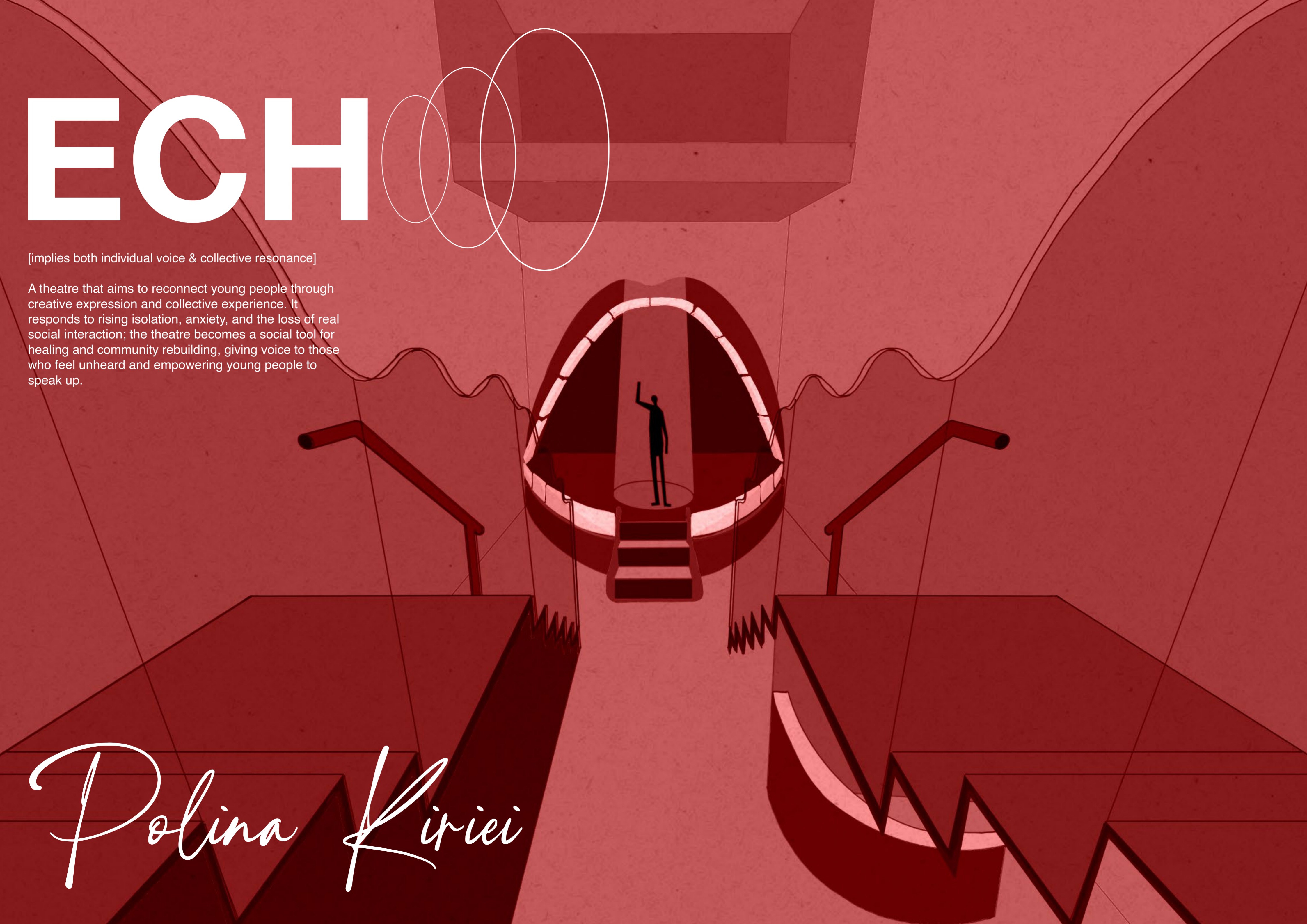


ECHO

[implies both individual voice & collective resonance]

A theatre that aims to reconnect young people through creative expression and collective experience. It responds to rising isolation, anxiety, and the loss of real social interaction; the theatre becomes a social tool for healing and community rebuilding, giving voice to those who feel unheard and empowering young people to speak up.

Polina Kiriei



Problem

Manchester youth say mental health and cost of living barriers to employment – Prince's Trust research

The Prince's Trust NatWest Youth Index 2024, released today, finds that almost a third of 16–25-year-old in Greater Manchester are worried their mental health will stop them achieving their career goals.

The Youth Index is an annual research report based on a YouGov survey of 2,239 16- to 25-year-olds across the UK, gauging young people's confidence and happiness across a range of areas, from their physical and mental health to money and working life.

This year's research shows the overall wellbeing of young people remains low, with happiness and confidence in mental health seeing the biggest decrease compared to other factors over the 15-year history of the research. Happiness in work, education, qualifications and money are at all-time lows.



"My mental health stops me from achieving my goals"



Sofia, 23

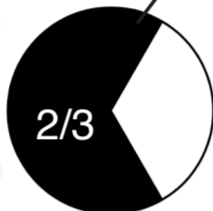
Fine art graduate unsure about next steps; working in hospitality to pay rent.

She feels creatively stuck and disconnected from the community after uni.

She needs a place to reconnect with like-minded people and rediscover creative purpose.

Two-thirds of council-funded youth centres in England closed since 2010

Local government cuts have led to a 'lost generation of young people', warns Unison



"I have nowhere to go to socialise and express myself"



Matthew, 19

Second-year student at MMU studying graphic design.

He struggles with self-confidence and public speaking; spends most of his time behind screens, loves music and performance but feels too intimidated to join societies.

He needs a casual, welcoming place where creativity isn't judged - a space to just try things out.



Amir, 20

Music technology student; struggles with anxiety and sensory overload.

He finds nightlife overwhelming but craves connection through music, spends time producing alone, rarely performs.

He needs a calmer, sober, and creative nighttime spaces — social, but not overstimulating.

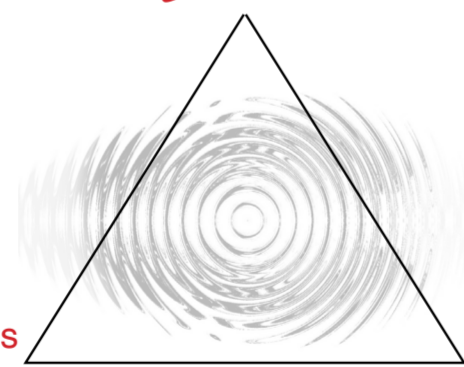


Young people today face growing isolation, anxiety, and limited access to spaces that nurture creativity and community. Education and public infrastructure often prioritise productivity over self-expression, leaving little room for play, experimentation, or healing. The lack of inclusive, non-commercial venues prevents many from discovering their creative potential or connecting with others through shared artistic experiences.

Empower

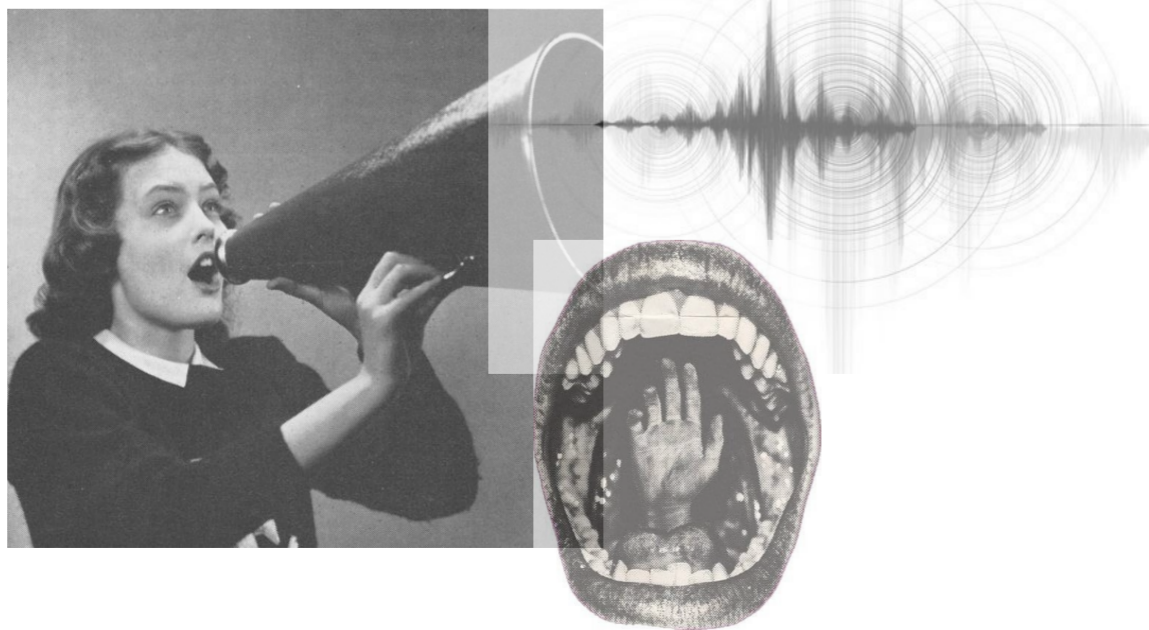
Express

Educate



Why?

It is important to provide a safe space for young people to speak up and express themselves, surrounded by like-minded and open-minded people. The ECHO theatre environment would allow them to build confidence, engage in meaningful conversations, and address important issues in today's society that matter to them.



"Spaces shape voices, but voices give meaning to spaces."



Site



82 Portland street

key demographic: 16-34 yo

project's TA: 16-25 yo

- buildings
- pavement
- greenery
- river
- railway

'to see art' [galleries, theatres]

'to express yourself through art'



concept

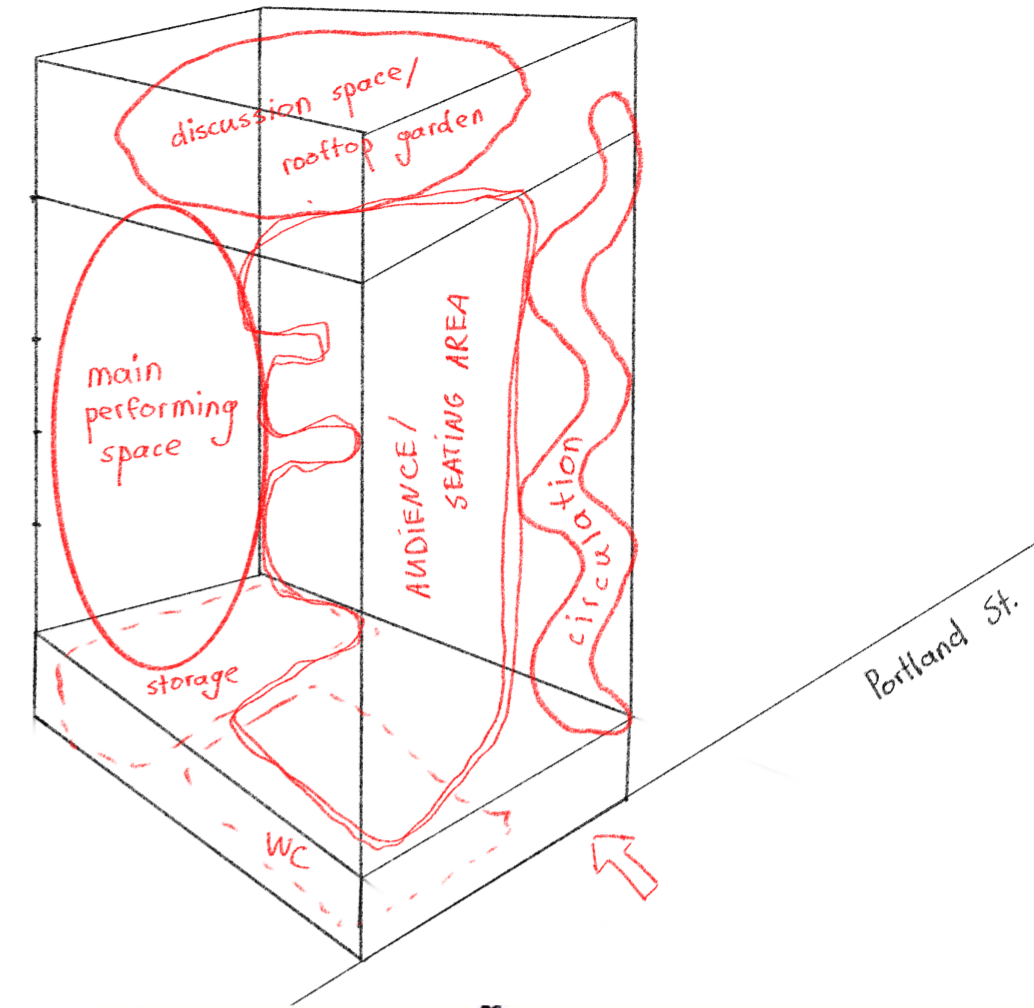
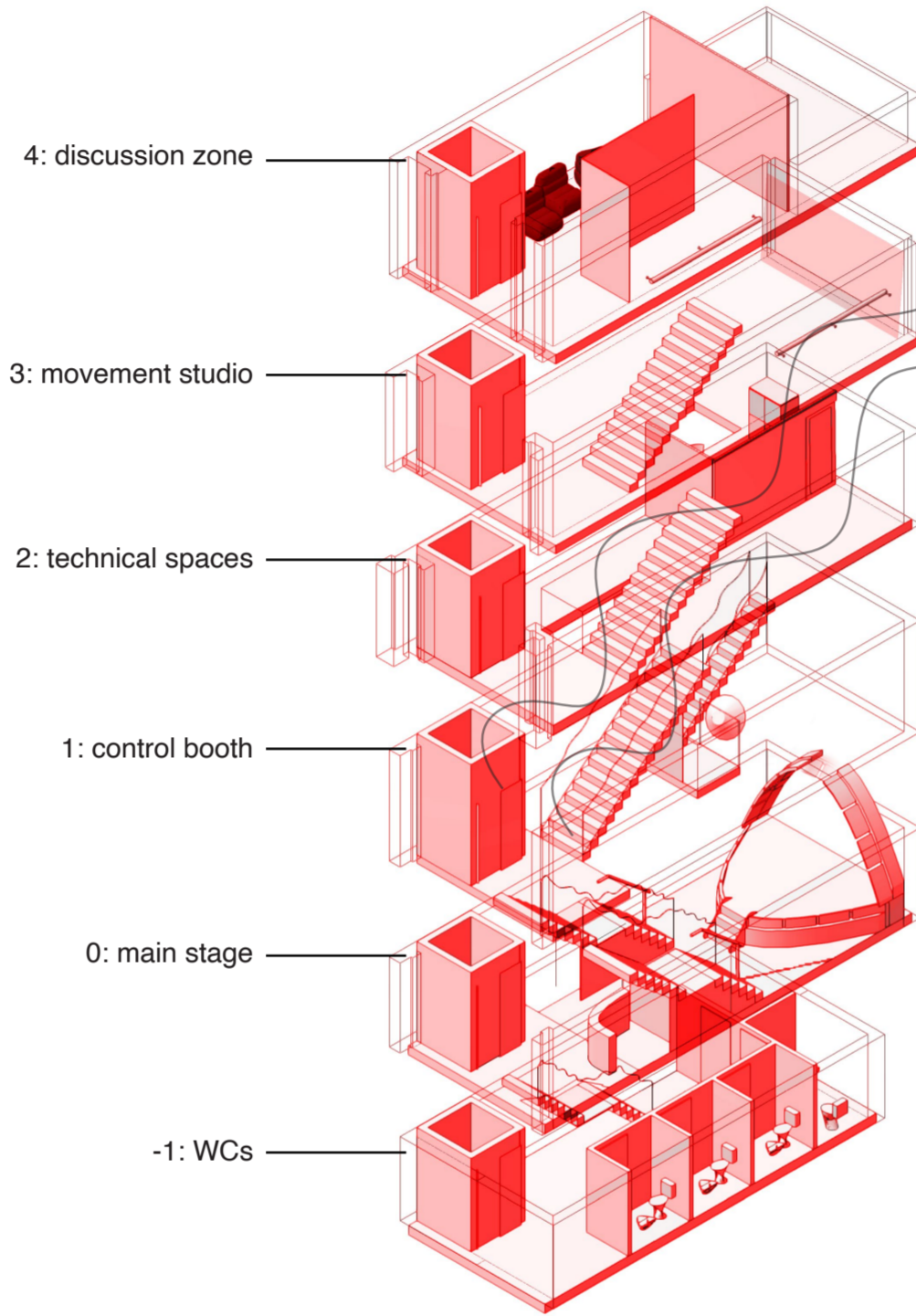
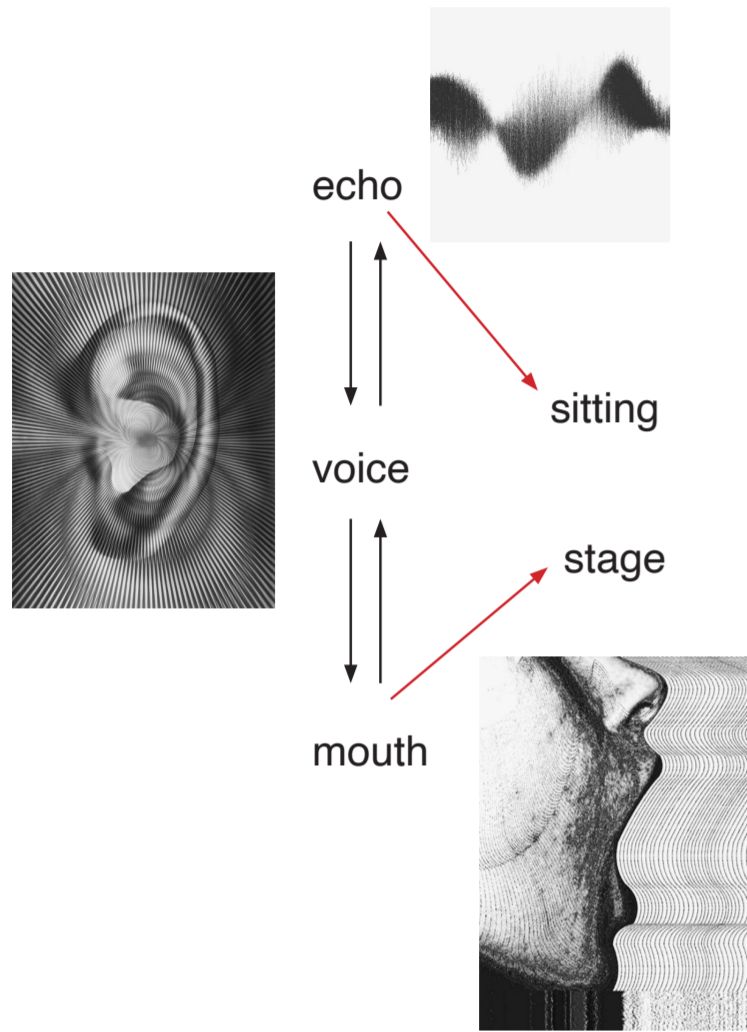
ECHO [implies both individual voice & collective resonance]
 freedom is collective: through performance, play, and creation, healing becomes shared, and empowerment grows from community.

purpose

To reconnect young people through creative expression and collective experience. It responds to rising isolation, anxiety, and the loss of real social interaction; the theatre becomes a social tool for healing, empowerment, and community rebuilding — giving voice to those who feel unheard.

function

The theatre functions as a creative community hub that blends performance, rehearsal, and social spaces. Its flexible layout supports workshops, open-mic nights, improvised theatre, and wellbeing activities.



OPEN MOUTH 82 Portland St.
ECHO
 OPEN STAGE

Light travels in waves — just like stories. In this workshop, we explore how illumination becomes a performer in itself. Shape shadows, sculpt curves, and let the stage glow from within. Together we'll turn the ECHO theatre into a living, breathing instrument of light.

SCENIC LIGHTING WORKSHOP

Weekend workshop - Limited spaces
ECHO
 03-04.01.26

Play Call - **Voices Wanted for New Production**

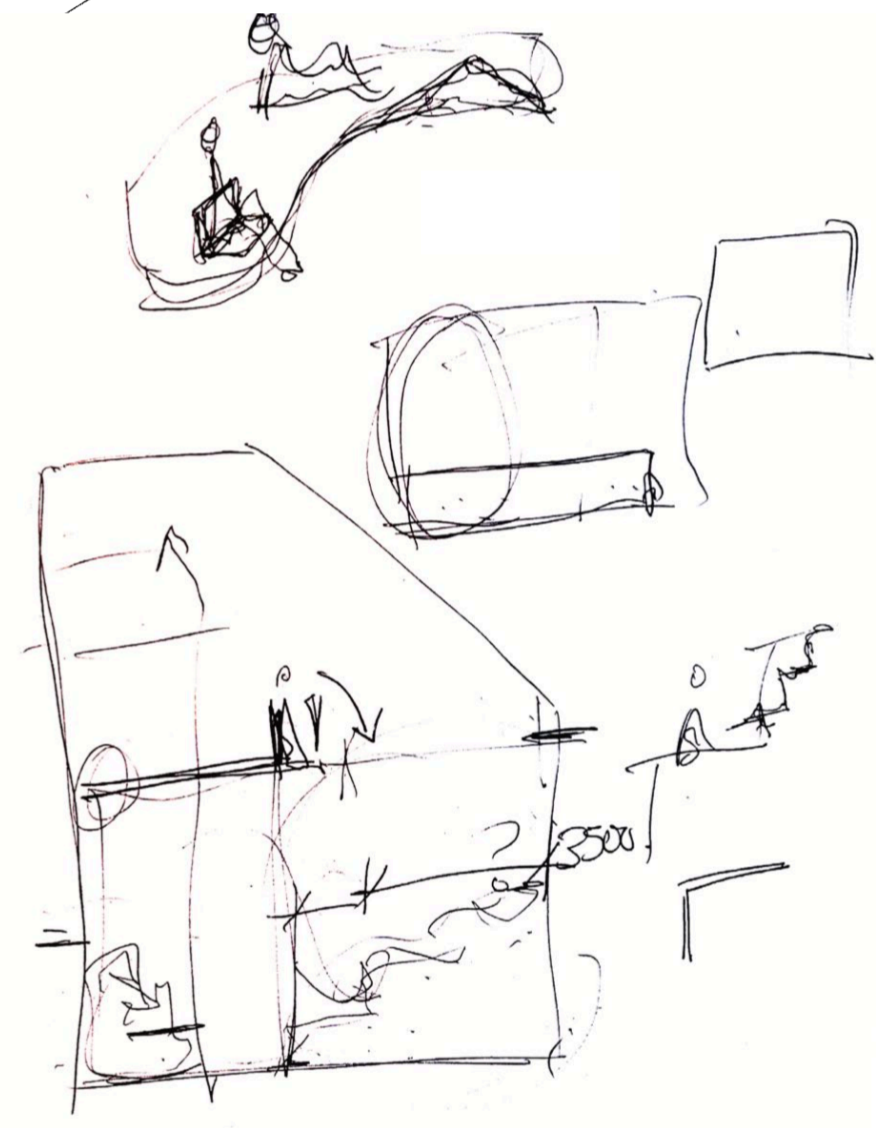
We're assembling a creative team for a new devised performance. Come shape characters, movement, sound, and narrative from the ground up.

! 5-week course
 ! No experience needed

ECHO

start date: 15/01

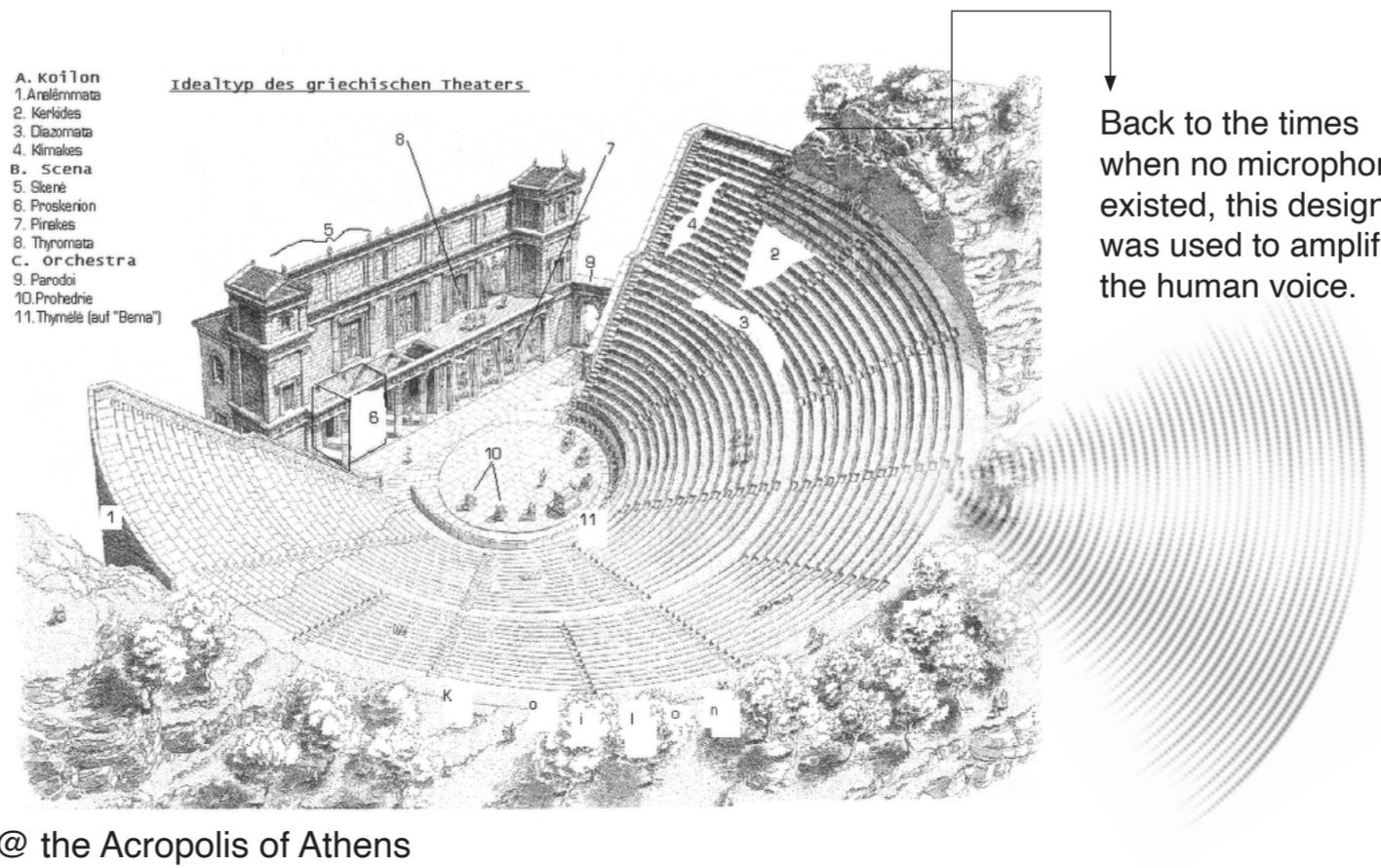
"A theatre is not defined by its walls, but by how far a voice can travel within it."



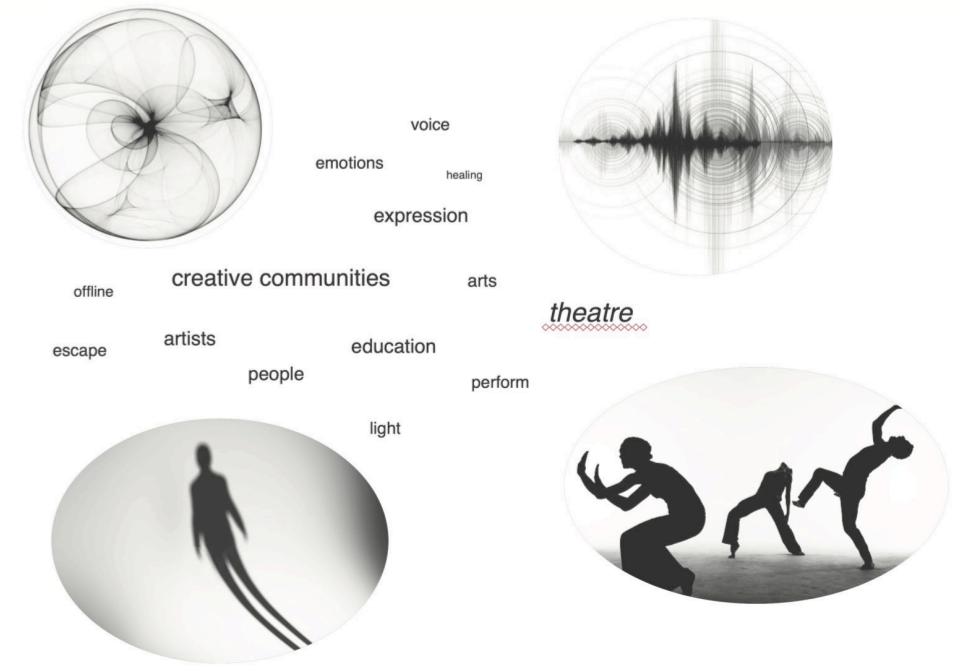
adjacent matrix

- -Have to
- -Better be
- -Would be nice

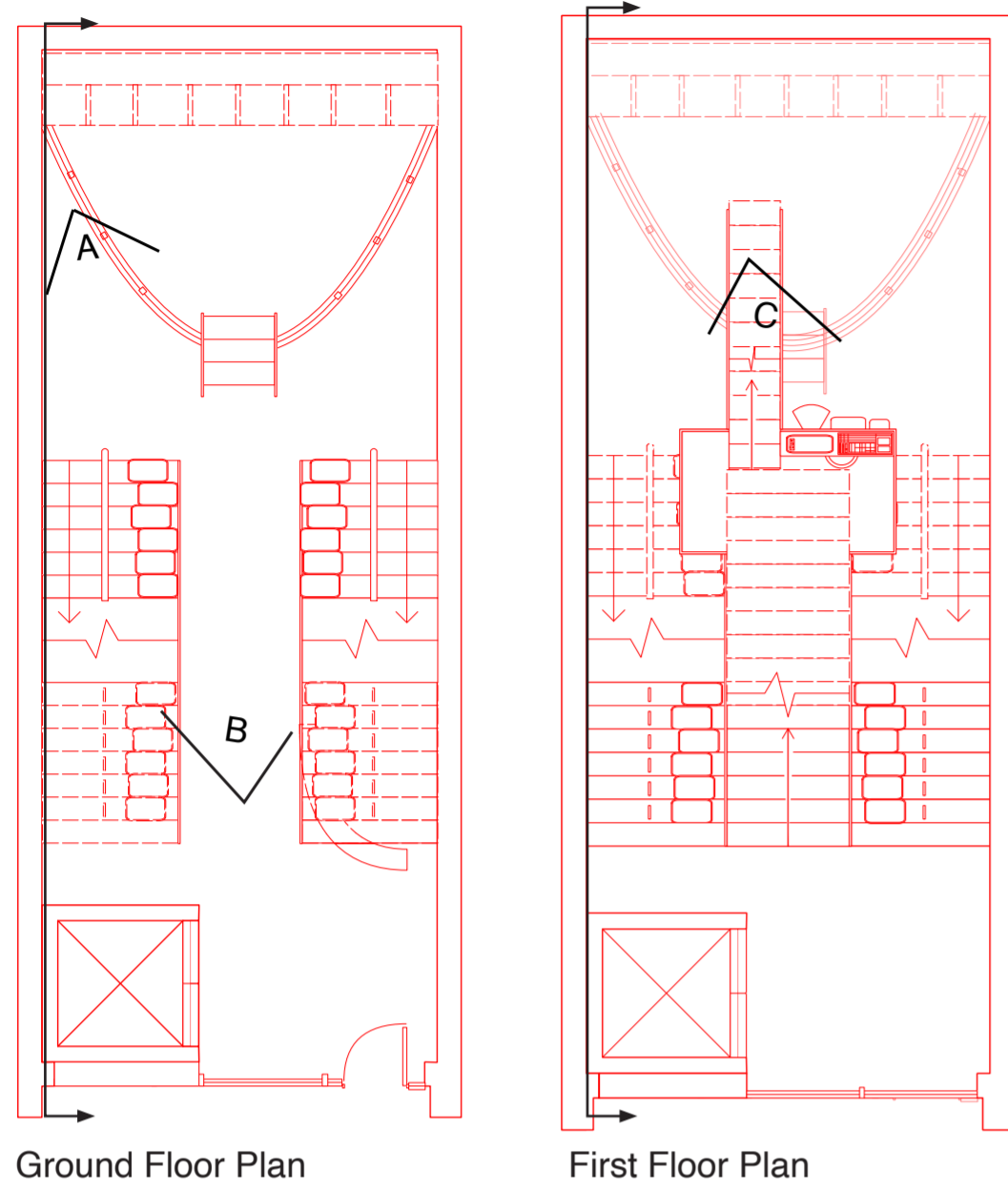
	Welcome/ exhibition zone	Main performance space	Audience seating area	Backstage	Lighting and sound booth	Dressing rooms	Storage	Discussion/ shared space	WC
Welcome/ exhibition zone	●								
Main performance space	●	●	●	●	●	●			
Audience seating area		●	●					●	●
Backstage		●		●	●	●	●		
Lighting and sound booth		●	●		●				
Dressing rooms		●		●		●	●		
Storage			●				●		
Discussion/ shared space				●				●	
WC			●						●



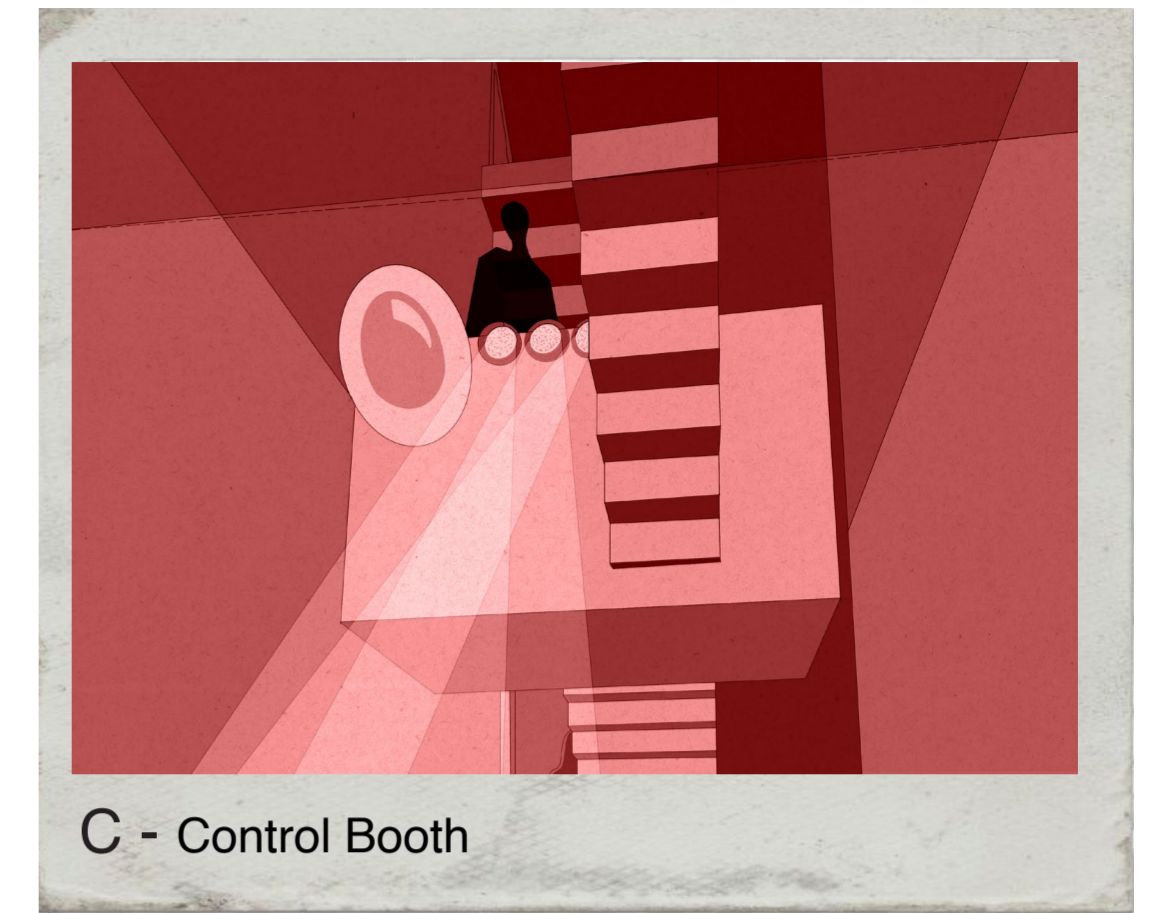
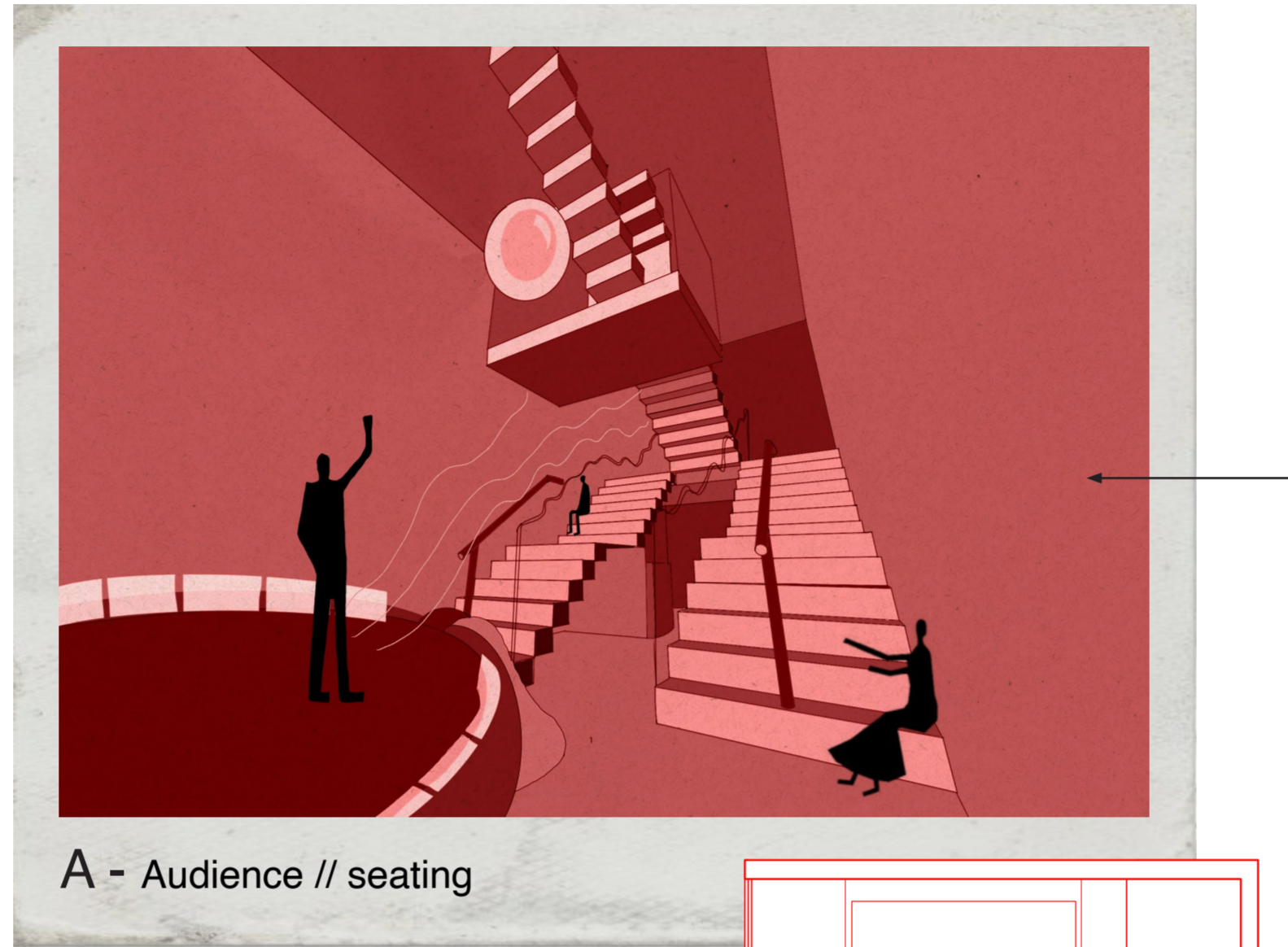
Back to the times when no microphones existed, this design was used to amplify the human voice.



Plans & visuals

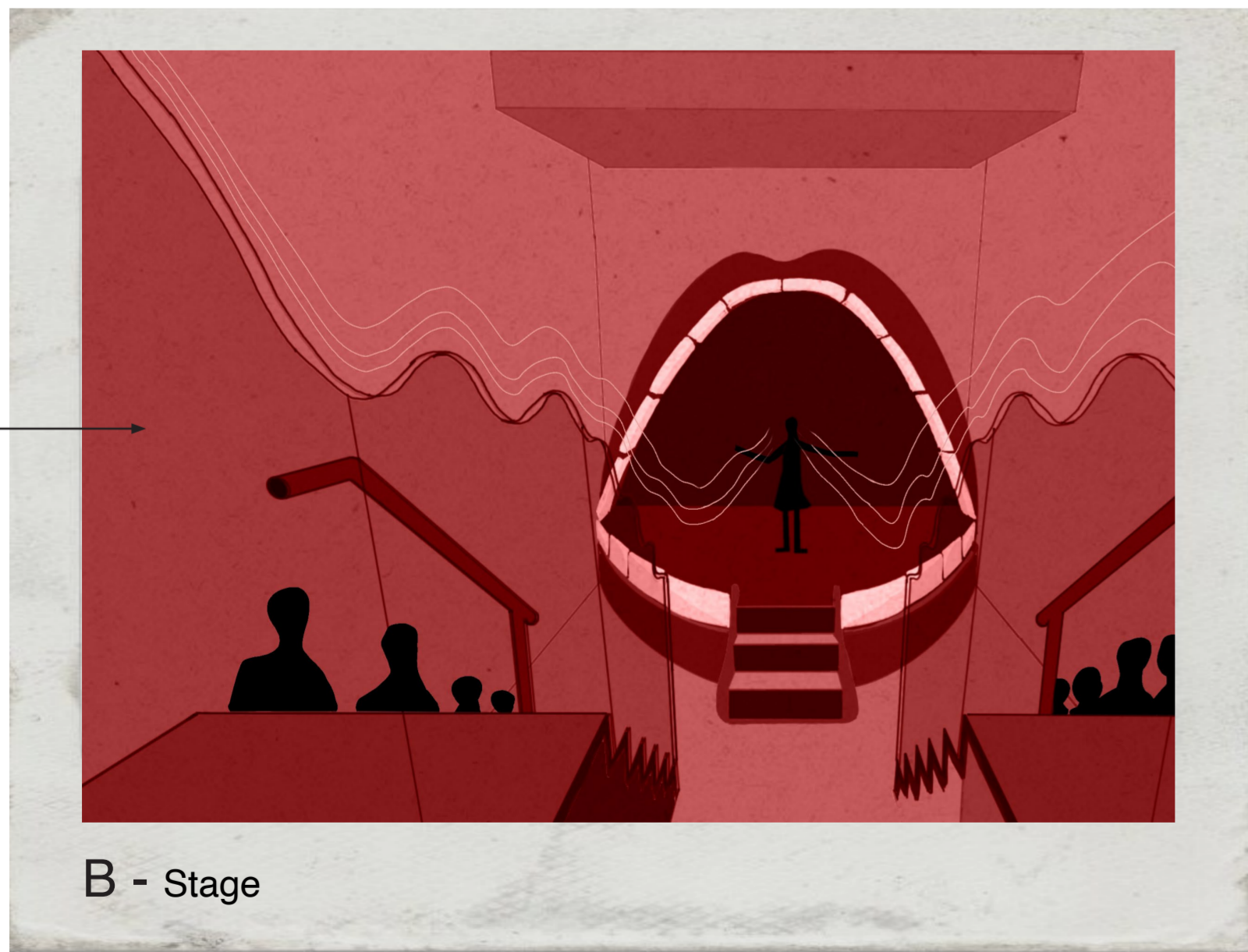
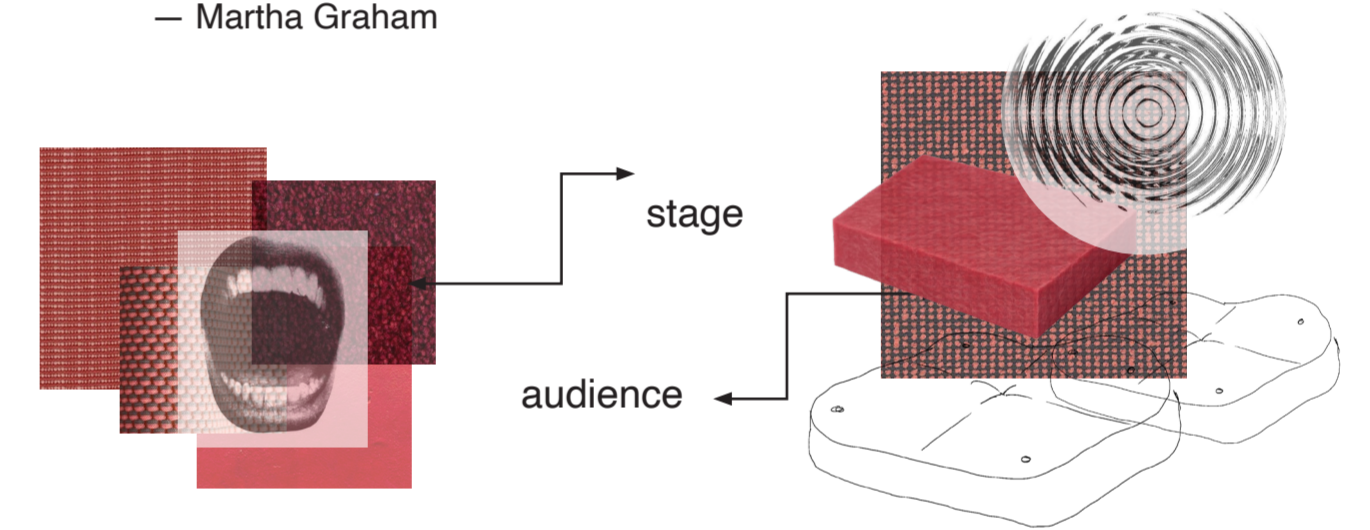


Audience seating is arranged as a sound wave, like an echo travelling through space. This creates a visual metaphor in which spectators are positioned within the echo itself.

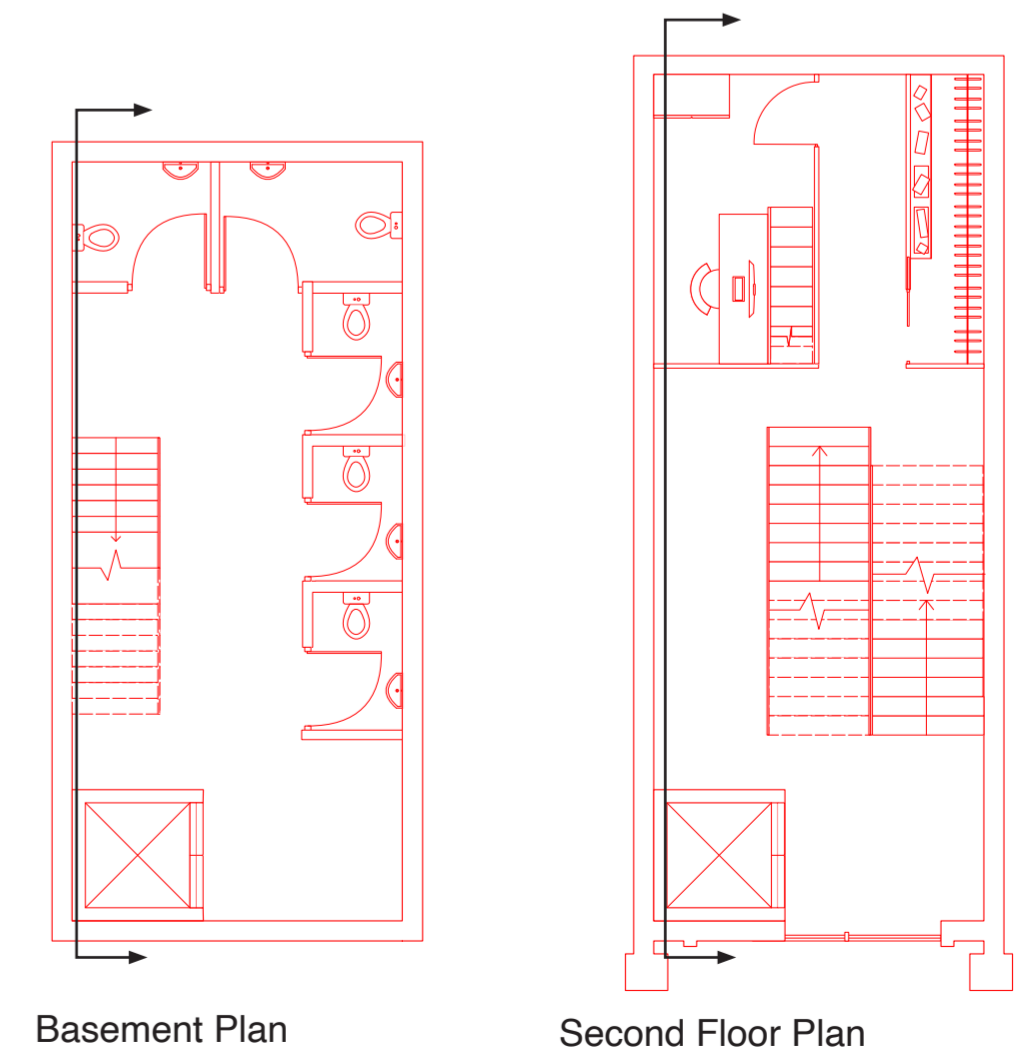
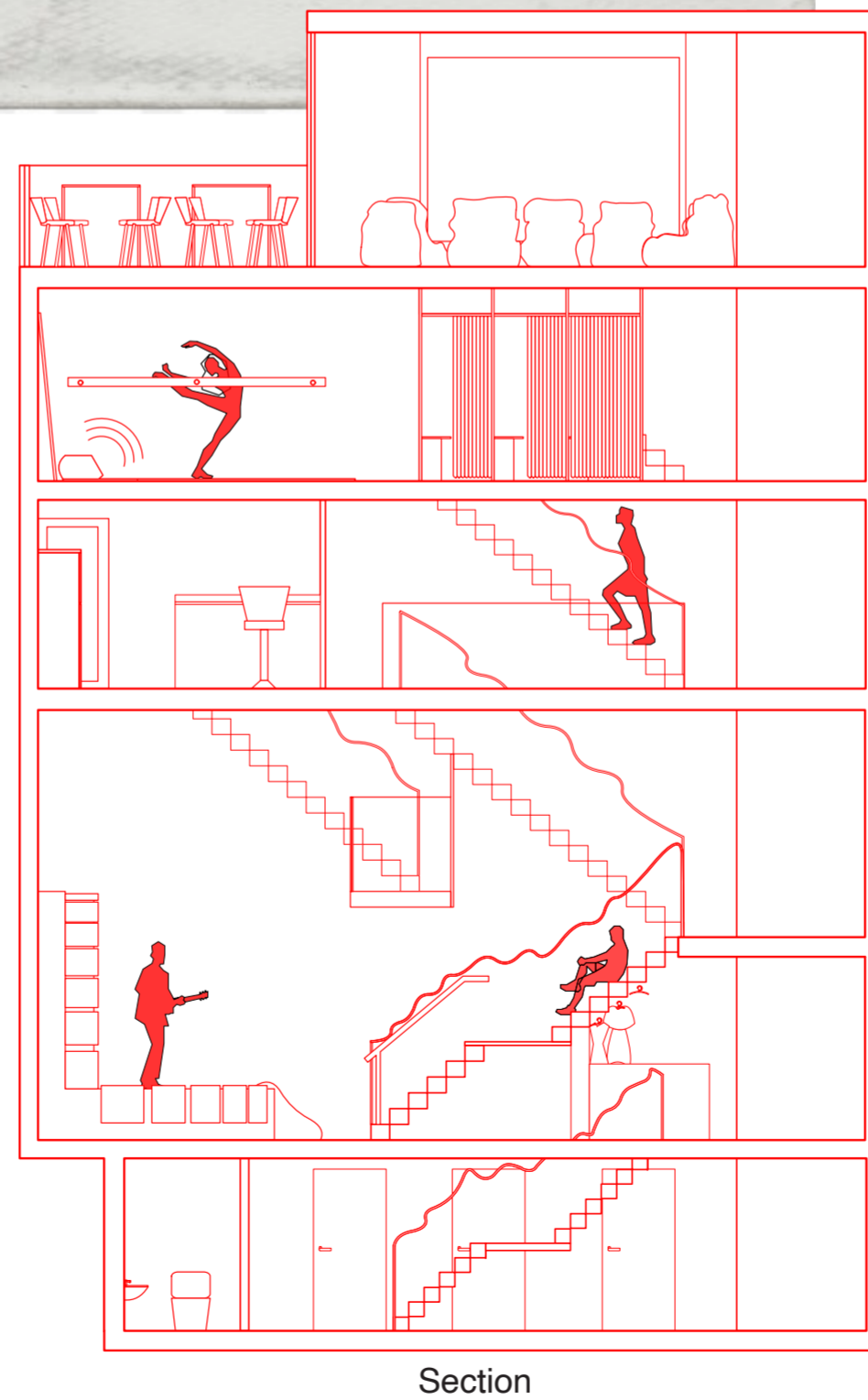


"Theater is a verb before it is a noun, an act before it is a place."

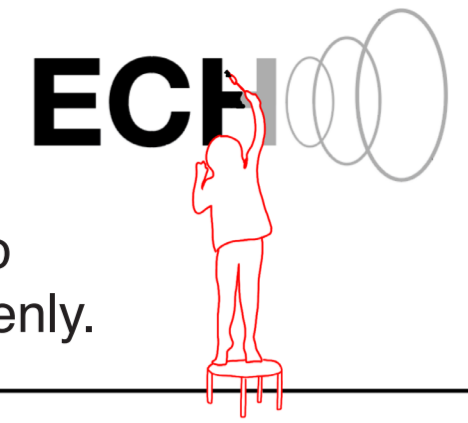
— Martha Graham



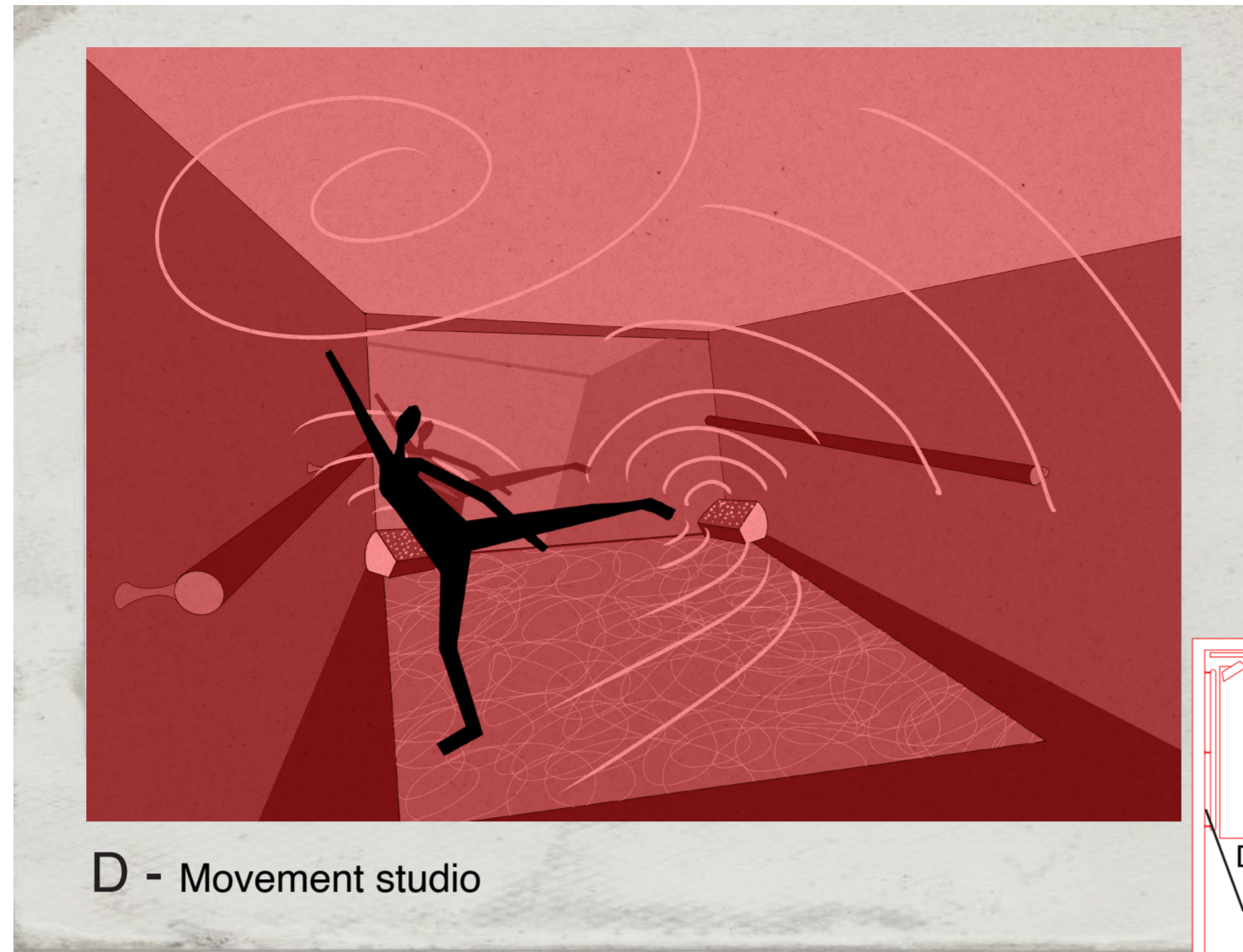
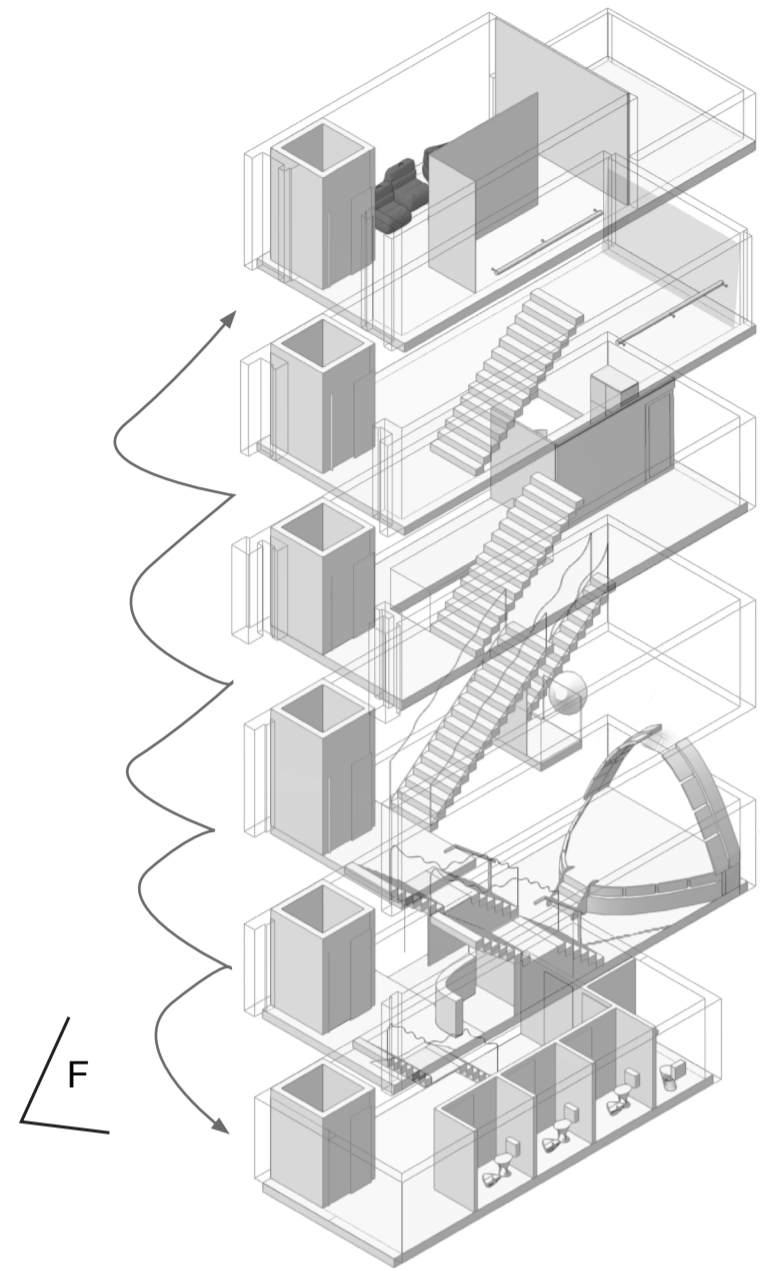
Mouth-shaped stage symbolises the human act of speaking. As a physical representation of a voice being projected outward, it encourages young people to speak up, share their perspectives, and engage confidently with the world around them.



Plans & visuals

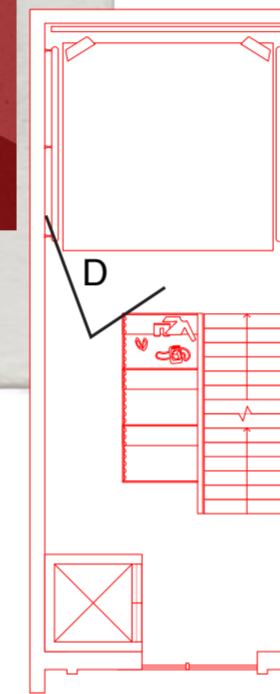


Empowering a new generation to speak freely, confidently, and openly.



D - Movement studio

Before we learn to articulate our thoughts, we communicate through movement. The space empowers young people to communicate through the body as confidently as through their voice.



Third Floor Plan

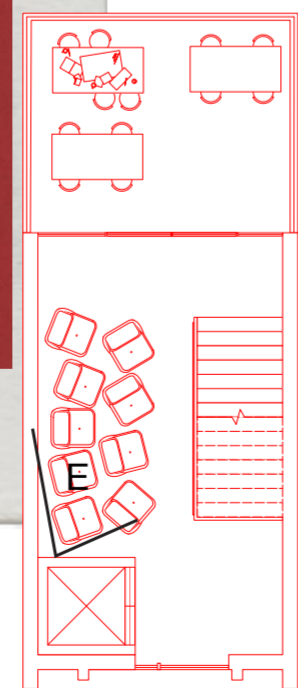


F - Street view

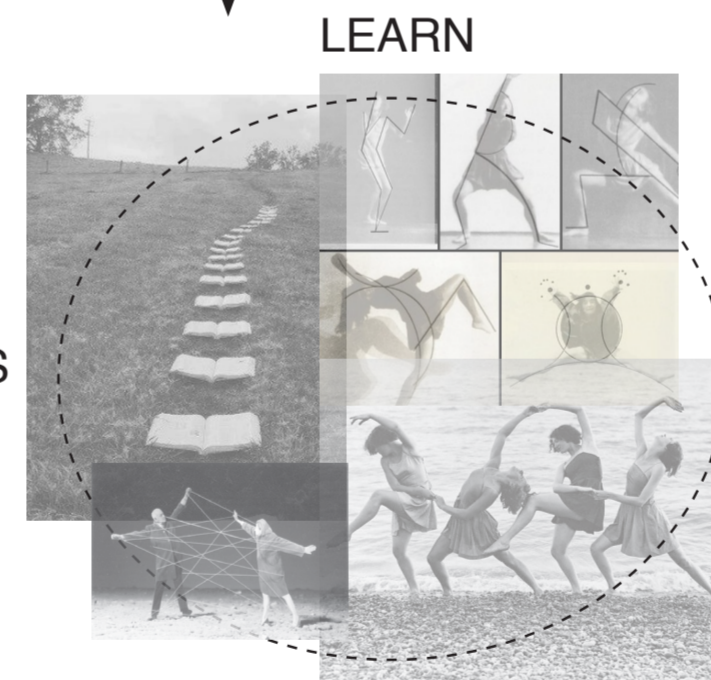


E - Discussion room

It is a reflective space designed for dialogue, sharing knowledge/ impressions and to learn from each other. It is a safe space to express the opinion and create meaningful connections with others.



Fourth Floor Plan



LEARN

REHEARSE

PERFORM

DISCUSS

This sequence reflects the rhythm of growth, which ECHO Theatre space provides. It begins with learning and curiosity, develops through rehearsal and experimentation, comes to life in performance, and is completed through reflection and discussion. Together, these stages create a continuous cycle of development, providing young people with a space not only to express themselves, but to refine their voice, build confidence, and grow through shared experience.

"Theater begins with the cloakroom"

— Konstantin Stanislavskiy

The theatre begins the moment one enters the building, check their coats, and prepare to leave the outside world behind. ECHO creates an environment where every interaction, conversation, and performance contributes to the amplification of young voices.

