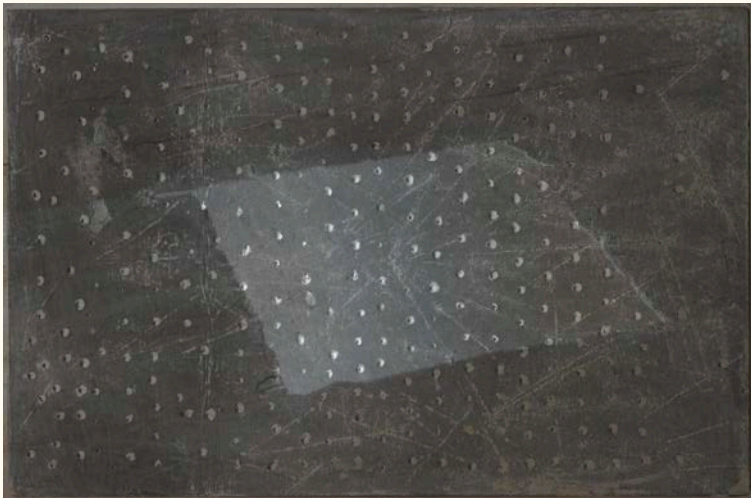


CO-FIELD

15 WESTFERRY CIRCUS
LONDON



CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS

Despite its location in the heart of East London, Canary Wharf functions like an island—spatially isolated, culturally detached, and socially homogeneous. As a top-down planned financial district, it prioritizes efficiency, control, and order, while sacrificing the everyday urban experiences of encounter, pause, and belonging—elements essential to vibrant public life and cultural vitality.

Ironically, this hyper-rational environment sits just a few kilometers from East London's most dynamic artistic neighborhoods, such as Hackney Wick, Dalston, Bermondsey, and Peckham. These areas have evolved from the bottom up, fostering diverse creative ecosystems of studios, galleries, and community-run spaces that support openness, experimentation, and public engagement.

Yet, meaningful dialogue between these worlds remains rare. The closed design, singular economic focus, and stratified social fabric of Canary Wharf create a lack of "invitation"—making it difficult for creatives or non-financial communities to connect with its spatial identity. This disconnection is not merely physical, but also cultural, social, and psychological.

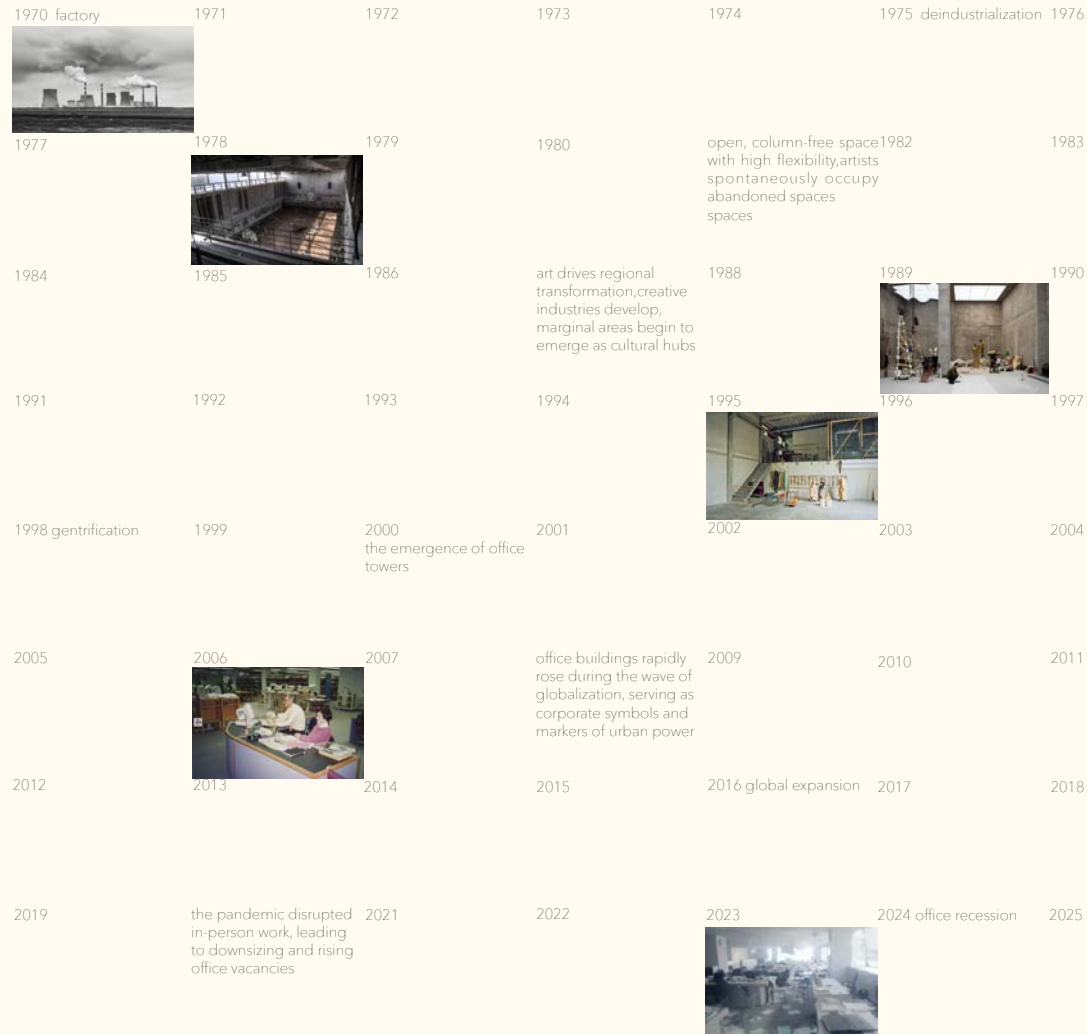


MOTIVATION

East London's artistic communities didn't emerge from top-down policies or commercial strategies. Instead, they grew organically—artists occupying and reimagining leftover spaces, filling urban voids with creativity. Places like Hackney Wick, Dalston, and Peckham owe their vitality to this bottom-up process: from abandoned industrial sites, to artist-led interventions, to the slow formation of creative clusters and cultural networks. This trajectory reflects a broader logic of post-industrial urban change throughout the 20th century.

Today, Canary Wharf stands at a similar turning point. In the wake of the pandemic, the rise of remote work has sharply reduced the demand for traditional office space, leaving large areas underused. This "de-office" shift disrupts the district's finance-dominated logic and opens a rare window to reimagine its purpose.

Could Canary Wharf, then, take cues from its neighboring artistic communities to reclaim its own dormant spaces? By welcoming artists into this once-closed environment, there is an opportunity to activate its latent potential. Co-field proposes just that—placing artists at the center of urban transformation, not merely as exhibitors, but as users, storytellers, and connectors. The goal is not simply to install art, but to reweave Canary Wharf into the city's cultural fabric—creating relationships, shared meaning, and new forms of collective knowledge with surrounding communities. More than reuse, this is an attempt to repair and rebalance a fragmented urban condition.

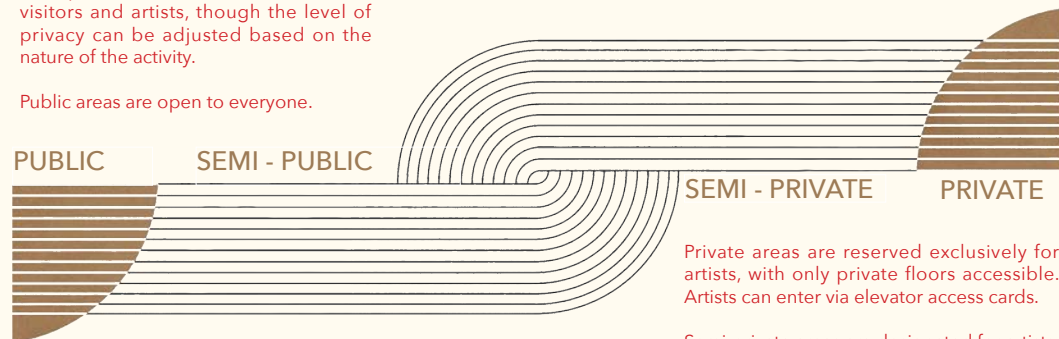


Crowd Analysis

	Current situation	Spatial responses
Office worker	Canary Wharf functions as a financial district with a rigid, monotonous work environment.	Public cafés and relaxation zones offer spaces for coffee, rest, and informal interaction during breaks. Art exhibitions further enrich these everyday experiences, softening the building's corporate tone.
London art enthusiasts (visitors)	The area lacks cultural landmarks and draws a narrow demographic—mostly office workers and residents—resulting in limited community engagement.	New exhibition spaces (public) and artist-led events such as lectures, talks, and workshops (semi-public) invite broader public participation. These interventions diversify cultural activities and encourage more active visitor engagement.
Artists	While artists play a vital role in East London's creative ecosystem, high living costs make it hard for emerging artists to sustain their practice. Canary Wharf remains largely inaccessible to them—both spatially and culturally.	The new building serves as a creative incubator, offering semi-private workshops (e.g., woodworking, sculpture, printing) and private studio-living units. Artists can both create and exhibit within the same structure. Shared lounge areas foster collaboration, while public-facing galleries enable artists to connect with the wider community. This layered spatial system supports artistic practice, interaction, and visibility.

Semi-public areas are accessible to both visitors and artists, though the level of privacy can be adjusted based on the nature of the activity.

Public areas are open to everyone.



Private areas are reserved exclusively for artists, with only private floors accessible. Artists can enter via elevator access cards.

Semi-private areas are designated for artists, but visitors can observe internal activities through windows.



PROJECT OVERVIEW

Co-field is a project transforming the vacant office building at 15 Westferry Circus into a shared space for both the public and artists, aiming to break down traditional boundaries between art and its audience while infusing the city with greater openness and creative vitality. By providing integrated living and working spaces for young artists, co-field not only alleviates the challenges posed by high housing costs but also includes workshops to help them focus on their creative pursuits. At the same time, the project opens its doors inclusively to the surrounding community and financial professionals, offering a place for relaxation, communication, and engagement with art, and even fostering direct dialogue and collaboration with artists. Ultimately, co-field is dedicated to bridging the gap between the public and the private, creating an innovative venue that transcends spatial and social boundaries, integrates artists' lives and work into the community, and enriches the city with a diverse, dynamic, and sustainable cultural ecosystem.

Details	
Location	Canary Wharf, London, E14
Construction started	1998
Completed	2001
Floor count	10
Floor area	16,255 m ²
Architect	Terry Farrell & Partners



Gallery visitors



The artist organizing the exhibition



Registered Artist



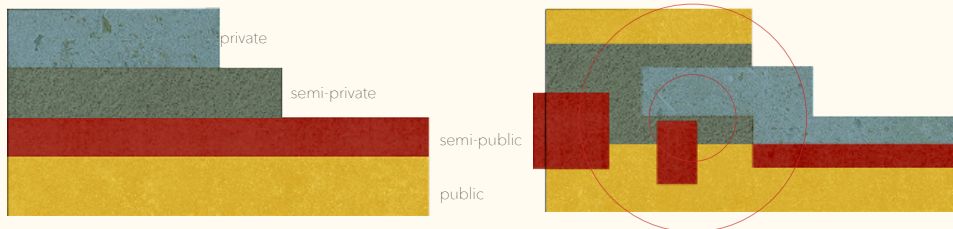
Office worker

DESIGN STRATEGY

I. Functional Organization

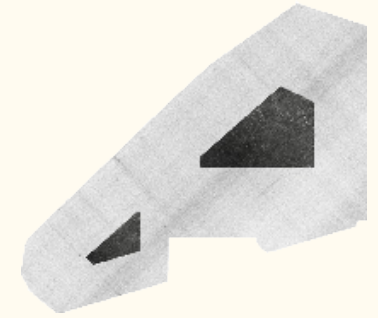
At the heart of co-field lies a simple ambition: to dissolve the boundaries between public and private, between the artist and the audience. Instead of sticking to the building's original ground-up, hierarchical layout, the space is reimagined through an "inner-core-outer-ring" configuration. More private and semi-private functions—like studios and living areas—are tucked into the core, while public zones wrap around the edges. Between them lie transitional spaces that encourage spontaneous encounters and blurred boundaries.

This structure doesn't just operate on a single level. Across the building's height, these four degrees of openness—ranging from fully public to artist-only—are woven into a vertical sequence. Visitors move through a layered environment where glimpses of the artistic process emerge amid public activity. The result is a spatial rhythm that protects the intimacy of creative work while opening moments of it to the outside world—merging artistic life with community presence in a shared, breathing architecture.

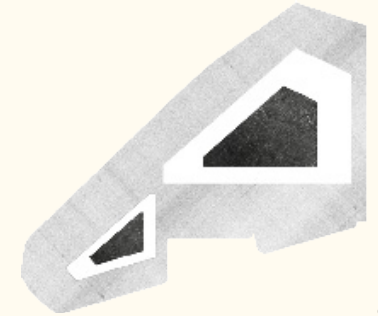


II. Core Opening

In the original building, each floor functioned in isolation, cutting off vertical flow and stifling the kind of energy that fuels artistic work. co-field reimagines this with an "open-core" design at the building's heart. By carving out openings around the central core on every level, it creates a vertical visual corridor—a spine that ties the whole structure together. Floor slabs are strategically adjusted to introduce variation in height and degrees of privacy, balancing openness with moments of retreat. This design doesn't just connect spaces physically—it encourages people to move differently. Visitors, art lovers, and resident artists naturally cross paths, no longer confined to passive viewing. Instead, the layout invites them into a shared rhythm of exploration and interaction, turning a static building into a living, layered experience.



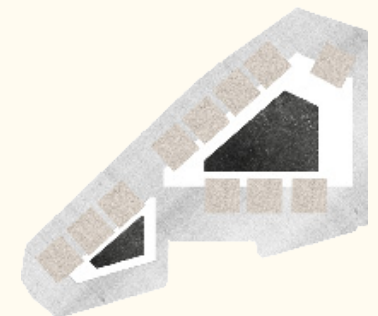
original building



core opening

III. Inserting Boxes

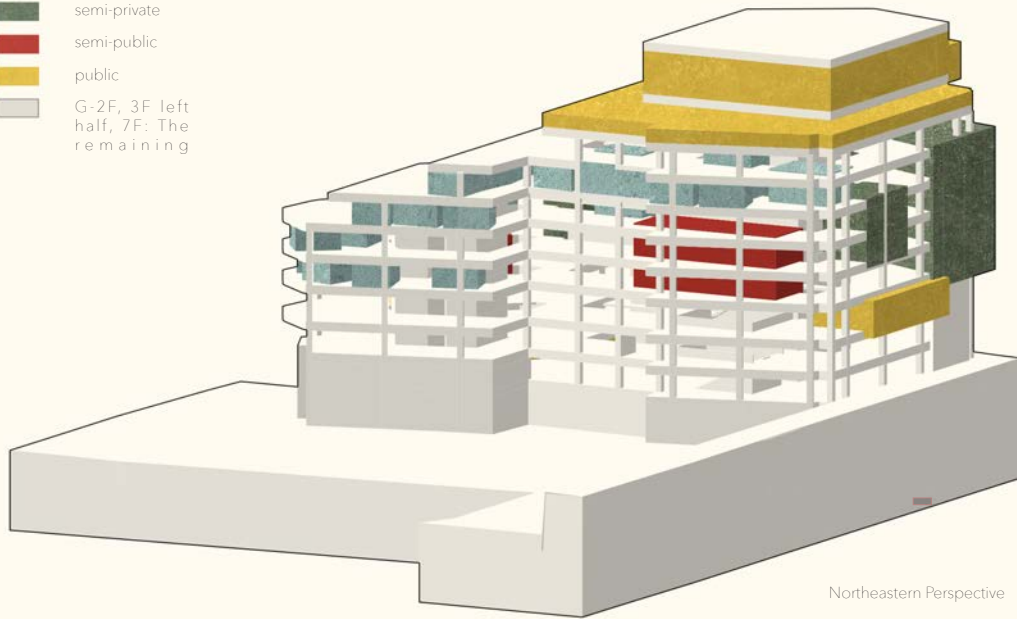
Rather than breaking up the open, spacious interior with conventional walls, co-field takes a different approach—embedding smaller volumes or functional units within the larger space. These nested structures preserve long sightlines, adding layers of depth and creating a more fluid, engaging flow through the building. This strategy not only makes the layout more flexible but also allows different zones to have their own identity while still feeling connected. The result is a space that stays open and breathable, yet supports a wide range of uses and interactions.



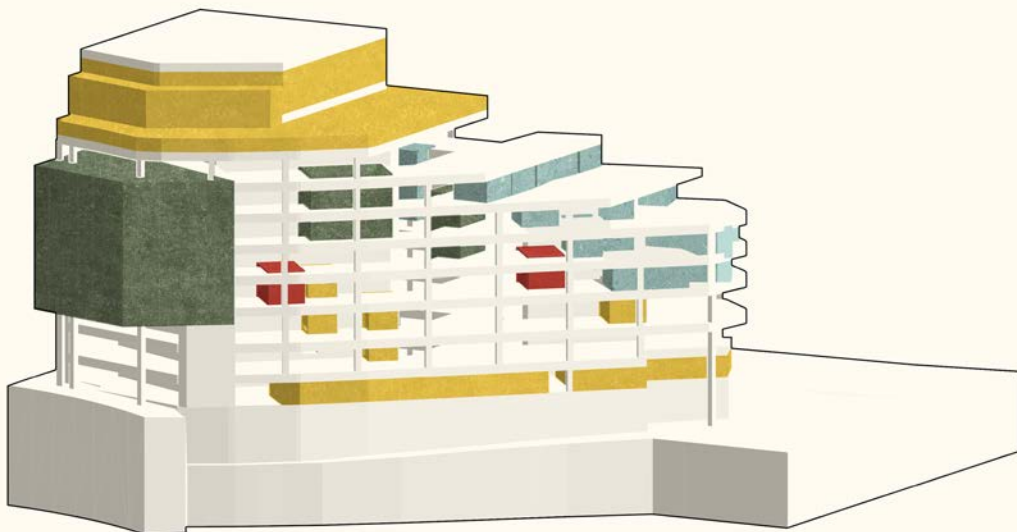
Inserting Boxes



- private
- semi-private
- semi-public
- public
- G-2F, 3F left half, 7F: The remaining



Northeastern Perspective



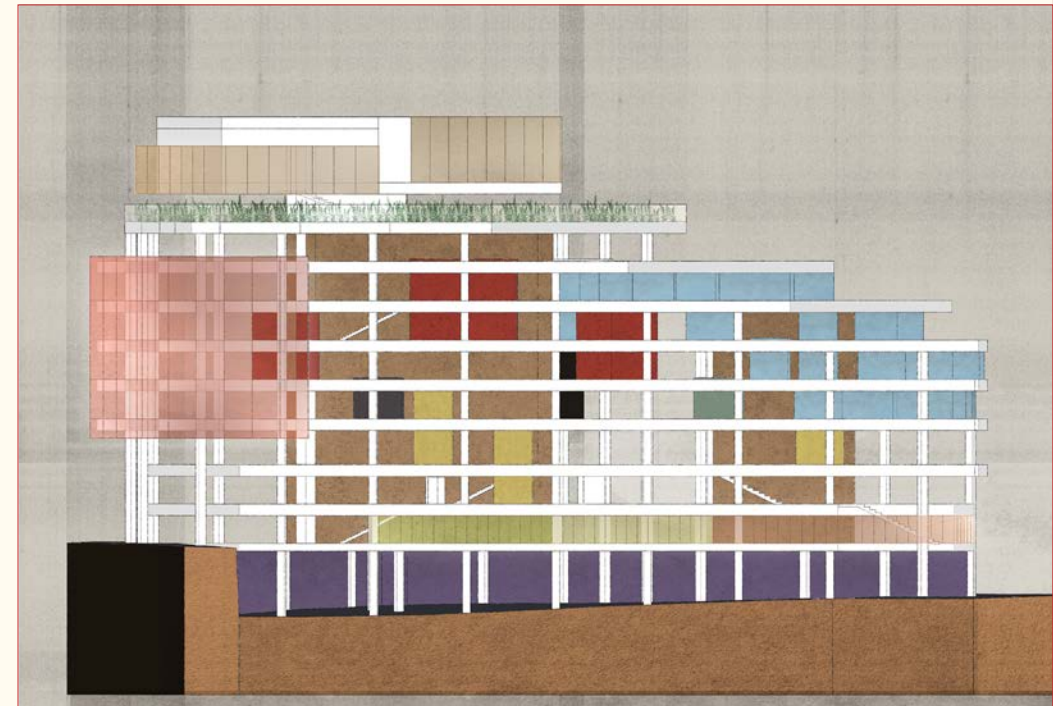
Southwest perspective

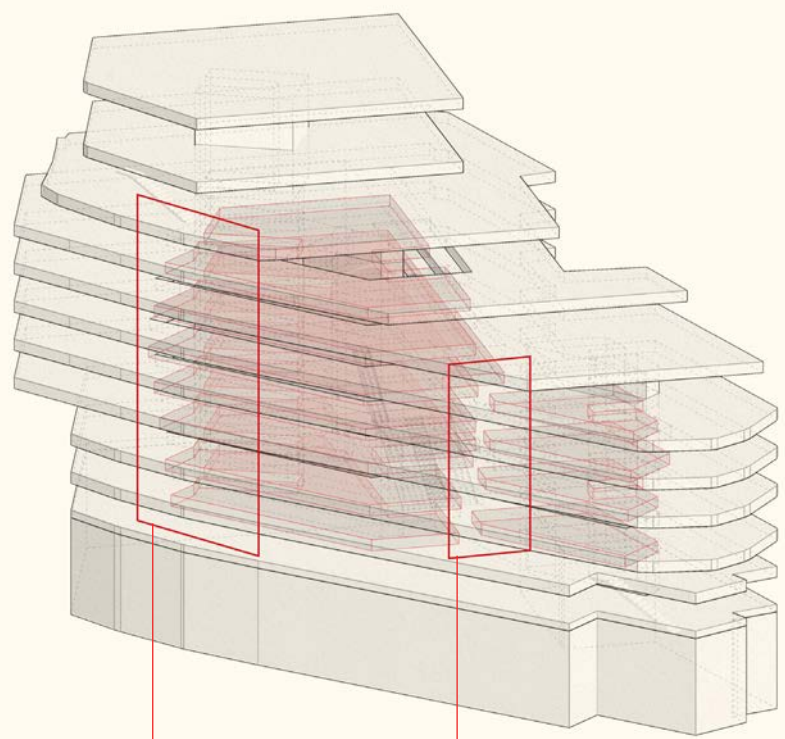
SPACE LOGIC

In the public zone, a staircase along the central core guides visitors smoothly through the exhibition spaces, while the primary vertical circulation still relies on the elevator within the core. Stairs, platforms, and bridges connect the exhibition areas across floors, maintaining spatial continuity without intruding on the artists' private domains.

The ground floor, serving as the main entrance and most open area, features a large staircase that can host events like press conferences or performances, with adjacent zones designated for large-scale installations. From the third floor upward, the layout gradually shifts into a semi-open realm, offering workshops and lectures open to the public, with a stronger focus on interaction and hands-on engagement. At this level, circulation shifts from the main core to a smaller core leading to the studios, marking a transition from open to semi-private space. The sixth floor is reserved entirely for artists—housing studios and living areas that are closed to the public, ensuring concentration and privacy.

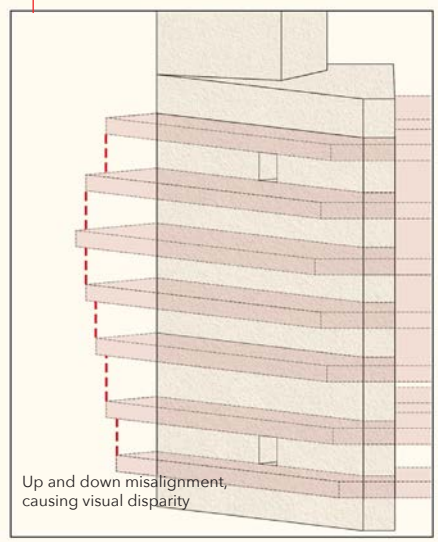
Through a combined strategy of core, stairs, and bridges, the building establishes a spatial gradient from public to private. This system supports open exhibition access while preserving the privacy and autonomy essential for artistic creation.



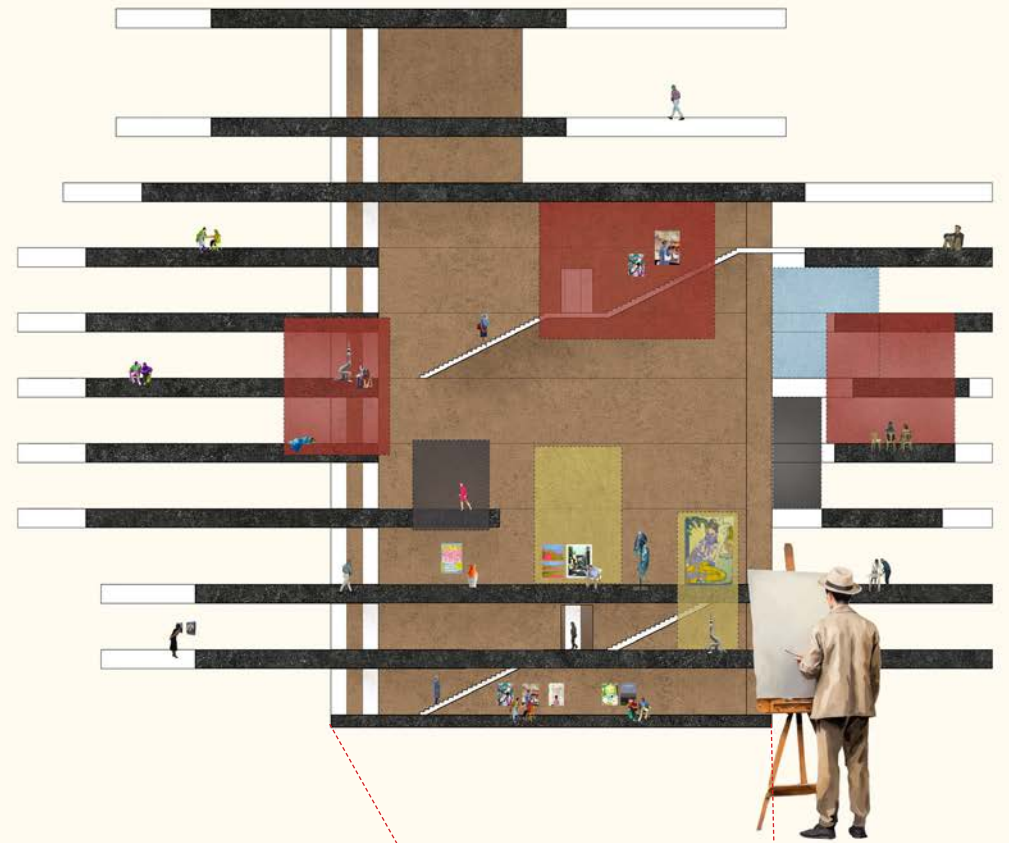
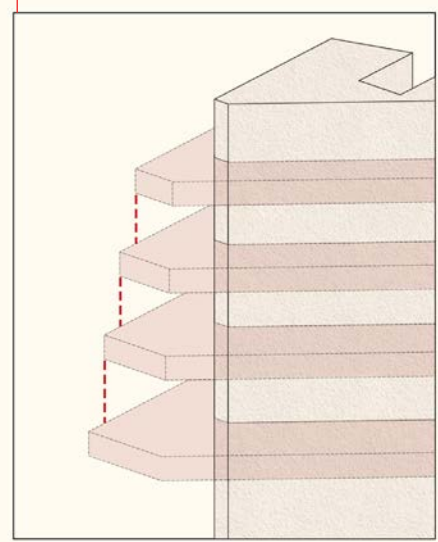


View 1

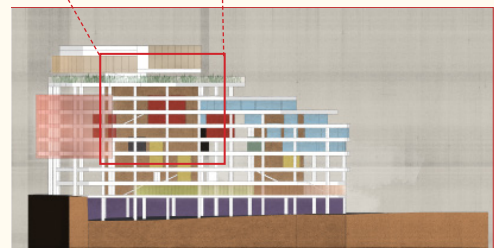
View 2

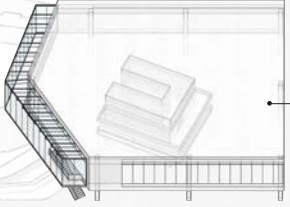


Up and down misalignment, causing visual disparity

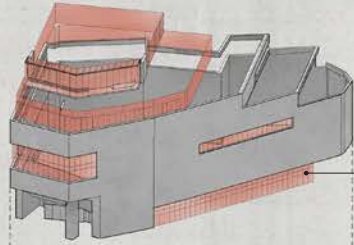


As the floors rise, the openings in each slab progressively widen, creating an ever-extending vertical corridor. Certain functional units, in the form of "boxes," are staggered or cantilevered between floors, allowing them to visually "overlook" one another through these apertures. Moving upstairs, users can see the projecting boxes, while those inside a box can also look out and catch sight of others on different levels, enabling multidimensional visual interplay. This arrangement not only enriches the spatial layering but also facilitates a more natural and engaging sense of interaction among users.





The lounge bar is located on the top floor of the building and is open to the general public



Facade

The sculptural building volume incorporates lightweight glass curtain walls



Studio + en-suite

The artist residency program offers comprehensive support for young creators. Each artist is provided with a private studio and living space to ensure privacy and foster focused creative work



Function space

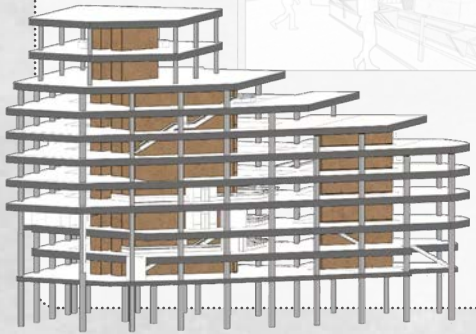
The first ten floors are open for both artists and the public, supporting creative work and everyday

In contrast to traditional enclosed renovations, box-like volumes are inserted to form distinct zones and communal clusters



Workshop to artist

Building structure



Floor openings along the central core turn it into a spatial focal point

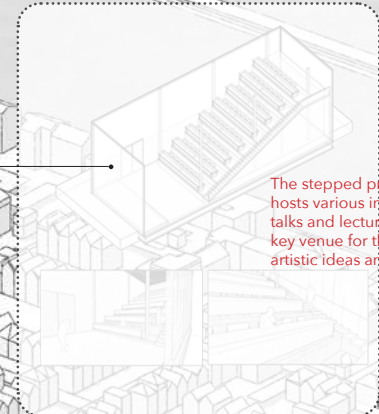


Base

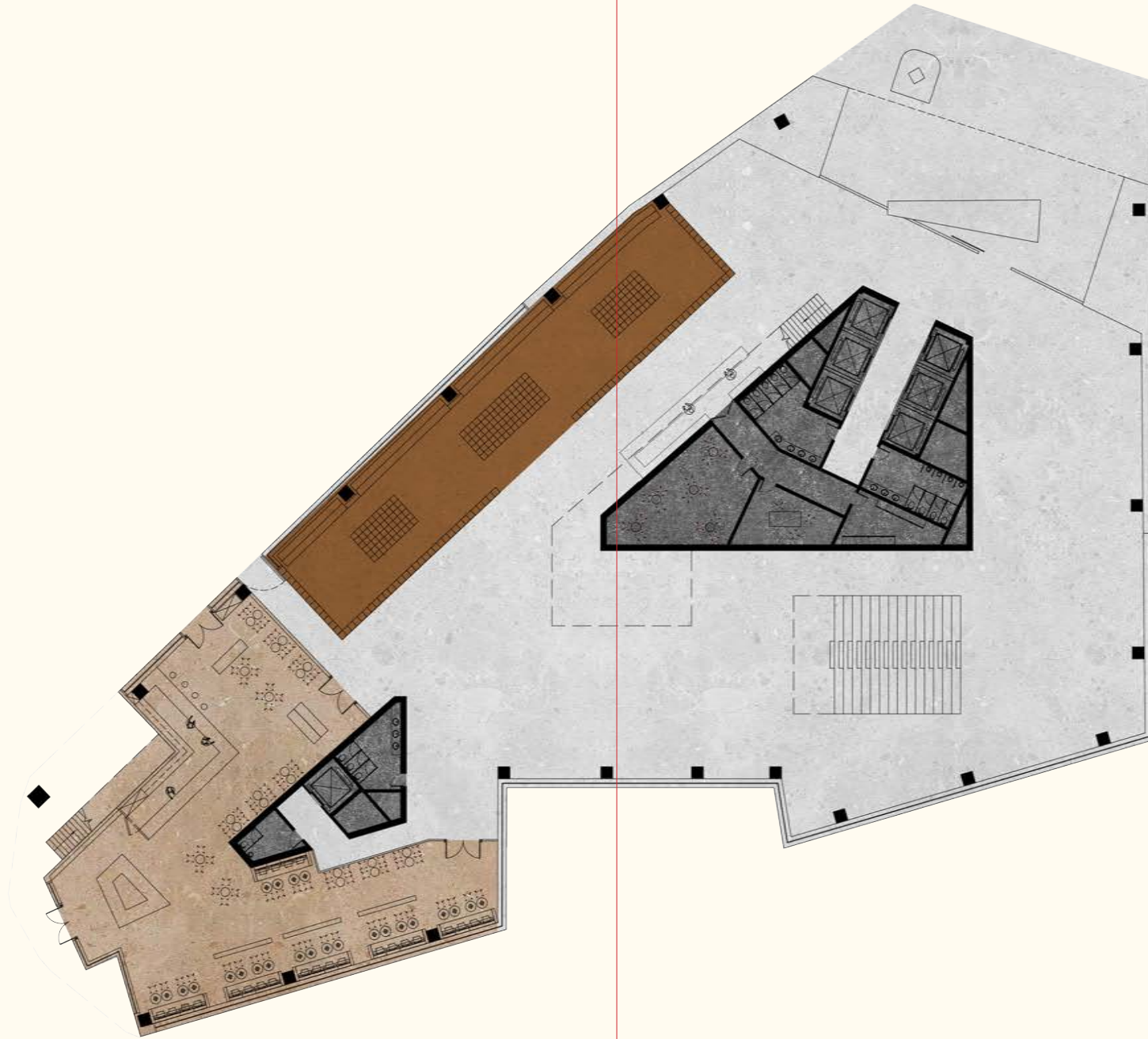
The basement level is designated for parking, logistics, and operational support

entrance

The main entrance features a large recessed volume, creating a striking visual focal point that draws people in to explore



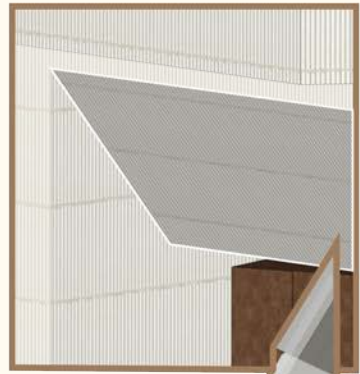
The stepped presentation hall hosts various invitation-based talks and lectures. It serves as a key venue for the exchange of artistic ideas and discourse



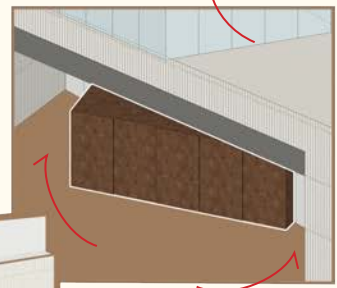
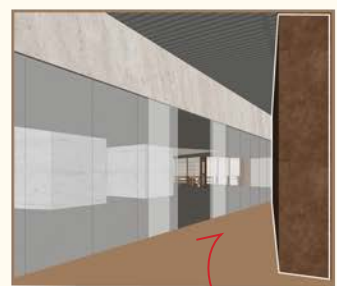
Ground floor

The entrance

THE SLOPED CEILING



THE FRONT DOOR

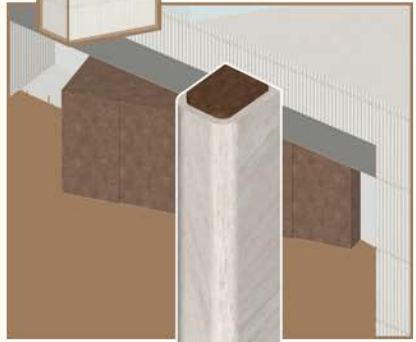


A pivoting iron gate conceals the building's main entrance behind it. The original structural columns are wrapped in a layer of marble cladding.



THE MATERIAL

The building's envelope consists of two layers: the first is glazed, while the second spans two storeys and is clad in grooved concrete panels made from recycled stone. The off-white façade completely replaces the original cladding, reinforcing the project's presence in Canary Wharf and distinguishing it from the surrounding, repetitive office buildings.



THE COLUMN

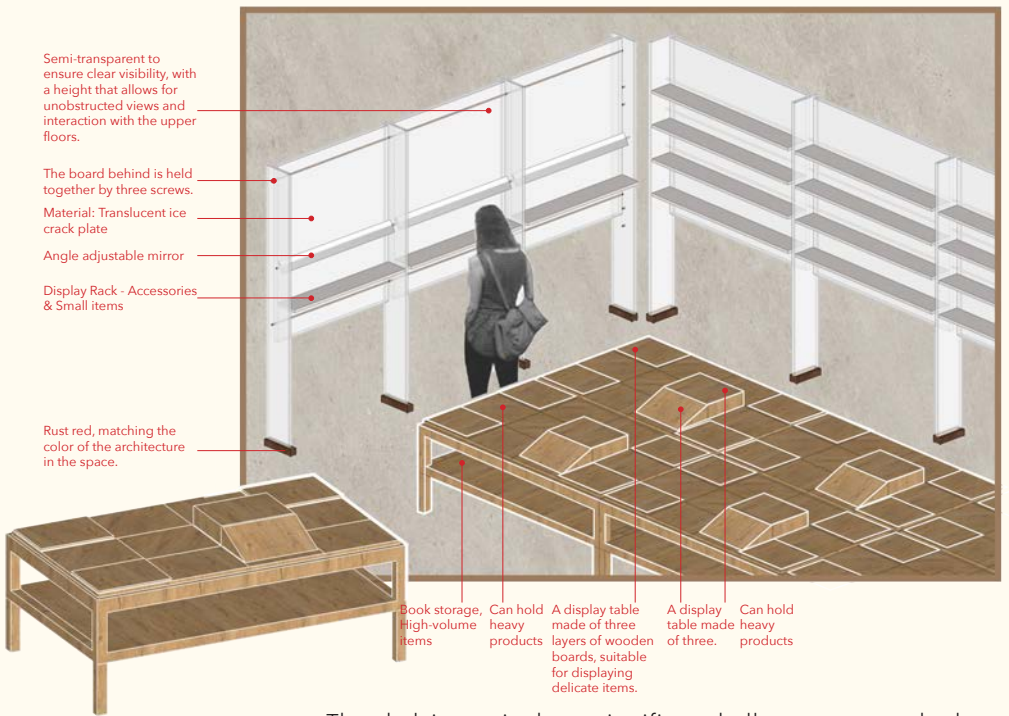
The entrance has been recessed to carve out a small lounge area for the public to pause and rest. Above it, the projecting "box" cantilevers outward, creating a rhythmic push-and-pull that echoes the interior spatial choreography. The façade wraps around the left side of the entrance, forming a bold frame that emphasizes the threshold.

Inside the entry, a sloped ceiling delivers a striking visual impact: as visitors move inward, the ceiling height gradually decreases, transitioning from a generous, open volume to a more intimate, enclosed space. This change not only heightens the sense of ceremony upon entering, but also sets up a powerful contrast with the lofty volumes beyond.

A rotating iron gate remains perpetually held at a fixed, partially open angle—symbolizing the building's constant openness—while also splitting the entry flow into two paths, one for visitors and one for artists. Finally, a layer of stone clads the originally square structural columns, rounding off their profiles to soften the lines at the threshold and lend the space a more welcoming, comfortable character.



Ground floor

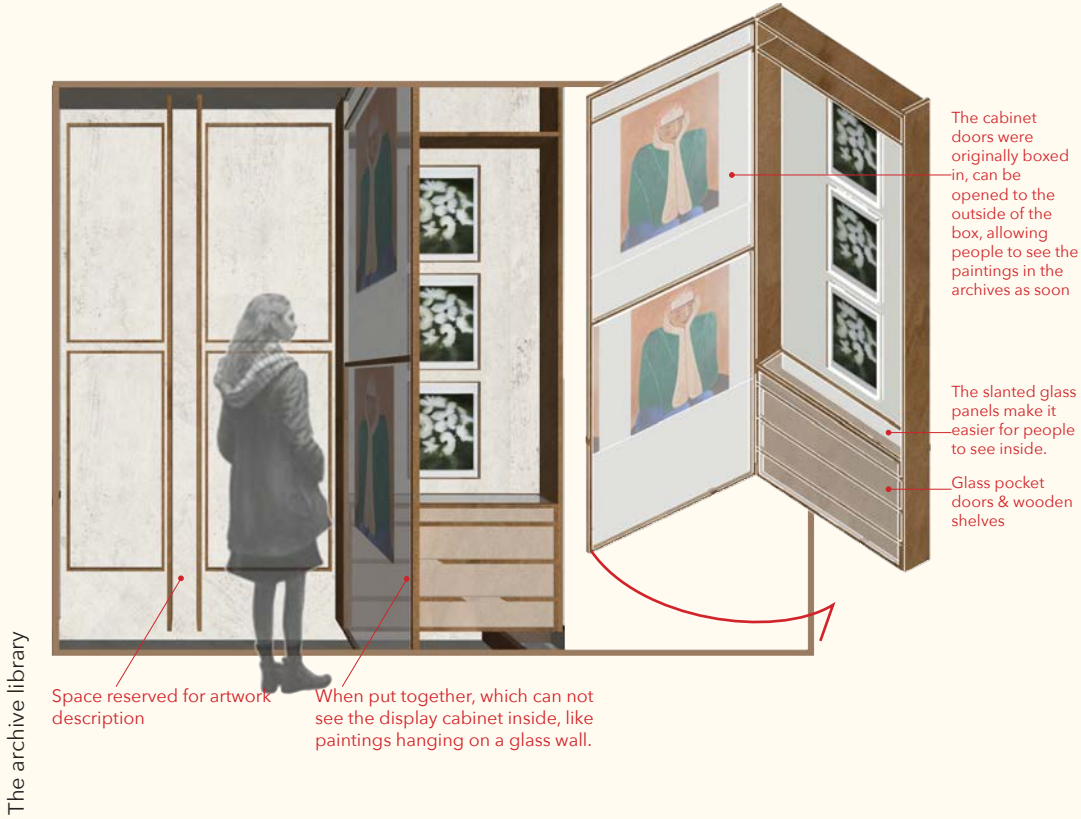


The shelving units have significant hollow spaces at the bottom, keeping visitors' visual focus consistently at eye level. Combined with translucent resin panels, these features give the entire art store space a strong sense of openness and breathability. Yet, their floor-to-ceiling design also serves like walls, creating a comforting sense of enclosure that defines the activity areas within the art store. The two modular shelving types ensure products of any size can be suitably displayed.

A long display table in the center of the space intentionally creates a dramatic visual shift, drawing visitors' divergent attention to focus on the items showcased there. The art merchandise available is crafted directly by artists working in the building, resulting in diverse product categories such as magazines, candles, glassware, postcards, and more. Each item's placement on the table is carefully pre-arranged based on its material characteristics.



Additionally, a small display box within the exhibition functions as an archive. This concentrated area supports the creation of small thematic exhibitions, such as architectural master sketches, graphic designs, books, and various other possibilities. The fully transparent design greatly shortens the viewing distance between visitors and displayed items, offering unobstructed 360-degree views from both inside and outside the space. These interactive and exploratory elements are seamlessly integrated into the curatorial pathway, with cabinet doors designed to open, encouraging visitors to closely examine and discover details.



WOOD BLINDS



THE CEILING DETAILS



THE COLUMN & FRAME



THE MATERIAL



WORKSHOP-PUBLIC

When inserting a new architectural volume into the space, industrial aesthetics are integrated through material choices and geometric form. The independent box is constructed with a slender steel frame system. Vertical steel elements are added between the ceiling beams as a subtle detail, forming an "industrial skeleton" across the ceiling.

The steel structure is treated with a slightly weathered finish, which contrasts sharply with the single supporting column and refined steel beams above, both made of reflective metal. Large transparent floor-to-ceiling windows expose the steel frame, concrete, and metal panels—along with visible plugs and switches—highlighting the raw construction. This rawness is set against the warmth of delicately crafted wooden handrails, creating a spatial atmosphere that is rugged yet layered.

To allow for adjustable privacy, wooden roller blinds are installed, enabling the space to shift from fully transparent—where the public can easily observe or enter—to a closed, temporary setting when needed. Designed as a space for close interaction between artists and the public, the interior contains no fixed furniture. Only lightweight cushions and a movable screen are provided, giving artists maximum freedom to define how the space is used.



THE COFFEE TABLES



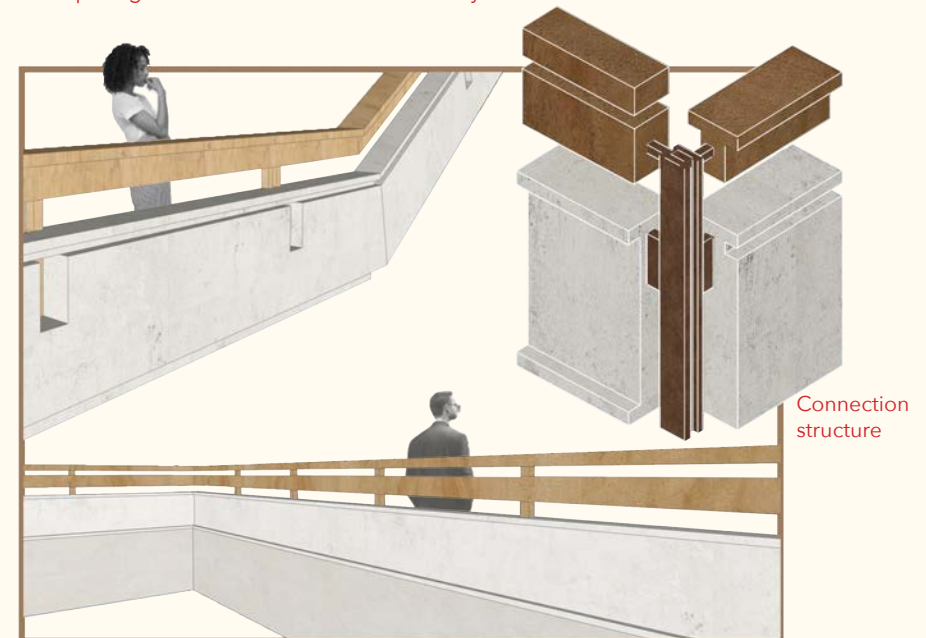
Coffee table: Place the table in a location with a rich structural view and unobstructed sightlines, allowing pedestrians to enjoy coffee and take a brief rest.

The evolving urban context once saw developers pushing out original artist communities in favor of office buildings; ironically, artists are now welcomed back as saviors of the very land they were once forced from. The blend of vintage elements and industrial aesthetics creates a temporal collision, folding time back to the vibrant days of artist enclaves brimming with creativity.

The handrails, vintage in form yet thoughtfully hollowed out, avoid heaviness, contrasting subtly with the robust structural core to which they connect. Wood materials inject warmth and comfort into the cold office atmosphere, enhancing accessibility and usability for people. Built upon the base of raw concrete, the exposed grain of natural wood introduces a striking juxtaposition of refined softness against industrial roughness, simultaneously preserving the rationality of modern industrial architecture and embedding the warmth of traditional craftsmanship.

Throughout the building, except for the top two floors, the handrails maintain a consistent design language, sustaining spatial continuity. Only at subtle moments do they slightly morph, enabling three distinct interactions: grasping, leaning, and resting.

The spacing between the handrails on ordinary

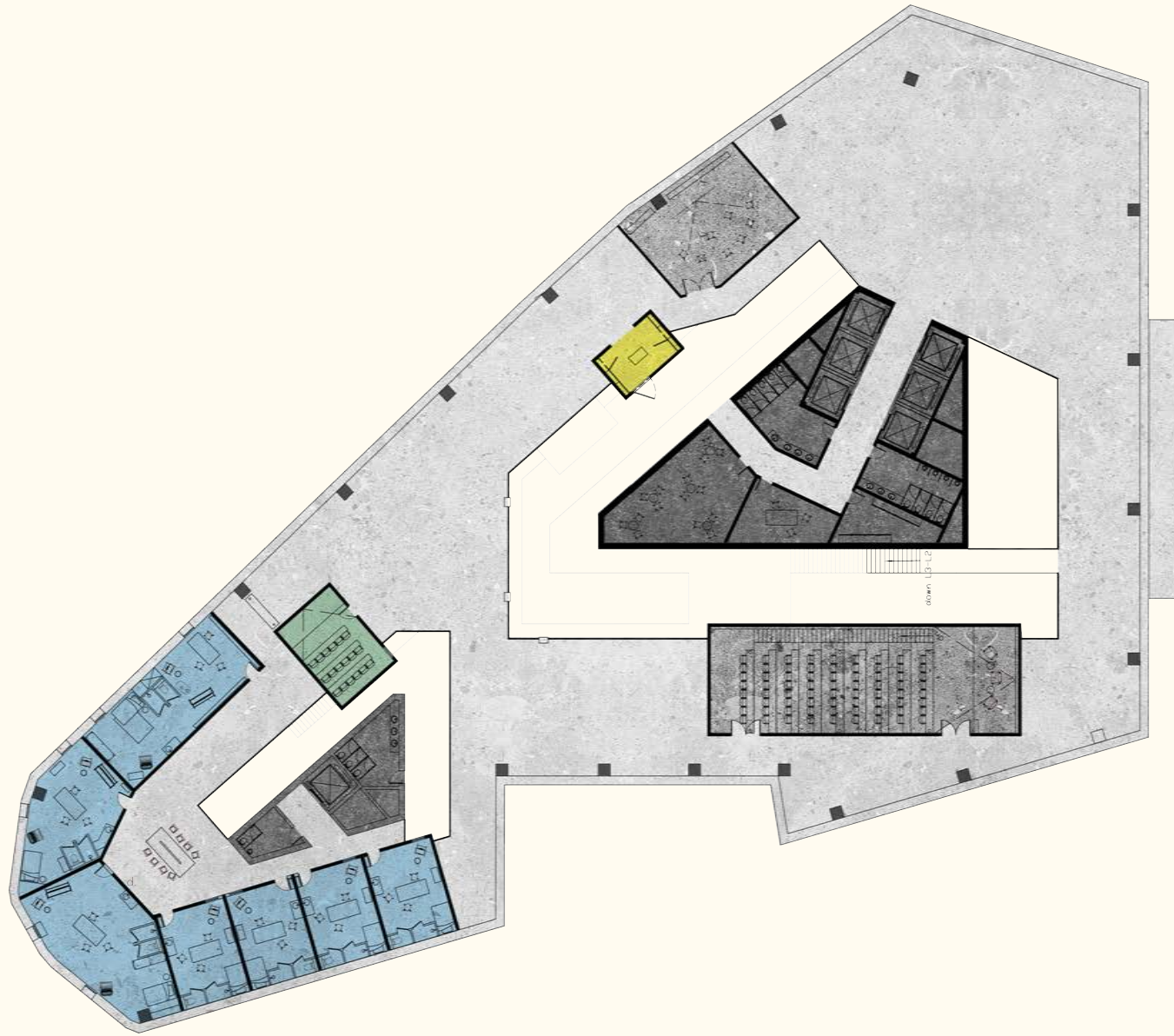


THE HANDRAILS

High level handrails allow pedestrians to lean on them and rest.



Ground floor

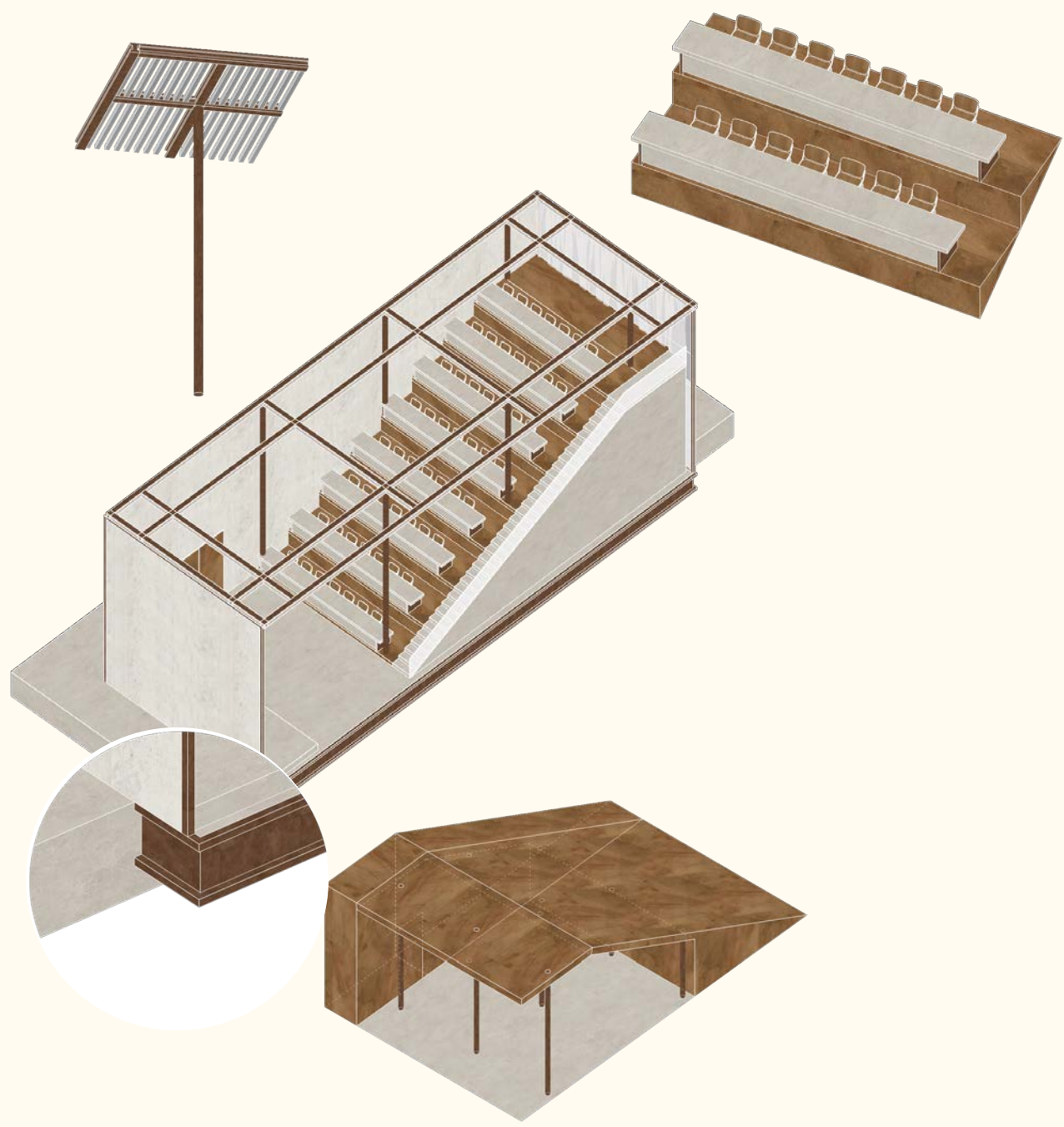




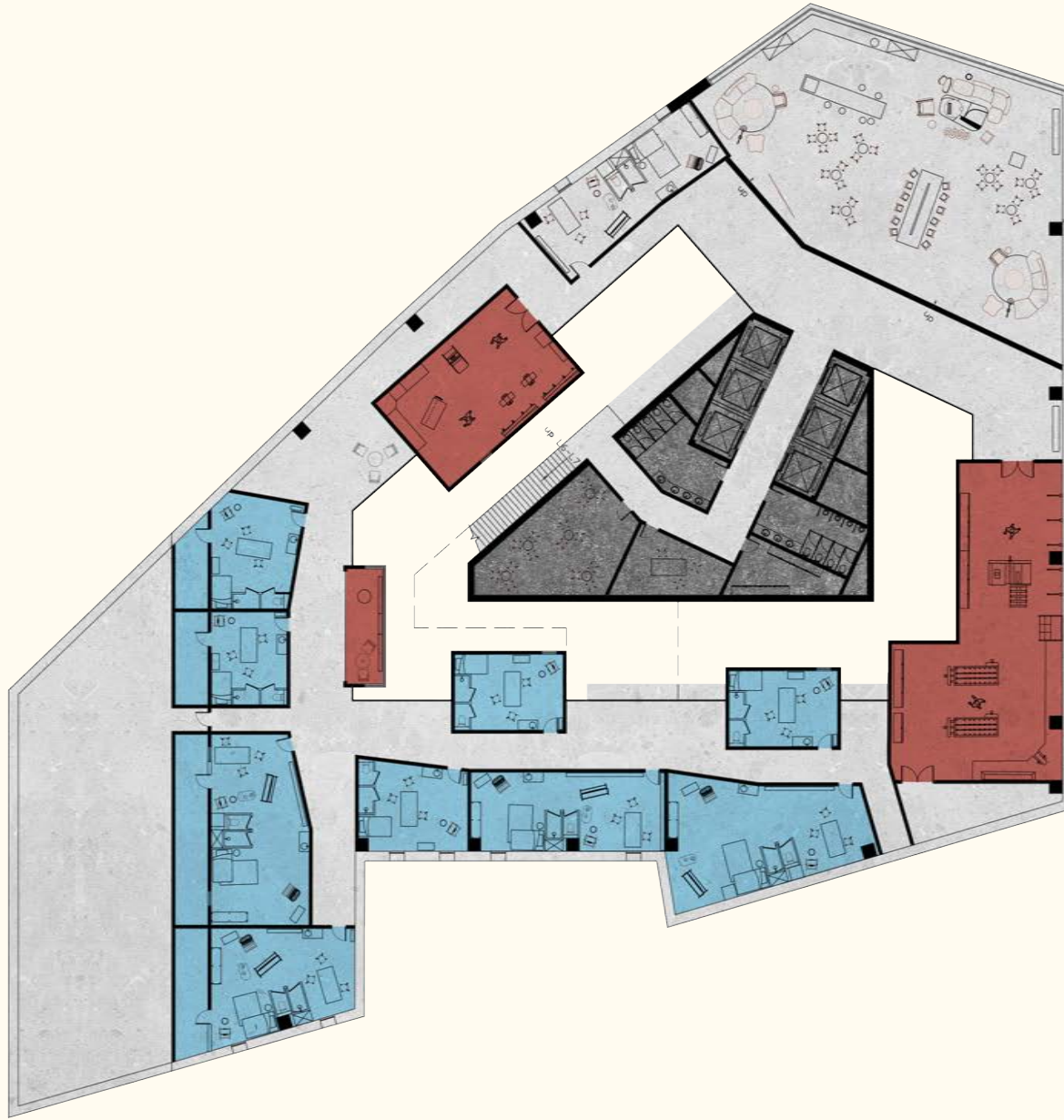


LECTURE

A multifunctional room that can be used as an exhibition space or a preparation area.
The space under the staircase is also utilized as a storage room.







Studio + En-suite



Viewed from the outside, the building's façade maintains visual integrity by using grilles made from the same material and dimensions as the exterior cladding. These allow natural light to enter the habit space while preserving the coherence of the



These units offer young artist members a dedicated space for creation. Each suite includes a spacious studio area and basic living amenities, such as a bed, private bathroom, and a compact kitchen. There are two unit types—Type A and Type B—differing mainly in size, providing options that suit varying needs and financial situations.

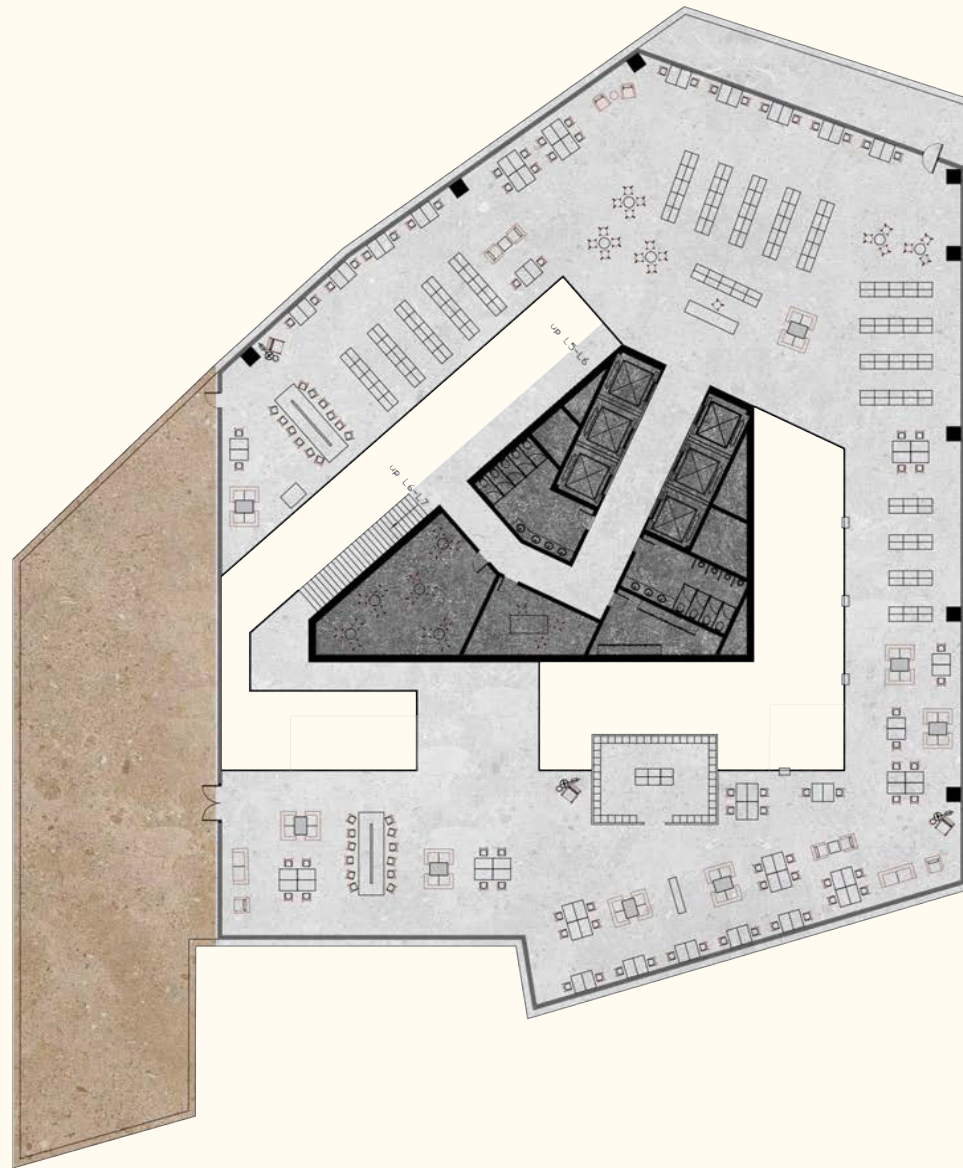
Sunlight filters through the grilles, casting shifting patches of light—an interplay between architecture and natural light.



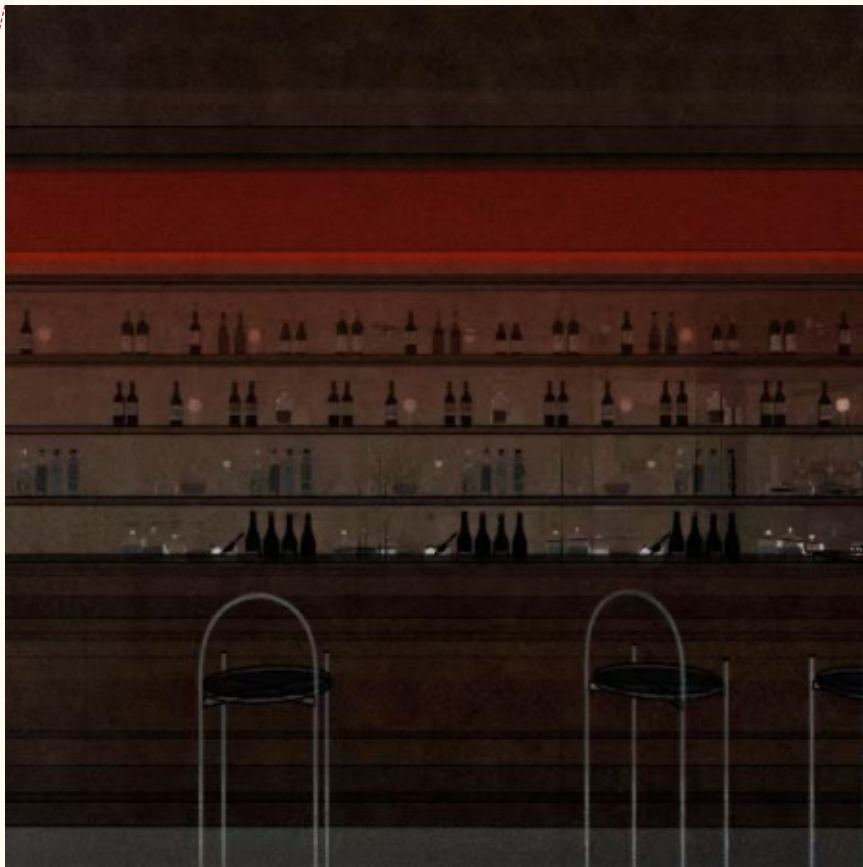
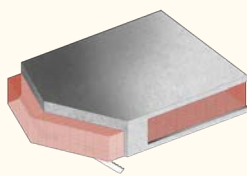
Studio + en-suite units are located on the middle floors of the building and accessed via a secure elevator with restricted entry. To subtly discourage accidental intrusion by the public, the outer edges of this area are lined with semi-private transitional spaces that serve as a spatial buffer. To support both social interaction and leisure among residents, a 300-square-meter common space is located on the 6th floor, available for gatherings and informal events.



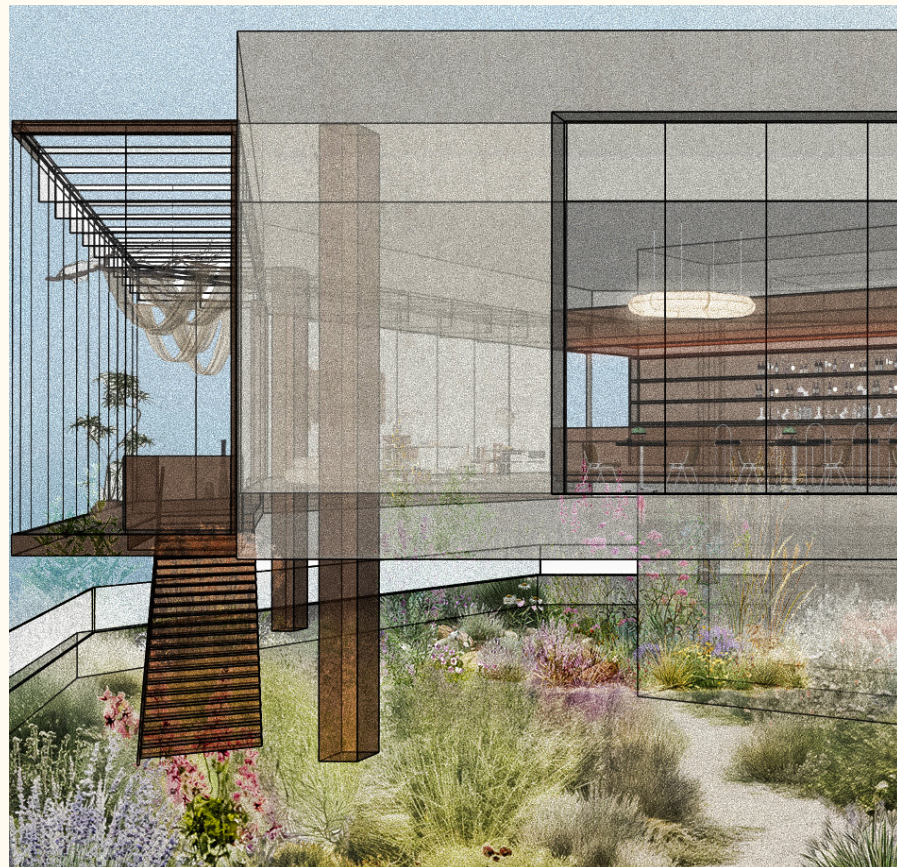
type A & B



LOUNGE BAR



lounge bar



Landscape level

The 8th floor of the building serves as a dedicated landscape level, designed as an immersive, standalone sky garden. It offers a shared natural space for both the public and resident artists. A staircase leads directly from this landscape level to the lounge bar above, creating a spatial sequence with a strong sense of ceremony.

The dining space continues the artist residency's signature industrial-retro style, enhanced by artistic lighting installations. By night, it transforms into a distinctive environment for dining and social interaction.

