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Introduction

Buildings are products of humans and their culture; they're dynamic entities whose materiality can be defined in a network of relations and that include social and temporal aspects.

In the context of economic and technological progress, buildings, as well as humans, are often found vulnerable, underconsidered and forgotten. Tegel Airport from Berlin, pure embodiment of an anti-capitalistic brutalist piece of architecture, symbolises a transition of time, space, emotional and mental states.

This work is about reconsidering the role of conservation/reinventing of a building and how it can be repulsed within and beyond temporality, spaciality, memoriality and materiality.

Ultimately, I propose transforming the airport into a rehabilitation centre for people suffering from burnouts, as a place of second chances. By keeping the key material, concrete, exposed in different forms, shapes and colours, I am trying to define freedom of self expression and honesty

Q/A

about the project

What are you doing?

I am transforming a closed airport from Berlin into a rehabilitation center for people who suffer from burnouts and mild mental health issues. I am drawing a parallel between the human and the building, both victims of technological and economical progress, are facing constraints about their own validity.

Why is it needed?

Burnout is the term used more and more in the competitive and fast-growing industries, describing an emotional, physical, and mental state of overwhelming caused by immoderate stress. This is the side effect phenomenon of technological and economical progress, which, without prevention, can snowball into more severe, even incurable mental health issues. Preventive medicine is a combination of medical practices that are designed with a proactive approach to patient care.

Who is it for?

The rehabilitation center is destined for everyone suffering burnouts, without any age or gender limitations. Considering the fact that many people don't take this seriously, and accepting certain mental exhaustion is interpreted as shame, and practice self-healing, I've decided to combine together practices open for all.

How will it live?

The space will be managed by doctors and wellbeing specialists and rooms where people can transit their state of mind and rest, as well as activity rooms. Different types of therapeutical practices will be combined in order to serve as a platform of detachment from the capitalistic world. Art therapy, Dance therapy, yoga, wellness, are just a few of the ideas of how space will be used. My major idea behind designing this space is to keep the memory of space and use the ex-airport as a symbol of transition. Since it is a brutalist building, I want to keep the descriptive material — concrete as a key element in the project, because keeping the material exposed will transmit the idea of honesty and strength. Being aware of the contradictory qualities of concrete, and how complicated will be to make it accepted as well-being or comfortable material, I will use different forms, techniques as much as different colors and textures to crossover stereotypes and create a powerful but welcoming space.

Where will it be?

Berlin, Germany

What difficulties are you facing realizing this?

The biggest difficulty is to find the floorplans with the sizes. I am working with some approximative measurements and without a in-person site evaluation.

The power of and the effect it has on people

Due to the lockdown, our world took the size of our homes. This was our office, our stage, our restaurant, our cinema, and at some point it wasn't enough anymore. Every second person I knew was buying furniture, deco and replanning the space they live in. Coincidence? I don't think so.

My initial research idea, and the reason why I actually applied for the MA, was about The philosophy of space and the correct planing of it. After researching deeper into the topic of homes, I realised that the perfect home means different things to different people, Is a part of our identity. Then, I thought of designing something for people, I thought of depression, burn-outs, and other major problems people are dealing with, especially in the pandemic context when people lost families, jobs, homes. I thought of hospitals, as a place of power and a place of second chances. While not knowing what my final research topic will be, but working on the Unit 1 tasks, I understood I have some things that always interested me and that I wish to use that in my project. Reuse, Transform, reinterpret were just few of them.

Berlin's Tegel airport, loved by many for its brutalist design, closed its airways this year, after more than 60 years of servicing the German capital. The Aesthetics and a low-key anti-capitalistic interpretation of its design don't hide the fact that Tegel was overloaded and a change was necessary, but what's next? I wanted to research brutalist architecture deeper so I've used London's beloved The Barbi-

space



can Centre, to record my movie FEEL BRUTALISM. The barbican, like the other representants of this type of architecture, is a controversial place, that you either love or you don't. Texture? Colour? Concrete? Here I decided to make an experiment. I've created a model imitating a concrete block to test people's feelings based on how it looks. Our brains have evolved to identify patterns, creating associations by interacting with the real world. It's a survival instinct.

The main sensation now is that life is speeding up, a commonly reported aspect of people living in these transitioning times where media and technology take control. A stressful, emotionally consuming lifestyle, an extreme commitment can put people under pressure, to the point that they feel exhausted, burned out, and unable to cope. Brutalist architecture is the most honest type of architecture. My research idea is to use Tegel Airport's to create a place of rehabilitation for people who suffer burnouts and depressions, a place where people can be honest with themselves and can build their own strong emotional shield. I want to debate the idea that a brutalist building can never a wellness place and use this brutalist iconic airstrip as a symbol of transition, strength and adaptability to the time and the changes progress anticipates. This will be A home away from home.

Conceptualisation and materiality of concrete in a socio — political and cultural context

To say that concrete is a contradictory material, it's not particularly an original observation. Although we depend and use concrete extensively - by mixing cement, water and the desired aggregate - people also regularly express distaste for its visual, tactile qualities and its functionality. Indeed, concrete is not universally bad, oppressive or ugly. These are categories that we have developed in response to changing historical dynamics. Conceptualisation and materiality of con-



crete in a socio-political and cultural context. Only by taking charge of this chronicle and looking deeper into the materiality of concrete can we better understand our response to it, plan differently new built environments and repurpose those massive grey monoliths.

Identified particularly with the politics of the left and tracing back to the beginning of the twentieth century, concrete appears to be political in many ways. The idea of reinforced concrete as an act to draw people together and enhance their collective social consciousness was initially represented by the so-called tour de force: The Centennial Hall, completed in 1913 in Breslau (then Germany, now Poland). This circular, continuous interior space, the biggest in that world, is an icon in the history of modern architecture and reinforced concrete. Designed to hold an audience of ten thousand people, the concrete hall was criticised by Robert Breuer, a well-known critic of the times, as a mix of 'anxiety and enthusiasm'. Funny or not, this argument applies up to this day and once again confirms this yin and yang quality of concrete as universal material.

It was in the post-war era that reinforced concrete achieved this political maturity becoming a formidable weapon, especially in the Cold War context. The main scope of all western democracies at the time was establishing and maintaining a stable

consensus between the state and people. In that sense, creating welfare, guaranteeing all citizens access to certain healthcare, education, housing, pensions, was the general strategy all over Europe. Architectural politics of the Cold war era were seen as showpiece projects, for example, Stalinallee in Berlin, in response to which the Westside started developing a variety of housing blocks, by western architects. The communist East and the capitalist West were competing to outshine the other in the field of ordinary building. Throughout Europe, concrete 'manifesto' buildings started to appear as well. In Paris, Town Hall, Boulogne-Billancourt working-class suburb development, Karl Marx School in Paris, were all controlled by a communist municipality. In England, the socialist London Borough of Finsbury's Finsbury Health Centre, where the excessive use of concrete was used as political propaganda, advising against the national government's lack of a social programme. The train of events and the way concrete was used as a political material, brings us closer to 1997, the opening of Romania's Palace of Parliament. A surface of 330 000 square meters makes it the biggest administrative construction in Europe and the second in the world, after the U.S. Pentagon.

The Palace's scale, design and surroundings were the ultimate manifestation of Ceausescu's force. Architecture and urbanism find justification in politics where even the straight roads towards the permanent are a symbol of order, control, and power. Another iconic example is The Berlin Wall, also known as the Iron Curtain, which divided a nation and two very different ideologies. Made of iron fencing and then reinforced concrete blocks, The Curtain was not just a border between democracy and Communism, but also a defensive line, a limit to the expansion of Soviet control in Europe. What is interesting about the interpretation of the Berlin Wall as well as of bunkers, is that its significance does not lay in itself as a place but as a mirror reflecting what it protects from and what it stands for. As mentioned by the french philosopher Virilio: 'concrete offers life through its protection'.



Tegel airport, a brutalist beauty, until recently was a space of both transition and negotiation. In fact, it reveals continuous connectivity between national and international politics and the history of spatial orders and International affairs. A unique political situation in 1948, with West Berlin being enclosed by Soviet power, developed a need to fulfil both a political-military and a social purpose. The architects created a modern airport, with a concrete shell construction, visible pillars and beams, achieving a new standard in German contemporary architecture, which after the war had been struggling with finding its own identity. Tegel, as a space of transition, affects our idea about time and space during and after transit. The motif of origin has continued to strongly and repeatedly influence the airports' function and aesthetics, like in 2011, when the renowned spatial structure successfully argued the preservation of the building which found itself in a changed political context.





OTTO-LIEBHAF

BERLIN-TEGEL

DER
RAUM
VON
FLIEGEN

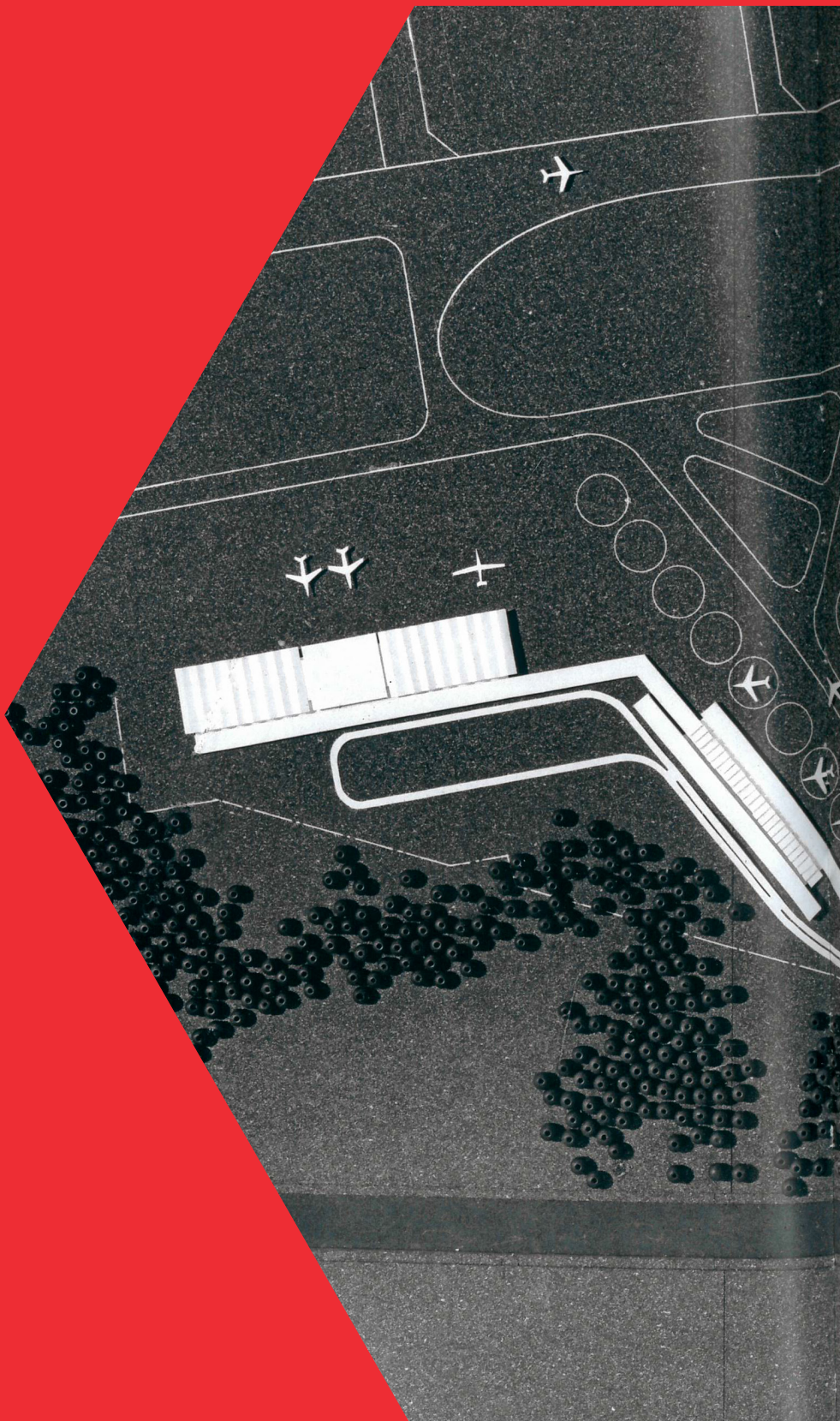


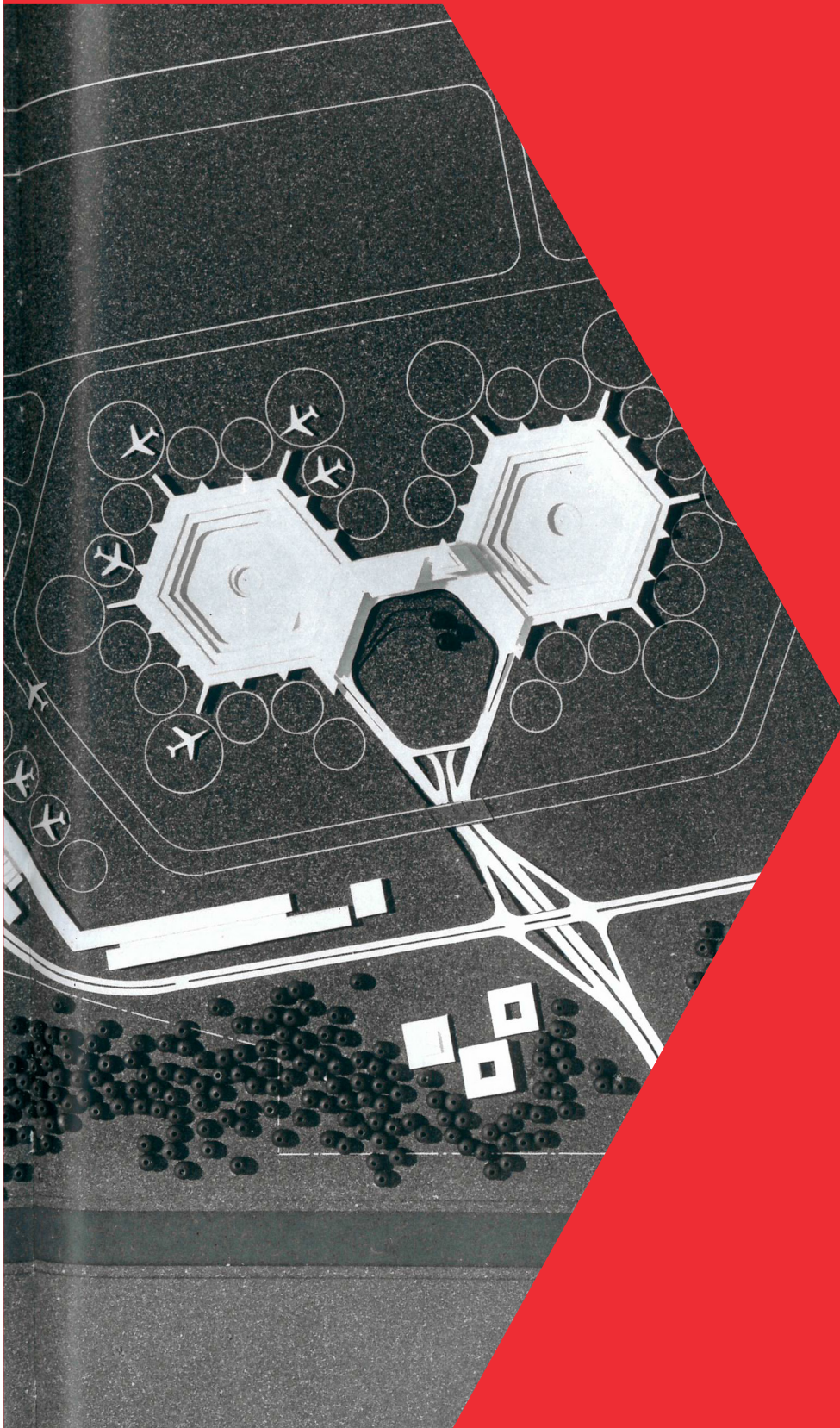
For architects, concrete was politically neutral. The wide usage of concrete was a propelling aestheticism and for the young architects, a celebration of creative freedom. In wartime, churches continued their activities in bunkers. With peace, the church intended to reformulate spirituality, spread holiness and hope by building 'more simpler churches, rather than having few but magnificent ones'. A good example of a church by Le Corbusier's La Tourette. Admired and commented by Alexandre Persitz as: *"Never has poverty of a material has appeared sumptuous as an expression of high spirituality."* Le Corbusier made it clear though that his work was about "psycho-physiology of the feelings' more than religious requirements. As in his other works of the era, he tried evoking sensuality and emotion. An interesting statement was made by the Italian architect Giovanni Michelucci: *"poverty is a moral condition of work, and by giving a crude material 'moving testimony of life' could give realisation to our interior richness."*

Visually, the idea of poverty associated with concrete buildings goes hand in hand with an attested simplicity of form and lack of ornamentation. Subject to decades of wear and tear, vandalism, clutter, shabbiness and accumulated dirt as much as a developing pattern of crimes happening in these places, developed mass anticipation of negative events related to those places, and of course a fear of death. This brings back to the war times, where concrete took the shape of bunkers as shelters and dust, as a representation of explosions and death. Interestingly enough, the material absorbed and keeps the memory of death to this day, overshadowing the positive qualities of concrete and our realistic perception of the monolith.

I couldn't help but wonder, are acts of public urination or graffiti, are a form of protest, and dislike for concrete? In my judgement, compared to a glass cube, it gives a sense of comfort and protection for people to release themselves and their creativity. By interviewing a friend of mine, a graffiti artist, I confirmed that artists like concrete for its texture. *"It has depth, the paint does not slide on the surface, which gives an idea of the temporality of my work."* By researching and developing an objective analysis of the material I've made a questionnaire and let the public opinion balance out this idea of substantial materiality.







If it's about evening the good and the bad of this material as well as choosing between loving and hating concrete, what would you choose?

65%
Love concrete

good contrast
character
sculptural qualities
fluidity of forms
tactile qualities
strong and resistant

Percentual share of opinions about concrete by age groups. The survey was developed in a timeframe of 5 days (2nd – 7th of April 2021).

57 %		18 – 30
25 %		30 – 45
15 %		45 – 60
3 %		60+



35%
Hate concrete

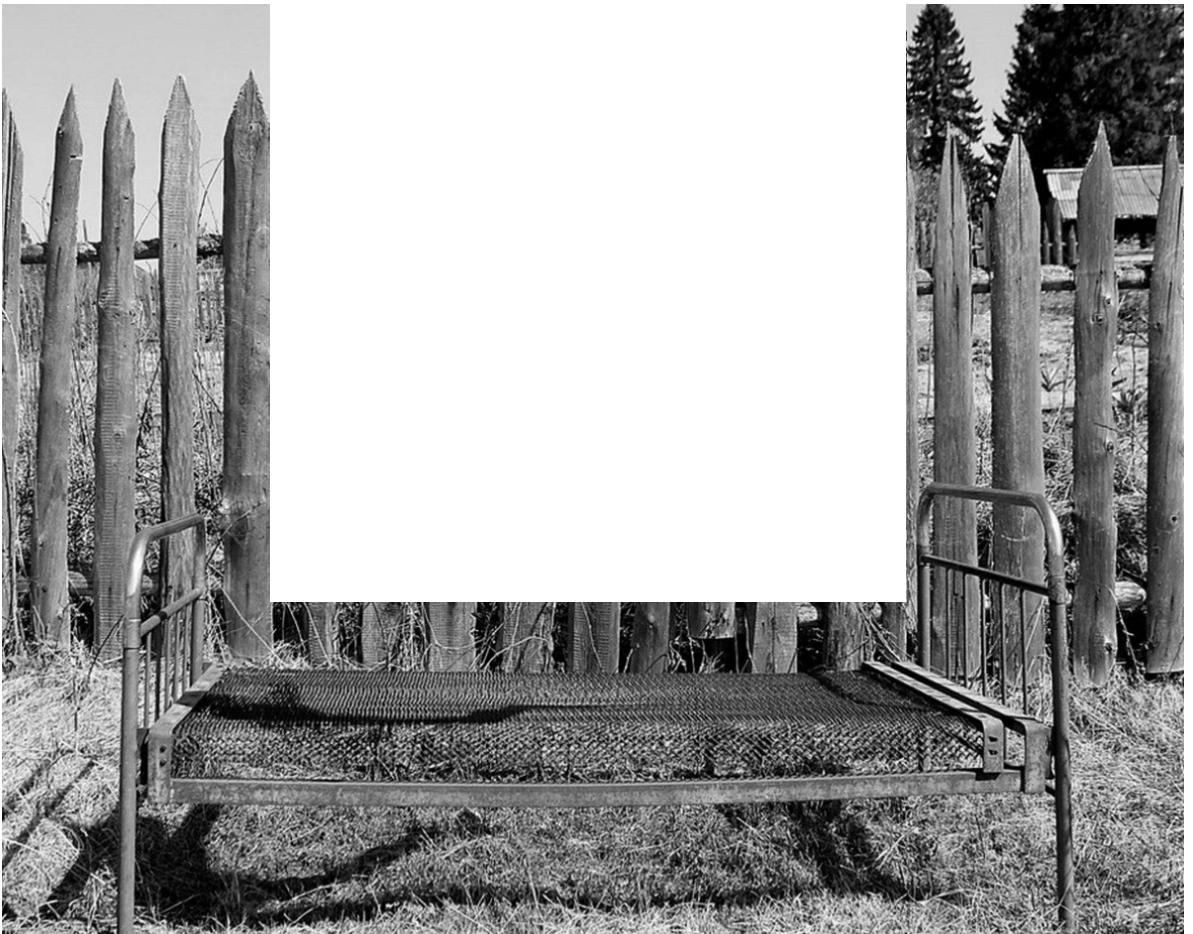
ages badly
cold
looks depressing
unsustainable
basic
edgy

Memoriality & Storytelling

Fair point is that the majority of participants in the survey are young people, presumably activating in the fields of art, design and architecture. Besides this still initial state of survey, an idea is clear, that younger people are more open to concrete and even speaking about it than the older generations. New generations, by having more access to information what before model a deeper understanding of the material, rebellion against the older generations general loathing of it and movements such as SOS Brutalism and the appearance of Instagram pages propagandising the unorthodox beauty of postmodernist buildings (for example: *socialistmodernism* — 414K followers, *brutal_architecture* — 178K followers; *cats_of_brutalism* — 73,7K followers). In these circumstances, a new wave of rediscovering concrete's aesthetic, concrete texture is printed as wallpaper and back-

ground for different marketing campaigns. You can spray yourself with Concrete parfum by Comme des Garçons, wear concrete accessories available on Etsy and ebay, drink at the Concrete Cafe, then party at the Concrete Berghain nightclub, it is that easy making concrete the ultimate lifestyle concept.

A point worth having in mind, are the above mentioned tactile qualities of concrete. Brutalist facades are not a mystery, It is behind the walls that intrigue us. The way it's made and how it works can be easily inspected. The surface is in fact capable of retaining the inner structure of temporality and the folds of memory in its material substance. It can also express sensations, the sensorium of effects of moods and even create atmosphere. It is in this sense that I want to read the surface as architecture not only as a mask.



Tegel Airport, Berlin

built using machines
cold war context
precisely designed
concrete was exposed



My house in Moldova

built by human
post perestroika context
improvised tools and proportions
concrete was never exposed

Building a strong base for a better future.
Built in a crisis period. A way of self
expression. A new beginning.
Usage of concrete meant possibility
and potentiality.

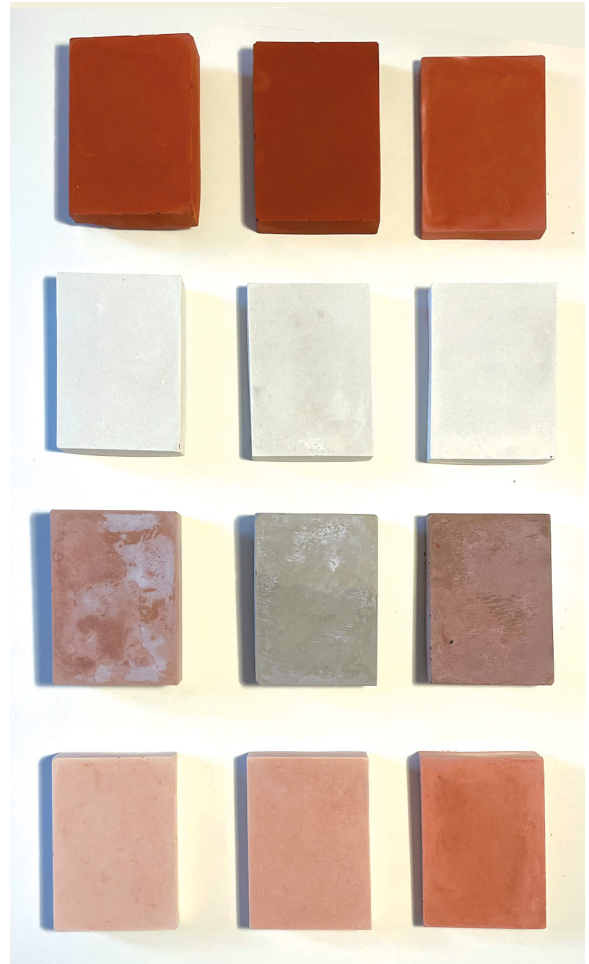
Stereotypes

stereotype no.1 concrete is gray

If there is a speculation that concrete is gray and that its colour is one of the factors that makes it so unlikable. This experiment is focusing on testing concrete's potential to be a different color or tone.

Experiment No.1— Lighten the tonality of gray concrete: In the image, we can see 5 different samples of concrete. The goal of the experiment was to lighten the basic Portland cement with different ratios of Mica powder pigment. Although the market research showed this as an unbeatable option to lighten the concrete, the practice shows that the pigment was not strong enough to lighten the mix using the ratios. Due to the glitter/shimmering effect that the pigment had, the experiment resulted with a reflective surface, what activates then meeting direct light forces.

Experiment No.2 - Colour testing on concrete. Testing pigments and ratios on white and gray concrete After finding the best ratio, different quantities and types of cement were used to obtain different hues of terracotta red, pink and brown. The experiment has shown that White cement and gray cement have different consistencies to start with. By using the same ratio 1:1: 0,5 the outcome have different densities, resulting in better water absorption for the gray cement mixes. The gray cement & red mortar mix resulted earth tones, reminding of wood and clay, where white cement & mortar mixes happened to turn into more desaturated shades of red, as different hues of powder pink.







stereotype no.2
concrete is flat



“There is more sense, I believe, in accepting the dislike people have for concrete for what it is, and in finding room for that repugnance within whatever account of concrete we are able to give.”

— Adrian Forty

Speaking of surfaces, a point worth having in mind is the quality of concrete to take the shape of the cast it sits in and carries after, the memory of the structure. The surface is in fact capable With the presence or lack of light, to express sensations, the sensorium of effects of moods and even create atmosphere.

It is in this sense that these experiments come to read the surface as architecture, not only as a mask. In this context, a series of imprints and textures were made, in order to test Concrete's sculptural qualities. As we can see in the image, natural iprints such as leaves and shells, concrete is retaining the inner structure of temporality and the folds of memory in its material substance.

The surface, far from being superficial, is a moving entity. In most architectural works, the surface becomes a reinterpretation of ornamentation and in relation to light, it is being activated. Seeing and feeling the material white inhabiting these spaces, transform it into a site of intimacy, where the relation with depth is something endlessly satisfying. The texture is the communal architecture of exhibition and materiality. In this aesthetic of minimal simplicity, the attention to material attention affirms materiality in a larger sense of the term. In a material intersection between inside and outside, played out on the surface, it layers an interaction between us and the world around us, between interiority and exteriority, emerging time and space.

It is not my purpose to try to explain away the negativity that concrete attracts, nor to persuade people that what they find ugly is really beautiful. This is not an apology for concrete, meant to win people over to it. If we challenge ourselves to think further, the abstract ornamentation or the idea of visual input finds its meaning in our own interpretation, about what we feel or learned to think. Our brains have evolved to develop patterns creating associations based on our interactions with the world.

The outcomes of working with stereotypes and testing on concrete have shown that besides the fact that it can play a sustainable role in this equation, (by only complementing the existing structure with recycled concrete), it can also take different forms and colours.



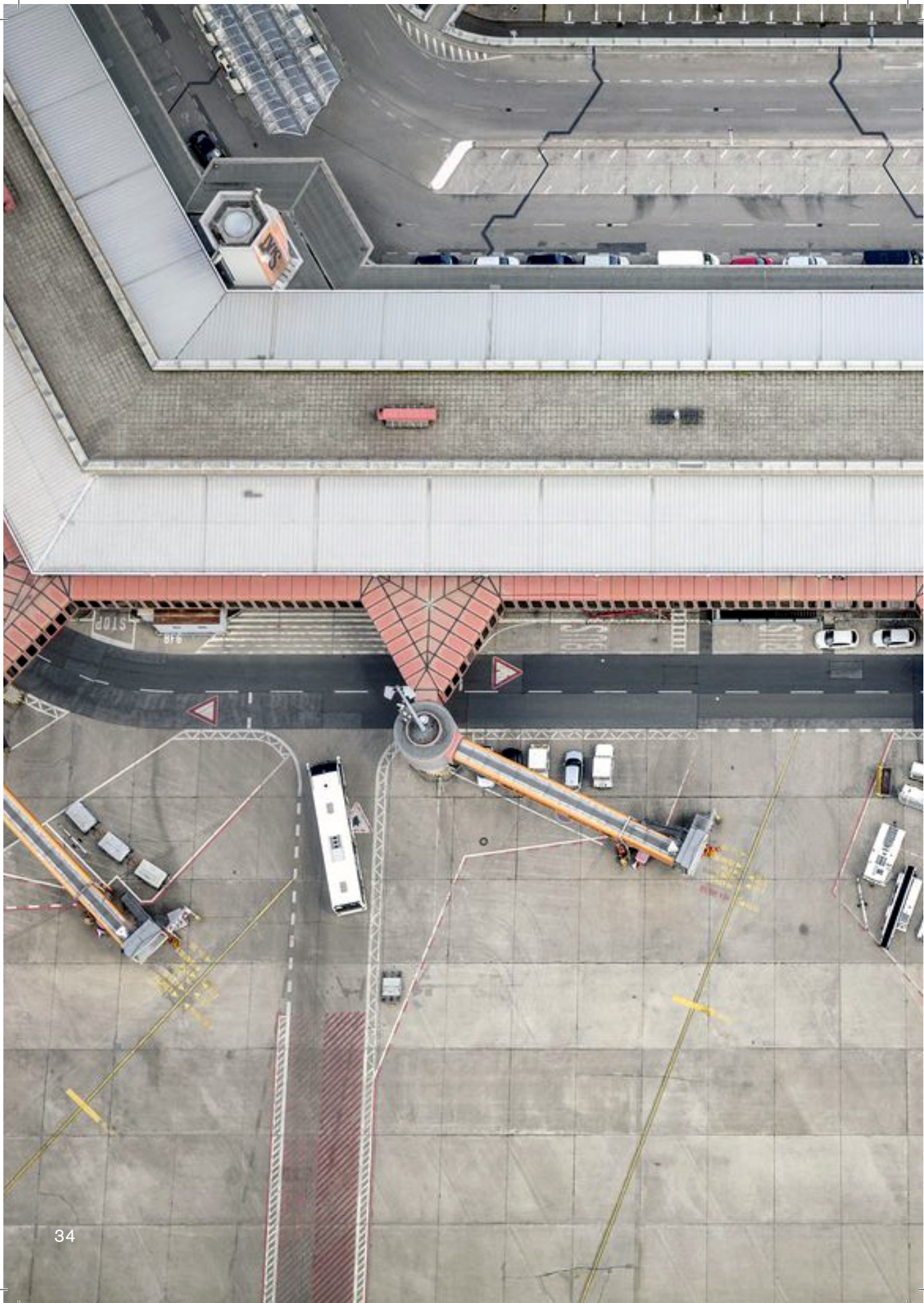
the structure of concrete

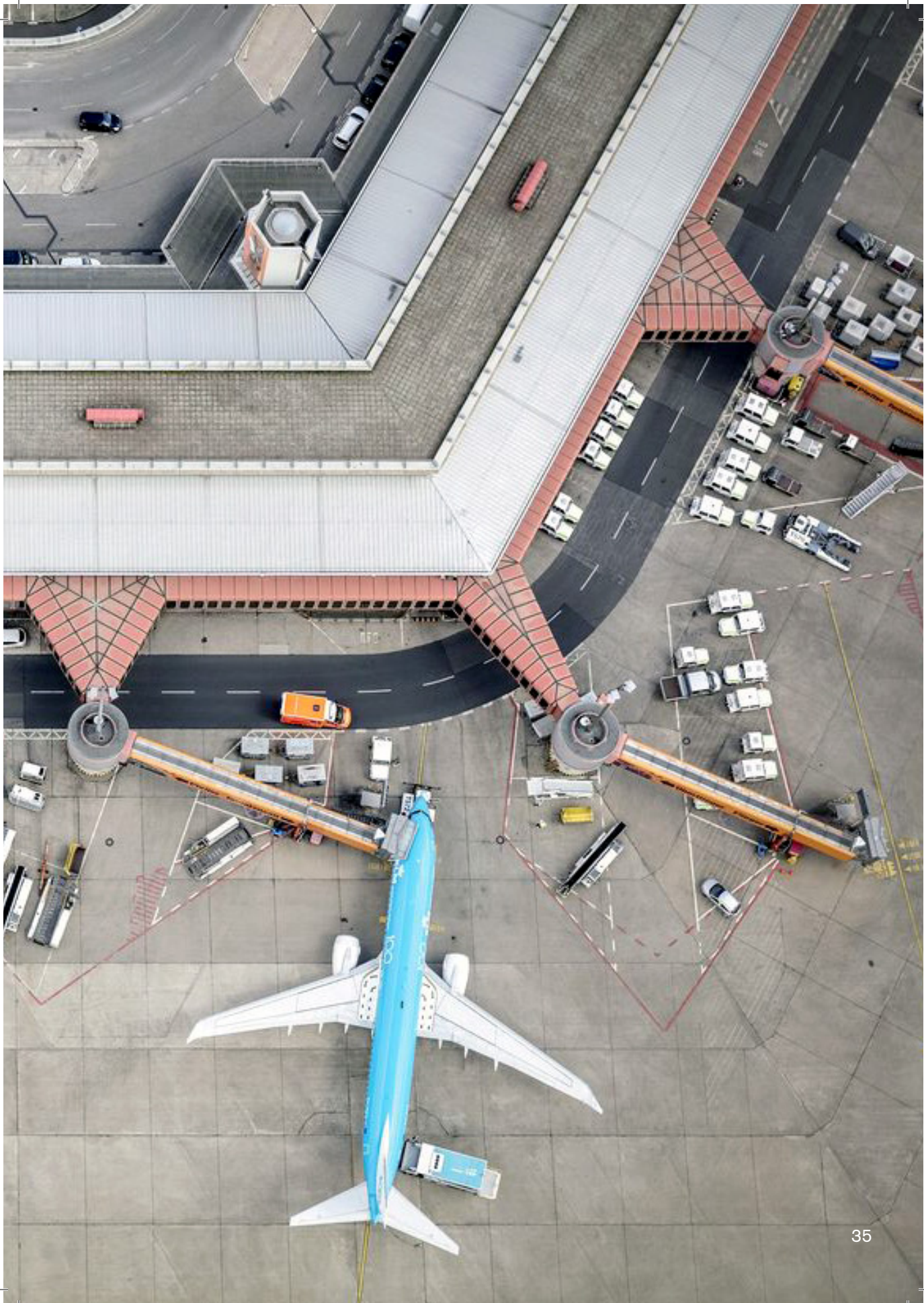


The surface, far from being superficial, is a moving entity. In most architectural works, the surface becomes a reinterpretation of ornamentation and in relation to light, it is being activated. Seeing and feeling the material while inhabiting these spaces, transform it into a site of intimacy, where the relation with depth is something endlessly satisfying. The texture is the communal architecture of exhibition and materiality. In this aesthetic of minimal simplicity, the attention to material attention affirms materiality in a larger sense of the term. In a material intersection between inside and outside, played out on the surface, it layers an interaction between us and the world around us, between interiority and exteriority, emerging time and space.

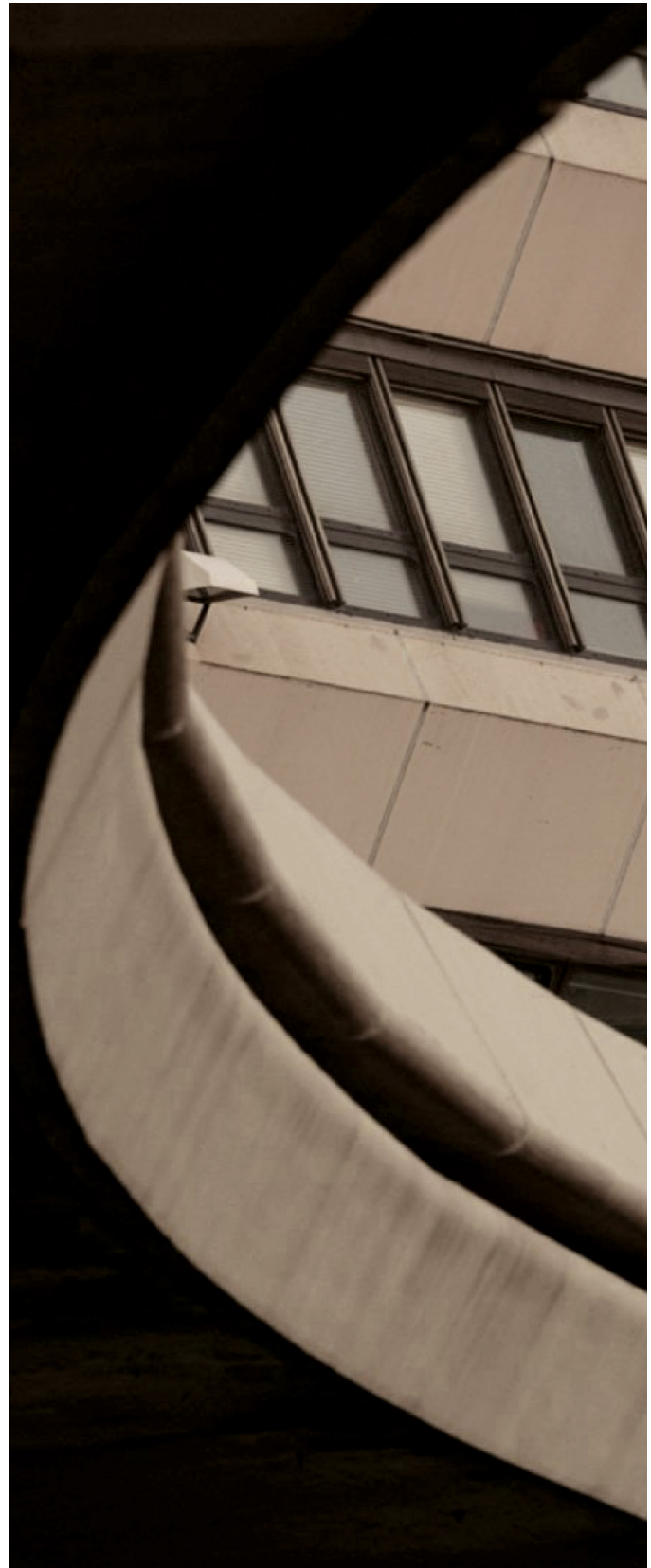
The usage of speech all over the world shows that concrete has left a significant mark on our culture, and its performance over the years, validates concrete as a universal, strong, austere, heavy, and why not, cool material. In Romanian saying "*you look Beton*" will be taken as a compliment, where Beton will speak about some sort of seriousness, heaviness, and will express attitude and class. The interjection "*Beton!*" is an exclamation of coolness. "*Concrete idea/argument*" in Romanian, same as in English, is about something confidently standing on realistic grounds. In German "*Beton Fraktion*" - a stubborn political group. "*Beton-Kopf*" literally "*concrete head*" is a reactionary political opponent. In English "*to be seen or cast in concrete*" is an idiom describing something unalterable or not subject to change.

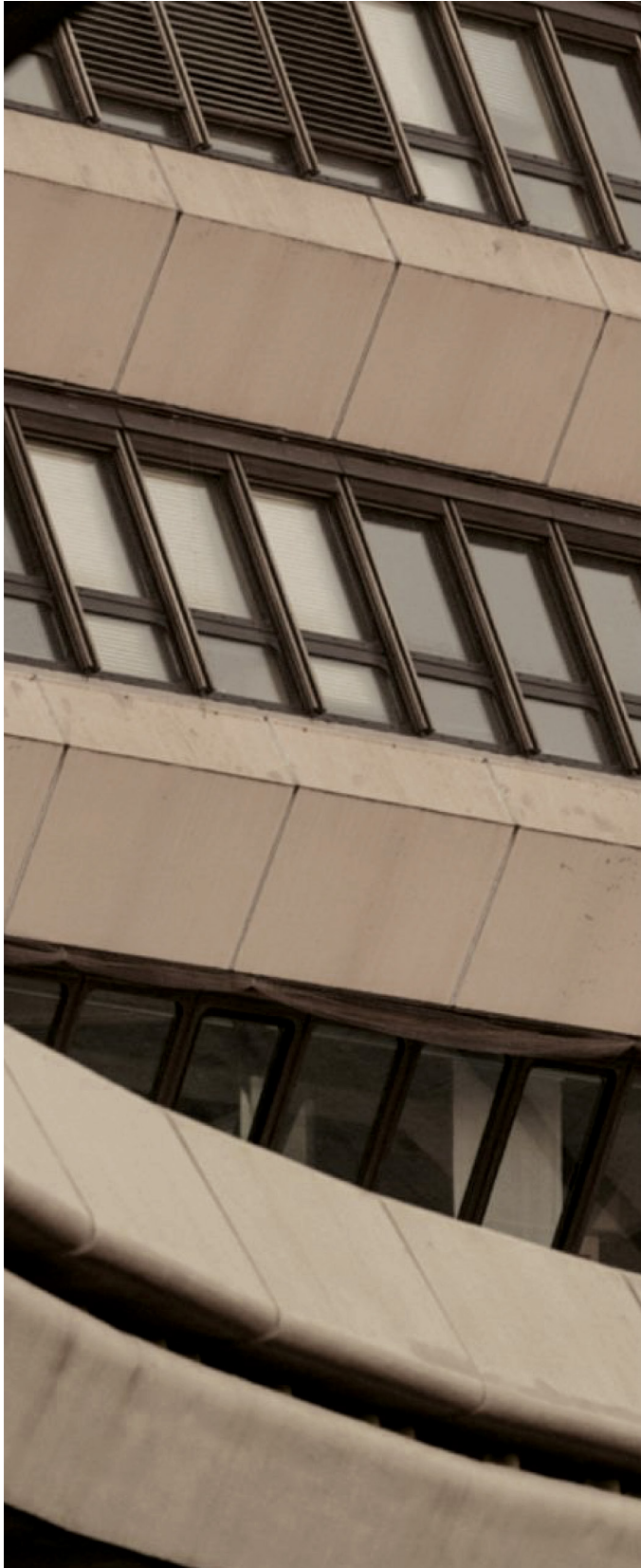
Under that same umbrella called culture, it is important to speak about the mid-1960 US hippies' colourful breakout as an ambitious manifest against the panic dimensions of the new rising buildings and the gray tones and its unnatural qualities. Concrete is often regarded as dumb or stupid material more associated with death than life. Just as in the previously given example, the post-war era gave life to new cultures and creations. In Germany – a country that much gave to the post-punk culture – artists are mostly attracted by the Eastern side of Berlin. There, the old, abandoned brutalist buildings turn into squats where countercultural scenes – post-punk first, techno later – thrive. In addition, Berlin is the city where the Italian band CCCP is born. The group used a photo collection of flats in the East Berlin district of Pankow for the cover of their 1996 retrospective *Live in Pankow*. In movies, the usage of concrete abundant scenes served to build a futuristic future idea. In the Matrix, for example, it also is served as a form to represent strength.





Every new year's eve, millions of Russians sit down to watch the 1976 romantic comedy *The Irony of Faith*. It is some sort of a national tradition. In the movie, the protagonist ends up drunk in Leningrad (now Saint Petersburg), unaware that he has taken a plane from Moskow. He jumps into a taxi and tells the driver his Moskow address. Turns out that there is an exact street with the exact same building. He enters and finds out that his key works in the lock of what he thinks of being the door of his apartment. He notices no minor differences and falls asleep. I don't want to spoil the entire movie, but the whole joke is based on the reality of Soviet housing. This movie confirms a lot of the stereotypes that people have about Russia and countries in the former communist bloc.





The Union of Socialists Republics (1922 – 1991) all over its history was about standardisation, industrialisation and urbanisation. Architects at the time championed a form of modern architecture known as constructivism. The simple but functional design was a perfect fit for planners and unskilled labour in providing housing for millions of people. *“They spend people’s money on a beauty that no one needs”* said Khrushchev, a URSS leader (referring to the previous ‘management’). Instead, they build simpler but more. However, the very idea of social housing leads us back to the famous Le Corbusier and his Unite d’Habitation where he based the principles of functionalism even before WWII. The use of straight geometric lines, mostly rectangular, the absence or excessive architectural details on the facades, the use of reinforced concrete panels in constructions, basic colour scheme and a shape that will correspond to the purpose of the building. Many constructivist ideas, as well as the later influence on the iron curtain, as a result of the in-house School of Modern Architecture. Concrete was associated also with socialism, because of this bonding power between a mass of loose particles. *“We produce cement. Cement is a firm bond. Cement is us, comrades- the working class”* said a Red Army soldier Chumakov (character in the realist novel Cement by Fyodor Gladkov 1925). This idea of facilitating people with housing was often compared with US examples, destined to very low-income citizens, the buildings often lacked maintenance. The soviet projects on the other side were for everyone and better kept. This fact was used to showcase a political rivalry, that the east is better than the west.

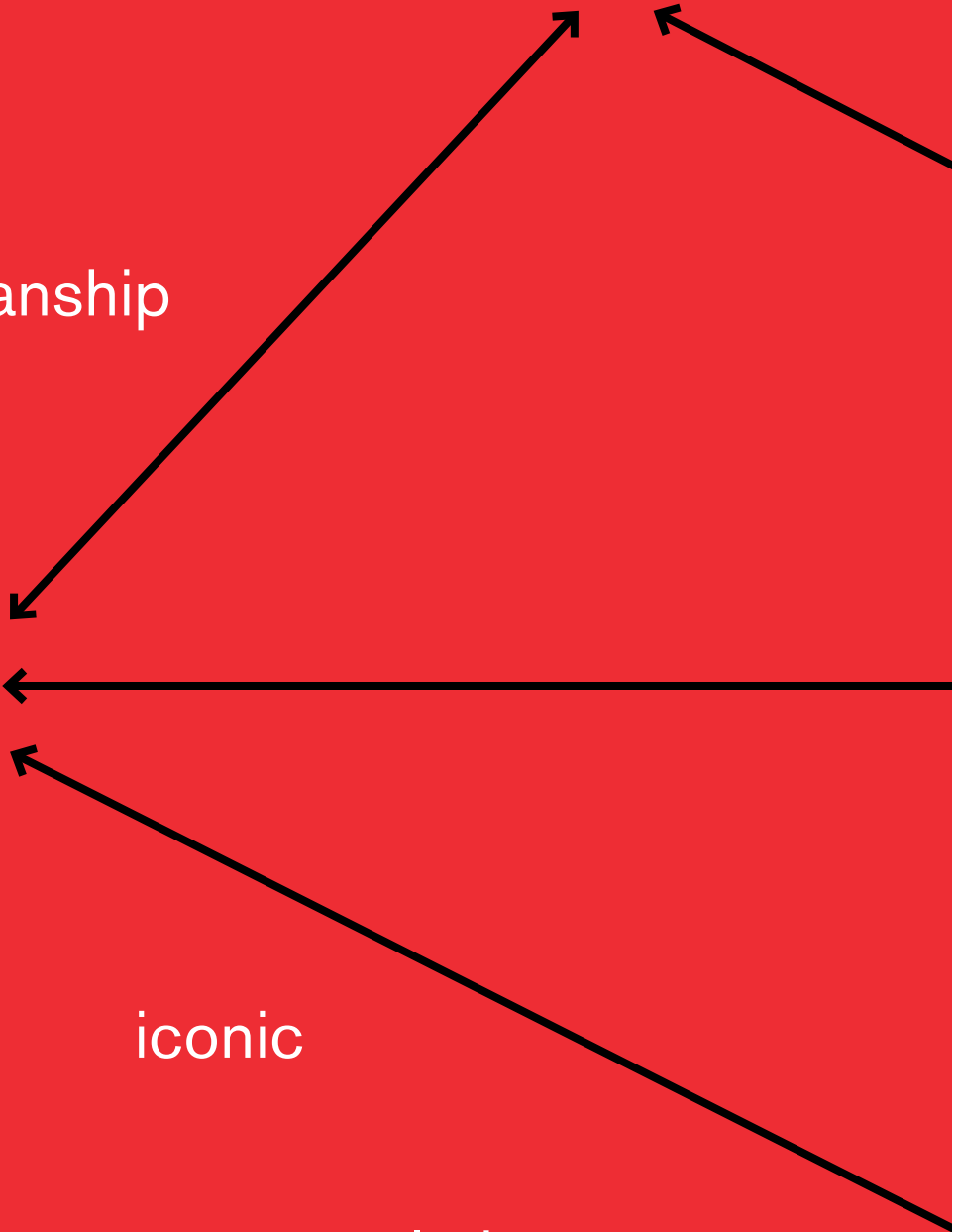
authentic

craftsmanship

artsy

iconic

revolutionary



history

popular

edgy

imagination

experimentation

old

Nowhere in the world, in that era, more concrete was poured than in the URSS. Metaphorically, a concrete box was built to keep in the labour, for growth in productivity, creating a surplus, which was to be converted into armaments and defence, building Mother Russia a world-leading force. Ironically, the voracious share of soviet of the GDP was the actual reason for the downfall of the URSS.

It's 1999, it's summer and in the village Corlateni, Moldova, an ex-socialist republic, another family is building a house. It's only now that people are having more access to building materials such as concrete, sand as much as clothes, imported food and other goods... Concrete was not always cheap, and its deficiency built up a growing demand and a bigger price. In this rural context, while the new house next door was made of self-made mud & straw bricks, concrete looked like the embodiment of modernity and exoticism. In a deep economic and personality crisis, Moldova and its inhabitants saw the act of building a concrete house as an establishment of a better and stronger future.

This is a story of improvisation. It is about using a bed's springs mesh to sieve the aggregate and agricultural tools to mix the ingredients in an old bathtub, a word of mouth as a binding guide-ratio for the magic to happen. It is myself narrating this story, as a mix of memories of my 5 years old self and my family's. Now that I analyse this emotional substrate, the context and the meaning, this story has an interesting loading for me. First of all, jumping on my grandmother's bed springs mesh made me share the feeling of freedom, as I was not allowed to do that inside, in a normal bedroom setting.









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How brutalist archi—
tecture can promote
a sustainable

and



therapeutic
experience?

In the last decade, concerns have emerged about the technical and economical progress as being a negatively affecting factor for human well-being. While these concerns were already evident during the years of strong growth and good economic performance, the crisis periods have even further amplified them. We live in fast-moving times with high expectations and critical deadlines. Nothing seems to get any easier, the technology is taking it over when on the other side, our tasks are piling upon tasks and we never seem to that light at the end of the tunnel.

Burnout, the term used more and more in the competitive and fast-growing industries, describes an emotional, physical, and mental state of overwhelming caused by immoderate stress. Lynn Hamilton, Chief Commercial Officer at online therapy company Talkspace, says: *“Roughly one in five people have a diagnosable mental health condition, and these numbers run parallel in the workplace. Yet, the vast majority of people either don’t seek treatment, are misdiagnosed or don’t get the adequate treatment they need.”* Burnouts at work is a phenomenon that many companies try to monitor through surveys and different apps, this being the key to efficiency and a healthy workflow. The stress is real and early intervention is best, so as employees reach a level for stress, that’s manageable short term before it’s too late.

We became these hamsters in the wheels, racing around to meet the demands, working to afford education, stay up nights to pass the exams, having full-time jobs to afford a decent lifestyle, working while raising young children and so on. The development of media is another factor leading to burnouts. Perfect pictures, influencers and happy lives shown on our screens make us question our own lives, personalities and achievements. In the era of consumerism we are becoming the society's puppets, following the rules, following influencers and calling it *"the dream"*, forgetting to think what our actual dream is about, who we are, where we come from and where are we going.

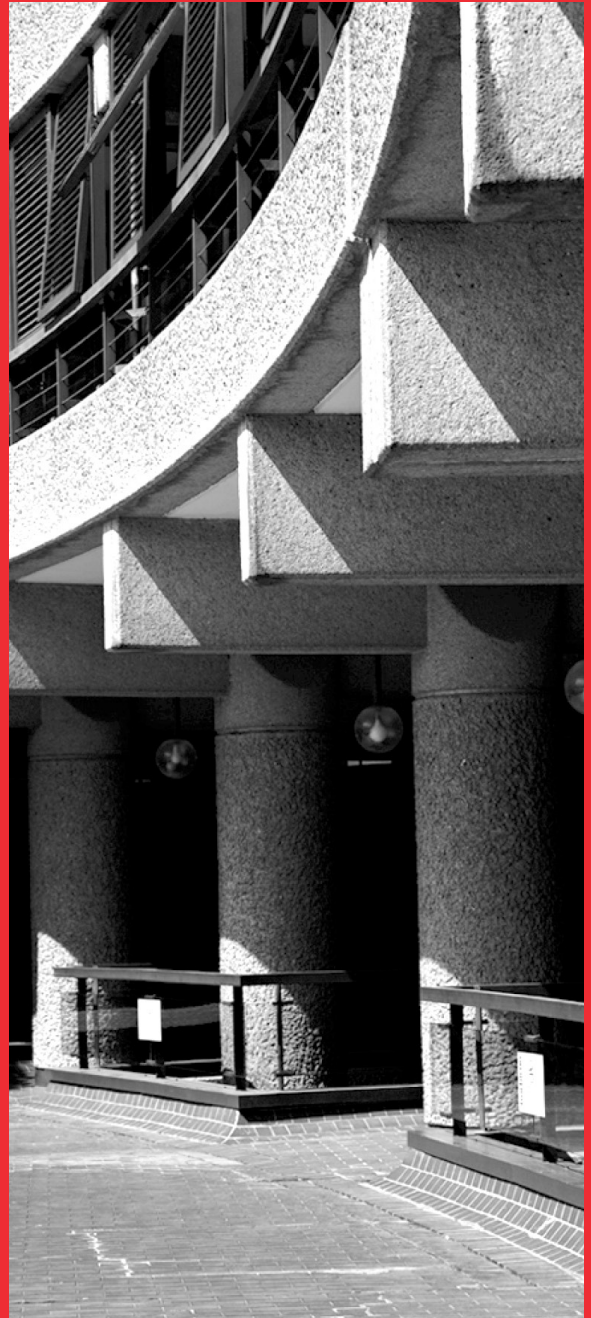
Tegel airport from Berlin, loved & hated by many for its brutalist design, closed its airways this year, after more than 60 years of servicing the German capital. The Aesthetics and a low-key anti-capitalistic interpretation of its design don't hide the fact that Tegel was overloaded and a change was necessary. This case is about "anything goes", it's about progress and how small we are in a place where money rule the world. The History of Tegel leads back to The Berlin Blockade (24 June 1948 – 12 May 1949) this was one of the first major international crises of the Cold War. Measures to relieve the hopelessly overwhelmed Tempelhof Airport were taken to provide the residents of the city with essentials, i.e. food or warm clothes. A new airfield was needed and this was the perfect place for it. It was completed and usable in just under 90 days. The "Berlin Airlift" is now a term that will forever be associated with Berlin and Germany's history and Tegel Airport is the most important place that has shaped it. A place of hope at a time when this country was not doing very well. A makeshift solution to save human lives. *"A place of hope at a time when this country was not doing very well"*, Tom Hauser for Mit Vergnuegen.

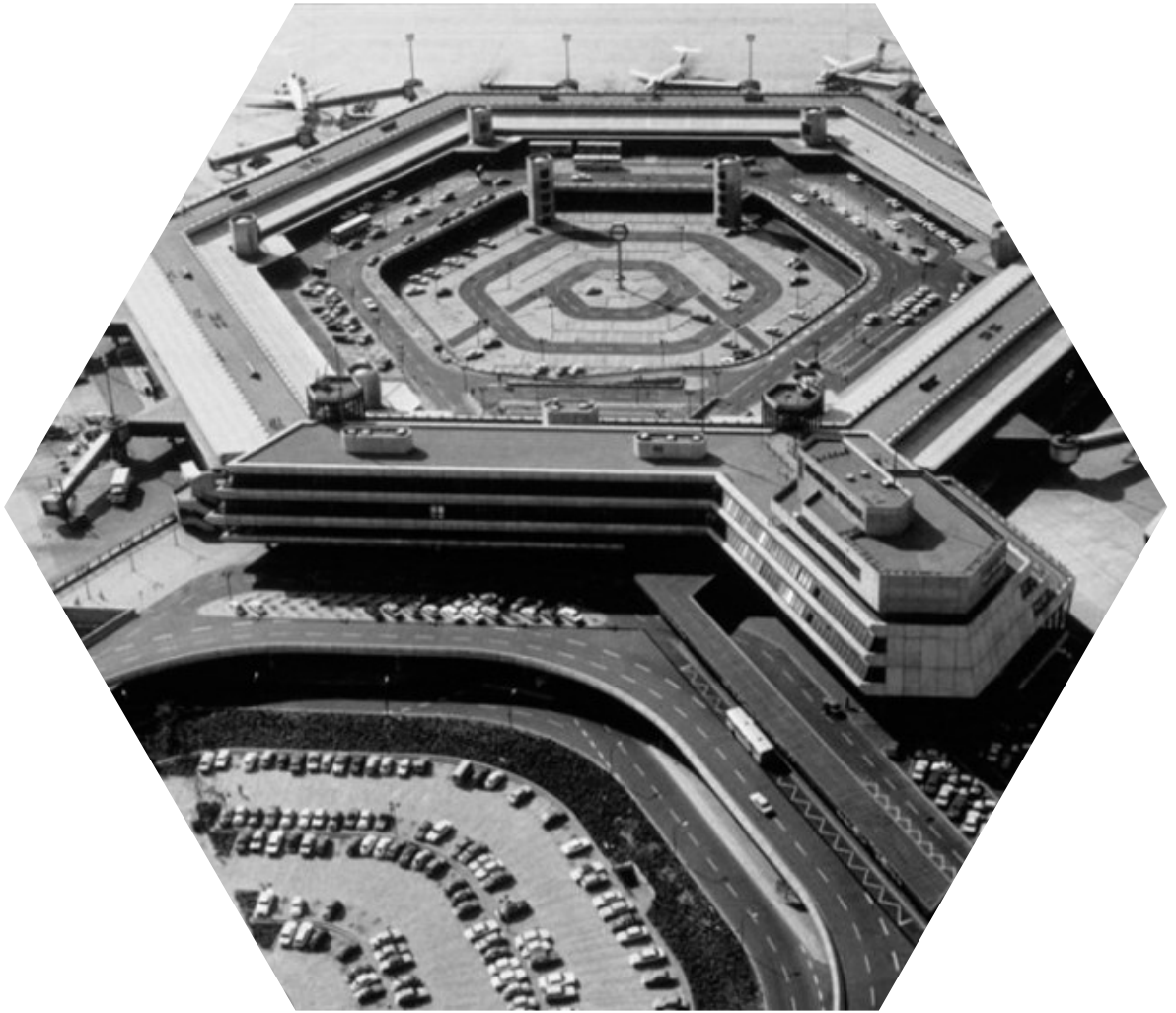
Alexander Clement, author of *Brutalism: Post-War British Architecture*, states that this architectural style is *"characterized by large, sometimes monumental, forms brought together in a unified whole with heavy, often asymmetrical proportions."* It must be made clear, however, that even if the interpretations of Brutalist buildings are controversial, these "sculptures" are a strike of optimism, an encouragement for betterment, they want you to feel something, they want you to have an experience, an art experience.

To think about Brutalism is to think about concrete. Brutalist architecture is one of the most honest types of architecture. My research idea is to use Tegel Airport to create a place of rehabilitation for people with mild/moderate mental health issues, for people who suffer burnouts and depressions, a place where people can be honest with themselves and can build their own strong emotional shield.

Haruki Murakami once said "Don't let appearances fool you. There's always only one reality." - one you can feel I suppose. Speaking about what we see, can we really trust it? Speaking about concrete, many people still link that with the idea of a cold place, but many of us will be surprised to know that concrete walls and floors are year-round thermally efficient. The concrete naturally controls comfort levels and drastically decreases energy demands. If we challenge ourselves to think further, the idea of visual input has no meaning at all, it is all about our own interpretation, about what we learned to think. Our brains have evolved to develop patterns creating associations based on our interactions with the world. It's a survival instinct. We learned to associate blues and greens with a sense of serenity and calm but red and yellow with excitement, but how come we all unlearn this when we have to stop at the traffic light or cross the street?

But how does the so-called 'concrete beast' make you achieve a level of calm and relaxation and how can it be a place of healing?



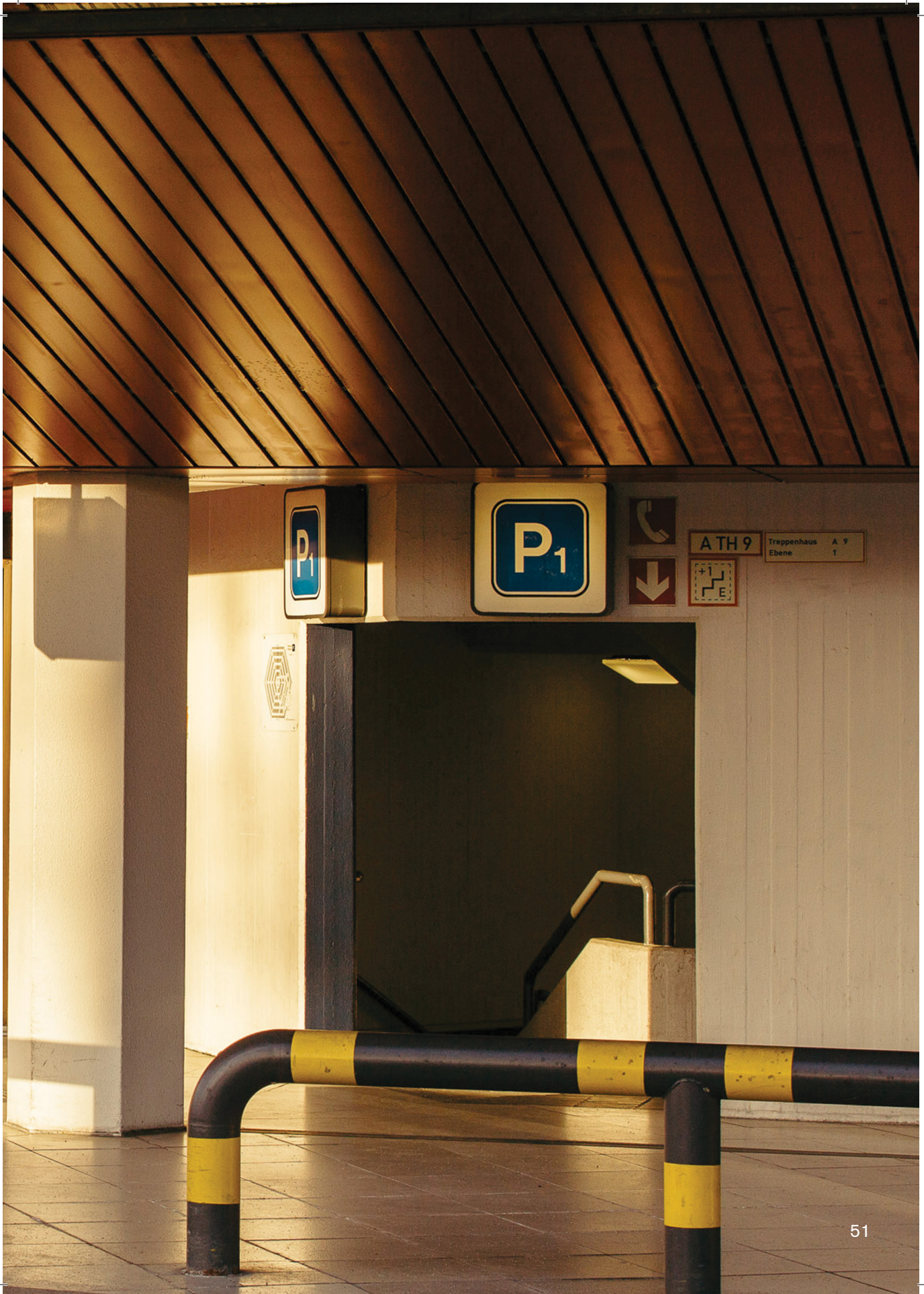


Through time and memorial though, people have dreamed of a happy healing place and they call that Paradise. Weirdly, we all picture that abundance of greens and water, a place of nature, and in fact, scientific studies show that views of nature do improve mood and create a state of happiness. So If a place can make you happy, can it also make you well? An important fact is that a place can stress us and some of the most common elements are: crowding, temperature, noise, light (too much or too little), confusion, maze. Regrettably, the hospitals could easily be described with the words listed above, and is this really a space for healing? And if we are all so different, with our own baggage and views on life, what is the perfect ratio of a well-designed healing space?

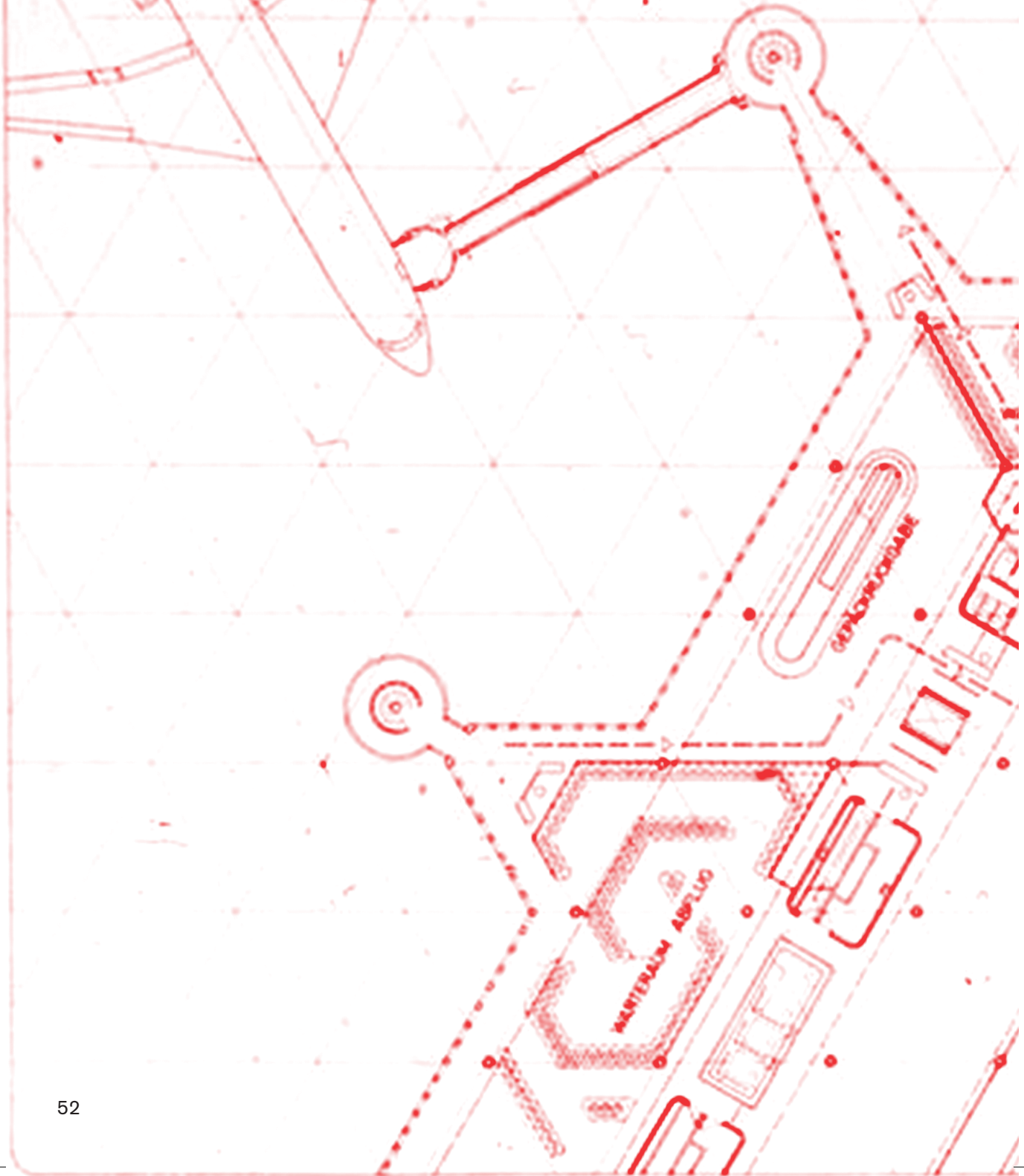
Described as brutish, edgy and grey, the Tegel Airport building is a strange place to be, for some, and nothing seems particularly inviting to stick around for longer than necessary. The airport is a symbol of transition, and repurposing the building, means giving it an other chance, the same as giving it to ourselves. Tegel itself is designed to stick around, and that is the destination!

Burnouts, and other major problems people are dealing with, especially in the pandemic context when people lost families, jobs, homes. I thought of hospitals, as a place of power and a place of second chances. It is time to get back on our feet, be more aware of our feelings, stop sabotaging ourselves. It's time to sharpen our sense of identity and individualism because this is our most powerful weapon, but before that, it's time to ask for help. Burnout is best prevented with the things that excite people, energize them, and bring them renewals...whatever that is, individually. This research is about taking people from a place of anxiety and fear to one of hope and happiness, through the prism of interpreting a brutalist "outdated" building as a metaphor of transition and finding purpose. It's a state of mind that I want to research, that place that allows you to enjoy the good moments, be honest with yourself, heal and don't get stuck in the bad ones





Cured by design

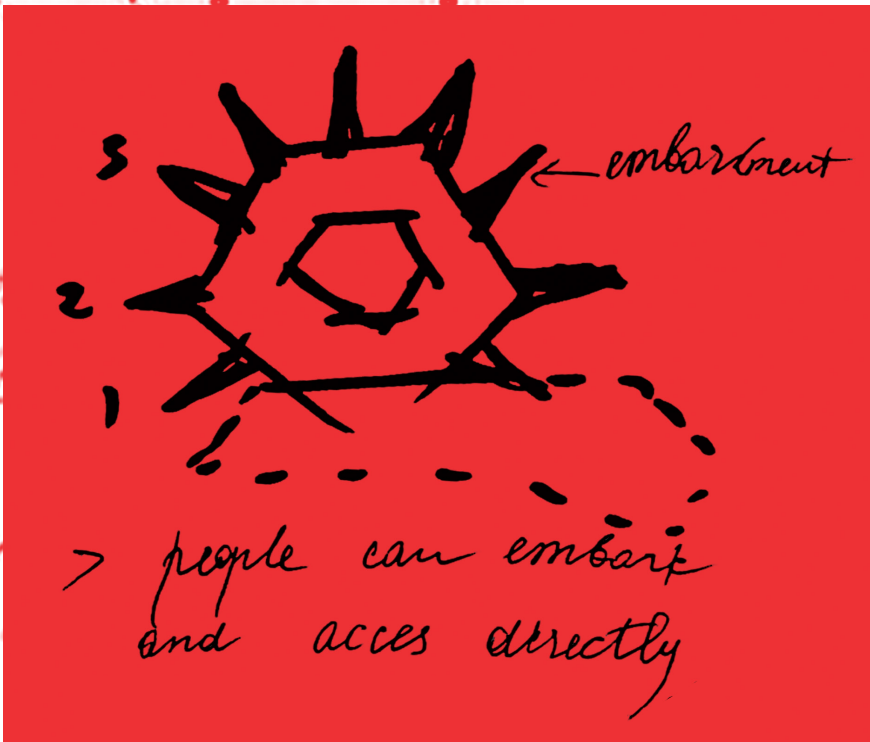


Burnouts is an increasingly popular subject describing an emotional vulnerability, physical, and mental state of overwhelm caused by immoderate stress. Vulnerability and exposure are dynamic, varying across temporal and spatial scales, and depend on economic, social, geographic, demographic, cultural, institutional, governance, and environmental factors.

"Lack of resilience and capacity to anticipate, cope with, and adapt to extremes and change are important causal factors of vulnerability."

- Omar-Dario Cardona.

The authenticity of the problem lies in the continuous development of competitive and fast-growing industries and a rising number of burnouts, leading to more severe mental health issues. As we can all agree on the positive sides of technological and economic progress, we will always continue to outweigh the negatives. While these concerns were already evident during the years of strong growth and good economic performance, the crisis periods and recently the Covid 19 pandemic, have even further amplified them. Mental illness is taking its toll both on those who were already at risk, as well as for those who have never sought mental health support before.



motion :



> in ~~not~~ circular direction from left to right people will move across the space

meaning:



> reset
> restart
> reboot

clock :



> organisation
> circular motion
> movement from left to right



1 Context (economic/tech development) / ~~slow~~ high speed life → human building



2 Airport → symbol of transition - brutalism - protection - strength - thick - exposed

Memory of space

repurposing second chances

rebirth/reset

transition of time and space and emotional.

stereotypical ≠

letting go of stereotypes as a way to learn flexibility in a time of transition / change

sense of protection

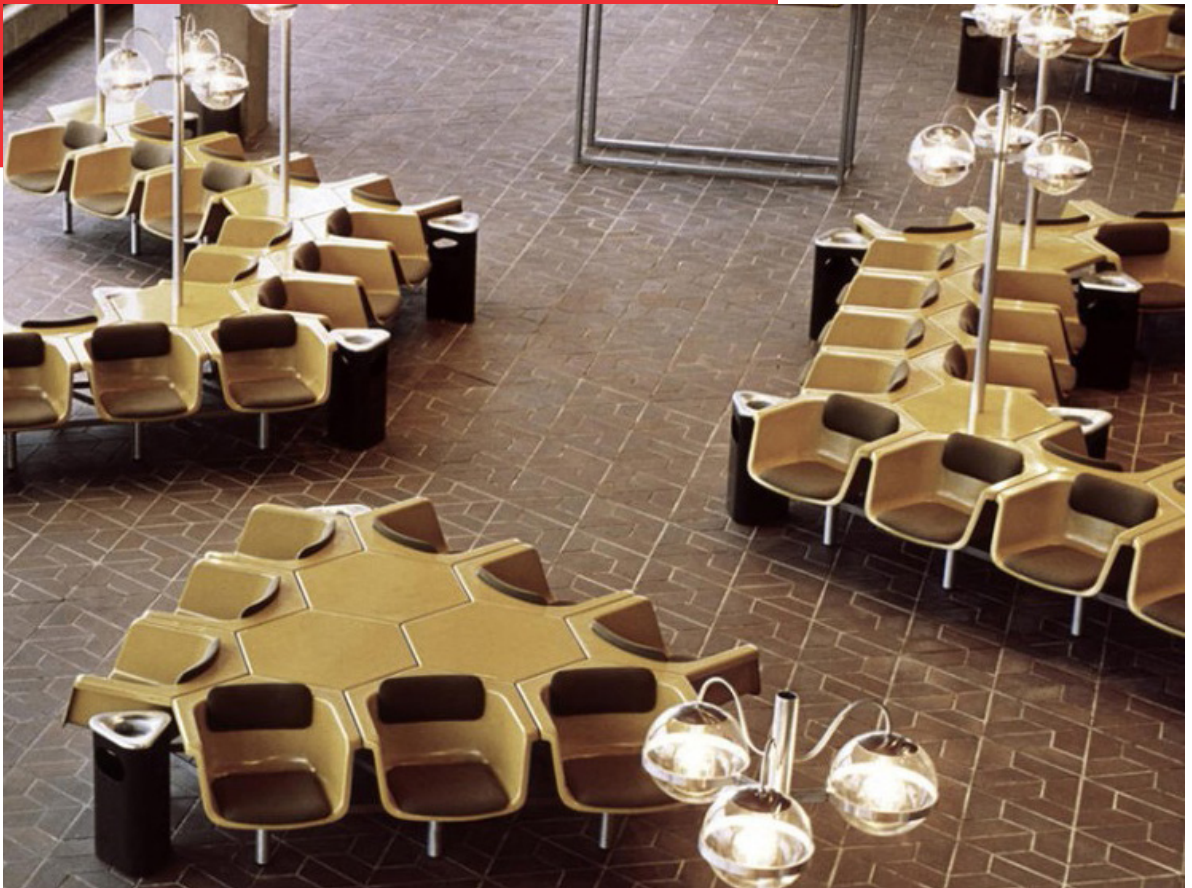
We need to understand well-being in terms of human flourishing. Talking about this matter will not only raise awareness towards and a more serious handling of the syndrome. Through the example of the airport's own rehabilitation/repurposing, the practice aims to communicate the idea of adaptability to the ever changing times and the importance of identity in this equation.

An airport is like a small town. From large scale to small, it is subject to constant change. The airport building kept on being adapted to the ever changing times. Consulting photo archives and the floor plan, the character of the building reveals itself through the rigorous symmetry of the facility of the hexagonal ring.

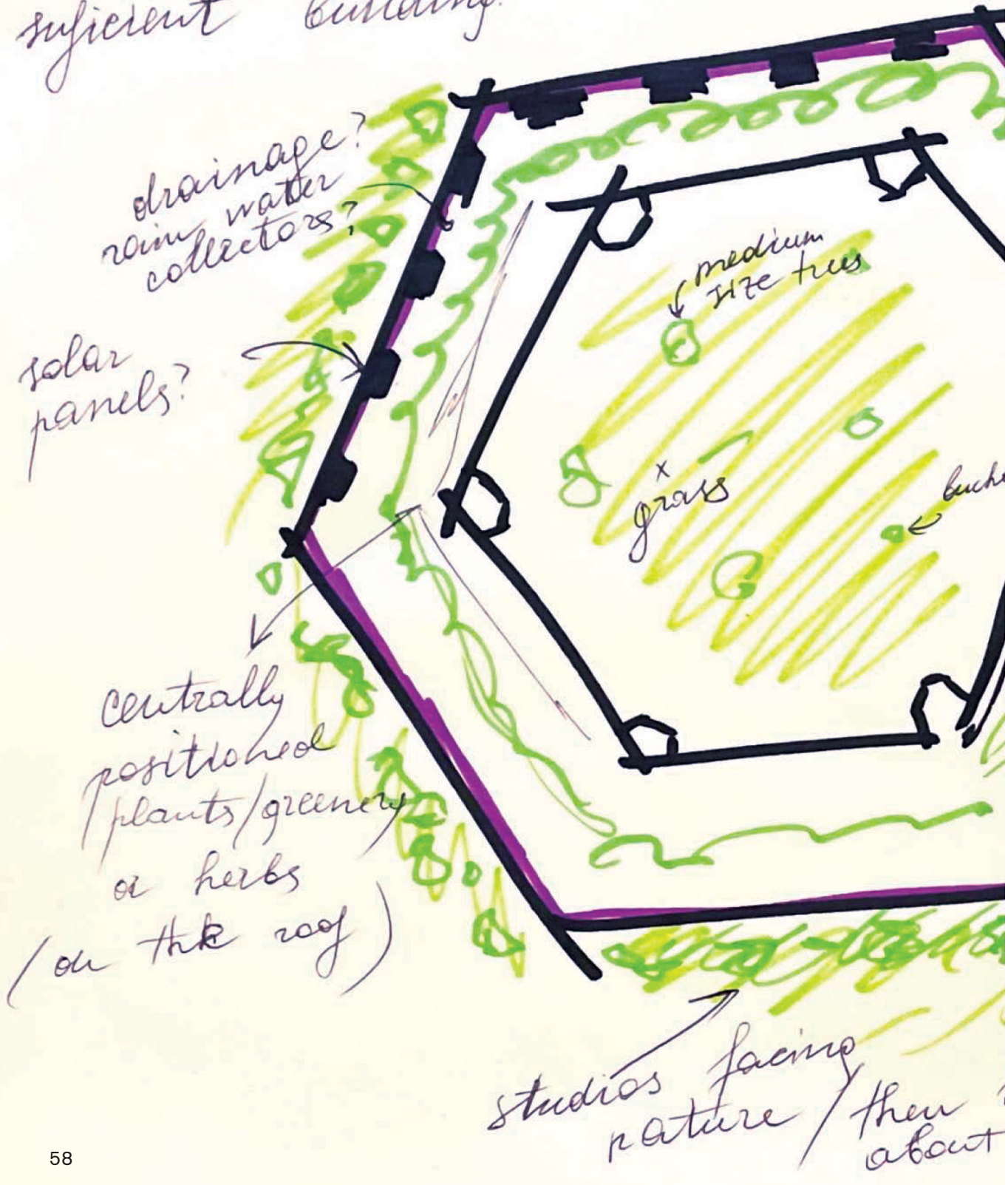
au
dings > vulnerable in this context.

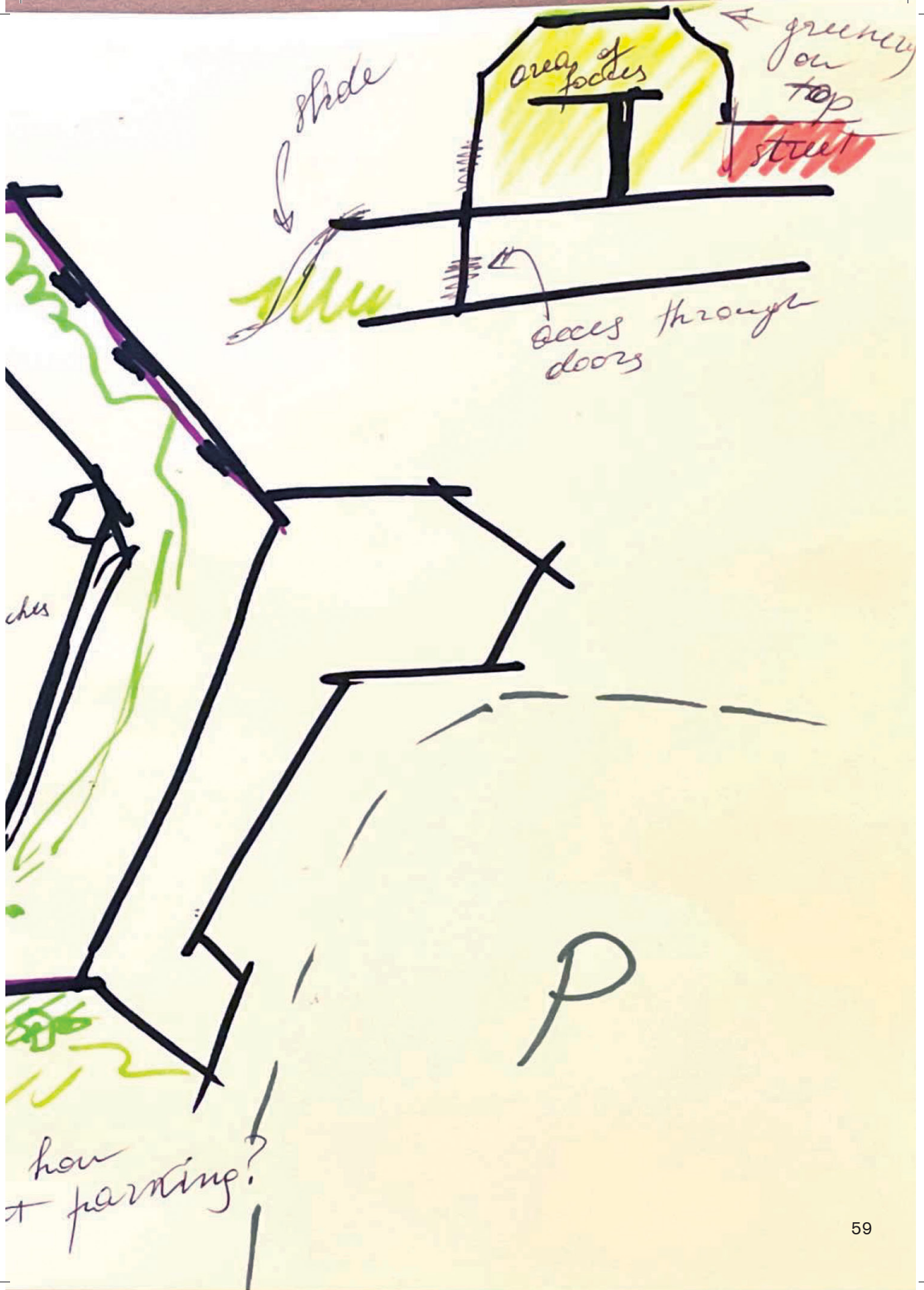
red concrete - symbol of honesty

↓
being honest with
yourself. Honesty / Realism
or - ~~one~~ at first
step to the cure.



> ideas about greenery
> creating an utopic; self
sufficient building.





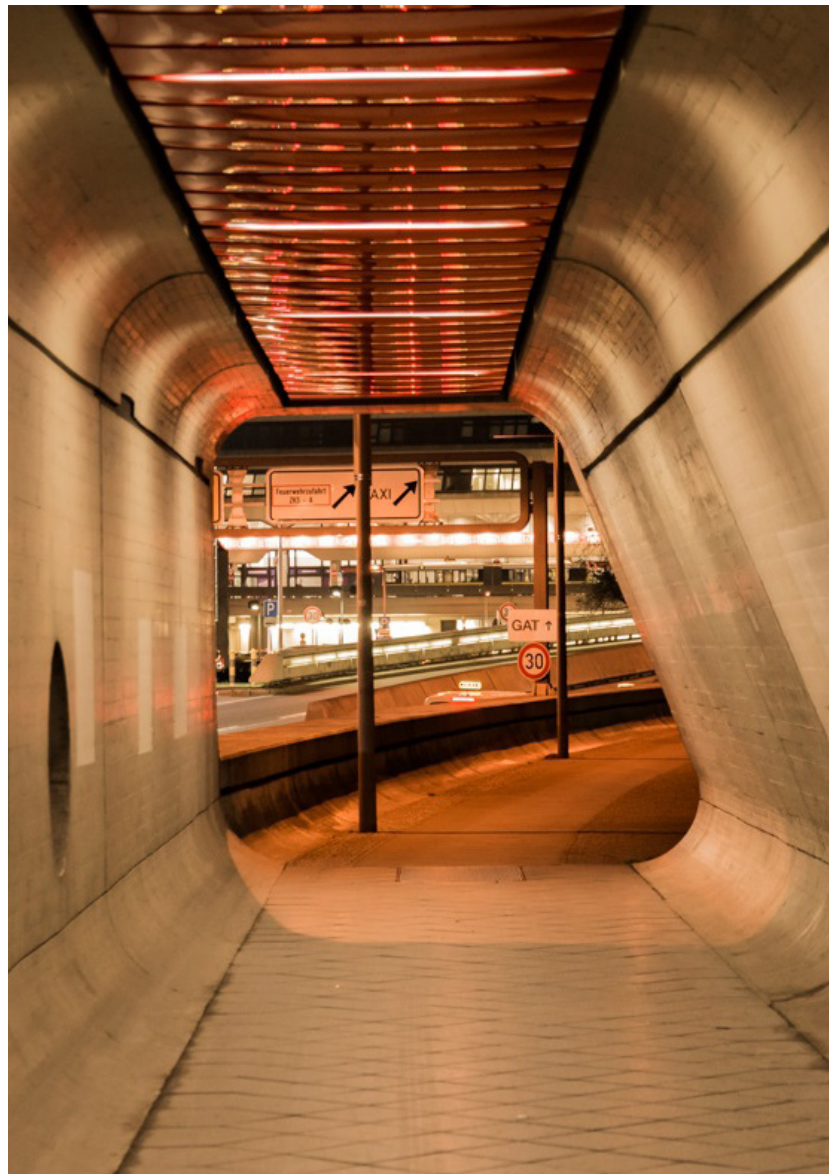




As fascinating as Tegel was as an idea of an airport, it could not keep up with the dynamics of a reunited Berlin, it was too small and the concept of a drive-in airport was not scalable to the needs of Germany's new capital in the centre of a reunited Europe.

The idea to drive with your car directly to your gate, without having to walk miles through duty-free shops, seems both very intriguing and anachronistic today.

Nowadays, neither the paranoid security requirements of air travel nor the constant congestion of urban traffic allows for such a casual and comfortable way of switching between the two.











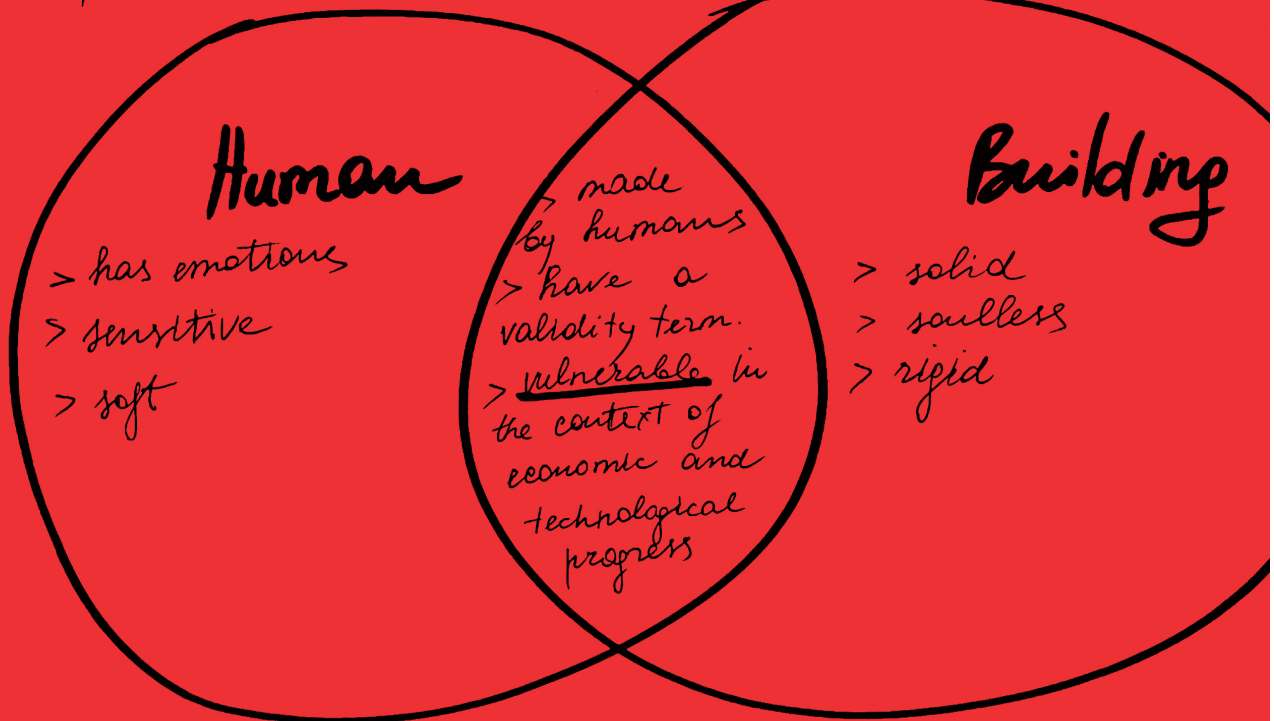
An interesting example serving as inspiration is Eero Saarinen's 1960s terminal building at New York's John F. Kennedy airport, following a restoration of its modernist details. The terminal, now called the TWA Hotel, shares the same history as Tegel airport, the building was closed as it was unable to support the size of modern aircrafts and growing numbers of flights.

Tegel's rehabilitation resonates with this example in terms of keeping the identity of the building while being repurposed. From the interesting museum exhibits, distractions, to the unmatched views of the airfield, or rooms with elements of 1960s design, this is certainly a fantastic way to travel back in the bygone era.

Another example is Herzog & de Meuron's former San Francisco power plant. The design proposal is a careful reconsideration of the qualities of the industrial site, assigning new use to the former power plant's architectural features. This project provides inspiration by embodying the marks of time: the old bricks covered in graffiti added over the years of building's abandonment, creating contrast by adding a lightweight, steel structure on top, symbolising a new beginning.

Both examples serve as beautiful precedents of off-use building preservation, but what is considered to be useful for this practice and concept development is the unifying aspect of the past and the present, as much as the socio-cultural orientation.

* A parallel between the human and the building



Neither West nor East Berlin exists anymore but as painful as the divided city must have been, it also provided people with a sense of identity, therefore closing Tegel feels like another loss to many.



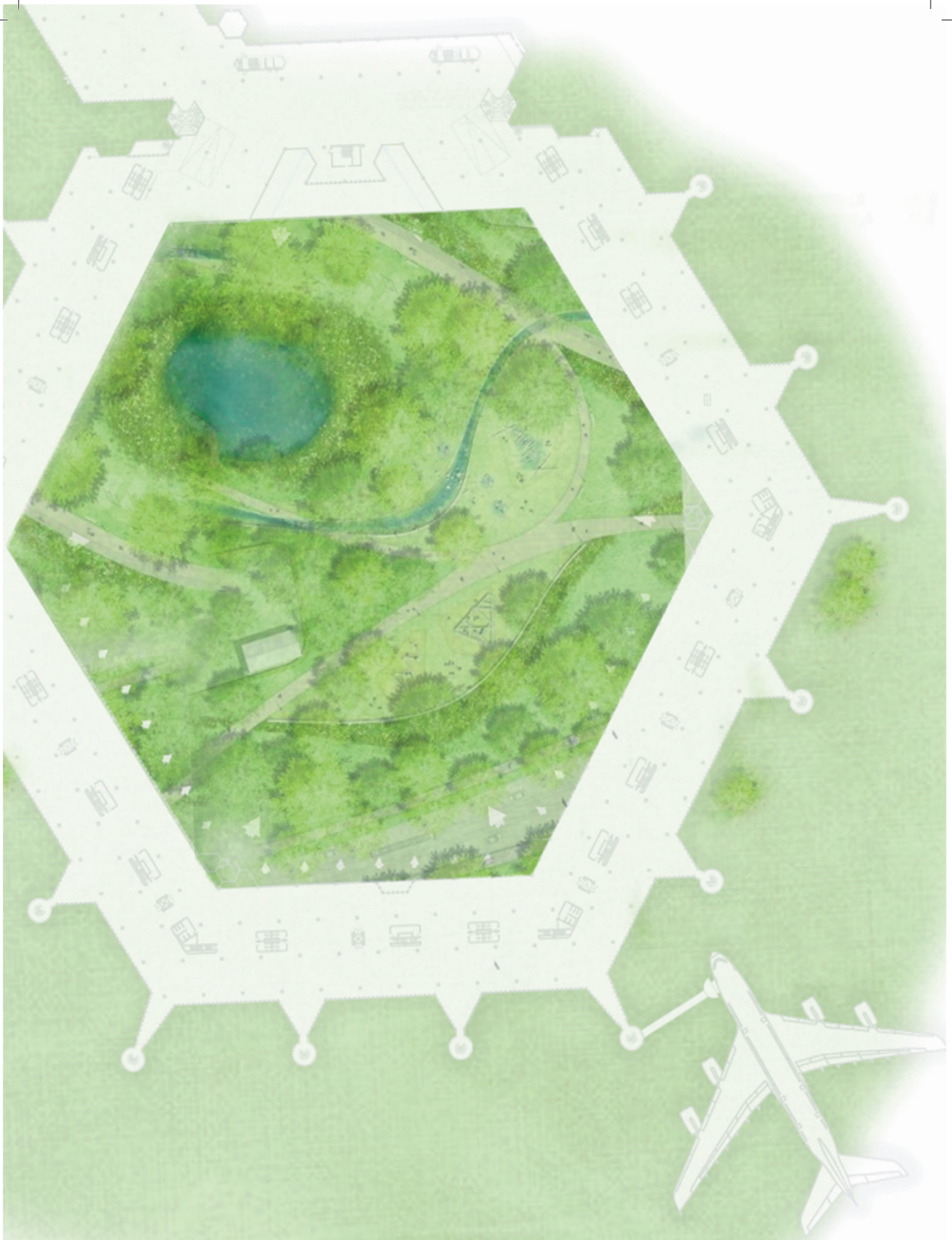






Realisation







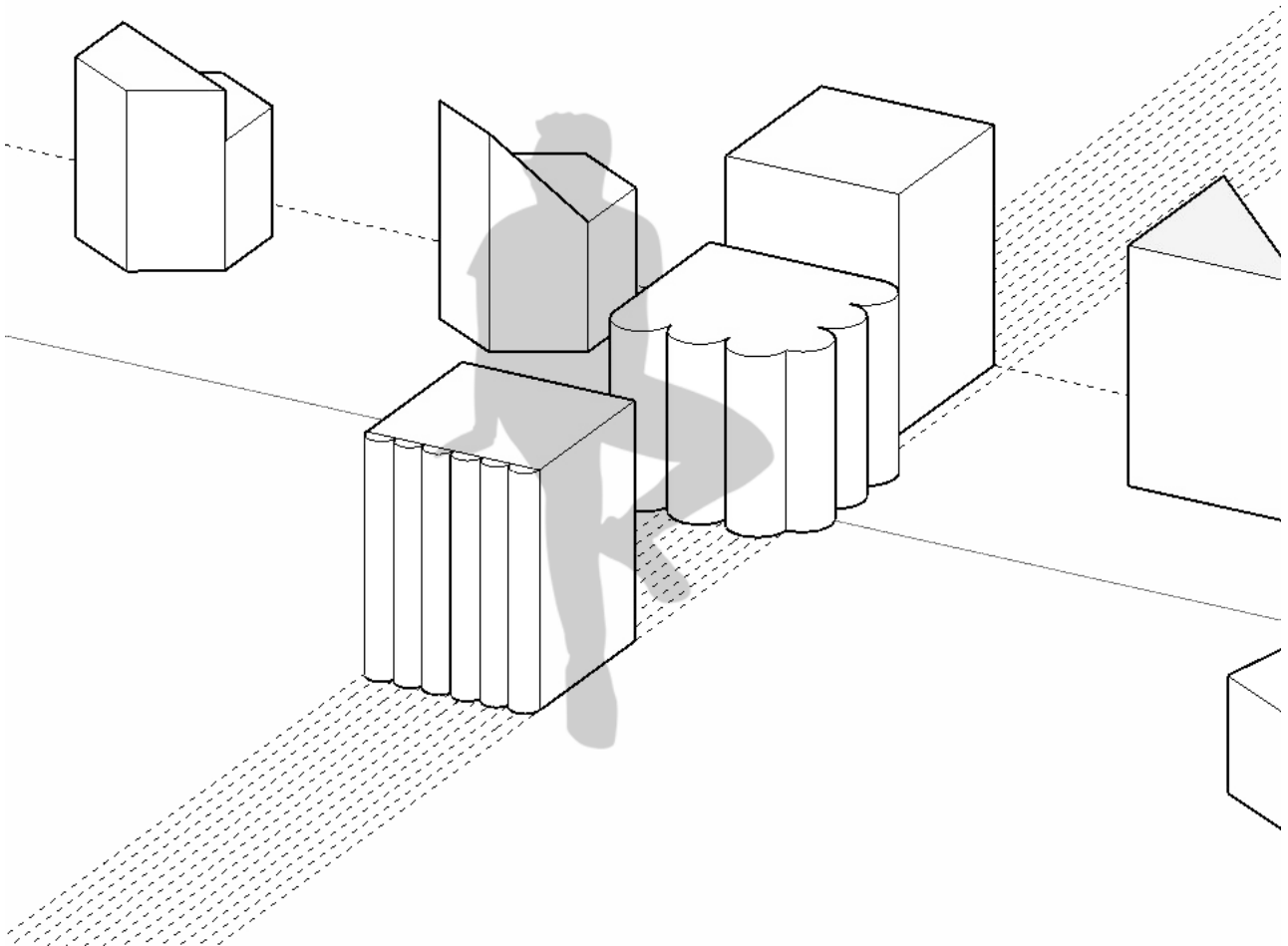
Following Tegel's identity and epic designs, experiments were done to find the best solutions to create a wall division that will incorporate the airport's initial design concept. site divisions were created using triangles, coming together into hexagons.

The Serpentine pavilion is a mix of columns and seats. Every detail references London locations where communities have come together in the past and present – the steps of a Railton Road terrace, the office of an Afro-Caribbean newspaper, Brutalist ribbed concrete, and the delicate fluting of a classical column. The inspiration that lies in this example is not only about the abstractionism of forms that come to complete each other like a puzzle, but also the idea of gathering as a form of performance. In smaller or bigger groups, people adapt it to their own needs by finding comfort in the freedom of interpretation. Pictures below are just a few variations of how a similar type of construction can be used in different other ways: sitting, laying, walking on them, standing etc.

The airport open space areas will include moveable small parts that will be displaced throughout the space as 'important spaces of gathering, communication and community forming. The freedom of usage in this case will also be expressed through the idea of space divisions. The pieces are stackable and can form a closed space within an open space. This way, a transition area can become the destination, it can become a space of events, learning as well as play. The furniture is to be made from a steel frame and timber faces, treated with micro cement with a soft matte finish for a pleasant touch and a visual resemblance with concrete casted forms, in order to resonate with brutalist interior.



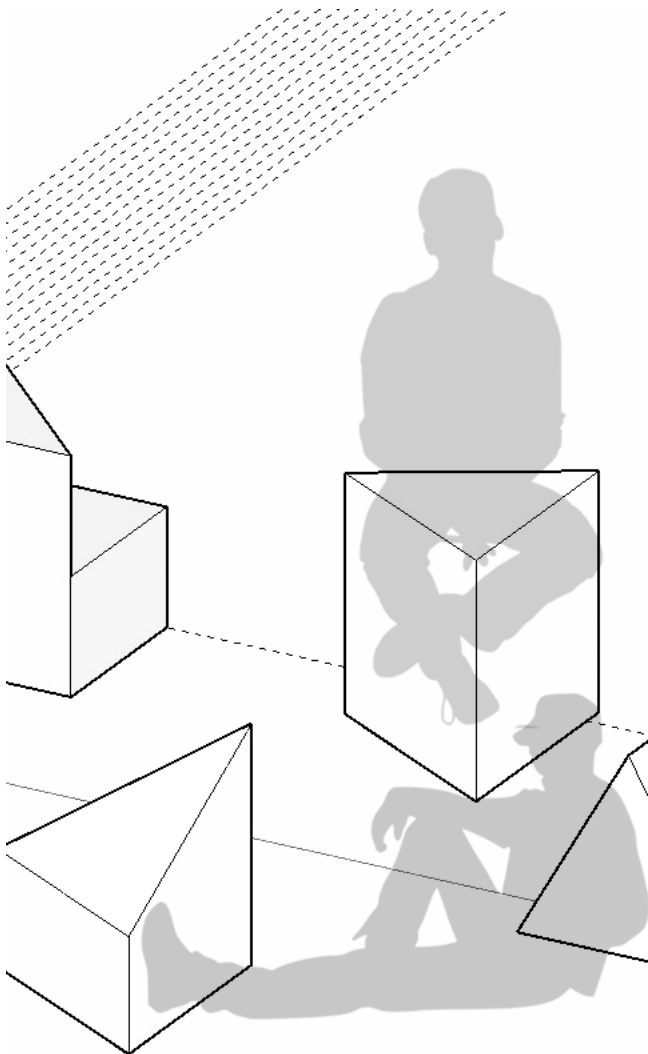
According to the principle of displaying the building structure and material, claddings and plasters were generally not used. At the basis of this principle were such ethical values as truth, honesty and directness. How concrete can be comfortable? Break stereotypes through colours and shapes. Therapy through memories, a play of light, texture and depth. How can I plan the space? one problem, not too design, give space as a form of freedom and let off control-curved walls, anti capitalistic design-triangles? Examples of chicago towers. Another way to break the pattern and go off grid is to leave more free space, free space that can be adapted to visitor's needs.

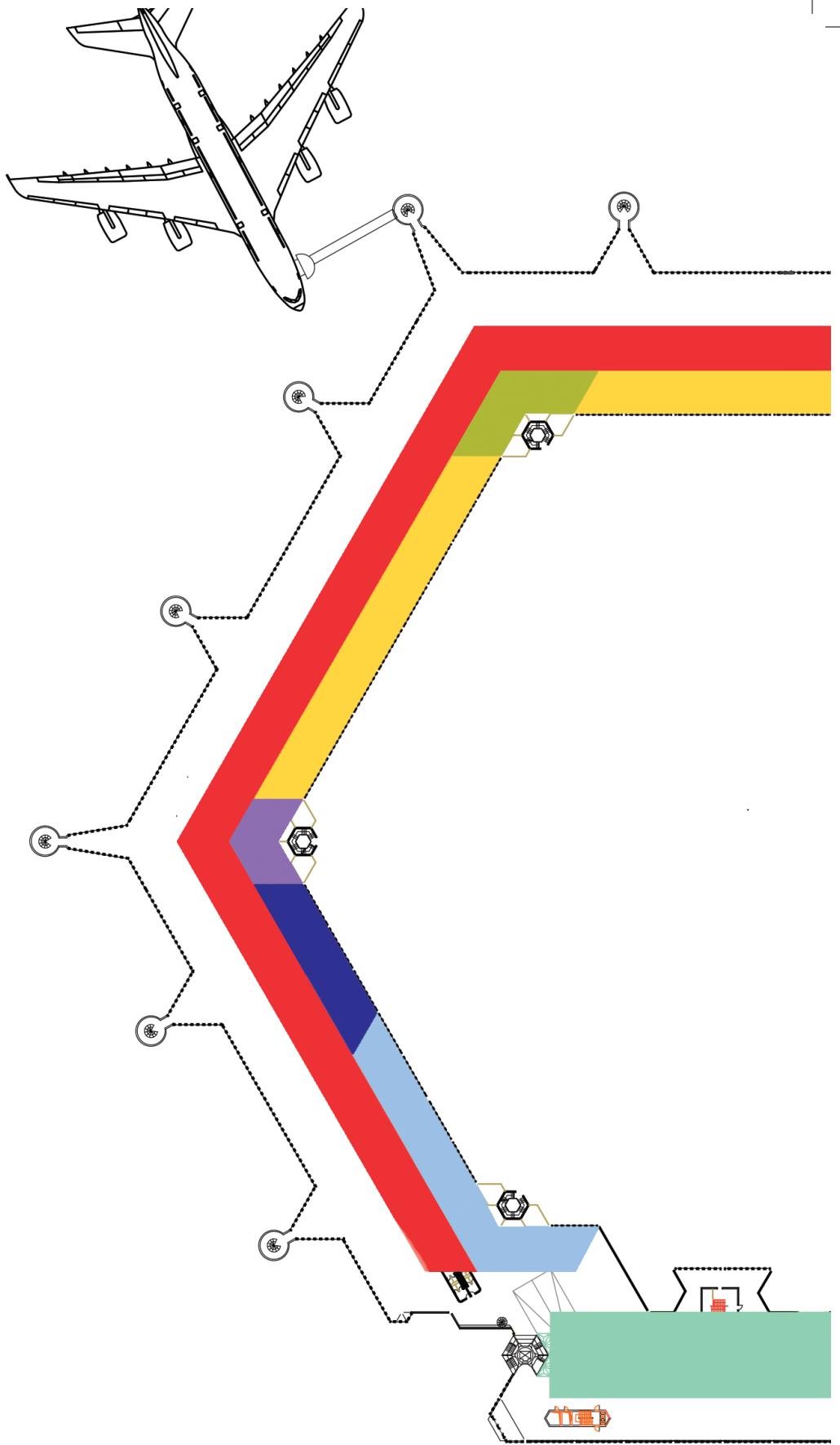


The colour palette of the project will mainly consist of earth tones derivative from Tegel's representative red color. Using as reference the experimentation with mortar and pigments on concrete, the same ratios can be used in order to form different hues using white and gray cement as a base. The design project aims to be consistent rather than obsessive. Exploring the range of variations within the possible spectrum, visitors are taken into a therapeutic trip, where they can find comfort in freedom of interpretation.

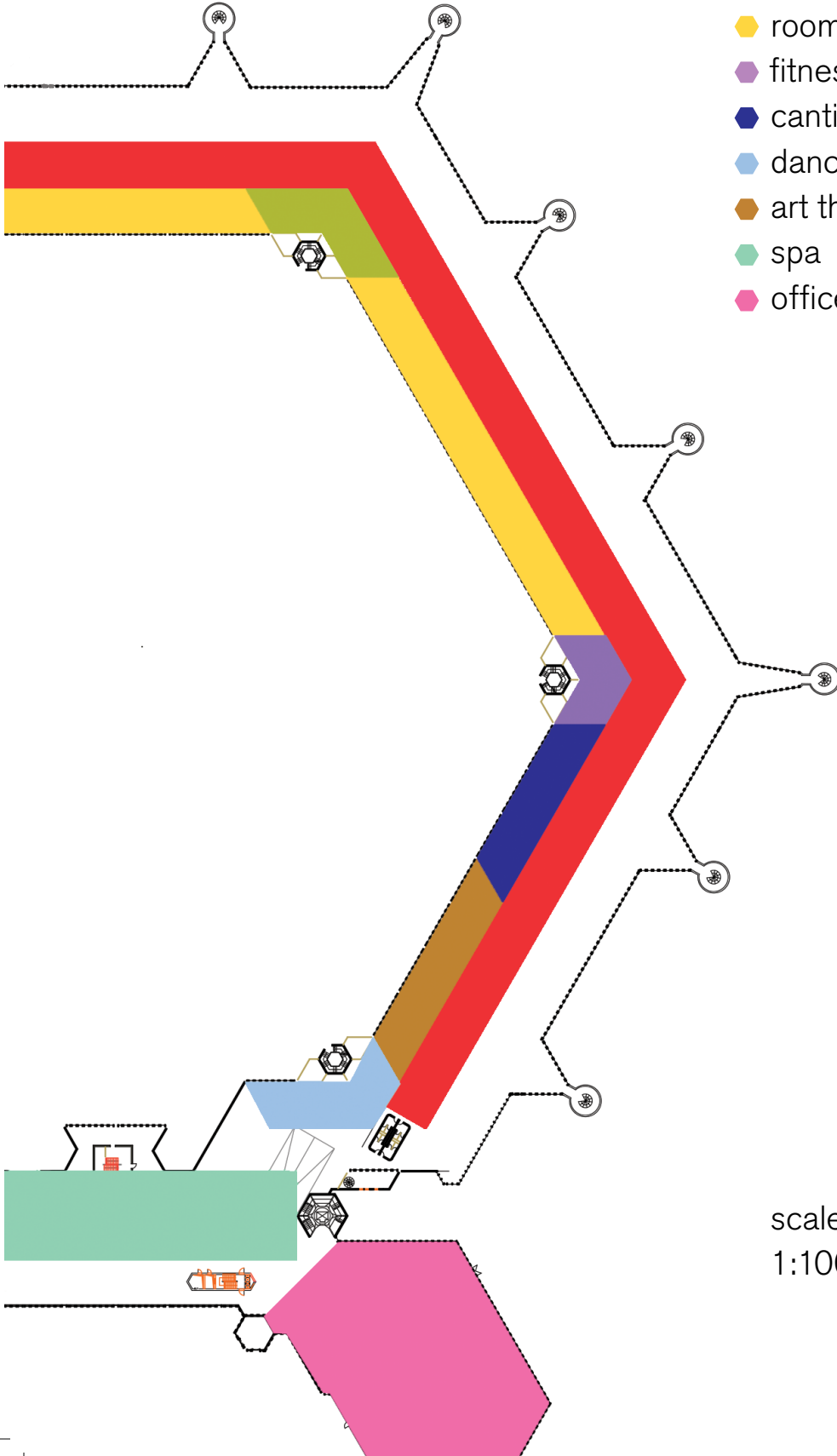
If we challenge ourselves to think further, the abstract ornamentation or the idea of visual input finds its meaning in our own interpretation, about what we feel or learned to think. Our brains have evolved to develop patterns creating associations based on our interactions with the world. In the image below, we can see how textures activate the static surfaces and stimulate the creation of associations of forms and meaning. From imprints of leaves, grass, waves, fabric, knittings, to more abstract ones, the textures are designed to transition visitors into a space of memory, that being grandparents garden, a familiar knitted plaid texture that we used to have as kids, or just a blanc, abstract that we can define ourselves, while contemplating the present.

The design concept is to create a rehabilitation centre, that, when visited and experienced, evokes a transition in time, in space, in memory.





- ◆ assistance
- ◆ library
- ◆ rooms
- ◆ fitness
- ◆ canteen
- ◆ dance therapy
- ◆ art therapy
- ◆ spa
- ◆ offices

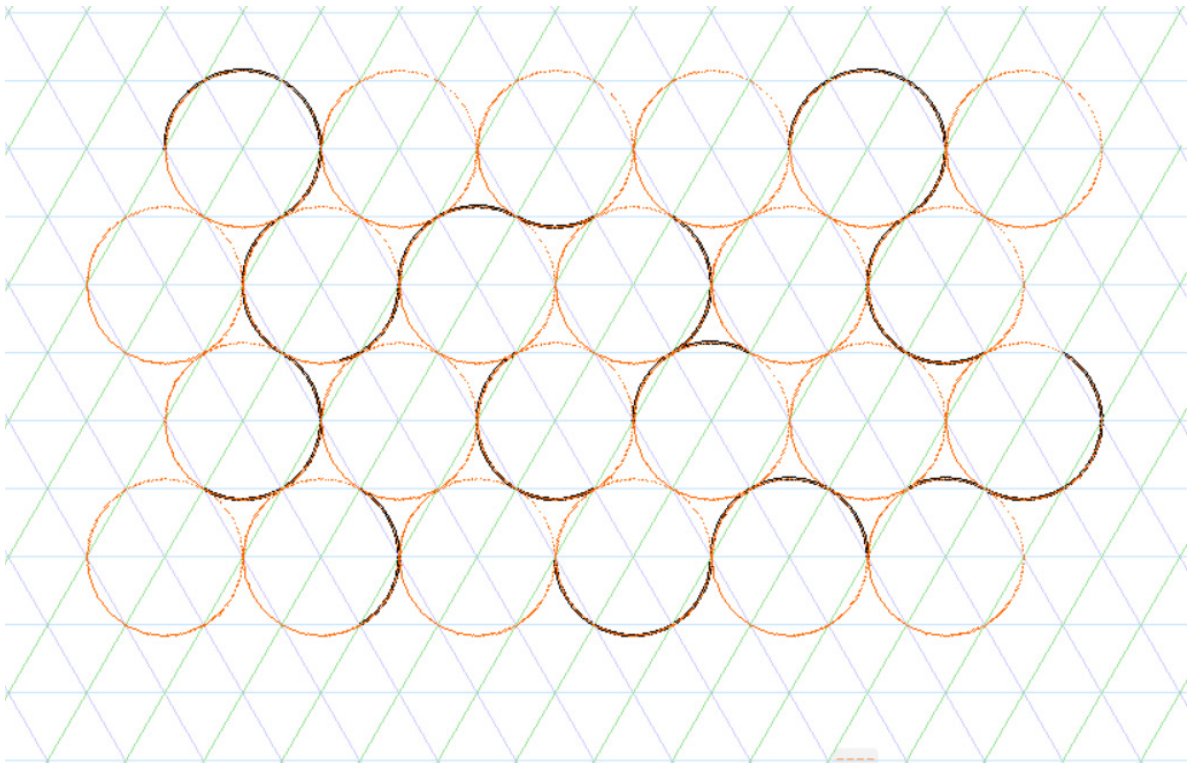


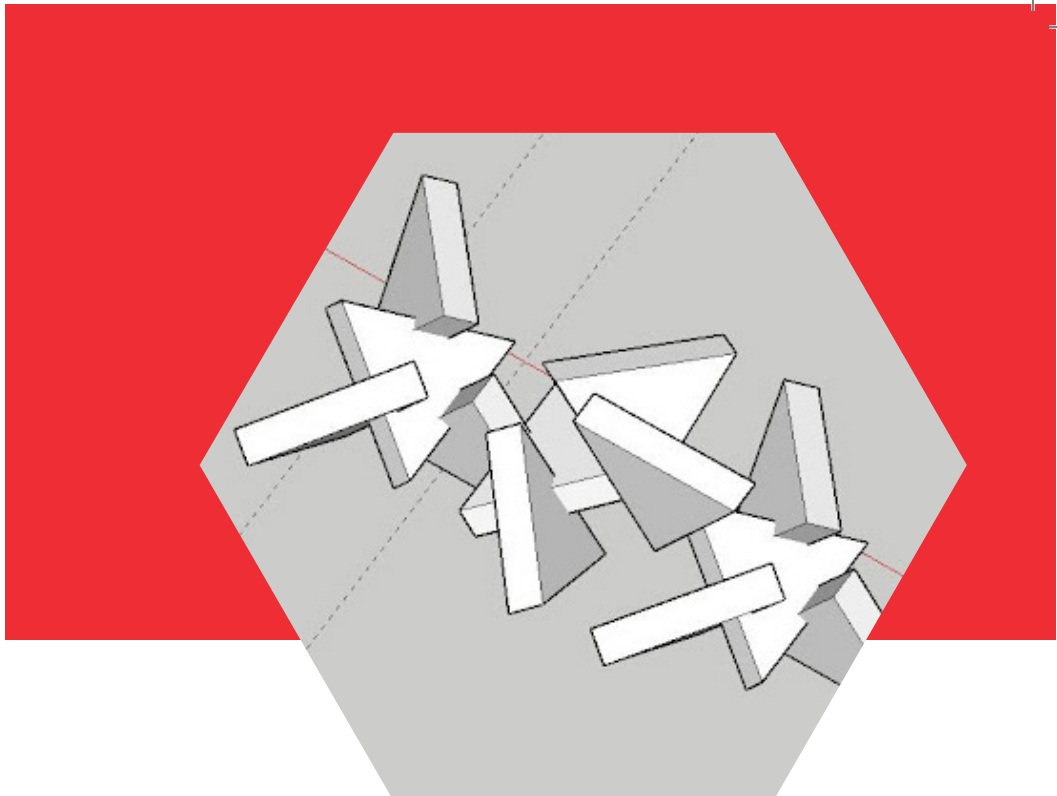
scale
1:1000

The hierarchy of needs as defined by Maslow remains one of the most visible and widely discussed theories of basic human needs both in and out of psychology. In his theory on motivation and personality development, Maslow talks about five needs driving human behavior. The first stage - Physiological needs, includes among others, the drives for hunger, thirst or sleep. According to Maslow's idea, these physiological needs have to be satisfied before other higher needs in the famous pyramid can be met. The next steps are the Safety need followed by the Love and Belongingness need. The Safety need highlights the human need to feel secure, whereas the Love and Belongingness need captures the requirement for company and attachment. At the top of the classic pyramid, Self-esteem and Self-actualization are located. While Self-esteem can be gained via personal achievements, a prerequisite for the fulfillment of Self-actualization is personal growth. Although this theory was and still is used as a research base on human behaviour, scientists have contested Maslow's humanistic view on mankind might have "been too positive".

Either way, Self-actualization, just as the overall wellbeing subject is classified as objective and subjective. This becomes particularly self explanatory when considering that different people can perceive the same circumstances differently.

Through time and memory, people have dreamt of a happy healing place. Weirdly, the majority of us picture an abundance of greens and water, a place of nature and in fact, scientific studies show that views of nature do improve moods and create a state of happiness. So if a place can make you happy, can it also make you well? An important fact is that a place can cause stress and some of the most common reasons are: crowding, temperature (too high or too low), noise, light (too much or too little), confusion, maze. Regrettably, hospitals and rehabilitation centers can easily be described with these words.



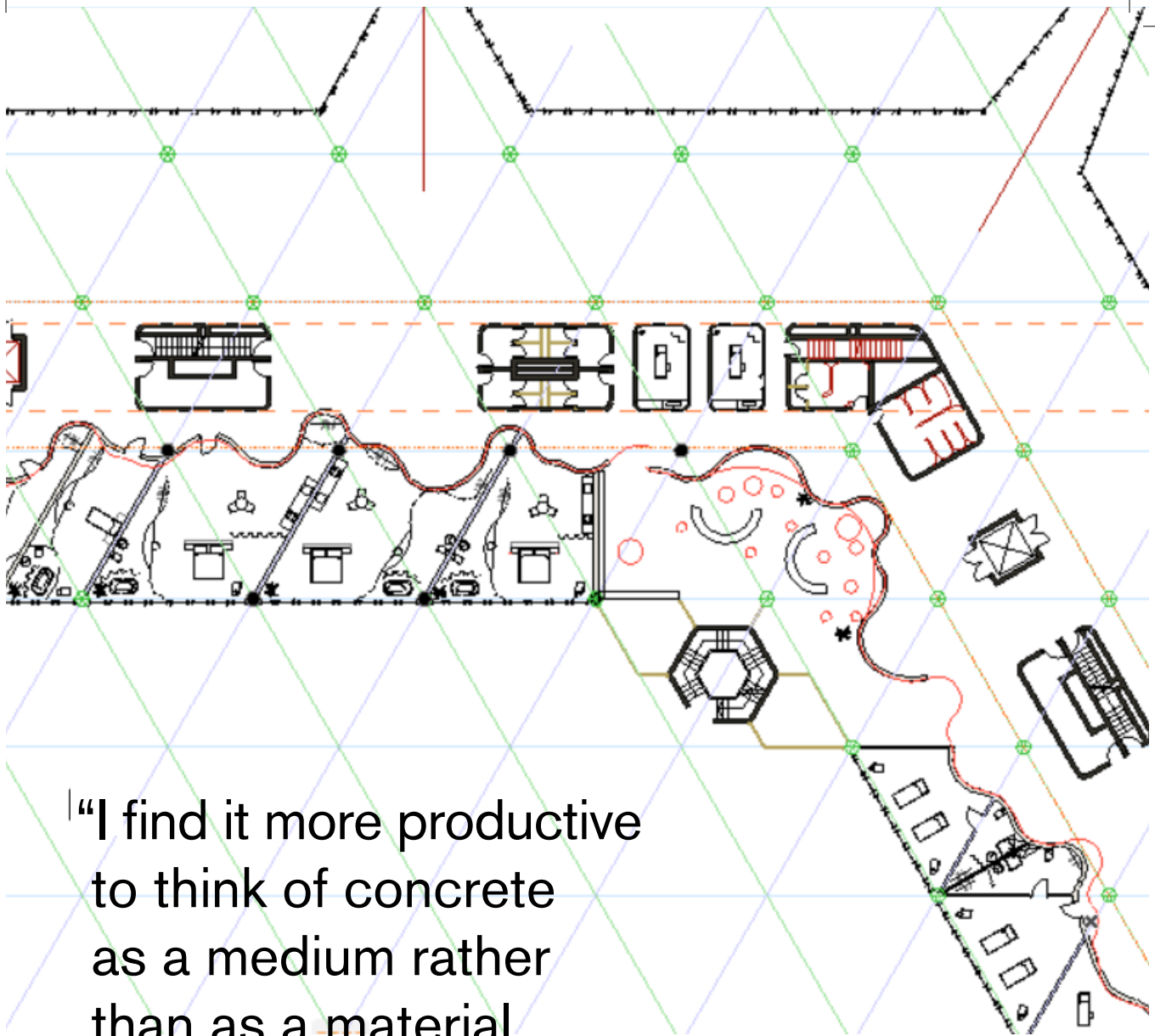


Other theories of wellbeing in mental health identify the three key themes in Compassionate Design where these psychological needs are directing the designer's attention to ways in which space programming might be developed to meet. The focus on personalisation reinforces a person's psychological need for identity; the connection theme addresses the need for inclusion and attachment and sensory stimulation provides ways of delivering occupation and comfort.

Koolhaas has developed a space agenda that speaks for areas of void, where social performance takes place in between compliance and independence. Contrary to my long standing reputation as a capitalist sell-out and cynical bystander in the process of globalization - I was actually very interested in selective participation. The key is being "selective" while also looking for strategies that would allow us to pursue (programmatically) our own interests.

The concept of a rehabilitation centre combined with the site's aesthetics might sound a little conflicting, or rather incompatible. To say that concrete is a contradictory material is not particularly an original observation. Although we depend and use concrete extensively- people also regularly express distaste for its visual qualities and the negative effect on the Co2 emissions when poured. Indeed, concrete is not universally bad, oppressive or ugly. These are categories that we have developed in response to changing historical dynamics.





“I find it more productive to think of concrete as a medium rather than as a material, as a medium, through which all sorts of ideas, some of them architectural, have been communicated.”

— Adrian Forty



One such example of materialisation of concrete as a medium is Le Corbusier's La Tourette, admired and commented by Alexandre Persitz as: *"Never has poverty of a material appeared sumptuous as an expression of high spirituality."* Le Corbusier made it clear though that his work was about "psycho-physiology of the feelings" more than religious requirements. An Interesting statement was made by the Italian architect Giovanni Michelucci *"poverty is a moral condition of work, and by giving a crude material 'moving testimony of life' could give realisation to our interior richness."*

The positive outcome of the project is that using the philosophy of the space and the site specific grid, It successfully transformed into a space of experience that can serve as a therapy space for people suffering burnouts. The design concept is to create a rehabilitation centre that, when visited and experienced, evokes a transition in time, in space, in memory, through the visual and tactile imprints on the concrete walls. The goal isn't to explain away the negativity that concrete attracts, nor to persuade people that what they find ugly is really beautiful. Due to the Covid 19 pandemic and limitations of travel, the site analysis was done virtually, by accessing archives, youtube videos, articles, as well as random instagram posts, in order to create a realistic overall impression of the site's status...

Using Maslow's theory as a starting point and then completing that information with others research, like Rem Koolhaas or Esther M. Sternberg, the design solutions were starting to come together. The research informed the practice in a hierarchical manner. Using the theories, design solutions were formed to fit within the site's pre-design concept and the future idea of development. The belonging and inclusion ensures that the design process is socially aware, inclusive and human-centred. Co-designing as a concept serves as a therapeutic practice that helps people engage and adapt the space to their needs.

There is no general rule for telling us how to weigh their relative importance against each other, but as experimentation proves, there are ways of using concrete as a therapeutic medium. This work is not an apology for concrete, meant to win people over to it, it is an experiment, a speculation of what concrete can be and as a medium, what it can transmit.





