

# B L A K E

**“THERE HAS ALWAYS BEEN A LACK OF BLACK REPRESENTATION IN THE ART AND DESIGN WORLD”**

## INTRODUCTION

Just 2% of Interior Designers identify as Black; and overall in the UK, still just 14% of the working age population represent BAME background. Two out of five BAME interior designers face discrimination in the workplace due to their race or ethnicity according to the British Institute of Interior Design (BIID). Over 60% believe that any advancements within the industry have been hindered because of their race or ethnicity.

### “PROBLEM REQUIRES A “MULTI-FACETED” SOLUTION”

The BIID suggests that having a multi-faceted approach is a way forward; forming a Diversity and Inclusion committee providing the help to support change within design firms from recruitment, internships, and opportunities for promotion. Furthermore, connecting with partners in wider industries such as universities, colleges, trade shows, award schemes, suppliers and other initiatives to ensure the practice of diversity and inclusion.

In recognition of an active effort to increase the issue of diversity in the interior design sector, Sophie Ashby and Alexandria Dauley have established the United in Design initiative; outlining key steps in which interior design companies should acknowledge in order to improve their diversity. (Hahn, J, 2021)

## CONCEPT [SYMBOLISM]

Adinkra symbols tell a story of African heritage and how it is rich and deep in culture. Originating from the Akan people; the dominant ethnic group of present day Ghana and the Ivory Coast located in West Africa, these ancient symbols create a visual representation of important cultural concepts, ideas, spiritual meaning and emotions. According to the Akan tradition, Adinkra images emerged in the early 1500s as design statements on fabric.

## INSPIRATION [BOATS]

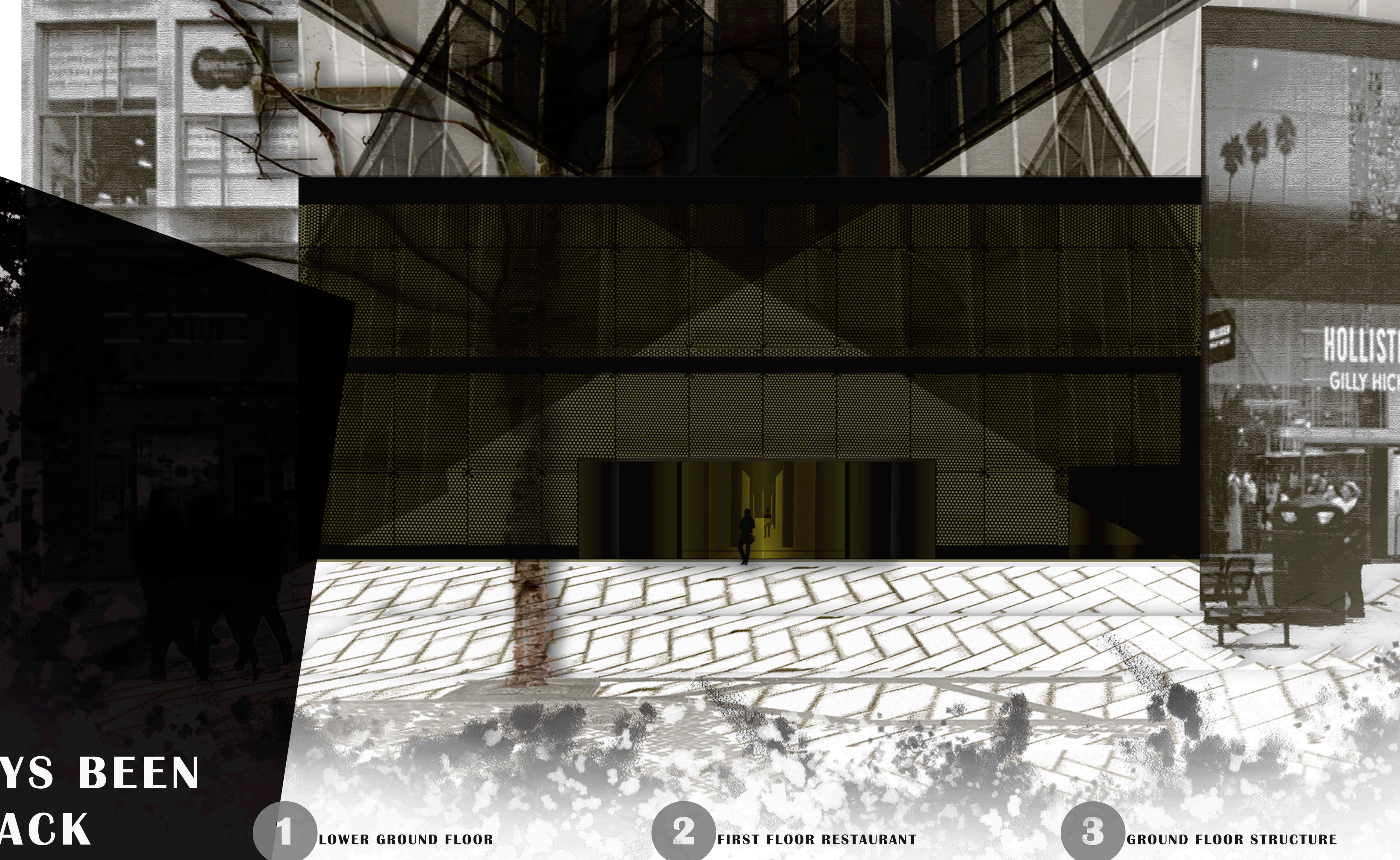
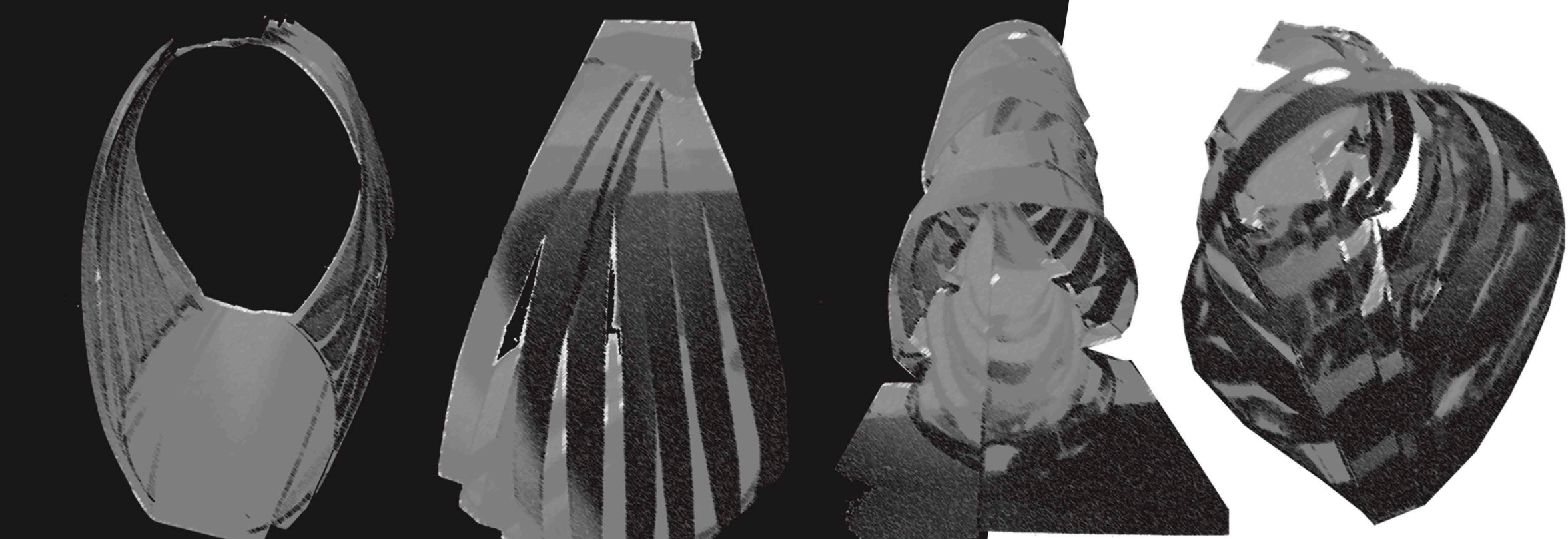
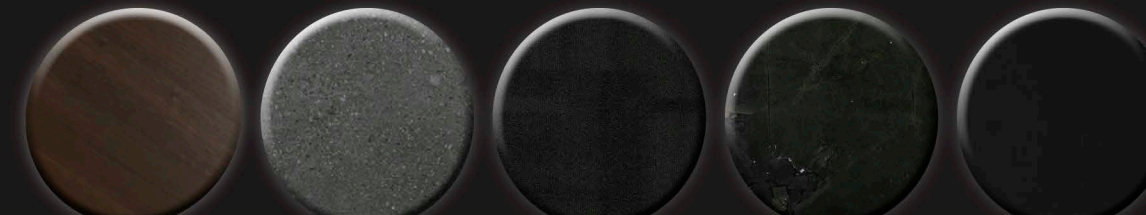
Structures, objects and the selection of materials within the space are heavily influenced by slave ships that were built between the 17th and 19th century to transport slaves - relating back to the experience of confinement, but 'a light at the end of the tunnel' illusion. In doing so, the user can empathise with the real life events that played a key part in the history of Black culture; forming a unique connection and experience. As a result, it is intended for the user to leave feeling inspired and educated.

Additionally, the space encourages collaboration as it is also available and able to accommodate a variety of functions. Without meaning, the structures serve as statement features, one ranging through the double-heightened space from the lower ground floor through to the ground floor ceiling height, deliberately emphasising the true scope of the space, all designed to spark interest from the user regardless.

## MATERIALITY

The space will feature 3 statement structures, predominantly manufactured of wood and steel finishes, exposed fixtures and fittings to really showcase a distinctive character. The selection of materials chosen to occupy this vast space, derive from historical objects widely recognised and associated with slavery. The combination of wood and metal are heavily projected throughout its decor effectively resulting in an industrial design style. With its large interior space, such vastness is not lost and there still can be felt a lot of 'void', and 'emptiness' which remains. Simplicity is met with style and history makes a transition into a new and fresh perspective.

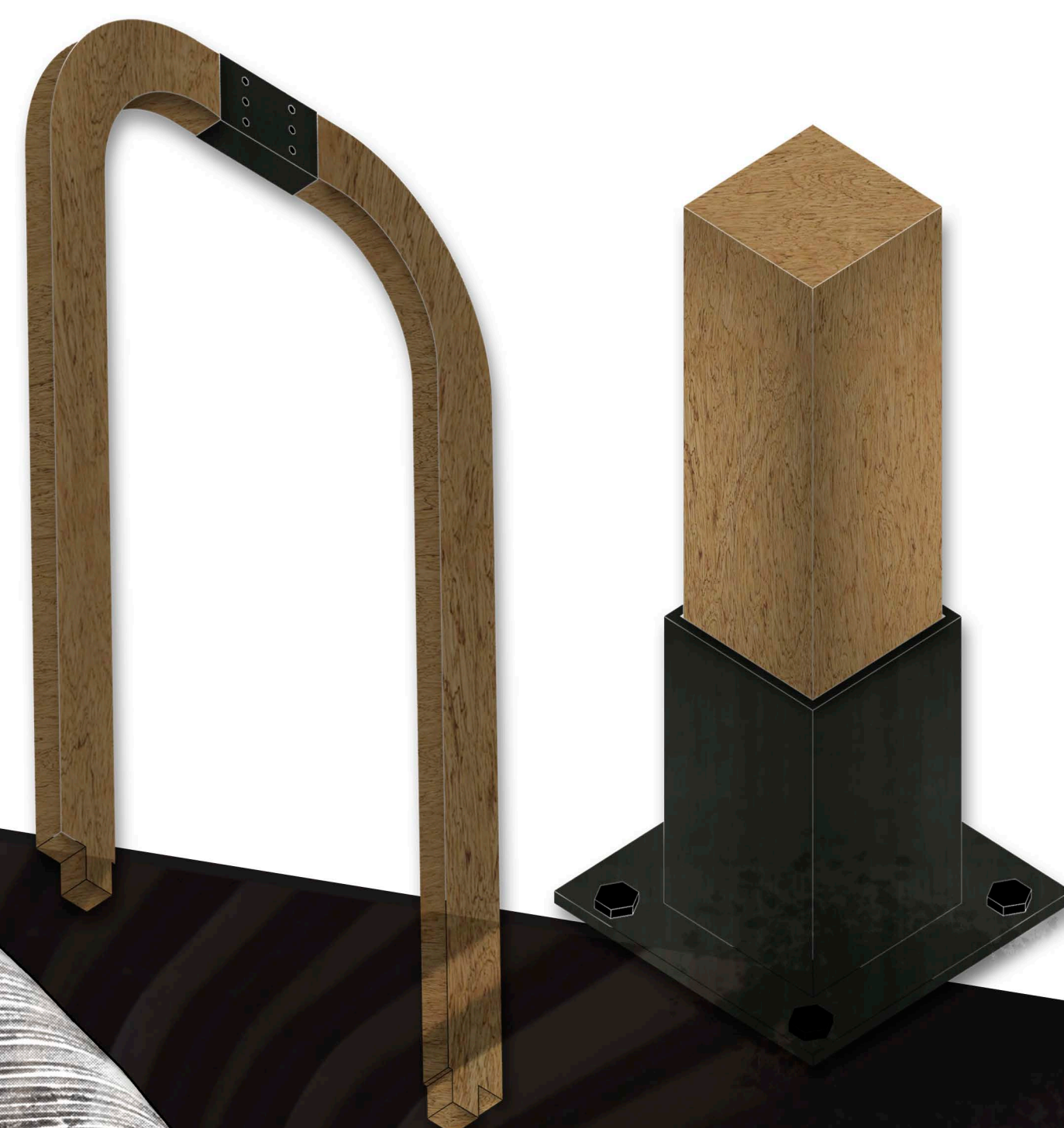
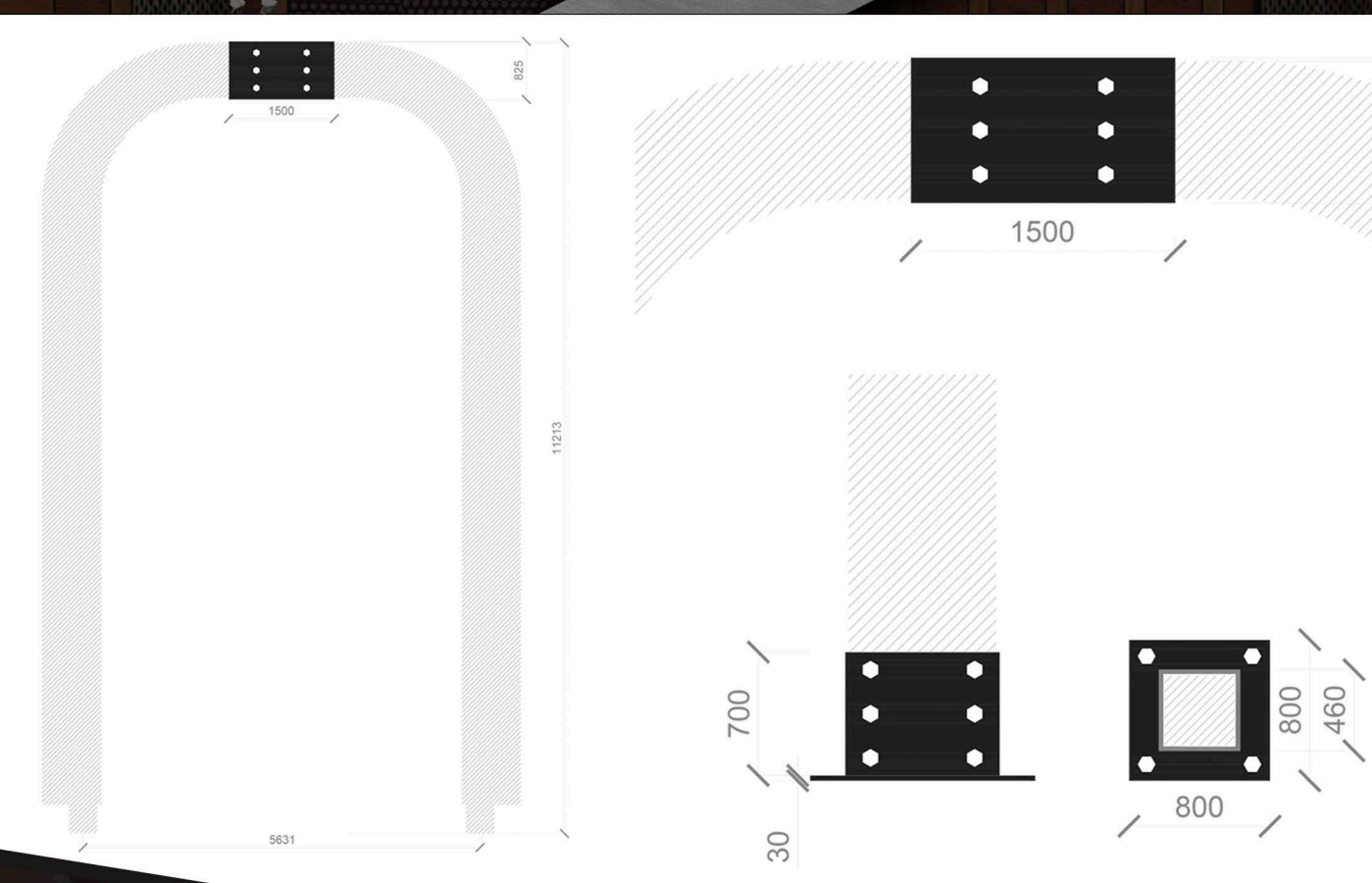
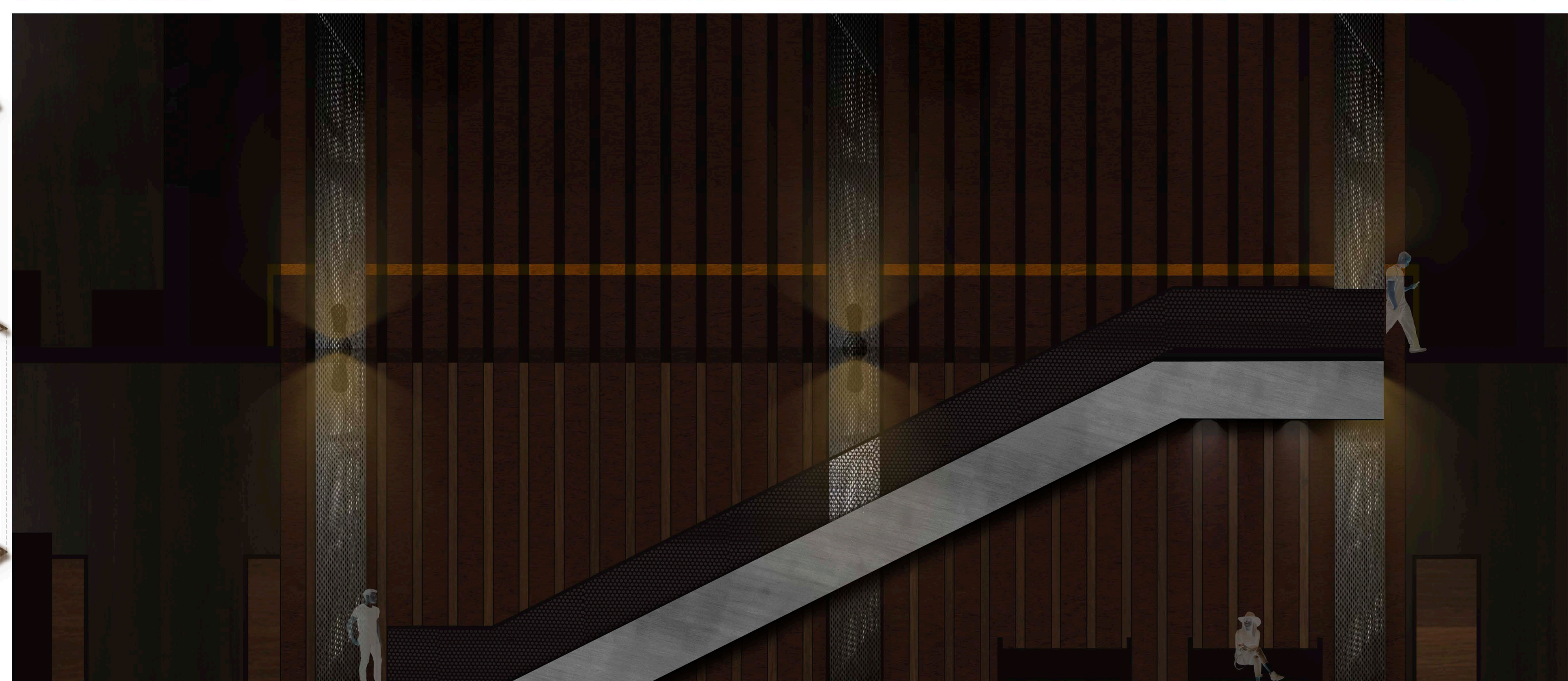
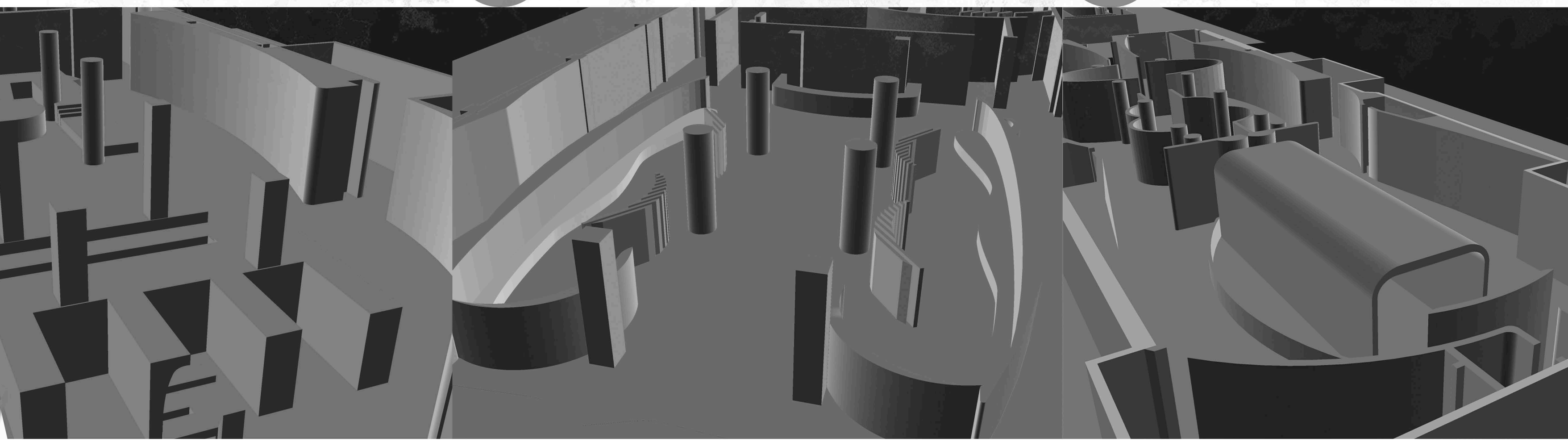
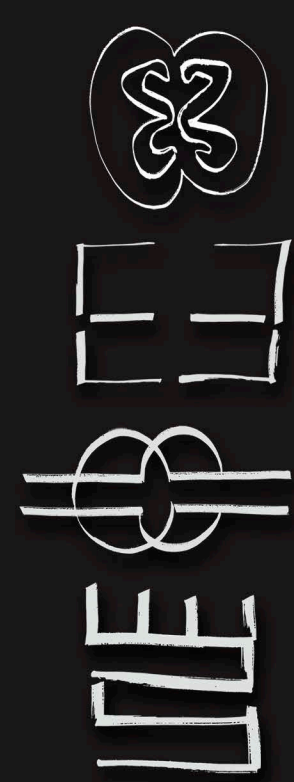
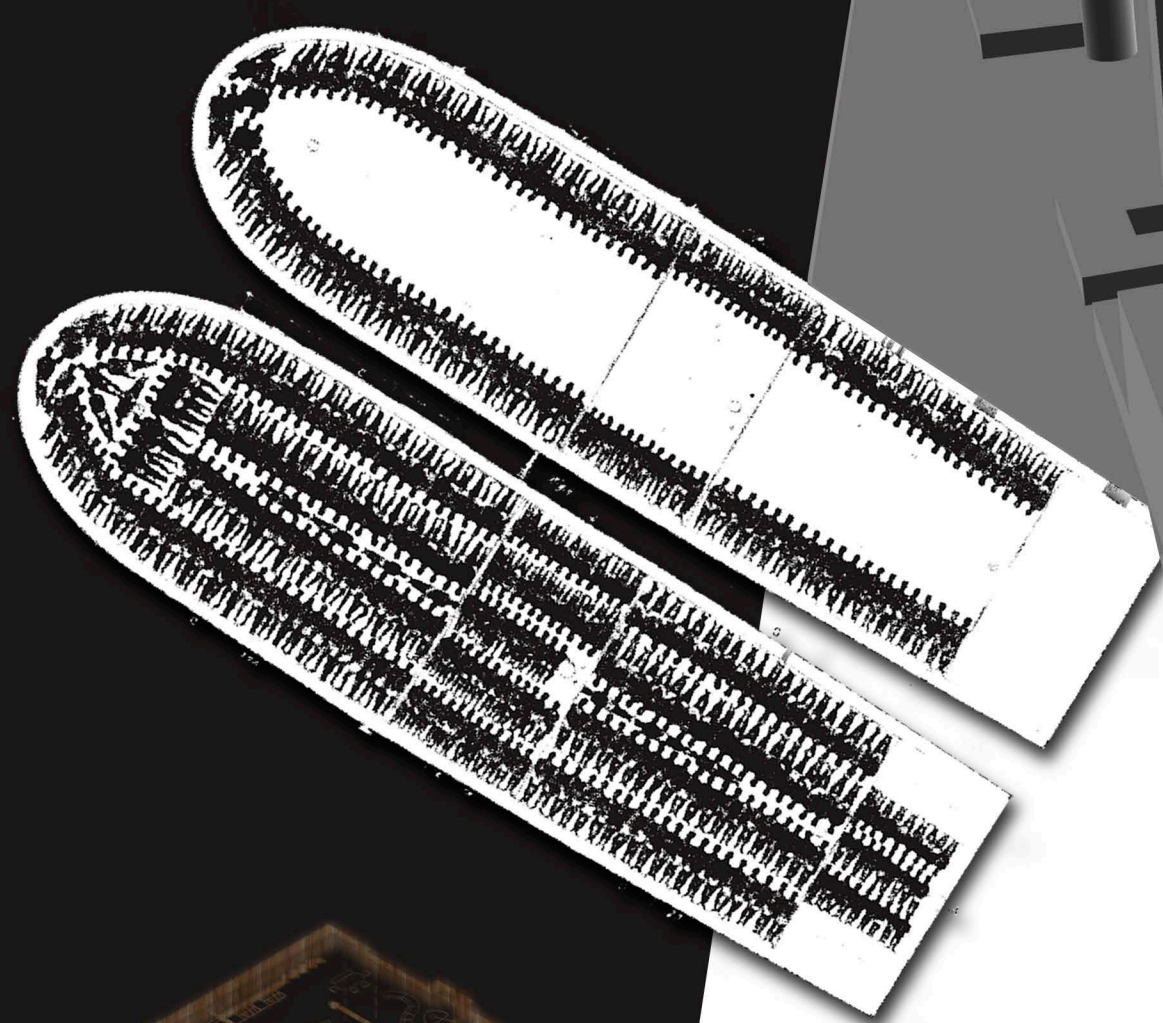
stained wood veneer Birch/veneer steel tile/epoxy resin carpet black polished tile/matte black steel



1 LOWER GROUND FLOOR

2 FIRST FLOOR RESTAURANT

3 GROUND FLOOR STRUCTURE



## DETAILING [ARCHED STRUCTURE]

One of five very focal points within the space. Displayed in a 1:20 and 1:50 scaled model, this structure retains strong purpose. Aside from its impressive statement, it is meant to create a sense of temporary confinement which transitions via up and down moving escalators, 'transporting' each user between two levels into 'freedom'. Its location stands tall between two floor heights with its foundation beginning from the lower ground floor, towering through to the full height of the ground floor.

The arched structure is made out of timber wood, and paired with black steel plates (at the base and the top) and M50 hex head bolts to fix in place.



**S**

- + Population of 1.1 million
- + Most culturally diverse city
- + Steadily growing National and International visitors
- + Excellent transport infrastructure
- + Large scope of space for multifunctional uses



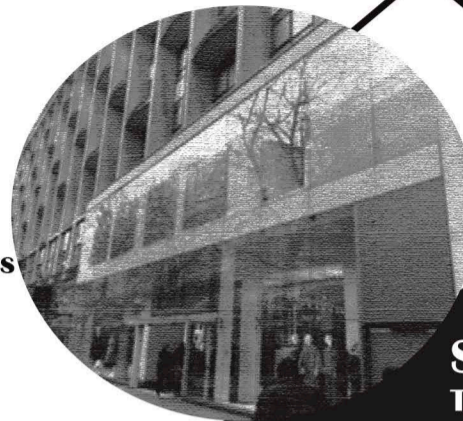
**W**

- + Moderate-High crime
- + High unemployment status
- + Low disposable income
- + Only one main public entrance



**O**

- + Surrounded by 6 neighbouring 'sister' cities
- + New developments such as HS2 line providing new jobs
- + A new and different proposal compared to surrounding store fronts



**T**

- + Possible competition from other gallery/exhibition spaces within neighbouring areas

**SITE ANALYSIS**

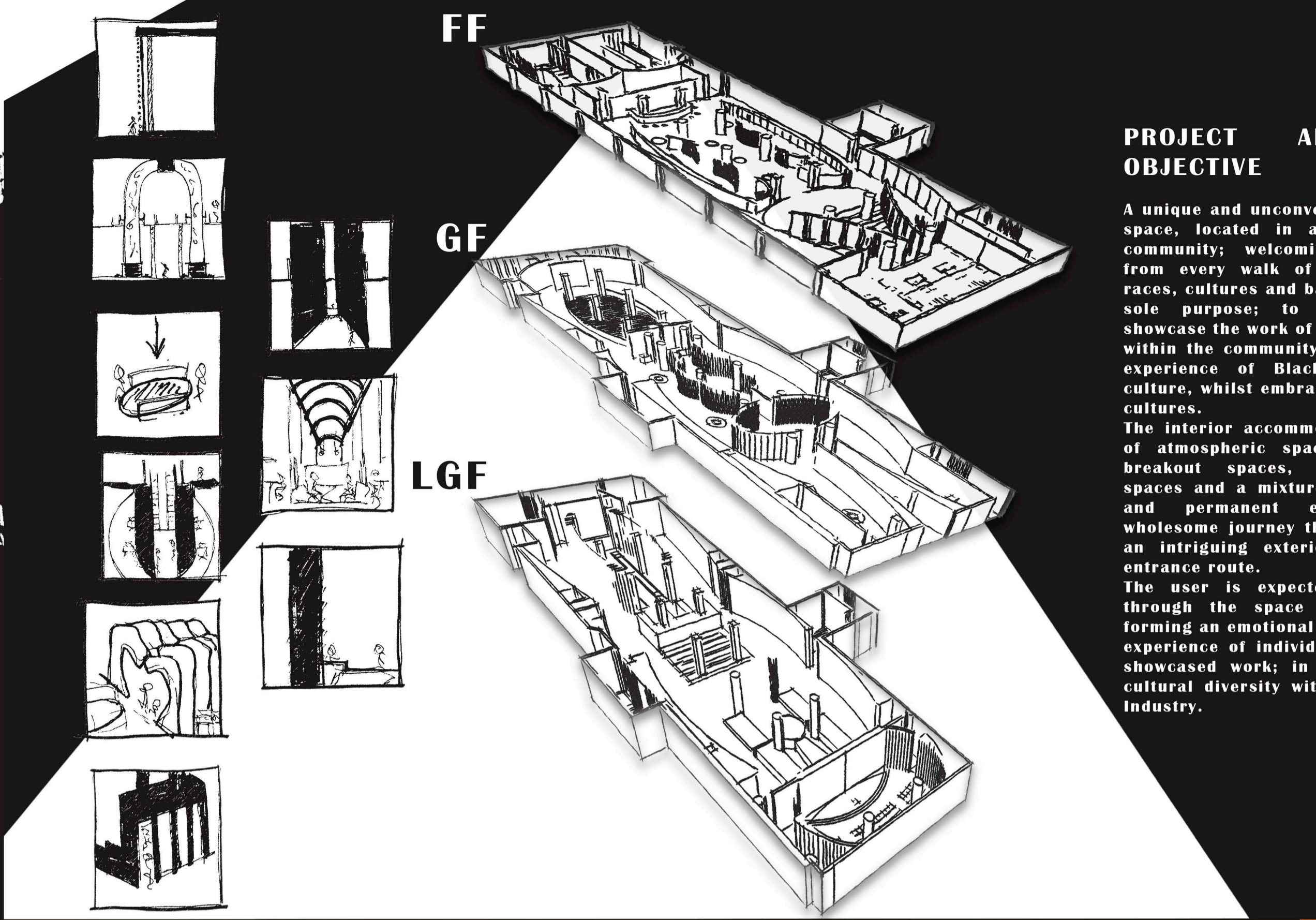
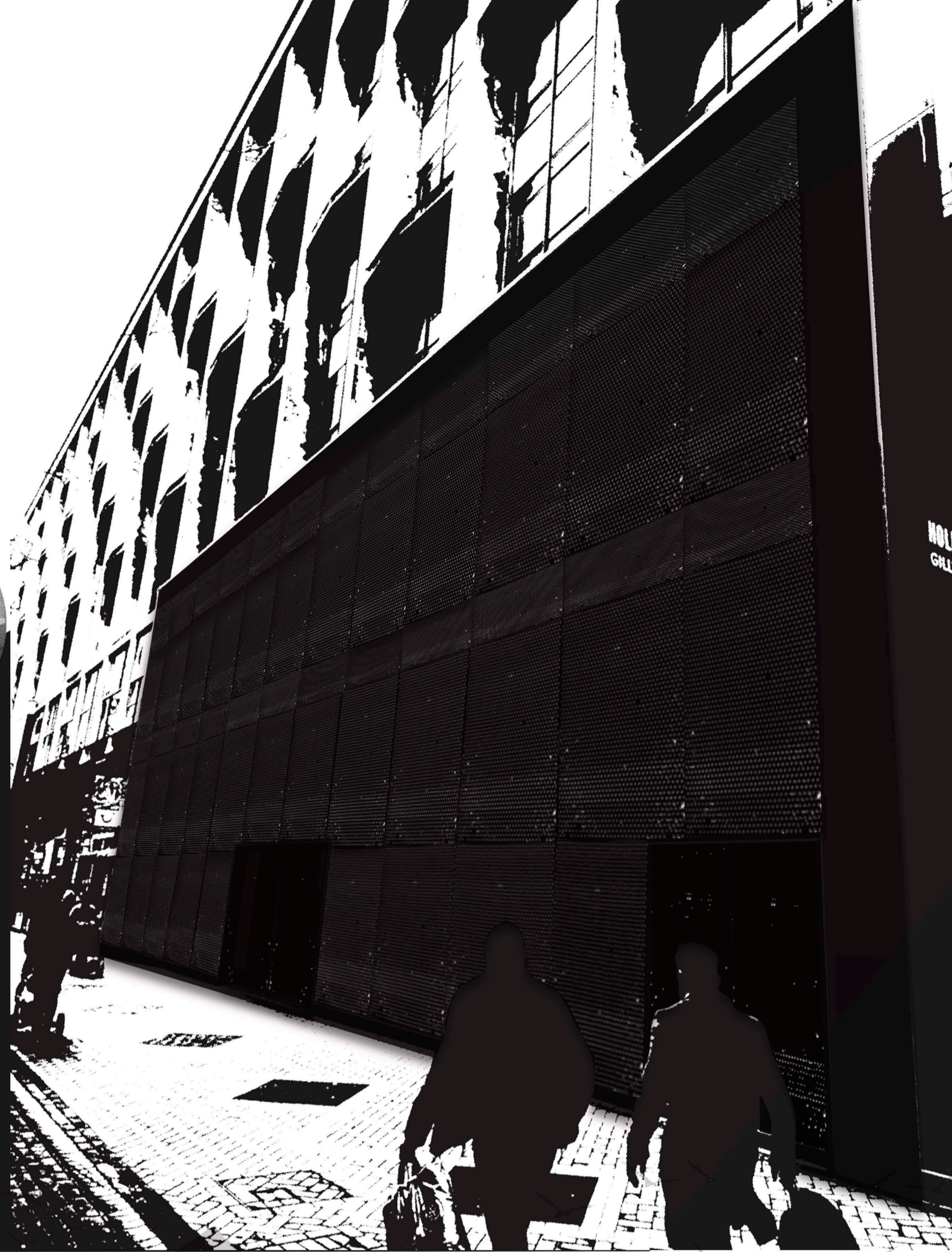
The property at 6-9 New Street is located in the 'super-diverse' city of Birmingham, making up a part of its largest shopping locations, connecting to Bullring, Corporation Street and Victoria Square. Previously home to a BHS store, now it is currently home to H&M.

**SITE AREA**

- + 3,450 square metres
- + 3 storeys

**SITE HERITAGE**

Not a listed building



**PROJECT AIM AND OBJECTIVE**

A unique and unconventional gallery space, located in a super-diverse community; welcoming individuals from every walk of life, different races, cultures and backgrounds. Its sole purpose; to advocate and showcase the work of Black creatives within the community, exploring the experience of Black history and culture, whilst embracing all diverse cultures.

The interior accommodates a range of atmospheric spaces, communal breakout spaces, multifunctional spaces and a mixture of temporary and permanent exhibitions. A wholesome journey that begins with an intriguing exterior facade and entrance route.

The user is expected to proceed through the space with empathy, forming an emotional yet celebratory experience of individuals, and their showcased work; in recognition of cultural diversity within the Design Industry.

- ATMOSPHERIC
- BREAKOUT
- MULTI-FUNCTIONAL
- EXHIBITION

**DESIGN APPROACH**

