

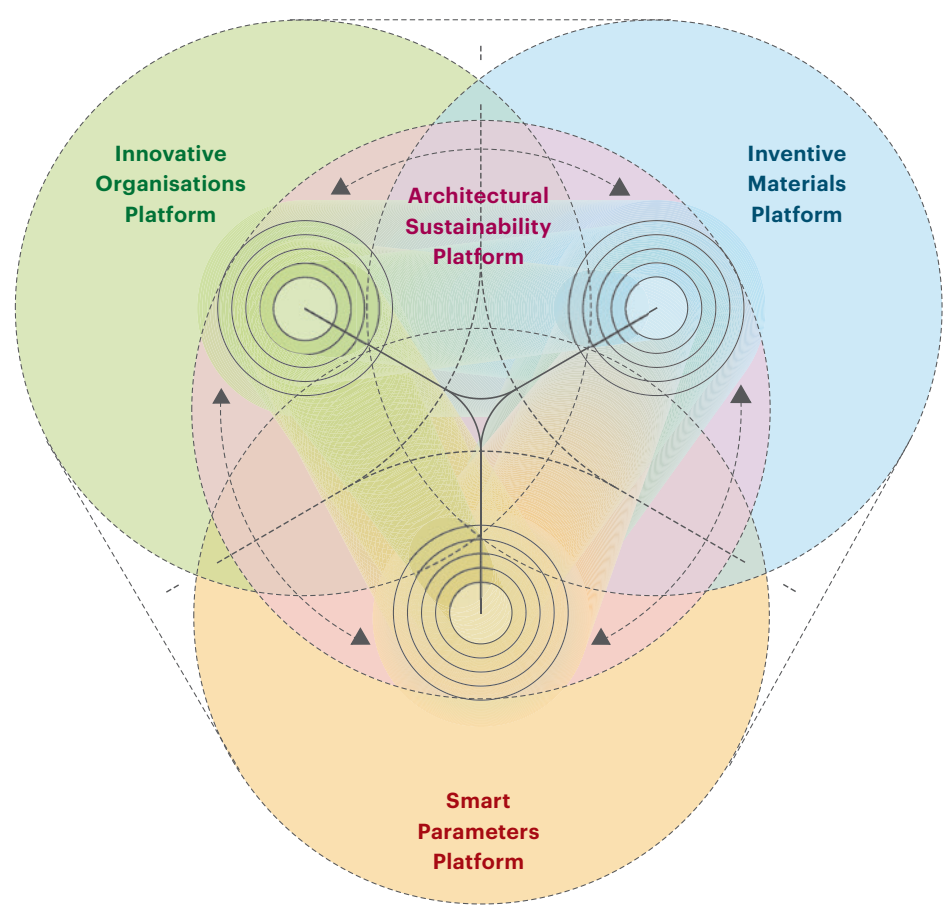
KNOWLEDGE MATTERS

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EDITED BY
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FRAME

KNOWLEDGE MATTERS



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THE EXPANSIONS OF THE PROFESSION

The continued ideological and pragmatic specialisation of the architectural profession has produced a literal contraction of roles – from a generalist model to a specific form of expertise. This marks an important instance to reflect on the opposite impetus: that of expanding the role of the architect. Perhaps the very contrast between two diverging ideas in architecture – specialisation and expansion – is especially meaningful today. Architects are no longer being trained to make buildings, but also to reflect on the way the world is changing – the culturally diverse milieu affecting the urban fabric of global cities, as well as the long-term impact the built world has on the environment.

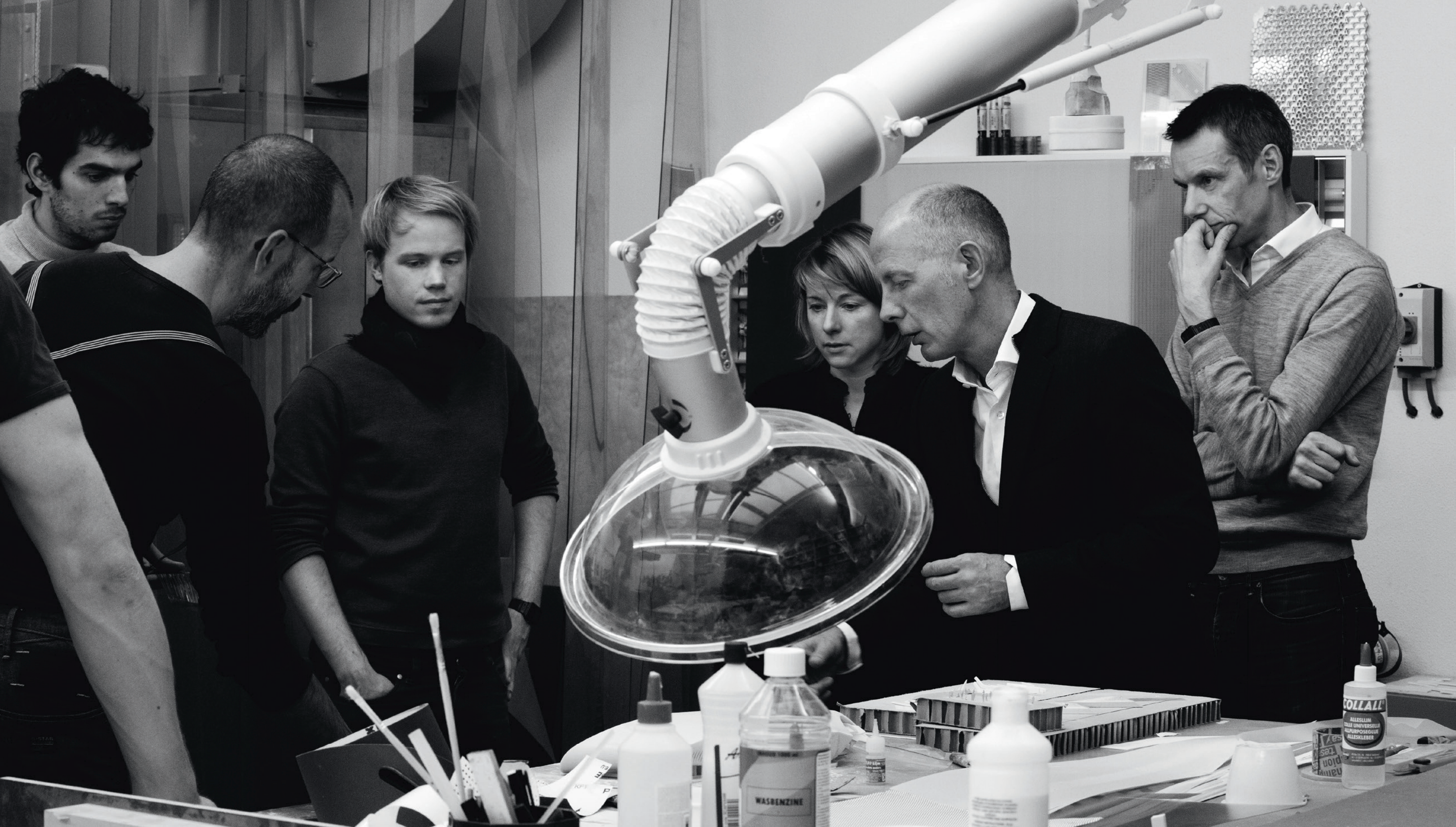
The profession's agency has often proven to be fragile – frequently reframed amidst often volatile cultural, economic, and political shifts.



A KNOWLEDGE PRACTICE WITHIN A NETWORK MODEL

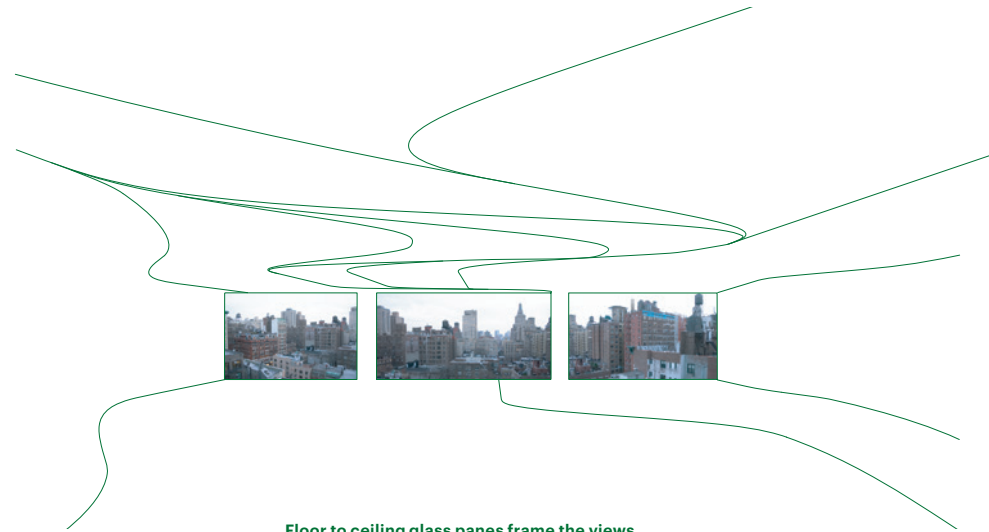
— What is the role of the architect?

This challenging, sincere, and increasingly expansive question has been a consistent preoccupation for UNStudio. The recursive tendency toward re-evaluation is natural when operating in a discipline that is so affected by changes in technology, cultural mores and shifts in financial and political climates. As architecture's inseparable relationship to this network of forces persists, we are prompted to question a broad range of assumptions about the discipline, including how it should be taught, produced, experienced and disseminated.

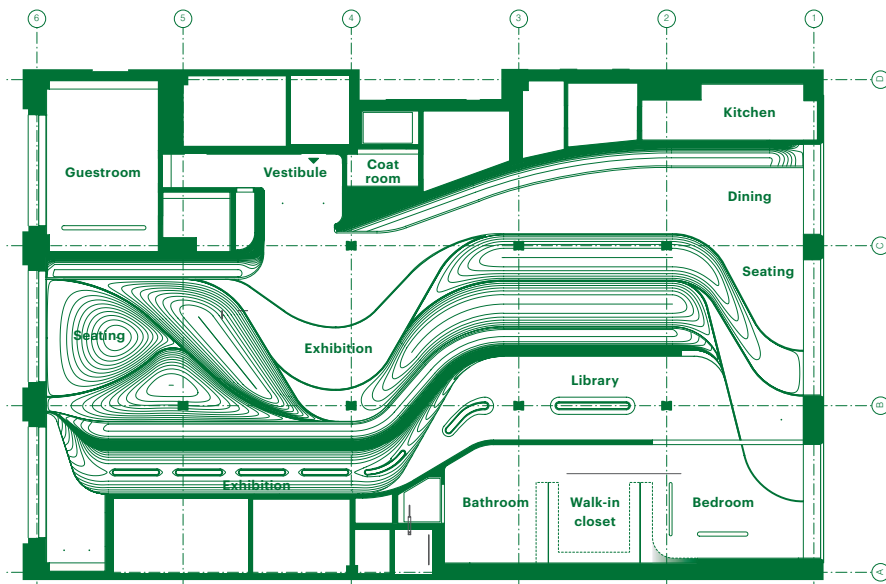


COLLECTOR'S LOFT, NEW YORK, USA, 2007-2010

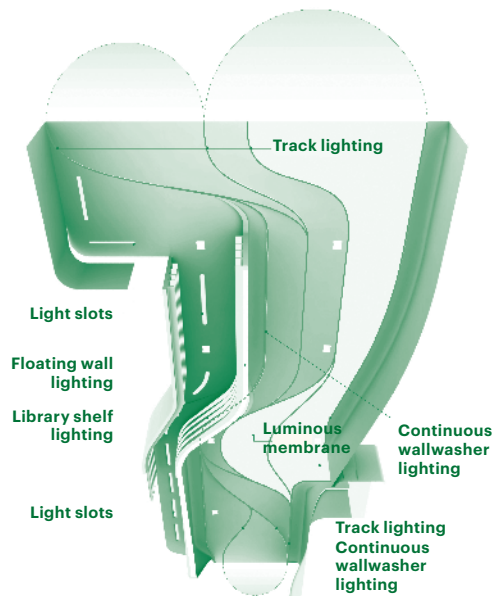
The ceiling of this Manhattan loft is the catalyst for a conversation between gallery and living space. Walls and light are organised and articulated by this big detail, which creates a series of hybrid conditions that negotiate, exaggerate and blend the relationship between exhibition and living areas. By interchanging luminous and opaque treatments, the ceiling creates a field of ambient and local lighting conditions attuned to the various demands of display and daily rituals. Opaque areas consist of subtly arched elements, creating the impression of a limitless ceiling which disguises the true height of the space. The luminous part of the ceiling is backlit by 18,000 led lights. This extensive membrane of light serves multiple purposes: it balances the proportions of the loft by creating an illusion of height, functions as an unobtrusive space divider, and can be programmed to illuminate the space with various shades of light. By interchanging between luminous and opaque, the ceiling becomes a field of ambient and local lighting conditions.



Floor to ceiling glass panes frame the views toward downtown Manhattan

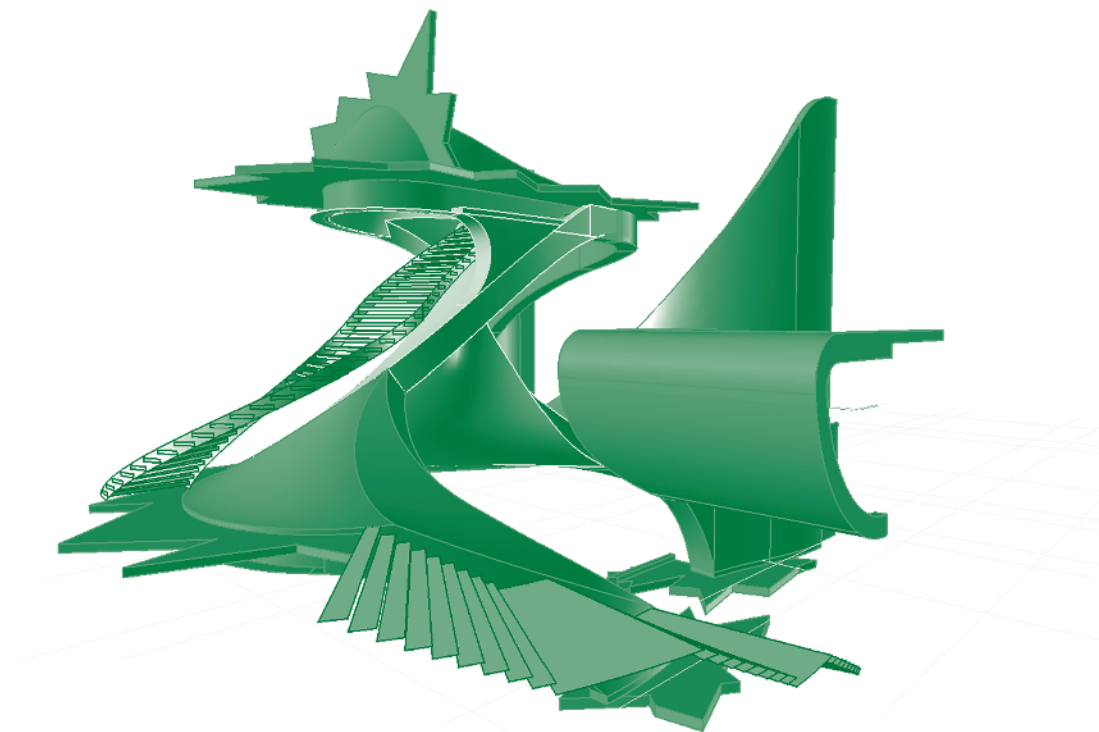
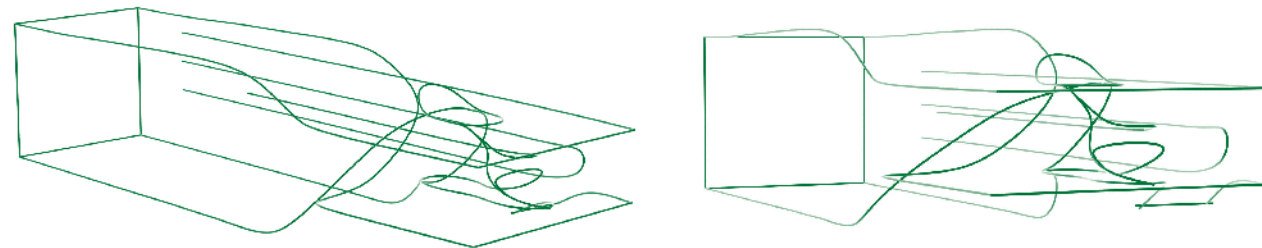


Reflected ceiling plan

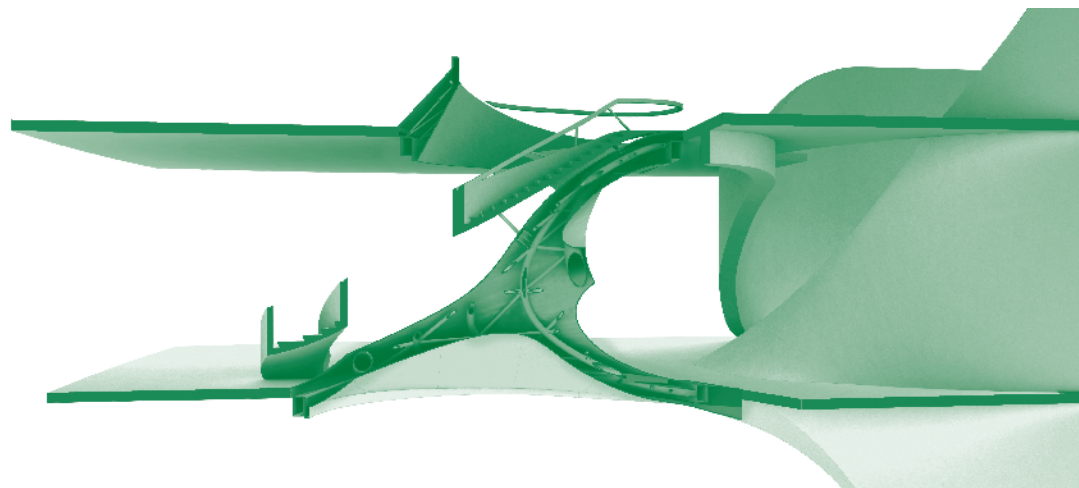


Ceiling lighting scheme





3D image of concrete components



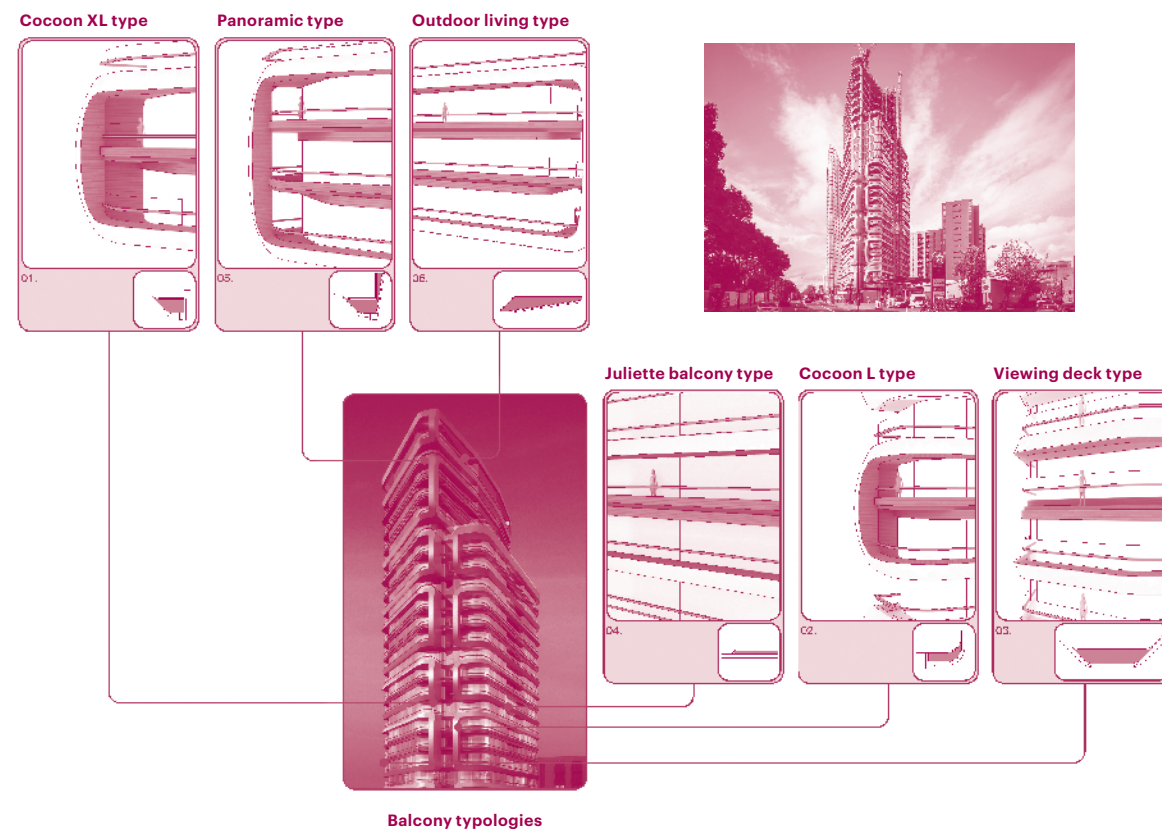
3D section twist

PROGRAMMATIC SCALES

The specific scaling of programme fosters a more sensitive integration between the multiple components of a building and its urban context. When adding a programme to an existing urban framework, it is important to understand ways in which the introduction of new programming will resonate. Rather than existing as mute extrusions, residential towers are enlivened through the legible reading of their inner neighbourhoods, while the precise scaling of a theatre can have regenerative effects on its context and encourage community-building. In this way, the precise articulation of programmatic scales opens the possibility to speak to, and affect audiences far beyond the allocated brief.

THE CANALETTO TOWER, LONDON, ENGLAND, 2011–2016

The facade treatment of the Canaletto tower plays with scalar contrasts and takes advantage of the tower's prominent position in the city of London. Clusters of adjacent floors are grouped together through the expression of frames, creating distinctive vertical neighbourhoods that introduce a scale otherwise untypical for a residential tower. Each resident has the ability to identify their unit within one of these clusters, even from a distance. Near views reveal a carefully curated material palette, contrasting between textured and smooth to emphasise the 'framing' strategy. At Canaletto, bridging scales is a strategy that combines material treatment and form to mediate between neighbourhood, tower and urban context.





VILLA NM, UPSTATE NEW YORK, USA, 2000-2007

The dual character of the materiality of Villa NM is expressed through its dark matte surface cladding contrasted with highly reflective coated glass. The dark surface absorbs light and defines the silhouette of the building, while the glazed areas reflect the surroundings with a rich golden tint. In contrast, the interior surfaces are rendered white, while the reflective glass when viewed from inside is completely transparent. Therefore, the dual materials perform contrasting roles between the villa's exterior expression as a beguiling object in the landscape, and the interior life of a functional home.

