

Scriptorium

& Office

re-enchantment of work

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&

Office:

re-enchantment of work

Tutors:

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Scriptorium

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Office:

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The Scriptorium was a space within a medieval monastery in which monks would rewrite the sacred books. The work of rewriting a manuscript was at the same time a prayer. The monastic rule considered a labour practiced by a monk as a service in a duty to God (Agamben, 2011). The monotonous and repetitive work of rewriting books was not only an action resulting in a new manuscript but it also had a symbolic meaning of subordination and connection to God. The work was at the same time a disciplinary ritual in unity with the preaching, which was reflected in the Benedictine rule of *Ora et Labora*—pray and work. *Spirituale opus* - the spiritual labour - was an inherent part of the monastic life and later it became the core of the protestant ethos of work. The religious consideration of the worldly labour was one of the main elements of the Protestantism. The religion perceived hard work and diligence as the symptoms of predestination of soul to the salvation. Secularization of the protestant idea of work and the sense of duty resulted in the creation of the capitalism (Weber, 2005). The work that before was at the same time a meditation in the reli-

gious sense became a literal and goal oriented task related to the call of duty in the secular sense. The discipline and rule that had earlier been enchanted and symbolic for the monk within a monastery became rational tools to increase the efficiency of the performed labour. The transition of work from *sacrum* to the realm of profane has affected the spatial setting of work.



The spatial analysis of the scriptorium with the wider context of the monastery presented in this paper is followed by the general take on the past spiritual understanding of work and disenchantment. The journey through the secularisation of the ideas related to labour that comes next, leads to today's setting of work – an office.



A confrontation of the medieval scriptorium and today's *escritorio* (Portuguese: office), a space where the rational reasoning is dominating the life of the worker, results in an attempt to introduce the notion of the spiritual *other* to the homogenous working environment.



The earthbound action of rewriting books, the apparent goal of which it was to produce a new manuscript, became a transcendent experience for the monks due to the specific spiritual content that was reflected in the spatial context of the medieval monastery. During the ritualistic practice, the rules of everyday and the usual organisation of the social structures become suspended on the benefit of *communitas* – a state in which all the community members become equal in order to be able to share together an experience of a ritual (Turner, 2010). Within a monastery, the unusual state of suspension of everyday rules, that were structuring a secular society, was constant. According to Rudolf Otto, the spiritual experience is based on the otherness (*ganz Andere*) to the everyday life (Otto, 1996). Otto claimed that the religious notion is completely different from what is known in the mundane world. Therefore, it is impossible to relate the unique religious mindset to the rational realm of mundane (Otto, 1923):

“The feeling of it may at times come sweeping like a gentle tide pervading the mind with a tranquil mood of deepest worship. It may

pass over into a more set and lasting attitude of the soul, continuing, as it were, thrillingly vibrant and resonant, until at last it dies away and the soul resumes its “profane,” non-religious mood of everyday experience.”

The life of the monks was organised according to the rules characteristic exclusively for this specific social group living in the monasteries. This distinct condition of an otherness was expressed in the spatial qualities of the sacred space (Aureli, 2016). As Mario Botta wrote, *“a space is sacred when it is different, when it has been circumscribed”* (Botta, 1995). Certain spatial qualities reflected and supported the religious reasoning and behaviour of the monks for whom the work was at the same time a higher service to God.

figure 1, page 8 (previous)

Illustration of Jean Miélot, a scribe priest at work

1456, author: Jean Le Tavernier

figure 2, page 9 (previous)

Government printing office, Washington

1912, Harris & Erwing Inc.

figure 3, 4 pages 13-15 (next)

St. Gall monastery floorplan including the daily route of the monk (page 13)

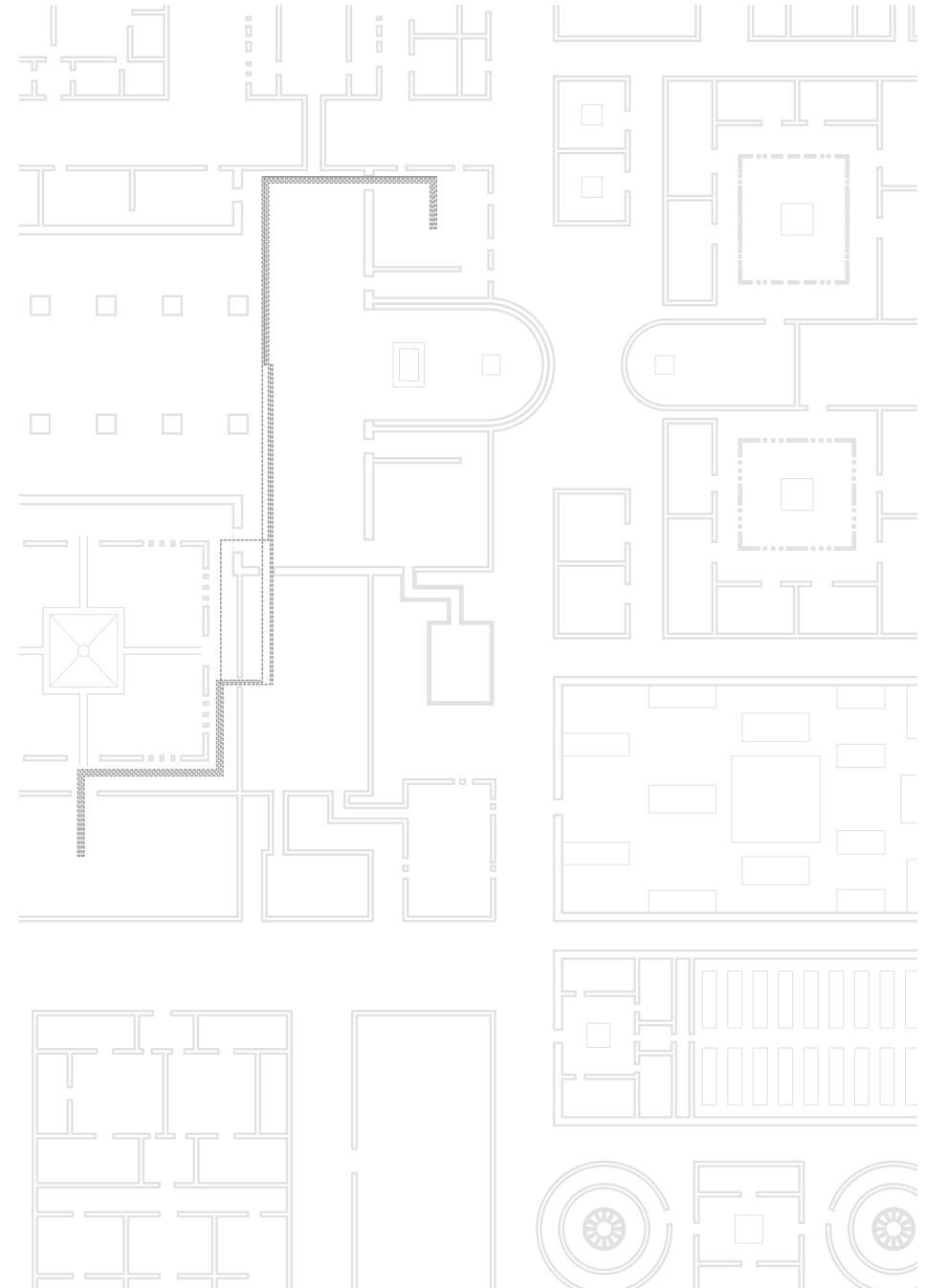
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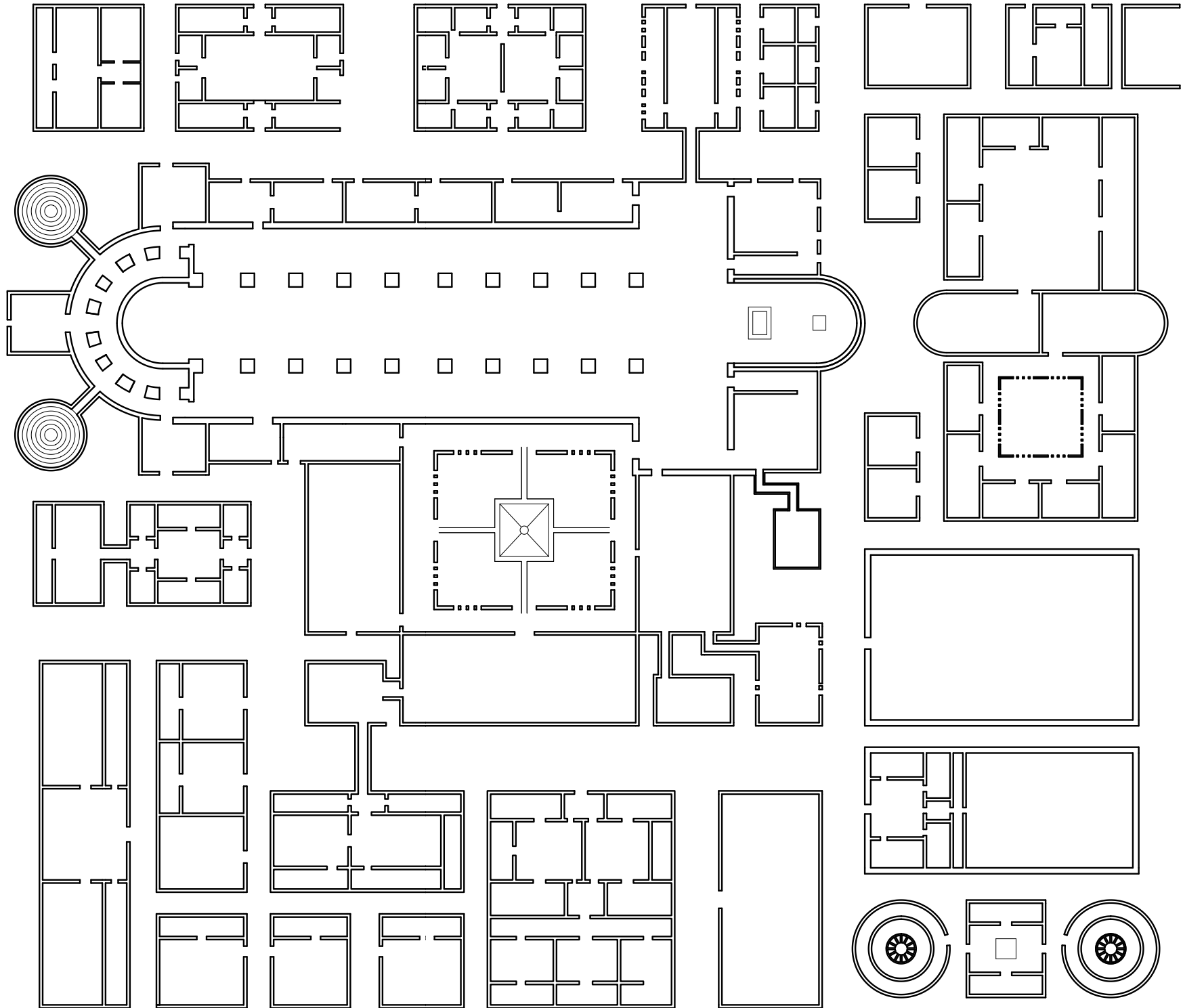
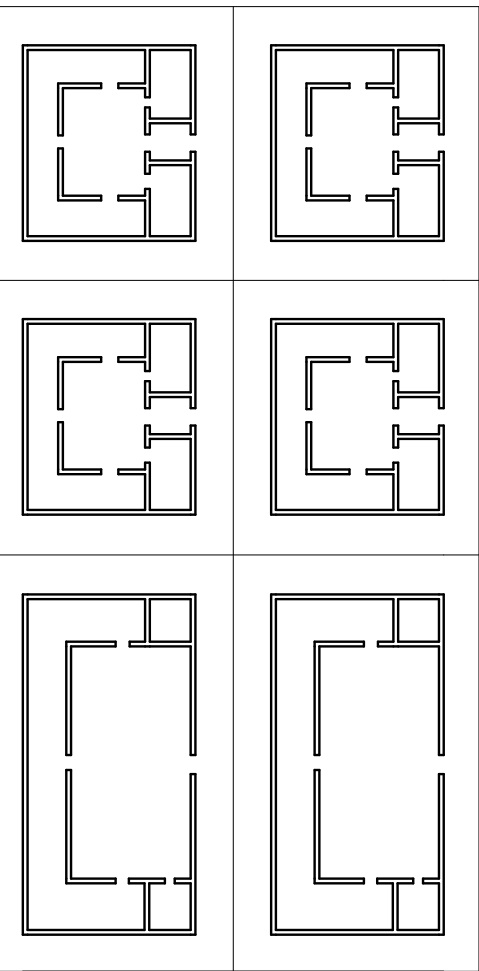
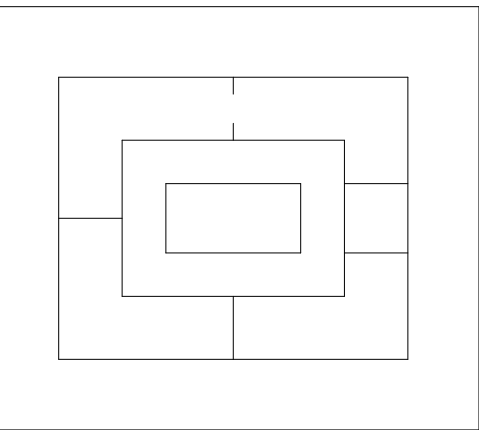
Daily route of the monk in the monastery

Plan of St. Gall drawn in IX century as a commission of Haito, the abbot of Reichenau is seen by scholars as an ideal image of the spatial and functional arrangement of the monastery (Horn, 1986). It has been used in this paper as a case study to analyse the general qualities of the sacred space of the monastery in relation to the everyday experience of the monk. Based on the plan and the available renderings, St. Gall was used as a tool to explore the sequence of spaces that the monk witnessed during the day. Some analysed qualities were borrowed from other examples of the monastic architecture and projected on the presented example. The daily schedule of the monk used to conduct this analysis is based on the medieval monastic rules.

DAILY SCHEDULE OF THE MONK

MATINS	2:30 – 3:00	morning prayers in the church
LAUDS	5:00 – 6:00	return to bed for a brief sleep
PRIME	before 7:30	silent prayer, breakfast in refectory
TERCE	around 9:00	work in the scriptorium
SEXT	12:00	mass
NONES	2:00 – 3:00	dinner
VESPERS	around 4:30	evening prayer
COMPLINE	around 6:00	return to bed





Geometry

During the day, the monk was moving through the different spaces of the monastery according to the given schedule. The day started with the prayer in the church located at the heart of the monastery. For the worshipper coming from the outside of the monastery, entering the space of the church meant an introduction to a different pace, reasoning and rules which was communicated in the spatial organisation of the sacred interior. It was also symbolically a process of transition from the profane outside to the sacred inside (Aureli, 2016). The monk, on the other hand, entered a space of the church after a walk through the cloister - a covered arcade walk separating the daily, profane activities from the higher practice of the religious rituals. The description below illustrates the symbolic value of this solution:

„The cloister, both as an architectural solution and as a safe haven established in the heart of every well-disciplined monk to carry with himself even outside, secured the monastic ideals from dissolution in a world avid for the sacred embodied by monks and monasteries.” (Horn, 1986)

The visual rhythm of the arcades in the relation to the movement through the cloister was a prelude to the experience inside the church. Once walked in, the monk immediately led the gaze towards the altar, as the space was strongly directional (Białostocki, 2006). Two rows of columns symmetrically placed on both sides of the space visually framed an altar and organised the movement within the church (Aureli, 2016). The space with the rhythmical distribution of the columns imposed a certain tempo that was perceived as the monk was walking, which had already been experienced before and with less intensity during the walk through the cloister. The columns also created a sense of hierarchy and order. (Aureli, 2016). “The Name of The Rose” by Umberto Eco delivers an illustrative description of an experience of the monk Aldo stepping inside the church:

“(…) multiple arches, led the gaze, as if into the heart of an abyss, toward the doorway itself, crowned by a great tympanum, supported on the sides by two impostes and in the centre by a carved pillar, which divided the entrance into two apertures protected by oak doors reinforced in metal.” (Eco, 2004)

The interior of the church directed an attention of the monk towards an altar during any performed activity within the space. As the monk during the day was frequently coming back to the church or was passing through it on a way to the scriptorium, he was constantly reminded of the spiritual meaning of his service within a monastery as *spirituale opus* – a service to God.

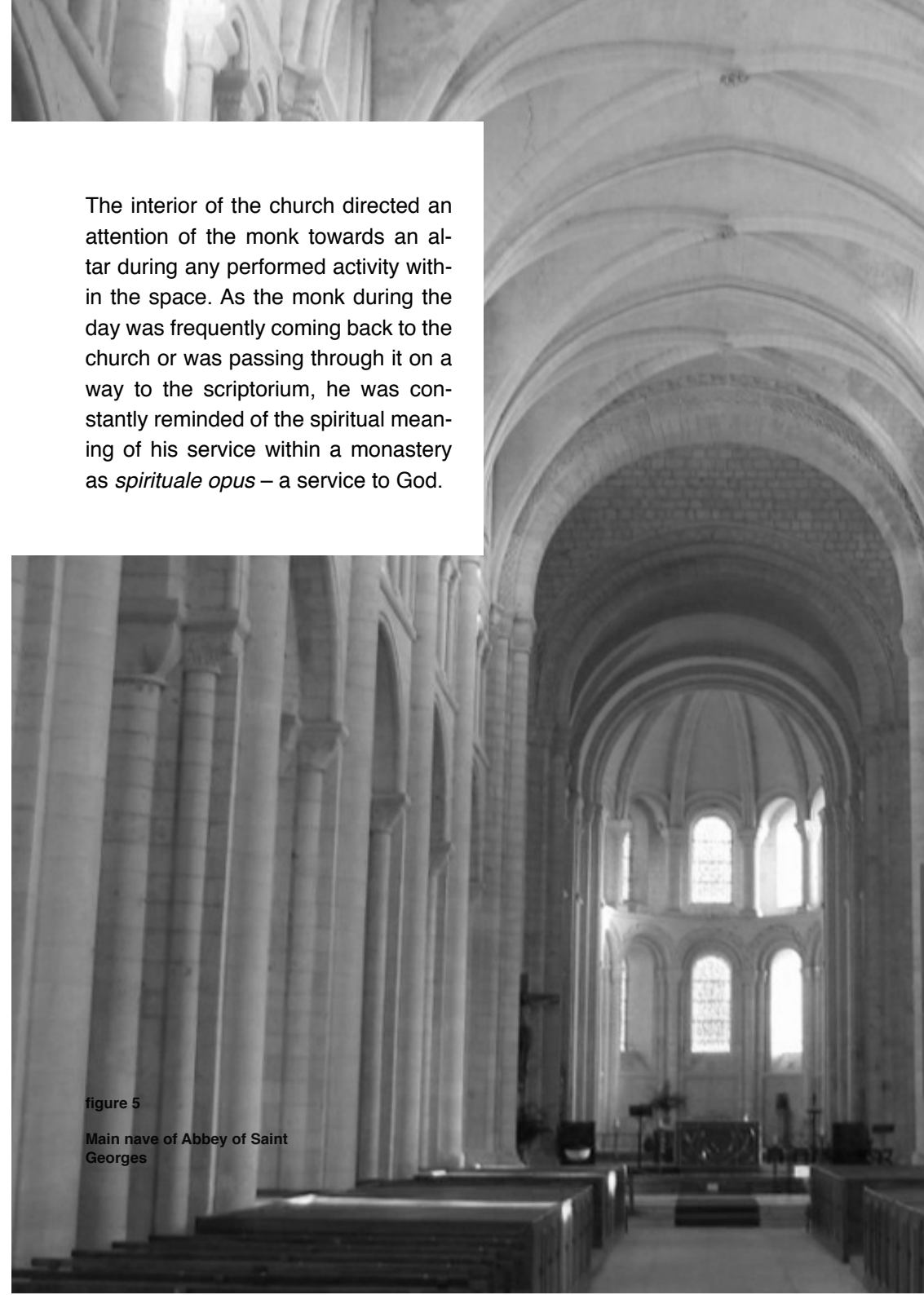
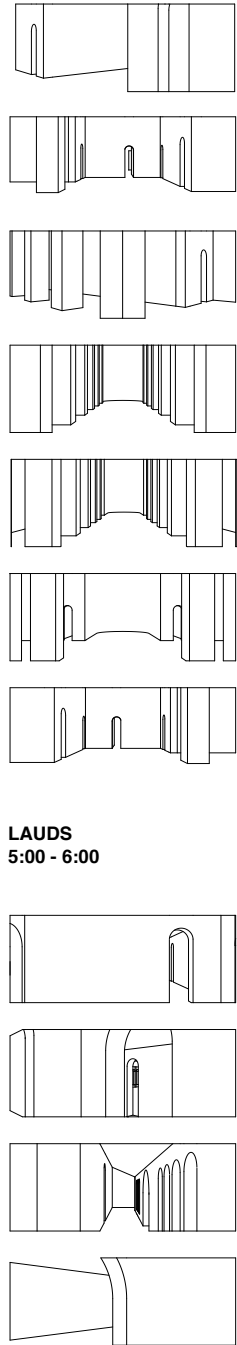
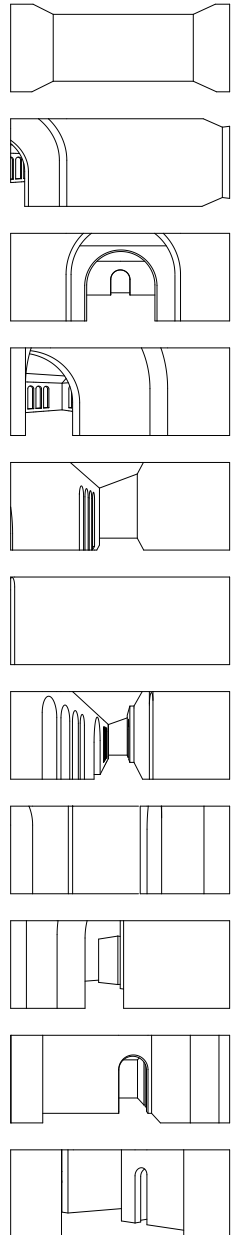


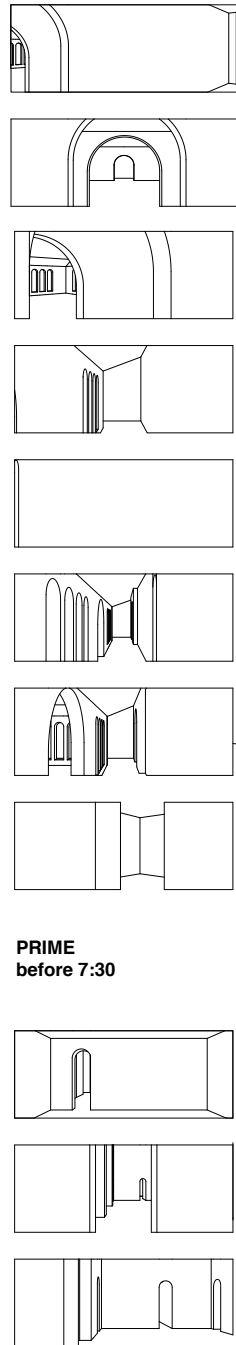
figure 5

Main nave of Abbey of Saint Georges

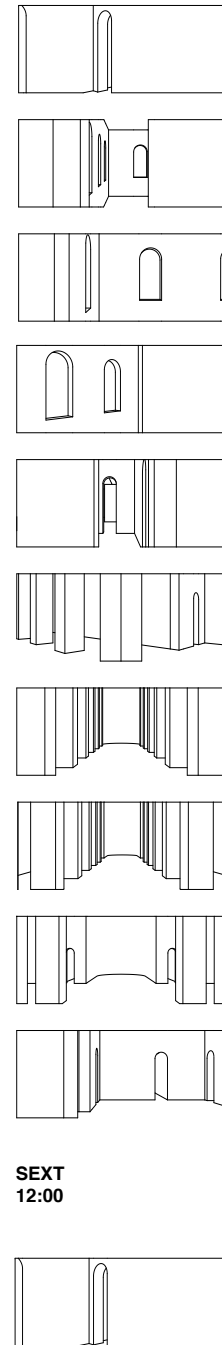
MATINS
2:30 - 3:00



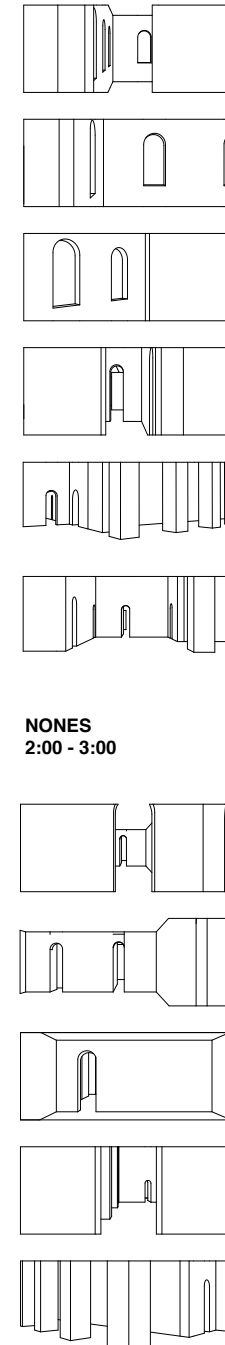
LAUDS
5:00 - 6:00



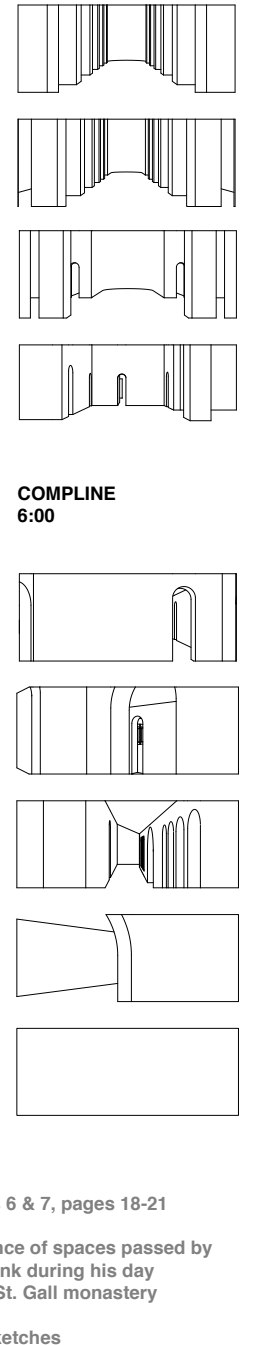
PRIME
before 7:30



SEXT
12:00



NONES
2:00 - 3:00



COMPLINE
6:00

figures 6 & 7, pages 18-21
sequence of spaces passed by
the monk during his day
in the St. Gall monastery
own sketches



Scale

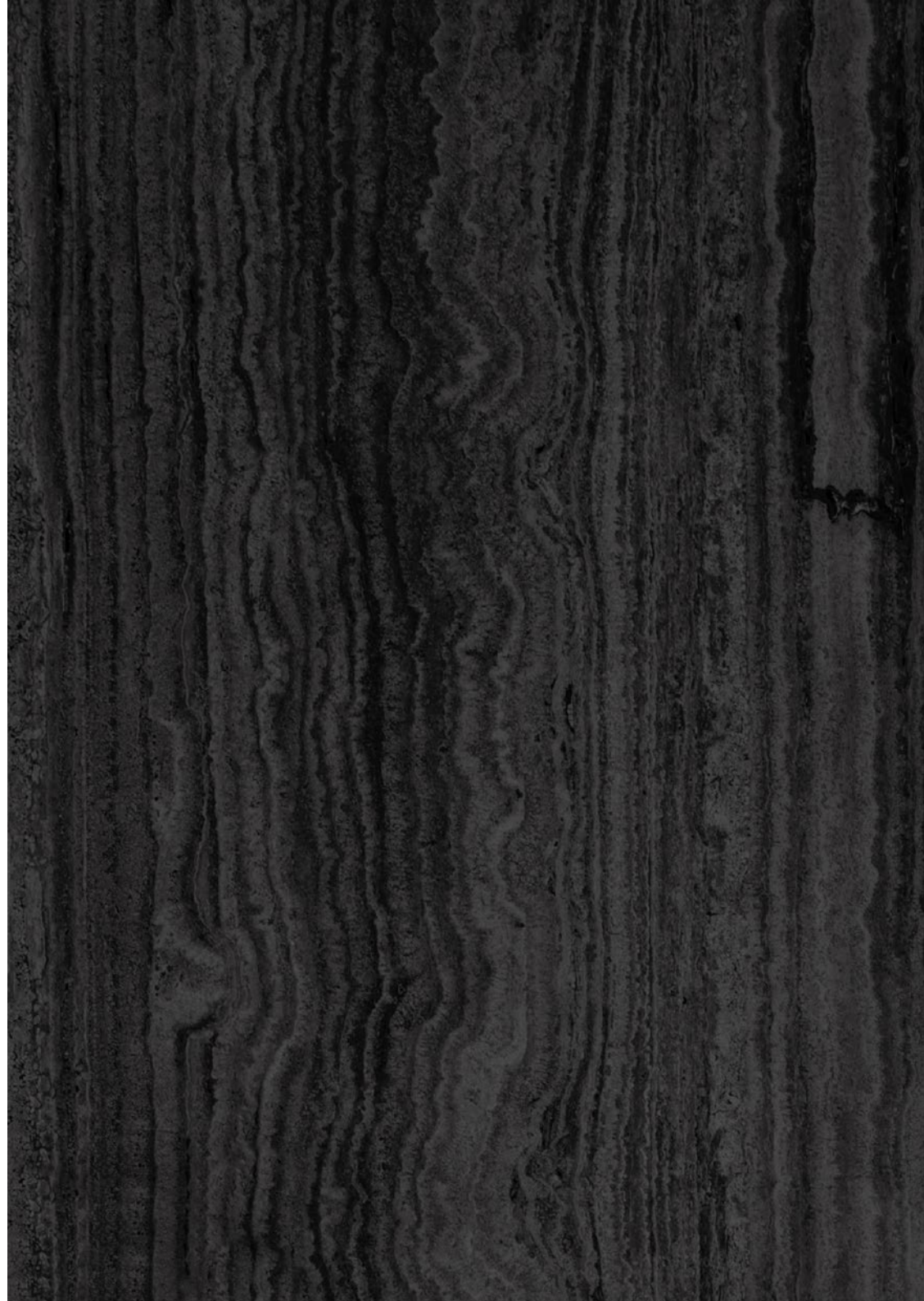
Entering a space of the church exposed a monk to the different geometry and a strong direction but it also introduced him to a very different spatial scale. The church was a space significantly higher compared to the other buildings surrounding the monastery and it was also a tallest building in the town. The verticality of the church interior had a symbolic meaning of an aspiration towards the Heaven. A monk, during the day, was transitioning between the horizontal spaces of the dormitory, refectory and scriptorium and a vertical church reminding him about the higher, divine goals. Frequent presence in the sacred space of the church oriented a mind-set of the monk towards the higher aspiration and reminded him of the redemption.

Atmosphere

The notion of divine within the monastery was further supported by the atmosphere of the space very different to the outside, everyday surrounding. The everyday ambience surrounding the monk was significantly different to the one of the mundane world. In the sacred medieval monastery, the light was considered as visual representation of the divine (Shafik Ramzy, 2013). The dim and indirect illumina

tion in the church was a tool to evoke a religious reading in both worshippers and monks. On the other hand, the scriptorium and library as well as other spaces that were used for the practical purposes, were lightened well in order for the monk to be able to conduct a given task. In the scriptorium, seven windows were providing a well lightened space for the scribe monk (Horn, 1986). A monk was in transition between the spaces where light was treated instrumentally and those in which it was a symbol of the presence of God. The spirituality of the place was also reflected in the use of material characterized by heaviness and presence, such as stone. The stone suggested the long lasting of the church as if it naturally belonged to the land it was built on. It also allowed the traces of passing time to gradually appear on its surface. Monk Aldo perceived the materiality of the space as following:

"(...) the silent speech of the carved stone, accessible as it immediately was to the gaze and the imagination of anyone (...) dazzled my eyes and plunged me into a vision (...)" (Eco, 2004)



Body movement

Each movement practiced in the monastery was symbolic and carried a meaning, as any service within the sacred walls was *spirituale opus*. Some movements were both symbolic and practical as they were at the same time labour. Others were purely symbolic and abstract expressions of the religious content. The day of the scribe monk was dominated by sitting, however in the monastery sitting was not a dominant position. Most monks were working physically on the fields or in farms. Therefore, sitting was perceived as unusual and rare position to remain in for longer time. For that reason it was considered as drudgery and the most refined form of discipline. The annotation of eight-century monk on the margins of the manuscript expresses the bodily struggle:

“Writing is excessive drudgery. It crooks your back, dims your sight, twists your stomach and your sides. Three fingers write, but the whole body labors.”

Sequence of spaces

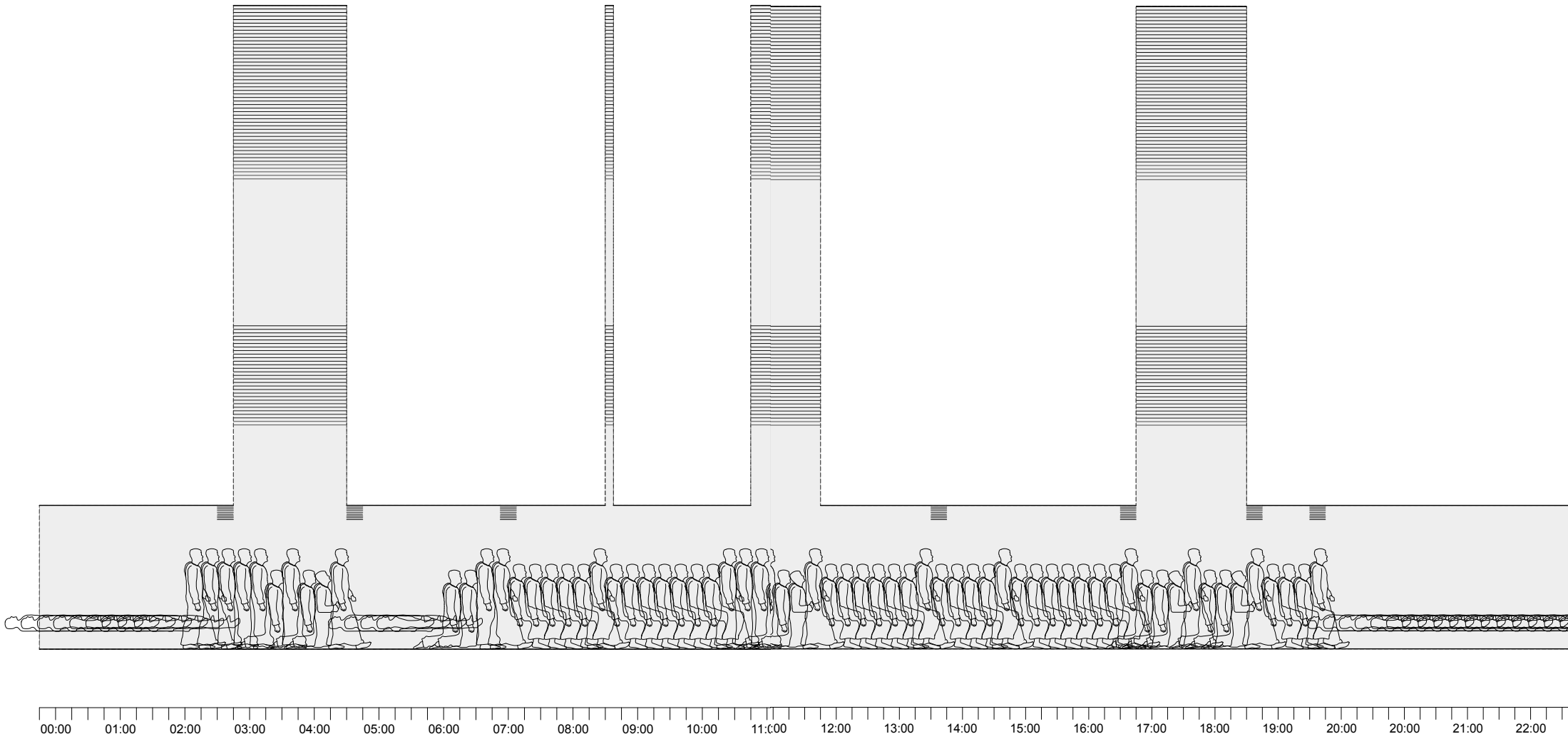
The distribution of the different functions within a monastery was not based on the rational reasoning exclusively. The position of different rooms within a plan also suggested the per-

ceived importance of the different functions. The cloister was separating the religious ritual from the daily activities reflecting the general division on *sacrum* and *profanum*. On the plan of St. Gall, the church was at the heart of the monastery. The most mundane spaces such as pig or cow farms were at the entrance to the monastery – at the threshold between the sacred inside and profane outside. The activities perceived as more important or noble kind of practice were located at the side or nearby the church. The work in the library or the scriptorium was considered as a higher or nobler kind of practice. It was therefore positioned at the side of the church, between the presbytery and the transept. (Horn, 1989).

figure 8, pages 26-27 (next)

The body movement in relation to the space during the day of the monk in the St. Gall monastery

own sketches



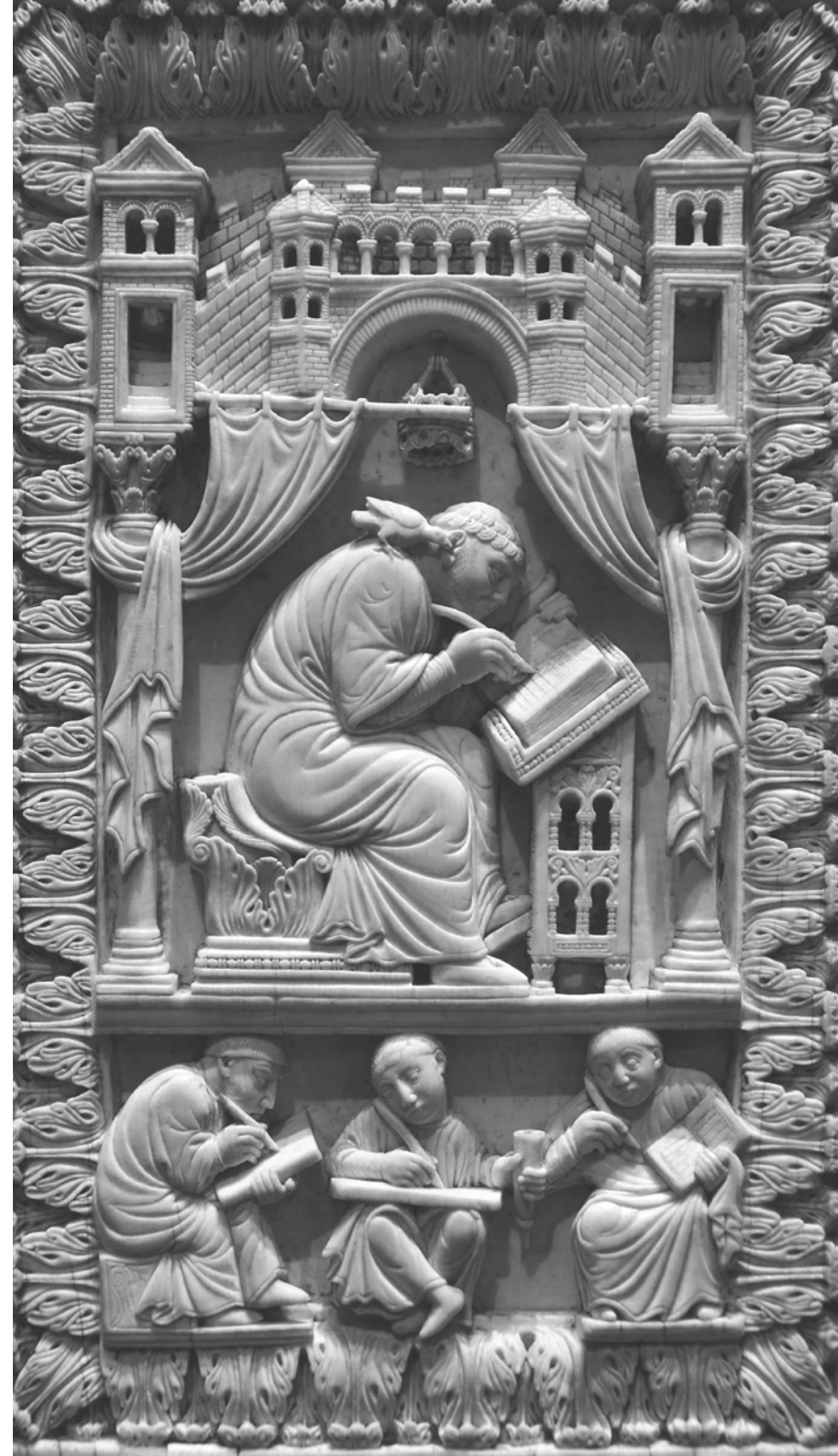
I. The scriptorium

The monk, on a way to the scriptorium, was passing by the church with the altar on his side. The space of the church was a physical representation of religious reasoning and it oriented a mindset of the monk to the divine. On the other hand, the space of the scriptorium itself was not filled with the symbolic features. Its spatial qualities were responding to the requirements necessary for the tedious production of the manuscript. The distribution of the furniture elements – seven tables positioned along the two walls and a table with the shelving rack – responded to the practical demands of the work exclusively. Nevertheless, the scriptorium was an element in the sequence of spaces, which supported the religious reading of labour. Coming directly from the church, in perception of the monk the activities of working and praying were physically very close to one another which pointed out to the conceptual unity of praying and working – *ora et labora*.

figure 9 (right)

Relief of St. Gregory the Great
with the scribes

10th century, Kunsthistorisches
Museum, Vienna



Emotional context

As indicated before in the context of the spatial sequence, the work in the scriptorium was considered as a noble practice. The part of the poem written by Alcuin, an English scholar from eighth century, proves the validity of this argument (Horn, 1986):

*“To copy books is better than to ditch the vines;
The second serves the belly, but the first the minds”
(Fodere quam vites melius est scribere libros
Ille suo ventri serviet, iste animae).*

Cassiodorus, the medieval scholar, described in such words the work done by the scribe (Haven Putnam, 1898):

“He may fill his mind with the Scriptures while copying the saying of the Lord; with his fingers he gives life to men and arms against the whiles of the devil. As the antiquarius copies the words of Christ, so many wounds does he inflict upon Satan. What he writes in his cell will be scattered far and wide over distant provinces. Man multiplies the Words of Heaven, and, if I may dare so to speak, the three fingers of his right hand are made to express the utterances of the Holy Trinity (...).”



figure 10 (right)

Engraving of the scribe monk
at work

1891, author: William Blades



The work in the scriptorium was accompanied by the high working culture represented in the disciplinary behaviour and rules. The access to the space of scriptorium was limited for chosen members of the monastery and the ones working in the scriptorium were not allowed to leave it freely. The monk had to perform the work in silence and according to the strict disciplinary rules preventing from the distractions and temptations.

Considered a noble practice, the work in the scriptorium was also simply a physical struggle. Writing in the still position for a longer time caused a monk a lot of pain. Some monks described the fatigue during the work on the margins of the manuscript (Horn, 1986).

“The book which you can see was written in the outer seats. While I wrote I froze and what I could not write by the beams of the sun I finished by candlelight.”

*(Sedibus externis hic librum, quem modo cernis,
Dum scriptis, frigit, ed quod cum lumine solis
Scribere non putuit, perfecit lumine noctis)*

figure 11 (left)

Lay person and monk at work
in Echternach Abbey

1020, Bremen,
Universitätsbibliothek

This physical struggle was a part of a bodily discipline that symbolically meant subordination to God. This work was at the same time a prayer

or a meditative act. This specific state in which the manual labour and prayer have merged into one is referred to in the monastic literature as *meditatio* (Agamben, 2011). Meditation in the monastic sense, different from the modern understanding of the term, evolved from the silent reading of the God's word. The repetition and recitation of the sacred texts out of the memory could accompany any activity through the day. Therefore, it became inseparable part of the monks work. The Benedictine formula *ora et labora* – work and pray expressed the importance of those two aspects in the life of the monk. As Giorgio Agamben explained “...the monastic rule (...) considers the work of the hands as an indiscernible part of the opus Dei”. The manual labour in the context of a monastery was spiritualized and became an inseparable part of the service to God. John Cassian, a medieval monk wrote: “Whatever you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do everything for the glory of God (1 Cor. 10:31)”. Concept of spirituale opus determined a symbolic and spiritual reading of the discipline and a bodily exercise.

Exercise

The disciplinary exercise within the monastery was at the same time a preaching. It was not oriented on a

specific achievement but was part of the opus Dei. In the perception of the monk, the purpose of an exercise was not limited to creation of material good exclusively but it went far beyond it. In the mystical or ascetic sense, an exercise was an act directed to the higher purpose of the redemption after death (Jewdokimow, 2012). The time dedicated to the disciplinary exercise of rewriting of books was oriented on the goal outside earthy time and a physical world. The scribe monk was subordinating to the celestial rules and was present in an alternative, spiritual realm. The organization and hierarchy of the scribe's work was dominated by the individual aim to master one's body within the spirit of opus Dei.

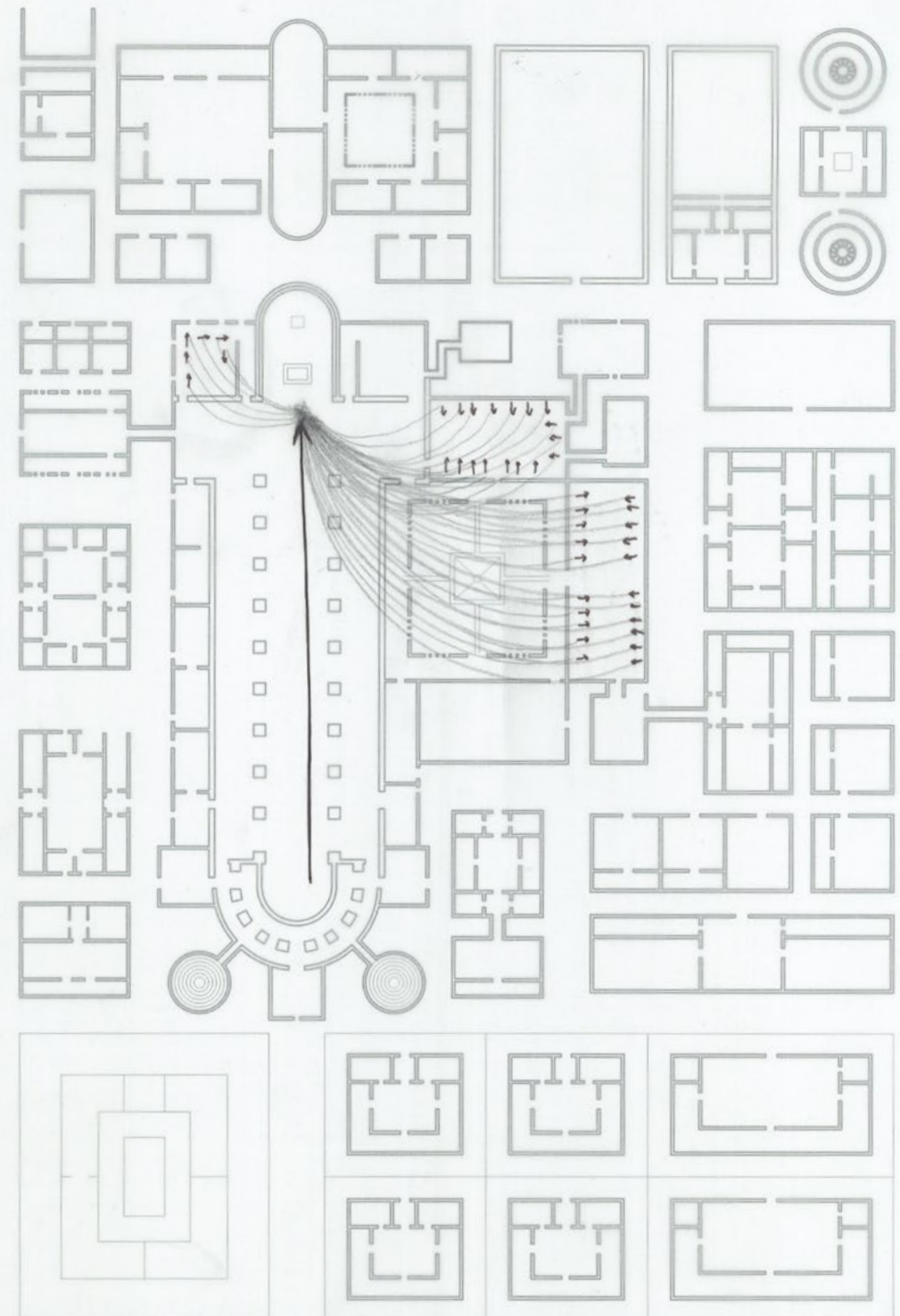


figure 12 (right)

diagram: spiritual perception
of work in the monastery

own sketch

The monastic concept of *spirituale opus* and the Benedictine rule of *ora et labora* can be seen as the precursors to the Protestantism with the ethos of work as one of the cores (Agamben, 2011). The Christian idea of good work, within the Protestantism in particular was seen as a duty and the sign of God's grace. Diligence and hard work were recognized as the symptoms of predestination to salvation and therefore they were cherished and desired among the worshippers. Even the most earthly labour was seen as contributing to the prosperity of the society and to God's grace. According to Max Weber, the secularization of the ideas standing behind the ethos of work in Protestantism gave a rise to capitalism (Weber, 2005). He argued that Protestantism enhanced the pursuit of economic gain associating it with the religious aspirations. The values cherished within the protestant societies such as diligence and hard work that previously had been assigned with the religious meaning, continued to last within the society but were later deprived of the spiritual connotations. The duty in a religious sense has been transformed to a "spirit of capitalism" - a sense of responsibility as a part of the economy (Weber, 2005). Simultaneously, the meaning of an exercise and a discipline has been shifted from the spiritual realm to the economic

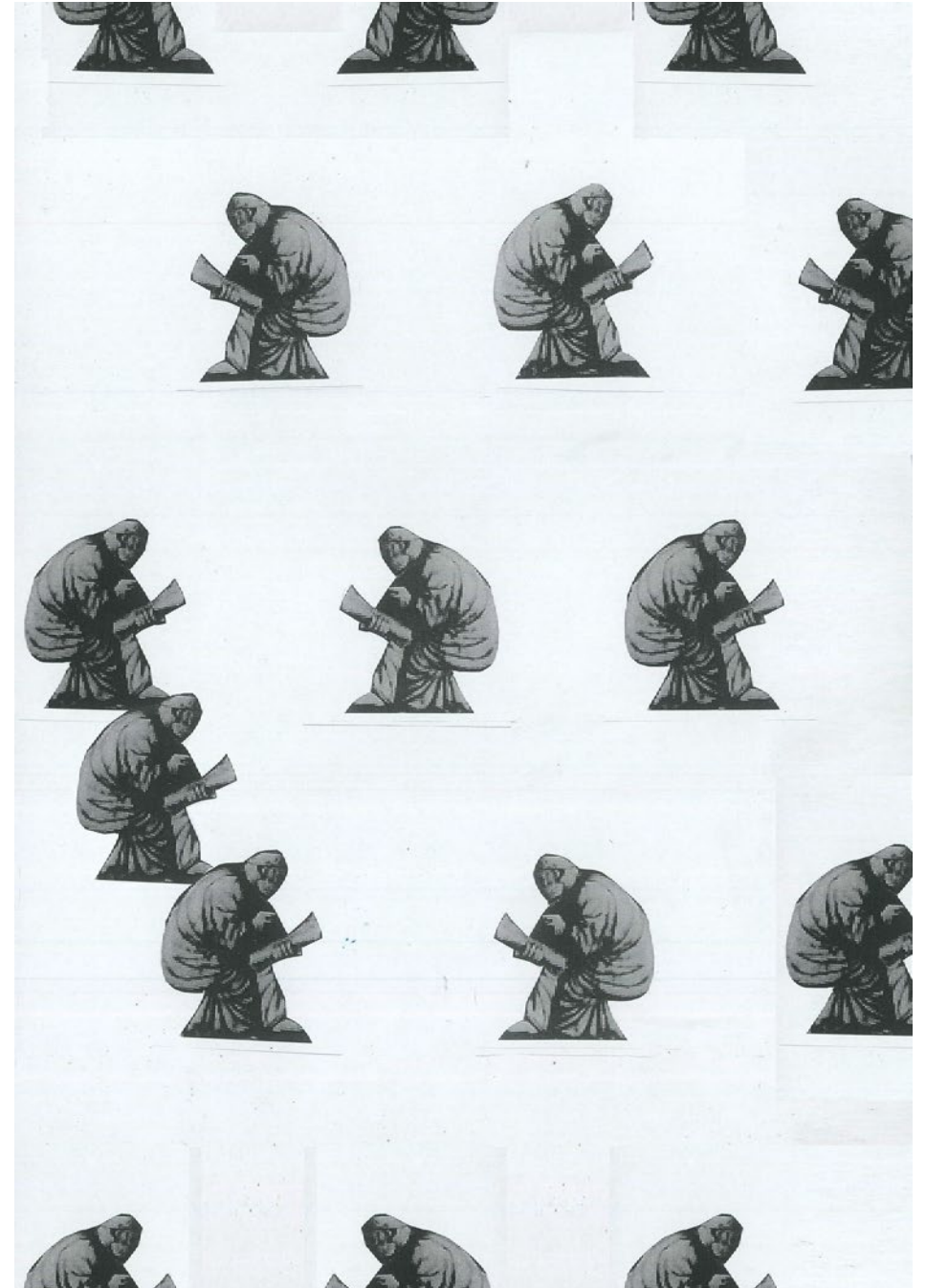
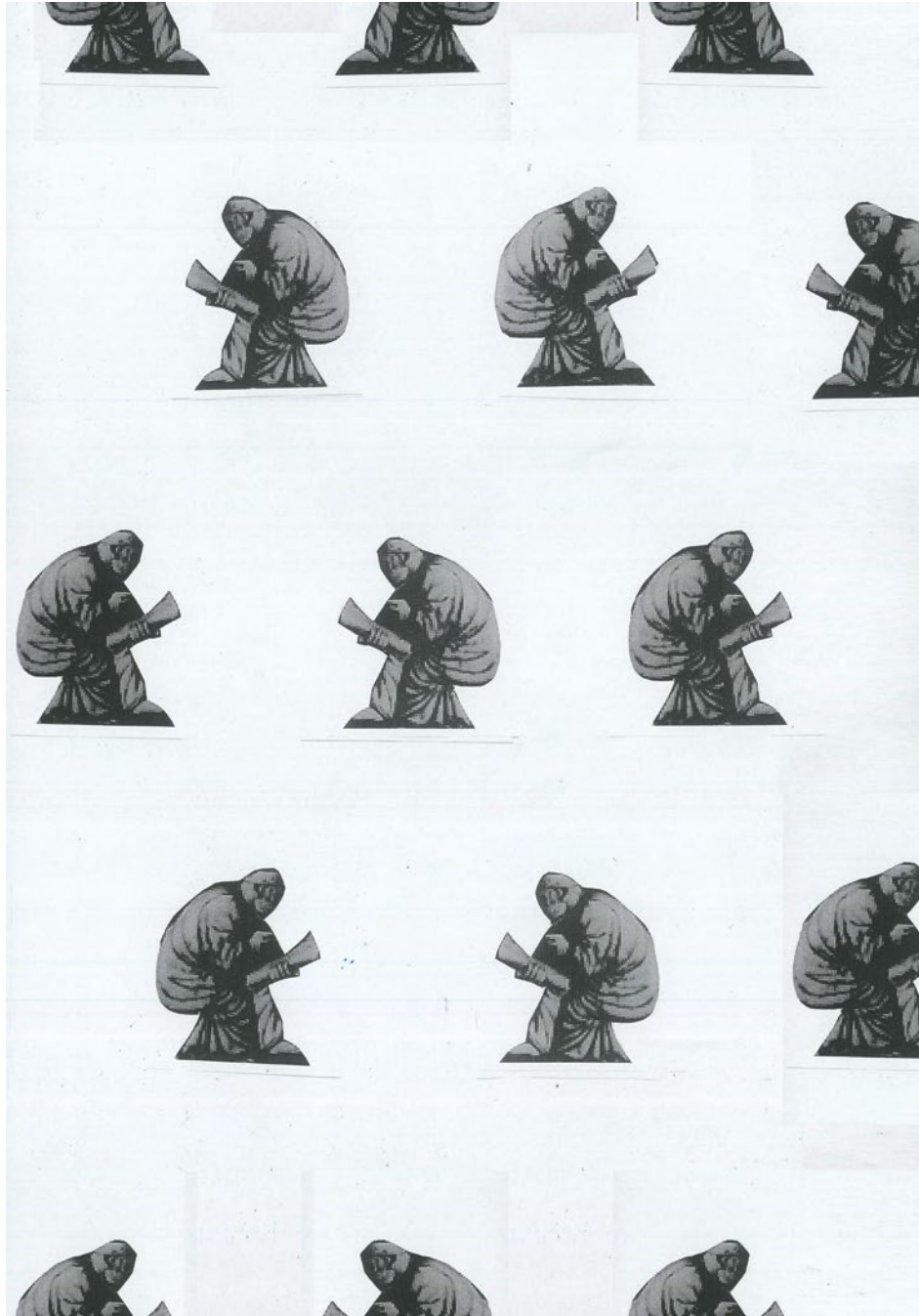
one and an exercise became a way to economize the time on the earth (Foucault, 1975). The *spirituale opus* was no longer spiritual but rather it became oriented on achieving a concrete earthly result. The discipline, as occurred within the disciplinary ritual, was incorporated into economic processes (Foucault, 1975).

Previously focused on otherworldly aims, the discipline of the body became directed towards the purposes pragmatically related to the economy. What before has been spiritual and symbolic, soon became a way to chase the everyday in the economic and material sense (Jewdokimow, 2012). The new discipline, rather than based on austerity, was later practiced in order to increase the efficiency (Foucault, 1975). The bodily practice that by monks had been perceived as the integral part of the ascetic life was now a tool and an inherent element of economical and political organisation.

figure 13 (next)

Work versus ritual

result of workshops with Koen Deprez



A great role of the scriptoriums in the Medieval Europe and in the history of knowledge is unquestionable. They contributed to the preservation and distribution of great amount of writings (Haven Putnam, 1898). The scriptoriums, in which the manual labour of the monks resulted in creation of the wide range of the manuscripts, were for a long time the main centres of work based on writing (*scribere*) and knowledge production. Today's main settings of production of different kinds of knowledge are the offices, in a broad sense of the word, in which the worker's labour is as well based on the form of writing (*scribere*) – today on the computer keyboard. First take on the distribution of the desks in the space, the sitting position of the monk/worker, the organisation of work encourage to confront the concept of scriptorium with today's common setting of a knowledge worker. A reflection on the secularisation of the ethos of work that gave rise to today's "spirit of capitalism" leads to a subjective argument that the office today is a secular sequence of the scriptorium. Both the etymology of the word scriptorium and the scope of meanings of office including past definitions of the word confirm the validity of this analogy.

The word *scriptorium* comes from the Latin *scriptorius*, which means writing.

In Spanish, *escritorio* means a desk and in Portuguese the same word stands for *office* (Wiktionary). On the other hand, a word *office* the contemporary definition of which is following: "a room or part of a building in which people work, especially sitting at tables with computers, phones, etc., usually as a part of a business or other organization" (Oxford Dictionary), was used in the Christian world to describe "the authorized form of ceremonial worship to a church" or "a daily service without an Eucharist" among other meanings connected to the religious practice. Additionally, it was also used to express the personal, official and moral duty. The transition of the Protestantism to the realm of capitalistic world changed a meaning of a duty from religious - connected to predestination of souls to incorporated into the economic reasoning. It is therefore interesting to see that the notion of *duty* is so related to the term of an office, which previously was also a part of the religious realm and later became related to the market economy. The word *office* links then the world of sacred and profane and is itself an illustration of the process of secularization.

Similarities

The comparison between a rendering of a scriptorium and a picture of an

office presents a similarity in the distribution of desks around the space. The workers/monks were/are sitting evenly distributed around the space in the most rational arrangement. The working body posture also has not transformed significantly since the medieval times. The relation of the body to the desk remains comparable to the one in the scriptorium. Still today, this posture causes the pain and trouble to the one staying still for a longer period of time. Similarities occur also in the organisation of work. The monks were working at the given schedule, within certain organisational rules and with the supervision of the monk of a higher position. The hierarchy of work and the office rules occur also in setting of work today. What is known today as the working culture can be compared to the high esteem in which the work in the scriptorium was held.

Differences

Although the similarities between the physical condition and organisation of work within the office and in the medieval scriptorium are clear, the actual experience of the monk and today's worker are in fact very different to one another. The reason of that is that the meaning of certain elements that are common for both spaces mean something very different today compared to

what they represented in the medieval monastery. For example, the rules and working esteem that in the monastery were an element of the subordination to God and a spiritual discipline, in the office today are a way to improve the working results and create a condition fruitful for fulfilling the concrete economic goals. The bodily struggle of sitting for a long time was for a monk an exercise on a way to achieve a mastery over the body, which was a part of austerity of monastic life. This pain within the walls of the modern office is no longer romanticized but rather seen as an obstacle that has to be eliminated or reduced to assure the full productivity. Moreover, the body movement is perceived literally and treated instrumentally in an office as a tool to gain certain economic profits. The theories such as scientific management or Taylorism were the first to look at the human movement in scientific and rationalized manner as a way to increase the efficiency within the working space. The body expression that was symbolic in the monastery was later methodically looked at and modified to fulfil concrete expectations. The ergonomics of work today is oriented on creating a friendly working environment that serves the profane outcomes. The symbolic and spiritual reading of work with its different elements that contributed to the reading

of labour as a disciplinary ritual was replaced with the literal understanding and work. Previously, *ora et labora*, became *labora* alone.

As illustrated in the previous paragraphs, through the day in the medieval monastery, the monk was walking through the sequence of spaces that encouraged him to read symbolically the practiced labour. Double perception of activities within the monastic life as both goal oriented and symbolic was supported by the spatial condition of the monk as he was constantly, frequently reminded through the spatial qualities of the monastery about the spiritual, higher meaning of any activity he was indulging with. The space was inviting a monk to reflect and escape beyond the rationality and purpose of performed action. In the symbolic and emotional sense, today's *escritorio* is a very different setting.

figure 14 (right top)

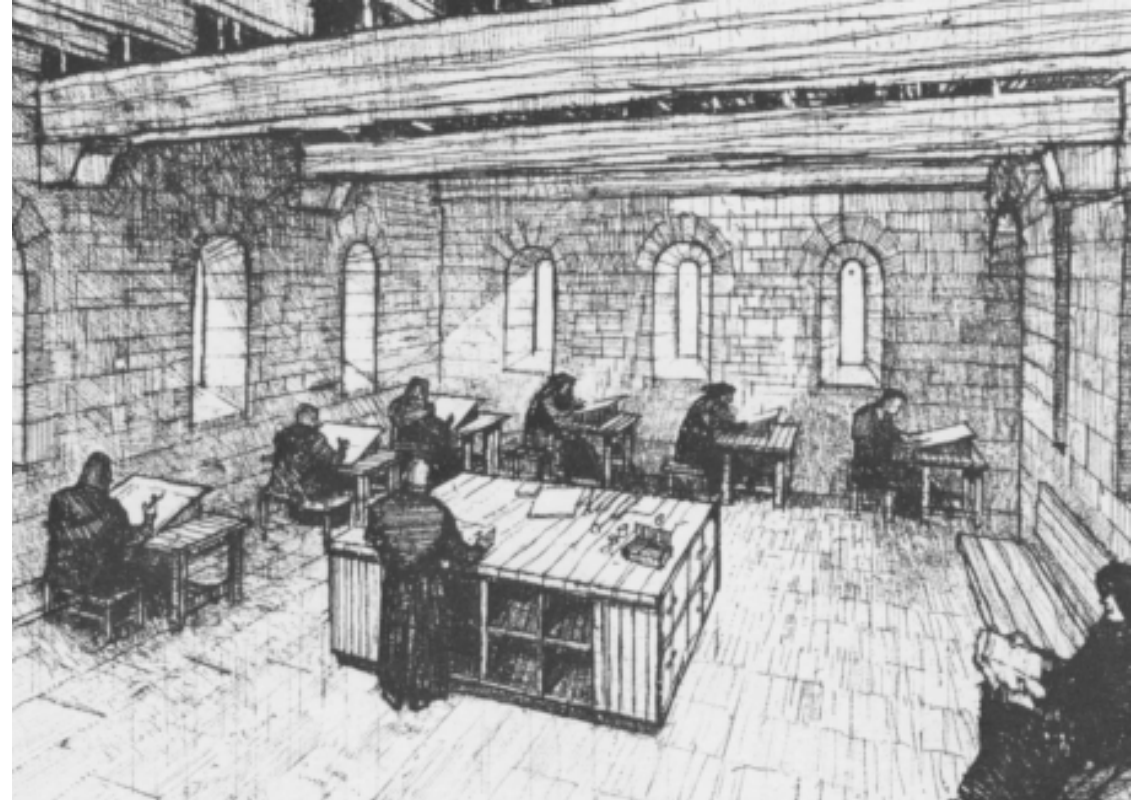
Rendering of scriptorium
of St. Gall monastery

author: Ernest Born

figure 15 (right bottom)

office environment

source: Wikipedia/
Phillie Casablanca



“Typical Plan is minimalism for the masses; already latent in the first brutally utilitarian explorations, by the end of the era of Typical Plan, i.e., the sixties, the utilitarian is refined as a sensuous science of coordination – column grids, facade modules, ceiling tiles, lighting fixtures, partitions, electrical outlets, flooring, furniture, color schemes, air-conditioning grills – that transcends the practical to emerge in a rarified existential domain of pure objectivity.”

Rem Koolhaas and Bruce Mau describe in S, M, L, XL a typical plan, a *“zero-degree, architecture stripped of all traces of uniqueness and specificity”*. It is recognized as the perfect setting for new processes, *“ideal accommodation for business”* (Koolhaas, 1995):

“Typical Plan is neutral, not anonymous. It is a place of worship. More austere than a Cistercian monastery, it accommodates infinitely greater numbers, a 20th century church without doctrine.”

Daily route of the worker in the space

Typical plan represents a grotesque illustration of what a modern office is. The generic plan of the office used below to reflect on the daily experience of the worker is a collection of the typical and stereotypical qualities assigned to the work setting. The reduction of the office space to such redundant form has been done intentionally with the awareness of the variety of directions that are now occurring in the office architecture.

DAILY SCHEDULE OF THE WORKER

8:00 – 12:00	work
12:00 – 13:00	lunch break
13:00 – 17:00	work

figure 16, page 47 (next)

office interior with the modular ceiling system

source: <http://www.rlmno.com/ceiling-office>

Geometry

In the morning, the worker arrives to the office building and walks through the revolving door to enter the lobby space - the spacious interior proudly manifesting the corporation spirit. The space in its neutrality and openness does not impose the direction but the worker immediately moves towards the elevators and travels up in a small elevator cubicle. The worker enters the office space and the witnessed repetitiveness of the gridded ceiling system, furniture, window frames and columns leads the gaze in all directions. Eyes slide smoothly through the uniform space, free from direction and focus points. The outline for the space is a rectangle, the most neutral, rational and typical of the forms (Koolhaas, 1995). The columns are evenly distributed around the space in both directions and so are the desks. They are placed in most rational arrangement, both efficient and beneficial for the best working focus. The worker goes to the desk, sits on a chair and rises up the eyes from the computer to see the surface of the ceiling, a gridded structure connecting the whole office floor, suggesting an equal importance of each area. The desks create a surface of regularly distributed elements filling up a space. As a worker walks through the space towards the toilets or to make

a coffee, the grid of the ceiling rhythmizes the movement in relation to the steps, creating an office pace.

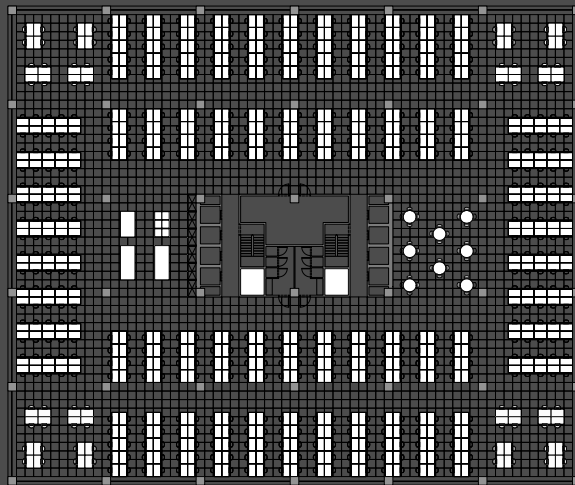
Scale

The ceiling is high enough for the workers to feel comfortable and low enough to efficiently stack multiple floors one on top of another, without a waste of the space. As the lunch break starts, the worker goes to the elevator. After exiting the elevator at the lobby floor, a worker is exposed to the high lobby space, which seems even higher in confrontation to the claustrophobic elevator space as well as to the rationally high office. This exposition lasts shortly as the worker walks out from the lobby space to the open street.

Atmosphere

After walking back from the lunch break, the worker enters again the high, well lighted lobby space the ambience of which is neutral and non-intrusive. The use of noble materials is a proof of legibility and prosperity of the company as a trustworthy economic centre. The worker comes back to the office, where evenly distributed light around the space creates a perfect condition for working. The materials in





the office space – the system ceilings, carpets and the smooth surface of the laminated desks – express the temporality of the space. The temporary materials that can be easily replaced or easily cleaned don't invite to leave a mark or a trace.

Body movement

The worker sits at the desk in front of the computer and to work. Used to this position, as sitting accompanies the worker both during the work and the leisure time, the worker feels the pain in the back only after the significant amount of time passes. The sitting position is a dominant position both in the office and outside and it almost feels natural, especially at the beginning of the working day. When the pain occurs, the worker stretches the back to eliminate it as it a distraction that delays the work progress.

Sequence of spaces

The distribution of the different spaces in the office building is the most rational and objective arrangement possible. The worker has a quick access to the kitchen, toilets or the vertical circulation of the building as the cubicle containing all those functions is located at the centre of the office space. The central position of the functions

in the office is a rational decision, not symbolic. Those rooms have a secondary meaning within the office and their central location benefits simply the best circulation in the building.

figure 17 (left top)

office interior

source: www.flickr.com / Michael Lokner

figure 18 (left bottom)

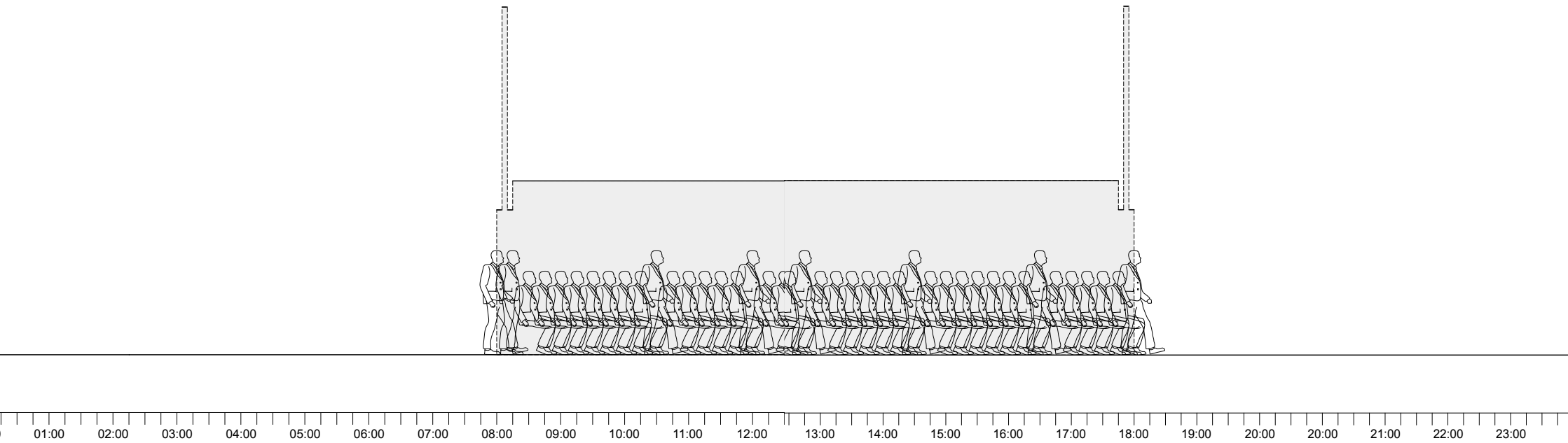
generic office plan

own sketch

figure 19, pages 50-51 (next)

The body movement in relation to space during the day of the worker in the generic office

own sketch



The condition of today's worker is a rational setting the spatial qualities of which are dictated by the reason and logic. The office captures one in the regulated environment, ruled by the economy-oriented reasoning. The space reflects the general understating of work that through the history was secularized and disenchanting. Work is perceived literally and focused on a concrete goals. The process of rationalization and disenchantment, analysed by Max Weber, affected the idea and specificity of today's work resulting in a purely rational work environment. The affective architecture appears to create a corporative loyalty resulting in the efficient work. Today's working environment is in fact a reflection or an extension of today's everyday condition, literal and rationalized.

Rationalization affected not only the work but also the other parts of life. The introduction of the regulative procedures – the increase of bureaucracy and rules – contributed to creation of condition in which spiritual and magical thinking was replaced by norms and rationality (Weber, 2005). Max Weber has seen those factors as ones that rationalized the western societies and reduced to the minimum the mysticism. The motivations in life that previously were of emotional and magical nature became rationally justified and

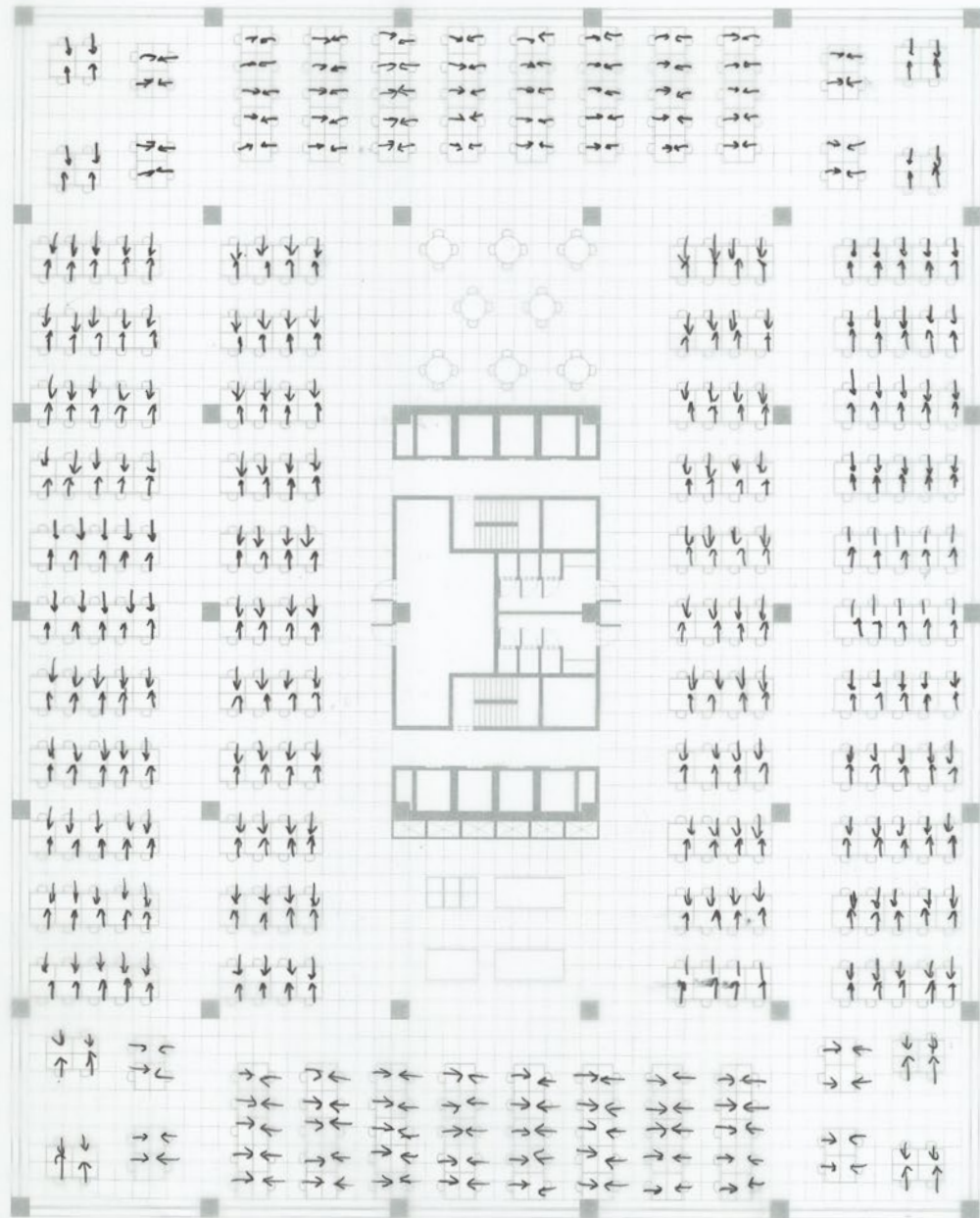
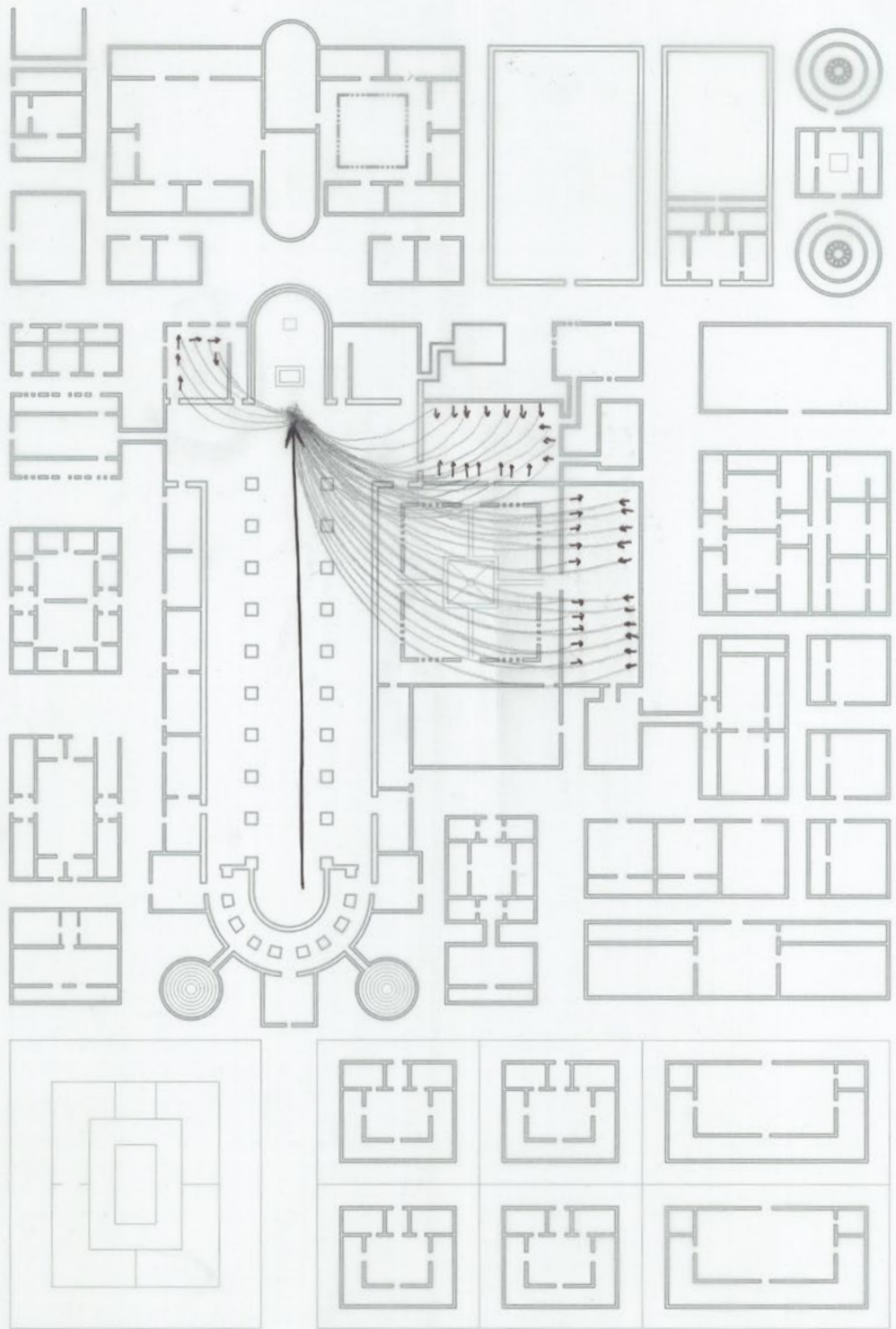
calculated. This changed the functioning of the society and lead to homogenization of different spheres of life (Habermas, 1985).

The rationalization and introduction of normative procedures and rules lead to homogenization of different spheres of life that used to be diverse. More spheres of life that before belonged to spiritual or personal realm became a part of the economy. At the same time, free time and work started to merge into one (Hinsliff, 2013). The reasoning specific for work has entered a private sphere. Moreover, in some cases free time is treated as the preparation for the work time. For example, the bodily discipline of working at the gym is seen as a tool to increase an efficiency and productivity at work (Boehlke, 2011). Entertainment and body discipline are seen as a part of the work hygiene and therefore as a part of economy.

The secularization has reduced the differentiation of time on festive and everyday. This division has been replaced with *“flat, linear and homogeneous industrial time”* (Aureli, 2016). Moreover, everyday work was before oriented on the higher, distant goals of Divine. On the other hand, today everyday is based chasing the everyday small material goals. It is dedicated to economy. The office life is a

part of everyday condition, which Rita Felski describes in the article “The Invention of Everyday Life” as following:

“Everyday life is also a secular and democratic concept. Secular because it conveys the sense of the world leached of transcendence; the everyday is everyday because it is no longer connected to the miraculous, the magical or the sacred.” (Felski, 2000)



The secularization contributed to the creation of a homogenous condition dominated by the rationality and calculation. An office space is an inseparable part of this realm. On the contrary, the space of the monastery offered a sense of *otherness* to the outside mundane world. One could escape from the material and mundane reasoning. Within the sacred, even the work, directly connected to the economy, became a transcendent experience. During the daily route in the monastery, the monk was encouraged through the experience of the space to transcend beyond the daily in the perception of reality. The use of spatial qualities of the sacred space: geometry, scale, atmosphere, sequence of spaces, body movement, supported the condition of *meditatio* – a merge of work and prayer. The monk was not limited to the literal understanding of the performed act but could project a spiritual meaning upon it. In the rational condition of the office, there is no room for the ritual as the gateway from the mundane.

Confrontation of the typology of the office with the historic reference of the scriptorium is an attempt to introduce a ritual and the transcendent reasoning to the rationalized workspace. The reconstruction of the generic office typology, that is a consistent part of the

homogenous and economized realm, comes from an aspiration to introduce a sense of otherness to the working environment.

The reconstruction of the generic office inspired by the spatial qualities of the sacred is an attempt to bring a state of *meditatio* to the workspace - not exclusively in the religious sense of the word, but as a general transcendent and spiritual experience for an individual in the rational and practical realm. Such reconstructions offer a gateway from the homogeneity of the reasoning, time and space by offering an introduction to a different tempo, atmosphere and logic. The everyday temporality of the office resulting both from the geometry and materiality of the office space in relation to the body movement, as well as from the goal-oriented reasoning, becomes suspended to invite for the reflection, symbolic perception and meditation. In such condition desirably work itself becomes a ritual and gains an alternative meaning in the perception of the worker.

figure 20, figure 21, pages 54-55
(previous)

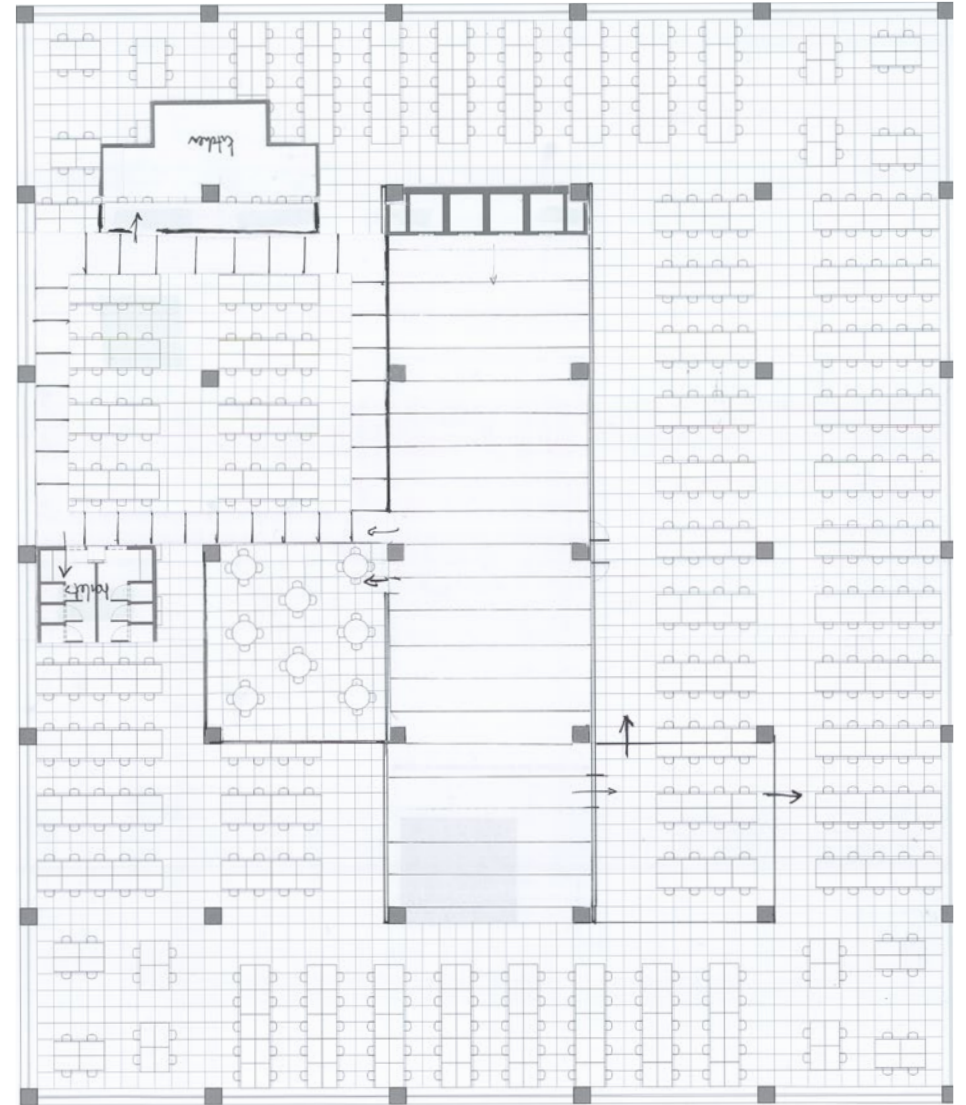
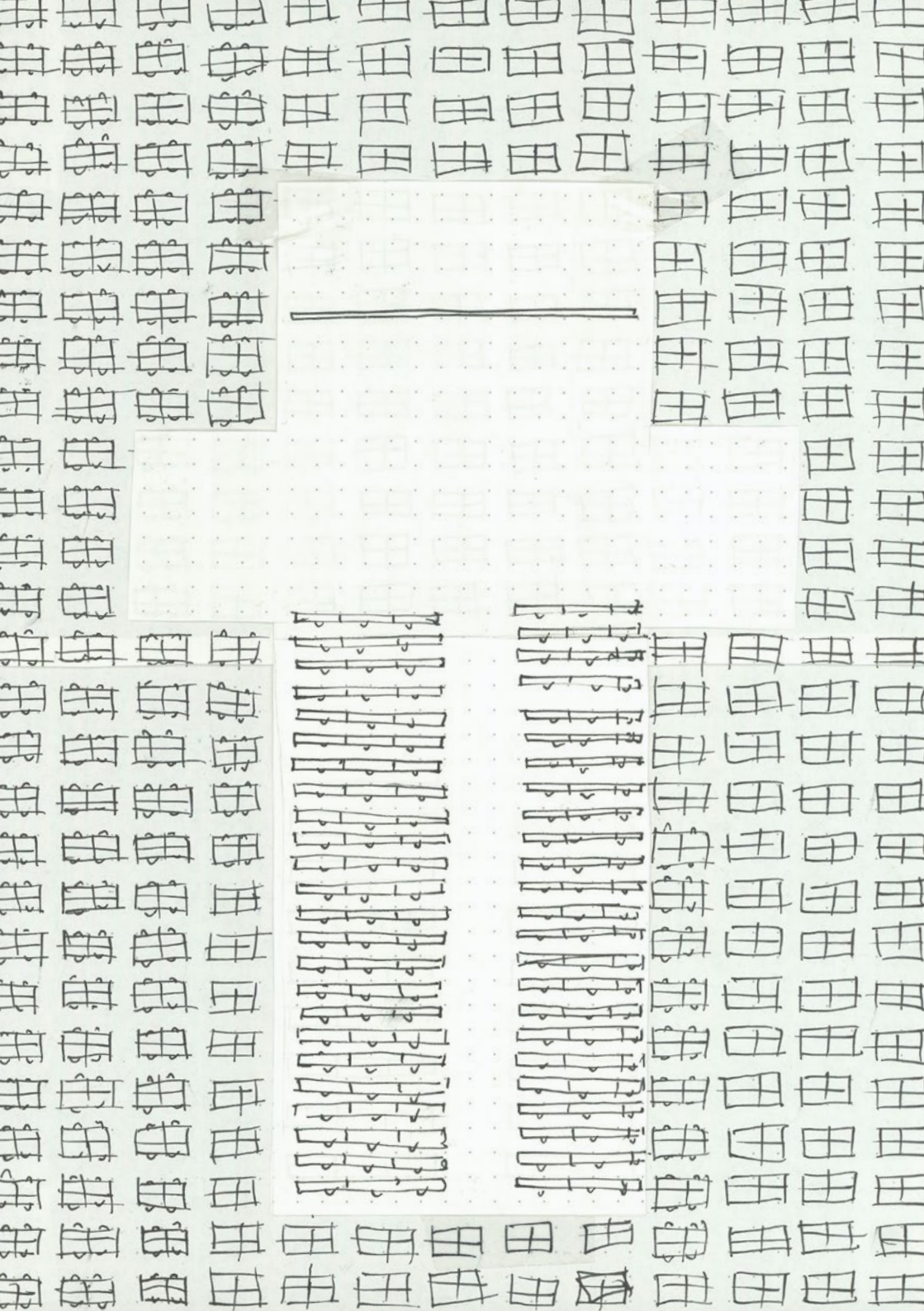
symbolic versus literal
understanding of work

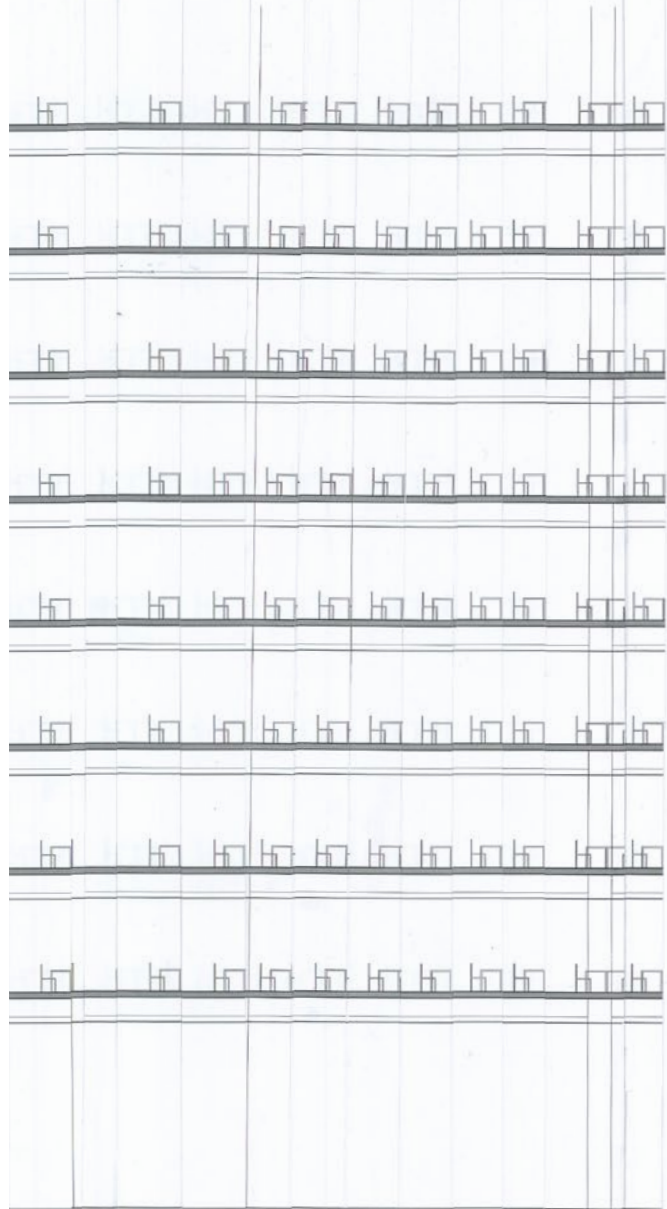
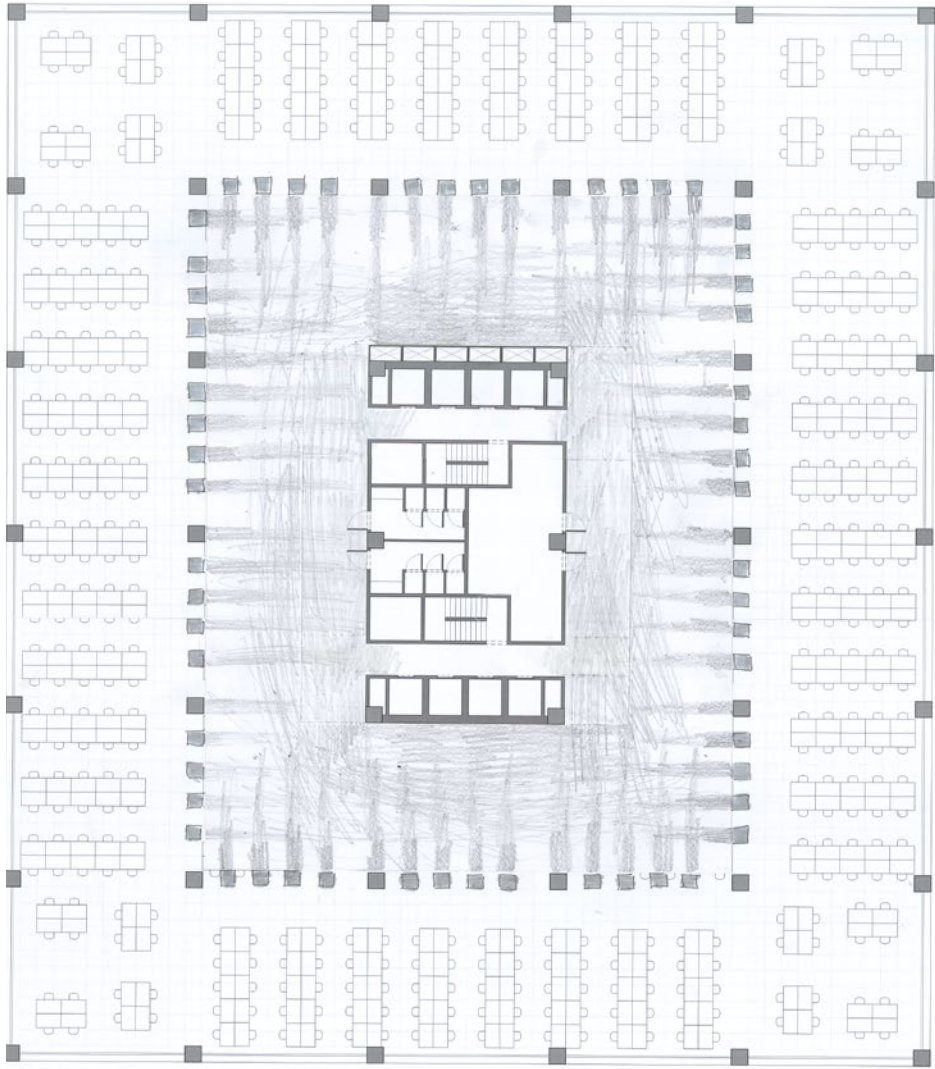
own sketches

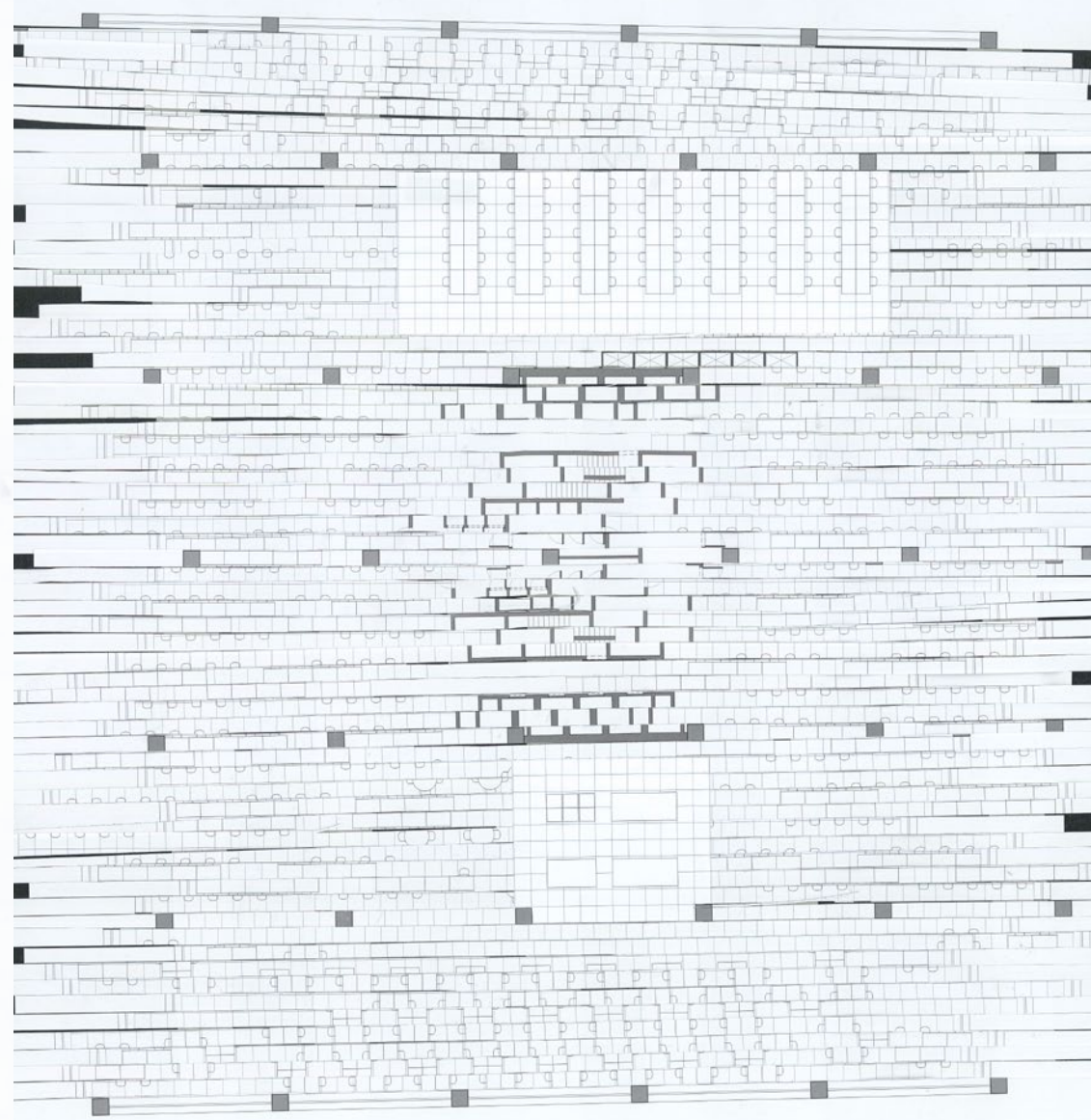
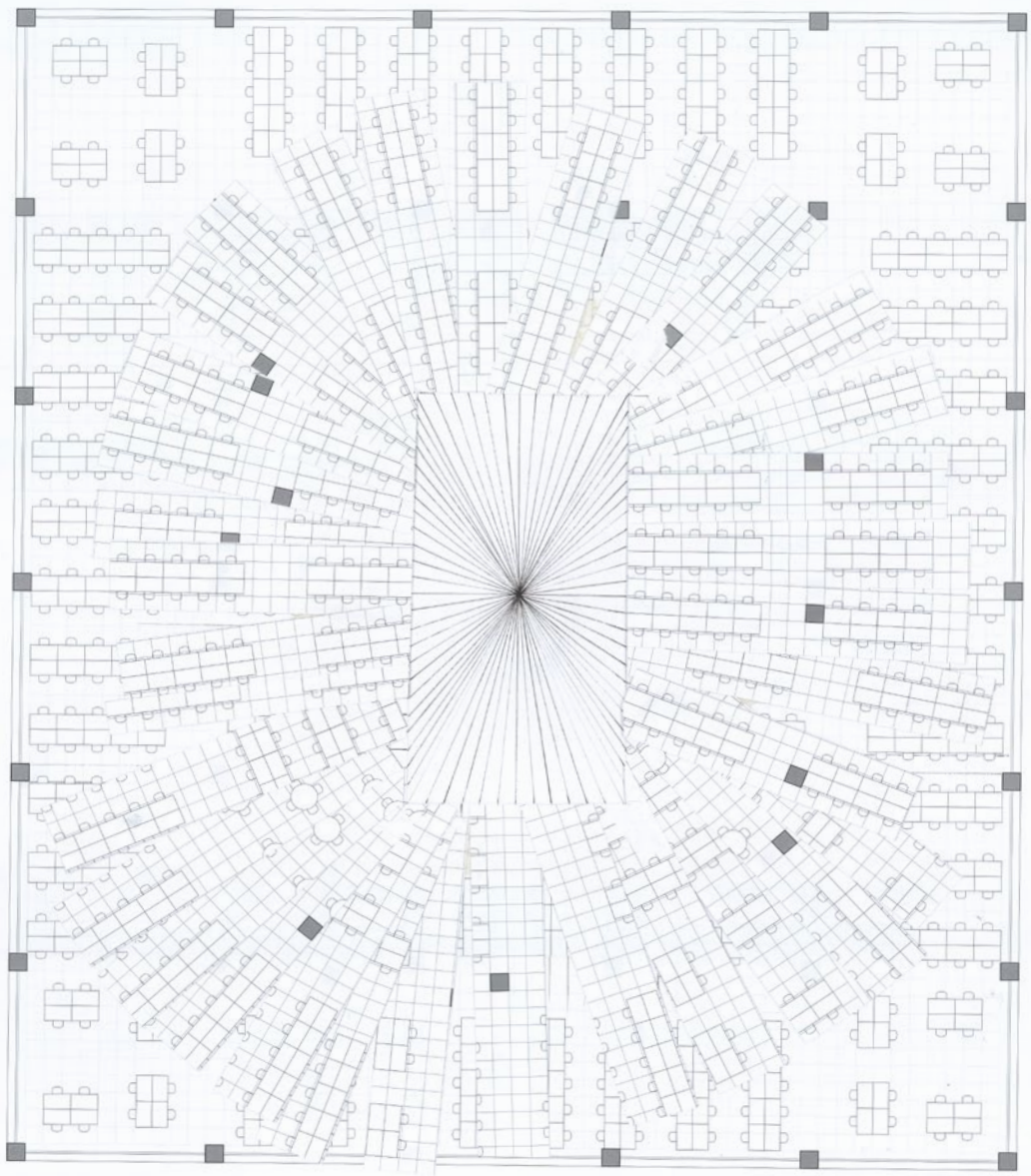
figures 22-27, pages 58-63 (next)

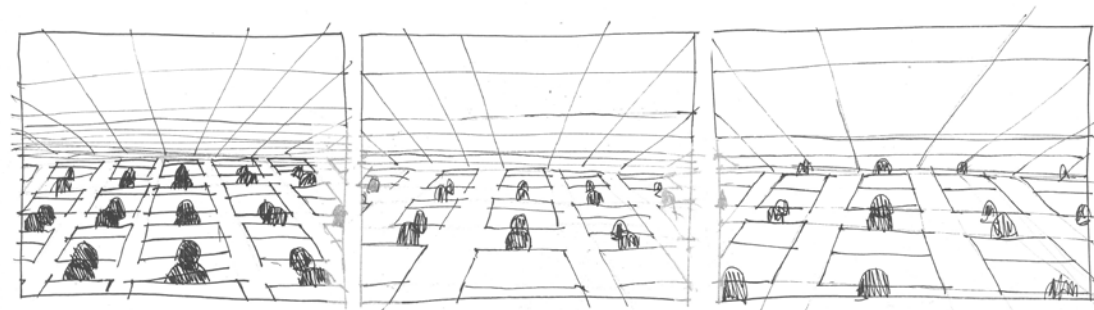
office reconstructions, visual
research

own sketches







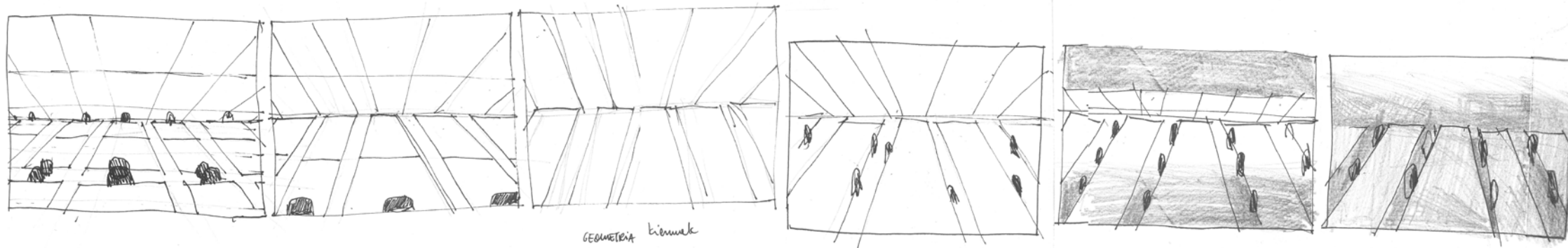


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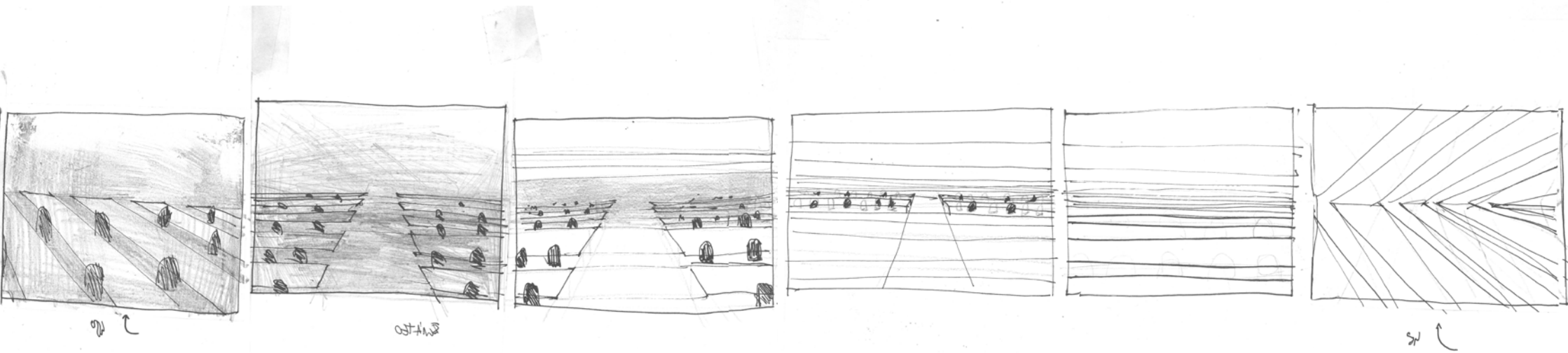
figure 28

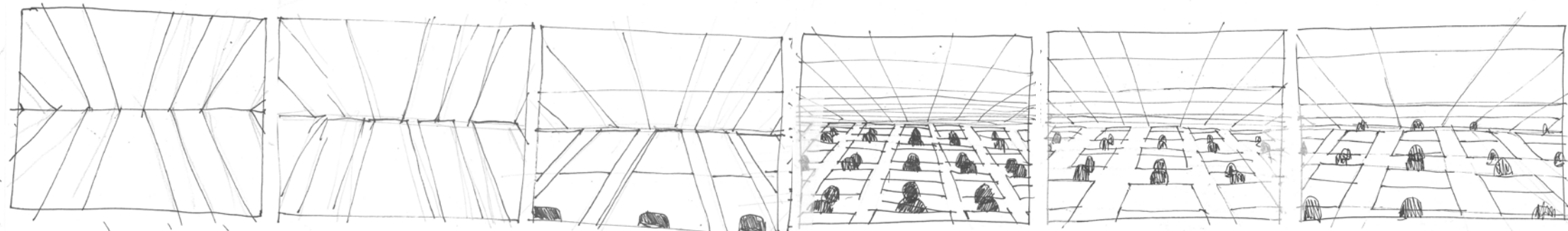
office interventions, visual
research

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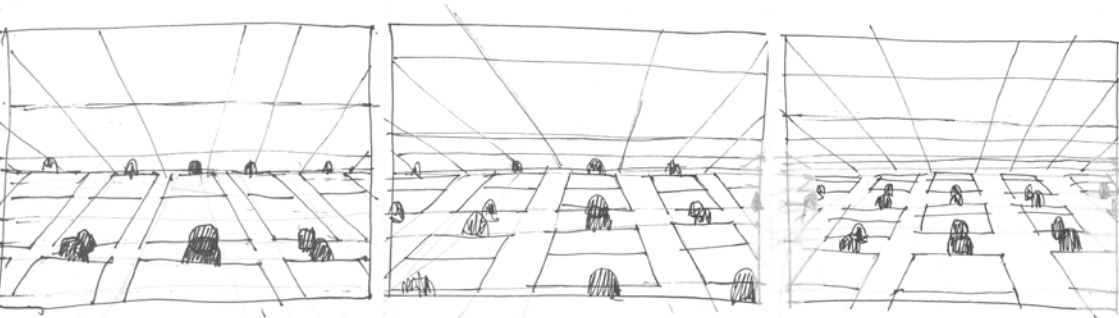
GEOMETRIA kinnuk





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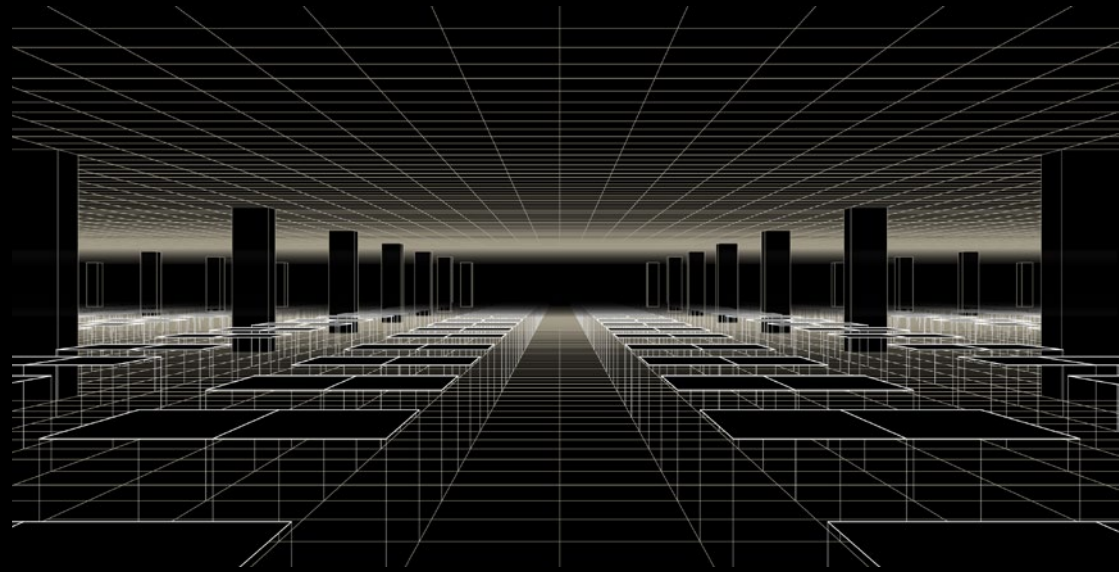


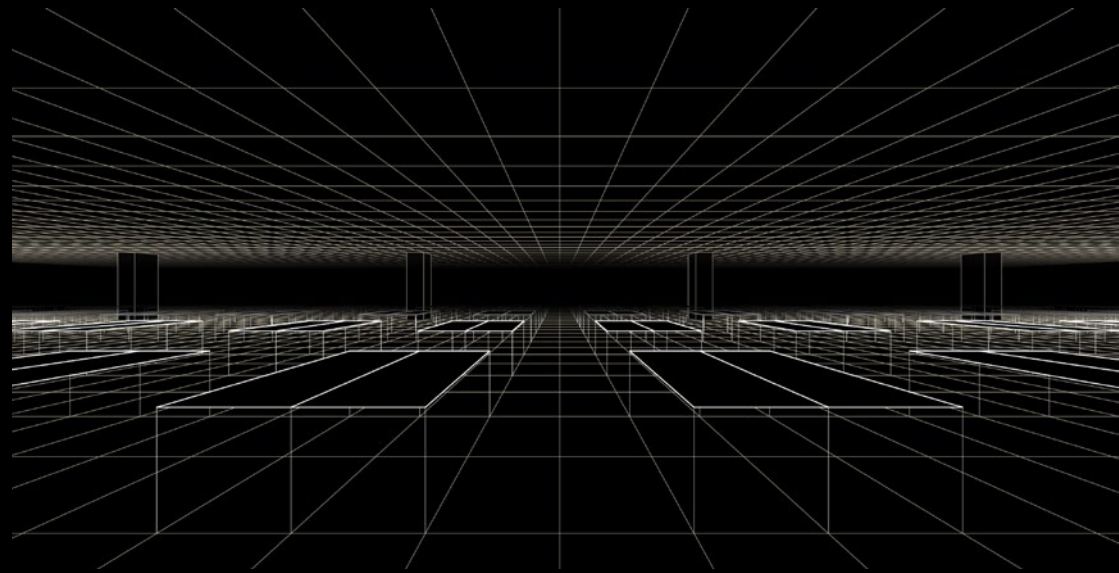
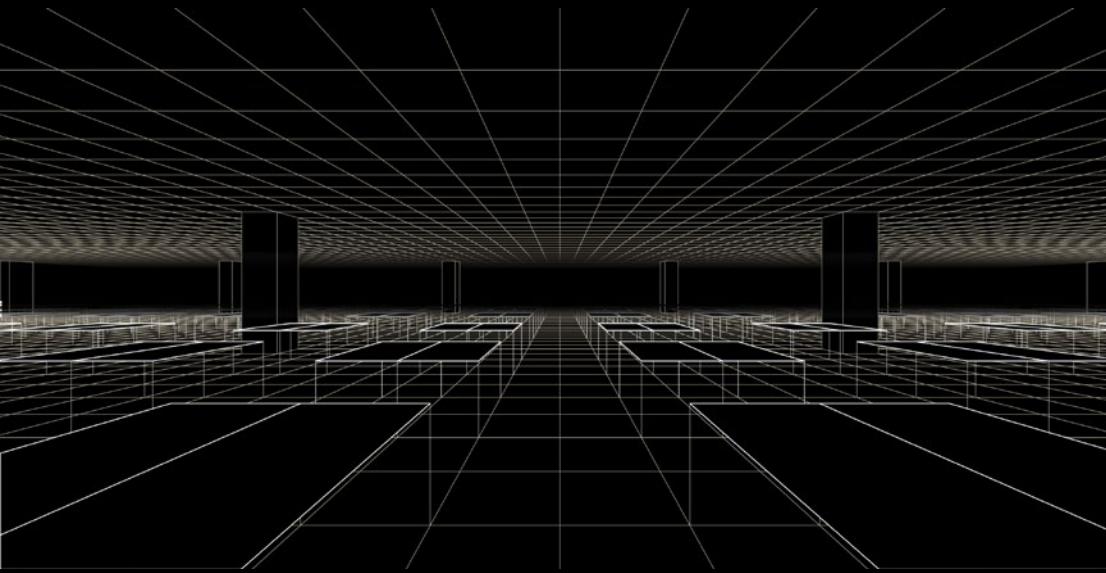
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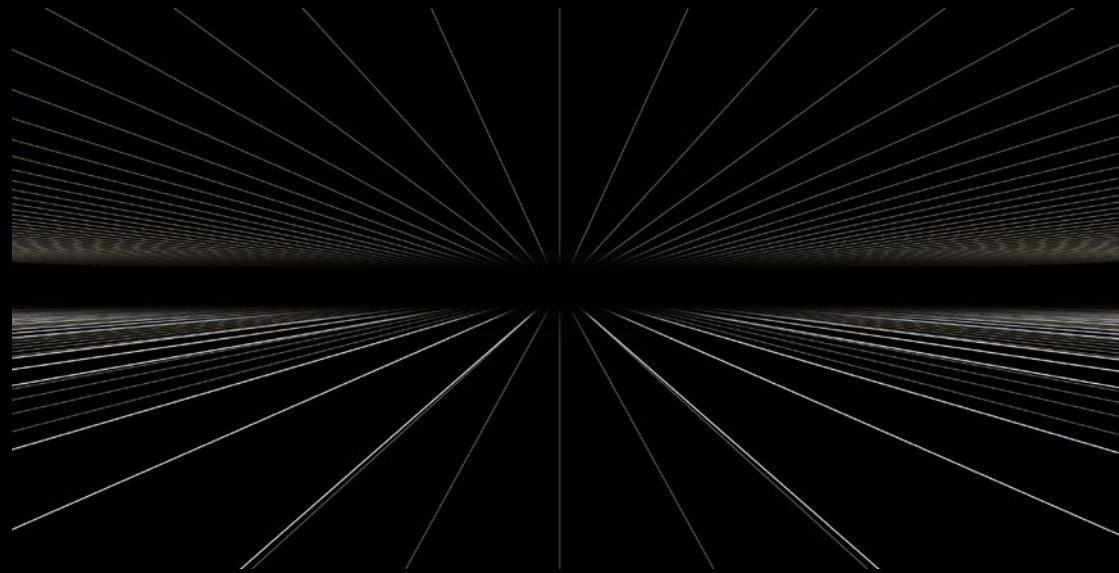
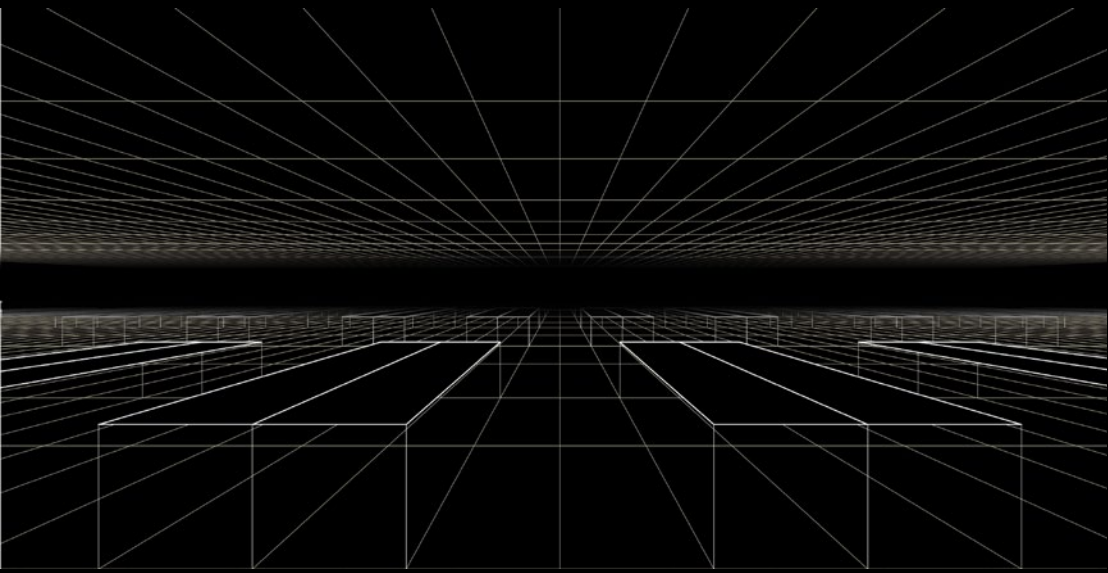
Rhythm, pace, direction

The office space has a characteristic tempo created by the rhythmical distribution of the furniture, ceiling and floor grids in relation to the movement of the worker around the space.

The intervention in the space is a gradual modification of the rhythm characteristic for the office. As the distances between the ceiling and floor modules gradually enlarge, together with extending office tables, the perception of the pace in relation to the movement changes. Although the walking tempo does not change, one has an impression of slowing down. Finally the space appears in which the perception of time is no longer present. The office temporality is gone on benefit of the complete suspension of time.



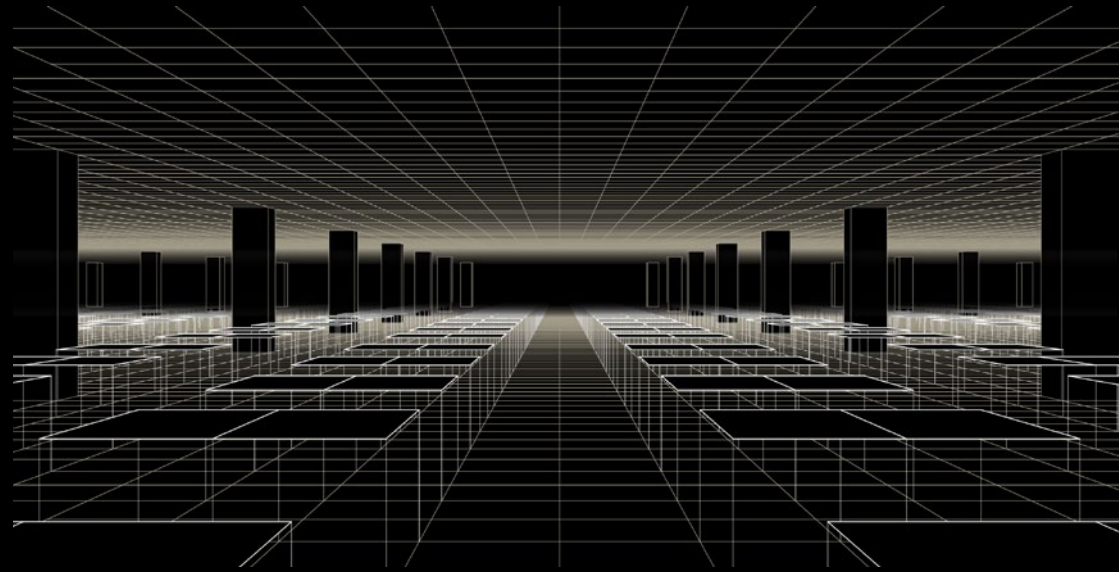


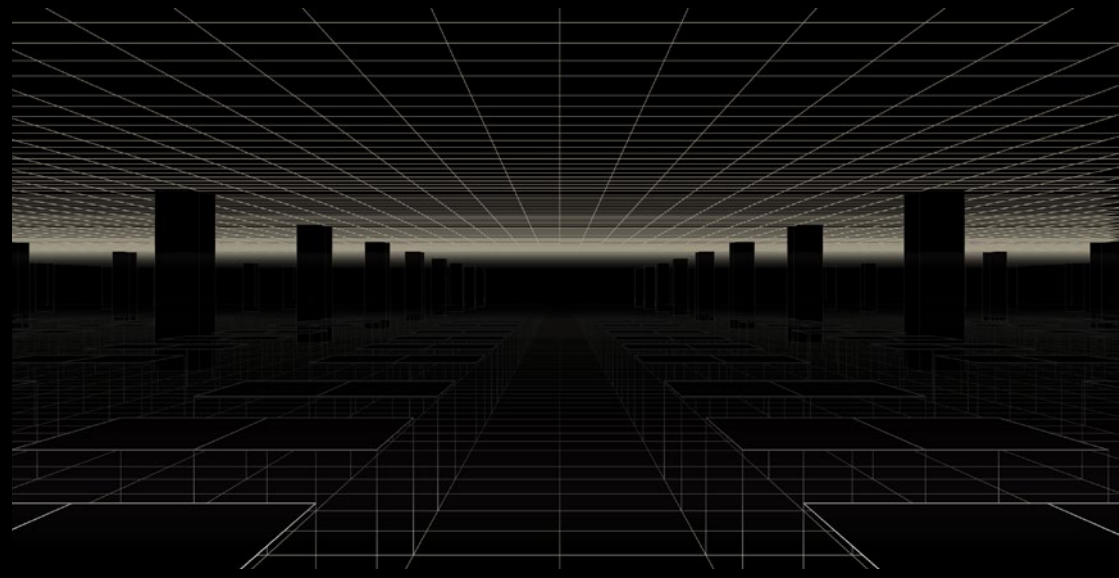
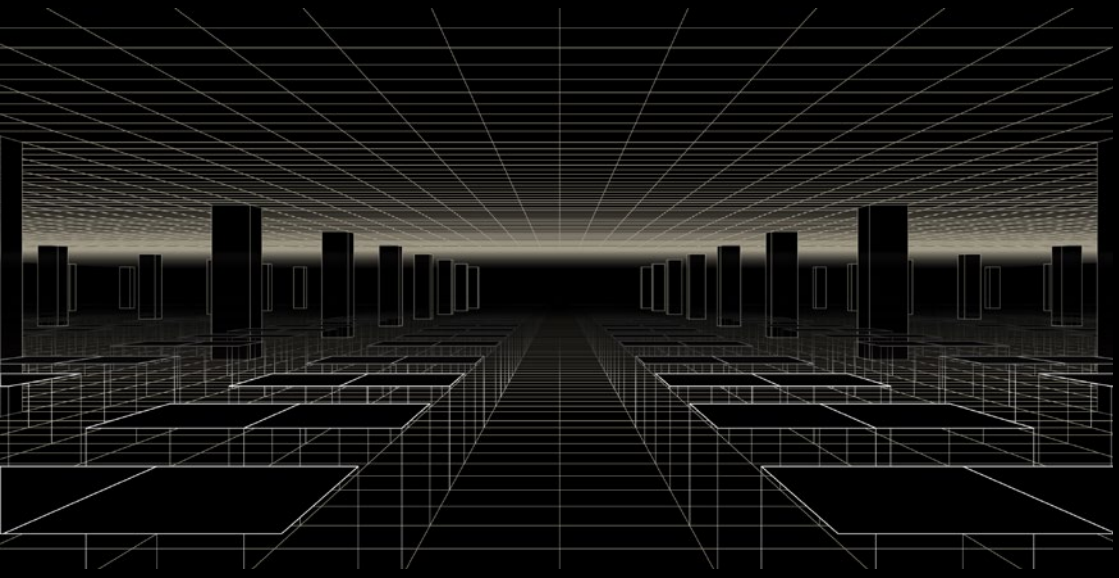


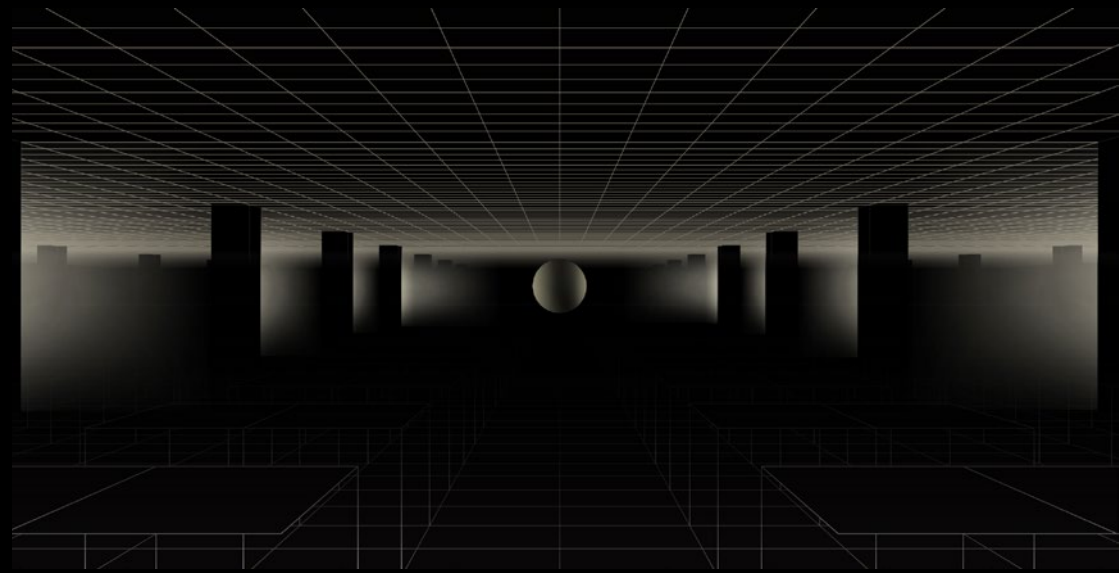
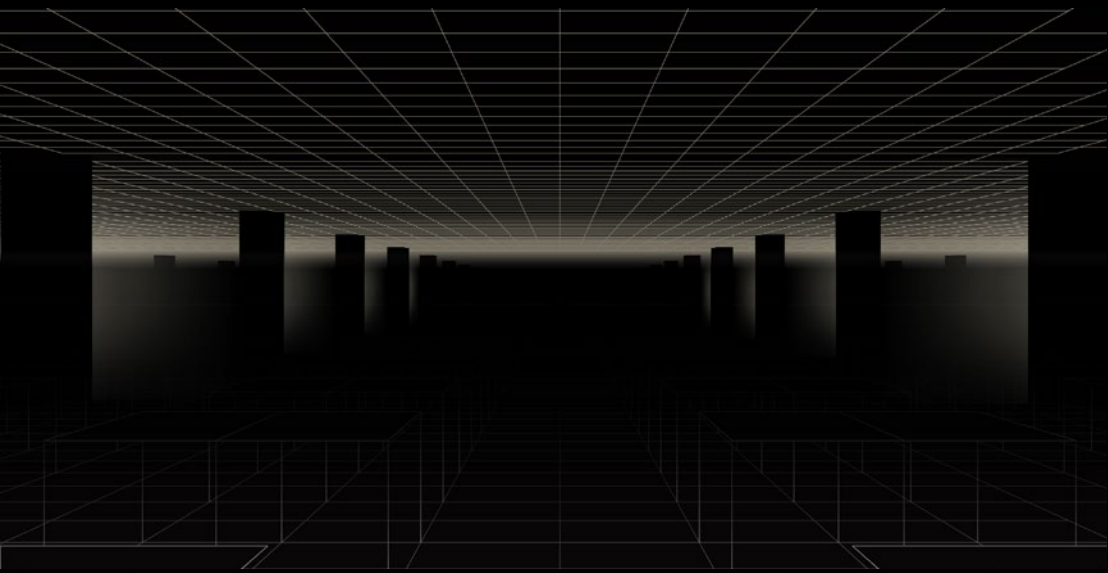
Atmosphere, light, focus

The usual light conditions in the office are the most favourable for working, enabling to focus on the given task.

The general, evenly distributed light is slowly replaced by indirect lighting coming from the sides. The strong contrast appears between the lighted parts and those blinded in the dark. The light coming from behind the pillars is slowly revealing a still figure on the horizon. In the office covered in darkness, everyone is focusing now on this one object brought to the view by the light.





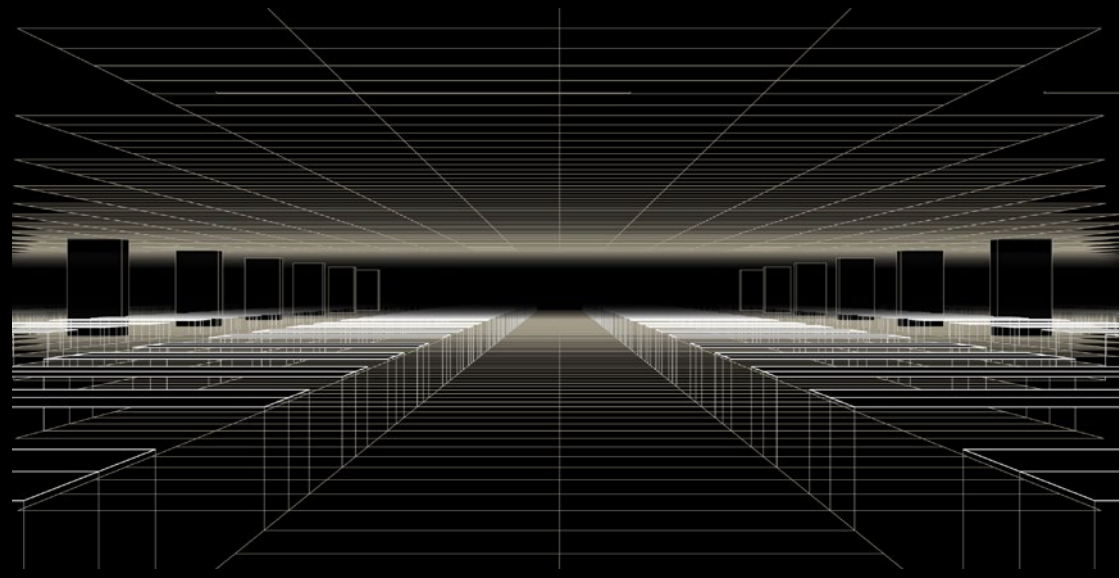
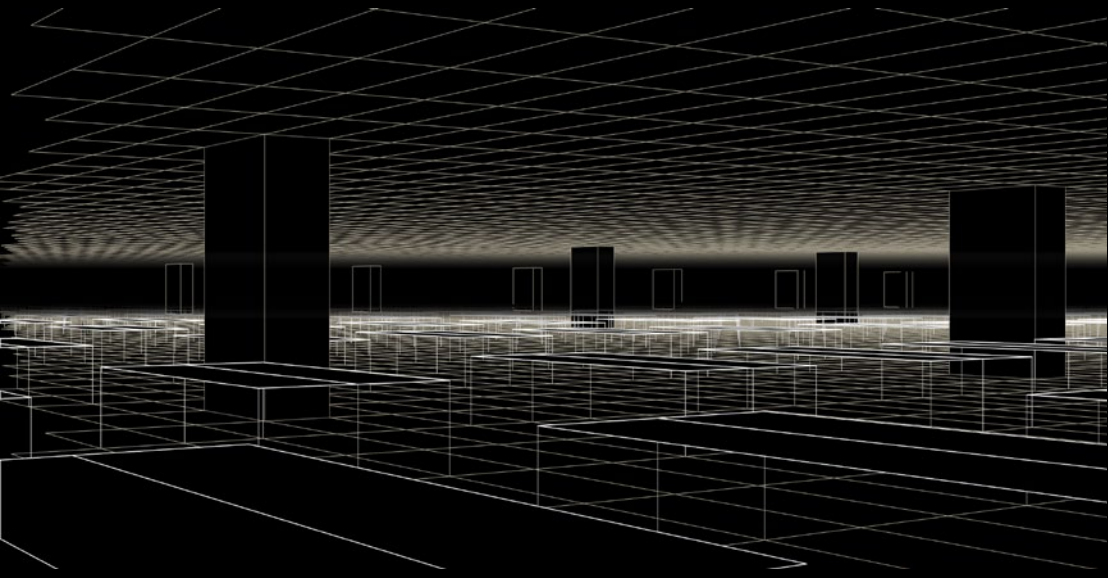


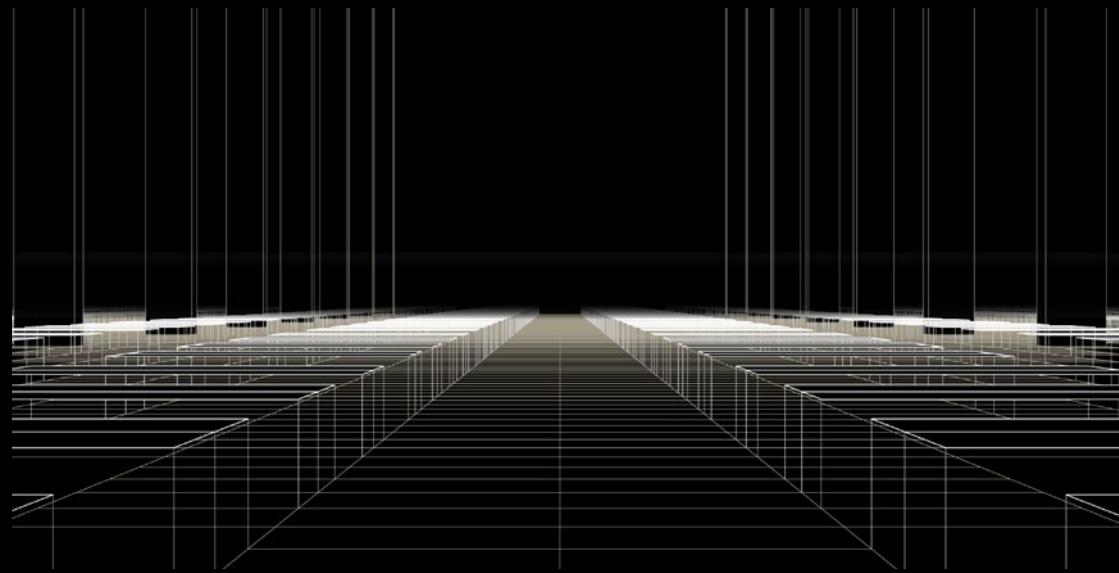
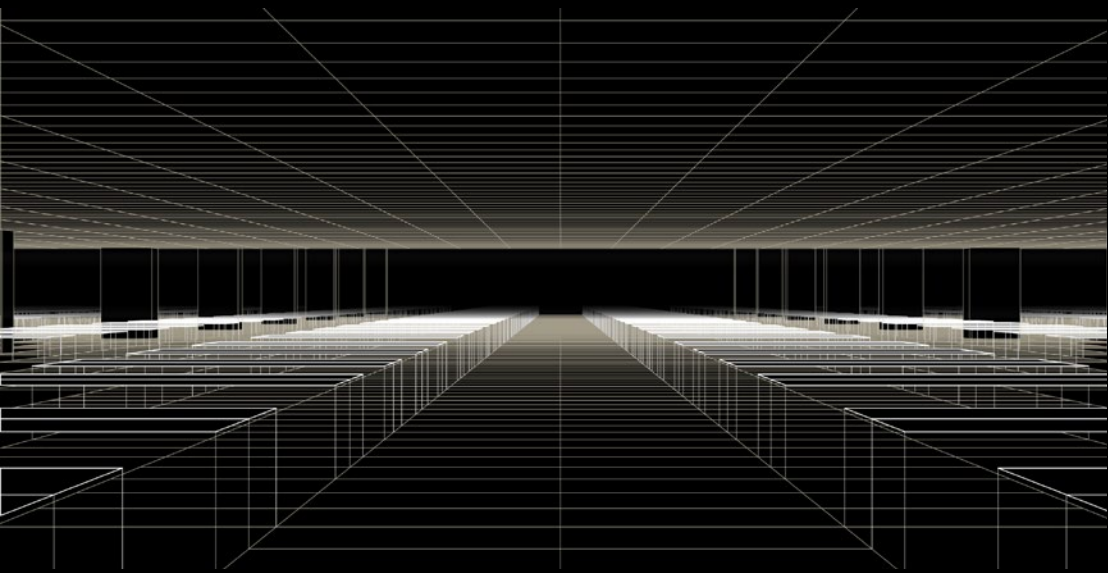
Direction, scale, focus

Due to the modular ceiling grids and even distribution of the furniture around the space, the office does not have a strong direction.

As the distances between the ceiling and floor modules gradually enlarge, together with extending office tables, the space gains a direction. The higher density of divisions in one direction creates a visual hierarchy inside the space. As the space gradually becomes higher, the office strongly directs one's focus and movement to the newly created centre.





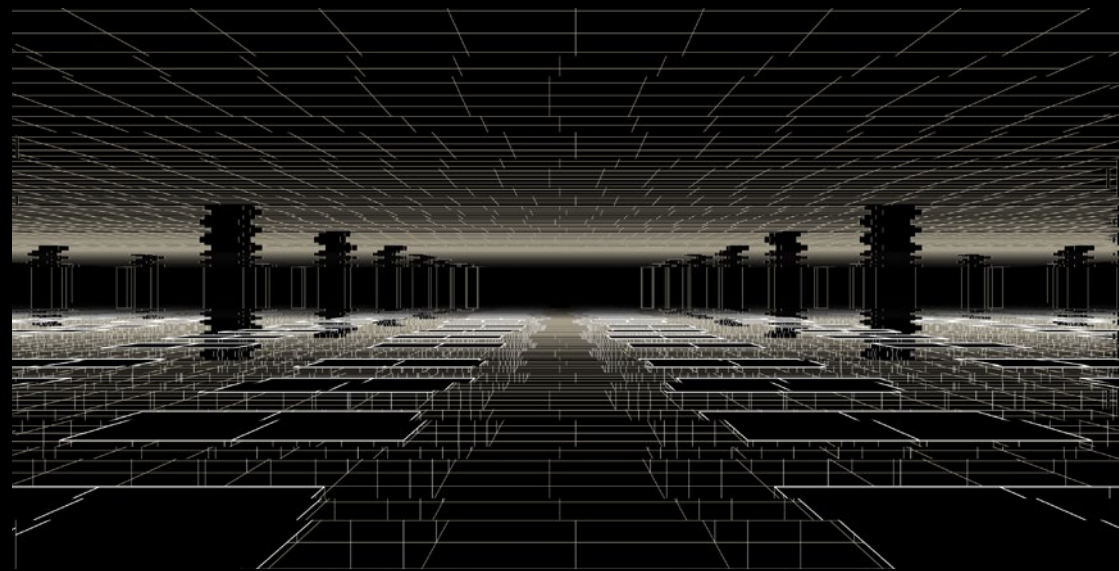
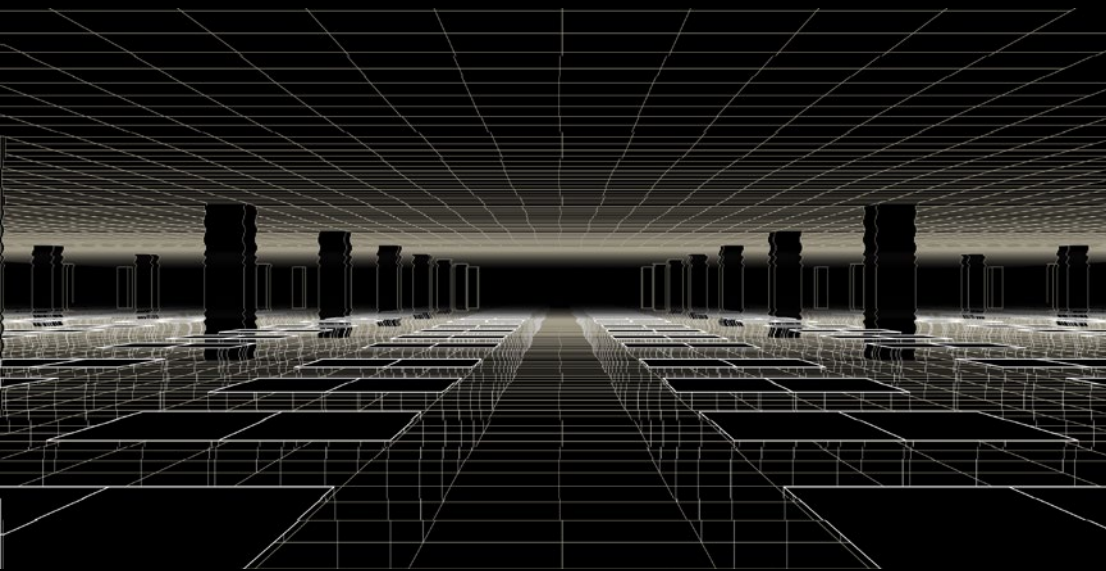


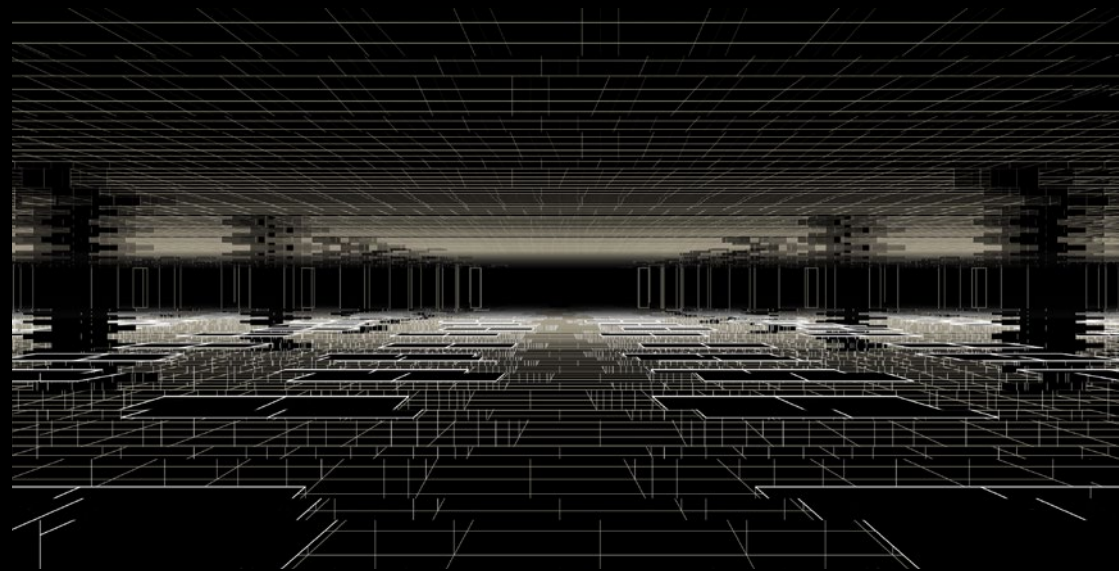
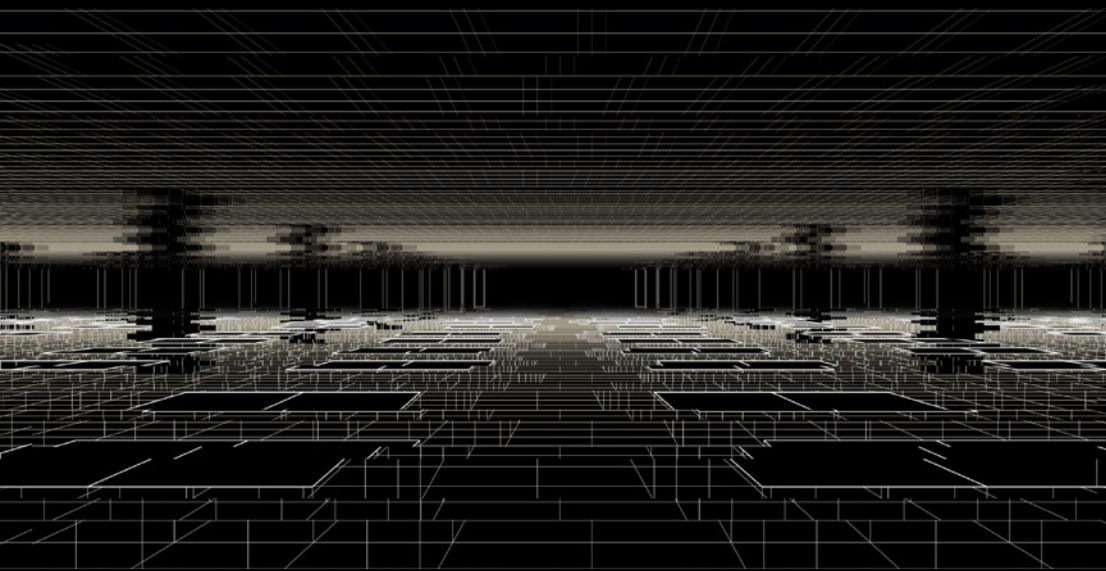
Geometry, interpretation, use

The rational office arrangement is the response to the work requirements.

The gradual reconstruction of the office space invites for a different interpretation of the office elements. The interior and its furniture can be used differently than previously. A different sitting arrangement, redirection of attention or even different body movements can now appear within the space. As the ceiling grid is slowly decomposed, the organic shapes start to appear resembling the materials that last.







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Office

& Scriptorium

re-enchantment of work