

A PAUSE IN THE MOUNTAIN AND CITY
Re-Imagining Tea Drinking in Guangzhou, China

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Abstract

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The thesis seeks to develop an architectural form that helps create an awareness of the historic relationship between the Baiyun mountains and Guangzhou city. Their physical connection has existed since the city's foundation. However, as the city has grown, the spiritual connection with the mountains has decreased. With a dense population and vast urbanized area, the mountains are at risk of being neglected by Guangzhou's urban dwellers. Instead, they treat the mountains as a place for entertainment. The result is the mountains have become merely a consumptive resource for the city. This thesis will reconnect the mountains and the city through creating a dialogue. The dialogue embraces the differences and argues for the necessity of a new relationship between the mountains and the city.

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PROLOGUE

The Mountain and the City

Mountains are here,
without being replaced.
We survive on the dreams of mountains,
humble as it might be,
timeless as it might be.
Consciousness of mountains exists,
before we have knowledge of them.
The city has not been a city,
land has not been an abandoned land.
Even no attention had been paid in between,
no interruption had occurred in between.
The city is now expanding,
with no cautiousness for the boundary.

Yet mountains become stubborn,
yet mountains become forgotten.
People dictate the city is the place of living,
whereas the value is concealed in mountains.
People love the city with their life,
people love the mountains with their soul.
Life is a reachable passage,
while mountains are undetermined.
Soul is the intangible wind,
as it surpasses the reality of life.
At the moment,
mountains possess an infinite heart.

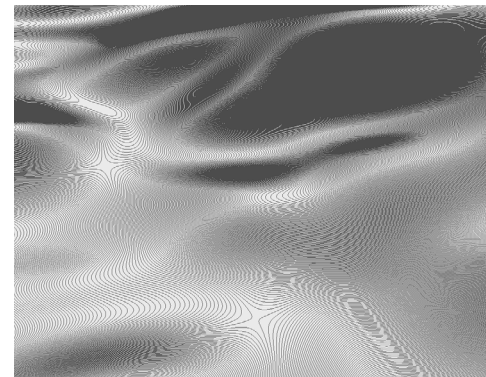


Figure 1. Topography of
the Baiyun Mountains

INTRODUCTION

Guangzhou is the capital and largest city of Guangdong Province in China. It is situated by the Pearl River to the south, and Baiyun Mountain to the north. The original city dates back to 206 BCE and used to be the capital for Nanyue Kingdom. Currently the city has become a mega-city with a population of 13.5 million.¹

Guangzhou has been furnished with abundant natural resources since ancient times. The role of nature in the city is predominantly represented by the Baiyun Mountains. The Baiyun Mountains encircle the city with a range of 9.7 km in length and 4.5 km in width. It has been a popular scenic location since the Song Dynasty (AD 960-1279). The mountain is also called the First Mountain of Lingnan, referring to the larger geographic region and showing its importance to the local people.²

At the same time, the city is experiencing rapid growth in recent decades. Urbanization has pushed the density of the city to an unprecedented level, whereas people have been living with traditional natural scenery in nature for a long time. In particular, the mountains had always been a source of inspiration for the culture.

However, the new development has neglected the dialogue between the city and its larger context - the Baiyun Mountains. They have become a resource for the city that has been continuously encroached upon by new construction. Meanwhile, urban dwellers continue to be surrounded by high rise buildings that are occasionally punctuated by green spaces, usually furnished with artificial lakes and gardens. Some of these artificial gardens overlook the meaning of nature in traditional culture. There is a need for urban

dwellers to re-imagine the city - not just as a place full of gardens and lakes, but also as meaningfully connected with the mountains.

Nature, as the authentic source, is the fundamental part of the city. On the one hand, the site is comprised of natural elements such as a bamboo grove and a lake. These elements allow people to experience as citizens in nature. They also inspire the citizens as a cultural source that has been deeply rooted in the past. On the other hand, the site is a stage for connecting the city and the mountains - the dynamic and static. The mountains used to be a broader image framed by the city. Now they confront the growing city as an enclosed entertainment place. The contradiction between the city and the mountains brings a new dialogue that will be necessary.

This thesis proposes that architectural form can help people recognize and re-imagine a new relationship between the city and the mountains. It creates the awareness in order to provide people with inspiration regardless of the changing times. The thesis takes a sustainable design strategy in using the bamboo grove and minimizing the intrusion on the original landscape.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

INFLUENCE OF URBANIZATION IN GUANGZHOU



Figure 2. Map of Ancient Canton(after 1380)

Guangzhou, originally named Canton, is a city with a population of 13.5 million (2016) in the southeast of China. It was initially the capital of the Nanyue Kingdom in 204 BC. In 1380, it was expanded to be three towns in one surrounded by city walls and moats. Thereafter the framed view with mountains had been established (Figure 2).³ As seen in the Map of Ancient Canton, Guangzhou provided a spectacular view, merging mountains, city and river, with the unique landscape formed by the Pearl River Delta. Nature, which served as a bond for the urban fabric, was heavily embedded in the daily lives of the citizens.

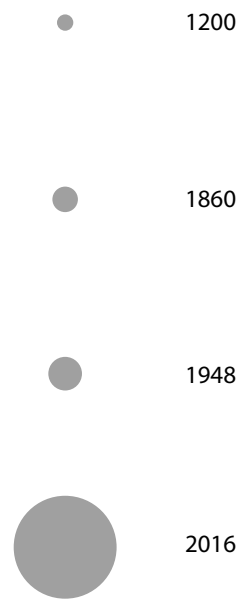
Among the most scenic views that prevailed in the city, were those that include Baiyun Mountain. While originally located outside of the city, the lofty peaks of the mountain range have continued to dominate



views in Guangzhou. At the same time, citizens have visited the mountain as an important cultural site since ancient times.⁴ Also people have benefited from the portable water transported from the mountain (Figure 3). The relationship between city and mountain is essential and unique.

Figure 3. Bamboo Conduits from Baiyun Mountain to the City in Song Dynasty

Urban Expansion



Relationship to Nature

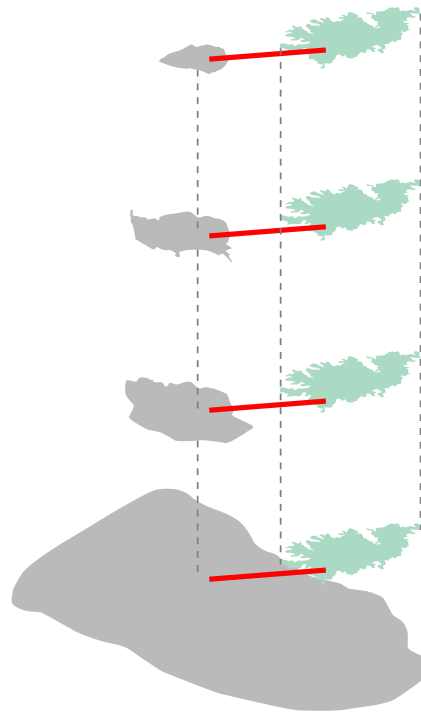


Figure 4. Urban Expansion Diagram

During the Qing Dynasty (1644-1912), Guangzhou was the only main port of China allowing trade with foreign countries. But during the last century, Guangzhou's unique role in trading overseas has been gradually surpassed by its neighbors such as Hong Kong and Shenzhen. In recent decades under the influence of globalization, Guangzhou has emerged as a megacity. Combining with neighboring cities Guangzhou has also become part of the largest urban agglomeration in the world.⁵ Meanwhile, the traditional architecture of the area has been consumed by the massive rise of new construction.

As the city has grown, mountain and the city started to overlap with each other (Figure 4). The city used to be independent from the mountains. Recent construction has boosted the density level in this area. Modern infrastructures linking the city become



new boundaries between the city and mountains. The transition from nature to urban area is less considered, rather, the mountains belong to the larger map of the new city. They are part of the grid system in the urban plan, as one of the most concentrated ones in urban development. Many entertaining facilities and parks have been installed in the mountains in order to serve a large amount of visitors (Figure 5). As most visitors see the mountains as a

Figure 5. Grass Skating in Baiyun Mountains, Guangzhou. 2016



Figure 6. Urban Expansion
in Guangzhou. 2016

place for relaxation, the character of nature as a pure and prime force is missing. The dialogue between the mountains and the city is changing.

The high rises have impacted the original view from the city. Before urbanization became enormous, the mountains dominated the visual experience in almost every street of the city. As dense as the city had been, it was still subordinated to nature (Figure 7).

In recent decades, this intense urbanization has been based on the emulation of western models, resulting in a disconnection with the traditional city of the past.⁶ Recognizing that growth is essential to the rise of the economic vitality of the city, the local government has built more infrastructure to serve the growing urban population.⁷ It was also forced to bear the challenge of maintaining a healthy urban



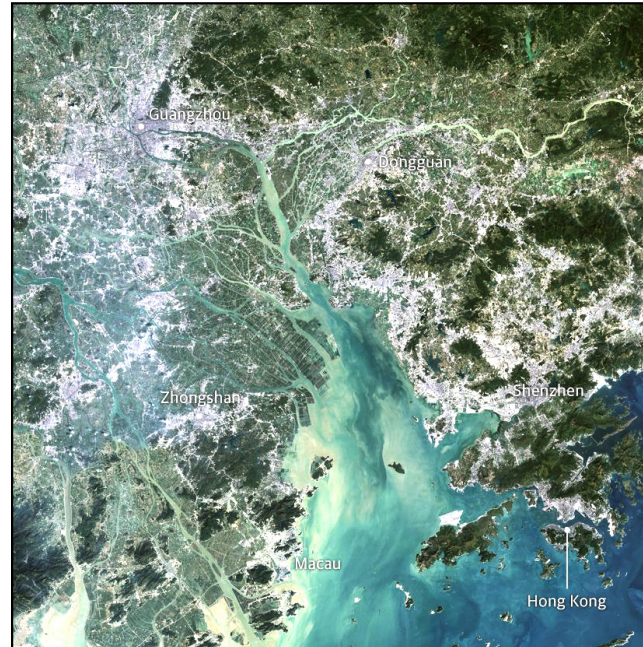
environment for the remaining residents. All these challenges have initiated the question of what role nature is playing nowadays.

Starting from the 1970s, the city and this region have been developed as the manufacturing and economic hub in the south of China. Thus, the landscape has been quickly turned into gray urban lands as

Figure 7. Guangzhou City with Baiyun Mountains. 1949. Right



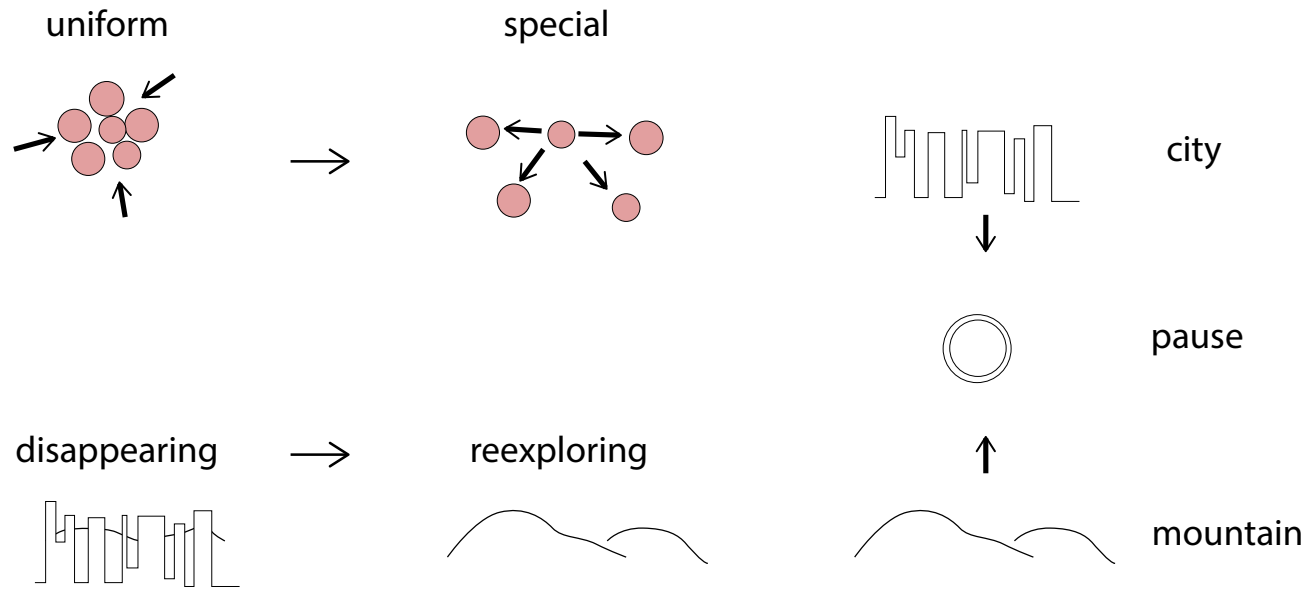
compared to green farming lands (Figure 8 & 9). This dramatic change in the Pearl River Delta influenced the landscape pattern and indicated the transforming tendency in the following decades. Immigration caused by global urbanization has led to a city built for massive construction and consumption.



In other words, more uniform characteristics such as artificial gardens and lakes are being repeated in new society, conflicting with the dense development. On the one hand, the city became less identified by decreasing characteristics (Figure 10). Temples,

Figure 8. Satellite Image of the Pearl River Delta in 1979. Left

Figure 9. Satellite Image of the Pearl River Delta in 2000. Right



towers and other relics are now less valued and more difficult to connect with citizens. Rather, iconic skyscrapers became a new home for their life. On the other hand, the mountain is disappearing from view and the memory of citizens. Though the mountains are still in a natural balance, they are treated as much

as programmatic extensions of the large city today. It is hard to recognize the difference and special characteristics of both mountains and city without thinking about their independence since ancient times.

Figure 10. Urban Framework Analysis

APPRECIATION IN LANDSCAPE



Figure 11. Muqi Fachang. Dusk over Fisher's Village (渔村夕照图). 13th Century

Landscape has been an enduring influence on traditional culture in China. As Daoism described, naturalness is valued as a central experience for beings.⁸ It addresses the primordial state of all things. Since the Imperial period, traditional paintings have sought to capture landscape as both a livable place and a spiritual realm (Figure 11). It has also been a popular subject in works of literature, often as an expression and interpretation of spiritual life. It reveals the culture's intimate relationship with nature.

The ancient poem "Lou Shi Ming" (824-826 AD) describes the experience of seeking shelter in nature for study and retreat:

*Who heeds the hill's bare height until
some legend grows around the hill?
Who cares how deep the stream before
its fame is writ in country lore?
And so this humble hut of mine
may shelter virtues half divine.
The moss may climb its ruined stair,
and grassy stains the curtain wear.
But scholars at their ease within,
for all but Ignorance enters in.
With simple lute the time beguile,
or "Golden Classic's" page a while.
No discords here their ears assail,
nor cares of business to bewail.
This is the life the Sages led.
"How were they poor?" Confucius said.⁹*



The sense of occupying a space in nature between land, air and water, is also explored in architecture (Figure 12). As Steven Holl notes: “Architecture does not so much intrude on a landscape as it serves to explain it.”¹⁰ Rather than being treated as isolated objects, architectural forms have the potential to be intertwined with their context. The elements of land, water and air are integral parts of the environment. It is only through the act of inhabiting nature, that it can be activated and recovered as a part of everyday urban life.¹¹

Phenomenology in architecture is the study of perception, emotion and consciousness in physical experience of space and time. This approach encourages inhabitants of space to think of themselves as the living body instead of the physical body. In this way they become more conscious of the

Figure 12. Chichu Art Museum

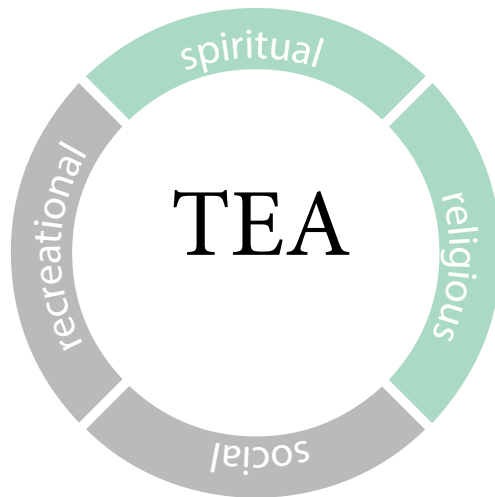
environment as an animated realm.¹² The awareness of nature as a resource becomes an enduring gift that offers the potential of meaningful expression of human beings. The environment consists of varied elements. These elements from the nature are not just objects.

For example, water has been seen as a special life giving and spiritual force that has an impact on multiple senses in architecture (Figure 13).¹³ Affecting touch, sound, smell as well as sight, water allows people to experience space in a meaningful way. That is to say, water becomes imagination of a being, it is understood from its depth spiritually, not just from its materiality. Quiet, pure and mysterious - varied characteristics of water enable the description of its inner world.¹⁴



Figure 13. Casa Gilardi

THE MEANING OF TEA



Tea appeared as a kind of medicine at the beginning of history. It is said that the deity Shen Nung first discovered tea, describing it as “good for tumours or abscesses that come about the head, or for ailments of the bladder. It dissipates heat caused by the phlegm’s or inflammation of the chest. It quenches thirst. It lessens the desire for sleep. It gladdens and cheers the heart.”¹⁵

Soon after its turning to public, tea became a refined drink rather than a medicine with the fondness of its flavour and aroma. In 780 AD, the tea master Lu Yu wrote a book “The Classic of Tea”, dictating the importance of selecting a water source, ascertaining the degree to which water should be boiled, with many other important aspects of tea. He brought tea to a new level as high culture. Comparing with the luxury style before, he argued the importance

Figure 14. Meaning of Tea Diagram

of imbuing tea with cultivation and spiritual meaning(Figure 15).

In ancient times, tea drinking was taken by varied groups in society. It was especially expressed as spiritual cultivation with literati, Buddhist monks and other groups. The trace of cultural influences continues to affect how tea is now served in modern society. However as modernization has made more

imprint, tea attained more privileges among the rich. Commercial sales are in a smaller proportion for a large population. As a result, the ritual process of tea is neglected in the race for commercial expansion. While ancient tea contains more religious and spiritual meaning, the contemporary way is much less about the spiritual depth. Rather, it more closely aligns with the pursuit of fine products(Figure 14).¹⁶



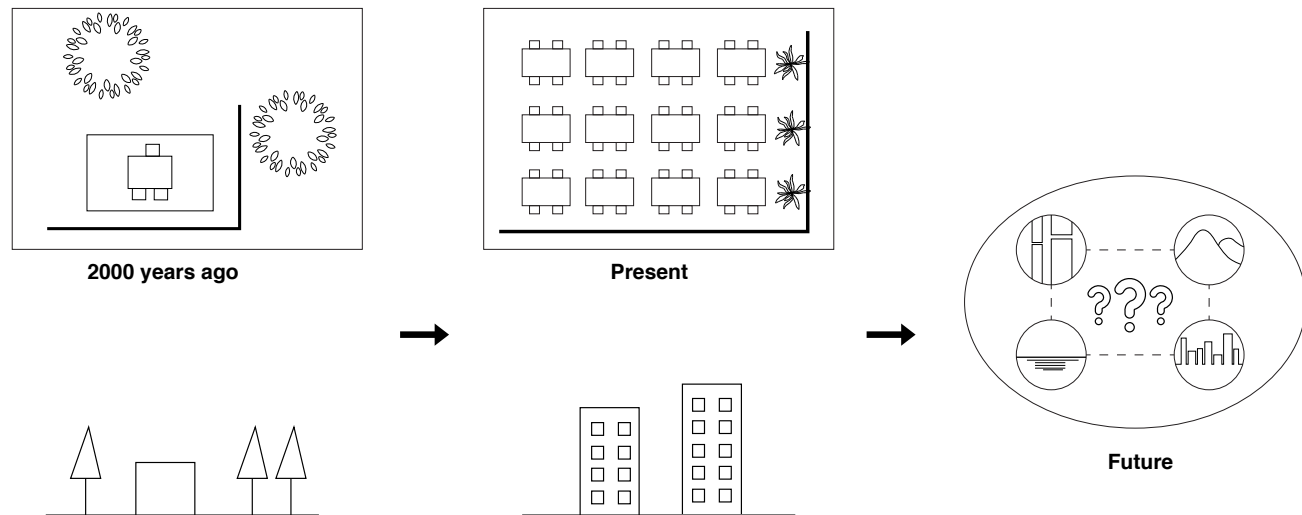
Figure 15. Tea Style in Ancient China



With tea leaves in boiled water, harmony is sensed in the cup. Tea is not merely an isolated object or piece of art to appreciate. It is imbued with an environment that consists of a human and the nature setting.¹⁷ Spaces for tea drinking vary between ancient and contemporary periods.

In ancient China, tea houses enabled a better experience of nature. Their small scale allowed a focus on the relationship between human and nature. It was typical to set up a table within the larger landscape. Especially the separation from the outdoors helped create a quiet atmosphere. However, tea drinking in contemporary period is subordinated to the dining, with less concerns with the atmosphere (Figure 16). Because of the density in the urban area, a large number of tables are set in one room. As the diagram indicates (Figure 17), plants in pots are often seen as a decoration representing nature.

Figure 16. Tea Style in 18th Century, China



Thinking about the ancient and future impact, it would be worthy of taking the surroundings into account - the bamboo grove, the lake, mountains and city. Seen together this would question the necessity of a dialogue between city and mountains.

The answer is unpredictable for the future, owning potentials of blending different characteristics.

Figure 17. Place for Tea Drinking

PRECEDENT STUDIES

This thesis explores the potential of architecture to allow city dwellers to reconnect with nature. Three case studies of contemporary works show how this is possible in built works of different functions and scales.

Commune By The Great Wall

Location: Beijing, China

Architect: Kengo Kuma

Date: 2002

Villa in The Mountain

The Commune by the Great Wall completed in 2002 is located in the rural area of Beijing, China. It is one of a series of hotels designed by renowned architects from around the world (Figure 18).

As the name suggests, the project is located close to the Great Wall, which crosses the northern border of China. The “new wall” constructed of bamboo creates a sense of visual transparency. Light and air are able to filter through the building. It has strong intent

of creating a new environment of permeability and intimacy between the residents and nature.¹⁸ Bamboo is often used as traditional material in China. This natural material offers a variety of ways to partition space, as well as creating a harmonious space with the surrounding natural environment (Figure 19).¹⁹

The hotel has become a favorable place for people to rethink the relationship between humans and nature. By dwelling in the mountain, residents seek to experience the myth of the mountain and expose themselves to the environment. Unlike the lifestyle in the city, this rural retreat erases the sense of living in a cube. Activating all the resident's senses, it provides a complete experience that is one with nature.

Figure 18. Interior View of the Villa. Top

Figure 19. Exterior View of the Villa. Bottom



D. Z. Suzuki Museum

Location: Kanazawa, Japan

Architect: Yoshio Taniguchi

Date: 2011

Meditation above Water

The D.T. Suzuki Museum is a small museum located in the city of Kanazawa, Japan. It commemorates the life of Suzuki Daisetz Teitaro, a famed teacher and writer of Zen Buddhism. Zen Buddhism became popular in Japan since it was imported from China in the 12th century. The architecture of the museum seeks to reflect a master's philosophy that continues to influence people today.

The museum is made up of three wings identified as Entrance, Exhibition and Contemplation that surround three gardens: Vestibule, Roji and Water Mirror. Located at the center is the large pond in the water mirror garden (Figure 20), which surrounds the white cube of the contemplative space. The simple form of the Contemplation Space is a large room with openings on all four sides (Figure 21), which extends

out into the Water Mirror Garden. There are seats in the quiet interior where visitors can take time to meditate.²⁰ Instead of becoming just an abstract form, the cube provides a neutral setting to allow people to engage with the inspiring natural setting. The scale of the pathway is very gentle, and allows for intimate contact with the water.

The museum provides a space that reflects the philosophy of Zen Buddhism where people can connect in a spiritual way to the natural context. The physical form of the architecture allows visitors to understand the space from the water reflection - as an essential experience for the living body within the city.

Figure 20. Water Mirror Garden in D.Z. Suzuki Museum. Top

Figure 21. Contemplative Space in D.Z. Suzuki Museum. Bottom



Rain Room Installation

Location: Barbican Centre, London

Design Team: Random International Studio

Date: 2012/2013

The Experience of Falling Water

The last case study is an art installation by the collaborative studio, Random International. This group of artists based in London use multi-media spaces to explore how technology shapes the environment. Their project, Rain Room (2012) has been installed in the MOMA in New York City and the LA County Museum of Art.²¹

Rain Room creates an environment of falling water through which visitors can walk, trying to avoid being drenched in the process. When a human body is detected, the continuous downfall temporarily stops (Figure 22). The creation of this water environment sensitive to the human body allows visitors to control the rain. As visitors move through the space, the sound of water and feeling of moisture fill the air. The sound and smell of water becomes a powerful means

to connect with the human body as it approaches the space. Even though rain is a common occurrence, the fall of water creates a sense of wonder and awareness of the qualities of this natural substance (Figure 23).

The Rain Room installation connects the powerful projection of water and the movement of the human body. As visitors interact with the environment, they are able to experience nature in an intimate way that affects all their sense.²²

Figure 22. Rain Room at the Barbican. 2012. Top

Figure 23. Rain Room at the Barbican. 2012. Bottom

Video Link: [Rain Room at the Barbican, 2012](#)



METHODOLOGY

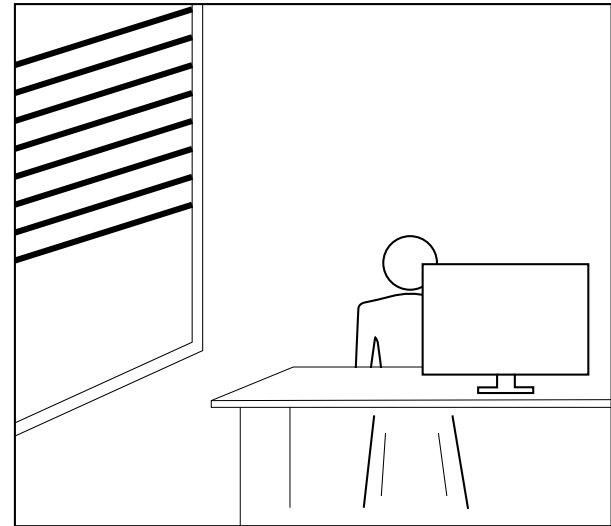
TEA JOURNEY

The Tea Journey assumes a story that citizens have sequential experiences of the city while preceding to the mountains. It is a storytelling board to logically envision each step and to show the impression behind the journey. Tea is a method of highlighting the experiences of all. Through the journey, the emotion, time and space are fluctuating constantly. The memory is recalled and refreshed with new intervention of the city due to vast urbanization.

Compared with a real trip, the Tea Journey is set up for the goal of having a cup of tea. “Having a cup of tea” is thought to allow oneself to avoid worrying about something ahead.²³ It allows a clear focus on the objects, things and spaces that we are experiencing at the moment. In our life, we are always living in one among millions of moments.

1. Finishing a busy day

The journey begins with a person who works in a place without natural surroundings. Things that can distract him are the window and computer. After a day of working, he feels stressed and has a lack of enthusiasm. So he wants to go outside of the city - where he might find a difference and can breathe freely.



2. Relaxing outside the city

He takes a bus from the city center to the Baiyun Mountains. It is hard to imagine the mountains without getting closer. The very few of memories he could recall was when the city had not been expanded.

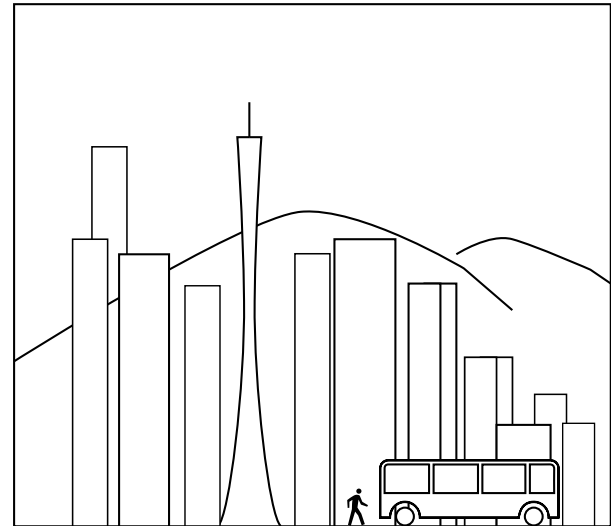
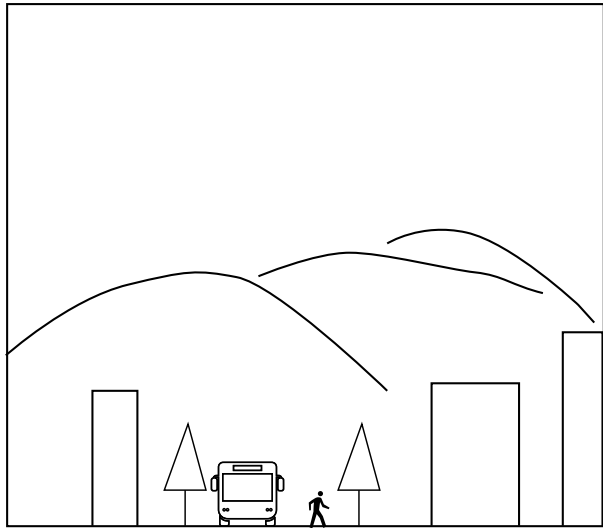


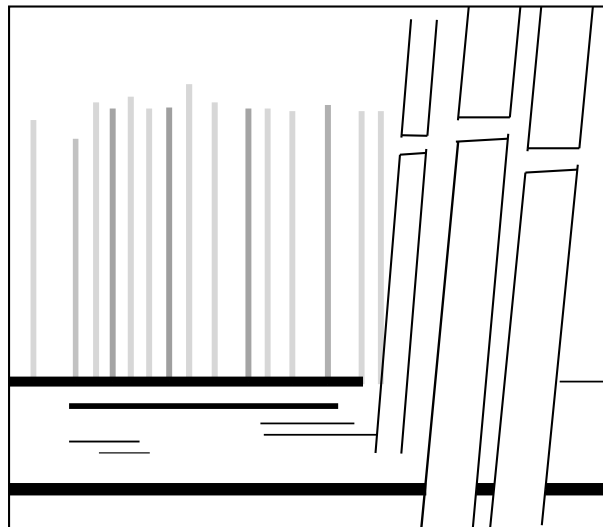
Figure 24. Finishing a busy day. Top

Figure 25. Relaxing outside the city. Bottom



3. Arriving in the rural area

As he is approaching to the mountains, he find that profiles of urban boxes are lowering down and the mountains are rising up. He comes desperately for something different from the city. The city is messed up with high rise buildings. Only the boundary can tell what the city used to be, how the city has transformed.



4. Being surrounded by nature

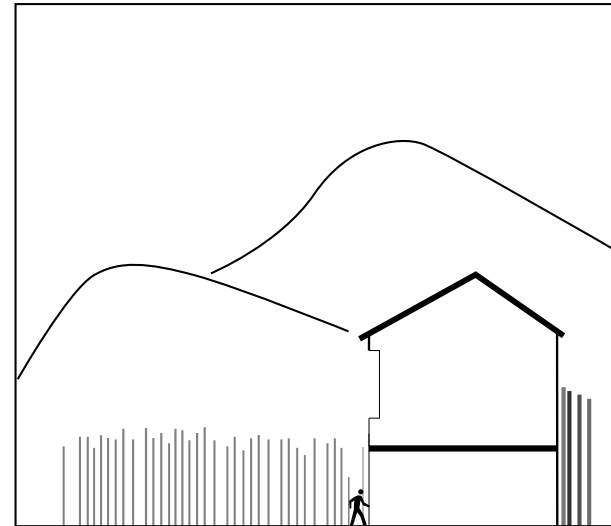
It is not often when he come to a place without a plan. The substance of nature exists. Yet its first impression is hidden in depth. He struggles with the different forces of the urban and rural environment.

Figure 26. Arriving in the Rural Area. Top

Figure 27. Being Surrounded by Nature. Bottom

5. Staying in a quiet place

When he steps into the natural site, he is immersed in his own world - a world of himself and nature. The sound comes as wind crosses the bamboo, seeing the quiet lake with a reflection of him. All the surroundings are in flux, and at the same time are subtly captured by his vision.



6. Observing the city from afar

Moving up, he observes the city from far away. Dreams rely on the framed view while he is passing through. It seems that he is passing through time, when he is passing through physical space. The noisy world he encountered is now disappearing. Eventually he arrives in a quite place.

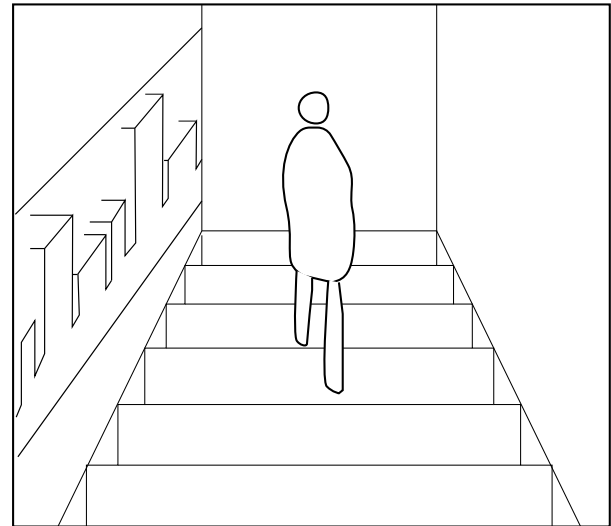
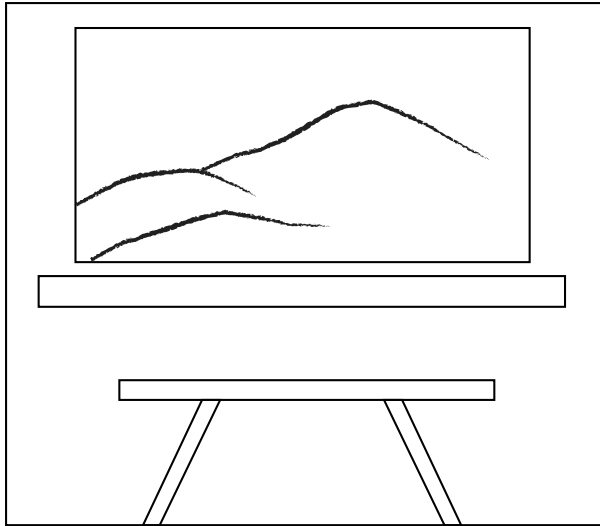


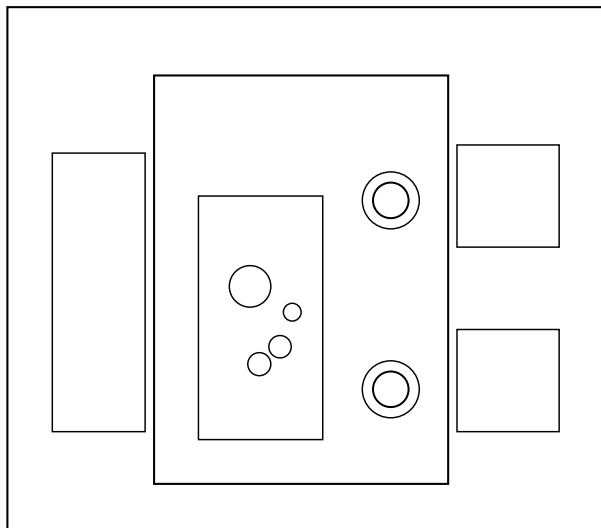
Figure 28. Staying in a Quiet Place. Top

Figure 29. Observing the City from afar. Bottom



7. Seeing the mountains from the window

He goes further to discover. In one of the many scenes, the mountains enter into his vision. The city has been developed under the power of modern cultivation. However the mountains are still not a place of existence for humans.



8. Setting up for tea

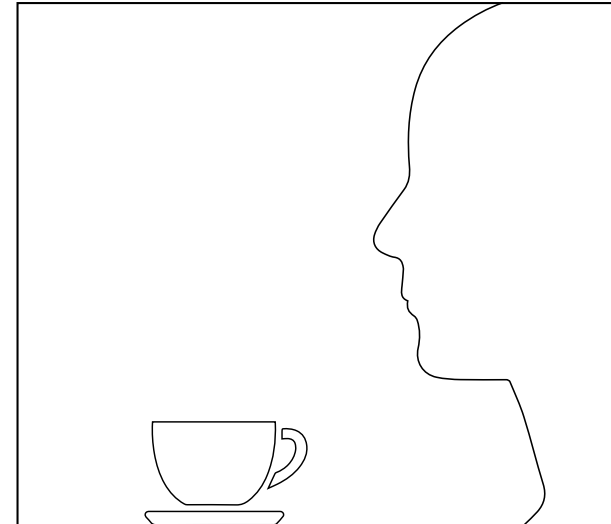
Setting a tea table for visitors varies within a different time and space. It is meant to be a coincidence when people meet here with tea. Tea is prepared for an experience of the moment.

Figure 30. Seeing the Mountains from the Window. Top

Figure 31. Setting up for Tea. Bottom

9. Tasting the water in tea leaves

Tea leaves are in boiled water. Every time the water is slightly different, the same as the tea leaves, this leads to a different sense of tea in each moment. With the aroma generated by the tea, the harmony is brought in front of the framed view. It is at this moment, the view of mountains blends with the taste and feeling of the individual.



10. Imagining a trip to the mountains

After the tea, he comes up with the idea of going to the mountains. The mountains are meant to be the destination in this path.

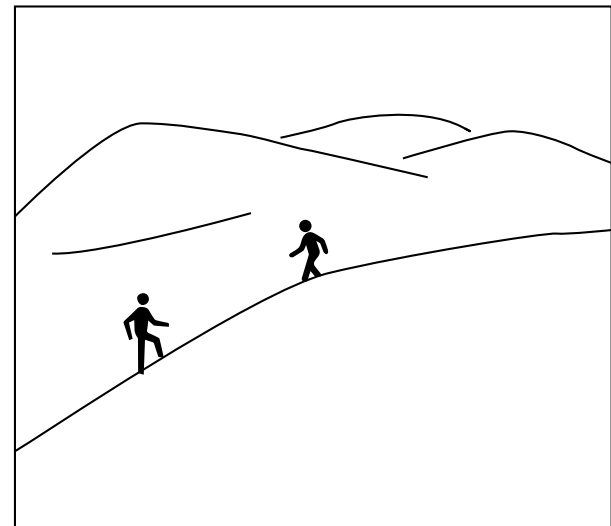


Figure 32. Tasting the Water in Tea Leaves. Top

Figure 33. Imagining A Trip to the Mountains. Bottom

IN BETWEEN

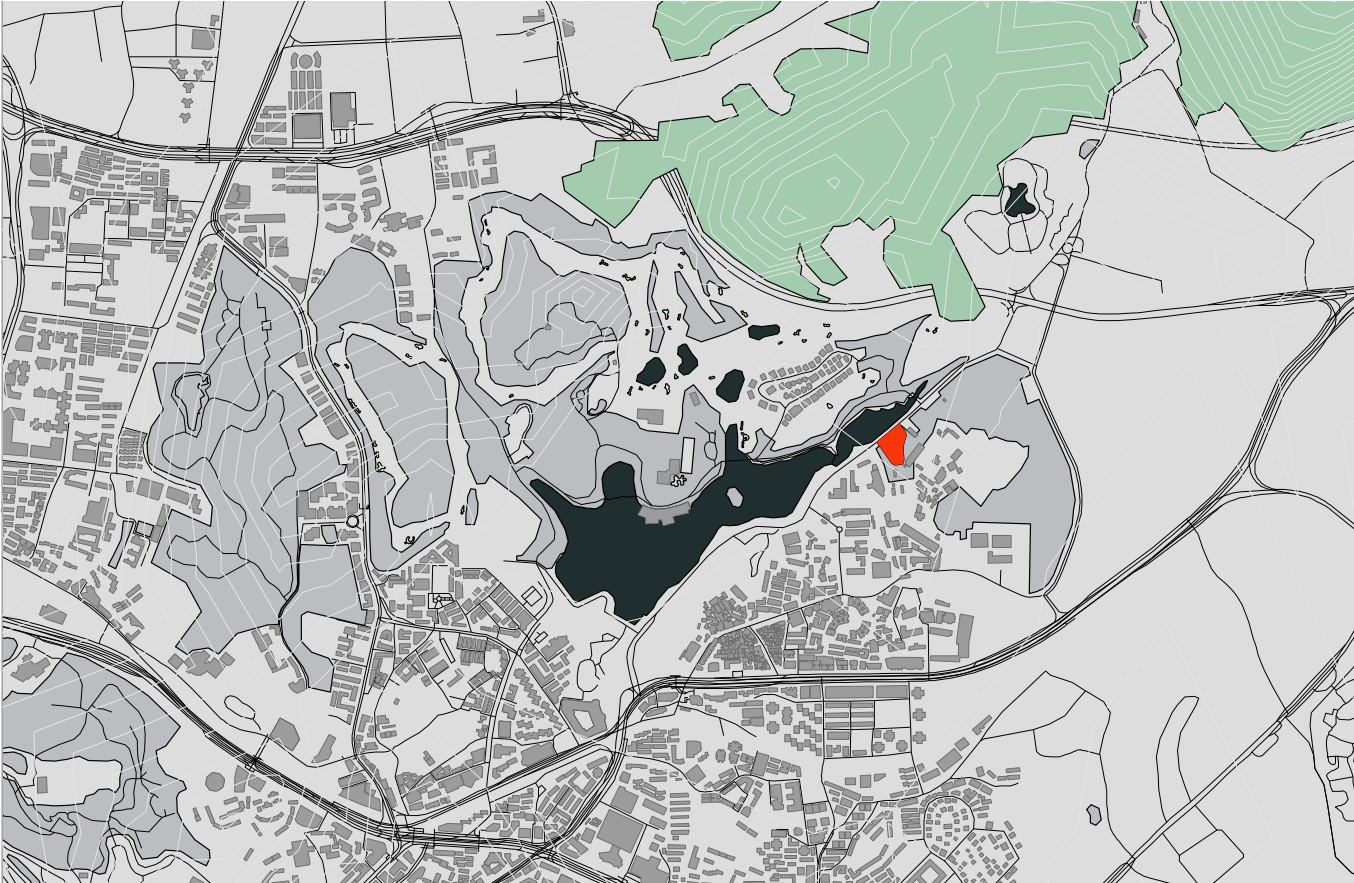


Figure 34. Site Map

The site is located between the boundary of the city and the mountains. The city is in the southwest direction, while the mountains are in the northeast direction (Figure 34). It is on one of the main routes from the city to the mountains. Being far away from both skyscrapers and the peak, the site has the potential of keeping noises away and making the chaos clear.

The site is surrounded by a green public area, which is mostly occupied by entertainment parks. With a residential area on its edge, the site is at the point of intersection between green parks and urban blocks. Green parks are filled by pavilions, museums, entertainment areas, artificial lakes, villas and golf courses. The residential zone includes complex functions such as schools, hospitals and housing. The

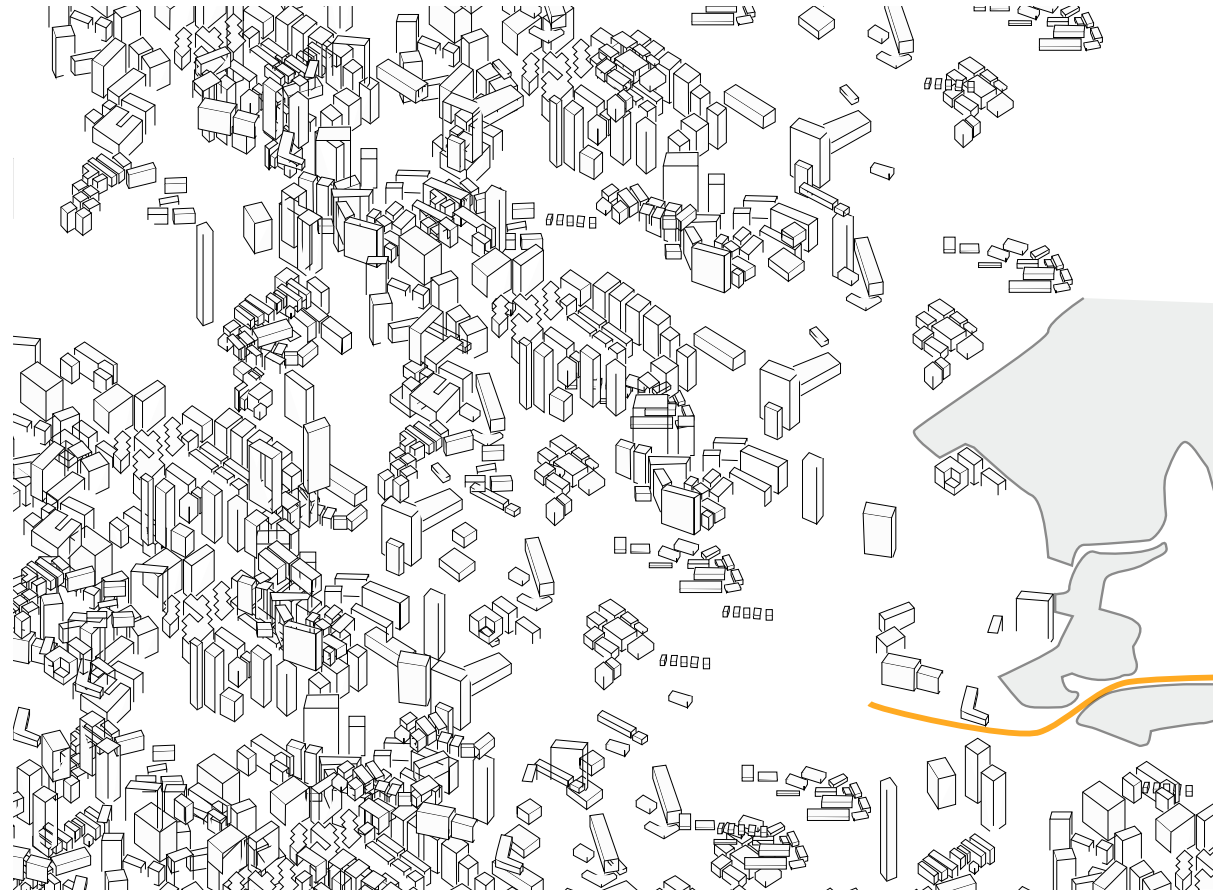
Daoism Sanctuary right next to the site is one of only a few of the historic relics left in this area.

The site is about a mile away from the south entrance of the mountain. The area has an abundance of natural resources including bamboo groves and lotus flowers. The site is surrounded and partly hidden by the bamboo trees, with a water pool at the center. The dense vegetation creates an experience of seclusion from the outside. The water pool serves as a destination surrounded by the dense foliage of the bamboo trees. With the larger scale of Baiyun Mountains in the background, the site is framed as a small secluded area for people to gather, stay and make connections. Which makes possible the interaction between urban dwellers and nature.

IN CONTRAST

The city is growing in fast speed, with an expectation of satisfying both immigrants and natives, the old and the young, the desire for nostalgia and the need for change. The volume of the city is getting larger and denser as a new landscape that confronts the Baiyun Mountains (Figure 35). The urban area around the mountains used to be part of mountain ranges across several neighboring provinces. Now it has been transformed from the natural land to urban spaces.

When there is a resistance to change, there is a need for making a dialogue. That is the initial motivation for choosing this site. The site is fairly accessible from both sides of the city and the mountains. However, it is also unique as a small parcel. The intent of this thesis proposal is to use a small act to initiate a profound progression.



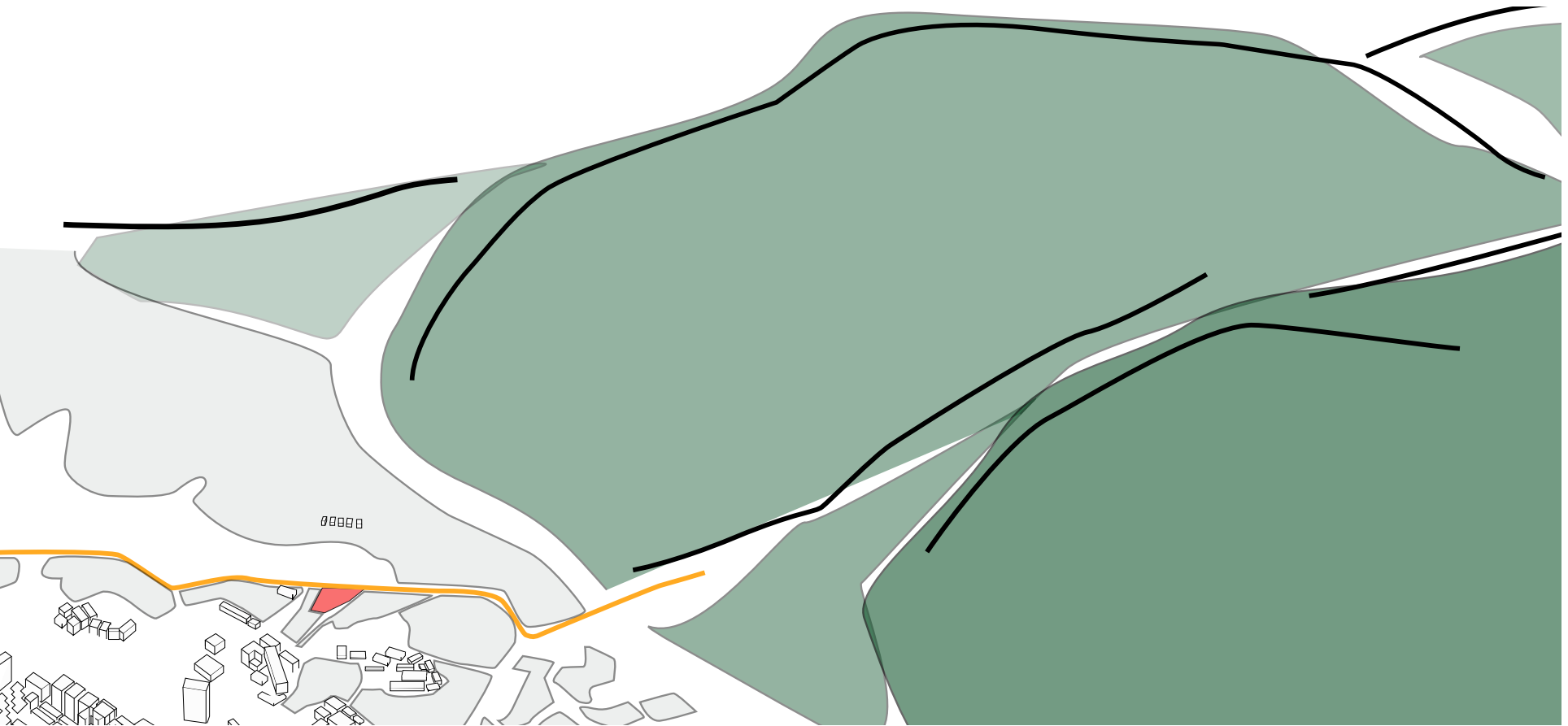


Figure 35. Site Aerial View

DESIGN RESPONSE

URBAN DESIGN APPROACH - LOOPING

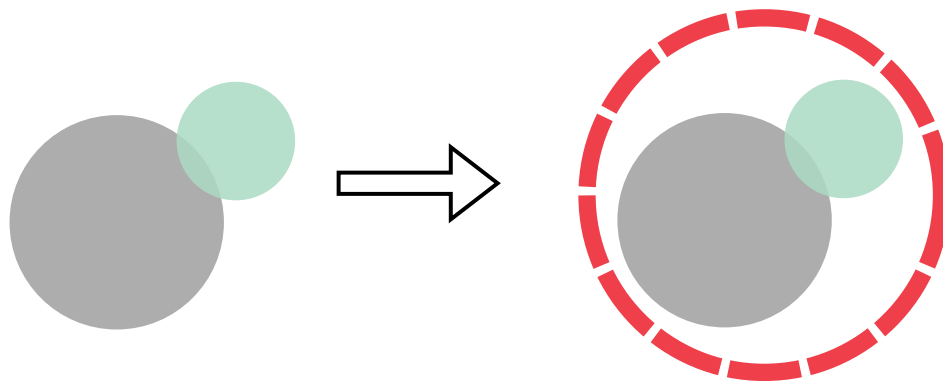


Figure 36. Looping Diagram

The design seeks to develop an architectural form that helps create a relationship between the Baiyun mountains and Guangzhou city. Their physical connection has existed since the city's foundation. However, as the city has grown, the spiritual connection has been affected by rapid urbanization. With a denser population, the city confronts the challenge of keeping the mountains as a spiritual source. Instead, the Baiyun mountains have been developed in a consumerist way as in other public green areas in the city.

The intent is to create a stage that allows a dialogue between the city and the mountains. The content for the dialogue is to rethink the dynamic contradiction initiated by urbanization. Looping means keeping the independence and acknowledging the difference

between the city and the mountains (Figure 36).

On the one hand, the city has the tendency to merge with the rest. On the other hand, the Baiyun Mountains keep the original force in affecting a human's emotions, customs and culture. They both exist regardless of the urbanization or other future progress. Creating a loop is a way of recognizing, maintaining and reiterating what is there. In this way, the spiritual role of the mountains will again be explored in the growing city.

TOPOGRAPHY ANALYSIS - VIEW RANGE DIAGRAM



The framed view is a traditional way of treating nature in Chinese architecture. It is to borrow landscape that represents visual experiences through the distant scenery (Figure 37). In this thesis, the visual experience is essential for visitors to perceive the mountains.

Focusing on the site, it is shaped as a valley in the topography. In order to optimize the visual experience, it is necessary to move up vertically. In this case, it is only possible to view the mountains when people are standing higher than the bamboo groves. The diagram indicates the relationship between height and view (Figure 38). Vertical movement thus becomes essential to the design.

Figure 37. Threshold in Hangzhou, China

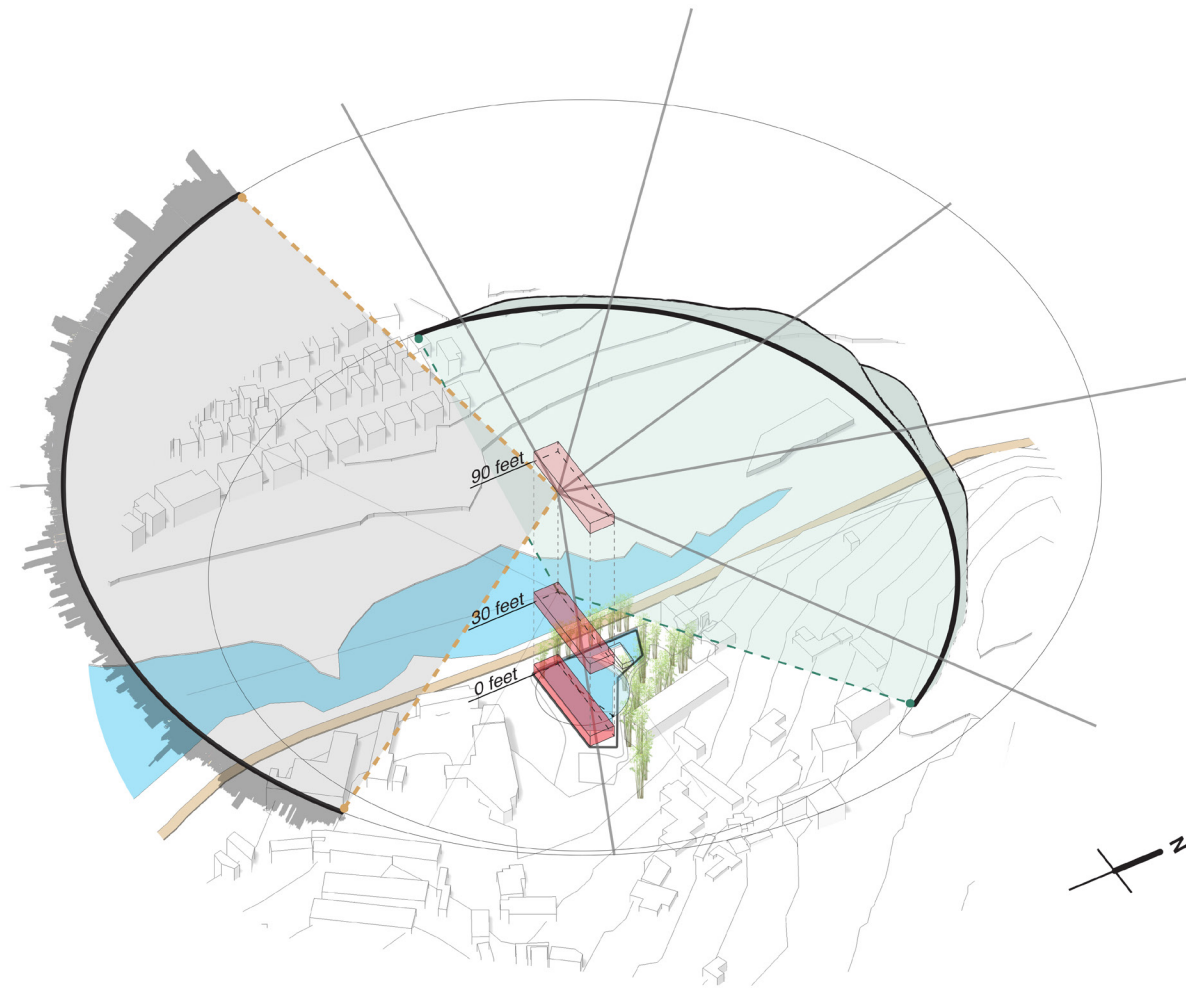


Figure 38. View Range Diagram

DEVELOPING ARCHITECTURAL FORM

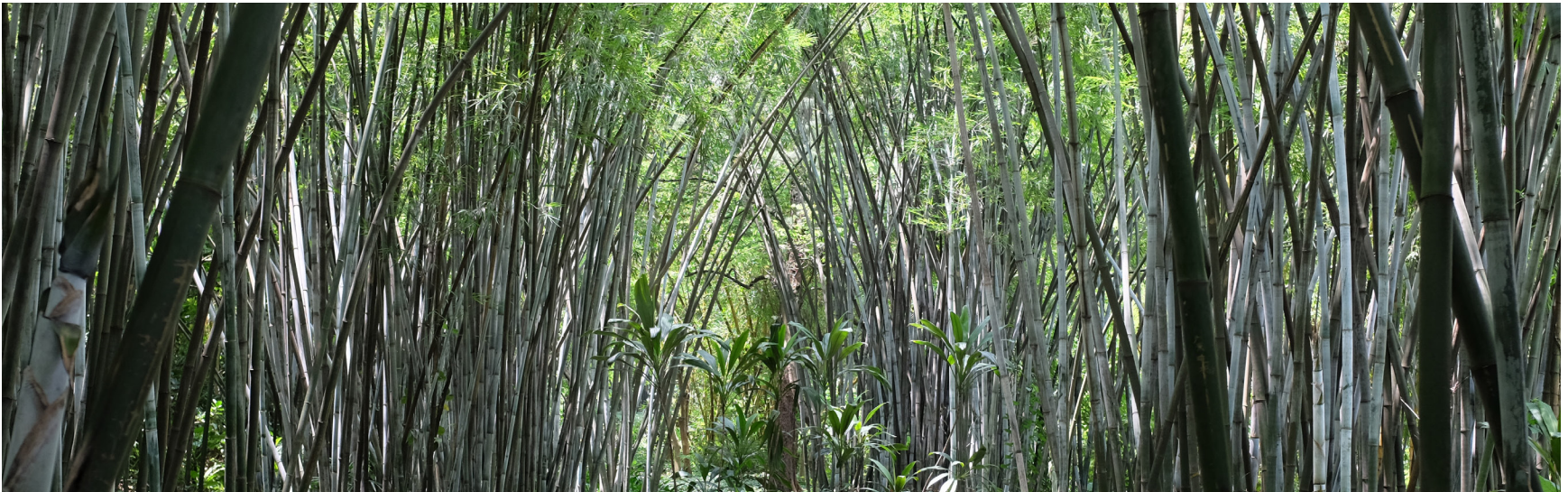


Figure 39. Bamboo Forest in the Site

Bamboo is one of the most popular plants in Guangzhou. Living in the humid subtropical climate, people will always see the bamboo in nature. It is also the most prominent element in this site (Figure 39). Planted around the lake, the bamboo groves provide both intimacy and privacy in the environment. Bamboo makes seclusion from the outside while allowing for tranquility inside.

Being integrated with the site, the form is taken from the vertical element of bamboo. As the main impression, vertical bamboo is reinterpreted by skew angles, indicating the difference from the original. The lifted volume intends to create spaces for mitigating the coexisted chaos (Figure 40). Through the lifted form, visitors have varied experiences of talking directly to the city and the mountains.

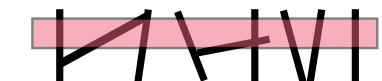
Figure 40. Architectural Concept. Right



vertical element

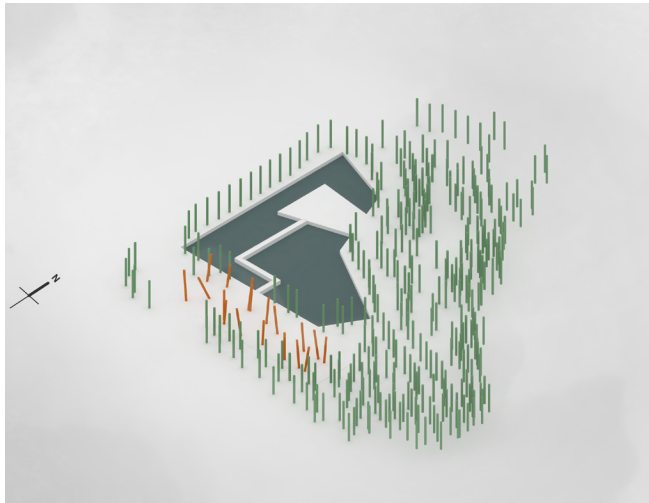


random rhythm



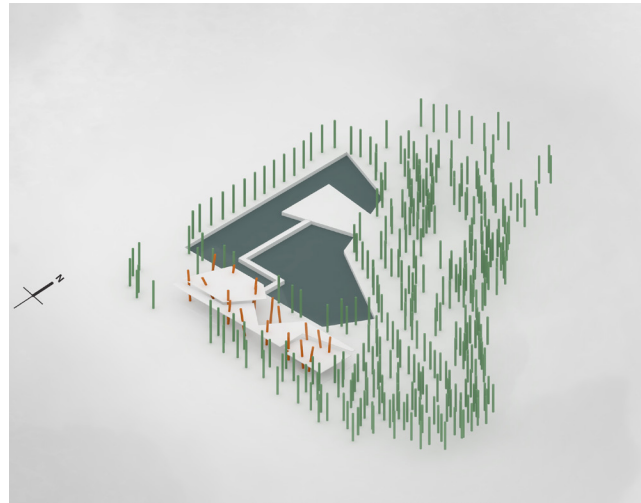
looping the chaos

PROCESS OF THE ARCHITECTURAL FORM



1. Columns

The building form starts from building columns in a vertical way.

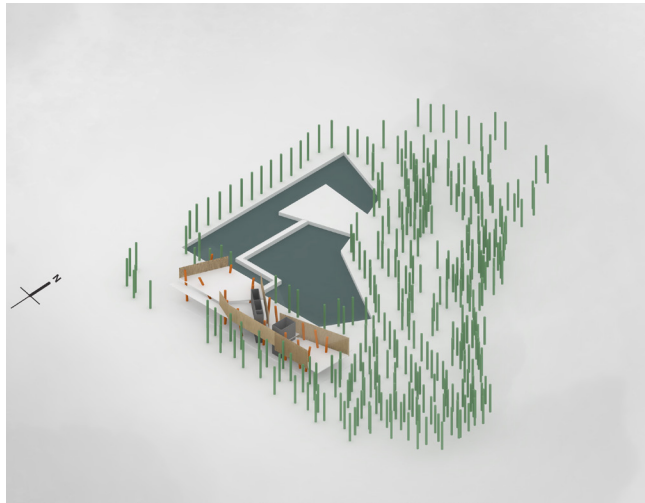


2. Platforms

Then the varied platforms connecting different spaces are built, providing space at different heights.

Figure 41. Adding Columns. Left

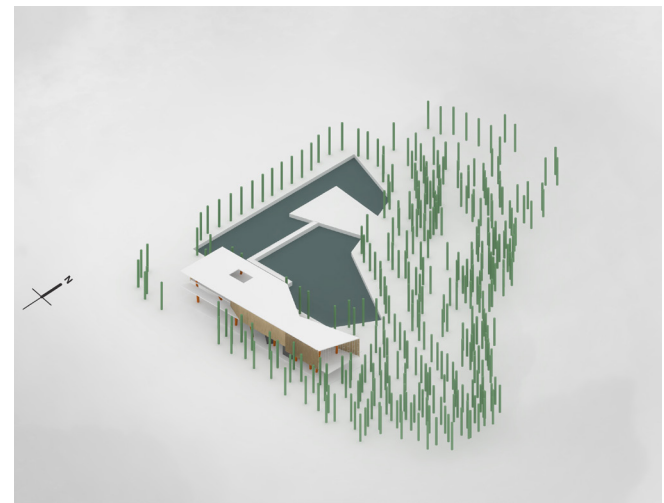
Figure 42. Adding Platforms. Right



3. Walls

Wood slats create focused views to different contexts. It also connects with the idea of bamboo in the landscape.

Figure 43. Adding Walls.
Left



4. Roof

The roof is capped flatly, leaving only an opening for the central space, thus minimizing the impact on the original landscape.

Figure 44. Adding Roof.
Right

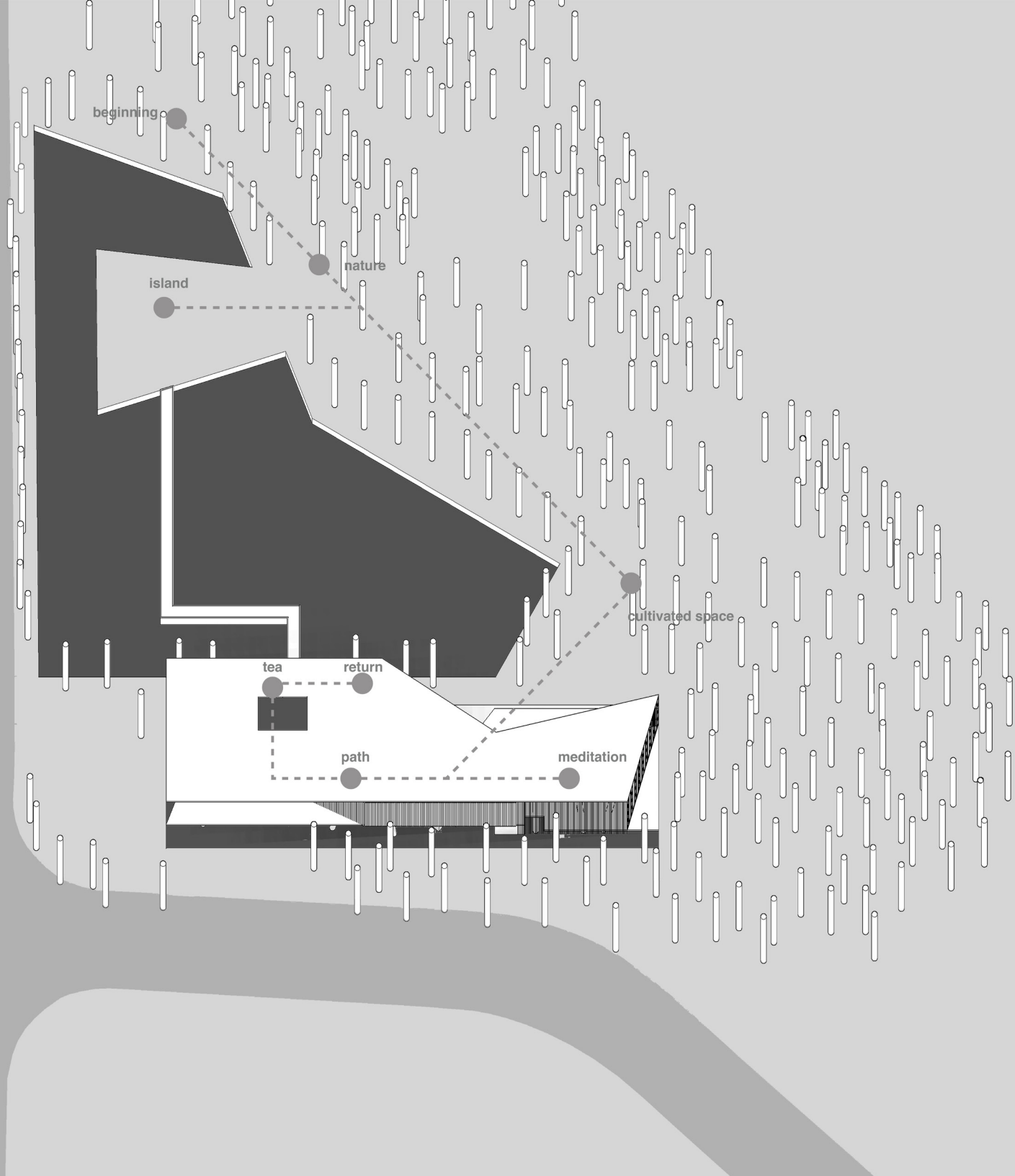


Figure 45. Path in the Site

A PATH IN THE SITE

The tea journey is not merely creating an exceptional moment that can be repeated. Rather, it is a path of procession to an unknown or unexpected answer. Without the tendency to belong to either the city or the mountains, the site survives in the path.

The path can be understood as a linear process of reinterpreting the environment in the human mind. When people come, act and think, they interact with nature.

The north entrance at the beginning of the path leads people into a pure natural world (Figure 45). Visitors are immediately surrounded by the bamboo groves. As in approaching to the south, they will arrive in the middle - the island. There is a distance to the architecture form which is separated by water. The lake is not only reflecting nature, but also is reflecting

the human mind. Standing on the island, people view the architectural form as a different world. While situated inside the landscape, the form represents a dialogue between the city and the mountains.

Moving further in south, people are immersed in an integrated environment. The experience is shifted to cultivated space that consists of nature and the man-made form.

Following with the sequence inside the form, the first part is the meditative space. The second part is a path, smaller than the whole path, which is a way of getting closer to the destination. The third part is the tea space that represents the moment of drinking while having an imagination. The last step of the path is the return. People go back where the journey started.

MAIN ACCESS ON THE GROUND LEVEL



The site used to be a central lake with the island in the north and grassland in the south (Figure 46). Instead of occupying the original island, the design focuses on the empty grassland. Making use of the land, a bridge connects the architectural form with the original island (Figure 47). It offers a slow and quiet way of approaching the destination.

The ground floor is mainly integrated with the surrounding landscape. It is part of the landscape. Separated from the ground, main activities shift when people move upstairs to the entrance. The central core for circulation is exposed on the ground, allowing a minimal impact on nature. Columns are skewed on angles, emphasizing vertical elements of bamboo in the site. The transition from nature to the new form is made by adding a bridge in the lake.

Figure 46. Original Site Plan

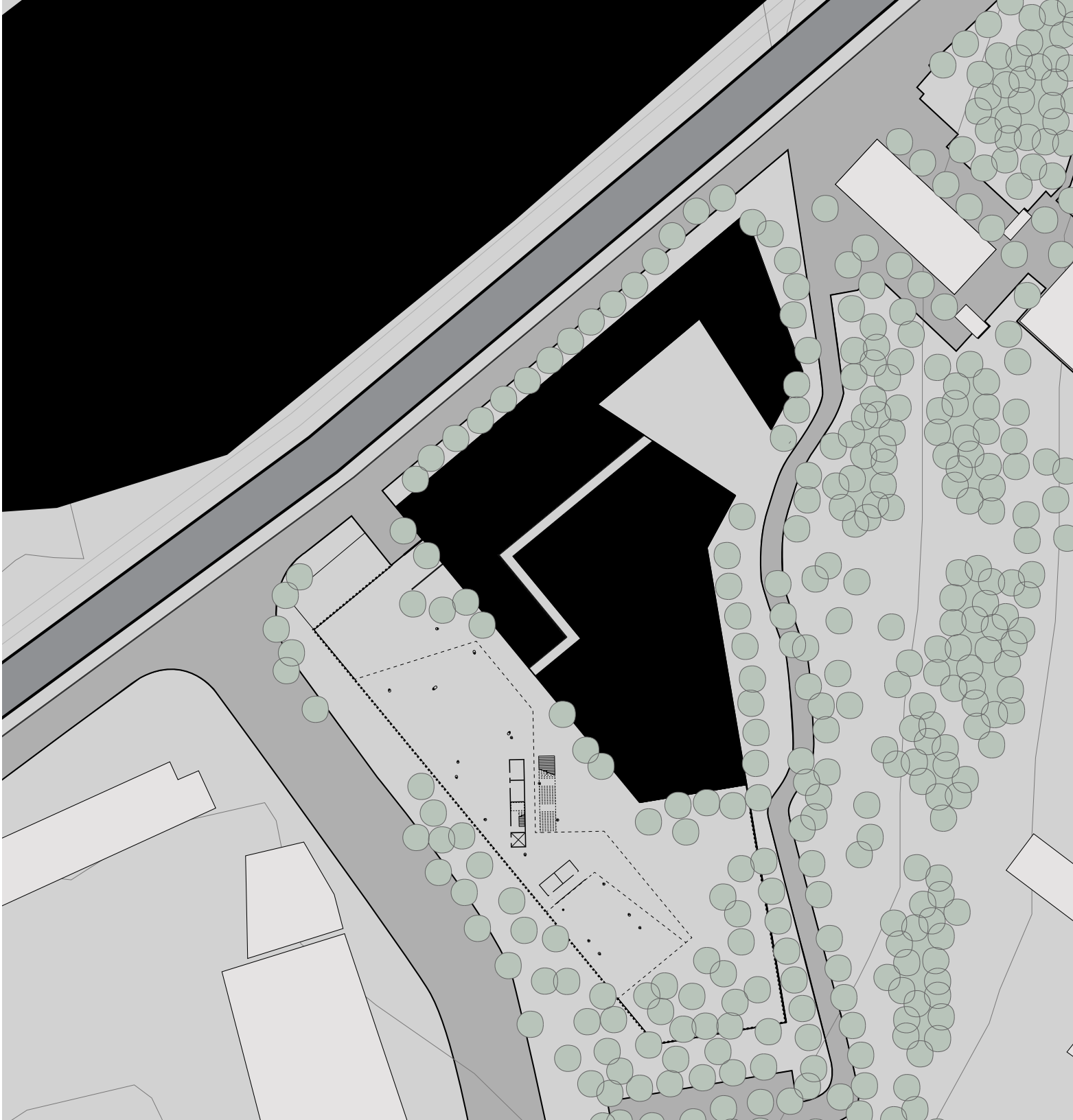


Figure 47. Proposed Site Plan

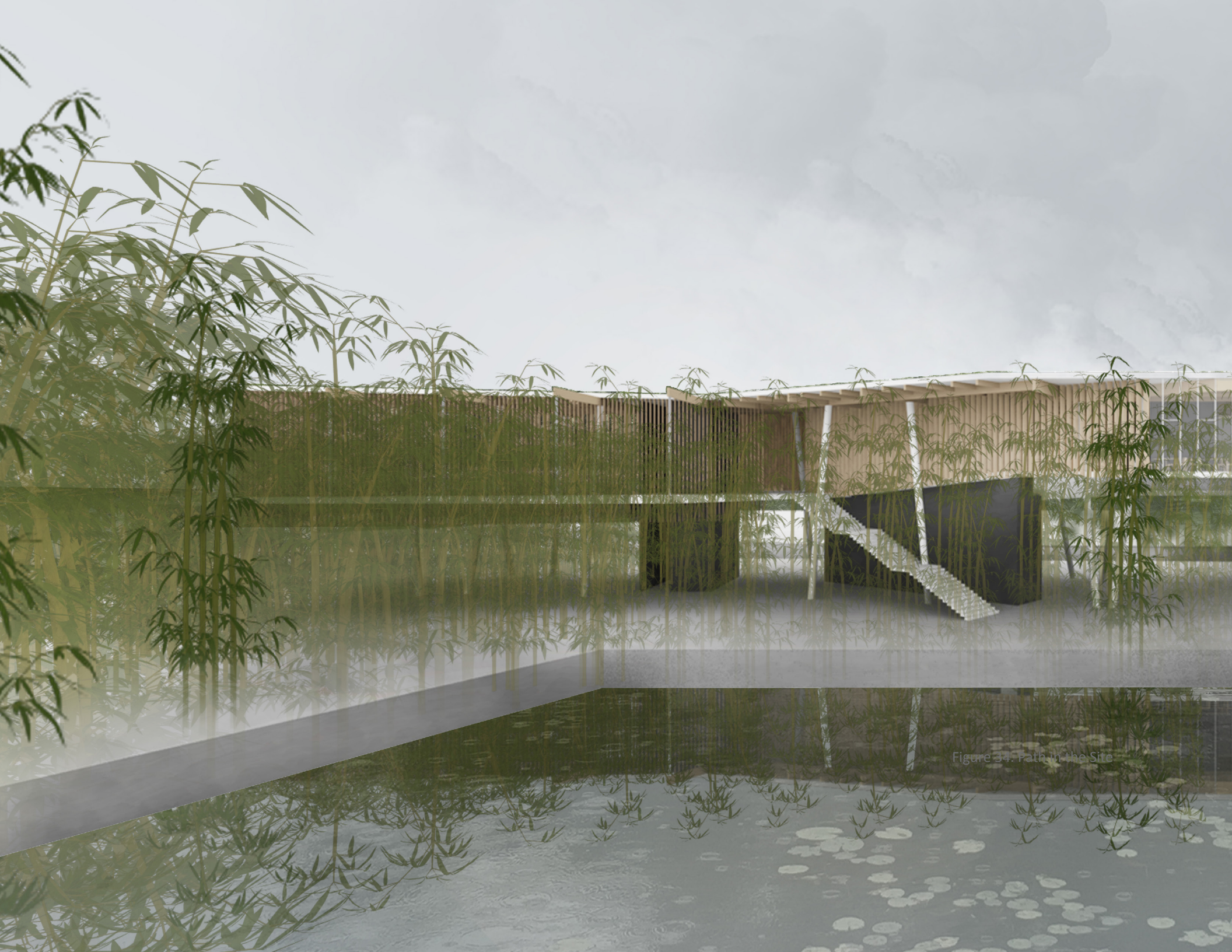
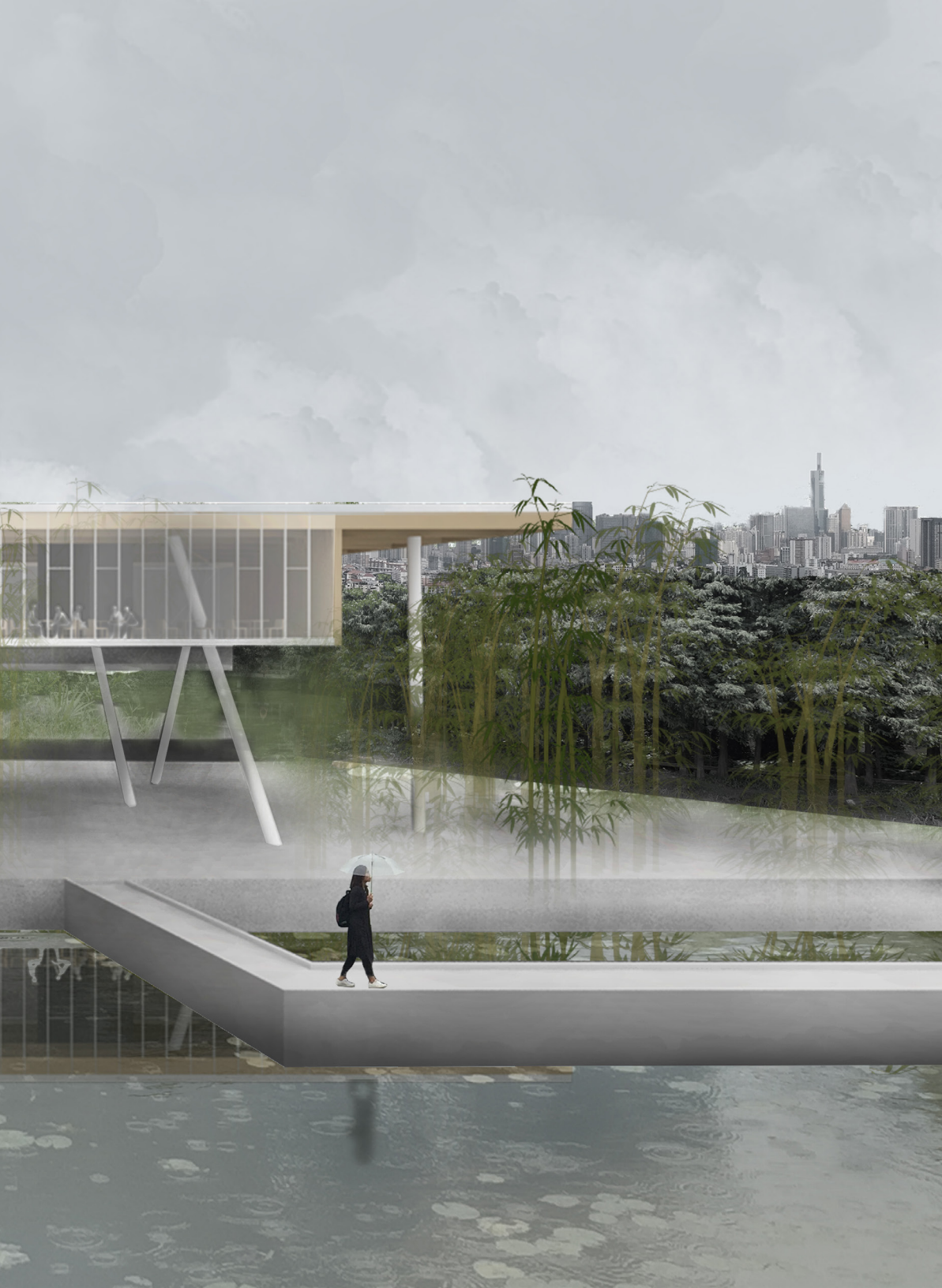


Figure 34. Path in the Site



View across the pond

The view shows the integration of building form with the original site. The bridge in the lake is added for the seclusion from being lost in the bamboo groves. The building form is floated above the ground for a focused view towards the city and the mountains. Meanwhile, the form is dissolved into the landscape.

Figure 48. View Across the Pond

ACCESS ON THE SECOND LEVEL

Moving up through the main stairs , the space first encountered on the second floor is the chamber shaped by the facade. The first space in the east is a yoga practice room. Breathing the air through wood slats on both sides, the practitioner is engaged with nature. The second space while moving to the west is the amplified chamber while with a view to the outdoor decking in the south corner. The third space is the central room for the kitchen and preparing tea. Walking through the open kitchen, the destination for discovery is having a tea with the view of the Baiyun Mountains.

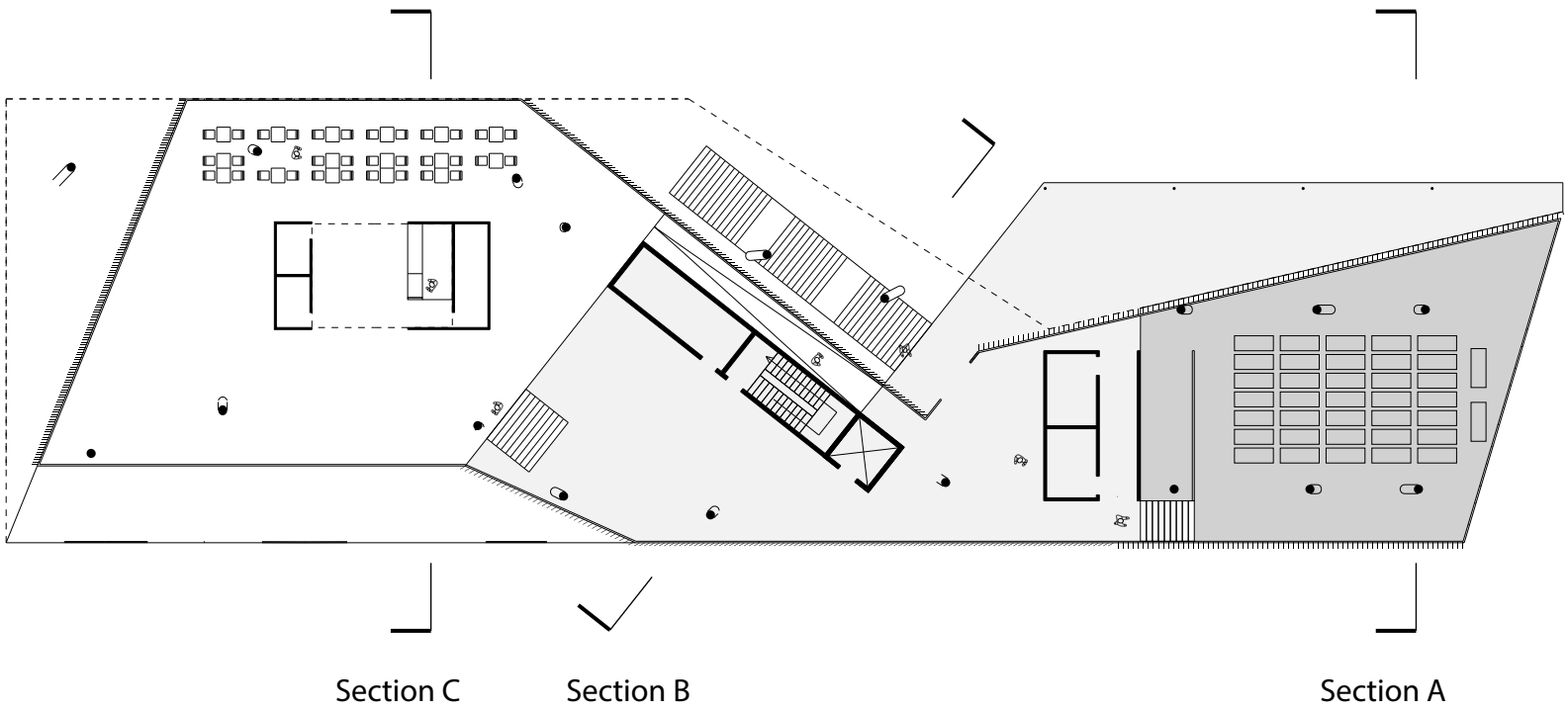
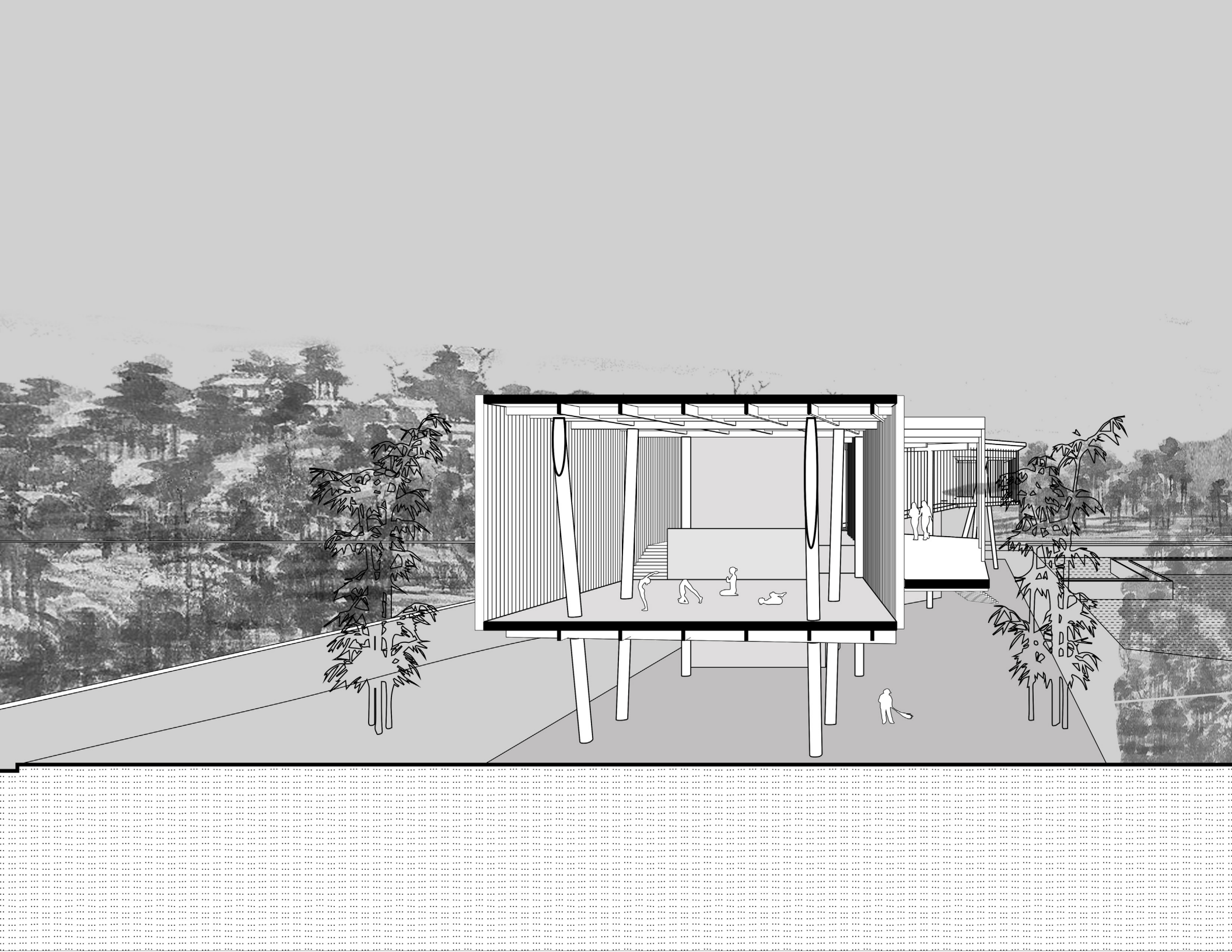
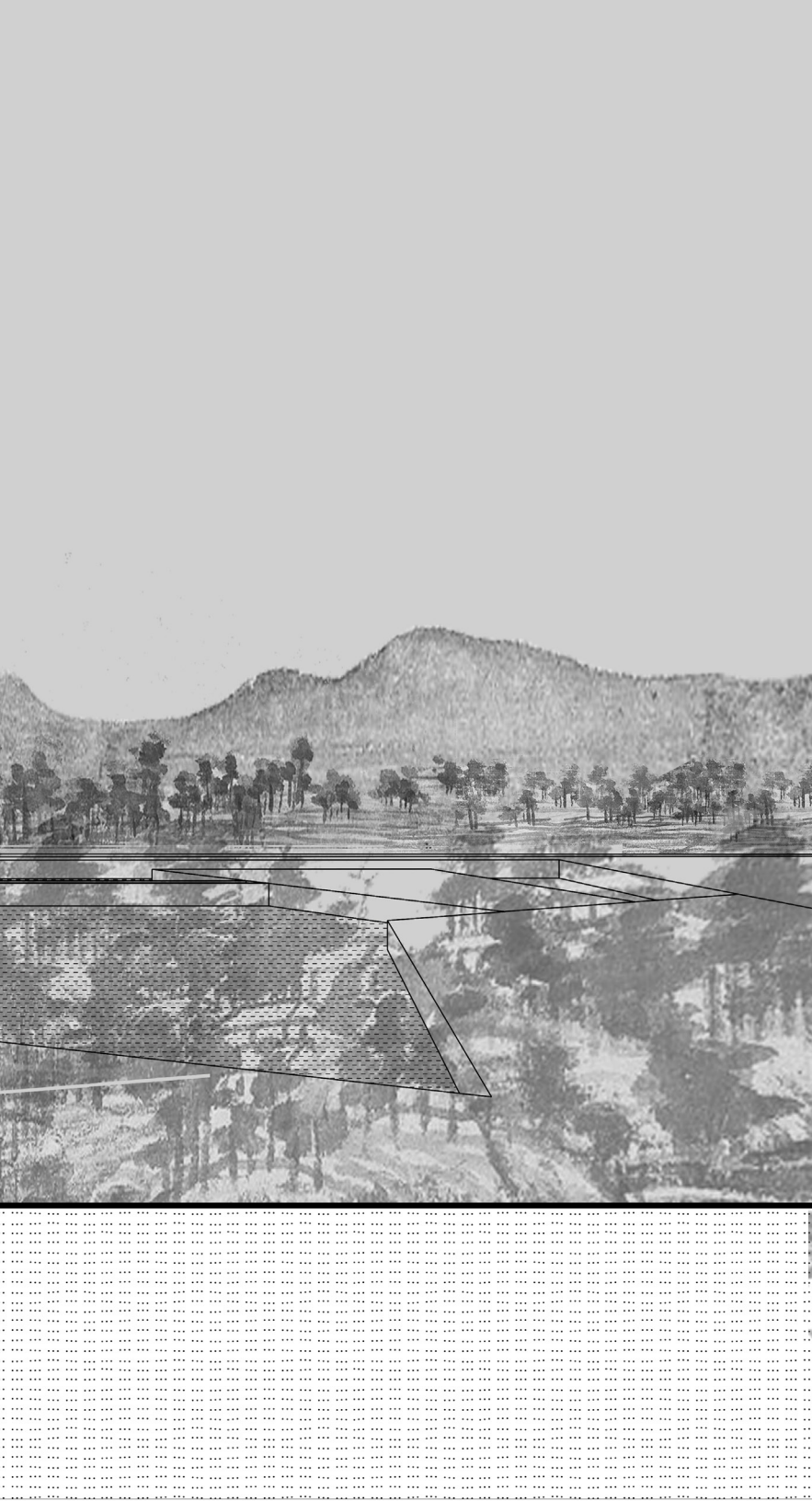


Figure 49. Second Floor Plan





MEDITATION (SECTION A)

There are three chapters in the architectural form. The first chapter is called meditation. Meditation is a physical form for thinking about the relationship between people and the world in which they live. In this case, it is about the intimacy between the living body and surrounding bamboo groves. Bamboo is an important element of the site, which is constantly experienced by people through the visual and other senses.

Figure 50. Section A



1. Entrance

This is the entrance view of the building form. The threshold which leads to the inner space suggests vertical movement. The mysterious experience is created by the slender columns which form the entrance.

2. Approaching the meditative space

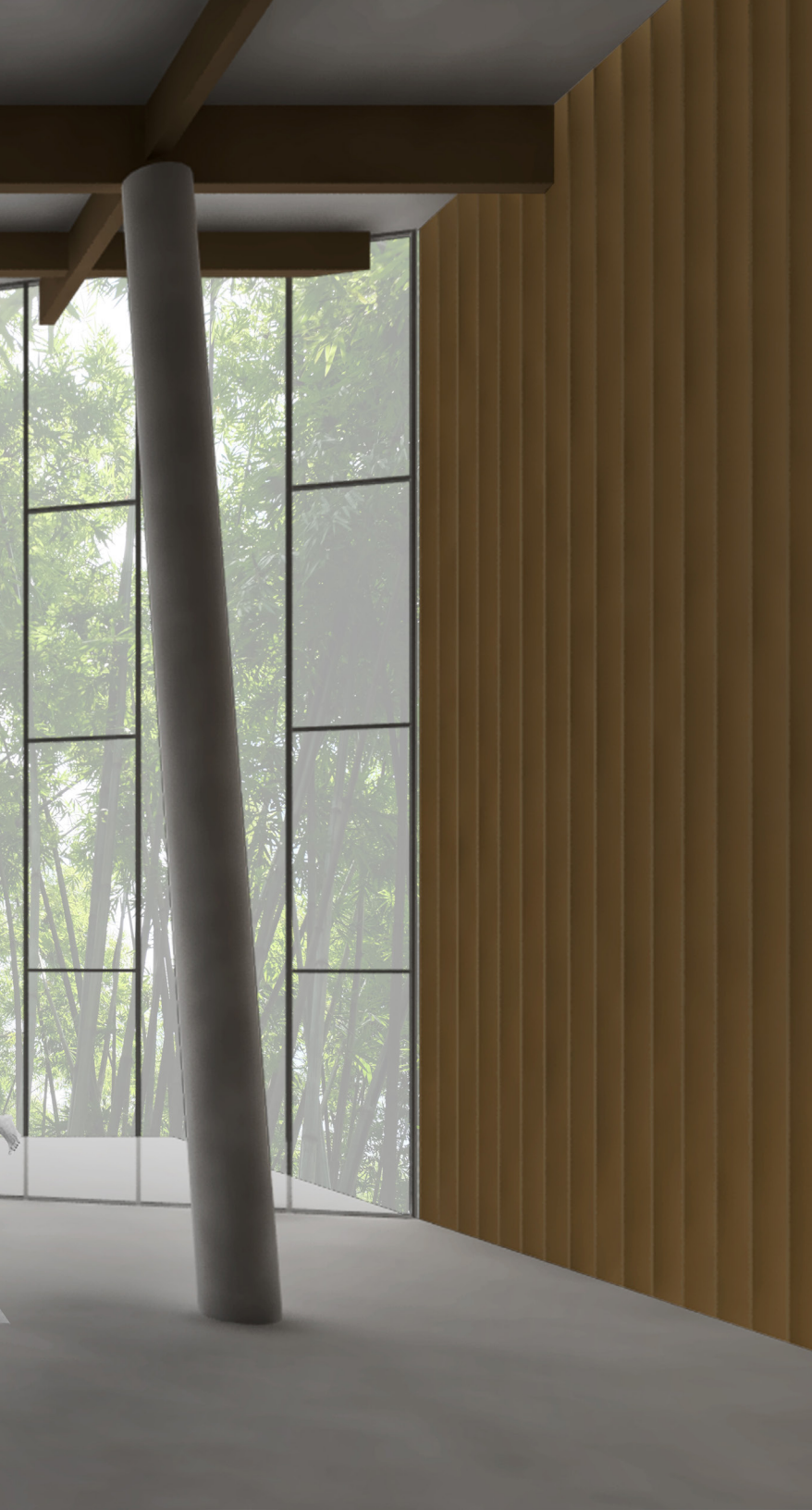
The view is towards east side of the building. The passage leads to the meditative space. While it is floated above the ground, practitioners approach the space by walking down.

Figure 51. Entrance (opposite page)

Figure 52. Approaching the Meditative Space



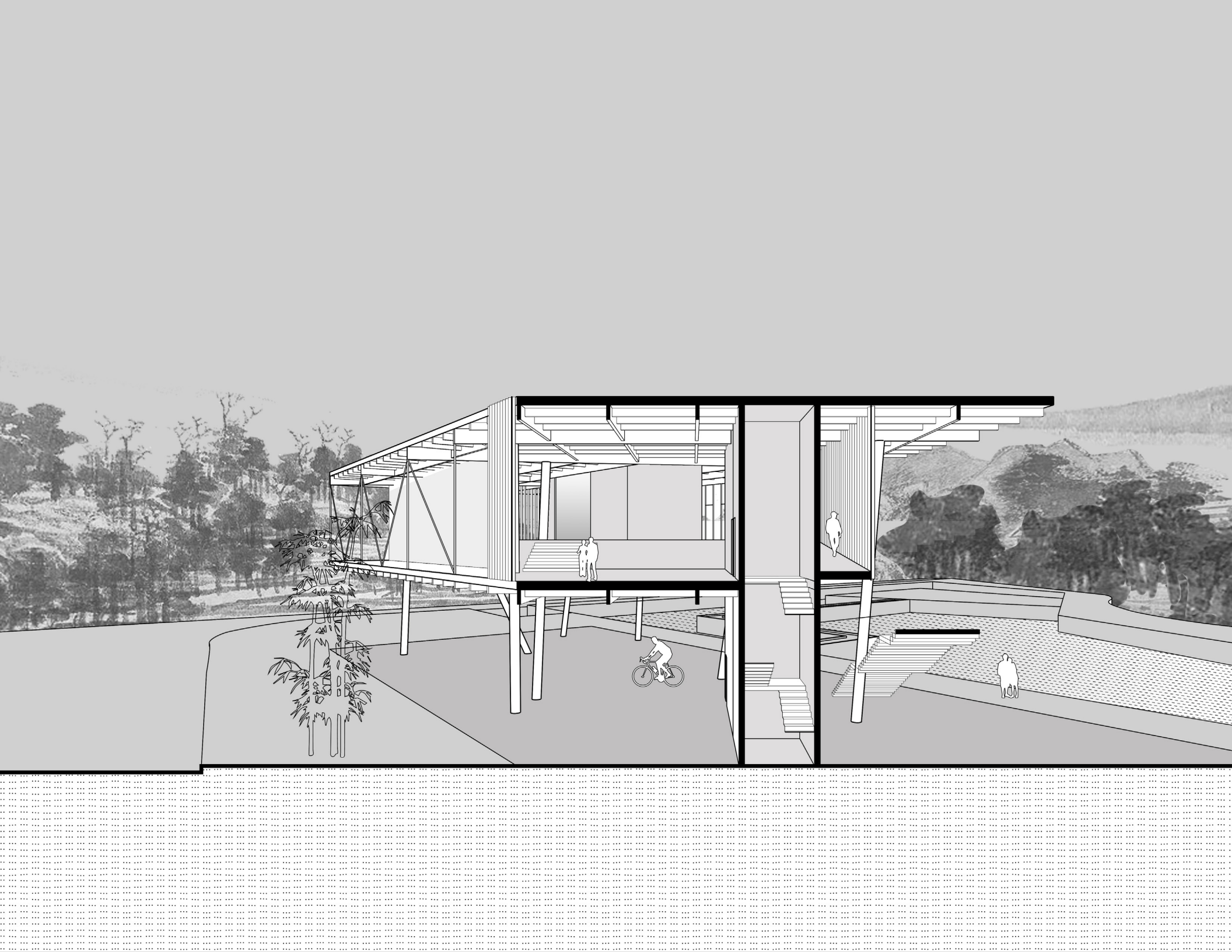




3. Meditative space facing northeast

This is the space for yoga and other meditative activities. With air filtering through wood slats, practitioners attach their multiple senses to nature. Through sound, sight and smell, they are fully engaged with bamboo forest in front. It is where the mind encounters nature.

Figure 53. Meditative Space Facing Northeast





PATH (SECTION B)

The second chapter is the path. It is a small part of the looping route throughout the site. During this movement, a transition is experienced from pure nature to the cultivated space. It is where the spiritual bridge is built between people and nature. Nature does not disappear. Instead, it starts to become an image to be viewed.

Figure 54. Section B



4. Path to the city view

Sliding around the wood slats, the visitors further explore starting from the west of the circulation core. The city is hidden by the varied wood slats, and the varied angles of the columns point to the next step.

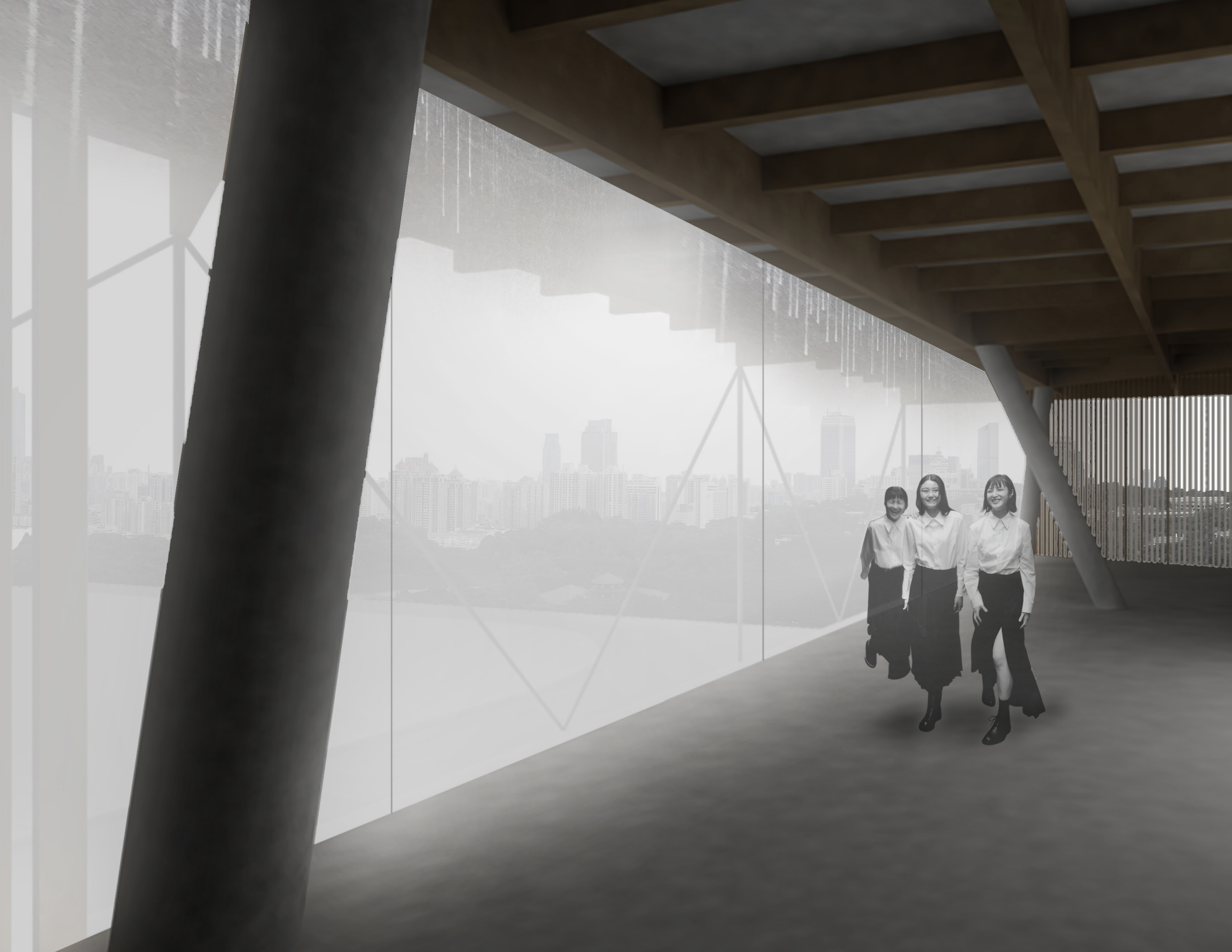
5. Approaching the city view

As the passage becomes broader, the surrounding becomes more tangible to the eyes. The vision encounters a central space encircled by columns.

Figure 55. Path to the City View

Figure 56. Approaching the City View
(opposite page)



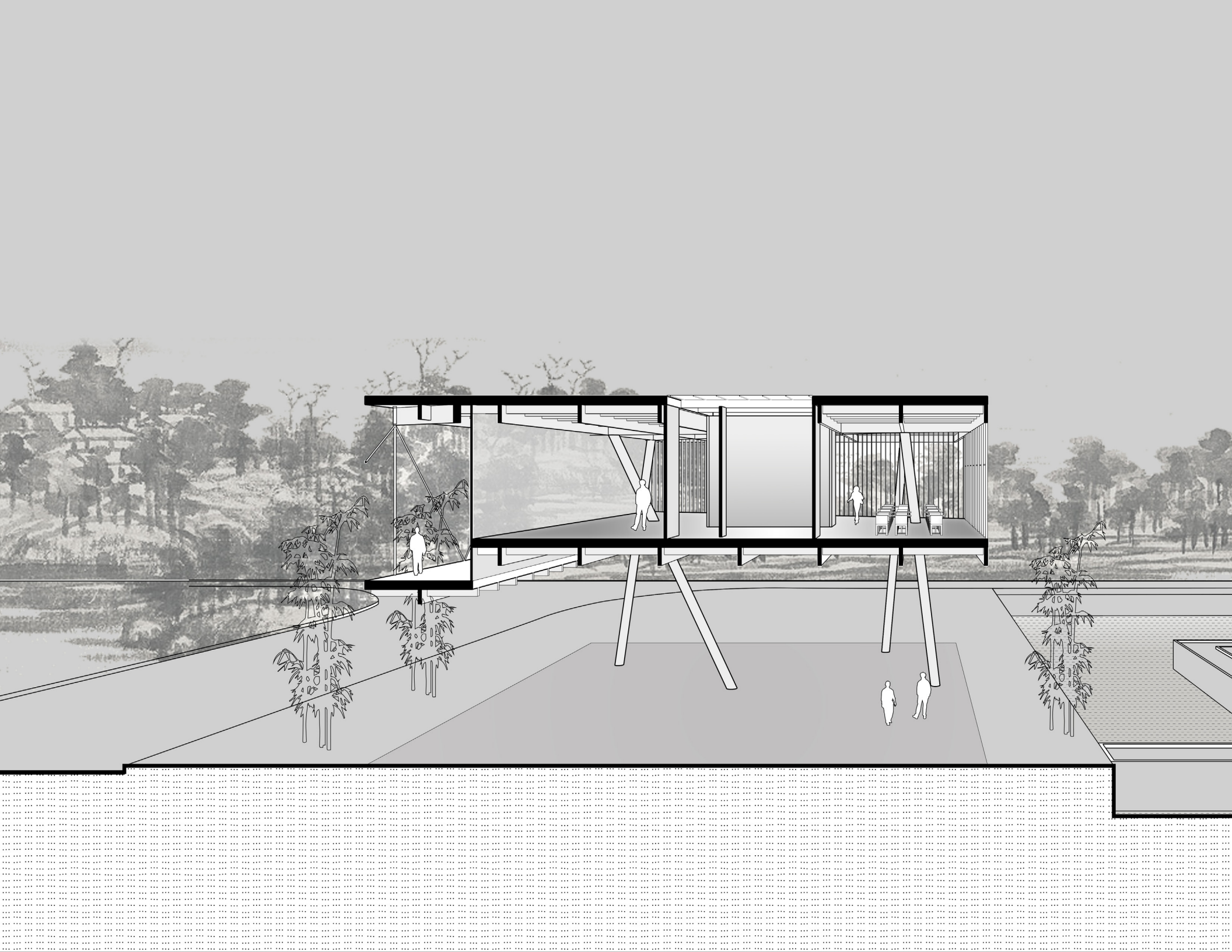


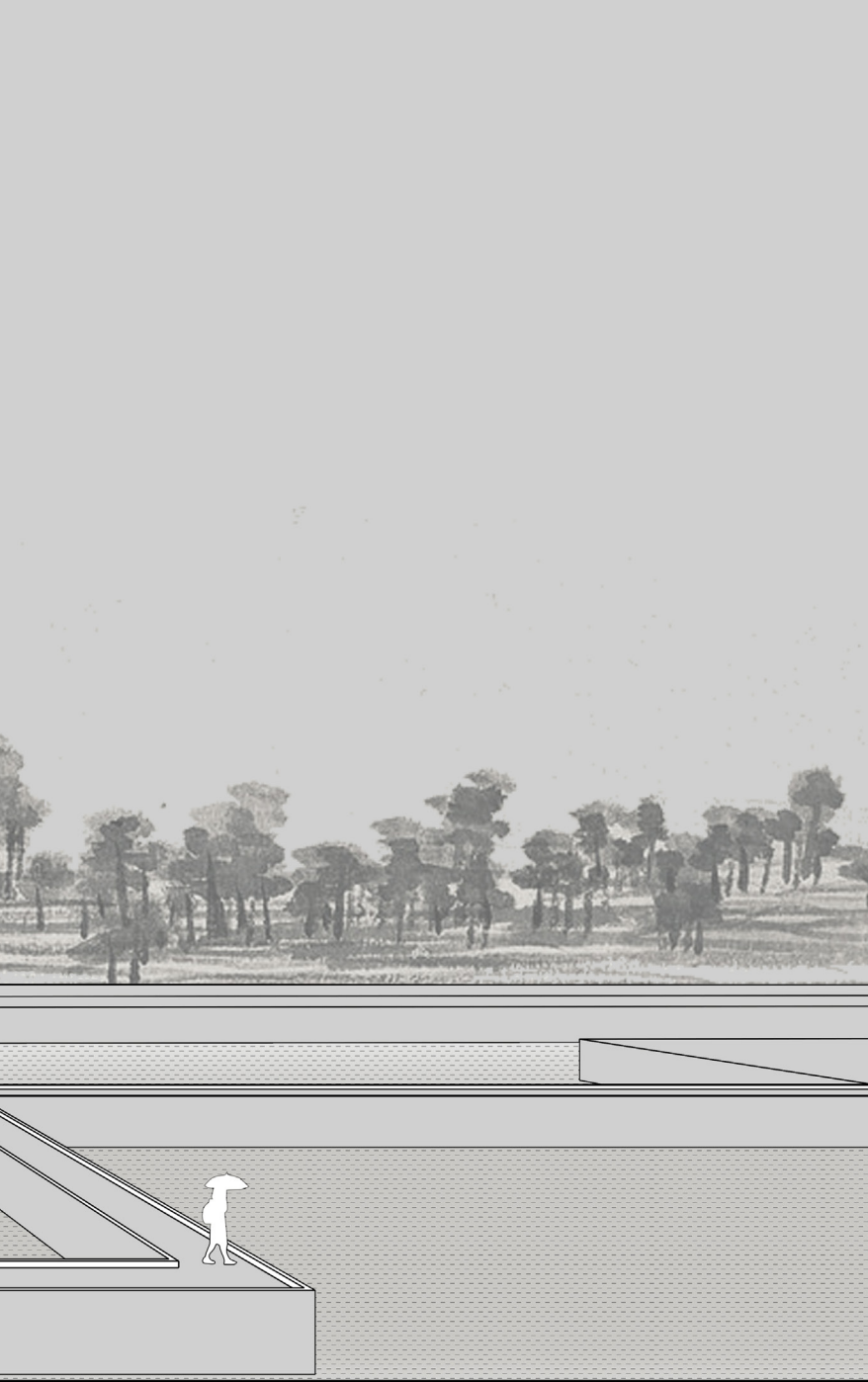


6. City view

Light plays an important role in the space by full panels of translucent fabric in the south facade. For a long time, the city has become a prominent view in the citizens' life. Blurring the direct contact with the city allows a cautious thinking of the change that has taken place. Meanwhile, those gaps between the wood slats indicate an intimate relationship with the context.

Figure 57. City View





TEA (SECTION C)

The last chapter is tea. It is where visitors are set into a focusing area towards the distant nature, such as the pond in the site, and the peak of Baiyun Mountains a few miles away. Being inspired by the spiritual connection with nature, the view is considered to be a pause. It is an ephemeral moment of life that enables the awareness of the eternal universe.

Figure 58. Section C





7. Approaching the tea

The physical movement of body is cast by a diffused skylight in a central space. Shadows lead visitors to the destination - drinking tea in front of the mountains. In the process of preparing the tea, the serving room brings inspiration and practice to the tea table. Through the taste, scent and sight, the imagination is stimulated.

Figure 59. Approaching the Tea

TEA



8. Tea Drinking Space

Visitors sit to take a break along the windows in the north. The mind is purified when they are having a direct dialogue with the mountains. Tea brings the memory of the past and instigates the emotions at the moment.

9. Return Way

At the end of the journey, visitors leave from the narrow and long passage in the north. With or without the exceptional feeling, the journey becomes a part of their millions of memories.

Figure 60. Tea Drinking Space (opposite page)

Figure 61. Return Way



CONCLUSION

There are no everlasting answers in predicting the future of Guangzhou. The city has changed to display varied characteristics during its long history. The Baiyun Mountains, as an exceptional existence, are constantly influencing the way people think about the city. Through the dialogue in the design proposal, the relationship between nature and the city has been reiterated. The phenomenology embedded in this relationship recalls the spirit and culture born in this region. The thesis revivifies and re-imagines a new relationship between the city and the mountains. As one of many potential proposals, it argues for the importance of embracing the differences caused by urbanization. Meanwhile, it addresses the necessity of living in connection with the original path.



Figure 62. Panoramic View of Guangzhou. 2016. Bottom



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25. Relaxing outside the city
26. Arriving in the Rural Area
27. Being Surrounded by Nature
28. Staying in a Quiet Place

29. Observing the City from afar
30. Seeing the Mountains from the Window
31. Setting up for Tea
32. Tasting the Water in Tea Leaves
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