

## RESEARCH PANEL: METHODS FOR NOETIC ARCHITECTURES

0. *Dear all, welcome to my final presentation. This project which I'm about to present to you is one about illness, it's about life and death, it's about bodies, and numbers, and it's about bodies and healing. Will go through these 3 panels to present the different stages of the project; research, method, design, where in the method panel: THE HOSPITAL OF THINKABLE BOUNDARIES I focus on the overall architectural direction and in the design PANEL: I have focused and developed one of the main characters of the project: THE MIDNIGHT LIBRARY. I have programmed a digital path to take you on this transversal journey. So let's start with the research on healing/illness bodies/numbers.*
1. *First of all, what is a hospital? Or maybe the questions that should be asked is, where is a hospital? Because throughout time, the idea of the hospital has shifted, evolved and transformed.*
2. *For the Greeks, the hospital was all about holistic healing. One entered the sanctuary through sacred path and had to spend one night with the god of health to figure out your illness in your dreams before you could start your process of healing.*
3. *Hospital comes from the latin word of hospes, or hospitium, meaning visitor, guest and host. It reflects the sort of spatial communion which took place in these practices in the early Greco-Roman times.*
4. *In Sweden, the context of the project, the first hospitium resided in the monastery of Alvastra abbey, where the Cistercian catholic monks pilgrimed in the early 13th century. In the monasteries sick or lost people were always welcome to seek recovery and at the same time protection here. The patients were treated with meditation, and herbal medicines from their own medicinal garden.*
5. *With the reformation, the monasteries were destroyed. Instead illness and most of all understanding illness became a topic for the educational institutions where the anatomical practices entered the stage.*
6. *Anatomical dissections of bodies, and in the beginning only criminal bodies, became the means of collecting medical knowledge*
7. *and the anatomical theatre became the central knowledge-space. The dead body on the table served as a productive object, a primary source of medical knowledge and future diagnostics.*
8. *During the 20th century and the presence of the respiratory disease tuberculosis, aesthetics and functions of healing architecture was derived from medical theories connected to cleanliness, purity, and light, which postulated architecture as a curing machine. The body of the architect became inseparable to the patient, as many the architects during this time experienced these symptoms themselves.*
9. *The 21st century is defined by mental illness, with depression being the leading cause of disease. A condition shared between 300 million people and continuously increasing worldwide. and our modern understanding of medicine and illness seem to struggle to find lasting treatments. where is the hospital of depression?*
10. *SSRI's as the main medicinal treatment were invented in the 50s seem to remove some of the deepest despair, but with that it removes the highest euphoric emotions. The moments of vitality and life.*
11. *So as being a patient myself in this condition, the research I am pursuing is about architectures of healing, where health is not to be limited to an absence of disease but as the nexus of aliveness, the forming of vital experience. To approach this question, I started with collecting some evidence from my personal experience with mental illness and more importantly with healing. And the one aspect that I could derive as the most essential one was the notion of the noetic. A character so important that I had to do a graduation project about it. I will call her Noa.*
12. *When I met Noa, I was at a critical moment in life. I was struggling with eating disorders, and I had reached a crossroads. After a stressful Pizza-incident, I contemplated whether the life I that was living really was worth living. I was lacking social context, relationships and meaning. I could either end this life or start living another one. The next day I woke up and the decision was made.*

13. *It took me about a year or so to reach normal weight, and by so I was ejected from the hospital system. But mentally I wasn't well. The disconnection between my rational, mind and my useless, body I couldn't overcome. During this time, I looked for help in different places and tried different cognitive therapies but the structural boundaries of my illness I could never truly exceed myself.*
14. *We tend to think that thinking comes before feeling, that our minds are somehow superior to our bodies. This is at least my experience and common in mental illness, where the mind is stuck in negative and even very destructive loops and we tend to think that we can figure it out with our minds. But for me this was the problem, and the realization of the body's agency and intentionality, the presence of emotion, was for me the key. And this I encountered through my first meeting with Noa.*
15. *I met her in a shady apartment complex in the outskirts of Stockholm. On the door I remember reading the words, where there's a witch there is a way, and wondering what I gotten myself into. I had, in desperation or joined an ayahuasca session with a trained shaman who was also a psychotherapist.*
16. *We began with standard psychoanalytical workshop. Discussing intentions for the ceremony. Afterwards there was a smoke ritual. And then we drank.*
17. *It's difficult to talk about this experience, as it is both unregulated and criminalized in many places. But also because it is difficult to depict. Characteristics for the psychedelic experience is what is called Synesthesia, where the boundaries of your senses and perception become one, it is also in this state where neurons push out of their routine neural paths and creatively connect with new parts of the brain. I remember this experience like the most vivid dream, but yet, I was not sleeping, you and your body was awake. And this is the profound memorization of the experience.*
18. *And for me this was not just any dream. I dreamt that I was dying, laying in a hospital bed with my family around me to say their goodbyes. I was able to feel their emotion, traveling from person to person. I experienced their pain and somewhere realized my own value in this world. The value of this dying body in the hospital bed. My dying body. And that was life-changing. Because I wasn't dying. I was able to get a second change to life. And this was for me, my encounter with Noa, through the noetic experience. The noetic experience is not limited to psychedelic experience but can also reveal itself as Insight, awareness and consciousness, other noetic practices are yoga, holotropic breathing and meditation. Most of us have had a noetic experience.*
19. *So what is it really about? The noetic. How can noetic practices go beyond and dissolve the semiotic grid? How does a shift in perception change our sense of knowledge?*
20. *And how could (if it could) the noetic be instrumentalized into methods for architecture? What architectures could this give birth to? And finally, to what extent is architecture capable of healing?*
21. *Here my approach was to look at the noetic from different perspectives. Perspectives which I can relate to on different cultural, personal and experiential levels.*
22. *I named these explorations the surgeon the shaman and the noet.*
23. *For the surgeon, which I already presented in the introduction, which suggests he is also part of the problem, the noetic is a question of corporeal, and semiotic thresholds. The surgeon shifts the boundaries of what is possible, by cutting through the material thresholds to manipulate tissue. The surgeon is the founder of the separation between body and mind where one of the side effects is the quantification and objectification of the body, leaving nothing but productive corpses. Yet, the surgeon is also capable of material healing.*
24. *For the shaman the noetic realm is about the spiritual perception which produces other types of knowledges, that of the situated embodied knowledge. The psychedelic ceremony with plant medicines is a central part of their healing practices where the material and the immaterial realm reconnects and fortifies not just the emotional personal connection but also the collective, temporal and ecological connection. The medicines are seen as sentient beings, as the relationship of hospitality, where the guest and the host meet in communion.*

25. *The noet understands the noetic as a perceptive and cognitive instrument with the potential to open up rigid thinking and prejudice, bridging and permeating thresholds, by offering new ways of 'seeing' in the world. For the noet - as for the poet - the world is always there before reflection begins. The body is the intentional agent and the mediator for spatializing and inhabiting a world, and experience becomes the primary source of knowledge. The noet also sees life as a process, a continuity of events creating a liminal ontology where each moment can be seen anew.*

26. *What I could conclude through this research was the relation between noetic practices and philosophies, existing in the material and the immaterial realms. How then, can noetic methods be instrumentalized? The noetic agenda can be said as following:*

*to overcome the binary opposition and hierarchies of the material and the immaterial context; to embrace the noetic method is to embrace transition; that knowledge is precisely residing in this movement, and that is something that must be experienced with our bodies; to recognize the body as the main mediator of experience; to adopt the noetic method it is to recognize the personal/situational, both as material and immaterial beings, as objective, important and meaningful existences, while embracing and accepting other forms of living such as plants, animal and objects as equal, to consider life and architecture as a process, an event ontology where the liminal is investigated*

27. *in an architectural project or brief there is often a decided site. In this project to approach a site was to listen to an inner longing for a place where these healing practices could take place, safely and integrated in the modern configuration.*

28. *the noetic practices reveals the notion of liminality so there was a certain energy in searching for a place where the liminal could be enhanced, and for me this was a starting point for the design project. I looked at liminal places in the city of Stockholm. I knew I was at the right spot when I felt discomfort, outside of my so called comfort zone.*

29. *On the site there is this abandoned traintrack. It was built as industrial railroad to transport of exports and imports from the harbor. After the second world war the military seized the area as classified to have an emergency route to the southern hospital. But before that the site took on many different characters.*

30. *And here I introduce one of the noetic methods, how to approach the memory of the place; by reconciling the material and the immaterial memory by incorporating it into the design. A way of asking the site for permission to intervene.*

31. *During the 17th century, the site –with its close location to the water, became good conditions for brick manufacturing and here was the first brickyard in Stockholm, providing all building materials for the city.*

32. *In the late 19th century – Stockholm was in despair after the cholera plague hitting Europe and the city was seeking new treatments for the illness. Water quality was a problem in industrialized Stockholm and so the first water treatment facility was built on the site.*

33. *And in the 50s the site turned into an industrial complex. The site incorporated both the biggest General Motors industry in Sweden.*

34. *The site has also been a transit zone, a resting zone for trains, this was the case until the road was shut after the second world war.*

35. *Another heritage of the site is that of the collective, where collective allotment gardens in Stockholm was early adopted here in this area. They still reside on next to the plot today.*

36. *Concluding this noetic method of contextualizing the site is this site spirit mapping, where the heritage of the site, the material and the immaterial memories, matters, when approaching a design project on the site; the memory and agenda of the site meets the memory and the agenda of the architect. So it's really about keeping these perspectives simultaneously.*

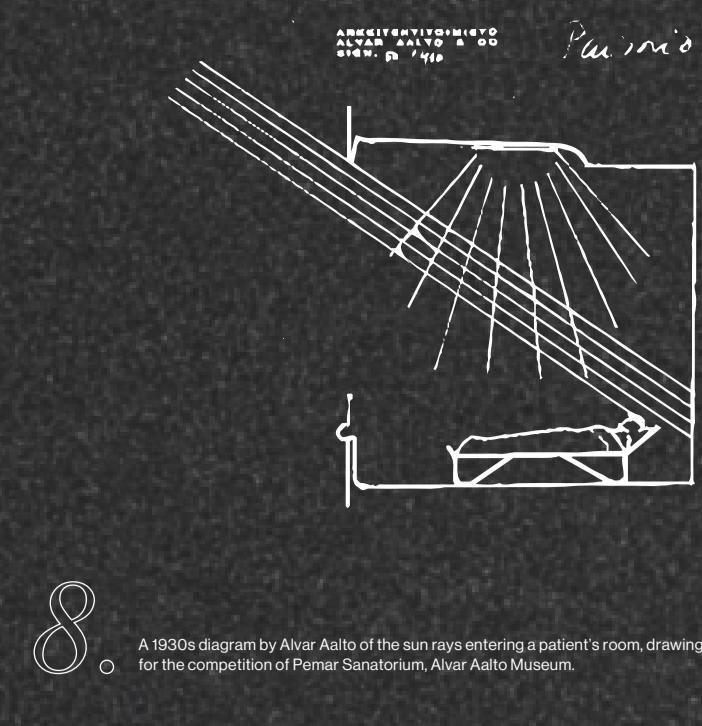
37. *Where lays the dialogue between them? How can the body be incorporated into the design? These are questions I asked myself when approaching the design project the hospital of thinkable boundaries, and in the next panel I will explain how liminality and embodiment, has been incorporated into the design process.*



6. The Englishman at the Bedside by Hans Holbein the Younger, 1528



5. The Hospital of the Holy Spirit, 1970s

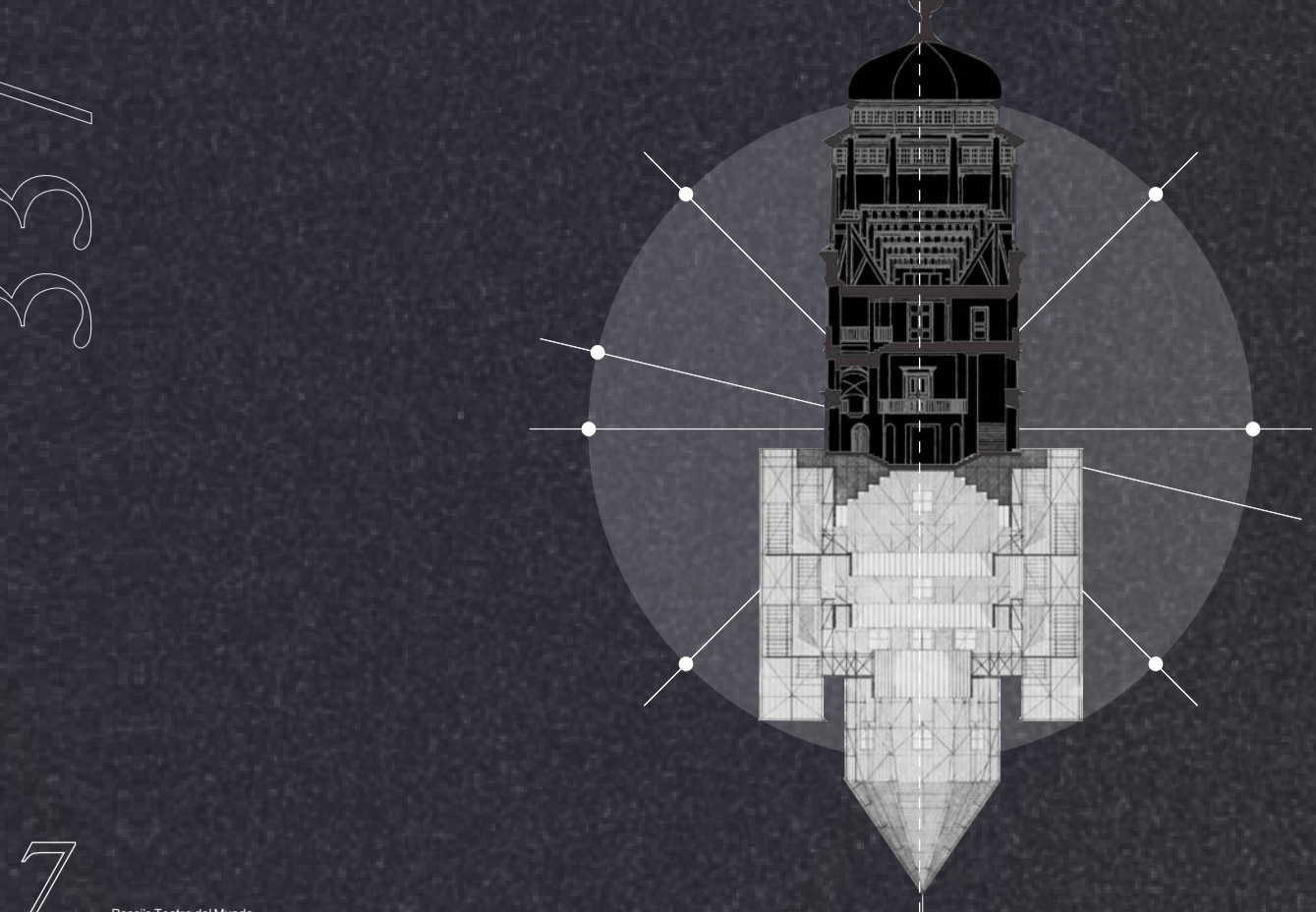


8. The Hospital of the Holy Spirit, 1970s

9. where is the hospital of depression?



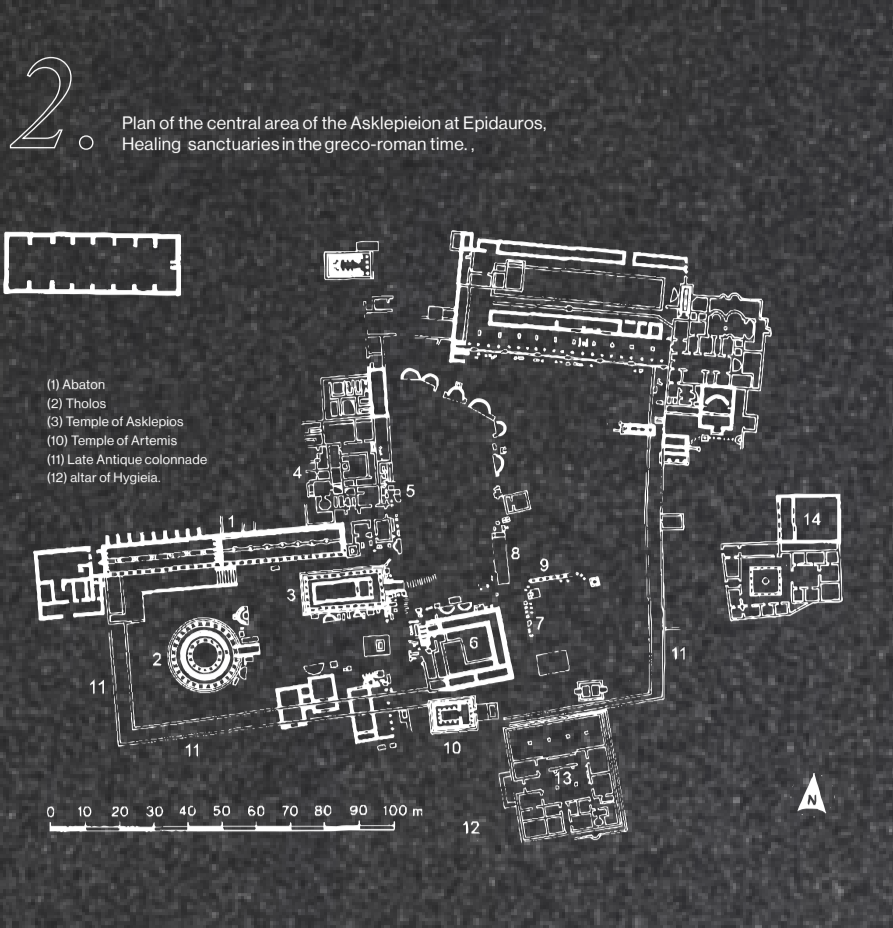
23. For the surgeon, the noetic is a question of corporal, and semantic thresholds. The surgeon shifts the boundaries of what is possible by cutting through the material thresholds to manipulate tissue. The surgeon is the founder of the separation between body and mind where one of the side effects is the quantification and objectification of the body, leaving nothing but productive corpse. Yet, the surgeon is also capable of material healing.



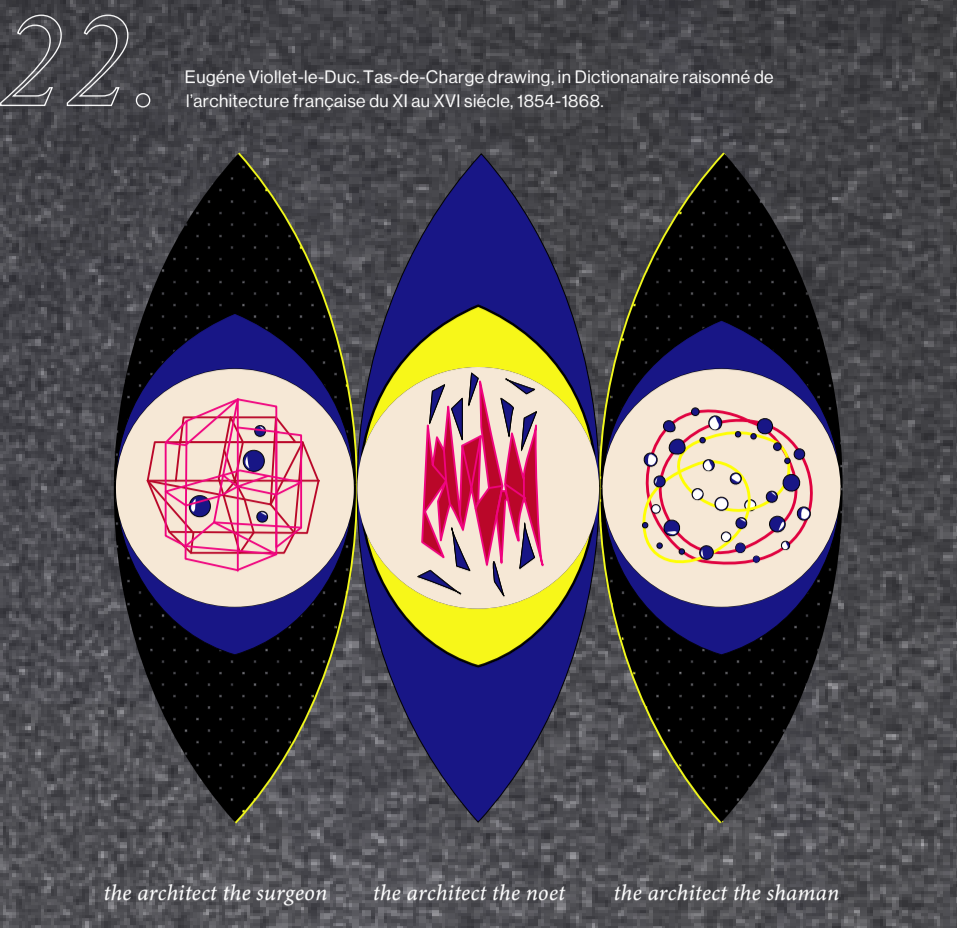
7. Lighthouse



1. what is a hospital? where

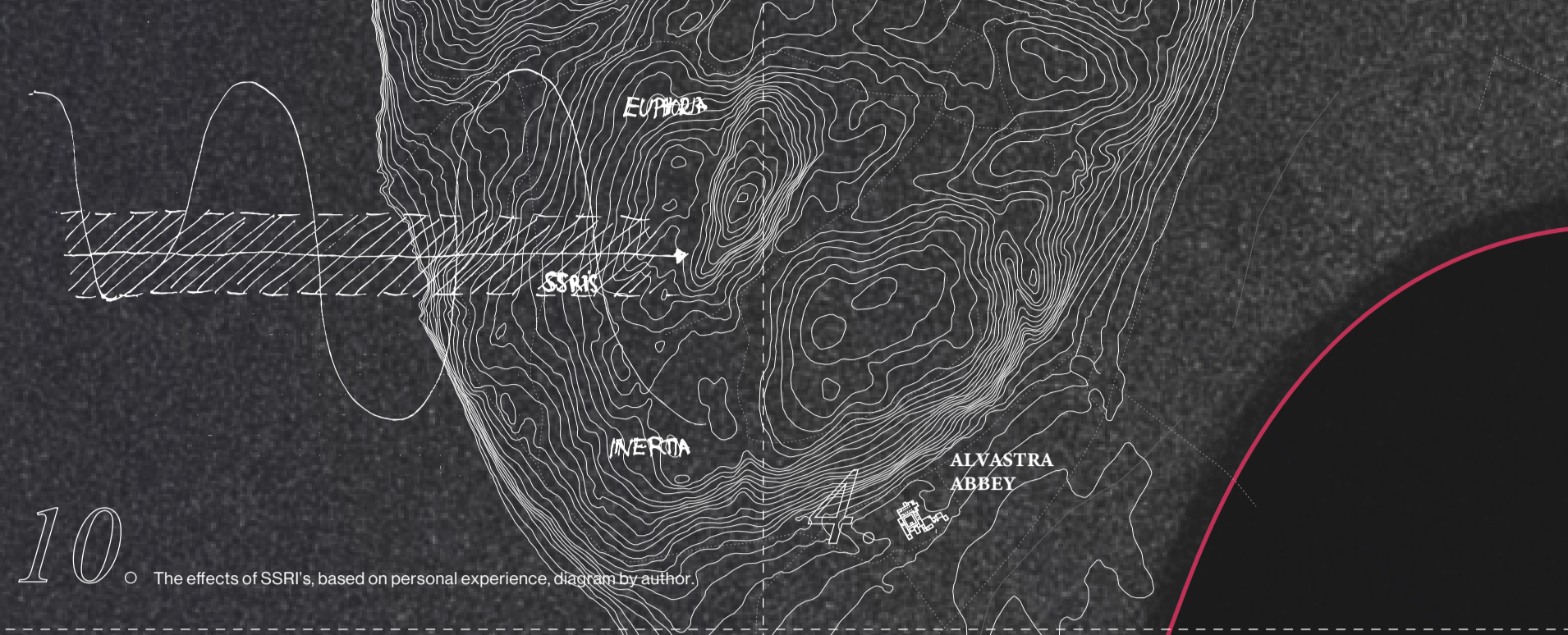


2. Part of the construction of the Hospital of the Holy Spirit



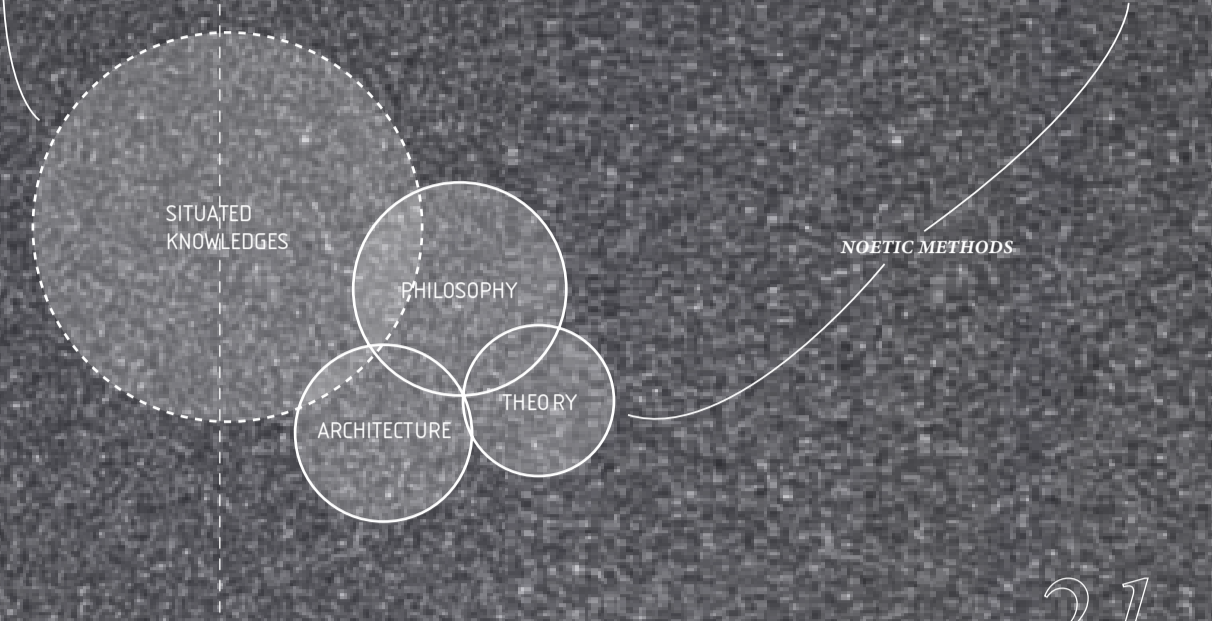
22. The Hospital of the Holy Spirit, 1970s

24. For the human, the noetic realm is about a spiritual perception, producing other types of knowledge. The psychedelic ceremony with plant medicines is a central part of healing practices where the material and the immaterial realm reconnects and fortifies not just the emotional personal connection but also the collective, temporal and ecological connection. The medicines are seen as sentient beings, as the relationship of hospitality, where the guest and the host meet in communion. They are not a thing but a relative.



10. The Hospital of the Holy Spirit, 1970s

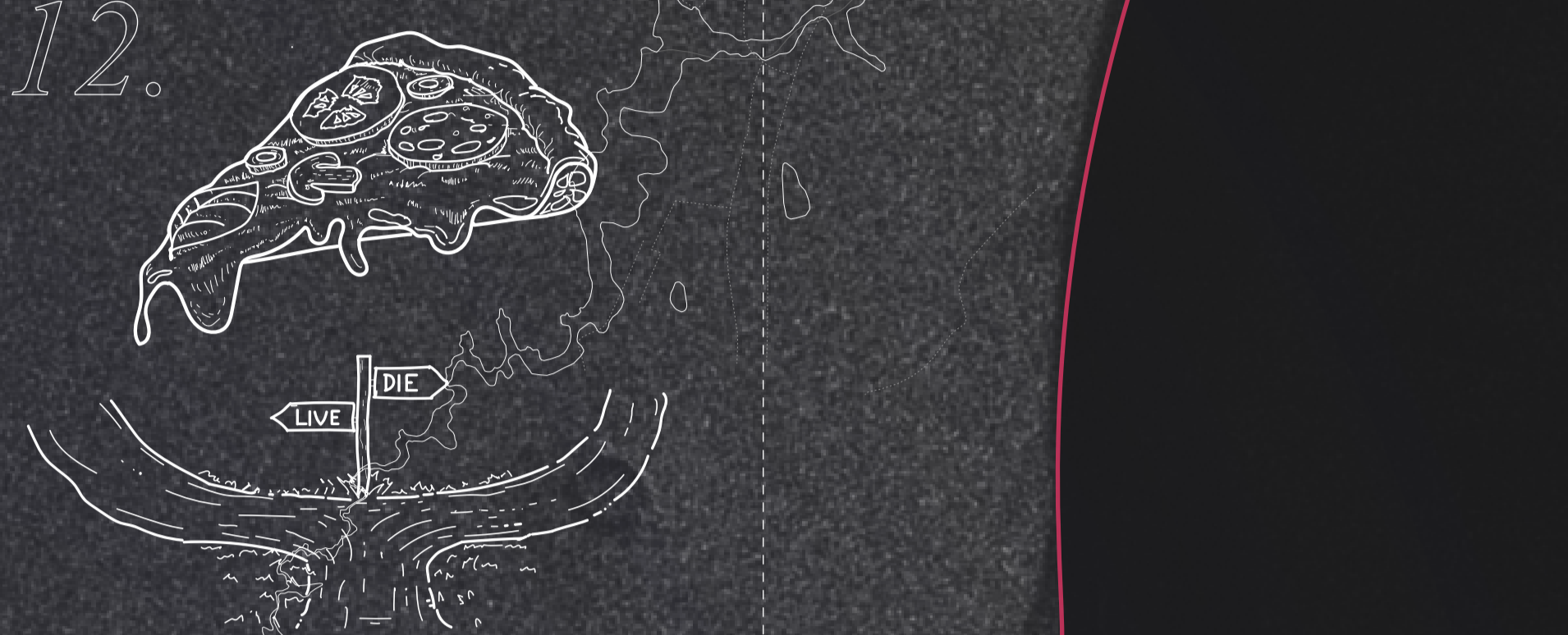
'hospes' - Latin for guest, or visitor and host  
'hospitium' - Latin for the 'hospitium' created between guest and host. The sacred duty of every host to welcome and protect any stranger in the night comes into their home



21. The Hospital of the Holy Spirit, 1970s



16. The Hospital of the Holy Spirit, 1970s



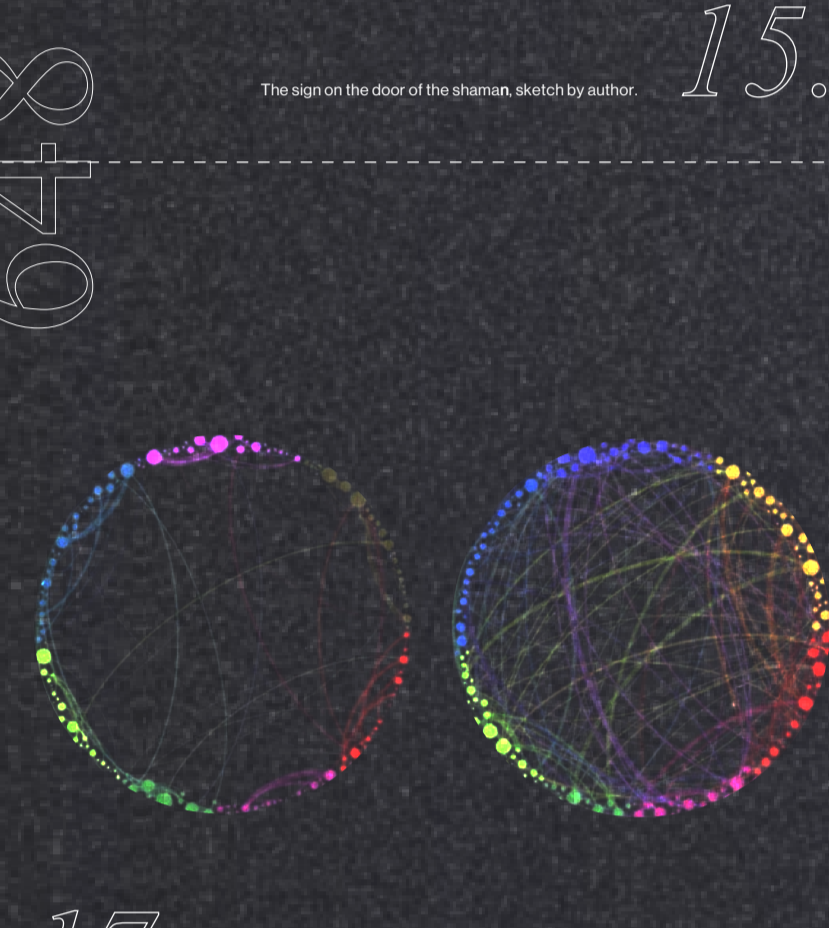
12. The Hospital of the Holy Spirit, 1970s

1. What methods of design can be articulated when healing is explored from noetic perspectives?
2. How can these inform new material arrangements: architecture, landscapes, and infrastructures: 'of and for healing within the psychological configuration' of modernity?
3. To what extent is architecture capable of healing?

20. ?

Where there is a Will there is a Way

noetic moments are moments of pure awareness where, if only for that moment, the relational structure is visible and imminent and remembered through an embodied experience



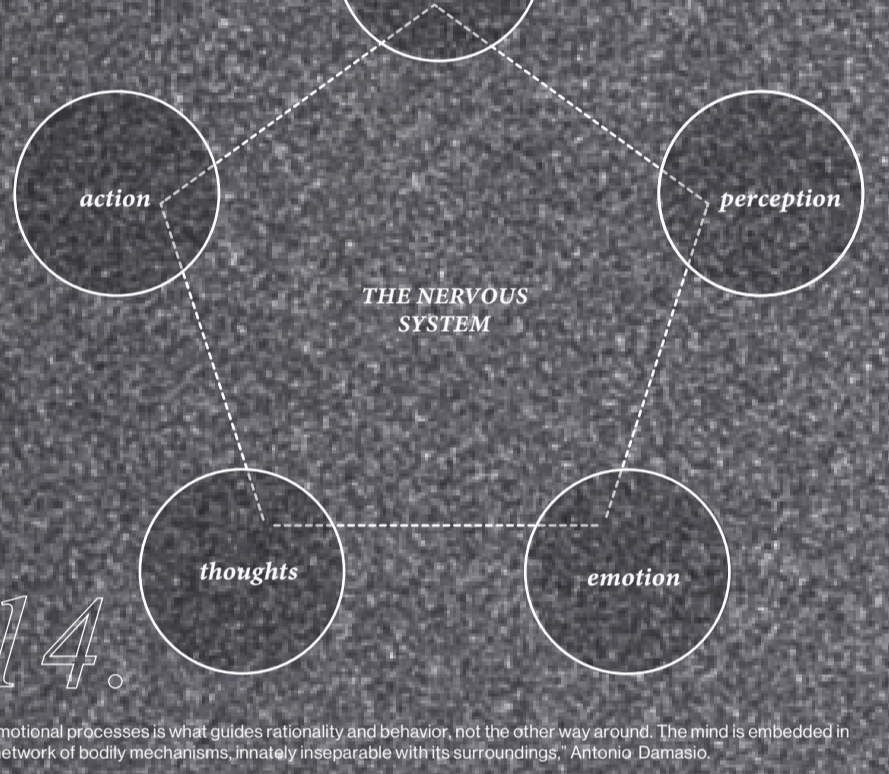
17. The Hospital of the Holy Spirit, 1970s



19. The Hospital of the Holy Spirit, 1970s

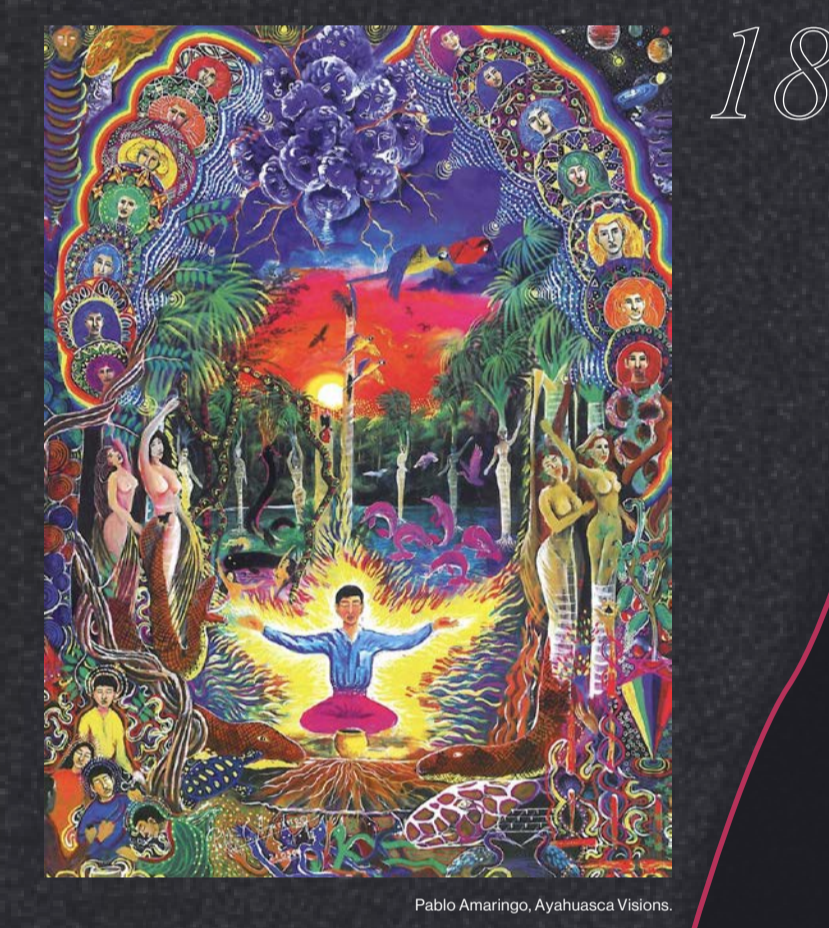


25. The most understands the noetic as a perceptive and cognitive instrument with the potential to open up rigid thinking and practice bridging and permeating thresholds, by offering new ways of seeing in the world. For the most the world is always there before reflection begins. The body is the intentional agent and the mediator for spatializing and inhabiting a world, and experience becomes the primary source of knowledge. The most who sees life as a process, a continuity of events creating a liminal ontology where each moment can be seen anew.

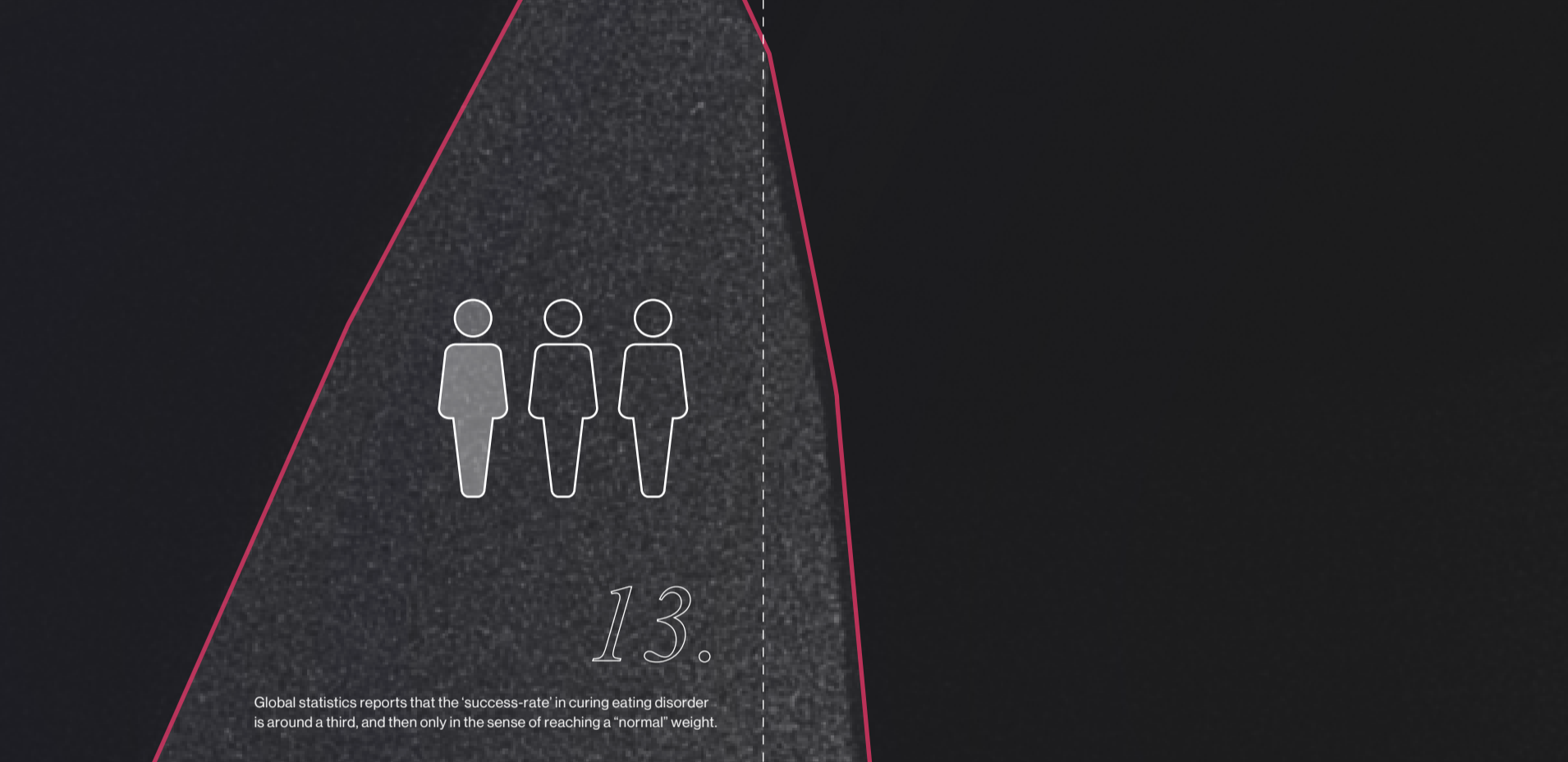


14. The Hospital of the Holy Spirit, 1970s

Noetic design methods:  
I memory of the site, material and immaterial dialogue  
II embodied design: the body as mediator  
III system of healing: architecture as process



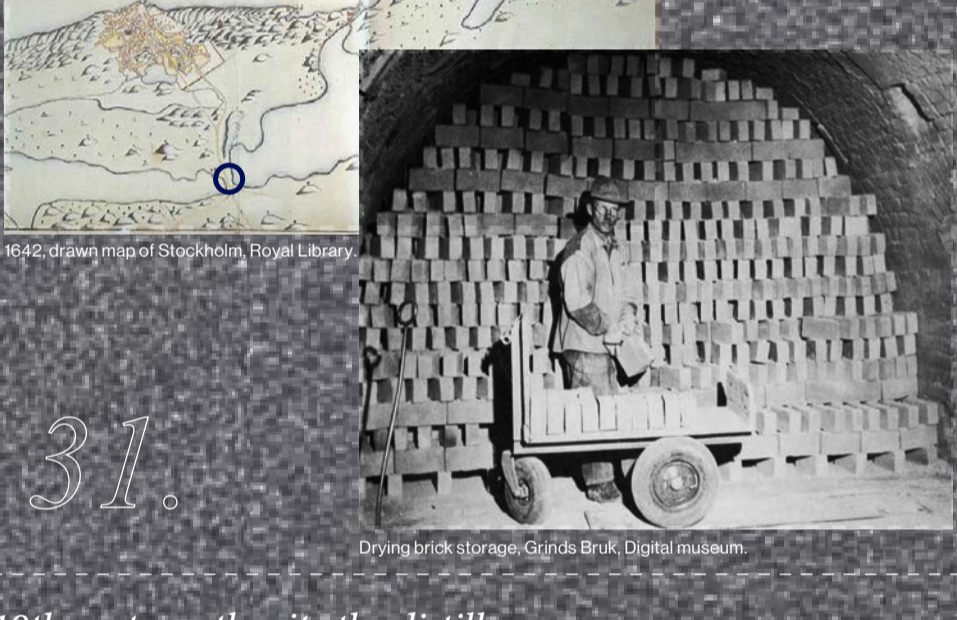
18. The Hospital of the Holy Spirit, 1970s



13. Other entities remain but the noetic realm coming with intention, as a point of view and a new way of seeing the world

27. longing for a healing sanctuary

I. memory of the site  
17th century: the site the brickyard



19th century: the site the distillery



20th century: the site the industry



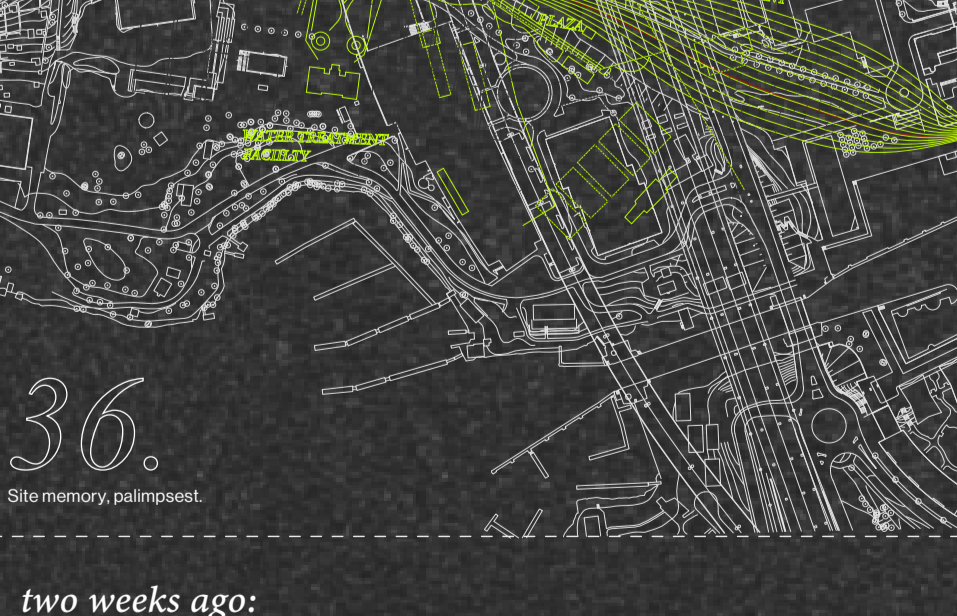
20th century: the site the transit



20th century: the site the collective



35. two weeks ago:



37. future



29. The Hospital of the Holy Spirit, 1970s



26. noetic agenda



28. the relationship between liminal practice and liminal place

noetic agenda  
To overcome the binary opposition and tension of the material and the immaterial context, both the material and the immaterial sphere  
To embody the noetic method in a material form, to create a space that is not just a container for the body, but a space that is a part of the body  
To create a space that is a part of the body, to create a space that is a part of the body  
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To create a space that is a part of the body, to create a space that is a part of the body



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the relationship between liminal practice and liminal place

# A-MODULAR THE ARCHITECT THE PATIENT

## THE HOSPITAL OF THINKABLE BOUNDARIES

Noetic methods in architecture

What is the project about?

This project is an epistemological project, or rather an onto-epistemological one. It is precisely that, because it sets out to explore their intimate relation through pursuing a research in which other sources of knowledge and methods of calibration are acknowledged, investigated and experienced with open mind.

This project is a methodological project. It is precisely that because it seeks understand how these onto-epistemological relations produce certain systems of knowledge and patterns of thought and proceeds to transform these understandings and findings into a productive process of methods.

This project is a methodical project. It is precisely that because it questions standard methods of measuring and acquiring knowledge, both within the faculty of Architecture, but also within a Western, post-industrial context.

This project is an ethical project. It is precisely that because it investigates and criticizes how laws, regulations, language and modes of production within the Western system of knowledge perpetually rejects, neglects and discriminates minor bodies, communities and organisms. This is precisely an ethical issue because of how it limits, suffocates and even eradicates their humans and vegetal experience.

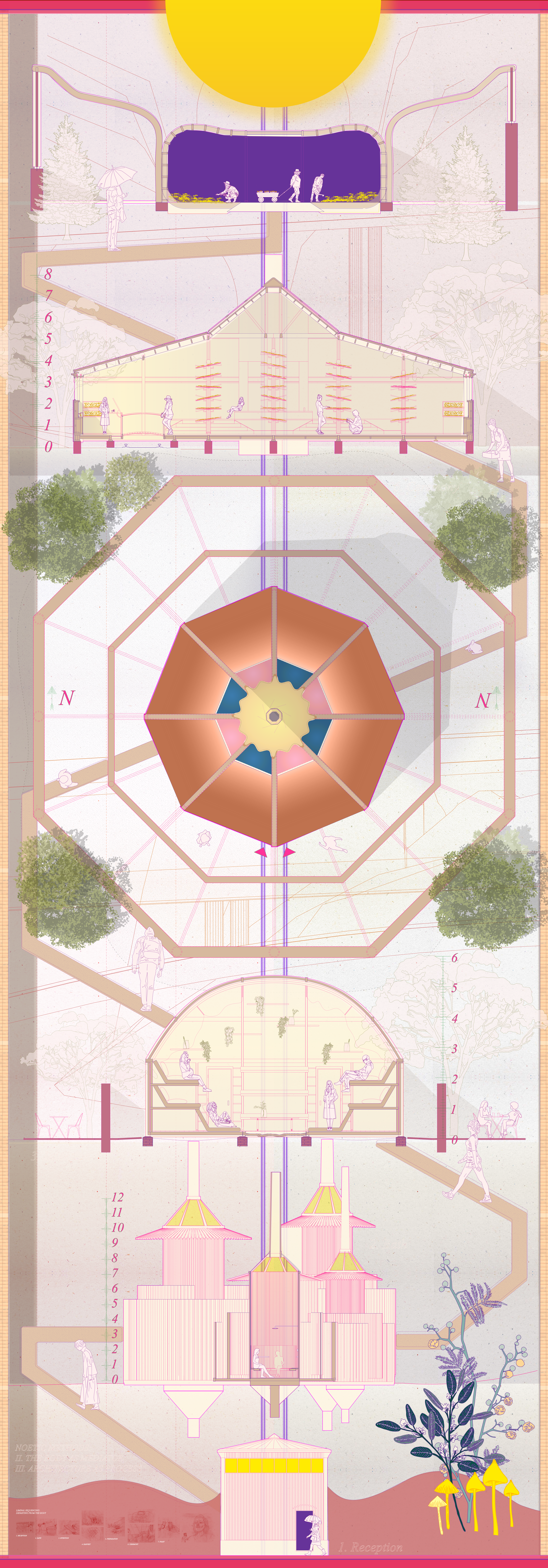
This project is a personal project. It is precisely that because it departs from an intimate personal experience of sickness and health, sickness where the edge of mortality reveals itself as determined and finite, that the face of existence refuses to be taken for granted, and health, where the bliss of vitality simply cannot pertain itself to cells of the body, but continues through every membrane of reality, indistinctly and infinitely. These are personal precisely because it elaborates on the universal themes of being, living and dying.

This project is a noetic project. It is precisely that because its main agenda is to overcome the binary opposition and hierarchy which separates the material and the immaterial context. It seeks to instrumentalize the perceptive and cognitive tool, that is the noetic, into methods of design and into the materialization of the built environment. It is precisely noetic because it seeks to open up rigid thinking and reveal prejudice, by representing other ways of seeing the world. It is precisely noetic because it considers material bodies: humans, organisms, objects and architectures, as sentient, sensual and intentional. This project is noetic because it emphasizes the situated, the personal, the lived, and considers these as materially meaningful.

Ragna Karin Brüllhaugen  
Nordström

## METHOD PANEL – THE HOSPITAL OF THINKABLE BOUNDARIES

1. *Welcome to the hospital of thinkable boundaries, A post-industrial complex of healing. The hospital of thinkable boundaries is based on my personal experience of healing and the shamanic tradition ritual aspect of the experience, so this project is a way of extending that ritual. Practicalities; In the context of Sweden the plant medicine in use would be psilocybin as it is grown naturally in liberty cap mushrooms. So how can this ritual be amplified and rethought of in an urban context with the noetic agenda in mind?*
2. *Here I demonstrate the main spatial design method which I call embodied liminal sequencing. To start with the interactions with the body and construct a spatial narrative from it.*
3. *First the human enters the complex through the reception, where a medical and personal check-in takes place. Understand the patients thoughts and answer any questions. The reception is also open for the curios one.*
4. *Then the human continues to the baths, where the body is prepared and cleansed. Here is also a sauna and an icebath to get the body in a calm state..*
5. *After the baths the bodies continues to the therapy building, where patients undergo a four hour long workshop to get the patient in the right mindset, that is to think and meditate on their problems, meanings and sorrows. The therapy space is a space for reflection and inspiration. Like a greenhouse, the patient is filled with energy, light and warmth to become calm before the ceremony.*
6. *On the other side of the site the mushrooms are being prepared. They are being harvest at the mushroom farm, a very damp and dark place, yet magical. Sometimes the patients come early to join the harvest.*
7. *After harvest the mushrooms are transported on the traintrack to the drying facility where they are being dried in the large oven and then put to dry on the rotating shelves. To keep this dry and ventilated environment I explore the notion of sentient architecture, where the material choices are made from organic sources and also sentient in the spiritual sense, the method of recycling and reusing elements with other histories.*
8. *This material concept runs through the whole project, trying to incorporate the sentience in the material. A breathing structure with hempcrete, mycelium insulation and wood fiber as the content and with wooden structural elements. This allows the façade to ventilate naturally in the summer and in the winter, the ovens heat up the facility.*
9. *When the mushrooms have dried they are brought to the ceremonial space, where the mushroom and the human meets.*



## DESIGN PANEL – THE MIDNIGHT LIBRARY

1. *The ceremony takes place in the Midnight Library. The midnight library is like a womb, in here you want to feel safe and enclosed, when perception changes and the darkness appears, a straight wall can be a guiding element, like the totems, the candles and the music. Points of references. Here the fireplace is a central element. The fire as mesmerizing as it can be, offers sanctuary, and connection. If the weather allows, the roof opens up like a flower, allowing the patient a direct contact with the cosmos. In the winter the structure is closed as a womb, allowing the patient their rebirth. DEMONSTRATE MODEL*

2. *Now I will read some excerpts from my personal writings about the ceremony:*

3. *As my body started to feel more and more nauseous, I was soaring over the jungle as an eagle, taking in the beauty of Mother Earth.*

4. *Suddenly I dive down abruptly into the forest and shift-shaped into a jaguar. We hunted through the forest, my eyes were her eyes, my body was her body; beautiful, majestic, muscular; perfection of nature. The colours of the jungle became more and more intense, and the vegetation became more and more crowded. As I make my way through the deep jungle the nausea increases and suddenly there is only darkness.*

5. *I open my eyes and the roof is gone. Instead I can see the starry sky. Projected as a spheric surface, an astrological vault. I recognize Karlavagnen, or Charles Wain, the star constellation where people in my family who has passed away has their place. One of the stars is the star of my brother; he blinks to me.*

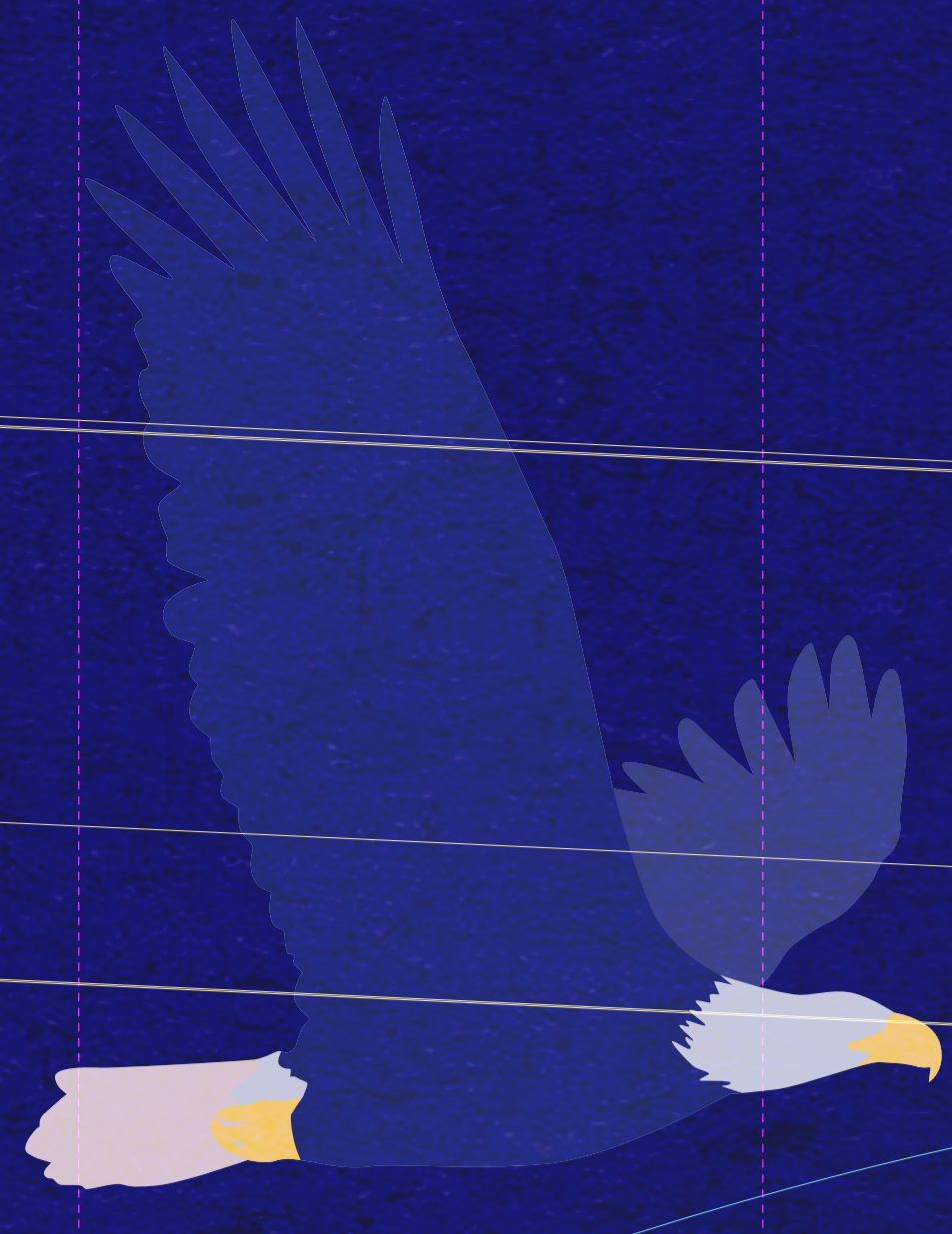
6. *I'm traveling through a hospital corridor. I hear no footsteps. I must be some sort of immaterial entity. At one door I suddenly stop and enter. Everything is white. I'm blinded by the high exposure. Suddenly a bed appears along one of the walls. Someone is laying in it. I can only see the contours, so I decide to move closer. At first, I don't recognize her. Her pale skin of her shoulders and neck is exposed the white blanket only covers to her chest. She must be very sick. When I come closer to see the face, I recognize who it is. It's me.*

7. *A cold shudder overwhelms me. What am I doing here? Why am I laying there? Why am I so pale? I quickly feel an awe of shame. I hope nobody sees me like this, all naked, without any makeup or fixed hair. I turn in the room and is shocked by all the people who has gathered around the hospital bed. I try to make eye contact, but it seems as like they can't see me. Everyone is there: my mother and father; my stepparents, my siblings, my partner, even two friends I recently started hanging out with. The shame is quickly replaced by warmth. How nice that they're all here for me. then I see they are all crying. The warmth is replaced by confusion, of fear. Slowly, the entity that I am starts to move away from the front of the bed, towards my mother. Without notice I enter her body and all of a sudden, I can see myself through her eyes. What's even more profound is that I can feel what she feels. This I won't be able to describe. I feel deep, deep pain and suffering. She mourns me. I start sobbing quietly where I am laying on my mattress. I hold the dice a bit firmer. It's too much to go through. I feel all her love and sorrow. The anger. The defeat. The confusion. Everything that she misses, everything that she will never get to say. All that is lost. And that's when I realize.*

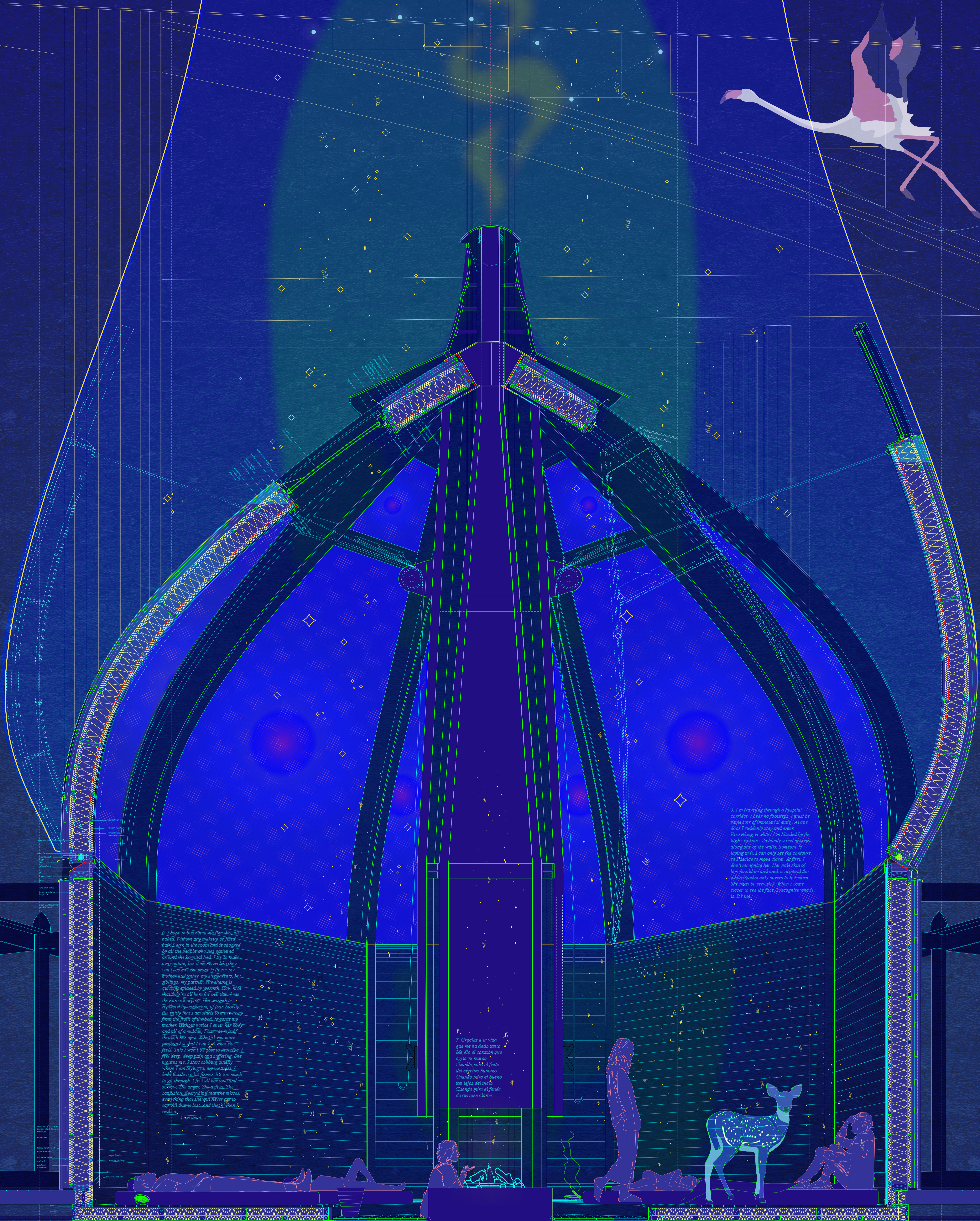
*I am dead.*

# 6. CEREMONY

1. As my body started to feel more and more nauseous, I was soaring over the jungle as an eagle, taking in the beauty of Mother Earth.



9. Leaving the building I felt lighter, more alive and calmer than I'd ever felt before. For the first time in my adult life, I had felt the transforming stroke of love. My heart was wide open both towards people around me and myself. The self-loathing was replaced with a deep compassion and empathy. But I was still shaken. My ontological understanding of the world was completely deflected and the idea of knowledge that I had carried with me for so long had profoundly shifted. What is this knowledge? I knew somewhere that this experience was induced by the medicine, and that the scenes from the hospital could be described as a sort of dreaming, however, I was conscious in the dream. It was manifested as a true experience in my body. I was there. I felt it. And that was my first real poetic experience.



4. I hope nobody sees me this time. I'll make noise and maybe I'll find them. I get in the room and he's already in the middle of his nap. I try to make noise, but it seems he knows I'm there. I see his shadow on the wall. I don't know what to do. I see his shadow on the wall. I don't know what to do. I see his shadow on the wall. I don't know what to do.

8. I remember it is like you see the stars when you're in a dream. I remember it is like you see the stars when you're in a dream. I remember it is like you see the stars when you're in a dream.

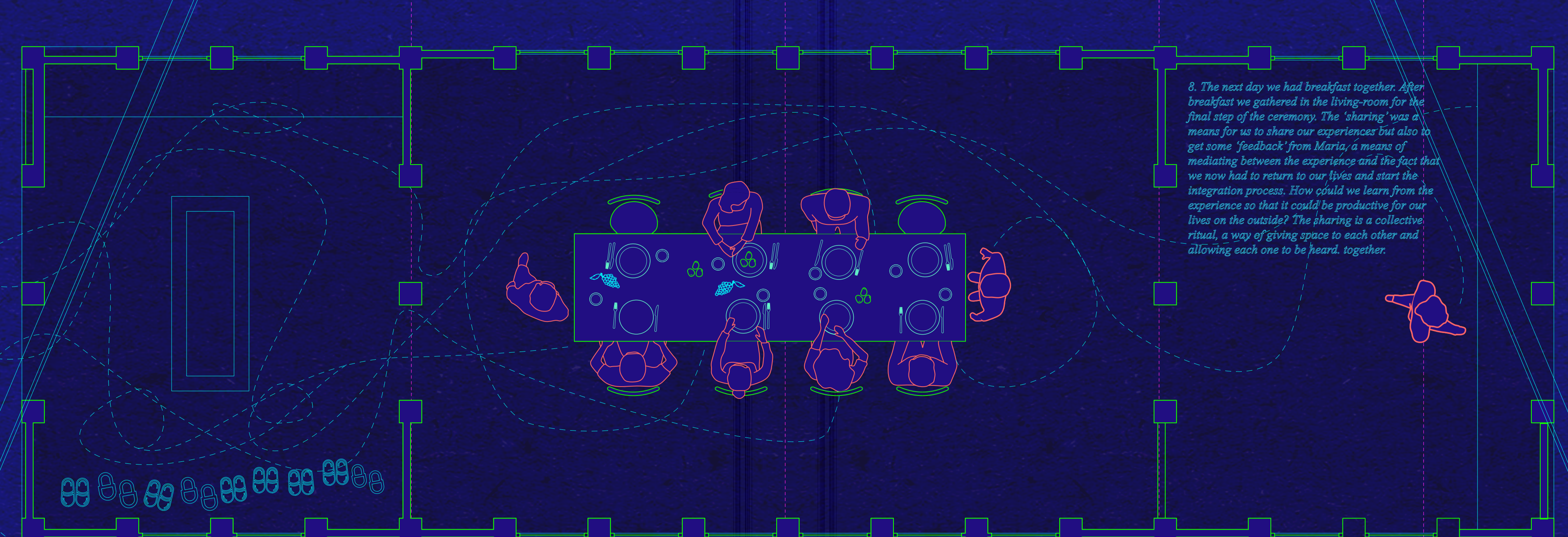
2. The houses around me to change positions. I felt in the dark, I felt in the dark, I felt in the dark. I felt in the dark, I felt in the dark, I felt in the dark.

7. I open my eyes and the world is gone. The world is gone and the world is gone. The world is gone and the world is gone. The world is gone and the world is gone.

2. I dive down abruptly into the forest and skapashya into a jaguar. We hunt through the forest, my eyes were like eyes, my body was her body, beautiful, majestic, muscular, perfect of nature. The colours of the jungle became more and more intense, and the vegetation became more and more crowded. As I make my way through the deep jungle the noises increase and suddenly there is only darkness.



5. The next day we had breakfast together. After breakfast we gathered in the living room for the final step of the ceremony. The 'sharing' was a means for us to share our experiences but also to get some 'feedback' from Maria as a means of mediating between the experience and the fact that we now had to return to our lives and start the integration process. How could we learn from the experience so that it could be productive for our lives in the future? The sharing is a collective ritual, a way of giving space to each other and allowing each one to be heard, together.



# 7. FEAST

THE MIDNIGHT LIBRARY

PERCEPTION, KNOWLEDGE & HEALING



*Then two cosmic arms, descended from the starry sky and held me. Suddenly I was an infant, wrapped up in a blanket. I was holding myself. Everything was going to be okay. I was not dead.*

*Exhausted, I spent the rest of the ceremony in pure bliss, enjoying the realization that I was alive. My whole being was dissolved in a state of what can be best described as Love. Infinite and unconditional. I listened to the beautiful tones of the music which constructed a spatial and temporal meaning. 'Gracias a la vida', Mercedes Sosa sang.*

8. *After the ceremony there is the feast. Where the patients celebrate their collective existence through a shared meal in the dining temple. The temple allows for one table and a small kitchen, where the food is prepared by the facilitators. After the feast the patients return to their personal mattress, their place for the night, in the ceremonial space, to sleep.*

9. *The following day the experiences are shared over breakfast in the therapy space where the patients talk about their dreams and can get a constructive feedback from the facilitators. When the sharing is over, the visit is over. The patients' hug and say their goodbyes. And they leave the facilities through the reception space. The process of healing is not over here, it was just visiting for a short moment. And the guests leave the host for now.*

*Thank you.*