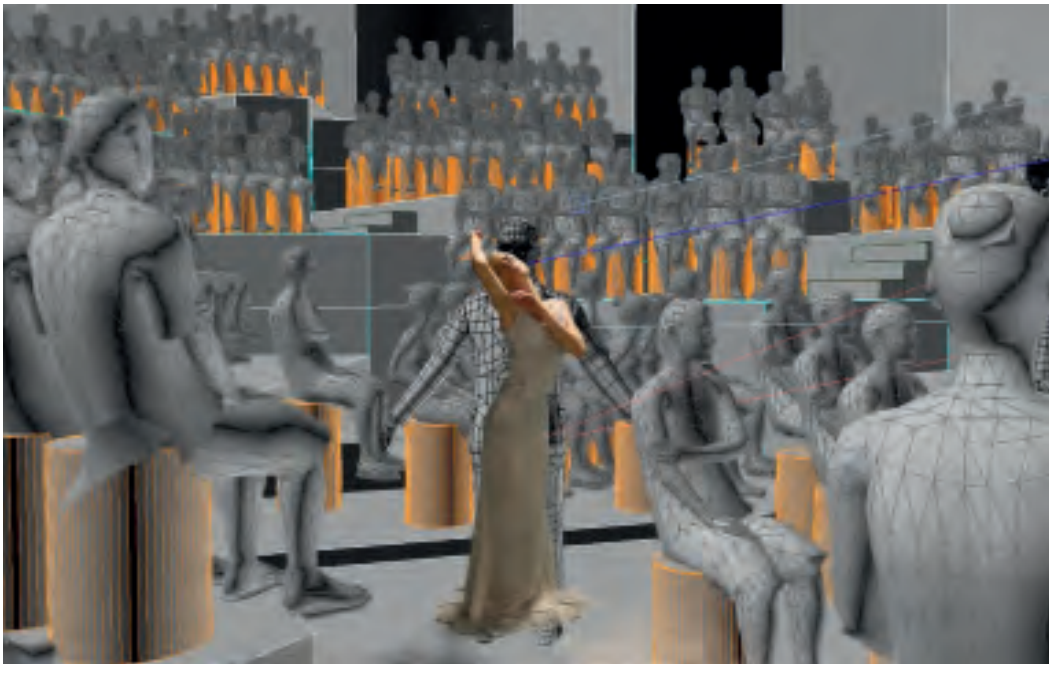
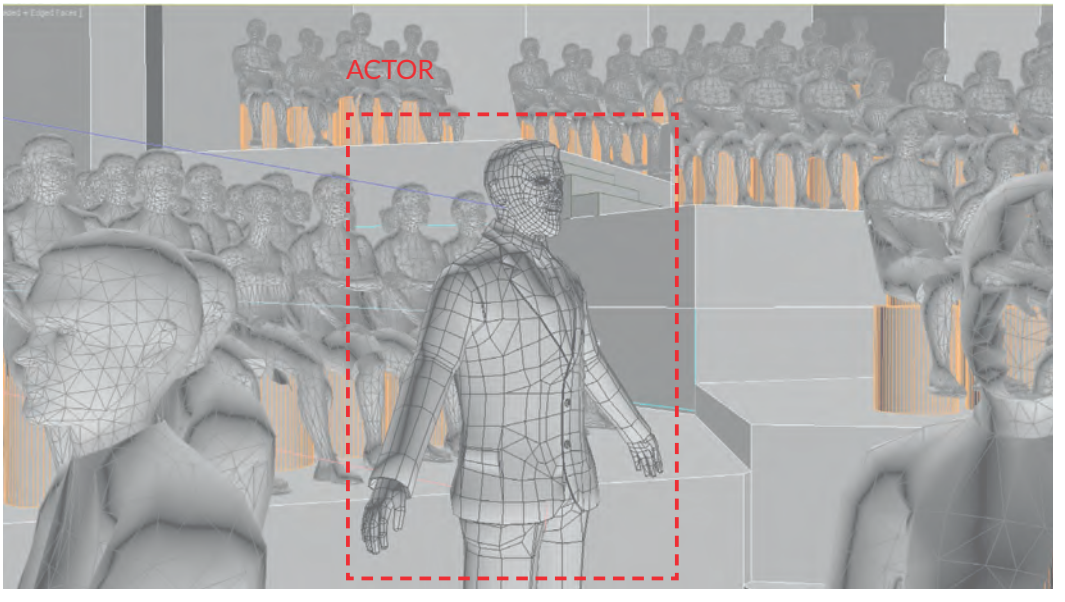


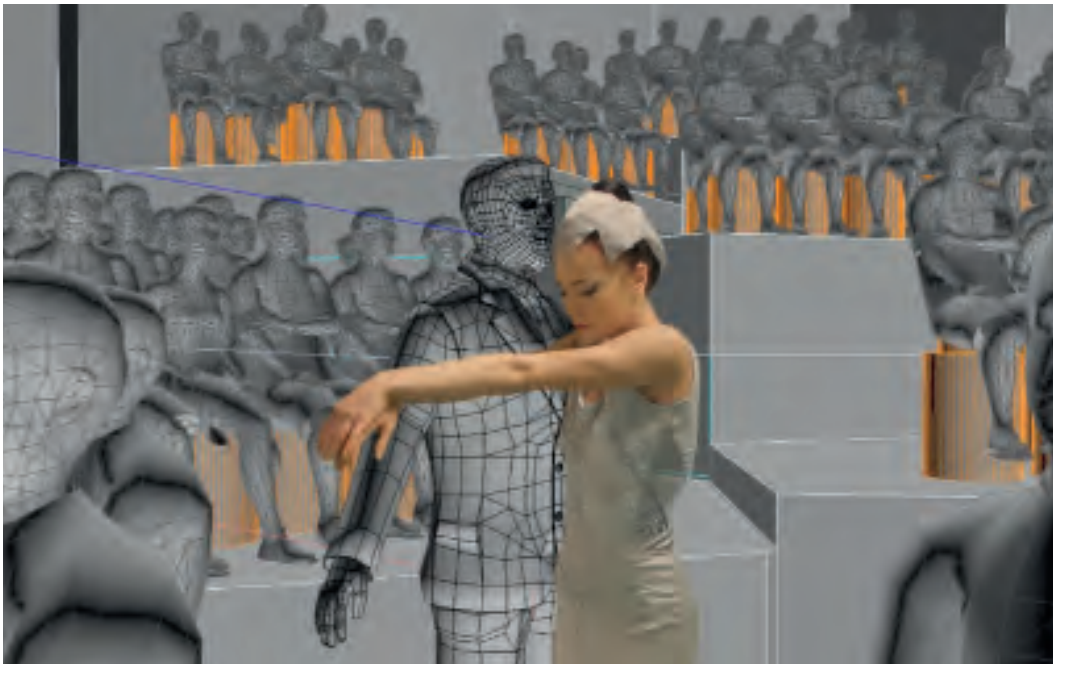
S3 _ Camera 2 Camera Hight = 1.52 m Camera Lense - 20 mm



H = 1.52 m, L = 3.7 m Camera Lense - 22 mm



S3 _ Camera 3 Camera Hight = 1.35 m Camera Lense - 20 mm



H = 1.35 m, L = 2.7 m Camera Lense - 24 mm

PUCK

If we shadows have offended,
Think but this, and all is mended,
That you have but slumber'd here
While these visions did appear.
And this weak and idle theme,
No more yielding but a dream,
Gentles, do not reprehend:
if you pardon, we will mend:
And, as I am an honest Puck,
If we have unearned luck
Now to 'scape the serpent's tongue,
We will make amends ere long;
Else the Puck a liar call;
So, good night unto you all.
Give me your hands, if we be friends,
And Robin shall restore amends.

Do you like going to the theatre?

'I am loving it. For many years. I loved taking my kids to children's theatres. And it is indescribable, just as love is, who can explain it? I want to see all possible plays – not all of them are nice, some are boring, tiresome, dumb. But when I am watching a play where there is something so strong holding my breath, heart, soul, something that is rising me up and dropping me down, that is making me cry – all this gives me a hilarious experience.'
Valentina Dragoshinska, Human resources in the Supreme Court

'I love it... Because it is live magic. Every night every performance is different.'
Nikola Hitrov, Judge

´Not that much anymore, because of the forced arrangement of spaces: stage there, audience here, the forced view, the limited repertoire...´
Harald Trapp, architect

'It' s almost as exciting as going to a new city. What happens on the scene is an independent world.'
Joana Lazarova, design editor

'I believe theatre is one of the best places where one may fulfills his dreams!'
Stefan Popoff, stage designer

THANK YOU!

A big thank you to my tutors Christian Kühn and Harald Trapp

And many many thanks to all my friends ...

Petko Valchev /Grasshopper Script

Valya Stoyanova /Styling + running around like crazy

Eddy Schwartz /Co- Director and organizer of filming

Milan Ribagin & Angel Balakchiyski/ camera

Poli Venkova /make up

Julia Bocheva /Flower, Adriana Dimova /Helena, Javor Baharov / Puck, Stanislav Kertikov /Demetrius
Sotir Melev /Oberon

Nikoleta Angelova

Milena Matchirska

Studio Orfei

all interview partners

And all the friends who helped with all those details when time is never enough…
Stefan Pirintchev, Lidia Atanasova, Aneliya Stoyanova, Joana Lazarova, Vesselina Bochukova, Marta Todorova, Melanie Hosner

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Fig 5-16 Izenour, George C.; Theater Design, McGraw-Hill Inc., 1977, chapter- ANCIENT

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