

# CONNECTIONS

THE BARGEHOUSE

BY REBECCA HO



## PROJECT BRIEF & IE COMPETITION

The brief was to design a new space for the client **Vitra** who are an international furnishing company in the existing space of the Bargehouse located on the South Bank of London using the company's key principles.

Vitra's values of **sustainability, collaboration, innovation, work ethic and eco-friendly** approaches to design are reflected in the research and final design of this project through the use of **Vitra's sustainable and innovative furniture**. Creation of a **collaborative space that unifies communities** and offers a place where people can **find a balance between work and leisure**. And lastly all sourcing of various materials used in the proposed design were from companies that **care deeply about the environment**.

The Bargehouse project 'Connections' will include research into the importance of making connections in the local community and **lots of experiments of textile designs** inspired by an old craft that has united communities and other bespoke design elements shown through **various sketches, hand making, and digital modelling** inspired by the existing features of the Bargehouse to connect its history to the proposed design.



vitra.

## VITRA'S VALUES

- Sustainability
- Collaboration
- Innovation
- Work Ethic
- Eco-friendly



**CREATING TEXTILES (SHIBORI)**  
The art form that connects communities

**INDIGO**  
The colour that connects cultures

## THE IMPORTANCE OF CONNECTION

Loneliness is a mental health condition that is **overlooked** by many. The feeling of being lonely can often be the **start of developing various mental and physical health issues**.

Therefore, it is important to find solutions to address this issue such as **creating a safe space** for people to discuss the topic of loneliness and activities that **encourage people to form meaningful relationships** in their local communities.

## BBC LONELINESS EXPERIMENT SURVEY SAYS...



"40% of young people feel lonely vs 27% of the elderly over 75".

## LONELINESS CHARITY



The Marmalade Trust is the UK's leading loneliness charity for all ages.

## HEALTH CONDITIONS LINKED WITH CHRONIC LONELINESS

- Cardiovascular health risks
- Depression
- Increased Blood Pressure
- Increased Risk of Dementia.

## CONCEPT

The concept is to design a space where people from all generations can **make connections** with their local community **through the exchanging of artistic skills, old techniques, and experiences**.

Taking inspiration from the Festival of Britain which connected the whole nation through the use of art and design. The main aim of the space is to also **raise awareness of loneliness** which is part of mental health. Therefore, to combat this issue is to provide a place where the community can connect and improve on their social interactions.

Following the values of Vitra, the Bargehouse will engage in artistic activities that promotes **collaboration** and **inclusivity** which supports the **wellbeing** of all and provides **opportunities** for people to form meaningful relationships.

Vitra, the client of this project will host these workshop activity sessions. They will provide the **sustainable** furniture designs used to facilitate the functioning of the building and their **knowledge of collaborating** with various international designers to come up with something innovative and exciting to encourage more people to use the space.

- Sustainability
- Collaboration
- Inclusivity
- Wellbeing
- Opportunities

## CREATING TEXTILES (SHIBORI)

The art form that connects communities.

Dyeing fabrics was a common practice in many cultures such as in China, Nigeria, and India to name a few. Some cultures became **synonymous with fabric dyeing** such as in **Japan with their shibori**. Creating decorative dyed textiles was not just **a way of life** in these cultures but was also an activity that connected communities because it was **relatively easy** to do by **almost anyone of all ages**.

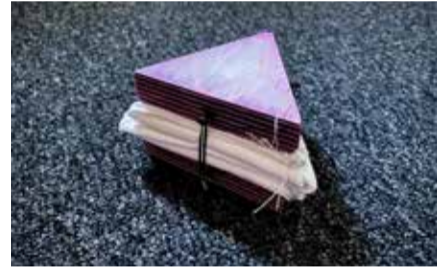
## INDIGO

The colour that connects cultures.

Looking on a larger scale something that connected cultures throughout history was the **frequent use of indigo**. Indigo was used in ancient cultures such as **Greek, Roman, Chinese, Japanese, and Indian** which are all cultures that developed close to each other. But what is even more remarkable is that **parts of Central and South America discovered and used indigo independently** even though these cultures are located on the opposite side of the world.

## SHIBORI INSPIRATION

Shibori is a Japanese technique of **sophisticated tie-dyeing or stitched resist fabric dyeing**. The term shibori is derived from the Japanese verb **'shiboru'** which means to **wring, squeeze, and press**. There are six main types of shibori techniques which include Kanoko, Kumo, Nui, Itajime, Arashi and Miura shibori. For the Bargehouse project, it will **focus on itajime shibori** as this technique involves folding pieces of fabric and then sandwiching it between two identical blocks of wood. The idea is to take **shapes from the existing features** of the Bargehouse **to design bespoke textiles and other unique decorative elements and furniture**.



Preparing fabric for itajime shibori dyeing.

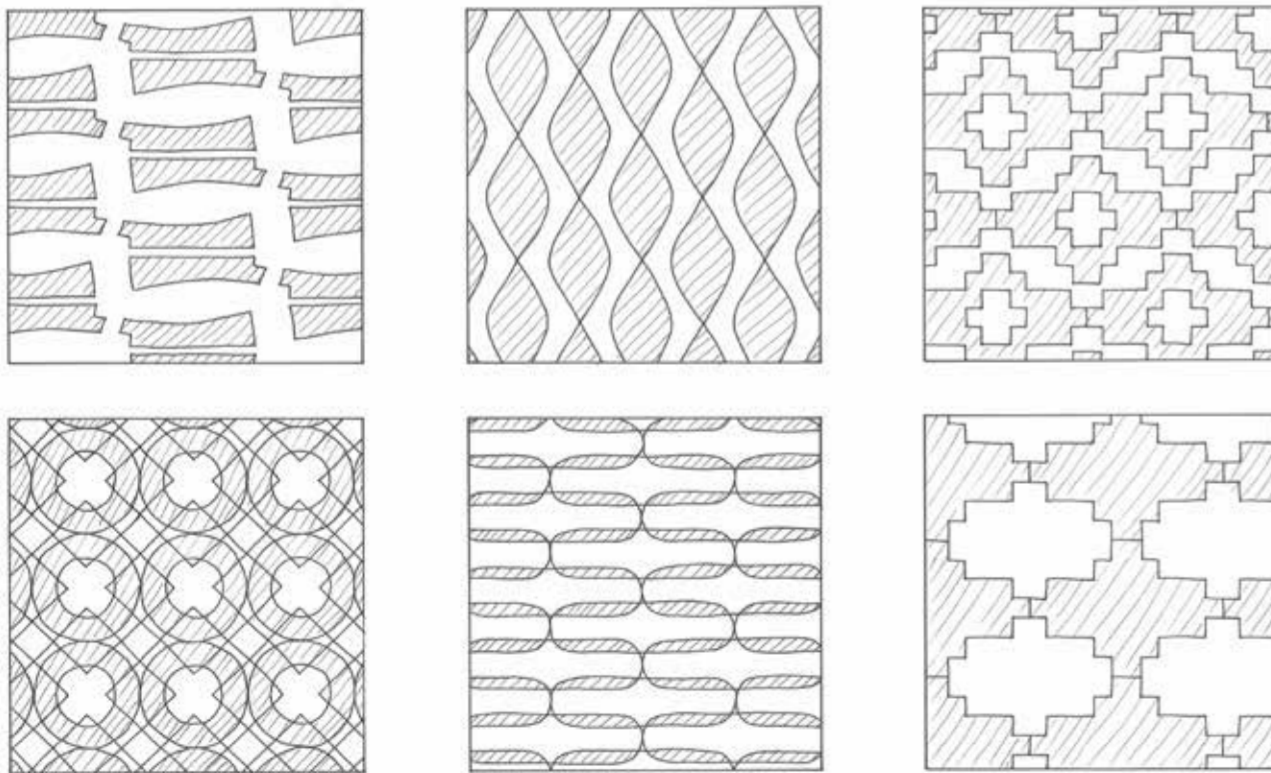


Dyeing the fabric in a vat of natural indigo dye.

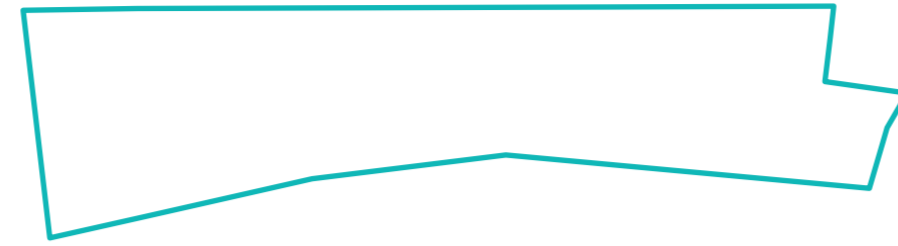


Hanging the dyed textiles to dry naturally.

## PATTERN SKETCHES



The shapes taken from the existing features of the Bargehouse were drawn out over and over to create **repeating patterns to be used for various design elements** such as décor, accent walls, partitions, soft furnishings etc. They can also be used as a **method of way finding** to create a more aesthetic way of indicating what spaces are used for instead of the alternative method of using obvious signage.



Simplified shape of the Bargehouse.



Shapes inspired by the 'OXO' Branding of the Oxo Tower and the Bargehouse.



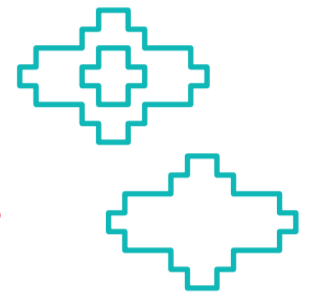
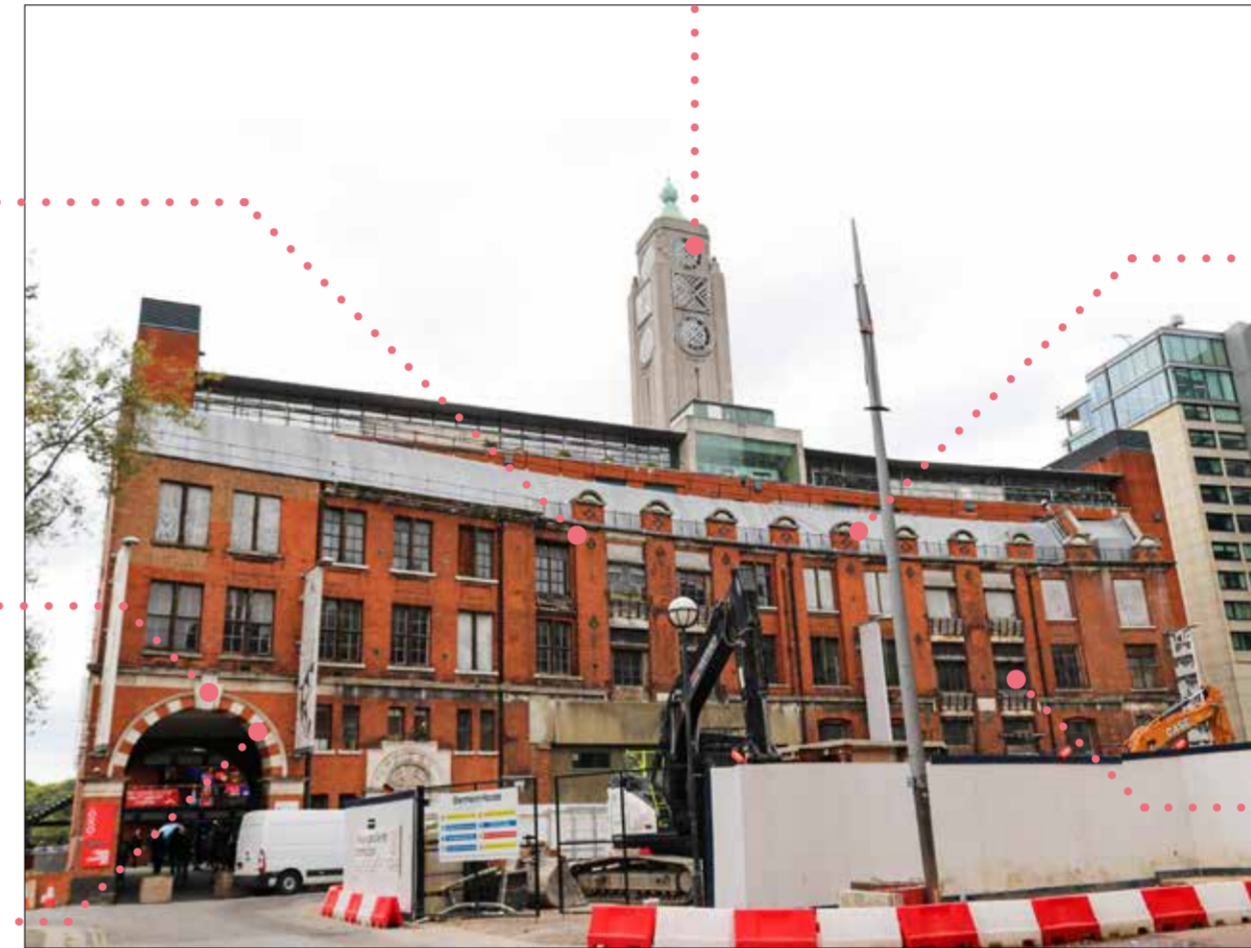
Exterior decoration element.



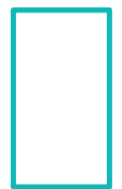
Art Deco decorative element above the archway.



Bargehouse archway.



Brick pattern taken from the roof detail.



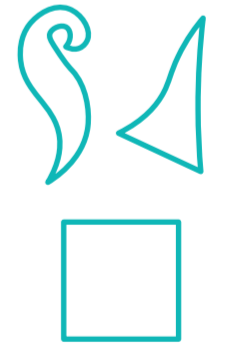
Rectangular window panel.



Floor grate.

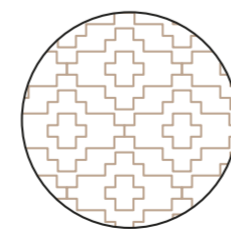


Wall ventilation grate.

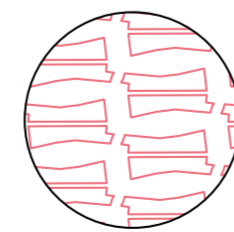


Shapes taken from tile pattern.

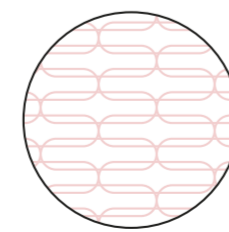
## PATTERNS FOR WAYFINDING



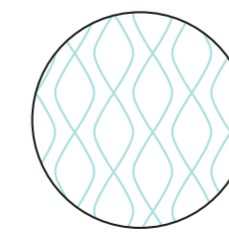
Pop Up Market Pattern



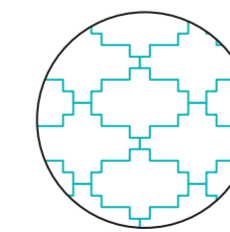
Studio Space Pattern



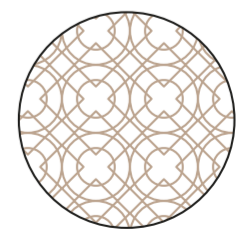
Staircase Pattern



Cafe & Social Space Pattern



Exhibition Space Pattern

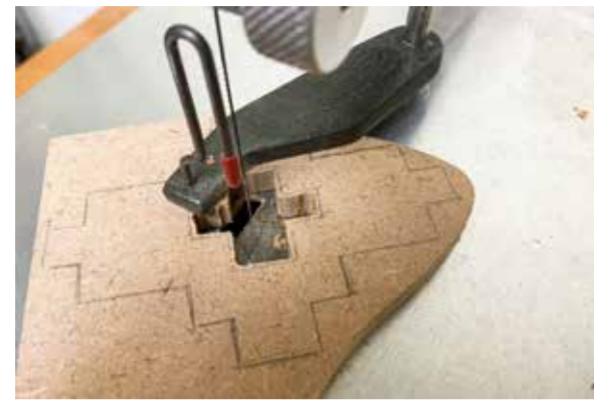


Lift Pattern

### CREATING SHAPES INSPIRED BY THE BARGEHOUSE FOR ITAJIME SHIBORI



1. Printed and traced all the Bargehouse shapes onto MDF.



2. Used the workshop machines to cut out all the shapes into individual pieces.



3. This is the final result of all the different wooden shaped blocks in preparation for shibori.

### PREPARING SHAPES & FABRIC FOR THE DYEING PROCESS



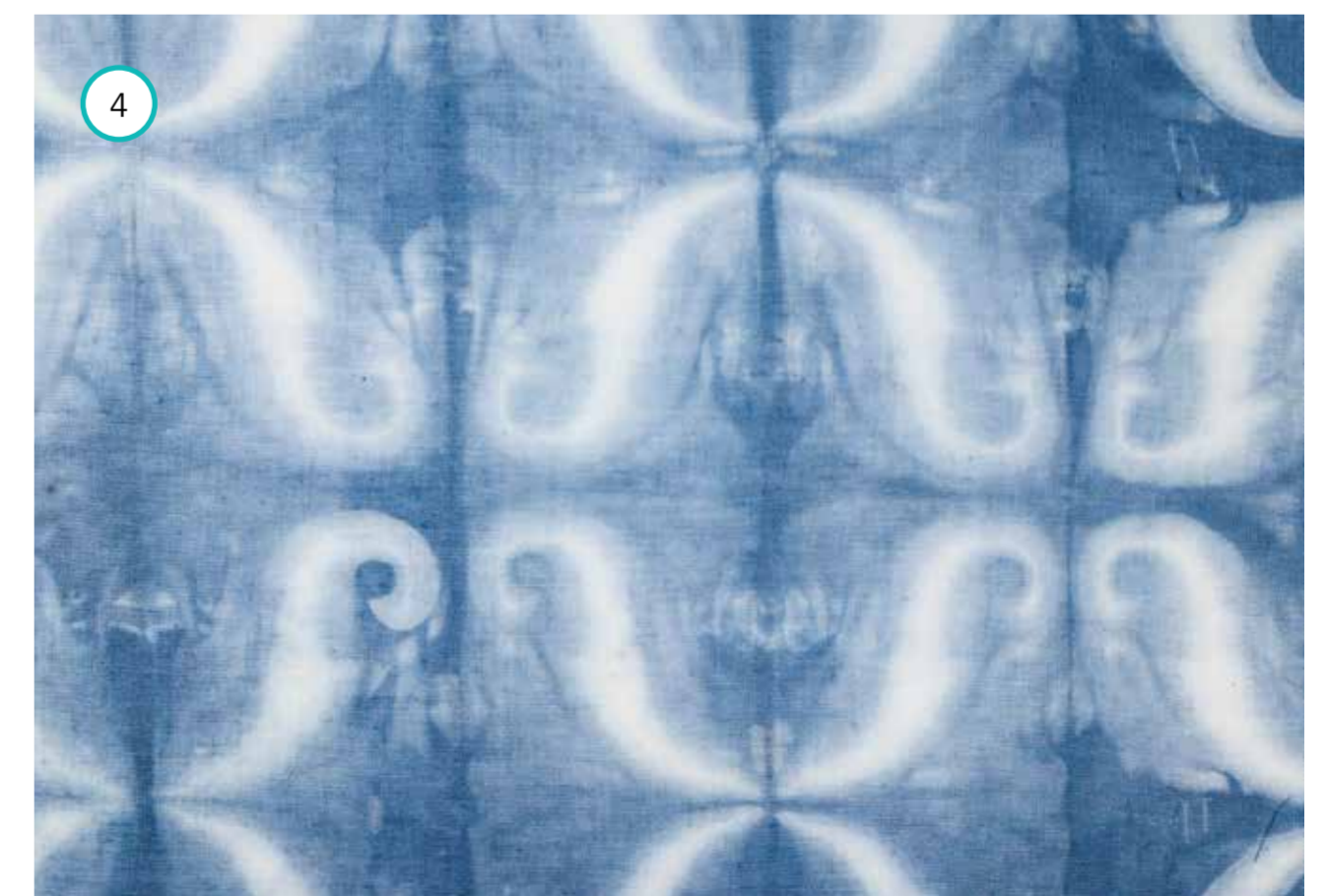
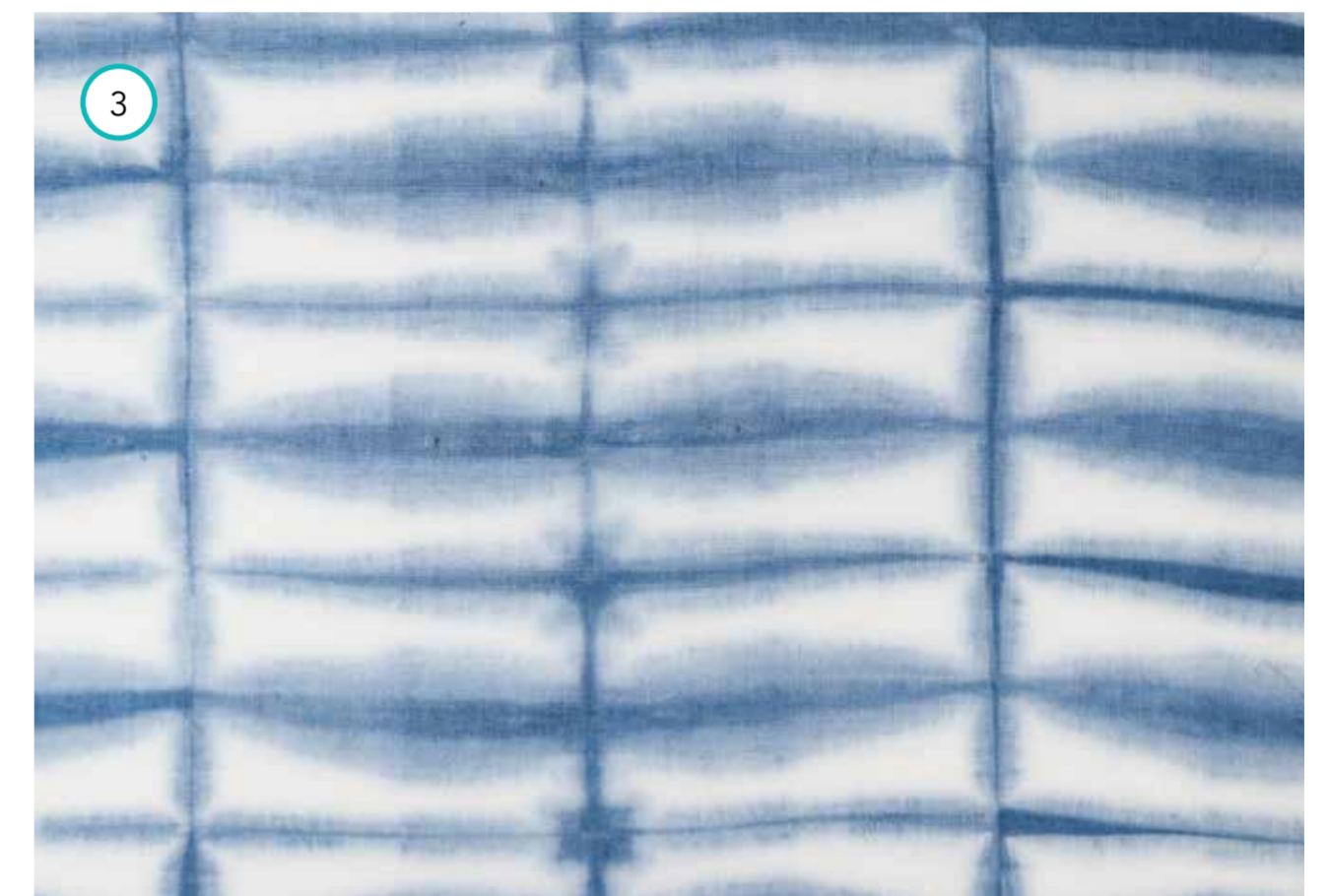
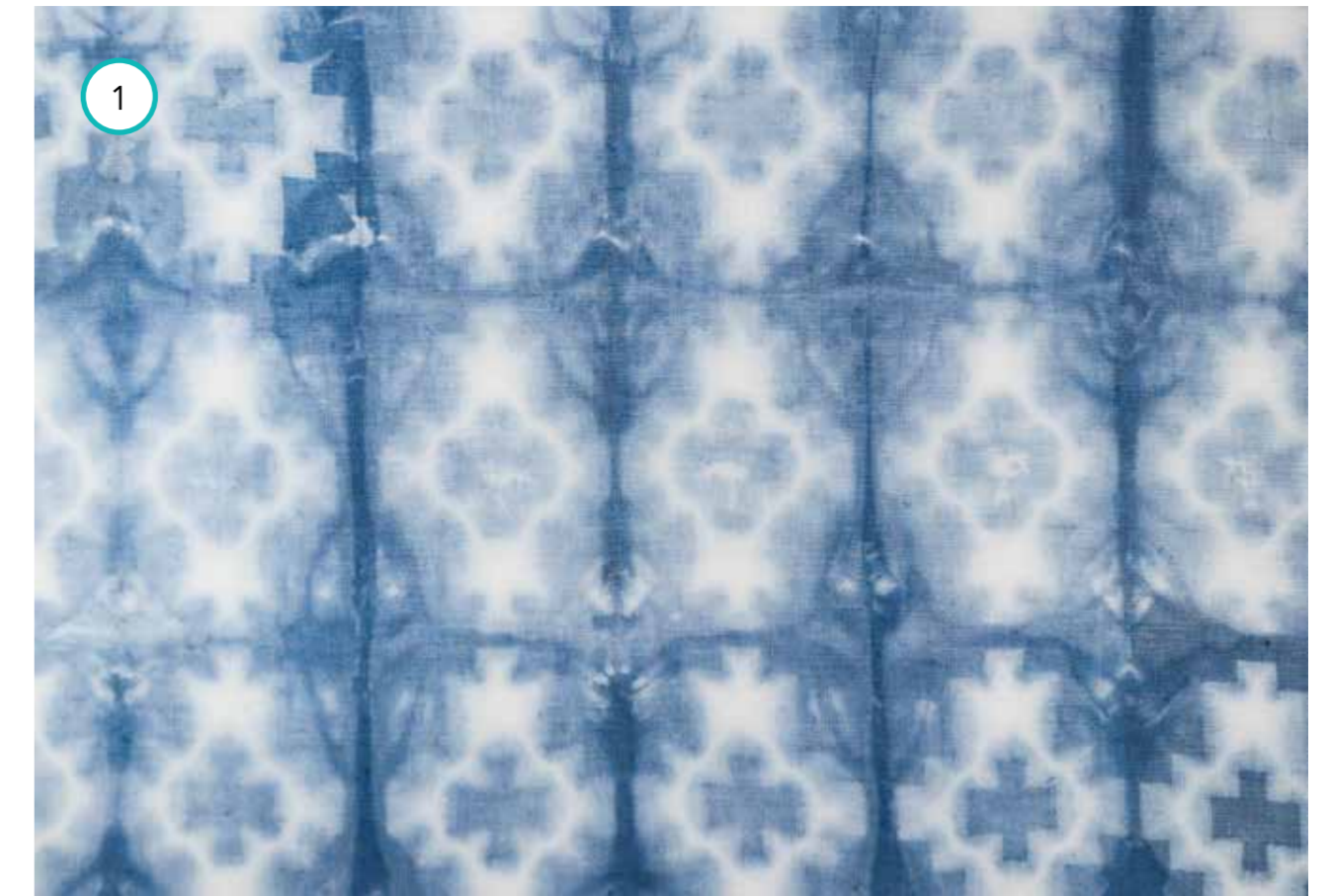
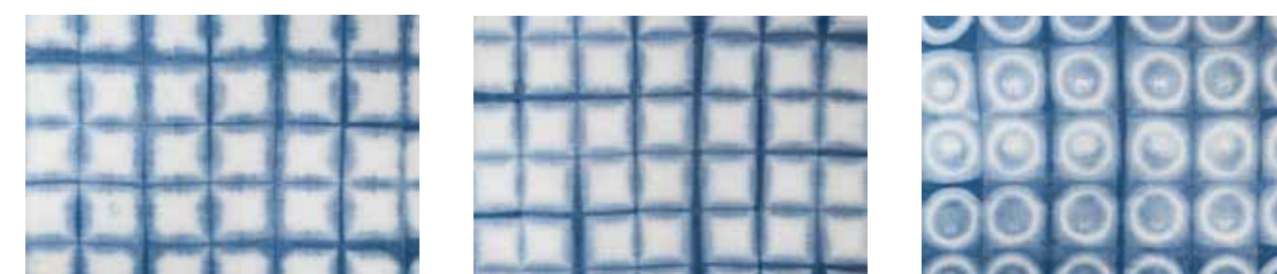
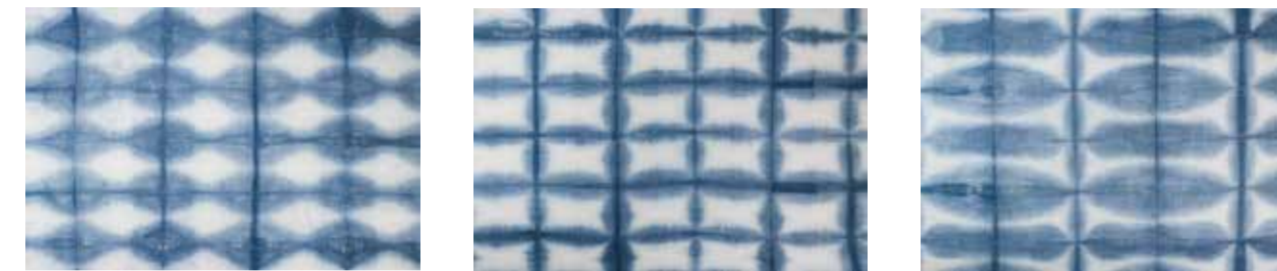
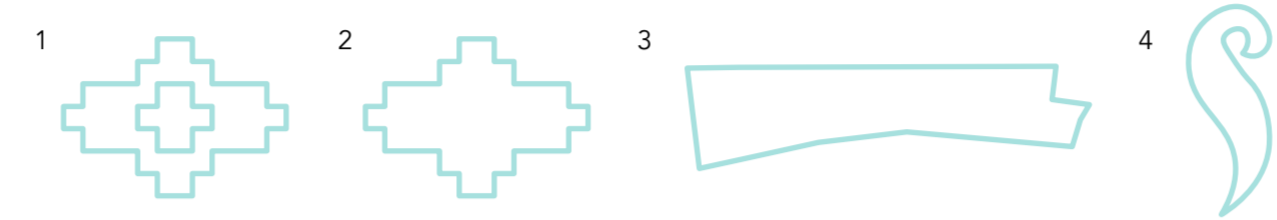
Method: binding the wooden blocks and folded fabric with clamps.

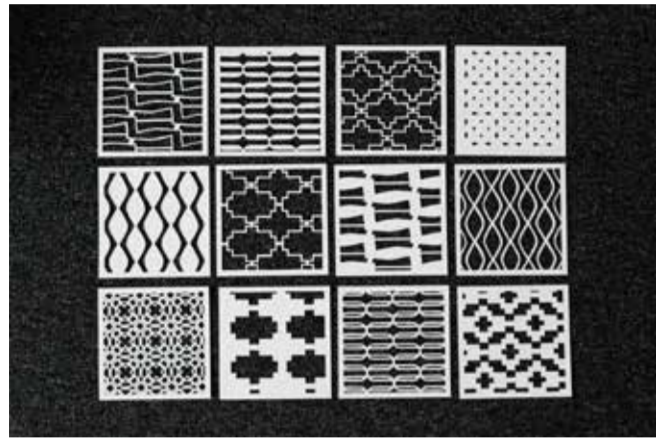
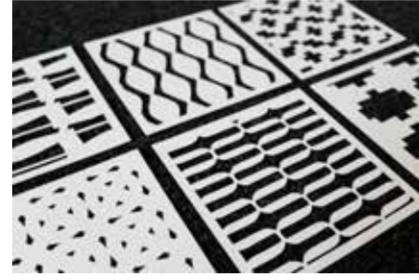
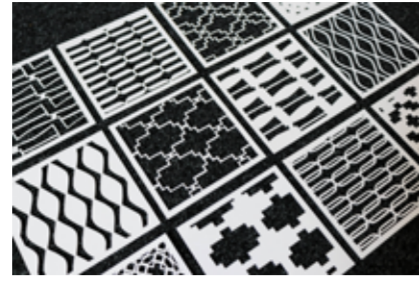
Usually, string would be used to bind the fabric however, **clamps provide a stronger hold** and therefore **creates cleaner pattern designs** with a **sharper contrast** between the white of the linen and the deep blue colour of the indigo dye.

### ITAJIME SHIBORI EXPERIMENT OUTCOMES

Each textile is unique, and **each section of the same pattern looks different**. Even when this process is repeated exactly, the final pattern will not be the same which makes it **an exciting activity to do with others**.

These textiles will be used for the **soft furnishings and hanging art pieces** in the main spaces of the building such as on the ground floor and permanent shibori exhibition on the fourth floor. They are not just limited to being used as furnishing covers and artwork but also, they can be used as **inspiration for the flooring or ceiling**.





### HAND CUT PATTERN DESIGNS

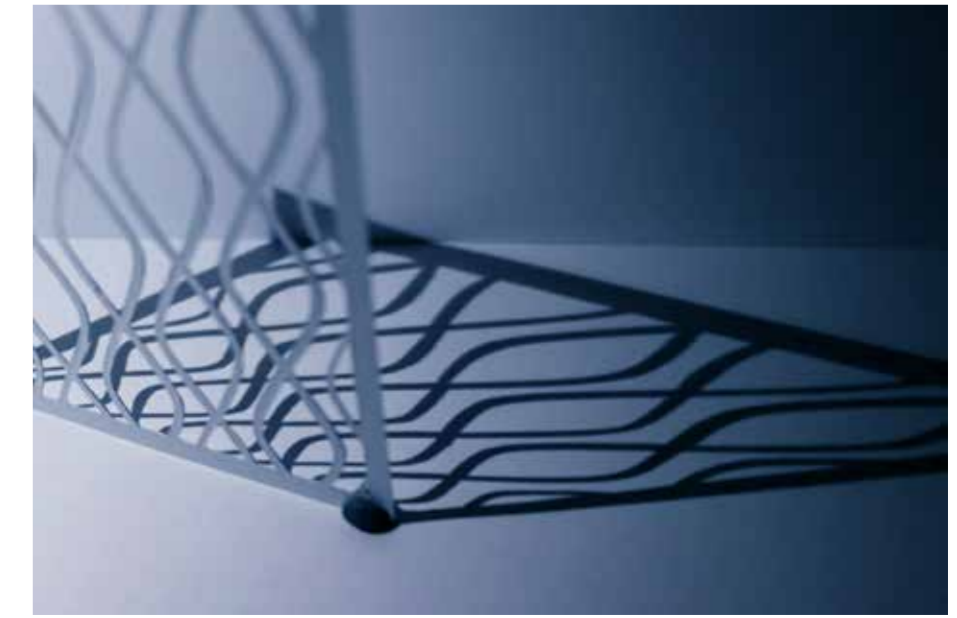
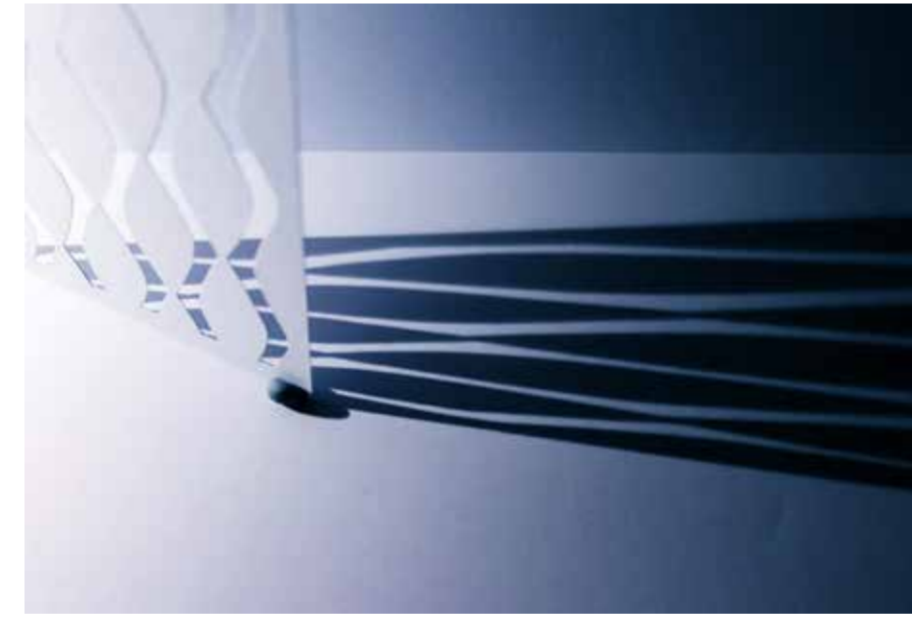
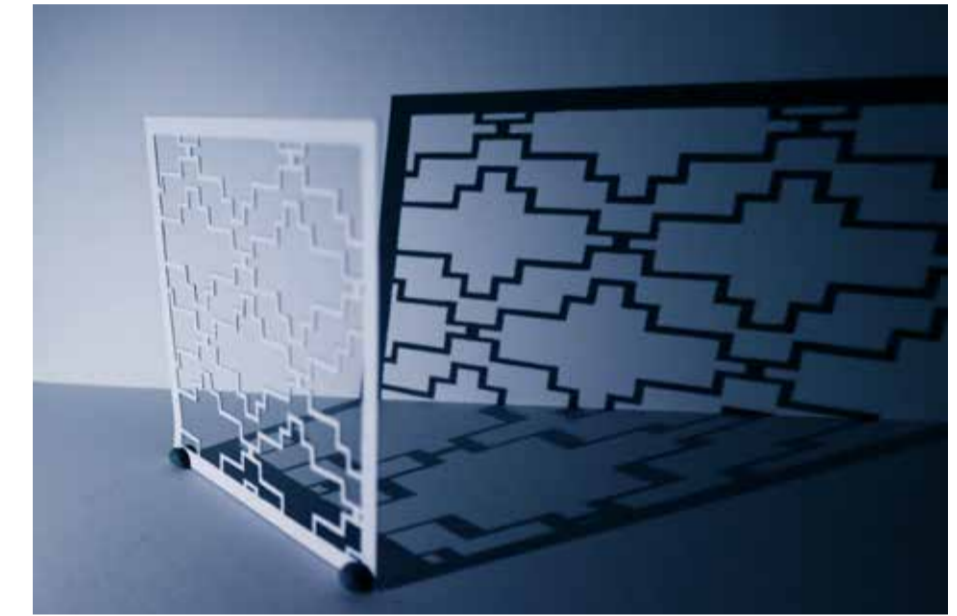
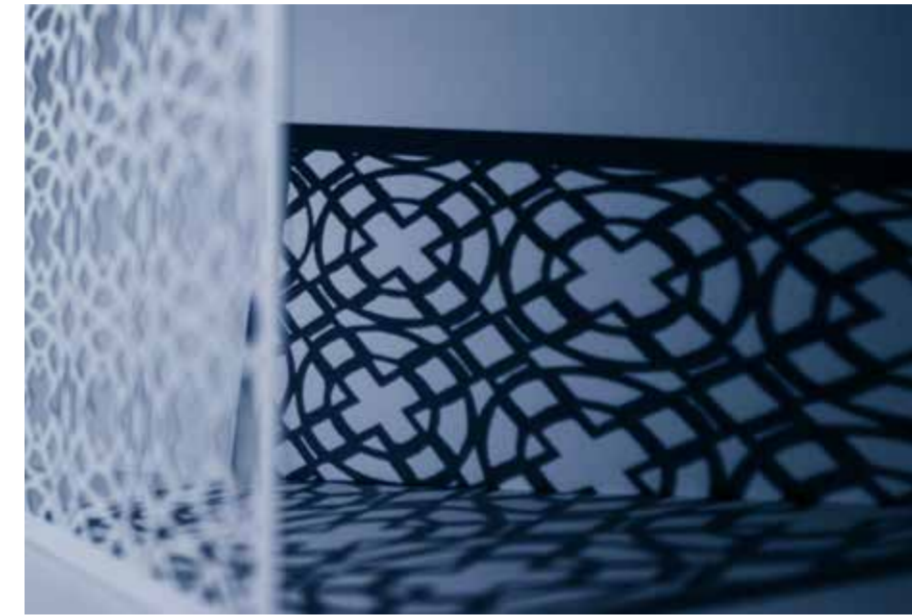
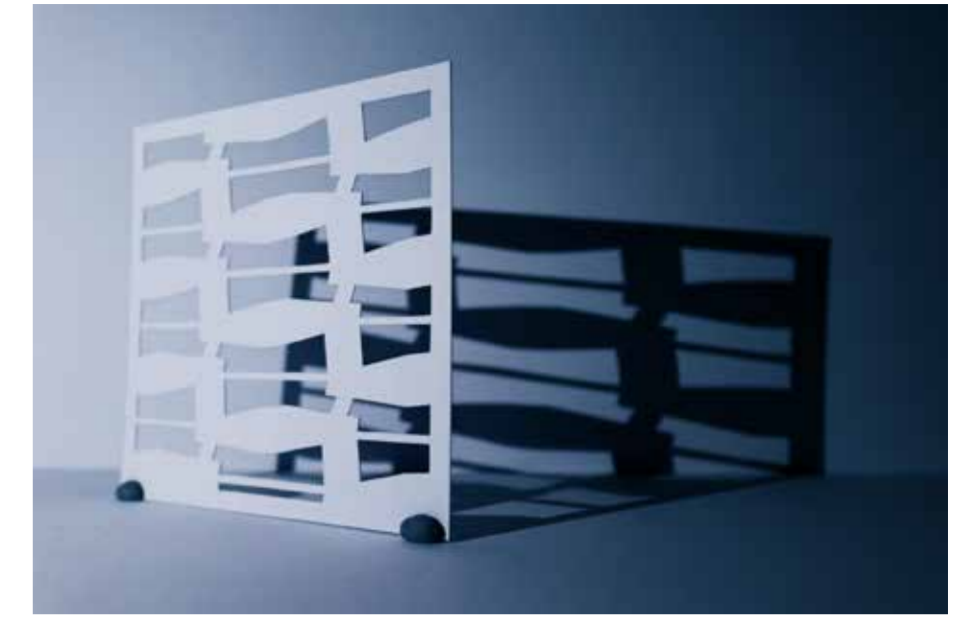
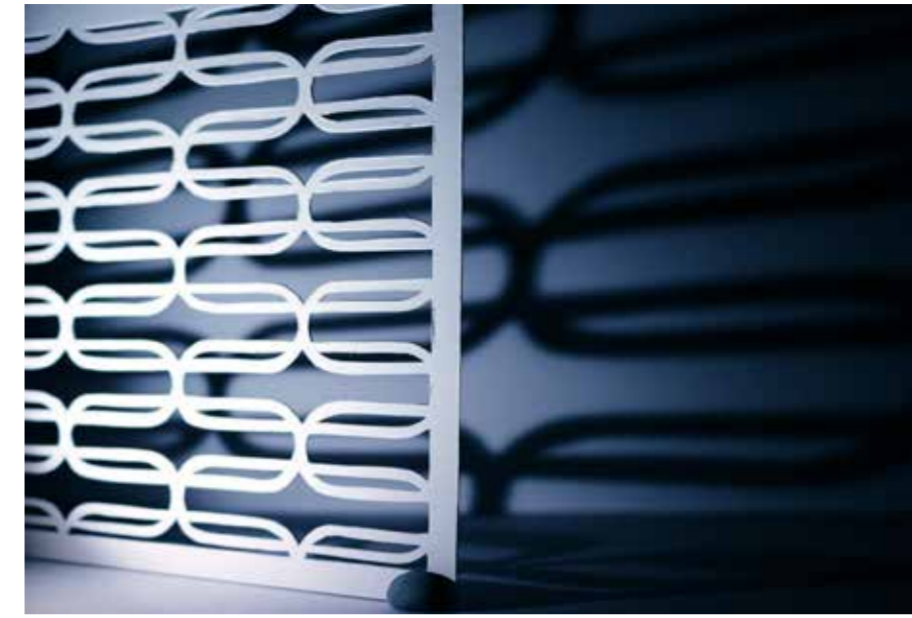
Here are the different **hand cut patterns** taken from the drawings of the **six original pattern sketches**. The initial six **patterns were inspired by the shapes of the Bargehouse**. These shapes can be used to create different shibori textiles or as shown here these shapes were repeated over and over to create patterns.

With these patterns other things can be made such as partitions, accent walls, decorative panelling, artwork, décor pieces, railings etc.

To see the different ways in which the patterns can look, an experiment of hand cutting each of them out from the initial sketches was carried out. This experiment saw how **the pattern changes** when you **only cut out the shapes** or when the **shape and background are cut out**.

In total there are now **12 different patterns** which were later **drawn-out using AutoCAD** and then used to **model 3D elements using Rhino**.

**Experiments using light** was used to see the various shadows that the pattern cut-outs created. The shadows **add an extra depth** to these pattern cut-outs which may help to create more **dynamic interior spaces**.

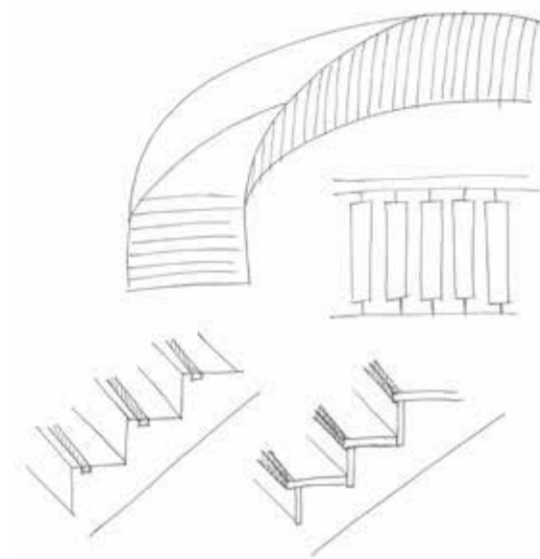


### SKETCHING IDEAS

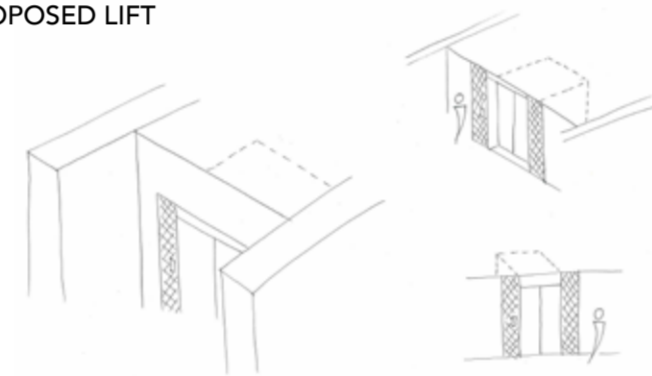
These are initial sketches of a **new feature staircase** to be designed on the ground floor of the Bargehouse, a **proposed lift** with decorative side panelling and **adaptable partitions** that can turn and stack up against the wall to help divide up the space into zones for various activities.

All these new design elements will take inspiration from the hand cut pattern designs.

#### FEATURE STAIRCASE



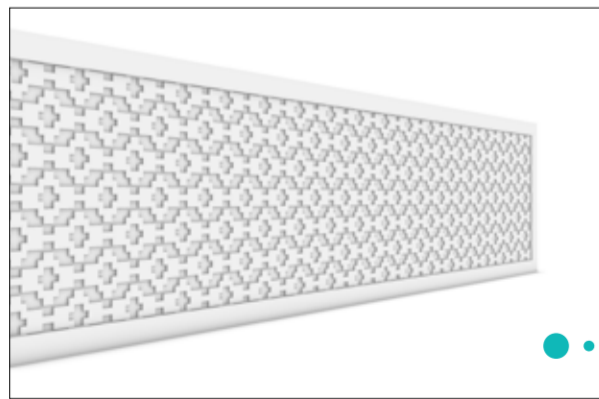
#### PROPOSED LIFT



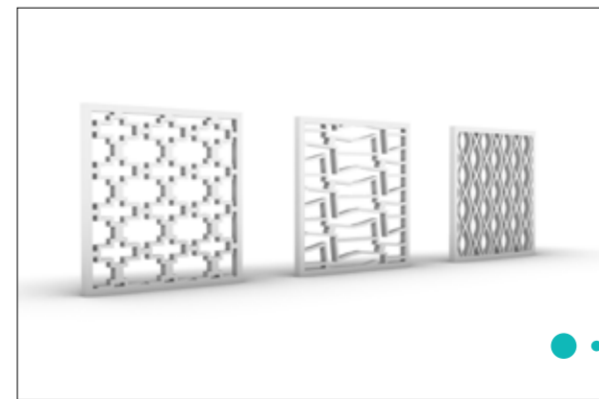
#### DECORATIVE PARTITIONS



### DIGITAL MODELLING IN RHINO



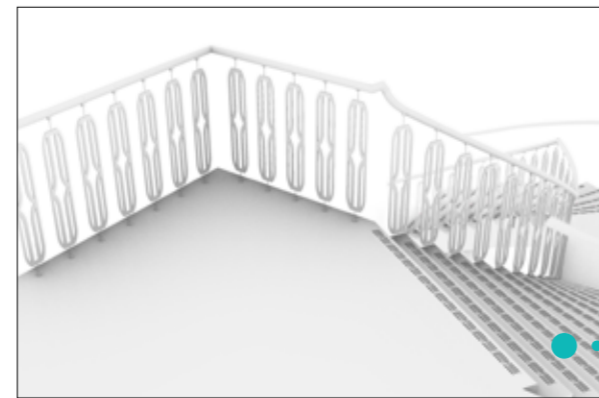
Ground floor pop up market accent wall.



Partitions for the exhibition, studio, and social spaces.

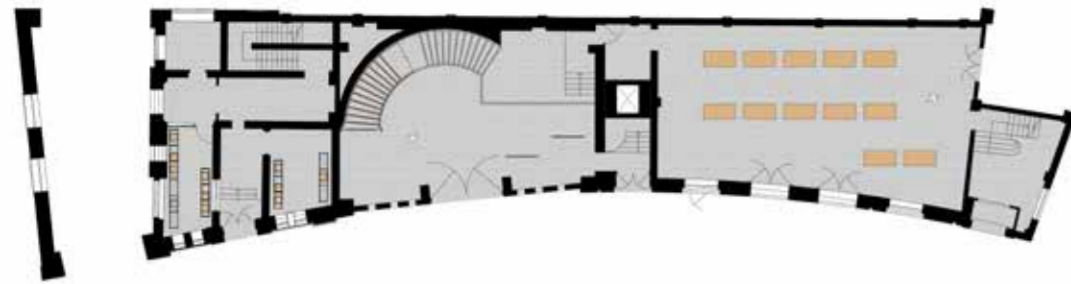


Proposed lift design with decorative panelling.

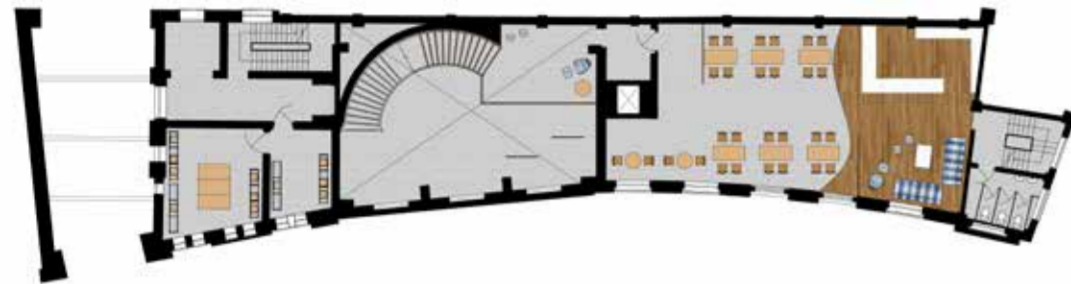


Feature staircase from the top platform of the stairs.

0 **GROUND FLOOR**  
Main community space and pop-up market.



1 **FIRST FLOOR**  
Main community space and cafe.



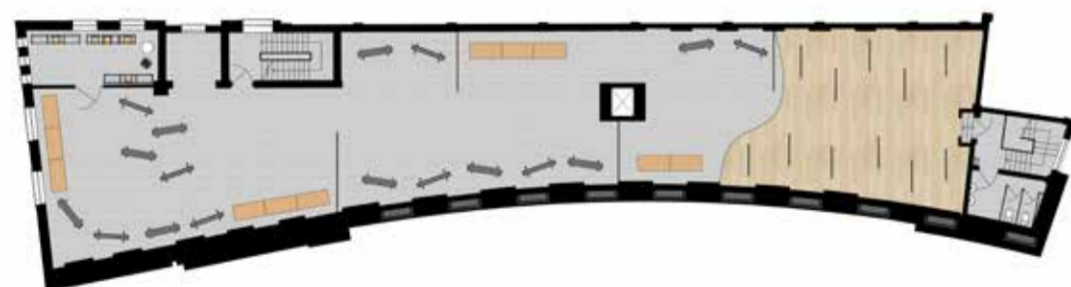
2 **SECOND FLOOR**  
Mixed use studio and social spaces.



3 **THIRD FLOOR**  
Mixed use studio spaces.



4 **FOURTH FLOOR**  
Community and permanent shibori exhibition spaces.



10m Scale Bar

**THE PROGRAMME**



The facilities of the Bargehouse will provide a space for the community to **develop transferable skills** and **build relationships** by **collaborating in artistic activities** and **raising money for charity** with a focus on loneliness which will hopefully **improve the wellbeing of all**.

**FINAL DESIGN**

The concept for the new design of the Bargehouse was to **encourage people to make connections**. The approach was to create an environment that **hosted art & design-based activities** so that the community of all generations, backgrounds and cultures can socialise and form closer relationships.

It is very important that a space like this was designed because of something that many overlook when talking about mental illness and wellbeing, which is the topic of **loneliness** that **affects people of all ages**.

With this new community space in the Bargehouse which is located right in the heart of the city, not only can the local community **connect with each other** but also with the communities further away that can come and see the exhibitions and pop-up markets **showcasing work from the local people**.

**Vitra** who will play a major role in this community space will help facilitate and run this organisation. Their **expertise in collaborating** with industry professionals makes them an important **inspiration for the community** to see what is also out there in the **industry of creative opportunities and possibilities**.



Sustainability



Collaboration



Inclusivity



Wellbeing



Opportunities



Ground floor main community meeting space.



First floor cafe space.



Second floor community social space.



Fourth floor permanent shibori exhibition.



Third floor mixed use studio space as a shibori workshop.