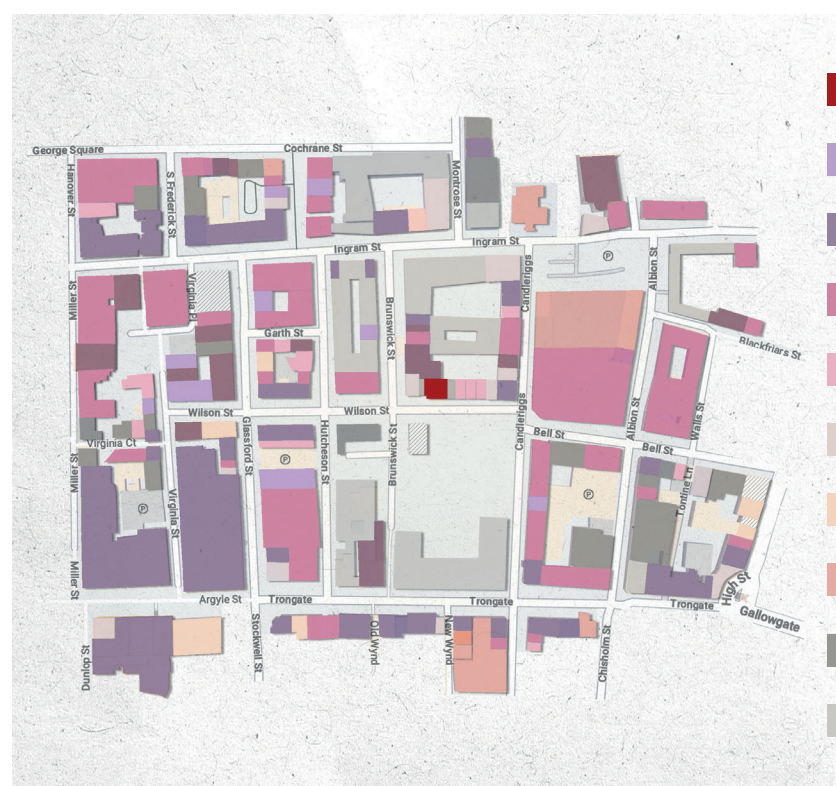
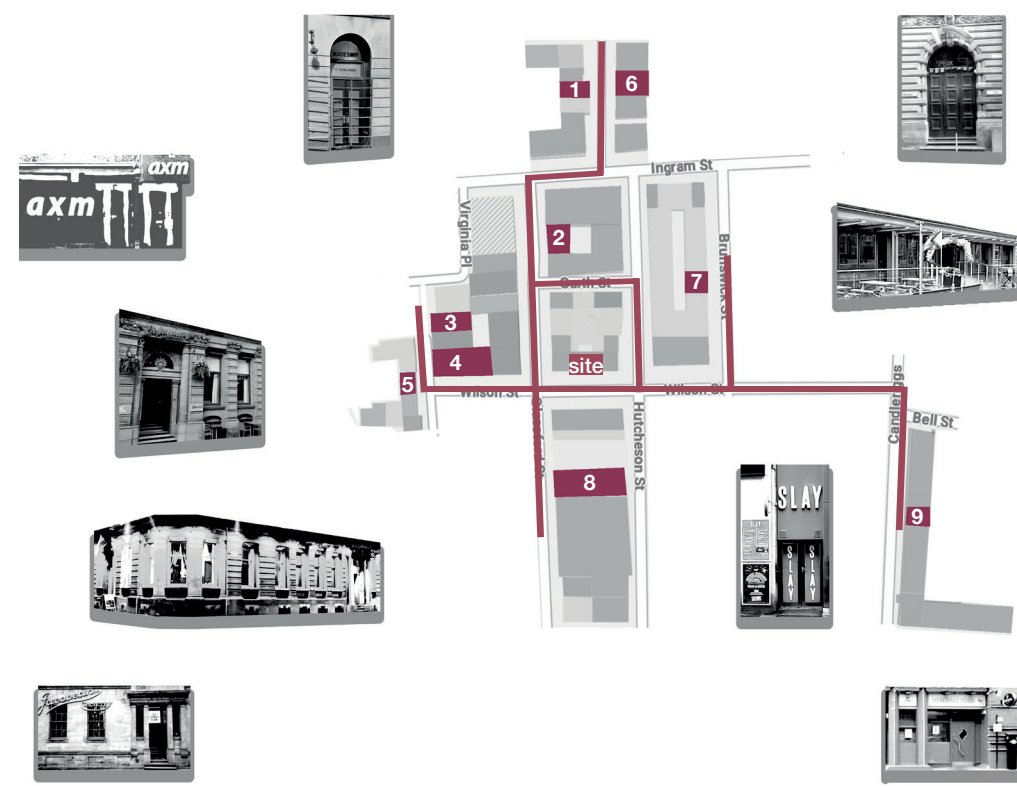




come out ~~in~~ THE CLOSET



- Site: 24-26 Wilson Street
- LGBTQ+ Venue
- Retail
- Bar/Restaurant
- Health & Wellbeing
- Cafe
- Supermarket
- Arts & Culture Venue
- Commercial
- Residential



Merchant City presents a layered urban context with strong cultural and LGBTQ+ visibility, but site research revealed a gap in spaces designed for inclusive, everyday queer experiences.

Merchant City hosts a range of queer venues, however they're predominantly nightlife spaces, leaving a gap in inclusive, daytime LGBTQ+ infrastructure.

Clothing is a key tool that queer people use to express themselves.

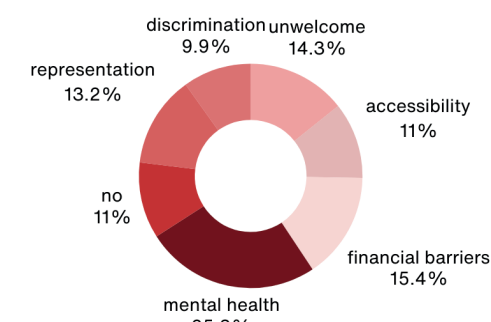
The Closet is a spatial response to the lack of inclusive daytime environments for LGBTQ+ people in Glasgow's Merchant City. Reclaiming a space once tied to secrecy, it transforms the idea of 'the closet' into a hub for queer fashion, self-expression and community celebration. As a multifunctional retail, workshop and social space, it supports creativity, identity and connection through everyday use. Garments by queer designers are produced on-site, making creation a celebrated and visible part of the retail experience. Rooted in queer ideas of inclusivity and performance, the design challenges conventional retail models and offers an accessible alternative to nightlife-focused queer spaces.



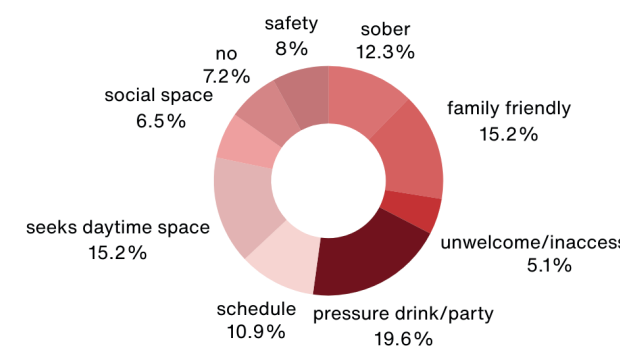
The Concept

I began the design process by thinking about 'the closet' as a threshold which in queer life often marks moments of tension and exclusion. Instead of erasing thresholds in the space, I wanted to explore what would happen if they became central to the design. Could it be flipped into something playful and inviting? This thinking shaped how I began to imagine the spatial experience and how different areas would relate to one another. Rather than acting as barriers, they could create connections between spaces without being fully open or closed. This would create a more positive experience that flips the narrative of what it means to cross these thresholds for queer people.

Are there any barriers preventing you from accessing LGBTQIA+ spaces?




Does the late-night nature of these venues affect your ability to access community spaces?




Survey participants identified barriers such as cost, alcohol culture, inclusivity and mental wellbeing, highlighting a clear demand for safer, more inclusive daytime options.


Spatial Strategy & User Journey

Users





Luca, 28
(They/Them)







Nia, 34
(She/Her)






Axel, 20
(He/Him)



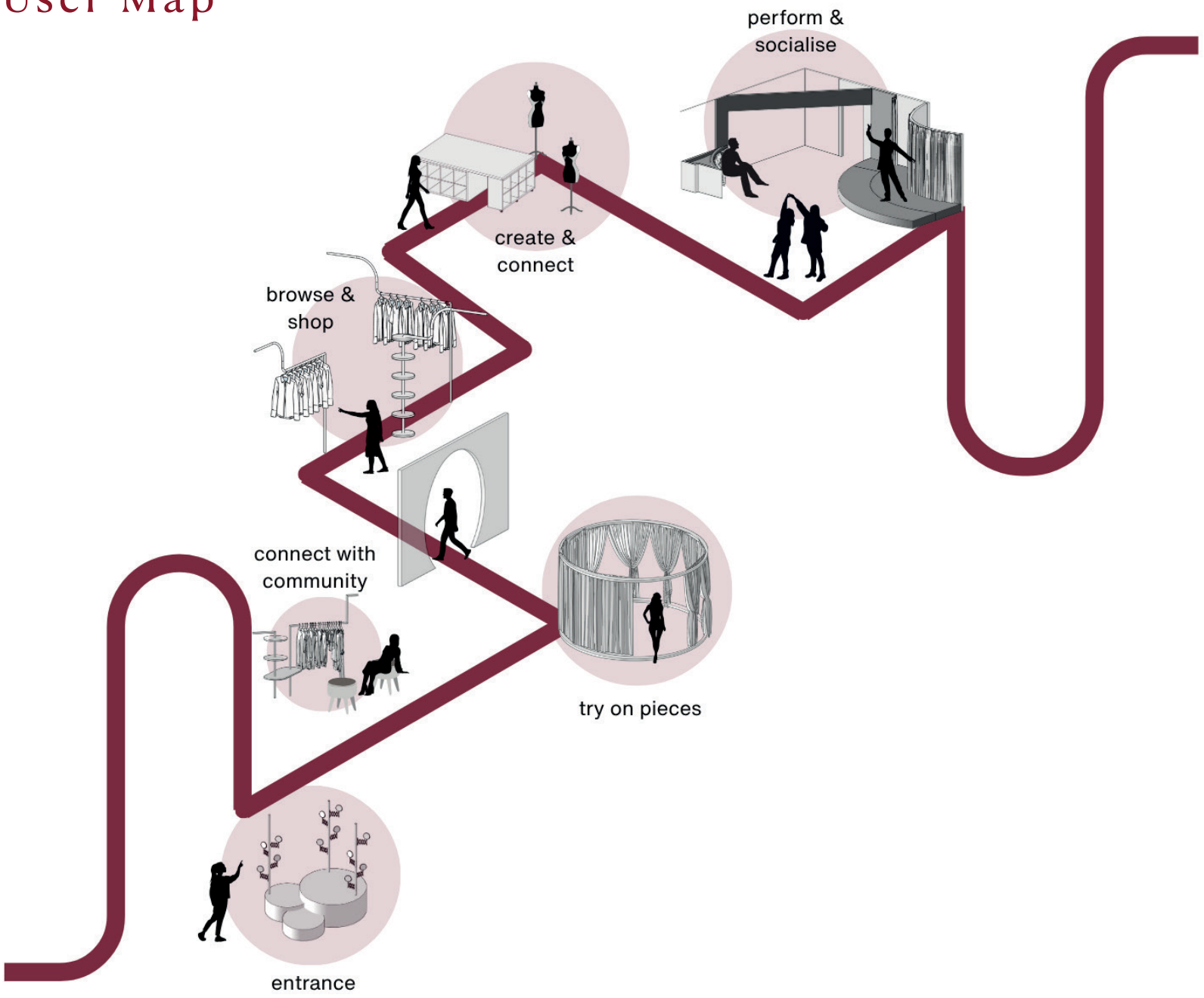


Clio, 41
(They/Them)



These target users reflect a spectrum of needs, from social connection and expression to creative and affirming environments.

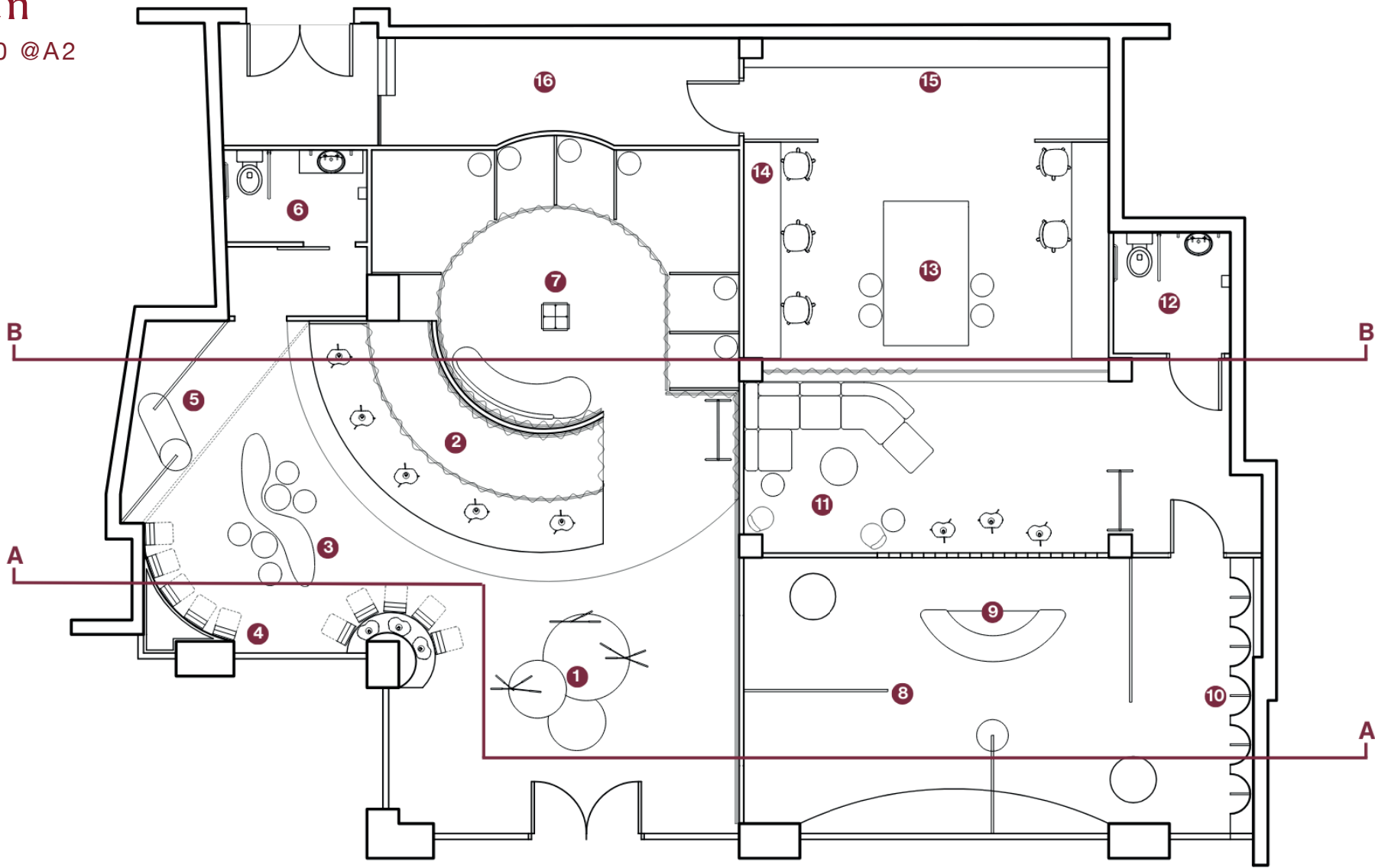
User Map



The Closet invites users on a spatial journey shaped by layered thresholds that nurture identity, connection, self-expression, and celebration.

Plan

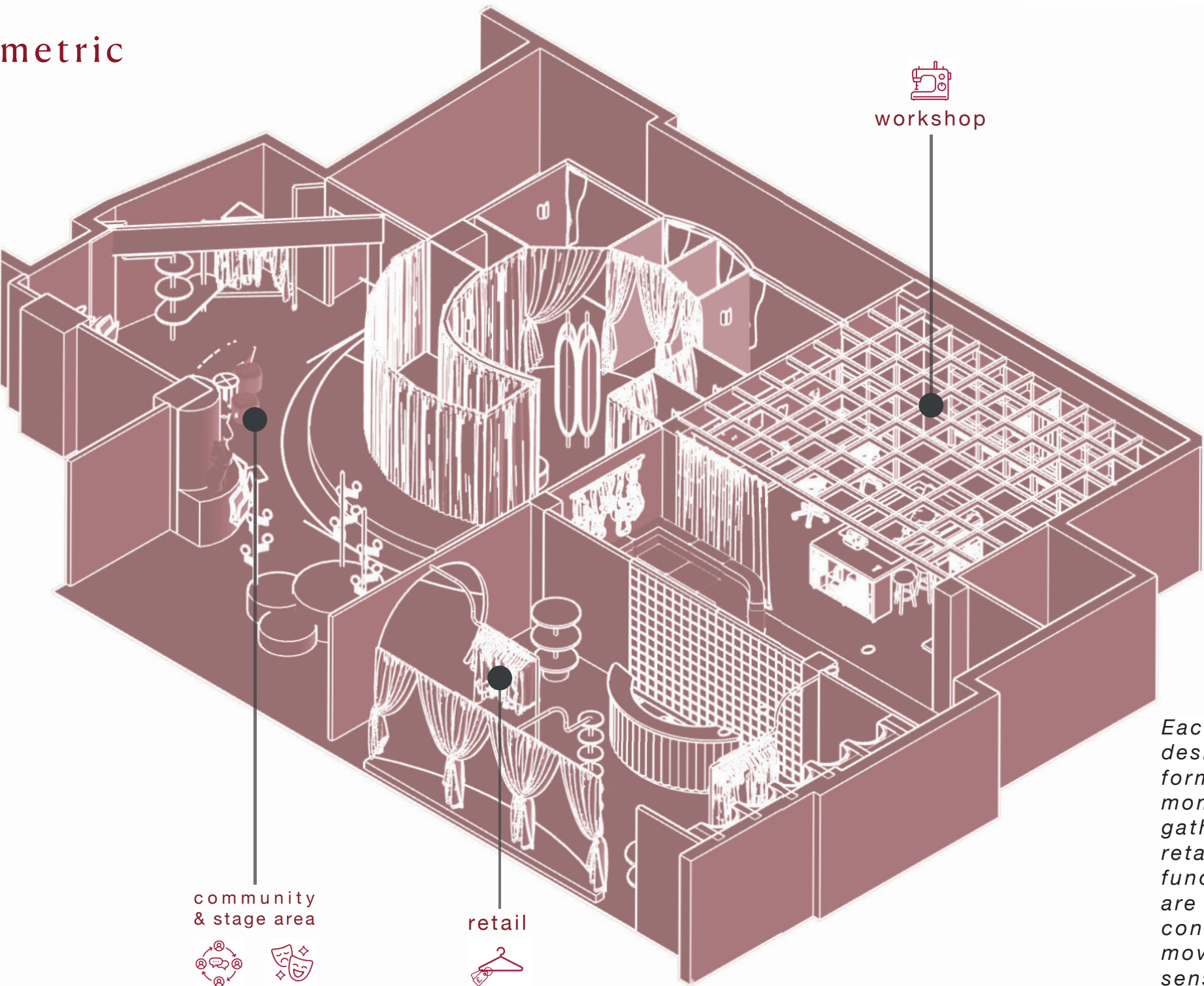
1:100 @A2



- 1) entrance feature display
- 2) multifunctional display/stage
- 3) communal seating zone
- 4) reclaimed theatre seating
- 5) community clothing share
- 6) public WC
- 7) changing rooms
- 8) bespoke retail railings
- 9) retail cash desk
- 10) feature retail display
- 11) social/collaboration zone
- 12) staff WC
- 13) collab/cutting table
- 14) individual work stations
- 15) workshop storage
- 16) back of house

Axonometric

1:100 @A2



Each zone within The Closet is designed to support different forms of engagement. From moments of expression and gathering to making and retail exchange. While their functions vary, the zones are visually and spatially connected, encouraging fluid movement and reinforcing a sense of collective identity.

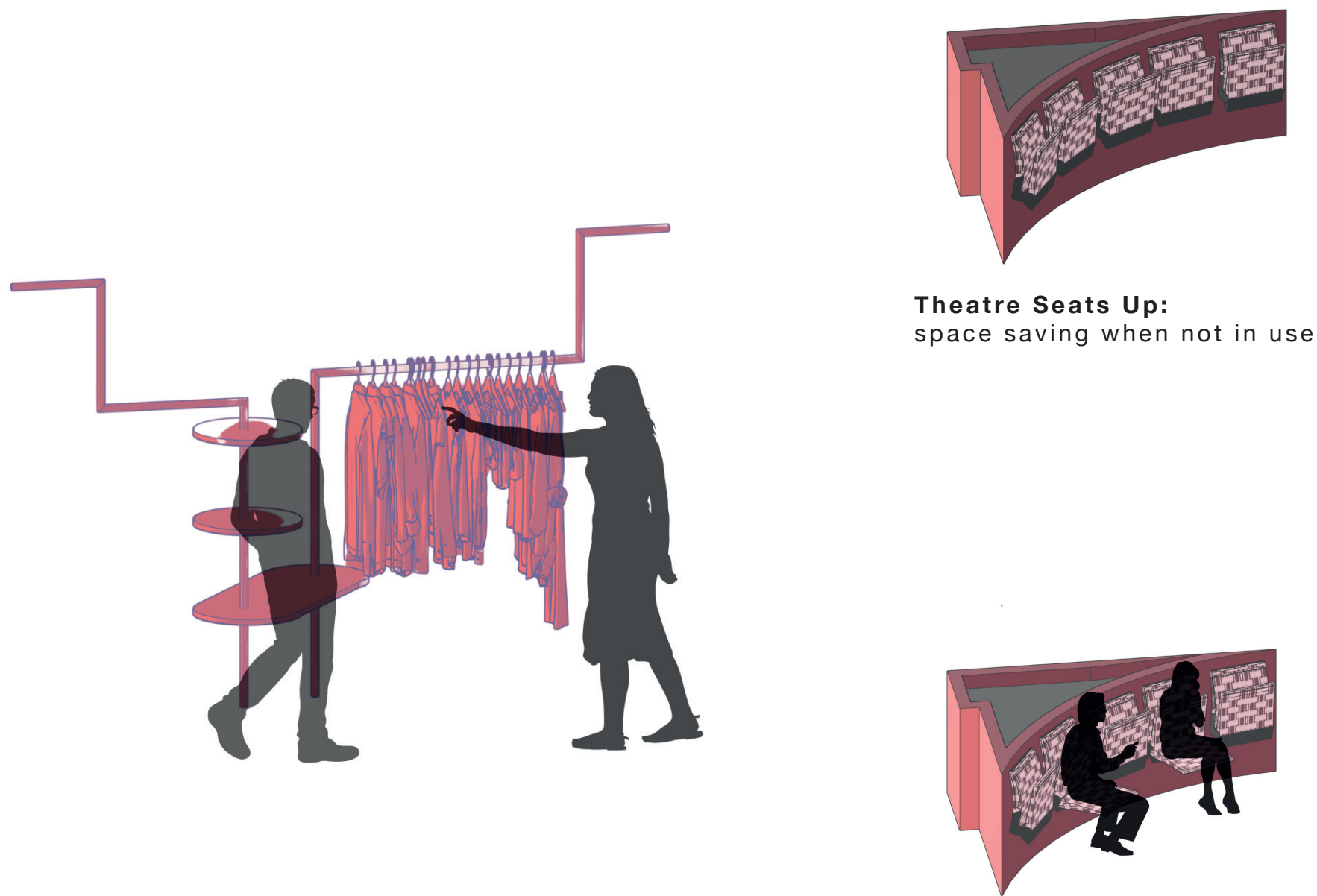
Community & Performance: A Flexible Space for Gathering and Expression



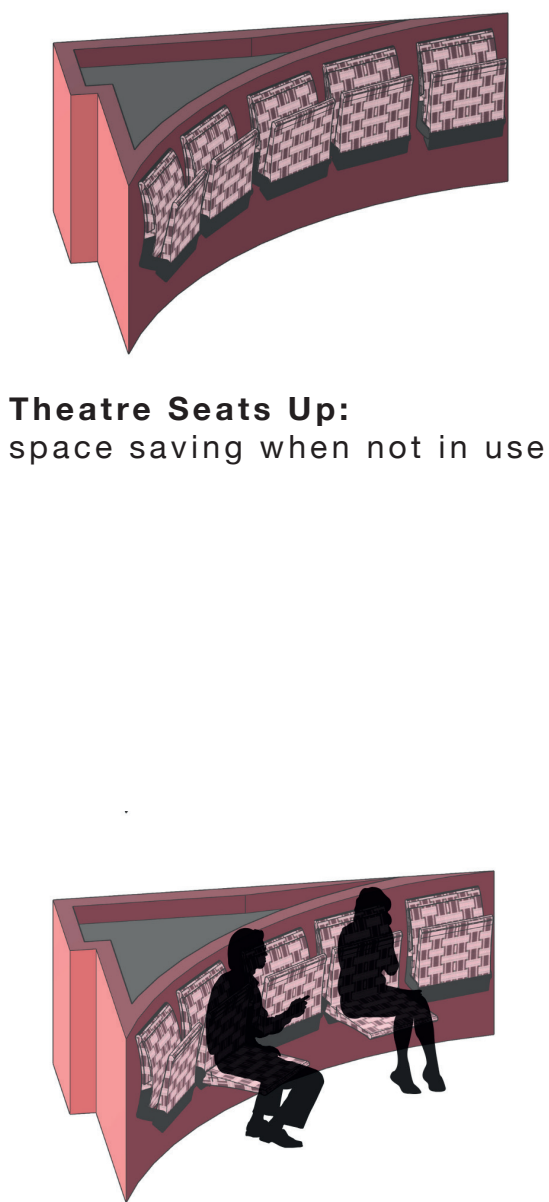
During the day, the space works as a relaxed seating area where people can meet and hang out. The soft forms and moveable furniture make it easy to adapt for different needs. There's also a community shop where people can donate clothes or take what they need, encouraging sharing, care, and circular fashion.



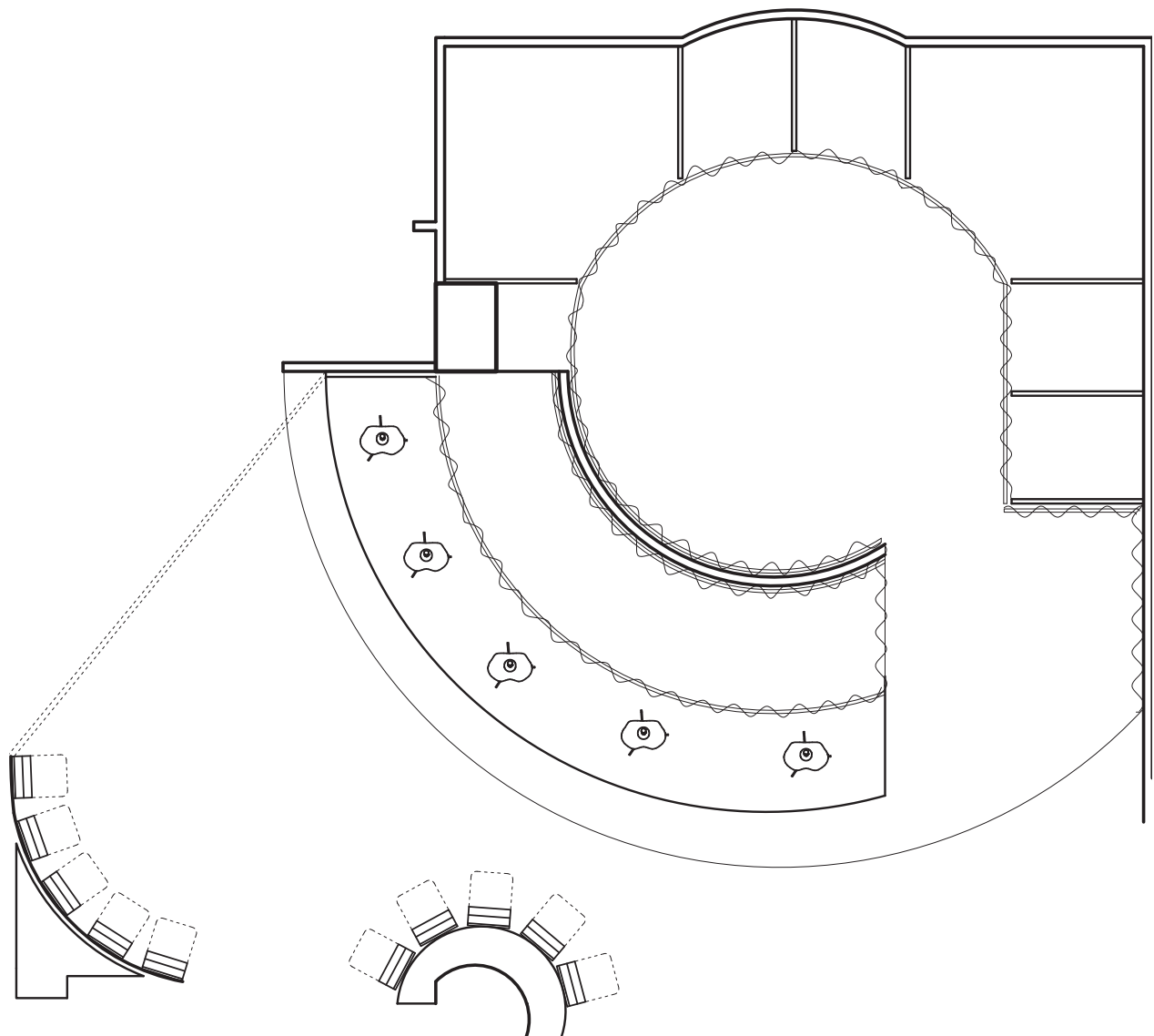
The modular design allows the display area to transform into a stage setting for events like fashion shows and drag performances. It adapts to the energy of the space and the needs of the community, offering moments for both connection and expression.



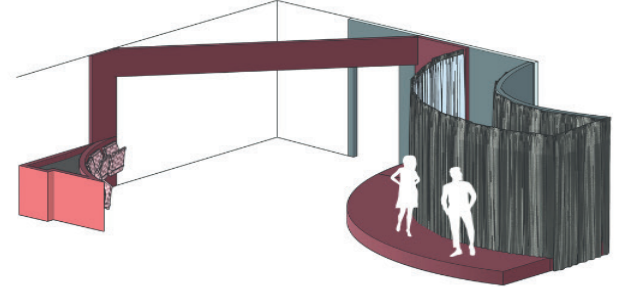
Community Shop Railing Detail:
donate, share & reuse



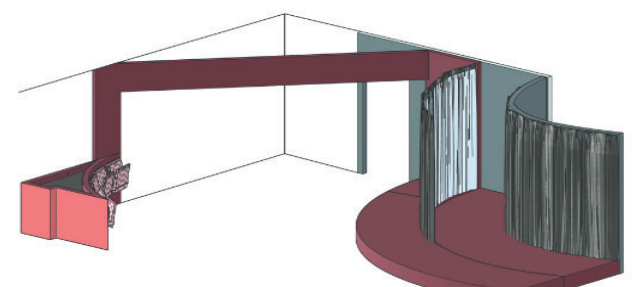
Theatre Seats Up:
space saving when not in use



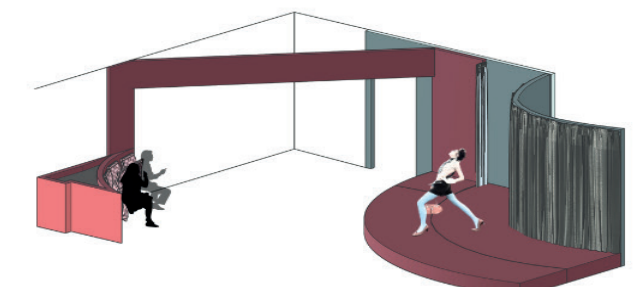
Display/Performance Zone Detail:
1:50 @A2



Curtains Closed:
platform acts as mannequin display



transition from display to stage

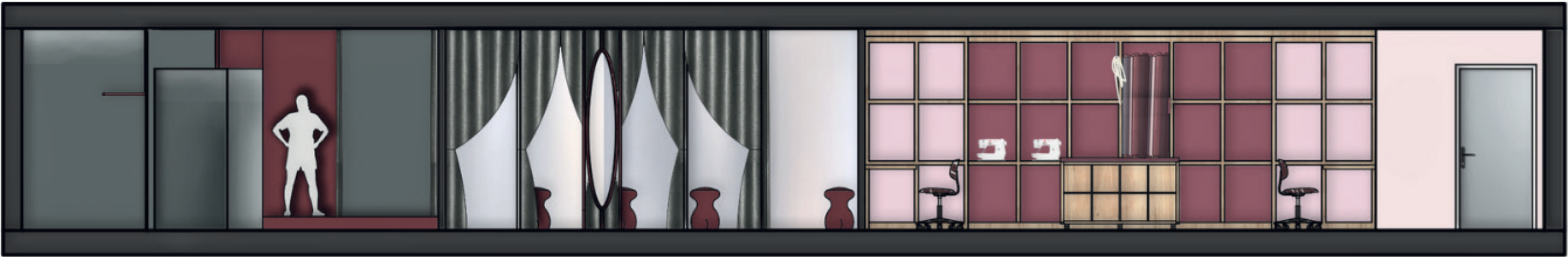


Curtains Open:
platform acts as stage/runway

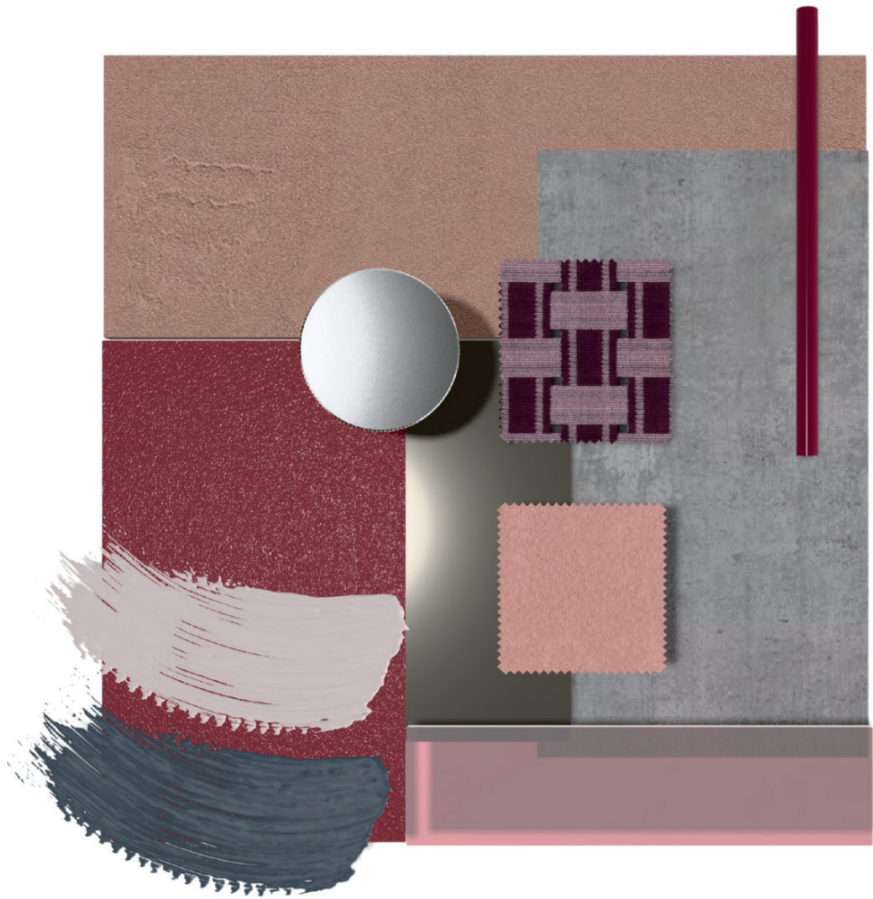
Constructing Identity Through Space & Material



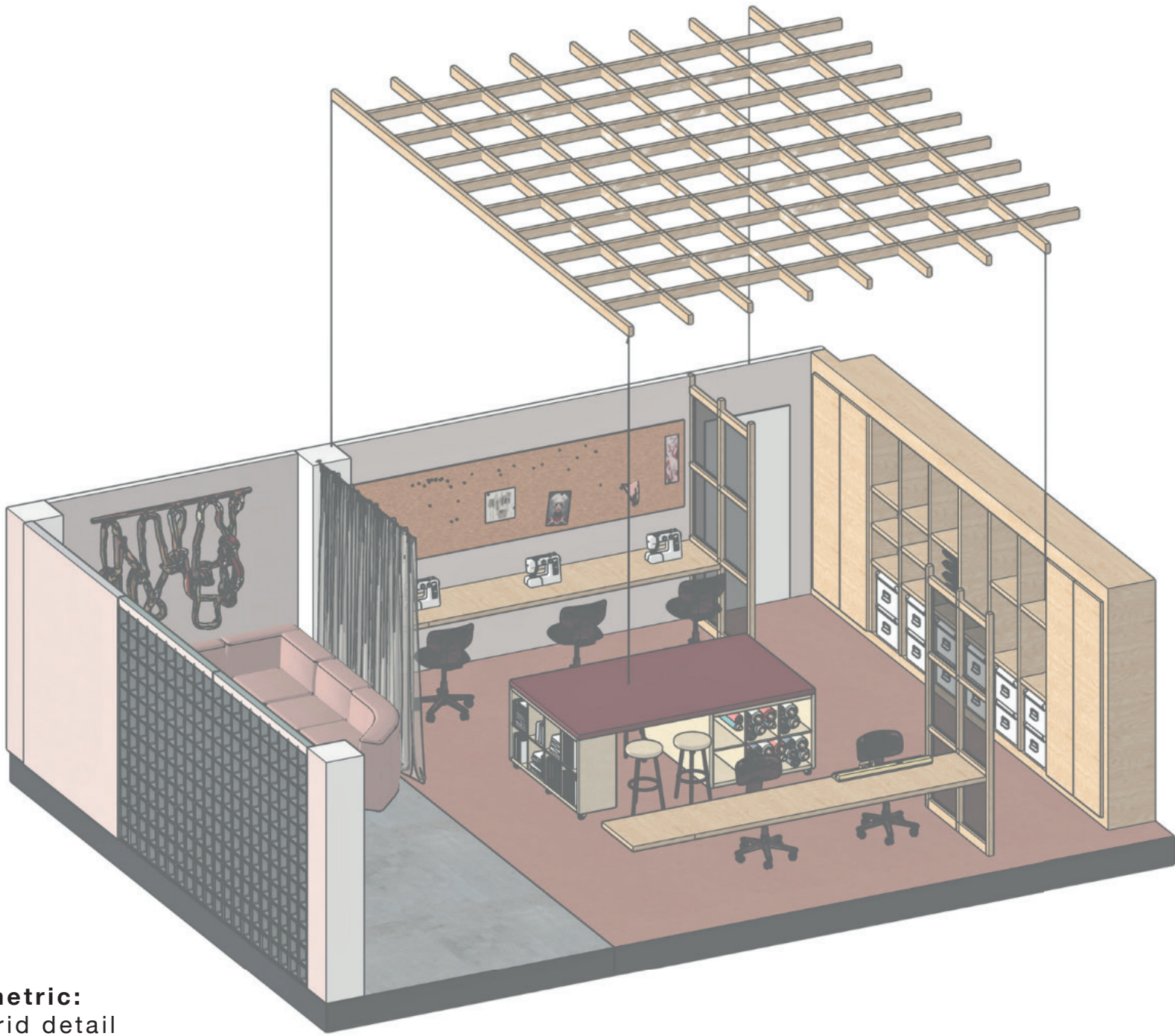
Section A:A
1:50 @A2



Section B:B
1:50 @A2



This palette brings together the key materials that run throughout the space. Reflective and translucent surfaces like mirror, lacquered paint and tinted acrylic play with distortion and visibility, linking back to themes of queer visibility and identity. These are grounded by more tactile elements like concrete and soft textiles, creating a balance between practicality and atmosphere.

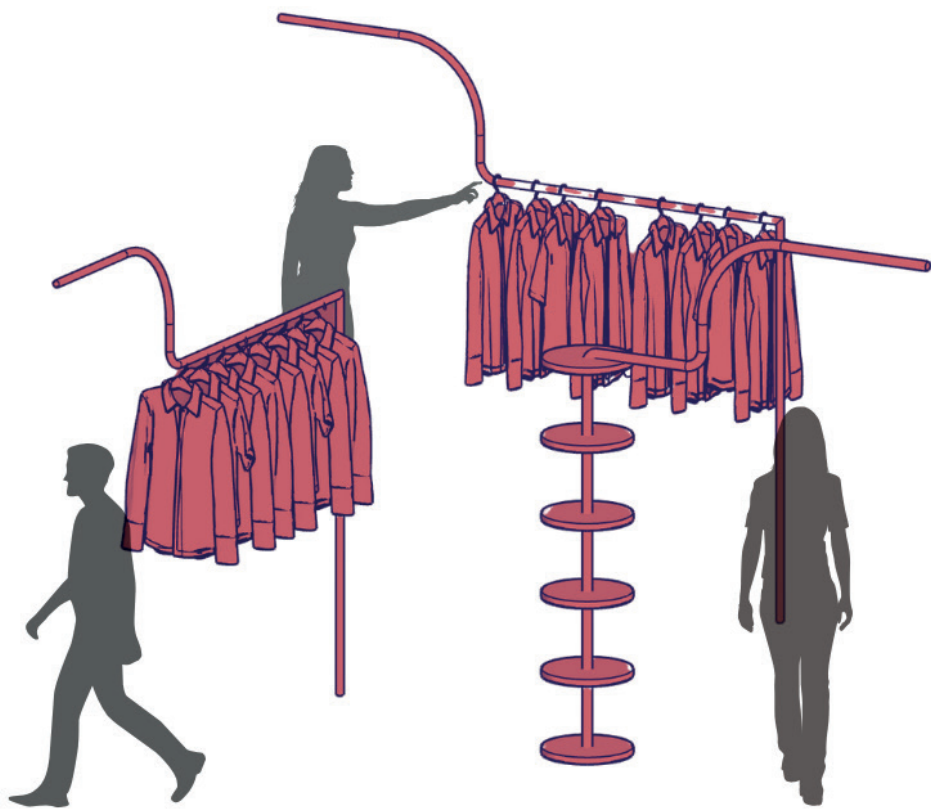
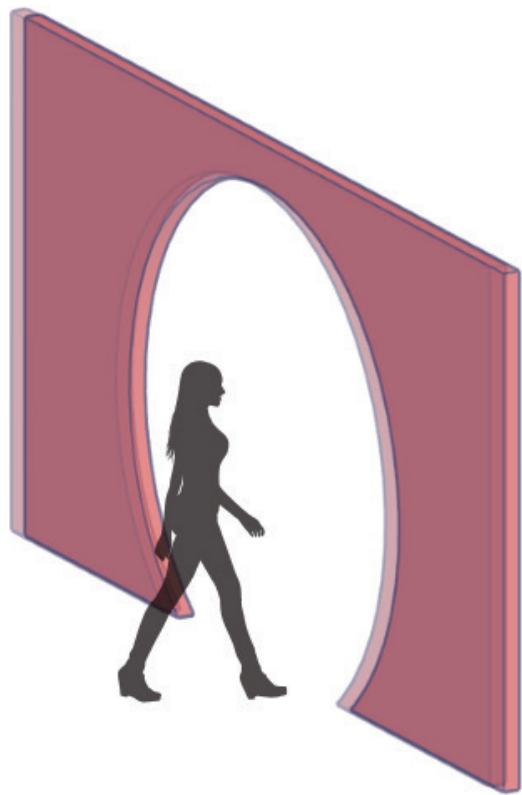
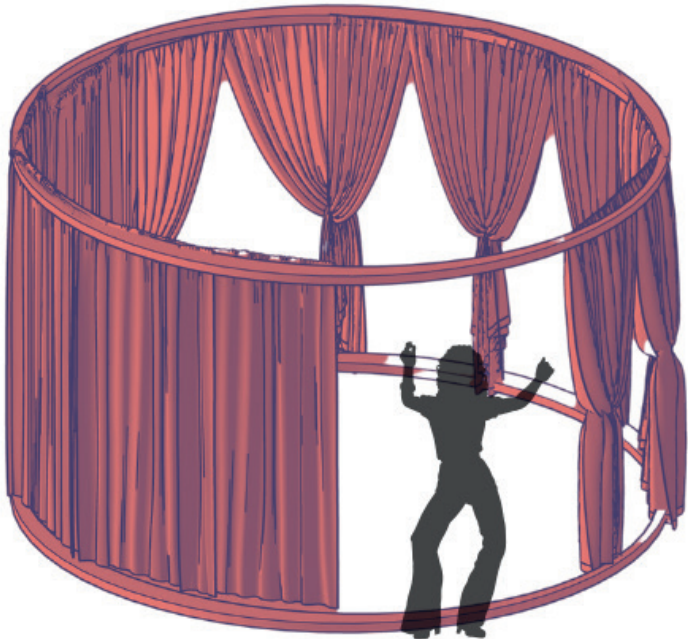


Workshop Axonometric:
exploded ceiling grid detail



The workshop continues the same language of colour, material, and intent as the rest of the space while leaning into function. It supports making without losing atmosphere, offering clear zones for collaboration, focused work, and rest. Designed to uplift queer designers, the space nurtures creativity and allows identity to be expressed through the act of making.

Fluid Retail: Queer Visibility Through Clothing & Space



Fluid Thresholds

These spatial elements reimagine thresholds not as barriers but as fluid transitions between states of privacy, visibility, and interaction. The circular changing room offers flexible intimacy, the arched entryway invites movement through softened boundaries, and the modular clothing rails introduces a sense of flow into the railing system encouraging free exploration. Together, they support a more open and expressive experience of space.



The circular changing area removes the pressure of traditional gendered spaces, offering a fully inclusive environment for people of all gender expressions. It's designed to feel more open, less intimidating, and allows people to try on clothes, express their identity, and share moments with friends if they choose.



Rather than following traditional retail layouts, the display avoids fixed categories like gender, creating a more open and exploratory way to shop. Materials like glass, mirror, and tinted acrylic bring in transparency and reflection, continuing the theme of queer visibility and self-expression that runs through the whole space.