

V. MEMORIA

THE MEMORIAL TO FALLEN BODIES AND THE VIRTUALLY FREE MARKET

LOS ANGELES, 1995

This project departs from a call for designs for a “Justice Park” as a memorial to victims of violent crime in Los Angeles on the occasion of the trial of O. J. Simpson. The site is a city block outside the Criminal Courts adjacent to City Hall in the Los Angeles Civic Center.

The brief asked whether symbolic form and the design of public space could meaningfully commemorate the dead and also speak of social justice to a nation of the living. Identifying itself as a “romantic competition,” competitors were also asked to try to create a place that would personify the emotional “heart and soul of America.”

Our response to this curious brief is in two parts. The first, entitled the Memorial to Fallen Bodies, commemorates victims of violent crime, and the second, entitled the Virtually Free Market, seeks to activate a relevant, contemporary public place related to the overriding theme of social justice.

THE MEMORIAL TO FALLEN BODIES

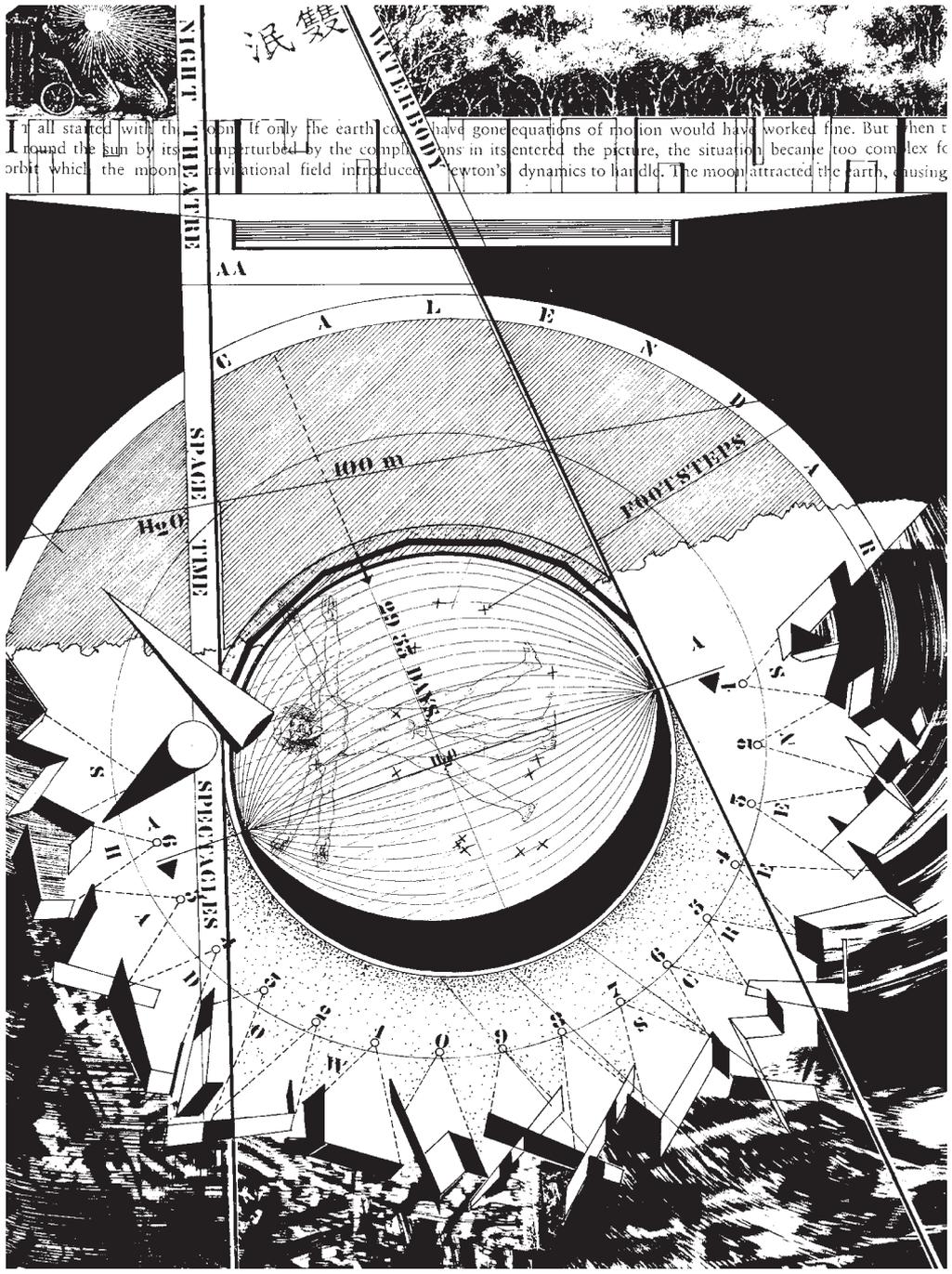
The Memorial to Fallen Bodies is a large water feature based on the moon, our chosen icon of America’s late twentieth-century heart and soul. Water fills and empties from this terraced pool in accord with the lunar cycle, mimicking the shapes of the lunar calendar. Victims of violent crime are signed in silver on the terrace of the lunar time at which they were killed. The actual moon, named with great figures of science and the arts, is here reflected and named with those sacrificed to the city, the anonymous, fallen. The moon—beacon of romanticism, home of the dead, and icon of insanity—is brought down to earth, as it was once thought only witches could do.

THE VIRTUALLY FREE MARKET

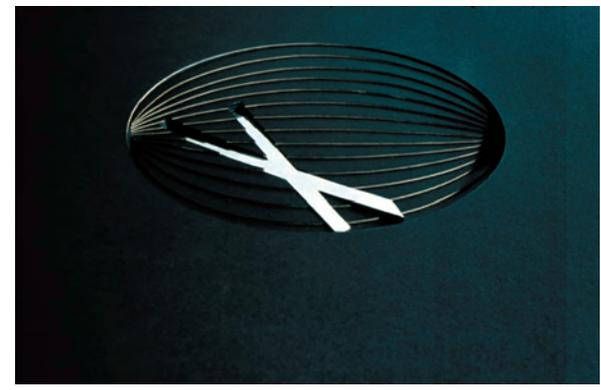
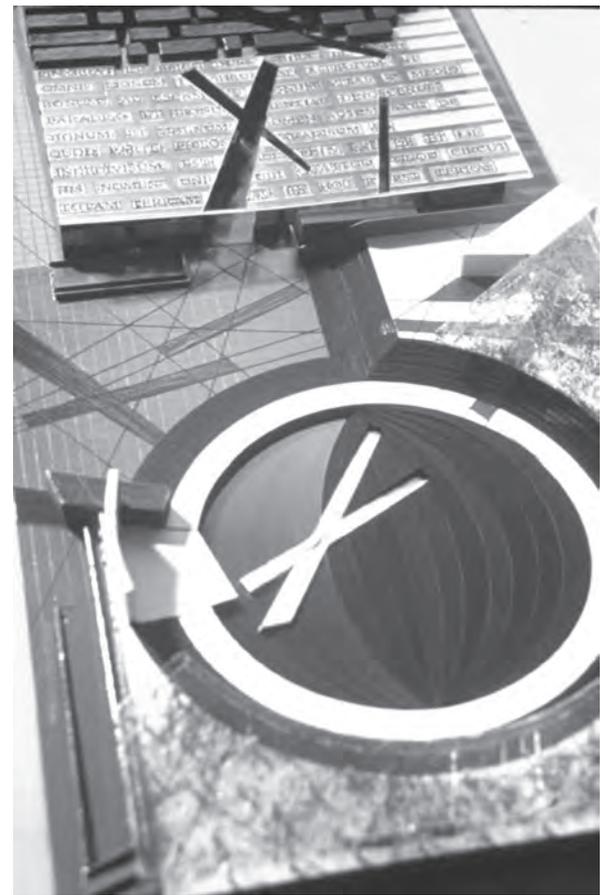
A scaled-up copy of a fragment of St. Augustine’s description of the eviction from Paradise is used as a base plan for a large urban space adjacent to the Memorial to Fallen Bodies. Whereas the water body of the memorial is quiet, open, and reflective, the Virtually Free Market is crowded, noisy, and hi-tech.

The narrative of expulsion from the garden, reiterated by Augustine for the medieval mind, explains a split between this world and an ideal one. It also conflates sin with knowledge and punishes humanity’s hubris in aspiring to become gods—themes that bear upon the America that put man on the moon. Christian morality, fearing the Dionysian moon, forms the substrata of justice and our law. Christianity is structured upon a dual conception of space and time, one heavenly and eternal and the other earthly and finite. Margaret Wertheim argues that postmodern culture is similarly dualistic, although instead of heaven it has cyberspace.¹

Each word in Augustine’s text is literally extruded as a block and built as a habitable booth. Each booth is networked and cybernetically fitted out so that it can be rented out to computer nerds, cybertraders, and hackers, in exactly the manner in which an arts and crafts market is rented out to artisans. However, the Virtually Free



If all started with the moon. If only the earth could have gone equations of motion would have worked fine. But when the moon entered the picture, the situation became too complex for Newton's dynamics to handle. The moon attracted the earth, causing

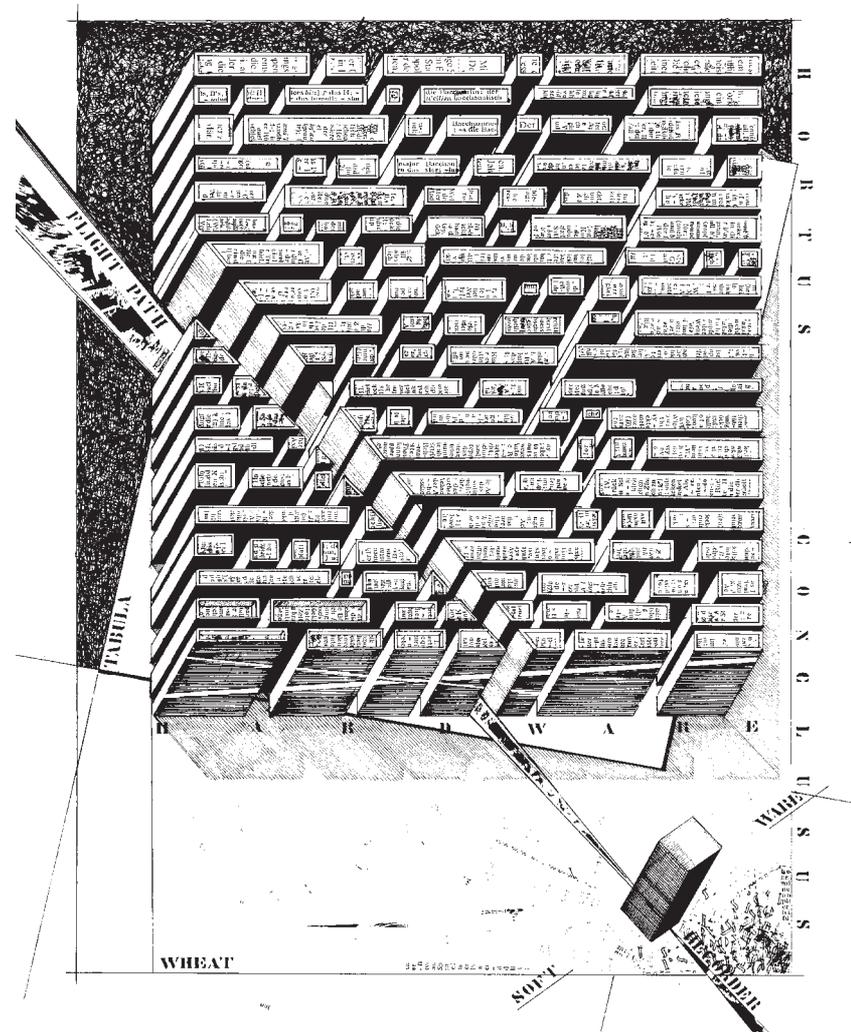


Market deals in information and cutting edge, virtual experiences, not talismans. The extruded text, now a labyrinth of cyber-booths, is constructed in metal as if it were a giant print template tilted to the sky or a microchip now enabling many different paths through the old linear structure of print.

The Virtually Free Market is put forward as an urban proposition for public space in an attempt to increase basic access to technology and information because, as Mike Davis points out, “the Ghetto is defined not only by its paucity of parks and public amenities but also by the fact that it is not wired into any of the key information circuits.”² The project will also manifest the immaterial subculture of the Internet in urban form, enshrining and enhancing the creative competition of designing and selling cyberspatial experiences.

The Virtually Free Market is presented with a view to one of our contemporary cyber Medicis—those who typically boast that information society will offer all information to all people at all times—acting as patron.

- 1 Margaret Wertheim, *The Pearly Gates of Cyberspace: A History of Space from Dante to the Internet* (Sydney: Doubleday, 1999), pp. 44–75.
- 2 Mike Davis, in Michael Sorkin, ed., *Fortress Los Angeles: The Militarization of Public Space* (1990), p. 155.





THE TWENTIETH CENTURY MONUMENT

BERLIN 1993

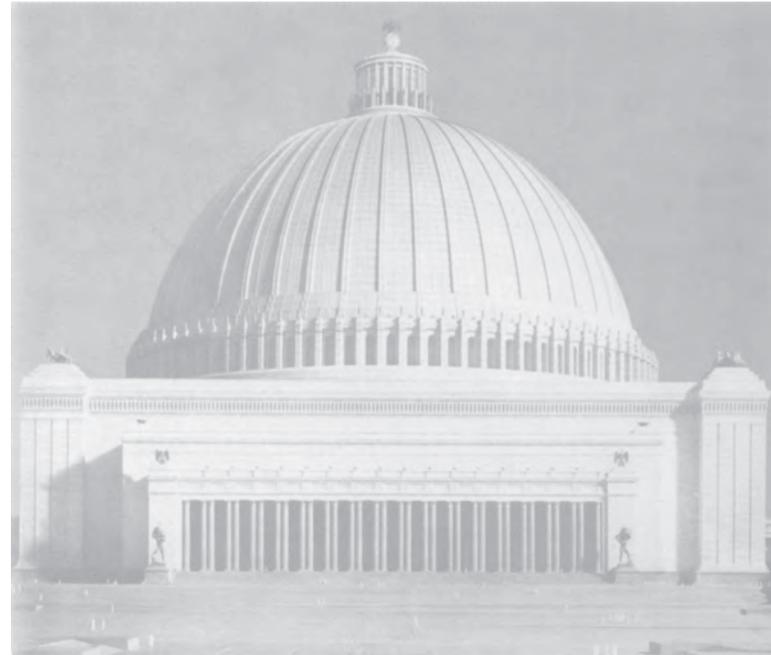
In a small fenced-off and overgrown fruit garden in the middle of Berlin is an enormous block of concrete.

Approximately eight meters high and seven meters wide, the block was originally constructed as a test foundation to provide calculations for the final density and size of the footings intended to uphold Albert Speer's Great Hall of the German People, the unbuilt temple of the Third Reich, and its intended capital, Germania, a.k.a. Berlin. The Great Hall was conceived to be the largest dome construction in the history of architecture and was to sit on approximately two hundred of these monstrous individual footings.

One proposal is to slice the block in half, signifying a split atom of a consciousness that haunts progress. Inside the split, a small staircase would allow access onto the top of the block.

The preferred proposal is to carve up the block of concrete into large but manageable fragments and redeposit them unceremoniously in the midst of the open space at the center of the new parliamentary zone in central Berlin (see the Spreebogen). This land, now the heart of democratic, united Germany was intended as the site for the Great Hall for which this test foundation was made. Removing the massive concrete block would enable the small fruit garden to become an accessible public neighborhood park.

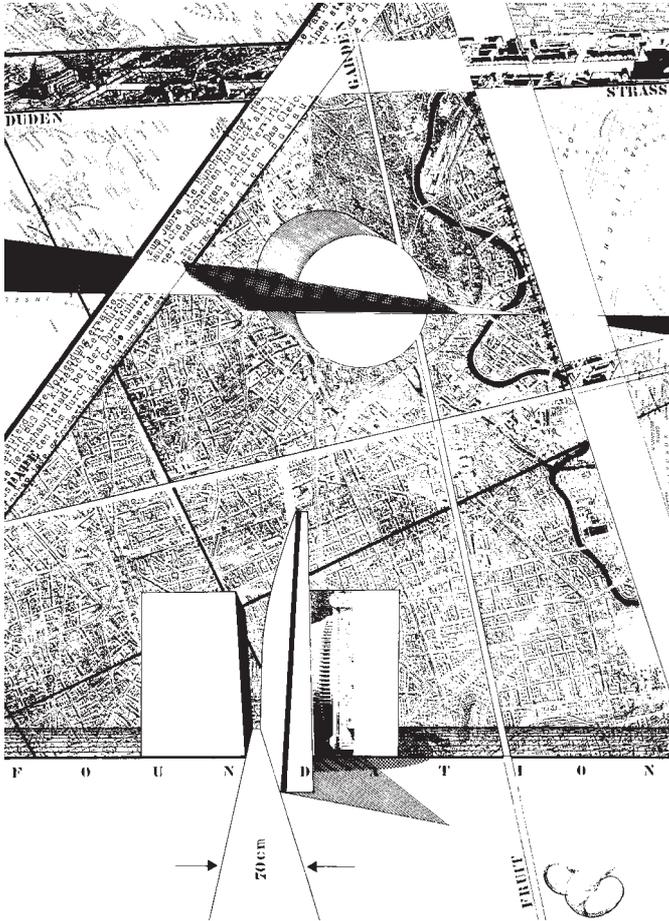
The fear with such highly symbolic moves is that they inadvertently establish shrines for those who gravitate toward Nazism's racial hallucinations. Indeed this grotesque pile of concrete is Germania's headstone, but surely it can only serve as a clear sign of megalomania's end point, the ideological *reductio ad absurdum* of the twentieth century.



MODEL OF THE GREAT HALL OF THE GERMAN PEOPLE BY ALBERT SPEER.



THE ORIGINAL CONCRETE TEST FOUNDATION, DUDENSTRASSE, BERLIN.



DETAIL VIEW OF THE BERLIN PLAN (GERMANIA) BY ALBERT SPEER FOCUSING ON THE GREAT HALL OF THE GERMAN PEOPLE SITED AT THE ARC OF THE RIVER SPREE, FOR WHICH THE ORIGINAL TEST FOUNDATION WAS BUILT. (THIS SITE WAS LATER SUBJECT TO AN INTERNATIONAL DESIGN COMPETITION; SEE A-POLITICAL PROJECT(IONS), P. 70.)



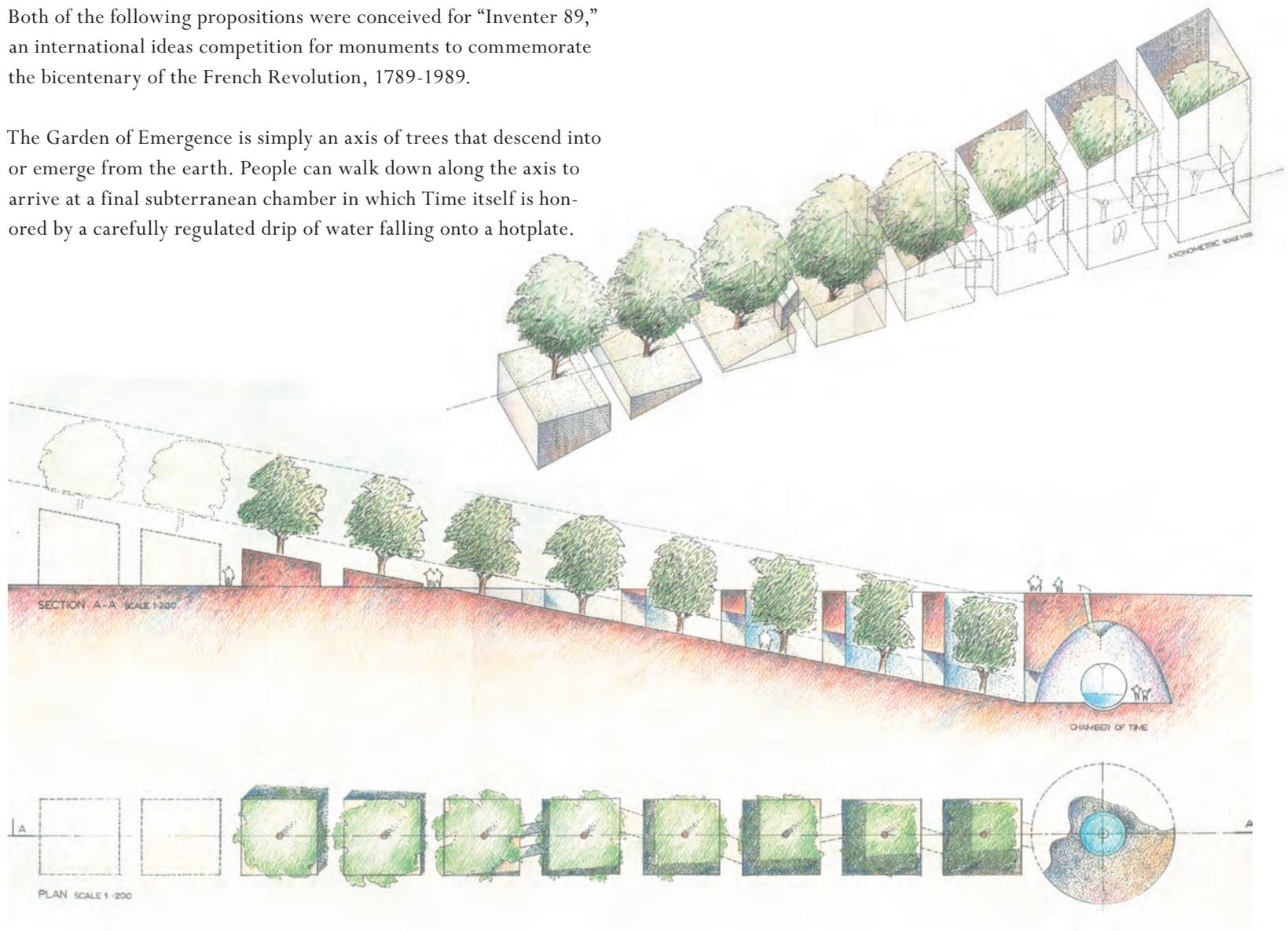
PROPOSED SITE FOR THE LOCATION OF THE BROKEN TEST FOUNDATION IN FRONT OF THE REICHSTAG, BERLIN.

PLACE DE LA RÉVOLUTION

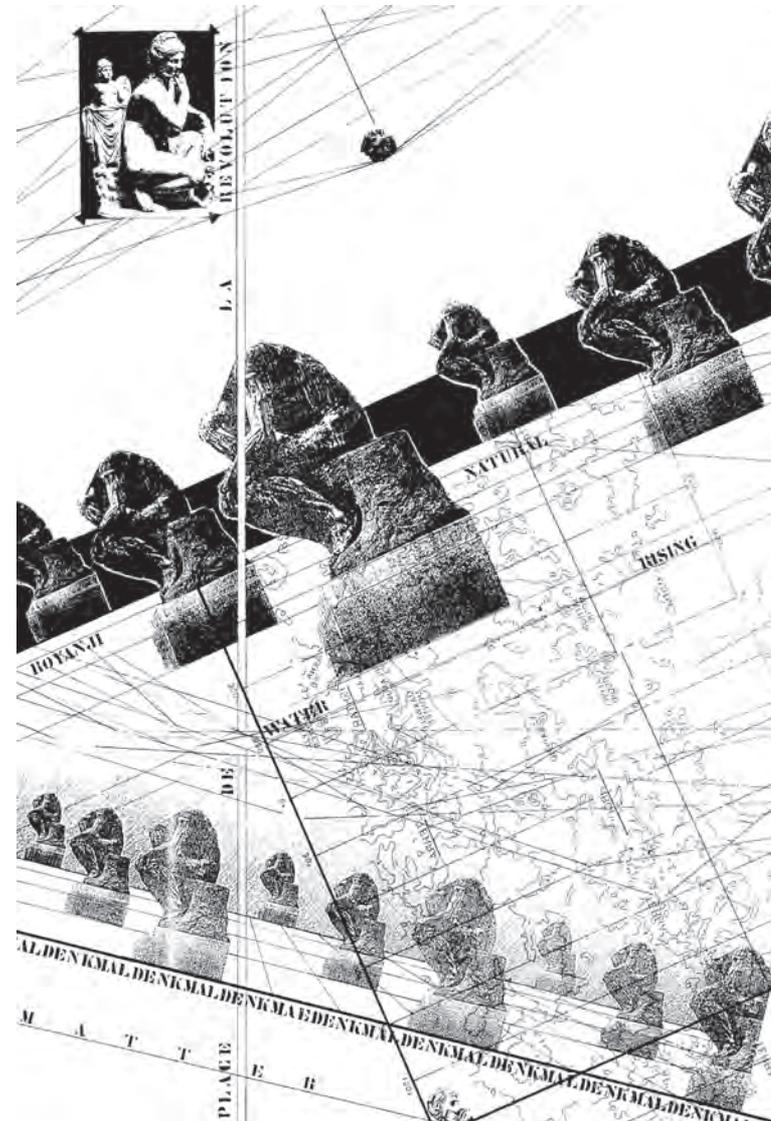
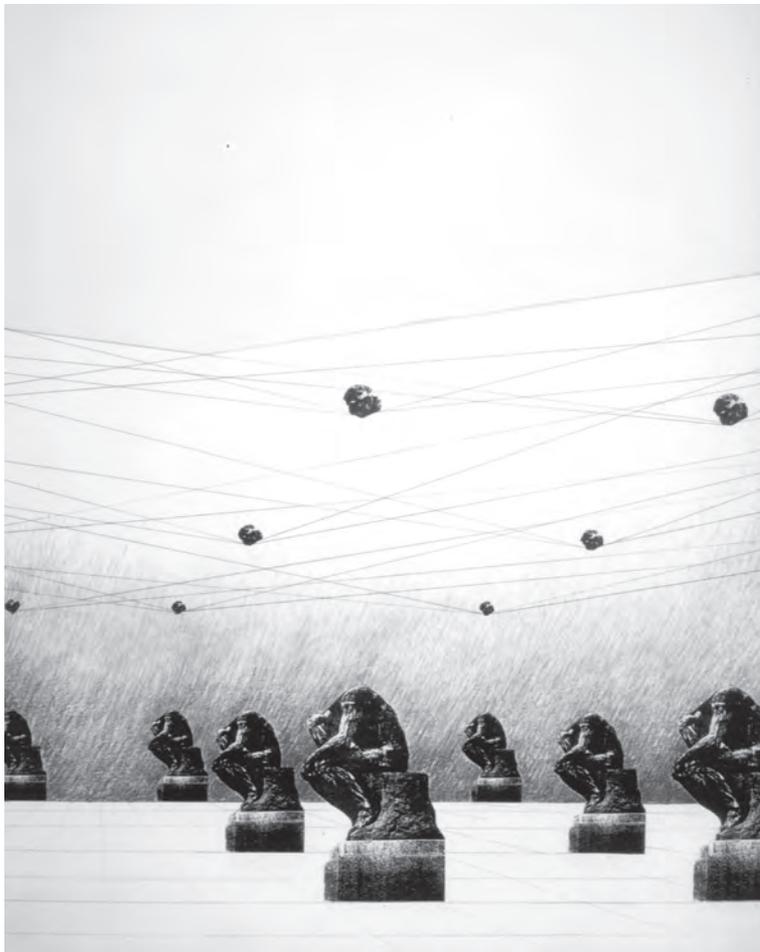
PARIS 1989

Both of the following propositions were conceived for “Inventer 89,” an international ideas competition for monuments to commemorate the bicentenary of the French Revolution, 1789-1989.

The Garden of Emergence is simply an axis of trees that descend into or emerge from the earth. People can walk down along the axis to arrive at a final subterranean chamber in which Time itself is honored by a carefully regulated drip of water falling onto a hotplate.



A second proposal, the Place de la Révolution, is a sunken water garden inscribed with the cartography of the planet Venus, a planet where one finds several of the goddesses of antiquity. Upon this map, in the sunken garden, multiple decapitated copies of Rodin's *Thinker* are arranged in a grid. The volume of the sunken garden gradually fills and empties with water over a 243-day cycle—the time it takes for one revolution of Venus around the sun. When the water garden is full, the Thinkers' bodies are submerged, leaving only the disembodied heads suspended above water level in a web of wires.



THE PENTAGON MEMORIAL SKY GARDEN

WASHINGTON, D.C. 2002

memory, *n.* faculty of mentally retaining impressions of past experience, ability to remember; that which is remembered; commemoration; period during which something is remembered.

Black Box Flight Recorder, *n.* device in an aircraft which records the memory of a flight; chronicler of flight events.

The Pentagon Memorial Sky Garden is a field of 184 hovering black cubes that contain water and reflect the sky.

The main metaphor for the proposal comes from the black box flight recorder, itself an Australian invention, and a crucial container of memory. In the proposal there is one flight recorder for each victim, but they are renamed Life Recorders and designed as 1-by-one-meter black cubes containing a deep conical well of water which reflects the sky.

At the base of the deep cone of water is a polished stainless steel disc creating a perspective to infinity. At the water level, in each of the 184 Life Recorders, bronze letters spell out the name of the deceased and their place of birth. By inscribing the place of an individual's birth at the place of that individual's death, the space and time of the individual's life is metaphorically held in the healing waters of the Life Recorder.

The 184 reflections captured in each Life Recorder create a cumulative crescendo of sky across the plaza, affording recognition of the immensity of the loss while also commemorating the individual. By creating a field of 184 individual memorials to make one collective

monument, the design mediates between nationalism and individuality, the tension at the heart of American culture.

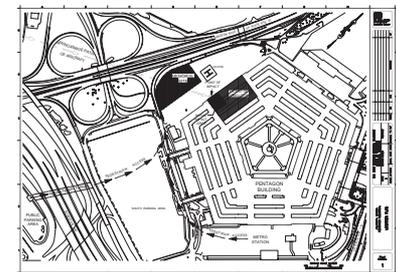
However, black box flight recorders are actually bright orange, and so, inserted into the larger black cubes are smaller, orange cubes. These are designed as precious chests, containers into which the relatives of victims are invited to place mementos of their loved ones. Once inserted into the larger shell of the black cube, the orange memento chests will be locked for perpetuity and the keys kept in the Pentagon. In this way, the design links both the public and private understandings of loss from September 11.

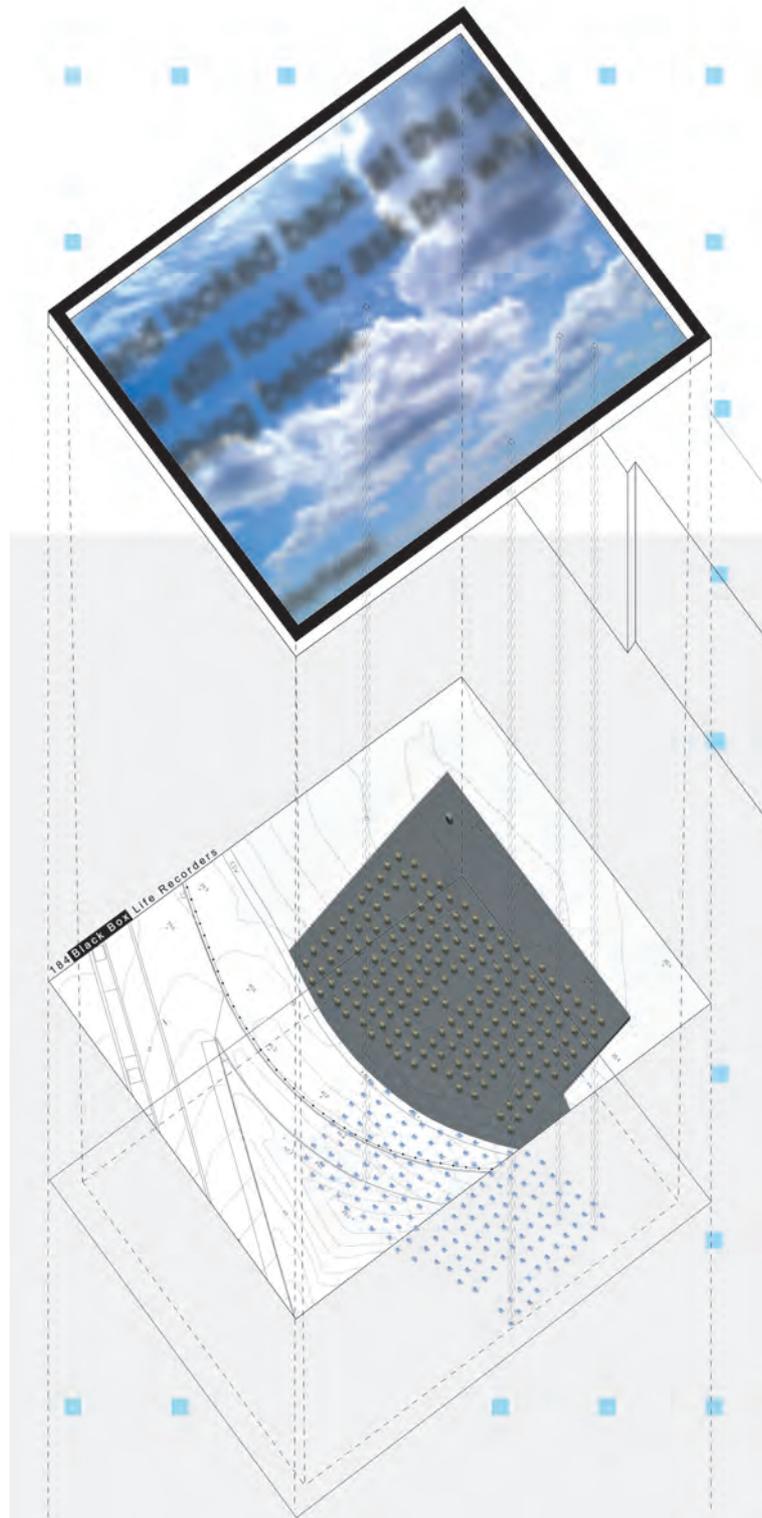
The Sky Garden of 184 Life Recorders derives its overall form and layout from the specific qualities of its context. The Pentagon's façade, immediately adjacent to the site, features ninety-two windows. This façade is reflected and doubled to provide the grid configuration for the Life Recorders. Thus the Sky Garden speaks directly to the building at the heart of the event. There is also a connection to the formality of nearby Arlington Cemetery.

The formality of the plaza, the configuration of the site, and the human scale of each individual Life Recorder lend the Sky Garden to a range of possible commemorative rituals. As a whole, the Sky Garden is a field of intense gravitas and permanence, yet its water surfaces change with every nuance in the wind and the sky.

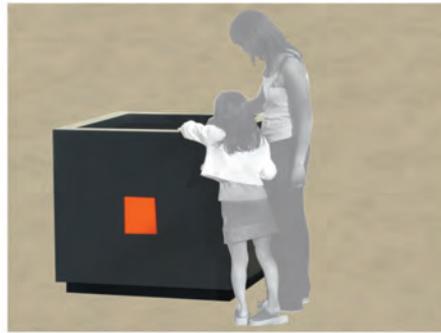
*I turned and looked back up at the sky,
Where we still look to ask the why
Of everything below.*

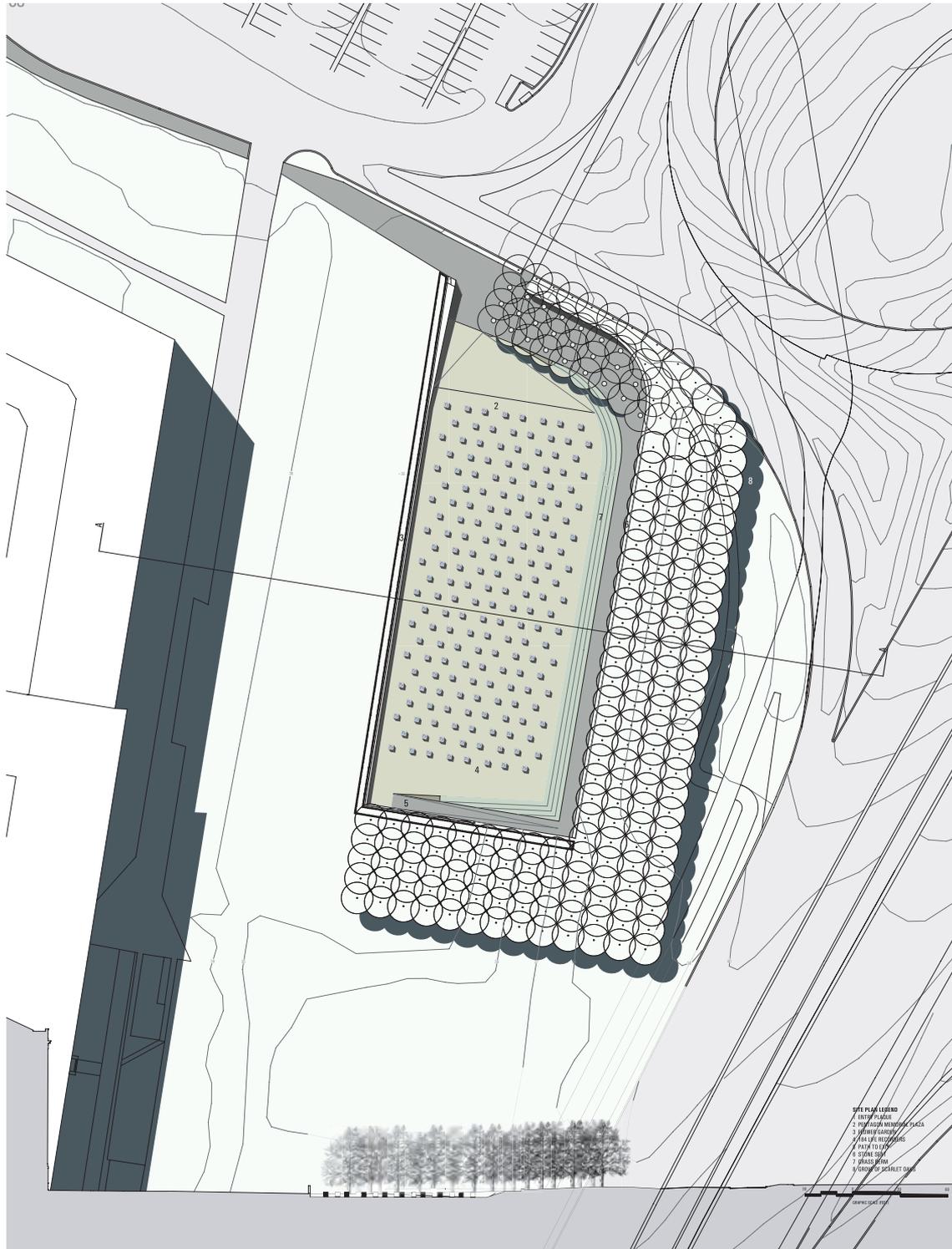
—Robert Frost, "Afterflakes"



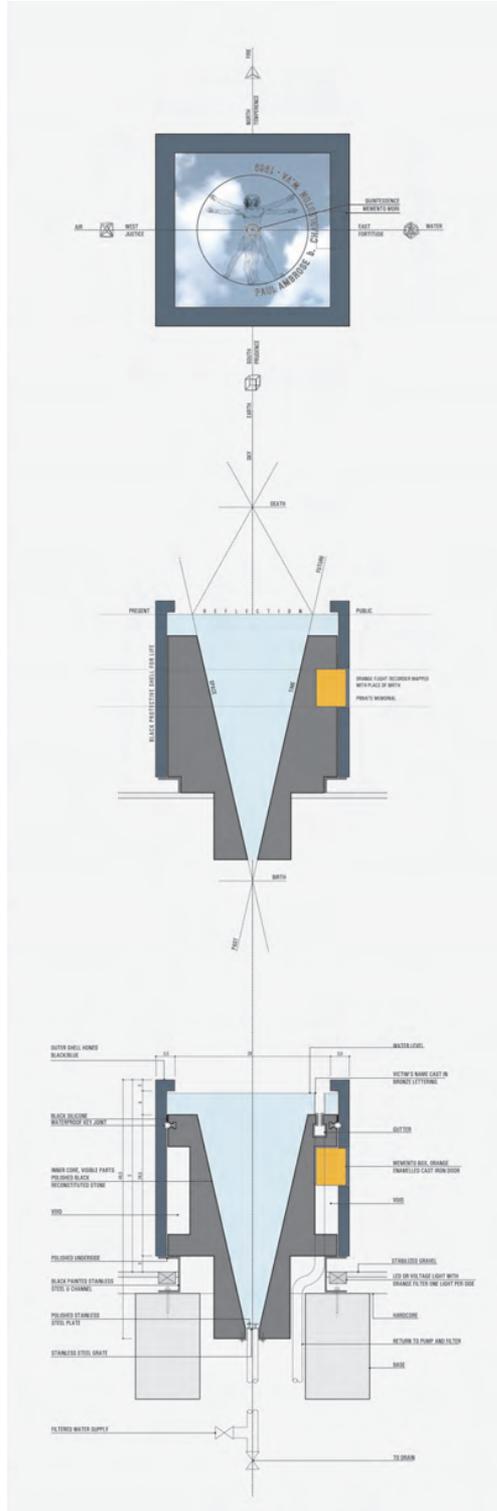


ROOM 4.I.3'S STAGE ONE COMPETITION ENTRY .FOR THE MEMORIAL TO THE VICTIMS OF THE 9/11 ATTACK ON THE PENTAGON.









THE WORLD TRADE CENTER MEMORIAL

NEW YORK CITY 2003

This proposal for the World Trade Center Memorial includes the following components: the Book, the Grove, the Terrace, and the Ground.

THE BOOK

In this situation, amidst Daniel Libeskind's phoenix, there is no need for heroics, spectacle, or glib signs of optimism. There is, however, a need for subtly joining the radically personal and radically global nature of post-September 11 culture in a manner that allows the community to regain the site for life and dignified reverence. The primary metaphor of this proposal is the Book: the book of the dead, the book of life, the book as the core of the enlightenment, and now the book as the ideological basis of fundamentalist misinterpretation cut from the tree of knowledge.

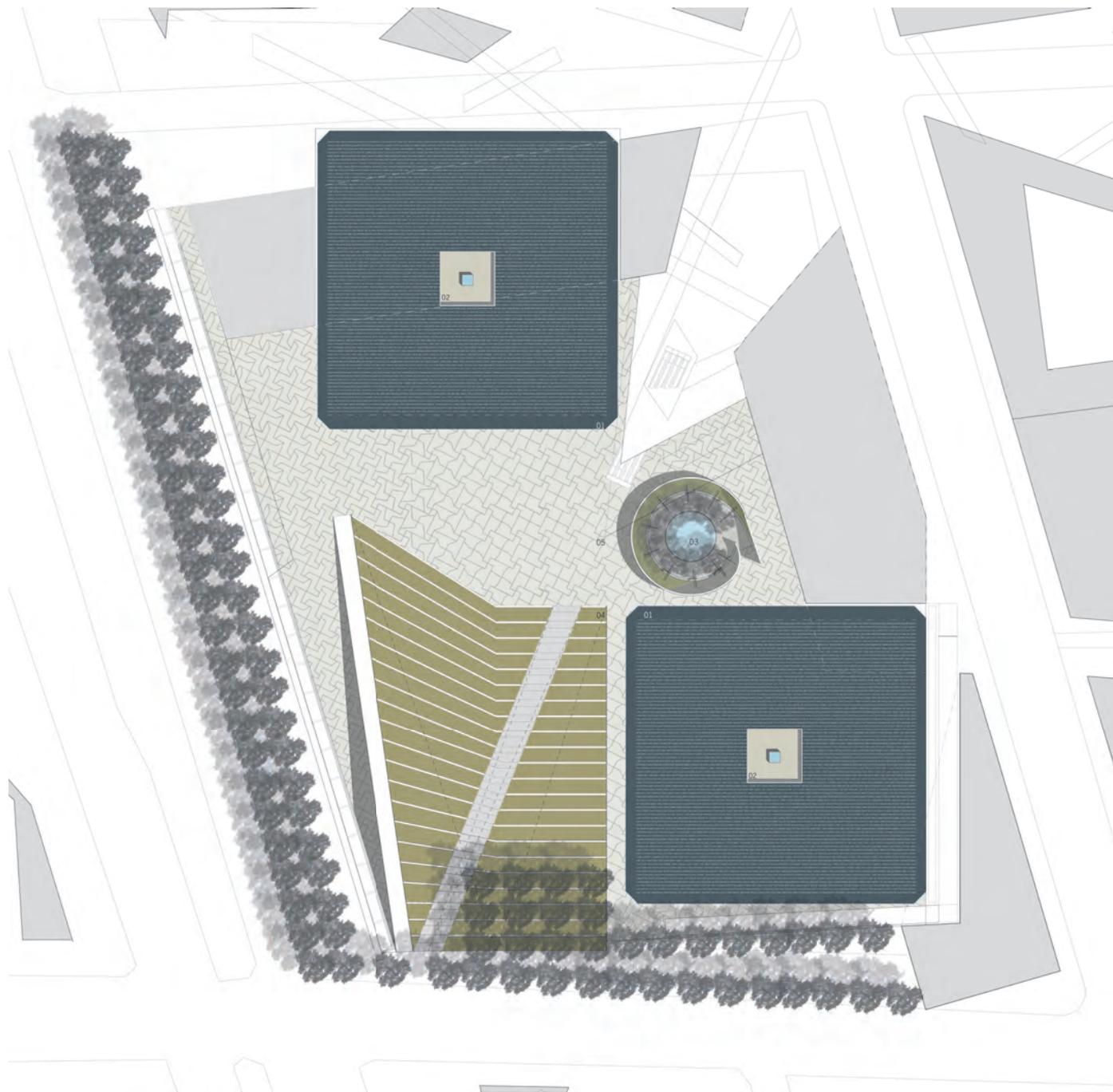
In the manner of sacred text this proposal writes the name of each victim into the palimpsest of the city. The two pages of the Book cover the footprints of the two World Trade Center towers. 3,016 names are spelled out as extruded letters, rising up from a fine gravel surface. Reminiscent of I beams in section, each letter is precisely made of indigo-colored reconstituted stone capped with a thick block of laminated, highly polished North American hardwood. Both the wooden letters and the stone shafts are precisely shaped to each letter. The wood is treated and can be simply maintained to last hundreds of years. By simple pin joints the tactile wooden letters appear to levitate slightly above the reconstituted stone shaft, and subtle lighting emanates from the gap between the stone shaft and the wooden letter, so that the whole field of text has a warm glow at night. The extruded letters making up the names of individuals

can be read close up or from a distance. The forms of the letters create nooks and crannies suited to a range of ritualized practices such as laying wreaths, lighting candles, or placing mementos. In addition, in between each victim's name is a plinth (grammatically a period) capped by a brass plaque upon which relatives and families are offered the opportunity to include personal obituaries and/or an etched image of the deceased. The simple, strong, and warm materials in this proposal can be exquisitely crafted but also lend themselves to mass production in regard to molding and laser cutting technologies. Overall the two fields of text bank up slightly from 1 foot to 5 feet, and tilt toward the sun. Gaps between the rows of names and between each name allow labyrinthine circulation, and the alphabetic listing of names creates logical locations.

At the center of each page of the book, enclosed by a small wall, is an inaccessible area necessary for the deposition of unidentified remains. Here, before the ground is sealed and covered in raked gravel, dignitaries and relatives may ceremoniously place small quantities of earth taken from the home countries of all citizens murdered on September 11. At the center of each enclosed plot is a small font of overflowing water reflecting the sky.

THE GROVE

In contrast to the public fields of the book is a small circular grove of trees. A place of respite, serenity, and togetherness, the grove is exclusively for families and relatives of the deceased. The circular grove is defined by a 12-foot-high stone wall upon which is inscribed a roll of honor including all the names of the living who were involved in rescue and reconstruction. This roll of honor effectively wraps and protects the interior seclusion of the grove. Mature trees planted into a grass berm form the grove. Each tree is angled toward the center, so that over time the branches intertwine to form a green chapel where relatives can meet and reflect. A gate at the entrance to the grove politely identifies the interior of the grove as a private place.



THE TERRACE

At the level of urban design, the terrace allows the broader context of the city to connect with the sunken space of the memorial gracefully and respectfully, without detracting from the architect's original intention for the site. The terraces allow easy access into and through the site and create generous levels of permanent and installed seating, accommodating daily life and crowds for formal occasions. Each terrace includes grass strips and garden beds which can be seasonally planted. At the top of the terrace, a bosquet of trees forms a shaded filter into the site. Via the terraces the quotidian public life of the cityscape can effectively join with the meanings of the site.

THE GROUND

The ground refers to all the flat paved space of the memorial site. The stone for this ground is delivered from all countries willing to participate. Each country sends a specified quantity of high-quality stone to New York, where the stone is cut so that each paving unit literally locks into those adjacent to it. Akin to a jigsaw puzzle, this paving pattern of multicolored stone symbolizes a global community united against terrorism, a renewed foundation.

