

OFFBEAT

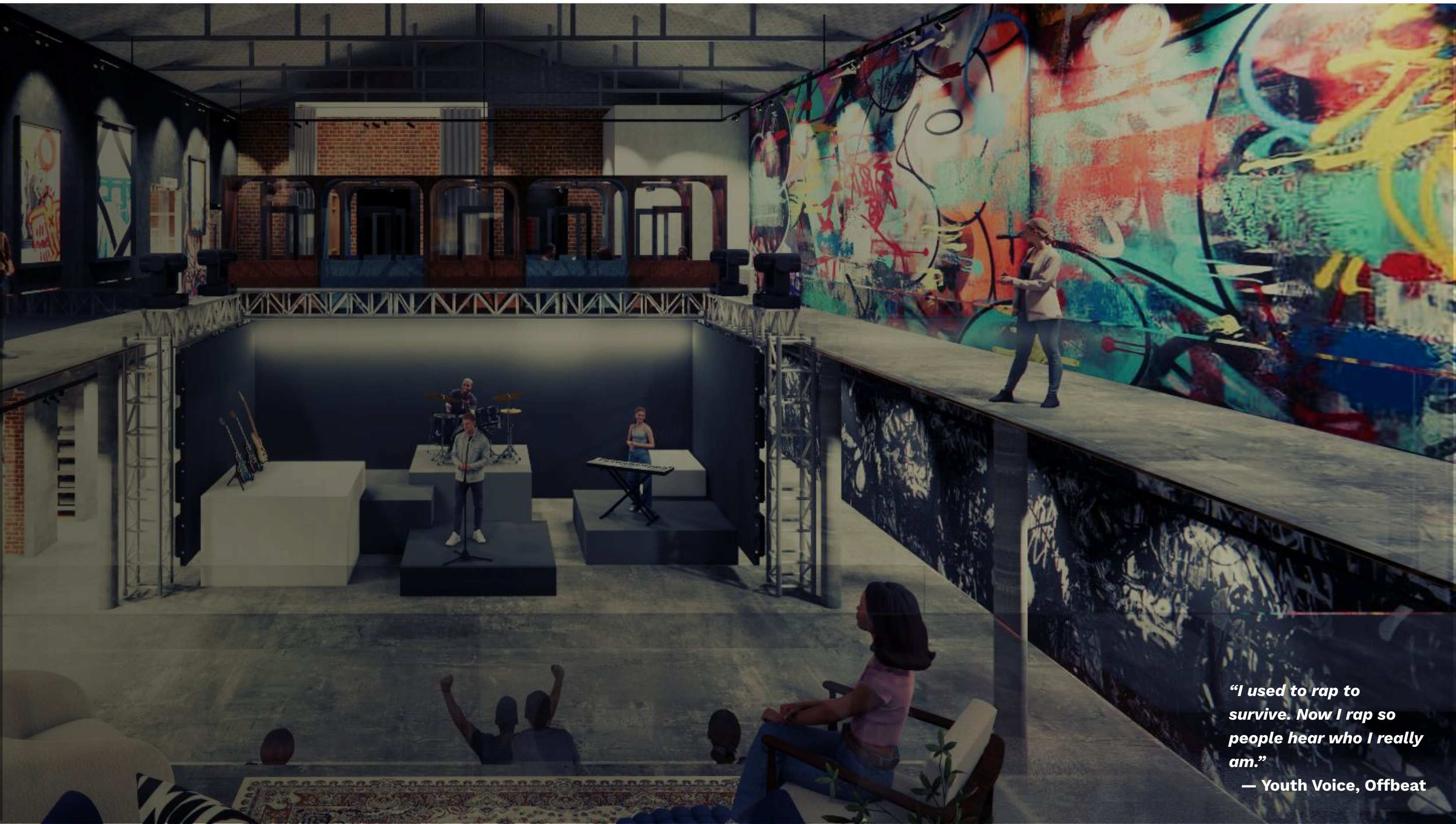
WHAT IF **EXPRESSION** REPLACED **AGGRESSION**?

Offbeat is a mentoring and creative hub for young people affected by gang culture in Manchester.

It reclaims the abandoned Hulme Hippodrome into a space where music, graffiti, and mentorship are used to nurture identity and voice.

Through the Beat / Break / Build concept, Offbeat transforms stigma into skill — offering support, structure, and self-expression.

It is a model of how adaptive reuse can foster justice, not just function.



“I used to rap to survive. Now I rap so people hear who I really am.”
— Youth Voice, Offbeat

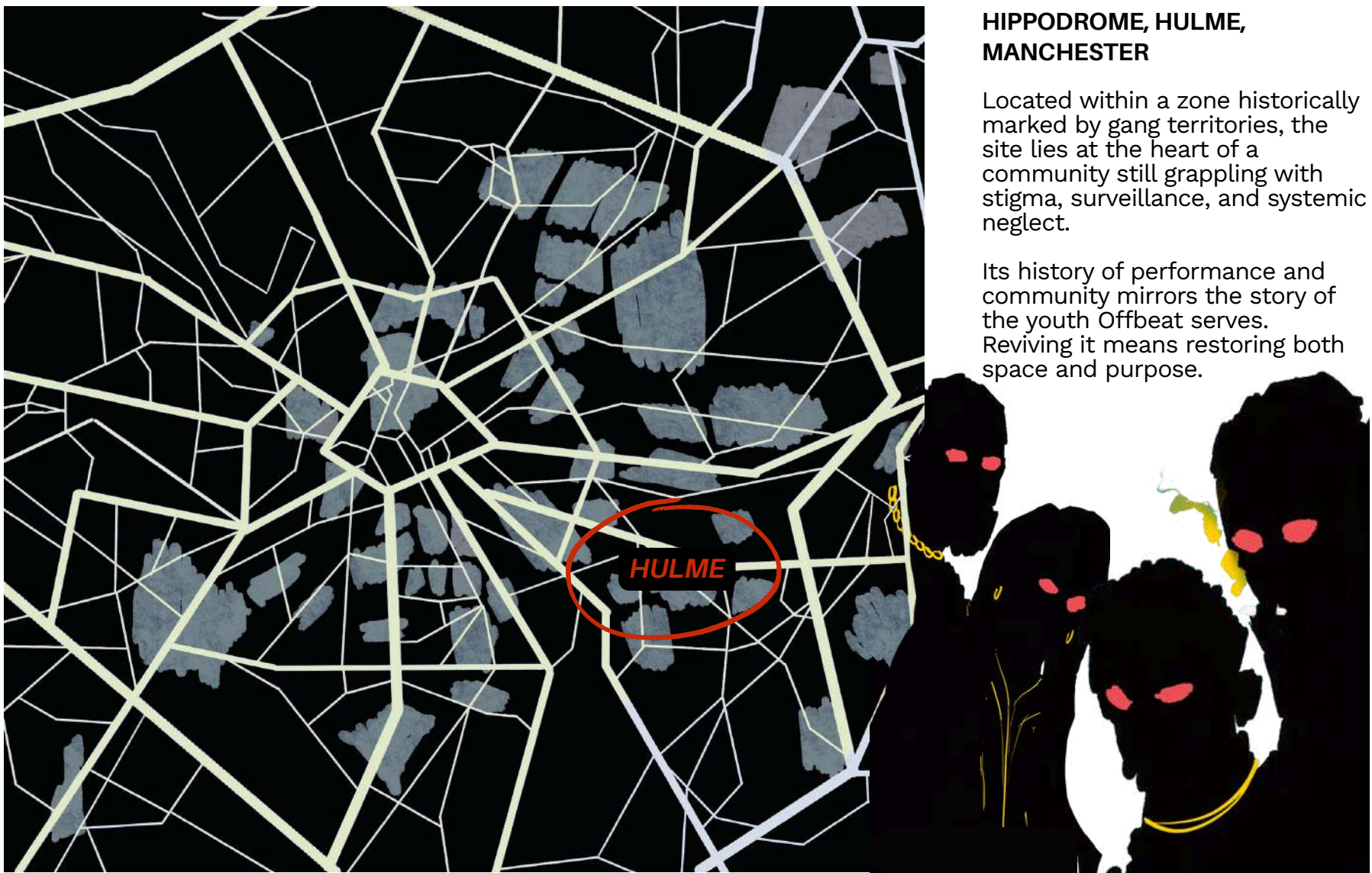
Offbeat isn’t about control — it’s about giving back what’s been denied: identity, self-worth, and a safe place to be heard.

Too often, young people are criminalised for expressing frustration or pain, especially through graffiti and music.

What if that expression wasn’t punished, but nurtured?
What if creative outlets were seen not as rebellion, but as relief, healing, and empowerment?

Offbeat offers that space — a platform for voice, growth, and community.

WHAT	HOW	WHY	WHERE
Offbeat is a creative and mentoring hub for young people affected by gang culture.	Through music, graffiti, and mentorship, Offbeat nurtures voice, skill, and agency.	To challenge the criminalisation of youth expression and provide safe creative spaces.	Hippodrome, Hulme, Manchester



HIPPODROME, HULME, MANCHESTER

Located within a zone historically marked by gang territories, the site lies at the heart of a community still grappling with stigma, surveillance, and systemic neglect.

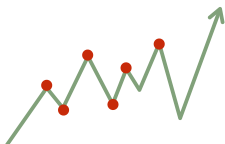
Its history of performance and community mirrors the story of the youth Offbeat serves. Reviving it means restoring both space and purpose.

WHY THIS MATTERS

In Manchester, many young people are criminalised for expressing their frustration and pain through drill, rap, graffiti, and music.



1 in 7 young people in Manchester are **not in education, employment, or training (NEET)**.



Over the past five years, there’s been a **57% RISE** in **18–25 year olds** accessing **temporary accommodation** in Manchester.



1 in 2 gang-affiliated youth say **unemployment and lack of purpose** pushed them into gang involvement.

Without safe creative alternatives, gangs fill this gap.

Offbeat offers a space where **expression replaces aggression**, where young voices are heard, nurtured, and supported to grow.

THE PROTAGONISTS



THINKING ABOUT JOINING GANGS



FINDING THEIR WAY OUT



ALREADY INVOLVED



AFFECTED BY GANGS

A BUILDING
THAT
ALREADY
SPEAKS

Graffiti found on site,
spontaneous,
unsanctioned
messages from youth
seeking to be seen.



WHY HULME HIPPODROME?

Once a thriving theatre, now abandoned, the Hippodrome sits in a community rich in culture but underserved in support.

Hulme’s young people are diverse, creative, and over-policed, especially around **drill, grime, graffiti,** and **rap.**

This isn’t just a building. It’s a stage being reclaimed.

LISTENING TO THE WALLS

Graffiti inside the Hippodrome already tells a story.

Words like “**hope**”, “**war**”, “**grow**”, and “**gang**” are scrawled across its surfaces, not as vandalism, but as visual cries for recognition.

These aren’t random tags; they are messages from young people who want to be seen, heard, and understood.

WHY MUSIC & GRAFFITI AS A SOLUTION?

Often blamed for “corruption,” drill, grime, and graffiti are not the cause, they’re the response.

For many young people, these forms are survival tools, ways to process identity, pain, and power when other systems fail.

Offbeat doesn’t erase these expressions, it amplifies them.

What was once criminalised becomes a catalyst for confidence, community, and growth.

THE CONCEPT

A SYSTEM TO REFRAME IDENTITY, RECLAIM AUTONOMY, AND STRUCTURE CREATIVE GROWTH.

Cubes reflect the rigid systems youth face : limiting, uniform, and isolating. Rearranged, they show a journey: from chaos to structure, isolation to connection.

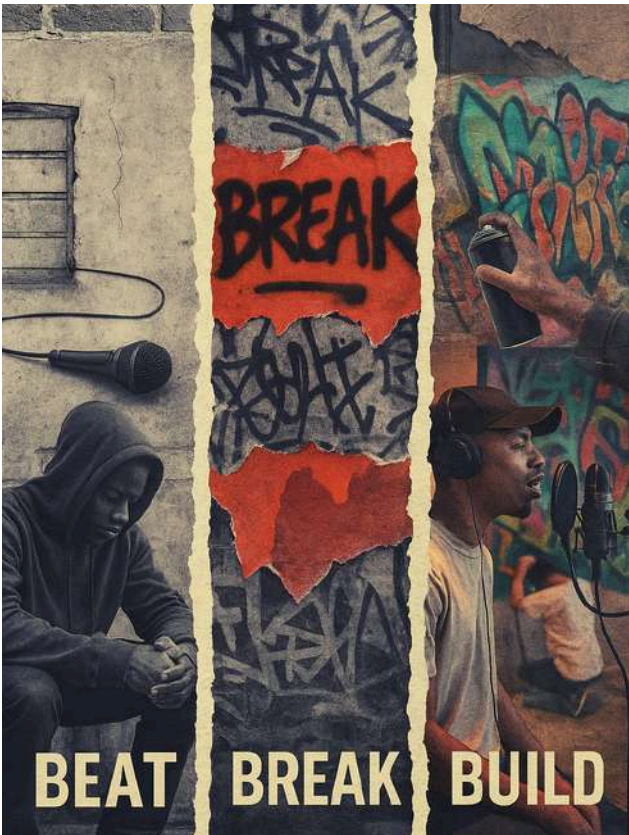
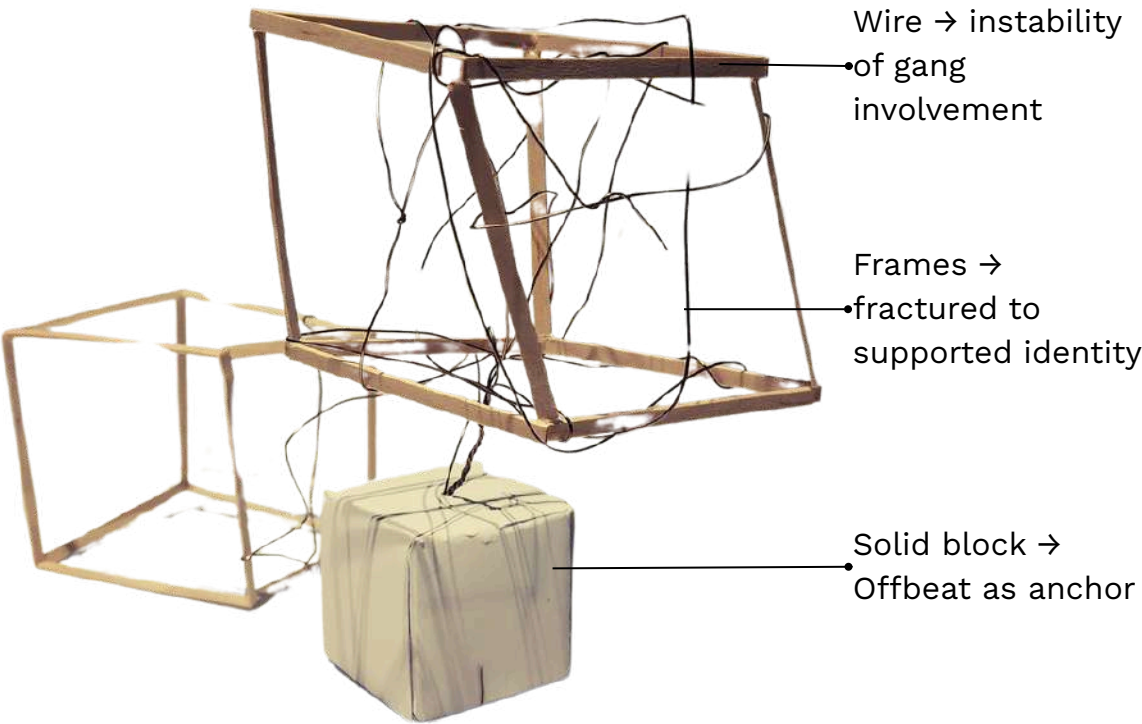
Each cube becomes a step toward growth, **guided — not confined** — by Offbeat.

The model informed the **Beat / Break / Build** structure, helping balance support with autonomy and creative freedom.

BUILD

BREAK

BEAT



“We start with noise. Then we find rhythm.” — Youth voice, Offbeat

BUILD – (1F: GRAFFITI & VISUAL ARTS)

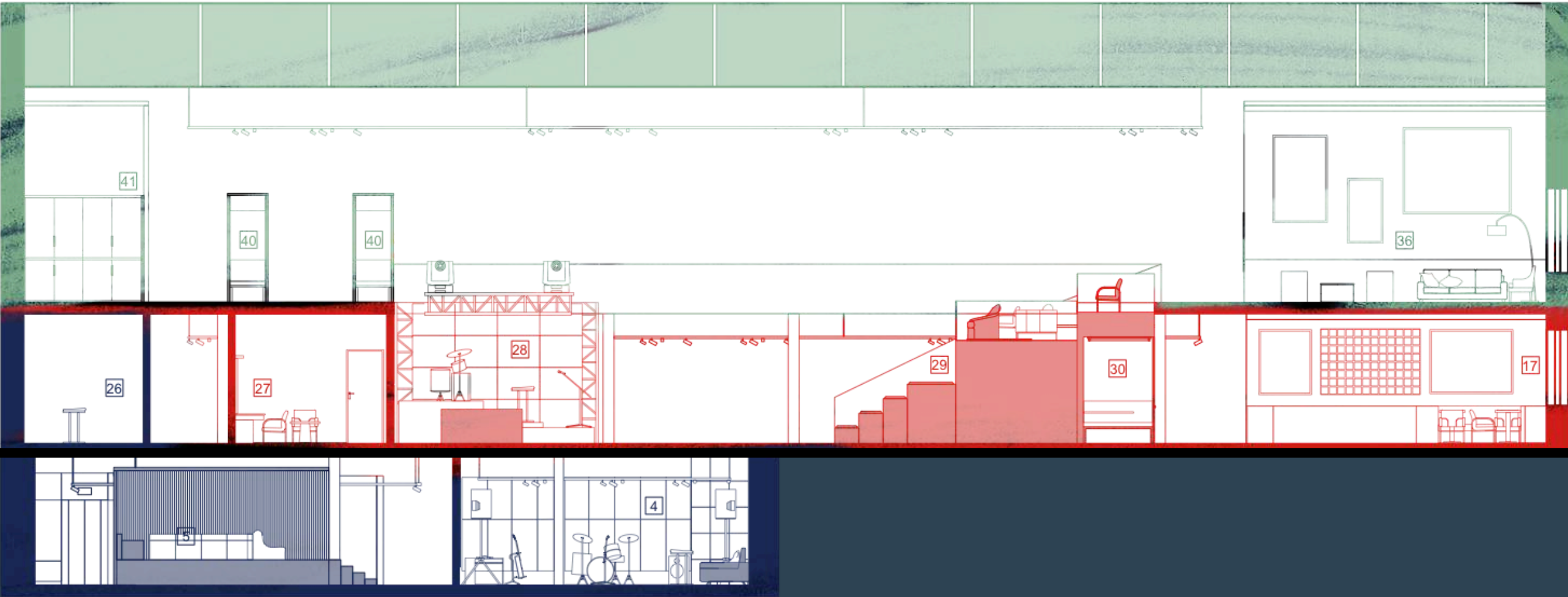
A canvas for growth. Layered, textured, and energetic — where young artists develop their craft and leave their mark.

BREAK – (GF: PERFORMANCE)

A space to challenge norms. Open, loud, and expressive — breaking through barriers and stereotypes.

BEAT – (B: MUSIC PRODUCTION)

The foundation, where creativity begins: dark, raw, and rhythmic — like an underground pulse where music is born.



- 4 BAND PRACTICE ROOM
- 5 LOUNGE
- 17 SEATING AREA
- 26 PRACTICE ROOM
- 27 GREEN ROOM
- 28 STAGE
- 29 STAGE SEATING
- 30 MENTOR 1-1 ROOM
- 36 COLLABORATION SPACE AND LOUNGE
- 40 WORK PODS
- 41 PAINT LIBRARY

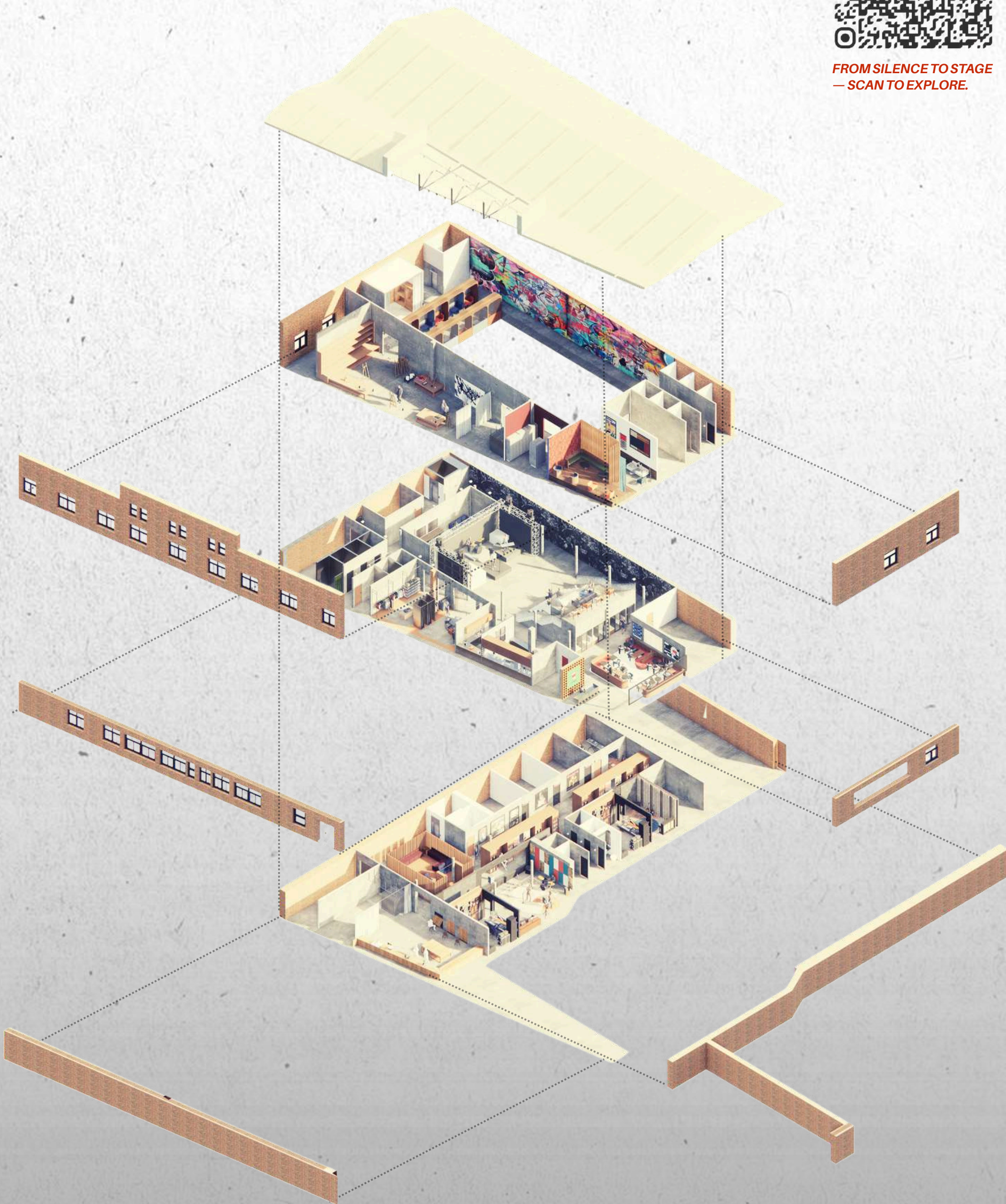
SECTIONAL B | Not to scale

SPATIAL STRATEGY

CONNECTING PROGRAMME,
PEOPLE, AND PURPOSE



FROM SILENCE TO STAGE —
SCAN TO EXPLORE.



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36



30



29



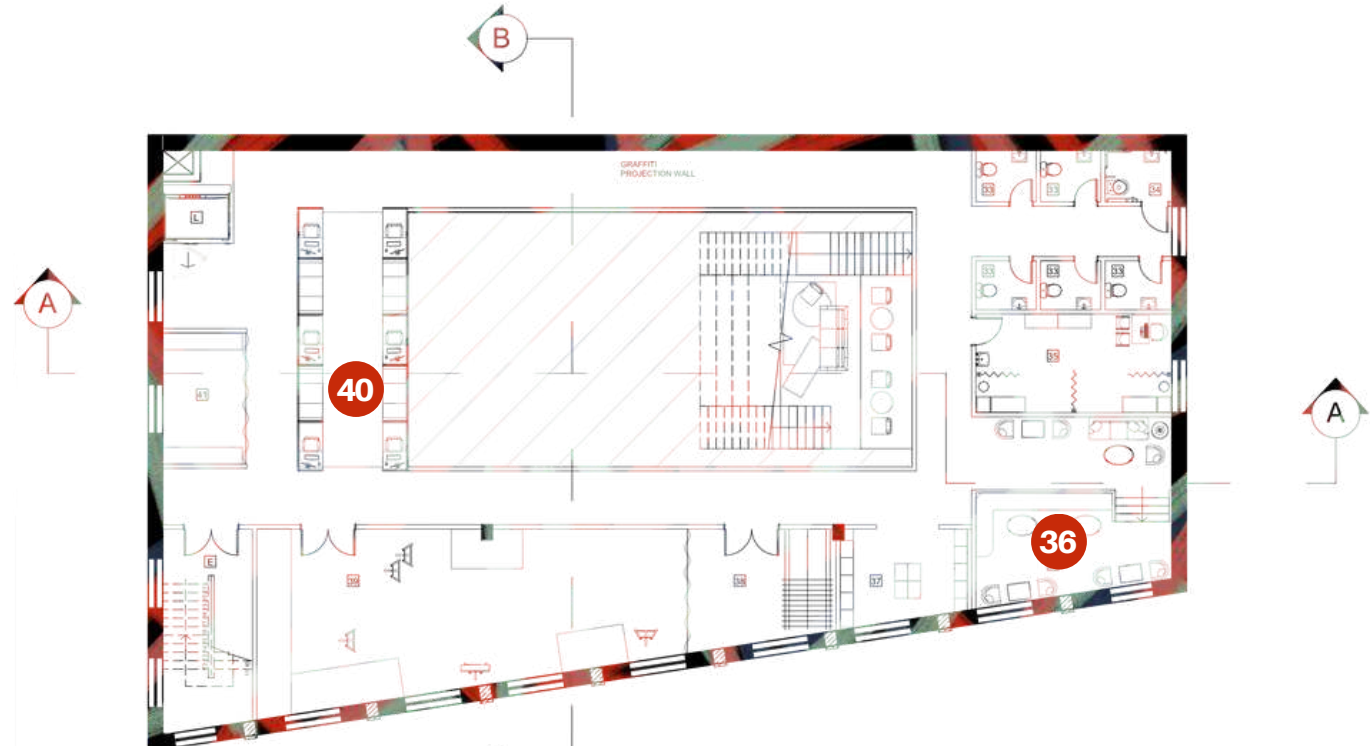
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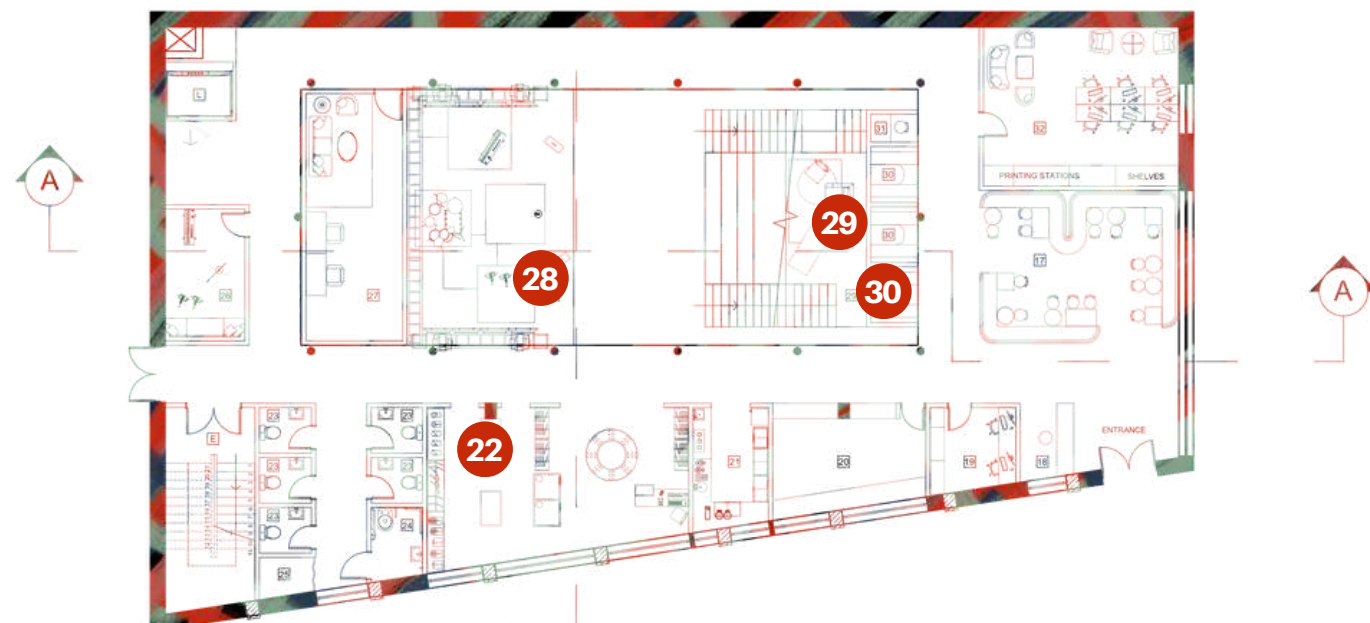
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1F: GRAFFITI & PODS —
(BUILD)



GF: PERFORMANCE & LOUNGE —
(BREAK)



B: MUSIC STUDIO —
(BEAT)

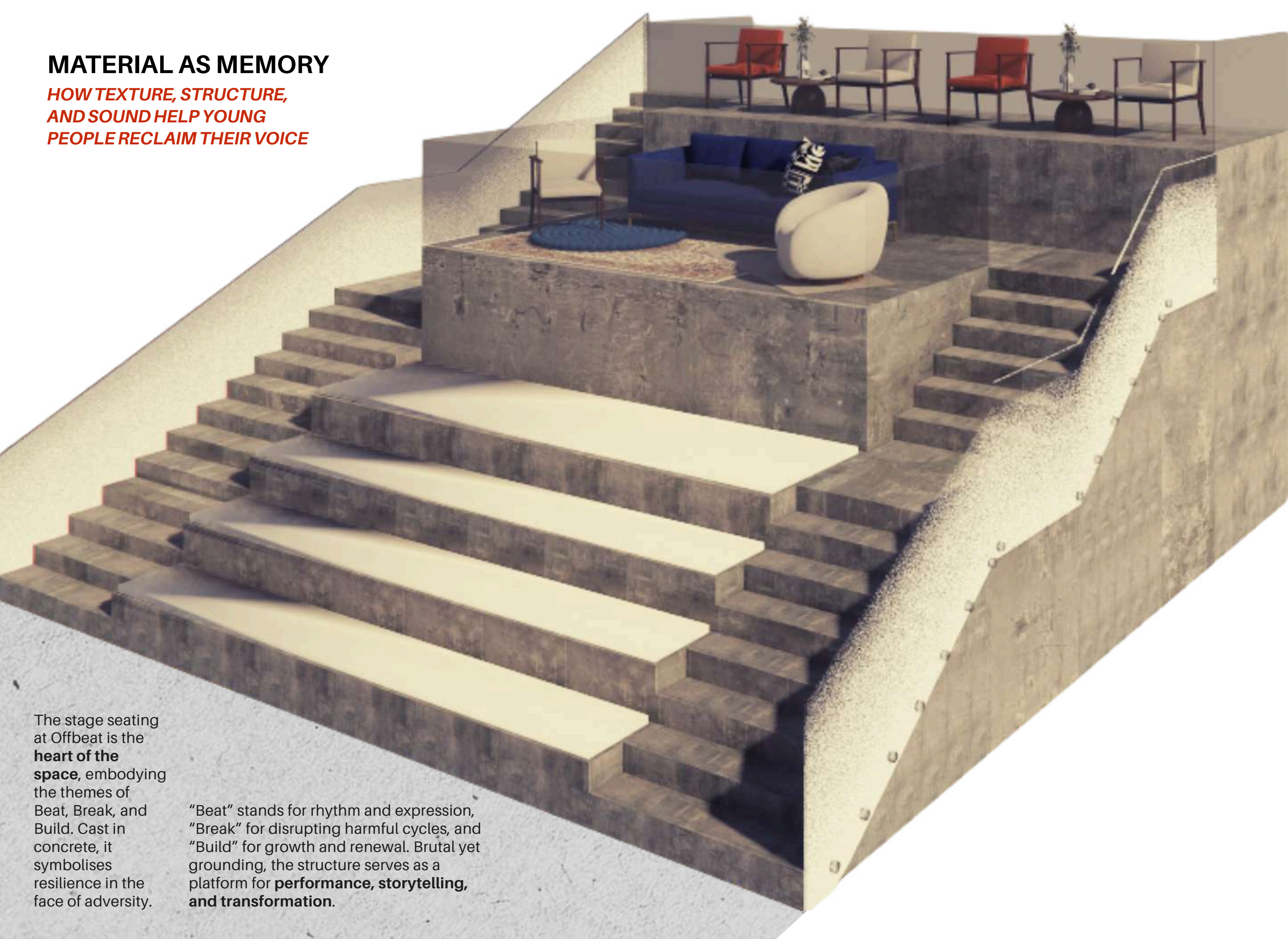
FACILITIES

SPACES DESIGNED FOR CREATIVITY,
REFLECTION, AND GROWTH.

- 40 Private Workstations: Enclosed pods for quiet, focused tasks (e.g. music production, sketching, CV writing)
- 36 Chill Zone: A relaxed, youth-friendly common area with seating, music, and conversation
- 30 Mentoring Rooms: Private, informal spaces for one-to-one sessions
- 29 Graffiti Wall Zones: Indoor and outdoor wall spaces for practice, commissions, and public art
- 28 Showcase Area: Space for live performances, pop-up exhibitions, or open mic nights
- 28 Workshop Space: Flexible space for CV sessions, artist talks, and group activities
- 22 Design & Merch Store: Computers, tablets, and tools for creating zines, posters, clothing, and other products
- 12 Music Studio: Soundproofed area with recording and mixing equipment

MATERIAL AS MEMORY

HOW TEXTURE, STRUCTURE,
AND SOUND HELP YOUNG
PEOPLE RECLAIM THEIR VOICE



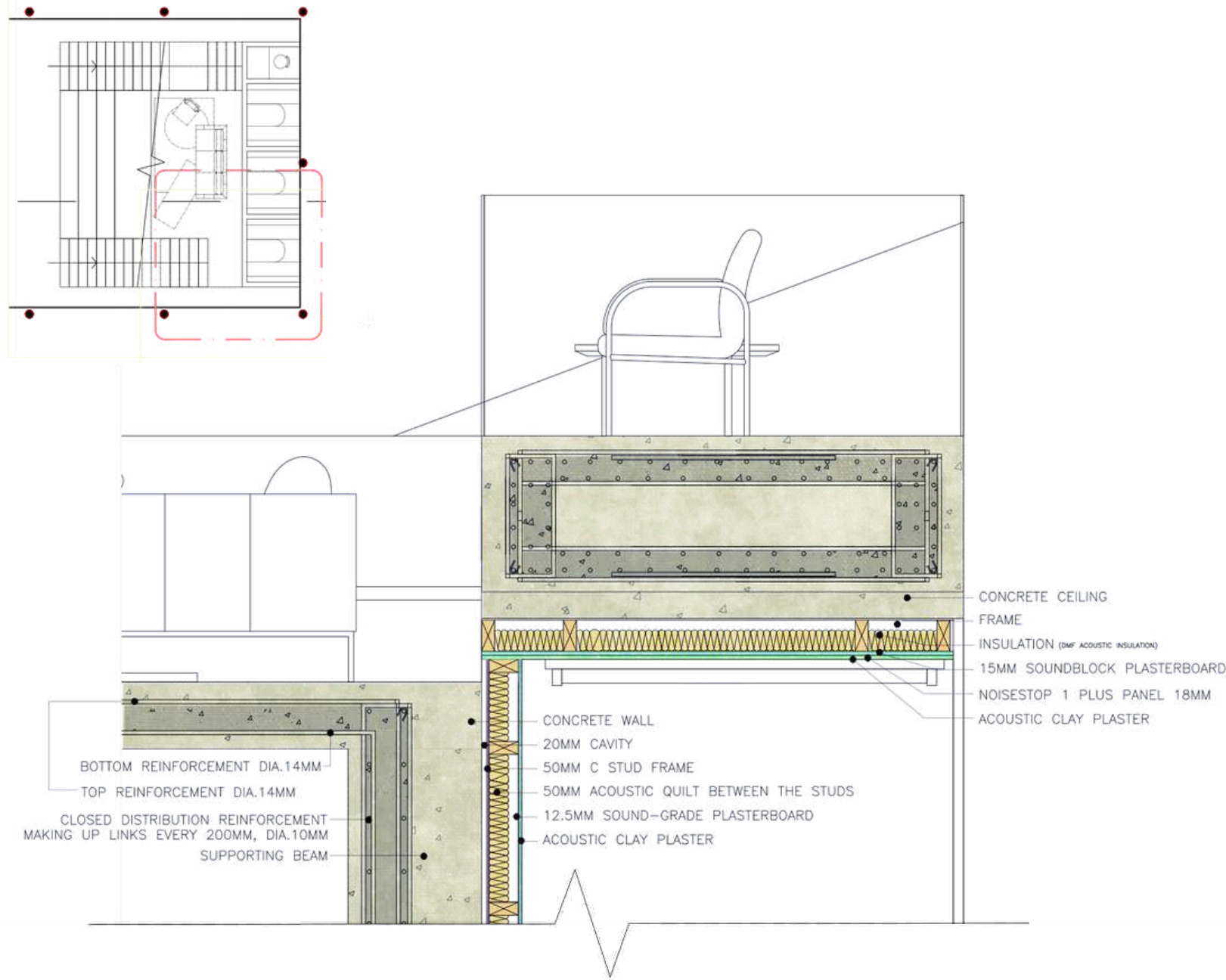
The stage seating at Offbeat is the heart of the space, embodying the themes of Beat, Break, and Build. Cast in concrete, it symbolises resilience in the face of adversity.

“Beat” stands for rhythm and expression, “Break” for disrupting harmful cycles, and “Build” for growth and renewal. Brutal yet grounding, the structure serves as a platform for performance, storytelling, and transformation.

CONSTRUCTION DETAIL

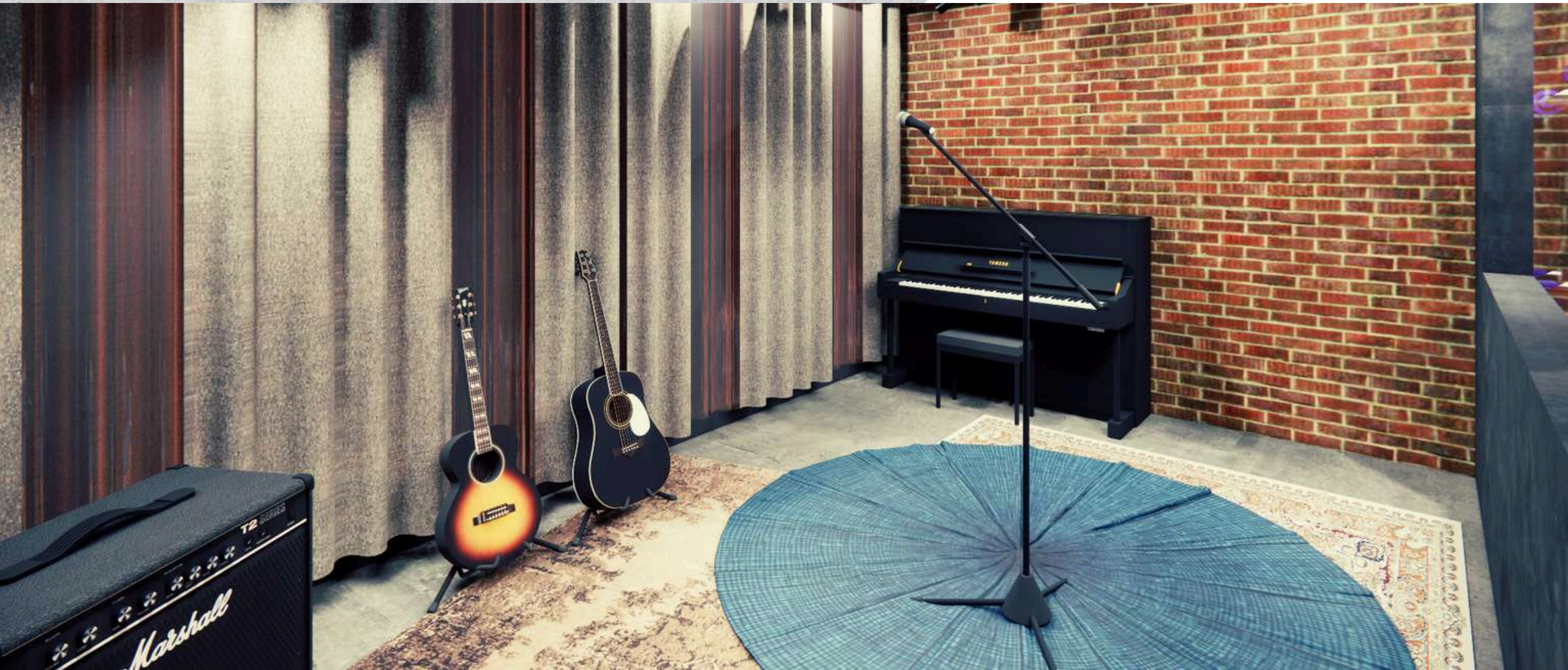
This construction detail shows the concrete stage seating at the heart of Offbeat. Designed for durability and acoustic performance, the seating provides a stable foundation for youth-led expression.

It connects directly to the one-to-one mentor rooms above, reflecting Offbeat’s core approach: combining structured support with space for performance and growth. Concrete, acoustic plaster, and layered sound insulation ensure the area serves both energetic events and quiet reflection, without compromise.



RAW MATERIALS, REAL MEANING

Offbeat’s material identity reflects **resilience** and **transformation**. Exposed concrete grounds the space with strength and honesty, while layered textiles and reclaimed carpets introduce warmth, comfort, and care. The contrast between raw and soft materials mirrors the journey of the youth, toughened by experience, yet open to healing and growth through Beat, Break, Build.



ENGINEERED WOOD

Youth resilience — durable, warm, and supportive



CONCRETE

Reality grounded — tough, exposed, truthful



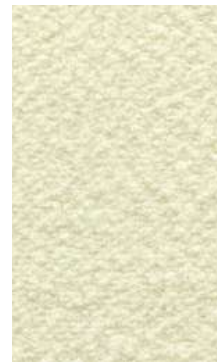
EXISTING BRICK

Historic memory — the past held, not erased



RECYCLED STEEL

Strength reclaimed — repurposed with pride



CARPET

Comfort underfoot — softness against the harsh



CURTAINS

Privacy without walls — boundaries that don’t shut out

These materials aren’t neutral. They speak of care, control, survival, and voice.

BREAK

CALL TO ACTION



MENTOR 1-1
PRIVATE SUPPORT SESSIONS



WORK PODS

BEAT

EXPLORATION & EXPRESSION



PRACTICE ROOMS & RECORDING STUDIOS
FOR WRITING, RECORDING, REHEARSING



EDITING SUITE



PERFORMANCE AREA
LIVE SHOWS, OPEN MICS, SHOWCASES



MERCHANDISE STORE

BUILD

CHALLENGE & COLLABORATION



GRAFFITI ZONE
TOOLS, SPACE, AND FREEDOM TO PAINT



PROP AND BACKDROP MAKING

WHAT OFFBEAT PROVIDES

ONE-TO-ONE MENTORSHIP:
Youth are paired with mentors who understand their background and interests

CAREER & CV WORKSHOPS:
Sessions focused on building creative portfolios and applying for arts opportunities

PROFESSIONAL COLLABORATIONS:
Guest artists and musicians lead sessions and co-create projects

PUBLIC EVENTS:
Performance nights, art shows, and creative markets open to the wider community

MERCHANDISE SUPPORT:
Youth can sell music, art, or designs, gaining income and exposure

CREATIVE JOB PATHWAYS:
Support with applying for commissions, apprenticeships, and freelance opportunities

COLLABORATIVE PROJECTS:
Youth from music and graffiti streams work together on shared outputs (e.g. visuals for gigs, album art, etc.)

ONGOING ACCESS:
Offbeat supports young people for as long as needed, until they gain the confidence, skills, and stability to move forward