Villa 31

casanova+hernandez, rotterdam / SON engineering, tirana

COMPOSITION TEAM:

Jesus Hernandez Mayor: CH partner, co-director
Driant Zeneli: Visual Artist
Zef Paci: curator
Erind Bejleri: urban planner and landscape architect
Enriketa Papa: historian
Gentian Stratoberdha: architect-restoration expert
Kim Knoppers: curator
Paolo Naldini: curator
Cecilia Guida: curator
PetraBlaisse: visual Artist
Athina Kavaja: architect

1.1 GLOBAL STRATEGY THAT COMBINES PRESERVATION, RESTORATION, RE-FUNCTIONING, CURATIONAL PROGRAM AND MANAGEMENT

1.1.1 GLOBAL STRATEGY

The establishment of the Cultural Quartet is based on a global strategy that analyzes the cultural, social and urban context of Tirana and the problems and potentials of each building to propose a global set of actions for the 4 buildings simultaneously, and some specific ones for each of them separated.
The global strategy helps to make the whole Culture Quartet efficient and sustainable, but understanding the specific identities makes each building special and in certain way autonomous.

|	1. National Museum	2. Palace of Brigades	3. Villa 31	4. Ex-writers League
EXISTING				
01. Building Typology	Museum	Royal Palace	House	Urban Building
02. Historic context	"Socialist" Museum	Monarchy	Repression symbol	Cultural focus
03. Urban context	Monumental, touristic	Isolated, leisure park	Bars and leisure	Urban
04. Building Identity	Functional	Historical	Political	Reused
05. Problems	Dated	Non public	Non public	Non public
06. Potentials	Iconic	Architecture & Design	Curiosity	Reusable
07. Special element	Plinth and courtyard	Park and furniture	Garden	Terrace
RE-FUNCTIONING				
07. New Identity	Modern, open	History	Unveil the secret	Dynamic
08. Focus	Art + History	Art + Sculpture / Design	Art + Politics	Art + New Media
09. Theme	Albanian history	Monarchy & transition	Social & political	Modern culture
10. Communication device	Narrative + Interactive	Narrative + visual	No narrative/interpret.	Narrative / participation
11. Exhibition formats	Artifacts, photo, video	Sculpture, Art installations	Virtual art, Art install.	No restrictions
12. Activities	Workshops, lectures, proj.	Workshops, concerts, proj.	Lectures, projections	Workshops, lectures, proj.
13. Activity rotation	Medium (monthly)	Low (3 months)	Medium (monthly)	High (daily)
14. Additional services	Restaurant, shop, library	Restaurant, shop	Outdoor cinema	Restaurant, shop, library
15. Public	General, schools, tourists	General, schools, tourists	General, tourists	Youth, cultural tourism
16. Amount of public	Large amount / groups	Medium / small groups	Small amount	Medium amount
17. Role in the Quartet	Landmark	Established Top Culture	Discovery	Experimental
18. Educative role	General knowledge	Specific Knowledge	Self- Reflection	Participative
19. Experience	Learning by walking	Esthetic experience	Intellectual experience	Global experience
20. Architectural restoration	Modernization	Total preservation	Total preservation	Restoration
21. Architectural Additions	Multimedia basement	Park visitor facilities	No additions	No additions
22. Financing	Public / private	Public / private	Public / private	Public / private
23. Management	Mostly public	Shared management		
24. Curational team	Permanent shared curational team combined with invited guest curators			

1.1.2 SPECIFIC IDENTITY FOCUSED ON THE HISTORY OF THE BUILDING

The strategy defines a clear identity for each institution related to the history of each building or the content of the exhibition which is going to be shown.
The identity of the National History Museum is based on history represented by the dates of the important moments in the Albanian history.
The identity of the Palace of Brigades is linked to design and decorative arts represented by the a geometrical pattern that decorates one of the furniture of the interior of the building.
The identity of Villa 31 is related to the domestic scale of the building and the secretism around it.
The identity of the Ex-League of Writers is related to the past of the building and its relation to the literature represented by letters.
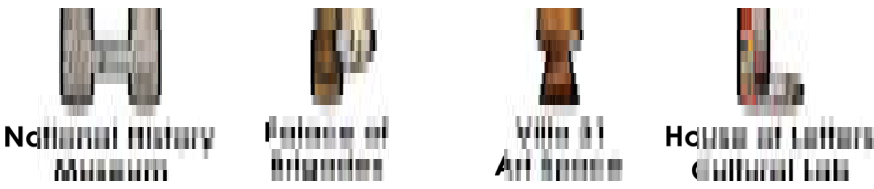
1. CULTURAL FAMILY

National History Museum — Palace of Brigades — Villa 31 Art Space — House of Letters Cultural Lab

2. RELATED IDENTITIES
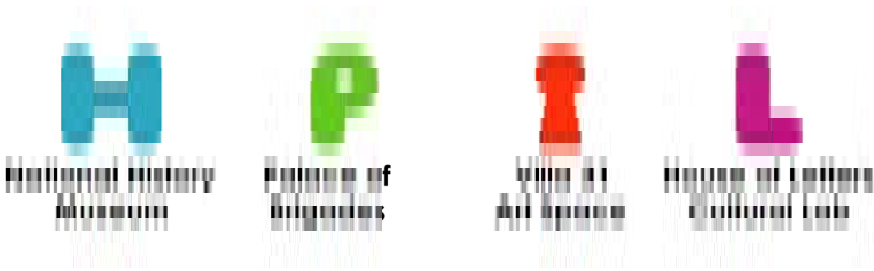
3. SPECIFIC TIME

4. SPECIFIC IDENTITY

1.1.3 MAXIMUM PRESERVATION + NECESSARY RESTORATION + REVERSIBLE INTERVENTION

Each building has an architectural expression, a particular history and an identity.
The strategy analyzes all these data to propose a set of compatible functions in each building and an efficient re-functioning proposal based on the maximum preservation, the necessary restoration and the minimum level of intervention within the buildings.
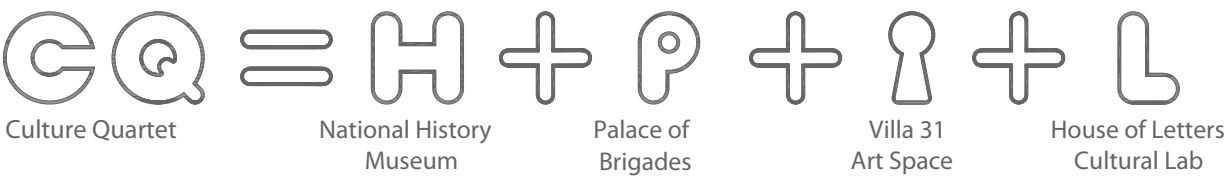
1.2 LINK AMONG THE FOUR BUILDINGS IN THE QUARTET TO CREATE A SOCIO-CULTURAL HUB

1.2.1 COMMON COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

The communication strategy should be designed from the beginning of the project, interlinking architectural design with graphic design, typography and logo.

Although each building has a specific identity, name and logo, all of them should be clearly identified by the public as being part of a connected hub of cultural institutions.

Culture Quartet | National History Museum | Palace of Brigades | Villa 31 Art Space | House of Letters Cultural Lab

1.2.2 CULTURE QUARTET WALK ROUTE, BICYCLE PATH AND GUIDED VISIT

The CQ walk route could be promoted in tourist maps available at the tourist information, hotels, cafes and main cultural focus of Tirana.

The CQ bicycle path links in a circular route the four buildings and could be equipped with bicycle parking areas at the entrance of the buildings and a rental bicycle system.

A one day guided visit to the four centers can be organized by the CQ team. The ticket price could include a fast transport among centers in an electrical CQ-mobile. Optionally, lunch can be organized at the new restaurant of the History Museum.
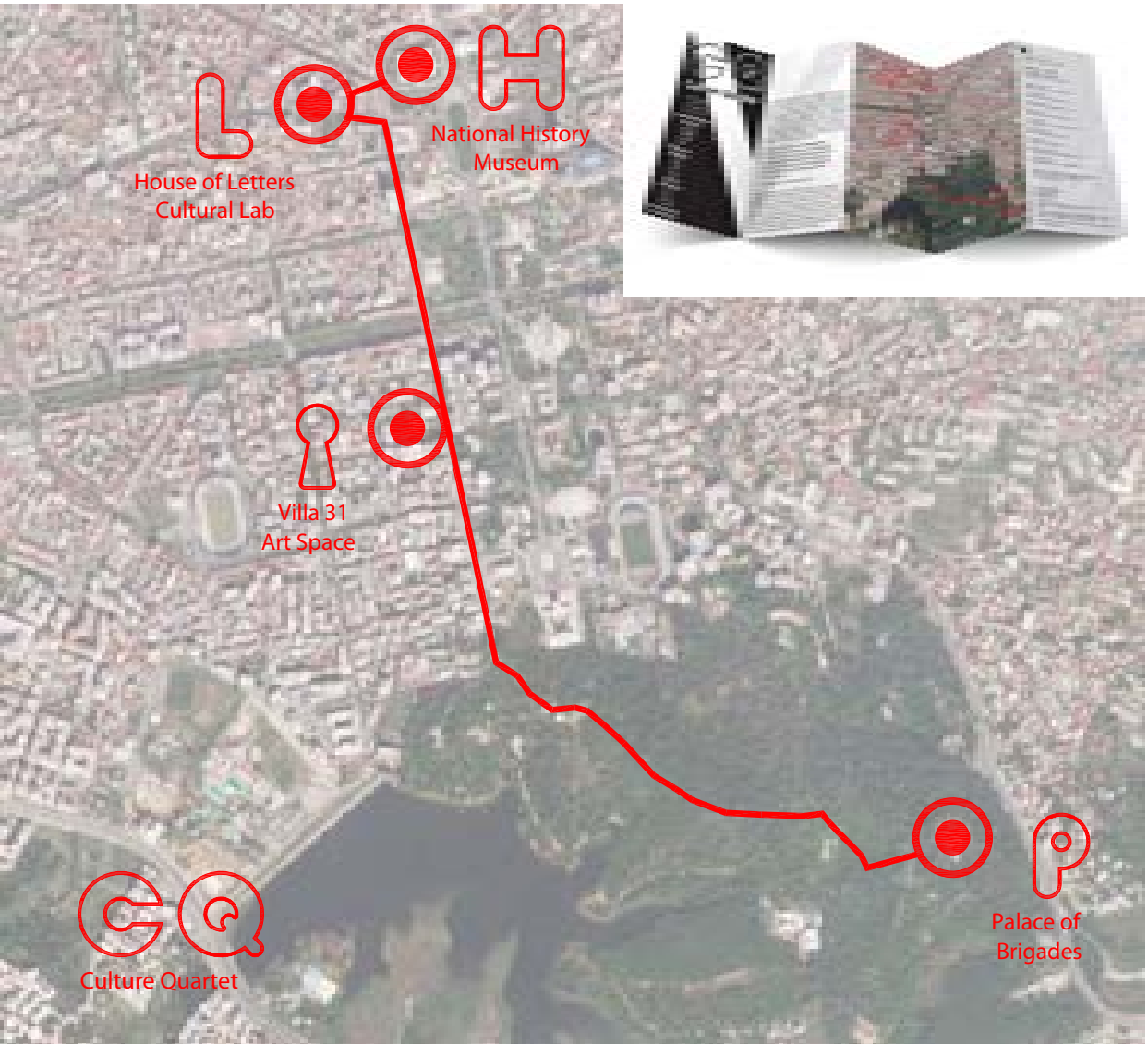
1.2.3 VIRTUAL WINDOWS THAT COMMUNICATE BUILDINGS OF THE CQ AND THE CQ WITH OTHER CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS

The "virtual windows" are video screens located in each center, which show the activities that are happening or are going to happen in the other centers of the CQ or in other cultural institutions in Albania. The windows stimulate the local public to visit the other centers, and provide an effective way to inform tourists about other cities and cultural sites to visit in Albania.
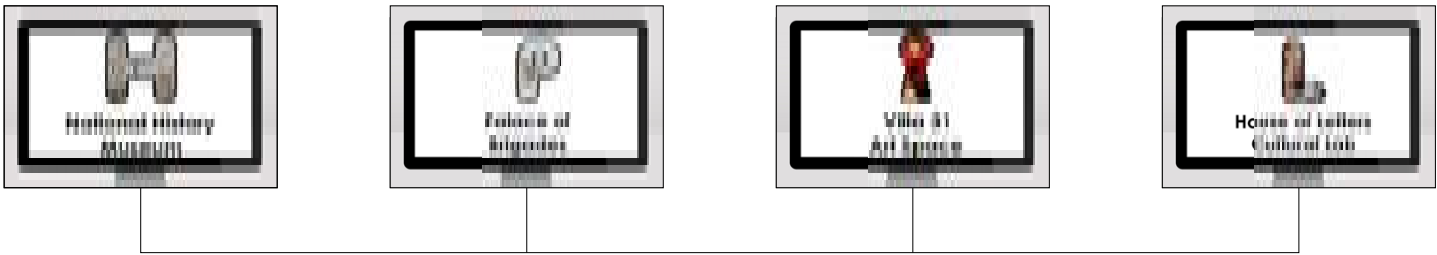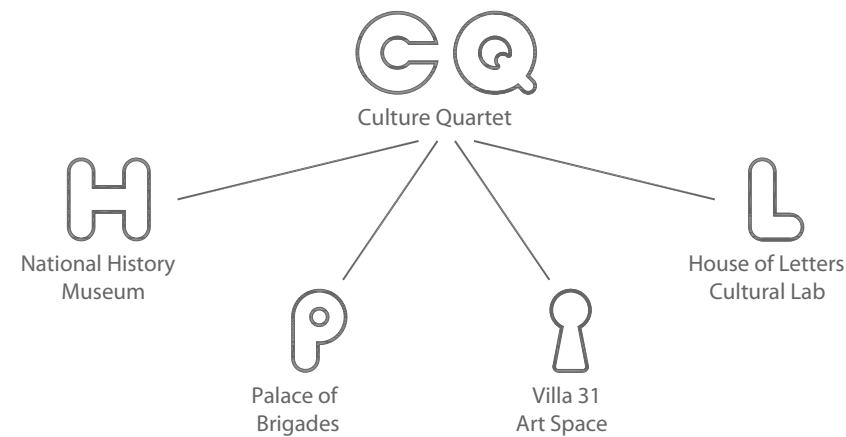

1.2.4 CULTURE QUARTET VIRTUAL NETWORK

The CQ is a new cultural hub model in Albania, which should be focused on connecting especially with young people in order to allow it to grow in the future. The communication department of CQ must use social media to attract young local visitors as well as global web sites such as google earth to attract all kinds of travelers.

## 1.3 FLEXIBLE AND SUSTAINABLE PROGRAM OF ACTIVITIES

1.3.1 COORDINATION OF EXHIBITION OPENINGS AND EVENTS AMONG THE FOUR CENTERS

A good coordination of dates of openings, lectures, workshops, concerts and film projections is essential to create a continuous and dynamic cultural program. The communication of this program through a flexible website that informs about the events celebrated each day will help to transmit the dynamic spirit of the CQ.

Culture Quartet

National History Museum

House of Letters Cultural Lab

Palace of Brigades

Villa 31 Art Space

1.3.2 COMBINATION OF PERMANENT EXHIBITION WITH TEMPORARY EXHIBITIONS & ACTIVITIES

Every center combines permanent exhibitions with temporary exhibition and events. The permanent exhibitions are focused on the history of Albania in the National History Museum and on Albanian literature at the Ex-League of Writers. Also the buildings, interiors and furnitures of the Palace of Brigades and Villa 31 become part of the exhibtion. Some of the temporary exhibitions seek for an interaction with the permanent exhibition as it happens in Villa 31 and in the Palace of Brigades, but the four buildings will have temporary exhibitions and events independent of the permanent ones. This combination allows to attract two types of public to the buildings: the persons who visit the building just once, as tourists do, and the ones who come back to see new program frequently.

Cultural Quartet Curational Team

Culture Quartet

permanent exhibitions

temporary exhibitions & events

temporary exhibitions & events

temporary exhibitions & events

temporary exhibitions & events

permanent exhibitions

permanent exhibitions

permanent exhibitions
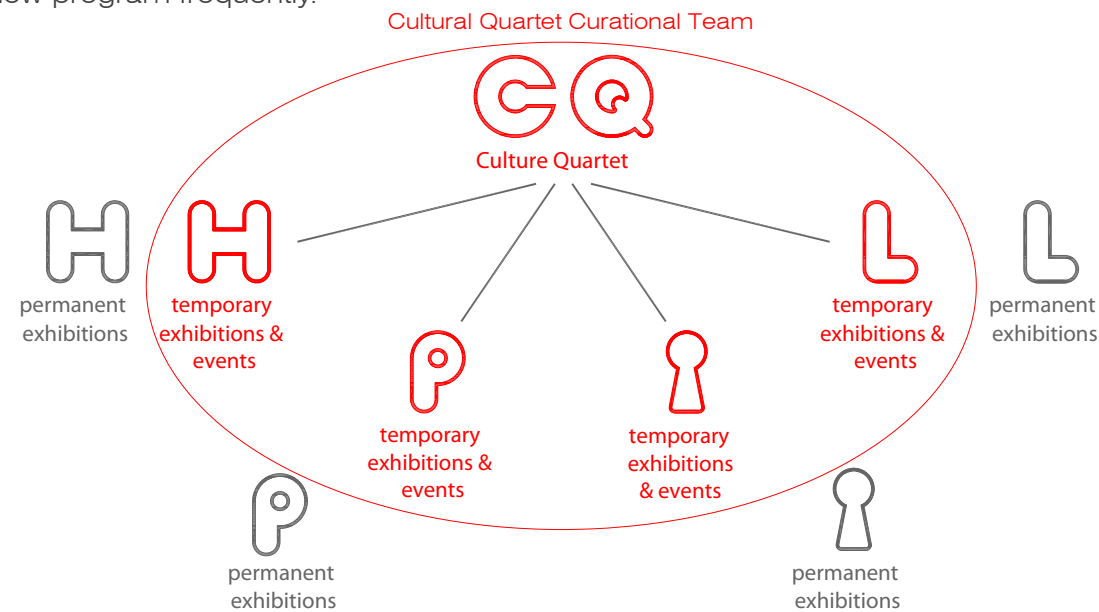
1.3.3 INVITED CURATORS AND SPECIAL ARTIST PROJECTS

Renown artists can be eventually invited to create site specific interventions in the Villa 31 and the Palace of Brigades, creating unique combinations of space and art that will attract the media attention and in some cases could also attract the attention of international public and critic.

1.3.4 ACTIVITIES ORGANIZED IN SERIES WITH CLEAR PUBLIC IMAGE

The activities programmed in the different centers are classified following series. Each series of events, such as temporary exhibitions, education, lectures, concerts, etc. has a nickname, and a clear objective. The program activities could be concentrated in four or five targets and grow in the future, expanding the cultural agenda.

Exhibitions

Magazine

Gallery

Education

Lab

Pop-up shop

1.4 NEW MODEL PUBLIC-PRIVATE

1.4.1 PUBLIC - PRIVATE DIRECTION BOARD

The modification of the current law will allow new models of partnership between public and private entities. These new models could attract new partners to existing and new cultural institutions. One of the first experiments in this model is the National Photomusem Marubi in Shkodër with a directional board formed by the Ministry of Culture, Municipality of Shkodër, Albanian Development Fund (ADF) and the Albanian American Development Foundation (AADF).

The partnership with local governments, as the city of Tirana, is important to guarantee that the city is involved in the project. The public role of culture should be guaranteed, therefore the state should have a major role in taking decisions.

Private cultural institutions can participate in the financing of the new institutions and NGOs can canalize the international cultural funds for the development of the cultural sector in Albania.

1.4.2 PATRONS

Patrons are persons or companies who want to support a specific cultural institution. In order to guarantee the economic sustainability of each cultural institution, patrons should agree to a minimum of three year patronship contract.

Patrons benefit from their support of culture, and each patron should be related to those institutions related to the public image that they want to project. Tax deductions by law will help incentive in a first stage the patronship of new cultural institutions in Albania.

1.4.3 YOUNG PATRONS

To work with patrons and young patrons is a successful model of financing tested by the FOAM museum in Amsterdam, which is 85% privately financed (30% of the selling of tickets and 55% by patrons and sponsors). Young patrons programs are focused on ambitious young professionals and companies, which can afford a small economic support to the cultural institution for a certain period of time in order to become senior patrons in the future.
This model could be specially interesting to test in the CQ in order to start growing among young Albanian entrepreneurs a strong patronship system for the future new cultural institutions.

1.4.4 SPONSORS

Sponsors collaborate on specific projects such as temporary exhibitions, lectures, etc.
A single sponsor could be also in charge of financing the complete program of a single exhibition space for a limited period of time. Sponsors get direct publicity in the exhibitions or catalogues, but also indirectly through media and internet.

1.4.5 EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

Educational programs not only are an important part of the program of any modern cultural institution, but also an important way to finance the activities of the center. Public funds in educational programs are also more stable and will help for creating an economic sustainability of the centers.

1.4.6 TICKETS

The current law on financing of governmental cultural institutions in Albania forced to send the revenue of selling tickets of each museum to the central government who assigns a fixed budget for the center. The new law to be applied in the next months in Albania will change this practice helping the self financing of the centers. The amount of visitors will become an important factor to support economically the museums, and attractive exhibitions and dynamic cultural programs that should connect with current society will be essential to test in the CQ.
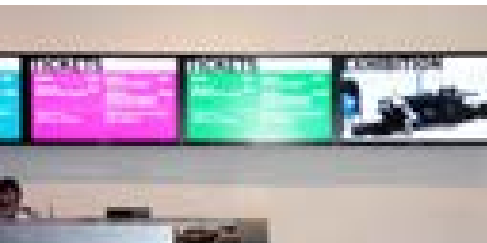
1.4.7 SHOP, RESTAURANT, CAFE

Modern cultural Institutions put special attention in new commercial facilities such as shop, restaurants and cafes. On the one hand, this provides a useful service to the museums and on the other hand, these activities can become a very important source of financial support. The fact that most of the modern renovations of museums developed around the world in the last years have consisted in the enlargement of this kind of services with new halls, courtyards or museum extensions supports this statement.
In a first phase it is advisable to rent these spaces to private companies which are more competitive and provide a stable financing source.
Museum graphic identity and merchandising should be developed in the first steps of the creation of the institution, planning the possibility of growing in the future.

1.4.8 RENTAL SPACES

Another way to finance the institution is to use the multifunctional rooms as rental spaces when they are not in use internally. It is important a strict control of the activities to develop in these spaces, always related to the culture to avoid any damage to the image of the institution.

PROGRAM OF ACTIVITIES

The planned program of activities for the Villa 31 during the first year consists on:

1. Physical site specific interventions.

There are programmed at least two main temporary exhibitions based on physical site specific interventions per year.
Artists, filmmakers, writers and artists are invited to develop a site specific research project specifically created or adapted for the Villa 31.

2. Virtual site specific interventions.

There are at least five virtual site specific interventions programed per year. The flexibility provided by the virtual reality to mount and dismount in few seconds a new exhibition, reverse totally the traditional curational system because with a very low cost it gives the opportunity of creating a very active program of exhibitions that will keep alive the cultural centre.

3. Events and educational activities

The Villa 31 will be designed with specific spaces and modern equipment in order to celebrate a rich program of lectures, debates, workshops, concerts and performances. The year program is coordinated by the team of curators of the Culture Quartet. The Villa 31 is one of the most dynamic centers of the quartet that will attract a young audience not only avid of experiencing contemporary art, but also other aspects as well of the contemporary culture such as digital art, cinema, comic, video and music.

The program of the center could combine local and international artists. The history of the villa can work as an important element capable of attracting interesting international artists. The virtual technology can make it feasible that renown persons of the culture from the other side of the world can exhibit their works in the villa.

ESTIMATED COST

The cost for the works of renovation or the Villa 31 and the interventions in the basement of the proposed technical equipment to reuse the villa and the gardens as a new cultural center is in the range of 350-400.000 euro.

2.1 A OPEN HOUSE TO EXPLORE AND TO INTERPRETATE

2.1.1 CURIOSITY ABOUT A WELL KEPT SECRET AS VISITORS' ATTRACTOR

Villa 31 is linked to the recent history of Albania. It was a very well kept secret inaccessible for most of the Albanians and has been closed to the public even after the death of Enver Hoxha. Everybody has heard stories about the house, about a cinema in the basement and a pool inside the house, which has aroused the imagination of the people.

Curiosity is one of the main reasons why many people want today to visit the house, and curiosity should remain the reason why people will want to visit it again and again.

**Villa 31
Art Space**

2.1.3 NON-NARRATIVE EXHIBITION WITH SPACE FOR SELF INTERPRETATION

A narrative exhibition has only one voice and tells spectators a closed history. Interpretation is open, creative and implies the use of imagination. Different voices can tell us different aspects of the same history, different points of view and different perceptions. Artists and curators will be in charge of stimulating visitors to experience the house in very different ways, stimulating citizens to visit the house each time again when a new intervention is created.

2.1.2 OPEN HOUSE

The house has strong symbolic connotations related to closeness. The proposal seeks to reverse this symbolism by creating an open house where visitors could have free access to the whole house being able to visit every room without restriction.

The public entrance is located at the south side of the house, which is the most open and public, and it is close to many popular cafes, bars and restaurants. On this side the garden has a low fence that allows citizens to look inside stimulating them to participate in the activities of the centre.

The concept of the open house presents a narrative that mixes functional and symbolic aspects by, for instance, shifting the visitors' entrance to the entrance that before was reserved exclusively to Enver Hoxha and by creating a multifunctional room for projecting films and celebratING debates in the cinema room that the dictator used to censor the films in Albania.

public access
to events in
gardens

public
gardens

public
entrance
villa 31
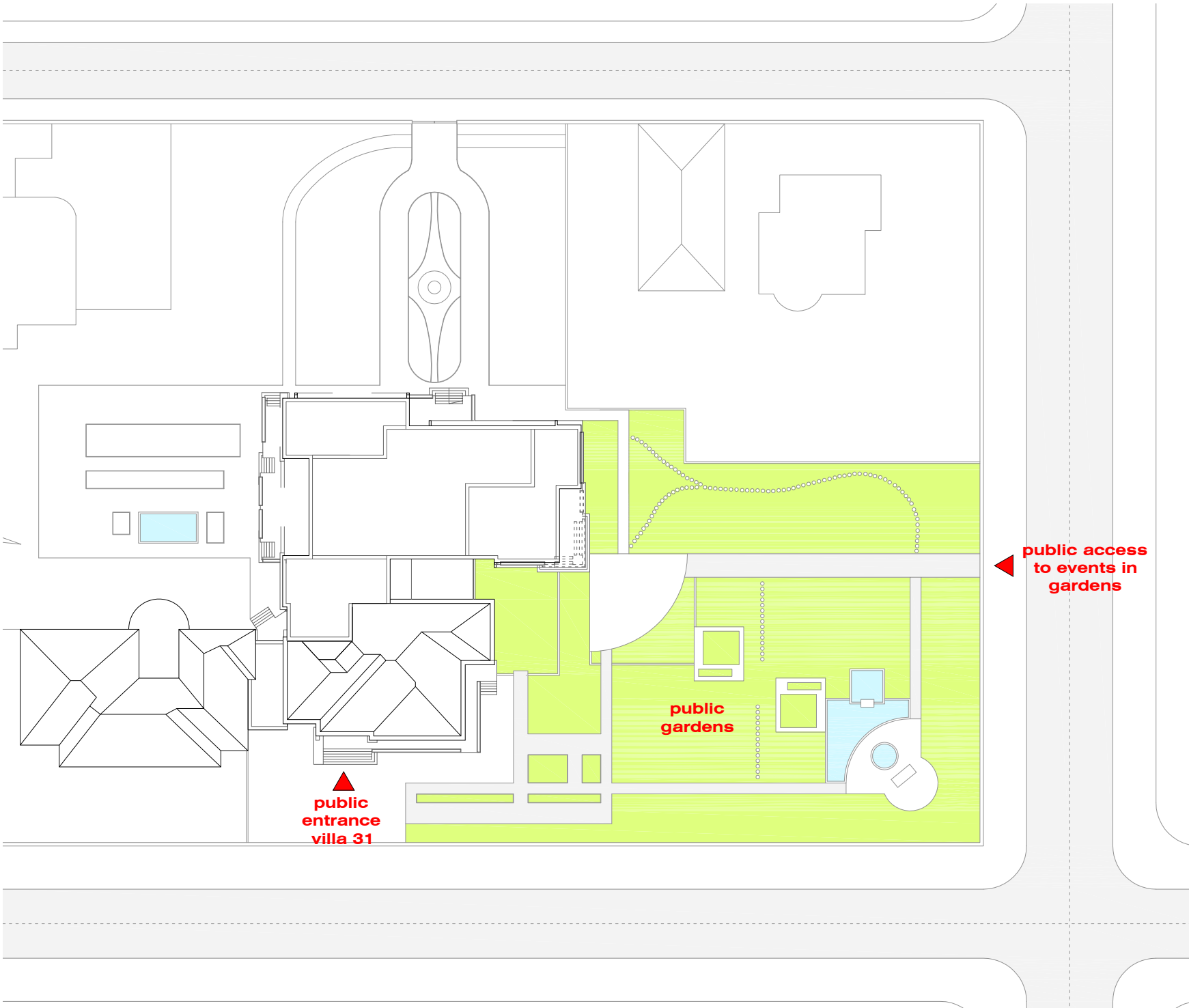
2.2 "PHYSICAL" SITE SPECIFIC INTERVENTIONS: HOUSE AS INTERACTION DEVICE TO PRODUCE MULTISENSORY EXPERIENCES

Filmmakers, writers, musicians and artists, researchers working in different formats such as sculpture, photography, art installations or video-art are invited to interpret the space and the history of the place, allowing the public to have very different experiences of the space and the objects in it.

Each year the center invites four artists to create site specific installations. Each exhibition lasts for three months. Artists can use any space of the house and the garden to create their site specific installations with the only condition of not creating any damage to the existing building, interiors and garden elements.

2.2.1 VIDEO-ART CHANNEL IN EXISTING TVs

The video-art channel connects all the existing tv's which are distributed in different rooms of the house with the video-players located in the technical room in the basement.
The existing tv's are transformed into a video-screen where the work of contemporary artists is projected. The existing seats and sofas around the tv give to these small video-rooms a domestic atmosphere that paradoxically not only matches with the domestic function of the house, but also with the public dimension of the new cultural center.

2.2.2 AUDIO SITE SPECIFIC INTERVENTIONS

An audio installation is installed in very specific places in the house and the gardens. Speakers are hidden in a way that are not visible to the public. The system is connected to an audio reproduction system installed in the technical room located in the basement. Invited artists can program their own audio tracks with music, sounds, noise, spoken texts and whatever they think could be used to create their work.

2.2.3 ROUTING AS EXHIBITION DEVICE

Artists can choose which doors can be open or closed to create specific routes for the visitors during their art installations. Very lineal routing could be used to provoke a feeling of alienation. A totally free routing could provoke disorientation. And closing some rooms can create mystery. It is up to the artists to decide the routing based on the experience they want to create.

Example of site specific intervention created by Petra Blaisse for the Sonneveld house in Rotterdam. The reflective floor creates a new perception of the house that dialogues with the modern principles of the design: light, air and space.

2.3 "VIRTUAL" SITE SPECIFIC INTERVENTIONS

Technology and virtuallity will help to observe the reality from a very different perspective.
Mixing the real world with the virtual world could be a way to understand the past, our present and even the future.

1. Virtual reality allows us to mix reality with virtual works when they are observed with a mobile telephone or tablet.
2. A Flexible exhibition system allows us to change easily the exhibition, just by uploading new images or 3d models.
3. Economic exhibition method that allows the center to invite artists all around the world without paying high costs in the transport of their works.
4. Virtual reality as exhibition format connects with the younger generation of Albanians who are very familiar with new technologies.
5. Virtual reality is an ideal medium to show works of young digital artists, but it can show as well works of any visual artist which works with images or photography.

2.3.1 VISIT THE VIRTUAL EXHIBITION IN 3 STEPS:

1. DOWNLOAD IN YOUR MOBILE PHONE OR TABLET A FREE VIRTUAL REALITY APP.
   It is a free application and takes only few secons. For this demo version, please download from playstore or applestore the application named "AUGMENT"

2. CLICK SCAN AND SCAN THE OBJECTS MARKED WITH THE LOGO OF VILLA 31

3. MOVE FREELY IN THE ROOM WITHOUT LOOSING THE VIRTUAL ARTWORK FROM YOUR SCREEN

2.4 PROGRAM OF ACTIVITIES

Villa 31 Art Space presents a parallel program of activities. Although most of the rooms of the house are totally preserved being used as exhibition spaces, there are few vacant rooms or spaces which can be used to set the program of activities.

2.4.1 CINEMA ROOM (shhh!)

Enver Hoxha used to watch himself in this room the movies to project in the cinemas of Albania forbidding or cutting scenes of many of them. A cinema room is rebuilt and becomes a place of free expression and debate. An active multifunctional space with a continuous program of films, short movies, videos is combined with lectures, debates and live music.

2.4.2 VIDEO-POOL-ROOM (blupblup)

The pool room located on the ground floor of the house, which is now used as storage, will be reused as a video room. A prefabricated structure with seats is installed inside it to provide space for 30 spectators. Watching videos at the bottom of the pool will be an unusual but also revealing experience, that conceptually isolates the spectators from the exterior world and immerse them in the fantastic world of creativity.

2.4.3. ART-KITCHEN (mummm)

The kitchen is a large space of the basement, which has been used till our days. In the last years the art of cooking has moved from the domestic realm to the restaurants and from the restaurants to the museums. Famous chefs such as Ferrán Adriá have pushed the art of cooking to new limits, creating an artistic experience that mixes colors, textures and flavors. In fact, Ferrán Adriá has been already one of the attractions of the Documenta in Kassel and the work of many chefs are currently exhibited in many museums worldwide.

The Art-Kitchen works as a culinary laboratory that invites regularly cookers and chefs to prepare different artistic menus becoming a singular experience between workshop and degustation. It is also conceived as a pop-up creative restaurant that will serve food and drinks during a whole week in long tables in the gardens when the weather allows it.

3 SITE SPECIFIC INTERVENTIONS

3.1 "PHYSICAL" SITE SPECIFIC INTERVENTIONS

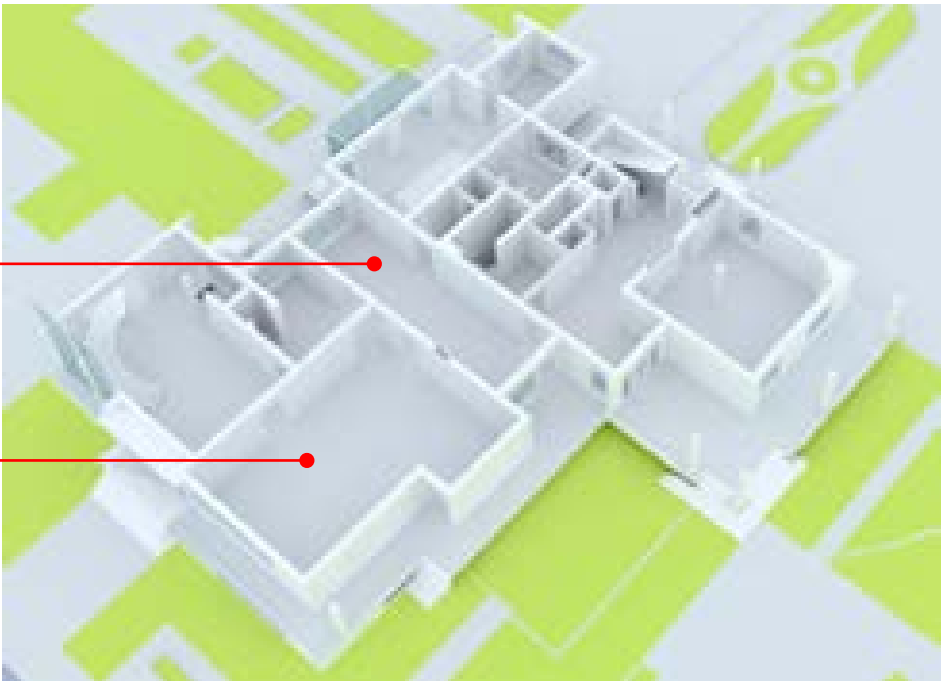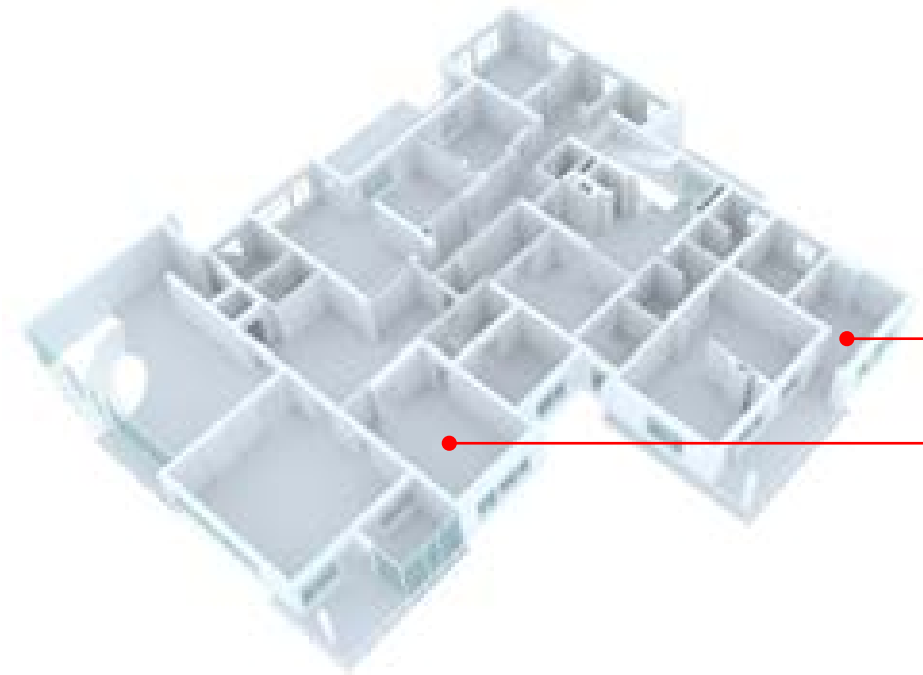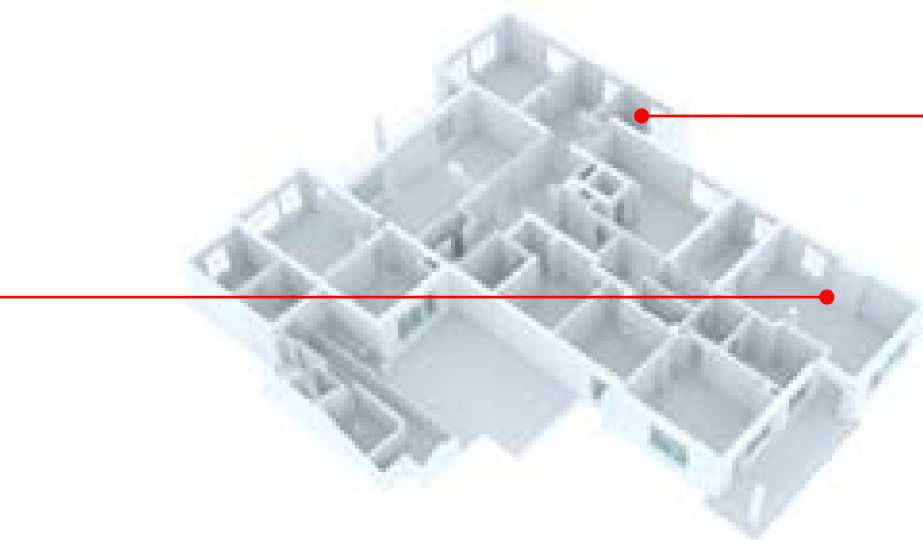## 3.2 "VIRTUAL" SITE SPECIFIC INTERVENTIONS

EXAMPLE OF VIDEO-ART WORK SCREENED IN ONE OF THE EXISTING TV's USING THE NEW VIDEO NETWORK. "CENTER DI PERMANENZA TEMPORANEA" FROM ADRIAN PACI.

EXAMPLE OF SCULPTURAL ART INSTALLATION AT THE GROUND FLOOR. RON MUECK

EXAMPLE OF SPATIAL ART INSTALLATION AT THE GROUND FLOOR. "SCATTERED CROWD" FROM WILLIAM FORSYTHE.
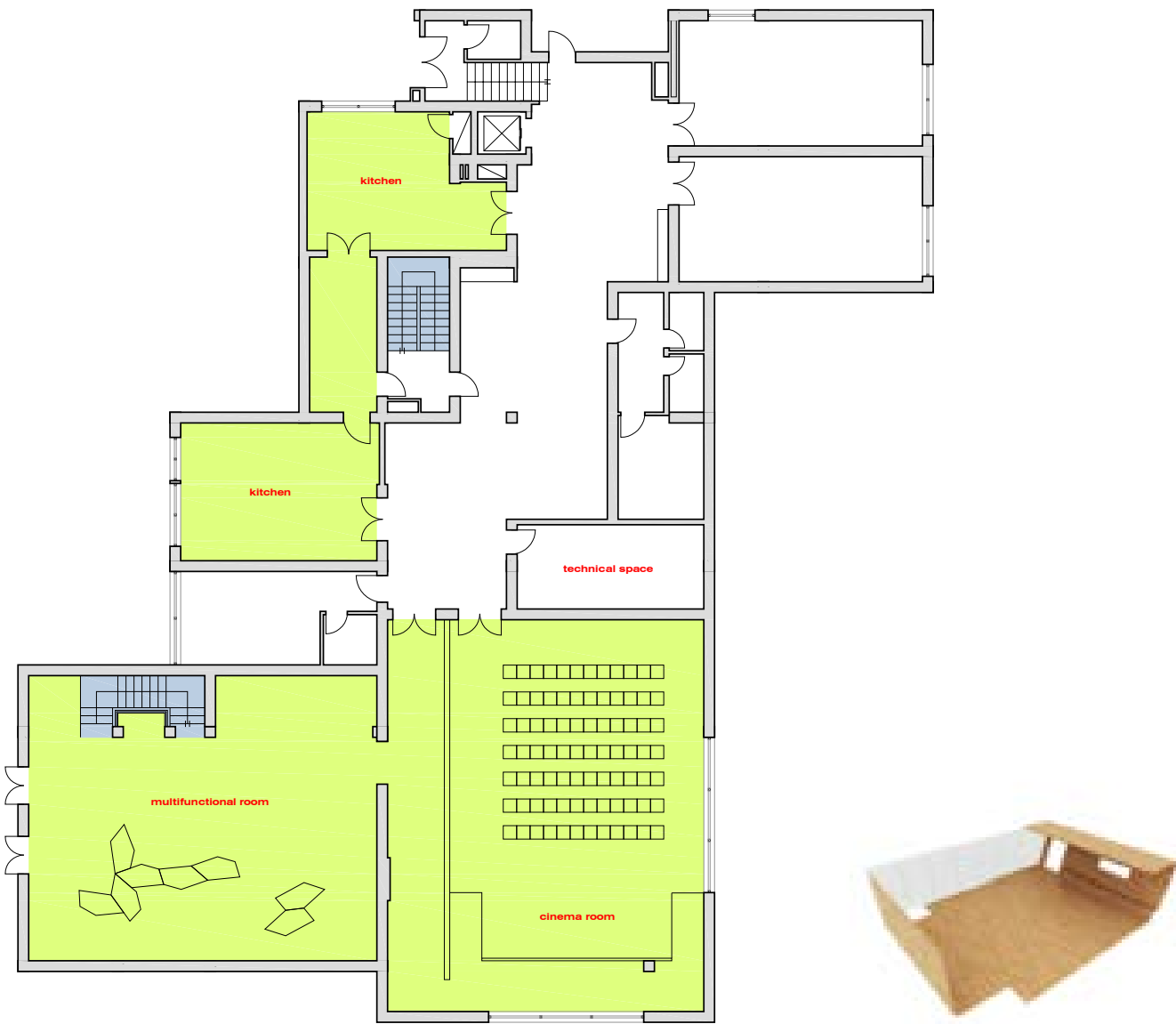

VIRTUAL SITE SPECIFIC: INTERVENTION ON TOILET

VIRTUAL SITE SPECIFIC: INTERVENTION ON TV

VIRTUAL SITE SPECIFIC: INTERVENTION ON WALL

4 ACTIVITY SPACES AT BASEMENT AND GROUND FLOOR

casanova+hernandez, rotterdam / SON engineering, tirana

kitchen

kitchen

technical space

multifunctional room

cinema room

BASEMENT PLAN

room 0.10

room 0.9

room 0.8

room 0.7

room 0.6

room 0.5

room 0.3

room 0.2

room 0.4

room 0.1

▲
public access

GROUND FLOOR PLAN

5 SPACES FOR SITE SPECIFIC INSTALLATIONS AT FIRST AND SECOND LEVELS

casanova+hernandez, rotterdam / SON engineering, tirana

FIRST FLOOR PLAN

room 1.25
room 1.24
room 1.26
room 1.23
room 1.3
room 1.4
room 1.5
room 1.27
room 1.2
room 1.6
room 1.22
room 1.1
room 1.7
room 1.28
room 1.9
room 1.16
room 1.10
room 1.11
room 1.8
room 1.17
room 1.29
room 1.13
room 1.18
room 1.12
room 1.31
room 1.30
room 1.19
room 1.14
room 1.21
room 1.20
room 1.15

SECOND FLOOR PLAN

room 2.17
room 2.16
room 2.18
room 2.3
room 2.4
room 2.1
room 2.2
room 2.19
room 2.6
room 2.15
room 2.5
room 2.7
room 2.8
room 2.10
room 2.13
room 2.14
room 2.12
room 2.11
room 2.9
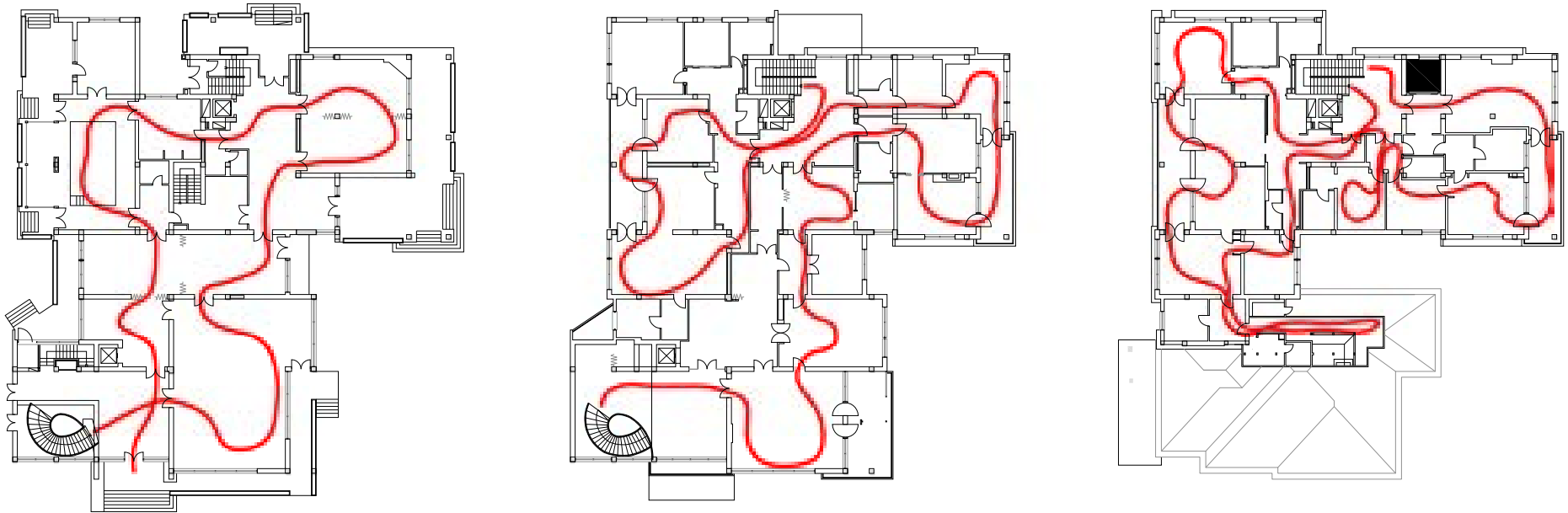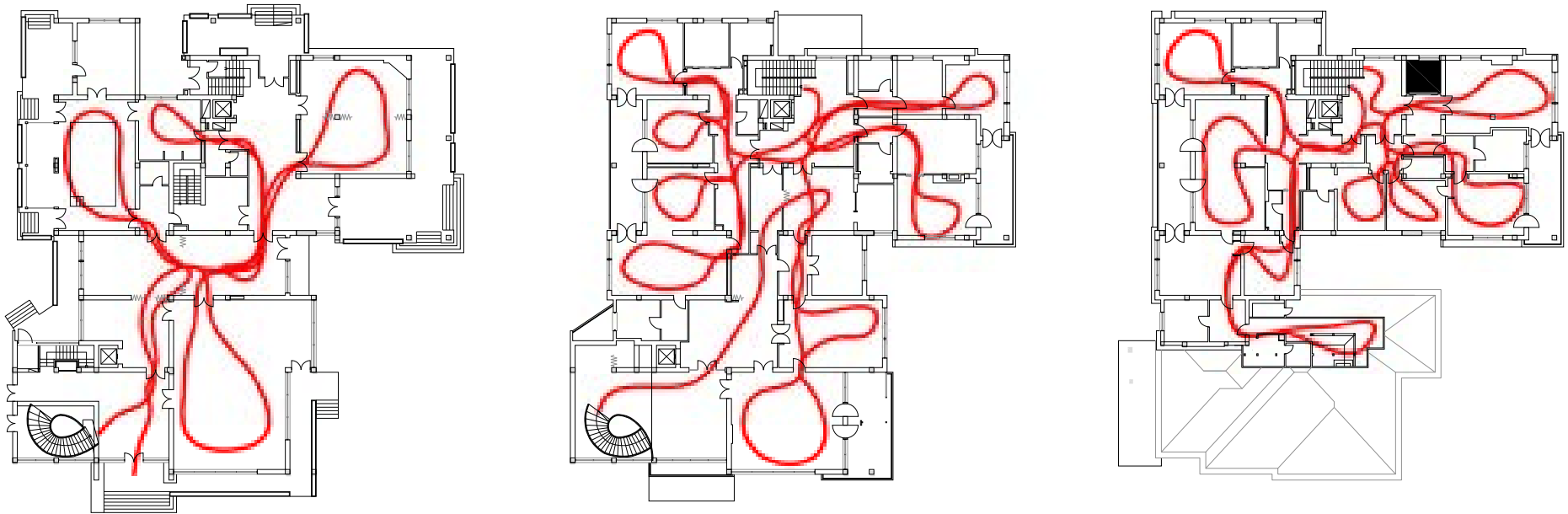room 2.20
room 2.22
room 2.21
room 2.24
room 2.23
room 2.25
room 2.26
room 2.28
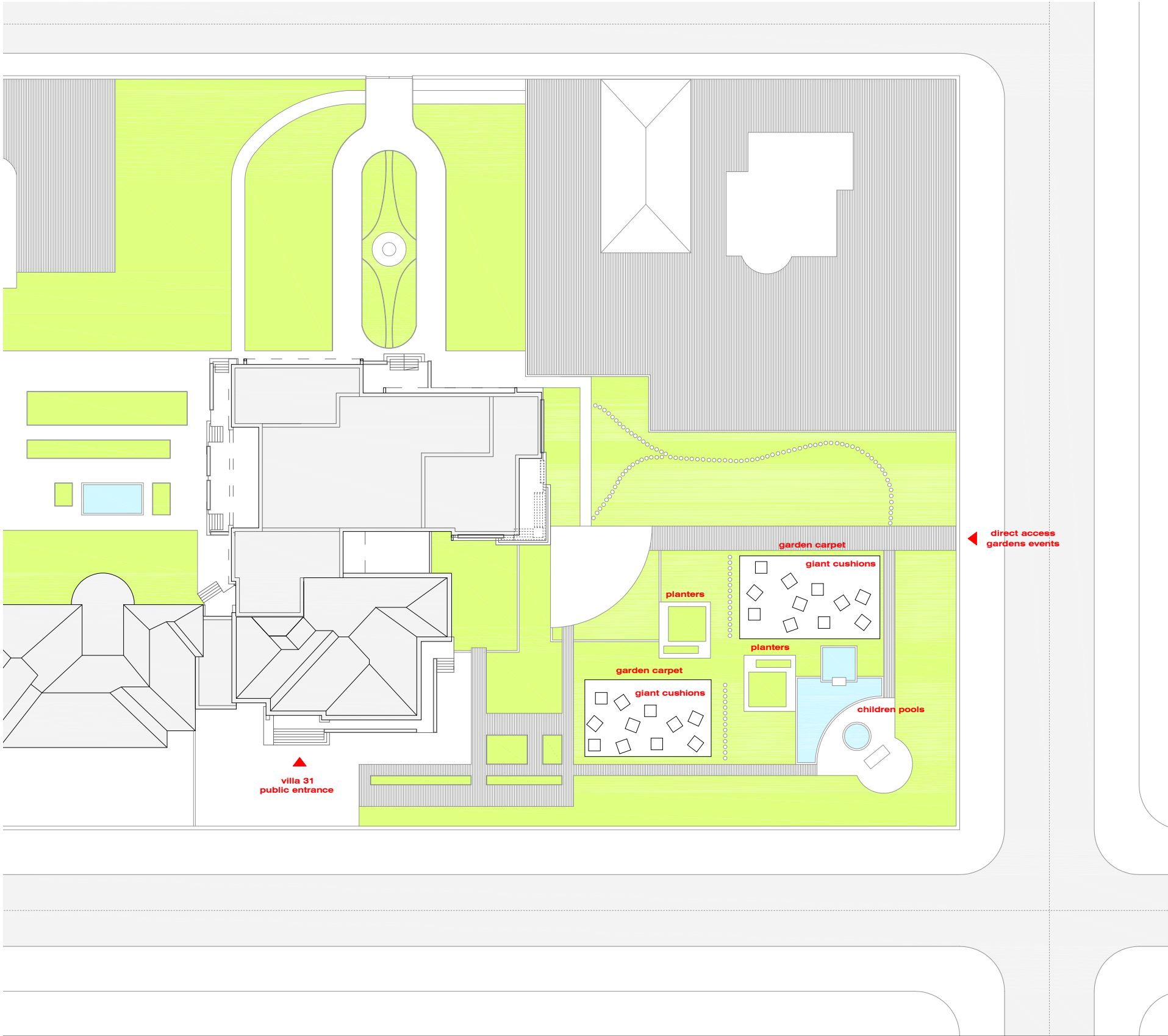room 2.27

EXAMPLE OF LINEAL CIRCULATION BY CLOSING SOME OF THE DOORS

EXAMPLE OF FREE CIRCULATION BY KEEPING EVERY SPACE ACCESIBLE AND ALL DOORS OPEN

EXISTING ELEVATION

AERIAL VIEW

direct access
gardens events

garden carpet

giant cushions

planters

planters

garden carpet

giant cushions

children pools

villa 31
public entrance

SITE PLAN