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ANY GIVEN SUNDAY

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December 19, 2016

Syracuse University School of Architecture

“Our attachments are our temple, what we worship, no? What we give ourselves to, what we invest with faith. . . . Attachments are of great seriousness. Choose your attachments carefully. Choose your temple of fanaticism with great care.”

— David Foster Wallace, *Infinite Jest*

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2. Belief / Ritual / Manual

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INTRO

Our attachments are our temple.

Our lives are defined by the things we surround ourselves with. They captivate our thoughts, moods, and desires, but besides their ability to transfix us, they possess a power to transform us. They can shape our needs, values, and behaviors. They ultimately leave us with transformative experiences that provide and enforce within us our beliefs. The rise in prominence of pop culture as a force in shaping the way in which people see and confront the world has meant that our attachments are as disparate and ubiquitous as ever. We communicate and enforce that which we hold close by the acts that we commit ourselves to, these actions take the form of rituals.

This thesis contests that a ritual is not only limited to the realm of the religious or spiritual but can be seen as any embedded practice evident in our everyday lives that communicates meaning and legitimizes belief. The thesis ultimately wants to explore how rituals can be reduced to their most basic actions and expressions and seeks to create a system to accommodate a world with a rapidly changing system of beliefs and subsequently its rituals.

Chris Pellitteri first saw Star Wars in 1977, when he was 7, and now shares it with his family and two kids, Jay 8 and Lily 6

"I've met so many wonderful people, all over the world. It's a wonderful community of likeminded people with an interest in Star Wars. There's nothing else like it". James Burns, 44



Issei Kato's documentation of in "May the Force be with you" showcases the various collections and ways Star Wars Fans have molded their lives and spaces around their fandom. The significance of these films and by extension their costumes, memorabilia, and characters have for these extreme fans is beyond the measure of purely casual entertainment. "It's been a life journey really ... I've travelled round the world, I've met people I would never associate with normally," Oldbury said. "The thing that unites us is the fact that we all love the films." Explains Dave Oldbury.

Dave Oldbury, 47, shows off his Star Wars inspired tattoos.

Richard Mitchell, 46, posed in his bedroom amongst his collection describes Star Wars as "A way of life"

BELIEF

Belief encompasses the unwavering faith in something or someone and can be categorized and argued for as functioning and asserting meaning four different ways.

Belief as making us human

Belief as meaningful compass

Belief as radical commitment

Belief as embodied practice¹

This thesis will try to explore the idea that rituals are a manifestation of belief as embodied practice.

RITUAL

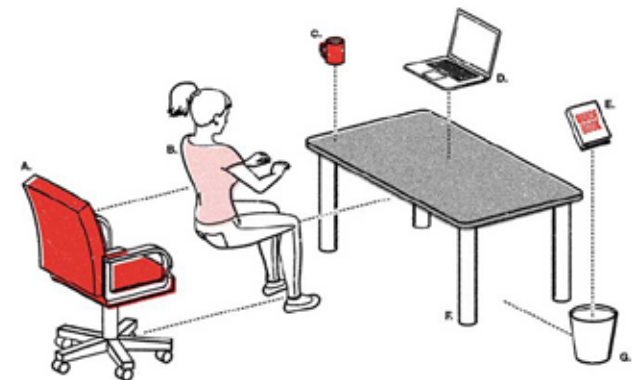
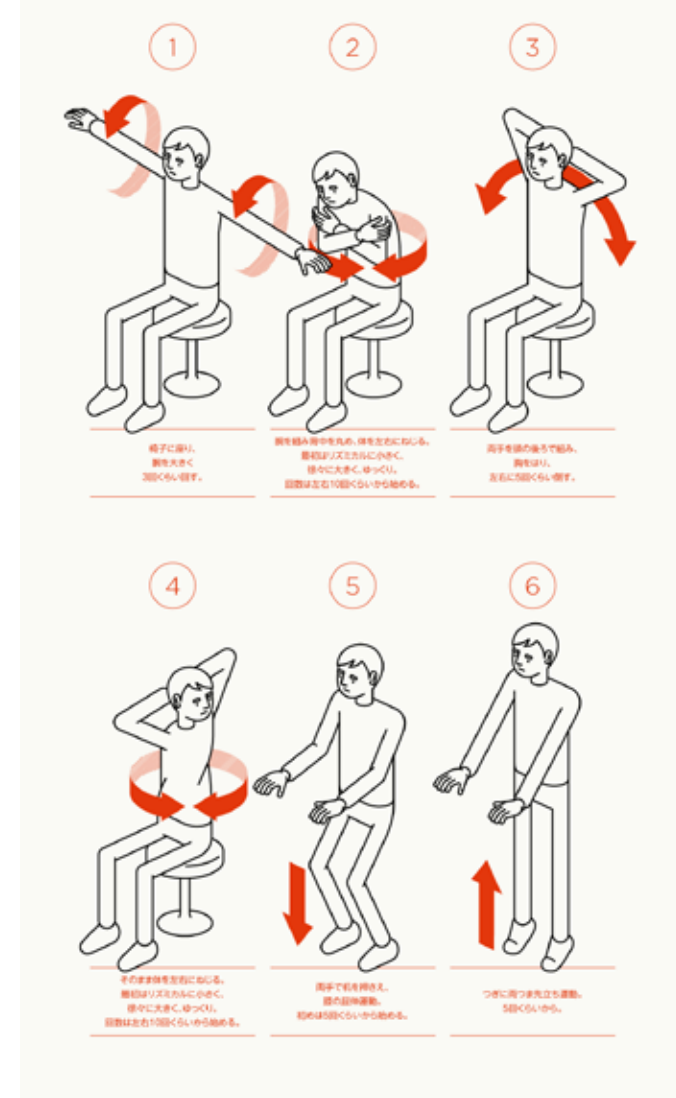
Beliefs are supported through the practice of rituals. These are actions or as Susanne Langer states, "Ritual is a symbolic transformation of experiences that no other medium can adequately express."² Belief is embodied through the action of ritual, which serves as a mediator to connect the gathering community and the understanding they seek through its performance. The importance is the experience the ritual facilitates and less with the structure within which it occurs. This idea emphasizes the importance of the action, and not so much the place. This further posits that anywhere can be a place for ritual.

The ritual experience is ultimately seeking to implement a transformation. This is achieved through the shift of context and elements (objects, symbols, and identities).³ Contexts, are situations, within which requires a distinctive set of identities and behaviors. Elements are embedded, utilized, and both shape and give meaning to certain contexts.

The ritual serves to glorify a certain context while the elements that exists within are granted a higher level of importance.

MANUAL

A ritual is a repetitive statement of value, rooted in action. Rituals often require a carefully composition of actions performed in a meaningful way to achieve the required effect. The manual lends itself to the ritual because it is a comprehensive set of instruction that utilizes the visual aid of drawings. Its accessibility as a tool for communication make it the ideal medium to synthesize and simplify.










CASE MATRIX

The cases studies have been charted to reflect both the ritual, as a process, and the corresponding spaces in which they occurred. Following James Swan's descriptions from his book Sacred Places, these spaces can be identified as, the shrine (human crafted setting), the temple (the places where the larger whole seems condensed into a symbolic statement), and the sacred site (nature).⁴

The ritual categories followed the process of procedures and steps of conversion. These being introduction; an initial encountering of a belief, indoctrination; an acceptance and approval of a belief, marking oneself; an outward and sometimes public expression of a belief, and remediation; a restructuring of the things and those around one to accommodate and spread a belief.

The point of the matrix isn't to assert that the two are the same or that one can be conflated for the other, it is to recognize and position it as a system of belief that is validated, participated, and enlivened through the actions of its participants, who engage in the ritual along the path or at a particular point in the train of belief.

	INTRODUCTION	INDOCTRINATION	MARKING ONESELF	REMEDICATION
SHRINE				
TEMPLE				
SACRED SITE				
				



Case: *Madame Tussauds Wax Museum*

Ritual: *Visitors pose with figures of notable individuals*



Case: *The Bedroom (Rookie's Strange Magic)*

Ritual: *Interests are enshrined and lived amongst*



Case: *Cosplay*

Ritual: *Participants dress up as a favorite fictional superhero*



Case: *Panathenaic Festival*
Ritual: *Athenians processed through the city to the Akropolis to present the statue of athena with a robe*



Case: *Sports Parade*
Ritual: *Fans gather to watch athletes parade through the city streets and celebrate a victory*



Case: *The Cyrstal Cathedral Video Screens*
Ritual: *The congregation gathered for service watch on the large video screens.*



Case: *Sports Bars (Chappell's Bar)*
Ritual: *Visitors watch sports games and drink among mutal fans*



Case: The Prophet Muhammad's Footprint at Topkapi Palace Museum in Istanbul

Ritual: Visitors come to observe and record the relic



Case: The Prophet Muhammad's Footprint at Topkapi Palace Museum in Istanbul

Ritual: Visitors come to observe and record the relic

THE MANUAL

AND THE RITUAL

Selecting a few cases along the matrix, the manual for the ritual ultimately tries to combine the ritual into an easily comprehensible manual and the spacial diagram of the spaces in which they are performed.

NUART ROCKY HORROR PICTURE SHOW

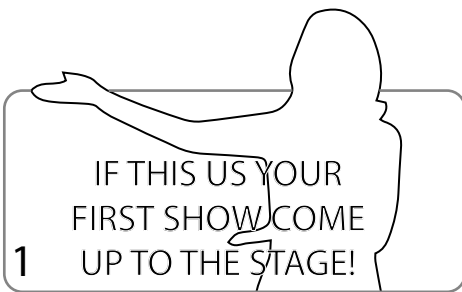
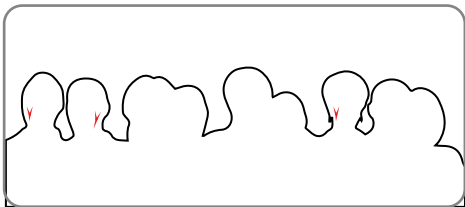
LA

While not a critical success, it gained recognition as a cult film. Audience members, dressed as their favorite characters would watch the film and participate by talking back to the screen. In some showings, fans would perform alongside the screen, singing and miming with their respective parts, shadowcasts. At the NuArt Theatre in Los Angeles, the troupe Sins O' the Flesh have performed shadowcasts since 1988. The performers are fans who do their own hair, make-up, props. First time viewers are brought on stage and marked with a V.

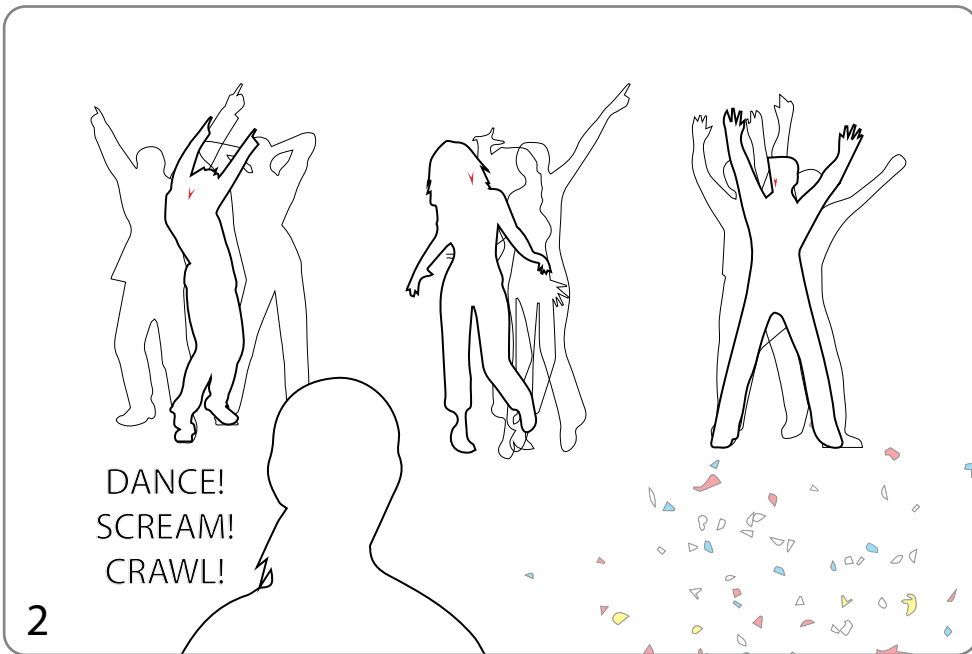




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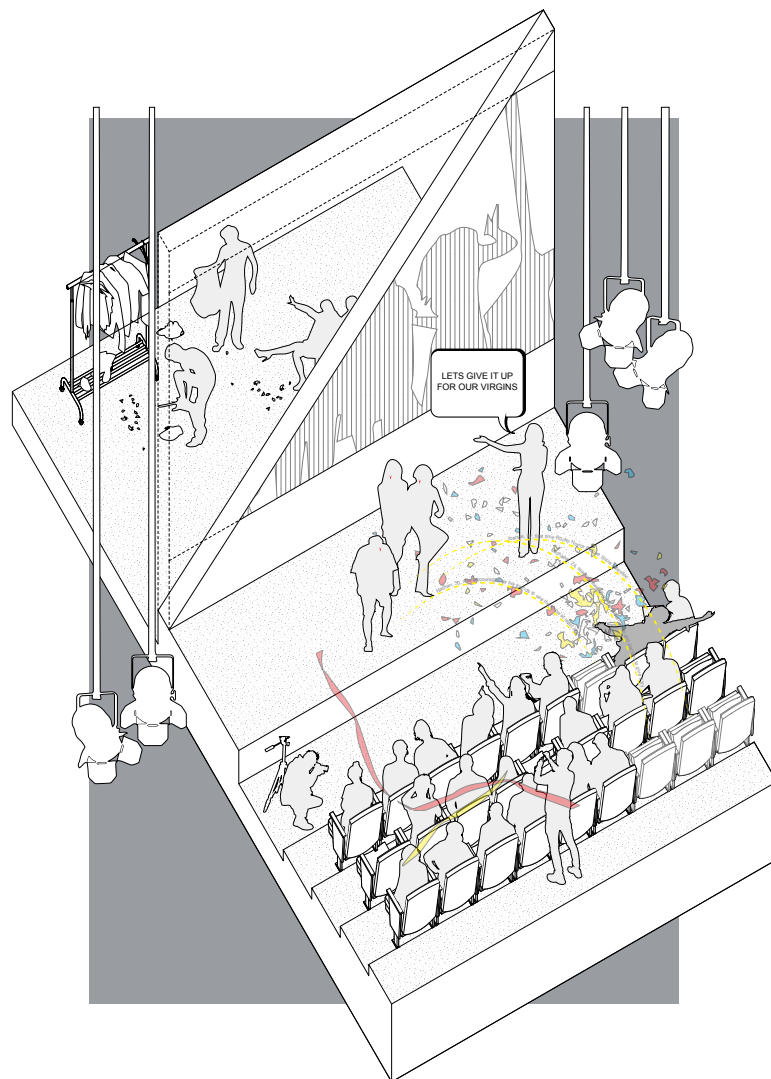
1
IF THIS IS YOUR
FIRST SHOW COME
UP TO THE STAGE!



2
DANCE!
SCREAM!
CRAWL!



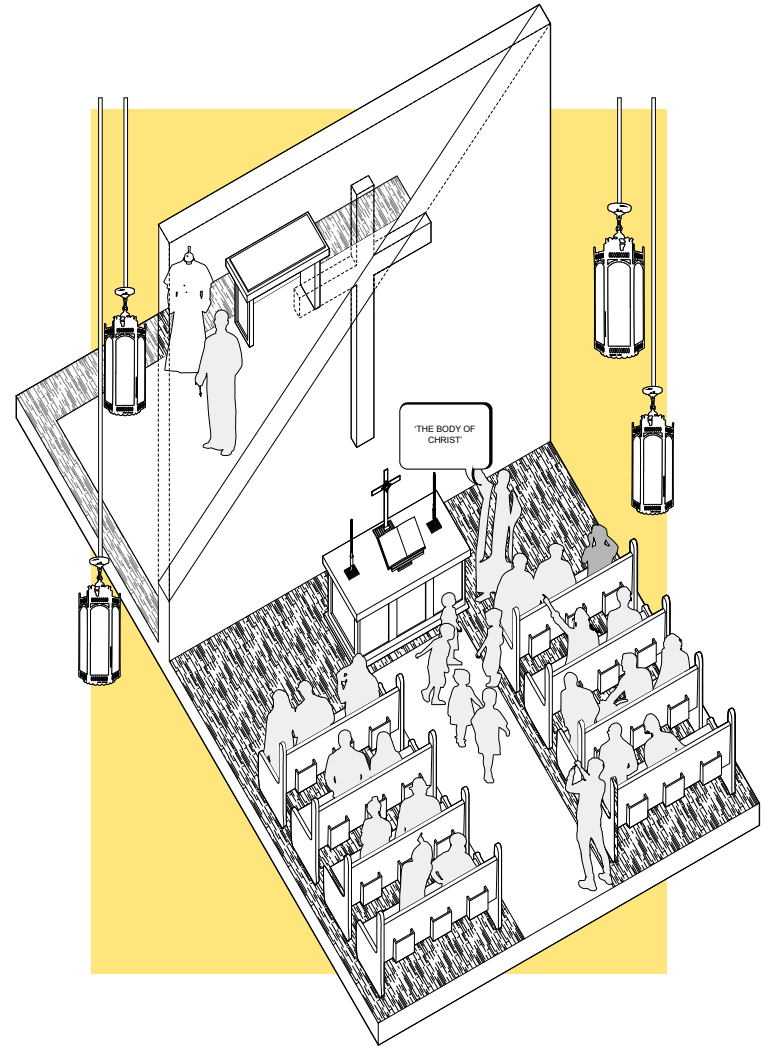
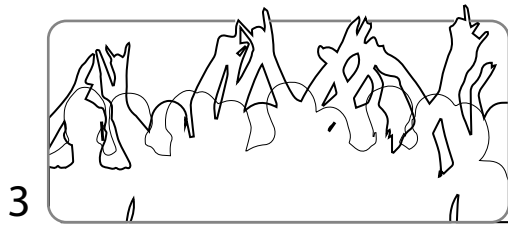
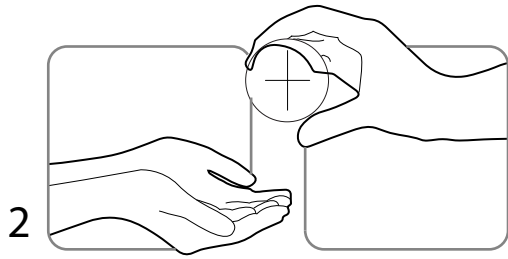
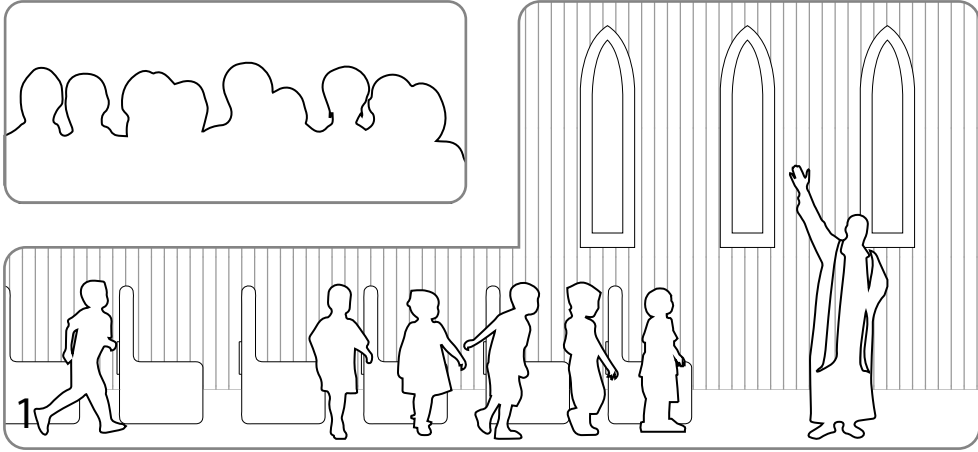
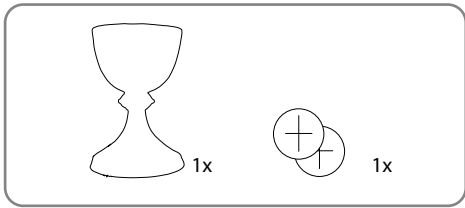
3



1ST COMMUNION

The ceremony of first communion is often considered the official welcoming of new members to church. It typically occurs when children are between 7-8 years old following an initial baptism. They are invited to take part in the sacrament of Eucharist, when Catholics share bread and wine meant to symbolize the body and blood of Christ. Instruction and preparation is given to those who participate and family members are present for support and encouragement. The children dress formally and participate in the mass, the recitation of prayers and readings.



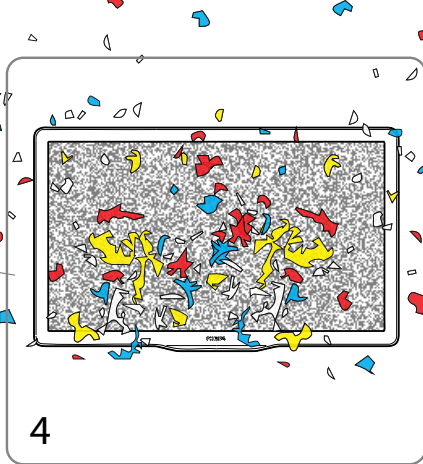
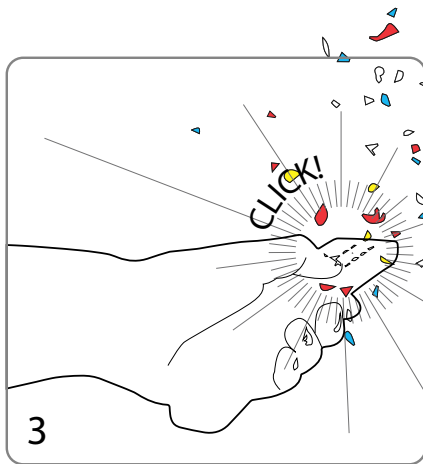
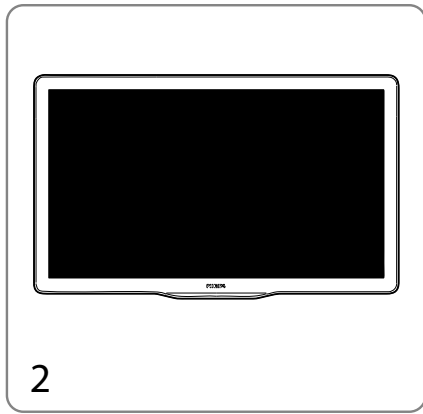
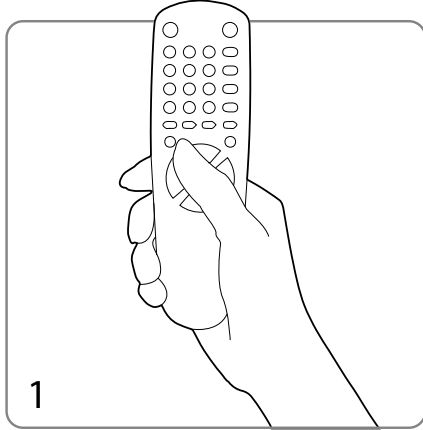
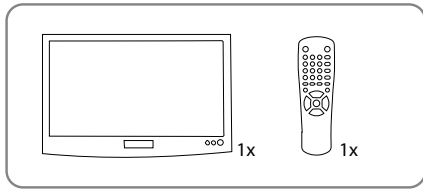


TELEVISION AS RITUAL

“How is the television used? For watching, white noise, babysitter, companion, another family member”⁵

Since its introduction into society, the television has become a central object for the engagement, escape, and transcendence. Its ubiquity among the modern home not only speaks to its technological impact, but the common ritualized action of watching it. Providing a collective experience that itself is often an internalized experience. The viewer, takes on the role of both observer and participant. In the words of Marshall McLuhan, the viewer is “transported” into a different world of mediated events whose purpose is to reassure, to reaffirm and to reestablish harmony in an essentially disharmonious world.⁶ Night after night, season after season.



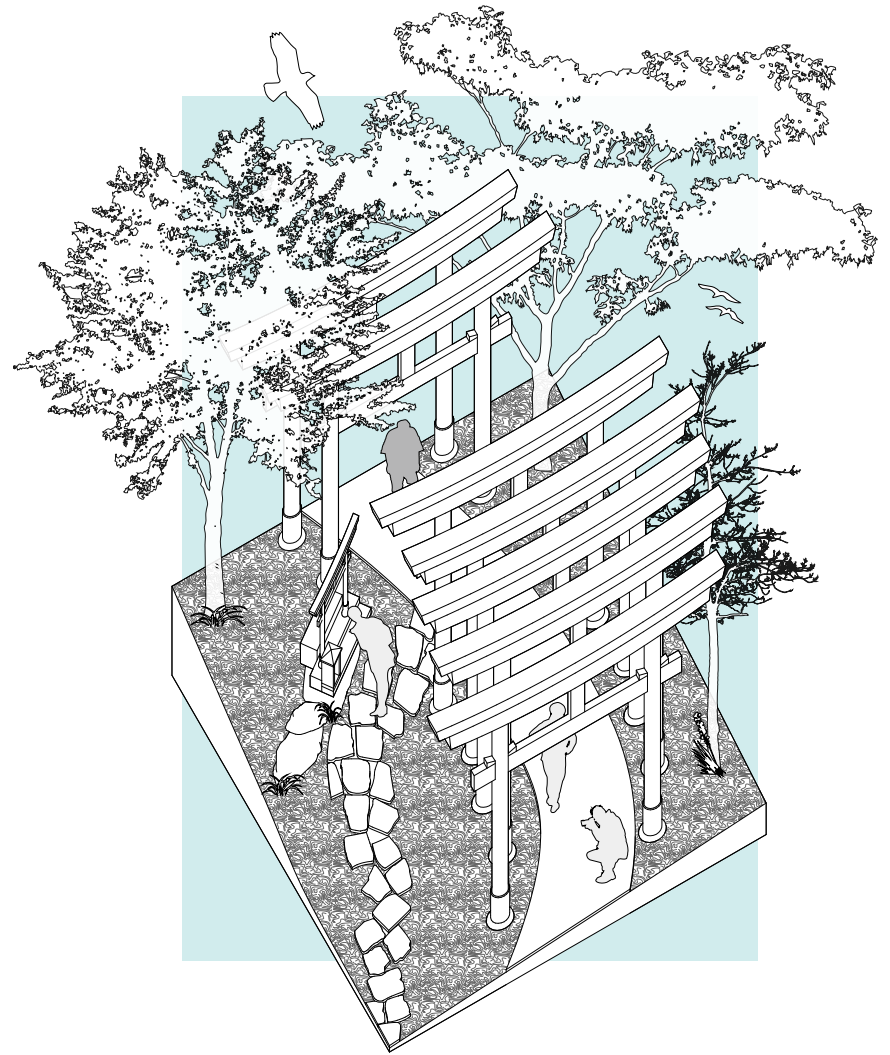
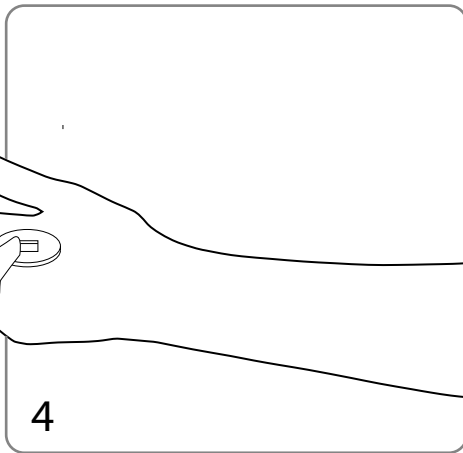
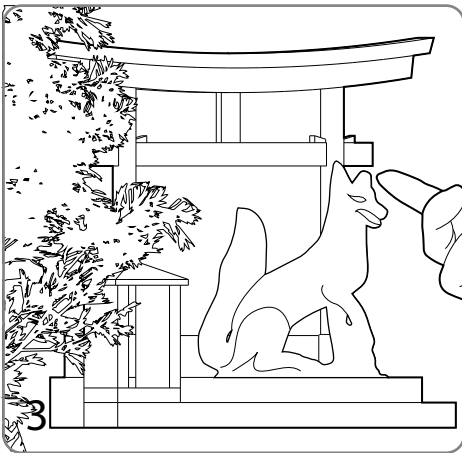
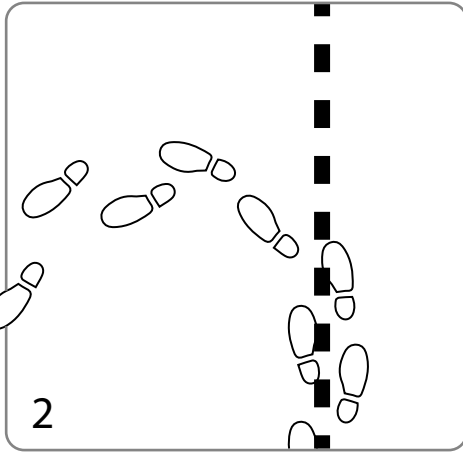
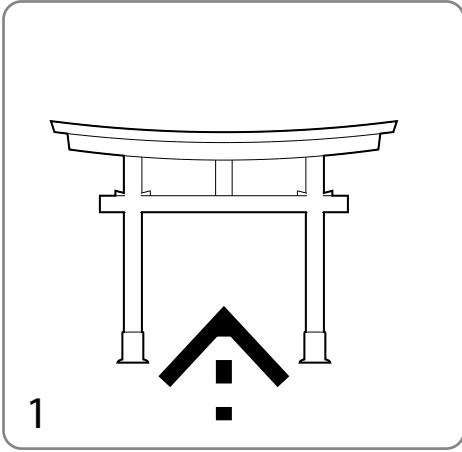
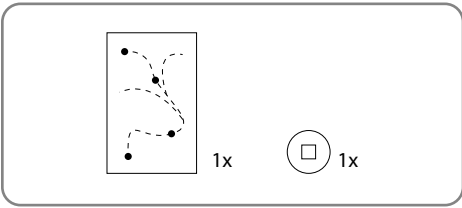


FUSHIMI INARI- TAISHA SHRINE

KYOTO, JAPAN

Fushimi Inari-Taisha is a shrine dedicated to the Kami Inari in the Japanese Shinto religion. In addition to its role in the ritual of the Shinto religion, it is also one of the most popular shrines and attracts countless tourists and visitors everyday. The shrine is spread across a mountain which takes its name from Inari, who is seen as the patron of business. It consists of a series of 4000 ceremonial gates, or torii, each of which has been donated by a Japanese business. They sprawl the pathway like a tunnel leading the way to the top. Along the path are large public shrines, and even smaller private shrines for worship. These small shrines are for worshippers. These usually consist of miniature stone torii gates and statues as well as symbolic references of Inari, often depicted as a fox. These smaller shrines deviate from the path and are hidden and embedded into the landscape. They are meant for participants of the worship ritual in contrast to the rest of the site. This duality allows for both ritual and observer to exist along the same path.





RITUAL SPACE

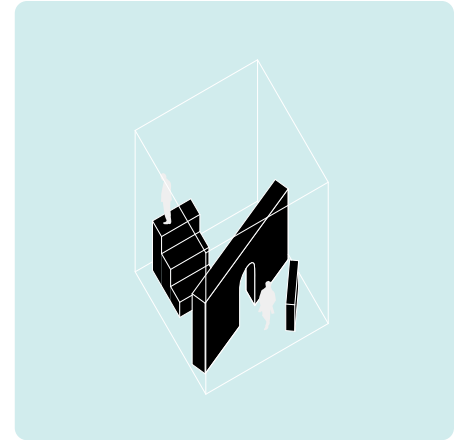
Ultimately the ritual can be simplified into three simple categories representing the ritual action.

The sequenced ritual, requires the participation of the user and is processional.

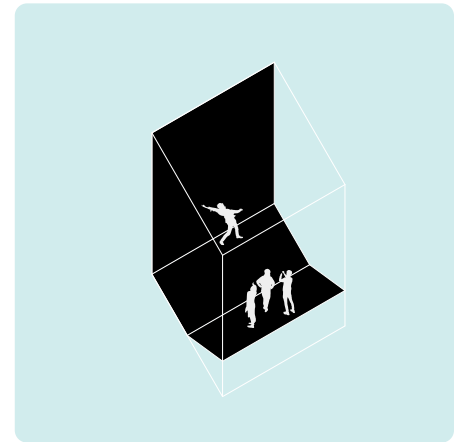
The observed ritual, typically situates an audience, a mediator, and a receiver of the ritual action.

The objectified ritual, glorifies an object or symbolic representation of the belief. It works to separate the special from the mundane.

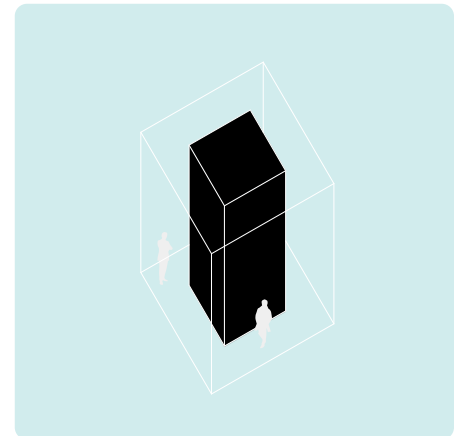
SEQUENCED

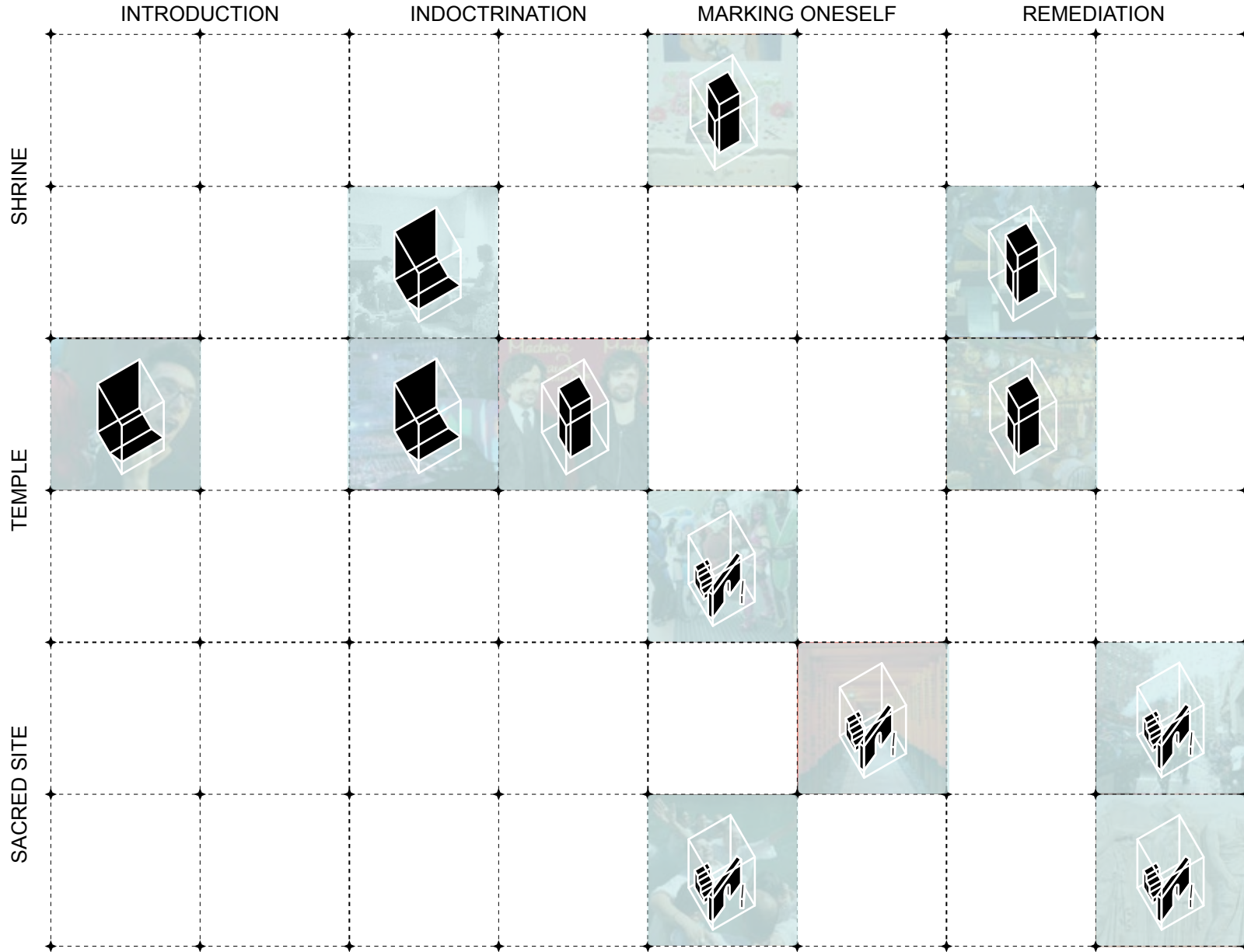


OBSERVED



OBJECTIFIED





INTRODUCTION

INDOCTRINATION

MARKING ONESELF

REMEDICATION

SHRINE

TEMPLE

SACRED SITE

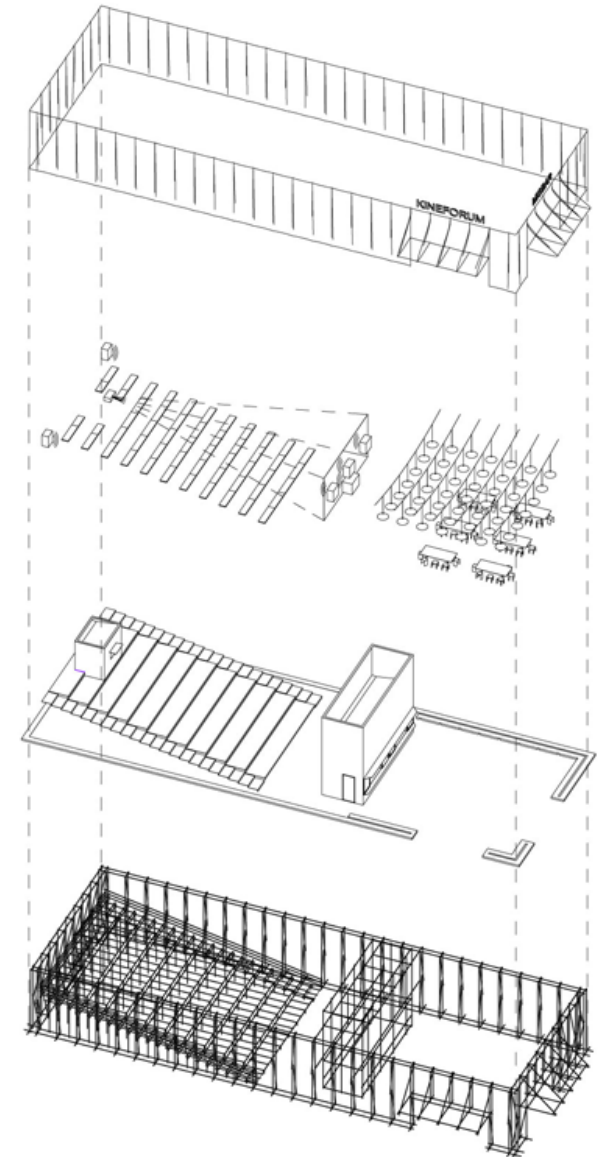


PRECEDENTS

The wide variety of rituals necessitates temporality. The following precedents were constructed as temporary installations using a simple system or means.

KINEFORUM MISBAR CSUTORAS & LIANDO

Kineforum Misbar was constructed in 10 days as a temporary open air cinema in Jakarta, Indonesia. Situated in a large plaza, the structure consisted of a rented scaffolding system covered with a translucent curtain, while floors and seating were made with simple plywood.



STUDIO EAST DINING

CARMODY GROARKE

Built on-top of a multi-story car garage in London. The temporary restaurant provided views across London's 2012 Olympic site as it was being constructed. It was built in 10 weeks and stayed up for three weeks. Studio East Dining drew from the materials of the surrounding context and utilized a scaffolding system and polyethylene wrapping.



ENOUGH SPACE

STUDIO JAUKE VAN DEN BRINK

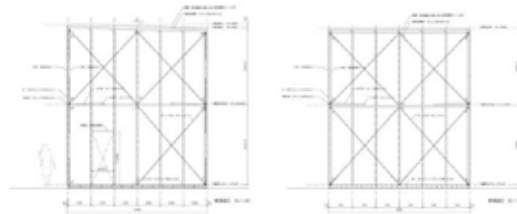
Built in 2008 on the grounds of Noorderzon, a performing arts festival in Groningen, Netherlands. The installation was a tower with an embedded stair, meant to lead visitors up above the festival grounds. As participants experience the installation they become part of the work, as figures moving behind the glowing boxes of the tower.



CLOUDSCAPE

TETSUO KONDO ARCHITECTS

Created as a smaller version of an installation from the 2010 Venice Biennale, Cloudscape was situated in the sunken courtyard in the Museum of Contemporary Art in Toyko. Visitors climbed a single staircase to ascend a cloud that was created by pumping air of differing conditions into three zones. The temperature controlled environment was encased in a formwork of metal pipes and enclosed by vinyl sheets.





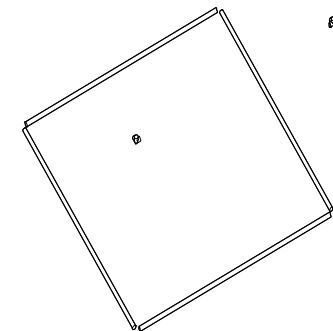
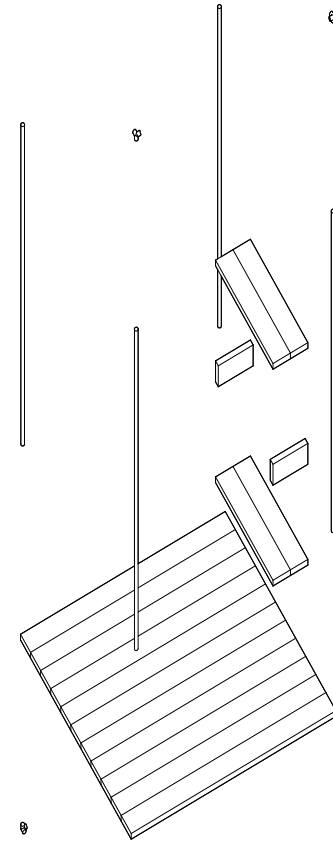
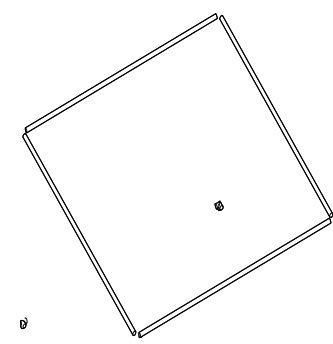
LARGE

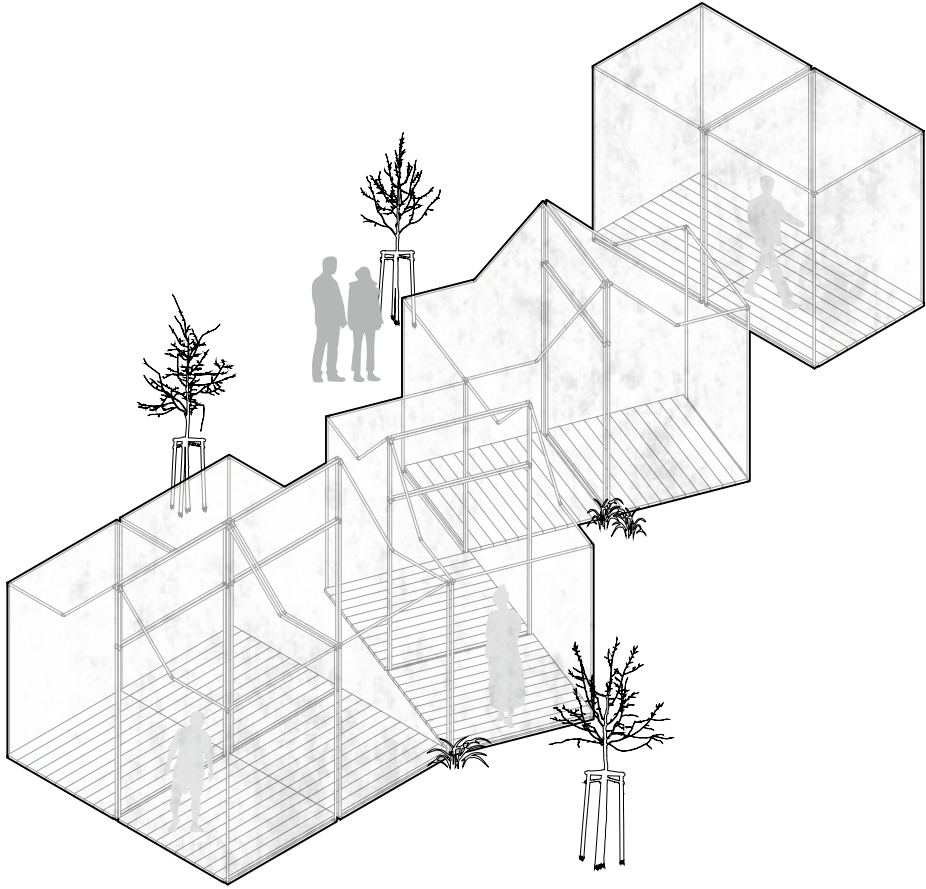
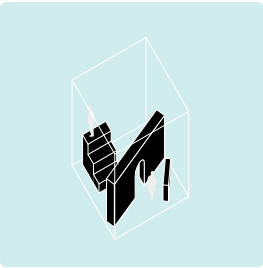
SMALL

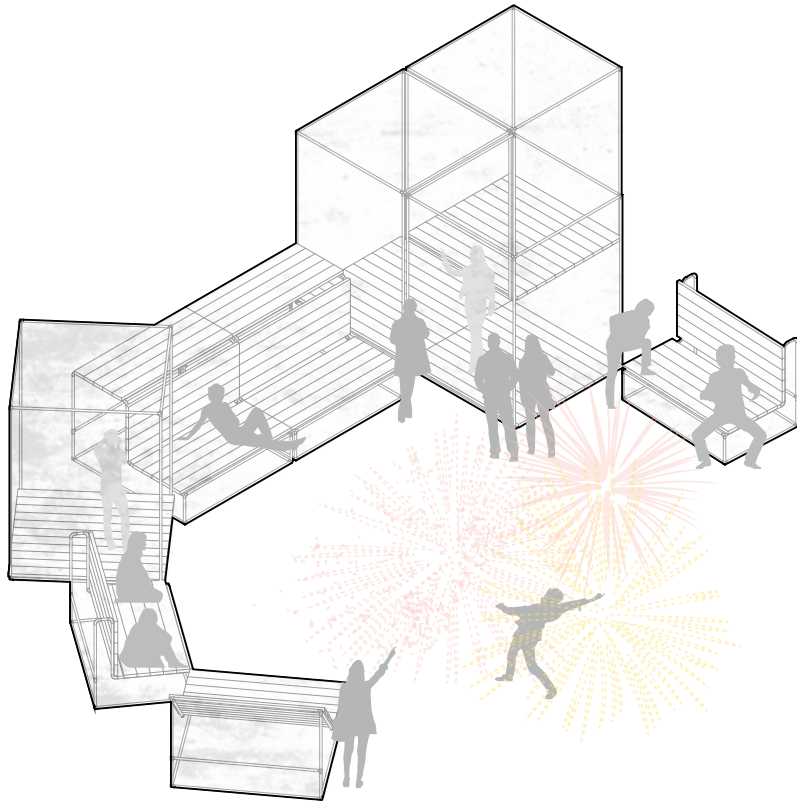
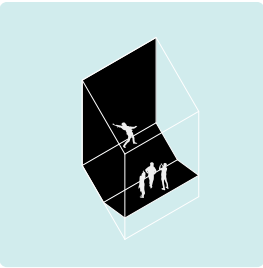
*Repetitive System of Parts
Simplicity and Flexibility of System
Transparency*

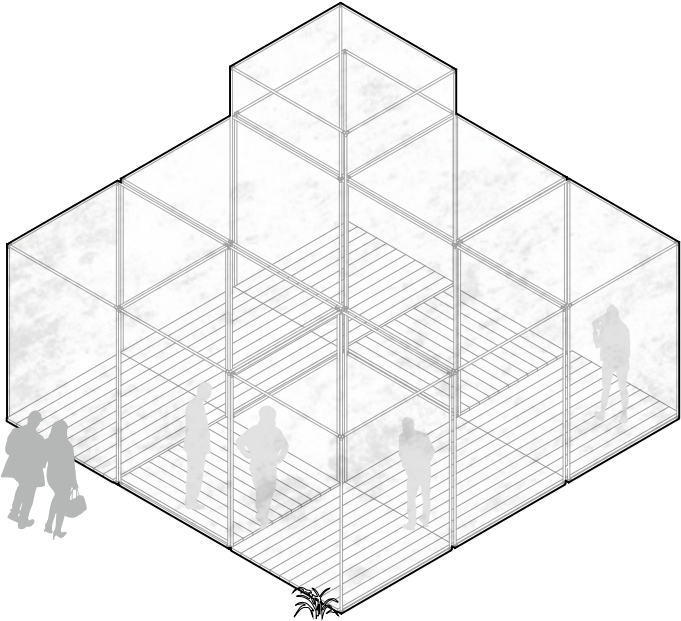
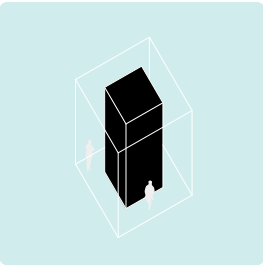
PROJECTIONS

Moving forward with the next phase of the project, my aims are to design a system of parts that can accommodate most rituals. I want to explore how this system can be implemented across a wide range of sites, users, and conditions, and explore what implications this approach can have in shaping how we see and approach our understanding of the ritual, especially those rooted in the everyday.









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