



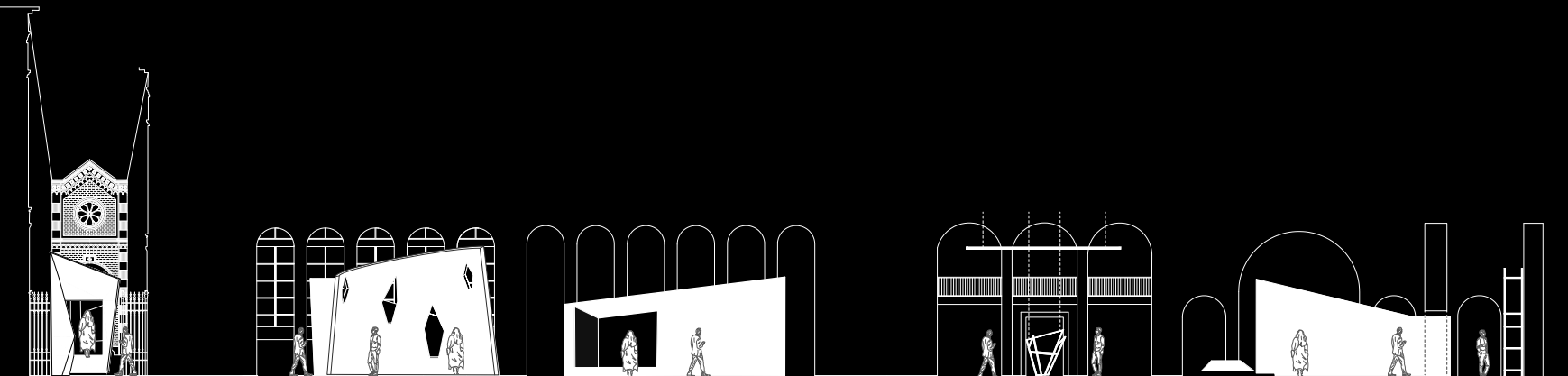
Politecnico di Milano
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UBU-RE IN&OUT

using *Space* as the mind's *Narrator*



To my family

Il lavoro di tesi nasce dalla personale volontà di ricercare
e far conseguentemente emergere la connessione tra l'architettura e il teatro.

Il teatro è da sempre stata una mia grande passione e
studiando architettura in questi anni ho iniziato a chiedermi se in qualche modo
queste due discipline potessero essere fonte d'ispirazione l'una per l'altra.

Il presente progetto è un tentativo di rispondere a tale domanda.

In questi ultimi anni ho maturato il pensiero che ci sia qualcosa di profondo che le lega
perché, quando si progetta serve una grande consapevolezza dello spazio, la quale
nel teatro si impara ad avere stando sul palco, tra la scenografia e gli altri attori.

La padronanza dello spazio teatrale è la chiave per un buon spettacolo,
così come nell'architettura essere consapevoli dello spazio che si progetta
è la chiave per far vivere bene gli altri.

This thesis project was born from a personal desire to explore and highlight the connection between **architecture** and **theatre**.

Theatre has always been a great passion of mine, and during my years studying architecture I began to wonder whether these two disciplines could, in some way, inspire one another. This project is an attempt to answer that question.

Over the past few years, I have come to believe that there is something deeply connecting them. Designing requires a strong awareness of **space** — an awareness that, in theatre, is learned on stage, among the **scenography** and the other **actors**.

Mastery of theatrical space is the key to a successful performance, just as, in architecture, being aware of the space one designs is essential to creating environments in which people can truly **live** well.

_sommario

La presente tesi indaga lo **spazio** come dispositivo drammaturgico attivo, superando l'idea di architettura e scenografia come semplici contenitori neutri dell'azione teatrale.

Lo spazio non è più sfondo passivo, ma sistema relazionale capace di orientare comportamenti, costruire gerarchie e trasformare lo spettatore da osservatore a parte integrante dell'esperienza.

La ricerca mette in dialogo teoria architettonica e pratica scenografica, approfondendo i principi dell'*Environmental Theatre* e il superamento della frontalità tradizionale del teatro all'italiana, fondata sulla separazione tra palco e platea. Frammentazione, discontinuità e instabilità diventano strumenti progettuali per ridefinire il ruolo del pubblico.

In questo quadro, il **Teatro Arsenale di Milano** è analizzato come *black box flessibile*: non forma statica, ma dispositivo trasformabile.

La scelta di Ubu Roi di **Alfred Jarry** nasce dalla sua portata di rottura: fin dalla prima del 1896, l'opera scardina le convenzioni teatrali e inaugura una nuova idea di scena.

Il suo eccesso grottesco e la centralità del tema del potere offrono la base per un'indagine spaziale che traduce l'assurdo in esperienza fisica.

In parallelo, il *pensiero decostruttivista* rafforza questa prospettiva: così come Daniel **Libeskind** nel Jewish Museum Berlin costruisce una narrazione emozionale attraverso vuoti, tagli, inclinazioni e fratture, senza ricorrere alla parola, allo stesso modo Ubu Roi rivela il proprio potenziale attraverso lo spazio. L'assurdità dell'opera si concretizza in ambienti deformati, obliqui, compressi e disarticolati, capaci di generare disorientamento e tensione.

Il progetto scenografico "*UBU RE IN&OUT*" trasforma così il teatro da rappresentazione del mondo esterno a rappresentazione dell'interiorità di Ubu, sviluppandosi dal contesto urbano all'interno della black box in un percorso itinerante e non lineare, in cui lo spettatore attraversa lo spazio come parte attiva del sistema.

_abstract

This thesis explores **space** as an active dramaturgical device, moving beyond the idea of architecture and scenography as neutral containers. Space is understood as a relational and performative condition that shapes behaviors and hierarchies, transforming the spectator from a passive observer into an active participant.

The research develops through a dialogue between architectural theory and the practice of scenography, focusing on the principles of *Environmental Theatre* and the overcoming of traditional composition. Fragmentation and instability redefine the role of the audience, while deconstructivist thought supports the idea of space as tension and displacement. In this context, the **Teatro Arsenale in Milan** is analyzed as a flexible black box: not a static form, but an active device.

The choice of Ubu Roi by **Alfred Jarry** is based on its historical and scenographic importance. At its premiere in 1896, the play marked a radical break with theatrical conventions and opened the way to modern theatre. Its structural instability and egregious excess provide a strong foundation for a spatial investigation focused on power and deformation.

This scenographic project "*UBU RE IN&OUT*" overturns the theatre as a representation of the world and transforms it into a representation of Ubu's soul. The performance journey extends from the city into the theatre through a circular path, in which the spectator is absorbed into the space as an active part of the system.

The essence of the thesis lies in emotional storytelling through space: the instability and unpredictable environments make Ubu's absurdity concrete, turning space and audience into the true protagonists.

_Table of Contents

_Introduction

1. Performing Space: toward a spatial practice

- 1.1 Space as performative structure
- 1.2. The Black Box: From the Empty Space to Teatro Arsenale
- 1.3. Transition: From Spatial Condition to Spatial Deconstruction

2. The Collapse of Representation: From Absurd Theatre to Deconstructivism

- 2.1 Richard Schechner and Environmental Theatre
- 2.2 The Breakdown of Traditional Theatrical Space: Libeskind and Jarry in dialogue

3. Inside out “Ubu Roi”

- 3.1 Alfred Jarry and “His” Ubu Roi
- 3.2 Narrative Power and structural fragmentation

4. UBU RE: IN(TERIORITY) & OUT(BREAK): The Project

- 4.1 The Architecture of Ubu’s mind
- 4.2 From textual Analysis to spatial Project
- 4.3 Conceptual phases: a circular system
- 4.4 THE CITY AS PROLOGUE_Urban Totems
- 4.5 UBURE:IN&OUT_General plan arrangement
- 4.6 UBURE:IN&OUT_Urban to interior section

4.7 UBURE:IN&OUT_Show begins: the 6 scenes

01_UBU'S BELLY

Circulation plan

Section

Assembly phases

02_UBU'S STOMACH

Circulation plan

Section

Assembly phases

03_UBU'S DESIRE

Circulation plan

Section

Assembly phases

04_UBU'S TIRANNY

Circulation plan

Section

Assembly phases

05_UBU'S COWARDICE

Circulation plan

Section

Assembly phases

06_UBU'S GREED AND ENDING

Circulation plan

Section

Assembly phases

4.8 UBURE:IN&OUT_Renders

_Conclusion

_List of figures

_Bibliography

_Acknowledgments

_Introduction

This thesis investigates the relationship between architecture and scenography through the design of a performative spatial system inspired by **Ubu Roi** by **Alfred Jarry**, conceived for the **Teatro Arsenale** in Milan.

The research is grounded in a precise assumption: emotional narration can be constructed through space, without relying primarily on words. Architecture and scenography share the same fundamental material, space, and therefore the capacity to shape perception, movement, and experience. What differentiates them is not their substance, but the way in which space is activated and structured in time.

The Teatro Arsenale, with its atypical configuration and its nature as a flexible black box (originally a sacred space later transformed into a performance venue) provides an appropriate context for this exploration. Its apparent neutrality becomes a field of experimentation. The space is not simply occupied; it is reinterpreted. It is not decorated; it is placed under tension.

Within this framework, scenography is approached as an architectural act. It is not treated as background or illustration, but as a system capable of assembling spatial conditions and producing meaning through form, void, scale, and movement.

Ubu Roi offers a coherent ground for such an exploration. Jarry's text destabilizes language, narrative logic, and moral structure. Its grotesque exaggeration and structural discontinuity anticipate the crisis of representation that characterizes much of twentieth-century theatre. The instability embedded in the work suggests a spatial translation: the absurd can become concrete through architecture. In this perspective, the irrationality and excess of Ubu are not illustrated but spatialized.

The project explores how impossible, inclined, fragmented, and destabilizing spaces can give physical form to psychological and political imbalance. The modeling of space becomes the modeling of emotional tension.

The performance is conceived as itinerant and non-linear. It begins in the city, engaging with the surrounding urban context, and gradually incorporates the spectator into an interior spatial condition the "belly" of Ubu, within the Teatro Arsenale. Linear time is disrupted; spatial sequences are organized around tensions rather than chronology. The oscillation between exterior and interior (**In&Out**) reflects the relationship between private impulse and public consequence that structures the character's trajectory.

The objective of this thesis is not to reinterpret Ubu Roi textually, but to test how architecture can embody instability and construct an experiential narrative. Through the manipulation of scale, orientation, and spatial continuity, the project aims to demonstrate that architecture and scenography operate on a shared ground: both are capable of producing meaning through the configuration of space. In this sense, space is not a neutral container of action: It is the primary instrument through which the action is understood.

01 **Performing Space:** toward a spatial practice

"Performance takes place in a concrete space, and the organization of that space influences the behavior of performers and audience alike."

— Richard Schechner, *Environmental Theater* (1973)

1.1 Space as Performative structure

Scenography cannot be reduced to decoration or visual background. In contemporary theory and practice, it must be understood as a spatial discipline concerned with the construction of environments in which performers and spectators interact. The term itself — from the Greek "*skēnē*" (stage structure) and "*graphía*" (writing) — implies not ornament but spatial inscription.¹

Scenography is the writing of space.

The rupture with illusionistic representation begins at the turn of the twentieth century. Adolphe Appia rejected the painted backdrop and perspectival simulation typical of nineteenth-century theatre, proposing instead a three-dimensional stage articulated through platforms, stairs, and light.²

For Appia, light was not illumination but an architectural material capable of shaping volume in relation to the actor's body. The stage ceased to represent architecture and began to operate as architecture.

Similarly, Edward Gordon Craig challenged naturalism through abstract spatial compositions constructed with movable screens and articulated planes.³ Space was no longer mimetic; it became compositional and autonomous.

With Jerzy Grotowski, the transformation shifted from formal innovation to relational reconfiguration.

In "*Towards a Poor Theatre*", the scenographic apparatus is reduced materially, yet the spatial relationship between actor and spectator becomes central.⁴ Each production reorganizes proximity, orientation, and hierarchy. Space becomes a device for structuring encounter.

1. The etymology of the term derives from the Greek *skēnē* (stage building or tent) and *graphía* (writing or drawing). See: The Oxford English Dictionary, s.v. "scenography."

2. *Adolphe Appia, Music and the Art of the Theatre* (1899; English trans. 1962). Appia's rejection of painted scenery and his conception of light as a plastic and architectural element mark a decisive break with nineteenth-century illusionism.

3. *Edward Gordon Craig, On the Art of the Theatre* (1911). Craig proposes abstract, movable screens as compositional spatial structures replacing naturalistic representation.

4. *Jerzy Grotowski, Towards a Poor Theatre* (1968). Grotowski redefines theatre as a relational encounter, minimizing material scenography while intensifying spatial proximity between actor and spectator.

This evolution culminates in a broader understanding of scenography as spatial system. Rather than illustrating a narrative, it constructs the conditions within which interaction unfolds. From an architectural perspective, scenography and architecture share structural principles: composition, proportion, material articulation, and the relationship between whole and detail.

As Dante Ferretti has observed, the scenographic project does not fundamentally differ from architectural design: both concern the creation of space for human interaction.⁵ The precision with which architectural details contribute to the coherence of a façade parallels the way scenographic elements structure perception and meaning. Every detail participates in the construction of the whole.

Even when theatre embraces illusion and technical artifice — walls rising, bodies suspended, environments materializing — it remains fundamentally a spatial operation. Whether inhabited directly, as in architecture, or mediated through the actor's presence, space is the primary medium.

Scenography, therefore, may be defined as the architectural construction of a performative environment.

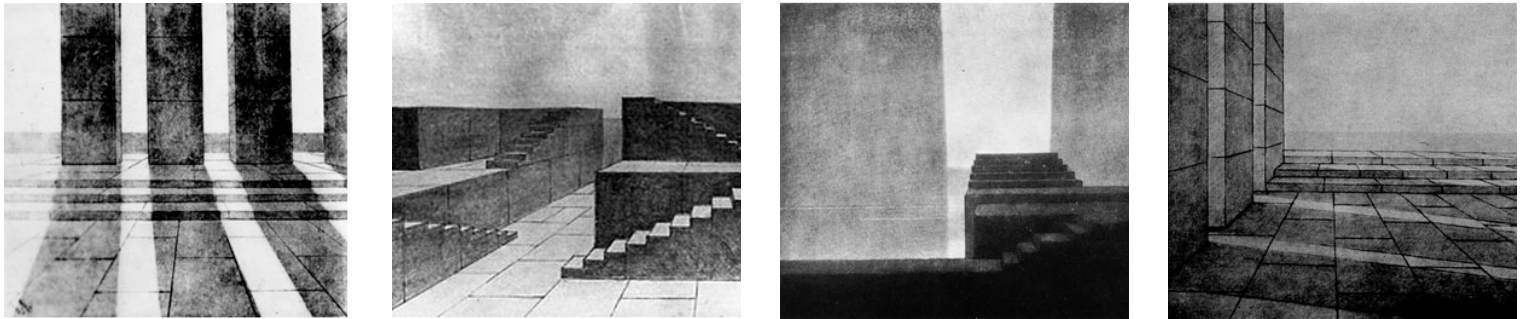


Figure 1-4. Adolphe Appia – Stage design studies.
Spatial articulation through platforms and light.
Source: Archival drawings.

5. Dante Ferretti, interviews and writings on scenographic practice. Ferretti frequently emphasizes the structural and methodological parallels between scenographic and architectural design.

1.2 The Black Box: From the Empty Space to Teatro Arsenale

In "**The Empty Space**", Peter Brook famously writes: *"I can take any empty space and call it a bare stage."*⁶

This assertion displaces theatrical essence from architectural typology to spatial condition. Theatre does not begin with décor, nor with institutional form, but with the activation of a volume through action and attention.

Emptiness is not absence, it is potential.

The typology of the black box theatre translates this conceptual position into architectural form. Emerging from early twentieth-century experimental practices and widely diffused in the 1960s⁷ the black box rejects the hierarchical structure of the proscenium theatre. It is characterized by:

- **absence of fixed stage**
- **flexible seating**
- **neutral surfaces**
- **adaptable spatial configuration**

Any large room can be transformed into a black box through minimal intervention: black paint, curtains, technical grid. This accessibility made it particularly attractive to experimental and non-institutional companies. More importantly, the black box embodies an ideological stance: theatre as human encounter rather than architectural spectacle.

The black box does not impose orientation; it requires spatial decision. It offers an envelope, not a hierarchy. Within this lineage, the **Teatro Arsenale** in Milan occupies a distinctive position. Founded in 1974 and housed within a former deconsecrated church, it retains the volumetric characteristics of its ecclesiastical origin while operating as a contemporary experimental venue.

The longitudinal axis of the nave, the height of the interior, the presence of the former apse, and an upper gallery overlooking the main hall define an architectural organism that diverges from traditional Italian theatre typology. There is no proscenium arch and no fixed stage platform.

⁶. Peter Brook, *The Empty Space* (London: Penguin Books, 1968), 9.

⁷. See Richard Schechner, *Environmental Theater* (New York: Hawthorn Books, 1973); and Christopher Innes, *Avant-Garde Theatre 1892–1992* (London: Routledge, 1993).

Audience and performers frequently share the same ground level, with spectators often positioned in the area corresponding to the former apse while action unfolds within the nave.

The upper level introduces vertical stratification. Actors may appear from above, generating multi-directional perception and destabilizing frontal vision. Circulation and orientation are not predetermined; they are constructed through staging.

Although often described as a black box, Teatro Arsenale is not geometrically neutral. Its darkened interior tends toward abstraction, yet the memory of its ecclesiastical structure persists in proportion and spatial continuity. It represents a hybrid condition: a historically stratified volume operating within experimental logic.

In this sense, Brook's "empty space" acquires architectural specificity.

Teatro Arsenale is not void but latent structure:an envelope awaiting spatial inscription.

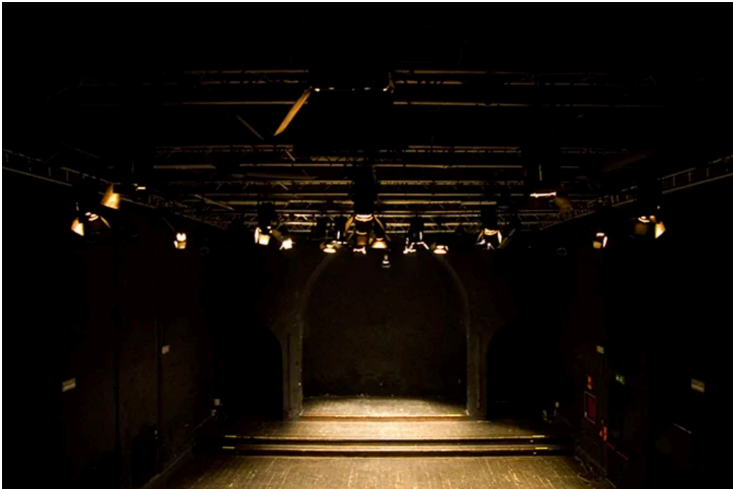


Figure 5-6. Teatro Arsenale, Milan – Performance hall.

Black box configuration and flexible spatial layout.

Source: Official website of Teatro Arsenale.

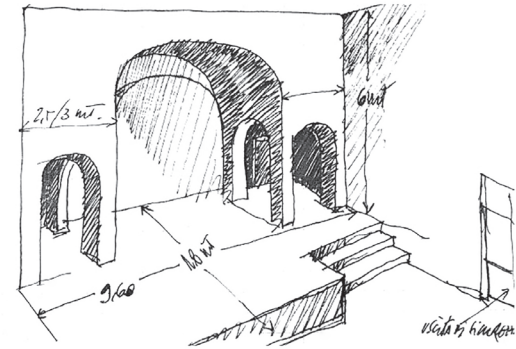
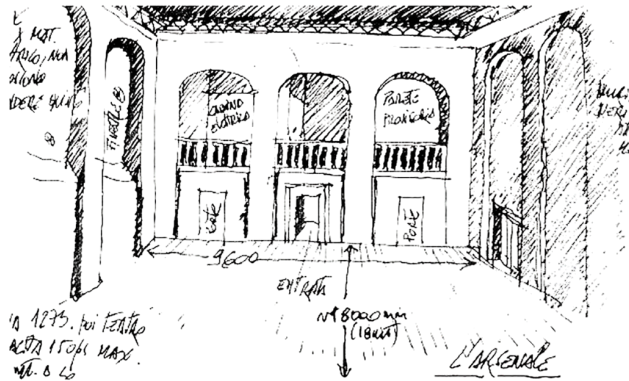


Figure 7-8. Teatro Arsenale, Milan – Performance hall.

Configuration's sketches

Source: Official website of Teatro Arsenale.

If the black box is defined by indeterminacy, Teatro Arsenale exemplifies indeterminacy within a pre-existing architectural framework. Unlike the classical theatre, structured by frontal hierarchy and perspectival depth, Teatro Arsenale operates through spatial continuity. The absence of a framed stage abolishes the visual threshold separating fiction from observation. The event unfolds within a shared volume. Architecturally, the space is defined by longitudinal development and vertical articulation. The former nave establishes axial extension; the gallery introduces elevation; the apse area offers focal potential without imposing it. These elements do not prescribe scenic order but provide spatial tension.

The theatre thus functions not as container but as device. Its neutrality is productive rather than passive. By withholding fixed hierarchy, it transfers responsibility to scenographic intervention. Thresholds, centers, trajectories, and densities must be articulated through design. The project of scenography within such a space becomes an act of architectural negotiation. It must engage with height, axis, memory, and volume. The inherited ecclesiastical proportions cannot be erased; they must be reinterpreted.

Teatro Arsenale therefore constitutes more than a venue. It is a structural premise for spatial inquiry. Its hybrid condition — former sacred architecture operating as experimental black box — establishes a fertile ground for investigating space as dramaturgical instrument. The envelope remains constant; its meaning is continually redefined.

1.3 Transition: From Spatial Condition to Spatial Deconstruction

The reflections developed in this chapter establish a progressive shift in the understanding of theatrical space: from decorative backdrop to architectural construction; from framed stage to relational environment; from fixed typology to adaptable spatial framework.⁸ What once functioned primarily as visual support for dramatic action gradually assumes structural agency. Space ceases to serve as passive container and becomes an operative system that organizes perception, proximity, and encounter.

Through Appia, Craig, and Grotowski, scenography emerges as a discipline concerned not with representation but with spatial organization and embodied experience.⁹ The stage is no longer conceived as an image to be viewed, but as a constructed environment to be inhabited. Through Brook and the black box typology, theatre is reduced to its primary condition: an activated volume.¹⁰ In this reduced state, architecture is stripped of ornament and illusion, revealing its essential capacity to host action. In the case of Teatro Arsenale, this condition acquires architectural specificity. The former ecclesiastical envelope operates as an indeterminate yet structurally charged environment: a space that does not impose predetermined meaning but requires its continuous spatial and performative construction. If Chapter 1 has defined the spatial premise, Chapter 2 interrogates its theoretical implications. The question that follows is no longer how space is constructed, but how space can be destabilized. The twentieth century does not merely redefine theatrical architecture; it subjects it to critical dismantling. Hierarchies collapse, frontal vision dissolves, narrative coherence fractures.¹¹ Spatial order becomes contingent rather than fixed, experiential rather than representational. The stage becomes environment; the environment becomes event.¹²

It is within this expanded and unstable framework that the theory of Environmental Theatre, and the broader deconstruction of theatrical space, must be examined.¹³ Chapter 2 therefore moves from spatial condition to spatial instability: from architecture as framework to space as critical device, capable of generating tension, displacement, and meaning through its own configuration.

8. See Adolphe Appia, *Music and the Art of the Theatre* (1899); Edward Gordon Craig, *On the Art of the Theatre* (1911).

9. Jerzy Grotowski, *Towards a Poor Theatre* (1968).

10. Peter Brook, *The Empty Space* (1968).

11. Jacques Derrida, "Structure, Sign, and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences" (1966).

12. Richard Schechner, *Environmental Theater* (1973).

13. *Ibid.*; see also Christopher Innes, *Avant-Garde Theatre 1892–1992* (1993).

02 **The Collapse of Representation**

From Absurd Theatre to Deconstructivism

2.1 Richard Schechner and Environmental Theatre

The twentieth century marks a decisive rupture in the conception of theatrical space. The architectural logic of the proscenium stage — based on frontal hierarchy, perspectival depth, and the separation between audience and action — progressively dissolves. Space ceases to function as a stable container of representation and becomes an unstable field of relations.

This shift can be understood as a form of spatial deconstruction: not merely a stylistic change, but a structural redefinition of how space produces meaning. A key moment in this transformation is the theory of Environmental Theatre, articulated by Richard Schechner in the late 1960s and formalized in *Environmental Theater* (1973).¹⁴

Schechner does not simply propose alternative staging techniques; he redefines the spatial and relational foundations of performance.

In the proscenium model, space is hierarchically organized: the stage is framed and elevated, the audience positioned frontally, and perspective controls vision. Environmental Theatre disrupts this system at its core. Theatre is conceived as a network of interactions among performers, spectators, and environment. The space is no longer a neutral backdrop but an active participant in the event.

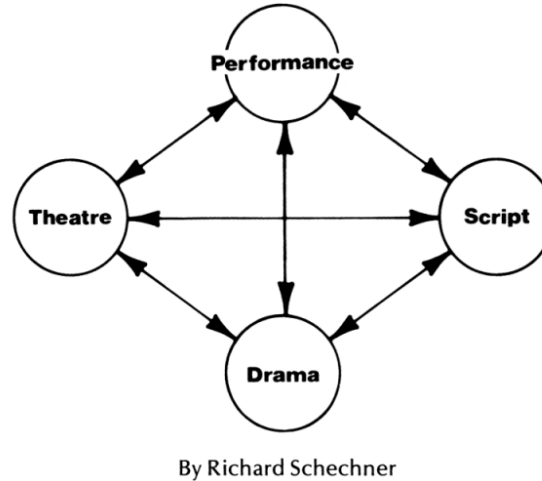


Figure 9. Diagram of the interdependent relationships between performance, script, drama, and theatre, according to Richard Schechner.

The diagram illustrates theatre as a dynamic system of reciprocal exchanges rather than a linear hierarchy. Performance, script, drama, and theatre influence one another through continuous interaction, reinforcing Schechner's view of theatre as a network of related transactions rather than a text-centered structure.

14. Richard Schechner, *Environmental Theater* (New York: Hawthorn Books, 1973).

One of Schechner's most radical principles is that all available space may be used for performance.¹⁵ The boundary between stage and auditorium becomes permeable. Actors move through the audience, spectators are repositioned, and multiple centers of attention coexist. The entire volume becomes performative.

Equally significant is the use of transformed or found spaces — warehouses, streets, churches, industrial buildings. Architecture is no longer a fixed typology but a condition to be reinterpreted. Space is selected not for its conformity to theatrical norms, but for its potential to be reconfigured.

Environmental Theatre dismantles frontal hierarchy, collapses the separation between actor and spectator, and reconceives space as a dynamic system rather than a container. Performance does not unfold within architecture; it continually reconstructs it. The environment becomes processual, shaped by movement, proximity, and temporal unfolding.

From a scenographic perspective, this transformation is decisive. The designer no longer composes a framed image but constructs a relational field. Circulation, thresholds, verticality, density, and distance become dramaturgical tools. From an architectural standpoint, the entire spatial volume becomes subject to design logic. Space becomes event.

It is precisely this redefinition — from container to active system — that makes Environmental Theatre a crucial theoretical foundation for projects that treat architecture and scenography as inseparable disciplines.

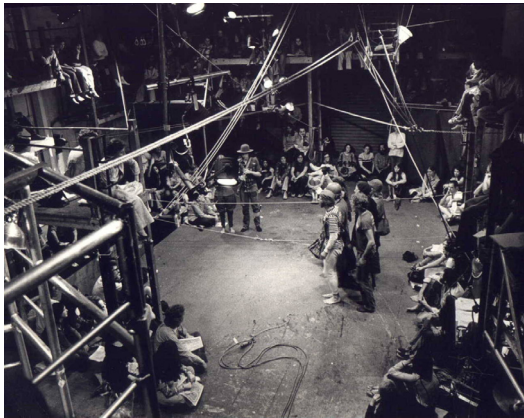


Figure 10. Environmental Theatre performance by Richard Schechner and The Performance Group, late 1960s.

15. Ibid., especially the axiom stating that all available space may be used for performance.

2.2 The Breakdown of Traditional Theatrical Space: Libeskind and Jarry in dialogue

The transformation of theatrical space in the twentieth century unfolds within a broader crisis of representation. The proscenium theatre, consolidated between the Renaissance and the nineteenth century, was structured around three fundamental principles: frontal hierarchy (stage versus auditorium), illusionistic depth, and the separation between fiction and reality.¹⁶ Architecture functioned as a framing device, positioning the spectator as a distant and stable observer.

Modern theatre progressively dismantles these assumptions. Adolphe Appia replaces the painted backdrop with three-dimensional platforms and light as spatial modulators, transforming the stage into architectural construction.¹⁷

Edward Gordon Craig advances abstraction through movable screens and articulated planes, redefining space as compositional and autonomous.¹⁸

Jerzy Grotowski eliminates fixed separation between actor and spectator, reducing theatre to relational proximity.¹⁹ Peter Brook radicalizes this condition in *The Empty Space*, where theatre becomes an activated volume rather than a representational apparatus.²⁰

The dissolution of traditional theatrical space unfolds along two trajectories: the collapse of perspective and the erosion of architectural hierarchy. Representation yields to presence, the spectator is no longer outside the event but spatially implicated within it. The stage ceases to simulate architecture and instead operates as environment.

16. See Oscar G. Brockett and Franklin J. Hildy, *History of the Theatre* (Boston: Allyn & Bacon, 2003).

17. Adolphe Appia, *Music and the Art of the Theatre* (1899).

18. Edward Gordon Craig, *On the Art of the Theatre* (1911).

19. Jerzy Grotowski, *Towards a Poor Theatre* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1968), 19–45.

20. Peter Brook, *The Empty Space* (London: Penguin, 1968), 9–15.

A decisive turning point in this transformation is the 1969 staging of *Orlando Furioso* by Luca Ronconi.²¹⁶ Presented in non-traditional spaces, the production fragmented narrative continuity and dispersed the audience across multiple performance zones. Spectators moved physically within the event, choosing viewpoints and constructing their own sequences. Frontal vision dissolved; theatrical space became itinerant, relational, and unstable.



Figure 11-12. *Orlando Furioso*, directed by Luca Ronconi (1969).

Non-frontal staging and fragmented spatial configuration. The audience moves within the performance environment, dissolving the traditional separation between stage and auditorium and transforming theatrical space into an immersive and itinerant field.

21. *Orlando Furioso*, directed by Luca Ronconi, 1969. See Franco Quadri, *Il rito perduto* (Turin: Einaudi, 1973).

Within this broader shift, the Theatre of the Absurd represents not an isolated movement but a structural rupture. As Martin Esslin argues, absurd drama rejects logical progression, psychological realism, and stable meaning.²² Language fragments, causality collapses, repetition replaces development. This dramaturgical instability inevitably produces spatial consequences: scenography can no longer function as illustrative backdrop but must operate as structural agent.

This condition resonates with architectural deconstructivism. The 1988 MoMA exhibition *Deconstructivist Architecture*, curated by Philip Johnson and Mark Wigley, identified works characterized by fragmentation, distortion, and formal instability.²³ Architecture abandons harmony in favor of tension and displacement.

In this convergence between theatre and architecture, space becomes critical device rather than neutral framework. The stage becomes environment; the environment becomes event. Instability is no longer accident but method — a spatial strategy through which meaning is constructed.

22. Martin Esslin, *The Theatre of the Absurd* (New York: Anchor Books, 1961).

23. Philip Johnson and Mark Wigley, eds., *Deconstructivist Architecture* (New York: MoMA, 1988).



Figure 13. Jewish Museum Berlin, designed by Daniel Libeskind (1999).

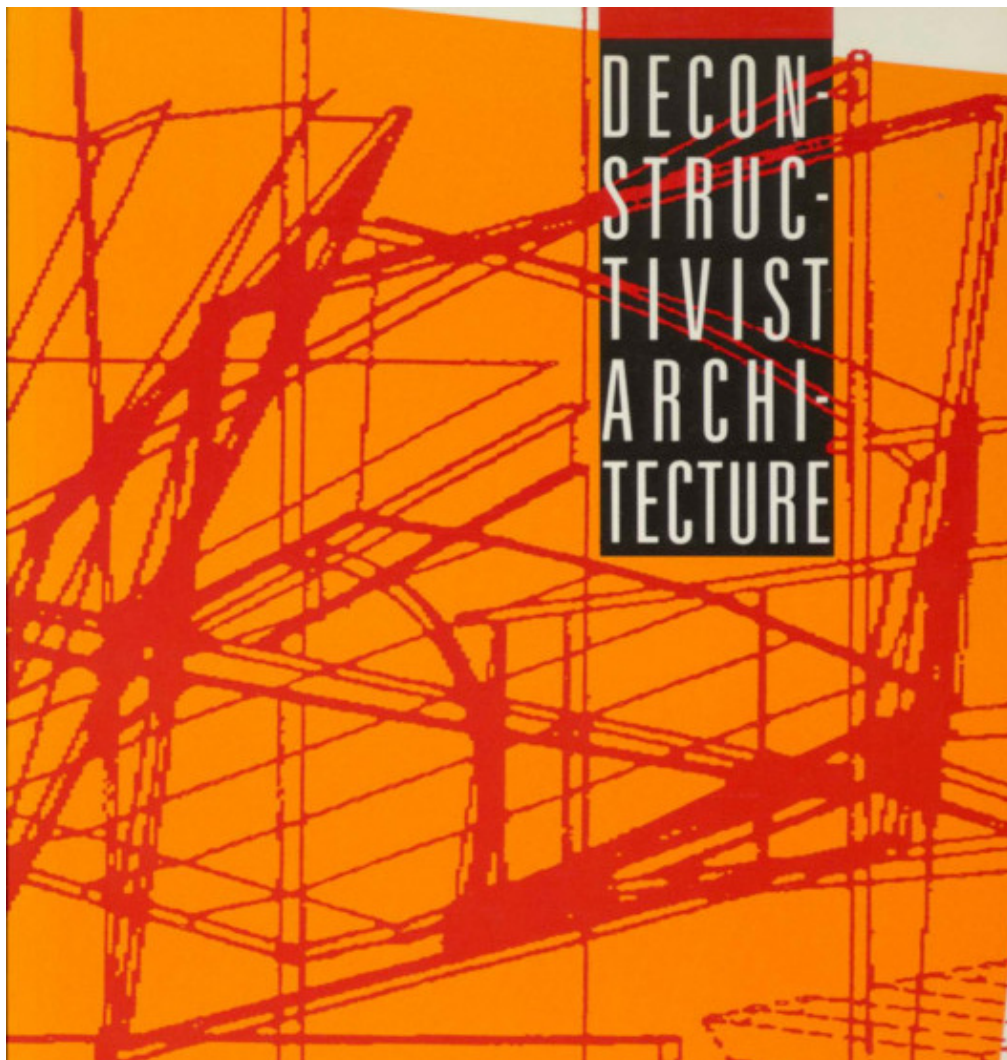


Figure 14. Deconstructivist Architecture, exhibition catalogue, Museum of Modern Art, curated by Philip Johnson and Mark Wigley (1988).

03 Inside out "Ubu Roi"



3.1 Alfred Jarry and “his” Ubu Roi

Alfred Jarry (1873–1907) occupies a decisive position at the threshold of modern theatre. Emerging from the Symbolist milieu of late nineteenth-century Paris, Jarry developed a dramaturgy grounded in exaggeration, parody, and structural inversion. His intellectual formation unfolded during the unstable years of the French Third Republic, marked by political corruption, institutional fragility, and the divisive tensions of the Dreyfus Affair.²⁴

Within this climate of distrust toward authority, Jarry produced a theatre that did not reflect order but exposed its absurdity. Originally conceived as a school parody of a despised teacher, the figure of Père Ubu evolved into a grotesque embodiment of arbitrary power.

Central to Jarry’s thinking was **pataphysics**, defined as the “**science of imaginary solutions**,” a conceptual framework privileging exception, contradiction, and irrationality.²⁵ This logic would underpin the structure of *Ubu Roi*.

The premiere took place on 10 December 1896 at the Théâtre de l’Œuvre in Paris, directed by Lugné-Poe. The first word of the play — “Merdre” — provoked immediate uproar.²⁶

Yet the scandal cannot be reduced to vulgar language. What disturbed the audience was the collapse of theatrical convention. Late nineteenth-century spectators expected realism, psychological coherence, and scenographic plausibility. Instead, they encountered schematic settings, grotesque costumes, exaggerated gesture, and the deliberate exposure of theatrical artifice. Illusion was not perfected; it was dismantled.

That night marked a structural rupture. Theatre ceased to mirror bourgeois order and began to undermine it.

24. See Jean-Denis Bredin, *The Affair: The Case of Alfred Dreyfus* (New York: George Braziller, 1986); and Eugen Weber, *France: Fin de Siècle* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1986).

25. Alfred Jarry, “Exploits and Opinions of Dr. Faustroll, Pataphysician” (1911); see also Alfred Jarry, *Gestes et opinions du docteur Faustroll, pataphysicien* (Paris: Fasquelle, 1911).

26. Alfred Jarry, *Ubu Roi* (Paris: Mercure de France, 1896); see also Noël Arnaud, *Alfred Jarry: D’Ubu Roi au Docteur Faustroll* (Paris: La Table Ronde, 1974), on the premiere at the Théâtre de l’Œuvre (10 December 1896).



Figure 15. Père Ubu illustrated by Alfred Jarry. Original drawing depicting the grotesque and exaggerated physicality of the character.



Figure 16. Stage interpretation of Ubu Roi. Grotesque costume and exaggerated body proportions translating Ubu's absurd corporeality into performative form.

3.2 Narrative Power and structural fragmentation

The narrative recounts the rise and fall of Père Ubu. Encouraged by Mère Ubu, he assassinates King Venceslas of Poland and seizes the throne. Once in power, he imposes arbitrary taxation, confiscates wealth, executes nobles, and governs through violent incompetence. Ultimately betrayed and defeated, he flees into exile — unchanged, still convinced of his greatness.⁶²⁷ The setting is nominally Poland, described as “nowhere.”⁶²⁸ Geography shifts fluidly across references to Russia, France, and elsewhere. The play unfolds through more than twenty abrupt scene changes — palace, battlefield, cave, forest, ship — without realistic continuity.²⁹⁶

The instability of power is mirrored by **the instability of space**.

At its core, *Ubu Roi* articulates a radical satire of authority. Père Ubu embodies tyranny stripped of dignity. His power is infantile, impulsive, grotesque. As critical studies observe, Ubu represents the infantilization of sovereignty — power reduced to tantrum and greed.⁶³⁰

Language itself collapses. Words are distorted; rhetoric degraded; syntax disarticulated. Communication fails. By destabilizing language, Jarry destabilizes legitimacy.

The grotesque becomes method. Exaggeration exposes corruption. Ridicule dismantles fear. Narrative coherence fractures; scenic continuity dissolves; psychological realism disappears.

The play therefore enacts the collapse of representation on multiple levels:

- **Political** representation (authority revealed as arbitrary)
- **Linguistic** representation (meaning destabilized)
- **Spatial** representation (illusion fragmented)

The proscenium frame remains physically present, but its ideological authority is fractured.

27. ⁶²⁷Alfred Jarry, *Ubu Roi* (Paris: Mercure de France, 1896).

28. Ibid. (“en Pologne, c’est-à-dire nulle part”).

29. See Martin Esslin, *The Theatre of the Absurd* (New York: Anchor Books, 1961), 23–30.

30. See Alastair Broachie, *Alfred Jarry: A Pataphysical Life* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2011); and Jill Fell, *Alfred Jarry: An Imagination in Revolt* (London: Associated University Presses, 2005).

The importance of Ubu Roi lies not merely in the scandal it provoked in 1896, but in the structural transformation it introduced into theatrical practice.

With this work, theatre was released from the obligation of mimetic realism. The dominant naturalistic paradigm of the late nineteenth century — grounded in psychological plausibility and scenographic illusion — was destabilized. Instead of reproducing reality, Jarry distorted it. Exaggeration replaced imitation, grotesque caricature replaced psychological depth.³¹

In doing so, Ubu Roi anticipated many of the trajectories that would define twentieth-century theatre. The instability of language, the collapse of rational causality, and the absurdity of power foreshadowed what Martin Esslin would later define as the Theatre of the Absurd³². Although Jarry precedes Beckett and Ionesco by decades, the structural logic of his dramaturgy already dismantles coherence and certainty.

Equally decisive was the impact on scenographic thinking. The rapid succession of fragmented locations, the schematic quality of environments, and the refusal of spatial continuity challenged the illusionistic unity of the proscenium stage. Space ceased to function as a stable container for narrative development. It became episodic, discontinuous, and exposed.

This transformation reverberated throughout the twentieth century. **Avant-garde movements** such as **Dada and Surrealism** embraced similar strategies of exaggeration and dislocation. Later directors and scenographers explored non-linear spatial configurations, multi-directional staging, and the deliberate revelation of theatrical mechanism.

The rupture inaugurated by Ubu Roi also resonates beyond theatre. Twentieth-century architectural discourse increasingly questioned formal stability and compositional harmony. In deconstructivist architecture — as theorized by Philip Johnson and Mark Wigley and exemplified by architects such as Daniel Libeskind and Peter Eisenman — space is articulated through fragmentation, tension, and disjunction.³³ Although historically unrelated, the structural analogy is evident: both theatre and architecture move away from unified order toward instability as expressive principle.

Thus, Ubu Roi must be understood not only as political satire, but as a foundational act of theatrical deconstruction. It fractured narrative coherence, destabilized language, and disrupted spatial unity. The stage was no longer a place of representational reassurance, but a site of critical exposure.

The consequences of that rupture extend throughout modern performance practices. If nineteenth-century theatre sought to conceal its mechanisms, the twentieth century increasingly revealed them. If realism aimed at continuity, modern theatre embraced discontinuity. In this sense, Ubu Roi stands at the origin of a theatre that understands instability not as failure, but as method.

31. Alfred Jarry, *Ubu Roi* (Paris: Mercure de France, 1896); see also Jill Fell, *Alfred Jarry: An Imagination in Revolt* (London: Associated University Presses)

32. Martin Esslin, *The Theatre of the Absurd* (New York: Anchor Books, 1961), 23–30.

33. Philip Johnson and Mark Wigley, *Deconstructivist Architecture* (New York: MoMA, 1988), 7–15.

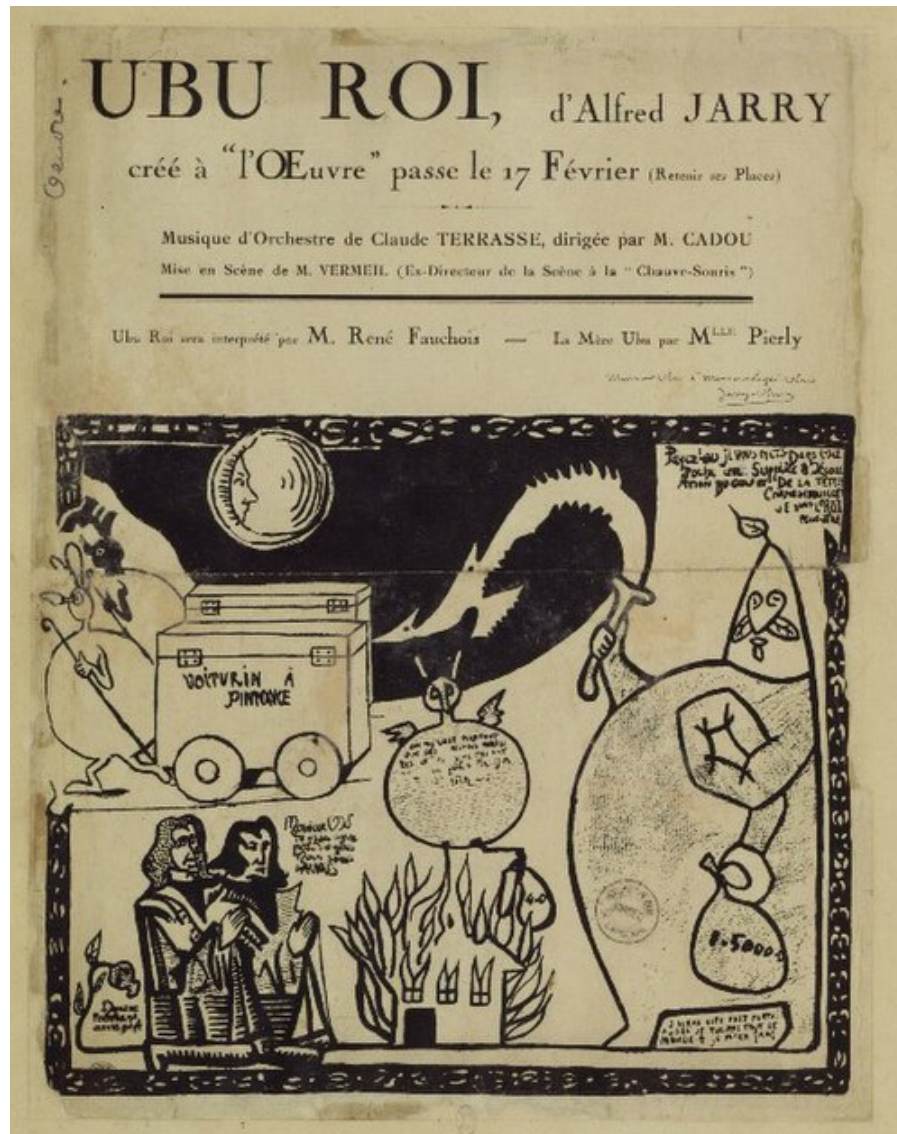
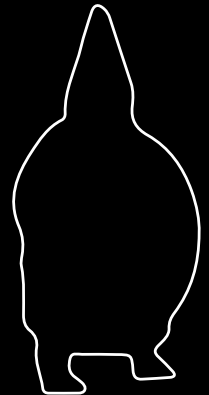


Figure 17. Poster for Ubu Roi
by Alfred Jarry,
Théâtre de l'Œuvre, Paris (1896).
Original illustrated announcement
for the premiere

"Theatre must not reflect reality, but deform it."
— Alfred Jarry, *Questions de théâtre* (1897)

04 **UBU RE: IN**(TERIORITY) & **OUT**(BREAK)

The Project



4.1 The architecture of Ubu's mind

The conceptual origin of the project lies in a radical inversion of the traditional theatrical paradigm. Rather than conceiving the stage as a representation of the external world, the scenographic device is understood as the spatial manifestation of interiority. The project does not attempt to reconstruct Poland, nor to illustrate the episodic structure of Ubu Roi. Instead, it translates the instability of the text into architectural condition.

In this conception, Ubu does not dominate a throne; he inhabits his own belly.

The theatrical environment becomes a visceral architecture — deconstructed, distorted, unstable — in which every object embodies hunger, every space functions as an organ, and every passage operates as a process of digestion. The spectator is not positioned in front of the narrative but immersed within it. The audience enters the ventre of Ubu, inhabiting the very structure that generates his ambition, excess, and collapse.

Space ceases to function as background and becomes an operative body. The stage transforms simultaneously into organism and battlefield, where power expands, accumulates, fractures, and implodes. The architecture of the absurd is therefore conceived as a system in which authority ultimately consumes itself.

This interiorization of space resonates with the principles of Environmental Theatre as articulated by Richard Schechner, who rejects the fixed separation between spectator and stage and conceives performance as a spatial field of interaction.³⁴ In this framework, space is not a passive container but an active environment shaped by movement and encounter. The present project radicalizes this premise: the environment does not simply surround the audience; it incorporates it.

34. Richard Schechner, *Environmental Theater* (New York: Hawthorn Books, 1973), 3–24.

The spatial strategy also draws from architectural deconstructivism, particularly the Jewish Museum in Berlin by Daniel Libeskind. Through fragmentation, voids, inclination, and discontinuity, Libeskind demonstrates how architecture alone can communicate trauma and historical rupture without reliance on narrative explanation.³⁵ Spatial disjunction becomes emotional language. Similarly, the scenographic system proposed here seeks to embody instability through broken axes, compressions, distorted geometries, and inaccessible voids.

The theoretical grounding of this approach finds further resonance in Bernard Tschumi's reflections in *Architecture and Disjunction* (1994).³⁶ Tschumi argues that modernity is marked by disjunction — a rupture between form, function, and meaning. Architecture can no longer rely on harmonious unity; instead, it must orchestrate tensions and discontinuities. Disjunction becomes a methodological tool rather than a failure.

Central to Tschumi's thought is the relationship between event, movement, and space. Architecture is not complete without the event that occurs within it.³⁷ Space is produced through interaction; it is inseparable from the body that inhabits it. His notion of "event-space," exemplified in projects such as the Parc de la Villette, proposes that spatial meaning emerges through collision, trajectory, and encounter.³⁸

Applied to the present project, this implies that the scenographic device is activated only through the movement of spectators within it. Constrictions, forced paths, changes in level, and moments of spatial compression introduce what Tschumi describes as the "violence of space" — the condition in which architecture affects posture, perception, and bodily awareness.³⁹ The spectator's body becomes part of the architectural system.

Within this environment, the throne — emblem of power — is not treated as decorative object but as structural presence. It remains perceptible throughout the spatial journey, yet its form may deform, fragment, enlarge, or become inhabitable. It may function simultaneously as object, platform, threshold, or obstacle. Power does not simply appear; it conditions space. Through this inversion, scenography shifts from representation to incorporation. The spectator does not observe Ubu from a distance; the spectator inhabits the unstable architecture that generates him.

35. Daniel Libeskind, *Breaking Ground: Adventures in Life and Architecture* (New York: Riverhead Books, 2004), 42–58; see also Jewish Museum Berlin project documentation.

36. Bernard Tschumi, *Architecture and Disjunction* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1994), xiii–xvi.

37. *Ibid.*, 121–130.

38. Bernard Tschumi, *Event-Cities* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1994), 13–25.

39. Tschumi, *Architecture and Disjunction*, 131–145.

4.2 From textual analysis to spatial strategy

The conceptual framework of the project was developed through a close analytical reading of *Ubu Roi*, aimed at identifying the structural forces embedded within the text rather than merely its narrative sequence.

Five key narrative moments emerged from this preliminary analysis: the domestic origin of ambition (the house), the seizure of power, the accumulation of authority, the outbreak of war, and the retreat into the cave — a pseudo-return that does not resolve the cycle but suspends it.⁴⁰ Rather than translating these phases into literal scenographic tableaux, the project reinterprets them spatially, treating them as conditions rather than scenes.

In dialogue with the thesis supervisor, the decision was made to conceive the performance as itinerant, inspired by the principles of Environmental Theatre as articulated by Richard Schechner.⁴¹ According to Schechner's axioms, theatrical space should not be limited to a fixed stage nor constrained by a single frontal viewpoint. All space may be used for performance, and the spectator may become active within the event.⁴²

Following this logic, the audience is not positioned in a stable seating arrangement but moves within the scenographic environment. The narrative does not unfold through rigid chronological progression; instead, space and time are experienced as fluid and interwoven. The spectator's trajectory replaces traditional linear storytelling.

The linear succession of events present in Jarry's text is therefore reorganized around a central axis: power. Accumulation and delirium emerge as forces generated by power and inseparable from it.

40. Alfred Jarry, *Ubu Roi* (Paris: Mercure de France, 1896).

41. Richard Schechner, *Environmental Theater* (New York: Hawthorn Books, 1973), 3–24.

42. *Ibid.*, 6–18.

This reinterpretation does not aim to impose a new narrative, but to reveal the structural tensions already implicit in the text.⁴³⁶ The scenographic system constructs spatial intensities rather than sequential representations. The itinerant configuration allows for multiple focal points and shifting perspectives, dissolving the classical separation between stage and auditorium.⁶⁴⁴ Each spatial transformation corresponds not to a change of location in the text, but to a modification of tension within the environment. Expansion, compression, exposure, and obstruction become dramaturgical tools. The project also draws from architectural deconstructivism, particularly the Jewish Museum in Berlin by Daniel Libeskind. There, spatial fragmentation and void operate as carriers of meaning independent of verbal explanation.⁶⁴⁵ Similarly, the scenographic device proposed here seeks to communicate instability through form, material articulation, and spatial disjunction rather than literal illustration. In this sense, the project does not stage *Ubu Roi* as a sequence of scenes, but constructs an environment structured around power and its distortions. The modular and transformable nature of the device reflects the instability of authority depicted in the play: space expands, fractures, and reconfigures in response to the internal logic of excess. The result is not a representation of events, but an experiential system in which spectators navigate the structural tensions of the text.

43. Martin Esslin, *The Theatre of the Absurd* (London: Penguin, 1961), 23–30.

44. Schechner, *Environmental Theater*, 17–24.

45. Daniel Libeskind, *Breaking Ground: Adventures in Life and Architecture* (New York: Riverhead Books, 2004), 42–58.

4.3 Conceptual phases: a circular spatial system

The original structure of *Ubu Roi* unfolds through a sequential logic. Events follow one another in chronological order: domestic conspiracy, seizure of power, accumulation of authority, war, retreat. The dramaturgy is episodic yet fundamentally linear, progressing through a *cause-effect* relationship between ambition and consequence.

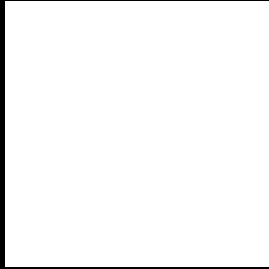
The present project begins by identifying these structural passages within the text:

- **House** (domestic origin of ambition)
- Desire of **power**
- **Accumulation** of authority
- War - **Chaos**
- Cave-**house** (pseudo-return)

In Jarry's dramaturgy, these phases occur *consecutively*, inscribed within a conventional progression of space and time. However, following the theoretical framework established in the previous chapters — Environmental Theatre (**Schechner**), architectural disjunction (**Tschumi**), and spatial fragmentation (**Libeskind**) — this project proposes a manipulation of both space and time. Linear narration is not reproduced, it is reorganized.

Rather than unfolding sequentially, the phases are absorbed **into a circular spatial logic**.

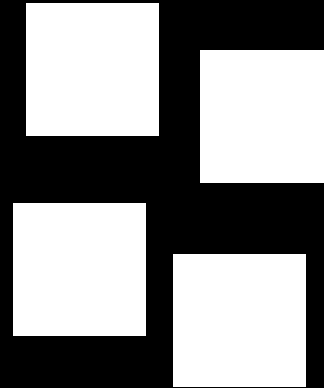
INTERPRETATION OF THE KEY PHASES OF UBU ROI



HOUSE

Intimacy
Belly
Domestic Space
Visceral Thoughts

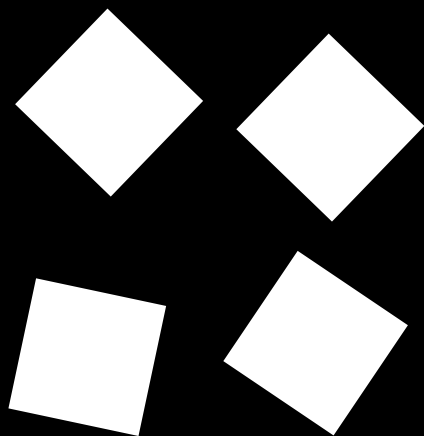
The spatial journey begins with compression. The house is narrow, intimate, almost suffocating: like a belly. It represents Ubu's interior world, where instinct and thought collapse into the same space.



DESIRE

Breaking
Changing
Seizure of power
Madre Ubu

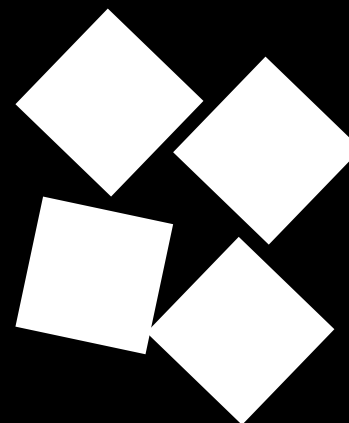
When Ubu gains power, space expands. Volumes become larger, heights increase, perspectives open. The environment grows together with his ambition. Power literally makes space inflate.



CHAOS
War
Self-defense
Nonexistent Hierarchy
Doubts

With war, space begins to break apart. Angles become unstable, circulation is confusing, geometry fragments.

The environment no longer expands:
it becomes disorienting.

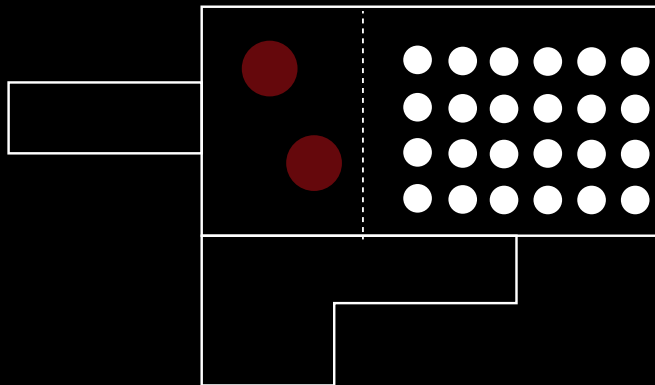


HOUSE-CAVE
Implosion
Stillness
pretending
pseudo-return

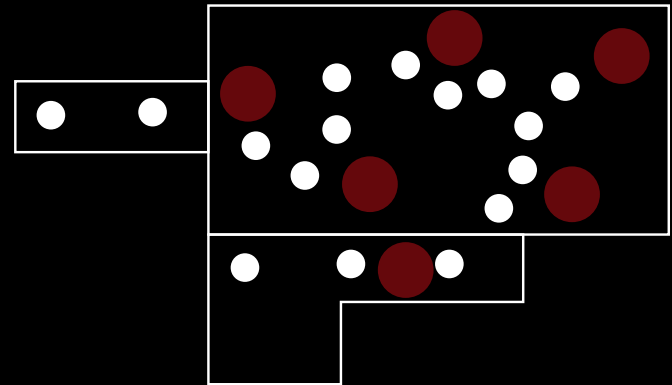
In the final phase, space contracts again. It seems like a return, but it is not the same as the beginning. The compression is distorted, marked by everything that has happened. The movement, compression, expansion, fragmentation, compression, creates a circular structure rather than a linear story.

FROM SEQUENCE TO CIRCULARITY, Inside Teatro Arsenale

The Teatro Arsenale operates as a flexible black box in which actors and audience share the same undifferentiated volume. The absence of a fixed stage allows for adaptable configurations, though the relationship typically remains frontal or semi-frontal depending on the production.

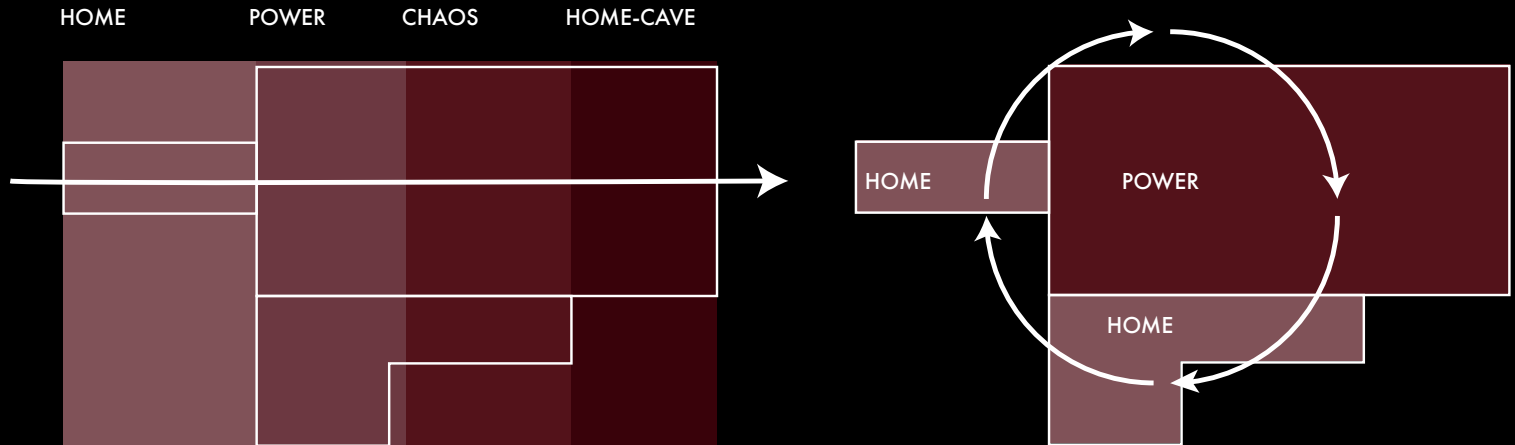


Existing audience-actor configuration
Standard configuration



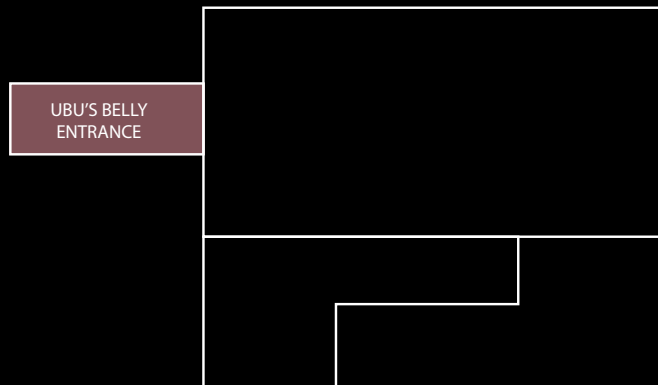
Proposed audience-actor configuration for
the itinerant performance

At the center of this cycle is power. Power is the force that drives every transformation. It generates desire, accumulation, fear, and collapse. It makes space grow and destabilizes it at the same time.



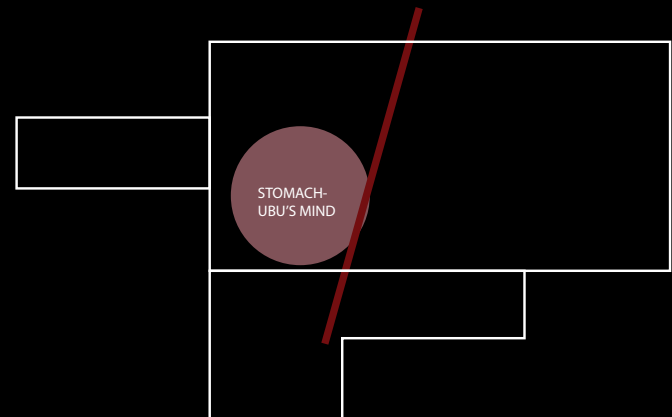
THE SCENES

The project does not follow the story of Ubu Roi in a chronological way. Instead, I decide to stage and following Ubu's inner condition and translates it into space. The spectator does not move through different "places" of the plot, but through different states of Ubu's mind.



Entrance – Inside Ubu

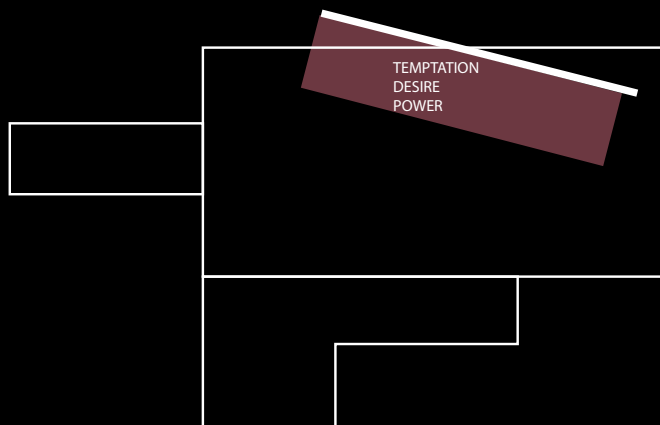
The spectator prepares to enter Ubu's mind — his belly. The scenography is not a background but an active performer, communicating anxiety, ambition, fear, and the consequences of Ubu's actions. The audience is not outside the story; it is inside Ubu.



Stomach/Mind

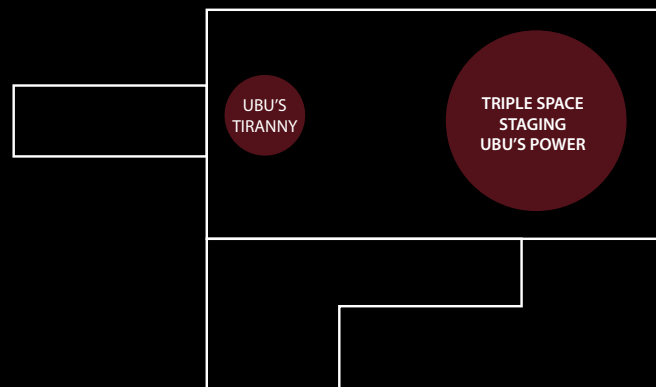
The first spatial condition is the domestic interior. Home is not comfort, but psychological origin. It represents intimacy, doubt, and the fragile equilibrium before action. This is the space of hesitation

This approach is similar to the spatial narration of the Jewish Museum by Daniel Libeskind, where history is not explained step by step but experienced emotionally through voids, inclinations, and broken paths. In the same way, in this project space communicates before the actors do.



Temptation of Power

This phase marks the moment of provocation. It is Mère Ubu who ignites the desire for conquest, mocking hesitation and transforming doubt into ambition. Power does not yet belong to Ubu — it appears as temptation.

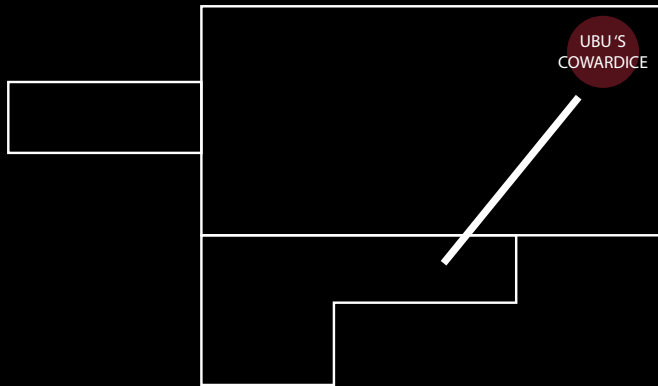


POWER- Tiranny

Power expands and becomes excessive. Desire for accumulation intersects the central axis, generating distortion and imbalance. Space begins to deform under the weight of greed and delirium. Authority grows unstable.

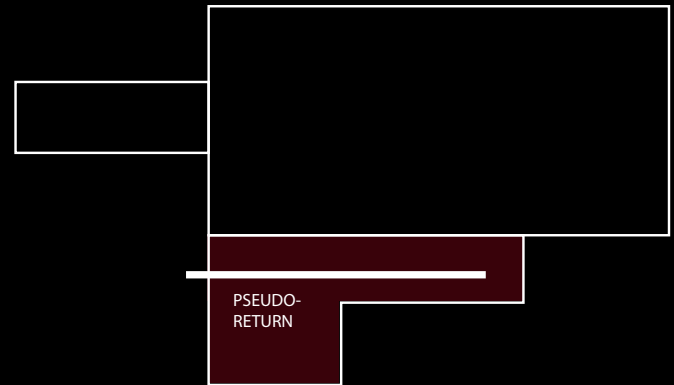
FROM SEQUENCE TO CIRCULARITY

The project does not follow the story of Ubu Roi in a chronological way. Instead, it follows Ubu's inner condition and translates it into space. The spectator does not move through different "places" of the plot, but through different states of Ubu's mind.



POWER– Fear/Cowardice

War does not turn Ubu into a hero. It exposes his fear. Faced with conflict and instability, power reveals its weakest form: panic, self-preservation, and paranoia. In this phase Ubu becomes closest to us — not through greatness, but through cowardice.



POWER- Greed and pseudo-return

In the final phase, Ubu is no longer driven by fear but by excess. Power is not enough — he wants more. Accumulation becomes obsession. The desire to possess expands beyond necessity, revealing the grotesque hunger that defines him.

The project constructs a continuous oscillation between interior and exterior — between what Ubu thinks and what he performs; between instinct and action; between private desire and public consequence.

The audience is displaced repeatedly from one spatial condition to another, as if inside a flipper mechanism. Compression, expansion, deviation, return. The spectator is not seated but propelled.

The objective is disorientation — not confusion for its own sake, but critical activation.

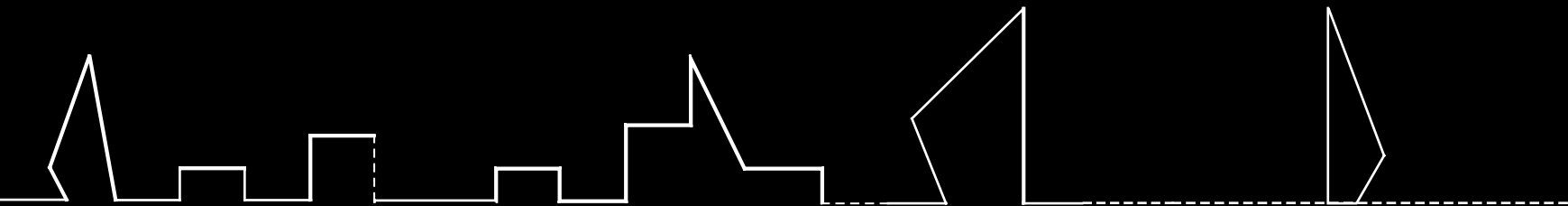
Jarry sought to provoke reaction, to disturb complacency. The present project pursues the same aim spatially. The spectator is not passive but implicated.

Questions emerge: Who is Ubu? How distant are his desires from ours? What happens when ambition is left unchecked?

Space becomes the primary narrative instrument.

Architecture ceases to be background and becomes protagonist. Through spatial compression, expansion, fragmentation, and contraction, the mind of Ubu is not described — it is inhabited.

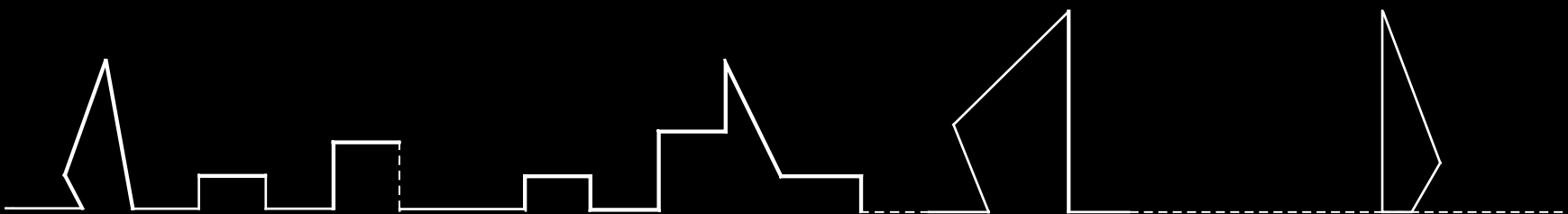
*"Let the trumpets sound, ladies and gentlemen, the play begins!
Let the actors speak..."*



04.4

THE CITY AS PROLOGUE

Urban totems



The performance begins in the city.

The city functions as *prologue*.

4 totems are positioned along the main urban axis, forming a broken line that anticipates the fragmented logic of the spectacle.

Each totem corresponds to one act of the performance and translates a dramaturgical condition into a specific urban gesture.

At the tram stop, the totem becomes a device for waiting, embodying cowardliness through the act of standing by.

In a public resting area, it invites pause and gathering, expressing temptation through flowing movement that slows and deviates.

At the metro exit, it transforms into a threshold to cross, representing power through crossing and directed motion.

Finally, in a transitional passage, it folds into a more articulated form that encourages hesitation, translating defeat into slowing.

Each element activates a bodily behavior shaped by its urban context.

Everyday actions — *waiting, moving, passing, slowing* — become **spatial metaphors of Ubu's psychological states**.

The spectator begins to inhabit the logic of the performance before entering the theatre.

The city is not backdrop: it is the first act.

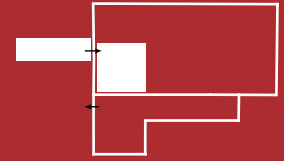
The spectator enters the theatre having already crossed Ubu's spatial condition.





act-ion

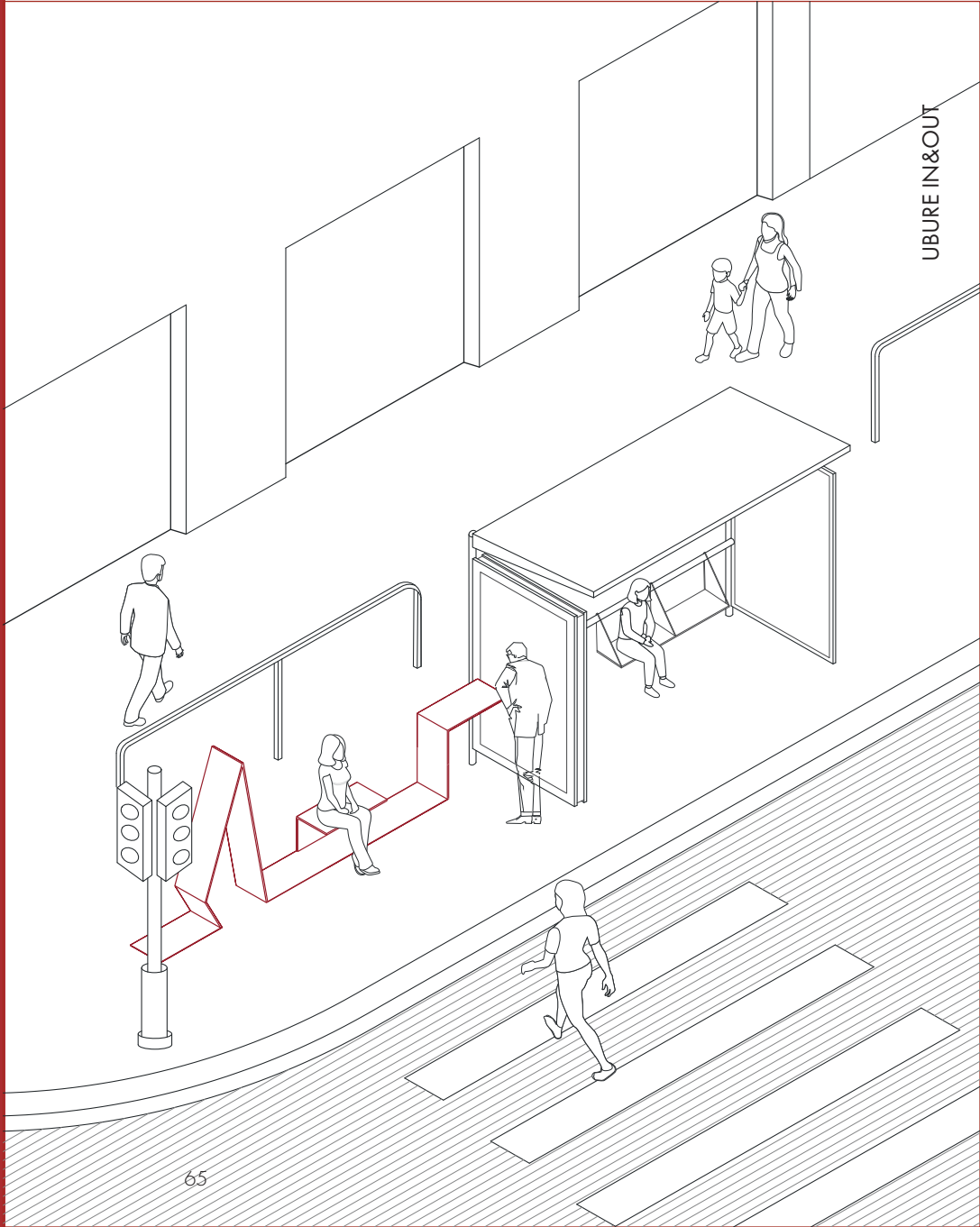
cowardliness - standing by



The first totem marks the beginning of the performance and corresponds to the initial area of the spectacle: Ubu's mind, suspended between desire and fear. Before taking power, he hesitates. This hesitation becomes spatial.

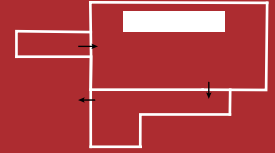
Placed at a tram stop, the totem engages with the condition of waiting. The tram stop is a space of pause and anticipation, where bodies remain still before movement. This everyday immobility reflects Ubu's cowardice.

Rather than initiating action, the totem reinforces delay. Waiting becomes metaphor and experience. The spectator does not yet enter the theatre, but enters Ubu's hesitation — the moment before power is taken.



act-ion

temptation- flowing

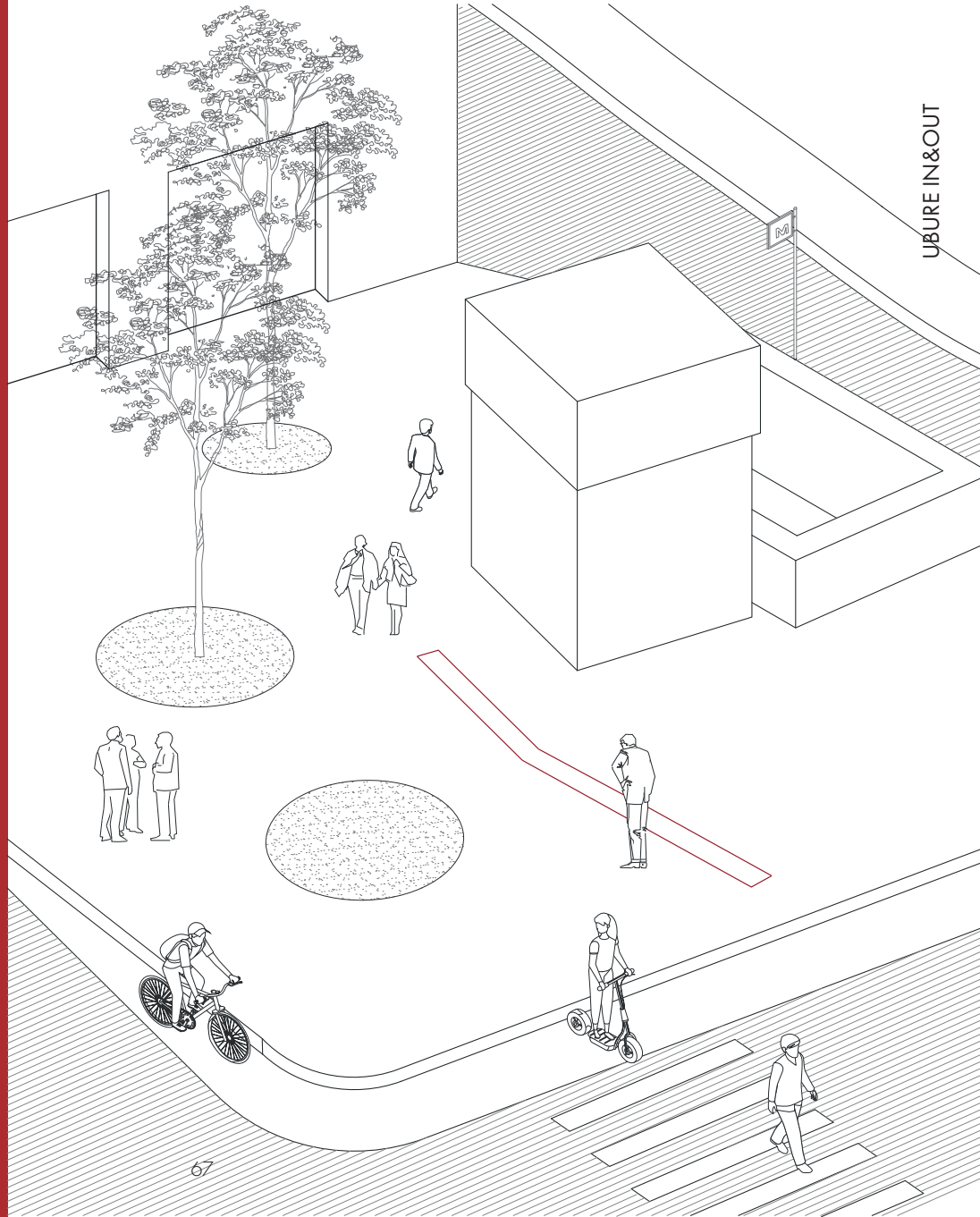


02

The second totem corresponds to the next phase of the performance: the provocation of Mère Ubu, who incites Ubu to seize power. If the first totem embodied hesitation, this one introduces direction.

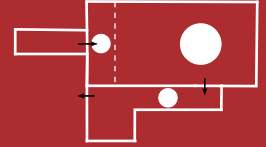
Placed just outside the metro exit, the totem is a horizontal strip laid on the ground. It functions as a line of movement, pointing toward Teatro Arsenale. The metro exit is a space of emergence and reorientation; here, that transition becomes dramaturgical impulse. Unlike the vertical totem of waiting, this element does not allow pause. It suggests trajectory. The body is guided forward. This spatial gesture reflects Mère Ubu's role: she pushes, provokes, and redirects fear into action.

In this second station, immobility is replaced by momentum. The spectator is no longer suspended — they are set in motion toward power.



act-ion

power-crossing

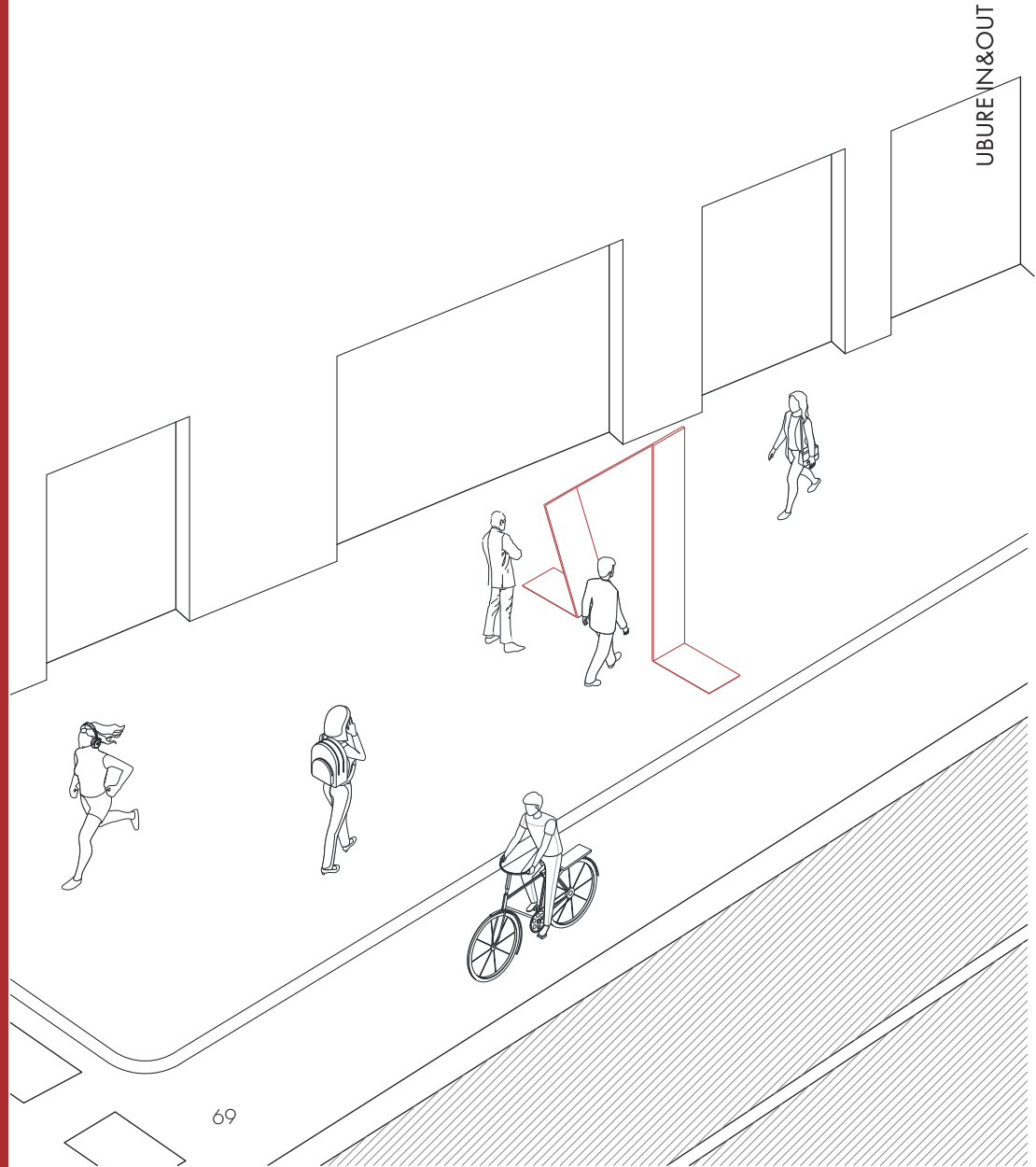


The third totem represents the moment of taking power — the central and most anticipated phase of the performance. Here, ambition becomes action.

Located in the middle of a public square, near the beginning of the sidewalk, the totem requires pedestrians to pass beneath it in order to read its inscriptions. This act of crossing becomes symbolic: moving under the structure enacts the gesture of seizing power.

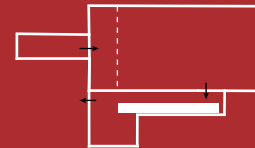
On a sidewalk, the primary action is just passing and crossing; therefore, the totem dialogues directly with the needs and functions of the city. It does not block circulation, it amplifies it.

In this station, movement becomes assertion. The spectator symbolically takes the throne.



act-ion

defeat- slowing



The fourth totem represents the final phase of the performance: defeat. After ambition and conquest, what remains is exhaustion.

Located in Piazza della Resistenza Partigiana, near the De Amicis metro stop, it stands within a space already associated with pause. Here, people sit, eat ice cream, rest in the shade, or simply talk. The totem reinforces this condition.

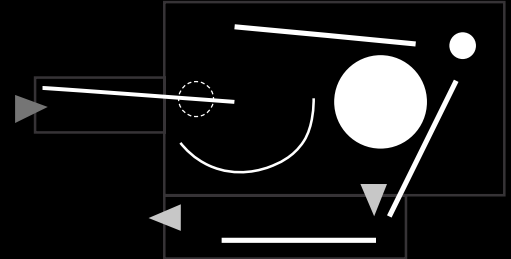
It invites slowing down. In contrast to the urgency of the previous stations, this one encourages stillness.

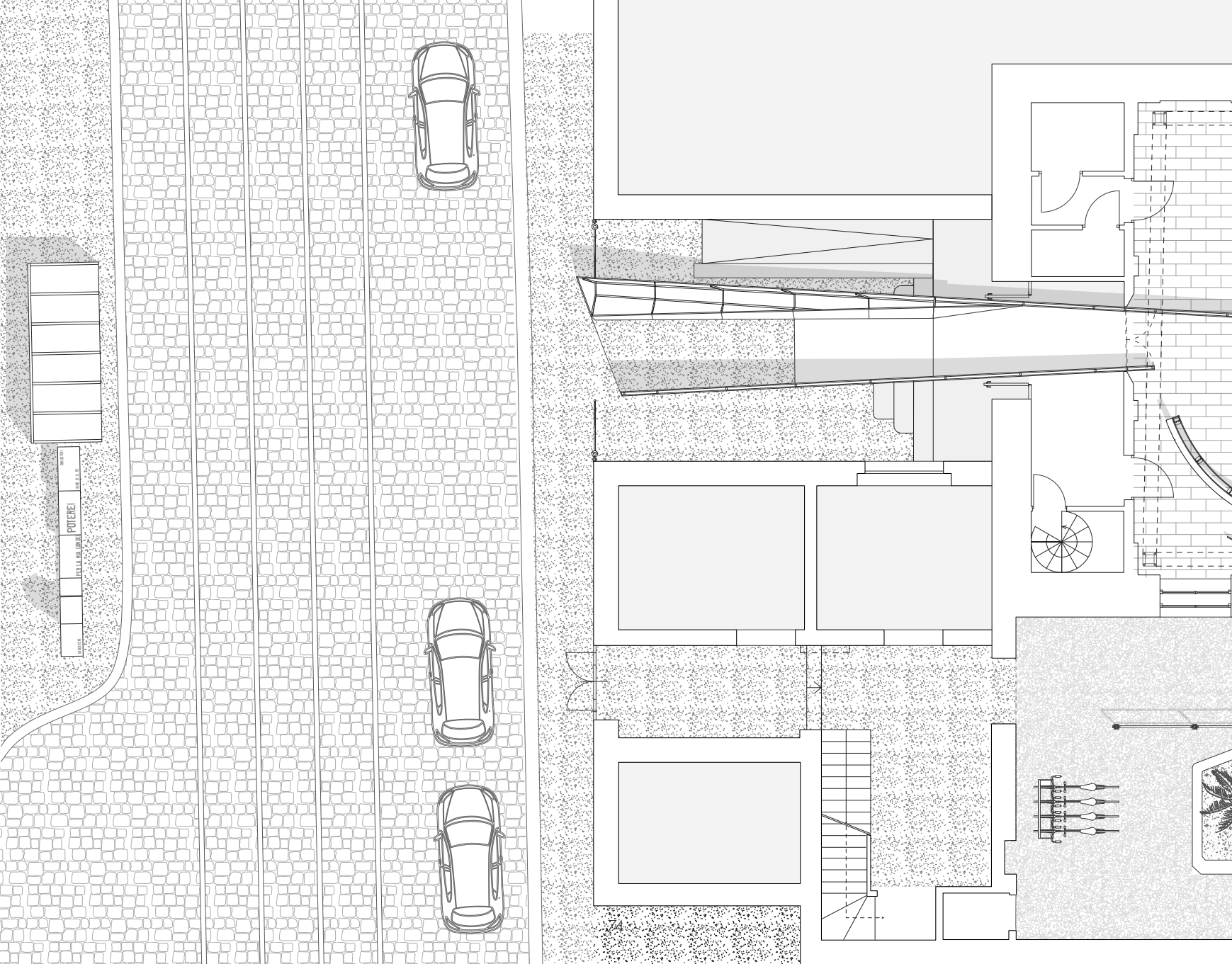
In this final stage, power dissolves into quiet. The spectacle ends in rest rather than triumph.

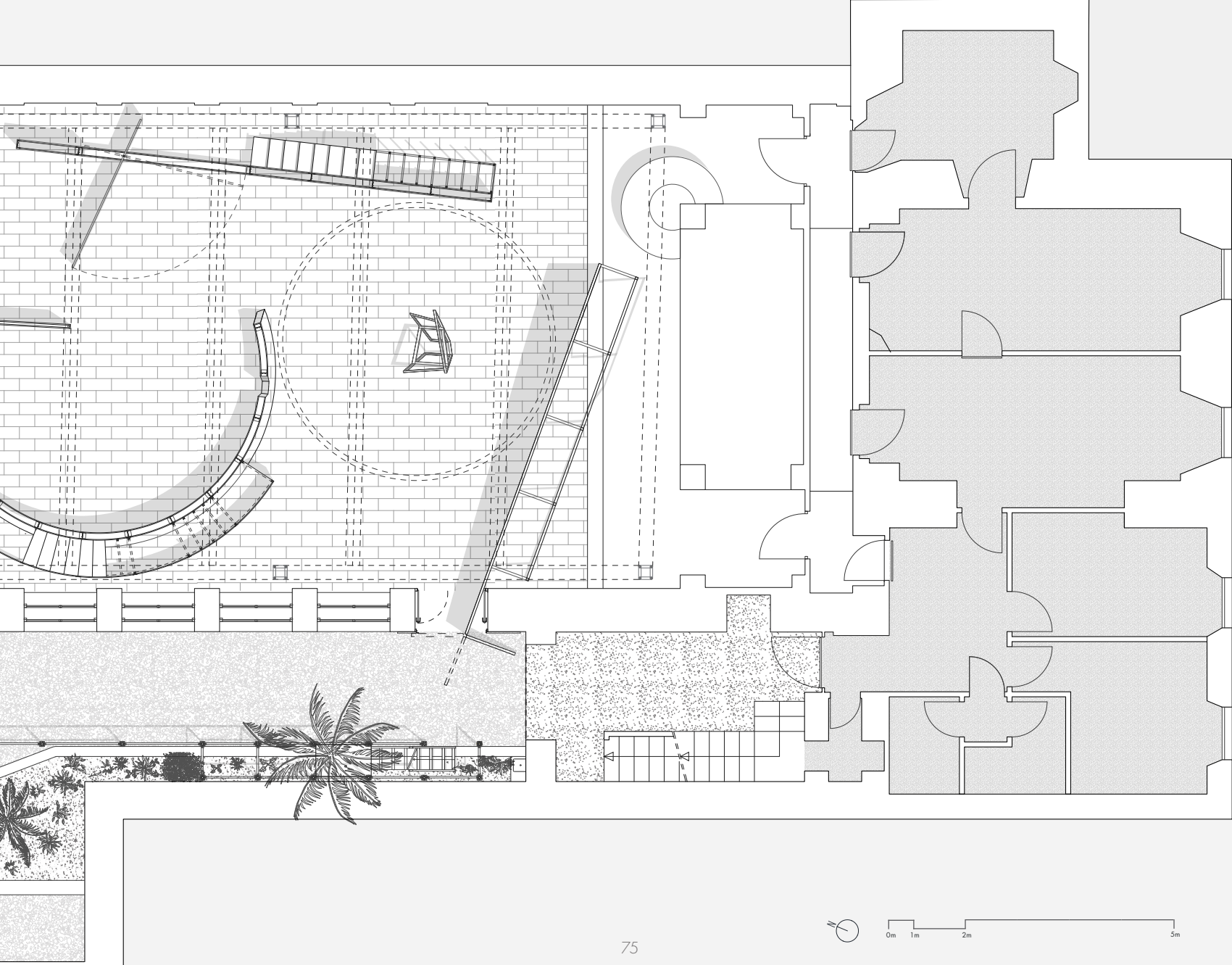


04.5 **UBURE&OUT**

General plan arrangement







04.6 **UBURE&OUT**

Urban to interior section





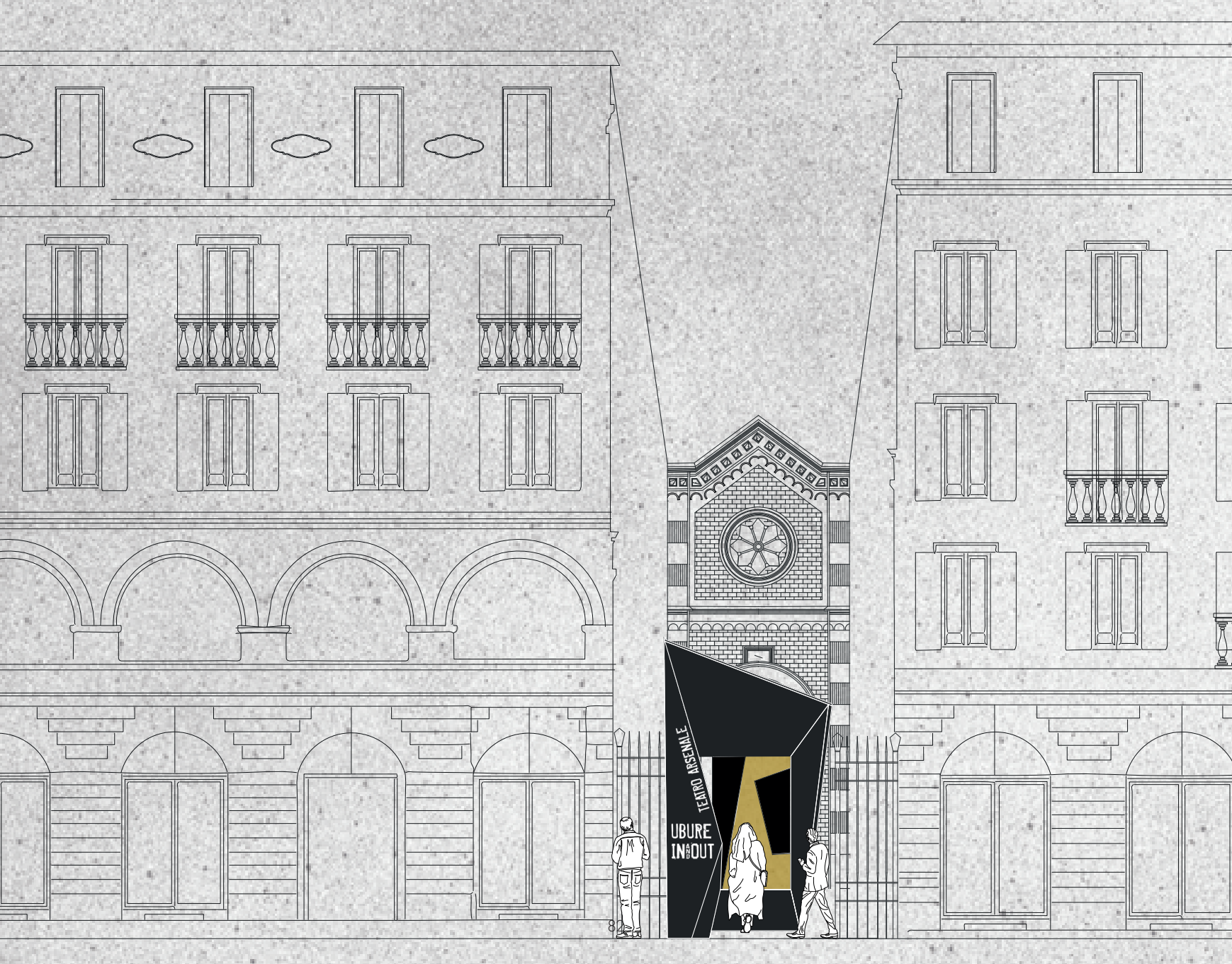
0m 1m 2m 5m

“Welcome to the theatre,
where everything is make-believe, yet nothing is false.”

— Gigi Proietti

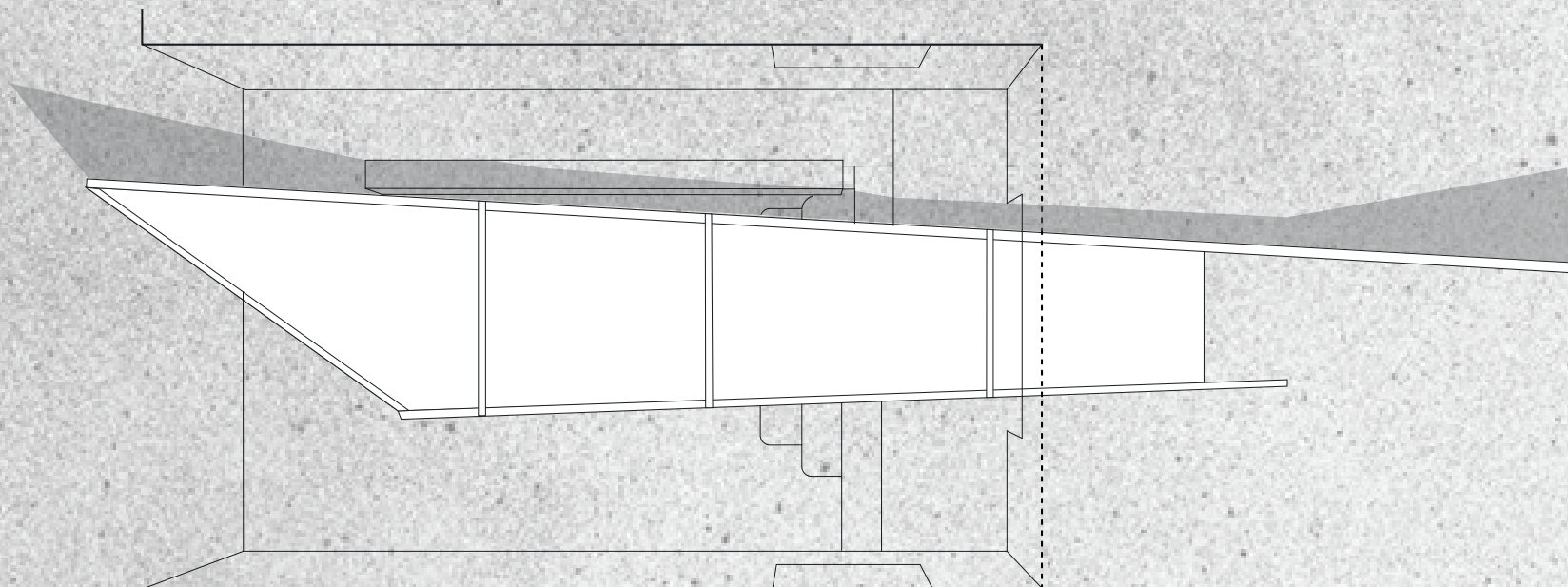
04.7 **UBURE&OUT**

Show begins: the 6 scenes



UBU'S BELLY

01



The transition from city to theatre occurs through a tunnel.

This tunnel is already the belly of Ubu.

After the open dimension of the city, the spectator enters a narrow, lowered passage. The space compresses: reduced height, tight width, slight inclinations. The body is forced to adjust. Discomfort and instability are intentional. The passage does not welcome; it absorbs.

This spatial tension recalls the destabilizing strategies of Daniel Libeskind, where architecture generates emotional unease through compression and disjunction.¹ The tunnel becomes a psychological device rather than a neutral corridor.

Within this confined space, an asynchronous interaction unfolds. The spectator hears Ubu's voice before witnessing his rise.

He already commands. He is already tyrant. Projected fragments and distorted sounds accompany the passage.

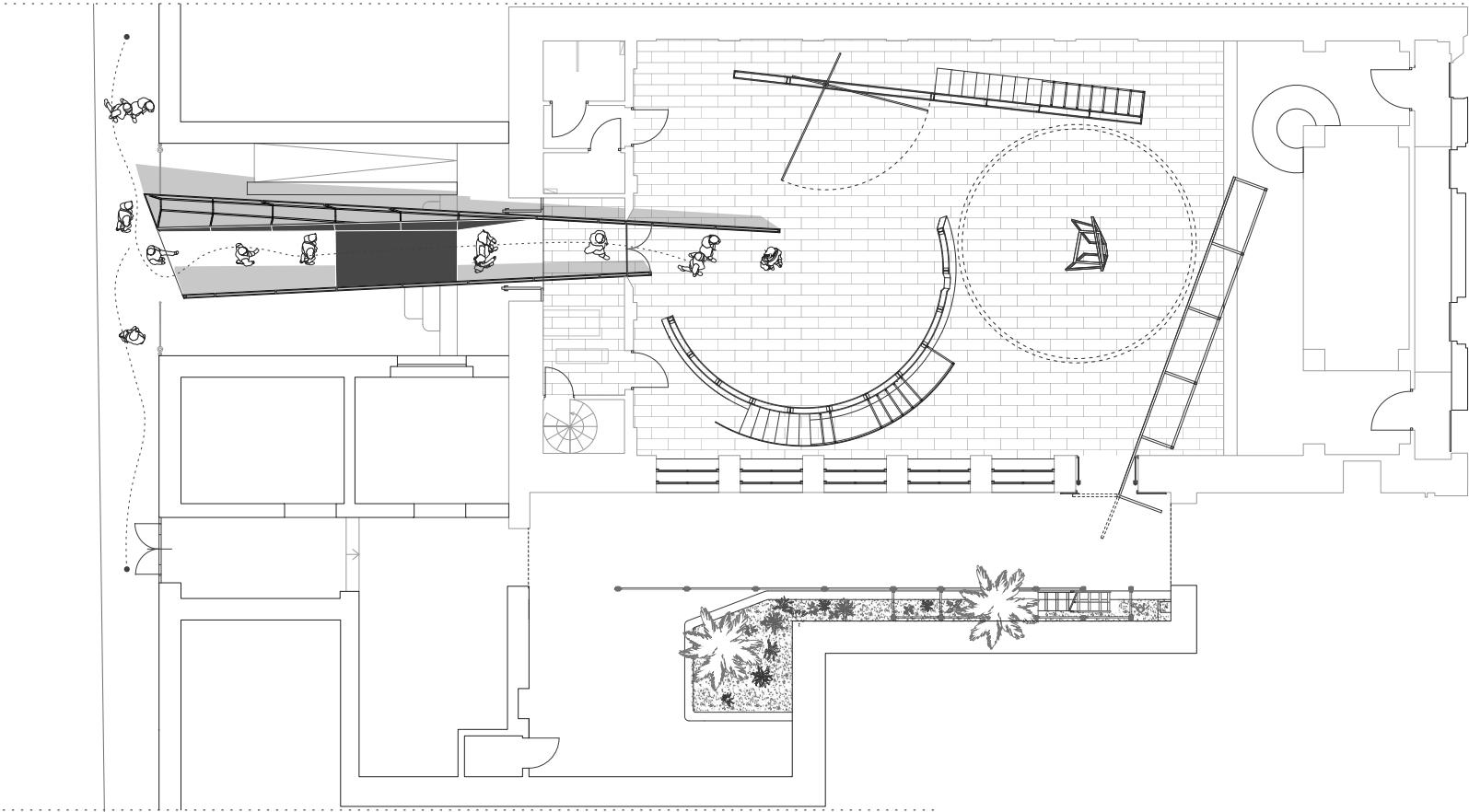
Chronology is broken. The end precedes the beginning.

The body enters the belly while power is already present.

The tunnel becomes the first act of domination.

1. Daniel Libeskind, *Breaking Ground: Adventures in Life and Architecture* (New York: Riverhead Books, 2004), 42–58.

UBU'S BELLY
PLAN DISTRIBUTION AND FLOW



0m 1m 2m 5m

«MERDRE!

PER LA MIA CANDELA VERDE, AVANZATE.

IO SONO IL RE, E IL RE PARLA ANCHE QUANDO NON LO VEDETE.

PER ORDINE REALE SI ENTRA, SI PASSA, SI CONTINUA, NON FERMATEVI.

TUTTO CIÒ CHE È ROTONDO MI APPARTIENE

E VOI NON FATE ECCEZIONE.

QUANDO COMANDO SI OBBEDISCE. NON FERMATEVI.

IL POTERE NON ASPETTA. È GIÀ MIO. E ORA VOI SIETE DENTRO.»

Merdrel! — Ubu Roi (1896), Atto I

«De par ma chandelle verte» / «Per la mia candela verde» — Ubu Roi

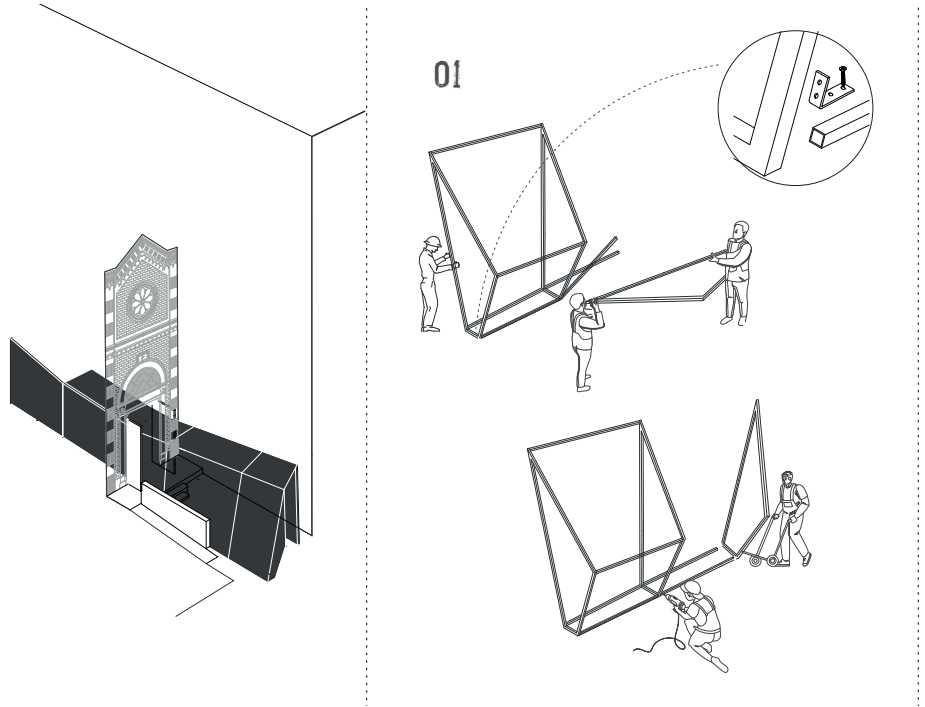
«Tout ce qui est rond m'appartient» / «Tutto ciò che è rotondo mi appartiene» — Ubu Roi

UBU'S BELLY ASSEMBLY PHASES

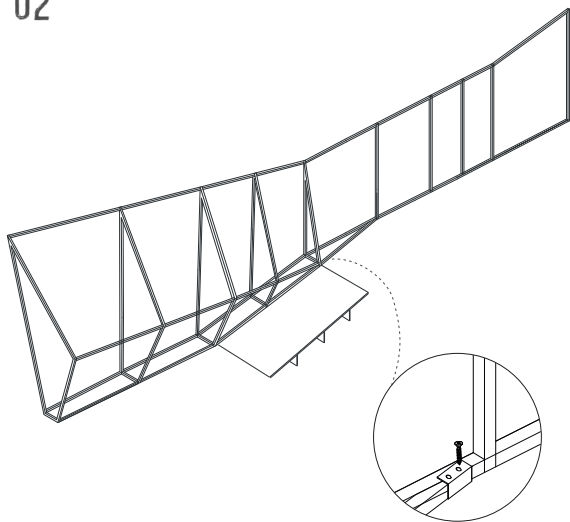
The tunnel is assembled through a modular steel structure prefabricated in sections and bolted on site to ensure precision and speed of installation. The structural frame defines the curved profile of the space.

Panels are mounted from the inside, leaving the exterior surface exposed and reinforcing the perception of the tunnel as a constructed system. A pivot mechanism is integrated into the wall to allow the window-cut to open during the performance, activated by the actress. The stair elements consist of steel substructures with wooden treads bolted on top.

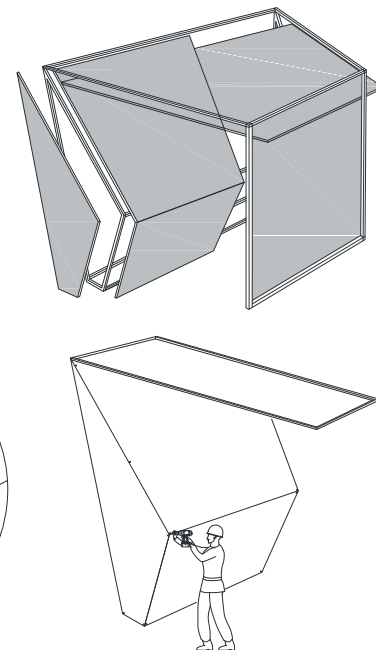
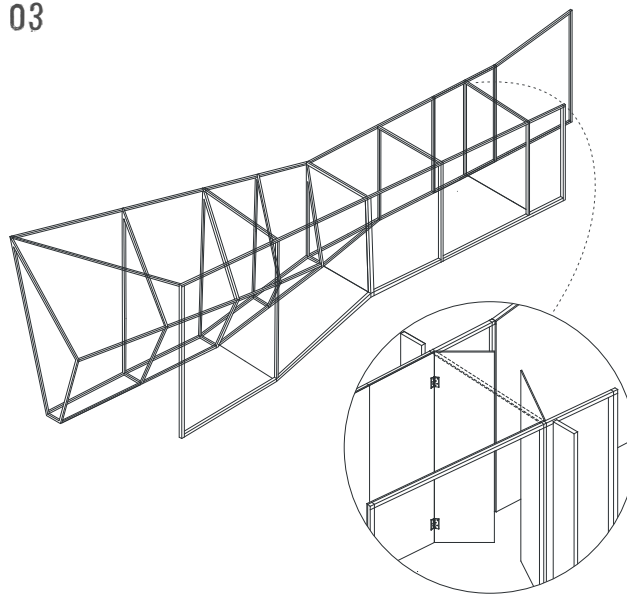
The Barisol stretch membrane is inserted into metal guides, with a concealed LED system behind it providing diffused backlighting while masking the structural depth. Structure and dramaturgy coincide in a visible and articulated construction process.



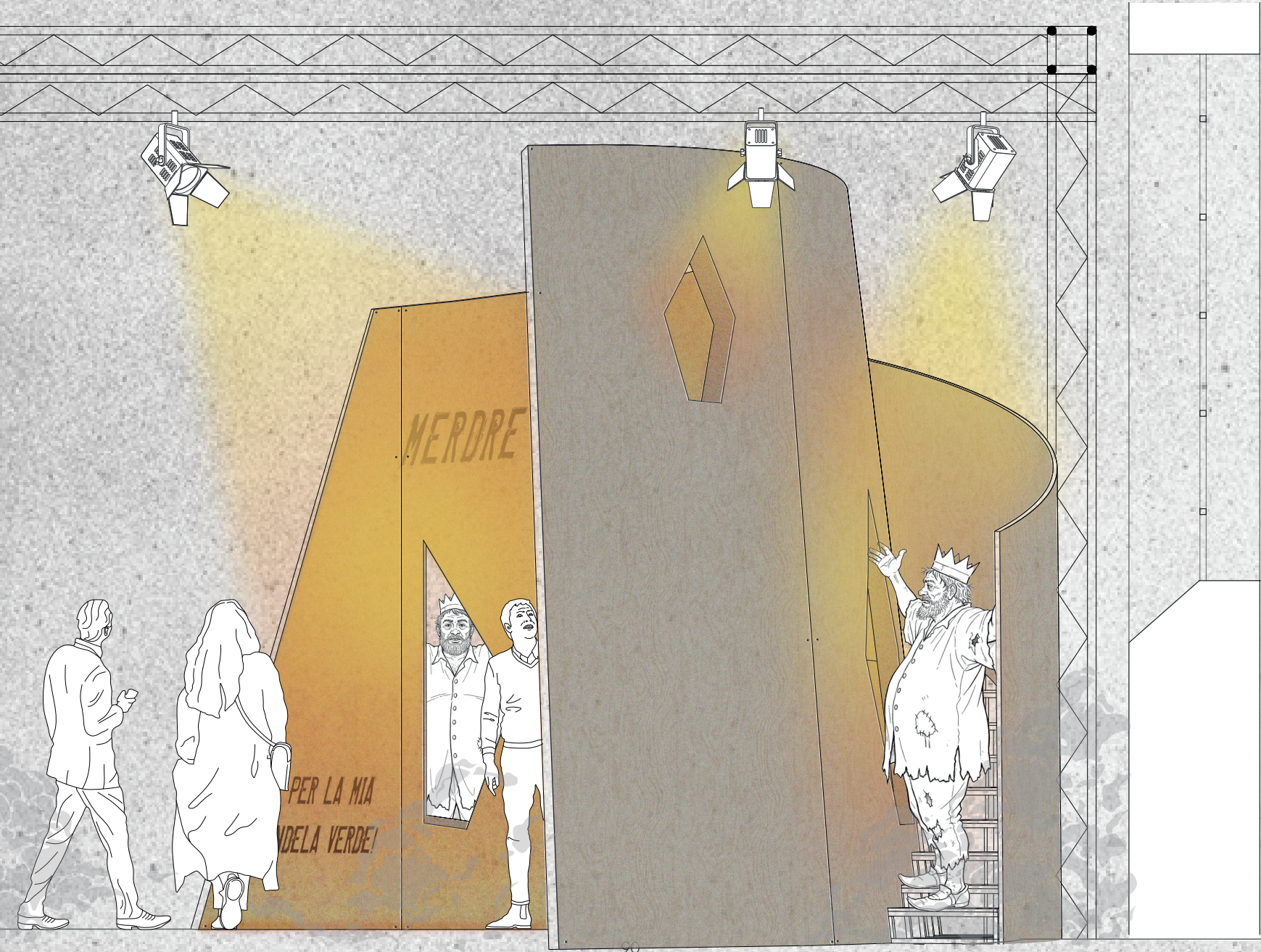
02



03

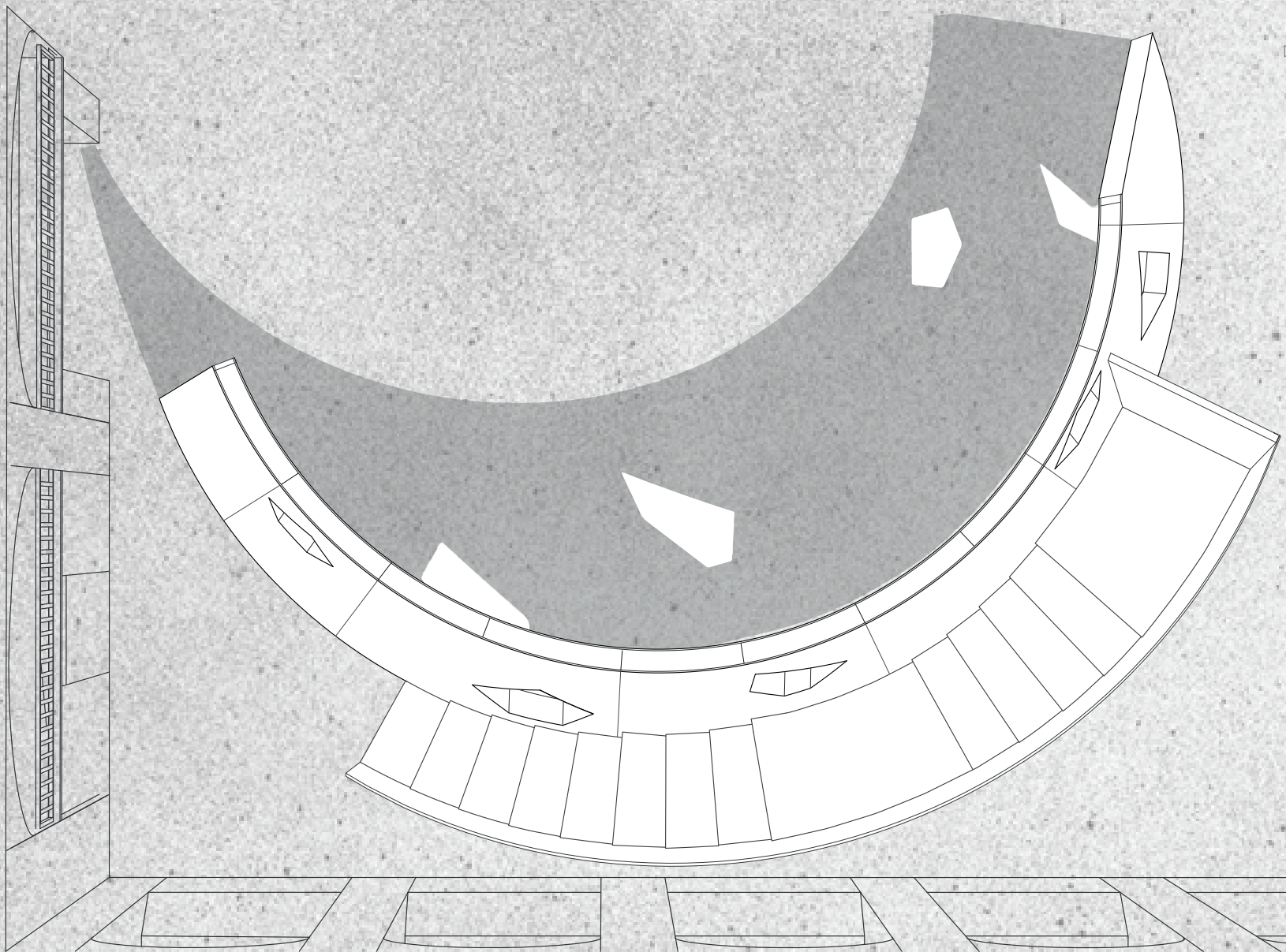


UBURE IN&OUT



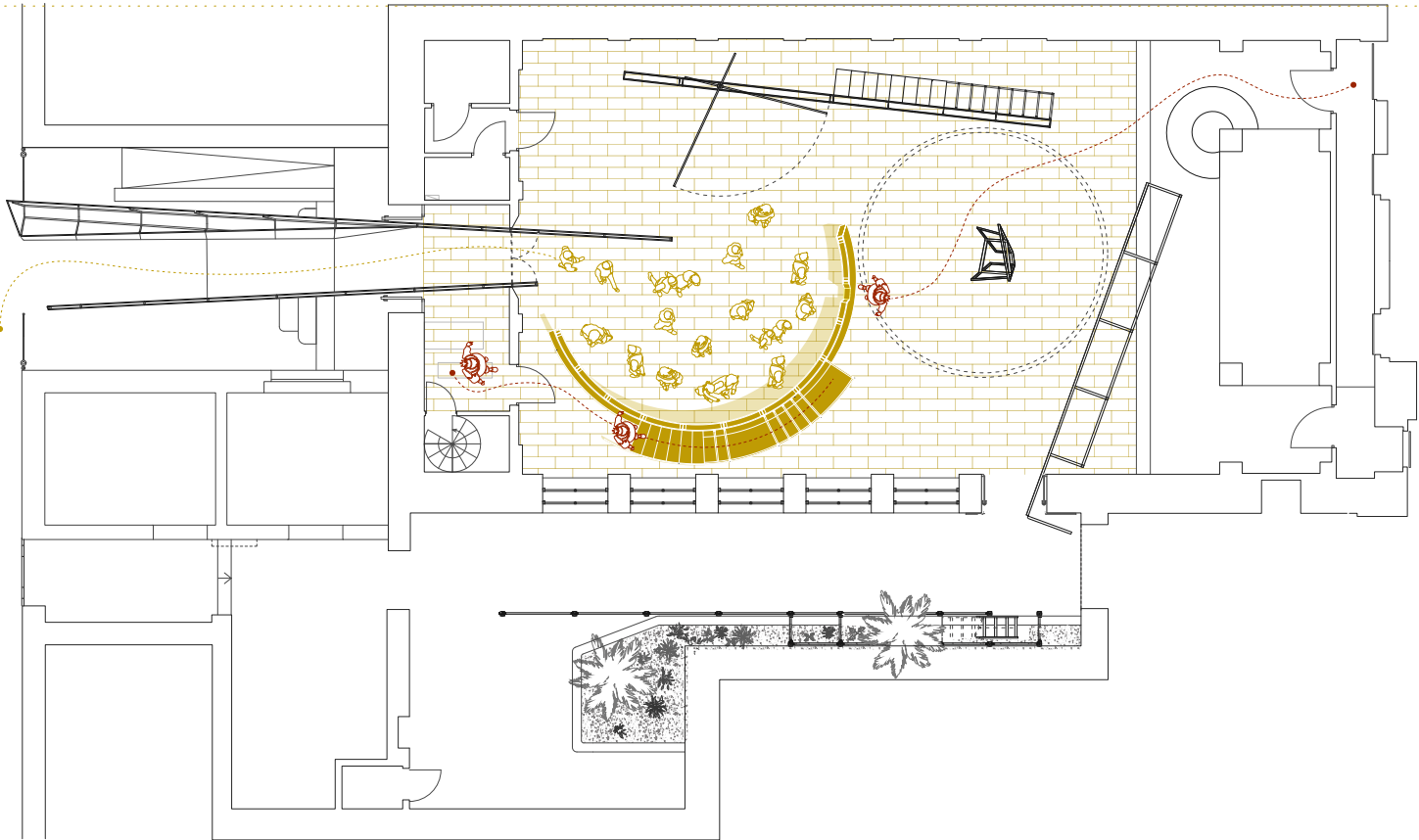
UBU'S STOMACH

02



■ Upon entering, approximately twenty spectators, are enveloped by a space that seems to lean inward, as if holding its breath. The air feels tense, compressed, unstable. Power here is not solid — it trembles. Fear and ambition coexist in a fragile equilibrium, and the atmosphere suggests that something could collapse at any moment.

UBU'S STOMACH
ACTORS AND AUDIENCE FLOW DIAGRAM

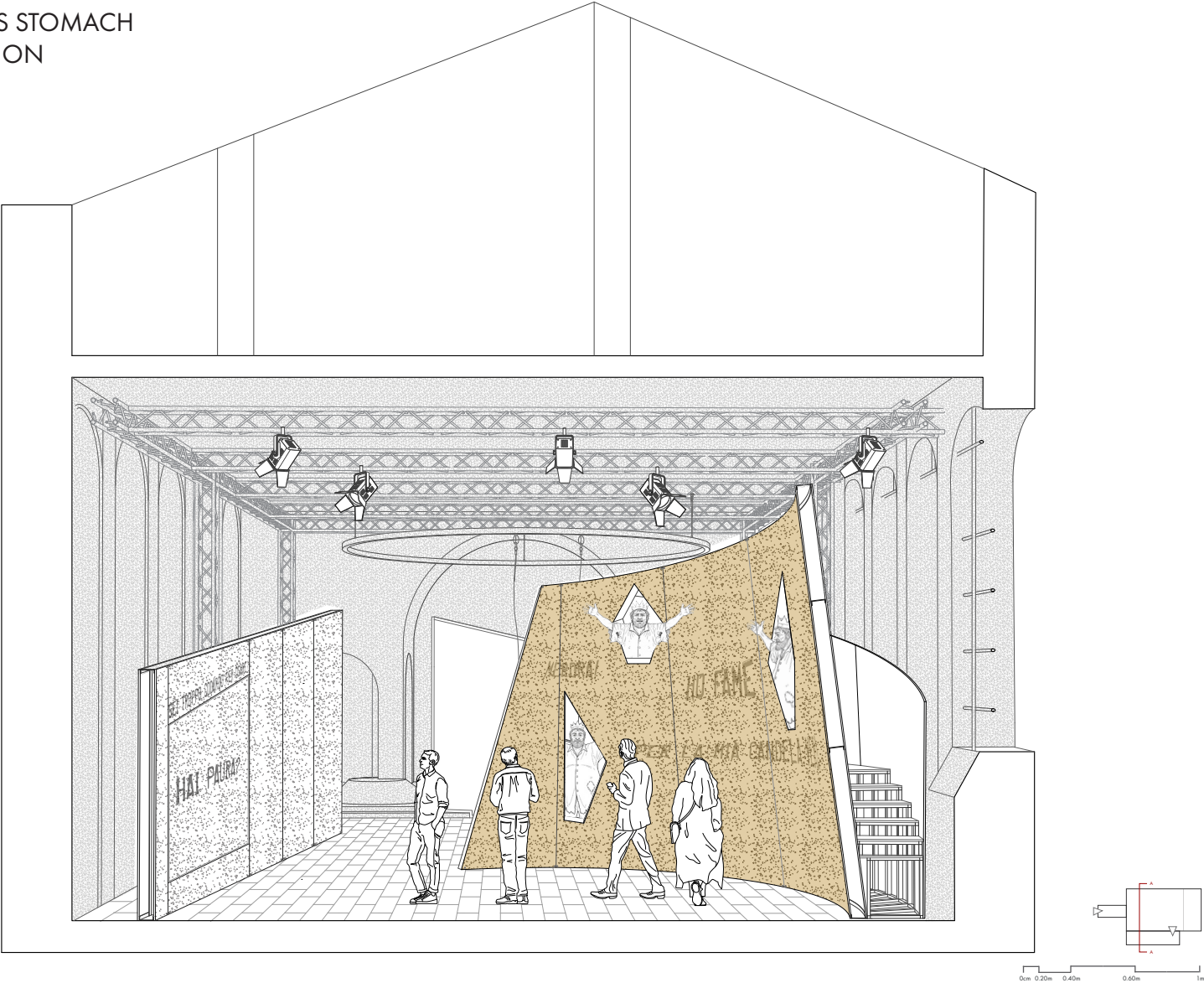


0m 1m 2m 5m

The environment is defined by tall curved walls that incline slightly forward, generating a sense of imbalance and spatial tension. Nothing is perfectly vertical; the geometry destabilizes perception and denies a fixed point of orientation. Narrow cuts carved into the curved surfaces function as concealed thresholds. Behind the walls, a hidden staircase allows actors to move vertically and appear intermittently through these fissures. They emerge briefly — fragments of bodies, partial gestures, isolated voices — before retreating again.

The walls operate as membranes rather than barriers. Sound and presence surface from multiple points, eliminating frontal hierarchy. The spectator is not positioned in front of the action but surrounded by it, inhabiting a spatial system where power, desire, and fear circulate continuously.

UBU'S STOMACH
SECTION



«MERDREI PER LA MIA CANDELA VERDE, HO FAME!
 LA COSCIENZA È UNA COSA INUTILE CHE IMPEDISCE DI MANGIARE TRANQUILLI.
 IO NON PENSO MAI: MI STANCA. PENSARE NON RIEMPIE LO STOMACO.
 SE NON CI FOSSE LA PAURA SAREI UN EROE, MA HO PAURA:
 E ALLORA MANGIO. DATEMI SALSICCE, ORO, TASSE, SUDORE.
 TUTTO CIÒ CHE È ROTONDO MI APPARTIENE. IO DIVORO.
 IO INGOIO. IO REGNO CON LA PANCIA.»

«La conscience est une chose inutile» - Ubu Roi

«La coscienza è una cosa inutile.»- Ubu Roi

«Je ne pense jamais, cela me fatigue» - Ubu Roi

«Non penso mai, mi stanca.»- Ubu Roi

«S'il n'y avait pas de peur je serais un héros» - Ubu Roi

«Se non ci fosse la paura sarei un eroe.»- Ubu Roi

«Tout ce qui est rond m'appartient» - Ubu Roi

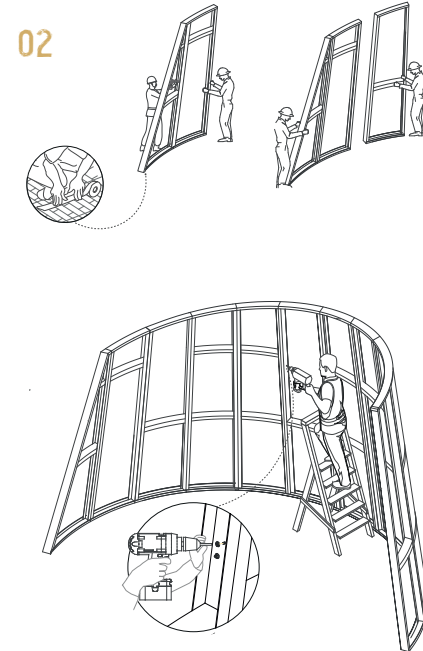
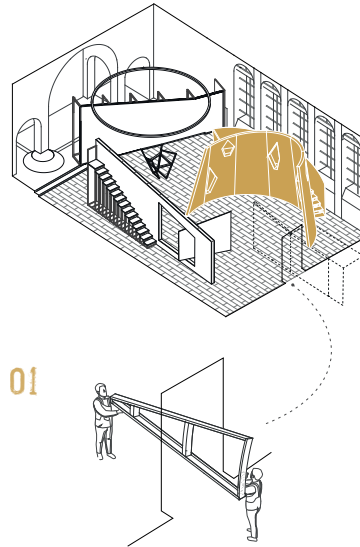
«Tutto ciò che è rotondo mi appartiene.»- Ubu Roi

UBU'S STOMACH ASSEMBLY PHASES

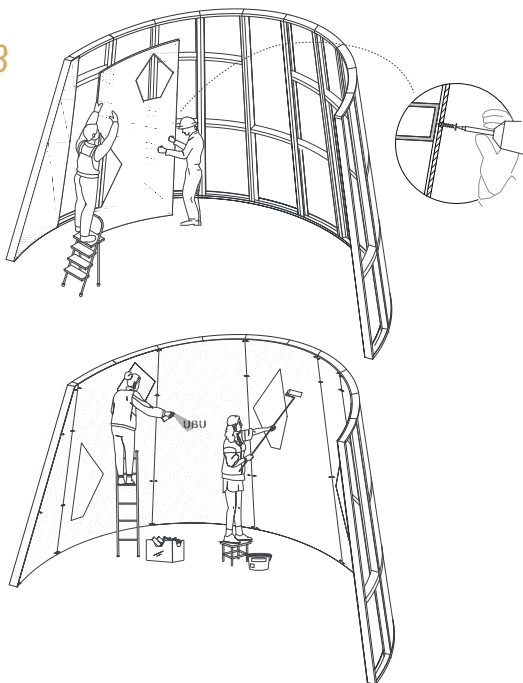
The structure is composed of prefabricated steel modules, welded in advance, transported to site, and assembled on location. Once aligned and bolted together, they define the curved perimeter of the space.

The curved panels are then mounted one by one, gradually shaping the internal surface of the "stomach." Graphic elements are applied directly onto the panels to complete the scenographic identity.

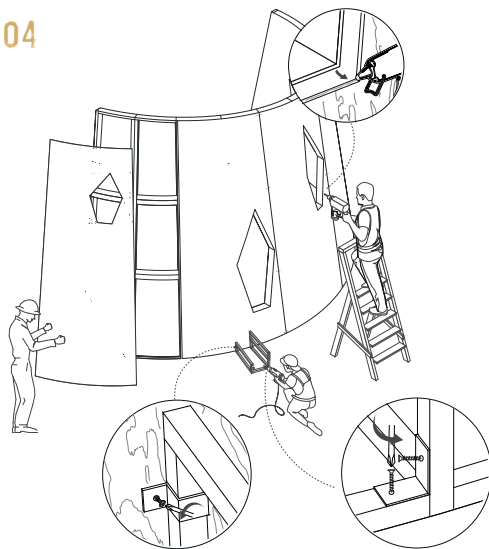
The staircase is assembled through modular components and fixed to the main frame, followed by the installation of additional panels behind it, completing the enclosure.



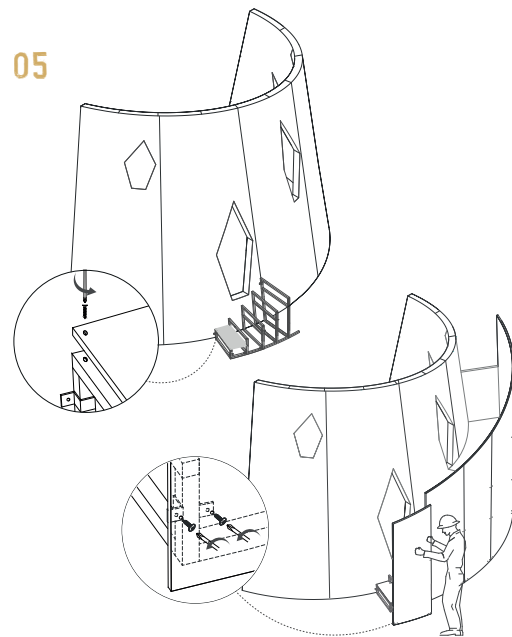
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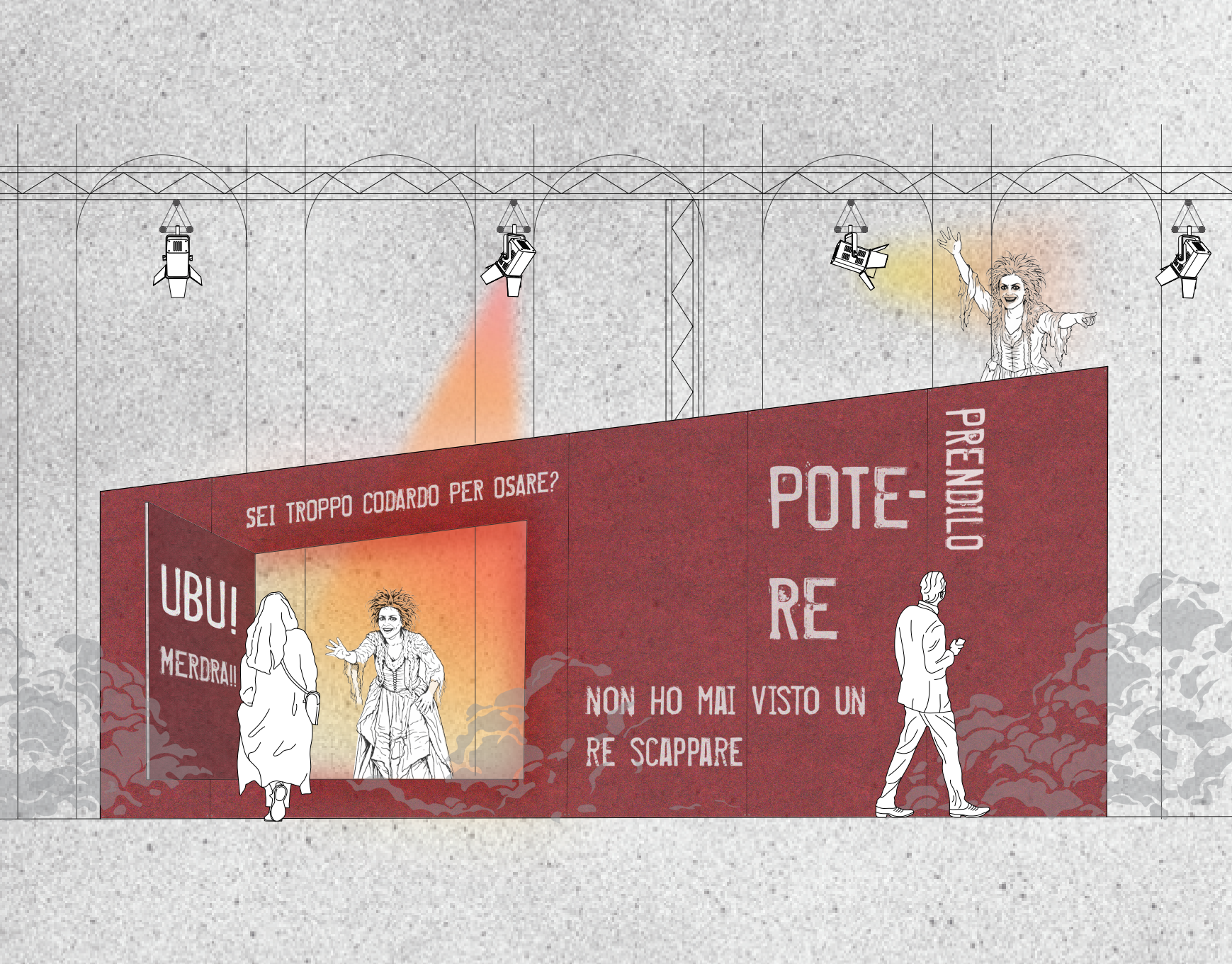


04



05





SEI TROPPO CODARDO PER OSARE?

UBU!

MERDRA!!

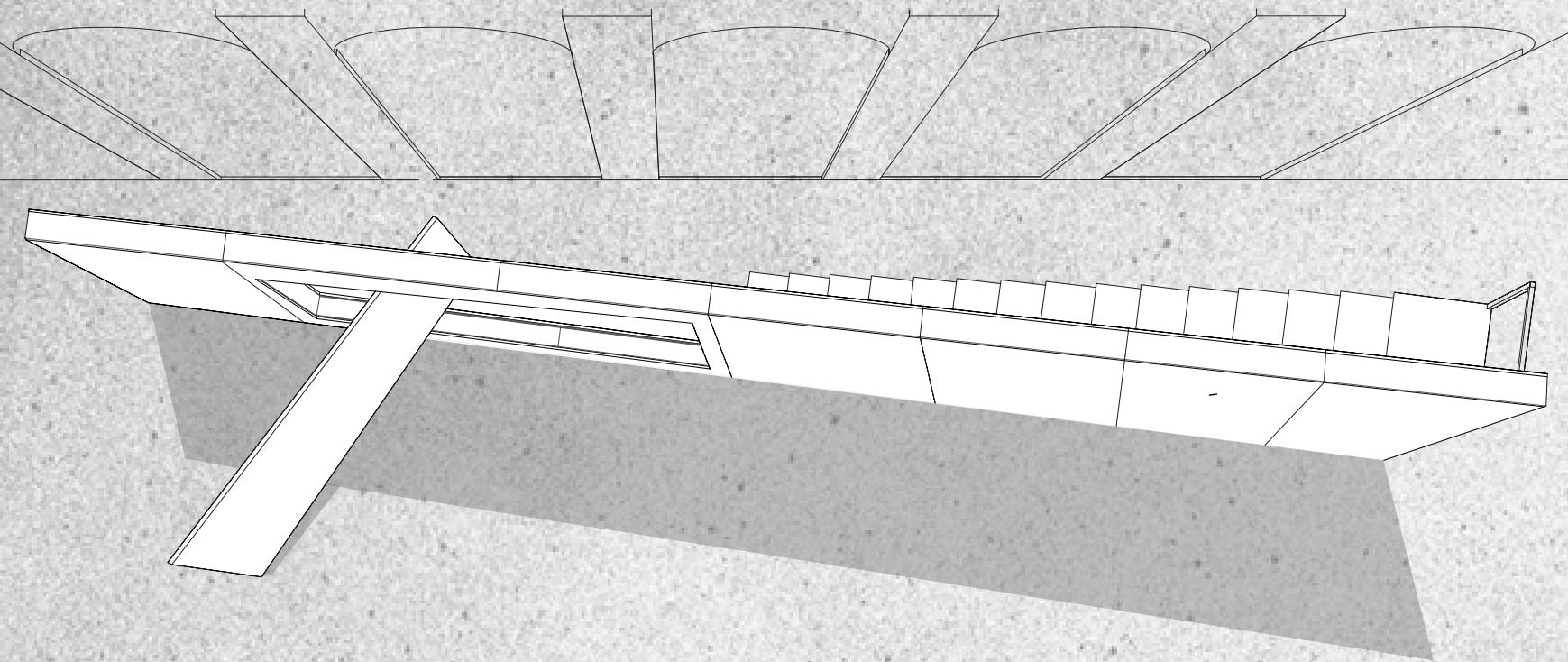
POTE-
RE

PRENDILO

NON HO MAI VISTO UN
RE SCAPPARE

UBU'S DESIRE

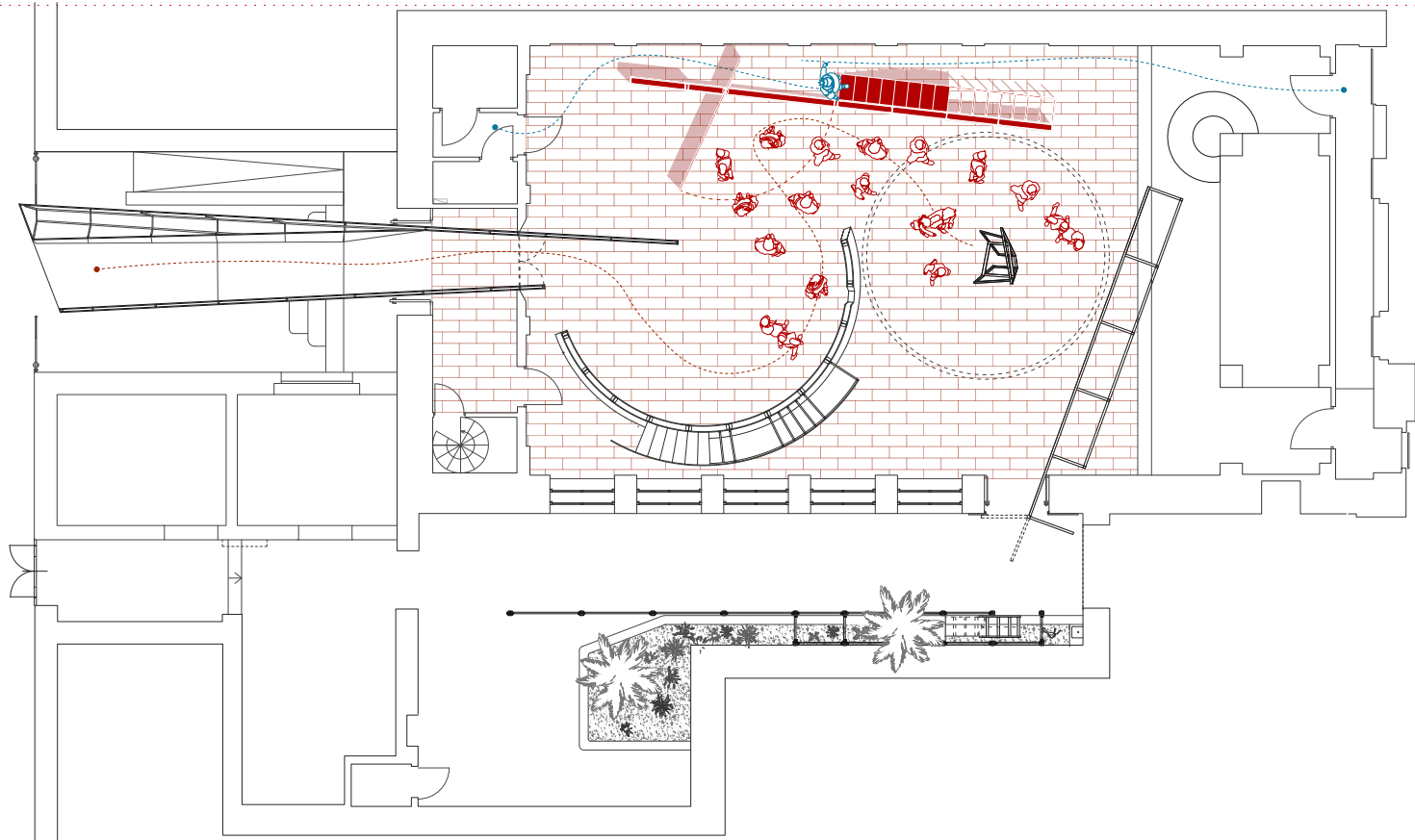
03



The equilibrium of the mind is abruptly interrupted by the appearance of Mère Ubu. Her presence cuts through hesitation. She is ironic, sharp, destabilizing. What was fragile becomes agitated. With her words, fear turns into provocation.

■ The suspended tension breaks — it pushes toward action.

UBU'S DESIRE
ACTORS AND AUDIENCE FLOW DIAGRAM

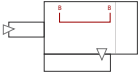
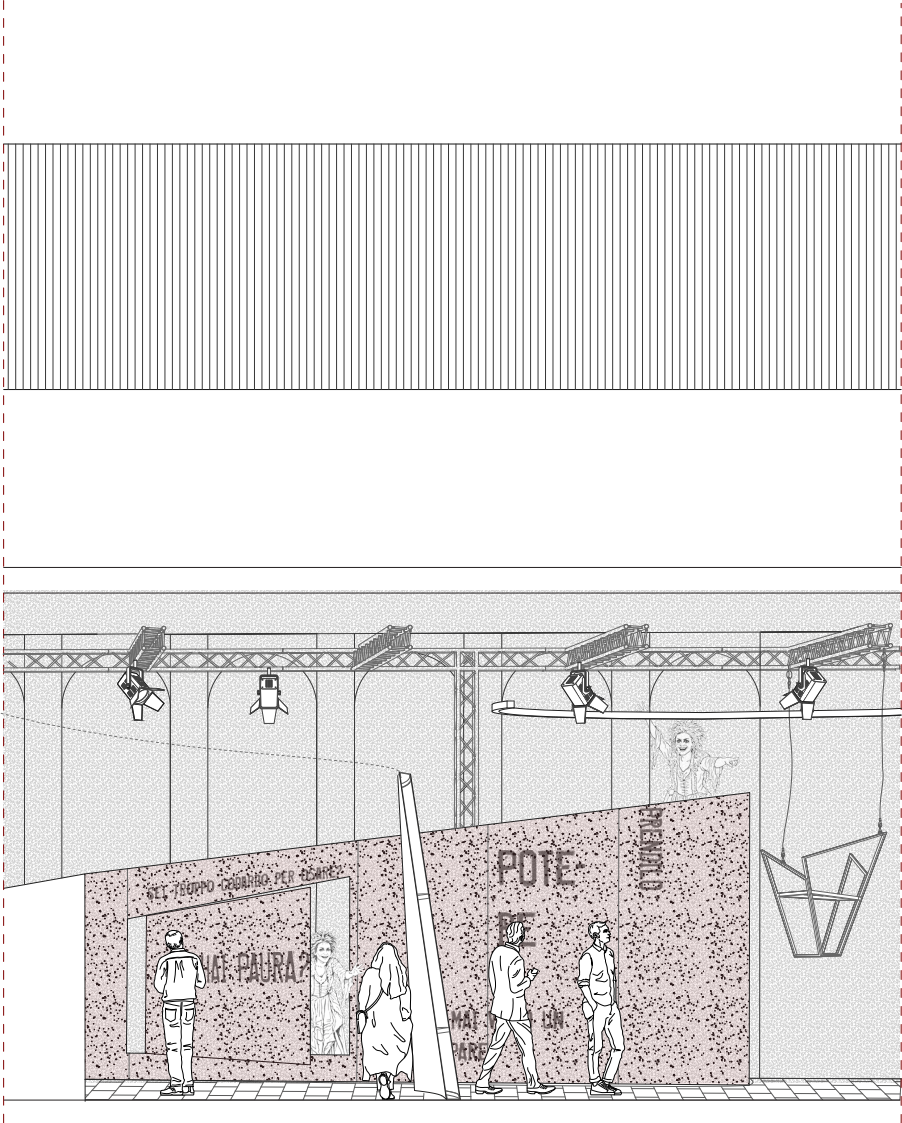


Mère Ubu appears from behind a secondary wall, revealed through the sudden opening of a window-cut. The gesture reinforces the recurring logic of in & out: what is concealed becomes visible, and what is behind confronts what is in front. The opening acts as both visual breach and narrative turning point.

Her intervention fractures the spatial equilibrium. The architecture, previously suspended in tension, shifts toward movement. The wall no longer functions solely as enclosure but as threshold.

By addressing both Ubu and the audience, she redirects the spatial dynamic toward the throne. The spectator, already immersed within Ubu's interior, becomes implicated in the momentum. The void transforms from passive gap into active catalyst, initiating the transition from hesitation to conquest.

UBU'S DESIRE
SECTION



0cm 0.20m 0.40m 0.60m 1m

«COME!?

TI ACCONTENTI DI ESSERE CAPITANO DEI DRAGONI?

TI ACCONTENTI?

POTRESTI ESSERE REI REI REI CON UNA BUONA SCIABOLATA TUTTO È FATTO.

NON È PIÙ DIFFICILE CHE TAGLIARE UNA SALSICCIA.

BISOGNA MASSACRARE LA FAMIGLIA REALE. AVANTI! UNA BELLA STRAGE, E SEI SOVRANO.

IL POTERE NON SI SOGNA: SI PRENDE.»

«Comment! tu te contenterais d'être capitaine des dragons?» — Ubu Roi, Atto I

«Tu pourrais être roi!» — Ubu Roi

Incitement to the massacre of the royal family — Ubu Roi, Atto I

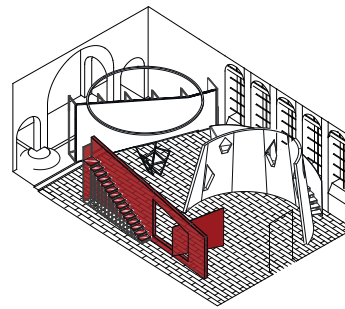
Language of the saber strike / simplified violence — Ubu Roi

UBU'S DESIRE ASSEMBLY PHASES

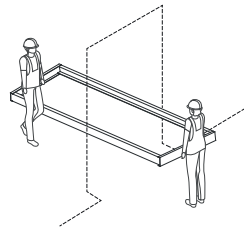
The structure is composed of prefabricated steel modules assembled on site and bolted together to form the linear wall system. Once aligned, the vertical panels are mounted sequentially, defining the continuous surface of the tunnel.

A window-cut is integrated within the panel system through a pivot mechanism, allowing it to open during the performance. The staircase is assembled using modular steel components, with wooden treads fixed in place.

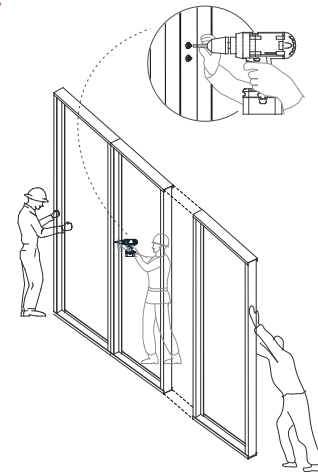
Additional panels are installed behind the stair structure, completing the enclosure and reinforcing the continuity of the scenographic surface.

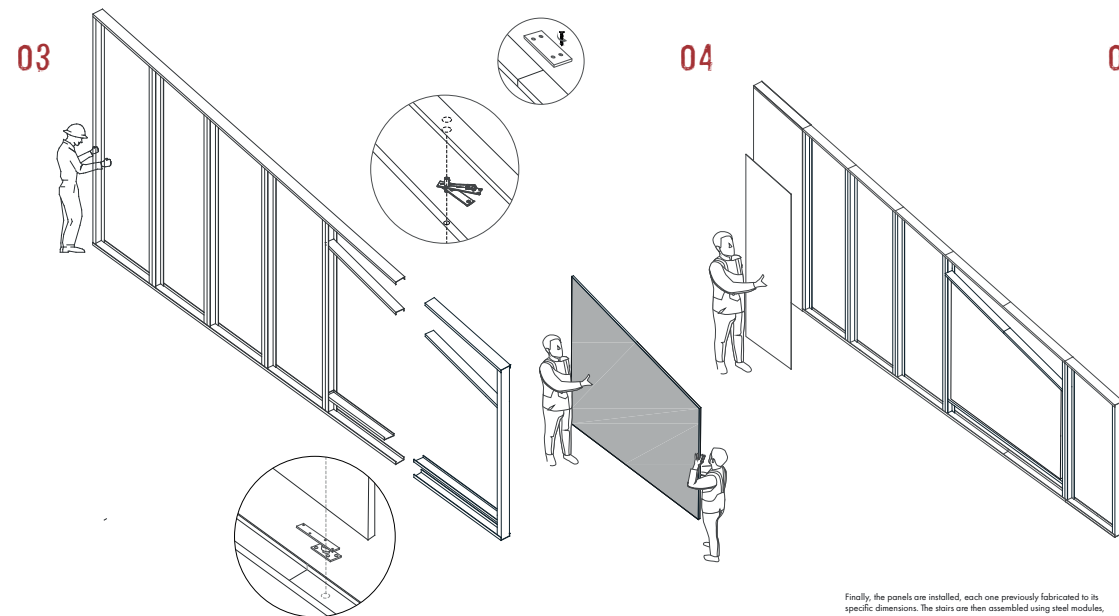


01



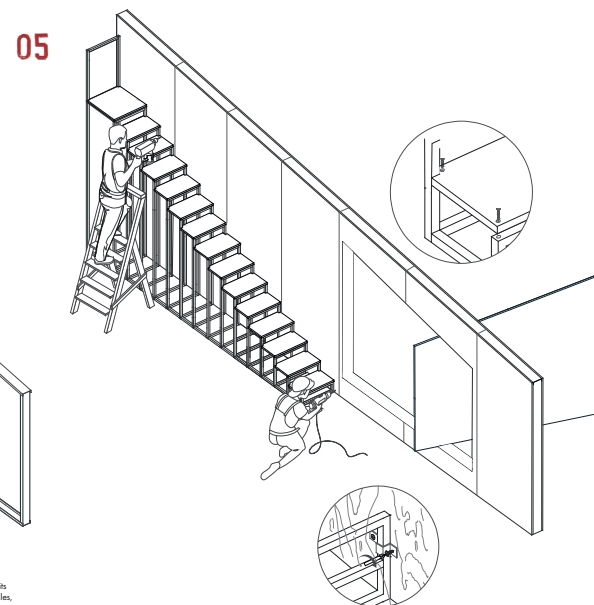
02



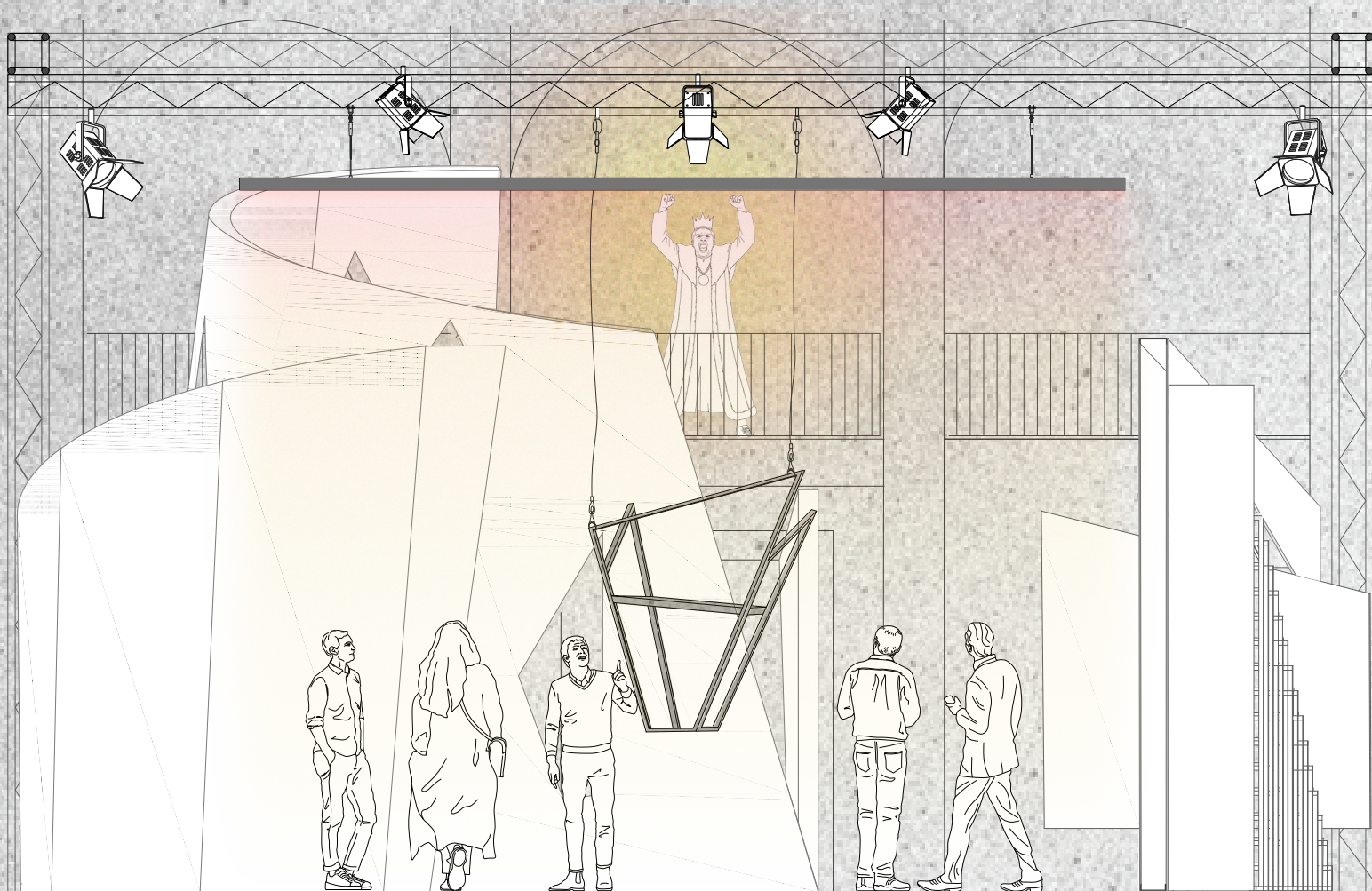


03.3
UBURE IN&OUT
ASSEMBLY PHASES

Finally, the panels are installed, each one previously fabricated to its specific dimensions. The stairs are then assembled using steel modules, onto which the wooden treads are bolted.



Supervisor: Pierluigi Salvadori
Assistant supervisor: Matteo Spreafico

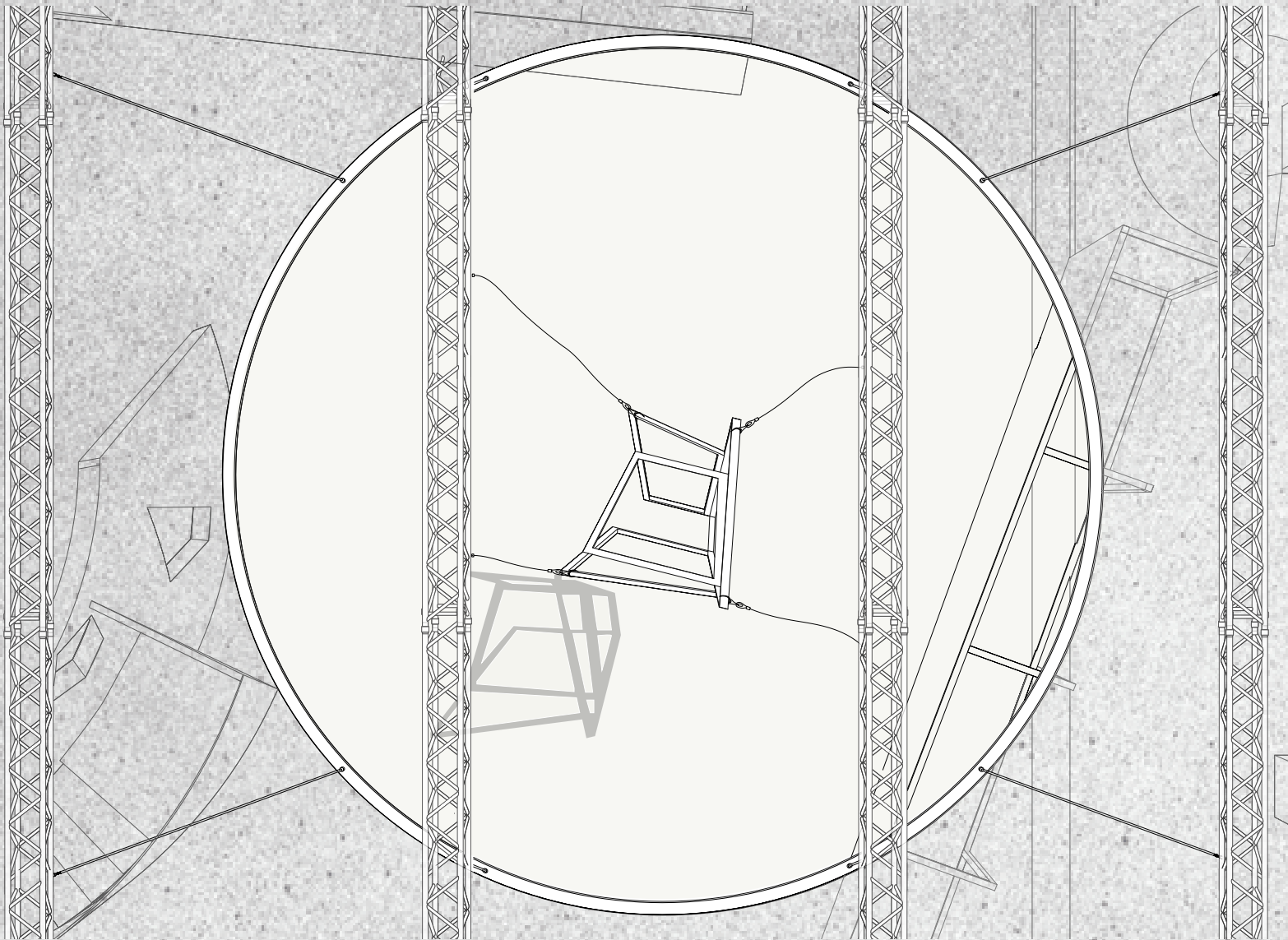


UBU'S

TIRANNY

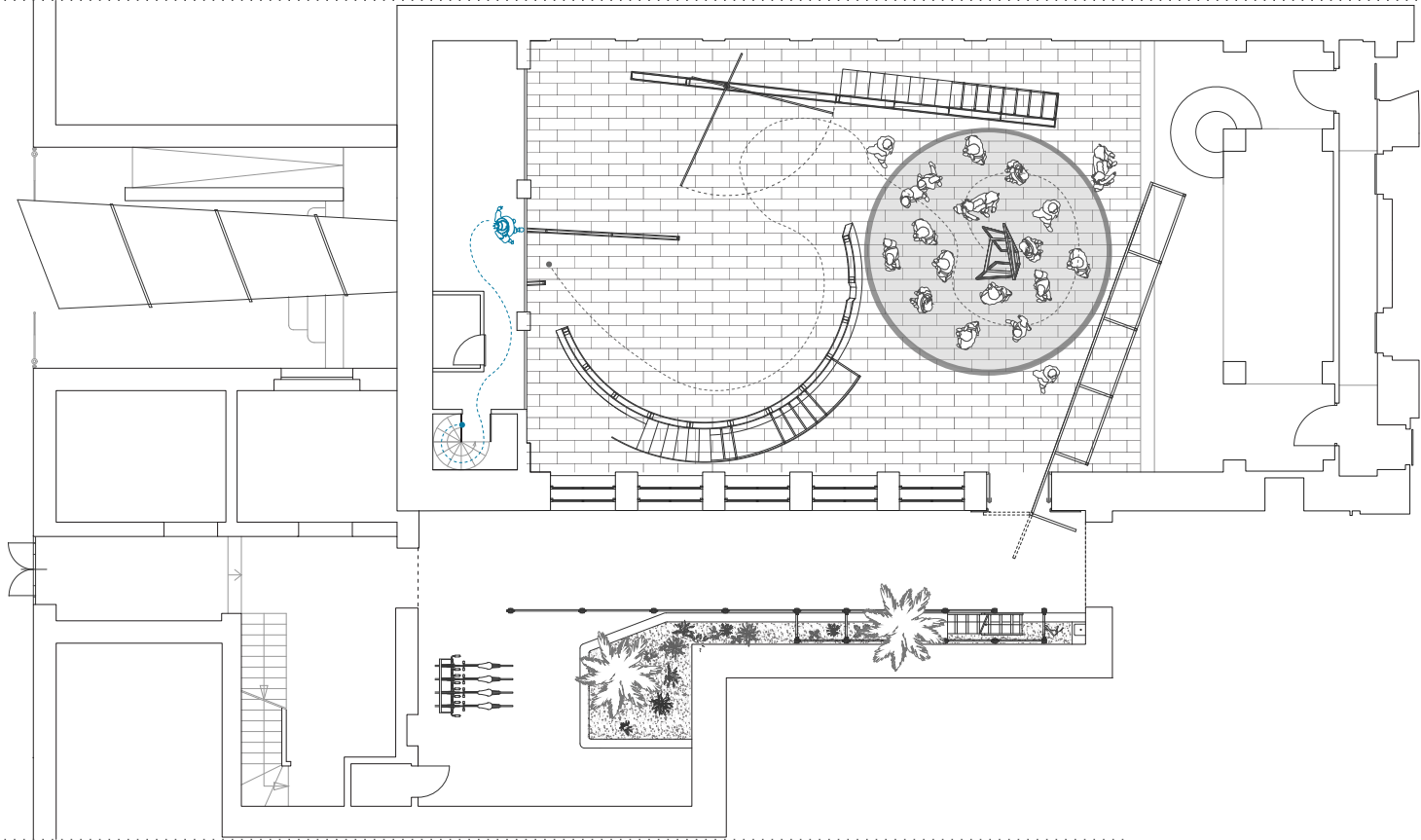
TRIPLE SPACE STAGING_1

04



The spectators approach the throne. Throughout the previous spaces, it has remained partially visible — never fully accessible, always distant. It has functioned as a silent magnet, drawing bodies forward. Now they stand before it. What once appeared majestic reveals its distortion. The throne is exaggerated, unstable, grotesque. Power is no longer noble — it is warped. The audience feels the impulse to reach, to claim, to possess. The temptation becomes collective. Then the light changes. A perimeter forms on the ground. The space tightens. What seemed open becomes containment. Tyranny begins.

UBU'S TIRANNY
ACTORS AND AUDIENCE FLOW DIAGRAM



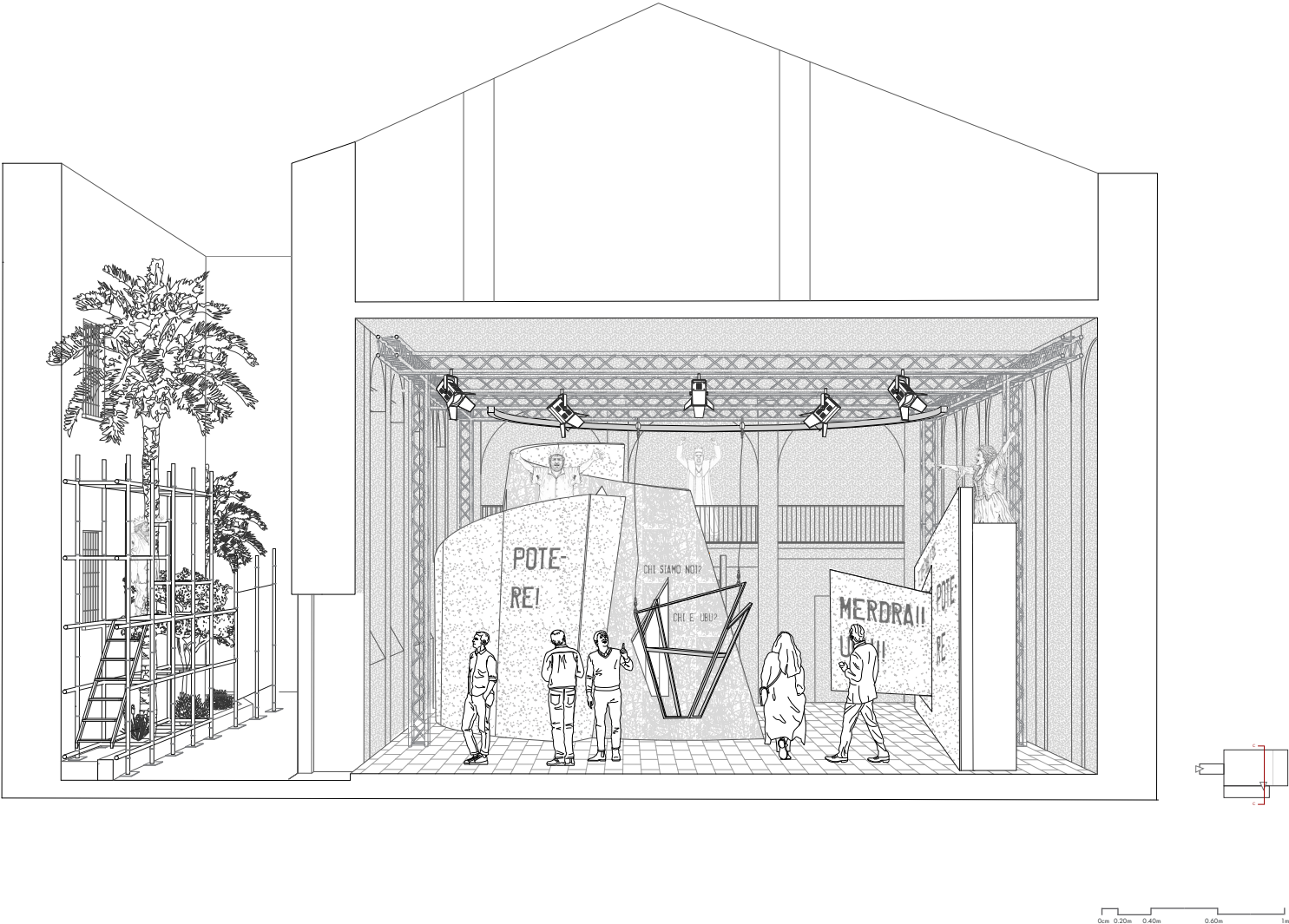
0m 1m 2m 5m

The throne, positioned along the central axis of the sequence, shifts from distant symbol to immediate presence. Its altered proportions and unstable geometry undermine traditional iconography of authority. It is not elevated harmony but distorted excess.

As spectators move toward it, a beam of light defines a boundary on the floor, enclosing them within a marked perimeter. This luminous line transforms the open configuration into a controlled spatial field. The audience becomes contained within the system it sought to approach.

This moment initiates the first phase of the Triple Scenic — Ubu's Tyranny. The Triple Scenic is a spatial device composed of three simultaneous environments. Each represents the same narrative moment — the seizure of power — from different psychological perspectives. Rather than unfolding sequentially, these conditions coexist, multiplying interpretation within a single act.

UBU'S TIRANNY
SECTION



«PER LA MIA CANDELA VERDE, SI SOPPRIMANO I NOBILI!
 SI SOPPRIMANO I RICCHI!
 SI SOPPRIMANO I MAGISTRATI! PORTATE LA MACCHINA "SCERVELLATRICE".
 TASSATE TUTTO. PRENDETE TUTTO.
 CHI MI GUARDA STORTO VENGA DECAPITATO. È LA FINANZA! È LA FISICA!
 È LA MORALE DI PADRE UBU!
 IO SONO IL RE.»

"Faites mourir les nobles!" — "Have the nobles killed!"

Ubu Roi, Act III. Expression of Ubu's arbitrary and violent exercise of power.

"Apportez la machine à décerveler." — "Bring the brain-removing machine."

Ubu Roi. Grotesque parody of mechanized justice and institutional violence.

Episodes of taxation and massacres — Ubu Roi, Act III.

Satirical depiction of fiscal oppression followed by systematic executions.

Pseudo-scientific and financial tone — Almanach du Père Ubu (1899).

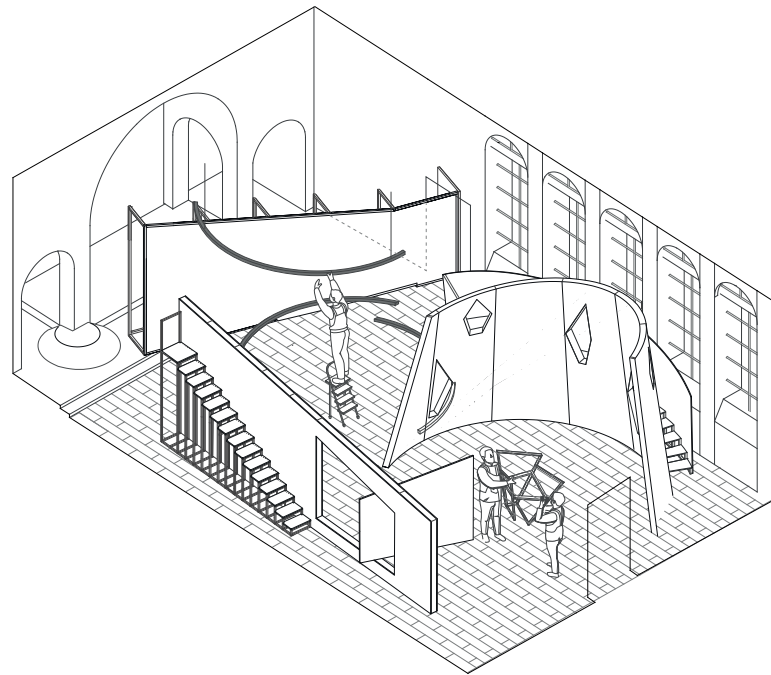
Mock-administrative language parodying bureaucratic rationality and power structures.

UBU'S TIRANNY ASSEMBLY PHASES

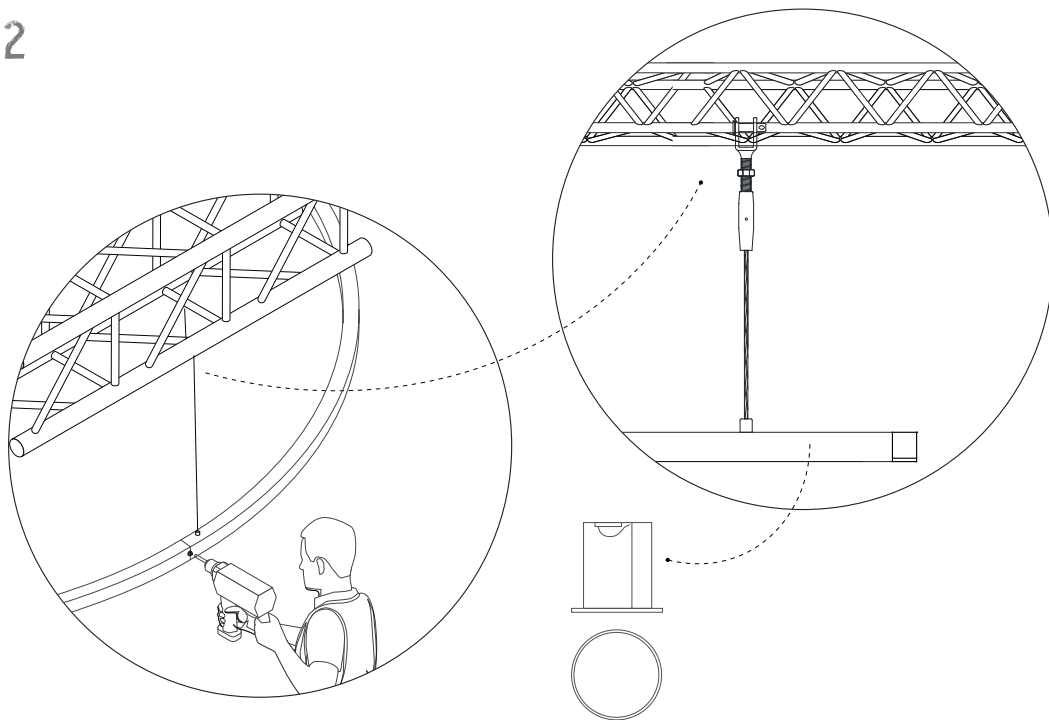
The circular lamp, with a diameter of 6 meters, is prefabricated in four separate segments. The elements are transported to site and assembled on location, forming the complete ring structure. Once connected, the lamp is anchored and suspended from the overhead truss system.

The chair is independently fixed to the stage trusses (americane) through a lifting mechanism, allowing it to be raised and positioned during the performance. Both elements rely on the structural grid above, transforming the ceiling into an active support system rather than a neutral technical device.

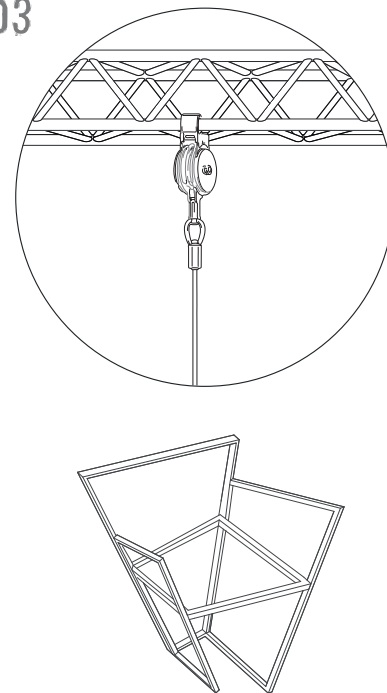
01

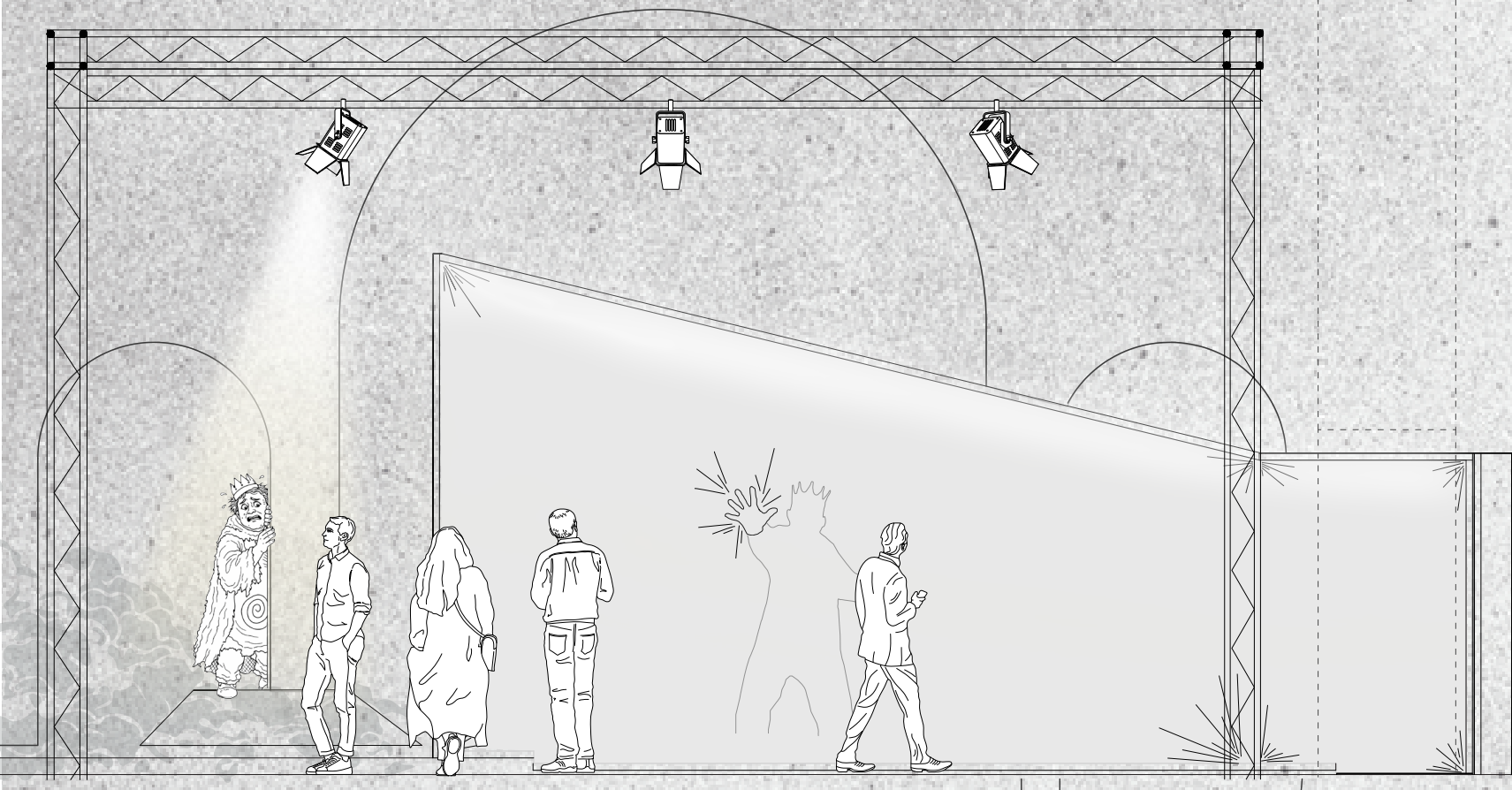


02



03





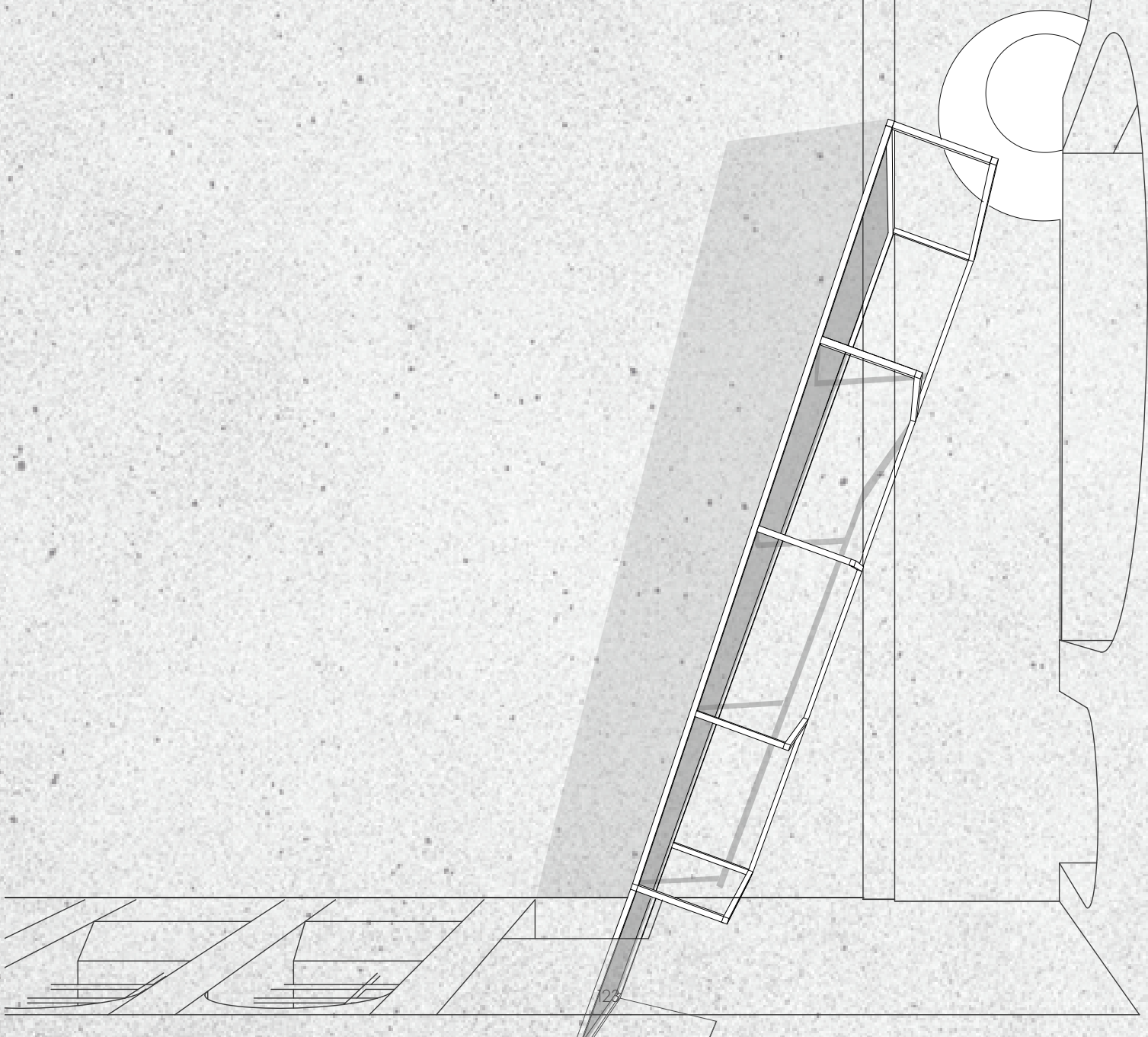
UBU'S

COWARDICE

TRIPLE SPACE STAGING_2

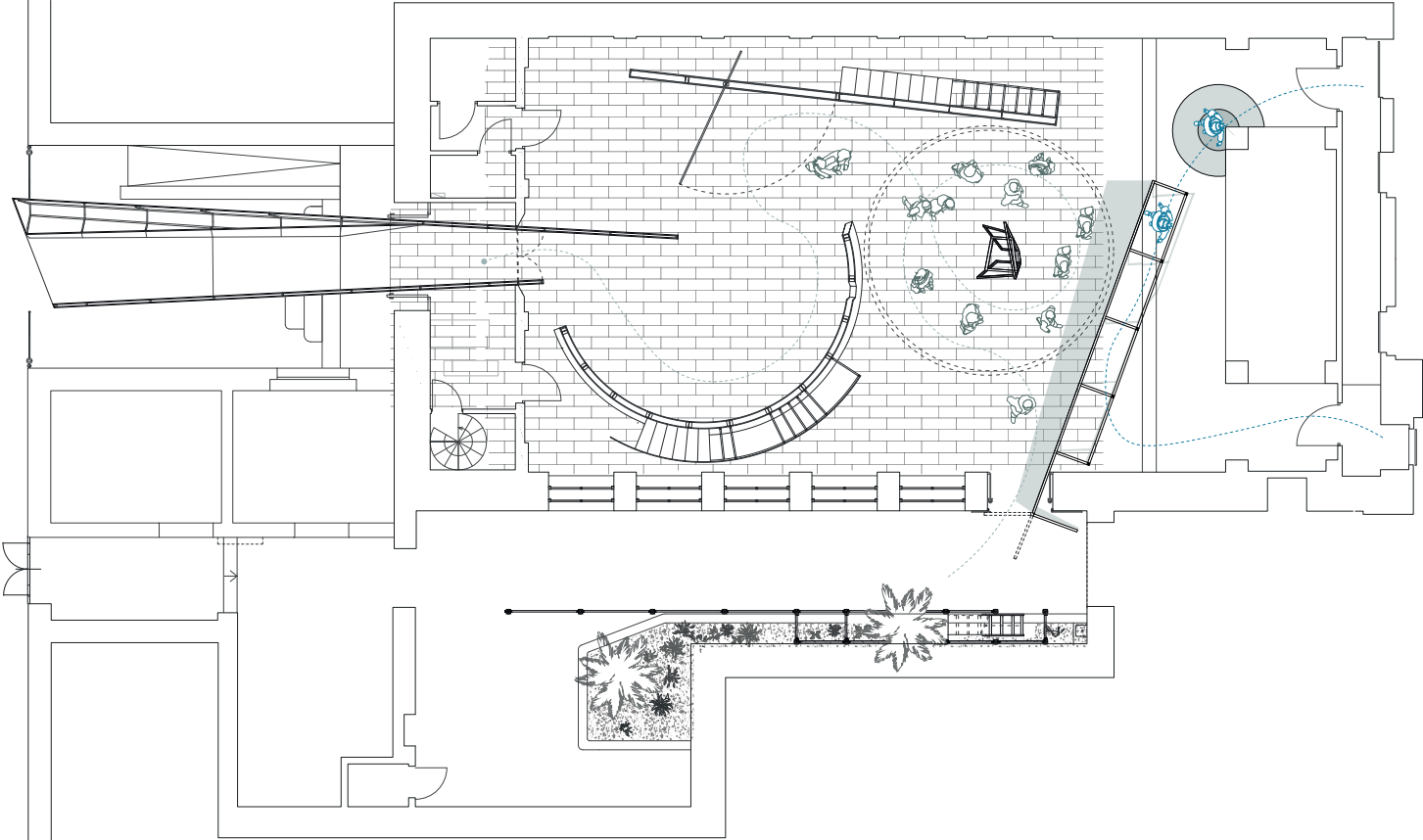
05

If cowardice revealed Ubu's fragility, greed restores his distortion. From the threshold, hands begin to appear — fragments of bodies offering jewels, objects, glittering temptations. Ubu reaches. He grabs. He demands more. He is never satisfied. Fear gives way to appetite. His body leans forward, pulled by what is not yet his. Desire expands beyond measure. The impulse to possess becomes contagious.



UBURE IN&OUT

UBU'S COWARDICE
ACTORS AND AUDIENCE FLOW DIAGRAM

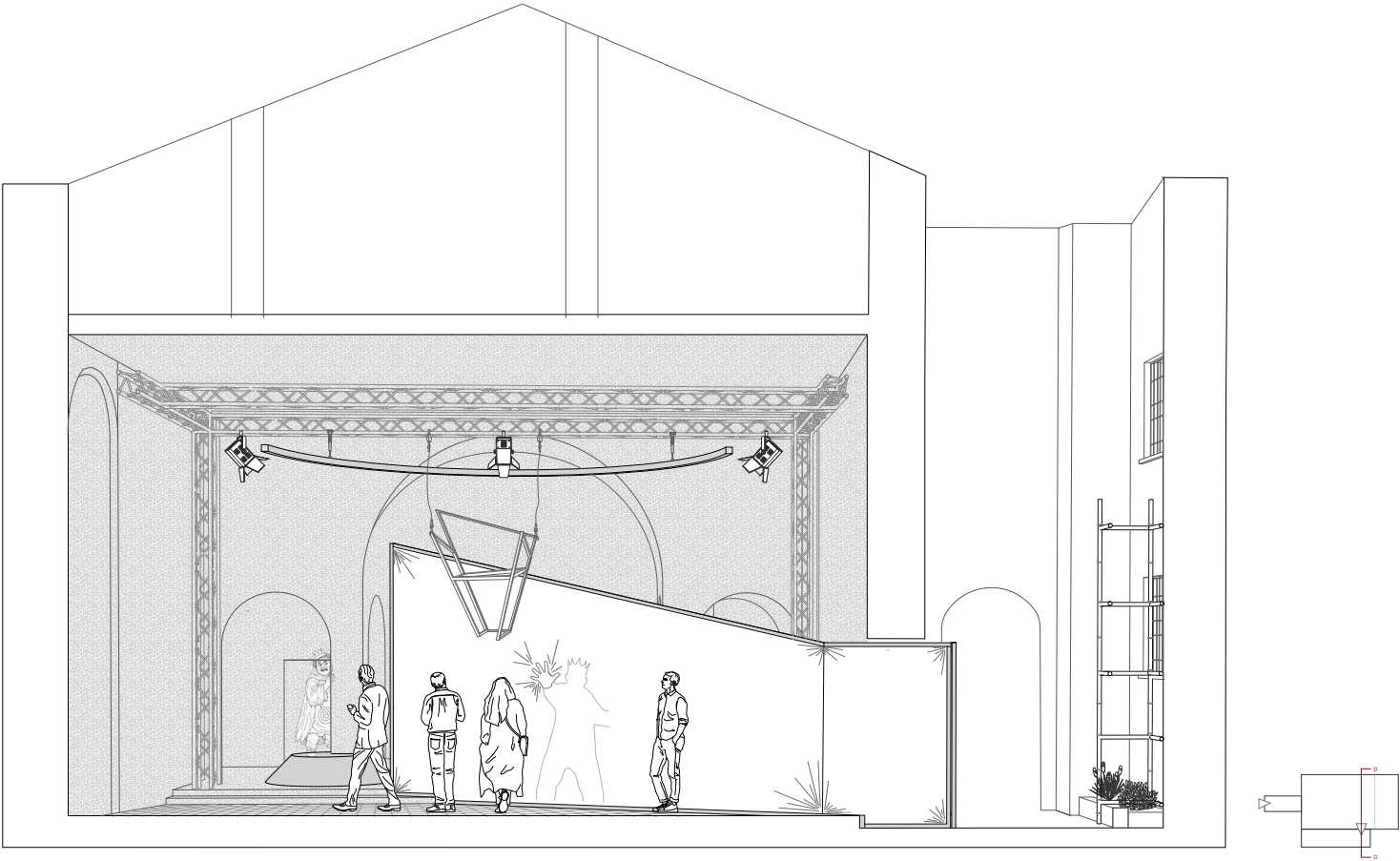


The action unfolds near the threshold, transforming it into a magnetic zone. The other actors remain concealed; only their hands emerge from behind walls and architectural edges, passing objects into Ubu's reach. The fragmentation of bodies reinforces the logic of accumulation without presence — only exchange.

This choreography of offering and taking turns greed into spatial force. Ubu's insistence on "more" shifts the axis outward, activating the audience's orientation toward the door. The spectators are subtly compelled to move, to follow the trajectory of desire.

Accumulation becomes not only material but perspectival. To want more is to look further; to look further is to move. The theatrical frame stretches toward the exterior, preparing the transition from interior space to city.

UBU'S COWARDICE
SECTION



«HO PAURA.

SÌ, HO PAURA. SE NON CI FOSSE LA PAURA SAREI UN EROE.

HO PAURA DEI POLACCHI, DELLE RIVOLTE, DELLE CONGIURE.

HO PAURA DI PERDERE CIÒ CHE HO PRESO.

PERCHÉ IL RE È SOLO.

E QUANDO IL RE È SOLO SENTE IL RUMORE DEI PROPRI PASSI.

HO PAURA DI COMANDARE.

HO PAURA DI OBBEDIRE.

HO PAURA DI RESTARE SENZA NIENTE.»

«S'il n'y avait pas de peur je serais un héros» — Ubu Roi

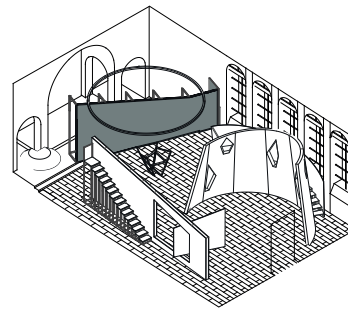
Paure delle rivolte polacche e delle congiure — Ubu Roi, Atti III-IV

UBU'S COWARDICE ASSEMBLY PHASES

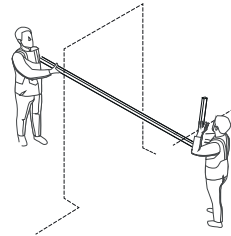
The system is built from prefabricated steel modules assembled and bolted together on site to form the primary structural frame. Vertical supports and upper guides define the linear enclosure.

The Barisol stretch ceiling is then inserted into the dedicated metal profiles integrated within the steel structure. The membrane is tensioned in place, creating a continuous surface that conceals the structural depth while allowing integrated lighting to diffuse evenly across the plane.

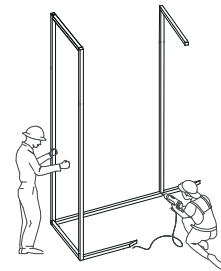
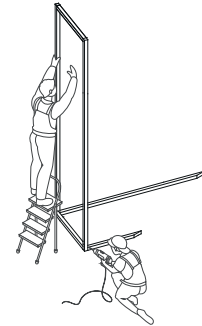
The final element is the door, mounted onto reinforced steel hinges that allow a 270-degree opening. This wide rotation enables full spatial permeability, transforming the wall from fixed boundary into dynamic threshold.

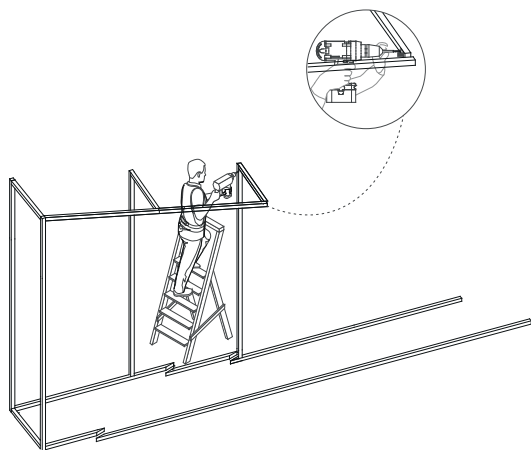


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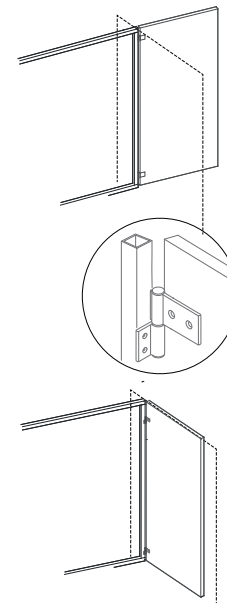
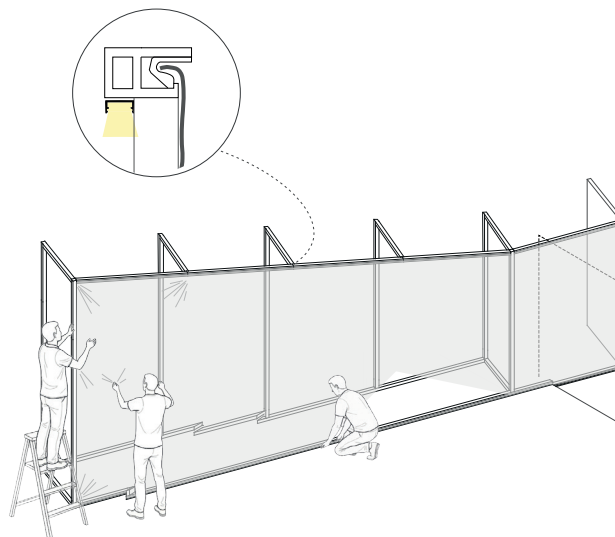


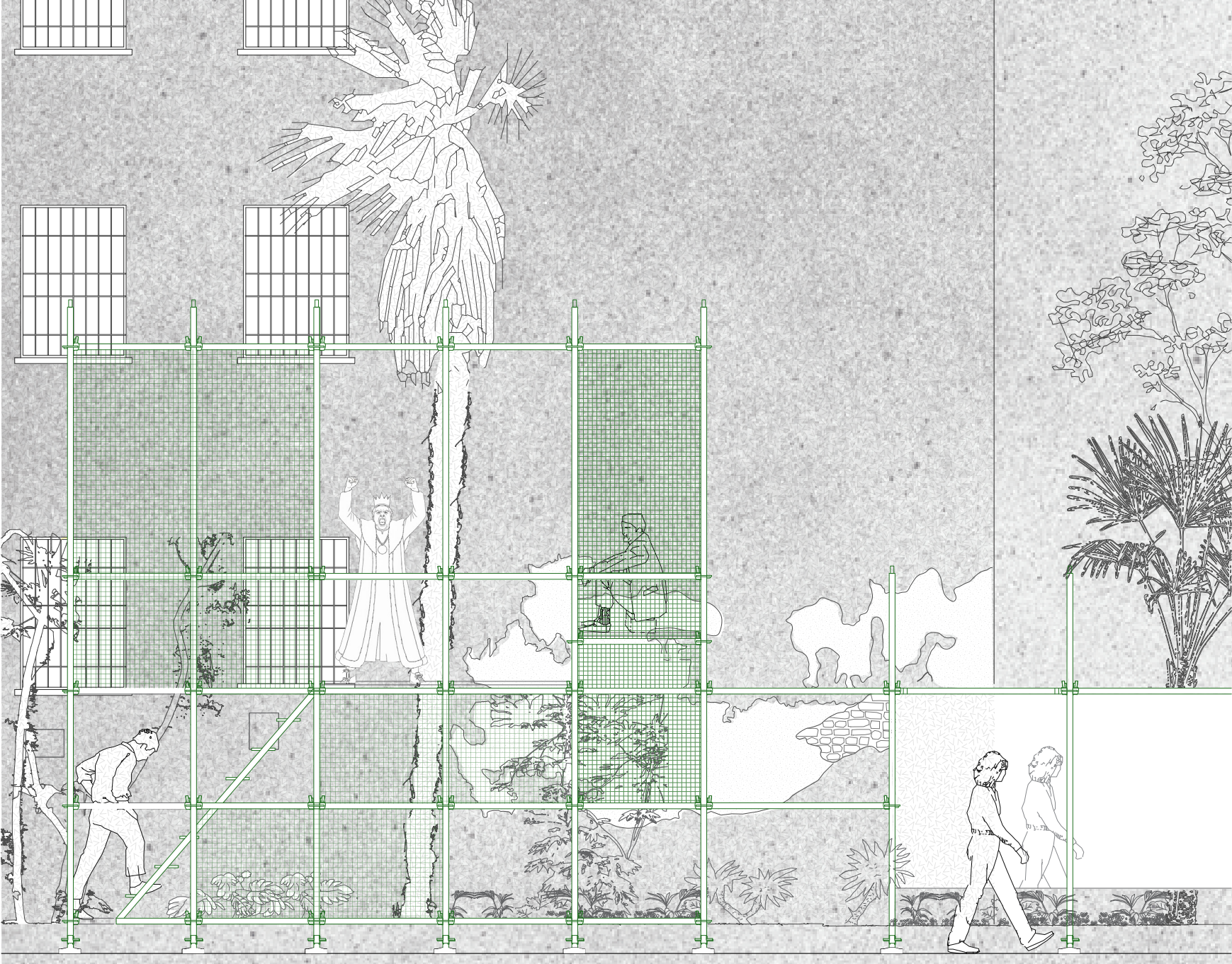
02





04



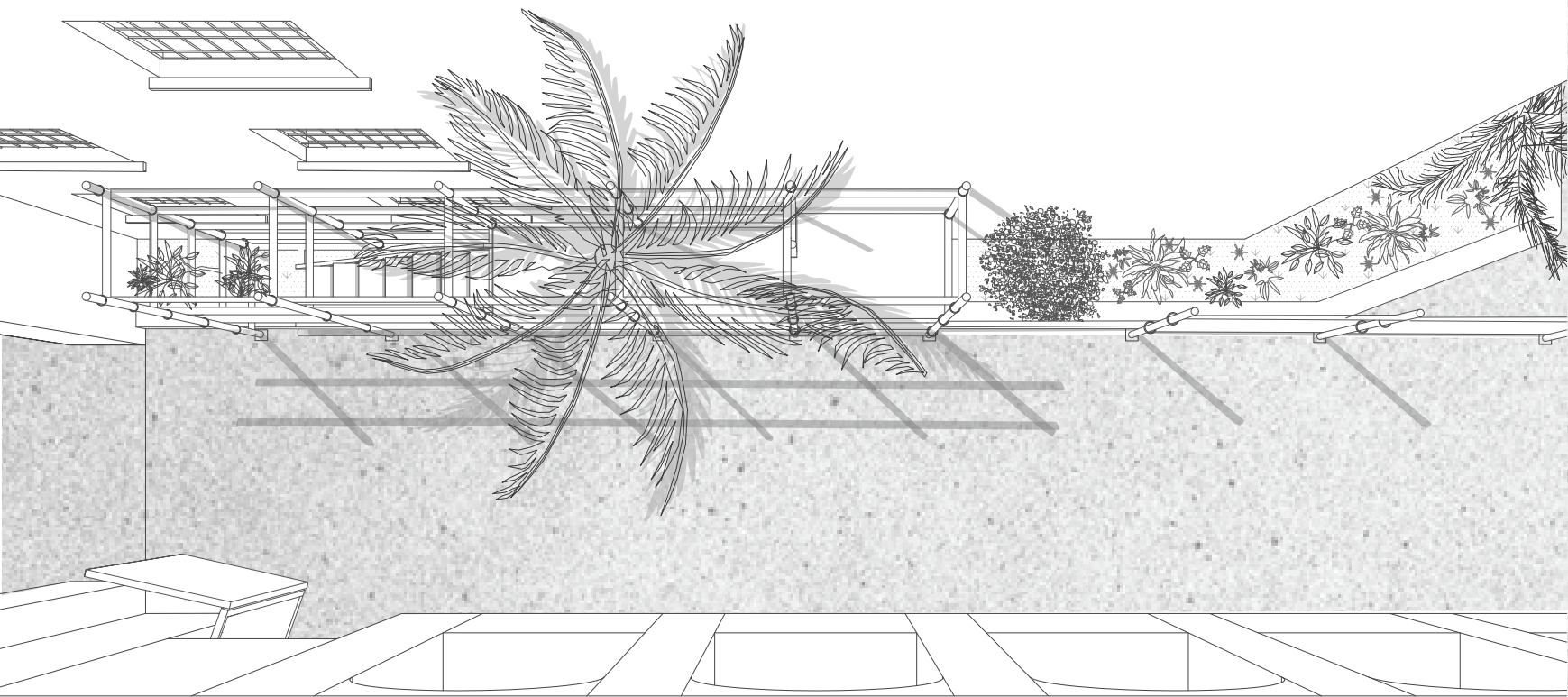


UBU'S

GREED/ENDING

TRIPLE SPACE STAGING_3

06

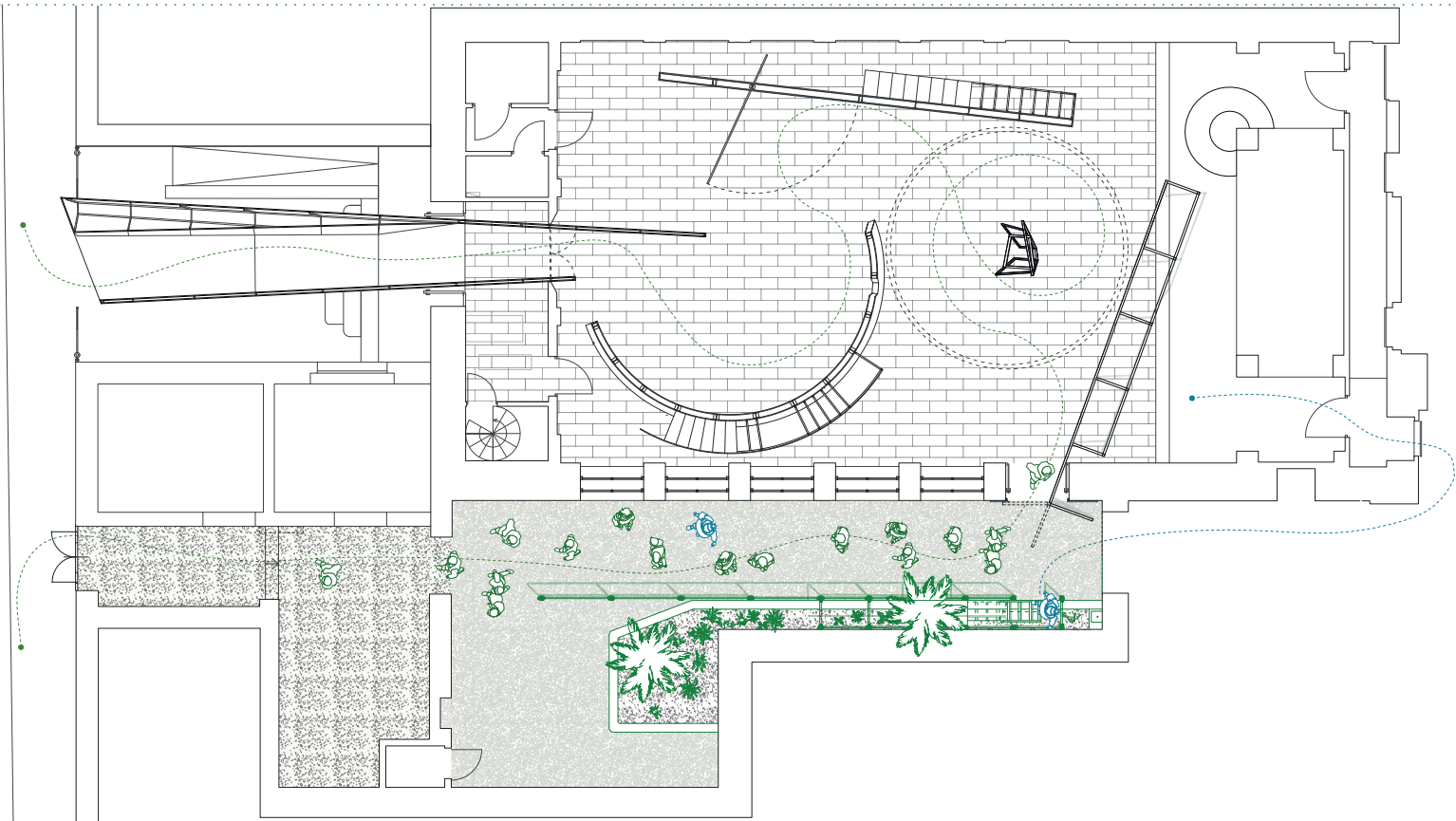


If cowardice revealed Ubu's fragility, greed restores his distortion. From the threshold, hands begin to emerge — fragments of bodies offering jewels, objects, glittering temptations.

Ubu reaches. He grabs. He demands more. He is never satisfied.

Fear dissolves into appetite. His body leans forward, pulled by what is not yet his. Desire expands without limit. The impulse to possess becomes irresistible — and contagious.

UBU'S GREED
ACTORS AND AUDIENCE FLOW DIAGRAM



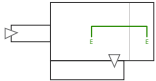
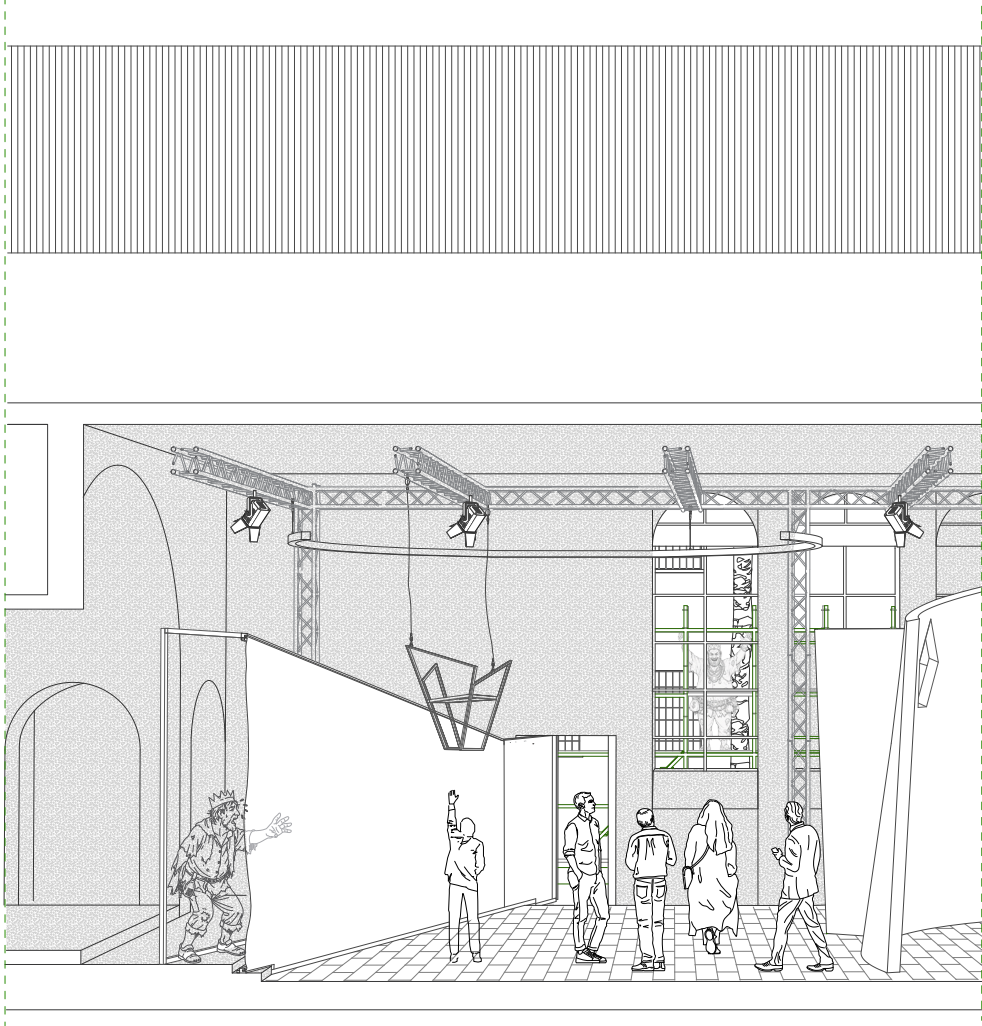
0m 1m 2m 5m

The action unfolds in the liminal zone near the door, transforming the threshold into a magnetic point of attraction. The other actors remain concealed; only hands extend into the space, passing objects from behind walls, curtains, and architectural edges. Bodies fragment into gestures of offering and exchange.

This choreography of accumulation turns greed into a spatial force. Ubu's insistence on "more" shifts the orientation outward, activating the spectators' movement toward the same direction. The audience is subtly compelled to follow the trajectory of desire — toward the door, toward what lies beyond.

In this phase, accumulation is not only material but perspectival. To want more is to look further. To look further is to move. The theatrical frame stretches toward the city.

UBU'S GREED
SECTION

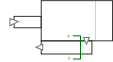
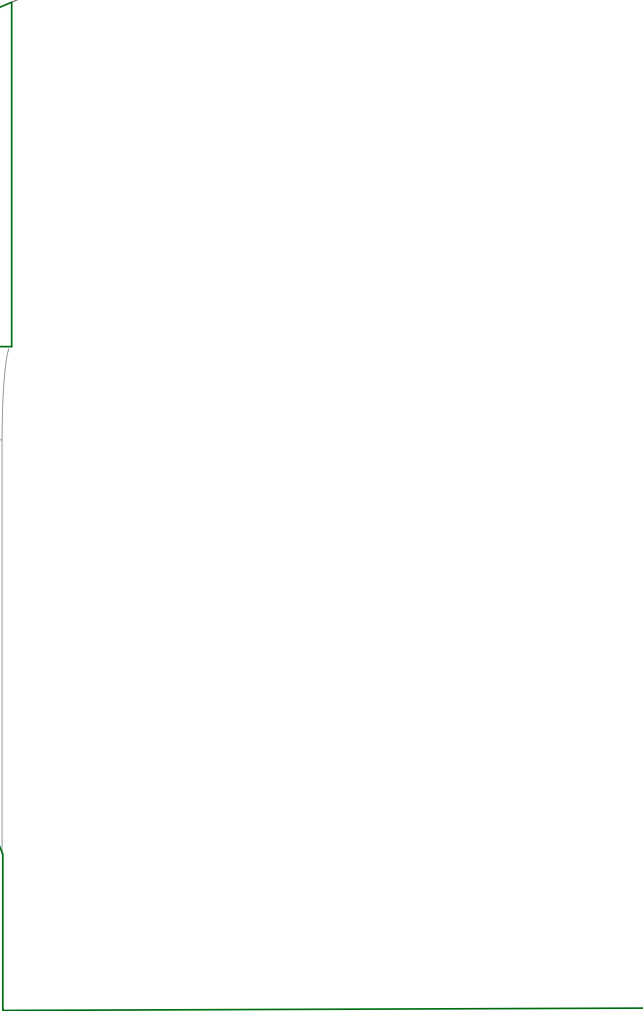
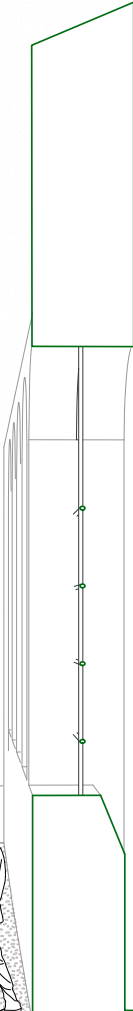
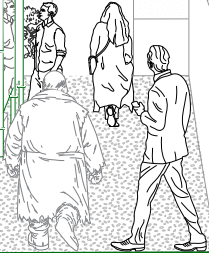
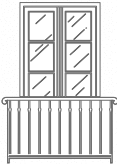
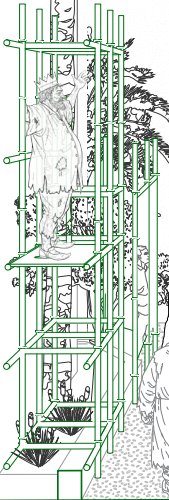


0cm 0.20m 0.40m 0.60m 1m

«DATEMI TUTTO. NON BASTA.
NON BASTA IL TRONO, NON BASTA L'ORO, NON BASTA IL SANGUE.
TUTTO CIÒ CHE È ROTONDO MI APPARTIENE. I
O DECRETO, IO INCASSO, IO ACCUMULO.
LA FINANZA È LA VERA SCIENZA.
SE NON RESTA NULLA DA PRENDERE, PRENDERÒ IL RESTO.
PER LA MIA CANDELA VERDE,
VOGLIO ANCORA. SEMPRE DI PIÙ.»

«Tout ce qui est rond m'appartient» — Ubu Roi
Ossessione per tasse e denaro — Ubu Roi, Almanach du Père Ubu

UBU'S ENDING
SECTION



«MERDRE.

HO REGNATO. SÌ, HO REGNATO. PER LA MIA CANDELA VERDE HO COMANDATO, HO TASSATO, HO FATTO DECAPITARE. TUTTO CIÒ CHE È ROTONDO MI APPARTENEVA - O ALMENO COSÌ CREDEVO. E ORA FUGGO. IL RE FUGGE. IO FUGGO. SE NON CI FOSSE LA PAURA SAREI UN EROE... MA HO PAURA. HO PAURA DEL RUMORE DEI MIEI STESSI PASSI, HO PAURA DI CIÒ CHE RESTA QUANDO IL POTERE SI SVUOTA. HO PRESO TUTTO, E NON È BASTATO. HO VOLUTO TUTTO, E ORA NON RESTA NIENTE. MERDRE. IO SONO UBU. E MENTRE CADO, SENTO CHE IL REGNO NON RESTA... RESTA SOLO IL RUMORE.»

«Merdre!» — Ubu Roi, Atto I

«De par ma chandelle verte» / «Per la mia candela verde» — Ubu Roi

«Tout ce qui est rond m'appartient» — Ubu Roi

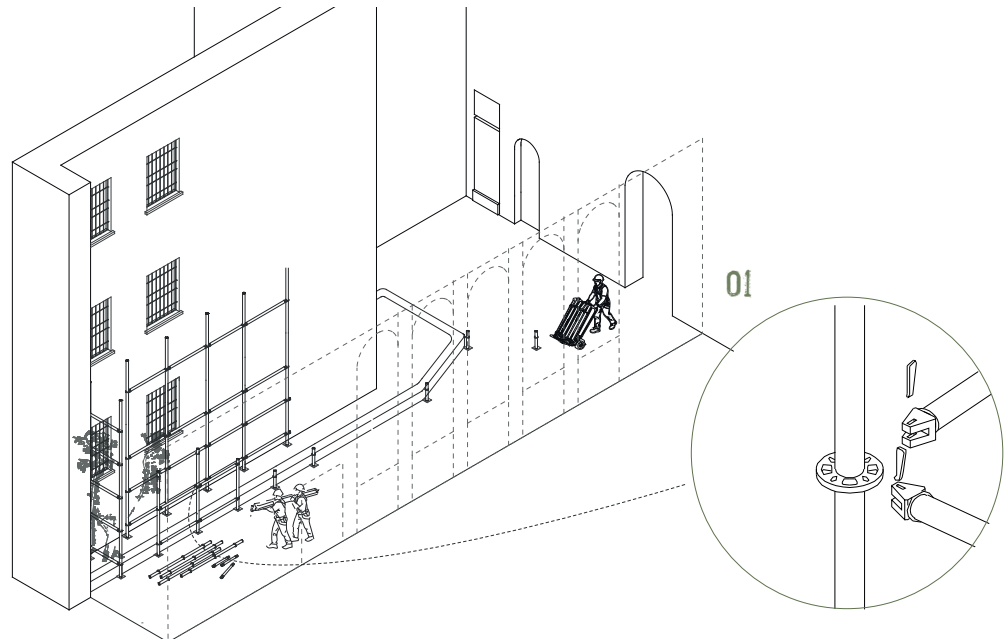
«S'il n'y avait pas de peur je serais un héros» — Ubu Roi

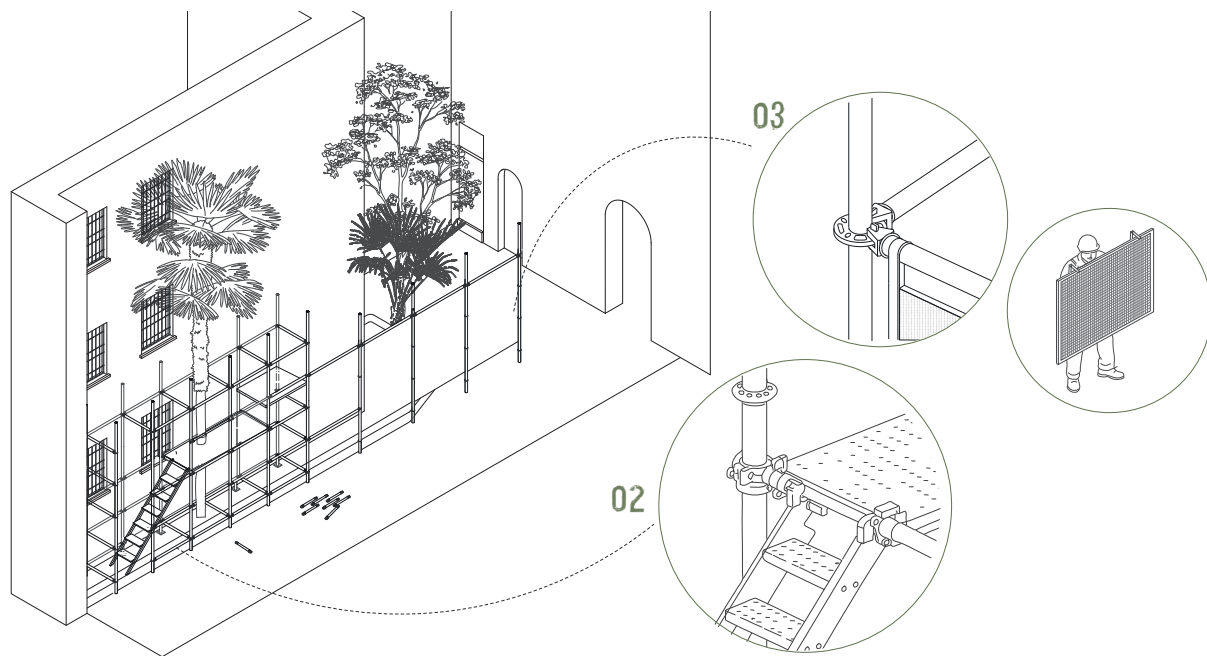
UBU'S GREED/ENDING ASSEMBLY PHASES

The external system is constructed using a modular Ringlock scaffolding structure. Vertical standards are anchored to base plates and connected through horizontal ledgers and diagonal braces, forming a stable and adaptable framework.

The modular components allow rapid assembly and precise alignment along the façade. Once the primary grid is secured, secondary elements and panels are fixed onto the scaffolding, integrating the structure with the architectural envelope.

The Ringlock system functions not only as support but as visible structural language, emphasizing temporality, construction, and the performative occupation of the urban surface.



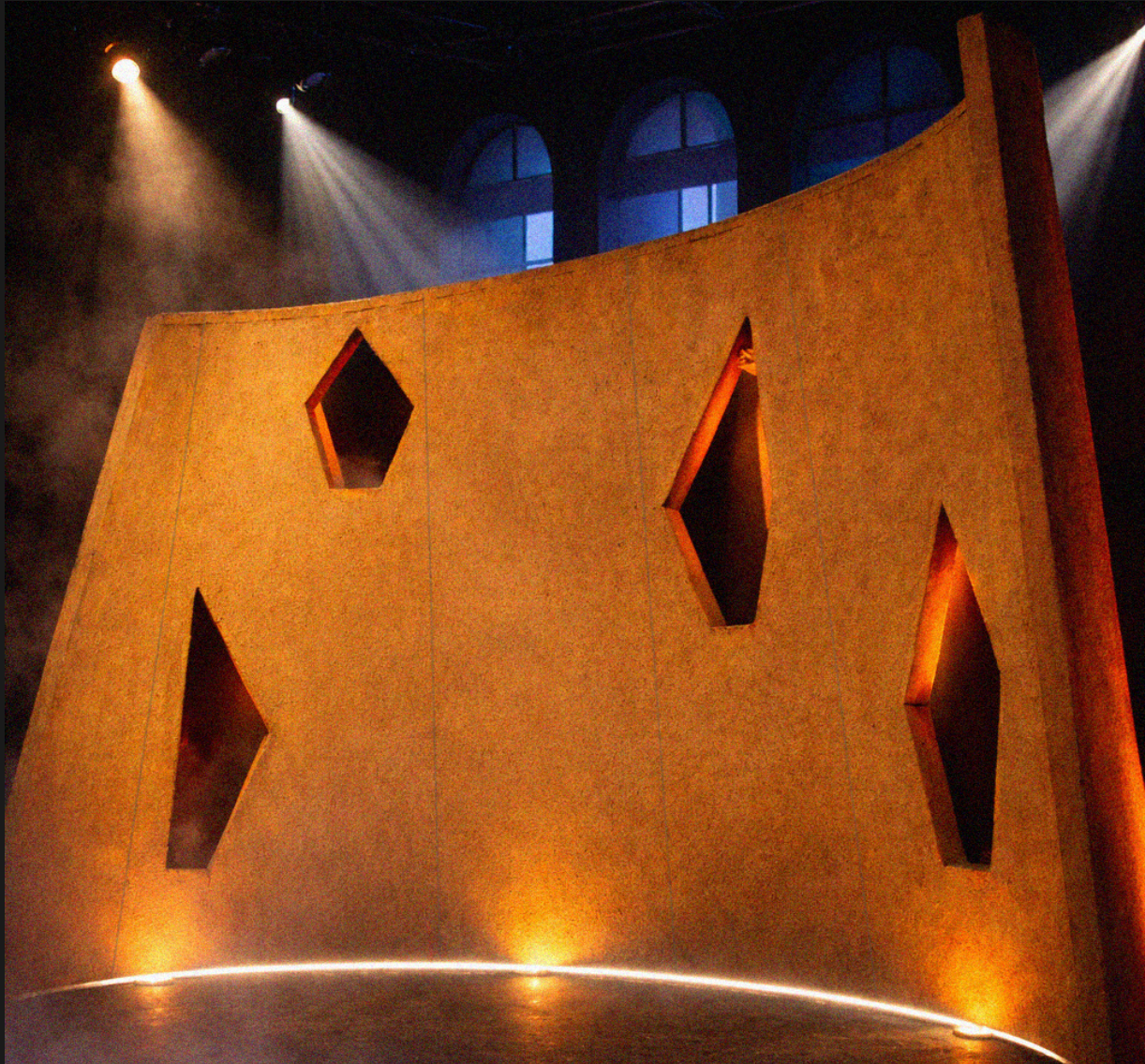


Voice-over, while Ubu the actor walks through the audience...

"NON RESTA IL REGNO.
NON RESTA L'EROE.
NON RESTA LA MORALE.
RESTA IL RUMORE,
INTESO COME RESIDUO DEL POTERE.
LA STORIA È FINITA,
MA LO SCANDALO NO.
E ALLORA COS'È IL POTERE?
È UNA PAROLA.
E UNA PAROLA?
È UN RUMORE NELL'ARIA CHE VOLA."

04.8 **UBURE&OUT** *renders*









_Conclusion

This thesis began with a question: can architecture operate not as a container of performance, but as the very substance through which performance is constructed? Through the design of UBU RE IN&OUT, the research has attempted to answer this question by testing space as an active dramaturgical instrument.

The investigation has demonstrated that architecture and scenography do not simply coexist; they share a structural ground. Both disciplines organize bodies, movements, hierarchies, and perceptions. Both construct experience through spatial configuration. What differs is not their material, but their temporality. Architecture traditionally stabilizes space; theatre activates it. When these two conditions intersect, space becomes event.

The choice of Ubu Roi proved fundamental. Jarry's destabilization of language, authority, and narrative coherence revealed a dramaturgical structure already predisposed to spatial translation. Rather than illustrating the grotesque excess of Ubu, the project absorbed it architecturally. Fragmentation, compression, inclination, and disjunction became spatial equivalents of psychological imbalance and political distortion. Instability was not represented; it was inhabited.

The itinerant structure — beginning in the city and culminating within the interior of the Teatro Arsenale — expanded the theatrical frame beyond its physical boundaries. The urban totems initiated the performance as a behavioral condition, transforming everyday gestures into dramaturgical acts. The subsequent immersion into the "belly" of Ubu dissolved the conventional separation between spectator and stage. The audience did not observe power; it navigated its consequences.

Through this process, linear narrative gave way to circular tension. Space expanded and contracted, disoriented and reassembled, mirroring the cyclical logic of ambition, accumulation, fear, and pseudo-return. Power emerged not as a theme among others, but as the central axis structuring transformation. In this circular system, exterior and interior, public and private, action and impulse became spatially inseparable.

Ultimately, the research confirms that space is capable of emotional narration independent of verbal explanation. Architecture can embody contradiction, instability, and excess. It can generate discomfort, anticipation, and awareness. When conceived as an active system rather than a passive envelope, space does not merely host action — it produces meaning.

UBU RE IN&OUT therefore does not propose a scenographic solution alone, but a methodological position: to design space as tension, as process, as event. In doing so, the thesis affirms that architecture and theatre share a common capacity — the power to transform perception through the construction of spatial experience.

_List of figures

Figure 1–4 – Adolphe Appia, Stage design studies. Archival drawings.

Figure 5–6 – Teatro Arsenale, Milan. Performance hall. Official website of Teatro Arsenale.

Figure 7–8 – Teatro Arsenale, Milan. Configuration sketches. Official website of Teatro Arsenale.

Figure 9 – Richard Schechner. Diagram of performance–script–drama–theatre relationships.

Figure 10 – Environmental Theatre performance, The Performance Group, late 1960s.

Figure 11–12 – Orlando Furioso, directed by Luca Ronconi, 1969.

Figure 13 – Jewish Museum Berlin, Daniel Libeskind, 1999.

Figure 14 – Deconstructivist Architecture, MoMA exhibition catalogue, 1988.

Figure 15 – Père Ubu illustrated by Alfred Jarry.

Figure 16 – Stage interpretation of Ubu Roi.

Figure 17 – Poster for Ubu Roi, Théâtre de l'Œuvre, Paris, 1896.

Figures 18–Author's drawings and project diagrams (urban masterplan, totems, circulation diagrams, sections, scenographic layouts).

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At the end of this journey,
we can say that the design of a scenography
does not differ so much from the design of any other architecture.
Thescenography project is, in its essence, **the project of a space in which people interact.**
The close relationship between architectural composition and detail,
how much the smallest element contributes to the creation of the whole, of the whole, of the whole,
does not differ at all from the close relationship that exists in the construction technique of a façade.

Every detail makes the difference.

