

HERSTORIA

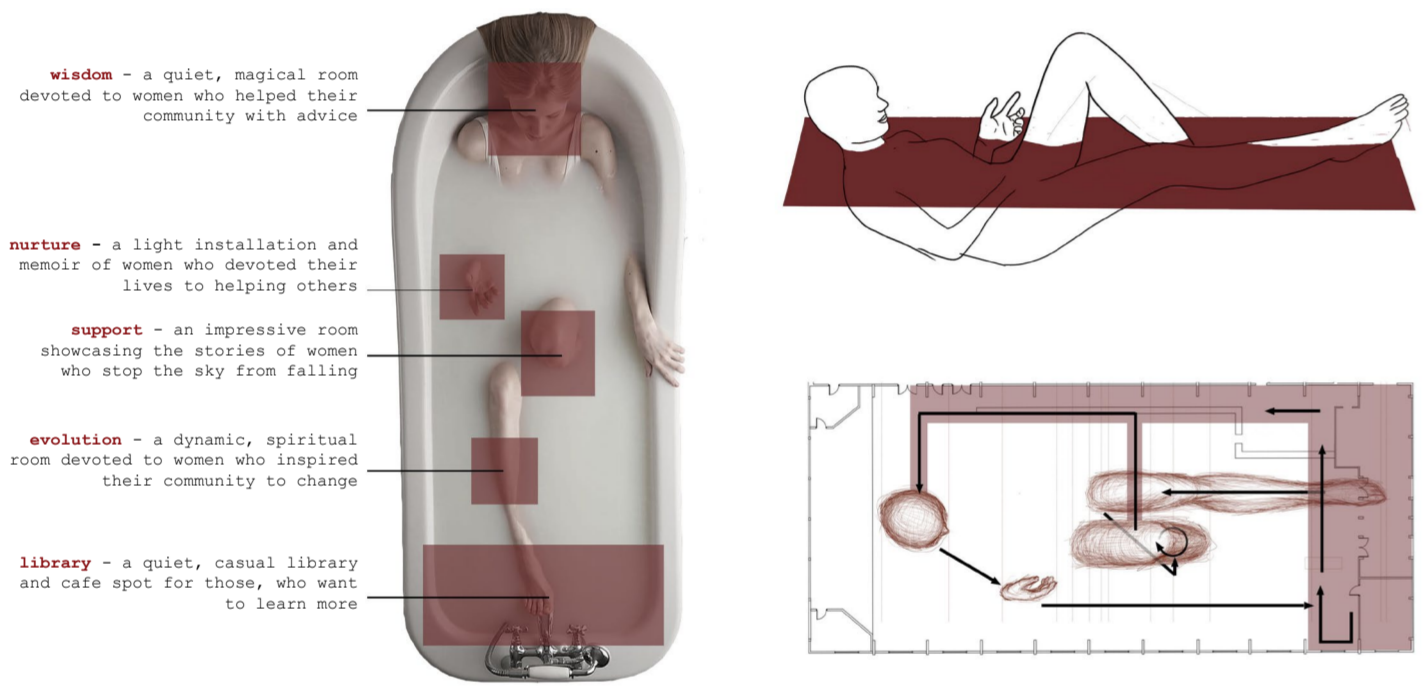
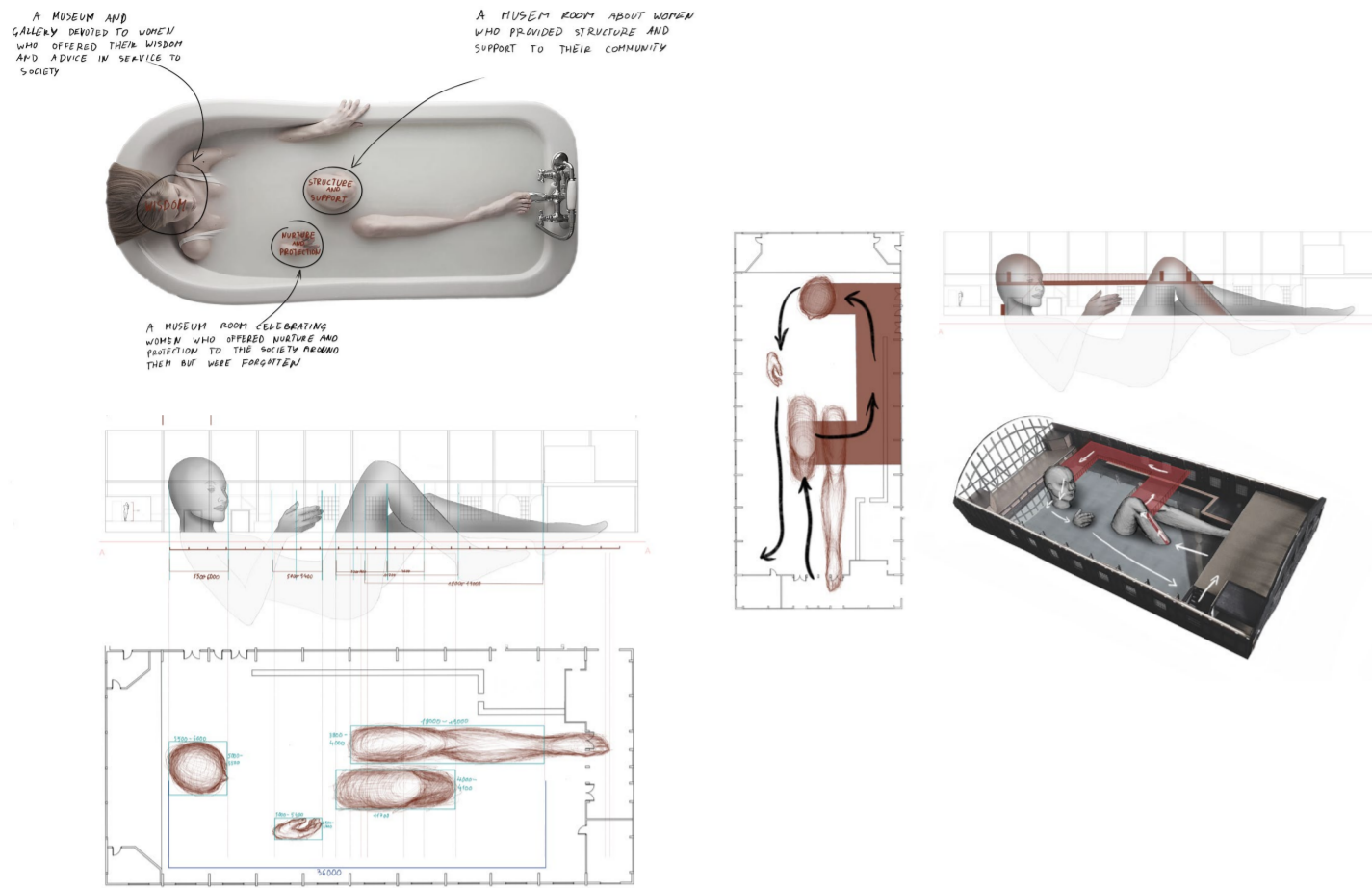
what if we could use interior design in helping women reclaim their voice?

THE BRIEF

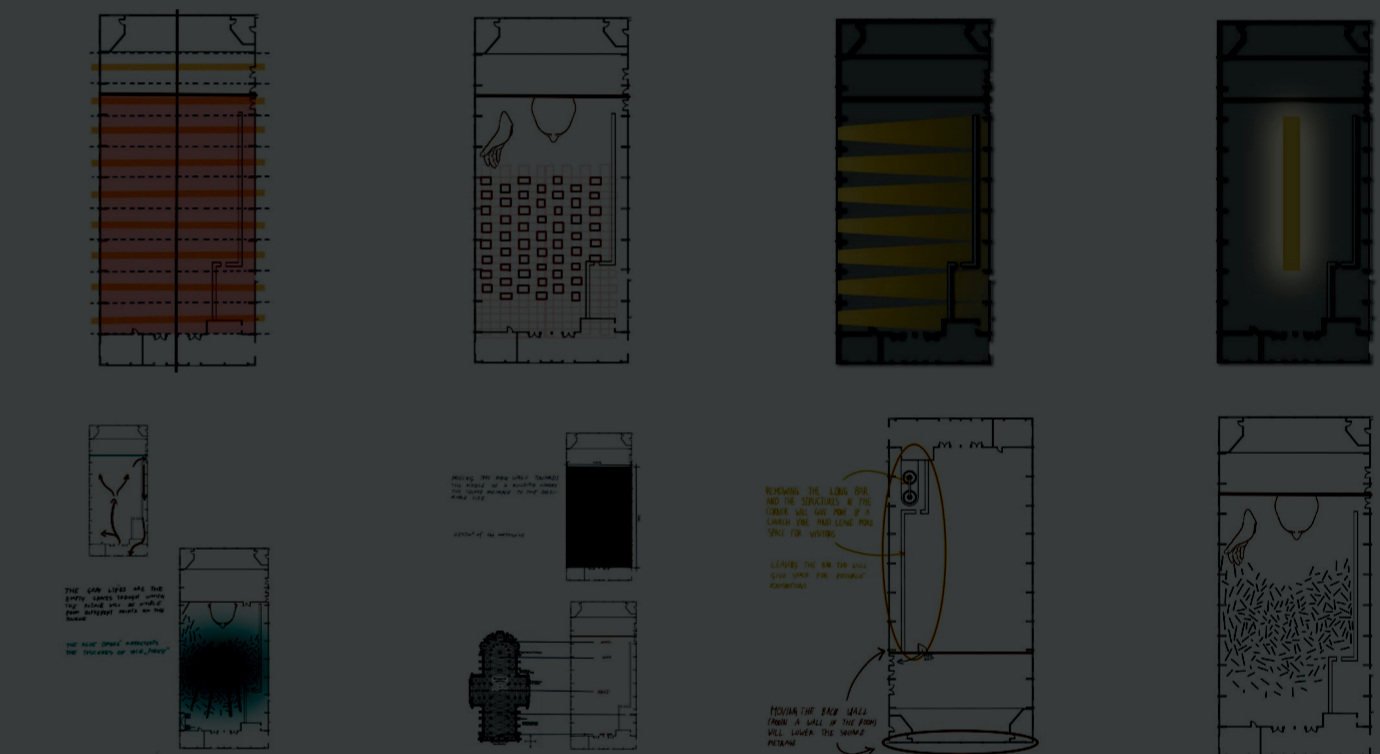
The current social unrest around the topic of female empowerment in Poland, where the Stara Zajezdnia building is located, prompted me to create a design solely dedicated to exploring the role women played in our civilization's development. Its purpose is to serve visitors with an experience that helps overwrite the seemingly set-in-stone narrative we have about our history and shed some light on those parts where women played a major role in forwarding the development of science, art, literature or politics, and have later been forgotten due to their gender and social standing.

This is both a museum and a temple of femininity, a place where we can understand and learn what it meant to be a woman and embrace what it is to be one now. This is a space to celebrate the forgotten female heritage.

concept development



site diagrams & doodles



- 1. the evolution room
- 2. the structure room
- 3. the nurture sculpture
- 4. seating area
- 5. the wisdom room
- 6. the gallery
- 7. cafe & library

project site:

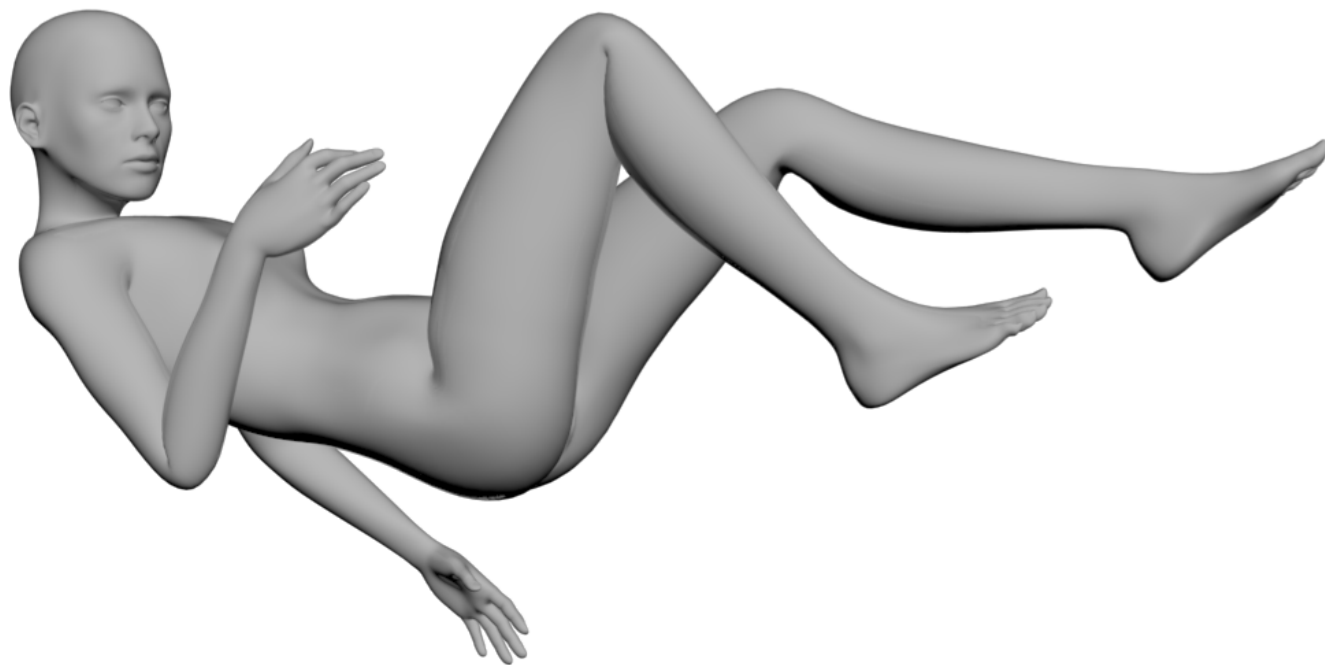
the old tram depot

- "stara zajezdnia"
- address: 5 wawrzynca st, krakow
- previously: tram depot
- currently: event space
- floor space: 1,443 sqm
- built: 1882-1928

our goddess

I decided to use the figure of a resting female body as a driving theme in my design. The intent behind this is to instil the feeling of being in a presence of something bigger than us. I wanted to portray the embodiment of womanhood the way we've been showing deities thought millennia- as imposing, powerful, and beyond our comprehension.

This figure is designed to be purposely androgynous to break away from the established status quo and further underline that femininity is much more than the socially imposed frames and stereotypes.



sources for research:



HERSTORIA
EMILIA ROSKOSZ

analysed: women's heritage

Throughout my research on the history and cultural impact of women in Eastern Europe, I was constantly being surprised by new stories I haven't heard before about women whose heritage and biography puts them among the most impactful people we learn about in school. I read book after book, listened to dozens of podcasts and have seen many articles about the world-changing impact of femininity over the centuries, however, I still couldn't lose the impression that this knowledge would never make its way to me if I didn't spend so much time researching that topic.

That need for education sprinkled with a bit of righteous anger at being cheated out of aeons of female heritage or even a chance to learn about it gave birth to the idea of a place where femininity can be properly cherished, remembered and appreciated the way it deserves. After spending even more time with all my Forgotten Women and their stories I saw a gap in the market- a desperate need for a space devoted solely to the history of these heroines of their own stories and I felt the need to give them back their voices- stolen by the social injustice, prejudice, circumstances of their birth and their gender. I usually spend a lot of time on research before any project. This is because everything I create comes from the need to express something I perceive as important, so extensive research is partially for my benefit. The idea for a project about femininity has been brewing in my mind for a while- evidenced by the works of art I created right before the start of my design process for Herstoria:

**“TREMENDOUS AMOUNTS
OF TALENTS ARE BEING
LOST TO OUR SOCIETY
JUST BECAUSE THIS
TALENT WEARS A SKIRT”**

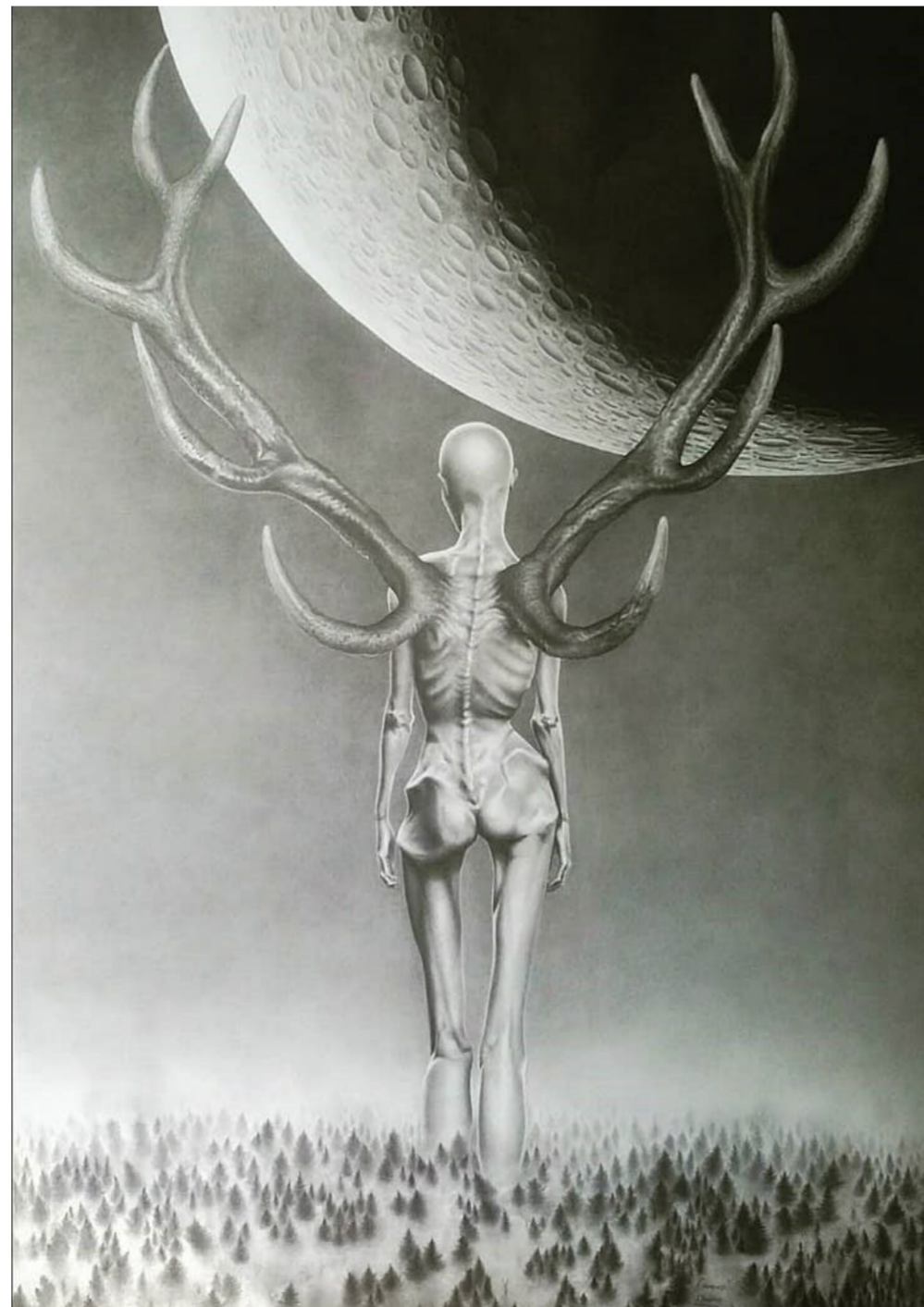
-SHIRLEY CHRISHOLM



“Boys will be boys”

Author: me (Emilia Roskosz)
Size: 500mm x 700mm
Medium: pencil on paper

This piece was inspired by my research for the Herstoria project and the social unrest in my home country- Poland. Political polarisation has never been as strong as it is in the last couple of years, with the main issue being a conflict between religious and secular factions. Poland has a history of gender inequality that deeply affected me in my childhood, being brought up in a conservative household. I deal with it by visually illustrating a problem I think needs to be addressed. This drawing, titled “Boys will be Boys” shows the objectification of women in Eastern European culture, the difference between the way men and women are viewed and the exploitation we have to face every day. This woman is being treated as an object, used to her detriment by a male embodiment of patriarchy- strong, unyielding and faceless- for a purpose completely out of her control.



“Cernunnos”

Author: me (Emilia Roskosz)
Size: 841mm x 594mm
Medium: pencil on paper

This drawing addresses the climate crisis my generation will be forced to face in a few years. Cernunnos, the Celtic deity of forests and nature, has usually been portrayed as a horned, imposing, larger-than-life figure. I believe, however, that the more accurate representation of this god is a female- as the personification of the environment that is being mistreated similarly to women in our history. The way we destroyed native habitats around us doesn't let me show Her healthy- if she's the god of the forest, she suffers with it.



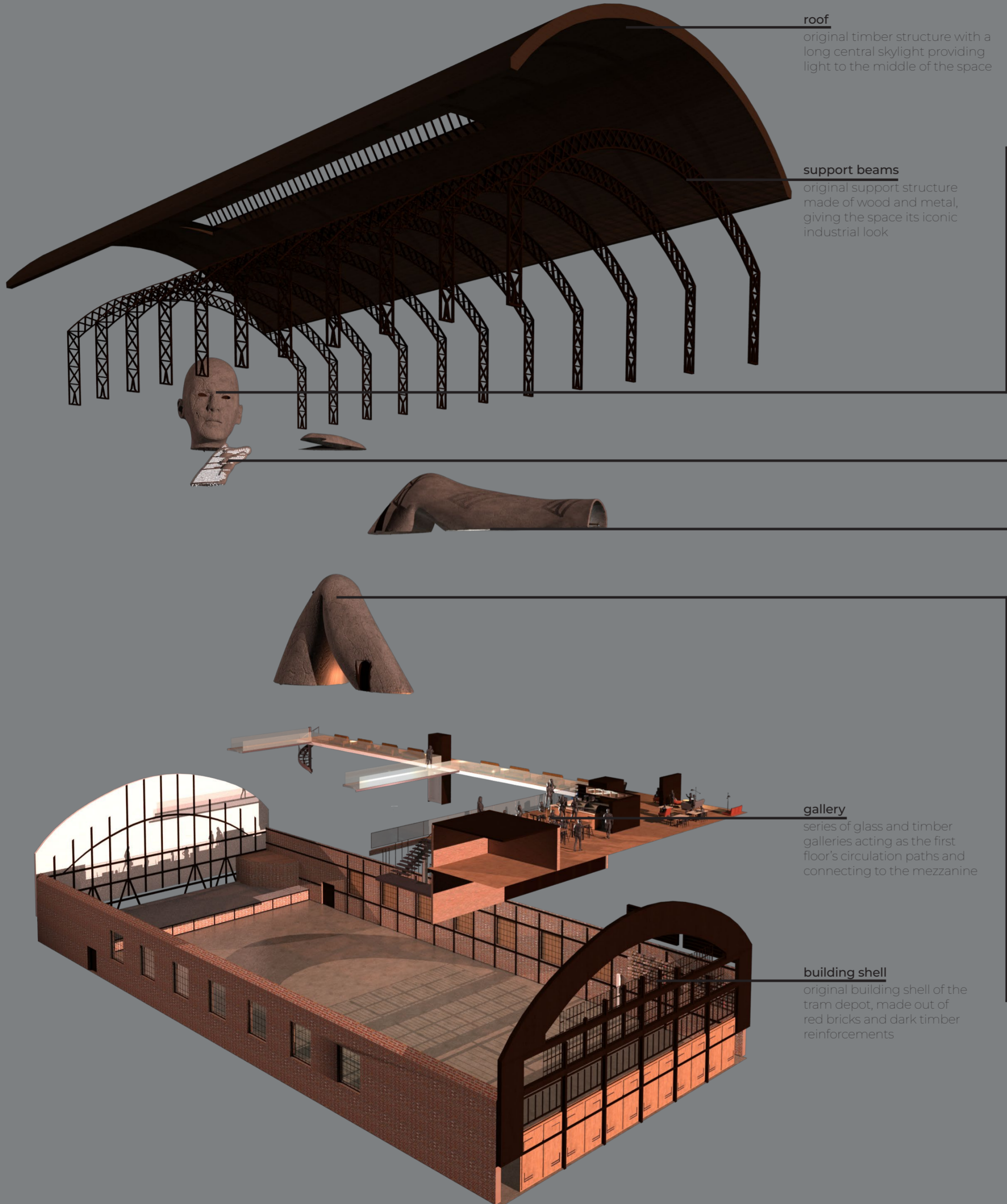
“Everything is fine”

Author: me (Emilia Roskosz)
Size: 570mm x 570mm
Medium: pencil on paper

This is a commentary on the way media and those in power prefer to sugar-coat the social unrest we are facing. People, who have been in charge of the decision-making that led us to this point, are also in charge of informing us about the consequences of their decisions. Personified depiction of the “problematic topic”- whether it is the environment, systemic racism or misogyny is being ineptly presented as resolved, but even a cursory glance past the “puppet” will reveal that this is in fact not the case, and that there is still plenty of work to be done.



USER JOURNEY



wisdom

this room, located in the "head" of the structure, is inspired by all the wisdom that women have provided society with

nurture

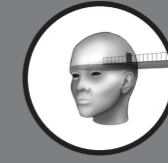
this part of the sculpture is shaped like a cupped palm of a hand. The LED lights shaped like letters tell a story of the women who cared and nurtured their communities

evolution

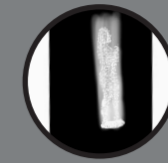
this space, the longest out of all of them, is devoted to the female explorers, scientists and other women who helped to push humanity further into the future

structure

this room shows the stories of women who provided society with stability and who governed the rules to make sure the structure is being upheld



on your way to this room you have a chance to admire the Goddess from the mezzanine. it's a good moment to take pictures, although you will have another chance at the end of your journey. you come closer to the head, and see partially concealed doorway leading inside. what could possibly be hidden in the mind of a deity?



you are greeted with a dark room, the only source of light being the vertical collums made out of what looks like fairy lights. when you look closer, the shapes "inside" the collums start resembling human figures suspended above the floor. these are light statues of women who never themselves had a chance to step into the spotlight.



by touching the tiny suspended lights you trigger motion sensors and you hear a clear voice of a woman, telling you her story. this is how you learn about her and her biography. these are women who don't reveal their secrets themselves, but to learn anything you have to ask for information. who knows, maybe they have some answers for you?



like the women in question, this installation humble and quiet. the fingers of the palm are shaped into steps, creating a few levels of seating- this part of the statue is covered in what looks like "light tattoos" shaped like sentences. they are telling the stories of women that were forgotten, but deserve to be credited for their devotion to helping others.



when you enter this room, the first thing that hits you is the fog. it is coming from underneath your feet and hides the edges and the opposite side of the room and dampens the echos. when it dissipates a little, you see a raised path weaving its way through the space, leading you deeper into the space.



you see a strong light emanating the end of the room. you notice there are sculptures on both sides of the path- they are glowing slightly in the dim light. all seem so dynamic, they look like they are running towards the lit up part of the room. you move closer to the first statue- now you can clearly hear the recorded voice.



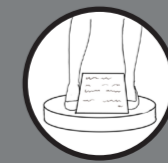
you stop and sit on the edge of the path- it's raised enough so you can sit. the fog gathered by the floor swallows you, dampening most sounds. it is telling you a story of a woman, who pushed against boundaries, helped her society to progress and evolve, but whose legacy was lost. this is the first time when she can share her story with the world.



after leaving the first room, you are guided to the hidden door in the sculpture that leads you to a narrow, tall room hiding a circular staircase. you start climbing up, towards a faint light coming from above. it's eerily quiet. This is a room representing another gift that women bring to their communities.



you enter the room through a trap door in the floor. the first thing that draws your attention are two massive sculptures- they seem to be holding the ceiling up. they are intimidating and impressive, emanating strenght. you want to come closer so you cross the room, passing by a seating area littered with information panflets and books.



the two sculptures are the heroines that the world forgot. near the source of the light that shines up from below you can clearly see engraved boards with their names and biography notes. to read them you have to bow your head, paying tribute to the sculptures. you have to find out the information on your own. they are too busy saving the world.

physical model

making of & final results

The main structure in the room, The Statue, was designed in 3D Studio Max and later 3D printed using high-quality off-white resin. To imitate the texture of concrete the real-sized sculpture would have had, I used a sponge to apply the painting gesso and give it a rougher finish. Then I coated it with two layers of watered-down acrylic paint and rubbed the excess away to leave it only in the cracks and dips in the surface.

One of the more challenging parts of that build was the spiral staircase in the corner- it is hidden out of sight, but its lack would have lowered the level of detail in the model. I measured and calculated the 4mm long steps and the angle under which they would have been and glued them to the centre pole using non-toxic glue.

The furniture was mainly constructed using carefully cut paper, pieces of mountboard and wire staples. It was especially tricky because of the small scale of the model, and therefore every millimetre being crucial.

I made the pop-up cafe as a separate piece before installing it on the mezzanine inside the model. I worked to use different finishes to convey different surfaces- rough paper carved into stripes to resemble wooden planks, plastic painted white on one side to represent glazed countertop, mountboard for wooden shelves and translucent plastic fashioned into a glass lid of a countertop display. I also cut circles out of white plastic to fashion them into stacks of tiny plates.

The delicate window frames this building is known for were too thin to be accurately made using wood or paper, so I decided to cut small bits of wire and glue each one of them onto the surface of a plastic window.

White cutting out base shapes of the walls I left hollow spaces alongside the edges that were later fitted with 7mmx3mm magnets. similar magnets were hidden along the edges of the roof, so after putting it on the building the structure wouldn't be sliding to the sides to damage any component of the model.

Model

Author: me (Emilia Roskosz)
Scale: 1:150
Medium: pencil on paper

Interior design revolves more around colours and textures than disciplines such as architecture, so model making for this industry should look different. I developed my own style of model making, striving to achieve high realism and detail and relying on materials, textures, colours and finishes to convey the mood of the piece I am creating. I want my models to be so believable that you can see a tiny version of yourself wandering inside, seating on the couches and reading the tiny books.

