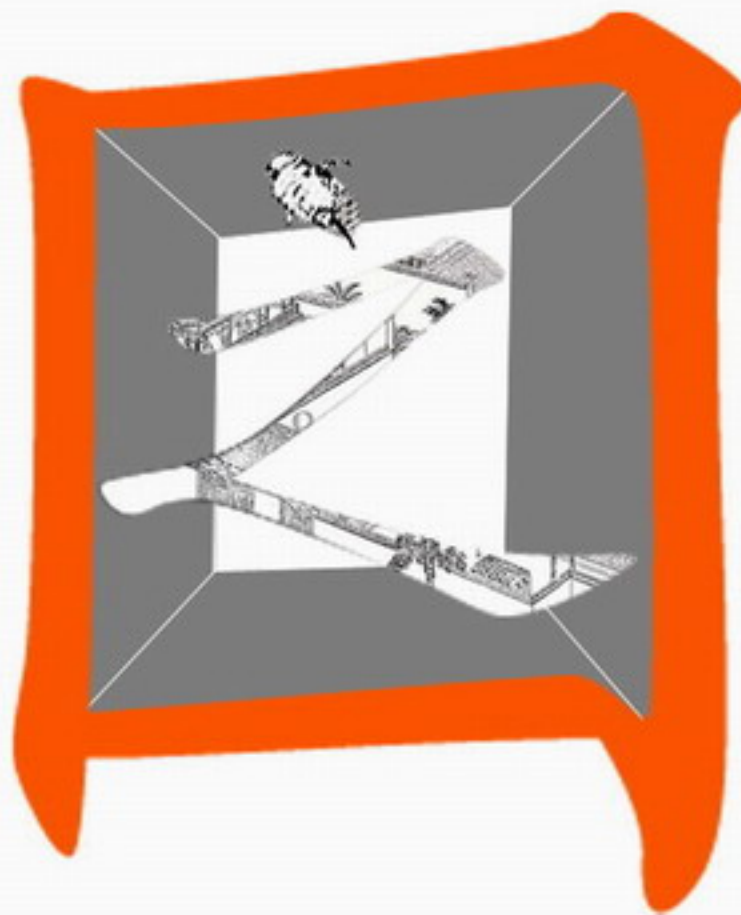


A Museum  
for  
*Illustrations of the Garden of the Hall Encircled by Jade*  
(1602-1605)  
(The Longest Woodblock Print Scroll in Chinese History)



Fei Wang

2005  
Alexandria, VA, USA



The thesis submitted to the faculty of Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Architecture.

Fei Wang



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Paul Emmons, Chairman

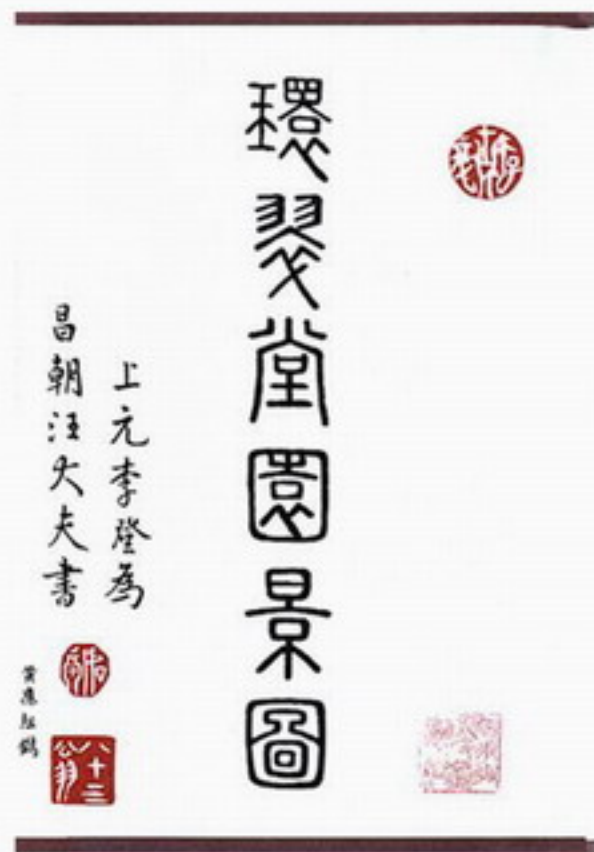
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Marco Frascari

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Marcia Feuerstein

Defense date: May 11, 2005



This thesis is a Museum for *Illustrations of the Garden of the Hall Encircled by Jade*, the longest wood-block print in Chinese history. It is about 14.8 meters long and 25 centimeters high. This painting was originally made in 1602-1605 AD, Ming Dynasty. This painting is about a garden named *Garden of Sitting in Reclusion*, and the Hall Encircled by Jade is the main building in the garden, which was completed around 1600 AD. There is little literature about this garden. The most informative are a book named *A Record of the Hall Surrounded by Jade Of Master Sitting-in-Reclusion* (Zuoyin Xiansheng Huancui Tang Ji) and 100 poems, but the poet who wrote the poems never saw the garden. The book and the scroll are both “narratives” of a visit to the garden, but the descriptions are different. I only concentrate on the painting but not the real garden, as the real garden does not exist now. This artist is Qian Gong, an artist from Suzhou who specialized in landscape, architecture, and portrait painting. He starts with a tour of the lake, and finally he enters the garden itself. And later, Huang Yingzu, made the wood block. The original painting and woodblock have disappeared now and remain only 3 copies in China and Japan.





All red marks are what appear to be the same person, the artist himself



Scale (reference as the biggest human figure) 1:1

1:1.2

1:1.4

1:1.4



1:1.4

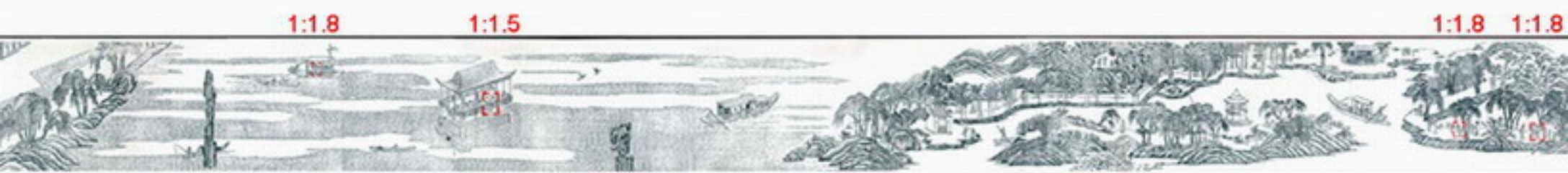


1:1.5

1:1.8

1:1.5

1:1.5





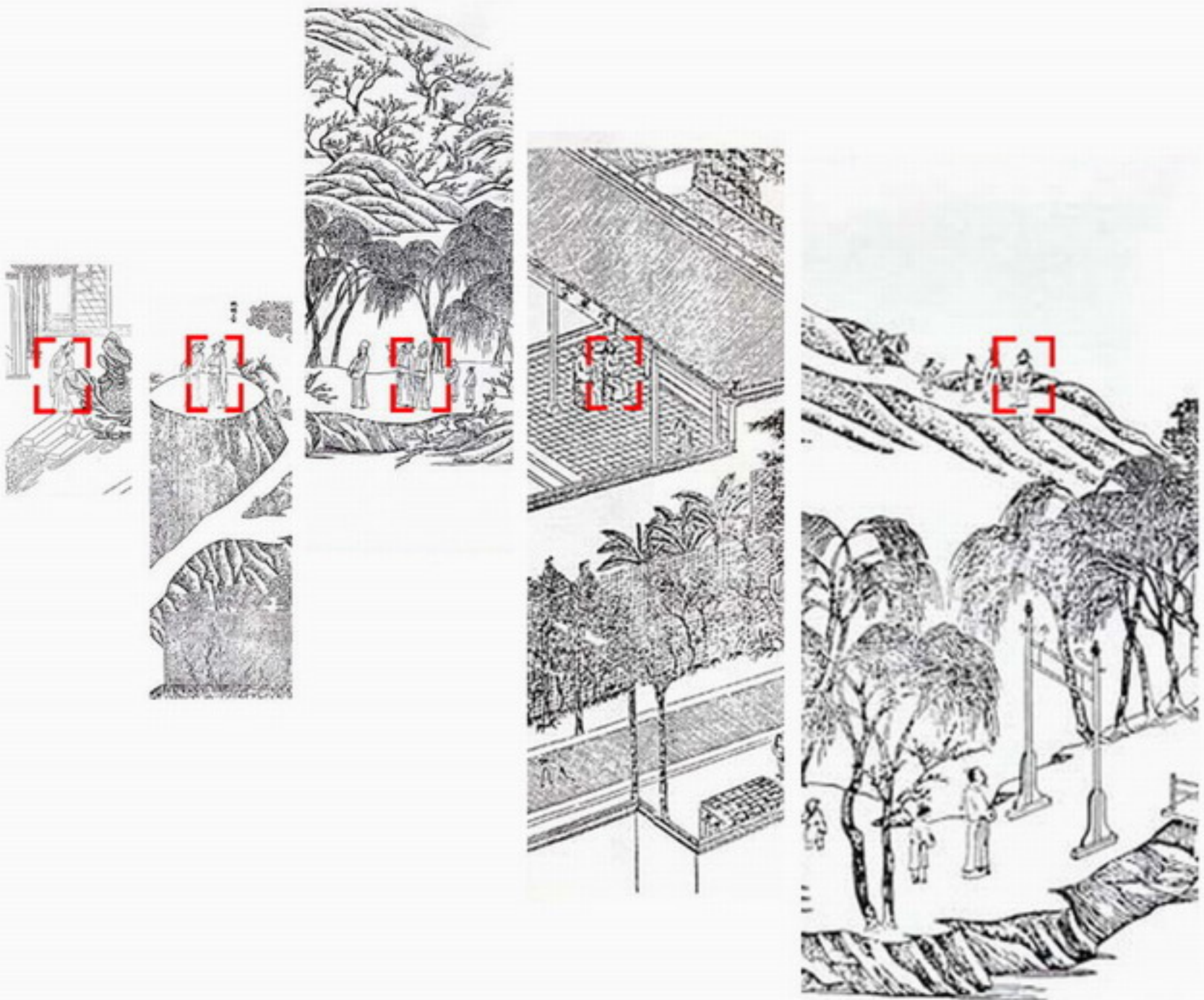


# SCALE



The painting is very unique. Before the 19th century, normally in Chinese long scroll there is no perspective and all human figures are the same scale, and most of them are read parallel (or at the same speed). But in this painting, scales of human figures are changed many times. In the beginning, it is about landscape, and there is no human figure at all; then some tiny people appear; then along the story, the human figures are bigger and bigger; in the end, people are 4 times larger than the first tiny people we see; then after the wall of the garden, the scale changes again (from the small temple).

## SCALE



INSIDE

OUTSIDE



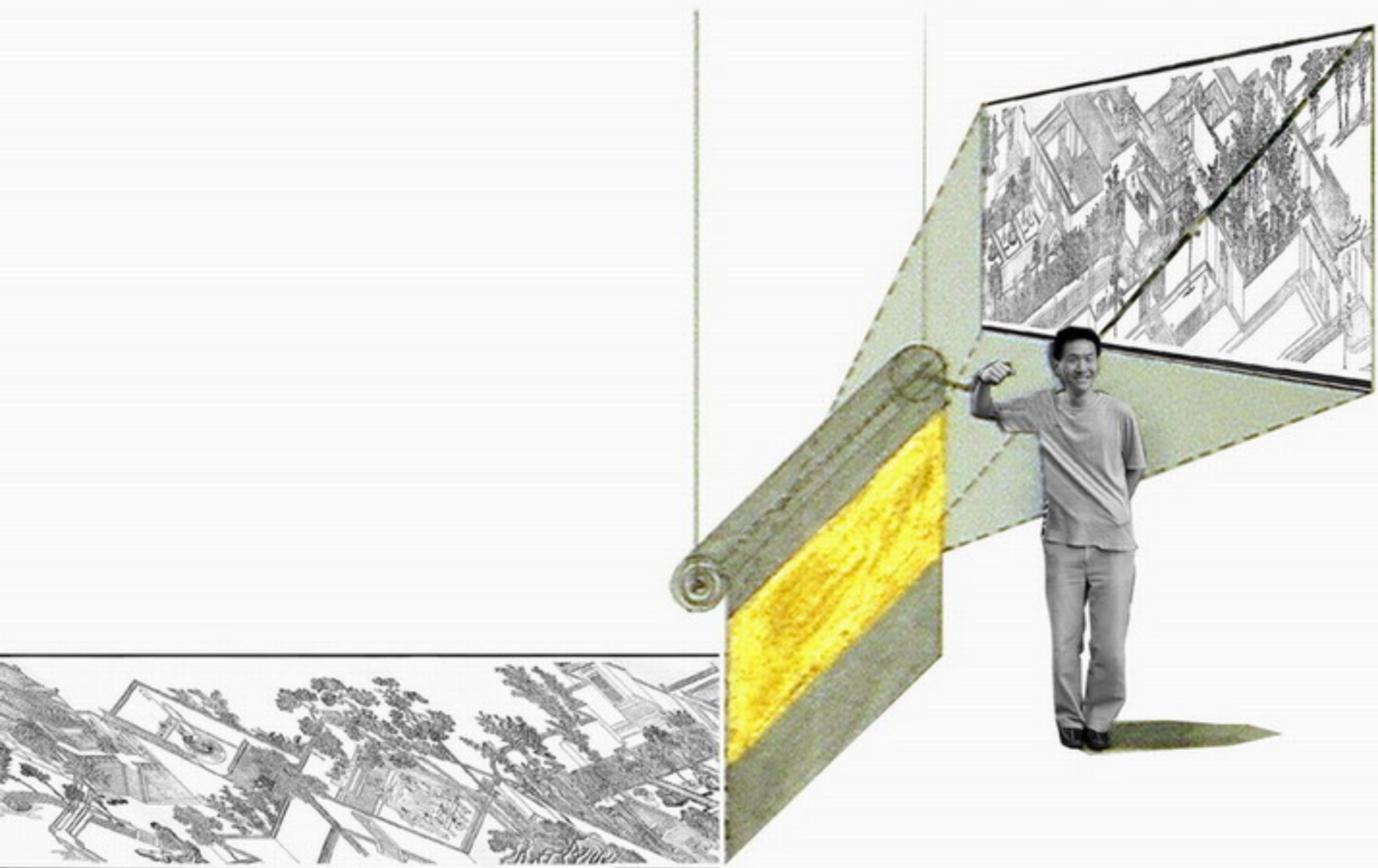
if he walks through the whole print  
it takes **more than several days**

if I walk through the whole print  
it takes **9 seconds**

All figures I marked with red is the same person, the painter. In this painting, buildings are painted in isometric with 45 degree angle, and when human figures change, there is always a 45 degree between them, such as building, mountain, trees and so on. When you read this painting and you want to follow the story inside it, you cannot use the same speed, because scales change a lot. Thus, there is a very different way to read this painting and also exhibit the painting. If I treat this painting as a walkway, it takes 9 seconds to finish it; the painter inside spends at least several days to finish the whole trip; if I unroll it to read, it takes 5 minutes to get around, but not to read; and the painter painted it for 3 years. This means we have many ways to read the painting, inside, outside and in-between.

IN-BETWEEN

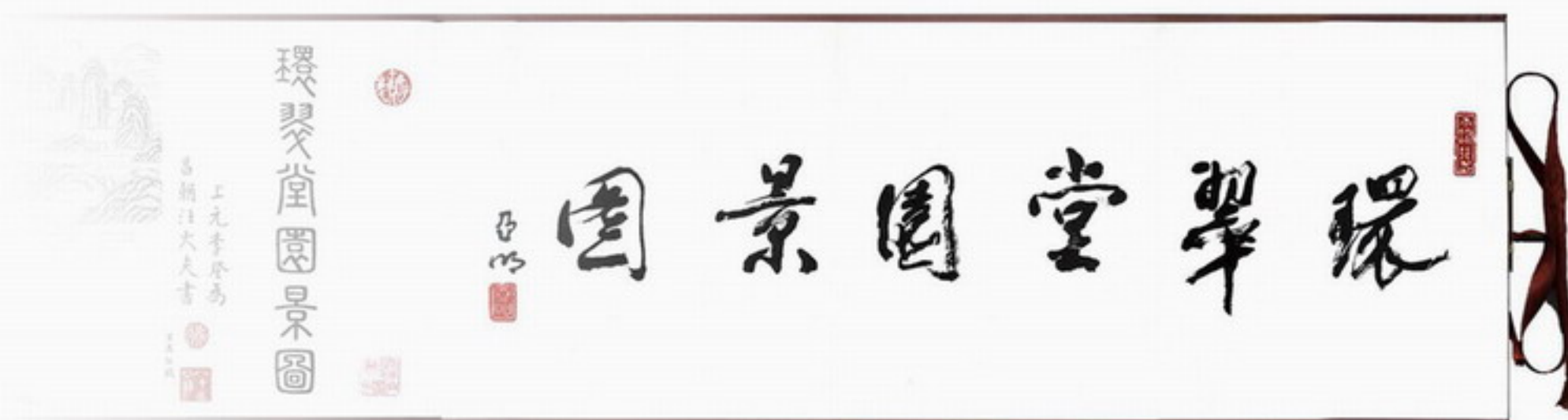
S P E E D



if i play the whole print as film of a movie  
it takes 20 seconds



# 環翠堂園景圖



Interpretation of this painting will be explored from different views through its Chinese title. That does not intent to give a definition of each word, but to cultivate the potentials behind the painting in cultures through history.

“Tu (Painting)” in Chinese is not only about to paint on paper, but after the painting is painted, there is another question is about exhibiting or showing. It is not a static way, but an action. So different paintings have different ways to show and exhibit. Also, in different cultures, we have different ways. In ancient China, for long horizontal scrolls, there is no such long table to show it everywhere and even to paint it. Normally, Chinese paint long paintings in several segments, then glue them together, then decorate them and then put them into a tiny box. When one reads it, he just unrolls one part and then rolls it then unroll another part. It often takes a long time to read the whole painting. For not too long scrolls, we can hang on the wall, but mostly, Chinese read painting on table and store it in a box.

# 圖景園堂翠環 Painting

口+畀

口(wéi)  
scope, area

畀(bǐ)  
hard, difficult  
plan and contrive, consider again and again  
seek, design, project  
draw  
imitate  
expect  
picture, drawing  
map  
domain  
intention  
book

Qiu Ying (1494-1552), Qingming Festival on River @ Freer Museum, DC  
(about 12M long)



Zhu Rong (1624-1705), Flower on River @ Tianjin Museum  
(10M long)



On Table

or

On Wall

The Museum is a recent idea. We are getting used to seeing paintings on walls in museum. But, how about Chinese long scroll? The *Qingming Festival on River* in Freer Museum in Washington, DC, is one of the most famous paintings in Chinese history. Because it is so famous, there is a copy from different artists in each dynasty. For such a famous painting, it is even exhibited with two other paintings at the same table. And they don't show the whole painting but unroll it at random. It looks like the frozen action of ancient Chinese reading a painting. Another exhibition is a scroll in Tianjin Museum in China. This scroll is unrolled totally on a curve wall. I can see the whole 10 meters long, painting thoroughly. This is really a modern idea to show it like this, at least not an ancient Chinese way to do it. Look at this room, we are having presentation on wall, but in Chinese school, teachers review drawings on the ground. I mean until for my age, there is no presentation or pin-up at all, and we just hand in big presentation drawings and teachers spread them on ground and give them grades. That's different. Wall or Table?

If there is a long horizontal scroll, do you prefer to see it on wall or table?

|          | Scroll on the Wall | Scroll on the Table | Either |
|----------|--------------------|---------------------|--------|
| Chinese  | 24                 | 12                  | 1      |
| Asian    | 2                  | 2                   | 1      |
| American | 25                 | 11                  | 1      |

I made a survey of people from different cultures to see whether people would like to see a long horizontal painting on wall or table. For Chinese, 2/3 are willing to see scroll on the wall; for other Asian people, half to half. (Maybe it is because I don't have too many Asian friends to ask.) For non-Asian people, still 2/3 like to read scroll on wall. However, there are 4 answers different: it depends. Depend on what? Depend on the painting itself. They are smarter. This is still a key question for me to answer in my design.

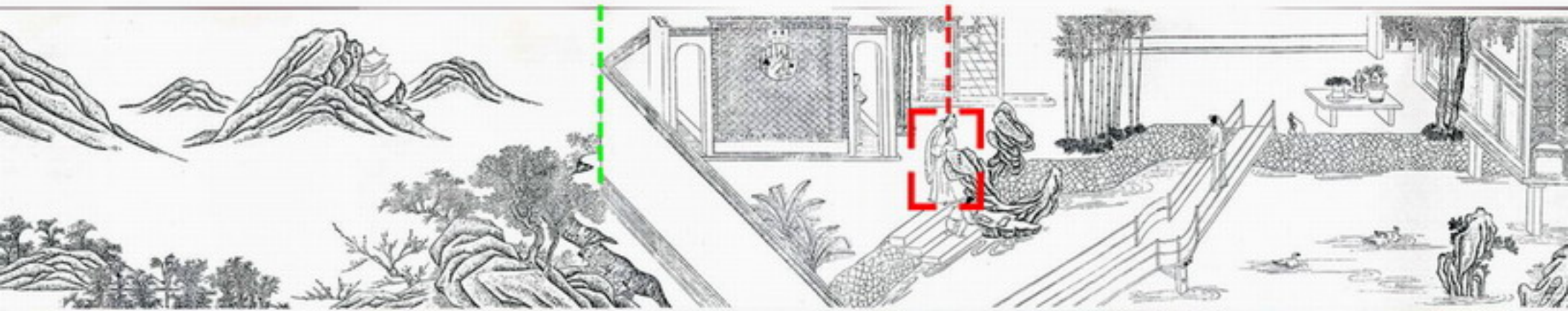
About encircled, Chinese always believe that everything has a circle or round. Maybe someday we will be in our beginning again. But in this painting, the ending of the painting doesn't mean the ending of the story. This ending is just the ending of the garden, but how can we explain the story? I don't know. It is probably that some part of the painting shows that artist going home. Maybe. It is interesting how I can solve the problem of ending that is not ending.

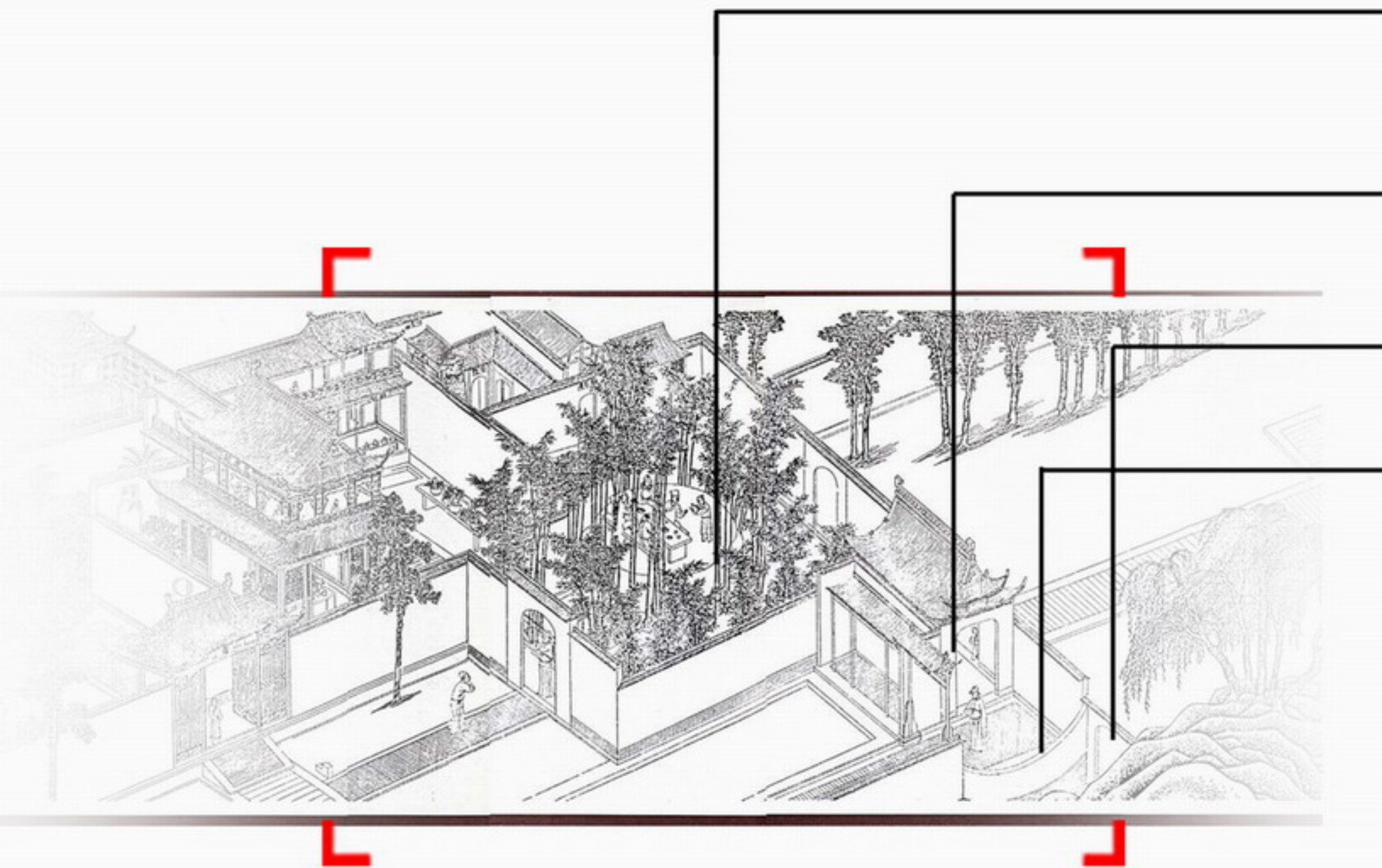


# 圖景園堂翠環

## Encircled

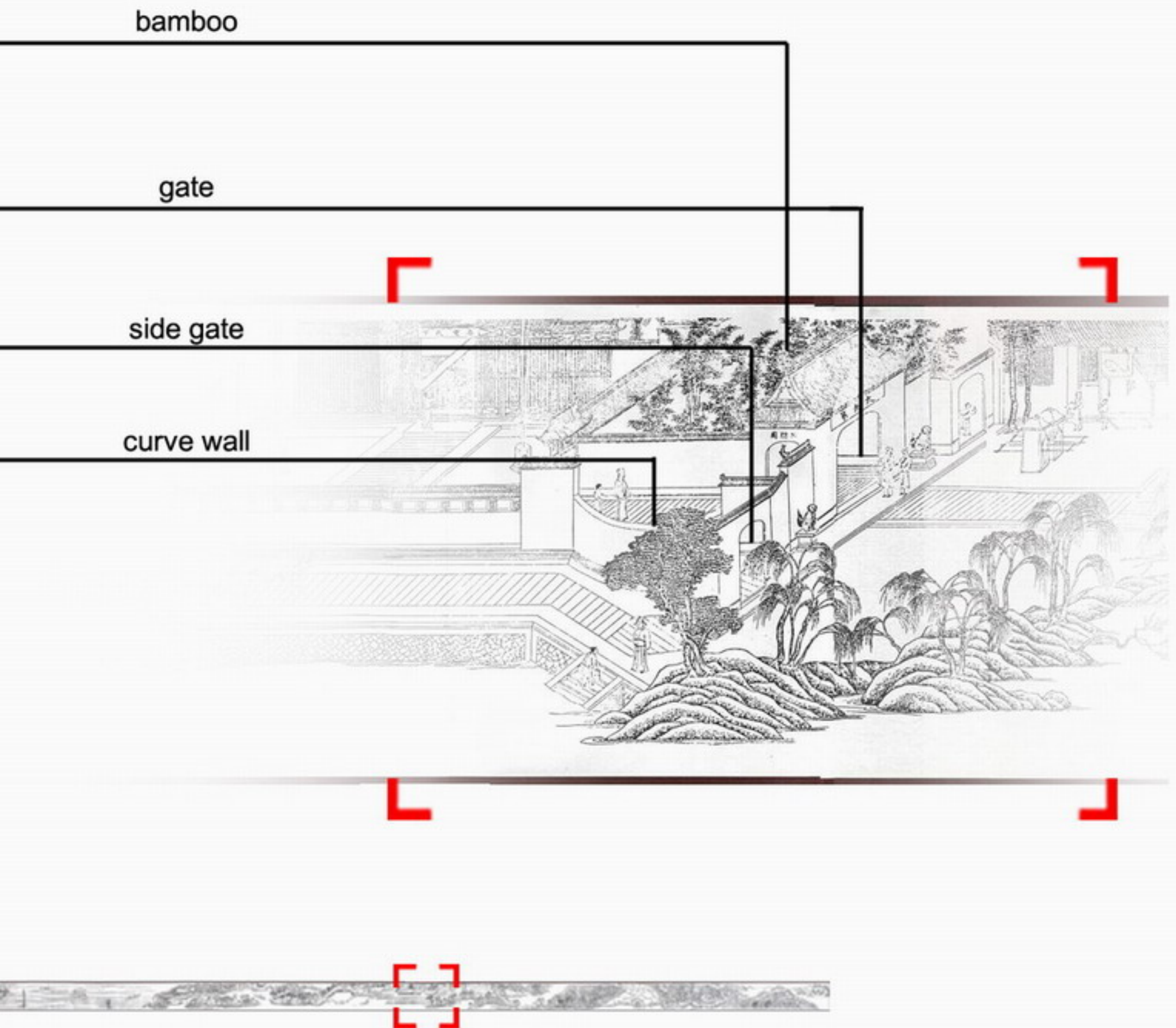
Ending is not Ending





## Encircled

There are two parts in this painting that looks wierd. These two buildings look like the same building but they belong to different parts with different names. Look at the composition of the gate, side door, bamboo, and curved wall; these two views are really of the same building but seen in front view and back view. No one can explain this, but these are also my key points for my future design.





# 圖景園堂翠環

## Garden

Yuan means garden, but from this character, we can see the composition of Chinese Garden, earth+water+tree+wall, but the most important is the relationship between them. It can be explained by Gestalt philosophy. Gestalt is: A physical, biological, psychological, or symbolic configuration or pattern of elements so unified as a whole that its properties cannot be derived from a simple summation of its parts.

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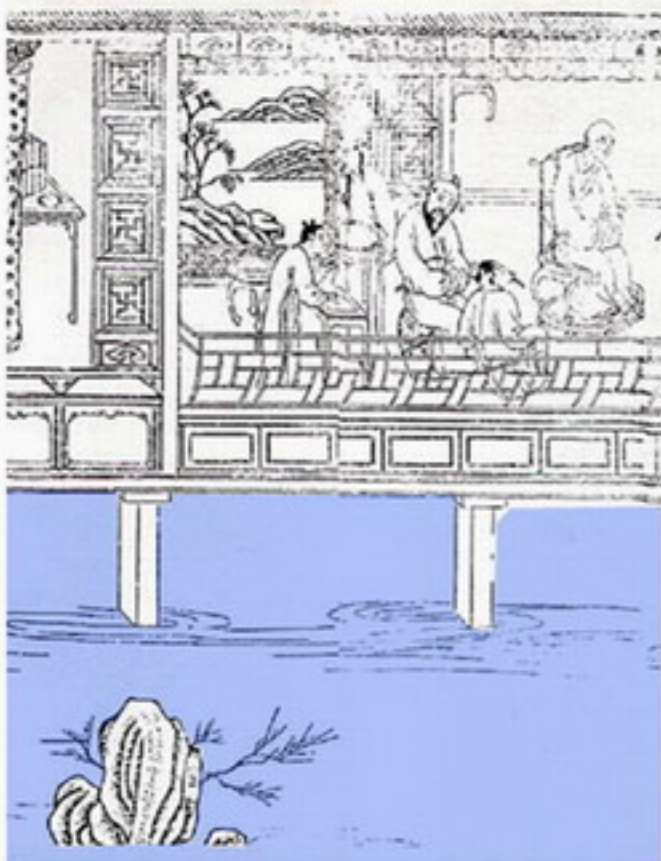




earth / rock

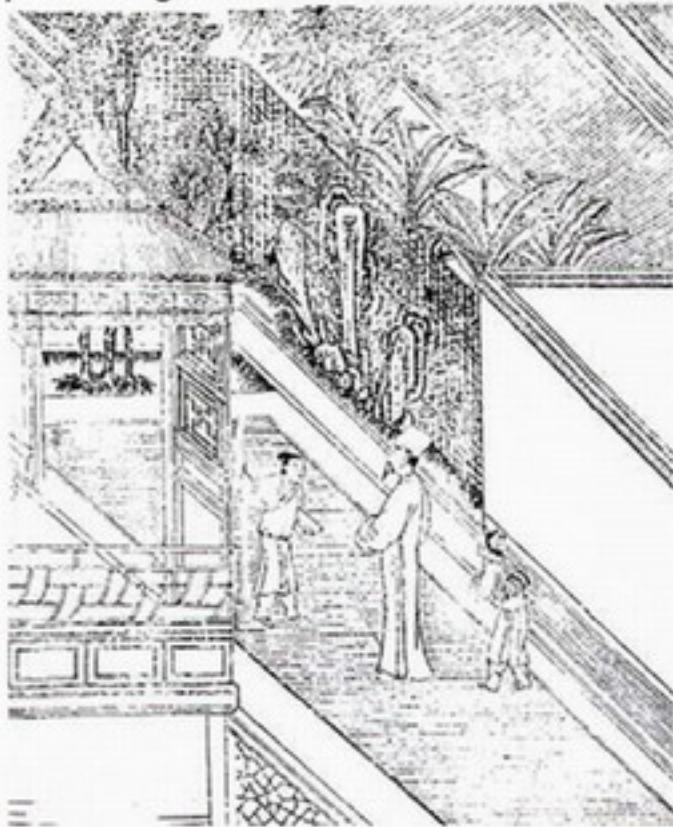


pool / water



袁

plant / green



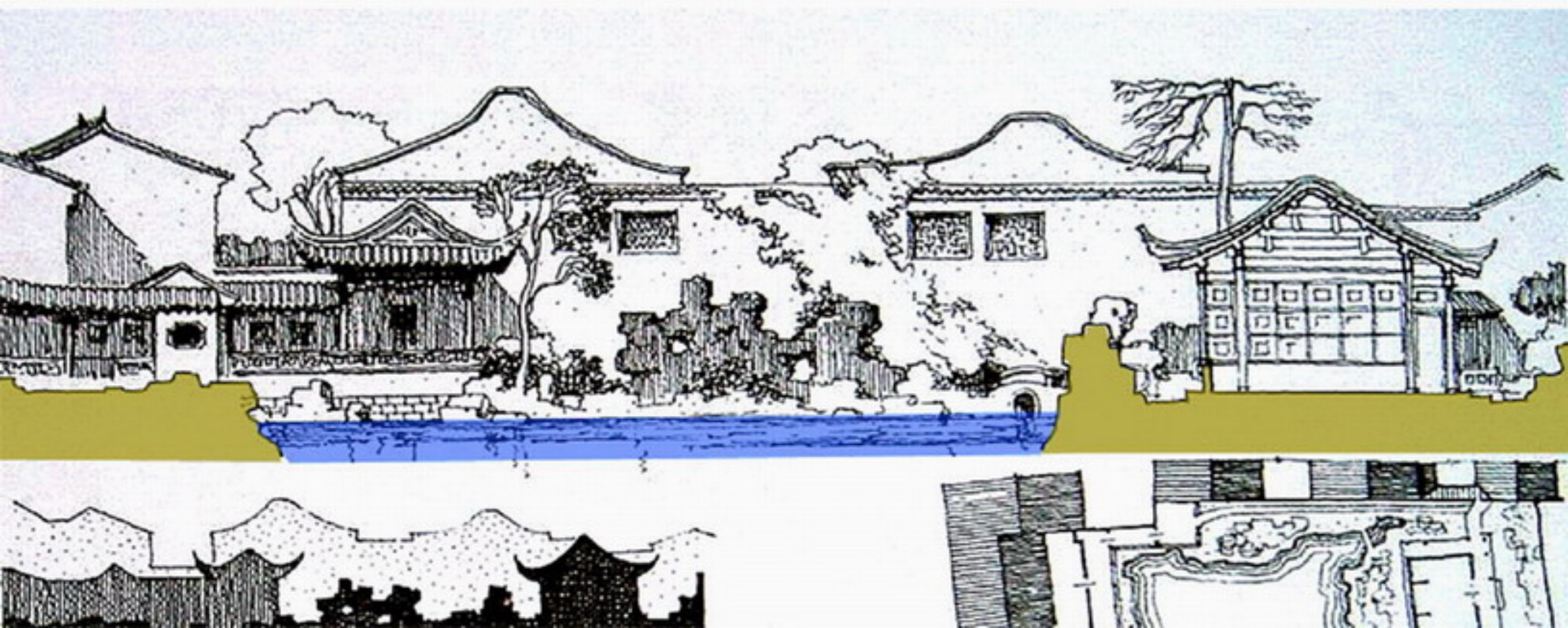
袁

wall / enclosure

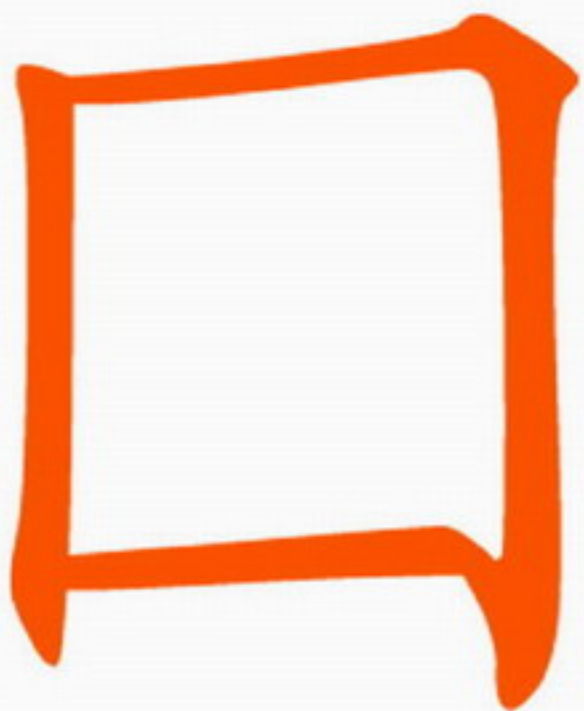




relationship



The most important aspect of the Chinese garden is the relationship between elements. Chinese gardens are usually very small, but we can feel much more than the plan can show. Just now I talked about each element, but I cannot separate each with any other elements. In papers about Chinese gardens that western scholars wrote, but I always feel very disappointed they always separate each element too much. Look at this section, it shows the relationships between each elements. However, Chinese garden can never been described by plan and few sections.

A large, stylized orange character, which is the Chinese character '围' (wéi), meaning 'enclosure' or 'area'.

Wéi

enclosure  
scope, area

A large, stylized grey character, which is the Chinese character '之' (zhī), meaning 'possessive particle' or 'possessive pronoun'.

Zhī

grow  
go to, leave  
this, that  
its, his, other  
of  
zigzag



The following project is the museum to show the longest woodblock painting. I try to show the whole painting in a very small place. It is like the painting is stored in a tiny box, but inside is infinite. It is also like the garden inside the painting, area is small but it is much larger when you walk in to feel it.

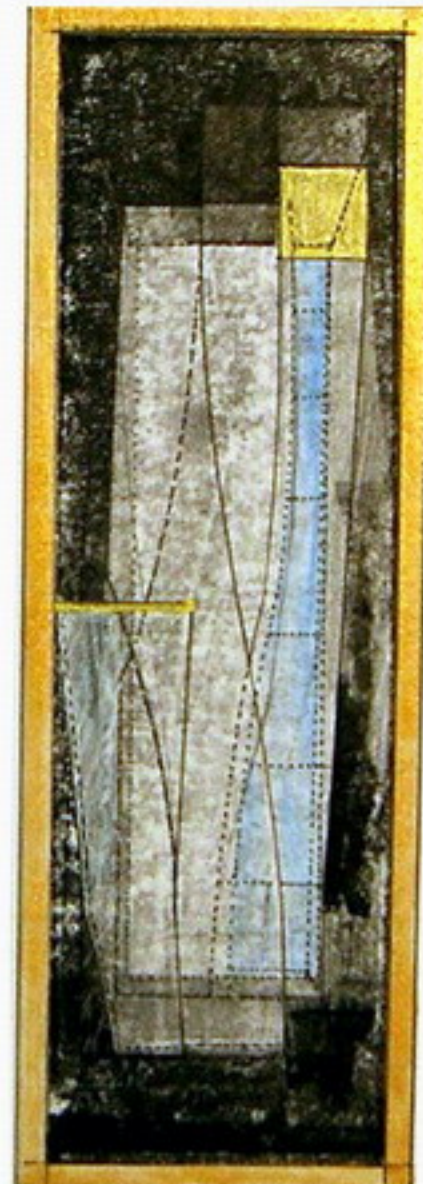
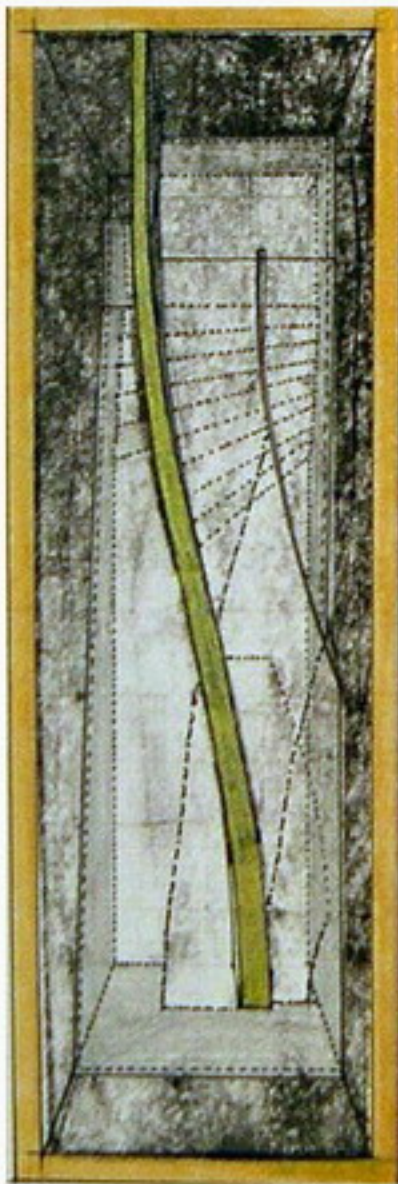
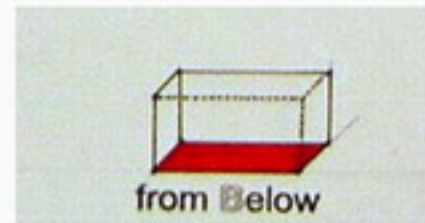
Here a Chinese word is invented. From the image, it means walking in an enclosure, also the abstract section and plan with balance of asymmetry.

S I T E



Chinatown is “culture hybrid” and I will exhibit this very Chinese thing through my interpretation of the US. Chinatown is the best place to do this experiment. And I found a small site in Chinatown, Washington, DC, to do my research. This building will be a cultural hybrid, increasing or decreasing the cultural difference happening at the same time.





STUDY PLANS

The process of the thinking to shape the museum is about the key questions:

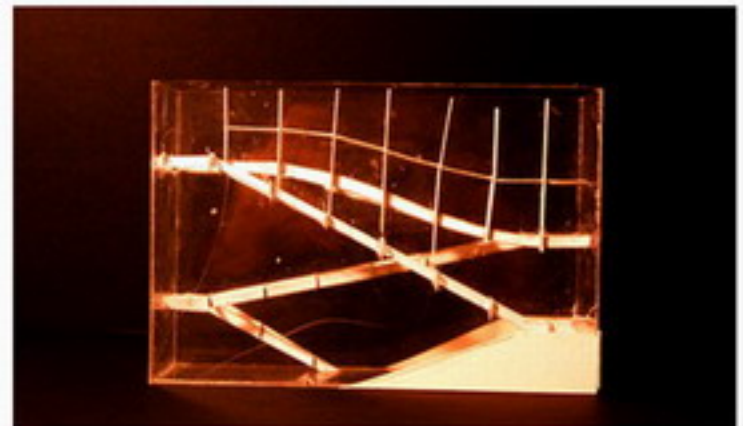
**How to exhibit the long scroll?**

**How to represent the painting in the building, or how to make museum like a painting itself?**

**How to invite people inside to feel the painting and not only to see it?**

**How to let people know this building is “only” for a long scroll?**

**How to deal with cultural difference for Chinese culture between the east and the west, the modern and the tradition?**



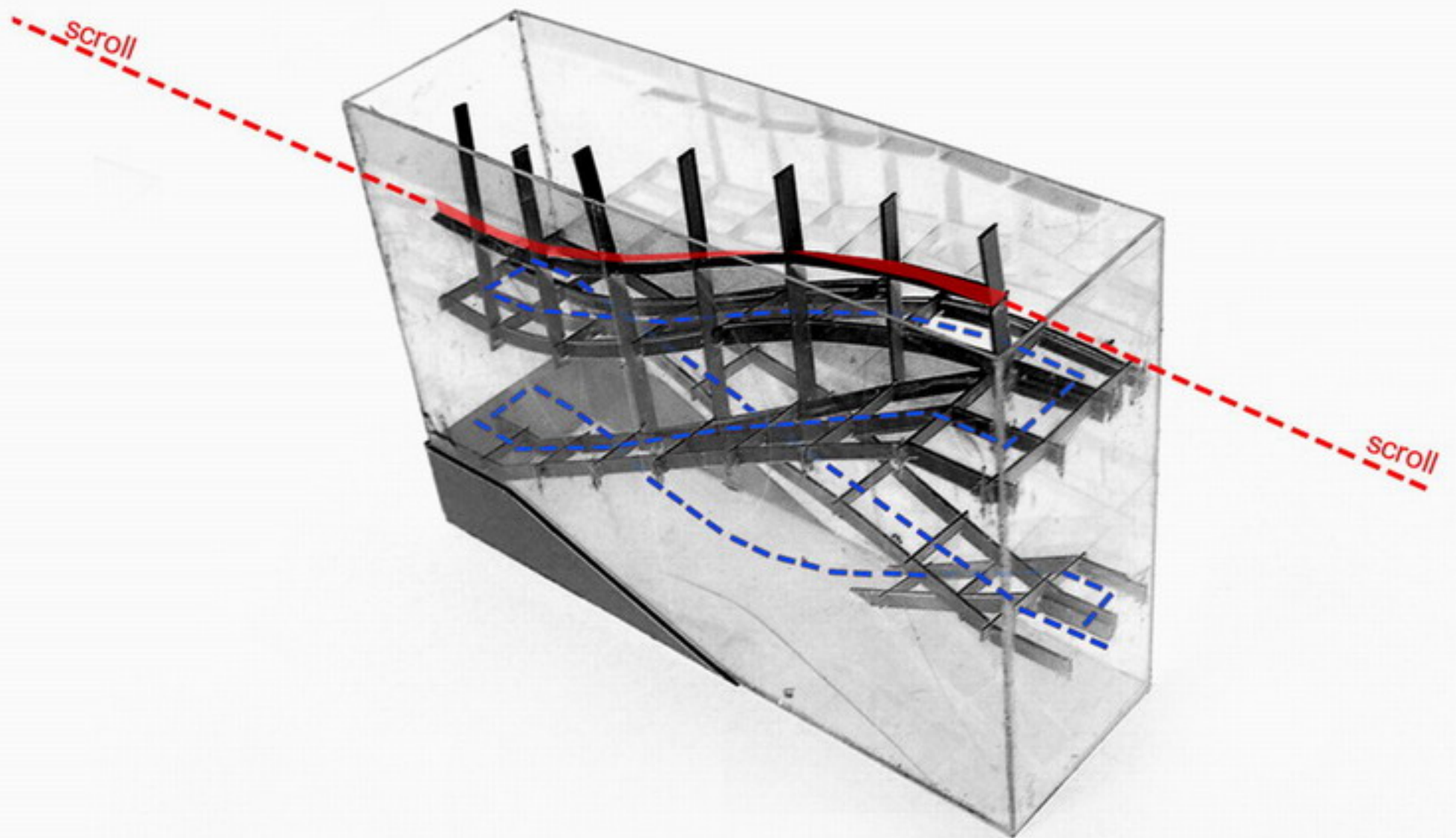
STUDY MODELS



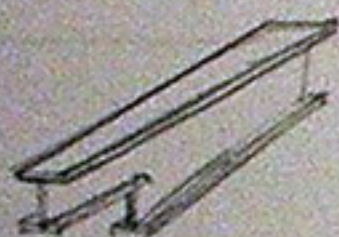
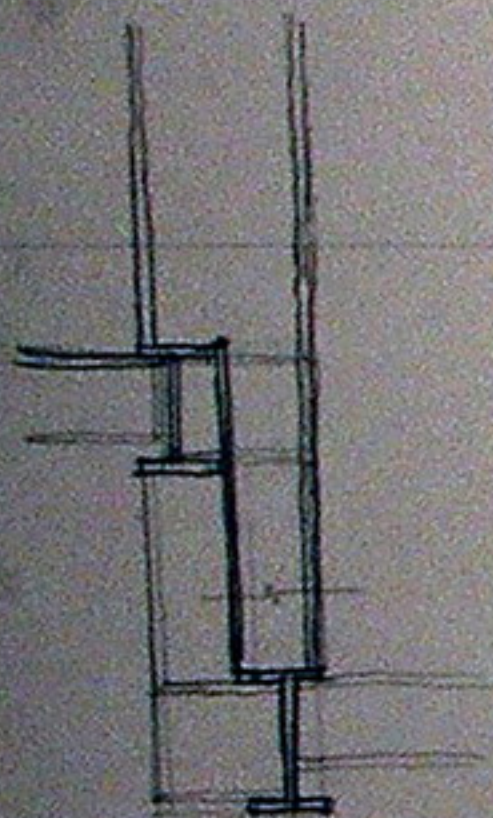
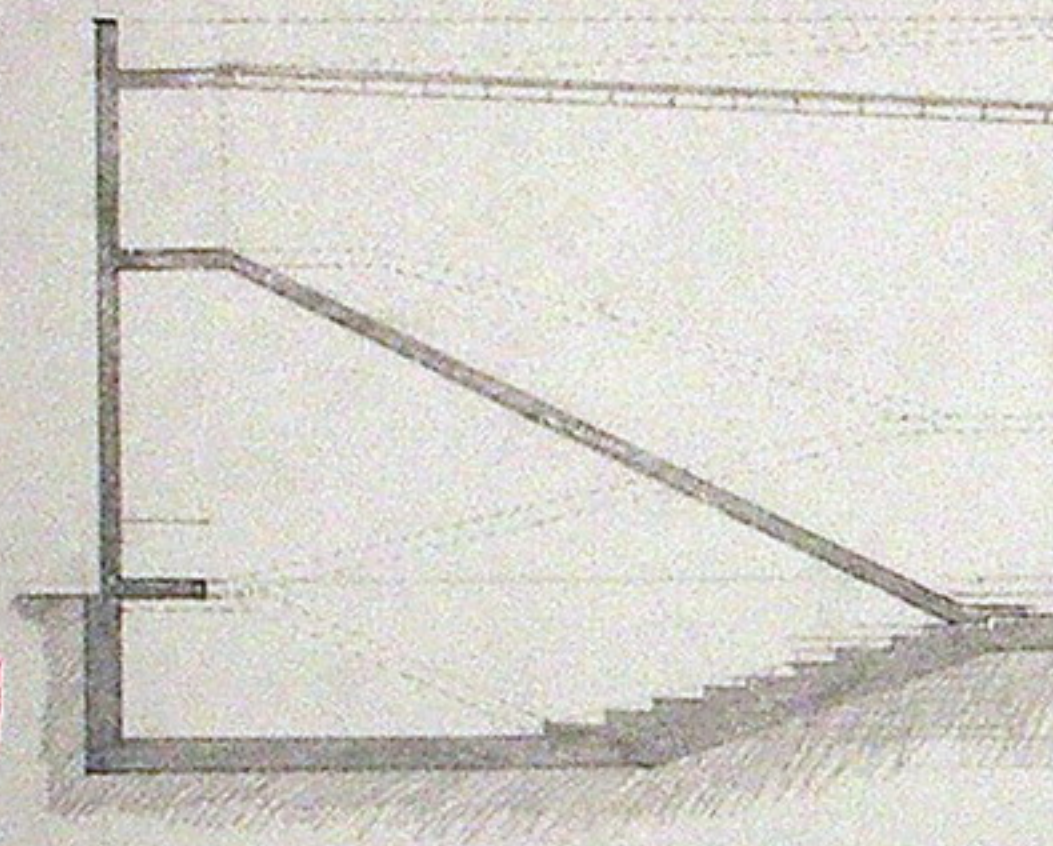
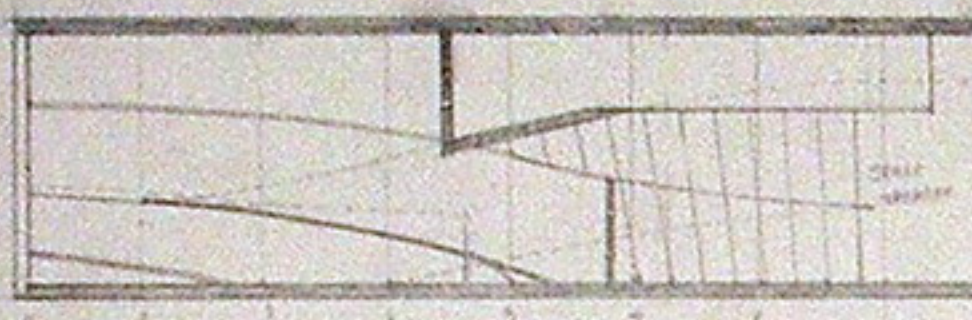
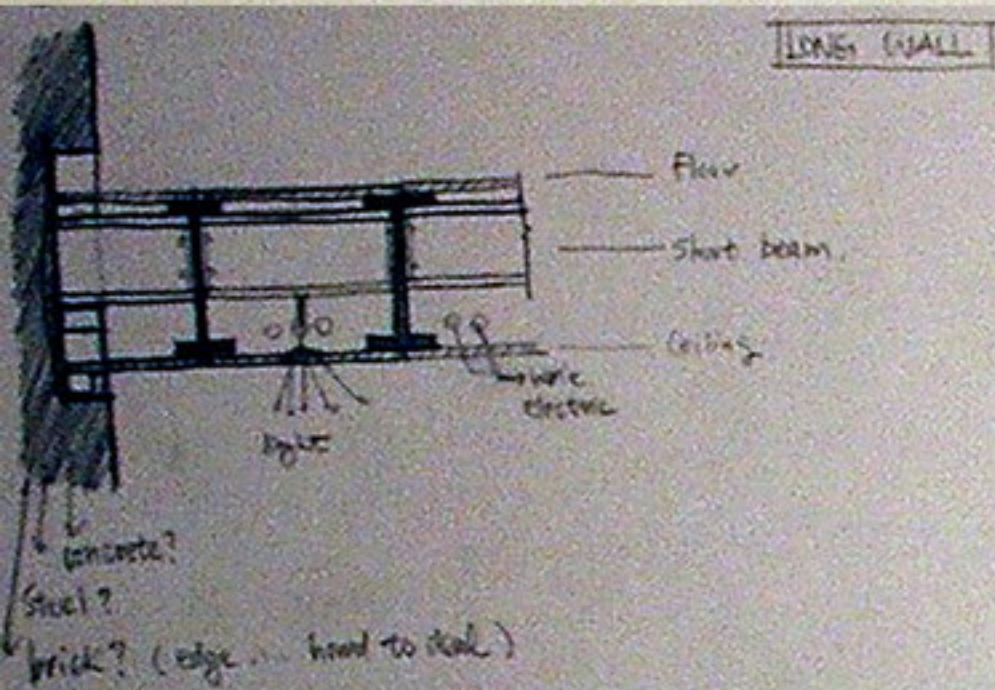
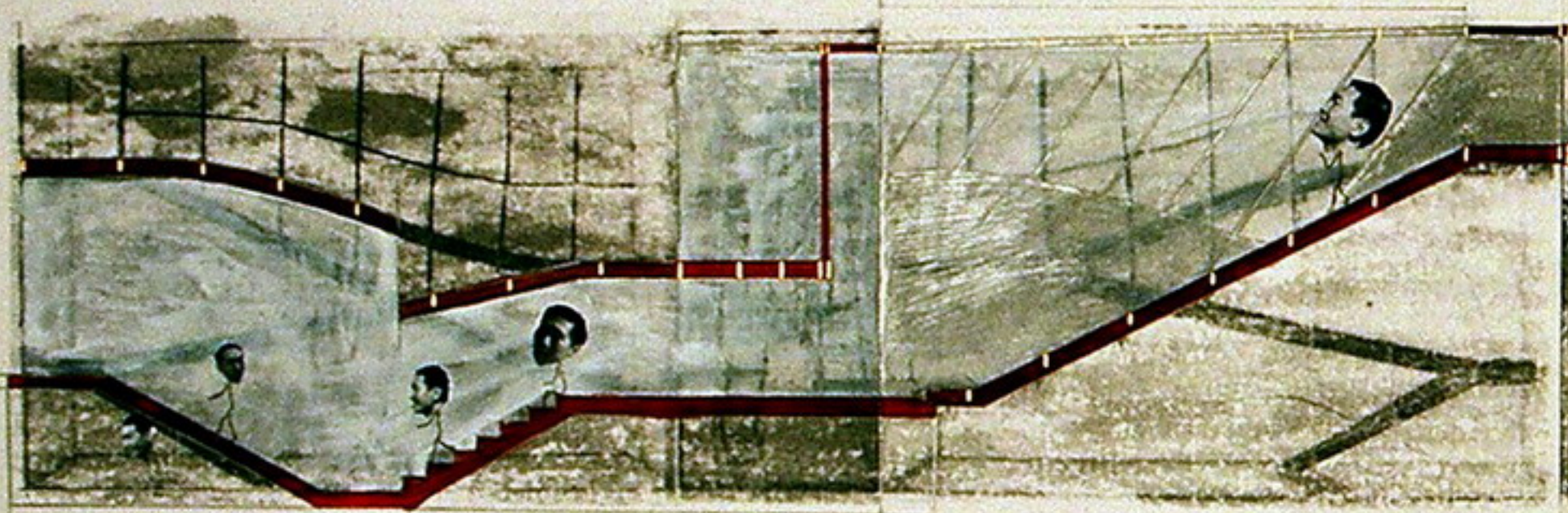
Does this new Chinese character present the plan, section, or tracing?

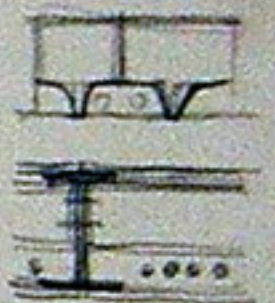
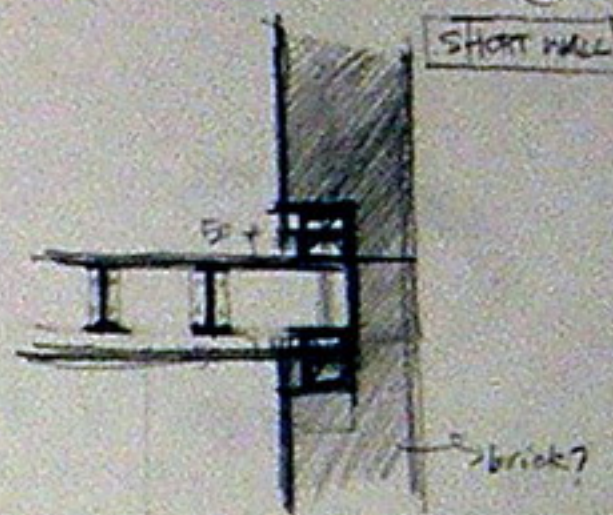
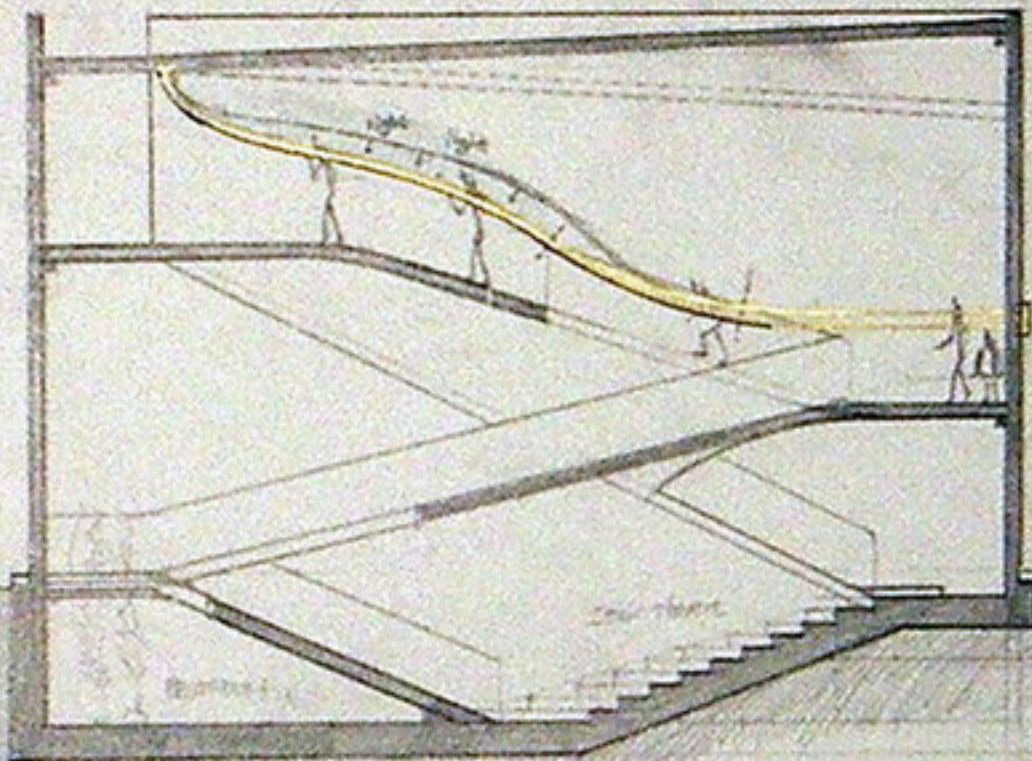
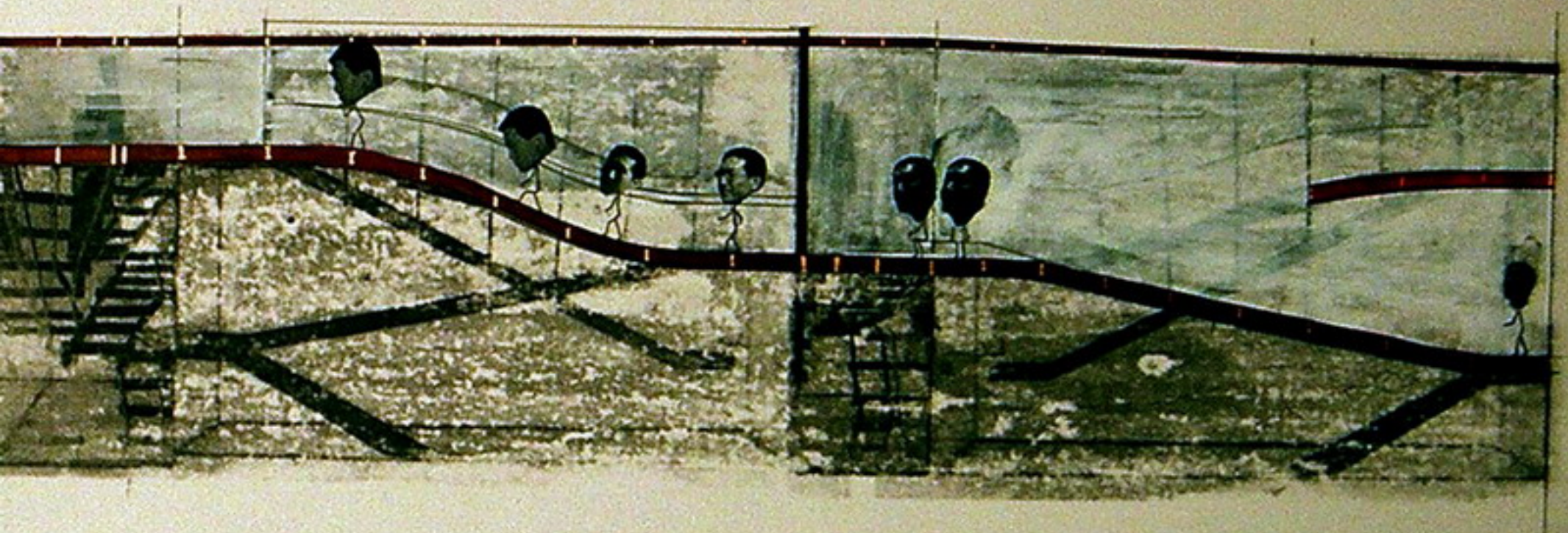
All of them, but more than those...

It is not the definition of the word with single meaning, not to be confined by a single point of view to think and see.



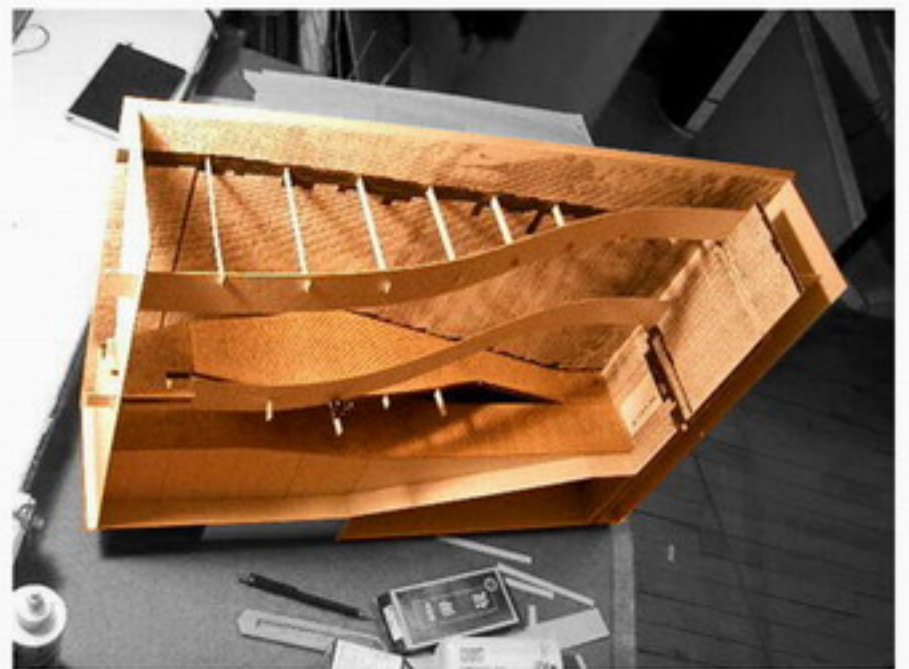
CIRCULATION & EXHIBITION & STRUCTURE  
STUDY MODEL

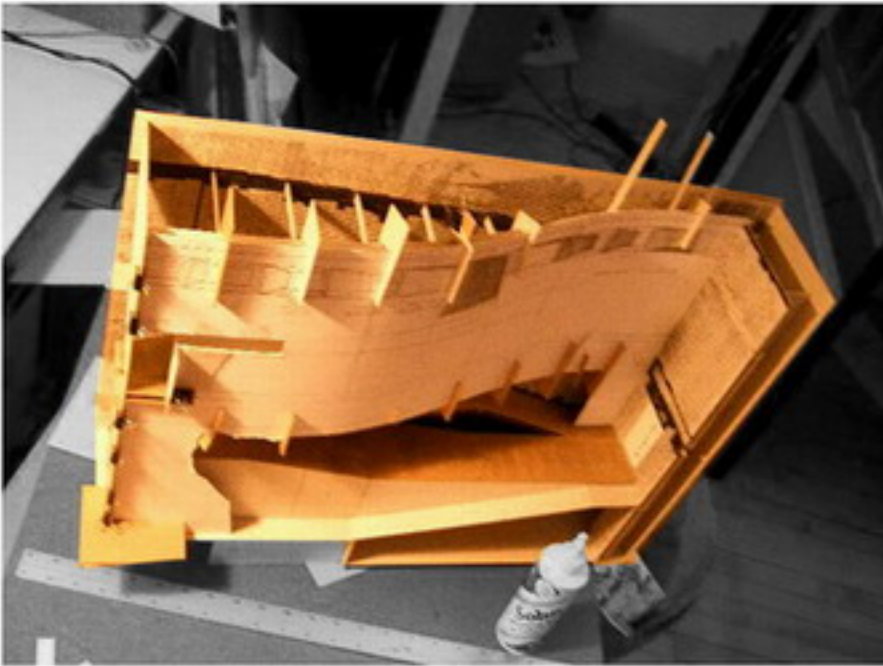




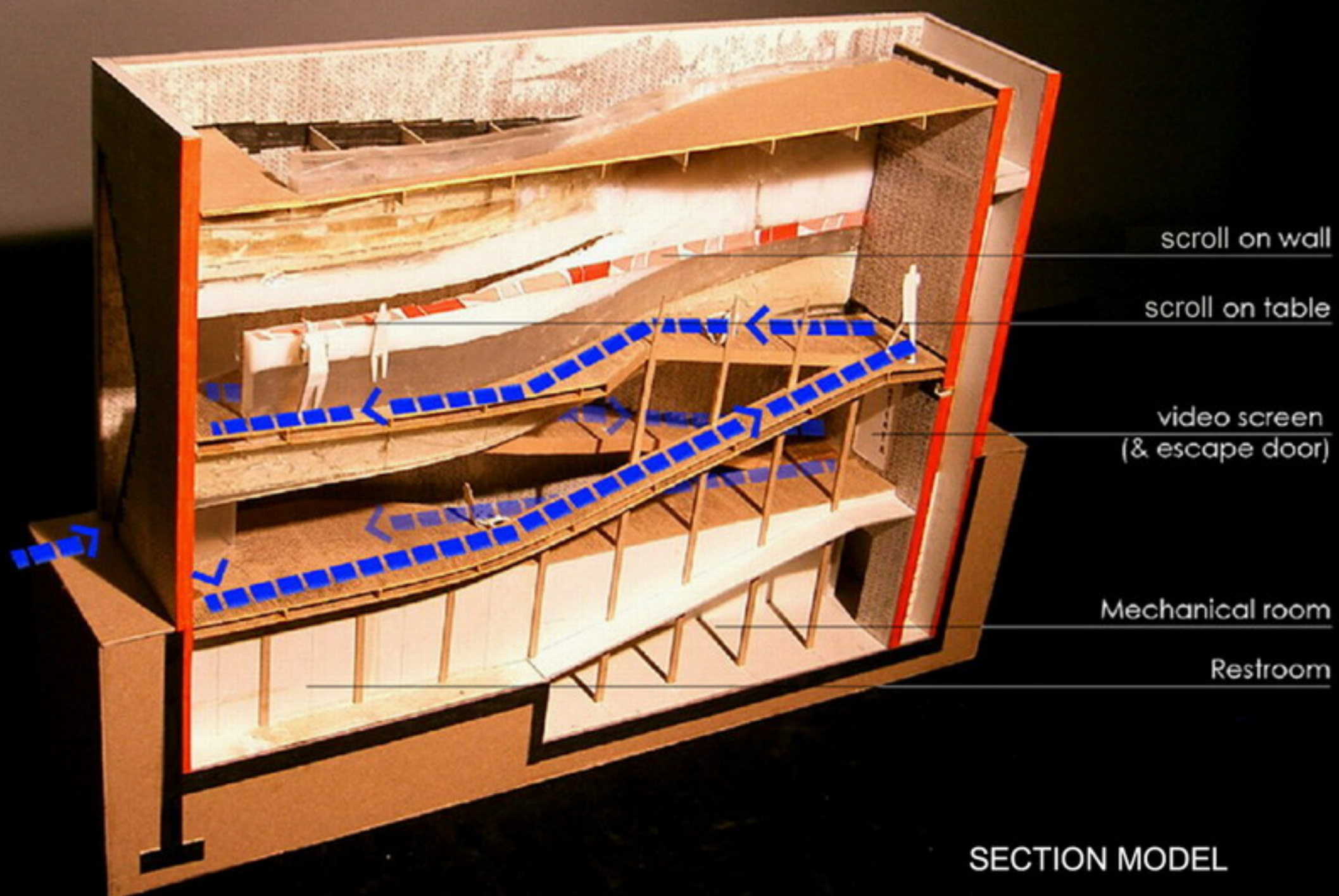
Making

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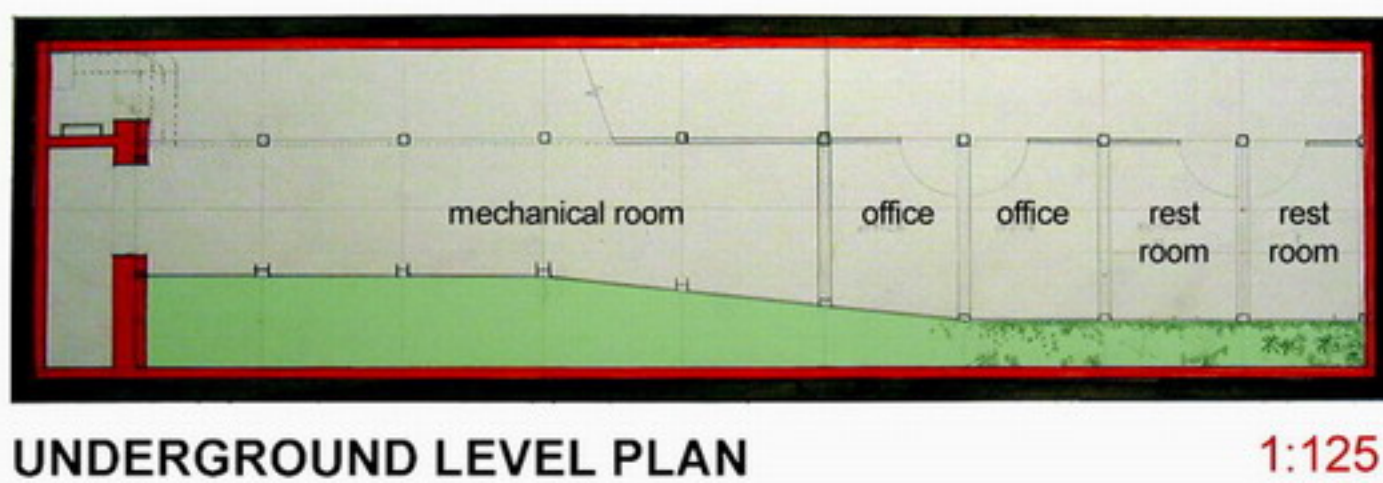
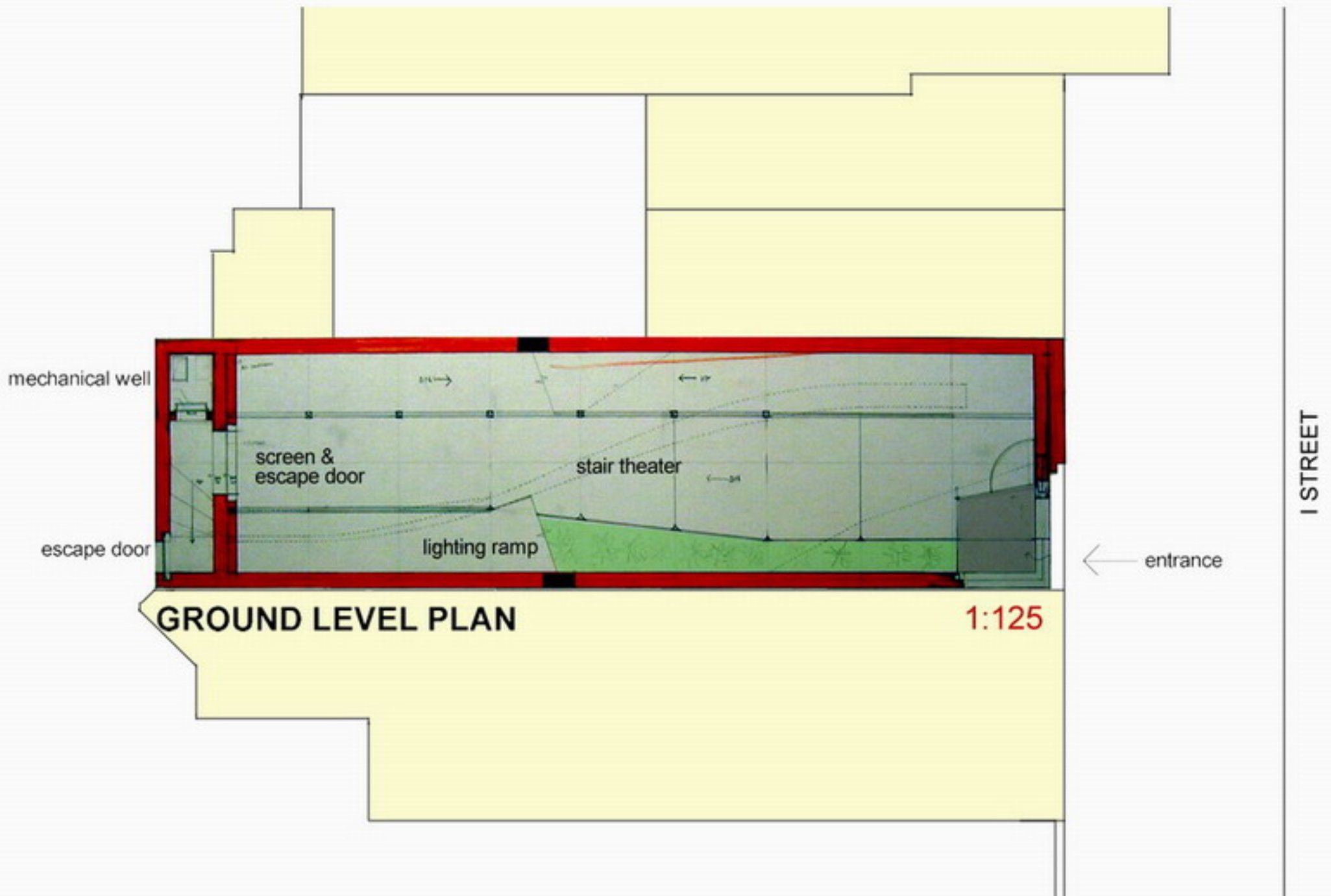
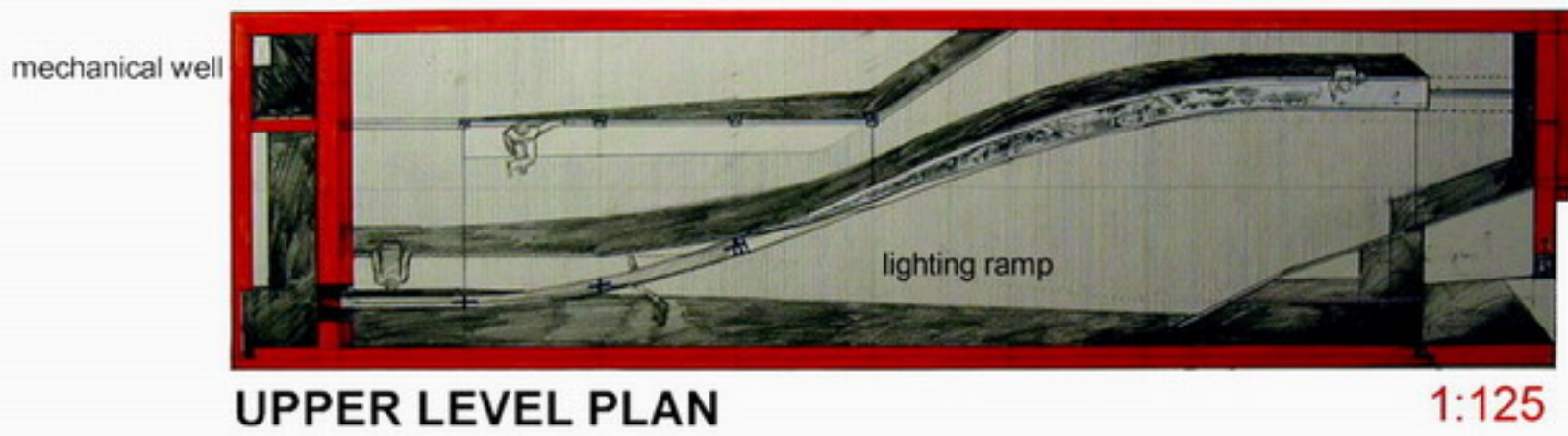


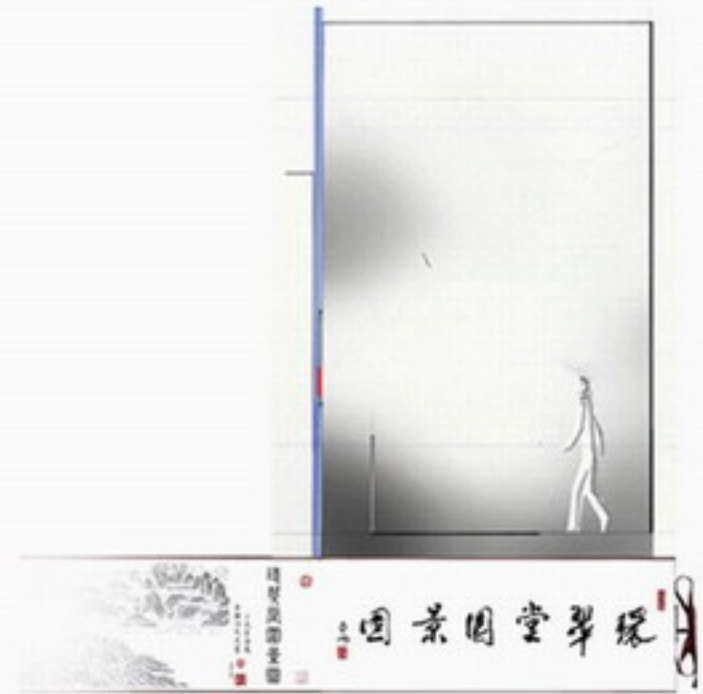






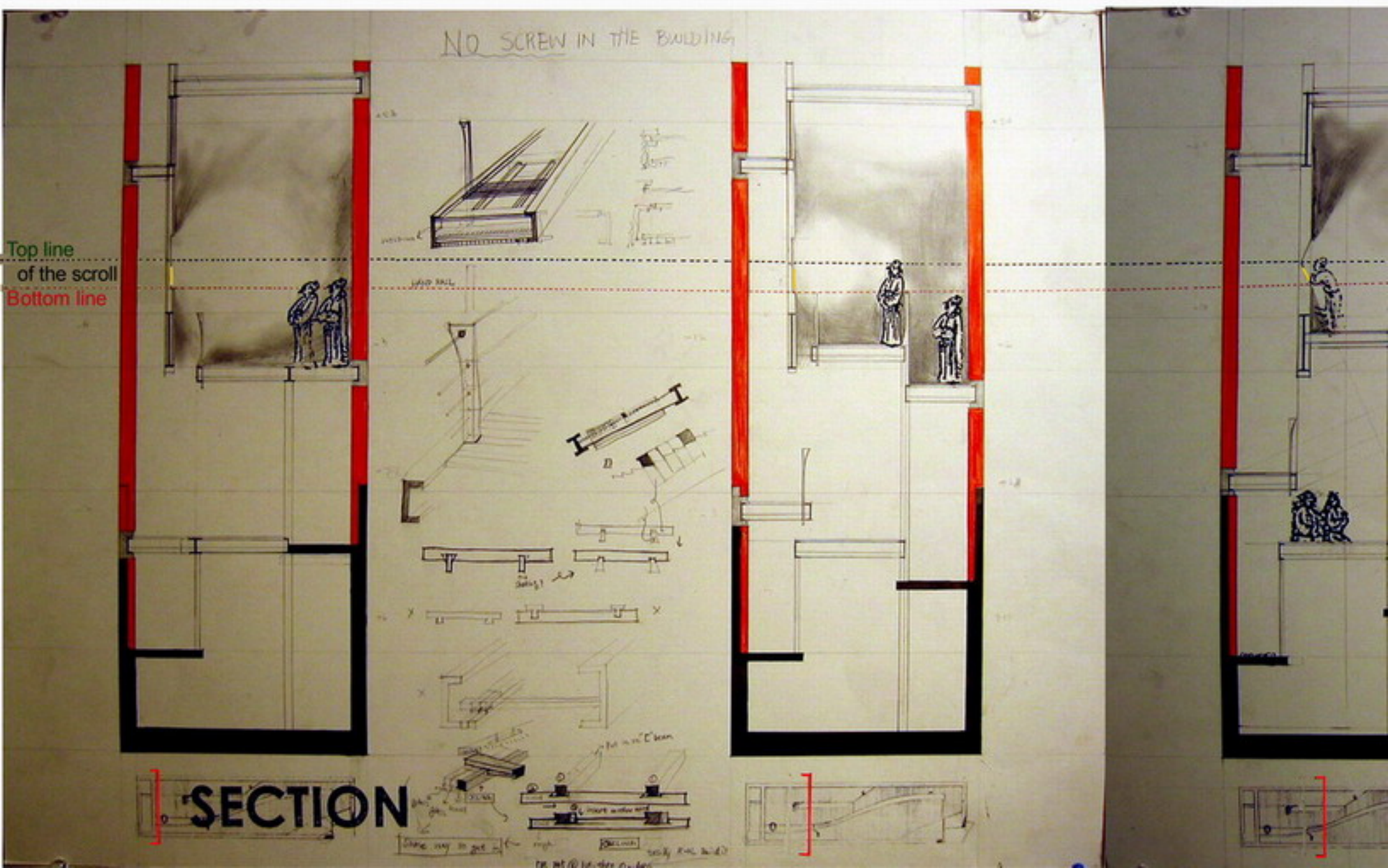
← NORTH

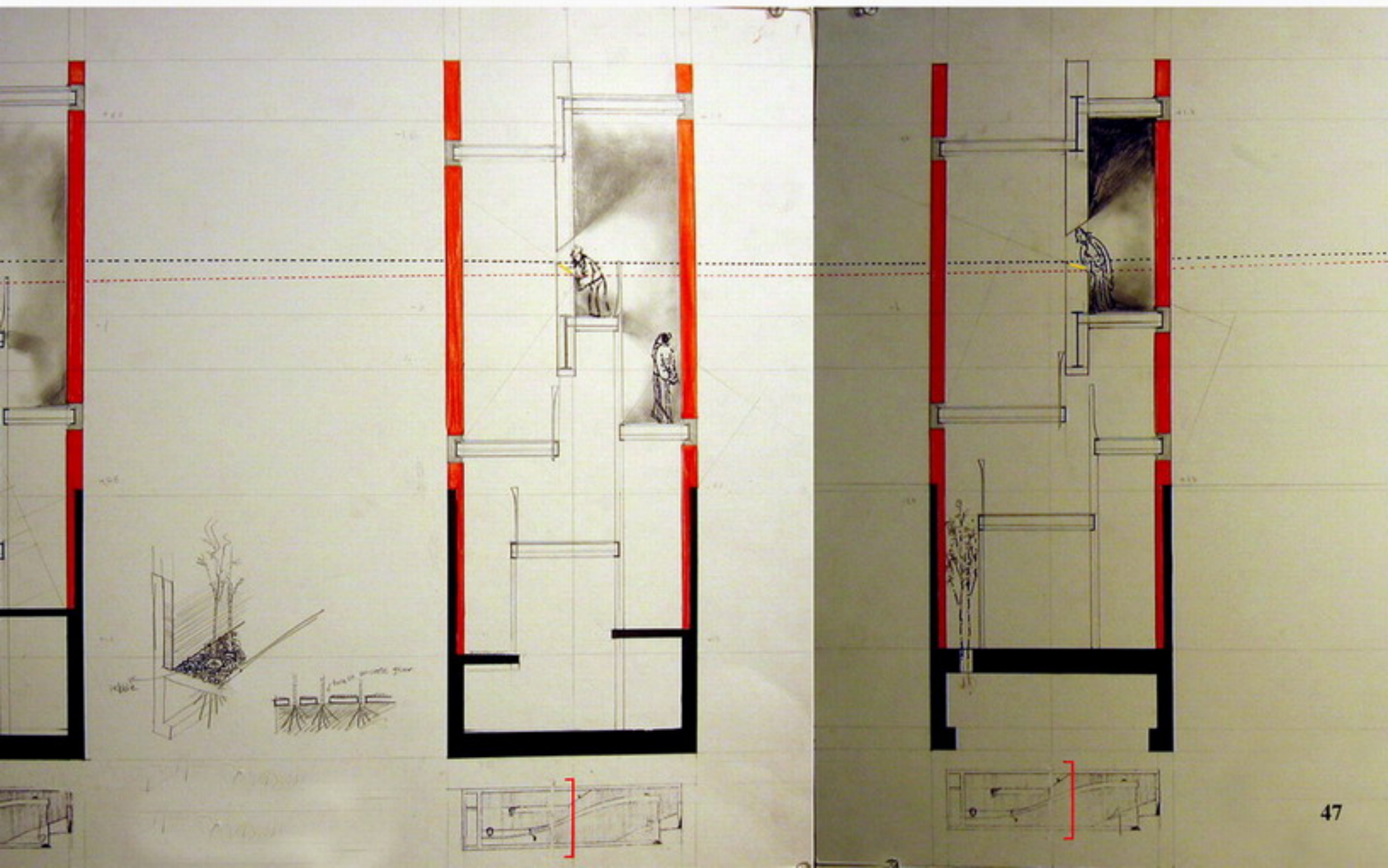
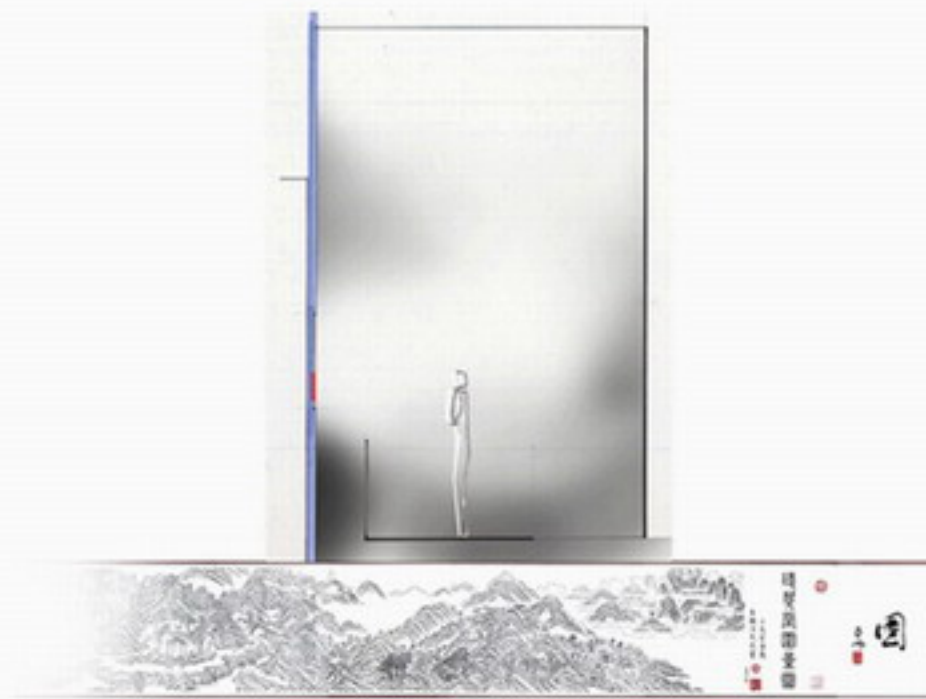




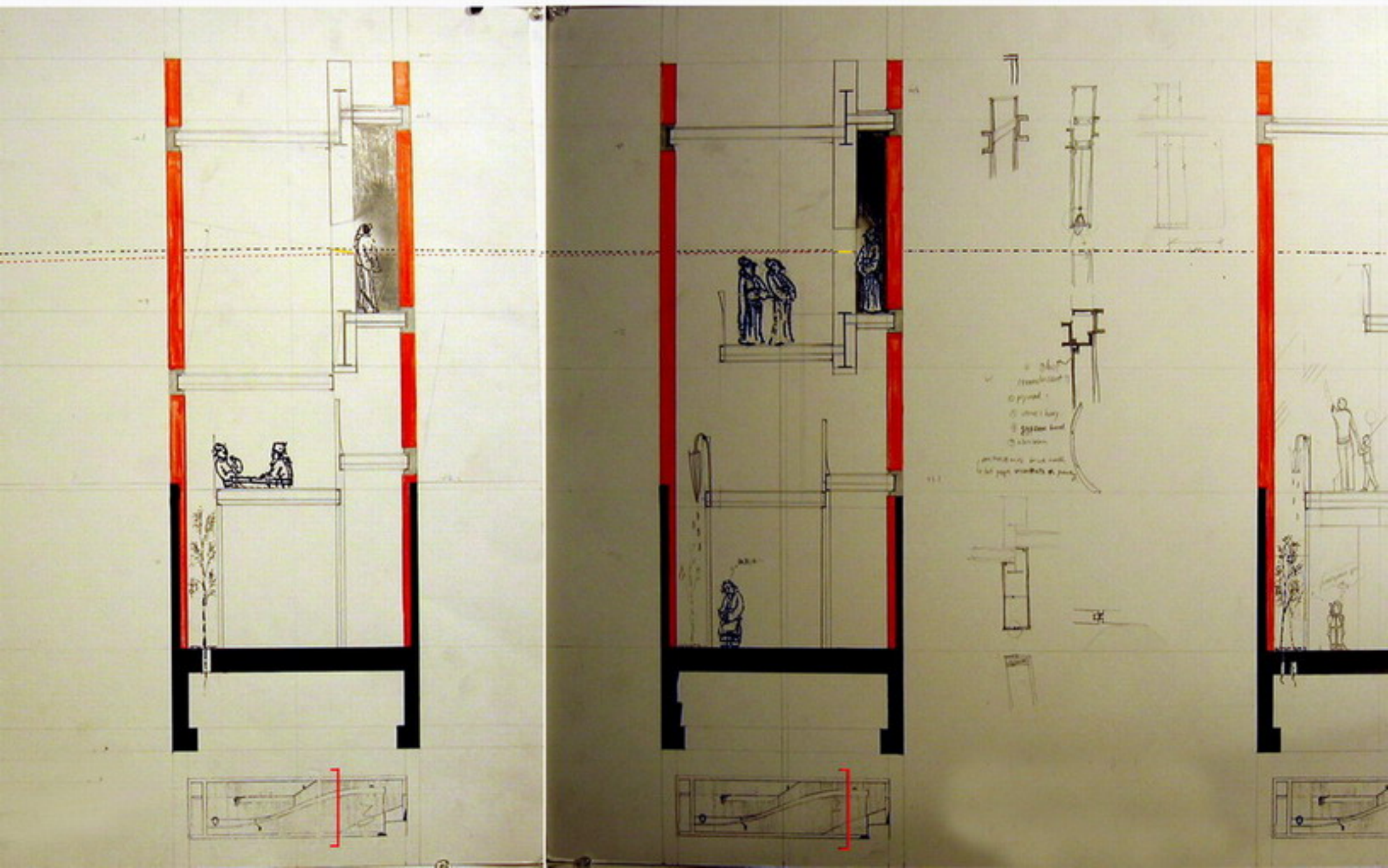
Animation begins from this page till p.75, if read fast from this side. Building sections match parts of the scroll exhibited.

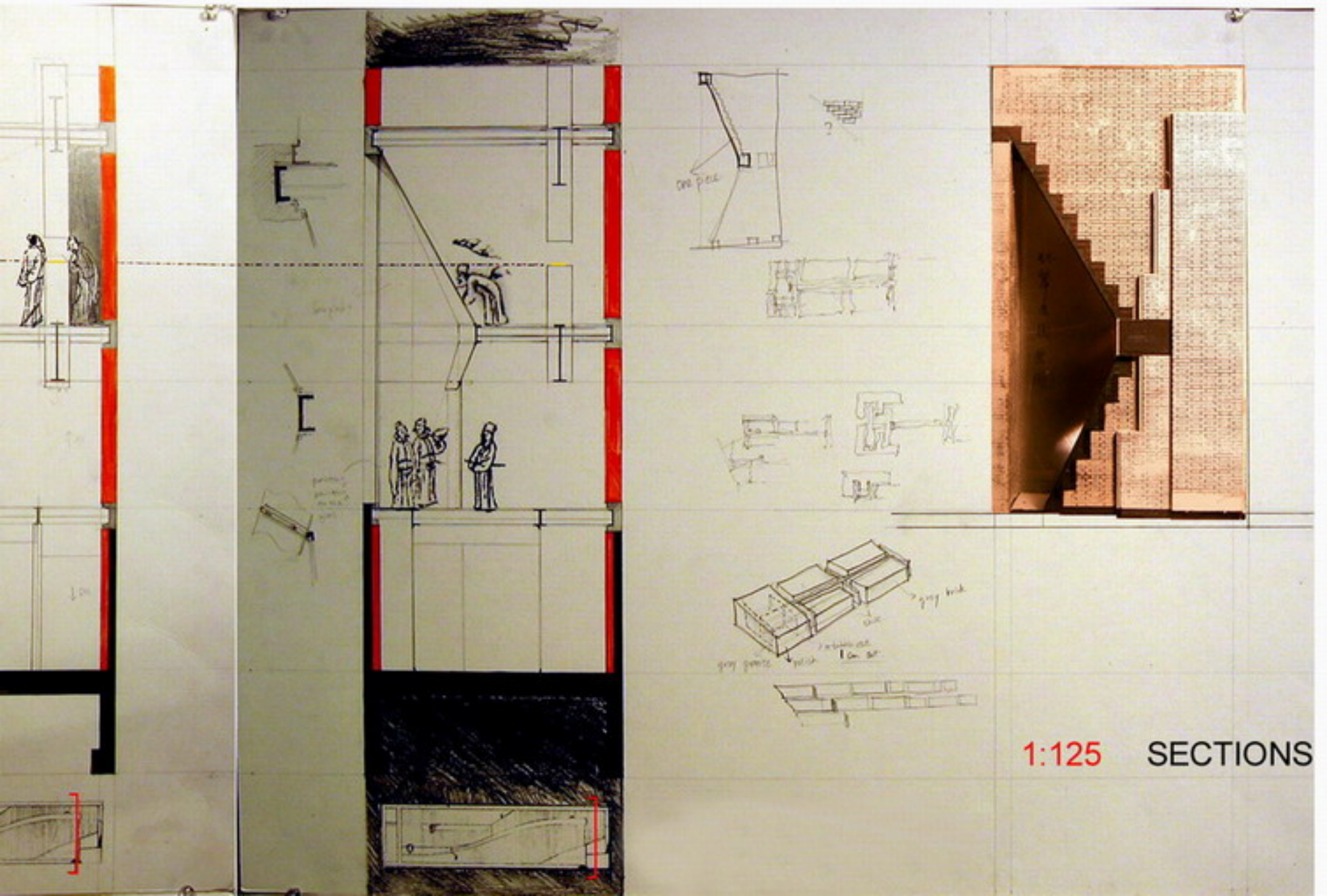
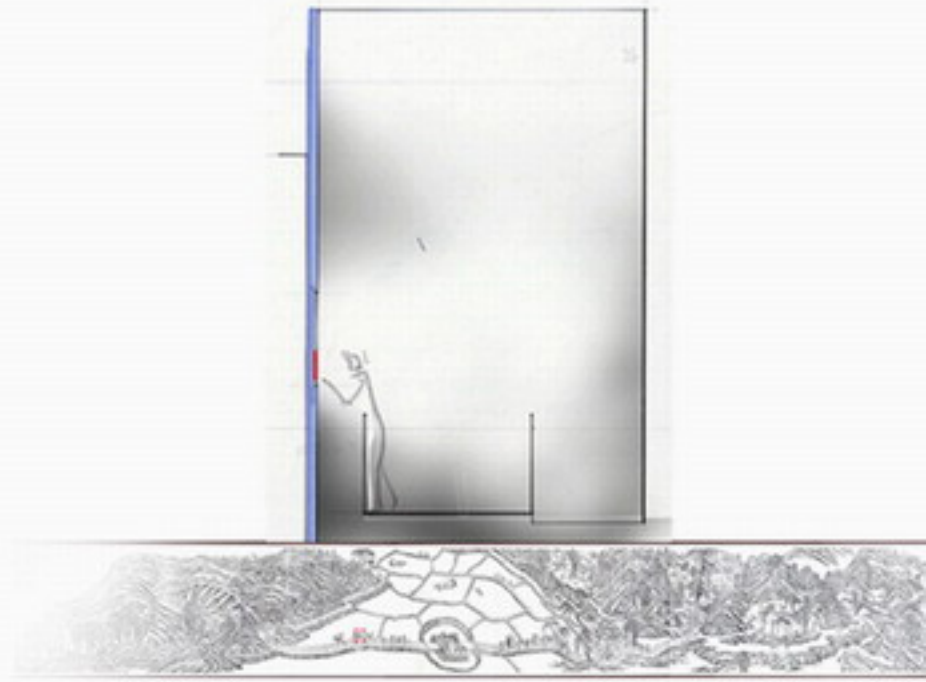
There is analogy between painting and this building. This painting is named "Garden", but only 1/3 of the painting is about this garden, and if I made all human figures the same scale, 1/50 of the story is about the garden, but you cannot separate the garden from this story. And also the story is focused on different parts in different scales. Once you enter into my building, you are entering the painting already, even before you get inside. You are designed already. You walk a long way to get the painting like spending a long time to see the garden. And in different parts of the building, you focus on different things but they all connect to each other. After seeing the scroll is finished, you get into another space with natural light. In this space, you still can feel the shape of the curving wall and different opening size on the wall, and see people on the other side. Even after you go down and you pass the curving wall, it is still above you.



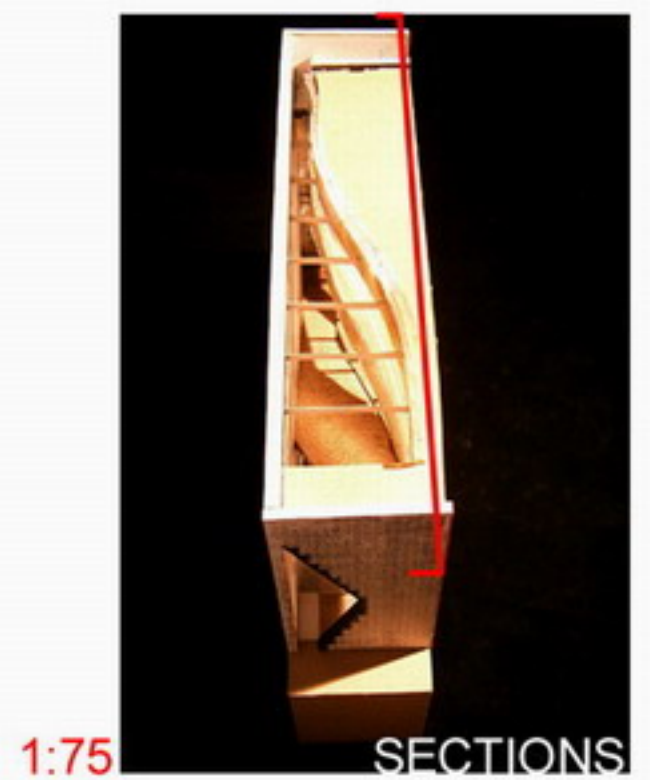
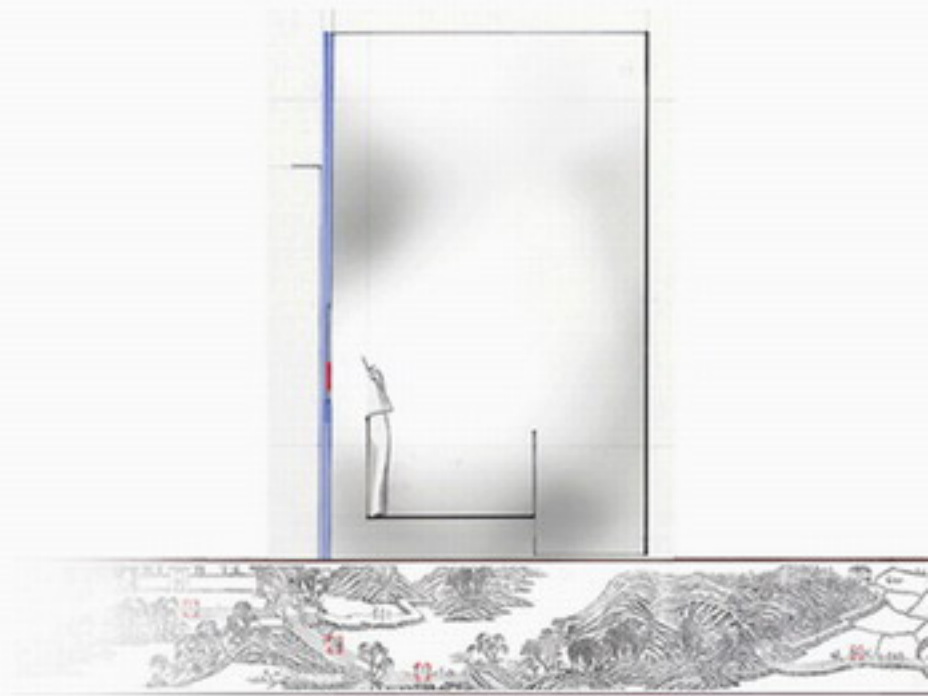
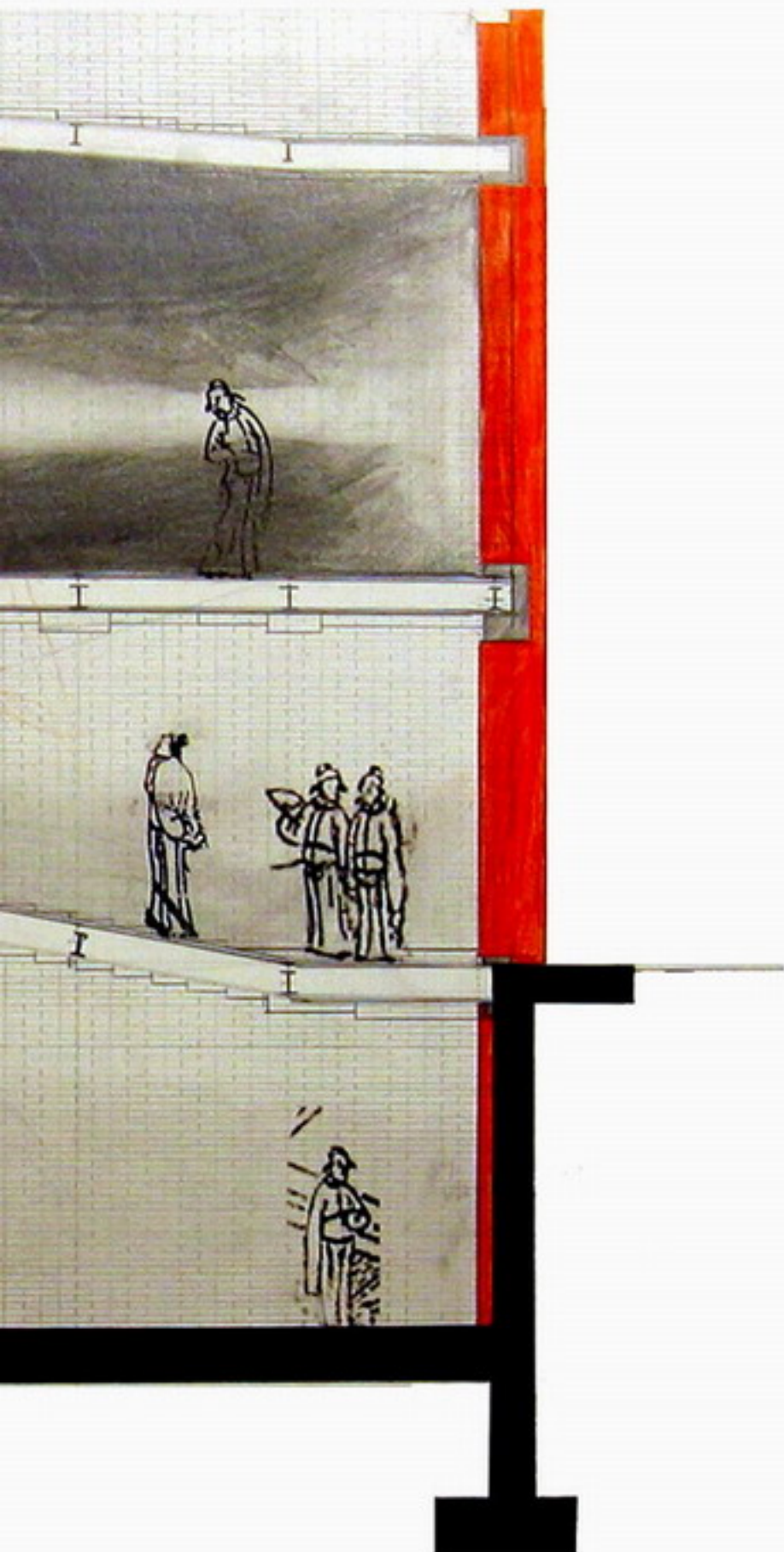


There is a curving wall in the middle of the museum, with different widths. In the beginning, the painting is about landscape, so the pace is bright and wide, people can see it horizontally and with different distances. Also you cannot reach the painting, because there is a gap between floor and curve a wall. It allows people to feel the distance and scale of the painting: it's far and free. When the painting is almost being inside the garden and building, the space is narrow and dark, letting people feel the space by body and focus on the painting on the table. People have to put their head into the cabinet to see the painting. In the end, the scale of the painting is big, and the space is only for one person to get through. There are two key points to make rotations of the painting. Where the two buildings are similar, and they divide the painting into three parts: on the wall, on the table and between them. The survey about wall or table does not mean there are only two views to read the painting but more possibilities. The space is not only about showing the painting passively, but actively. Although, the painting is unrolled totally and you can see the whole painting, it is no use for understanding the painting, and you have to see it by yourself. Just let you feel the space and scale and story inside the painting, not only by eye. Such as in the beginning, there is gap, you can see downstairs but you also can hear the sound of movie showed downstairs. In the end, you cannot see the space around you, but feel it by your body.



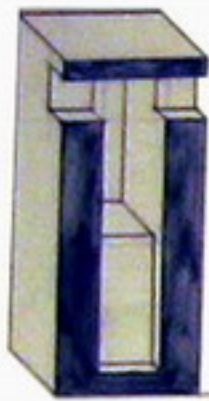






1:75

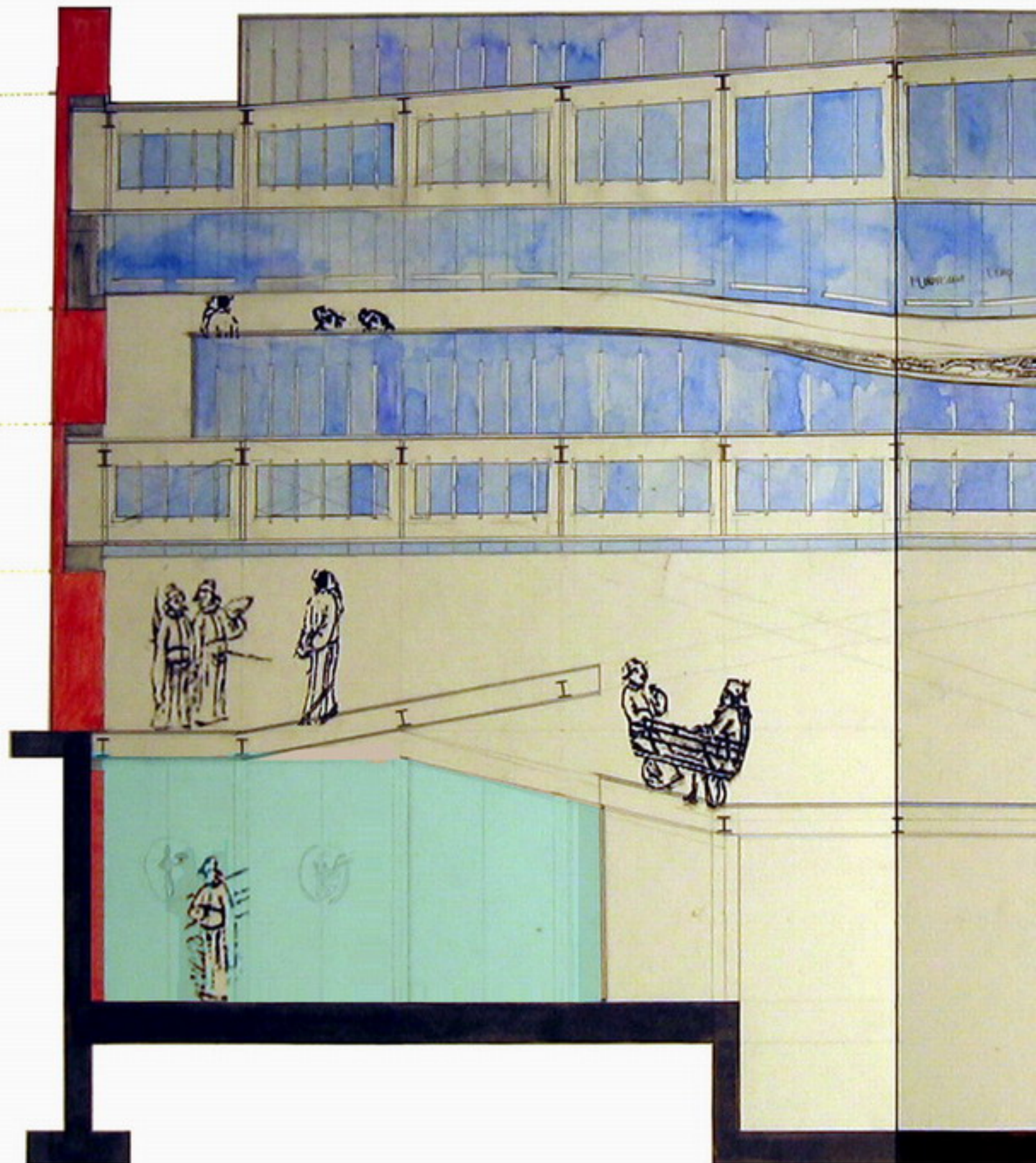
SECTIONS

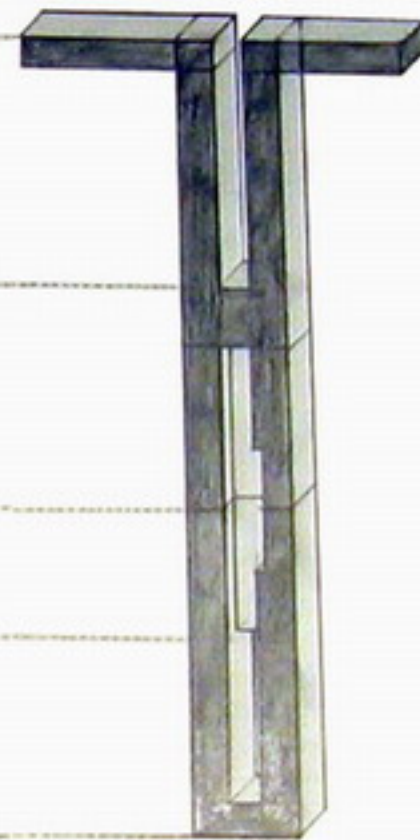
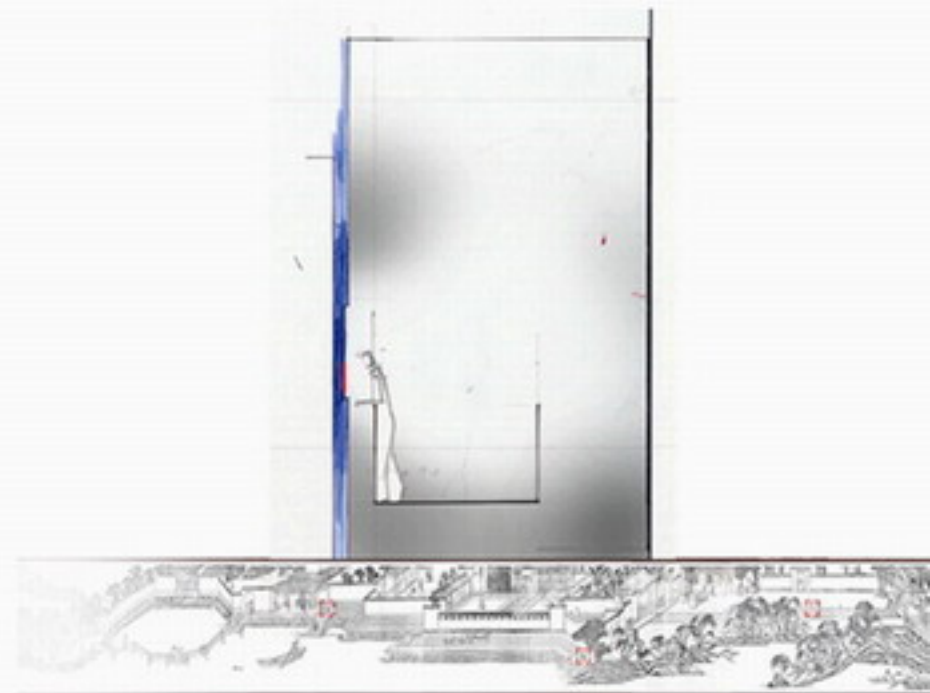
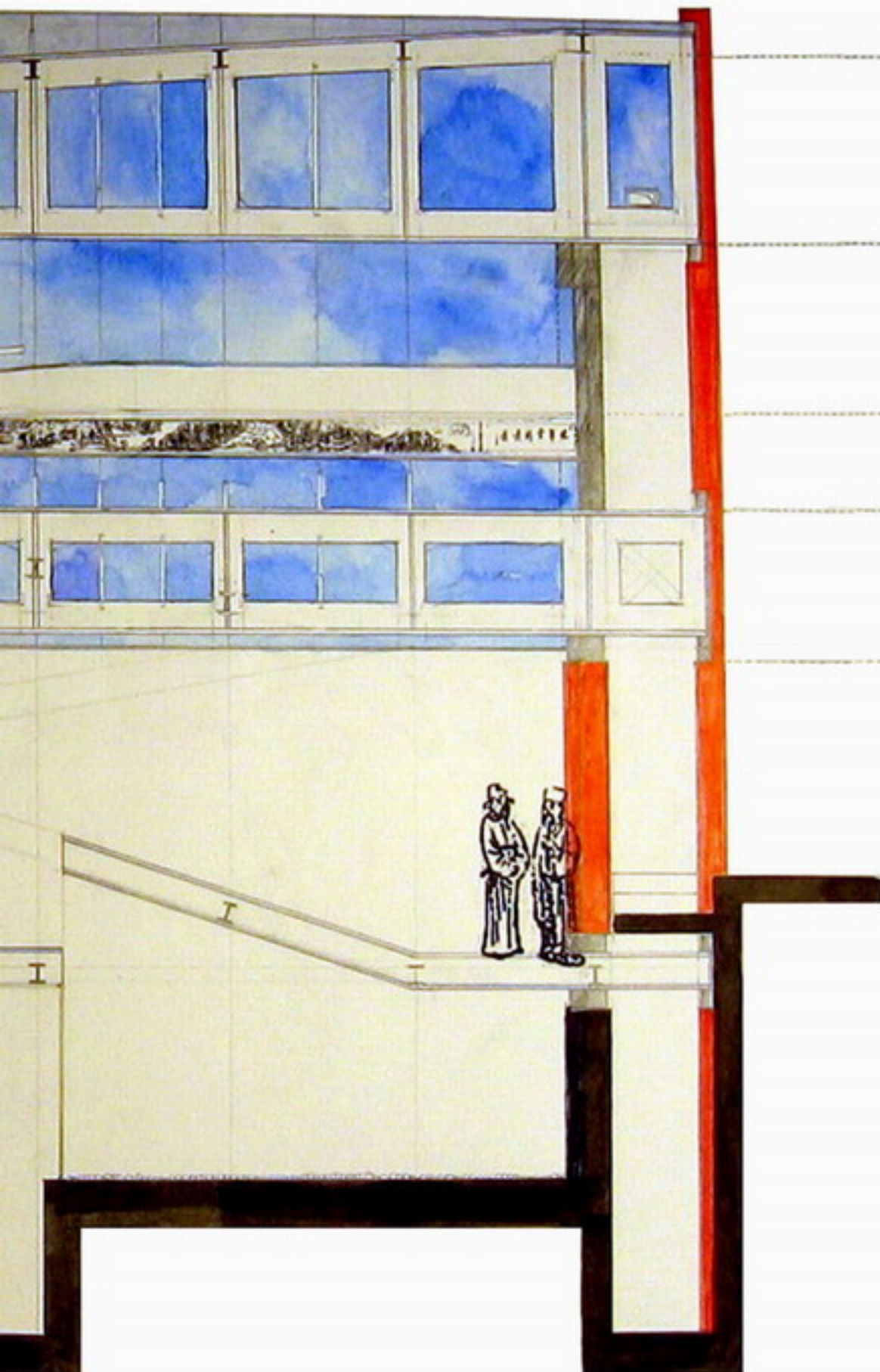


granite stone

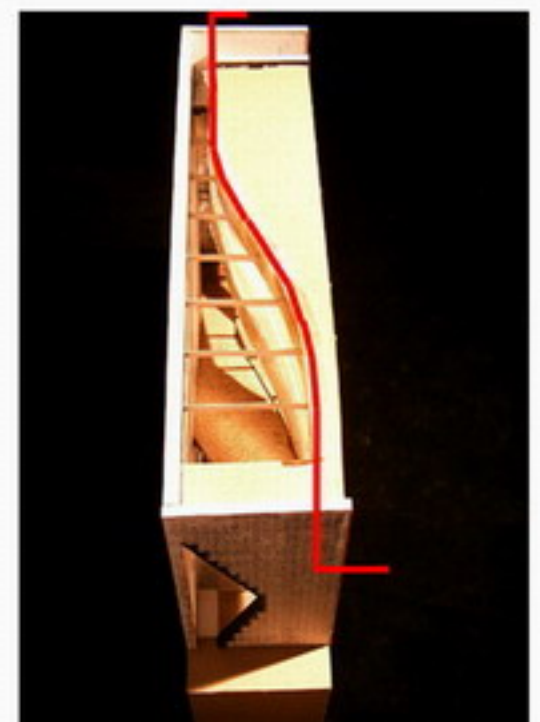


granite stone



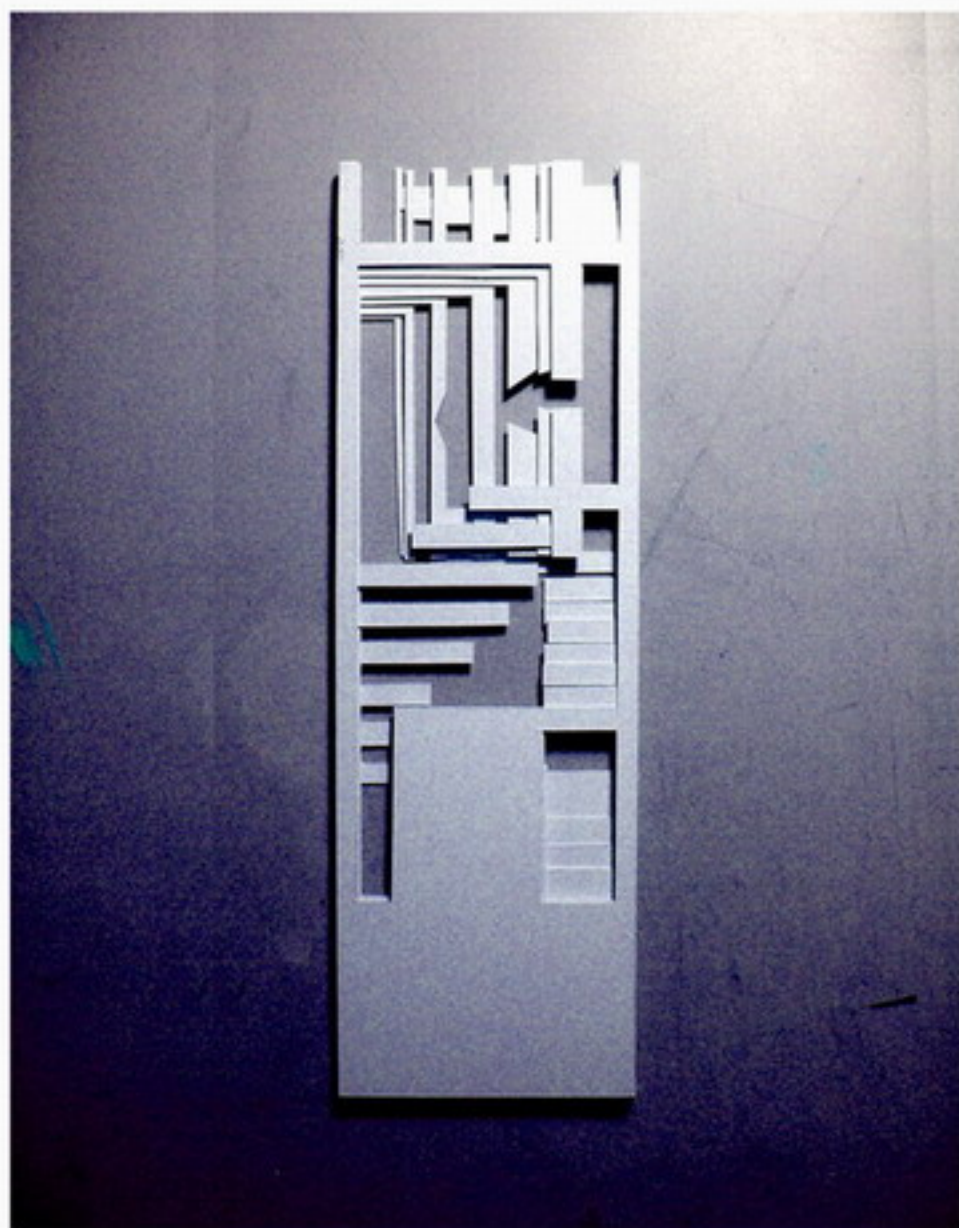
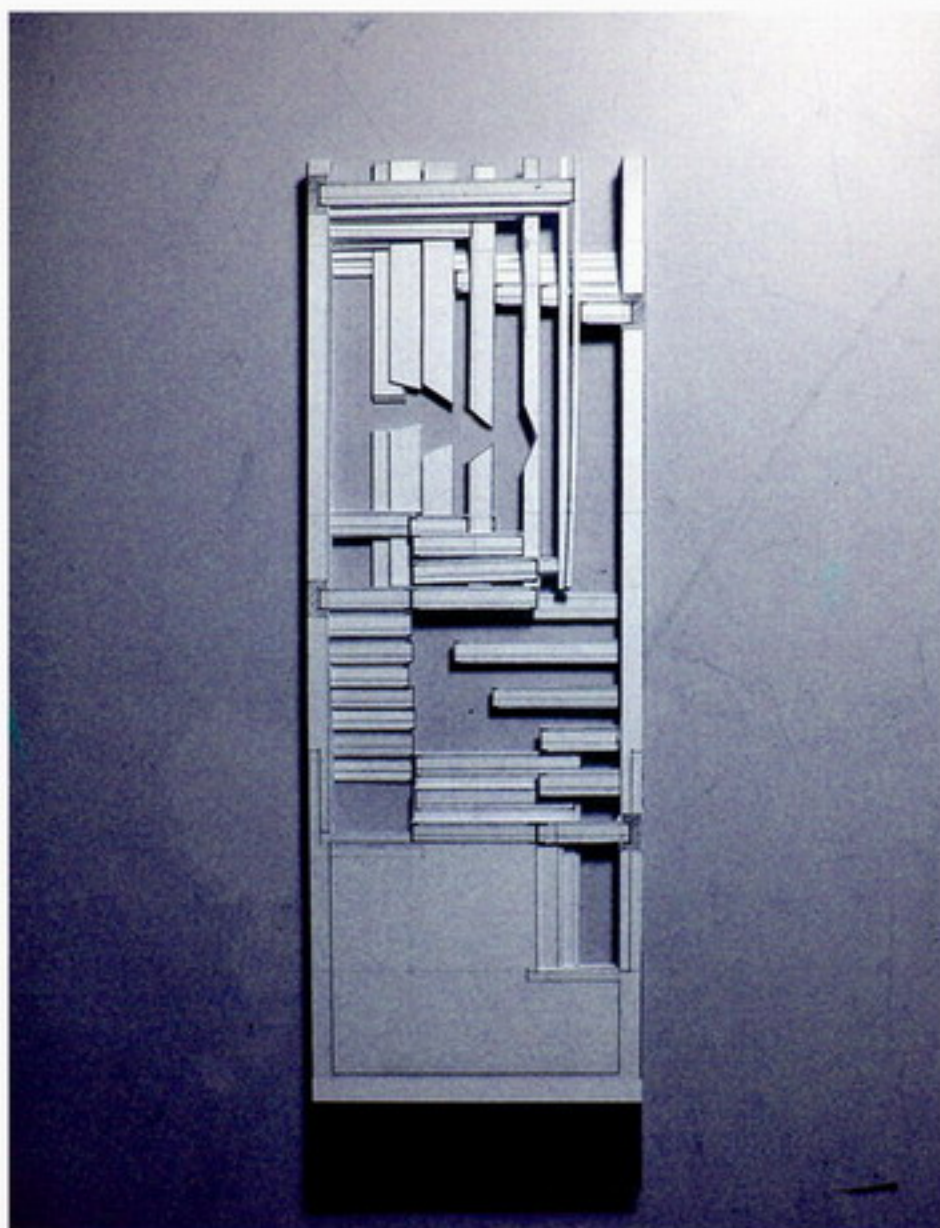


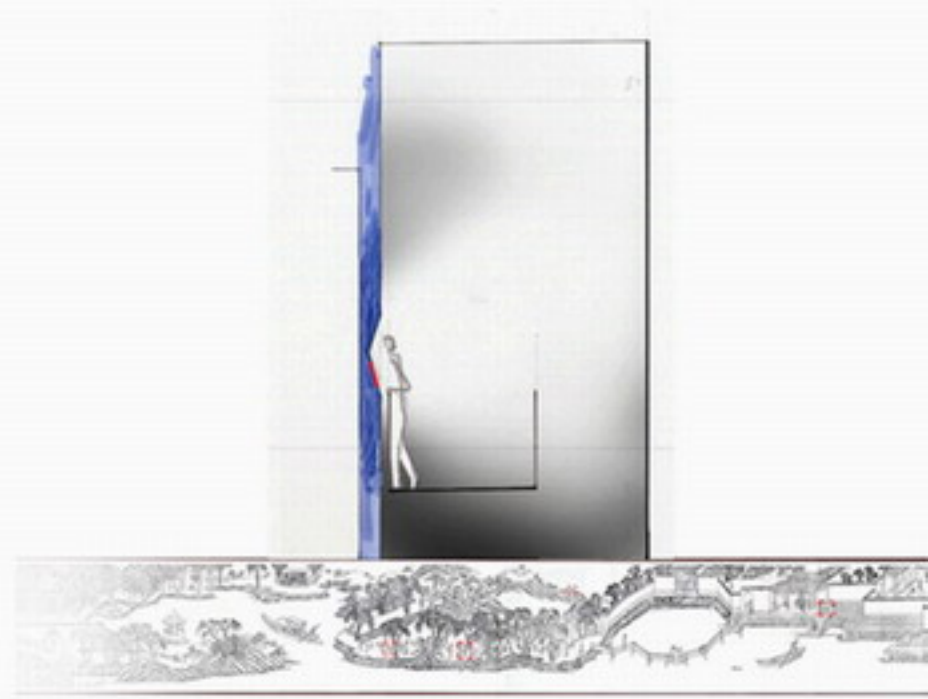
granite stone



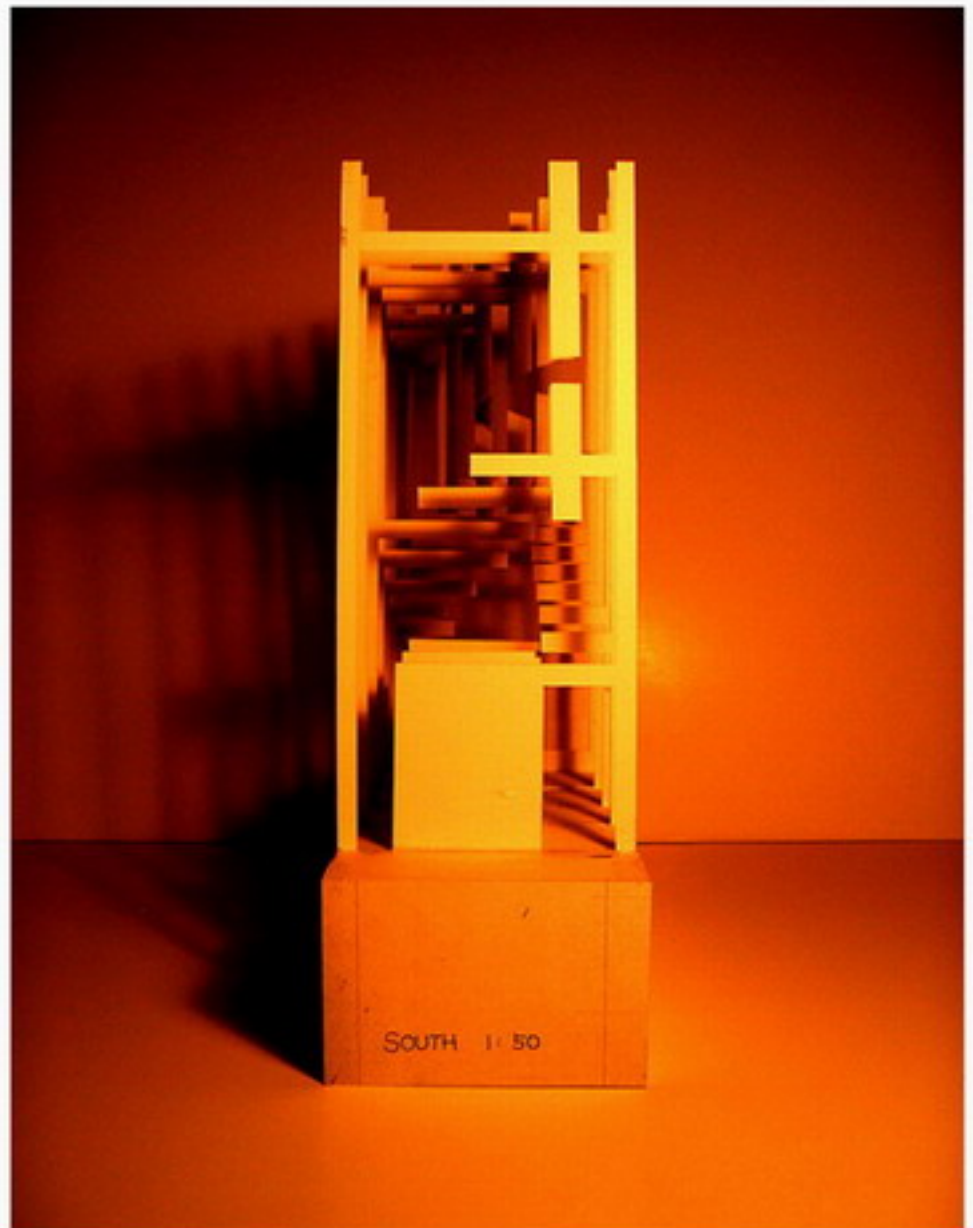
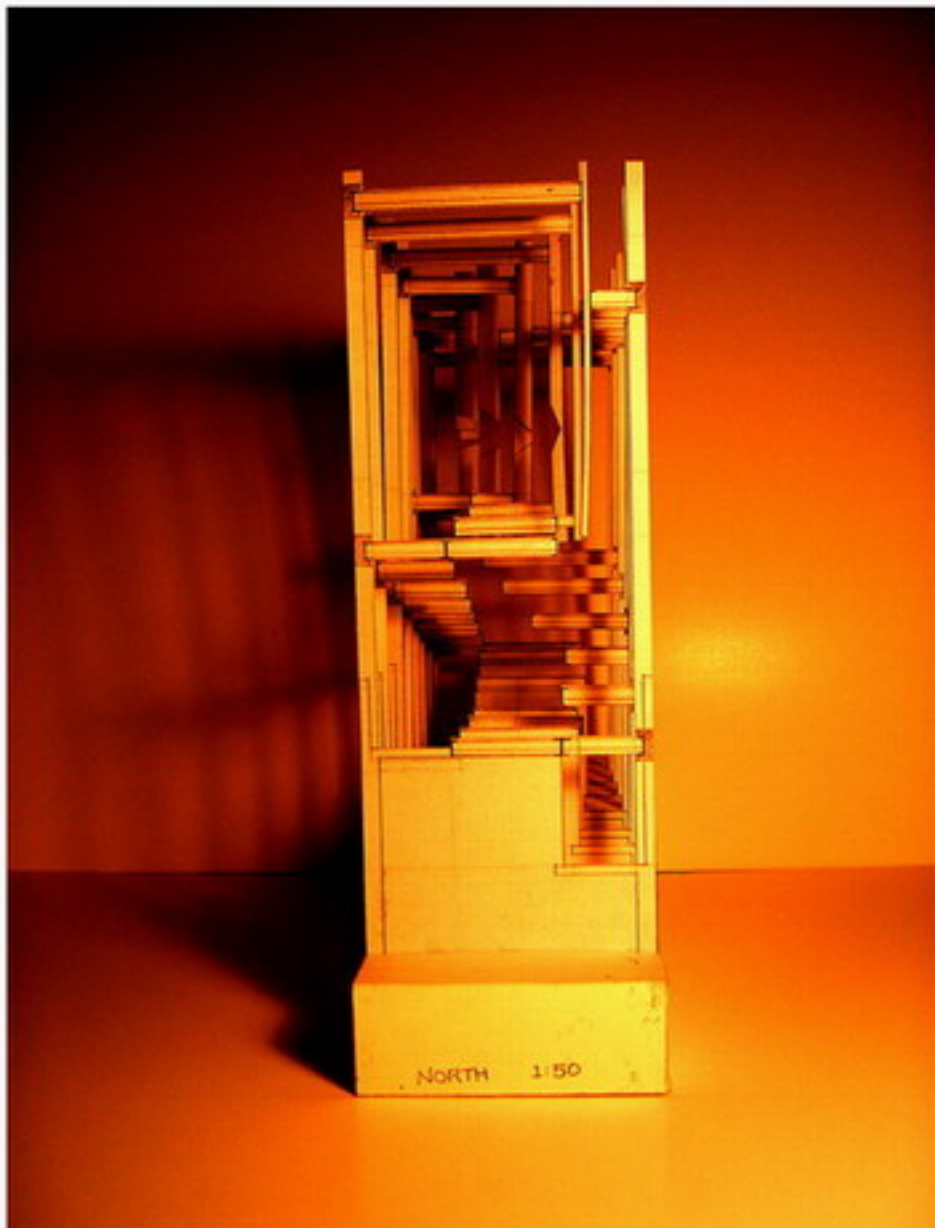
1:75 CURVING SECTION

Traditionally, architects always try to find the most representative section to cut the spirit of a building. However, in the design, there is no one single section that can be the most representative one. When seven short sections are drawn from the museum, there are different ways to read them, through two-dimensional and three-dimensional ways.





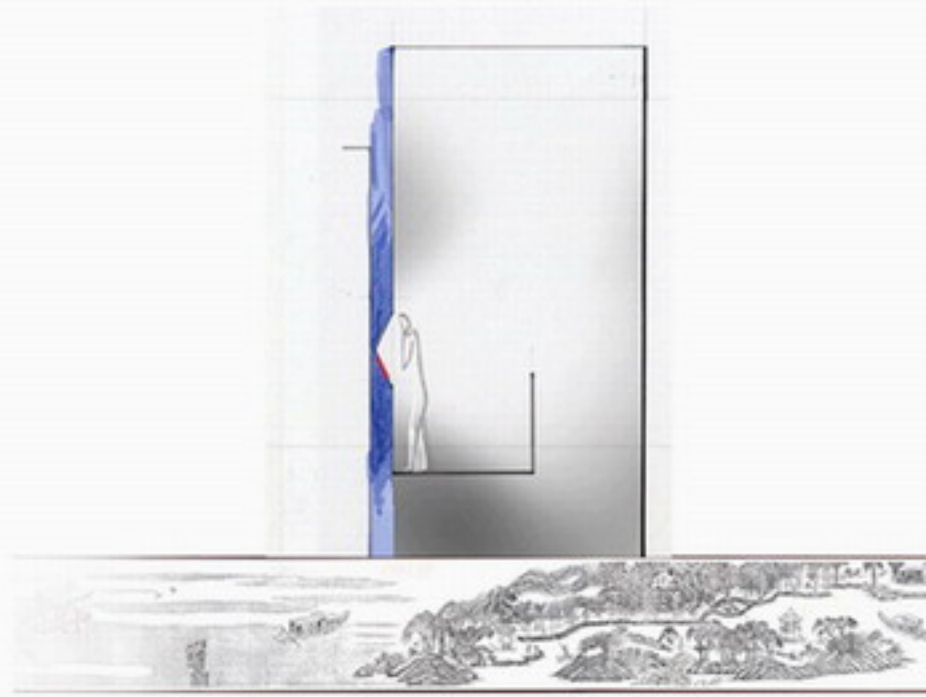
## SEVEN SECTIONS





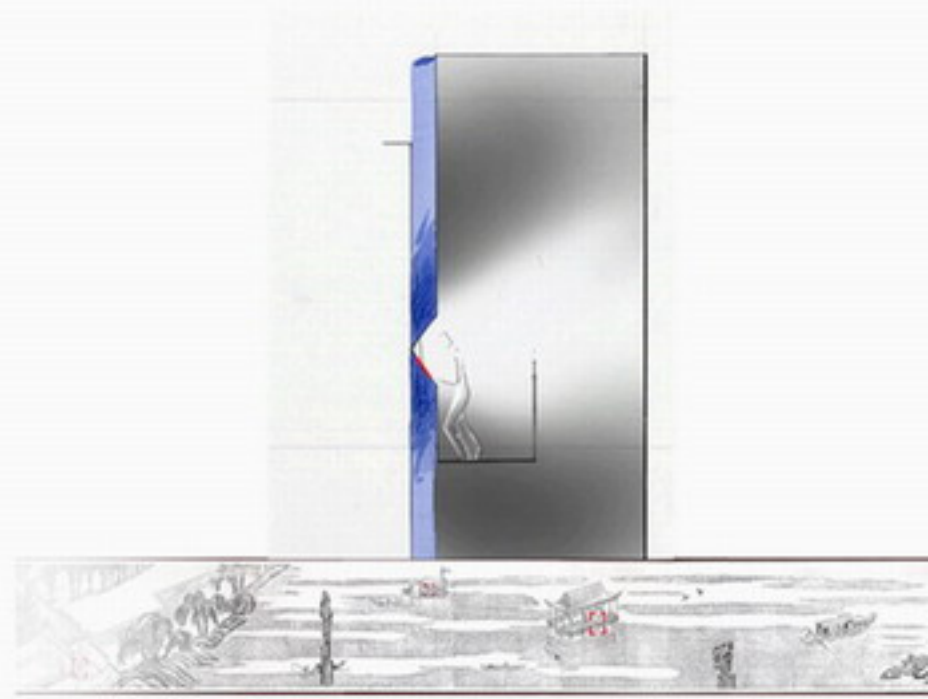
Large Beam inside Curving Wall

Large Beam inside Curving Wall

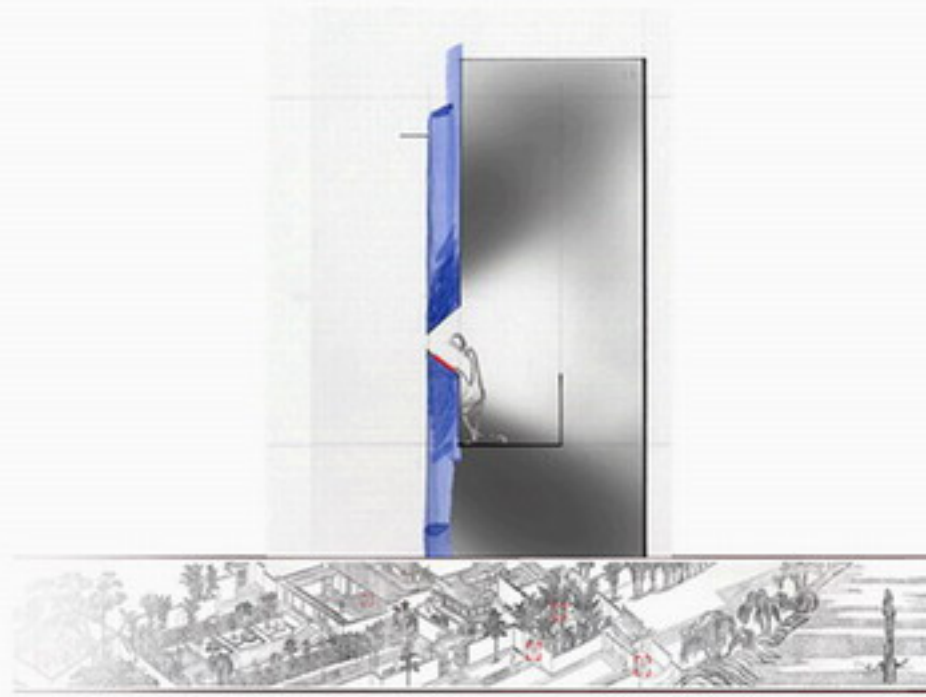


## STRUCTURE

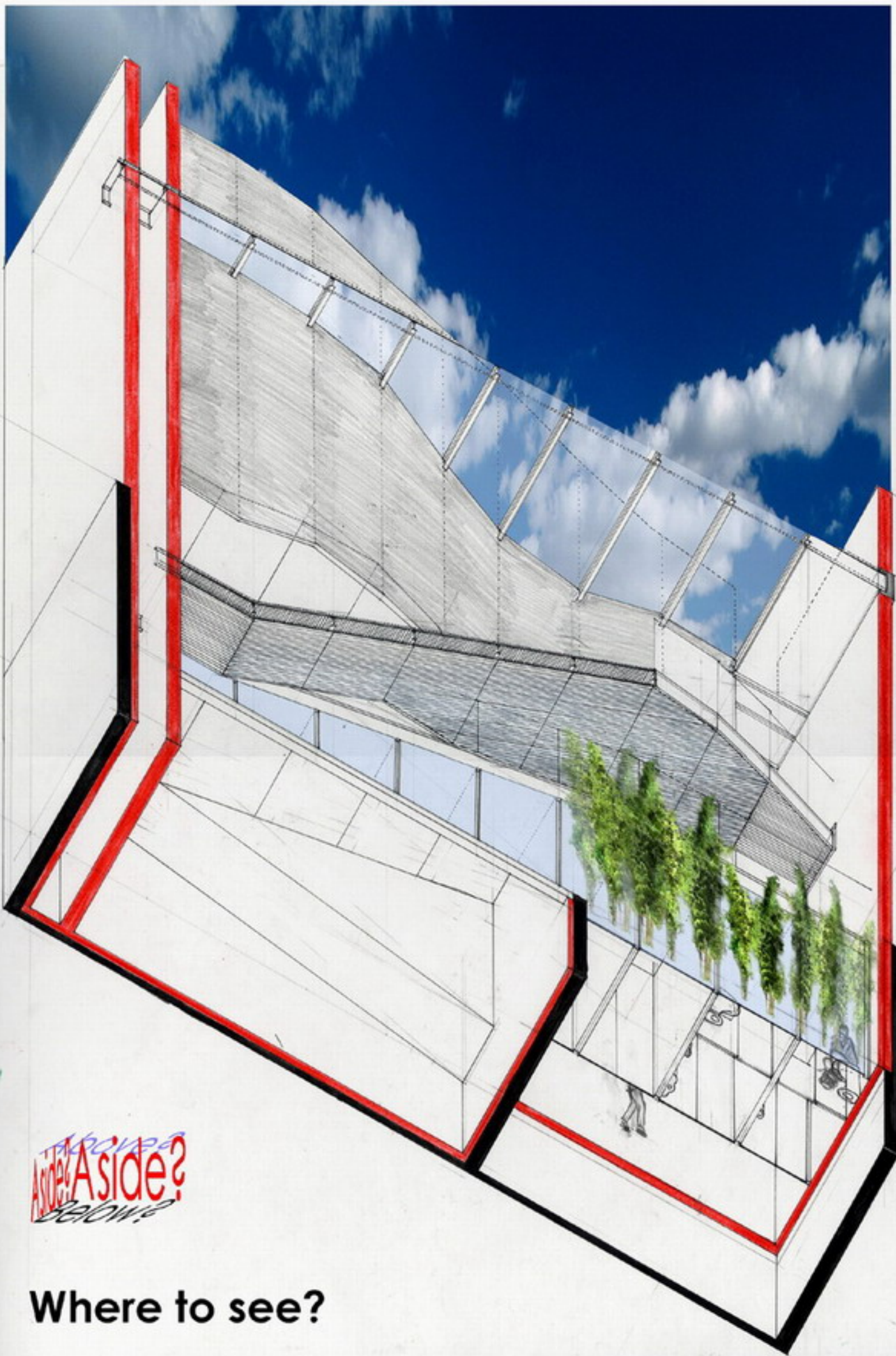






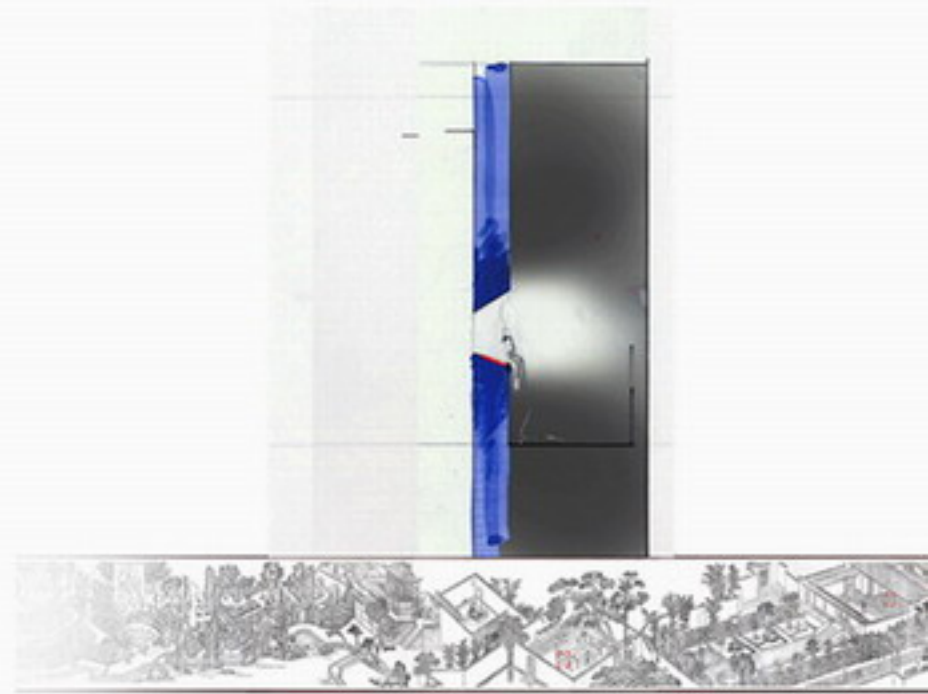


NORTH ELEVATION

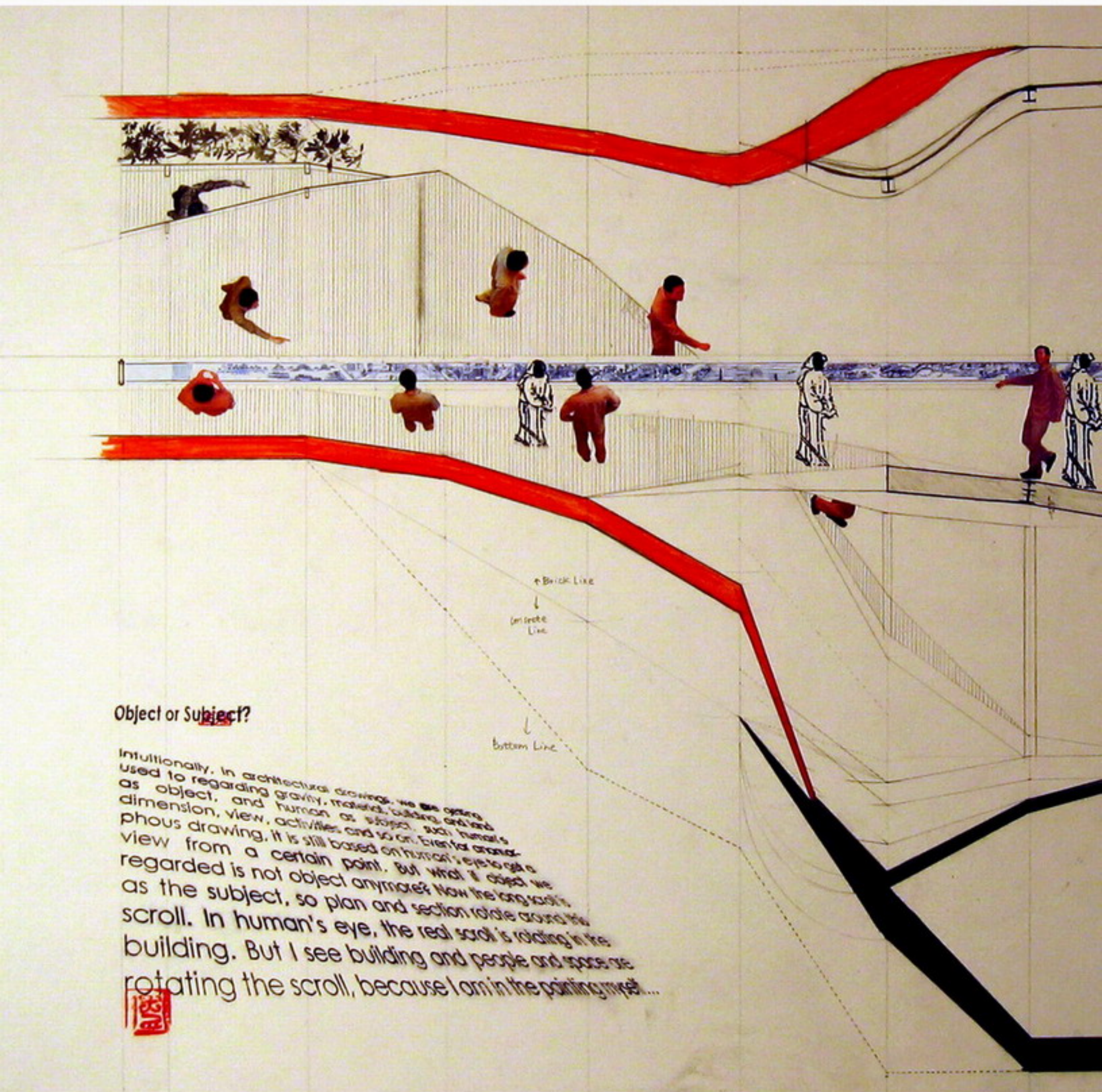


Above?  
Aside? Above?  
Below?

**Where to see?**



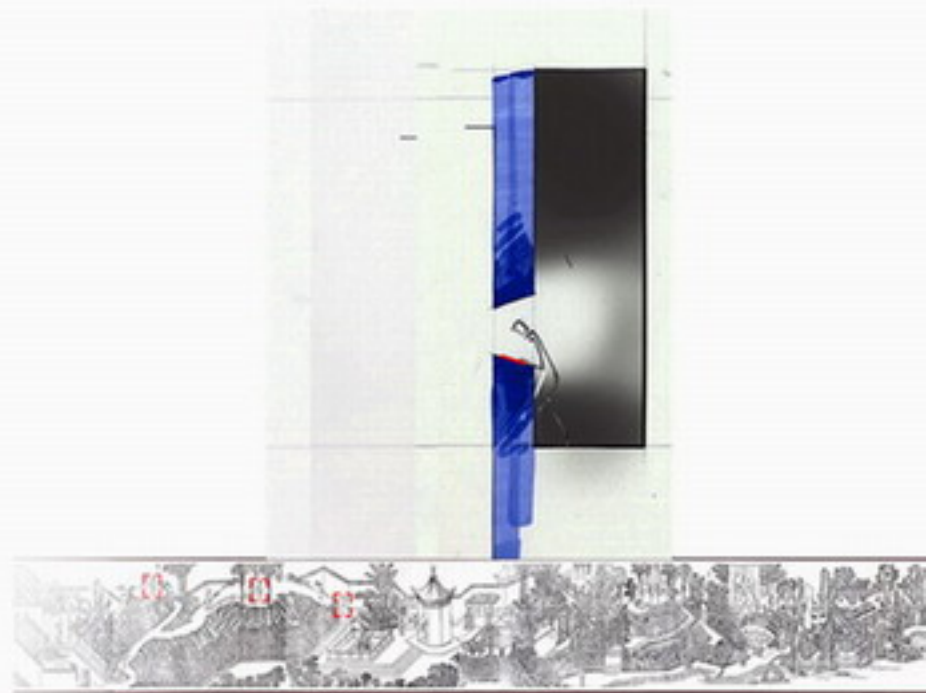
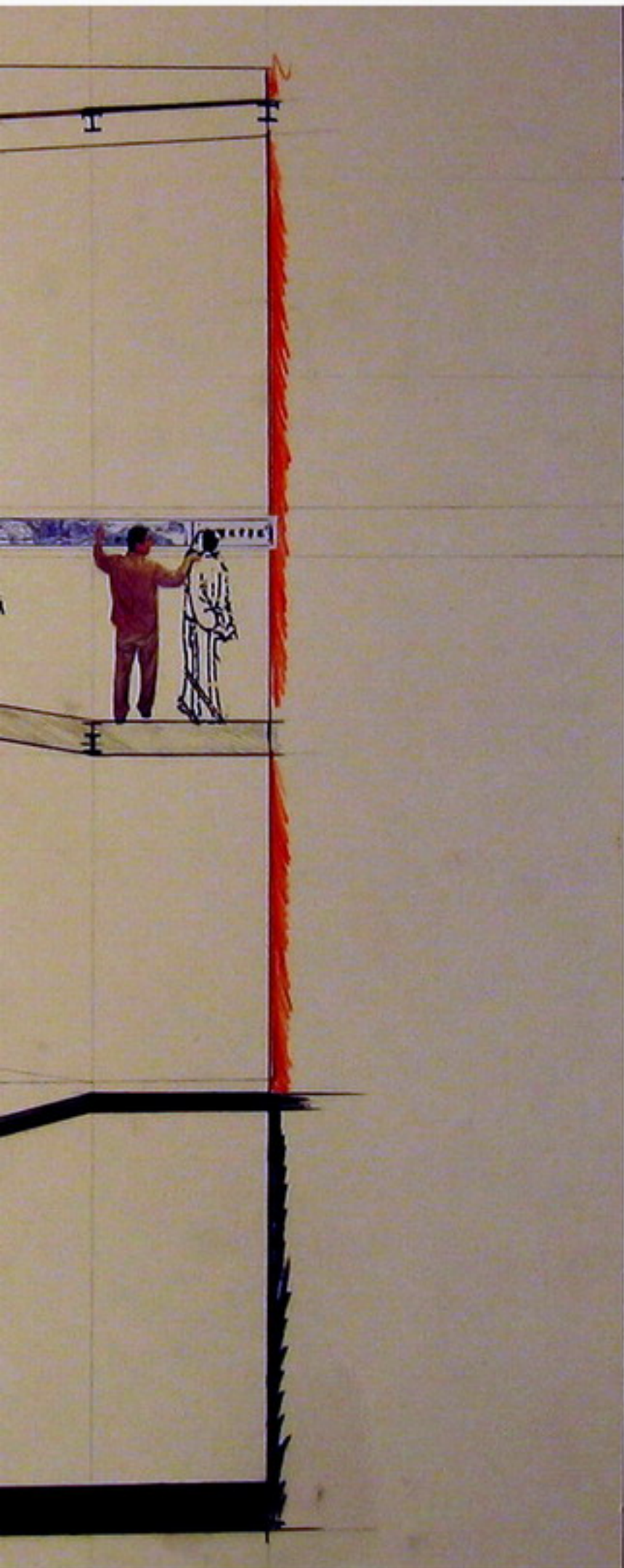
**AXONOMETRIC DRAWING**



### Object or Subject?

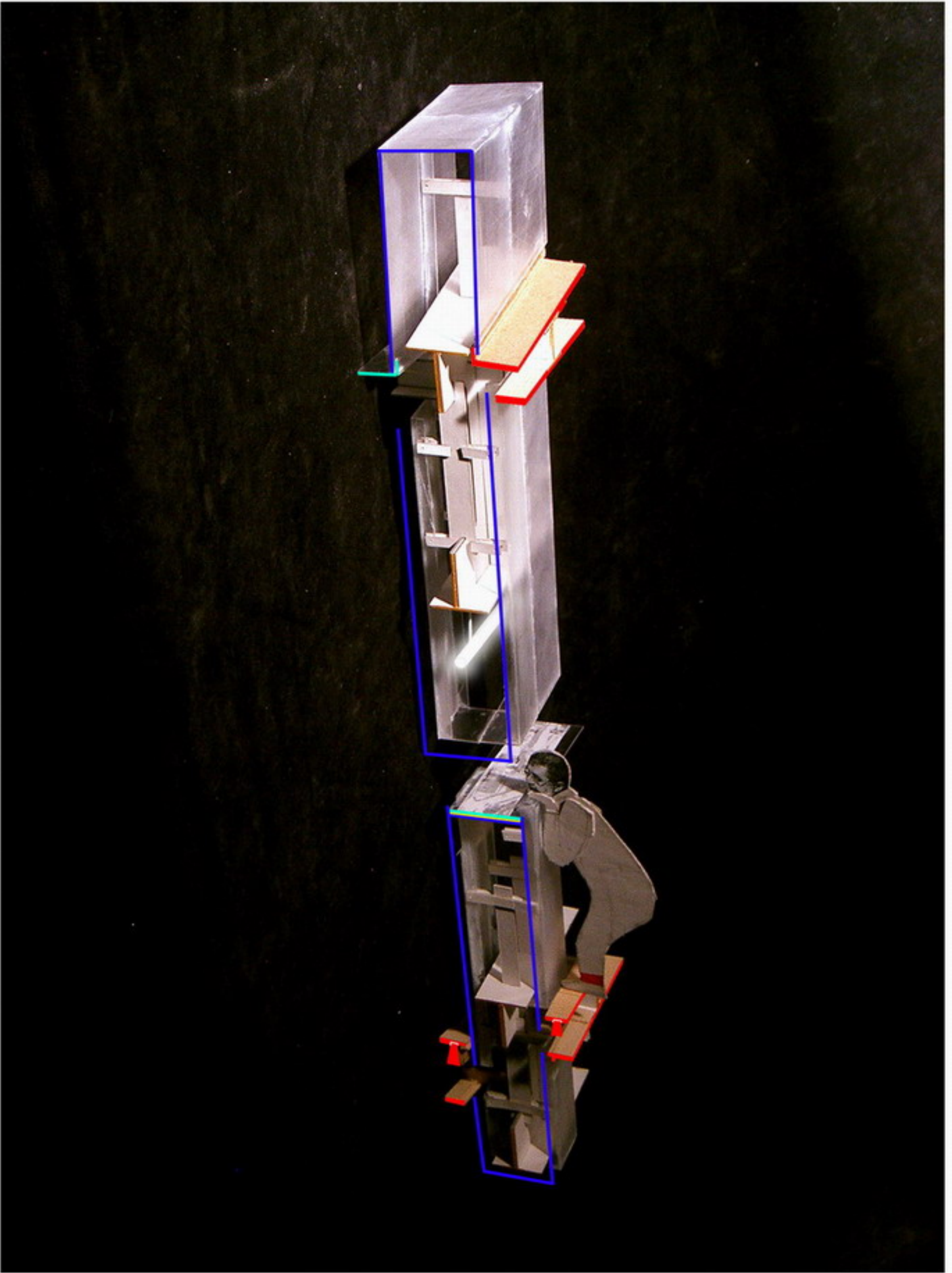
Intuitively, in architectural drawings, we are often used to regarding gravity, material, building and land as object, and human as subject. Such human's dimension, view, activities and so on. Even for architectural drawing, it is still based on human's eye to get a view from a certain point. But what if object we regarded is not object anymore? Now the long scroll is as the subject, so plan and section rotate around the scroll. In human's eye, the real scroll is rotating in the building. But I see building and people and space are rotating the scroll, because I am in the painting myself....

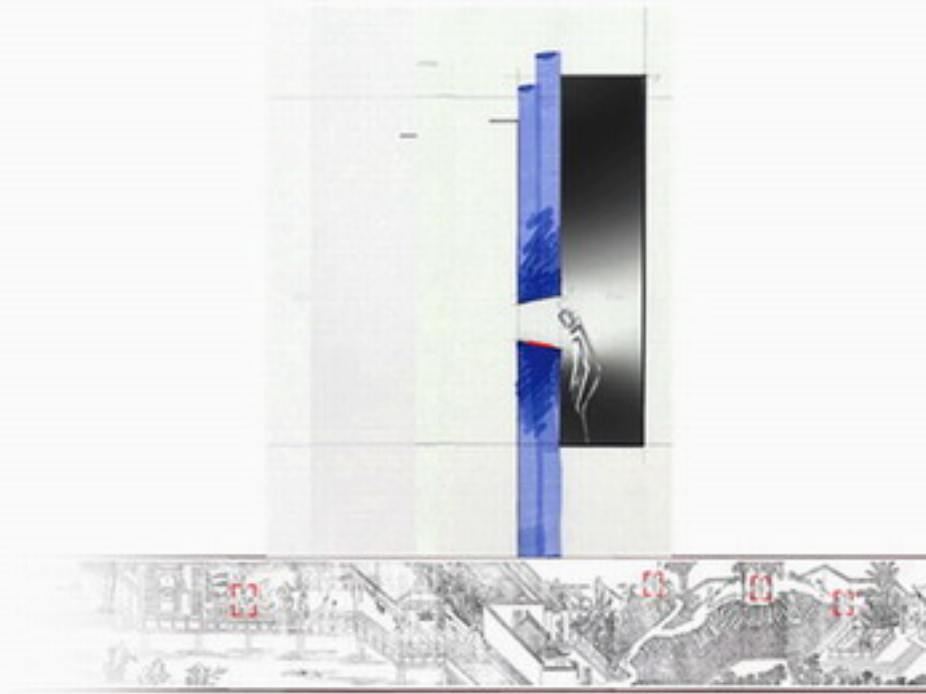




Intuitively, in architectural drawings, we are getting used to regarding gravity, material, building, and land as object, and human as subject, such human's dimension, view, activities and so on. Even for anamorphic drawings, it is still based on human's eye to get a view from a certain point. But what if object we regard is not an object anymore? Now the long scroll is the subject, so the plan and section rotate around this scroll. In human's eye, the real scroll is rotating in the building. But I see building and people and space are rotating the scroll, because I am in the painting myself.

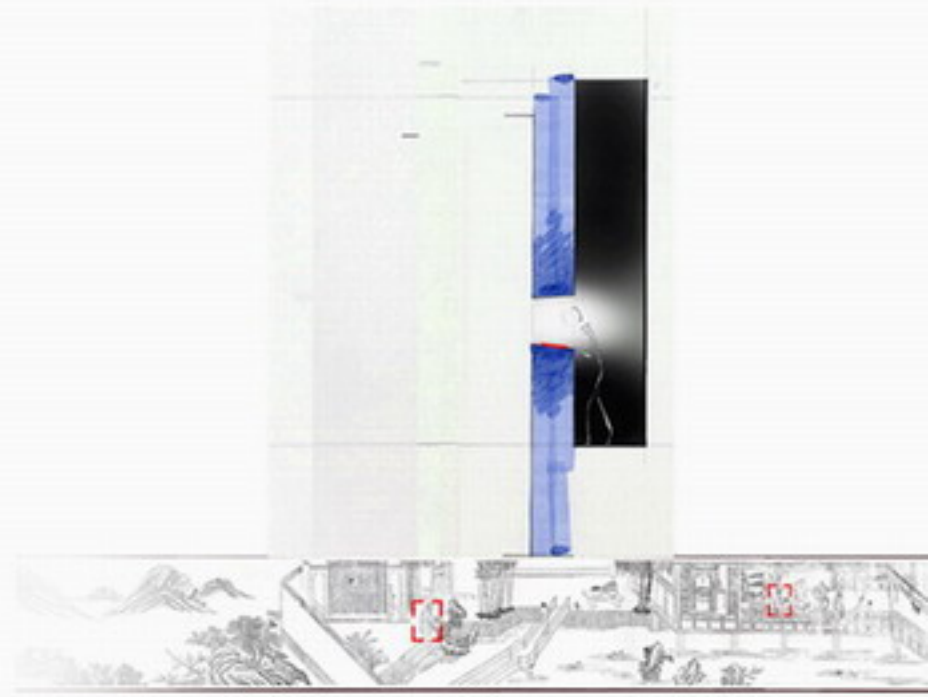
## OBJECT AND SUBJECT





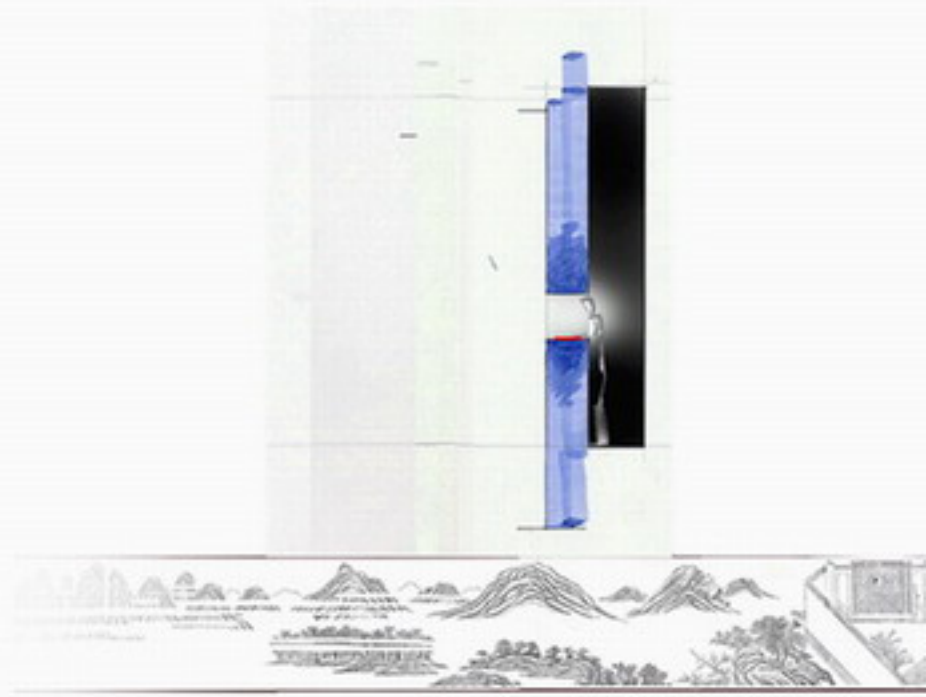
**DETAIL OF CURVING WALL  
SCROLL @ END**





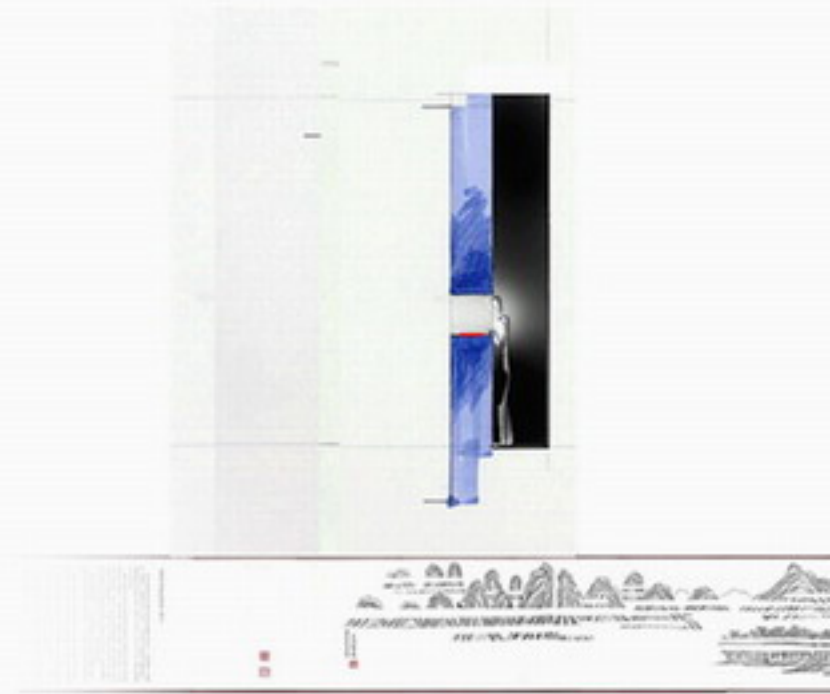
SCROLL





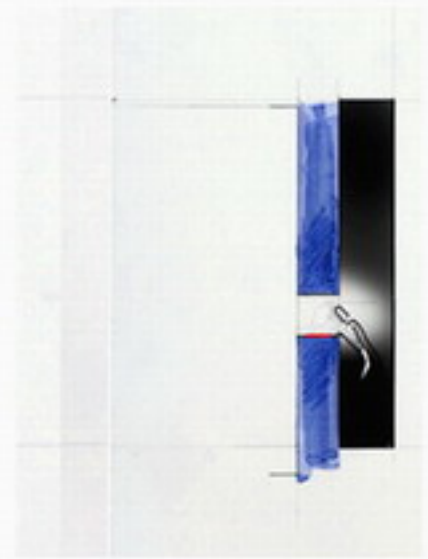
**LIGHTING RAMP  
BEHIND SCROLL**

新纂丁宜周星圖



**Screen as emergency exit door**  
**STAIR THEATER**





STAIR THEATER

## STAIR THEATER

Close

Artificial Light

Quiet

Private Garden

Staying

Looking Down

Slow



Distant

Natural Light

Loud

Landcape

Moving

Looking Up

Fast



FINAL PRESENTATION DISPALY

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## Curriculum Vita

Fei Wang

|                                                                                                                                 |      |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| Master of Architecture<br>Washington-Alexandria Architecture Center<br>Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, USA | 2005 |
| Bachelor of Architecture (with honor)<br>Tongji University, Shanghai, China                                                     | 2003 |
| Born in Zhengzhou, China                                                                                                        | 1980 |

## Awards and Honors

|                                                                                   |           |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| Thesis Award, Virginia Tech                                                       | 2005      |
| Second Prize, 2003 Crystal Online Architectural Design Competition                | 2004      |
| Third Prize, 2004 UA International Architectural Design Competition               |           |
| Honor Bachelor Graduate                                                           | 2003      |
| Honor Project, Graduation Design                                                  |           |
| Excellent Prize, Student Exhibition of 2002 Shanghai Biennale at Shanghai         |           |
| Second Prize, 2001 Xunda Cup National Design Competition of Architecture Students | 2001      |
| Special Prize, 2001 Zhu International Design Competition                          |           |
| Honorable Mention, International Student Design of the 21st Century Public Toilet |           |
| Consecutive College Scholarship                                                   | 1999-2001 |



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